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**Analytical Services Group**

**Perceptions of Crime:  
Findings from the  
2017/18  
Northern Ireland  
Crime Survey**

**Research and Statistical Bulletin 3/2019**

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**February 2019**

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## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This bulletin presents findings from the 2017/18 Northern Ireland Crime Survey and focuses on respondents' perceptions of crime including worry about crime, perceived risk of victimisation and the effect of 'fear of crime' on quality of life.

- ◆ Drugs (80%), alcohol (60%) and a lack of discipline from parents (53%) were the three factors most commonly identified by NICS 2017/18 respondents as major causes of crime in Northern Ireland today. When asked which single factor they considered to be the main cause of crime, the most common responses, cited by 39% and 17% of respondents respectively, were drugs and a lack of discipline from parents.
- ◆ Three-fifths (60%) of NICS 2017/18 respondents thought crime levels in Northern Ireland had increased in the preceding two years. Although this proportion remained unchanged ( $p < 0.05$ ) compared with NICS 2016/17 (57%), the NICS 2017/18 figure is 19 percentage points below that observed in 2003/04 (79%). The proportion of respondents who felt there was less crime in Northern Ireland fell ( $p < 0.05$ ) between NICS 2016/17 and 2017/18, from 14% to 10%.
- ◆ As in previous sweeps of the survey, NICS 2017/18 respondents continued to be more positive in their perceptions of crime trends in their local area than at the regional level with 30% believing local crime levels had increased in the preceding two years.
- ◆ Based on a seven-strand composite measure, findings from NICS 2017/18 show that 9% of respondents perceived the level of anti-social behaviour (ASB) in their local area to be high, unchanged ( $p < 0.05$ ) from NICS 2016/17 (9%). The equivalent figure for England and Wales was similar at 10% (Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) 2017/18). Across the individual categories, 'rubbish or litter lying around' (26%, NICS 2017/18; 30%, CSEW 2017/18) and 'people using or dealing drugs' (25% and 23% respectively) were most commonly identified as problems in both jurisdictions.
- ◆ Despite a lower prevalence of crime in Northern Ireland than in England and Wales, the proportion of NICS respondents expressing high levels of worry were similar to CSEW rates for the crime types examined: burglary (11%, NICS 2017/18; 10%, CSEW 2017/18); car crime (8% and 7% respectively); and violent crime (12% for both).
- ◆ For the crime types examined, the vast majority of NICS 2017/18 respondents believed it unlikely that they would fall victim during the coming year. Overall, 11% of respondents thought it was likely that they would be the victim of burglary, 9% believed they would experience some form of vehicle-related theft, while 5% perceived themselves to be at risk of violent crime.
- ◆ At 74%, the majority of NICS 2017/18 respondents felt that 'fear of crime' has a minimal impact on their quality of life, remaining on a par ( $p < 0.05$ ) with that observed the previous year (72%, NICS 2016/17). A further 22% claimed it has a moderate effect, while the remaining four per cent stated their quality of life is greatly affected by their 'fear of crime'.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 The focus of this publication

This bulletin draws on findings from the 2017/18 Northern Ireland Crime Survey (NICS), a representative, continuous, personal interview survey of the experiences and perceptions of crime of 1,582 adults living in private households throughout Northern Ireland. Previously conducted on an ad hoc basis in 1994/95, 1998, 2001 and 2003/04, the NICS began operating on a continuous basis in January 2005.

In addition to describing respondents' perceptions of causes of crime, recent changes in crime levels and the extent of anti-social behaviour in the local area, the bulletin illustrates three commonly used measures of concern about crime:

1. worry about crime and personal safety;
2. perceptions of the risk of victimisation; and
3. perceptions of the effect of 'fear of crime' on quality of life.

Comparisons are made (where appropriate and available) between the results of the 2017/18 NICS and those of the 2017/18 [Crime Survey for England and Wales](#) (CSEW, formerly known as the British Crime Survey (BCS); ONS, 2018), as well as with earlier sweeps of the NICS.

Throughout this report key findings are commented on in the text, with full numerical details on each section available in the relevant tables comprising the Tabular Annex.

Further background information on this bulletin is available in the Technical Annex. An additional NICS 2017/18 report on [Experience of crime](#) (Campbell and Rice, December 2018) was published separately.

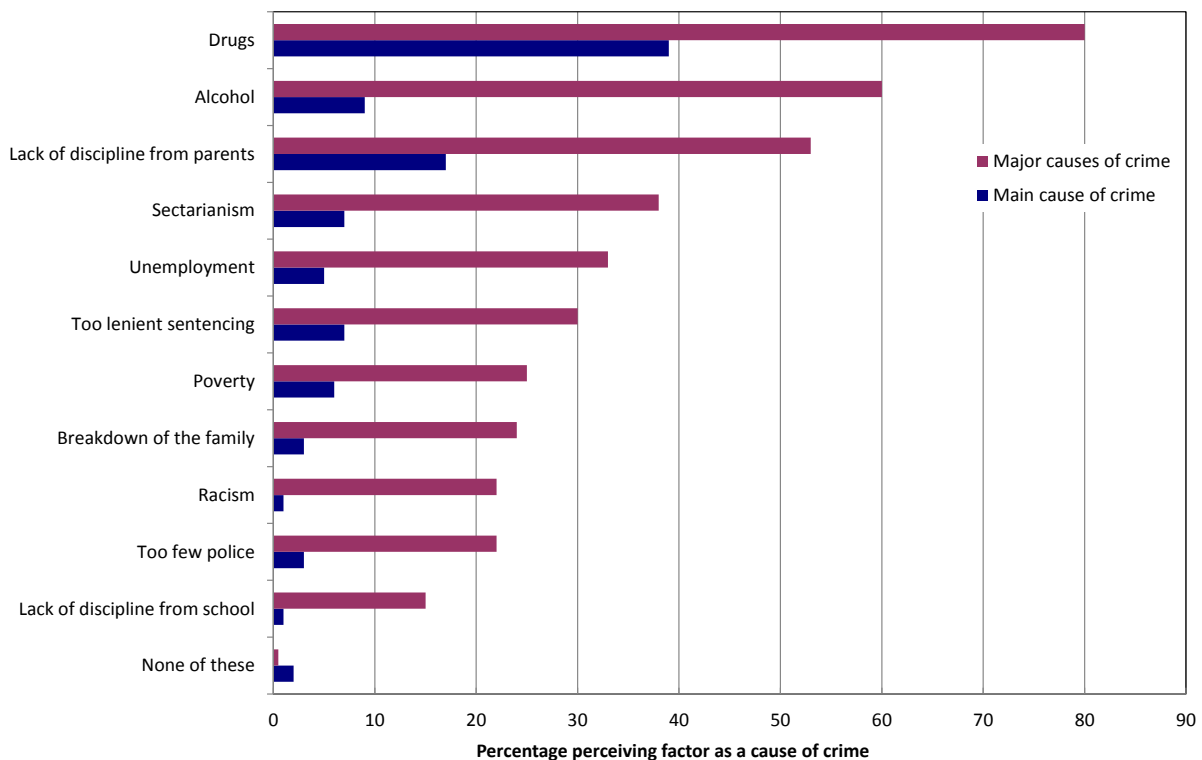
## 2. PERCEPTIONS OF CAUSES OF CRIME, CRIME LEVELS AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

### 2.1 Causes of crime

Northern Ireland Crime Survey (NICS) respondents were asked to select from a list the factors they considered to be *major* causes of crime in Northern Ireland today. If a respondent selected more than one factor, they were then asked which of these factors they believed to be the *main* cause of crime.

