Perceptions of Modern Slavery: Findings from the 2019/20 Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey

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NATIONAL STATISTICS

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CONTENTS

1 | Summary Findings

This bulletin presents findings from the modern slavery module included within the 2019/20 Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey.

- When asked about the prevalence of modern slavery, the majority (60%) of respondents perceived it to be widespread in Northern Ireland with sexual exploitation (80%) viewed as the most prevalent type. Poverty (78%) was perceived as the most likely factor that makes people particularly vulnerable to modern slavery.

- Just over a third of respondents (35%) felt they would recognise the signs and indicators that someone is a victim of modern slavery. Of those who said they would, body language/general behaviour/whether they appear scared or anxious/emotional signs (84%) was most readily considered by respondents as an indicator or sign associated with modern slavery. The majority of respondents, just over three-fifths (61%), felt their awareness of modern slavery had increased in the past year.

- Almost nine-in-ten respondents (89%) stated they would report concerns of someone being a victim of modern slavery. When asked to whom they would report it, respondents were by far most likely to indicate they would inform the police (87%). Of those who would not report their concerns, 'not my business/wouldn't want to get involved' (50%) and 'wouldn't know who to report it to or how to report it' (41%) were the main reasons given for not doing so.

- The majority of respondents (60%) were confident (either 'very' or 'fairly') that the courts and police deal effectively with modern slavery with the remaining 40% having little or no confidence at all.

- When asked in what ways they could personally help to tackle modern slavery, reporting concerns to the police or other authorities (58%) or improving their awareness of signs that someone may be a victim (52%) were most likely to be cited by respondents. Just over one-in-ten (12%) felt they didn't have a role in helping to tackle modern slavery.

2 | Introduction

2.1 The focus of this publication

This bulletin draws on findings from the 2019/20 Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey (NISCS). The survey was formerly known as the Northern Ireland Crime Survey (NICS) but was renamed following a review in 2017/18. NISCS is a representative, continuous, personal interview survey of the experiences and perceptions of crime of 3,710 adults living in private households throughout Northern Ireland. Previously conducted on an ad hoc basis in 1994/95, 1998, 2001 and 2003/04, the survey began operating on a continuous basis in January 2005.

The focus of this publication is on a module contained within the NISCS relating to perceptions of modern slavery. As part of the aforementioned review of the survey, this module was developed and asked for the first time in 2019/20 and will be included biennially thereafter. The module asks respondents about their perceptions of modern slavery including, for example, the prevalence of it and types that occur, along with their views on reporting concerns.

The questions asked respondents about 'modern slavery including human trafficking'; for the purposes of this report it will hereafter be referred to collectively as 'modern slavery'.

Throughout this report key findings are commented on in the text, with numerical details on each section available in the relevant tables comprising the Tabular Annex (Appendix 1). Figures can also be found in the accompanying Microsoft Excel and Open Data Source documents.

Further background information on this bulletin is available in the Technical Annex (Appendix 2). Additional NISCS 2019/20 reports including Experience of Crime (opens in a new window) (Campbell, Rice and Ross, February 2021), Perceptions of Crime (opens in a new window) (Ross and Campbell, March 2021) and Perceptions of Policing and Justice (opens in a new window) (Campbell, Ross and Rice, June 2021) have been published separately.
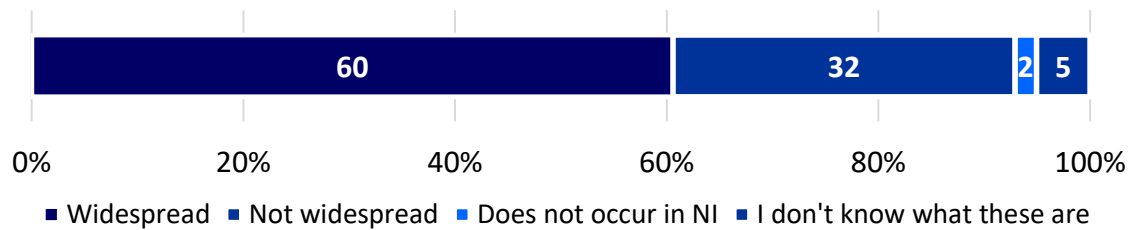
3 | Prevalence of Modern Slavery

3.1 Prevalence of modern slavery

Respondents to the 2019/20 NISCS were asked questions to gauge their views on the prevalence of modern slavery in Northern Ireland. Initially, participants were asked the extent to which they thought modern slavery was present, figures for which are given in Table 1. Respondents were then provided with a short definition/explanation of modern slavery and subsequently asked about the specific types of exploitation they thought occurred in Northern Ireland. More than one response could be selected; a 'No exploitation occurs' option was also offered. Figures are presented in Table 2.

- Findings show the majority of respondents, three-fifths (60%), perceived modern slavery to be widespread in Northern Ireland. Just under a third, 32%, believed it was not widespread whilst a small proportion, 2%, felt modern slavery does not occur in Northern Ireland.

Figure 3.1: Prevalence of modern slavery in Northern Ireland (%), 2019/20

■ Widespread ■ Not widespread ■ Does not occur in NI ■ I don't know what these are

1. Results exclude don't knows and refusals.

2. Widespread includes the options: very widespread; widespread; and fairly widespread.

- Sexual exploitation (80%) was perceived as the most prevalent form of modern slavery. This was followed by forced labour (64%), forced begging (55%) and forced criminality (51%). Of the various types considered, organ harvesting was seen to be the least prevalent (3%). Again, only a small proportion perceived no exploitation to occur (4%).

