



Home Office

# Home Office Statistical Bulletin



## **Perceptions of crime, engagement with the police, authorities dealing with anti- social behaviour and Community Payback: Findings from the 2010/11 British Crime Survey**

**Supplementary Volume 1 to Crime in England and Wales  
2010/11**

*Debbie Moon (Ed.), John Flatley (Ed.), Jenny Parfremment-  
Hopkins, Philip Hall, Jacqueline Hoare, Ivy Lau and Jenny Innes*

November 2011

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## Further information

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This publication should be read in conjunction with the User Guide to Home Office Crime Statistics, a useful reference guide with explanatory notes regarding the issues and classifications which are key to the production and presentation of the crime statistics: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/science-research-statistics/research-statistics/crime-research/user-guide-crime-statistics/>

Copies of other Home Office publications are available from the Home Office Science Internet pages: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/science-research/research-statistics/>

The dates of forthcoming publications are pre-announced and can be found via the UK National Statistics Publication Hub: <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/hub/index.html>

For further information about the British Crime Survey and police recorded crime statistics, please email [crimestats@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:crimestats@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk) or write to:

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# Introduction

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This bulletin is the first in a series of supplementary volumes that accompany the main annual Home Office Statistical Bulletin, 'Crime in England and Wales 2010/11' ([Chaplin \*et al.\*, 2011](#)). These supplementary volumes report on additional analysis not included in the main annual publication. Figures included in this bulletin are from the British Crime Survey (BCS), a large, nationally representative, face-to-face victimisation survey in which people resident in households in England and Wales are asked about their experiences of crime in the 12 months prior to interview.<sup>1</sup>

Since 2001/02 the BCS has run continuously with interviewing being carried out throughout the year. Until recently the BCS did not cover crimes against those aged under 16, but since January 2009 interviews have been carried out with children aged 10 to 15. BCS respondents are also asked about their attitudes towards different crime-related issues such as the police and criminal justice system, and about their perceptions of crime and anti-social behaviour. BCS figures in the main body of this report are limited to adults aged over 16 as in previous years, but experimental statistics for children are shown separately in Chapter 1.

This bulletin presents findings from additional analyses based on the 2010/11 BCS on people's contact and engagement with the police, their views of how the authorities in the local area are dealing with anti-social behaviour, their awareness and perceptions of Community Payback and their perceptions of crime.

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<sup>1</sup> For more information about the BCS see the [User Guide to Home Office Crime Statistics](#).

# Conventions used in figures and tables

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## Table abbreviations

- '0' indicates no response in that particular category or less than 0.5% (this does not apply when percentages are presented to one decimal point).
- 'n/a' indicates that the BCS question was not applicable or not asked in that particular year.
- '-' indicates that for recorded crime percentage changes are not reported because the base number of offences is less than 50, for the BCS indicates that data are not reported because the unweighted base is less than 50.
- '..' indicates for police recorded crime that data are not available.
- '\*\*'
- '\*\*\*' indicates for BCS that the change is statistically significant at the five per cent level. Where an apparent change over time is not statistically significant this is noted in the text.

## Unweighted base

All BCS percentages and rates presented in the tables are based on data weighted to compensate for differential non response. Tables show the unweighted base which represents the number of people/households interviewed in the specified group.

## Percentages

Row or column percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Most BCS tables present cell percentages where the figures refer to the percentage of people/households who have the attribute being discussed and the complementary percentage, to add to 100%, is not shown.

A percentage may be quoted in the text for a single category that is identifiable in the tables only by summing two or more component percentages. In order to avoid rounding errors, the percentage has been recalculated for the single category and therefore may differ by one percentage point from the sum of the percentages derived from the tables.

## Year-labels on BCS figures and tables

Prior to 2001/02, BCS respondents were asked about their experience of crime in the previous calendar year, so year-labels identify the year in which the crime took place. Following the change to continuous interviewing, respondents' experience of crime relates to the 12 full months prior to interview (i.e. a moving reference period). Year-labels from 2001/02 onwards identify the BCS year of interview. Other questions on the BCS (e.g. attitudes to policing, confidence in the criminal justice system) ask the respondent their current views or attitudes, and thus the data are referenced as the year in which the respondent was interviewed (e.g. 1996, 2008/09).

## 'No answers' (missing values)

All BCS analysis excludes don't know/refusals unless otherwise specified.

## Numbers of BCS incidents

Estimates are rounded to the nearest 10,000.



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# 1 Policing and community engagement

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*Jenny Parfremment-Hopkins*

## 1.1 SUMMARY

The BCS collects a wide range of information about the police and their engagement with the local community, including questions relating to people's general awareness of the police in their local area, contact with the police about local issues and contact for other reasons (for example, to report a crime).

- The 2010/11 BCS showed that just over half of people (55%) said that they had seen a police officer or Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) on foot patrol at least once a month and about two-fifths (39%) had seen an officer on foot patrol at least once a week. A quarter (25%) said that they never saw police officers on foot patrol in the local area. These figures are similar to those from the 2009/10 BCS, but follow more substantial year-on-year increases in awareness since 2006/07, when the question was introduced.
- Specific questions about people's awareness of local neighbourhood policing teams showed that awareness had increased from 39 per cent in 2009/10 to 44 per cent in 2010/11.
- The 2010/11 BCS showed that about a third (32%) of adults had seen, read or heard details about their local police and over half of people (57%) said they knew how to contact the police about policing, crime or anti-social behaviour (up from 54% in 2009/10). Ten per cent had contacted the police about local issues.

Since 1991, the BCS has asked about any other contact people may have had with the police (other than about local policing priorities or issues), including contact initiated by themselves (for example, to report a crime) and contact initiated by the police (for example, if they were stopped by the police in a vehicle or on foot).

- Around a quarter of people (23%) had made contact with the police (other than about local issues) in 2010/11. This was most commonly to report a personal or household crime (37%) or a crime of which someone else was a victim (15%), or to report any other disturbance (13%).
- The numbers of people contacting the police for reasons other than to talk about local issues decreased from 43 per cent in 1993 to 23 per cent in 2010/11, with a flattening out in levels of contact in more recent years. It is not possible to be certain of the reasons for this decrease, but it is likely to be a result of a number of factors including police deployment, policing methods and falls in actual levels of crime.
- The 2010/11 BCS showed that around one in ten people (9%) had been in a car or motorcycle which was approached or stopped by the police in the last 12 months (most commonly so that the police could carry out routine checks on the vehicle or to check ownership). Of those who had been stopped in a vehicle in 2010/11, eight per cent had also been searched or the vehicle was searched (this represents less than 1% of the general population).
- A much smaller proportion of people had been stopped and asked questions by the police when they were on foot in the last 12 months (3% in 2010/11). Of those who had been stopped on foot in 2010/11, 30 per cent had also been searched (again, this represents less than 1% of the general population).

## 1.2 INTRODUCTION

The British Crime Survey (BCS) collects a variety of information about different aspects of policing and about community engagement with the police, such as questions relating to people's contact with the police about local issues. Previous findings for these questions were reported in [Scribbins \*et al.\* \(2010\)](#); this chapter largely repeats these analyses and provides updated figures from the 2010/11 survey.<sup>1</sup> Questions about the visibility of the local police have been included on the BCS since 2006/07 and trends since then are shown for this question. Longer-term trends are shown for questions that have been included in the BCS since 1991, including those relating to people's experiences of contact with the police about other issues; for example, their experiences of contacting the police about crime, of being stopped by the police in a vehicle or on foot and contact the police had initiated with them for any other reason.

The chapter concentrates on findings for adult respondents (aged 16 and over) to the BCS. Since January 2009 interviews have been carried out with children aged 10 to 15. As for adults, the main focus of the child interview is their experience of victimisation in the previous 12 months, but additional modules also ask about children's experiences of crime and policing-related issues. First results for questions about children's awareness and contact with the police were reported in [Scribbins \*et al.\* \(2011\)](#); updated findings for 2010/11 are included in Box 1.5 of this chapter.

## 1.3 VISIBILITY OF THE LOCAL POLICE

In recent years the development of the neighbourhood policing model has focussed local policing activities on:

- the presence of visible, accessible and locally known police officers and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs);
- community engagement in identifying priorities; and
- targeted policing and problem solving to tackle public concerns in the neighbourhood.

Questions relating to people's experiences of seeing the police in their local area have been included on the BCS since 2006/07. The following sections discuss people's general awareness of their local police as well as exploring some of the key elements of the neighbourhood policing model in more detail.

### Seeing officers on foot patrol

The 2010/11 BCS showed that just over half of people (55%) said they had seen police officers or PCSOs on foot patrol in their local area once a month or more often. This breaks down as follows:

- 39 per cent of people had seen an officer on foot patrol at least once a week (25% had seen an officer about once a week and 14% at least once a day); and
- 16 per cent of people had seen an officer on foot patrol about once a month (for full breakdowns see Table 1.01).

Around one in five people (19%) had seen an officer on foot patrol less than once a month and a quarter (25%) said that they had never seen officers on foot patrol in their local area.

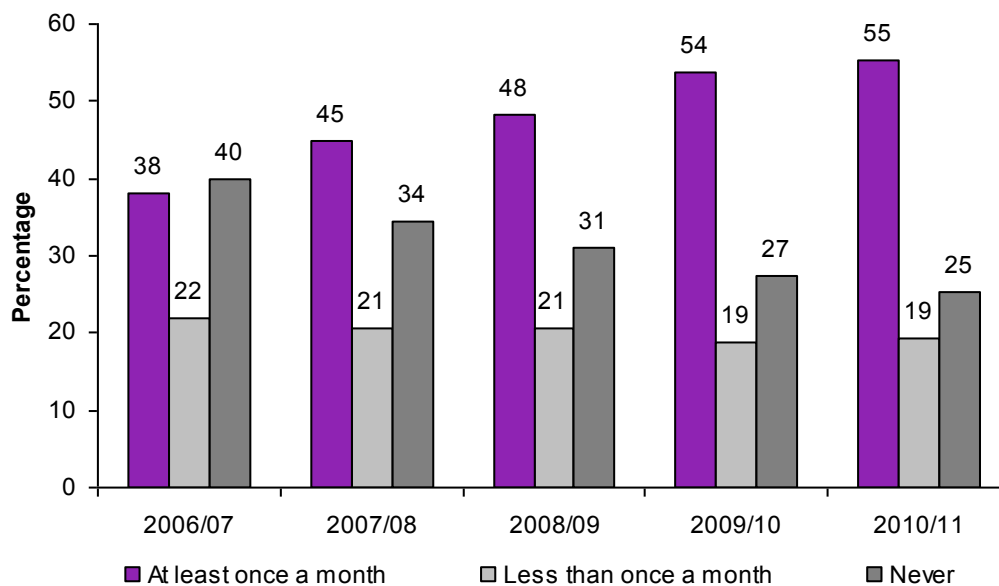
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<sup>1</sup> A history and trends for questions relating to perceptions of police performance were also included in [Scribbins \*et al.\* \(2010\)](#) but are not repeated here.

The proportion of people who said they never saw officers on foot patrol fell by two percentage points (from 27% to 25%) between the 2009/10 and 2010/11 BCS. There were small corresponding increases in the proportions of people saying they had seen an officer on foot patrol in the local area more than once a day (4%, up from 3% in 2009/10) and for those saying that they had seen an officer about once a month (16%, up from 15% in 2009/10).

Trends since 2006/07 (when the question was introduced) show an increase in the proportions of people who saw officers on foot patrol at least once a month (from 38% to 55%; see Figure 1.1 below). There was no change in visibility between the 2009/10 and 2010/11 BCS (the one percentage point increase was not statistically significant).

**Figure 1.1 How often adult respondents saw police officers or PCSOs on foot patrol in the local area, 2006/07 to 2010/11 BCS**



- There was a 15 percentage point decrease in the proportion of people who said they had never seen an officer on foot patrol in their local area (from 40% in the 2006/07 BCS to 25% in 2010/11) and a small decrease in the number of people who had seen officers on foot patrol in the local area less than once a month (22% in 2006/07 compared with 19% in 2010/11).
- As noted above, there was a corresponding increase in the proportion of people who had seen an officer at least once a month. Within this combined category, the largest increase between the 2006/07 and 2010/11 BCS was for the proportion of people who had seen an officer about once a week (from 18% in 2006/07 to 25% in 2010/11; see Table 1.01).

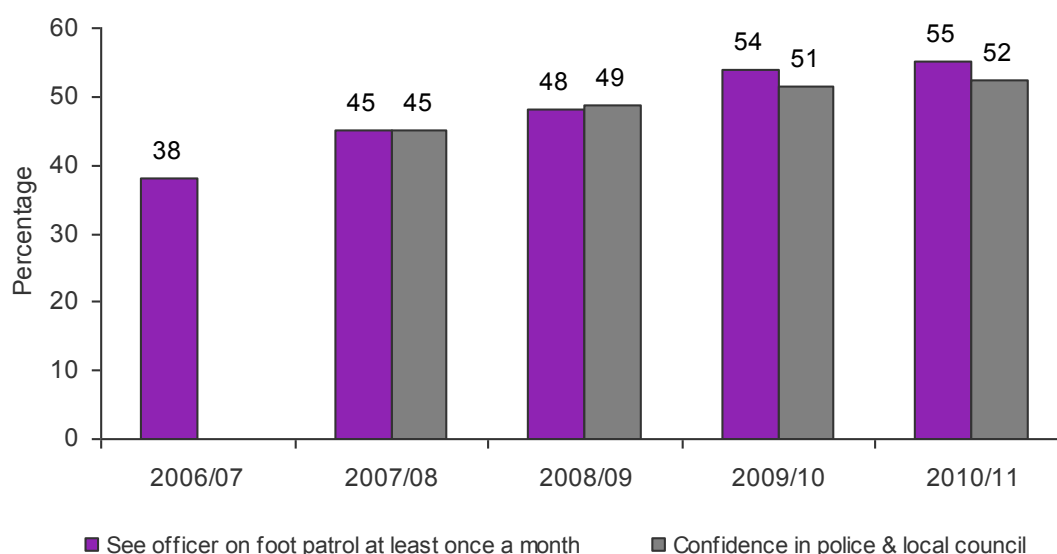
Previous analysis has shown that how often respondents had seen the local police varied with personal and household and area characteristics.<sup>2</sup> [Scribbins et al. \(2010\)](#) showed that, in particular, there was substantial variation by the type of area a person lived in. For example, people living in urban areas were much more likely to have seen an officer on foot patrol at least once a month than those living in rural areas. There were more subtle differences in how often a person saw officers on foot patrol by personal and household characteristics.

<sup>2</sup> A full breakdown of how often people saw officers on foot patrol by personal, household and area characteristics using the 2009/10 BCS can be found in Tables 2.02 and 2.03 of [Scribbins et al. \(2010\)](#). Many of these characteristics will be closely associated (for example, marital status and age) so caution is needed in the interpretation of the effects of these different characteristics when viewed in isolation.

Previous analysis of BCS data has also shown an association between seeing the local police on foot patrol and perceptions of police performance. For example, [Thorpe \(2009\)](#) found that seeing a police officer or PCSO on foot patrol was a factor independently associated with confidence in the local police and council in dealing with anti-social behaviour (ASB) and crime issues in the area. More recently, [Scribbins \*et al.\* \(2010\)](#) reported that people who saw an officer on foot patrol on a regular basis (at least once a month) were more likely to agree that the police and local council were dealing with the ASB and crime issues in the local area.

Figure 1.2 shows trends since 2006/07 (when the questions were first asked) for how often people had seen the local police and their confidence in the police and local council in dealing with the ASB and crime issues that matter in the local area; as police visibility has increased over time, confidence in the police and local council has increased at a similar rate.

**Figure 1.2 Visibility of the police and confidence in the police and local council<sup>1</sup>, 2006/07<sup>2</sup> to 2010/11 BCS**



1. Based on the question 'How much would you agree or disagree that the police and local council are dealing with the ASB and crime issues that matter in this area'.
2. Questions about confidence in the police and local council were not asked in the 2006/07 BCS.

Since 2009/10, the BCS has also asked respondents whether they had noticed a change in how often they saw police officers or PCSOs on foot patrol in the local area in the last two years. The 2010/11 BCS showed that 31 per cent of people said they had noticed officers on foot patrol in the local area more often than two years ago while ten per cent said they had noticed officers on foot patrol less often. A further 37 per cent said that how often they had noticed officers on foot patrol in the local area had stayed the same in the last two years<sup>3</sup> (Table 1a).

This pattern is fairly similar to findings from the 2009/10 BCS, although a slightly smaller proportion of people said they had noticed officers on foot patrol more often (than two years ago) than in the 2010/11 BCS (31% compared with 33% in 2009/10). Instead, respondents were more likely to say that how often they saw officers had stayed about the same (37% compared with 34% in 2009/10); this is unsurprising given that the 2010/11 BCS showed little change overall in how often people had seen officers on foot patrol compared with 2009/10.

<sup>3</sup> In addition, 13 per cent and nine per cent of people respectively spontaneously reported that they had not noticed any change in how often they saw officers or that they never saw any officers on foot patrol in their local area.

**Table 1a Perceived change in visibility of the local police on foot patrol<sup>1</sup>, 2009/10 and 2010/11 BCS**

Percentages	England and Wales, adults aged 16 and over, BCS	
	2009/10	2010/11
More often	33	31
About the same	34	37
Less often	9	10
Not noticed any change <sup>2</sup>	13	13
Never see any officers on foot patrol <sup>2</sup>	10	9
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>10,939</i>	<i>11,364</i>

1. Based on the question 'In the last two years have you noticed any change in how often you see police officers or Police Community Support Officers on foot patrol in your local area'.

2. These categories were spontaneously mentioned by the respondent.

### Awareness of neighbourhood policing teams

Since April 2008, every neighbourhood in England and Wales had a dedicated neighbourhood policing team. Neighbourhood Policing will continue to be supported by the Neighbourhood Policing Fund until April 2013, after which decisions on the funding and resourcing of neighbourhood policing will lie with democratically elected Police and Crime Commissioners<sup>4</sup> (PCCs), in consultation with Chief Constables.

The BCS has asked questions about the public's awareness of their local neighbourhood policing team since April 2009. First results for this question were published in [Flatley et al. \(2010\)](#) and showed that 39 per cent of people were aware of their local neighbourhood policing team in 2009/10. The 2010/11 BCS showed a statistically significant increase (to 44%) in people's awareness of neighbourhood policing teams (Table 1b).

**Table 1b Awareness of neighbourhood policing team, 2009/10 and 2010/11 BCS**

Percentages	England and Wales, adults aged 16 and over, BCS	
	2009/10	2010/11
Aware of neighbourhood policing team	39	44
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>10,862</i>	<i>11,292</i>

Previous analysis of the 2009/10 BCS (see [Scribbins et al., 2010](#)) showed that there was an association between how often a person saw officers on foot patrol in their local area and awareness of neighbourhood policing teams; those who saw officers more frequently were more likely to be aware of their neighbourhood team. However, as the 2010/11 BCS shows little change in how often people saw police officers or PCSOs on foot patrol compared with 2009/10, it would appear that the increase in awareness of neighbourhood policing teams between 2009/10 and 2010/11 may be driven by other factors (such as awareness of how to contact local officers; see section 1.4 for a discussion of contact with the police about local policing issues).

4 For information on the role of PCCs see: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/police/police-crime-commissioners/>



Previous analysis has also shown that awareness of neighbourhood policing teams varied with personal and household and area characteristics.<sup>5</sup> For example; older people were generally more likely to be aware of their neighbourhood team than younger people and people who rented their living accommodation privately were less likely to be aware than owner occupiers or social renters. The 2009/10 BCS also showed that levels of crime<sup>6</sup> and of deprivation<sup>7</sup> did not appear to affect people's awareness; people who lived in the most deprived areas and people who lived in high-crime areas were as likely to be aware of their neighbourhood team as those who lived in less deprived areas and low-crime areas respectively.

Analysis in [Scribbins et al.](#) (2010) also showed that there was an association between awareness of local neighbourhood policing teams and perceptions of police performance; people who were aware of their neighbourhood team were also more likely to be confident that the police and council were dealing with the ASB and crime issues in their area.

### 1.4 CONTACT WITH THE POLICE

Since April 2009, the BCS has also asked about other aspects of the neighbourhood policing model, including questions about the accessibility of the local police and about the public's contact with the police about local policing issues (see Box 1.1 for details of the questions asked). More general questions about people's contact with the police about other issues and about their experiences of being stopped by the police have been included in the survey since the 1991 BCS; long-term trends for these questions are presented in Figures 1.3 to 1.6.

