YOUNG PEOPLE'S ATTITUDES AND EXPERIENCES OF POLICING, VIOLENCE AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IN NORTH BELFAST

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Young People's Attitudes and Experiences of Policing, Violence and Community Safety in North Belfast

Jonny Byrne, Mary Conway and Malcolm Ostermeyer

Institute for Conflict Research

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Executive Summary

There was widespread interface violence in North Belfast in 1996 in response to disputes over parades and trouble has persisted in many areas each year since then. In the Ardoyne-Glenbryn area the violence and tension peaked during the Holy Cross dispute between June and November 2001 and although the disorder has largely remained under control since that time, antagonisms have continued.

Although some work has been done with younger children in the area, particularly in relation to the impact of the protests related to access to Holy Cross Primary School, little has been carried out specifically on how young people have been affected by the disorder of the past several years. There is little information relating to young people's experiences of the violence, experiences of the other community, how the trouble has affected their sense of safety moving around their area, and how they view the policing of their areas. This research, conducted between September and December 2004, is an attempt to address the knowledge gap.

This research focuses on young people's attitudes and experiences of violence and community safety in North Belfast. The research adopted both quantitative and qualitative approaches: the analysis is based on the findings of a questionnaire completed by 2,486 young people and interviews and focus groups with young people, police officers and community representatives in the North Belfast area. The main issues addressed in the research include:

1. The attitudes and experiences of young people attending post primary schools in the North Belfast area towards incidents of violence and disorder;
2. The key issues of concern to young people in relation to issues of personal safety and security;
3. The views and opinions of the police response to violence and disorder in North Belfast.

Key findings

1. The vast majority of young people in North Belfast have experienced high levels of violence and disorder. This includes violence related to going to school, interface and paramilitary violence and violence related to parades. However, significant numbers also report experiences of domestic violence and sexual violence.
2. Young people who live in North Belfast have had a greater experience of a wide range of forms of violence than those who go to school in the area but live outside North Belfast.
3. Many young people reported poor experiences with the police, over 40% of young people living in North Belfast stated they had been stopped and questioned for no reason or had experienced verbal harassment by the police.
4. The majority of young people held negative views of the police. Perceptions of the police by young people compared unfavourably with the other emergency services.

5. The young people had strong views of how policing could be improved and the issues that should be prioritised. These do not coincide with the findings of the wider 2004 DPP survey of residents of North Belfast.

The following is a summary of the main findings from the research.

Questionnaire findings:

It was originally planned to administer the questionnaire to approximately 500 young people from around the Ardoyne-Glenbryn area. However, increased interest from several schools resulted in the questionnaire being completed by 2,486 young people aged 14-17 years in eleven post primary schools in North Belfast. A number of themes emerged from the findings which document young people's perceptions and attitudes to violence, community safety and policing in North Belfast:

School safety

- Over a quarter of young people (26%) had felt intimidated travelling to and from their schools in North Belfast.
- More females (29%) than males (22%) had felt intimidated, along with 30% from the Catholic community and 19% from the Protestant community.
- Over half (51%) of young people had experienced an incident of violence and/or threatening behaviour while travelling to and from their schools, with the most frequently reported incident being a school bus being attacked (20%). The largest number of respondents who had experienced violence and disorder (47%) indicated that young people wearing school uniforms were the main protagonists in these incidents.
- 66% of young people felt that the police did not provide a safe environment for young people travelling to and from school.

Community life

- Three quarters of young people (75%) had friends from a different community background to themselves.
- 31% of young people participated in cross community projects, with a further 19% not wanting to.
- The majority of respondents (61%) felt that their community background restricted their movement within North Belfast.

Community violence

- Most young people (82%) indicated an experience of violence and disorder in North Belfast, with the most commonly reported incident being fighting between members of the Catholic and Protestant communities (61%).
- Older respondents had a greater experience of incidents of violence and disorder compared to younger respondents.
- Respondents who lived outside North Belfast had significantly less experience of violence and disorder than had young people who lived in North Belfast.

- Half of respondents (50%) had been affected by violence and disorder in North Belfast, with the most frequently reported effect being that young people were unable to travel through parts of the area (26%).
- Young people who lived within North Belfast were more affected by violence and disorder than were young people from outside North Belfast; females were more likely to be affected than males.
- 39% of respondents indicated that the police held the most authority within their community.
- More young people from within North Belfast (41%) indicated that paramilitary groups held the most authority than did respondents from outside North Belfast (29%).
- 38% indicated that they would contact the police first to report an attack against them.

Policing in North Belfast

- 43% of young people felt that the current level of policing at interfaces increased sectarian violence.
- The majority of respondents indicated that the police in North Belfast monitored and controlled parades unfairly (53%), with 62% from the Catholic community and 41% from the Protestant community holding this view.
- 65% of respondents thought that the police did not understand the issues and problems experienced by young people in North Belfast.
- Over a third of young people (36%) indicated that they had been verbally harassed by the police. There were significant differences between young people who lived within and outside North Belfast in their experiences of the police, with young people outside North Belfast generally having more positive experiences.
- Half the respondents felt that interface violence should be a policing priority.
- 44% of respondents felt that an increase in CCTV would improve policing in North Belfast.

Emergency services

- 27% of young people thought that it was acceptable to throw missiles/objects at the police, compared to 1% who thought it was acceptable to attack ambulances.
- 30% of young people from the Catholic community and 25% from the Protestant community thought that it was acceptable to throw missiles/objects at the police.
- 23% of respondents thought that the police provided a good service, compared to 70% for the ambulance service and 69% for the fire service.
- 17% of respondents thought that the police were understanding, compared to 58% for the ambulance service and 50% for the fire service.
- 31% of young people said they would consider joining the ambulance service, 29% the fire service and 12% the police.

Focus groups

Six focus groups with young people 12-18 years old were convened with the assistance of teachers and community/youth workers in the Ardoyne-Glenbryn area of North Belfast. A further two focus groups were conducted with the police along with

four interviews with community representatives. A number of themes emerged from the groups including:

School safety

- All of the young people had either experienced or were aware of incidents in which school children had been attacked verbally and/or physically because of their perceived community background.
- The most common incident referred to by young people was school buses being attacked.
- Several young people had experienced sectarian abuse because of the school uniform they were wearing
- The PSNI, Translink and schools have been involved in meetings and discussions to decrease attacks on school buses.
- Monitoring school routes takes up a considerable amount of police resources but is perceived by the police as being necessary to minimise community tensions in North Belfast.

Violence and disorder

- All of the young people in the focus groups had experienced violence and disorder in their communities. The most frequently reported incident was sectarian fighting.
- The Holy Cross Dispute had damaged community relations throughout North Belfast.
- Incidents of violence and disorder had recently decreased around interfaces in North Belfast.
- The majority of young people welcomed CCTV, but the police felt that it was not possible to attribute the recent decrease in violence and disorder solely to its presence.

Restriction of movement

- Young people felt that their community background was a significant factor in determining the places they could travel to in North Belfast.
- Several facilities and amenities were inaccessible to one community or the other due to their location.

Parades

- Attitudes to band parades were principally determined by the community background of the young people: those from the Catholic community wanted them stopped, while Protestant young people wanted all of them permitted.
- The majority of young people, regardless of community background, had no understanding or knowledge about the history of band parades.
- Band parades were seen as a catalyst for violence and disorder in North Belfast.

Policing

- The majority of young people reported negative experiences of the police. The most common complaints were of police officers using obscene language and of them stopping people for no apparent reason.
- Young people thought that the police treated Catholic and Protestant communities differently.
- Few young people had communicated or interacted with the police at an informal level.
- There was consensus that attacks on fire brigades and ambulances were wrong but attacks on the police were acceptable.
- Young people identified interface problems, drug dealing, paramilitary activity and domestic violence as the four areas that should be prioritised by the police.
- The young people thought that more CCTV, greater community input into policing and more uniformed police would be the most significant improvements to local policing and safety.

Recommendations

1. **There is a need to provide and deliver effectively a broader range of information to young people on all aspects of policing including policy formulations and operational decisions in the North Belfast area.** It is important that this information is conveyed to young people in a format that is both interesting and in language that young people can easily understand and identify with. Furthermore, young people should have the opportunity to discuss with the police issues that are topical and that have been developed by young people themselves.

2. **The PSNI need to be able to hear and respond to the concerns of young people about current approaches to the policing of young people.** It is particularly worrying to note the high percentage of young people who reported experiencing verbal harassment from police officers. We believe that this is an issue that might usefully be addressed through the DCU training programme.

3. **We recommend that the PSNI should review their overall training programme in relation to communicating and interacting with young people.** The PSNI has placed a strong emphasis of improving training related to diversity issues, we believe there is a similar need to review current training with regard to the policing of young people. The Northern Ireland Policing Board should assess how current training programmes within the PSNI deal with the policing of young people and should ask the PSNI to consider how this can be improved.

4. **The PSNI should establish a consultative forum for young people in North Belfast.** The research raised a number of issues where young people felt that they experienced low-level harassment from the police in North Belfast and identified different priorities for policing than the adult population. We believe it would be appropriate to establish a body to facilitate and promote ongoing consultation with young people on policing issues. This might follow the model of either the District Policing Partnership or a Community Policing Liaison Committee. This could also be a pilot for a wider approach to engagement with young people by the PSNI, it

would also be in line with a recommendation made in the recent Northern Ireland Affairs Committee report on the Police Ombudsman.

5. **The PSNI in North Belfast should develop a programme that encourages more effective engagement between the young people and the police.** There was evidence, particularly from the survey findings, that young people wanted to engage with the police at more informal levels. A significant number of young people have a high regard for the police but have been unable to communicate with them and highlight their concerns and fears.

6. **The PSNI have already initiated a programme of work with young people through some of the schools in the area. This should be commended.** We believe it would be useful for the PSNI to explore with the principals of all post-primary schools in the area how to improve mutual understanding and communication between the PSNI and young people.

7. **The ongoing work between Translink, the PSNI and schools in North Belfast must be commended.** There has been recognition that attacks against school buses in North Belfast have decreased in the last year. It is important that communication and interaction between the key stakeholders continues and that appropriate resources are made available for this initiative to continue.

8. **We believe that it might be beneficial to develop a closer working relationship between the police, fire and ambulance services at an educational level.** The research findings showed that the majority of young people did not approve of people attacking the fire or ambulance services. However a significant number felt that attacking the police was acceptable. A partnership between the three services involving educational presentations would be one possible way of highlighting the services that the three organisations provide.

9. **More should be done by local community representatives, politicians and representatives from the statutory and voluntary sector in reaching out and engaging with young people on issues that are relevant to them.** Young people need both the opportunity and the environment to discuss and formulate their own issues and concerns. This can only be facilitated through the guidance and support of adults in the community.

10. **The report highlights that young people in North Belfast have experienced, and continue to experience, high levels of violence, and significantly higher levels of violence than young people living in nearby areas. This needs to be taken into consideration by all statutory bodies working with young people.** The research also suggests that there may be a connection between the high levels of inter-communal violence and higher levels of domestic violence and sexual violence. This should be explored through further research.

1. Introduction

Violence and disorder has been a persistent problem in the interface areas in North Belfast over recent years. There was widespread interface violence in North Belfast in 1996 in response to disputes over parades, and trouble has persisted in many areas each year since then. In the Ardoyne-Glenbryn area the mutual distrust, suspicions and sectarian tensions that characterise the two communities erupted in the form of the Holy Cross dispute in June 2001 (Cadwallader, 2004). Even with the involvement of mediators, politicians, community representatives and the clergy, the protest lasted for the best part of a year before it was resolved. Throughout the protest the communities in Ardoyne and Glenbryn experienced nightly disturbances including rioting, petrol bomb attacks and sectarian intimidation. A siege mentality developed within both communities that exacerbated the incidents of violent behaviour.

The Ardoyne-Glenbryn area has become one of the most difficult interfaces in Belfast in recent years as a result of the violence. It has a fractured geography with numerous interfaces, some obvious, some not so, and it is an area where the demographic profile has changed over recent years. This has made management of the violence difficult for all those involved from both communities and for the police. For many people in the area the police remain a part of the problem and are treated with suspicion and mistrust.

The disorder has largely remained under control since 2002, but suspicion and antagonism has continued. Although some work has been done with younger children in the area, particularly in relation to the impact of the protests related to access to Holy Cross Primary School, little has been carried out specifically on how young people have been affected by the disorder of the past several years. There is minimal information relating to young people's experiences of the violence, experiences of the other community, how the trouble has affected their sense of safety moving around their area, and how they view the policing of their areas. This research, conducted between September-December 2004, was an attempt to address this knowledge gap.

The demographics of North Belfast

There is widespread agreement that the changing demographics and issues around territory have been one of the main factors in increased tensions and violence in North Belfast. According to Jarman (2002) demographic shifts of population indicate that the Catholic population is younger and growing, while the Protestant population is older, diminishing and less well organised, with many of the younger families having moved out of the city. Recent media reports (www.bbc.co.uk/ni 26/08/04) have highlighted the fear among some families in North Belfast that they will be forced to leave their area because they have become part of a minority community. This was especially evident when the Protestant families left their homes on the Torrens estate as a result of alleged threats and intimidation from members of the neighbouring Catholic communities. When Torrens housing estate was established twenty years ago it was designated as a Protestant area, however it is now desolate and abandoned. Views are divided among the communities as to whether these families were forced to leave due to intimidation or they simply moved to a better environment. As Totten (2002) concludes 'it depends from what community you reside in as to whether the

shift in territory in North Belfast is simply a natural demographic change or more a strategic expulsion'.

The Catholic population within the North Belfast Parliamentary Constituency Area has in ten years increased by over 2,000, with the Northern Ireland Census (2001) putting the figure at 34,880. However the Protestant population diminished by over 2000, with the Northern Ireland Census (2001) indicating that there were 38,084 living within the North Belfast Constituency. A closer examination of the electoral wards within North Belfast highlights the areas where the Catholic population has increased and the Protestant population has decreased (Table 1).

By comparing Census data from 1991 and 2001 it is evident that five electoral wards have undergone significant population shifts. Bellevue, Cavehill, Chichester Park, Cliftonville and Fortwilliam have all seen increases in the proportions of Catholics but decreases in the proportions of Protestants. These areas where there has been an increase in the Catholic population are located close to the Antrim Road and are perceived as containing more owner-occupied homes than the rest of North Belfast.