Figure 3.2: Types of modern slavery occurring in Northern Ireland (%), 2019/20
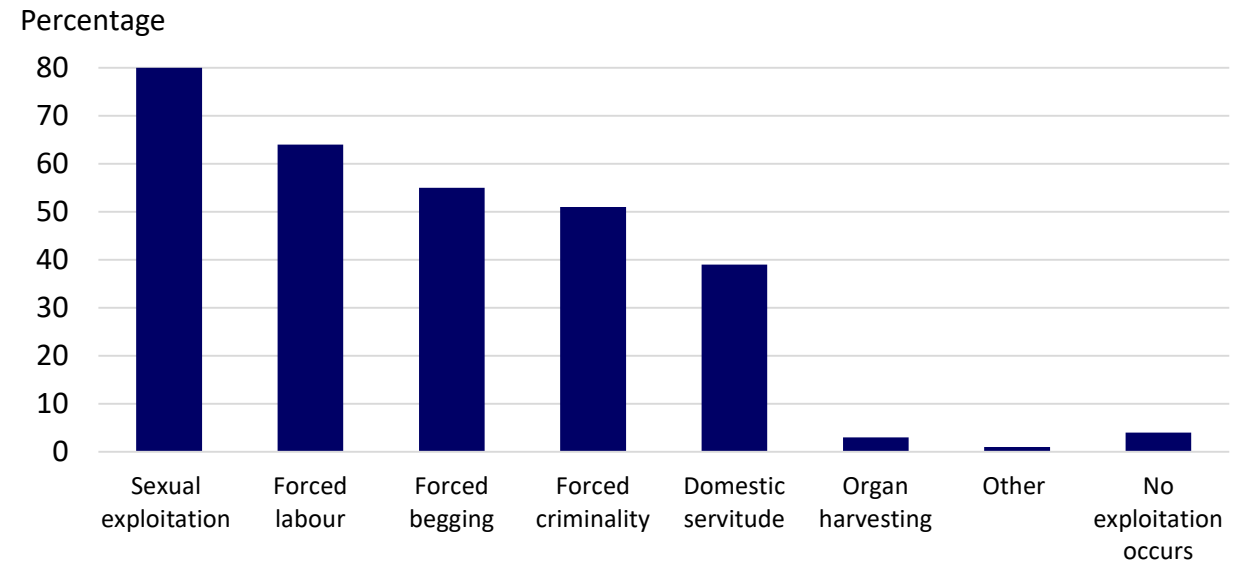
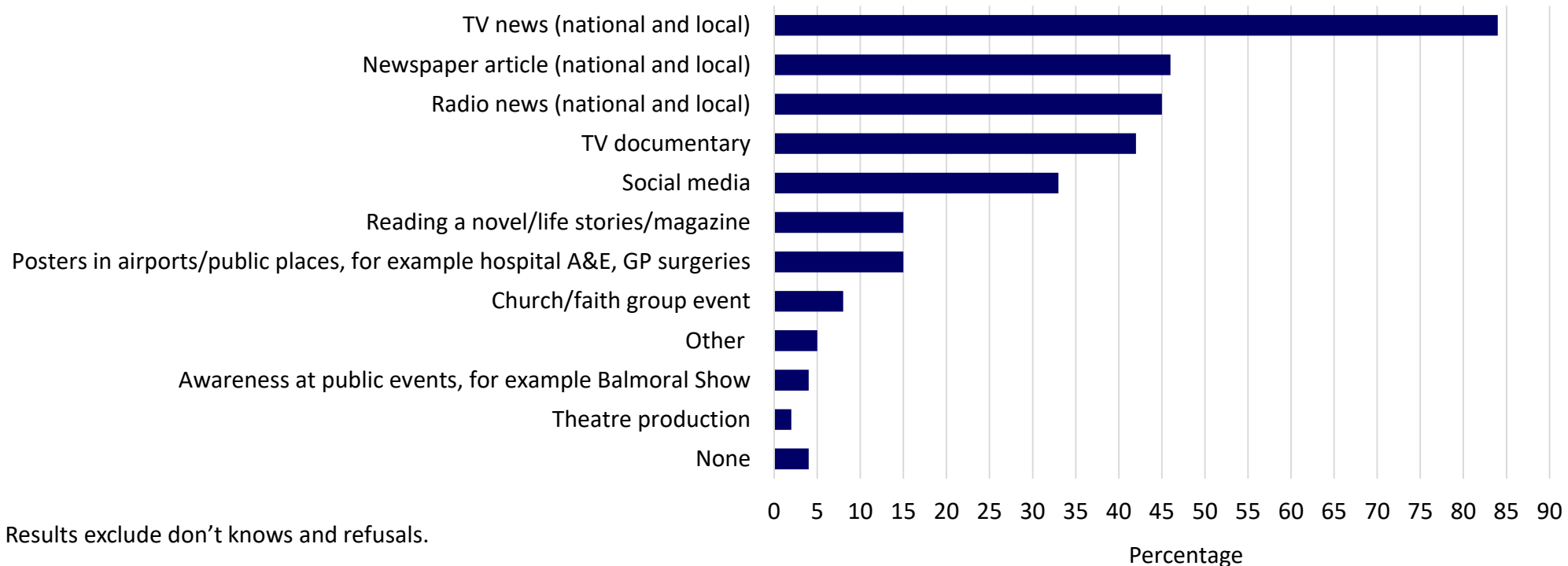1. Results exclude don't knows and refusals.

4 | Awareness of Modern Slavery

4.1 Awareness of modern slavery

Questions were also included in the module to ascertain respondents' awareness of modern slavery, more specifically regarding the mediums through which they had heard about it, if any, and what factors they felt made people particularly vulnerable. For both questions respondents were presented with a list of response options; more than one response could be chosen. Results can be found in Tables 3 and 4.

- Findings show that TV news (national and local) (84%) was the main medium through which respondents had heard about modern slavery; other common mediums cited were newspaper articles (46%), radio news (45%) and TV documentaries (42%).

Figure 4.1: How respondents had heard about modern slavery (%), 2019/20

1. Results exclude don't knows and refusals.

4 | Awareness of Modern Slavery

▪ When asked about the factors that make people vulnerable to modern slavery, poverty (78%) was the most commonly cited factor, followed by immigration status (64%) and a desire for a better life (60%). Personal relationships (16%) and age (24%) were among the factors least likely to relate to a person's vulnerability.

