



Statistical News Release

Public confidence in the Police and their local partners: results from the British Crime Survey year ending September 2008

A new set of questions was included in the British Crime Survey (BCS) from October 2007 relating to levels of confidence in the police working with local agencies to tackle the anti-social behaviour and crime issues that matter in the local area. These were developed for use in the new 'Making Communities Safer' Public Service Agreement (PSA 23).

Aggregate figures for England and Wales relating to the first year of data collection (October 2007 to September 2008) were published in January 2009 (see Home Office Statistical Bulletin 1/09, *Crime in England and Wales Quarterly update to September 2008*). Today a more detailed breakdown is provided at police force area level. These figures will form the baseline for new targets set by the Home Secretary for each police force to improve the level of public confidence.

Table 1 shows the percentage of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that 'The police and local council are dealing with the anti-social behaviour and crime issues that matter in this area'¹. BCS interviews in the 12 months to September 2008 showed that 46 per cent of people agreed with this question. There was some variation between police forces, however less than a quarter had estimates that were statistically significantly different from the average for England and Wales.

Box 1 Confidence Intervals and Statistical Significance

BCS estimates are based on a representative sample of the population aged 16 or over. Any sample survey may produce estimates that differ from the figures that would have been obtained if the whole population had been interviewed. The size of this difference depends on the sample size, the size and variability of the estimate and the design of the survey. We are able to calculate the range of values between which the population figure is estimated to lie (confidence interval). At the 95 per cent confidence level when assessing the results of a single survey it is assumed that there is a one in 20 chance that the true population value will fall outside the 95 per cent confidence interval calculated for the survey estimate.

The changes in estimates between years of the survey may occur by chance. In other words, the difference may be simply due to which adults were randomly selected for interview. We are also able to measure whether this is likely to be the case using standard statistical tests. Survey results that are statistically significant at the five per cent level, according to these tests, are identified by asterisks in the table.

¹ The full range of possible responses for this question is strongly agree, tend to agree, neither agree nor disagree, tend to disagree and strongly disagree.

Table 1 Confidence in police and local councils in dealing with ASB and crime by police force area

BCS interviews year to September 2008				
	Confidence in police and local councils dealing with issues (%)	Statistically significantly different from England and Wales	Confidence intervals +/-	<i>Unweighted base¹</i>
Avon & Somerset	40.6		5.3	843
Bedfordshire	45.9		5.5	916
Cambridgeshire	44.1		4.4	937
Cheshire	43.5		4.7	944
Cleveland	54.0	**↑	4.0	860
Cumbria	52.8	**↑	4.5	998
Derbyshire	45.5		4.6	969
Devon & Cornwall	53.2	**↑	5.2	890
Dorset	49.4		4.6	942
Durham	51.3	**↑	3.8	957
Dyfed Powys	43.8		4.0	997
Essex	45.8		5.2	935
Gloucestershire	45.8		4.3	985
Greater Manchester	43.3		3.3	1,393
Gwent	39.3	**↓	5.3	966
Hampshire	47.3		3.8	918
Hertfordshire	49.7		3.9	971
Humberside	39.2	**↓	5.3	945
Kent	44.2		4.5	938
Lancashire	51.0		5.4	850
Leicestershire	46.3		4.5	910
Lincolnshire	38.0	**↓	4.9	970
Merseyside	50.9		6.0	813
Metropolitan/City of London	47.4		3.0	3,196
Norfolk	48.2		4.3	868
North Wales	44.7		4.7	889
North Yorkshire	50.8		5.1	883
Northamptonshire	41.1	**↓	4.3	1,090
Northumbria	48.8		4.0	892
Nottinghamshire	43.6		4.5	1,047
South Wales	38.7	**↓	5.4	991
South Yorkshire	41.4		4.9	979
Staffordshire	46.9		4.2	954
Suffolk	50.9		4.9	904
Surrey	51.9	**↑	4.9	901
Sussex	45.0		4.9	979
Thames Valley	46.0		4.1	1,090
Warwickshire	41.7		4.8	954
West Mercia	42.5		6.5	893
West Midlands	46.2		4.9	1,354
West Yorkshire	44.1		4.3	1,106
Wiltshire	41.1		6.0	955
England and Wales	46.0		0.8	42,772

1. Number of people interviewed

2. Arrows indicate a statistically significant difference compared with England and Wales. ↑ = higher than national average. ↓ = Lower than national average.

Notes for editors

1. These British Crime Survey (BCS) figures are based on interviews with adults aged 16 or over living in private households in England and Wales conducted between October 2007 and September 2008 (BCS year ending September 2008).
2. The BCS fieldwork was carried out by BMRB Social Research. In the year ending September 2008 the BCS had a nationally representative sample with a response rate of 76 per cent². Further information about the BCS and access to recent publications can be found at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/bcs1.html>.
3. A fuller analysis examining the relationship between perceptions of the police and socio-demographic characteristics is planned for release on 23rd April 2009. In particular this publication will focus on factors strongly associated with confidence in local agencies and the police, using multivariate analysis, as well as reviewing the variation in police perception measures by various socio-demographic factors.

This Statistical News Release is a National Statistics output produced to the highest professional standards and free from political interference. It has been produced by statisticians working in the Home Office Statistics Unit. The governance arrangements in the Home Office for statistics were strengthened on 1 April 2008 to place the statistical teams under the direct line management of a Chief Statistician, who reports to the National Statistician with respect to all professional statistical matters.

² Based on BCS interviews achieved during the year ending March 2008. The response rate for the year ending September 2008 cannot be calculated as finalised response figures are not yet available.