



PUBLIC PROSECUTION SERVICE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Perceptions of the Public Prosecution Service

Findings from the Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey

October 2020 – December 2020



**Public
Prosecution
Service**

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Introduction

The Public Prosecution Service

The Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland (PPS), which is headed by the Director of Public Prosecutions, is the principal prosecuting authority in Northern Ireland. In addition to taking decisions as to prosecution in cases investigated by the police, it also considers cases investigated by other statutory authorities, such as HM Revenue and Customs.

The primary role of the PPS is to reach decisions to prosecute or not to prosecute and to have responsibility for the conduct of criminal proceedings. A range of options is also available for dealing with offenders other than through prosecution. These options include cautions, informed warnings and youth conferencing. Prosecutors may also refer offenders to the National Driver Alertness Scheme or to a Community Restorative Justice Scheme.

Perceptions of the Public Prosecution Service

Between 2013 and 2018, the PPS published *Perceptions of the Public Prosecution Service: Findings from the Northern Ireland Omnibus Survey*, including results from a module of 5 questions relating to public awareness and public confidence in the PPS. Survey information is used by the PPS for a variety of purposes, such as informing the development of policy and assessing the effectiveness of communication. Data in respect of the PPS's effectiveness and its fairness and impartiality are also used as key performance indicators for the Service. Findings from *Perceptions of the Public Prosecution Service* can be found on the PPS website [here](#).

Due to the discontinuation of the Northern Ireland Omnibus Survey in 2018, the PPS commissioned a module for inclusion in the Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey 2018. This particular survey was selected due to its methodology broadly matching that of the Omnibus Survey and its representativeness across Northern Ireland. The PPS commissioned a module in the survey for a second time in 2019 and the third time in 2020.

The Life and Times Survey

The Northern Ireland Life and Times (NILT) Survey was launched by the University of Ulster and Queen's University of Belfast in the autumn of 1998. Its mission is to monitor the attitudes and behaviour of people in Northern Ireland annually to provide a time-series and a public record of how attitudes and behaviour develop on a wide range of social policy issues. The survey is run on a modular format and aims to provide a local resource for use by the general public and a data source for public and academic debate.

The survey consists of a number of different modules, each based on a specific topic. The modules included in the 2020 survey were: respect, ethnic minorities, good relations, coercive behaviour, the criminal justice system, political attitudes, COVID-19 and community safety and perceptions of paramilitary influence.

Whilst the NILT Survey closely mirrors the Omnibus Survey in terms of the methodology for selecting respondents, there are some differences. For example, the NILT Survey tends to focus on a small

range of related policy issues, involving in-depth questioning, whereas the Omnibus Survey usually involved a larger number of unrelated modules. This has provided a new context for the PPS module to that of the Omnibus Survey.

A total of four questions specific to the PPS were included in the 2020 NILT Survey in order to gauge the following:

- Public awareness of the PPS (Question 1);
- Views as to the PPS's effectiveness in prosecuting people accused of committing a crime (Question 2);
- Public perceptions of the PPS's fairness and impartiality (Question 3); and
- Public perceptions of the PPS's independence (Question 4).

Question 1 was asked of all respondents. Questions 2, 3 and 4 relate only to those respondents who had heard of the PPS (i.e. respondents who had answered 'yes' at question 1).

In order to achieve the objectives of the research while considering the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, a multi-modal approach was used. A large-scale Computer Assisted Web Interviewing (CAWI) survey was developed and this was supplemented with Computer Assisted Telephone Interviews (CATI) and Computer Assisted Personal Interviews (CAPI) via Microsoft Teams video calls. Face-to-face interviewers also called directly to selected households to encourage participation.

Detailed notes have been supplied, which provide an account of the technical aspects of the survey, including the origin of the sample, response rates and its representativeness (see Annex 4: Technical Notes, page 20).

About this Report

This report provides information in respect of the 2020 NILT Survey, conducted between October 2020 and December 2020. As this is the third year the PPS has commissioned a module in the Survey, comparisons can be made across the three years.

Analysis of each of the PPS questions is available across ten key variables, as follows: Age-group, gender, religion, partnership status, limiting health condition/disability status, dependant status, employment status, qualification level, socio-economic classification and PPS Region. For the purposes of this report, the analysis has been limited to age, gender and religion. However, data in respect of any of the remaining variables can be provided on request (see contact details below).

It should be noted that the 2020 NILT Survey has produced a relatively high proportion of people who answered 'don't know' in response to the questions. These 'don't knows' have been excluded from the main body of the report. As such, the focus of the bulletin is on those people who have offered an opinion regarding the PPS. However, in the interests of transparency, the full results (including the 'don't know' responses) have been set out in Annex 2: Survey Data - see page 14. As the proportion of 'don't knows' within the Omnibus Survey results was small, these were normally included within the published results. Therefore this bulletin differs in this respect when compared with previous Omnibus Survey publications.

The total responses for each question are presented within the main body of the report are based on weighted data. Percentages in the tables may not add to 100% due to rounding. Unweighted base numbers across the tables will vary due to the exclusion of 'don't knows'.

Official Statistics

The statistics within this report are '*Official Statistics*' as defined in Section 6 of the Statistics and Registration Services Act 2007. Statisticians from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency are seconded to the PPS and are responsible for ensuring that the statistics produced comply with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

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Contact Us

If you have any feedback, questions or requests for further information about this report, please contact us as follows:

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Summary of Key Findings

Note: Unless otherwise stated, the figures throughout this document exclude those who responded 'don't know'.

Question 1:

Had you heard of the Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland, 'the PPS'?

- **90.7%** of those surveyed **had heard** of the PPS.

