

INVERCLYDE COUNCIL CITIZENS' PANEL NEWSLETTER

AUTUMN 2015

Dear Panel Member

Welcome to the latest Citizens' Panel newsletter.

We were pleased with the response to the survey issued in Spring 2015. 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 Spring 2015 survey were:

- *child protection*
- *satisfaction with Council Services*
- *alcohol*
- *mental health and stigma*
- *Inverclyde Council's website.*

The Autumn 2015 questionnaire focuses on the Council's reputation; drugs; recycling; and dementia and stigma. We look forward to receiving your completed questionnaire.



This newsletter outlines the key results from the Spring 2015 survey and what we are doing in response to your feedback.

1. Child protection

Sixty-seven per cent of respondents said that, if they had concerns regarding the safety of a child or young person, they would report those concerns to a police officer. This is followed by 47% who would report concerns to a social worker and 17% who would contact a teacher.

Just over half (55%) of Panel members said that nothing would prevent them reporting concerns they may have about a child or young person.

Almost three quarters (72%) of respondents said they were very or fairly confident that the relevant services in Inverclyde will protect children and young people and help them if they are at risk of harm.

Seventy-four per cent of Panel members said they were very or fairly confident that the necessary action would be taken if they contacted an agency with a concern.

The Panel was then asked to consider how important a variety of factors were in protecting children and young people from abuse and neglect. The factors that the greatest number of respondents stated were very important were 'professionals sharing information with each other' (88%) and 'professionals

working together to support children and families' (79%). Panel members also thought that 'professionals providing extra support to families where a child is at risk' (78%) was an important factor. The same number (78%) saw the importance of 'listening to children and young people and taking their views into account when making decisions which affect them'.

Finally, Panel members were asked if they were aware of the Council's work to support looked after children who are at risk. Of the 42% respondents who said they were aware of this work, 67% thought young people in Inverclyde were very well looked after, with a further 18% stating they were fairly well looked after.

What are we doing with your feedback?

The findings reflect an ongoing high level of public confidence in the response of services to protect children in Inverclyde. This is particularly encouraging given the number of recent press reports on enquiries into child abuse and exploitation in other areas of the United Kingdom where the service response has been severely criticised. The Child Protection Committee has considered the Citizens' Panel responses which will inform developments in service provision and public awareness activity.

2. Alcohol

The first question asked Panel members if alcohol was an issue in their neighbourhood: more than a quarter (26%) said alcohol is not an issue at all in their area, a third (33%) said it was a minor issue and 27% said it was a major issue.

Just under half (45%) of respondents said alcohol does not cause any problems in their neighbourhood. However, where consumption of alcohol does cause problems in people's areas, the main issues are an 'increase in incidents of anti-social behaviour' (36%), 'problems associated with underage drinking' (23%) and an 'increase in drinking in public places' (17%).

When Panel members were asked who they felt has responsibility to tackle alcohol problems, the majority of people (63%) said it is individuals themselves. This was followed by 'local government - Inverclyde Council' (35%) and 'national government' (28%). Additionally, just over a quarter (26%) of respondents thought the alcohol industry should have responsibility to tackle alcohol

problems; 23% of Panel members also said that 'communities' should be involved.

The final question asked what action Panel members thought should be taken to tackle alcohol problems. More than half (57%) of respondents said there needs to be a change in attitudes towards alcohol in the west of Scotland. The same number (57%) said education in schools should be used as a way of tackling alcohol problems while 50% thought the issue of underage drinking should be looked at.

What are we doing with your feedback?

Panel members' responses provided important information on the wider community impact of alcohol misuse, together with a community perspective about how we should address and prevent problematic alcohol use.

The Inverclyde Alcohol and Drug Partnership's (ADP) Strategy

2. Alcohol (cont).

and Delivery Plan focuses on working in partnership to address the issues highlighted by the Survey responses. The ADP delivers prevention strategies within the context of meeting wider community needs associated with the impact of alcohol misuse.

Three issues highlighted by the Panel - reducing anti-social behaviour, problems associated with underage drinking and drinking in public places - are already key actions in the ADP's Delivery Plan.

3. Mental health and stigma

When Panel members were asked if they knew someone who has a mental health issue, 40% said that they did. Just over a third (36%) of people who know someone who has a mental health issue said the person had experienced stigma and discrimination because of their mental illness.

Panel members were then asked if they had heard of the national 'See Me' campaign which aims to end mental health discrimination; 34% said they had heard of the initiative. Of the people who had seen the campaign, more than a third (38%) thought it had been very or fairly effective while 15% said it was not effective or not at all effective.

Finally, Panel members were asked to describe the stigma and discrimination they were aware of, together with what action could be taken to tackle the issues. Respondents provided full and comprehensive responses to both these questions which give the Council a useful insight into the extent of the subjects.

What are we doing with your feedback?

Citizens' Panel members were asked a series of questions to establish background information on the magnitude of the problems of stigma associated with mental illness. An overwhelming response was received from Panel members. Once the responses have been further analysed, they will contribute to the future planning of, and inform the direction of travel for, the Inverclyde Anti-Stigma Partnership. This locally gathered data will also support other sources of research on this important topic.

The Inverclyde programme 'Changing Attitudes towards Alcohol' provides a comprehensive programme of awareness and education across the community and in all primary and secondary schools and forms part of community work with young people. Additionally, staff from the Healthier Inverclyde Project 'Drink Safe Inverclyde' deliver a comprehensive alcohol awareness training programme in the local area which is available to all employers and community groups.

4. Inverclyde Council's website

The first question in this part of the survey asked Panel members if they had ever visited the Council's website. Just over half (56%) said they had visited our website and 44% said they had not.

The majority of people (60%) said they had visited the website 'just once or twice' while just over a quarter (26%) said they visited it every month. A smaller number (13%) looked at the website every week while a very small number of respondents (1%) looked at it every day.

The final question asked what features or facilities Panel members would like to see on the Council's website. A large number of topics were suggested including: a breakdown of Elected Members' expenses and when and where they attend Council-related business; a 'live chat system' to get answers (to questions) there and then; more links to other websites; details of local cultural activities; more local information; names and contacts in Council Services; easier ways to update details online, for example, to pay Council Tax and report roads defects and street lighting faults; and a better search facility.

What are we doing with your feedback?

The Council re-launched its website in May 2015 and many of the observations highlighted by the Citizens' Panel fed into the project. For example, the previous website's cumbersome navigational structure has been replaced by a vastly improved search facility in the style of a 'Google' search; this option was specifically requested by Panel members.

The new website's design puts the citizen or customer first by introducing large graphical links to get to the desired top tasks very quickly. A major requirement for the site was to make it a platform for more transactional, self-service type requests and these elements will be introduced over the next few months.

5. Satisfaction with Council Services

In the final section of the survey, the Panel was asked how satisfied they were with seven Council Services. Panel members were asked to respond to this question only if they had used the Council Services in the last year. The table opposite outlines the responses.

What are we doing with your feedback?

It is pleasing to note that satisfaction with Council Services is generally high, with the majority of Services attracting a satisfaction rating of more than 80%. The exception is social care or social work services which had a lower satisfaction rating, together with a higher than average 'neither/nor' response rate; this may be because respondents had not used social care or social work services in the last year and therefore responded to the question accordingly.

Council Service	% who were satisfied or very satisfied
The McLean Museum and Art Gallery	87
Refuse collection	84
Parks and open spaces in Inverclyde	82
Local schools	81
Leisure services	81
Libraries in Inverclyde	81
Social care or social work services	64