

Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland:

Annual report on
public awareness of the
Police Complaints
System in
Northern Ireland, 2014

April 2014

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Executive Summary

This report presents the findings from an independent survey carried out by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) into public awareness of the Office of the Police Ombudsman (the Office).

The Office is required by law to provide an independent police complaints service which aims to secure the confidence of the public. Each year it asks NISRA to pose a series of questions, in a survey of the general population in Northern Ireland, about their attitudes to the police complaints system.

The Office feels it important to understand the level of public awareness of the system and the key attitudes to it, including if the public have confidence in the Office. The findings from this survey provide an important and independent indicator of the public 'position' on these issues.

The survey has been carried out annually since the Office opened. The report provides detailed data for the 2014 survey.

The main findings were as follows:

- A high proportion of respondents had heard of the Police Ombudsman (84% in 2014). Although the awareness level has remained high for many years, the current level has decreased since 2010. The majority of those aware of the Police Ombudsman thought that he was independent of the police. However the proportion who thought that he was independent of the police has decreased since 2012.
- Since the Office opened, the majority of respondents were confident that the Police Ombudsman deals with complaints in an impartial way, although this proportion has fallen from 83% in 2010 to 75% in 2014.

- Most respondents thought that they would be treated fairly if they were to make a complaint against a police officer to the Police Ombudsman (84% in 2014). This figure has been consistently high over the last number of years.
- The majority of respondents felt that the Police Ombudsman would help ensure that the police in Northern Ireland do a good job (81% in 2014). However this proportion has been decreasing in recent years.

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.

It is recognised that many factors, some of which are outside the control of the Office, may influence the attitudes and perceptions of the public. These factors could include; past experience of the work of the Office, wider community confidence and to some extent the adverse publicity that surrounded the Office during recent times. These surveys, however, provide an indicator of public attitudes to the Office and provide useful information on trends over time.

This report presents detailed findings from the fifteenth survey which was carried out between 6th January and 8th February 2014. The data were collected through a module in the NISRA Omnibus Survey. The report provides information on:

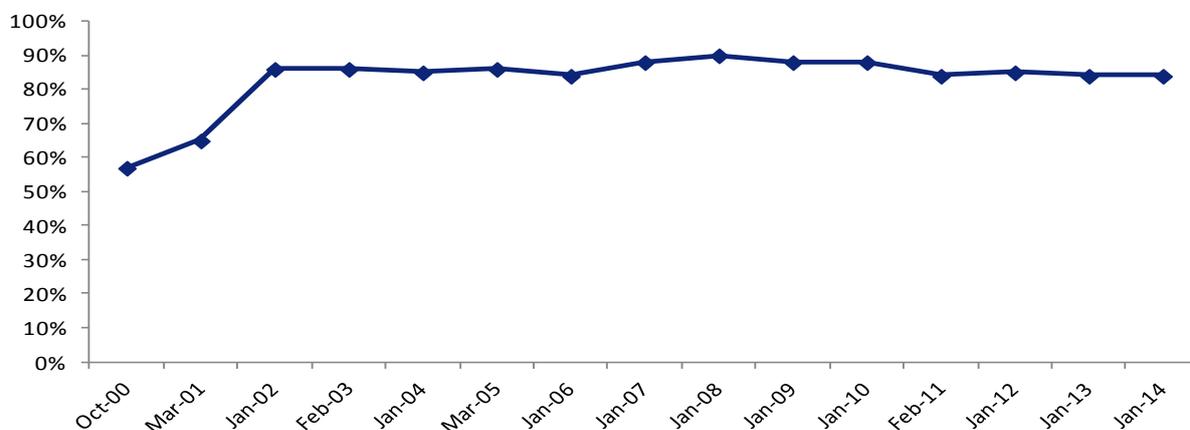
- awareness of the Police Ombudsman;
- perceptions of the impartiality of investigation of complaints by the Police Ombudsman;
- perceptions of fairness and equality of treatment of the public and police by the Police Ombudsman;
- perceptions of improvements in policing due to the existence of the Police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

Survey findings

Awareness of the Police Ombudsman

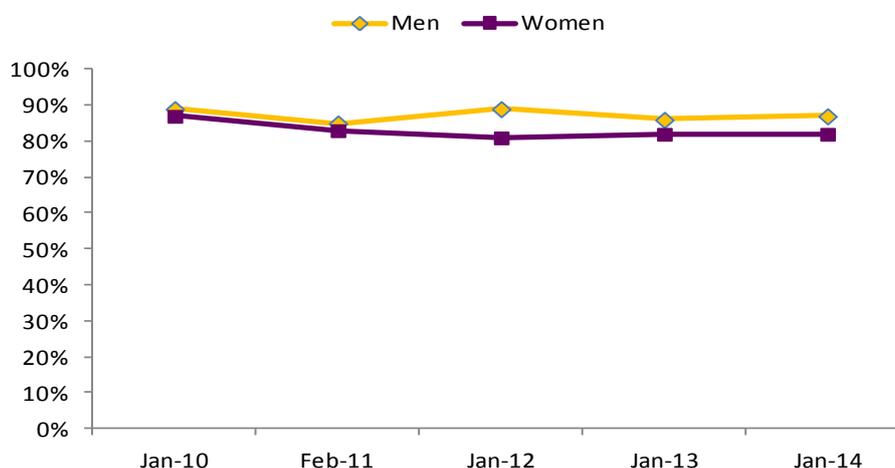
In 2014, the majority of respondents (84%) stated that they had heard of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland. Figure 1 (Table 1) shows that awareness levels have been consistently high since 2002. However the current level of awareness has decreased since 2010.

Figure 1: Level of awareness of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland, 2000-2014



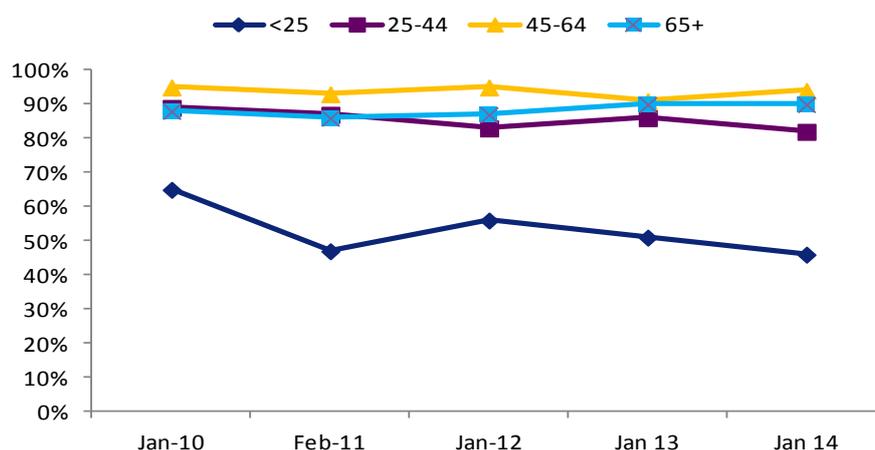
Results show that in 2014, awareness was weaker among women (Figure 2, Table 2). This difference between genders was also evident in 2012.

Figure 2: Level of awareness of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland by gender, 2010-2014



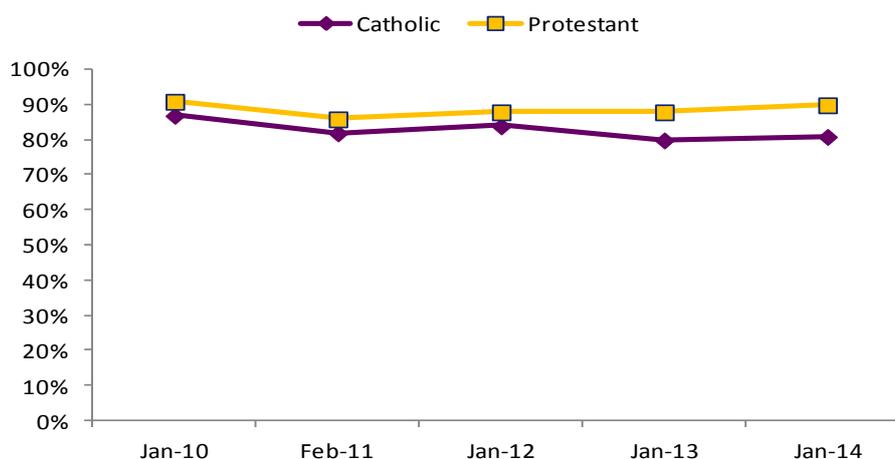
In 2014, those aged 45-64 showed higher levels of awareness than other age groups. This higher awareness was also apparent in 2012. Awareness levels among respondents aged 16 - 24¹ were lower than older age groups (Figure 3, Table 3).