Question 2:

How confident are you that the Public Prosecution Service is effective at prosecuting people accused of committing a crime?

- **62.1%** of all adults surveyed were either **very or fairly confident** that the PPS is effective at prosecuting people accused of committing a crime.

Question 3:

How confident are you that the Public Prosecution Service provides a fair and impartial prosecution service?

- **70.3%** of all adults surveyed were **very or fairly confident** that the PPS provides a fair and impartial prosecution service.

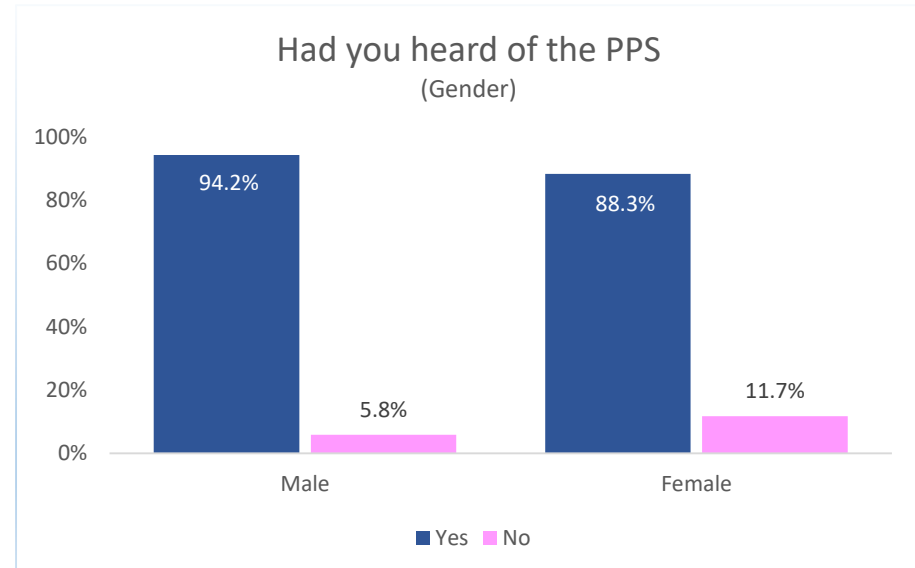
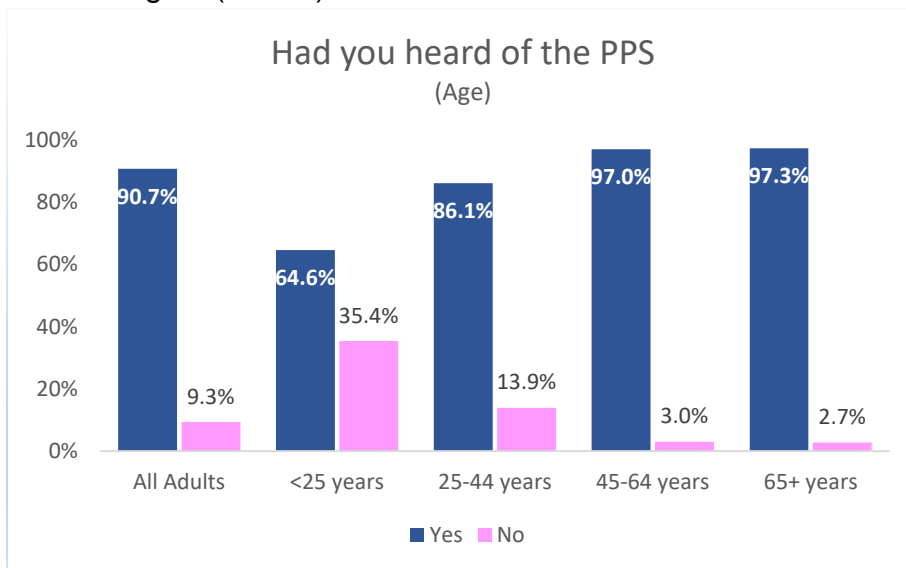
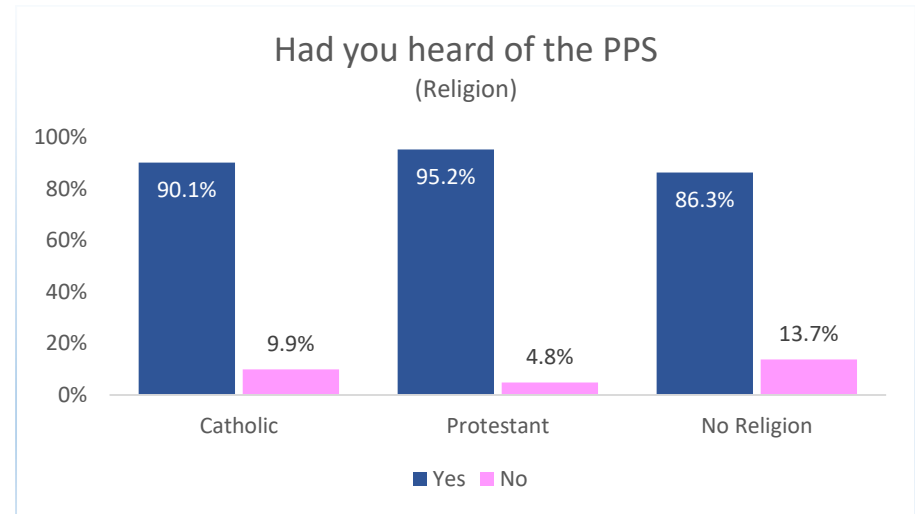
Question 4:

How confident are you that the Public Prosecution Service takes its prosecution decisions independently? (That is, independent of police, Government or any other body)

- **69.1%** of all adults surveyed were **very or fairly confident** that the PPS takes its prosecution decisions independently.

