

**Deliberative Public Opinion on
Policing Priorities in the United Kingdom**

Prepared for the Home Affairs Committee

Connecting to Parliament

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1. Event Summary and Notes on Data

As part of its broader inquiry into police reform, the Home Affairs Committee collaborated with the Institute for Democratic Engagement and Accountability (IDEA) at the Ohio State University, a research organization specializing in deliberative constituent engagement, on a Deliberative Town Hall. This format had previously been used successfully with congressional committees in the U.S. as well as individual MPs in the Australian Parliament. As part of their standard protocol for such events, IDEA worked with a local online survey panel (YouGov's UK online panel) to recruit a representative sample of constituents to take a pre-survey about their views on policing priorities, which also include basic background information on current policing issues. Survey completers were then randomly selected into either a treatment or control group to eliminate self-selection effects. Constituents in the treatment group (3500 in total) were provided additional background information and invited to participate in an online Deliberative Town Hall on the evening of April 18, 2023. The event featured MPs Rt. Hon. Dame Diana Johnson (Labour) and Tim Loughton (Conservative) and Bedfordshire PCC Festus Akinbusoye (Conservative). One thousand three hundred constituents from England and Wales attended the Deliberative Town Hall, with the vast majority participating for at least a full hour. Constituents in both the treatment and control groups then received a post-survey asking many of the same questions as the pre-survey, allowing researchers to track changes in opinion due to participation in the town hall.

This report contains comprehensive information about the sample of British constituents who took the surveys as well as those who attended the Deliberative Town Hall; a full reporting on their opinions about key elements of policing priorities, including breakdowns by age, gender, ethnicity, partisan affiliation, religion, and region; qualitative information from the town hall itself; as well as reporting on participants' views about the town hall and their trust in and approval of the Select Committee and other institutions before and after the town hall.

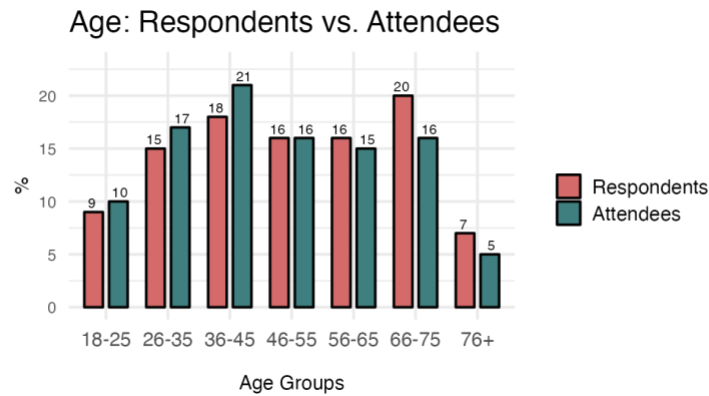
As a statistical note, for analysis items that report opinions, we show average opinion differences between the pre- and post-survey among attendees that were weighted to match the population of England and Wales according to age, gender, education, and region.

We also ran multivariate analyses to isolate which group characteristics were behind being more likely to attend the Deliberative Town Hall (Section 2) or to agree or disagree with the policy statements (Section 3).

2. Demographic Overview

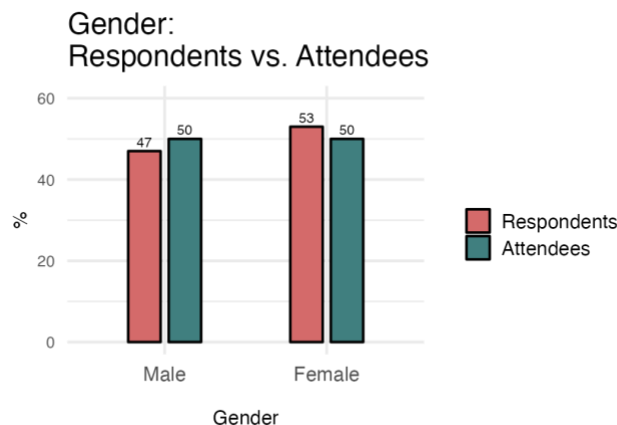
Overall, the group of participants who attended the Deliberative Town Hall were quite representative of the population as a whole, meaning that adjustments via weighting were minimal, adding confidence to our inferences. The charts below depict the breakdown of the demographics for age, gender, class, religion, and party. We provide charts for both the entire sample of constituents and those who attended the Deliberative Town Hall.

Age



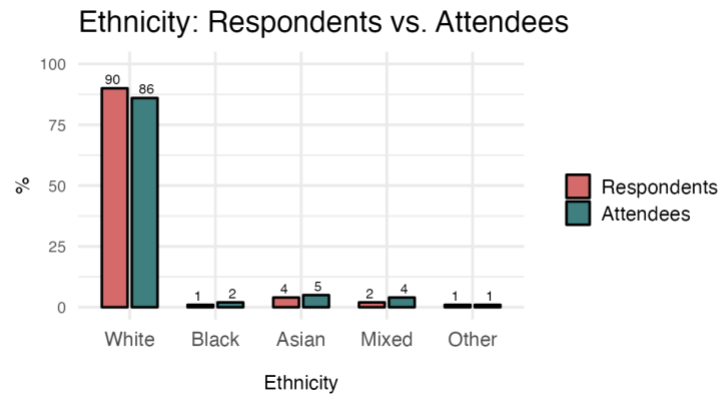
There were a variety of age groups well represented in the sample. For both respondents and attendees, younger people and older people participated in the study, with most participants fitting into the middle-range age categories.

Gender



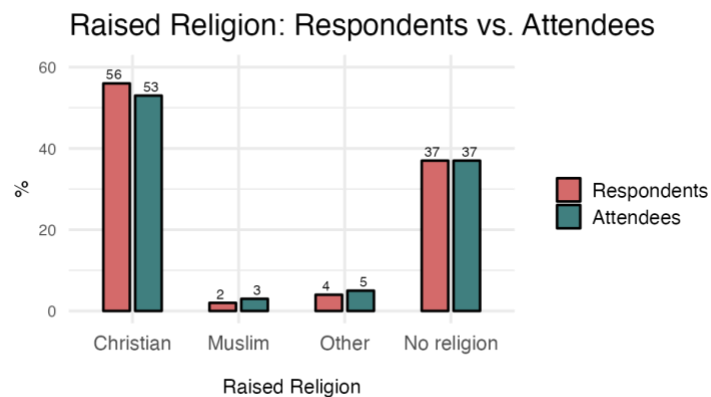
For the entire sample, there was a virtually even split between genders represented in the study.

Race/Ethnicity



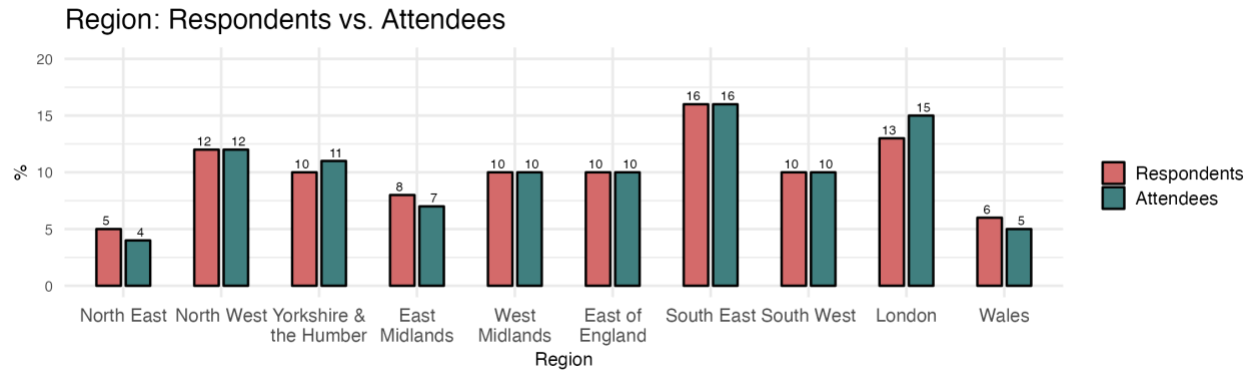
The entire sample was overwhelmingly white, with small proportions of other races included in the study. While white participants are slightly overrepresented in the sample compared to the rest of England and Wales, the sample proportions are close to the full population.

Religion



The majority of the sample were raised as Christians, while a sizable minority of the sample said that they were raised with no religion. There were very small proportions of the sample who indicated that they were raised in a religion other than Christianity.

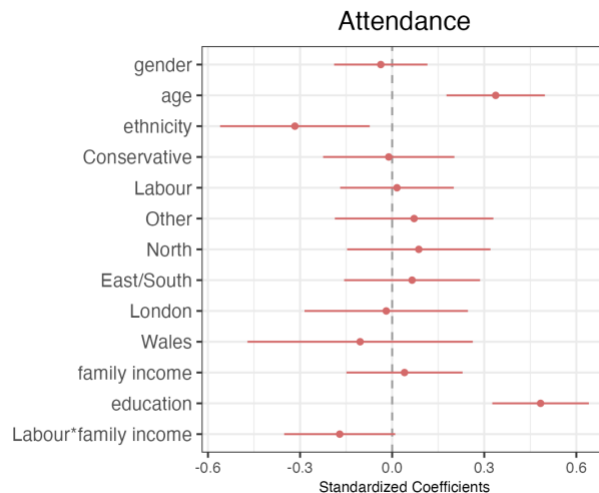
Region



There were a range of regions represented in the sample, with a solid variety of participants hailing from the regions of interest. A plurality of participants were from the South East or London, and there were significant proportions of participants joining from other regions, too.

Who Wants to Deliberate?

While the majority of this report focuses on the survey responses from those who attended the Deliberative Town Hall, we also explored which factors were associated with constituents' inclination to attend the town hall event. Specifically, we report the traits of people who said that they were willing to attend the event and then actually showed up.



The results indicate that among those who were willing to deliberate, older, educated, and non-White citizens were more likely to show up for the Deliberative Town Hall. In addition, less affluent members of Labour participated at higher rates – i.e., attendance was more about pocket-book issues than ideology broadly, since the affluent Labour voters were less likely to attend.

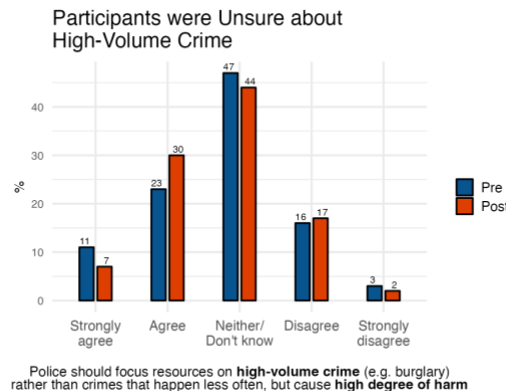
3. Constituent Opinion on Policies

Below, we detail the responses to several questions from the inquiry related to a number of policies under consideration for improving policing.

The graphs below present the opinion change among attendees from the pre-survey to the post-survey, **weighted so that the demographics match those of the actual population of England and Wales**. *Though not depicted, in each case, we have also compared the treatment to the control condition on the post-survey. Those differences track the pre-post differences quite well, making it unlikely that any changes are due to peculiarities in the composition of the group who attended the events.* We also break down the weighted results from post-survey responses among attendees based on *age, gender, race/ethnicity, religion, party affiliation, and region* to give a sense of what informed public opinion would look like by group if the whole country were to have been able to deliberate. Any noticeable findings from the breakdowns are stated in this section, while the actual graphs can be found in Appendix 1. Similarly, significant findings from the multivariate analysis are stated for each policy item. All multivariate regression figures can be found in Appendix 2.

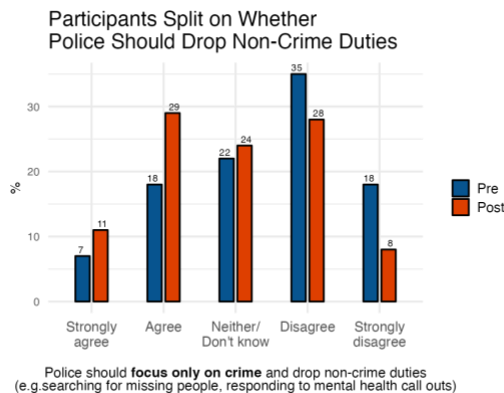
High-Volume vs. High Degree of Harm

Respondents were largely undecided on how they felt about police focusing on high volume crime rather than other forms of crime with a higher degree of harm. However, of those who did have an opinion, a higher proportion of respondents (30%) agreed with focusing on high-volume crime than those who disagreed (and would prefer to focus on crimes that cause a high degree of crime). After the Deliberative Town Hall, the share of participants who preferred focusing on high-volume crime increased slightly. There was substantial variation based on the region of respondents: In the Northeast, for example, nearly 50% of attendees agreed with the statement, while only around 1/4 (25%) of attendees from the East Midlands agreed. In other subgroups, Muslims were significantly more likely to disagree with this statement than Christians, religious “nones,” and other religions surveyed. Multivariate analysis showed that older people and participants from the north of England were more likely to agree that police should focus on high-volume crime.



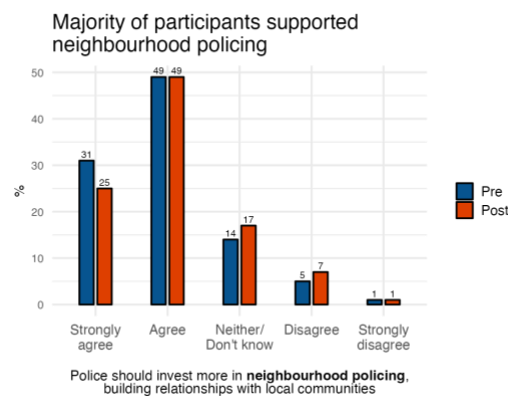
Crime vs. Non-Crime Duties

On the question of whether police should focus only on crime and drop non-crime duties, participants in the Deliberative Town Hall were mixed, with roughly a third each for, against, and unsure. However, the percentage of participants who supported police focusing only on crime and dropping non-crime duties increased 11%. Amongst subgroups, however, Black attendees were particularly averse to this idea, with 60% disagreeing to some extent with the statement that police should shed their non-crime duties and focus only on crime. Multivariate analysis shows that men, older people, whites and Conservatives were more likely to agree that police should focus on crime and drop other duties, whereas Labour constituents were less likely to agree.



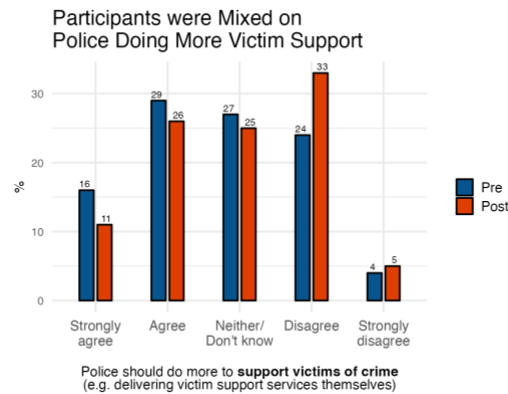
Neighbourhood Policing

A commanding majority of participants, 75%, believe that police should invest more in neighbourhood policing, building relationships with local communities. Also notably, support for neighbourhood policing was similarly high amongst all subgroups — no subgroup had any markedly different opinion on the policy. Multivariate analysis shows that men, older people, and Labour constituents were a bit more likely to support this policy, while people from London were a bit less so. Conservatives from the East/South region and non-white men were less likely to support this policy.



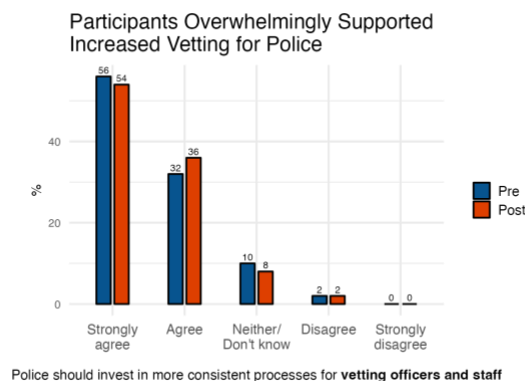
Support Victims of Crime

Participants were largely mixed on whether or not police should do more to support victims of crime. However, after the Deliberative Town Hall, the share of participants who felt that police should *not* do more in this area increased by 10%. There were substantial differences in subgroup opinion toward this item: younger attendees supported this policy more than older attendees; Muslims supported the policy significantly more than non-Muslims; and non-white attendees supported the policy more than white attendees. Multivariate analysis shows that older people and white constituents were less likely to support the policy, while female Labour constituents were more likely to support it.



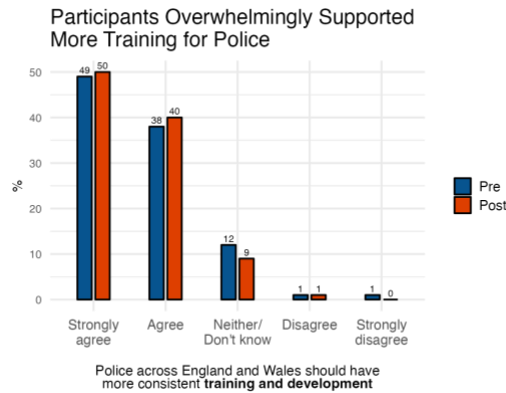
Vetting Process

A striking 90% of participants agreed that police should invest in more consistent processes for vetting officers and staff. Support for this policy was overwhelming before the town hall and remained so even after discussion of tradeoffs in the Deliberative Town Hall. Women and younger attendees were slightly more likely to strongly agree with this statement than other groups. Multivariate analysis shows that women and Labour constituents were more likely to support this policy.



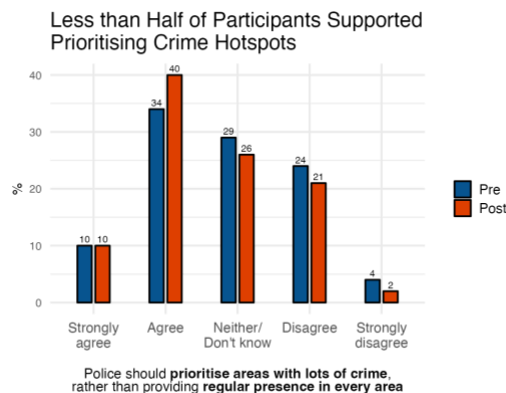
Training and Development

90% of participants also agreed that police across England and Wales should have more consistent training and development. Support for this policy was overwhelming before the town hall and remained so even after discussion of tradeoffs in the Deliberative Town Hall. Among subgroups, women, younger people, and Black and mixed respondents were especially likely to strongly agree with this statement. Multivariate analysis shows that Labour constituents were more likely to support this policy, while constituents from London were less likely to support it.



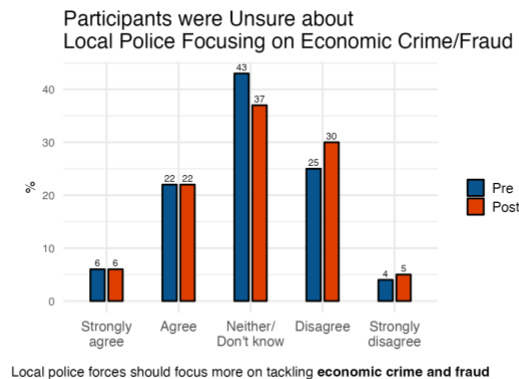
Prioritize Areas with High Crime Rates

40% of attendees supported police prioritizing areas with lots of crime, rather than providing regular presence in every area. Support for this policy increased about 6% slightly after deliberation. However, those who identified their ethnicity as “other” were especially likely to strongly disagree that police should prioritize high-crime areas. Almost half of attendees in that ethnic category strongly disagreed with that sentiment, and nearly 70% disagreed generally that high-crime areas should be prioritized. Broken down by religion, Muslims were the group most likely to strongly support the police prioritizing high-crime areas. Multivariate analysis shows that men were more likely to support this policy, and Labour constituents from London were also more likely to support this policy.



