SCOTTISH POLICE
AUTHORITY
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POLICE
SCOTLAND
Keeping people safe
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Community Confidence Action Research – Under 16 Views – Levenmouth

Introduction

Between the 20th February and 15th March, the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) and Police Scotland ran a survey across seven local schools in Levenmouth to gain views on policing from those under the age of 16 as part of the Community Confidence Action Research Project.

Schools were invited to take part and contribute towards the design of the questions. A range of questions were made available on paper and via the SPA's Citizen Space platform (with the paper questions simplified in case needed for younger age groups). It was at the discretion of schools on how these questions were made available to pupils e.g. one school completed via paper copies. In total 212 responses were received and of these 207 provided consent and were analysed for this report.

As well as questions on consent and location in Levenmouth, questions related to what they would do if they had a general worry/problem (Q4), who they would contact if they were in danger (Q5), if they felt the police would help them if they were in danger (Q6), why they had chosen their answers to the previous questions (Q7) and what they would like to see the police focus on in the area (Q8).

This paper outlines the key findings of these questions. SPA officers analysed quantitative responses in Microsoft Excel and reviewed qualitative responses for key themes. It should be noted that due to the non-representative nature of the sample the findings of these questions cannot be generalised to the entire Levenmouth population.

Question 2: In which area is your main location/residence in Levenmouth?

Where main location/residence were provided 34% (n=70) of the 207 respondents were from Ward 22 (Buckhaven, Methil, Methilhill, Wemyss Villages), whilst 61% (n=127) were from Ward 21 (Leven, Kennoway and Windygates, Lundin Links and Largo).
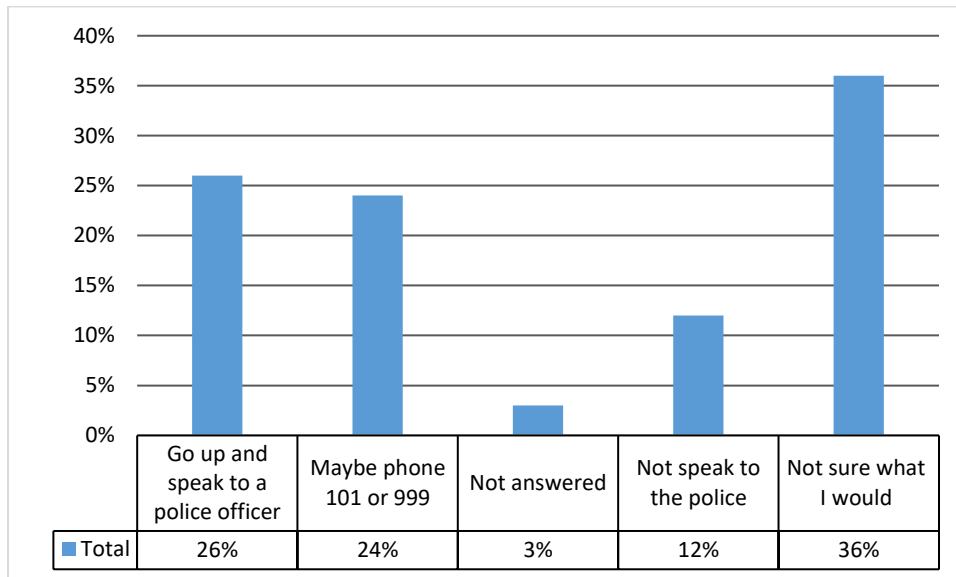
Question 4: If I had a general worry or problem outside of school I would...

Figure 1 shows that 36% (n=74) of pupils would not be sure what they would do if they had a general worry or problem outside of school. This is followed by 26% (n=53) who said they would go up and speak to a police officer, 24%

(n=50) who would maybe phone 101 or 999 and 12% (n=25) who would not speak to the police.

Of the 25 who would not speak to the police, two felt too scared of the police to be comfortable speaking to them, whilst six would contact a parent first. Of these six pupils, two of them thought their worries wouldn't be an important issue for a police officer to deal with.

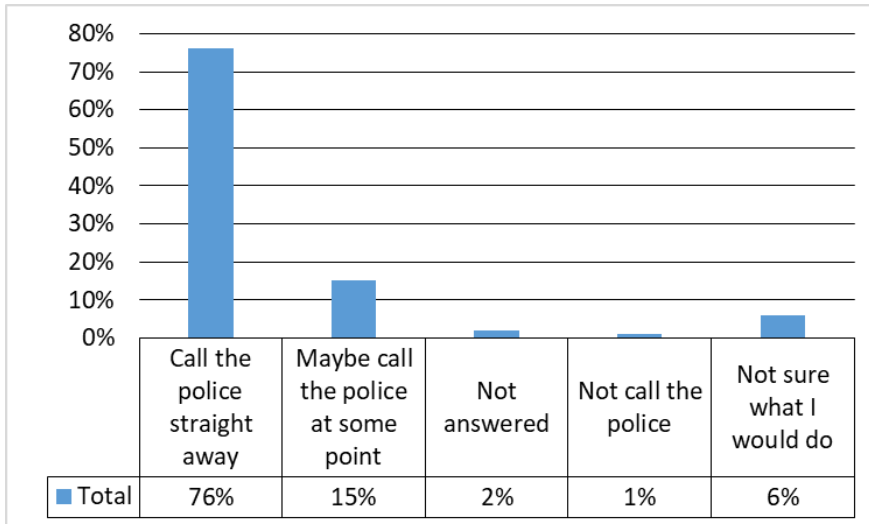**Figure 1: If I had a general worry or problem outside of school I would… (n=207)**

