



Meeting	Policing Performance Committee
Date	19 March 2025
Location	Video Conference
Title of Paper	Public Polling Insights
Presented By	Martin Smith, Strategy and Research Lead, SPA
Recommendation to Members	For Discussion
Appendix Attached	Yes: Appendix 1 – Public Perceptions of Policing in Scotland (January 2025) Appendix 2 – Future plans relating to polling

PURPOSE

This paper provides the Committee with information relating to polling conducted in January 2025 and future plans relating to polling.

Members are invited to discuss the content of this report.

1. Background and Context

- 1.1 In 2022 the Authority commissioned the Diffley Partnership to carry out public polling on a six-monthly basis, aligned to the Authority's mission of overseeing Scottish policing in the public interest.
- 1.2 The polling exercises undertaken by the Diffley Partnership use the established *ScotPulse* national polling panel to gather independent, non-self-selecting and representative data for the Scottish adult population. Core questions relating to public confidence and trust in the police are asked every six months, with additional supplementary questions being asked to address topical policing issues of public interest.
- 1.3 The approach being taken to establish the public's views on policing in Scotland contributes to the Authority's vision of evidence-based policing in the public interest, by providing a large sample which is as representative as possible of the diverse profile of the Scottish population.
- 1.4 This paper summarises:
 - (1) Public Polling Results from January 2025 – the last sweep of regular six-monthly polling work as per the current contract with the Diffley Partnership, and including thematic questions relating to biometrics in policing, awareness of local police plans, and awareness of the role of the Scottish Police Authority.
 - (2) Future plans relating to polling, with a specific proposal to (a) increase the frequency of polling, (b) formalise the mechanisms through which stakeholders can input to suggestions around topical polling (c) make greater use of the Authority's website to disseminate polling data and insights and (d) simplify the core routine polling questions based on an analysis of results from six sweeps of polling between 2022-2025.

The detailed reports for each of these pieces of work can be found in the appendices to this paper, which contain data, insights and conclusions.

2. Public Perceptions of Policing in Scotland (January 2025)

- 2.1 This report (**Appendix 1**) provides the Authority with the results of public polling carried out in January 2025 as part of the routine six-monthly polling series. The report also contains key insights and compares the latest polling results with previous waves of polling. This is the final sweep of polling under the existing contract with the Diffley Partnership.
- 2.2 In addition to the three core questions on trust, confidence and policing performance, the January polling features questions on biometrics and policing, awareness of local police plans and local scrutiny arrangements, and awareness of the role of the Scottish Police Authority.
- 2.3 The polling activity ran between 29th and 31st January, with 2,583 people completing the survey via the *ScotPulse* platform.
- 2.4 The following key findings are expanded upon within the main report (see Appendix 1):

Trust, Confidence and Police Performance

- 2.5 Levels of confidence and trust in policing fell very slightly in January 2025 compared with August 2024, however the main demographic patterns that have been evident for some time remain in place, for example, women having more confidence and trust in policing than men.
- 2.6 Overall confidence in the police remains strong, with 77% of people having high or medium confidence in the police in Scotland (16% having low confidence and 7% saying that they 'don't know'). Confidence remains strongest regarding keeping areas safe and tackling crime.
- 2.7 Trust in the police also remains strong, with 72% of people having high or medium trust in the police in Scotland (21% saying 'low' and 7% saying 'don't know').
- 2.8 Regarding police performance, 66% of people rate the police as doing a good job (or at least *not* a poor job), with 8% of people saying 'don't know'. Police performance is rated more positively in terms of keeping communities safe and tackling crime. Exceptionally, people are more likely to regard police performance

as being poor, rather than good, as far as tackling antisocial behaviour and bringing communities closer together is concerned.

Biometrics and Policing

- 2.9 The polling in January 2025 asked a series of questions relating to the use of biometrics in policing and forensics contexts. The question set was developed through engagement with the Biometrics Commissioner to deliver a set of questions that would generate value for both the Commissioner and the policing system itself (the Authority and Forensic Services, and Police Scotland).
- 2.10 Whilst the report at Appendix 1 contains more detailed findings, the following points summarise the main findings:
- The public's understanding of the rationale for retaining fingerprints, DNA and photographs of people who have been arrested in Scotland is high, with 92% of people saying that they understand the reasons.
 - The public also overwhelmingly thinks that retaining fingerprints, DNA samples and photographs of people arrested by the police helps to solve crime, with 92% of people giving this view.
 - Additionally the public overwhelmingly thinks that collecting forensic evidence at crime scenes (fingerprints and DNA) helps the police to solve crimes, with 95% of people expressing this position.
 - The public also believe that there is a strong case for retaining the fingerprints, photographs or DNA of people convicted of a crime in Scotland, with 64% of people saying such material should be kept forever, and 14% saying more than 30 years but not forever. 9% of people said that the material should not be kept for more than 15 years or not retained at all. 6% of people said that they did not know.
 - There is also strong support among the public for the police taking the fingerprints, photographs and DNA from children and young people under 16 years of age where they have been arrested in Scotland (73% agree with this position).

- Public support is also strong for the use of technology by the police to help recognise the faces of people in public places to help identify persons who may be wanted by the police (72% of people agree with this). Women are more likely than men to support this technology (77% versus 67%).

Awareness of National and Local Policing Oversight

2.11 The public were also questioned about their awareness of local police plans, local police scrutiny arrangements, and awareness of the role of the Scottish Police Authority. The main findings are set out below.

- Only 2% of people say that they are aware that there is a local police plan covering their local area and have also seen a copy of it. A further 15% of people say that they are aware that there is a local police plan, but have not seen it. Awareness is greater among men than women (20% versus 14%). The majority of people (65%) say that they were not aware of local police plans but found the concept to be of interest to them.
- There is a higher level awareness of how local elected members monitor police performance in local areas. 32% of people say they are aware that this happens. Once again, awareness is greater among men than women (38% versus 27%). 50% of people, however, say that they were not aware that this happens, but would be interested to know more.
- Awareness of the Scottish Police Authority is comparatively high, with 54% of people saying that they have heard of the Scottish Police Authority, including 11% of people who say that they have an understanding of the Authority's work. Once again, men are more likely to have awareness than women, however the largest variation relates to age, with 71% of people aged 65+ having awareness compared with 42% of people aged 16-24 years. Overall, 30% of people say that they have not heard of the Scottish Police Authority but would be interested to know more.

3. Future Plans Relating to Polling

- 3.1. This short paper (**Appendix 2**) outlines some of key considerations that Authority staff will be pursuing as part of informing the procurement exercise to supply future public polling to the Authority. Members of the Committee are invited to reflect on the proposals.
- 3.2. The key considerations and proposals follow from a review of polling activity undertaken between 2022-2025 via the Diffley Partnership and the *ScotPulse* survey, where more than 15,000 people have responded to surveys over the course of six sweeps of polling.
- 3.3. The review by Authority staff explored:
 - (a) The relative value of the core questions on confidence, trust and police performance;
 - (b) The frequency of polling and, linked to this, its responsiveness to public interest issues and topics;
 - (c) The pace at which the pooled sample builds up to a sufficiently large size to permit 'deeper dives' into sub-sections of the population;
 - (d) Opportunities for wider engagement across the policing system to identify topical interest areas for questions; and
 - (e) How the Authority disseminates polling data and insights.
- 3.4. The short paper in Appendix 2 sets out Authority staff's intended direction of travel with respect to each of these considerations.