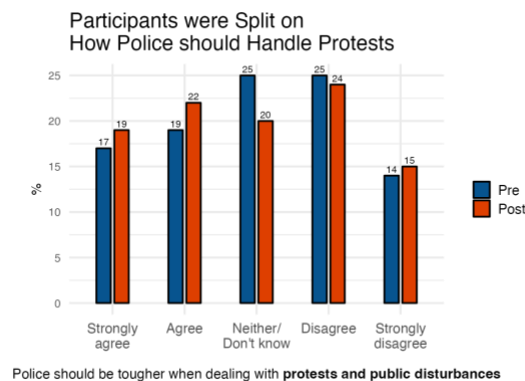
Economic Crime and Fraud

A plurality of participants was unsure whether local police forces should focus more on tackling economic crime and fraud. This policy may be less familiar to constituents in general and was less discussed in the town hall than some of the others. Among those who did have an opinion, 35% disagreed with the policy, while 28% agreed. Among subgroups, a higher percentage of Muslims strongly agreed that local police forces should focus more on tackling economic crime and fraud compared to other religious groups. Older people did not support this policy at the same rate as younger age categories. Multivariate analysis shows that women and older constituents were less likely to support this policy.



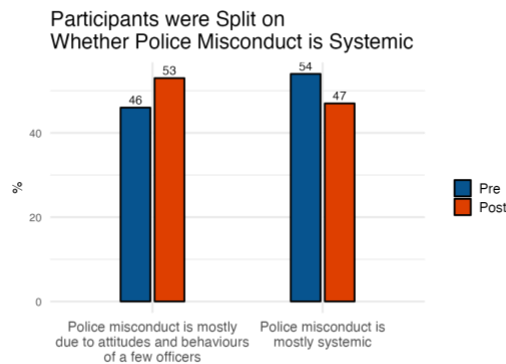
Protests

Participants were split on whether police should be tougher when dealing with protests and public disturbances, and there was substantial variation across respondents in their opinions on the issue. Younger attendees did not support this policy, while Conservatives supported this policy at a very high rate. Multivariate analysis shows that younger people in general were less likely to support this policy, however older Labour voters were also less likely to support this policy. White constituents in London were also less likely to support this policy. Older, non-Labour constituents were more likely to support the policy, as were Conservative constituents.



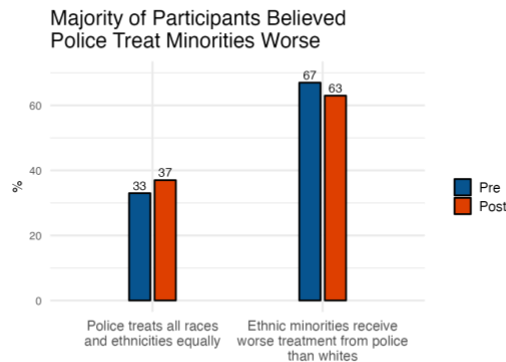
Nature of Police Misconduct

Participants were about evenly split on the nature of police misconduct. The share of participants who believe police misconduct is mostly due to the attitudes and behaviours of a few officers, rather than being a systemic issue, did increase after the Deliberative Town Hall by 7%. However, there were significantly higher numbers of participants who believed police misconduct was systemic amongst several subgroups: younger people, women, and Black people believed that police misconduct is systemic, while most Conservative attendees believe that police misconduct was the result of a few bad officers. Multivariate analysis shows that women, non-white, Labour and Other constituents were more likely to believe police misconduct is systemic, as were younger people from London. Conservatives were less likely to agree.



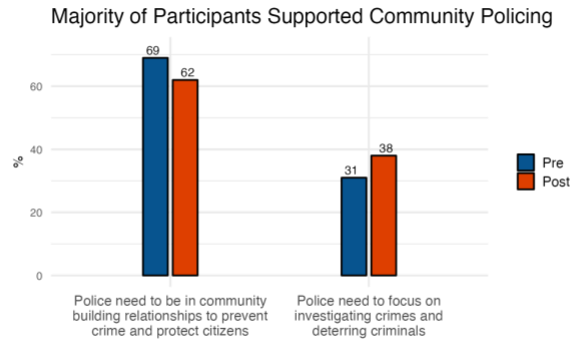
Treatment of Minorities

A large majority of participants said that ethnic minorities receive worse treatment from police than whites. Amongst subgroups, younger people, non-white people, women, Muslims, and non-Conservatives believe that minorities are treated worse than white people. Multivariate analysis largely confirms the breakdown data.



Community Building or Crime Solving

62% of participants believed the police need to be in community building relationships to prevent crime and protect citizens, whereas 38% responded the police should focus on investigating crimes and deterring criminals. The percentage of participants who agreed with this statement dropped by 7% after the town hall. Multivariate analysis shows older people and Labour constituents were more likely to support this policy.



4. Constituents' Opinion in Their Own Words

Participants submitted a total of 1437 substantive comments/questions during the Deliberative Town Hall. Overall, the questions were of very high quality, reflecting those constituents had either been following the issue or had trained up for the event by reviewing the background materials in advance. The following twelve questions were asked live in the Deliberative Town Hall, providing the impetus for most of the panelist's responses:

- “The hierarchical and insular nature of police forces has been cited as a factor in some police failures. Isn't it time to consolidate the number of police forces from the current level of 43 in England alone and reduce levels of bureaucracy and cost duplication and ensure a more consistent approach?” [57/Male/White/Christian/Yorkshire and the Humber]
- “Why is the policing in the UK now being used as a backup for social services?” [68/Female/White/Christian/East Midlands]
- “Funding continues to increase through Council tax, but this funding does not appear to be linked to performance - please comment.” [Anonymously Submitted]
- “Why do the police's leadership not have the ability to dismiss members of their forces when they underperform, or have poor behaviour, as the unions have created a mafia-esque shield around racists, misogynists, homophobes and transphobes? I see regularly that investigation took years to complete while they were on paid suspension.” [39/Male/White/No religion/West Midlands]
- “Conviction rates for serious crime, like rape, are appallingly low whilst police resources on policing tweets runs into hundreds of thousands of man hours. What direction is being given to apply police resources to genuine and serious crime?” [64/Male/White/No religion/North West]
- “How do you think police forces can work to better serve marginalized communities?” [38/Male/White/No religion/North West]
- “There is a perception that the police are not interested in local crimes because they are so rarely seen on the streets and never doing foot patrols in residential areas. Whilst foot patrols do little to prevent crime, they ensure that the public feel a relationship between themselves and the police. When one knows how much money has been taken out of policing in the last thirteen years, it is hardly surprising that there is no budget for enough police on the streets. Is there any plan to restore funding back to 2010 levels?” [66/Male/White/Christian/West Midlands]
- “Some of the towns here have a fairly deserted high street that people stay away from due to antisocial behaviour and petty crime. If we are to attract people to spend money in our towns and cities as well as businesses to flourish in the long term, I believe the basic baseline for the police should be to provide a reassuring lingering presence to the community that they should feel safe in town centres and rural areas.” [35/Male/White/Christian/North West]
- “I want to know the vetting for police officers since the case of Sarah Everard? Has anything changed since this happened to protect the women in our country?” [Anonymously Submitted]
- “There is a serious struggle in recruiting police officers, some officers I know have suggested it could be that the degree requirement has put off those who would traditionally join, i.e., ex-forces, could removing this requirement improve this?” [Anonymously Submitted]
- “I totally agree that the integrity of individual officers is important. I believe that better screening of applicants is required to identify possible 'bad apples' earlier. Like Jury service, can members of the public be involved in interviewing?” [Anonymously Submitted]
- “Neurodivergent people form a disproportionate percentage of people going through the criminal justice. What training do the police have on recognising, communicating to and understanding neurodiversity.” [51/Female/White/Christian/London]

The other 1400+ other questions have been clustered into 8 major themes, each with a number of subtopics. We have selected a range of examples for each. We include these representative selections in Appendix 4. Here, we simply summarize the major clusters with one or two representative examples. These topics map closely onto the list of priorities shared with participants in the background materials, but also convey other concerns participants had.

500 comments (34%) focused on the vast range of competing police priorities, expressing the need for police to be able to focus more on crime, rather than many other duties that often end up being assigned to them. Both high-degree crime such as knifing or sexual assault and high-volume crime such as burglary, anti-social behavior, and drug-related crime were mentioned. Some also pointed out the changing nature of crime, stressing the need to better handle economic fraud and cyber-crime. At the same time, participants offered suggestions on what duties might be taken on by specialized teams or outside agencies.

- “Considering that only 1 in 100 rapes recorded by police resulted in a charge in 2021, How can the police convince victims of rape or sexual assault that it is worth the emotional burden of reporting their assault?” [19/Male/White/No religion/West Midlands]
- “Given the international nature of cyber-crime and fraud, is it even appropriate for local police forces to be tasked with dealing with it? I feel similarly about my rural force dealing with terrorism.” [35/Male/-/-/East of England]
- “Youth ASB is of prime concern. Not only their county (city) line activities but also their criminal damage, and increasingly attacks on vulnerable people. This makes people afraid to go out. With no police visibility in the areas affected it goes unchecked. Calls to police are ignored so people give up calling them. Therefore the ASB is not recorded. With no youth services due to local authority cuts to funding year on year on year... what is the solution?” [66/Female/White/No religion/North East]
- “Why does it often fall to the police to deal with people with mental health issues rather than crime and crime prevention?” [48/Male/White/No religion/North West]

Participants also had a wide range of general policing questions and comments: 338 comments (22%) were about the organization of police and its internal problems, conviction rates, funding, the performance of officers and lack of accountability for bad behaviour.

- “It isn’t the police that take cases to court - it is the CPS. Do we have an issue with the ability of the CPS to make correct decisions?” [53/Male/White/No religion/Yorkshire and the Humber]
- “Why do we have multiple police forces with different management ideas and objectives, which potentially creates a post code lottery to the public in how they get served?” [54/Male/White/Christian/North West]
- “Recently a report on the MET police was released saying that there was institutional racism, sexism, and homophobia within the police force, and there are suggestions this type of behaviour inevitably spreads to the way they police communities. Do the speakers think this issue is prevalent outside of London too and how can this type of systemic issue be addressed?” [21/Female/Asian/No religion/London]

Constituents were emphatic about the need to improve the recruitment and vetting of police, with 212 comments (14%) including the desired qualifications, the need for diversity, the need for continuous vetting and the possibility of public participation in vetting.

- “Staggered that each police force can have their own standard of vetting! Ongoing scrutiny is absolutely crucial.” [54/Female/White/Christian/South East]
- “I believe public trust in policing in England and Wales is at its lowest due to serious crimes being committed by officers, including but not limited to rape and murder. How do you propose to improve the vetting system or ongoing assessment of officers to prevent such happening? How do you intend to gain public trust again?” [45/Male/White/Christian/Wales]

105 comments (7%) focused on the strong desire for neighbourhood policing, particularly more local police stations as well as “bobbies on the beat.” There were also some concerns specifically about rural areas.

- “Prevention is better than cure. Visibility is a big part of that. Many local Police stations have been shut to save costs. We need to go back to local policing and visible foot patrols as it will deter crime and give peace and mind to the public. Thoughts?” [37/Male/White/No religion/North West]
- “Why is it difficult to walk into a police station and talk to an officer? It seems to be a prevalent problem, especially in more rural communities, that local stations are no longer open to the public. Is it purely down to funding? I feel like people within a community would feel safer having a physical police presence.” [37/Female/White/No religion/East of England]

70 questions/comments (4%) described the lack of trust constituents felt in police. Many comments specifically tied this to the lack of accountability following recent revelations of police misconduct.

- “Hello, I’m a woman in my early 30’s in the South East. I was assaulted 10 years ago and didn’t go to the police as I didn’t feel I would be believed, nor did I feel that anything would be done. I think my trust in the police on this kind of crime is even lower now. How are the police trying to help woman with their trust in being believed when they are assaulted? How are the police going to tackle the lack of trust there is from women in the police especially after cases such as Sarah Everard?” [32/Female/White/Christian/South East]

46 questions/comments (3%) focused on the kind of training officers currently receive and what they think should be added to it, particularly to deal with specialized groups.

- “Diana mentioned there is a very proactive recruitment process taking place at the moment. I would be interested to know what is in place to ensure those recruited do not hold the racist, homophobic, and misogynist views that the recent enquiry discovered was very prevalent in policing.” [52/Female/White/No religion/West Midlands]
- “How can we standardise basic officer and career training similar to the Army’s Sandhurst officer college around England & Wales? There are so many police colleges, training packages that aren’t compatible and funding disparities across regions. Many specialist officers such as firearm officers struggle to move to different forces around the UK due to a Byzantine plethora of independent regional police forces not being compatible.” [35/Male/White/Christian/North West]

10 questions/comments (1%) focused on how police handled protests, with a majority prioritizing citizens' civil liberties versus a minority expecting the police to minimize the impact of protest on others.

- “Why do we use so many police resources for known peaceful public gatherings? It at times seems excessive.” [61/Female/White/Christian/South East]

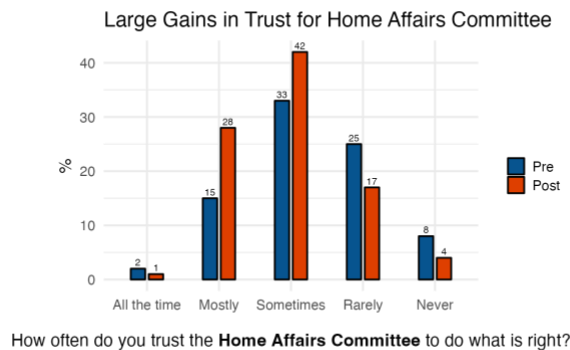
Finally, there were a handful of “off-topic” comments on a wide range of issues such as education, corruption, immigration, etc.

5. Constituent Opinion of Institutions

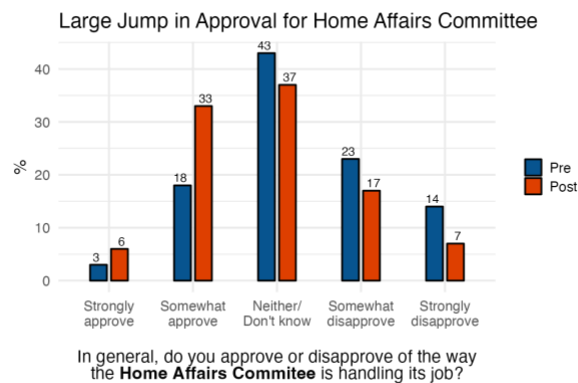
In this section, we examine the survey responses amongst attendees of the Deliberative Town Hall to the questions on trust and approval of the U.K. Parliament, Home Affairs Committee, and the Police in England and Wales. The first graph presents the opinion change amongst attendees from the pre-survey to the post-survey, weighted so that the demographics match those of the actual population of England and Wales. Though not depicted, in each case, we have also compared the treatment to the control condition on the post-survey. Those differences track the pre-post differences quite well, making it unlikely that any changes are due to peculiarities in the composition of the group who attended the events. We also break down the weighted results from post-survey responses among attendees based on age, gender, race/ethnicity, religion, party affiliation, and region and discuss the results here. The graphs can be found in Appendix 3.

Trust and Approval towards the Home Affairs Committee

After the Deliberative Town Hall, the percentage of participants who trusted the Home Affairs Committee some or most of the time jumped 22 points.

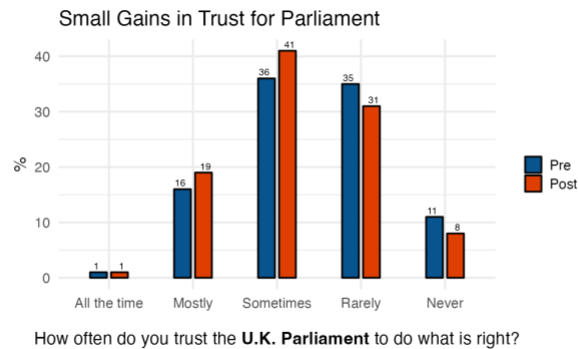


Approval of the Home Affairs Committee also increased by 18 points among participants after the Deliberative Town Hall.

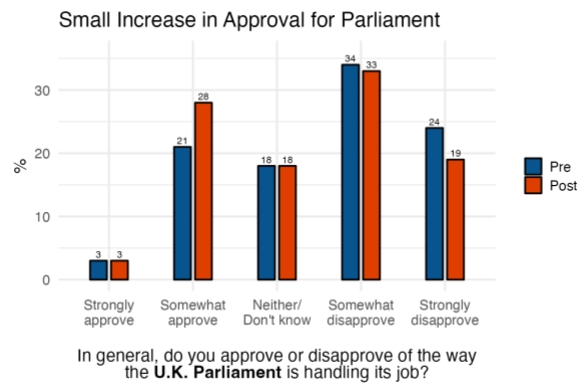


Trust and Approval towards the U.K. Parliament

The largest gains in trust and approval were seen for the committee that directly engaged the constituents; however, participation in the Deliberative Town Hall does appear to have slightly increased trust and approval in government and institutions more broadly. After the Deliberative Town Hall, the percentage of attendees who trust Parliament as a whole to do what is right some or most of the time increased by 8 points.

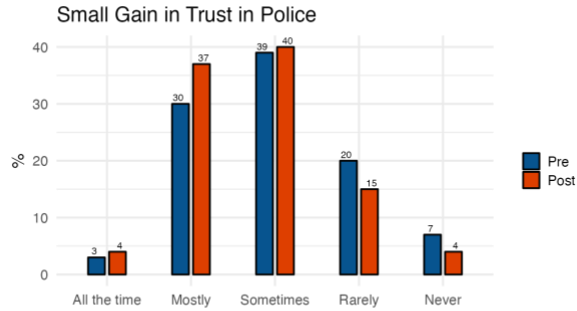


The percentage of attendees who approved of the way Parliament is handling its job increased 7% after the Deliberative Town Hall.



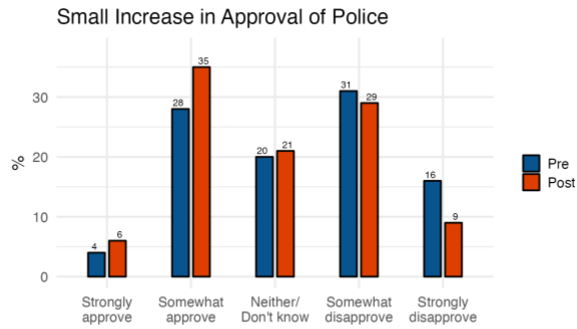
Trust and Approval towards the Police in England and Wales

After the Deliberative Town Hall, the share of participants who mostly or always trust the police increased 7%.



How often do you trust the **police in England and Wales** to do what is right?

After the Deliberative Town Hall, the number of participants who approve of the police increased 9%.

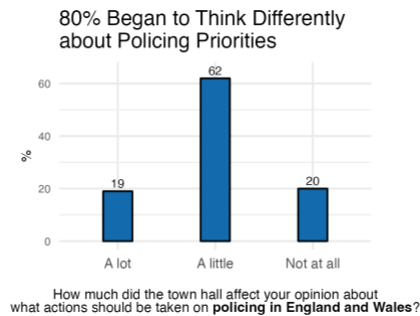


In general, do you approve or disapprove of the way the **police in England and Wales** is handling its job?

