

Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland:

Annual report on
public awareness of the
system for complaints
against the police in
Northern Ireland,
2011

November 2011

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Executive Summary

This annual report presents the detailed findings from the 2011 Omnibus Survey. The report also provides trend data for key questions. The headline figures from this survey have already been published in the 2010/11 Annual Report. The main findings are:

- The majority of respondents have never experienced unacceptable behaviour from a police officer.
- The most frequently reported type of unacceptable behaviour was that a police officer had been disrespectful or impolite.
- More respondents said that they would go first of all to a police station in order to make a complaint against the police rather than go to the Police Ombudsman or a solicitor.
- A high proportion of respondents said that they had heard of the Police Ombudsman.
- Younger respondents were less likely than older respondents to be aware of the Police Ombudsman or to feel that he was independent of the police.
- The majority of respondents who had heard of the Police Ombudsman thought that he was independent of the police.
- Eight out of ten respondents were confident that the Police Ombudsman deals with complaints in an impartial way.
- The majority of respondents thought that they would be fairly treated if they were to make a complaint against a police officer to the Police Ombudsman.
- Almost nine out of ten respondents felt that a police officer being complained about would be treated fairly.

- The majority of respondents felt that the Police Ombudsman would help ensure that the police in Northern Ireland do a good job.

Introduction

The Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland was established by the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 1998 to provide an independent system for investigating complaints against the police in Northern Ireland.

The Police Ombudsman's Office is committed to carrying out research and consultation in order to improve the quality and effectiveness of the police complaints system. It is also committed to both informing the public about the Police Ombudsman's powers of independent investigation and gaining the confidence of both the public and the police in the police complaints system and processes. As part of a programme of research, the Office has carried out annual surveys of public awareness of the police complaints system since October 2000.

This report presents detailed findings from the twelfth survey, which was carried out in February 2011. The key results from this survey were published in the 2010/11 Annual Report. The data was collected through a module in the Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency's (NISRA) Omnibus Survey.

The report provides information on:

- perceptions and experiences of police misconduct;
- awareness and independence of the Police Ombudsman;
- perceptions of the impartiality of investigation of complaints by the Police Ombudsman;
- perceptions of fairness and equality of treatment of the public and police by the Police Ombudsman;
- perceptions of improvements in policing due to the existence of the Police Ombudsman's Office and
- trend data for key questions.

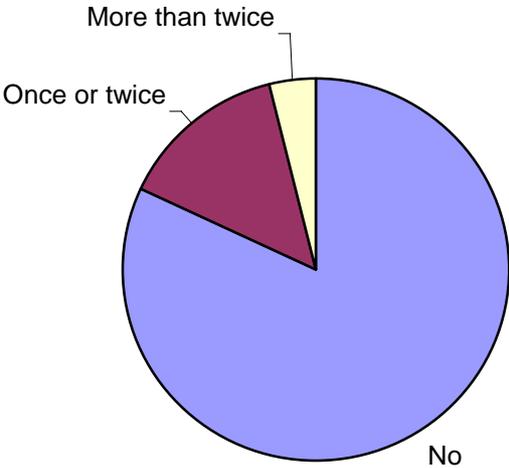
Survey findings

Perceptions of police misconduct

When asked “has a police officer ever behaved towards you in a way that you thought was unacceptable?” the majority of respondents (82%), in 2011 said no (Figure 1).

The majority of respondents said police officers had not behaved unacceptably;

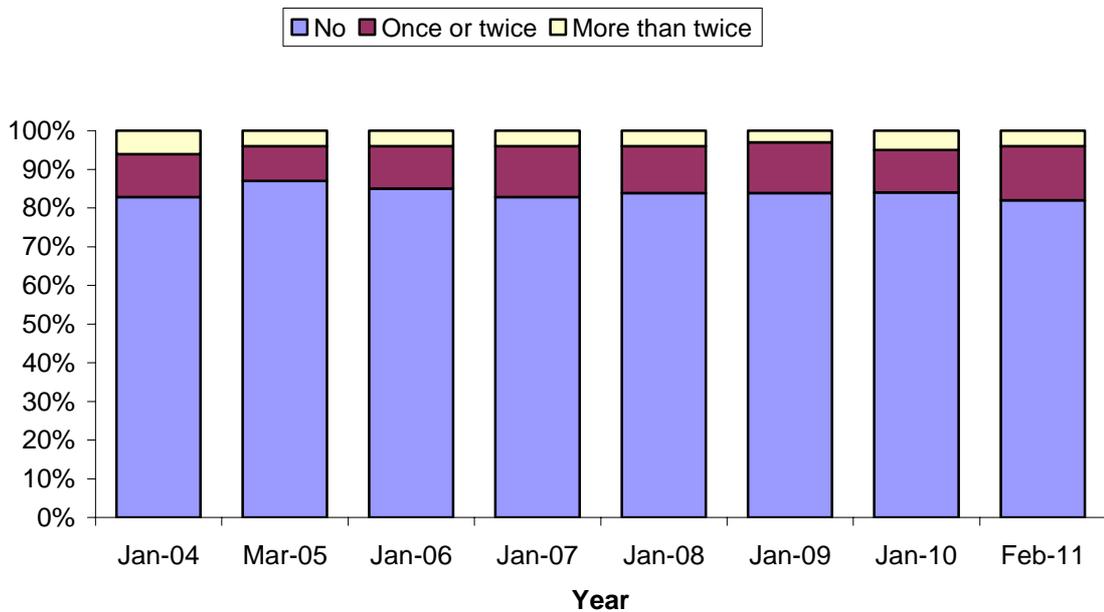
Figure 1: Has a police officer ever behaved towards you in a way that you thought was unacceptable, 2011?



Proportions of respondents who have experienced unacceptable behaviour from a police officer has remained steady over time, except in 2005 when a smaller proportion of respondents stated that they had experienced unacceptable behaviour at least once (Figure 2).

Majority of respondents have not experienced unacceptable behaviour over time;

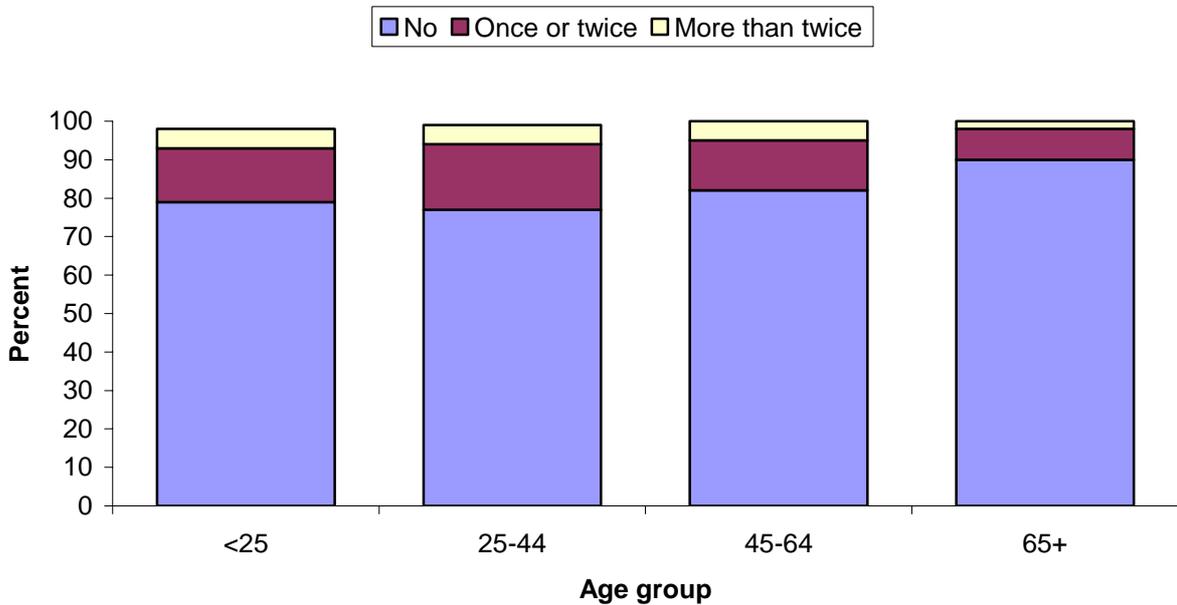
Figure 2: Has a police officer ever behaved towards you in a way you thought was unacceptable?



In 2011, there was a higher proportion of men than women who stated that they had been treated unacceptably on at least one occasion. Similar proportions of Catholics and Protestants had experienced unacceptable behaviour. Respondents aged 65 and over were less likely than respondents in younger age groups to say that they had experienced unacceptable treatment (Figure 3).

Older respondents were less likely than younger respondents to say they had experienced unacceptable behaviour;

Figure 3: Has a police officer ever behaved towards you in a way that you thought was unacceptable, 2011?



Those respondents who stated that they had been treated unacceptably by a police officer were asked to elaborate further; to describe the way in which the officer had behaved; whether or not they had complained about the incident; and, if they hadn't complained, why they hadn't.

When asked what the officer did that they felt was unacceptable, the most common response was that the officer was disrespectful or impolite to the respondent.

Table 1 shows a full breakdown of the types of unacceptable behaviour reported by respondents in 2011.

Table 1: Types of unacceptable behaviour experienced, 2011

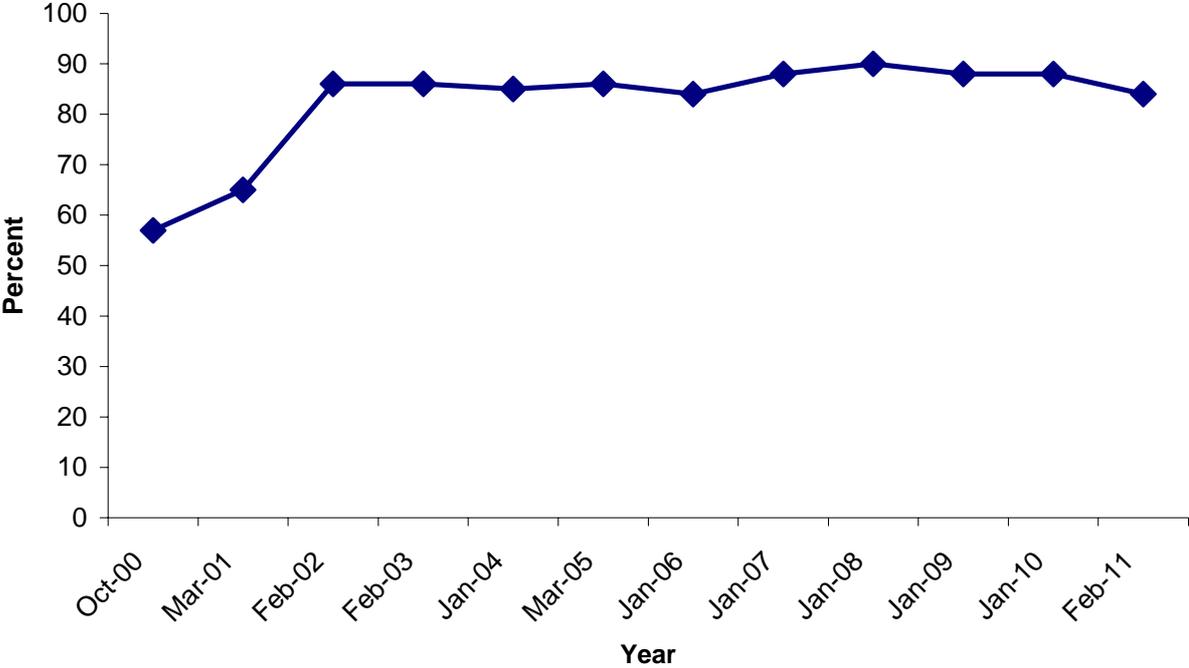
Behaviour	% Respondents
Officer was disrespectful or impolite	58
Officer did not carry out their duty properly	27
Officer didn't follow proper procedures	25
Officer wrongly accused you of behaviour	25
Harassment	18
Stopped or searched without reason	12
Officer was violent	11
Discrimination by race, gender, age or religion	11
Officer swore	11
Officer used sectarian, racist or sexist language	8
Officer searched house without reason	3
Officer took an item of respondent's property	2
Other	2
Don't know/refusal	2

Awareness of the Police Ombudsman

In 2011, the majority of respondents (84%) stated that they had heard of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland. Figure 4 shows that awareness levels have been consistently high since 2002, although the level reported in 2011 was lower than the levels reported over the last four years.

