

PBNI Public Perception Survey: 2016

Background

The Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI) was established as a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB), under the Probation Board (Northern Ireland) Order 1982 and the first Board was appointed in December 1982. Since 12 April 2010, when justice functions in Northern Ireland were devolved to the Northern Ireland Assembly and the Department of Justice came into existence as a new Northern Ireland Department, the Probation Board has been an executive Non-Departmental Public Body of the Department of Justice.

On a daily basis, PBNI provide;

- Assessment reports to courts to assist judges when they are sentencing offenders
- Assessment reports to assist Parole Commissioners when decisions are being made about releasing people from prison
- The supervision of offenders in the community who are required to comply with court orders or licence conditions
- Behavioural change programmes
- Oversight of community service (unpaid work)
- A Victim Information Scheme

PBNI staff also work alongside partner organisations in the statutory, voluntary and community sectors to minimise the risk of harm posed by offenders and ensure victims' views are taken into consideration. In all the work it undertakes the Probation Board seeks to reduce offending.

In order to gauge the level of public awareness, understanding, and satisfaction of the work of PBNI, the organisation included five questions in the October 2016 Northern Ireland Omnibus Survey. The questions are detailed in Appendix 1.

Omnibus Survey

The Northern Ireland Omnibus¹ Survey is carried out on a regular basis by the Central Survey Unit of the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) and is designed to provide a snapshot of the lifestyle and views of a representative sample of people of Northern Ireland. The survey comprises two distinct parts: core questions about the respondents and their individual circumstances, and a variety of mainly attitudinal questions commissioned by clients, which seek the views of the public on a range of issues.

As was the case with previous omnibus surveys, the sample for the October 2016 survey consisted of a random sample of addresses selected from the Land and Property Services Pointer database of private addresses. At each address, one person aged 16 or over was selected to participate in the survey. From an eligible sample of 1,920 addresses, 946 interviews were achieved, giving a response rate of 49%. Interviews were conducted between 3rd October and 10th December 2016.

¹ An omnibus survey is a sample survey which contains questions about a wide range of issues.

Survey Results

Awareness of PBNI (N=946)

Seven in ten of the survey respondents (71%) had heard of the Probation Board for Northern Ireland. This is a similar finding to that in the 2012 survey, when 68% of respondents had heard of the organisation and in the 2009 survey, when 65% of respondents had heard of the organisation.

The level of awareness was higher in areas of East Northern Ireland² than areas of West and South Northern Ireland (72% compared with 63%). The level of awareness in the Belfast and Outer Belfast Areas was 78%. A list of the structure of the Nomenclature of Units for Territorial Statistics (NUTS3) areas is included in Appendix 2.

Contact with PBNI (N=676)

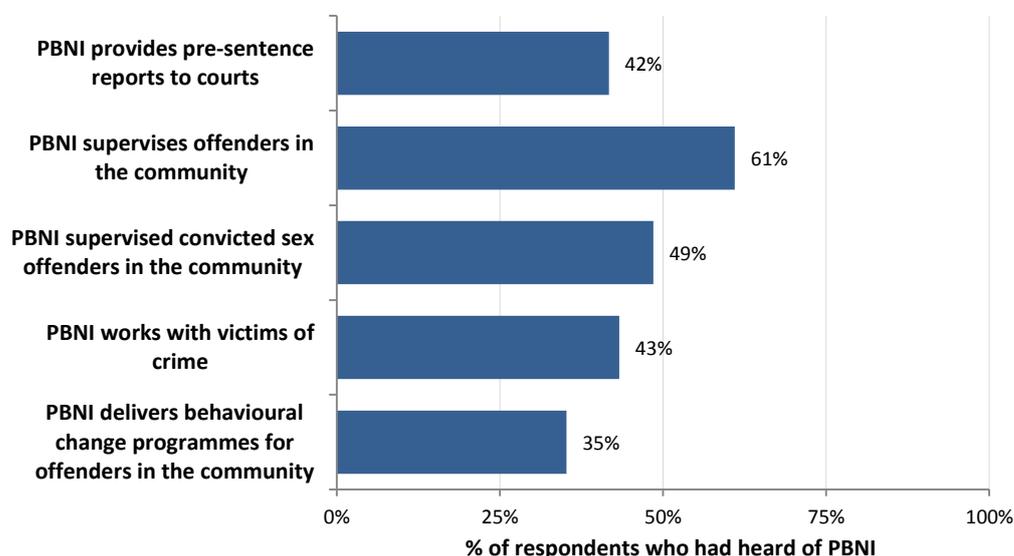
Of the 71% of survey respondents who had heard of PBNI; 87% had no contact with the organisation, 10% had contact in another capacity, 2% had contact as a victim, and 1% had contact as a service user.

