QUALITY OF LIFE SURVEY IV:
CRIME AND PERCEPTIONS OF SAFETY IN GAUTENG

SEPTEMBER 2017
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GCRO | Gauteng
City-Region
Observatory

QUALITY OF LIFE IV:
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PREFACE

The Quality of Life (QoL) survey, run every two years, has become GCRO's flagship project. The QoL survey is designed to provide a regular understanding of the quality of life, socio-economic circumstances, satisfaction with service delivery, psycho-social attitudes, value-base and other characteristics of residents in Gauteng. It serves as a tracking and diagnostic tool, affording a rich information resource for policy makers, business, civil society and the public wanting to see where progress is being made, and where concerns remain.

QoL is a household-based survey with randomly selected adults (18+) as respondents. The GCRO has conducted four QoL surveys and there has been growth in the number of respondents included in each successive sample:

- QoL I (2009) with 5 836 respondents in Gauteng and a total of 6 636 across the wider Gauteng City-Region
- QoL II (2011) with 16 729 respondents
- QoL III (2013/14) with 27 490 respondents
- QoL IV (2015/16) with 30 002 respondents.

The QoL sample is designed to be representative of the Gauteng population and each municipality within the province. Census 2011 was used as a benchmark for the sample frame, and the final dataset was weighted back to these figures. This large sample enables GCRO to analyse, map and model the data through a range of innovative methods with a high degree of confidence and precision.

The QoL sample is also designed to include respondents from every ward in Gauteng. The QoL IV (2015/16) survey drew a minimum of 30 respondents per ward in non-metro wards, and 60 in metro wards, with increased numbers reflecting higher population density. The survey therefore provides critical, local-level data for analysis and assessment to guide targeted government interventions.

This QoL IV Data Brief is one of a series that takes a deeper look into the QoL IV (2015/16) dataset, and explores patterns, trends and dynamics in a range of focus areas such as social cohesion, crime, health, quality of life, poverty and inequality, economy, and governance.

Additional information on the Quality of Life survey can be found on the GCRO website: **www.gcro.ac.za**

*Due to rounding of individual values, figure labels in graphs may not add up to 100%.

HEADLINE FINDINGS

- In the QoL IV (2015/16) survey, representative of adults in Gauteng, a fifth of respondents said that they had been a victim of crime in the year before being interviewed.
- Almost three-quarters of the respondents noted that they felt safe at home and a similar proportion felt safe walking around their area during the day. Just more than a quarter of respondents said they felt safe while walking after dark.
- When asked to name the biggest problem in their community, the most common answer given by respondents was crime. Drugs was the second-most frequently identified problem.
- The proportion of Gauteng residents who are satisfied with metro police/traffic police is greater than those who are dissatisfied. Ekurhuleni residents were the most satisfied, while Emfuleni residents were the least.
- The proportion of Gauteng residents who were dissatisfied with safety and security provided by government was similar to the proportion who were satisfied. Residents of Mogale City were the most satisfied. Once again, residents of Emfuleni were the least satisfied.
- Of the 7% of respondents (roughly equivalent to 600 000 Gauteng residents) who participated in a protest in the year before they were interviewed, 22% stated that crime and security issues were among the reasons for their protest. Some 19% stated that their participation was against corruption.
- Around four-fifths of the respondents who had recently interacted with police or safety-related services indicated that they had been helped in a reasonable amount of time, that they had been treated with dignity and respect, and that their needs had been met.
- 15% of the respondents said that they had been asked to pay a bribe to a government official, traffic cop, policeman or other public servant. Residents in Lesedi were least likely to say that they had ever been asked for a bribe, while residents of Johannesburg and Midvaal were most likely.

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INTRODUCTION

The Gauteng City-Region Observatory (GCRO) undertook its fourth and largest Quality of Life (QoL) survey in 2015/16. The survey gathered perceptions of Gauteng residents through a diverse series of questions on social, economic, political, health, service delivery, crime and other issues. Some questions asked respondents to comment directly on issues of crime and safety. Other questions did not ask specifically about crime and safety but these themes emerge in some of the responses they gave.

Crime and safety data from the QoL IV (2015/16) survey are analysed in this Data Brief through comparisons between different municipalities, comparisons between the performance of the law enforcement sector with other parts of government, spatial analyses, and an assessment

of trends over time by drawing on results from previous QoL surveys.

The following questions are posed and addressed in this data brief.

1. What are respondents' perceptions of crime and safety?
2. How does crime feature amongst the problems respondents identified within their communities, and by business owners?
3. Are respondents satisfied with the crime-prevention and safety services provided by government?
4. How do respondents experience their interactions with government departments that are responsible for law enforcement, compared to other government departments and services?

REPORTED CRIME AND PERCEPTIONS OF SAFETY

When respondents from the QoL IV (2015/16) survey were asked 'Have you been a victim of crime in the past year', 20% of respondents said that they had been a victim of crime (Figure 1). This measure has been reasonably consistent over the four QoL surveys, with a slight improvement in 2015/16.

Despite this, when respondents were asked whether they perceived crime to be getting better or worse, a sizeable proportion felt it had gotten worse (42%), while 38% said it had stayed the same, and only 21% said it had improved (Figure 2). Responses to this question have fluctuated over time. Compared with QoL III (2013/14), there has been an increase in the proportion of respondents saying that crime has stayed the same, paired with a decrease in the proportion of those who believe it has worsened or improved.
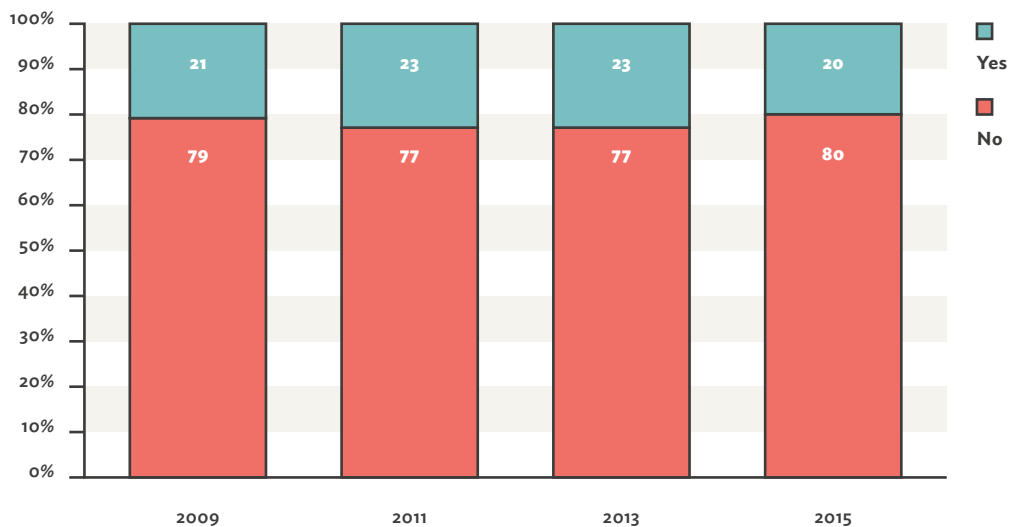
> **"When respondents from the QoL IV (2015/16) survey were asked 'Have you been a victim of crime in the past year', 20% of respondents said that they had been a victim of crime."**
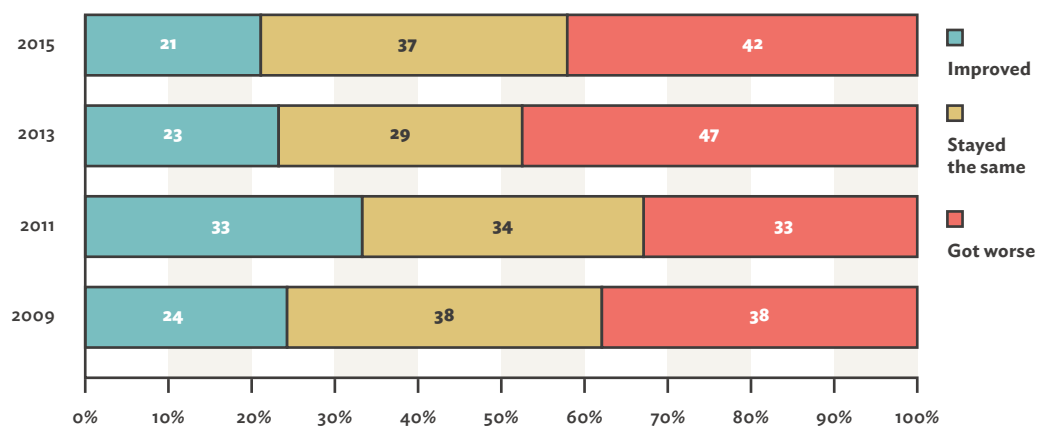
FIGURE 1: Respondents reporting that they had been a victim of crime in the past year (2009, 2011, 2013, 2015)

Data source: GCRO QoL I (2009), QoL II (2011), QoL III (2013/14), QoL IV (2015/16)

FIGURE 2: Respondents' perceptions of crime in the past year (2009, 2011, 2013, 2015)

Data source: GCRO QoL I (2009), QoL II (2011), QoL III (2013/14), QoL IV (2015/16)

Respondents were asked how safe they feel in three different situations: at home, walking in their area during the day and walking in their area after dark. Three-quarters of the respondents (75%) felt safe at home and a similar proportion (73%) felt safe walking around their area during the day (Figure 3). However, only a little more than a quarter of respondents (27%) said they felt safe while walking after dark.

