



Community Confidence Action Research – Letham Evaluation

Executive Summary

This report summarises the findings of the evaluation in Letham as part of the Scottish Police Authority and Police Scotland's [Community Confidence Action Research Project](#).

Using a range of data (such as Scottish Government statistics) Letham was identified as an area for this project. Since August 2022, we have conducted a survey gathering views on confidence in policing in Letham in Autumn and held a number of events over Spring 2023 to gather ideas on how confidence in policing could be enhanced in the local area.

In Spring/early Summer 2023 local policing in Perth and Kinross implemented a range of initiatives based on this community feedback. These included introducing named community officers, hosting pop up events, developing links with local organisations, promoting the Police Scotland Youth Volunteers, and creating a presentation giving an overview of policing.

To evaluate the initiatives a three-pronged approach has been taken:

- A survey with those 16 and over mirroring one conducted in Sept-Nov 2022;
- Questions with children in a local primary school mirroring questions from January 2023; and
- Conversations with community representatives

It should be noted that due to small sample sizes and the non-representative nature of the samples the findings of these surveys cannot be generalised to the entire Letham population and should be considered indicative only.

Key findings:

16 and Over Survey

- The majority of respondents were unaware of initiatives undertaken by local policing.
- Overall, rates of confidence and trust decreased between Sept-Nov 2022 and July/August 2023. This is similar to the downward trend in confidence documented in [SPA national polling](#) between July 2022 and 2023.
- Those who were aware of at least one initiative tended to have high confidence and trust in policing and felt local police were doing a 'very good/somewhat good job'.

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- Those who were not aware of any initiatives tended to have low confidence and trust in policing and felt local police were doing a 'somewhat poor/very poor job'.
- While a higher proportion still feel Letham has a sense of community, there was a decrease in those who 'strongly agreed/agreed' and an increase in those who 'disagreed/strongly disagreed' between Sept-Nov 2022 and July/August 2023.
- Comments on Letham largely centred around anti-social behaviour, crime and drug dealing along with some mention of fears of safety and police visibility.

Under 16 Survey

- The majority of pupils who responded appeared to view policing positively with little variation from January 2023.
- It appears there has been limited awareness of initiatives that have been implemented in Letham with the main things noticed over the year groups being officers at events/the school and seeing more police cars.

Community Group Input

- The project has given a greater understanding of policing.
- Greater communication was suggested along with ideas for fostering community relationships (e.g. hot desks in community).
- The Community Police Officers were viewed positively, but concerns were raised about availability impacting benefit (e.g. pulled away for response) and nature of short-term trial.
- The PPCW outreach officer was viewed as an asset.

Community Confidence Action Research – Letham Evaluation

Introduction

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Community Confidence Action Research – Letham Evaluation Survey 16 and Over

To gain insights into the impact of Police Scotland's initiatives in Letham from those aged 16 and over, the Scottish Police Authority and Police Scotland designed a survey to gather views on these initiatives and views on confidence in policing (mirroring the questions asked in [Sept-Nov 2022](#)). Hosted on the Scottish Police Authority's Citizen Space site, the survey contained 15 questions and ran from 3rd July 2023 and 20th August 2023. In total 27 responses were received.

Table 1 shows that the majority of respondents lived in the Letham area (70%, n=19). The highest proportion of respondents were aged 35-44 (41%, n=11) and the lowest aged 16-24 and 65+ (both 4%, n=1). The sample is predominantly female at 59% (n=16), and the majority had no contact with police in the six months prior to survey (56%, n=15). It should be noted however that in comparison to the survey in Sept-Nov 2022, a higher proportion had had contact – 44% (n=12) in July/August 2023 compared to 14% (n=8) in Sept-Nov 2022.

Table 1: Sample demographics (n=27)

Reason for being in/visiting Letham?		
I have family/friends in the area	2	7%
I live in the area	19	70%
I work in the area	3	11%
Other	3	11%
Age		
16-24	1	4%
25-34	4	15%
35-44	11	41%
45-54	7	26%
55-64	2	7%
65+	1	4%
Prefer not to say	1	4%
Gender		
Female	16	59%
Male	10	37%
Prefer not to say	1	4%
Contact with police - 6 months		
No	15	56%
Yes	12	44%

Awareness of Initiatives

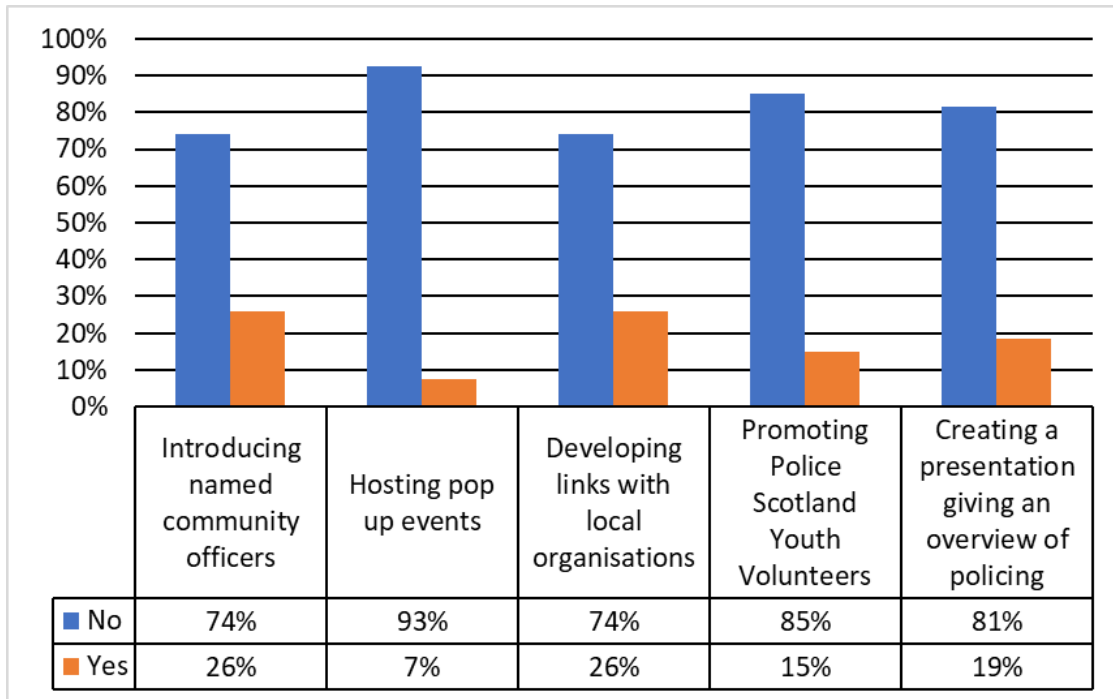
Figure 1 shows that the majority of respondents were unaware of the initiatives put in place by local policing. In total 17 respondents (63%) were not aware of any initiatives, whereas 10 (37%) were aware of at least one.

Respondents were more likely to be familiar with the introduction of named community officers and developing links with local organisations (both 26%, n=7).

When asked to give their views on initiatives if they had been aware of them, five responses were received. Two noted officers came into their office and two that they were made aware via local community groups. One also noted it was a “very professional police force” that was “good with the youngsters”.

