

Public Views and Experience of Policing and Criminal Justice in Essex

Q1 2021/22 Survey Results Presentation v2.5

Executive Summary: Quarter 1 (Q1) 2021/22 Highlights

Confidence and satisfaction in Essex Police (EP) remains high. Of those surveyed in the last year, 80% believe EP do a good or excellent job. This is the highest level recorded since the survey began and a significant increase compared to last year's 70%. Of those who responded between April and June, 83% think EP are doing a good or excellent job, the highest rate since the survey began and an increase on the previous high seen in the last quarter at 81%.

Positive response levels are significantly higher than recorded last year across most questions, 77% of respondents have confidence in local policing, a significant increase compared to 68% at the same time last year. 78% of respondents are confident they would receive good service if reporting a crime, up from 71% in the previous 12 months and 84% of respondents said they thought they would be treated fairly if they reported a crime, up from 71% in the previous 12 months. At the same time, the number of residents that believe Crime or ASB are becoming more of a problem has fallen to just 22%, a significant fall from 31% this time last year.

Whilst victim satisfaction has increased in the last year, there is still a significant gap between victims and non-victim levels of confidence in Essex Police. In the last year, 61% of victims think EP are doing a good/excellent job compared to 82% of non-victims. The gap has increased further to 21% points, an increase of 4% points compared to the previous quarter's results. There is a significant difference in five key areas (details in slide 5). To explore some of the reasons behind the differences, two focus groups were held with victims to identify the key drivers for confidence and satisfaction. These focus groups highlighted the importance of communication with victims, particularly in explaining the investigation process and ensuring updates occur. Conversely, over-promising and under-delivering on response times and follow-ups resulted in dissatisfaction. Positive face-to-face interactions with officers and staff improved satisfaction levels. (detail in slides 6 & 7).

The gap between White and Ethnic Minorities (excluding White minorities) responses has narrowed. These two types of group are now statistically the same in seven areas; this is an improvement in two areas since the last quarter (detail in slide 4). There continues to be a significant difference between White and Ethnic Minorities in three key areas, however: being treated fairly when making a complaint (84% vs 67%), stop and search powers used fairly (84% vs 72%) and the importance of police presence (87% vs 78%). Although the gaps are significant, the rates for both groups are improving overall.

Key Findings: Quarter 1 (Q1) 2021/22

83% of respondents think **EP are doing a good/excellent job**. This is the highest result since the survey began (previous highest Q4 2020/21 81%). There has been a general upward trend since Q2 2019/20, with the last three out of four quarters 80% or above. This quarter there were good results reflected in most questions.

The questions below continue to show good results in Q1 2021/22 compared to Q4 2020/21:

- There was a significant increase (+7% points) in those who agree **EP are dealing with crime and ASB**: 62%, up from 55% last quarter. This is the highest result since the survey began. Only 20% of people said they thought that **crime and ASB is more of a problem** which is the joint lowest quarterly result (with Q1 2019/20) since the survey began. There is a strong correlation between the perceptions of crime and confidence; when there is an increase in the proportion of respondents who agree that EP are dealing with crime and ASB, there is a decrease in the proportion of respondents who thought crime and ASB is more of a problem.
- 80% of people thought that **they would receive a good service** from EP, which is higher than 77% in Q4.
- 80% of respondents have **confidence in the police in their local area** which is an increase on 77% last quarter.
- 83% of respondents answered that they were confident police were using their **Stop and Search power fairly** and respectfully. This is significantly higher than last quarter (77%).
- 84% of respondents reported that they think their **complaint would be treated fairly**. This is a significant increase on last quarter (77%, +7% points) however still below Q3 2020/21 when this figure was at 93%.
- 65% of people surveyed agreed that **we understand the issues that affect their community**. There is no significant change since last quarter (67%).

The questions below have fallen in Q1 2021/22 compared to Q4 2020/21:

- 40% of respondents felt **informed about what the police are doing in their local area**. This is a significant decrease from 43% in Q4 and the lowest result since Q2 2019/20. There was also a significant increase in the number of respondents who were interested to know what the local police were doing in their area (67% in Q4 to 79% in Q1) suggesting there a demand for more information.
- 61% of people think it is **very important to have a uniformed presence**. This is a significant decrease from 66% in Q4.

Key Findings: Quarter 1 (Q1) 2021/22

White and Ethnic Minorities (excluding White minorities)

The gap between White and Ethnic Minorities (excluding White minorities) responses has narrowed, and the two groups are now statistically the same in seven areas. This was an improvement in two areas since the last quarter. Where the gap remains in three areas, the rates for both groups are improving; however, the rate for White respondents is improving more than Ethnic Minorities respondents (excluding White minorities).