Table 1: Percentages of Catholics and Protestants by electoral ward in North Belfast

Electoral ward	1991 Census				2001 Census			
	Catholic %	Protestant %	Other %	None %	Catholic %	Protestant %	Other %	None %
Abbey	15	53	17	15	14	52	12	22
Ardoyne	90	-	-	10	87	1	-	12
Ballysillan	1	75	11	13	2	67	10	21
Bellevue	49	29	5	17	55	23	4	18
Castleview	25	52	7	16	28	51	6	15
Cavehill	32	46	8	14	48	35	5	12
Chichester Park	57	20	5	18	68	12	3	17
Cliftonville	49	31	6	14	64	23	3	10
Coole	1	69	13	17	1	69	10	20
Crumlin	1	78	9	12	2	75	7	16
Dunanney	1	71	12	16	1	72	8	19
Duncairn	1	74	10	15	2	70	8	20
Fortwilliam	20	57	8	15	30	50	5	15
Ligoniel	33	47	7	13	33	46	6	15
New Lodge	86	4	1	9	93	1	-	6
Valley	54	27	4	15	47	32	5	16
Water Works	80	4	1	15	83	4	1	12
Whitehouse	3	67	15	15	3	66	11	20
Woodvale	-	82	9	9	1	77	7	15
Total % of population	*38*	*41*	*14*	*7*	*41*	*40*	*15*	*4*

Source: Northern Ireland Census 1991 and 2001, NISRA
*None also included those who failed to disclose their community background.
*Protestant includes Presbyterian, Church of Ireland and Methodist.
*Other includes Christian and Christian related, along with other religions and philosophies.

The only electoral ward in which there was a substantial increase in the proportion of Protestants in the population was Valley, with a corresponding decrease in the proportion of Catholics. It is also interesting to note that in the majority of wards that saw a decrease in the Protestant population there was an increase in the number of people who did not indicate their religious background. This was evident in the Duncairn area, were the number of people who stated no religion increased by 5%.

It is important to note that the majority of people living in North Belfast do not perceive the Abbey, Coole, Dunanney, Valley and Whitehouse wards as being part of the North Belfast area. Table 1 highlights the changing demographics in electoral wards in North Belfast by comparing data from the 1991 and 2001 Censuses.

Young people

Two recent reports have highlighted the role of young people in community violence and disorder in North Belfast, The North Belfast Community Action Project (2002) and Managing Disorder: Responding to Interface Violence in North Belfast (Jarman, 2002). There was an acknowledgement in both reports that some young people had been involved in public disorder. However, it was felt that boredom due to a lack of facilities and inadequate resources, or perhaps being unable to access these resources, was one of many contributing factors to young people's involvement in violence and disorder.

The environment in which young people grew up was also seen as affecting their long-term attitudes and behaviour. The insecurity and frequent violence experienced by young people made them feel alienated within their community, resulting in some young people participating in 'recreational rioting' and aligning themselves with paramilitary organisations. The reports also noted that there were very few positive influences and role models in North Belfast for young people.

Young people have also been the victims of sectarian violence, especially those who have attended schools in North Belfast. In the last five years the media have documented several incidents in which schools, school buses and pupils have been attacked because of their affiliation to a particular community. Between 2001 and 2003 34% of all reported attacks on buses occurred in the North Belfast DCU (see Appendix 1 for full figures), while Translink indicated that over £100,000 worth of damage was caused by attacks on buses in North Belfast in just one month in 2001.

It was also felt that school children on the buses were the targets in each of the attacks (Belfast Telegraph 16/10/01). In September 2003 eight school children were taken to hospital after their school buses were attacked by stone throwers at a flash point in North Belfast (Belfast Telegraph 27/10/03). Furthermore, in an unrelated incident two teenage Loyalists were accused of torching a number of cars in the grounds of a Catholic school in North Belfast. This incident, like previous ones, was perceived to be a sectarian attack (Belfast Telegraph 10/01/02).

Schools have also been forced to close as a result of sectarian tensions in North Belfast. In January 2002 a confrontation involving two people escalated into large scale rioting with several schools in the North Belfast area having to close early and

provide alternative transport to return the school children to their homes (www.wsws.org/articles 14/1/2002).

The violence and disorder has had an impact on all sections of the local communities in North Belfast, significantly on relations between the Protestant/unionist communities and Catholic/nationalist communities, and between both main communities and the police (see Table 2). While young people have been the victims of such violence, they have also been the perpetrators. Darby and Knox (2004) concluded that 'young people were presented as both trouble makers and potential peace makers'.

Table 2: Sectarian Disorder in Interface Areas in North Belfast, 1996-2004

	Criminal Damage	**Assault**	**Riot**	**Disturbance**	**Total**
1996	267	67	90	-	424
1997	444	113	73	-	630
1998	416	105	67	-	588
1999	318	124	86	-	528
2000	668	250	0	364	1, 282
2001	978	341	59	328	1, 706
2002/03	593	207	0	104	904
2003/04	199	152	1	227	579
Total	**3,883**	**1,359**	**376**	**1,023**	**6,641**

Source: PSNI North Belfast District Command Unit.

This report explores young people's experiences of, and attitudes to, violence in North Belfast and considers their roles both as victims and perpetrators of violence.

2. Methodology

Introduction

The research focused on young people's attitudes and experiences of policing, violence and community safety in North Belfast. Three main issues were addressed throughout the research including:

1. A detailed account of the attitudes and experiences of young people in North Belfast towards the violence and disorder that had occurred in the area over recent years;
2. The key issues of concern to young people in relation to personal safety and security;
3. A number of recommendations for relevant statutory and voluntary organisations as to how they may respond to the issues and concerns that have been raised by the young people.

Methods

The research involved a combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods. These included:

- A survey (Appendix 2) of young people aged 14-17 years, which was conducted in eleven post primary schools throughout North Belfast.
- Six focus groups with young people, representative of both major communities in and around Ardoyne-Glenbryn;
- Two focus groups with the PSNI at a Command and Sector level;
- Four interviews with community representatives.

Questionnaire

A self-completed questionnaire was designed by ICR with comments received from the police and community representatives in North Belfast. Initially it was proposed that ICR would administer a questionnaire to approximately 500 young people in and around the Ardoyne-Glenbryn area of North Belfast. From the outset the majority of schools were very keen to participate in the research, so the project was expanded to invite all post primary schools in North Belfast to participate. The survey eventually included eleven of the twelve post primary schools in North Belfast (Table 3). St Gemma's felt unable to participate in the questionnaire because they had recently been involved in another research project in the school.

The schools were contacted initially by phone and then by follow up letter and/or personal visit requesting their participation in the research. In some cases a police officer from the community involvement unit facilitated meetings between school principals and the researcher.

On receiving the school's agreement a number of questionnaires along with permission slips were left with the school principal, and the researcher returned three weeks later to collect the completed questionnaires. The schools preferred to

administer the questionnaire within their own schedules, so as to minimise levels of disruption for the pupils. The individuals distributing the questionnaire were fully briefed, and the researcher was in close contact to answer any queries or solve any problems that might arise. The age range for the questionnaire was 14-17 years; therefore teachers administered the questionnaire to Years 10, 11, 12 and 13 in each of the schools.

Table 3: Schools in North Belfast that participated in the research project and the number of participants who completed the survey

School	Total number of pupils	Returned questionnaires	*Response rate (%)*
Belfast Boys Model	634	213	*34*
Belfast Girls Model	651	219	*34*
Belfast Royal Academy	625	443	*69*
Castle High	92	44	*48*
Dominican College	588	563	*96*
*Hazelwood College	*279	76	*27*
Little Flower	400	155	*39*
Our Lady of Mercy	313	194	*62*
St Gabriel's	106	45	*42*
St Malachy's	585	432	*74*
St Patrick's	469	110	*23*
Total	**4,742**	**2,486**	*52*

* This figure represents the number of young people in years 10-13 who live in the North Belfast area.

The sample that participated in the survey represents 52% of all 14 to 17 year olds attending the eleven schools in North Belfast. Figures obtained from the schools indicate that of the years sampled, 58% were from a Catholic background and 42% from a Protestant background. Both Protestant and Catholic schools were given the same opportunity to participate in the study.

Each questionnaire was coded with an identifier relating to the school that was known only to the researcher. The questionnaire responses were coded and manually inputted into SPSS. A complete SPSS data sheet was produced and analysis, including frequencies and crosstabulations, conducted.

Focus Groups with young people

The members of the focus groups were obtained with the assistance of teachers and community and youth workers located in and around the Ardoyne-Glenbryn area of North Belfast. The sample comprised of young people aged 12-18 year old with both genders and community backgrounds represented. In total six focus groups were conducted with a total of 42 participants. There were difficulties in setting up focus groups in some Nationalist communities due to the Northern Ireland Policing Board funding of the research. However, with the assistance of community representatives and youth workers the required number of focus groups took place. Table 4 shows the areas targeted and the breakdown of the groups in terms of age, gender and community background.

All of the focus groups were tape-recorded after receiving permission from the participants. The young people were briefed about the methods employed and that all information provided was confidential. All data and personalised information, including the tapes of focus groups were destroyed on completion of the report. A number of themes were used to guide the focus groups, including community life, violence and disorder, policing in North Belfast and attacks on school buses.

Table 4: Locations and number of participants in focus groups

Area in North Belfast	Total	Gender		Age	Community Background	
Ardoyne	9	6 male 3 female		14-18	9 Catholic	
Ballysillan	4	4 male		14	4 Protestant	
Ardoyne/Glenbryn	9	4 male 5 female		13-15	4 Catholic 5 Protestant	
Greater New Lodge	3	3 female		14-15	3 Catholic	
Glenbryn	5	5 male		15-17	5 Protestant	
Ligoniel	12	12 female		12-14	12 Catholic	
Total	**42**	**19M**	**23F**	**12-18**	**28C**	**14P**

Focus groups with the PSNI

Two focus groups were conducted with the PSNI from the North Belfast District Command Unit. One involved representatives from Command level the other involved twelve police officers from the Sector level. Participants were fully briefed on the research methods and were assured that all information was confidential. Consent was given to tape record the discussion and these were transcribed. Themes used to guide the groups included policing priorities in North Belfast, the role of young people in violence and disorder, sectarian intimidation and future policing initiatives.

Interviews with community representatives

Five informal interviews were conducted with community representatives from within the Nationalist/Republican and Unionist/Loyalist communities in North Belfast. Discussions centred on the issues and themes that had been raised by young people in the focus groups. The discussions were not tape recorded, but hand written notes were made.

Output

Because of the interest and support we received from the post-primary schools in North Belfast, ICR agreed to produce an individual report on the findings of the survey in each school. Each school will thus receive a copy of the full report plus a report on the experiences of their own pupils.

ICR have also produced a short report on the findings relevant to the emergency services and will send these to both the Fire Service and the Ambulance Service.

3. Demographic findings

The following section highlights the age, gender, community background and place of residence of the young people who participated in the questionnaire.

In total, 2,486 questionnaires were completed by young people attending eleven post-primary schools in the North Belfast area. The sample consisted of 1,045 (42%) males and 1,441 (58%) females (Table 5).

Table 5: Age and gender split of participants

Age	Number of respondents	% of respondents	Males		Females	
			Number	%	Number	%
14	809	33	374	15	435	18
15	853	34	440	18	413	17
16	575	23	190	8	385	15
17	247	10	40	1	207	8
Missing	2	0	1	0	1	0
Total	**2,486**	**100**	**1,045**	**42**	**1,441**	**58**

The respondents were also asked to indicate their community background (Table 6). The majority of young people were from the Catholic community (64%), followed by the Protestant community (30%).

Table 6: Community background and gender of respondents

Religion	Number of respondents	% of respondents	Males		Females	
			Number	%	Number	%
Catholic	1,599	64	614	25	985	40
Protestant	749	30	361	15	388	16
No religion	74	3	42	2	32	1
Mixed	20	1	7	-	13	0.5
Christian	12	1	6	-	6	-
Other	10	0.5	3	-	7	0.5
Pagan	4	0.5	4	-	0	-
Jehovah Witness	4	-	-	-	4	-
Sikh	2	-	0	-	2	-
Hare Krishna	2	-	2	-	0	-
Muslim	1	-	0	-	1	-
Mormon	1	-	0	-	1	-
Hindu	1	-	1	-	0	-
Missing	7	-	5	-	2	-
Total	**2,486**	**100**	**1,045**	**42**	**1,441**	**58**

- = less than 0.5%

The young people were asked to indicate the name of the street where they lived. This was subsequently checked with the Revised Register of Electors to determine whether or not the respondents resided in the Belfast North Parliamentary Constituency area. Table 7 provides a list of the electoral wards in North Belfast and the number of respondents who resided in them. The findings show that 40% of young people who completed the questionnaire resided outside the North Belfast constituency with 54% indicating that they lived in the constituency; 6% failed to provide sufficient information to facilitate this allocation.

Table 7: Location of respondents by electoral ward

Electoral ward	Number of respondents	*% of respondents*
Outside North Belfast	987	*40*
Ardoyne	169	*7*
Chichester Park	160	*6*
Cavehill	133	*5*
Ballysillan	133	*5*
Waterworks	126	*5*
Cliftonville	121	*4*
New Lodge	98	*4*
Ligoniel	90	*4*
Castleview	69	*3*
Fortwilliam	64	*3*
Woodvale	58	*3*
Crumlin	47	*2*
Duncairn	26	*1*
Bellevue	25	*1*
Valley	21	*1*
Whitehouse	1	*0*
Coole	1	*0*
Dunanney	1	*0*
Missing	156	*6*
Total	**2,486**	***100***

The respondents were asked to indicate their postcode if they did not live in the North Belfast area. Unfortunately analysis proved difficult as a significant number of respondents failed to provide their postcode. However, from the available data it was apparent that the majority (57%) resided in and around Carrickfergus, Newtownabbey and Carnmoney (Table 8).

Table 8: Young people who live outside North Belfast by Postcode

Outside North Belfast	Number of respondents	% of respondents
BT 36 (Carnmoney)	363	*37*
BT 37 (Newtownabbey)	98	*10*
BT 38 (Carrickfergus)	98	*10*
BT 13 (West Belfast)	74	*7*
BT 41 (Antrim)	20	*2*
BT 29 (Crumlin)	16	*2*
BT 39 (Ballyclare)	16	*2*
BT 6 (Castlereagh)	7	*1*
BT 17 (Dunmurry)	6	*1*
BT 5 (Belfast East)	5	*0.5*
BT 8 (Castlereagh)	4	*0.5*
BT 27 (Lisburn)	4	*0.5*
BT 16 (Dundonald)	4	*0.5*
BT 40 (Larne	4	*0.5*
BT 68 (Craigavon)	3	*0.5*
BT 9 (South Belfast)	3	*0.5*
BT 11 (South Belfast)	3	*0.5*
BT 12 (South Belfast)	3	-
BT 10 (South Belfast)	2	-
BT 18 (North Down)	2	-
BT 24 (Down)	2	-
BT 26 (Hillsborough)	1	-
BT 28 (Lisburn)	1	-
BT 31 (South Down)	1	-
BT 34 (Newry)	1	-
BT 42 (Galgorm)	1	-
BT 45 (Magherafelt)	1	-
BT 48 (Derry/Londonderry)	1	-
BT 56 (Portrush)	1	-
BT 61 (Armagh)	1	-
BT 69 (Aughnacloy)	1	-
Missing	240	*24*
Total	**987**	*100*

- = less than 0.5%

4. Safety concerns travelling to and from school

The following section details respondents' experiences of travelling to and from their schools in North Belfast, along with incidents of violence and disorder they may have engaged in towards other young people.

