Research Report

Public Perceptions of Policing in England and Wales 2018

Prepared for: Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services

Prepared by: BMG Research

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1 Executive Summary

1.1 Introduction

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) independently assesses the effectiveness and efficiency of police forces and fire and rescue services. BMG Research were commissioned by HMICFRS to undertake two large-scale surveys of the general public; one to assess current perceptions of the police, and the other to assess current perceptions of the fire and rescue service.

This report presents the findings from the police survey. The study consisted of 17,043 surveys with members of the public. The majority were conducted via online panels, with a small number conducted-face-to-face. More details on the methodology can be seen in section 2.1.

1.2 Overall satisfaction with local police force

- Satisfaction with local police is relatively high. Over three-fifths of respondents (61%) say that they are satisfied, and only 12% are dissatisfied. The proportion of respondents who are satisfied has increased from 2017, however it should be noted that the question was asked a little differently in 2018 and this could have impacted results. Nonetheless, this increase reflects other positive perceptions of local police throughout the survey.
- When asked to provide reasons for why they were satisfied respondents commonly mentioned they thought the police are doing a good job, and recognition that the job was difficult and high pressured.
- Of the small proportion who are dissatisfied, common reasons reported include perceptions of the police not taking action and perceptions of minimal police presence.
- More respondents would speak highly of the police (40%) than would be critical of them (18%).
- The majority of respondents perceive no change in the service provided by their local police force over the past 12 months (58%). A small proportion feel it has got better (8%), whereas almost a quarter perceive it has got worse (22%).

1.3 Perceptions of crime and police handling of crime

- More respondents this year, compared to last, said that crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) is either a very big or quite a big problem in their local area (40%, compared to 30% in 2017).
- A similar proportion (42%) of respondents agree that local police are dealing with the crime and ASB issues that matter to them, while 19% disagree. This, as well as the positive increases in more general perceptions of the police, suggests that while respondents perceive that crime and ASB are increasing, they also feel that their local police are taking action to combat them.
- There is more consensus that online crime is a problem (81%) and most consider it to have got worse over the past 12 months (63% say it is now more of a problem).

Confidence in the local police to effectively deal with online crime has increased (34% are confident, compared to 26% in 2017), although it is still relatively low.

1.4 Confidence in police

- Confidence in the police to effectively deal with a number of situations remains high.
- Respondents were most confident that police would effective in dealing with an emergency (74%), and least confident that the police would be effective in dealing with a non-emergency, however the proportion of respondents who feel confident has increased compared with last year (52%, compared to 47% in 2017).
- There have been smaller increases across nearly all of the other situations measured. However, there has been a decrease in the proportion of respondents who are confident that the police are easy to access or speak to in the event of an emergency (63%, compared to 73% in 2017).

1.5 Police visibility

- It continues to be important to respondents that there is a visible police presence in their area, whether this is on foot (78% say it is important), or in a vehicle (77%).
- Although the majority of respondents have seen a police officer or PCSO on foot at least once in the past year, a sizeable proportion (36%) have not and over a third (35%) say that the frequency of seeing police on foot has decreased compared to 12 months ago. This, in part, explains why nearly half of respondents (48%) are dissatisfied with the frequency they have seen the police on foot in their local area.
- A similar pattern can be seen for police presence in vehicles. Respondents see police in vehicles more often than on foot, although one in five have (20%) not seen any in the past year, which may partly explain the lower number of those dissatisfied with the frequency (35%).
- When asked why it is important to see the police respondents tend to equate police visibility, whether it is on foot or in a vehicle, with crime prevention and feel that a good police presence acts as a deterrent. Some also mention that a police presence is reassuring or gives them peace of mind.

1.6 Contact with the police

- Most respondents (60%) have had no contact with the police in the past year. Where respondents have had contact it is most likely to be as a witness to a crime (11% of all respondents), or as a victim of crime (10% of all respondents).
- Levels of satisfaction following contact with the police remains consistent with previous years, with three in five respondents satisfied with the service they received (61%).
- Respondents who have had contact with the police are most satisfied with the conduct of officers / staff (64%) and are less satisfied with the outcome of their interaction (54%), although this has increased since 2017.
- Two in five respondents who had had contact with their local police felt safer after their most recent contact (38%), and 13% felt less safe. Unsurprisingly, feelings of safety are linked with the nature of the interaction, for example victims are more likely to feel less safe (21%) whereas those at a community event are more likely to say they felt safer after their interaction (47%).

1.7 Legitimacy of the police

- Around two-thirds of respondents agree that their local police force would treat them fairly if they needed to contact them, has their respect and they treat people fairly and with respect.
- Encouragingly, the slight majority now think that their local police have a good reputation most / all of the time (52%), a figure which has increased significantly from 2017 (42%).
- Fewer respondents agree that their local police use physical force and stop and search appropriately, but this is not because a greater proportion disagrees with the statements, rather that they don't know.
- Just over half (51%) of respondents feel that the police use of stop and search is effective in preventing crime. Less than one in six disagree (14%) and an equal number (15%) say they do not know if it is effective.

1.8 Police engagement

- The proportion of respondents who feel informed about what police are doing in their local area has increased (37%, compared to 32% in 2017). However, the majority of respondents (58%) feel that they are not informed.
- There has also been an increase in the proportion of respondents who have been informed about what their local police are doing to tackle crime and ASB; it has risen to 22%, from 11% in 2017. However, the majority of respondents (69%) continue to say they have not been informed.
- Where respondents have been informed about what their local police are doing to tackle crime and ASB, social media is the most common means of communication, particularly Facebook (42%). Leaflets, newspapers, Twitter and email are also commonly used.
- A larger proportion of respondents now say that the police have not been effective at providing advice or guidance to the public in the last 12 months (39%, compared to 25% in 2017), but a smaller proportion this year said that they do not know (26%, compared to 35% in 2017).
- Most respondents continue to be interested in knowing what the local police are doing in their area (81%), and to be interested in a wide variety of topics, but the majority (61%) have not taken any action to find out about or give their views to their local police force.
- Of the small proportion of respondents that have communicated with their local police force, social media is the most common channel (56%), with Facebook being used by 45% of respondents who communicated with their local force.

1.9 Police responsibilities and priorities

- When asked which public service is the most responsible for looking after a range of vulnerable groups, the police were selected as the most responsible for victims of stalking and harassment (65%), missing people (58%) and victims of domestic abuse (43%).
- When asked to choose from a list of crimes police should prioritise respondents were most likely to select dealing with terrorism/extremism (49%), child sexual exploitation/ abuse (46%) and violent crime (41%).

- Commercial/business crimes (27%), online abuse (22%) and ASB/other non-criminal incidents (19%) are seen by respondents as the least important priorities for the police.

2 Introduction

2.1 Background and methodology

Since 2015 HMICFRS has commissioned an annual study into the general public's perceptions of their local police force across England and Wales. The study covers the public's views and experiences of local policing and explores topical policing issues.

This year's survey was undertaken in June and July 2018 by BMG Research and consisted of 17,043 surveys. The majority of the surveys were conducted online with members of online research panels. However, a minority of the surveys (748) were conducted face-to-face with trained interviewers in respondents' homes. 61 surveys were also conducted online via postal invites to the survey. The face-to-face surveys were specifically targeted to groups of the population that are traditionally underrepresented on online panels, and so ensure that the resulting survey sample was as representative of the total adult population of England and Wales as possible.

It is worth noting that previous waves of the research (surveys conducted in 2015, 2016 and 2017) utilised an online panel methodology only. Regression analysis shows that even when demographic differences of the face-to-face sample are controlled for (i.e. age and ethnicity) there are still some differences in responses for face-to-face respondents compared to those who completed the survey online. This supports the inclusion of this group in the sample, but does affect comparability with respondents from previous years. Results have been compared across the years to illustrate any trends in the data, but these trends should be treated as indicative only due to the methodological changes between surveys.

2.2 Notes on this report

The following points should be noted when reading this report:

- Data have been weighted at a national level, based on the criteria of age, gender, GOR (Government Office Region), IMD quartile (Indices of Multiple Deprivation) and ethnicity.
- Unless stated otherwise, all differences noted in this report are statistically significant at a 95% confidence level. This means that there is only a 5% probability that the difference has occurred by chance (a commonly accepted level of probability), rather than being a 'real' difference. Only differences of 5 percentage points or greater have been reported.
- Results are based on all respondents unless otherwise specified. Where results for sub-groups have been used in charts their relevant base sizes are shown in parentheses after the description of the sub group, e.g. Aged 16-24 (1,254).
- In the tables and charts contained in this report a * symbol denotes a proportion that is less than 0.5%, but greater than zero.
- Where results do not sum to 100% this is either due to rounding, or due to multiple responses being allowed for the question.
- The following acronyms are used in this report:

  - IMD – Indices of Multiple Deprivation. This official statistic measures relative deprivation in small areas called lower layer super output areas. For the analysis all areas were divided into 4 quartiles based on their IMD score. References to the 'most deprived' areas in this report pertain to the 25% with the lowest IMD score, while references to the 'least deprived' areas pertain to the 25% with the highest IMD score.
  - BAME (black, Asian and minority ethnic groups).
  - ASB (anti-social behaviour)
  - PCSOs (Police Community Support Officers)

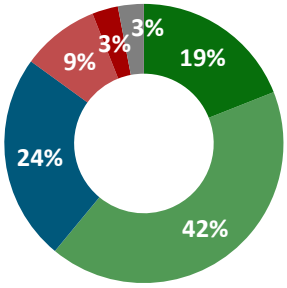
- Throughout this report references have been made to subgroups where their results differ from the total by a statistically significant amount, and this difference is greater than 5 percentage points (see Appendix B: Demographic profile of participants). A number of variables have been taken into account when analysing subgroups:
  - Age
  - Gender
  - Ethnicity
  - Urban / Rural
  - IMD
  - Sexuality
  - Disability
  - Satisfaction with local police force
  - Whether they feel informed about their local police force
  - Interaction with police
  - Reason for last contact
  - Satisfaction with last contact
  - Visibility of police on foot
  - Visibility of police in vehicles
  - Whether they feel informed about crime and ASB in their local area
  - Whether they feel police are dealing with crime and ASB issues
  - Whether they feel people treat people fairly and with respect
  - Whether they feel the police use Stop and Search appropriately
- Where possible, subgroup trends have been compared to similar surveys undertaken in 2016 and 2017.
  - The variables analysed across years are: age, gender, ethnicity, sexuality and disability.

3 Overall satisfaction with local police force

This section looks into respondents' overall satisfaction with their local police force and perceptions of their reputation and performance over the past 12 months.

Generally, respondents are satisfied with their local police, with over three fifths (61%) saying that they are satisfied (see Figure 1). A sizeable proportion of respondents have neutral views (24%) and less than one in six are dissatisfied (12%). Satisfaction with local police is markedly higher than seen in 2017, but it should be noted that the way in which the question was asked has changed, which is likely to have had an impact upon results[1].

Figure 1: Satisfaction with local police force



	2018[1]	2017	2016	2015
Satisfied	61% ↑	53%	52%	52%
Dissatisfied	12% ↓	19%	17%	17%

Very satisfied
Fairly satisfied
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
Fairly dissatisfied
Very dissatisfied
Don't know

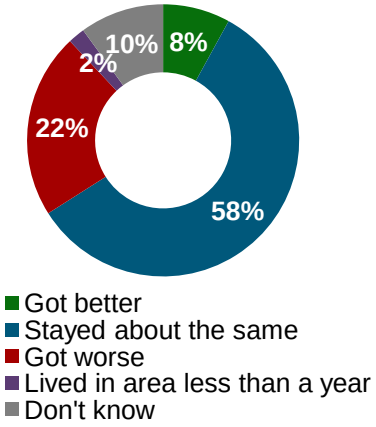
↑ ↓ Indicates a statistically significant difference compared to 2017

Q1. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local police force?
Base: All respondents; 2018 (17,043), 2017 (12,662), 2016 (16,865), 2015 (26,057)

Figure 2 shows perceptions of change in performance of the local police over the past year. More respondents think that the service provided has got worse (22%) than those who think it has got better (8%).

[1] In 2015, 2016 and 2017 the question was asked as 'How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following in your local area?' Respondents were then asked about four areas of local services, one of which was their local Police force. This means that respondents in previous years are likely to have compared satisfaction with the police to other local services when giving their responses, whereas respondents in 2018 are not likely to have made that comparison.

Figure 2: Perceived change in performance of local police force in the last 12 months



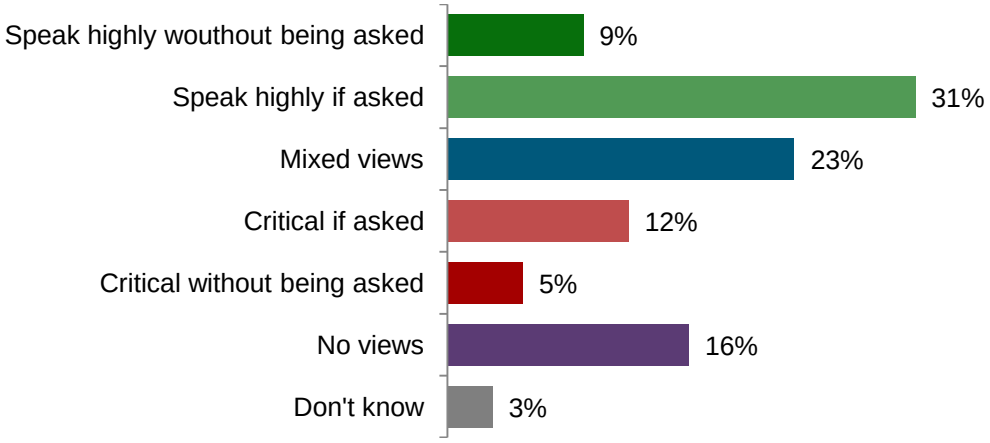
	2018[2]	2017	2016	2015
Got better	8%	5%	5%	6%
Got worse	22%	25%	20%	18%

Q2. Over the past 12 months, do you think the service provided by your local police force has got better, worse, or stayed about the same?
Base: All respondents; 2018 (17,043), 2017 (12,662), 2016 (16,865), 2015 (26,057)

Two out of five respondents say that they would speak highly of their local police force (40%), while nearly one out of five would be critical of them (18%, see Figure 3). The remainder either have mixed views (23%), no views (16%) or don't know (3%). There is a general trend in the proportion that would speak highly increasing from 2015. However, the proportion who would speak critically is largely unchanged.

[2] In 2015, 2016 and 2017 the question was asked as 'Over the past 12 months do you think the service provided by each of the following in your local area has got better, worse, or stayed about the same?' Respondents were then asked about four areas of local services, one of which was their local Police force.

Figure 3: Attitudes toward local police force



	2018	2017	2016	2015
Speak highly	40%	36%	35%	32%
Speak critically	18%	16%	15%	16%

Q3. Thinking now about the police in your local area, which of these phrases best describes the way you would speak about them to other people?
Base: All respondents; 2018 (17,043), 2017 (12,662), 2016 (16,865), 2015 (26,057)

Respondents were asked a follow up question to explain their level of satisfaction with their local police force. They were presented with a box in which they could write their responses. Text analytics was used to help understand these responses, intelligently grouping individual responses with similar answers. Sentiment was also taken into account during this grouping. A large proportion of respondents mentioned several points in their response and so were allocated to multiple groups to reflect their response.

The most common reasons given for satisfaction with the local police were general perceptions that the police are doing a good job, whether this is despite budget cuts, pressure, or that it is a difficult job, feeling that police are hardworking, or just a general perception without further explanation. Some also mention feeling that there is an adequate police presence. Other frequently given responses include mention (or at least perceptions) of timely or adequate responses to incidents and perceptions that crime is low or falling.

Figure 4 details some examples of the responses given that have been grouped into these themes.

A low proportion of respondents (12%) said that they are dissatisfied with the local police. However, of those who are dissatisfied the most common reasons given centre on perceptions that the police do not take action and perceptions of minimal or non-existent police presence. Other frequently given responses were on the themes of perceptions of inadequate responses or response times, perceptions of lack of resources or staff, negative personal experiences with the police and perceptions of unfair treatment (including corruption and excessive use of force). Figure 5details some examples that have been given grouped into these themes.

Interestingly, those who are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with their local police give reasons that align fairly closely with those given for being dissatisfied but are mostly perceptions without mention of personal experience with the police. Common themes were

around lack of news about the police and perceptions of minimal presence of the police. Less common mentions include perceived lack of action or effectiveness of the police and perceived lack of resources or staff. Figure 6 details some examples given that have been grouped into these themes.

Figure 4: Reasons for satisfaction with local police force

Q5. Why are you satisfied with the police in your local area?
Examples of comments given in open text box

Figure 5: Reasons for dissatisfaction with local police force

Police don't take action

"On many occasions I have needed help from the police, I have made a phone call, but have never had a policeman attend the problem I have reported"

"When you phone for help with some disturbance they never turn up. They don't seem to be concerned with stopping or solving crimes"

"If you have a problem the answer is always they can't help"

Minimal / non-existent presence

"Never see a police officer on the streets and in the area"

"Don't see them about and there is a lot of crime happening"

"Not enough policing on the streets any more and crime and anti-social behaviour is therefore rising in our area."

Inadequate responses / response times

"Slow, unreliable. Took half an hour to attend a serious incident"

"If called out they always take ages to get to you by which time often the dispute has sorted itself out"

Lack of resources / staff

"There are far too few people to cover such a large area"

"Lack of officers in this postcode, leaving only PCSOs on duty"

Negative personal experiences

"Had an issue. But they didn't turn up and didn't respond. Until I complained"

"My son's car was damaged by idiots and they didn't even come out "

Unfair treatment

"The police in my local area tend to pick and choose who they help."

