



Department of
Justice

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Analytical Services Group

**Perceptions of the
Youth Justice Agency:
Findings from the
2010/11 to 2015/16
Northern Ireland Crime
Surveys**

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INTRODUCTION

The Youth Justice Agency aims to make communities safer by helping children to stop offending. The Agency works with children aged 10-17 years who have offended or are at serious risk of offending.

Since 2009, the Northern Ireland Crime Survey (NICS) has included three questions relating to the Youth Justice Agency. These questions aim to measure: the level of awareness of the agency and its work; and confidence levels on whether it is effective in reducing re-offending by young people aged 10-17. This is the first report published, with findings covering each of the financial years from 2010/11 to 2015/16.

KNOWLEDGE OF THE YOUTH JUSTICE AGENCY

NICS respondents were asked to indicate whether they had heard of the Youth Justice Agency.

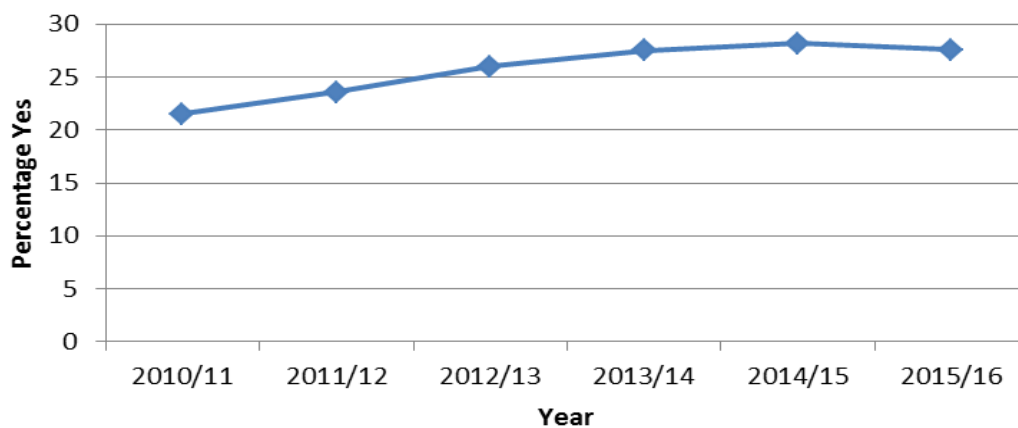
- ◆ NICS 2015/16 findings show just over a quarter (27.6%) of respondents indicated that they had heard of the Youth Justice Agency, while the remaining 72.4% felt they had not. These figures were unchanged ($p < 0.05$) when compared with NICS 2014/15. However when compared to 2010/11 there is a statistically significant increase ($p < 0.05$) in the respondents that answered “Yes”. Conversely there is statistically significant decrease ($p < 0.05$) in the respondents that answered “No” (Table 1).

Table 1: Have you ever heard of the Youth Justice Agency?¹

Percentage (%)	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	Statistically significant change 2010/11 to 2015/16? ²	Statistically significant change 2014/15 to 2015/16? ²
Yes	21.5	23.6	26.0	27.5	28.2	27.6	** ↑	
No	78.5	76.4	74.0	72.5	71.8	72.4	** ↓	
Unweighted base	3,782	4,046	4,043	3,586	2,069	1,966		

1. Results exclude non-valid responses.
2. Statistical significance of change at the 5% level (two-tailed test) is indicated by a double asterisk (**).

Figure 1: Have you ever heard of the Youth Justice Agency?



AWARENESS OF THE WORK OF THE YOUTH JUSTICE AGENCY

NICS respondents were also asked how aware they were of the work of the Youth Justice Agency. The following results are based on those respondents who had heard of the Youth Justice Agency (question 1).

