

Public awareness of and confidence in Official Statistics in Northern Ireland 2012 – Findings from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) Omnibus Survey.

In June 2012, 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 of 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 June 2012 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 1,015 respondents to the module.

Key findings:

- 61% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that official statistics in NI are generally accurate. This was not significantly different from the figure obtained in 2010, the last time the survey was run. The 2012 figure however was higher than the figure of 53% obtained the first time the survey was carried out in 2009.
- 9% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that official statistics in NI are generally accurate. Of these respondents, 39% thought that this was because statistics are manipulated or adjusted for political purposes.
- 31% of respondents had heard of NISRA before being contacted about the survey. Of these respondents, 76% agreed or strongly agreed that official statistics produced by NISRA were generally accurate.



- 41% of respondents were aware of sources of information on the number of births, deaths and marriages in NI each year.
- 45% of respondents were aware of sources of information on the size of the NI population.
- 67% of respondents were aware of sources of information on the number of casualties on NI roads.
- 48% of respondents were aware of sources of information on recorded levels of crime in NI.
- 63% of respondents were aware of sources of information on hospital waiting times in NI.
- 62% of respondents were aware of the Census.
- 71% 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 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	43%	35%	46%	39%	46%	39%	34%	41%
The size of the population of Northern Ireland	35%	38%	50%	41%	55%	46%	44%	45%
The number of casualties on NI roads	55%	70%	72%	65%	68%	68%	62%	67%
Recorded levels of crime in NI	36%	42%	54%	47%	53%	54%	44%	48%
Statistics on hospital waiting times in NI	43%	54%	67%	64%	71%	71%	67%	63%
The Census	41%	59%	70%	68%	70%	67%	50%	62%
The number of unemployed persons in NI	65%	71%	71%	76%	73%	71%	62%	71%
Total	96	159	191	162	155	147	105	1015

1.2 Analysis by Gender*

<i>All persons aged 16 and over Base = 100%</i>	Male	Female	Total
The number of births, deaths and marriages in NI each year	41%	41%	41%
The size of the population of Northern Ireland	51%	39%	45%
The number of casualties on NI roads	66%	67%	67%
Recorded levels of crime in NI	51%	45%	48%
Statistics on hospital waiting times in NI	62%	63%	63%
The Census	62%	63%	62%
The number of unemployed persons in NI	72%	70%	71%
Total	442	573	1015

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

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	6%	5%	4%	7%	6%	5%	7%	6%
Agree	57%	52%	58%	54%	63%	51%	47%	55%
Neither agree nor disagree	28%	33%	27%	28%	18%	29%	31%	28%
Disagree	5%	8%	7%	9%	8%	8%	10%	8%
Strongly disagree	-	-	1%	1%	2%	2%	1%	1%
Don't know	4%	1%	2%	2%	2%	4%	3%	2%
Total	96	159	191	162	155	147	105	1,015

2.2 Analysis by Gender

<i>All persons aged 16 and over Base = 100%</i>	Male	Female	Total
Strongly agree	5%	6%	6%
Agree	58%	53%	55%
Neither agree nor disagree	24%	31%	28%
Disagree	9%	7%	8%
Strongly disagree	1%	0%	1%
Don't know	1%	3%	2%
Total	442	573	1015

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	39%
Statistics are misrepresented or spun by politicians or the media	33%
Statistics are contradicted or disputed by politicians, the media or other sources	21%
Don't trust statistics, from personal experience	18%
Statistics are difficult to count or measure/information is not always reported	27%
Statistics alone do not tell the whole story/there is more to it than just the figures	30%
Other	12%
No opinion/don't understand figures or statistics	2%
Don't know	4%
Total *	95

* % 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	12%	36%	45%	32%	32%	31%	15%	31%
No	88%	62%	54%	68%	66%	67%	83%	68%
Total **	96	159	191	162	155	147	105	1015

**** 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	31%	32%	31%
No	68%	68%	68%
Total**	442	573	1,015

**** 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 Base = 100%</i>	Total
Strongly agree	12%
Agree	65%
Neither agree nor disagree	20%
Disagree	1%
Strongly disagree	0%
Don't know	2%
Total	315

Notes

This bulletin is based on findings from the June 2012 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 June 2012 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 1015 respondents to the module.

Figures in all tables have been rounded. Totals appearing within the text are calculated using unrounded data and as such may differ slightly from totals calculated directly from the tables.