Methodological note on the possible order effect on responses to questions on attitudes to the police and criminal justice system arising from changes in the CSEW questionnaire

Introduction
This Methodological note presents finding from analysis to explore whether changes to questions within the Performance of the CJS module in the 2011/12 Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW, previously known as the British Crime Survey) led to an order effect on responses to questions on attitudes to the police and the criminal justice system (CJS). The analysis was designed to test two principal hypotheses:

• That the removal of questions on the CJS for half the respondents led to an increase in positive responses to subsequent questions on the police. Previous analysis has shown that the public are generally more positive about the police than the CJS (see Smith, 2010). In view of this, it is thought that the removal of these questions on the CJS may have resulted in an increase in positive responses to subsequent questions.

• That the removal of two questions on the perceptions of local policing from the Performance of the CJS module led to an increase in positive responses to subsequent questions. Previous findings in relation to the questions that were removed indicate that respondents were generally more negative in their answers compared with subsequent questions. As such it is thought that the removal of these may have resulted in an increase in positive responses to these subsequent questions.

Research literature on survey methodology has shown that the context and order in which questions appear in a survey can influence the answers given by respondents (see, for example Dillman et. al, 2009). Such effects tend to be less striking for questions about facts (such as age or employment status) than for questions about attitudes which are more sensitive to the context and order in which questions are asked. Such effects have been described as cognitive-based or normative-based. Cognitive-based effects are those where answers to earlier questions influence the respondent’s thoughts when answering subsequent questions. Normative-based effects are those where earlier questions lead respondents to align their answers to a social norm.

The CSEW is reviewed annually and changes are made to the questionnaire to respond to user needs or to reflect changing realities. Within the victimisation section of the questionnaire, which is the basis for the National Statistics on crime, changes to questions are minimised to ensure consistency over time and enable trend comparisons. However, in other parts of the questionnaire, changes are more frequent so that different topics can be covered over time. Questions on perceptions, confidence and ratings of the police and the CJS have formed part of the survey since it began in 1982, but have evolved over time in line with emerging areas of interest.

The structure of the 2011/12 CSEW questionnaire is shown in Figure 1. The questionnaire had a complex structure, consisting of a set of core modules asked of the whole sample, a set of modules asked only of different sub-samples, and self-completion modules asked of all 16-59 year
olds. Within some modules there was further filtering so that some questions are only asked of even smaller sub-samples.

**Figure 1 Flow Diagram of the 2011-12 CSEW Core Questionnaire**
Following information collected about the composition of the household, the questionnaire started with questions about perceptions of crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB), including questions on worry about crime, feelings of safety, perceptions of crime levels and problems in the local area with ASB. Following this module of questions, all respondents were asked about their experiences of crime in the last 12 months, initially via a set of screening questions and, for those who had been victims, a fuller victimisation module. Following this, respondents were randomly allocated to one of four modules:

Module A – Experiences of the police
Module B – Attitudes to the CJS
Module C – Crime prevention and security
Module D – Ad hoc crime topics (for example, e-crime)

The random approach ensures that each sub-sample remains representative of the survey population. Further information can be found in the 2011/12 Crime Survey for England and Wales Technical Report.

In April 2011, changes were made to the filtering of questions in the Performance of the CJS module for the 2011/12 survey year which may have brought about unintentional order effects to responses to questions in this module. Specifically, rather than questions being asked of all respondents, they were asked of sub-samples.

**Key findings**

There were a number of changes to the filtering of questions in the Performance of the CJS module of the 2011/12 CSEW. Analysis showed that these changes may have had an effect on responses to the questions on perceptions of the police within this section of the questionnaire.

- The removal of a question on whether the authorities seek people’s views about the anti-social behaviour and crime issues that matter in this area may have led to an increase in positive responses to a subsequent question on whether the authorities are dealing with the anti-social behaviour and crime issues that matter in the area.

- The removal of the question on whether the police in the local area can be relied on to deal with minor crimes may have led to an increase in positive responses to the subsequent question on whether the local police understand the issues that affect the local community. It also appears to have had a similar though lesser effect on the two questions which follow: the local police are dealing with the things that matter to people in the community and overall confidence in the local police.

