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COMMUNITY ATTITUDES SURVEY

THE NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD MODULE 2003

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**OUR CORPORATE VISION:
TO ENSURE FOR ALL THE PEOPLE OF NORTHERN
IRELAND AN EFFECTIVE, EFFICIENT, IMPARTIAL AND
ACCOUNTABLE POLICE SERVICE WHICH WILL SECURE
THE CONFIDENCE OF THE WHOLE COMMUNITY**

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INTRODUCTION

THE NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

The Northern Ireland Policing Board is an independent public body whose job it is to oversee policing in Northern Ireland. It was set up on 4 November 2001 as a result of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000. The Policing Board is not controlled by Government and has strong independent powers to carry out its work. The Policing Board consists of 19 Members, ten political members of the Northern Ireland Assembly and nine Independent Members appointed through open competition.

The main role of the Policing Board is to ensure that the Police Service of Northern Ireland is effective and efficient. The Policing Board holds the Chief Constable to account for all his actions and those of his staff. This means that the Chief Constable must answer to the Policing Board on any aspect of policing in Northern Ireland. However, the Policing Board cannot, and do not, direct or control the Chief Constable. He has the right to take independent policing decisions based only on the need to uphold law and order. This is called operational responsibility. But he must in turn answer for his actions to the Policing Board. This process is what effective accountability is all about.

Finding out what the community wants from their police service; what they think about the service that is delivered, and how it is performing, is vital if the Board is to carry out that role.

The Board must also keep itself informed as to:

- Trends and patterns in recruitment to the police and the police support staff; and
- The extent to which membership of the police and police support staff is representative of the community in Northern Ireland

and assess:

- The effectiveness of measures taken to secure that the membership of the police service is representative of the community; and
- The level of public satisfaction with the performance of the police and the District Policing Partnerships (DPPs).

In order to gauge public satisfaction and consider the views of the public on policing, the Policing Board conducts a programme of consultation and research activities involving a range of groups and organisations. The results of this consultation and research are published by the Policing Board to ensure openness and transparency, and to advise the public of its findings.

Community Attitudes Survey

The Central Survey Unit of the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) was commissioned in 1992 by Criminal Justice Departments and Agencies and the Central Community Relations Unit to conduct a continuous survey of attitudes towards law and order issues.

The survey is funded by the Northern Ireland Policing Board, the Northern Ireland Office and the Equality Unit of the Office of the First & Deputy First Ministers. The Community Attitudes Survey is an annual survey, where information is collected in a systematic way to enable any emerging trends to be identified. The interviews are conducted over a twelve-month period with a representative sample of persons aged 16 and over living in Northern Ireland. Results from the Community Attitudes Survey are used by the Policing Board to fulfil its responsibilities under Section 3(3)(d) of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 and to measure some targets set by the Board in the Annual Policing Plan.

This bulletin presents the findings from the eleventh year of the Community Attitudes Survey (January 2003 - December 2003). Although the survey measures a broad range of attitudes towards crime, policing and the courts, this bulletin focuses on public attitudes towards the police, the Northern Ireland Policing Board and District Policing Partnerships.

The survey had a response rate of 68% yielding a total of 1,464 respondents. Of these 1,464 respondents, 815 (56%) were Protestant, 537 (37%) were Catholic and 112 (8%) said they were neither Protestant nor Catholic or refused to answer the question. The 112 respondents in this "other" category are included in the totals but there is no breakdown of this category due to the number being too small to provide meaningful analysis. Percentages in some tables may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

RESULTS

1: PERCEPTIONS OF THE POLICE

Q1: Please tell me how polite the police in your area are when dealing with ordinary policing problems?