If respondents were not aware of the initiatives, they were asked as to how they could be made aware in future. In total 19 comments were received, with 16 containing suggestions. There were seven suggestions for physical media (e.g. leaflets through doors, posters in shops etc.) and one also noted “door to door conversations”. Five comments mentioned social media, with three specifically referencing Facebook. Three comments mentioned presence/visibility (e.g. “actually seeing a police officer”, “more cops on the beat” etc.). One mentioned using the “Letham website” to publicise events, one mentioned working with community groups, and one mentioned working with local schools.

Figure 1: Based on feedback from the community earlier in this project, Police Scotland have recently implemented initiatives to try and enhance confidence in policing in Letham. Have you noticed any of these initiatives in the area in the last few months? (n=27)



Confidence in Policing

In terms of confidence in police in the local area, over the range of indicators a higher proportion of respondents scored 'Low' across all indicators – see **Figure 2**:

- General (56%, n=15)
- Responding quickly (52%, n=14)
- Tackling crime (59%, n=16)
- Preventing crime (67%, n=18)
- Tackling anti-social behaviour (67%, n=18)
- Keeping your area safe (59%, n=16)
- Being there when you need them (56%, n=15)
- Providing an appropriate and timely response (59%, n=16)

Comparatively, in Sept-Nov 2022, shows the following indicators were rated as 'Medium' by a higher proportion of respondents – with all others being rated 'low'.

- Providing an appropriate and timely response
- Being there when you need them
- General

A larger proportion of respondents selected 'low' in July/August 2023 compared to those who selected 'low' in Sept-Nov 2022. However, for 'responding quickly', 'tackling anti-social behaviour', 'keeping your area safe', 'being there when you

need them’, and ‘providing an appropriate and timely response’, a higher proportion selected ‘high’ in July/August 2023 than in Sept-Nov 2022. A similar downward trend in feelings of confidence in policing has been documented in the [SPA national polling](#) between July 2022 and 2023.

However, **Figure 3** shows a higher proportion of those who were aware of at least one of the initiatives scored ‘high’ for all initiatives except ‘Preventing crime’ where there was an even split between ‘low’ and ‘high’. This is in comparison to those who were not aware of any initiative scoring ‘low’ across all indicators – see **Figure 4**.

While it is not possible to tell if these factors are linked due to small sample sizes, it does suggest that awareness of initiatives could be linked to increased confidence in policing.

Figure 2: How much confidence do you have in the police in your local area (0-10, where 0 is ‘No confidence at all’ and 10 is ‘complete confidence’) – July/August 2023 - n=27; Sept-Nov 22 – n=57

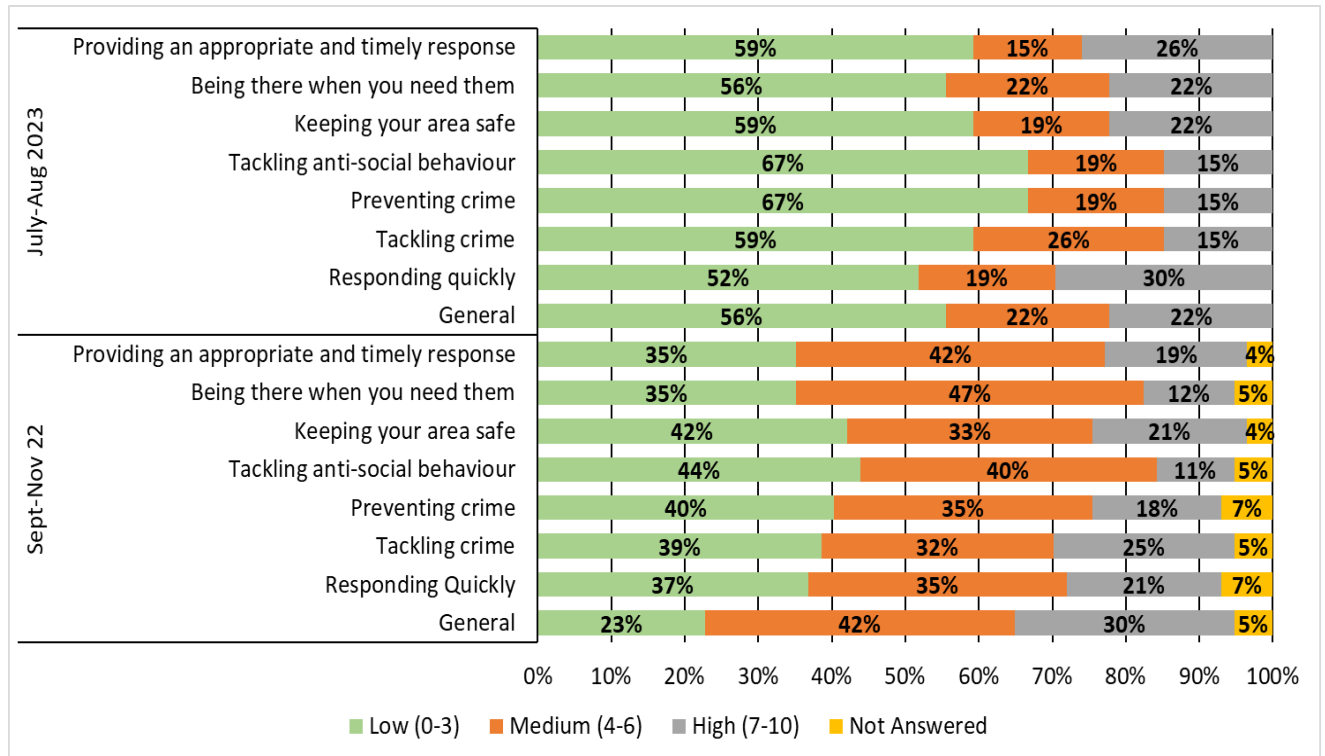


Figure 3: How much confidence do you have in the police in your local area (0-10, where 0 is 'No confidence at all' and 10 is 'complete confidence') – July/August 2023 – Awareness of one or more initiatives (n=10).

