



The Scottish
Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

Public perceptions of organised crime in Scotland

Crime and Justice



social
research

PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF ORGANISED CRIME IN SCOTLAND

Ipsos MORI Scotland

Scottish Government Social Research
2013

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 To help explore public perceptions of organised crime in Scotland, the Scottish Government commissioned a module of questions in the spring wave of the Ipsos MORI Scottish Public Opinion Monitor, a quarterly telephone survey carried out among a representative sample of c.1,000 adults (18+) in Scotland.
- 1.2 The Scottish Public Opinion Monitor is a multi-client survey carried out by telephone among a random sample of adults across Scotland every quarter. Respondents are selected using random digit dialling and, to ensure the achieved sample is broadly representative of the Scottish adult population (18+), sample quotas are set on age, sex and working status and region. All interviews are conducted using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI).
- 1.3 For this wave, a total of 1,001 respondents across Scotland were interviewed between 29th April and 5th May 2013.
- 1.4 The data are weighted to match the known profile of the Scottish population by age, sex and working status using census data; tenure using Scottish Household Survey data; and public-private sector employment using Scottish Government Quarterly public sector employment series data.
- 1.5 Table 1.6 shows both the weighted and unweighted profile by age, sex and working status in the achieved sample.

Table 1: Sample profile – age, sex and working status

Sample characteristic	SPOM unweighted profile	SPOM weighted profile
	%	%
<i>Age</i>		
18-24	10	12
25-34	17	16
35-54	35	35
55+	38	36
<i>Sex</i>		
Male	44	48
Female	56	52
<i>Working status</i>		
Working full time	44	41
Not working full time	56	59

Reporting and interpretation

- 1.6 For the purposes of analysis, computer tables were prepared and responses to each survey question were analysed against a number of variables, namely:
- sex
 - age (four groups: 18 to 24 years; 25 to 34 years; 35 to 54 years; and 55 years and over)
 - employment status (four groups: working full time; working part-time; not working; and retired)
 - employment sector
 - tenure (three groups: owner occupier; rent from social landlord; and rent from private landlord)
 - children aged under 16 living in the household (two groups: yes and no)
 - Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) quintiles: five point scale ranging from 20% *most* deprived datazones in Scotland to 20% *least* deprived datazones in Scotland
 - urban/rural indicator¹ (two groups: urban and rural)
- 1.7 Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this may be due to computer rounding, the exclusion of 'don't know' categories or multiple answers. Throughout the report, an asterisk (*) denotes any value of less than half of one per cent. Where appropriate, we have commented on statistically significant subgroup differences.

¹ Derived from postcode data using the Scottish Government 6-fold Urban Rural Classification: urban areas include those defined as large urban areas, other urban areas and accessible small towns; rural areas include those defined as remote small towns, accessible rural and remote rural.