Almost three quarters of respondents (74%) in 2003 thought that their local police were very/quite polite when dealing with ordinary policing problems compared to 73% in 2002 (Table 1). The proportion rating the politeness of local police as not very/not at all polite in 2003 was 7% - an increase of 1 percentage point from 2002 (6%). Over three quarters of Protestant respondents (79%) thought that the police are polite when dealing with ordinary policing problems in their locality (identical to 2002) compared to 71% of Catholic respondents (an increase of 4 percentage points from 2002).

TABLE 1: Politeness of local police

Rating/Percentage	Community Attitudes Survey											
	2000			2001			2002			2003		
	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All
Very/quite polite	68	76	73	65	80	74	67	79	73	71	79	74
Neither polite nor impolite	17	12	14	14	9	11	13	11	12	12	9	11
Not very/not at all polite	7	4	5	9	3	5	7	3	6	7	5	7
Don't know/refusal	9	8	9	13	8	10	13	7	10	10	7	9

Q2: Please tell me how helpful the police in your area are when dealing with ordinary policing problems?

Over two thirds of respondents (69%) in 2003 thought that their local police were very/quite helpful when dealing with ordinary policing problems which is identical to the 2002 finding (Table 2). The proportion rating the helpfulness of local police as not very/not at all helpful in 2003 was 10% which is also identical to the 2002 finding. Just under three quarters of Protestant respondents (72%) thought that the police are helpful when dealing with ordinary policing problems in their locality, a decrease of 1 percentage point from 2002. Almost two thirds of Catholic respondents (65%) thought that the police are helpful when dealing with ordinary policing problems in their locality, an increase of 2 percentage points from 2002.

TABLE 2: Helpfulness of local police

Rating/Percentage	Community Attitudes Survey											
	2000			2001			2002			2003		
	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All
Very/quite helpful	63	75	71	63	77	72	63	73	69	65	72	69
Neither helpful nor unhelpful	11	10	10	10	9	9	12	10	11	12	12	12
Not very/not at all helpful	15	5	9	13	5	9	12	8	10	12	8	10
Don't know/refusal	11	9	10	14	8	11	13	8	11	11	8	10

Q3: Would you say that the police deal fairly with everyone?

Just under three quarters of respondents (72%) in 2003 thought that the police deal fairly with everyone compared to 71% in 2002 (Table 3). Just over three quarters of Protestant respondents (78%) thought that the police deal fairly with everyone - identical to 2002, while the proportion of Catholic respondents who thought that the police deal fairly with everyone increased from 61% in 2002 to 66% in 2003.

TABLE 3: Fairness of police

Rating/Percentage	Community Attitudes Survey											
	2000			2001			2002			2003		
	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All
Yes	63	81	75	57	83	72	61	78	71	66	78	72
No	28	13	19	33	12	21	30	13	19	26	15	19
Don't know/refusal	8	6	7	9	5	7	9	9	9	8	8	8

Q4: Taking everything into account, do you think that police in this area do a good job or a poor job?

Almost two thirds of respondents (65%) in 2003 thought that their local police were doing a very/fairly good job compared to 67% in 2002 (Table 4). The proportion rating the police as doing a fairly/very poor job in 2003 was 16% - an increase of 1 percentage point from 2002 (15%). Just over two thirds of Protestant respondents (69%) thought that their local police were doing a very/fairly good job compared to 76% in 2002. The proportion of Catholic respondents who thought that the local police were doing a very/fairly good job increased from 57% in 2002 to 59% in 2003.

TABLE 4: Local police does a good job?

Rating/Percentage	Community Attitudes Survey											
	2000			2001			2002			2003		
	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All
Very/fairly good	58	79	72	55	79	69	57	76	67	59	69	65
Neither good nor poor	14	11	12	20	10	14	16	11	13	19	14	16
Fairly/very poor	23	7	14	21	8	13	22	10	15	19	14	16
Don't know/refusal	5	2	3	4	2	3	5	3	4	3	3	3

2. DISTRICT POLICING PARTNERSHIPS

Q5: Which of the following, in your view, should receive most attention from the police in this area?