The respondents were asked to indicate how they travelled to school. The most frequently used form of transport was a car (38%) followed by a bus (37%). Further analysis revealed that half of the young people travel to school with their friends (50%), with a further 27% travelling with their parents, 13% on their own, and 10% with siblings. Table 9 illustrates the main methods of transport young people used travelling to and from school.

Table 9: Young people's methods of transport to school

Method of travel	Number of respondents	*% of respondents*
Car	951	*38*
Bus	912	*37*
Walk	453	*18*
Train	88	*4*
Taxi	71	*3*
Cycle	3	*0*
Scooter	1	*0*
Missing	7	*0*
Total	**2,486**	***100***

The young people were asked whether they had ever felt intimidated travelling to and/or from their school. It emerged that while 70% of respondents said they had never felt intimidated, over a quarter of young people (26%) said they had; the remaining 4% were unsure (Table 10).

Table 10: Young people who have felt intimidated travelling to and from school

Intimidated travelling to and from school	Number of respondents	*% of respondents*
No	1,731	*70*
Yes	653	*26*
Don't know	101	*4*
Missing	1	*0*
Total	**2,486**	***100***

A further examination of responses involving the gender, community background and location of the young people revealed that 29% of females compared to 22% of males had felt intimidated travelling to and from their school. In relation to community background it was determined that 30% of young people from the Catholic community and 19% from the Protestant community had felt intimidated travelling to and/or from their school. Figure 1 shows that Catholic girls were the most likely to report feeling intimidated (31%) and Protestant boys the least likely to report this (14%).

**Figure 1: Proportions of Catholic and Protestant boys and girls
reporting feeling intimidated travelling to and from school**
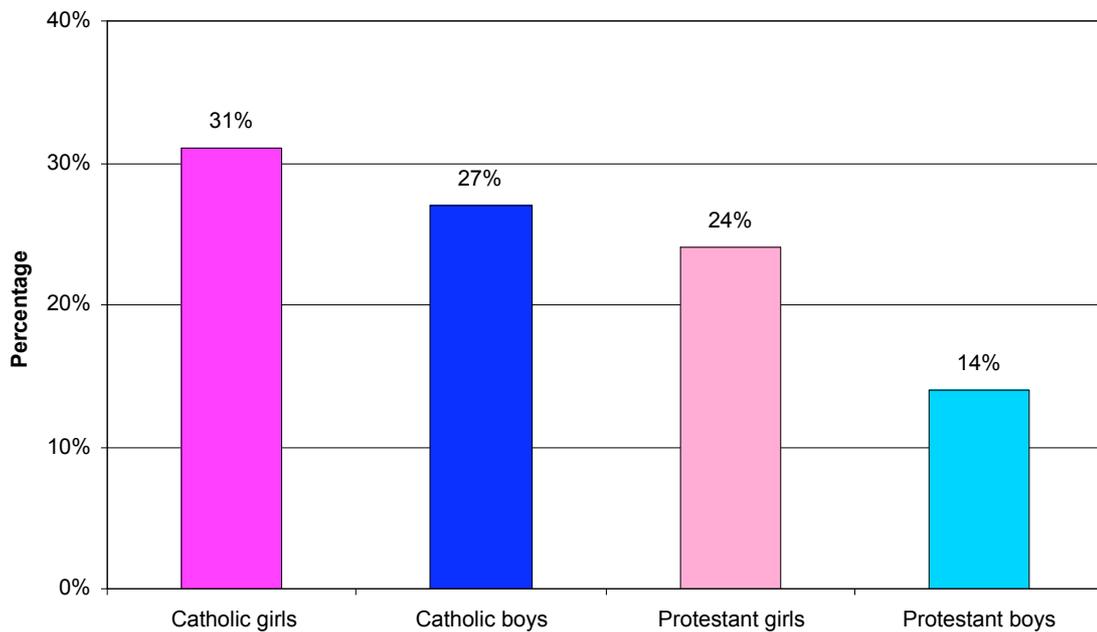
There were no significant differences between young people who lived in and outside North Belfast, with 26% of young people from both areas having felt intimidated travelling to and from their schools. With regards to the age of the respondents it appeared that older respondents tended to feel more intimidated than younger ones, with 35% of 17 year olds reporting this compared to 26% of 14 year olds.

The respondents who had felt intimidated travelling to and/or from their school were asked to highlight whether this feeling of intimidation was more likely to occur in the morning or afternoon. The majority of these young people (72%) believed that this was more likely to occur in the afternoon, upon leaving their school. A further 17% indicated that the morning time was when they had felt most intimidated, with 11% stating that they felt intimidated all the time.

The young people were asked whether they had ever been threatened and/or attacked travelling to and/or from school because of their community background. The majority of respondents (51%) indicated that they had experience of violent and/or threatening incidents. A further 48% said they had not experienced such incidents, with 1% of respondents declining to provide a response. The most frequently reported incident by young people was having their school bus attacked (20%) followed by being verbally abused on the street (14%). Table 11 provides a breakdown of the types of incidents young people had experienced travelling to and/or from school.

Table 11: Most recent incident involving young people travelling to and from school

Incident	Number of respondents	*% of respondents*
No incident occurred	1,200	*48*
Bus being attacked	508	*20*
Verbally abused on street	341	*14*
Objects been thrown	190	*8*
Chased	134	*5*
Beaten up	70	*3*
Other (not stated)	17	*1*
Missing responses	26	*1*
Total	**2,486**	***100***

Further analysis was conducted to determine whether the area where young people lived contributed to their experience of being threatened and/or attacked travelling to and/or from school. It was concluded that there was no significant difference between where young people lived and their experience of violent incidents and/or threatening behaviour whilst travelling to and/or from school.

However, there were differences between community backgrounds, with 53% from the Catholic community and 47% from the Protestant community having experienced a violent and/or threatening incident. Catholic girls were the most likely to report having been attacked (55%), followed by Catholic boys (50%), Protestant girls (48%) and Protestant boys (46%).

The respondents were also asked if they could identify the people most involved in these incidents. The largest proportion (47%) of those young people that had experienced violent incidents and/or threatening behaviour said that the incidents involved people wearing a school uniform, 38% maintained that it was people not wearing a school uniform with 15% unable to decide.

The questionnaire also attempted to determine young people's participation in threatening or violent behaviour towards other young people travelling to and/or from school because of their perceived community background. The majority of young people (85%) said that they had not participated in violent or threatening behaviour. However, 13% of young people said that they had participated in this type of behaviour with a further 2% failing to provide a response.

The most frequently reported incident that young people engaged in was shouting abuse on the street (9%), followed by throwing objects at people (5%). Table 12 shows the types of violent and disorderly behaviour young people have participated in. Similar findings emerged from the Young Persons Behaviour and Attitudes Survey (2003) with 7% of young people stating in the last twelve months that they had attacked, threatened or been rude to someone because of their religion.

Table 12: Violence and disorderly behaviour young people have engaged in

Type of incident	Number of respondents	*% of respondents*
Have not participated	2,119	*85*
Abuse on the street	215	*9*
Throwing objects at people	129	*5*
Attack school buses	91	*4*
Chasing people	71	*3*
Beating people up	58	*2*
Missing responses	40	*2*

(Participants were allowed to tick more than one category)

Respondents were also asked whether they thought that the police provided a safe environment for young people travelling to and from schools in North Belfast. Only a small minority (11%) felt that the police were able to provide a safe environment for school children, with 23% being undecided and 66% saying that the police did not do enough. This view was common to both Protestants (67%) and Catholics (66%).

A follow up question examined who respondents thought should be monitoring the school routes. The largest proportion of young people (23%) were under the impression that nobody was needed. However, over one fifth (21%) maintained that the police should be monitoring school routes in North Belfast. Table 13 highlights the main responses by young people to who should be monitoring school routes.

Table 13: Respondents views on who should monitor school routes

Monitor school routes	Number of respondents	*% of respondents*
Don't need anybody	570	*23*
Don't know	542	*22*
Police	509	*21*
People from community	453	*18*
Teachers	257	*10*
Senior pupils	106	*4*
Missing responses	49	*2*
Total	**2,486**	***100***

Summary

- Over a quarter of young people (26%) had felt intimidated travelling to and from their schools in North Belfast.
- More females (29%) than males (22%) had felt intimidated, along with 30% from the Catholic community and 19% from the Protestant community.
- Over half (51%) of young people had experienced an incident of violence or threatening behaviour whilst travelling to and from their schools, with the most frequently reported incident being a school bus being attacked (20%). The largest number of respondents who experienced violence (47%) indicated that young people wearing school uniforms were the main participants in these incidents.

5. Impact of community background

The following section highlights the level of interaction between young people from the Protestant and Catholic communities, along with the impact young people's community background has on their movements within North Belfast.

The respondents were asked if they had any friends from a different community background to themselves. The findings indicated that the majority (75%) of young people had friends from a different community background, 22% did not and a further 3% were not sure. (These figures are slightly higher than the ones produced from the Young Life and Times Survey (2004), which indicated that 60% of young people had friends from other religious backgrounds).

Further analysis showed that 78% from the Catholic community and 67% from the Protestant community had friends from different religious backgrounds. However, 81% of young people from outside North Belfast, compared to 72% of respondents from within North Belfast had friends with a different religious background. Finally, 84% of females and 64% of males had friends from a different religious background.

In relation to cross community activities outside of school it emerged that 31% of young people participated at some level in cross community initiatives. This figure is smaller than reported in the Young Life and Times Survey (2004), which indicated that 61% of young people participated in cross-community projects. More than one in five young people (22%) did not participate in cross community activities because they were not sure how to do so (see Table 14). A further 19% of respondents indicated that they did not want to participate in any cross community programmes.

Table 14: Level of participation in cross community activities

	Number of respondents	*% of respondents*
Do cross community work	760	*31*
Don't know	666	*27*
Don't know how to	550	*22*
Don't want to	478	*19*
Missing responses	32	*1*
Total	**2,486**	*100*

Young people who lived in North Belfast were less likely than those living outside the area to take part in cross community projects (27% compared to 35%). However, further analysis examining the community background of young people and their levels of participation in these activities found that 31% of respondents from both the Protestant and Catholic communities participated in cross community programmes.

In addition, while 29% of males and 32% of females stated that they participated in cross community activities, 27% of males and 14% of females indicated that they had no intention of doing so (see Figure 2). This gender difference was also evident in the Youthquest 2000 Survey (Smyth, 2000) which revealed that 14% of males and 10% of females thought that cross community work was not a good idea.

Figure 2: Young people's participation in cross-community activities
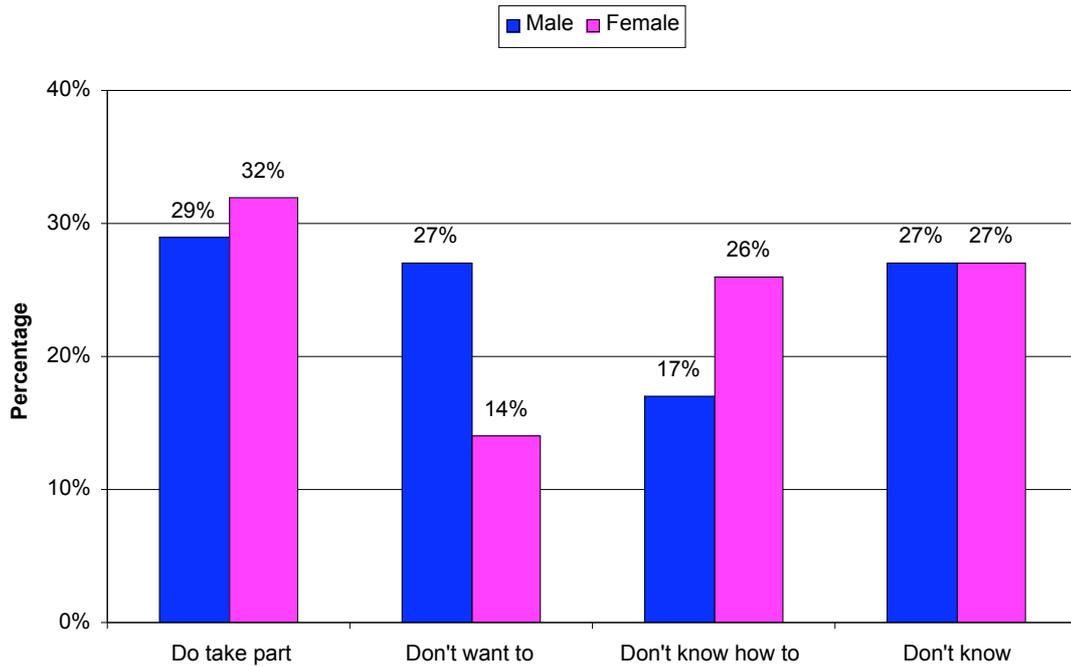
Restriction of movement

A series of questions examined whether the community background of young people was a significant factor in relation to their movement throughout North Belfast. The majority of respondents (61%) maintained that their community background restricted their movement within North Belfast, with 32% of young people indicating that it was not a factor. A further 7% were undecided as to how their community background affected their movement. Table 15 highlights the main activities in which young people found it difficult to participate within North Belfast, 38% of respondents felt that meeting friends was difficult and 36% found it difficult to go to a leisure centre.

Table 15: Activities young people who are unable to travel through parts of North Belfast find difficult to participate in

	Number of respondents	*% of respondents*
Meet friends	576	*38*
Go to the leisure centre	547	*36*
Go the cinema	374	*25*
Shop	230	*15*
Play sports	187	*12*
Work	100	*7*

(Participants were allowed to tick more than one category)

Community background and geographical location of the respondents were also examined to determine whether either had had a significant effect on the movement of young people throughout North Belfast. The results showed that 68% of young people from the Catholic community avoided parts of North Belfast, compared to 50% of those from the Protestant community. In relation to where young people resided, it

was clear that those from within North Belfast were more inclined to avoid parts of North Belfast than were those who lived outside North Belfast (68% compared to 52%).

Summary

- Three quarters of young people (75%) had friends from a different community background to themselves.
- 31% of young people participated in cross community projects, with a further 19% not wanting to.
- The majority of respondents (61%) felt that their community background restricted movement within North Belfast.

6. Violence in the community

This section documents young people's experiences of violence and disorder in North Belfast, along with the effects, if any, on the lives of young people. Furthermore, young people's views on who is responsible for sectarian violence are considered and the possible ways to decrease it.

Most young people (82%) said that they had experience of violence and disorder in North Belfast, with only 18% having no such experience. The most commonly reported incident was fighting between members of the Catholic and Protestant communities (61%), followed by fighting with the police (50%).

