

Community Confidence Action Research – Levenmouth Evaluation

Executive Summary

This report summarises the findings of the evaluation in Levenmouth 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) Levenmouth was identified as an area for this project. Since February 2023, we have conducted a survey gathering views on confidence in policing in Levenmouth in Winter 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 Summer/early Autumn 2023 local policing in Levenmouth implemented a range of initiatives based on this community feedback. These included increasing community officer engagement, hosting pop up events, supervisors "walking the beat", holding a Quarterly Public Forum, creating a presentation giving an overview of policing, creating community leaflets/newsletter, revising social media approach, and promoting communications via Improving Levenmouth Together (ILT).

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

- A survey with those 16 and over mirroring one conducted in Feb-Mar 2023;
- Questions with children in local primary schools mirroring questions from February 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 Levenmouth population and should be considered indicative only.

Key findings:

16 and Over Survey

- The majority of respondents didn't notice any of the initiatives undertaken by local policing.
- Overall, the rate of trust increased between Feb-Mar 2023 and Nov-Dec 2023. Rates of confidence recorded during this period remained 'low'.
- 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'.
- A higher proportion feel Levenmouth does have a sense of community. There was an increase in those who 'strongly agreed/agreed' and 'disagreed'/strongly disagreed' between Feb-Mar 2023 and Nov-Dec 2023.
- Comments on Levenmouth largely centred around anti-social behaviour, with some mention of police response times, police visibility, drugs, and a lack of police funding.

Under 16 Survey

- The under 16 survey was distributed to the local secondary school in Levenmouth.
- No responses were received for the under 16 survey. It is, therefore, not possible to determine if any changes in responses occurred compared to the previous survey from Feb-Mar 2023.

Community Group Input

- The project was positively received in the community and by partners.
- Members of the ILT found that the initiatives put in place had a positive impact on the local community.
- The ILT have worked closely with the police in a range of areas which have contributed to community cohesion post-COVID.
- Concerns have been raised around the non-engagement with young people in the community and increases in anti-social behaviour, and in ensuring that a stable local community inspector team remains in place to continue their positive work.

Community Confidence Action Research – Levenmouth Evaluation

Introduction

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Community Confidence Action Research – Levenmouth Evaluation Survey 16 and Over

To gain insights into the impact of Police Scotland's initiatives in Levenmouth 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 [Feb-Mar 2023](#)). Hosted on the Scottish Police Authority's Citizen Space site, the survey contained 16 questions and ran from 13th November 2023 and 27th December 2023. In total 43 responses were received.

Table 1 shows that the majority of respondents lived in the Levenmouth area (74%, n=32). The highest proportion of respondents were aged 35-44 and 45-54 (both 19%, n=8) and the lowest aged 65+ (9%, n=4). The sample is predominantly female at 63% (n=27), and the majority had contact with police in the six months prior to survey (58%, n=25).

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54% (n=23) of respondents were from Ward 22 (Buckhaven, Methil, Methilhill, Wemyss Villages), whilst 44% (n=19) of respondents were from Ward 21 (Leven, Kennoway and Windygates, Lundin Links and Largos). 2% of respondents (n=1) selected 'Other'.

Table 1: Sample demographics (n=43)

Reason for being in/visiting Levenmouth?		
I have family/friends in the area	1	2%
I live in the area	32	74%
I work in the area	6	14%
Other	4	9%
Age		
16-24	5	12%
25-34	6	14%
35-44	8	19%
45-54	8	19%
55-64	7	16%
65+	4	9%
Prefer not to say	5	11%
Gender		
Female	27	63%
Male	14	32%
Prefer not to say	2	5%
Contact with police - 6 months		
No	18	42%
Yes	25	58%

Awareness of Initiatives

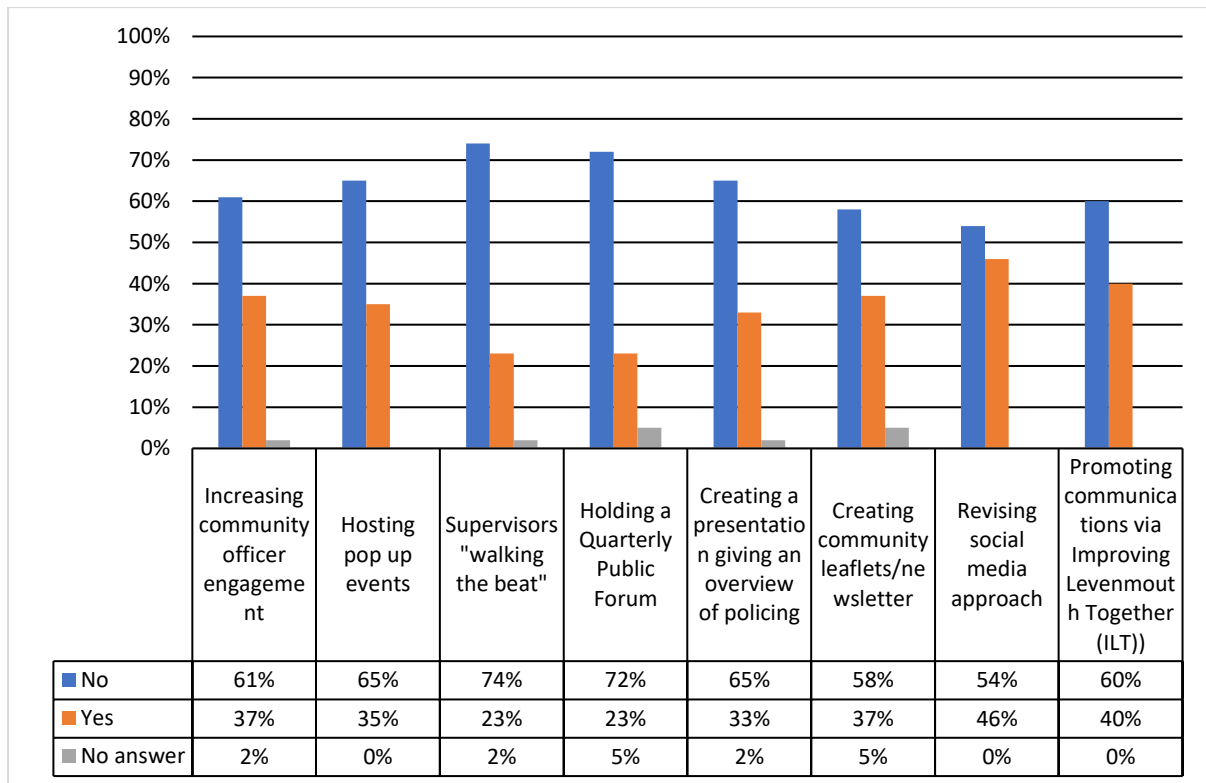
Figure 1 shows that the majority of respondents were aware of at least one of the initiatives put in place by local policing. In total 19 respondents (44%) were not aware of any initiatives, whereas 24 (56%) were aware of at least one.

