

# Police reform and public confidence in Scottish policing: 2012 to 2015

An analysis of Scottish Social Attitudes survey data

Dr Kath Murray

University of Edinburgh

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## Introduction

This report examines public confidence in Scottish policing, and public awareness of police reform between 2012 and 2015. Capturing public attitudes immediately prior to and following the amalgamation of Scotland's eight police forces in April 2013, the report provides original insights into how public attitudes towards Scottish policing changed during the early years of police reform. Note that *the findings cannot be generalised beyond the four-year survey period (2012 to 2015)*.

The analysis is based on Scottish Social Attitudes (SSA) data collated by ScotCen Social Research as part of the annual SSA survey series. This is a nationally representative, face-to-face survey of adults living in Scotland. For the purposes of this report, the sample is aged eighteen years or over.<sup>1</sup> The survey module on police reform and public confidence was sponsored by the Scottish Institute for Policing Research (SIPR), Police Scotland, the Scottish Police Authority and ScotCen Social Research.

The analysis shows that public confidence in policing – as measured by whether respondents thought that the local police did a good job or bad job – remained relatively stable between 2012 and 2014. Public confidence ratings then fell significantly between 2014 and 2015. The timing of this downturn, around two years after police reform, indicates that the shift was not influenced by the idea of a single force per se. Instead, the analysis suggests that the results may reflect perceived changes to on the ground police practice, including a perceived reduction in local police presence.

There is also evidence of regional convergence in public confidence ratings, with initially higher confidence ratings in the East and North in 2012 converging with lower ratings in the West (which remained broadly unchanged) across the four-year period. These findings might cautiously be read as evidence of a West/Strathclyde policing model taking hold in the early reform years.

Looking at the relationship between police contact and public confidence in local policing, the analysis suggests that police-initiated encounters (for example, being questioned on the street or searched) may be associated with lower ratings of local policing. While no data are available on the quality of these interactions, the findings nonetheless underscore the importance of fair and proportionate policing. While the results suggest that a visible police presence is broadly welcome, by the same token it is also clear that the type of interaction matters.

Analysis of the relationship between socio-demographic factors and confidence in local policing show that for the most part, the associations are relatively weak or not statistically significant, with few clear trends.

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<sup>1</sup> In 2016, ScotCen extended the SSA sample to 16 and 17-year olds.

Despite intense media and political interest in Scottish policing in 2015, there is no strong evidence to suggest that media coverage has influenced people's perceptions of local policing. While confidence ratings fell more sharply among regular newspaper readers in 2015, compared with non-regular readers, more advanced regression analysis (see part three) found no statistically significant relationship between media consumption (newspaper or online) and confidence in local policing. It is also worth noting that as late as 2015 (three years into reform), despite increasing press interest, nearly half (44%) could not correctly identify Scotland's single service structure.

Looking to the policy implications, it should be acknowledged that Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) are already addressing some of the issues raised in this report, notably those around police visibility. The need to maintain a visible police presence is prioritised in the Policing 2026 ten-year strategy published in June 2017, while police reform more broadly has sought to protect frontline services.<sup>2</sup>

To make this commitment more transparent and accountable, it is suggested that the SPA publish disaggregate police workforce data on an annual basis, with frontline visible policing clearly demarcated. While the SPA has made clear that these data are essential to planning and strategy,<sup>3</sup> there is nonetheless a need for greater public engagement and transparency around frontline policing in Scotland. Data publication would align with the commitments to accountability and localism set out in the Scottish Government Strategic Police Priorities<sup>4</sup> (and supported by Policing 2026), meet the requirement for robust evidence on operational capacity (as referenced by the Cabinet Secretary for Justice in his June 2017 statement to the Scottish Parliament),<sup>5</sup> and allow benchmarking with other police forces.<sup>6</sup> It is also suggested that the SPA and Police Scotland commission follow-up SSA survey modules to track change over time, and to triangulate the SSA findings with other data sources on public confidence and police visibility, including the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey, and Police Scotland management data.

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<sup>2</sup> Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body (2012) [Police and Fire Reform \(Scotland\) Bill Policy Memorandum](#)

<sup>3</sup> An undated [SPA briefing on Policing 2026](#) states: 'It is therefore essential we can accurately track and report on the changing make-up of the police workforce. To do so, it is necessary to capture an accurate baseline of the workforce profile adopting recognised categorisations of staff and officers. Following existing practices defined by Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary for England and Wales which break down police officers' categories as 'operational', 'operational support' and 'business support' we are undertaking an exercise to categorise Police Scotland posts in similar terms. Using refined Scottish definitions, the exercise will deliver a categorisation for the whole workforce which when statistically verified, can serve as a baseline for reporting on the changing proportions of roles across the organisation'.

<sup>4</sup> Scottish Government [Strategic Police Priorities](#)

<sup>5</sup> Scottish Parliament (2017) [Meeting of the Parliament 20 June 2017](#)

<sup>6</sup> For example, annual Home Office Police Workforce data includes headline workforce figures, joiners and leavers, and disaggregated data on frontline and local policing. See: Home Office (2016) [Police Workforce, England and Wales, 31 March 2016](#). This methodology is based on around seventy different job functions. The four main classifications are: Visible operational front line; Non-visible frontline; Frontline support; and Business support. See: Home Office (2018) [User Guide to Police Workforce Statistics](#)

## Report structure

The report is structured in three parts. **Part one** examines public awareness of police reform, and trends in public confidence in local policing between 2012 and 2015. **Part two** examines a range of factors variously associated with public confidence in local policing. These are: police visibility, contact with the police, media readership and socio-demographic factors. Drawing the analysis together, **part three** uses regression analysis to test which factors and categories significantly related to public confidence in local policing between 2012 and 2015, when controlling for other factors.

## Methods and data

The analysis in the report is based on Scottish Social Attitudes (SSA) data collected between 2012 and 2015.

### a) Sampling and interviews

The SSA survey uses random probability sampling to ensure that the results are representative of the Scottish population. In the four sweeps analysed in this report, the survey was conducted with adults aged eighteen years or over, living in Scotland. Figure 1 shows sample sizes for the 2012 to 2015 sweeps, and the respective fieldwork period. Survey interviews were conducted using face-to-face computer-assisted interviewing. All respondents were asked to fill in a self-completion questionnaire using the interviewer's laptop (if preferred, the interviewer could read out the questions).

**Figure 1. SSA sample sizes and fieldwork period, 2012 to 2015**

| Year  | Sample size | Fieldwork period          |
|-------|-------------|---------------------------|
| 2012  | 1,229       | July to October 2012.     |
| 2013  | 1,497       | June to October 2013      |
| 2014  | 1,501       | May to August 2014        |
| 2015  | 1,288       | July 2015 to January 2016 |
| Total | 5,515       |                           |

### b) Weighting

All percentages cited in the report are based on weighted data. The data are weighted to take account of the fact that not all households or individuals had the same probability of selection, to correct the over-sampling of rural addresses, and to account for differences between responding and non-responding households (using census information and interviewer observations). The weights are also adjusted to ensure that the weighted data matches the age-sex profile of the Scottish population (based on mid-year estimates from the National Records of Scotland).

### c) Analysis and significance testing

The analysis in this report was undertaken using IBM SPSS Statistics v.24. All significant differences are significant at the 95% level or above. Significant results are denoted by 'p' (a p-value of 0.05 or less indicates that there is a less than 5% chance that the difference is due

to chance, while a p-value of 0.01 or less indicates that there is a less than 1% chance). P-values of 0.05 or less are generally considered to indicate that the difference is highly statistically significant, while a p-value of 0.06 to 0.10 may be considered marginally significant. Percentages presented in the report may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

The final part of the report uses logistic regression to test the effect of a range of factors (variables) on public confidence in local policing. Logistic regression identifies variables that are independently associated with the dependent variable and produces 'odds ratios'. These indicate the categories within each independent variable that are most associated with the dependent variable. In this report, the higher the odds ratio, the more likely the factor is to be associated with confidence in the local police. Note however, that the technique cannot establish causal relationships.

Odds ratios are calculated in relation to 'reference categories', with a separate reference category for each variable. For example, '16 to 24 years' is set as the reference category for the 'age-group' variable and has odds of 1.00. Odds for the remaining age-groups are then calculated in relation to the 16 to 24-year old category. Odds above 1.00 show that those in that category are more likely to express confidence in local policing, compared with 16 to 24-year olds. Conversely, odds below 1.00 show that the odds of expressing confidence in the local policing are lower, compared with 16 to 24-year olds.

## Part I. Public awareness of organizational change and confidence in Scottish policing 2012 to 2015

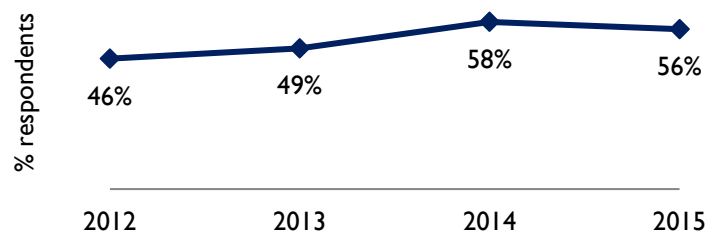
This part of the report examines public awareness about police reform, and trends in public confidence in local policing between 2012 and 2015. The analysis is based on six core SSA police reform and public confidence questions, asked in each sweep between 2012 and 2015

Section 1.1 looks at public awareness of police reform. Sections 1.2 and 1.3 examine how public confidence in local policing changed between 2012 and 2015. Finally, section 1.4 looks at two additional confidence measures, asked in 2012 and 2015 respectively.

### 1.1. Public awareness of police reform

Between 2012 and 2015, public awareness of how Scottish policing is structured increased significantly. **Figure 2** shows that in 2012 (the year prior to reform), less than half the sample (46%) correctly identified the organizational structure of Scottish policing (at the time, eight forces). By 2014 (the first full year of reform), this proportion had increased significantly to 58% and remained constant thereafter (the change between 2014 and 2015 is not significant).

**Figure 2. Proportion who correctly identified the organizational structure of Scottish Policing (% SSA 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015)**



Unweighted base = 1,229 (2012) 1,497 (2013) 1,501 (2014) 1,288 (2015)  
Proportions include 'don't know' and refusals = 0.2% (all years). p =.000

Looking at how much people knew about the move to a single police service, **Figure 3** shows that between 2012 and 2015, the proportion who 'hadn't heard anything' about the move to a single service fell from 32% to 21%. At the other end of the scale, those who knew 'a lot' about reform rose from 5% to 9% between 2012 and 2013, and then plateaued at 10% up to 2015. Generally speaking, most people said they had heard about police reform but knew little if anything about what it involved.

