Scottish Crime and Justice Survey

Consultation Analysis Report

Scottish Government
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Contents

1. Introduction

This paper summarises the responses and feedback gathered during the 2021 Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS) consultation. The aim of the consultation was to (i) engage with and explore the views of SCJS users on the current design of the survey, the survey's content and available resources and, (ii) gather all input and suggestions, which may inform the upcoming SCJS re-procurement process. We would like to thank all those who responded or attended our discussion events.

2. The Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS)

The SCJS is a large-scale social survey which asks people about their experiences and perceptions of crime in Scotland. Over the years, the SCJS has asked over ninety thousand people about their views and experiences of crime and justice in Scotland. It has found a 46% fall in crime between 2008/09 and 2019/20 and improvements in people's feelings of safety. Importantly, it has also identified varying levels of both crime victimisation and feelings of safety amongst different groups in society.

The SCJS is a key source of evidence on crime victimisation in Scotland, as well as issues relating to policing and the criminal justice system. It is used extensively by the Scottish Government to inform the design and effective delivery of policy as well as by academic stakeholders and justice organisations. The SCJS and Police Recorded Crime statistics are essential complementary sources of data that, together, present a fuller picture of crime in Scotland. The SCJS captures crime that does not come to the attention of the police, and helps validate the police recorded crime data and ensure crime and justice policy is based upon a comprehensive understanding of the victimisation rate in Scotland.

3. SCJS Re-Procurement

The current SCJS contract is coming to an end. Therefore, a new contract must be put in place through a re-procurement exercise. The current timeline for re-procurement requires that this contract should be in place in October 2022, with the new supplier beginning fieldwork in Spring of 2023. This process provides an opportunity for the survey to be reviewed, to ensure it remains meaningful and relevant to users.

4. Citizen Space Consultation and Discussion Events

To investigate the needs and views of survey users, a formal consultation ran on Citizen Space for 11 weeks, from the 23rd September to the 9th December 2021. A paper was prepared for the consultation which provided background information and outlined 8 'themes for feedback'. These themes aimed to capture a range of

feedback on different aspects of the survey's design and content. The themes are: the survey aims, its function as a crime survey, the sample & frequency, new question topics, the definition of 'SCJS crime', comparisons with the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW), the SCJS & further research, and future proofing. The consultation received 21 written responses.

In addition to the written consultation, the SCJS team facilitated a series of discussion events during the consultation period. Due to restrictions on social interaction as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, all discussion events took place online over MS Teams. Two events were advertised on the consultation webpage and via ScotStat, open to all individuals or organisations who had an interest in this topic area. 12 people attended the two open discussion events. An additional two events were organised for Scottish Government analytical and policy colleagues. Over 60 Scottish Government colleagues attended these events. All four events began with a short introduction from the SCJS team, followed by an open discussion structured according to the 'themes for feedback'. The views reported throughout this document are the combined feedback of all written responses and all discussion events.

To note, a further three user workshops took place in January 2022. These workshops are not discussed in this document. A [summary of these events](#) is available on the Scottish Government website.

## 5.	High Level Summary of Responses

All feedback and suggestions gathered throughout the consultation are valued and are being reflected on as part of the re-procurement exercise. However, the most commonly raised suggestions relate to the further **disaggregation of survey data** and **questions on specific topic modules**.

Further disaggregation of data was commonly requested. The most requested sub-groups of data can be broadly summarised as **local authority area**, **ethnicity**, and **gender**. Additional breakdowns such as data on those aged 16-18, those with disabilities, and other protected characteristics were also requested.

In addition to disaggregation of data, requests were made for specific question topics to be addressed in greater detail, modified, or entered as new additions to the survey. The topics most commonly referenced can be summarised as **partner abuse**, **gender-based violence**, and **cyber crime.**

6.   User Materials

The consultation explored opinion on the available SCJS user materials. These user materials are: i) the main findings report; ii) the excel data tables; iii) the interactive data tool and; iv) the data available through the UK Data Service (UKDS).

6.1   User Materials - [The Main Findings Report](#)

The Main Findings Report is the main publication which documents the results of the survey on an annual basis. The report contains a wide-range of evidence about experiences and perceptions of crime, the police and justice system in Scotland, as well as biennial results from the survey's self-completion modules which cover drug use, stalking and harassment, partner abuse, and sexual victimisation. The report also includes one-page infographic summaries by theme.