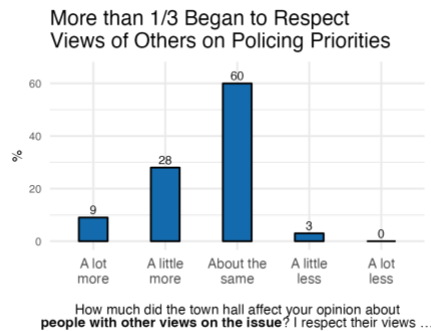
6. Constituent Opinion of Deliberation

In this section, we provide the responses from participants on how the Deliberative Town Hall affected their opinions, their views of other citizens, and the usefulness of this kind of engagement.

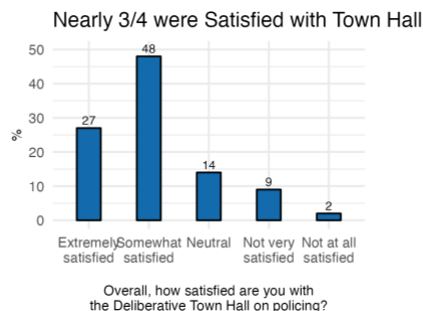
First, 80% of attendees reported that the Deliberative Town Hall affected their opinions on what actions should be taken to improve policing, with 19% of participants saying the town hall affected their opinions “a lot.”



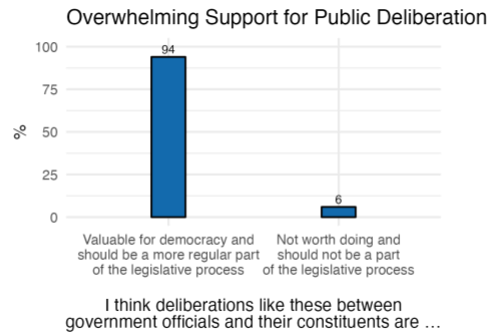
Furthermore, roughly a third of constituents said that they had an increase in respect for others with different views after the Deliberative Town Hall.



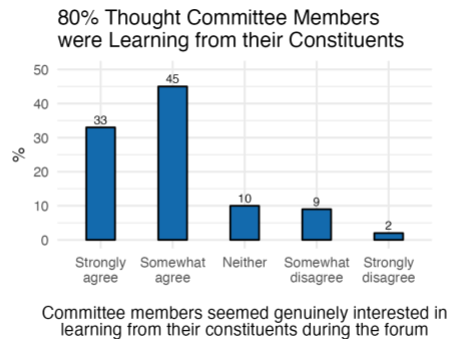
Next, **roughly 75% of attendees said that they were somewhat or very satisfied with the Deliberative Town Hall**; only about 1 in 10 attendees said that they were not very satisfied with the Deliberative Town Hall.



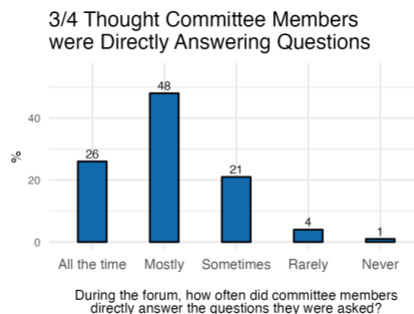
In addition, an overwhelming majority, 94% of attendees, said that deliberative events like the one they participated in are valuable for democracy and should be a more regular part of the legislative process.



These high levels of satisfaction and perceptions of value of deliberative constituent engagement are likely related to constituents’ perceptions that the participating elected officials were genuinely interested in their questions and comments during the Deliberative Town Hall. A strong majority of attendees, around 80%, indicated that they thought that the participating committee members and other panelists were genuinely interested in learning from their constituents during the event.



The vast majority of attendees also thought that committee members were directly answering questions that they were asked, not just giving talking points or the party line.



7. Conclusion

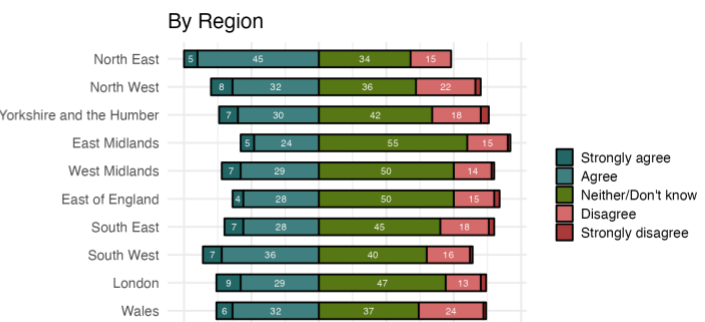
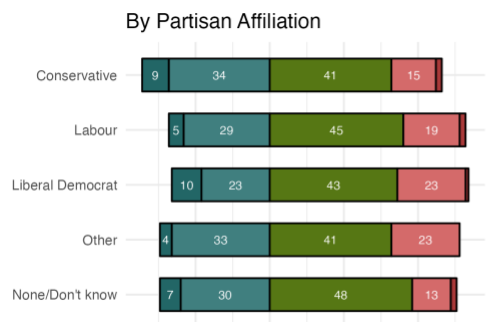
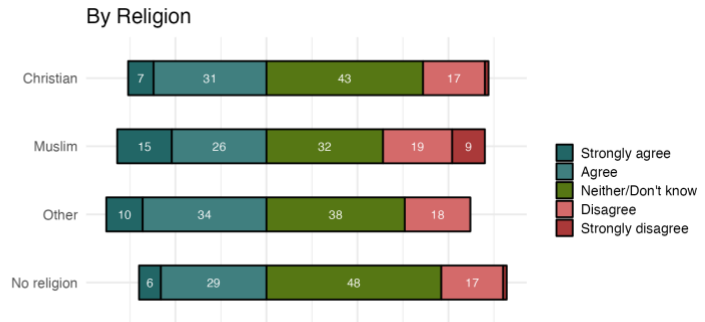
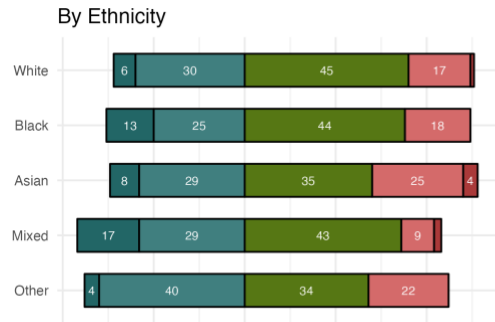
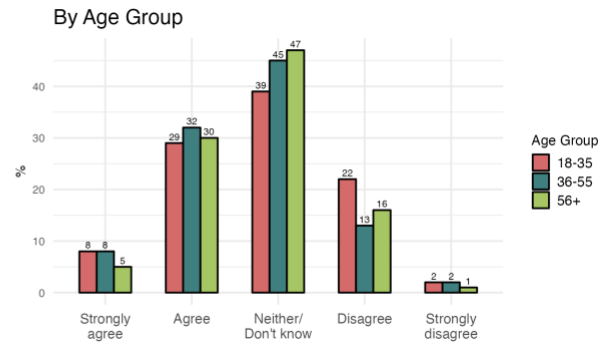
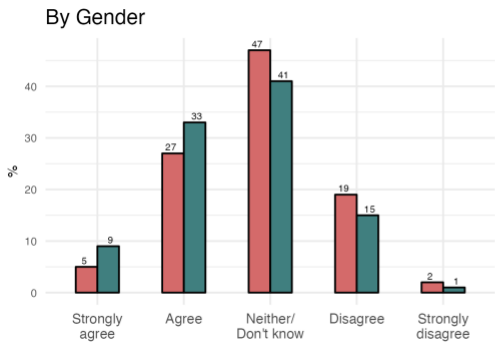
This study might be most usefully thought of as a way to think about priorities: participants were not positioned to make detailed recommendations about how exactly police should spend their time or how they should be organized, but they were able to clearly say which problems with policing they thought were most urgent. Moreover, because the tradeoffs for most of the policies were discussed in the Deliberative Town Hall, participants had a chance to consider not only their own “pain points” but also which tradeoffs they thought were or were not worth accepting before registering their final judgment. Overall, the following narrative emerges:

- Most people were unwilling to accept the tradeoff between focusing more on high volume or high-impact crime — but among those who were willing to make a trade-off roughly twice as many prioritized high-volume crime.
- Constituents did seem to believe (and disapprove of) the police having become de facto responsible for many situations that would seem to be better suited to mental health workers or other service agencies, diminishing the police’s ability to focus on deterring and investigating crime. Respondents often attributed this to funding cuts to other services.
- With regard to other duties that could be taken out of the police’s remit to focus on crime: there was not a strong majority willing to say that police should not do more to support victims of crime; however, after the Deliberative Town Hall, the share of participants who felt that police should *not* do more in this area did increase by 10%. Many participants expressed disapproval of what they perceived as the police spending too much time on responding to tweets, harmful speech, or offensive public displays.
- There was overwhelming consensus on two priorities: a striking 90% of participants supported investing in and improving both better vetting police recruits and better training police officers. These overwhelming majorities persisted even after discussion in the town hall of the tradeoff (i.e., shifting resources away from front-line crimefighting efforts).
- This desire to invest in improving the police force was further reinforced by the very high volume of questions and comments from the Deliberative Town Hall expressing distrust in the police and outrage at police misconduct and the apparent lack of accountability for it. While participants were split on whether police misconduct was a systemic issue or simply due to a few bad officers, a large majority did agree that ethnic minorities are treated worse by police than white citizens.
- A commanding majority (across age, race, gender, ethnicity, and religion) believed that police should invest more in neighbourhood policing (building relationships with local communities). This strong preference was also reinforced with a huge amount of qualitative data lamenting the closure of local police stations and calling for increased police visibility in neighbourhoods.
- While there was not a clear majority of constituents who thought economic crime, fraud, and cyber-crime should become a stronger area of focus for *local* police, many constituents did express that this new kind of crime should be addressed by specialized teams working at the regional or national level.

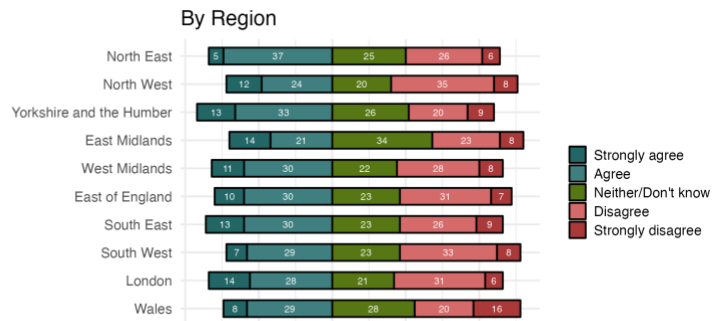
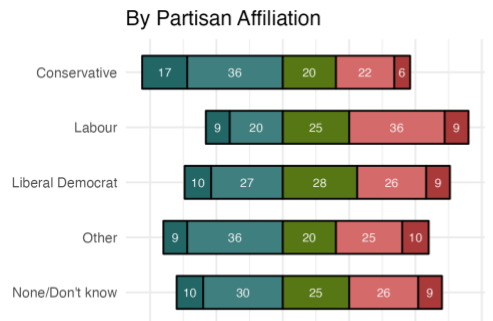
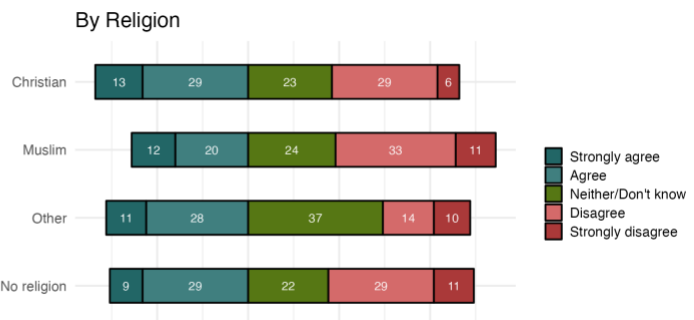
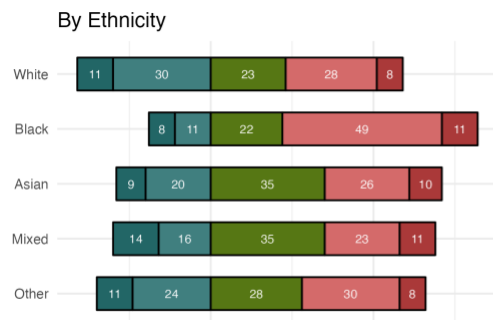
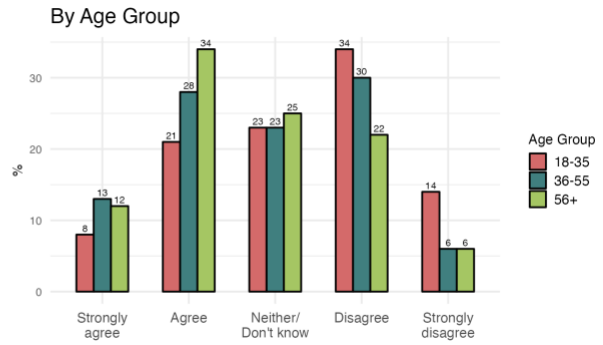
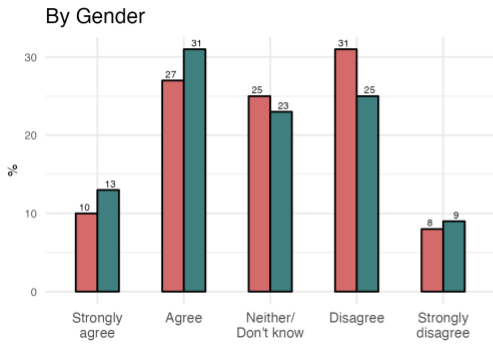
We hope to have provided a useful sense of 1) the public’s priorities for police reform in England and Wales, 2) the general direction in which they would like to see those efforts move, and 3) the tradeoffs they are willing to accept in order to do so.

Appendix 1. Breakdown of Constituent Opinion on Policing Priorities by Group

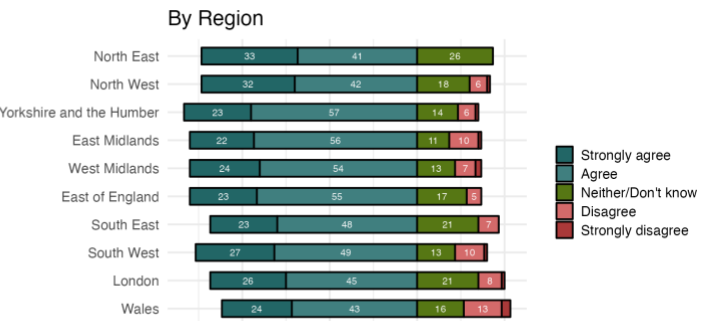
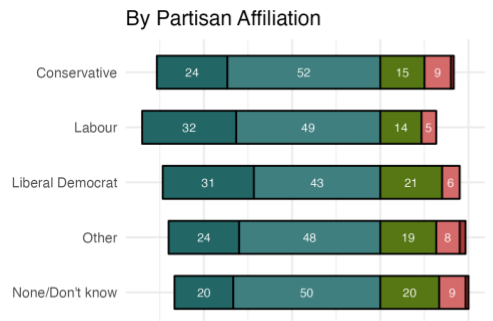
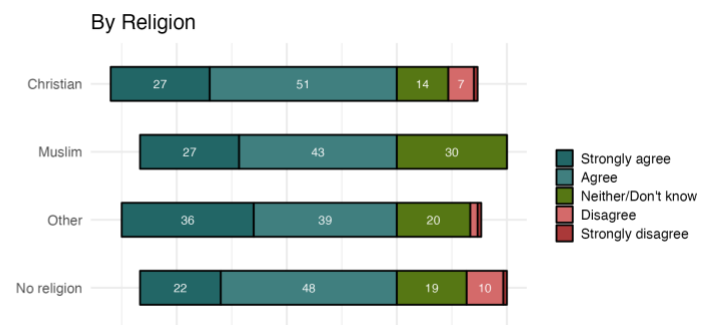
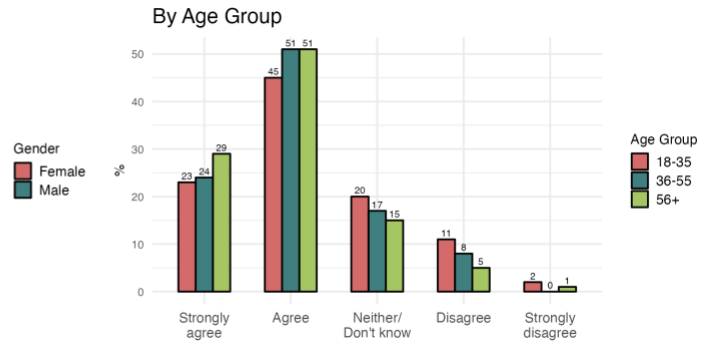
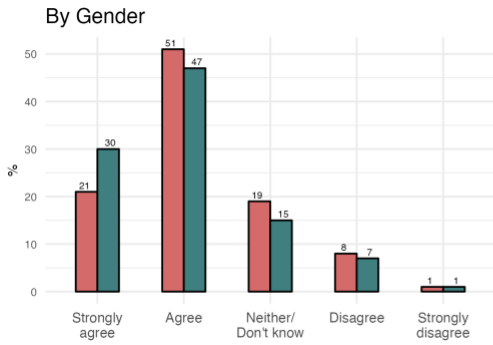
High-Volume vs. High Degree of Harm