Figure 4.2: Perceived factors that make people particularly vulnerable to modern slavery (%), 2019/20
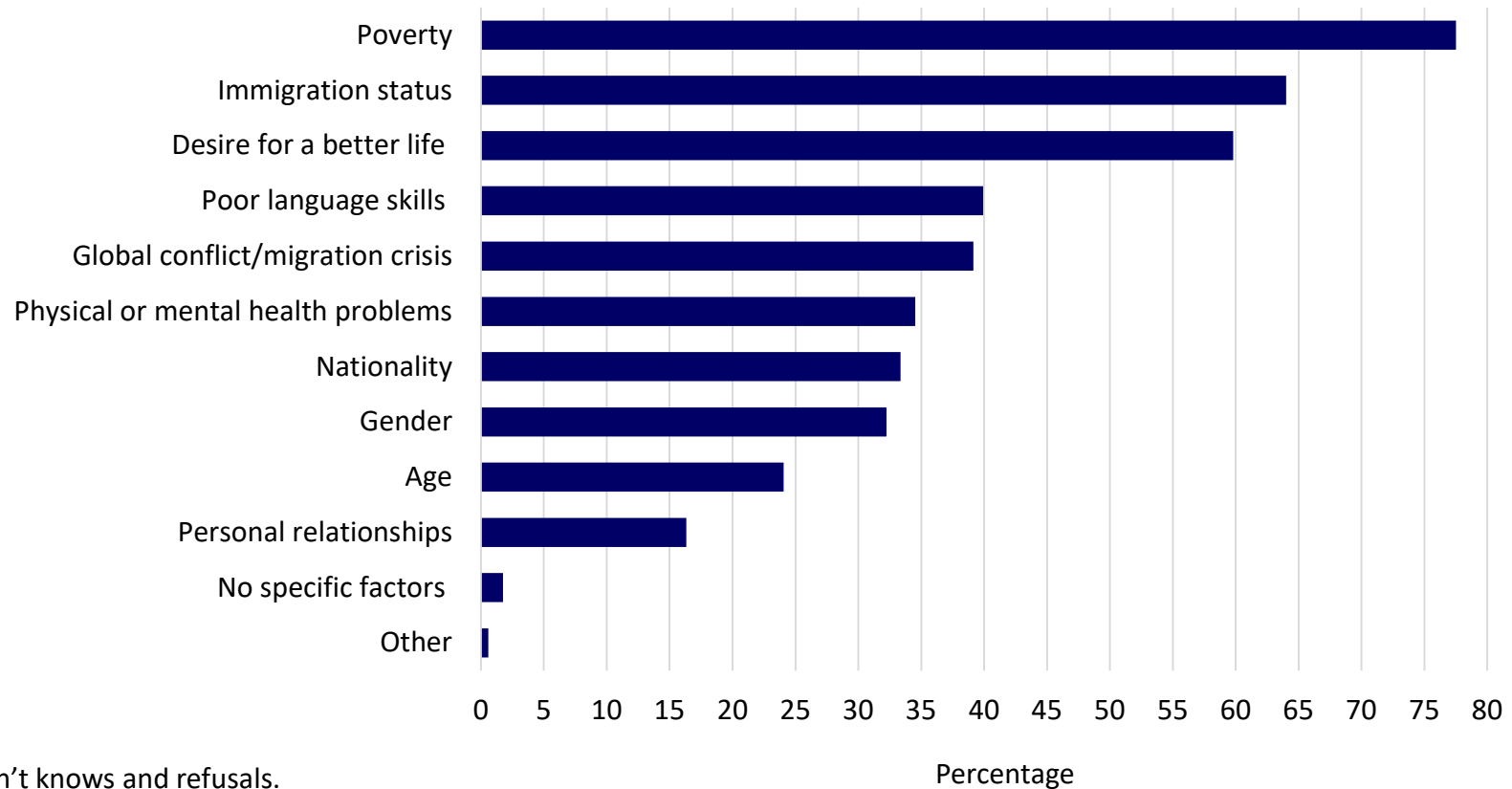
1. Results exclude don't knows and refusals.

4 | Awareness of Modern Slavery

4.2 Signs and indicators of modern slavery

Awareness was also captured by asking respondents whether they would recognise the signs and indicators that someone is a victim of modern slavery (Table 5) and, if so, which signs and indicators they would associate with it. Respondents were presented with a list of signs/indicators; more than one option could be selected. The signs/indicators considered, findings for which are presented in Table 6, were:
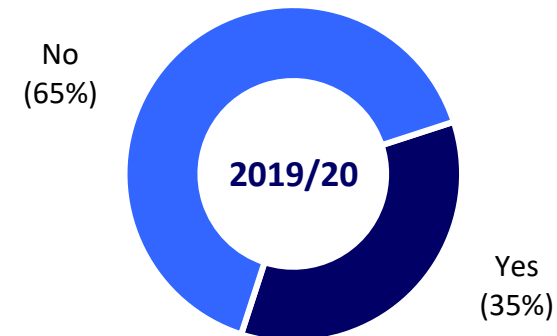
- Body language/general behaviour/whether they appear scared or anxious/emotional signs

- Personal appearance/physical injuries

- Suspicious behaviour, for example excessive visiting by strangers to residential address, unusual payment methods

- Begging/poverty

- Poor working conditions - long hours, no breaks, poor wages

- Over-crowding in residential areas

- Poor health/drugged/malnutrition/underfed

- Living conditions/area

- Awareness someone is being controlled

- Prostitution

- Poor language skills

- Isolation

- Nationality

- Associates/Gangs

- Intuition

- Personal experience/witness

- Other

Within the module, respondents were asked how their awareness of modern slavery has changed in the past year, that is, whether it has increased or stayed the same. Findings are shown in Table 7.

- The majority of respondents, almost two-thirds (65%), indicated that they would not recognise the signs or indicators that someone is a victim of modern slavery.

Figure 4.3: Whether respondents would recognise the signs and indicators that someone is a victim of modern slavery (%), 2019/20

No (65%)

2019/20

Yes (35%)

1. Results exclude don't knows and refusals.

4 | Awareness of Modern Slavery

- Of those who stated they would recognise the signs and indicators, a persons 'body language, general behaviour, whether they appear scared or anxious or emotional signs' (84%) were most readily perceived as an indicator, followed by their personal appearance/physical injuries (69%).

