

An Garda Síochána Public Attitudes Survey Bulletin



Q4 2019

Research conducted by



This bulletin presents the key findings from the fourth quarter of the Garda Public Attitudes Survey conducted between October and December 2019. While 16 and 17 year olds are surveyed and reported on in the Public Attitude Survey annual report, the sample size for this group is too small to report on a quarterly basis.

Survey respondents were asked about their perceptions of national and local crime; whether they had been victims of crime in the last year and, if so, whether they reported the crime to Gardaí. Satisfaction levels with how their case was handled were also queried. Respondents were asked about their level of fear and worry about crime and victimisation, and whether this impacts their quality of life. Their views on the crime types that should be prioritised by Gardaí were gathered as well as perceptions of Garda visibility and Garda presence in their local areas. Satisfaction levels with An Garda Síochána and the degree of trust felt in the Gardaí were also examined, as were views on treatment by Gardaí, Garda-community relations and perceptions of the Garda organisation's effectiveness and capability.

The survey is designed to run on a continuous basis (it is continuously surveying the population) with 1,500 people being surveyed each quarter. Data was collected by means of in-home, face-to-face interviews with participants. The high level results presented in this bulletin are based on data which has been weighted by age, gender, social class and nationality.

This is a survey of a random sample of the population. Therefore, it must be accepted that there will be some margin of error. This has been calculated at +/- 2.53 percent for the quarterly sample. It is important to note that as analysis is done on smaller proportions, the margin of error increases. **This should be remembered when examining analysis of victims of crime.** A further point to note is that not all charts where percentages are used will add up to 100 percent due to the rounding of figures. In line with the methodology used in the 2018 Annual Report, preliminary analysis of all variables was completed to assess the proportion of 'don't know' responses. A decision was then taken on

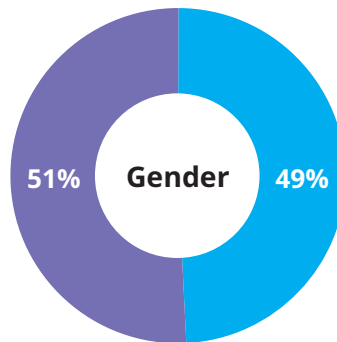
whether they were to be excluded from subsequent analyses. 'Don't know' and refused responses have been removed from analysis if they account for less than 10 percent of responses at all measurement points. In cases where 'don't know' responses totalled 10 percent or more of respondents' replies, analysis including and excluding such responses are presented for completeness. Monitoring of 'don't know'/refused responses is ongoing to ensure data quality is maintained.

Demographics

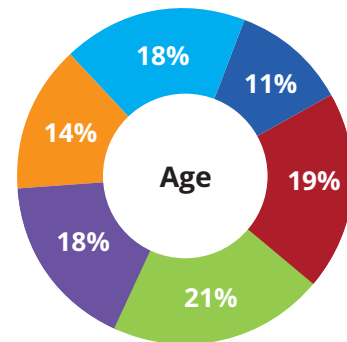
The sample is of 1,500 adults aged 18 years and over.

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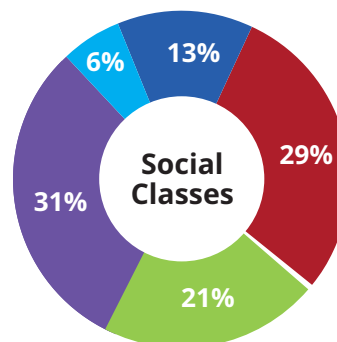
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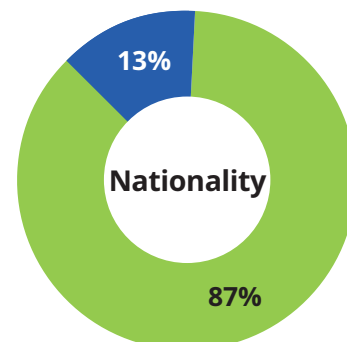
● Female ● Male