"I saw a recent incident of police brutality"

Q5. Why are you dissatisfied with the police in your local area?
Examples of comments given in open text box

Figure 6: Reasons for being neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with local police force

Lack of personal experience / news

"Haven't heard any complaints and have had no personal contact"

"I've not had much to do with them but I haven't heard anyone moaning about them so that's a good sign"

"I can't comment fully either way as I haven't had a lot of interaction with them or read or heard anything either way"

Minimal police presence

"Haven't seen much of them or had a chance to interact with them"

"There are no foot patrols and the only time you see the police, is in a car, never have the chance to speak to a police person face to face"

"Never see them or have had any contact with them to form an opinion"

Lack of action / effectiveness

"In the event of a crime you get a reference number and told to claim off your insurance. No attempt is made to solve crimes even when there is evidence"

"No belief in their ability to solve or prevent crime"

Lack of resources / staff

"They do the best they can, but due to government funding cuts they are beginning to struggle"

"I think that the limited resources that we have available here work to the best of their ability- however it is impossible for them to work efficiently with the minute numbers and resources"

Q5. Why are you neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the police in your local area?
Examples of comments given in open text box

Younger respondents (generally those aged 25-34 years old) are more positive about the police, a trend that has been seen in previous years. They are more likely to be satisfied with their local police (67% for those aged 25-34, compared to 61% overall) and are more likely to think that police performance has got better over the past 12 months (14% of those aged 16-24 and 16% of those aged 25-34, compared to 8% overall).

BAME respondents are also more positive, with 15% thinking that police performance has got better over the past 12 months (compared to 8% overall) and a greater proportion saying that they would advocate the police than have done so in past (40%, compared to 28% in 2016).

There appears to be a link between regular interaction with police or frequently seeing them in the local area and satisfaction. Those who have direct interaction at least every 3 months are more likely to be satisfied (82%, compared to 61% overall), as are those who simply report seeing a police officer or PCSO on foot in their local area at least every 3 months (76%) or monthly (81%) in the past year. Perhaps unsurprisingly, those who are satisfied are also more likely to say that performance has got better over the past 12 months (13%, compared to 8% overall).

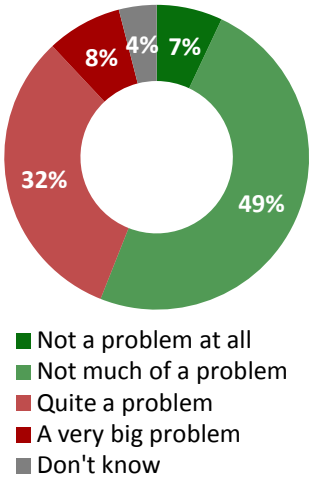
4 Perceptions of crime and police handling of crime

This section considers respondents' perceptions of crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) in the local area, including online crime, and perceptions of the police responses to those.

Respondents are split about whether crime and ASB are a problem in the local area; four in ten (40%) consider it a very or quite big problem, while more than half (56%) think it is not much/not a problem at all (see Figure 7a). Nonetheless, compared to 2017, more people now think that crime and ASB are a problem (+10 percentage points). This is a trend that can be seen since 2016 when only 26% said that crime and ASB were a problem in their area. Similarly, the proportion of respondents who feel it has got worse has increased slightly (up from 23% in 2017), a trend that can be seen since 2015 (when only 15% thought it was more of a problem, see Figure 7b).

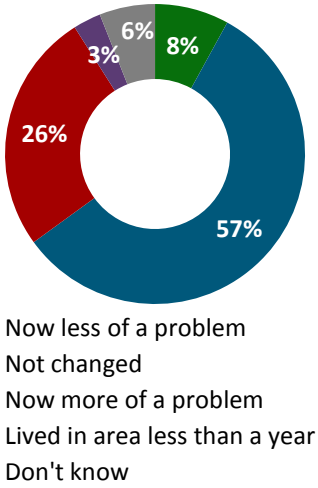
Figure 7: Perceptions of crime and ASB in respondents' local area

a. How much of a problem crime and ASB



	2018	2017	2016	2015
Not much / no problem	56% ↓	68%	72%	72%
Very / quite a big problem	40% ↑	30%	26%	25%

b. How the problem has changed



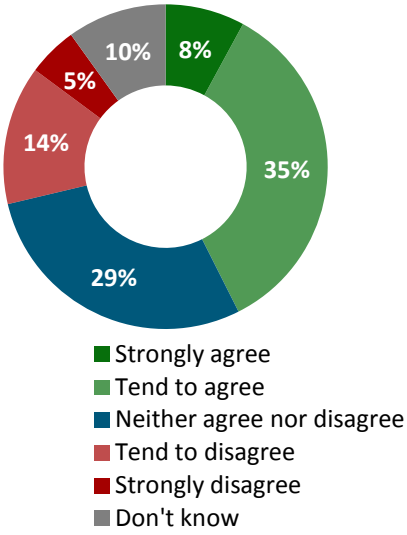
	2018	2017	2016	2015
Less of a problem	8%	5%	6%	7%
More of a problem	26%	23%	17%	15%

↑ ↓ Indicates a statistically significant difference compared to 2017

Q6. How much of a problem, if at all, do you think crime and anti-social behaviour are in your local area? Q7. Compared with 12 months ago, do you think crime and anti-social behaviour have become more of a problem in your area, less of a problem, or has it not changed?
Base: All respondents; 2018 (17,043), 2017 (12,662), 2016 (16,865), 2015 (26,057)

Over two in five agree that the local police are dealing with crime and ASB issues in the local area (42%), while nearly one in five disagree (19%, see Figure 8). This suggests that while respondents perceive that crime is a problem and may be getting worse but a large number feel the police are dealing with crime and ASB.

Figure 8: Perceptions of police response to crime and ASB issues in the local area



	2018	2017	2016	2015
Agree	42%	38%	6%	7%
Disagree	19%	22%	18%	19%

Q8. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the local police are dealing with the crime and anti-social behaviour issues that matter to you in the area where you live?
Base: All respondents; 2018 (17,043), 2017 (12,662), 2016 (16,865), 2015 (26,057)

Before asking respondents about their perception of online crime, this year respondents were first asked what types of online crimes they are aware of. They were presented with a box in which they could write their responses. The same type of text analytics as described on page 14 was used to help understand these responses.

The most commonly mentioned types of online crime are fraud of varying types (personal details or identity theft, banking fraud, email/phishing and other more general mentions of fraud). Less frequently mentioned forms of online crime include harassment, stalking and bullying, scams, hacking and online crimes related to children.

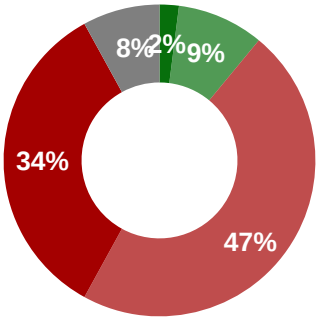
Respondents were then told that online crime includes: hacking, fraud, sexual offences and harassment to ensure that the following questions were answered with reference to all online crime types. This addition to the survey for this year may have impacted the results found in the following questions in comparison to previous years.

Around eight in ten respondents consider online crime to be a very or quite a big problem (81%, see Figure 9a). This proportion has increased from 2017, but is now in line with the proportion seen in 2016.

More than three in five respondents say that online crime is now more of a problem than 12 months ago (63%, see Figure 9b). Only a very small minority consider it to be less of a problem now (4%), with 32% thinking it has not changed or not knowing.

Figure 9: Perceptions of the problem that online crime poses

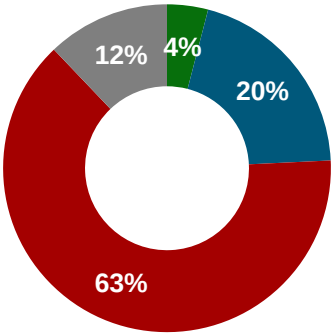
a. How much of a problem online crime is



- Not a problem at all
- Not much of a problem
- Quite a big problem
- A very big problem
- Don't know

	2018[3]	2017	2016
Not much of a problem / not a problem at all	11% ↓	16%	13%
Very / quite a big problem	81% ↑	73%	82%

b. How the problem has changed



- Now less of a problem
- Not changed
- Now more of a problem
- Don't know

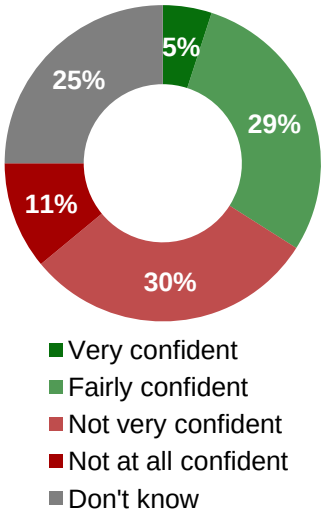
↑ ↓ Indicates a statistically significant difference compared to 2017

Q11. How much of a problem, if at all, is online crime? Q12. Compared with 12 months ago, do you think online crime has become more of a problem, less of a problem, or has it not changed?
Base: All respondents; 2018 (17,043), 2017 (12,662), 2016 (16,865)

Perceptions of confidence in the local police to deal effectively with an online crime are split, with around two in five saying that they are not confident (41%) and a slightly smaller proportion feeling confident (34%, see Figure 10). However, confidence in the police to deal with online crimes has increased compared to 2017 and 2016.

[3] An introductory statement was added before this question in 2018: Thinking of the full range of online crimes, including hacking, fraud, sexual offences and harassment. The question text is also slight changed from that used in 2016 and 2017: 'How much of a problem, if at all, do you think crime is online?'

Figure 10: Confidence in local police force to deal effectively with online crime



	2018[4]	2017	2016
Confident	34% ↑	26%	24%
Not confident	41%	43%	42%

↑ ↓ Indicates a statistically significant difference compared to 2017

Q13. How confident are you, if at all, that the police in your local area would be effective in dealing with an online crime?
Base: All respondents; 2018 (17,043), 2017 (12,662), 2016 (16,865)

Online crime is perceived to be more of a problem relative to non-online crime and ASB. Although the questions were asked a little differently[5], 81% of respondents agree that online crime is a very or quite big problem (see Figure 9a), while 40% of respondents think that crime and ASB are a problem in their local area (see Figure 7a). Respondents are also more likely to think that online crime is now more of a problem compared to 12 months ago (63%, see Figure 9b) compared to crime and ASB in the local area (26%, see Figure 7b). Additionally respondents are less confident that police are dealing effectively with online crime (41% are not confident, see Figure 10), than they are that police are effectively dealing with crime and ASB that matters to them in their area (19% disagree with the statement, see Figure 8).

Younger respondents have greater confidence in the police's ability to deal with crime. They are more likely to agree that the police are responding to crime and ASB issues (51% of those aged 16-24), a proportion that has increased markedly from 2017 when 43% of 16-24 years olds agreed. They are also more likely to feel confident that the police in their area are effective in dealing with online crime (40% of those aged 16-24 and 42% of those aged 24-34, compared to 34% overall).

A similar pattern can be seen with BAME respondents; 51% agree that police are dealing with crime and ASB in their area (compared to 42% overall, and up from 43% in 2017) and 41% are confident that police in their area are effective in dealing with online crime.

However, disabled respondents are less positive. They are more likely to say that crime is a problem in their area (45%, compared to 40% overall) and that it is more of a problem than it was 12 months ago (31%, compared to 26% overall). Disabled respondents are also more

[4] In 2016 and 2017 this question was asked as a grid question which included other police responsibilities

[5] The question asking about ASB/crime specially asked about perceptions in respondents local area, whereas the online crime question did not specify a location.

likely to disagree that the local police are dealing with the crime and ASB issues that matter to them in the area where they live (24% disagree, compared to 19% overall).

There also appears to be a link between dissatisfaction with the local police force and perceptions of crime. Respondents who are dissatisfied with their local police force are more likely to say crime is a problem in their local area (70%, compared to 40% overall), that it has become more of a problem (54%, compared to 26% overall), disagree that police are effectively dealing with crime and ASB that matters to them (71%, compared to 19% overall), and not be confident that their local police can effectively deal with online crime (77%, compared to 41% overall).

Although regular direct contact with the police (at least every 3 months) does not seem to impact heavily on perceptions of levels of crime and ASB, it does appear to impact on perceptions of the police's ability to deal with crime. Respondents who have had regular contact are more likely to agree their local police are dealing with crime and ASB (64%, compared to 42% overall) and are more likely to be confident their local police are effective in dealing with online crime (56%, compared to 34% overall). A similar pattern can be seen among respondents who see police officers or PSCOs on foot or in a vehicle at least every 3 months.

There is also a link between feeling informed and perceptions of how the police are dealing with crime. Respondents who feel informed about what their local police are doing are more likely to agree that they are dealing with crime and ASB (66%, compared to 42% overall), as are those who have been told about how the police are tackling crime and ASB in the past 12 months (63%).

5 Confidence in police

This section focuses on respondents' perceptions of police effectiveness in a number of emergency and non-emergency scenarios.

Respondents are most confident that the police would be effective in dealing with an emergency (74%, see Figure 11) and that their response to an emergency would be timely (65%). However, there has been a 10 percentage point decrease from 2017 for 'being easy to access/speak to in an emergency'.

Despite confidence being the lowest in whether the local police would be effective in dealing with a non-emergency, this has increased compared to 2017 (52%, compared to 47%). Respondents are similarly confident, compared to 2017 and 2016, that the police would be effective when dealing with a request for information/advice (61%), and a similar number of respondents are confident the police would be effective (61%) and discreet in using information/intelligence provided by the public (65%), both questions were new for 2018.

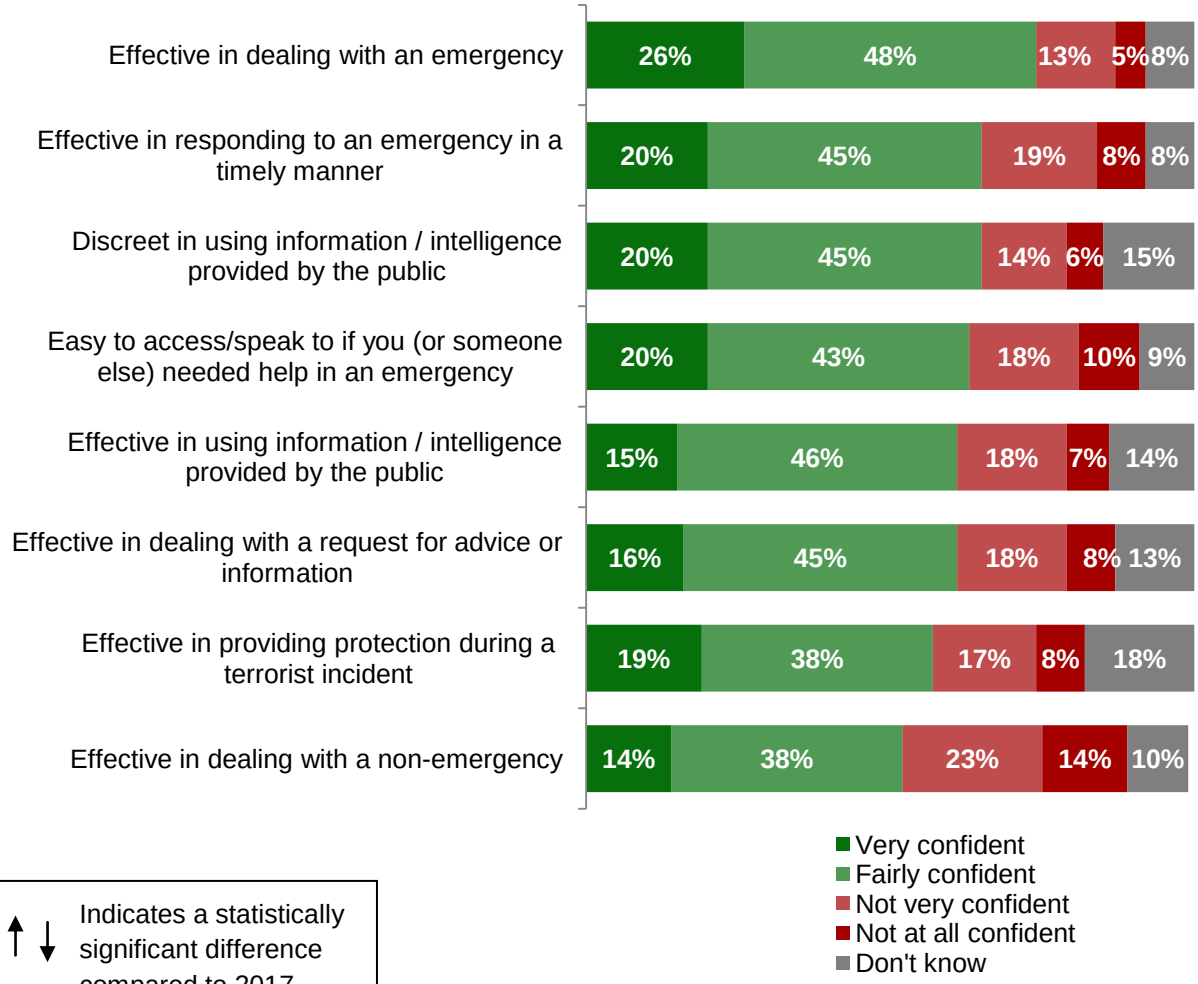
BAME respondents are more likely to be confident in being easy to access/speak to in an emergency (70%), effective in dealing with a request for advice or information (68%), effective in providing protection during a terrorist incident (65%) and effective in dealing with an non-emergency (59%). This is a positive increase compared to 2016, when BAME respondents were less likely than average to be confident in most situations.

Respondents who feel well informed and believe that the police treat people fairly and with respect are also more likely to feel confident in all scenarios.

Where respondents have interaction with the police they are much more likely to be confident, and this confidence increases for respondents who have more frequent interaction. For example, 78% of those who have interaction at least once a month are confident the police will respond to an emergency in a timely manner, and 75% of those who have interaction at least every 3 months are confident. This falls to 69% of respondents who have had contact once or twice in the past year and to 62% for those who have had no interaction in the past year.