#### Contact with the police about local policing issues

Overall, just under a third (32%) of adults reported having seen, read or heard details<sup>8</sup> about their local police, representing no statistically significant change compared with the 2009/10 BCS (31%). People had most commonly come across details of their local police in a police newsletter (29%), a council newsletter (25%), in a local newspaper (21%) or on a poster in a public place (15%). Again, this is a similar pattern to findings from the 2009/10 BCS (see Table 1.02).

Over half of people (57%) said that they knew how to contact the police about policing, crime or ASB (for example, to tell them what issues they should focus on), an increase from 54 per cent in 2009/10. However, there was no change in the number of people who had contacted the police about local issues in 2010/11 (10%) compared with 2009/10 (11%; the one percentage point decrease was not statistically significant). For those who had contacted the police, the most common way of doing so was by telephone (59%), while smaller numbers had contacted the police in a meeting or at an organised event (12%), in person (11%) or by visiting a police station (10%; Table 1.03).

Respondents were also asked about any other contact they had with the police about local policing issues. Similar to the 2009/10 BCS, the 2010/11 BCS showed that nine per cent of people said that the police had knocked on their door, while smaller proportions had approached an officer on patrol (4%), at an event in the local area or at an open public meeting (both 3%). About three-quarters of people (77%) had not had any contact with the police in any of these ways in the last 12 months.

One of the key elements of neighbourhood policing is engagement with residents to find out about the local priorities for tackling crime and ASB. The 2010/11 BCS showed that 30 per cent of people had

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5 A full breakdown of awareness of neighbourhood policing teams by personal, household and area characteristics using the 2009/10 BCS can be found in Tables 2.04 and 2.05 of [Scribbins et al.](#) (2010). Many of these characteristics will be closely associated (for example, marital status and age) so caution is needed in the interpretation of the effects of these different characteristics when viewed in isolation.

6 As indicated by the Crime Domain of the Index of Multiple Deprivation (see Section 7.1 of the [User Guide to Home Office Crime Statistics](#) for more information).

7 As indicated by the Employment Domain of the Index of Multiple Deprivation (see Section 7.1 of the [User Guide](#) for more information).

8 For example, the names of the officers on the team, how to contact them and details of meetings they were holding in the local area.

been asked what the problems were in the local area when they had been in contact with the police (this is similar to results for 2009/10 (29%); Table 1.04).

### **Box 1.1 BCS questions about contact with the local police**

Respondents are asked a series of questions about their contact with the local police, including;

*For respondents that said they had actually contacted the police in the local area in the last 12 months to let them know their views about policing, crime or ASB, such as to tell them what local issues they should focus on or to let them know they were not satisfied with what they were doing:*

#### **How did you FIRST contact them? (interviewer codes only one option):**

- By email/online
- Phone call
- In a meeting or organised event
- Approached/contacted officer in person
- At the police station
- Some other way

#### **During the last 12 months, have you had contact with police officers or Police Community Support Officers in your local area in any of the ways shown on this card? (respondents are asked to choose all options that applied from a card they were shown):**

- At an open public meeting
- At a surgery or drop-in centre
- At a gathering in street near here
- They knocked on my door
- Approached officers on foot/bike patrol
- At a group I go to
- At an event in the local area
- At a community centre
- Other

*For respondents that said they had seen, read or heard any details about their local police:*

#### **Where did you come across these details about your local police? (interviewer codes all options that applied):**

- Police newsletter
- Council newsletter
- Neighbourhood Watch newsletter
- Poster in public place (e.g. library, community centre, etc.)
- Local newspaper
- Local TV/radio
- Somewhere else

## Other contact with the police

The previous section discussed contact with the police about local policing issues and priorities. Since 1991, the BCS has also asked about other contact people may have had with the police, including contact initiated by themselves (for example, to report a crime; see Box 1.2 for details of the questions asked) as well as contact initiated by the police (for example, if they had been stopped by the police in a vehicle or on foot; see Boxes 1.3 and 1.4 for details of the questions asked). These questions do not refer specifically to the local area so will cover people's experiences of both their local police and of the police in other areas.

### **Box 1.2 BCS questions about other contact with the police**

Respondents are asked questions about their contact with the police (other than about local policing issues), including;

*For respondents who had contacted the police about issues other than local policing:*

**Looking at the reasons on this card, why have you yourself contacted the police in the last 12 months? (respondents asked to choose all that applied from a card they were shown):**

- To report a crime they, someone in their household, or of which someone else (not in their household) was the victim
- Because they were asked to do so
- To report a traffic accident or medical emergency
- To report a burglar alarm or a car alarm going off
- To report any other suspicious circumstances or persons
- To report any type of disturbance, noise or nuisance (other than alarms going off)
- To report a missing person
- To report they had lost or found something (including animals)
- To tell them that their house was going to be empty
- To report any other type of problem or difficulty
- To ask for directions or the time
- To ask for or to give them any other sort of advice or information
- Just for a social chat

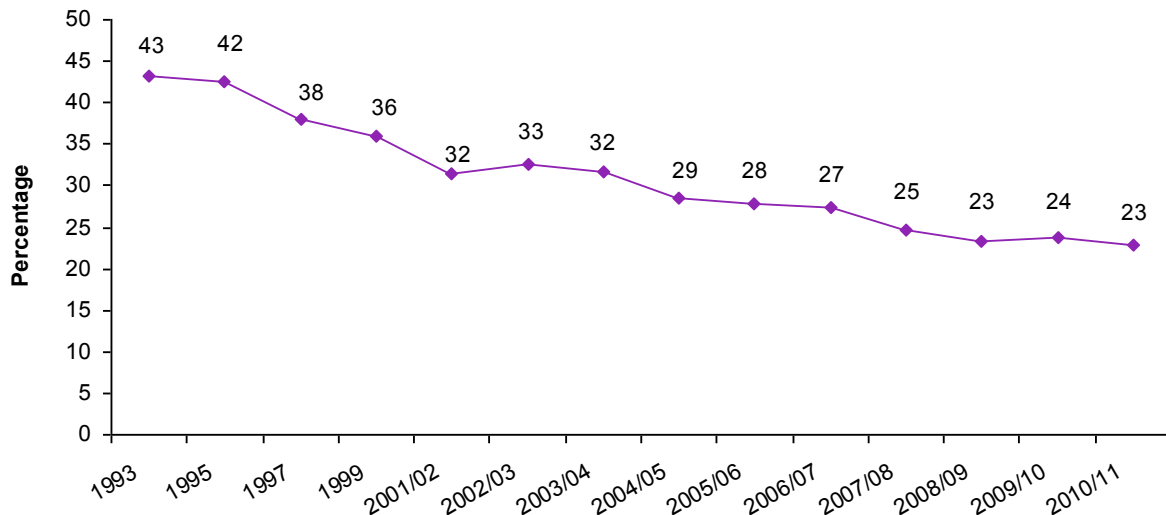
### ***Respondent-initiated contact with the police***

The BCS asks respondents about any general contact they had made with police officers in the last 12 months and about their reasons for doing so. Around a quarter of people (23%) had made contact with the police in the last 12 months; of those people this was most commonly to report a personal or household crime (37%) or a crime of which someone else was the victim (15%), to report any other disturbance (13%) or other suspicious circumstances or persons (11%; Table 1.05). This is a similar pattern to findings from the 2009/10 BCS.

Longer-term trends show a decrease in the number of people contacting the police for one of the reasons outlined in Box 1.2; from 43 per cent in 1993 to 23 per cent in 2010/11. Trends in contact with the police in more recent years (since 2007/08) have levelled (see Figure 1.3).

It is not possible to be certain of the reasons for the fall in the numbers of people contacting the police. It is likely to be a result of a number of factors including changes in police deployment, policing methods and, of course, reductions in the actual level of crime.<sup>9</sup> For example, the 2010/11 BCS estimated crime to be 50 per cent lower than the peak in 1995, representing nearly 10 million fewer crimes. The possibility that the fall in people contacting the police could be due to decreased reporting rates<sup>10</sup> by victims of crime has been discounted as these have shown little variation over time (see [Flatley et al.](#), 2011).

**Figure 1.3 Trends in respondent-initiated contact with the police, 1993 to 2010/11 BCS**



1. Questions about respondent-initiated contact with the police were included in the 1991 BCS but were not asked in a way that is comparable with those included in later survey years and data are not presented here.
2. For an explanation of year-labels, see 'Conventions used in figures and tables' at the start of this volume.

When asked about their overall level of satisfaction<sup>11</sup> with the way that the police handled the matter, people generally reported high levels of satisfaction; almost eight out of ten people said that they were very (50%) or fairly (28%) satisfied, while the remainder were a bit (14%) or very (9%) dissatisfied (Table 1.05).

### ***Police-initiated contact with the respondent***

The BCS also asks about people's experiences of police-initiated contact, including their experiences of being stopped by the police (in a vehicle or on foot)<sup>12</sup> as well as contact made by the police for any other reason (see Boxes 1.3 and 1.4 for details of the questions asked).

<sup>9</sup> Since 1993, the BCS has consistently shown that people had most commonly contacted the police to report a crime or disturbance.

<sup>10</sup> For information about reporting rates in the BCS, see Section 4 of the [User Guide](#) and for the most recent published figures, see [Flatley et al.](#) (2011).

<sup>11</sup> Previous analysis of the 2008/09 BCS showed that there was an association between levels of satisfaction with police contact and confidence in the police; agreement that 'the police and local council were dealing with anti-social behaviour and crime in the local area' was influenced by the level of satisfaction with police contact rather than having had contact alone (see [Walker et al.](#) (2009) for further details).

<sup>12</sup> For statistics on stops and searches under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE) see [Povey et al.](#) (2011).

**Box 1.3 BCS questions about experiences of being stopped by the police in a vehicle or on foot**

Respondents are asked a series of questions about their experiences of being stopped by the police in a vehicle or on foot<sup>1</sup>, including:

*For those who had been stopped in a vehicle in the last 12 months and the police gave a reason for stopping them:*

**What was the reason they gave? (interviewer codes all options that applied):**

- Speeding
- Suspected drink driving
- Some other driver-related behaviour
- Some vehicle defect (e.g. faulty brake lights, tyres, etc.)
- Parking offence
- Other motoring/traffic offence
- To check car ownership
- Routine check (e.g. checking tax disk)
- Some other (non-motoring/non-vehicle) offence
- Police had received information (tip-off) about an offence
- Matched suspect description for a crime
- Case of mistaken identity
- In vicinity of a crime
- Some matter other than an offence

*For those who had been stopped on foot in the last 12 months and the police gave a reason for stopping them:*

**What was the reason they gave? (interviewer codes all options that applied):**

- Police had received information (tip-off) about an offence
- Matched suspect description for a crime
- Case of mistaken identity
- Respondent seen in vicinity of a crime
- To ask whether respondent had witnessed anything
- Said respondent looked suspicious / was acting suspiciously
- Said respondent was acting disorderly / was drunk and disorderly / making a nuisance
- Just making general enquiries / asking for information / asking for directions
- Some other matter than an offence

<sup>1</sup> Questions relating to respondent's experiences of being stopped in a vehicle or on foot were removed from the 2011/12 BCS.

### Box 1.3 BCS questions about experiences of being stopped by the police in a vehicle or on foot (cont'd)

*For those who had either been stopped in a vehicle or on foot in the last 12 months:*

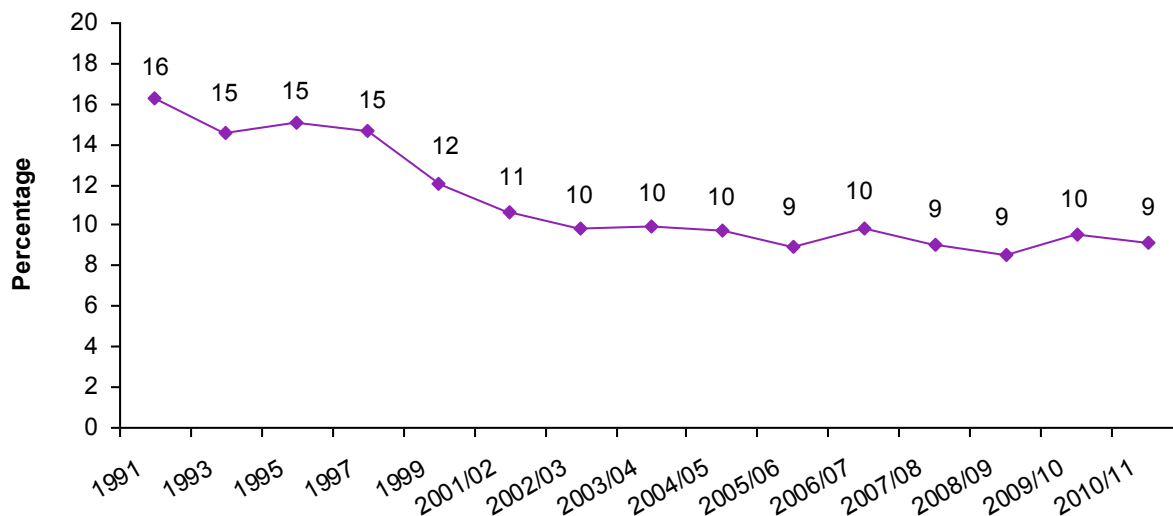
**[Thinking just about the last time you were stopped] did the police do any of the things on this card? (respondents are asked to choose all options that applied from a card they were shown):**

- Gave an on-the-spot warning about an offence committed
- Said they would/might issue a summons
- Made an arrest
- Gave a copy of form stating reasons for stop/stop and search
- Just asked questions
- Took name and address (stopped on foot only)
- Carried out a breath test (stopped in vehicle only)
- Issued a Fixed Penalty Notice for an offence (stopped in vehicle only)
- Told to take documents to the police station (stopped in vehicle only)
- Gave a warning about a vehicle fault (stopped in vehicle only)
- Issued a Vehicle Defect Rectification Notice (stopped in vehicle only)
- Gave some advice about vehicle maintenance (stopped in vehicle only)
- Gave some advice about driving (stopped in vehicle only)
- Other action

The 2010/11 BCS showed that around one in ten people (9%) had been in a car or motorcycle which was approached or stopped by the police in the last 12 months. This represents no statistically significant change compared with the 2009/10 BCS (10%). Most people who had been stopped had only been so once (74%); smaller numbers had been stopped either twice (16%) or three times or more (9%). In the majority of cases where the respondent had been stopped in a vehicle the respondent was given a reason for being stopped (94%). These were most commonly so that the police could carry out routine checks on the vehicle or to check car ownership (32%), because the respondent was suspected of speeding (14%) or because of some vehicle defect (13%; Table 1.06).

Figure 1.4 shows long-term trends for people's experiences of being stopped by the police whilst in a vehicle. The likelihood of being stopped in a vehicle fell by six percentage points between the 1991 BCS and the 2002/03 (from 16% to 10%) and has remained flat (at between 9% and 10%) between 2002/03 and 2010/11. This decrease is likely to be due to a complex range of factors, including changes in police tactics, police numbers and the number of vehicles on the roads.

**Figure 1.4 Trends in police-initiated contact: respondent in a vehicle stopped by the police, 1991 to 2010/11 BCS**

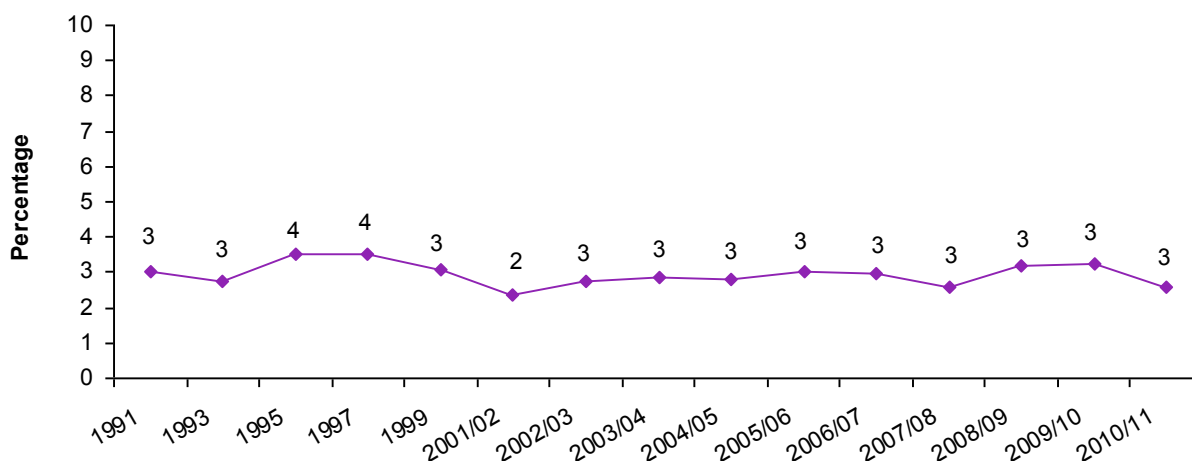


1. For an explanation of year-labels, see 'Conventions used in figures and tables' at the start of this volume.

Respondents who had been stopped by the police in a vehicle in the last 12 months were asked what actions the police took as a result of stopping them. The most common action taken was the police just asking questions, mentioned by almost half of those who had been stopped (46%). A smaller number of people who had been stopped were given an on-the-spot warning, were told that the police might or would issue a summons or the police made an arrest (13%) or were issued a fixed penalty notice (also 13%).

A much smaller proportion of people (3%) had been stopped and asked questions by the police when they were on foot in the last 12 months. There has been very little variation in the numbers of people stopped by the police whilst on foot since the 1991 BCS (see Table 1.07 and Figure 1.5).

**Figure 1.5 Trends in police-initiated contact: respondent on foot stopped by the police, 1991 to 2010/11 BCS**



1. For an explanation of year-labels, see 'Conventions used in figures and tables' at the start of this volume.

When asked about their overall level of satisfaction with the way that the police handled the matter, people who had been stopped in a vehicle were generally positive; almost eight out of ten people said that they were very (44%) or fairly (35%) satisfied, while the remainder said they were either a bit (9%)

or very (12%) dissatisfied (Table 1.06). The high levels of satisfaction<sup>13</sup> among those who had been stopped in a vehicle may be explained by the mainly routine reasons the police gave for stopping them (for example, to carry out routine checks). In only a small number of cases did the police take any serious action, such as making an arrest.

Only a small number of respondents in the 2010/11 BCS had been stopped whilst on foot (113) and as a result, figures for questions about reasons for being stopped on foot, police actions and the respondent's satisfaction with how the police handled the matter are not presented here.

Previous research has shown that the likelihood of being stopped by the police (either in a vehicle or while on foot) varied by personal and household and area characteristics.<sup>14</sup> For example, [Nicholas et al.](#) (2008) showed that young men aged 16 to 24 were more likely to be stopped in a vehicle and on foot, compared with the average for England and Wales.

#### *Experience of being searched by the police*

Respondents who had been stopped by the police in the last 12 months were also asked whether the police had searched the vehicle or anyone in it (if stopped in a car or on a motorcycle) or whether they, anyone with them or any bags or cases were searched (if stopped on foot). Of those who had been stopped in a vehicle, eight per cent had also been searched or the vehicle had been searched. This represents less than one per cent of the general population (i.e. including those who had not been stopped in the last year and therefore not asked the question). Of those who had been stopped on foot<sup>15</sup>, 30 per cent had also been searched (Table 1c, below). Again, this represents less than one per cent of the general population once those who had not been stopped have been taken into account.

The results of other questions relating to the respondent's experience of being searched (for example, who or what was searched and whether a reason was given for the search) are not presented here due to the small numbers of people who had been searched in the last 12 months.

**Table 1c Whether the police searched respondent or anyone with respondent, 2009/10 and 2010/11 BCS**

Percentages	England and Wales, adults aged 16 and over, BCS			
	In vehicle		On foot	
	2009/10	2010/11 <sup>1</sup>	2009/10	2010/11 <sup>1</sup>
Searched <sup>2</sup>	10	8	27	30
<i>Unweighted base</i> <sup>3</sup>	902	452	254	113

1. The sample size for these questions was reduced by half between the 2009/10 and 2010/11 BCS.

2. Includes police looking into any bags or cases.

3. Unweighted base is all respondents stopped in last year.

13 It is possible that satisfaction with the police handling of the matter varied according to why the respondent was stopped; however, the relatively small numbers of people who had been stopped in a vehicle do not allow for robust breakdowns of satisfaction by reasons for being stopped.