FIGURE 3: Respondents' perceptions of safety at home, walking in their area during the day, and walking in their area after dark

Data source: GCRO QoL IV (2015/16)
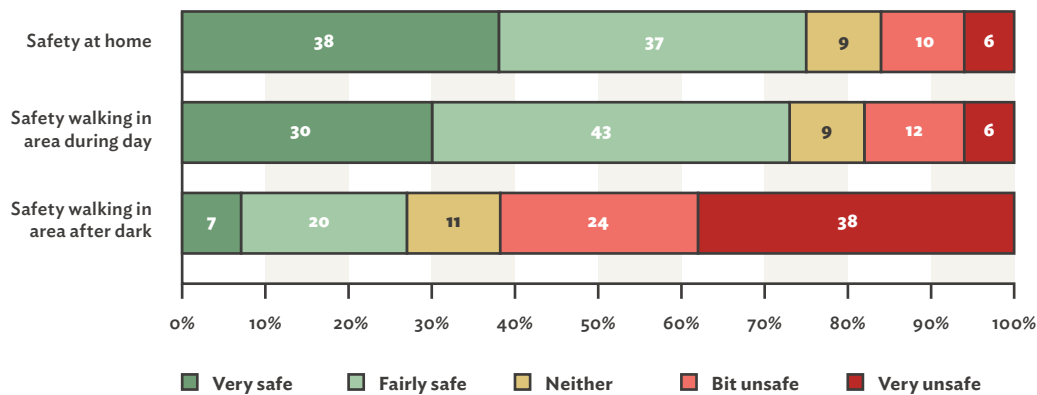
How safe people feel varies by the gender of the respondent, migration status, dwelling type, and the presence of and satisfaction with street lights. The majority of both male and female respondents said that they felt unsafe walking in their areas after dark. A greater proportion of women felt unsafe (65%) compared to men (59%) (Figure 4).

FIGURE 4: Feeling safe when walking in their area after dark by gender

Data source: GCRO QoL IV (2015/16)
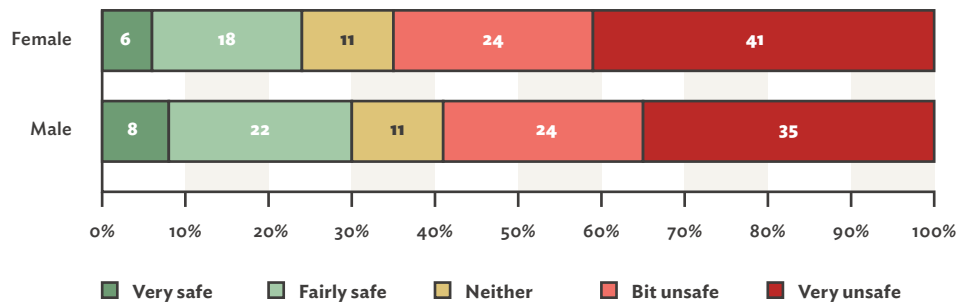
Migration status also makes a difference, but possibly not as one might expect. Given high levels of xenophobia in South Africa, we expected that migrants from outside South Africa would feel most unsafe. In fact, internal migrants from other provinces within South Africa felt the least safe of all respondents, with 66% either 'very unsafe' or 'a bit unsafe' (Figure 5). This figure was slightly lower among cross-border migrants (63%). This may be affected by where different kinds of migrants live within the city-region.

FIGURE 5: Feeling safe when walking in their area after dark by migration status
*Data source: GCRO QoL IV (2015/16)*
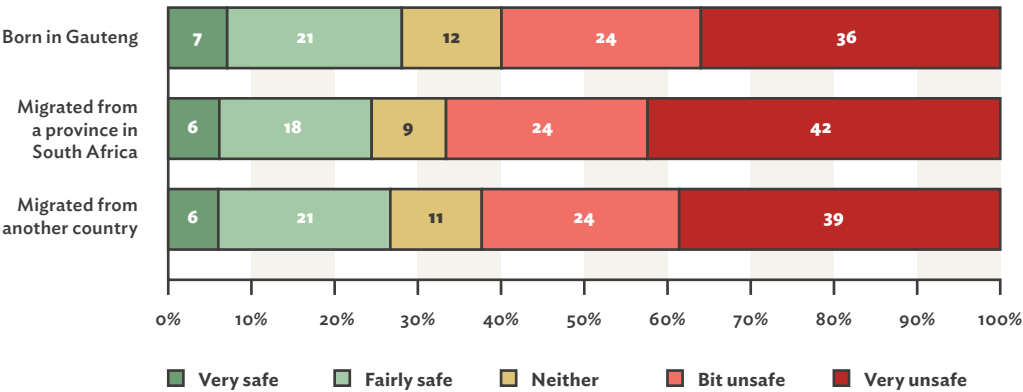
Housing type influences how safe people feel at home. Some 93% of respondents in retirement complexes said they felt safe at home (Figure 6). However, only 62% of respondents in backyard shacks and 61% in informal settlements felt safe at home. Many people choose to live in townhouses and cluster complexes for safety reasons, and a high proportion of respondents living in these dwelling types report feeling safe at home. These dwelling types are not only 'gated' but often served by private security which increases both actual and perceived levels of safety. Some 17% of respondents living in townhouses and 7% living in cluster houses reported that they turn to private security to deal with problems in the areas where they live, compared to only 3% (in both dwelling types) who stated that they turn to the police for assistance. By way of contrast, none of the respondents living in informal dwellings reported that they would turn to private security (Figure 11 and Figure 12 provide more data on responses to the question *'if there is a problem in the area where you live, who do you talk to first to sort it out?'*).

"**Many people choose to live in townhouses and cluster complexes for safety reasons, and a high proportion of respondents living in these dwelling types report feeling safe at home.**"

FIGURE 6: Proportion of respondents who feel safe at home by dwelling type
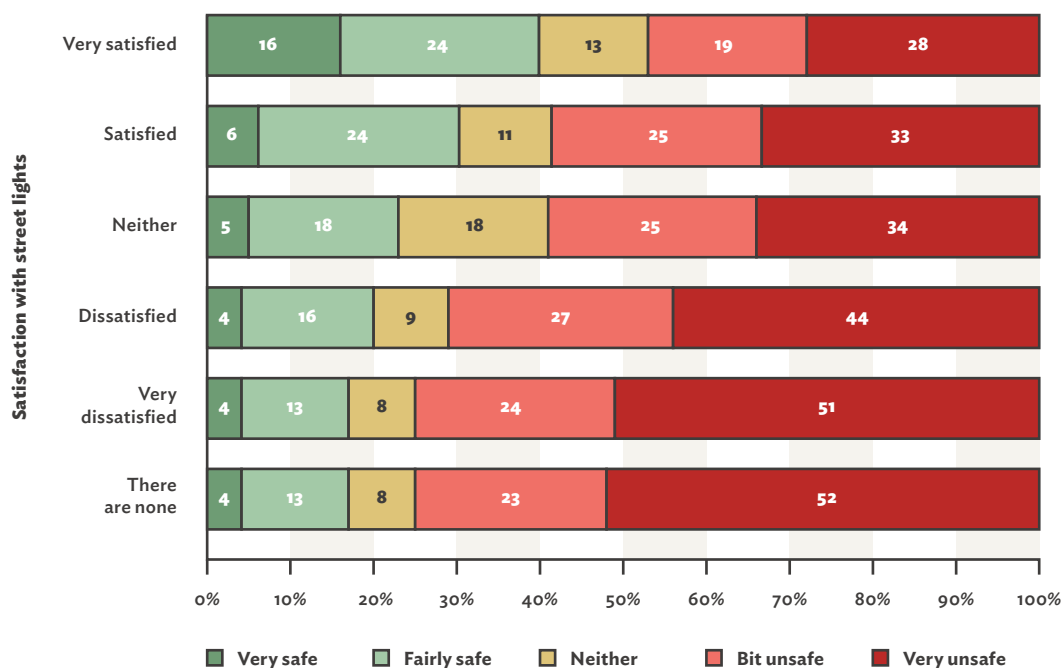*Data source: GCRO QoL IV (2015/16)*
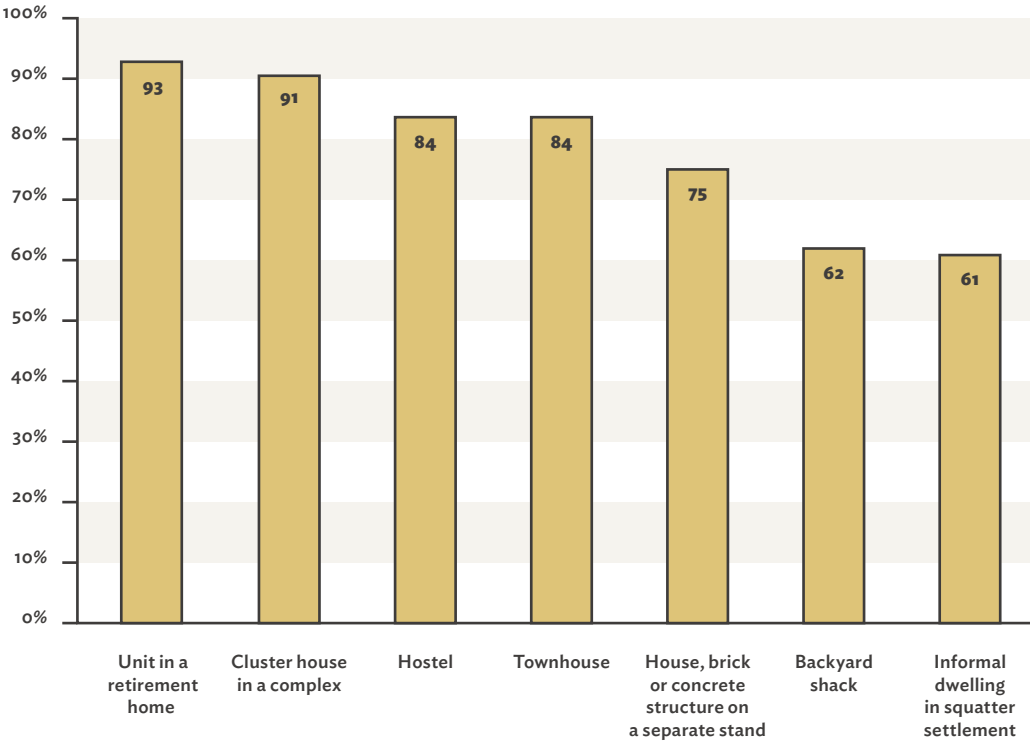
While most people feel unsafe walking at night, the presence of street lights makes a significant difference as to whether people feel safe or not. Respondents who were satisfied with their street lights were more likely to feel safe in their area after dark. Some 33% of the respondents who were satisfied with their street lights felt safe walking in their area after dark (Figure 7). By comparison only 18% of people who were dissatisfied with their street lights felt safe. Perceptions of safety were virtually identical for respondents reporting no street lights in their area and those who were very dissatisfied with street lights. The presence or absence of street lights might, of course, be a proxy for other characteristics of the neighbourhood, and further work would need to be done to isolate the exact importance of street lights.

