

ScotCen 2015 Social Attitudes Survey

Stop and Search Module Results

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Background and Results

In 2015, the SPA and Police Scotland commissioned SIPR to use the ScotCen Social Attitudes Survey to ask a range of questions about policing, including the use of stop and search. This commissioning took place in response to the SPA's Stop and Search Scrutiny Inquiry report of May 2014 which made a recommendation that research be carried out by the SPA (in conjunction with others) to examine the short- and long-term impact of stop and search on individuals and communities across Scotland.

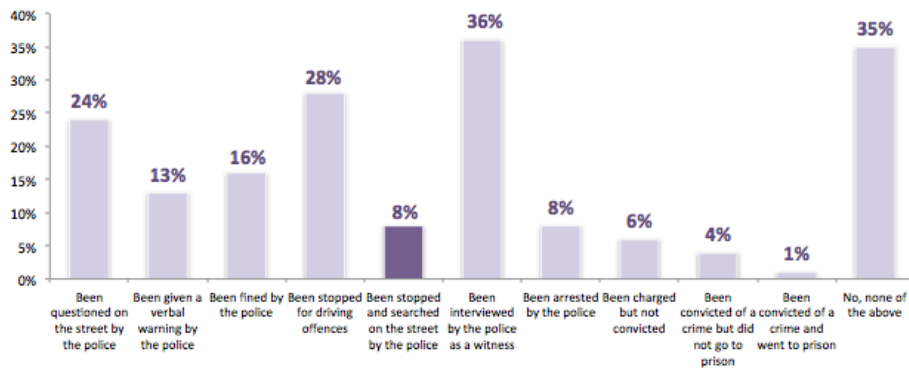
Other pieces of research have been commissioned, and been completed, examining various aspects of stop and search and its impact, namely a piece of qualitative fieldwork-based research undertaken by Blake Stevenson, and a quantitative analysis of stop and search as experienced by schoolchildren in Edinburgh and Glasgow as part of a wider, national and international study called UPYC – *Understanding and Preventing Youth Crime*.

The use of the Social Attitudes Survey 2015 was intended to capture more general perceptions and attitudes towards stop and search among the wider population of Scotland, bearing in mind that most people cannot describe an actual experience of being stopped and searched. For example, ScotCen have found through the Survey that only 8% of people say that they have ever been stopped and searched in the street (and this may not necessarily have taken place in Scotland).

The survey was carried out from July 2015 and was completed over the course of the calendar year. A total of 1,288 persons across Scotland participated in the survey. The sampling frame used by ScotCen is designed to provide a representative national sample against which statistically significant findings can be established with a high degree of confidence.

The results from the Stop and Search module questions are provided below, with some additional context information (provided by ScotCen). ScotCen will be providing Police Scotland and the SPA with a download of raw data, enabling both organisations' analytical functions to explore relationships within the dataset and test hypotheses of interest, including the relationship between the Stop and Search results and wider questions around Police Reform.

Has any of the following ever happened to you? Please choose as many answers as apply to you.



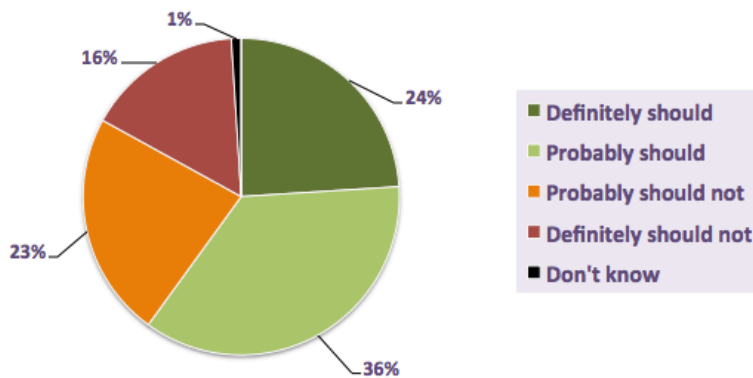
ScotCen Social Attitudes Survey 2015

n = 1,288

Additional Context

Almost one in twelve people say that they have been stopped and searched on the street by the police

Do you think the police **should**, or **should not**, be allowed to stop anyone in the street with little reason and ask them if they are **willing** to be searched to find out what they have on them?