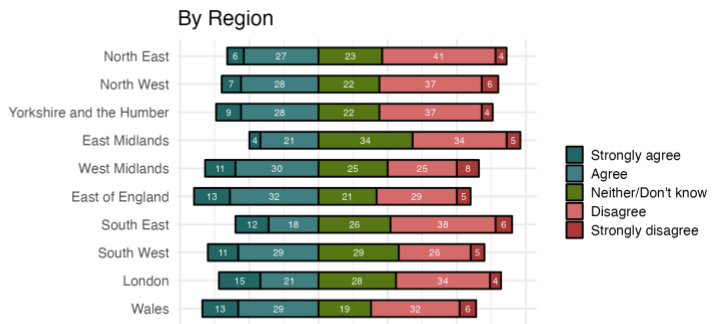
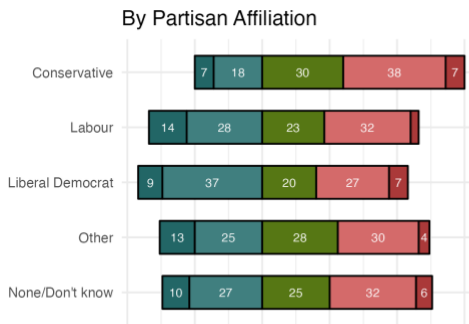
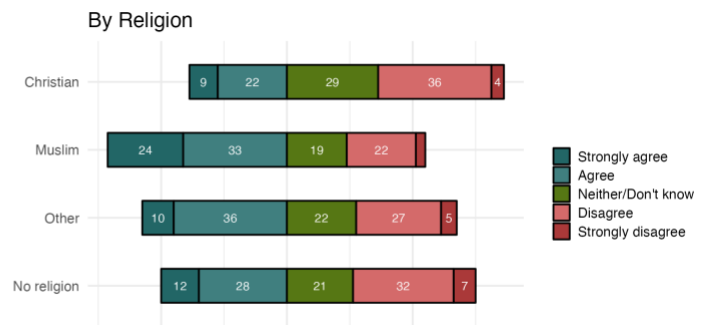
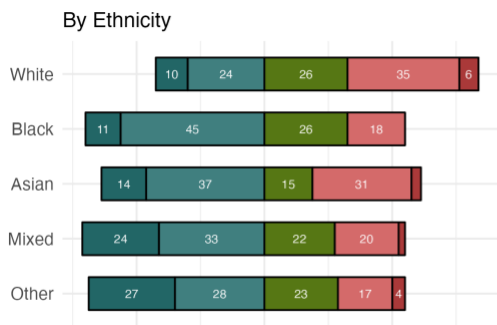
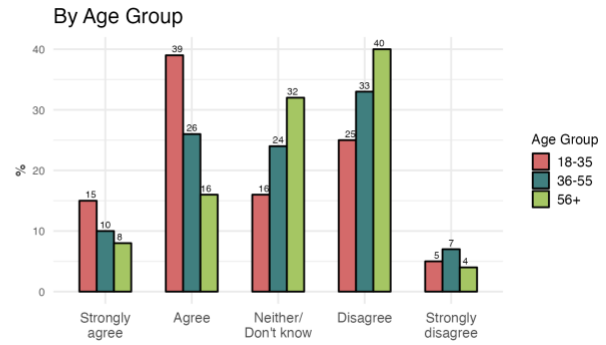
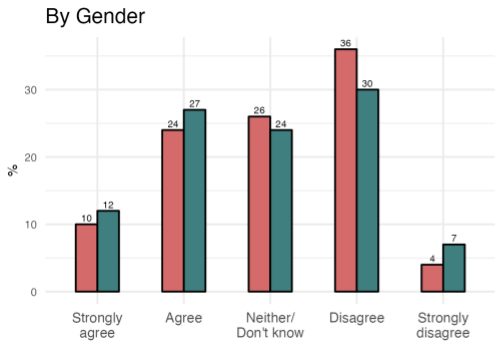
Crime vs. Non-Crime Duties



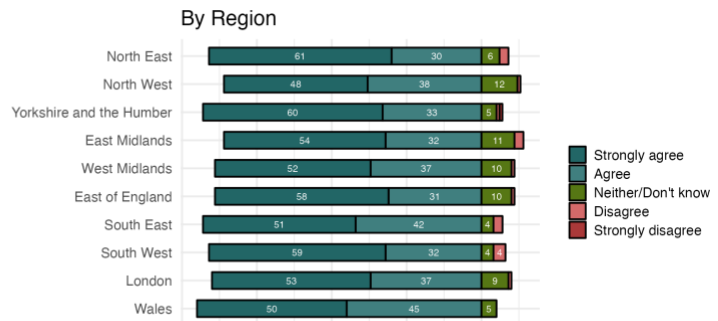
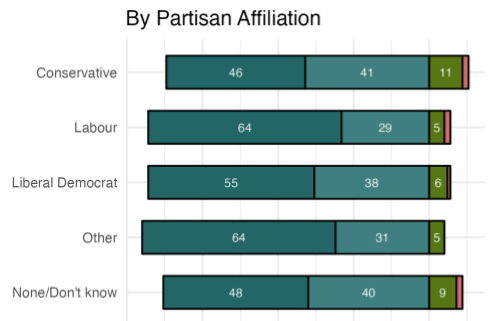
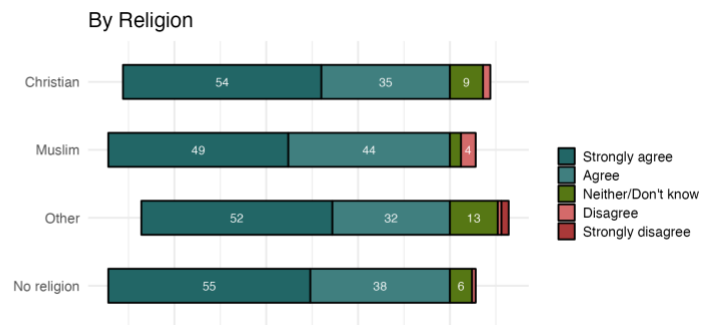
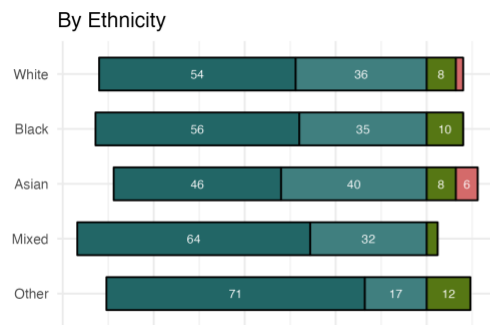
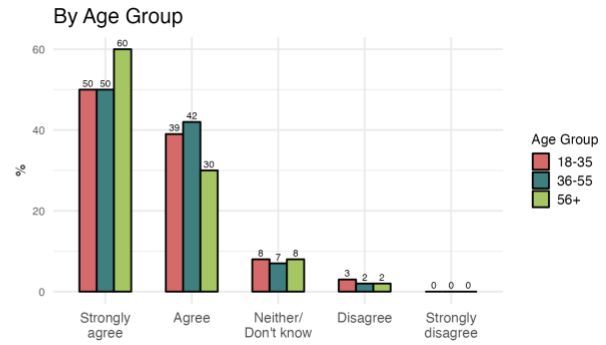
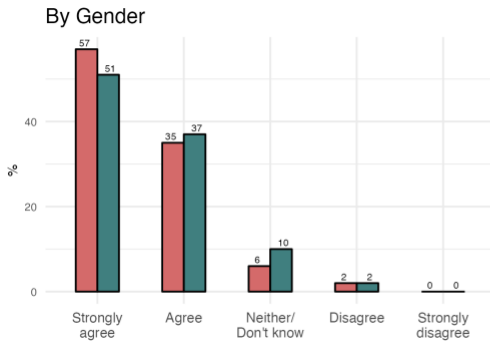
Neighbourhood Policing



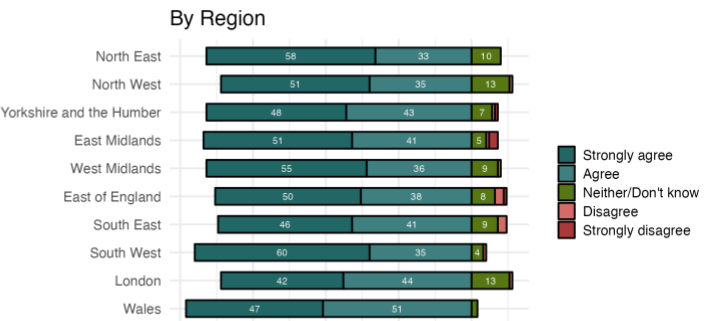
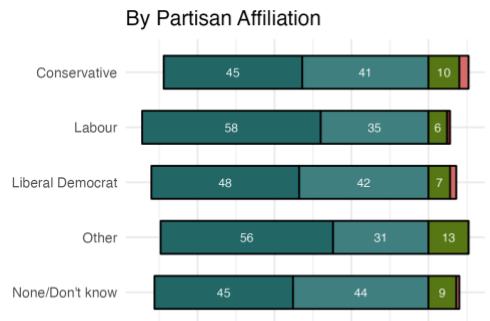
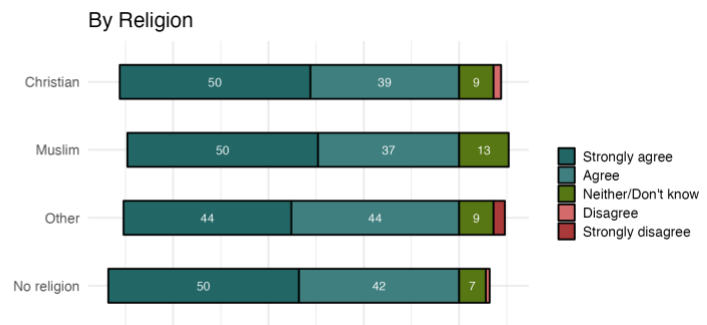
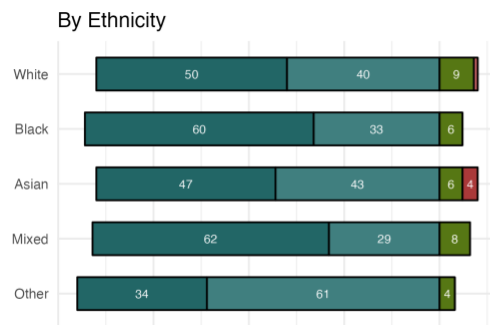
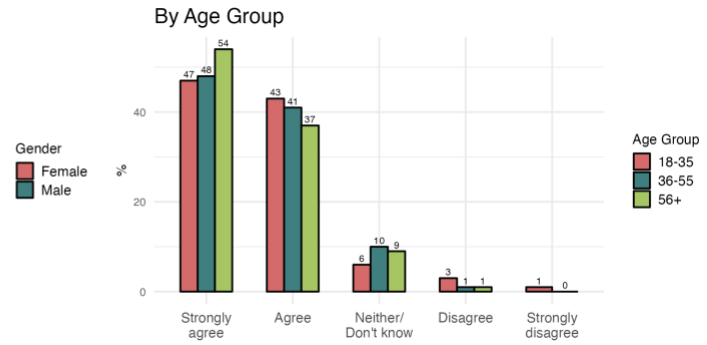
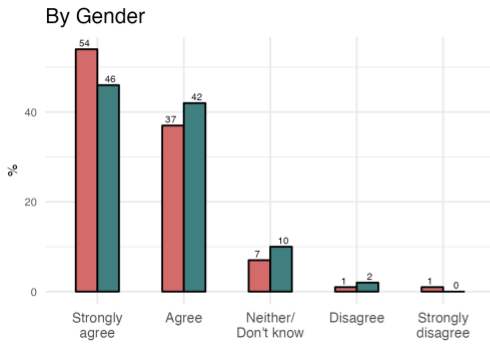
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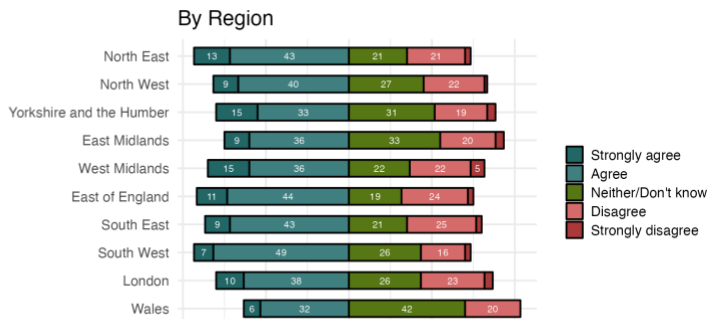
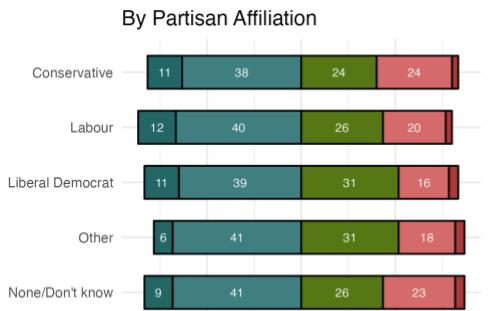
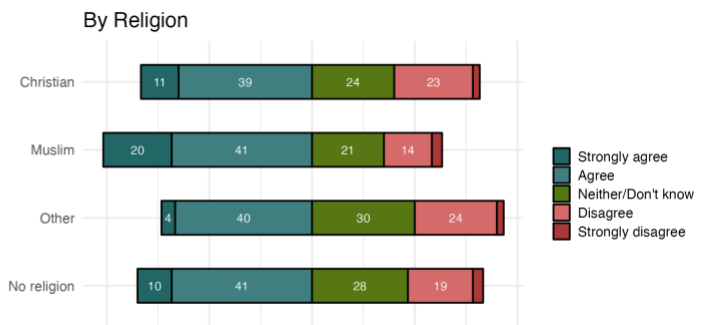
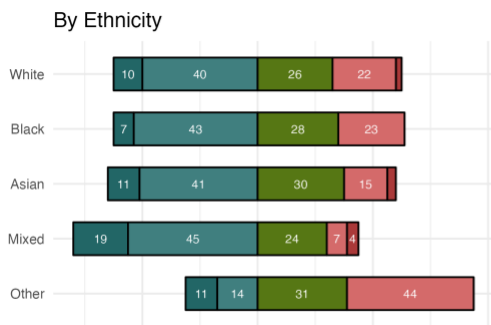
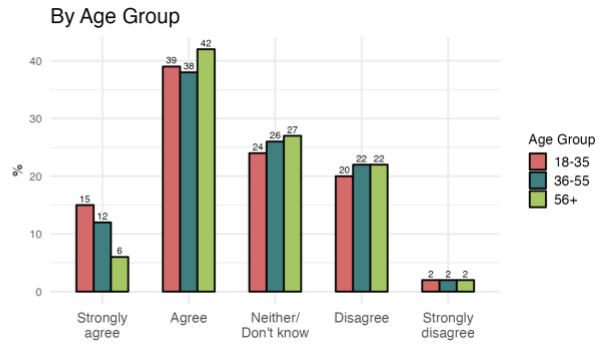
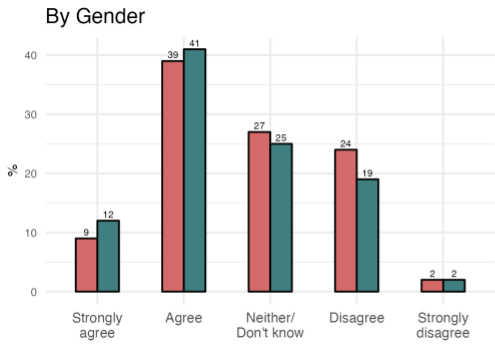
Vetting Process



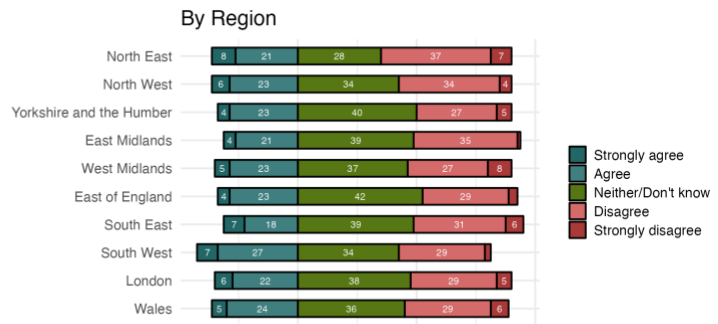
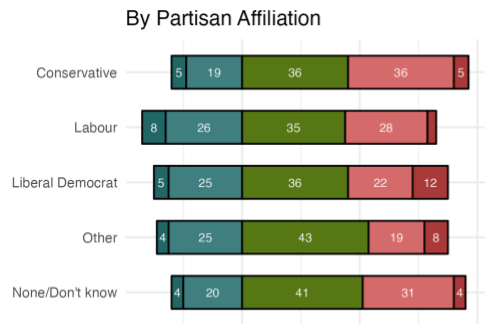
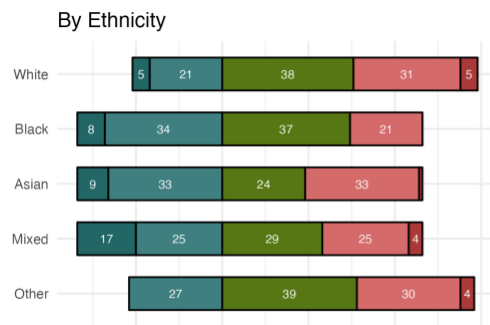
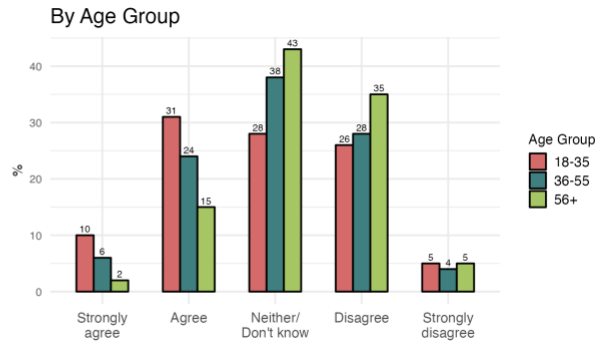
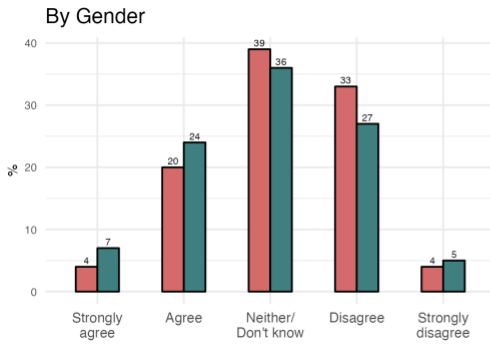
Training and Development



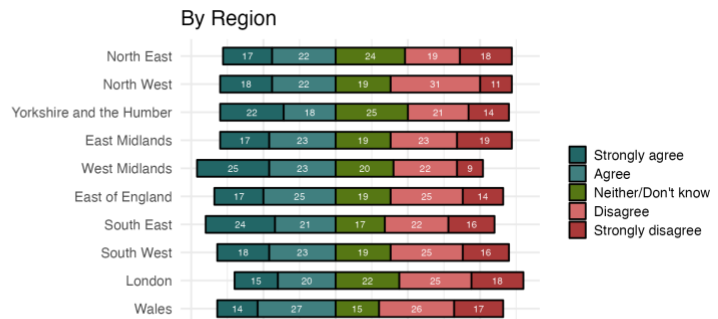
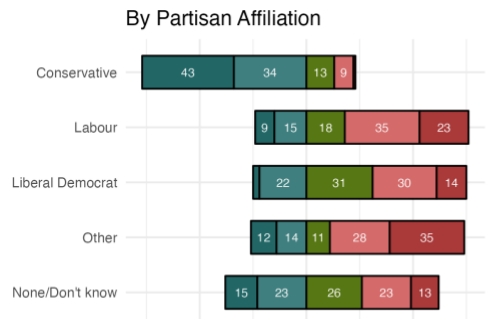
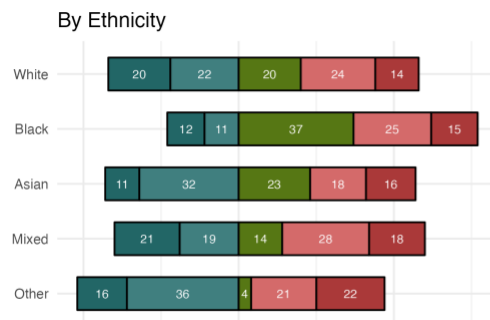
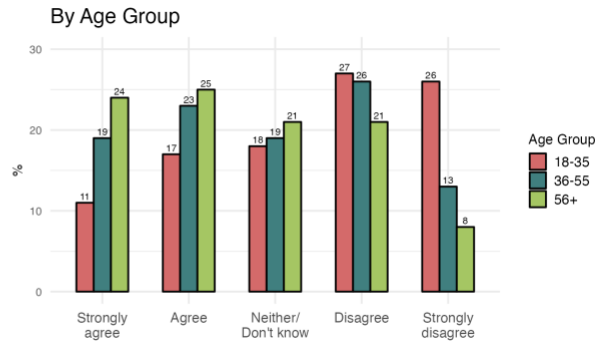
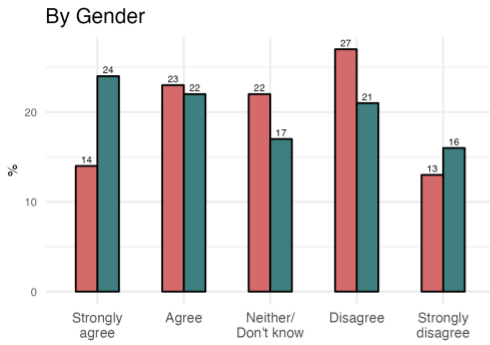
Prioritize Areas with High Crime Rates