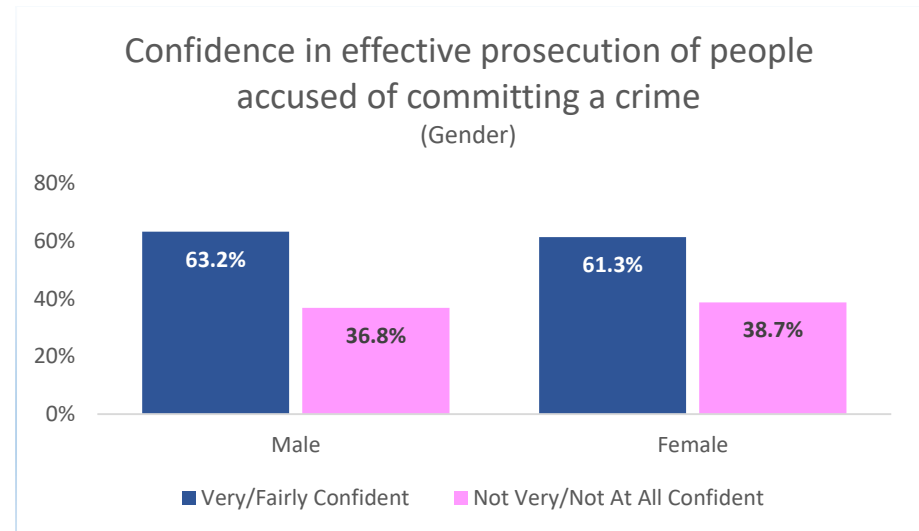
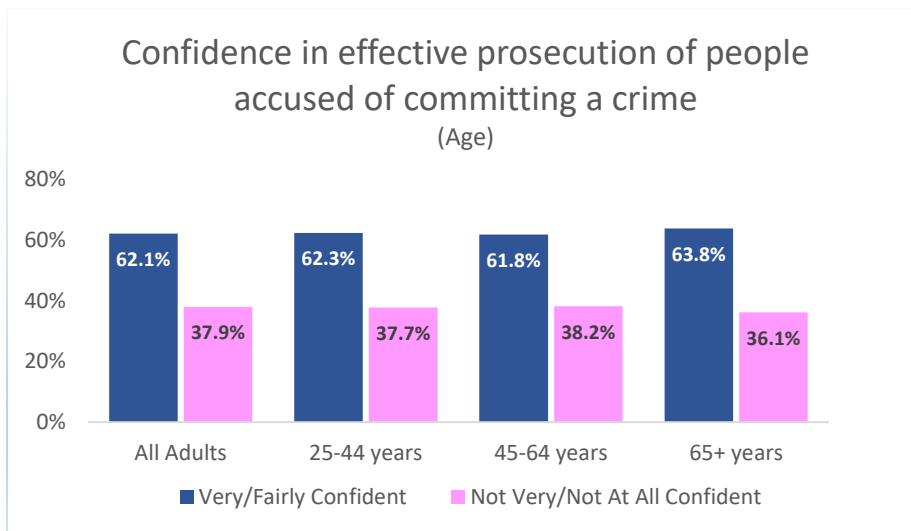
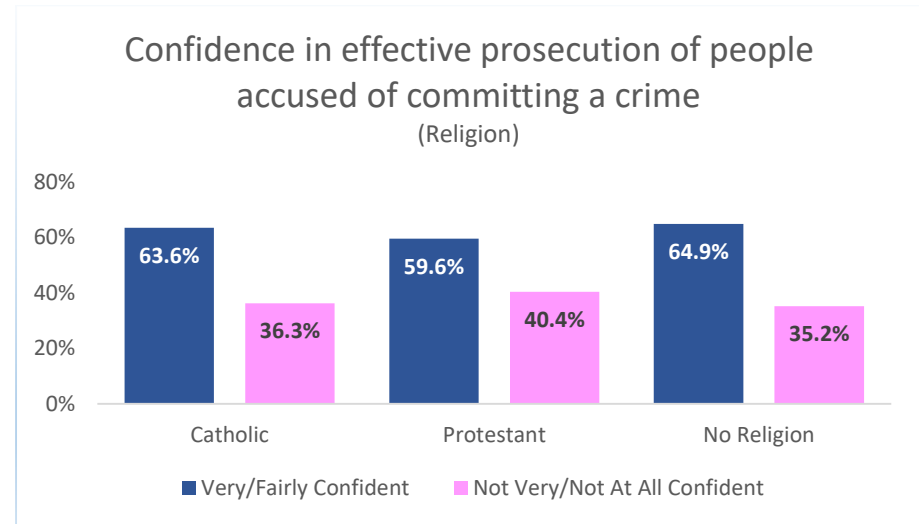
Question 1: Had you heard of the Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland, 'the PPS'?

- Of the respondents that were surveyed, 90.7% had heard of the PPS. This compares to 80.8% in 2018 and 83.1% in 2019.
- More males (94.2%) than females (88.3%) had heard of the PPS. In terms of the different age groups, those in the under 25 category had the lowest level of awareness (64.6%).
- The religious breakdown shows that more Protestants (95.2%) than either Catholics (90.1%) or those with no religion (86.3%) had heard of the PPS.



