

Public confidence and fear of crime:
what we knew (and what we didn't)
pre-RtP

Neil Davidson

Justice Analytical Services

Scottish Government

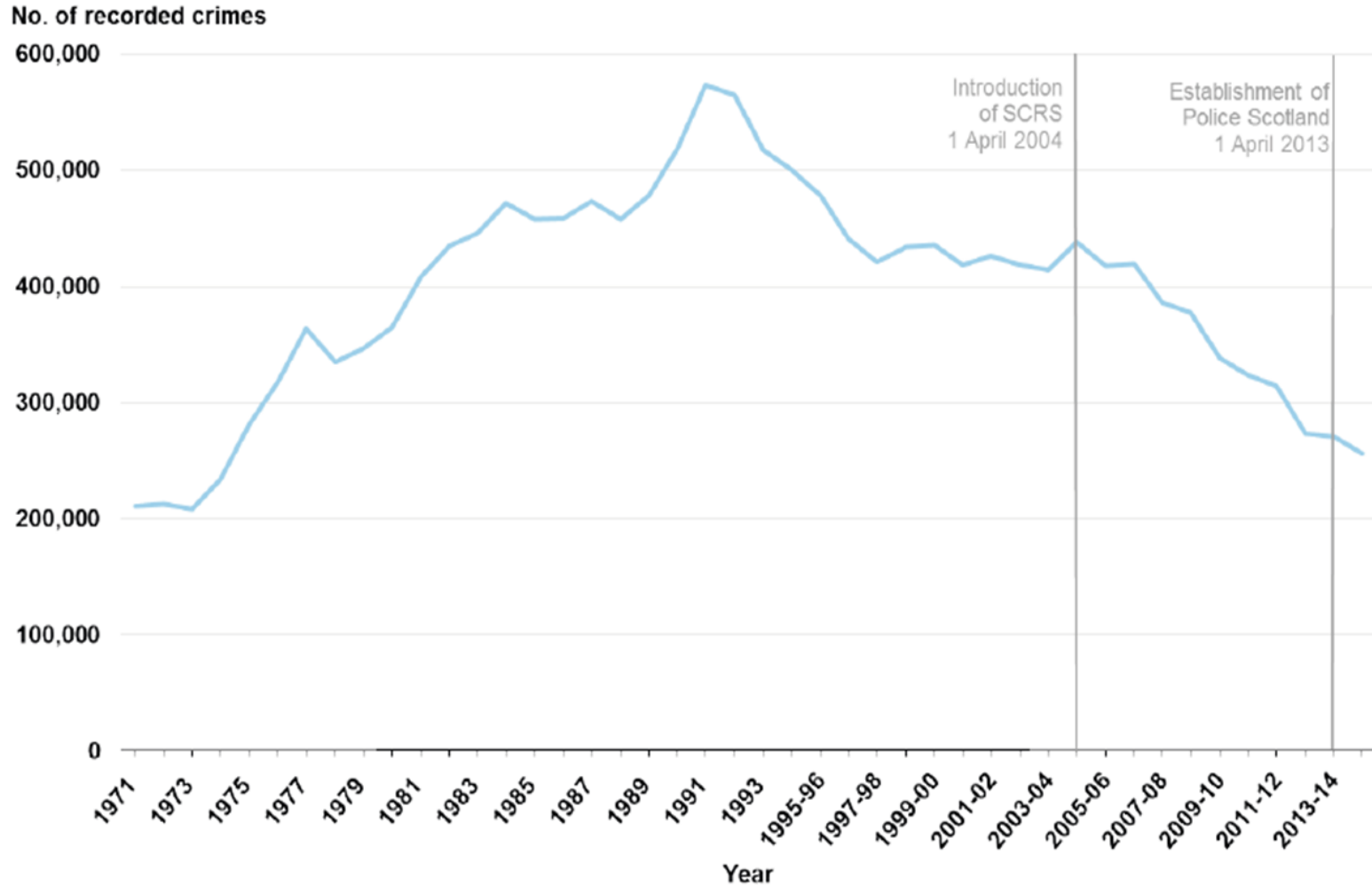
Impacts of fear of crime and reduced confidence

- **Functional fear:** can encourage vigilance and stimulate precautionary activity.
- **Individual level:** can lead to restrictive, limiting, and negative behaviour changes. Associated with negative mental physical health
- **Community level:** can drain shared sense of trust, social cohesion, and neighbourhood stability.
- **Costs:** difficult to estimate, but tangible + intangible x national scale = significant amount.

Fear of crime is felt unevenly: why?

- Certain groups have been identified as being more vulnerable to FOC;
 - women, those living in deprived areas, the elderly, ethnic minorities, and those living with long-term physical and mental health issues.
- Several dimensions thought to explain this;
 - Personal experience of crime
 - Perceived vulnerability
 - Disorder, cohesion and collective efficacy
 - Knowledge of local and national crime trends
 - Contact with the CJS

Crime rates in Scotland



Crime rates in Scotland

- **Crime types:**
 - all crimes', 'property crime' and 'violent crime', all show reductions since 2008/09.
- **Crime locations:**
 - 23 of the 32 local authority areas are showing decreases in recorded crime.
- **Police clear-up rates:**
 - the clear-up rates was the highest since 1976.
- **Overall risk of victimisation:**
 - the risk of being a victim of crime has fallen from 20.4% in 2008/09 to 16.9% in 2012/13 (14.8% risk of being a victim of property crime and 3.1% of being victim of violent crime).

Crime rates in Scotland

- **Risk of crime by personal, household and area characteristics;**
 - **Males age 16-24** had the highest risk of being a victim of any crime.
 - The risk of becoming the victim of any crime was higher for those adults living in the **15% most deprived** areas of Scotland
 - 4% of adults were **repeat victims** of property crime and 1% of adults were repeat victims of violent crime
- **Experiences of anti-social behaviour (physical and social)**
 - all forms of ASB are experienced more by those living in deprived areas compared to the rest of Scotland.
 - ‘social rented’ experience more ASB than ‘owner occupied’, ‘private rented’ or ‘other.
 - ‘Rural areas’ experience less than the national average for all forms of ASB, and urban areas experience more than the national average

Perceptions of crime

- **Perceived local crime rates:** People believe the crime rate in their local area to be failing, but fewer people believed the national crime rate decreased
- **Perceived crime types:** People perceive most particular crime types to be less common or remaining the same in their local area than in the past.
- **Actual risk vs. perceived risk:** People's perceived risk of being a victim of crime remains overinflated at around two to three times higher than the actual risk for most crimes
- **Confidence in the police:** Overall confidence in the local police appears to be high and has improved across all major measures. However, the views of those in the 15% most deprived areas appear to be more negative regarding the police's ability to do their work in all measures.

Perceptions of crime

- **‘Walking home alone after dark’:**
 - Question commonly posed in surveys to judge fear of crime and public confidence
 - The majority of adults (72%) said that they felt very or fairly safe walking alone in their local area after dark, while 27% of adults said they felt very or a bit unsafe.
 - Females were far more likely than males to report feeling unsafe (38% of females compared with 15% males).
 - People living in the 15% most deprived areas, people who rating their neighbourhood as poor place to live, and those with long-standing health conditions were also more likely to report feeling unsafe walking alone at night.

Gaps identified – going forward

- Lack of Scottish based research in general
- Additional analysis of what we did have
- The need for more diverse methodologies
- Inclusion of the voices of young people
- New directions for research to be explored
- How to communicate with the public