4. Next Steps

- 4.1 It is anticipated that the Authority will have a new contract in place with a supplier by the summer of 2025, enabling continuity with the existing pace and regularity of polling. Authority staff will engage with Police Scotland's procurement team in the coming months.
- 4.2 Deeper-dive analysis continues, with six sweeps of data now being available. Last year Authority staff completed deeper dives into women's views on policing, and the views of people living in rural

and remote Scotland, at that time using four sweeps of data. Two deeper dives are currently in progress: one on the views of young people (including children aged 16-17 years) and one on the tackling of antisocial behaviour in Scotland (for which focus group data has also been collected). It is anticipated that these reports will be available to the Policing Performance Committee as from June 2025.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1. There are no direct financial implications in this report.

6. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

6.1. There are no direct personnel implications in this report.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1. There are no direct legal implications in this report.

8. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1. There are no direct reputational implications in this report, however the act of conducting regular independent polling on public interest aspects of policing, and publishing the results, enhances the Authority's reputational aim of ensuring policing in the public interest.

9. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1. There are no direct social implications in this report.

10. COMMUNITY IMPACT

10.1. There are no direct community implications in this report, however the act of conducting regular independent polling across communities in Scotland, and analysing results at a disaggregated level (e.g. by geography, gender, age, deprivation), supports the Authority in maintaining an awareness of potential variations in community views of policing in Scotland.

11. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

11.1. There are no direct equalities implications in this report.

12. ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS

12.1. There are no direct environment implications in this report.

RECOMMENDATION

Members are invited to note and discuss the contents of this report and the content within the two accompanying appendices.



2025

Public Perceptions of Policing in Scotland

Key Findings



SCOTTISH POLICE
AUTHORITY
ÙGH DARRAS POILIS NA H-ALBA



Table of Contents

- 03 — Introduction**
- 04 — Trust in the Police**
- 07 — Confidence in the Police**
- 10 — Performance of Local Police**
- 11 — Evidence Retention**
- 13 — Scottish Police Authority**
- 14 — Local Police Plan**



Introduction

Diffley Partnership was commissioned to conduct regular polling of the Scottish adult (16+) public on policing in Scotland and related issues of interest to the Scottish Police Authority (SPA). This report sets out the key findings of the sixth wave of polling, conducted from 29th to 31st January 2025. Fieldwork dates for all other waves are listed below:

- Wave 1 - 26th July - 1st August 2022
- Wave 2 - 31st January - 5th February 2023
- Wave 3 - 18th - 23rd July 2023
- Wave 4 - 23rd - 26th January 2024
- Wave 5 - 7th - 11th August 2024



Methodology

The survey was designed by Diffley Partnership. The survey and its insights include both key indicators which are captured at regular intervals as well as topical elements to inform the SPA's decisions and strategy.

Invitations to complete the survey were sent out through the online ScotPulse panel between 29th to 31st January 2025, and received 2,582 responses. Results were tabulated and analysed quantitatively, including significance testing for between-group differences in opinion. The survey data was weighted to the age and gender profile of the Scottish population.



Presentation and interpretation of findings

This report summarises the key findings of this polling, drawing out noteworthy findings and between-group differences. The issues explored in this poll include:

- trust and confidence in police in Scotland,
- performance of local police,
- perceptions of evidence gathering,
- awareness of the SPA,
- awareness and monitoring of local police plans

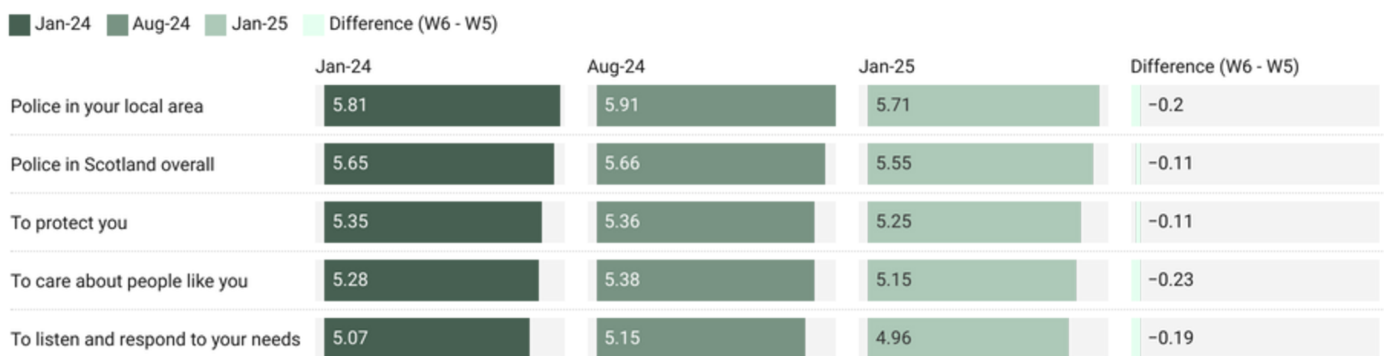
Each aspect is explored in turn using data visualisations and comments on significant differences between demographic groups, where appropriate.

Trust in the Police

Respondents were asked how much trust they have in the police in a number of areas, on a scale of 0 "do not trust at all" to 10 "trust completely".

The graph below shows differences in the most recent three waves of data collection. The differences quoted are between January 2025 and August 2024.

For the first time since beginning data collection, all averages have decreased. However, with the exclusion of 'to listen and respond to your needs', averages remain greater than 5. This indicates respondents had more trust than distrust across each area.



Local police continued to receive the highest average rating of trust from the public (5.71). This was closely followed by police in Scotland overall (5.55).

In terms of actions, respondents trusted the police to protect them (5.25) and to care about people like them (5.15) to around the same degree.

The average rating for 'to listen and respond to your needs' was under 5 for the first time since data collection began. An average value of 4.96 is somewhat neutral. However, this has been decreasing over time.

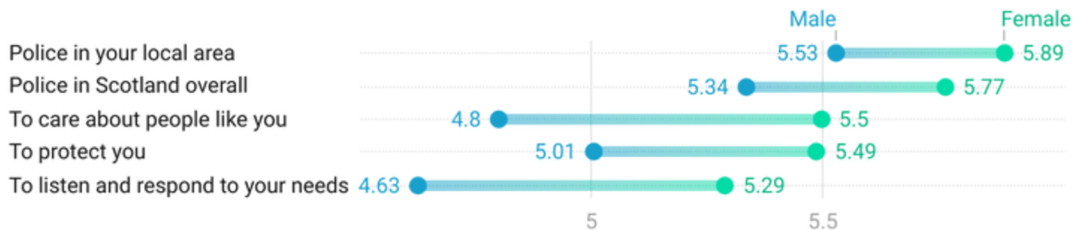
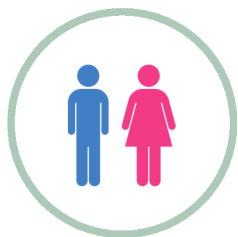
41%

**of respondents have a high level of trust
in police in their local area
(rated as 7 to 10 out of 10)**

Variations in Trust: Demographics

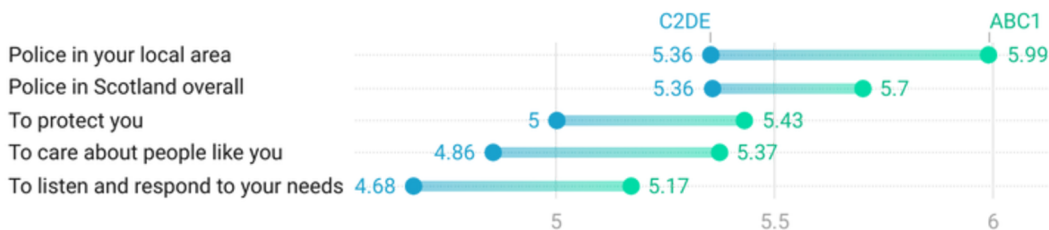
Trust in the police continued to vary greatly depending on demographic factors.

