

INVERCLYDE COUNCIL CITIZENS' PANEL NEWSLETTER

AUTUMN 2019

Dear Panel Member

Welcome to the latest Citizens' Panel newsletter.

We were pleased with the response to the survey issued in Winter 2018/19. Sixty-four per cent of you completed a questionnaire and provided valuable feedback that we will use to improve services provided by the Council.



Topics in the Winter 2018/19 survey were:

- domestic abuse
- roads and street lighting
- community justice
- Inverclyde Council's performance.

The Autumn 2019 questionnaire focuses on the protection of vulnerable children and young people; Inverclyde Council's performance; and satisfaction with Council Services. We look forward to receiving your completed survey.

This newsletter outlines the key results from the Winter 2018/19 survey and our response to your feedback.

1. Domestic abuse

We introduced the first section of the survey by explaining that the vision of the Inverclyde Violence Against Women Multi-Agency Partnership is to live in an area where all individuals are equally safe and respected, women and girls live free from all forms of violence and abuse and no child or young person has to experience gender-based violence or live with its impact.

The first question asked the Panel what sort of issues come to mind when they hear the term *violence against women*. The top five issues that more than 70% of respondents think of in relation to violence against women were:

Physical abuse, assault or physical attack by a partner or ex-partner	94%
Emotional/psychological abuse; being controlled by a partner or ex-partner - threats, being denied access to money, criticised and made to feel bad, activities restricted or isolated from family and friends	83%
Rape/sexual assault/sexual abuse by someone known to the victim	82%
Rape/sexual assault/sexual abuse by a stranger	79%
Sexual harassment, bullying and intimidation in a public or private space, including work	76%

The second question asked Panel members if they or anyone they know had experienced any form of violence against women. More than two thirds (69%) of respondents said they or someone they know had experienced a form of violence against women. The top five types of violence against women that Panel members or someone they know had experienced were:

Emotional/psychological abuse; being controlled by a partner or ex-partner	32%
Physical abuse, assault or physical attack by a partner or ex-partner	31%
Stalking or harassment	14%
Sexual harassment	11%
Rape/sexual assault/sexual abuse by someone known to the victim	9%

The final question in this section of the survey asked the Panel to indicate what local services they are aware of that could provide support to women who are experiencing violence. The top five local services that respondents are aware of are:

Police Scotland	88%
Inverclyde Women's Aid	74%
GP/Doctor	65%
Victim Support	62%
Social Work	58%

Our response to your feedback

While the vast majority of Citizens' Panel members (94%) said that they think of *physical abuse, assault or physical attack by a partner or ex-partner violence against women*, it is perhaps encouraging to note that this is closely followed by *emotional/psychological abuse; being controlled by a partner or ex-partner - threats, being denied access to money, criticised and made to feel bad, activities restricted or isolated from family and friends*, which 83% of respondents told us is the issue that comes to mind when they hear the term *violence against women*. This would suggest that the ongoing training delivered locally – which challenges stereotypical views of violence against women being primarily of a physical nature – is making an impact.

The recent legislative change, namely the introduction of The Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 (effective from 1 April 2019), which incorporates coercive controlling behaviour, has received significant media coverage during the last few months. It would appear that the Act's high profile has contributed to public awareness of the complexity of the issue of violence against women. The fact that almost 70% of Panel members said that they or someone they know had experienced a form of violence against women demonstrates that there is a continued need for the issue to be challenged in the local area, as well as in Scotland as a whole.

2. Roads and street lighting

We introduced the roads and street lighting section of the survey by advising the Panel that, in 2012, the Council invested £29 million in a five year improvement programme which included road and pavement resurfacing works, an extensive road patching and pothole repairs programme, street lighting replacement works and improvements to bridges. We also advised that, in the last six years, we treated and upgraded 220 km of roads and pavements which has resulted in a reduction in the number of Inverclyde's roads which require maintenance treatment.

