

Voice!

Locality Planning
Eye Health
Equality and Diversity



Welcome

Welcome to the 20th citizens panel newsletter! This newsletter gives feedback to you, a member of Aberdeen citizens panel, on the results of the 20th questionnaire. Topics in this questionnaire covered the Community Planning theme of Locality Planning with additional questions on Eye Health and Equality and Diversity.

This newsletter provides a summary of the results of the questionnaire you completed in June 2010, and how we plan to use this information. Your responses are important in informing and contributing to future plans by all partners of the City Voice.

Questionnaire data is analysed by our research consultants at The Robert Gordon University. As always, all information provided is kept strictly confidential.

The 21st survey, focusing mainly on the Community Planning themes of Transport & Connections, The Environment and Jobs and Prosperity is included with this newsletter. Many thanks to all of you who have continued to complete the questionnaires and have returned them promptly over the last couple of years.

Please continue to get in touch if you wish to make any comments on the citizens panel. You will find my contact details at the end of the newsletter.

Philippa Mason
City Voice Co-ordinator

Future Questionnaires

This newsletter, and the full results of the 20th questionnaire, are available to view on the Community Planning website www.aberdeencityvoice.org.uk

Internet access is provided at libraries throughout Aberdeen City and hard copies are available at The Point (Broad Street), and all city libraries.

Alternatively, hard copies can be posted out by contacting me on the details below.

I plan to issue Newsletter No.21, a summary of the results of the enclosed questionnaire in February 2011, along with the 22nd Questionnaire.

If you have any further queries or would like to feedback your comments, please contact me:

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Aberdeen City Voice is an initiative by Aberdeen's Community Planning Partnership, including Aberdeen City Council, Grampian Police, Grampian Fire & Rescue Service, Scottish Enterprise, NHS Grampian, Communities Scotland and Aberdeen Council of Voluntary Organisations.

Please recycle this newsletter when you have finished with it 



Update

Following the recruitment drive that took place over the summer, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome new panellists to the City Voice. The panel current stands at 922 members and is still growing! Your support has bolstered our numbers and ensures that the Panel is now even more representative of our community. Panellists will receive 3 questionnaires a year along with a newsletter, which updates them on the results of previous consultations and explains how the information you provide, will be used to shape policy, improve service provision, measure performance and apply for funding.

FAQ – I've noticed the City Voice sometimes asks me questions that I've answered before. Why should I answer them again?

If you've been a panellist for over a year you might feel a sense of déjà vu sometimes as you notice some of the questions in the City Voice have been asked before. Please be reassured, it's not that we lost your results or we ignored your answers! It's because some services need to track progress of a policy or initiative over time and the best way to do this is to ask the panel. Tracking your responses over the years have enabled our Transport Planners to assess the rise and fall in car use in the City and our waste management officers to understand residents recycling habits and behaviour. Over the years, these results build a pattern of longitudinal data that our Community Planning Partners find invaluable. Without this it would be impossible to measure and assess trends that affect policy and impact service delivery.

and finally...

just to let you know that I will be going on maternity leave at Christmas and therefore this will be the last newsletter you get from me for a year or so. We will be recruiting a maternity cover over the next couple of months but in the meantime, if you need to contact me please continue to do so at the normal address.

20th Questionnaire – Panel Response

Here are the results of the 20th questionnaire you kindly completed in June 2010. The results have now been analysed and a summary is presented in this newsletter. At the time of issuing the questionnaire, there were 919 of you on the panel — we received 668 questionnaires which gives us an overall response rate of 73%. This is slightly lower than the last few questionnaires and it's important to keep the return rates as strong as possible so if there is a reason you are not replying, please let me know:

- ¥ Are the questionnaires too complicated?
- ¥ Too long?
- ¥ Are we asking about the things of little interest to you?
- ¥ What would you like us to ask you about?

Please let me know when you return by letter, email or telephone.