01. Gender



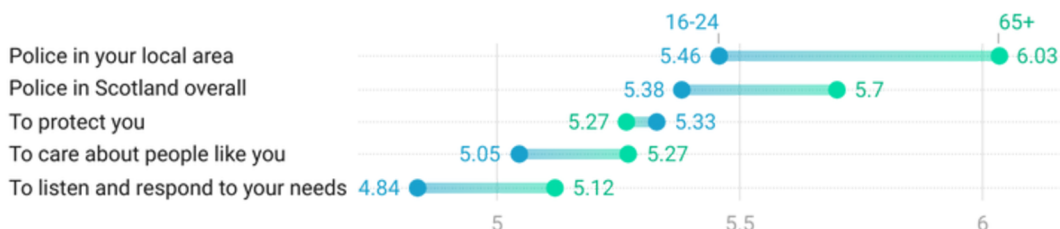
Female respondents were significantly more likely to have more trust in police for all aspects. This has been observed across all data collection waves, despite some fluctuation in the numerical average between each wave. Indeed, as the average score awarded by female respondents remained above 5 across all aspects, they typically had more trust than distrust in the police than male respondents.

02. Social grade



Working-class respondents (those in the C2DE category) continued to show less trust in the police than respondents who were middle and upper class (ABC1). There was more distrust observed by working class respondents on the issues of caring (4.86) and listening (4.68), as the average was less than five.

03. Age

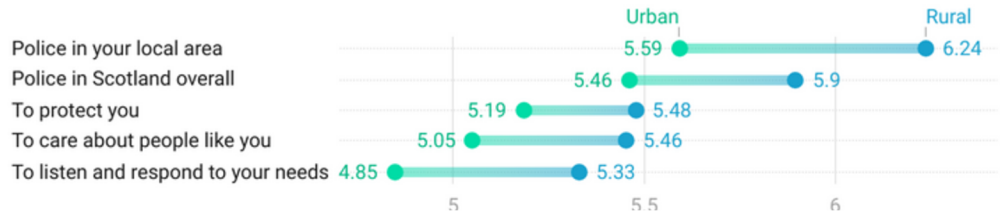


Respondents aged 65+ had significantly more trust in their local police than young people (aged 16-24 years old). Both age groups had similar trust in the police to protect them (5.33 for younger people, 5.27 for older people). However, younger people were more likely to distrust the police to listen and respond to their needs, scoring this an average 4.84 out of 10, compared to 5.12 for older people.

Variations in Trust: Geographics

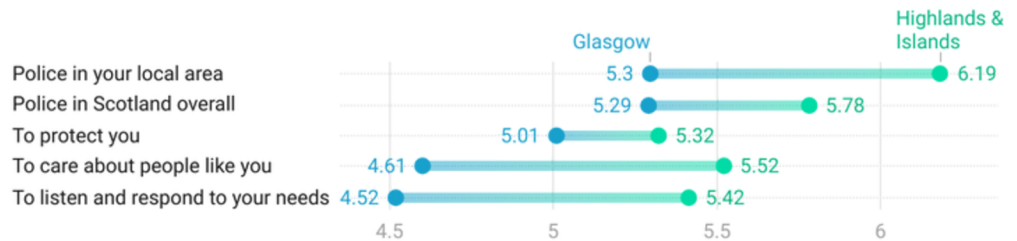
Trust in the police varied across geographic factors.

01. Urban vs Rural



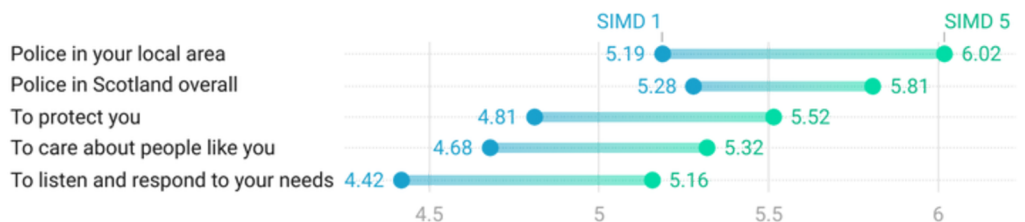
Respondents in urban areas had less trust in the police for all factors than respondents in rural areas. Respondents in rural areas were particularly trusting in their local police, with an average of 6.24 out of 10. This increased from 6.19 in August 2024.

02. Parliamentary Area



Respondents in Glasgow were most likely to have low levels of trust in police than any other parliamentary region in Scotland. Respondents in the Highlands and Islands region had the most trust in police. All averages were greater than 5 in the Highlands and Islands, indicating more trust than distrust in the region.

03. Areas of Deprivation



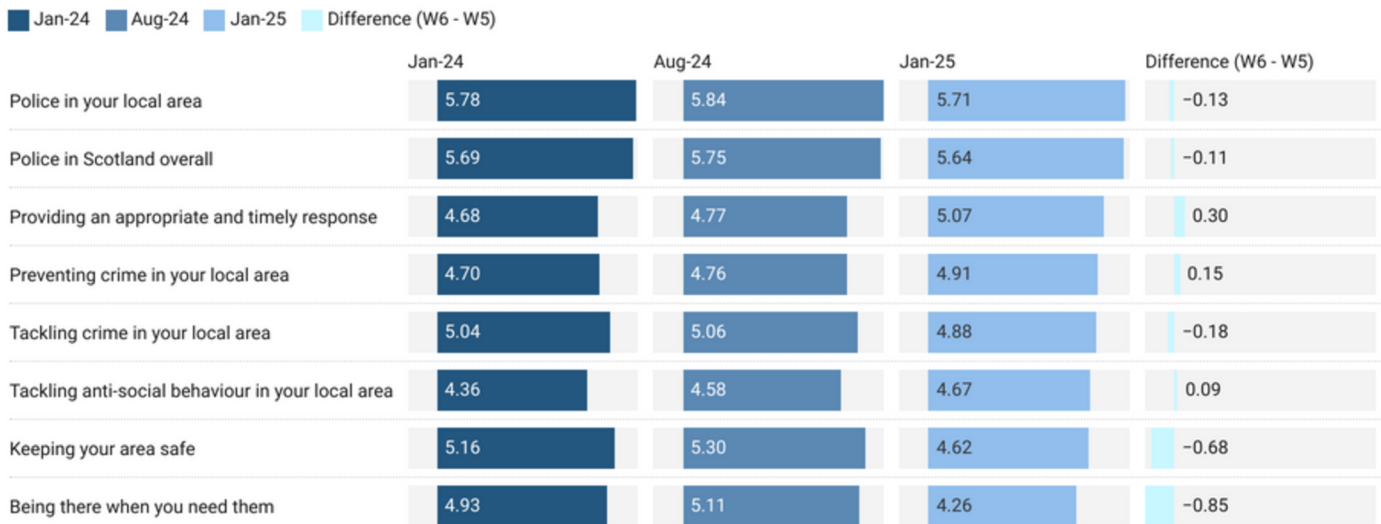
Respondents in the least deprived areas (SIMD5) were more likely to trust the police than those in the most deprived (SIMD1) areas.

Respondents in SIMD 5 areas continued to award above-average scores to the police for all aspects, indicating there was more trust than distrust in these areas.

Confidence in the Police

Respondents were asked how much confidence they had in the police in a number of areas, on a scale of 0 "no confidence at all" to 10 "complete confidence".

In contrast with trust, some aspects of confidence increased while others decreased between waves. The differences quoted are between January 2025 and August 2024.



The average confidence rating of 'police in your local area' (5.71) and 'Scotland overall' (5.64) remained higher than 5 out of 10. This was also true for 'providing an appropriate and timely response' (5.07). Despite a decrease in average values between waves, an average above 5 indicated respondents had more confidence than no confidence in police overall.