Figure 4.4 Signs and indicators associated with modern slavery (%), 2019/20

Percentage
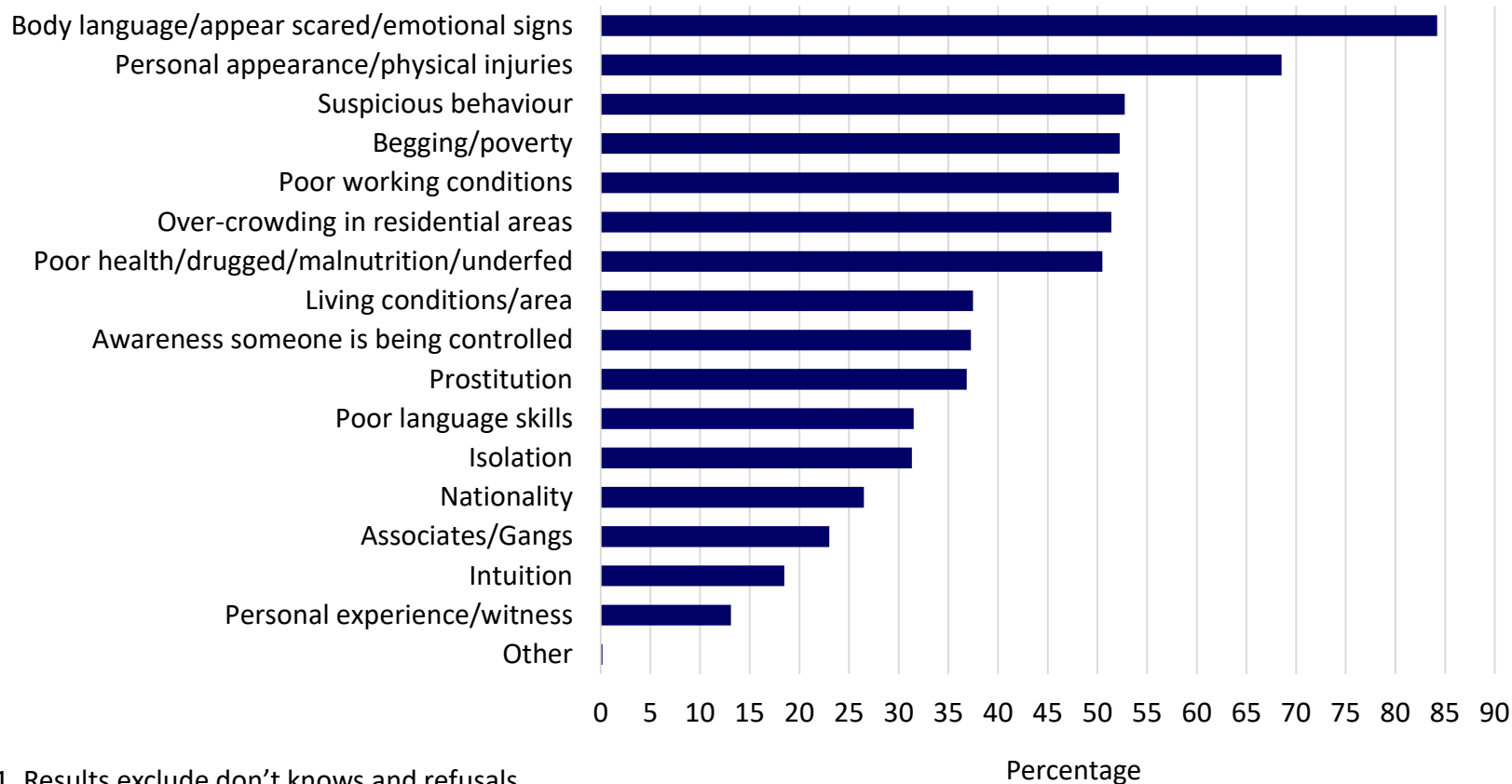
1. Results exclude don't knows and refusals.

Figure 4.5: How respondents' awareness of modern slavery in Northern Ireland has changed in the past year (%), 2019/20

Increased (61%)

Stayed the same (39%)

2019/20
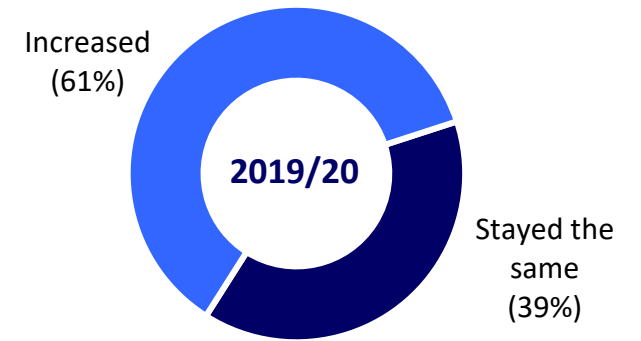
1. Results exclude don't knows and refusals.

- Although only 35% of respondents felt they would be able to recognise the signs and indicators of modern slavery, the majority of respondents (61%) felt their awareness of modern slavery had increased in the past year.

5 | Reporting Modern Slavery

5.1 Reporting of modern slavery

Tables 8 and 9 present findings on whether respondents would report their concerns over someone being a victim of modern slavery and, if so, to whom they would report it. Respondents were presented with a list of organisations; more than one option could be selected. The options given were as follows:

- Report to the Police
- Contact Crimestoppers
- Contact the local Health and Social Care Trust
- Contact a charity dealing with modern slavery or human trafficking
- Contact the Modern Slavery Helpline
- Speak to elected representatives
- Contact the UK Border Force/UK Immigration Enforcement
- Report to HMRC
- Report to the Gangmasters Labour Abuse Authority
- Other

For those who stated that they would not report their concerns, the reasons for not doing so are given in Table 10. Again, respondents could select more than one response.

- The vast majority of respondents (89%) stated they would report their concerns if they thought someone was a victim of modern slavery. When asked to whom they would report their concerns, respondents were by far more likely to report it to the police, almost nine-in-ten (87%), followed by just over one-in-five (21%) who would contact Crimestoppers.

Figure 5.1: Whether respondents would report their concerns of modern slavery (%), 2019/20

No (11%)

Yes (89%)

2019/20

1. Results exclude don't knows and refusals.
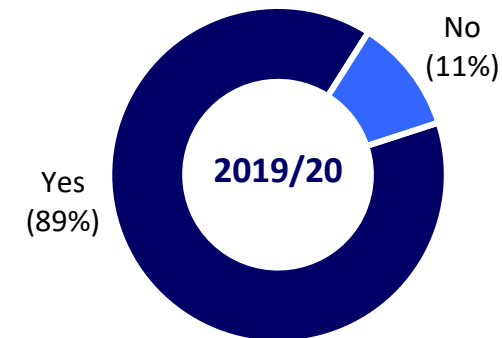
5 Reporting Modern Slavery

- At 50%, 'not my business/wouldn't want to get involved' were the most common reasons given by respondents for not reporting their concerns, while 41% cited 'wouldn't know who to report it to or how to report it'. 'They're not harming anyone in Northern Ireland' (<0.5%) and 'tried to report it but was not able to contact the police/police were not interested' (1%) were among the least likely reasons to be selected.