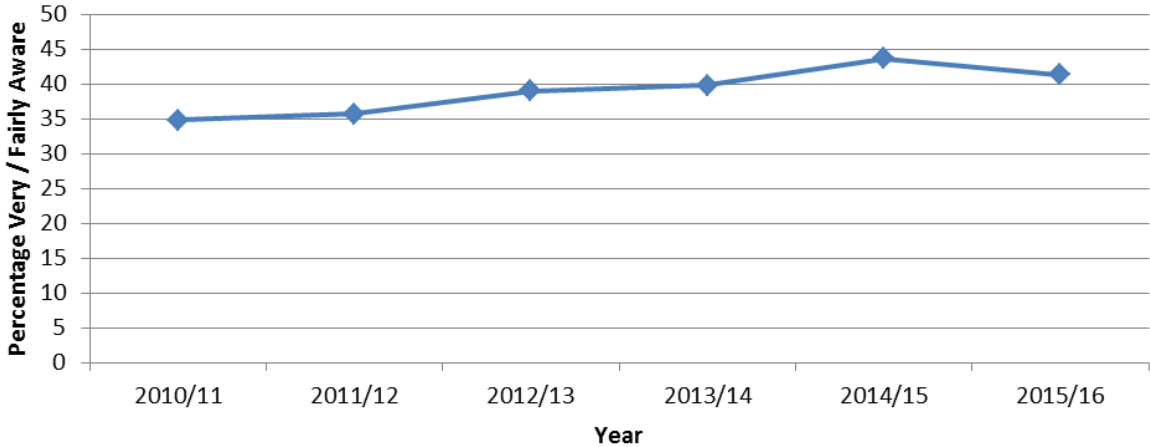
- ◆ Over two-fifths (41.3%) of respondents felt either very or fairly aware of the work of the Youth Justice Agency. The other 58.7% of respondents felt either not very or not at all aware. These figures were unchanged ($p < 0.05$) when compared with NICS 2014/15. When compared with 2010/11 there is a statistically significant increase ($p < 0.05$) in the respondents who were “very/fairly aware of the work of the Youth Justice Agency” (34.8% in 2010/11 to 41.3% in 2015/16). Conversely there is a statistically significant decrease ($p < 0.05$) in the respondents who were “not very/not aware of the work of the Youth Justice Agency” (65.1% in 2010/11 to 58.7% in 2015/16) (Table 2).

Table 2: Awareness levels of the work of the Youth Justice Agency¹

Percentage (%)	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	Statistically significant change 2010/11 to 2015/16 ²	Statistically significant change 2014/15 to 2015/16 ²
Very / fairly aware	34.8	35.7	39.0	39.8	43.7	41.3	** ↑	
Not very / not aware	65.1	64.0	60.8	60.2	56.2	58.7	** ↓	
Don't Know	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.0		
Unweighted base	857	928	1,007	961	567	533		

1. Results exclude non-valid responses.
2. Statistical significance of change at the 5% level (two-tailed test) is indicated by a double asterisk (**).
3. Results are only for those who had heard of the Youth Justice Agency (question 1).

Figure 2: How aware are you of the work of the Youth Justice Agency?



CONFIDENCE IN THE WORK OF THE YOUTH JUSTICE AGENCY

NICS respondents were asked how confident they were that the Youth Justice Agency is effective at reducing re-offending by young people (aged 10-17). The following results are based on those respondents who had heard of the Youth Justice Agency (question 1).

