

Life in Lancashire Wave 1



Objectives:

1. Investigate panel members attitudes towards the Police.
2. Investigate panel members knowledge of Social Services.
3. Find out how people would prefer to contact Social Services and when they would prefer to contact Social Services.

Methodology: mailed to all 1,699 panel members, with a response rate of 86% (1,427 questionnaires were returned).

Conducted by: RBA Research

Fieldwork: 26/07/01 to 24/07/01

Summary Results

The Police

Contact with Police

Just under half (47%) say they have had contact with the police in the last year. By district, Pendle (56%) and Rossendale (57%) have higher levels of contact with the police.

There is a higher level of recent contact amongst those who have a more negative view of the police overall (61%). The data suggests that having recent experience tends to, if anything, make people less favourably disposed to the police, with the exception that they are less likely to think the police are racist.

Visibility of Officers

Just under half (45%) say they never see a police officer on the beat. Just over a fifth (22%) say they see a police officer on the beat at least once a month, and one in ten (10%) at least once a week.

Almost nine out of ten (89%) say the frequency with which they see a police officer on the beat is not enough, including 97% of those with a negative view overall of the police in Lancashire.

A similar proportion (87%) say that seeing a police officer on the beat makes them feel safer, with half (49%) saying it makes them feel *much* safer. Those who are more likely to say that seeing an officer makes them feel safer include older panel members, women and those with a disability.

Attitudes Towards the Police

Six out of ten (61%) agree that '*on the whole, the police in Lancashire do a good job*'; 13% disagree. Those more likely to agree include women, older panel members and people living in rural areas. There is a higher level of agreement

amongst panel members living in Ribble Valley, Wyre, Lancaster, Chorley and West Lancashire.

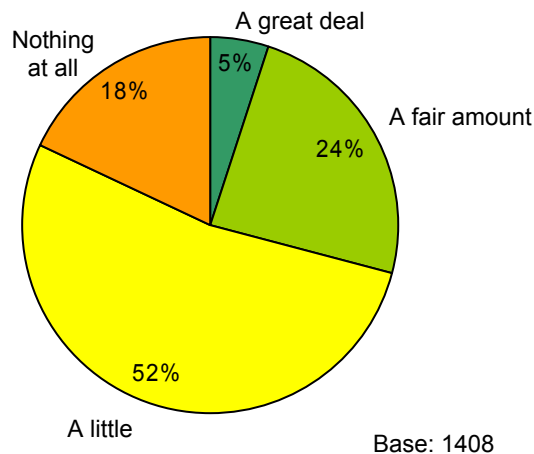
Those who have had contact with the police in Lancashire in the past 12 months are more likely to *disagree* that the police do a good job (17%), than those who have not had recent contact (10%). This negative attitude is reflected in the responses of this group of respondents to most other attitude statements about the police.

Social Services

Knowledge/Awareness

Four in five (80%) say they know something about the work of Social Services. Almost one fifth (18%) say they know nothing.

Knowledge of the Work of Social Services



Given three scenarios where Social Services would be a valid first point of contact, panel members see Social Services as more relevant as a first point of call in some situations than in others.

In the case of an elderly neighbour who had not been seen for several days, more (77%) would contact the police in the first instance (9% say they would first contact Social Services in this situation).

If a friend with a mental health problem was not coping, one in three (32%) say they would go first to Social Services. The first contact for 34% would be a nurse or professional carer (34%), and almost a fifth (18%) say they would contact a GP or family doctor.

In the case of a child in danger of potential abuse, almost three out of ten (29%) say they would contact Social Services first, and just under third to the NSPCC or Childline. One in four (26%) would, in the first instance, go to the police.

Contact with Social Services

Almost nine out of ten panel members (86%) would telephone Social Services direct during office hours. Just 4% would visit an office, and the rest would telephone various places to ask how to contact Social Services.

Out-of-hours, just over half (55%) would telephone Social Services direct. These are proportionally more likely to be those who have a good knowledge of Social Services, have had previous contact, and/or are ABC1 households. One in five (19%) would telephone the police, and one in nine (11%) would telephone the NHS Direct helpline.

One in four panel members (24%) say they have contacted Social Services in the past three years, either for themselves or on behalf of someone else. Of these, more than nine out of ten (93%) say they made contact during office hours. A quarter (25%) considered their situation to be an emergency. Six out of ten (59%) spoke to someone straight away; 84% of these were satisfied with the outcome – almost half (49%) very satisfied.

Access to Social Services

In a *non-emergency* situation, over a third (36%) of panel members say they have no preference about when would be a convenient time to contact Social Services. Of those who do have a preference, weekend mornings or weekday evenings are considered convenient for most, followed by weekend afternoons.

In an *emergency* situation, eight out of ten (81%) feel that access should be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Lancashire Record Office

One in three panel members (35%) don't think they will need to use the Records Office in the next three years.

Of those who potentially have a need, the most popular role would be in researching family history (30%). One in four (26%) say they may visit the website (including 45% of those with access to the internet).

Over half (56%) say they were aware of the Lancashire Record Office prior to taking part in this survey – proportionally more ABC1s and single parents. Four out of ten (40%) say they had never heard of the Record Office.

Almost one in seven (15%) say they were previously aware of the document deposit facility. Just 2% say they are likely to use it in the next three years, and almost four out of ten (38%) say they may do.

One in sixteen (6%) say they have used the Lancashire Record Office in the past three years – of the people who used the Record Office 67% visited the office, and 33% telephoned. Two in five of these (42%) were researching family history. Among those who have made contact in the past 12 months, nine out of ten (91%)

say the Record Office was able to help them, and 85% say they were happy with the outcome.