14 The sample size for these questions in 2010/11 was reduced from a quarter to an eighth compared with the 2009/10 BCS, preventing any analysis of contact with the police by personal, household and area characteristics. However, a breakdown of contact with the police by personal, household and area characteristics using the 2006/07 BCS can be found in Table 4.4 of [Nicholas et al.](#) (2008). Many of these characteristics will be closely associated (for example, marital status and age) so caution is needed in the interpretation of the effects of these different characteristics when viewed in isolation.

15 Only a small number of respondents in the 2010/11 BCS had been stopped whilst on foot (113) and as a result, figures for whether they had been searched should be treated with caution.



*Other police-initiated contact with the respondent*

Respondents were also asked whether the police had made contact with them in the last 12 months, other than to stop them when in a vehicle or on foot. Around one in ten (11%) people had been contacted by the police in the last 12 months, and for half of these people (53%) the reason was to ask the respondent for information in connection to a crime. A smaller number of people had been contacted by the police as part of an investigation into any other noise or disturbance or about an accident or traffic offence. These findings are very similar to the 2009/10 BCS (Table 1.08).

**Box 1.4 BCS questions about other police-initiated contact with the respondent**

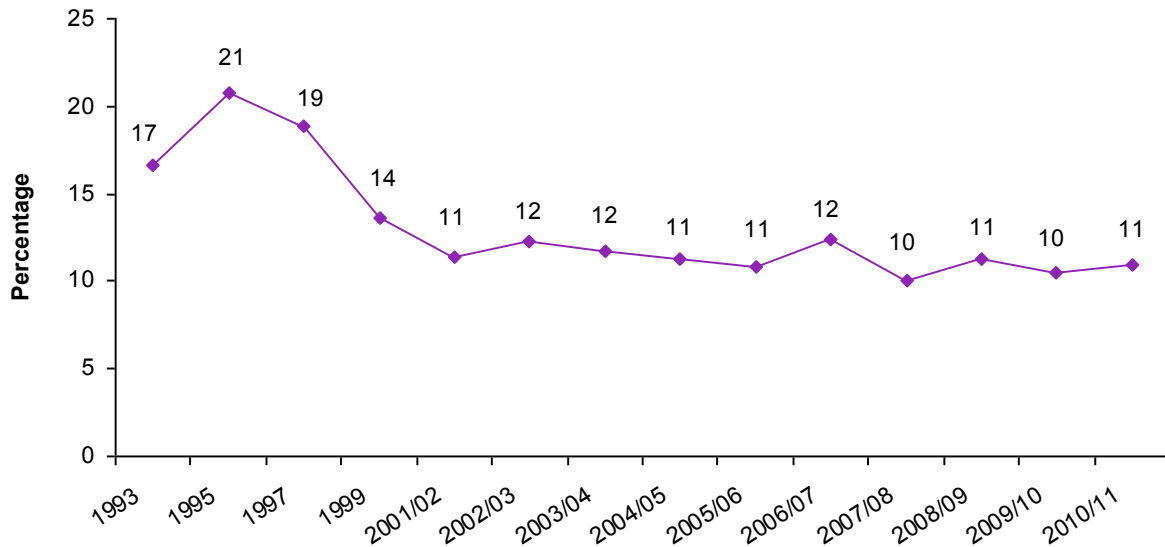
Respondents are asked questions about other contact initiated by the police, including;

*For respondents who had been contacted by the police:*

**Looking at the reasons on this card, why have the police contacted you in the last 12 months?**

- To return missing property or an animal
- To deal with a ringing burglar alarm
- To investigate another noise or disturbance
- To ask for information in connection with a crime that had been committed
- To investigate an accident or traffic offence in which you were involved
- To search your house
- To make an arrest
- To ask you to move on
- For any other reason

Longer-term trends for this question show a decrease in the number of people who were contacted by the police for one of the 'other' reasons shown in Box 1.4; from 17 per cent in 1993 to 11 per cent in the 2010/11 BCS (see Figure 1.6) due mainly to a sharp fall between the 1995 BCS and 2001/02 BCS, after which the trend has remained relatively flat. The fall in police-initiated contact is likely to be a result of a combination of factors, such as changes in police deployment, policing methods and reductions in levels of BCS crime.

**Figure 1.6 Trends in police-initiated contact: other reasons, 1993 to 2010/11 BCS**

1. Questions about police-initiated contact with the police for other reasons were included in the 1991 BCS but were not asked in a way that is comparable with those included in later survey years and data are not presented here.
2. For an explanation of year-labels, see 'Conventions used in figures and tables' at the start of this volume.

In cases where the police had made contact with the respondent for one of these other reasons, levels of satisfaction with the way that the police handled the matter were generally high; over eight out of ten people said that they were very (48%) or fairly (34%) satisfied, while the remainder said that they were a bit (9%) or very (8%) dissatisfied (Table 1.08).

### Box 1.5 Children's contact with the local police

Since January 2009 the BCS has asked children aged 10 to 15 resident in households in England and Wales about their experience of crime in the previous 12 months (see [Chaplin et al.](#), 2011 for experimental statistics on the victimisation of children based on the 2010/11 BCS). As well as asking children about their experience of crime, other modules of questions were randomly allocated to sub-samples. A third of the overall sample (about 1,250<sup>1</sup>) was asked questions about their experiences of and contact with the local police.

First results for these questions, based on the 2009/10 BCS, were published in [Scribbins et al.](#) (2011). This box updates headline figures for these questions (for data, see Tables 1.09 to 1.13). In general, these figures represent a similar picture compared with the 2009/10 BCS. Where relevant, comparisons are made between the experiences of children and of adult respondents to the BCS.

For more information on the BCS extension to 10 to 15 year olds, see Chapter 2 of the [User Guide to Home Office Crime Statistics](#).

#### Visibility of the local police:

The 2010/11 BCS showed that 71 per cent of children had seen a police officer or PCSO on foot patrol in their local area in the last 12 months (Table 1.09). This is similar to the proportion of adults who had seen an officer on foot patrol in the local area (75%; although for adults no time period was specified in the question). Thirty-eight per cent of children said they had seen an officer on foot patrol at least once a week (again, similar to adults; 39%).

<sup>1</sup> This sample size is large enough to provide robust national estimates for questions asked of the whole sub-sample but caution should be used when interpreting responses to questions asked of further sub-samples as these are sometimes based on a low number of cases.

**Box 1.5 Children's contact with the local police (cont'd)**

Children were also asked about whether they had seen officers in or around their school and were more likely to say that they had seen a police officer or PCSO in this environment in the last 12 months (86%). The frequency with which children saw an officer in or around school was similar to how often they saw the police in the local area; 40 per cent had seen an officer at least once a week (Table 1.10).

As an indication of the extent to which the police were engaging with children in their local communities, children were asked how familiar they were with police officers and PCSOs in their local area. Just under half (46%) of children said that they knew an officer, with 23 per cent knowing officers by both name and sight. The remaining 54 per cent did not know any of the police officers or PCSOs in the local area (Table 1.11).

**Contact with the local police:**

Around a quarter of children (24%) aged 10 to 15 had had contact with the police in the last 12 months. Of those who had contact with the police, about half (53%) said that they had been contacted or approached by the police, 28 per cent had contacted or approached the police themselves and for 19 per cent it had varied at different times (Table 1.12).

**Table 1.01 Visibility of local police on foot patrol, 2006/07 to 2010/11 BCS**

Percentages	England and Wales, adults aged 16 and over, BCS					Statistically significant change, 2006/07 to 2010/11	Statistically significant change, 2009/10 to 2010/11
	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11		
<b>How often respondent saw a police officer/PCSO<sup>1</sup> on foot patrol</b>							
At least once a month	38	45	48	54	55	**	
More than once a day	2	2	3	3	4	**	**
About once a day	6	7	8	10	10	**	
About once a week	18	21	22	25	25	**	
About once a month	13	15	15	15	16	**	**
Less than once a month	22	21	21	19	19	**	
Never	40	34	31	27	25	**	**
<i>Unweighted base</i>	10,744	11,598	11,436	11,009	11,462		

1. Police Community Support Officer.

**Table 1.02 Knowledge about local police, 2009/10 and 2010/11 BCS**

Percentages	England and Wales, adults aged 16 and over, BCS	
	2009/10	2010/11
<b>Respondent had seen, read or heard details of local police</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>32</b>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>11,031</i>	<i>11,501</i>
<b>Where respondent had come across details of local police</b>		
Police newsletter	26	29
Council newsletter	26	25
Local newspaper	25	21
Poster in public place	13	15
Neighbourhood Watch newsletter	11	11
Other newsletters/flyers <sup>1</sup>	5	6
Directly from the police <sup>2</sup>	2	2
At a local meeting/group <sup>3</sup>	2	1
Local TV/radio	0	1
Somewhere else	6	6
<i>Unweighted base (respondent had come across details of local police)<sup>4</sup></i>	<i>3,625</i>	<i>3,872</i>

1. Coded from open response post-interview. Includes parish council newsletter, Resident's Association newsletter, etc.

2. Coded from open response post-interview. Includes details from a police officer, PCSO, at a police station, from a police website, etc.

3. Coded from open response post-interview. Includes parish council meeting, Resident's Association or tenant's group, Neighbourhood Watch group, etc.

4. Figures here are based on respondents who had seen, read or heard details of the local police.

**Table 1.03 Contact with the police about local issues, 2009/10 and 2010/11 BCS**

Percentages	England and Wales, adults aged 16 and over, BCS	
	2009/10	2010/11
<b>Respondent knew how to contact the police about policing, crime or anti-social behaviour<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>54</b>	<b>57</b>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	11,025	11,501
<b>Respondent contacted the police about local issues</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>10</b>
<i>Unweighted base (respondent knew how to contact police about local issues)<sup>2</sup></i>	6,238	6,816
<b>How first contacted police about local issues</b>		
By phone	54	59
In a meeting/organised event	13	12
In person	13	11
At a police station	9	10
By email/online	7	4
Some other way	4	4
<i>Unweighted base (respondent had contacted police about local issues)<sup>3</sup></i>	703	683

1. For example, to tell the police what local issues they should focus on or to let them know the respondent was not satisfied.

2. Figures here are based on respondents who knew how to contact the local police about policing, crime or anti-social behaviour.

3. Figures here are based on respondents who had contacted the local police about policing, crime or anti-social behaviour.

**Table 1.04 Other contact with the police about local issues, 2009/10 and 2010/11 BCS**

Percentages	England and Wales, adults aged 16 and over, BCS	
	2009/10	2010/11
Police knocked on respondent's door	9	9
Approached officer on patrol	4	4
At an event in the local area	3	3
At an open public meeting	3	3
At a local gathering	2	2
At a community centre	1	1
At a group respondent attends	1	1
In the course of respondent's job <sup>1</sup>	1	1
At a surgery/drop-in meeting	1	1
Contacted respondent by phone <sup>1</sup>	0	0
Other	4	4
No contact	76	77
<i>Unweighted base</i>	11,043	11,517
<b>Whether respondent was asked about problems in local area</b>		
Yes	29	30
No	71	70
<i>Unweighted base (respondent had contact with police in last 12 months)<sup>2</sup></i>	2,507	2,612

1. Coded from open response post-interview.

2. Figures here are based on respondents who had contact with the local police in the last 12 months in one of the ways outlined in this table.

**Table 1.05 Public-initiated contact with the police, 2009/10 and 2010/11 BCS**

Percentages	England and Wales, adults aged 16 and over, BCS	
	2009/10	2010/11
<b>Respondent contacted the police in the last 12 months<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>24</b>	<b>23</b>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	11,053	11,522
<b>Nature of contact with the police</b>		
To report a personal or household crime	35	37
To report a crime of which someone else was the victim	12	15
To report any other disturbance	13	13
To report any other suspicious circumstances/persons	13	11
To report any other type of problem	8	9
To report a traffic accident/medical emergency	9	8
To ask for any other sort of advice/information	5	5
Told/asked to do so <sup>2</sup>	4	5
For a social chat	4	4
To report found property (including animals)	4	4
To report lost property (including animals)	4	3
To report a missing person	2	2
To ask for directions or the time	3	2
To report a burglar alarm ringing	2	2
To tell them your home was going to be empty	0	0
To report a car alarm going off	1	0
To give them any other sort of information	9	9
<i>Unweighted base (respondent had contact with police in last 12 months)<sup>3</sup></i>	2,608	2,594
<b>Satisfaction with the way police handled the matter</b>		
Very satisfied	48	50
Fairly satisfied	24	28
A bit dissatisfied	16	14
Very dissatisfied	12	9
<i>Unweighted base (respondent had contact with police in last 12 months)<sup>4</sup></i>	1,803	1,830

1. For one of the reasons shown in this table.

2. For example, to show documents or to give a statement.

3. Figures here are based on respondents who had contact with the local police in the last 12 months for one of the reasons outlined in this table.

4. Excluding those who had contact because they were told/asked to do so, to ask directions or the time, for a social chat and not already mentioned in the victimisation module of the BCS.

**Table 1.06 Police-initiated contact: respondent in vehicle stopped by police, 2009/10 and 2010/11 BCS**

Percentages	England and Wales, adults aged 16 and over, BCS	
	2009/10	2010/11 <sup>1</sup>
<b>Respondent in vehicle stopped by the police in the last 12 months</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	11,051	5,743
<b>How many times respondent stopped by the police in last 12 months</b>		
Once	75	74
Twice	16	16
Three times or more	9	9
<b>Respondent given reason for being stopped</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>94</b>
<b>Reason given for stopping respondent</b>		
Routine check/to check car ownership	29	32
Speeding	15	14
Some vehicle defect	10	13
Other motoring/traffic/parking offence	13	11
Some other driver-related behaviour	11	10
Suspected drink driving	7	8
Some other (non motoring/non vehicle) offence	5	5
Some matter other than an offence	4	4
Other reason <sup>2</sup>	4	3
<b>Police action</b>		
Just asked questions	44	46
Gave on-the-spot warning/said would/might issue summons/made an arrest	18	13
Issued a fixed penalty notice	10	13
Carried out a breath test	14	13
Gave warning about a vehicle fault/issued Vehicle Defect Rectification Notice/gave advice about vehicle maintenance	10	9
Gave respondent some advice about driving	12	9
Told respondent to take documents to police station	7	8
Other reason <sup>3</sup>	8	7
None of these	7	9
<b>Satisfaction with the way police handled the matter</b>		
Very satisfied	42	44
Fairly satisfied	37	35
A bit dissatisfied	9	9
Very dissatisfied	12	12
<i>Unweighted base (respondent stopped by police in last 12 months)<sup>4</sup></i>	901	453

1. The sample size for these questions was reduced by half between the 2009/10 and 2010/11 BCS.

2. Includes cases of mistaken identity, suspected drink driving, the respondent being in the vicinity of a crime and the respondent matching a suspect description for a crime.

3. Includes giving a copy of form stating reasons for stop/stop and search.

4. Unweighted base is for how many times the respondent was stopped by the police in the last 12 months. The bases for other measures will be similar.



**Table 1.07 Police-initiated contact: respondent on foot stopped by police, 2009/10 and 2010/11 BCS**

Percentages	England and Wales, adults aged 16 and over, BCS	
	2009/10	2010/11 <sup>1</sup>
<b>Respondent on foot stopped by the police in the last 12 months</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>11,048</i>	<i>5,747</i>

1. The sample size for these questions was reduced by half between the 2009/10 and 2010/11 BCS.

**Table 1.08 Police-initiated contact: other, 2009/10 and 2010/11 BCS**

Percentages	England and Wales, adults aged 16 and over, BCS	
	2009/10	2010/11
<b>Respondent contacted by the police in the last 12 months</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>11,053</i>	<i>11,516</i>
<b>Reason given for contacting respondent</b>		
To ask for information in connection with a crime	48	53
To investigate other noise or disturbance	11	11
To investigate an accident or traffic offence	7	8
To make an arrest	3	3
To deal with ringing burglar alarm	3	2
To ask you to move on	3	3
To return missing property or an animal	2	2
To search your house	2	3
Other reason	27	26
<i>Unweighted base (police contacted respondent in the last 12 months)<sup>1</sup></i>	<i>1,090</i>	<i>1,212</i>
<b>Satisfaction with the way police handled the matter</b>		
Very satisfied	46	48
Fairly satisfied	38	34
A bit dissatisfied	9	9
Very dissatisfied	8	8
<i>Unweighted base (respondent had contact with police in last 12 months)<sup>2</sup></i>	<i>1,031</i>	<i>1,163</i>

1. Figures here are based on respondents who were contacted by the police in the last 12 months.

2. Excluding those who were contacted by the police to return missing property or an animal, to deal with a ringing burglar alarm or for another reason.

**Table 1.09 Awareness of local police on foot patrol amongst children aged 10 to 15, 2009/10 and 2010/11 BCS**

Percentages	England and Wales, children aged 10 to 15, BCS	
	2009/10	2010/11
<b>Child saw police officers/PCSOs<sup>1</sup> on foot patrol<sup>2</sup> in local area in last 12 months</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>71</b>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	1,206	1,263
<b>How often child saw police officers/PCSOs<sup>1</sup> on foot patrol<sup>2</sup> in local area in last 12 months</b>		
At least once a month	57	57
More than once a day	3	3
About once a day	7	10
About once a week	26	26
About once a month	21	18
Less than once a month	11	14
Never	32	30
<i>Unweighted base</i>	1,195	1,245

1. Police Community Support Officer.

2. Includes seeing an officer on a bicycle in the local area.

**Table 1.10 Awareness of local police in/around school premises amongst children aged 10 to 15, 2009/10 and 2010/11 BCS**

Percentages	England and Wales, children aged 10 to 15, BCS	
	2009/10	2010/11
<b>Whether child saw police officers/PCSOs<sup>1</sup> in/around school premises in last 12 months<sup>2</sup></b>		
Seen officers in/around school premises	83	86
<i>In school</i>	61	57
<i>In the areas around school</i>	51	54
Not seen officers in/around school premises	17	14
<i>Unweighted base</i>	1,194	1,261
<b>How often child saw police officers/PCSOs<sup>1</sup> in/around school premises in last 12 months</b>		
At least once a month	62	63
More than once a day	5	5
About once a day	9	11
About once a week	24	24
About once a month	23	23
Less than once a month	20	23
Never	17	14
<i>Unweighted base</i>	1,184	1,246

1. Police Community Support Officer.

2. Totals add to more than 100 per cent as more than one response possible.

**Table 1.11 Familiarity of local police amongst children aged 10 to 15, 2009/10 and 2010/11 BCS**

Percentages	England and Wales, children aged 10 to 15, BCS	
	2009/10	2010/11
Child knows any local police officers/PCSOs <sup>1</sup>	46	46
<i>Both by name and sight</i>	20	23
<i>By name only</i>	5	5
<i>By sight only</i>	21	19
Child does not know any local police officers/PCSOs <sup>1</sup>	54	54
<i>Unweighted base</i>	1,206	1,266

1. Police Community Support Officer.

**Table 1.12 Contact with the police amongst children aged 10 to 15, 2009/10 and 2010/11 BCS**

Percentages	England and Wales, children aged 10 to 15, BCS	
	2009/10	2010/11
<b>Child had contact with a police officer/PCSOs<sup>1</sup> in last 12 months</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	1,211	1,270
<b>Contact initiated by</b>		
Child contacted/approached police	30	28
Police contacted/approached respondent	52	53
Varied at different times	18	19
<i>Unweighted base</i>	277	284

1. Police Community Support Officer.

**Table 1.13 Satisfaction with police contact amongst children aged 10 to 15, 2009/10 and 2010/11 BCS**

Percentages	England and Wales, children aged 10 to 15, BCS	
	2009/10	2010/11
<b>Child-initiated contact</b>		
Satisfied	79	83
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	12	9
Dissatisfied	10	8
<b>Change in opinion based on contact (child-initiated)</b>		
More positive	45	43
Less positive	8	7
Did not change your opinion of the police	48	50
<i>Unweighted base</i> <sup>1</sup>	130	132
<b>Police-initiated contact</b>		
Satisfied	77	81
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	12	9
Dissatisfied	11	10
<b>Change in opinion based on contact (police-initiated)</b>		
More positive	35	35
Less positive	9	8
Did not change your opinion of the police	57	57
<i>Unweighted base</i> <sup>2</sup>	193	201

1. Unweighted base refers to satisfaction with child-initiated contact. Bases for change in opinion based on contact will be similar.

2. Unweighted base refers to satisfaction with police-initiated contact. Bases for change in opinion based on contact will be similar.

## 2 Public confidence in the authorities tackling anti-social behaviour and awareness of Community Payback

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*Ivy Lau and Jacqueline Hoare*

### 2.1 SUMMARY

This chapter presents further analysis of the 2010/11 British Crime Survey (BCS), focusing on public attitudes about the effectiveness of authorities in tackling anti-social behaviour (ASB) and perceptions of Community Payback.

