

Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland:

Annual report on
public awareness of the
system for complaints
against the police in
Northern Ireland,
2012

January 2013

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Executive Summary

This annual report presents the detailed findings from the 2012 Omnibus Survey. These surveys have been carried out annually since the Office opened. The report provides trend data for key questions since they were included in the survey. For other questions trend data is presented for the last five years. The headline figures from this year's survey have already been published in the Police Ombudsman Annual Report, 2011/12.

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.
- Respondents were more likely to first of all go to a police station in order to make a complaint against the police rather than to the Police Ombudsman or a solicitor. In 2012, around half of respondents would initially make their complaint at their local police station and this proportion has increased since 2010. In 2012, 14% of respondents would initially make their complaint directly to the Police Ombudsman's Office; and this proportion has decreased since 2011.
- 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.
- The majority of respondents who had heard of the Police Ombudsman thought that he was independent of the police; however younger respondents were less likely to feel this.

- Since the Office opened, the majority of respondents reported that they were confident that the Police Ombudsman deals with complaints in an impartial way, although the proportion who were confident has fallen from 83% in 2010 to 77% in 2012.
- Most respondents thought that they would be fairly treated if they were to make a complaint against a police officer to the Police Ombudsman.
- 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 (the 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 thirteenth survey, which was carried out between 2nd January and 4th February 2012. The key results from this survey were published in the Office's Annual Report, 2011/12. The data were collected through a module in the Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency's (NISRA) Omnibus Survey.

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.

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;

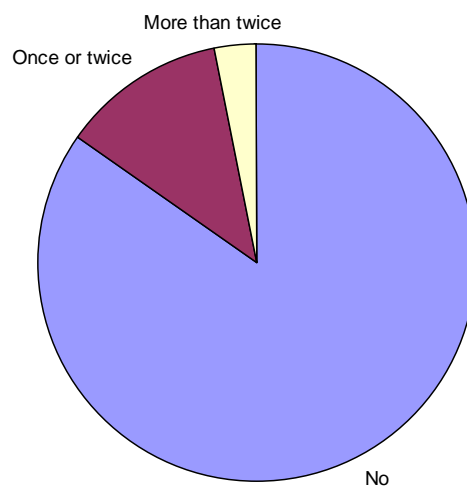
- perceptions of improvements in policing due to the existence of the Police Ombudsman's Office and
- trend data for key questions.

Survey findings

Perceptions of police misconduct

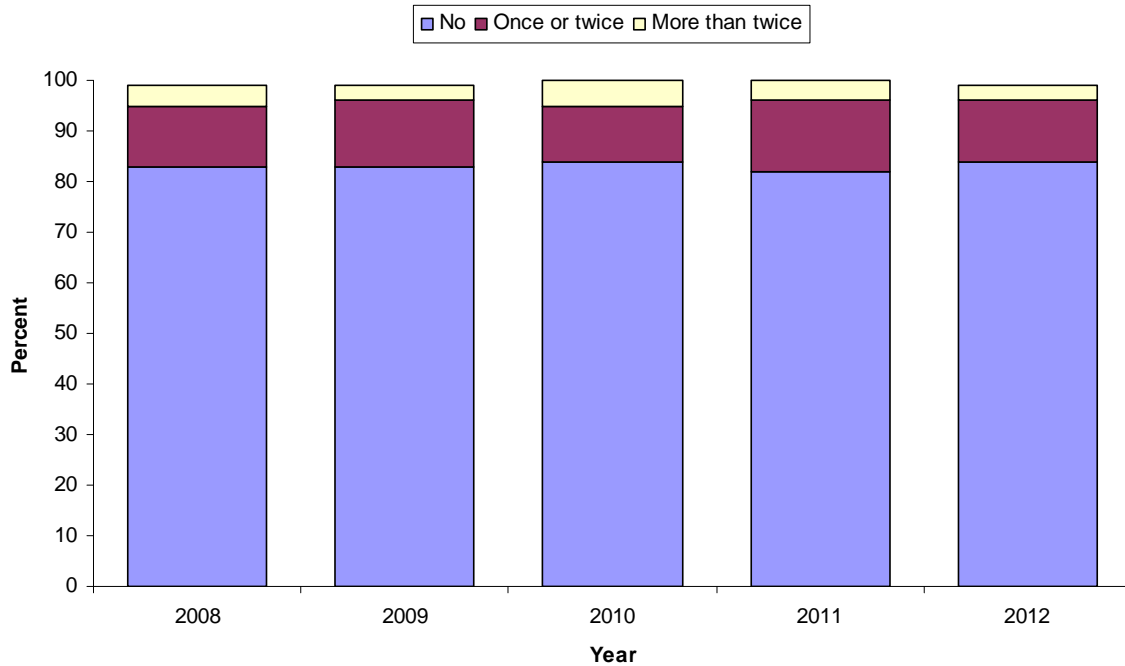
When asked had a police officer ever behaved towards them in a way that they thought was unacceptable, the majority of respondents (84%), in 2012, said that they had not experienced police behaviour that they thought was unacceptable (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Has a police officer ever behaved towards you in a way that you thought was unacceptable, 2012?



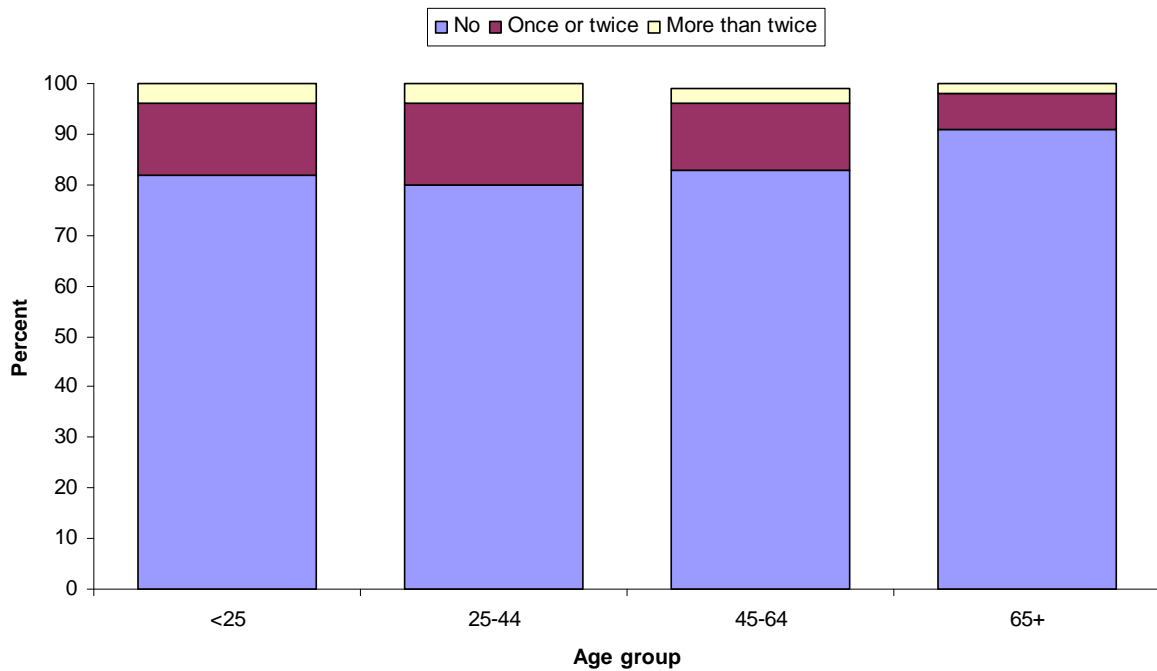
The proportions of respondents who had experienced unacceptable behaviour from a police officer have remained steady over time (Figure 2).

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



In 2012, 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 behaviour (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Has a police officer ever behaved towards you in a way that you thought was unacceptable, 2012?



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 2012.

Table 1: Types of unacceptable behaviour experienced, 2012

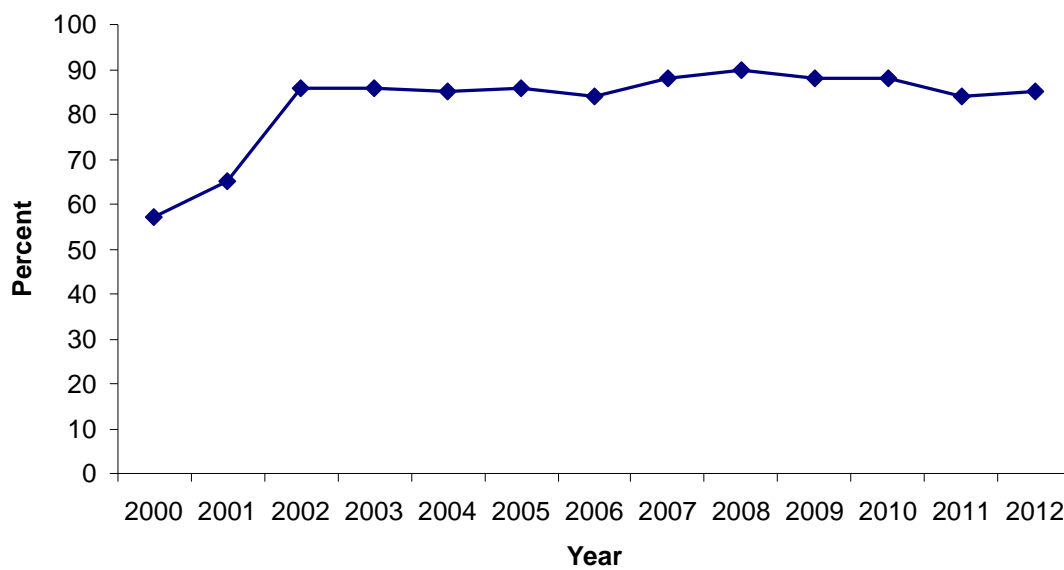
Behaviour	% Respondents
Officer was disrespectful or impolite	56
Officer didn't follow proper procedures	25
Harassment	21
Officer did not do his duty properly	17
Stopped or searched without reason	15
Officer wrongly accused you of behaviour	15
Officer was violent	14
Discrimination by race, gender, age or religion	11
Officer swore	10
Officer used sectarian, racist or sexist language	6
Officer searched house without reason	4
Officer took an item of respondent's property	4
Other	6
Don't know/refusal	2

