

“Your views are very important...”

Thank you for continuing to take part in Opinion.”



Malcolm Doherty
Chair of the
Lancashire Police Authority



Steve Finnigan
Chief Constable

Opinion

“have your say”

May 2009

Serious & Organised Criminality

In November 2007 Lancashire Constabulary's Serious & Organised Crime Unit (SOCU) wanted to find out what you, the public of Lancashire, understand by the term 'organised crime' and what impact it has on your lives and your community to help us with future planning and communications. In the last questionnaire we asked you a selection of these questions again so that we could see if your opinions had changed over time. The results suggest that the work that has been done has had a positive impact on your opinion, as can be seen below:

We found that:

- Your overall awareness of organised crime has decreased and the majority of you remain unaware of organised crime and unthreatened by it.
- The number of you stating that organised crime does not have an effect on your lives has increased by nearly 20%, from 39% in 2007 to 58% in 2008.
- However, your level of concern about the organised crime activities asked about this time around (Drug gangs, the selling of Class A drugs, people trafficking, the robbery of financial institutions and money laundering) has slightly increased, with the highest levels of concern associated with drug dealing and drug gangs.
- The main channels for finding out about organised crime are local media and word of mouth – no change from 2007.
- The main indicators of organised crime activity are 'seeing groups of people hanging around an area' or observing 'constant visitors to a particular house or street'.
- The likelihood of you reporting any suspicions of organised crime activity have remained fairly static, with 89% of you stating that you would be likely to report them compared to 90% in 2007.
- Your confidence in the Constabulary to act on information provided has also remained similar at 84% in 2008 compared to 83% in 2007.
- Your awareness of SOCU has increased from 19% in 2007 to 31% in 2008. And, as in 2007, the majority of you have heard about SOCU via the local media.

Quick glance
– issues you'd like to know more about

In this most recent questionnaire you've asked us to provide you with more information about police activities and initiatives within local communities. Obviously this information is different for each area, so we've provided a brief guide to how to find out more...

Your team is;

- Dedicated to 'getting things done' in your area and spending at least 80% of their time visibly doing this;
- Visible and easy to contact by phone, through local meetings called Police and Communities Together (PACT) and through the internet;
- Committed to listening to you to find out what your concerns and priorities are;
- Determined to work with you and with other organisations to tackle the problems that you identify;
- Responsible for telling you what they have done in answer to your problems.

Every neighbourhood in Lancashire has a neighbourhood policing team and you can find out who's on your team by entering your postcode in the 'My Neighbourhood' box on the Lancashire Constabulary website (www.lancashire.police.uk).

The Constabulary has adopted a national pledge to make sure that you receive a consistently high level of service from your neighbourhood policing teams.

How to contact us

If you have a query about completing the questionnaire, about being a panel member or have any change of details e.g. name or address, please contact Darren Hornby at SMSR 01482 301041 or e-mail dhornby@smsr.co.uk.

WINNER

Congratulations to Mrs Nadine Smith from Morecambe, our latest £100 prize draw winner.

Congratulations to our latest prize draw winner, Mrs Nadine Smith from Morecambe. Mrs Smith, who is a keen golfer, has been on the panel now for a couple of years and says that it enables her to feel like she is making a contribution for local people. For a number of years she has also been involved in charity work for the blind and plans to donate some of her winnings to the local blind charity where she is also a volunteer.

Welcome to the latest edition of Opinion

It may seem, to some of you, like a long time since you received a questionnaire (and maybe not long enough to others!) and actually, it is. We've been reviewing all of our surveys and made the decision towards the end of 2008 to bring Opinion in line with some of the other surveys we do and send out four questionnaires a year instead of the usual three. In order to give you a break before we ask you to complete an additional survey a year, we decided to miss out the usual February questionnaire and begin again in the new fiscal year. So here we are.

As always, we look forward to hearing your views on the issues included in the latest questionnaire and thank you for your continued commitment to giving us your opinions on policing in Lancashire.



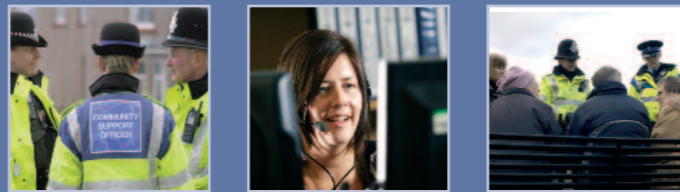
Snapshot:...

There were more than a 2,000 fewer victims of crime in Lancashire during October to December last year, according to the latest figures from the Home Office. Lancashire continues to be a safe place to live as the figures show all crime fell by 6.8 per cent during October to December 2008 compared to the same period for the previous year, which equates to 2,092 fewer victims.