#### ***Public confidence in authorities tackling ASB***

The 2010/11 BCS asked respondents how confident they were that the authorities in their local area were effective at tackling ASB. The analysis in this chapter is focused solely on people who perceived at least one of the following five behaviours to be a problem in their local area: noisy neighbours, teenagers hanging around, vandalism and graffiti, people using or dealing drugs, and people being drunk or rowdy (that is, 48% of respondents).

- Of people who perceived at least one of the five elements of ASB as a problem in the local area, half (52%) were confident that the authorities were effective at reducing ASB; two in five (41%) were confident that the authorities were effective in bringing ASB offenders to justice; and a third (34%) felt well informed about what was being done to tackle ASB. There was little variation in these perceptions according to personal, household or area characteristics.
- However, as might be expected, perceptions of the effectiveness of the authorities in tackling ASB were associated with other measures of confidence in crime and policing-related issues. For example, those who thought the police in the local area were doing a good or excellent job were twice as likely to be confident in the effectiveness of the authorities at reducing ASB compared with those who thought the police were doing a fair or poor job (70% and 35% respectively).
- The number of anti-social behaviours perceived as a problem was associated with perceptions of the effectiveness of the authorities. For example, people who perceived just one of the five anti-social behaviours as a problem in their area were twice as likely to feel confident that the authorities were effective at bringing ASB offenders to justice as those who perceived all five behaviours as a problem (50% and 27% respectively).

#### ***Awareness and experience of seeing Community Payback***

- The proportion of respondents that had heard of Community Payback was high (85%), but levels of awareness of activities in the local area were much lower: only 15 per cent of adults had personally seen offenders carrying out Community Payback work in the local area in the last 12 months.
- Overall two-thirds of adults (67%) felt that Community Payback was a very or fairly effective form of punishment. Only a small proportion of people thought it was not at all effective (5%).
- There was an inverse relationship between awareness of Community Payback and confidence in the criminal justice system (CJS) as a whole: those who had heard about, were aware of, or had personally seen Community Payback were less confident in the effectiveness of the CJS. However, caution is needed in the interpretation of this result when viewed in isolation as it is likely that other factors may be contributing to this pattern.

## 2.2 INTRODUCTION

Anti-social behaviour is defined by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 as acting in ‘a manner that caused or was likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household’. Terms such as ‘nuisance’ and ‘disorder’ are also used to describe some of this behaviour.<sup>1</sup> Dealing with ASB continues to be a priority for the Government<sup>2</sup>; action to tackle ASB may be initiated by a number of agencies, including the police, local councils and registered social landlords.

The term ‘anti-social behaviour’ as used in the British Crime Survey (BCS) covers a range of behaviours and outcomes from criminal behaviour (such as damage to property) to general nuisance, all of which may impinge on the quality of people’s lives. The BCS has included questions on perceptions of ASB for a number of years including questions about how much of a problem a range of different types of ASB are perceived to be in the local area.<sup>3</sup> In 2010/11, questions were added to the BCS to evaluate people’s perceptions of the effectiveness of agencies in tackling ASB; these questions are a focus of this chapter.

This chapter also looks at public perceptions of Community Payback (part of the adult non-custodial sentence<sup>4</sup> available to courts). Community Payback is one possible element of a community order which involves offenders doing compulsory unpaid work for the benefit of the community. Courts are given the power to sentence offenders to undertake between 40 and 300 hours of Community Payback. This type of sentence is available only where the offence is serious enough to warrant a community sentence, but not so serious that custody is unavoidable.

Unpaid work of this kind was previously known as ‘community service’ or ‘community punishment’ but was relabelled as Community Payback in 2005 to increase public awareness. Following recommendations in the 2008 review by Louise Casey ‘Engaging Communities in Fighting Crime’<sup>5</sup>, this type of activity has been consistently referred to as Community Payback (the new term was not always used following its introduction in 2005). In addition, Casey recommended that such schemes should be made more visible to the members of the public. In accepting these recommendations, the previous administration promoted the wearing of high-visibility orange jackets with ‘Community Payback’ insignia displayed on the front and back by those engaged in such work. Typically, local probation trusts invite members of the public to put forward ideas for work that offenders can carry out in their neighbourhoods. Projects involve activities that may not otherwise be carried out, such as removing graffiti and working on environmental projects.

## 2.3 PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN THE AUTHORITIES TACKLING ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

The 2010/11 BCS asked respondents how confident they were that the authorities in their area were effective at reducing ASB and in bringing to justice those who carry out ASB.<sup>6</sup> These questions were asked after respondents were given a reminder about the types of problems that might be considered as ASB and had been mentioned earlier in the interview (see Box 2.1).

The question on whether people were confident in the authorities’ effectiveness at reducing ASB was asked of all respondents in the sub-sample, irrespective of whether respondents had answered

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1 <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100407205403/asb.homeoffice.gov.uk/article.aspx?id=9066>

2 The 2011-2015 Home Office business plan (<http://www.number10.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/HO-Business-Plan1.pdf>) states that part of the Home Office vision is to ‘enable the police and local communities to step up the fight against crime and anti-social behaviour.’

3 See Section 6.3 of the [User Guide to Home Office Crime Statistics](#) for more information on the BCS measure of perceived anti-social behaviour.

4 The range of requirements available as part of a community order are: compulsory (unpaid) work; participation in activities; programmes aimed at changing offending behaviour; prohibition from certain activities; curfew; exclusion from certain areas; residence requirement; mental health treatment; drug treatment and testing; alcohol treatment; supervision; attendance centre requirement.

5 <http://www.justice.gov.uk/publications/docs/community-payback-research.pdf>

6 These questions are asked of a half sample from the 2010/11 BCS.

previously that they perceived anti-social behaviour to be a problem in their local area or not. However, the analysis on public confidence in the authorities tackling ASB in this chapter is restricted to respondents who perceived one or more of the five anti-social behaviours listed in the preamble to the first question relating to confidence in the authorities as a problem (see Box 2.1).

### **Box 2.1 BCS questions about tackling anti-social behaviour**

Respondents were asked a series of questions about tackling anti-social behaviour, including:

Earlier I asked you about problems in your local area such as noisy neighbours, teenagers hanging around, vandalism and graffiti, people using or dealing drugs and people being drunk or rowdy.

**Still thinking about these types of problems, how confident are you that the authorities in your area are effective at reducing anti-social behaviour?**

- Very confident
- Fairly confident
- Not very confident
- Not at all confident
- SPONTANEOUS ONLY: No problem with anti-social behaviour in this area

**Still thinking about these types of problems, how confident are you that the authorities in your area are effective in bringing to justice those who carry out anti-social behaviour?**

- Very confident
- Fairly confident
- Not very confident
- Not at all confident

**Overall, how well informed do you feel about what is being done to tackle these sorts of problems in your local area?**

- Very well informed
- Fairly well informed
- Not very well informed
- Not informed at all

Almost half (48%) of respondents perceived a problem in their local area with at least one of the five specific anti-social behaviours mentioned in the question, i.e. noisy neighbours, teenagers hanging around, vandalism and graffiti, people using or dealing drugs, and people being drunk or rowdy (Table 2a).

It should be made clear that the group of respondents described here as perceiving a problem with at least one of these five elements of ASB is different to the standard ASB measure routinely published from the BCS where seven questions are used to provide an overall index of levels of perceived ASB, which also includes the two ASB measures on rubbish or litter lying around on the streets and abandoned or burnt-out cars. For example, only 29 per cent of respondents who perceived at least one of the five elements of ASB as a problem had a high level of perceived anti-social behaviour according to the standard BCS ASB measure.<sup>7</sup> This means that the approach used in this chapter

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<sup>7</sup> This measure is derived from responses to the seven individual anti-social behaviour strands as described in Section 6.3 of the [User Guide](#). In the 2010/11 BCS 14 per cent of respondents perceived there to be a high level of ASB in their local area ([Chaplin et al.](#), 2011).



based on respondents perceiving at least one of the five elements of ASB as a problem is capturing a much larger group of respondents than those covered by the standard ASB measure.

Of respondents who perceived at least one of the five elements of anti-social behaviours as a problem in their local area, over a third (36%) perceived one element of ASB as a problem and a further 25 per cent perceived any two elements as a problem. Only six per cent perceived all of the five anti-social behaviours as a problem.

**Table 2a** Number of the five elements of anti-social behaviour<sup>1</sup> perceived as a problem in the local area

Percentages	England and Wales, adults aged 16 and over, 2010/11
	<i>Percentage saying 'fairly' or 'very' big problem</i>
<b>Respondents who perceived at least one of five elements of ASB as a problem<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>48</b>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>23,428</i>
<b><i>Of respondents who perceived at least one of five elements of ASB as a problem<sup>1</sup></i></b>	
<b>Number of anti-social behaviours perceived as a problem</b>	
Any one problem	36
Any two problems	25
Any three problems	19
Any four problems	14
All five problems	6
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>10,365</i>

1. The five anti-social behaviours included here are: noisy neighbours, teenagers hanging around, vandalism and graffiti, people using or dealing drugs, and people being drunk or rowdy in the local area.

[Flatley et al.](#) (2010)<sup>8</sup> previously found that area characteristics were important predictors for perceptions of ASB. In line with these findings, similar variation was seen here among respondents who perceived a problem with at least one of the five elements of ASB in their area (see Table 2.01 for personal and Table 2.02 for household and area characteristics of these respondents). However, many of these characteristics will be closely associated (for example, area type and level of physical disorder) so caution is needed in the interpretation of the effects of these different characteristics when viewed in isolation. As with the standard ASB measure routinely published from the BCS the proportion of people who perceived a problem with at least one of the five elements of ASB in their local area was generally higher in urban areas, areas with a high level of physical disorder and the most deprived areas.

It is important to note that it is not possible to identify the direction or nature of a number of the relationships highlighted in this chapter. For example, it is difficult to say whether a person's confidence in the police in the local area influences their confidence in the effectiveness of authorities at reducing ASB or whether it is their perception of what is being done to tackle ASB that influences their confidence in the police. It is also possible that responses to both measures simply tap into a respondent's general feeling about crime and policing-related issues.

<sup>8</sup> See Chapter 5 'Public Perceptions' in [Flatley et al.](#) (2010) for further details.

## Confidence in the effectiveness of the authorities at reducing ASB

Half of those who perceived a problem with at least one of the five specific elements of ASB in their local area (52%) were confident that the authorities in their area were effective at reducing ASB (4% were very confident and 48% were fairly confident, Table 2.03).

Among people who perceived at least one element of ASB as a problem, there was little variation in confidence in the authorities being effective at reducing ASB according to personal, household and area characteristics. For example, similar proportions of people who perceived a problem with at least one of the five specific elements of ASB living in urban (52%) or rural (55%) areas felt confident that the authorities were effective at reducing ASB, as did those in areas of high physical disorder compared with those living in areas where physical disorder was not high (both 52%, Tables 2.01 and 2.02).

Levels of confidence in the effectiveness of the authorities at reducing ASB were also considered alongside other perceptions of crime and policing-related issues. As might be expected, the likelihood of feeling confident in the effectiveness of the authorities at reducing ASB was associated with other measures of confidence in crime and policing-related issues (Table 2.04). For example:

- Respondents who thought the police in the local area were doing a good or excellent job were twice as likely to be confident in the effectiveness of the authorities at reducing ASB compared with those who thought the police were doing a fair or poor job (70% and 35% respectively).
- Those who agreed that the police and local council were dealing with the ASB and crime issues that matter in the local area were much more likely to be confident in the effectiveness of the authorities at reducing ASB (75%) compared with those who disagreed or neither agreed nor disagreed with that statement (32%).

Levels of confidence declined as the number of ASB problems respondents perceived in their local area increased; for example, two-thirds (66%) of people who perceived only one type of ASB as a problem felt confident compared with 28 per cent of those who perceived all five types of ASB as a problem.

## Confidence in the effectiveness of the authorities at bringing to justice those who carry out ASB

Respondents were also asked how confident they were that the authorities in their local area were effective in bringing to justice those who carry out ASB. Two in five respondents (41%) who perceived a problem with at least one of the five specific elements of ASB were confident that the authorities were effective in bringing ASB offenders to justice; three per cent were very confident and 38 per cent were fairly confident (Table 2.03).

There was little variation by personal, household and area characteristics (Tables 2.01 and 2.02). However, similar to the pattern described in the previous section, respondents' confidence in the authorities in bringing to justice those who carry out ASB varied greatly with perceptions of other crime and policing-related issues (Table 2.04).

- Sixty-two per cent of people who agreed that the police and local council were dealing with the ASB and crime issues that matter in the local area felt confident that the authorities were bringing ASB offenders to justice, compared with 22 per cent of those who neither agreed nor disagreed.

Those perceiving fewer numbers of ASB problems in the local area were more likely to feel confident that the authorities were effective at bringing ASB offenders to justice; for example, people who perceived just one of the five types of ASB as a problem were twice as likely to feel confident than those who perceived all five behaviours as a problem (50% and 27% respectively).

## How well informed people felt about ASB being tackled

The 2010/11 BCS gathered information on how well informed respondents felt about what was being done to tackle ASB in their local area. Of the people who perceived at least one of the five types of ASB as a problem, a third (34%) felt well informed about what was being done; however, only four per cent felt very well informed (Table 2.03).

There was little variation by personal, household and area characteristics (Tables 2.01 and 2.02). But, as found for previous questions, feeling informed about what was being done to tackle ASB problems in the local area varied by perceptions of crime and policing-related issues (Table 2.04).

- Around half of people (52%) who agreed that the police and local council were dealing with the ASB and crime issues that matter in the local area felt informed about what was being done to tackle ASB, considerably higher than those who disagreed or neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement (19%).

Although the differences are less striking than for previous questions, the number of types of ASB perceived as a problem had an effect on the perception of being informed about what was being done to tackle ASB: 39 per cent of those who perceived one ASB problem felt well informed compared with 29 per cent of those who perceived all five behaviours as a problem.

## Confidence in the authorities tackling ASB and feelings of being informed

As might be expected, feeling well informed was positively associated with perceptions of the effectiveness of the authorities at reducing ASB and bringing those who carry out ASB to justice (Table 2b).

- Around three-quarters (73%) of people who felt well informed were confident in the effectiveness of authorities at reducing ASB and a high proportion (63%) of those who felt well informed were confident in the authorities bringing ASB offenders to justice.
- In contrast, a lower proportion of people who did not feel well informed were confident in the effectiveness of the authorities at reducing ASB (41%) and in bringing ASB offenders to justice (30%).

**Table 2b Association between being informed about tackling anti-social behaviour in local area and the authorities' effectiveness at dealing with anti-social behaviour**

Percentages	England and Wales, adults aged 16 and over, 2010/11 BCS		
	Authorities effective at reducing anti-social behaviour	Authorities effective at bringing to justice those who carry out anti-social behaviour	Unweighted base <sup>1</sup>
<b>Overall, how well informed do you feel about what is being done to tackle these sorts of problems in your local area?</b>	<i>Percentage saying they were 'very confident' or 'fairly confident'</i>		
Very/fairly well informed	73	63	3,575
Not very/at all well informed	41	30	6,264

1. Unweighted base is given for the question about whether the authorities are effective at reducing anti-social behaviour; base for the other question will be similar.

## 2.4 AWARENESS AND EXPERIENCE OF SEEING COMMUNITY PAYBACK

The 2010/11 BCS included questions about people's awareness of Community Payback and whether people have actually seen offenders carrying out unpaid work in their area. The survey also asked about perceptions of the effectiveness of Community Payback (see Box 2.2).

### Box 2.2 BCS questions about Community Payback

Respondents were asked a series of questions about their awareness, experience and perceptions of Community Payback:

**As part of a community sentence, offenders can be made to carry out unpaid work for the benefit of the community. Before this interview had you heard of offenders being made to carry out unpaid work for the benefit of the community?**

- Yes
- No

**Are you aware of offenders doing Community Payback work in your local area in the last 12 months?**

- Yes
- No

**Can I check, have you actually SEEN offenders doing Community Payback work in your local area in the last 12 months?**

- Yes
- No

**How effective do you feel Community Payback is as a punishment?**

- Very effective
- Fairly effective
- Not very effective
- Not at all effective

These questions were asked of a quarter of the overall BCS interview sample. Respondents were assigned this module on a random basis meaning that the results are based on a nationally representative sample. However, it is important to note that these questions were not asked in the BCS to enable an evaluation of the impact of Community Payback. Rather they were designed to assess awareness of the scheme and to find out more about the attitudes of those who were aware. Information was not available on whether, and how, such schemes were operating in areas across the country.

### Awareness of Community Payback

The 2010/11 BCS showed that the proportion of people who had heard of offenders being made to carry out unpaid work for the benefit of the community was high; 85 per cent said that they had heard of this.

There was little variation in the types of adults who had heard of Community Payback according to personal, household and area characteristics (Tables 2.05 and 2.06). However, people with a higher

level of education and those living in more affluent or rural areas were more likely to have heard of Community Payback, for example:

- Adults with some educational qualifications (for example, 87% of adults with O level/GCSE qualifications and 89% of adults with degree or diploma qualifications) were more likely than those without any educational qualifications (77%) to have heard of Community Payback.
- People living in rural areas (89%) were more likely to have heard of Community Payback compared with those living in an urban area (84%).
- Awareness of Community Payback generally increased with household income; for example, 81 per cent of people in households with income of less than £10,000 were aware of Community Payback rising to 92 per cent of people in households with an income of £40,000 or more.
- People in managerial and professional occupations were most likely to have heard of Community Payback (91%) compared with all other occupations (for example, 83% of those in routine or manual occupations).

While the proportion of respondents saying they had heard of the scheme was high, levels of awareness of Community Payback activities in the local area were much lower. One-quarter of adults (25%) were aware of offenders doing Community Payback work in their local area in the last 12 months; three in five (60%) of these adults had personally seen offenders doing work in the last 12 months, equivalent to 15 per cent of all adults overall.

There were some differences in the characteristics associated with having heard of Community Payback and those associated with seeing the scheme in the local area, notably that:

- Adults living in urban areas were more likely to have seen the scheme in their local area compared with those living in rural areas (15% and 12% respectively) despite there being lower overall awareness of Community Payback in urban areas compared with rural areas (84% and 89% respectively).
- Adults living in areas of high physical disorder were more likely to have seen offenders doing Community Payback than where physical disorder was not high (19% and 14% respectively), contrasting with the pattern for overall awareness (76% had heard of Community Payback in areas of high physical disorder compared with 86% where physical disorder was not high).
- The proportion of adults who had seen Community Payback decreased with decreasing levels of crime (from 17% in the most deprived areas according to the Crime deprivation index to 10% in the least deprived areas) while overall awareness generally increased with decreasing levels of crime (82% of those in the most deprived areas had heard of Community Payback compared with 91% in the least deprived areas).

### Effectiveness of Community Payback

Overall two-thirds of adults (67%) felt that Community Payback was a very or fairly effective form of punishment. One in ten (10%) thought it was very effective and 57 per cent thought it was fairly effective. Only a small proportion of people thought it was not at all effective (5%, Table 2.07).

There was no strong pattern of variation in perceptions of Community Payback being effective as a punishment according to personal, household or area characteristics (Tables 2.05 and 2.06), contrasting with the patterns seen when looking at general awareness of the scheme. For example, there was no statistically significant difference in the proportion of adults who thought that Community Payback was effective as a punishment in urban or rural areas (66% and 68% respectively).

Awareness of Community Payback was not associated with perceptions of its effectiveness as a form of punishment. For example, around two-thirds of adults felt Community Payback was effective whether they had heard of offenders being made to carry out unpaid work in the community or not (67% and 65% respectively). The same held true for whether people were aware of Community Payback work in the local area or not (68% and 66% respectively), and whether adults had personally seen offenders doing Community Payback work or not (69% and 66% respectively, Table 2.08).

Although people's feelings about the effectiveness of Community Payback appeared independent of their awareness or experience of personally seeing it, there seemed to be an inverse relationship to confidence in the criminal justice system (CJS) as a whole: those who had heard about, were aware of, or had personally seen Community Payback were least confident in the effectiveness of the CJS. However, caution is needed in the interpretation of this effect when viewed in isolation as it is likely that other factors<sup>9</sup> could be contributing to this pattern (Table 2.08):

- Among adults who had heard of Community Payback, two in five (40%) were confident in the CJS as a whole being effective compared with 50 per cent of those who had not heard of Community Payback.
- People who were aware of offenders doing Community Payback work in the local area had lower levels of confidence in the effectiveness of the CJS than those who weren't (36% and 43% respectively).

