

**Standard Report  
on  
Methods and Quality  
for  
Crime & Victimisation Module**

This documentation applies to the reporting period:  
2015

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# 1. Overview

The Crime & Victimization (C&V) survey is carried out to gather information on the levels of personal and household crime in the population and the attitudes and opinions of individuals to crime and to the Irish justice system.

The survey was first undertaken in 1998 and is conducted as a module of the Quarterly National Household Survey (QNHS). Incidents of crime that occurred in the previous 12 months are included in the survey. This survey is one of a number produced by the crime and justice section that are designed to provide an insight into crime and justice in Ireland. This is the only release produced by the section, thus far, that is not compiled using administrative data.

This and other surveys produced by the crime and justice section are designed to provide policymakers in the Department of Justice and Equality, An Garda Síochána and other semi-states with the data necessary to facilitate evidence based policy decision making.

## 2. General information

### 2.1 Statistical Category

Primary Statistical Survey

### 2.2 Area of Activity

Crime & Justice Statistics

### 2.3 Organisational Unit Responsible, Persons to Contact

The Crime and Victimization survey falls under the remit of the Social and Demographic Statistics Directorate, headed by Richard McMahon, Assistant Director General. Paul M. Crowley is the Senior Statistician with responsibility for Social Analysis

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### 2.4 Objectives and purpose; history

The C&V module was introduced to provide detailed official information on the incidence of crime and victimisation in the population and the attitudes and opinions of the population on the Irish justice system. Crime and victimisation surveys based on the perspective of the victim are commonplace in countries with established statistical systems.

The questionnaire for each edition of the survey was designed following consultation with an advisory group whose membership was drawn from key stakeholders in the area. It has remained broadly similar to ensure that comparison of trends over time is possible. Some modifications have been made to minimise the response burden and to incorporate changes in the broader environment.

### 2.5 Periodicity

The C&V survey was first carried out in 1998. It was repeated in 2003, 2006, 2010 and 2015. The survey is conducted as a module of the QNHS. The household survey unit is undergoing redevelopment at present. No decision will be taken on the timing of the next edition of the survey until the redevelopment process is complete. This decision will take into consideration any additional data requirements that may arise in the interim.

## **2.6 Client**

The survey is conducted to meet National requirements. There is currently no Eurostat regulation on crime and victimisation.

## **2.7 Users**

- Department of Justice and Equality
- An Garda Síochána
- Semi-state agencies in the area of justice
- Economists
- Research institutions
- Individual researchers
- The public

## **2.8 Legal basis**

Participation in the survey is voluntary for respondents thus there is no legal requirement to participate.

# **3. Statistical concepts, methods**

## **3.1 Subject of the statistics**

The subject of the statistics is the crime and victimisation experiences of the public, their perceptions of crime in their area and their opinions of the justice system. Respondents are asked if they were the victims of crime and if so to provide some details of the crime(s). They are further asked to express their opinions on crime in their area, the effect this has on their lives and their level of confidence in An Garda Síochána and the criminal justice system.

## **3.2 Units of observation/collection units/units of presentation**

The survey population is individuals aged over 18 living in private households. It excludes individuals living in institutions or communal accommodation and persons of no fixed abode. Data is collected at household and individual level.

The main units of presentation are

- Demographic variables such as sex, age, geographic location and nationality
- Crime and reporting variables such as frequency of crime and reporting rates
- Levels of satisfaction ratings

## **3.3 Data sources**

The information is collected from individuals in households. Data collected at household level is obtained from one individual in the household.

### **3.4 Reporting unit/respondents**

All usual residents i.e. persons living regularly at the dwelling in question and sharing the main living accommodation, aged 18 and over are surveyed. Where an individual was not available for interview, in most circumstances information was provided by another member of the household via a proxy interview.

### **3.5 Type of survey/Process**

Sample survey.

### **3.6 Characteristics of the sample/process**

#### **3.6.1 Population and Sampling Frame**

The reference population is all individuals living in private households in Ireland. All usual residents of the household are included. The sampling frame is all private households in Ireland. The population is derived from the results of the 2011 Census.

#### **3.6.2 Sampling Design**

There are three stages to the Crime and Victimization Survey sample selection. As a module of the QNHS the sample is selected by the Household Survey Collection Unit (HSCU).

Stage 1: The sample frame of households is clustered into blocks (small areas) with each block containing 60 occupied households on the night of the 2011 Census of Population. The sample frame is stratified using administrative county and population density. Probability Proportional to Size (PPS) sampling is used to select 1,300 blocks.

Stage 2: Simple Random Sampling (SRS) is used to select 20 households in each block. This ensures that each household in the sample frame has an equal probability of selection. Households are asked to take part in the survey for five consecutive quarters. Households participating in the first of these five quarters are referred to as wave one households, households in their second quarter are referred to as wave two and so on.

Stage 3: Households in waves 2-5 with at least one individual aged 18 or over are asked to participate in the crime and victimisation module. Proxy interviews are allowed.