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

Awareness of the Police Ombudsman

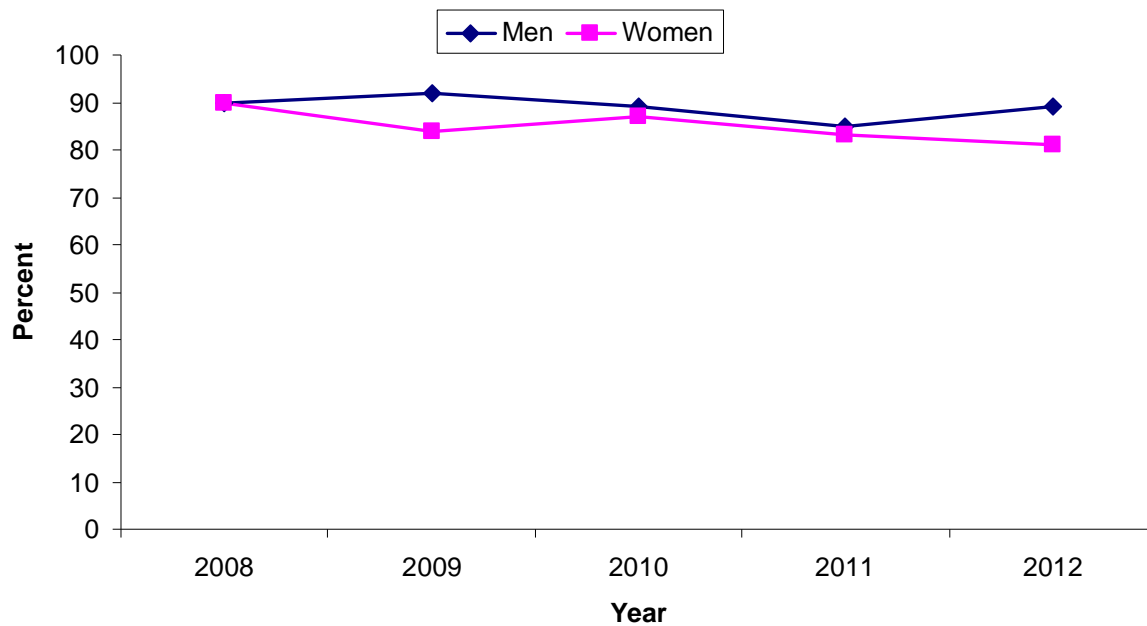
In 2012, the majority of respondents (85%) stated that they had heard of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland. Figure 4 shows that awareness levels have been consistently high since 2002, although in 2011 awareness was lower than the previous four years.

Figure 4: Level of awareness of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland, 2000 - 2012



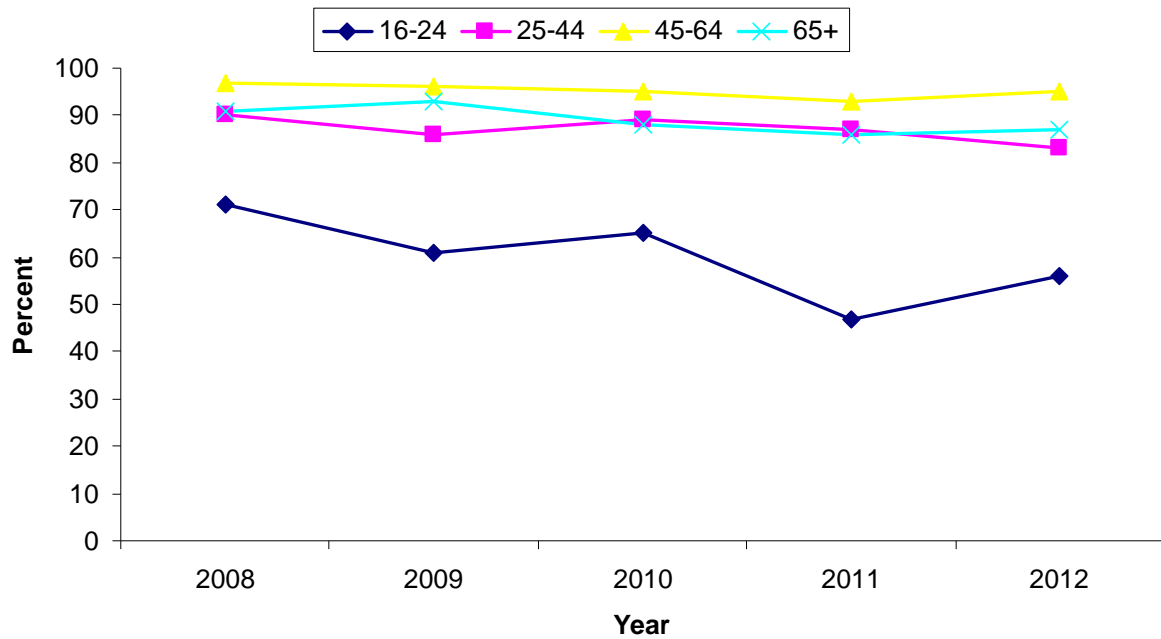
Results show that in 2012, women were less likely than men to be aware of the Police Ombudsman (Figure 5). This difference between genders was also evident in 2009.

Figure 5: Level of awareness of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland by gender, 2008 - 2012



Generally, awareness levels among respondents aged 16 - 24¹ have been consistently lower than older age groups. Awareness levels among those aged 16 - 24 dipped in 2011 (Figure 6).

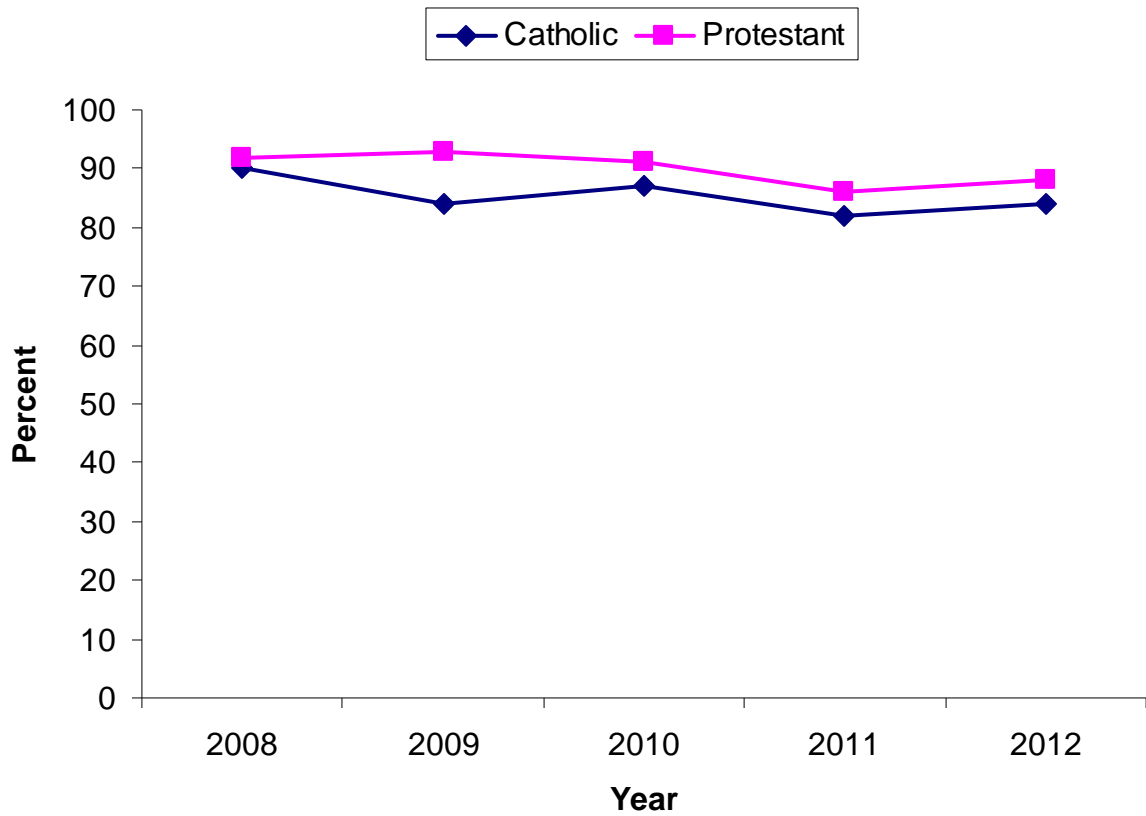
Figure 6: Level of awareness of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland by age group, 2008 - 2012



¹ Caution should be exercised when interpreting results from the 16 – 24 age group, due to the small numbers of respondents.

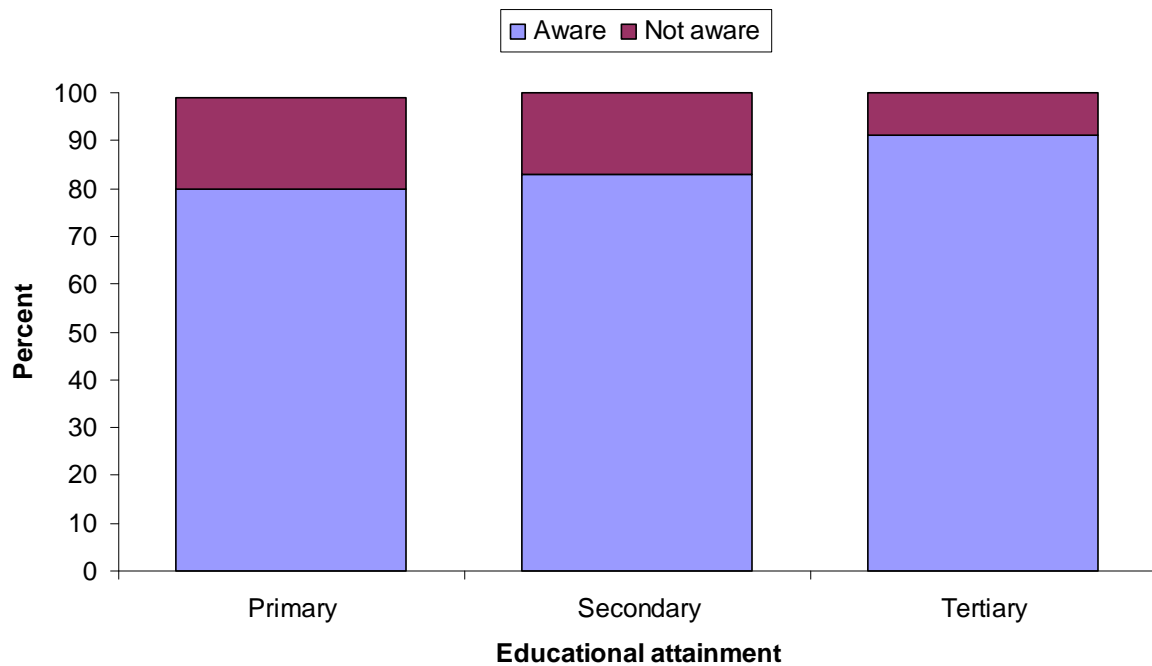
In 2012, awareness of the Police Ombudsman was similar among Protestants and Catholics. Figure 7 shows that during the last five years awareness levels were similar among Catholic and Protestant respondents except in 2009 when Protestant respondents were more aware of the Police Ombudsman than Catholic respondents.