**Figure 3. Knowledge about the move to a single police service (%) SSA 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015**

|  | 2012  | 2013  | 2014  | 2015  |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| I've not heard anything about it                                   | 32%   | 28%   | 27%   | 21%   |
| I've heard about it but don't know anything about what it involves | 29%   | 27%   | 23%   | 28%   |
| I've heard about it and know a bit about what it involves          | 33%   | 36%   | 41%   | 41%   |
| I've heard about it and know a lot about what it involves          | 5%    | 9%    | 10%   | 10%   |
| Unweighted bases   | 1,229 | 1,497 | 1,501 | 1,288 |

Proportions include 'don't know' and refusals = 0.2% (all years). p=.000

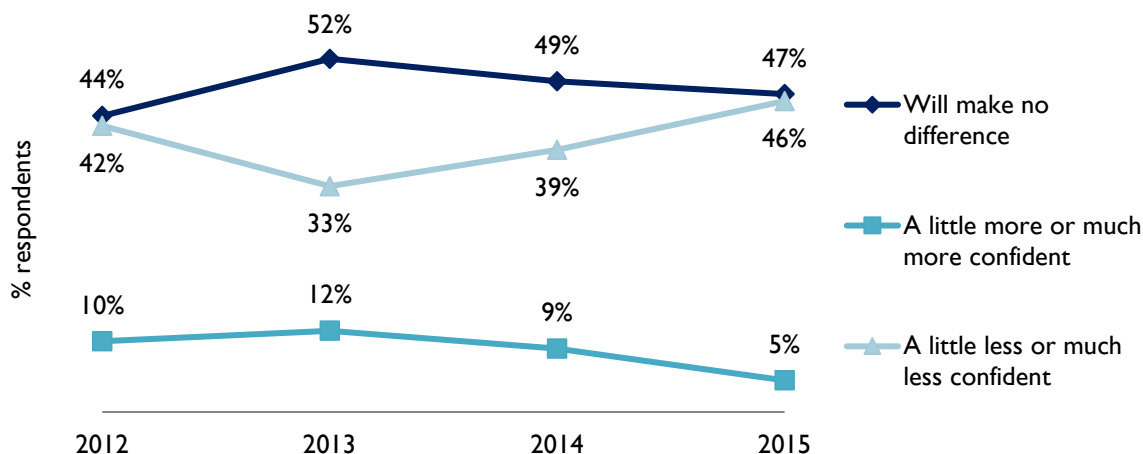
While **Figure 2 and Figure 3** show significant increases in public awareness of organizational change, it is striking that by 2015 – against a backdrop of intense media coverage and high-profile controversies<sup>7</sup> – nearly half (44%) did not correctly identify the single service structure, a fifth (21%) had heard nothing about police reform, while 28% didn't know anything about what it involved.

These findings help to provide a different perspective on the sharp increase in media attention in the post-reform period and suggest that many people remained unaware of some of the key debates and political issues around police reform.

## I.2. Police reform and confidence in local policing

Respondents were asked whether *having a single national force for Scotland* made them feel more confident, less confident or no different about local policing.<sup>8</sup> **Figure 4** shows that around half thought that reform would make no difference to local policing (this proportion fluctuated between 44% and 52% over the four-year period). The relatively small proportion who felt 'much more' or 'a little more' confident remained fairly constant between 2012 and 2014 (between 9% and 12%) and then fell to 5% in 2015. Those who felt 'much less' or 'a little less' confident dropped from 42% to 33% between 2012 and 2013 (into the first year of reform), and then increased steadily to 46% by 2015.

**Figure 4. Whether having a single national police force for Scotland makes people more, or less confident about local policing (%) SSA 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015**



Unweighted base = 1,229 (2012) 1,497 (2013) 1,501 (2014) 1,288 (2015)  
 Proportions include 'don't know' and refusals = 3.1%. p=.000

<sup>7</sup> These include the M9 crash, the use of armed police on routine duties, unregulated stop and search, and the use of covert methods to identify journalists' sources.

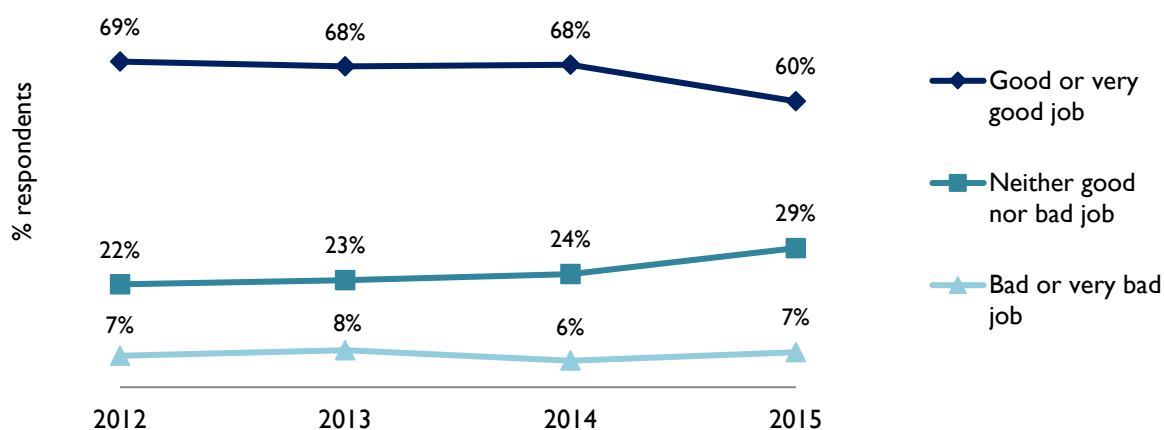
<sup>8</sup> Full question: 'Regardless of whether or not you had already heard about these changes, do you think that having a single national police force for Scotland will make you feel more confident about how your local area is policed, less confident or will it make no difference? (Much more confident, a little more confident, will make no difference, a little less confident, much less confident).'

The fact that public confidence in local policing improved between 2012 and 2013 – going into the experiential first year of reform – and fell thereafter suggests that the downturn was more likely to be influenced by changes to local policing taking hold, rather than the idea of a single service per se.

This observation is supported by two similar trends in the data: a marked fall in overall confidence in local policing in 2015 (compared with 2014 and earlier), and a fall in the proportion who thought the police had a good understanding of local problems (compared with 2014 and earlier). **Figure 5 and Figure 6** show these results.

**Figure 5** shows that those who thought that the police in the local area did a ‘good’ or ‘very good’ job<sup>9</sup> remained constant at around 68% between 2012 and 2014 – more than a year after the establishment of Police Scotland.<sup>10</sup> This proportion then fell to 60% in 2015. Note however that the fall in positive ratings did not translate into negative ratings. Instead, the proportion of ambivalent ratings – those who thought the police were neither good nor bad – increased from 22% to 29% between 2012 and 2015, while the small proportion who rated local policing as ‘bad’ or ‘very bad’ remained largely unchanged at around 7%.

**Figure 5. Are the police doing a good job or bad job in your local area (%) SSA 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015**



Unweighted bases: 1,229 (2012) 1,497 (2013) 1,501 (2014) 1,288 (2015)  
 Proportions include ‘don’t know’ and refusals = 2.5%. p=.000

Consistent with the trend above, **Figure 6** shows that the proportion who ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ that the police had a good understanding of the problems faced by local people remained constant between 2012 and 2014 at around 57%. This proportion then fell to 43% in 2015. Again, those who ‘neither agreed nor disagreed’ increased, from 18% to

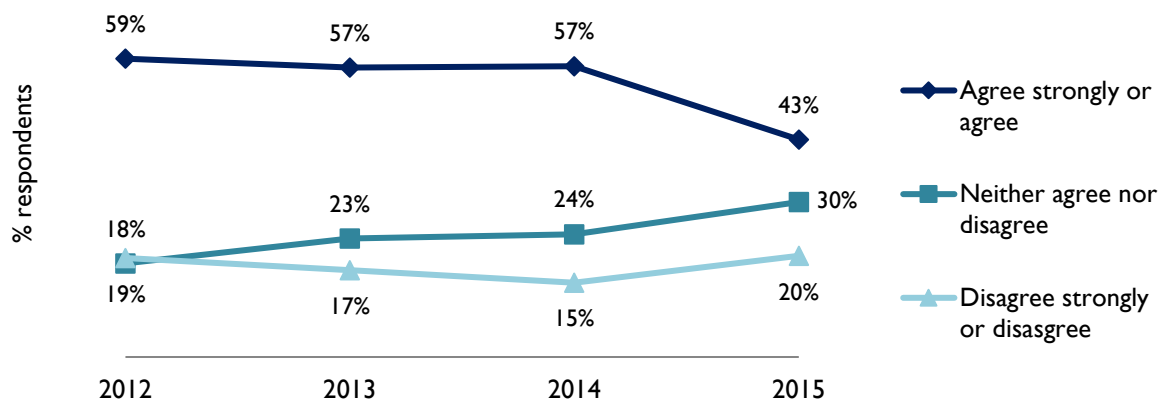
<sup>9</sup> Full question: Taking into account all the things the police are expected to do, would you say they are doing a good job or a bad job in your local area? For the purposes of this report, the five original response categories (very good job; good job; neither good nor bad job; bad job; very bad job) are collapsed into three categories: good or very good; neither good nor bad; bad or very bad.

<sup>10</sup> Police Scotland was established on 1 April 2013. Fieldwork for the 2014 sweep ran between May and August 2014.



30% between 2012 and 2015, while those who 'disagreed' or 'strongly disagreed' fluctuated across the period, with no clear trend.

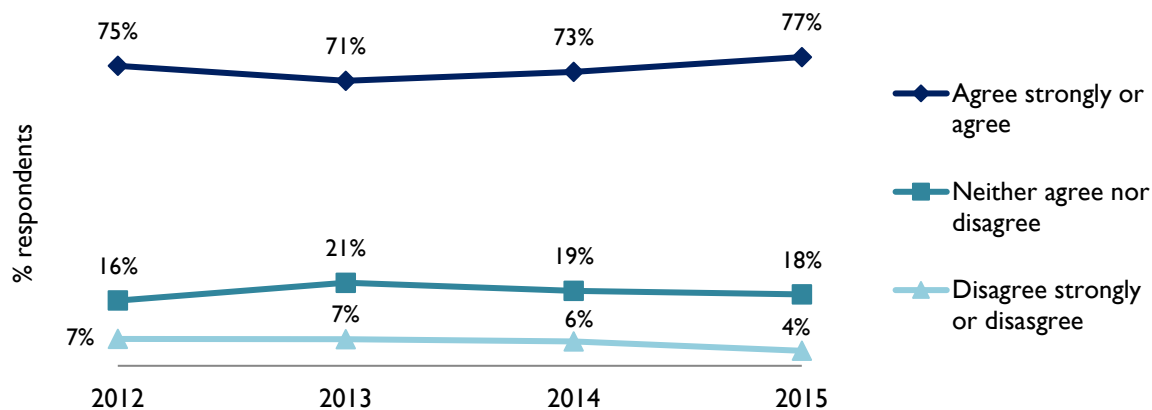
**Figure 6. Agree or disagree: police in area have a good understanding of problems faced by local people (%) SSA 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015**



Unweighted bases = 1,229 (2012) 1,497 (2013) 1,501 (2014) 1,288 (2015)  
 Proportions include 'don't know' and refusals = 4.3%. p=.000

**Figure 7** shows whether people agreed or disagreed that the police should do more to find out what local people think about how the local area is policed. These results show that across the four-year period, around three-quarters consistently agreed that the police should do more to find out what people think about local policing.

