
Report To:	Policy and Resources Committee	Date:	22 September 2015
Report By:	Angela Edwards, Head of Inclusive Education, Culture and Corporate Policy	Report No:	PR/139/15/AE/KB
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Subject:	Results from the Citizens' Panel Spring 2015 Survey		

1.0 PURPOSE

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee of the headline results from the Spring 2015 Citizens' Panel Survey and advise how Council Services will use the Panel's responses to review and improve service delivery.

2.0 SUMMARY

2.1 The Survey focused on the following topics:

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

2.2 Throughout the report, commentaries on the results, shown in italics, are included from the appropriate Council Service.

2.3 A number of significant points emerged from the Spring 2015 Survey:

- 72% of respondents said they were very or fairly confident that services in Inverclyde will protect children and young people and help them if they are at risk of harm;
- more than a quarter (26%) of respondents said alcohol is not an issue in their neighbourhood;
- 40% of Panel members said they know someone who has a mental health issue;
- 70% of respondents said it was easy or quite easy to find what they were looking for on the Council's website; and
- satisfaction with Council Services is generally high, with the majority of Services exhibiting a satisfaction rating in excess of 80%.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- a. notes the main findings from the Spring 2015 Citizens' Panel Survey; and

- b. takes account of the results when reviewing and improving service delivery, as appropriate.

Angela Edwards, Head of Inclusive Education, Culture and Corporate Policy

4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 The Citizens' Panel was established in 2007 to enable the Council to regularly consult with Inverclyde residents on a wide range of issues and to obtain feedback to improve and develop services to meet the needs of local people. The Panel comprises 1,000 local residents, with membership refreshed annually by one third.

4.2 The return rate of 64% for the Spring 2015 Survey is broadly in line with previous questionnaires.

5.0 SURVEY TOPICS, FINDINGS AND SERVICE COMMENTARIES

5.1 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. Smaller numbers of respondents said they would approach a health visitor (11%), a doctor (9%) and some other person (4%).

Just over half (55%) of Panel members said that nothing would prevent them reporting concerns they may have about a child or young person. However, the main issues that *would* prevent people from reporting a concern are 'not having enough evidence or information' (24%), 'fear of getting it wrong' (19%) and 'concerns about confidentiality being maintained' (11%).

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. A small number (8%) were not confident or not at all confident that services in Inverclyde will protect children and young people and help them if they are at risk of harm.

When asked if they thought the necessary action would be taken if they contacted an agency with a concern, 74% said they were very or fairly confident that the necessary action would be taken. Only 2% said they were not at all confident the necessary action would be taken.

Panel members were then asked to consider how important they felt 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'.

The final question in the child protection section asked if Panel members 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. A very small number (4%) thought that young people in Inverclyde were not well looked after.

Child protection - Service commentary

The Inverclyde Child Protection Committee was pleased to have the opportunity to include questions in the Citizens' Panel Spring 2015 Survey.

The findings reflect an ongoing high level of public confidence in the response of services to protect children. 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 findings of the Citizens' Panel Survey, alongside the results from Surveys undertaken in 2011 and 2013, and these findings will inform developments in service provision and public awareness activity.

5.2 Alcohol

The first question in this section of the Survey 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 NHS is the organisation that people were least likely to feel has responsibility to tackle problems associated with alcohol (19%).

The final question in the alcohol section of the Survey 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 of Panel members (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. Other ways Panel members thought alcohol problems should be tackled are by a reduction in the availability of cheap alcohol (40%) and the introduction of minimum pricing for alcohol (16%).

Alcohol - Service commentary

The Citizens' Panel Survey findings highlight areas of concern to which there is an identified need for action. In particular, Panel members' responses provide 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 and Delivery Plan focuses on working in partnership to address the issues highlighted by the Survey responses. Inverclyde has adopted a treatment and whole population approach to alcohol misuse issues. Partners work to address individuals' alcohol misuse issues through health and social care services and community recovery services. The ADP partners deliver prevention strategies within the context of meeting wider community needs associated with the impact of alcohol misuse.

Reducing anti-social behaviour, problems associated with underage drinking and drinking in public places are already key actions in the ADP's Delivery Plan and the Inverclyde Community Safety Strategy.

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, alcohol awareness work with young people through the Health and Wellbeing Survey and the follow-on '#Clyde Conversations' event provided opportunities to shape services and support in a way that meets the needs of our young people. Staff from the Healthier Inverclyde Project 'Drink Safe Inverclyde' (DSI) deliver a comprehensive alcohol awareness training programme in the local area which is available to all employers and community groups; DSI staff also attend community events and local community groups to raise awareness of choices about alcohol consumption.

5.3 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.

Of the respondents who know someone who has a mental health issue, 36% said that they have experience of supporting someone who has been subjected to stigma and discrimination around 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.