The following were highlighted as the issues which respondents believe should receive most attention from the police in their area: speeding (25%), burglary (17%), drinking and driving (10%) and paramilitary activity (8%). A higher proportion of Protestant respondents (11%) than Catholic respondents (3%) thought that paramilitary activity required most attention in their area whereas a higher percentage of Catholic respondents (11%) than Protestant respondents (4%) thought that joyriding required most attention.

TABLE 5: Issues which should receive most attention in your area¹

Rating/Percentage ²	Community Attitudes Survey		
	C	P	All
Paramilitary activity	3	11	8
Burglary	17	16	17
Theft of/or from cars	5	5	5
Assaults	3	1	2
Damage to property/vandalism	5	7	6
Speeding	24	26	25
Drinking and driving	11	9	10
Drunk and disorderly people	4	5	4
Family rows	1	0	0
Sexual assaults on women or children	3	2	3
Illegal drug use	7	8	7
Child abuse	3	3	3
Organised crime	2	3	3
Joyriding	11	4	7

¹ Note: no comparative data has been included as the categories were revised in 2003.

² Percentages relate to respondent's number one priority.

Q6: Which of the following, in your view, should receive most attention from the police in Northern Ireland?

The issues respondents thought that the police should give most attention to in Northern Ireland as a whole were paramilitary activity (32%), joyriding (14%) and illegal drug use (13%). Protestant respondents (37%) were more likely than Catholic respondents (25%) to think that paramilitary activity required most attention from the police in Northern Ireland as a whole whereas Catholic respondents (17%) were more likely than Protestant respondents (12%) to think that organised crime required the most attention.

TABLE 6: Issues that need most attention in Northern Ireland¹

Rating/Percentage ²	Community Attitudes Survey		
	C	P	All
Paramilitary activity	25	37	32
Burglary	5	5	5
Theft of/or from cars	1	1	1
Assaults	4	3	3
Damage to property/vandalism	2	1	2
Speeding	3	3	3
Drinking and driving	6	5	5
Drunk and disorderly people	1	1	1
Sexual assaults on women or children	6	4	5
Illegal drug use	15	12	13
Child abuse	7	7	7
Organised crime	17	12	14
Joyriding	6	6	6

¹ Note: no comparative data has been included as the categories were revised in 2003.

² Percentages relate to respondent's number one priority.

3. PERCEPTIONS OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

Q7: Have you ever heard of the Northern Ireland Policing Board?

Over eight in ten respondents (84%) had heard of the Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB) in 2003 compared to 80% in 2002 (Table 7). Over four fifths of Protestant respondents (86%) had heard of the NIPB in 2003 (an increase of 3 percentage points compared to 2002) and 82% of Catholic respondents had heard of the NIPB in 2003 (an increase of 5 percentage points on 2002).

TABLE 7: Have you heard of the Northern Ireland Policing Board?*

Rating/Percentage	Community Attitudes Survey								
	2001			2002			2003		
	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All
Yes	76	78	77	77	83	80	82	86	84
No	24	22	23	23	16	19	18	13	15
Don't know/refusal	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1

* The Police Authority for Northern Ireland was replaced by the Northern Ireland Policing Board on 4 November 2001.

Q8: Do you think the Northern Ireland Policing Board is part of the police or independent of the police?

Just under half of respondents (49%) thought that the Northern Ireland Policing Board was independent of the police in 2003 which is identical to the 2002 finding (Table 8). A further 39% of respondents thought that the NIPB was part of the police in 2003 compared to 38% in 2002. The proportion of Protestant respondents who thought that the NIPB was independent of the police decreased from 53% in 2002 to 50% in 2003. However, the proportion of Catholic respondents who thought that the NIPB was independent of the police increased from 45% in 2002 to 47% in 2003.

