



Aberdeen City **voice**

Aberdeen's Citizens' Panel Newsletter
Number 13, June 2008

Welcome to the 13th citizens' panel newsletter! This newsletter gives feedback to you, a member of Aberdeen citizens' panel, on the results of the 13th questionnaire. Topics in this questionnaire covered the Community Planning themes of Health & Social Care and Safety.

This newsletter provides a summary of the results of the questionnaire you completed in March 2008, 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 14th survey, focusing mainly on the Community Planning themes of Arts, Heritage and Sports, Jobs and Prosperity and Neighbourhood Action – Locality Planning, 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 Corley
City Voice Co-ordinator

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



News

Recruitment - We are about to start a recruitment drive for more panellists to join the City Voice. To ensure that we get a representative sample of Aberdeen City residents, we are sending invitation letters to 1% of randomly selected households in the City. This equates to 2,200 households! This will help us to boost our numbers and ensure that the views given by the panel truly reflect our community. As well as the postal recruitment, we also need to do more targeted recruitment. The panel needs more young people and people with children to ensure that it is representative. This targeted recruitment will take place over the next 6 months. If you know of anyone who would like to join the City Voice, please feel free to pass my contact details to them.



Update - In Questionnaire 10 (March 2007), NHS Grampian wanted to find out your views on a new Health and Care Village. This project involves moving some healthcare services from old facilities no longer appropriate for modern health care into new buildings closer to the city centre. We wanted to find out which aspects of the new facilities were important to you. You told us that an accessible city centre location with easy access to bus routes and good car parking was important. These views, as well as the views of other consultation exercises were taken into account when looking at proposed sites for the new village. The preferred location has been identified as Frederick Street and NHS Grampian is currently negotiating use of this site. An outline business case is being developed and it will be submitted to Scottish Government for approval. Current estimates tell us that the new Health and Care Village will be open in 2012.

In December 2007, Grampian Fire and Rescue Service asked for your views on their Draft Annual Action Plan 2008-2009. Your views, along with the views of Aberdeenshire and Moray Citizens' Panels and other local area consultations were used to inform the final version of the Action Plan adopted by the Grampian Joint Fire and Rescue Board in April 2008. The vast majority of responses indicated agreement and support for the main planning themes, but the consultation also highlighted several potential areas for improvement. The final Action Plan incorporates many of your constructive comments.

Grampian Fire and Rescue Service are extremely grateful to all of you who responded to the questionnaire. As with previous consultations, the sheer number of responses demonstrates the willingness of the community to get involved in shaping the delivery of this vital public service. The final version of the Action Plan can be found at www.grampianfrs.org.uk

Many thanks to all of you who responded to both this most recent, and the last questionnaire. Again we received many additional comments, which have been passed on to the relevant service for response.



13th Questionnaire – Panel Response

Here are the results of the 13th questionnaire you kindly completed in March 2008. The results have now been analysed and a summary is presented in this newsletter. At the time of issuing the questionnaire there were 802 of you on the panel - this gives us an overall response rate of approximately 79%. This is a strong response but slightly lower than the response rate to the previous two questionnaires. It is important that as many of you as possible respond each time. This will help us put all your views and concerns before the Partnership which is involved in providing services for Aberdeen residents and planning for your future.

Please let me know if there are any reasons for you not replying. 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 by completing the tear off slip at the back of this newsletter.



Safety

Safety in Aberdeen City Centre

Aberdeen's shops, restaurants, pubs and clubs are busier than ever, but by-products of the increased numbers of people coming into the city centre, especially at night, include alcohol-related crime and anti-social behaviour. In June 2007, Grampian Police increased the number of officers on foot patrol in the city centre to combat these problems. We wanted to find out whether the increased police presence made you feel safer and more confident about visiting the city centre.

We were also interested in finding out if you had spoken to any uniformed police officers on foot patrol since June 2007 and whether you were satisfied with the response you had received. Although only a small number of you had spoken to a uniformed officer, the vast majority (approximately 84%), were satisfied with the response you received.

The most obvious difference in results appeared when we split panellists into age groups. This tells us that between 6pm and 12am, 55% of panellists over the age of 65 said that they did not feel safe in the city centre as compared with only 30% of 16-24 year olds and 39% of 25-34 year olds. This pattern also occurred in the 12am to 6am time slot with 40% of 16-24 year olds indicating that they felt more safe in the city centre compared with only 6% of 55-64 year olds.

Figure 1 : Since the introduction of more police officers on foot patrol within the city centre, do you feel more confident about visiting the city centre at the following times?