Figure 7: Level of awareness of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland by religious belief, 2008 - 2012



In 2012, higher levels of awareness of the Police Ombudsman were reported for those respondents in paid employment compared with those not in paid employment. During 2011/12, awareness of the Police Ombudsman also varied according to the respondents' level of educational attainment, with higher levels of educational attainment being associated with higher levels of awareness (Figure 8).

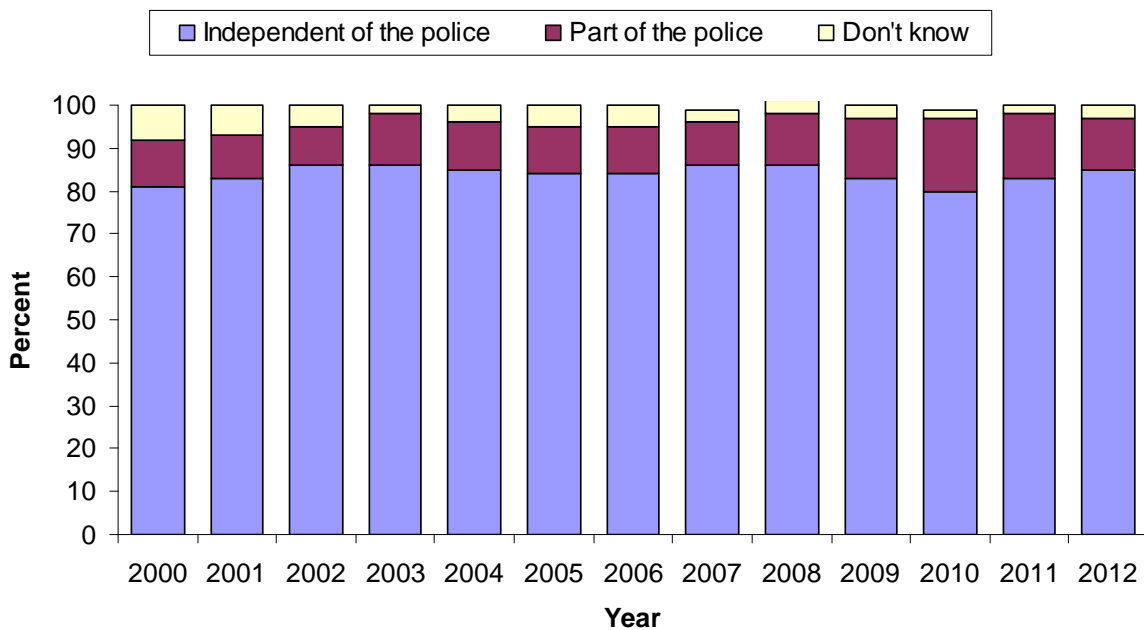
Figure 8: Level of awareness of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland by highest educational attainment, 2012



Independence of the Police Ombudsman

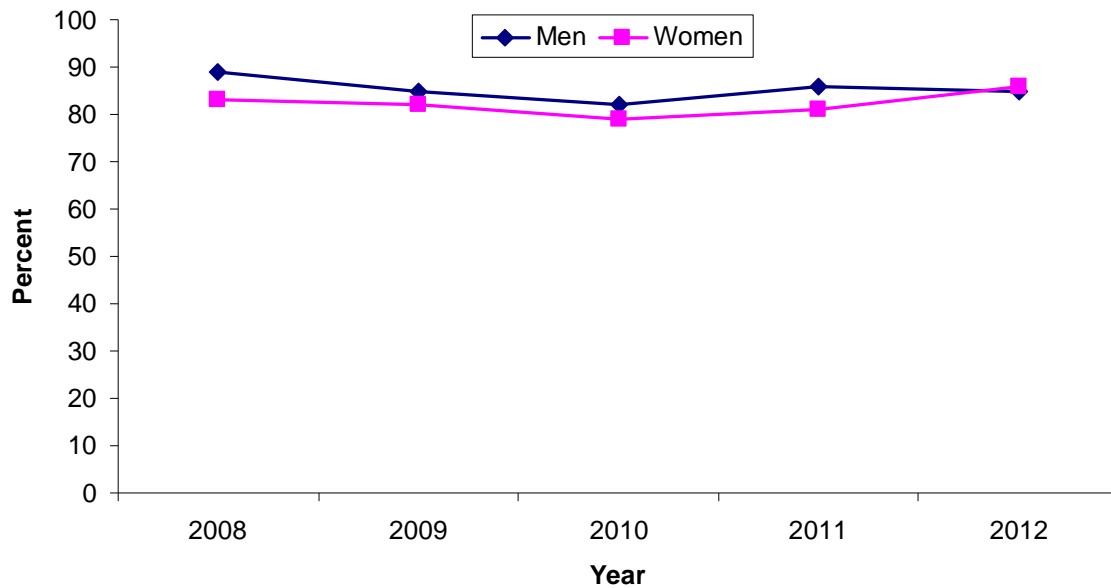
All respondents who had heard of the Police Ombudsman were asked for their opinion on whether or not the Police Ombudsman was independent of the police or part of the police. In 2012, the majority of these respondents (85%) who had heard of the Police Ombudsman felt that the Police Ombudsman was independent of the police. The proportion who thought that the Police Ombudsman was independent of the police has been consistently high since 2000 (Figure 9).

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



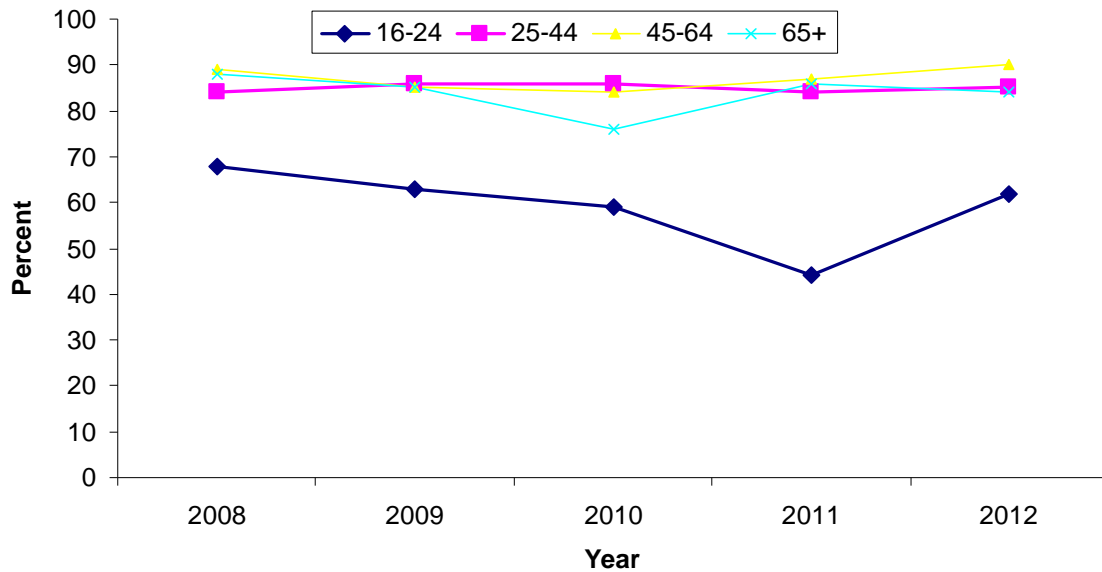
In 2012, similar proportions of men and women were aware of the independence of the Police Ombudsman. In 2008 and 2011 awareness levels were higher among men than women (Figure 10).

Figure 10: Level of awareness of the independence of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland by gender, 2008 - 2012



In 2012, respondents aged 16 - 24² showed a lower level of awareness of the independence of the Police Ombudsman than other age groups (Figure 11). Results show that awareness levels among those aged 16 - 24 dipped in 2011.

