

The Highland Council
Communities and Partnerships Committee
10 December 2015

Agenda Item	13
Report No	CP 09/15

Annual Highland Council Survey of Performance and Attitudes: Attitudes to Prejudice and Discrimination and Equalities Analysis

Report by Head of Policy and Reform

Summary

This report updates Members on public attitudes to prejudice and discrimination in Highland. It also summarises notable differences in views in the Council's public performance survey by some equality groups. This information results from an analysis of responses to questions included in the Council's Citizen's Panel Survey 2015.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Council's 2015 Public Performance and Attitudes Survey was completed by the Citizen's Panel during the summer and the [full results](#) were reported to Council on 29 October. This report summarises the results of questions on attitudes to discrimination and prejudice, and some analysis of the differences in views between certain groups.
- 1.2 Understanding public attitudes towards equalities and diversity in Highland supports the Council's 'Fairer Highland' commitments. It also helps to demonstrate how we meet the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty in the Equality Act 2010 to give due regard to: eliminating discrimination, advancing equality and fostering good relations between groups who share the protected characteristics in the Act.
- 1.3 In keeping with previous surveys, the analysis of all the survey questions has considered if there are any differences in view among different groups in our community, namely by age, gender and disability. While we cannot have the same confidence in the robustness of the results at this level, the information does provide useful indications of differing views to consider

2 Attitudes to equality and diversity

- 2.1 Since 2011, the Council's public performance survey has included a number of attitudinal questions to gain an understanding of public attitudes towards equality and diversity. The questions are based on a number contained in the 2011 [Scottish Social Attitudes survey](#)ⁱ and therefore allows for some comparisons at national level. Generally, responses in Highland in 2011 were slightly less positive about diversity but views in Highland in subsequent years appear to have become increasingly accepting of diversity. The questions in this section ask about views to equality and diversity in relation to: prejudice, accepting communities, and diverse communities.

2.2 **Views on prejudice:** Those surveyed were asked: **“Which of the two statements comes closest to your own view?”** (Question 36)
 a) *Highland should do everything it can to get rid of all types of prejudice, or*
 b) *Sometimes there is good reason for people to be prejudiced against certain groups.*

2.3

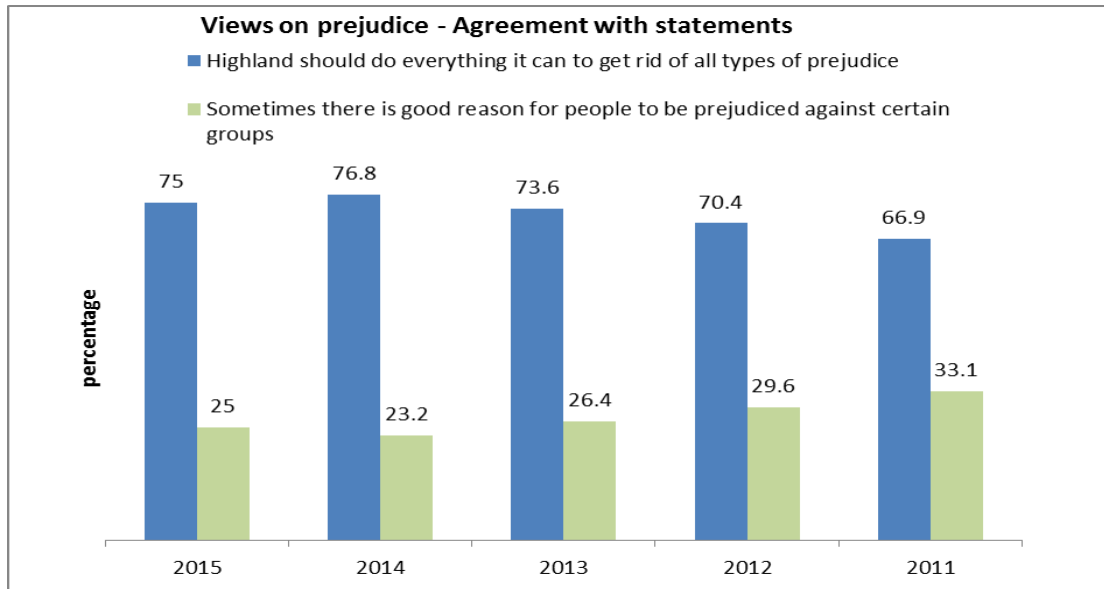


Figure 1

2.4 In response to this question, we have generally seen a steady, positive trend as shown in Figure 1. When we first asked this question in 2011, 67% of respondents to the Council survey felt that Highland should do everything it can to get rid of all types of prejudice. This compared to 72% of respondents to the same question in the Scottish Social Attitudes survey that year. In 2015, 75% respondents in Highland agreed with the statement, a slight drop from 76.8% in 2014.

