

# Voice!

Winter Maintenance  
**Care for Older People**  
Quality of Life



# Welcome

Welcome to the 25th citizens' panel newsletter! This newsletter gives feedback to you, a member of Aberdeen's citizens' panel, on the results of the 25th questionnaire that you completed in March 2012. Topics in that questionnaire included winter maintenance, care for older people and quality of life.

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 26th survey, focusing mainly on the Community Planning themes of Healthier, 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.

Finally, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any comments or suggestions on how we could improve future questionnaires and newsletters.

## **Philippa Mason**

City Voice Co-ordinator

## Future Questionnaires

This newsletter, and the full results of the 25th questionnaire, are available to view on the Community Planning website

[www.aberdeencityvoice.org.uk](http://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.26, a summary of the results of the enclosed questionnaire in September 2012, along with the 27th 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, NHS Grampian and Aberdeen Council of Voluntary Organisations.

**Please recycle this newsletter when you have finished with it**



### Update

Firstly, I would like to thank Sharon Wilkinson and the team for doing a fantastic job running the City Voice whilst I was on maternity leave. The City Voice is now online and receiving strong praise from both panellists and partner organisations. I am now back in the office and look forward to working with you all in the future.

### Panel breakdown

We currently have 961 people on our City Voice panel. 48% are male and 52% are female. When we look at the age profile of the City Voice, 13% are aged between 16-34, 65% are 35-64 and 22% are 65+. This means that we need more young people on the Panel to ensure it represents the true demographics of our City. If you know of anyone that might be interested in joining the Panel (particularly those aged 16-34!), please pass them my details or direct them to the website.

### 25th Questionnaire - Panel Response

Here are the results of the 25th questionnaire you completed in March 2012. The results have now been analysed and a summary is presented in this newsletter. At the time of issuing the questionnaire, there were 961 of you on the panel - we received 676 questionnaires which gives us an overall response rate of 70%. The response rates were very similar for both the online and written returns. Thank you to all of you who responded. This response rate is slightly lower than the last questionnaire 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.





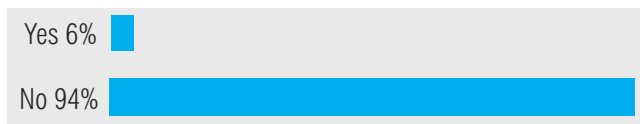
# Winter Maintenance

Aberdeen City Council currently spends over £1 million a year on winter maintenance with the aim to reduce as far as possible, the effects of adverse weather conditions on the movement of people and vehicles. Activities include gritting and snow ploughing main roads, side roads and footpaths and ensuring street lighting is working effectively. The council are responsible for providing winter maintenance on 550 miles of road and over 1200 miles of footways. In order to assess and improve their performance, the Council were keen to find out how you thought they were doing and what you thought they could be doing better.

Your results told us that overall, panellists were generally satisfied with the gritting, snow ploughing and condition of main roads and bus routes but much less so with the gritting, snow ploughing and condition of local or side roads. In regards to street lighting in winter conditions, panellists were generally more satisfied with the lighting intensity and repair time in the city centre than in residential areas. When we break the street lighting results down by area, we can also see variation in the levels of satisfaction across the city with neighbourhoods in the north more likely to be satisfied with street lighting in residential areas than in south or central neighbourhoods.

The Roads Winter Service Plan is published every year and outlines how the Council plans to prioritise and treat roads and footpaths for the coming year. The City Voice asked panellists if they had previously seen or read this plan and if so, how satisfied they were with it. Your results are shown in Figure 1 and tell us that vast majority of panellists had not seen the plan.

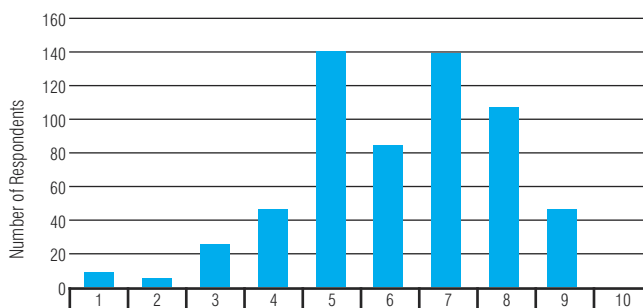
**Figure 1: Have you previously seen or read the Roads Winter Service Plan 2011-2012?**



When asked whether you had used the City Council website in order to gain information on local weather conditions, only 21% of panellists said they had. When we break this down by age, we can see a direct correlation with younger panellists much more likely to have accessed this information than older panellists.