● 18-24 ● 25-34 ● 35-44
● 45-54 ● 55-64 ● 65+



● F ● AB ● C1 ● C2 ● DE



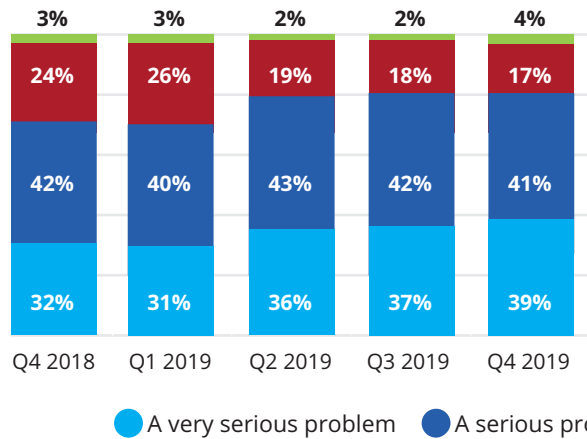
● Non-Irish Nationals ● Irish Nationals

Perceptions of Crime

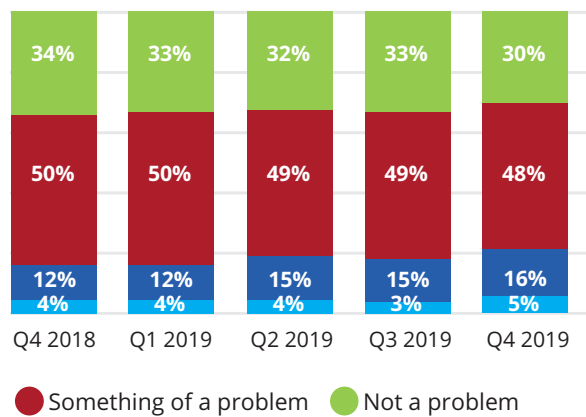
In Q4 2019, 80 percent of survey respondents considered national crime to be either 'very serious' or 'serious' – an increase of 6 percentage points from the same quarter of last year. The proportion of respondents who perceive national crime to be 'very serious' or 'serious' has fluctuated between 74 and 80 percent over the last five survey sweeps, although respondents who consider national crime to be a 'very

serious problem' has been trending upwards since Q1 2019. Perceptions of local crime present a contrasting picture. Respondents continue to view local crime as less serious than national crime. In Q4 2019, 21 percent of respondents perceived crime in their local areas as 'very serious' or 'serious' – an increase of 3 percentage points from Q3 2019.

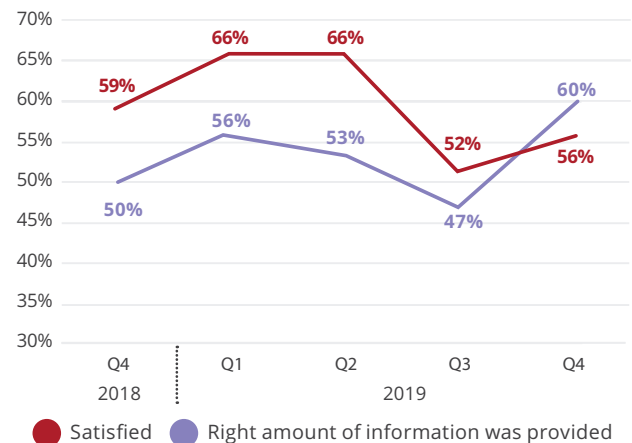
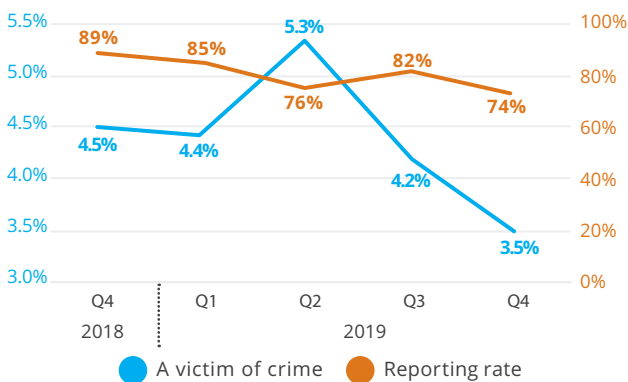
Perceptions of National Crime



Perceptions of Local Crime



Victimisation



The victimisation rate¹ stood at 3.5 percent² in Q4 2019, compared to a rate of 4.2 percent in Q3 2019. Seventy-four percent³ of victims stated they had reported their most recent crime incident to An Garda Síochána. This represents a decrease of 15 percentage points from the reporting rate in the same quarter of 2018. The satisfaction rate among victims of crime during Q4 2019 (victims who reported their crime to Gardaí) stood at 56 percent, an increase of 4 percentage

points from Q3 2019 when it was 52 percent, but still lower than in Q1 and Q2 of 2019 when it stood at 66 percent. In Q4 2019, 60 percent of victims felt the right amount of information had been provided to them – up 13 percentage points from Q3 2019 and an increase of 10 percentage points from the same quarter last year. **It should be remembered that quarterly figures relating to victims of crime should be treated with caution due to the low sample size.**

1 This includes being a victim of burglary, theft, robbery, criminal damage, assault, or fraud.

2 53 respondents experienced victimisation in the previous 12 months.