- ◆ Findings from NICS 2017/18 show that, as in previous years, drugs, alcohol and a lack of discipline from parents (80%, 60% and 53% respectively) remain the three factors most commonly identified as major causes of crime in Northern Ireland today. At 15%, a 'lack of discipline from school' was least likely to be identified by NICS 2017/18 respondents as a major cause (Table A1; Figure 2.1).
- ◆ When asked which single factor they considered to be the main cause of crime, the most common response was drugs, cited by 39% of respondents, followed by a lack of discipline from parents (17%) (Table A1; Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1: Perceptions of causes of crime (%) in Northern Ireland



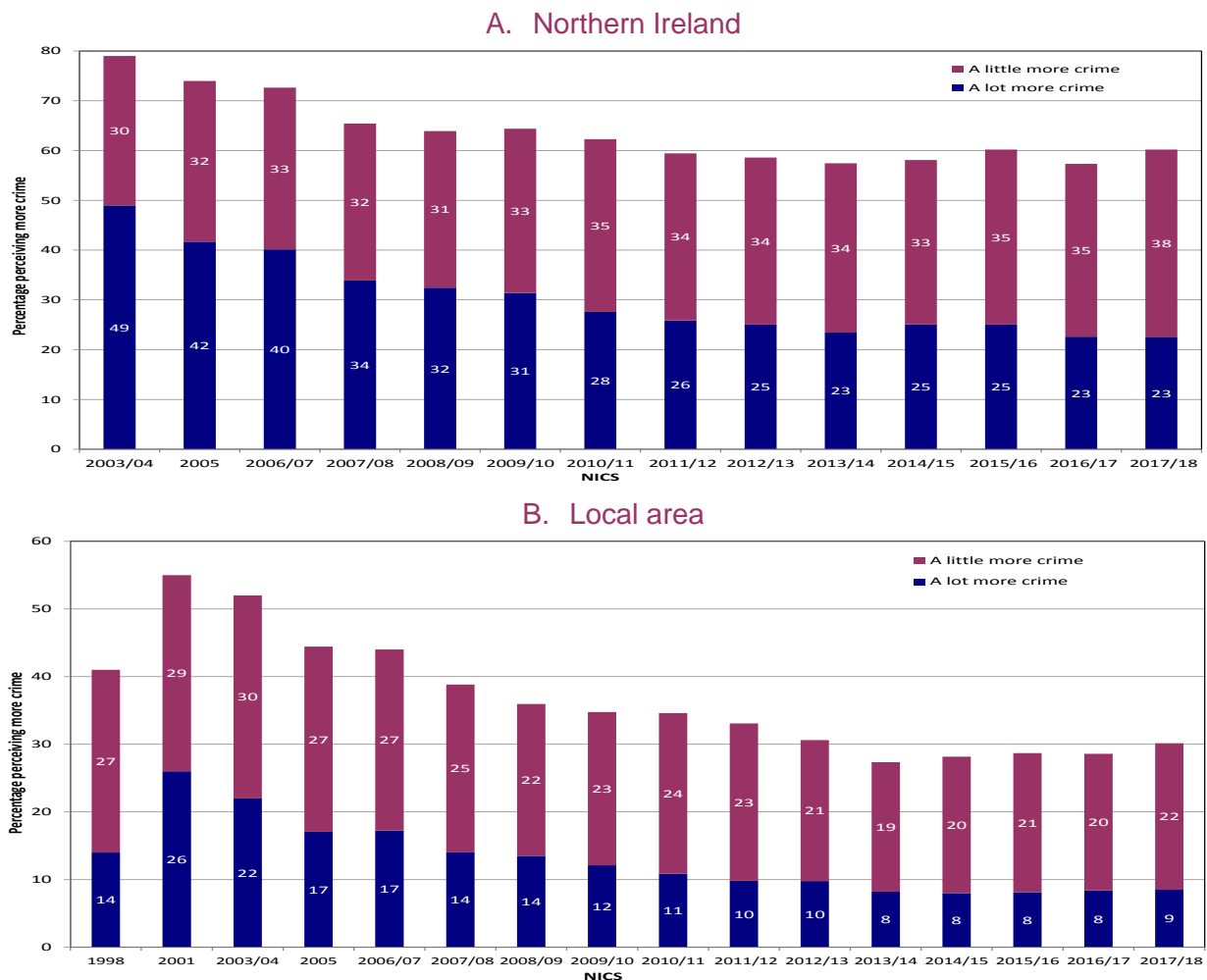
Source: NICS 2017/18

### 2.2 Perceptions of change in crime levels

NICS participants were also asked how they perceived the level of crime to have changed, if at all, in both Northern Ireland and their local area during the two years prior to interview, based on a five-point scale ranging from 'a lot more crime' to 'a lot less crime'. Typically, people can believe crime is on the increase, even if it is not, and that the situation is worse at the regional level than in their own local area. Thus, it is the trend in this proportion, rather than the actual value, that is of primary interest. Results are presented in Tables A2, A3 and Figure 2.2.

- ◆ Latest findings suggest that the proportion of respondents who believed there was ‘less crime’ in Northern Ireland in the preceding two years showed a statistically significant decrease ( $p < 0.05$ ) when compared with the previous year, from 14% in 2016/17 to 10% in 2017/18. While this may appear to have resulted in a corresponding increase in the proportion who felt there was ‘more crime’ in Northern Ireland, from 57% to 60%, this apparent increase is not statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) (Table A2; Figure 2.2A).
- ◆ The proportion perceiving there to be ‘more crime’ in Northern Ireland has, however, shown an overall decrease, from a high of 79% in 2003/04 to 60% in 2017/18. This ‘more crime’ figure comprises the proportion perceiving ‘a lot more crime’ and ‘a little more crime’. While the percentage for ‘a little more crime’ has increased from 30% to 38% between 2003/04 and 2017/18, the proportion believing there is ‘a lot more crime’ has more than halved over this period (from 49% to 23%), resulting in the overall decrease in the ‘more crime’ figure, from 79% to 60% (Table A2; Figure 2.2A).
- ◆ As in previous sweeps of the survey, NICS 2017/18 respondents were more positive in their perceptions of crime levels within their local area than at the regional level, with 30% believing crime in their local area had increased in the preceding two years. While this was unchanged ( $p < 0.05$ ) from 2016/17 (29%), it does compare favourably with that observed in NICS 2001 when the proportion who felt crime had increased was 55%. This reduction was primarily due to a drop in the proportion who felt there was ‘a lot more crime’ in their local area, from 26% to 9%, over the same period. The reduction in the proportion perceiving more crime in their local area, from 55% to 30%, resulted in an almost equivalent increase in the percentage who felt the crime level in their local area hadn’t changed, from 36% in 2001 to 56% in 2017/18 (Table A3; Figure 2.2B).

Figure 2.2: Perceptions of changing crime levels (%) in Northern Ireland and the local area