A similar pattern can be seen regarding how frequently respondents have seen police on foot or in a vehicle in the past 12 months, with those respondents that see police most frequently (whether on foot, or in a vehicle) more likely to be confident across all of the areas measured, and those who see the police less frequently less likely to be confident.

Figure 11: Confidence in local police force's handling of situations



↑ ↓ Indicates a statistically significant difference compared to 2017

% of respondents confident local police would be	2018[6]	2017	2016	2015
Effective in dealing with an emergency	74%	71%	71%	N/A
Easy to access/speak to in an emergency	63% ↓	73%	71%	73%
Effective in dealing with a request for advice or information	61%	57%	59%	N/A
Effective in providing protection during a terrorist incident	57%	55%	46%	N/A
Effective in dealing with a non-emergency	52% ↑	47%	51%	N/A

Q23-Q30C. How confident are you, if at all, that the police in your local area would be…
Base: All respondents; 2018 (17,043), 2017 (12,662), 2016 (16,865), 2015 (26,057)

[6] Not all statements are comparable to previous years. Those that are were split across two different questions in 2015, 2016 and 2017.

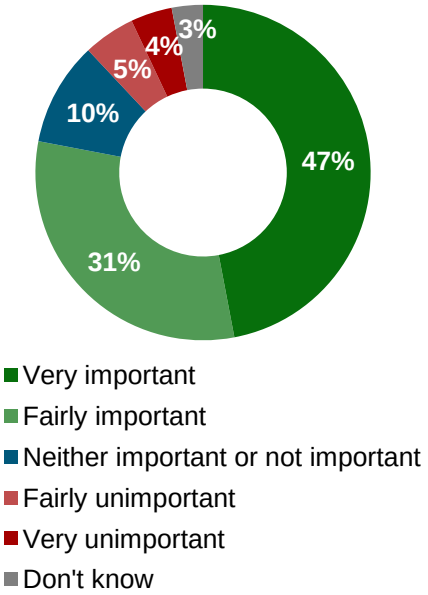
6 Police visibility

This section explores police visibility, including frequency of seeing the police in the local area, satisfaction with this frequency and perceived importance of police visibility.

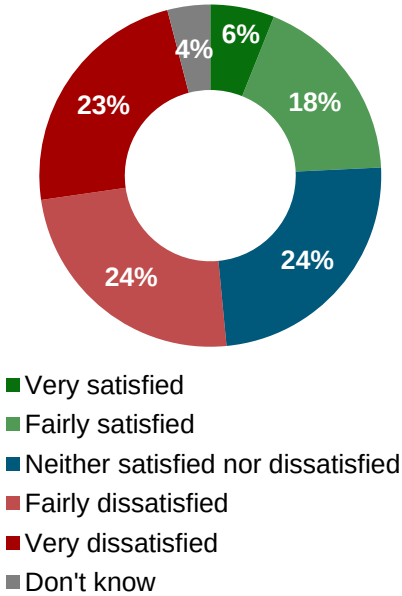
Most respondents believe it is important to have police officers or PCSOs on foot in the local area (78%, see Figure 12a). Fewer than one in ten (9%) consider this to be unimportant, with the remainder having neutral views or not knowing. A change was made to the question text in the 2018 question, so figures are not directly comparable, but the proportion who say a regular police presence is important has declined compared to previous years.

Figure 12: Importance of having regular and satisfaction with police officer or PCSO on foot presence in local area

a. Importance of on foot police presence



b. Satisfaction with on foot police presence



	2018[7]	2017	2016	2015
Important	78%	83%	83%	86%
Not important	9%	14%	13%	11%

Q14. How important, if at all, do you think it is to have a regular police or PCSO presence on foot in your local area? Q17. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the frequency that you have seen police or PCSOs you have seen on foot in your local area?
Base: All respondents; 2018 (17,043), 2017 (12,662), 2016 (16,865), 2015 (26,057)

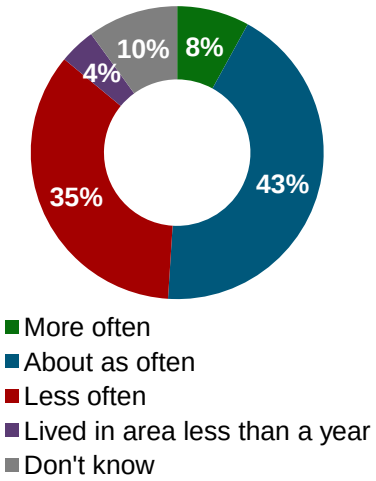
[7] The question text changed in 2018 to specifically refer to police officers and PCSOs rather than a uniformed police presence. It is also worth noting that the questions were in a different order in previous surveys, with the question on importance of seeing police presence on foot coming after questions that measured the frequency they had been seen.

Just under half of respondents are dissatisfied with the number of police officers or PCSOs they have seen on foot in their local area (48%, see Figure 12b). Nearly one in four say that they are satisfied (24%), while the same proportion have neutral views (24%).

Respondents who see police on foot more often are more likely to be satisfied with the frequency that see police on foot (56% of those who see police at least once a month and 45% of those who see police at least every 3 months are satisfied, compared to 24% overall).

The majority of respondents perceive no change in the frequency of sightings of police officers or PCSOs on foot in the local area (43%, see Figure 13). However, over a third (35%) say that they have seen police officers or PCSOs less often, and this figure has been increasing slightly since 2015 (although the question has been asked slightly differently to previous years[8]).

Figure 13: Change in the frequency that police officers or PCSOs are seen on foot in local area



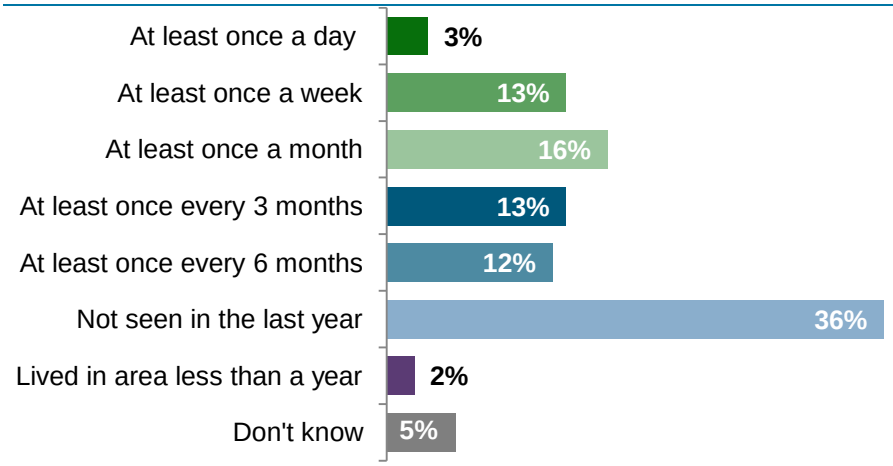
	2018[8]	2017	2016	2015
More often	8%	6%	5%	7%
Less often	35%	34%	33%	31%

Q16. Compared with 12 months ago, would you say you now see police officers or PCSOs on foot in the area where you live more often, less often, or about as often?
Base: All respondents; 2018 (17,043), 2017 (12,662), 2016 (16,865), 2015 (26,057)

While 44% have seen police officers or PCSOs on foot in the local area at least once every three months, over a third (36%) say that they have not seen any officers or PCSOs on foot in the past year (see Figure 14).

[8] The question text changed in 2018 and so results are not directly comparable to previous years. In 2018 respondents were asked specifically about police officers or PCSOs rather than a uniformed police presence.

Figure 14: Frequency that police officers or PCSOs are seen on foot in local area

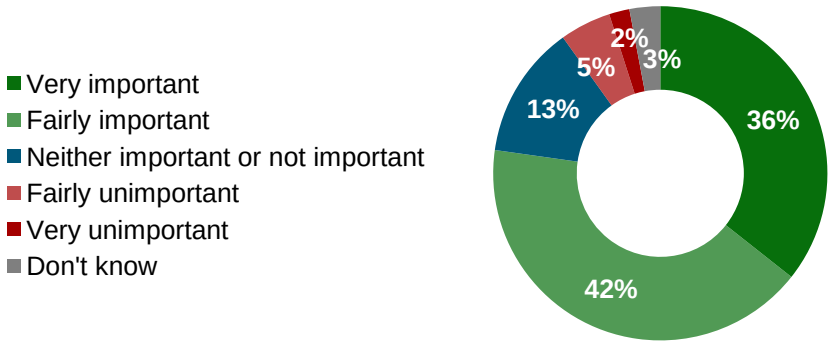


	2018[9]	2017	2016	2015
At least once every 3 months	44%	29%	28%	36%
Not seen in the past year	36%	44%	41%	36%

Q15. In the past 12 months how frequently, on average, have you seen police officers or PCSOs on foot in your local area?
Base: All respondents; 2018 (17,043), 2017 (12,662), 2016 (16,865), 2015 (26,057)

Most respondents believe that it is important to have a police officer or PCSO presence in vehicles in their local area (77%, see Figure 15), with only a small minority disagreeing (6%). These are similar proportions to those who feel it is important to see a police presence on foot in their local area.

Figure 15: Importance of having regular police officer or PCSO presence in vehicles in local area



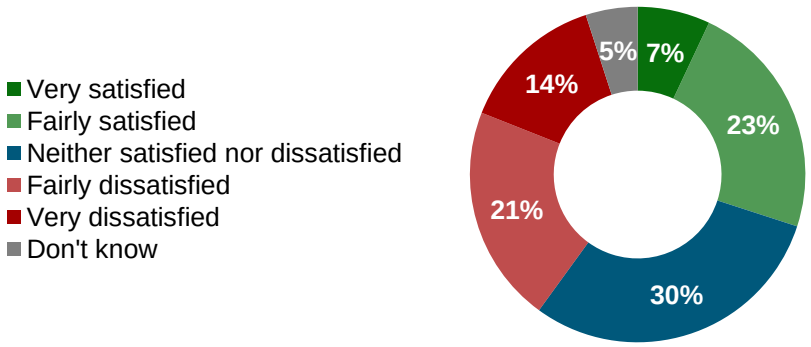
Q18. How important, if at all, do you think it is to regularly see the police or PCSOs in a vehicle in your local area?
Base: All respondents; 2018 (17,043)

[9] Again, the question text changed in the 2018 questionnaire so results are not directly comparable between years. In 2018 respondents were specifically asked about police officers and PCSOs rather than a uniformed police presence. It was also asked as a separate question rather than in a variety of different situations as in 2017, 2016 and 2015.

Satisfaction with the number of police or PCSOs seen in a vehicle in the local area is split, with 35% of respondents being dissatisfied and 30% being satisfied (see Figure 16).

As seen with police presence on foot, respondents who see police more often in a vehicle are more likely to be satisfied with the frequency that they see police in a vehicle (51% of those who see police in a vehicle at least every month and 45% of those who see them at least every 3 months, compared to 30% overall).

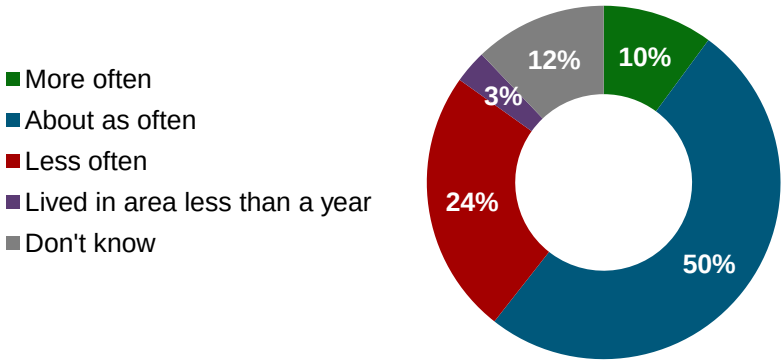
Figure 16: Satisfaction with the frequency of police officers or PCSOs seen in a vehicle in local area



Q21. How satisfied are you with the frequency that you have seen police or PCSOs in a vehicle in your local area?
Base: All respondents; 2018 (17,043)

Half of respondents perceive no change in the frequency of sightings of police officers or PCSOs in vehicles (50%, Figure 17). Nearly one in four say that they now see officers in vehicles less often (24%) and only one in ten (10%) say that they see them more often.

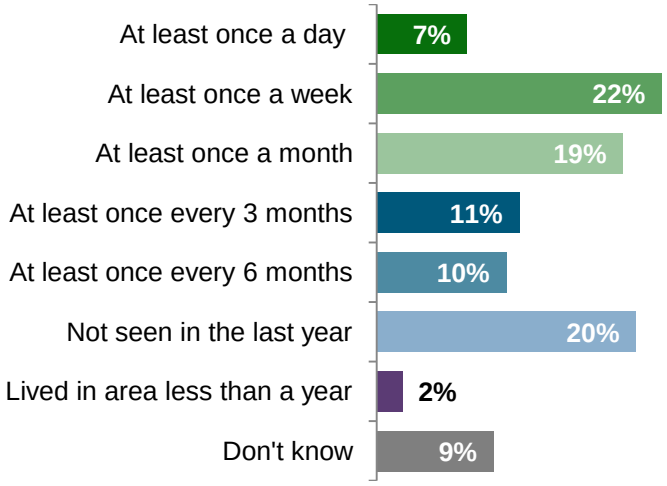
Figure 17: Change in the frequency that police officers or PCSOs are seen in a vehicle in local area



Q20. Compared with 12 months ago, would you say you now see police officers or PCSOs in a vehicle in the area where you live more often, less often, or about as often?
Base: All respondents; 2018 (17,043)

More respondents have seen officers in vehicles at least once in the last 3 months (59%, see Figure 18) than on foot (44%, see Figure 14). However, a fifth have not seen any officers in vehicles in the last year (20%).

Figure 18: Frequency that police officers or PCSOs are seen in a vehicle in local area



	2018[10]	2017	2016	2015
Once every 3 months or more	59%	58%	56%	61%
Not seen in the last year	20%	12%	12%	11%

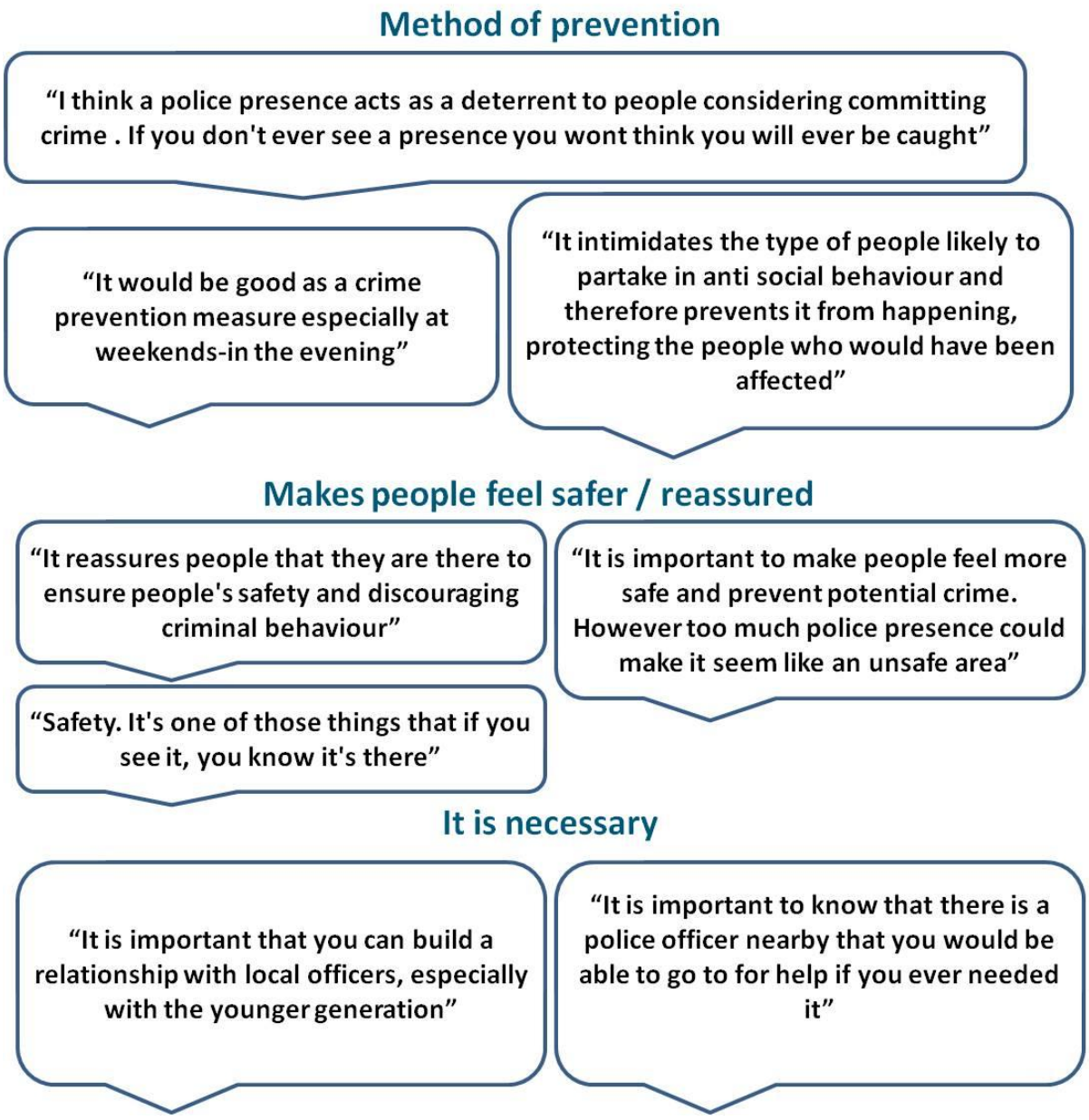
Q19. In the past 12 months, how frequently, on average, have you seen police officers or PCSOs in a vehicle in your local area?
Base: All respondents; 2018 (17,043), 2017 (12,662), 2016 (16,865), 2015 (26,057)

Respondents were asked to explain why they think police presence, either on foot or in a vehicle, is or is not, important. The same method was used to analyse the responses as explained on page 14.