	Go up and speak to a police officer	Maybe phone 101 or 999	Not answered	Not speak to the police	Not sure what I would
■ Total	26%	24%	3%	12%	36%

Question 5: If I was in danger and needed help, I would…

Figure 2 shows that the majority of pupils (76%, n=157) would call the police straight away if they were in danger and needed help. 15% (n=30) would maybe call the police at some point, 6% were not sure what they would do (n=13), and 1% (n=3) would not call the police.

Of the three who would not call the police, one noted in Question 5 they would call their parent first.

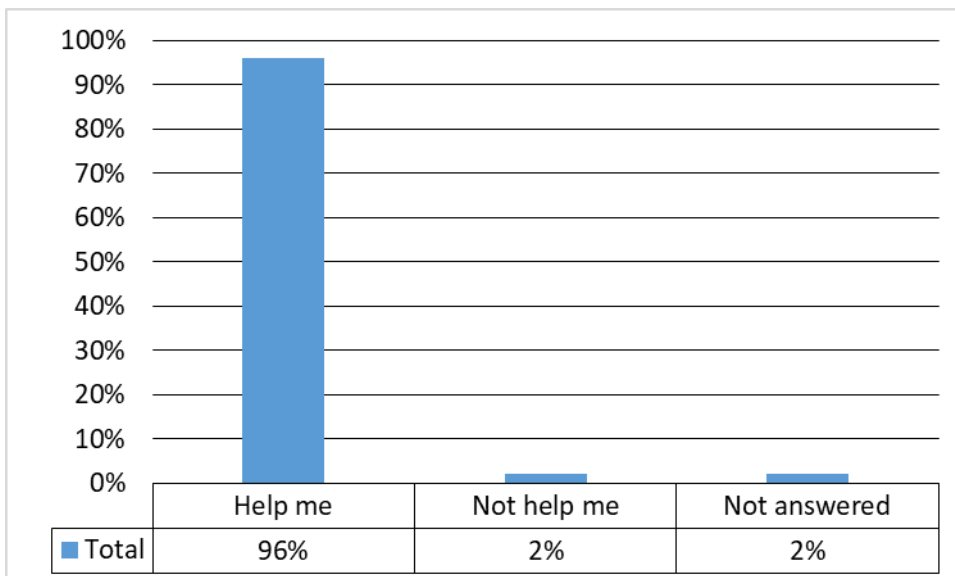**Figure 2: If I was in danger and needed help, I would… (n=207)**

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	Call the police straight away	Maybe call the police at some point	Not answered	Not call the police	Not sure what I would do
■ Total	76%	15%	2%	1%	6%

Question 6: If I was in danger and needed help, I think the police would...

Figure 3 shows that if they were in danger and needed help, the majority of pupils thought the police would help them (96%, n=198).

Of the 5 (2%) who selected "Not help me", one comment in Question 5 related to having 'heard lots of stories where people called the police for help and they mainly didn't do anything'.

Figure 3: If I was in danger and needed help, I think the police would... (n=207)

	Help me	Not help me	Not answered
■ Total	96%	2%	2%

Question 7: Thinking about your answers above, can you tell us why you chose these options?

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For Question 5, when asked to reflect on their answers to the previous questions and comment on why they chose these options, 169 pupils left comments.

These largely related to believing the police could/would help, it was the right/smart thing to do and feeling they were safe/would keep them safe. Some comments recognised that that pupils may not contact the police if they didn't think the situation warranted it.

One noted that the police are reliable and noted that the officer at their school is approachable.

Question 8: What would you like to see the police focus on in Levenmouth?

In total 158 comments were received for Question 6 which asked what they would like to see the police focus on in Levenmouth.

Many included focusing on anti-social behaviour (e.g. fighting, starting fires, and bullying), drugs in school (e.g. cannabis, under-age use of vape pens), and vandalism. There was some mention of preventing and solving crimes, greater police patrol visibility, and a desire for engagement in schools (e.g. visiting schools and showing pupils how to be and keep safe, including internet safety).

There were also comments about reducing litter in the area, the safety of wildlife, and sexism.

Conclusion

Overall, the majority pupils who responded appeared to view policing positively. In terms of what pupils felt police should focus on or what would make them feel happier about the police, there is a desire for having more engagement in schools. There was also mention of keeping people safe and references to anti-social behaviour (e.g. fighting, starting fires, and bullying), drugs in school (e.g. cannabis, under-age use of vape pens), and vandalism.