ScotCen Social Attitudes Survey 2015

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Additional Context

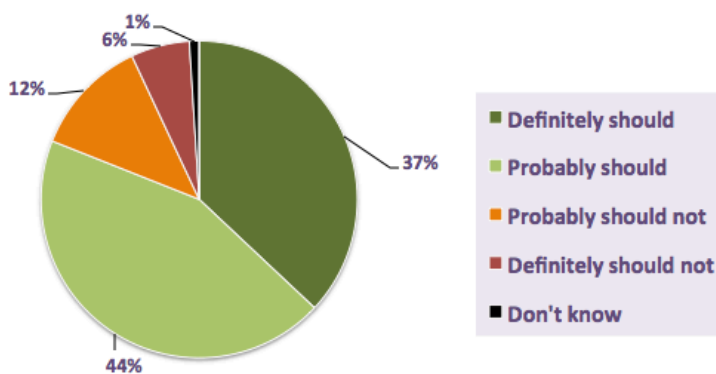
Those who are more likely to think the police 'definitely' or 'probably' should be allowed to stop someone are:

Those over 30 (47% of those aged 18-29 compared with 61% of those aged over 65)

Those with no formal qualifications

People who have ever been stopped and searched are more likely to say the police 'definitely should not'

And do you think the police **should**, or **should not**, be allowed to stop someone in the street who they think is acting suspiciously and demand that they search them to find out what they have on them?



ScotCen Social Attitudes Survey 2015

n = 1,288

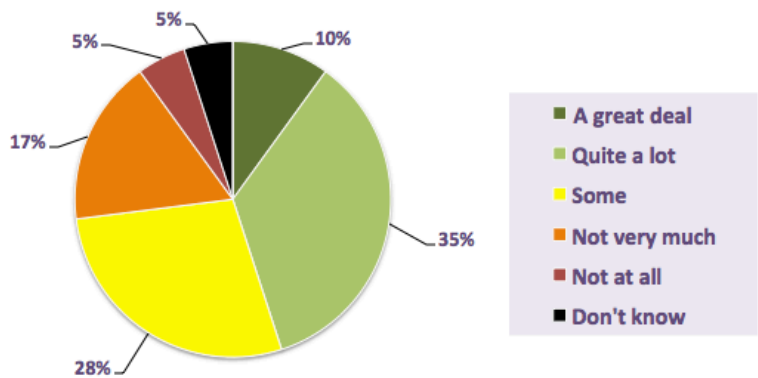
Additional Context

Older people are even more likely than younger people to think that the police should be allowed to stop someone acting suspiciously

Women are slightly more likely than men to think the police should be allowed

People who have ever been stopped and searched are more likely to say the police 'definitely should not'

And from what you have seen or heard how much, if at all, do you generally trust the police to use stop and search in a fair and just way?



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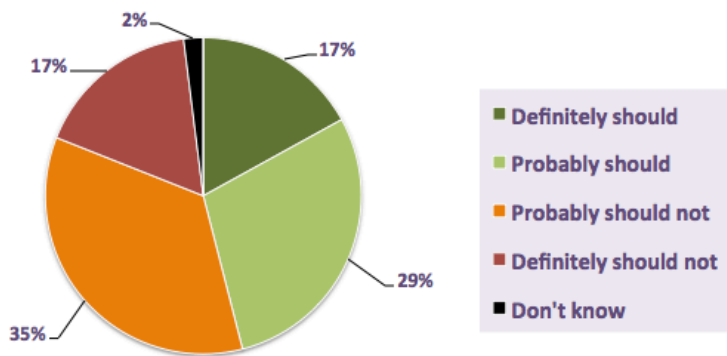
Additional Context

People over 40 were more likely to say they trusted the police 'a great deal' or 'quite a lot' (50% of those 40-64 compared with 31% of those aged 18-29)

Those in the least deprived areas were more likely to say 'a great deal' or 'quite a lot'

Those who had been stopped and searched were less likely to say that they trusted the police to use stop and search in a fair and just way

Say there has been a spate of robberies in an area and the police think that the thieves might be a group of young men. In these circumstances, do you think that the police **should**, or **should not**, be allowed to stop **any** young man and search him in the street?



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Additional Context

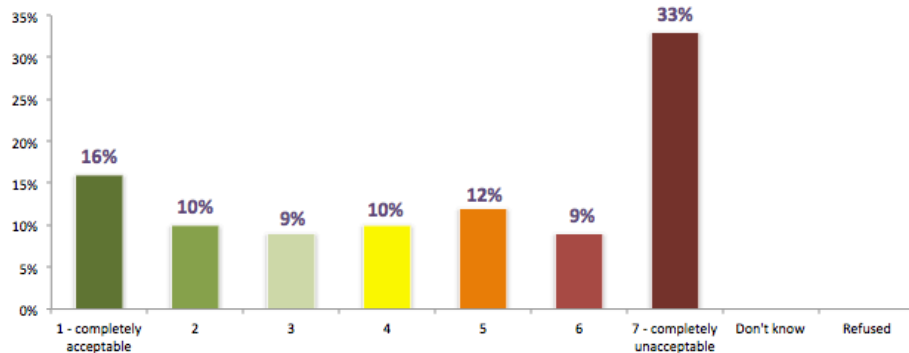
Those who were less likely to say that the police 'definitely' or 'probably' should be allowed to stop and search were:

People aged 18-29 years old (23% of 18-29 year olds said the police 'definitely' or 'probably' should compared with 51% of those aged 30-39)

Those with higher levels of education (37% of those with degrees compared with 63% of those with no formal qualifications)

Those living in the least deprived areas of Scotland

Imagine you are walking in your local area and the police stopped you and asked if you would be willing to be searched. There is no particular reason for the police to believe you are doing anything illegal. How acceptable would this be to you?