TABLE 8: Do you think the Northern Ireland Policing Board is part of the police or independent of the police?*

Rating/Percentage	Community Attitudes Survey								
	2001			2002			2003		
	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All
Part of the police	45	38	41	41	36	38	42	38	39
Independent of the police	44	49	47	45	53	49	47	50	49
Don't know/refusal	11	12	12	14	11	13	11	12	12

* The Police Authority for Northern Ireland was replaced by the Northern Ireland Policing Board on 4 November 2001.

Q9: Do you think that the Northern Ireland Policing Board will help ensure that the police do a good job?

Almost three quarters of all respondents (74%) thought that the Northern Ireland Policing Board will help ensure that the police do a good job (Table 9). Over three-quarters of Protestant respondents (77%) thought that NIPB will help ensure that the police do a good job compared to 71% of Catholic respondents.

TABLE 9: Do you think that the Northern Ireland Policing Board will help ensure that the police do a good job?

Rating/Percentage	Community Attitudes Survey 2003		
	C	P	All
Yes	71	77	74
No	14	11	12
Don't know/refusal	16	12	15

4. PERCEPTIONS OF DISTRICT POLICING PARTNERSHIPS

Q10: Have you heard of District Policing Partnerships?

Just under one half of all respondents (48%) had heard of District Policing Partnerships (DPPs) (Table 10). Just over half of Protestant respondents (52%) had heard of the DPPs compared to 44% of Catholic respondents.

TABLE 10: Have you heard of District Policing Partnerships (DPPs)?¹

Rating/Percentage	Community Attitudes Survey 2003		
	C	P	All
Yes	44	52	48
No	56	47	51
Don't know/refusal	0	1	1

¹DPPs were established in March 2003.

Q11: How confident are you that the composition of your local DPP is representative of your local area?

Just over two fifths of all respondents (43%) thought that the composition of the local DPP is representative of their local area (Table 11). The proportion of Protestant respondents and Catholic respondents who are confident that the composition of their local DPP is representative of their local area were similar at 44% and 45% respectively. It should be noted that over one third (36%) of all respondents stated they did not know or refused to answer.

TABLE 11: How confident are you that the composition of your local DPP is representative of your local area?

Rating/Percentage	Community Attitudes Survey 2003		
	C	P	All
Very/Fairly confident	45	44	43
Not very/not at all confident	21	20	20
Don't know/refusal	32	37	36

Q12: How confident are you that DPPs will address local problems?

Just under three fifths of all respondents (59%) are confident that DPPs will address local policing problems (Table 12). The proportion of Protestant respondents and Catholic respondents who are confident that DPPs will address local problems were similar at 60% and 59% respectively. It should be noted that over one fifth (22%) of all respondents stated they did not know or refused to answer.

TABLE 12: How confident are you that DPPs will address local problems?

Rating/Percentage	Community Attitudes Survey 2003		
	C	P	All
Very/fairly confident	59	60	59
Not very/not at all confident	21	18	19
Don't know/refusal	20	21	22

Q13: Are you prepared to contact your local DPP to raise local policing issues?

Three fifths (60%) of all respondents (63% of Protestant respondents and 58% of Catholic respondents) are prepared to contact their local DPP to raise local policing issues (Table 13). Less than one third (30%) of all respondents stated that they are not prepared to contact their local DPP.

TABLE 13: Are you prepared to contact your local DPP to raise local policing issues?

Rating/Percentage	Community Attitudes Survey 2003		
	C	P	All
Yes	58	63	60
No	33	28	30
Don't know/refusal	9	9	10

5. COMPOSITION OF THE POLICE SERVICE

Q14: Do you think that the Police Service of Northern Ireland has too few Catholics in it, too many or is the number about right?

Just under half of respondents (48%) in 2003 thought that there were too few Catholics in the police compared to 54% in 2002 (Table 14). The proportion of respondents who thought that the proportion of Catholics in the police was about right increased from 24% in 2002 to 29% in 2003. The number of Catholic respondents who thought that there were too few Catholics in the police fell from 73% in 2002 to 68% in 2003. Similarly, the proportion of Protestant respondents who thought that there were too few Catholics in the police fell from 42% in 2002 to 34% in 2003.