Respondents were more likely to be familiar with the revised social media approach (46%, n=20) and promoting communications via Improving Levenmouth Together (ILT) (40%, n=17).

When asked to give their views on initiatives if they had been aware of them, eighteen responses were received. Two noted the positive impact of a community event in Buckhaven and getting the chance to engage with local police. Two highlighted an increased presence of officers walking the beat, including higher-ranking officers. Three noticed an increase in the work of local policing being promoted on social media and via leaflets. Two described greater engagement with children, including noting that "the officers that work in Levenmouth have active engagement with some of the younger year S1/2 classes".

If respondents were not aware of the initiatives, they were asked as to how they could be made aware in future. In total 23 comments were received, with 16 containing suggestions. There were nine suggestions for physical media (e.g. leaflets through doors, posters in shops etc.) and one also noted "small community meetings". Eight comments mentioned social media, with four specifically referencing Facebook, but one comment noted difficulties in reaching those who don't use Facebook. One comment highlighted the possibility of local schools providing information to give to parents or including it in school newsletters. Three comments mentioned presence/visibility (e.g. "actual visibility in the community", "more police officers out on the streets, particularly at weekends"). One comment recommended working with local car clubs to offer road safety support for young drivers and drivers with modified vehicles to abide by the law, road policing drop in questions etc for modified / young drivers who want to abide by the law, including to "come to meets to chat to people".

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 Levenmouth. Have you noticed any of these initiatives in the area in the last few months? (n=43)



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 seven indicators – see **Figure 2:**

- Responding quickly (42%, n=18)
- Tackling crime (37%, n=16)
- Preventing crime (42%, n=18)

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- Tackling anti-social behaviour (44%, n=19)
- Keeping your area safe (40%, n=17)
- Being there when you need them (39%, n=17)
- Providing an appropriate and timely response (39%, n=19)

Comparatively, the 'General' indicator was rated as 'Medium' and 'High' by a higher proportion of respondents (both 35%, n=15)

The proportion of respondents that selected 'low' in Feb-Mar 2023 slightly decreased in Nov-Dec 2023, with slight increases in 'high' responses seen in 'Responding quickly', 'Tackling crime', 'Preventing crime', 'Keeping your area safe', and 'Providing an appropriate and timely response'. Furthermore, for 'General', the proportion of respondents that selected 'low' in Nov-Dec 2023 decreased against those who selected 'low' in Feb-Mar 2023, whilst 'Medium' responses increased, and 'High' responses decreased.

However, **Figure 3** shows a higher proportion of those who were aware of at least one of the initiatives scored 'high' for all initiatives. 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') – Nov-Dec 2023 - n=43; Feb-Mar – n=100

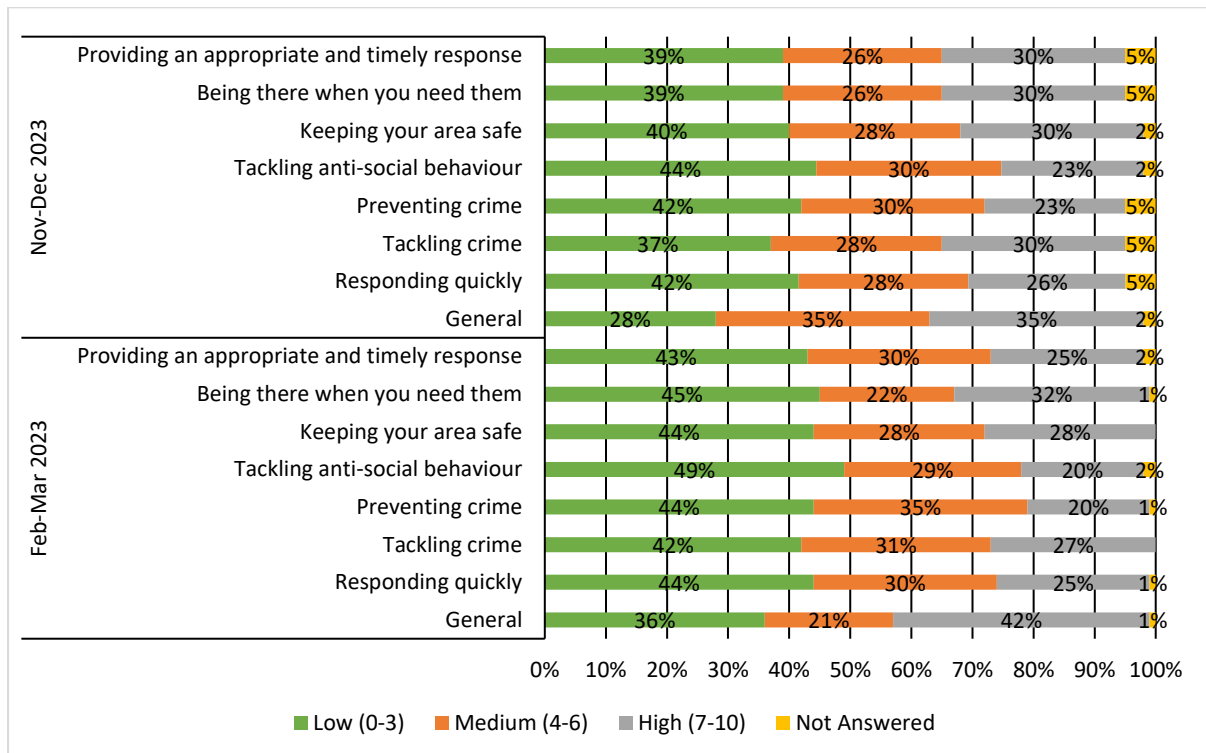


Figure 3: How much confidence do you have in the police in your local area (0-10, where 0 is 'No confidence at all' and 10 is 'complete confidence') – Nov/Dec 2023 – Awareness of one or more initiatives (n=20).