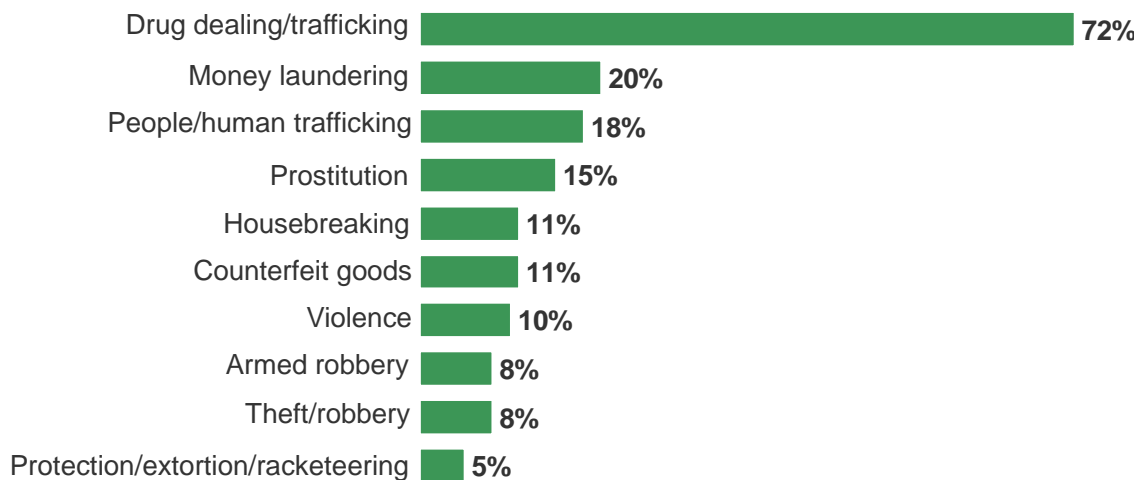
2 MAIN FINDINGS

Awareness of organised crime

When asked what types of illegal activity they typically associate with organised crime, people in Scotland are most likely to cite 'drug dealing/trafficking' (72%), followed by money laundering (20%) and 'people/human trafficking for sexual or labour exploitation'.

Figure 2.1

Q. What types of illegal activity do you associate with organised crime?



Base: All (1,001)
*Top 10 responses

Source: Ipsos MORI

Just 8% of respondents were *unable* to name any type of organised crime activity, with women (10%) and 18-24 year olds (13%) most likely to say 'don't know'. Further, respondents living in the most deprived areas of Scotland were generally more likely than those living in the most affluent areas to be unable to name any type of organised crime activity (12% of those living in the most deprived areas compared to 4% of those living in the most affluent areas).

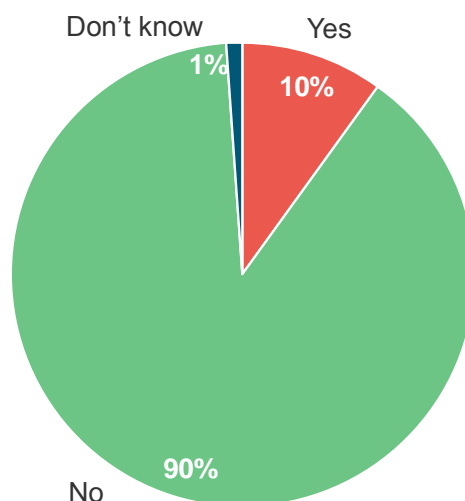
Experience of organised crime

As Figure 2.2 below illustrates, one in ten respondents (10%) say that they have been personally affected by organised crime in the last three years. There are a few significant subgroup differences, however:

- retired people are *least* likely to say they have been affected (5%).
- those who think that organised crime is a problem in their neighbourhood are more likely to say that they have been personally affected (18%) than those who don't think it's a problem (7%).
- similarly, respondents who think that organised crime is a serious problem in Scotland are more likely to say that they have been affected themselves (11%), compared with those who don't see it as a serious national issue (4%).

Figure 2.2

Q. Have you been personally affected by organised crime in the last three years?



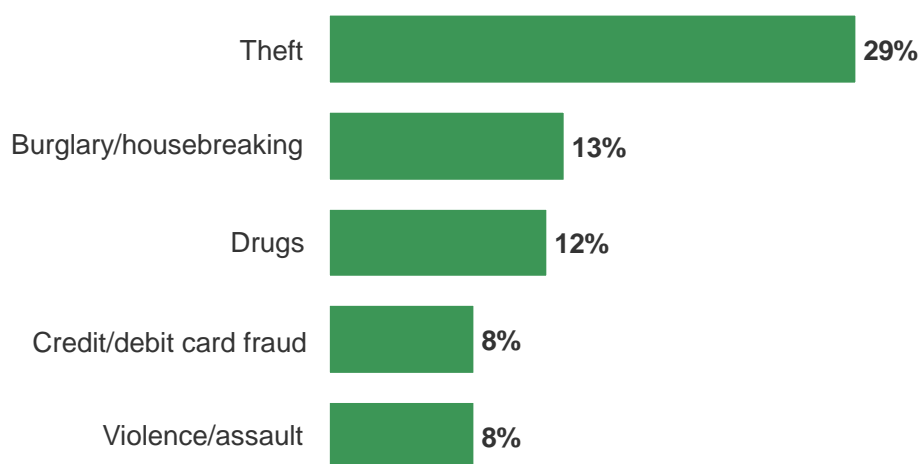
Base: All (1,001)

Source: Ipsos MORI

Figure 2.3 below shows that among those who *have* been personally affected by organised crime in the last three years, respondents are most likely to have experienced a theft (29%).

