

A Consultation on the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey

September 2021

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1. Introduction

The Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS) is a large-scale social survey which asks people about their experiences and perceptions of crime in Scotland. Over the years, the SCJS has asked over ninety thousand people about their views and experiences of crime and justice in Scotland, it has found a 46% fall in crime between 2008/09 and 2019/20 and improvements in people's feelings of safety. Importantly, it has also identified varying levels of both crime victimisation and feelings of safety amongst different groups in society. As such, the SCJS is a key source of evidence on crime victimisation in Scotland, as well as issues relating to policing and the criminal justice system. It is used extensively by the Scottish Government to inform the design and effective delivery of policy as well as by academic stakeholders and justice organisations.

The Scottish Government commissions the SCJS and the current contract is coming to an end. This means that a re-procurement process is needed. This is a timely opportunity to take stock of the SCJS, what it does well, what it could do better and ultimately, what the future of the survey should look like. It is for this reason that we are reaching out to users of the SCJS and asking you to take part in our formal consultation. We would also like to draw your attention to the user events that will be held in October 2021 as part of this consultation exercise. These events will provide an opportunity to ask questions, raise any suggestions or ideas you may have and engage in informal discussion about the survey. We encourage you to attend one of these events. Please see more details on our Citizen Space webpage: <https://consult.gov.scot/safer-communities/scottish-crime-and-justice-survey/>.

This consultation is the first in a two-stage engagement process. On the basis of findings from the consultation we will organise a number of live workshops. These workshops will be centred on key themes and issues arising from this consultation and are due to take place in January 2022. The goal will be to seek further, detailed insight into areas of user interest to ensure that feedback is specific enough to be operationalised within the re-procurement process. In short, this second stage will aim to streamline the feedback received in the first stage of engagement and determine how to make it workable within existing limitations. We ask that if you are happy to take part in these workshops that you indicate this when asked during the consultation.

Our goal is for the re-procurement process of the SCJS to be transparent and publicised; informed by evidence, including expert opinion and advice; to respond to the needs of users and to align with the priorities of the Scottish Government. By taking part in this consultation and in any ongoing engagement activity you will be playing a key role in helping us reach this goal. Thank you.

The SCJS and the Scottish Government's annual Police Recorded Crime Statistics are each signature products on crime in Scotland and provide complementary measures of crime and victimisation. This consultation focuses upon the SCJS but we would like to take this opportunity to draw attention to the Scottish Government's Crime and Policing Statistics Consultation, due to open in October. This will be made available on Citizen Space, users can be kept informed of any developments relating to the consultation through the ScotStat network.

1.1 Re-Procurement

We would like to briefly explain what we mean by 're-procurement' and the key stages of this process in order to provide further context to this consultation.

The SCJS is currently contracted to Ipsos Mori and ScotGen. This contract will be coming to an end in 2023 and therefore it needs to be 're-procured'. This means the Scottish Government will be advertising the research project, inviting individuals and organisations to bid for the research and ultimately selecting a contractor(s). Prior to advertising the research project, the Scottish Government must critically engage with the survey in its current form, identifying its key strengths, weaknesses and ultimately how it might be adapted to further meet the needs of users. It is for this reason that a large element of the re-procurement process is engagement with users, who are best placed to provide insight into the strengths and weaknesses of the survey. Once procured, the new contract will last in the region of 4-6 years and therefore feedback received within this consultation will have a long-term and significant impact upon the provision of the SCJS.

The re-procurement of the SCJS comes at a significant point in time. The COVID-19 pandemic and associated public health measures have resulted in substantial changes in all aspects of life, no less for the SCJS which is based on face-to-face in-home interviews and as such was suspended from March 2021. The challenges posed by COVID-19 may persist for some time and the re-procurement process must be undertaken with this in mind.