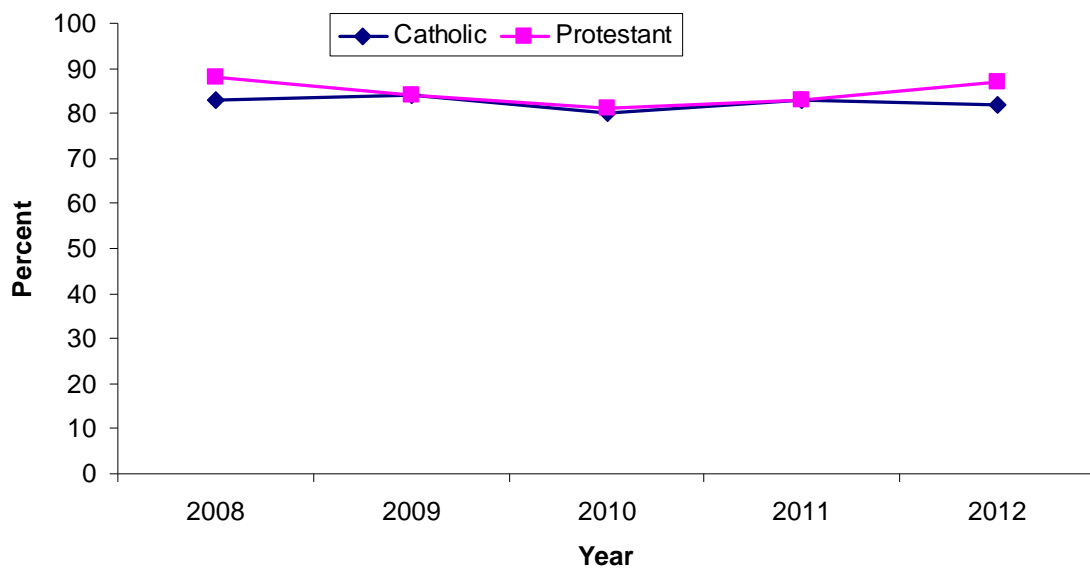
Figure 11: Level of awareness of the independence of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland by age group, 2008 - 2012



² Caution should be exercised when interpreting results from the 16 – 24 age group, due to the small numbers of respondents.

In 2012, there was a higher level of awareness of the Office's independence among Protestant respondents than Catholic respondents. Figure 12 shows that previous to 2012, awareness levels had been similar among Catholics and Protestants, except in 2008 when Protestant respondents were more likely than Catholic respondents to think that the Police Ombudsman was independent of the police.

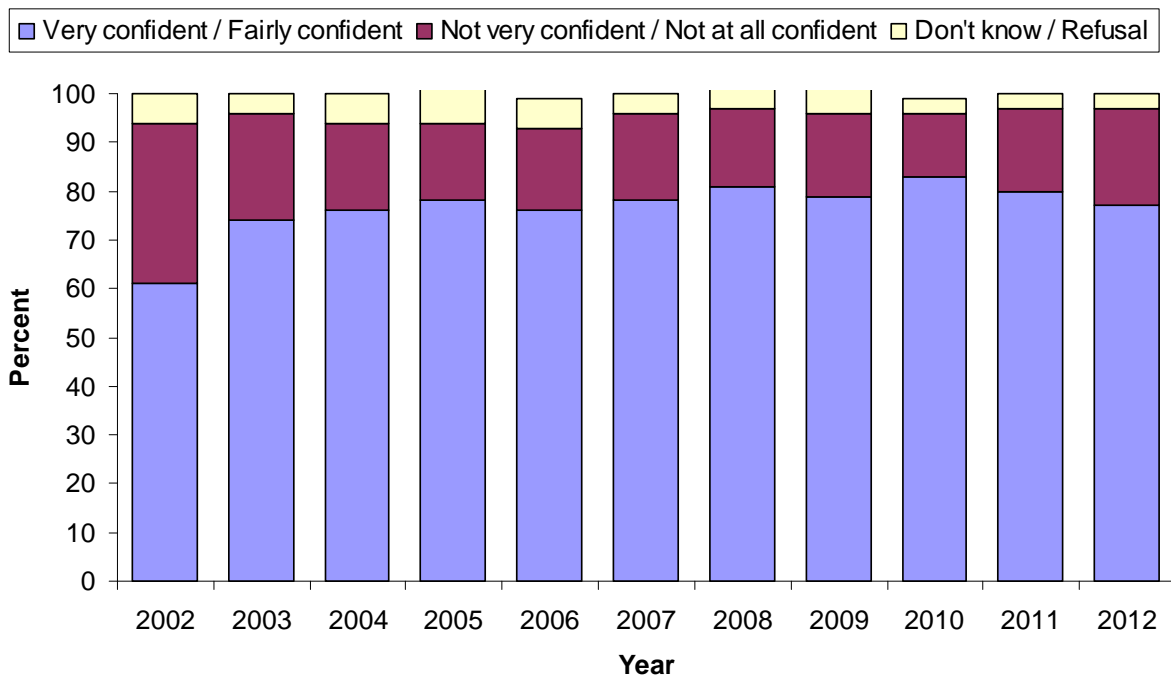
Figure 12: Level of awareness of the independence of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland by religious belief, 2008 - 2012



Impartiality of investigation

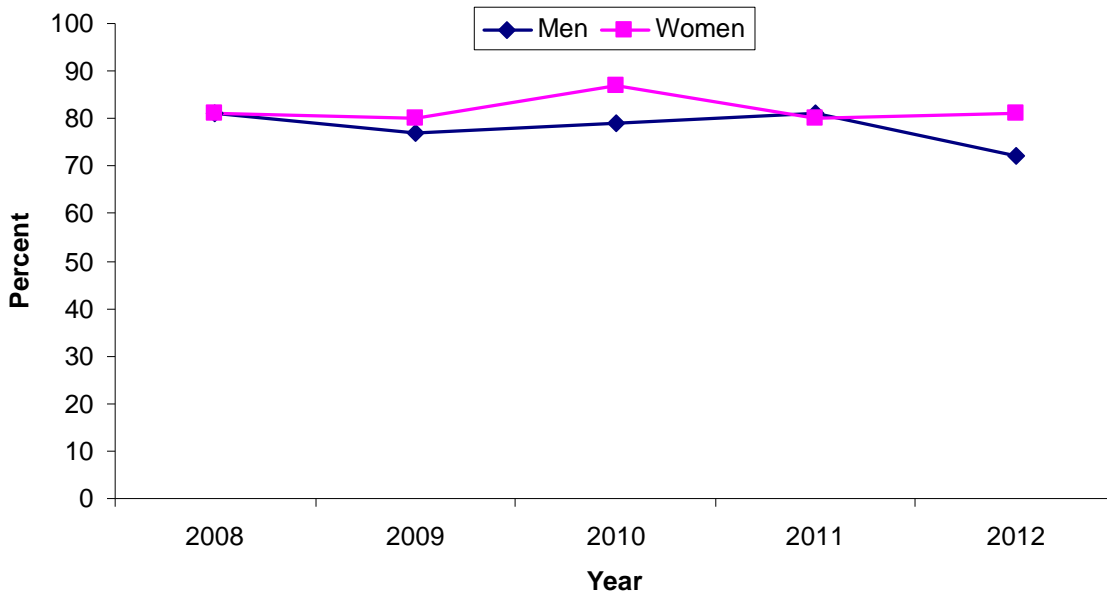
In 2012, the majority of those respondents who had heard of the Police Ombudsman were fairly confident or very confident that the Police Ombudsman deals with complaints in an impartial way. Figure 13 shows that since 2010 confidence levels have decreased from 83% to 77%.

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



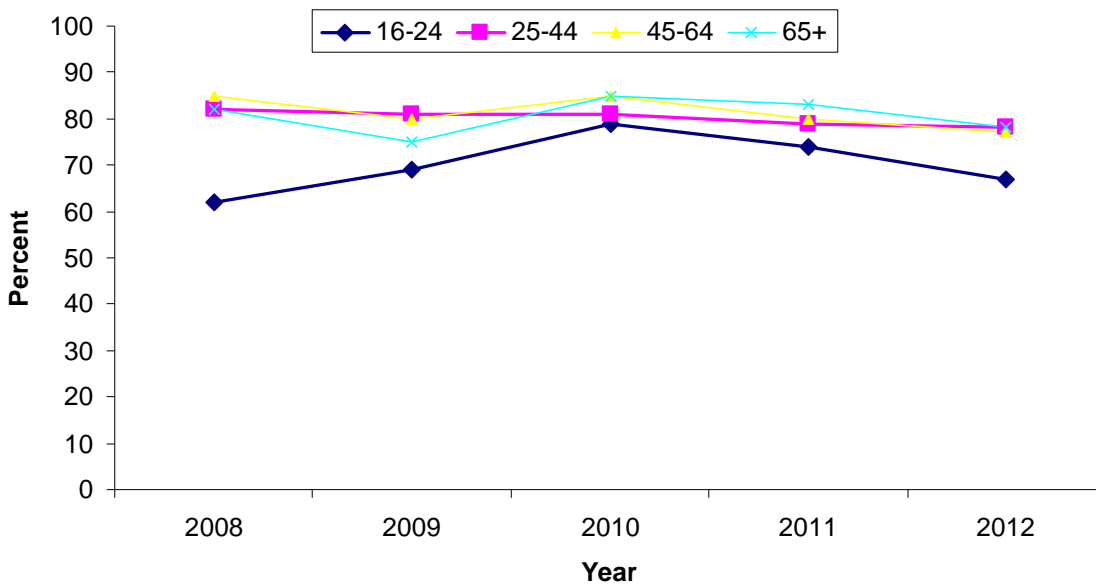
In 2012, women were more likely than men to be confident that the Police Ombudsman deals with complaints in an impartial manner. Figure 14 shows that in 2010 also, women were more likely than men to be confident in this matter.

Figure 14: Level of confidence that the Police Ombudsman deals with complaints in an impartial way by gender, 2008 - 2012



In 2012, respondents in all age groups were just as likely to be confident that the Police Ombudsman deals with complaints impartially. Figure 15 shows that in 2008 and 2009 respondents aged 16 - 24³ showed lower levels of confidence in the impartiality of the Office compared with older age groups.