- The confidence in the fairness of the CJS questions were only asked of a half sample of respondents in 2011/12 whereas they had been asked of all respondents in previous years. The omission of the CJS questions for half of the respondents appears to have had an effect on some of the subsequent questions on perceptions of the police that immediately follow in the same module. These all received more positive responses from respondents who were not asked the CJS questions than from respondents who were asked the CJS questions, except for the question on whether the local police understand the issues that affect the local community which showed no difference in responses between the two groups.
In general, analysis showed that respondents who were asked questions about the CJS before they were asked questions about the police were more likely to have a negative view of the police than those who were only asked questions about the police. This suggested that public perceptions of the CJS were generally more negative than those of the police, which was also evidenced by the high overall rating of the police compared with the overall confidence in the fairness of the CJS (75 per cent compared with 63 per cent; see Tables 1 and 3). These findings were further supported by research carried out by the Ministry of Justice in 2010 on CSEW questions on public confidence in the CJS from 2002/03 to 2007/08 (see Smith, 2010).

The results of the analysis indicated that changes to the 2011/12 CSEW may have had an impact on responses to the questions on the overall ratings of the police, perceptions of the police and confidence in the police and local council dealing with anti-social behaviour and crime issues that matter in their local area. As such, 2011/12 CSEW data for these questions are not considered directly comparable with data for earlier years.

However, there is no clear evidence that the changes to the 2011/12 CSEW had an impact on responses to the confidence in the CJS questions. Although these questions were asked of half the sample of respondents in the 2011/12 CSEW, there was no evidence of an order effect and therefore data from the confidence in the CJS questions are comparable to those from earlier years.

**Background**

The CSEW is a face-to-face survey in which a nationally representative sample of the population resident in households in England and Wales are interviewed in their own home. The CSEW has measured respondents’ ratings of their local police since its inception in 1982. The original question asked “Taking everything into account, would you say the police in this area do a good job or a poor job?”. This was modified in 2003/04 to bring it in line with other questions about CJS agencies. Since then, respondents have been able to select from five response options: ‘excellent’, ‘good’, ‘fair’, ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’. Additionally, since 2003/04, the question has been asked of all respondents rather than a sub-sample. This increased the sample size considerably and enabled the question to more accurately measure government targets on confidence in the local police at the local police force area level. These targets were abolished by the current Government in 2010.

In October 2004 additional questions on perceptions of the local police were added as indicators of public confidence to monitor Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets within the Policing Performance Assessment Framework (PPAF). The performance measures were based on the proportion of respondents who ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘tended to agree’ that “the police in this area…”:
- can be relied on to be there when you need them;
- would treat you with respect if you had contact with them for any reason;
- treat everyone fairly, regardless of who they are;
- can be relied on to deal with minor crimes;
- understand the issues that affect this community; and
- are dealing with the things that matter to people in this community.

Following the above questions on specific aspects of police performance, a final question asked: “Taking everything into account I have confidence in the police in this area”.

Office for National Statistics
In October 2007, two further questions were introduced into the CSEW which were designed to measure public confidence in the police working with local agencies to understand and tackle the crime and anti-social behaviour issues of importance in their community. Respondents were asked how much they agreed or disagreed that “the police and local council…”:

- are dealing with the anti-social behaviour and crime issues that matter in this area; and
- seek people’s views about the anti-social behaviour and crime issues that matter in this area.

The first question was the basis of the target set by the then Home Secretary for each police force to improve the level of public confidence in the police and local partners, including their Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP), over a three-year period (2008 to 2011). This target has since been abolished by the current Government as part of its removal of centrally imposed targets from the police. However, many police forces continue to monitor the results of this question as a key local metric. The question on seeking people’s views about anti-social behaviour and crime issues was dropped from the 2011/12 survey.

In April 2008 an additional question was added to the survey which asks whether: “The police and local council keep people informed about how they are dealing with the anti-social behaviour and crime issues that matter in this area”. This question was also dropped from the 2011/12 survey.