Table 1: Key Stages of Re-Procurement

Stage	Description	Key Dates
Literature Review	Reviewing the criminology literature to locate the SCJS, its key concepts and ideas within the wider discourse on crime and victimisation.	August, September and October 2021.
Review of International Crime Surveys	Reviewing existing, international crime surveys to identify areas of best practice and lessons to be learned.	September, October and November 2021.
Formal Consultation & Live Discussion Events	<p>A formal, written consultation hosted on Citizen Space designed to enable users to provide feedback on the SCJS and how it might be adapted.</p> <p>Live, online discussion events will also be held during the 11 week 'live' period to enable consultees to ask questions and engage in informal discussions about the survey.</p>	<p>Consultation to be 'live' for 11 weeks: September, October and November, 2021.</p> <p>Discussion events will take place in October 2021.</p>
Further User Engagement	Live workshops to discuss the SCJS with users and gain further, specific feedback on general themes raised during the consultation.	Workshops will take place in January 2022.
Writing of Invitation to Tender (ITT)	The ITT is the document that advertises the SCJS and invites bids.	This document will be finalised by March 2022.
Tender	When the ITT is made publicly available and bids are invited.	The tender period is approximately 6 weeks and will begin in March 2022.
Awarding of Contract	After evaluating all the bids the panel awards the contract.	This will likely take place in June 2022.
New Contractor Begins Fieldwork	Having had time to prepare the survey, the contractor will be in the position to begin conducting fieldwork.	Spring 2023.

2. Responding to this Consultation

We are inviting responses to this consultation by **9th December 2021**.

Please respond to this consultation using the Scottish Government's consultation hub, Citizen Space (<http://consult.gov.scot>). Access and respond to this consultation online at <https://consult.gov.scot/safer-communities/scottish-crime-and-justice-survey>. You can save and return to your responses while the consultation is still open. Please ensure that consultation responses are submitted before the closing date of **9th December**.

If you are unable to respond using our consultation hub, please send the Respondent Information Form to: SCJS@gov.scot.

2.1 Handling your Response

If you respond using the consultation hub, you will be directed to the 'About You' page before submitting your response. Please indicate how you wish your response to be handled and, in particular, whether you are content for your response to be published. If you ask for your response not to be published, we will regard it as confidential, and we will treat it accordingly.

All respondents should be aware that the Scottish Government is subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and would therefore have to consider any request made to it under the Act for information relating to responses made to this consultation exercise.

If you are unable to respond via Citizen Space, please complete and return the Respondent Information Form included in this document by email.

To find out how we handle your personal data, please see our privacy policy: <https://www.gov.scot/privacy/>

2.2 Next Steps in the Process

Where respondents have given permission for their response to be made public, and after we have checked that they contain no potentially defamatory material, responses will be made available to the public at <http://consult.gov.scot>. If you use the consultation hub to respond, you will receive a copy of your response via email.

Following the closing date, all responses will be analysed and considered along with any other available evidence to help us. Responses will be published where we have

been given permission to do so. An analysis report will also be made available on Citizen Space.

2.3 Comments and Complaints

If you have any comments about how this consultation exercise has been conducted, please send them to: SCJS@gov.scot

2.4 Scottish Government Consultation Process

Consultation is an essential part of the policymaking process. It gives us the opportunity to consider your opinion and expertise on a proposed area of work.

You can find all our consultations online: <http://consult.gov.scot>. Each consultation details the issues under consideration, as well as a way for you to give us your views, either online, by email or by post.

Responses will be analysed and used as part of the decision making process, along with a range of other available information and evidence. We will publish a report of this analysis. Depending on the nature of the consultation exercise the responses received may:

- indicate the need for policy development or review
- inform the development of a particular policy
- help decisions to be made between alternative policy proposals
- be used to finalise legislation before it is implemented

While details of particular circumstances described in a response to a consultation exercise may usefully inform the policy process, consultation exercises cannot address individual concerns and comments, which should be directed to the relevant public body.

3. Part One: Overview of the Current Scottish Crime and Justice Survey & Past Changes to the Survey

To provide further context to this consultation the following pages contain information on the current Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS), and the history of crime surveying in Scotland. Please also see the 2019/20 [Technical Report](#) and [Questionnaire](#) for further details.