Reported reasons for using the main findings report include:
- To view trends in overall crime
- To view results on specific topics
- To include as background context in research or academic publications

Reported reasons for not using the main findings report include:
- The main findings do not provide the breakdowns and detail required
- The report is not relevant to their work

6.2   User Materials - [The Excel Data Tables](#)

For users who wish to explore the data collected by the SCJS, data tables for each topic area covered by the survey are available for download from the SCJS area of the Scottish Government website in Microsoft Excel format.

Reported reasons for using the excel data tables include:
- To further explore themes arising from the main findings
- To perform analysis in their area of interest

Reported reasons for not using the excel data tables include:
- Summaries being already available in the main findings report
- The data tables do not provide the disaggregation of data they require, such as by ethnicity and local authority area
- The use of the data tables is unnecessary or not relevant to their work

6.3   User Materials - <u>The Interactive Data Tool</u>

The interactive online tool graphically displays time-series data using SCJS findings. Using this tool, users can view findings for various sections of the SCJS, including rates of crime victimisation, confidence in and attitudes to the police, and perceptions of crime. Different visualisations can be created to highlight different aspects of the data, such as viewing trends over time and breakdowns of police divisions relative to the national average.

Reported reasons for using the interactive data tool include:
- To examine trends over time
- To generate questions for further research
- To quickly provide data and results in their area of interest

Reported reasons for <u>not</u> using the interactive data tool include:
- The user typically only required the main findings
- The tool does not provide the data and level of detail they require, such as local authority area
- They were not aware of the tool
- Using the tool is unnecessary or irrelevant to them

6.4   User Materials - <u>The UK Data Service</u>

The UK Data Service is an online resource which holds a collection of economic, social and population data for research and teaching. It is free to register and become a member of the UKDS. Registered users can request the download of SCJS data in SPSS, Stata and tab-delimited formats.

Reported reasons for using the data available through the UKDS include:
- To gather detail in specific areas
- To perform further analysis on their topics of interest

Reported reasons for <u>not</u> using the data available through the UKDS include:
- They were unfamiliar with or unaware of the UKDS
- They are not a member of the UKDS
- It is not relevant to their work

6.5   User Materials - Summary

Considering the range of feedback received, it is apparent that, going forward, the SCJS user materials must continue to cater for a variety of users and their requirements. This is illustrated by the contrasting feedback received for each available resource. For example, for some users, the main findings report was the only resource they used as this provided the information they required. However, for

other users, the main findings report did not provide the information they required, necessitating the use of other materials and data sources, such as the UK Data Service (UKDS). A similar contrast is seen when asked directly about the UKDS data, with some users stating they use the UKDS to conduct further analysis, whereas other users were unaware of or unfamiliar with the UKDS.

Although the SCJS already presents a range of user materials, comments were made which suggest possible changes to these resources and the manner they are presented could further increase the value of the statistics. It was highlighted that the survey data, which is currently available through the UKDS, could be better promoted. More specifically, information relating to the data content, format, availability, and the necessary process to request access and download, could be communicated to users of the SCJS in a clearer way. Similar considerations were extended to the interactive data tool, with users feeling the tool was useful, but underutilised due to their lack of familiarity with the resource. Considering this, it was suggested that to make the survey and resources more accessible, it may be beneficial to have a form of guide to assist users - which may include a catalogue of the survey data variables, and to have an online repository where requests are made publically available to avoid repetition.

7.   The Strengths and Weaknesses of the SCJS

Questions within the Citizen Space consultation asked users to state what they considered to be the strengths and weaknesses of the SCJS. A summary of this feedback, combined with insights gathered at the consultation events, is presented below.

7.1   Perceived Strengths of the SCJS

Respondents highlighted key strengths of the SCJS as being the collection of data which provides a comparable time-series since 2008/09, and the ability of the SCJS to capture crimes not reported to the police. Further comments stated strengths include the range of topics covered, and the ability to capture data on sensitive topics.

7.2   Perceived Weaknesses of the SCJS

Respondents highlighted the weaknesses or limitations of the SCJS to be a lack of disaggregated data to provide information on aspects such as local authority area, ethnicity, gender, and other protected characteristics. Further comments stated weaknesses include the ability of the survey to adequately explore the victim experience during a period of decreasing victimisation rates, a lack of international comparisons, not capturing community justice activities, and the exclusion of those who do not live in private residences.

8.   Themes for Feedback

The consultation document described 8 'themes for feedback'. These themes were: the survey aims, its function as a crime survey, the sample and frequency, new question topics, definition of SCJS crime, comparisons with CSEW, the SCJS and further research, and future proofing. The feedback related to each theme is outlined in the following sections.