Attention must also be drawn to the fact that nearly 1 in 8 young people indicated that they had experience of domestic violence (12%), and 1 in 16 (6%) had experience of sexual violence. It is important to note that that these responses only indicate that young people have an experience of particular incidents and do not necessarily state that they have been personally subjected to or involved in such activities. Table 16 shows the types of violence and disorder that young people have experience of in the North Belfast area.

Table 16: Young people's experience of violence in North Belfast

Types of incident	Number of respondents	*% of respondents*
Sectarian fighting	1,523	*61*
Fighting with the police	1,246	*50*
Attacks on school buses	1,146	*46*
Interface violence	1,056	*43*
Fighting at band parades	1,056	*43*
House petrol/paint bombed	889	*36*
People leave homes	741	*30*
Pipe bombs	661	*27*
Fighting in community	602	*24*
Shots fired	476	*19*
Attacks on ambulances	292	*12*
Domestic violence	291	*12*
Attacks on firemen	260	*11*
Sexual violence	159	*6*
No experience of violence	454	*18*

(Participants were allowed to tick more than one category)

Further analysis was conducted on the young people's responses by examining their age and where they lived. In relation to age, the findings showed that older respondents appeared to have a greater experience of incidents of violence and disorder than younger respondents. This was especially evident in regards to respondent experiences of interface violence, with 50% of 17 year olds indicating an experience compared to 37% of 14 year olds.

The findings also showed that those who resided outside the North Belfast area had significantly less experience of violence and disorder than did those who lived within

the area. Table 17 provides a breakdown of young people's experiences of violence and disorder by the area where they live. The largest difference between young people from within and outside North Belfast occurred in their experiences of interface violence, sectarian fighting and houses being petrol bombed. It is worth noting that regardless of whether young people lived in or outside of North Belfast, similar numbers of young people (47%) had experience of school buses being attacked.

Table 17: Young people's experiences of violence and disorder by area of residence

Types of incidents experienced	Live within North Belfast		Live outside North Belfast	
	Number	*%*	**Number**	*%*
Sectarian fighting	944	*71*	504	*50*
Fighting with the police	809	*61*	380	*38*
Attacks on school buses	624	*47*	478	*47*
Interface violence	695	*52*	311	*31*
Fighting at band parades	656	*49*	344	*34*
House petrol/paint bombed	595	*45*	253	*25*
People leave homes	479	*36*	218	*22*
Pipe bombs	458	*34*	176	*17*
Fighting in community	393	*29*	175	*17*
Shots fired	333	*25*	120	*12*
Attacks on ambulances	185	*14*	96	*10*
Domestic violence	185	*14*	87	*9*
Attacks on firemen	160	*12*	87	*9*
Sexual violence	100	*8*	50	*5*
No experience of violence	190	*14*	247	*25*

(Participants were allowed to tick more than one category)

Effects of violence and disorder on young people

Respondents were asked if the incidents of violence and disorder had any effect on them. The findings concluded that 50% of young people had been affected at some level by the incidents, with the remaining 50% unaffected. The most frequently reported effect concerned young people's ability to travel throughout parts of North Belfast (26%), followed by a family member/friend being injured (22%; see Table 18).

Analysis was also conducted to determine if young people from outside the North Belfast area experienced different effects of the violence and disorder to those who lived in North Belfast. As previously noted, young people from within North Belfast had far greater experiences of violence than those from outside North Belfast. Similar findings were replicated in relation to the effects of violence on young people.

In relation to those who were unable to attend school, 10% of respondents from within North Belfast were affected, compared to 4% of those from outside North Belfast. 31% of young people from within North Belfast were unable to travel through parts of North Belfast, compared to 21% of young people from outside North Belfast. Overall,

46% of young people from within North Belfast claimed to have been unaffected by violence and disorder, compared to 57% of those from outside North Belfast.

Table 18: Effects of violence and disorder in North Belfast on young people

Types of effects	Number of respondents	*% of respondents*
Had no effect	1,245	*50*
Restricted travel	642	*26*
Family/friend injured	549	*22*
Scared to go out at night	200	*8*
Changed school route	196	*8*
Unable to attend school	181	*7*
Participated in violence	157	*6*
Injured/hospitalised	149	*6*
Nightmares	134	*5*
New transport to school	113	*5*
Leave community	71	*3*
Medication for sleep	50	*2*
Change schools	25	*1*

(Participants were allowed to tick more than one category)

Several gender differences also emerged with 28% of females, compared to 23% of males indicating that they were unable to travel through parts of North Belfast. Also 10% of females and 4% of males had been unable at one time to attend school. Males said that they were less affected by incidents of violence and disorder, with 56% of males compared to 47% of females maintaining that they were unaffected.

Significant differences between the communities relating to the effects of violence and disorder were noted: 31% of young people from the Catholic community indicated that they were unable to travel through parts of North Belfast due to the violence and disorder compared to 19% of respondents from the Protestant community; 9% of young people from the Catholic community changed their route to school, compared to 7% from the Protestant community. Similarly, 9% of respondents from the Catholic community were scared to go out at night, compared to 7% from the Protestant community. Finally, 59% of young people from the Protestant community indicated that they were unaffected by incidents of violence and disorder, compared to 46% of young people from the Catholic community.

Sectarian violence

The questionnaire also examined who young people perceived to be the most responsible for sectarian violence in North Belfast. The findings showed that young people found it difficult to attribute blame to one single group for these incidents. Over half of the young people (55%) felt that young Catholics and Protestants; Loyalist and Republican paramilitaries; the police; political organisations and Loyal Orders were all responsible for sectarian violence in North Belfast. Table 19 shows the main groups that young people perceive as being responsible for sectarian violence in North Belfast.

Table 19: Responsible for sectarian violence in North Belfast

Groups	Number of respondents	% of respondents
All of these groups	1,354	55
Young Catholics	233	9
Loyalist paramilitaries	183	8
Young Protestants	156	6
The police	125	5
Republican paramilitaries	121	5
Political organisations	105	4
Loyal Orders	32	1
Missing	177	7
Total	**2,486**	**100**

There were no significant differences between where young people lived and their views on who was responsible for sectarian violence in North Belfast. The majority of young people from both within North Belfast (56%) and outside North Belfast (59%) believed that the violence was the responsibility of a combination of all of the groups. The majority of young people from both Catholic (57%) and Protestant (48%) communities appeared to indicate that sectarian violence was the result of multiple factors. However, differences did emerge in relation to young people's perceptions of the role of other groups in sectarian violence.

Young people from the Catholic community (6%) were more inclined to blame the police than young people from the Protestant community (3%). Nearly a quarter (24%) of respondents from the Protestant community associated sectarian violence with young Catholics, compared to 3% from the Catholic community.

Table 20 Views of young people from the Catholic and Protestant communities on who is responsible for sectarian violence in North Belfast

Groups	Catholic community		Protestant community	
	Number	%	Number	%
All of these groups	905	57	362	48
Young Catholics	52	3	175	24
Loyalist paramilitaries	157	10	21	3
Young Protestants	134	8	12	2
The police	95	6	25	3
Republican paramilitaries	30	2	88	12
Political organisations	76	5	25	3
Loyal Orders	32	2	0	-
Missing	118	7	41	5
Total	**1,599**	**100**	**749**	**100**

Respondents from both communities acknowledged the role of paramilitary groups in sectarian violence with 10% of the Catholic community highlighting the role of Loyalist paramilitaries and 12% of the Protestant community indicating the influence of Republican paramilitaries.

Finally, 2% of respondents from the Catholic community attributed sectarian violence in North Belfast to the Loyal Orders, however, no Protestant respondent indicated like wise. Tables 20 and Figure 3 highlight the main groups young people from the Catholic and Protestant community said were responsible for sectarian violence in North Belfast.

Figure 3: Young people's views on groups responsible for sectarian violence
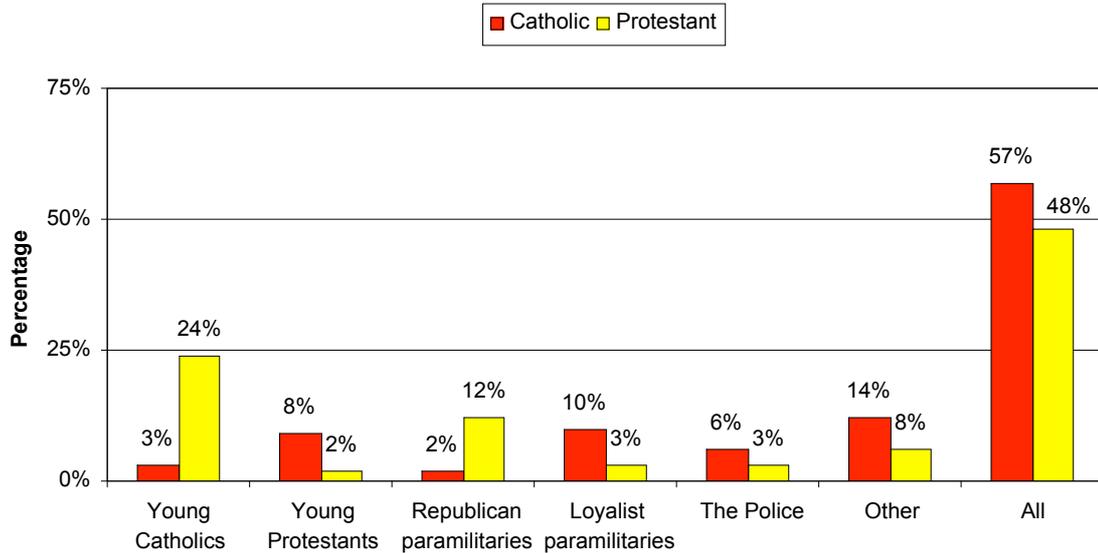
* Other includes Loyal Orders, political organisations and missing responses.

The young people were also asked their views on what measures could decrease the number of sectarian incidents in North Belfast. Over a quarter of the respondents (26%) indicated that removing all the paramilitary groups would decrease sectarian incidents (see Table 21). The second most popular response was to ban all the parades in North Belfast (19%) followed by an increase in community relations work (12%).

Table 21: Measures to decrease sectarian attacks in North Belfast

Type of measures	Number of respondents	*% of respondents*
No paramilitary groups	647	*26*
No parades	483	*19*
Community relations work	298	*12*
More integrated schools	243	*10*
More CCTV	233	*10*
Segregated housing	159	*6*
More integrated housing	136	*6*
New politicians	97	*4*
Not stated	190	*7*
Total	**2,486**	***100***

Further analysis revealed that there were significant differences between the community background of the respondents and the measures suggested to decrease sectarian incidents. Table 22 shows that 26% of young people from the Catholic

community suggested banning all parades, compared to 5% from the Protestant community. Furthermore, 14% of respondents from the Protestant community compared to 4% from the Catholic community thought that the total segregation of Catholic and Protestant housing would decrease sectarian incidents. There was a stronger emphasis on the benefits of CCTV from respondents from the Protestant community (17%) than from the Catholic community (6%).

Table 22: Views of young people from the Catholic and Protestant communities on measures to decrease sectarian incidents in North Belfast

Type of measures	Catholic community		Protestant community	
	Number	*%*	**Number**	*%*
No paramilitary groups	378	*24*	228	*30*
No parades	429	*26*	37	*5*
Community relations work	200	*12*	82	*11*
More integrated schools	178	*11*	51	*7*
More CCTV	95	*6*	131	*17*
Segregated housing	54	*4*	102	*14*
More integrated housing	89	*6*	34	*5*
New politicians	66	*4*	22	*3*
Not stated	110	*7*	62	*8*
Total	**1,599**	*100*	**749**	*100*

Summary

- Most young people (82%) indicated an experience of violence and disorder in North Belfast, with the most commonly reported incident being fighting between members of the Catholic and Protestant communities (61%).
- Older respondents had a greater experience of incidents of violence and disorder compared to younger respondents.
- Furthermore, respondents who lived outside North Belfast had significantly less experience of violence and disorder than young people who lived in North Belfast.
- Half of respondents (50%) had been affected by violence and disorder in North Belfast, with the most frequently reported effect being young people unable to travel through parts of North Belfast (26%).
- Young people who lived within North Belfast were more affected by violence and disorder than young people from outside North Belfast, along with more females than males.

7. Authority figures

The respondents were asked to identify who they considered had the most authority within their community. This section illustrates these findings along with the organisations respondents would access if they were the victim of an attack.

The largest proportion of respondents (39%) indicated that the police held the most authority within their community, closely followed by paramilitary groups (34%). Table 23 highlights the main authority figures identified by respondents.

Table 23: Authority figures within the community

Authority figure	Number of respondents	% of respondents
Police	958	39
Paramilitary groups	837	34
Community/youth workers	218	9
Clergy/Church	153	6
Nobody	57	2
Teachers	14	1
Families	13	1
Missing responses	236	9
Total	**2,486**	**100**

There were significant differences according to the community background and where young people lived in regards to their responses on who had the most authority within their communities (Table 24). Overall the largest proportion of respondents thought that the police had the most authority in the community. However, young people who lived outside North Belfast (50%) were more likely to indicate the police than those who lived within North Belfast (36%). Paramilitary groups were viewed as having more authority by young people from within North Belfast (41%) than they were by those who lived outside North Belfast (29%).

Table 24: Authority figures within the community for residents and non-residents of North Belfast

Authority figures	Live in North Belfast %	Live outside North Belfast %
Police	36	50
Paramilitary groups	41	29
Community/youth workers	11	8
Clergy/Church	7	6
Nobody	2	3
Teachers	-	1
Families	1	1
Missing responses	2	2
Total	**100**	**100**

The findings also showed that the community background of the respondents was a factor in who young people thought had authority within their communities with 43%

of those from the Catholic community viewing the police as having the most authority, compared to 36% from the Protestant community. In relation to community/ youth workers, 11% from the Catholic community indicated that they had the most authority, compared to 6% from the Protestant community. Finally, 30% of young people from the Catholic community perceived paramilitary groups as having the most authority within their community, compared to 51% of respondents from the Protestant community.

The young people were also asked to identify whom they would contact within their community for assistance if someone had attacked them. The largest proportion of young people (38%) indicated that they would contact the police, with 24% using their friends. Table 25 shows the main groups that young people would contact within their community.

Table 25: Groups young people would contact if they were attacked

Groups	Number of respondents	% of respondents
Police	977	*38*
Friends	598	*24*
Find out myself	370	*15*
Local paramilitaries	293	*12*
Family	79	*3*
Local politicians	53	*2*
Nobody	40	*2*
Not stated	76	*3*
Total	**2,486**	***100***

In relation to the community background of respondents, it emerged that 41% of respondents from the Catholic community and 39% from the Protestant community would contact the police for help. However, 21% of young people from the Protestant community, compared to 8% from the Catholic community would contact local paramilitaries for assistance. Young people who lived within North Belfast (13%) would be slightly more inclined to contact local paramilitaries for assistance, than those who lived outside North Belfast (11%). Likewise, respondents who lived outside North Belfast (48%) would be more likely to contact the police for aid than would those who lived within North Belfast (36%). The findings clearly show that young people's community background and geographical location are significant factors in determining who they perceived to have the most authority within their communities and who they would primarily contact for assistance.