High levels of awareness of Police Ombudsman over time;

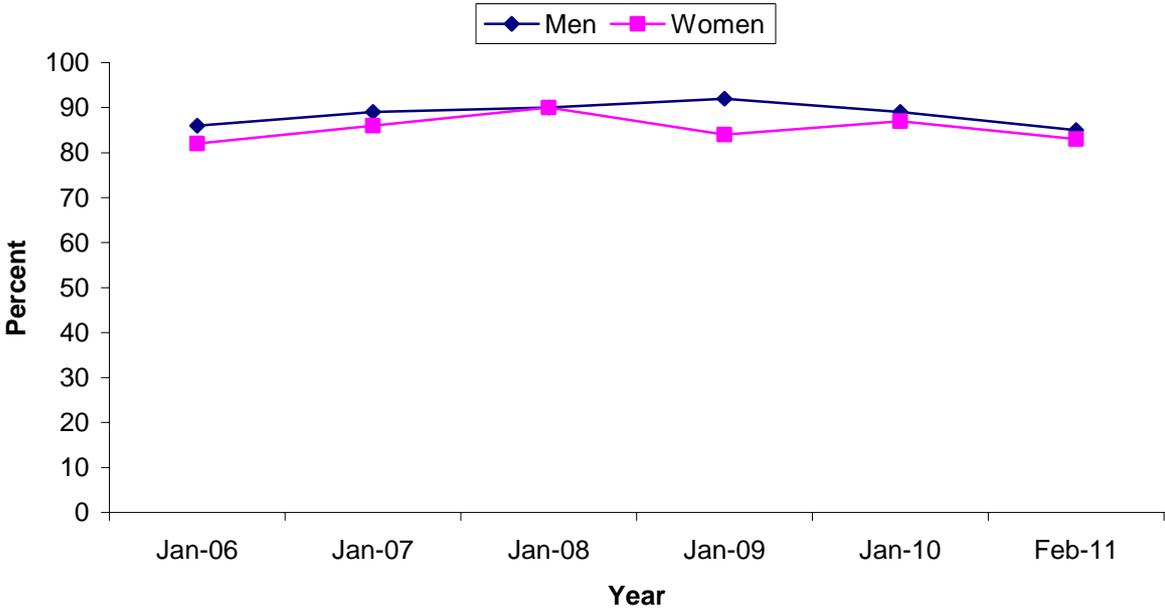
Figure 4: Level of awareness of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland, 2000 - 2011



In 2011, similar proportions of men and women had heard of the Police Ombudsman. This trend has been consistent since 2006, except in 2009, when women were less likely than men to be aware of the Police Ombudsman (Figure 5).

Awareness of the Police Ombudsman similar among men and women;

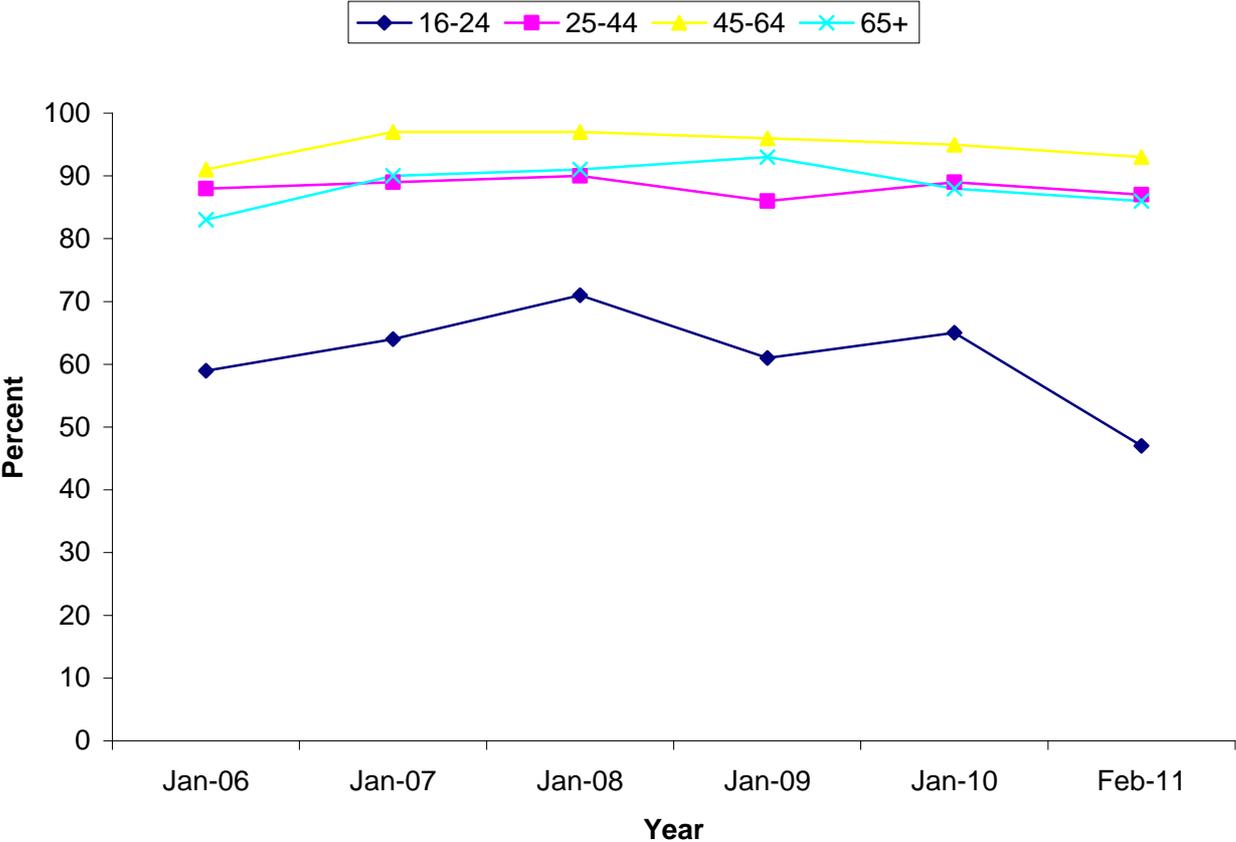
Figure 5: Level of awareness of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland by gender, 2006 - 2011



Since 2006, awareness levels among respondents aged 25 or less have been consistently lower than older age groups (Figure 6). From 2010 to 2011, the awareness level among respondents aged 25 or less dropped 18 percentage points to 47%.

Awareness was lower among younger respondents;

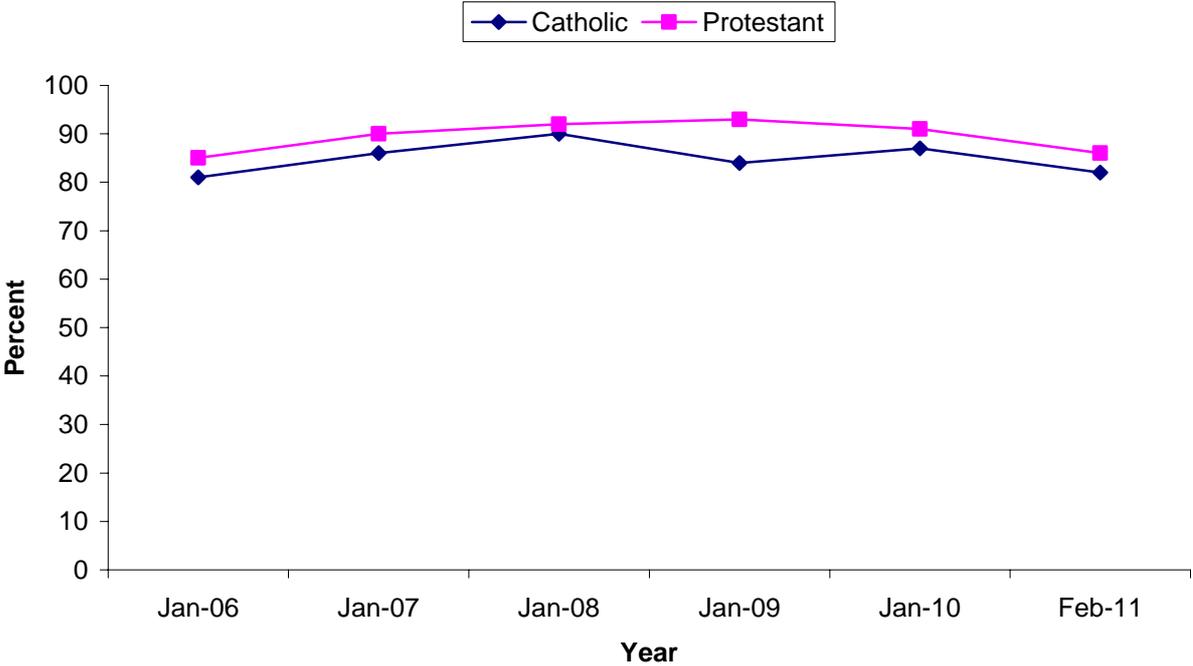
Figure 6: Level of awareness of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland by age group, 2006 - 2011



In 2011, awareness of the Police Ombudsman was similar among Protestants and Catholics. Figure 7 shows that this trend has continued since 2006 except for 2009, when Catholic respondents were less likely to be aware of the Police Ombudsman than Protestant respondents.

Awareness level was generally similar among Catholics and Protestants over time;

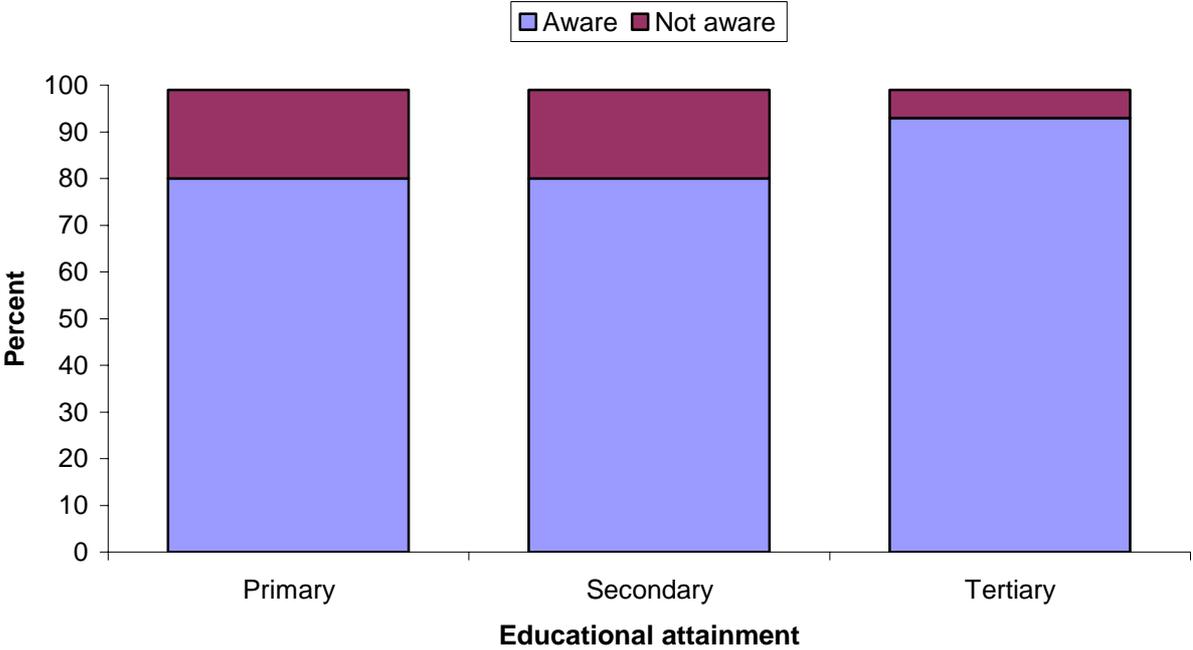
Figure 7: Level of awareness of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland by religious belief, 2006 - 2011



In 2011, higher levels of awareness of the Police Ombudsman were reported for those respondents in paid employment compared with those not in paid employment. Awareness of the Police Ombudsman also varied according to the respondents' level of educational attainment during 2011, with higher levels of educational attainment being associated with higher levels of awareness (Figure 8).