3 39 victims reported their crime to An Garda Síochána.

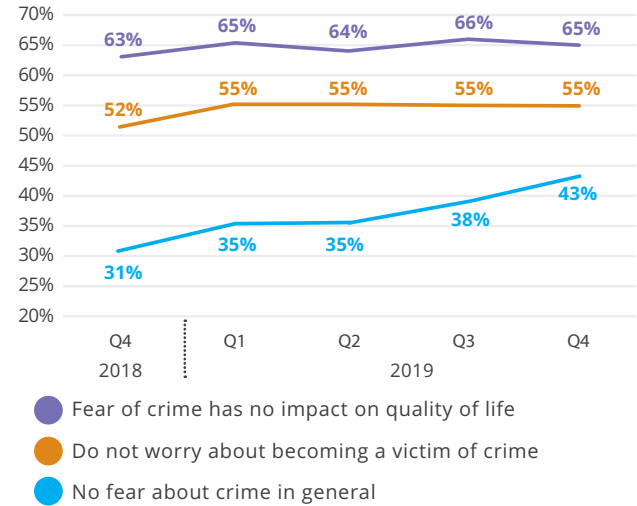
Worry about Victimization and Fear of Crime

In Q4 2019, the proportion of respondents who do not worry about becoming a victim of crime stood at 55 percent (this has remained unchanged for the last four quarters). Among those who did worry about victimisation, 3 percent worried about becoming a victim of personal injury, 12 percent worried about property theft or damage and 30 percent worried about becoming a victim of both.

Forty-three percent of respondents reported having no fear about crime in general in Q4 2019. This figure has been trending upwards since the same quarter of last year when it stood at 31 percent. For those respondents who reported being fearful, 3 percent had 'a lot of fears' while 54 percent reported having 'some' fears or 'very few' fears.

In Q4 2019, 65 percent of respondents reported that their fear of crime had no impact on their quality of life – an increase of 2 percentage points from Q4 2018. Among those who reported that fear of crime had impacted their quality of life, 23 percent stated it had reduced their quality a little, 10 percent reported it had moderately reduced their quality of life and 3 percent significantly or greatly.

Worry about Victimization and Fear of Crime

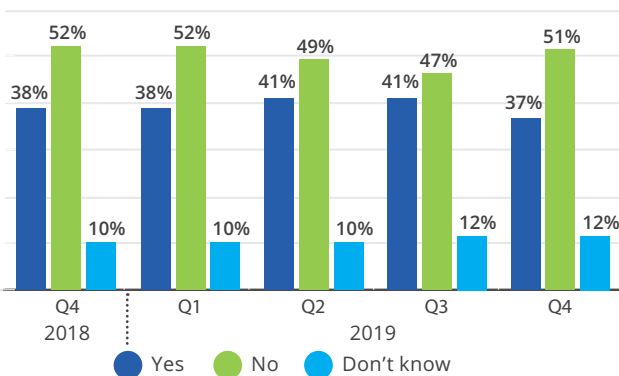


Garda Visibility

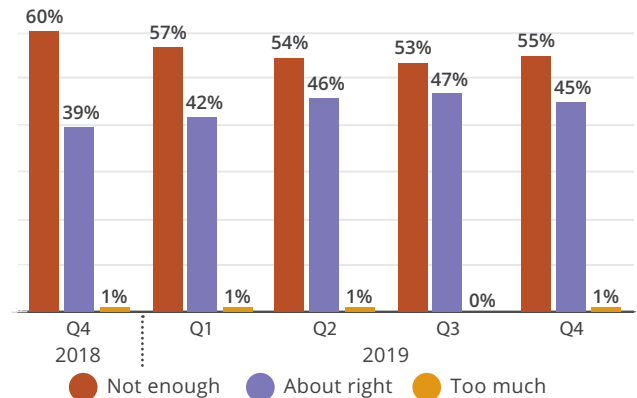
In Q4 2019, 37 percent of respondents reported being aware of Garda patrols locally – a decrease of 4 percentage points from Q2 and Q3 2019, where this figure stood at 41 percent respectively. Respondents who viewed Garda presence locally

as not enough in Q4 2019 stood at 55 percent, an increase of 2 percentage points from Q3 2019, but down 5 percentage points from the same quarter in 2018.