FIGURE 7: Feeling safe walking after dark in their area and satisfaction with street lights
Data source: GCRO QoL IV (2015/16)

Satisfaction with street lights

	Very safe	Fairly safe	Neither	Bit unsafe	Very unsafe
Very satisfied	16	24	13	19	28
Satisfied	6	24	11	25	33
Neither	5	18	18	25	34
Dissatisfied	4	16	9	27	44
Very dissatisfied	4	13	8	24	51
There are none	4	13	8	23	52

■ Very safe ■ Fairly safe ■ Neither ■ Bit unsafe ■ Very unsafe

PHOTOGRAPH BY **CLIVE HASSALL**

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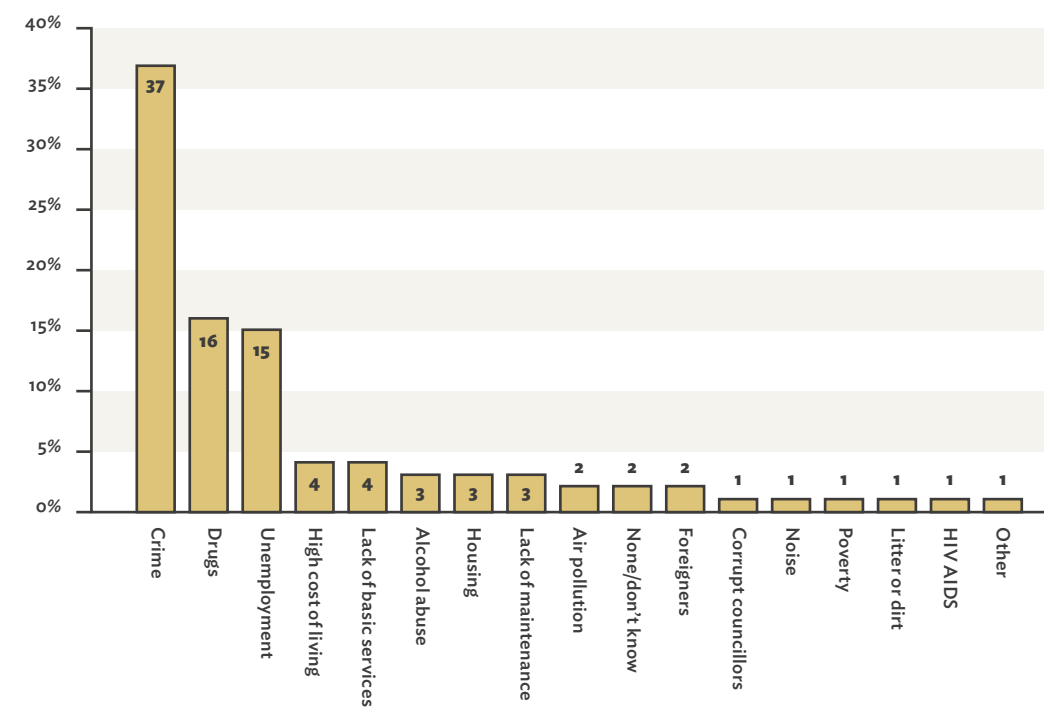# THE BIGGEST PROBLEMS IN YOUR COMMUNITY: CRIME AND DRUGS

Respondents were asked to identify the biggest problem in their community. As in previous QoL surveys, in 2015/16 the most common response was crime (37%) (Figure 8). Unemployment, which in previous QoL surveys was the second-most frequently cited problem, dropped below drugs in 2015/16. Drugs has risen to the second most frequently cited problem, rising from 5% in 2011 and 2013/14 up to 16% in 2015/16. An additional 3% of respondents named alcohol as the biggest problem in their community (Figure 8). When drugs and alcohol concerns are counted together, one-fifth of the respondents said that one or other form of substance abuse was the biggest problem facing their community.

The Victims of Crime Survey conducted by Statistics South Africa (StatsSA) in 2014/15 suggested similar mounting concerns over substance abuse. In that survey 81% of Gauteng respondents reported that they believed that a key motive behind property crime was the need for drugs.[1]

1. Statistics South Africa (2015): Victims of Crime Survey. 2014/2015 Pretoria.
http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0341/P03412014.pdf

FIGURE 8: Respondents' perception of the biggest problem facing their community
*Data source: GCRO QoL IV (2015/16)*

Although a large proportion of QoL respondents cited crime as the biggest problem in their community, this is not evenly distributed across the province, as demonstrated in Figure 9. In wards with the darkest shade of red, between 61% and 88% of respondents reported that crime was the biggest problem in their community. Examples of such wards can be found in the southern parts of Boksburg (Ekurhuleni) and Krugersdorp (Mogale City). Areas with lower percentages of respondents citing crime as the biggest problem (lighter shadings) include parts of Carletonville (Merafong) and Mohlakeng (Rand West).