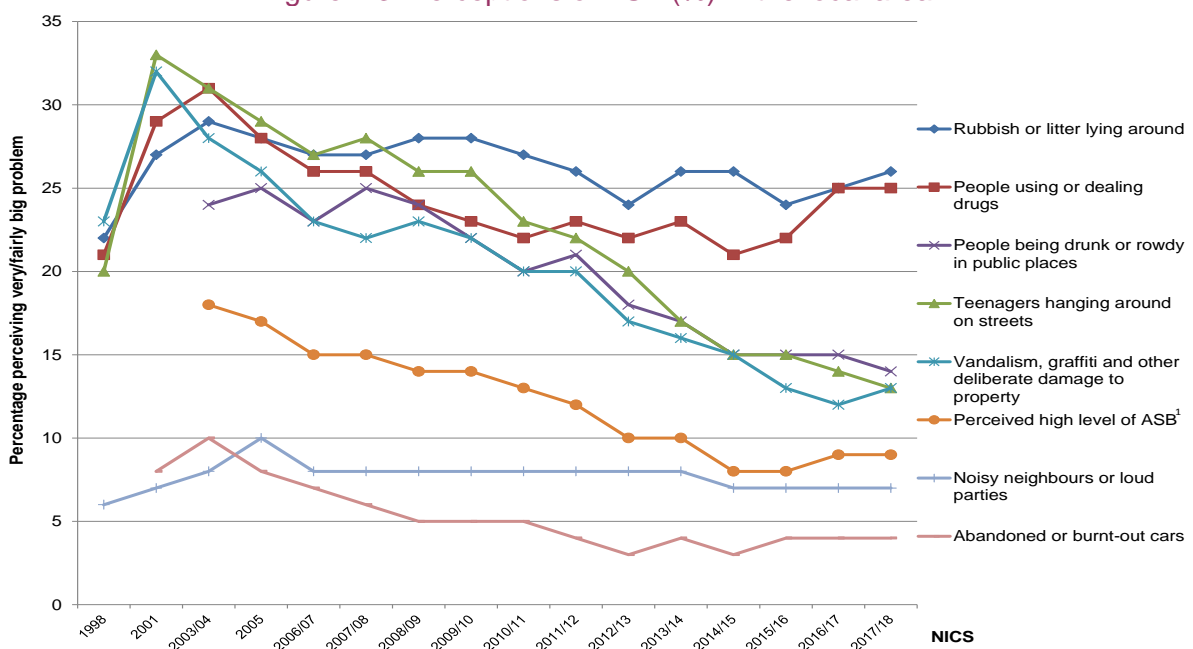


### 2.3 Perceptions of anti-social behaviour in Northern Ireland and England and Wales

Respondents to the NICS and CSEW were asked to rate how much of a problem different types of anti-social behaviour (ASB) are in their area using a four-point scale ranging from 'very big problem' to 'not a problem at all'. Since 2003/04, responses to the following seven strands have been used to form a composite measure (see Section 4.3 of the [NICS User Guide](#) (DoJ, 2016a, for more information)) to gauge the overall perceived level of ASB in the local area:

1. abandoned or burnt-out cars;
  2. noisy neighbours or loud parties;
  3. people being drunk or rowdy in public places;
  4. people using or dealing drugs;
  5. teenagers hanging around on the streets;
  6. rubbish or litter lying around; and
  7. vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property.
- ◆ Based on this composite measure, findings from NICS 2017/18 show that the proportion of respondents who perceived the level of ASB in their local area to be high was 9%, unchanged ( $p < 0.05$ ) from 2016/17 (9%). The proportion perceiving a high level of ASB has fallen gradually over the last decade from the 2003/04 figure of 18%. The equivalent figure for England and Wales (CSEW 2017/18) was similar at 10% (Table A4).
  - ◆ While there were no statistically significant changes ( $p < 0.05$ ) between 2016/17 and 2017/18 for any of the seven individual ASB strands, when 2017/18 findings are compared with those from 2003/04, overall decreases ( $p < 0.05$ ) were observed for most strands. The largest decreases, in percentage point terms, were observed for 'teenagers hanging around on streets' (from 31% to 13%) and 'vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property' (28% to 13%) (Table A4; Figure 2.3).
  - ◆ The ASB types most likely to be perceived by NICS 2017/18 respondents as problems in the local area were 'rubbish or litter lying around' (26%) and 'people using or dealing drugs' (25%) whereas 'abandoned or burnt-out cars' (4%) and 'noisy neighbours or loud parties' (7%) were considered the least problematic forms of ASB (Table A4; Figure 2.3).

Figure 2.3: Perceptions of ASB (%) in the local area



1. Derived from responses to the seven individual ASB strands.

- ◆ A similar trend is reflected in England and Wales with CSEW 2017/18 respondents also most likely to perceive ‘rubbish or litter lying around’ (30%) and ‘people using or dealing drugs’ (23%), and least likely to consider ‘abandoned or burnt-out cars’ (3%), as problems (Table A4).
- ◆ NICS respondents were then asked to select the type of ASB that, in their view, causes the single biggest problem in their local area. Almost two-fifths (38%) responded that none of the seven ASB strands represented the single biggest problem in their local area, a proportion which has shown an overall increase from 31% in NICS 2008/09. Of the specific ASB strands considered, the most common response, cited by 22% of NICS 2017/18 participants, was ‘rubbish or litter lying around’. While rubbish and litter has been reported as the single biggest problem in recent years, results from earlier sweeps, for example 2008/09 (when the question was first introduced), suggest ‘teenagers hanging around on streets’ was considered the single biggest local problem (23%). The equivalent rate for rubbish or litter lying around in NICS 2008/09 was 16% (Table A5).
- ◆ As in previous years, ‘abandoned or burnt-out cars’ (1%, NICS 2017/18) was least likely to be considered as the single biggest local problem (Table A5).

### 3. WORRY ABOUT CRIME AND PERSONAL SAFETY

#### 3.1 Worry about crime and personal safety in Northern Ireland and England and Wales

Worry about becoming a victim of crime is measured by the NICS in two ways: firstly, about specific crimes; and secondly, with regard to personal safety when alone after dark, either at home or walking in the local area (Table A6).

Respondents to NICS 2017/18 were asked how worried they are about becoming a victim of the following crimes using a four-point scale, ranging from ‘very worried’ to ‘not at all worried’:

1. home being burgled;
2. being mugged and robbed;
3. physical attack by a stranger;
4. physical attack because of their race, religion, sexuality or disability;
5. rape;
6. theft of a car; and
7. theft from a car.

Two composite indicators for worry about car crime and violent crime are constructed from the responses to the individual car crime and violent crime questions. These additional indicators, together with the proportion of respondents who claimed to be ‘very worried’ about burglary, are compared with CSEW analyses.

For the worry about car crime indicator, responses to each car crime question of ‘very worried’ are awarded 2 points and ‘fairly worried’ 1 point. Those respondents scoring a combined 3 or 4 points are considered to have a high level of worry about car crime. This measure refers only to respondents residing in households owning, or with regular use of, a vehicle.

A similar approach is used to determine the worry about violent crime indicator, with responses to each violent crime question of ‘very worried’ being awarded 2 points and ‘fairly

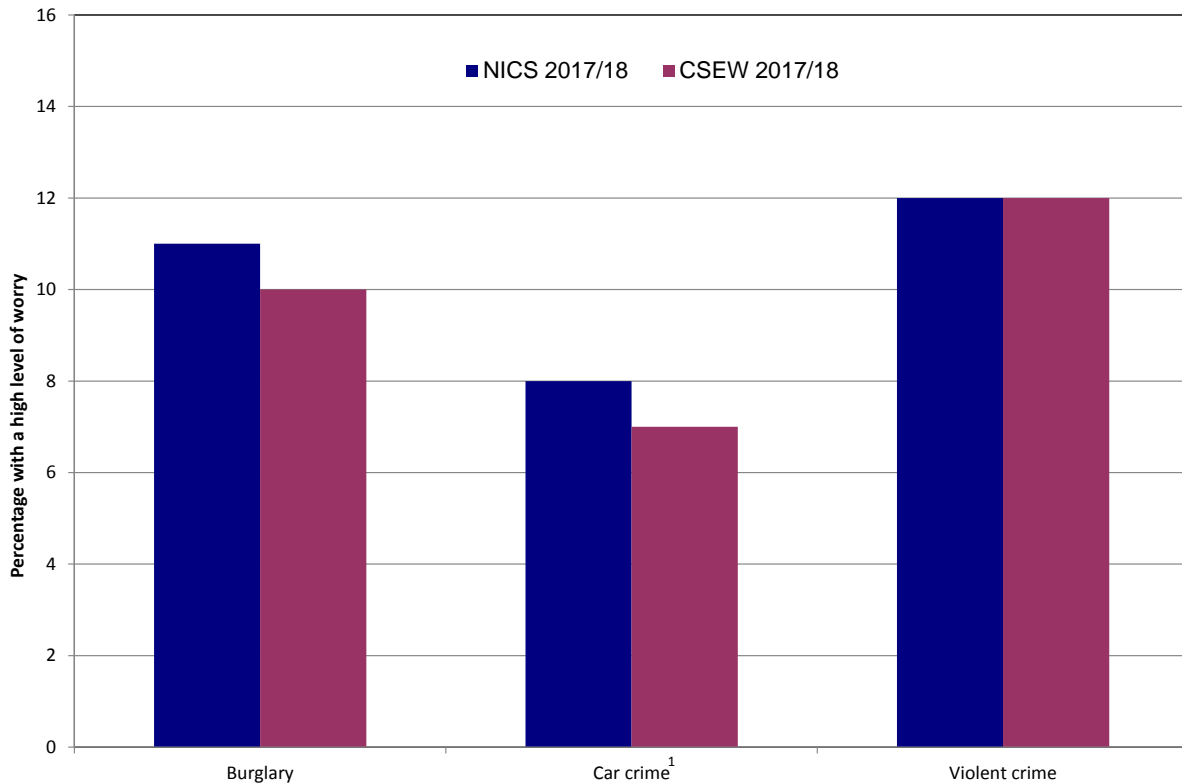
worried' 1 point. In this instance, the scale ranges from 0 to 8 points and those scoring 4 or more points are deemed to have a high level of worry about violent crime.

