

Crime and Criminal Justice Research Programme

Scottish Crime and Victimization Survey 2004: Research Findings

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Introduction

Following a Fundamental Review of the Scottish Crime Survey in 2003, the Scottish Executive substantially revised the methods used to estimate victimisation in Scotland. The new Scottish Crime and Victimization Survey (SCVS) was established with a substantially increased sample (up to 27,000 annually from 5,000 every three years or so), continuous fieldwork and a switch to data collection by telephone.

As part of a calibration exercise comparing the previous and newly designed methodologies, MORI Scotland and TNS Social were jointly commissioned to undertake a face-to-face survey involving 3,000 interviews that repeated the data collection from previous sweeps of the Scottish Crime Survey (SCS). A full report of the calibration exercise has been published.¹ This report presents the main findings of that survey related to victimisation and respondents' perceptions of crime and other issues.

Main Findings

- Around 940,000 crimes were committed against households and individuals in Scotland between 1 April 2003 and 31 March 2004. Sixty per cent of crimes were against property and these mainly involved acts of vandalism against vehicles and other property.
- Just over one in every five respondents had experienced a crime against themselves or their household. Vandalism was the most common with 15% of households having experienced at least one incident in the previous year. One in every twenty adults reported at least one incident of personal crime in the previous year.
- Almost one in four crimes involved violence. Petty assault accounts for most of the violent crime and are almost 10 times more prevalent than serious assaults.
- Crime is perceived by almost 60% of adults as a big problem facing Scotland today. There is greater concern about crime than about standards of health care, housing, education or public transport.
- The experience of crime is strongly related to the type of area people live in. Households in the areas classified as most deprived using the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation experience more crime and anti-social behaviour than the least deprived areas.

¹ Hope, S. (2005) Scottish Crime and Victimization Survey: Calibration Exercise: A Comparison of Survey Methodologies, Scottish Executive <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/12/22132936/29366>

Methodology

Although conducted on a smaller scale than previous sweeps of the SCS, which had samples of about 5,000 interviews, the 2004 face-to-face element of the SCVS involved the same basic approach as previous sweeps. A stratified random sample of addresses was selected in 455 clusters across mainland Scotland and the main inhabited islands. Three thousand interviews were carried out with a randomly-selected adult and details of crimes experienced by the household and the individual (up to a maximum of five) in the previous year were collected. The reference period for the survey was from 1 April 2003 to 31 March 2004. The survey produced an adjusted response rate of 67%.

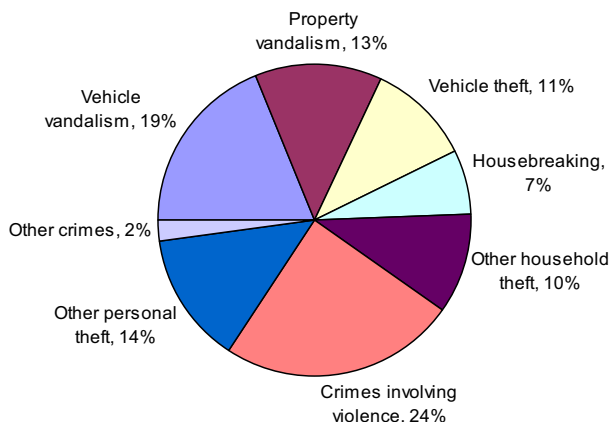
As is the case with all sample surveys (including previous Scottish Crime Surveys), levels of victimisation and other data recorded by the survey are best estimates of the likely levels that would be found in the population as a whole. The estimates are subject to margins of error, which are mainly a function of the sample size. They might also be affected by bias caused by differences in the likelihood of different groups in the population agreeing to participate in the survey and differences in whether people perceive incidents to be a crime and whether they report them in the survey.

The smaller sample size in 2004 means that the data from the survey are less precise than those from previous surveys and this has been taken into account in reporting differences between surveys.

Levels of crime

The 2004 survey suggests that between 1 April 2003 and 31 March 2004 there were just over 940,000 crimes committed against households and individuals in Scotland. Sixty per cent of these were committed against property – mainly motor vehicles and property vandalism, which accounted for over 40% of all crimes and two-thirds of the property crimes.