**Figure 7. Agree or disagree: police should do more to find out what people think about the way the local area is policed (%) SSA 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015**



Unweighted base = 1,229 (2012) 1,497 (2013) 1,501 (2014) 1,288 (2015)  
 'Should find out more' proportions include 'don't know' and refusals = 2.1% p=.003

### 1.3. Regional variation in overall confidence

This section looks at how confidence in local policing varied by region between 2012 and 2015, based on the core SSA question 'Taking into account all the things the police are expected to do, would you say they are doing a good job or a bad job in your local area?' (as shown in **Figure 5**).

The analysis looks at three regions: SSA East, West and North. For the purposes of this report, the very small SSA South region (n=392, all years), which covers the Borders and Dumfries and Galloway, is aggregated with SSA East.

Note that the SSA regions **do not correspond with Police Scotland Command Areas** and that for clarity, the regions discussed in this report are pre-fixed with 'SSA'. The corresponding Local Authority Area, Police Scotland Division and Command Area for each SSA region are shown in Appendix I.

**Figure 8 (a to c)** shows that in 2012 (that is, prior to reform), 'good' and 'very good' public confidence ratings varied between SSA West, and SSA North and East (the difference between SSA North and SSA East is not statistically significant). In SSA West, 60% rated local policing as 'good' or 'very good', compared with 71% in SSA North and 76% in SSA East.

Looking across the four-year period, 'good' or 'very good' ratings in SSA West increased from 60% to 66% between 2012 and 2013, remained stable in 2014, and then fell to 59% in 2015. However, the overall variation in SSA West (i.e. across all the response categories) was not statistically significant. This consistency is striking and suggests that the policing approach in SSA West remained largely unchanged across the four-year period.

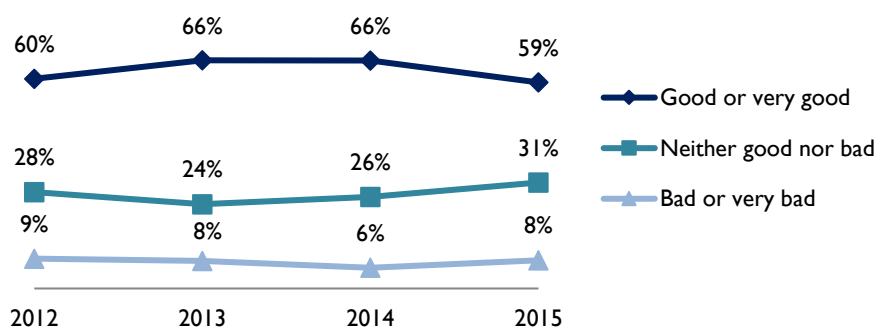
In SSA North, 'good' or 'very good' confidence ratings remained stable between 2012 and 2014 (fluctuating between 69% and 71%) and then fell to 61% in 2015. While this decrease was statistically significant, the overall variation was marginally outside the .05% confidence level ( $p=.062$ ).

The most pronounced change was in SSA East. 'Good' or 'very good' ratings fell from 76% to 69% between 2012 and 2013, remained constant between 2013 and 2014, and then fell again to 62% in 2015. In the same period, those who rated local policing as 'neither good nor bad' almost doubled, from 15% to 29%, while those who rated local policing as 'bad' or 'very bad' rating did not vary. Again, the fall in positive ratings shifted to an ambiguous, rather than a negative rating,

Strikingly, from 2014 onwards, public confidence in local policing did not vary between the three SSA regions, as SSA North and East converged with SSA West. This finding is important and might cautiously be read as evidence of a West/Strathclyde policing model taking hold in the early reform years.

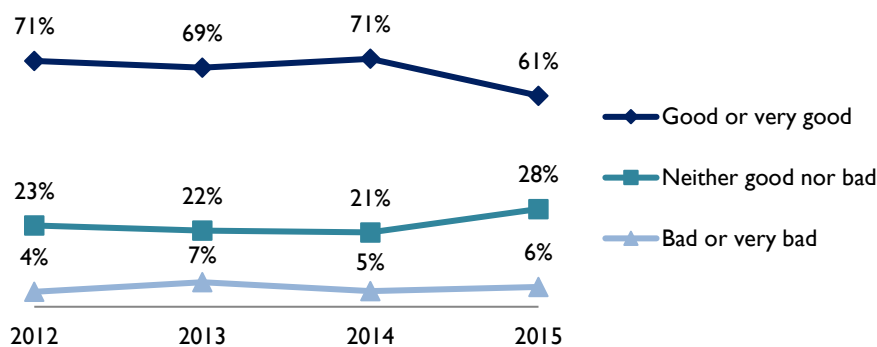
**Figure 8. Local police are doing a good or bad job, by region and year (%) SSA 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015**

**a) SSA West**



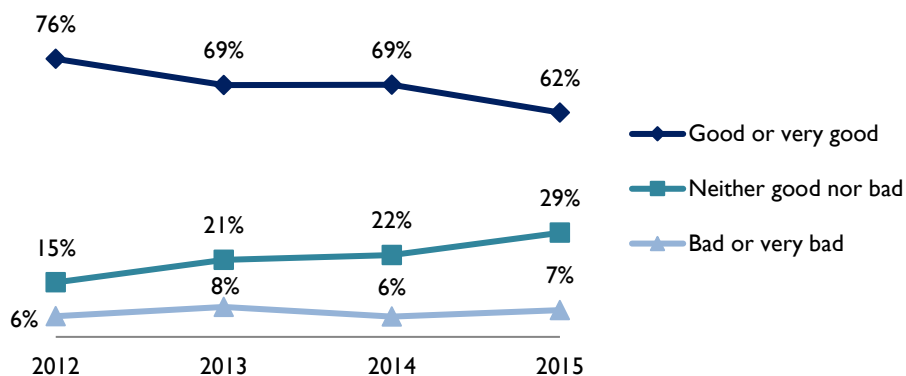
Unweighted bases: 441 (2012) 525 (2013) 471 (2014) 488 (2015)  
 Proportions include 'don't know' and refusals = 2.5% (all years). p=non-significant

**b) SSA North**



Unweighted bases: 308 (2012) 398 (2013) 356 (2014) 330 (2015)  
 Proportions include 'don't know' and refusals = 2.9% (all years). p=.062

**c) SSA East**



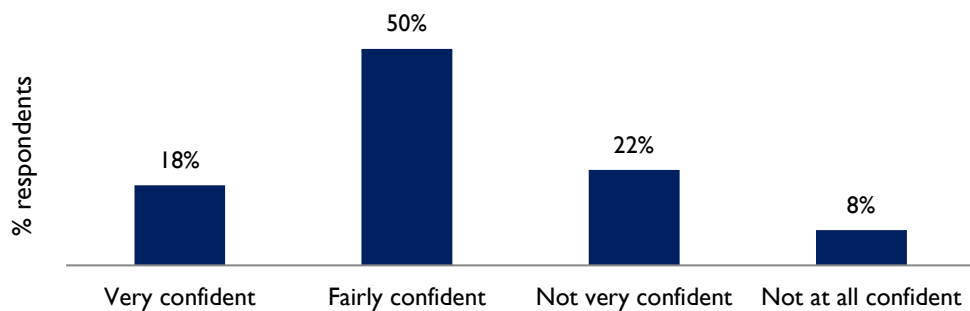
Unweighted bases = 480 (2012) 574 (2013) 674 (2014) 470 (2015)  
 Proportions include 'don't know' and refusals = 2.6% (all years). p=.000

#### I.4. Additional confidence measures (SSA 2012 and 2015)

In 2012 only (prior to reform), respondents were asked the following question: ‘Imagine there was an on-going problem in your local area, such as young people causing trouble in the evenings, and you contacted your local police to discuss this problem. How confident are you that the police would take seriously what you had to say?’

**Figure 9** shows that the majority responded positively: half were ‘fairly confident’ (50%) and just under a fifth (18%) were ‘very confident’. Just over a fifth (22%) were not very confident, while less than one in ten (8%) were ‘not at all confident’.

**Figure 9. Confidence that the local police would take an on-going problem seriously (%) SSA 2012**

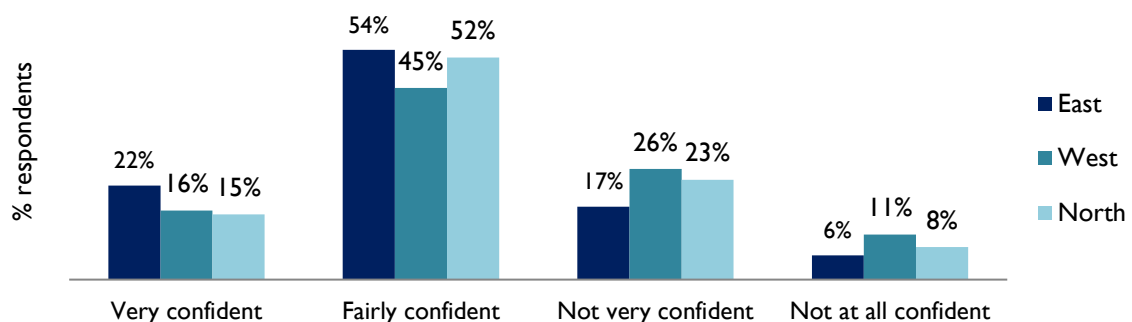


Unweighted bases = 1,229

Confidence proportions include ‘don’t know’ and refusals = 1.7%

Broadly consistent with the regional findings presented in Section 1.3, **Figure 10** shows that confidence that local police would take an ongoing problem seriously was highest in SSA East, compared with SSA North and West. For example, 22% in SSA East stated that they were ‘very confident’, compared with 16% and 15% in SSA West and SSA North respectively. Looking at the negative ratings, 17% in SSA East stated that were ‘not very confident’, compared with 26% and 23% in SSA West and SSA North respectively.

**Figure 10. Confidence that the local police would take an on-going problem seriously by region (%) SSA 2012**



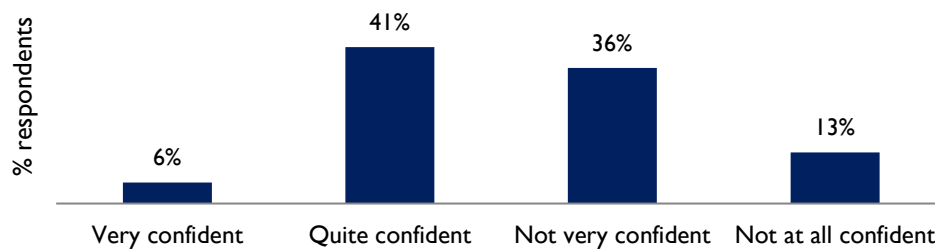
Unweighted base = 1,299

Confidence proportions include ‘don’t know’ and refusals = 1.7%. p=.001

In 2015 only, respondents were asked ‘how confident are you that the police would treat seriously your complaint about being treated badly by a police officer?’. **Figure 11** shows that two-fifths (41%) had some level of confidence that the complaint would be taken seriously, although few were ‘very confident’. The proportion of those who were ‘not at all confident’ was double the proportion who were ‘very confident’, at 13% and 6% respectively.