'Preventing crime in your local area' steadily increased over the past three waves of data collection, from 4.70 to 4.91. However this still remains lower than 5. The same is true for tackling anti-social behaviour in your local area (4.67).

The average confidence rating for 'keeping your area safe' (4.62) and 'being there when you need them' (4.26) decreased the most between waves.

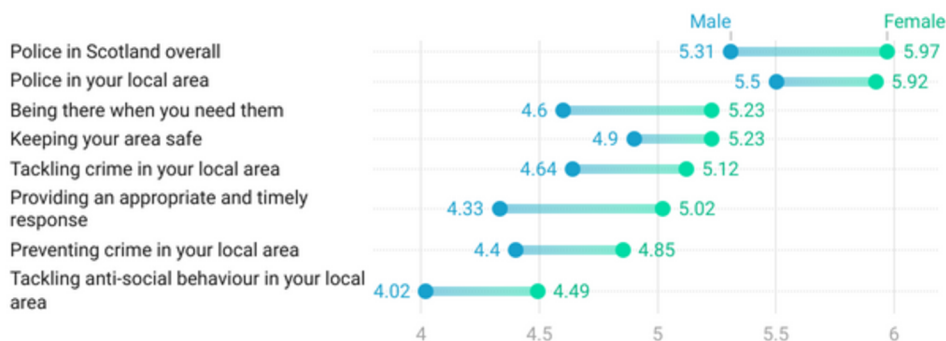
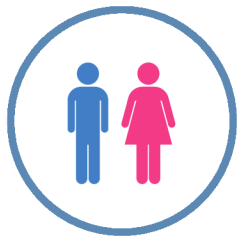
40%

**of respondents have high confidence in
police in their local area
(rated as 7 to 10 out of 10)**

Variations in Confidence: Demographics

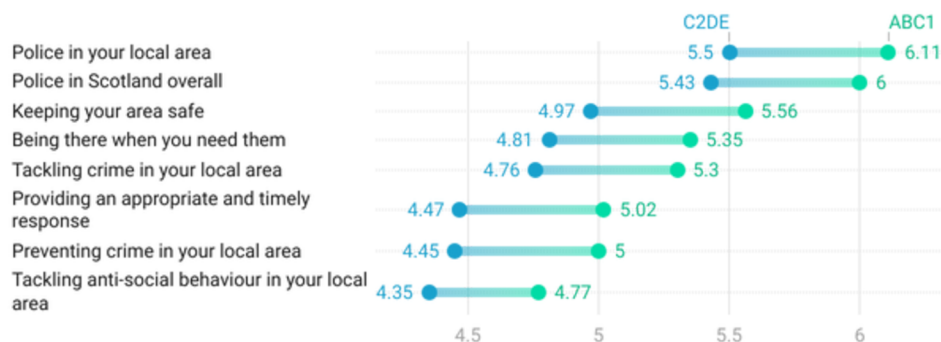
Levels of confidence in police varied significantly between demographic groups.

01. Gender



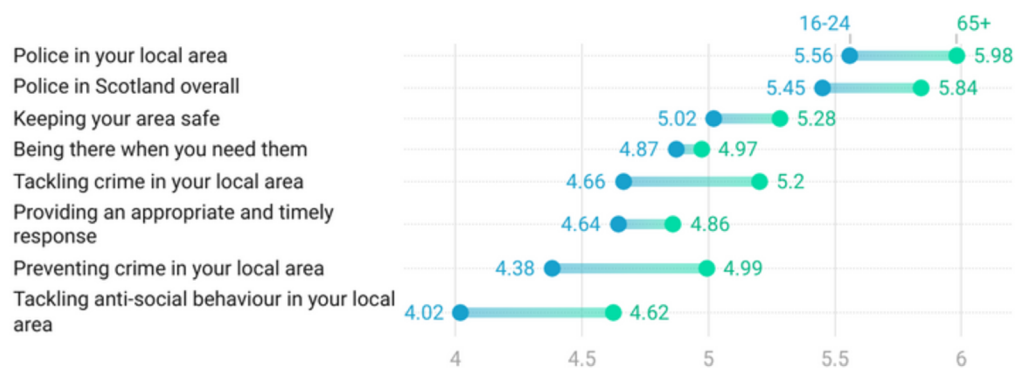
Male respondents were significantly more likely to have less confidence in police for all aspects than female respondents. Female respondents continued to award a higher than average confidence rating to police across all aspects, with the exception of 'preventing crime in your local area' (4.85) and 'tackling anti-social behaviour in your local area' (4.49).

02. Social grade



Working class people (those in the C2DE category) had less confidence in the police across all aspects than people who are middle and upper class (ABC1).

03. Age



Younger people (aged 16-24 years old) were more likely to have less confidence in the police than older people (aged 65+ years old) across all aspects.

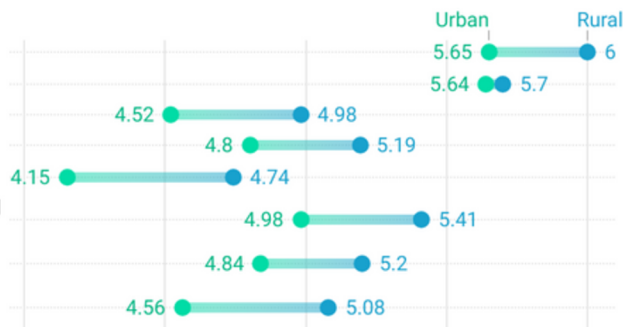
Variations in Confidence: Geographics

Levels of confidence in police varied significantly across geographic factors.

01. Urban vs Rural



- Police in your local area
- Police in Scotland overall
- Keeping your area safe
- Tackling crime in your local area
- Being there when you need them
- Tackling anti-social behaviour in your local area
- Preventing crime in your local area
- Providing an appropriate and timely response

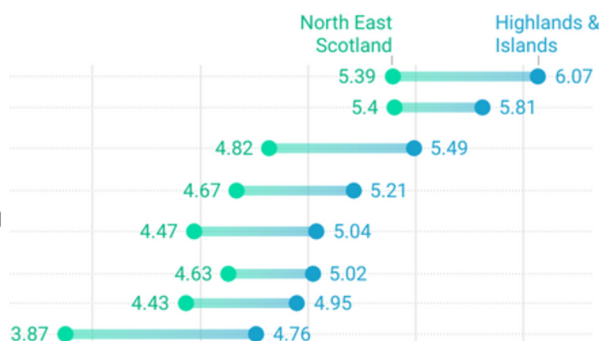


Respondents in rural areas had more confidence in the police across the full range of aspects. Respondents in urban areas had particularly low confidence in the police to be there when they are needed, giving a lower than average rating of 4.15 out of 10.

02. Parliamentary Area



- Police in your local area
- Police in Scotland overall
- Providing an appropriate and timely response
- Tackling crime in your local area
- Tackling anti-social behaviour in your local area
- Preventing crime in your local area
- Keeping your area safe
- Being there when you need them

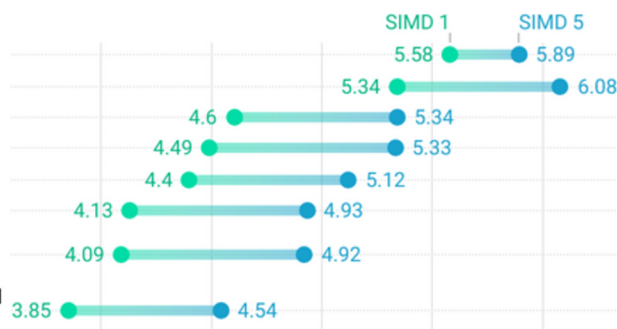


Despite a slight decrease from August 2024, respondents in the Highlands and Islands had the most confidence in the police, while those in North East Scotland had the least confidence. The lowest rating was given to 'being there when you need them' which scored 3.87 out of 10.

