Public confidence and fear of crime: what we knew (and what we didn’t) pre-RtP

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Impacts of fear of crime and reduced confidence

- **Functional fear**: can encourage vigilance and stimulate precautionary activity.

- **Individual level**: can lead to restrictive, limiting, and negative behaviour changes. Associated with negative mental and physical health.

- **Community level**: can drain shared sense of trust, social cohesion, and neighbourhood stability.

- **Costs**: difficult to estimate, but tangible + intangible × national scale = significant amount.
Fear of crime is felt unevenly: why?

• Certain groups have been identified as being more vulnerable to FOC;
  – women, those living in deprived areas, the elderly, ethnic minorities, and those living with long-term physical and mental health issues.

• Several dimensions thought to explain this;
  – Personal experience of crime
  – Perceived vulnerability
  – Disorder, cohesion and collective efficacy
  – Knowledge of local and national crime trends
  – Contact with the CJS
Crime rates in Scotland
Crime rates in Scotland

• Crime types:
  – all crimes’, ‘property crime’ and ‘violent crime’, all show reductions since 2008/09.

• Crime locations:
  – 23 of the 32 local authority areas are showing decreases in recorded crime.

• Police clear-up rates:
  – the clear-up rates was the highest since 1976.

• Overall risk of victimisation:
  – the risk of being a victim of crime has fallen from 20.4% in 2008/09 to 16.9% in 2012/13 (14.8% risk of being a victim of property crime and 3.1% of being victim of violent crime).
Crime rates in Scotland

- **Risk of crime by personal, household and area characteristics;**
  - *Males age 16-24* had the highest risk of being a victim of any crime.
  - The risk of becoming the victim of any crime was higher for those adults living in the *15% most deprived* areas of Scotland.
  - 4% of adults were *repeat victims* of property crime and 1% of adults were repeat victims of violent crime.

- **Experiences of anti-social behaviour (physical and social)**
  - All forms of ASB are experienced more by those living in deprived areas compared to the rest of Scotland.
  - ‘*Social rented*’ experience more ASB than ‘*owner occupied*’, ‘*private rented*’ or ‘*other*’.
  - ‘*Rural areas*’ experience less than the national average for all forms of ASB, and urban areas experience more than the national average.
Perceptions of crime

- **Perceived local crime rates**: People believe the crime rate in their local area to be failing, but fewer people believed the national crime rate decreased.

- **Perceived crime types**: People perceive most particular crime types to be less common or remaining the same in their local area than in the past.

- **Actual risk vs. perceived risk**: People’s perceived risk of being a victim of crime remains overinflated at around two to three times higher than the actual risk for most crimes.

- **Confidence in the police**: Overall confidence in the local police appears to be high and has improved across all major measures. However, the views of those in the 15% most deprived areas appear to be more negative regarding the police’s ability to do their work in all measures.
Perceptions of crime

• ‘Walking home alone after dark’:
  – Question commonly posed in surveys to judge fear of crime and public confidence
  – The majority of adults (72%) said that they felt very or fairly safe walking alone in their local area after dark, while 27% of adults said they felt very or a bit unsafe.
  – Females were far more likely than males to report feeling unsafe (38% of females compared with 15% males).
  – People living in the 15% most deprived areas, people who rating their neighbourhood as poor place to live, and those with long-standing health conditions were also more likely to report feeling unsafe walking alone at night.
Gaps identified – going forward

• Lack of Scottish based research in general
• Additional analysis of what we did have
• The need for more diverse methodologies
• Inclusion of the voices of young people
• New directions for research to be explored
• How to communicate with the public