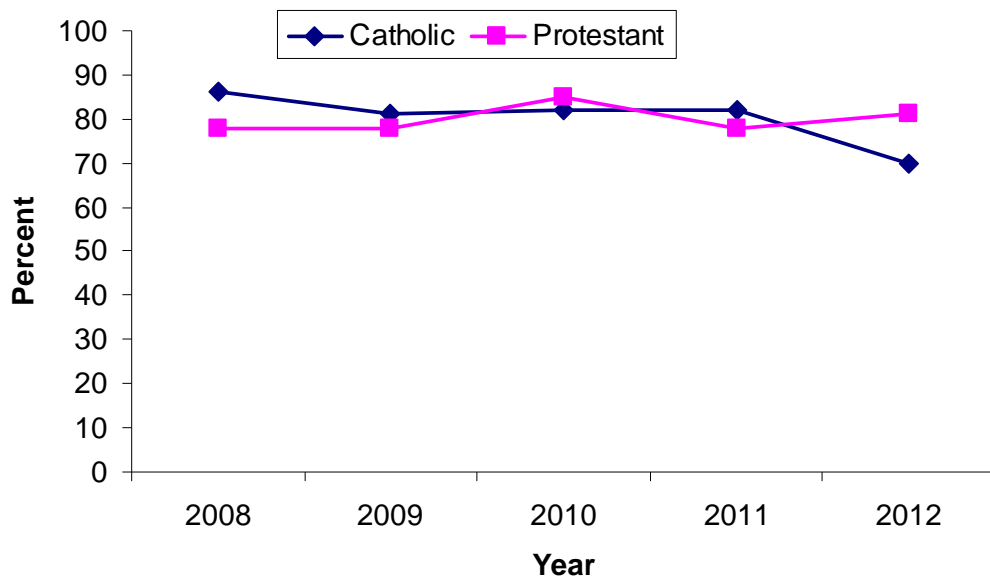
Figure 15: Level of confidence that the Police Ombudsman deals with complaints in an impartial way by age group, 2008 - 2012



³Caution should be exercised when interpreting results from the 16 – 24 age group, due to the small numbers of respondents.

In 2012, Protestant respondents were more likely than Catholic respondents to be confident that the Police Ombudsman deals with complaints impartially. Figure 16 shows that in 2008, Catholic respondents were more likely than Protestant respondents to be confident that the Police Ombudsman deals with complaints impartially.

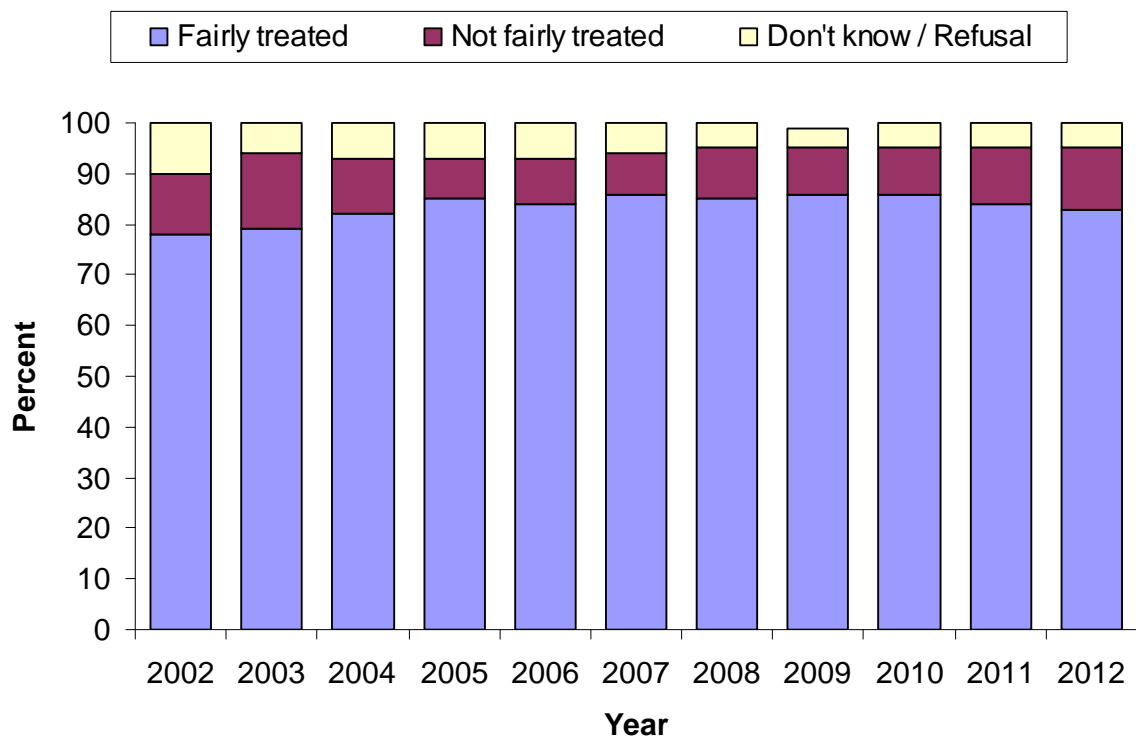
Figure 16: Level of confidence that the Police Ombudsman deals with complaints in an impartial way by religious belief, 2008 - 2012



Fairness and equality of treatment of complainant and police officers

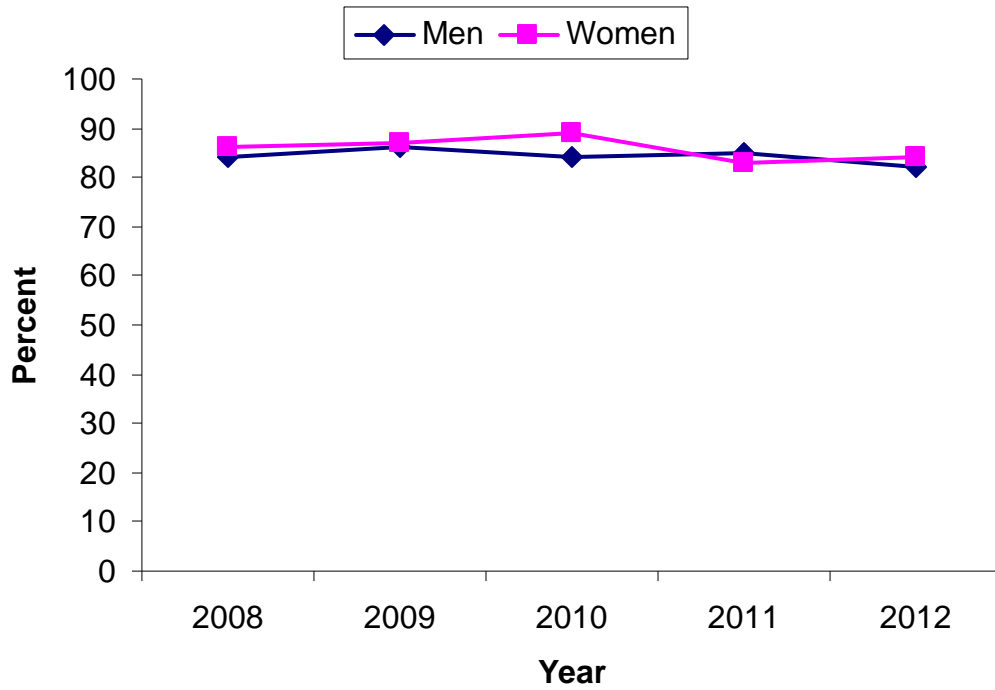
Respondents were asked how they felt complainants and police officers would be treated by the Police Ombudsman in the event of a complaint being made. In 2012, 83% of respondents stated that they thought that they would be treated fairly if they made a complaint against a police officer (Figure 17). Since the Office opened, this proportion has been consistently high.

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?



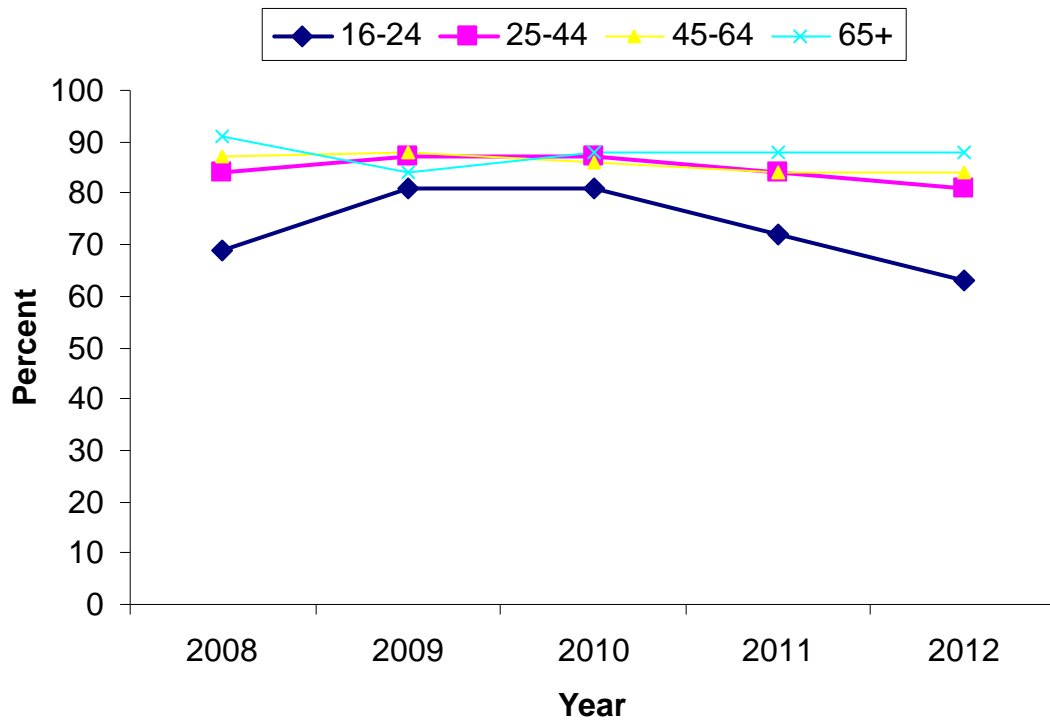
In 2012, similar proportions of men and women felt that they would be treated fairly if they made a complaint to the Ombudsman. This trend has been consistent over time, except in 2010, when women were more likely than men to think they would be treated fairly (Figure 18).

Figure 18: Fair treatment by the Police Ombudsman by gender, 2008 - 2012



In 2012, respondents aged 16 - 24⁴ 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. Figure 19 shows that, similarly, in 2008 and 2011, younger respondents had less positive views than older respondents.