The majority of respondents (92%) said they were not aware of other campaigns or initiatives that aim to tackle mental health stigma.

The next part of the Survey asked Panel members 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 these questions which give the Council a useful insight into the extent of the subjects.

Mental health and stigma - Service commentary

A core action in the Inverclyde Health and Social Care Partnership's mental health improvement plan - 'Making Wellbeing Matter in Inverclyde' - is the re-establishment of the Inverclyde Anti-Stigma Partnership (IASP).

To establish background information on the magnitude of the problems of stigma associated with mental illness, Citizens' Panel members were asked a series of questions to elicit their views. 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 IASP. This locally gathered data will also support other sources of research on this important topic.

5.4 Inverclyde Council's website

The first question in this section 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.

When asked about the frequency of their visits to the website, the majority of people (60%) said they had visited it '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.

Panel members were then asked about their reasons for looking at the Council's website. The reasons people gave were many and varied; examples include school holiday dates; recycling information; job searching; cemetery information; to request repairs to, for example, faulty street lights; Council Tax; general update information; and using on-line library accounts.

When asked to describe their experience of using the Council's website, 70% said it was easy or quite easy to find what they were looking for. A fifth of respondents (20%) said it took some time to find what they were looking for, while 10% said it was difficult to find what they were looking for.

The final question in this section of the Survey 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 on-line, for example, to pay Council Tax and report roads defects and street lighting faults; and a better search facility.

Inverclyde Council's website - Service commentary

The Council re-launched its website in May 2015 and many of the observations highlighted by the Citizens' Panel fed into the project.

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. Additionally, 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 Council has formed an internal web team which meets regularly to oversee the continuing evolution and quality of the website's content. Encouragingly, since the website's re-launch, we have seen a 40% rise in repeat site visits.

5.5 Satisfaction with Council Services

The final section of the Survey asked Panel members how satisfied they were with seven Council Services: the McLean Museum and Art Gallery; refuse collection; parks and open spaces in Inverclyde; local schools; leisure services, for example, swimming pools, local gyms, etc; libraries in Inverclyde; and social care or social work services. Panel members were asked to respond to this question only if they had used the Council Services in the last year.

The following table outlines the 2012 responses of Panel members to this question, together with their responses in 2015:

Council Service	% who were satisfied or very satisfied		Difference
	Autumn 2012 %	Spring 2015 %	
The McLean Museum and Art Gallery	87	87	performance maintained
Refuse collection	79	84	+ 5%
Parks and open spaces in Inverclyde	70	82	+ 12%
Local schools	76	81	+ 5%
Leisure services	83	81	- 2%
Libraries in Inverclyde	87	81	- 6%
Social care or social work services	74	64	- 10%.

Satisfaction with Council Services - Service commentary

The Council is acutely aware of the importance of providing high quality services to local residents and visitors to the area, particularly with the aim of retaining and enhancing Inverclyde's population. It is therefore pleasing to note that Panel members' satisfaction with Council Services is generally high and has, in the main, improved between 2012 when the question was last asked and 2015.

The majority of Services attracted a satisfaction rating of more than 80%. The biggest increase (12%) in satisfaction was with parks and open spaces. This may reflect the Council's development of its Play Area Strategy which aims to ensure that Inverclyde's children, wherever they live, have a play area nearby.

The decrease in satisfaction with leisure services was very small (2%) while social care or social work services attracted the lowest satisfaction rating in both years. The scores for both these services may reflect the fact that respondents had not used them in the last year and therefore responded to the question accordingly.

Lastly, satisfaction with libraries fell slightly (6%) between 2012 and 2015. One reason may be the Central Library's move to smaller premises in January 2015; any possible impact on satisfaction levels will be closely monitored.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial implications - one-off costs:

Cost centre	Budget heading	Budget year	Proposed spend this report	Virement from	Other comments
n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Financial implications - annually recurring costs/(savings):

Cost centre	Budget heading	With effect from	Annual net impact	Virement from	Other comments
n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

6.2 Human Resources: There are no direct human resources implications arising from this report.

6.3 Legal: There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

6.4 Equalities: There are no direct equalities implications arising from this report.

6.5 Repopulation: Provision of Council Services which are subject to close scrutiny with the aim of delivering continuous improvement for current and potential citizens of Inverclyde support the Council's aim of retaining and enhancing the area's population.

7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 The appropriate Council Services were consulted on the development of the Spring 2015 Citizens' Panel questionnaire and the results have been disseminated to ensure that cognisance is taken of the Panel's responses when improvements to service delivery are considered.

8.0 CONCLUSION

8.1 The results of the Citizens' Panel Spring 2015 questionnaire are presented for the Committee's consideration, with the recommendation that they are taken into account when reviewing service delivery, as appropriate.

9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 None.