8.1   Themes for Feedback - Survey Aims

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

Respondents were asked how the survey aims might be adapted, extended, or if new aims should be added in order to better align with user needs.

Broad agreement was found for the survey aims, with it often stated the aim of the SCJS should be to capture a representative picture of crime, including unreported crime throughout Scotland. However, some responses questioned the ability of the SCJS to accurately understand the victim experience for individual groups. For example, it has been stated that the inability of the SCJS to disaggregate data into lower-level demographic and geographic sub-groups may mean that the current survey aim '*examine the varying risk and characteristics of crime for different groups of adults in the population'* may not be adequately fulfilled at present. Further comments suggested there should be aims related to community justice, public health approaches, and community wellbeing in relation to crime and justice.

8.2   Themes for Feedback - Function as a Crime Survey

Respondents were asked how the survey might better complement the Police Recorded Crime Statistics and evidence three of Scotland's National Indicators, *perceptions of crime in the local area*, *crime victimisation* and *access to justice*.

Regarding the SCJS's function as a crime survey, respondents made comments which covered a range of issues. These comments include:

- Disaggregation of data would help to understand the experiences of victim groups and their locality in order to better inform the National Indicators.
- A suggestion was made to capture the precise location of incidents to ensure crimes are attributed to the correct geographical area.
- To capture victims the survey may otherwise miss, measuring cyber dependent and other cyber enabled crime could be improved.
- It was proposed that the SCJS should align with Police Scotland's medium-term strategic engagement themes.
- It was suggested that we should further explore respondent's experiences of the criminal justice system and their perceptions of sentencing (e.g. if sentences reflect the seriousness of the crime)

8.3 Themes for Feedback - Sample & Frequency

Respondents were asked their views on both the design of the survey's sample and its regularity, which operated on an annual basis before the COVID-19 pandemic.

A major theme of the feedback received was the extent to which the current size and representativeness of the sample ensured the survey could meet its stated aims. Comments generally demonstrated that users would highly value having further disaggregated data, in addition to that already provided – and that the current sample size is insufficient at achieving this. There were several areas where more disaggregated data was sought, including by local authority area, ethnicity, age groups (e.g. 16-18 year olds), gender, disability, and the other protected characteristics – and that the development of this information would be important in evidencing progress against several policy objectives.

To add further value to the data produced by the survey, suggestions were made to increase the overall sample size, change the sampling strategy to oversample in deprived areas, or use sample boosts to target particular sub-groups of the population where there is high user interest

Further comments were made in relation to the composition of the sample. Concerns were:

- The omission of those not living in private residences
- Not capturing people experiencing homelessness
- Not capturing people in rehabilitation
- Potentially missing victims of abuse due to their living circumstances
- Not including under 16s to explore children's experiences of and exposure to crime.

8.4   Themes for Feedback - New Question Topics

The consultation informed respondents of the current questionnaire length, and therefore the limited capacity to include new topics without removing or rotating out others. However, all respondents were asked to provide input on ideas for new question topics.

Comments were made expressing a need to improve and review the questions on domestic abuse and gender based violence to better understand victimisation, and ensure the survey's wording and questions are in line with current legislation. Specifics areas of abuse were highlighted, such as reviewing how the impact of coercive control is measured, capturing details such as harassment via unwanted gifts, and if it was an abuser who contacted the authorities to report an incident. Also highlighted was a need to expand the collection of cyber crime related data and incidents, with it stated that the survey must separate 'cyber crime' into 'cyber-enabled' and 'cyber-dependent' crime to allow for more detailed analysis. It was suggested that to capture incidents of cyber crime and fraud, the SCJS should consider the victim form used by the Crime Survey England and Wales.

Additional requests for new additions to the survey, or to expand current questioning were also proposed. These suggestions include:

- Hate crime, and the need to comply with current legislation
- Timeframes and the impact of this on victims, such as the time taken for decisions by the Police, Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service and the Courts
- Further explore views on convictions and sentencing, specifically whether survey respondents feel the 'sentence fits the crime' for a number of different crime types
- Questions which explore the recommendations from Lady Dorrian's report which reviewed the management of sexual offence cases
- Better understand the impact of crime, such as on the families of homicide victims
- Capturing harassment and feelings of safety on public transport
- Consider the ordering of topics in the self-completion section, such as illicit drug use and partner abuse

8.5   Themes for Feedback - Definition of SCJS Crime

Respondents were informed the current definition of 'All SCJS Crime' includes violent and property crime - views on this definition were welcomed.