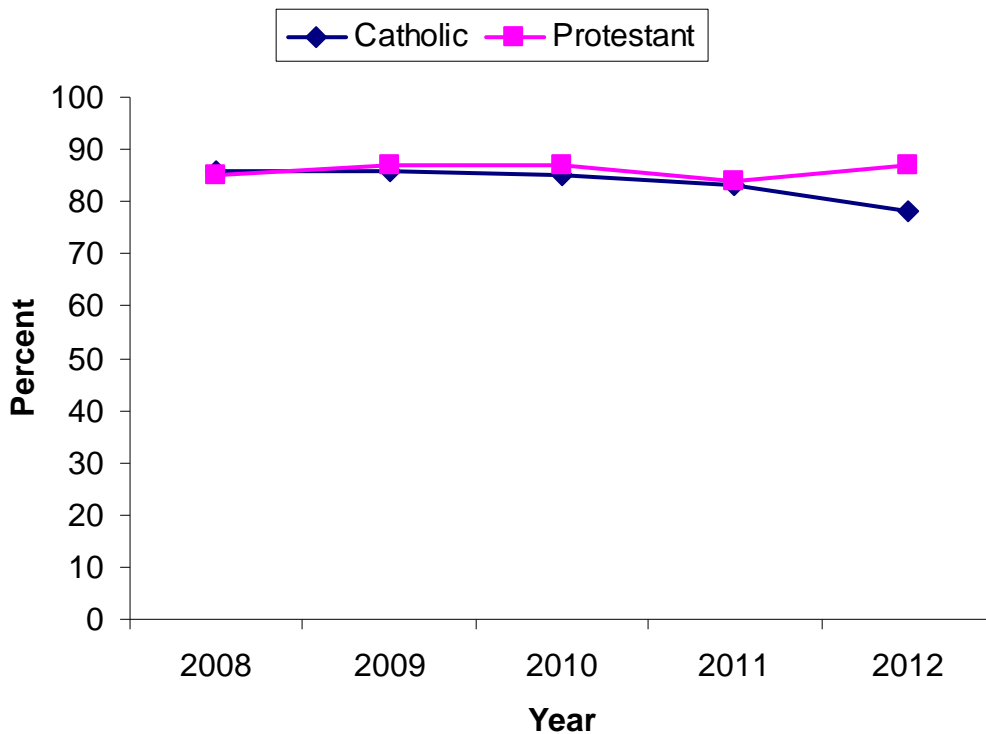
Figure 19: Fair treatment by the Police Ombudsman by age group, 2008 - 2012



⁴ Caution should be exercised when interpreting results from the 16 – 24 age group, due to the small numbers of respondents.

In 2012, Protestants were more likely than Catholics to think they would be treated fairly if they made a complaint (Figure 20). However, in the previous four years perception of fair treatment was similar among Catholic and Protestant respondents.

Figure 20: Fair treatment by the Police Ombudsman by religious belief, 2008 - 2012



When respondents were asked in 2012, did they think the **police officer** would be treated fairly, 90% of respondents thought police officers would be treated fairly by the Police Ombudsman in the event of a complaint being made against them.

In 2012, similar proportions of men and women and Catholics and Protestants believed that police officers would be treated fairly.

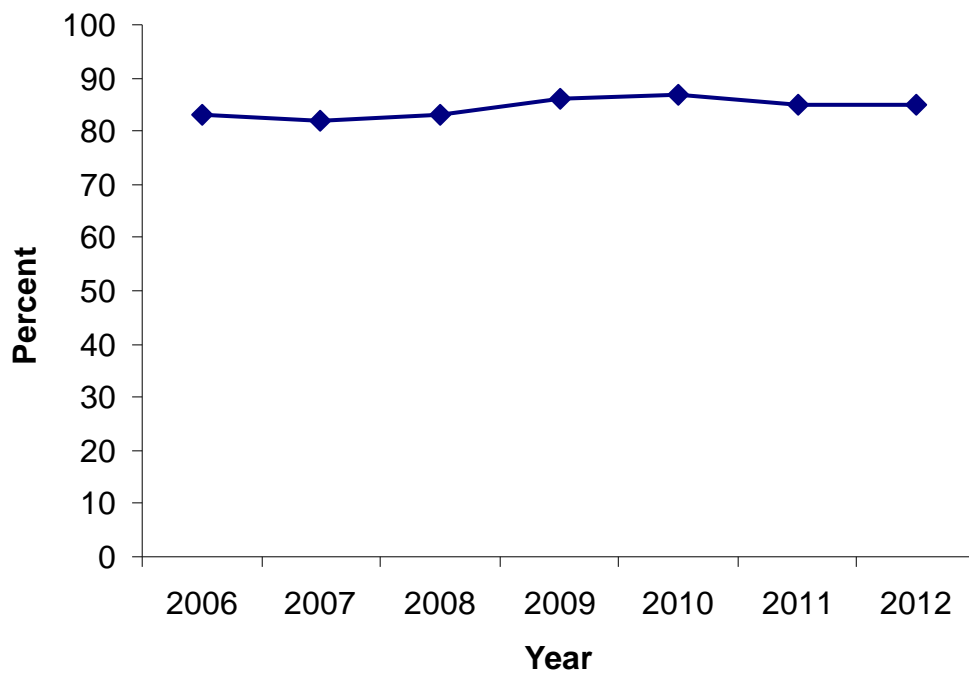
Those respondents who felt that either the complainant or the police officer would not be treated fairly by the Police Ombudsman, were subsequently asked who they felt would be treated better; the complainant or the police officer. In 2012, 80% of these respondents felt that the police officer would be treated better than the complainant, while 16% 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.

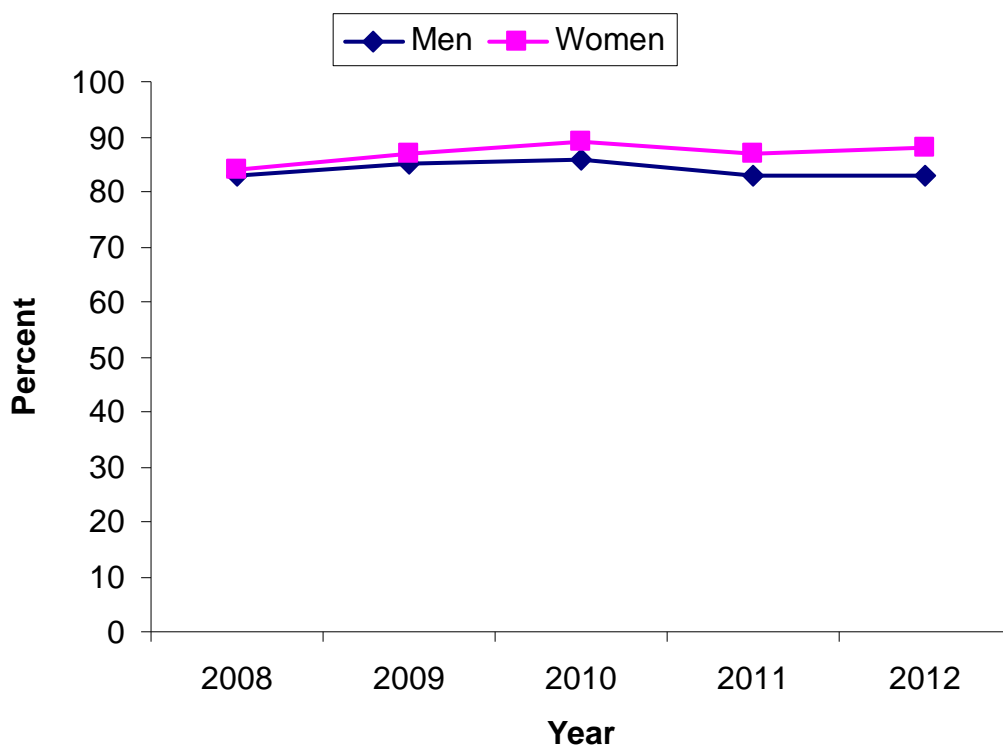
In 2012, the majority (85%) of respondents felt that the Police Ombudsman would help ensure that the police in Northern Ireland do a good job (Figure 21). This proportion has remained consistently high over time.

Figure 21: Belief that the Police Ombudsman will help ensure that the police do a good job, 2006 - 2012



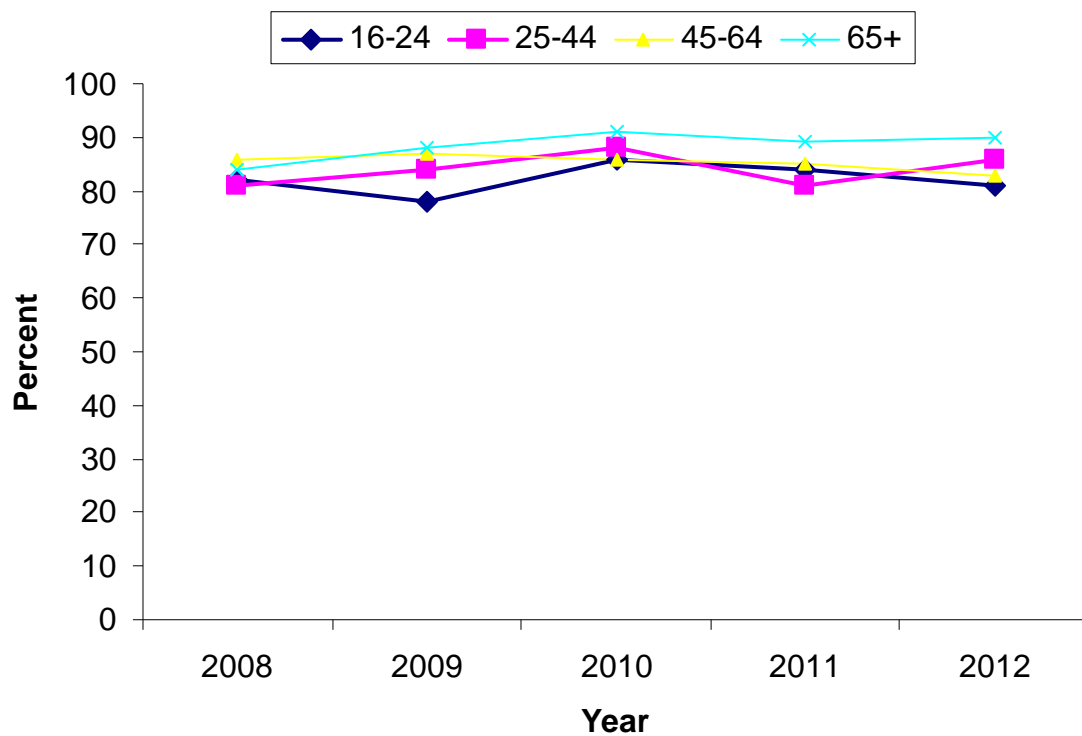
In 2012, women were more likely to feel that the Police Ombudsman would help ensure that the police do a good job. Figure 22 shows that between 2008 and 2010, men and women were equally likely to feel that the Ombudsman would help ensure that the police do a good job. However, since then the gap in perception between men and women has increased.