Unlike the previous results, these findings did not vary by SSA region, although the reason for this is not clear. For example, it could reflect the regional convergence as shown in Section 1.3, or it may be that the results tap into people’s ideas about the integrity of police complaints and trust in policing, rather than confidence in (and changes to) local policing.

**Figure 11. Confidence that the police would treat a complaint about being treated badly by an officer seriously (%) SSA 2015**



Unweighted base = 1,288

Confidence proportions include ‘don’t know’ and refusals = 3.6%

## Part 2. Factors associated with public confidence in local policing

This part of the report examines a range of factors associated with public confidence in local policing, using simple cross-tabulations. As before, the analysis is based on the core SSA question, 'Taking into account all the things the police are expected to do, would you say they are doing a good job or a bad job in your local area?.'

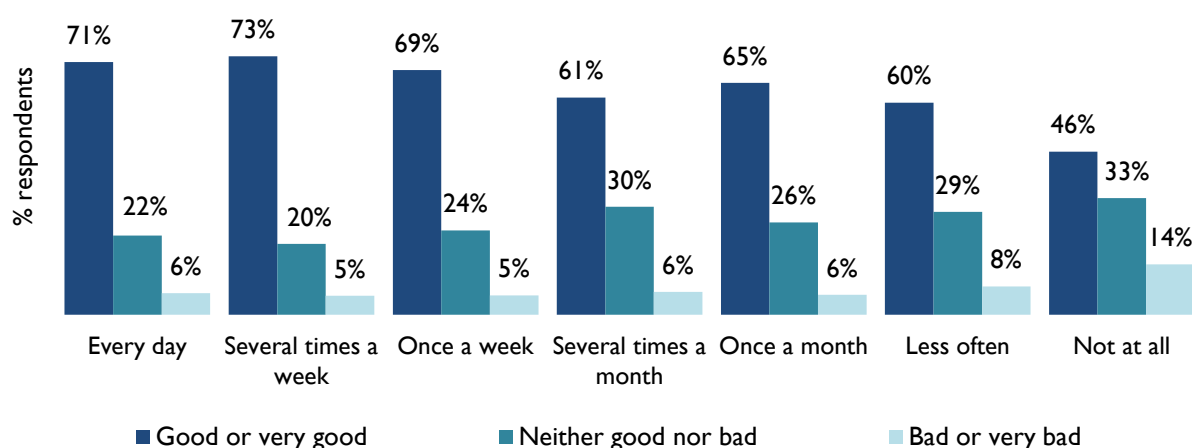
### 2.1. Police visibility

This section examines the relationship between confidence in local policing and police visibility. The analysis is based on data collected in the 2012 and 2015 sweeps, both of which asked respondents, 'How often do you see the police around here?' (with responses ranging from 'not at all' to 'every day').

At the time of writing, no data are available on frontline police and police visibility in Scotland. While the Scottish Government publish quarterly data on the number of police officers, these are not disaggregated by policing roles or duties, for example, the number or proportion of officers engaged in visible operational frontline policing. In this respect, the SSA data provide important insights into perceived police visibility in Scotland, and how this relates to public confidence in policing.

Using aggregate data from the 2012 and 2015 sweeps, **Figure 12** shows that public satisfaction in local policing was highly related to people's perception of police visibility. Very broadly, 'good' or 'very good' ratings fell in line with perceived policing visibility: ranging from 71% among those who saw the police daily, down to 46% who did not see the police at all. The 'neither good nor bad' category fluctuated upwards, while the proportion who rated local policing as 'bad' or 'very bad' varied significantly between those who did not see the police at all (14%), and the remaining categories (which averaged at around 7%).

**Figure 12. Level of confidence in local policing by perception of police visibility (%) SSA 2012 2015**



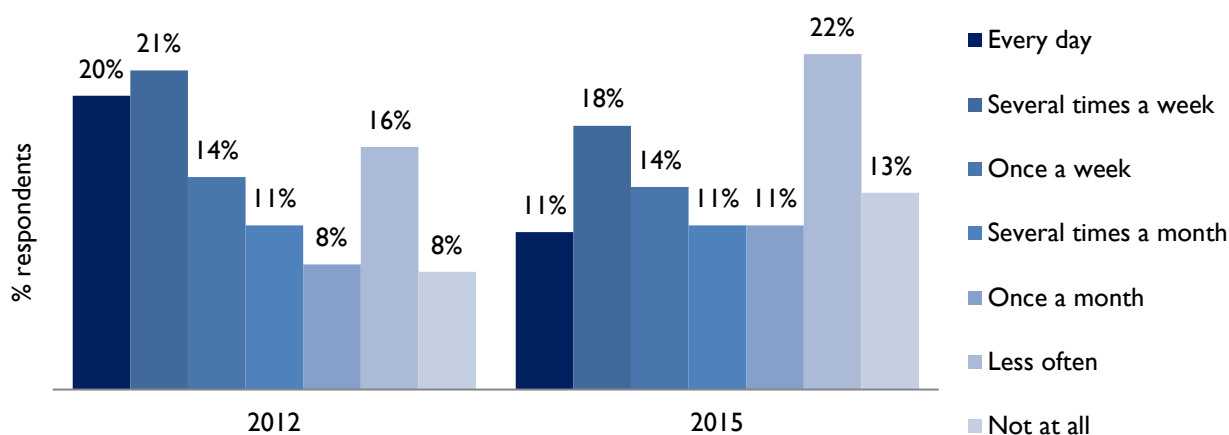
Unweighted base = 2,517

Proportions include 'don't know' = 3.0%. p=.000

The relevance of these results is underscored by a significant reduction in perceived police visibility between 2012 and 2015. **Figure 13** shows that in 2012, a fifth (20%) stated that they saw the police in their local area every day. With the exception of those who responded 'less often (than once a month)' (16%), the distribution of responses in 2012 was weighted towards more visible policing.

By 2015, this distribution had shifted significantly. Notably, those who saw the police every day had almost halved, from 20% to 11%, those who saw the police 'less often (than once a month)' increased from 16% to 22%, while the proportion who never saw the police rose from 8% to 13%.

**Figure 13. Perception of local police presence by year (%) SSA 2012 2015**

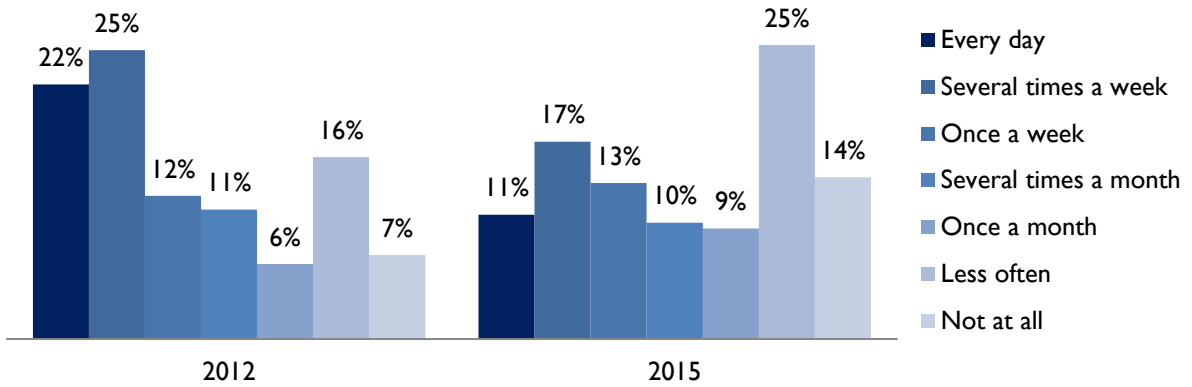


Unweighted bases: 1,229 (2012) 1,288 (2015)  
 Proportions include 'don't know' and refusals = 0.4% (both years). p=.000

Breaking down these results by region **Figure 14 (a to c)** suggests that the downturn in visible policing was most marked in SSA West, where the proportion who saw the police daily fell from 22% to 11% between 2012 and 2015. This was followed by SSA East, where those who saw the police daily fell from 18% to 9%. By contrast, the variation in SSA North was not statistically significant.

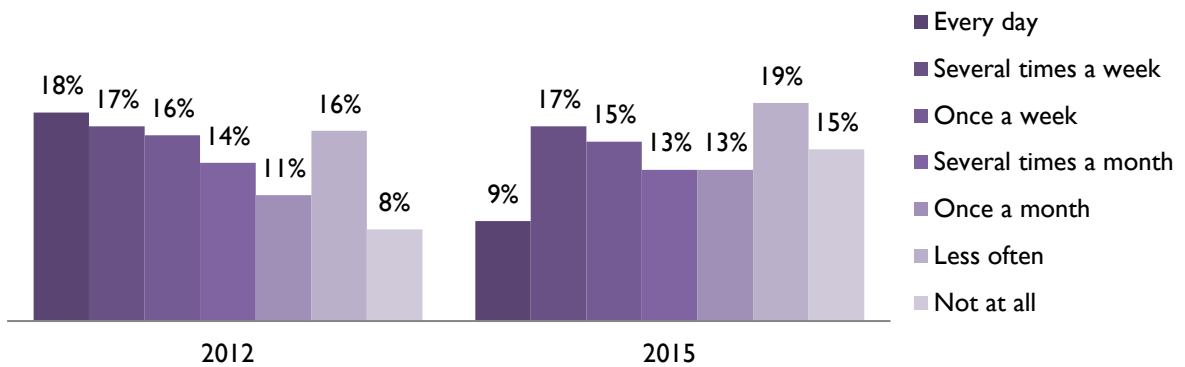
**Figure 14. Perception of local police presence by year and SSA region (%) SSA 2012 2015**

**a) SSA West**



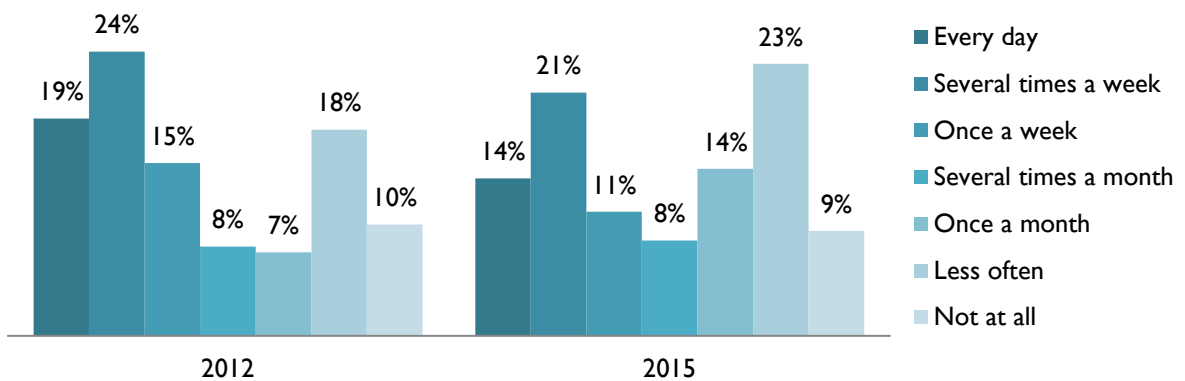
Unweighted bases: 441 (2012) 488 (2015)  
 Proportions include 'don't know' and refusals = 0.5% (both years). p=.000

**b) SSA East**



Unweighted bases: 480 (2012) 470 (2015)  
 Proportions include 'don't know' = 0.4% (both years). p=.000

**c) SSA North**



Unweighted bases: 308 (2012) 330 (2015). p=non-significant



## 2.2. Contact with the police and satisfaction with local policing

Contact with the police can affect public confidence in different ways. For example, research shows that negative experiences tend to have a relatively strong impact on public confidence, while the impact of positive experiences tends to be minimal (the ‘asymmetry’ theory).<sup>11</sup>

In the 2015 sweep only, respondents answered a series of questions about whether they had ever had contact with the police. While SSA does not tell us about the quality of these encounters, the data does show whether the contact was police-initiated (for example, being stopped and searched, or arrested) or public-initiated (for example, phoning 999 or attending a public meeting).<sup>12</sup> In this respect, the data provides a rough proxy for whether the encounter was wanted or not.