Since 2007/08, NICS respondents have also been asked how worried they are about becoming a victim of (all types of) crime in general, using the same four-point scale ('very worried' to 'not at all worried'). Responses to this question are also included within Table A6.

Table A6 shows the proportions of respondents in Northern Ireland and England and Wales who expressed high levels of worry about burglary, car crime and violent crime.

- ◆ Despite a lower prevalence of crime in Northern Ireland than in England and Wales, the proportion of NICS respondents expressing high levels of worry were similar to CSEW rates for the crime types examined: burglary (11%, NICS 2017/18 and 10%, CSEW 2017/18); car crime (8% and 7% respectively); and violent crime (12% for both) (Table A6; Figure 3.1).

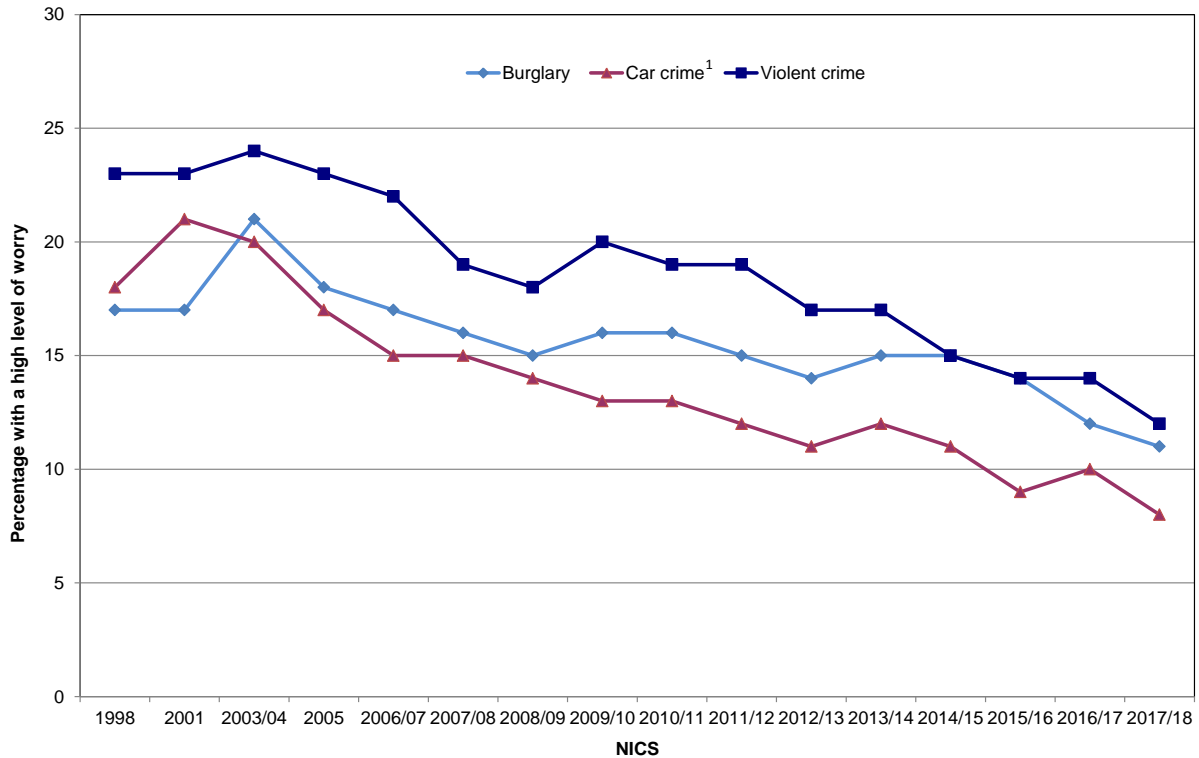
Figure 3.1: Worry about crime (%) in Northern Ireland and England and Wales



1. Based on respondents residing in households owning, or with regular use of, a vehicle.

- ◆ While NICS 2017/18 findings show the proportions expressing high levels of worry about burglary and violent crime (11% and 12% respectively) were unchanged ( $p < 0.05$ ) from those observed in 2016/17 (12% and 14% respectively), they compare favourably with NICS 2003/04 when the rates were double (21% and 24% respectively) those observed in 2017/18 (Table A6; Figure 3.2).
- ◆ Similarly, while the proportion of NICS 2017/18 respondents reporting a high level of worry about car crime (8%) remained on a par ( $p < 0.05$ ) with that recorded the previous year (10%, NICS 2016/17), it has reduced by more than half since 2001 when a rate of 21% was observed (Table A6; Figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2: Worry about crime (%) in Northern Ireland



1. Based on respondents residing in households owning, or with regular use of, a vehicle.

- ◆ Consistent with levels of worry about crime, both measures of personal safety were unchanged ( $p < 0.05$ ) between NICS 2016/17 and 2017/18: walking alone in area after dark (6% and 5% respectively); and being alone in home at night (2% and 1% respectively) (Table A6).
- ◆ While the proportion feeling very unsafe when alone in home at night has remained at around 1% or 2% each year since 1998, the proportion who feel very unsafe walking alone in their area after dark has shown an overall reduction. When compared with 2003/04, this rate has decreased by almost two-thirds, falling from 13% to 5% in 2017/18 (Table A6).

## 4. PERCEPTIONS OF THE LIKELIHOOD OF VICTIMISATION

### 4.1 Perceptions of the likelihood of victimisation in Northern Ireland

A person's perception of the likelihood that they will be a victim of crime may be influenced by their level of worry about crime. In addition to questions on worry about crime (Section 3), the NICS asked respondents how likely they think it is that they will be a victim of the following offences in the next 12 months, using a four-point scale ranging from 'very likely' to 'very unlikely':

1. home being burgled;
2. theft of a car;
3. theft from a car;
4. being mugged and robbed; and
5. physical attack by a stranger.