Garda Patrols Locally



Garda Presence Locally



Satisfaction with An Garda Síochána

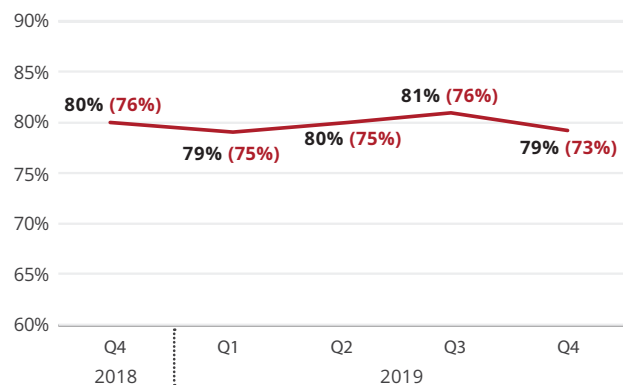
Satisfaction with An Garda Síochána remained high during Q4 2019 when 79 percent of respondents reported being either 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with the service provided to their local communities by An Garda Síochána (this figure was 73% when 'don't know' responses were included). Satisfaction levels have remained within the 79 – 81 percent range since Q4 of 2018.

In January 2018, four new questions were added to the Public Attitudes Survey related to perceptions about reliability of Gardaí in local areas and Garda-community relations. As with previous sections, 'don't know' and refused responses are removed from analysis if they account for less than 10 percent of responses. However, to accurately present the data, proportions excluding and including 'don't know' responses are presented in the 'Satisfaction with An Garda Síochána' chart (in red) and 'Level of Agreement' charts below.

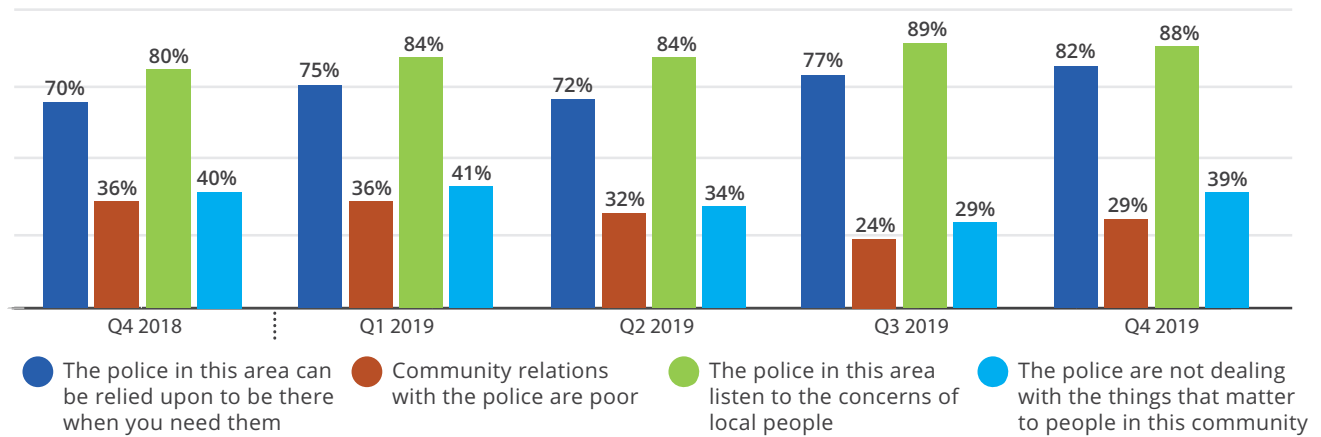
- In Q4 2019, 82 percent of respondents agreed that the Gardaí can be relied upon to be there when needed. This is an increase of 5 percentage points from Q3 2019 and the highest figure in the last five quarters.

- Twenty-nine percent of respondents agreed that Garda-community relations are poor, an increase of 5 percentage points from Q3 2019, but down 7 percentage points from the same quarter in 2018.
- The majority of respondents at 88 percent felt that Gardaí listen to the concerns of local people – an increase of 8 percentage points from the same quarter in 2018.
- Finally, 39 percent agreed that Gardaí are not dealing with things that matter to the local community, an increase of 10 percentage points from Q3 2019.