Figure 5.2: Reasons given for not reporting concerns of modern slavery (%), 2019/20

1. Results exclude don't knows and refusals.
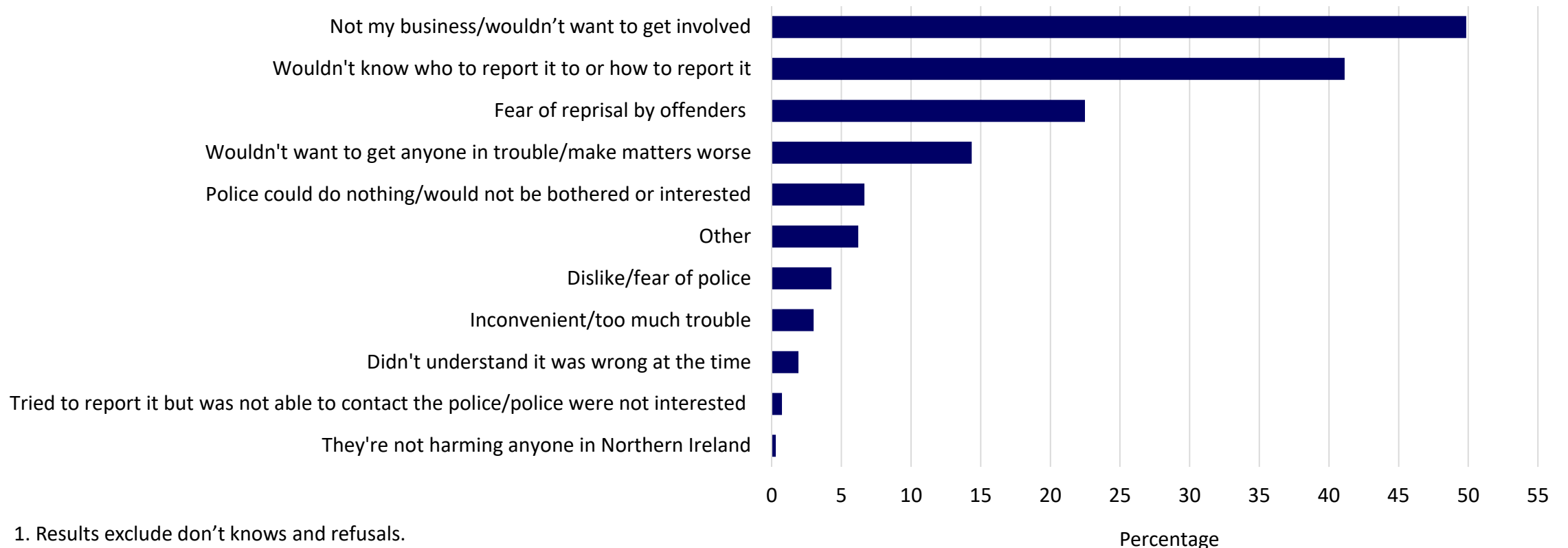
6 | Tackling Modern Slavery

6.1 Confidence in the courts and police

As part of the module, respondents' views on tackling modern slavery were sought. Initially, confidence levels were gauged on whether the courts/police are effective at dealing with modern slavery. A four point scale was used ranging from 'very confident' to 'not at all confident', figures for which are given in Table 11.

- Results show that the majority of respondents expressed at least some confidence in the courts/police when dealing with modern slavery. Three-fifths (60%) were confident, either very or fairly, that modern slavery is dealt with effectively, whilst the remaining 40% showed little or no confidence.

Figure 6.1: Confidence that the courts/police deal effectively with modern slavery (%), 2019/20

60	40

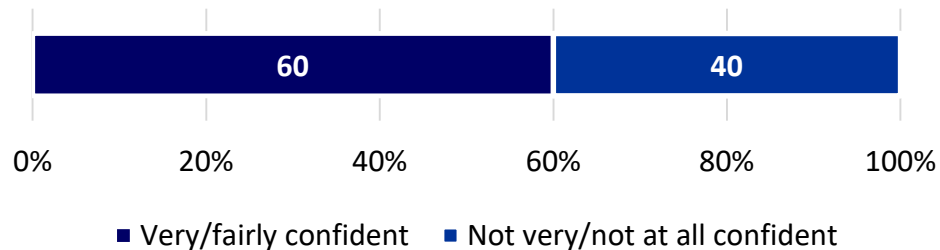0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

■ Very/fairly confident   ■ Not very/not at all confident

1. Results exclude don't knows and refusals.

Respondents were then asked why they thought there had been an increase in the number of victims being recovered. Respondents were presented with a list of options from which more than one option could be chosen.

- Table 12 indicates that 'increased awareness means people report the crime more' (45%) and 'the crime is becoming more common' (44%) were viewed as the most likely reasons for the increase in the number of victims being recovered while 'people feel less responsible for other people's welfare' (9%) was least likely to be cited.

Figure 6.2: Perceptions of why respondents think there has been an increase in the number of victims recovered (%), 2019/20

Category	Percentage
Increased awareness means people report the crime more	~45
This crime is becoming more common	~44
More organised criminals are active in Northern Ireland	~34
The crime is not becoming more common but is being uncovered more successfully	~23
People feel less responsible for other people's welfare	~9
Other	~2

0 10 20 30 40 50

Percentage
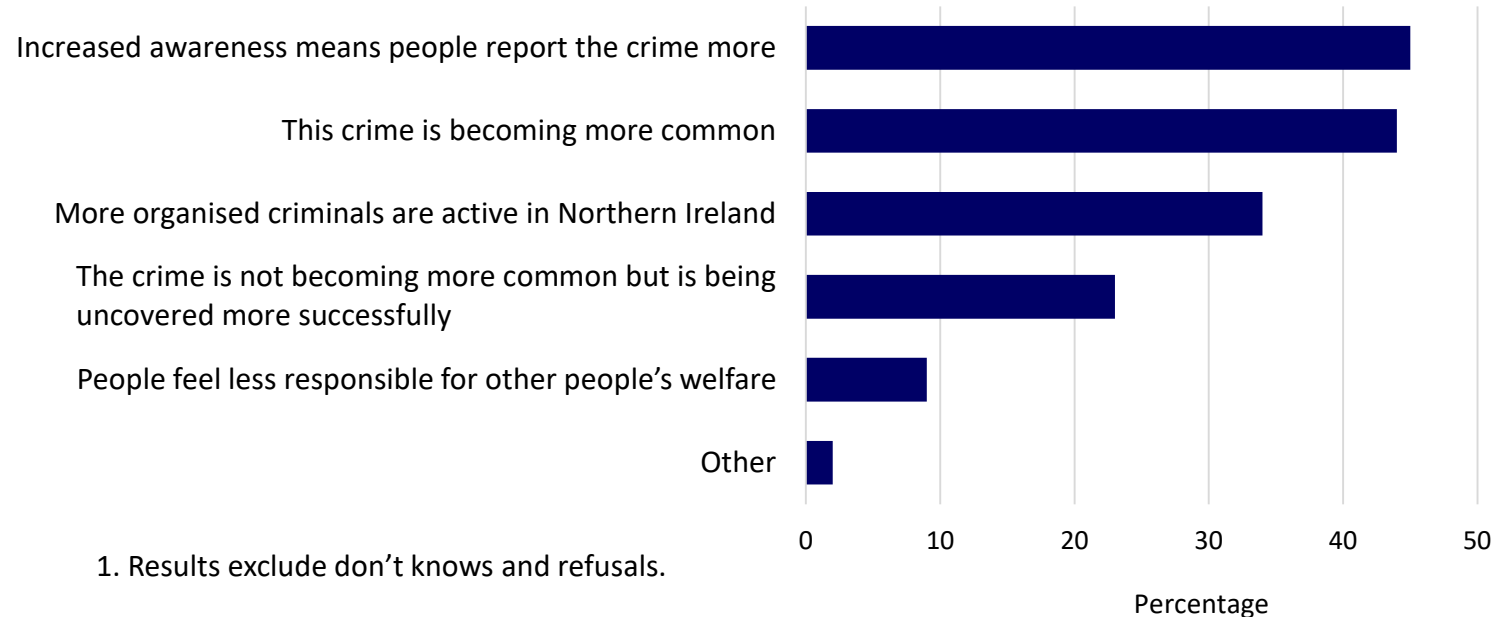
1. Results exclude don't knows and refusals.