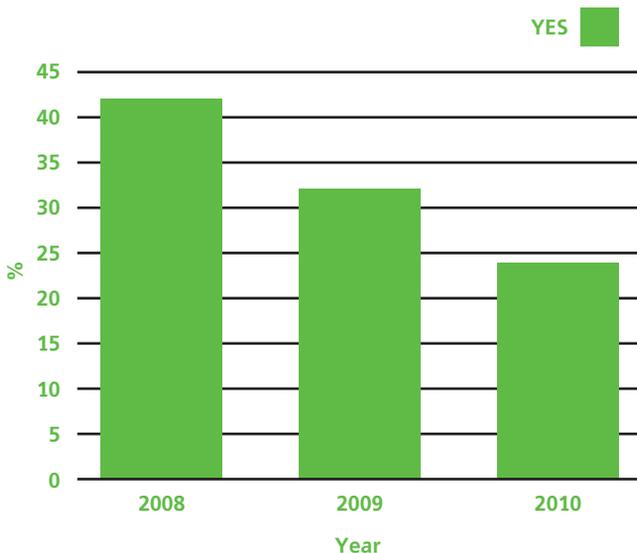
Neighbourhood Planning

Every Neighbourhood in Aberdeen City has a Community Action Plan. The first Neighbourhood Community Action Plans were published in 2005 and since then, Aberdeen City Council has been using a consistent approach across the city to build Neighbourhood Planning into the plans of all the public services (i.e. City Council, Grampian Police, National Health Service, Grampian Fire & Rescue and the other community planning partners).

The questions in City Voice 20 have been asked over the last 3 years and are designed to track resident understanding and involvement in the Neighbourhood Planning process.

The panel were asked if they were aware that a Neighbourhood Community Action Plan existed for their area. Figure 1 shows the results to this question for the last 3 years.

Figure 1: Do you know if there is a Community Action Plan for your Neighbourhood?



Comparing these results, we can see that resident s awareness has decreased from 42% in 2008 to 24% in 2010.

The panel were asked if they had been asked for their views on local services or issues in the last 12 months. 12% of the panel said that they had been asked and of which, the majority had been asked via a questionnaire or survey (42%) followed by a neighbourhood consultation meeting (32%). The Council are also keen to track satisfaction levels with the Neighbourhood Planning process. Your results told that only 8% were satisfied, 13% were not satisfied but the overwhelming majority (79%) didn t know enough about the process to comment either way. Panellists who told us they were not satisfied were asked to tell us why. The 2 major reasons sited were;

- 1 Lack of information provided on process
- 2 The Council ignores the views of residents.

The final questions put to panellists in this section were about whether they felt they could influence what happens in their Neighbourhood. In 2010, 37% of panellists felt they could influence what happens and this compares with 44% in 2009 and 27% in 2008. Panellists who indicated that they did not feel they could influence what happens in their Neighbourhood were asked to tell us why. It s more difficult to analyse qualitative answers as people express their views differently but if we group the responses into broad categories, the results tell us that 48% of the answers given were about the council not listening to peoples concerns and 15% of answers referred to a previous negative experience. A reoccurring subject mentioned in this section was the Union Terrace Gardens consultation carried out earlier this year. Whilst the Union Terrace Gardens issue is not a Neighbourhood Planning matter, it seems to have affected panellists responses.

This is what we are doing

The aspiration for Neighbourhood Planning is to increase resident s involvement in addressing the issues that affect the quality of life in their local area and to develop services that can respond to these needs. The City Voice has been used consistently throughout the development of Neighbourhood Planning to chart progress and help improve the approach.

Clearly , the results show that between 2008 and 2010, awareness of Neighbourhood Community Action Plans has reduced; public service consultation about local issues has lessened and people feel their ability to influence decisions has weakened . Part of the reasons for this may relate to the reduction of resources currently being applied to support Neighbourhood Planning, the change in the Council's structure back to a more traditional service specific approach and people's feelings of powerlessness in relation to being able to effect change. A recurrent theme which although not strictly a Neighbourhood Planning matter, relates to the Union Terrace Gardens consultation carried out by Aberdeen City and Shire Economic Forum earlier this year. This appears to have affected the degree to which residents feel they can influence issues at a local as well as a city wide level.

