

Public awareness of and confidence in Official Statistics in Northern Ireland – Findings from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) Omnibus Survey 2010.

In April 2010, 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 2010 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 1,212 respondents to the module.

Key findings:

- 57% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that official statistics in NI are generally accurate.
- 9% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that official statistics in NI are generally accurate. Of these respondents, 44% 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, 75% agreed or strongly agreed that official statistics produced by NISRA were generally accurate.

- 54% of respondents were aware of sources of information on the number of births, deaths and marriages in NI each year.
- 56% of respondents were aware of sources of information on the size of the NI population.
- 78% of respondents were aware of sources of information on the number of casualties on NI roads.
- 62% of respondents were aware of sources of information on recorded levels of crime in NI.
- 62% of respondents were aware of sources of information on hospital waiting times in NI.
- 60% of respondents were aware of the Census.
- 70% of respondents were aware of sources of information 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 sources of information about 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	50%	52%	58%	55%	58%	53%	51%	54%
The size of the population of Northern Ireland	54%	51%	58%	55%	66%	59%	46%	56%
The number of casualties on NI roads	65%	73%	88%	85%	83%	80%	65%	78%
Recorded levels of crime in NI	51%	58%	63%	70%	71%	62%	56%	62%
Statistics on hospital waiting times in NI	43%	52%	60%	76%	68%	70%	58%	62%
The Census	34%	52%	69%	64%	68%	71%	56%	60%
The number of unemployed persons in NI	62%	69%	74%	76%	74%	74%	55%	70%
Total	104	197	222	199	172	166	152	1,212

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	54%	55%	54%
The size of the population of Northern Ireland	59%	53%	56%
The number of casualties on NI roads	77%	80%	78%
Recorded levels of crime in NI	64%	61%	62%
Statistics on hospital waiting times in NI	60%	64%	62%
The Census	61%	60%	60%
The number of unemployed persons in NI	69%	71%	70%
Total	530	682	1,212

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	5%	7%	4%	5%	3%	5%	4%	5%
Agree	55%	54%	48%	49%	56%	53%	52%	52%
Neither agree nor disagree	28%	31%	36%	27%	24%	26%	27%	29%
Disagree	8%	3%	8%	10%	13%	8%	9%	8%
Strongly disagree	0%	1%	0%	2%	4%	2%	0%	1%
Don't know	3%	3%	5%	7%	1%	5%	7%	4%
Total	104	197	222	199	172	166	152	1,212

2.2 Analysis by Gender

<i>All persons aged 16 and over Base = 100%</i>	Male	Female	Total
	%	%	%
Strongly agree	7%	3%	5%
Agree	48%	56%	52%
Neither agree nor disagree	30%	27%	29%
Disagree	9%	8%	8%
Strongly disagree	2%	1%	1%
Don't know	4%	4%	4%
Total	530	682	1,212

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	44%
Statistics are misrepresented or spun by politicians or the media	35%
Statistics are contradicted or disputed by politicians, the media or other sources	15%
Don't trust statistics, from personal experience	21%
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	5%
No opinion/don't understand figures or statistics	10%
Total *	128

* Percentages may add to more than 100% due to multiple responses

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	16%	40%	38%	31%	35%	26%	16%	30%
No	84%	59%	62%	69%	65%	74%	82%	69%
Total**	104	197	222	199	172	166	152	1,212

** Total includes 'don't know' responses

4.2 Analysis by Gender

<i>All persons aged 16 and over Base = 100%</i>	Male	Female	Total
	%	%	%
Yes	29%	32%	30%
No	71%	68%	69%
Total**	530	682	1,212

** Total includes 'don't know' responses

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	12%
Agree	63%
Neither agree nor disagree	19%
Disagree	2%
Strongly disagree	1%
Don't know	3%
Total	363

Notes

This bulletin is based on findings from the April 2010 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 2010 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 1,212 respondents to the module.