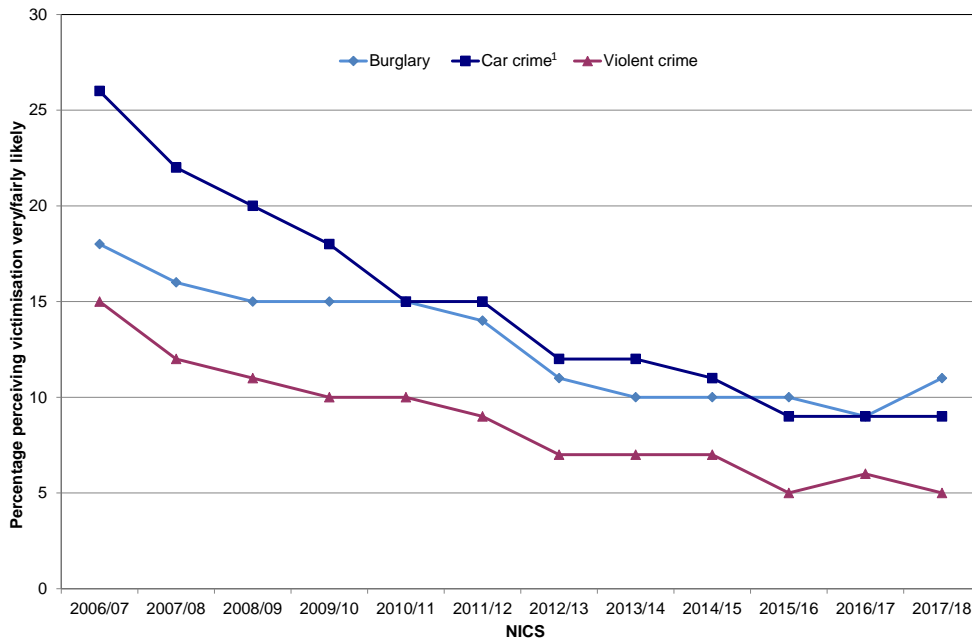
Two composite indicators to measure the perceived likelihood of being a victim of car crime and violent crime are constructed from the responses to the individual car crime and violent crime questions. These additional indicators, together with the proportion of respondents who say they are very or fairly likely to have their home burgled in the next year, comprise the three crime groups presented in this section (Table A7).

The perceived likelihood of being a victim of car crime is a composite measure of respondents who think they are very or fairly likely to either have a car/van stolen or have something stolen from a car/van in the next year, or both. This measure refers only to respondents residing in households owning, or with regular use of, a vehicle.

Similarly, the perceived likelihood of being a victim of violent crime is a composite measure of anyone who thinks they are very or fairly likely to be either mugged/robbed or physically attacked by a stranger in the next year, or both.

- ◆ In line with results from previous sweeps, the vast majority of NICS 2017/18 respondents believed it unlikely that they would fall victim to any of these crimes during the coming year. For example, it is apparent from Table A7 that eight out of nine people surveyed (89%) did not think they would experience burglary.
- ◆ Overall, 11% of NICS 2017/18 respondents believed they would experience burglary within the next year while 9% believed that they would experience some form of vehicle-related theft (vehicle owners only). A lower proportion of respondents, 5%, perceived themselves to be at risk of violent crime. While no statistically significant changes ( $p < 0.05$ ) were observed compared with 2016/17 for any of the three measures, the proportions of respondents believing it likely that they would fall victim to each of these crime types have been falling gradually over the last decade or so and compare with highs observed in 2006/07: car crime (26%, NICS 2006/07 v 9%, NICS 2017/18); burglary (18% v 11%); and violent crime (15% v 5%) (Table A7; Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1: Perceptions of the risk of victimisation (%) in Northern Ireland



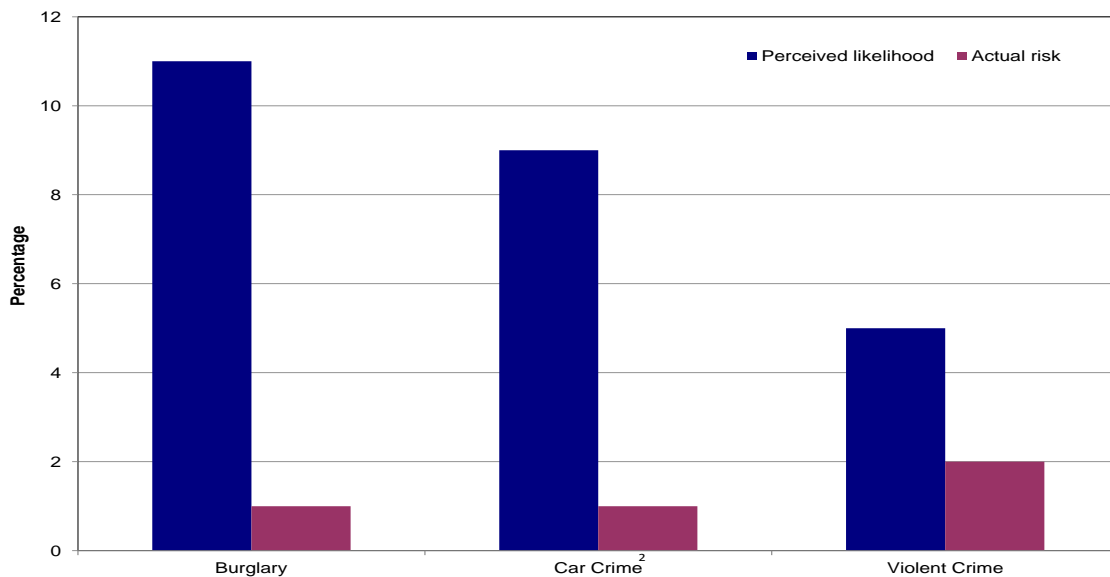
1. Based on respondents residing in households owning, or with regular use of, a vehicle.

#### 4.2 Perceptions of the likelihood of victimisation, and actual risk, in Northern Ireland

NICS findings reveal a disparity between a person’s perceived likelihood of being a victim of crime and their actual risk, whereby the perceived risk exceeds the actual risk across each of the crime types considered.

- ◆ NICS 2017/18 results show that 11% of people thought they were very or fairly likely to be a victim of burglary, compared with an actual risk of one per cent. A similar pattern emerged in terms of car crime (9% v 1%) and violent crime (5% v 2%) (Figure 4.2).

Figure 4.2: Perceived likelihood of victimisation and actual risk (%)<sup>1</sup> by individual crime type



Source: NICS 2017/18

1. Rates for actual risk are available from [DoJ Research and Statistical Bulletin 37/2018 Experience of Crime: Findings from the 2017/18 Northern Ireland Crime Survey](#) (Campbell & Rice, 2018).

2. Based on respondents residing in households owning, or with regular use of, a vehicle.

## 5. PERCEPTIONS OF THE EFFECT OF ‘FEAR OF CRIME’ ON QUALITY OF LIFE

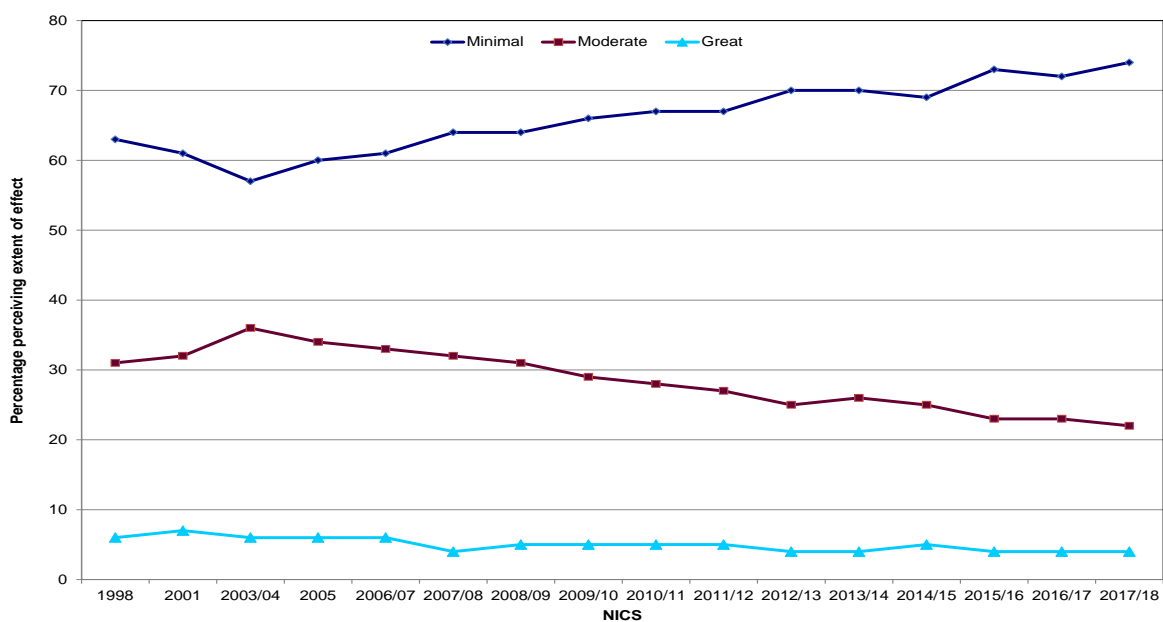
### 5.1 Perceptions of the effect of ‘fear of crime’ on quality of life in Northern Ireland and England and Wales

While a basic level of concern about crime may be beneficial in that it encourages people to take measures to reduce their likelihood of victimisation, ‘fear (about being a victim) of crime’ can become problematic if it has a detrimental impact on a person’s quality of life.

