



21st Survey: Community Safety

WELCOME to the latest citizens' panel newsletter.

Inside you will be able to find out the results of the 21st survey that was sent to you in May 2010.

You will also find out what we have done with the results.

A range of issues were explored, including:

- Overall views on community safety
- Underage drinking
- Fire and road safety
- Community safety priorities

Panel Profile

Our recent efforts to recruit new members to the panel and update the details we have for existing panel members has been successful.

The panel membership is back up to 1250 citizens and, as a representative sample, it closely matches both the age and area distribution of Aberdeenshire's population.

Erika Skinner

Community Planning Support Officer

Survey Response

755 of you completed and returned the questionnaire on time to represent an overall response rate of 66.2%.

Full results for the 21st survey are available to view on the Community Planning website (under the 'Get Involved' section)

www.ouraberdeenshire.org.uk

MEMBER ORGANISATIONS OF THE COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP ARE:

Aberdeenshire Council • Grampian Fire and Rescue Service • NHS Grampian • Grampian Police
Scottish Enterprise • Aberdeenshire Community Councils • Aberdeenshire Local Rural Partnerships
Aberdeenshire Councils for Voluntary Service • Nestrans • Skills Development Scotland • ACSEF
Aberdeenshire Alcohol and Drug Partnership • Aberdeenshire Youth Council

Overall Views on Community Safety

This newsletter summarises the results of our annual Community Safety survey where, for many of the questions we asked, we are able to benchmark the results in 2010 against previous results in 2007 and 2009, and assess the impact of actions taken by the Aberdeenshire Community Safety Partnership. Overall, the results show an improved picture of Community Safety in 2010 for Aberdeenshire citizens compared with 2007.

Levels of crime and anti-social behaviour

For the first time since we started asking questions on this topic in Viewpoint, the net majority of respondents in 2010 felt that the level of crime in their local area had decreased in the past year. Those aged 45 and over are more likely to feel that levels of crime have reduced.

Despite this positive trend, many respondents continue to believe that the crime rate in Aberdeenshire is higher than it actually is. Aberdeenshire has the third lowest crime rate in Scotland, however only a quarter of respondents thought the Shire had one of the five lowest crime rates out of the 32 Scottish local authority areas.

Overall, perceived levels of anti-social behaviour have remained the same between 2009 and 2010, with 52% of respondents feeling levels have stayed the same, a quarter saying it has increased and a further quarter saying it has decreased.

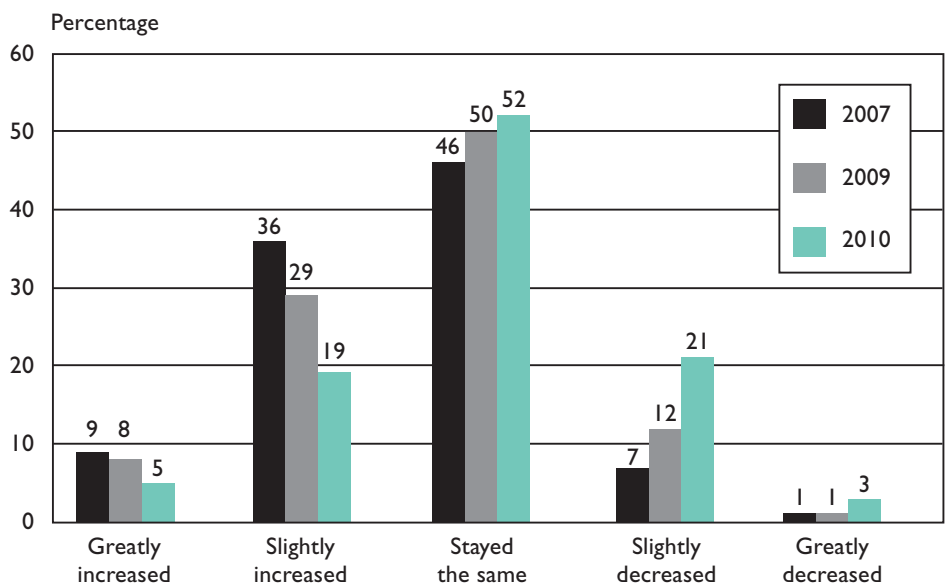
Experiences of anti-social or criminal behaviour

For the majority of anti-social and crime indicators we asked about, there has been a decrease in the extent to which respondents have either witnessed or experienced these between 2007 and 2010.