Further analysis which controlled for other factors such as occupation, age, ethnicity, type of area and victimisation showed that the relationship between awareness of Community Payback and confidence in the CJS described above remained. However, the independent effect of awareness of Community Payback on confidence in the CJS was not as strong as these other factors.

Exploratory research has previously suggested that a large proportion of people surveyed in a small number of selected areas known to be undertaking work and communications on Community Payback felt unable to assess the likely impact of Community Payback on their levels of confidence in the fairness and effectiveness of the CJS ([Moore et al.](#), 2010).

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<sup>9</sup> That is, the characteristics of adults who were more likely to have heard of Community Payback may be the same or similar to the characteristics which are independently associated with lower levels of confidence in the CJS.

Table 2.01 Views of respondents who perceived a problem with anti-social behaviour in their local area<sup>1</sup> about tackling anti-social behaviour in the local area by personal characteristics

Percentages		England and Wales, adults aged 16 and over, 2010/11 BCS				
	Respondents who perceived at least one of five elements of ASB as a problem	Unweighted base <sup>2</sup>	Authorities effective at reducing anti-social behaviour	Authorities effective at bringing to justice those who carry out anti-social behaviour	Informed about what is being done to tackle anti-social behaviour	Unweighted base <sup>3</sup>
			Percentage saying they were 'very confident' or 'fairly confident'		Percentage saying they were 'very informed' or 'well informed'	
<b>ALL ADULTS</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>23,428</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>9,868</b>
16-24	61	1,956	51	45	24	1,136
25-34	57	3,203	56	43	33	1,722
35-44	50	3,933	48	37	34	1,819
45-54	46	3,908	52	38	34	1,708
55-64	45	4,107	48	37	40	1,727
65-74	35	3,378	60	46	42	1,115
75+	24	2,943	60	47	50	641
<b>Men</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>10,523</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>4,389</b>
16-24	59	879	53	47	26	493
25-34	58	1,427	57	44	33	752
35-44	49	1,782	45	34	34	806
45-54	44	1,797	46	33	31	745
55-64	46	1,893	43	33	41	796
65-74	35	1,548	58	41	39	514
75+	26	1,197	50	35	44	283
<b>Women</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>12,905</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>5,479</b>
16-24	64	1,077	49	43	23	643
25-34	56	1,776	55	43	34	970
35-44	50	2,151	51	40	35	1,013
45-54	48	2,111	56	43	36	963
55-64	45	2,214	53	41	39	931
65-74	35	1,830	62	50	45	601
75+	23	1,746	68	56	55	358
<b>Ethnic group</b>						
White	46	21,573	51	39	34	8,871
Non-White	59	1,825	57	51	35	995
Mixed	55	173	51	34	28	83
Asian or Asian British	60	837	56	50	36	471
Black or Black British	60	494	64	57	42	280
Chinese or other	58	321	56	51	27	161
<b>Marital status</b>						
Married	43	10,934	53	40	37	4,136
Cohabiting	54	2,093	46	37	30	1,035
Single	58	4,863	52	43	30	2,587
Separated	52	762	56	43	37	352
Divorced	51	2,110	56	42	38	998
Widowed	31	2,658	63	52	46	756
<b>Respondent's employment status</b>						
In employment	50	12,733	51	38	32	5,745
Unemployed	66	678	54	47	31	404
Economically inactive	42	9,965	54	45	39	3,700
Student	57	570	53	47	28	314
Looking after family/home	54	1,189	49	45	37	617
Long-term/temporarily sick/ill	61	1,050	48	41	40	619
Retired	32	6,825	58	46	45	2,000
Other inactive	49	331	57	55	34	150
<b>Respondent's occupation</b>						
Managerial and professional occupations	43	7,809	51	36	34	2,914
Intermediate occupations	44	4,823	49	36	34	1,908
Routine and manual occupations	51	8,863	54	45	36	4,089
Never worked and long-term unemployed	54	817	55	55	40	371
Full-time students	58	911	53	48	26	500
Not classified	53	205	51	40	40	86
<b>Highest qualification</b>						
Degree or diploma	45	7,710	51	37	35	3,046
Apprenticeship or A/AS level	51	4,090	51	38	31	1,851
O level/GCSE	51	4,499	51	42	33	2,121
Other	43	1,036	57	50	35	397
None	45	6,037	56	48	38	2,436
<b>Long-standing illness or disability</b>						
Long-standing illness or disability	47	6,928	50	39	37	2,955
Limits activities	47	4,992	50	40	38	2,143
Does not limit activities	47	1,933	49	37	33	809
No long-standing illness or disability	48	16,462	53	42	33	6,905
<b>Newspaper of choice</b>						
'Popular'	51	13,914	53	42	34	6,371
The Sun	57	5,138	56	45	33	2,711
The Daily Mirror	51	2,390	51	43	34	1,120
The Daily Mail	44	4,649	52	39	36	1,803
The Daily Express	41	1,177	55	39	38	443
The Daily Star	55	560	46	37	30	294
'Broadsheet'	41	5,697	50	36	33	2,049
The Daily Telegraph	37	1,778	48	32	33	582
The Guardian	48	1,365	51	37	30	563
The Independent	40	655	47	35	37	231
The Times	39	1,732	51	37	34	590
The Financial Times	53	167	49	38	32	83
Some other newspaper	51	363	59	54	46	162
No one newspaper in particular	52	218	51	43	35	97
Would not want to read any newspaper	44	2,406	49	41	35	882

1. This includes respondents who said they had a 'very' or 'fairly' big problem with one or more of the following anti-social behaviours asked about in the BCS: noisy neighbours, teenagers hanging around, vandalism and graffiti, people using or dealing drugs, and people being drunk or rowdy. This differs from the standard BCS measure of perceived levels of ASB (see Section 6.3 of the [User Guide to Home Office Crime Statistics](#) for more information).

2. Base is the half-sample of the 2010/11 BCS who are asked questions about tackling anti-social behaviour.

3. Unweighted base is given for the question about whether the authorities are effective at reducing anti-social behaviour; bases for other questions will be similar. All questions are only asked of a half-sample of the 2010/11 BCS and analysis includes only those who said they perceived a 'very' or 'fairly' big problem with at least one of five anti-social behaviours mentioned in the question: noisy neighbours, teenagers hanging around, vandalism and graffiti, people using or dealing drugs, and people being drunk or rowdy.

4. See Section 7.3 of the [User Guide](#) for definitions of personal characteristics.

**Table 2.02 Views of respondents who perceived a problem with anti-social behaviour in their local area<sup>1</sup> about tackling anti-social behaviour in the local area by household and area characteristics**

Percentages		England and Wales, adults aged 16 and over, 2010/11 BCS				
	Respondents who perceived at least one of five elements of ASB as a problem	Unweighted base <sup>2</sup>	Authorities effective at reducing anti-social behaviour	Authorities effective at bringing to justice those who carry out anti-social behaviour	Informed about what is being done to tackle anti-social behaviour	Unweighted base <sup>3</sup>
			Percentage saying they were 'very confident' or 'fairly confident'		Percentage saying they were 'very informed' or 'well informed'	
<b>ALL ADULTS</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>23,428</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>9,868</b>
<b>Structure of household</b>						
Single adult & child(ren)	64	1,214	51	43	35	707
Adults & child(ren)	51	4,939	51	42	34	2,292
Adult(s) & no children	45	17,275	53	41	34	6,869
<b>Total household income</b>						
Less than £10,000	53	3,298	58	51	40	1,578
£10,000 less than £20,000	51	4,654	53	42	37	2,105
£20,000 less than £30,000	49	3,155	51	40	36	1,393
£30,000 less than £40,000	48	2,363	52	37	32	989
£40,000 less than £50,000	47	1,615	51	38	33	694
£50,000 or more	42	3,224	51	34	31	1,169
No income stated or not enough information provided	46	5,099	51	44	32	1,940
<b>Tenure</b>						
Owners	42	15,810	50	38	34	5,898
Social renters	62	3,889	53	45	38	2,186
Private renters	53	3,643	56	47	31	1,749
<b>Accommodation type</b>						
Houses	46	19,984	52	40	34	8,030
<i>Detached</i>	31	6,180	51	36	34	1,643
<i>Semi-detached</i>	46	7,469	53	41	33	3,008
<i>Terraced</i>	58	6,335	51	41	35	3,379
Flats/maisonettes	61	2,976	54	45	34	1,633
Other accommodation	20	58	59	62	55	13
<b>Output area classification</b>						
Blue collar communities	60	3,979	52	42	35	2,167
City living	51	1,066	53	43	32	532
Countryside	22	3,582	53	41	35	688
Prospering suburbs	34	5,509	55	38	34	1,623
Constrained by circumstances	62	2,368	52	43	37	1,348
Typical traits	49	4,920	49	38	33	2,239
Multicultural	68	2,004	54	46	33	1,271
<b>Area type</b>						
Urban	52	17,510	52	41	34	8,343
Rural	29	5,918	55	40	36	1,525
<b>Level of physical disorder</b>						
High	76	1,119	52	45	40	805
Not high	46	21,924	52	41	34	8,885
<b>Crime deprivation index</b>						
10% Most Deprived output areas	68	1,934	52	43	35	1,211
2	63	1,921	49	41	36	1,140
3	58	1,993	55	45	35	1,084
4	53	1,874	50	41	32	925
5	51	1,923	56	43	34	900
6	47	2,073	53	38	32	881
7	40	2,130	52	37	35	773
8	38	2,448	54	42	33	826
9	33	2,251	54	41	36	655
10% Least Deprived output areas	26	2,906	54	41	38	649

1. This includes respondents who said they had a 'very' or 'fairly' big problem with one or more of the following anti-social behaviours asked about in the BCS: noisy neighbours, teenagers hanging around, vandalism and graffiti, people using or dealing drugs, and people being drunk or rowdy. This differs from the standard BCS measure of perceived levels of ASB (see Section 6.3 of the [User Guide](#) for more information).

2. Unweighted base is the half-sample of the 2010/11 BCS who are asked questions about tackling anti-social behaviour.

3. Unweighted base is given for the question about whether the authorities are effective at reducing anti-social behaviour; bases for other questions will be similar. All questions are only asked of a half-sample of the 2010/11 BCS and analysis includes only those who said they perceived a 'very' or 'fairly' big problem with at least one of five anti-social behaviours mentioned in the question: noisy neighbours, teenagers hanging around, vandalism and graffiti, people using or dealing drugs, and people being drunk or rowdy.

4. See Sections 7.1 and 7.2 of the [User Guide](#) for definitions of area and household characteristics.



**Table 2.03 Views of respondents who perceived a problem with anti-social behaviour in their local area<sup>1</sup> about tackling anti-social behaviour in the local area**

Percentages	England and Wales, adults aged 16 and over, 2010/11 BCS			
	Authorities effective at reducing anti-social behaviour	Authorities effective at bringing to justice those who carry out anti-social behaviour	Informed about what is being done to tackle anti-social behaviour	
<b>Very/fairly confident</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>Very/fairly well informed</b>	<b>34</b>
Very confident	4	3	Very well informed	4
Fairly confident	48	38	Fairly well informed	31
<b>Not very/at all confident</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>Not very/at all well informed</b>	<b>66</b>
Not very confident	39	47	Not very well informed	46
Not at all confident	9	12	Not informed at all	20
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>9,868</i>	<i>9,690</i>		<i>9,993</i>

1. This analysis only includes respondents who said they had a 'very' or 'fairly' big problem with one or more of the following anti-social behaviours asked about in the BCS: noisy neighbours, teenagers hanging around, vandalism and graffiti, people using or dealing drugs, and people being drunk or rowdy. This differs from the standard BCS measure of perceived levels of ASB (see Section 6.3 of the [User Guide](#) for more information).

**Table 2.04 Views of respondents who perceived a problem with anti-social behaviour in their local area<sup>1</sup> about tackling anti-social behaviour in the local area by crime and police-related perceptions<sup>2</sup>**

Percentages	England and Wales, adults aged 16 and over, 2010/11 BCS			
	Authorities effective at reducing anti-social behaviour	Authorities effective in bringing to justice those who carry out anti-social behaviour	Informed about what is being done to tackle anti-social behaviour	<i>Unweighted base<sup>3</sup></i>
	<i>Percentage saying they were 'very confident' or 'fairly confident'</i>		<i>Percentage saying they were 'very well informed' or 'well informed'</i>	
<b>Number of anti-social behaviours perceived as a problem<sup>4</sup></b>				
Any one problem	66	50	39	3,504
Any two problems	53	43	33	2,501
Any three problems	46	35	32	1,889
Any four problems	37	31	31	1,381
All five problems	28	27	29	593
<b>Police and local council dealing with the ASB and crime issues that matter in the local area</b>				
Agree	75	62	52	4,580
Neither agree nor disagree; and disagree	32	22	19	5,114
<b>Satisfaction with police in the local area</b>				
Doing an excellent or good job	70	57	44	4,894
Doing a fair or poor job	35	26	25	4,874
<b>Police understand the issues that affect people in this community</b>				
Agree	64	52	42	6,241
Neither agree nor disagree; and disagree	32	23	22	3,449
<b>Police are dealing with the things that matter to people in this community</b>				
Agree	72	59	46	4,949
Neither agree nor disagree; and disagree	32	22	22	4,715
<b>Perception of level of crime in the local area compared with country as a whole</b>				
Higher than average	42	34	30	1,544
About average	51	41	34	4,591
Lower than average	59	45	38	3,572

1. This includes respondents who said they had a 'very' or 'fairly' big problem with one or more of the following anti-social behaviours asked about in the BCS: noisy neighbours, teenagers hanging around, vandalism and graffiti, people using or dealing drugs, and people being drunk or rowdy. This differs from the standard BCS measure of perceived levels of ASB (see Section 6.3 of the [User Guide](#) for more information).

2. See Section 6 of the [User Guide](#) for definitions of BCS perception measures. This table should be interpreted as follows. For example, 75 per cent of respondents who agreed that the police and local council were dealing with the ASB and crime issues that matter in the local area felt that the authorities were effective at reducing ASB. And 39 per cent of respondents who perceived any of one five specific anti-social behaviours as a problem felt well informed about what was being done to tackle ASB.

3. Unweighted base is given for the question about whether the authorities are effective at reducing anti-social behaviour; bases for other questions will be similar. These questions are only asked of a half-sample of the 2010/11 BCS and analysis includes only those who said they perceived a 'very' or 'fairly' big problem with at least one of five anti-social behaviours mentioned in the question: noisy neighbours, teenagers hanging around, vandalism and graffiti, people using or dealing drugs, and people being drunk or rowdy.

4. The five anti-social behaviours included here are: noisy neighbours, teenagers hanging around, vandalism and graffiti, people using or dealing drugs, and people being drunk or rowdy in the local area.

Table 2.05 Perceptions about Community Payback by personal characteristics

Percentages	England and Wales, adults aged 16 and over, 2010/11 BCS					
	Heard of offenders being made to carry out unpaid work for benefit of community	Aware of offenders doing Community Payback work in local area in last 12 months	Personally seen offenders doing Community Payback work in local area in last 12 months <sup>1</sup>	Unweighted base <sup>2</sup>	Feel Community Payback is effective as a punishment <sup>3</sup>	Unweighted base
<b>ALL ADULTS</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>11,728</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>11,292</b>
16-24	82	26	13	972	66	953
25-34	84	24	15	1,618	72	1,562
35-44	88	26	16	1,895	70	1,834
45-54	87	25	16	1,929	65	1,854
55-64	88	27	16	2,104	63	2,031
65-74	86	22	15	1,711	64	1,639
75+	79	17	9	1,499	64	1,419
<b>Men</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>5,293</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>5,132</b>
16-24	85	29	14	446	65	439
25-34	84	25	14	728	74	708
35-44	90	25	17	848	69	823
45-54	87	25	16	879	63	857
55-64	90	29	17	972	60	950
65-74	90	25	17	789	63	758
75+	81	20	11	631	61	597
<b>Women</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>6,435</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>6,160</b>
16-24	79	24	13	526	66	514
25-34	83	24	15	890	69	854
35-44	86	27	16	1,047	72	1,011
45-54	88	26	15	1,050	66	997
55-64	87	24	15	1,132	67	1,081
65-74	83	20	13	922	64	881
75+	77	16	8	868	67	822
<b>Ethnic group</b>						
White	87	25	15	10,803	66	10,421
Non-White	70	19	10	916	69	863
Mixed	68	23	18	96	65	96
Asian or Asian British	68	19	9	410	73	386
Black or Black British	78	19	12	257	67	241
Chinese or other	61	14	7	153	65	140
<b>Marital status</b>						
Married	86	24	15	5,487	65	5,268
Cohabiting	86	28	16	1,007	67	986
Single	84	25	14	2,434	68	2,356
Separated	86	29	19	379	69	365
Divorced	86	23	14	1,112	66	1,072
Widowed	80	20	12	1,304	70	1,240
<b>Respondent's employment status</b>						
In employment	88	25	15	6,315	67	6,107
Unemployed	86	31	18	325	70	311
Economically inactive	81	23	14	5,069	65	4,857
Student	73	22	12	276	72	267
Looking after family/home	75	23	13	602	65	582
Long-term/temporarily sick/ill	83	27	17	559	59	545
Retired	84	22	14	3,459	64	3,298
Other inactive	86	29	17	173	67	165
<b>Respondent's occupation</b>						
Managerial and professional occupations	91	22	14	3,901	70	3,759
Intermediate occupations	88	25	15	2,413	66	2,318
Routine and manual occupations	83	27	16	4,465	63	4,303
Never worked and long-term unemployed	70	22	12	409	67	393
Full-time students	74	22	12	442	70	427
Not classified	79	21	9	98	56	92
<b>Highest qualification</b>						
Degree or diploma	89	23	14	3,851	71	3,689
Apprenticeship or A/AS level	89	28	16	2,038	66	1,977
O level/GCSE	87	26	16	2,243	64	2,185
Other	74	22	11	506	67	474
None	77	23	14	3,066	63	2,947
<b>Long-standing illness or disability</b>						
Long-standing illness or disability	85	25	15	3,465	62	3,329
Limits activities	83	26	15	2,519	62	2,414
Does not limit activities	89	23	13	945	62	914
No long-standing illness or disability	85	24	15	8,251	68	7,951
<b>Newspaper of choice</b>						
'Popular'	85	26	15	6,914	64	6,733
The Sun	84	28	16	2,505	64	2,444
The Daily Mirror	83	28	16	1,210	65	1,179
The Daily Mail	88	24	14	2,338	65	2,266
The Daily Express	89	24	13	586	64	570
The Daily Star	86	30	20	275	68	274
'Broadsheet'	90	22	13	2,920	72	2,791
The Daily Telegraph	90	20	13	920	66	871
The Guardian	92	20	13	668	76	636
The Independent	93	24	15	353	74	340
The Times	89	22	14	893	74	864
The Financial Times	87	34	16	86	77	80
Some other newspaper	65	25	13	166	66	152
No one newspaper in particular	96	24	16	105	61	97
Would not want to read any newspaper	75	22	13	1,213	65	1,136
<b>Experience of crime in last 12 months</b>						
Victim	87	30	18	2,244	65	2,175
Not a victim	85	23	14	9,484	67	9,117

1. This question is asked only if respondents had said they were aware of offenders doing Community Payback work in the local area in the last 12 months. Respondents who said they were not aware of offenders carrying out the work were included with those who said they had *not seen* offenders doing Community Payback work.

2. Unweighted base is given for the question about whether respondents had heard of offenders being made to carry out unpaid work for the community; the base for the other questions on whether respondents being aware or seeing offenders doing Community Payback will be similar. These questions are asked of a quarter-sample of the 2010/11 BCS.

3. This question is asked of the quarter-sample of the 2010/11 BCS; the proportion includes respondents who said they thought Community Payback was 'very' or 'fairly' effective as a punishment.