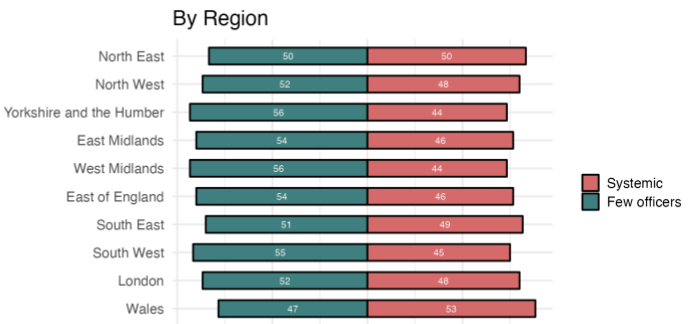
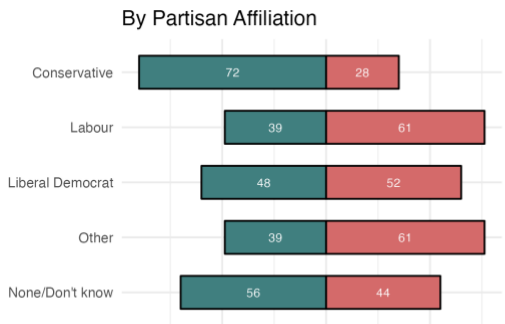
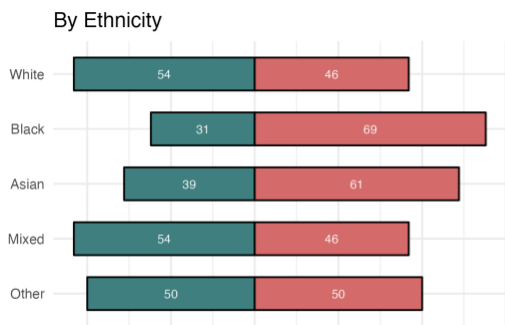
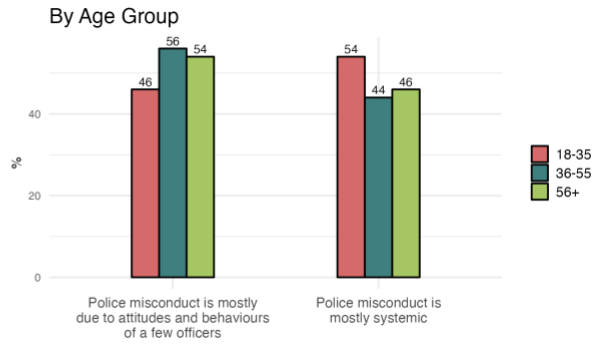
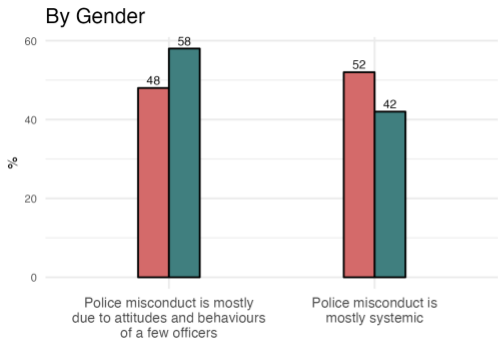
Economic Crime and Fraud



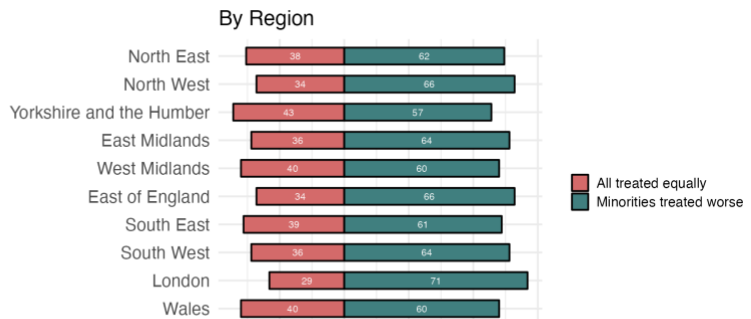
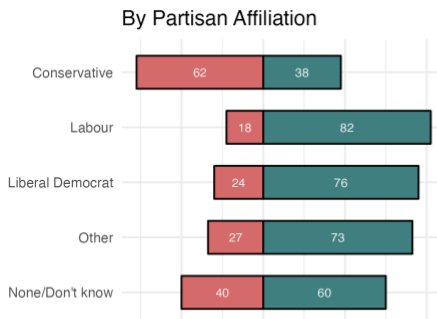
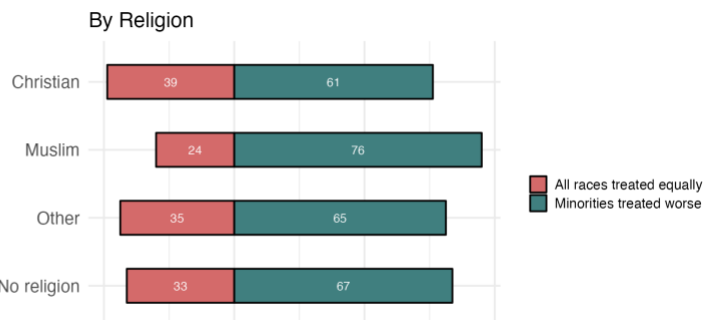
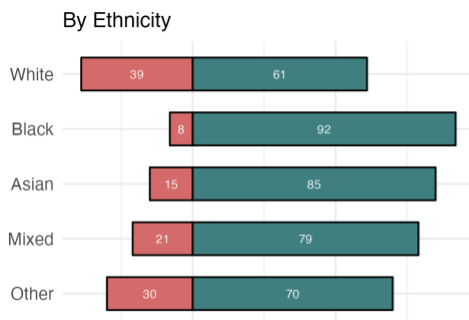
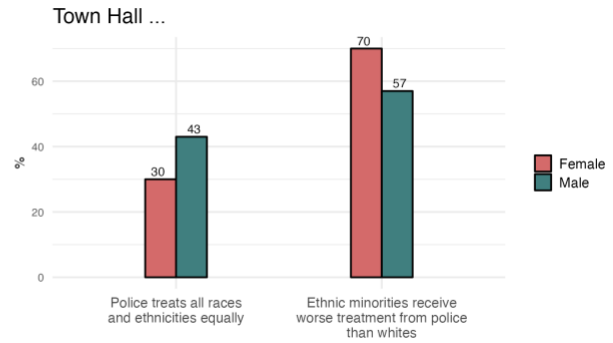
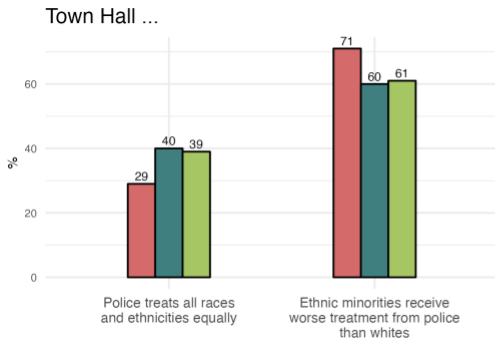
Protests



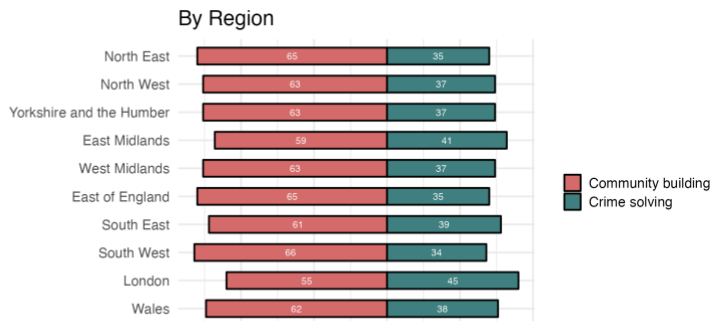
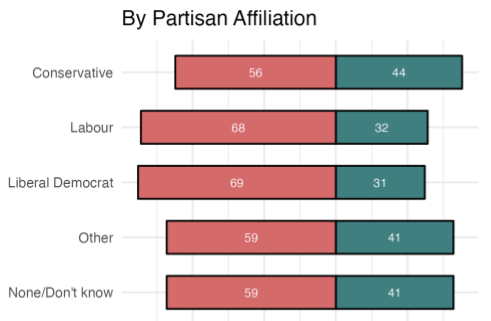
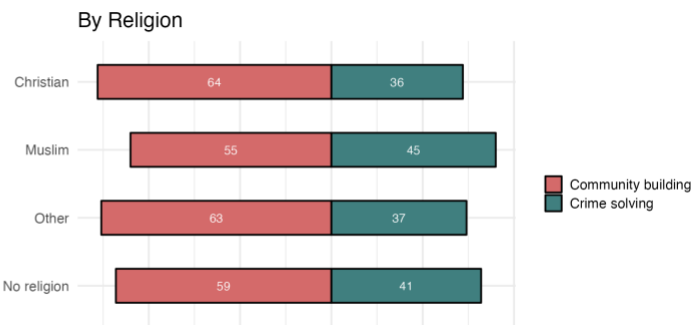
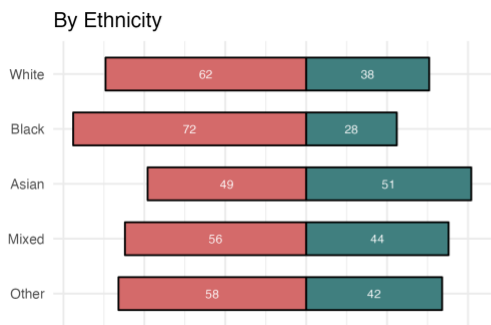
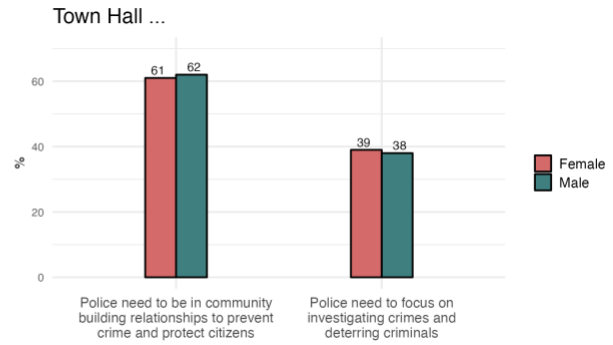
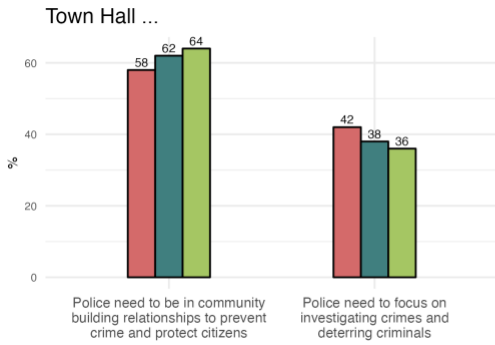
Nature of Police Misconduct



Treatment of Minorities



Community Building or Crime Solving



Appendix 2. Regression Tables and Figures

Attendance

In order to determine the statistical relationship between group characteristics and attendance among those who were willing to deliberate in the pre-survey, we ran a series of multivariate logistic regression models. Among the 12,792 YouGov panelists who completed the pre-survey, 5440 (43%) expressed willingness to deliberate. Of the 5440 who were willing, 3500 (64%) were randomly selected to attend the Deliberative Town Hall. Of the 3500 who were selected, 1381 (39%) showed up. Accordingly, the dataset is confined to those who were willing to deliberate and invited to the Deliberative Town Hall (N = 3500).

The dependent variable, **attendance**, is a binary variable measured as 1 if the survey respondent attended the online Deliberative Town Hall and 0 otherwise. The model contains a total of twelve independent variables. First, **gender** is an indicator variable measured as 0 if female and 1 if male. Another indicator variable is **ethnicity**, measured as 0 if non-white and 1 if white. The following ordinal variables were included as well: **family income** (under £5,000 per year, £5,000 - £14,999 per year, £15,000 - £150,000 per year, £150,000 and over), **age** (18-35, 36-55, 56+), and **education** (No qualifications, Levels 1-5, Level 6+). All ordinal variables were centered to make the regression results easier to interpret. To measure partisan affiliation, we included three indicator variables, **Conservative**, **Labour**, and **Other**, with Independents as the reference category. Lastly, we included four indicator variables to account for region: **North**, **East/South**, **London**, and **Wales**, with Midlands as the reference category. Religion was also considered yet ultimately excluded from the analysis, given that certain subsets of religious groups almost entirely overlap with those of ethnicity (namely, only 0.3% of the White invitees were Muslim) and may create bias in the regression models.

Finally, we weighted the dataset along age, gender, education, and region so that the results will be representative of the general population. Any incomplete responses were dropped. The table in the following page contains the results of the multivariate regression.

The first model is unweighted. The second model is weighted and contains main effects only. In both models, we see a positive and significant effect for **age** and **education**, and a negative and significant effect for **ethnicity**. This implies that older, educated, and non-White citizens were more likely to show up for the Deliberative Town Hall. To see whether different demographic categories were interacting with each other in a meaningful way, we ran additional regressions with interaction terms. The results show that less wealthy Labour constituents participated at higher rates.

Attendance

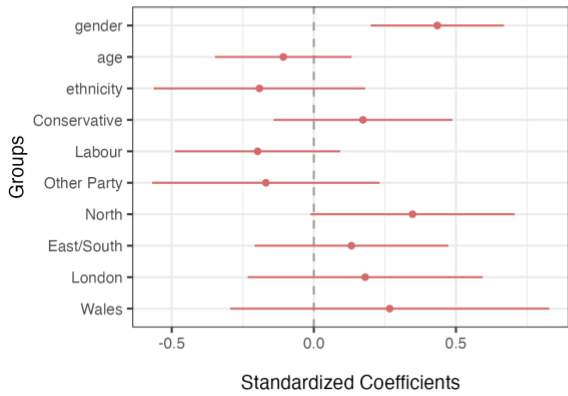
	Unweighted		Weighted, Main Effects Only		Weighted, With Interactions	
gender	-0.039	(0.078)	-0.032	(0.077)	-0.037	(0.078)
age	0.218 ***	(0.053)	0.216 ***	(0.053)	0.217 ***	(0.053)
ethnicity	-0.328 *	(0.129)	-0.321 **	(0.124)	-0.317 *	(0.124)
Conservative	0.005	(0.109)	0.001	(0.109)	-0.011	(0.109)
Labour	0.019	(0.095)	0.012	(0.094)	0.016	(0.094)
Other Party	0.088	(0.133)	0.078	(0.132)	0.072	(0.132)
North	0.089	(0.120)	0.078	(0.119)	0.087	(0.119)
East/South	0.071	(0.114)	0.065	(0.113)	0.065	(0.113)
London	0.001	(0.140)	-0.023	(0.136)	-0.019	(0.136)
Wales	-0.112	(0.190)	-0.108	(0.187)	-0.104	(0.187)
family income	-0.043	(0.056)	-0.041	(0.055)	0.028	(0.067)
education	0.331 ***	(0.054)	0.328 ***	(0.054)	0.327 ***	(0.054)
Labour*family income					-0.210	(0.113)
N	2860		2860		2860	
logLik	-1895.814		-1895.856		-1894.120	
AIC	3817.628		3817.711		3816.241	

*** p < 0.001; ** p < 0.01; * p < 0.05.

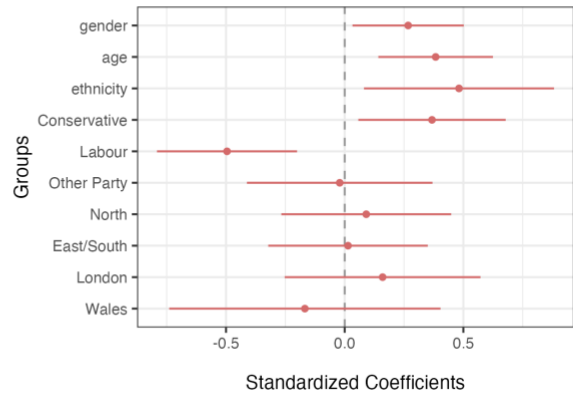
Subgroup Analyses of Constituent Opinion on Policies

To see whether a particular subset of the attendees was more likely to agree/disagree to the policy statements in Section 3, we ran logistical regressions on the treatment group (N = 1292). Here, the dependent variable is 1 if the participant is in line with the majority opinion and 0 otherwise (i.e. if the majority disagrees with the given statement and a participant responded “Strongly agree,” that participant is coded as 0). The independent variables are same as above. The dataset was also weighted to be more representative of the general population. The following figures depict the regression results for each policy item in Section 3:

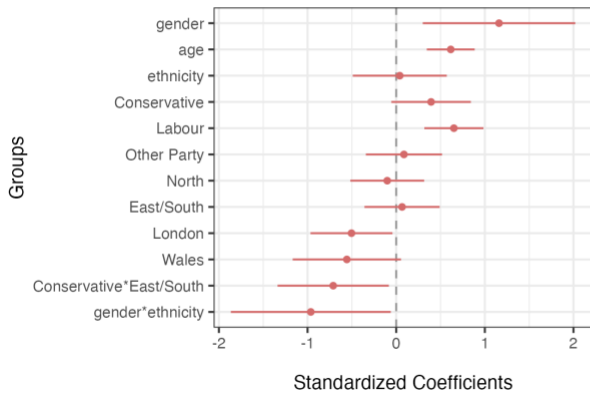
Agree with "Police Should Focus More on High-Volume Crime than High-Degree Crime"



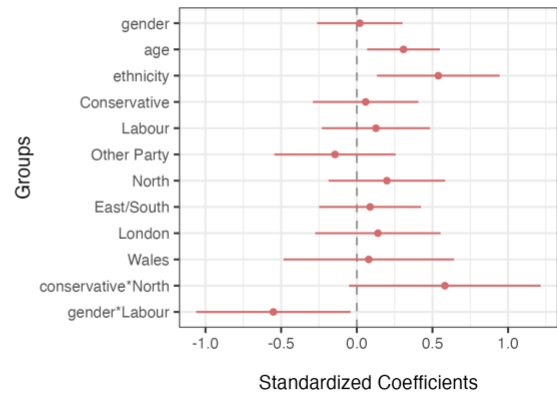
Agree with "Police Should Focus Only on Crime and Drop Non-Crime Duties"



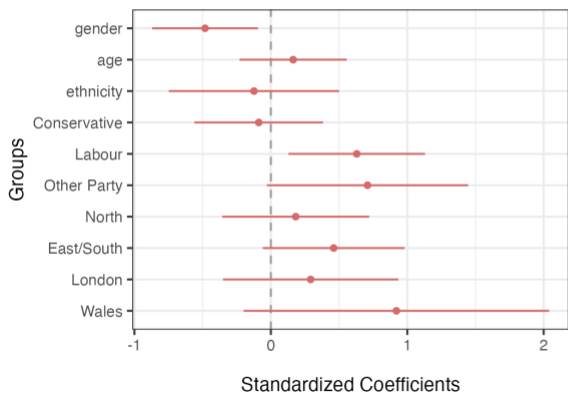
Agree with "Police Should Invest More in Neighbourhood Policing"