The final question in this section asked panellists to give a rating on how well the Council had performed this year in relation to winter maintenance. Almost two thirds of respondents (64%) gave some degree of positive rating with just over a third providing some degree of negative rating. Almost a quarter of respondents rated the Council's performance as a '5' or a '7'. The results can be seen in Figure 2

**Figure 2: On a scale of 1-10 (where 1 = very poor and 10 = excellent), how well do you think Aberdeen City Council has performed in relation to winter maintenance during this particular winter (2011-12)?**



### This is what we are doing

The City Voice results have provided us with lots of valuable and interesting information. The results will be considered over the summer months and will then be used to help formulate the Roads Winter Service Plan 2012-13. This Plan will be drafted and submitted to Committee for approval in September. We hope to repeat these questions in the years to come to help us build a comprehensive picture of customer satisfaction and allow us to measure this against the severity of winter. I would like to thank the City Voice panellists for taking the time to answer these questions.

**Richard Blain - Roads Operations Manager**  
Aberdeen City Council



# Reshaping Care for Older People

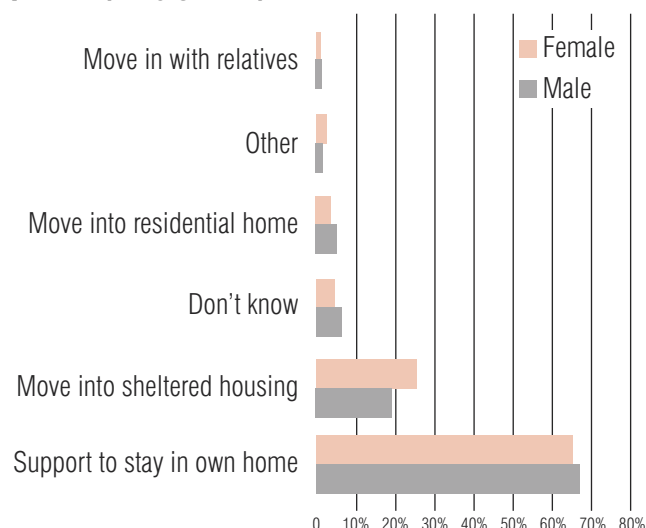
With an ageing population and tighter financial budgets, how we provide care for older people is becoming a high priority both locally and nationally. The current pathways of care are becoming unsustainable so the Scottish Government has established a four year Change Fund initiative. The Reshaping Care for Older People Change Fund aims to improve services for older people by encouraging the NHS Boards, local authorities, the Third Sector and the independent sector to make better use of their resources and adopt a more joined up approach. The council and the NHS were keen to find out your views and perceptions of current care options for older people and to find out what you think the priorities should be when they plan these services for the future.

Panellists were asked where they think the emphasis should be in order to help people become or remain healthy and independent as they get older. The most popular response was that there should be more support in the community (41%) followed by there being more information about existing services (36%).

Panellists were then asked what type of care and support they would prefer if, when they were older, they were finding it more difficult to look after themselves or their home. The most popular response by far was support to stay in own home (66%). This was followed by moving into sheltered housing (22%).

When this was broken down by age, younger panellists were more likely than older panellists to say that they would move into sheltered housing and older age groups were more inclined to want to stay in their own homes. Figure 3 breaks this result down by gender. It tells us that for most options, there was only slight variation between male and female panellists but if we look at sheltered housing, we can see that more women than men would chose this option.

**Figure 3: If, when you are older, you find it more difficult or you are unable to look after yourself and your home, what sort of care and support would you prefer? (% by gender)**



The Panel were asked what they thought was the most effective way to overcome isolation among older people. You could tick up to three options. Your top three responses were;

**Social opportunities** - chosen by 56% of respondents

**Befriending services** - chosen by 42% of respondents

**Transport services** - chosen by 40% of respondents

The panel were asked if they provided care for an older person who was frail, disabled, ill, or had a mental health or substance abuse problem. 206 panellists (31%) reported that they did with the majority reporting they provided care for a frail older person (40%). These panellists were then asked what additional support would be most helpful for enabling and enhancing this care. The most popular support would be 'equipment and adaptations to help older people remain at home', followed by 'initiatives to maximise independence and wellbeing'.

The final question in this section asked panellists if they had any other comments on what issues should be considered when reshaping care for older people. The most popular type of response related to ensuring a better quality or consistency of care and carer (20%). This includes comments made on improving the breadth of services provided and those which focused on the quality of training and compassion among carers who deal with older people. The next most popular category of responses were those which encouraged greater levels of consultation with older people when designing and delivering services for them (10%).

### **This is what we are doing**

I am extremely pleased with the high level and quality of responses to these questions. Specifically it was good to confirm that the panel agree with the Aberdeen Partnerships' strategic vision that most people want support to be able to stay in their own homes when they get older.

You also told us that equipment and adaptations were the most useful way we could help support you when caring for older people who was frail, disabled, ill or suffered from mental health or substance misuse issues. This is an area of considerable additional funding so hopefully we will start to see this making a difference soon.

I also note your comments on how we need to consult and get older people involved in reshaping their care. I would very much welcome contact from any older people wishing to join the e-mail list for the Older People Wellbeing Network or wish to receive our Aberdeen Partnership newsletter.

Your results have provided a very 'rich' data set and it will be used to significantly inform the imminent development of our Joint Commissioning Strategy for Older People. The information you provided will also be used to support the ongoing work and priorities of the Aberdeen City Council Older People Wellbeing Co-ordinators. Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete the questionnaire.