Figure 3: Level of awareness of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland by age group, 2010-2014



In 2014, awareness of the Police Ombudsman was higher among Protestants than Catholics. This difference in awareness between the two communities was also evident in 2013 (Figure 4, Table 4).

Figure 4: Level of awareness of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland by community background, 2010-2014



¹ Caution should be exercised when interpreting results (by year) for the 16 – 24 age group, due to the small numbers of respondents.

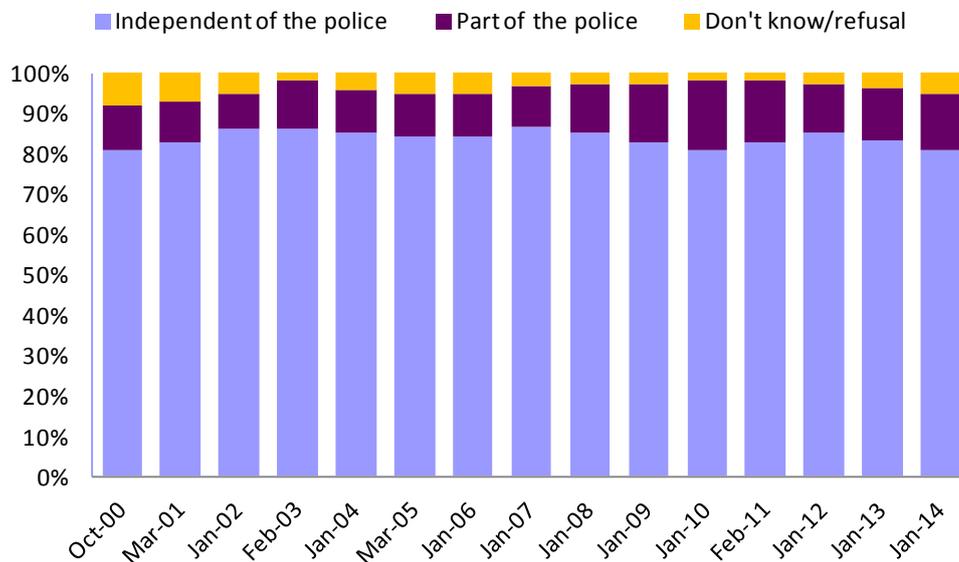
Respondents were asked to choose from a list of responses, how they had heard about the Police Ombudsman. In 2014, most respondents cited television, followed by newspapers/magazines and radio. This echoed previous findings on the source of people's awareness, with other media generally appearing at similar levels to previous surveys, however the proportions citing television or newspapers/magazines has decreased since 2004 (Table 5).

In recent years additional options were added to this question namely; Website, Twitter, YouTube and Facebook. In 2014, 4% of respondents used the website to obtain information about the Office.

Independence of the Police Ombudsman

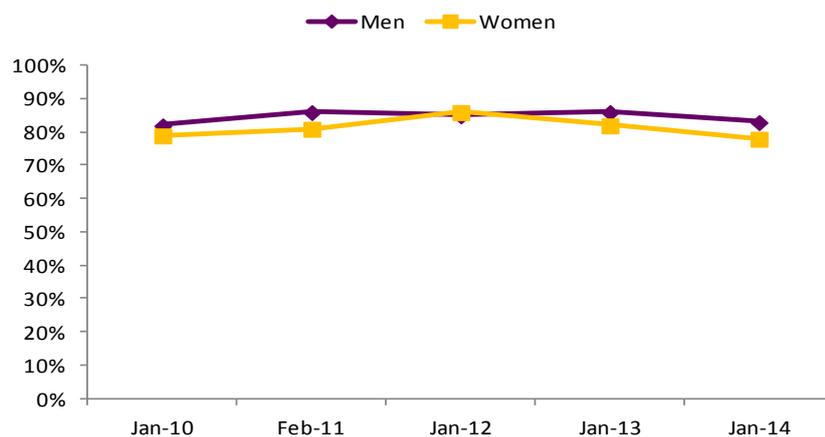
All respondents who had heard of the Police Ombudsman were asked for their opinion on whether or not the Police Ombudsman was independent of the police or part of the police. In 2014, the majority (80%) of respondents who had heard of the Police Ombudsman felt that he was independent of the police. Although the proportion who thought that the Police Ombudsman was independent of the police has been consistently high since 2000, the current level has decreased since 2012 (Figure 5, Table 6).

Figure 5: Police Ombudsman is independent of the police or part of the police, 2000-2014



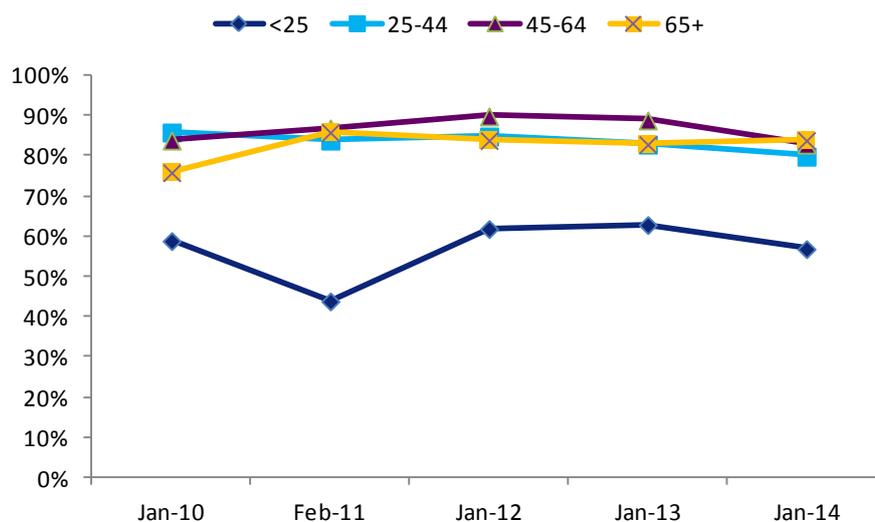
In 2014, a higher proportion of men than women thought that the Police Ombudsman was independent of the police. This difference was also evident in 2011 (Figure 6, Table 7).

Figure 6: Proportion who thought that the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland is independent of the police by gender, 2010-2014



Respondents aged 16 - 24² were less likely to think that the Police Ombudsman was independent of the police than older age groups (Figure 7, Table 8).

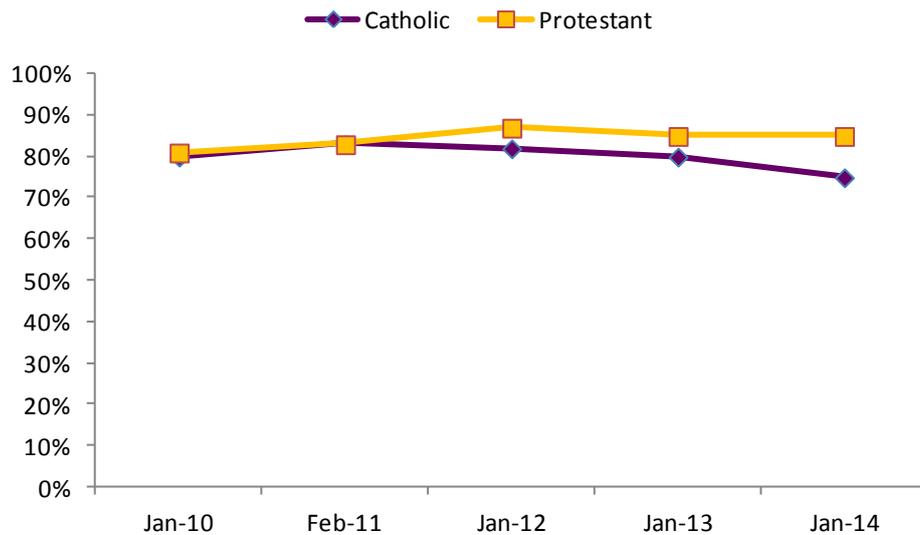
Figure 7: Proportion who thought that the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland is independent of the police by age group, 2010-2014



² Caution should be exercised when interpreting results (by year) for the 16 – 24 age group, due to the small numbers of respondents.

In 2014, Protestants were more likely to think that the Police Ombudsman was independent of the police. Figure 8 (Table 9) shows that previous to 2012, views among Catholics and Protestants were similar, but since then the gap in the proportion who thought he was independent has increased.