03. Areas of deprivation



- Police in Scotland overall
- Police in your local area
- Keeping your area safe
- Tackling crime in your local area
- Being there when you need them
- Preventing crime in your local area
- Providing an appropriate and timely response
- Tackling anti-social behaviour in your local area



Respondents in the most deprived areas (SIMD1) were typically less confident in the police across all measures than those in the most affluent areas (SIMD5). Tackling anti-social behaviour was the lowest rated issue across all areas.

Performance of Local Police

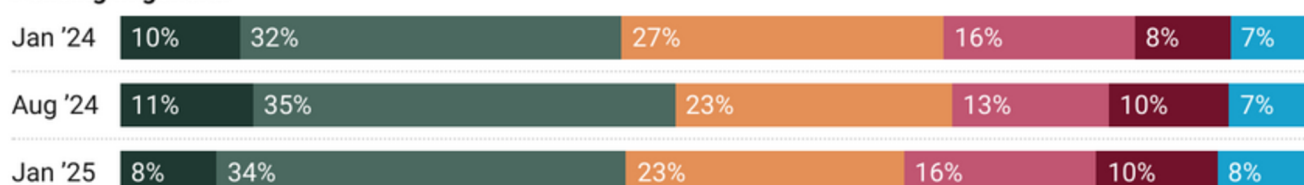
Respondents considered how well police in their local area performed across a range of tasks.

Overall, 43% of respondents believed the police in their local area were doing a good job policing in general. This was closely followed by 'keeping your area safe' (37%) and 'tackling crime' (35%). However, a third (30%) also believed local police were doing a poor job tackling crime in the local area.

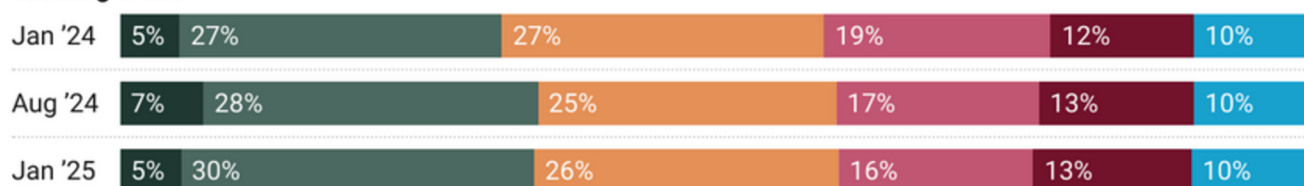
How good or poor a job do you think the police in your local area are doing at the moment in the following regards?

■ A very good job
 ■ A somewhat good job
 ■ A neither good nor poor job
 ■ A somewhat poor job
 ■ A very poor job
 ■ Don't Know

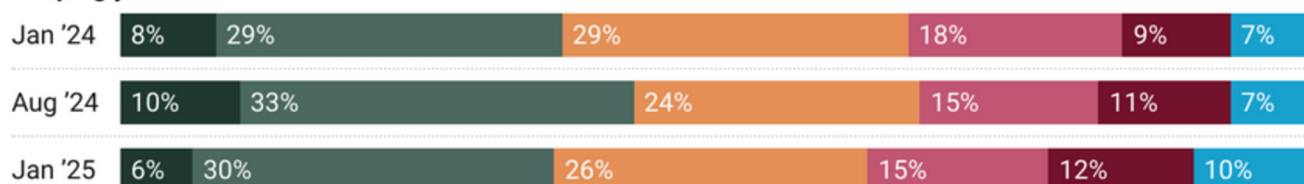
Policing in general



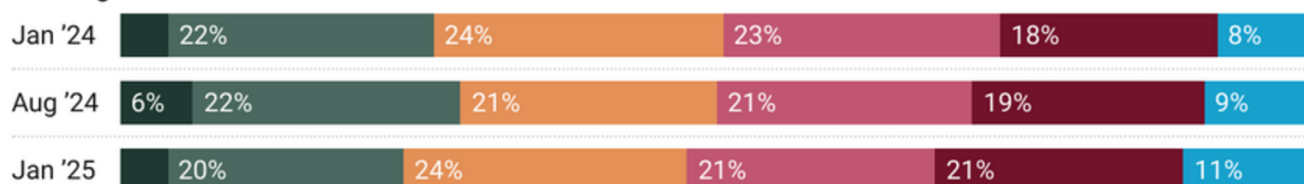
Tackling crime



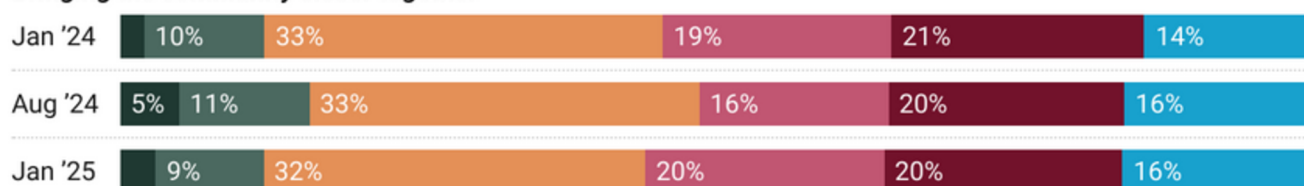
Keeping your area safe



Tackling anti-social behaviour



Bringing the community closer together



Evidence Retention

Several questions were asked in this wave of data collection about the collection and retention of evidence. Evidence could include fingerprints, photographs and DNA samples related to crime in Scotland.

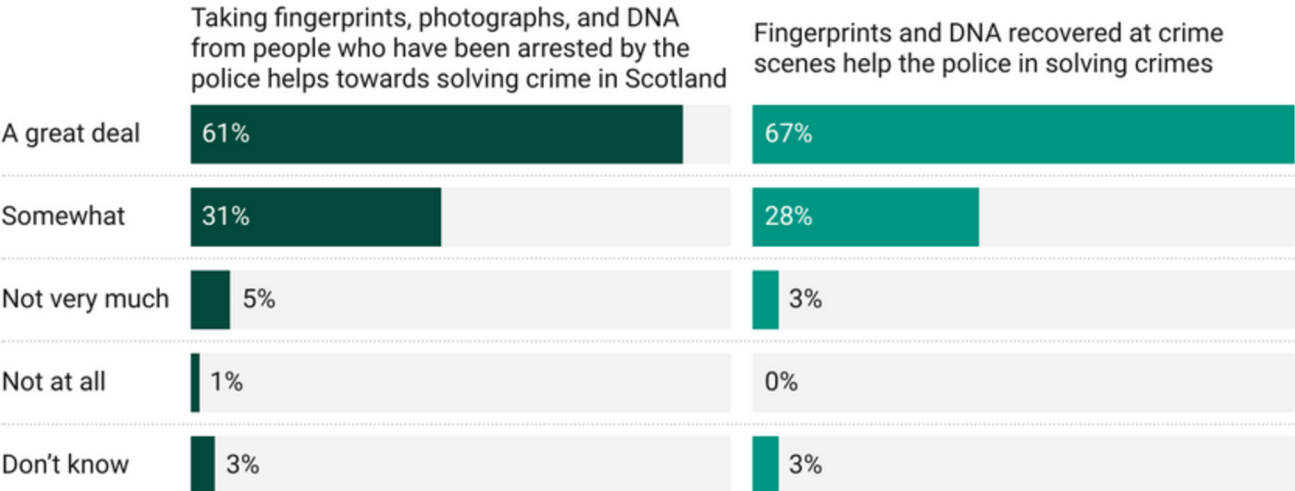
More than half of all respondents (57%) had a great deal of understanding of the reasons why evidence is collected in Scotland.