There is **no statistical difference** between the two groups for seven areas in Q1:

- EP are doing a good/excellent job (White 83% and Ethnic Minorities 83%),
- Confidence in the police (White 80% and Ethnic Minorities 83%),
- EP understands community issues (White 65% and Ethnic Minorities 65%),
- EP are dealing with crime and ASB (White 62% and Ethnic Minorities 58%),
- Confident in receiving a good service (White 80% and Ethnic Minorities 79%),
- Crime and ASB is more of a problem (White 20% and Ethnic Minorities 22%),
- Being informed about police in the area (White 40% and Ethnic Minorities 32%).

The **gap between White and Ethnic Minority (excluding White minorities) groups** remains in three areas:

- Being treated fairly if they made a complaint (White 84% and Ethnic Minorities 67% in Q1). The proportion of White respondents who agreed has increased by 6% points compared to Q4 2020/21. However, the proportion of Ethnic Minority respondents who agreed only increased by 1% compared to Q4 2020/21. The gap between the two groups increased from 12% in Q4 to 17% in Q1. Looking at the 12 months to June 2021, the gap between groups is smaller at 9% (86% White and 77% Ethnic Minorities).
- Stop and Search used fairly (White 84% and Ethnic Minorities 72% in Q1). The proportion of White respondents increased by 6% and the proportion of Ethnic Minorities increased by 4%, resulting in a widening of the gap from 9% points in Q4 to 11% points in Q1. Although the gap has widened this quarter, in the last 12 months the proportion of Ethnic Minorities stating they are confident police Stop and Search powers are being used fairly has increased significantly by 16% points from 56% (12m to June 2020) to 72% (12m to June 2021).
- A uniform presence is important (White 87% and Ethnic Minorities 78% in Q1). The gap has increased as the proportion of Ethnic Minorities declined by 6% compared to Q4. The proportion of White respondents who agreed remained the same.

Key Findings: Quarter 1 (Q1) 2021/22

Victims v. Non-Victims in the last 12 months to June 2021 (Q1 results) compared to the 12 months to March 2021 (Q4 results).

Victims continue to report lower levels of confidence and satisfaction than non-victims across most questions.

The below areas have seen a decline in victim confidence/satisfaction compared to the previous quarter:

- Victims have **less confidence in receiving a good service** from the police (57% compared to 80% for non-victims). Both the victims and non-victims rate have declined since the last quarter and the gap between the two groups has increased by 2% points from 22% points in Q4 to 24% points in Q1.
- 61% of victims, compared to 82% of non-victims think **EP are doing a good/excellent job**; this equates to a 21% point gap. The gap between victims and non-victims has grown by 4% points compared to the previous quarter results (65% of victims, compared to 81% of non-victims in Q4, a 17% point gap).
- 58% of victims, compared to 80% of non-victims, reported to have **confidence in the police in their area**. The confidence rate of victims has declined by 1% point compared to Q4 results, increasing the gap between groups from 21% points in Q4 to 22% points in Q1.
- 41% of victims (20% for non-victims) think **crime and ASB have become more of a problem**. This is an increase of 3% points for victims on the previous quarter; non-victim rate remained the same and the gap increased to 14% points (12% points in Q4). Victims are also less likely to think **EP are dealing with crime and ASB locally** (43% of victims compared to 57% of non-victims). The victim rate decreased by 2% points on the last quarter and the gap has increased to 21% points (Q4 gap 18% points).

The below area has seen an improvement in victims' rate:

- 74% of victims of crime believe they would be **treated fairly if they made a complaint** compared to 87% of non-victims. Both the victims and non-victims rate have improved since the last quarter and the gap between the two groups has decreased by 1% point from 13% points in Q4 to 12% points in Q1.

There continues to be no significant difference in the below area:

- Around half of all respondents (49%) feel they are well informed **on what local police are doing** and there is no significant difference between victims (52%) and non-victims (49%).

Key Findings from Victims Focus Group

A focus group of 7 victims of crime was conducted by SMSR online in June 2021. There were two groups: advocates and critics of EP. The participants were chosen based on their overall level of satisfaction with their experience as a victim of crime.

The below key findings highlight common themes, where there were areas of satisfaction and what caused high levels of dissatisfaction:

Contact and Response – All victims who received a visit from an officer gave positive feedback stating they had been understanding, helpful and polite. However, most participants had an expectation that response times would be faster with some waiting hours for an officer to attend and not being told why there was a delay. Online reporting was less satisfactory; victims lacked the opportunity to ask questions and some victims received no response at all. Overall, two out of the seven victims were satisfied with the response they received once their incident was reported.