FIGURE 9: Percentage of respondents per ward who identified crime as the biggest problem in their community
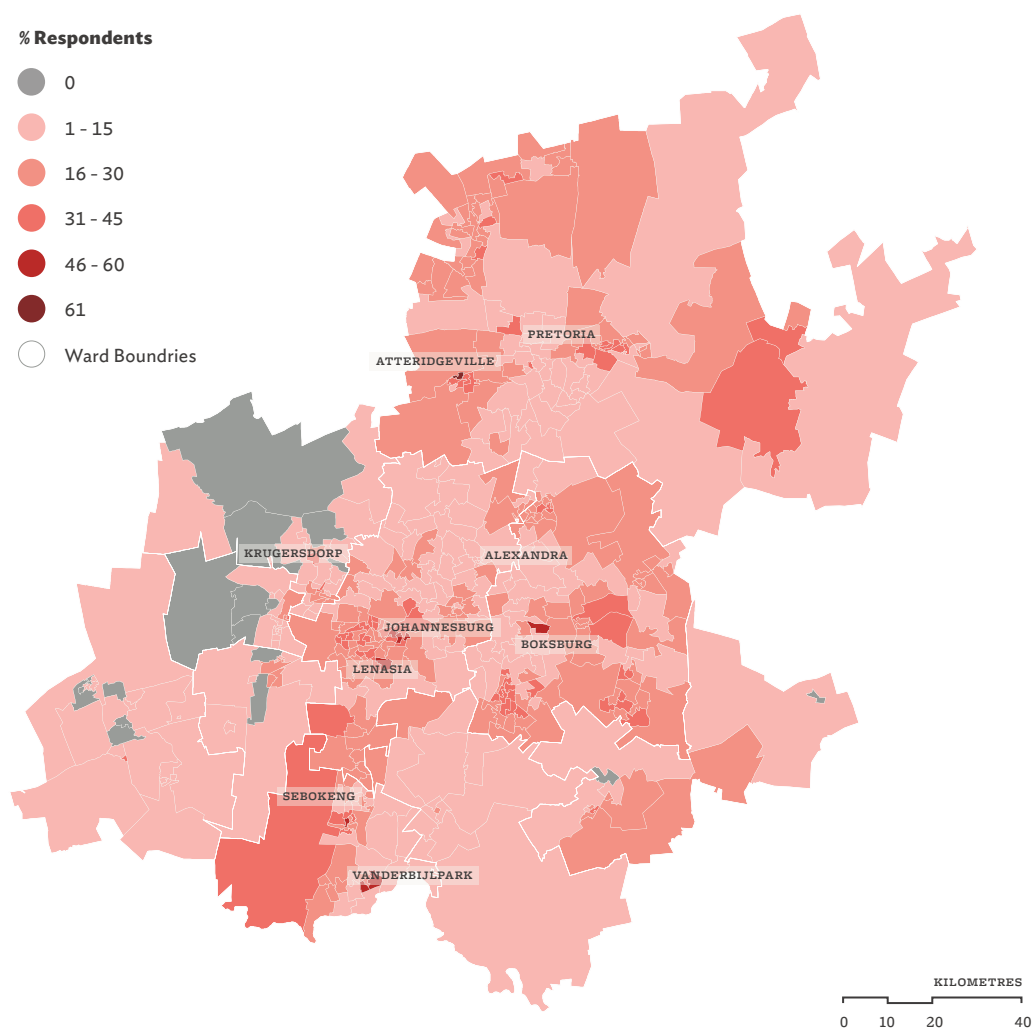
Data source: GCRO QoL IV (2015/16)
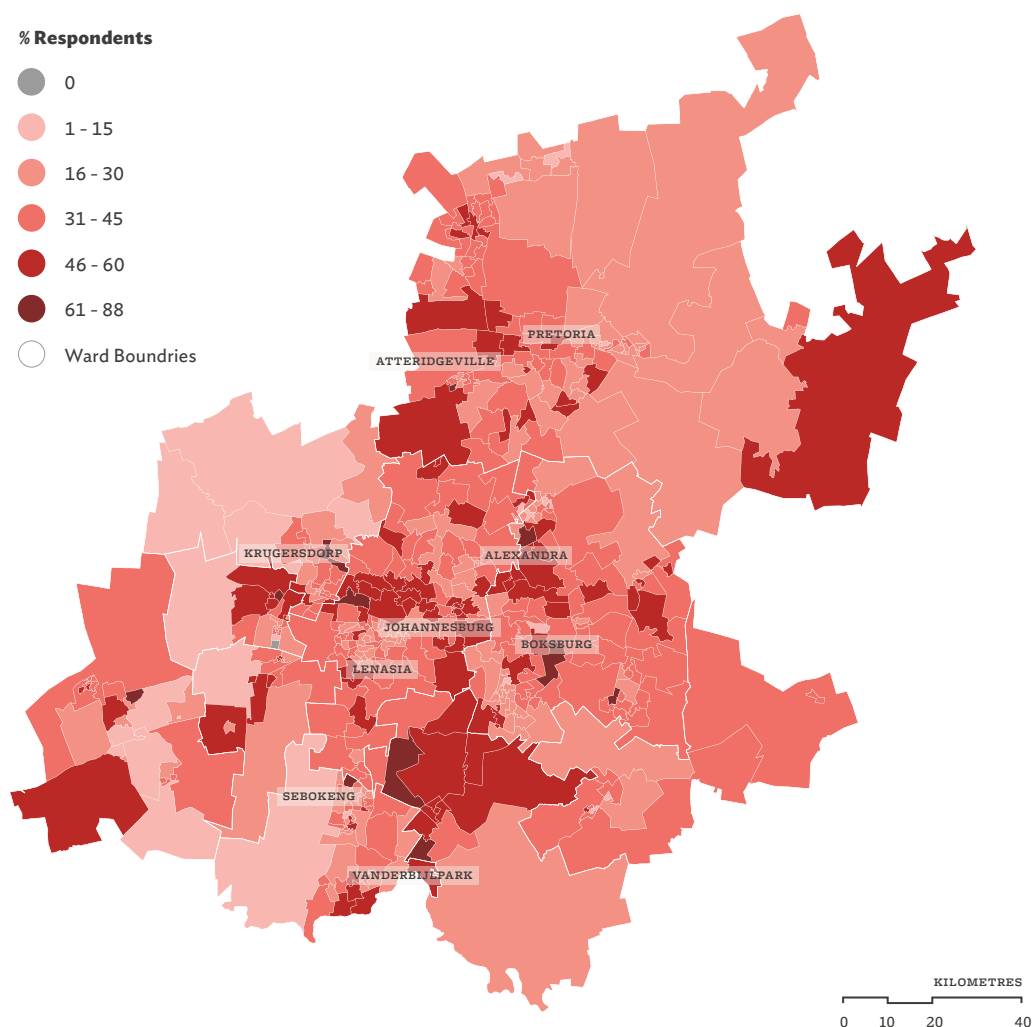
The 19% of respondents that identified substance abuse (drugs or alcohol) as the biggest problem in their community are also not distributed evenly across Gauteng (Figure 10). In areas with the darkest shading, 46% to 61% of respondents reported that substance abuse was the biggest problem facing their community. Such areas with high percentages include Atteridgeville (Tshwane), Vanderbijlpark (Emfuleni) and Beyers Park (Ekurhuleni). In parts of Vereeniging (Emfuleni) and Meyerton (Midvaal) significantly lower percentages of respondents reported that drugs and alcohol were the biggest problem in their community.

FIGURE 10: Percentage of respondents per ward who identified drugs and alcohol as the biggest problem in their community

Data source: GCRO QoL IV (2015/16)

% Respondents

- 0
- 1 – 15
- 16 – 30
- 31 – 45
- 46 – 60
- 61
- Ward Boundries

PRETORIA

ATTERIDGEVILLE

KRUGERSDORP

ALEXANDRA

JOHANNESBURG

BOKSBURG

LENASIA

SEBOKENG

VANDERBIJLPARK

KILOMETRES

0   10   20   40

Respondents were asked 'If there is a problem in the area where you live, who do you talk to first to sort it out?' Unsurprisingly, since most people identified crime as the biggest problem in their community, 37% of the respondents said they would call the police while a further 9% said they would use private security (Figure 11). It is also worth noting that 14% of the residents could not identify anyone they would approach.

The respondents who noted that they would go to the police were mapped per ward. A visual comparison of Figure 9, Figure 10 and Figure 12 shows that areas where crime is a big problem (61-88% in Figure 9) correspond with the areas where respondents will first go to the police if there was a problem in their area (55-61% in Figure 12). These include areas such as Boksburg (Ekurhuleni), Bronkhorstpruit (Tshwane) and Bekkersdal (Rand West). Likewise, this relationship is observed in areas in which respondents identified drugs and alcohol as a major problem (Figure 10) – most parts of Emfuleni, Atteridgeville (Tshwane) and Tsakane (Ekurhuleni).

FIGURE 11: If there is a problem in the area where you live, who do you talk to first to sort it out?
Data source: GCRO QoL IV (2015/16)
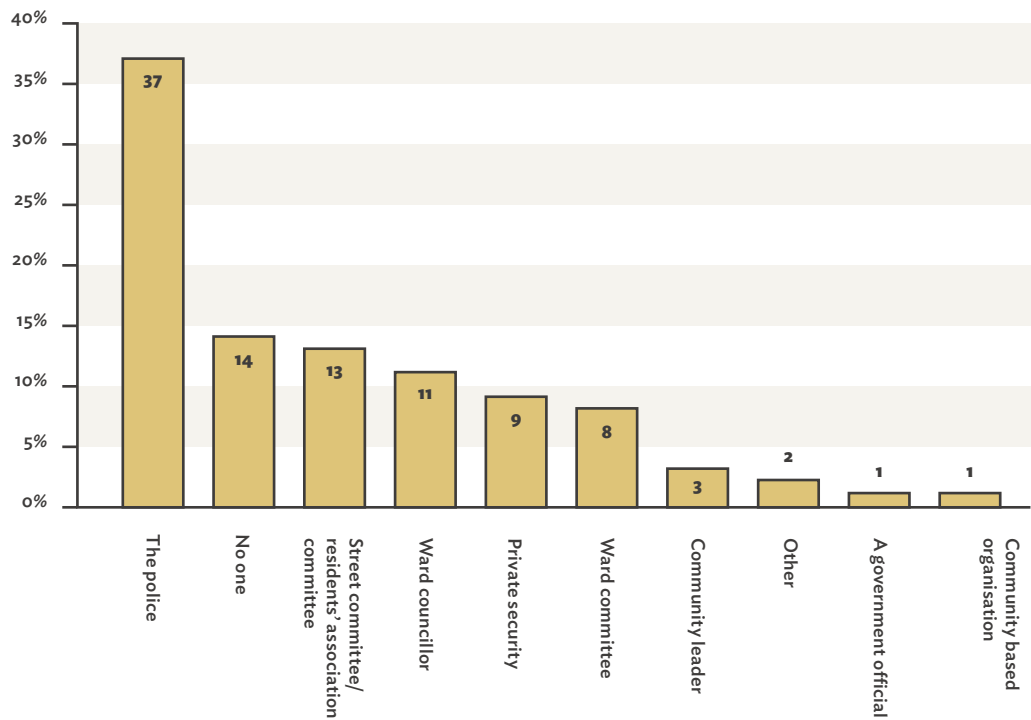
FIGURE 12: Percentage of respondents per ward who would go to the police first to sort out a problem in the area where they live

Data source: GCRO QoL IV (2015/16)