The notable indicators on the decrease are:

- Vandalism/graffiti
- Threatening behaviour
- Car crime
- Drunkenness
- People taking illegal drugs
- Teenagers/children causing a nuisance
- Problems with neighbours
- Misuse of fireworks

Figure 1 - Perceived change in levels of crime



This is what we're doing: Dog fouling

Dog fouling continues to be highlighted as an issue of considerable concern to residents, both in this survey and at various community engagement events throughout Aberdeenshire. Greater dog owner responsibility is seen as crucial to tackling this problem and in Formartine a pilot project will be launched in June this year, aimed at dog owners. The Formartine Community Planning Group, in conjunction with the support of the 11 Community Councils in the area, will be providing biodegradable dog waste bags, free of charge, to local dog owners. The bags will be distributed in communities across Formartine and posters will also be distributed to raise awareness. It is hoped that this education campaign will encourage dog owners to clean up after their dog and dispose of the waste responsibly.

More details about the scheme can be found at www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/communitycouncils or by contacting mark.mitchell@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Mark Mitchell, Formartine Community Planning Support Officer

However, respondents identified four indicators in particular which continue to be commonly experienced or witnessed but also increasing in occurrence and these are:

- Dog fouling
- Anti-social driving
- Rubbish or litter lying around
- Fly tipping

Three of these aspects of anti-social behaviour (dog fouling, anti-social driving, rubbish or litter lying around) are also the top three issues that respondents indicated they worry about most frequently and more so than when asked the question in 2009.

Fear of crime

Results in 2010 show that, compared with 2007, respondents now feel safer walking alone in their town centre and their local neighbourhood. However, there has been little change between 2009 and 2010.

For those respondents who had gone out after dark within the past year, and had felt unsafe, the main reasons given for feeling that way were:

- Groups of people hanging around
- Noisy or anti-social behaviour from groups of people
- Individuals hanging around that you were suspicious of
- Things you have read in the paper
- General feeling of being unsafe in the dark

This is what we're doing: Safer Streets

The **Safer Streets** initiative is one example of what the Community Safety Partnership has been doing in 2010 to address your concerns and reduce the incidence of vandalism, drunkenness and threatening behaviour.

Safer Streets specifically aims at reducing alcohol related violence and anti-social behaviour over the festive period. Fraserburgh, Peterhead and Inverurie were identified as hot spots for key activities to be carried out, including:

- High visibility Police and Community Warden patrols.
- Licensing Standards Officers and Police visiting licensed premises to promote improved licensing standards and Pubwatch Schemes.
- Work in partnership with Aberdeenshire Alcohol and Drug Partnership to promote responsible alcohol consumption.
- Street Sports in Fraserburgh and Peterhead to provide young people with positive activities that divert them away from engaging in crime and anti-social behaviour.

By targeting resources in these three towns over what is a very busy period, we were able to prevent alcohol related violence and anti-social behaviour – the occurrence of such offences reduced by 40% on aggregate over the three towns taking part in the Safer Streets initiative. Our Local Policing Teams will continue to work with partners to ensure Aberdeenshire is a safe place to visit, live and work.

Chief Inspector Janice Innes, Grampian Police



Fire Safety

91% of respondents said they have a smoke alarm on every level of their home. Far fewer (47%) claim to have an Action Plan for evacuating their home in the event of a fire and this proportion has decreased since 2007 when 53% claimed to have such a plan. 38% of respondents have a carbon monoxide alarm and this has increased from 32% of respondents in 2007.

Underage Drinking

In this section, we asked panel members about awareness of underage drinking in your local area, as well as general attitudes towards it, including views on its impacts and who you felt had a key role in addressing underage drinking.