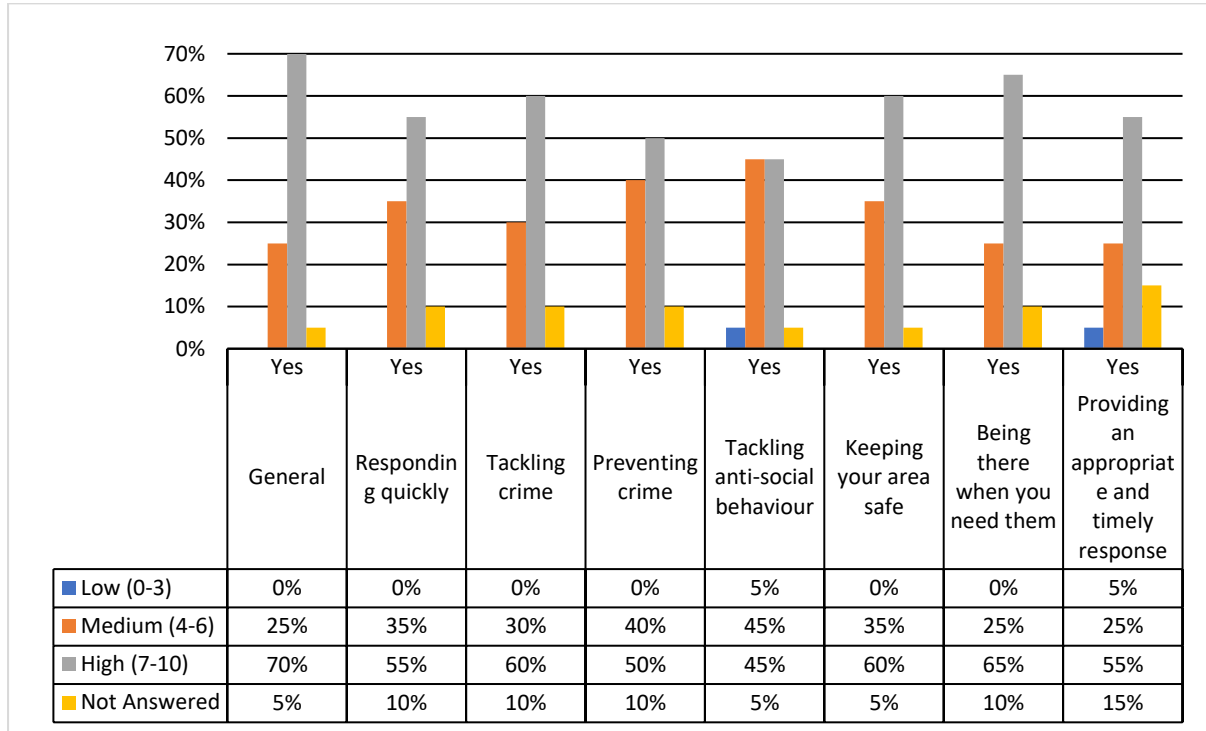
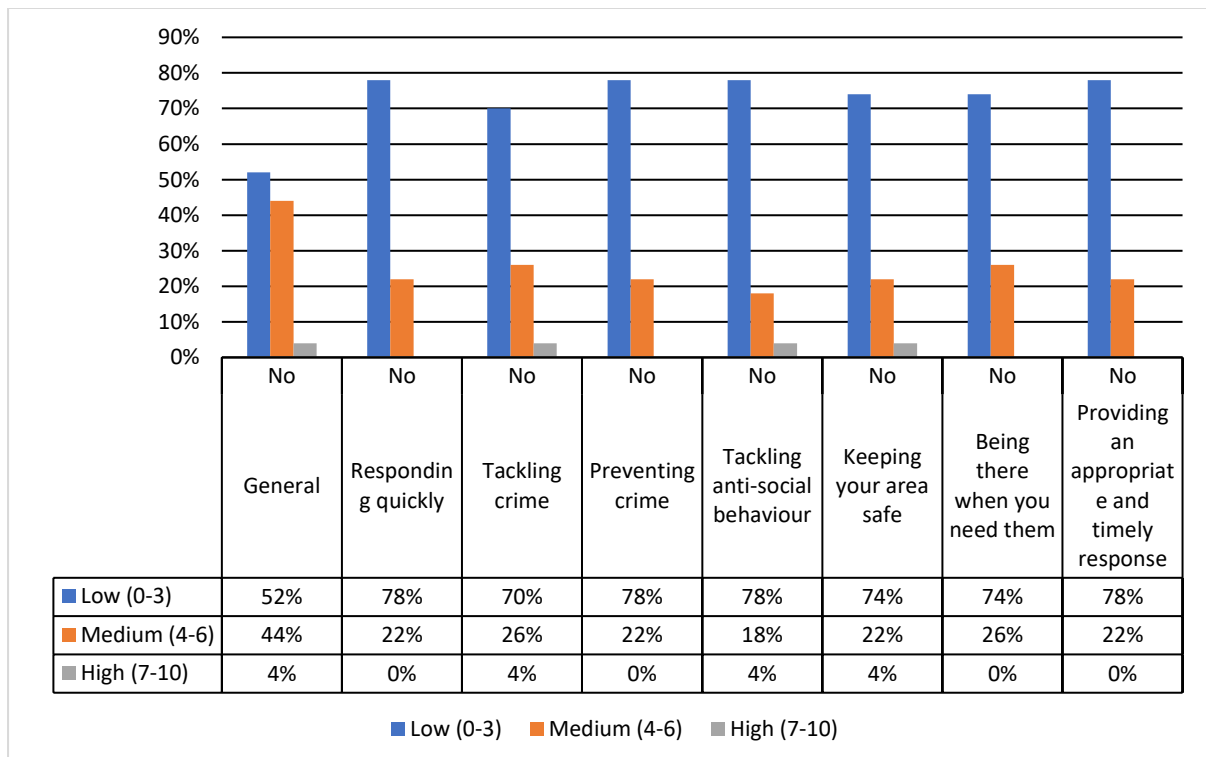


Figure 4: How much confidence do you have in the police in your local area (0-10, where 0 is 'No confidence at all' and 10 is 'complete confidence') Nov/Dec 2023 – No awareness of initiatives (n=23).