The first question in this part of the survey asked Panel members how satisfied they are with the roads network in their neighbourhood and in Inverclyde as a whole. Half (50%) of Panel members said they are very or fairly satisfied with the roads network in their neighbourhood. This is double the number of respondents (25%) who, in 2012, told us they were very or fairly satisfied with the maintenance of roads and pavements in their neighbourhood. Additionally, at that time, 63% of Panel members said they were fairly or very dissatisfied with the maintenance of roads and pavements in their neighbourhood; this figure dropped by 25% to 38% in response to the Winter 2018/19 Panel questionnaire.

In 2018/19, almost half (47%) of Panel members said they are very or fairly satisfied with pavements in their neighbourhood, while more than a third (35%) of respondents said they were either fairly or very satisfied with pavements in Inverclyde.

The next question in this part of the survey asked about respondents' satisfaction with Inverclyde's new street lighting infrastructure. More than two thirds (68%) of Panel members said they are very or fairly satisfied with street lighting in their neighbourhood, while a similar number (66%) of respondents said they were either fairly or very satisfied with street lighting in Inverclyde as a whole.

The final question in this section of the survey asked the Panel if they had any suggestions or comments they wished to make about roads, pavements or street lighting in Inverclyde.

Our response to your feedback

The survey results indicate that Panel members recognise the network improvements that have been achieved throughout Inverclyde. The responses also confirm that the extensive £29 million improvement programme delivered during the last five years has been successful in upgrading the local roads network. Additionally, it should be noted that a further £15 million investment programme has been confirmed for delivery over the next five years and we will aim to achieve more positive results during that time.

The Roads Team acknowledges and welcomes the comments and suggestions from Panel members about roads, pavements and street lighting, including an ongoing demand for further action on pothole repairs, pavement resurfacing works and street lighting upgrade works.

3. Community justice

A selection of questions about community justice formed the next part of the survey.

The first question asked Panel members about their awareness of community justice; just over a fifth (21%) of Panel members told us they are aware of it.

Panel members were then asked to indicate whether they thought a list of statements were part of community justice; the top three statements were:

Supporting victims and witnesses of crime	72%
Recognising the impact of crime in local communities	69%
Unpaid work projects in the community	66%

The next question asked Panel members how confident they were that community justice will make a difference in Inverclyde; the responses were:

On balance, I think it should make a difference	33%
Not at all confident	33%
Slightly confident	30%
I think it will make a significant difference	4%

The last question in this section of the survey asked the Panel in what ways they are most likely to get involved in community justice in Inverclyde; the top three responses were:

• Read articles in the local media	51%
• Respond to surveys	48%
• Receive an e-newsletter	21%

Our response to your feedback

The Inverclyde Community Justice Partnership is a new arrangement that assumed its full responsibilities in April 2017. As such, the primary focus has been on establishing the Partnership and building the framework to strengthen and develop collaborative working. The results of the Citizens' Panel survey will be helpful in informing the direction and action needed to take forward the areas of communication and participation, as well as supporting their prioritisation.

In addition, the Partnership is currently undertaking a Strategic Needs Assessment and the responses from the Panel will be included in that process. One theme being considered is the ripple effect of crime, with a view to exploring this further as part of a community conversation approach.

4. Inverclyde Council's performance

The final section of the survey asked about some areas that the Council measures its performance against.

Sixty-nine per cent of Panel members said they are satisfied with the services provided by Inverclyde Council, an increase of 1% from when the question was last asked of the Panel in 2016.

More than half (55%) of respondents think the services the Council provides are good value for money, a decrease of 5% from 2016.

While more than two thirds (67%) of Panel members think that, by working together, local people can influence decisions that affect the local area, this represents a decrease of 5% since 2016.

Our response to your feedback

A number of improvement actions are being considered, with the aim of strengthening our understanding of the reasons for the decrease in the number of Panel members who feel they can influence local decision-making; for example, the facilitation of focus groups alongside the work currently taking place around the devising of Locality Plans for the three Localities in the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan 2017/22 (which sets out the outcomes that the community planning partners in Inverclyde, known as the Inverclyde Alliance, will seek to improve).