2.5 The highest levels of support for the statement that *“Highland should do everything it can to get rid of all types of prejudice”* are found amongst respondents who are: women (82%) compared to men (68%) employed (81%); those aged 16-24 (81%); and students (81%).

2.6 **Accepting Communities:** In response to the question (question 32) *“To what extent do you feel your community is accepting of people coming to live here from outside the Highlands?”* results have been consistent. In 2014, 2013 and 2012, some 86% of respondents believe their communities are accepting of such people to some degree. This was 87% in 2015 as shown in figure 2.

2.7

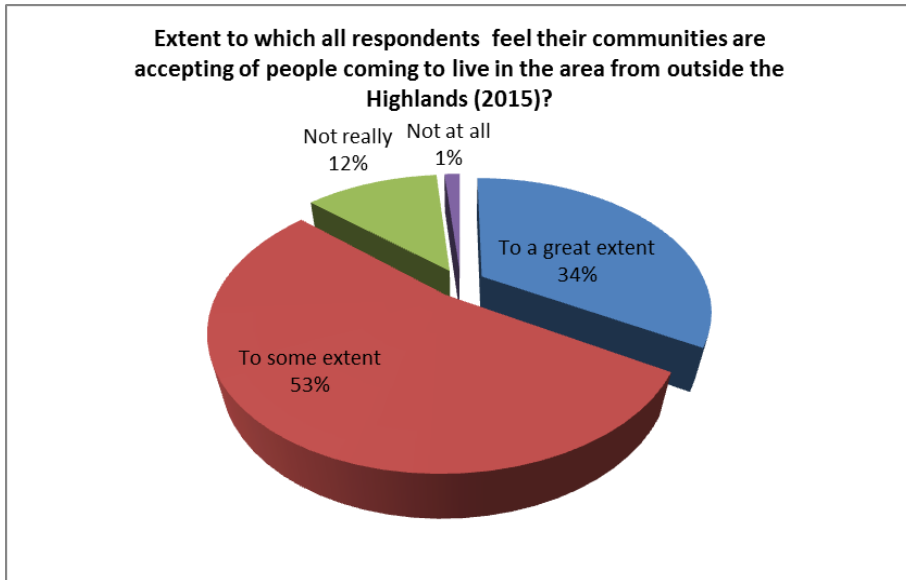


Figure 2

2.8 Diverse communities: Respondents were asked whether they would prefer to live in an area “with lots of different kinds of people”, or “where most people are similar to you” (question 37). Again the results, shown in figure 3, have been consistent in 2014, 2013 and 2012 with 52% saying they would prefer to live in an area with lots of different kinds of people; and this rose to 58% in 2015. This compares with 47% saying this in 2011 and when a majority said they would prefer to live in an area where people were similar to them.

The 2015 survey results show again that age seems to matter in the responses. Some 59% of those aged 65+ chose “where most people are similar to you”. By contrast in each of the other age groups the majority opinion was: “with lots of different kinds of people”, including 70% of those aged 25-44.