% Respondents

- 0 – 18
- 19 – 32
- 33 – 42
- 43 – 54
- 55 – 61
- Ward Boundries

KILOMETRES

0   10   20   40
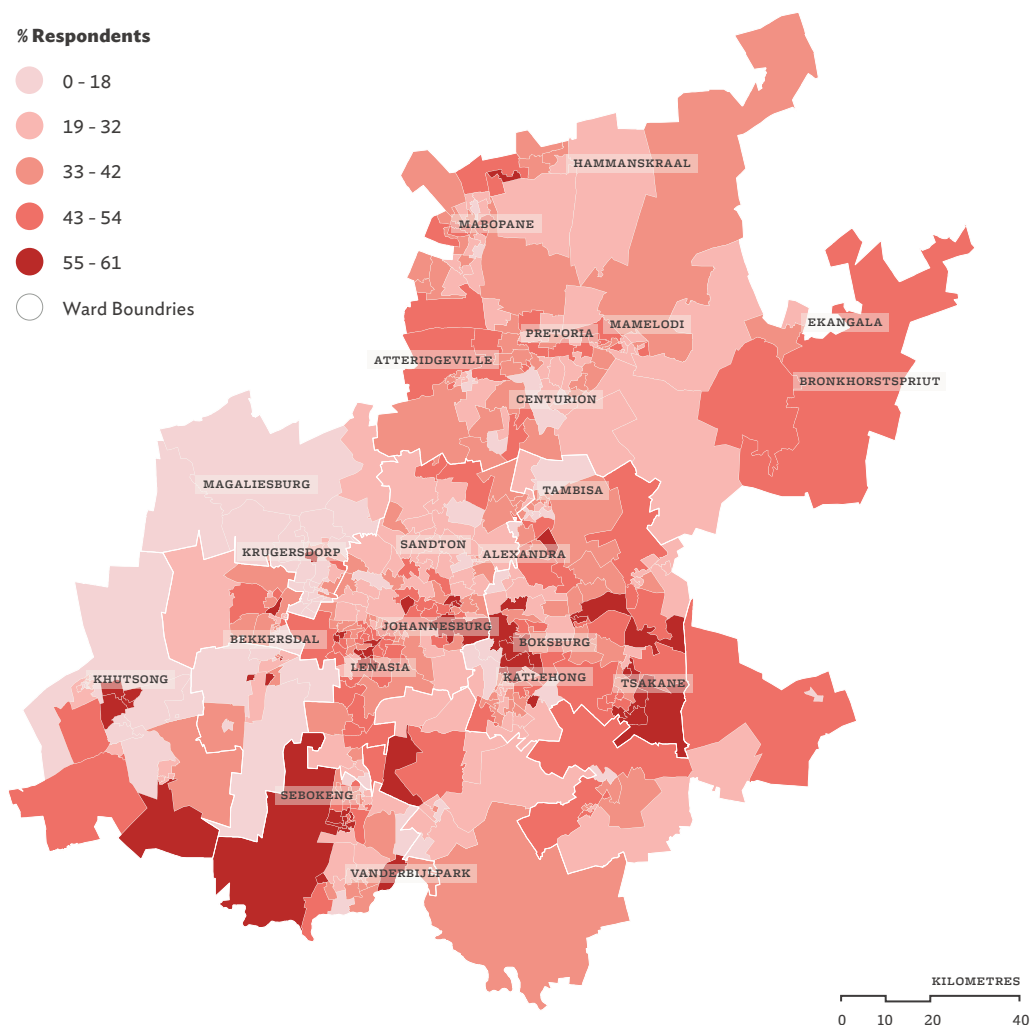
The QoL survey includes a set of questions for those respondents (8% in total) who identified themselves as business owners. Business owners were asked 'What is the main constraint experienced by your business?' Many of the responses to this question relate to financial constraints, such as rising costs, the cost of credit or borrowing money, tax rates and lack of access to finance. However, the most commonly cited problem was 'crime and theft', identified by 16% of business owners (Figure 13). Furthermore, some 2% of business owners indicated harassment by police as a constraint and 1% said violence.

While formal and informal business owners report different business challenges, both groups indicated crime and theft as their principal constraint. Some 17% of informal businesses said 'crime and theft' was their biggest constraint, compared with 15% of formal businesses (Figure 14).
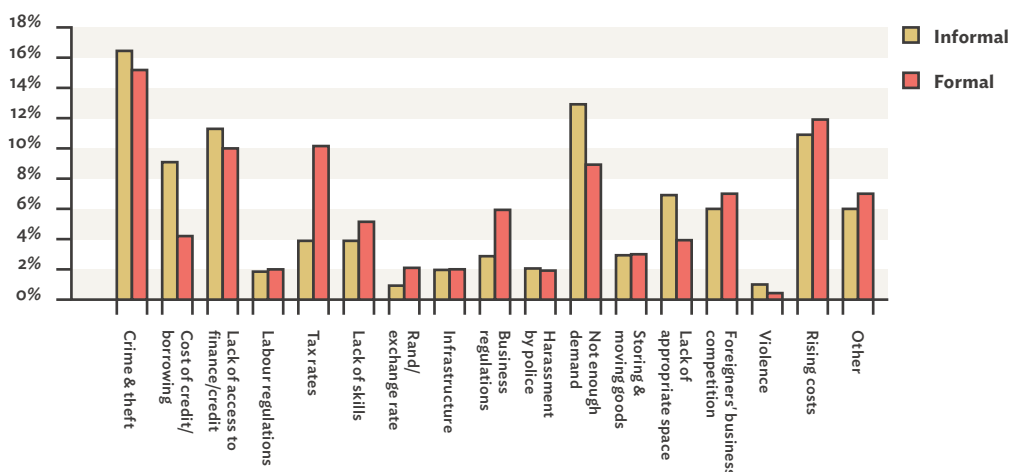
FIGURE 13: **Main constraint experienced by businesses as reported by owners**

Data source: GCRO QoL IV (2015/16)
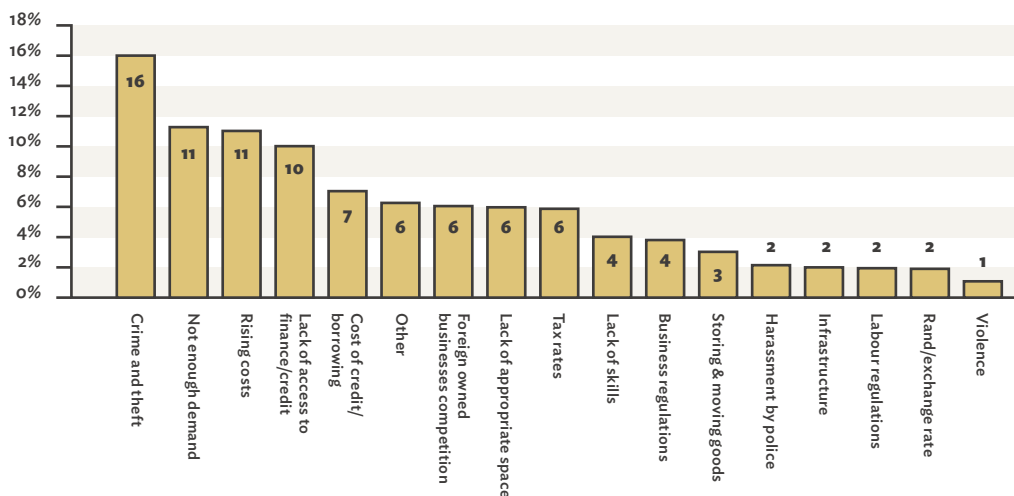
FIGURE 14: **Comparison of the main constrains experienced by businesses in the formal and informal sectors**

Data source: GCRO QoL IV (2015/16)

SATISFACTION WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT IN COMPARISON TO OTHER GOVERNMENT SERVICES

In an attempt to understand satisfaction levels among Gauteng residents, respondents were asked a series of questions about their satisfaction with various government services. The performance of metro/traffic police as well as safety and security services provided by government can be benchmarked against other services such as water, electricity, housing, waste, health, education and so on. (For a more comprehensive set of comparisons please refer to the **QoL IV Launch presentation**).

