

A guide to using Scottish and UK datasets

Scottish Crime and Justice Surveys (SCJS)

The SCJS asks people about their experiences and perceptions of crime in Scotland. It has been held a total of twelve times since 1982 (every one to six years). The survey involves interviewing a randomly selected adult in 12,000 households across Scotland per year.

Topics include:

- Public perceptions of crime
- victimisation
- satisfaction with the police
- knowledge and use of controlled drugs and solvents

See also <http://www.scotpho.org.uk/publications/overview-of-key-data-sources/surveys-cross-Sectional/scottish-crime-and-justice-survey>

Survey years and sample size

Since 1982 a total of twelve crime surveys (every one to six years) have been held in Scotland (1982, 1988, 1993, 1996, 2000, 2003, 2004, 2006, 2008-09, 2009-10, 2010-11 and 2012-13). In 1982 and 1988 data were collected in central and southern Scotland as part of the British Crime Survey (BCS). The following four were held under the name of the Scottish Crime Survey. The 2004 and 2006 surveys were called the Scottish Crime and Victimization Survey. Since then they are called the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey.

Approximately 5,000 adults per survey up to 2006. Sample sizes increased considerably to approximately 16,000 adults in 2008/09 and 2009/10 and 13,000 in 2010/11. From 2012/13 onwards, sample size will be 12,000 adults per financial year.

Geographical variables

From 2012/13, data are available at national, Police Force Area and Community Justice Authority levels, but not at Local Authority level - this is the main difference from previous years.

Useful websites

There are two main sites that have information concerning the SCJS and supporting material:

[The Scottish Government \(SG\)](#)

Is a useful website with many different kinds of information on the survey. It has a page for publications: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/crime-and-justice-survey/publications>. Different publications related to the SCJS are ordered according to the year of the survey. For the 1993 to 2006 crime surveys only research findings are provided, but datasets, questionnaires and technical reports are available for all subsequent surveys (i.e. all the SCJS ones). The technical reports are similar to the user guides in the UKDA and contain useful information. Data tables for the 2008-09 to 2012-13 sweeps of the survey are provided in <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/Datasets/SCJS>.

These Excel tables present the (weighted) percentage of respondents who gave each response to a question, as well as the unweighted number who answered the question (the first row in each table labelled 'Sample size', with the exception of summary tables).

[UK Data Service](#) (the link is for the 2009-10 only)

These data are not open access, so to access them you need to be a registered UKDA user. In the UKDA website, the SCJS technical reports provides all the necessary information concerning the survey design and questionnaire content.

Dataset structure

When accessing to the data, there are three files for each survey, e.g:

Scjs s3 rf (the respondent file)

Produced at the level of the individual respondent and contains all questionnaire data and associated variables, excluding information that is collected in the victim form or the self-completion questionnaire. Data for all respondents is provided in the RF file, irrespective of whether they are classified as victims or non-victims.

Scjs s3 scf (the self-completion file)

Produced at the level of the respondent and contains all of the data and associated variables in the self-completion questionnaire (illicit drug use, stalking and harassment, partner abuse and sexual victimisation) as well as the key demographic variables from the RF data file. The file can also be linked to the RF data file for analysis purposes using the variable SERIAL.

Scjs s3 vff (the victim form file)

Produced at the level of the individual incident and contains all the data collected in the victim form. Thus, an individual respondent who reported three separate incidents and completed three victim forms would have three separate records in the VFF data file.

Questionnaire structure, coverage and question routing

The SCJS questionnaire has a complex structure, detailed in page 36 of the technical reports (for example: [Technical report 2012/13](#)). Generally speaking, it consists of three elements:

The **main questionnaire** consists of a set of core modules asked of the whole sample, including demographics; and a set of full and quarter-sample modules, containing questions on a variety of topics;

Victim form A which collects details about up to five incidents a respondent may have experienced during the reference period (the 12 months prior to interview).

A self-completion questionnaire covering sensitive issues. All respondents were asked to complete a self-completion questionnaire, but had the option to refuse this.

Each of these three elements contains various sections (for example, the self-completion questionnaire contains four sections covering risk factors, illicit drug use, stalking and harassment and partner abuse, and sexual victimisation). Within most sections there is a degree of **filtering/routing** of the questions so that some questions are only asked of sub-samples of respondents (for example, those who have had contact with the police in the last 12 months).

Survey weights

Each of the SCJS technical reports (for example: [Technical report 2012/13](#)) have a section on the survey weighting procedures that were applied to the survey data.

The following units of analysis require weights:

- Household main section (matching household type, age of head of household and urban/rural areas within Local Authorities)
- Individual main section (adult selection weight and household weight)
- Household self-completion
- Individual self-completion

For the 2012/13 (and most of the earlier) SCJS the SPSS data files contain two sets of weights variables, grossed and scaled weights.

Grossed weights include an expansion factor so that data can be expressed as a proportion of the population of Scotland. When using the gross weight to analyse individual based data for a question asked of the entire sample, the weighted sample size would be the total number of adults in Scotland. The 2012/13 SCJS SPSS data files contains the following grossed weighting variables:

- Household weight
- Individual weight
- Gross incident weight for SCJS crimes
- Self-completion household weight
- Self-completion individual weight.

Scaled weights do not include this expansion factor and can be used when undertaking advanced statistical analysis. When using the scaled weight to analyse individual based data for a question asked of the entire sample, the weighted sample size would be the total number of respondents interviewed. There are four scaled weighting variables available in the 2012/13 SCJS SPSS data files:

- Scaled household weight
- Scaled individual weight
- Scaled self-completion household weight
- Scaled self-completion individual weight