Awareness was highest among those with higher levels of educational attainment;

Figure 8: Level of awareness of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland by highest educational qualification, 2011

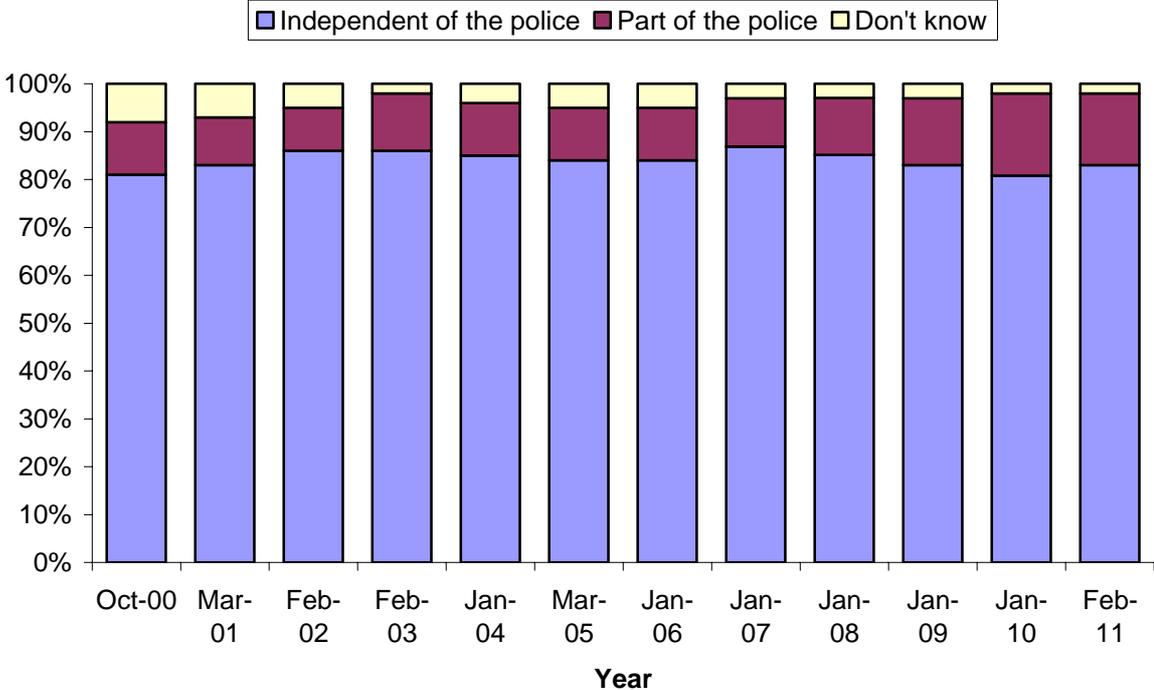


Independence of the Police Ombudsman

All respondents who had heard of the Police Ombudsman were asked for their opinion on whether or not the Police Ombudsman was independent of the police or part of the police. In 2011, the majority of these respondents (83%) felt that the Police Ombudsman was independent of the police. The proportion who thought that the Police Ombudsman was independent of the police has been consistently high since 2000 (Figure 9).

Respondents continue to feel Ombudsman is independent of police;

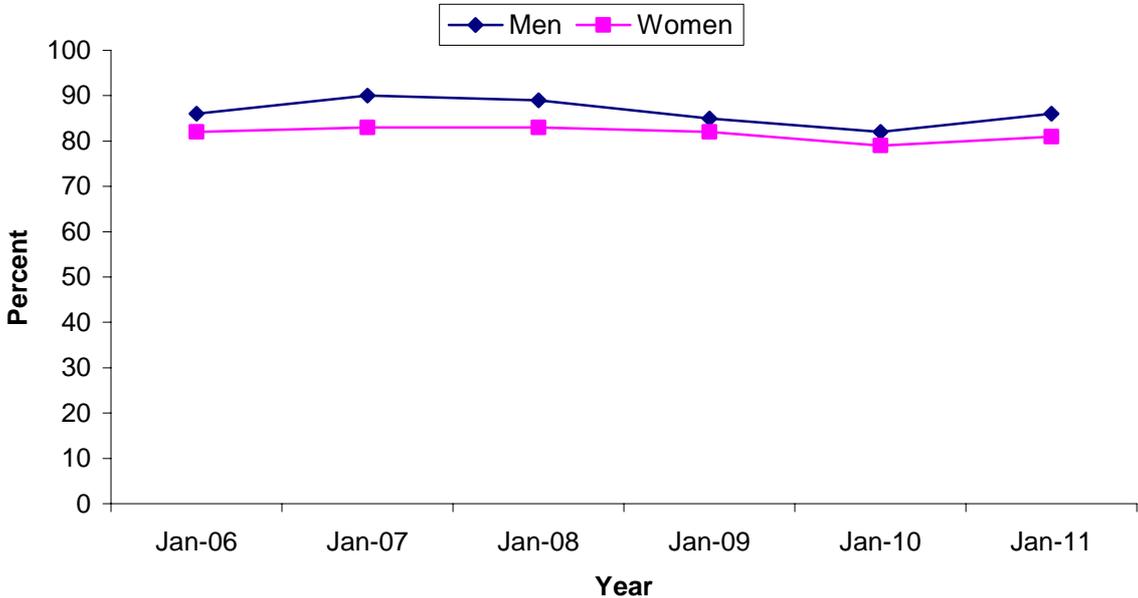
Figure 9: Do you think the Police Ombudsman is part of the police or independent of the police?



In 2011, awareness of the independence of the Police Ombudsman was higher among men than women. Awareness levels have been similar over time, except for in 2007 and 2008 when men were more likely to be aware of the independence of the Police Ombudsman compared with women (Figure 10).

Similar levels of awareness of the Ombudsman’s independence among men and women;

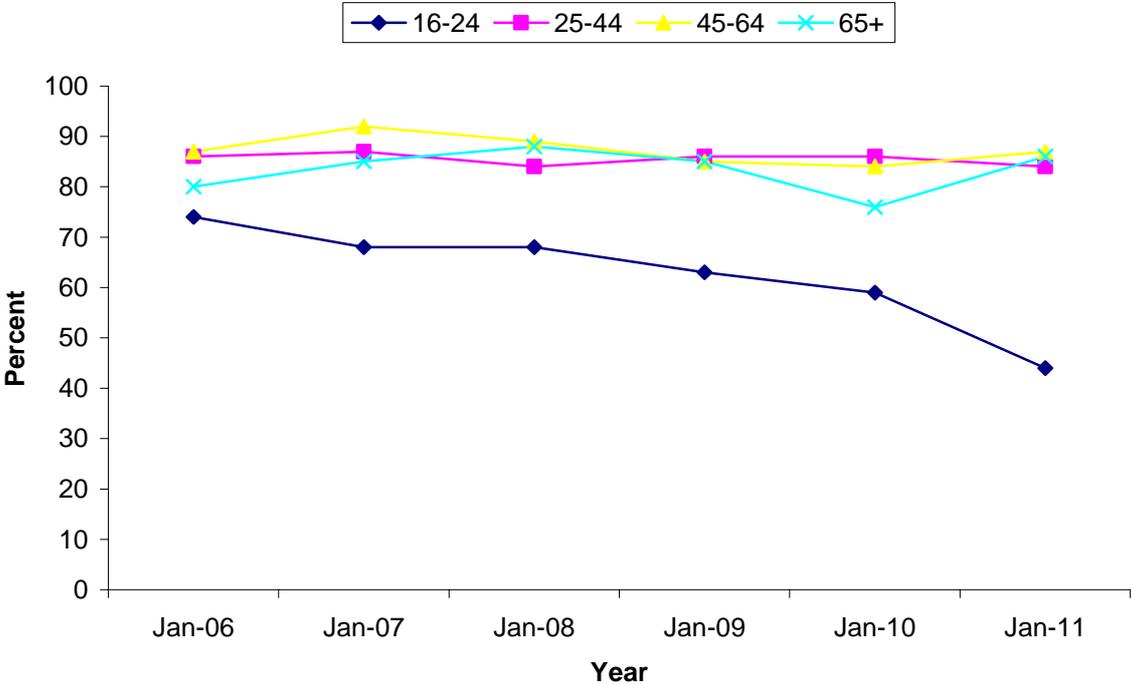
Figure 10: Level of awareness of the independence of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland by gender, 2006 - 2011



In 2011, respondents under 25 showed a lower level of awareness of the independence of the Police Ombudsman than other age groups. Figure 11 shows that this trend has been consistent over time. Overall awareness of the independence of the Police Ombudsman has continued to decline among younger respondents, with awareness levels falling from 59% in 2010 to 44% in 2011.

Decline in awareness levels of independence among under 25s;

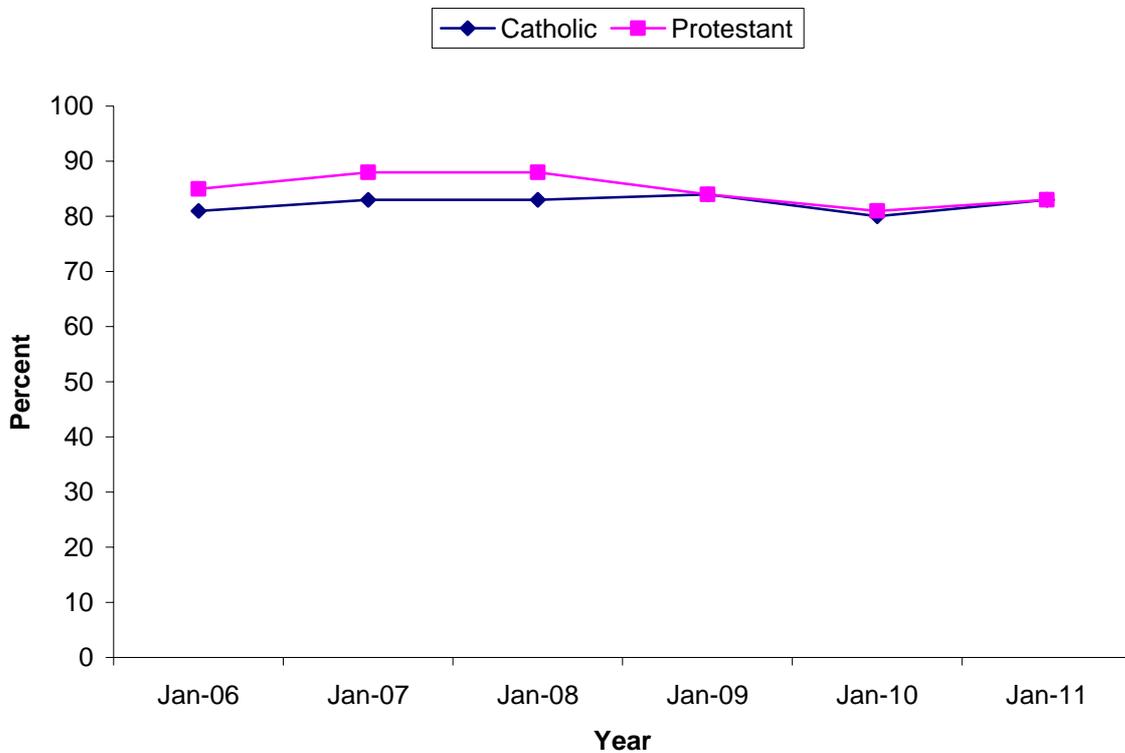
Figure 11: Level of awareness of the independence of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland by age group, 2006 - 2011



In 2011, awareness of the Office's independence was similar among Catholics and Protestants. Figure 12 shows that awareness levels have been similar among Catholics and Protestants over time except for 2007 and 2008 when Protestant respondents were more likely than Catholic respondents to think that the Police Ombudsman was independent of the police.