The Community Planning Partnership is currently under review and the results from the City Voice will be used to consider what needs to be done to improve the Neighbourhood Planning processes and methods for the future. Aberdeen City Council is currently undertaking an engagement exercise with the whole city in relation to its 5 year Business Plan and the results will also be used to inform this work.

Dave Kilgour - City Strategist
Aberdeen City Council

Business Improvement Districts

Aberdeen City Council is working in partnership with the Aberdeen Business Improvement District Co. to write a proposal for the creation of a Business Improvement District (BID) in Aberdeen City Centre. Similar BID s already operate in Edinburgh, Inverness, Falkirk and Elgin and are designed to create a partnership between the local council and local businesses. This partnership will initiate and finance improvements to the city centre, particularly in relation to cleanliness, attractiveness, safety and security.

The initial set of questions were about city centre visiting habits and behaviours. Your results told us that panellists were more likely to visit the city centre to shop once or twice a week. Most panellists would visit the bank or building society once a month and for entertainment, panellists were more likely to visit once every couple of months. Unsurprisingly, younger age groups were more likely to visit more often for bars, pubs and clubs or entertainment. Other reasons for visiting the city centre were cited as attending a group or association or for personal care (hairdressers or dentist).

Panellists were asked how long they spent carrying out the various activities in the city centre. On average, female panellists were more likely to spend more time shopping than their male counterparts. Although some panellists may find this unsurprising, perhaps more surprising was the gender differences in visiting bars, pubs and clubs. Your results tell us that on average, female panellists were more likely to spend longer in the city centre visiting bars, pubs and clubs than men. The City Voice asked panellists to tell us how long they had been visiting/ using Aberdeen City Centre. The results can be seen in Figure 2.

Figure 2: How long have you been visiting/using Aberdeen City Centre?

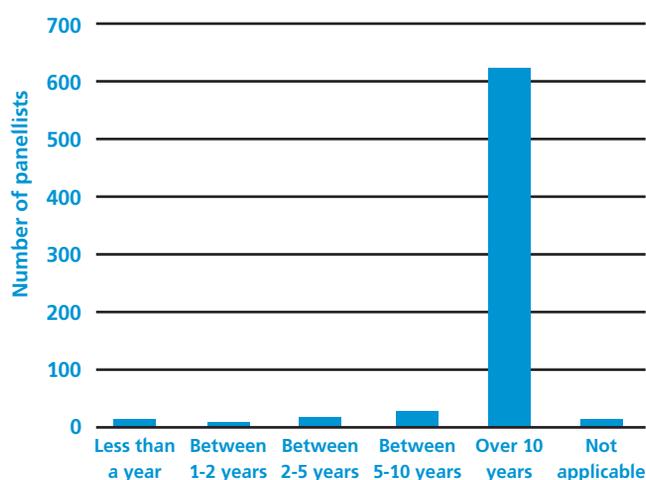


Figure 2 tells us that the vast majority of panellists who answered this question (93%) had been visiting the city centre for over 10 years.

The next set of questions were about travelling to and around the city centre. Your results told us that during the day, the most popular mode of transport for visiting the city centre was the bus (43%). This was followed closely by car (40%) and then walk at 27%. Male respondents were slightly more likely to use the car and female respondents were slightly more likely to use the bus. In terms of age, younger age groups were more likely to walk and respondents in the 65+ age group were more likely to get the bus. Taxi use increased and cycling decreased with age.

When you combine the figures for day, evening and night time travel into the city centre, the most popular mode of transport overall is the car, followed by the bus.