To what extent would you say that you understand the reasons why the police take fingerprints, photographs and DNA samples of people who have been arrested in Scotland?



Almost two-thirds believed that the evidence collected from crime scenes (67%) and the evidence collected from those who have been arrested (61%) helps a great deal towards solving crime in Scotland.

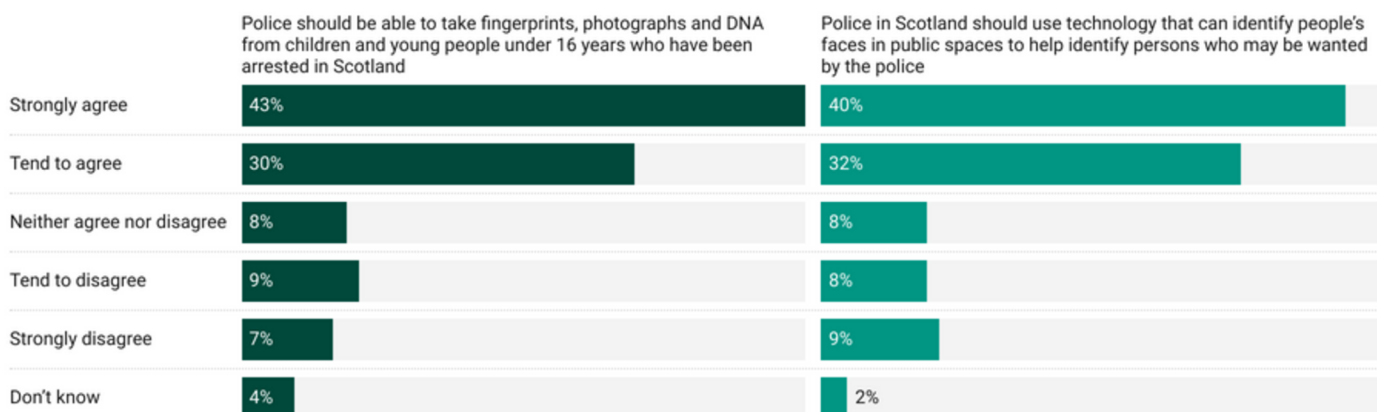
To what extent do you think:



Around three-quarters of respondents were in agreement that police should be able to take fingerprints, photographs and DNA from children and young people under 16 years old who have been arrested in Scotland. Fewer than a sixth (16%) disagreed with this.

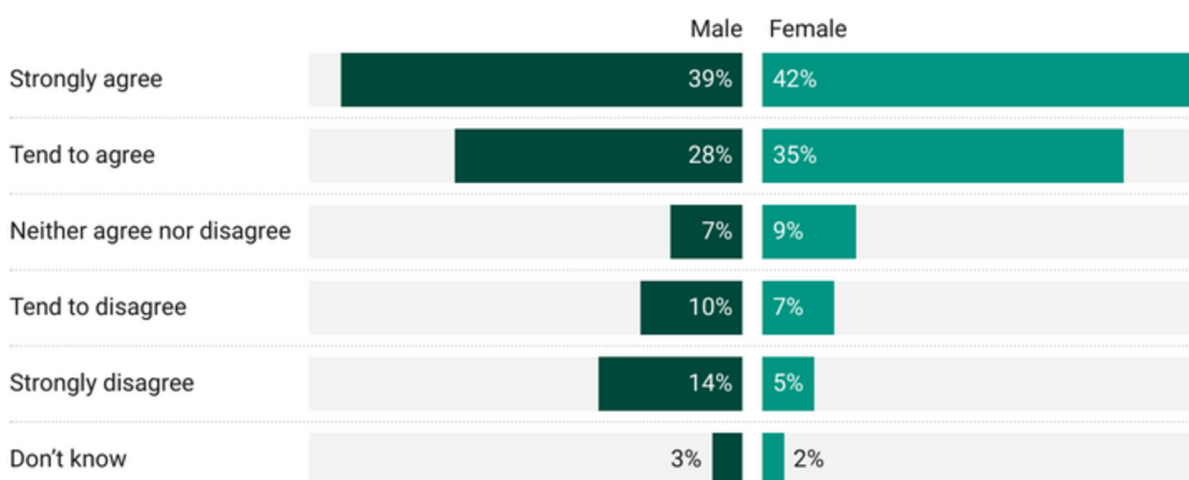
There was also strong support for the use of technology to identify persons of interest to the police. 72% of respondents agreed that police in Scotland should use technology that can identify people's faces in public spaces to help identify persons who may be wanted by the police.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following:



However, the strength of this agreement varied by gender. Overall, 77% of female respondents were supportive of the police's use of technology for this purpose. However this was only true for two-thirds (67%) of male respondents. Around a quarter of all male respondents (24%) disagreed with the use of technology.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following: Police in Scotland should use technology that can identify people's faces in public spaces to help identify persons who may be wanted by the police, by gender



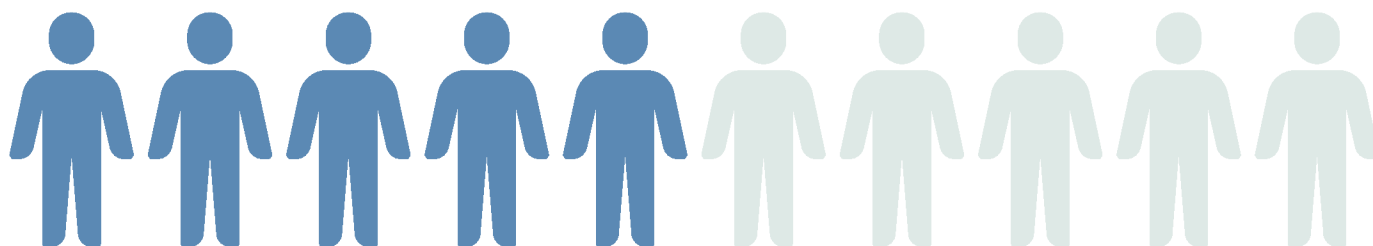
Around two-thirds of respondents believe evidence should be retained forever (64%) while 29% of respondents believe there should be time limits imposed on retention. Indeed, 8% believe evidence should be kept for less than 15 years while 14% believe evidence should be stored for more than 30 years, but not forever.



Scottish Police Authority

For this latest wave of data collection, respondents were asked about police plans in their local area and their awareness of the Scottish Police Authority (SPA).

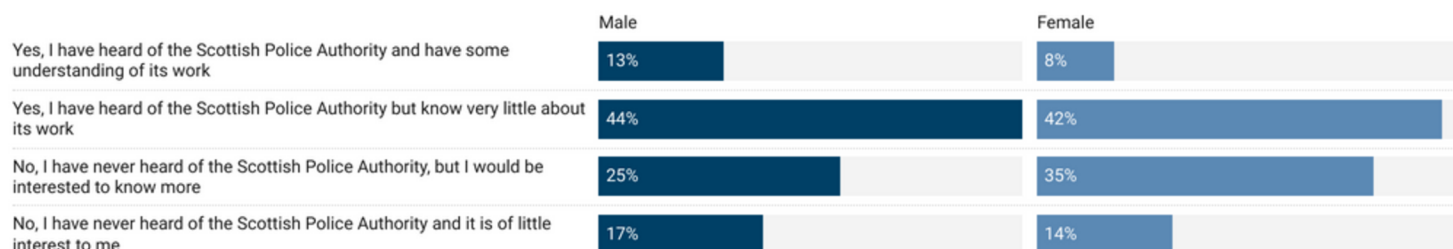
Around half of all respondents were familiar with the work undertaken by the Scottish Police Authority (54%).



A further third of respondents had never heard of the SPA but were interested to know more.