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
During the period from 6am to 12pm	42.8%	23.6%	33.6%
During the period from 12pm to 6pm	47.2%	23.4%	29.4%
During the period from 6pm to 12am	22.1%	48.8%	29.1%
During the period from 12am to 6am	8.1%	57.0%	34.8%

Safety in Aberdeen City Centre – this is what we're doing

Grampian Police, City Centre Unit officers have contact with a high percentage of people aged 16-24 years old. The results from the City Voice tell us that younger panellists have noticed the increased Police presence in the city centre and this is very positive. Although only a small percentage of the panel have had direct contact with uniformed officers on foot patrol, the feedback is very positive in terms of satisfaction with that contact.

The information you gave us on when you feel confident about visiting the city centre is very important and we are acutely aware of the correlation between police presence and public confidence, especially in the busy city centre. Your results will help us to assess the shift patterns and levels of coverage by the City Centre unit and we will make improvements to increase the level of visibility in the late evenings/early hours of the morning.

Finally, we asked if you had noticed an increase in Grampian Police media updates. These updates may include progress on tackling specific problems in a particular area or street. Your results told us that we need to do more to increase public awareness and understanding.

Inspector George MacDonald
Grampian Police

Community Safety

Aberdeen City Council and its Community Planning partners understand that your local environment and personal safety is central to your quality of life. We wanted to find out what your top community safety concerns were and what action you think should be taken to address these. As well as understanding the big picture, we also wanted to understand the community safety concerns in your local area.

The top three community safety concerns in your **local area** were:

1. Housebreaking
2. Teenagers/children causing a nuisance
3. Drugs

The top three community safety concerns **city wide** were:

1. Drugs
2. Physical assaults
3. Alcohol misuse

We asked you to tell us about your main road safety concerns. These results were the same for your local area and city wide with the top three identified as drivers who speed, drivers who use mobile phones and drink or drug drivers.



**Community Safety–
this is what we're doing**

The responses you gave in Questionnaire 13 have given us invaluable information about community safety in Aberdeen City. We will be using this information to develop Neighbourhood Community Action Plans, and target our resources.

It is interesting to see that 'house-breaking' features as the most commonly cited local community safety concern. The number of housebreaking crimes has consistently fallen over the past few years in Aberdeen City and therefore, we need to consider how we communicate this message to our residents. City wide, it is clear that people are concerned about drug crime, physical assaults and alcohol misuse. These concerns are priority themes for the community safety partnership and support previous analysis of safety priorities in Aberdeen.

In relation to road safety, it is not surprising to see that 'drivers who speed' is the top local issue. 40% of panellists also highlighted 'parking on pavements' as a road safety risk. This is an area of road safety that we will need to investigate further in light of the panel results. An unexpected result relates to 81% of panel members raising 'drivers who use mobile phones' as their main city wide road safety issue. Clearly, residents are witnessing road safety issues as they go about their business and this is an area of enforcement that we will need to work on with our Community Planning partners.

We then asked you for your views on whether you thought crime had increased over the last two years in your local area. Panellists living in Central neighbourhoods were more likely than panellists in the North and South neighbourhoods to say that crime had increased. We also asked if you thought anti-social behaviour had increased in your local area over the last two years. Panellists in the North areas were more likely to say that anti-social behaviour had increased. City wide, panellists thought that both crime and anti-social behaviour had increased in the last two years.

We also wanted to find out which offences or problems you had witnessed in the last two years. In your **local area**, the top three offences were:

1. Dog Fouling
2. Inconsiderate driving
3. Teenagers/ children causing a nuisance

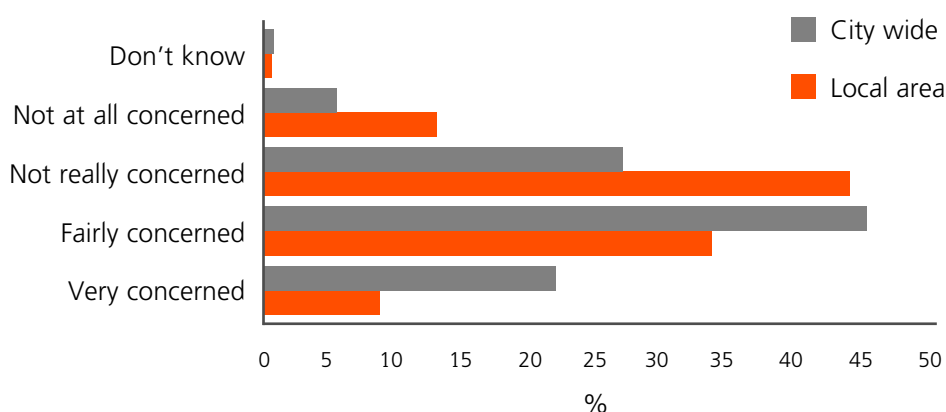
City wide, the three most frequently witnessed offences were:

1. Inconsiderate driving
2. Drunkenness
3. Graffiti/ vandalism

We asked you to tell us how concerned you were about becoming a victim of crime in your local area and city wide. Your results are shown in Figure 2.