Around two-thirds (62%) of the 2015 sweep had experienced some type of police-initiated contact, while half (50%) reported public-initiated contact.

**Figure 15** shows the prevalence of the different types of police and public-initiated contact respectively. For some types of encounter, the level of police-public interaction was relatively high. For example, over a third of the sample reported being interviewed as a witness (35%), just under a third had used a non-emergency number to contact the police (30%), while nearly a quarter (22%) had been questioned on the street.

**Figure 15. Prevalence of police-initiated and public initiated contact (%) SSA 2015**

| <b>Police-initiated contact</b>     | <b>%</b> | <b>Public-initiated contact</b>                         | <b>%</b> |
|-------------------------------------|----------|---|----------|
| Interviewed as a witness*           | 35%      | Used a non-emergency number                             | 30%      |
| Stopped for driving offences        | 27%      | Phoned 999  | 14%      |
| Questioned on the street            | 23%      | Spoken to an officer in the street                      | 14%      |
| Fined by the police                 | 15%      | Spoken to an officer at a police station                | 13%      |
| Given a verbal warning              | 12%      | Contacted the police via internet or social media       | 3%       |
| Stopped and searched                | 8%       | Attended public meeting about how local area is policed | 1%       |
| Arrested                            | 8%       |   |          |
| Charged, not convicted              | 6%       |   |          |
| Convicted, but did not go to prison | 4%       |   |          |
| Convicted and went to prison        | 1%       |   |          |
| Unweighted base                     | 1,288    |   | 1,288    |

\* Some interviews could be classified as public-initiated.

All proportions include ‘don’t know’ and refusals: police-initiated = 5.1%, public-initiated = 0.0%

<sup>11</sup> Skogan, W. (2006) Asymmetry in the impact of encounters with the police. *Policing and Society*, 16: 99-126.

<sup>12</sup> While being ‘interviewed as a witness’ (the most common type of encounter) could belong to either category, the results presented in Figure 16 suggest that the encounters reported were more likely to be police-initiated.

The relationship between public-initiated encounters and confidence in local policing appeared weak. For the most part, ratings of local policing among those who had initiated contact with the police did not vary from those who had not.

Conversely, those who had experienced police-initiated contact were significantly less likely to rate local policing as 'good' or 'very good', compared with those who had not.

**Figure 16** shows respondent's ratings of local policing by different types of police-initiated contact. The results show that the proportion that rated local policing as 'good' or 'very good' broadly fell with the gravity of the encounter. For example, 58% of those who had been stopped for a driving offence rated local policing as 'good' or 'very good' (compared with 61% who had not). Further down the scale, 51% of those who had been questioned on the street, rated local policing as 'good' or 'very good' (compared with 62% who had not), while 30% of those who had been charged rated local policing as 'good' or 'very good', compared with 62% who had not.

**Figure 16. Types of police-initiated contact and confidence in local policing (%) 2015**

| Type of police contact              | Has experienced type of police contact |                      |                 | Has not experienced type of police contact |                      |                 | Sig. |
|-------------------------------------|--|----------------------|-----------------|--|----------------------|-----------------|------|
|                                     | Confidence in local policing           |                      |                 | Confidence in local policing               |                      |                 |      |
|                                     | Good or very good                      | Neither good nor bad | Bad or very bad | Good or very good                          | Neither good nor bad | Bad or very bad |      |
| Stopped for driving offence         | 58%                                    | 31%                  | 9%              | 61%  | 30%                  | 7%              | .010 |
| Interviewed as a witness            | 57%                                    | 29%                  | 11%             | 61%  | 30%                  | 6%              | .000 |
| Fined by the police                 | 54%                                    | 35%                  | 11%             | 61%  | 29%                  | 7%              | .000 |
| Questioned on the street            | 51%                                    | 35%                  | 12%             | 62%  | 28%                  | 6%              | .000 |
| Given a verbal warning              | 48%                                    | 36%                  | 13%             | 61%  | 29%                  | 7%              | .000 |
| Stopped and searched                | 44%                                    | 40%                  | 16%             | 61%  | 29%                  | 7%              | .000 |
| Arrested                            | 42%                                    | 50%                  | 7%              | 61%  | 28%                  | 8%              | .000 |
| Charged, not convicted              | 30%                                    | 49%                  | 21%             | 62%  | 29%                  | 7%              | .000 |
| Convicted, but did not go to prison | 28%                                    | 54%                  | 17%             | 61%  | 29%                  | 7%              | .000 |
| Convicted and went to prison        | 22%                                    | 33%                  | 44%             | 60%  | 30%                  | 7%              | .000 |

Unweighted base = 1,222

All proportions include 'don't know' and refusals = 2.9%

### 2.3. Media readership

Since police reform, it is generally acknowledged that media and political interest in Scottish policing has increased, as well as public awareness of policing (see **Figure 2**). However, the relationship between critical media coverage, such as that seen in Scotland, and public attitudes towards policing is not particularly clear-cut. For instance, a US study found no relationship between media consumption (regular viewing of crime news and drama) and public attitudes on police effectiveness. Instead, age, education, and factors based on

experience – perceived neighbourhood problems and fear of crime – related significantly to perceived police effectiveness (Dowler, 2002).<sup>13</sup> Similarly, a UK study by Hohl (2011)<sup>14</sup> found little evidence between media reporting and public trust in the police.

Analysis of SSA data suggests that the relationship between media readership and public confidence in local policing is relatively weak. While there is some evidence of a relationship between newspaper readership and ratings of local policing in the 2015 sweep, this did not extend to online news readership, nor was it evident when controlling for a range of factors (see part three). It should also be noted that daily newspaper readership fell significantly across the four sweeps, from 49% in 2012, to 36% in 2015 (in the same period, daily online news readership rose from 29% to 37%).

**Figure 17** and **Figure 18** show the prevalence of newspaper and online news readership between 2012 and 2015.

**Figure 17. Regular daily newspaper readership (%) SSA 2012 2013 2014 2015**

|                               | 2012  | 2013  | 2014  | 2015  |
|-------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Regularly reads a daily paper | 49%   | 43%   | 41%   | 36%   |
| Unweighted base               | 1,229 | 1,497 | 1,501 | 1,288 |

p=.000

**Figure 18. Daily online news/newspaper website readership (%) SSA 2012 2013 2014 2015**

|                         | 2012  | 2013  | 2014  | 2015  |
|-------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Reads news online daily | 29%   | 30%   | 33%   | 37%   |
| Unweighted base         | 1,229 | 1,497 | 1,501 | 1,288 |

p=.000

**Figure 19** below shows that for the most part, between 2012 and 2014, confidence in the local police did not vary significantly between those who regularly read a daily paper, and those who did not. However, in the 2015 sweep (coinciding with the overall fall in public confidence) those who regularly read a daily paper were significantly less likely to rate the local police as ‘good’ or ‘very good’, compared with those who did not, at 52% and 65% respectively.

The final two columns in **Figure 19** show the percentage differences between 2012 and 2014, and 2014 and 2015 respectively. These indicate that the most pronounced change occurred between 2014 and 2015 and that the fall in ‘good’ or ‘very good’ ratings was much more pronounced among regular newspaper readers (minus fifteen percentage points),

<sup>13</sup> Dowler, K. (2002) ‘Media Influence on Citizen Attitudes toward Police Effectiveness’, *Policing and Society. An International Journal of Research and Policy*. 12 (3) 227-238.

<sup>14</sup> Hohl, K. (2011) ‘The Role of the Mass Media in Public Trust in the Police’ in J. Jackson, B. Bradford, E. Stanko and K. Hohl *Just Authority? Public Trust and Police Legitimacy*. Routledge. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=1928522>

compared with those who did not read a newspaper regularly (minus four percentage points).

**Figure 19. Public confidence in local policing by frequency of daily newspaper readership (%) SSA 2012 2013 2014 2015**

| Newspaper readership                 | Whether local police do a good or bad job | 2012  | 2013  | 2014  | 2015  | 2012-2014 % difference | 2014-2015 % difference |
|--------------------------------------|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Regularly reads a daily paper        | Good or very good                         | 69%   | 68%   | 67%   | 52%   | -2%                    | -15%                   |
|                                      | Neither good nor bad                      | 22%   | 24%   | 26%   | 37%   | +2%                    | +11%                   |
|                                      | Bad or very bad                           | 7%    | 6%    | 6%    | 8%    | -1%                    | +2%                    |
| Doesn't regularly read a daily paper | Good or very good                         | 69%   | 68%   | 69%   | 65%   | 0%                     | -4%                    |
|                                      | Neither good nor bad                      | 22%   | 21%   | 23%   | 25%   | +1%                    | +2%                    |
|                                      | Bad or very bad                           | 6%    | 9%    | 5%    | 7%    | -1%                    | +2%                    |
| Unweighted bases                     |   | 1,229 | 1,497 | 1,501 | 1,288 |                        |                        |

All proportions include 'don't know' and refusals = 2.5% (all years)

Regularly reads a daily paper: p=.000 Doesn't regularly read a daily paper: p=.030

The results in **Figure 20** show relatively small changes in public confidence between 2012 and 2014, most of which are not statistically significant. There are some similarities with the results in **Figure 19**, although the overall picture is complex. Also note that the results are not directly comparable given the different frequencies in readership.

Between 2014 and 2015, 'good' or 'very good' ratings fell significantly (by nine percentage points) among those who accessed online news at least once daily, and among those who accessed online news less than once a month or never. Note that the 12% drop in confidence between 2014 and 2015 among the 'once a month or more' group also reflects an increase in confidence between 2012 and 2014.