Comments were made that to effectively measure crime within Scotland, consideration should be given to include cyber crime within 'All SCJS Crime'. An

additional comment stated that (if the scope of 'SCJS crime' remained the same) it may be more accurate to describe 'All SCJS Crime' as '*All SCJS Violent and Property Crime*'.

8.6   Themes for Feedback - Comparisons with CSEW

Respondents were asked for views or comments regarding comparisons made between the SCJS and the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW).

There was general agreement that comparisons with CSEW and other nations are positive. However, it was stated that legal definitions can differ between nations, which makes comparisons difficult. Further comments include that disaggregating data by ethnicity would bring Scotland in line with England and Wales, who publish information related to the justice system and ethnicity. Regarding the number of crimes captured, it was stated that the technical approach of the SCJS caps the number of reported crimes at 5, and CSEW has moved to capping at the 98th percentile.

8.7   Themes for Feedback - SCJS & Further Research

Respondents were asked if any aspects of the SCJS might be adapted to better enable users to undertake further research in their area.

Comments stated that a barrier to further research is the inability to disaggregate the data into the sub-group of interest, such as gender, age group, and local authority area. Additional comments questioned the accessibility of the current user materials (such as data availability and format), and awareness and knowledge of the re-contact database.

8.8   Themes for Feedback - Future Proofing

Respondents were informed that in light of the pandemic, and the resulting significant impact on the survey, there is a need to 'future proof' the SCJS. Respondents were asked for views and comments on how this might be achieved.

Regarding future proofing, comments primarily focused on survey methodology. These comments primarily suggested developing a mixed mode design, incorporating online and telephone data collection methods. It was noted that any change in data collection must consider accessibility issues, the quality of data, potential impact to the time-series, and any risk or ethical concerns which may arise through the use of a new survey mode. Comments were also made in relation to survey content, stating that to remain 'future proof', the survey should capture 'new' types of crime, such as cyber crime. It was highlighted that it is necessary to also consider inclusive communications (such as catering for British Sign Language) to

ensure all are able to contribute to the survey – and that this should be considered part of the design process, not a retrofit.

9. Next Steps

We would like to once again extend our thanks to all who participated in the consultation process. All suggestions, even those not explicitly stated within this document, are being considered by the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey team. The feedback gathered has significantly influenced and assisted in guiding various re-procurement and development work streams on survey design. Responses to the consultation have been published (where permission was granted) and are available to view on the [consultation webpage](#).

Three key streams of discussion have emerged from the consultation feedback, which are being taken forward as part of our review of the SCJS. The key streams can be summarised as survey design, ongoing user engagement, and questionnaire development. These streams of discussion were the basis of the three user workshops which took place in January 2022. A [summary of the feedback](#) gathered at these workshops and the accompanying papers which were distributed to attendees is available on the Scottish Government website.

9.1 Next Steps - Survey Design

Feedback and comments were made about aspects such as the sample size, the survey aims, and the survey scope. These comments informed the development of an options appraisal paper, that outlined potential survey design options, methodologies, and considerations such as sample size and strategy, and how these might align with user needs.

9.2 Next Steps - User Engagement

Given the feedback received, there is potential to improve the SCJS user experience through reviewing how the current survey data and materials are presented and promoted to users. For example, it has been raised that aspects such as the data available through the UK Data Service and the Interactive Data Tool could be better explained and promoted. The accessibility and promotion of these resources is being considered by the SCJS team, reviewing aspects such as their visibility on the website, the clarity of the data content, and overall ease of access. In light of this, the SCJS team are considering how to improve access and use of the available data and resources, and how to help users to navigate the questionnaire to understand what is included and when, as well as communicating any upcoming question or rotational changes.

9.3   Next Steps - Questionnaire Development

The survey team are committed to further development of the SCJS questionnaire to better understand the victim experience. Specifically, this work will relate to questions on partner abuse and cyber crime. Work has previously been undertaken on the development of the partner abuse module of the SCJS, but was paused in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Similarly, new questions on cyber crime were introduced to the SCJS questionnaire in 2018/19. The SCJS team are committed to further develop theses area by reviewing both topics. The feedback received during the SCJS consultation has highlighted that both partner abuse and cyber crime remain of high interest to survey users. The SCJS team will return to this questionnaire development work in the spring of 2022, with the goal of incorporating changes made in the first fieldwork year of the new survey contract.

