

Voice!

Fairer-Mental Wellbeing
Fairer-Equality for all
Wealthier and Fairer-Welfare Reform
Additional Questions-Roads
Additional Questions-Fuel Poverty



Welcome

Welcome to the 31st citizens' panel newsletter! This newsletter gives feedback to you, a member of Aberdeen's citizens' panel, on the results of the 31st questionnaire that you completed in February/ March 2014. Topics in that questionnaire included mental wellbeing, equality for all, equality and diversity, welfare reform, road maintenance and traffic.

Your responses are important in informing and contributing to future plans by all partners of the City Voice. The data is analysed by our research consultants at The Robert Gordon University. As always, all information provided is kept strictly confidential.

The 32nd survey, focusing mainly on questions in and around 'Healthier' and 'Stronger and Safer' 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.

Annina Cavelti Kee
City Voice Co-ordinator

Future Questionnaires

This newsletter, and the full results of the 31st questionnaire, is available to view on the Community Planning website

www.aberdeencityvoice.org.uk Internet access is provided at libraries throughout Aberdeen and hard copies will be available at the Marischal College Customer Service Centre and all city libraries. Alternatively, hard copies can be posted to you by contacting me on the details below.

I plan to issue Newsletter No. 32, a summary of the results of the enclosed questionnaire in October 2014, along with the 33rd Questionnaire. If you have any further queries or would like to feedback your comments, please contact:

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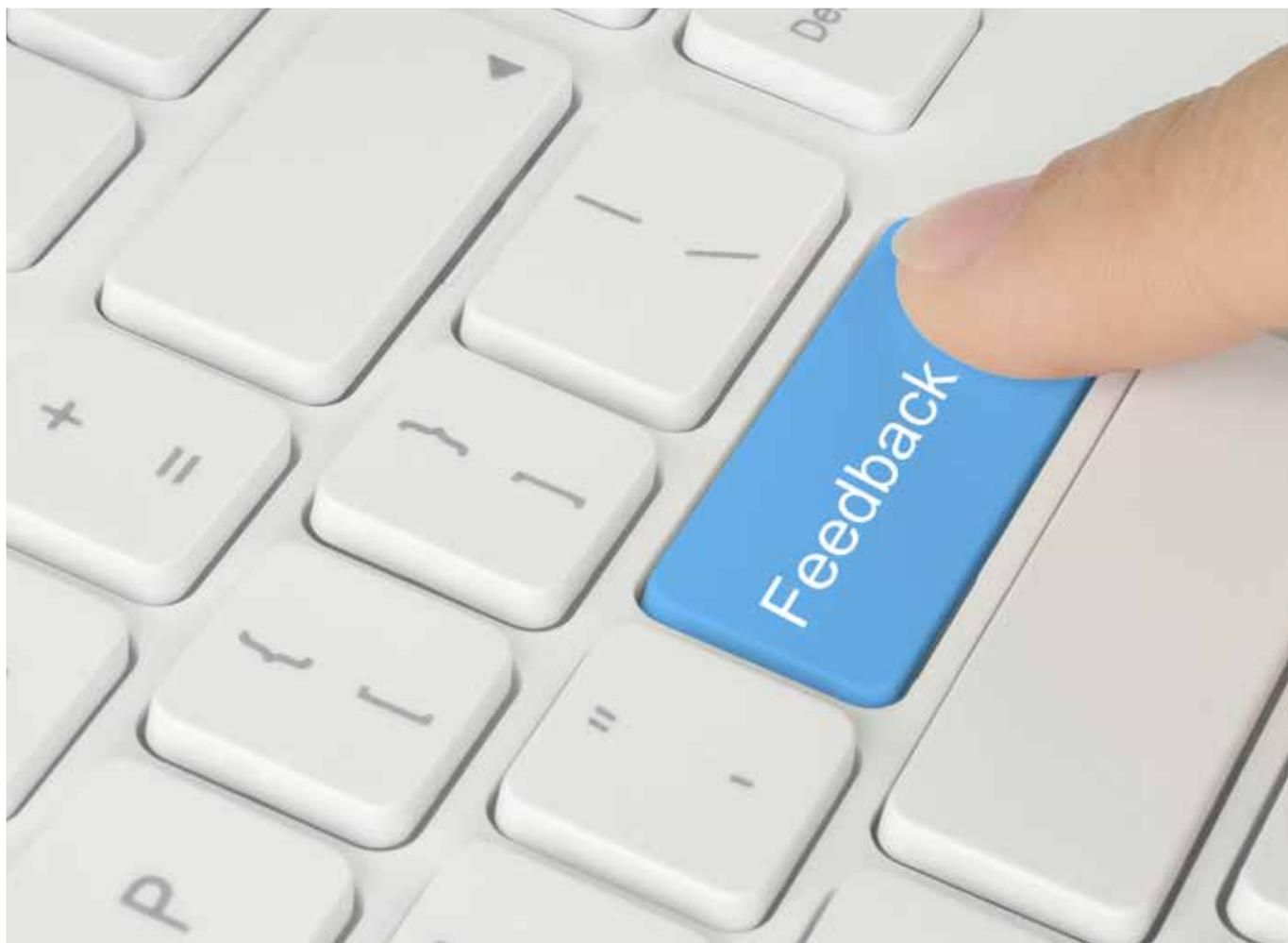
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Aberdeen City Voice is an initiative by Aberdeen's Community Planning Partnership, including Aberdeen City Council, Grampian Police, Grampian Fire & Rescue Service, Scottish Enterprise, NHS Grampian, Communities Scotland and Aberdeen Council of Voluntary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