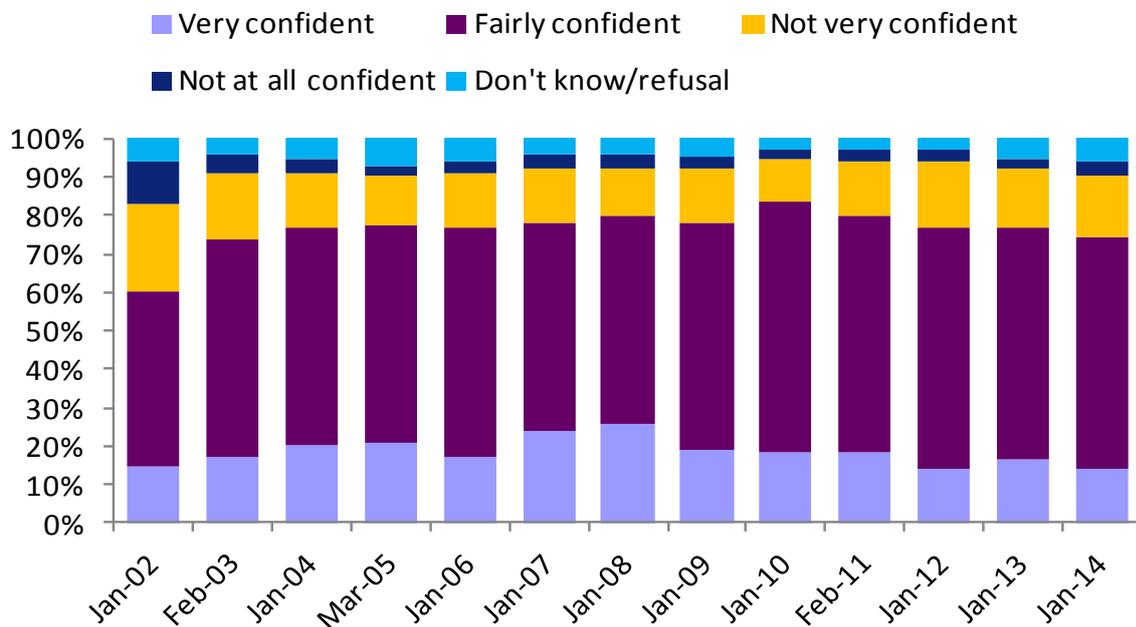
Figure 8: Proportion who thought that the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland is independent of the police by community background, 2010-2014



Impartiality of investigation

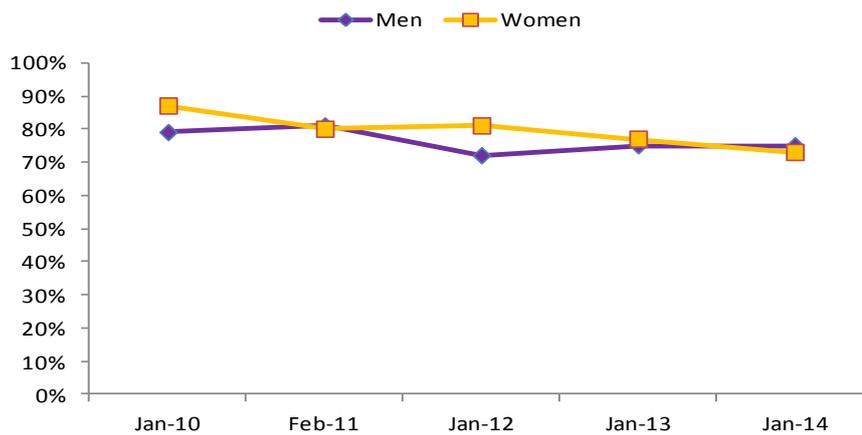
In 2014, the majority of those respondents who had heard of the Police Ombudsman were fairly confident or very confident that the Police Ombudsman deals with complaints in an impartial way. However, most were only fairly confident rather than very confident. Figure 9 (Table 10), shows that since 2010 confidence levels have decreased from 83% to 75% (very confident and fairly confident combined).

Figure 9: Level of confidence that the Police Ombudsman deals with complaints in an impartial way, 2002-2014



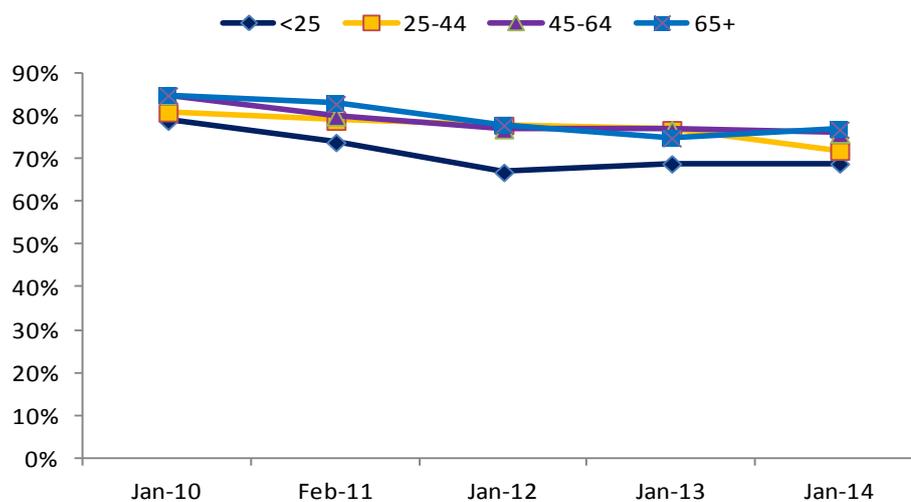
In 2014, men and women were equally likely to be confident that the Police Ombudsman deals with complaints in an impartial manner. However, in 2012 and 2010, women were more likely than men to be confident in this matter (Figure 10, Table 11).

Figure 10: Level of confidence that the Police Ombudsman deals with complaints in an impartial way by gender, 2010-2014



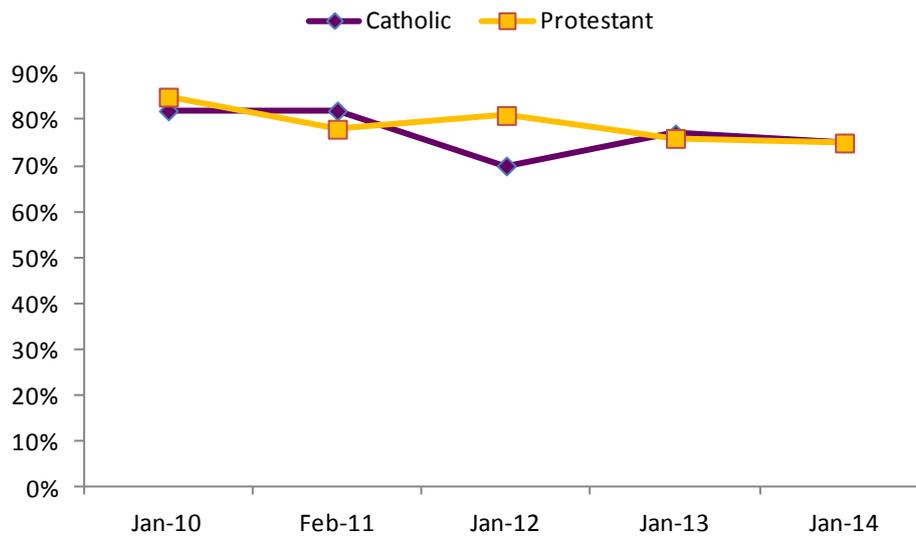
In 2014, confidence was similar among age groups. This has been consistent since 2010 (Figure 11, Table 12).

Figure 11: Level of confidence that the Police Ombudsman deals with complaints in an impartial way by age group, 2010-2014



In 2014, confidence was also similar among the two main community groups. However in 2012, Protestant respondents were more likely than Catholic respondents to be confident that the Police Ombudsman deals with complaints impartially, (Figure 12, Table 13).

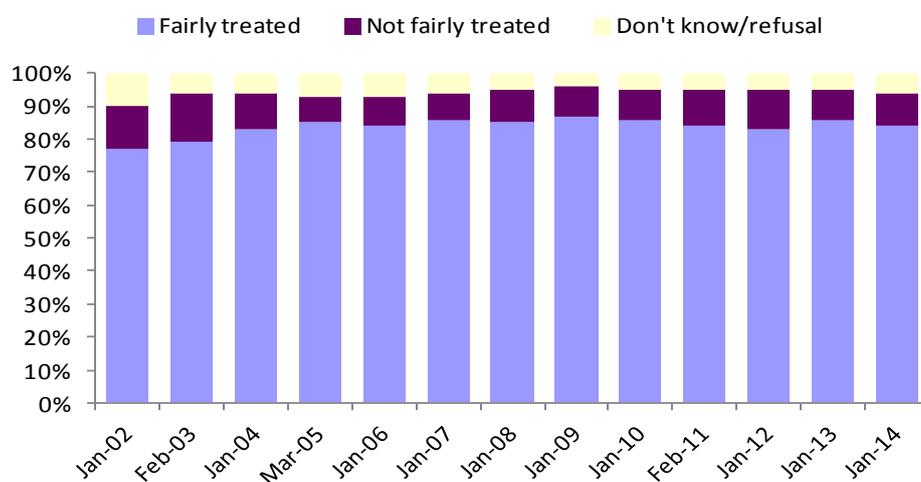
Figure 12: Level of confidence that the Police Ombudsman deals with complaints in an impartial way by community background, 2010-2014



Fairness and equality of treatment of complainants 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 2014, 84% of respondents stated that they thought that they would be treated fairly if they made a complaint against a police officer (Figure 13, Table 14). Since 2002, this proportion has been consistently high.