### **3.7 Survey technique/data transfer**

QNHS interviewers visit selected households and ask residents to voluntarily participate in the QNHS. Residents in waves 2-5 who meet the conditions of the module (over 18 years of age) and are available to complete the module in person are asked to complete the module. Data are collected on encrypted tablets using Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI). The data collected from households is transferred to head office using a secure encrypted data tunnel on a weekly basis.

### **3.8 Questionnaire**

The crime and victimisation survey questionnaire is divided into two sections namely questions asked at individual level and questions asked at household level.

Questions asked at individual level are sub-divided into ones that ask respondents opinions on crime and justice and questions on the crime experiences of the individual. There are six opinion questions and four questions on experience of crime. If a respondent has been a victim of crime they are asked a further series of questions on the crime they suffered.

Questions asked at household level all relate to crime experiences. The respondent who responds on behalf of the household is asked seven questions. If household crime was experienced, a further series of questions on the details of the crime(s) are asked.

Respondents are given a list of possible responses to all questions. The questionnaire can be accessed at the following location

<http://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/qnhs/documents/qnhsspecialmodules/C&VQuestQ32015.pdf>

### **3.9 Participation in the survey**

Participation in the survey is voluntary.

### **3.10 Characteristics of the survey/Process and its results**

Respondents to the survey are asked questions on their experiences and opinions on crime and victimisation after they complete the core questions on the Quarterly National Household Survey (QNHS). Data are collected at individual and household level. The offences covered and the details asked are in line with the International Crime Victims Survey, a large scale international survey project about crime and victimization.

The survey does not include questions on sexual assaults or domestic violence, as these questions were considered too sensitive and personal for inclusion in a general household survey such as the QNHS.

The following tables are reported on in the publication:

- Households classified by whether they experienced crime 1998, 2003, 2006, 2010, 2015
- Households who experienced crime classified by region, location, level of affluence/deprivation 2015
- Percentage of households who were victims of crime and reported the incident to the Gardaí 2003, 2006, 2010, 2015
- Households classified by details of why a crime was not reported to the Gardaí 2015
- Burglaries classified by details of the crime 2003, 2006, 2010, 2015
- All persons aged 18 years and over classified by whether they experienced crime 2003, 2006, 2010, 2015
- All persons aged 18 years and over who experienced crime classified by region, sex, age and nationality 2015
- Percentage of persons aged 18 years and over who were victims of crime and reported the incident to the Gardaí 2003, 2006, 2010, 2015
- All persons aged 18 years and over classified by details of why a crime was not reported to the Gardaí 2015
- Thefts classified by details of the crime 2003, 2006, 2010, 2015
- All persons aged 18 years and over classified by their perception of crime in their local area, broken down region, sex, age and nationality 2015
- All persons aged 18 and over classified by how they are affected by anti-social behaviour, broken down by region, sex, age and nationality 2015
- All persons aged 18 and over classified by whether they worry about becoming the victim of crime, broken down by region, sex, age and nationality 2015
- All persons aged 18 and over classified by how much fear of crime has affected their quality of life, broken down by region, sex, age and nationality, 2015
- All persons aged 18 and over classified by their confidence in the criminal justice system, broken down by region, sex, age and nationality, 2015
- All persons aged 18 and over classified by how they would rate Gardaí in their local area, broken down by region, sex, age and nationality, 2015

### **3.11 Classifications used**

The classifications used can be divided into:

- Individual level classifications – Age, sex, region, nationality
- Household level classifications – No of persons in the household, levels of deprivation

### **3.12 Regional breakdown of results**

A breakdown comparing at NUTS3 level is available for both household and individual data.

## **4. Production of the statistics, Data processing, Quality Assurance**

### **4.1 Data capture**

Data are collected in the field by a team of interviewers on encrypted tablets (CAPI). A BLAISE application is used to collect the data. The data are then transmitted to CSO HQ.

### **4.2 Coding**

The majority of coding is undertaken in the field. Supplementary coding is done by the Statistician using SAS.

### **4.3 Data Editing**

The datasets relating to the module are provided by the HSCU. These datasets have been edited in the field by the interviewers where required. Limited editing is necessary as answers to the questions are limited to a predefined list of options. Edits to ensure that responses are consistent are carried out in SAS.

### **4.4 Imputation (for non-response or incomplete datasets)**

No imputation is carried out for individuals who do not agree to complete the module. Limited ad-hoc imputation is carried out in the event that a variable is missing.

### **4.5 Grossing and Weighting**

When the final dataset has been compiled the data are grossed to ensure that the distribution of persons in the sample is aligned to that of the population. Grossing factors are calculated using population estimates broken down by gender, region and age group. The crime and victimisation survey is a sub-sample of the overall QNHS sample so the grossing factors differ from those used in the preparation of the core QNHS. Special grossing factors which exclude proxy respondents were calculated when the results of the opinion questions (Tables 3.1 – 3.6) were compiled. This was done to minimise potential bias in the results.