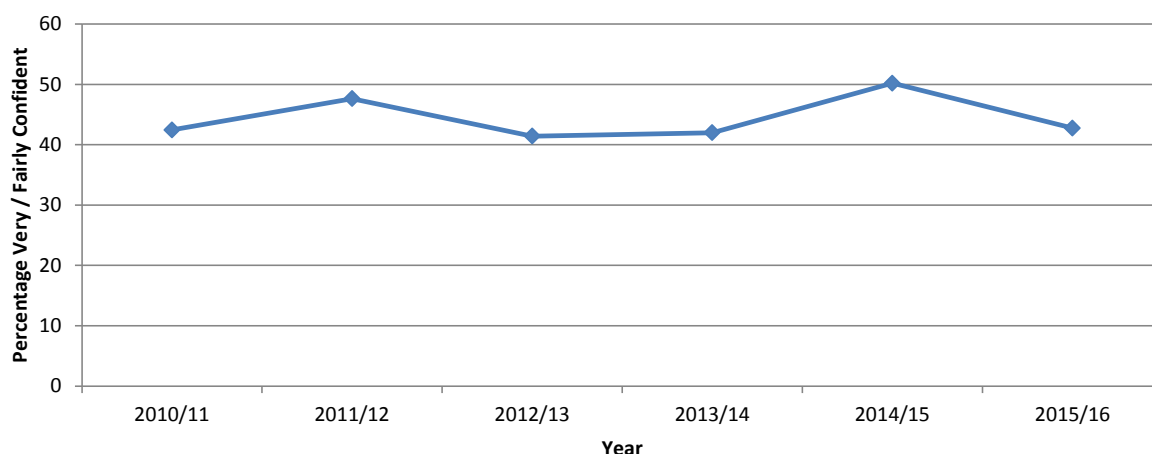
- ◆ Just over two-fifths (42.8%) of respondents felt either very or fairly confident that the Youth Justice Agency is effective at reducing re-offending by young people. This represents a statistically significant decrease ($p < 0.05$) from the peak of 50.2% in 2014/15. However this figure was unchanged ($p < 0.05$) when compared with 42.4% in NICS 2010/11 (Table 3).
- ◆ The proportion of respondents who were not very or not at all confident that the Youth Justice Agency is effective at reducing re-offending by young people in 2015/16 (46.8%) is unchanged ($p < 0.05$) when compared with both 2010/11 (46.5%) and 2014/15 (41.6%).
- ◆ The remaining 10.5% of respondents in 2015/16 were unsure, which remains unchanged ($p < 0.05$) since the previous year (8.2%) and since the baseline year (NICS 2010/11: 11.1%).

Table 3: How confident are you that the Youth Justice Agency is effective at reducing re-offending by young people aged 10-17?¹

Percentage (%)	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	Statistically significant change 2010/11 to 2015/16? ²	Statistically significant change 2014/15 to 2015/16? ²
Very / fairly confident	42.4	47.6	41.4	42.0	50.2	42.8		** ↓
Not very / not confident	46.5	45.0	45.3	44.5	41.6	46.8		
Don't Know	11.1	7.3	13.3	13.5	8.2	10.5		
Unweighted base	853	924	1,007	958	566	533		

1. Results exclude non-valid responses.
2. Statistical significance of change at the 5% level (two-tailed test) is indicated by a double asterisk (**).
3. Results are only for those who had heard of the Youth Justice Agency (question 1).

Figure 3: How confident are you that the Youth Justice Agency is effective at reducing re-offending by young people aged 10-17?



Further analysis to split the respondents to this question based on their answers to question two highlights that respondents who were “very / fairly aware of the work” of the Youth Justice Agency are significantly ($p < 0.05$) more confident that the Youth Justice Agency is effective at reducing re-offending than those who were “not very / not aware of the work” (Table 4).

