

Public Survey Results: September 2009

Recommendation(s):

- (i) To note the findings of the survey and take them into account when considering future priorities

Summary

1. The Force Consultation Unit carries out continuous telephone surveying of the public in relation to confidence, satisfaction and perceptions of policing, crime and anti-social behaviour.
2. The latest key findings from the surveys are attached at the appendix. A full copy of the report can be made available on request to the Consultation Unit and will be available on the Constabulary's website shortly.

Contact: for further information
Gill Sims
Force Consultation Manager
Telephone: 01392 452676
E-mail: gillian.sims@devonandcornwall.pnn.police.uk
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DEVON & CORNWALL
CONSTABULARY

PUBLIC CONFIDENCE, SATISFACTION AND PERCEPTIONS OF CRIME AND ANTI- SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

**Public Survey
October 2008 – September 2009**

1. Summary

Satisfaction and confidence (as defined by the percentage of people who agree that the police and local council are dealing with the crime and anti social behaviour that matters – the single top down target) remain high, although there have been some significant reductions in the percentage of people who think that the police seek their views on and are dealing with the things that matter in the community and who say they have a lot of confidence in the police. People who are aged between 25 and 64 have the lowest levels of confidence in the police and local council.

Since the end of May 2009 there has been an encouraging increase in people's awareness and contact with their local neighbourhood policing team. This increased awareness and contact is likely to account for the increasing willingness to receive information about the police through a personal visit from a member of the team and for personal contact now being a more important factor than the local media in influencing people's opinion of the police.

Whilst most people think that the level of crime has remained the same over the past two years, significantly more people now think it has reduced in comparison to those who think it has increased. People's fear of crime remains steady, however of those who *are* worried about being a victim of crime fear of being physically attacked by strangers has increased.

Continued improvements to public confidence and satisfaction are likely if the Force can improve the visibility of foot patrols and the level of contact with local neighbourhood policing teams so that people see the police regularly and feel that they are there when needed. Night patrol is also likely to increase people's feelings of safety when out after dark. These measures should also help reduce people's fear of crime.

The Force also needs to continue to focus on neighbourhood policing and community engagement so that people feel that their views are both sought and understood. Much of this can potentially be effectively achieved through the medium of newsletters, leaflets/ cards and posters, although people's personal contact with the Constabulary is also a key factor in their confidence levels. People need to feel that the police will treat them fairly regardless of who they are. In addition, text messaging is increasingly being chosen as a preferred method of receiving information from the police.

Engagement must also be backed up by action to deal with the issues raised by the community and to continue to reduce the level of crime.

2. Key Findings

Police Visibility

- A third of people say they see the police on foot patrol at least once a fortnight. However a third say they never see them.
- More than half of people say they would like to see the police more often. They would most like to see them in town centres at night and in the evening, outside pubs and clubs at closing time, at known local hot spots at crucial times and on housing estates during the evenings and nights.

Community Engagement

- Approximately half of people know they have a neighbourhood policing team, know how to contact them and have met someone from the team
- There have been significant increases in the amount of people who know how to contact their NPT; know the name of someone from the team; and who have been contacted by the team.
- People have a preference for passive forms of being informed about policing in their local area (leaflets, newsletters, contact cards and posters. However there have been a large increases in the amount of people saying they would welcome a personal visit from someone from their neighbourhood policing team and contact by text message.

Confidence in police in local area

- 79.2% agree that the police and local council are dealing with the anti-social behaviour and crime that matter.
- 63.7% agree that they seek people's views about the anti-social behaviour and crime issues that matter. There has been a small but significant reduction in the level of agreement since December 2008.
- 90.8% agree that they would treat everyone fairly regardless of who they are
- 68.5% agree that they can be relied on to be there when needed
- 87.6% agree that they understand the issues that affect the community
- 81.3% agree that they are dealing with the things that matter to people in the community. There has been a small but significant reduction in the level of agreement since March 2009.
- 81.9% agree that they have a lot of confidence in the Police. There has been a small but significant reduction in the level of agreement since in February 2009.
- 76.2% of people think that the police are doing a good or excellent job

Anti Social Behaviour

Key problem areas are (in order):

- speeding traffic
- cars parked inconveniently, dangerously or illegally
- rubbish or litter lying around
- uncontrolled dogs or dog mess

Personal Safety and Perception and Fear of Crime

- 6 out of 10 people consider that the level of crime has stayed the same over the past 2 years However, significantly more people now think that crime has reduced compared to those who think it has got worse.
- Three quarters of people feel at least fairly safe walking alone in their local area after dark. This has increased significantly since May 2009. However a third of people feel at least a little bit unsafe.

- Just under a quarter of people said they were very or fairly worried about being a victim of crime. Burglary continues to be the key area of concern for respondents. Fear of being mugged or robbed and being insulted or pestered in a public place remain high, whilst there has been a significant increase in the percentage of people who are concerned about being physically attacked by strangers.

Contact

- Just over a quarter of respondents had contacted the police in the last 12 months. More than 8 in 10 of these contacts were made by phone.
- 86.8% of people said they found it easy to contact someone who could help them
- 80.7% said they were able to contact someone who could assist them quickly
- 75.8% said they were satisfied with the way the matter was dealt with.
- 97.5% of people would prefer to contact the police by phone.

Overall Satisfaction with the Constabulary

- 89.2% of people were satisfied with the overall service provided by the Constabulary.
- The percentage of people who say they base their opinion of the Constabulary on some form of direct contact has increased significantly. This has now overtaken the local media as the main source of people's opinions although the affect of what people have seen heard or read in the local media remains high.