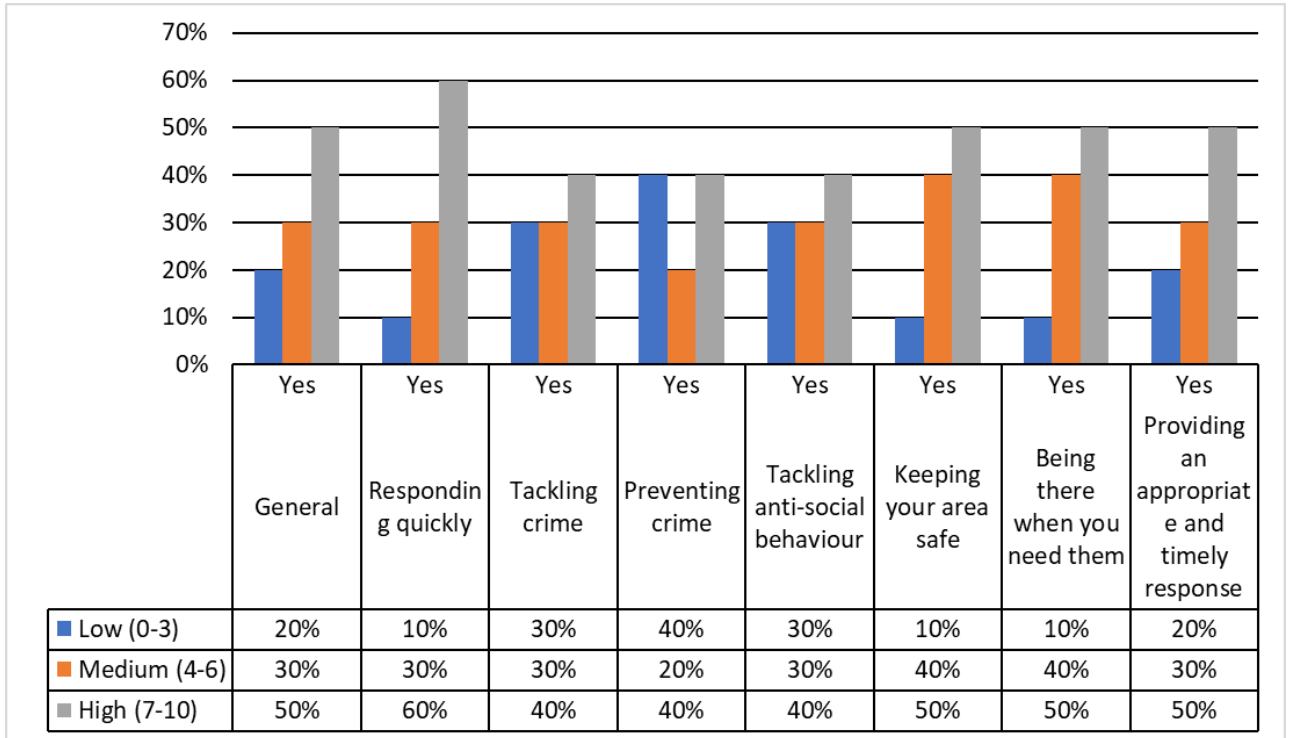
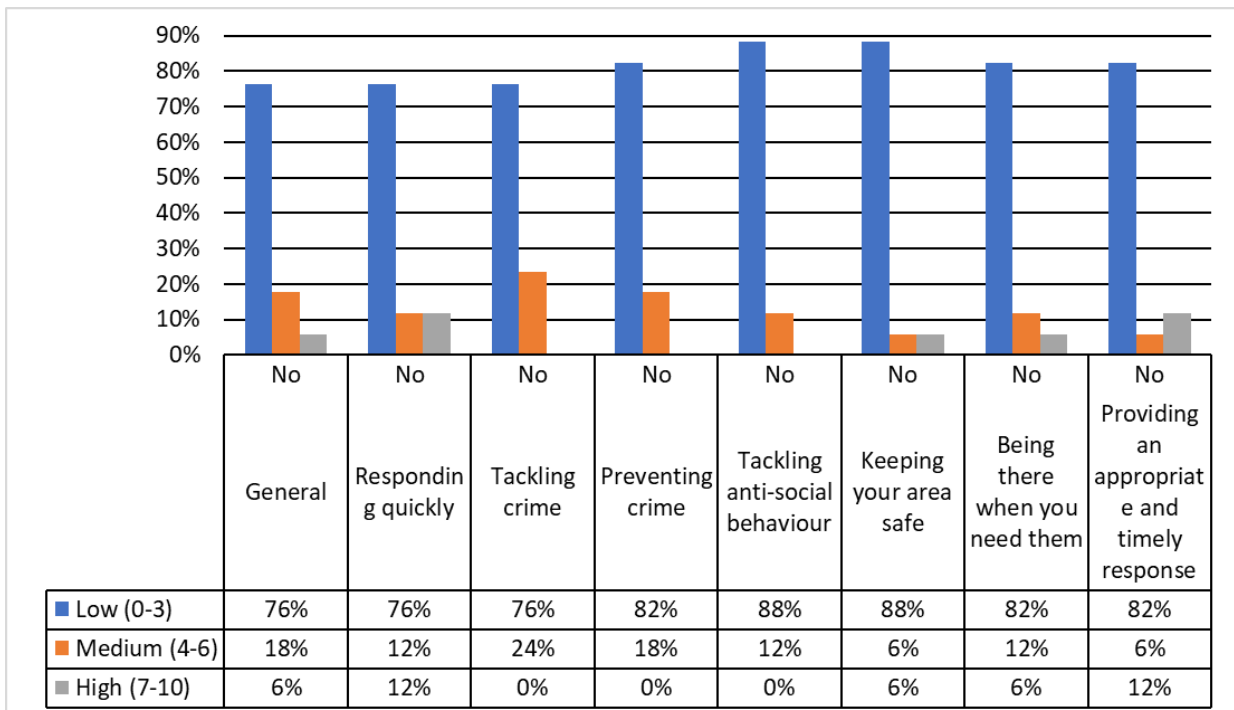


Figure 4: How much confidence do you have in the police in your local area (0-10, where 0 is 'No confidence at all' and 10 is 'complete confidence') – July/August 2023 – No awareness of initiatives (n=17).



Trust in Policing

Figure 5 shows that the highest proportion of respondents across all categories scored 'low'. This is lower than Sept-Nov 2022 where the highest proportion scored 'medium'. However, for all except 'to care about people like you', the second most common response was 'high' – when 'high' was the least common response in Sept-Nov 2022 for all indicators except 'In general'. A similar downward trend in feelings of trust in policing has been documented in the [SPA national polling](#) between July 2022 and 2023.

However, **Figure 6** shows a higher proportion of those who were aware of at least one of the initiatives scored 'high' for all indicators. This is in comparison to those who were not aware of any initiative scoring 'low' across all indicators – see **Figure 7**.

Again, while it is not possible to tell if these factors are linked due to small sample sizes, it does suggest that awareness of initiatives could be linked to increased trust in policing.

Figure 5: How much trust do you have in the police in your local area (0-10, where 0 is 'Do not trust at all' and 10 is 'Trust completely') - July/August 2023 - n=27; Sept-Nov 22 - n=57