Similar levels of awareness of Ombudsman's independence among Catholics and Protestants;

Figure 12: Level of awareness of the independence of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland - by religious belief, 2006 - 2011

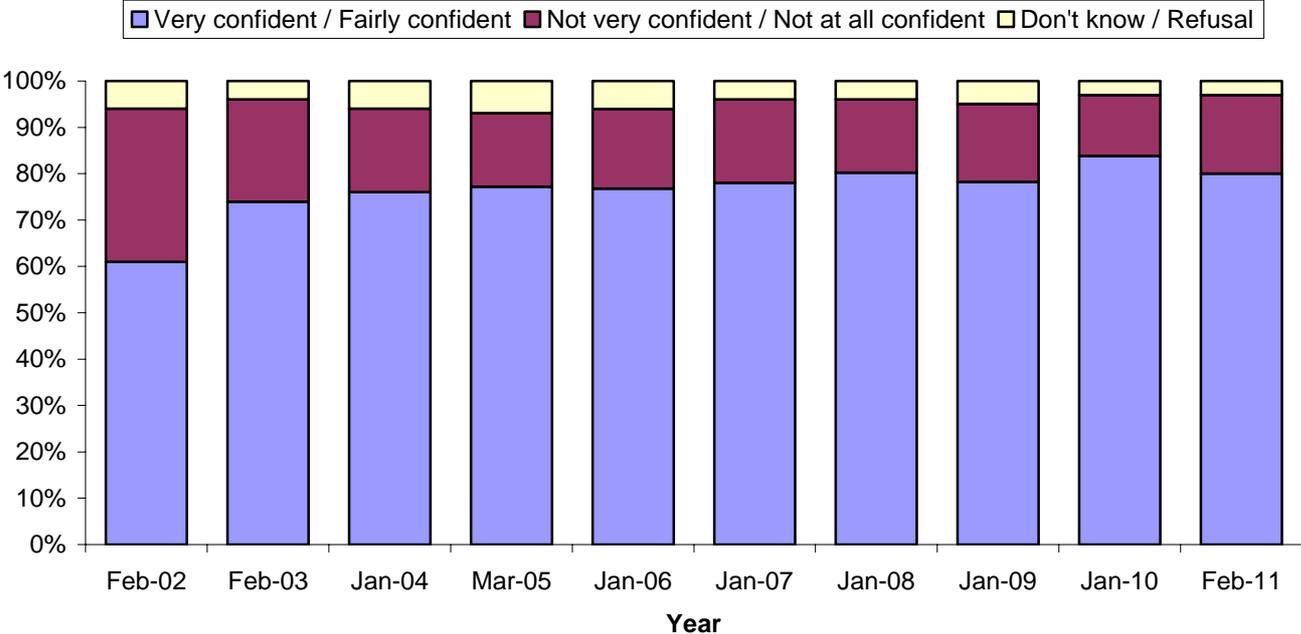


Impartiality of investigation

In 2011, the majority of those respondents who had heard of the Police Ombudsman were fairly confident or very confident that the Police Ombudsman deals with complaints in an impartial way. Figure 13 shows that confidence in the impartiality of the Police Ombudsman has increased markedly since February 2002, but that the trend has also slowed down significantly.

Continued confidence in Police Ombudsman’s impartiality;

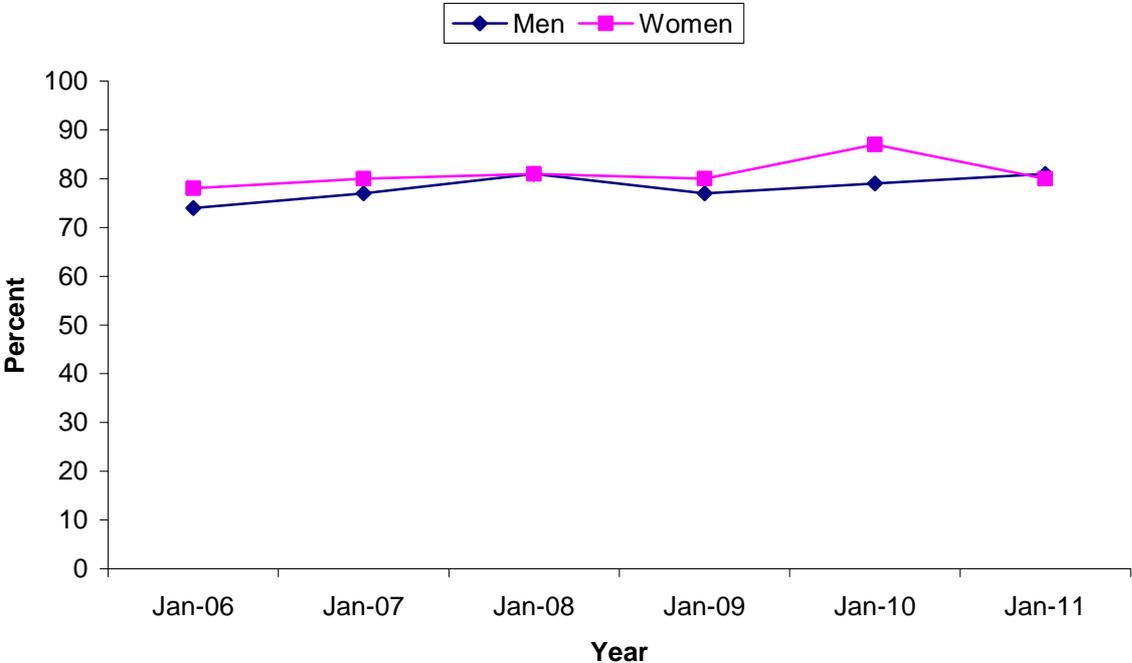
Figure 13: How confident are you that the Police Ombudsman deals with complaints in an impartial way?



In 2011, similar proportions of men and women were confident that the Police Ombudsman deals with complaints in an impartial manner. Figure 14 shows that this trend has been consistent over time except during 2010 when women were more likely than men to think that the Ombudsman deals with complaints impartially. Confidence levels among women decreased from 2010 to 2011, so that in 2011 levels were similar among men and women.

Men and women continue to be confident in Ombudsman’s impartiality;

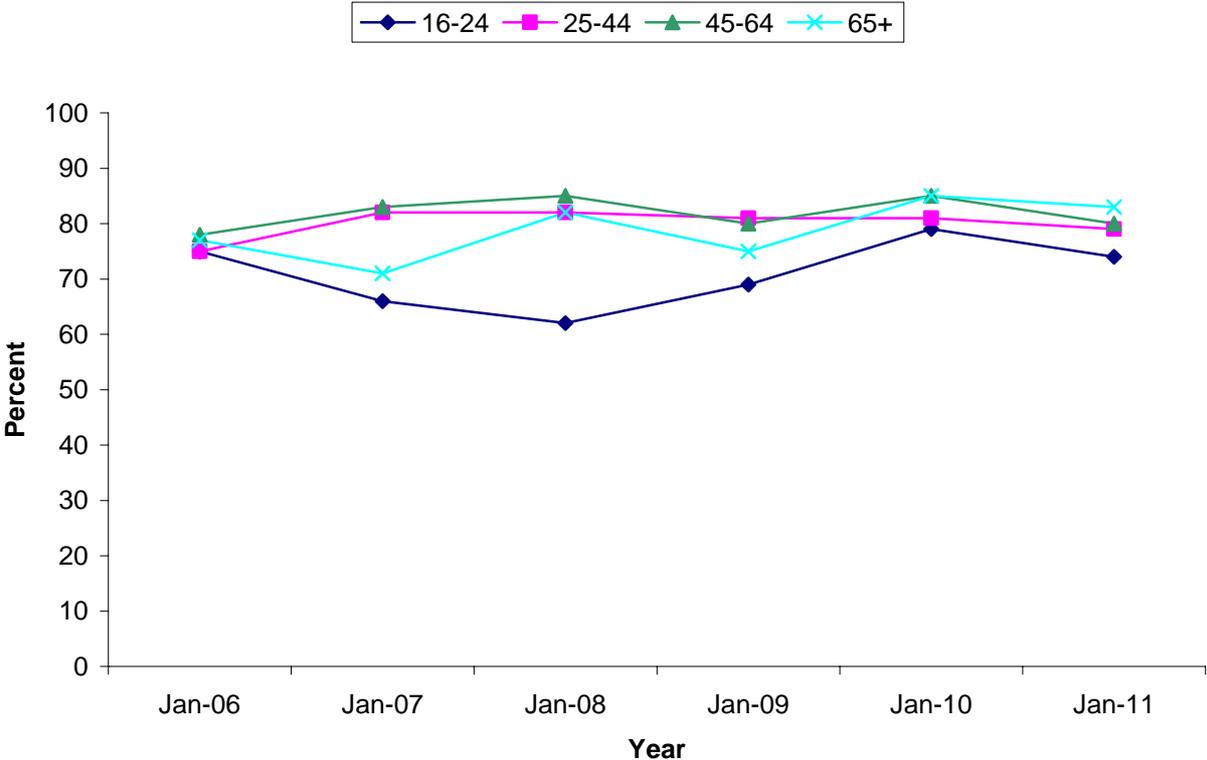
Figure 14: Level of confidence that the Police Ombudsman deals with complaints in an impartial way - by gender, 2006 - 2011



In 2011, respondents aged under 25 showed similar levels of confidence in the impartiality of the Office compared with older age groups (Figure 15). From 2007 to 2009, younger respondents generally showed lower levels of confidence than older respondents.

Increased confidence levels in under 25 age group;

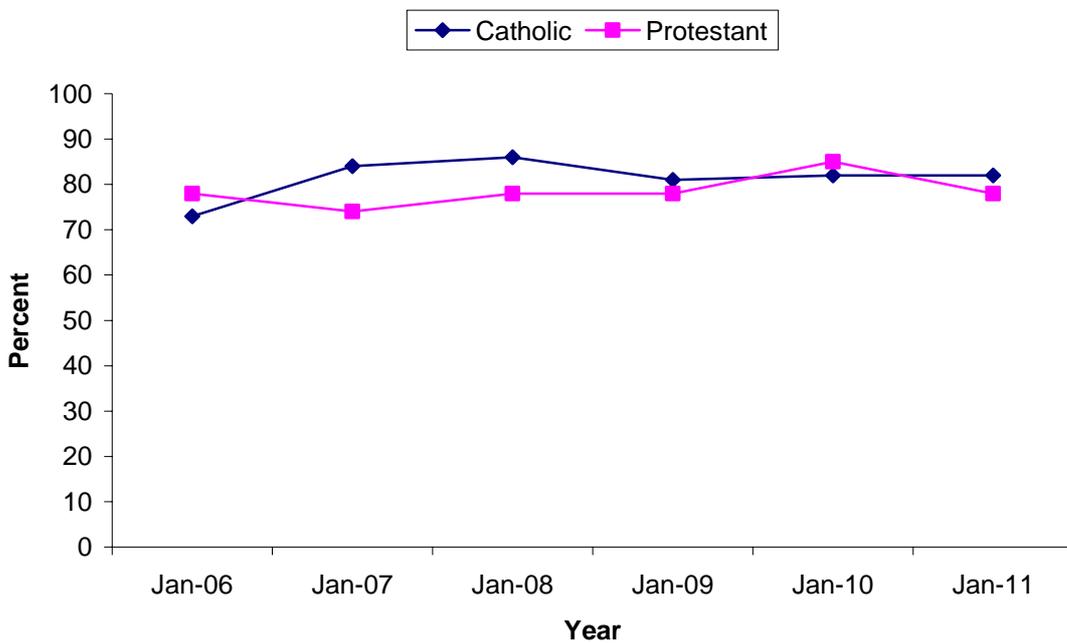
Figure 15: Level of confidence that the Police Ombudsman deals with complaints in an impartial way - by age group, 2006 - 2011



In 2011, there was little difference in the proportions of Catholic and Protestant respondents who were confident that investigations are dealt with in an impartial manner. Figure 16 shows that generally over the last three years, confidence among Catholics and Protestants was similar.