Summary

- 39% indicted that the police had the most authority in their community.
- More young people from within North Belfast (41%) indicated that paramilitary groups held the most authority than did respondents from outside North Belfast (29%).
- 38% indicated that they would contact the police first to report an attack against them.

8. Policing and young people

This section reports the views and experiences young people have of policing. The respondents also indicate what issues the police should be concentrating on, and provide potential improvements to policing in North Belfast.

Young people's attitudes and experiences of policing in North Belfast were gauged by a series of questions on the policing of parades and interfaces. The largest number of respondents (43%) indicated that the current level of policing at interfaces increased the violence, 24% felt that the policing had no effect on levels of violence, 21% were undecided, 9% felt that it lowered the levels of violence and 3% did not respond.

Some differences in opinion did emerge from the respondents when their community background and place of residence were examined. Young people who lived in North Belfast (49%) were more inclined to think that the current policing of interfaces increased violence, compared to those from outside North Belfast (39%). Furthermore, young people from the Catholic community (49%) also felt that the policing of interfaces in North Belfast increased levels of violence, compared to those from the Protestant community (37%).

The majority of young people (53%) felt that the police in North Belfast monitor and control parades unfairly, with 18% indicating that they policed them fairly. Further analysis revealed that 61% of respondents from within North Belfast and 45% from outside North Belfast felt that the police operated unfairly. In relation to the community background of the respondents, 62% from the Catholic community and 41% from the Protestant community felt that police monitored and controlled parades unfairly. Table 26 shows the responses from young people on the policing of parades in North Belfast.

Table 26: Young people's perceptions on the policing of parades in North Belfast

Perceptions	Number of respondents	% of respondents
Unfairly	1,323	*53*
Don't know	663	*27*
Fairly	448	*18*
Missing responses	52	*2*
Total	**2,486**	***100***

Young people's experiences of the police

Several questions focused on the relationship between young people and the police. When the respondents were asked whether they thought that the police understand the issues and problems young people experienced in North Belfast, 65% did not think so, 19% were not sure, 14% believed that the police did, and a further 2% did not provide a response. There were no significant differences between respondents from different community backgrounds or from the area where they lived.

The young people were then asked to indicate the types of behaviour they have experienced from the police. The largest proportion of respondents (36%) indicated

that they had been verbally harassed by the members of the police, with a further 33% stating that they had been stopped and searched by the police for no apparent reason. 32% of young people did indicate a positive response from the police that involved a friendly conversation. Table 27 lists the various experiences young people have had from the police.

Table 27: The experiences of the police among young people who live in and outside North Belfast

Behaviour	Live in North Belfast		Live outside North Belfast		Overall	
	No.	%*	No.	%*	No.	%
Verbal harassment	529	42	263	28	792	36
Stopped/no reason	520	41	296	32	816	33
Discrimination	432	34	201	22	633	29
Behaved violently	367	29	143	15	510	23
Friendly chat	362	29	347	37	709	32
Provided help	198	16	213	23	411	19
Solved a problem	146	12	136	15	282	13
Sexual harassment	41	3	29	3	70	3

(Participants were allowed to tick more than one category)
* *This percentage represents young people who lived in and outside of North Belfast and is not representative of the overall percentages.*

Significant differences emerged when the young people's responses were cross-tabulated with where they lived. Young people from outside North Belfast reported considerably more positive experiences with the police than did young people who lived within North Belfast, with 37% of young people from outside North Belfast reporting having had a friendly conversation with a member of the police, compared to 29% from within North Belfast. In contrast, 29% of young people from North Belfast indicated that they had experience of the police behaving violently, compared to 15% from outside North Belfast.

Young people's experience of the police have also been reported in Hamilton et al (2003) which found that 21% of respondents had indicted that a police officer had behaved in an unacceptable way towards them. The main form of unacceptable behaviour reported was disrespectfulness and/or impoliteness (58%). Furthermore, young people said they believed that the police always assumed that they were 'up to no good'.

Improvements to policing in North Belfast

Respondents were asked to indicate what they thought that police should be concentrating on in North Belfast. The majority of young people felt that interface violence (50%) should be a policing priority, followed by drug dealing/drug use (42%). It is interesting to note that over one third of young people (37%) felt that domestic violence was an issue that the police should be concentrating on. This along with the previous response that nearly 1 in 8 young people had experience of domestic violence (12%) shows that young people have both an awareness and experience of violence and disorder that is not necessarily associated with religious and community divides.

Further analysis failed to provide any significant differences between responses from young people who lived within and outside North Belfast, apart from views on paramilitary activity with 45% of young people from outside North Belfast, compared to 35% within North Belfast indicating that it was a policing priority. An examination of the community background of the respondents showed that 31% from the Catholic community and 39% from the Protestant community felt that the police should be concentrating on protecting young people travelling to and from school (Table 28).

Table 28: What the police should be concentrating on in North Belfast

Policing priorities	Number of respondents	% of respondents
Interface violence	1,233	*50*
Drug dealing/use	1,031	*42*
Paramilitary activity	921	*37*
Domestic violence	911	*37*
Protecting school kids	793	*32*
Car crime	621	*25*
Burglary	536	*22*
Road safety	272	*11*
Under age drinking	246	*10*
Community relations	243	*10*

(Participants were allowed to tick more than one category)

It is important to highlight the differences in opinion that young people and adults have in relation to policing priorities in North Belfast. A recent DPP Survey (2004) for the North Belfast area indicated that only 4% of respondents felt that domestic violence was the biggest problem in North Belfast. Instead, young people causing a nuisance (57%) and underage drinking (56%) were perceived to be the biggest problems in the area. It is worth noting that young people may have very different perceptions of policing priorities to those of the wider adult population.

The questionnaire also asked young people to indicate what measures they thought would improve policing in North Belfast. The largest number of respondents stated that more CCTV (44%) along with a bigger community input on policing (41%) would improve policing in North Belfast (Table 29).

Table 29: Improvements to policing in North Belfast

Improvements	Number of respondents	% of respondents
More CCTV	1,081	*44*
Community input/policing	1,012	*41*
More uniformed police	899	*36*
Stop all parades	899	*36*
Community relations	806	*32*
Fewer uniformed police	528	*21*
More security barriers	495	*20*
Allow all parades	349	*14*

(Participants were allowed to tick more than one category)

There were significant differences between the responses from young people who lived both within and outside North Belfast, along with respondents from different community backgrounds. Those living in North Belfast felt that more security barriers (24%) would improve policing, compared to 17% of young people who lived outside North Belfast. Respondents from outside North Belfast (42%) indicated that more uniformed police officers on the streets would be an improvement, compared to 35% of young people who lived in North Belfast. It is interesting to note that the only significant gender difference concerned those who indicated a stronger focus on community relations, with 29% of males, compared to 37% of females advocating this approach. A more in-depth analysis of the community background of respondents revealed significant differences among young people from the Catholic and Protestant communities (Table 30).

Table 30: Catholic and Protestant views on improving policing in North Belfast

Improvements	% Catholic community	% Protestant community
More CCTV	*40*	*56*
Community input/policing	*47*	*33*
More uniformed police	*33*	*48*
Stop all parades	*51*	*9*
Community relations	*36*	*30*
Fewer uniformed police	*24*	*18*
More security barriers	*19*	*27*
Allow all parades	*4*	*41*

(Participants were allowed to tick more than one category)

The findings indicated that 51% of young people from the Catholic community felt that stopping all parades would improve policing in North Belfast, compared to just 9% of young people from the Protestant community. However, only 40% of young Catholics advocated more CCTV, compared to 56% from the Protestant community. In addition, 19% from the Catholic community feel that more security barriers are necessary, in comparison to 27% from the Protestant community.

Summary

- 43% of young people felt that the current level of policing at interfaces increased violence.
- The majority of respondents indicated that the police in North Belfast monitored and controlled parades unfairly (53%), with 62% from the Catholic community and 41% from the Protestant community holding these views.
- 65% of respondents did not think that the police understood the issues and problems experienced by young people in North Belfast.
- Over a third of young people (36%) indicated that the police had verbally harassed them. There were also significant differences between young people who lived within and outside North Belfast and their experiences of the police, with young people outside North Belfast having more positive experiences.
- Half the respondents felt that interface violence should be a policing priority.
- 44% of respondents felt that an increase in CCTV would improve policing in North Belfast.

9. The Police, Fire and Ambulance Services

The following section documents young people's perceptions of the emergency services, including their views on attacks against ambulance and fire brigade vehicles and employees. Recent media attention has highlighted attacks against ambulances and fire engines (BBC, 17/01/05) and figures provided by both organisations highlight the large number of reported incidents (see Tables 31 and 32).

Table 31: Attacks on Firefighters by Command Area

Type of incident	2002				2003				2004			
	N	S	E	W	N	S	E	W	N	S	E	W
Damage & injury	1	-	9	-	1	-	2	-	1	-	4	-
Damage to vehicle	11	14	74	9	9	17	55	5	9	20	35	10
Hostile crowd-no injury or damage	35	47	180	24	18	37	148	25	28	50	145	20
Injury to person	-	-	5	1	1	1	5	3	-	-	5	-
Total	47	61	268	34	29	55	210	33	38	70	189	30
Total by year	410				327				327			

N= Northern, S= Southern, E= Eastern, W= Western Command Areas.
Source: Northern Ireland Fire Service

In the years 2002-2004 there were 1,064 reported incidents against the Fire Brigade. The majority of these incidents occurred in the Eastern Command Area, which incorporates North Belfast. Unfortunately, it was not possible to determine the geographical location of attacks against ambulances and their personnel.

Table 32: Attacks on ambulances and their personnel from 2000-2004

Year	Number of incidents	% of incidents
2000	38	*7*
2001	95	*17*
2002	122	*21*
2003	188	*33*
2004	125	*22*
Total	**568**	***100***

Source: Northern Ireland Ambulance Service

The young people were asked a series of questions relating to the emergency services and their roles within the community. First the respondents were questioned on the acceptability of throwing missiles/objects at emergency vehicles. Table 33 shows that the majority of young people did not agree that throwing missiles/objects at emergency vehicles was an acceptable form of behaviour. However 27% of respondents did feel that attacking police cars or Land Rovers was 'ok', with 22% agreeing it was 'ok' to stone army vehicles. There was a general consensus from the respondents that throwing missiles/objects at ambulances (99%) and fire engines (99%) was not 'ok', and similar attitudes were held with regard to throwing missiles at buses.

Table 33: Young people who thought it was 'ok' to throw missiles at vehicles

Emergency services	Number of respondents	% of respondents
Police cars/Land Rovers	669	*27*
Army vehicles	544	*22*
Public buses	59	*2*
Fire engines	18	*1*
Ambulances	16	*1*

(Participants were allowed to tick more than one category)

Once again there were distinct differences according to community background and the places where they lived. Thirty two percent of young people who lived in North Belfast thought that it was 'ok' to throw missiles at police cars or Land Rovers, compared to 19% from outside North Belfast. Furthermore, 27% of respondents from North Belfast indicated that it was 'ok' to throw missiles at army vehicles compared to 14% of young people who lived outside North Belfast. In relation to community background, it emerged that 30% of young people from the Catholic community and 25% from the Protestant community stated that it was 'ok' to throw missiles at police vehicles. In addition, 29% of respondents from the Catholic community indicated that it was 'ok' to throw missiles at army vehicles, compared to 10% from the Protestant community.

Following on from this, the respondents were provided with a list of words to describe each of the services, and asked to indicate which words best described the organisation. The general consensus from the young people was that the ambulance and fire services were viewed in a positive light, with 82% and 73% respectively indicating that they were professional. However, these positive perceptions did not extend to young people's views of the police service, with only 30% believing them to be professional, and a further 56% indicating that they thought they were biased. Table 34 and Figure 4 highlight the attitudes of young people towards each of the emergency services.

Table 34: Young people's attitudes towards the emergency services

Attitudes	Ambulance service %	Fire service %	Police service %
Professional	*82*	*73*	*30*
Helpful	*69*	*66*	*24*
Good service	*70*	*69*	*23*
Understanding	*58*	*50*	*17*
Fair	*50*	*49*	*20*
Militaristic	*3*	*5*	*49*
Biased	*4*	*5*	*56*

The views held by young people of the police service differed significantly depending on where they lived and their community background. Of those who lived outside North Belfast, 38% thought that the police were professional, compared to 27% who lived within North Belfast. Similarly, 61% of young people from within North Belfast perceived the police service as biased, compared to 52% of people who lived outside North Belfast.