### **Sandy Reid - Programme Development Manager**

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# Quality of Life

The economic manifesto of Aberdeen City and Shire Economic Future (ACSEF) includes a vision of our area as being one of the most interesting and enjoyable locations in the UK in which to visit, live, work and grow up. This means having a good quality of life. In 2009, City Voice panellists were asked for their views on a series of topics which can contribute to a good quality of life. Your results helped ACSEF to understand what you thought 'quality of life' meant and how well the city was delivering on your expectations. In March 2012, the panel were called upon again to find out if things had changed and whether you thought they had improved, stayed the same or got worse.

**Transport** - This included four factors: local public transport, levels of traffic congestion, maintenance of roads and national and international transport connections. Your results tell us that less than 4% of panellists felt that any of these factors had got much better over the last 2 years. For all but national and international transport connections, a far greater proportion of panellists felt that things had become much worse. In regards to traffic congestion, 73% of respondents thought it had got a bit or

much worse and 72% of panellists thought maintenance of roads had got worse. Overall levels of satisfaction were highest in relation to national and international transport connections (17%) and local public transport (16%)

**Shopping and Entertainment** - The factors considered in this category were range of shops, choice of bars and restaurants and cultural facilities. Panellists told us that in all factors, a majority of respondents stated that things had got a bit, or much better.

**Housing and Environment** - This category included seven factors: access to the countryside, air quality/ levels of pollution, clean streets, attractive city centre, access to parks and open spaces, choice of housing and availability of affordable housing. For 5 of these 7 factors, a majority stated there had been no change but this is notably not the case in relation to the 'attractive city centre' factor in which 61% of respondents stated that things had got a bit or much worse.

**Economy and Jobs** - This category included five factors: employment opportunities, the local economy, level of earnings/incomes, cost of living and impact of volunteering. In each factor, the proportion of respondents stating that things have become a bit or much better is relatively small, however for all but one of the factors around a third of respondent's state there has been no change. The exception is in relation to cost of living in which 90% of respondents state that things have got a bit or much worse.



**Lifelong Learning** - This category includes quality of schools/education, further/ higher education opportunities and activities for younger people. Your results tell us that for each factor, around a third of panellists provided a 'don't know' response whilst a similar proportion provided a 'no change' answer.

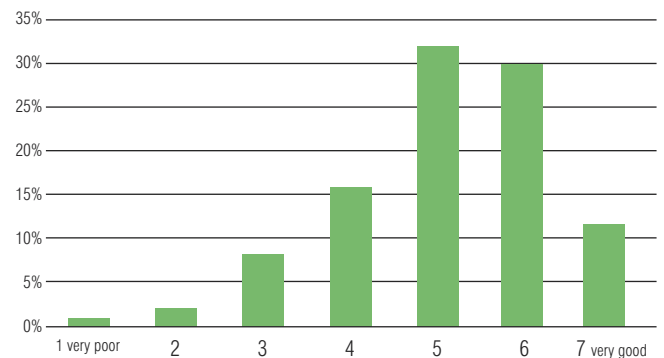
**Community Safety** - Factors in this category include level of crime and level of anti-social behaviour. 14-18% of panellists believed that the situation in respect of these two factors had either got a bit or much better, but the most popular response to both factors was 'no change'. The proportion of panellists stating that things had got a bit or much worse was higher in relation to the level of anti social behaviour (38%) than to levels of crime (24%).

**Health and Wellbeing** - This category included quality of local health services, access to community facilities, access to social services and access to sports facilities. The most popular response to all but one factor (access to social services) was 'no change'. The highest response to this category was 'don't know'. For quality of local health services and access to sports

facilities, the proportion of respondents stating that things had got better or much better was greater than was the case in relation to access to community facilities and access to social services. The proportion of respondents stating that things have either got a bit or much worse was greater in relation to access to community facilities (30%) than was the case in relation to other factors (around 14%).

The final question in this section asked panellists to rate their own quality of life now. Respondents were asked to use a 7 point scale running from 1 (very poor) to 7 (very good). The results are shown in Figure 4.

**Figure 4: Having considered the various factors...how would you rate your own quality of life now?**



**This is what we are doing**

The responses to the Quality of Life questions have provided a very useful update to the initial set of questions that were asked in late-2009. The positive responses in Shopping and Entertainment are pleasing and are probably due to recent developments, such as Union Square, which have extended the range of shops and restaurants in Aberdeen. However, there is clearly still work to be done on Transport, where many panellists feel there has been deterioration in local public transport and traffic congestion over the past two years. The effect of the recession is evident in responses in the Economy and Jobs section, where many panellists feel there has been an increase in the cost of living and a reduction in employment opportunities.

These results will be considered by Aberdeen City & Shire Economic Future (ACSEF) and will be used to inform their new Action Plan, which is due to be launched later this year.

**Tom Snowling - Senior Research Officer**  
Aberdeen City Council