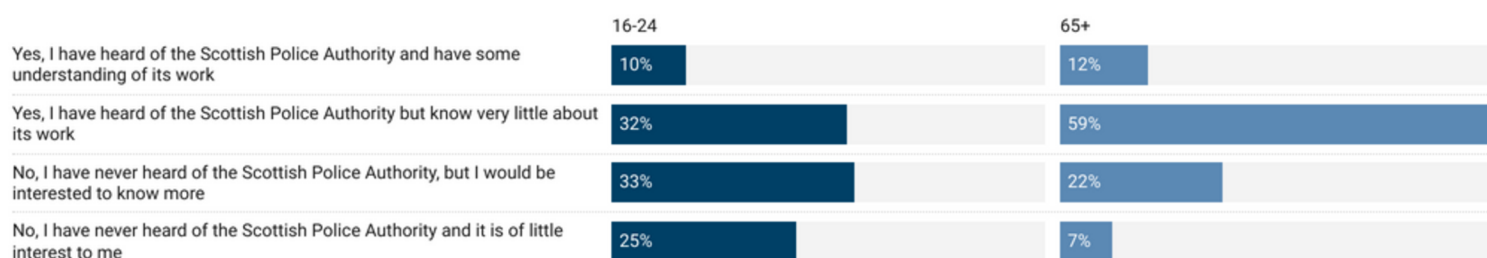
Overall, male respondents were more likely to be familiar with the work of the SPA than female respondents (58% vs 50%). However, female respondents were more likely to want to know more (35%) than male respondents (25%).

How familiar are you with the work undertaken by the Scottish Police Authority?, by gender



Similarly older people (aged 65+ years old) were more likely to be familiar with the work of the SPA than younger people, aged 16-24 years old (71% vs 42%). Younger people were interested to know more about the work of SPA (33%).

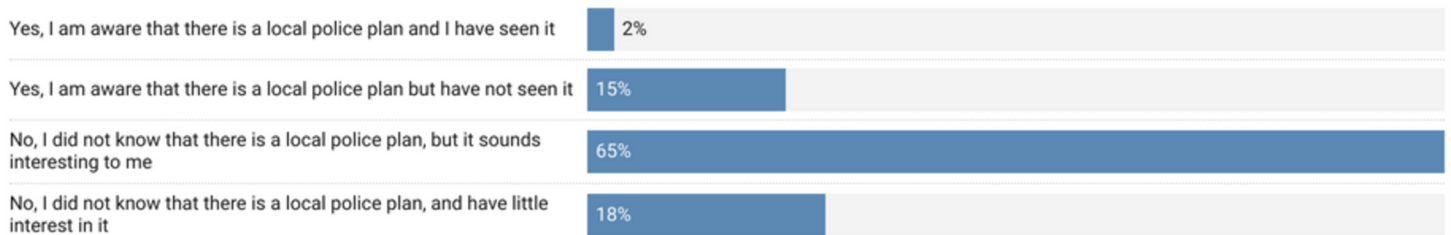
How familiar are you with the work undertaken by the Scottish Police Authority?, by age



Local Police Plan

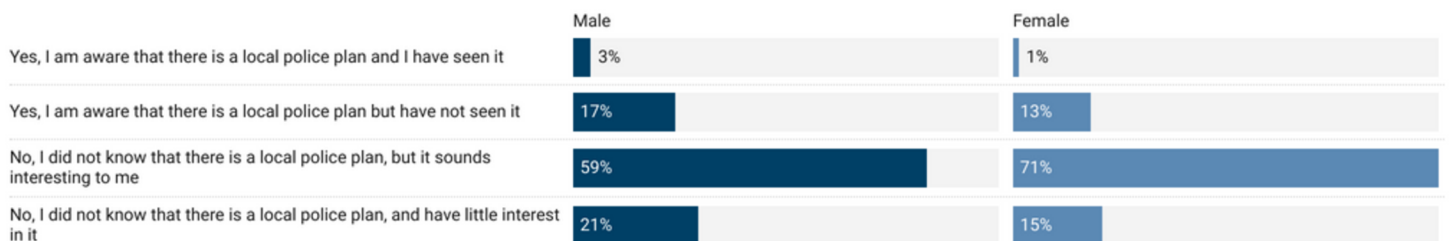
Less than a fifth of all respondents had awareness of the police plan covering their local authority area (17%). Respondents were only asked broad awareness of the plan rather than awareness of contents within the local police plan.

Are you aware that there is a police plan covering your local authority area?



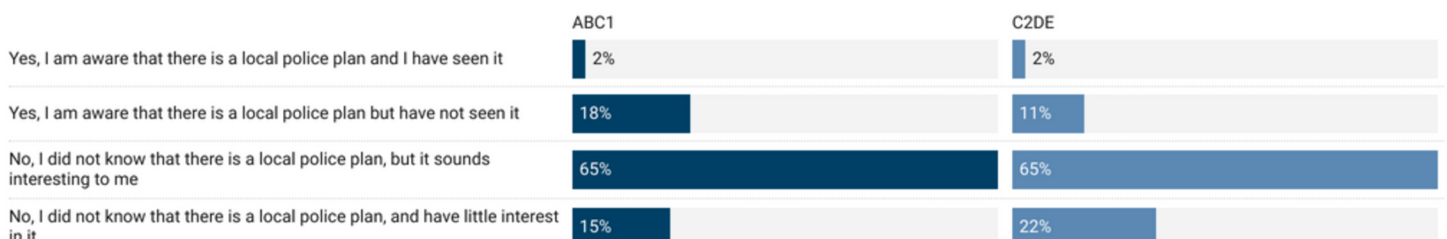
Again, male respondents had more awareness of the local police plan than female respondents (20% vs 14%). Male respondents were more likely to have little interest in finding out about the local police plan while female respondents were interested to find out more.

Are you aware that there is a police plan covering your local authority area?, by gender



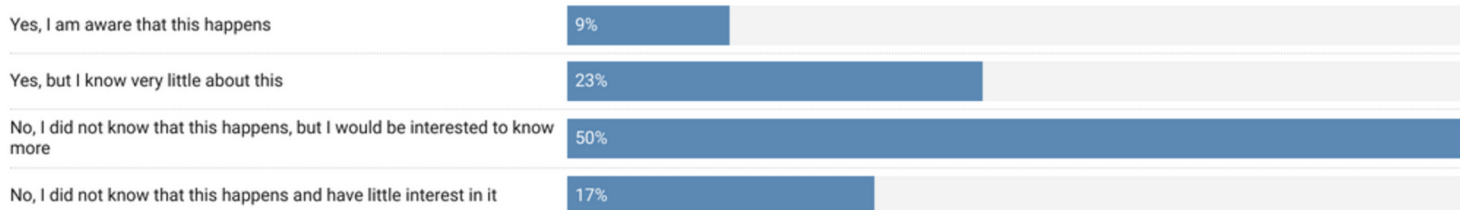
Respondents in the ABC1 categories are more likely to be aware of their local police plan (20%) than those in the C2DE categories (13%). Two-thirds of each occupation believe this is interesting (65%). However, those C2DE respondents are more likely to have little interest in their local plan (22% vs 15%).

Are you aware that there is a police plan covering your local authority area?, by occupation



Only a third (32%) of all respondents are aware that their local councillors regularly monitor police performance in their local authority area. Half of all respondents would be interested to know more (50%) while less than a fifth (17%) do not know this happens and have little interest in it.