Figure 4: Young people's attitudes towards the emergency services
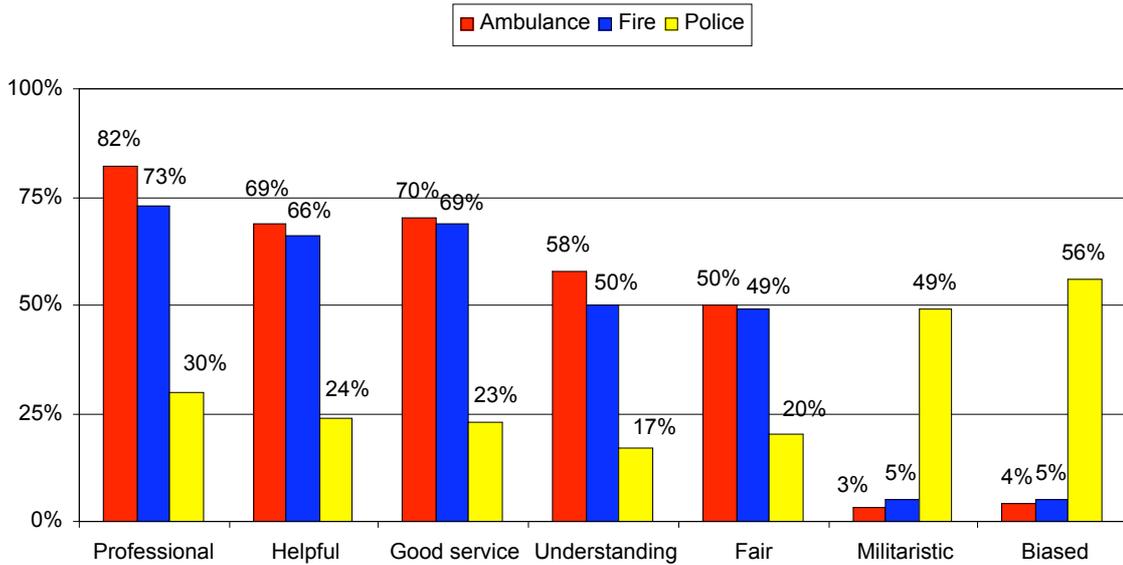
With regards to the community background of the respondents, the findings concluded that 54% from the Catholic community viewed the police service as being militaristic, compared to 42% from the Protestant community. In addition, 65% of respondents from the Catholic community indicated that the police service was biased, compared to 43% from the Protestant community. However, 37% from the Protestant community viewed the police as professional, compared to 27% from the Catholic community (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: Attitudes of young Catholics and Protestants to the police in North Belfast
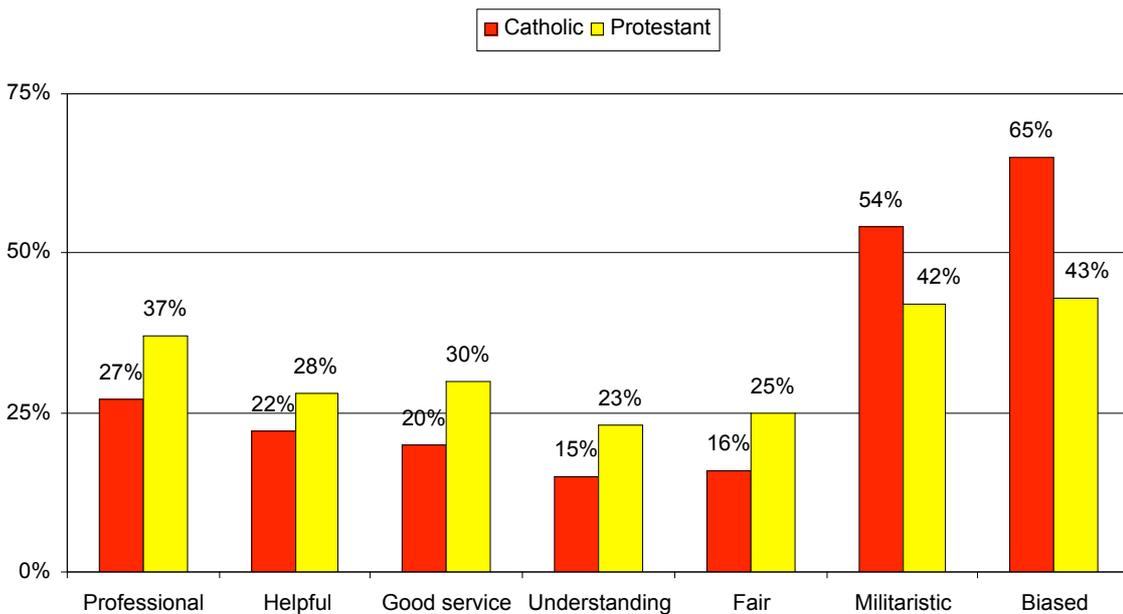
The final section on emergency services looked to determine what types of organisations young people would consider joining in the future. Table 35 shows that

almost a third of respondents (31%) indicated that they would consider applying to the ambulance service for future employment. Under closer examination, it emerged that 27% of males and 33% of females, and 35% from the Catholic community and 21% from the Protestant community viewed the ambulance service as a potential employer. A further 29% of respondents indicated that they would consider joining the fire service. The findings showed that 39% of males and 21% of females and 30% from the Catholic community and 27% from the Protestant community would consider the fire service as a future career.

Table 35: The emergency services young people would consider joining

Emergency services	Number of respondents	% of respondents
Ambulance service	732	*31*
Fire service	686	*29*
Police service	282	*12*

The lowest level of support from the respondents was given to the police service, with 12% of young people indicating that they would consider joining. Further analysis showed that 13% of males and 11% of females, along with 10% from the Catholic community and 15% from the Protestant community would consider the police service as future career.

Furthermore, 10% of young people who lived within North Belfast and 14% who lived outside the area would consider joining the police. In the survey conducted by Hamilton et al (2003) on young people's attitudes and experiences of the PSNI, 17% of young people would or had considered joining the police, with fewer Catholics (11%) than Protestants (23%) considering the option.

Summary

- 27% of young people thought that it was ok to throw missiles/objects at the police, compared to 1% who thought it was ok to attack ambulances or fire engines.
- 30% of young people from the Catholic community and 25% from the Protestant community thought that it was acceptable to throw missiles/objects at the police.
- 23% of respondents thought that the police provided a good service, compared to 70% for the ambulance service 69% for the fire service.
- 17% of respondents thought that the police were understanding, compared to 58% for the ambulance service and 50% for the fire service.
- 31% of young people would consider joining the ambulance service, 29% the fire service and 12% the police.

10. Experiences of young people from Upper North Belfast

The following section documents the findings from six focus groups with young people and two with the PSNI, along with four interviews with community representatives. The focus group participants came from the Ardoyne-Glenbryn area, and the Greater New Lodge, Ballysillan and Ligoniel. Several themes emerged from the discussions that have been identified in the section below. These themes offer an insight into the issues and concerns of young people living in and around the Ardoyne-Glenbryn area of North Belfast.

Safety issues travelling to and from school

The discussions with young people began with questions relating to how safe they felt travelling to and from their schools in North Belfast. All of the young people had either experienced, or were aware of, incidents in which school children had been attacked verbally and/or physically because of their perceived community background. The most common incident referred to by young people was school buses being attacked:

We have been on the bus when it has been attacked. In most cases it has been stoned…people know that we are Catholic because of our school uniform. (Catholic male)

Our bus has been stoned before…they wait until the Catholics get off at their stop and then they know that there are just Protestants left on the bus. (Protestant male)

The results from the questionnaire also indicate that young people had been involved in an incident where their school bus had been attacked, with 20% of respondents answering yes to the question. The young people's experiences were not limited to attacks on school buses, with several recalling incidents were they had been verbally abused and assaulted because of the school uniform they were wearing:

I have been walking home and girls have started spitting on me just because of my school uniform. (Catholic female)

I was attacked by four fellas…they knew what I was just from the road I was walking down and the direction that I was going in. (Protestant male)

According to the participants, most young people removed their school uniforms when they arrived home after school. They did not wear their uniforms outside their communities for fear of being identified as either a Catholic or Protestant. One respondent discussed the attacks on school properties in the North Belfast area, indicating that their location in Protestant areas often antagonised local communities:

Look where the school is, right in the middle of Ballysillan…you are basically saying come on in and wreck our cars…burn the school…You know we don't put Protestant schools in their areas. (Protestant male)

Discussions with the police from the North Belfast District Command Unit focused on their response to attacks against school buses in North Belfast. The police indicated

that they had been involved in meetings and discussions with schools and Translink in the North Belfast area in an attempt to decrease the number of incidents. These meetings provided an opportunity for schools to discuss their various opening and closing times throughout the year, and for the police to highlight the precautionary measures they were taking to protect both Translink buses and school pupils. According to the police, the number of recorded incidents involving school buses had decreased dramatically in the last twelve months:

Over the last year the number of incidents has decreased…there has been a lot of work with the school principals, Translink and us. (Police respondents)

Several of the police respondents highlighted the amount of resources that were spent monitoring school routes twice a day, every day of the school week. They admitted that they would prefer to be doing something more constructive:

The police resources are tied up looking after school routes…if they did a time and motion study on it, I think that people would faint at how much resources are being used. (Police respondent)

However, there was a realisation from the police that they had to continue monitoring school routes regardless of the resources consumed by the exercise. Even though the police recognised that their time could be spent more constructively, they were also aware of the potential for violent exchanges between communities if school buses were attacked. As one officer indicated:

Protecting school routes takes up a considerable amount of our time…but it is a lesser of two evils…if you don't do it and the buses get stoned then you would be facing widespread rioting as a result. (Police respondent)

The police were adamant that incidents involving attacks against school buses were not simply policing issues. They realised that they could deter potential offenders, but long-term responsibility lay with society in general. When one police respondent was asked what would stop attacks against school buses, they indicated:

It will not be a police officer, that's for sure. We could be there for the next five years and it will not make a difference, except that no buses will be stoned. (Police respondent)

As previously stated, there was an acknowledgement from the young people, along with the PSNI and community representatives, that incidents involving school buses had dramatically decreased over the last twelve months. There is no doubt that the high visibility of the police in North Belfast along school routes has contributed to this decrease, along with measures undertaken jointly by Translink, the schools and the PSNI, but it was also felt that on-going work within communities was another significant factor.

Community life

The young people were asked to describe what life was like within their communities. The majority of participants, regardless of community background expressed negative views about their community:

Shit…it can be rough sometimes. (Protestant male)

Crap…there is nothing for young people to do. (Catholic female)

A large number of participants expressed feelings of anger, frustration and resentment, often blaming the environment in which they lived as a reason for their quality of life. There was a consensus among all the young people that communities in North Belfast suffered from a lack of facilities, resources and investment in comparison to other areas in Northern Ireland. According to the young people, the only thing they could do was 'get carry-outs' at the weekend and drink with their friends. The majority of participants admitted having tried alcohol. Drinking was perceived to be normal behaviour for the young people, and a way of socialising with their friends.

Some participants held the view that every now and then adults would become interested in young people and promise them better facilities and offer guidance and support. However, this was usually short lived:

Anything that has been done for young people seems to be short term…it is all good for a while and then they take it away from us again. (Protestant female)

Regardless of community background, each respondent thought that their community was worse off than other areas in North Belfast. Young people from the Catholic community felt that Protestant areas received better housing and more facilities compared to Catholic areas, and Protestant young people had the same perceptions about Catholic communities. It was evident that housing was an important issue to young people, with the number of new developments being an indicator as to how a community was perceived:

Whenever you drive down into Ardoyne or even any Catholic area all you see is brand spanking new houses, drive ways, gardens the lot. (Protestant male)

Look at the Protestant areas…all the new houses in Ballysillan up at the horseshoe bend…they are far better than ours. (Catholic female)

It was interesting to note that young people from the Protestant community felt that Loyalist areas in North Belfast had more problems than did Nationalist areas because of the disputes between various Loyalist paramilitary groups which they believed was drug related:

There seems to be more fighting between supporters of Loyalist paramilitaries...there is so much money and drugs. (Protestant male)

The young people perceived drugs to be a problem that all communities in North Belfast were facing. There was a strong belief that paramilitaries controlled the supply of drugs and that the police were limited in actions to take:

Yeah there are loads of drugs in the community now…really bad now…the community is flooded with them…all over North Belfast. (Catholic male)

The issue of drug dealing/use was explored in the questionnaire, with 42% indicating that this was an issue that the police in North Belfast should be concentrating on.

Community relationships

Several of the young people talked about their participation in cross community programmes along with the difficulties they have experienced associating with young people from different communities. One female participant reflected on the difficulties she had experienced having a friend from a different religious background, indicating that it was both a stressful and a worrying time when they met. She explained that going to each other's houses was complicated and limited the amount if time they spent together:

It can be difficult having a friend from a different community background to yourself…it can be difficult bringing them back to your area and then walking around it…sometimes your other mates don't understand, so you always have to be careful about what you say and where you go. (Catholic female)

The young people felt that participating in cross community programmes in North Belfast was difficult. It was evident that females were more supportive of these types of programmes but none would go out of their way to participate. According to the young people in the focus groups, there was limited communication and interaction between young people from Protestant and Catholic communities in North Belfast. As one respondent indicated:

I'm from Glenbryn and I find it easier to get on with young people from the South rather than ones from Ardoyne. (Protestant male)

A community representative explained that since the Holy Cross dispute relations between the Protestant and Catholic communities had deteriorated and there was no communication or interaction:

Young people see that there have been no friendships forged between the adults so they wonder why they should engage with people from the other community. (Community representative)

When one group of young people were asked what would improve relationships between the communities they replied *'nothing, you could build a massive twenty foot wall between the two communities…out of sight out of mind'.* (Protestant male)

Restriction of movement

The religious background of the young people was viewed as a significant factor in determining places they could travel to in North Belfast. All of the focus group participants recognised that several facilities and amenities were inaccessible to some communities due to their location. The young people discussed in detail the precautions they take whenever they leave the security of their neighbourhoods:

We have to be conscious all the time about where we are, what we are doing, where we are going and what we are wearing…that is life around here. (Protestant male)

It is far better to travel in groups when you leave your community. (Catholic female)

Several of the older participants were aware of the dangers travelling around North Belfast but indicated that they had become conditioned to these dangers and did not think about the risks. In one focus group the young people highlighted the difficulty in accessing leisure services outside of their community:

We can't go to the leisure centre…there is not one leisure centre in a Catholic area in North Belfast. Ballysillan is the nearest one…but the safest one is about twenty minutes away and a tenner in a taxi. (Catholic male)

These views were also reflected in the findings from the survey, which indicated that 61% of young people felt that their community background restricted their movement in North Belfast. Furthermore, over one third of respondents (36%) felt that going to the leisure centre was an activity that they were unable to do because of their community background.

Violence and disorder

All of the young people had experienced violent incidents within their communities. The majority of these incidents involved members of the Catholic and Protestant communities fighting with each other. It is also interesting that the findings from the questionnaire showed that the most frequently reported experience of violence in North Belfast was sectarian fighting (61%):

I remember when the Catholics would come up and try and kick my granny's door in…she was 82 years of age…and they had been drinking all night…and they thought that it would be a bit of fun to terrorise some Protestants. (Protestant male)

The rioting that occurred around the time of the Holy Cross dispute in 2001 was discussed in detail within the focus groups. All of the young people remembered quite vividly the incidents and some were active participants in the nightly rioting around Ardoyne-Glenbryn:

Holy Cross was a nightmare…we can all remember clearly what happened…it was just mad, you couldn't even get to sleep at night. (Catholic female)

The young people indicated that even though the dispute had ended over two years ago, feelings and emotions were still running high:

Because people from the Catholic community are still intimidating the people from this community…they continue to rub our noses in it by walking up to Holy Cross School. (Protestant male)

Discussions within the focus groups then looked at the role young males and females along with adults played in community violence. It emerged that males were most likely to participate in violence with females supporting and voicing encouragement:

Any rioting usually involved young people 13 and above…the girls just watch and cheer, it is mostly fellas. (Protestant male)

Adults were seen more as facilitators and controllers of the violence and disorder rather than active participants:

Sometimes you have adults who organise the riot and have the kids to start it…so they can finish it. (Catholic male)

There was agreement from the young people, police and community representatives that levels of violence and disorder had been decreasing over the last eighteen months:

It has calmed down here compared to previous years…in the last year and a half it has been ok…previous to that it was madness, there was rioting nearly every day. (Catholic female)

Things are bad, but there is not the same level of violence and disorder…but the tension is still there…this hasn't gone away if anything it has got worse. (Protestant male)

Several participants in the focus groups criticised the policing of interfaces in North Belfast. There was a perception that the police did not want to get involved in community disputes and preferred to let the Protestants and Catholics *'fight it out among themselves'*:

The police take ages to do anything, they just watch and don't get involved. (Catholic male)

Representatives from the police were aware that there were misconceptions about how they policed riot situations. However, the police explained that resources along with the level of violence and disorder were crucial in determining the response:

People often wonder why you don't arrest the people when they are rioting…but what you are then doing is moving four officers away from somewhere to arrest one person…you have limited resources…so it is much better to video the incidents. Then people can be identified and arrested after the incident has stopped, often early in the morning. (Police respondent)

Furthermore:

People often don't realise that just because the police are not making an immediate arrest people are getting away…they are not…it is all about observation and then arrest…people are charged, a lot of this goes unnoticed. (Police respondent)

Further discussions with the police revealed that the number one policing priority in North Belfast was Youths Causing Annoyance (YCA):

Which is difficult because a lot of the time they are not doing anything…apart from simple congregating in numbers, and by virtue of being there they are creating a nuisance factor…but that is our number one priority in North Belfast. (Police respondent)

According to the police this problem had increased over the last few years in part because there was more of a reporting culture. People were accessing the services provided by the police and contacting them more frequently. This was evident from PSNI statistics, which showed that from April 2002 to March 2003, there were 1,824 reported incidents of YCA. However, from April 2003 to March 2004, there were 3,080 reported incidents of YCA, which constituted a 69% increase. The police indicated that incidents of YCA were time consuming and exhausted police resources:

In most cases the police have to respond…a large part of a ten hour day would be spent chasing up these instances of YCA…people simply want the problem removed…in a lot of cases we just have to move kids on. (Police respondent)

Several police respondents felt that tackling problems with YCA would involve a multi-agency approach and not solely the police, involving support from education authorities and youth service providers.

