



Community Confidence Action Research – Under 16 Views – Irvine Fullarton

Introduction

Between the 20th February 2023 and 26th March 2023, the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) and Police Scotland ran a survey in six local schools with students from the Irvine Fullarton area to gain views on policing from those under the age of 16 as part of the Community Confidence Action Research Project.

Schools were invited to take part and contribute to the design of the questions. A range of questions were made available on paper and via the SPA's Citizen Space platform (with the paper questions simplified in case needed for younger age groups). It was at the discretion of schools on how these questions were made available to pupils. In total 82 responses were received and of these 79 provided consent and were analysed for this report.

As well as questions on consent and school, questions related to what they would do if they had a general worry/problem (Q3), who they would contact if they were in danger (Q4), if they felt the police would help them if they were in danger (Q5), why they had chosen their answers to the previous questions (Q6) and what they would like to see the police focus on in the area (Q7).

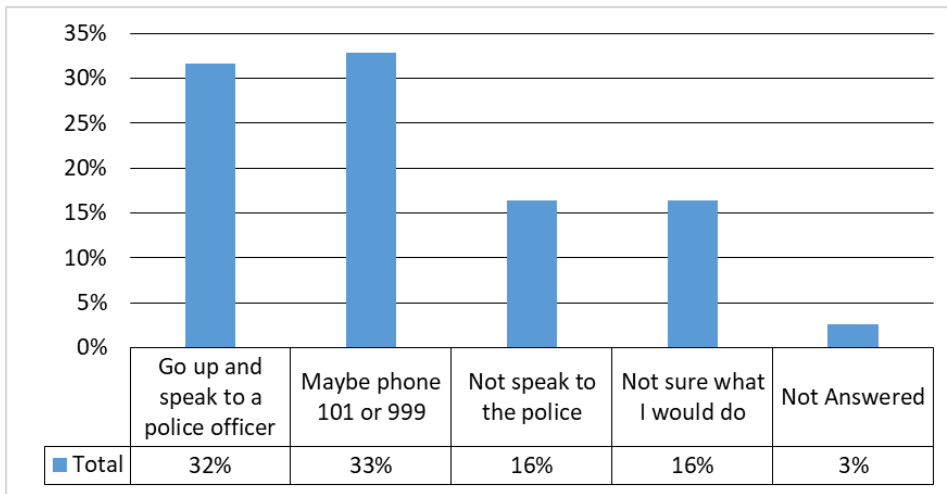
This paper outlines the key findings of these questions. SPA officers analysed quantitative responses in Microsoft Excel and reviewed qualitative responses for key themes. It should be noted that due to the non-representative nature of the sample the findings of these questions cannot be generalised to the entire Irvine Fullarton population.

Question 3: If I had a general worry or problem outside of school I would...

Figure 1 shows that 33% (n=26) of pupils would maybe phone 999 or 101 if they had a general worry or problem outside of school. Followed by 32% (n=25) who would go up and speak to a police officer. Both of the options 'Not speak to the police' and 'Not sure what I would do' had 16% (n=13) response rate. 3% (n=2) of people did not answer this question.

When asked to further explain their answer, pupils who said that they would not speak to the police typically would expect their parents or guardian to help them instead. There were some responses that expressed lack of confidence in the police (e.g. either they were scared or had a previous negative experience with the police).

Figure 1: If I had a general worry or problem outside of school I would... (n=79)

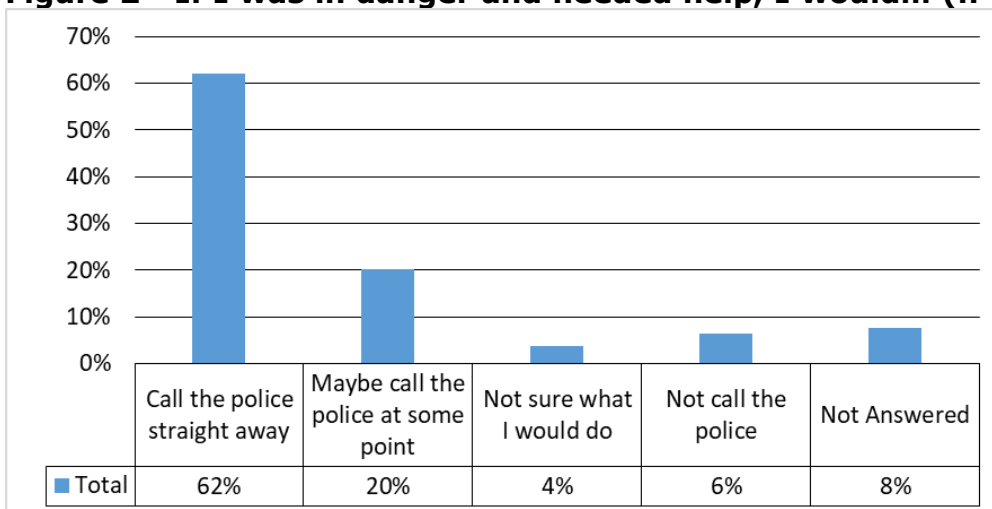


Question 4: If I was in danger and needed help, I would...