3.1 Overview of Current SCJS

As it stands, the SCJS is a survey of public experiences and perceptions of crime in Scotland. The 2019/20 survey is the ninth year of the SCJS, with the first being conducted in 2008/09. The survey interviews adults aged 16 or over who live at private residential addresses in Scotland.

At present, the survey aims to:

- enable people in Scotland to tell us about their experiences of, and attitudes to, a range of issues related to crime, policing and the justice system, including crime not reported to the police
- provide a valid and reliable measure of adults' experience of crime, including services provided to victims of crime
- examine trends over time in the number and nature of crimes in Scotland, providing a complementary measure of crime compared with police recorded crime statistics
- examine the varying risk and characteristics of crime for different groups of adults in the population

The statistics produced from the SCJS provide a picture of the level of crime in Scotland as SCJS respondents are asked directly about their experience of incidents which have happened to them, irrespective of whether or not they reported them to the police. Therefore, the survey provides a record of peoples' experiences of crime, which is unaffected by variations in reporting behaviour of victims or any changes in crime recording practices by the police. However, the SCJS and police recorded crime statistics should be seen as a complementary series, which together provide a more complete picture of crime than could be obtained from either series alone.

The survey also provides evidence for a number of performance targets for the public sector in Scotland, at a national and a local level, including informing progress against the Scottish Government's [National Performance Framework](#) (NPF)¹.

The survey uses a victim form questionnaire to collect extensive details about the nature of each incident that respondents report, such as when and where it occurred and details about the offender(s) and other relevant information. This allows classification, and hence counts, of crimes in Scotland.

The SCJS collects information on incidents occurring in the previous 12 calendar months before the month in which the interview takes place. This time period is referred to as the survey 'reference period'. The reference period varies depending on the month in which the interview took place, although the reference period covers an equal length of time (12 calendar months) for each respondent.

The SCJS only collects data on incidents occurring in Scotland in the reference period. Incidents which happen abroad are not covered by the survey (termed non-valid incidents). Incidents which happened in England and Wales will be recorded in the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) where householders are resident in either England or Wales. Crimes experienced in England and Wales by people normally resident in Scotland and incidents occurring in Scotland to people who live in England and Wales will not be captured in either the SCJS or CSEW.

Incidents which meet the above criteria and which are identified as crimes within the scope of the survey are used to produce the 'all SCJS crime' statistics which are published in the 2019/20 SCJS Main Findings report.

The survey collects socio-demographic information from respondents which allows a picture to be built up about the nature of crime in Scotland and variation in experiences of victimisation among subgroups of the population. For example, the [2019/20 SCJS](#) found that men were more likely to experience violent crime, as well as people in the 15% most deprived areas of Scotland, and those living in urban locations whilst people aged 60 and over were less likely to be victims of violent crime.

The survey collects information on a number of sensitive issues, including sexual victimisation, stalking and harassment, and partner abuse (collected via the self-completion element of the questionnaire). It also collects attitudinal information on a range of issues related to crime, policing and the justice system.

¹ The framework measures Scotland's progress against the National Outcomes. To do this, it uses 'National Indicators'. The SCJS informs three National Indicators: Crime victimisation, Perceptions of local crime rate and Access to justice.

Further information about what the SCJS covers, how the survey is delivered and who is included can be found in the [2019/20 Main Findings report](#) 'Introduction and Background to the SCJS' chapter.

3.2 Scottish Surveys Core Questions

The [Scottish Surveys Core Questions](#) (SSCQ) is an annual Official Statistics publication. From January 2012 a set of 20 core questions have been asked in the Scottish Household Survey, the Scottish Health Survey and the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey. In addition, where two or more surveys ask questions on the same topic, wording has been harmonised. Results from the three surveys on the core questions are pooled together each year to offer a larger sample size, enabling more precise and granular breakdowns of results for equality groups and at sub-national geographies. It is anticipated that the SCJS's function as one of the three core question surveys will not be affected by the re-procurement process.