**Figure 20. Public confidence in local policing by online news readership (%) SSA 2012 2013 2014 2015**

| Online news readership          | Whether local police do a good or bad job | 2012  | 2013  | 2014  | 2015  | % difference 2012-2014 | % difference 2014-2015 |
|---------------------------------|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|------------------------|------------------------|
| At least once a day             | Good or very good                         | 72%   | 73%   | 72%   | 63%   | 0%                     | -9%                    |
|                                 | Neither good nor bad                      | 19%   | 18%   | 20%   | 28%   | +1%                    | +8%                    |
|                                 | Bad or very bad                           | 6%    | 7%    | 6%    | 6%    | 0%                     | 0%                     |
| Once a week or more             | Good or very good                         | 75%   | 66%   | 69%   | 65%   | -6%                    | -4%                    |
|                                 | Neither good nor bad                      | 19%   | 27%   | 23%   | 26%   | +4%                    | +3%                    |
|                                 | Bad or very bad                           | 6%    | 6%    | 4%    | 7%    | -2%                    | +3%                    |
| Once a month or more            | Good or very good                         | 62%   | 66%   | 67%   | 55%   | +5%                    | -12%                   |
|                                 | Neither good nor bad                      | 26%   | 20%   | 29%   | 37%   | +3%                    | +8%                    |
|                                 | Bad or very bad                           | 8%    | 12%   | 3%    | 9%    | -5%                    | +6%                    |
| Less than once a month or never | Good or very good                         | 66%   | 65%   | 65%   | 56%   | -1%                    | -9%                    |
|                                 | Neither good nor bad                      | 24%   | 25%   | 26%   | 32%   | +2%                    | +6%                    |
|                                 | Bad or very bad                           | 7%    | 8%    | 6%    | 9%    | -1%                    | +3%                    |
| Unweighted bases                |   | 1,229 | 1,497 | 1,501 | 1,288 |                        |                        |

All proportions include 'don't know' and refusals = 2.5% (all years). At least once a day  $p=.006$  Once a week or more  $p=.039$  Once a month or more  $p=\text{non-sig.}$  Less than once a month/never  $p=.000$

Taking an overview, regular newspaper readers shifted their position more than those who were not regular newspaper readers, mainly between 2014 and 2015. While confidence among non-regular newspaper readers also fell at this time (following a period of stability), the shift was much more marginal. The overall pattern among daily online news readers was similar to daily newspaper readers (i.e. stability, followed by a fall in 2015). For less frequent online readers, the pattern was more variable, which means the decline between 2014 and 2015 should be read with caution. The pattern among those who rarely read the news online was similar to those who didn't read newspapers regularly, albeit the fall in confidence between 2014 and 2015 was more pronounced among the online group.

Overall, most people's level of confidence fell to some extent between 2014 and 2015; however, this was more pronounced amongst regular news readers (i.e. those likely to be more aware of policing issues).

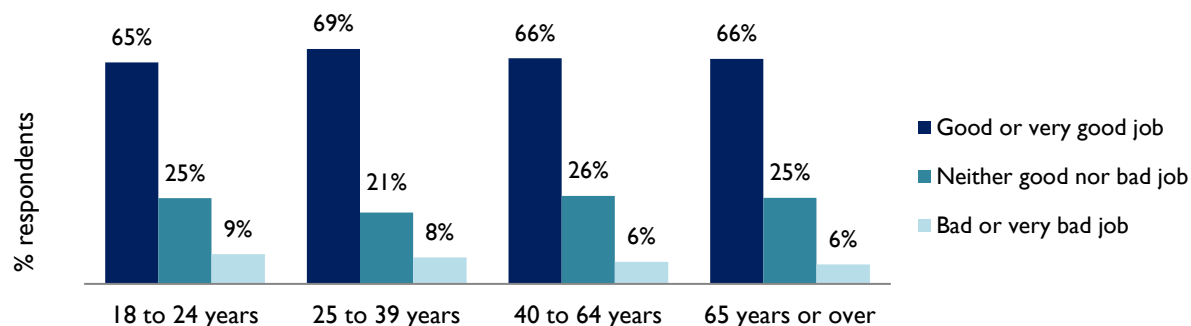
To be clear, the findings only scratch the surface of the relationship between the media and public views on policing, and further research and analysis is required to unpack this complex issue further. The findings do however suggest, that media coverage is unlikely to act as a simple predictor of confidence in local policing. The findings in part three also suggest that when controlling for a range of factors, that media readership is unlikely to be significantly associated with public confidence in local policing.

The remainder of part two examines the relationship between public confidence in local policing and socio-demographic factors. The analyses are based on aggregate data from all four sweeps (n=5,515).

## 2.4. Age

The relationship between age and satisfaction in local policing was weak amongst adults aged eighteen years or over. While some of the differences shown in **Figure 21** are statistically significant, there is no clear pattern in terms of age difference, and most of the results are close to the average. Notably, the proportion that rated the local police as 'good' or 'very good' did not vary significantly across the four age groups.

**Figure 21. Public confidence in local policing by age-group (%) SSA 2012 2013 2014 2015**



Unweighted base = 5,507, missing cases = 0.1%

Proportions include 'don't know' and refusals = 2.5%. p=.003

## 2.5. Gender and ethnicity

The relationship between gender and confidence in local policing was also weak, with no significant variation across the main confidence response categories. The relationship between ethnicity and confidence in local policing was not statistically significant.

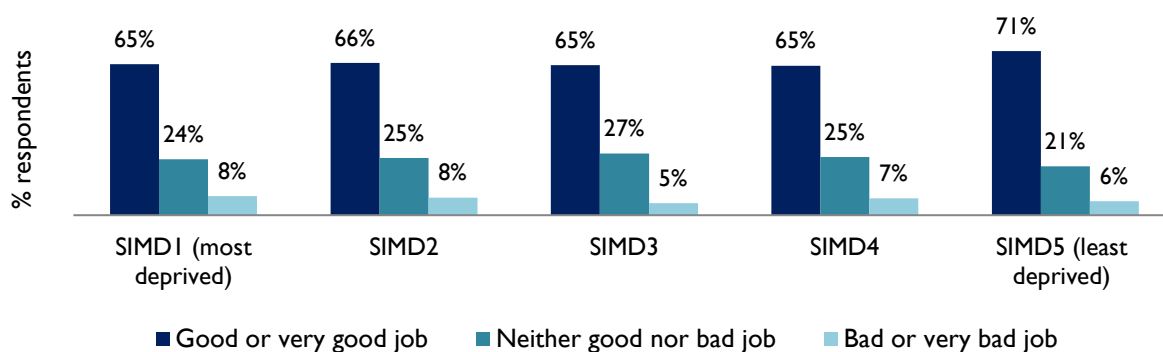
## 2.6. Neighbourhood deprivation

### Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)

SIMD data are constructed from a range of measures<sup>15</sup> that provide a comprehensive measure of relative area deprivation across Scotland. The data are structured as 6,505 data zones covering the whole of Scotland, ranging from the most deprived (1) to least deprived (6,505). The analysis below is based on aggregated SIMD quintiles, ranging from the most deprived (1) to the least deprived (5).

**Figure 22** shows a significant relationship between neighbourhood level deprivation and satisfaction with the local police, with higher ratings in the least deprived quintile compared with the others. The results show that 71% in the least deprived quintile stated that the local police do a 'good' or 'very good' job, compared with around 65% in the remaining SIMD categories. There was no evidence that people living in the most deprived areas of Scotland were less confident in local policing compared with most other parts of Scotland.

**Figure 22. Public confidence in local policing by neighbourhood deprivation (%) SSA 2012 2013 2014 2015**



Unweighted base = 5,515

Proportions include 'don't know' and refusals = 2.5%. p=.009

## 2.7. Income source

Confidence in local policing was also higher amongst those with a wage or other source of private income, compared with those on state benefits. **Figure 23** shows that 67% of those with a wage or private income rated local policing as 'good' or 'very good', compared with 63% on state benefits. At the other end of the scale, 9% of those on state benefits rated the

<sup>15</sup> SIMD data are constructed from eight indicators in seven 'domains'. These are: income, employment, health, education skills and training, housing, geographic access and crime.

police as 'bad' or 'very bad', compared with 6% of those with a wage or private income. Although small, these differences are statistically significant,

**Figure 23. Public confidence in local policing by income source (%) SSA 2012 2013 2014 2015**

|                      | State benefits | Wage or private income |
|----------------------|----------------|------------------------|
| Good or very good    | 63%            | 67%                    |
| Neither good nor bad | 25%            | 24%                    |
| Bad or very bad      | 9%             | 6%                     |

Unweighted base = 5,463, missing cases = 0.9%  
 Proportions include 'don't know' and refusals = 2.5%. p=.000

## 2.8. Education level

People educated up to degree or higher education level were more likely to rate local policing as good or very good, compared with those educated up to Higher/A-level standard or lower. **Figure 24** shows that 72% of those educated to degree level or above rated the police as good or very good, compared with 64% among those educated up to Higher/A-level, 62% among those educated to Standard Grade/GCSE and 64% among those with no qualifications.

**Figure 24. Whether the local police do a good job or bad job, by education level (%) SSA 2012 to 2015**

|                            | Good or very good | Neither good nor bad | Bad or very bad |
|----------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| Degree or Higher Education | 72%               | 21%                  | 5%              |
| Higher/A-level             | 64%               | 27%                  | 7%              |
| Standard Grade/GCSE        | 62%               | 28%                  | 9%              |
| None                       | 64%               | 25%                  | 8%              |

Unweighted base = 5,484, missing cases = 0.6%  
 Proportions include 'don't know and refusals' = 2.5%. p=.000



## 2.9. Urban and rural areas

Based on the four-year aggregate sample, public confidence ratings between urban and more rural locations did not vary (not shown). However, confidence ratings did vary over time in urban areas. **Figure 25** shows that in urban areas, 'good' or 'very good' ratings remained stable between 2012 and 2014, and then fell from 69% to 59% between 2014 and 2015. By contrast, public confidence ratings in small towns and rural areas remained constant or slightly fluctuated across the four sweeps, with no overall statistically significant changes.

**Figure 25. Urban areas: local police are doing a good or bad job by year (%) SSA 2012 2014 and 2015**

| Type of area     | Whether local police do a good or bad job | 2012  | 2013  | 2014  | 2015  | % difference 2012-2014 | % difference 2014-2015 |
|------------------|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Urban areas      | Good or very good                         | 68%   | 68%   | 69%   | 59%   | +1%                    | -10%                   |
|                  | Neither good nor bad                      | 22%   | 23%   | 23%   | 32%   | +1%                    | +9%                    |
|                  | Bad or very bad                           | 6%    | 8%    | 6%    | 7%    | 0%                     | +1%                    |
| Small towns      | Good or very good                         | 64%   | 69%   | 66%   | 65%   | +2%                    | -1%                    |
|                  | Neither good nor bad                      | 20%   | 20%   | 27%   | 23%   | +7%                    | -4%                    |
|                  | Bad or very bad                           | 11%   | 8%    | 6%    | 9%    | -5%                    | +3%                    |
| Rural areas      | Good or very good                         | 74%   | 66%   | 67%   | 63%   | -7%                    | -4%                    |
|                  | Neither good nor bad                      | 20%   | 24%   | 25%   | 26%   | +5%                    | +1%                    |
|                  | Bad or very bad                           | 5%    | 8%    | 6%    | 6%    | +1%                    | 0%                     |
| Unweighted bases |   | 1,229 | 1,498 | 1,502 | 1,127 |                        |                        |

Unweighted base = 5,446 missing cases = 1.3%

Confidence proportions include 'don't know and refusals' = 2.5% (all years)

Urban areas p=.000, small towns and rural area p=non-sig.