Please recycle this newsletter when you have finished with it





Aberdeen City Voice blog

Aberdeen City Voice has now its own blog!!! Follow the news and latest updates on: <http://aberdeencityvoice.wordpress.com/>

Panellist update

Some of you might be aware that we started a new recruitment process. After we removed 180 panellists from the panel last year our goal is to have over a 1,000 panellists by the end of this year - we currently have 887 panellists! We contacted surgeries, churches, schools and community centres, and we are advertising on different online platforms in order to gain people's attention. We want to let people know that they can make their voices heard! If you know of anyone who might be interested in joining our citizens' panel please point them to our website or let us know and we will get in touch with them.

31st Questionnaire - Panel Response

Here are the results of the 31st questionnaire you completed in February/ March 2014. At the time of issuing the questionnaire, 863 people were on the panel and we received 677 questionnaires which gives us an overall response rate of 78.4%. We were happy to see that the response rate has gone up since the last issue. Thank you everyone who responded! To give you an idea of the representativeness of this particular questionnaire here are some figures: We have a good representation of the whole city when we look at the different neighbourhoods: 36.3% of the respondents live in the south, 32.6% in the centre and 31.1% in the north of the city. 350 women and 316 men completed this questionnaire. However, we are not so representative when it comes to age groups. Only 9.2% of the respondents are aged between 16 and 34, 40.8% are between 35 and 54, 27.8% between 55 and 64 and 22.2% are 65+. We are aware of this unequal representation and are trying to target younger people in our current recruitment process.

It is vital for the success of the City Voice that we keep response rates as high as possible so please continue to complete them and if you wish to change the format that you receive the questionnaire in, please do not hesitate to contact us. And if there is a reason you are not replying, please let me know.



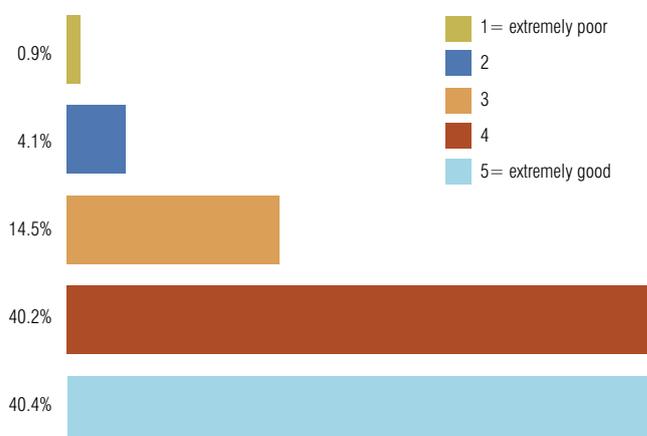
Fairer-Mental Wellbeing

The Aberdeen City Mental Health Partnership has a Joint Mental Wellbeing Strategy, which aims to improve mental wellbeing and reduce stigma and inequalities. The Partnership Group wanted to find out how City Voice panellists felt about their own mental wellbeing and how confident they were about maintaining their own, and their communities' mental wellbeing. Panellists were asked about where they would go to seek advice/support if they had a concern about their own mental wellbeing. Most panel members said they would see the GP (91.1%), 14.2% would call a helpline, 11.5% would turn to voluntary organisations, 11.1% would seek advice from employers/ occupational health and 1.6% said they would go nowhere.