Figure 13: Perception of fair treatment when making a complaint, 2002-2014



In 2014, perceptions of fair treatment were similar among men and women. These perceptions have been consistent over time, except in 2010, when women were more likely than men to think they would be treated fairly (Figure 14, Table 15).

Figure 14: Perception of fair treatment by the Police Ombudsman by gender, 2010-2014

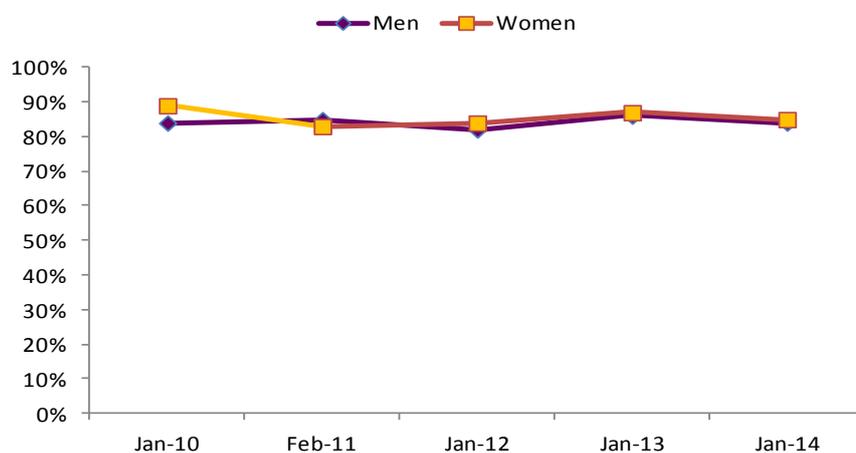
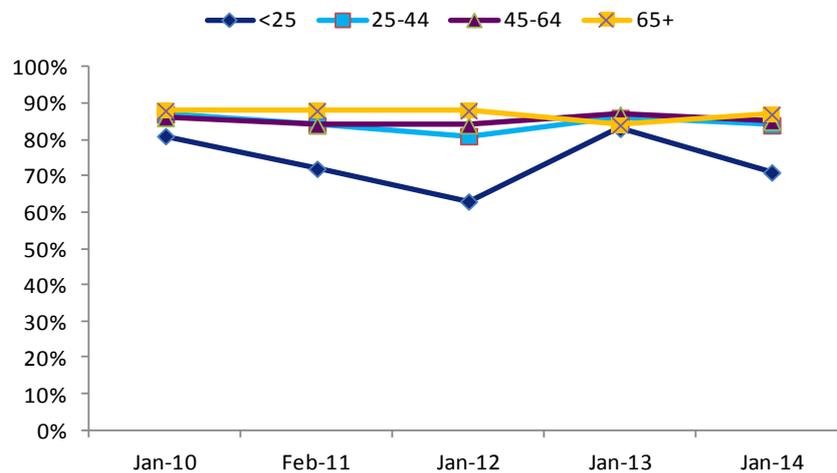


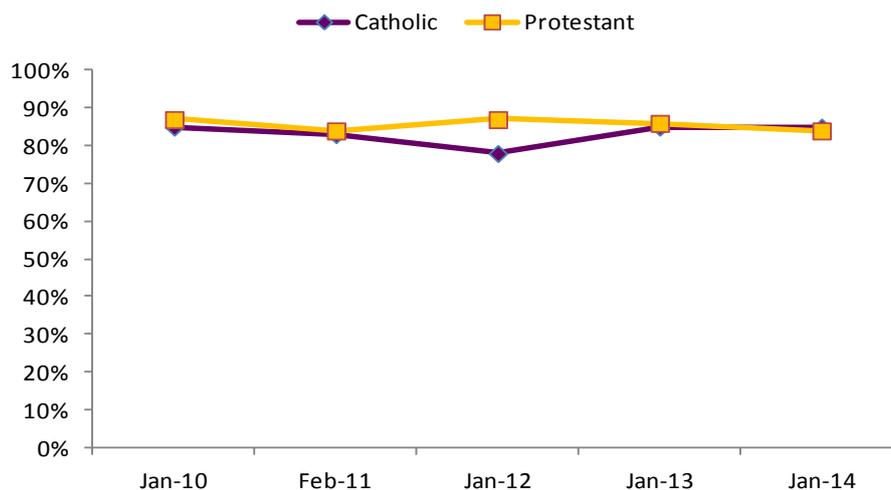
Figure 15 (Table 16), shows that perception of fair treatment among younger respondents has varied over the last five years.

Figure 15: Perception of fair treatment by the Police Ombudsman by age group, 2010-2014



In 2014, Protestant and Catholic respondents were equally likely to think they would be treated fairly if they made a complaint (Figure 16, Table 17). However, in 2012, Protestants were more likely than Catholics to perceive fair treatment.

Figure 16: Perception of fair treatment by the Police Ombudsman by community background, 2010-2014



When respondents were asked, did they think the **police officer** would be treated fairly, the majority (90% in 2014) of respondents thought that police officers would be treated fairly by the Police Ombudsman in the event of a complaint being made against them (Table 18).

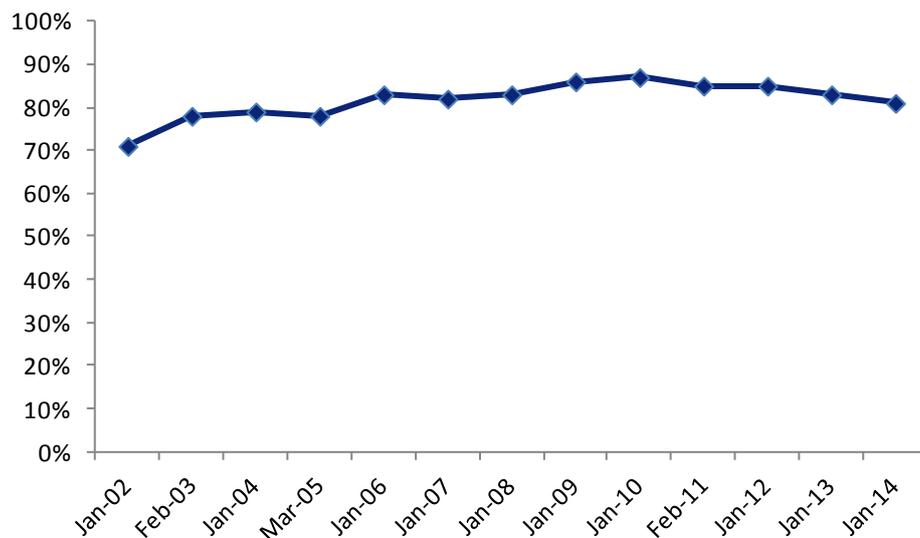
In 2014, similar proportions of men and women and of Catholics and Protestants believed that police officers would be treated fairly (Table 19 and 21). This perception was also similar among age groups (Table 20).

Effect of Police Ombudsman on policing

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.

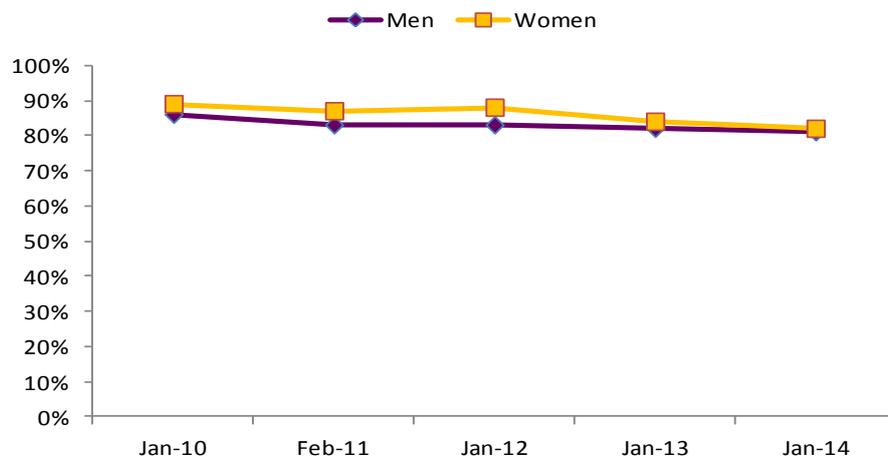
In 2014, 81% of respondents felt that the Police Ombudsman would help ensure that the police in Northern Ireland do a good job (Figure 17, Table 22). Although, this proportion has remained consistently high over time, the current level has been gradually decreasing since 2010.