Figure 1: Distribution of crime in 2003/2004²



2 Revised figures for 2006 following adjustment to weighting

Broadly, the level and distribution of crimes in 2003/2004 is similar to that recorded by the survey for 2002 and 1999.

The prevalence of crime is generally reported in relation to the 'at risk' population. Thus household crime is expressed in terms of incidents per 10,000 households, personal crimes as per 10,000 adults and crimes involving motor vehicles and bicycles as per 10,000 vehicle and bicycle owning households respectively. Between 2002 and 2003/2004 there were no significant changes in the prevalence of individual categories of crime although the overall prevalence of household crime showed a decline.

Table 1: Incidence of crime 2003/2004³

Offence category interval	Rate	Confidence	
		±95%	±90%
Rates per 10,000 households (n= 3,034)			
Motor vehicle vandalism	806	147	124
Property vandalism	568	152	128
Theft from motor vehicle	323	79	66
Attempted theft of/from mv	73	35	29
Theft of mv	63	40	34
Bicycle theft	92	43	37
Housebreaking	291	87	73
Other household theft	443	101	84
Rates per 10,000 adults (n= 3,034)			
Petty assault	484	159	13
Serious assault	54	32	27
Sexual offences	26	25	22
Theft from person	309	108	90
Robbery	32	26	22
Other personal theft	13	26	22
Threats	321	110	92
Rates per 10,000 vehicle users (n= 2,106)			
Motor vehicle vandalism	1199	217	181
Theft from motor vehicle	481	116	98
Attempted theft of/from mv	109	51	43
Theft of mv	94	60	50
Rates per 10,000 bicycle owners (n= 1,164)			
Theft of bicycle	257	119	100

Just over one in five respondents (21%) had experienced either any personal or household crime in 2003/2004, which is similar to the proportion recorded by the survey in 2000 and 2003.

Fifteen per cent of households had experienced at least one incident of property crime in the survey year, with vandalism to motor vehicles and property and theft from motor vehicles being the most common crimes. Five per cent of individuals had experienced at least one incident of personal crime, with

3 Revised figures for 2006 following adjustment to weighting

petty assaults being most common. Compared with serious assaults, petty assaults are almost 10 times more common, with a prevalence rate of just under 500 per 10,000 adults compared with serious assaults with 54 per 10,000 adults.

Reporting to the police

Overall, 44% of crimes recorded by the survey came to the attention of the police. In about three-quarters of reported incidents, the offence was reported by the respondent or someone else in the household. Where the incident had not been reported to the police, the main reasons given were that the police would not have been able to do anything (35% of unreported incidents), the incident was too trivial (35%) or the police would not have been interested (19%).

Table 2: Proportion of all incidents of the main crime types reported to the police

	Yes	No	Don't know / No answer	Total	Base
Housebreaking	68	32	0	100	80
Theft from motor vehicle	55	39	6	100	95
Petty assault	45	54	2	100	123
Theft from person	42	58	0	100	69
Property vandalism	40	60	0	100	168
Motor vehicle vandalism	40	60	0	100	233
Threats	38	62	0	100	102
Other household theft	27	73	0	100	131
All incidents	44	55	1	100	1143

Public perceptions of crime and social problems

From a range of social problems asked about in the survey, crime is the third most commonly rated as 'a big problem' after drug abuse and alcohol abuse, other social issues such as unemployment, housing conditions and standards of education and public transport are rated as less of a problem⁴.

⁴ The public perception question on problems facing Scotland was asked at the beginning of the survey, before the more detailed questions on experience of crime and victimisation.

Table 3: Perceptions of problems

	Big problem	A bit of a problem	Not a problem	DK	Total
Drug abuse	76	18	3	3	100
Alcohol abuse	60	33	5	2	100
Crime	59	35	5	1	100
Unemployment	43	43	10	4	100
Standards of health care	33	39	25	3	100
Standards of housing	22	45	27	6	100
Racial discrimination	20	45	29	7	100
Standards of public transport	20	33	37	10	100
Standards of education	10	39	42	8	100

The extent to which crime is rated as a big problem differs between urban and rural areas and in terms of the relative deprivation of the area in which respondents lived. In general, urban areas, which also tend to be more deprived, were more likely to view crime as a big problem than rural and less deprived areas (Figures 2 and 3).