Ward 21: Leven, Kennoway and Windygates, Lundin Links and Largos

In Ward 21, across the range of indicators a higher proportion of respondents scored 'Low' confidence for:

- Responding Quickly (53%, n=10)
- Tackling Crime (47%, n=9)
- Preventing Crime (53%, n=10)
- Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour (47%, n=9)
- Keeping Your Area Safe (42%, n=8)
- Being there when you need them (47%, n=9)
- Providing an appropriate and timely response (53%, n=10)

'General' was the only indicator in which a higher proportion scored 'Medium' than 'Low' (42%, n=8).

Ward 22: Buckhaven, Methil, Methilhill, Wemyss Villages

In Ward 22, a higher proportion of respondents scored 'High' confidence for three indicators:

- General (44%, n=10)
- Tackling Crime (35%, n=8)
- Being there when you need them (39%, n=9)

However, a higher proportion of respondents scored 'Low' confidence for two indicators:

- Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour (39%, n=9)
- Providing an appropriate and timely response (35%, n=8)

For 'Keeping Your Area Safe', a higher proportion of respondents gave the same score to 'Low' and 'High' confidence (35%, n=8).

Two indicators also received the same score for 'High', 'Medium' and 'Low' confidence:

- Responding Quickly (33%, n=7)
- Preventing Crime (33%, n=7)

Trust in Policing

Figure 5 shows that the highest proportion of respondents across three of the four categories scored 'high'. One of the four categories ('to protect you') scored 'low'. This is similar to Feb-Mar 2023 where three of the four categories scored 'high'. However, the category which scored 'low' was 'to listen to and respond to your needs'.

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' for 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') – Nov-Dec 2023 - n=43; Feb-Mar – n= 100

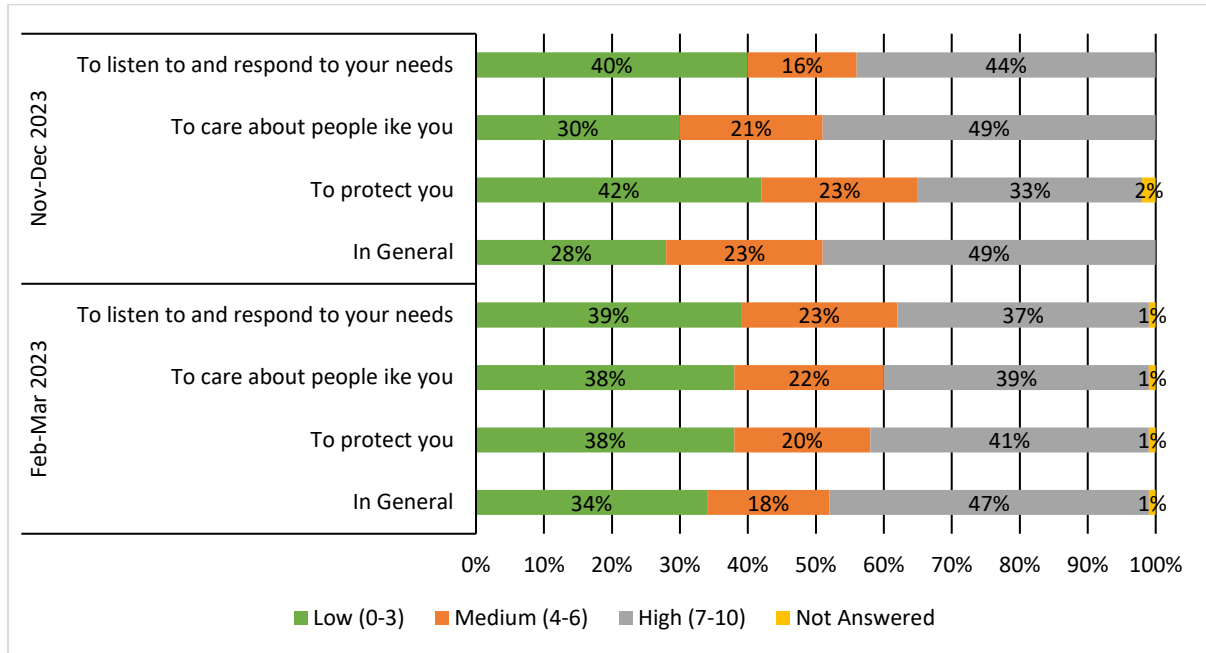


Figure 6: How much trust do you have in the police in your local area (0-10, where 0 is 'Do not trust at all' and 10 is 'Trust completely') – Nov-Dec 2023 – Awareness of initiatives (n=20)