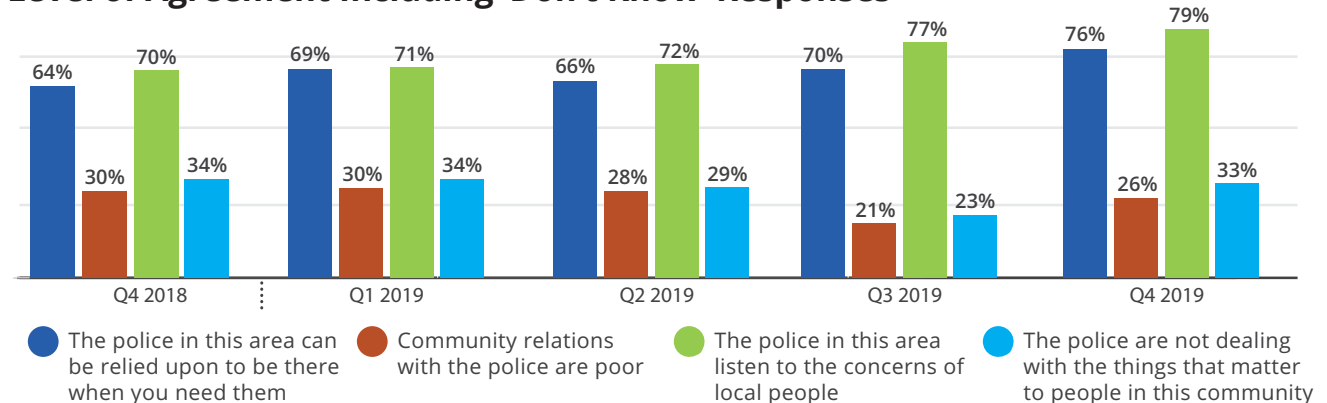
Satisfaction with An Garda Síochána



Level of Agreement Excluding 'Don't Know' Responses

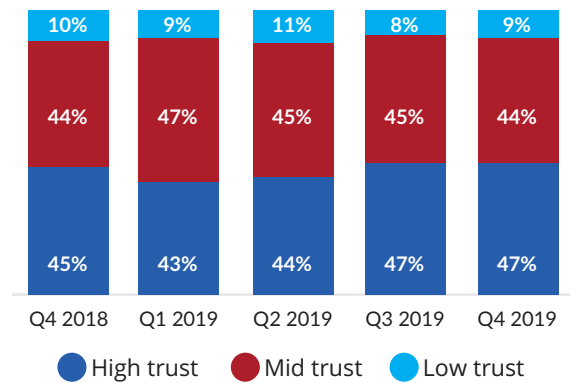


Level of Agreement Including 'Don't Know' Responses



Trust in An Garda Síochána

During Q4 2019, trust in An Garda Síochána continued to remain high, with 91 percent of respondents reporting having a mid to high level of trust. Trust in the Gardaí is a measure that has remained very stable over survey sweeps, fluctuating between 89 percent and 92 percent in the last five quarters.

