

# Changes to the Crime Survey for England and Wales – Consultation Questionnaire

13 June 2017

## Overview

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) is a face-to-face victimisation survey in which people resident in households in England and Wales are asked about their experiences of a range of crimes in the 12 months prior to the interview. Respondents to the survey are also asked about their attitudes towards different crime-related issues, such as the police and the criminal justice system and perceptions of crime and anti-social behaviour.

In the context of public sector financial constraints, the future level of funding for the CSEW will be reduced with effect from October 2017. Therefore we have drawn up a range of proposals to reduce the cost of the CSEW in 2017/18 and future years. Full details and information on the likely impacts of the different solutions are set out in the consultation document.

We are now seeking user feedback on the potential options in order to inform our decision on how best to achieve the required cost savings.

## Why We Are Consulting

It is proposed that all the following questions will be removed from the CSEW questionnaire from October 2017:

- All questions in the 'Performance of the Criminal Justice System' module, excepting those related to the performance of the police.
- All questions in the 'Experiences of the Criminal Justice System' module
- All questions in the 'Attitudes to the Criminal Justice System' module
- Questions relating to victims' experiences of the court system and use of victim services from the 'Victimisation' module.

However, removing the questions alone will not yield sufficient savings and therefore we need to find additional reductions in the survey to make up the shortfall and are seeking users views on possible options.

You can either complete the on-line survey or fill in this document and email it to [crimestatistics@ons.gov.uk](mailto:crimestatistics@ons.gov.uk).

## Introduction

This survey asks questions on your opinions of the proposed options for achieving the cost savings required on the Crime Survey for England and Wales.

You are able to respond using the on-line survey or by completing this questionnaire, but please read the consultation document first as this gives background information. Your completed questionnaire should be emailed to [crimestatistics@ons.gov.uk](mailto:crimestatistics@ons.gov.uk).

The questionnaire will take about 15-20 minutes to complete and closes at midnight on Sunday 23rd July.

To promote greater transparency in our decision making, we will publish all responses in full. With your permission we may also attribute comments to the person providing them when we report the outcomes of this consultation. We will not publish personal contact details, but will give the name of the responding organisation where relevant.

For further information on ONS consultations, please visit <https://consultations.ons.gov.uk/>

## Please tell us a bit about you....

We aim to be as open and transparent as possible, so we will publish all responses to this survey. This will include the name of your organisation, and with your permission, also your name. We will not publish personal contact details.

### 1. What is your name? (Required)

Mark Day

### 2. Are you happy for your name to be published alongside your response? (Required)

Yes

### 3. What is your email address?

mark.day@prisonreformtrust.org.uk

### 4. What is your organisation? (Required)

Prison Reform Trust

### 5. Is this your personal response or are you responding on behalf of your organisation? (Required)

Responding on behalf of your organisation

### 6. What sector do you work in? (Required)

Academic/research (e.g student, postgraduate researcher)

Charity and voluntary

Business

Journalist/Media

Local or regional government/public organisation

National government department/organisation

International organisation

Other (please specify)

Please enter your selection from the list above

Charity and voluntary

### 7. May we contact you to discuss your response to this consultation? (Required)

Yes

## Details of the three options

Three approaches have been identified for making the required cost savings from the CSEW in 2017/18 and future years. These are:

### **Removing other questions from the survey**

The principal aim of the CSEW is to ask respondents about their experiences of a range of crimes in order to produce estimates of the trends in those crimes over time. However, it also asks questions on other crime-related issues such as anti-social behaviour, attitudes toward the police, drug use and perceptions of the risk of crime. Removing these additional questions would generate cost savings by reducing the average interview length.

### **Reducing the response rate**

Over the last ten years, the CSEW has maintained a relatively high response rate of between 72% and 75% (with the exception of 2014/15 when a 70% response rate was recorded). Maintaining such a high response rate is only possible through interviewers making repeated visits, particularly to households who are difficult to contact. Making less effort to achieve such a high response rate will generate savings. We estimate that dropping the response rate to 69% will be sufficient to make up the funding shortfall.

### **Reducing the sample size**

The achieved sample size is currently 35,000 households per year. Making a small reduction (of around 1,800) in the sample size will generate sufficient cost savings by reducing the amount of fieldwork required.

## 8. What are your views on the proposed cost-savings?

Please provide comments

The Prison Reform Trust has no view on the merits or otherwise of the various options to achieve the required cost savings. However, we do have particular concerns regarding the decision to remove the questions on restorative justice (RESTOR1-3, VICTIMISATION MODULE). Robust research evidence demonstrates that restorative justice (RJ) produces beneficial outcomes in criminal justice. 85% of victims express satisfaction with the process, and a government-commissioned study found that RJ reduces the frequency of re-offending by 14%. On the basis of this evidence, the Victims' Code requires criminal justice agencies to inform victims of crime of the option of RJ and the government has committed to a vision of "good quality, victim-focused restorative justice (RJ) to be available at all stages of the criminal justice system (CJS) in England and Wales." Despite its benefits and the government's support, RJ remains under-used and, for many people unfamiliar. The 2015-2016 British Crime Survey found that only 4.2% of victims, whose offender was known to the police, were offered RJ. In this light, it is vital that the crime survey continue to measure public awareness of RJ, their understanding of how it works and the benefits it provides, and how they might access it. In particular, there is a need for continuous tracking of the proportion of victims of crime who are offered RJ, as a means of gauging the Government's success in meeting its vision of RJ available for all.

**Of the proposed cost-saving options, which would you prefer ONS to adopt? (Required)**

**Option A:** reduce target response rate (to 69%)

**Option B:** reduce sample size (by 1,800 interviews)

**Option C:** remove additional questions from CSEW to reduce survey to core questions required to produce quarterly crime estimates

**Option D:** reduce target CSEW response rate to 71% and reduce sample size by 600 households

Please indicate your preferred option here:

**9. Is there a particular reason for your stated preference?**

Please provide comments

The Prison Reform Trust has no view on the merits or otherwise of the various options to achieve the required cost savings.

**10. What impact would these potential options have on your use of CSEW data?**

Please provide comments

The decision to remove the questions on RJ will make it much harder for charities such as ourselves to monitor whether the government is meeting its commitment to victims in this important area of criminal justice policy.

**11. Do you have any other comments?**

## After the consultation

We will review all of the consultation responses and use these to inform our final recommendation on the best option for making the required cost savings from the CSEW. We will publish a summary of the comments and approach chosen approximately 6 to 8 weeks after the consultation closes.

## Confidentiality and data protection

To promote greater transparency in our decision making, we will publish all responses in full. With your permission we may also attribute comments to the person providing them when we report the outcomes of this consultation. We will not publish personal contact details, but will give the name of the responding organisation where relevant. If you have any questions relating to confidentiality and data protection please email [ons.communications@ons.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:ons.communications@ons.gsi.gov.uk).

The information you send us may be passed to other parts of Government. Your response might be made available if required under a Freedom of Information request.