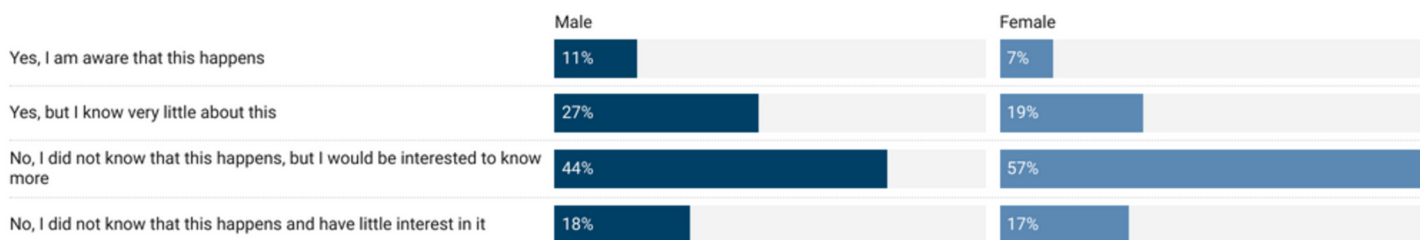
Are you aware that your local councillors regularly monitor police performance in your local authority area?



As with other aspects, females broadly have less awareness than males. Indeed, 38% of males are aware that local councillors regularly monitor police performance whilst this is true for 27% of females.

Females, while not being as informed, are more interested to know more about the monitoring of police performance (57%) than males (44%).

Are you aware that your local councillors regularly monitor police performance in your local authority area?, by gender



32%

of respondents are aware their local councillors regularly monitor police performance

Policing Performance Committee 19 March 2025

Appendix 2

Future Plans Relating to Polling

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Since the summer of 2022 the Authority has had a contract in place with the Diffley Partnership to provide regular, six-monthly polling of the Scottish (adult) population using the *ScotPulse* panel. The contract with the Diffley Partnership completed with the last sweep of polling in January 2025.
- 1.2 In preparation for going to market to identify a supplier for future polling work, staff at the Authority have reviewed the approach taken to polling over the last three years. This review has considered:
- (a) The relative value of the core questions on confidence, trust and police performance;
 - (b) The frequency of polling and, linked to this, its responsiveness to public interest issues and topics;
 - (c) Opportunities for wider engagement across the policing system to identify topical interest areas for questions; and
 - (d) How the Authority disseminates polling data and insights.
- 1.3 This short paper summarises the findings from this analytical review for the Committee and seeks views on the considerations proposed for future polling.

2. Core Questions on Confidence and Trust in Policing and Police Performance

- 2.1 Polling over the period 2022 to 2025 has consisted of using three core questions relating to confidence and trust in policing, and views on police performance. These questions have been asked at six-monthly intervals across the three-year period. Other topical questions have supplemented these on an *ad hoc* basis, and have covered a wide variety of themes, including:
- Policing response to mental health

OFFICIAL

- Proportionate investigative response to crime
- New and emerging technologies in policing
- Tackling antisocial behaviour
- Institutional discrimination
- Trust and confidence in other institutions and public bodies
- Biometrics
- Awareness of local police plans and the role of oversight bodies

- 2.2 For each of the six sweeps of polling carried out between 2022-2025, approximately 2,600 people have responded (15,823 people in total).
- 2.3 The three core questions relating to confidence in the police, trust in the police, and views on police performance can be described as 'complex matrix questions'. This is because sub-questions are embedded into each of the three main questions. These complex matrix questions (shown below) have been designed in a way to see how views differ among the public regarding different facets of policing, rather than just policing as a whole.

The Core Questions

- 2.4 *Core Question 1:* How much confidence do you have in the police in the following regards? On a scale of 0-10 where 0 is no confidence and 10 is complete confidence?
- Police in your local area
 - Police in Scotland overall
 - Preventing crime in your local area
 - Tackling crime in your local area
 - Tackling anti-social behaviour in your local area
 - Keeping your area safe
 - Being there when you need them
 - Providing an appropriate and timely response

Core Question 2: How much trust do you have in the police in the following regards? On a scale of 0-10 where 0 is no confidence and 10 is complete confidence?

- Police in your local area
- Police in Scotland overall
- To protect you
- To care about people like you
- To listen and respond to your needs

Core Question 3: How good or poor a job do you think the police in your local area are doing at the moment in the following regards? Options are: A very good job, A somewhat good job, Neither a good nor bad job, A somewhat poor job, A very poor job.

- Policing in general
- Tackling crime

OFFICIAL

- Keeping your area safe
- Tackling anti-social behaviour
- Bringing the community closer together

2.5 In terms of financial implications, complex matrix questions incur a greater cost than asking a simple question. It is therefore important that the complex matrix questions derive good value.

2.6 An analytical review of the three complex matrix questions shows that there is an extremely high level of interrelationship in terms of how people respond to them. For example, there are very few instances of people saying that they have high confidence in the police but low trust (and vice versa), or have high confidence in the police but think that they are doing a poor job. This is not a surprising finding, however the strength of interrelationship is much greater than expected. There is a high possibility that respondents perceive terms such as 'confidence', 'trust' and 'doing a good or bad job' as being interchangeable, even though the intended meaning is different.

2.7 The following summary contains a selection of statistics that are indicative of the high degree of interrelationship in terms of how people have responded to the current core questions (15,823 people).

Police in the local area:

- 0.3% of people have low confidence in local policing but high trust in local policing
- 0.2% of people have high confidence in local policing but low trust in local policing
- 80.6% of people give the exact same rating to confidence (e.g. low, medium or high) as they do to trust

Police in the Scotland overall:

- 0.2% of people have low confidence in local policing but high trust in local policing
- 0.2% of people have high confidence in local policing but low trust in local policing
- 80.4% of people give the exact same rating to confidence (e.g. low, medium or high) as they do to trust

Proposal for Consideration

2.8 It is proposed that in future polling exercises one core matrix question will be used, combining the three interrelated concepts of confidence and trust in policing, and views on police performance. The different facets to policing will continue to be measured. The precise wording and format of the question will be agreed with the next supplier of public polling to the Authority.

OFFICIAL

3. Frequency of Polling

- 3.1 Polling has so far taken place at six-monthly intervals, typically late July and late January. This has produced six sweeps of data over a three year period, amounting to 15,823 responses in total.
- 3.2 In 2024 Authority staff commenced a series of deeper dives into sub-populations within the data, using an aggregated dataset comprising the first four sweeps of data (around 10,500 respondents). This meant that it took almost two years for the aggregated dataset to become sufficiently large to enable analysis of discrete sub-populations of the data.

Proposal for Consideration

- 3.3 It is proposed that the frequency of polling will be increased e.g. to quarterly or 4-monthly. This will improve the responsiveness of polling regarding topical issues and themes, and also enable the aggregated dataset to become larger more quickly.

4. Engagement on Polling

- 4.1 To date routine interactions and engagement with stakeholders has helped Authority staff to identify topical issues where establishing public opinion would have value to the Authority and stakeholders.

Proposal for Consideration

- 4.2 It is proposed to establish a more formal mechanism (e.g. the Authority's Citizen Space engagement hub) whereby suggestions for topical polling questions can be submitted by stakeholders for consideration by Authority staff. This will be primarily promoted to stakeholder members of the Joint Research and Evidence Forum at quarterly meetings, although opportunities via routine interactions and engagement will continue to be used, with stakeholders referred to the engagement hub.

5. Dissemination of Polling Data and Insights

- 5.1 Insights from polling activity are currently disseminated, in the main, via papers to the Policing Performance Committee. Insights are also shared on an *ad hoc* basis through presentations and through occasional insight pieces on the Authority's website.

Proposal for Consideration

- 5.2 It is proposed that the Authority's [webpage on polling](#) is developed to include an interactive dashboard that allows users to ask queries of the underlying raw polling data to develop their own insights, above and beyond what Authority staff will continue to produce for the purposes of insight pieces and papers to the Policing Performance Committee.