ScotCen Social Attitudes Survey 2015

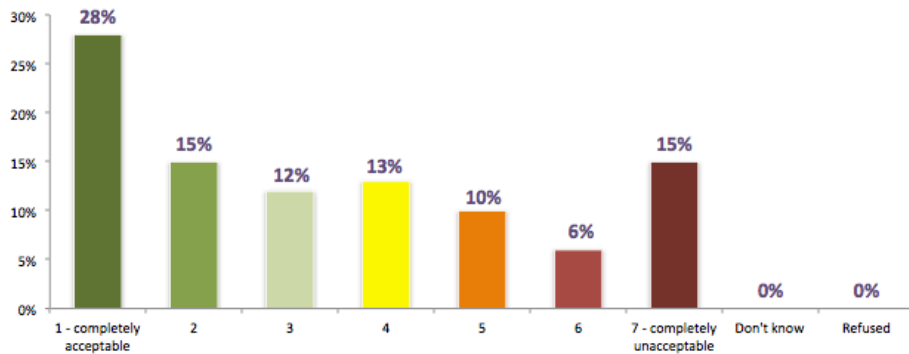
n = 1,288

Additional Context

The scale variable was collapsed into acceptable (1-3), neither (4) and unacceptable (5-7).

Women and those on higher incomes are more likely to think it's acceptable.

And now imagine there's been a spate of robberies in your area. The police stop you and ask if they can search you because you're of the same age and sex as the suspects. How acceptable or unacceptable would this be to you?



ScotCen Social Attitudes Survey 2015

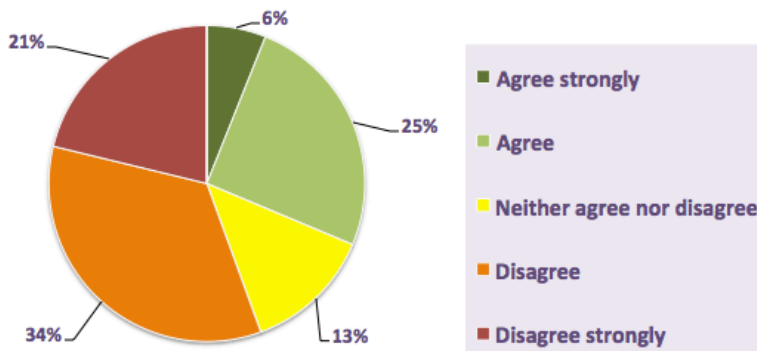
n = 1,288

Additional Context

The scale variable was collapsed into acceptable (1-3), neither (4) and unacceptable (5-7).

Men were more likely to think it's acceptable. People on lower incomes are less likely to think it's acceptable.

Imagine someone is stopped and searched by the police in the street and they find nothing illegal. How much do you agree, or disagree, that the police should still ask the person for their personal details, such as their name, age and address?



ScotCen Social Attitudes Survey 2015

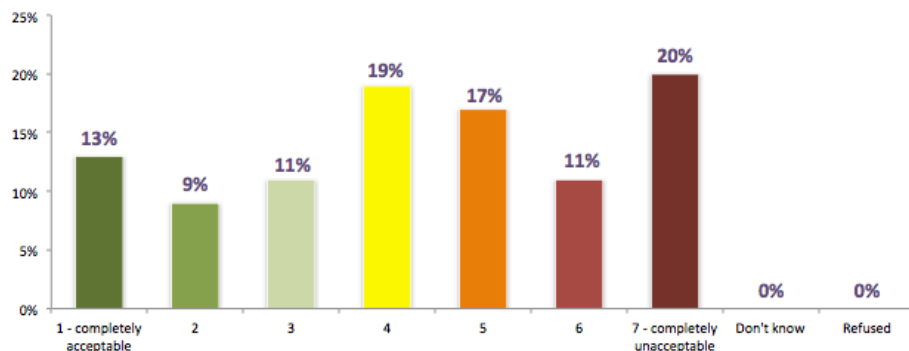
n = 1,288

Additional Context

Those who were more likely to disagree or strongly disagree that the police should still ask for personal details are:

- People aged 18-29
- Those educated to degree level
- Those living in the least deprived areas

Say there has recently been an increase in crime in your local area. One evening a group of 14 year olds are walking down the street and making a bit of noise, though there is no reason to believe they are doing anything illegal. Two police officers approach them, stop them and ask if they can search them. How acceptable or unacceptable do you think this is?