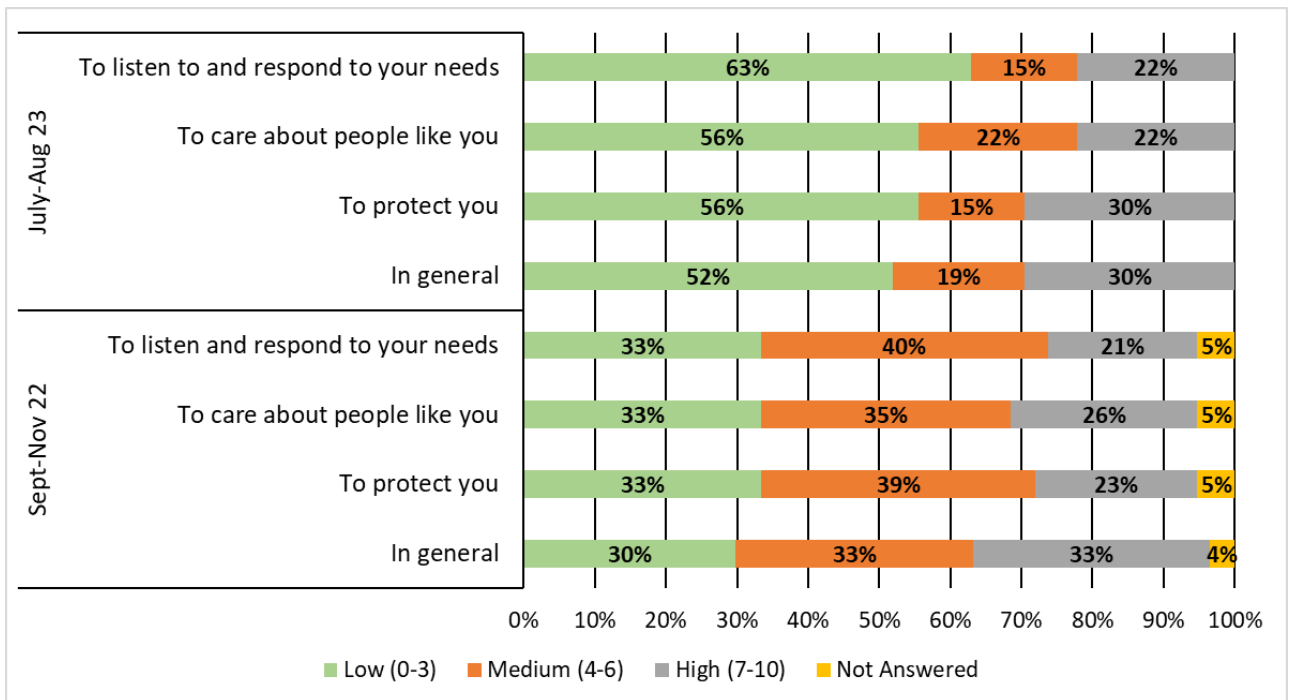


Figure 6: How much trust do you have in the police in your local area (0-10, where 0 is 'Do not trust at all' and 10 is 'Trust completely') - July/August 2023 - Awareness of one or more initiatives (n=10)

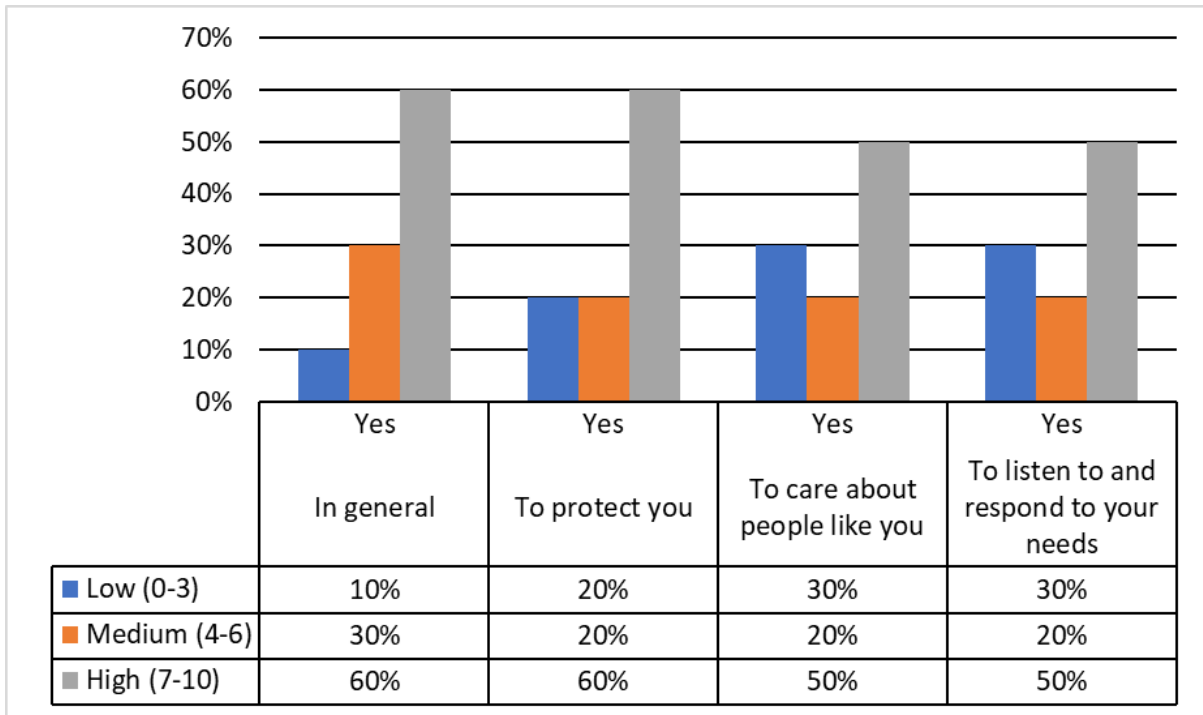
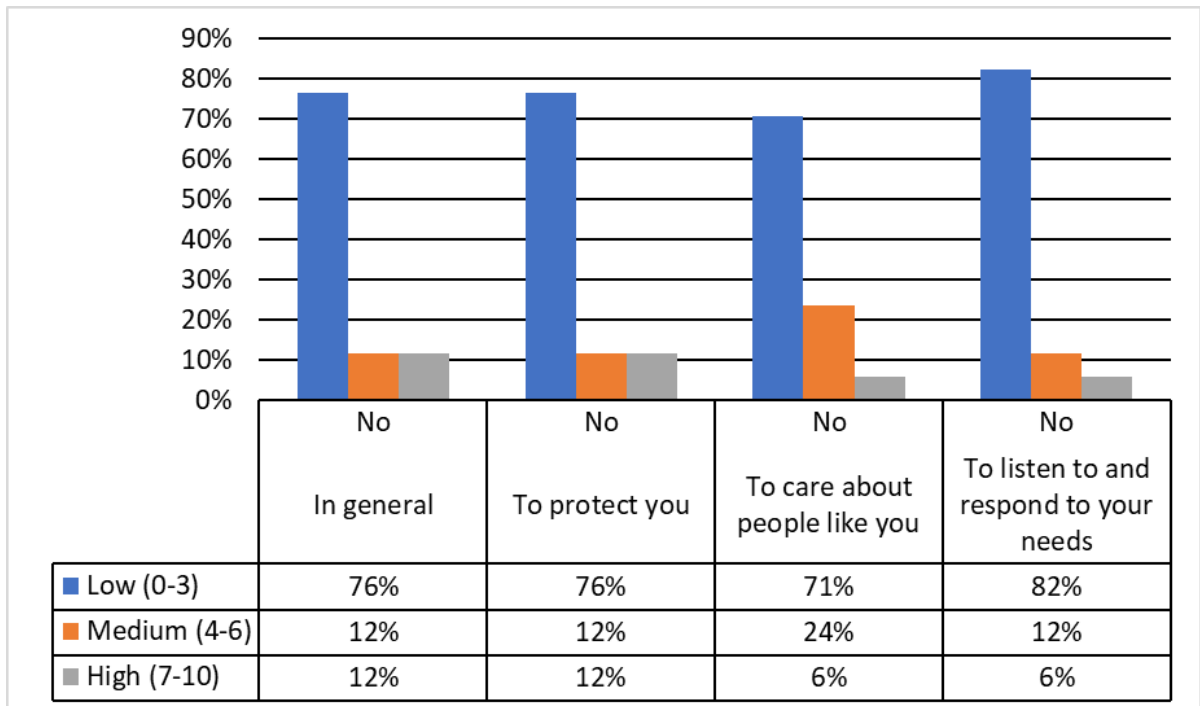


Figure 7: How much trust do you have in the police in your local area (0-10, where 0 is 'Do not trust at all' and 10 is 'Trust completely') - July/August 2023 - No awareness of initiatives (n=17)



Performance

Regarding the performance of police in their local area, the highest proportion of respondents selected 'somewhat poor/very poor job' across all scenarios – see **Figure 8**. In comparison, in Sept-Nov 2022, a higher proportion of respondents selected 'neither a good nor poor job'.