Asked about the ways in which Aberdeen City Mental Health Partnership Group should communicate information most panellists chose 'newspapers' (67.2%), followed by 'leaflets' (60.4%), 'website' (55.7%), 'radio' (45.9%), 'social media' (43.6%) and 'at public events' (34.6%). 9.9% chose 'other'. Asked to specify the 'other' 43.3% said information should be made available through the GP, hospitals or dentists and 19.4% suggested through television (19.4%).

When asked about their own mental wellbeing the overwhelming majority of City Voice panellists rated their mental wellbeing as good (40.2%) or extremely good (40.4%). (See Figure 1)

Figure 1: On a scale of 1-5 (where 1 = extremely poor and 5 = extremely good) how would you rate your own mental wellbeing?



Base = 664 respondents

Panellists were also asked how confident they were of maintaining their own mental wellbeing on a scale of 1-5 where 1 = not at all confident and 5 = very confident. The majority (45.6%) rated their confidence level at 4, followed by 5 (35.4%). This means that 81.0% of the respondents are confident or even extremely confident that they can maintain their own mental wellbeing. 13.8% rated their confidence levels with 3, 3.8% with 2 and 1.4% with 1.

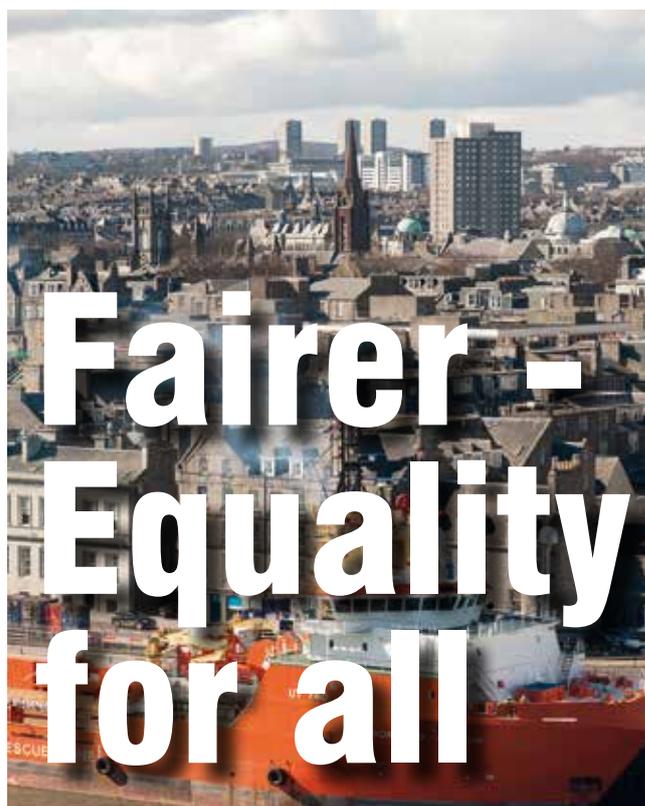
This is what we are doing

The Mental Health Partnership was very encouraged to see so many respondents indicating that they enjoy either good, or very good, mental wellbeing. This is complemented by the fact that 81.0% of respondents are confident or very confident that they are able to maintain their own mental wellbeing. This is extremely positive and welcome news.

It is also encouraging to see that most people would seek some form of advice or support if they had a concern about their mental wellbeing. Whilst most respondents said they would seek advice or support from their GP the answers in this section demonstrated the very broad range of help and support that is available and that respondents felt would be appropriate to access if required. Over 90.0% of respondents said they would go to family or friends, which highlights the importance of our relationships in helping us to maintain mental wellbeing. We were concerned to learn that 4.1 % of people considered their mental wellbeing as poor and 0.9% of people even as extremely poor. A similar number of people, 5.2% of the panellists, expressed a lack of confidence in their ability to maintain their own mental wellbeing. Clearly we need to consider how we can meet the needs of people living in Aberdeen who do not enjoy good mental wellbeing. It is therefore extremely useful to have such clear views expressed in relation to how best to disseminate information on mental wellbeing. The responses indicate that we need to continue to use a wide range and a variety of means of communicating information.