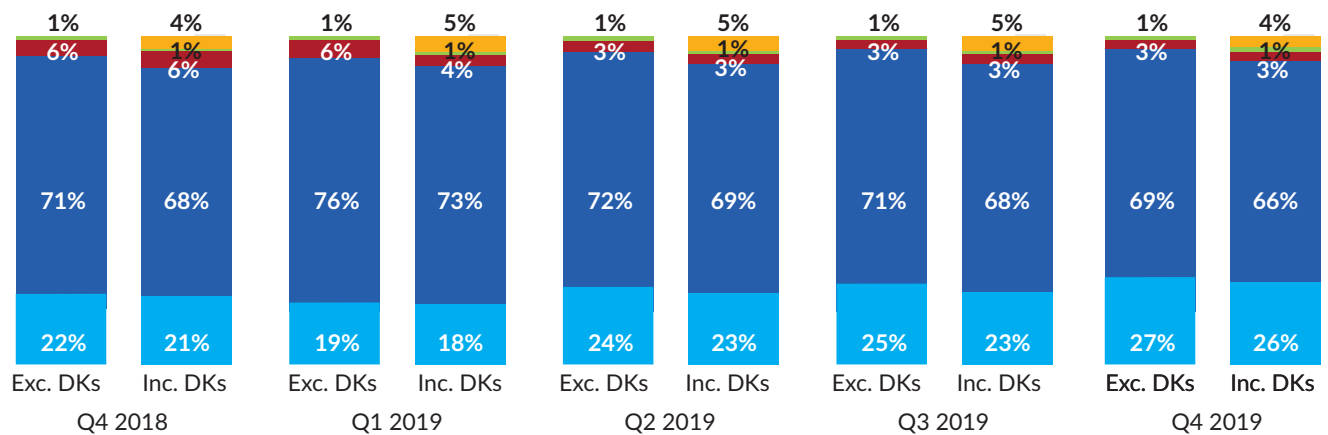


Treatment by An Garda Síochána

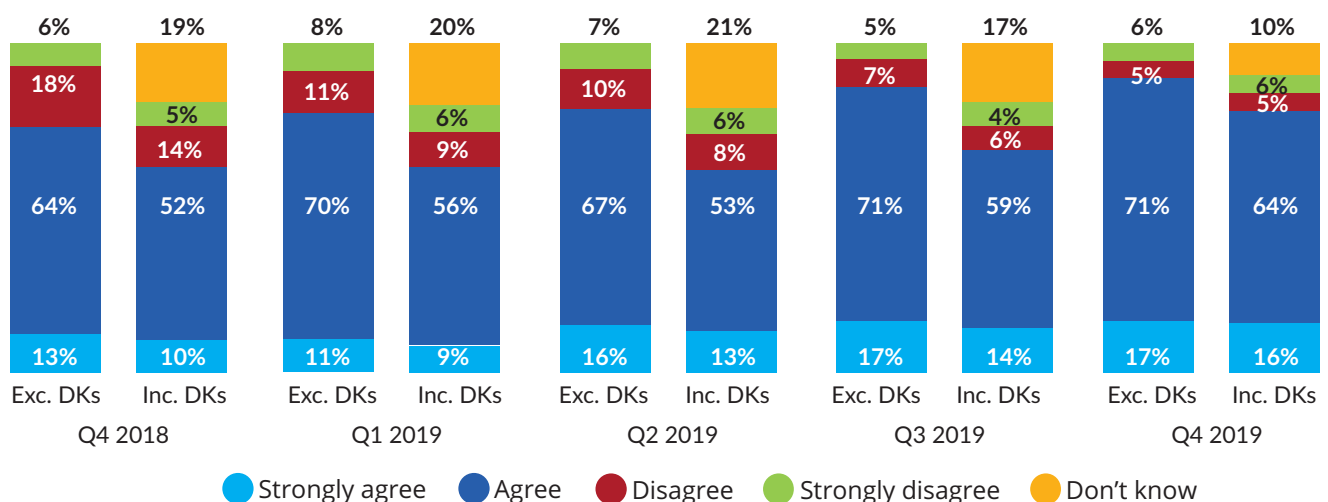
As can be seen from the charts below, figures including and excluding 'don't know' responses are presented. This is due to the large proportion of 'don't know' responses to these questions, particularly in relation to the question as to whether Gardaí treat everyone fairly. In Q4 2019, 96 percent of survey respondents agreed that Gardaí would treat them with respect if they had contact with them for any reason

(when 'don't know' responses were included in the analysis, this figure was 92%). This figure has remained at the same level for the last three quarters. When asked if the Gardaí in their local area treat everyone fairly regardless of who they are, 88 percent of respondents agreed (80% when 'don't know' responses were included). This figure has increased by 11 percentage points from the same quarter in 2018.