The most commonly mentioned reason for the importance of a regular police presence, either on foot or in a vehicle, is as a method of crime prevention. This suggests that respondents feel a visible police presence will act as a deterrent to committing crime. Other reasons that are commonly mentioned include a high police visibility being reassuring or helping people to feel safe and more general feelings that a police presence is necessary. Some examples of the responses given are below (Figure 19).

[10] The question text changed in the 2018 questionnaire so results are not directly comparable between years. In 2018 respondents were specifically asked about police officers and PCSOs rather than a uniformed police presence. It was also asked as a separate question rather than in a variety of different situations as in 2017, 2016 and 2015.

Figure 19: Reasons for importance of police presence (from free text responses)



Q22. Why do you think it is important or unimportant to see a police officer or PCSO presence on foot or in a vehicle in your local area?
Examples of comments given in open text box

Older respondents (those aged 65+) are more likely to think that police presence is important, either on foot (82%, compared to 78% overall), or in a vehicle (82%, compared to 77% overall). However, they are less likely to see a police presence on foot (32% have seen the police on foot at least every 3 months in the past year, compared to 44% overall) and in a vehicle (53% have seen police in a vehicle at least every 3 months in the past year, compared to 59% overall). Consequently, they are more likely to be dissatisfied with the presence that they see on foot (60%, compared to 48% overall) and in a vehicle (43%, compared to 35% overall).

Although most still think it is important, younger respondents are less likely to think that a presence on foot (67% of those aged 16-24 and 73% of those aged 25-34, compared to 78%

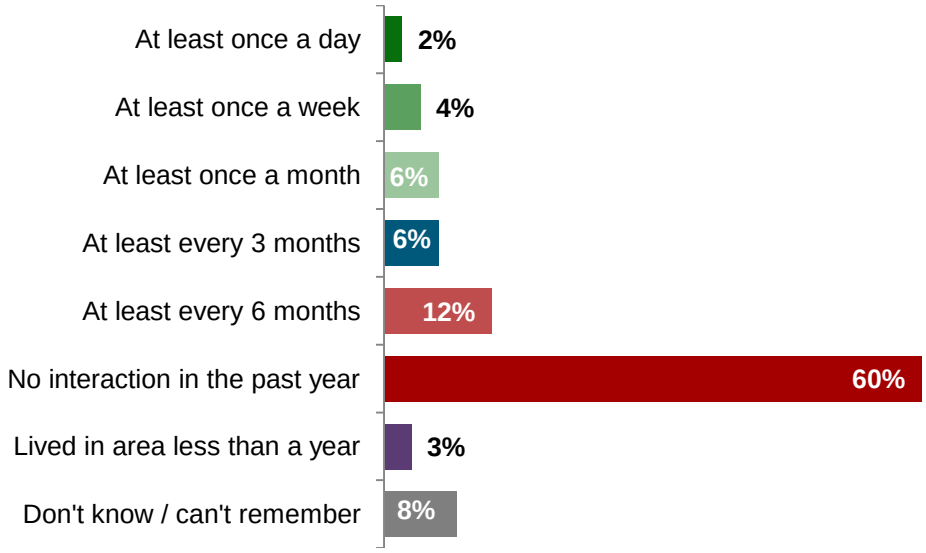
overall) or in a vehicle (68% of 16-24 year olds, compared to 77% overall) is important. These groups are also more likely to see police on foot (59% of 16-24 year olds and 57% of 25-34 year olds see police on foot at least every 3 months, compared to 44% overall) or in a vehicle (68% of those aged 16-24 and 67% of those aged 25-34, compared to 59% overall), and are more likely to be satisfied with the police presence that they see (35% of 16-24 year olds and 36% of 25-34 year olds are satisfied with the presence on foot, 41% of 16-24 year olds and 39% of 25-34 year olds are satisfied with the presences in a vehicle, compared to 24% and 30% overall respectively).

7 Contact with the police

This section covers the amount of contact respondents have with the police and the types of contact experienced. It also covers their satisfaction with their most recent contact.

In all, 29% of respondents report having some form of contact (no matter how informal) with the police in the last year compared to 60% who have not (see Figure 20). The proportion of respondents reporting an interaction with police officers or PCSOs at least every 3 months has increased by 6 percentage points compared to the previous year. However, it should be noted that some changes have been made to this question, meaning that results are not directly comparable to previous years[11].

Figure 20: Frequency of interactions with police officers or PCSOs in local area



	2018[11]	2017	2016	2015
At least every 3 months	18%	12%	13%	12%
No interaction	60%	67%	65%	65%

Q31. In the past 12 months, how often, if at all, have you had any interaction with Police Officers or PCSOs in your local area? This might have been a conversation, or just a greeting or acknowledgement in the street or something more formal.
Base: All respondents; 2018 (17,043), 2017 (12,662), 2016 (16,865), 2015 (26,057)

Younger respondents are more likely to report interaction (no matter how informal) at least every 3 months (26% of those aged 16-24 and 29% of those aged 25-34). Other groups more likely to have interaction at least every 3 months include BAME respondents (26%) and those in the most deprived areas (23%). Further detail for these breakdowns can be seen in Table 1.

[11] In 2018 two additional codes were added to the responses for this question: 'at least once a day', and 'lived in the area less than a year'. Therefore the results are not directly comparable to previous years.

Table 1: Contact with police demographic breakdown

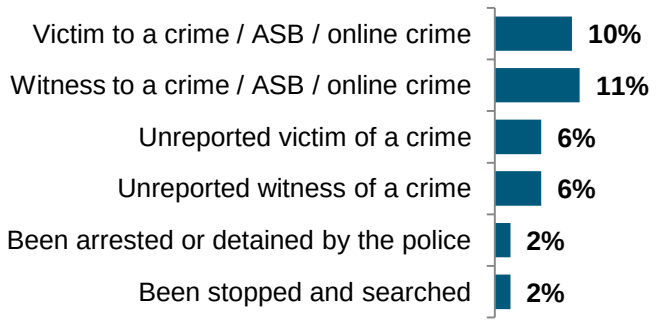
		Interaction at least once every 3 months	No interaction in the past year	*Base*
Total		18%	60%	*17,043*
Age	16-24	26%	47%	*1,134*
	25-34	29%	48%	*2,622*
	35-44	21%	55%	*2,976*
	45-54	13%	65%	*3,113*
	55-64	10%	70%	*3,512*
	65+	10%	71%	*3,662*
Ethnicity	White	17%	62%	*15,803*
	BAME	26%	49%	*1,153*
	Black	23%	48%	*186*
IMD	Least deprived quartile	13%	66%	*4,533*
	Most deprived quartile	23%	53%	*3,867*

Q31. In the past 12 months, how often, if at all, have you had any interaction with Police Officers or PCSOs in your local area? This might have been a conversation, or just a greeting or acknowledgement in the street or something more formal.
Red highlighting indicates statistically significant decreases and green highlighting indicates significant increases compared to total.

In terms of more formal contact with the police in the past year, one in ten (10%) respondents has been a victim of crime or ASB, while 11% have witnessed a crime or ASB (see Figure 21). Respondents aged 65+ are less likely to have contact with the police as a victim (5%) or a witness (5%). 6% of respondents have been a victim or witness to a crime that wasn't reported.

A small minority of respondents have been arrested or detained (2%), or stopped and searched (2%). Black respondents are more likely to have been stopped and searched (8%, compared to 2% of all respondents).

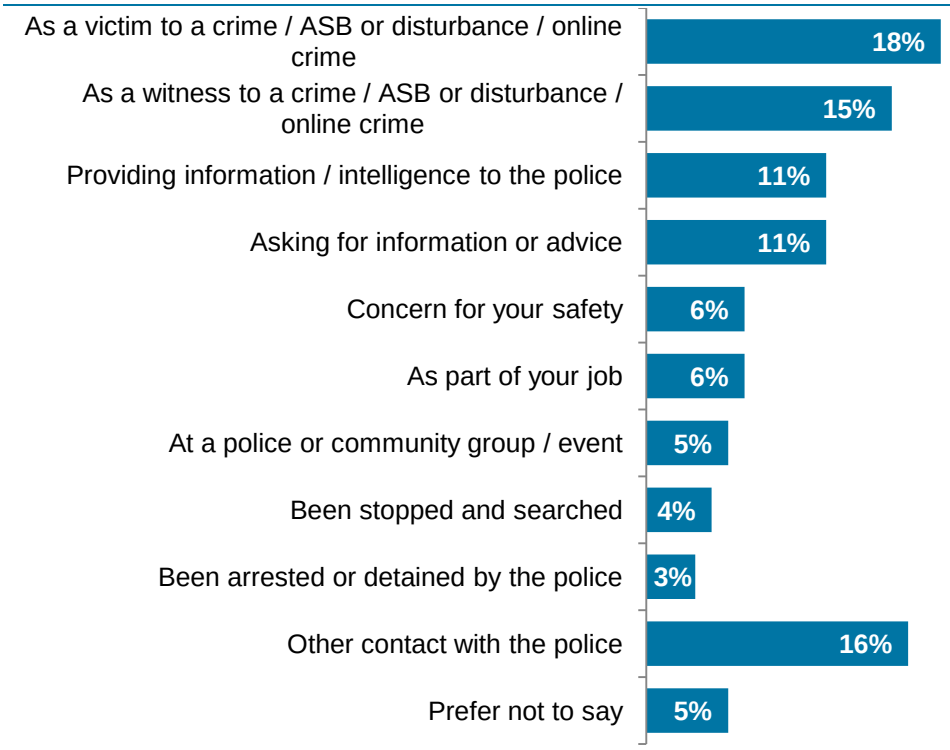
Figure 21: Reasons for contact with local police force in the last 12 months



Q32. Have you had any contact or interaction with your local police force for any of the following reasons in the past 12 months? Q33. In the past 12 months, have you been the victim of a crime or witnessed a crime that you didn't report to the police? Q34. And have you had any contact or interaction with your local police force for any of the following reasons in the past 12 months?
Base: All respondents; 2018 (17,043)

The most common reason for respondents' last contact with local police was due to either being a victim or witness to crime or ASB (18% and 15% respectively). Just below these are providing information or intelligence to the police (11%) and asking for information or advice (11%).

Figure 22: Reason for last contact or interaction with local police force

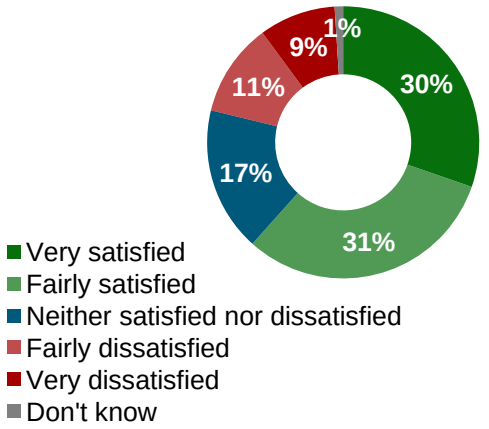


Q35. What was the reason that you last had any contact or interaction with your local police force?
Base: All who have had contact in the past 12 months; 2018 (5,471)

Satisfaction with this last contact remains similar to previous years, as 61% report that they were satisfied with the service they received during their last contact and 21% report that they were dissatisfied.

There is some variability in overall satisfaction with the last contact, depending on what the last contact was regarding. Respondents are less likely to be satisfied if their last contact was through being arrested or detained (45%), being stopped and searched (47%) or as a victim (50%). However, respondents are more likely to be satisfied if their last contact was at a police or community group / event (81%), asking for information or advice (75%) or as part of their job (71%).

Figure 23: Overall satisfaction with last interaction or contact with local police force



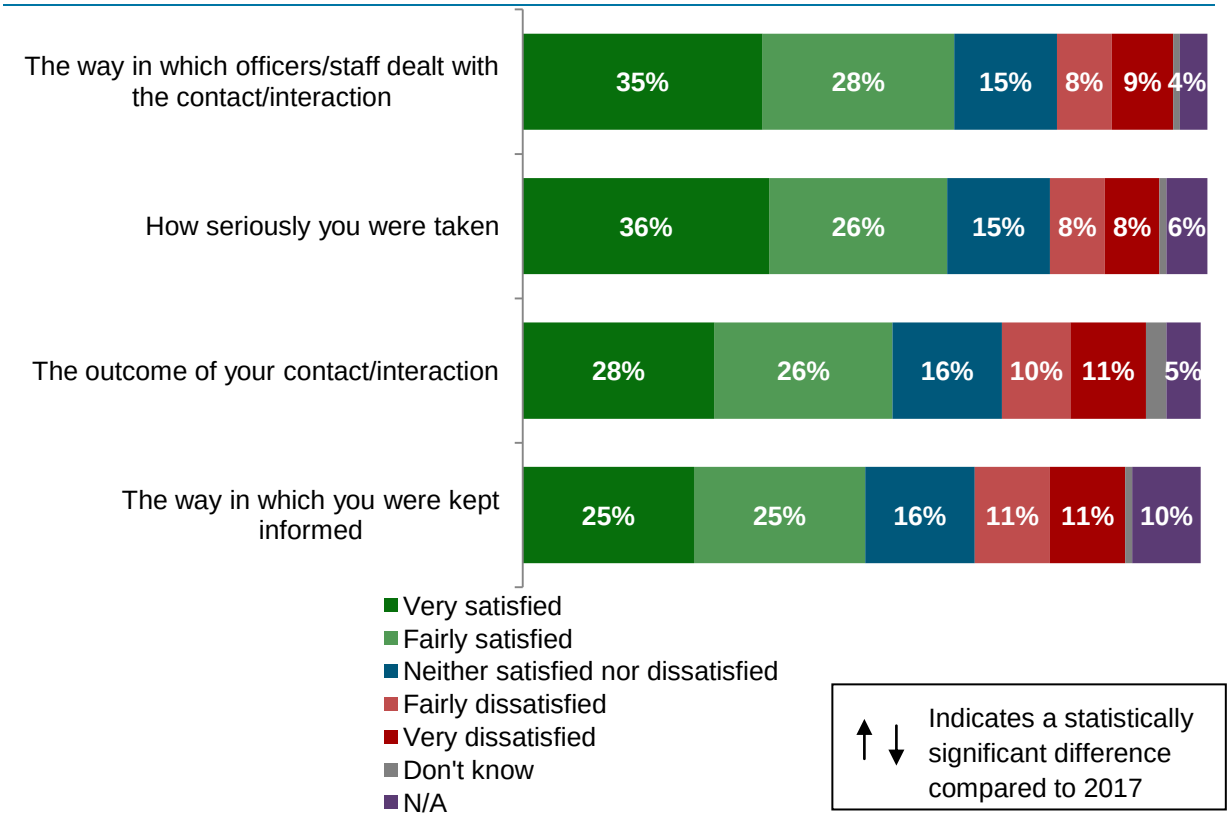
	2018	2017	2016
Satisfied	61%	60%	61%
Dissatisfied	21%	21%	20%

Q36. Thinking back to this occasion with your local police, overall how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the service you received from the police?
Base: All who have had contact in the past 12 months; 2018 (5,471), 2017 (3,372), 2016 (4,397)

Respondents who have had contact with their local police were most satisfied with the conduct of staff during the interaction (64%), followed by how seriously they were taken (62%). Satisfaction levels for the outcome of the contact and the way they were kept informed are somewhat lower (54% and 51% respectively). However, satisfaction with these elements has increased compared to previous years and 10% of respondents say that being kept informed was not relevant to their interaction.

Where a respondents last interaction with the police was regarding asking for information or advice, at a police or community group / event, as part of their job or as a concern for safety they are more likely to be satisfied with the outcome of that interaction (69%, 69%, 66% and 65% respectively).

Figure 24: Satisfaction with aspects of most recent interaction with local police



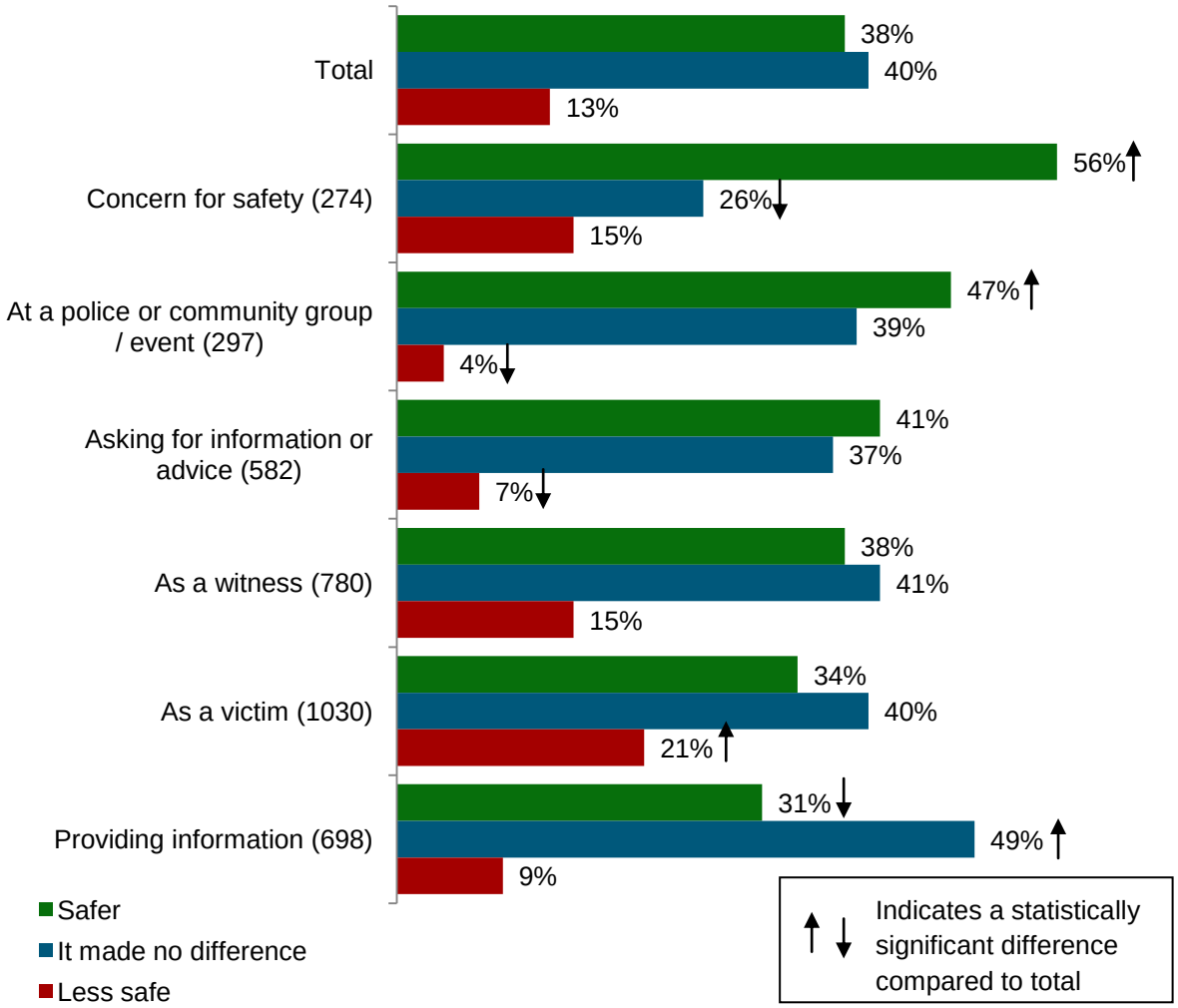
Satisfaction	2018	2017	2016	2015
The way in which officers/staff dealt with the contact/interaction	64%	62%	61%	65%
How seriously you were taken	62% ↑	57%	56%	N/A
The outcome of your contact/interaction	54% ↑	48%	49%	52%
The way in which you were kept informed	51% ↑	45%	43%	49%

Q37-40. Thinking about your most recent interaction with your local police *(Response from Q35)*, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with...
Value labels below 4% are not shown
Base: All who have had contact in the past 12 months; 2018 (5,471), 2017 (3,372), 2016 (4,397), 2015 (8,089)

When asked whether their last contact with local police made them feel safer, two in five respondents say that it makes no difference (40%), while a similar amount say it left them feeling safer (38%, see Figure 25). Just 13% say that the interaction made them feel either a little or much less safe.

