

Creating safer communities

Crime and antisocial behaviour affect us all. Our social research uncovers the issues of greatest public concern, and communicates these to the police and others, helping to create safer, stronger communities.

Overcoming crime and the fear of crime

Crime is an ever-present problem but the fear of crime blights communities. Enabling people of all ages, races and genders to express their concerns about their safety helps communities to work together to combat crime and the causes of crime. This requires criminal justice organisations to consult and understand the public's views. We use a range of research tools to ensure that everyone's voice is heard.



How we can help

- We offer:
- specialist experience of policing and criminal justice and a full range of research techniques to analyse the real issues;
 - evidence-based recommendations to make the criminal justice system more accessible to those who rely on it most.
- Through:
- crime surveys; household, postal, telephone and online surveys; satisfaction surveys of policing and the courts; staff surveys;
 - qualitative consultations, workshops, focus groups, and in-depth interviews, all tailored to clients' requirements.



Improving community safety and reducing fear of crime

For the Metropolitan Police we analysed interviews with Key Individuals within Safer Neighbourhood Wards to identify community concerns and to map local crime and disorder hotspots. We also explored satisfaction with neighbourhood policing, perceptions of crime and anti-social behaviour, concern about security, information provision and community participation. We made recommendations for action by Safer Neighbourhood Policing Teams.

Crime surveys with the public

We have undertaken large-scale surveys of victimisation and its impact, fear of crime, and support and assistance sought from and provided by the police and Victim Support. This includes several waves of the Scottish Crime Survey. Our local crime surveys include Aberdeen, Eastbourne, Eastleigh, Edinburgh, Hambleton, Leith, Norwich, Scarborough, Southampton, Waltham Forest, Wandsworth and Westminster.

Supporting victims of crime

We evaluated a pilot scheme in Scotland to improve support to victims of youth crime and information on young people referred to the Children's Reporter on offence grounds. We interviewed the police, Victim Support Scotland, Scottish Children's Reporters Administration, Authority Reporters, Children Panel Chairs, Youth Justice Social Work Services and victims of youth crime, making recommendations for a national scheme.

We showed how information can promote understanding of the criminal justice system from the victims' perspective and the extent to which it encourages crime reporting and help-seeking behaviour.

Offending and sentencing

Our evaluation of an Experimental Bail Supervision Scheme, designed to offer an alternative to remand, involved complex design and multiple research techniques. We consulted criminal justice agencies and social work departments, analysed bail cases, collated court records, and used qualitative research and analysis to explore case features.



Working with prisoners

We reviewed services targeted at suicide prevention, including support available for prisoners and those held on remand. We interviewed prisoners in depth to explore mental health, practical and emotional support needs; and did focus groups with Samaritan-trained prisoner listeners.

User satisfaction and the criminal justice system

We have surveyed both professional and non-professional court users to measure satisfaction with court services against performance standards. The work has covered all Sheriff Courts and the Supreme Courts in Scotland. We have also measured customer satisfaction amongst solicitors and legal aid users to establish benchmark data for future monitoring purposes.

Policing

For the Home Office we compared the profile of people stopped by the police with the profile of people on the street at the times and places when stops are made.

We identified performance development needs of the police across the UK in relation to their professional interaction with the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender communities through analysis of consultation responses and focus groups with stakeholders.

Following the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, the Metropolitan Police Service asked us to urgently evaluate the effectiveness of police and civilian staff briefings on its implications. Later, we reported on morale and issues of concern to staff to provide a briefing note for the incoming Commissioner.

We have regularly analysed Local Staff Surveys to provide the police service with a corporate overview of staff satisfaction.