Paramilitaries

The role of paramilitary groups was touched upon in the focus groups, with a number of diverse opinions emerging from the discussions. All of the young people were aware that paramilitary groups operated within their communities, and several had experience of confrontation with these groups. The general view was that paramilitaries continued to exert control and influence over communities in North Belfast.

The community background of the participants was not a significant factor in determining the level of support for paramilitary groups. It became evident that several young people from both community backgrounds felt that no paramilitaries should have a role within local communities:

If we had a better police force then we would not have scumbags like the UDA and IRA running around beating kids. (Catholic male)

However, one respondent was more supportive of paramilitary groups indicating that:

If there weren't any paramilitaries now…I could safely say that the place would be a whole lot worse. (Protestant male)

The influence that paramilitaries had in the communities was evident when the young people explained why the numbers of riots had decreased in the past year. They clearly thought that paramilitaries had instructed people within communities to stop fighting:

Both paramilitary groups have made people stop because it is in their interests to keep a control of the current situation. (Catholic female)

An interesting exchange took place in the focus group with both Catholic and Protestant participants. Discussions centred on paramilitary punishments and it emerged that in some Protestant communities, Loyalist paramilitaries issue three warnings before a punishment is ordered. This did not occur within the Catholic communities.

So where you live you get three warnings before you get beat?…in our place we don't get warnings we just get beat. (Catholic male)

One of the complaints young people had in relation to paramilitary punishments was that they were often conducted unfairly and without justification. Furthermore, it was felt that some people in the community were punished more leniently than other young people:

Like it can depend on what family you are from…depending on who you know and what their position is within that community…affects the severity of any punishment that you might receive. (Catholic male)

CCTV

The emergence of CCTV around parts of North Belfast generated mixed views from both Protestant and Catholic participants. There was general agreement from the young people that the introduction of CCTV had resulted in a decrease in the number of violent incidents at interface areas. However, some held the view that they made no difference and simply moved the violence to other areas in North Belfast:

Local troublemakers are adapting to the cameras and targeting places outside the camera's view. (Catholic female)

They have been good…they have stopped the rioting especially at the Ardoyne roundabout. (Catholic female)

All of the young people were aware of the location of the cameras but were not entirely sure as to how they worked or their true purpose. Several participants from the Catholic community felt that the cameras were not there to stop rioting but instead to watch and monitor members of the nationalist/Republican communities. The cameras were viewed as intrusive and some viewed them as spying on their communities:

They shouldn't be able to see so far into people's houses…I don't like them…they spy on us, and they don't look in on the Protestant communities (Catholic female)

All of the participants were aware of people who had been arrested after being caught on camera for rioting. However, several Catholic participants claimed that of those arrested and charged the vast majority were from the Catholic community. There was an underlying feeling that CCTV was being used specifically to police and target the nationalist communities in North Belfast. This view was also evident in the results from the questionnaire, where 17% from the Protestant community, compared to only 6% from the Catholic community felt that more CCTV would decrease sectarian incidents in North Belfast (see Table 22).

The support for CCTV was not all positive with some young people indicating that the cameras just made life easier for the police, and provided them with excuses not to patrol the streets:

We phoned the police and said there was rioting in the Ardoyne street…they said hold on, then said nah there is nothing on the screens to indicate that there is rioting (Protestant male)

Another respondent questioned whether the cameras were even turned on:

They attacked the 32 Degrees North bar in Ardoyne with a digger and petrol bombs...but I don't even think it was caught on camera. (Catholic male)

According to the police, there are 25 CCTV cameras operational across the North Belfast District Command, with more planned. However, it is important to note that the police indicated that there was a decrease in violent incidents in some areas before CCTV was introduced:

It is difficult to determine whether CCTV is responsible for the decrease in incidents…there has been a lot of work involving community workers from both sides of the community. (Police respondent)

The police also stated that there had been no significant differences in the number of Catholic and Protestant people who had been prosecuted as a result of CCTV footage. Furthermore, it was noted that recently there had been a sharp decrease in the number of people who had been prosecuted. The police attributed this to the decrease in violent and disorderly behaviour at interfaces in North Belfast.

According to the police, there was a growing acceptance within communities of CCTV, and opposition to their installation was decreasing. The police also discussed the lengthy consultation process involved in locating cameras indicating that:

A lot of time is spent in the consultation process involving politicians, crime analysts and local community members. (Police respondent)

It was noted that there was now a move to introduce CCTV into areas to combat 'ordinary crime', not just public order offences. There is no doubt that the introduction of CCTV has aided the police in North Belfast, but as one police respondent stated:

CCTV cannot replace the police, but whenever resources are tight it can be a great assistance…the police can use it to provide them with an overview of the area. (Police respondent)

Parades

The issue of band parades was the one theme that completely divided young people by their community background. There appeared to be no common ground on the presence of band parades in North Belfast. However, the majority of young people associated band parades with incidents of violence and disorder. This was reflected in the views of participants from the Protestant community who were adamant that parades should continue and that it was up to members of the Catholic community to accept that Protestants had a right to march down certain roads:

What's all the fuss about, it is just a few minutes in the morning…just because more Catholics have moved into Ardoyne…it is not fair to try and stop our parade (Protestant female)

On the other hand, Catholic participants held the view that the parades were sectarian and served no purpose:

I don't agree with them…they should not happen…what I don't understand is why they want to walk past the shop fronts and then get a bus…just get the bus. (Catholic female)

Within each of the focus groups the discussions on parades proved lively at times, with participants from both communities defending their views and opinions strongly. It was apparent that many of the arguments used by young people in either defence or criticism of parades had been heavily influenced by adults within their communities. One participant talked about the confrontations at Drumcree, even though when questioned about its relevance they were unable to enter into a debate:

We gave in on the Garvaghy Road…we are not doing the same in Ardoyne (Protestant male)

The young people also appeared to be unclear about the issues surrounding the parades debate, and there was no awareness as to why each community either objected or supported the band parades:

Why do the Protestants have to walk through our area knowing that it will crack us up…you tell me why? (Catholic female)

Because it was a Protestant area before that…then the Catholics started ethnic cleansing and all the Protestants had to leave. (Protestant female)

The participants had no knowledge or understanding about the history and tradition that was associated with parades. In discussions with a Protestant community representative, it was explained that parading was a central issue within the area, and that young people were heavily influenced by nationalist objections and often violent protests to members of their community parading over the marching season.

The views reflected in the focus groups were consistent with the findings from the survey with 51% from the Catholic community, compared to 9% from the Protestant community indicating that stopping all parades would improve policing in North Belfast. Conversely 41% from the Protestant community and 4% of the Catholic community indicated that allowing all parades would improve policing.

Policing in North Belfast

The young people very openly discussed their views and perceptions of policing in North Belfast. The majority of participants reported negative experiences of the police, with the most common complaints involving police officers using obscene language, and stopping people for no apparent reason. It is interesting to note that over a third of young people (36%) reported in the questionnaire that verbal harassment was a frequent experience from the police:

The police treat young people badly…they always find a way of pulling young people in and asking them their name and address. (Protestant male)

The findings from the focus groups revealed that young people thought that the police treated the Protestant and Catholic communities differently. Several Protestant participants indicated that the police often ignored nationalist areas and concentrated on Loyalist areas because they were safer to patrol:

You never see the police in Ardoyne…they are not allowed in there…when was the last time you saw a foot patrol in Ardoyne, I haven't seen one in my life time. (Protestant male)

I think there are times that the police just cannot handle people from around Ardoyne…they are scared of them. (Protestant male)

On the other hand young people from the Catholic community felt that the police discriminated against their communities:

The media does not lie…you just see how many peeler jeeps wade into the Catholic community…they never do that in the Protestant communities. (Catholic male)

However one young person felt that there was a section of the police that didn't discriminate between Catholics and Protestant, stating that:

The DMSU are the only unbiased type of police…they just beat all round them. (Protestant male)

One point the young people did agree on was that the police were not welcome in any of their areas, and that when they stepped in to stop confrontations, they became the focus of attack:

The police get into the middle and then all the kids start throwing bricks at them…its good craic. (Catholic and Protestant respondents)

Everyone hates the police. It doesn't matter where you live. (Catholic female)

The police piss us off…they just raise tensions by their presence even when there isn't any tension…they create the problems. (Protestant male)

The discussions then focused on whether young people would consider joining the police in the future. It was evident that more Protestant than Catholic participants were keen on joining the police:

No wonder no Catholics join the police. It's like this, if you were to say in Ardoyne that you were going to be a peeler, you would get a hiding and might be shot. (Catholic male)

The police were aware of how difficult it was to engage with young people, but felt that it was not unique to North Belfast but common throughout Northern Ireland:

Young people are a very hard group to reach and they have very different needs in relation to policing than adult groups. Our community involvement unit go out into schools and talk to young people. (Police representative)

The young people were asked about their level of engagement with the police. Catholic participants had minimal contact with the police in comparison to the young people from the Protestant community. Those from the Protestant community talked about the police coming into their school to discuss issues on crime and drugs. The majority of young people did not view this as a positive experience and did not appreciate the police lecturing them:

They do not come into the schools to talk to young people unless it has to do with drugs. (Protestant male)

Not withstanding the political issues surrounding policing, there was a view that young people, regardless of their community background, held negative perceptions of the police:

The whole attitude of the police is bad…even the kids in Ardoyne would say the same thing…nobody looks at the police positively, they just wave their power about all the time. (Protestant male)

Similar feelings were expressed by a community representative,

I think that young people from both sides of the community feel disenchanted with the police…they cannot relate to them…the police do not build relationships with the young people. (Community representative)

Attacks on the emergency services

All of the participants were very critical of people who attacked both emergency vehicles and workers. A large number of young people had witnessed incidents in which both ambulances and fire engines had been attacked by youths with bottles, bricks and stones:

It is not right to stone them. These people are being paid to do a job of saving lives and people attack them. (Protestant male)

However, the same respondents made clear distinctions between attacking emergency vehicles and attacking the police. They were of the view that the police expected to be attacked and so it was normal behaviour to confront them whenever possible:

That's the way it is…and it doesn't matter to them because they are in big armoured trucks…stones will not do anything to them. (Protestant male)

The views from the focus group participants were similar to the findings reported in the questionnaire were 1% felt that it was ok to throw objects/missiles at fire engines and ambulances, but 27% thought that it was ok to attack police cars/land rovers. Young people made clear distinctions between the police, ambulance and fire brigade:

The police and army…they are just there to aggravate…but the ambulance and fire service are there to do a job. (Protestant male)

Future prospects

Each of the participants was asked to consider what future relationships between the Protestant and Catholic communities would be like. The majority of young people did not think that communication or interaction would improve:

I think that relationships between Protestants and Catholics will eventually get worse…more integrated schools would be good, but what difference do they really make…in an integrated school you call someone a Catholic, but once you are back in your own community you call them Taigs. (Protestant female)

As previously stated the majority of young people were very negative about community relations. They acknowledged that even though the levels of violence and disorder had been decreasing, there were still underlying tensions between the two communities. There were however, some positive views expressed from participants about the future, indicating that people were learning from the past, not wanting to repeat previous mistakes and that communities were beginning to tolerate each other:

The important thing to remember is that the current situation is nothing like it was a few years ago…there is a renewed optimism within communities and nobody wants to go back to the way it used to be. (Community representative)

It was also promising to note that young people from the focus groups were curious as to how other young people from different areas of North Belfast perceived their own communities. One Catholic group in particular wanted the issues they raised brought up in the Protestant group so that they would be aware of their concerns:

I would love to know what they think and say…let them hear what we are talking about. I bet their issues are the same as ours. (Catholic female)

Conclusion

The young people from the focus groups had all experienced incidents of violence and disorder both in their communities and travelling to and from their schools. The most commonly reported incident involved sectarian fighting, much of it attributed to the Holy Cross dispute during 2002/03. There is no doubting the effects the dispute had on the lives of the young people, both on their views of community relations and policing. Regardless of community background young people appeared disengaged and alienated from the police in North Belfast. These views were based on negative experiences with the police, often involving low-level harassment along with perceptions that the police discriminated against young people by their community background.

11. Summary and Recommendations

The findings from this research provide a comprehensive account of young people's experiences and perceptions of violence and community safety in North Belfast. The discussions in the focus groups largely replicated the responses from the questionnaire and together provide little reason for optimism about the development of inclusive and stable social structures. However, it was evident that respondents from the Ardoyne-Glenbryn focus groups held more negative views of both the police and community relations than those who participated in the survey. It appeared that a combination of interface violence, the Holy Cross dispute and a lack of social development had alienated significant numbers of young people. These young people in particular appeared to have a very negative outlook of life in North Belfast.

The attitudes and beliefs of the young people have been shaped by incidents of sectarian and communal violence. While a large proportion of young people say they have friends from the 'other' community and say that they want to be involved in cross-community activities, at the same time, a significant minority have no such social ties, show no desire to become involved with the other community, insist that there should be more segregation and seem willing to indulge in overtly sectarian and sometimes violent behaviour. The result is that the majority of young people in the area routinely experience intimidatory behaviour and violence during their daily lives that affects their range of movement.

The research findings in relation to policing indicated that the majority of young people's experiences of the police were predominantly negative. Regardless of community background, a significant proportion of young people perceived the police as unfair, biased and confrontational. The majority of young people had not communicated or interacted with the police in an informal way, and those that had, felt that the police simply lectured them on issues around crime and drug use.