Respondents to NICS were asked how much their own quality of life is affected by their ‘fear of crime’ on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is no effect and 10 is a total effect. In order to standardise the results, the following conventions have been used to gauge the effect of ‘fear of crime’ on quality of life:

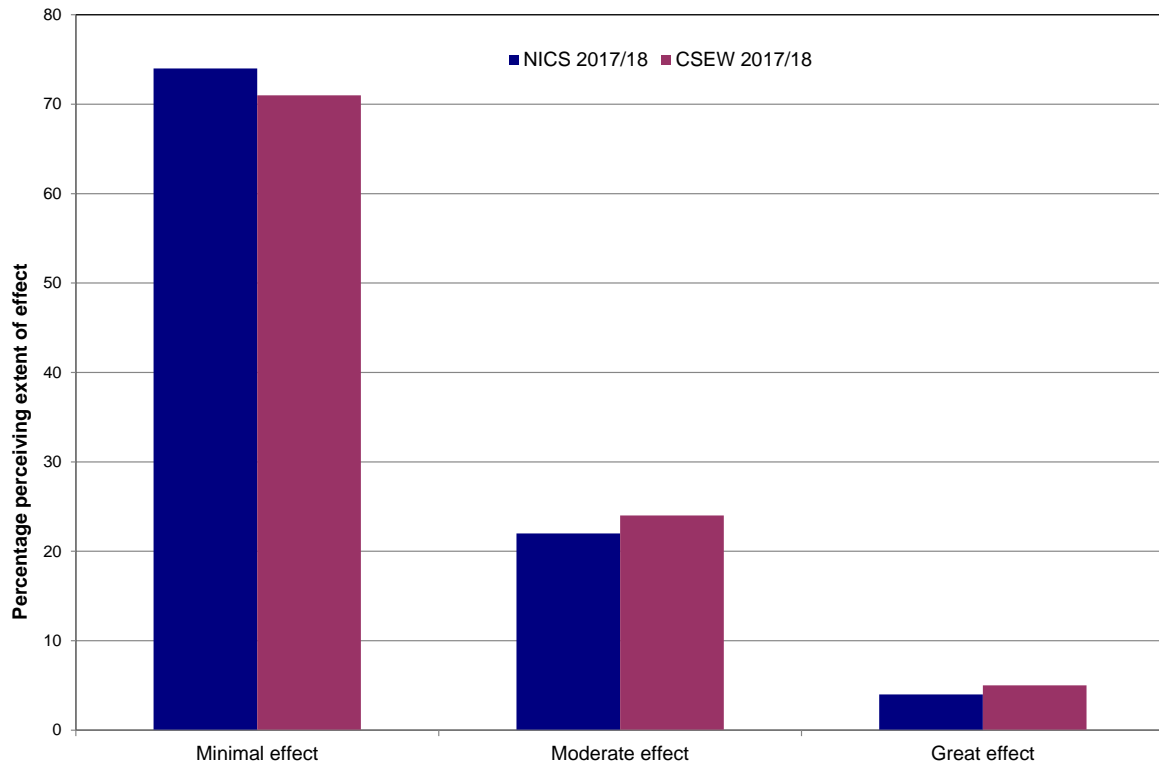
1. minimally affected (responded in the range 1 to 3);
  2. moderately affected (responded in the range 4 to 7); and
  3. greatly affected (responded in the range 8 to 10).
- ◆ Almost three-quarters (74%) of NICS 2017/18 respondents felt ‘fear of crime’ has a minimal impact on their quality of life, showing no statistically significant change ( $p < 0.05$ ) to the rate of 72% observed the previous year (NICS 2016/17). Similarly, the proportions claiming fear of crime has a moderate (23% in 2016/17 and 22% in 2017/18) or great effect (4% in both years) also remained unchanged ( $p < 0.05$ ) (Table A8; Figure 5.1).
  - ◆ The proportion of respondents who felt a minimal impact on their quality of life has shown a gradual improvement with the 2017/18 rate of 74% comparing with a low of 57% observed in 2003/04. Consequently, a reduction has occurred in the proportion reporting a moderate effect from 36% to 22% over the same period, while the rate observed for a great effect on quality of life has remained relatively stable (Table A8; Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1: Perceptions of the effect of ‘fear of crime’ on quality of life (%) in Northern Ireland



- ◆ While CSEW 2017/18 results show a similar trend to NICS 2017/18 in that the majority of respondents claimed 'fear of crime' has a minimal effect on their quality of life, findings suggest that this proportion is lower in England and Wales than in Northern Ireland (71%, CSEW 2017/18 v 74%, NICS 2017/18). The proportions claiming a moderate impact on quality of life were 24% and 22% respectively, while the respective rates for a great effect in 2017/18 were 5% and 4% (Table A8; Figure 5.2).

Figure 5.2: Perceptions of the effect of 'fear of crime' on quality of life (%) in Northern Ireland and England and Wales





## TABULAR ANNEX

Table A1: Perceptions of the causes of crime (%) in Northern Ireland<sup>1,2</sup>

	Major causes of crime <sup>3</sup>	Main cause of crime
Drugs	80	39
Alcohol	60	9
Lack of discipline from parents	53	17
Sectarianism	38	7
Unemployment	33	5
Too lenient sentencing	30	7
Poverty	25	6
Breakdown of the family	24	3
Racism	22	1
Too few police	22	3
Lack of discipline from school	15	1
None of these	<0.5	2
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1,581</i>	<i>1,581</i>

Source: NICS 2017/18

1. Results exclude don't knows and refusals.
2. Respondents were asked to select from a list the factors they considered to be the major causes of crime in Northern Ireland today. If respondents selected more than one factor they were asked which of the factors they believed to be the main cause of crime. If respondents gave only one factor, this was taken as the main cause.
3. Percentages may add to more than 100 as respondents could select more than one cause.

Table A2: Perceptions of change in overall crime levels (%) in Northern Ireland<sup>1</sup>

	NICS 2003/04	NICS 2005	NICS 2006/07	NICS 2007/08	NICS 2008/09	NICS 2009/10	NICS 2010/11	NICS 2011/12	NICS 2012/13	NICS 2013/14	NICS 2014/15	NICS 2015/16	NICS 2016/17	NICS 2017/18	Statistically significant change, 2016/17 to 2017/18 <sup>2</sup>
<b>More crime<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>79</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>60</b>	
A lot more crime	49	42	40	34	32	31	28	26	25	23	25	25	23	23	
A little more crime	30	32	33	32	31	33	35	34	34	34	33	35	35	38	
Same	14	17	18	20	23	24	25	28	29	31	31	30	29	30	
Less crime	7	9	10	14	13	11	13	12	12	12	10	10	14	10	** ↓
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>2,704</i>	<i>3,578</i>	<i>3,678</i>	<i>3,790</i>	<i>3,737</i>	<i>3,977</i>	<i>3,916</i>	<i>3,925</i>	<i>3,898</i>	<i>3,458</i>	<i>2,003</i>	<i>1,914</i>	<i>1,820</i>	<i>1,539</i>	

1. Results exclude don't knows and refusals.
2. Statistical significance of change at the 5% level (two-tailed test) is indicated by a double asterisk (\*\*).
3. The proportion of respondents believing there has been 'a little more crime' or 'a lot more crime'; these figures may not sum to the 'more crime' composite figure due to rounding.