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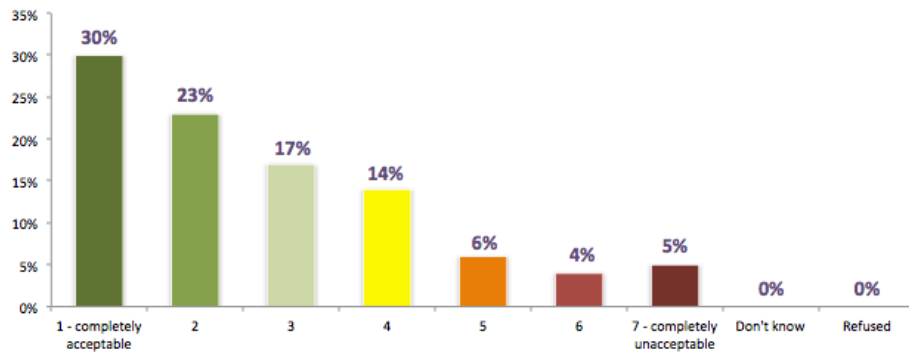
n = 1,288

Additional Context

The scale variable was collapsed into acceptable (1-3), neither (4) and unacceptable (5-7). Those who were less likely to think it acceptable included:

- 18-29 year olds
- Women
- People with degrees

Imagine a woman in her 60s is leaving a supermarket. She appears to be hiding something under her coat. Two police officers approach her, stop her and ask if they can search her. How acceptable or unacceptable do you think this is?



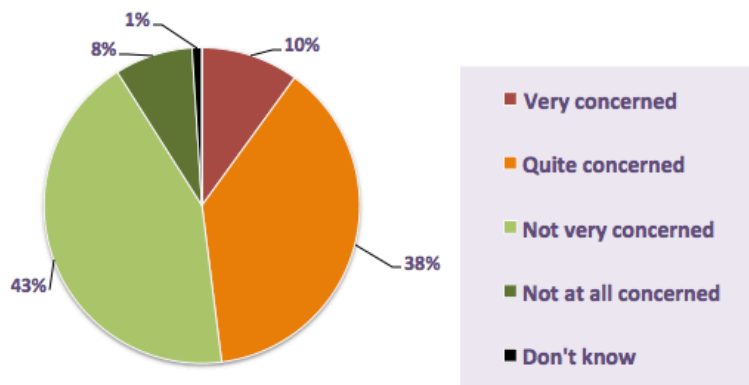
ScotCen Social Attitudes Survey 2015

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Additional Context

There were no significant differences by age, education, gender, income, urban/rural and SIMD

Currently in Scotland, younger people are more likely than older people to be stopped and searched in the street. How concerned are you, if at all, that younger people are more likely to be searched?



ScotCen Social Attitudes Survey 2015

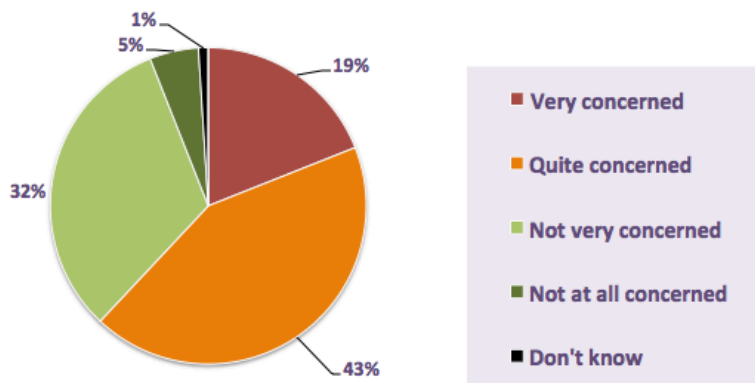
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Additional Context

Those who were more likely to be concerned that younger people are more likely to be searched are:

- 18-29 year olds
- Women compared with men
- People on lower incomes
- Those living in more deprived areas

And currently in Scotland people living in poorer areas are more likely than people living in better off areas to be stopped and searched in the street. How concerned are you, if at all, that people living in poorer areas are more likely to be searched?



ScotCen Social Attitudes Survey 2015

n = 1,288

Additional Context

Those who were more likely to be concerned that poorer people are more likely to be searched are:

- Women were slightly more concerned than men
- Those with no formal qualifications
- Those on lower incomes
- Those living in the most deprived areas