Figure 17: Belief that the Police Ombudsman will help ensure that the police do a good job, 2002-2014



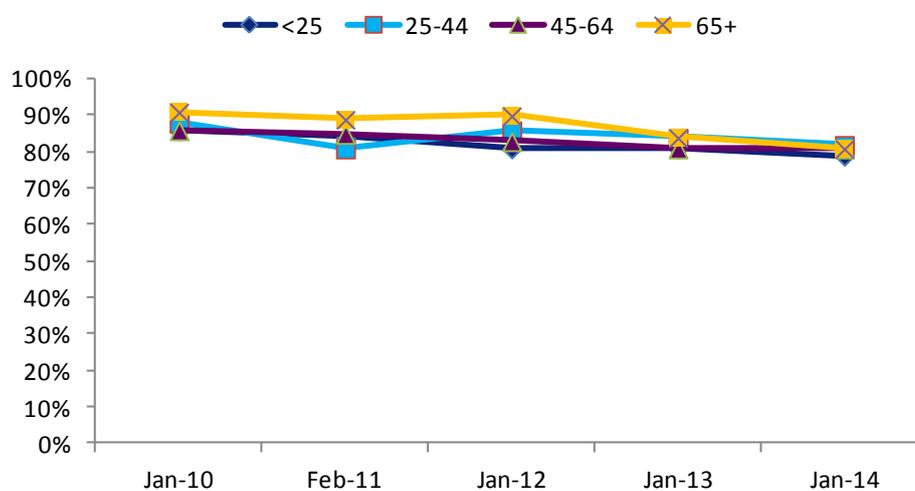
In 2014, men and women were equally likely to feel that the Ombudsman would help ensure that the police do a good job. Figure 18 (Table 23) shows that views were similar over the last five years, except in 2012, when women were more likely than men to feel that the Police Ombudsman would help ensure that the police do a good job.

Figure 18: Belief that the Police Ombudsman will help ensure that the police do a good job by gender, 2010-2014



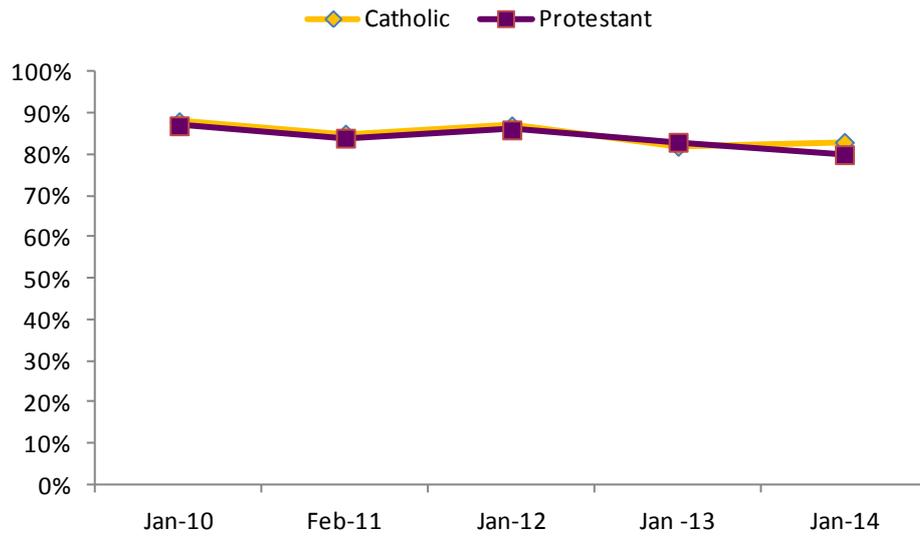
Generally, views were similar among all age groups. (Figure 19, Table 24).

Figure 19: Belief that the Police Ombudsman will help ensure that the police do a good job by age group, 2010-2014



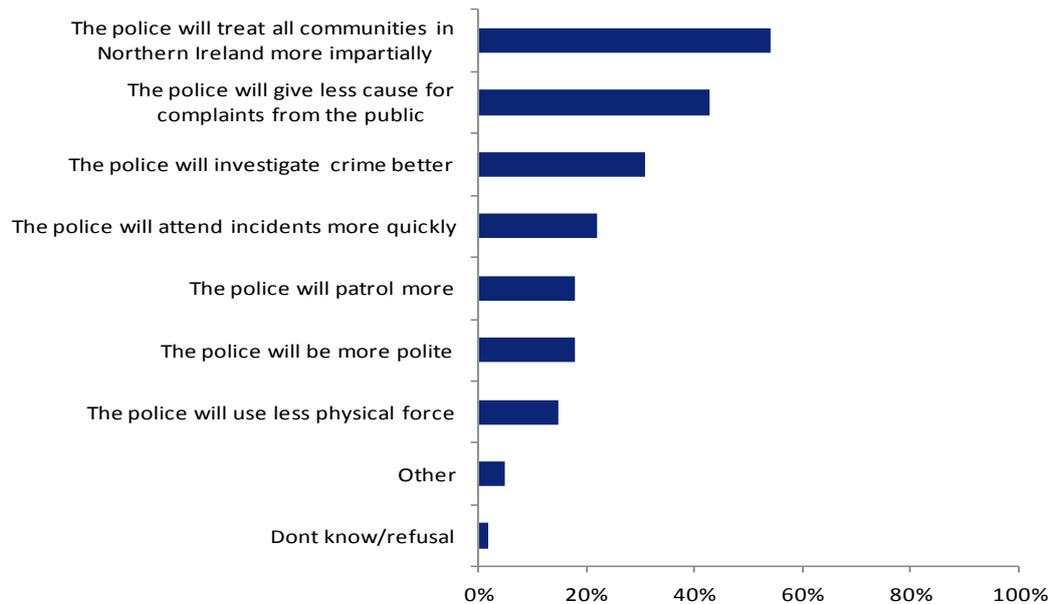
In 2014, similar proportions of Protestant and Catholic respondents believed that the Police Ombudsman would help ensure that the police do a good job. Figure 20 (Table 25) shows that since 2010, Catholic and Protestant respondents had similar views.

Figure 20: Belief that the Police Ombudsman will help ensure that the police do a good job by community background, 2010-2014



Those respondents, who stated that they thought that the Police Ombudsman would help ensure that the police do a good job, were asked to select why they thought this was from a list of reasons on a show card (Figure 21, Table 26).

Figure 21: Ways the police will do a good job because of the Police Ombudsman, 2014



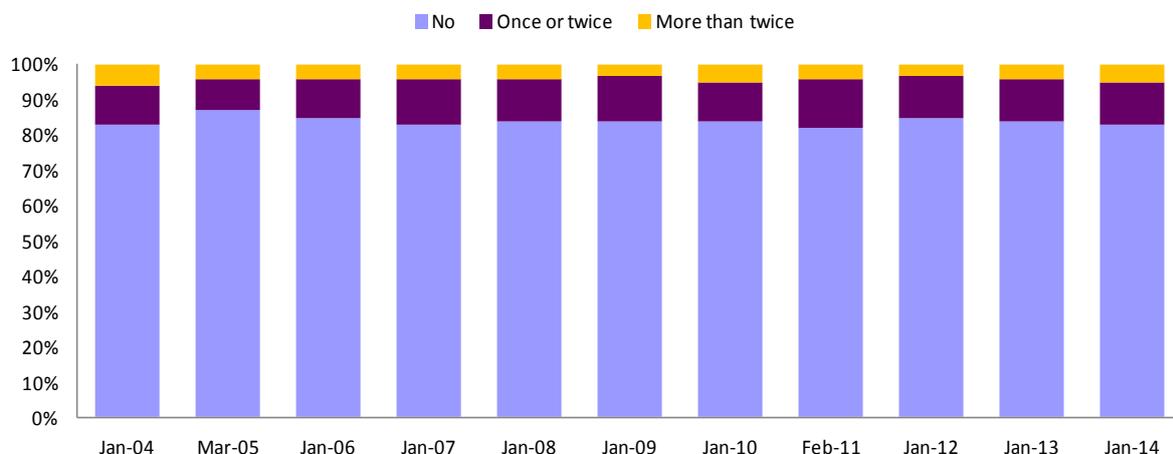
Men and women both felt that the greatest contribution to policing from the Police Ombudsman was that the police would treat all communities in Northern Ireland more impartially (Table 27). Catholic and Protestant respondents and respondents in all age groups also held this view (Tables 28 & 29).