Figure 2 shows that the majority of pupils (62%, n= 49) would call the police straight away if they were in danger and needed help. 20% (n= 16) would maybe call the police at some point, 4% were not sure what they would do (n=3), and 6% (n=5) would not call the police.

Of the responses that would not call the police straight away (i.e. 'Maybe call the police' and 'Not call the police'), respondents typically would call for a parent/guardian or another member of their family before thinking about contacting the police. Some respondents also expressed apprehension about calling the police due to fears that they would escalate the situation or not do anything to help. A few respondents would not feel confident talking to the police felt the police may not believe them if they were to ask for help.

Figure 2 - If I was in danger and needed help, I would... (n=79)

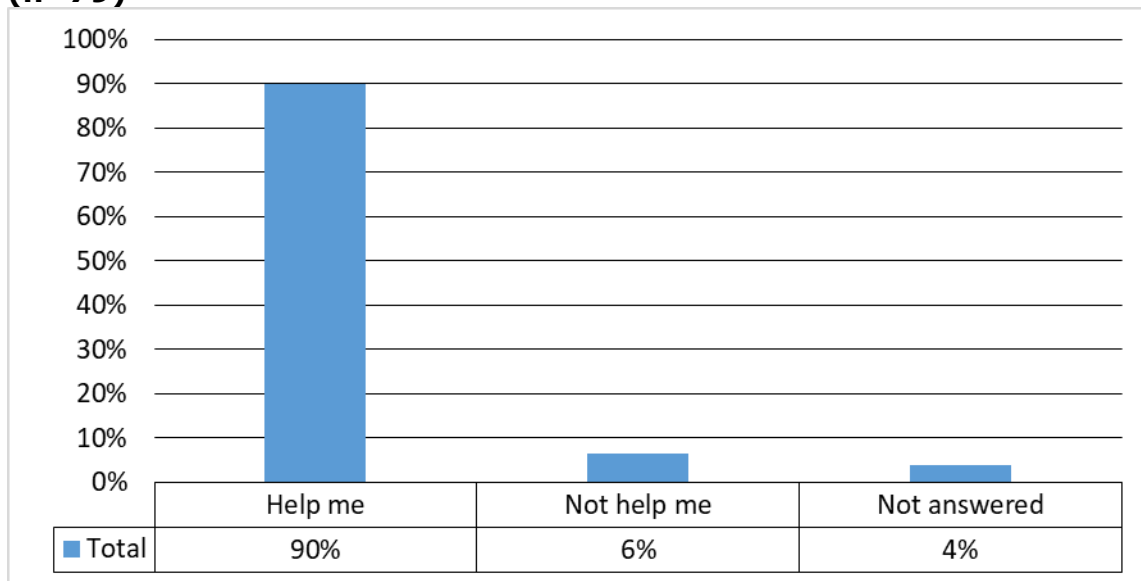


Question 5: If I was in danger and needed help, I think the police would...

Figure 3 shows that if they were in danger and needed help, the majority of pupils thought the police would help them (90%, n=79).

Of the 6% (n=5) who selected "Not help me", one comment in Question 5 related to having 'heard lots of stories where people called the police for help and they mainly didn't do anything'. 4% (n=3) of respondents did not answer this question.

Figure 3 - If I was in danger and needed help, I think the police would... (n=79)



Question 6: Thinking about your answers above, can you tell us why you chose these options?

In total there was 73 comments received for Question 6 which asked respondents to reflect and comment on their answers to the previous questions.

For the pupils who said they would contact the police if they were in danger or believed that the police would help them, the vast majority of respondents stated that they trust the police to help them and that it would be the right thing to do. Multiple responses noted that it would be dependent on the situation, however in more serious situations they felt they would approach and trust the police. Some responses identified that the police are there to "keep you safe" and to help the community.

Pupils who responded that they would not call the police or believed that the police would not help them if they were in danger instead identified a family member as being a support. Some pupils responded that they are scared of the police. One response noted that they had previously had a negative experience with the police which has impacted upon their opinion.

Question 7: What would you like to see the police focus on in Irvine Fullarton?

In total there was 72 comments received for Question 7 which asked what they would like to see the police focus on in Irvine.

Many responses identified the issue of drug-related crime and drug use in the area, with people noting that it made them feel unsafe. It was suggested in many responses that police should target this issue. A range of responses also expressed that there should be a police focus upon young people's use of vapes, and the people selling vapes to young people. There were also some responses that suggested there should be more police visibility at certain times in the shopping centre, but also on the beach.

Multiple pupils also noted that speeding causes damage to the community, and that general road safety should be a priority for the police. There was also a focus by some respondents on the more low level anti-social behaviour like littering and graffiti.

Across a range of responses, pupils expressed that the police should respond to racism and sexism in the community, and the impacts of these. There were also responses that identified the police's role in relationships with young people in the Irvine Fullarton area, with some pupils suggesting that the police should "not stereotyping young people" and "be nicer to young people".

Conclusion

Pupils in Irvine Fullarton had a generally positive view of the police; with responses identifying that the police are there to "keep you safe" and to help the community.

A greater level of police focus on addressing drug use, drug crime, and vaping in area was suggested by many respondents.

Tackling anti-social behaviour (including speeding, littering, and graffiti), targeted police presence in the mall and beach, and building better relationships with young people are issues that matter to pupils.