

Fear of Crime

Criminal Justice

What worry about crime actually tracks, which is not the local crime rate.

What fear tracks

- Perceived disorder in the local area
- Media coverage and vivid single cases
- Perceived vulnerability and control
- Trust in police and in neighbours
- Experience, direct or through others

What it does not track

- Local recorded crime rates closely
- Personal statistical risk
- National crime trends over time
- Actual likelihood of serious harm
- The offences people worry about most

THE DIFFERENCE THAT MATTERS

Fear is a distinct outcome with its own causes; reducing crime does not automatically reduce fear of it.

Educational reference. Measurement is contested: survey wording strongly affects the level of fear that respondents report.