Figure 2: Perception of crime as 'a big problem' by Scottish Executive urban/rural classification

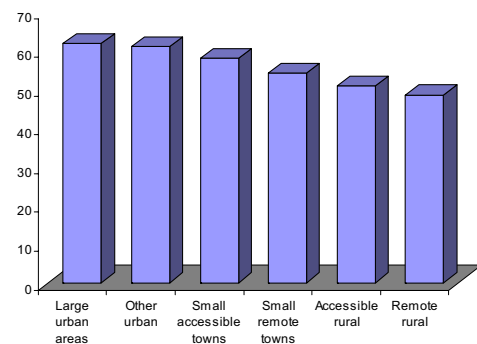
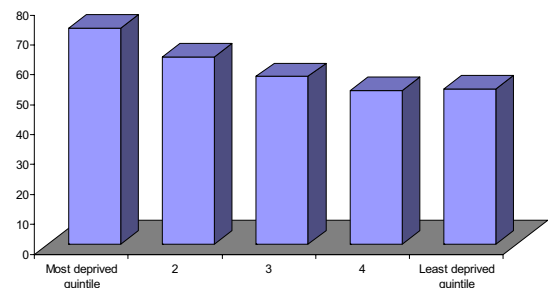


Figure 3: Perception of crime as 'a big problem' by SIMD quintiles



Specific types of crime

Half of the survey sample was asked to say how common they thought various types of crime were in their area. Property crimes such as vandalism and vehicle crime were

most likely to be seen as very or fairly common offences, although violent crime was also seen as common, with a quarter of those asked saying that people being attacked or assaulted in the street or other public places was very or fairly common.

There is significant variation by area type with respondents in more deprived areas generally twice as likely to believe that crimes were very or fairly common. Table 4 shows perceptions of the frequency of different types of crime vary between the most deprived fifth of areas and the least deprived fifth.

Violent street crime shows the largest difference between the most deprived and least deprived fifth of areas. Respondents in the most deprived areas are four times more likely to think that it is very or fairly common either for people to be mugged or robbed or for people to be attacked or assaulted in the street or other public place. The least variation was in terms of housebreaking and sexual assault.

The incidents of crimes recorded by the survey show that although personal crime is rare, residents in the most deprived areas are more likely to actually experience crimes than are residents of the least deprived areas. Seven per cent of adults in the most deprived areas reported one or more incident of personal crime compared with 4% of adults in the least deprived areas. There is no difference in the experience of property crimes across areas.

Figure 4: Proportion of adults experiencing any personal crimes by SIMD quintiles

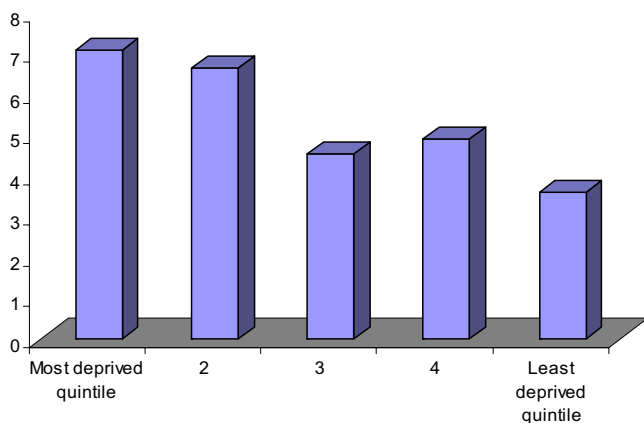


Table 4: Perceptions of how common various types of crime are in respondent's area: percentage of respondents in each SIMD quintile saying each is 'very' or 'fairly' common