4. See Section 7.3 of the [User Guide](#) for definitions of personal characteristics.

Table 2.06 Perceptions about Community Payback by household and area characteristics

Percentages	England and Wales, adults aged 16 and over, 2010/11 BCS					
	Heard of offenders being made to carry out unpaid work for benefit of community	Aware of offenders doing Community Payback work in local area in last 12 months	Personally seen offenders doing Community Payback work in local area in last 12 months <sup>1</sup>	Unweighted base <sup>2</sup>	Feel Community Payback is effective as a punishment <sup>3</sup>	Unweighted base
<b>ALL ADULTS</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>11,728</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>11,292</b>
<b>Structure of household</b>						
Single adult & child(ren)	82	30	19	628	71	601
Adults & child(ren)	85	26	16	2,403	68	2,329
Adult(s) & no children	85	24	14	8,697	66	8,362
<b>Total household income</b>						
Less than £10,000	81	26	15	1,715	67	1,657
£10,000 less than £20,000	84	27	17	2,344	65	2,255
£20,000 less than £30,000	88	27	17	1,594	66	1,533
£30,000 less than £40,000	88	25	16	1,148	68	1,119
£40,000 less than £50,000	92	23	14	799	69	772
£50,000 or more	92	23	14	1,592	71	1,544
No income stated or not enough information provided	79	23	12	2,531	64	2,408
<b>Tenure</b>						
Owners	88	24	14	7,832	66	7,549
Social renters	81	29	17	1,984	65	1,906
Private renters	82	25	14	1,867	69	1,793
<b>Accommodation type</b>						
Houses	86	25	15	9,923	66	9,568
<i>Detached</i>	89	21	13	3,088	68	2,956
<i>Semi-detached</i>	86	26	16	3,676	66	3,570
<i>Terraced</i>	84	27	17	3,159	65	3,042
Flats/maisonettes	78	22	12	1,573	70	1,502
Other accommodation	.	.	.	35	.	35
<b>Output area classification</b>						
Blue collar communities	83	30	19	1,986	63	1,920
City living	83	18	12	539	73	515
Countryside	90	21	12	1,775	70	1,704
Prospering suburbs	89	22	12	2,735	66	2,636
Constrained by circumstances	83	28	16	1,194	64	1,161
Typical traits	88	27	17	2,491	66	2,402
Multicultural	74	23	13	1,008	69	954
<b>Area type</b>						
Urban	84	25	15	8,817	66	8,511
Rural	89	21	12	2,911	68	2,781
<b>Level of physical disorder</b>						
High	76	28	19	585	66	569
Not high	86	24	14	10,960	67	10,550
<b>Crime deprivation index</b>						
10% Most Deprived output areas	82	25	17	957	65	918
2	78	25	16	965	68	931
3	84	27	16	1,006	70	975
4	86	29	16	959	64	932
5	87	24	13	981	66	942
6	86	25	14	1,067	63	1,026
7	85	24	15	1,052	69	1,009
8	88	22	14	1,203	67	1,173
9	87	23	13	1,120	67	1,077
10% Least Deprived output areas	91	19	10	1,456	70	1,392

1. This question is asked only if respondents had said they were aware of offenders doing Community Payback work in the local area in the last 12 months. Respondents who said they were not aware of offenders carrying out the work were included with those who said they had *not seen* offenders doing Community Payback work.

2. Unweighted base is given for the question about whether respondents had heard of offenders being made to carry out unpaid work for the community; the base for the other questions on whether respondents being aware or seeing offenders doing Community Payback will be similar. These questions are asked of a quarter-sample of the 2010/11 BCS.

3. This question is asked of the quarter-sample of the 2010/11 BCS; the proportion includes respondents who said they thought Community Payback was 'very' or 'fairly' effective as a punishment.

4. See Sections 7.1 and 7.2 of the [User Guide](#) for definitions of area and household characteristics.

Table 2.07 Proportion of adults who felt that Community Payback was effective as a punishment

England and Wales, adults aged 16 and over, 2010/11 BCS	
Percentages	
<b>Very/fairly effective</b>	<b>67</b>
Very effective	10
Fairly effective	57
<b>Not very/at all effective</b>	<b>33</b>
Not very effective	29
Not at all effective	5
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>11,292</i>

Table 2.08 Association between awareness of Community Payback and perceptions of effectiveness of Community Payback and the criminal justice system<sup>1</sup>

Percentages	England and Wales, adults aged 16 and over, 2010/11 BCS		
	Feel Community Payback is effective as a punishment	The criminal justice system as a whole is effective	Unweighted base <sup>2</sup>
	Percentage saying 'very effective' or 'fairly effective'	Percentage saying 'very confident' or 'fairly confident'	
<b>Heard of offenders being made to carry out unpaid work for benefit of community</b>			
Yes	67	40	9,768
No	65	50	1,517
<b>Aware of offenders doing Community Payback work in local area in last 12 months</b>			
Yes	68	36	2,806
No	66	43	8,446
<b>Personally seen offenders doing Community Payback work in local area in last 12 months</b>			
Yes	69	35	1,712
No	66	38	1,082
Heard of Community Payback but not aware of in the local area	66	43	8,446

1. This table should be interpreted as follows. For example, 67 per cent of the respondents who had heard of offenders being made to carry out unpaid work for the benefit of community (i.e. those who answered 'Yes' to that question) felt that Community Payback was effective as a punishment. Forty-three per cent of respondents who were not aware of offenders doing Community Payback work in the local area in the last 12 months felt the that criminal justice system as a whole was effective.

2. Unweighted base is given for the question about whether respondents felt Community Payback is effective as a punishment; the base for the question on the effectiveness of the CJS as a whole will be similar. Questions on awareness and experience of Community Payback are asked of a quarter-sample of the 2010/11 BCS.

## 3 Understanding perceptions of crime

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*Philip Hall and Jennifer Innes*

### 3.1 SUMMARY

This chapter presents findings from the 2009/10 and 2010/11 BCS examining some of the factors relating to people's perceptions of crime nationally and locally.

- According to the 2010/11 BCS 60 per cent of people thought that crime in the country as a whole had increased over the last few years, but only 28 per cent of people thought the same about crime in their local area.
- Ten per cent of people thought that crime in their local area was 'higher than average', compared with 51 per cent who thought it was 'lower than average'.
- The media was most commonly cited by respondents when asked about which sources of information gave them the impression that national crime rates were increasing. While the media was also reported to be important in informing perceptions of changes in local levels of crime, personal experience was much more influential than it was in the case of perceptions of the national picture.
- Levels of media consumption were high, with 73 per cent of people reading newspapers and 91 per cent of people watching the news on television. There were some differences in perceptions of crime depending on which newspaper someone read and which television channel they used to view the news.
- The level of trust in official statistics was mixed, with 38 per cent of people saying that they trusted crime statistics produced by the Home Office and 34 per cent saying that they distrusted them (and the remainder unsure). The police were most trusted to present crime figures in a fair and balanced way and politicians were least trusted.
- Those who had used online crime maps in the last 12 months and who lived in a relatively low-crime area were more likely to think that crime in their local area was 'lower than average' than those who had not (83% compared with 65%). However, there was no relationship between use of crime maps and perceptions of crime in relatively high-crime areas.
- The use of crime data, such as via online crime maps or published as official Home Office statistics, was relatively low when compared with media consumption. Thirty-six per cent of respondents said that they take notice of official statistics when they are published and four per cent said that they had used crime maps in the last 12 months.
- There was some evidence that perceptions of crime in the local area were related to personal experiences. Those who had been victims of crime in their local area, those living in areas of high physical disorder and those who experienced problems with anti-social behaviour in their local area were more likely to think that crime in the local area was 'higher than average' or 'about average'.

## 3.2 INTRODUCTION

As well as being used to estimate levels of crime in England and Wales, the British Crime Survey (BCS) also contains questions on respondents' perceptions of crime. Two key crime perception measures are covered here: respondent perceptions of the change in levels of crime over the last few years (both nationally and locally) and the perceived level of crime in a respondent's local area compared with the level of crime nationally (see the [User Guide to Home Office Crime Statistics](#) for more information).

Analysis of the BCS has previously shown the existence of two 'perception gaps' ([Moon \*et al.\*, 2009](#)). The first of these is a difference between perceptions of changes in crime levels and changes in crime levels measured by official statistics. The majority of respondents to the 2010/11 BCS (60%) said that they thought crime had gone up nationally in the last few years. However, BCS and police recorded measures of crime have shown the opposite. For example, in 2010/11 BCS overall crime was eight per cent lower than in 2008/09<sup>1</sup> and police recorded crime showed a similar overall decrease of 12 per cent over the same period ([Chaplin \*et al.\*, 2011](#)).

The second perceptions gap is between perceptions of crime nationally and locally. For example, while a majority (60%) of respondents to the 2010/11 BCS thought that crime in the country as a whole had increased over the past few years, only a minority (28%) thought it had increased in their local area. In addition, when asked about the level of crime in the local area compared with nationally, only a small number of respondents (10%) said that crime in their local area was 'higher than average' and around half (51%) that crime was 'lower than average'. The remaining 39 per cent said that crime in their local area was 'about average'.<sup>2</sup>

These results indicate that respondents have a less negative view of crime in their local area than in the rest of the country and leads to an apparent paradox in which respondents generally think that crime is high or increasing nationally but few identify that this is the case in their local area.

This chapter explores this difference in perceptions by examining what may be behind them and how these views are formed, in particular looking at various sources of information which might influence respondent perceptions of crime. The relationship between the use of media and perceptions of the national crime rate is explored and crime maps, personal experience of victimisation and the local environment are examined for their effect on perceptions of the local crime rate.

## 3.3 PERCEPTIONS OF CRIME

Previous analysis has shown that variations in respondents' perceptions of crime in their local area broadly reflect differences in crime levels that are confirmed by other measures, such as the Crime domain of the English Indices of Deprivation ([Moon \*et al.\*, 2009](#)). Both this, and the fact that perceptions of the crime rate nationally are very different to the picture portrayed in official statistics, suggest that the imbalance between views on crime locally and nationally could be due to overly negative perceptions of crime nationally. If this is the case, when asked to compare crime locally with crime nationally (see Box 3.1), respondents who perceive a lot of crime locally may be inclined to describe this as 'about average'. They may perceive the high level of crime in their local area to be similar to the high level of crime they perceive to exist nationally. Previous analysis suggests that this might be the case, as people in the highest crime areas are the most likely to say that the local crime rate is 'about average' ([Moon \*et al.\*, 2009](#)).

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1 Comparisons with other years are available ([Chaplin \*et al.\*, 2011](#)).

2 There is no specific definition of 'local area' given in these questions, although in an earlier question the respondent's local area is defined as 'within a 15-minute walk of here'.

**Box 3.1 Question on perception of crime in local area compared with the country as a whole in the 2010/11 BCS**

I'd now like to ask you some questions about the level of crime.

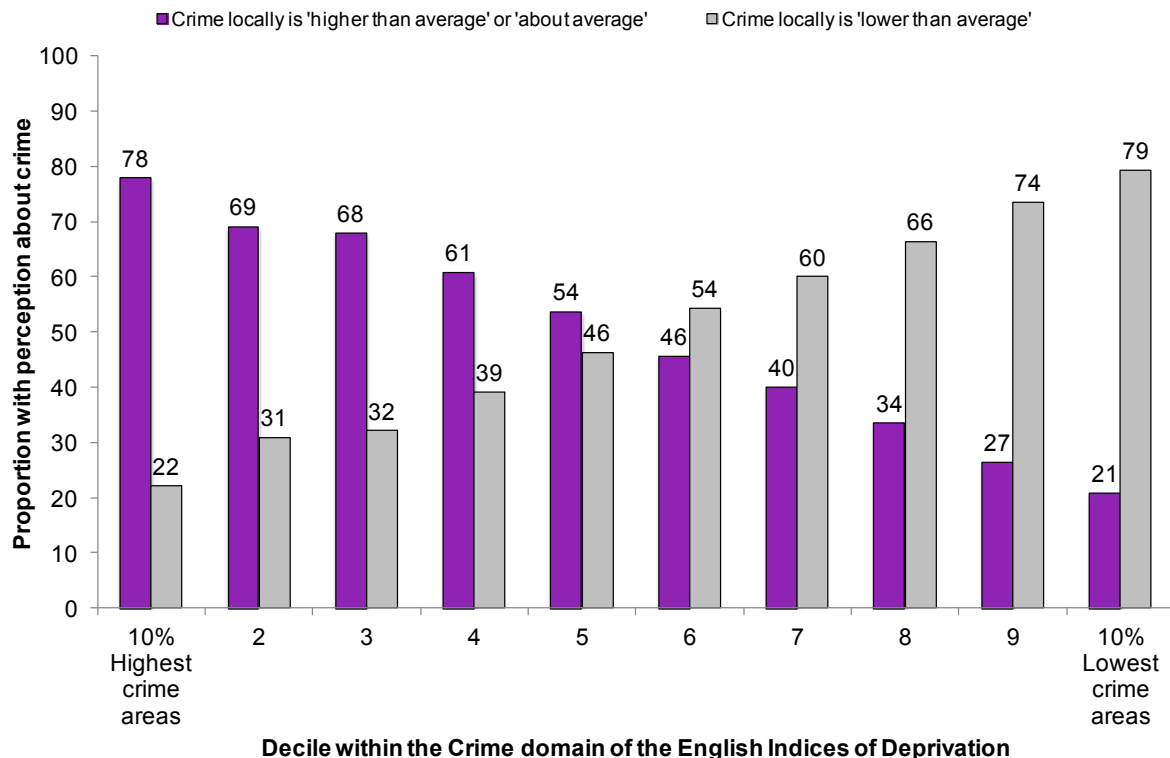
Not all areas of the country experience the same levels of crime. What happens in your local area may, or may not, reflect the national picture. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions, it is just what you think.

**Compared to the country as a whole do you think the level of crime in your local area is:**

- Higher than average
- Lower than average
- About average

This theory can be tested further through the BCS question on the local compared with the national crime rate. Combining 'higher than average' and 'about average' responses, on the basis that both may reflect a perceived high level of crime locally, produces a very strong linear relationship between perceptions of crime and the Crime domain of the English Indices of Deprivation<sup>3,4</sup> (Figure 3.1).

**Figure 3.1 Perception of crime rate in the local area by decile within the Crime domain of the English Indices of Deprivation, 2010/11 BCS**



3 See the [User Guide](#) for more information.

4 The English Indices of Deprivation classify areas by ONS Lower Super Output Area boundaries. These are not necessarily the same as respondents' definitions of 'local area' or the description of 'within 15-minutes walk of here' used in other parts of the BCS to define the local area.

The strength of the relationship between perceptions and another measure of crime in the local area provides good evidence that respondents' perceptions of relative local crime levels are more closely aligned with the actual amount of crime. This is in contrast to perceptions of crime nationally which appear to be unduly negative.

### 3.4 SOURCES OF INFORMATION

As well as being asked what they think has happened to crime in the country as a whole and in their local area over the past few years, BCS respondents are also asked what sources of information have given them this impression.<sup>5</sup>

The media was an important source of information on crime in the country as a whole. The most commonly cited source was news programmes on television or radio (59% of respondents). Other common sources were local newspapers (32% of respondents), tabloid newspapers (30% of respondents) and word of mouth or information from other people (28% of respondents; Table 3.01).

The media was also an important source of information on crime locally, with respondents most commonly saying that information came from local newspapers (47%). However, word of mouth or information from other people (44%) and personal experience (41%) were also important sources of information on local crime for respondents. Very few respondents said that they used information from the police to form their impression of crime in the local area (less than 1%; Table 3.02).

Different sources of information were associated with different perceptions of crime. Respondents who said that they thought that crime in the country as a whole had gone up over the past few years were most likely to cite news programmes on television or radio (62%), local newspapers (35%) or tabloid newspapers (35%) as the source of their impression (Table 3.01). The fact that these are also the most popular sources overall may partially explain why the view that crime is increasing nationally is so prevalent.

Those who said that they thought crime in the country as a whole had gone down were also most likely to cite news on the television or radio (50%), suggesting that the relationship between the use of media and perceptions of crime is not the same for all respondents. This was followed by broadsheet newspapers (31% of respondents) and personal experience (25% of respondents), far less common sources overall.

Respondents who perceived that local crime had risen over the past few years were most likely to cite local newspapers as the source of their impression of crime (54%), followed by word of mouth or information from other people (49%) and personal experience (35%; Table 3.02).

Personal experience was the most common source of information on crime given by those who said that crime in the local area had gone down in the past few years (44% of respondents). This source was more likely to be cited by respondents that perceived a decrease in crime locally than respondents that perceived an increase in crime locally (35%). It was also more commonly cited as a source of information locally than nationally, which may partially explain why perceptions of crime locally are generally more positive.

These results provide possible explanations for the difference in perceptions of crime nationally and locally. The media in the form of television, radio and local and tabloid newspapers are frequently cited as influences on perceptions of national crime and these sources are also associated with perceptions of crime increasing. Although these sources also have an effect on local perceptions, personal experience is more commonly cited as a source of information on local crime than it is for crime in the country as a whole, and is more commonly associated with perceptions of crime decreasing.

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<sup>5</sup> Respondents are asked to cite where their impression of crime has come from and can select more than one source. Therefore the total number of sources cited will add up to more than 100 per cent.



### 3.5 NEWSPAPERS AND TELEVISION

As shown above, the media is often a source of people's impressions of crime, particularly at a national level. The media is usually the only source of information on serious but low volume crimes for the majority of people and is often linked to the misconception that crime is going up when it is actually going down. This was discussed by Pfeiffer *et al.* (2005) who conducted research on media use and its impact on crime perceptions, sentencing attitudes and crime policy. They linked patterns of television viewing to views of rises in crime in Germany at a time when crime had actually fallen, suggesting this is not a pattern seen only in England and Wales.

According to the 2010/11 BCS, 73 per cent of adults aged 16 or over had read a newspaper in the last three months (data not shown). The question on sources of information analysed above only asked respondents if their perception of crime was influenced by broadsheet or tabloid newspapers. However, the BCS can also be used to relate perceptions of crime to readership of individual newspapers.<sup>6</sup> Analysis of the 2010/11 BCS showed that the style of newspaper was strongly associated with perceptions of crime, with those who had read more 'popular'<sup>7</sup> newspapers more likely to perceive that crime had increased nationally (81%) than readers of traditionally 'broadsheet'<sup>8</sup> newspapers (59%; Table 3.03).

Among 'popular' newspapers, perceptions of crime were very similar across all newspapers. However, among traditionally 'broadsheet' newspapers there was some indication that there was a relationship with individual newspapers (for example, 74% of *Daily Telegraph* readers thought that crime had gone up in the country as a whole over the last few years, compared with 46% of *Guardian* readers).

Respondents are also asked how frequently they watch television and whether or not they watch the news on television. Results from the 2009/10 BCS (questions about television watching were not included in the 2010/11 BCS) show that 99 per cent of adults say that they watch television and 91 per cent say that they watch the news on television (data not shown). Adults who said that they watch news on the television were more likely to think crime had gone up in the country as a whole over the past few years than those who did not watch news on the television (81% compared with 75%).

As with newspapers, perceptions of crime were also associated with what channel the news was watched on. Those who watched the news on ITV most often were more likely to think that crime had gone up in the country as a whole over the past few years (88%) compared with those who watched the news on BBC channels (78%). Viewers of Channel 4 and other satellite or cable news channels were the least likely to think crime had risen (69% and 65% respectively; Figure 3.2 and Table 3.04).

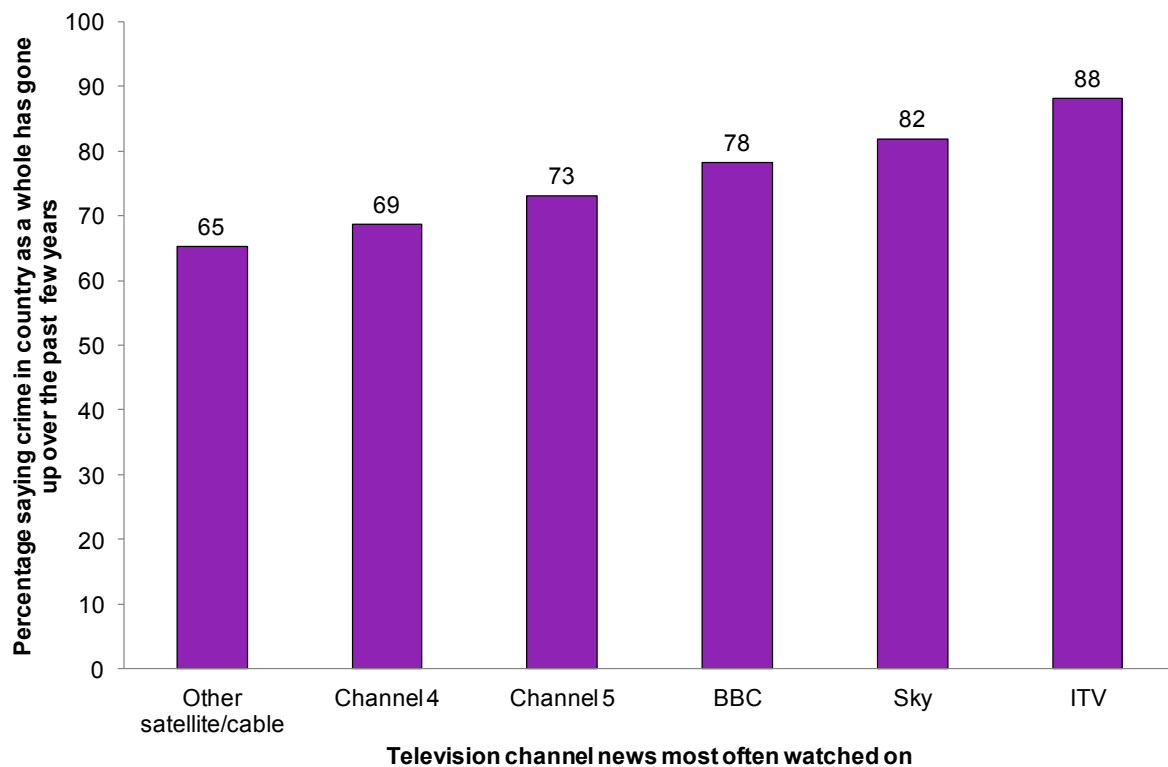
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6 Respondents are asked which newspaper they have read most often over the past three months. If they have read two or more equally frequently they are asked which is their preferred newspaper.