Area variable is constructed from the six category Scottish Government urban-rural classification.

### Part 3. Factors associated with confidence in local policing: regression analysis

The final part of the report tests the factors examined in part two using logistic regression analysis. This method shows whether a statistical association exists between a dependent variable (in this case, confidence in local policing) when controlling for a range of independent variables or factors. By contrast, the analysis in part two examined factors in isolation. Logistic regression also shows the strength of the relationship between the dependent variable and each explanatory factor – or put another way, the extent to which certain factors increase the chances of a person being confident in the police. Note that regression analysis cannot be used to establish causal relationships; rather, the technique is based on the likelihood of an effect, which is expressed as odds (see further Methods and data).

Three models are shown, based on the different variables available in each sweep. For each model, the dependent variable is whether respondents think that the local police do a good job or bad job. Significant odds above 1 show that respondents in that category have higher odds of thinking the police do a ‘good’ or ‘very good’ job, compared with the reference category. Conversely, significant odds below 1 show that respondents in that category have lower odds of thinking that police do a ‘good’ or ‘very good’ job, compared with the reference category.

Model 1 looks at factors available in all four sweeps. These are socio-demographic variables, area (urban/rural) and media readership. Model 2 looks at the 2012 and 2015 sweeps only, and tests for the effect of police visibility, in addition to the factors in model 1. Model 3 is based on the 2015 sweep only, and tests for police-public contacts, police visibility and the model 1 factors. In each model, significant effects are highlighted in red, marginal effects in blue and reference categories are denoted ‘ref.’

Taking an overview of the results in the three models, the strongest explanatory factors for whether someone has confidence in the police are views on police visibility, neighbourhood deprivation and police-initiated contact. While there are some significant association between other socio-demographic and area factors, for the most part these do not hold when controlling for police visibility (model 2) and do not hold at all when controlling for police-initiated contact and police visibility (model 3).

Neither gender nor news readership (newspaper and online) are statistically significant across all three models, which strongly suggests that neither factor is significantly associated with public confidence in local policing when controlling for a range of factors. The results are shown in more detail below.

### Model 1. All sweeps, socio-demographic, area and media variables

The results in model 1 shows a significant overall regional effect (Wald=7, p=.030). Looking at the different SSA regions, those in SSA North were 1.6 times more likely to express confidence in local policing, compared with those in SSA West (the reference category). There is also a significant relationship between age and confidence in local policing, with those aged 40 to 64 years, and 64 years or over both more likely to rate local policing as 'good' or very 'good', compared with the 18 to 24 years age-group. Looking at income source, those with a private income were nearly twice as likely (1.7) to express confidence in local policing, compared with those on state benefits, while those educated to degree level were around 1.5 times more likely to rate local policing as 'good' or 'very good', compared with those with no qualifications.

Note however that many of the factors in the model are not significantly related to confidence in local policing. These are year, gender, neighbourhood deprivation, area and news readership. Overall, model 1 appears weak, as suggested by the low Nagelkerke R Square score (.044) which indicates that the (mostly socio-demographic) factors in the model only explain a very small proportion of the variation in confidence in local policing.

### Model 1. Socio-demographic, area and media variables. All sweeps

| <b>Dependent variable coding:</b><br>local policing 'good' or 'very good' = 1 | <b>Wald</b> | <b>Sig.</b> | <b>Odds</b> | <b>Lower CI</b> | <b>Upper CI</b> |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| <b>Year</b>   |             |             |             |                 |                 |
| 2012 (ref.)   | 5.3         | .148        |             |                 |                 |
| 2013  | 1.3         | .251        | 0.8         | 0.6             | 1.1             |
| 2014  | 0.3         | .583        | 1.1         | 0.8             | 1.5             |
| 2015  | 2.0         | .163        | 0.8         | 0.6             | 1.1             |
| <b>SSA region</b>   |             |             |             |                 |                 |
| SSA West (ref)  | 7.0         | <b>.030</b> |             |                 |                 |
| SSA North   | 6.6         | <b>.010</b> | 1.6         | 1.1             | 2.3             |
| SSA East and South  | 2.4         | .119        | 1.2         | 1.0             | 1.5             |
| <b>Age-group</b>  |             |             |             |                 |                 |
| 18 to 24 (ref)  | 17.9        | <b>.000</b> |             |                 |                 |
| 25 to 39 years  | 0.1         | .803        | 1.0         | 0.7             | 1.5             |
| 40 to 64 years  | 3.5         | .061        | 1.4         | 1.0             | 2.0             |
| 65 years or over  | 12.9        | <b>.000</b> | 2.2         | 1.4             | 3.5             |
| <b>Gender</b>   |             |             |             |                 |                 |
| Male (female = ref.)  | 2.2         | .138        | 0.8         | 0.7             | 1.1             |
| <b>Neighbourhood deprivation</b>  |             |             |             |                 |                 |
| SIMD 1 (Most deprived) (ref.)   | 5.1         | .273        |             |                 |                 |
| SIMD 2  | 0.1         | .758        | 1.1         | 0.8             | 1.5             |
| SIMD 3  | 3.1         | .080        | 1.4         | 1.0             | 2.0             |
| SIMD 4  | 0.0         | .835        | 1.0         | 0.7             | 1.4             |
| SIMD 5 (Least deprived)   | 1.0         | .308        | 1.2         | 0.8             | 1.7             |

Continued.

| <b>Dependent variable coding:</b><br>local policing 'good' or 'very good' = 1 | <b>Wald</b> | <b>Sig.</b> | <b>Odds</b> | <b>Lower CI</b> | <b>Upper CI</b> |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| <b>Income source</b>  |             |             |             |                 |                 |
| Private income/wages (ref. = state benefits)                                  | 12.3        | <b>.000</b> | 1.7         | 1.2             | 2.2             |
| <b>Education</b>  |             |             |             |                 |                 |
| No qualifications (ref. category)   | 11.7        | <b>.009</b> |             |                 |                 |
| Degree/HE   | 5.0         | <b>.026</b> | 1.5         | 1.1             | 2.2             |
| Highers-A-levels  | 0.0         | .936        | 1.0         | 0.7             | 1.5             |
| Standard grade/GCSE   | 0.3         | .573        | 0.9         | 0.7             | 1.3             |
| <b>Urban or rural area</b>  |             |             |             |                 |                 |
| Urban area (ref)  | 3.8         | .149        |             |                 |                 |
| Small town  | 3.8         | .051        | 0.7         | 0.5             | 1.0             |
| Rural area  | 0.2         | .621        | 0.9         | 0.6             | 1.3             |
| <b>Online news readership</b>   |             |             |             |                 |                 |
| Daily online media  | 3.8         | .290        |             |                 |                 |
| Once a week or more   | 0.6         | .451        | 1.1         | 0.8             | 1.6             |
| Once a month or more  | 1.2         | .266        | 0.8         | 0.5             | 1.2             |
| Less than once a month or never   | 1.2         | .277        | 0.9         | 0.6             | 1.1             |
| <b>Newspaper readership</b>   |             |             |             |                 |                 |
| Regularly reads daily paper (ref = doesn't)                                   | 0.3         | .557        | 0.9         | 0.7             | 1.2             |
| Constant  | 27.4        | 0           | 4.7         |                 |                 |

N=3,865 Nagelkerke R<sup>2</sup>=.044

## **Model 2. Police visibility, socio-demographic, area and media variables (2012 and 2015)**

Model 2 examines the relationship between police visibility and public confidence in policing, using the 2012 and 2015 sweeps only. This model explains a higher proportion of the variation in confidence in local policing (Nagelkerke R<sup>2</sup> = .125), compared with model 1 (R<sup>2</sup> = .044). In other words, the model is a much better fit for the data.

The results show that those in SSA North were almost twice as likely to express confidence in local policing, compared with SSA West, although the overall regional effect is not significant (unlike model 1). The relationship between age and public confidence in policing is also less pronounced, compared with model 1, with the only significant association among the 65 or over age-group, compared with the 16 to 24 years age-group.

The strongest associations in model 2 relate to area-based factors: neighbourhood deprivation, urban/rural geography, and police visibility. Looking at neighbourhood deprivation, people in all quintiles were significantly more likely to say they were confident compared with the most deprived neighbourhoods, although the effect was strongest for the top 20% (least deprived). Confidence in local policing was around half as likely in small towns, compared with urban areas (odds ratio=0.5).

The strongest explanatory factor in model 2 is police visibility, as indicated by the high Wald scores, which range from 10 to 52. The results show that those who saw the police were more likely to be confident than those who never saw the police. Those who saw the police

either once a week or more, or every day, were around six times more likely to rate local policing as ‘good’ or ‘very good’, compared with those who never saw the local police.

This model was repeated for 2015 only as a validity check. The results (not shown) are similar to model 2, with strong associations between confidence in local policing and both police visibility and neighbourhood deprivation. The Nagelkerke R<sup>2</sup> result (.127) is also similar to model 2 (.125).