Figure 2.3

Q. Can you tell me how you have been affected by organised crime in the last three years?



Base: All who have been personally affected by organised crime in the last three years (102)
*Top 5 responses

Source: Ipsos MORI

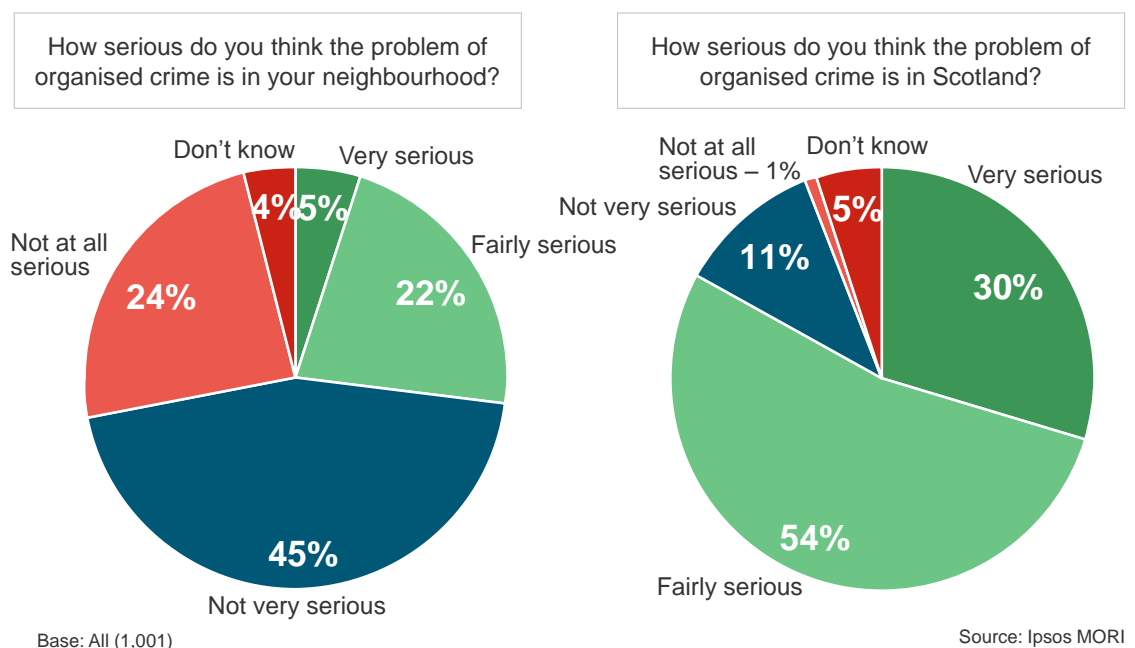
Extent of organised crime

While nearly seven in ten people in Scotland (69%) think that organised crime is *not* a serious problem in their neighbourhood, just over a quarter (27%) perceive it to be a serious issue, with those living in urban (31%) and the most deprived areas (46%) most likely to regard it as a problem.

Although based on a small sample size (98), the data indicates that those who have been personally affected by organised crime in the last three years are more likely to feel that organised crime is a serious problem in their neighbourhood, than those who have not (50% vs. 25%).

Despite not tending to think that it is a problem in their neighbourhood, the majority of Scots (84%) consider organised crime to be a serious issue in Scotland, with women (87%), those aged 55+ (88%) and those living in the most deprived areas (90%) most likely to regard it as a problem. As might be expected, people living in Scotland who have themselves been personally affected by organised crime in the last three years are more likely to regard organised crime as a serious problem in Scotland, than those who have not (93% vs. 83%).