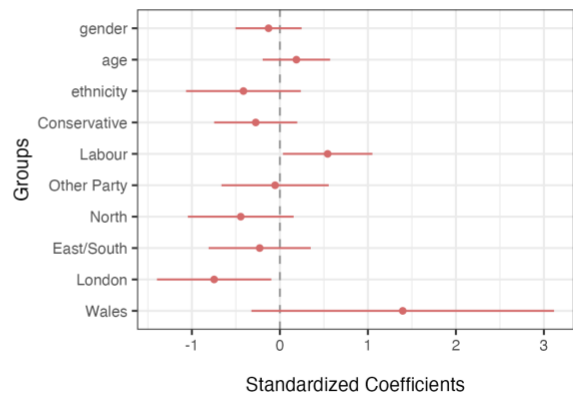
Disagree with "Police Should Support Victims of Crime"



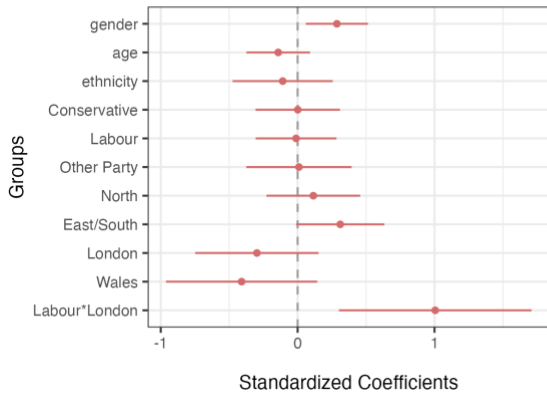
Agree with "Police Should Invest More in Consistent Processes for Vetting Officers"



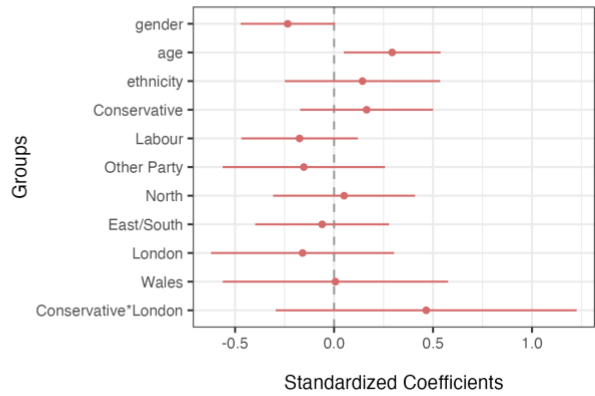
Agree with "Police Should Have More Consistent Training and Development"



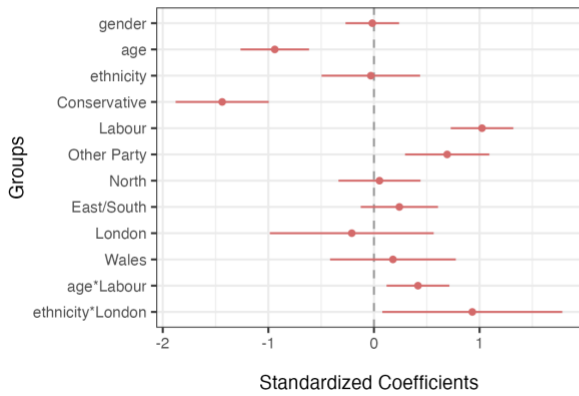
Agree with "Police Should Prioritise Areas with Lots of Crime"



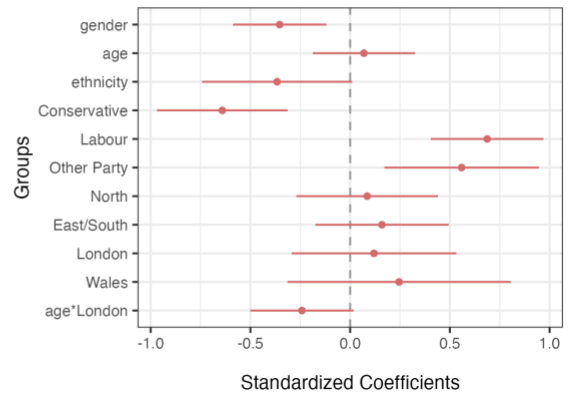
Disagree with "Police Should Focus More on Tackling Economic Crime and Fraud"



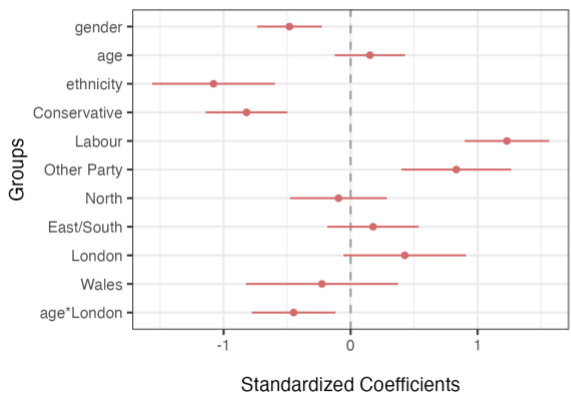
Disagree with "Police Should be Tougher When Dealing with Protests and Public Disturbances"



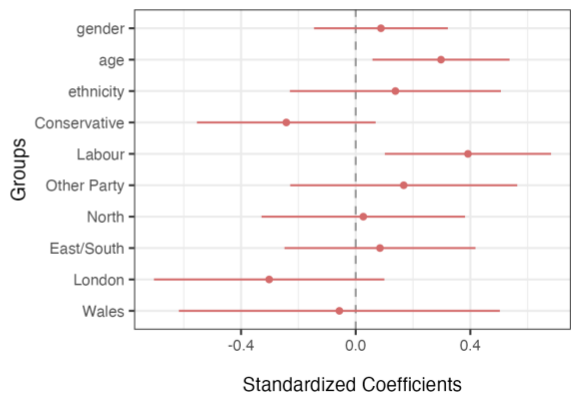
Agree with "Police Misconduct is Systemic, Rather than Due to a Few Officers"



Agree with "Ethnic Minorities Receive Worse Treatment from Police than Whites"

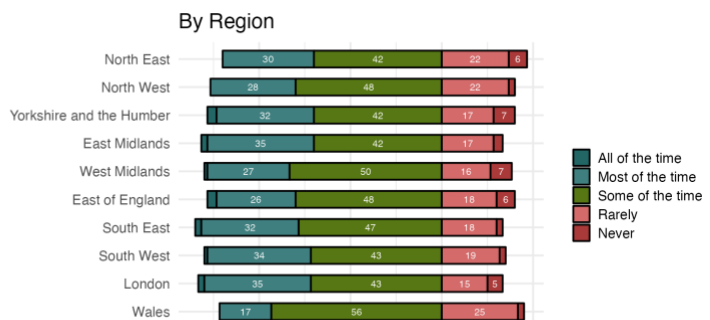
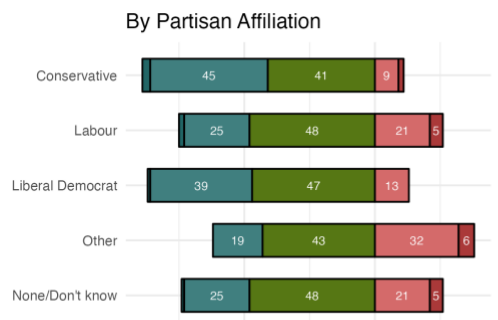
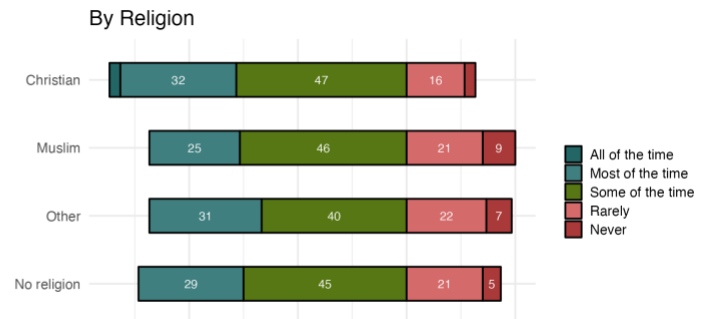
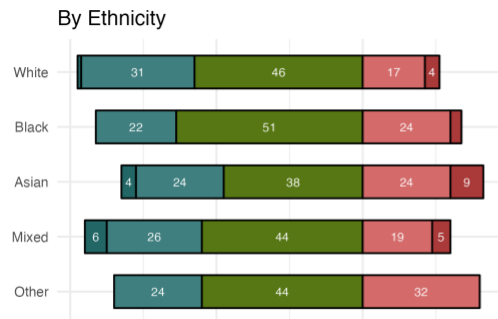
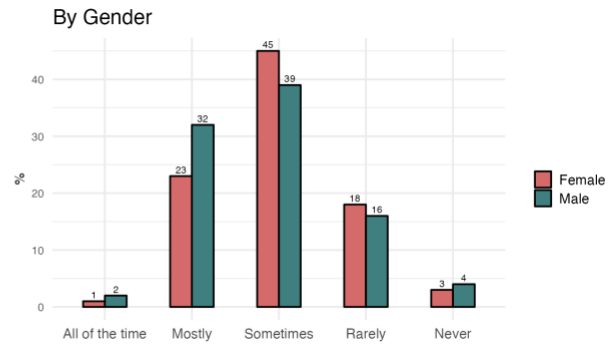
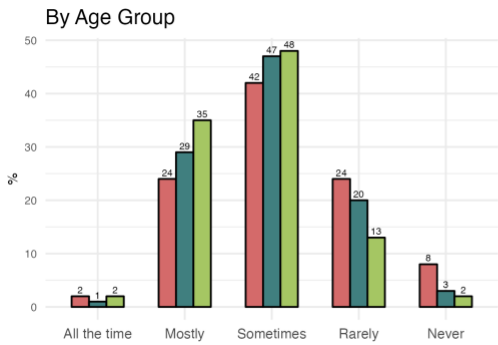


Agree with "Police Should be in Community Building Relationships"

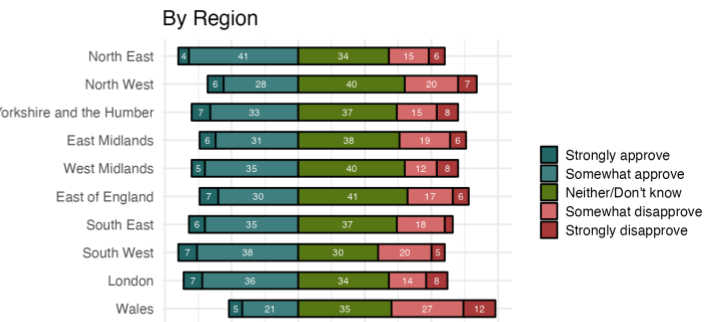
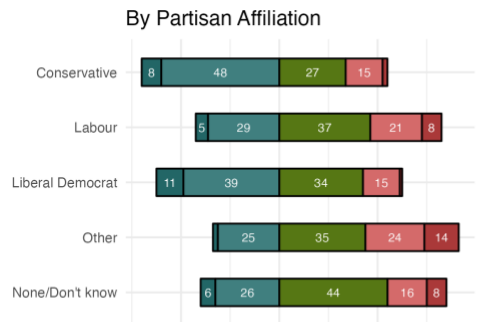
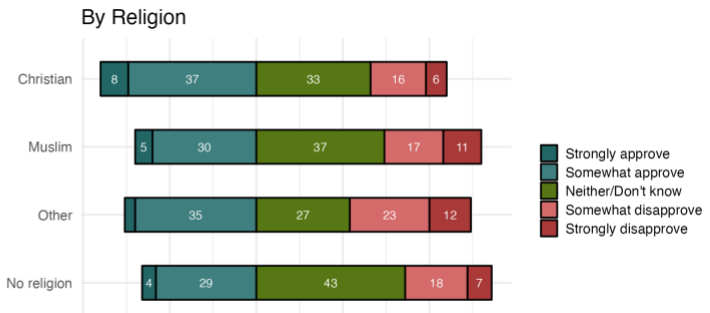
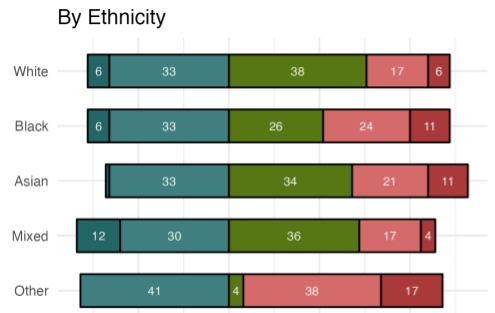
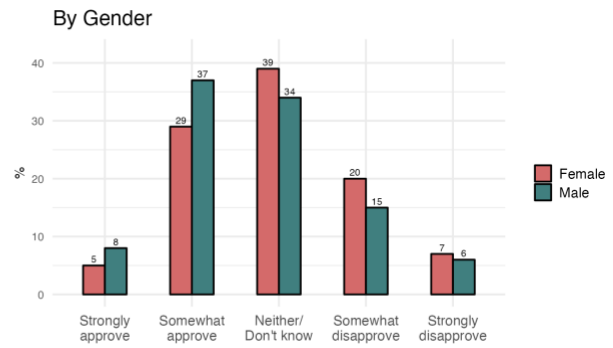
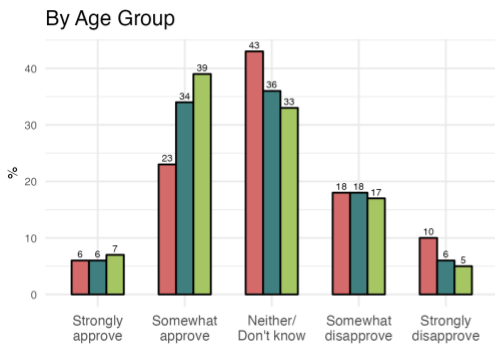


Appendix 3. Breakdown of Constituent Opinion on Institutions by Group

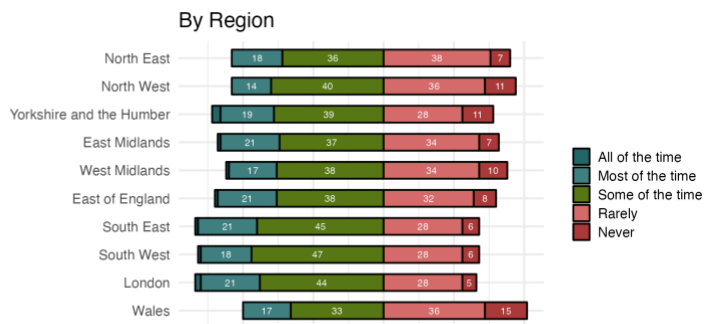
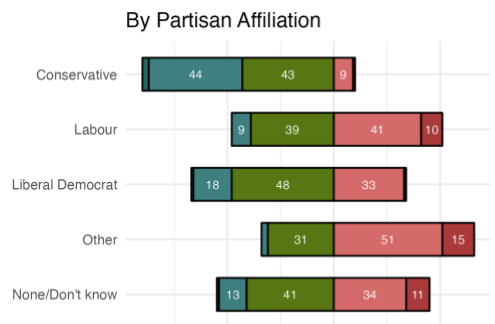
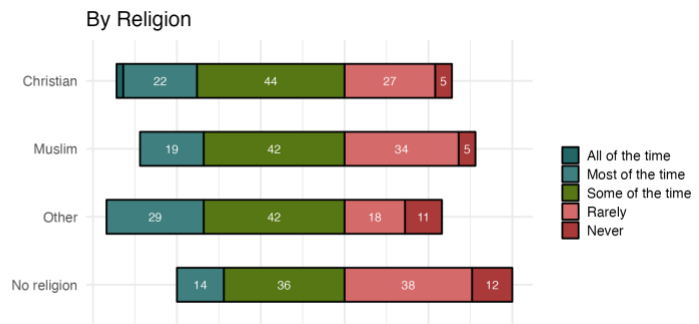
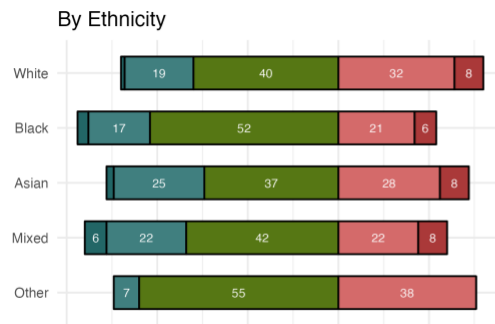
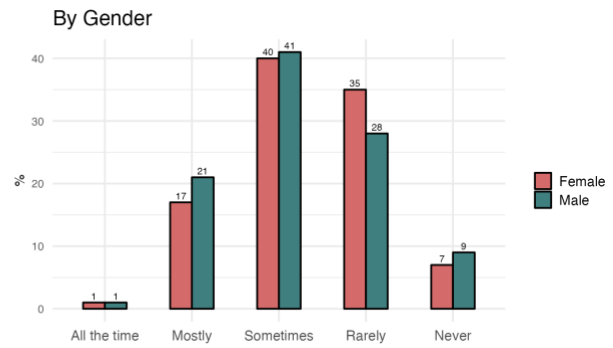
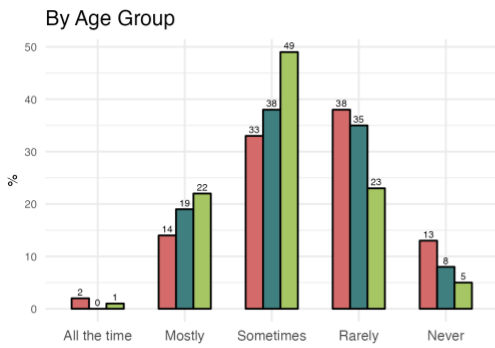
Trust towards the Home Affairs Committee



