

RESULTS FROM OPINION WAVE 6

The Authority maintains a representative panel of 4,000 individuals for the whole of Lancashire. Panel members are consulted 3 times a year on various policing issues. The report below details the results from the consultation that took place in June and July 2004

Topics we consulted on:

Confidence

Influencing policing

Awareness of local based Community Beat Managers (CBM's) and Police Community Support Officers (PCSO's),

Emergency preparedness

Cannabis and the law.

Confidence in Lancashire Constabulary

- There has been a general overall increasing trend in confidence in the Constabulary over the past 2½ years with confidence during this wave being higher than in any previous surveys - 87% were very/fairly confident in Lancashire Constabulary.
- The main factor that has influenced your confidence for this last wave was positive nationwide audit results, immediate/quick responses by the Police and good feedback to the public in response to specific incidents.
- However, the main explanations for your decreases in confidence this wave related to lack of results/action e.g. failure to arrest offenders, poor quality of response/disinterested and the presence of anti-social behaviour.

Action/outcome:

Information regarding levels of confidence in the Lancashire Constabulary is monitored by senior managers in regular strategic management meetings, with particular emphasis being placed on the reasons for increases or decreases in confidence.

Influencing Local Policing

- A high proportion of you (85%) want a say in local policing, although only around half (49%) feel that you can influence Policing as individuals.
- 75% of you feel you are able to influence the Police as a group.
- 52% say that local Police do not encourage the local community to become involved, with the most prevalent barrier being the perceived autocratic and political system.
- The most popularly suggested methods of influencing the Police included providing feedback such as this survey, through groups and meetings by reporting incidents and sharing local knowledge.
- 69% of you overall are aware of at least one opportunity to become involved with the Police, (for example becoming a Special Constable,) whereas only 40% are interested in getting involved.

Community Beat Managers (CBM) and Police Community Support Officers (PCSO)

Many people are unaware that they have a local officer (CBM or PCSO) in their area (61% and 66% overall respectively) and proportions are not aware of the services provided by these officers (42% and 50% respectively).

Of those who are aware, many say both kinds of officers are particularly effective in reducing groups of youngsters hanging around, reducing rowdy behaviour and reducing the occurrence of youths drinking on the streets.

- Those respondents (40%) who have both a CBM and a PCSO in their local area feel safer and more reassured due to their presence. However more than half of these respondents do not know how to contact their local officer.
- The majority of contact with CBMs and PCSOs is via local meetings, home visits, the telephone, Neighbourhood Watch, work, or just in passing.

- Most contact has been in relation to: anti-social behaviour e.g. by youths or neighbours; car related issues e.g. untaxed vehicles, abandoned cars or dangerous driving; vandalism and criminal damage or drug dealers.

Action/outcome:

The Constabulary and Authority place high priority on engaging with local communities. To support that process both the Constabulary and Authority provide opportunities to become involved in influencing policing.

The Authority provides 'PAC' Police Authority Community meetings 3 times a year at a district level to enable local people to speak to a Divisional Commander and a Member of the Authority about any policing matter.

'PACT'- Police and Communities Together is a locally based Constabulary initiative that allows people to task their local 'bobby' in their own neighbourhoods. PACT is about problem solving policing on a local level giving everyone the chance to see their CBM/PCSO in person at least once per month communicating with local people and telling them what their CBM/PCSO is doing for them. Meetings are held during the first week of every month.

Morecambe Bay Cockling Incident

The majority of respondents perceive the Morecambe Bay cockling incident to have been handled well and believe that the Constabulary have been making efforts to build relationships with fisheries and other relevant authorities, since the incident.

Emergency Preparedness

- Clearly, the majority of you are concerned about international terrorism (89%) and there seems to be a desire to access more information about the threats and hazards posed. Most significantly, 74% of you would be more reassured if you were aware of the capabilities of the Lancashire Emergency Services to deal with such incidents. Members of the public perceive the responsibility of providing such information to sit foremost with Central Government, then Lancashire County Council, then Lancashire Constabulary, then Lancashire Fire & Rescue Service, followed by the Police Authority and the Ambulance Service.

Cannabis and the law The majority of respondents were generally well informed about cannabis (89% know what cannabis is, 87% know it is illegal to sell it, 84% know it is illegal to grow it, and only 6% have no idea what the law is on cannabis).

Conclusion

In the main the results from this research panel have been positive. The Constabulary is seen to be continually moving forward in terms of providing a better service, building relations and creating increased confidence among the local public in Lancashire.