6 | Tackling Modern Slavery

6.2 Tackling and prevention of modern slavery

Finally, respondents were asked how, in their view, they could personally help tackle modern slavery (Table 13) and subsequently, what they thought was the best way to prevent it. For the latter, a list of response options was not offered to respondents. Asked as an open question, respondents own views were sought and then their response was coded as appropriate by interviewers using a pre-set list. Findings are given in Table 14.

- At 58%, reporting concerns to the police or other authorities was the main way respondents felt they could personally tackle modern slavery. This was closely followed by 'improve my awareness of signs that indicate someone may be a victim' (52%). 'I don't have a role' was selected by 12% of respondents.

Figure 6.3: How respondents think they could personally help tackle modern slavery (%), 2019/20

1. Results exclude don't knows and refusals.
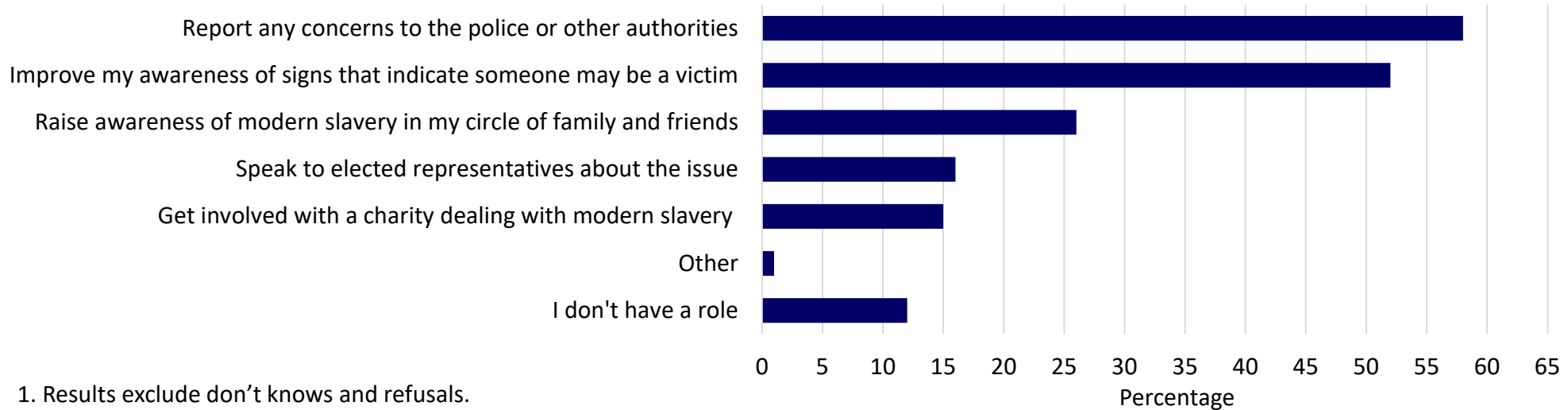
- Findings show that raising awareness in the community (35%) was perceived by respondents as the best way to help prevent modern slavery, followed by having more border controls/better checks on immigration (16%). 'Speeding up delivery of justice' (<0.5%) was viewed as one of the least effective ways to prevent modern slavery.

Appendix 1: Tabular Annex

Table 1: Perceptions of the extent to which modern slavery is present in Northern Ireland (%) [1,2,3]

% saying	
Widespread	60
Not widespread	32
Does not occur in Northern Ireland	2
I don't know what these are	5
Unweighted base	3,621

Source: Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey 2019/20

1. Results exclude don't knows and refusals.

2. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

3. Widespread includes the response options: very widespread; widespread; and fairly widespread.

Table 2: Types of exploitation respondents believe occur in Northern Ireland (%) [1,2]

% saying	
Sexual exploitation	80
Forced labour	64
Forced begging	55
Forced criminality	51
Domestic servitude (forced labour which takes place in a private home)	39
Organ harvesting (forced surgical procedure that removes organs or tissues for reuse, typically for organ transplantation)	3
Other	1
No exploitation occurs	4
Unweighted base	3,558

Source: Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey 2019/20

1. Results exclude don't knows and refusals.

2. Respondents could select more than one response.

Table 3: How respondents have heard about modern slavery (%) [1,2]

% saying	
TV news (national and local)	84
Newspaper article (national and local)	46
Radio news (national and local)	45
TV documentary	42
Social media	33
Reading a novel/life stories/magazine	15
Posters in airports/public places, for example hospital A&E, GP surgeries	15
Church/faith group event	8
Other	5
Awareness at public events, for example Balmoral Show	4
Theatre production	2
None	4
Unweighted base	3,678

Source: Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey 2019/20

1. Results exclude don't knows and refusals.

2. Respondents could select more than one response.

Table 4: Factors respondents believe make people particularly vulnerable to modern slavery (%) [1,2]

% saying	
Poverty	78
Immigration status	64
Desire for a better life	60
Poor language skills	40
Global conflict/migration crisis	39
Physical or mental health problems	35
Nationality	33
Gender	32
Age	24
Personal relationships	16
No specific factors	2
Other	1
Unweighted base	3,640

Source: Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey 2019/20

1. Results exclude don't knows and refusals.

2. Respondents could select more than one response.

Table 5: Whether respondents would recognise the signs and indicators that someone is a victim of modern slavery (%) [1]

% saying	
Yes	35
No	65
Unweighted base	3,591

Source: Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey 2019/20

1. Results exclude don't knows and refusals.

Table 6: Signs or indicators associated with modern slavery (%) [1,2,3]

% saying	
Body language/general behaviour/whether they appear scared or anxious/emotional signs	84
Personal appearance/physical injuries	69
Suspicious behaviour, for example excessive visiting by strangers to residential address, unusual payment methods	53
Begging/poverty	52
Poor working conditions - long hours, no breaks, poor wages	52
Over-crowding in residential areas	51
Poor health/drugged/malnutrition/underfed	50
Living conditions/area	37
Awareness someone is being controlled	37
Prostitution	37
Poor language skills	32
Isolation	31
Nationality	26
Associates/Gangs	23
Intuition	18
Personal experience/witness	13
Other	<0.5
Unweighted base	1,220

Source: Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey 2019/20

1. Results exclude don't knows and refusals.
2. Asked of respondents who stated they would recognise the signs or indicators of someone being a victim of modern slavery.
3. Respondents could select more than one response.

