

The Highland Council

Community Safety, Public Engagement and Equalities Committee – 1 October 2014

Agenda Item	4
Report No	CPE 26/14

Public Performance Survey 2014: Responses to questions on Community Safety

Report by the Head of Policy and Reform

Summary

This report provides a summary of the responses from the Citizens' Panel on questions about attitudes to community safety in the 2014 Public Performance and Attitudes Survey.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Highland Council's 2014 Public Performance and Attitudes Survey (PPAS) was carried with the Citizen's Panel in the summer of 2014. The survey included a number of attitudinal questions to gather views on:
- Community safety concerns
 - Fear of crime
 - Precaution against crime; and
 - Perception of safety in the local area
- The report was analysed by the UHI Centre for Remote and Rural Studies.
- 1.2 This is the third year of reporting on a revised set of seven questions about community safety. This information will continue to form part of the evidence required for the Council to agree priorities for future local plans for police and fire services as well as the Single Outcome Agreement.
- 1.3 For the whole survey there were 1,148 usable responses providing high levels of confidence that results can be generalised to the adult population in the Highlands as a whole. Confidence in the results is high and at the 95% level and within a +/- 2.9% confidence interval. In other words, if we had surveyed everyone we could be 95% confident that the results would be within a range of +/-2.9% of those reported.
- 1.4 The results of the survey support the Council's programme 'Working together for the Highlands' under the theme of 'Working together for strong and safe communities' and specifically the commitment to 'ensure that elected members will play a full part in agreeing the priorities and local plans for police and fire and rescue services in the Highlands'. Elected members will also monitor performance against these plans' both in this committee and locally at Area Committees.

2. Key findings: Perceptions of safety in the local area

2.1 In response to the question 'how do you rate the safety of your area within 15 minutes' walk of your home?' 96.7% rated their locality as either "very" or "fairly safe"; this is slightly down on the 2013 figure of 97.8% but comparable with the results from 2012. The difference between the years is shown below.

Safety of your area within 15 minutes' walk

	2011	2012	2013	2014
A very safe area	51.3%	53.3%	58.5%	61.7%
A fairly safe area	41.6%	42.8%	39.3%	35%
Rather unsafe area	5.5%	2.9%	1.7%	2.0%
A very unsafe area	1.1%	0.7%	0.1%	1.2%

2.2 Respondents from rural wards across Highland were more likely to indicate that that they felt they lived in a 'very safe' area. The highest percentages of respondents were found in:

- East Sutherland and Edderton (84%)
- Eilean a'Cheo (83%)
- Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh (81%)
- North, West and Central Sutherland (81%)
- Black Isle (81%)
- Badenoch and Strathspey (78%)

By comparison, the lowest percentages of respondents rating the area they live in as 'very safe' were to be found in:

- Inverness Central (34%)
- Wick (35%)
- Inverness West (36%)
- Cromarty Firth (40%)

However the number of responses at Ward level is too small for the findings to be representative of views there. The most that can be inferred is that generally more people are more likely to feel very safe in rural areas.

3. Key findings: Community Safety Concerns

3.1 The top three community safety concerns remain the same for 2014 and are:

- **Road safety**, with 36% saying it was a major concern (up from 30%) and 44% reporting a minor concern.
- The second highest concern was **alcohol abuse** with 30% saying this was a major concern (up from 24%) and 39% a minor concern, the same as in 2013;
- **Anti-social behaviour** ranked third with 22% saying this was a major concern (up from 19%) and 41% reporting this as a minor concern, slightly up from last year. There is a notably higher proportion of individuals with disabilities holding this view with 75% noting a concern about anti-social behaviour.

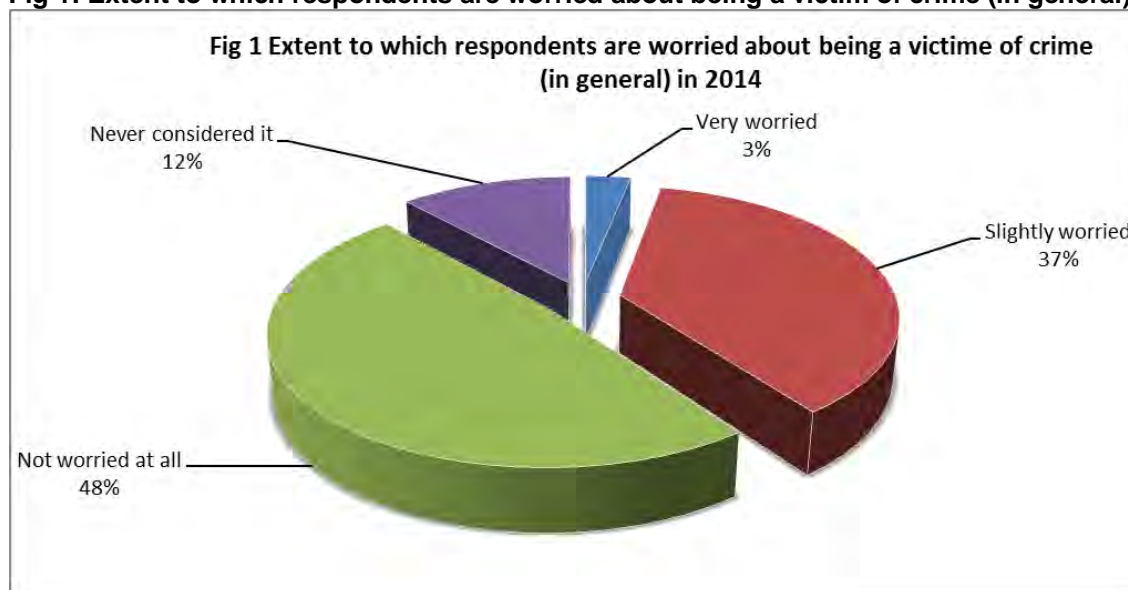
3.2 Different levels of concern were expressed by different groups in the community. For example:

- Council tenants continue to show more concern about serious and organised crime, domestic abuse, abuse of vulnerable adults and violent crime.
- People unable to work show more concern with domestic abuse, serious and organised crime and fire related antisocial behaviour.
- People with disabilities show more concern with anti-social behaviour, serious and organised crime and abuse of vulnerable adults.
- Those that have lived in the Highlands for less than 5 years showed less concern in relation to antisocial behaviour and serious and organised crime.