Making complaints against the police

When asked had a police officer ever behaved towards them in a way that they thought was unacceptable, the majority of respondents (83% in 2014), said that they had not experienced police behaviour that they thought was unacceptable.

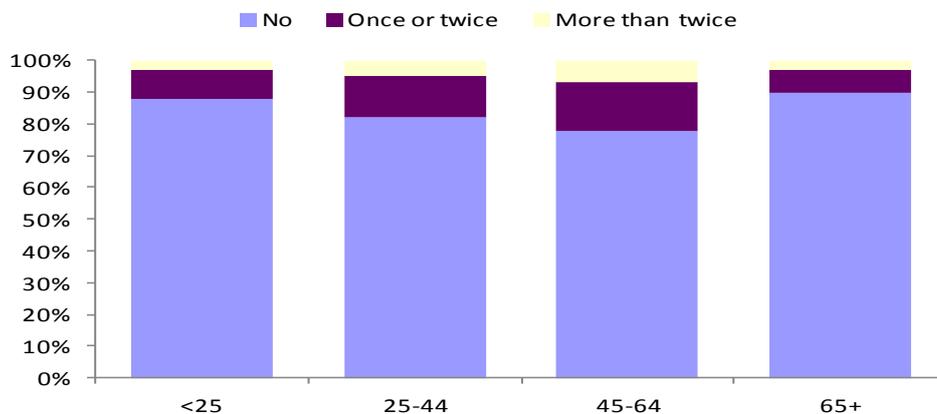
This proportion has remained steady over time (Figure 22, Table 30).

Figure 22: Perception of unacceptable behaviour from a police officer, 2004-2014



In 2014, men were more likely than women to state that they had been treated unacceptably on at least one occasion (Table 31). Similar proportions of Catholics and Protestants had experienced unacceptable behaviour (Table 33). Respondents aged 25-64 were more likely to say that they had experienced unacceptable behaviour than those respondents aged 65 and over (Figure 23, Table 32).

Figure 23: Perception of unacceptable behaviour from a police officer by age group, 2014



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.

The most common type of unacceptable behaviour experienced was that the officer was disrespectful or impolite to the respondent. Table 34 shows a full breakdown of the types of unacceptable behaviour reported by respondents in 2014.

Respondents who stated that they were treated in an unacceptable manner were asked had they made a complaint about the incident. In 2014, 21% said that they had made a complaint (Table 35).

Respondents who did not make a complaint were concerned 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, didn't want to make trouble for the police or were scared of reprisals (Table 36).

Respondents were given a list of possible answers and asked to choose where they would go **initially** to make a complaint against the police. The most common choice was the local police station. In 2014, 44% would initially go here to make a complaint (Table 37).

In 2014, 14% of respondents would go directly to the Police Ombudsman. The proportion of respondents who made this choice has been similar to levels reported in previous years except for in 2011 when 21% said they would go directly to the Police Ombudsman.

In 2014, Protestant respondents were more likely to go initially to their local police station or to the Police Ombudsman to make a complaint. Catholic respondents were more likely than Protestant respondents to go initially to a solicitor (Table 38).

The results show that respondents to this survey were more likely to say that they would initially make a complaint against the police at a local police station. However, nearly two thirds of complainants actually made their complaint directly to the Police Ombudsman's Office in 2012/13 (Statistical Report of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland, Six Monthly Update to September 2013).

Respondents who did not say they would initially go to the Police Ombudsman were asked to choose the reason why from a list of possible responses. In 2014, 46% of respondents stated that they did not know that they could make a complaint directly to the Police Ombudsman and 35% said that it was more convenient to go to one of the other places mentioned earlier (Table 39).

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. Interestingly the majority of respondents (61% in 2014) stated that they would use the internet (Table 40).

Appendix 1: Methodology

Fourteen questions were commissioned by the Police Ombudsman's Office for inclusion in the January 2014 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 06 January and 08 February 2014. Interviews were achieved with 1,217 individuals, representing a response rate of 64 % 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 in some cases 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. Additional technical details and tables are available upon request.

Appendix 2: Notes

This is an Official Statistics publication. Official Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in 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 Office's Mission Statement is to provide an effective, efficient and accountable complaints system which is independent, impartial and designed to secure the confidence of the public and police.

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

'a level of 80% public awareness of the Office.'

In 2014, 84% of respondents were aware of the Police Ombudsman.

'a level of 80% awareness of the independence of the Police Ombudsman.'

In 2014, 80% 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 2014, 75% of respondents were confident that the Police Ombudsman deals with complaints impartially.

'a level of 80% perception of fair treatment by the Office if they made a complaint against the police.'

In 2014, 84% of respondents felt that they would be treated fairly.

The Office also carries out separate surveys of the attitudes of people who have made complaints about police and of the police officers who have been subject to complaint. It also has an extensive programme of engagement within the community, where it listens and responds to issues raised. Taken together, this information helps underpin its business planning processes.

Appendix 3: Detailed Tables of Results

Table 1: % Respondents who had heard of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland

	Oct-00	Mar-01	Jan-02	Feb-03	Jan-04	Mar-05	Jan-06	Jan-07	Jan-08	Jan-09	Jan-10	Feb-11	Jan-12	Jan-13	Jan-14
Aware	57%	65%	86%	86%	85%	86%	84%	88%	90%	88%	88%	84%	85%	84%	84%
Not aware	41%	35%	14%	13%	14%	14%	16%	12%	10%	12%	12%	15%	15%	16%	16%
Don't know/refusal	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Total survey respondents	1189	1076	1142	1214	1292	1092	1122	1211	1238	1126	1216	1109	1141	1154	1217

Asked to all persons aged 16 and over

Table 2: % Respondents who had heard of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland by gender

	Jan-10	Feb-11	Jan-12	Jan-13	Jan-14
Men	89%	85%	89%	86%	87%
Women	87%	83%	81%	82%	82%

Asked to all persons aged 16 and over

Table 3: % Respondents who had heard of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland by age group

	Jan-10	Feb-11	Jan-12	Jan 13	Jan 14
<25	65%	[43/91]	[52/93]	51%	[42/91]
25-44	89%	87%	83%	86%	82%
45-64	95%	93%	95%	91%	94%
65+	88%	86%	87%	90%	90%

Asked to all persons aged 16 and over

Table 4: % Respondents who had heard of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland by community background

	Jan-10	Feb-11	Jan-12	Jan-13	Jan-14
Catholic	87%	82%	84%	80%	81%
Protestant	91%	86%	88%	88%	90%

Asked to all persons aged 16 and over

Table 5: 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	Jan-12	Jan-13	Jan-14
Television	93%	89%	90%	94%	93%	87%	86%	84%	86%	86%	87%
Newspaper/magazine	56%	43%	49%	50%	50%	42%	49%	49%	40%	42%	42%
Radio	44%	31%	40%	43%	42%	40%	40%	43%	35%	36%	41%
Word of mouth	13%	9%	12%	10%	12%	12%	11%	9%	7%	11%	15%
Friends/family	9%	4%	7%	5%	7%	6%	5%	7%	3%	8%	11%
Leaflets and Posters**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11%
Through work	7%	5%	7%	4%	7%	5%	7%	7%	6%	8%	8%
Website*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2%	4%
Twitter*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%	1%
Facebook**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1%
Attended presentation	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
You Tube*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%	0%
<i>Leaflets</i>	6%	4%	7%	4%	4%	5%	5%	5%	5%	4%	-
<i>Internet</i>	1%	1%	3%	2%	3%	2%	3%	3%	2%	-	-
<i>Poster</i>	4%	2%	3%	2%	4%	3%	2%	3%	3%	3%	-
Other	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	2%	1%	2%

Asked to all persons who were aware of the Police Ombudsman

Note: Percentages may add to more than 100% due to multiple responses

* Category introduced in 2013

** Category introduced in 2014

Categories in italics are no longer used

Table 6: Do you think the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland is part of the police or independent of the police ?

