

## Public awareness of and confidence in Official Statistics in Northern Ireland – Findings from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) Omnibus Survey.

In April 2009, questions relating to public awareness of and confidence in official statistics in Northern Ireland were placed in the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency's (NISRA) Omnibus Survey. Questions were also asked about the public's awareness and confidence in official statistics produced by NISRA. In the survey, 'Official Statistics' were defined as those produced by the Government in Northern Ireland about the economy and the society we live in.

The Omnibus Survey consists of modules of different themes and is conducted at various times throughout the year. It is based on a systematic random sample of addresses selected from the Land and Property Services Agency list of private addresses. In April 2009 a total of 2,200 addresses were selected for interview and, at each address sampled, a person aged 16 or over was randomly selected to complete the interview. There were 1,168 respondents to the module.

### Key findings:

- 53% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that official statistics in NI are generally accurate.
- 10% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that official statistics in NI are generally accurate. Of these respondents, 51% thought that this was because statistics are manipulated or adjusted for political purposes.
- 30% of respondents had heard of NISRA before being contacted about the survey. Of these respondents, 71% agreed or strongly agreed that official statistics produced by NISRA were generally accurate.



- 48% of respondents were aware of official statistics on the number of births, deaths and marriages in NI each year.
- 50% of respondents were aware of official statistics on the size of the NI population.
- 76% of respondents were aware of official statistics on the number of casualties on NI roads.
- 59% of respondents were aware of official statistics on recorded levels of crime in NI.
- 57% of respondents were aware of official statistics on hospital waiting times in NI.
- 75% of respondents were aware of official statistics on the number of unemployed persons in NI.

## Further analysis

Further results by age band and gender are shown in the following tables:

### Q1 - Can you tell me if you have heard of any of the following official statistics on NI?

#### 1.1 Analysis by Age group

<i>All persons aged 16 and over</i> <i>Base = 100%</i>	16 – 24	25 – 34	35 – 44	45 – 54	55 – 64	65 – 74	75 and over	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
The number of births, deaths and marriages in NI each year	48%	46%	45%	49%	57%	44%	50%	48%
The size of the population of Northern Ireland	54%	48%	50%	43%	57%	50%	50%	50%
The number of casualties on NI roads	77%	76%	77%	78%	77%	75%	70%	76%
Recorded levels of crime in NI	58%	59%	55%	63%	66%	60%	51%	59%
Official statistics on hospital waiting times in NI	34%	50%	55%	66%	75%	66%	46%	57%
The number of unemployed persons in NI	76%	76%	79%	75%	79%	73%	54%	75%
Total	110	186	219	188	168	184	113	1,168

#### 1.2 Analysis by Gender

<i>All persons aged 16 and over</i> <i>Base = 100%</i>	Male	Female	Total
	%	%	%
The number of births, deaths and marriages in NI each year	52%	46%	48%
The size of the population of Northern Ireland	57%	45%	50%
The number of casualties on NI roads	80%	73%	76%
Recorded levels of crime in NI	63%	56%	59%
Official statistics on hospital waiting times in NI	57%	58%	57%
The number of unemployed persons in NI	79%	72%	75%
Total	489	679	1,168

**Q2. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement... Official statistics in Northern Ireland are generally accurate?**

**2.1 Analysis by Age group**

<i>All persons aged 16 and over Base = 100%</i>	16 – 24	25 – 34	35 – 44	45 – 54	55 – 64	65 – 74	75 and over	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Strongly agree	3%	6%	2%	5%	4%	4%	3%	4%
Agree	52%	48%	46%	48%	52%	52%	45%	49%
Neither agree nor disagree	27%	36%	38%	29%	31%	25%	34%	31%
Disagree	10%	6%	5%	12%	7%	10%	11%	9%
Strongly disagree	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%	2%	0%	1%
Don't know	8%	5%	8%	4%	6%	7%	8%	6%
Total	110	186	219	188	168	184	113	1,168

**2.2 Analysis by Gender**

<i>All persons aged 16 and over Base = 100%</i>	Male	Female	Total
	%	%	%
Strongly agree	3%	4%	4%
Agree	50%	48%	49%
Neither agree nor disagree	30%	32%	31%
Disagree	10%	7%	9%
Strongly disagree	1%	1%	1%
Don't know	6%	6%	6%
Total	489	679	1,168

**Q3. Why do you disagree that official statistics are generally accurate?**

<i>All persons who answered disagree or strongly disagree to Q2</i>	Total
	%
Statistics are manipulated or adjusted for political purpose	51%
Statistics are misrepresented or spun by politicians or the media	37%
Statistics are contradicted or disputed by politicians, the media or other sources	14%
Don't trust statistics, from personal experience	20%
Statistics are difficult to count or measure/information is not always reported	17%
Statistics alone do not tell the whole story/there is more to it than just the figures	28%
Other	6%
No opinion/don't understand figures or statistics	4%
Total	115

**Q4 - Before being contacted about this survey had you heard of NISRA, the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency?**

**4.1 Analysis by Age group**

<i>All persons aged 16 and over Base = 100%</i>	16 – 24	25 – 34	35 – 44	45 – 54	55 – 64	65 – 74	75 and over	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	18%	27%	36%	39%	36%	29%	17%	30%
No	82%	73%	64%	61%	64%	71%	83%	70%
Total	110	186	219	188	168	184	113	1,168

**4.2 Analysis by Gender**

<i>All persons aged 16 and over Base = 100%</i>	Male	Female	Total
	%	%	%
Yes	29%	31%	30%
No	71%	69%	70%
Total	489	679	1,168

**Q5. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement... Official statistics produced by NISRA are generally accurate?**

<i>All persons who have heard of NISRA</i>	Total
	%
Strongly agree	10%
Agree	61%
Neither agree nor disagree	22%
Disagree	3%
Strongly disagree	1%
Don't know	3%
Total	342

## **Notes**

This bulletin is based on findings from the April 2009 Northern Ireland Omnibus Survey. The Omnibus Survey is administered by the Central Survey Unit in the Northern Ireland Research and Statistics Agency.

It is based on a systematic random sample of addresses selected from the Land and Property Services Agency list of private addresses. In April 2009 a total of 2,200 addresses were selected for interview and at each address sampled a person aged 16 or over was randomly selected to complete the face to face interview. The results were weighted to take into account the fact that households are sampled rather than individuals, and individuals in a household with a larger number of respondents have a smaller chance of being selected than households with a smaller number of respondents. There were 1,168 respondents to the module.