Figure 22: Belief that the Police Ombudsman will help ensure the police do a good job by gender, 2008 – 2012



In 2012, respondents in all age groups felt that the Police Ombudsman would help ensure that the police do a good job. Generally, views were similar among all age groups, except in 2009 when respondents aged 16 - 24⁵ were less likely than those aged 65+ to feel that the Police Ombudsman would help police do a good job (Figure 23).

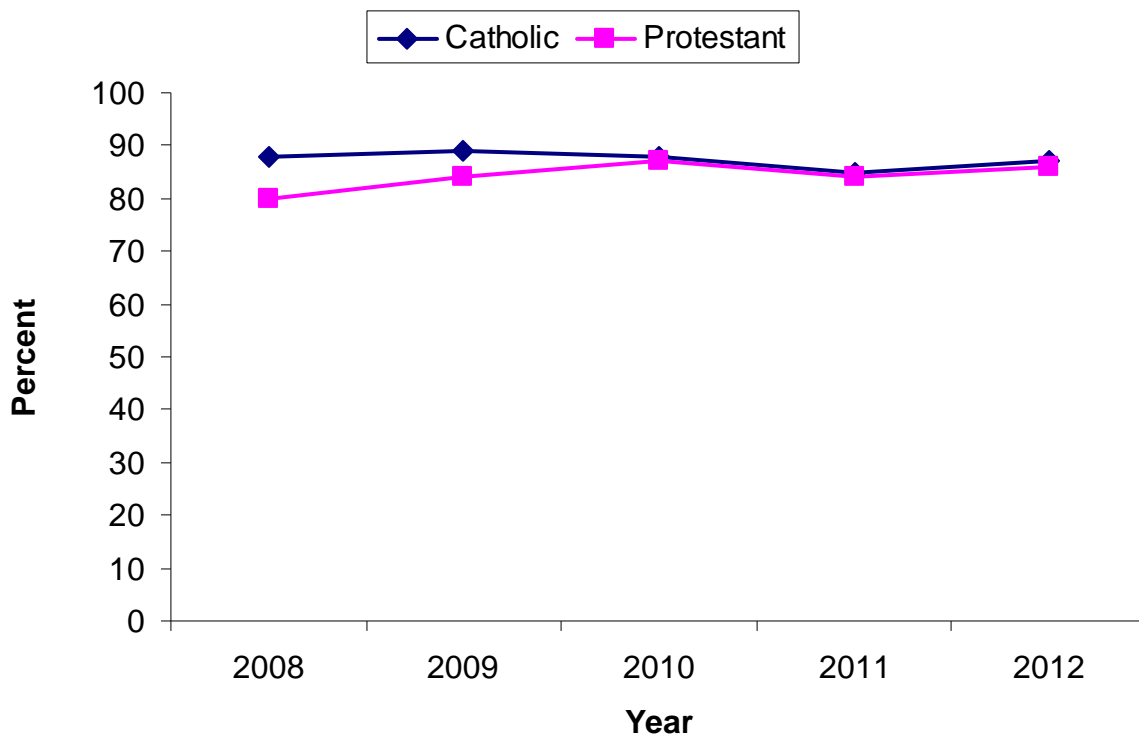
Figure 23: Belief that the Police Ombudsman will help ensure the police do a good job by age group, 2008 - 2012



⁵ Caution should be exercised when interpreting results from the 16 – 24 age group, due to the small numbers of respondents.

In 2012, similar proportions of Protestant and Catholic respondents believed that the Police Ombudsman would help ensure that the police do a good job. 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).

Figure 24: Belief that the Police Ombudsman will help ensure the police do a good job by religious belief, 2008 – 2012

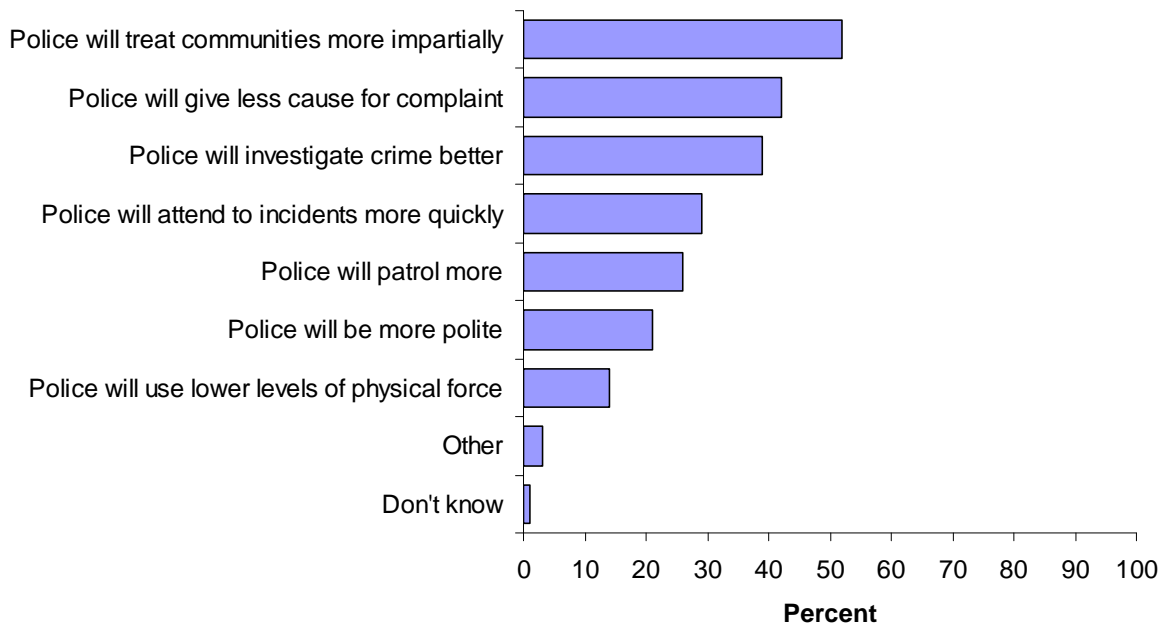


Those respondents, who stated that they thought that the Police Ombudsman would help ensure that the police do a good job, were asked to select from a list of reasons in what way they felt the police would do a better job. The three main reasons quoted were:

- 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?



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. Catholic and Protestant respondents and respondents in all age groups also held this view (Table 2, 3 & 4).

Table 2: In what way will the police do a good job because of the Police Ombudsman, by gender?

Ways police will do a good job	Percent	
	Men	Women
Police will treat all communities in Northern Ireland more impartially	52	52
The police will give less cause for complaints from the public	43	41
The police will investigate crime better	40	39
The police will attend to incidents more quickly	29	29
The police will patrol more	28	23
The police will use less physical force	16	12
The police will be more polite	24	18
Other	3	2
Don't know	1	2

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

Table 3: In what way will the police do a good job because of the Police Ombudsman, by age group?

Ways police will do a good job	Percent			
	<25	25-44	45-64	65+
Police will treat all communities in Northern Ireland more impartially	52	58	51	46
The police will give less cause for complaints from the public	38	37	49	38
The police will investigate crime better	43	43	36	40
The police will attend to incidents more quickly	26	29	25	35
The police will patrol more	31	29	21	27
The police will use less physical force	14	17	13	12
The police will be more polite	26	20	21	20
Other	0	2	4	3
Don't know	2	1	1	2

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

Table 4: 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	52	52
The police will give less cause for complaints from the public	38	44
The police will investigate crime better	42	38
The police will attend to incidents more quickly	34	27
The police will patrol more	27	25
The police will use less physical force	16	13
The police will be more polite	24	19
Other	2	3
Don't know	0	2

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

Making complaints against the police

In 2012, of those respondents who had stated that they were treated in an unacceptable manner, 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.

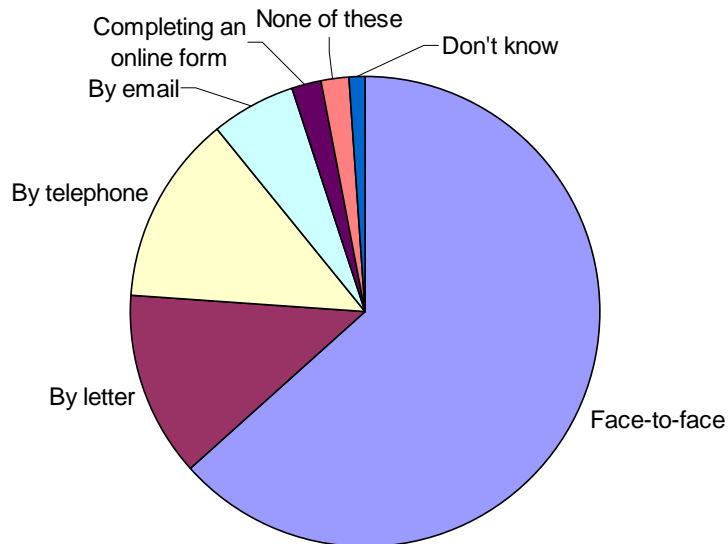
All respondents were asked where they would go **initially** to make a complaint against the police. In 2012, the greatest proportion of respondents felt that they would initially make their complaint at their local police station. This proportion has increased from 38% in 2011 to 49% in 2012.

In 2012, 14% of respondents felt that they would complain directly to the Police Ombudsman. Although this proportion has decreased from 2011 (21%) it is similar to the proportions reported in earlier years.

In 2012, 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 said they would go to the Police Ombudsman to make their complaint, however Catholic respondents were more likely than Protestants to say that they would make their complaint to a solicitor.