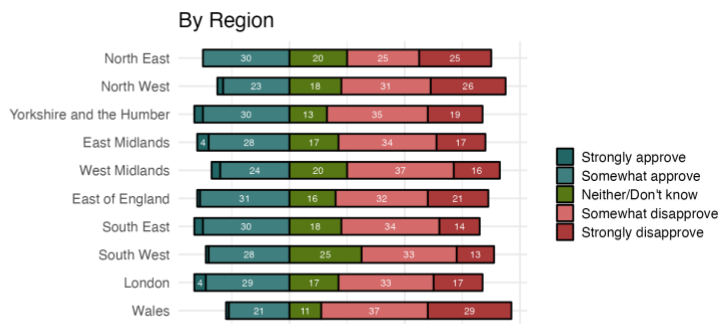
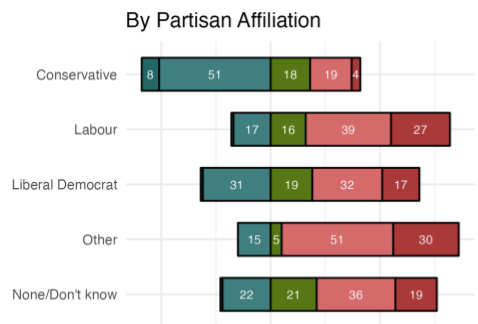
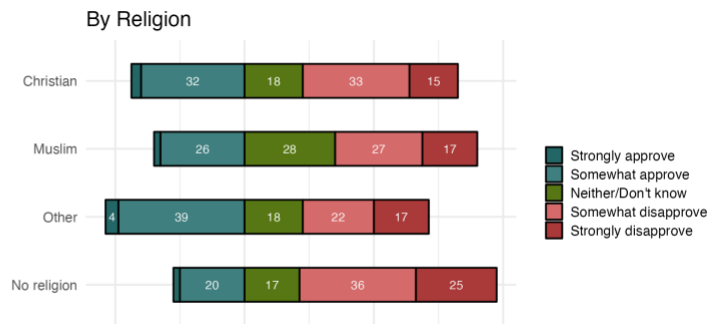
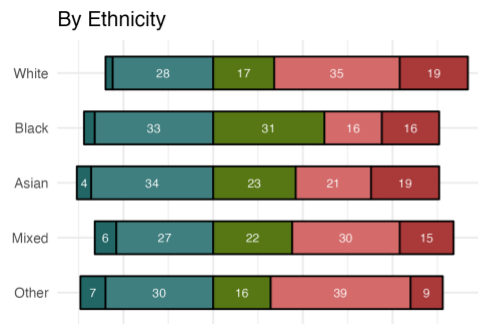
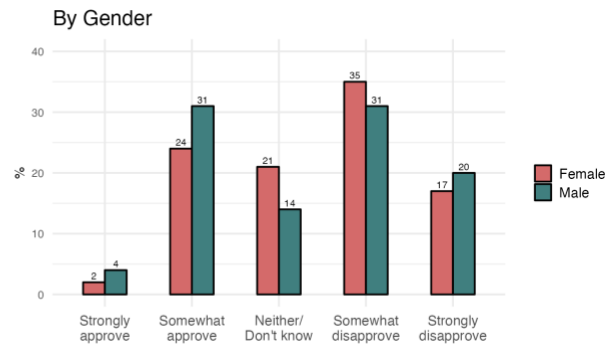
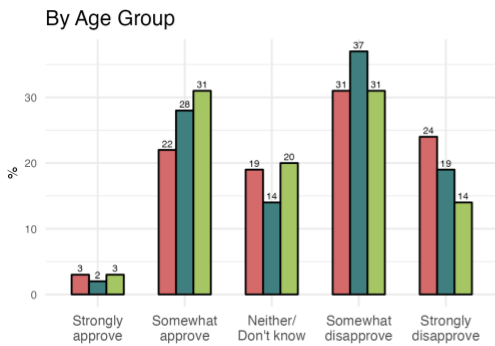
Approval towards the Home Affairs Committee



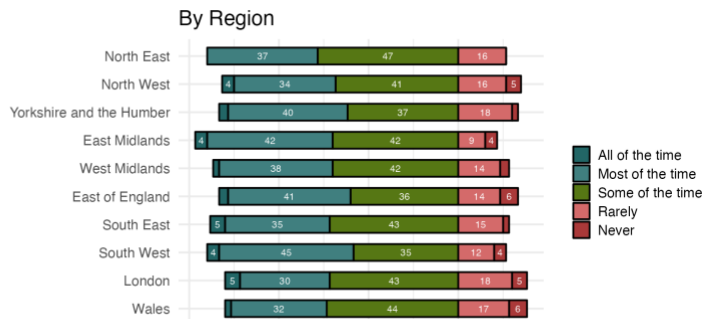
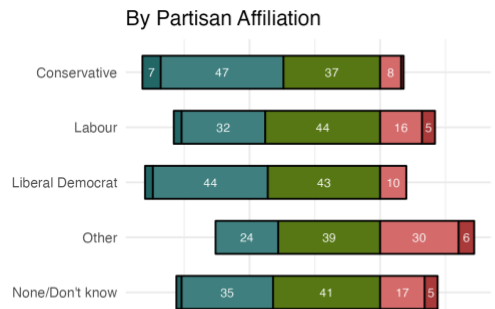
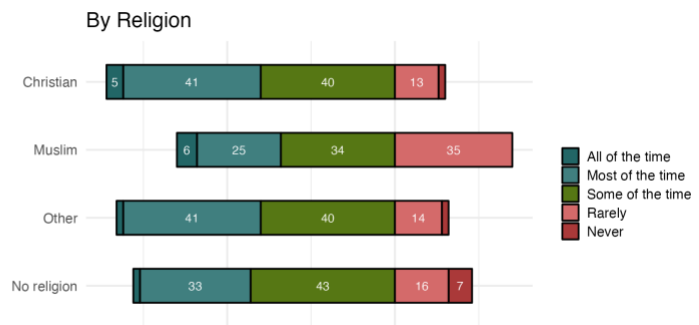
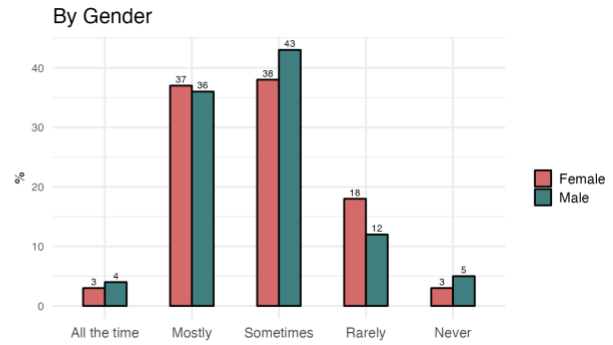
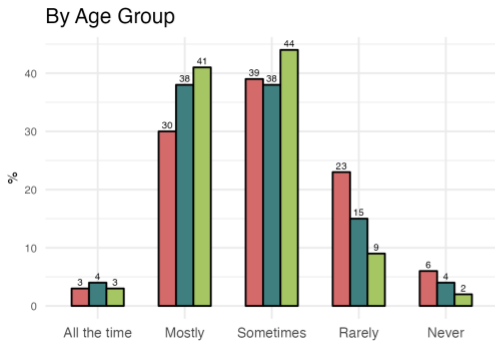
Trust towards the U.K. Parliament



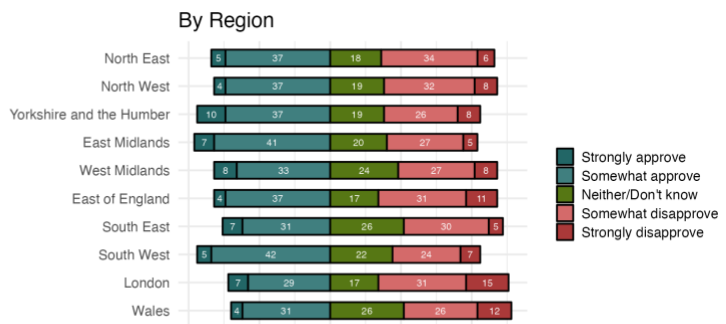
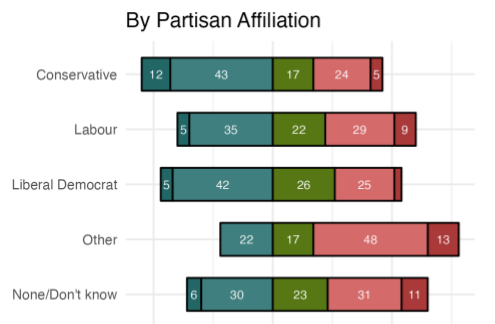
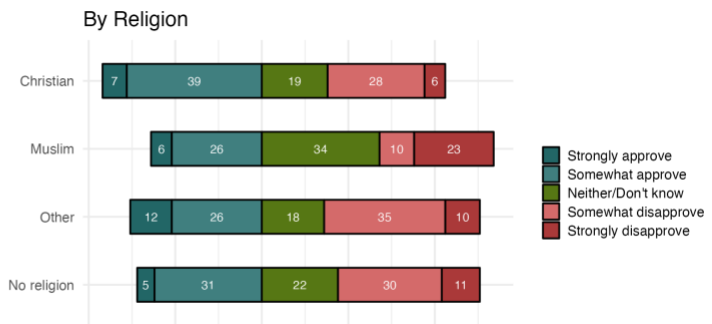
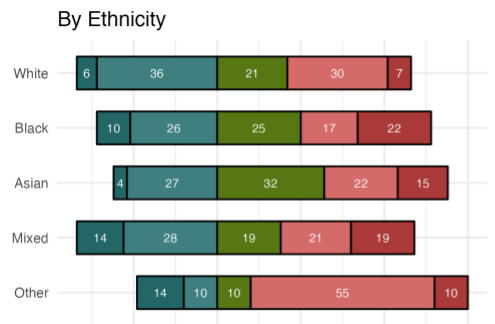
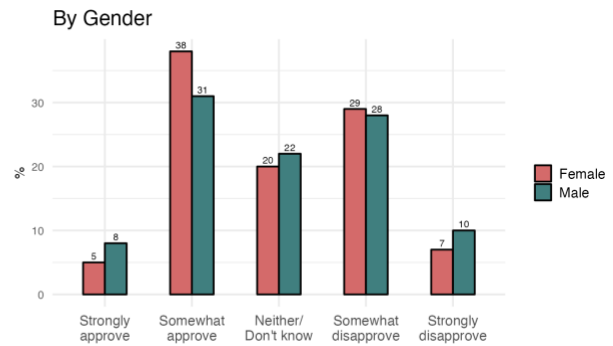
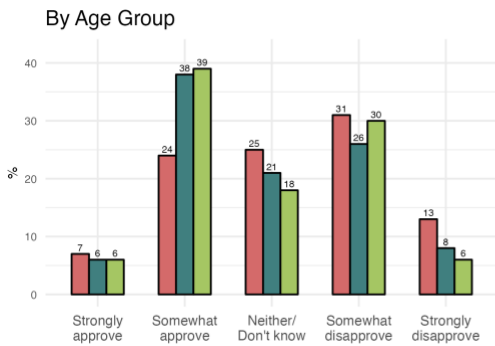
Approval towards the U.K. Parliament



Trust towards the Police in England and Wales



Approval towards the Police in England and Wales



Appendix 4. Representative List of Questions and Comments from Deliberative Town Hall

Competing Police Priorities 500 questions/comments (34%)

Questions/Comments

Making more things illegal, like riding electric scooters on roads, is pointless if no one is there to police it. [54/Male/White/Christian/North West]

With regard to all the types of crime that are committed and the reporting systems that are available - e.g. 999, non-emergency and regional Police Services as well as in person and online, would it not be better to form specific Teams to deal with particular incidents? For example PCSO's to deal with Community issues such as vandalism, theft and anti social behaviour, a Specialist Unit to deal with Mental Health related problems, and private agencies such as Victim Support, CRISIS and Domestic Violence charities to be the point of contact for victims of crime, therefore leaving the Police to deal with the more demanding crimes? I ask this in light of the poster displayed in Maidstone Police Station asking people to report non urgent incidents online - including rape, sexual assault, racial violence, domestic violence and so on. [59/Female/White/Christian/South East]

I am concerned about online fraud and scams. Given its international nature, don't you think that this should be done on a national scale & staffed by experts, and not the "bobby in the beat"? I am happy not to see police on patrol. [76/Male/White/Christian/London]

Do the panel feel that the police are perhaps trying to cover too many crimes that could possibly be handled by other organisations. [40/Male/White/Christian/North East]

I understand that police need to get straight onto catching a criminal once a crime has happened but their duty is also to tend to the victim in some ways. I was left surrounded by addicts and drunks when I was violently mugged. NO screening was done to ascertain whether I was still in danger, which I was. No screening was done to see if I was vulnerable, I am disabled with no ability to run or escape another violent assault by the remaining people surrounding me. I was alone for 40 mins after the assault, I do not understand why my safety was secondary to the capture of the perpetrator? She was known to the police, they knew her likely place of residence, surely not EVERY available officer was needed to go to her residence. Why are victims neglected in this way? [54/Female/White/Other/North East]

How much control do the police have? I have family and friends who have been robbed off a phone (for example) and they have been able to track the location of the phone but the police still denied knocking on the door and enquiring about it. [33/Female/Asian/Muslim/East of England]

Underfunding of social services and mental health services in society needs to be better funded in order to have an impact on front line policing. How is this being addressed?

[54/Female/White/Christian/East Midlands]

How, why and under what authority do the police decide to allocate scarce resources to investigate actions which are not crimes (twitter spat / hurtful language) as a priority over real crime? [60/Female/-/Christian/Wales]

Questions/Comments

When people are drinking in town the police just walk passed !! why ?
[48/Male/White/Christian/East Midlands]

High Impact Crime (knife crime and sexual assault)

Questions/Comments

Considering that only 1 in 100 rapes recorded by police resulted in a charge in 2021, How can the police convince victims of rape or sexual assault that it is worth the emotional burden of reporting their assault? [19/Male/White/No religion/West Midlands]

We are concerned about knife crime, what tactics can be put in place to combat this
[66/Female/White/Christian/Yorkshire and the Humber]

High Impact Crime (cyber-crime, economic crime)

Questions/Comments

Why can't fraud be dealt with by a group independent of the police until protection is needed.
[72/Female/White/Christian/Wales]

It's been said that crime has changed with 50% now being fraud. Has the number of "traditional" crimes fallen and, if so, by how much? [76/Male/White/Christian/London]

Can we employ people who are only cyber experts and that they don't need to be police officers? [58/Male/White/Christian/East Midlands]

Given the international nature of cyber crime and fraud, is it even appropriate for local police forces to be tasked with dealing with it? I feel similarly about my rural force dealing with terrorism. [35/Male/-/-/East of England]

Anti-Social Behavior

Questions/Comments

Some of the towns here have a fairly deserted high street that people stay away from due to antisocial behaviour and petty crime. If we are to attract people to spend money in our towns and cities as well as businesses to flourish in the long term, I believe the basic baseline for the police should be to provide a reassuring lingering presence to the community that they should feel safe in town centres and rural areas. [35/Male/White/Christian/North West]

Youth ASB is of prime concern. Not only their county (city) line activities but also their criminal damage, and increasingly attacks on vulnerable people. This makes people afraid to go out. With no police visibility in the areas affected it goes unchecked. Calls to police are ignored so people give up calling them. Therefore the ASB is not recorded. With no youth services due to local authority cuts to funding year on year on year.... what is the solution?
[66/Female/White/No religion/North East]

Community Policing

Questions/Comments

On a totally different note - as I headteacher I have seen very effective practice with colleagues in the police working directly with young people at risk of getting drawn into knife crime, gang culture and / or exploitation. I would be very concerned if this was to be seen as inessential work. What are the panel's view of this? [45/Female/White/No religion/Yorkshire and the Humber]

Health Service (Including Mental Health Support)

Questions/Comments

Why does it often fall to the police to deal with people with mental health issues rather than crime and crime prevention? [48/Male/White/No religion/North West]

Are there alternative approaches to dealing with mental health issues? E.g. could mental health ambulances be set up and if so, how would staff be trained and funded? [35/Female/White/Christian/Wales]

Would it not make sense to increase funding for woefully underfunded mental health services? This would potentially decrease crime involving desperate unmedicated or untreated sufferers. Also, it would mean less police time spent on mental health crisis intervention, where they often do the job the mental health crisis teams should be doing. i.e keeping sufferers safe, preventing suicide, etc. I've seen this myself. This would free up police resources [Anonymously Submitted]

Linking to Local Support Agencies to Reduce Demands on Police

Questions/Comments

Combined agency responses would be fantastic but the funding for other agencies has been stripped out over the past 13 years. County council funding has been decimated. What steps are being taken to improve equality of funding across different agencies so that the most appropriate agency responds? [55/Female/White/Christian/East of England]

I agree with some of the comments about other specialist agencies taking over what the police is currently doing as they are better placed/trained to handle it. This requires much more co-ordination and communication though - having personally seen the number of different teams that are involved in social services (through short term fostering), there were so many different people turning up at our door that didn't know about the other teams and hadn't had any information passed on. It's critical that this isn't replicated if responsibilities are shared between the police and other organisations. Consistency is important in dealing with people who have suffered crime - mentally, crime is difficult to deal with and it will not help if you have to keep explaining yourself to different people and also your questions aren't actioned. [49/Female/White/Christian/South East]

Legalizing Drugs

Questions/Comments

I'm at university in Manchester and I've had a stranger offer myself (and others my age) a business card advertising drugs while walking through the city centre (at about 10pm). Do you think the fact drug dealers are confident enough to do something like this in the open suggests inadequate police presence on the streets? Is enough being done to deter this sort of thing? [21/Male/White/Christian/North West]

Police in the UK spend a lot of time and resources dealing with low level drug offences, e.g. marijuana. The Home Office is talking about criminalising nitrous oxide, which would result in more resources being used to deal with what is essentially an anti-social nuisance. Many comparable countries, including Canada and many US states are legalising cannabis. Does the panel agree that this could allow for more money to deal with violent crime and cybercrime? [33/Male/Mixed/Muslim/London]

General Policing Issues 338 questions/comments (22%)

Conviction Rates

Questions/Comments

Why are rates of solving crime so unacceptably low? [64/Male/White/Christian/South West]

It isn't the police that take cases to court - it is the CPS. Do we have an issue with the ability of the CPS to make correct decisions? [53/Male/White/No religion/Yorkshire and the Humber]

As someone who knows many officers who work on Rape and Sexual Assaults, and they have huge frustrations about the fact that the Crown Prosecution Service seem to have a reluctance to take cases to court, despite the amount of evidence collected during investigations, and that the media tends to make it out that the police are at fault for the low conviction rate, shouldn't the committee also look at the wider issues within the prosecution system?

[37/Female/White/No religion/South East]

Organization

Questions/Comments

Why do we have multiple police forces with different management ideas and objectives, which potentially creates a post code lottery to the public in how they get served?

[54/Male/White/Christian/North West]

Does a change in the nature of crime challenge the idea of 43 local forces trying to tackle certain crimes? Should local forces concentrate on 'physical' policing (e.g. community policing) and hive off the internet fraud / county lines / etc to regional / national specialists?

[53/Male/White/Christian/Wales]

Local police services are needed but shared services are a must to reduce admin and repeated costs. Procurement, HR, Payroll, IT as a shared service but the management and running of the local force carried out by the local force. Likewise Cyber policing does not need to be localised as it has no borders or boundaries [46/Male/White/Other/Yorkshire and the Humber]

Internal Problems

Questions/Comments

Why do the police's leadership not have the ability to to dismiss members of their forces when they underperform, or have poor behaviour, as the unions have created a mafia-esque shield around racists, misogynists, homophobes and transphobes? I see regularly that investigation took years to complete while they were on paid suspension. [39/Male/White/No religion/West Midlands]

Recently a report on the MET police was released saying that there was institutional racism, sexism, and homophobia within the police force, and there are suggestions this type of behaviour inevitably spreads to the way they police communities. Do the speakers think this issue is prevalent outside of London too and how can this type of systemic issue be addressed? [21/Female/Asian/No religion/London]

With our local police station in Wales, many male officers were found guilty of sexual abuse against a few female officers and female members of the public, but the only punishment given was for them to resign, yet their identities were kept hidden. Also with the Covid lockdowns, MP's that broke lockdown rules were not investigated and took public backlash to get the Met to even look into it. The question being, there seems to be a 2-tier system in enforcing the law between the public and those in power. How can accountability be monitored and what protections can be given to officers that are brave enough to investigate high profile or people in power? [33/Male/White/No religion/Wales]

The culture within policing does seem to be quite toxic and the changes Festus refers to with the new intakes will take too long to filter through organically. How will you ensure that this culture of immunity and superiority changes sooner rather than later? [55/Female/White/Christian/East of England]

As an ex poliice officer I'd much rather be investigated by the IOPC than police officers - the IOPC are far more easy going. And using business people would be a joke, they very rarely have any ethics or morals; they're worse than the police! [62/Male/White/Christian/East of England]

Funding

Questions/Comments

Pam from Manchester Hi Diana why did the police force cut the amount of officers a few years ago yet now the force are recruiting again? Where did the money come from? Thank you [62/Female/White/Christian/North West]

Why did the conservative government remove 40,000 police officers from duty around 2010, with Police experts suggesting that this would dampen local intelligence and community relationships and was not in the best interests of the public? [51/Male/White/Christian/Yorkshire and the Humber]

I agree that cuts to all public services has vastly contributed to rising anti social behaviour. [Anonymously Submitted]

Questions/Comments

The reality is that with financial cuts in several services such as mental health services, social services etc the police have become the last resort. There needs to be more investment in support service but when people with a person in mental health crisis are told nobody will help and the only way to access services is to call police they feel they have no choice.