Levels of satisfaction vary across different government services. Respondents showed higher levels of satisfaction with water and energy services than either metro/traffic police or government-provided safety and security (Figure 15). However, satisfaction with these safety-related services was higher than that for governments' initiatives to grow the economy.
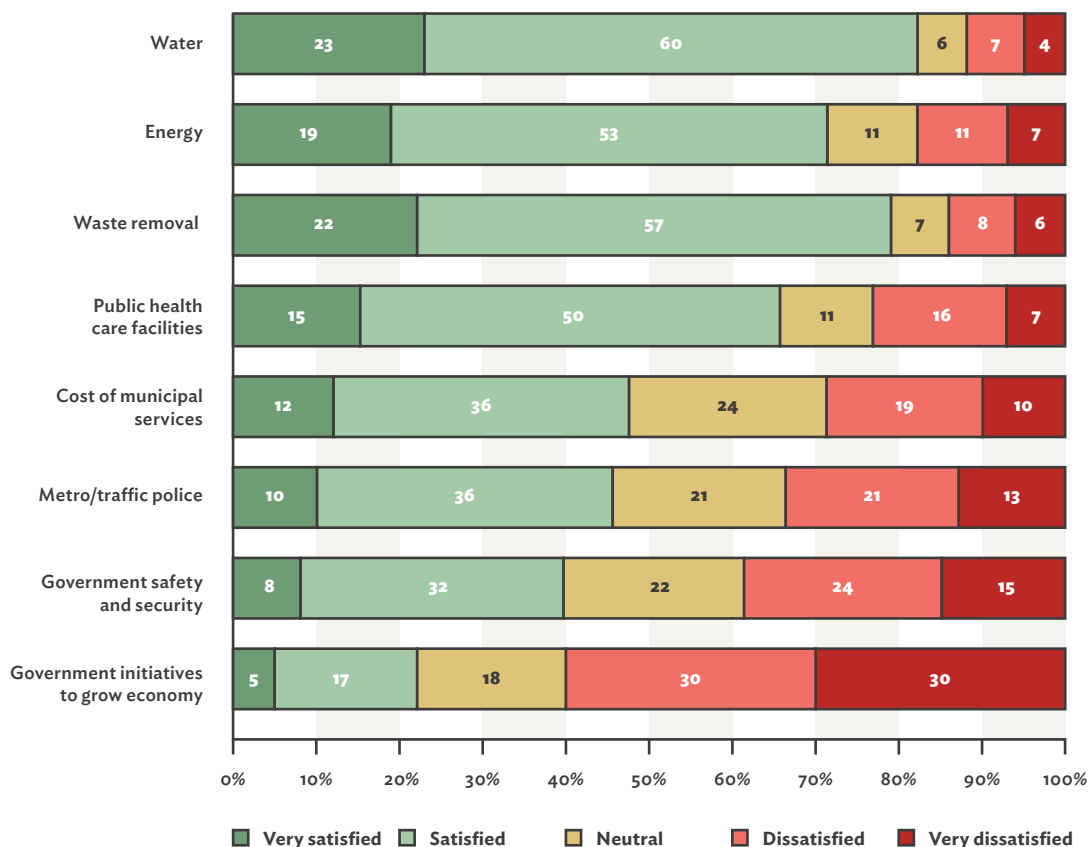
> **"Levels of satisfaction vary across different government services. Respondents showed higher levels of satisfaction with water and energy services than either metro/traffic police or government provided safety and security"**
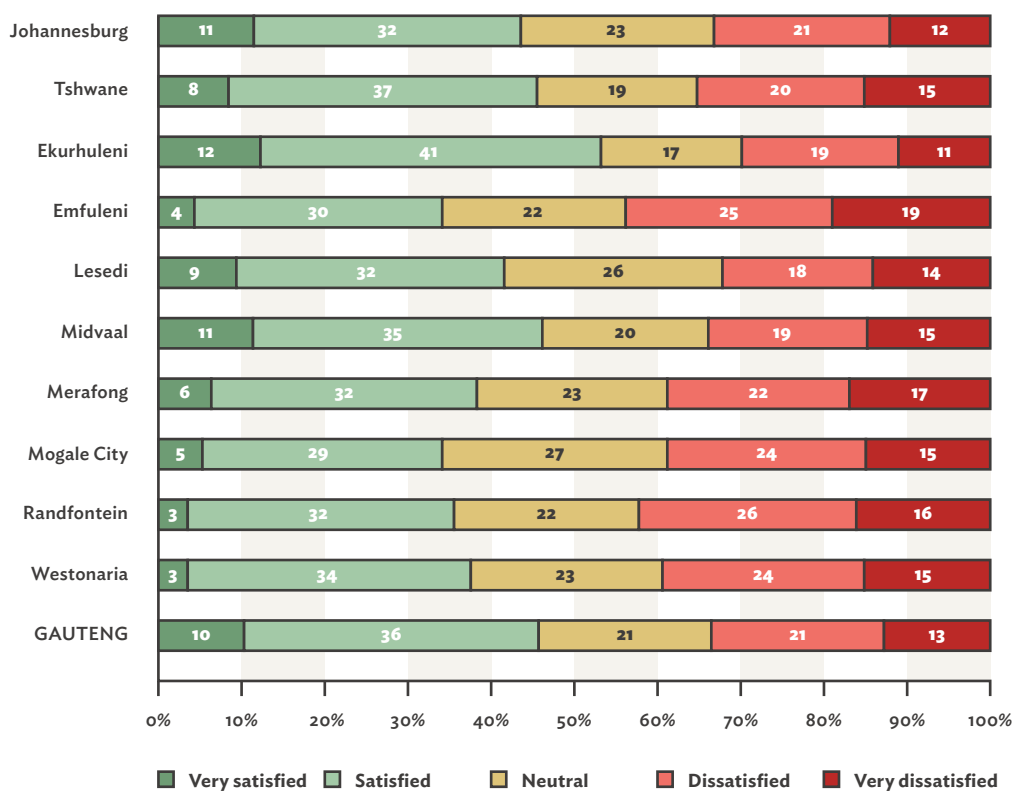
FIGURE 15: Satisfaction with government provided services
Data source: GCRO QoL IV (2015/16)

Category	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Water	23	60	6	7	4
Energy	19	53	11	11	7
Waste removal	22	57	7	8	6
Public health care facilities	15	50	11	16	7
Cost of municipal services	12	36	24	19	10
Metro/traffic police	10	36	21	21	13
Government safety and security	8	32	22	24	15
Government initiatives to grow economy	5	17	18	30	30

It is worth noting that overall in Gauteng more people were satisfied (46%) with metro/traffic police than those who were dissatisfied (34%) (Figure 16). The proportion of Gauteng residents who were dissatisfied with safety and security provided by government (39%) is similar to those who were satisfied (40%) (Figure 17).

Ekurhuleni is the only municipality where more than half of the respondents said that they were satisfied with metro/traffic police (53%), followed by Midvaal (46%) (Figure 16). Tshwane (45%) and Johannesburg (43%) also had relatively high satisfaction levels, whereas Emfuleni and Randfontein had low levels of satisfaction and high levels of dissatisfaction with metro/traffic police.

FIGURE 16: Satisfaction with metro/traffic police by municipality

Data source: GCRO QoL IV (2015/16)

Municipality	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Johannesburg	11	32	23	21	12
Tshwane	8	37	19	20	15
Ekurhuleni	12	41	17	19	11
Emfuleni	4	30	22	25	19
Lesedi	9	32	26	18	14
Midvaal	11	35	20	19	15
Merafong	6	32	23	22	17
Mogale City	5	29	27	24	15
Randfontein	3	32	22	26	16
Westonaria	3	34	23	24	15
GAUTENG	10	36	21	21	13

■ Very satisfied ■ Satisfied ■ Neutral ■ Dissatisfied ■ Very dissatisfied

PHOTOGRAPH BY **CLIVE HASSALL**

FIGURE 17: Satisfaction with safety and security provided by government by municipality
Data source: GCRO QoL IV (2015/16)
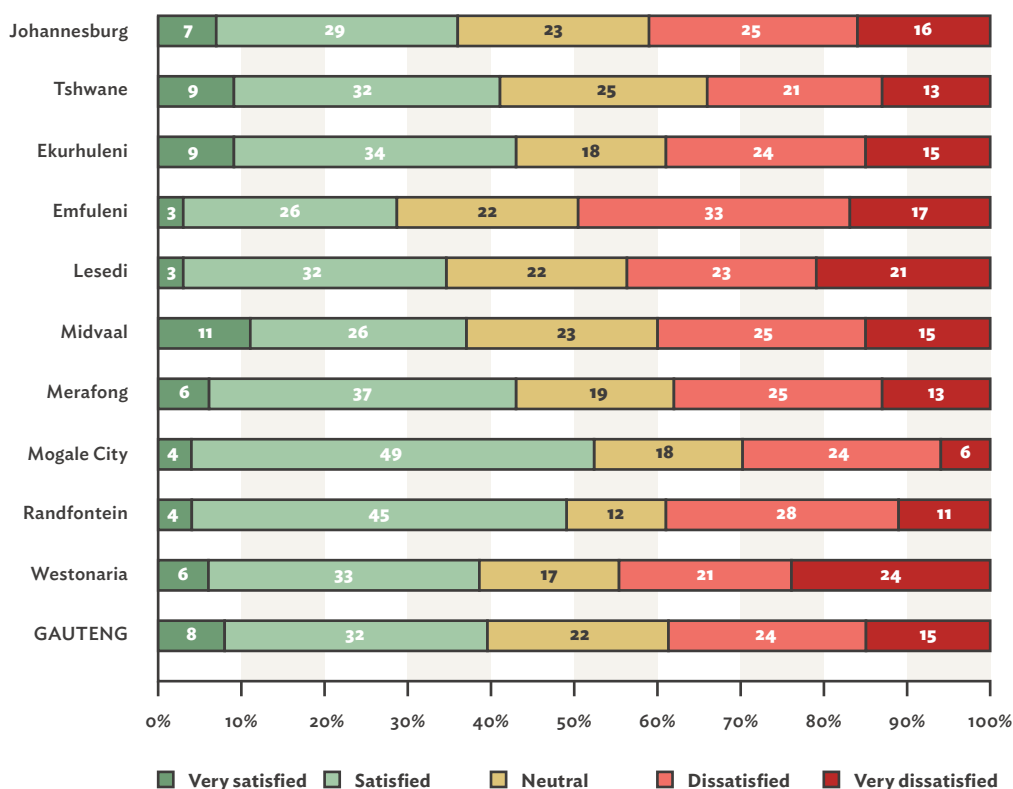
Satisfaction with metro/traffic police is not strongly aligned with satisfaction with government safety and security. In terms of safety and security services provided by government, Mogale City was the only municipality where more than half of respondents indicated that they were satisfied (53%), followed by Randfontein where just less than half of respondents were satisfied (49%) (Figure 17). In contrast, both of these municipalities had comparatively low levels of satisfaction with metro/traffic police. Emfuleni had the highest levels of dissatisfaction with safety and

security services provided by government (50%), and only 29% of the municipality were satisfied.

In order to gauge how important safety and security services are to respondents compared to other kinds of services, we asked respondents to indicate which types of services matter most to them.

A percentage of all population groups identified safety and security as their most valued government service (Figure 18), but this varied by race. White and Indian/Asian respondents place greater emphasis

on safety and security services (both 17%) than either coloured (13%) or African (7%) respondents. African respondents placed comparatively greater emphasis on economic support and job creation. This does not mean that safety and security are not important to African respondents or that they are less likely to be victims of crime. Rather, it indicates that African respondents' priorities align more strongly with economic concerns than with safety and security.