The information from this survey gives us important information to help us understand how we need to target our future activity.

Sally M. Wilkins
Planning and Development Manager
Aberdeen City Council



The City Voice panellists were asked by Aberdeen City Council if they felt the citizens of Aberdeen have equal opportunities in relation to the following eight categories - access to employment, rates of pay, access to affordable housing (both in the rented and owner-occupied sectors), access to education, access to healthcare, access to local authority care services, access to sport and leisure services and access to cultural services (such as libraries, galleries, theatres, cinemas and performance venues).

Figure 2 shows that panellists felt that access to healthcare had the highest level of equal opportunity - with 541 answering 'yes'. This was followed by access to education (498), and access to sport/leisure (386). The panellists least agree with the statement 'equal opportunity in relation to rates of pay' (204).

Figure 2: Do you feel that the citizens of Aberdeen have equal opportunities in the following categories?

	Yes	No	Don't know
Access to employment	333	157	155
Rates of pay	204	254	187
Access to affordable housing	300	152	197
Access to education	498	79	70
Access to healthcare	541	57	56
Access to care services	329	126	196
Access to sport/leisure	386	113	147
Access to cultural services	341	102	192
Overall	315	108	150

Base = Employment and rates of pay (645 respondents), housing (649), education (647), healthcare (654), care service (651), sport/leisure (646), cultural services (635), overall (573)

This is what we are doing

The fact that in most questions the responses reflected generally positive views towards equality of access in Aberdeen was heartening. The views of panellists towards equality of access to education and healthcare were especially positive. The lower agreement levels concerning access to affordable housing may be reflective of the relatively high cost of housing in Aberdeen in both the rented and purchased sectors, which is influenced by a number of factors, including the rate of activity in the local economy. Overall, although there were significant levels of agreement (55.0%) that there are equal opportunities in Aberdeen, the survey shows that there is more work to be done if perceptions are to improve in some areas.

The council provides a web-based performance page - Aberdeen Performs, which offers citizens a range of information drawn from across public services. The information gleaned from the survey will support our priority: 'Smarter Living' and the outcome we aim to achieve: 'Aberdeen is a fair and equal city.'

Neil Buck
Performance and Risk Manager
Aberdeen City Council



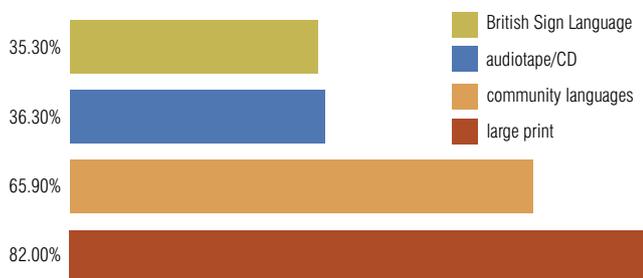
Local authorities play a central role in improving the lives of the people in their cities. This includes tackling disadvantage and inequality. Panellists have been asked a set of questions to help the council to monitor the progress it has achieved in different areas of equality. Firstly, panellists were asked if they or a member of their family had experienced any discrimination when receiving council services in the past year. An overwhelming majority (93.2%) stated that they haven't experienced any discrimination. The other 6.8% who had experienced one or more discrimination pointed out that they experienced them on the grounds of disability (3.5%), age (3.4%), sex (0.9%), race (0.7%) and due to religion and belief (0.6%). 0.1% had experienced discrimination on the grounds of gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity and sexual orientation. Asked if they had reported the experienced discrimination the majority (77.3%) answered they had not and only 22.7% said they had.

The council also wants to find out why people who experienced discrimination had not reported their incident. The majority (7 out of 30 respondents) said that they were reluctant to complain or 'make a fuss'. 6 thought it to be futile to complain, 4 panellists said that they have the impression that the council is not concerned about certain sectors of the population, namely older and disabled people, and four panellists think that the council discriminates in favour of certain sections of society.