Figure 2.4 Extent of organised crime

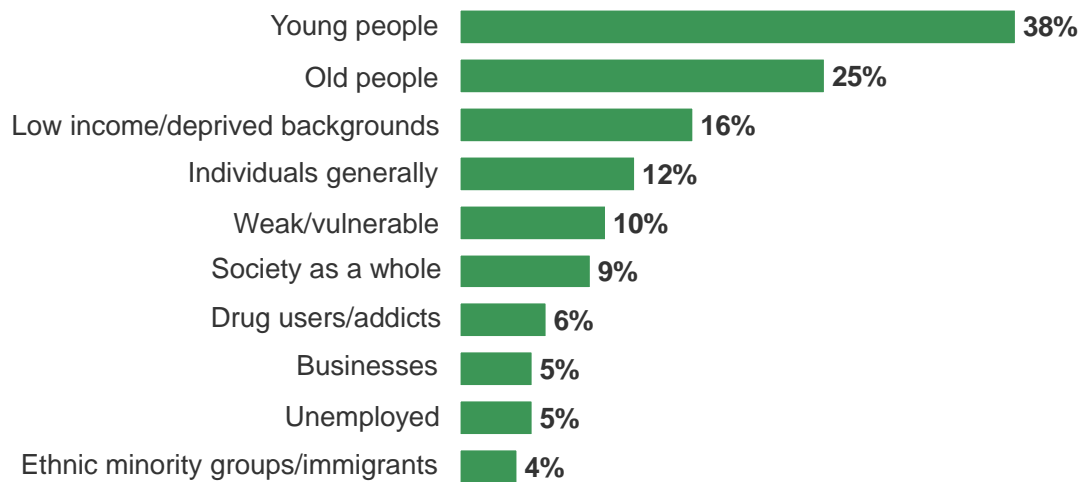


Who is most affected?

As figure 2.5 below illustrates, people in Scotland believe that young people (38%), older people (25%) and those on low income/from deprived backgrounds (16%) are most likely to be affected by organised crime in Scotland. Those aged 18-24 are particularly likely to think that young people (51%) and older people (41%) are most affected by organised crime.

Figure 2.5

Q. Which groups or individuals do you think are most affected by organised crime in Scotland?



Base: All (1,001)
*Top 10 responses

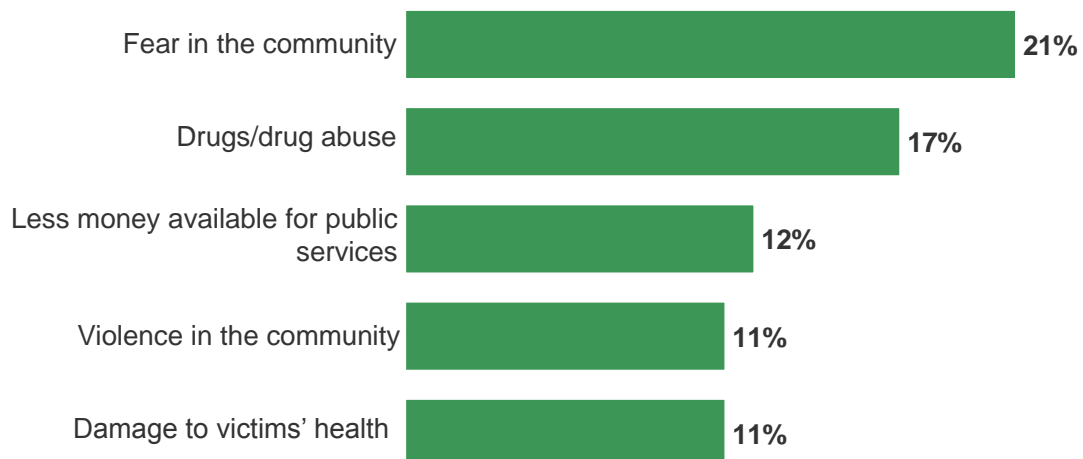
Source: Ipsos MORI

The impact of organised crime

Figure 2.6 below illustrates that people living in Scotland believe the main impacts of organised crime in Scotland to be 'fear in the community' (21%), 'drugs/drug abuse' (17%) and 'less money being available for public services' (12%). Men were particularly likely to cite drugs as an impact (20% vs. 14% of women). One in five respondents (21%) were not able to name any impacts of organised crime, with women (25%) and retired people (29%) most likely to be unable to name any impacts.

Figure 2.6

Q. What do you think are the main impacts of organised crime in Scotland?



Base: All (1,001)
*Top 5 responses

Source: Ipsos MORI

Who is responsible for tackling organised crime?