Awareness of PBNI Services (N=674)

The same respondents who indicated they were aware of PBNI were subsequently asked to indicate whether they were aware of some of the services that PBNI delivers. Figure 1 below presents the level of awareness, among those who had heard of PBNI, for each of these services.

The chart shows that, at 35%, the level of awareness was lowest in terms of PBNI's provision of behavioural change programmes for offenders in the community. Awareness was highest in terms of PBNI supervising community sentences (61% of respondents were aware).

Figure 1: Awareness of PBNI Services



Effectiveness of PBNI (N=555)

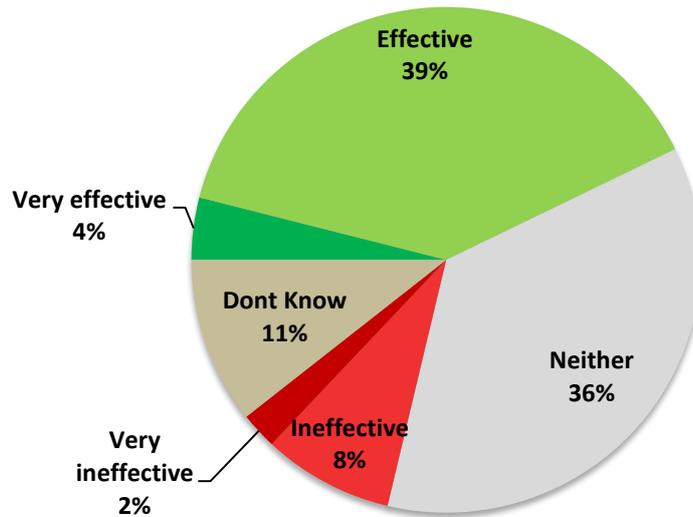
Respondents who were aware of at least one of the PBNI services above were asked to indicate how effective PBNI is at delivering the range of services.

Around two-fifths of respondents³ (43%) indicated that PBNI was effective⁴ at delivering services, while 11% of respondents indicated that the organisation was ineffective⁵.

² Using NUTS3 geocode designations; Belfast excluded.

At 36%, a substantial number of respondents were undecided, while 6% indicated that they did not know.

Figure 2: Effectiveness of PBNI



The level of effectiveness reported in this survey is similar to that reported in previous surveys; in the 2012 survey 41% of respondents and in the 2009 survey 39% of respondents indicated that PBNI was effective⁶ in its supervision of offenders.

³ Respondents who had heard of PBNI and were aware of at least one of PBNI's services.

⁴ Very effective/effective

⁵ Very Ineffective/ineffective

⁶ Very effective/Fairly effective

Appendix 1: List of Questions

Q1. Have you heard of the Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI, also known as the Probation Service)?

1. Yes
2. No

Q2. Have you had any contact with PBNI? (All respondents answering 'Yes' to Q1)

1. Yes, as a service user
2. Yes, as a victim
3. Yes, in another capacity
4. No contact

Q3. What other capacity is this? (All respondents answering 'Yes, in another capacity' to Q2)

(Open answer)

Q4. Which of the following services are you aware of? (All respondents answering 'Yes' to Q1)

1. PBNI provides pre-sentence reports to courts
2. PBNI supervises offenders in the community
3. PBNI supervises convicted sex offenders in the community
4. PBNI works with victims of crime
5. PBNI delivers behavioural change programmes for offenders in the community
6. None of these

Q5. How effective is PBNI at delivering these services in Northern Ireland? (All respondents answering 'Yes' to Q1 and choosing at least one of options 1-5 in Q4)

1. Very effective
2. Effective
3. Neither effective nor ineffective
4. Ineffective
5. Very ineffective

Appendix 2: List of NUTS3 Areas - Created using Local Government District Areas (1992)

Belfast

Belfast City Council

Outer Belfast

Carrickfergus

Castlereagh

Lisburn

Newtownabbey

North Down

East of Northern Ireland

Antrim

Ards

Ballymena

Banbridge

Craigavon

Down

Larne

North of Northern Ireland

Ballymoney

Coleraine

Derry

Limavady

Moyle

Strabane

West & South of Northern Ireland

Armagh

Cookstown

Dungannon

Fermanagh

Magherafelt

Newry & Mourne

Omagh