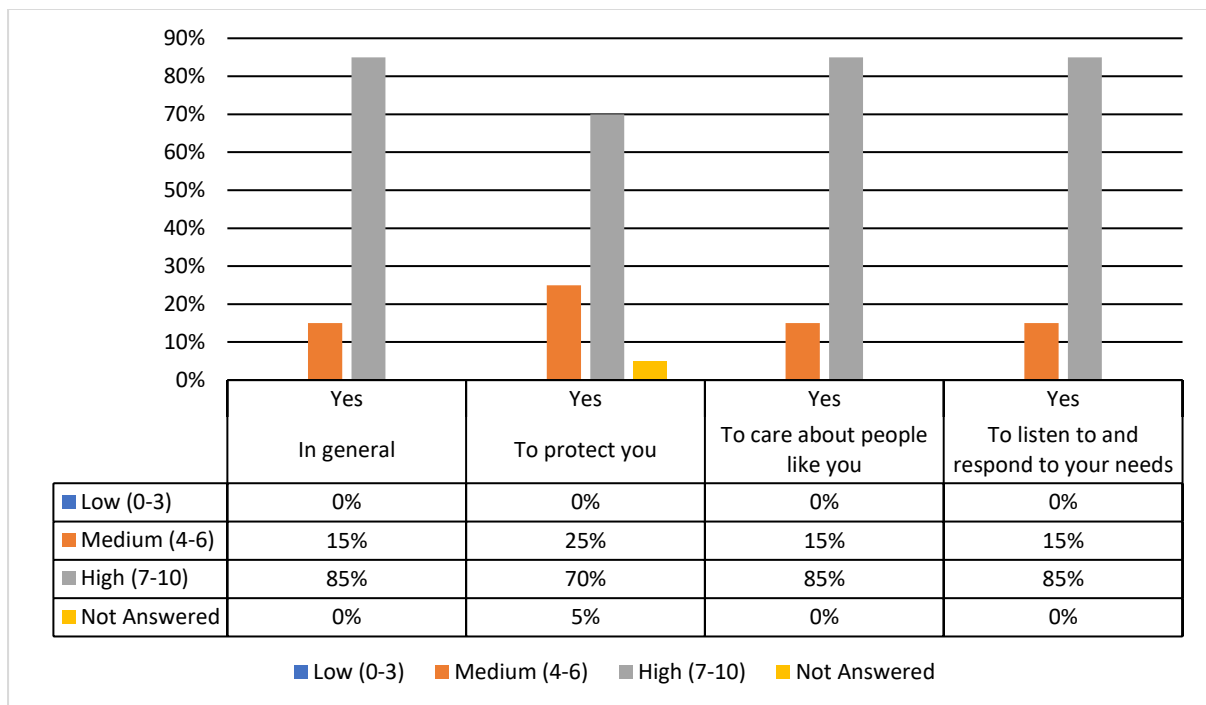
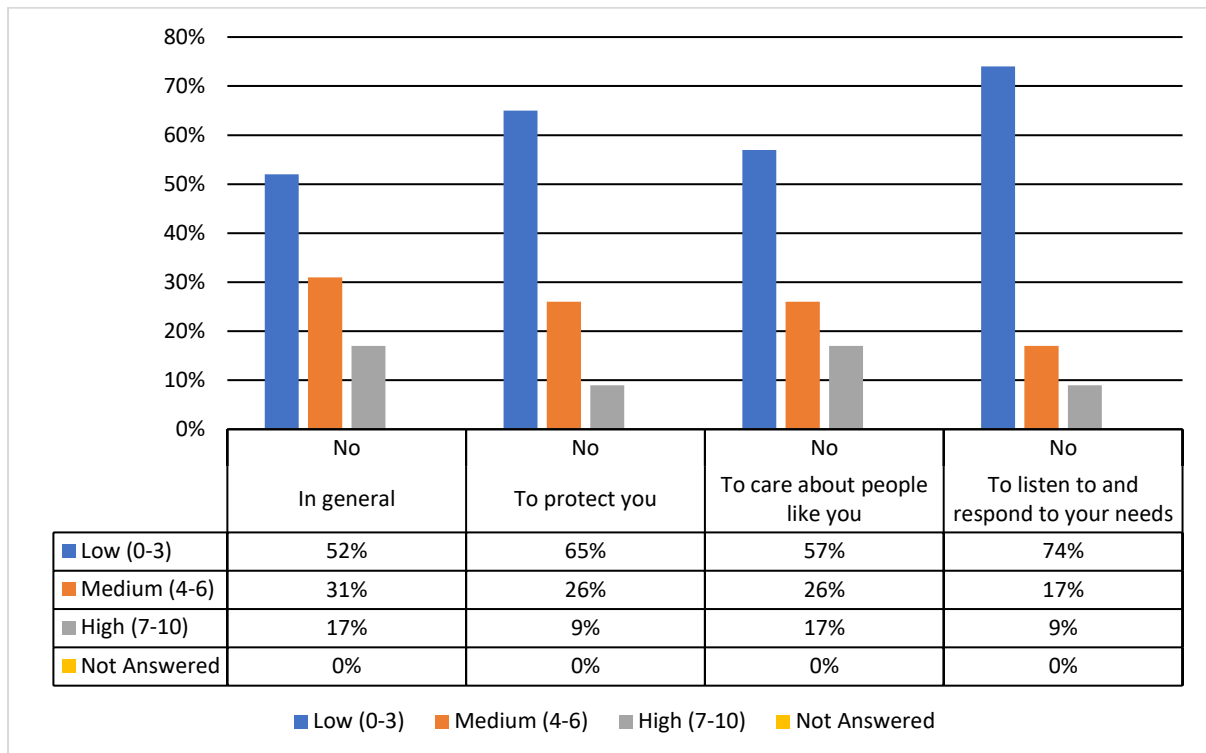


Figure 7: How much trust do you have in the police in your local area (0-10, where 0 is 'Do not trust at all' and 10 is 'Trust completely') - Nov-Dec 2023 – No awareness of initiatives (n=23)



Ward 21: Leven, Kennoway and Windygates, Lundin Links and Largos

In Ward 21, a higher proportion of respondents scored 'High' for two of the four trust indicators:

- General (47%, n=9)
- To care about people like you (47%, n=9)

However, the remaining two indicators were scored 'Low' by respondents:

- To protect you (47%, n=9)
- To listen and respond to your needs (53%, n=10)

Ward 22: Buckhaven, Methil, Methilhill, Wemyss Villages

In Ward 22, a higher proportion of respondents scored 'High' trust for all indicators:

- General (52%, n=12)
- To protect you (45%, n=10)
- To care about people like you (52%, n=12)
- To listen and respond to your needs (52%, n=12)

Performance

Regarding the performance of police in their local area, 'A very good/somewhat good job' had the highest proportion of respondents selected across three scenarios – see **Figure 8**:

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- Policing in general (44%, n=19)
- Tackling crime (37%, n=16)
- Keeping your area safe (40%, n=17)

However 'A very poor/somewhat poor job' had the highest proportion of respondents selected in two scenarios:

- Tackling crime (37%, n=16)
- Tackling anti-social behaviour (44%, n=19)

'A neither good nor poor job' had the highest proportion of respondents in the 'Bringing the community closer together' scenario (37%, n=16).