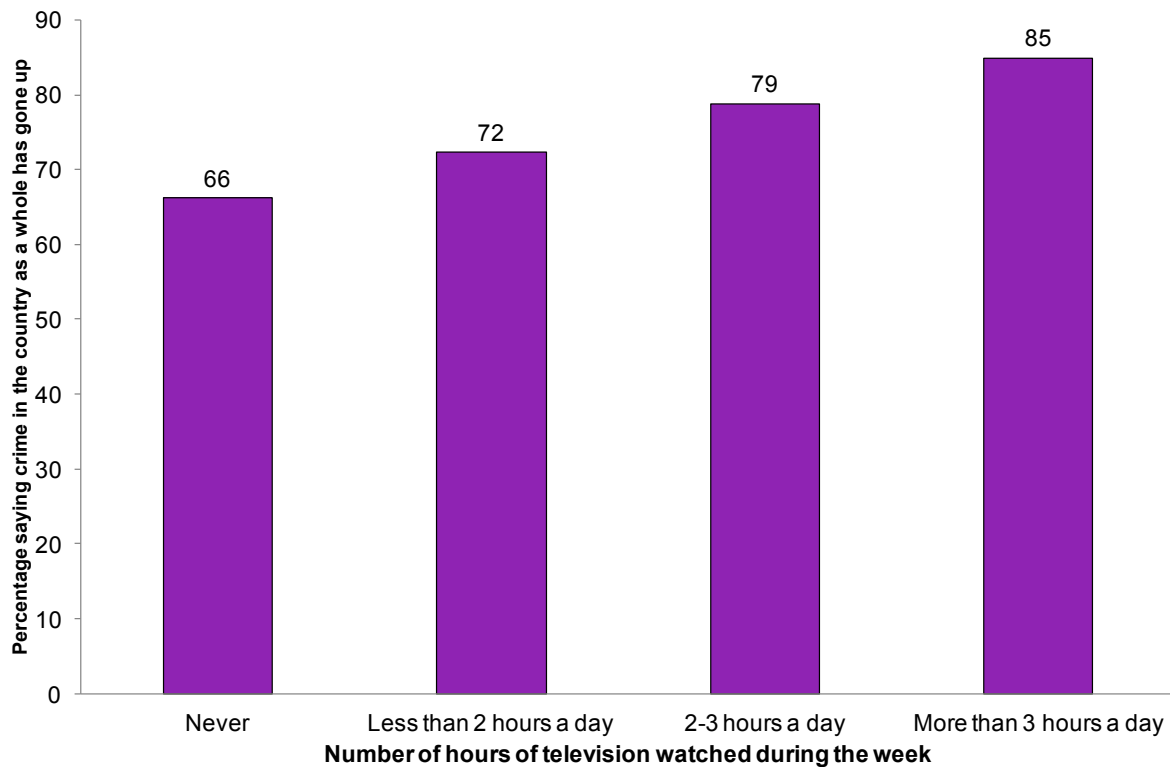
7 'Popular' newspapers consist of The Sun, The Daily Mirror, The Daily Mail, The Daily Express and The Daily Star.

8 'Broadsheet' newspapers consist of The Daily Telegraph, The Guardian, The Independent, The Times and The Financial Times.

Figure 3.2 Television news channels and perceptions of crime, 2009/10 BCS



The 2009/10 BCS also included a question on frequency of television watching. Fifty-seven per cent said that they watched television for less than three hours a day and 43 per cent said that they watched television for more than three hours a day. Those that said they watched television for more than three hours a day were more likely to think that crime had gone up in the country as a whole over the past few years (85%) compared to people that said they watched less than three hours a day (76%). Those who said that they never watched television or didn't own a television were the least likely to think that crime had gone up (66%; Figure 3.3 and Table 3.05).

**Figure 3.3 Amount of television watched and perceptions of crime, 2009/10 BCS**

These figures appear to reinforce the results above, that media consumption is associated with the perception that crime is increasing in the country as a whole. In addition, there was a relationship between the style of media used by respondents and their perceptions of crime. However, it is not possible to identify the direction or nature of this relationship. While respondents do state that their opinions are influenced by television and newspapers, it is possible that these factors may reflect other social and demographic factors which are also related to perceptions. In addition, it may be the case that rather than a person's choice of newspaper or television channel influences their perception of crime the reverse is the case, i.e. readers chose media that reflect their own pre-existing views.<sup>9</sup>

### 3.6 OFFICIAL STATISTICS

New questions were added to the 2010/11 BCS to assess levels of trust in official statistics. Respondents are asked about their opinions on official crime statistics and whether they trust those produced by the Home Office. While these generally show trust in Home Office crime statistics to be higher than other surveys have shown (see [Bailey et al.](#), 2010, discussed below), it is possible that responses may be influenced by respondents knowing that they are being interviewed on behalf of the Home Office. Social desirability, where the respondent answers in a way that is considered most socially acceptable, may also have an influence, making respondents more likely to say that they have used and trust official statistics. In addition, it is possible that non-responders refuse to take part in the BCS due to distrust in official statistics, although it is not possible to identify the extent to which this is the case. In any of these situations, BCS figures for the level of trust in Home Office statistics may be an overestimate.

Around a third (36%) of respondents said that they take notice of official crime statistics when they are published. Overall levels of trust in crime statistics were mixed, with 38 per cent of adults saying that they trusted that crime figures published by the Home Office gave a true picture of what is happening

<sup>9</sup> The relationship between newspaper readership and views was explored in a study by [Duffy and Rowden \(2005\)](#).

to crime and 34 per cent saying that they distrusted the figures. The remaining 28 per cent said that they neither trusted nor distrusted them. As expected, trust was higher among those saying they take notice of official statistics (46%) than those saying they don't take any notice (34%; Table 3a).

Another study of trust in official statistics showed trust in crime statistics (inferred from asking about trust in domestic burglary figures) were similar to levels of trust in figures from other government departments such as population, unemployment, cost of living and hospital waiting figures ([Bailey et al.](#), 2010).

**Table 3a Trust in official statistics by attention paid to them, 2010/11 BCS**

<b>Percentages</b>		<b>England and Wales, adults aged 16 and over, 2010/11 BCS</b>	
	Take notice of official statistics	Do not take notice of official statistics	<b>Overall</b>
<i>Percentage with level of trust in official statistics:</i>			
Trust	46	34	<b>38</b>
Neither trust nor distrust	19	34	<b>28</b>
Distrust	35	32	<b>34</b>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	8,355	14,344	<b>22,755</b>

Respondents are asked to give reasons for their trust or distrust in official crime statistics. The most common reasons given that implied distrust in statistics were that crimes are difficult to count, define or measure (18%), the figures are misrepresented or spun by politicians (16%), figures alone don't tell the whole story (15%) and the Home Office/Government can't be trusted to produce figures (15%; Table 3.06).

Of the reasons for trusting crime statistics, the most common was that the Home Office/Government can be trusted to produce the figures (16%), similar to the number who expressed the opposite opinion. Other reasons given for trusting official statistics included having heard or read something good about the figures (4%) and trust from personal experience (4%).

Trust in official statistics is related to perceptions of crime. Respondents who trusted official statistics were nearly three times as likely to think that crime had gone down nationally over the last few years as those who distrusted official statistics (11% compared with 4%; Table 3b).

**Table 3b Trust in official statistics by perceptions of crime, 2010/11 BCS**

<b>Percentages</b>		<b>England and Wales, adults aged 16 and over, 2010/11 BCS</b>		
	Trust official statistics	Neither trust nor distrust official statistics	Distrust official statistics	
<i>Percentage with perception about crime:</i>				
Crime has gone up	66	73	80	
Crime has stayed the same	23	22	16	
Crime has gone down	11	5	4	
<i>Unweighted base</i>	8,216	6,353	7,993	

Respondents to the 2010/11 BCS were asked whether they agreed or disagreed that each of politicians, the Home Office, the media and the police present crime figures in a fair and balanced

way. According to the 2010/11 BCS, respondents were most likely to agree that this was true of the police (47%) and least likely to agree that this was true of politicians (14%; Table 3.07).

When looking at the difference between those who agreed or disagreed with each statement, it appears that the police are most trusted (24 percentage points more agreeing than disagreeing) and politicians are least trusted (46 percentage points less agreeing than disagreeing; Table 3.07). These findings are in line with other research on public confidence in official statistics which asked respondents to rate how much they trusted figures from various institutions on a scale from zero to ten (where zero meant do not trust at all and ten meant trust completely). NHS figures were the most highly trusted, with a mean score of 7.14. Police figures had a mean score of 6.33 and were more trusted than figures produced by the civil service (5.48) and government (4.40; [Bailey et al.](#), 2010).

### 3.7 CRIME MAPS

From January 2011, all police forces have been required to supply street-level crime data to a central portal (<http://www.police.uk>). These data are applied to maps which act as another source of information for the public to form opinions about crime in their local area. Prior to this, forces published this information on their own websites at neighbourhood level, typically wards, and national crime maps were also available through a central portal hosted by the National Policing Improvement Agency (<http://www.npia.police.uk/>).<sup>10</sup> Therefore, in the 2010/11 BCS where interviews were conducted between April 2010 and March 2011, the majority of respondents answering questions about crime maps would have been referring to this older form of information. Figures for overall awareness and use of online crime maps have been published previously ([Chaplin et al.](#), 2011) and showed that according to the 2010/11 BCS, 15 per cent of people were aware of crime maps and four per cent had looked at or used crime maps in the last 12 months.

Analysis of the 2010/11 BCS shows that use of crime maps was related to perceptions of the crime rate in the local area. Overall, respondents who had looked at crime maps in the last 12 months were more likely to perceive that crime in their local area was below average than those who hadn't (59% compared with 49%).

In this context, one factor that is important to consider is how respondent perceptions relate to objective measures of crime locally and whether these are more closely aligned as a result of using crime maps. To judge this, respondent perceptions were classified as either being 'more closely aligned' or 'less closely aligned' according to the model below:

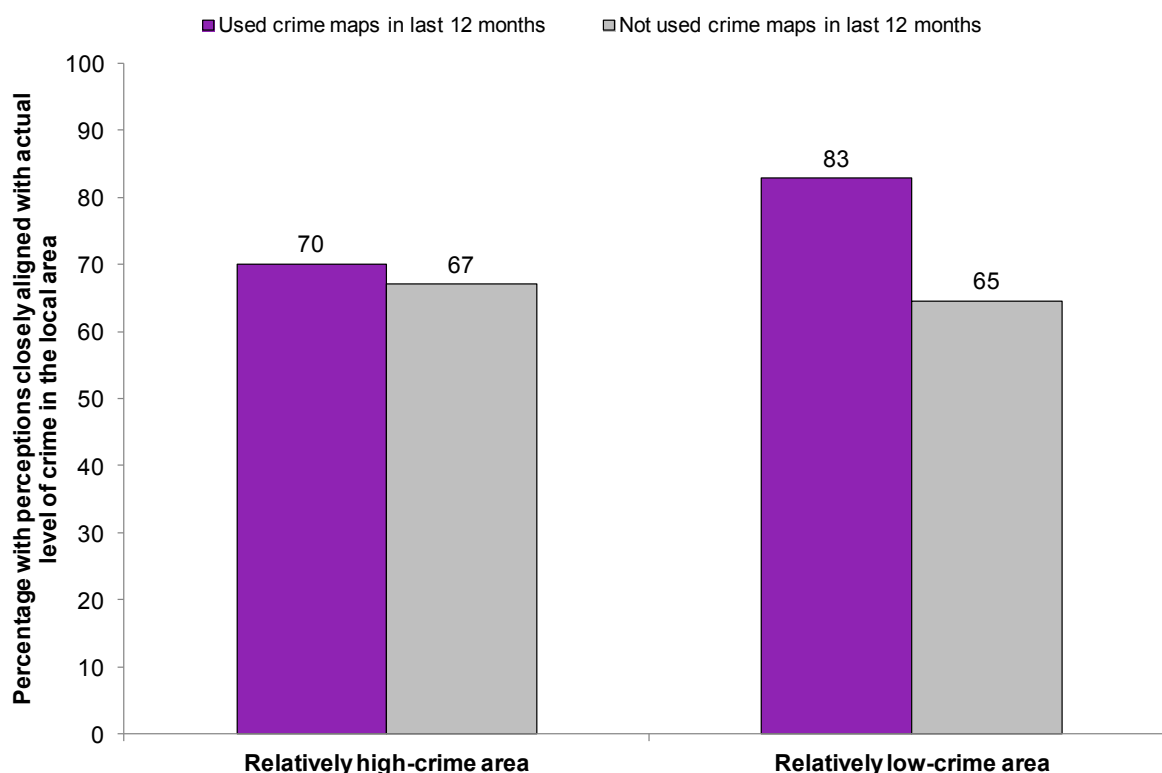
	Low level of crime perceived in the local area <sup>1</sup>	High level of crime perceived in the local area <sup>1</sup>
<b>Respondent lives in a relatively low-crime area</b> (Area ranked within the bottom half of the Crime domain of the English Indices of Deprivation <sup>2</sup> )	More closely aligned	Less closely aligned
<b>Respondent lives in a relatively high-crime area</b> (Area ranked within the top half of the Crime domain of the English Indices of Deprivation <sup>2</sup> )	Less closely aligned	More closely aligned

1. Respondents are classified as perceiving a low level of crime in the local area if they said the local crime rate was 'lower than average'. Respondents are classified as perceiving a high level of crime in the local area if they said the local crime rate was 'about average' or 'higher than average'. See Section 3.3 for explanation.
2. Crime levels measured by the Crime domain of the English Indices of Deprivation (2010). 'Relatively low-crime' and 'relatively high-crime' areas include those ranked within the bottom 50% and top 50% of the Crime domain respectively.

<sup>10</sup> Neither wards nor street-level crime data are necessarily coterminous with ONS Output Area boundaries used by the English Indices of Deprivation nor the respondent's definition of 'local area' or 'within 15-minutes walk of here' used in the BCS.

Respondent perceptions about relative levels of crime in their local area are reasonably good, with two-thirds (66%) holding views closely aligned to objective measures of crime. This did not vary significantly by whether the views were held about a relatively low or relatively high-crime area (65% and 67% respectively). However, for those living in relatively low-crime areas, those who had used crime maps in the last 12 months were more likely to hold views closely aligned with objective measures of crime in their local area than those who hadn't (83% compared with 65%). There was no significant difference in the alignment of perceptions between those who had and those who had not used crime maps in relatively high-crime areas (Figure 3.4).

**Figure 3.4 The relationship between the use of crime maps, perceptions and objective measures of crime in the local area, 2010/11 BCS**



This result shows why, overall, crime map usage is associated with a perception of crime in the local area being low. Crime map usage is associated with an increased alignment of perceptions with objective crime measures (i.e. lower perceived level of crime) in relatively low-crime areas, and no difference in relatively high-crime areas. [Quinton](#) (2011) found that, in a randomised control trial, people who had been provided with information on crime in their local area had more positive perceptions of crime and the police, a finding supported by the BCS. This research also showed that information was not associated with an increase in fear of crime, a similar finding to that from the BCS, and that crime map users in high-crime areas did not perceive a higher level of crime in the local area. Quinton did, however, find that information provided reassurance to those in high-crime areas, something that was not seen in these results from the BCS.

One important point to note in the context of this analysis is that it is not necessarily crime maps themselves that have a direct effect on perceptions of crime. Users of crime maps may differ in other ways that cause them to perceive low levels of crime in the local area. Crime map use may also be a measure of people with a general interest in crime who also use information from other sources to form an opinion. In either case, the use of crime maps could be seen as an indication of people with access to information on crime in the local area.

### 3.8 EXPERIENCE OF VICTIMISATION

As well as the various sources of information covered above, respondent perceptions of crime rates will be influenced by their own experience of crime. Previous analysis has shown that victims of crime<sup>11</sup> are more likely to think that crime has increased locally over the last few years (Flatley *et al.*, 2010). The analysis below looks into this further by examining how the location of victimisation is related to perceptions of local and national crime rates.

According to the 2010/11 BCS, those who were victims of crime in the local area were around twice as likely as non-victims to say that the local crime rate was higher than average (19% compared to 8%). Those who had been victims of crime elsewhere in England and Wales, but not in the local area, were only slightly more likely than non-victims to say that the local crime rate was above average (11% compared to 8%). In addition, those who had been victims of crime in the local area were less likely to say that the local crime rate was lower than average (37%) compared to those who had been victims elsewhere in England and Wales or non-victims (52% and 54% respectively; Table 3c).

**Table 3c Perceptions of the local crime rate by experience of victimisation, 2010/11 BCS**

Percentages	England and Wales, adults aged 16 and over, 2010/11 BCS		
	Victim of crime in the local area	Victim elsewhere in England and Wales	Non-victim
<i>Percentage saying crime in the local area compared to nationally is:</i>			
Higher than average	19	11	8
About average	44	37	38
Lower than average	37	52	54
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>5,444</i>	<i>1,476</i>	<i>27,466</i>

1. If a respondent was a victim of crime in the local area and elsewhere, victimisation in the local area takes priority.

The overall pattern of association between victimisation and perceptions of crime therefore appears to be that, while those who had been victims of crime in the local area perceived a higher local crime rate, those who had been victims elsewhere held similar views to non-victims. Although it is not possible to identify a direct causal effect for this relationship, it may indicate that victims take into account the location of their victimisation in forming perceptions of crime levels in the local area.

It might be expected that those who had been victims of crime outside their local area would perceive a higher level of crime nationally and therefore, due to the comparative nature of the question, would be more likely to think that crime locally was lower than average. The fact that this is not the case may be a further indication that respondent perceptions of crime nationally are high and so victimisation reinforces rather than changes this view. In addition, those who had been victims of crime in the local area were more likely than those who were victims elsewhere or non-victims to think that crime in the local area was 'about average' (44% compared with 37% and 38% respectively). This could again be a reflection of respondents perceiving crime to be high nationally and therefore experiencing crime locally leads respondents to believe that crime in the local area is similar to the country as a whole.

Interestingly, experience of victimisation makes no difference to the alignment of respondent perceptions with actual levels of crime<sup>12</sup>, with similar proportions of victims locally, victims elsewhere and non-victims holding perceptions of crime that were aligned with objective measures of crime (69%, 66% and 66% respectively). This suggests that the fact that victims perceive a higher level of crime locally is because in general they live in higher crime areas, which would be expected. It may also indicate that victimisation does not disproportionately affect perceptions of crime.