People living in Scotland are largely in agreement that the police have the main role in tackling organised crime (88%), with the Scottish Government (38%), local communities (19%) and 'everyone' (15%) also thought to have some responsibility. Those living in the least deprived quintile are most likely to cite the police (94%) and Scottish Government (45%) as responsible for tackling organised crime.

As Table 2.1 below shows, those who have been personally affected by organised crime in the last three years are significantly *less* likely to cite the police as having a role in tackling organised crime (77% vs. 88% overall), but are also more likely to say that 'everyone' has a responsibility (24% vs. 15% overall).

Table 2.1 Who do you think has a role in tackling organised crime in Scotland?

		Have you been personally affected by organised crime in the last three years?	
		Yes	No
	Total		
Police	88%	77%	90%*
Scottish Government	38%	40%	38%
Local communities	19%	23%	19%
Everyone	15%	24%*	15%
Councils	11%	7%	11%

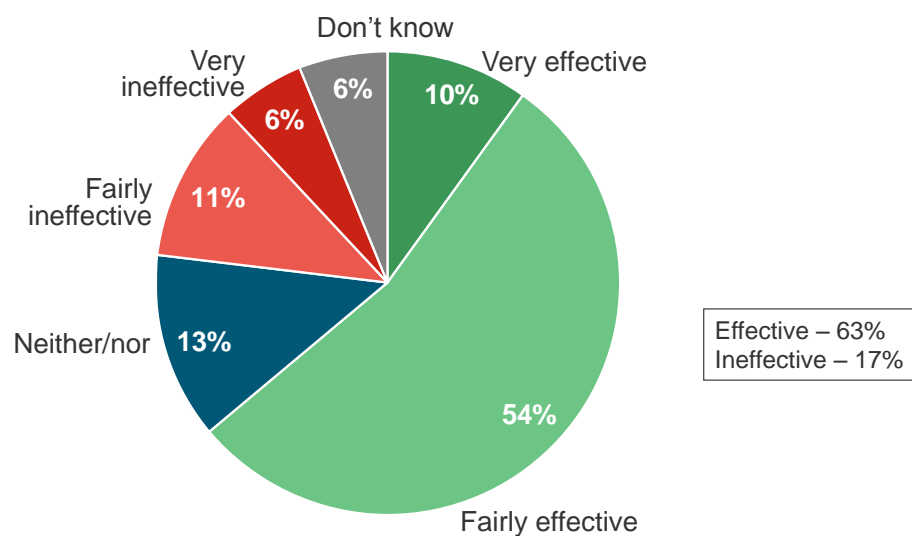
**Statistically significant difference*

How effective are the police?

Nearly two thirds of respondents (63%) think that the police are effective in tackling organised crime, with people aged 55+ (71%) and those living in the least deprived areas (71%) most likely to be positive. Just under one in five (17%) say that the police are ineffective, though this figure rises to 23% among those who say that organised crime is a serious problem in their neighbourhood, perhaps reflecting respondents' frustration about levels of crime and anti-social behaviour where they live.

Figure 2.7

Q. How effective do you think the police are in tackling organised crime?



Base: All (1,001)

Source: Ipsos MORI

Those who report having been personally affected by organised crime in the last three years, and who are therefore perhaps more likely to have been in contact with the police, are significantly *less likely* to say that the police are effective in tackling organised crime (49% vs. 63% overall).

Reporting organised crime

Four in five people living in Scotland (81%) say that they would report someone who they suspected of being involved in organised crime, and this figure rises to 85% among women, 88% among those living in the two least deprived areas and 90% among rural dwellers. Around one in ten (8%) are unsure of what they would do.

Among those who say they would be likely to report it someone they suspected of being involved in organised crime (n=834), the vast majority say they would report it to the police (96%). Far smaller numbers say they would contact their local authority (6%) or Crimestoppers (5%), and other reasons cited were far less common.

Social Research series
ISSN 2045-6964
ISBN 978-1-78256-915-2

web only publication
www.scotland.gov.uk/socialresearch

APS Group Scotland
DPPAS14641 (09/13)