3.3 History of Crime Surveys in Scotland

Prior to the 2019/20 survey, there have been 16 previous surveys of victimisation in Scotland, beginning with the 1982 and 1988 years of the British Crime Survey (BCS) coordinated by the Home Office. BCS coverage in Scotland was limited to south of the Caledonian Canal. The first independent Scotland-only survey was commissioned by the Scottish Office in 1993 under the title of the Scottish Crime Survey (SCS) and was followed by repeated surveys in 1996, 2000 and 2003. In 2004, following an external review, the survey underwent both a name change, under the title of the Scottish Crime and Victimisation Survey (SCVS), and a major methodological change, with a move away from in-home face-to-face interviewing to telephone interviewing. However, the 2006 survey returned to face-to-face interviewing after it was shown that the robustness of the data produced by the 2004 telephone survey could not be substantiated. Following the 2006 SCVS, a further review of the crime survey was carried out, which resulted in the new Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS) being launched in April 2008.

The SCJS has retained the same basic design from 2008/09 onwards. However, throughout the SCJS series of surveys, there have been a reduction in sample sizes and some small changes to the sample design in relation to clustering and stratification and the length of the fieldwork period for each survey (summarised in the [Table](#) on page 13). Whilst the fundamental structure of the questionnaire has remained consistent, the survey questionnaire is designed to allow the rotation of questionnaire sections in and out of the survey according to the policy and research requirements of the Scottish Government and stakeholders.

After the 2010/11 survey was completed, the survey moved to a biennial frequency, with the survey conducted in 2012/13 and 2014/15 (but no surveys in 2011/12, 2013/14 or 2015/16). From the 2016/17 survey onwards, the SCJS has returned to a

continuous fieldwork model, but with the achieved sample size reduced to around half that of the 2014/15 survey (11,500 down to sample target of 6,000). This means that some sections of the questionnaire and breakdowns of the data are only available on a biennial basis (e.g. when the 2018/19 and 2019/20 surveys are combined). The 2019/20 survey represents the fourth survey in this continuous series.

3.4 Changes as a Result of COVID -19

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and associated public health measures of social distancing and lockdown, the SCJS was suspended and no 2020/21 survey was produced. Instead, the [Scottish Victimisation Telephone Survey 2020](#) (SVTS) was delivered. This social survey, which was designed to be nationally representative, asked people about their experiences and perceptions of crime, safety, and policing during the COVID-19 pandemic. The results are based on a sample of around 2,700 telephone interviews conducted in September and October 2020. It is important to note, however, that due to a number of methodological differences the findings from the SVTS cannot be compared to SCJS results.

3.5 Plans for 2021/22 Survey

We plan to restart interviews in November 2021 operating a knock-to-nudge approach to begin with and then moving to in-home face-to-face interviewing when it is considered safe to do so. Respondents will be given the option to complete their interview over the phone if they prefer.

Knock-to-nudge involves an interviewer knocking on the door of a randomly selected household and asking the selected adult to take part in an interview over the phone or by video. It does not involve an interviewer entering the respondent's home.

The self-completion section of the SCJS (on drug use, partner abuse, sexual victimisation, and stalking and harassment) is usually completed by the respondent confidentially using the interviewer's laptop. This will remain the case for face-to-face interviews², however we plan to introduce the option to complete this section through a web-based survey when the respondent has completed the main survey over the phone.

This should allow us to produce a final year of data under our existing contractual obligations, using a flexible survey design which can be amended as required should social-distancing restrictions return in future.

Conducting a mixed-mode SCJS provides an opportunity to learn about how survey modes work together and compare. However, whilst mitigating actions will be taken wherever possible, there are a number of risks associated with telephone interviewing, in particular. For example, there can be greater bias in those who

² This will be done in a covid-secure way i.e. the laptop will be wiped down before and after use by the respondent.

choose to take part by telephone and response rates are known to be significantly lower than with in-person interviewing. Therefore, although a central aim, it may not be possible to compare 2021/22 results to the SCJS time series.