A set of questions was introduced into the CSEW in 2008/09 to ask respondents about their confidence in the effectiveness and fairness of the wider CJS. These questions are preceded by the following preamble: “The next few questions are about the effectiveness of the Criminal Justice System. This includes the police, the Crown Prosecution Service, the courts, prisons, and the probation service”.

The first set of questions asks respondents how confident they are that the:

- police are effective at catching criminals;
- Crown Prosecution Service is effective at prosecuting people accused of committing a crime;
- Courts are effective at dealing with cases promptly;
- Courts are effective at giving punishments which fit the crime;
- prisons are effective at punishing offenders who have been convicted of a crime;
- prisons are effective at rehabilitating offenders who have been convicted of a crime; and
- probation service is effective at preventing criminals from re-offending.

These are followed by a general question: “Thinking about all of the agencies within the Criminal Justice System: the police, the Crown Prosecution Service, the courts, prisons and the probation service. How confident are you that the Criminal Justice System as a whole is effective?”

These are then followed by questions which ask how much respondents agree or disagree that:

- the CJS gives victims and witnesses the support they need;
- the CJS treats those who have been accused of a crime as ‘innocent until proven guilty’;
- the CJS takes into account the views of victims and witnesses;
- when handing out sentences the CJS takes into account the circumstances surrounding the crime;
• the CJS is too soft on those accused of committing a crime;
• the CJS achieves the correct balance between the rights of the offender and the rights of the victim; and
• the CJS discriminates against particular groups or individuals.

This is then followed by another question: “Thinking about all of the agencies within the Criminal Justice System: the police, the Crown Prosecution Service, the courts, prisons and the probation service. How confident are you that the Criminal Justice System as a whole is fair?”.

Results of these questions are used by Local Criminal Justice Boards to monitor public confidence in the effectiveness and fairness of the CJS.

Changes to the Performance of the CJS questions in the 2011/12 CSEW

A step change rise in a number of the confidence, perceptions and ratings measures in 2011/12 has been reported in previous crime statistics publications. This methodological note provides the findings of further analysis to investigate whether or not this step change was a result of amendments in April 2011 to the 2011/12 questionnaire rather than a change in public attitudes.

Determining whether or not changes to the questionnaire, on their own, had an effect on responses to particular questions is difficult. A true experiment would seek to isolate all of the possible confounding factors, for example by running a split-sample trial in which respondents are randomly allocated to answer the same questions, at the same time, but in a different order. However, here the questions being examined are nested within an existing questionnaire with respondents taking different routes through the questionnaire preceding them and asked in two separate survey years. It is thus not possible to isolate questionnaire changes from other possible factors, such as in-service delivery or respondent burden. There was no significant change in survey methodology – the survey continued to ask questions in the same mode (face-to-face) and the basic sample design was the same in both years.

However, there were a number of changes to the Performance of the CJS module of the 2011/12 questionnaire that may have had an impact on responses to some of the questions within this module. This module contained questions on public confidence, perceptions and ratings of the police and the wider CJS. The survey changes which may have affected responses to some questions in this module were:

• Some perceptions and confidence of the police questions were removed from the 2011/12 questionnaire, which may have had an impact on the responses to the subsequent questions;
• The confidence in the CJS questions were only asked of a half sample of 2011/12 CSEW respondents (those routed to subsequent Modules A and B), whereas they had been asked of all respondents in previous years’ surveys which may have had an impact on the responses of the half sample no longer asked the preceding questions.

Each of the questions in the Performance of the CJS module which could have been affected by the changes identified above were analysed from 2008/09 (the year most of these questions were

---

1 For previous analysis, see ‘Crime in England and Wales, Quarterly First Release to December 2011’, ONS, 2012.
first introduced to the CSEW) to 2011/12. Quarterly data were used to analyse more detailed trends across the period.

Additionally, the move to asking only half the sample some of the confidence in the CJS questions in 2011/12 allowed a post-hoc split-sample experiment, comparing responses from those subsequently routed to Modules A and B (who were asked the CJS questions immediately before the policing questions) with those from Modules C and D respondents (who were not asked the CJS questions). Everything else being equal, as all four groups provide nationally representative samples, there should be no statistically significant differences in the responses given to the policing questions asked of all four sub-samples. Any changes found may therefore provide evidence of whether or not there was likely to have been an order effect. Findings are reported below.