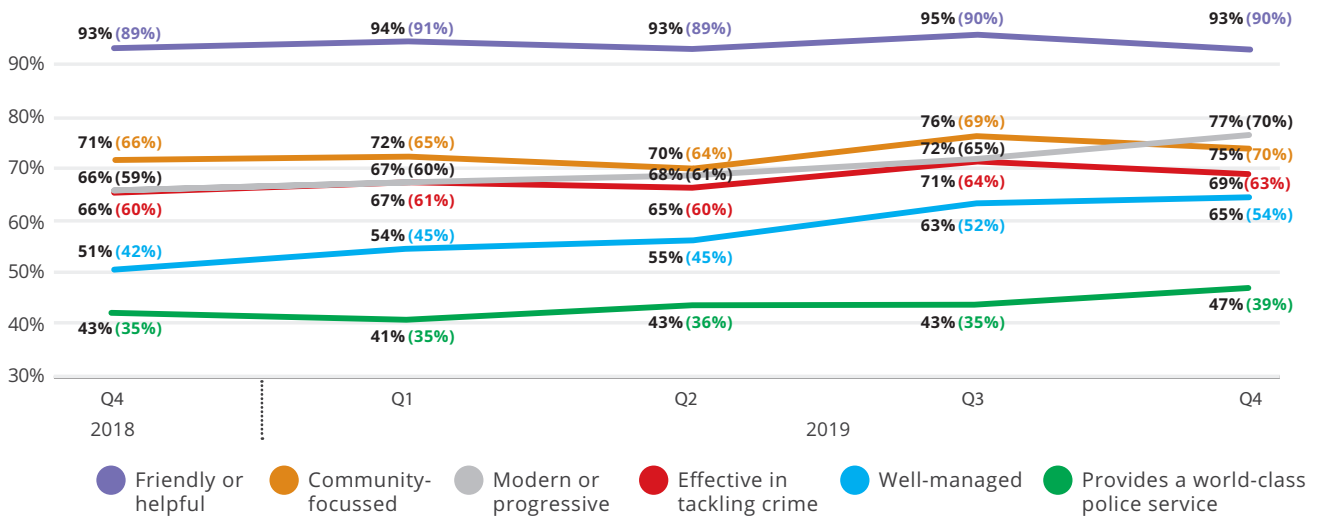
The Gardaí treat people with respect



The Gardaí treat everyone fairly



Perceptions of the Garda Organisation



As stated earlier in this report, if 'don't know' and refused responses amount to less than 10 percent, they are not included in the analysis. However, to provide complete and accurate presentation of the data, proportions including and excluding 'don't know' responses are presented in the chart above ('don't know' figures in brackets). In Q4 2019, 93 percent of respondents agreed with the statement that 'An Garda Síochána are friendly and helpful'. This figure remains consistently high. Seventy-five percent of respondents felt that An Garda Síochána is community-focussed. The

proportion who considered An Garda Síochána modern and progressive stood at 77 percent (this has been trending upwards since Q4 2018) and effective in tackling crime, 69 percent; 65 percent considered An Garda Síochána to be well-managed (up 14 percentage points from Q4 2018 data). Finally, 47 percent agreed that the organisation provides a world-class service – an increase of 4 percentage points from Q3 2019. Perceptions of An Garda Síochána's effectiveness and capability have been steadily improving since 2016 and Q4 2019 continues this trend in many areas.

Conclusion

Commissioned by An Garda Síochána, with fieldwork completed by Amárach Research, An Garda Síochána's Public Attitudes Survey results are now published on a quarterly basis. Previous bulletins and annual reports are available at www.garda.ie.

With no change from previous quarters, respondents continue to view local crime as less serious than national crime. The proportion of respondents who view national crime as 'very serious' has been trending upwards since Q4 2018, although the combined figure for those who view it as 'serious' or 'very serious' continues to remain relatively stable.

In Q4 2019, the victimisation rate stood at 3.5 percent, while the proportion of victims reporting their most recent crime to Gardaí stood at 74 percent. Satisfaction among victims of crime (56% in Q4 2019) who reported the crime to Gardaí, has increased from Q3 2019 when it stood at 47 percent. **As stated previously, it is important to note that as analysis is done on smaller proportions of the sample the margin of error increases. This should be taken into account when examining quarterly victims of crime samples.**

The proportion of respondents who do not worry about becoming a victim of crime remained the same as in the last number of quarters (55%). The proportion of respondents who have no fear about crime in general increased 5 percentage points from Q3 2019 to 43 percent and those who felt fear of crime had no impact on their quality of life stood at 65 percent.

Awareness of Garda patrols in local areas stood at 37 percent in Q4 2019, while perceptions of Garda presence locally being at the right level stood at 45 percent in Q4 2019, a slight decrease from Q3 2019. Satisfaction with service to local communities remains high with 79 percent being either 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with this service.

Trust in An Garda Síochána continues to remain very high at 91 percent. In Q4 2019, the majority of respondents (96%) believe that Gardaí would treat you with respect if you had contact with them for any reason and that Gardaí in their local area treat everyone fairly regardless of who they are (88%). Finally, agreement levels with statements about An Garda Síochána's effectiveness and capability have shown improvements in a number of areas.