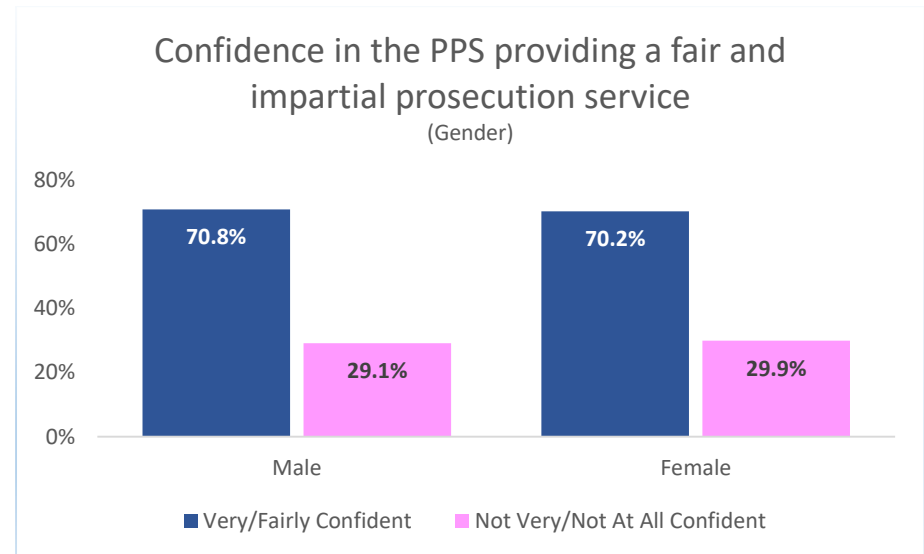
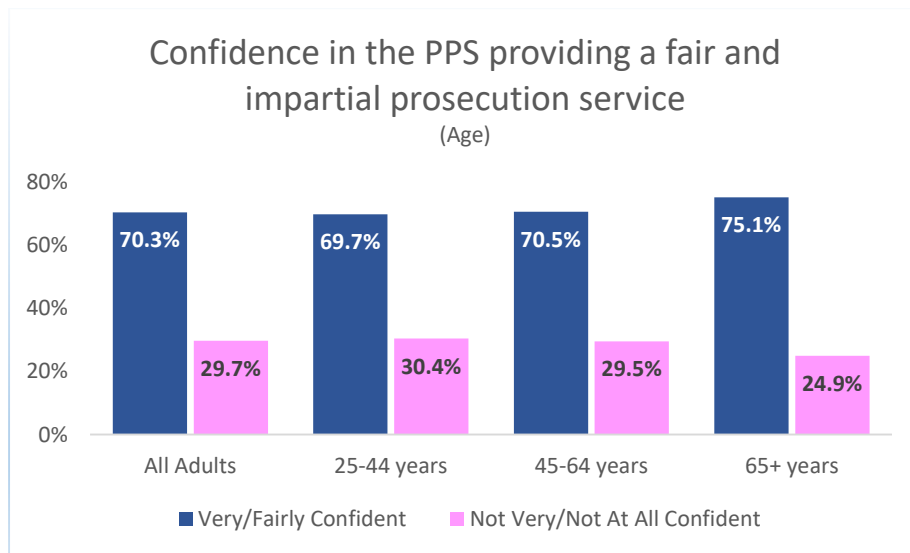
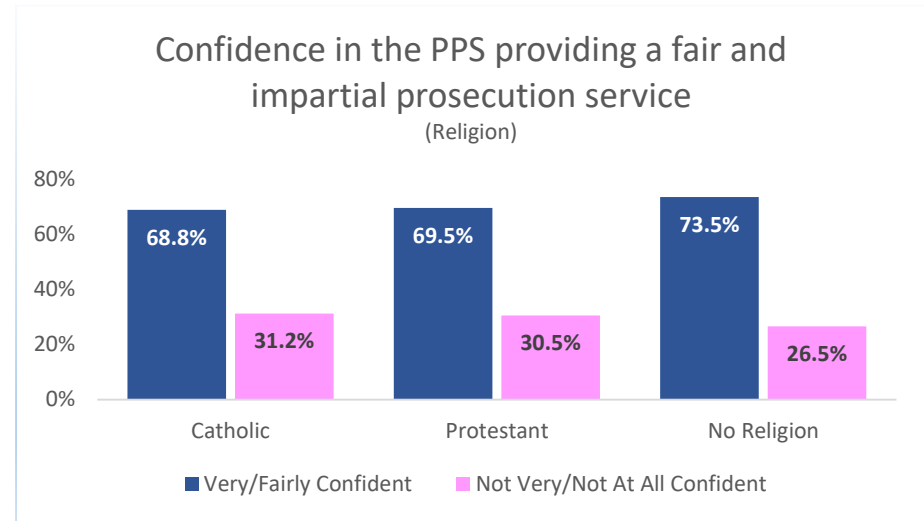
Question 2: How confident are you that the Public Prosecution Service is effective at prosecuting people accused of committing a crime?

- 62.1% were very or fairly confident that the PPS is effective at prosecuting people accused of committing a crime. This compares to 64.2% in 2018 and 66.3% in 2019.
- Findings were broadly similar across age groups and by gender.
- 63.6% of Catholic respondents were confident in the effectiveness of the Service compared to 59.6% of Protestants.