**Model 2. Police visibility, socio-demographic, area and media variables. SSA 2012 and 2015**

| <b>Dependent variable coding:</b><br>local policing ‘good’ or ‘very good’ = 1 | <b>Wald</b> | <b>Sig.</b> | <b>Odds</b> | <b>Lower CI</b> | <b>Upper CI</b> |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| <b>Year</b>   |             |             |             |                 |                 |
| 2015 (ref = 2012)   | 0.1         | .798        | 1.0         | 0.7             | 1.4             |
| <b>SSA region</b>   |             |             |             |                 |                 |
| SSA West (ref)  | 5.9         | .053        |             |                 |                 |
| SSA North   | 4.3         | <b>.038</b> | 1.8         | 1.0             | 3.2             |
| SSA East and South  | 3.4         | .064        | 1.4         | 1.0             | 2.1             |
| <b>Age-group</b>  |             |             |             |                 |                 |
| 18 to 24 (ref)  | 7.5         | .059        |             |                 |                 |
| 25 to 39 years  | 1.2         | .273        | 1.4         | 0.8             | 2.4             |
| 40 to 64 years  | 3.0         | .083        | 1.6         | 0.9             | 2.7             |
| 65 years or over  | 7.2         | <b>.007</b> | 2.6         | 1.3             | 5.3             |
| <b>Gender</b>   |             |             |             |                 |                 |
| Male (female = ref.)  | 2.4         | .123        | 0.8         | 0.5             | 1.1             |
| <b>Neighbourhood deprivation</b>  |             |             |             |                 |                 |
| SIMD 1 (Most deprived) (ref.)   | 26.5        | <b>.000</b> |             |                 |                 |
| SIMD 2  | 10.1        | <b>.001</b> | 2.2         | 1.4             | 3.6             |
| SIMD 3  | 12.4        | <b>.000</b> | 2.8         | 1.6             | 5.0             |
| SIMD 4  | 4.2         | <b>.041</b> | 1.8         | 1.0             | 3.1             |
| SIMD 5 (Least deprived)   | 21.2        | <b>.000</b> | 4.1         | 2.2             | 7.4             |
| <b>Income source</b>  |             |             |             |                 |                 |
| Private income/wages (ref. = state benefits)                                  | 0.1         | .823        | 0.9         | 0.6             | 1.5             |
| <b>Education</b>  |             |             |             |                 |                 |
| No qualifications (ref. category)   | 1.8         | .622        |             |                 |                 |
| Degree/HE   | 0.0         | .908        | 1.0         | 0.6             | 1.8             |
| Highers-A-levels  | 0.5         | .497        | 0.8         | 0.5             | 1.5             |
| Standard grade/GCSE   | 0.6         | .434        | 0.8         | 0.5             | 1.4             |
| <b>Urban or rural area</b>  |             |             |             |                 |                 |
| Urban area (ref)  | 8.5         | <b>.014</b> |             |                 |                 |
| Small town  | 7.2         | <b>.007</b> | 0.5         | 0.3             | 0.8             |
| Rural area  | 0.4         | .536        | 1.2         | 0.7             | 2.2             |
| <b>Online news readership</b>   |             |             |             |                 |                 |
| Daily online media  | 1.9         | .598        |             |                 |                 |
| Once a week or more   | 0.1         | .787        | 1.1         | 0.6             | 1.8             |
| Once a month or more  | 0.7         | .397        | 0.7         | 0.4             | 1.5             |
| Less than once a month or never   | 1.0         | .326        | 0.8         | 0.5             | 1.2             |

Continued.

| <b>Dependent variable coding:</b><br>local policing 'good' or 'very good' = 1 | <b>Wald</b> | <b>Sig.</b> | <b>Odds</b> | <b>Lower CI</b> | <b>Upper CI</b> |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| <b>Newspaper readership</b>   |             |             |             |                 |                 |
| Regularly reads daily paper (ref = doesn't)                                   | 1.6         | .210        | 0.8         | 0.6             | 1.1             |
| <b>Police visibility</b>  |             |             |             |                 |                 |
| Never see police (ref.)   | 52.2        | <b>.000</b> |             |                 |                 |
| See police every day  | 31.1        | <b>.000</b> | 6.3         | 3.3             | 12.0            |
| See police once a week or more  | 45.5        | <b>.000</b> | 6.5         | 3.8             | 11.2            |
| See police once a month or more   | 22.6        | <b>.000</b> | 4.0         | 2.3             | 7.1             |
| See police less often   | 10.0        | <b>.002</b> | 2.4         | 1.4             | 4.1             |
| Constant  | 52.2        | .850        | 1.1         |                 |                 |

N=1,673 Nagelkerke R<sup>2</sup> =.125

### **Model 3. Police-public contact, police visibility, socio-demographic, area and media variables.**

The final model is based on the 2015 sweep only, and introduces the police contact variables (police-initiated and public-initiated). While the unweighted sample size (N=703) is considerably smaller compared with models 1 and 2, the model explains a higher proportion of the variation in public confidence, as denoted by the higher Nagelkerke R<sup>2</sup> (.175) which suggests a good fit for the data.

The results are broadly similar to model 2, with significant associations between confidence in local policing and both police visibility and neighbourhood deprivation. However, note that these associations are not quite as strong as model 2 (as based on the respective Wald statistics). There is also no statistically significant relationship between region or age-group and confidence in local policing.

There is however, a significant relationship between police-initiated contact and public confidence, with those who had experienced one or more police-initiated encounters less than half as likely to rate local policing as 'good' or 'very good', compared with those who had not experienced police-initiated contact. The model also suggest that public-initiated encounters may have a negative effect on confidence in local policing – although this result was just outside the limit of statistical significance (which may reflect the relatively small sample size).

**Model 4. Police-public contact, police visibility, socio-demographic, area and media variables.  
SSA 2015**

|   | Wald | Sig.        | Odds | Lower CI | Upper CI |
|---|------|-------------|------|----------|----------|
| <b>SSA region</b>                             |      |             |      |          |          |
| SSA West (ref.)                               | 1.5  | .476        |      |          |          |
| SSA North                                     | 1.5  | .228        | 1.7  | 0.7      | 3.8      |
| SSA East and South                            | 0.3  | .587        | 1.2  | 0.7      | 2.0      |
| <b>Age-group</b>                              |      |             |      |          |          |
| 18 to 24 (ref.)                               | 4.5  | .210        |      |          |          |
| 25 to 39 years                                | 1.8  | .181        | 1.8  | 0.8      | 4.1      |
| 40 to 64 years                                | 1.9  | .171        | 1.7  | 0.8      | 3.8      |
| 65 years or over                              | 0.0  | .982        | 1.0  | 0.4      | 2.7      |
| <b>Gender</b>                                 |      |             |      |          |          |
| Male (female = ref.)                          | 0.2  | .685        | 0.9  | 0.5      | 1.5      |
| <b>Neighbourhood deprivation</b>              |      |             |      |          |          |
| SIMD 1 (Most deprived) (ref.)                 | 15.4 | <b>.004</b> |      |          |          |
| SIMD 2  | 7.8  | <b>.005</b> | 3.0  | 1.4      | 6.3      |
| SIMD 3  | 7.7  | <b>.006</b> | 3.0  | 1.4      | 6.6      |
| SIMD 4  | 3.2  | <b>.072</b> | 2.1  | 0.9      | 4.6      |
| SIMD 5 (Least deprived)                       | 11.9 | <b>.001</b> | 4.9  | 2.0      | 12.1     |
| <b>Income source</b>                          |      |             |      |          |          |
| Private income/wages (state benefits = ref.)  | 0.1  | .715        | 1.1  | 0.6      | 2.1      |
| <b>Education</b>                              |      |             |      |          |          |
| No qualifications (ref.)                      | 3.6  | .308        |      |          |          |
| Degree/HE                                     | 0.0  | .953        | 1.0  | 0.5      | 2.3      |
| Highers-A-levels                              | 1.6  | .205        | 0.6  | 0.3      | 1.3      |
| Standard grade/GCSE                           | 0.8  | .373        | 0.7  | 0.3      | 1.5      |
| <b>Urban or rural area</b>                    |      |             |      |          |          |
| Urban area (ref.)                             | 1.1  | .570        |      |          |          |
| Small town                                    | 1.1  | .303        | 0.7  | 0.4      | 1.4      |
| Rural area                                    | 0.0  | .929        | 1.0  | 0.4      | 2.5      |
| <b>Online news readership</b>                 |      |             |      |          |          |
| Daily online media (ref.)                     | 1.8  | .622        |      |          |          |
| Once a week or more                           | 0.0  | .984        | 1.0  | 0.5      | 2.1      |
| Once a month or more                          | 0.6  | .426        | 0.7  | 0.3      | 1.8      |
| Less than once a month or never               | 1.3  | .256        | 0.7  | 0.4      | 1.3      |
| <b>Newspaper readership</b>                   |      |             |      |          |          |
| Regularly reads daily paper (doesn't = ref.)  | 2.7  | .102        | 0.6  | 0.4      | 1.1      |
| <b>Police visibility</b>                      |      |             |      |          |          |
| Never see police (ref.)                       | 21.4 | <b>.000</b> |      |          |          |
| See police every day                          | 5.7  | <b>.017</b> | 3.2  | 1.2      | 8.3      |
| See police once a week or more                | 21.1 | <b>.000</b> | 6.6  | 2.9      | 14.7     |
| See police once a month or more               | 9.5  | <b>.002</b> | 3.5  | 1.6      | 7.9      |
| See police less often                         | 5.9  | <b>.015</b> | 2.6  | 1.2      | 5.5      |
| <b>Police-initiated contact</b> (ref. = none) | 9.6  | <b>.002</b> | 0.4  | 0.2      | 0.7      |
| <b>Public-initiated contact</b> (ref. = none) | 3.5  | <b>.063</b> | 0.6  | 0.4      | 1.0      |
| Constant                                      | 3.2  | <b>.074</b> | 3.2  |          |          |

N=703 Nagelkerke R<sup>2</sup> = .175

Marginal results are highlighted in blue.

## Appendix I.

### SSA region variable, Local Authority, Police Scotland Division and Command Area

| SSA Region and unweighted bases | Local Authority                       | Police Scotland Division and Command Area (North, East, West) |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| North<br>n=1,392 (25%)          | Argyll and Bute                       | Argyll and West Dunbartonshire (W)                            |
|                                 | Highlands                             | Highlands and Islands (N)                                     |
|                                 | Orkney, Shetland & Western Isles      | Highlands and Islands (N)                                     |
|                                 | Aberdeen City                         | North East (N)  |
|                                 | Aberdeenshire                         | North East (N)  |
|                                 | Moray                                 | North East (N)  |
| East<br>n=1,806 (33%)           | Edinburgh                             | Edinburgh (E)   |
|                                 | Fife                                  | Fife (E)  |
|                                 | Clackmannanshire                      | Forth Valley (E)  |
|                                 | Falkirk                               | Forth Valley (E)  |
|                                 | Stirling                              | Forth Valley (E)  |
|                                 | Angus                                 | Tayside (N)   |
|                                 | Dundee                                | Tayside (N)   |
|                                 | Perth and Kinross                     | Tayside (N)   |
|                                 | East Lothian                          | The Lothians and Scottish Borders (E)                         |
|                                 | Midlothian                            | The Lothians and Scottish Borders (E)                         |
| West Lothian                    | The Lothians and Scottish Borders (E) |   |
| South<br>n=392 (7%)             | Borders                               | The Lothians and Scottish Borders (E)                         |
|                                 | Dumfries and Galloway                 | Dumfries and Galloway (W)                                     |
| West<br>n=1,925 (35%)           | East Ayrshire                         | Ayrshire (W)  |
|                                 | North Ayrshire                        | Ayrshire (W)  |
|                                 | South Ayrshire                        | Ayrshire (W)  |
|                                 | East Dunbartonshire                   | Greater Glasgow (W)   |
|                                 | East Renfrewshire                     | Greater Glasgow (W)   |
|                                 | Glasgow                               | Greater Glasgow (W)   |
|                                 | South Lanarkshire                     | Lanarkshire (W)   |
|                                 | North Lanarkshire                     | Lanarkshire (W)   |
|                                 | Renfrewshire                          | Renfrewshire and Inverclyde (W)                               |
| Inverclyde                      | Renfrewshire and Inverclyde (W)       |   |