In comparison, in Feb-Mar 2023, a higher proportion of respondents selected 'A very good/somewhat good job' for 'Policing in general' and 'Tackling crime', 'A very poor/somewhat poor job' for 'Tackling anti-social behaviour' and 'Bringing the community closer together', and 'A very good/somewhat good job' and 'a somewhat poor/very poor job' for the 'Keeping your area safe' scenario.

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 four indicators – 'Bringing the community closer together' received a higher proportion of 'A neither good nor poor job' responses. 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? – Nov-Dec 2023 - n=43; Feb-Mar 23 – n=100

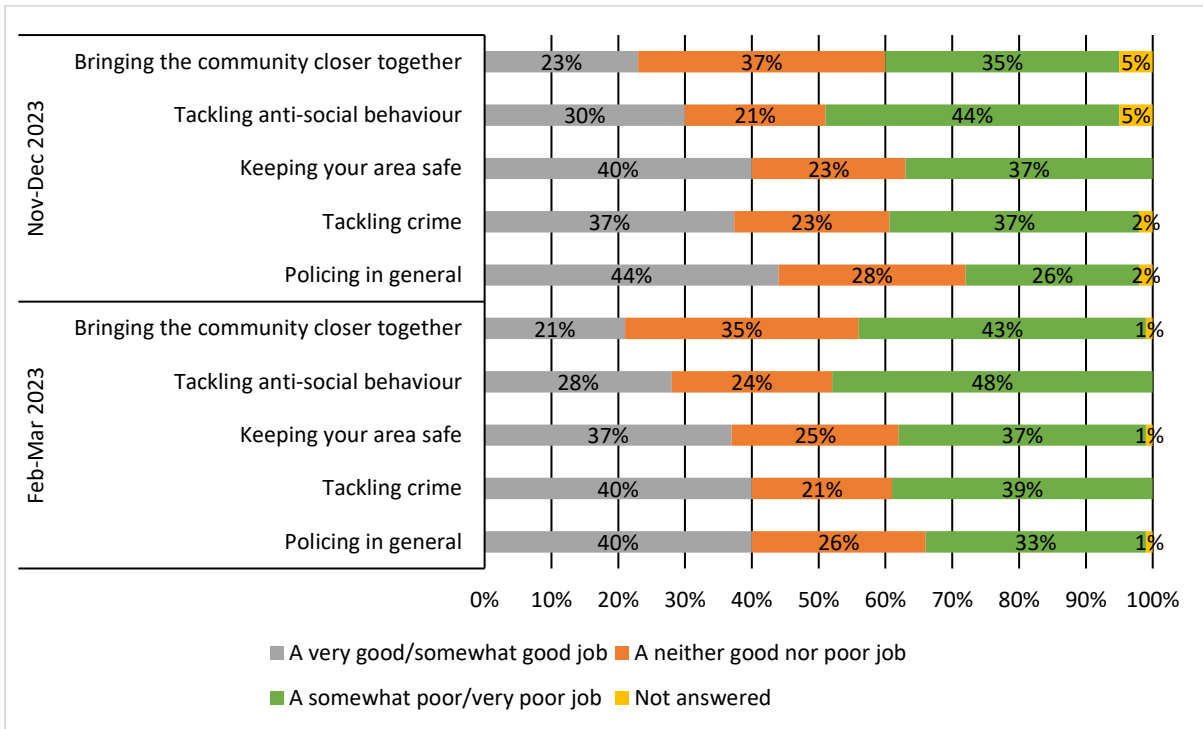


Figure 9: How good or poor a job do you think the police in your local area are doing at the moment in the following regards? – Nov/Dec 2023 - Awareness of one or more initiatives (n=20)