However, as with the confidence and trust questions, respondents who were aware of initiatives were more likely to view policing performance more positively than those who were unaware. **Figure 9** shows that a higher proportion of respondents who were aware of one or more initiatives felt police in their local area were doing a 'very good/somewhat good job' across all indicators. Comparatively, **Figure 10** shows that the majority of those who were unaware of initiatives felt that police were doing a 'somewhat poor/very poor job' across all indicators.

Again, while it is not possible to tell if these factors are linked due to small sample sizes, it does suggest that awareness of initiatives could be linked to increased positivity in the performance of local policing.

Figure 8: How good or poor a job do you think the police in your local area are doing at the moment in the following regards? – July/August 2023 - n=27; Sept-Nov 22 – n=57



Figure 9: How good or poor a job do you think the police in your local area are doing at the moment in the following regards? – July/August 2022 - Awareness of one or more initiatives (n=10)

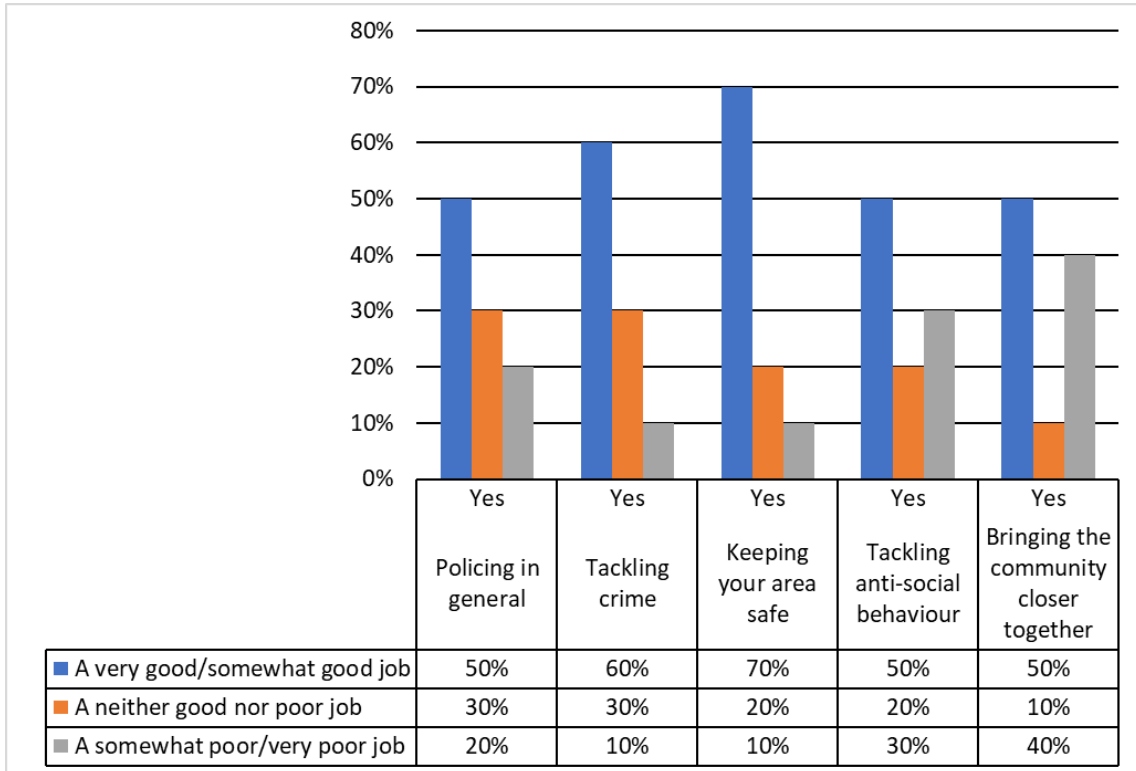
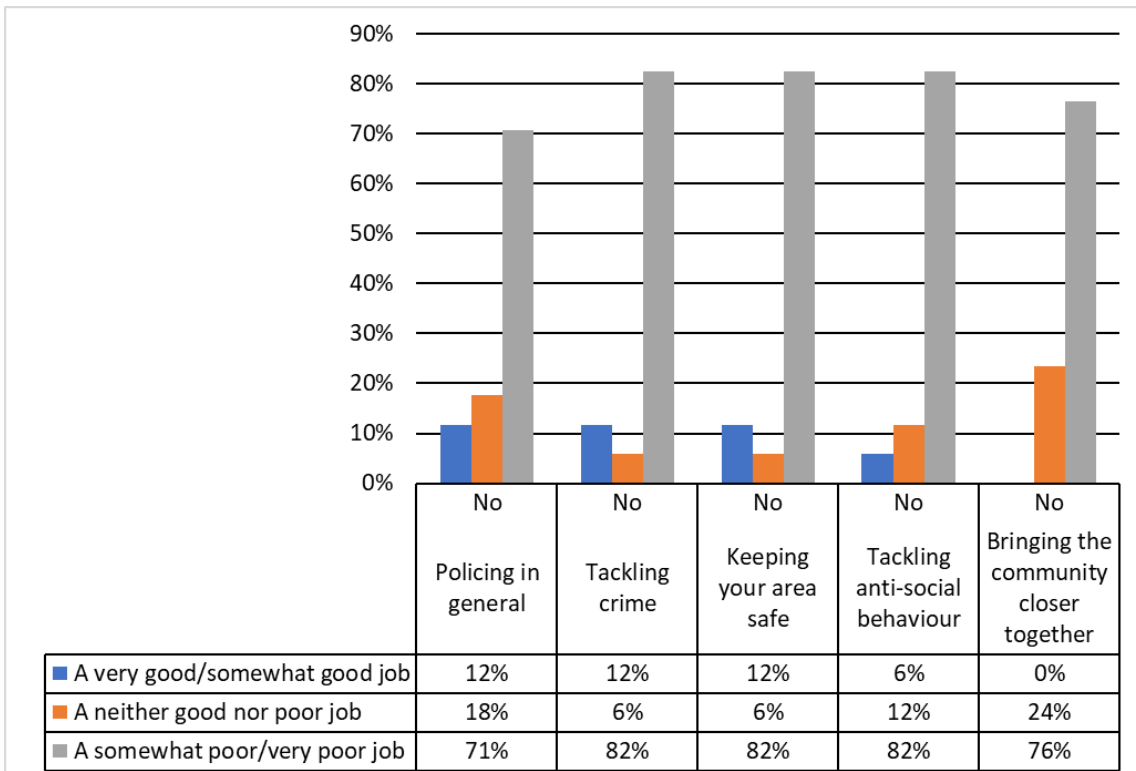