The council produces information about services available in large print, community languages, audiotape/CD and British Sign Language. Panellists were asked if they were aware about the

availability of these formats. 82.0% said they knew of the large print option, 65.9% of the community languages provision. Only 36.3% however were aware that the information is also available on audiotape/CD and only 35.3% in British Sign Language. (See Figure 3 below)

Figure 3: Did you know that information about council services is available in the following formats?



Base = 677 respondents

Older People

With the help of the City Voice panellists Aberdeen's Older People Advisory Group (OPAG) wants to find out what will best deliver on the needs of older people. Panellists were therefore first asked who they thought older people would usually turn to if they had a financial issue. The most popular answer with 86.3% was 'friend/family', which was followed by 'voluntary organisation' (24.5%) and 'the council' (11.8%). Panellists also suggested 'banks', 'financial advisers', 'Citizens Advice Bureau' or 'no one: older people are often too proud or reluctant to ask for assistance'.

Panellists were also asked if they, or any other relevant family member, would know where to find information on certain health issues, such as Attendance Allowance, Community Alarm, Blue Badge, Personal Independence Payment, or Carer's Allowance. Most of the people knew where to find information on the Blue Badge scheme (58.1%), followed by 50.5% of people who knew about the Attendance Allowance, 49.5% said they would know how to find information on Carer's Allowance and on Community Alarm. Only 34.0% knew where to find information on Personal Independence Payment. Looking at the different age groups 31.6% of those aged 16-34 would know where to go to find out about Attendance Allowance, while 60.7% of the 55 - 64 year olds would know. 49.6% of panellists aged between 35 and 54 and 45.7% of those panel members who are 65+ knew where to turn to for Attendance Allowance. A similar pattern can be seen for information on the Blue Badge scheme - 64.9% of the panellists aged between 55 and 64 and 45.6% of those aged 16-34 knew where to find information on this particular scheme. 29.8% of the panellists aged between 16 and 34 and 61.1% of those in the age group of 55-64 know where to find information about Community Alarm. (See Figure 4)

Figure 4: Would you (or any other relevant family member) know where to find information on the following health issues? (% who answered 'yes' by Age Group)

Health issue	Age Group			
	16-34	35-54	55-64	65+
Attendance Allowance	31.6	49.6	60.7	45.7
Community Alarm	29.8	46.6	61.1	46.8
Blue Badge	45.6	57.0	64.9	56.3
Personal Independence Payment	26.3	36.3	38.2	25.6
Carer's Allowance	41.1	50.0	56.5	41.6

This is what we are doing

This data provides a great opportunity for us to improve the services we offer.

It is interesting to note that this year the percentage of respondents who said they had experienced discrimination (6.8%) shows a marked increase to last year (2.8%). This upward trend may be due to an increased awareness and confidence in reporting. Almost 7.0% of the total respondents gave the causes of discrimination as disability or age. This is interesting as in the Prejudice Incidents Reports (PIRFs) made to Grampian Regional Equality Council racial discrimination is always by far the most frequently occurring form of discrimination.

Similar to last year, approximately 1 in 4 of those experiencing discrimination did not report the incident to anyone.

Additionally, there is clearly a need to improve responses to reporting and we have carried out an awareness raising campaign with staff, elected members, partners and communities on how to deal with PIRFs.

Within this year's top 3 answers "What more could the council do to improve the quality of life for people from different equality groups in the city?" were "Ensure equality for all, not just equality groups" (10.2%) and "Everything's okay as it is - no improvements necessary" (7.5%). This demonstrates the need to promote more effectively the council's statutory duties to foster good relations and advance equality of opportunity and the protected characteristics of the Equality Act, so that people understand that we all have one or more of the protected characteristics.

The information gathered from City Voice will form part of the progress report to the council on the Equality Outcomes. As part of this report, services will be invited to suggest how best they can use the findings to improve their services and accessibility for the people of Aberdeen

The responses to the specific questions on older people will be presented at the next meeting of the Older People's Advisory Group and action points will be taken forward.