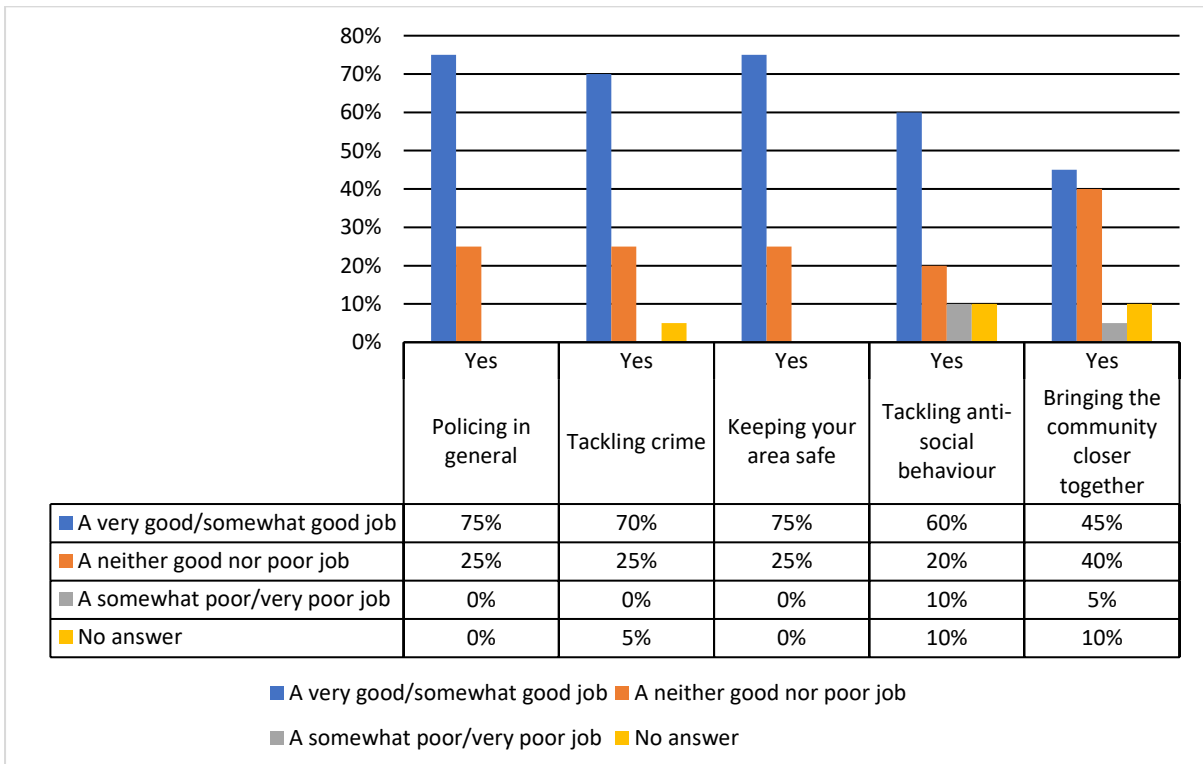
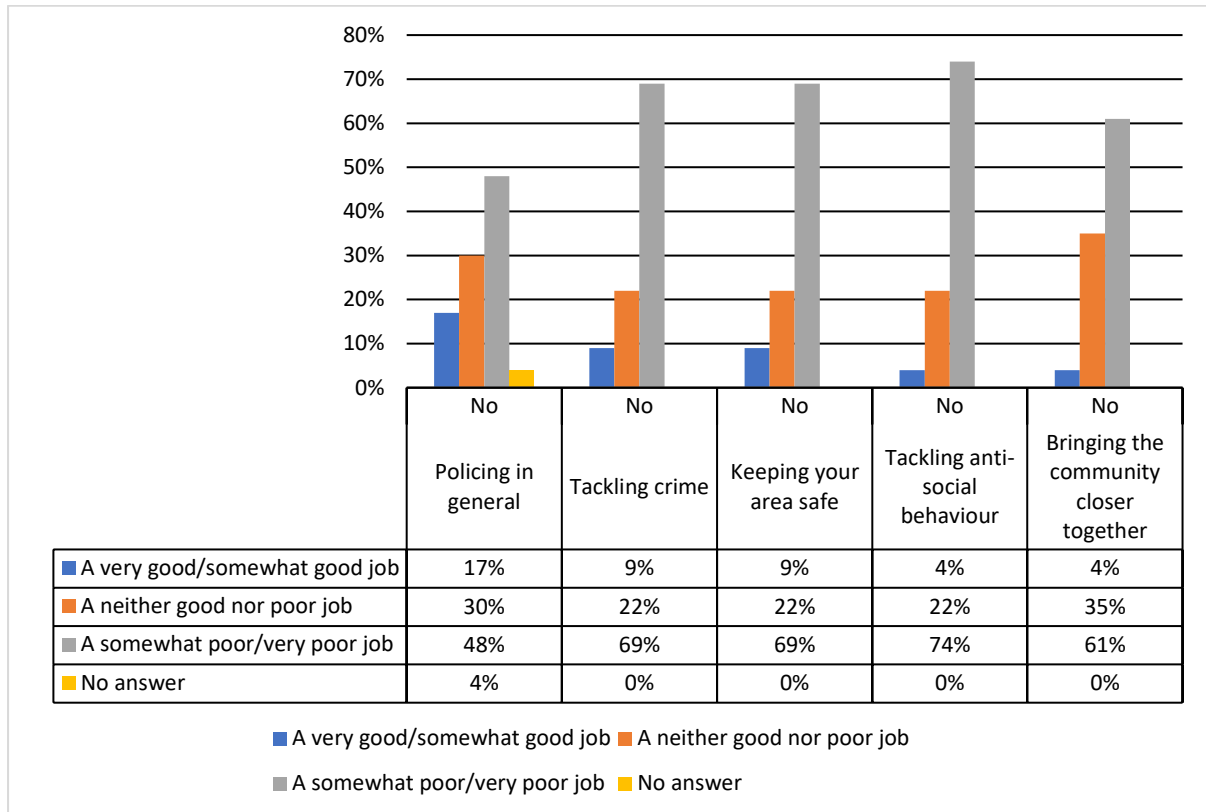


Figure 10: How good or poor a job do you think the police in your local area are doing at the moment in the following regards? – Nov/Dec 2022 - No awareness of initiatives (n=23)



Ward 21: Leven, Kennoway and Windygates, Lundin Links and Largos

In Ward 21, a higher proportion of respondents scored 'A very poor/somewhat poor job' for four of the scenarios:

- Tackling crime (47%, n=9)
- Keeping your area safe (42%, n=8)
- Tackling anti-social behaviour (47%, n=9)
- Bringing the community closer together (42%, n=8)

However, the 'Policing in general' scenario scored 'A very good/somewhat good job' (39%, n=7).

Ward 22: Buckhaven, Methil, Methilhill, Wemyss Villages

In Ward 22, a higher proportion of respondents scored 'A very good/somewhat good job' for three of the scenarios:

- Policing in general (55%, n=12)
- Tackling crime (41%, n=9)
- Keeping your area safe (45%, n=10)

However, a higher proportion of respondents for the 'Tackling anti-social behaviour' scenario scored 'A very poor/somewhat poor job' (41%, n=9), and a

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higher proportion of respondents for the 'Bringing the community closer together' scenario scored 'A neither good nor poor job' (36%, n=8).

Community

Figure 11 shows that a higher proportion of respondents strongly agreed/agreed that Levenmouth has a sense of community (37%, n=16). However, this is closely followed by 30% (both n=13) who disagree/strongly disagree and neither agree nor disagree.