Catholics and Protestants confident that investigations dealt with impartially;

Figure 16: Level of confidence that the Police Ombudsman deals with complaints against the police in an impartial way, by religious belief, 2006 - 2011

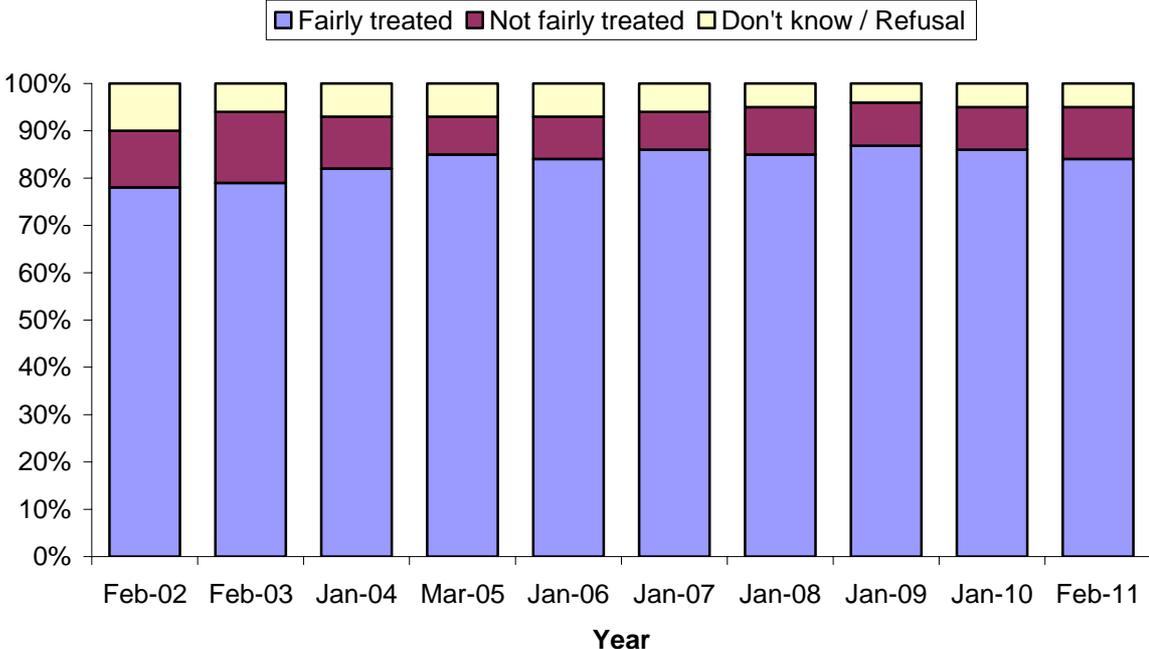


Fairness and equality of treatment of complainant and police officers

Respondents were asked how they felt complainants and police officers would be treated by the Police Ombudsman in the event of a complaint being made. In 2011, 84% of respondents stated that they thought that they would be treated fairly if they made a complaint against a police officer (Figure 17). This proportion increased significantly between 2002 and 2007; however this trend has slowed over the last five years.

Respondents continue to feel they are treated fairly;

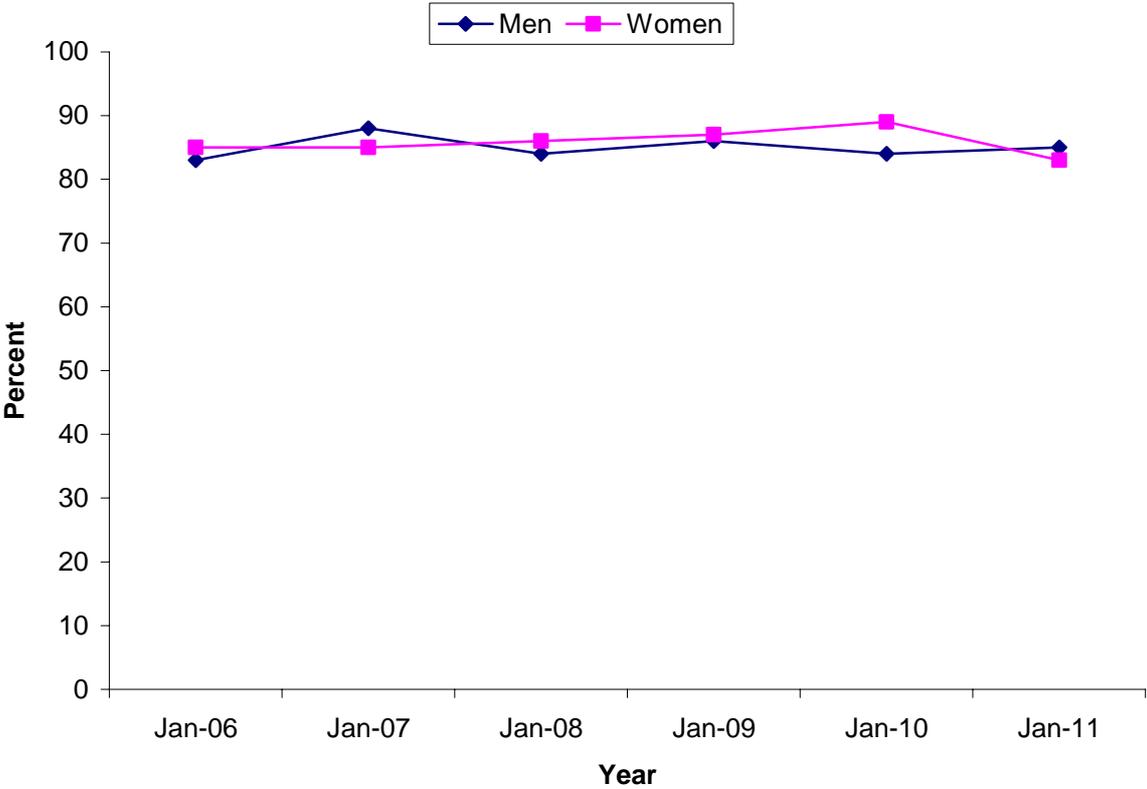
Figure 17: If you were to make a complaint against a police officer to the Police Ombudsman, do you think you would be treated fairly?



Further analysis shows that in 2011, similar proportions of men and women felt that they would be treated fairly if they made a complaint to the Ombudsman. This trend has been consistent over time, except in 2010, when women were more likely than men to think they were treated fairly (Figure 18).

Men and women felt they would be treated fairly;

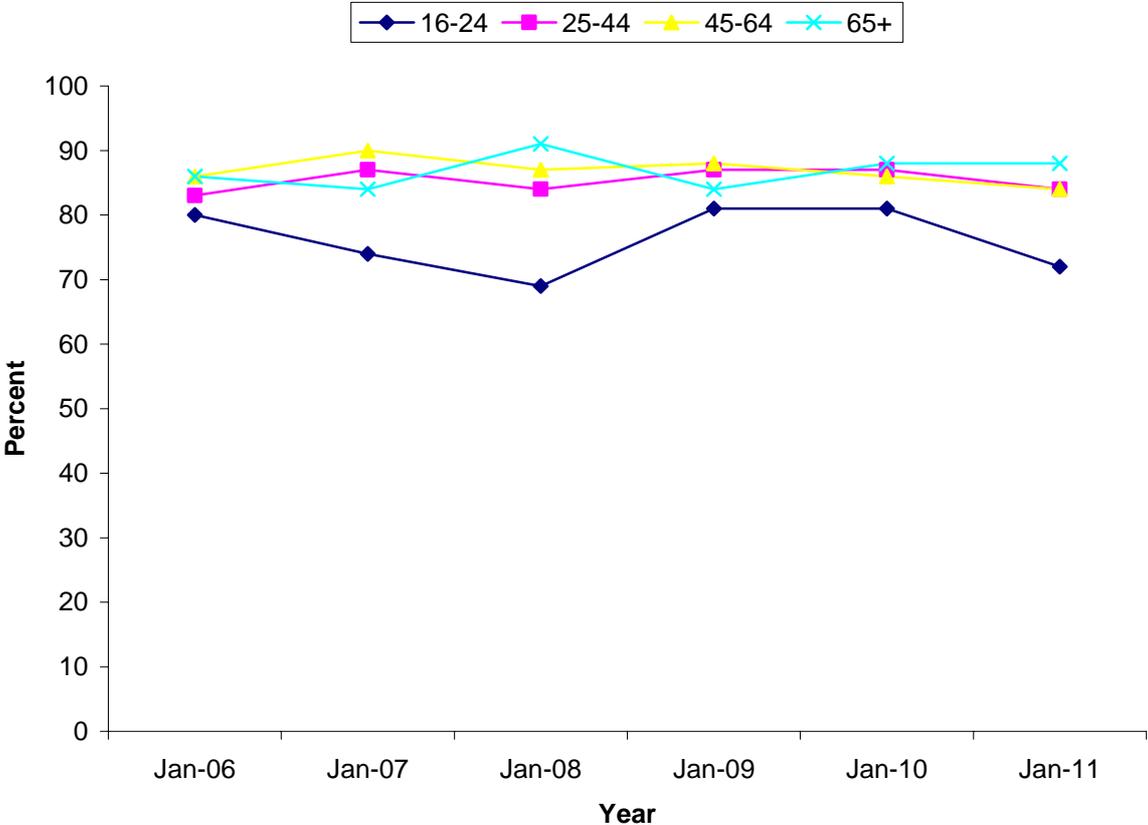
Figure 18: Fair treatment by the Police Ombudsman - by gender, 2006 - 2011



In 2011, respondents aged under 25 were less likely than respondents aged 65+ to think they would be treated fairly by the Ombudsman if they were to make a complaint to the Office. In 2007 and 2008, respondents aged under 25 were less likely than older respondents to feel that they would be treated fairly by the Ombudsman over time (Figure 19).

Under 25s less likely to think they would be treated fairly;

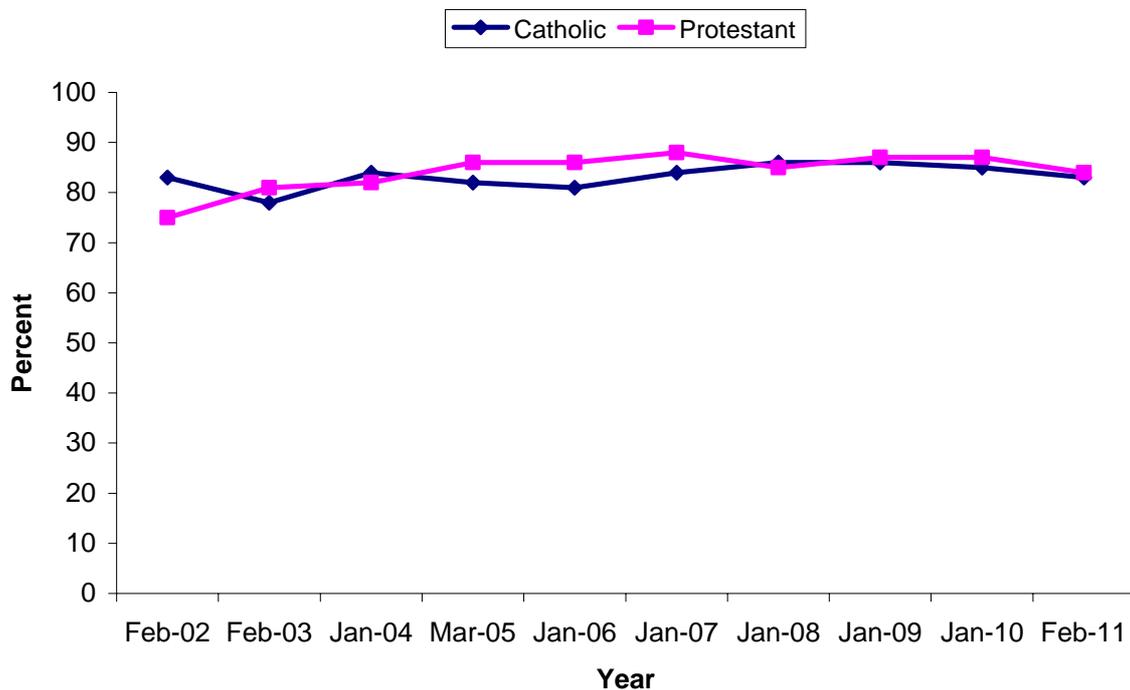
**Figure 19: Fair treatment by the Police Ombudsman -
by age group
2006 - 2011**



In 2011, similar proportions of Catholics and Protestants were likely to think they would be treated fairly if they made a complaint (Figure 20). This has been the general trend observed over time, however in 2006; Protestant respondents were more likely than Catholic respondents to think that they would be treated fairly.

Catholic and Protestant respondents treated fairly;

**Figure 20: Fair treatment by the Police Ombudsman-
by religious belief
2002 - 2011**



When respondents were asked did they think the **police officer** would be treated fairly, in 2011, 89% of respondents thought police officers would be treated fairly by the Police Ombudsman in the event of a complaint being made against them.