Figure 10: How good or poor a job do you think the police in your local area are doing at the moment in the following regards? – July/August 2022 - No awareness of initiatives (n=17)



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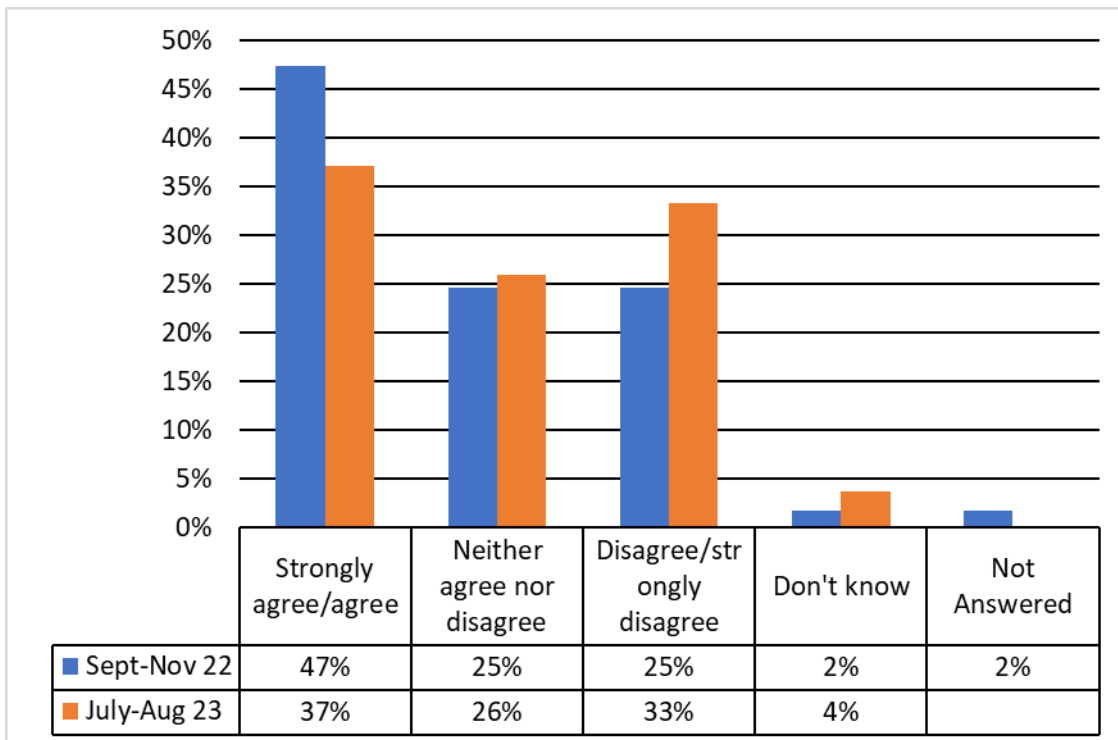
Figure 11 shows that a higher proportion of respondents strongly agreed/agreed that Letham has a sense of community (37%, n=10). However, this is closely followed by 33% (n=9) who disagree/strongly disagree.

The proportion of people who strongly agree/agree Letham has a sense of community has decreased since Sept-Nov 2022 and the proportion of those who strongly disagree/disagree have increased.

When asked on their general thoughts and feelings of Letham, 22 comments were received. These largely related to anti-social behaviour (e.g. “undesirable people walking the streets shouting and swearing”, “there is a lot of poverty in Letham, which results in a lot of anti-social behaviour”, fighting etc.), feelings of lots of crime (“crime is rife”) and drug dealing. There were also some mention of fears of safety and some comments on lack of police visibility – with one noting they felt there was more visible policing “back in the Tayside Police days”. A respondent also noted they felt that more joint police/council working practices would be helpful e.g. “a police social visit to residents to ask them about their concerns”.

One respondent noted they felt a Community Council for the area was needed, along with “fostering a sense of pride in surroundings and speaking out against bad, criminal and antisocial behaviour. 'What's the point in complaining-itis' is endemic.”. Another felt that the community group Letham4All was helping with a sense of community.

Figure 11: Do you agree that Letham has a sense of community? – July/August 2023 - n=27; Sept-Nov 22 - n=57



General Comments

In total, 10 comments were received when respondents were asked if they had any comments on the topics raised within the survey. Of these three mentioned police visibility, with one stating "More police = less crime. It really is that simple!", one wanting more police on the street and another stating no visibility (and also noting drug use). Another respondent also noted issues in the area including drug use, anti-social behaviour and drunken behaviour, and two comments mentioned issues around parking and speeding.

Two comments referred to lack of police engagement after contacting, and one a lack of trust in reporting an incident as they "didn't trust they'd arrive or provide a proportional response if they did". However, one mentioned seeing police officers at a local primary school café.

Conclusions and Key Findings

While the majority of respondents were unaware of the initiatives put in place by local policing, it is clear that those who were aware had high levels of confidence and trust in policing and felt local police were doing a very good/somewhat good job. While it is not possible to ascertain if there is a direct link between awareness of initiatives and higher confidence/trust due to small sample sizes, the low levels of confidence/trust and views of poor performance noted by those who were not aware suggests there could be a connection. To raise awareness of initiatives in future, respondents' suggestions included physical media, social media and working with local organisations.

Without taking into account awareness of initiatives, there was a decrease in confidence, trust and local police performance between the Sept-Nov 2022 and July/August 2023 surveys. However, this mirrors national trends, with a notable decrease in levels of confidence and trust documented in the Authority's [national polling](#) between July 2022 and July 2023.

Regarding sense of community, similar decreases were observed with those saying 'strongly agree/agree' falling by about 10 percentage points between Sept-Nov 2022 and July/August 2023. Comments largely centred around anti-social behaviour, crime and drug dealing along with some mention of fears of safety and police visibility.

Comments about police visibility/engagement, anti-social behaviour, substance use, parking and speeding were also made when respondents were asked on comments on topics raised within the survey.

Community Confidence Action Research – Letham Evaluation Survey Under 16

Introduction

Between the 30th August and 9th September 2023, the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) and Police Scotland ran a survey in a local primary school in Letham to gain views on policing from those under the age of 16 as part of the evaluation

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of the Community Confidence Action Research Project after receiving approval from Perth and Kinross Council.

Working with the primary school to design the approach, questions were made available via the SPA's Citizen Space platform to those in Primary 4 to Primary 7 and in total there were 36 respondents who consented to answer the questions. These questions related to what they would do if they had a general worry/problem (Q2), who they would contact if they were in danger (Q3), if they felt the police would help them if they were in danger (Q4), why they had chosen their answers to the previous questions (Q5) and if they had noticed any of the initiatives put in place by Police Scotland and if so what they had noticed (Q6).

Teachers for Primary 2 to Primary 3 also asked questions of their pupils relating to how they feel about the police and if they had noticed any new things police had been doing in Letham – given Primary 1 would not have been involved in the original survey it was decided to only ask the questions of Primary 2 and 3. It was up to each teacher how they introduced these questions to their classes and in total 60 Primary 2 to Primary 3 pupils were happy to take part. SPA staff received summaries of the responses for each year group.