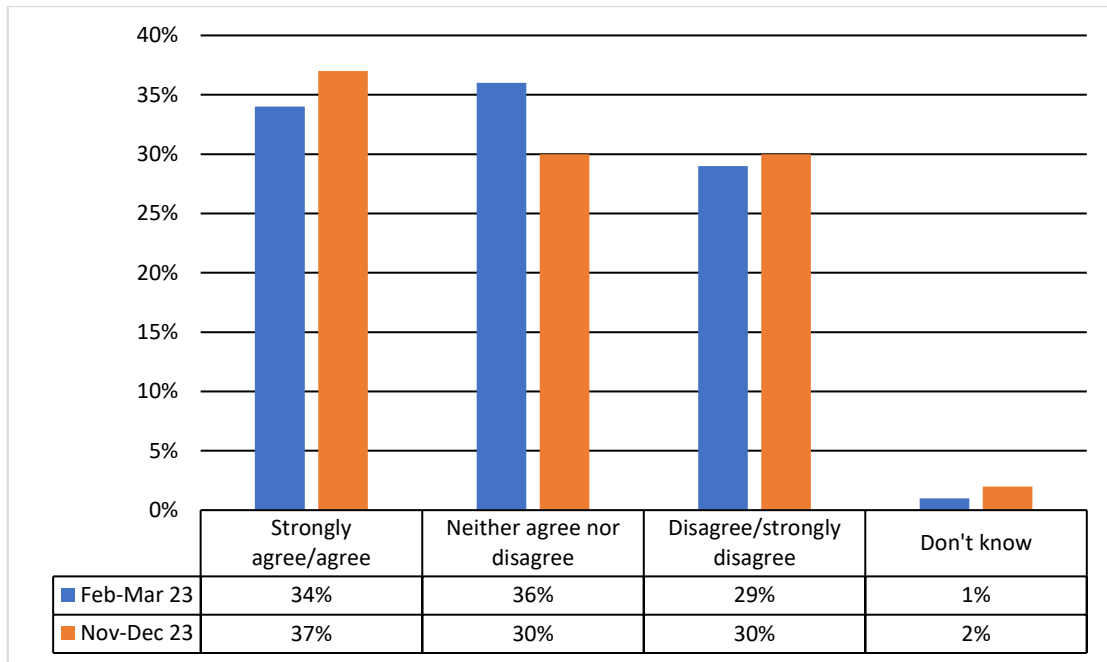
The proportion of people who neither agree nor disagree Levenmouth has a sense of community has decreased since Feb-Mar 2023 and the proportion of those who strongly agree/agree strongly and disagree/strongly disagree has increased.

When asked on their general thoughts and feelings of Levenmouth, 29 comments were received. These largely related to anti-social behaviour (e.g. "Teens and youths need watching though, and tackled and reprimanded", "Teenagers on unlicensed motorbikes", "Teenagers lout around drinking alcohol, vaping, smoking with no fear of being caught", vandalism, etc.). There was also mention of police response times ("report a crime and a 'Police Scotland' officer from Inverness will call you back weeks later", "Police response times is a joke!"), lack of police visibility ("Police do a great job but there is not enough of them", "I feel for the local force as again with everything it's down to money and everyone would like to see more officers on the streets") and drug dealing.

Numerous respondents noted that a lack of police resources impacted upon their effectiveness and overall availability ("There is still a bit of drug activity and antisocial behaviour in my area but fully understand that the police are doing the best they can with the resources they have", "Policing teams are doing their best but ultimately they are having to prioritise due to under resourcing", "I feel the individual police officers work hard but given the community and funding they cannot do what is required").

One respondent noted that the area has been "badly neglected by statutory agencies". Another respondent noted a sense of community in individual towns and areas and praised the work of Levenmouth Together events and those held at Silverburn in promoting a sense of community.

Figure 11: Do you agree that Levenmouth has a sense of community? – November/December 2023 - n=43; Feb-Mar 23 – n=100



Ward 21: Leven, Kennoway and Windygates, Lundin Links and Largos

In Ward 21, a higher proportion of respondents scored 'Strongly disagree/Disagree' and 'Strongly agree/Agree' when asked if Levenmouth has a sense of community (37%, both n=7).

Ward 22: Buckhaven, Methil, Methilhill, Wemyss Villages

In Ward 21, a higher proportion of respondents scored 'Strongly agree/Agree' and 'Neither agree nor disagree' when asked if Levenmouth has a sense of community (35%, both n=8). 26% (n=6) scored 'Strongly disagree/Disagree'.

General Comments

In total, 13 comments were received when respondents were asked if they had any comments on the topics raised within the survey. Of these three mentioned the impact of police funding upon resources, with one stating "Answer calls. Be more visible in the community. Challenge low level crime. All the rest is draining resources". Two mentioned poor 101 response times, with both highlighting that this has impacted upon their decision to use 101 in the future.

One respondent noted issues relating to drug use, drug dealing on local public transport, aggressive street begging and harassment at the local bus station which has required intervention by the police or the bus supervisor.

One respondent stated that there should be "less road side focus / stop and searches and use the time to connect with members of the motoring community to show the police as friends and part of the community instead of the enemy."

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One respondent described their positive experience at local drop-in events and “found the officers to be informative”.

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, working with local schools, and working with local organisations (local car clubs, organising small community meetings).

Without taking into account awareness of initiatives, between Feb-Mar 2023 and Nov-Dec 2023 there was an increase in trust, a decrease in confidence, and increases in local police performance in ‘Policing in general’ and ‘Tackling crime’, as well as decreases in ‘Tackling anti-social behaviour’ and ‘Bringing the community closer together’. This mirrors national trends, with a notable decrease in levels of confidence documented in the Authority’s [national polling](#) between July 2022 and July 2023.

Regarding sense of community, slight increases were observed with those saying ‘strongly agree/agree’ (up 3 percentage points) and ‘disagree/strongly disagree’ (up 1 percentage point) between Feb-Mar 2023 and November/December 2023. Comments largely centred around anti-social behaviour, and a lack of police resources, along with some mention of police response times, police visibility, and drug dealing.

Comments about police funding and resources, police response times to 101 calls and domestic abuse complaints, drug use, a desire for greater engagement with local community organisations, and positive experiences of local policing drop-in events were also made when respondents were asked on comments on topics raised within the survey.

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Conversations with Community Representatives

In January 2024, SPA staff had conversations with representatives from community groups in person and via Teams to gather feedback on the project. This included SPA staff attending an Improving Levenmouth Together (ILT) meeting as part of a visit to the area by officials from the Office of the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC).

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

- Members of the ILT found that the initiatives put in place had a positive impact on the local community.
- One member commented:
 - The project has been of some value and noted that the ILT have worked closely with the police in a range of areas which have contributed to community cohesion post-COVID.
 - They didn't think that the project could've been done differently in terms of the way it was developed and engaged with the local community. They also noted that post-Covid there is more community reluctance to get involved in activities outside their normal life and that "you couldn't have delivered the project at a worse time".
 - Their confidence in local policing was not impacted and noted that the ILT has a good relationship with the police with a mutual level of appreciation and trust even outwith the project.
- Members of the OPCC commended the work of SPA staff and local policing for the dedication and hard work put into the project and considered the findings to be insightful and helpful in supporting their own work in the West Midlands.