4. Key findings: Fear of Crime

4.1 Respondents were asked: “How worried are you about becoming a victim of crime?” The majority of the panel, 60.1% indicated they had never considered it or were not worried at all (down from 62.5% in 2013) compared to 39.9% that say they have some degree of worry (up from 37.6%); including only 3.1% saying they are very worried (see Figure 1 below).

Fig 1: Extent to which respondents are worried about being a victim of crime (in general)



4.2 There are notable differences in response according to individual characteristics:

- There is a greater level of worry found amongst disabled people with 61% saying they are worried (up from 48%) including 3% saying they are very worried (down from 5%).
- Council house tenants show more worry, with 52% worried (down from 53%) including 5% very worried.

- 4.3 Respondents were then asked about how worried they were about specific crimes. From a list of ten, there were only two identified where a majority showed some worry. The first was having their home broken into, a worry for 55% (up from 51%). The second was vandalism/deliberate damage to home property or car, a worry to 50% (down from 51%). The level of worry was highest amongst people unable to work (63%) and those who are disabled (63%).
- 4.4 A sizeable minority felt worried about having their car stolen or broken into (42%) and a minority also felt worried about being attacked by someone under the influence of alcohol (44%). Higher levels of concern were expressed by council tenants (53%), those unable to work (58%) and 16-24 year olds (59%).
- 4.5 Respondents were asked how worried they were about being the victim of being attacked, assaulted or robbed in the street. 36% said this was a worry (up from 31%). There are some variation between groups with disabled people more worried about becoming a victim (51%) and those unable to work (53%).
- 4.6 Levels of worry over being the victim of an attempted rape, or other serious sexual offence has remained the more or less the same with 12% of respondents slightly worried and a further 3% very worried (15% expressing some level of worry). Nearly all those expressing a worry are women.
- 4.7 In responding to a specific question on being a victim of domestic abuse, 5% (up from 4%) reported being worried and 1% very worried. 21% of those aged 16-24 reported that they are worried about being a victim of domestic abuse.
- 4.8 A separate question was asked about suffering discrimination or being subject to a hate incident (based on religion or belief, race or ethnic origin, mental health, physical disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or learning disability). The results of this question will be reported to the December meeting of this Committee alongside the overall report on Hate Crimes and Hate Incidents.

5. Key findings: Precautions against crime

- 5.1 Respondents were asked to select which precautions they took because of possible worries about crime. The most common precaution taken (always or sometimes) was to make sure that their home is adequately secured (92%) and to make sure their vehicle is adequately secured (90%). The percentage of respondents answering always or sometimes is shown below.

Precaution Taken	% who say they always or sometimes do this (2014)	% who say they always or sometimes do this (2013)
Make sure your home is adequately secured	92%	88%
Make sure your vehicle is adequately secured	90%	87%
Carry a mobile phone	73%	69%
Avoid certain places	59%	53%
Mark your property in case it is stolen	43%	45%
Avoid going out when it is dark	31%	27%
Avoid going out alone	29%	29%
Avoid going out at certain times	28%	26%
Take self-defence classes	6%	5%

The above and other information in this report will be shared with partners to target appropriate responses and inform the development of local plans.

6. Implications

6.1 Resources implications

There are no financial implications as a result of this survey report.

6.2 Equalities, Legal and Risk implications:

This report identifies equalities issues that highlight the requirement to consider the needs of different groups when targeting crime prevention activities and offering assurance to groups expressing higher levels of vulnerability and fear. Notable differences in responses were reported for people with disabilities, those unable to work, council house tenants and women. Without considering these needs there is a risk of failing to meet the equalities duties placed on public bodies and a failure to consider a range of evidence in agreeing the priorities and objectives for local policing and fire and rescue services. The Single Outcome Agreement has set equalities outcomes and with the partnership target to reduce the gap in fear of crime amongst people with disabilities compared to others.

6.3 Climate Change

There are no climate change implications as a result of this report, however it worth noting that around 900 members of the Citizens' Panel choose to respond to surveys electronically. This is encouraged to reduce paper and postage costs which have implications for carbon emissions as well.

6.4 Gaelic

There are no Gaelic implications.

6.5 Rural

The only rural implications are that more people in rural Wards are more likely to perceive their areas as being very safe.

7. Recommendations:

7.1 Members are asked to note that:

1. The survey shows 96.7% of respondents rated their area within 15 minutes' walk of their home as either "very" or "fairly safe"; the top three concerns continue to be road safety, alcohol abuse and anti-social behaviour; and the majority of respondents (60.1%) were either not concerned about or had not considered being a victim of crime.
2. The crimes of most worry were vandalism/deliberate damage to home property or car and having their home broken into; and making sure homes and cars are adequately secured remain the top two precautions people reported taking.
3. Notable differences in responses were reported for people with disabilities, those unable to work, council house tenants and women. This information will be shared with partners to target appropriate responses.
4. This feedback from the public is one source of evidence in agreeing and reviewing our community safety priorities.

Designation: Head of Policy and Reform

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