“I was broken into in the night when I was asleep. I had to chase them out of the property. I did not call 999. I called 101 and the response time was pretty poor. It happened at 2am and I do not think anyone came round till 8am” (Advocate)

“I was told to report the crime online. It was a vehicle related crime. I was told to go online and report it which I did. I went online and reported it. But basically, nothing happened. I did not get any kind of response. I had no one to follow up to investigate. I just heard absolutely nothing” (Critic)

Investigations – The investigation phase was a key driver to overall satisfaction, with a clear distinction between the advocates and critics at this stage; even when the crimes reported were similar, victim experiences were different. There was dissatisfaction with non-utilisation of evidence the victims expected to be considered, examples being Ring Doorbell footage and CCTV. Furthermore, a lack of explanation as to why these areas were not investigated compounded their dissatisfaction.

“At the time of reporting, I was told someone would contact us in a few days. I got an email after a few days asking me for evidence. I had photos and videos. I did not mind too much about them emailing me asking for the evidence. I would have liked a follow up phone call ideally. They did not explain why the evidence was not enough. That was disappointing” (Critic)

Follow-up – Positive feedback was received by participants who had regular follow-ups. There was dissatisfaction when the victim was not communicated with or given any update on progress. There was no consistency in the follow-up actions taken for each incident, and, in some instances the victim was told they would receive a follow-up but didn't, which led to frustration.

“I guess it is hard. It depends on the seriousness, but having no follow up, belittled that and weakened down the crime. I would say I am dissatisfied. A lot of people share their experiences. But people do not report any more” (Critic)

Key Findings from Focus Group: Quarter 1 (Q1) 2021/22

Victims' Code – None of the victims were aware of the Victims' Code previously but all agreed that it would help to ensure the victim experience is better.

Comms – Attendees mentioned the impact the national media can have on local policing. Many said they would actively avoid news about policing and crime suggesting the stories are too negative.

"My main source of information is from local and national news and it does affect how I see police locally" (Advocate)

"I get all information about the police in general from national news. I think any story nationally will tell you whole opinion locally as well. I do have to say when I hear about Hillsborough or MET or institutional corruption within MET, that has damning effect on the country's police. The police command is naturally defensive and that does enormous damage. The national news has a big impact on people's perception about policing in the country" (Critic)

Key considerations overall from the focus group:

- **Communication for victims** is a key driver of satisfaction. If a victim feels informed about an investigation and the process / reasons for delays, they are more satisfied with our service. ***So what? Victims Code #1 – the right to understand and to be understood.***
- **Explanation of why certain actions were taken (and why they were not)**. Victims want to feel informed about what is happening in the investigation and why. Additionally, if there is a reason their incident cannot be investigated then informing and explaining the reasons to the victim will increase their satisfaction. ***So what? Explain, Explain, Explain at every opportunity.***
- **Demand pressures should not impact on relationship management** with victims. A call from a victim may be their only experience with Essex Police and will define their perception of the Force. ***So what? Never refer to how busy we are and treat every contact as unique.***
- **Consistency in approach and process to include a follow-up for the victim when there's a change to the investigation or it is closed** could alleviate some of the dissatisfaction experienced. Victims have an expectation of what level of service they expect to receive, they were least satisfied when their minimum expectations of a response were not met. ***So what? Communicate with the victim, explain the process and next steps.***
- **Positive face-to-face interactions** with officers increases victims satisfaction. ***So what? Make victims aware of TCTs/CSEOs/Coffee with Cops.***
- **Essex Police is not isolated from National and International events, news and policing controversies**. Communications should recognise this and focus on differences as a Force. ***So what? Emphasise our USPs and that we are Essex Police, not 'the Police'.***

Independent COVID-19 Survey

- Overall, 71.8% of those surveyed **have confidence in the approach** the force is taking in policing during the pandemic.
- Over four in five members of the public (81.4%) **fully support the approach** Essex Police is taking to policing the current situation. Of those who do not support the approach, more think we should be **taking a tougher stance** 5.9% versus 1.5% who say Essex Police is **going too far**.
- Overall, two-thirds (65.7%) are **satisfied with the communication** about Essex's approach, with 11.0% also saying that they have **seen information** about this for their local area.
- 61.0% of victims of crime, compared to 71.8% overall, think the **police are doing a good/excellent** job. Also, 74.9% of victims, compared to 81.4% overall, **fully support our policing approach** to the pandemic.
- There were no significant differences between Ethnic Minority (excluding White minorities) respondents compared to overall.

COVID-19 Related Complaints

Thematic analysis of the latest COVID-19 related complaint data highlighted several themes.

There has been a 44% (8 fewer) reduction in the number of complaints from 18 in Q4 2020/21 to 10 in Q1 2021/22.

Police not wearing facemasks and/or not keeping socially distanced accounted for 30% (3) of all complaints. This is a reduction in the percentage the previous quarter (67%).

Enforcement and Neighbour also accounted for 30% of all complaints this quarter.

Complaints	Enforcement	Neighbour	Other*	Police PPE/Distance	Grand Total
Apr	1	1	1	2	5
May	2	2	0	0	4
Jun	0	0	0	1	1
Grand Total	3	3	1	3	10
% of Total	30%	30%	10%	30%	100%