Similar proportions of men and women and Catholics and Protestants believed that police officers would be treated fairly in 2011.

Those respondents who felt that either the complainant or the police officer would not be treated fairly by the Police Ombudsman, were subsequently asked who they felt would be treated better; the complainant or the police office. In 2011, 72% of these respondents felt that the police officer would be treated better than the complainant, while 19% thought that the complainant would be treated better.

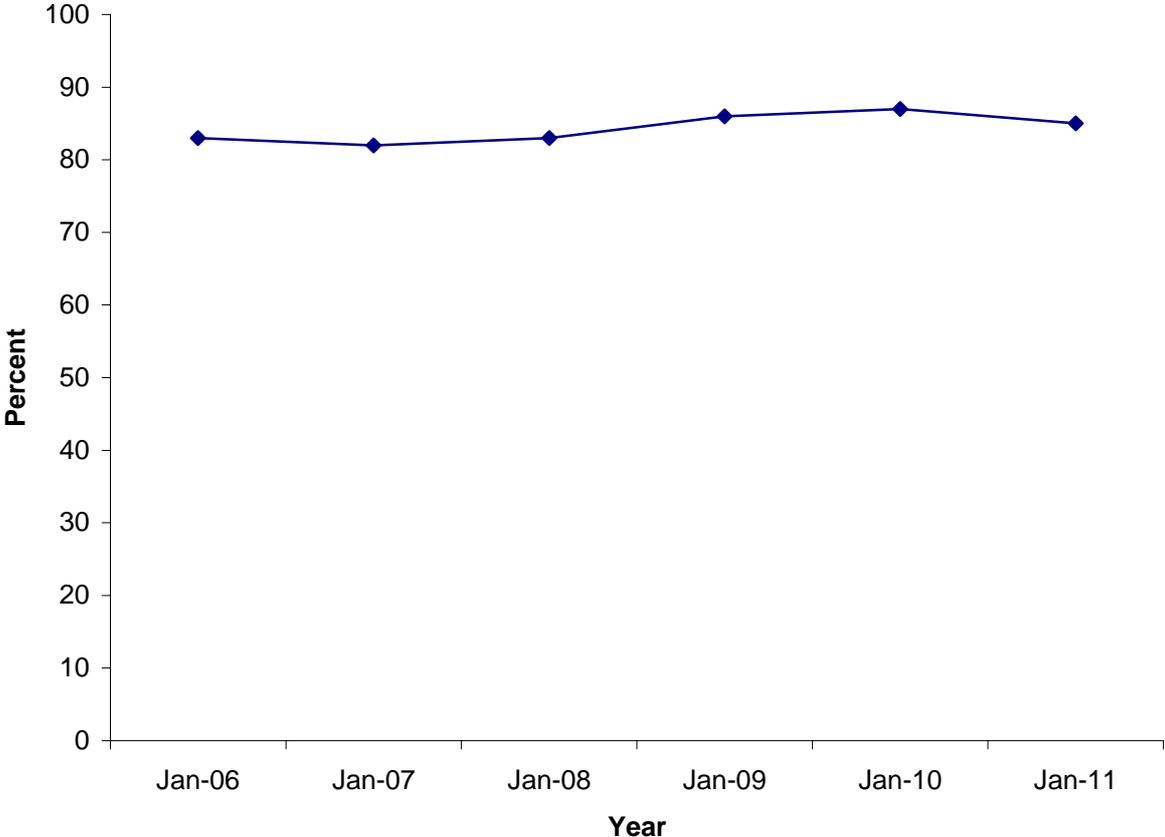
Effect of Police Ombudsman on policing

Finally respondents were asked whether they thought the Police Ombudsman would contribute to effective policing in Northern Ireland and what aspects of policing would be improved due to the impact of the Police Ombudsman.

In 2011, the majority (85%) of respondents felt that the Police Ombudsman would help ensure that the police in Northern Ireland do a good job (Figure 21). This has remained consistently high over time.

Police Ombudsman would help ensure police do a good job;

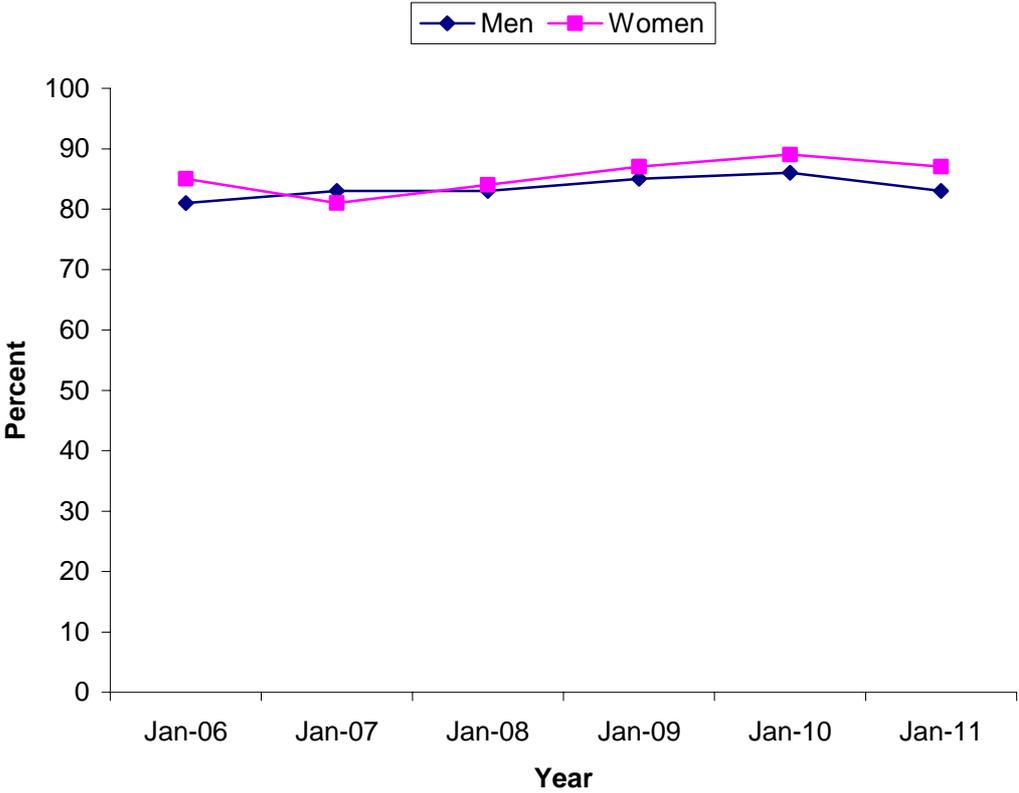
Figure 21: Belief that the Police Ombudsman will help ensure that the police do a good job, 2006 - 2011



In 2011, similar proportions of men and women reported that they felt that Police Ombudsman would help ensure that the police do a good job. Figure 22 shows that this trend has been consistent over time.

Men and women think the Ombudsman will ensure police do a good job;

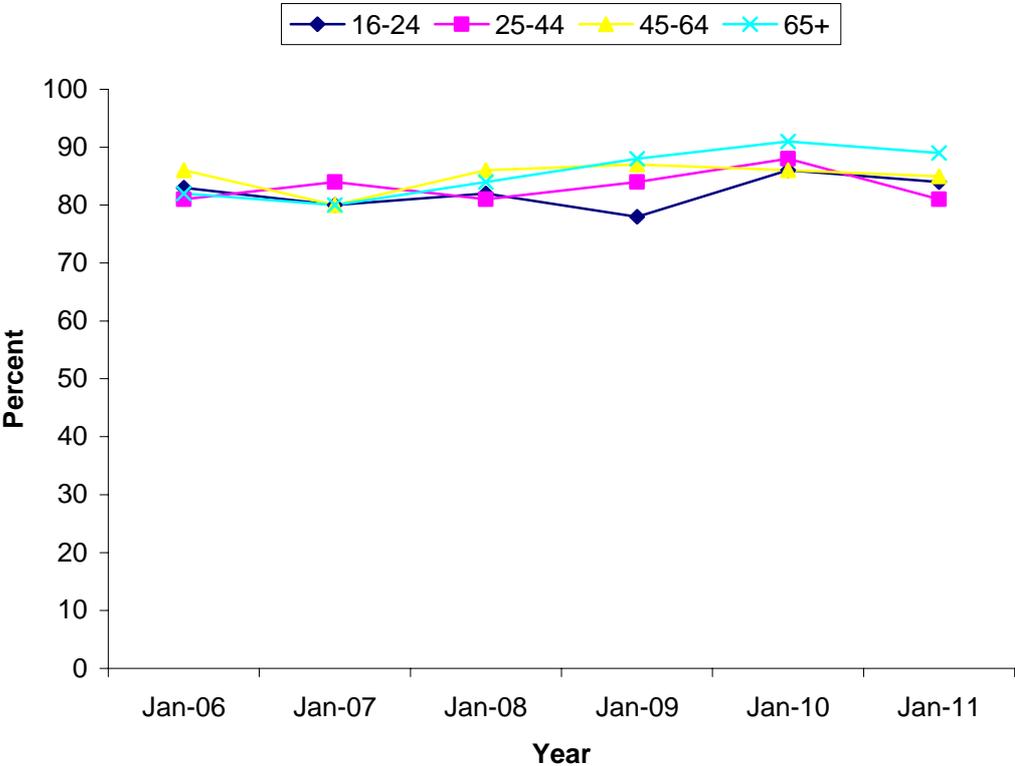
Figure 22: Belief that the Police Ombudsman will help ensure the police do a good job - by gender, 2006 - 2011



In 2011, respondents in all age groups felt that the Police Ombudsman would help ensure that the police do a good job. Generally confidence levels were similar among all age groups over time except in 2009 when respondents aged under 25 were less likely than those aged 65+ to feel that the Police Ombudsman would help police do a good job (Figure 23).

Respondents felt Police Ombudsman would help ensure police do a good job;

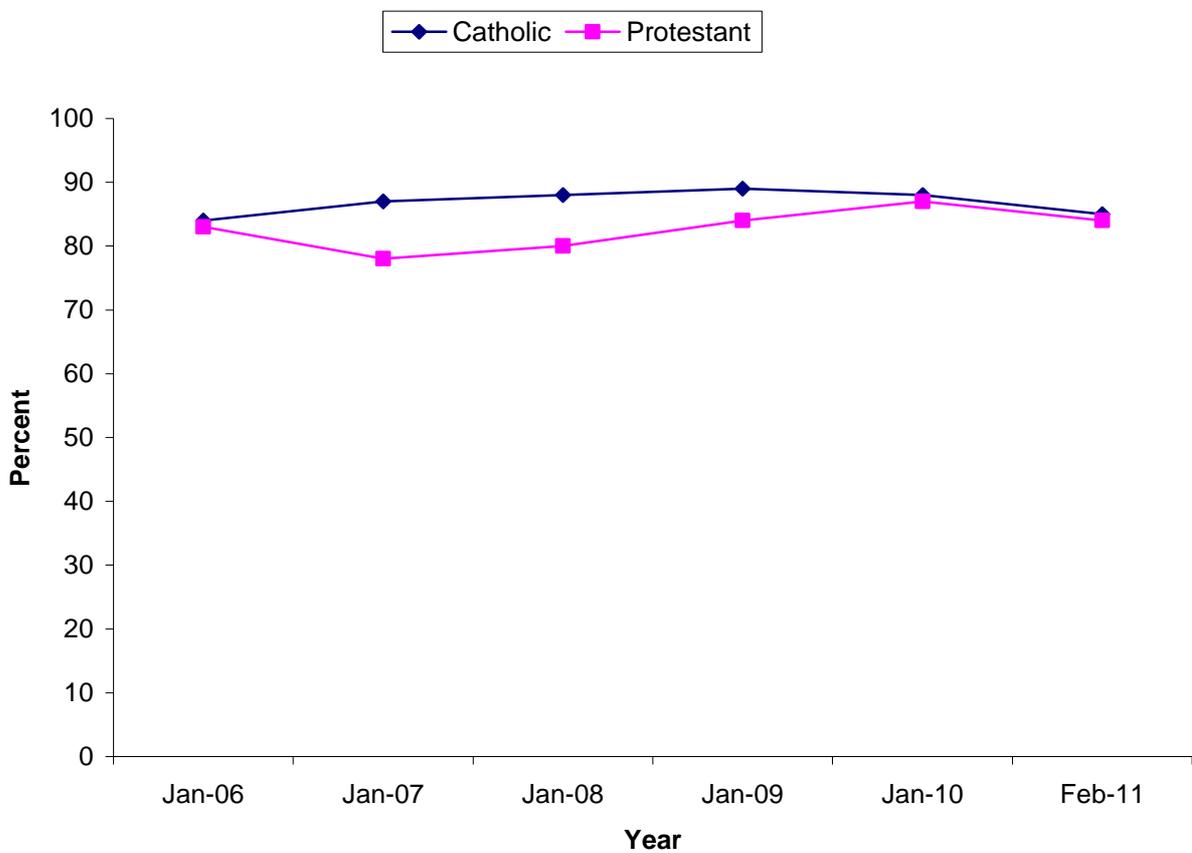
Figure 23: Belief that the Police Ombudsman will help ensure the police do a good job - by age group, 2006 - 2011



In 2011, the proportion of Protestant respondents who believed that the Police Ombudsman will help ensure that the police do a good job was similar to the level reported by Catholic respondents. Although, in earlier years, Catholic respondents were generally more likely than Protestant respondents to feel that the Police Ombudsman would help police do a good job (Figure 24).