### **4.6 Computation of Outputs, Estimation Methods Used**

Outputs are compiled by aggregation of grossed data to produce the totals appearing in the release. The aggregations are done by key variables such as gender, age and NUTS3 region. Aggregations by specific crime variables such as frequency of crime, reasons for not reporting a crime are also compiled. The aggregations are calculated using SAS.

### **4.7 Other Quality Assurance Techniques Used**

QNHS data are subject to audit in the field. As part of the training process for QNHS interviewers, a briefing on the Crime and Victimization module is provided at co-ordinator and interviewer training sessions.

## **5. Quality**

### **5.1 Relevance**

This crime and victimisation survey is a source of key crime indicators. It provides a perspective on the experiences and opinions of the general public, including victims, on crime. It is the only survey in the area that is not compiled from administrative sources. The information produced in the survey is used by policymakers to assess the effectiveness of spending decisions and to facilitate evidence based policy making.

### **5.2 Accuracy and Reliability**

#### **5.2.1 Sampling effects, representativeness**

As a sample survey the crime and victimisation survey is subject to sampling error. Precision estimates were not calculated as part of the survey process.

#### **5.2.2 Non Sampling effects**

##### **5.2.2.1 Quality of the data sources used**

Not applicable.

##### **5.2.2.2 Register Coverage**

The sampling frame consists of the stock of private housing at the time of the 2011 census.

##### **5.2.2.3 Non-response (unit and item)**

There were 27783 individuals eligible for inclusion in the survey. Of the individuals that were eligible 21828 responded. This represents a response rate of 79%. Of the 14,119 households selected for the crime and victimisation survey, 13,112 responded. This represents a response rate of 93%. No adjustment for was made for unit non response.

The level of item non response was minimal, no imputation was used.

##### **5.2.2.4 Measurement errors**

Despite the provision of specific training on the module for QNHS supervisors and field staff, there remains some instances where measurement errors may occur during the survey process. The decision to exclude the results of proxy interviews in opinion questions was taken to minimise measurement errors.

Respondent effects arise when the data are not readily available to the respondents. In particular cognisance needs to be taken of the potential for the following issues:



- Respondents can provide incorrect answers. Difficulty in recalling events, tendencies to exaggerate or underplay events, and reluctance to give answers that appear 'socially undesirable' are among the reasons why a respondent may not provide an accurate answer.
- Comprehension errors where the respondent does not readily understand the question or a key concept may also give rise to measurement errors.

#### **5.2.2.5 Processing errors**

The scope for processing errors is limited due to the fact that the values that can be keyed for variables are limited. In addition, a number of edits were included in the BLAISE application to prevent keying errors.

#### **5.2.2.6 Model-related effects**

Not Applicable

### **5.3 Timeliness and punctuality**

#### **5.3.1 Provisional results**

Provisional results are not compiled.

#### **5.3.2 Final results**

Final results were published on October 19<sup>th</sup> t+15 months after the end of the reference period.

### **5.4 Coherence**

Comparisons were made to An Garda Síochána Public Attitudes Survey. It was not possible to make direct comparisons of the victimisation rate as there are differences in the way in which this is analysed between the two surveys. Some comparisons on the opinion questions were possible. These comparisons gave similar levels of satisfaction.

### **5.5. Comparability**

To ensure comparability across different time periods, limited changes are made to the questionnaire. However, it is sometimes necessary to sacrifice some comparability improve the alignment of the survey with the needs of data users and to incorporate changes that have occurred in the subject matter over time.

The International Crime Victims Survey (ICVS) is a large scale international survey project about crime and victimization. The project was set up to fill the gap in adequate recording of offenses by the police for purposes of comparing crime rates in different nations. Although Ireland is not participating in the project, the questionnaire used by Ireland is comparable with the guidelines of the project.

### **5.6 Accessibility and Clarity**

#### **5.6.1 Assistance to Users, Special Analyses**

The Crime and Victimization release is available on the CSO website. The background notes on the publication provide some detail on the survey. Special analyses are accommodated where possible, on request.

Anonymised microdata will be made available to researchers via the Irish Social Science Data Archive in Q4 2016. This data will be accessible by applying directly to ISSDA.

## **5.6.2 Revisions**

The data are not revised.

## **5.6.3 Publications**

### **5.6.3.1 Releases, Regular Publications**

Archived release

<http://www.cso.ie/en/statistics/crimeandjustice/archive/releasearchive2010/>

## **5.6.4 Confidentiality**

The confidentiality of the data provided to the CSO by respondents is guaranteed by law in accordance with the 1993 Statistics Act. The data cannot be accessed under the Freedom of Information Act and is not disclosed to any other Government Department or Agency. All CSO staff including field personnel are designated as “Officers of Statistics” on appointment, thereby making them liable to penalties under the Statistics Act if they divulge confidential information to individuals or bodies. The laptops on which the data were collected are encrypted and password protected. Results are published in a format that is sufficiently aggregated to prevent the identification of individuals. A microdata file will be compiled for researchers but this file will be anonymised as part of the compilation process.