FIGURE 18: The services that matter the most to respondents, by population group
*Data source: GCRO QoL IV (2015/16)*
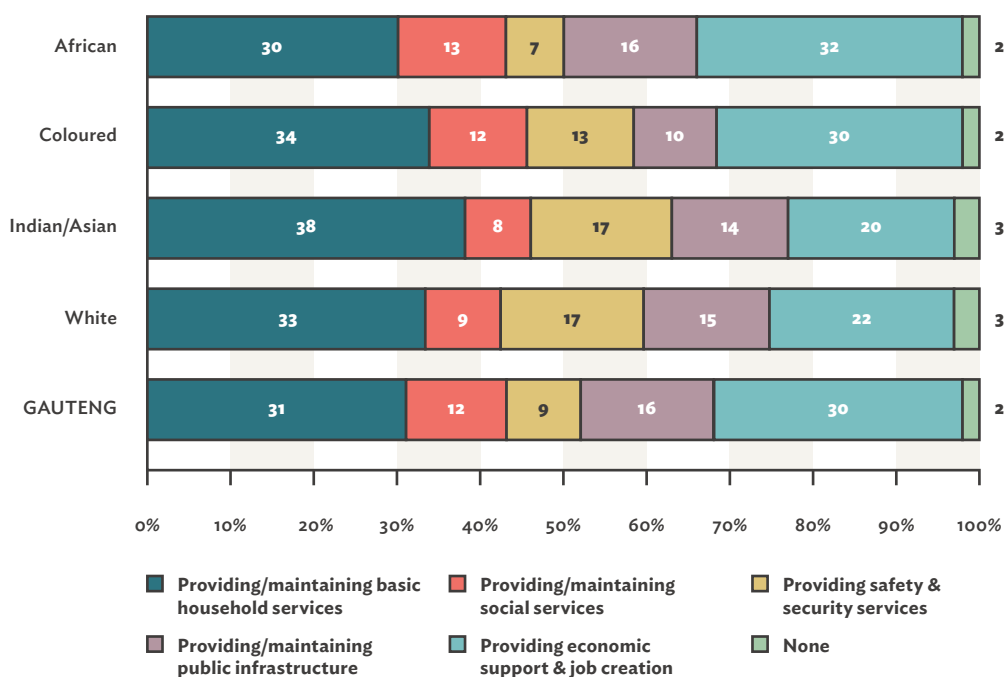
Another way to understand the significance of crime in respondents' lives is to examine the reasons given for protesting. In total, 7% of respondents reported that they had participated in a protest in the year prior to the interview (Figure 19). While this may seem to be a small percentage, it is equivalent to more than half a million people across Gauteng. The most commonly reported reasons behind protests were basic services and housing. What is particularly noteworthy is that 'crime' and 'corruption' were also given as reasons for protests, with 22% identifying that crime or security issues had fuelled their protest, and 19% pointed to corruption (Figure 19).

FIGURE 19: Proportion of respondents who participated in a protest in the year before the interview, and what the protest was about (the protest could have been about more than one thing)
Data source: GCRO QoL IV (2015/16)
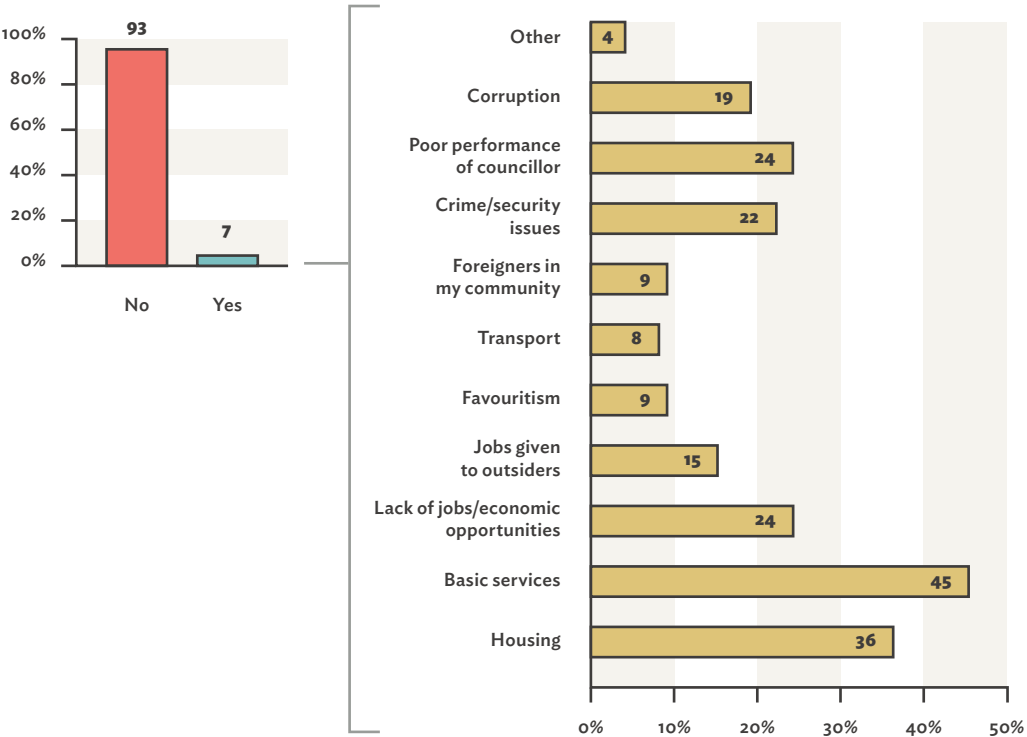
PHOTOGRAPH BY **ZEWANDE BHENGU**

INTERACTIONS WITH POLICE AND RELATED LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICES

We asked respondents if they had interacted with a government department or service in the past three months, and then to assess that interaction. Of the 36% of respondents who had interacted with government in the previous three months, an overwhelming proportion of respondents had interacted with government health services (Figure 20). This was followed by Home Affairs (8%) and police/safety services (5%). Some 1% of respondents had interacted with judicial/correctional services (Figure 20).
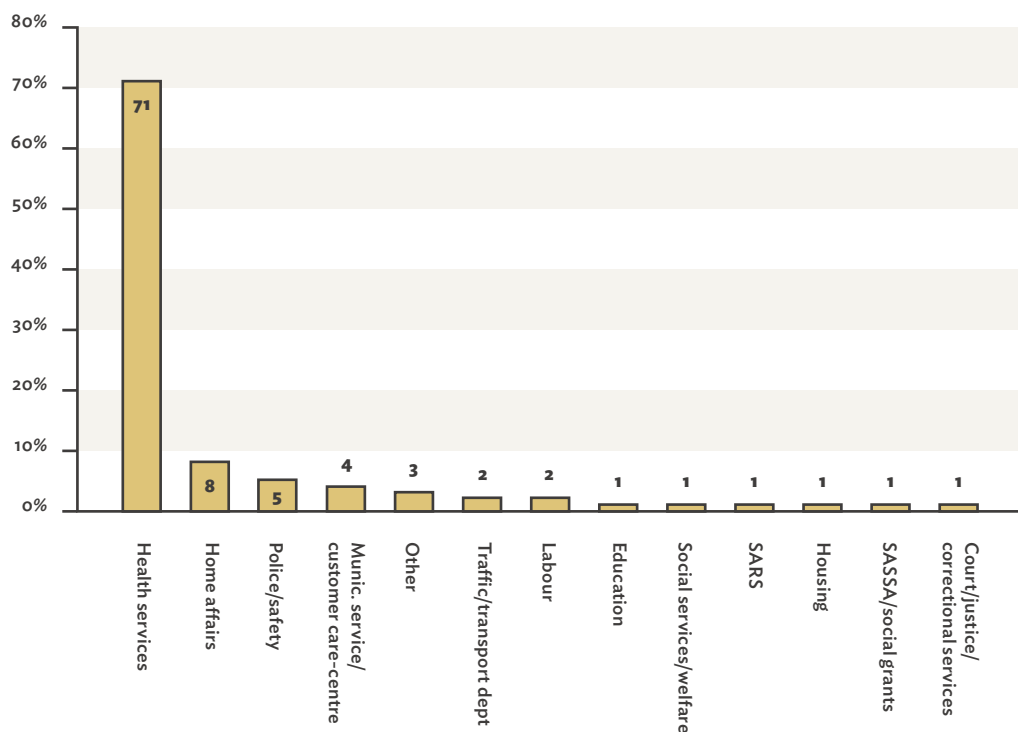
> "Of the 36% of respondents who had interacted with government in the previous three months, an overwhelming proportion of respondents had interacted with government health services"

FIGURE 20: Government or department or service respondent most recently interacted
with in the three months prior to the interview

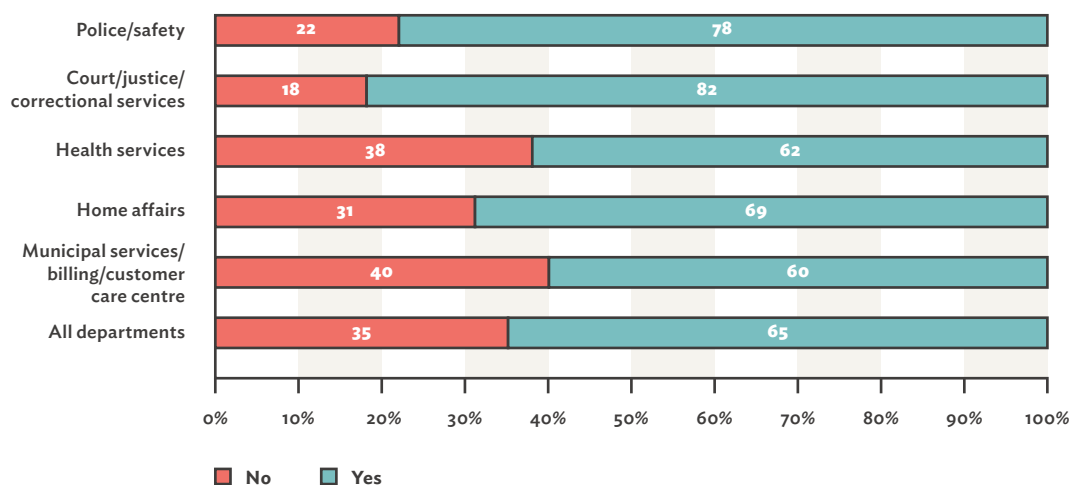*Data source: GCRO QoL IV (2015/16)*

Figures 21, 22 and 23 compare the experiences of respondents who had recently interacted with different government departments. Figure 21 shows that 78% of respondents who interacted with a police or safety department were assisted within a reasonable amount of time, compared to only 62% interacting with health services and 60% interacting with municipal billing/customer care centres. Some 81% of respondents who interacted with police or safety department said they were treated with dignity and respect (Figure 22), while 83% who interacted