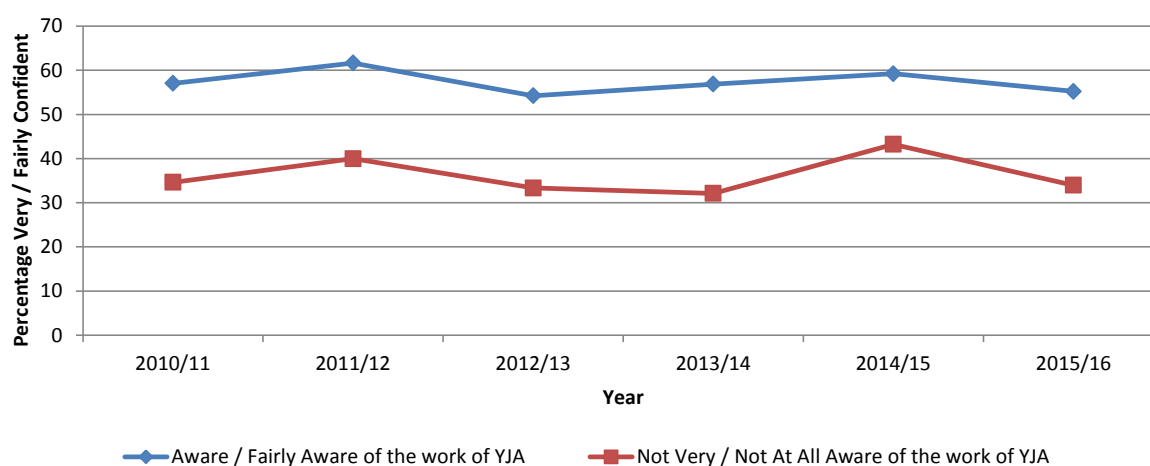
- ◆ Of those who were “very / fairly aware of the work” of the Youth Justice Agency (question 2), more than half (55.2%) were very or fairly confident that the Youth Justice Agency is effective at reducing re-offending by young people aged 10-17. In comparison, those respondents who were “not very / not aware of the work” of the Youth Justice Agency (question 2), only a third (34.0%) were very or fairly confident that the Youth Justice Agency is effective at reducing re-offending.
- ◆ This difference in response rates is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), showing that there is a significant link between awareness of the Youth Justice Agency’s work, and respondents confidence that the Youth Justice Agency is effective at reducing re-offending.
- ◆ Further, the statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) decrease in confidence highlighted in Table 3 can be demonstrated most clearly among those in the “not very / not aware of the work” group of respondents. The change in confidence from 2014/15 to 2015/16 in the “very / fairly aware of the work” group is not statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) (Table 4).

Table 4: How confident are you that the Youth Justice Agency is effective at reducing re-offending by young people aged 10-17?¹

Awareness of the work of YJA		Percentage (%)						Statistically significant change 2010/11 to 2015/16? ²		Statistically significant change 2014/15 to 2015/16? ²	
		2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16				
Very / fairly aware	Very / fairly confident	57.0	61.6	54.2	56.9	59.2	55.2				
	Not very / not confident	40.2	37.0	40.8	40.2	38.9	41.6				
	Don't Know	2.8	1.4	4.9	2.9	1.9	3.2				
Not very / not aware	Very / fairly confident	34.6	40.0	33.3	32.1	43.2	34.0			** ↓	
	Not very / not confident	49.8	49.7	48.3	47.3	43.7	50.4				
	Don't Know	15.6	10.3	18.3	20.6	13.1	15.6				
<i>Unweighted base</i>		853	924	1,007	958	566	533				

1. Results exclude non-valid responses.
2. Statistical significance of change at the 5% level (two-tailed test) is indicated by a double asterisk (**).
3. Results are only for those who had heard of the Youth Justice Agency (question 1).

Figure 4: How confident are you that the Youth Justice Agency is effective at reducing re-offending by young people aged 10-17?



FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information on the Northern Ireland Crime Survey please contact: Analytical Services Group, Department of Justice, 1st Floor, Laganside House, 23-27 Oxford Street, Belfast BT1 3LA; Telephone: 02890 724551; Email: statistics.research@justice-ni.x.gsi.gov.uk

This update and other Department of Justice research and statistical publications are available at: www.justice-ni.gov.uk

TECHNICAL NOTES

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 households. Refusals and non-valid responses have been excluded from the analyses where appropriate.

Because of a combination of both sampling and non-sampling error, any sample is unlikely to reflect precisely the characteristics of the population.

Statistical significance tests have been carried out on a range of differences observed between various sweeps of the NICS. These tests are used to establish the degree of confidence with which we can infer the observed findings as an accurate reflection of the perceptions of the population.

For the purposes of this update, 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.

Where differences are described as not statistically different, this means that the results do not differ beyond the levels expected by chance fluctuation (as judged at the 5% level).

With effect from April 2013 the sample size of the NICS was reduced from 4,000 interviews to 3,500 interviews and further in April 2014, from 3,500 to 2,000. These reductions were occasioned by the need to make savings generally in the levels of Departmental spending. As a result, 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.

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