Figure 2 shows the order of the questions in the Performance of the CJS module and the changes that affected these questions in the 2011/12 CSEW. There are eight additional questions on confidence in the effectiveness of the CJS at the start of this module, ahead of the confidence in the fairness of the CJS questions. These were also asked of only Module A and B respondents in 2011/12 whereas they had been asked of all respondents previously.

---

| For details see 2011/12 CSEW questionnaire, available from the Crime Statistics Methodology webpage. |
**Figure 2 Order of questions in the Performance of the CJS module in the 2011/12 CSEW and changes to the survey which may have had an impact on responses to these questions**

**Confidence in the fairness of the CJS**
- How much would you agree or disagree that the Criminal Justice System gives victims and witnesses the support they need?
- How much would you agree or disagree that the Criminal Justice System treats those who have been accused of a crime as innocent until proven guilty?
- How much would you agree or disagree that the Criminal Justice System takes into account the views of victims and witnesses?
- How much would you agree or disagree that when handing out sentences the Criminal Justice System takes into account the circumstances surrounding the crime?
- How much would you agree or disagree that the Criminal Justice System is too soft on those accused of committing a crime?
- How much would you agree or disagree that the Criminal Justice System achieves the correct balance between the rights of the offender and the rights of the victim?
- How much would you agree or disagree that the Criminal Justice System discriminates against particular groups or individuals?

**Overall confidence in the fairness of the CJS**
- How confident are you that the Criminal Justice System as a whole is fair?

**Overall rating of the police**
- Taking everything into account, how good a job do you think the police in this area are doing?

**Perceptions of the police**
- How much would you agree or disagree that the police in this area can be relied on to be there when you need them?
- How much would you agree or disagree that the police in this area would treat you with respect if you had contact with them for any reason?
- How much would you agree or disagree that the police in this area treat everyone fairly regardless of who they are?
- How much would you agree or disagree that the police in this area understand the issues that affect this community?
- How much would you agree or disagree that the police in this area are dealing with the things that matter to people in this community?
- How much would you agree or disagree that taking everything into account I have confidence in the police in this area?

**Confidence in the police and local council**
- How much would you agree or disagree that the police and local council are dealing with the anti-social behaviour and crime issues that matter in this area?

---

**Confidence, including overall confidence, in the fairness of the CJS**

Questions on confidence, including overall confidence, in the fairness of the CJS were asked of all respondents in each year from 2008/09\(^3\) until the 2011/12 CSEW, when they were only asked of a half sample of respondents. There were no other changes to the questions that immediately

---

\(^3\) The questions were introduced into the CSEW in October 2007. As such, for year-on-year trend analysis, data are only available from 2008/09.
preceded these in the questionnaire and year-on-year analysis generally showed little or small changes in the 2011/12 CSEW (see Table 1).

**Table 1 Proportion of respondents who agree with the confidence in the fairness of the CJS questions, 2008/09 to 2011/12 CSEW**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>England and Wales</th>
<th>Adults aged 16 and over</th>
<th>2008/09</th>
<th>2009/10</th>
<th>2010/11</th>
<th>2011/12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Criminal Justice System gives victims and witnesses the support they need?</td>
<td>Percentage agreeing</td>
<td>55 - 56</td>
<td>58 * 59</td>
<td>59</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Criminal Justice System treats those who have been accused of a crime as innocent until proven guilty?</td>
<td></td>
<td>78 - 78</td>
<td>77 * 79</td>
<td>79 *</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Criminal Justice System takes into account the views of victims and witnesses?</td>
<td></td>
<td>70 - 71 *</td>
<td>72 * 73</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When handing out sentences the Criminal Justice System takes into account the circumstances surrounding the crime?</td>
<td></td>
<td>64 - 66 *</td>
<td>67 * 68 *</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Criminal Justice System is too soft on those accused of committing a crime?</td>
<td></td>
<td>80 - 79 *</td>
<td>77 * 77</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Criminal Justice System achieves the correct balance between the rights of the offender and the rights of the victim?</td>
<td></td>
<td>36 - 36</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>38 *</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Criminal Justice System discriminates against particular groups or individuals?</td>
<td></td>
<td>35 - 35</td>
<td>34 * 37 *</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How confident are you that the Criminal Justice System as a whole is fair?</td>
<td></td>
<td>59 - 59 *</td>
<td>61 * 63 *</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics*

Note: Statistically significant changes (compared to the previous year) at the 95 per cent confidence level are indicated by an asterisk.

