

13 STIGMA, VICTIMISATION AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

13.1 Stigma and discrimination

Almost two-fifths (37.9%) of participants said they had experienced stigma or discrimination in the past year as a result of their mental illness. The proportion was higher in females with almost one half (46.9%) reporting experiencing stigma or discrimination in the past year compared with 31.8% of males.

Nearly one quarter (22.7%) said that the fear of stigma or discrimination had stopped them doing some of the things they had wanted to do, while almost as many (20.3%) said that it was the actual experience of stigma or discrimination that had stopped them.

Almost two-fifths (38.8%) of those in employment had not told their employer about their mental illness.

One in ten (11.6%) participants said facing stigma and discrimination was one of their top three challenges for the coming year.

13.2 Personal safety and victimisation

Participants expressed concern about their personal safety both inside and outside the home and for many this concern was well founded.

One in five (20.7%) said they felt unsafe or very unsafe when home alone at night, while one in ten (10.0%) said they felt unsafe or very unsafe when home alone during the day. Just over one quarter (27.5%) felt unsafe or very unsafe walking in their local area at night, which is similar to findings for general population as reported in the 2004-2005 International Crime Victims Survey.²⁴

Victimisation rates were high among people with psychosis, with 38.6% reporting any victimisation over the past year including break-ins, robberies and assaults. One quarter (24.8%) reported being a victim of an assault. By comparison, current levels of victimisation in the general population are much lower, with the most recent comparable survey data revealing an assault prevalence of 4.8%.²⁵

Females were just a little more likely to be victimised than males (40.5% compared with 37.4%), and younger people a little more so than older people (40.4% for 18-34 year olds compared with 37.4% for 35-64 year olds).

One in three (29.2%) of those who had been assaulted reported the most recent incident to police.

13.3 Community safety and time in prison

The proportion of participants charged with an offence over the past year was 10.6%, with 1.9% charged with traffic and vehicle offences, 1.6% with common assault, 1.5% with theft and 1.3% public order offences.

A small number, 59 participants or 3.2% of the total sample, had spent time in a prison or lock up over the past year. Two thirds of those incarcerated had spent only one day in a prison or lock-up.