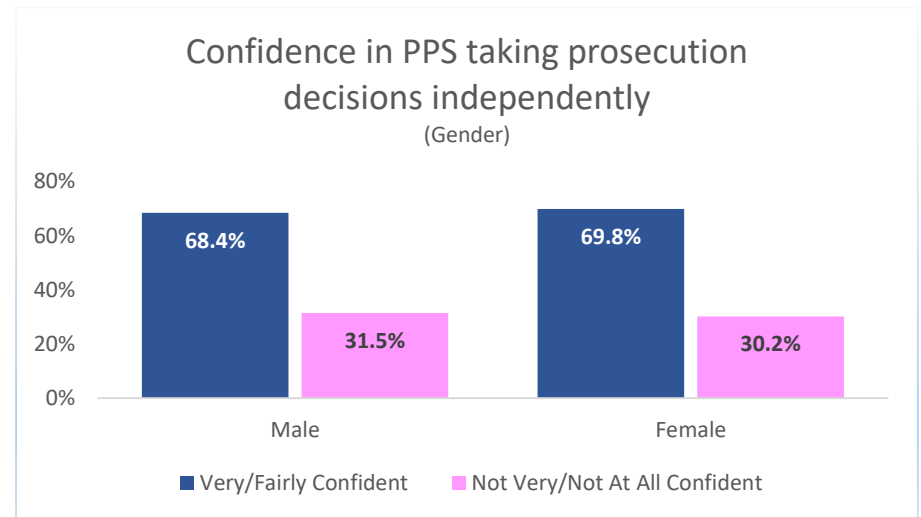
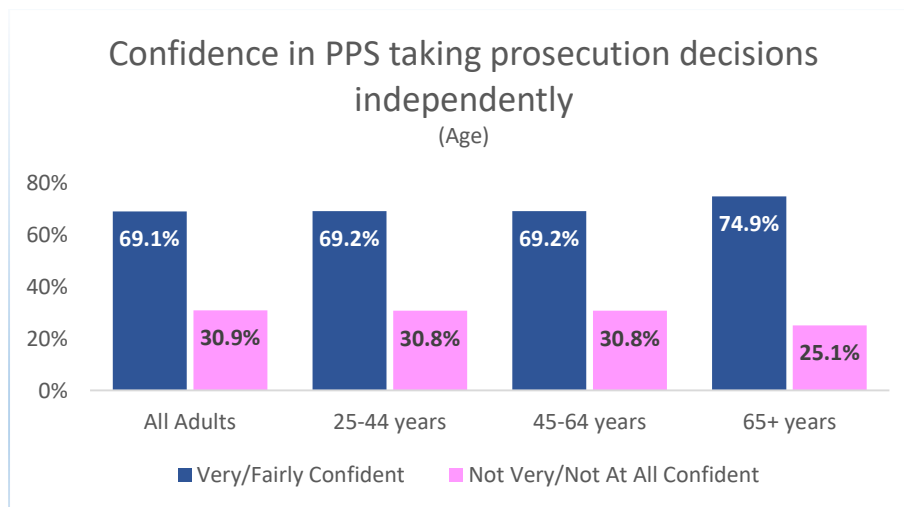
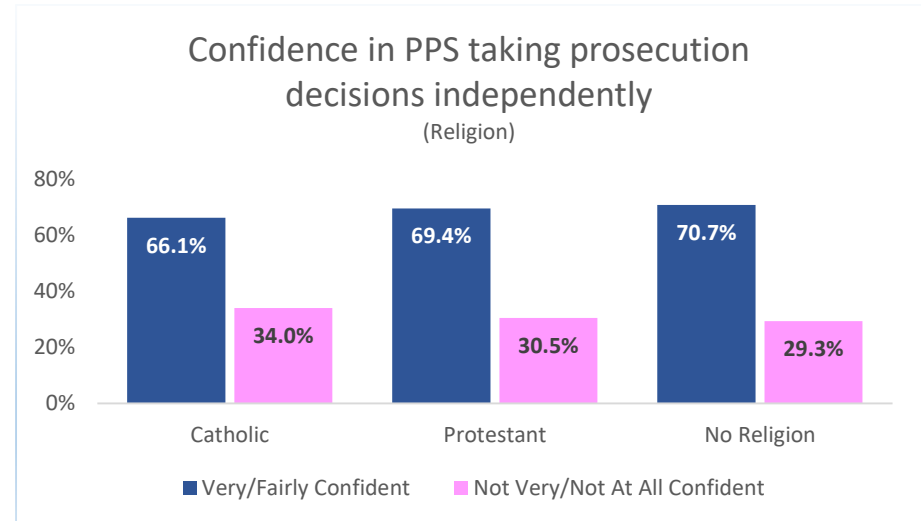
Question 3: How confident are you that the Public Prosecution Service provides a fair and impartial prosecution service?

- 70.3% of those surveyed were either very or fairly confident that the PPS provides a fair and impartial prosecutions service. This compares to 68.7% in 2018 and 76.6% in 2019.
- Males and females were broadly comparable while those in the 65+ age group reported the highest levels of confidence.
- Catholic and Protestant respondents expressed similar levels of confidence (68.8% and 69.5% respectively).



Question 4: How confident are you that the Public Prosecution Service takes its prosecution decisions independently? (That is, independent of police, Government or any other body)

- 69.1% of respondents were either very or fairly confident that the PPS takes its prosecution decisions independently. This compares to 64.8% in 2018 and 69.1% in 2019.
- Almost three quarters (74.9%) of those aged 65+ were very or fairly confident that the PPS's decisions are taken independently. Again males and females were broadly comparable.
- 69.4% of Protestant respondents were very or fairly confident compared to 66.1% of Catholic respondents.



Annex 1: Survey Data Excluding 'Don't Knows'

Table 1.1: Had you heard of the Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland, ‘the PPS’?