More significantly, differences emerged in the views of the police from young people who lived inside and outside North Belfast. Those from outside the area were more likely to have had a positive experience with the police compared to young people from North Belfast. This was reflected in the findings from the questionnaire that indicated that the most frequently recorded experience with the police for young people outside of North Belfast was having a friendly conversation, compared to verbal harassment for those living in North Belfast.

There follows a list of suggested recommendations for further action based on the research findings. The police service in particular cannot be expected to bear sole responsibility for solving the multitude of problems that exist within North Belfast. Rather, it is to be hoped that approaches and initiatives aimed at solving the problems of young people in North Belfast can be applied through a multi-agency approach, involving representatives from the voluntary, community and statutory agencies:

Furthermore, many of the findings in this report confirm the findings of previous research commissioned by the Northern Ireland Policing Board (Hamilton et al 2003) and the recent report of the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee on the Police Ombudsman (NIAC 2005). The recommendations may therefore be equally applicable to other PSNI District Command Units.

Recommendations

1. **There is a need to provide and deliver effectively a broader range of information to young people on all aspects of policing including policy formulations and operational decisions in the North Belfast area.** It is important that this information is conveyed to young people in a format that is both interesting and in language that young people can easily understand and identify with. Furthermore, young people should have the opportunity to discuss with the police issues that are topical and that have been developed by young people themselves.

2. **The PSNI need to be able to hear and respond to the concerns of young people about current approaches to the policing of young people.** It is particularly worrying to note the high percentage of young people who reported experiencing verbal harassment from police officers. We believe that this is an issue that might usefully be addressed through the DCU training programme.

3. **We recommend that the PSNI should review their overall training programme in relation to communicating and interacting with young people.** The PSNI has placed a strong emphasis of improving training related to diversity issues, we believe there is a similar need to review current training with regard to the policing of young people. The Northern Ireland Policing Board should assess how current training programmes within the PSNI deal with the policing of young people and should ask the PSNI to consider how this can be improved.

4. **The PSNI should establish a consultative forum for young people in North Belfast.** The research raised a number of issues where young people felt that they experienced low-level harassment from the police in North Belfast and identified different priorities for policing than the adult population. We believe it would be appropriate to establish a body to facilitate and promote ongoing consultation with young people on policing issues. This might follow the model of either the District Policing Partnership or a Community Policing Liaison Committee. This could also be a pilot for a wider approach to engagement with young people by the PSNI, it would also be in line with a recommendation made in the recent Northern Ireland Affairs Committee report on the Police Ombudsman.

5. **The PSNI in North Belfast should develop a programme that encourages more effective engagement between the young people and the police.** There was evidence, particularly from the survey findings, that young people wanted to engage with the police at more informal levels. A significant number of young people have a high regard for the police but have been unable to communicate with them and highlight their concerns and fears.

6. **The PSNI have already initiated a programme of work with young people through some of the schools in the area. This should be commended.** We believe it would be useful for the PSNI to explore with the principals of all post-primary schools in the area how to improve mutual understanding and communication between the PSNI and young people.

7. **The ongoing work between Translink, the PSNI and schools in North Belfast must be commended.** There has been recognition that attacks against school buses in North Belfast have decreased in the last year. It is important that communication and interaction between the key stakeholders continues and that appropriate resources are made available for this initiative to continue.

8. **We believe that it might be beneficial to develop a closer working relationship between the police, fire and ambulance services at an educational level.** The research findings showed that the majority of young people did not approve of people attacking the fire or ambulance services. However a significant number felt that attacking the police was acceptable. A partnership between the three services involving educational presentations would be one possible way of highlighting the services that the three organisations provide.

9. **More should be done by local community representatives, politicians and representatives from the statutory and voluntary sector in reaching out and engaging with young people on issues that are relevant to them.** Young people need both the opportunity and the environment to discuss and formulate their own issues and concerns. This can only be facilitated through the guidance and support of adults in the community.

10. **The report highlights that young people in North Belfast have experienced, and continue to experience, high levels of violence, and significantly higher levels of violence than young people living in nearby areas. This needs to be taken into consideration by all statutory bodies working with young people.** The research also suggests that there may be a connection between the high levels of inter-communal violence and higher levels of domestic violence and sexual violence. This should be explored through further research.

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13. Appendices

Appendix 1

Table 36: Criminal Damage to Buses by Region from 2001-2003

DCU	2001-2002	2002-2003	Total
North Belfast	669	278	947
West Belfast	177	196	373
East Belfast	123	149	272
Newtownabbey	104	88	192
Lisburn	97	70	167
South Belfast	80	45	125
Foyle	68	45	113
Craigavon	49	53	102
Castlereagh	32	46	78
Antrim	28	25	53
Ards	24	13	37
Limavady	12	24	36
Strabane	14	20	34
Coleraine	21	12	33
Down	13	14	27
Newry and Mourne	12	12	24
North Down	12	12	24
Armagh	12	10	22
Ballymena	8	10	18
Fermanagh	4	11	15
Dungannon	7	6	13
Omagh	10	3	13
Magherafelt	5	5	10
Carrickfergus	6	3	9
Banbridge	5	3	8
Cookstown	4	3	7
Ballymoney	3	3	6
Larne	2	2	4
Moyle	2	1	3
Northern Ireland	**1,603**	**1,162**	**2,765**

Source: Central Statistics Unit, PSNI

Young People's Attitudes and Experiences of Violence, Policing and Community Safety in North Belfast

An independent confidential survey to assess young people's experiences and perceptions of community violence in the North Belfast area. Please read the following questions carefully and answer according to your own experiences. This questionnaire has been designed by the Institute for Conflict Research.

Demographics

1. How old are you?

   14   15   16   17

   ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

2. Are you?

   ☐ Male
   ☐ Female

3. What street do you live in?

   ☐ _____

4. Do you consider yourself to be? **(Please tick one)**

   ☐ A member of the Catholic community
   ☐ A member of the Protestant community
   ☐ Other (Please specify)

   _____

5. Would you describe the area you live in as? **(Please tick one)**

   ☐ Mainly Protestant
   ☐ Mainly Catholic
   ☐ About half Protestant/Catholic
   ☐ Don't know

6. In terms of your ethnic background are you? **(Please tick one)**

   ☐ White
   ☐ Indian
   ☐ Black Caribbean
   ☐ Black other
   ☐ Chinese
   ☐ Pakistani
   ☐ Irish Traveller
   ☐ Bangladeshi
   ☐ Mixed ethnic group (Please specify)

   _____

7. How do you normally travel to school? **(Please tick one)**

   ☐ Walk
   ☐ Bus
   ☐ Cycle
   ☐ Car
   ☐ Taxi
   ☐ Other (Please state)

   _____

8. Do you travel to school? **(Please tick one)**

   ☐ On your own
   ☐ With your parents
   ☐ With your brother/sisters
   ☐ With your friends
   ☐ Other (Please specify)

   _____

9. Have you ever felt intimidated (scared) travelling to and from school? **(Please tick one)**

   ☐ Yes
   ☐ No
   ☐ Don't know

10. If yes does this occur more? **(Please tick one)**

    ☐ In the morning
    ☐ In the afternoon
    ☐ Occurs all the time
    ☐ Never felt intimidated

11. Are there particular times of the year when you feel more intimidated than others? **(Please tick one)**

    ☐ September to December
    ☐ January to March
    ☐ April to June
    ☐ Don't feel intimidated
    ☐ Always feel intimidated

12. Why have you felt intimidated (scared)? **(Please tick one)**

- [ ] Presence of Loyalist and/or Republican symbols
- [ ] Travelling through an interface area
- [ ] Seeing young people in other school uniforms
- [ ] Seeing people wearing certain sports strips
- [ ] Knowledge or experience of a previous violent incident
- [ ] Never felt intimidated
- [ ] Other (Please specify)

_____

13. Have you ever been threatened and/or attacked by other people when travelling to and from school because of your community background?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
- [ ] Don't know

14. What has been the most recent incident where you have been threatened and/or attacked when travelling to and from school because of your community background? **(Please tick one)**

- [ ] Bus being attacked
- [ ] Verbally abused on the street
- [ ] Chased
- [ ] Beaten up
- [ ] Objects thrown at you
- [ ] Have not been threatened/attacked
- [ ] Other (Please specify)

_____

15. Did this incident occur? **(Please tick one)**

- [ ] In the morning
- [ ] In the afternoon
- [ ] Have never been threatened/attacked

16. Can you identify the people most involved in these incidents of threatening/attacking behaviour? **(Please tick one)**

- [ ] People wearing a school uniform
- [ ] People not wearing a school uniform
- [ ] Never been threatened/attacked
- [ ] Not sure

17. Have you ever taken part in any threatening or violent behaviour towards young people travelling to and from school because of their community background?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

18. What types of behaviour have you taken part in, against other young people travelling to and from school from a different community? **(Please tick all that apply)**

- [ ] Attacking school buses
- [ ] Shouting abuse on the street
- [ ] Chasing people
- [ ] Beating people up
- [ ] Throwing objects at people
- [ ] Have not participated in these types of behaviour
- [ ] Other (Please state)

_____

Community environment

19. What is your experience of violence in North Belfast? **(Please tick all that apply)**

- [ ] Fighting at band parades
- [ ] People being forced to leave their homes
- [ ] Interface violence
- [ ] Houses being petrol/paint bombed
- [ ] Shots fired at homes
- [ ] Pipe bombs
- [ ] Fighting with the police
- [ ] Fighting between people from the Catholic and Protestant communities
- [ ] Attacks on school buses
- [ ] Attacks on ambulances
- [ ] Attacks on firemen
- [ ] Sexual violence
- [ ] Domestic violence
- [ ] No experience of sectarian violence
- [ ] Other (Please specify)

_____

20. What affects has this violence had on you? **(Please tick all that apply)**

- [ ] Forced to leave the community
- [ ] Unable to travel through parts of North Belfast
- [ ] Injured/hospitalised
- [ ] Family member/friend injured
- [ ] Unable to attend school
- [ ] Had to change schools
- [ ] Had to change transport to school
- [ ] Had to change route to school
- [ ] Medication for sleep
- [ ] Nightmares
- [ ] Scared to go out at night
- [ ] I participated in violence
- [ ] Had no affect on me
- [ ] Other (Please specify)

_____

21. Are there parts of North Belfast that you do not travel through or go into because of your community background?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
- [ ] Don't know

22. If you cannot travel through parts of North Belfast is it difficult to? **(Please tick all that apply)**

- [ ] Meet friends
- [ ] Work
- [ ] Go to the cinema
- [ ] Go to the leisure centre
- [ ] Shop
- [ ] Play sport
- [ ] I can travel anywhere
- [ ] Other (Please specify)

_____

23. From the list below, who would have the most authority within your community **(Please tick one)**?

- [ ] Police
- [ ] Clergy/Church
- [ ] Community/Youth workers
- [ ] Teachers
- [ ] Paramilitary groups
- [ ] Other (Please specify)

_____

24. If someone attacked you, who would you go to, to try and find out who did it? **(Please tick one)**

- [ ] My friends
- [ ] Local paramilitaries
- [ ] Local politicians
- [ ] The police
- [ ] Find out myself
- [ ] Other (Please specify)

_____

25. Do you have any friends with a different religious background to yourself?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
- [ ] Don't know

26. How often do you participate in cross community activities that are not associated with your school?

- [ ] Every day
- [ ] Every week
- [ ] Every month
- [ ] Never – don't want to
- [ ] Never – Don't know how
- [ ] Don't know

27. Who do you think is mainly responsible for sectarian violence in North Belfast? **(Please tick one)**

- [ ] Young Catholics
- [ ] Young Protestants
- [ ] Republican paramilitaries
- [ ] Loyalist paramilitaries
- [ ] The police
- [ ] Political organisations
- [ ] Loyal Orders
- [ ] All of the above
- [ ] Other (Please specify)

_____

28. Which of the following measures would decrease the number of sectarian incidents in North Belfast? **(Please tick one)**

- [ ] No parades
- [ ] No paramilitary groups
- [ ] Total segregation of Protestant and Catholic housing
- [ ] More integrated housing
- [ ] More community relations work
- [ ] More integrated schools
- [ ] More CCTV
- [ ] New politicians
- [ ] Other (Please specify)

_____

Emergency Services

29. Do you think it is ok to throw missiles/stones at? (Please indicate)

	Yes	No
Fire engines	[ ]	[ ]
Police cars/land rovers	[ ]	[ ]
Public buses	[ ]	[ ]
Army vehicles	[ ]	[ ]
Ambulances	[ ]	[ ]

30. How would you describe each of these organisations?

	Ambulance	Police	Fire brigade
Professional	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Militaristic	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Partisan	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Provide good service	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Fair	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Helpful	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Understanding	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

31. Would you ever consider joining the?

	Yes	No
Police	☐	☐
Ambulance service	☐	☐
Fire service	☐	☐

32. Do you think that the police provide a safe environment for young people travelling to and from school?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Don't know

33. Who would you have monitoring school routes? **(Please tick one)**

☐ The police
☐ People from your own community
☐ Teachers
☐ Senior pupils (Prefects)
☐ Don't need anybody
☐ Don't know

34. Do you think that the current policing of interfaces in North Belfast? **(Please tick one)**

☐ Increases the violence
☐ Has no affect on the violence
☐ Decreases the violence
☐ Don't know

35. Do you think that the police monitor and control parades in North Belfast? **(Please tick one)**

☐ Fairly
☐ Un-fairly
☐ Don't know

36. Do you think that the police understand the issues and problems young people experience living in North Belfast?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Don't know

37. Can you list the types of behaviour you have experienced from the police? **(Please tick all that apply)**

☐ Harassment
☐ Stopped or searched without reason
☐ Discriminated because of religion
☐ Behaved in a violent way
☐ They helped me
☐ Had a friendly conversation
☐ Solved a problem for me
☐ Other (Please specify)

_____

38. What do you think the police should be concentrating on in North Belfast? **(Please tick three that apply)**

☐ Domestic violence
☐ Interface violence
☐ Protecting young people going and coming from school
☐ Car crime
☐ Drug dealing/use
☐ Under age alcohol drinking
☐ Paramilitary activity
☐ Burglary
☐ Road safety
☐ Community relations
☐ Other (Please specify)

_____

39. If you could improve policing in North Belfast, what would you do? **(Please tick three that apply)**

☐ More uniformed police officers on the street
☐ Less uniformed police officers on the street
☐ Bigger community say on policing
☐ More CCTV
☐ Stronger focus on community relations
☐ Stop all parades in North Belfast
☐ Allow all parades in North Belfast
☐ More security barriers
☐ Other (please specify)

_____

Thank you for completing this questionnaire
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Institute for Conflict Research
Unit 14
North City Business Centre
2 Duncairn Gardens
BELFAST BT15 2GG

Tel: 028 9074 2682   Fax: 028 9035 6654
Email: info@conflictresarch.org.uk   Web: www.conflictresearch.org.uk

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