11 In the BCS, victims of crime are those respondents who had been victims in the 12 months prior to interview.

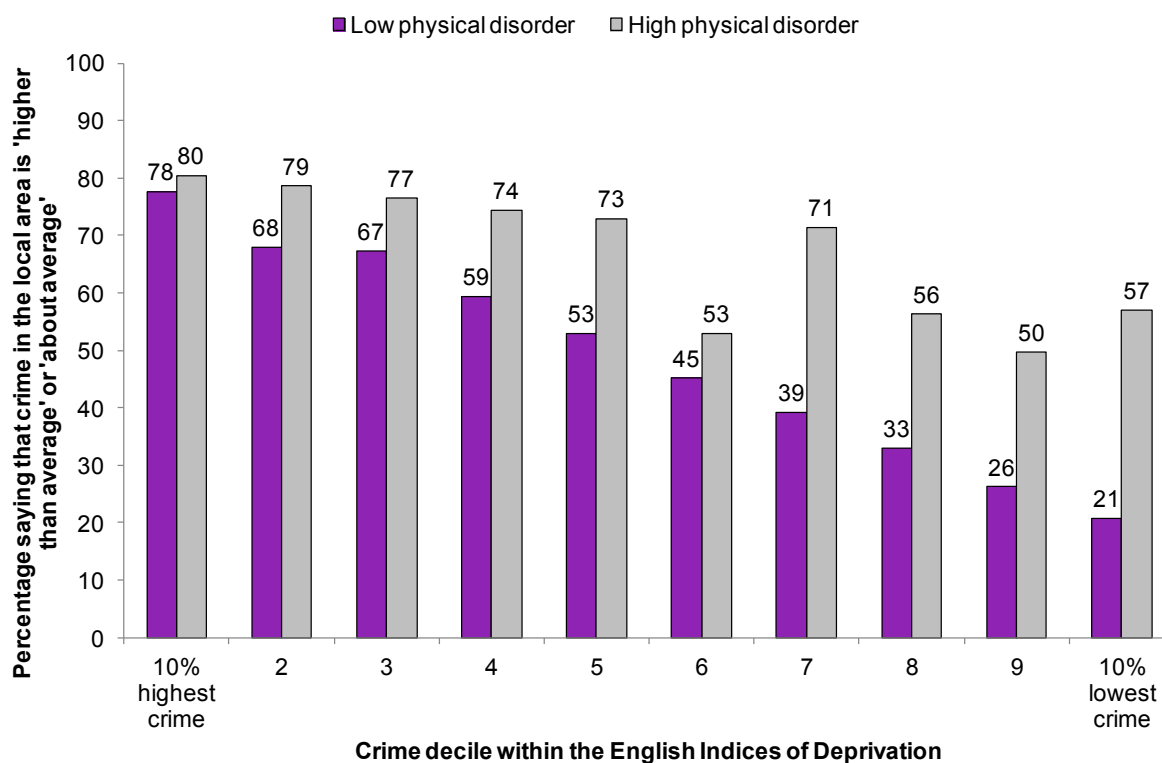
12 This is based on the model in section 3.7.

### 3.9 LOCAL ENVIRONMENT

As well as crime levels, BCS respondents and interviewers are also asked about other features of the local area. These include questions on the local community and problems related to anti-social behaviour. Although it is not possible to check whether conditions in the local environment lead directly to crime, the BCS can be used to examine whether respondents' perceptions of crime are related to conditions in the local area.

BCS interviewers provide observational data on the level of physical disorder in the immediate area around respondents' homes. This is then classified as a 'high' or 'low' level of physical disorder.<sup>13</sup> Analysis of the 2010/11 BCS shows that the level of physical disorder in the local area is closely related to perceptions of crime. Overall, respondents living in areas of high physical disorder were more likely to perceive crime in the local area to be 'higher than average' or 'about average' than those in an area of low physical disorder (73% compared with 48%). Although this effect can be seen across both high and low-crime areas, the difference in perceptions by the level of physical disorder in the local area was generally greater in low-crime areas (Figure 3.5).

**Figure 3.5 Perceptions of crime in the local area by level of physical disorder in respondent's immediate area by Crime domain of the English Indices of Deprivation, 2010/11 BCS**



Respondents to the BCS were also asked about other problems in their local area related to low-level crime and anti-social behaviour.<sup>14</sup> For each of the individual issues asked about, respondents who said that it was a problem in their local area were more likely to perceive that there was a high level of crime in the local area than those who said that it was not a problem (Figure 3.6). In addition, while the majority of respondents (63%) reported either no problems or only one problem in the local area,

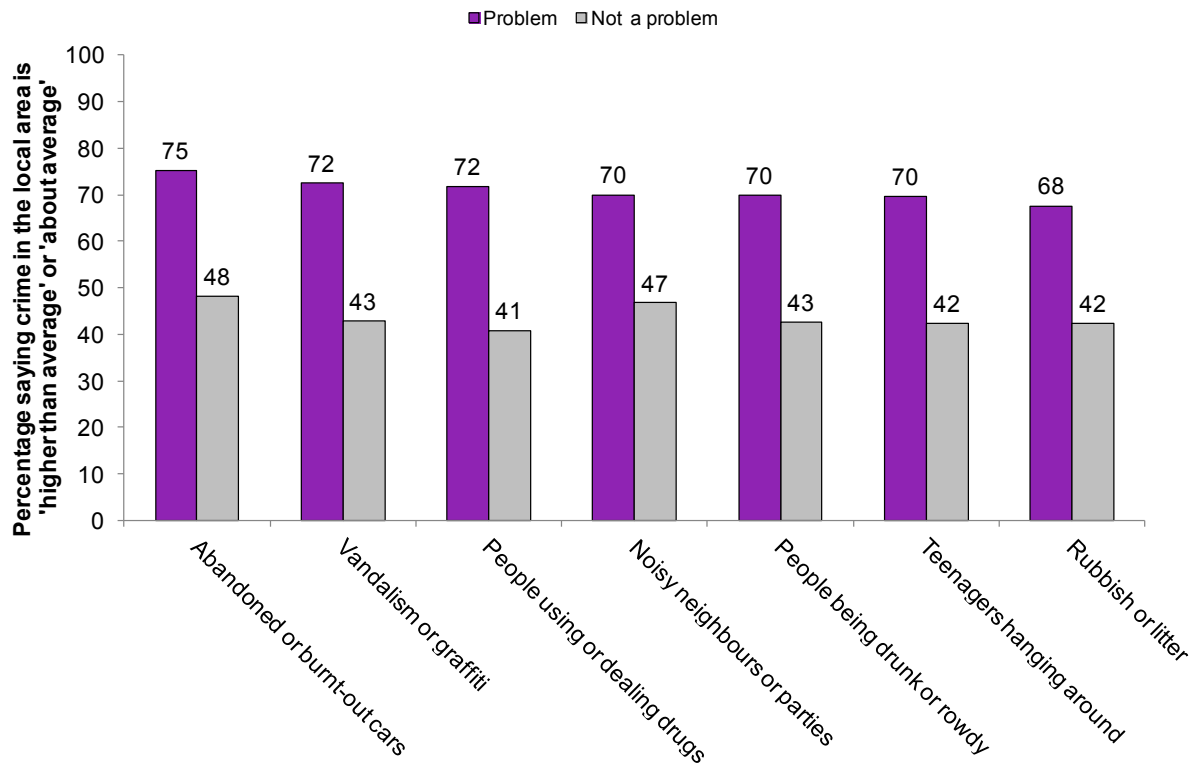
<sup>13</sup> See the [User Guide](#) for details of how this is classified.

<sup>14</sup> Problems asked about are: noisy neighbours or loud parties, teenagers hanging around on the streets, rubbish or litter lying around, vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property or vehicles, people using or dealing drugs, people being drunk or rowdy in public places and abandoned or burnt-out cars.

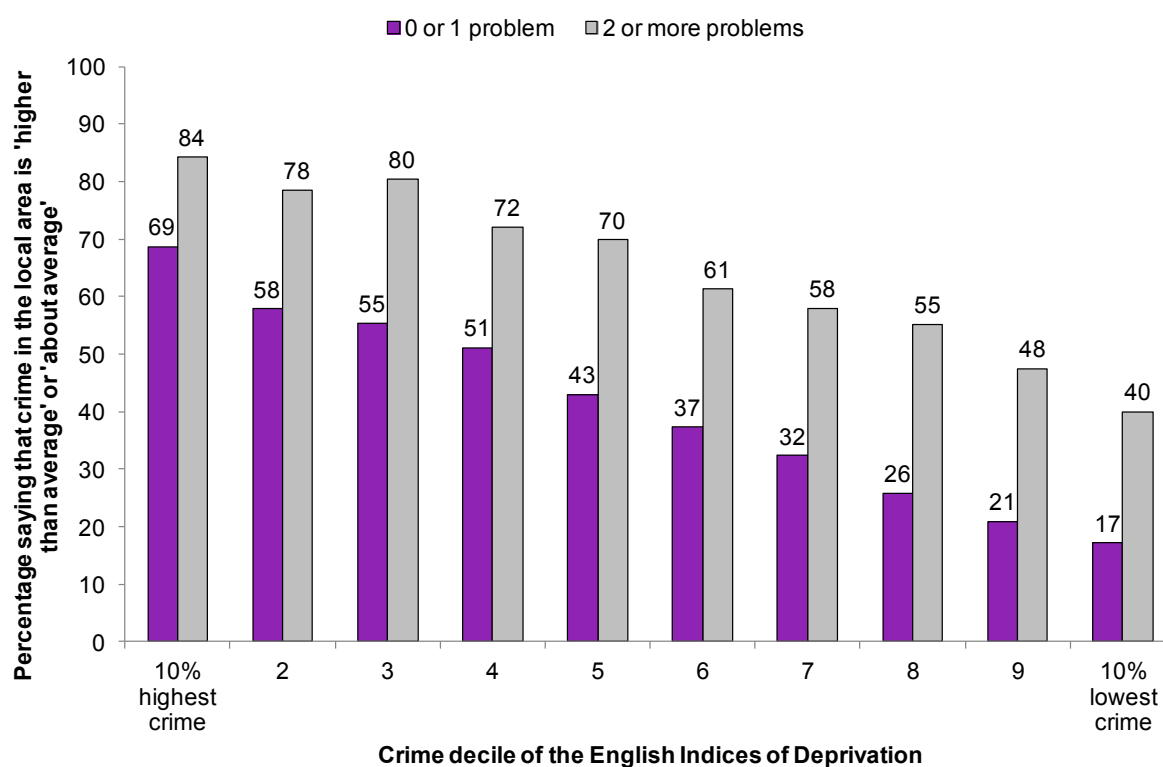


those who did report two or more problems were around twice as likely to say that crime in the local area was 'about average' or 'above average' than those who reported fewer than two (70% compared with 37%). As well as being reflected across both high and low-crime areas, the relationship between perceptions of problems in the local area and perceptions of crime appeared very similar across all types of area and did not seem to be stronger in low-crime areas, as with the level of physical disorder in the local area (Figure 3.7).

**Figure 3.6 Perceptions of crime by problems in the local area, 2010/11 BCS**



**Figure 3.7 Perceptions of crime in the local area by number of problems in the local area by Crime domain of the English Indices of Deprivation, 2010/11 BCS**



Both of these findings suggest that perceptions of crime levels are strongly related to environmental conditions in the local area. This could be because respondents in areas of high physical disorder or with other problems simply perceive more crime, or that where people perceive problems in the local area, they may view these as crimes. It may also be that respondent perceptions are in line with crime as measured by the English Indices of Deprivation but that even in areas where crime is relatively low there are small pockets of high physical disorder and other problems which are also associated with high levels of crime. In either case, the strong association between perceptions of crime and the local environment across both high and low-crime areas indicates that these conditions are highly localised and that across all parts of England and Wales there are small areas where a poor local environment is associated with people perceiving a high level of crime.

One issue with this analysis is that these relationships do not necessarily imply causality. While it could be hypothesised that a person's perception of their local environment influences their perceptions of crime levels, they may both reflect the same thing, which is a respondent's general feeling about the local area. Respondents who have a general negative feeling about their local area are likely to answer negatively across several questions, and therefore may describe crime in the local area as high and also say that there are a number of problems in the local area. However, the measure of physical disorder around the respondent's property is independently measured by a BCS interviewer and does show an association with perceptions of crime, suggesting there is more to these relationships than a general discontent among some respondents.

### 3.10 CONCLUSION

For the crime types and population it covers, the BCS has shown that crime in England and Wales has fallen considerably since 1995, a trend which is largely backed up by recorded crime statistics. However, the BCS has consistently shown that the overall perception is that crime is increasing in the country as a whole (Chaplin *et al.*, 2011). In contrast to this, respondent perceptions of relative levels

of crime in their local area vary in close alignment with crime as measured by statistical sources, such as the Crime domain of the English Indices of Deprivation. Differences in the sources of information used by respondents to obtain information on both the national and local crime rate may partly explain this discrepancy.

The perception that the crime rate in the local area had gone down over the last few years was associated with respondents' own personal experiences, including experience of victimisation and other conditions present in the local environment. In contrast, the prevailing view about the national crime rate, that it has increased, was associated with the media usage and increased media consumption, particularly of tabloid media.

The use of other sources of information was also related to perceptions. The use of and trust in official statistics was associated with the view that crime nationally had decreased. The use of crime maps was associated with closer alignment of perceptions of crime in the local area with objective measures of crime. These sources were also identified by respondents as generally reliable. In contrast, respondents were less likely to agree that the media and politicians present crime figures in a fair and balanced way.

It may be that in fact personal experience and access to information are the key reasons for differences in the perceived level of crime locally and nationally. Respondents' personal experiences reflect the level of crime reported in official statistics and sources of information, such as crime maps from the police, which are generally perceived to be reliable. However, by its nature, personal experience is most closely related with perceptions of the local area. Nationally, the main source of information for respondents is the media, associated with a higher perceived crime rate, and both newspapers and television news have a far larger audience than official statistics or crime maps. Crime is naturally newsworthy, particularly serious crime. The most serious types of crime are however, generally low in volume, leading to an imbalance in the level of news coverage and their prevalence in society. This is supported by results from the 2009/10 BCS which showed that the greatest discrepancies between national and local perceptions of crime were for the more serious types but also relatively low volume crimes: gun and knife crime ([Flatley et al., 2010](#)). It is understandably difficult for the public to distinguish between the amount of crime reported on in the media and the amount of crime there is nationally. Therefore, despite viewing the media as an unreliable source of information, for many respondents its use is associated with increased perceptions of crime nationally as it is their only source of information.

It is also important to consider that crimes are difficult to measure and define. Crime as defined in official statistics may not reflect respondent definitions of crime. The results above show that respondents who perceive problems related to anti-social behaviour in their local area, which may not be included in the overall BCS count of crime, are more likely to perceive a high level of crime in the local area. In addition, the 2009/10 BCS showed that bank and credit card fraud was the crime type most likely to be perceived as increasing locally and 90 per cent of respondents thought it was increasing nationally ([Flatley et al., 2010](#)). This crime type, however, is not included in the overall BCS count of crime. These possible differences in definitions of crime may have an effect on the difference between perceived and measured levels of crime.

**Table 3.01 Sources of perceptions of changes in crime in country as a whole over the past few years**

<b>Percentages</b>		<b>England and Wales, adults aged 16 and over, 2010/11 BCS</b>				
	<b>Source influenced perception of change in national crime level</b>	Source influenced perception that crime has gone up	Source influenced perception that crime has stayed the same	Source influenced perception that crime has gone down	Statistically significant difference in influence on perception that crime has gone <u>up</u> or <u>down</u>	
News programmes on TV/radio	<b>59</b>	62	49	50	**	
Local newspapers	<b>32</b>	35	27	23	**	
Tabloid newspapers	<b>30</b>	35	15	16	**	
Word of mouth/information from other people	<b>28</b>	29	27	20	**	
Personal experience	<b>24</b>	20	38	25	**	
Broadsheet newspapers	<b>22</b>	21	20	31	**	
TV documentaries	<b>21</b>	23	12	15	**	
Relatives' and/or friends' experiences	<b>18</b>	18	21	13	**	
Radio programmes	<b>13</b>	13	13	16	**	
Internet/world-wide-web	<b>12</b>	12	12	16	**	
Some other source	<b>1</b>	1	1	3	**	
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<b>17,420</b>	13,166	3,229	1,025		

**Table 3.02 Sources of perceptions of changes in crime in local area over the past few years**

<b>Percentages</b>		<b>England and Wales, adults aged 16 and over, 2010/11 BCS</b>				
	<b>Source influenced perception of change in local crime level</b>	Source influenced perception that crime has gone up	Source influenced perception that crime has stayed the same	Source influenced perception that crime has gone down	Statistically significant difference in influence on perception that crime has gone <u>up</u> or <u>down</u>	
Local newspapers	<b>47</b>	54	43	41	**	
Word of mouth/information from other people	<b>44</b>	49	42	40	**	
Personal experience	<b>41</b>	35	45	44	**	
News programmes on TV/radio	<b>26</b>	29	23	23	**	
Relatives' and/or friends' experiences	<b>24</b>	30	22	18	**	
Tabloid newspapers	<b>8</b>	12	6	6	**	
Broadsheet newspapers	<b>8</b>	10	6	8		
TV documentaries	<b>7</b>	10	5	6	**	
Radio programmes	<b>7</b>	9	6	8		
Internet/world-wide-web	<b>5</b>	6	5	5		
Information from the police <sup>1</sup>	<b>0</b>	0	1	1	**	
Some other source	<b>1</b>	1	1	3	**	
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<b>16,905</b>	6,287	9,094	1,524		

1. Question on information about the police was only asked about perceptions of crime in the local area.

**Table 3.03 Newspaper readership and perceptions of crime in country as a whole**

<b>Percentages</b>		<b>England and Wales, adults aged 16 and over, 2010/11 BCS</b>		
	Percentage saying crime has gone up	Percentage saying crime has stayed the same	Percentage saying crime has gone down	<i>Unweighted base</i>
<b>'Popular' newspapers</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>23,021</b>
The Daily Express	83	13	4	1,885
The Daily Mail	81	15	4	7,623
The Daily Star	81	13	6	994
The Sun	80	15	5	8,762
The Daily Mirror	79	15	6	3,757
<b>'Broadsheet' newspapers</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>9,057</b>
The Daily Telegraph	74	20	6	2,871
The Times	60	29	11	2,839
The Financial Times	58	30	12	298
The Independent	56	31	13	878
The Guardian	46	37	17	2,171
No newspaper	73	21	6	9,467
No one newspaper in particular	72	20	8	324
Some other national newspaper	71	22	7	861

**Table 3.04 Television news channel watched most often and perceptions of crime**

Percentages	England and Wales, adults aged 16 and over, 2010/11 BCS			
	Percentage saying crime in country as a whole has gone up	Percentage saying crime in country as a whole has stayed the same	Percentage saying crime in country as a whole has gone down	Unweighted base
ITV	88	9	3	8,040
Sky	82	13	5	1,645
BBC	78	17	5	19,117
Channel 5	73	19	8	170
Channel 4	69	23	8	754
Other satellite/cable	65	27	8	160

**Table 3.05 Amount of television watched and perceptions of crime**

Percentages	England and Wales, adults aged 16 and over, 2010/11 BCS			
	Percentage saying crime in country as a whole has gone up	Percentage saying crime in country as a whole has stayed the same	Percentage saying crime in country as a whole has gone down	Unweighted base
More than 3 hours a day	85	11	4	15,151
2-3 hours a day	79	17	5	11,293
Less than 2 hours a day	72	21	6	6,180
Never	66	27	7	436

**Table 3.06 Reasons for trust or distrust in official crime statistics<sup>1</sup>**

<b>Percentages</b>	<b>England and Wales, adults aged 16 and over, 2010/11 BCS</b>
Crimes are <u>difficult</u> to count/measure/define	18
Figures alone don't tell whole story	15
Crimes are <u>easy</u> to measure/count/define	3
Home Office/Government <u>can</u> be trusted to produce figures	16
Home Office/Government <u>can't</u> be trusted to produce figures	15
Figures are misrepresented/spun by <u>politicians</u>	16
Figures are misrepresented/spun by <u>the media</u>	9
Figures are misrepresented/spun ( <u>in general</u> )	3
<u>Don't trust</u> figures from personal experience	7
<u>Trust</u> figures from personal experience	4
Heard/read something <u>good</u> about the figures	4
Heard/read something <u>bad</u> about the figures	4
Mistrust of all official figures	1
Impression of crime is different to the official figures	1
Don't know a lot about the figures	3
Another reason	4
Don't know	6
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>24,498</i>

1. Respondents were asked what their reasons were for saying that they trust or distrust official crime statistics and could give more than one response.

**Table 3.07 Attitudes towards presentation of crime statistics by politicians, the Home Office, the media and the police**

<b>Percentages</b>	<b>England and Wales, adults aged 16 and over, 2010/11 BCS</b>				
	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	<b>Difference between proportion agreeing and disagreeing</b>	<i>Unweighted base</i>
The police present crime figures in a fair and balanced way	47	30	23	<b>24</b>	22,794
The Home Office present crime figures in a fair and balanced way	37	35	28	<b>9</b>	22,679
The media present crime figures in a fair and balanced way	22	24	54	<b>-32</b>	23,010
Politicians present crime figures in a fair and balanced way	14	27	60	<b>-46</b>	22,889

1. The order of these questions was randomised for each respondent.



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Copies of recent Home Office publications based on the British Crime Survey, including reports that report jointly on the BCS and police recorded crime, can be downloaded from:

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/science-research-statistics/research-statistics/>