Year	Response	All Adults	<25 years	25-44 years	45-64 years	65+ years	Male	Female	Catholic	Protestant	No Religion
2020	Yes	90.7%	64.6%	86.1%	97.0%	97.3%	94.2%	88.3%	90.1%	95.2%	86.3%
	No	9.3%	35.4%	13.9%	3.0%	2.7%	5.8%	11.7%	9.9%	4.8%	13.7%
	Unweighted Base	1,268	76	469	461	257	511	754	344	512	367
2019	Yes	83.1%	69.1%	76.2%	93.4%	85.3%	84.7%	81.7%	84.4%	87.7%	75.9%
	No	16.9%	30.9%	23.8%	6.6%	14.7%	15.3%	18.3%	15.6%	12.3%	24.1%
	Unweighted Base	1,185	95	371	331	383	541	641	388	492	242

Table 1.2: How confident are you that the Public Prosecution Service is effective at prosecuting people accused of committing a crime?

Year	Response	All Adults	<25 years	25-44 years	45-64 years	65+ years	Male	Female	Catholic	Protestant	No Religion
2020	Very/Fairly Confident	62.1%	N/A	62.3%	61.8%	63.8%	63.2%	61.3%	63.6%	59.6%	64.9%
	Not Very/Not At All Confident	37.9%	N/A	37.7%	38.2%	36.1%	36.8%	38.7%	36.3%	40.4%	35.2%
	Unweighted Base	1,031	<50	351	402	228	441	588	280	449	274
2019	Very/Fairly Confident	66.3%	70.0%	67.1%	64.3%	66.8%	64.9%	67.6%	64.7%	66.8%	65.6%
	Not Very/Not At All Confident	33.7%	30.0%	32.9%	35.7%	33.2%	35.1%	32.4%	35.3%	33.2%	34.4%
	Unweighted Base	857	53	254	280	267	412	445	290	377	161

Note: ‘N/A’ indicates that the unweighted base was less than 50 and therefore the breakdown was not valid.

Table 1.3: How confident are you that the Public Prosecution Service provides a fair and impartial prosecution service?

Year	Response	All Adults	<25 years	25-44 years	45-64 years	65+ years	Male	Female	Catholic	Protestant	No Religion
2020	Very/Fairly Confident	70.3%	N/A	69.7%	70.5%	75.1%	70.8%	70.2%	68.8%	69.5%	73.5%
	Not Very/Not At All Confident	29.7%	N/A	30.4%	29.5%	24.9%	29.1%	29.9%	31.2%	30.5%	26.5%
	Unweighted Base	1,014	<50	342	399	227	442	570	270	445	273
2019	Very/Fairly Confident	76.6%	72.9%	77.9%	75.2%	78.4%	77.9%	75.5%	71.1%	78.5%	79.7%
	Not Very/Not At All Confident	23.4%	27.1%	22.1%	24.8%	21.6%	22.1%	24.5%	28.9%	21.5%	20.3%
	Unweighted Base	858	55	254	276	270	413	445	286	381	158

Note: 'N/A' indicates that the unweighted base was less than 50 and therefore the breakdown was not valid.

Table 1.4: How confident are you that the Public Prosecution Service takes its prosecution decisions independently? (That is, independent of police, Government or any other body)

Year	Response	All Adults	<25 years	25-44 years	45-64 years	65+ years	Male	Female	Catholic	Protestant	No Religion
2020	Very/Fairly Confident	69.1%	N/A	69.2%	69.2%	74.9%	68.4%	69.8%	66.1%	69.4%	70.7%
	Not Very/Not At All Confident	30.9%	N/A	30.8%	30.8%	25.1%	31.5%	30.2%	34.0%	30.5%	29.3%
	Unweighted Base	979	<50	346	375	211	435	542	261	421	274
2019	Very/Fairly Confident	69.1%	N/A	70.4%	67.0%	74.8%	67.3%	70.7%	64.5%	73.4%	65.6%
	Not Very/Not At All Confident	30.9%	N/A	29.6%	33.0%	25.2%	32.7%	29.3%	35.5%	26.6%	34.4%
	Unweighted Base	838	<50	246	276	264	408	430	273	374	160

Note: 'N/A' indicates that the unweighted base was less than 50 and therefore the breakdown was not valid.

Annex 2: Survey Data Including 'Don't Knows'

Table 2.1: Had you heard of the Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland, ‘the PPS’?

Year	Response	All Adults	<25 years	25-44 years	45-64 years	65+ years	Male	Female	Catholic	Protestant	No Religion
2020	Yes	89.4%	63.4%	84.6%	96.2%	95.6%	92.7%	87.1%	88.8%	93.6%	85.3%
	No	9.2%	34.7%	13.7%	3.0%	2.7%	5.7%	11.5%	9.8%	4.7%	13.5%
	Don't know	1.4%	2.0%	1.7%	0.8%	1.8%	1.5%	1.4%	1.4%	1.7%	1.1%
	Unweighted Base	1,291	79	478	466	262	519	769	350	523	371

Table 2.2: How confident are you that the Public Prosecution Service is effective at prosecuting people accused of committing a crime?

Year	Response	All Adults	<25 years	25-44 years	45-64 years	65+ years	Male	Female	Catholic	Protestant	No Religion
2020	Very/Fairly Confident	55.4%	54.7%	53.4%	56.0%	58.8%	58.8%	52.9%	57.4%	54.6%	55.9%
	Not Very/Not At All Confident	33.8%	34.4%	32.3%	34.6%	33.3%	34.2%	33.4%	32.8%	37.1%	30.4%
	Don't Know	10.8%	10.9%	14.4%	9.4%	7.9%	7.0%	13.6%	9.8%	8.4%	13.8%
	Unweighted Base	1,153	50	404	446	248	480	671	309	488	320

Table 2.3: How confident are you that the Public Prosecution Service provides a fair and impartial prosecution service?