**Overall ratings of the police**

This question asked respondents how good a job they think the police in their local area are doing. Respondents can answer: ‘excellent’; ‘good’; ‘fair’; ‘poor’; or ‘very poor’. This question immediately followed the questions on the CJS which were only asked of a half sample of respondents in 2011/12.

Year-on-year trend analysis for this question showed a statistically significant increase in positive responses in each year since 2008/09 and showed that the rate of increase was fairly consistent, so the latest increase may just be part of a general upwards trend (see Table 2).
Table 2 Proportion of respondents who believe the local police are doing an excellent or good job, 2008/09 to 2011/12 CSEW

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Adults aged 16 and over</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2008/09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage saying excellent or good</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking everything into account, how good a job do you think the police in this area are doing?</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics

Note: Statistically significant changes (compared to the previous year) at the 95 per cent confidence level are indicated by an asterisk

However, further analysis was carried out to compare 2011/12 CSEW responses to this question between the half of respondents who were asked the previous CJS questions and the other half who were not. This found that a statistically significantly higher proportion of respondents who were not asked the preceding CJS questions gave an excellent or good rating than those who were (64 per cent compared with 60 per cent). This pattern was evident in each quarter of 2011/12 (see Figure 3) and indicated that the national rise seems to have been associated with a change in question order for half the sample. The increase in the proportion who rated the police ‘excellent’ or ‘good’ was a result of a reduction in the proportion who rated the police ‘fair’. There was little difference in the proportion rating the police ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’. This is further evidence of a possible cognitive-based order effect such as the priming effect (i.e. respondents are primed to think about one issue while answering the subsequent question) in that asking about the wider CJS appears to suppress the positive ratings of the police.
Figure 3 How good a job do you think police in this area are doing, 2011/12 CSEW

Analysis therefore indicated that the removal of preceding questions relating to the CJS led to a four or five percentage point increase in the positive ratings of the police. It appears that some respondents were less likely to think positively of the police if asked questions following others on the performance of the wider CJS.

Perceptions of the police

Following the removal of one question in 2011/12 (see Figure 2), there were six questions in the perceptions of the police section in the 2011/12 survey. Year-on-year analysis of these questions showed a general upwards trend in positive responses between 2008/09 and 2011/12 (see Table 3). Four of the six perceptions of the police questions showed an increase in positive responses in April to June 2011 compared to January to March 2011, coinciding with the changes to the 2011/12 questionnaire. In each case, this was the largest quarter-on-quarter increase in positive responses seen across the whole four-year period. Rarely have there been changes, upward or downward, of this magnitude in the past. This in itself is an indication that the changes to the 2011/12 questionnaire had an effect on the responses to the perceptions of the police questions. However, it is not enough on its own to be certain that this is the case.
Table 3 Proportion of respondents who agree with the performance of the police questions, 2008/09 to 2011/12 CSEW

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Adults aged 16 and over</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2008/09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police can be relied on to be there when you need them</td>
<td>48 -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police would treat you with respect if you had contact with them for any reason</td>
<td>84 -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police treat everyone fairly regardless of who they are</td>
<td>65 -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police understand the issues that affect this community</td>
<td>65 -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police are dealing with the things that matter to people in this community</td>
<td>54 -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking everything into account I have confidence in the police in this area</td>
<td>67 -</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics

Note: Statistically significant changes (compared to the previous year) at the 95 per cent confidence level are indicated by an asterisk

The first in this set of six questions asked respondents whether “the police can be relied on to be there when you need them”. This showed a statistically significant increase in the proportion who agreed with this statement between 2010/11 and 2011/12 (from 54 per cent to 59 per cent; see Table 3). Quarter-on-quarter analysis showed that this was attributed to an increase in April 2011 to June 2011 compared with the previous quarter (from 54 per cent to 58 per cent), coinciding with the changes to the 2011/12 questionnaire.

