MOUNTED POLICE SURVEY 2014

**Information for users of survey data file submitted to the UKDS**

**Background**

This survey was fielded as part of a larger, ESRC ‘knowledge exchange’ funded project investigating the use of mounted police in the United Kingdom – see here for details: <http://www.rand.org/randeurope/research/projects/mounted-police-uk.html>. Specifically, the survey was part of a quasi-experiment that investigated the effect of mounted police neighbourhood patrols on public trust and confidence. The core hypothesis behind the experiment was that public confidence would increase in areas that received mounted patrols relative to other, similar areas that did not. There is a relatively well-established link between police visibility and trust and confidence, and it was assumed that mounted police patrols comprise, if nothing else, a highly visible form of policing.

The quasi-experiment used a matched-pairs design, with pre- and post-test survey measures of public opinions in all research sites. A total of six research sites were selected, representing a mix of affluent and less affluent locales. The sites were Kingsholm and Wotton, and Matson and Robinswood, in the city of Gloucester; Cirencester Urban and Tetbury, also in Gloucestershire; and New Cross and The Lane in South London. All are electoral wards, except Cirencester Urban, which is a larger area that combines 5 different wards and covers the whole of the town of Cirencester. As far as is known none of these areas had experienced mounted police patrols in the recent past. See Giacomantonio et al. 2015[[1]](#footnote-1) for more details on the design of the quasi-experiment (the report is included in this UKDS data package).

The design of the quasi-experiment was as follows. First, a pre test survey fielded in all areas in February 2014. Second, seven or eight mounted community patrols took place in each three of the areas in March 2014 (i.e. patrols took place in one of each matched pair – Kingsholm and Wotton, Cirencester Urban and New Cross). These areas therefore comprise the ‘test’ sites in the quasi-experiment. Note that all other policing across all six sites was ‘business as usual’. Third, a second survey, identical to the first, was fielded in April 2014. Analysis of the experimental results should therefore proceed on a ‘difference in differences’ basis – what was the change in opinions in the experimental sites *relative to* change in the test sites?

**The Survey**

Both survey waves were telephone surveys conducted by the polling company SMSR. A total of 1,042 telephone interviews took in the pre test survey, providing baseline measurements of police visibility and public confidence. The second, post-test survey was identical to the earlier instrument, and comprised the post-test measures. A total of 1,041 people were interviewed in the second wave. Note that this was not a panel study – different respondents were contacted in each wave of the survey.

*Sampling*

Sampling in both survey waves was conducted with the aim of achieving a fixed sample size in each site, 179 in the pretest period and 179 in the posttest (note these sample sizes were not quite achieved in the London sites) and, therefore, a total sample size >1,000 in each wave.

A dialing list of telephone numbers in each area, held by SMSR, was used as the sampling frame. Each number was contacted in turn until the required number of interviews was achieved. An overall response rate for the survey is thus not particularly meaningful, and it is not a random probability sample. However, in some of the sites almost every available number was in fact contacted before the required number of interviews was achieved. In one area, for example, 904 of 1,051 available numbers were contacted over the entire period – the resulting 358 interviews approximates to a response rate of 40 per cent, based on the number contacted, or 34 per cent, based on the total of listed telephone numbers.

**Questionnaire Structure**

Since the survey was designed specifically to address the needs of the quasi-experiment – and for financial reasons – it is short in length. Two different questionnaires were used to reflect the survey covered two different police force areas, Gloucestershire and London. These were identical in all respects, save for the fact that one referred to ‘Gloucestershire Constabulary’ and the other to ‘The Metropolitan Police’. The London questionnaire is included in this submission to the UKDS.

Most items in the questionnaire are attitudinal, with response on Likert-type scales. Some required only yes/no responses, while there were also free text items.

After the pre-amble (Section A of the questionnaire), the survey covered the following issues:

* Section B: General opinions/experiences of the police and neighbourhood policing.
* Section C: Perceptions of local policing – community engagement, effectiveness and fairness
* Section D: Contact with police and perceptions of police presence
* Section E: Perceptions of crime, anti-social behavior and local problems
* Section F: General confidence in police
* Section G: Demographics (age, gender, ethnicity and disability status)

A full list of variables is given in the data dictionary file. Note that the variable *Condition* indicates the experimental condition/phase for each respondent; *Area* indicates in which research site a respondent was resident.

*Item coding*

Almost all items are coded as indicated in the survey questionnaire, including don’t know and missing responses. Where this differs details are provided in the data dictionary.

1. Giacomantonio, G., Bradford, B., Davies, M. and Martin, R. (2015). Making and Breaking Barriers Assessing the value of mounted police units in the UK. RAND Europe. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)