Year	Response	All Adults	<25 years	25-44 years	45-64 years	65+ years	Male	Female	Catholic	Protestant	No Religion
2020	Very/Fairly Confident	61.5%	47.7%	58.7%	62.7%	68.9%	65.7%	58.6%	59.4%	63.1%	62.9%
	Not Very/Not At All Confident	25.9%	33.9%	25.7%	26.3%	22.8%	27.1%	25.0%	27.1%	27.8%	22.6%
	Don't Know	12.5%	18.5%	15.6%	11.0%	8.4%	7.2%	16.3%	13.5%	9.2%	14.5%
	Unweighted Base	1,153	50	404	446	248	480	671	309	488	320

Table 2.4: How confident are you that the Public Prosecution Service takes its prosecution decisions independently? (That is, independent of police, Government or any other body)

Year	Response	All Adults	<25 years	25-44 years	45-64 years	65+ years	Male	Female	Catholic	Protestant	No Religion
2020	Very/Fairly Confident	58.4%	40.0%	58.7%	58.5%	63.7%	62.3%	55.7%	54.8%	59.9%	60.9%
	Not Very/Not At All Confident	26.1%	40.0%	26.1%	26.0%	21.4%	28.7%	24.1%	28.2%	26.4%	25.2%
	Don't know	15.5%	20.0%	15.1%	15.4%	14.9%	9.1%	20.2%	16.9%	13.8%	13.8%
	Unweighted Base	1,153	50	404	446	248	480	671	309	488	320

Annex 3: Trend Tables 2018-2020

Table 3.1: Had you heard of the Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland, ‘the PPS’? (Proportion of those surveyed who responded ‘Yes’, excluding don’t knows)

Year	2018	2019	2020
All Adults	80.8%	83.1%	90.7%
<25 years	58.9%	69.1%	64.6%
25-44 years	79.3%	76.2%	86.1%
45-64 years	86.3%	93.4%	97.0%
65+ years	83.7%	85.3%	97.3%
Male	85.2%	84.7%	94.2%
Female	77.4%	81.7%	88.3%
Catholic	84.9%	84.4%	90.1%
Protestant	81.8%	87.7%	95.2%
No Religion	74.5%	75.9%	86.3%

Table 3.2: How confident are you that the Public Prosecution Service is effective at prosecuting people accused of committing a crime? (Proportion of those surveyed who responded ‘Very/Fairly Confident’, excluding don’t knows)

Year	2018	2019	2020
All Adults	64.2%	66.3%	62.1%
<25 years	N/A	70.0%	N/A
25-44 years	68.4%	67.1%	62.3%
45-64 years	59.5%	64.3%	61.8%
65+ years	64.0%	66.8%	63.8%
Male	61.7%	64.9%	63.2%
Female	66.5%	67.6%	61.3%
Catholic	61.6%	64.7%	63.6%
Protestant	66.7%	66.8%	59.6%
No Religion	59.5%	65.6%	64.9%

Note: ‘N/A’ indicates that the unweighted base was less than 50 and therefore the breakdown was not valid.

Table 3.3: How confident are you that the Public Prosecution Service provides a fair and impartial prosecution service? (Proportion of those surveyed who responded 'Very/Fairly Confident', excluding don't knows)

Year	2018	2019	2020
All Adults	68.7%	76.6%	70.3%
<25 years	N/A	72.9%	N/A
25-44 years	69.6%	77.9%	69.7%
45-64 years	65.5%	75.2%	70.5%
65+ years	71.9%	78.4%	75.1%
Male	69.4%	77.9%	70.8%
Female	68.0%	75.5%	70.2%
Catholic	62.0%	71.1%	68.8%
Protestant	73.2%	78.5%	69.5%
No Religion	68.7%	79.7%	73.5%

Note: 'N/A' indicates that the unweighted base was less than 50 and therefore the breakdown was not valid.

Table 3.4: How confident are you that the Public Prosecution Service takes its prosecution decisions independently? (That is, independent of police, Government or any other body) (Proportion of those surveyed who responded 'Very/Fairly Confident', excluding don't knows)

Year	2018	2019	2020
All Adults	64.8%	69.1%	69.1%
<25 years	N/A	N/A	N/A
25-44 years	68.6%	70.4%	69.2%
45-64 years	62.1%	67.0%	69.2%
65+ years	64.3%	74.8%	74.9%
Male	64.6%	67.3%	68.4%
Female	65.0%	70.7%	69.8%
Catholic	59.9%	64.5%	66.1%
Protestant	70.8%	73.4%	69.4%
No Religion	57.8%	65.6%	70.7%

Note: 'N/A' indicates that the unweighted base was less than 50 and therefore the breakdown was not valid.

Annex 4: Technical Notes

Ethical Approval

The 2020 Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey received ethical approval from the Ethics Committee in the School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work, Queens University Belfast, where the survey coordinator is based.

The overall design

The 2020 Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey involved 1,292 face-to-face interviews with adults aged 18 years or over. In order to achieve the objectives of the research while considering the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, a multi-modal approach was used. A large-scale Computer Assisted Web Interviewing (CAWI) survey was developed and this was supplemented with Computer Assisted Telephone Interviews (CATI) and Computer Assisted Personal Interviews (CAPI) via Microsoft Teams video calls. Face-to-face interviewers also called directly to selected households to encourage participation.