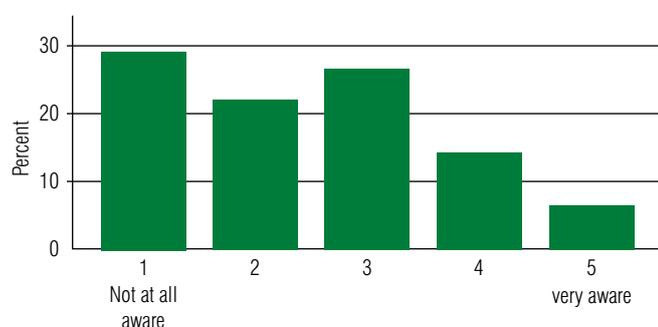
Sandra Bruce
Equalities Strategist
Aberdeen City Council

Wealthier and Fairer - Welfare Reform

Aberdeen City Council is interested in finding out panellists' awareness of changes to the welfare system which are currently being introduced by the UK Government.

Panellists were asked to rate on a scale of 1-5, where 1 = not at all aware and 5 = very aware, how they feel they understand the changes to the Welfare Benefit provision. The most popular response was 'not at all aware' — 29.3%. Only 7.1% said that they are 'very aware'. 21.6% thought they are 'somewhat aware', 27.2% said that they are 'aware' and 14.7% consider themselves as being 'quite aware' about the changes. (See Figure 5 below)

Figure 5: On a scale of 1-5 (where 1= not at all aware and 5 = very aware) how well do you feel you understand the changes in Welfare Benefit provision currently being introduced?



Base = 658 respondents

Panellists were then asked if they or a member of their family have been directly affected by the changes. 86.7% answered this question with 'no', 5.1% said 'yes, I have been personally affected' and 8.2% said 'a member of the family has been affected

by the changes'. Analysing this question by age group shows the percentage of respondents who said either they or a member of their family had been affected ranged from 17.5% (16-34 years old), 16.0% (35-54 years old), 10.7% (55-64 years old) to 9.3% (65+ years old).

A large majority of panel members (82.9%) were negatively affected by the changes - only 17.1% said it affected them in a positive way.

The council is interested in finding out if panellists who are in employment receive as a minimum the 'Living Wage' (£7.45 per hour), the majority (82.3%) answered with 'yes', 17.7% with 'no'. 91.2% of the panellists support the concept of a 'Living Wage' for all.

City Voice panellists were asked if they are aware of the existence of foodbanks in the city — 78.2% answered with 'yes', 21.8% with 'no'. 55.5% of the City Voice panellists said that they have donated food to foodbanks, 44.0% have never used it or donated anything. Asked about the concept of 'Social Solidarity Shops' 44.3% of the panellists thought that would be a good idea, 39.4% said that they didn't know and 16.4% answered with 'no'. Being then asked about who they think should pay for these shops if they were introduced, the majority said the UK or the Scottish government (35.1% and 25.8% respectively), 16.5% thought it should be the retailers, 12.9% the voluntary sector and 9.6% wants it to be the responsibility of the local authority.

City Voice panellists were also asked what they think would cause the greatest financial concern for households in the city. 47.4% answered with 'rising fuel prices', 29.2% with 'cost of food', 15.0% with 'welfare benefit cuts', and 8.5% thought it to be 'childcare cost'.



This is what we are doing

Firstly, I want to thank the panellists for helping the council and our Community Planning Partners by providing your responses to the questions on this subject. The introduction of Welfare Reform changes from the U.K. Government is providing major challenges for public services in the city as we have had to adapt, change and introduce new services and improved ways of working to ensure - particularly those citizens adversely affected - that these are minimised and that support is provided to help people where we can.

The results will be provided to the Welfare Reform Board at its next meeting and there will be discussions and proposals in relation to how we need to improve our local response.

The Board has placed a heavy emphasis on the need for improved communication and partnership working so some of the results such as the lack of knowledge about the Welfare Reform website, the Scottish Welfare Fund and the Cash in Your Pocket Partnership provide a steer for the need to increase our promotion of these services and the methods we are using to get messages across to the public which is very helpful. Some of the questions we asked were wider and potentially developmental in nature and will help to shape future provision. The support for the Living Wage across the panel is heartening and provides evidence why this is an identified priority for the Community Planning Partnership in the city. Feedback and information regarding foodbanks in the city will be shared with the Foodbank Partnership Aberdeen and will help the organisations involved to plan their services in the future.

Finally, this survey is the first we have carried out regarding Welfare Reform changes and provides baseline information

from which we can measure public awareness about the reforms, where people can get help, the impact of changes on citizens and our responses in the future. Welfare Reform is being rolled out gradually and is planned to be completed by 2017 so we would intend having an annual survey on this subject. Thanks again for all your help.

