

Review

Survey of feelings of safety 2021 – a measurement of feelings of safety and trust in the police across Denmark, the 12 police districts, the 98 municipalities and disadvantaged areas¹

In 2021, the Ministry of Justice conducted a survey about safety and trust in the police among citizens in Denmark. The survey is a continuation of the Police's Survey of feelings of safety which was conducted seven times by the Danish National Police (*Rigspolitiet*) in the period from 2013 to 2019. The questionnaire survey was completed by 27,510 persons in 2021 and was based on the same questions as those asked in the surveys conducted during 2013-2019 about the citizens' basic feeling of safety in their neighbourhood and their trust that the police would help them if they needed it. The survey has been extended to include several questions about the types of location and behaviour that the respondents could feel unsafe in relation to.

The survey produced the following results about the citizens' feeling of safety in their neighbourhood:

- In 2021, 88.1 per cent of citizens across Denmark indicated that they basically felt safe in their neighbourhood, 7.4 per cent indicated that they felt unsafe in their neighbourhood, while 4.3 per cent indicated that they felt neither safe nor unsafe.
- The proportion of citizens across Denmark who feel safe in their neighbourhood was higher in 2021 than in 2019 and in the three preceding years (2016-2018 taken together) but did not differ from the first three years of the period under review (2013-2015 taken together).
- The proportion of citizens who feel safe in their neighbourhood was higher in the police districts of Bornholm and Central and Western Jutland than in the rest of Denmark, while it was smaller in the Western Copenhagen police district than in the rest of Denmark.
- The proportion of citizens who feel safe in their neighbourhood was higher in 2021 than in 2019 in the following police districts: Central and West Jutland, South Jutland, South Zealand and Lolland-Falster, Central and West Zealand and North Zealand. The North Jutland and the South East Jutland police districts tend to see similar developments, while no statistically significant development is seen for the remaining police districts.
- In 2021, 70.0 per cent of citizens in disadvantaged areas indicated that they basically felt safe in their neighbourhood which is a smaller proportion than among citizens in the rest of Denmark and on a par with the level seen in disadvantaged areas in 2019. Among the remaining citizens in disadvantaged areas in 2021, 10.3 per cent indicated that they felt neither safe nor unsafe in their neighbourhood, while 19.0 per cent indicated that they basically felt unsafe in their neighbourhood. Further, there was a large degree of variation in the proportion of citizens in the individual disadvantaged areas who felt safe in their neighbourhood.

¹ In this abstract, this term refers to disadvantaged areas as defined by the Danish police.

- The survey also provides data regarding the proportion of citizens across Denmark who feel unsafe in particular types of location. The citizens who indicated that the relevant types of location did not exist in their neighbourhood have not been included in these specifications.
 - Of the types of location asked about, the largest proportion who felt unsafe was found at stations and bus stops (21.2 per cent) and on paths (20.7 per cent).
- Some types of behaviour that may potentially cause a feeling of unsafety are witnessed by many citizens, while other types of behaviour are only witnessed by few citizens. These different types of behaviour tend to result in differing degrees of feelings of unsafety among the citizens who witness them.
 - More than half of the citizens indicated that they had witnessed reckless driving or offences (other than against the person) in their neighbourhood. About two-thirds of those who had witnessed these types of behaviour indicated that it had made them feel *slightly* unsafe.
 - Just over one tenth of the citizens indicated that they had witnessed outlaw motorcycle gang or other gang activities or offences against the person in their neighbourhood. About half of those who had witnessed these types of behaviour indicated that it had made them feel *very* unsafe.
- The survey also described whether there was any difference in the level of safety based on the characteristics of the citizens.
 - A slightly smaller proportion of women than men indicated that they felt safe in their neighbourhood. The differences between men and women were more pronounced when it came to the feeling of unsafety in certain types of location, such as paths, stairwells and green spaces (including parks and play grounds), and the feeling of unsafety in connection with certain types of behaviour.
 - The proportion of citizens who basically felt safe in their neighbourhood increases with age. The proportion of citizens aged 65+ who felt safe was higher than the proportion of citizens in the younger age brackets. Similarly, the proportion of citizens aged 30-64 who felt safe was higher than the corresponding proportion of citizens aged 15-29.
 - The survey also included analyses of the proportion who feel safe in their neighbourhood based on the employment status and education of the respondents.

The survey produced the following results about the citizens' trust that the police would help them if they needed it.

- In 2021, 84.7 per cent of citizens across Denmark indicated that they trusted that the police would help them if they needed it.
- In 2021, the proportion of citizens who indicated that they trusted that the police would help them was statistically significantly higher than that found in the survey conducted in 2019 and compared to the three preceding years (2016-2018 taken together) and the first three years of the period under review (2013-2015 taken together).
- The proportion of citizens who trust that the police will help them if they need it was higher in the police districts of Bornholm, Central and West Jutland and South



East Jutland than in the rest of Denmark, while it was smaller in the police districts of Central and West Zealand and Western Copenhagen than in the rest of Denmark.

- The proportion of citizens who indicated that they trusted that the police would help them if they needed it was higher in 2021 than in 2019 in the following police districts: South East Jutland, South Jutland, Funen, South Zealand and Lolland-Falster and North Zealand. No statistically significant development was seen in the other police districts.
- 82.1 per cent of citizens in disadvantaged areas indicated that they trusted that the police would help them which is a slightly smaller proportion than among citizens in the rest of Denmark. Further, in 2021, the proportion was slightly smaller than the corresponding proportion in disadvantaged areas in 2019 where the proportion measured was particularly high. The proportion in 2021 remained at a higher level than in the period preceding 2019. It should also be noted that there were some variations in the proportion of citizens in the individual disadvantaged areas who indicated that they trusted that the police would help them if they needed it.
- The survey also described whether there was any difference in the level of trust in the police based on the characteristics of the citizens.
 - A larger proportion of women than men indicated that they trusted that the police would help them if they needed it.
 - A larger proportion of citizens aged 65+ than citizens in the younger age brackets indicated that they trusted that the police would help them if they needed it.
 - The survey also included analyses of the proportion who trusted that the police would help them if they needed it based on the employment status and education of the respondents.