Pilot and main stage fieldwork

The fieldwork was split into two phases; a pilot phase followed by main stage fieldwork. The purpose of the pilot was to assess the reliability and accuracy of the questionnaire and script, and to allow for any changes to be made ahead of the main stage fieldwork. Question wording and understanding was tested, alongside any routing and filtering. The main stage of the fieldwork was undertaken during the period 8th October 2020 and 8th December 2020

Once Ipsos MORI received approval from the NILTS project team, the CAWI survey link was activated. At this stage, Ipsos MORI mailed the advance letters and monitored the real time progress of the survey, as householders began completing it. The CATI/CAPI script was also released to the interviewing panel, for those participants who wanted to complete the interview with an interviewer over the phone or via Microsoft Teams.

Sampling and Response Rate

The sample for the 2020 survey consisted of a systematic random sample of addresses selected from the Postcode Address File (PAF) database of addresses. This is the most up-to-date and complete listing of addresses. The PAF is the most widely used sample frame for high quality social surveys in the UK and is a list of addresses in the United Kingdom that is maintained by the Royal Mail. Private business addresses were removed from the database prior to sample selection.

A total of 15,000 addresses were selected for invitation. To provide a random sample of Northern Ireland households, the sample was stratified proportionately by District Council area. The Postcode Address File (PAF) provides a good sampling frame of addresses but contains no information about the number of people living at an address. Further selection stages were therefore required to convert the listing of addresses to a listing of individuals from which one person (the 'selected respondent') is chosen to complete the survey.

The person to be interviewed was randomly selected using the 'next birthday' rule. Each letter sent to the selected addresses clearly stated that only the person with the next birthday was eligible to complete the survey online. At the beginning of the interview, the participant also had to confirm that they were the person within the household with the next birthday. The CATI/CAPI scripts were also set up to validate that the participant was the member of the household with the next birthday.

Table 4.1: Status of addresses			
Total addresses drawn from PAF	Addresses contacted by post*	Addresses contacted by interviewer**	Total in scope
15,000	14,784	798	14,784

* The remaining 216 addresses no longer existed, were inaccessible or addressee had gone away.

** Reminder calls made by interviewers.

Table 4.2: Breakdown of response		
	Number	Percent
Total co-operating	1,292	9%
- Fully co-operating	1,292	9%
- Partially co-operating	0	0
Refusal to co-operate	411	3%
Non-contact	13,131	88%
Other	166	1%
Total	14,784	100%

Representativeness

Selecting only one individual for interview at each address means individuals living in large households have a lower chance of being included in the sample than individuals living in smaller households. The data presented in this bulletin has been weighted to prevent a bias towards smaller households. To assess how accurately a survey sample reflects the population of Northern Ireland, the characteristics of the sample are compared with the characteristics of the Northern Ireland population from Mid-Year Population Estimates. The NILTS Sample has also been compared to the achieved sample of the Continuous Household Survey (CHS). Table 4.3 shows this comparison and Table 4.4 a profile of the survey sample.

Table 4.3: Representativeness of the NILTS 2020 sample by age and gender (%)			
Individual Characteristics	NILTS 2020 (weighted)	CHS 2017/18	Mid-Year Population Estimates 2019
Age			
18-24 years	8.0	5	11.0
25-34 years	18.0	14	17.1
35-44 years	18.9	16	16.6
45-54 years	19.9	20	17.7
55-64 years	18.8	17	15.9
65+ years	17.4	27	21.7
Gender			
Male	40.5	43	48.6
Female	59.3	57	51.4
Base=100%	1,292	3,262	1,452,962

Sources: NISRA, NILTS 2020

Table 4.4: Representativeness of the NILTS 2020 sample by religion (%)			
Individual Characteristics	NILTS 2020 (weighted)	CHS 2018/19**	Northern Ireland Census 2011
Religion			
Protestant	40	45	48
Catholic	28	43	45
Other or no religion*	28	11	6
Missing/refused	1	1	1
Base=100%	1,292	10,902	1,108,630

Sources: NISRA, NILTS 2020

* Includes 'no religion' and religion not stated.

** Supplemented from household membership.

Weighting

Selecting only one individual for interview at each sampled address means that the probability of selection for the survey is inversely related to the size of the household. In other words, individuals living in large households have a lower chance of being included in the sample than individuals in small households.

Before analysis, all households which provided a selected respondent are examined and the data are weighted in relation to the number of eligible adults at the address derived from the details of household structure recorded by interviewers on the questionnaire. This weighting process adjusts the results to those that would have been achieved if the sample had been drawn as a random sample of adults rather than of addresses.

On occasions, in tables showing weighted data, the sum of column totals does not equal the grand total. This is due to the rounding process associated with weighting. The percentages in the tables are based on weighted data but the totals are unweighted.

Sampling Errors and Confidence Intervals

Due to a combination of both sampling and non-sampling error, any sample is unlikely to reflect precisely the characteristics of the population. The number of cases upon which analysis is based is important, as it influences the precision (standard error) of the estimates. The Public Prosecution Service does not routinely publish estimates where the unweighted Base is less than 50 cases.

Because NILTS estimates are subject to sampling error, differences between population subgroups may occur by chance.

Table 4.5 below set outs sampling errors and confidence intervals at the 95% confidence level relating to a Systematic Random Sample design as used in the survey. Note that the margin of error for all sample estimates is within the parameters of $\pm 2.81\%$.

Table 4.5: Sampling errors and confidence intervals for variables (unweighted data)		
	%	Margin of Error
Age		
18-24	8.0	1.48
25-34	18.0	2.10
35-44	18.0	2.10
45-54	19.9	2.18
55-64	18.8	2.13
65 and over	17.4	2.07
Sex		
Male	40.5	2.67
Female	59.3	2.68
Religion		
Catholic	28.1	2.45
Protestant	41.8	2.69
None	27.2	2.43
Other	1.2	0.59
Refused/Don't Know	1.4	0.64

Source: NILTS 2020

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