Panellists were asked what, if anything would encourage them to shop/ visit the city centre more often or stay longer. Panellist could tick up to 3 options. The most popular options were as follows;

- 1 A better range of shops (selected by over a third of panellists)
- 2 A nicer atmosphere (selected by 29% of panellists)
- 3 A cleaner/tidier city centre (selected by 28% of panellists)

This is what we are doing

A BID proposal for Aberdeen city centre is currently being developed. When this is finalised, local city centre businesses will be invited to cast their votes in favour of the BID in a ballot. Assuming the BID achieves the appropriate level of support, a levy is then applied to the business rates to raise the necessary funding to implement improvements.

Your detailed responses to the questions posed have provided a wealth of extremely valuable information. This information will now be taken forward and used extensively during the consultation process planned to take place with the business community in the next few months. The information put forward by panellists of visitor frequencies and shopping patterns within the city centre will provide hard facts and concrete evidence to the business community of where they need to focus their attention to continue to secure the future of Aberdeen city centre.

I would like to thank panellists on behalf of the BID team for their magnificent response!

Carl Kodurand – Senior (Strategic Programmes)
Aberdeen City Council

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS



Regular eye examinations are more than just a way to find out if you need spectacles. They are also vital in helping to detect common eye conditions such as Glaucoma, Cataract and Age Related Macular Degeneration. It's also important for children to have eye examinations to establish that their eyes are developing normally, or detect any problems which may require treatment. NHS Grampian wanted to find out how much City Voice panellists knew about the eye care services available in Grampian and whether they had used them.

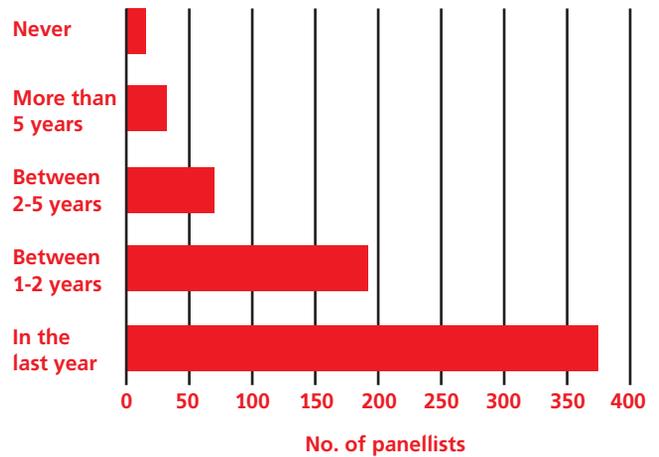
The first question asked panellists to tell us how often they thought certain groups were entitled to a free NHS eye test. Figure 3 shows what the majority of panellists thought and the correct answer for a selection of options.

Figure 3 tells us that panellists are strongly aware of when they are entitled to free eye tests according to age but less aware of entitlement with conditions like diabetes and glaucoma.

Panellists were asked to tell us about their personal experience of eye tests and in particular, when was the last time they had their eyes tested. Your results told us that of the 664 panellists that responded to this question, 56% had had a test in the last year and a further 29% had been tested within the last 2 years. The results to this question can be seen in Figure 4.

There were no significant difference in gender but when analysing age groups, the older you were, the more likely you were to have been tested in the last year.

Figure 4: When did you last have an eye test?



As well as your personal experience of eye tests, NHS Grampian were keen to find out how much you knew about additional eye care services. Panellists were asked whether they knew how to access emergency eye care services in Aberdeen. These services are designed to deal with urgent eye problems out of normal optician hours. The results are shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Did you know you could access emergency eye care services in Aberdeen City at your local optician?

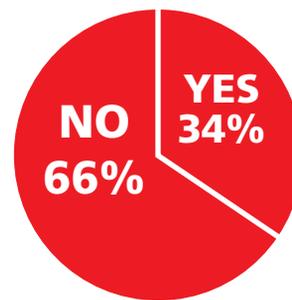


Figure 5 tells us that just over one third of panellists were aware of this but two thirds were not. When asked if they had used emergency eye care services in the last 12 months, 11% of panellists who knew they existed had used them.

Figure 3: How often do you think the following groups are entitled to a free NHS eye test with their local optician?