Results of the 2021/22 survey are expected to be published in mid-2023. For more information on the 2021/2022 survey, please visit the [SCJS webpage](#).

Table 2: Summary of Methodology Changes since 2008/2009 SCJS

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11 ⁵	2012/13	2014/15	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Survey company	TNS-BMRB ⁶	TNS-BMRB	TNS-BMRB	TNS-BMRB	TNS-BMRB	Ipsos MORI & ScotCen	Ipsos MORI & ScotCen	Ipsos MORI & ScotCen	Ipsos MORI & ScotCen
Core achieved sample	16,003	16,036	13,010	12,045	11,472	5,567	5,475	5,537	5,568
Response rate	70.9%	70%	67%	67.7%	63.8%	63.2%	62.4%	63.4%	63.4%
Sample frame	Royal Mail PAF ¹	Royal Mail PAF	Royal Mail PAF	Royal Mail PAF	Royal Mail PAF	Royal Mail PAF	Royal Mail PAF	Royal Mail PAF	Royal Mail PAF
Survey weights	Incident, Indiv, Hhold	Incident, Indiv, Hhold	Incident, Indiv, Hhold	Incident, Indiv, Hhold	Incident, Indiv, Hhold	Incident, Indiv, Hhold	Incident, Indiv, Hhold	Incident, Indiv, Hhold	Incident, Indiv, Hhold
Self-completion	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓*		✓*	
Reference period ²	12 months	12 months	12 months	12 months	12 months	12 months	12 months	12 months	12 months
CAPI ³	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
No of victim forms	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Cap on series of incidents	✓(5+)	✓(5+)	✓(5+)	✓(5+)	✓(5+)	✓(5+)	✓(5+)	✓(5+)	✓(5+)
Sample type	Stratified sample design, rural areas clustered			Single stage unclustered stratified sample design					
Design factor	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.3	1.2	1.34	1.22	1.17	1.21
Geographical coverage	Scotland (excluding smaller Island Communities)					Sampling frame includes all Islands			
Police Force Area (PFA)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Police Division (PD) ⁴					✓	✓*		✓*	
Community Criminal Justice Areas (CCJA)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X

1. PAF – Postal Address File

2. The SCJS only counts data on incidents occurring in Scotland and in the reference period for crime statistics

3. CAPI stays for 'Computer-assisted personal interviewing'

4. Police Division were introduced 1 April 2013; estimates can be derived for pre-2013 data. PFA results can still be derived by aggregating divisions in the underlying dataset

5. There were no surveys conducted in 2011/12, 2013/14, or 2015/16

6. TNS-BMRB is now Kantar Public UK

* Note that data from the self-completion modules and data by Police Division (PD) is reported on biennially

4. Part Two: Themes for Feedback

This consultation aims to collect views on the SCJS, its strengths, weaknesses and the manner in which it might be adapted through the re-procurement process. The following paragraphs outline the features of the survey that we are particularly interested in seeking feedback on. This section will be relevant when answering Question 8 in the consultation, however, views on how the survey should be adapted need not be limited to these specific features. To note, SCJS questionnaire development is ongoing and runs throughout the lifetime of the contract.

4.1 Survey Aims

We are seeking views and comments on the key aims of the SCJS, see Section 3.1 for current aims. Specifically, how these aims might be adapted, extended or new aims added in order to better align with the needs of users.

4.2 Function as a Crime Survey

Notwithstanding the above statement, the SCJS must retain its function as a crime survey and specifically its function of providing data that complements the Police Recorded Crime statistics and evidences three of Scotland's National Indicators, *perceptions of crime in the local area*, *crime victimisation* and *access to justice*. These are essential indicators that are not evidenced by other surveys or data. We are interested to learn more about how the survey might better complement the Police Recorded Crime Statistics and evidence these National Indicators.