Further analysis showed a clear difference between responses from those who were asked the preceding CJS questions and those who were not in 2011/12. Within the group who were asked the CJS questions, 56 per cent agreed that the police could be relied on, compared with 62 per cent of the group who were not asked the CJS questions. Furthermore, responses from those who were not asked the CJS questions were more positive than those from the other group in each quarter of 2011/12 (see Figure 4). Therefore, as seen in analysis of the overall ratings of the police, respondents who were asked the CJS questions were more likely to respond negatively to the question on the reliability of the police to be there when needed than other respondents, which is consistent with a priming effect, as described earlier.
The second and third questions in this set showed less clear trends. The second question asked respondents about the local police treating them with respect if they came in contact with them for any reason. The third question is related to local police treating everyone fairly, regardless of who they are. Annual trends showed an increase in positive responses to both of these questions in 2010/11 compared with the previous year, with a further statistically significant increase in 2011/12 for the second question only (see Table 3). This indicated a general upwards trend in positive responses to this question.

When looking at quarter-on-quarter trend analysis, there was no statistically significant change in positive responses to the second question on the police treating people with respect in any quarter. The same analysis of the third question on the police treating people fairly showed that there was a statistically significant change in the proportion of positive responses to this question in April to June 2011 than in the previous quarter, though this was followed by a statistically significant fall in the next quarter, so again, there is no clear trend over time.

Similarly, when comparing responses from those who were asked the CJS questions with responses from those who were not in the 2011/12 CSEW, there was no clear trend for either question. For the second question on the police treating people with respect, those who were not asked the CJS questions responded to this question more positively than those who were in the second and third quarters of 2011/12 only (87 per cent compared with 85 per cent and 87 per cent compared with 84 per cent respectively; see Figure 5).
Figure 5 Public perceptions of the local police treating the respondents with respect if they came into contact with them for any reason, 2011/12 CSEW

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree/Tend to disagree/Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Strongly agree/Tend to agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apr to Jun 11</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr to Jun 11</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul to Sep 11</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul to Sep 11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics

Note: G1 respondents were asked the CJS questions; G2 respondents were not asked the CJS questions

Note: Statistically significant changes (G1 compared with G2) at the 95 per cent confidence level are indicated by an asterisk

For the third question on the police treating people fairly, those who were not asked the CJS questions responded more positively than those who were in each quarter of 2011/12 except the first quarter (see Figure 6).
Figure 6 Public perceptions of the local police treating everyone fairly regardless of who they are, 2011/12 CSEW

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree/Tend to disagree/Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Strongly agree/Tend to agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April to June 2011 G1</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April to June 2011 G2</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July to September 2011 G1</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July to September 2011 G2</td>
<td>31*</td>
<td>69*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October to December 2011 G1</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October to December 2011 G2</td>
<td>32*</td>
<td>68*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January to March 2012 G1</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January to March 2012 G2</td>
<td>33*</td>
<td>67*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics

Note: G1 respondents were asked the CJS questions; G2 respondents were not asked the CJS questions

Note: Statistically significant changes (G1 compared with G2) at the 95 per cent confidence level are indicated by an asterisk

Prior to the 2011/12 CSEW, the question on the local police treating everyone fairly was followed by one on public perceptions of the local police being relied on to deal with minor crimes. This question was removed from April 2011, which may have had an additional impact on the subsequent questions 4, 5 and 6. Further analysis not presented here has shown that respondents were more likely to have a negative attitude to the question on the local police being relied on to deal with minor crimes than they were to the other questions in this set. As such, it might be expected that the removal of this question would have led to an increase in positive responses to the subsequent questions.