	Once every 6 months		Once every year		Once every 2 years		Never		Don't know	
	You said	Correct answer	You said	Correct answer	You said	Correct answer	You said	Correct answer	You said	Correct answer
Age 16 or under			X	X						
16 - 60 years					X	X				
Diabetics	X			X						
Patients with glaucoma	X			X						
Age 60+			X	X						

Eye Health – This is what we are doing

The results City Voice panellists gave us were positive in terms of the number of people who are aware of eligibility for regular eye examinations. The NHS provides free eye examinations but there are guidelines as to how often people can attend. The results were not as expected as there have been low attendance within certain age groups in previous years.

The City Voice results reported that just over half of panellists (56%) had had an eye examination within the last year. This is relatively high so it will be interesting to compare these figures with optician attendance figures.

Only a third of panellists were aware of the emergency eye care services available in Grampian. The lowest awareness was in the 16-34 year old age group with only 16% of panellists aware. This shows a need for further promotion of this service. Of the 33% who said they were aware of the service, only 11% had

attended. This may be seen as positive rather than a lack of use of the service as they may not have had an eye emergency themselves.

We also asked panellists about children attending regular eye examinations. Of the 104 panellists who have children aged 16 or under in their household, 64% said that their child's eyes were tested between the ages of 4 and 8 and 46% of panellists could remember their child having an eye test between the ages of 9 and 16.

The results from this questionnaire will be presented to the NHS Eye Care review board. They will also be taken forward by the City Eye Care Group and Emergency Eye Service Network to discuss how promotion and improvements can be made to increase use and awareness of these services in the future.

Carolyn Lamb – Eye Care Redesign Project Manager
NHS Grampian



Aberdeen City Council has developed a Single Equality Scheme and Action Plan which will address better the needs of the community it serves by combining all the equality actions on age, disability, gender, race, religion/faith/belief and sexual orientation into one plan. The Single Equality Scheme is about improving services and access to services for all the equality groups. Equalities is a thread which runs through everything the Council does and is built into the way they develop policies and plans and deliver services.

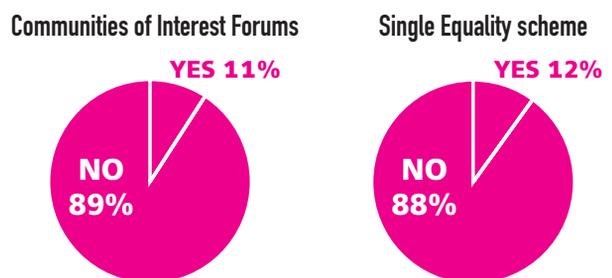
Certain communities are recognised by the Council as communities of interest because research shows that individuals within them are likely to experience unfavourable prejudice, discrimination and disadvantage for example, older people and ethnic minority people. The Council has developed Communities of Interest Forums to ensure that there is two-way communication between the Council and the various communities of interest. These forums include the Ethnic Minority Forum, Aberdeen Women's Alliance, the Disability Advisory group, the Older Peoples Working Group, and the Aberdeen City Youth Council.

City Voice panellists were asked to answer questions on diversity and equality issues in Aberdeen to help the Council monitor the progress of these initiatives, identify any barriers and obstacles, and provide baseline data that will enable them to track future progress.

This section of questions began by asking City Voice panellists if they were aware of the Council's Single Equality Scheme and Communities of Interest Forums. The results shown in the pie

charts tell us that only 12% of panellists are aware of the Single Equality Scheme and 11% are aware of Communities of Interest Forums. Women were slightly more likely to be aware of these initiatives than men. When we analyse this by age, respondents in the 55-64 year old age groups had the highest awareness.

Figures 6 & 7: Before reading about diversity and equality in the City Voice, were you aware of the following initiatives?