	Oct-00	Mar-01	Jan-02	Feb-03	Jan-04	Mar-05	Jan-06	Jan-07	Jan-08	Jan-09	Jan-10	Feb-11	Jan-12	Jan-13	Jan-14
Independent of the police	81%	83%	86%	86%	85%	84%	84%	86%	86%	83%	80%	83%	85%	84%	80%
Part of the police	11%	10%	9%	12%	11%	11%	11%	10%	12%	14%	17%	15%	12%	13%	14%
Don't know/refusal	8%	7%	5%	2%	4%	5%	5%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	3%	4%	5%
Total survey respondents	682	699	984	1044	1102	930	941	1073	1117	999	1068	939	978	977	1025

Asked to all persons who were aware of the Police Ombudsman

Table 7: % Respondents aware of independence by gender

	Jan-10	Feb-11	Jan-12	Jan-13	Jan-14
Men	82%	86%	85%	86%	83%
Women	79%	81%	86%	82%	78%

Asked to all persons who were aware of the Police Ombudsman

Table 8: % Respondents aware of independence by age group

	Jan-10	Feb-11	Jan-12	Jan-13	Jan-14
<25	[41/70]	[19/43]	[32/52]	[34/54]	[24/42]
25-44	86%	84%	85%	83%	80%
45-64	84%	87%	90%	89%	83%
65+	76%	86%	84%	83%	84%

Asked to all persons who were aware of the Police Ombudsman

Table 9: % Respondents aware of independence by community background

	Jan-10	Feb-11	Jan-12	Jan-13	Jan-14
Catholic	80%	83%	82%	80%	75%
Protestant	81%	83%	87%	85%	85%

Asked to all persons who were aware of the Police Ombudsman

Table 10: How confident are you that the Police Ombudsman deals with complaints against the police in an impartial way?

	Jan-02	Feb-03	Jan-04	Mar-05	Jan-06	Jan-07	Jan-08	Jan-09	Jan-10	Feb-11	Jan-12	Jan-13	Jan-14
Very confident	15%	17%	20%	21%	17%	24%	26%	19%	18%	18%	14%	16%	14%
Fairly confident	46%	57%	56%	57%	59%	54%	55%	60%	65%	62%	63%	60%	61%
Not very confident	23%	17%	14%	13%	14%	14%	12%	14%	11%	14%	17%	15%	16%
Not at all confident	11%	5%	4%	3%	3%	4%	4%	3%	2%	3%	3%	3%	4%
Don't know/refusal	6%	4%	5%	7%	6%	4%	4%	5%	3%	3%	3%	5%	6%
Total	984	1044	1102	930	941	1073	1117	999	1068	939	978	977	1025

Asked to all persons who were aware of the Police Ombudsman

Table 11: % Respondents confident/not confident that the Police Ombudsman deals with complaints against the police impartially by gender, 2010 - 2014

	Jan-10		Feb-11		Jan-12		Jan-13		Jan-14	
	Men	Women								
Very confident	20%	16%	19%	17%	15%	13%	16%	16%	14%	13%
Fairly confident	59%	71%	62%	63%	57%	68%	59%	61%	61%	60%
Not very confident	14%	9%	15%	13%	20%	14%	16%	15%	16%	16%
Not at all confident	3%	1%	3%	3%	4%	2%	5%	2%	5%	3%
Don't know/refusal	3%	3%	2%	5%	3%	3%	4%	6%	4%	8%

Asked to all persons who were aware of the Police Ombudsman

Table 12: % Respondents confident/not confident that the Police Ombudsman deals with complaints against the police impartially by age group, 2010 - 2014

		Jan-10	Feb-11	Jan-12	Jan-13	Jan-14
<25	Very confident	[8/70]	[5/43]	[4/52]	[5/54]	[4/42]
	Fairly confident	[47/70]	[27/43]	[31/52]	[32/54]	[25/42]
	Not very confident	[11/70]	[9/43]	[12/52]	[14/54]	[7/42]
	Not at all confident	[2/70]	[2/43]	[2/52]	[2/54]	[4/42]
	Don't know/refusal	[2/70]	-	[3/52]	[1/54]	[2/42]
25-44	Very confident	18%	16%	14%	14%	11%
	Fairly confident	63%	63%	64%	63%	61%
	Not very confident	14%	16%	17%	17%	18%
	Not at all confident	2%	2%	4%	3%	4%
	Don't know/refusal	3%	3%	2%	3%	6%
45-64	Very confident	18%	18%	15%	19%	13%
	Fairly confident	67%	62%	62%	58%	63%
	Not very confident	9%	12%	17%	13%	14%
	Not at all confident	3%	4%	4%	4%	3%
	Don't know/refusal	2%	3%	2%	6%	6%
65 and over	Very confident	20%	22%	15%	14%	19%
	Fairly confident	65%	61%	63%	61%	58%
	Not very confident	9%	11%	15%	15%	13%
	Not at all confident	1%	1%	2%	3%	3%
	Don't know/refusal	5%	5%	6%	7%	7%

Asked to all persons who were aware of the Police Ombudsman

Table 13: % Respondents confident/not confident that the Police Ombudsman deals with complaints against the police impartially by community background, 2010 - 2014

	Jan-10		Feb-11		Jan-12		Jan-13		Jan-14	
	Catholic	Protestant								
Very confident	18%	18%	17%	17%	15%	13%	16%	17%	13%	14%
Fairly confident	64%	67%	65%	61%	55%	68%	61%	59%	62%	61%
Not very confident	11%	12%	12%	15%	22%	14%	13%	17%	15%	16%
Not at all confident	3%	1%	3%	3%	5%	2%	4%	3%	4%	3%
Don't know/refusal	3%	3%	3%	4%	3%	3%	6%	4%	6%	5%

Asked to all persons who were aware of the Police Ombudsman

Table 14: If you were to make a complaint against a police officer, do you think you would be treated fairly?

	Jan-02	Feb-03	Jan-04	Mar-05	Jan-06	Jan-07	Jan-08	Jan-09	Jan-10	Feb-11	Jan-12	Jan-13	Jan-14
Fairly treated	77%	79%	82%	85%	84%	86%	85%	86%	86%	84%	83%	86%	84%
Not fairly treated	13%	15%	11%	8%	9%	8%	10%	9%	9%	11%	12%	9%	10%
Don't know/refusal	10%	6%	6%	7%	7%	6%	5%	4%	5%	5%	5%	5%	6%
Total survey respondents	984	1044	1102	930	941	1073	1117	999	1068	939	978	977	1025

Asked to all persons who were aware of the Police Ombudsman

Table 15: % Respondents who feel they would be treated fairly by the Police Ombudsman by gender

	Jan-10	Feb-11	Jan-12	Jan-13	Jan-14
Men	84%	85%	82%	86%	84%
Women	89%	83%	84%	87%	85%

Asked to all persons who were aware of the Police Ombudsman

Table 16: % Respondents who feel they would be treated fairly by the Police Ombudsman by age group

	Jan-10	Feb-11	Jan-12	Jan-13	Jan-14
<25	[57/70]	[31/43]	[33/52]	[45/54]	[30/42]
25-44	87%	84%	81%	86%	84%
45-64	86%	84%	84%	87%	85%
65+	88%	88%	88%	84%	87%

Asked to all persons who were aware of the Police Ombudsman

Table 17: % Respondents who feel they would be treated fairly by the Police Ombudsman by community background

	Jan-10	Feb-11	Jan-12	Jan-13	Jan-14
Catholic	85%	83%	78%	85%	85%
Protestant	87%	84%	87%	86%	84%

Asked to all persons who were aware of the Police Ombudsman

Table 18: If you made a complaint about a police officer, do you think the police officer would be treated fairly, 2014?

Yes	90%
No	5%
Don't know/refusal	5%

Asked to all persons who were aware of the Police Ombudsman

Table 19: If you made a complaint about a police officer, do you think the police officer would be treated fairly by gender, 2014?

	Men	Women
Yes	92%	89%
No	3%	7%
Don't know/refusal	6%	4%

Asked to all persons who were aware of the Police Ombudsman

Table 20: If you made a complaint about a police officer, do you think the police officer would be treated fairly by age group, 2014?

	<25	25-44	45-64	65+
Yes	[41/42]	89%	89%	91%
No	[1/42]	6%	4%	6%
Don't know/refusal	[0/42]	5%	7%	3%

Asked to all persons who were aware of the Police Ombudsman

Table 21: If you made a complaint about a police officer, do you think the police officer would be treated fairly by community background, 2014?