Police Ombudsman will help police do a good job;

Figure 24: Belief that the Police Ombudsman will help ensure that the police do a good job - by religious belief, 2006 - 2011

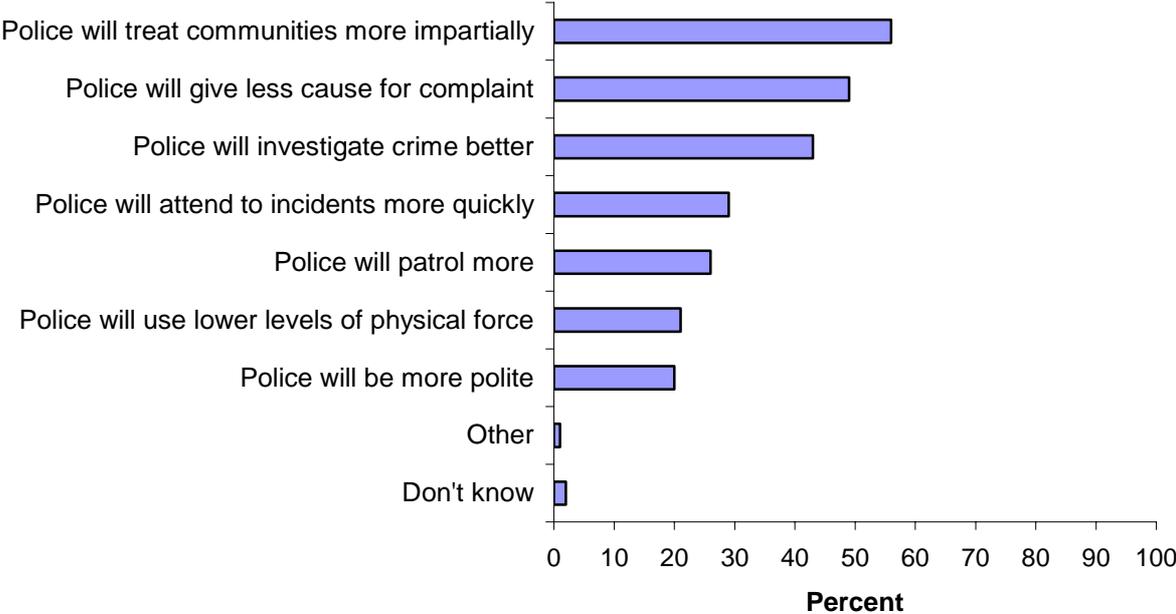


Those respondents, who stated that they thought that the Police Ombudsman would help ensure that the police do a good job, were asked in what way they felt the police would do a better job. The three main reasons quoted were:

- the police will treat all communities in Northern Ireland more impartially;
- the police will give less cause for complaints from the public;
- the police will investigate crime better.

A full breakdown of the responses given is illustrated in Figure 25.

Figure 25: In what way do you think the police will do a good job because of the Police Ombudsman?



Both Catholic and Protestant communities believed the main contribution to policing from the Police Ombudsman was that the police will treat all communities in Northern Ireland more impartially (Table 2).

Table 2: In what way will the police do a good job because of the Police Ombudsman? - By Religious Belief

Ways police will do a good job	Percent	
	Catholic	Protestant
Police will treat all communities in Northern Ireland more impartially	60	52
The police will give less cause for complaints from the public	45	51
The police will investigate crime better	38	48
The police will attend to incidents more quickly	30	27
The police will patrol more	25	28
The police will use less physical force	23	18
The police will be more polite	15	23
Other	0	1
Don't know	3	2

Making complaints against the police

Of those respondents who had stated that they were treated in an unacceptable manner during 2011, 21% said that they had made a complaint about the incident.

Respondents who did not complain about their experience were asked why they didn't make a complaint. The main reason quoted was a belief that nothing would be done about their complaint, followed by a belief that the complaint would not be taken seriously. A minority of respondents said that they didn't make a complaint because they didn't know how to complain, were scared of reprisals or didn't want to make trouble for the police.

All respondents were asked where they would go initially to make a complaint against the police. In 2011, respondents felt that they would initially make their complaint at their local police station (38%) followed by complaining directly to the Police Ombudsman (17%)¹.

The proportion of respondents who felt they would make their complaint at their local police station has decreased significantly over time (53% in 2006 compared with 38% in 2011), while the proportion of respondents who felt they would make their complaint directly to the Office has increased over time (9% in 2006 compared with 21% in 2011).

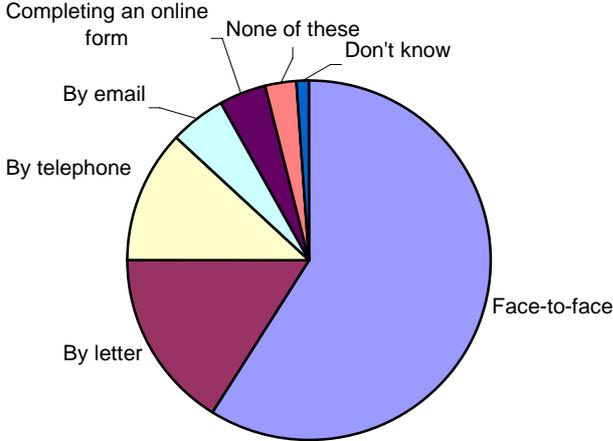
In 2011, Protestant respondents were more likely than Catholic respondents to say that they would make their complaint at their local police station. Similar proportions of Catholic and Protestant respondents were likely to say they would go to the Police Ombudsman to make their complaint, however Catholic respondents were much more likely than Protestants to say that they would make their complaint to a solicitor.

¹ Data from the Office's Case Handling System shows that 67% of the total complaints received to the Office during 2010/11 were actually made directly to the Office.

An additional question was added to the survey in 2010, to gauge how respondents would prefer to make complaints against the police. Figure 26 illustrates the breakdown of how complainants prefer to make complaints. As detailed over half of the respondents preferred a face-to-face method of making complaints.

Most respondents prefer to complain face-to-face;

Figure 26: How would you prefer to make a complaint?



In 2011, similar proportions of men and women preferred to complain face-to-face, however women were more likely than men to prefer to complain via a letter.

In 2011, when respondents were asked how they had heard about the Police Ombudsman, most of the respondents cited television, followed by newspapers/magazines and radio. This echoed previous findings on the source of people's awareness, with other media appearing at similar levels to previous surveys, however the proportion citing television has decreased since 2004.

Respondents who had heard of the Police Ombudsman were asked where they would go to find contact details for the Office, if they needed to make contact. In 2011, the majority of respondents stated that they would either use the internet or the telephone directory.

Appendix 1: Methodology

Fifteen questions were commissioned by the Police Ombudsman's Office for inclusion in the February 2011 NISRA Omnibus Survey.

The survey sample was drawn from The Land and Property Services Agency list of private addresses. This list was stratified into three regions (Belfast, East Northern Ireland and West Northern Ireland), and a random sample was drawn from each stratum. Interviewers called at each address on the list and randomly selected one person aged 16 or over living at the address for interview.

The total sample size was 2,200 addresses. The fieldwork took place between 14 February and 19 March 2011. Interviews were achieved with 1,109 individuals, representing a response rate of 58 % of the *eligible* sample.

Weighting factors were applied to the data in relation to household size.

The percentages given in the tables have been rounded to the nearest whole number. The following symbols have been used:

- 0%: figure in cell is less than 0.5%
- cell is empty: category not applicable

In certain cases percentages may not add to 100% due to the effect of rounding. Totals may also add up to more than 100% as respondents could provide more than one response.

Statistical significance tests have been carried out on the findings and differences are reported where they have been found to be statistically significant at the 5% ($p < 0.05$) level of probability (two tailed). This means that for any observed result that is found to be statistically significant one can be 95% confident that this has not happened by chance.

Trend data was analysed from 2006 to 2011 for key questions.

Additional technical details have been included in a separate report. This is available on the Police Ombudsman's web-site along with previous year's reports (www.policeombudsman.org).

Appendix 2: Notes

This is an Official Statistics publication. Official Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out on the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They undergo regular validation checks to ensure that they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political interference.

Data use:

The data collected are used by the Office to monitor and evaluate the service provided to public and to assess how effective the Office's role is in improving policing in Northern Ireland. The data is also used by this Office to comply with key performance indicators whereby the Office aims to maintain:

***'a level of 80% public awareness of the Office.'* In 2011, 84% of respondents were aware of the Office.**

***'a level of 80% awareness of the independence of the Police Ombudsman.'* In 2011, 83% of respondents were aware of the independence of the Police Ombudsman.**

***'a level of 80% confidence that the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland deals with complaints in an impartial way.'* In 2011, 80% of respondents were confident that the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland deals with complaints in an impartial way.**

***'a level of 80% respondents who think that they would be treated fairly by the Office if they made a complaint against the police.'* In 2011, 84% of respondents felt that they would be treated fairly by the Office if they made a complaint against the police.**

Appendix 3: Results

Table 1: Has a police officer ever behaved in an unacceptable way?

	Jan-04	Mar-05	Jan-06	Jan-07	Jan-08	Jan-09	Jan-10	Feb-11
No	82%	87%	85%	82%	83%	83%	84%	82%
Once or twice	11%	9%	11%	13%	12%	13%	11%	14%
More than twice	6%	4%	4%	4%	4%	3%	5%	4%

Asked to all persons aged 16 and over.

Table 2: Has a police officer ever behaved in an unacceptable way by gender?

	Men	Women
No	74%	88%
Once or twice	18%	10%
More than twice	8%	2%

Asked to all persons aged 16 and over.

Table 3: Has a police officer ever behaved in an unacceptable way by religious belief?

	Catholic	Protestant
No	80%	84%
Once or twice	14%	13%
More than twice	6%	4%

Asked to all persons aged 16 and over.

Table 4: Has a police officer ever behaved in an unacceptable way by age group?

	<25	25-44	45-64	65+
No	79%	77%	82%	90%
Once or twice	14%	17%	13%	8%
More than twice	5%	5%	5%	2%

Asked to all persons aged 16 and over.

Table 5: Level of awareness of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland

Oct-00	Mar-01	Feb-02	Feb-03	Jan-04	Mar-05	Jan-06	Jan-07	Jan-08	Jan-09	Jan-10	Feb-11
57%	65%	86%	86%	85%	86%	84%	88%	90%	88%	88%	84%

Asked to all persons aged 16 and over.

Table 6: Level of awareness of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland by gender

	Jan-06	Jan-07	Jan-08	Jan-09	Jan-10	Feb-11
Male	86%	89%	90%	92%	89%	85%
Female	82%	86%	90%	84%	87%	83%

Asked to all persons aged 16 and over.

Table 7: Level of awareness of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland by age group

	Jan-06	Jan-07	Jan-08	Jan-09	Jan-10	Feb-11
16-24	59%	64%	71%	61%	65%	47%
25-44	88%	89%	90%	86%	89%	87%
45-64	91%	97%	97%	96%	95%	93%
65+	83%	90%	91%	93%	88%	86%

Asked to all persons aged 16 and over.