Primary 2 to 3

Teachers were given a set of questions asking how pupils felt about the police (with a happy, neutral and sad) face options, along with if they had noticed any new things police had been doing in Letham.

Pupils in Primary 2 and 3 generally felt happy about the police (mirroring the results in January 2023).

Pupils noted they noticed police in supermarkets, at events (e.g. school BBQ where they got to investigate a police van, an event in the fire station, at Pride etc.), visiting classes and a café in the school, driving past in Letham and in town, talking to people, conducting speed checks, being present in town, and helping with incidents/people.

Primary 4 to 7

Q2: If I had a general worry or problem outside of school I would...

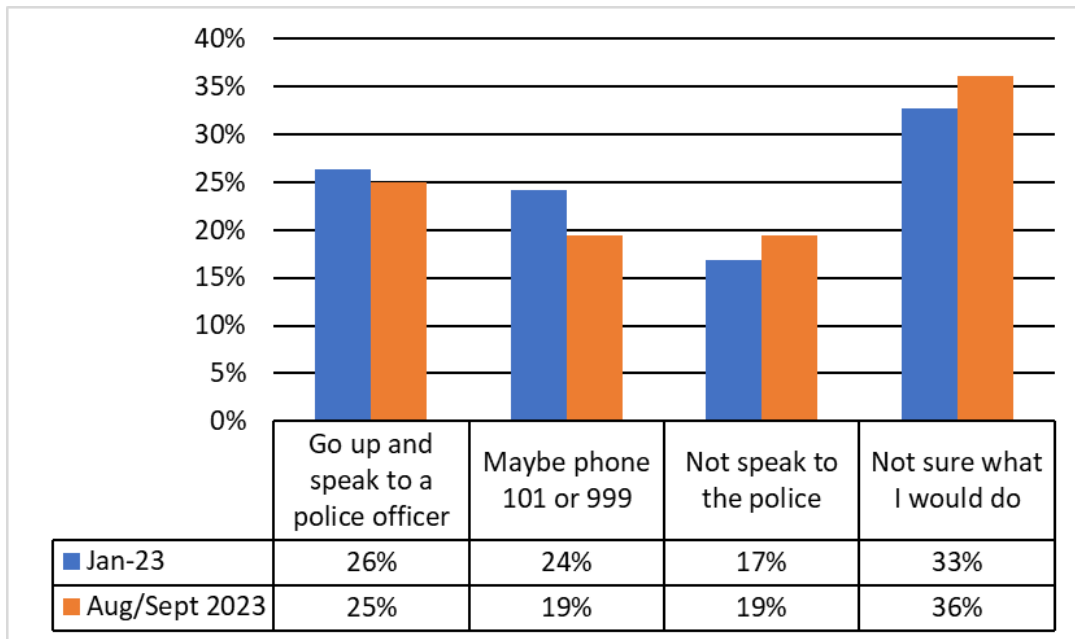
Figure 12 shows that results were broadly similar between January 2023 and August/September 2023 as to actions pupils would take if they had a problem or worry outside of school. In both January 2023 and August/September 2023 a higher proportion of pupils would not be sure of what they would do followed by those who would 'go up and speak to a police officer'. In August/September 2023 there was an equal split of those who would 'maybe phone 101 or 999' and 'not speak to the police' – whereas in January 2023 a higher proportion would maybe phone 101 or 999.

Of the 19% (n=7) in August/September 2023 who would not speak to the police, three would call the police straight away if they were in danger and

needed help, one would maybe call the police, two were not sure what they would do, and one would not call the police (all except this respondent felt the police would help them if they were in danger).

This varies from January 2023 as of the 17% (n=16) who would not speak to the police, all thought they would either call the police straight away or maybe at some point if they were in danger and needed help, and all but one thought they would help them if they were in danger.

Figure 12: If I had a general worry or problem outside of school I would... (Jan 23 – n=95, Aug/Sept 2023 – n=36)

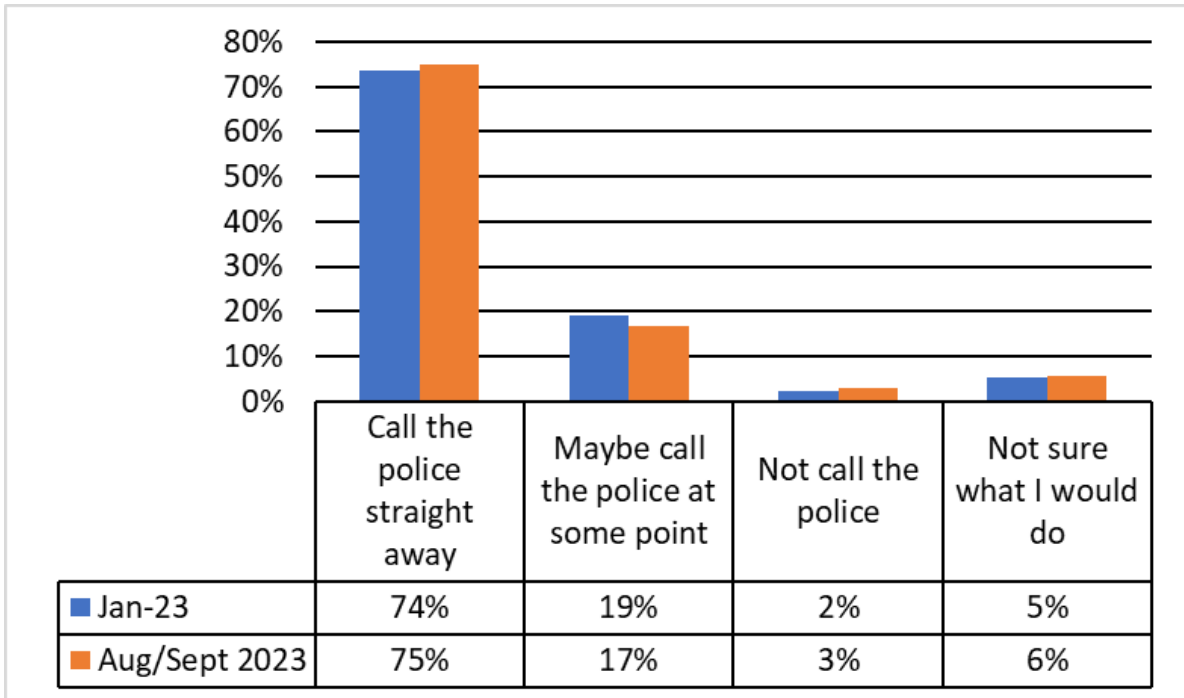


Q3: If I was in danger and needed help, I would...

Figure 13 shows that results were broadly similar between January 2023 and August/September 2023 as to actions pupils would take if they were in danger and needed help. In both January 2023 and August/September 2023 the majority of pupils would call the police straight away. This was followed by those who would maybe call the police at some point.

Only a minority were not sure what they would do (n=5 in January 2023 and n=2 in August/September 2023) or would not call the police (n=2 in January 2023 and n=1 in August/September 2023).