The fourth question in this set in the 2011/12 CSEW asked respondents about their perceptions of the local police understanding issues that affect the community. There was an overall increase in positive responses to this question in 2011/12 compared with the previous year and a smaller, though still statistically significant, increase in positive responses in 2009/10 compared with 2008/09 (see Table 3). This could be evidence of a general upwards trend, however there was no increase in positive responses in 2010/11. The number of positive responses to this question increased from 67 per cent in January to March 2011 to 71 per cent in April to June 2011 (see Figure 7). This indicates that changes to the 2011/12 questionnaire may have had an impact on responses to this question.
Figure 7 Public perceptions of the local police understanding the issues that affect the community, 2008/09 to 2011/12 CSEW

The impact of changes to the 2011/12 questionnaire was seen clearly in responses to the first question in this group of six questions, though less clearly in responses to the second and third questions. As such, the step change in positive responses to this fourth question in April 2011 was unlikely to be a result of the changes to the CJS questions alone. For this question, it was more likely to be a result of the removal of the preceding question on the police being relied on to deal with minor crimes, which had drawn a relatively high proportion of negative responses when it had been included in previous year’s surveys. This was supported by analysis of the 2011/12 CSEW, comparing responses from those who were asked the CJS questions to those who were not. There was no difference in positive responses between the two groups in any quarter of 2011/12 (see Figure 8).
Figure 8 Public perceptions of the local police understanding the issues that affect the community, 2011/12 CSEW

Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics
Note: G1 respondents were asked the CJS questions; G2 respondents were not asked the CJS questions
Note: Statistically significant changes (G1 compared with G2) at the 95 per cent confidence level are indicated by an asterisk

Analysis showed that the removal of the question on perceptions of the local police being relied on to deal with minor crimes may also have had an effect on responses to the fifth and sixth questions in this set of six questions, though the effect was less apparent than in the analysis of the fourth question (which asked about whether the police understand local concerns). The fifth question related to whether the police deal with the things that matter to people in this community and the sixth was the question on overall confidence in the police in this area. Analysis showed a statistically significant increase in positive responses to both questions in each year between 2008/09 and 2011/12 (see Table 3). Additionally, there was an increase in positive responses in April to June 2011 compared with the previous quarter (from 58 per cent to 61 per cent and from 72 per cent to 74 per cent respectively; see Figures 9 and 10). It is possible that this increase was a result of both the removal of the question on perceptions of the local police being relied on to deal with minor crimes and the removal of the CJS questions for half of the respondents. However, it is not possible to separately assess the impact of each of these two changes.
Figure 9 Public perceptions of the local police dealing with the things that matter to people in the community, 2008/09 to 2011/12 CSEW

Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics

Note: Dotted lines indicate different years

Note: Dashed line indicates the introduction of the 2011/12 CSEW questionnaire changes
Further analysis of the 2011/12 CSEW responses to the questions on the local police dealing with the things that matter to people in the community and overall confidence in the police showed that, overall, respondents who were not asked the CJS questions were more likely to give positive responses than those who were. However, for both of these questions, this difference in responses between the two groups was less strong than that seen in the first of this set of six questions. The pattern was not seen across each individual quarter of 2011/12. For the fifth question on the local police dealing with things that matter to people in the community, there were statistically significant differences in positive responses between the two groups in all except the third quarter of 2011/12 (see Figure 11). In contrast, for the sixth question on overall confidence in the police, this was the only quarter of 2011/12 where there was a statistically significant difference in positive responses between the two groups (see Figure 12). Where there were statistically significant differences, it was always the respondents who were not asked the CJS questions who gave more positive responses than those who were.
Figure 11 Public perceptions of the local police dealing with the things that matter to people in the community, 2011/12 CSEW

Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics

Note: G1 respondents were asked the CJS questions; G2 respondents were not asked the CJS questions

Note: Statistically significant changes (G1 compared with G2) at the 95 per cent confidence level are indicated by an asterisk
Confidence in the police and local council

This question followed the six questions on perceptions of the local police, and once again, year-on-year analysis showed a general upwards trend in positive responses (see Table 4). Respondents were asked how much they agree or disagree that the police and local council are dealing with the anti-social behaviour and crime issues that matter in their area. This showed a year-on-year increase in each year between 2008/09 and 2011/12, though with the largest increase in 2011/12 compared with the previous year (from 52 per cent to 61 per cent; see Table 4). This was the largest increase seen over the period in any of the questions. Analysis also showed a very clear increase in positive responses in April to June 2011 compared with the previous quarter (from 52 per cent to 60 per cent; see Figure 13).