2.9

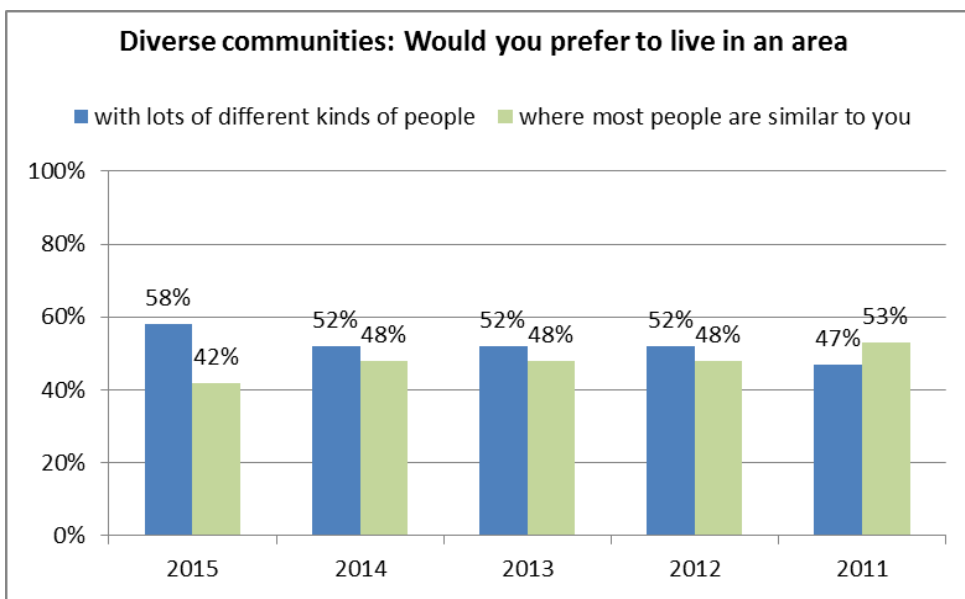


Figure 3

3 Equality analysis of the survey results:

- 3.1 Monitoring information on the breakdown of the panel by age, gender, disability and ethnicity is available. In 2015,
- Females 54.2%, Males 45.8%
 - Disability: 14 % of those who replied consider that they have a disability compared with: 11.1% in 2014; 13.5% in 2013; 13.1% in 2012; and 12.6% in 2011.
 - Age: 2.5% aged 16-24; 10.8% aged 25-44; 45.1% aged 45-64; 41.4% over 65.
 - Ethnicity: 96.4% of respondents identify as 'white'; 3.6 identify as BME with the highest proportion from 'mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups' (2.9%).

3.2 Analysis of the survey questions is undertaken by age, disability and gender, although as noted earlier, for sub-levels of information we cannot have the same confidence that the results or the survey are representative of the Highland population. However, this information provides useful indications of differing views and where further investigation may be needed. Some of the key differences are highlighted below.

3.3 **Contact with the Council:** Referring to personal visits to Council offices, respondents are asked their views about facilities for disabled people (question 6). A high proportion of all respondents (82%) in 2015 consider such facilities to be 'good' with only 2% responding 'poor' and this has been a generally improving trend. However, when the analysis of this question is carried out for only those respondents who identify themselves as disabled compared with the overall sample, a notably smaller percentage - 59% - classified these facilities as "good" while 34% said they were "average" and 7% said they were "poor". These results are demonstrated in Figure 4.

