

THE LATEST SURVEYS

Welcome to the July edition of the Angus Citizens' Panel newsletter. We are, once again, delighted with the information you provided on the latest surveys, and are pleased to be able to tell you about some of the actions we are taking as a result. We also have some news about the follow up to a survey that was done some time ago, on action we are taking to deal with unwanted doorstep sellers.

Below you will find a summary of results from the latest surveys and details of the two new surveys we are asking you to help us with. We have not included full results of the last surveys because of the length, but you can get them from www.angus.gov.uk/panel or by calling 01307 473762.

SEXUAL HEALTH AND RELATIONSHIPS

It may have passed you by, but NHS Tayside are busy trying to gather views on their draft plan on Sexual Health and Relationships, which sets out a number of proposals to improve the sexual health of the people of Tayside. To help them out, and help you to have your say on this important issue, we have agreed to pass on their consultation leaflet to you. Just fill in the blanks and return it to us and we'll pass it on to them, saving postage in the process!

HOUSING IN LATER LIFE

Angus Council is also keen to find out how best to meet the needs and aspirations for housing in retirement and later life. Work is also being done with tenants and some other groups but the council is keen to make sure that the views of the public are heard. Again, please fill in the survey and pop it back to us in the envelope provided. This survey is also available to

complete on the web at www.angus.gov.uk/panel.

UNDERAGE PURCHASING

We are delighted with the results we got back from this survey, confirming our view that you want us to deal with this issue firmly. They also gave us a clear idea of what we should be tackling as a priority, namely, alcohol, cigarettes, adult material, air rifles and fireworks.

These priorities reflect two main concerns, one about the health of young people and the other about the disruption that can be caused.

In terms of disruption, you are particularly concerned about alcohol, and also by fireworks, air rifles, glue and lighter fuel, and spray paint. Nearly all of you have seen young people causing disruption because of alcohol, are concerned about young people using it, and think that alcohol is responsible for crimes or disruptive behaviour.

You are also worried about the impact of alcohol on health, moreso than for cigarettes, glue and lighter fuel, and fireworks, which also bother you. These are also all things that you think are too easily available to young people.

The unfortunate thing, from our point of view, is that although more than a quarter of you have seen young people buying these things, and nearly 80% know you can report it, under 10% have got in touch with Trading Standards.

This is one of the issues your feedback, and recent changes in the law, will help us to deal with. Knowing that few of you report these things we are going to use young people to test purchase cigarettes, fireworks, spray-paints, glue and adult videos. This will go hand in hand

**WE HAVE READ ALL YOUR COMMENTS AND PASSED THEM TO THE RELEVANT PEOPLE.
WHEN YOU HAVE GIVEN CONTACT DETAILS THEY WILL BE GETTING BACK TO YOU WITH
SPECIFIC FEEDBACK!**

with continuing efforts by Tayside Police to tackle underage drinking, which is their area of responsibility.

As well as this initiative, discussions are underway with retailers to develop a voluntary scheme based around the proof of age cards that over four-fifths of you support.

DOORSTOPPERS

We are also delighted to be able to tell you about another initiative that has been informed by the views of the Angus Citizens' Panel: Doorstoppers. You might remember that, in 2003, a survey asked your views on this issue and you told us exactly what you thought of the problem.

Well, Trading Standards and Tayside Police have been developing the Doorstoppers campaign to crack down on the nuisance of doorstep sellers and the crimes that some commit. There have already been some successes saving consumers thousands of pounds that they would otherwise have lost.

MAKING CHILDREN SAFER

Your feedback on the information you need about child protection has also been extremely useful, though it will take time to use it to improve communication. And your priorities are clear, with number one being someone to speak to, followed by publicity materials, and then information on the internet.

We also discovered that, if you were concerned about a child, you were most likely to approach the police, with around two-thirds stating that you would do so. Between 30% and 50% of you said you would also talk to teachers, social workers, friends, or a doctor. This highlights the fact that we need to get the right information out there, to help you know exactly where to go and what to do when you need help.

The final point we picked up is that you want information to be easily available from a number of places, particularly GP's surgeries, schools,

and libraries, and that you would also appreciate information through your letterbox.

LIBRARY SURVEY

Unlike the other surveys, the library survey was more about seeing what you think, rather than looking at proposed changes, and we were very pleased with the results. Nearly half of you had used a library in the last month and less than a fifth have not used one in the last year. This compares very well with how often you buy books and how often you rent music or films from somewhere else.

This ties in with the fact that more of you have read a book borrowed from a library than have read a book you have bought or received. But you don't just use the library for books, you also use the catalogue, reference service, non-fiction books, archives and the staff themselves to gain information. Many of you also use the library for learning or research; as a hobby, for your work, or for family history.

We are also interested in why people do not use the library and how we could improve the service. Again it is nice to know that it is mainly because people prefer to do something else rather than because they think the service is poor. Having said that we also noted the things that you say would improve the service, including better customer facilities and being able to use other council services in a library.

FUTURE SURVEYS

As we mentioned in the last newsletter our aim is to provide short surveys, more regularly. We're pleased that we've been able to turnaround surveys quickly and intend to continue this approach in future. In fact, in order to do this, we have decided to scrap our summer break!

You may also be interested to know that we have now fully switched to the cheaper envelopes some of you suggested. We are now using smaller second class envelopes for all return mailings.

WE HAVE READ ALL YOUR COMMENTS AND PASSED THEM TO THE RELEVANT PEOPLE. WHEN YOU HAVE GIVEN CONTACT DETAILS THEY WILL BE GETTING BACK TO YOU WITH SPECIFIC FEEDBACK!