10.   Updates and Contacting the SCJS Team

There are a variety of ways users can hear about upcoming SCJS related activity, or contact the SCJS team. The team welcome any input and suggestions from SCJS users.

- [Scottish Crime and Justice Survey website](#)

The Scottish Crime and Justice Survey collection on the Scottish Government website is the home and central online presence of the survey. All new publications and data are hosted here upon release. It is also the place for SCJS participants to find out more information (including our privacy notice) under 'Interviewee Information'.

- [ScotStat](#)

Alerts to updates on SCJS related activity (such as new publications) are circulated via ScotStat. Registered users can receive notification of new publications and related activity.

Please note that the Scottish Government moved to a new system on the 1st March 2022. While the underlying system has changed, the ScotStat branding has been retained and the new system serves the same function. Existing ScotStat users should re-register with the new system to continue to receive updates. Further information and a signup form is available at the following link: [ScotStat Register: Guidance](#)

- [SG Justice Analysts Twitter](#)

The @SGJusticeAnalys Twitter page posts updates on SCJS related activity, and other research and statistics on crime and justice in Scotland.

- [Contact the SCJS team by email](#)

Users can get in touch with the SCJS team to ask further questions or provide feedback on the survey at any time by getting in touch over email: SCJS@gov.scot.

- SCJS User Group

The SCJS team have established a user group to ensure that user engagement is an on-going part of each survey cycle. If you would like to become involved in the user group, please contact us: SCJS@gov.scot.

11.   Annex A – Citizen Space Questionnaire

PAGE 1: Consultation Paper

Prior to beginning the Consultation please read the associated Consultation paper.

The paper provides a brief overview of the survey, a summary of past changes and an outline of the aspects of the survey we would most like to receive feedback on.

Section 4 of the Consultation paper, 'Themes for Feedback', is especially important when answering Question 8 in the Consultation.

PAGE 2: Using the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS) Main Findings report

The latest SCJS Main Findings report.

Questions:

> 1. Do you use the findings from the SCJS Main Findings reports?
> 1a. If you answered 'Yes'. How and for what purpose do you use the SCJS Main Findings report?
> 1b. If you answered 'No'. Why not?

PAGE 3: Using the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS) Excel Data Tables

The latest SCJS Excel data tables.

Questions:

> 2. Do you use the SCJS Excel Data Tables?
> 2a. If you answered 'Yes'. How and for what purpose do you use the SCJS Excel Data Tables?
> 2b. If you answered 'No'. Why not?

PAGE 4: Using the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS) Interactive Data Tool

The SCJS Interactive Data Tool

Questions:

> 3. Do you use the SCJS Interactive Data Tool?
> 3a. If you answered 'Yes'. How and for what purpose do you use the SCJS Interactive Data Tool?
> 3b. If you answered 'No'. Why not?

PAGE 5: Using the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS) data available through the UK Data Service (UKDS)

[The SCJS Data available through the UKDS](.).

Questions:

4. Do you use the SCJS data available through the UKDS?
4a. If you answered 'Yes'. How and for what purpose do you use the SCJS data available through the UKDS?
4b. If you answered 'No'. Why not?

PAGE 6: Aims & Objectives of the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS)

See current aims of the SCJS in Section 3.1 of the Consultation paper. At present, the survey aims to:

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

Question:

5. What do you think should be the main aims and objectives of the SCJS?

PAGE 7: Strengths & Limitations of the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS)

When reflecting on the strengths and limitations of the SCJS please focus on specific aspects of the SCJS as opposed to the strengths and limitations of quantitative analysis or surveys more broadly.

Questions:

6. What do you believe to be the major strength(s) of the SCJS?
7. What do you believe to be the limitations of the SCJS?

PAGE 8: Adapting the Survey

When answering this question please refer to the 'Themes for Feedback' section of the Consultation paper, pages 14-15. To note, views on how the survey should be adapted need not be limited to the specific features discussed in the consultation paper.

Aspects of the survey we are seeking feedback on:
- the survey aims
- function as a crime survey
- sample and frequency
- new question topics
- definition of 'SCJS Crime'
- comparisons with Crime Survey for England and Wales
- SCJS and further research
- future proofing the survey

Question:

      8. How do you think the SCJS should be adapted? When answering you may wish to refer to the 'Themes for Feedback' section of the consultation paper.

PAGE 9: Further Comments:

Questions:

      9. Please provide any additional comments in the box below?