Table A3: Perceptions of change in local crime levels (%) in Northern Ireland<sup>1,2</sup>

	NICS 1998	NICS 2001	NICS 2003/04	NICS 2005	NICS 2006/07	NICS 2007/08	NICS 2008/09	NICS 2009/10	NICS 2010/11	NICS 2011/12	NICS 2012/13	NICS 2013/14	NICS 2014/15	NICS 2015/16	NICS 2016/17	NICS 2017/18	Statistically significant change, 2016/17 to 2017/18 <sup>3</sup>
<b>More crime<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>41</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	
A lot more crime	14	26	22	17	17	14	14	12	11	10	10	8	8	8	8	9	
A little more crime	27	29	30	27	27	25	22	23	24	23	21	19	20	21	20	22	
Same	47	36	36	42	42	45	48	49	49	51	53	55	56	57	56	56	
Less crime	12	8	12	13	14	16	16	16	16	16	17	17	16	15	15	14	
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>2,648</i>	<i>2,597</i>	<i>2,644</i>	<i>3,076</i>	<i>3,171</i>	<i>3,295</i>	<i>3,291</i>	<i>3,495</i>	<i>3,494</i>	<i>3,497</i>	<i>3,524</i>	<i>3,109</i>	<i>1,816</i>	<i>1,707</i>	<i>1,605</i>	<i>1,375</i>	

1. Results exclude don't knows and refusals.
2. Based on respondents who had been living in their area for more than three years.
3. Statistical significance of change at the 5% level (two-tailed test) is indicated by a double asterisk (\*\*).
4. The proportion of respondents believing there has been 'a little more crime' or 'a lot more crime'; these figures may not sum to the 'more crime' composite figure due to rounding.

## NICS 2017/18: Perceptions of Crime

**Table A4: Perceptions of different types of anti-social behaviour as very / fairly big problems (%) in Northern Ireland and England and Wales<sup>1</sup>**

	NICS 1998	NICS 2001	NICS 2003/04	NICS 2005	NICS 2006/07	NICS 2007/08	NICS 2008/09	NICS 2009/10	NICS 2010/11	NICS 2011/12	NICS 2012/13	NICS 2013/14	NICS 2014/15	NICS 2015/16	NICS 2016/17	NICS 2017/18	Statistically significant change, 2016/17 to 2017/18? <sup>2</sup>	CSEW 2017/18
<b>Perceived high level of ASB<sup>3</sup></b>	-	-	18	17	15	15	14	14	13	12	10	10	8	8	9	9		10
Abandoned or burnt-out cars	-	8	10	8	7	6	5	5	5	4	3	4	3	4	4	4		3
Noisy neighbours or loud parties	6	7	8	10	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	7	7	7	7		10
People being drunk or rowdy in public places	-	-	24	25	23	25	24	22	20	21	18	17	15	15	14	14		16
People using or dealing drugs	21	29	31	28	26	26	24	23	22	23	22	23	21	22	25	25		23
Teenagers hanging around on streets	20	33	31	29	27	28	26	26	23	22	20	17	15	15	14	13		16
Rubbish or litter lying around	22	27	29	28	27	27	28	28	27	26	24	26	26	24	25	26		30
Vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property	23	32	28	26	23	22	23	22	20	20	17	16	15	13	12	13		15
<b>Unweighted base<sup>4</sup></b>	3,058	3,007	3,104	3,691	3,788	3,932	3,855	4,098	4,077	4,063	4,055	3,596	2,071	1,974	1,877	1,582		8,523 <sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>- Denotes indicator was not included in survey.

- Results exclude don't knows and refusals.
- Statistical significance of change at the 5% level (two-tailed test) is indicated by a double asterisk (\*\*).
- ASB: Anti-social behaviour (measure derived from responses to the seven individual strands in the table).
- Unweighted base refers to rubbish or litter lying around. Other bases will be similar.
- CSEW unweighted base refers to people using or dealing drugs. Other CSEW bases will be similar.

**Table A5: Perceptions of different types of anti-social behaviour as the single biggest problem (%) in the local area<sup>1</sup>**

	NICS 2008/09	NICS 2009/10	NICS 2010/11	NICS 2011/12	NICS 2012/13	NICS 2013/14	NICS 2014/15	NICS 2015/16	NICS 2016/17	NICS 2017/18
Abandoned or burnt-out cars	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
Noisy neighbours or loud parties	4	4	4	4	4	5	4	4	4	4
People being drunk or rowdy in public places	11	11	10	10	8	8	9	7	7	6
People using or dealing drugs	8	7	9	9	10	11	12	12	13	14
Teenagers hanging around on streets	23	21	19	18	16	13	10	11	11	11
Rubbish or litter lying around	16	16	18	18	18	19	22	20	21	22
Vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property	7	7	7	7	6	5	5	4	4	5
None of these	31	32	33	33	37	38	37	41	40	38
<b>Unweighted base</b>	3,852	4,090	4,066	4,055	4,049	3,594	2,072	1,972	1,874	1,579

1. Results exclude don't knows and refusals.

**Table A6: Worry about crime and personal safety (%) in Northern Ireland and England and Wales<sup>1</sup>**

	NICS 1998	NICS 2001	NICS 2003/04	NICS 2005	NICS 2006/07	NICS 2007/08	NICS 2008/09	NICS 2009/10	NICS 2010/11	NICS 2011/12	NICS 2012/13	NICS 2013/14	NICS 2014/15	NICS 2015/16	NICS 2016/17	NICS 2017/18	Statistically significant change, 2016/17 to 2017/18? <sup>2</sup>	CSEW 2017/18
<b>% with high levels of worry</b>																		
Burglary	17	17	21	18	17	16	15	16	16	15	14	15	15	14	12	11		10
Car crime <sup>3</sup>	18	21	20	17	15	15	14	13	13	12	11	12	11	9	10	8		7
Violent crime <sup>4</sup>	23	23	24	23	22	19	18	20	19	19	17	17	15	14	14	12		12
<b>% very worried</b>																		
Crime overall	-	-	-	-	-	9	8	8	9	8	7	7	7	6	7	5		-
<b>% feeling very unsafe</b>																		
Walking alone in area after dark	8	11	13	11	11	12	10	10	9	8	7	7	7	7	6	5		7
Alone in home at night	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1		-
<b>Unweighted base<sup>5</sup></b>	3,057	3,010	3,104	3,691	3,790	3,933	3,856	4,102	4,080	4,061	4,054	3,594	2,073	1,975	1,876	1,581		8,543

<sup>1</sup>- Denotes indicator was not included in survey.

- Results exclude don't knows and refusals.
- Statistical significance of change at the 5% level (two-tailed test) is indicated by a double asterisk (\*\*).
- Based on respondents residing in households owning, or with regular use of, a vehicle.
- As described in Section 3.1, the violent crime indicator is constructed from four questions. For the question on 'worry about physical attack because of their race, religion, sexuality or disability', the CSEW does not refer to 'sexuality or disability'.
- Unweighted base refers to worry about burglary. Other bases will be similar with the exception of car crime which is based on vehicle-owners only.