We are especially interested in those that have been directly affected by the Welfare Reform and want to hear more about the negative and positive experiences identified by respondents. So, if panellists have more information on their experience we would welcome case studies as these are important in shaping future services and making sure these are improved. If any panellist wants to provide further information on his/her experience we will maintain confidentiality and anonymity at all times. Please get in touch with: dkilgour@aberdeencity.gov.uk or call: 08456 080910 or 01224 522000.

Dave Kilgour
Strategist
Aberdeen City Council



Additional Questions-Roads

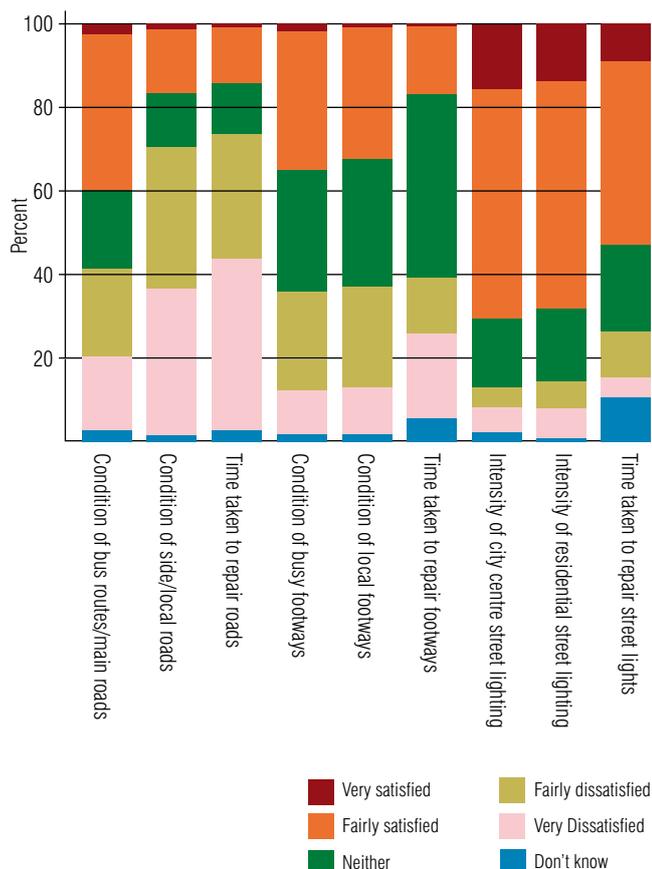
A couple of years ago the council asked the City Voice panellists about their conception of the quality of road maintenance. To see any potential changes over the last few years the same questions were asked again.

Asked about the condition of bus routes and other main roads, 40.4% of the 659 respondents expressed a level of dissatisfaction, i.e. they rated the quality with either 'fairly' or 'very dissatisfying'. Only 3.8% seem to be 'very satisfied' with the quality.

A large majority of the panellists (70.1%) thought the condition and sight of the local roads were either 'fairly' or 'very dissatisfying', 13.1% of the respondents ranked their level of satisfaction with 'either satisfied or dissatisfied', and 10.4% answered with 'don't know'.

The majority of respondents, 69.3% were 'very' or 'fairly dissatisfied' with the time taken to repair roads. 32.5% of the panellists rated the condition of busy footways as either 'very' or 'fairly satisfying', 37.6% were 'dissatisfied' and 27.1% could not say either way. The condition of the local footways was rated by 42.7% with 'very' or 'fairly dissatisfying', 29.9% expressed some level of satisfaction (i.e. 'fairly' or 'very satisfied') and 25.3% said they are 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied'. (See Figure 6 below)

Figure 6: To help prioritise limited budgets please indicate whether you are satisfied or dissatisfied with the council's present performance in each of the following areas



Base = condition of bus routes/main roads (659 respondents), condition of side/local roads (659), time taken to repair roads (657), condition of busy footways (650), condition of local footways (655), time taken to repair footways (651), intensity of city centre street lighting (653), intensity of street lighting in residential areas (657), time taken to repair lights (651)

City Voice panellists were asked for their views on current levels of spending on main and side roads, busy and local footways, and on street lighting. Regarding the council's spending on main roads 60.7% said that they would like to see more money invested in the maintenance of roads, 38.0% said that they were happy with the current level of spending and only 1.3% thought the council should spend less.