Awareness of underage drinking

Overall, the vast majority of respondents have either never or only occasionally witnessed or been aware of:

- Under 18s purchasing alcohol in their local area
- Over 18s purchasing alcohol for under 18s
- Under 18s being provided with alcohol by their parents or carers

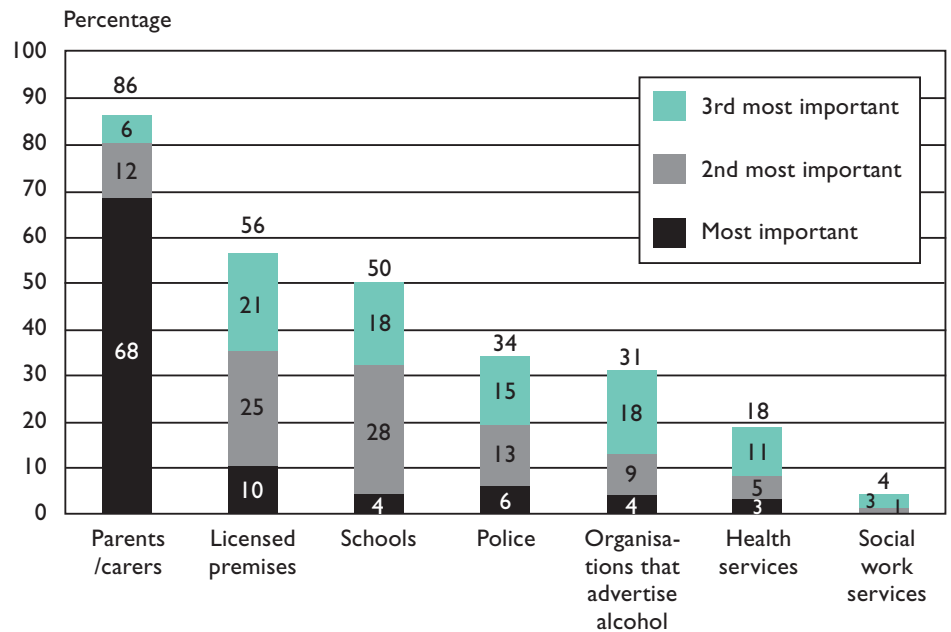
A higher proportion, but still a minority, of respondents (27%) said they had witnessed or been aware of under 18s drinking alcohol in public places in their local area either sometimes or quite often.

When asked the extent to which they felt aspects of underage drinking were a problem in their local area, the vast majority did not see it as a major problem.

However, 18% did consider under 18s drinking alcohol in public places a major problem in their area and a further 49% considered it a minor problem. Only 11% felt under 18s purchasing alcohol was a major problem in their local area, and a further 38% considered it a minor problem. The extent to which respondents felt both these issues were a major problem was highest in Banff and Buchan and lowest in Marr.



Figure 2 - Importance of roles in addressing underage drinking



This is what we're doing:

A range of initiatives are being adopted in a bid to tackle underage drinking in Aberdeenshire.

During October and December 2010, **Operation Papa**, a targeted multi-agency operation involving Grampian Police, Aberdeenshire Alcohol and Drug Partnership, Barnardos and Aberdeenshire Council Social Work Service, was held over three nights in Peterhead, in a bid to tackle underage drinking in public places. The aims of this initiative included heightened awareness among young people and their parents of the dangers of underage and binge drinking, as well as reducing the availability of alcohol for consumption by young people. Work is ongoing to repeat this exercise during the summer period at shows and games events throughout Aberdeenshire.

Anti-social Behaviour Patrols led by Grampian Police and other partners to tackle key issues will be delivered throughout 2011 in response to identified needs.

At the wider scale, the Alcohol and Drug Partnership Education Sub-Committee has developed an Action Plan which focuses on delivering a co-ordinated approach to alcohol misuse education and changing the attitudes of young people to alcohol across Aberdeenshire. Some of the initiatives under the Action Plan are already being delivered, including 'Drug Proof your Kids' training to volunteers to enable the roll out of a programme of education to parents which will include alcohol misuse and how to talk to their children about alcohol misuse. Education in schools, for example through secondary school guidance staff, will also be supported.

Linda Watt, Aberdeenshire Alcohol and Drug Partnership

Finally, respondents were asked overall how common they thought underage drinking was in their local area. Just over half (56%) of respondents thought it was common to some extent (21% very common and 35% fairly common).

Respondents from Kincardine and Mearns were most likely to consider underage drinking very or fairly common (65%) while those from Marr were least likely to think so (48%).

Attitudes towards underage drinking

We asked panel members at what age they thought it was acceptable for young people to consume alcohol.

When the average age of responses was calculated, we found that 16 was the age at which respondents felt it acceptable for young people to drink alcohol while supervised by a parent or carer. Meanwhile 82% felt that 18 was the acceptable age for young people to consume alcohol unsupervised.