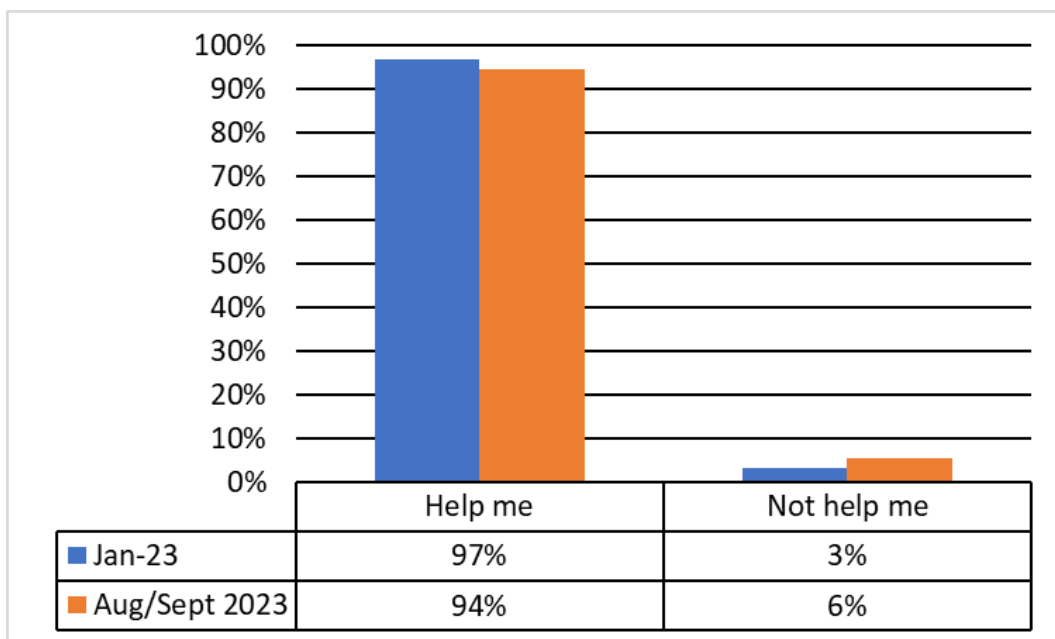
Figure 13: If I was in danger and needed help, I would... (Jan 23 – n=95, Aug/Sept 2023 – n=36)



Q4: If I was in danger and needed help, I think the police would...

Figure 14 again shows that results were broadly similar between January 2023 and August/September 2023 as whether pupils felt police would help them if they were in danger and needed help. In both January 2023 and August/September 2023 the majority of pupils felt the police would help them.

Figure 14: If I was in danger and needed help, I think the police would... (Jan 23 – n=95, Aug/Sept 2023 – n=36)



Q5: Thinking about your answers above, can you tell us why you chose these options?

For Question 5, when asked to reflect on their answers to the previous questions and comment on why they chose these options, 31 pupils left comments.

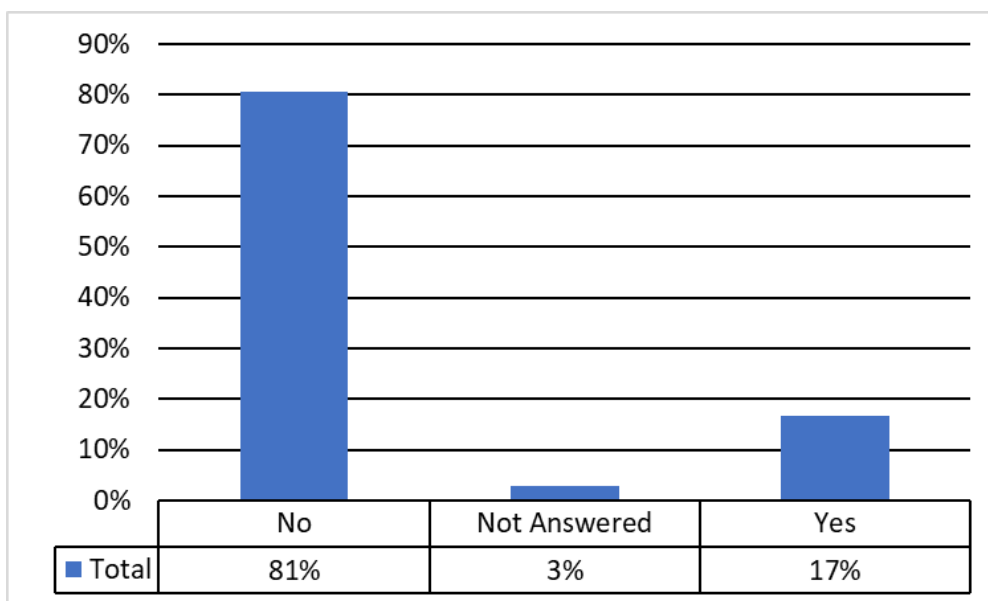
Comments largely related to how they believed the police would help them (e.g. help as it is their job, they would know to call police for help, or they have previously been helped etc.).

Other comments related to police keeping them safe/to stay safe, knowing police were safe people, and that their choices were sensible. Two noted it depended on the circumstances (e.g. would call police if it was “really bad” and if they were in school they would not need to call the police).

Q6: Have you noticed new things that the police have been doing in Letham in the last few months?

Figure 15 shows that the majority of pupils (81%, n=29) were unaware of any of the initiatives that Police Scotland had put in place in Letham. 17% (n=6) had noticed some new things, and one (3%) did not answer.

Figure 15: Have you noticed new things that the police have been doing in Letham in the last few months? (n=36)



If pupils selected ‘Yes’ they were asked to comment on what they had noticed. In total 10 comments were received, six from those who selected ‘Yes’ and four from those who selected ‘No’.

Of those who selected ‘Yes’, comments included noting they had seen some police cars down their street, noticed more police cars around and “less fights”, there had been “some officers patrolling events or festivals”, and that they are helping more people/reacting faster.

Of those who selected 'No', one comment noted they had seen more police cars going about. Others said they had not noticed as they did not live in Letham or they had not been aware of anything.

Conclusion

Overall, the majority of pupils who responded appeared to view policing positively with little variation from January 2023. However, it appears there was limited awareness of initiatives that had been implemented in Letham with the main things noticed over the classes being officers at events/the school and seeing more police cars.

Conversations with Community Representatives

From July to early September 2023, SPA staff had conversations with representatives from community groups in person, via email, or on MS Teams to gather feedback on the project. In total we spoke with four representatives from four different community groups.

Overall, the project was received positively and summarised feedback includes:

- It was noted by one that the project allowed a greater understanding of policing and the structures within it.
- The community officers were viewed positively, however, we received feedback on them being pulled away for response which was felt to reduce the benefit (e.g. unable to attend meetings, events etc.). The PPCW outreach officer was also viewed as an asset.
- There was concern about the community officers being a short-term trial that ends and a noted lack of clarity on whether tests could be kept in place post project. It was also queried whether commitments would be delivered the way they had been intended.
- Greater communication to the community was suggested (both from local policing and on the outcomes of the project). One noted information on how surveys are acted upon would help communities know they are being listened to. Another noted communication on what happens when 999/101 is called and the decision process that leads to deployment/lack of deployment would be helpful – noting confidence levels can be impacted by perceived inaction.
- Hot desks in local community venues were also suggested as a way to foster community relationships.
- Regarding some of the low numbers regarding attendance at events, surveys etc. it was noted this was also an issue for local organisations and not unique to this project.