TABLE 14: Number of Catholics in the police service

Rating/Percentage	Community Attitudes Survey											
	2000			2001			2002			2003		
	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All
Too few	85	60	70	85	57	69	73	42	54	68	34	48
Too many	-	1	1	0	2	1	1	3	2	1	5	3
About right	6	18	14	6	24	17	15	31	24	18	38	29
Don't know	9	20	16	9	17	14	12	23	19	13	23	20

Q15: Does the Police Service of Northern Ireland try harder to recruit Protestants or to recruit Catholics or does it try equally hard to recruit both?

Just under half of respondents (48%) in 2003 thought that the police try equally hard to recruit both Catholics and Protestants compared to 49% in 2002 (Table 15). The proportion of respondents who thought that the police try harder to recruit Catholics increased from 35% in 2002 to 37% in 2003. Catholic respondents (54%) were more likely than Protestant respondents (44%) to think that the police service tries equally hard to recruit both Protestants and Catholics.

TABLE 15: Recruitment to the police service

Rating/Percentage	Community Attitudes Survey											
	2000			2001			2002			2003		
	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All
Tries harder to recruit Protestants	16	3	8	12	1	6	10	0	5	11	2	6
Tries harder to recruit Catholics	13	22	19	22	35	30	24	43	35	24	46	37
Tries equally hard to recruit both Protestants and Catholics	49	60	56	50	54	52	53	48	49	54	44	48
Don't know	22	15	17	15	10	12	13	9	11	11	8	10

Q16: Which, if any, of the reasons given do you think might deter Catholics from joining the Police Service of Northern Ireland?

Almost two thirds (66%) of respondents in 2003 cited 'fear of intimidation or attack on them or their relatives' as a reason why Catholics might be deterred from joining the police compared to 70% in 2002 (Table 16). 'Other Catholics putting pressure on them not to join' (54%) and 'fear that they couldn't maintain contact with family and friends' (46%) were the next biggest reasons which respondents believed might deter Catholics from joining the police. Catholic respondents were less likely than Protestant respondents to think that Catholics might be deterred from joining because 'they do not support the system of government' (28% compared to 36%) and much more likely to think that 'they feel they would be treated badly in the police' (33% compared to 15%).

TABLE 16: Reasons which might deter Catholics from joining the police¹

Rating/Percentage	Community Attitudes Survey											
	2000			2001			2002			2003		
	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All
Other Catholics put pressure on them not to join	57	60	59	56	64	61	54	64	60	50	57	54
They feel they would be treated badly in the police	34	17	23	35	15	24	28	17	22	33	15	22
They try to join, not chosen because of religion	15	7	10	15	6	10	10	6	8	12	5	8
They try to join, not chosen because of political beliefs	17	8	11	18	8	12	16	8	11	12	9	11
Fear intimidation or attack on them or their relatives	67	71	70	65	71	68	72	70	70	67	66	66
Don't join because they don't support the system of government	41	40	40	40	43	42	30	36	34	28	36	33
Fear they couldn't maintain contact with family and friends	47	46	47	47	48	47	46	45	46	46	46	46
Don't join because they don't support the police	35	32	33	35	36	36	36	38	37	32	37	35
The name	27	21	23	21	21	21	6	6	6	4	5	5
Symbols such as the badge or other insignia	26	22	24	24	25	25	8	11	10	11	7	9
Other reasons	1	2	1	2	1	2	2	1	1	2	1	1
None of these	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	1	1	2	2	2
Don't know/refusal ²	-	-	-	4	4	4	2	4	4	4	4	5

¹ Percentages will not sum to 100 due to multiple responses

² Option not included before 2001.



The Northern Ireland Policing Board actively seeks views on issues relating to policing.
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