Feelings of safety following an interaction differ by the type of interaction experienced. Victims are more likely to say that they felt less safe compared to the total (21% vs. 13%, see Figure 25). Meanwhile, those whose last contact was for non-incident related reasons, such as concern for safety, or at a police or community group / event are significantly more likely to say they felt more safe (56% and 47% respectively), highlighting the police's ability to reassure people in this context.

Figure 25: Perceived increases in safety by type of last contact



Q41. Did you feel safer after your last contact with your local police?
Base: All who had specific forms of contact with police in the past 12 months[12]; 2018[13] (3,661), Base sizes for subgroups are in parenthesis

There is a relationship between formal interaction with the police and perceptions that the police are tackling crime and ASB. Where respondents have been a witness to a crime or have been the victim of a crime but not reported it they are significantly more likely to agree that the police are dealing with the crime and ASB issues that matter to them in the area where they live. However, they are also more likely to disagree with the statement, emphasising the polarising effect that can personal experience can have on attitudes towards the police.

Interestingly, where respondents have been arrested or detained, or stopped and searched they are more likely to agree that the local police are dealing with crime and ASB that matter

[12] Respondents were asked this question if their most recent contact with police was for the following reasons: as a victim to crime/ASB or disturbance/online crime, as a witness to crime/ASB or disturbance or online crime, concern for their safety, providing information/intelligence to the police, at a police or community group/event, or asking for information or advice.

[13] Data have not been compared to previous years as the group of respondents that this question was asked of has been reduced. The following groups of respondents were asked the question in previous years, but not in 2018: victims or witnesses of an accident, respondents who have been arrested or detained, respondents who have been stopped and searched, where contact was regarding concern for safety of others, where contact was regarding other concern for safety, reporting lost or found property, as part of their job, as a member of a group or partnership that aim to prevent crime, or other contact.

to them, but are not more likely to disagree (as seen with the other types of formal interaction mentioned above).

Those who disagree that the police treat people fairly and with respect are significantly more likely to let crimes go unreported as both a victim (12%) and as a witness (13%). This seems to suggest that a lack of faith and/or trust in the police services can be a factor deterring people from reporting crimes or ASB.

Satisfaction with the last interaction appears to be heavily linked with overall levels of satisfaction with the police. 74% of those who are satisfied overall (and have had formal interaction with the police in the past year) are satisfied with their last contact (compared to 61% of all respondents who have had formal contact). An even greater effect can be seen when it comes to dissatisfaction. Where respondents are dissatisfied overall they are 40 percentage points more likely to be dissatisfied with their most recent contact (61% vs. 21% of all respondents who have had formal contact).

Bisexual respondents were more likely to be dissatisfied across all of the factors measured regarding their last interaction: the way in which they were kept informed (33%, compared to 22% of all respondents), the outcome of their interaction (31%, compared to 22% of all respondents), how seriously they were taken (27%, compared to 17% of all respondents) and the way in which officer/staff dealt with the contact/interaction (26%, compared to 17% of all respondents). Similarly high levels of dissatisfaction can also be seen for gay or lesbian respondents; the outcome of their contact/interaction (33%), the way in which they were kept informed (29%), the way in which officers/staff dealt with the contact/interaction (28%) and how seriously they were taken (24%).

Unlike in previous years, where there was little difference between age groups, in 2018 respondents aged 16-24 are significantly less likely to feel satisfied with the way in which staff dealt with the interaction (58%, compared to 64% overall). A similar pattern also exists for how seriously they were taken (55%, compared to 62% overall). However, they are not less likely to be satisfied overall with the service they received from the police and are more likely to feel safer after their last interaction (43%, compared to 38% overall).

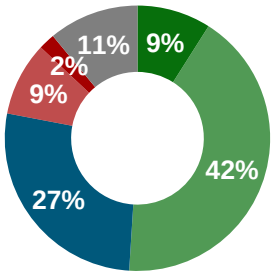
BAME respondents are significantly more likely to feel satisfied with the outcome of their contact (62%), particularly black respondents (65%, compared to 54% overall). This is in contrast to 2016 where BAME respondents were less likely to feel this way (40% vs. 49% total). BAME respondents (53%) are also significantly more likely to feel safer after their last interaction.

8 Legitimacy of the police

This section reviews respondents' attitudes towards police legitimacy, covering attitudes towards the use of physical force, stop and search, and the police's conduct.

Perceptions of local police forces are relatively positive with over half of respondents now saying that their local police have a good reputation all or most of the time (52%, see Figure 26). This has improved by ten percentage points compared to the 2017 survey (42%). Consistently, only one in ten (10%) believe that their local police have a good reputation hardly ever or never.

Figure 26: Perceived reputation of local police force



	2018[14]	2017	2016	2015
All / most of the time	52% ↑	42%	41%	43%
Hardly ever / never	10%	11%	11%	11%

↑ ↓ Indicates a statistically significant difference compared to 2017

- All of the time
- Most of the time
- Some of the time
- Hardly ever
- Never
- Don't know

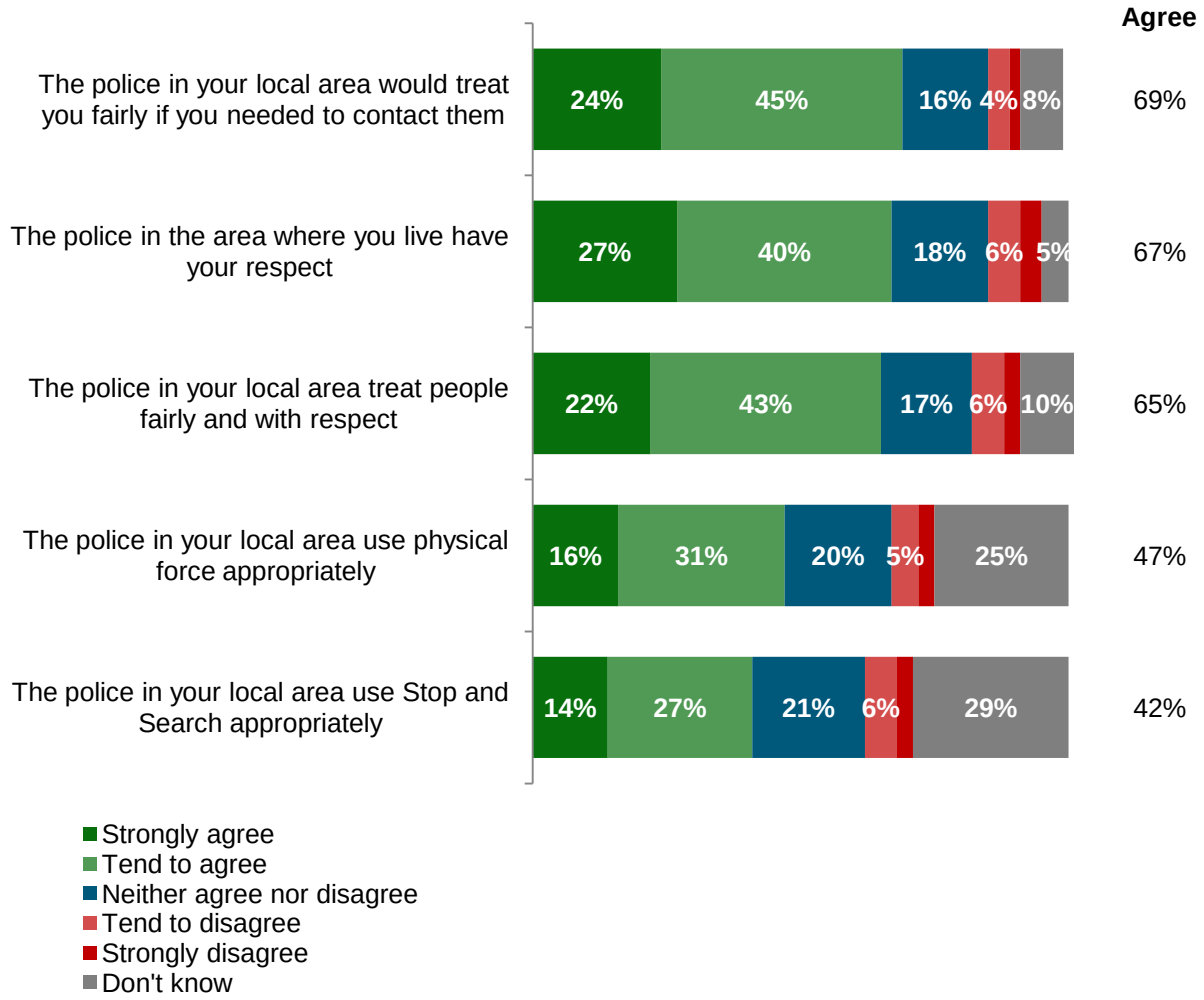
Q4. Thinking about the police in the area where you live, do you think they have a good reputation?
Base: All respondents; 2018 (17,043), 2017 (12,662), 2016 (16,865), 2015 (26,057)

Around two-thirds of respondents agree that: the police would treat them fairly if they needed to contact them (69%), their local police have their respect (67%), and the police treat people fairly and with respect (65%, see Figure 27).

Fewer respondents agree that their local police use physical force (47%) and stop and search appropriately (42%), although this is not because a greater proportion disagrees with the statements but rather due to a much higher proportion of respondents who don't know.

[14] In 2015, 2016 and 2017 this question was asked alongside other statements about perceptions of the police. The specific statement text was 'have a good reputation amongst local people'.

Figure 27: Attitudes towards police

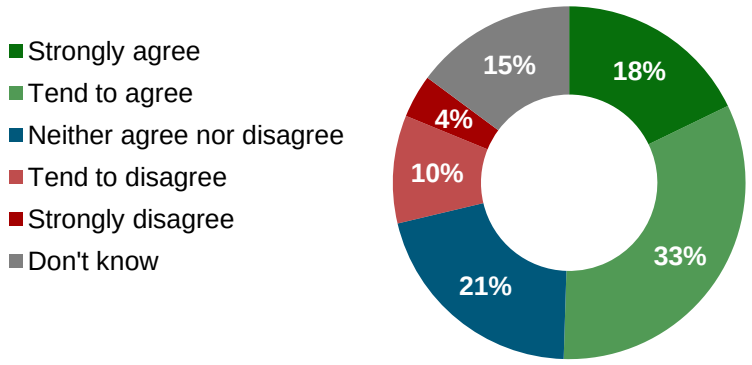


Q42-Q46. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
Values below 3% are not shown
Base: All respondents; 2018 (17,043)

The majority of respondents agree that the police's use of Stop and Search is effective in preventing crime (51%), while less than one in six disagree (14%, see Figure 28).

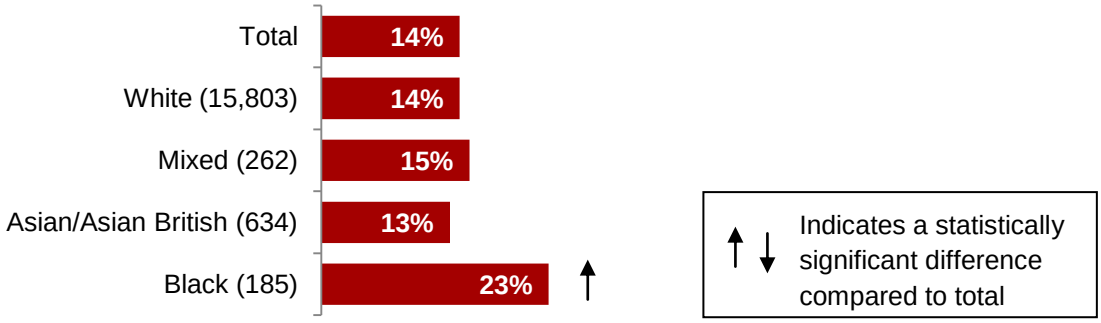
Black respondents, however, are significantly more likely to disagree that the police's use of Stop and Search is effective in preventing crime (23%, see Figure 29). Black respondents are also more likely to disagree that the police in their local area use Stop and Search appropriately (24% disagree, compared to 8% of all respondents).

Figure 28: Views on police use of Stop and Search in preventing crime



Q9. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? *The police use of Stop and Search is effective in preventing crime*
Base: All respondents; 2018 (17,043)

Figure 29: Disagree that Stop and Search is effective in preventing crime by ethnicity



Q9. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? *The police use of Stop and Search is effective in preventing crime*
Base: All respondents; 2018 (17,043), Base sizes for subgroups are in parenthesis

Respondents who believe local police use Stop and Search appropriately are more likely to agree that this measure is effective in preventing crime (73%). The same holds true for respondents who feel that the police treat people fairly and with respect (61%).

Respondents aged 65+ are more likely to agree that the police in their local area *'would treat you fairly if they needed to contact them'* (74%), *'have their respect'* (73%), and *'treat people fairly and with respect'* (70%). However, they are more likely to regard Stop and Search as effective in preventing crime (60%, compared to 51% of all respondents).

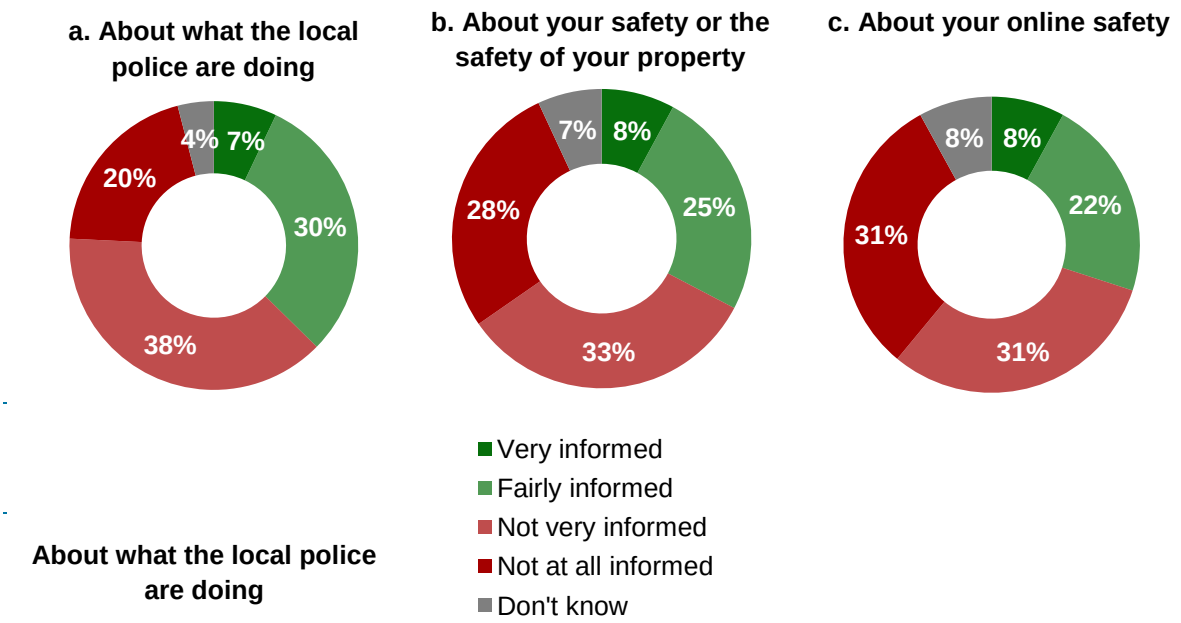
9 Police engagement

This section examines a variety of areas associated with feelings of engagement with the police. It covers how well informed respondents feel in a range of different areas, communication methods and level of interest.

The majority of respondents do not feel that they are informed about what police are doing in their local area, with 58% feeling either not very or not at all informed (see Figure 30a). This is an improvement compared to 2017, where nearly two-thirds (64%) said they were not informed. There has also been an increase in the proportion who do feel informed (now 37%).