Table 7: How respondents' awareness of modern slavery in Northern Ireland has changed in the past year (%) [1]

% saying	
Increased	61
Stayed the same	39
Unweighted base	3,555

Source: Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey 2019/20

1. Results exclude don't knows and refusals.

Table 8: Reporting of modern slavery: whether respondents would report concerns over someone being a victim (%) [1]

% saying	
Yes	89
No	11
Unweighted base	3,619

Source: Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey 2019/20

1. Results exclude don't knows and refusals.

Table 9: Reporting of modern slavery: who the concerns would be reported to (%) [1,2,3]

% saying	
Report to the Police	87
Contact Crimestoppers	21
Contact the local Health and Social Care Trust	13
Contact a charity dealing with modern slavery or human trafficking	12
Contact the Modern Slavery Helpline	11
Speak to elected representatives	9
Contact the UK Border Force/UK Immigration Enforcement	4
Report to HMRC	1
Other	1
Report to the Gangmasters Labour Abuse Authority	1
Unweighted base	3,211

Source: Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey 2019/20

1. Results exclude don't knows and refusals.

2. Asked of respondents who stated they would report their concerns of someone being a victim of modern slavery.

3. Respondents could select more than one response.

Table 10: Reporting of modern slavery: reasons given for not reporting concerns (%) [1,2,3]

% saying	
Not my business/wouldn't want to get involved	50
Wouldn't know who to report it to or how to report it	41
Fear of reprisal by offenders	22
Wouldn't want to get anyone in trouble/make matters worse	14
Police could do nothing/would not be bothered or interested	7
Other	6
Dislike/fear of police	4
Inconvenient/too much trouble	3
Didn't understand it was wrong at the time	2
Tried to report it but was not able to contact the police/police were not interested	1
They're not harming anyone in Northern Ireland	<0.5
Unweighted base	391

Source: Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey 2019/20

1. Results exclude don't knows and refusals.

2. Asked of respondents who stated they would not report their concerns of someone being a victim of modern slavery.

3. Respondents could select more than one response.

Table 11: Confidence that the courts/police are effective at dealing with modern slavery (%) [1]

% saying	
Very/fairly confident	60
Not very/not at all confident	40
Unweighted base	3,387

Source: Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey 2019/20

1. Results exclude don't knows and refusals.

Table 12: Why respondents believe there has been an increase in the number of victims being recovered (%) [1,2,3]

% saying	
Increased awareness means people report the crime more	45
This crime is becoming more common	44
More organised criminals are active in Northern Ireland	34
The crime is not becoming more common but is being uncovered more successfully	23
People feel less responsible for other people's welfare	9
Other	2
Unweighted base	3,569

Source: Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey 2019/20

1. Results exclude don't knows and refusals.

2. Respondents could select more than one response.

3. The unweighted base for the two responses, 'the crime is becoming more common' and 'the crime is not becoming more common but is being uncovered more successfully' will be slightly lower as they exclude respondents who selected both response options.

Table 13: How respondents think they personally could help to tackle modern slavery (%) [1,2]

% saying	
Report any concerns to the police or other authorities	58
Improve my awareness of signs that indicate someone may be a victim	52
Raise awareness of modern slavery in my circle of family and friends	26
Speak to elected representatives about the issue	16
Get involved with a charity dealing with modern slavery	15
Other	1
I don't have a role	12
Unweighted base	3,610

Source: Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey 2019/20

1. Results exclude don't knows and refusals.
2. Respondents could select more than one response.

Table 14: Best way to help prevent modern slavery (%) [1]

% saying	
More people in the community aware of signs and indicators/more awareness-raising	35
More border controls/better checks on immigration	16
Tougher sentences for criminals	6
More visible policing presence	6
Other	6
More action against organised crime gangs	5
More proactive police operations	5
Closer watch on airports and ports/points of entry	4
More resources for police	3
Tackling poverty	3
More action in victims' home countries	3
Better co-ordination between agencies tackling the crime	2
Health/other professionals more aware of signs and indicators	2
More willingness to take responsibility for others	1
Increase potential victims' awareness of their rights	1
More action against paramilitaries	1
Speeding up the delivery of justice	<0.5
Unweighted base	3,453

Source: Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey 2019/20

1. Results exclude don't knows and refusals.

Appendix 2: Technical Annex

About the NISCS

Closely mirroring the format and core questions of the CSEW, the NISCS is an important source of information about community safety issues such as levels of, and public attitudes to, crime and anti-social behaviour. Its results play an important role in informing and monitoring government policies and targets. Within the 2016-21 Draft Programme for Government (opens in a new window) (PfG) and the Northern Ireland Civil Service Outcomes Delivery Plan (opens in a new window), the Department of Justice lead on Indicator 1 related to reducing crime. Survey findings also informed the Northern Ireland Policing Board's Strategic Outcomes for Policing in Northern Ireland 2016-2020 (opens in a new window) (NIPB, 2016) and the Annual Policing Plan 2019-20 (opens in a new window) (NIPB, 2019).

An alternative, but complementary, measure of crime to offences recorded by the police, the main aims of the NISCS are to:

- measure crime victimisation rates experienced by people living in private households regardless of whether or not these crimes were reported to, or recorded by, the police;

- monitor trends in the level of crime, independent of changes in reporting levels or police recording practices;

- measure people's perceptions of and reactions to crime (for example, the level and causes of crime, the extent to which they are concerned about crime and the effect of crime on their quality of life);

- measure public confidence in policing and the wider criminal justice system; and

- collect sensitive information, using self-completion modules, on people's experiences regarding crime-related issues, such as domestic violence.