3.4

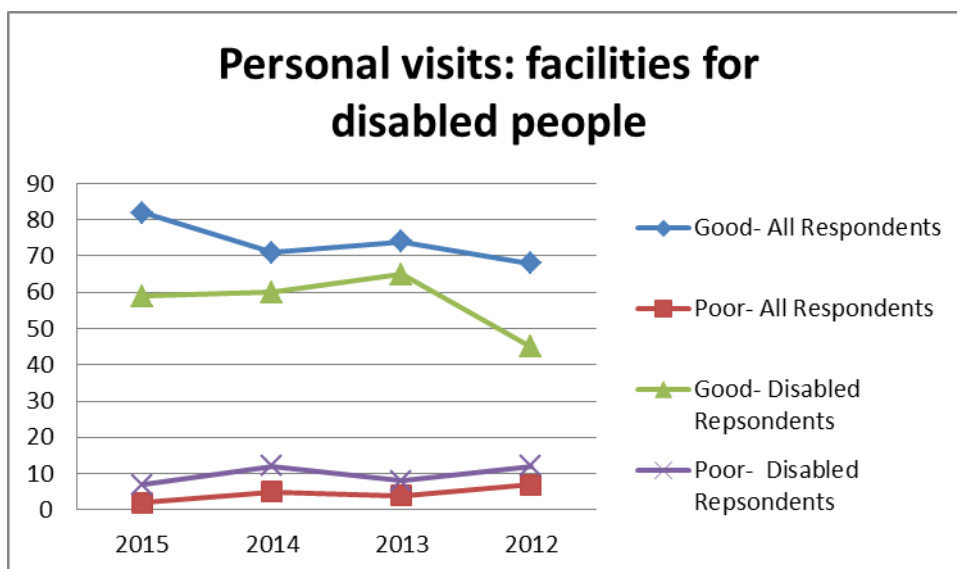


Figure 4

3.5 A net satisfaction rate for information on The Highland Council's Services is calculated for each year of the survey. The results show that the net satisfaction rate overall for 2015 is 52% - a little lower than it has been in recent surveys. However, net satisfaction rates are at their lowest amongst disabled people (41%).

3.6 Community Life – community safety: When asked about the extent of concern about anyone (including themselves) being subjected to a hate incident or a hate crime (based on religion or belief, race or ethnic origin, mental health, physical disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or learning disability) 58% said this was not a concern. The most common ground for concern was mental health (31%), followed by learning disability (29%), and then race or ethnic origin (28%).

When asked about awareness of the impact that hate incidents or crimes have on people in Highland 73.4% said they were aware with 26.6% saying they were not aware.

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). Most of those expressing a worry are women. In responding to a specific question on being a victim of domestic abuse, 2% (down from 5%) reported being worried and 1% reported being very worried.

3.7 Volunteering and Highlands Creativity: While there are no differences in volunteering by gender but there are notable differences by age. Older people are more likely to volunteer (47% of those aged 65+) compared to younger people (28% of those aged 25-44).

This year's survey asked about people's involvement in creative activities. While overall disabled people appear less likely to engage in creative activities, some 47% of respondents identifying as disabled noted that involvement in creative activities "improves my health" as a personal benefit compared with 33% of those without a disability. Some respondents noted reasons for not participating in creative activities, including:

- Some 9% cited their health as being not good enough while 6% of respondents felt that they are too old.
- While 3% of the total sample mentioned lack of access/facilities for disabled people as a barrier, some 15% of those with a disability say this is barrier to their further involvement in creative activities.

3.8 Overall satisfaction with Council Services

- It is notable that generally disabled people tend to have less positive feedback, although generally still positive overall rather than negative
- Older people, people with school age children and people living here for less than five years tend to view the Council more positively. While those aged 25-44 were more satisfied overall with Council Services (86%).
- There are a number of areas where 16-24 year old satisfaction was

lower including public transport and believing the Council treats all residents fairly.

4. Implications

- 4.1 Resources - there are no resource implications arising from this report.
- 4.2 Legal Implications – this report contributes to the Council’s work to meet the legal requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- 4.3 Equalities Implications – this report support the Council’s A Fairer Highland Plan which aims to address inequalities and discrimination. It contributes to the duty to gather and use evidence on equalities matters, and provides a number of measurable trends.
- 4.4 Climate Change/Carbon Clever – there are no known climate change implications arising from this report.
- 4.5 Risk Implications – equal opportunities is considered as part of the Council’s approach to risk management as an issue affecting all services. Failure to demonstrate that the Council meets the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty could result in legal action and reputational risk for the Council.
- 4.6 Gaelic – there are no known Gaelic implications arising from this report.
- 4.7 Rural implications – generally, there are no differences reported between views in rural and urban areas. Because the number of respondents at ward level is relatively low, any responses about people’s views at that level can only be indicative.

5 Recommendations:

5.1 Members are asked to note:

- That generally we have seen a positive trend with regard to attitudes about prejudice and diversity in Highland.
- Notable differences in responses to the Public Performance Survey were reported for some equality groups, in particular disabled people, and women, and some age groups. This information will be shared with services and partners to target appropriate responses.
- This information helps us improve our understanding of different experiences and views of different groups within the community, and identify areas for service improvement. Such evidence will support the Council’s Fairer Highland Plan and the commitment to ensure that people are treated fairly and with respect.

Designation: Head of Policy and Reform

Date: 01 December 2015

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Background Papers:

ⁱ Ormston, R., Curtice, J., McConville, S., & Reid, S., Scottish Social Attitudes Survey 2010: Attitudes to Discrimination and Positive Action, Scottish Centre for Social Research