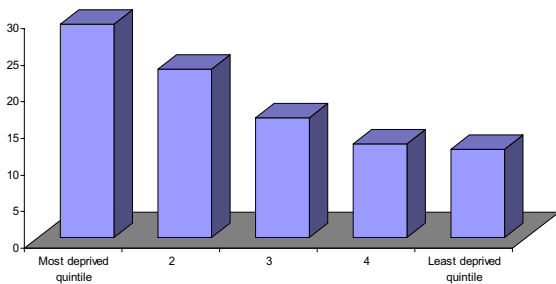
	Most deprived quintile	2	3	4	Least deprived quintileDK	All
Deliberate damage to property or vehicles	59	47	32	27	28	39
People having things stolen from their car or other vehicles	47	34	20	19	22	28
People's homes being broken into	34	29	24	24	24	27
People being attacked or assaulted in the street or other public places	44	38	14	16	11	25
People having their car or other vehicles stolen	36	27	12	15	14	21
People being mugged or robbed	32	24	10	10	8	17
People being physically attacked because of their skin colour, ethnic origin or religion	17	9	3	3	3	7
People being sexually assaulted	8	7	3	4	6	6

Changes in crime over the previous two years.

Respondents who had lived at their current address for two years or more were asked about changes in the crime rate in their area over the previous two years. Almost 40% felt that crime in their area had got worse over the period with 19% saying there was 'a lot more' crime and 21% saying there was 'a little more'. As with their 'perceptions of crime

as a big problem' (Figure 3 above) respondents in the more deprived areas were more likely to say that there had been a lot more crime in their area over the previous years.

Figure 5: Percentage in each SIMD quintile saying there had been 'a lot more' crime in their area over the previous two years.



Related to the level of area deprivation, respondents in social rented housing were more likely to say there had been a lot more crime in there in the previous two years (30%) than those in owner-occupied housing (16%) or private rented housing (14%).

Safety and fear of crime

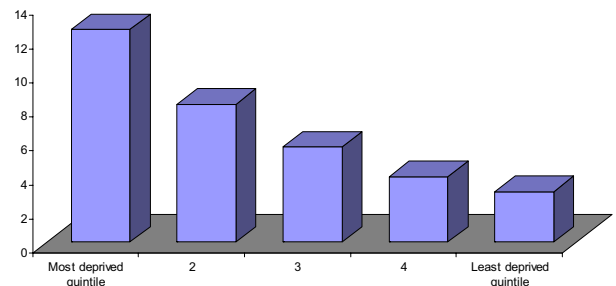
Safety 'when walking alone in this area after dark' strongly related to area deprivation. Compared with 36% of respondents in the least deprived 10% of areas, only 18% of respondents in the most deprived 10% said they felt 'very safe' when walking alone in their local area after dark. Not surprisingly, this is also related to the extent to which respondents felt crime rates had got worse in the previous two years – those who felt crime had got worse, were less likely to feel safe walking alone after dark.

There is a much weaker relationship between area deprivation and respondents' safety when at home alone at night. Respondents in the most deprived areas are less likely to feel very safe than those in the least deprived areas but whereas the percentage of respondents in the most deprived areas feeling very safe when walking alone in the area was half that of the least deprived areas, 60% of respondents in the most deprived areas feel safe when alone at home at night compared with 77% of respondents in the least deprived areas.

These differences are reflected in other related characteristics – respondents in large and other urban areas feel less safe than those in rural and remote rural areas; those in social rented housing feel less safe than those in owner-occupied housing (59% say they feel very safe compared with 70% of owner-occupiers). However, the classification of areas in terms of deprivation remains the strongest predictor of respondents' perceptions of safety.

Respondents' general 'fear of crime' provides a broader measure of the extent to which people are concerned about their own safety and the safety of their property. Overall, only 6% of respondents report being more than 'sometimes' worried about being a victim of crime – worrying 'all the time' or 'most of the time'. This only increased substantially where respondents reported that there had been 'a lot more' crime in their area in the previous two years but even among these respondents only 17% worried more often than 'sometimes'. As with other indicators, there is a fairly consistent relationship with area deprivation, with respondents in the more deprived areas reporting higher levels of anxiety about potentially being a victim of crime than those in less deprived areas, reflecting the higher levels of personal crime recorded in the more deprived areas .