These results tell us that panellists are more concerned about becoming a victim of crime city wide, than in their local area.

Figure 2: How concerned are you about becoming a victim of crime?



Fear of crime can dramatically affect your quality of life. The results from City Voice have given us vital information on where and when people feel at most risk. The Community Safety Partnership will use this information to assess how we tackle people's fear of crime and perception of danger.

Colin Walker
Community Safety Manager
Aberdeen City Council

Health and Social Care

Adult Protection

Aberdeen City Council has a duty to protect vulnerable people in our community. These people may include children, older people, people with mental health issues and disabled people. The Council also has a duty to raise public awareness of this issue and ensure that residents know what to do if they suspect a vulnerable person is at risk from harm. As well as physical, mental and sexual harm, vulnerable adults may be at risk from other forms of harm. New legislation now protects vulnerable adults from emotional abuse, neglect and deprivation, misuse of medication and dietary misuse.

We wanted to find out if you were aware of this new legislation and which method would be most effective at getting the information across to the wider community.

Figure 3: Were you aware of the new protection for vulnerable adults?

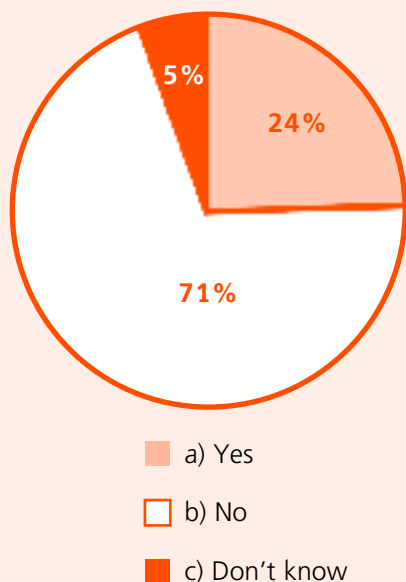


Figure 3 tells us that 71% of you were not aware of the new legislation. When we asked you how we should communicate this information to the community, 81% of panellists thought we should use local press and media coverage and 53% of you believed that an information leaflet available in Council buildings, libraries etc would be effective.



Adult Protection - this is what we're doing

It is very encouraging that almost a quarter of respondents said that they were aware of the new protection for adults at risk of harm. It is also encouraging to see that most respondents felt they would want to act on any suspicions or concerns they may have. Most people said they would inform the police, although 43% said they would contact the social work duty team, which is excellent news.

Although the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act places a primary duty on local authorities, it is expected that this should be in co-operation with our partners. In the Grampian area, we are working with Aberdeenshire and Moray Councils, Grampian Police, NHS Grampian, the Care Commission and the Voluntary Sector to develop our policy. This should mean that wherever a concern is reported, it would be referred on and investigated appropriately. The important message is always to report suspicions and concerns - it is heartening to see most people would do so.

We also wanted to find out how the panel thought we should get information about this new legislation across to the wider community. Just over half of respondents said that a public information leaflet would be a good way of getting the information across. We have recently developed a leaflet and this is now widely available across Aberdeen City. More than 80% of respondents suggested using the local media. This is certainly something we will consider using in the future. Approximately a third of respondents felt that we should put information on the Council website. Information about the new legislation can be found online at www.aberdeencity.gov.uk

We are really grateful to everyone for taking the time to let us know their thoughts about this important issue.

Sally Wilkins

Strategists - Adult Protection and Quality Assurance
Aberdeen City Council

Alcohol consumption

Recently, there has been a lot of media coverage about increasing alcohol consumption. Although we have information about drinking habits in Scotland generally, we did not have information on the situation in Aberdeen. We wanted to ask the panel about their drinking habits both at home and socially, so we could improve alcohol-related policy based on your needs, views and expectations.

Figure 4 shows us how many times a week panellists drink alcohol. The results tell us that 35% of the panel drink between 2 and 3 times a week.

When we analyse these results by gender and age, we found out that alcohol consumption is greater with male panellists and is highest in the 35-54 year old age group.

84% of panellists said that the level of alcohol consumption in Aberdeen concerned them with female panellists and panellists in the older age groups more likely to agree. Almost 90% of you thought that the licensing trade should do more to encourage responsible drinking. Almost 72% of panellists thought a minimum pricing policy should be introduced with nearly half of you agreeing that the price for a standard measure of vodka should be set at the higher price of at least £1.50.

Alcohol consumption - this is what we're doing

Alcohol consumption in Aberdeen continues to be a concern for many of you, particularly amongst the older panellists. Consequently, over 75% of you felt that the Council or Government should do more to reduce it.