4.3 Sample & Frequency

The current SCJS is designed to be nationally representative. It has an achieved sample of approximately 6,000 adults (aged over 16) living in private residences in Scotland. This includes rented and social housing. As it stands, the SCJS is an annual survey. We are interested in views and comments on these aspects of the survey's design.

4.4 New Question Topics

We welcome ideas for new question topics. It should be noted that the current interview length for the SCJS is approximately 40 minutes. This is unlikely to increase significantly as we must ensure that survey respondents are not over-burdened. Therefore, the addition of new questions will almost certainly necessitate the removal or rotating out of some existing questions.

4.5 Definition of 'SCJS Crime'

As discussed in the [2019/20 Technical Report](#), overall crime measured by the SCJS, referred to in reports as 'all SCJS crime', is a product of two distinct groups being combined: violent and property crime:

Violent crime includes the following distinct groups:

- Assault (includes serious assault, minor assault with injury, minor assault with no or negligible injury, and attempted assault)
- Robbery

Property crime includes the following distinct groups:

- Housebreaking
- Personal theft (excluding robbery)
- Other household theft (including bicycle theft)
- All motor vehicle related theft (including theft and attempted theft of and from a vehicle)
- Vandalism (including motor vehicle and property vandalism)

Cyber-crime and crimes mentioned within the self-completion sections are not included within 'all SCJS crime'. The self-completion section covers stalking, harassment, partner abuse (including both psychological and physical abuse by a partner) and sexual victimisation. Details of these are not included within 'all SCJS crime' statistics unless the incident is also mentioned by respondents in the victim form and assigned an offence code in the normal way. Incidents reported in the self-completion questionnaire only, could not be assigned offence codes in the same way as those collected in the victim form as only a limited number of follow-up questions were asked about incidents (reflecting an ethical decision based on potential respondent distress at having to disclose detailed information on very sensitive incidents).

We welcome comments on this definition of 'all SCJS Crime'.

4.6 Comparisons with Crime Survey for England and Wales

As discussed in detail in the [SCJS 2019/20 Technical Report](#), there are a small number of ways in which the SCJS and the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) differ. For example, the coding of crimes differs which reflects the different criminal justice systems in which they operate. That said, the SCJS and CSEW are deemed to be similar enough that their results on the overall victimisation rate are broadly comparable.

We welcome views and comments on the comparisons made between the SCJS and CSEW.

4.7 SCJS & Further Research

We are aware that a number of individuals and organisations use the SCJS data as a starting point for further quantitative and qualitative research. We are interested in learning more about this. We are particularly interested in hearing about any specific research projects, or general research areas, for which you would like to use the SCJS data as a starting point. Furthermore, if there are any barriers to you doing so?

Or, in other words, if any aspects of the SCJS might be adapted to better enable you to undertake further research in your area.

4.8 Future Proofing

As explained in Section 3.4, the SCJS was suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, the 2021/2022 survey plans to adopt mixed-mode methods to align with ongoing public health measures. In light of the pandemic, and the resulting significant impact on the survey, we are keenly aware of the need to ‘future proof’ the SCJS. We welcome views and comments on how this might be achieved.

5. Respondent Information Form

Please Note this form **must** be completed and returned with your response. If completing the consultation using Citizen Space, you will be asked to provide this information at the end of the consultation and therefore do not need to complete this form.

To find out how we handle your personal data, please see our privacy policy:

<https://www.gov.scot/privacy/>

Are you responding as an individual or an organisation?

Individual

Organisation

Full name or organisation's name

Phone number

Address

Postcode

Email

The Scottish Government would like your permission to publish your consultation response. Please indicate your publishing preference:

Information for organisations:

The option 'Publish response only (without name)' is available for individual respondents only. If this option is selected, the organisation name will still be published.

If you choose the option 'Do not publish response', your organisation name may still be listed as having responded to the consultation in, for example, the analysis report.

- Publish response with name
- Publish response only (without name)
- Do not publish response

We will share your response internally with other Scottish Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for Scottish Government to contact you again in relation to this consultation exercise?

- Yes
- No



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