	Catholic	Protestant
Yes	90%	91%
No	4%	5%
Don't know/refusal	5%	4%

Asked to all persons who were aware of the Police Ombudsman

Table 22: % Respondents who think the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland will help ensure that the police do a good job

	Jan-02	Feb-03	Jan-04	Mar-05	Jan-06	Jan-07	Jan-08	Jan-09	Jan-10	Feb-11	Jan-12	Jan-13	Jan-14
Yes	71%	78%	79%	78%	83%	82%	83%	86%	87%	85%	85%	83%	81%
No	19%	16%	15%	15%	10%	12%	11%	8%	9%	10%	11%	11%	12%
Don't know/refusal	9%	6%	6%	7%	6%	6%	5%	6%	4%	4%	4%	6%	7%
Total survey respondents	984	1044	1102	930	941	1073	1117	999	1068	939	978	977	1025

Asked to all persons who were aware of the Police Ombudsman

Table 23: % Respondents who think the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland will help ensure that the police do a good job by gender

	Jan-10	Feb-11	Jan-12	Jan-13	Jan-14
Men	86%	83%	83%	82%	81%
Women	89%	87%	88%	84%	82%

Asked to all persons who were aware of the Police Ombudsman

Table 24: % Respondents who think the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland will help ensure that the police do a good job by age group

	Jan-10	Feb-11	Jan-12	Jan-13	Jan-14
<25	[60/70]	[36/43]	[42/52]	[44/54]	[33/42]
25-44	88%	81%	86%	84%	82%
45-64	86%	85%	83%	81%	81%
65+	91%	89%	90%	84%	81%

Asked to all persons who were aware of the Police Ombudsman

Table 25: % Respondents who think the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland will help ensure that the police do a good job by community background

	Jan-10	Feb-11	Jan-12	Jan -13	Jan-14
Catholic	88%	85%	87%	82%	83%
Protestant	87%	84%	86%	83%	80%

Asked to all persons who were aware of the Police Ombudsman

Table 26: In what way do you think the police will do a good job because of the Police Ombudsman, 2014?

Reason	
The police will treat all communities in Northern Ireland more impartially	54%
The police will give less cause for complaints from the public	43%
The police will investigate crime better	31%
The police will attend incidents more quickly	22%
The police will be more polite	18%
The police will patrol more	18%
The police will use less physical force	15%
Other	5%
Dont know/refusal	2%

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

Note: Percentages may add to more than 100% due to multiple responses

Table 27: In what way do you think the police will do a good job because of the Police Ombudsman, by gender, 2014?

	Men	Women
Police will treat all communities in Northern Ireland more impartially	56%	52%
The police will give less cause for complaints from the public	44%	42%
The police will investigate crime better	31%	31%
The police will attend to incidents more quickly	20%	25%
The police will patrol more	18%	18%
The police will be more polite	21%	16%
The police will use less physical force	15%	15%
Other	5%	5%
Don't know/refusal	3%	1%

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

Note: Percentages may add to more than 100% as respondents can choose more than one option.

Table 28: In what way will the police do a good job because of the Police Ombudsman, by age group, 2014?

	<25	25-44	45-64	65+
Police will treat all communities in Northern Ireland more impartially	[20/33]	58%	54%	46%
The police will give less cause for complaints from the public	[13/33]	44%	42%	42%
The police will investigate crime better	[14/33]	29%	3%	30%
The police will attend to incidents more quickly	[15/33]	17%	23%	25%
The police will patrol more	[7/33]	20%	17%	17%
The police will be more polite	[8/33]	17%	18%	19%
The police will use less physical force	[5/33]	20%	14%	10%
Other	[0/33]	6%	7%	2%
Don't know/refusal	[0/33]	2%	1%	5%

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

Note: Percentages may add to more than 100% as respondents can choose more than one option.

Table 29: In what way will the police do a good job because of the Police Ombudsman, by community background, 2014?

	Catholic	Protestant
Police will treat all communities in Northern Ireland more impartially	55%	51%
The police will give less cause for complaints from the public	40%	43%
The police will investigate crime better	32%	31%
The police will attend to incidents more quickly	23%	24%
The police will patrol more	19%	17%
The police will be more polite	17%	19%
The police will use less physical force	16%	13%
Other	6%	4%
Don't know/refusal	2%	2%

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

Note: Percentages may add to more than 100% as respondents can choose more than one option.

Table 30: 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	Jan-12	Jan-13	Jan-14
No	82%	87%	85%	82%	83%	83%	84%	82%	84%	84%	83%
Once or twice	11%	9%	11%	13%	12%	13%	11%	14%	12%	12%	12%
More than twice	6%	4%	4%	4%	4%	3%	5%	4%	3%	4%	5%
Total survey respondents	1292	1092	1122	1211	1238	1126	1216	1109	1141	1154	1217

Asked to all persons aged 16 and over

Table 31: Has a police officer ever behaved in an unacceptable way by gender, 2014?

	Men	Women
No	78%	87%
Once or twice	13%	11%
More than twice	9%	2%

Asked to all persons aged 16 and over

Table 32: Has a police officer ever behaved in an unacceptable way by age group, 2014?

	<25	25-44	45-64	65+
No	[80/91]	82%	78%	89%
Once or twice	[8/91]	13%	15%	7%
More than twice	[3/91]	5%	7%	3%

Asked to all persons aged 16 and over

Table 33: Has a police officer ever behaved in an unacceptable way by community background, 2014?

	Catholic	Protestant
No	82%	84%
Once or twice	11%	12%
More than twice	7%	4%

Asked to all persons aged 16 and over

Table 34: Types of unacceptable behaviour experienced, 2014

Behaviour	
Officer was disrespectful or impolite	57%
Officer didn't follow proper procedures	23%
Officer did not do his/her duty properly	23%
Harassment	16%
Stopped or searched without reason	16%
Officer wrongly accused you of behaviour	11%
Officer was violent	11%
Officer swore	8%
Officer used sectarian, racist or sexist language	7%
Discrimination by race, gender, age or religion	6%
Officer searched house without reason	2%
Officer took an item of respondent's property	1%
Other	2%
Don't know/refusal	0%

All respondents who experienced unacceptable behaviour

Note: Percentages may add to more than 100% as respondents can choose more than one option.

Table 35: Did you make a complaint?

	Jan-04	Mar-05	Jan-06	Jan-07	Jan-08	Jan-09	Jan-10	Feb-11	Jan-12	Jan-13	Jan-14
Yes	16%	27%	22%	16%	18%	14%	15%	21%	21%	23%	21%
No	84%	73%	78%	84%	82%	86%	85%	79%	78%	77%	79%

Asked to all persons who had experienced unacceptable behaviour

Table 36: Main reasons why incident not complained about, 2014

Behaviour	
Felt nothing would be done about it	33%
Felt it would not be taken seriously	25%
Couldn't be bothered	17%
Incident was not serious enough	14%
Scared of police reprisals	4%
Didn't want to make trouble for the police	3%
Didn't know how to complain about police behaviour	2%
Other	2%

Asked to all persons who didn't make a complaint

Table 37: Where respondents would go initially to complain

Where respondents would go	Jan-04	Mar-05	Jan-06	Jan-07	Jan-08	Jan-09	Jan-10	Feb-11	Jan-12	Jan-13	Jan-14
Local police station	44%	52%	53%	40%	43%	44%	42%	38%	49%	43%	44%
Police Ombudsman	11%	11%	9%	13%	11%	14%	17%	21%	14%	16%	14%
Solicitor	18%	16%	14%	18%	18%	18%	16%	15%	13%	14%	13%
The Citizens Advice Bureau	5%	5%	6%	7%	6%	6%	6%	5%	6%	5%	7%
A local politician e.g. Councillor	5%	3%	3%	5%	4%	4%	5%	3%	4%	4%	6%
An MP/MLA	5%	4%	5%	5%	6%	5%	6%	6%	6%	6%	5%
Wouldn't make a complaint	3%	3%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%	5%	3%	4%	4%
Chief Constable of the PSNI	3%	2%	1%	3%	2%	2%	1%	4%	2%	2%	2%
The Policing Board	2%	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	0%	1%	0%	2%	1%
Other	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%
Don't know/refusal	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	2%	1%	2%	3%

Asked to all persons who were aware of the Police Ombudsman

Table 38: Where would you go to complain by community background, 2014?

Where respondents would go initially to complain	Catholic	Protestant
Local police station	38%	48%
Police Ombudsman	11%	17%
Solicitor	18%	9%
An MP/MLA	5%	4%
The Citizens Advice Bureau	8%	6%
Wouldn't make a complaint	4%	5%
Chief Constable of the PSNI	3%	2%
A local politician e.g. Councillor	7%	6%
The Policing Board	1%	1%
Other	1%	1%
Don't know/refusal	3%	2%

Asked to all persons who were aware of the Police Ombudsman

Table 39: What was the main reason why you would not go to the Police Ombudsman first of all?

Reason	Jan-13	Jan-14
Did not know you could make a complaint directly to the Police Ombudsman	44%	46%
It was more convenient to go to one of the places just mentioned	35%	35%
I was advised to make my complaints elsewhere	2%	2%
Other	18%	13%
Don't know/refusal	1%	4%

Respondents who would not initially complain to the Police Ombudsman

Table 40: Source of information for contacting the Police Ombudsman's Office, 2014

Source of information	
Internet	61%
Telephone directory	25%
Police station	8%
Directory enquiries	3%
Political representative	3%
Legal representative	2%
Advice agency	3%
Call at Office	1%
Community association	1%
Other	2%
Don't know	4%

Asked to all persons who were aware of the Police Ombudsman



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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:

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