The results told us that younger panellists were significantly more likely to drink alcohol at home or at a friends house before they went out at night. This is very valuable information as no other research has been carried out into this aspect of behaviour. Understanding how people behave can be used to plan how responsible drinking can be achieved and what the obstacles are to achieving it.

Turning to drinks promotions, you may have seen media coverage regarding low-cost alcohol and binge drinking in Scotland. With these concerns in mind, we asked if you felt that Aberdeen City Council had a role in limiting alcohol promotions. The majority of you said "yes", and gave strong support for a minimum pricing policy. When asked what you felt the minimum price for a measure of vodka should be, 91% of you supported a minimum price of £1 or more (45% supported a price of £1.50 or more). This information will be used to investigate the feasibility of introducing a voluntary code for minimum pricing in licensed premises in Aberdeen. Fewer of you supported a minimum pricing policy for alcohol sales in supermarkets and shops.

At the end of 2007, Aberdeen became the only city in Scotland to introduce street urinals. This was in response to many of you raising concerns (in a previous questionnaire) regarding the problem of street urination. Only 33% of you were aware that they had been introduced. More of you might have already seen them (six foot high grey plastic structures), but don't know what they are. Clearly this is something that needs advertising!

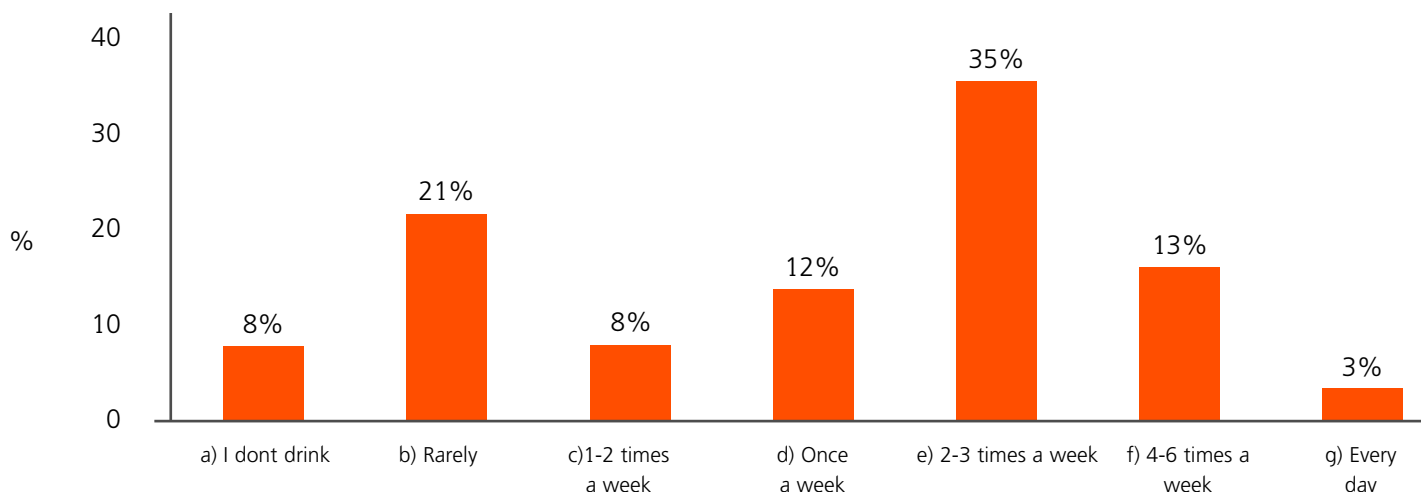
On a happy note, further to the 11th City Voice questionnaire, more of you are having a positive experience of using the night time taxis .

The citizen's panel has allowed us the opportunity to gain important feedback regarding drinking alcohol and pricing. Your views will direct decisions regarding new initiatives, and raises other questions that will be asked in future questionnaires. Many thanks for taking the time to answer and give your views. With your co-operation, Aberdeen will become a safer, vibrant and cleaner city.

Dale Sherriff

Researcher, Safer City Centre Initiative
Aberdeen City Council

Figure 4 : How often do you drink alcohol?



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Future Questionnaires

This newsletter, and the full results of the 13th 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.

Philippa Corley

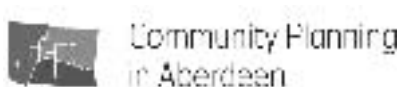
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I plan to issue Newsletter No.14, a summary of the results of the enclosed questionnaire in September, along with the 15th Questionnaire.

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



Additional Comments - Please let us know if your personal details have changed:

Name: _____

Previous Address: _____

New Address: _____

I no longer wish to be a panellist

Please return the above information in the prepaid envelope provided, or email pcorley@aberdeencity.gov.uk.

Thanks for your assistance.