Around a third of respondents feel informed through their local police about their safety / the safety of their property and about their online safety (see Figure 30b and c).

Figure 30: How well informed respondents feel



About what the local police are doing

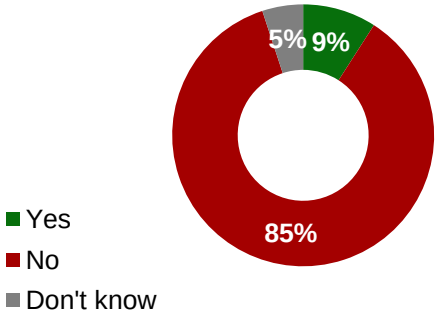
	2018	2017	2016	2015
Informed	37% ↑	32%	28%	31%
Not informed	58% ↓	64%	67%	64%

↑ ↓ Indicates a statistically significant difference compared to 2017

Q47. Overall, how well informed do you feel about what the police in your local area are doing? Q50-Q51. Thinking about the following areas, over the past 12 months how well informed do you feel through advice / information from your local police…
Base: All respondents; 2018 (17,043), 2017 (12,662), 2016 (16,865), 2015 (26,057)

The vast majority of respondents have not been asked their views on crime and ASB in the last 12 months (see Figure 31). Just under one in ten (9%) have been asked, which is an increase compared to 2017 (5%).

Figure 31: Proportion of respondents asked about views on crime and ASB in the past 12 months



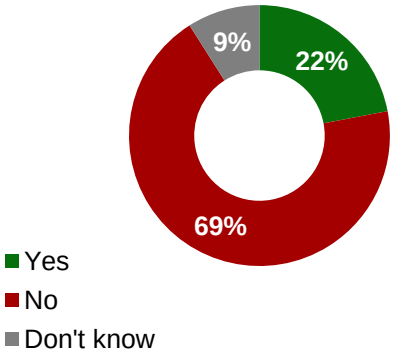
	2018[15]	2017	2016
Yes	9%	5%	5%
No	85% ↓	91%	91%

↑ ↓ Indicates a statistically significant difference compared to 2017

Q53. In the past 12 months have you been asked about your views on the crime and anti-social behaviour issues that matter to you in the area where you live? This may have been in person or via another method e.g. a questionnaire, or on a website.
Base: All respondents; 2018 (17,043), 2017 (12,662), 2016 (16,865)

The proportion of respondents who have been told in the last 12 months about how local police are tackling crime and ASB has doubled compared to 2017 (see Figure 32). Now nearly a quarter (22%) say that they have been informed. However, over two-thirds of respondents say that they have not been informed (69%).

Figure 32: Informed about how police in local area are tackling crime and ASB in local area



	2018[16]	2017	2016	2015
Yes	22% ↑	11%	12%	17%
No	69% ↓	83%	82%	78%

↑ ↓ Indicates a statistically significant difference compared to 2017

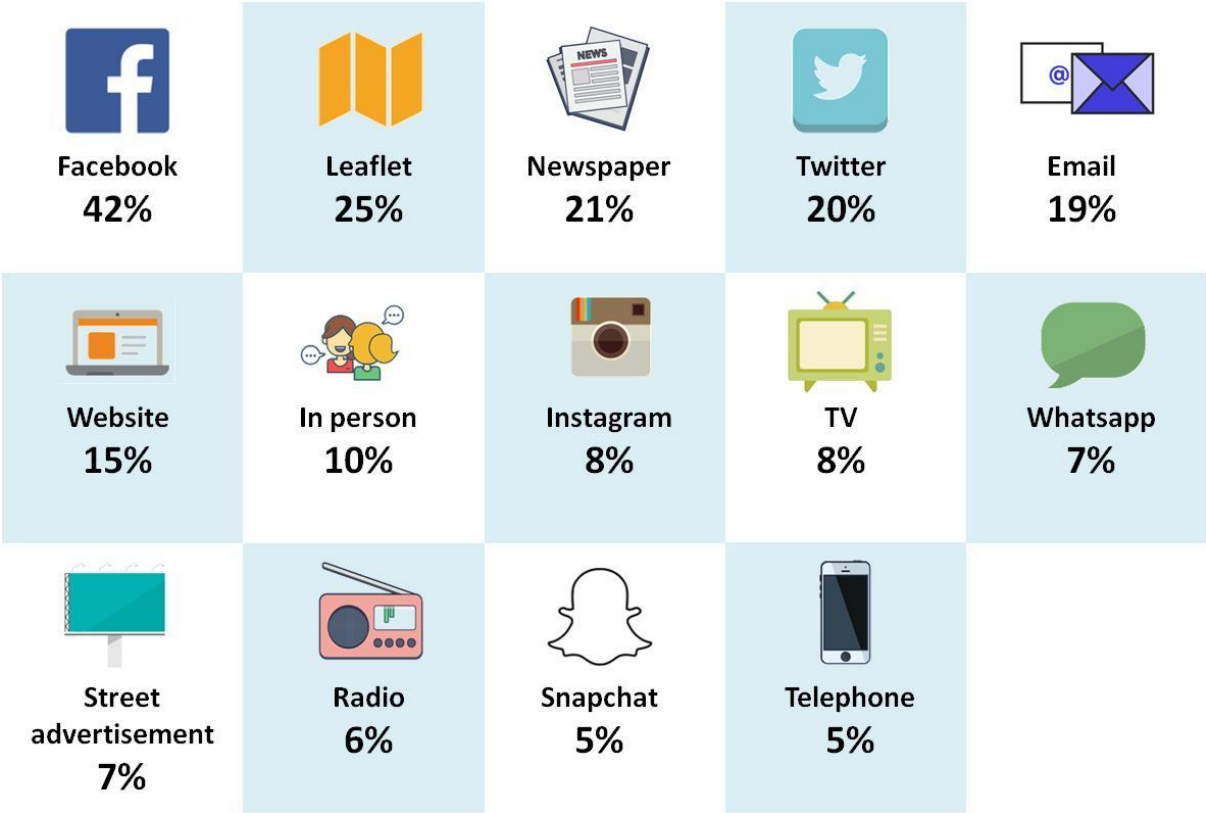
Q48. In the past 12 months have you been told about how the police in your local area are tackling crime and anti-social behaviour issues in the area where you live? This may have been in person or another method i.e. on a website, via email, twitter, facebook… etc
Base: All respondents; 2018 (17,043), 2017 (12,662), 2016 (16,865), 2015 (26,057)

[15] In 2018 'This may have been in person or via another method e.g. a questionnaire, or on a website' was added to the question text.

[16] In 2018, 'Twitter, Facebook...etc' was added to the question text.

Facebook is the most common method of communication for finding out how local police are tackling crime and ASB (42%, see Figure 33). Leaflets, newspapers, Twitter and email are also common methods of communication.

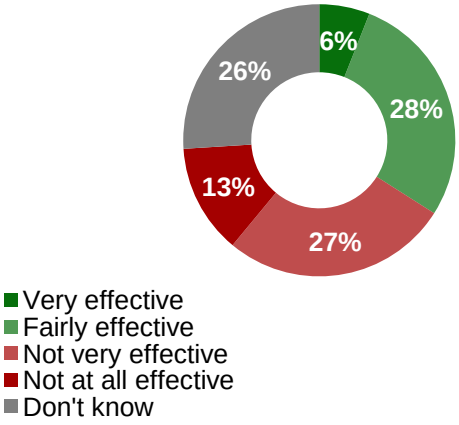
Figure 33: Method of communication for how local police are tackling crime and ASB



Q49. How were you told about how the police are tackling crime?
Base: All who have been told about how the police are tackling crime and ASB in the past 12 months; 2018 (3,758)

Respondents are split on whether they feel the police in their local area have been effective at providing advice or guidance to the public (see Figure 34). Just over a third (35%) feel their local police are effective, whereas just under two-fifths (39%) feel that they are not. There has been a marked increase in the proportion who think that their local police are not effective compared to previous years and a small decrease in those who say the police are effective. It is worth noting that there has been a 9 percentage point decrease in those who don't know, indicating that more respondents have an opinion about this issue.

Figure 34: Perceived effectiveness of police in providing advice or guidance to the public



	2018[17]	2017	2016
Effective	35% ↓	40%	40%
Not effective	39% ↑	25%	22%

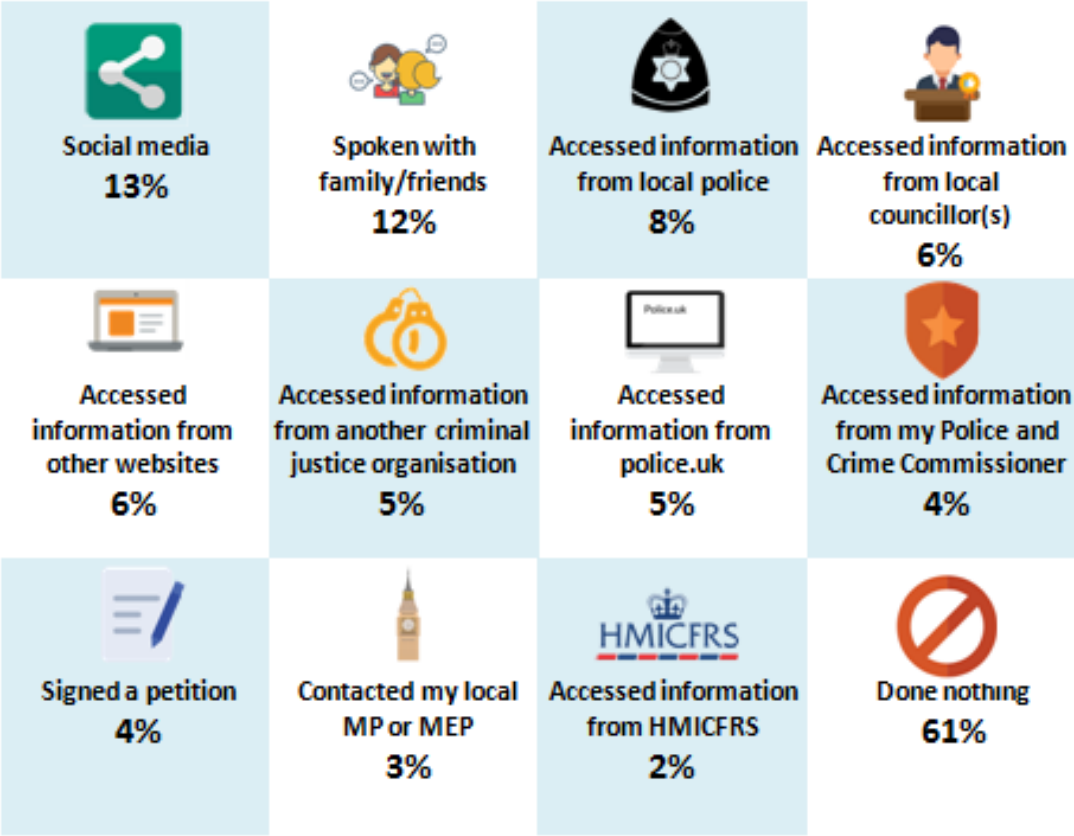
↑ ↓ Indicates a statistically significant difference compared to 2017

Q52. In the past 12 months how effective, if at all, do you think the police in your local area have been at providing advice or guidance to the public?
Base: All respondents; 2018 (17,043), 2017 (12,662), 2016 (16,865)

Most respondents (61%) haven't taken any action to find out about or give views about local policing in the past 12 months (see Figure 35). For those that have, the most common methods are social media sites and speaking to family or friends.

[17] In 2016 and 2017 this question was asked in a grid with other areas of police responsibility.

Figure 35: Actions taken to find out or give views about local police force

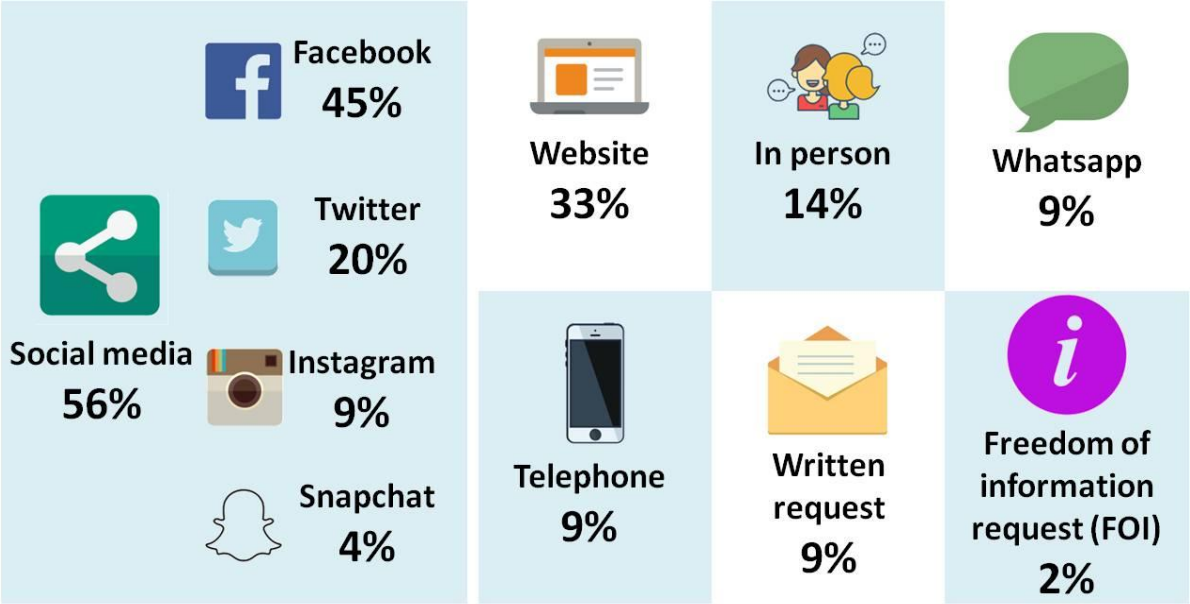


Q57. In the past 12 months, which of the following, if any, have you personally done to find out about the local police or to give your views?
Base: All respondents; 2018 (17,043)

Where respondents have been in touch with their local police force, the most common method of communication is through Facebook (45%, see Figure 36). Websites (33%) and Twitter (20%) are also common.

Social media in general is a common form of communication, with over half (56%) of those who have made contact doing so through social media in some form.

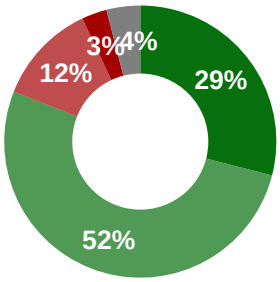
Figure 36: Method of communication used to find out about local police or give views



Q58. What means of communication did you use to find out about the local police or give your views?
Base: All who took action to find out about the local police or give their views; 2018 (5,896)

Although most respondents have done nothing to find out about their local police force or give their views the majority of respondents say they are interested in knowing what the police are doing in their local area (Figure 37). Over four-fifths (81%) are either very or fairly interested, while 15% are not interested.

Figure 37: Overall interest in the local police force



	2018	2017	2016	2015
Interested	81%	80%	75%	76%
Not interested	15%	17%	20%	21%

Q55. How interested, if at all, are you in knowing what the police are doing in your local area?
Base: All respondents; 2018 (17,043), 2017 (12,662), 2016 (16,865), 2015 (26,057)

Respondents are interested in knowing about a wide range of information about the local police (see Figure 38). The most commonly selected areas are around what the local police are doing or have done to prevent issues such as crime (66%), ASB (63%), serious and organised crime (51%) and drugs and alcohol misuse (49%). The full list of options given at this question can be seen in the appendix (Figure 44).

Figure 38: Aspects of police most interested in knowing about (only 5 most commonly mentioned options shown)

Q56. And what are you most interested in knowing about?
Base: All interested in knowing what the police are doing in their local area; 2018 (14,079)

Younger respondents are more likely to feel informed about what the police in their local area are doing (43% of those aged 16-24 and 46% of those aged 25-34, compared to 37% overall). They are also more likely to feel informed about their safety or the safety of their property (39% of 16-24 year olds and 40% of 25-34 year olds, compared to 33% overall) and about their online safety (39% for both those aged 16-24 and 25-34, compared to 30% overall). Social media is a key channel for this age group, with them being more likely to have found about how the police are tackling crime through it (80% of 16-24 year olds and 77% of 25-34 year olds, compared to 51% overall) and more likely to have used it to find out about police or give their views (69% of 16-24 year olds and 75% of 25-34 year olds who have taken action to seek information about the police, compared to 56% overall). It is also worth noting that this age group are more likely to have taken action to find out about the police or give their views (44% of those aged 16-24 and 46% of those aged 25-34, compared to 36% overall).

Meanwhile, older respondents are more interested in knowing what the police are doing in their local area (89% of those aged 65+, compared to 81% overall). Respondents aged 65+ are specifically more interested in knowing about what the police are dong to reduce or prevent different forms of crime, the safety of their property (55%, compared to 47% overall) and online safety (42%, compared to 37% overall).

BAME respondents are also more likely to feel informed about what the police in their local area are doing (43%, compared to 37% overall), about their safety or the safety of their property (40%, compared to 33% overall) and about their online safety (36%, compared to 30% overall). This is particularly the case for black respondents (46% informed, 45% about their safety and the safety of their property, and 44% about online safety). BAME respondents are also more likely to have been asked about their views in the past 12 months (14% for BAME, 17% for black respondents, compared to 9% overall). This may, in part, explain why BAME respondents are more likely to agree that the local police listen to the views of the public when setting priorities (40%, compared to 29% overall) and have been effective at providing advice and guidance to the public in the past 12 months (44%, compared to 35%).