68.4% of panellists want to see an increase in spending on side roads, 29.9% think it is okay the way it is and 1.8% think less money should be spent on side roads. The majority of panellists think the spending on busy footways should remain the same (57.8%), 39.2% think more money should be spent and 3.0% think less. Looking at the spending on local footways 57.3% are of the opinion that the same amount should be spent, 35.6% think it should be increased and 7.1% think it should be less.

Asked about the money the council spends on street lighting, the majority (66.3%) thinks the council should keep its spending at the present level, 23.3% want more money to be spent on street lighting and 10.4% less.

This is what we are doing

The Roads Service feels that City Voice is providing a valuable service. We are pleased with the survey and feel it has provided useful data for use in the development of the Roads Asset Management Plan.

There is a lot of detailed analysis which will take time to assimilate fully, but the initial impression is that the response of the panel is very much in line with what we would expect. Budgets for roads maintenance remain very tight and fall well short of what might be considered necessary to restore the road surfaces to an ideal condition. What money that is available is being channelled into resurfacing main routes. Efforts on local routes are being concentrated on keeping surfaces safe for normal use.

We now have two sets of figures and the indication is that the level of satisfaction with main roads and footways has deteriorated only very little while the satisfaction with local roads and footways has deteriorated noticeably.

It is our intention that these surveys should take place regularly and that a picture will develop which can be set alongside the objective assessments by technical surveys to produce a fuller picture of the customers' attitude to the level of service being provided and the degree to which we are meeting Community Requirements of the road network.

Angus Plumb
Engineer - Roads Management
Aberdeen City Council



Additional Questions- Fuel Poverty

Panellists were asked to point out the main fuel type they were using to heat their homes. 86.9% answered this question with 'mains gas', 10.6% said that they were using 'electricity', 1.2% rely on oil, 0.8% on solid fuel and 0.3% on LPG. Only one respondent (0.2%) answered that their energy comes from a renewable source.

Asked if they usually heat all their rooms, the majority of City Voice panellists answered with 'yes' (57.7%) and 42.3% said 'no'. Looking at the different ages groups it becomes apparent that the 65+ years old are the least likely to heat the whole house (48.6%), compared to the 16-34 (39.0%), 35-54 years old (36.2%) and the 55-64 years old (48.6%).

Asked about the approximate amount of their disposable income panellists spend on heating their homes, 32.3% said between 5-10%, 20.0% spend between 10-15%, 19.3% spend less than 5% and 12.9% were unsure or did not know how much of their disposable income they would be spending on heating their home. 10.6% said they would spend between 15-20% and 5.0% more than 20.0% of their disposable income.



This is what we are doing

The responses from the questionnaire are appreciated and the information provided will help us in developing schemes and prioritising particular areas of support with regard to fuel poverty and energy efficiency issues for householders in the city.

The results have shown that despite thousands of houses in the city having benefitted from improved insulation and new heating systems, increasing numbers of householders are finding it more difficult to access affordable warmth to heat their homes adequately. The main reason for this is of course the rising cost of fuel, but we can help to protect against this by carrying out energy improvements to properties, allied with support and advice for householders in how to heat homes more cost-effectively. The survey has re-affirmed that those most at risk of fuel poverty are householders over 65. And this age group will remain a priority in our efforts to reduce the impact of rising fuel prices and inefficient homes. At the same time the survey also reinforces that fuel poverty affects all age groups in all areas of the city and therefore it is important we also maintain support to all householders living in the city. As well as re-affirm our understanding of energy efficiency and fuel poverty issues, the survey has raised some points of note, such as:

- 1.5% of householders in the city heat their homes with oil/lpg, which are two of the most expensive fuels, and are usually perceived nowadays as 'rural' fuels
- 5.0% of householders don't usually heat their living room
- Over 65's are less likely to heat their bedrooms compared to younger generations.

This information will be shared with SCARF (Save Cash and Reduce Fuel), a local organisation that manages the city's home energy efficiency advice and fuel poverty support service on behalf of the council, and will be helpful to them when promoting service and engaging householders.

Kevin Christie
Senior Domestic Energy Officer
Aberdeen City Council