Recorded crime figures cannot, by their nature, provide an impression of the extent of concern about crime (often described as 'fear of crime') among different sections of the community. Hence, it is necessary to complement the police figures with information drawn from the NISCS, which, for the crime types it covers, provides a more complete measure of the extent and impact of crime against private households and their adult occupants. Further information on recorded crime statistics can be found in the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) User Guide to Police Recorded Crime Statistics (opens in a new window) (PDF, 1MB) (PSNI, 2022). While some of the core interviewer-administered modules for NISCS 2019/20 were (generally) based on CSEW 2019/20, some modification has been necessary to reflect local issues and the fact that the smaller NISCS sample size would not have generated robust results for follow-up questions asked of small sub-sections of the sample.

Frequency and sample size of the NICS/NISCS

Initially, the then NICS was conducted on an ad hoc basis, before becoming a biennial survey in 2001. At that time, the Community Attitudes Survey (CAS) was also being conducted on a continuous basis, facilitating annual reports on topics linked to crime, policing and the criminal justice system. Increasingly, however, the CSEW was becoming a key vehicle to track progress against Public Service Agreement (PSA) and other targets related to the criminal justice and health sectors in England and Wales. Hence, interest increased among officials and Ministers in what the NICS had to offer in terms of direct comparison, while, in light of the improved security situation, many of the issues originally covered by CAS were becoming less relevant.

Accordingly, it was decided that a more effective use of resources would be to discontinue CAS at the end of 2003 and to move fieldwork for the NICS to a continuous basis with effect from January 2005. This would facilitate the monitoring of annual trends and more regular direct comparison with England and Wales. It was also decided to increase the target achieved sample size for the NICS from 3,000 to 4,000. This would contribute to increased accuracy of headline results and generate more robust analyses for various socio-demographic characteristics. However, unavoidable budgetary pressures resulted in the need to reduce the target achieved sample size; a moderate decrease was first made in-year 2013/14, from 4,000 to 3,500, with a full sample reduction to 2,000 first being implemented in 2014/15. Following a review of the survey during 2017/18 (details of which can be found in the Safe Community Survey (opens in a new window) section of the Department of Justice website), the target sample size has been increased with effect from April 2018 onwards. It is anticipated that around 3,500 interviews will now be achieved annually. Additional information, covering issues such as sampling design and methodology is available within the survey User Guide (opens in a new window) (DoJ, 2023) and associated Quality Report (opens in a new window) (DoJ, 2023).

Sampling and fieldwork

The initial NISCS 2019/20 sample consisted of 7,500 addresses, randomly selected from the NISRA Address Register (NAR). The NAR is developed within NISRA and is primarily based on the Land and Property Services (LPS) POINTER database. Visits to each address by an interviewer from the NISRA Central Survey Unit resulted in an eligible sample of 6,576 occupied addresses, from which attempts were made to interview one randomly selected adult respondent at each address.

Selecting only one person at each address means that individuals living in large households have a lower chance of being included in the sample than those living in small households. Accordingly, the data presented in this publication have been weighted by household size to prevent a bias towards small household sizes.

In January 2005, the then NICS began operating on a continuous basis. This bulletin refers primarily to fieldwork undertaken during the financial year 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020, which involved complete interviews with 3,710 people aged 16 years and over. This represents an eligible response rate of 56%.

Respondents were assured in advance of the interviews that any information they provided would be treated as entirely confidential and that the level of detail produced in publications or in any subsequent analyses would not allow for identification of individuals. The interviews typically lasted under an hour for non-victims, although those involving respondents who disclosed several crimes could last much longer.

Rounding, error and statistical significance

Don't knows, refusals and non-valid responses have been excluded from the analyses. Percentages may not always sum to 100 or numbers may not sum to an overall total due to the effect of rounding. Full unrounded figures are available in the accompanying Microsoft Excel and Open Data Source versions of the Tabular Annex.

Due to a combination of both sampling and non-sampling error, any sample is unlikely to reflect precisely the characteristics of the population. Because NISCS estimates are subject to sampling error, differences between estimates from successive years of the survey or between population subgroups may occur by chance. For the purposes of the survey, where differences emerge as being statistically significant, these are reported at the 5% ($p<0.05$) level of probability (two-tailed tests). This means that, for any observed result that is found to be statistically significant, one can be 95% confident that this has not happened by chance.

As a result of the sample reduction in recent years, the respective confidence limits of any percentages from the survey were wider than was the case previously and the margin of difference between findings required to achieve 'statistical significance' was widened accordingly. This means that absolute differences in percentages which would previously have been 'statistically significant' with the larger numbers then sampled (and the much narrower range of error for any findings) may not necessarily be found to be statistically significant with the reduced sample size. This should be borne in mind when considering any long-term trends presented in survey tables.

Further information on the 2019/20 sweep of the NISCS is contained within the NISCS 2019/20 Technical Report (forthcoming, via the Safe Community Survey (opens in a new window) section of the Northern Ireland Department of Justice website).

Appendix 3: National Statistics Status

National Statistics status means that our statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value, and it is our responsibility to maintain compliance with these standards.

The designation of these statistics as National Statistics was confirmed in July 2020 following a Compliance Check (opens in a new window) by the Office for Statistics Regulation (opens in a new window). NISCS statistics last underwent a full assessment (opens in a new window) against the Code of Practice (opens in a new window) in 2012/13.

As part of the recent compliance check, we have made the following improvements:
- published a Future Programme of Work (opens in a new window) that details the list of developments that the department plan to scope in terms of feasibility of implementation.

Appendix 4: References

Campbell, P, Rice A and Ross, K. (2021) Experience of Crime: Findings from the 2019/20 Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey (opens in a new window). DoJ Research and Statistical Bulletin. Belfast: DoJ

Campbell, P, Ross K and Rice, A. (2021) Perceptions of Policing and Justice: Findings from the 2019/20 Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey (opens in a new window). DoJ Research and Statistical Bulletin. Belfast: DoJ

Department of Justice (2023) Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey User Guide (opens in a new window)

Department of Justice (2023) Northern Ireland Crime Survey Quality Report (opens in a new window)

Northern Ireland Executive (2016) Programme for Government 2016-21 and Outcomes Delivery Plan (opens in a new window)

Northern Ireland Policing Board (2019) Annual Policing Plan 2019-20 (opens in a new window)

Northern Ireland Policing Board (2016) Strategic Outcomes for Policing in Northern Ireland 2016-2020 (opens in a new window)

Office for National Statistics (ONS) (2020) Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2020 (opens in a new window)

Police Service of Northern Ireland (2022) User Guide to Police Recorded Crime Statistics in Northern Ireland (opens in a new window) (PDF, 1MB) (Updated December 2022)

Ross, K. and Campbell, P. (2021) Perceptions of Crime: Findings from the 2019/20 Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey (opens in a new window). DoJ Research and Statistical Bulletin. Belfast: DoJ