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Table A7: Perceptions of the risk of victimisation (%) in Northern Ireland<sup>1</sup>

% perceiving it likely that they will be a victim within the next year	NICS 2006/07	NICS 2007/08	NICS 2008/09	NICS 2009/10	NICS 2010/11	NICS 2011/12	NICS 2012/13	NICS 2013/14	NICS 2014/15	NICS 2015/16	NICS 2016/17	NICS 2017/18	Statistically significant change, 2016/17 to 2017/18? <sup>2</sup>
Burglary	18	16	15	15	15	14	11	10	10	10	9	11	
Car crime <sup>3</sup>	26	22	20	18	15	15	12	12	11	9	9	9	
Violent crime	15	12	11	10	10	9	7	7	7	5	6	5	
<i>Unweighted base<sup>4</sup></i>	3,708	3,855	3,774	4,006	3,987	3,992	3,980	3,527	2,051	1,938	1,843	1,549	

1. Results exclude don't knows and refusals.
2. Statistical significance of change at the 5% level (two-tailed test) is indicated by a double asterisk (\*\*).
3. Based on respondents residing in households owning, or with regular use of, a vehicle.
4. Unweighted base refers to perceived likelihood of being a victim of burglary. Bases for violent crime will be similar but will be lower for car crime which is based on vehicle-owners only.

Table A8: Perceptions of the effect of 'fear of crime' on quality of life (%) in Northern Ireland and England and Wales<sup>1</sup>

	NICS 1998	NICS 2001	NICS 2003/04	NICS 2005	NICS 2006/07	NICS 2007/08	NICS 2008/09	NICS 2009/10	NICS 2010/11	NICS 2011/12	NICS 2012/13	NICS 2013/14	NICS 2014/15	NICS 2015/16	NICS 2016/17	NICS 2017/18	Statistically significant change, 2016/17 to 2017/18? <sup>2</sup>	CSEW 2017/18
Minimal	63	61	57	60	61	64	64	66	67	67	70	70	69	73	72	74		71
Moderate	31	32	36	34	33	32	31	29	28	27	25	26	25	23	23	22		24
Great	6	7	6	6	6	4	5	5	5	5	4	4	5	4	4	4		5
<i>Unweighted base</i>	3,049	3,008	3,099	3,691	3,789	3,929	3,854	4,099	4,079	4,062	4,054	3,596	2,074	1,975	1,877	1,581		3,875

1. Results exclude don't knows and refusals.
2. Statistical significance of change at the 5% level (two-tailed test) is indicated by a double asterisk (\*\*).

## TECHNICAL ANNEX

### About the NICS

Closely mirroring the format and core questions of the CSEW, the NICS 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](#) (PfG) and the [Northern Ireland Civil Service Outcomes Delivery Plan](#), the Department of Justice will lead on Indicator 1 related to reducing crime. Findings contained within this bulletin will be used by the Department to inform the Delivery Plan for this Indicator. NICS findings will also inform the assessment of the impact of the [Community Safety Strategy](#) (DoJ, 2012) and the [Northern Ireland Policing Board's Strategic Outcomes for Policing in Northern Ireland 2016-2020](#) (2016).

An alternative, but complementary, measure of crime to offences recorded by the police, the main aims of the NICS 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);
- ◆ identify the characteristics and circumstances of people most at risk from and affected by different types of crime;
- ◆ 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 NICS, 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](#) (PSNI, 2018a).

While some of the core interviewer-administered modules for NICS 2017/18 were (generally) based on CSEW 2017/18, some modification has been necessary to reflect local issues and the fact that the smaller NICS sample size would not have generated robust results for follow-up questions asked of small sub-sections of the sample.

Additional information, covering issues such as sampling design and methodology is available within the [NICS User Guide](#) (DoJ, 2016a) and associated [Quality Report](#) (DoJ, 2016b).

## Frequency and sample size of the NICS

Initially, the 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 NICS 2014/15. Following a review of the survey during 2017/18 (details of which can be found [here](#)), the target sample size has been increased to 4,000 interviews annually with effect from April 2018 onwards.

## Sampling and fieldwork

The initial NICS 2017/18 sample consisted of 3,375 addresses, randomly selected from the Land and Property Services domestic property database. Visits to each address by an interviewer from the NISRA Central Survey Unit resulted in an eligible sample of 3,024 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 smaller households.

In January 2005, the NICS began operating on a continuous basis. This bulletin refers primarily to fieldwork undertaken during the financial year 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018, which involved complete interviews with 1,582 people aged 16 years and over. This represents an eligible response rate of 52%.

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 just under an hour for non-victims, although those involving respondents who disclosed several crimes could last much longer.

## Demographic breakdown

The following socio-demographic (personal, household and area) groups (listed below) are now presented in the accompanying Microsoft Excel and Open Data Source files only due to the impact on robustness of sub-sample analyses following the reduced sample size. Associated confidence intervals are also presented. The first six relate to equality categories specified in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998:

1. religious belief;
2. age;
3. living arrangements (marital status);
4. sex (gender);
5. disability (or illness);
6. household type (child dependants);
7. self-perceived nationality;
8. household income;
9. housing tenure;
10. type of area (urban / rural);
11. policing district (see Technical Annex for details);
12. multiple deprivation measure rank (MDM 2010);
13. perceived level of anti-social behaviour in area;
14. experience of crime reported to the police; and
15. daily newspaper readership.

## 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 to the nearest whole number, or because respondents could give more than one response. Figures presented in the tables and graphs within this bulletin have been rounded. Unrounded figures are available in the accompanying Microsoft Excel version 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 NICS estimates are subject to sampling error, differences between estimates from successive years of the survey or between population subgroups (presented in the accompanying Microsoft Excel workbook) may occur by chance.

For the purposes of this bulletin, where differences have emerged as being statistically significant, these have been 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, the confidence limits of any percentages from the survey are now wider than was the case previously and the margin of difference between findings now required to achieve 'statistical significance' has 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 now be found to be statistically significant with the reduced sample size.

As the Department of Justice does not routinely publish NICS estimates where the unweighted base is less than 100 cases, the sample reduction also means findings for some

## NICS 2017/18: Perceptions of Crime

socio-demographic sub-groups (included in the accompanying Microsoft Excel workbook), which would previously have been included, are no longer published. Some findings for the socio-demographic sub-groups examined may present as zero. These findings are based on the selected sample. They do not necessarily suggest that people in that area or among that group do not, for example, worry about crime or personal safety.

Further information on the 2017/18 sweep of the NICS is contained within the NICS 2017/18 Technical Report (forthcoming, via the Northern Ireland Department of Justice website: <https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/articles/northern-ireland-crime-survey>).

Table B1: Sample profile for NICS 2017/18

Group	Sub-group	Unweighted Number	Unweighted %	Weighted %
<b>Sex</b>	Men	702	44	47
	Women	880	56	53
<b>Age group</b>	16-24	113	7	10
	25-34	200	13	12
	35-44	278	18	17
	45-54	266	17	18
	55-64	269	17	17
	65-74	256	16	14
	75+	200	13	10
<b>Religion</b>	Catholic	642	41	42
	Protestant	775	50	49
<b>Area type</b>	Rural	557	35	36
	Urban	1,025	65	64
<b>Policing district</b>	Antrim and Newtownabbey	122	8	7
	Ards and North Down	148	9	9
	Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon	185	12	12
	Belfast	270	17	16
	Causeway Coast and Glens	129	8	8
	Derry and Strabane	132	8	8
	Fermanagh and Omagh	94	6	6
	Lisburn and Castlereagh	108	7	7
	Mid and East Antrim	135	9	9
	Mid Ulster	101	6	7
	Newry, Mourne and Down	158	10	10
<b>Multiple Deprivation Measure Rank<sup>1</sup></b>	1st quintile (most deprived)	277	18	16
	2nd quintile	302	19	19
	3rd quintile	347	22	23
	4th quintile	352	22	23
	5th quintile (least deprived)	304	19	20
<b>Vehicle-owning households</b>		1,305	82	87

1. Rank order of super output areas (derived from 2010 Multiple Deprivation Measure).

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