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LANCASHIRE Constabulary last year answered over a million non-emergency calls from members of the public, the highest number of non-emergency calls since the force began keeping records. The Constabulary answered over 1.1 million calls achieving a record 95.4% answered within 40 seconds. Calls range from reports of shoplifting to vandalism and vehicle crime.

Investors in policing... maximising your investment



Every year the Police Authority asks you what you think should be the priorities for the police. This helps to target resources at those priority areas that are of most concern to the public by setting annual policing objectives that reflect those priorities.

From our consultation with you, we know that 79% of you overall were willing to pay the standstill amount (£6.11) or above to improve policing. Of that number, 57% were willing to pay for improvements to the current policing services.

We also asked you to indicate which areas of the policing services Lancashire Constabulary provides that you would be willing to see resources both taken away from and improved depending on the funding available for 2008-09.

	Willing to see resources taken away from...	Would like to see resources given to...
Response services	2%	17%
Protective services	10%	10%
Neighbourhood policing	10%	19%
Split equally across all 3	73%	51%

Decision outcome

Last year policing in Lancashire benefited greatly from the additional investment, which led to impressive performance achievements. In the last 12 months the Constabulary was the top performing police force in England and Wales, brought burglary to a 35 year low and exceeded the Governments standard for Neighbourhood Policing (the only force to achieve this).

When setting this year's budget the Authority carefully considered the current economic climate, alongside the need to protect previous investments which funded such impressive performance results. We agreed that other than what was absolutely necessary it was essential not to place excessive financial burdens on local taxpayers.

As a result the Police Authority agreed to increase council tax in Lancashire by an extra 3.1%. That means that the average band D property will pay £142.08 a year towards policing, slightly under 12p a week.

Delivering performance in 2009/2010

In terms of the priorities for the coming year, you were very clear in what you see as a priority for the Constabulary to address.

Under Objective 1 - 'to reassure the public, particularly those who are vulnerable' with the top three being:

- Ensuring a safe and secure environment for the public (74%)
- Dealing with ASB, including alcohol-related ASB (69%)
- Being accessible and visible to everyone in the community (67%)

Under objective 2 - 'to reduce and investigate crime; concentrate on those offences that are of concern to the public' the top three priorities under Objective Two were:

- Violent crime (69%)
- Bringing offenders and offences to justice (55%)
- Acquisitive crime (52%)

Investors in policing...maximising your return

Like you, both the Authority and the Constabulary want to see the service we provide get even better, but cutting crime and keeping people safe costs money. The question we asked you about willingness to pay increases in council tax is related to the dilemma that the Authority faces each year. How do we match low levels of funding and a limit on the amount of money we can raise locally, with the growing demands on the service?

Knife crime in Lancashire

Following the focus on knife crime in both the media and in the national policing arena during the latter part of 2008 we wanted to explore public perceptions of knife crime in Lancashire to understand your views of the extent of the problem and its impact on your lives.

The predominant finding (as shown in the table below) is that just under half of you do not know whether knife crime is a problem in your neighbourhood or not - which is great news, as we can take from this that you're not affected by knife crime, irrespective of whether it is considered an issue in your area. In addition to this a further 29% of you do not consider it a problem at all. All of which is reassuring.

Q: Is knife crime a problem in your neighbourhood?	
Yes, a very big problem	2%
Yes, a big problem	4%
Yes, but only a slight problem	19%
No, not a problem at all	29%
Don't know whether it is a problem	45%

However, we are also mindful of the 19% of you that consider it a slight problem in your area and 6% who consider it to be a big problem. The Constabulary is currently working on a number of initiatives to address knife crime including, Be Sharp Think Sharp where officers from H Division have teamed up with the North West Ambulance service to deliver a presentation to over 10,000 school pupils. The presentation tells the

MEDIA IMPACT:

- The main reason given for considering knife crime to be a problem is 'local media coverage'.
- The group predominantly associated with knife crime is 'teenagers/youths', as focussed on in the media.
- Just over a quarter of you are more worried about being a victim of knife crime now than you were 12 months ago.
- The main reason for being more worried is 'media coverage'.



youngsters about the dangers of carrying knives and the severe consequences of using them. Using graphic images of people who have been injured by a knife and video footage, the feedback from the pupils has been extremely positive.

A joint campaign with Crimestoppers was launched back in January asking young people to text anonymously the names of people they know who carry knives. The launch took place at Balshaw High School and the scheme has been well received.

In addition, the majority of you actually associate knife crime with large cities and towns, such as London, Manchester and Liverpool. There is very limited association of knife crime with Lancashire, with only very small numbers of you mentioning specific areas of Lancashire, as the chart below shows.