10 Police responsibilities and priorities

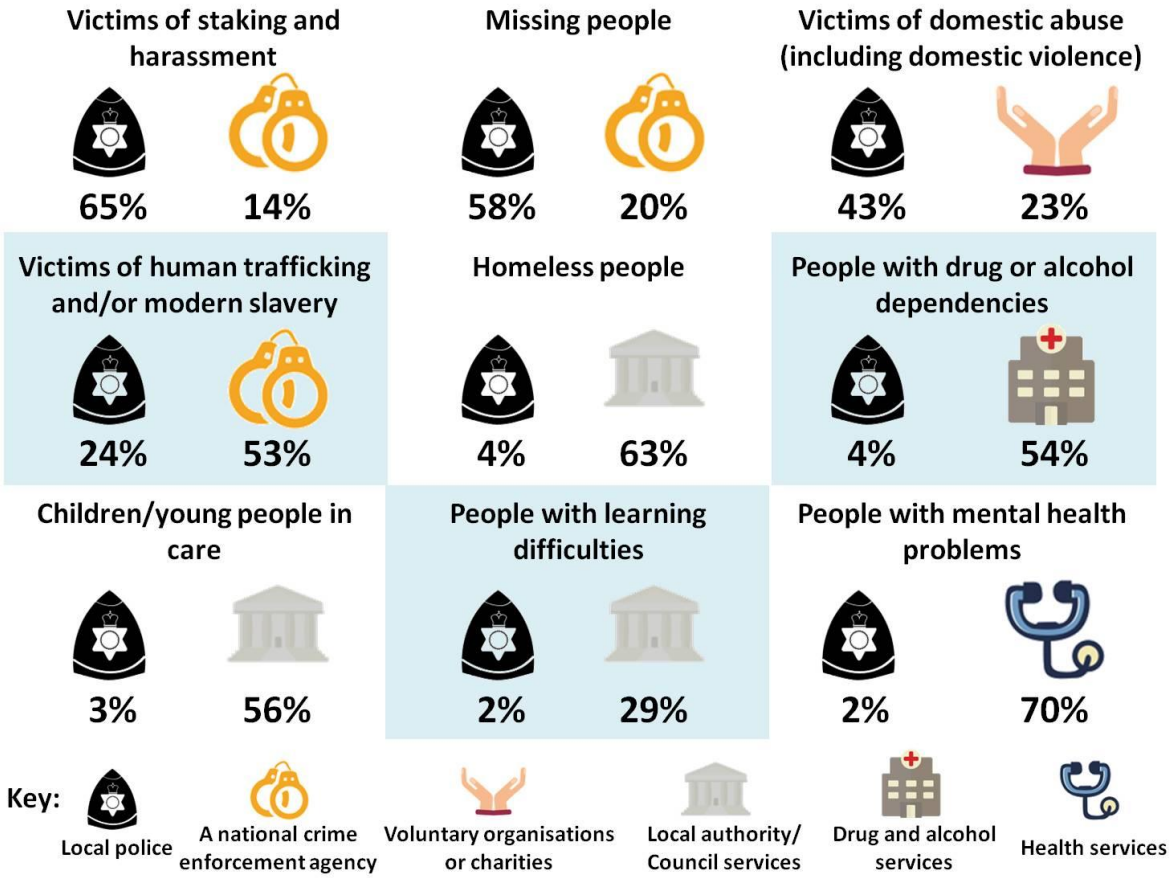
This section covers respondents' perceptions of the responsibilities and priorities of the local police force.

For the next set of questions respondents were asked to select, from a list of different organisations, which was the most responsible for 'looking after' different vulnerable groups of individuals. The police force was the service selected most only for victims of stalking and harassment (65%), missing people (58%) and victims of domestic abuse (43%).

For other vulnerable groups other organisations are more likely to be seen as more responsible, for example, a national crime enforcement agency is seen to be most responsible for victims of human trafficking and/or modern slavery, while local authorities or councils are seen to be responsible for homeless people and children/young people in care (see Figure 39 and Figure 43 in the appendix).

Respondents aged 55-64 and 65+ are more likely to think the local police should have the greatest responsibility for looking after victims of stalking and harassment (73% and 74%, compared to 65% overall), missing people (63% and 65%, compared to 58%) and victims of domestic abuse (47% and 50%, compared to 43% overall). Conversely, respondents aged 16-24 and 25-34 are less likely to think the local police have responsibility for these individuals (stalking and harassment: 54% and 55%, compared to 65% overall, and victims of domestic abuse: 37% and 36%, compared to 43% overall). However, they are not more likely to think that any other organisation has lead responsibility for these groups.

Figure 39: Responsibility for vulnerable individuals



Q59. Which, if any, of the following organisations do you think should have the greatest responsibility for looking after vulnerable individuals within the following groups of people?
Base: All respondents; 2018(17,043)

Respondents were given a task to determine the relative priority of a list of 15 areas that the police focus on at a national level. Respondents were shown 5 areas of responsibility and asked to select the one that they think should be the most important for police to prioritise and the one that they think is the least important for police to prioritise. This exercise was repeated a further 5 times, with different combinations of the areas.

This type of question setup allows for a model to be created which is used to determine the probability that each item is chosen as the highest priority if respondents were shown the full list of options and asked to rank them. This technique is used as it asks respondents to make decisions about a smaller number of items in one go. It also makes predictions about the distance between priority areas, e.g. the probability of responding in person to emergencies being selected as the most important priority is nearly twice that of the probability of tackling gangs being selected as the most important.

Respondents recognise the broad range of priorities that police forces need to balance. Although some police activities are more frequently selected as a priority, the activities are rated relatively closely, meaning that there are no tasks that are clearly seen as being more important to prioritise.

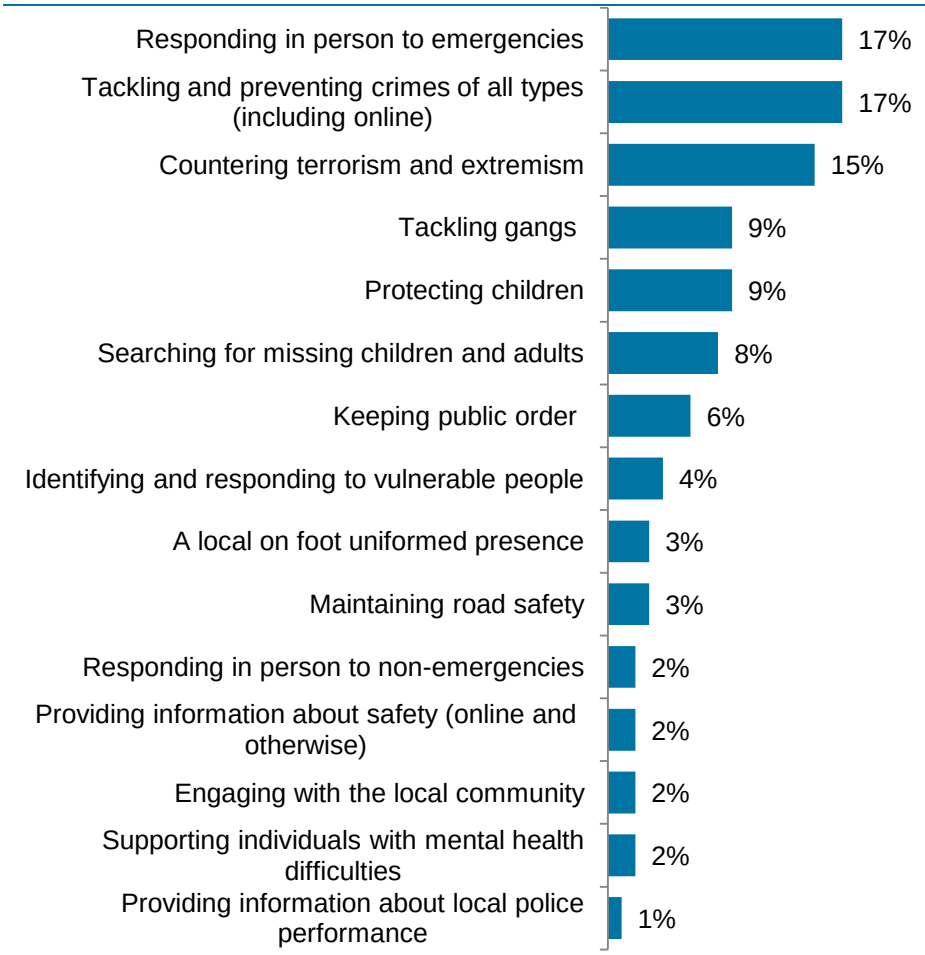
However, responding in person to emergencies and tackling and preventing crimes of all types are the tasks that are seen as being the most important priorities (both 17%, see Figure 40). These are closely followed by countering terrorism and extremism (15%).

Meanwhile, non-emergency related activities such as supporting individuals with mental health difficulties (2%), engaging with the local community (2%) and providing information about local police performance (1%) are ranked as the lowest priorities.

Interestingly, a local on foot uniformed presence is ranked relatively low (3%). This is in contrast to the 78% of respondents that say it is important to have a regular police officer or PCSO presence on foot in their local area (see Figure 12). This suggests that although most respondents say a regular police presence is important when asked about it on its own, once they are asked to contextualise this against the range of other police activities it becomes relatively less important.

A similar pattern can be seen when it comes to the police providing information. 81% of respondents say that they are interested in knowing what the police are doing in their local area (see Figure 37) with 40% of these respondents saying that they are interested in police performance. However, when this is compared to other areas that the police could prioritise it is ranked the lowest (1%).

Figure 40: Areas respondents feel police should prioritise



Q60. You will now be presented with a series of tasks that will ask you to select your highest priority and your lowest priority for the police at a national level.
Base: All who gave valid answers[18]; 2018 (16,777), scores shown are probability scores derived from a max differential model

These priorities are also reflected in the specific types of crime that respondents feel the police should prioritise (see Figure 41). Respondents were asked to select what they think the top 3 priorities should be for the police. They were then asked to rank these top 3 areas.

Terrorism/extremism is the most commonly selected (49% selected it as a top 3 priority, and 31% ranked as the most important), followed by child sexual exploitation/abuse (46% selected it as a top 3 priority and 23% ranked it as the most important). Violent crime or crime against the person is also ranked highly (with 41% selecting it as a top 3 priority and 14% selecting it as the most important), as is rape and other sexual offences (37% selected it as a top 3 priority and 17% as the second most important).

Next in terms of being mentioned within the top 3 were serious and organised crime (34%), burglary/theft/stealing (18%), ASB and other non-criminal incidents (9%), drug offences (9%), modern slavery (9%), domestic abuse (8%), hate crime (6%), arson and criminal damage (5%) and fraud (5%).

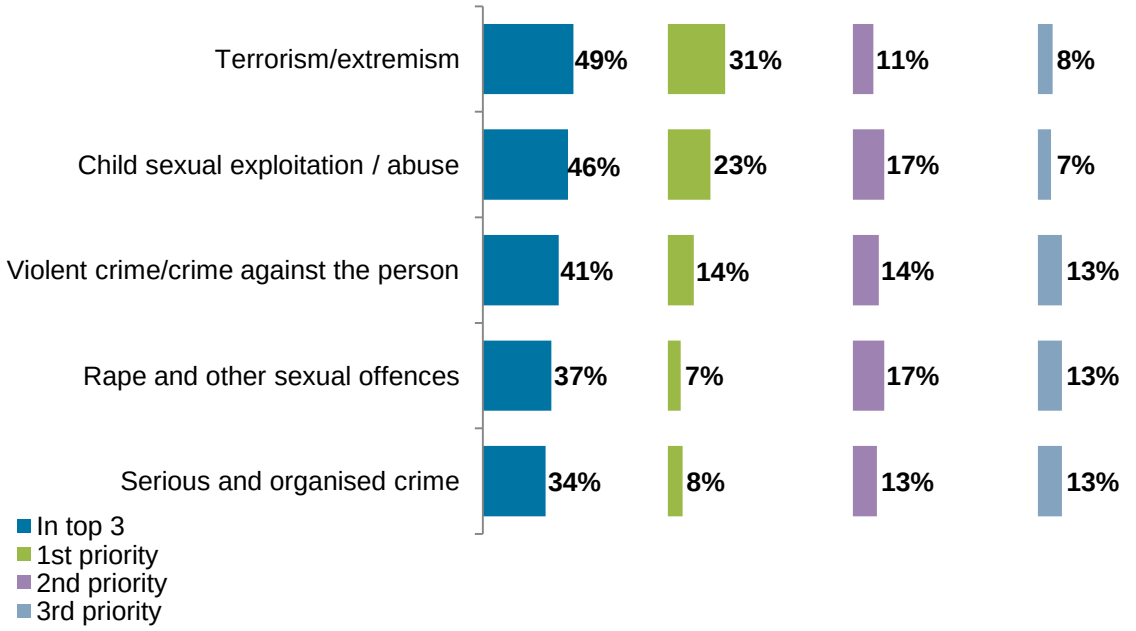
[18] All respondents were asked to answer question for the Max Diff model, but a small number gave 'don't know' responses for all statements, meaning that they could not be included in the model.

Crimes such as commercial/business crimes (2%) stalking and harassment (3%) and online abuse (3%) are the least likely to be considered as the most important priorities. The full details of responses to this question can be seen in the appendix (Figure 45).

Respondents aged 16-24 are more likely to select rape and other sexual offences (48%, compared to 37% overall) and domestic abuse (14%, compared to 8% overall) as types of crime that police should prioritise. They are less likely to select violent crime/crime against the person (28%, compared to 41% overall) and serious and organised crime (24%, compared to 34% overall). Respondents aged 55-64 and 65+ are more likely to say that terrorism/extremism (56% and 55%), violent crime/crime against the person (50% and 48%) and serious and organised crime (40% and 44%) should be a priority.

BAME respondents are less likely to say that terrorism/extremism (41%, compared to 49%), violent crime/crime against the person (31%, compared to 41% overall), rape and other sexual offences (31%, compared to 37% overall) and serious and organised crime (29%, compared to 34%) should be a priority. They are more likely to select drug offences (16%, compared to 9%) and ASB and other non-criminal incidents (15%, compared to 9% overall) as priority areas.

Figure 41: Types of crime police should prioritise (only 5 most commonly mentioned crime types shown)



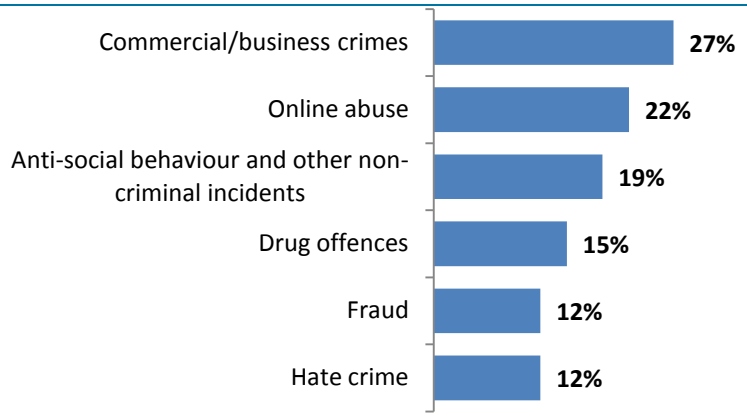
Q61. Which three of the following types of crime / anti-social behaviour do you think police across England and Wales should prioritise? Base: All asked question[19]; 2018 (16,777)
Q61A. Now thinking of the three prioritise you have selected, please rank them from most important to least important, where 1 is most important and 3 is the least important. Base: All who provided a rank; 2018 (15,969)

The crimes that respondents feel it is least important for police to prioritise are commercial/business crimes (27%), followed by online abuse (22%) and ASB and other

[19] This question was added after the pilot stage and so a small number of respondents were not asked it

noncriminal incidents (19%, see Figure 42, full data for this questions can be seen in the appendix, Figure 46).

Figure 42: Types of crime it is least important for police to prioritise (only most commonly mentioned options shown)



Q61B. And which of these do you think it is least important for the police to prioritise?
Base: All asked question[20]; 2018 (16,777)

[20] This question was added after the pilot stage and so a small number of respondents were not asked it

Appendix A: Completed surveys

Table 2: Number of completed surveys per police force

Area	Number of surveys	Area	Number of surveys
Avon & Somerset	403	Lincolnshire	401
Bedfordshire	405	Merseyside	402
Cambridgeshire	402	Metropolitan Police	409
Cheshire	400	Norfolk	400
Cleveland	416	North Wales	415
Cumbria	457	North Yorkshire	400
Derbyshire	403	Northamptonshire	403
Devon & Cornwall	401	Northumbria	406
Dorset	408	Nottinghamshire	401
Durham	402	South Wales	411
Dyfed-Powys	410	South Yorkshire	416
Essex	400	Staffordshire	403
Gloucestershire	402	Suffolk	402
Greater Manchester	402	Surrey	403
Gwent	404	Sussex	402
Hampshire	401	Thames Valley	400
Hertfordshire	408	Warwickshire	404
Humberside	414	West Mercia	406
Kent	400	West Midlands	401
Lancashire	400	West Yorkshire	417
Leicestershire	402	Wiltshire	401

Appendix B: Demographic profile of participants

This report focuses on key differences for specific sub-groups of the population. The table below outlines the number of surveys completed within each of these sub-groups.