Panellists were asked if they, or a member of their household, had ever experienced discrimination on certain grounds when receiving Council services over the last 2 years. 7% of the panel reported they had experienced discrimination. When asked if they had reported this discrimination, only 16% had done this. The Council wanted to find out to what degree panellists agreed or disagreed with some general statements about diversity and equality in Aberdeen City. Panellists were asked whether they thought Aberdeen was a welcoming place for communities of interest to live and work and whether they believed that people from communities of interest living and working in Aberdeen are valued and respected. The results are shown in Figure 8.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

Figure 8

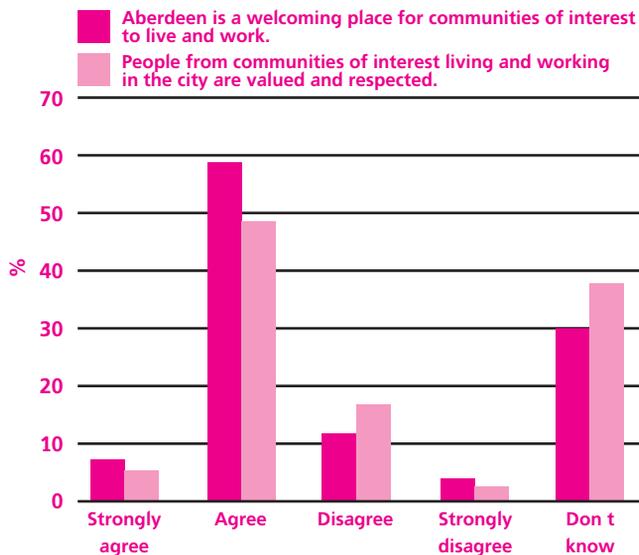


Figure 8 tells us that 66% of panellists agree or strongly agree that Aberdeen is a welcoming place and 54% of panellists agree or strongly agree that communities of interest living in the city are valued and respected.

Panellists were then asked if they were aware that information on Council services was available in a number of formats. 83% of panellists were aware they are available in large print, 62% were aware they are available in community languages, 41% knew they were available on audiotape/CD and 34% knew that they could be made available in British Sign Language. A greater proportion of women were aware of the different formats but there was no significant difference in age.

The final question asked panellists to provide suggestions for things the Council could do to improve the quality of life for equality groups in Aberdeen. These questions prompted a large response rate and these responses were grouped into themes. The most often mentioned themes were:

- 1 There should be more focus on all citizens, not just equality groups (17%)
- 2 The Council already does enough (16%)
- 3 More education on or stronger policing of the rights and entitlements of equality groups (10%)
- 4 More community events (10%)

This is what we are doing

This is the first time we have put questions in the City Voice and it's really helpful to get city wide information about residents understanding and awareness of equality and diversity issues in Aberdeen City.

We were disappointed to note the low level of awareness among respondents about the Council's Single Equality Scheme and so we will be promoting this more widely over the next year. Up to now, we have focussed our engagement activities on the Community of Interest groups and Community Councils. Recognising that this could be seen as preaching to the converted our task now is to engage with the main body of citizens in Aberdeen. As a first step we will work with our Communications team to publicise our initiatives more widely.

Although any instances of discrimination are disturbing and must always give cause for concern, we were encouraged to note that only 7% of respondents had experienced discrimination. We would encourage anyone who experiences discrimination to report the matter because it is only in that way that issues can be identified and proper remedial action can be taken. The results show that one reason for not reporting discrimination is people's lack of confidence that the Council would address the issue. We are introducing a revised prejudice incident reporting form within the Council and will develop a training package to alert Council staff to the correct procedures to follow. We hope that this will help address the public confidence issue.

It is good to see from responses that the majority of panellists agree that Aberdeen is a welcoming place to live and work and that people from communities of interest are valued and respected. We will continue to work to improve the quality of life for everyone in Aberdeen, including the equality groups. We will continue to raise awareness amongst all citizens about access to services and facilities in the city, and where appropriate this information will be available in various community languages and alternative formats.

The information from this questionnaire will be used as a baseline for measuring progress on our Single Equality Scheme and we hope to use the City Voice again in the future to see if our promotion work increases citizen awareness over the next few years.

Sandra Bruce & Roddy MacTaggart - (Strategists - Equalities)
Aberdeen City Council