Table 8: Level of awareness of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland by religious belief

	Jan-06	Jan-07	Jan-08	Jan-09	Jan-10	Feb-11
Catholic	81%	86%	90%	84%	87%	82%
Protestant	85%	90%	92%	93%	91%	86%

Asked to all persons aged 16 and over.

Table 9: Level of awareness of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland by paid employment?

	In paid employment	Not in paid employment
Yes	89%	82%
No	11%	17%
Don't know/refusal	0%	1%

Asked to all persons aged 16 and over.

Table 10: Level of awareness of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland by educational attainment?

	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
Yes	80%	80%	93%
No	19%	19%	6%
Don't know/refusal	1%	0%	1%

Asked to all persons aged 16 and over.

Table 11: Do you think the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland is part of the police or independent of the police?

	Oct-00	Mar-01	Feb-02	Feb-03	Jan-04	Mar-05	Jan-06	Jan-07	Jan-08	Jan-09	Jan-10	Feb-11
Independent of the police	81%	83%	86%	86%	85%	84%	84%	86%	86%	83%	80%	83%
Part of the police	11%	10%	9%	12%	11%	11%	11%	10%	12%	14%	17%	15%
Don't know/refusal	8%	7%	5%	2%	4%	5%	5%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%

Asked to all persons who were aware of the Police Ombudsman.

Table 12: Level of awareness of independence by gender

	Jan-06	Jan-07	Jan-08	Jan-09	Jan-10	Feb-11
Male	86%	90%	89%	85%	82%	86%
Female	82%	83%	83%	82%	79%	81%

Asked to all persons who were aware of the Police Ombudsman.

Table 13: Level of awareness of independence by age group

	Jan-06	Jan-07	Jan-08	Jan-09	Jan-10	Feb-11
16-24	74%	68%	68%	63%	59%	44%
25-44	86%	87%	84%	86%	86%	84%
45-64	87%	92%	89%	85%	84%	87%
65+	80%	85%	88%	85%	76%	86%

Asked to all persons who were aware of the Police Ombudsman.

Table 14: Level of awareness of independence by religious belief

	Jan-06	Jan-07	Jan-08	Jan-09	Jan-10	Feb-11
Catholic	81%	83%	83%	84%	80%	83%
Protestant	85%	88%	88%	84%	81%	83%

Asked to all persons who were aware of the Police Ombudsman.

Table 15: How confident are you that the Police Ombudsman deals with complaints against the police in an impartial way?

	Feb-02	Feb-03	Jan-04	Mar-05	Jan-06	Jan-07	Jan-08	Jan-09	Jan-10	Feb-11
Very confident / Fairly confident	61%	74%	76%	78%	76%	78%	81%	79%	83%	80%
Not very confident / Not at all confident	33%	22%	18%	16%	17%	18%	16%	17%	13%	17%
Don't know/refusal	6%	4%	6%	7%	6%	4%	4%	5%	3%	3%

Asked to all persons who were aware of the Police Ombudsman.

Table 16: Level of confidence that the Police Ombudsman deals with complaints against the police in an impartial way by gender

	Jan-06	Jan-07	Jan-08	Jan-09	Jan-10	Feb-11
Male	74%	77%	81%	77%	79%	81%
Female	78%	80%	81%	80%	87%	80%

Asked to all persons who were aware of the Police Ombudsman.

Table 17: Level of confidence that the Police Ombudsman deals with complaints against the police in an impartial way by age group

	Jan-06	Jan-07	Jan-08	Jan-09	Jan-10	Feb-11
16-24	75%	66%	62%	69%	79%	74%
25-44	75%	82%	82%	81%	81%	79%
45-64	78%	83%	85%	80%	85%	80%
65+	77%	71%	82%	75%	85%	83%

Asked to all persons who were aware of the Police Ombudsman.

Table 18: Level of confidence that the Police Ombudsman deals with complaints against the police in an impartial way by religious belief

	Jan-06	Jan-07	Jan-08	Jan-09	Jan-10	Feb-11
Catholic	73%	84%	86%	81%	82%	82%
Protestant	78%	74%	78%	78%	85%	78%

Asked to all persons who were aware of the Police Ombudsman.

Table 19: If you were to make a complaint against a police officer, do you think you would be treated fairly?

	Feb-02	Feb-03	Jan-04	Mar-05	Jan-06	Jan-07	Jan-08	Jan-09	Jan-10	Feb-11
Fairly treated	78%	79%	82%	85%	84%	86%	85%	86%	86%	84%
Not fairly treated	12%	15%	11%	8%	9%	8%	10%	9%	9%	11%
Don't know/refusal	10%	6%	7%	7%	7%	6%	5%	4%	5%	5%

Asked to all persons who were aware of the Police Ombudsman.

Table 20: Fair treatment by the Police Ombudsman by gender

	Jan-06	Jan-07	Jan-08	Jan-09	Jan-10	Feb-11
Male	83%	88%	84%	86%	84%	85%
Female	85%	85%	86%	87%	89%	83%

Asked to all persons who were aware of the Police Ombudsman.

Table 21: Fair treatment by the Police Ombudsman by age group

	Jan-06	Jan-07	Jan-08	Jan-09	Jan-10	Feb-11
16-24	80%	74%	69%	81%	81%	72%
25-44	83%	87%	84%	87%	87%	84%
45-64	86%	90%	87%	88%	86%	84%
65+	86%	84%	91%	84%	88%	88%

Asked to all persons who were aware of the Police Ombudsman.

Table 22: Fair treatment by the Police Ombudsman by religious belief

	Feb-02	Feb-03	Jan-04	Mar-05	Jan-06	Jan-07	Jan-08	Jan-09	Jan-10	Feb-11
Catholic	83%	78%	84%	82%	81%	84%	86%	86%	85%	83%
Protestant	75%	81%	82%	86%	86%	88%	85%	87%	87%	84%

Asked to all persons who were aware of the Police Ombudsman.

Table 23: If you made a complaint about a police officer, do you think the police officer would be treated fairly?

Yes	89%
No	7%
Don't know/refusal	4%

Asked to all persons who were aware of the Police Ombudsman.

Table 24: If you made a complaint about a police officer, do you think the police officer would be treated fairly by religious belief?

	Catholic	Protestant
Yes	90%	88%
No	6%	7%
Don't know/refusal	4%	5%

Asked to all persons who were aware of the Police Ombudsman.

Table 25: Do you think the Police Ombudsman treats the person making the complaint better or the police officer being complained about better?

	Feb-02	Feb-03	Jan-04	Mar-05	Jan-06	Jan-07	Jan-08	Jan-09	Jan-10	Feb-11
Complainant treated better	49%	35%	40%	45%	34%	38%	31%	28%	24%	19%
Police officer treated better	46%	62%	51%	41%	58%	48%	58%	57%	68%	72%

Asked to all persons who didn't think complainant or police officer would be treated fairly.

Table 26: Belief that the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland will help ensure that the police good job

Jan-06	Jan-07	Jan-08	Jan-09	Jan-10	Feb-11
83%	82%	83%	86%	87%	85%

Asked to all persons who were aware of the Police Ombudsman.

Table 27: Belief that the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland will help ensure that the police good job by gender

	Jan-06	Jan-07	Jan-08	Jan-09	Jan-10	Feb-11
Male	81%	83%	83%	85%	86%	83%
Female	85%	81%	84%	87%	89%	87%

Asked to all persons who were aware of the Police Ombudsman.

Table 28: Belief that the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland will help ensure that the police good job by age group

	Jan-06	Jan-07	Jan-08	Jan-09	Jan-10	Feb-11
16-24	83%	80%	82%	78%	86%	84%
25-44	81%	84%	81%	84%	88%	81%
45-64	86%	80%	86%	87%	86%	85%
65+	82%	80%	84%	88%	91%	89%

Asked to all persons who were aware of the Police Ombudsman.

Table 29: Belief that the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland will help ensure that the police good job by religious belief

	Jan-06	Jan-07	Jan-08	Jan-09	Jan-10	Feb-11
Catholic	84%	87%	88%	89%	88%	85%
Protestant	83%	78%	80%	84%	87%	84%

Asked to all persons who were aware of the Police Ombudsman.

Table 30: In what way do you think the police will do a good job because of the Police Ombudsman?

Reason	
Police will treat communities more impartially	56%
Police will give less cause for complaint	49%
Police will investigate crime better	43%
Police will attend to incidents more quickly	29%
Police will patrol more	26%
Police will use lower levels of physical force	21%
Police will be more polite	20%
Other	1%
Dont know/refusal	2%

Asked to all persons who thought the Police Ombudsman will help to ensure that the police do a good job.

Table 31: Main reasons why incident not complained about

Behaviour	
Felt nothing would be done about the complaint	38%
Felt it would not be taken seriously	22%
Incident was not serious enough	16%
Could not be bothered complaining	12%
Didn't know how to complain	5%
Scared of police reprisals	4%
Didn't want to make trouble for the police	2%

Asked to all persons who didn't make a complaint.

Table 32: Where respondents would go initially to complain

Where respondents would go initially to complain	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Local police station	53%	40%	43%	44%	42%	38%
Police Ombudsman	9%	13%	11%	14%	17%	21%
Solicitor	14%	18%	18%	18%	16%	15%
An MP/MLA	5%	5%	6%	5%	6%	6%
The Citizens Advice Bureau	6%	7%	6%	6%	6%	5%
Wouldn't make a complaint	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%	5%
Chief Constable of the PSNI	1%	3%	2%	2%	1%	4%
A local politician e.g. Councillor	3%	5%	4%	4%	5%	3%
The Policing Board	1%	1%	2%	1%	0%	1%
Other	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%
Don't know/refusal	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	2%

Asked to all persons who were aware of the Police Ombudsman.

Table 33: Where would you go to complain by religious belief?

Where respondents would go initially to complain	Catholic	Protestant
Local police station	32%	43%
Police Ombudsman	19%	23%
Solicitor	23%	8%
An MP/MLA	7%	6%
The Citizens Advice Bureau	6%	4%
Wouldn't make a complaint	4%	5%
Chief Constable of the PSNI	2%	5%
A local politician e.g. Councillor	3%	3%
The Policing Board	1%	1%
Other	0%	0%
Don't know/refusal	2%	1%

Asked to all persons who were aware of the Police Ombudsman.

Table 34: How would you prefer to make your complaint?

How would you prefer to make a complaint?	
Face to face	59%
By letter	16%
By telephone	12%
By email	5%
Completing an online form	4%
None of these	3%
Don't know	1%

Asked to all persons who were aware of the Police Ombudsman.

Table 35: How would you prefer to make your complaint by gender?

How would you prefer to make a complaint?	Men	Women
Face to face	61%	57%
By letter	13%	19%
By telephone	11%	13%
By email	6%	5%
Completing an online form	4%	4%
None of these	4%	2%
Don't know	1%	1%

Asked to all persons who were aware of the Police Ombudsman.

Table 36: Source of knowledge of the Police Ombudsman

Source of information	Survey month/year							
	Jan-04	Mar-05	Jan-06	Jan-07	Jan-08	Jan-09	Jan-10	Feb-11
Television	93%	89%	90%	94%	93%	87%	86%	84%
Newspaper/magazine	56%	43%	49%	50%	50%	42%	49%	49%
Radio	44%	31%	40%	43%	42%	40%	40%	43%
Word of mouth	13%	9%	12%	10%	12%	12%	11%	9%
Through work	7%	5%	7%	4%	7%	5%	7%	7%
Friends/family	9%	4%	7%	5%	7%	6%	5%	7%
Leaflet	6%	4%	7%	4%	4%	5%	5%	5%
Internet	1%	1%	3%	2%	3%	2%	3%	3%
Poster	4%	2%	3%	2%	4%	3%	2%	3%
Attended presentation	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%
Other	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%

Asked to all persons who were aware of the Police Ombudsman.

Table 37: Source of information for contacting the Police Ombudsman's Office

Source of information	
Internet	42%
Telephone directory	31%
Police station	14%
Directory enquiries	6%
Political representative	6%
Legal representative	4%
Advice agency	3%
Call at Office	3%
Community association	1%
Other	2%
Don't know	7%

Asked to all persons who were aware of the Police Ombudsman.



Additional copies of this and other publications are available from:

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These publications and other information about the work of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland are also available on the Internet at:

Website: www.policeombudsman.org



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