There was an additional change to the 2011/12 questionnaire which may have also had an impact on responses to this question. Prior to the 2011/12 CSEW, there was an additional question which was asked after the perceptions of the police questions and before this question. It asked respondents if the local authorities sought people’s views about the anti-social behaviour and crime issues that matter in their area. As demonstrated earlier in responses to the question on the local police understanding issues that affect the community, the removal of a preceding question appears to have had an impact on responses. It is likely that the removal of the preceding question had a greater impact on the responses to the question on local authorities’ handling of anti-social behaviour and crime issues that matter in their area, given the sequence of the questions, than the removal of the earlier CJS questions (for half the sample). Further analysis not presented in this
publication showed that respondents were more likely to have a negative attitude to the question on the local authorities seeking people’s views about the anti-social behaviour and crime issues that matter in their area than they were to the question on dealing with anti-social behaviour and crime issues. As such, it is expected that the removal of this question would have led to an increase in positive responses to the subsequent question.

### Table 4 Public confidence in the police and local council, 2008/09 to 2011/12 CSEW

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Adults aged 16 and over</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2008/09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The police and local council are dealing with the anti-social behaviour and crime issues that matter in this area</td>
<td>49 *</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics*

*Note: Statistically significant changes (compared to the previous year) at the 95 per cent confidence level are indicated by an asterisk*

### Figure 13 Public confidence that the police and local council are dealing with the anti-social behaviour and crime issues that matter in the local area, 2008/09 to 2011/12 CSEW

In the 2011/12 CSEW, respondents who were not asked the CJS questions were much more positive about the local authorities’ handling of anti-social behaviour and crime issues that matter in their area than those who were asked the CJS questions (63 per cent compared with 59 per cent). This pattern was seen in the responses given in each quarter of 2011/12 (see Figure 14).
Figure 14 Public confidence that the police and local council are dealing with the anti-social behaviour and crime issues that matter in the local area, 2011/12 CSEW

The analysis suggests that the answers to this question in the 2011/12 CSEW seem to have been affected by changes to the questionnaire in that year. However, the change in filtering, such that only half the sample were asked the preceding CJS questions, appears to have had the strongest impact on the first question in the set of six perceptions of the police questions. The questionnaire changes seem to have a lesser impact on subsequent questions.

Conclusion

Analysis appears to lend support to the idea that changes to the filtering of questions in the Performance of the CJS module in the 2011/12 CSEW had an effect on responses to some of the later questions within that module on:

- Overall rating of the local police;
- Perceptions of the local police; and
- Confidence in the police and local council.

As such, 2011/12 data for these questions are not directly comparable with those for earlier years.

The changes do not seem to have had an effect on responses to the questions on confidence in the CJS and therefore data for these questions are comparable over time. A full breakdown of the findings is shown in Table 5.
Table 5 Summary table indicating the impact of survey changes on the confidence in the police and police perceptions, 2011/12 CSEW

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Survey changes and whether these had an impact on responses</th>
<th>Are 2011/12 data comparable to those for earlier years?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall rating of the police</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking everything into account, how good a job do you think the police in this area are doing?</td>
<td>Likely Unlikely Likely</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Perceptions of the police</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The police in this area can be relied on to be there when you need them</td>
<td>Likely Unlikely Likely</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The police in this area would treat you with respect if you had contact with them for any reason</td>
<td>Likely Unlikely Likely</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The police in this area treat everyone fairly regardless of who they are</td>
<td>Likely Unlikely Likely</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The police in this area understand the issues that affect this community</td>
<td>Likely Likely Likely</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The police in this area are dealing with the things that matter to people in this community</td>
<td>Likely Likely Likely</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking everything into account I have confidence in the police in this area</td>
<td>Likely Likely Likely</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Handling of anti-social behaviour and crime</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The police and local council are dealing with the anti-social behaviour and crime issues that matter in this area</td>
<td>Likely Unlikely Likely</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>