with court/justice/correctional services reported the same. Some 82% of the respondents who interacted with the police or safety department said their needs were met, and only 20% of respondents who interacted with judicial/correctional services did not have their needs met (Figure 23). While there remains room for improvement, in general interactions with police/government safety services and judicial/correctional services are positive and in many cases are better than other government services.
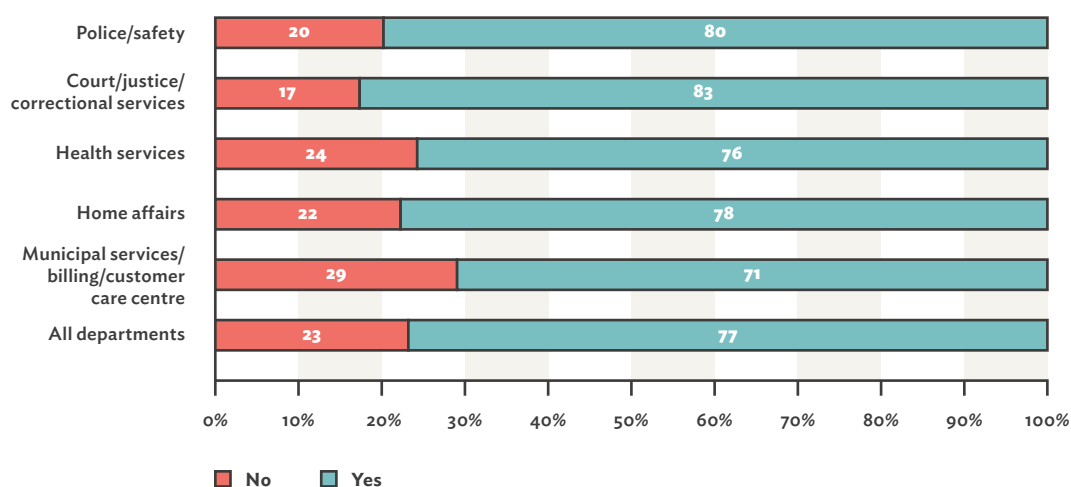
FIGURE 21: Whether a respondent was assisted in a reasonable amount of time by the department with which they most recently interacted
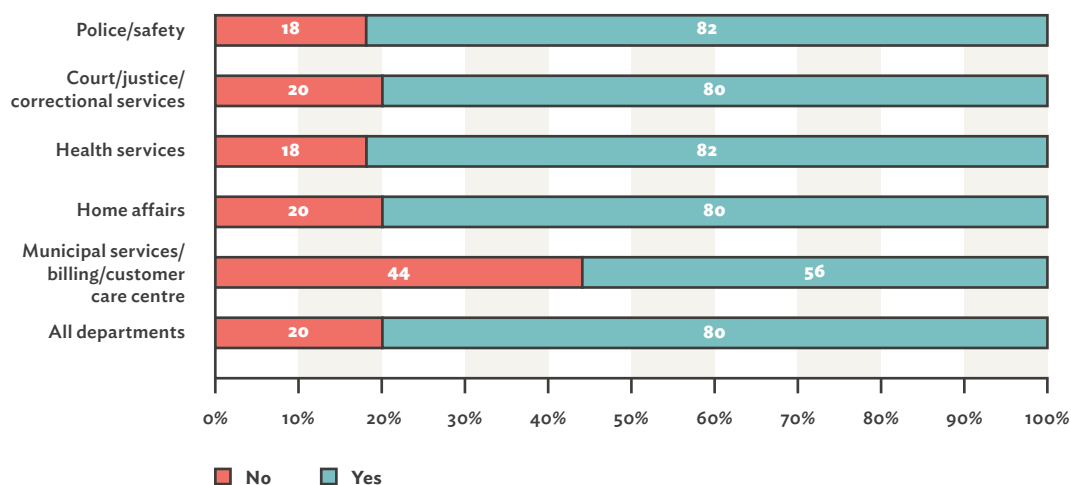
Data source: GCRO QoL IV (2015/16)

FIGURE 22: Whether a respondent was treated with dignity and respect by the department with which they most recently interacted
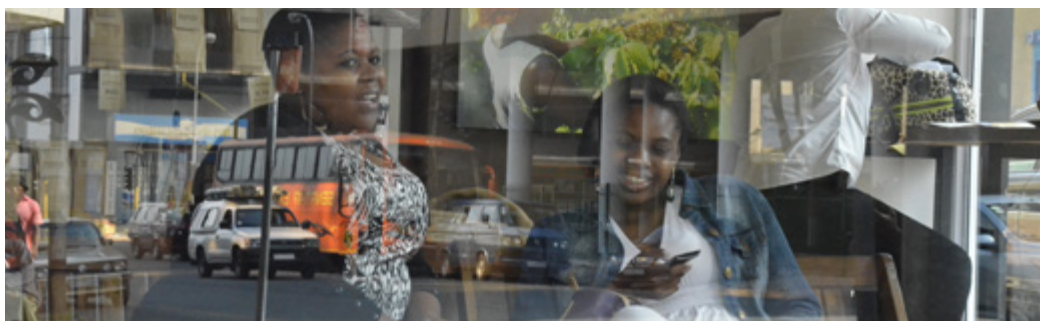
Data source: GCRO QoL IV (2015/16)

FIGURE 23: Whether respondent's needs were met by the department with which they most recently interacted

Data source: GCRO QoL IV (2015/16)

Department	No	Yes
Police/safety	18	82
Court/justice/correctional services	20	80
Health services	18	82
Home affairs	20	80
Municipal services/billing/customer care centre	44	56
All departments	20	80

■ No   ■ Yes

Although respondents were generally positive about interactions with government departments or services, a notable proportion reported having been asked to pay a bribe to a government official, traffic cop, police officer or other public servant. Some 15% of the respondents said that they had been asked for a bribe (which equates to over 1 300 000 people in Gauteng) (Figure 24). According to the QoL IV (2015/16) findings, incidents of bribery were most frequently reported by respondents in the City of Johannesburg (17%) and Midvaal (17%), whereas Lesedi had the lowest proportion of respondents who reported being asked to pay a bribe (4%) (Figure 24).
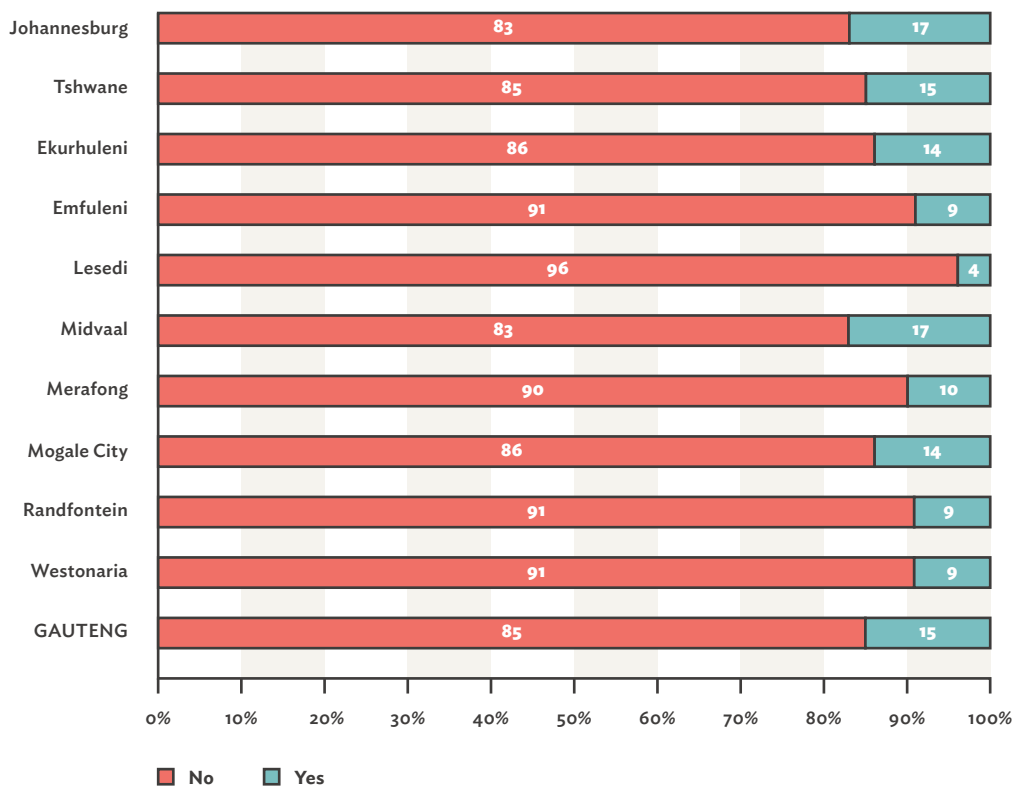

PHOTOGRAPH BY **SARAH JANSEN VAN VUUREN**

FIGURE 24: 'Have you ever been asked to pay a bribe to a government official, traffic cop, police officer, or other public servant?' by municipality

Data source: GCRO QoL IV (2015/16)

Municipality	No	Yes
Johannesburg	83	17
Tshwane	85	15
Ekurhuleni	86	14
Emfuleni	91	9
Lesedi	96	4
Midvaal	83	17
Merafong	90	10
Mogale City	86	14
Randfontein	91	9
Westonaria	91	9
GAUTENG	85	15

■ No   ■ Yes