Figure 6: Fear of crime – percentage worrying about being a victim of crime 'all the time' or 'most of the time' by SIMD quintiles



Anti-social behaviour

Like perceptions of the frequency of crime, perceptions of anti-social behaviour vary significantly between the most and least deprived areas, with residents in the more deprived areas consistently more likely to report being affected by each type of ASB. The only exception to this in the reported prevalence of speeding traffic, where all areas types were equally likely to say they are affected.

Although discriminatory attacks and harassment were the least common type of anti-social behaviour in all areas, residents of the most deprived areas were three times more likely to say that they are affected by people being attacked or harassed because of their skin colour, ethnic origin, or religion.

Respondents in the most deprived areas were twice as likely as those in the least deprived areas to say that they were affected by drug related ASB such as people dealing in or using drugs.

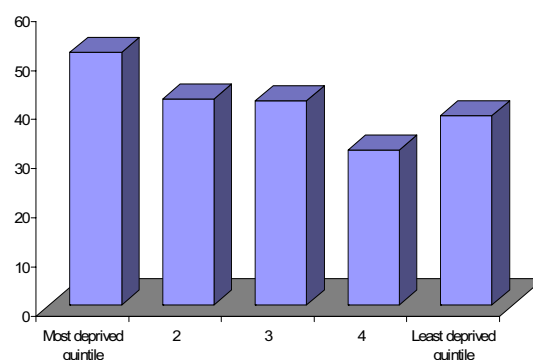
Table 5: Perceptions of anti-social behaviour: percentage of households in each SIMD quintile saying each has 'some effect' or a 'big effect' on their quality of life

	Most	2	3	4	Least	All
Speeding traffic	53	54	57	58	53	55
Rubbish, litter or dog mess lying around	62	54	50	52	50	54
Teenagers hanging around on the streets	60	51	39	42	43	47
People being drunk or rowdy in public places	55	51	42	40	42	46
Vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property or vehicles	53	45	35	33	34	40
People using or dealing drugs	50	42	30	28	22	34
People being insulted, pestered or intimidated in the street	37	39	22	21	24	29
Noisy neighbours or loud parties	34	27	26	16	24	25
Conflicts or disputes between neighbours	31	27	17	12	22	22
Abandoned or burnt out cars	22	18	13	15	13	16
People being attacked or harassed because of their skin colour, ethnic origin, or religion	21	16	9	14	7	13

Change in ASB over previous two years

In many areas there is a perception that problems of anti-social behaviour are becoming worse. Although common across all areas, this perception is more common in areas more likely to experience ASB – the most deprived areas.

Figure 7: Change in 'problems in this area' over the previous two years: percentage saying 'got a lot worse' or 'got a little worse'



Home security and insurance

Almost all households take basic security measures against burglary, with deadlocks and double locking doors and window locks being the most common. However, over a quarter of households do not take these measures. More advanced measures such as burglar alarms are very rare, with a quarter of households having a burglar alarm, 17% having security marked their valuables and just 2% using CCTV.

Table 6: Percentage of households with various security measures

Measure	%
Doors with double locks or deadlocks	72
Security locks (with keys) on windows	64
Security chains or bolts on doors	37
Peep hole on front door	29
Burglar alarm	24
Security marking or labelling of valuable possessions	17
Entry phone	16
Dog/ guard dog	6
Lights on timer or sensor switch	5
Others	3
Security/ camera/ CCTV	2
Security door	0
Lockable gates to protect garden	0
Fitted bars or grilles to windows	0
Double glazed windows	0
Fencing to protect garden	0

There is no link between whether or not respondents reported being affected by 'fear of crime' and the presence or absence of home security measures. Fear of crime appears to be primarily related to concerns about personal safety rather than the security of property. Among those reporting high fear of crime (giving a score of 7 or more to the impact of fear of crime on their quality of life), about 50% said they never go out in their area after dark compared with 26% overall.

Households that had ever been burgled (23%) have more security measures; in particular they are more likely to have

a burglar alarm, lights on a timer or sensor switch, double locks or deadlocks. Among households that had ever been broken into, 82% had taken two or more of the measures listed above whereas this proportion was 72% for households that had never been broken into.

Households with no home contents insurance (16% of all households) are twice as likely to have taken **none** of the security measures listed in Table 6 – 13% compared with only 6% of households with contents insurance.

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