An additional question was added to the survey in 2010, to gauge how respondents would prefer to make complaints against the police. Almost two thirds of respondents preferred a face-to-face method of making complaints (Figure 26).

Figure 26: How would you prefer to make your complaints, 2012?



In 2012, men were more likely than woman to prefer to complain face-to-face, however women were more likely than men to prefer to complain via a letter.

In 2012, 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 generally 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 2012, 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 January 2012 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 02 January and 04 February 2012. Interviews were achieved with 1,141 individuals, representing a response rate of 59 % 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 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 2012, 85% of respondents were aware of the Office.

'a level of 80% awareness of the independence of the Police Ombudsman.' In 2012, 85% 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 2012, 77% of respondents were confident that the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland deals with complaints in an impartial way.

'a level of 80% perception of fair treatment by the Office if they made a complaint against the police.' In 2012, 83% 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-08	Jan-09	Jan-10	Feb-11	Jan-12
No	83%	83%	84%	82%	84%
Once or twice	12%	13%	11%	14%	12%
More than twice	4%	3%	5%	4%	3%

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	80%	89%
Once or twice	14%	10%
More than twice	6%	1%

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	83%	86%
Once or twice	11%	12%
More than twice	5%	2%

Asked to all persons aged 16 and over.

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

	16-24	25-44	45-64	65+
No	82%	80%	83%	91%
Once or twice	14%	16%	13%	7%
More than twice	4%	4%	3%	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	Jan-12
57%	65%	86%	86%	85%	86%	84%	88%	90%	88%	88%	84%	85%

Asked to all persons aged 16 and over.

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

	Jan-08	Jan-09	Jan-10	Feb-11	Jan-12
Male	90%	92%	89%	85%	89%
Female	90%	84%	87%	83%	81%

Asked to all persons aged 16 and over.

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

Age group	Jan-08	Jan-09	Jan-10	Feb-11	Jan-12
<25	71%	61%	65%	47%	56%
25-44	90%	86%	89%	87%	83%
45-64	97%	96%	95%	93%	95%
65+	91%	93%	88%	86%	87%

Asked to all persons aged 16 and over.

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

Religious belief	Jan-08	Jan-09	Jan-10	Feb-11	Jan-12
Catholic	90%	84%	87%	82%	84%
Protestant	92%	93%	91%	86%	88%

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%	84%
No	11%	15%
Don't know/refusal	0%	0%

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%	83%	91%
No	19%	17%	8%
Don't know/refusal	0%	0%	0%

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	Jan-12
Independent of the police	81%	83%	86%	86%	85%	84%	84%	86%	86%	83%	80%	83%	85%
Part of the police	11%	10%	9%	12%	11%	11%	11%	10%	12%	14%	17%	15%	12%
Don't know/refusal	8%	7%	5%	2%	4%	5%	5%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	3%

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

Table 12: Level of awareness of independence by gender

	Jan-08	Jan-09	Jan-10	Feb-11	Jan-12
Male	89%	85%	82%	86%	85%
Female	83%	82%	79%	81%	86%

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

Table 13: Level of awareness of independence by age group

	Jan-08	Jan-09	Jan-10	Feb-11	Jan-12
16-24	68%	63%	59%	44%	62%
25-44	84%	86%	86%	84%	85%
45-64	89%	85%	84%	87%	90%
65+	88%	85%	76%	86%	84%

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

Table 14: Level of awareness of independence by religious belief

	Jan-08	Jan-09	Jan-10	Feb-11	Jan-12
Catholic	83%	84%	80%	83%	82%
Protestant	88%	84%	81%	83%	87%

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	Jan-12
Very confident / Fairly confident	61%	74%	76%	78%	76%	78%	81%	79%	83%	80%	77%
Not very confident / Not at all confident	33%	22%	18%	16%	17%	18%	16%	17%	13%	17%	20%
Don't know/refusal	6%	4%	6%	7%	6%	4%	4%	5%	3%	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-08	Jan-09	Jan-10	Feb-11	Jan-12
Male	81%	77%	79%	81%	72%
Female	81%	80%	87%	80%	81%

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-08	Jan-09	Jan-10	Feb-11	Jan-12
16-24	62%	69%	79%	74%	67%
25-44	82%	81%	81%	79%	78%
45-64	85%	80%	85%	80%	77%
65+	82%	75%	85%	83%	78%

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-08	Jan-09	Jan-10	Feb-11	Jan-12
Catholic	86%	81%	82%	82%	70%
Protestant	78%	78%	85%	78%	81%

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	Jan-12
Fairly treated	78%	79%	82%	85%	84%	86%	85%	86%	86%	84%	83%
Not fairly treated	12%	15%	11%	8%	9%	8%	10%	9%	9%	11%	12%
Don't know/refusal	10%	6%	7%	7%	7%	6%	5%	4%	5%	5%	5%

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

Table 20: Fair treatment by the Police Ombudsman by gender

	Jan-08	Jan-09	Jan-10	Feb-11	Jan-12
Male	84%	86%	84%	85%	82%
Female	86%	87%	89%	83%	84%

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

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

	Jan-08	Jan-09	Jan-10	Feb-11	Jan-12
16-24	69%	81%	81%	72%	63%
25-44	84%	87%	87%	84%	81%
45-64	87%	88%	86%	84%	84%
65+	91%	84%	88%	88%	88%

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

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

	Jan-08	Jan-09	Jan-10	Feb-11	Jan-12
Catholic	86%	86%	85%	83%	78%
Protestant	85%	87%	87%	84%	87%

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	90%
No	5%
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 gender?

	Male	Female
Yes	89%	92%
No	7%	4%
Don't know/refusal	4%	4%

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

Table 25: 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%	92%
No	7%	4%
Don't know/refusal	4%	4%

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

Table 26: Do you think the Police Ombudsman treats the person making the complaint better or the police officer being complained about better?

	Jan-08	Jan-09	Jan-10	Feb-11	Jan-12
Complainant treated better	31%	28%	24%	19%	16%
Police officer treated better	58%	57%	68%	72%	80%

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

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

Jan-06	Jan-07	Jan-08	Jan-09	Jan-10	Feb-11	Jan-12
83%	82%	83%	86%	87%	85%	85%

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 do a good job by gender

	Jan-08	Jan-09	Jan-10	Feb-11	Jan-12
Male	83%	85%	86%	83%	83%
Female	84%	87%	89%	88%	87%

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 do a good job by age group

	Jan-08	Jan-09	Jan-10	Feb-11	Jan-12
16-24	82%	78%	86%	84%	81%
25-44	81%	84%	88%	81%	86%
45-64	86%	87%	86%	85%	83%
65+	84%	88%	91%	89%	90%

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

Table 30: Belief that the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland will help ensure that the police do a good job by religious belief

	Jan-08	Jan-09	Jan-10	Feb-11	Jan-12
Catholic	88%	89%	88%	85%	87%
Protestant	80%	84%	87%	84%	86%

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

Table 31: 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	52%
Police will give less cause for complaint	42%
Police will investigate crime better	39%
Police will attend to incidents more quickly	29%
Police will patrol more	26%
Police will use lower levels of physical force	14%
Police will be more polite	21%
Other	3%
Don't know/refusal	1%

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

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

Table 32: Main reasons why incident not complained about

Behaviour	
Felt nothing would be done about the complaint	38%
Felt it would not be taken seriously	23%
Incident was not serious enough	12%
Could not be bothered complaining	11%
Didn't know how to complain	4%
Scared of police reprisals	2%
Didn't want to make trouble for the police	2%
Forgot	2%
Other	5%

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

Table 33: Where would you go initially to complain

Where respondents would go initially to complain	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Local police station	43%	44%	42%	38%	49%
Police Ombudsman	11%	14%	17%	21%	14%
Solicitor	18%	18%	16%	15%	13%
An MP/MLA	6%	5%	6%	6%	6%
The Citizens Advice Bureau	6%	6%	6%	5%	6%
Wouldn't make a complaint	4%	4%	4%	5%	3%
Chief Constable of the PSNI	2%	2%	1%	4%	2%
A local politician e.g. Councillor	4%	4%	5%	3%	4%
The Policing Board	2%	1%	0%	1%	0%
Other	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%
Don't know/refusal	2%	2%	1%	2%	1%

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

Table 34: Where would you go initially to complain by religious belief?

Where respondents would go initially to complain	Catholic	Protestant
Local police station	42%	53%
Solicitor	20%	9%
Police Ombudsman	13%	15%
An MP/MLA	6%	6%
The Citizens Advice Bureau	5%	7%
A local politician e.g. Councillor	6%	2%
Wouldn't make a complaint	3%	4%
Chief Constable of the PSNI	1%	3%
The Policing Board	0%	0%
Other	1%	1%
Don't know/refusal	2%	1%

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

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

How would you prefer to make a complaint?	
Face to face	64%
By letter	13%
By telephone	13%
By email	6%
Completing an online form	2%
None of these	2%
Don't know	1%

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

Table 36: How would you prefer to make your complaint by gender?

	Men	Women
Face to face	69%	58%
By letter	9%	16%
By telephone	12%	14%
By email	5%	6%
Completing an online form	2%	3%
None of these	2%	3%
Don't know	0%	1%

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

Table 37: Source of knowledge of the Police Ombudsman

Source of information	Survey month/year				
	Jan-08	Jan-09	Jan-10	Feb-11	Jan-12
Television	93%	87%	86%	84%	86%
Newspaper/magazine	50%	42%	49%	49%	40%
Radio	42%	40%	40%	43%	35%
Word of mouth	12%	12%	11%	9%	7%
Through work	7%	5%	7%	7%	6%
Friends/family	7%	6%	5%	7%	3%
Leaflet	4%	5%	5%	5%	5%
Internet	3%	2%	3%	3%	2%
Poster	4%	3%	2%	3%	3%
Attended presentation	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%
Other	1%	2%	1%	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

Table 38: Source of information for contacting the Police Ombudsman's Office

Source of information	
Internet	48%
Telephone directory	32%
Police station	14%
Directory enquiries	3%
Political representative	5%
Legal representative	2%
Advice agency	3%
Call at Office	2%
Community association	1%
Other	3%
Don't know	5%

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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