[52/Female/White/No religion/West Midlands]

Police Mistreatment/Brutality

Questions/Comments

I'm transgender, most queer people especially trans people are terrified of the police, I genuinely don't know a single trans person who would trust a police officer to deal with any issue they'd have, be it a hate crime, sexual abuse or to not attack them when they've been called on us to abuse us by bigots. What actual steps can you take to deal with the rampant bigotry of your police force that terrifies us. [25/Female/White/No religion/East of England]

What are the police currently doing to make sure stop and search isn't disproportionately affecting BAME males? [48/Female/White/No religion/Yorkshire and the Humber]

Why does the police take white (predominantly English) people cases more seriously than ethnic minorities? [31/Female/Other/Christian/London]

Young black youths are targeted by the police in stop and search, it is plainly racist rather than statistical searching - feels as if they are attacked so why would they trust the police [19/Female/Mixed/-/East of England]

Vetting and Recruitment 212 questions/comments (14%)

Questions/Comments

So, I read the background briefing. I was quite shocked by some of the language used. For example, all options available were shown as consuming resources. In fact this should not be the case. Background checks on recruitment should surely be done as a matter of course, and not take additional resources, so why is there the implication that this will be a cost for the police? The same is true of effective management of service police officers - although I appreciate that some management training is doubtless needed, the most basic management of staff involves having, and enforcing, effective policies on equalities, discipline etc. The briefing paper seemed to imply to me that enforcing effective management comes with an enormous cost - why? [69/Female/White/Christian/London]

Just yesterday, another serving police officer was arrested and charged with a number of sexual offences, specifically rape of a woman while on duty. How can police and the government assure us this is a few 'bad apples' when every day there are more and more stories about unacceptable behaviour by serving officers, who should never have been recruited to begin with? [34/Male/White/Christian/East of England]

I totally agree with Diana about it being necessary to recruit police with specific skills. but as far as I know, most people I know are under the impression that to work within the police, you

Questions/Comments

are required to serve many years from the bottom and “on the beat” before embarking on a specific skills path. Is this still the case? As surely this must put some very skilled and very valuable and needed off ever working for the police (using the need for online crime fighting for example) [40/Female/White/Christian/North West]

Do you have any plans on how to check police officers levels of empathy and ability to respectfully deal with the public? [20/Female/White/Christian/South East]

You all really dont get it! The public need to give the Police and backing and confidence that is needed. The reason being the Police are not on the beat mingling with the public, getting to know them and vice versa. I appreciate all the serious crimes abounding, but Joe Bloggs having something pinched from his shop, and Mr & Mrs Smith being burgled is just as important. We need good tough cops with a tough Chief Con up through the ranks and not straight out of Uni etc. The Police bend over back wards to appease law breakers like Ban Oil etc. They must be allowed to have more strength and firmness. That way they will get more admiration of what used to be a great institution [85/Male/White/Christian/North West]

Amongst younger people, I have noticed that cases of police misconduct have severely impacted the willingness of potential future recruits to consider joining police forces. Are there measures in place to “clean up” the image of police forces to restore confidence in youths joining the police? [20/Male/Mixed/No religion/London]

A19, a never before used Police Regulation, saw officers like me, forcibly retired 11 years ago. In my force over 60 officers were all dismissed, purely because they had reached full pensionable service. This wiped out, in one go all the experience accumulated by these officers. My force went into free fall, from being one of the highest rated to one of the lowest. The legacy of this is still felt today. All done allegedly for efficiency and effectiveness’ (it was to save money) [65/Male/White/Christian/East of England]

Qualifications (Mental Health, Degree, Fitness, Age, Need to Standardize Process)

Questions/Comments

On the recruiting of police officers why is it nessecary to have a degree and not life experience such as ex forces? [65/Male/White/Christian/South East]

The MPs have both said that crime is changing, IT IS NOT, the traditional crimes of robbery, burglary etc are still very prevalent, and the concentration on degrees will not solve these. [73/Male/White/Christian/East of England]

A little unfair to assume that only educated people can be the best people for the police force. [49/Male/White/No religion/North West]

I am one of the new 20,000 police officers. The degree route is turning a lot of officers away from the job. Response Police Officers can be carrying upto 20 crimes aswel as completing the university course and completing their DIT. This has led to a massive dropout rate. A response team should have around 20 reporting on for a shift and far to often I am seeing around 14 maybe 15 officers to cover a whole division. The mental health of officers is at an all time low and the number of officers off sick is increasing daily. [36/Male/White/Christian/North West]

Questions/Comments

Staggered that each police force can have their own standard of vetting! Ongoing scrutiny is absolutely crucial. [54/Female/White/Christian/South East]

You mention about standardised vetting for police in the UK. Do you think a standardised vetting process is the best approach? The range of crimes and issues in central London aren't going to be the same as someone working in the Highlands and I would expect would call for very different types of approach [40/Male/White/No religion/South East]

Diversity

Questions/Comments

According to the government website, only 6.9% of police officers in 2019 were not white. How do you propose to increase the ratio of diverse groups and become more inclusive? [35/Female/White/Christian/Wales]

Is it a priority for police forces to have more female officers on the beat? I saw a video recently where a male officer was slashed in the face with a machete. There were 3 other officers present, and two of them were female. The suspect would have been able to complete a murder and escape if those 2 female officers didn't have another man with them, because the attacker would have overpowered them. Is it actually a good idea for public safety to have women doing foot patrols? [48/Female/White/Christian/South West]

Police forces need to be representative of their communities - should recruitment positively discriminate to allow this representation to take place? [54/Female/White/Christian/East Midlands]

We don't want anything other than the best person for the role. Race or religion means nothing to someone trying to report being robbed. I feel politicians and the police are trying to be far too PC. Just hire the right people. [49/Male/White/Christian/London]

Public Participation in Vetting

Questions/Comments

I totally agree that the integrity of individual officers is important. I believe that better screening of applicants is required to identify possible 'bad apples' earlier. Like Jury service, can members of the public be involved in interviewing? [Anonymously Submitted]

How high a priority is improving vetting as officers transfer between forces? That seems to currently be an issue where forces have simply accepted an officer transferring in, without due diligence being applied. Hoping that will fall within the panel's desire to improve the continuity of the process of ensuring we have appropriate police officers and can help remove those who should not be police officers. [52/Male/White/No religion/South East]

I am concerned about members of the public choosing police officers. There are plenty of prejudiced members of the public each with their own axes to grind. [76/Male/White/Christian/London]

Need for Continuous Vetting

Questions/Comments

I believe public trust in policing in England and Wales is at its lowest due to serious crimes being committed by officers, including but not limited to rape and murder. How do you propose to improve the vetting system or ongoing assessment of officers to prevent such happening? How do you intend to gain public trust again? [45/Male/White/Christian/Wales]

Could vetting not be an ongoing process, such as every three years. vetting only at entry is not sufficient? [49/Male/Asian/Muslim/South West]

It isn't just the initial vetting of applicants, but it is also the way in which officers who have been accused of inappropriate behaviour are dealt with. As with Teachers, Doctors, Sports Coaches, the Clergy it is far easier to deploy an individual to a new Team or even promote them - thus moving the problem rather than making uncomfortable enquiries and difficult investigations. There has to be a firm structure and procedure in place to ensure ALL accusations are thoroughly investigated and not swept under the carpet.

[59/Female/White/Christian/South East]

Neighbourhood Policing 105 questions/comments (7%)

Questions/Comments

Prevention is better than cure. Visibility is a big part of that. Many local Police stations have been shut to save costs. We need to go back to local policing and visible foot patrols as it will deter crime and give peace and mind to the public. Thoughts? [37/Male/White/No religion/North West]

I live in Glossop in the High Peak and crime is on the rise, our police station is effectively closed to the public. Police presence is almost zero and we get a lot of 'out of towners' coming into the town and committing crimes knowing full well the police will be having to travel to attend and they will be long gone by the time they arrive. When will we get back to routinely having 'bobbies on the beat' helping to deter those who are committing these crimes effectively unchallenged, especially in a relatively small town like ours? [42/Male/White/No religion/East Midlands]

The options feel aligned to a very macro demographic (one size fits all) rather than micro demographic considering the age and needs of the local community - an older age group may well welcome more visible policing, for example [50/Male/White/No religion/South East]

Local policing is very important for local crimes such as burglary, violent crime, etc., but less important for remote crimes, e.g., online fraud. Surely there could be a split of responsibilities (as there is in serious and organised crime) to give a better response for specific types of crime? [43/Male/White/Christian/South East]

Local policing isn't stopped by a national police force. You would still have regional responses addressing regional issues it just means that the process, engagement and service is consistent across all members of the public rather than the current postcode lottery affected levels of service and types of response. [54/Male/White/Christian/North West]

Questions/Comments

Do you think that going back to having local bobbies with truly local knowledge walking the streets to keep certain behaviours under control, would be effective and great value for money and potentially ease the pressure on other officers, who could then be freed up to attend other crimes? [42/Female/White/No religion/North West]

Tim mentioned the number of Police Forces in England and looking at the consistency of procurement across all of these. I totally I agree with this in order to drive value for tax payers money. Although I agree that there needs to be a level of locality in the front line in what forces do, surely along with recruitment there are a number of other areas (like shared back office services, HR, recruitment) that could also be shared and streamlined to drive resource/money back into front line policing. This is a model used by Police Scotland, a national force but with some level of locality. [43/Male/White/Christian/North West]

Concerns for Rural Areas

Questions/Comments

Hi. I live in north Essex. Saffron Walden constituency. It's quite rural but we are seeing issues with knife crime around the area, in Suffolk and Cambridge, amongst teenage boys and young men. I'd like to know what is being done to tackle this especially as a mother to a 12 year old boy. [48/Female/White/Buddhist/East of England]

There are huge areas of the UK that are classed as rural and as many local police stations have been closed, these areas are now more vulnerable than ever. Whilst it is good to hear that there are more police being recruited, will any of these be dedicated to policing rural crime? [73/Male/White/Christian/East of England]

Why is it difficult to walk into a police station and talk to an officer? It seems to be a prevalent problem, especially in more rural communities, that local stations are no longer open to the public. Is it purely down to funding? I feel like people within a community would feel safer having a physical police presence. [37/Female/White/No religion/East of England]

Trust 70 questions/comments (4%)

Questions/Comments

For perspective I am a retired police officer as of March 2023 so was very interested in participating this evening. Firstly, I agree there has been a wholly negative coverage of police and the service provided of recent years and transparency and an untarnished reputation is of utmost importance. I am very mindful also that there are never positive reporting on what the police do well, and that is key to the issues I would like to raise today. In 2010 in the city I worked in there were 4 teams split into districts and each team had their own sergeant and a single inspector overseeing. The 4 teams that were on duty at anyone time had a minimum strength level of 80 officers (when all districts added together). When I left the service, by a twist of fate, I was based in the same city within the response team. Covering that same city

Questions/Comments

the minimum strength level was 14 officers. Taking into account a rise in population, a rise in mental health issues, a rise in poverty and a lack of open space that is frankly awful
[39/Male/White/Jewish/South East]

It is good that wrong-doing by rank and file police officers now seems to be taken more seriously but I feel that behaviour by higher up ranks that really damages the policing by consent model at a more fundamental level seems to go unpunished. Recent examples include the arresting and detaining of journalists who were covering road protests by the Hertfordshire force. I believe the internal enquiry found that orders came from above, so why aren't heads rolling as this is so fundamental and serious in my book. Similarly the Hertfordshire force conveniently losing possibly incriminating/embarrassing messages exchanged between their chief and with the then home secretary during the Cheshunt print works protests. No reasonable person believes the excuses given. Maybe it is all above board but we will only know with more transparency which we don't seem to have when it gets to that level. Can we get it? [48/Male/White/Christian/East of England]

Hello, I'm a woman in my early 30's in the South East. I was assaulted 10 years ago and didn't go to the police as I didn't feel I would be believed, nor did I feel that anything would be done. I think my trust in the police on this kind of crime is even lower now. How are the police trying to help women with their trust in being believed when they are assaulted? How are the police going to tackle the lack of trust there is from women in the police especially after cases such as Sarah Everard? [32/Female/White/Christian/South East]

The police give the impression that they don't care about burglaries, car thefts etc. even muggings. They just give you a crime number for insurance purposes. This attitude needs to change and each crime needs to be investigated. Stop investigating events where people are offending by something. The police also can't seem to get their facts correct so people lose respect for them e.g. they gave the wrong description of clothes worn by Nicola Bulley, when she went missing in St Michael on Wyre, and asked for dash cams giving an incorrect street name!! They also revealed confidential medical information about her-which they would have never commented on a man. The fact that several police officers have committed serious crimes themselves has eroded confidence in the police. Would I, as a woman, stop for a policeman to ask me questions late at night or in an isolated place. No way.
[71/Female/White/Christian/South East]

Amongst younger people, I have noticed that cases of police misconduct have severely impacted the willingness of potential future recruits to consider joining police forces. Are there measures in place to "clean up" the image of police forces to restore confidence in youths joining the police? [20/Male/Mixed/No religion/London]

Training 46 questions/comments (3%)

Questions/Comments

Diana mentioned there is a very proactive recruitment process taking place at the moment. I would be interested to know what is in place to ensure those recruited do not hold the racist,

Questions/Comments

homophobic, and misogynist views that the recent enquiry discovered was very prevalent in policing. [52/Female/White/No religion/West Midlands]

Are Police trained in- depth in Diversity issues- re faiths, nationalities, gender and social differences in the UK? [77/Female/White/Christian/Yorkshire and the Humber]

How can we standardise basic officer and career training similar to the Army's Sandhurst officer college around England & Wales? There are so many police colleges, training packages that aren't compatible and funding disparities across regions. many specialist officers such as firearm officers struggle to move to different forces around the UK due to a Byzantine plethora of independent regional police forces not being compatible. [35/Male/White/Christian/North West]

With the increase in new (particularly the young) recruits, will they be paired with an experienced officer to learn from them? For example, I had a sole uniformed PC at my door after multiple thefts from vehicles in my neighbourhood. He didn't introduce himself or tell me his name at any point, and he appeared very unsure of what to say. [44/Female/White/No religion/East Midlands]

Wouldn't it make more sense and be more practical, cost effective and functional to have some officers trained to deal with mental health, special needs, or vulnerable victims/perpetrators? Surely this would free up "regular" officers to attend other incidents. After all, we have officers who are specially trained to deal with victims in sexual assault/rape cases. [42/Female/White/No religion/North West]

Additional training needed to better support specialized groups

Questions/Comments

Neurodivergent people form a disproportionate percentage of people going through the criminal justice. What training do the police have on recognising, communicating to and understanding neurodiversity. [51/Female/White/Christian/London]

I'm autistic and would be up for giving some training. However i dont know where to start in building a program,are there tools that could be provided to the public to start offering services like these to the police? [29/Male/White/Christian/South West]

As far as neurodivergent people go, there needs to be education for police officers but this needs to be delivered by neurodivergent people rather than from neurotypical people speaking from an outsider's perspective. for example an issue such as selective mutism can be seen non compliance instead of an inability to speak that is beyond the person's control. [52/Female/White/No religion/West Midlands]

Protest 10 questions/comments (1%)

Questions/Comments

During lockdown, the police was tough on ordinary citizens, some where merely protesting for our human rights. The leaders of both parties were freely doing whatever they wanted to do, are the police working for the people and to keep us safe or simply for the government/politicians? [40/Female/White/Christian/Yorkshire and the Humber]

Why do we use so many police resources for known peaceful public gatherings? It at times seems excessive. [61/Female/White/Christian/South East]

Do police forces actually agree regarding the new Public Order bill, and will this give a reason for police to use excessive force to stop protests? Do police presence really stop disruption or will this provide power trips to officers during our right to protest? [19/Male/Asian/Muslim/West Midlands]

Do you think, given the increased focus on suppressing peaceful protest and the failure of police to respond - for whatever reason - to crimes committed against marginalised victims, that the police are becoming solely guardians of privilege for the establishment and abandoning their role as agents of justice? [41/Male/White/No religion/Yorkshire and the Humber]

why did the police just stand back when those protesters blocked road? blocking roads is not legal & it gave the public an impression that the police where in the protesters side [50/Male/White/Christian/West Midlands]

Other 67 questions/comments (5%)

Question

How are we investing in education to resolve long term policing issues? I'm a Headteacher and I believe this is an area that can support children being protected from moving into crime as well as lowering: policing capacity; prison and court costs. [39/Female/White/Christian/West Midlands]

Given that road safety performance in UK has been stagnating for the best part of a decade, how will roads policing be enhanced to ensure robust enforcement and the integration systematic interventions that make our roads safer? [27/Male/White/No religion/Yorkshire and the Humber]

Should the royal family be responsible for providing and funding their own security, rather than it being at a cost to the public? Thank you. [32/Male/White/No religion/London]

Is a crime that attracts headlines in the newspapers more likely to be investigated more thoroughly and have more resources? How big an impact does the media have on policing? [44/Female/White/Christian/West Midlands]

Festis has raised many good ideas which he has implemented within his area. How are successful / unsuccessful policies which are implemented in one region communicated to, and evaluated in, other regions around the country? Surely there are lessons learnt that can be built upon to improve overall efficiency (whilst still allowing localisation of policies). As a follow

Question

up to this, is a common taxonomy and information management structure used across uk wide forces to facilitate collaboration? [33/Male/White/No religion/South East]

More Public Engagement

Question

Slightly off topic - but if you claim the public do not understand or appreciate the scale of the challenge with the number of calls - why not publish them locally? each PCC could publish them on their website? Education is key. [34/Male/White/No religion/Yorkshire and the Humber]

My expectation on response from the police is that if I call then there will be immediate action. I know that's not possible, but thats my expectation. Could there be a national education/awareness campaign to give a clear picture/set clear expectations on how police will respond to various types of crime - ie lower general expectations and raise awarness of where the priorities lie? [70/Male/White/Christian/South East]

I appreciate the PCC suggesting we reach out to get involved with the local police policy. However, it's tricky having to keep an eye out to be involved with this kind of thing and making the time for it. It would be useful to reach out like you have done with YouGov so we are asked for our voice. Thanks again for putting this together, been great to listen to this debate! [28/Male/White/Christian/North West]

Usefulness of Forum

Question

Sensible cross party discussion well done [66/Male/White/Christian/West Midlands]

I have a general comment. I live in one of the safest Tory seats in the country but I do not vote Tory so feel like my vote doesn't count. This is the first time I have ever felt my voice has actually been heard politically, and I would like to see more of this sort of thing in politics. This is a far better way of having a conversation with the public over something like Question Time. [32/Female/White/Christian/South East]

Feedback: One thing I will take away from tonight is that prior to this forum I did not understand or appreciate the role of a PCC.. after listening to Festus I now support the role and have changed my mind on the role, in a positive way. [61/Female/White/Christian/West Midlands]