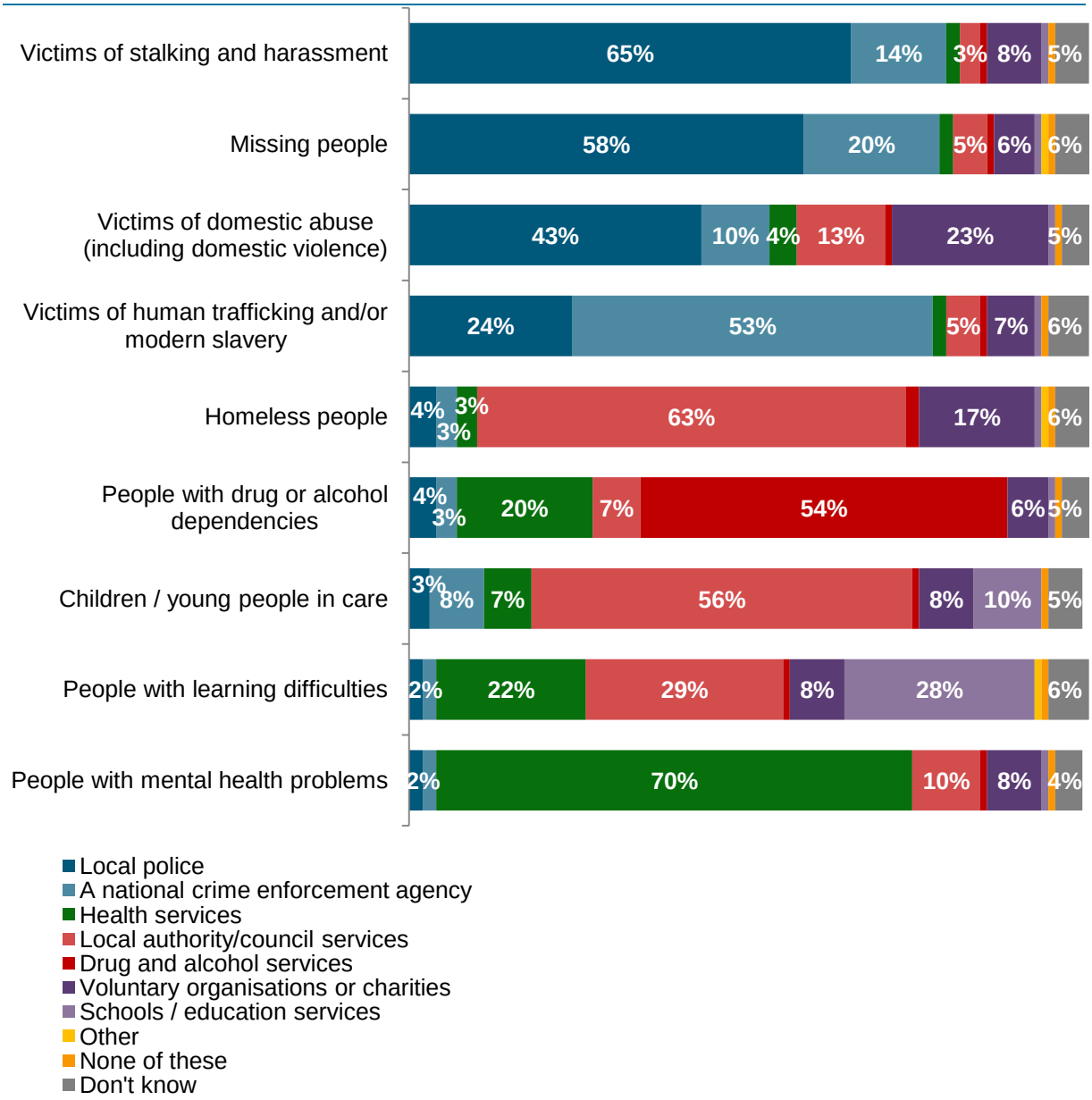
Table 3: Demographic profile of respondents

	Sub-group	Base
Gender	Male	6,803
	Female	10,213
Age	16-24	1,134
	25-34	2,622
	35-44	2,976
	45-54	3,113
	55-64	3,512
	65+	3,662
Ethnicity	White	15,803
	BAME	1,153
	Black	186
	Mixed	262
	Asian/Asian British	634
	Arab	27
Disability	Have a disability	4,401
	Do not have a disability	12,263
Area	Urban	13,215
	Rural	3,828
Sexuality	Heterosexual	15,735
	Gay/Lesbian	430
	Bisexual	409
	Other	101
IMD	1st quartile (Least deprived)	4,533
	2nd quartile	4,374
	3rd quartile	4,269
	4th quartile (Most deprived)	3,867
Satisfied with local police	Satisfied	10,440
	Dissatisfied	1,929

	Sub-group	Base
Satisfied with last interaction	Satisfied	3,417
	Dissatisfied	1,117
Crime/ASB in local area	Problem	6,400
	Not a problem	9,913
Police are dealing with crime/ASB	Agree	7,071
	Disagree	3,209
Informed about police	Well informed about police	6,098
	Not well informed about police	10,193
Told about how police are dealing with Crime/ASB	Yes	3,758
	No	11,792
On foot visibility	At least once every 3 months or more	7,018
	Not seen	6,786
In vehicle visibility	At least once every 3 months or more	9,718
	Not seen	3,640
Interaction with police	At least once every 3 months or more	2,614
	No interaction	10,646
Local police use Stop and Search appropriately	Agree	7,020
	Disagree	1,165
Local police treat people fairly and with respect	Agree	11,114
	Disagree	1,281
Formal interaction with local police in last 12 months	Yes- as a victim	1,532
	Yes- as a witness	1,580
	Yes – arrested or detained	222
	Yes – Stopped and Searched	260

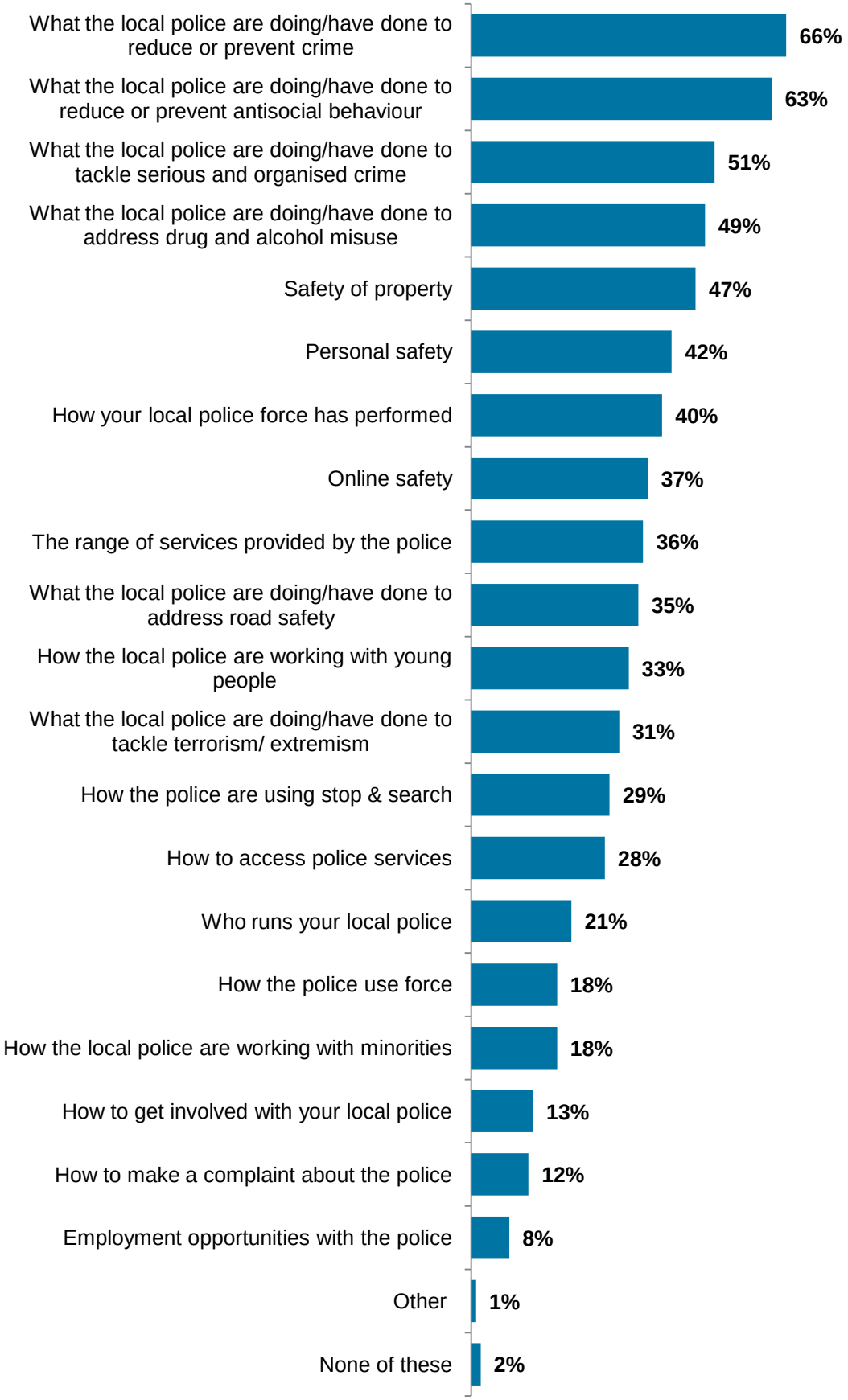
Appendix C: Additional charts

Figure 43: Services responsible for vulnerable individuals



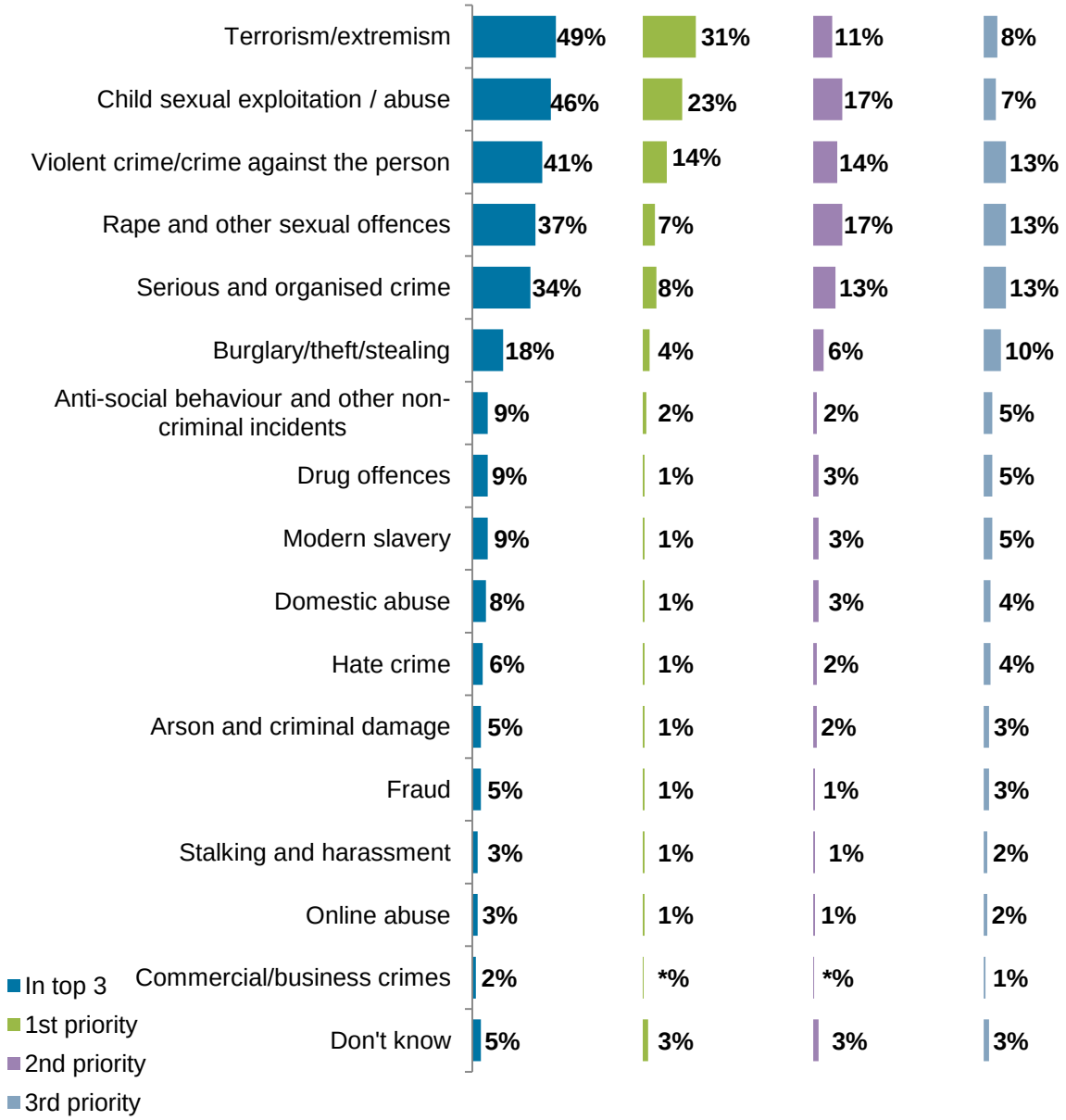
Q59. Which, if any, of the following organisations do you think should have the greatest responsibility for looking after vulnerable individuals within the following groups of people?
Base: All respondents; 2018 (17,043)

Figure 44: Aspects of police respondents most interested in knowing about



Q56. And what are you most interested in knowing about?
Base: All interested in knowing what the police are doing in their local area; 2018 (14,079)

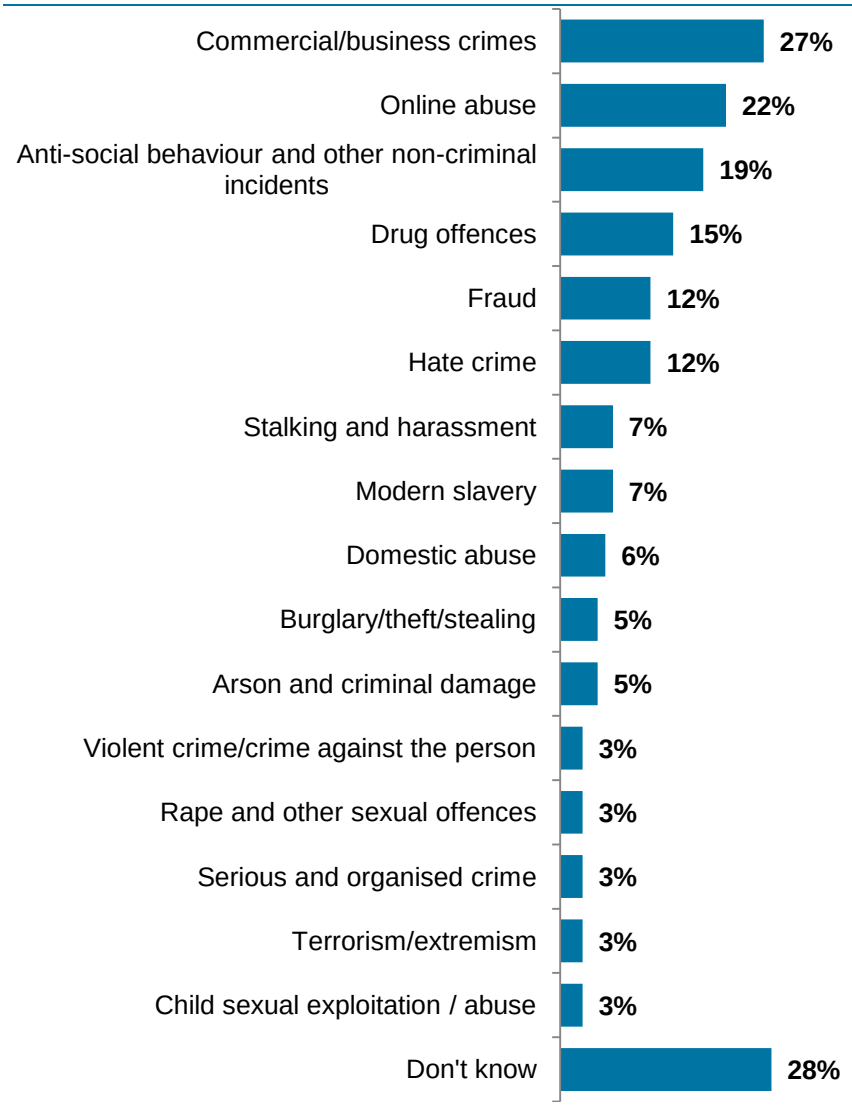
Figure 45: Types of crime police should prioritise (top 3)



Q61. Which three of the following types of crime / anti-social behaviour do you think police across England and Wales should prioritise? Base: All asked question[21]; 2018 (16,777)
Q61A. Now thinking of the three prioritise you have selected, please rank them from most important to least important, where 1 is most important and 3 is the least important. Base: All who provided a rank; 2018 (15,969)

[21] This question was added after the pilot stage and so a small number of respondents were not asked it

Figure 46: Types of crime it is least important for police to prioritise



Q61B. And which of these do you think it is least important for the police to prioritise?
Base: All asked question[22]; 2018 (16,777)

[22] This question was added after the pilot stage and so a small number of respondents were not asked it

Appendix D: Statement of Terms

Compliance with International Standards

BMG complies with the International Standard for Quality Management Systems requirements (ISO 9001:2015) and the International Standard for Market, opinion and social research service requirements (ISO 20252:2012) and The International Standard for Information Security Management (ISO 27001:2013).

Interpretation and publication of results

The interpretation of the results as reported in this document pertain to the research problem and are supported by the empirical findings of this research project and, where applicable, by other data. These interpretations and recommendations are based on empirical findings and are distinguishable from personal views and opinions.

BMG will not be publish any part of these results without the written and informed consent of the client.

Ethical practice

BMG promotes ethical practice in research: We conduct our work responsibly and in light of the legal and moral codes of society.

We have a responsibility to maintain high scientific standards in the methods employed in the collection and dissemination of data, in the impartial assessment and dissemination of findings and in the maintenance of standards commensurate with professional integrity.

We recognise we have a duty of care to all those undertaking and participating in research and strive to protect subjects from undue harm arising as a consequence of their participation in research. This requires that subjects' participation should be as fully informed as possible and no group should be disadvantaged by routinely being excluded from consideration. All adequate steps shall be taken by both agency and client to ensure that the identity of each respondent participating in the research is protected.

With more than 25 years' experience, BMG Research has established a strong reputation for delivering high quality research and consultancy.

BMG serves both the public and the private sector, providing market and customer insight which is vital in the development of plans, the support of campaigns and the evaluation of performance.

Innovation and development is very much at the heart of our business, and considerable attention is paid to the utilisation of the most up to date technologies and information systems to ensure that market and customer intelligence is widely shared.

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