We asked respondents to rank the importance of addressing certain impacts of underage drinking. Tackling the health impacts on young people was considered the most important issue by 46% of respondents, followed by threatening behaviour by underage drinkers (30%).

Parents and carers were considered by far to have the most important role in addressing underage drinking, with 68% of respondents selecting this as their top choice and 86% selecting this in their top three choices.

Licensed premises and schools were also considered to have an important role, while services such as the Police and Health Services were less likely to be seen as having an important role (Figure 2).

Safety on the Roads

Previous surveys have suggested that road safety was an important concern for people and the 2010 survey looked at whether opinions had changed since 2007.

The 3 main road safety issues concerning respondents in 2010 were:

- Speeding vehicles
- Drink driving
- Driving while using a mobile phone

This was followed to a lesser extent by:

- Anti-social driving
- Drug driving

Compared to when this question was asked in 2007, there are now notably fewer panel members who place drink driving or drug driving in their top 3 issues.

However, there has been an increase in concern about driving while using a mobile phone. Concern about speeding vehicles has reduced only slightly since 2007.

Young drivers (17-25 year olds) continue to be the group of drivers considered most at risk in terms of road safety issues, by 80% of respondents in 2010 and almost unchanged since 2007. Motorcyclists were considered the second most at risk group.

The majority of respondents continue to feel that the greatest road safety problems arise in the countryside (70%) as opposed to in towns (22%).



This is what we're doing:

Some of the road safety initiatives that the Community Safety Partnership has lead on during 2010 include:

Safe Drive Stay Alive – 5,500 young people from fifth year classes across Grampian attended this initiative in November 2010, which involves a hard-hitting road safety show delivered by emergency professionals and victims regarding the effects of road collisions on victims and their families.

Pass Plus – Financial support provided by the Community Safety Partnership over the past three years has raised awareness of the Pass Plus scheme and the benefits to young people (17-25 year old drivers) and their safety on the road.

Operation Zenith – is a multi-agency initiative focused on motorcyclists and those identified motorcycle rider behaviours that make individuals most at risk of collisions and serious injury. The Community Safety Partnership continues to support Operation Zenith which has been recognised for its achievements by several national bodies.

Kate Rigby, Strategic Development Officer (Community Safety), Aberdeenshire Council

Community Safety Priorities

Respondents were asked to prioritise a list of community safety issues that they felt the Community Safety Partnership should focus on.

The three issues which stood out as top priorities were:

- Alcohol misuse
- Road safety
- Anti-social driving

This was followed by a secondary set of priorities emerging from your choices:

- Controlled drugs
- Underage drinking
- Public place violence
- Youth disorder

This is what we're doing:

Information for this survey, along with data from a range of other source, fed into the annual Strategic Assessment of Community Safety. This Assessment gives robust evidence of the Community Safety issues across Aberdeenshire and determines the priorities for the Community Safety Partnership to focus on for the year ahead. The priorities agreed for 2011/12 are:

- Promoting safety and preventing accidents
- Reducing anti-social behaviour
- Violence reduction and prevention

These priorities will ensure that reduced budgets are targeted as effectively as possible and help to maintain the positive trend for community safety activity across Aberdeenshire. Action plans for each of these priorities are being developed which will enable partners to intervene at an early stage and prevent problems from occurring, for example by providing advice and education, diversionary activities (particularly for young people) and additional support. Where these approaches fail, enforcement measures will also be utilised.

Alcohol is very often the precursor to many forms of offending whether it is anti-social behaviour, violence or underage drinking. The Community Safety Partnership recognises the role alcohol plays in our society and continues to work closely with the Aberdeenshire Alcohol and Drug Partnership to find sustainable solutions.

Improving safety and tackling anti-social behaviour issues within our communities are often highlighted by citizens through consultation and engagement exercises as priority issues, and the annual Viewpoint Community Safety survey continues to be a valuable benchmarking tool for the Community Safety Partnership on the issues that concern Aberdeenshire citizens most.

For more information on the work of the Aberdeenshire Community Safety Partnership and their partnership working with your local community initiatives, go to

www.aberdeenshirecommunitysafety.org.uk

Willie Munro, Chair of the Community Safety Executive

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