



Community Confidence Action Research - Levenmouth

Purpose

The following report was compiled by SPA Strategy and Performance and Police Scotland Partnerships, Prevention and Community Wellbeing Division. It provides key findings from the Scottish Police Authority and Police Scotland's survey in Levenmouth as part of the Community Confidence Action Research Project

Executive Summary

This paper discusses the headline findings of a survey conducted in Levenmouth as part of the Scottish Police Authority and Police Scotland [Community Confidence Action Research Project](#).

The Community Confidence Survey ran from 1st February to 15th March 2023 with 100 responses. 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.

Key findings:

- Levenmouth community cohesion is not particularly strong. Just over one-third of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that Levenmouth has a strong sense of community. More respondents neither agreed nor disagreed that Levenmouth had a strong sense of community, and over a quarter of respondents disagreed.
- When asked to comment, views on the area were largely negative and related mainly to the poor condition of their local areas, youth anti-social behaviour, and drug use.
- High levels of confidence in policing were mostly associated with policing in general, and it is notable that the highest proportion of respondents scored 'Low' or 'Medium' in their level of confidence for most indicators.
- Respondents in Levenmouth had generally positive feelings in relation to trust and local policing, with a higher proportion scoring 'High' in three out of four indicators.
- Regarding performance, 'A very good/somewhat good job' and 'A somewhat poor/very poor job' were each the most common responses in two scenarios – similar to SPA national polling. These responses were equally common in 'Keeping your area safe'.
- The majority of respondents noticed no changes in local policing in the last six months, nor had their opinion of policing changed.

Introduction

This paper discusses the headline findings of a survey conducted in Levenmouth as part of the Scottish Police Authority and Police Scotland Community Confidence Action Research Project.

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.

Section 1: Community Confidence Action Research – Levenmouth Survey

As part of the Community Confidence Action Research Project, the Scottish Police Authority and Police Scotland designed a survey to gather views on community and policing in Levenmouth. Hosted on the Scottish Police Authority’s Citizen Space, the survey contained 16 questions and ran from 1st February – 15th March 2023. In total 100 responses were received.

Table 1 shows that the majority of respondents lived in the Levenmouth area (84%, n=84). Four respondents who submitted responses on Citizen Space selected more than one reason (live in the area and also works, all of the above). Inputting into Citizen Space only allowed the selection of one so in these instances the main reason selected was living in the area and working in the area.

The highest proportion of respondents were aged 45-54 (29%, n=29) and the lowest aged 16-24 at 3% (n=3). 3% of respondents also chose not to disclose their age. The sample is also predominantly female (62%, n=62). A slight majority of respondents stated they had contact with the police in the last 6 months (54%, n=54).

58% (n=58) of respondents were from Ward 22 (Buckhaven, Methil, Methilhill, Wemyss Villages), whilst 42% (n=42) of respondents were from Ward 21 (Leven, Kennoway and Windygates, Lundin Links and Largos).

Table 1: Sample demographics (n=100)

Reason for being in/visiting Levenmouth?		
I have family/friends in the area	1	1%
I live in the area	84	84%
I work in the area	11	11%
Other	4	4%
Age		
16-24	3	3%
25-34	12	12%
35-44	22	22%
45-54	29	29%
55-64	19	19%
65+	12	12%
Prefer not to say	3	3%
Gender		

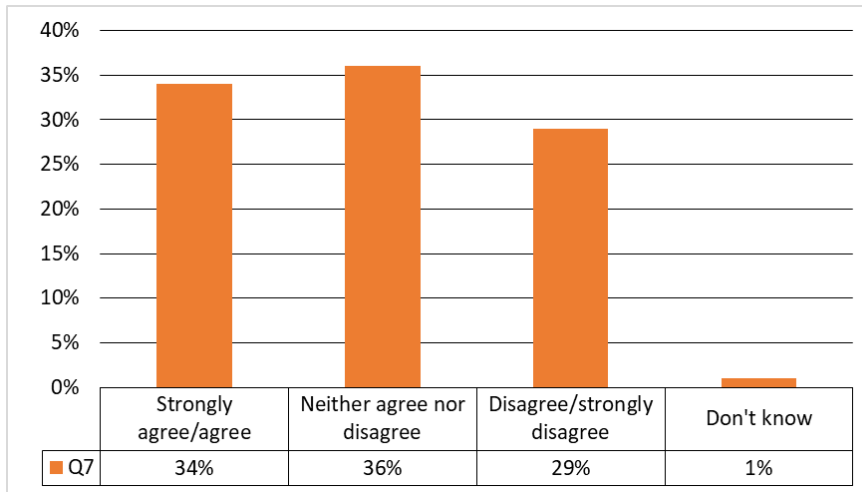
OFFICIAL

Female	62	62%
Male	32	32%
Non-binary (gender neutral)	1	1%
Other (please specify)	1	1%
Prefer not to say	4	4%
Contact with police – 6 months		
No	46	46%
Yes	54	54%

Community

Figure 1 shows that 36% (n=36) of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed that Levenmouth had a sense of community. 34% (n=34) strongly agreed/agreed and 29% (n=29) disagreed/strongly disagreed.

Figure 1: Q7: Do you agree that the area you selected has a sense of community? (n=100)



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

42% (n=42) of responses from Levenmouth were from Ward 21. 18 responses strongly agreed/agreed that their area has a sense of community (43%), 12 responses neither agreed nor disagreed (n=29%), 11 disagreed/strongly disagreed (26%) and one did not know.

Ward 22: Buckhaven, Methil, Methilhill, Wemyss Villages

58% (n=58) of responses from Levenmouth were from Ward 22. 24 responses neither agreed nor disagreed that their area has a sense of community (41%), and 18 disagreed/strongly disagreed (31%) and 16 strongly agreed/agreed (28%).

Q8: Thinking about your answers to the previous questions, what are your general thoughts and feelings of the area you selected?

In total there were 52 responses in relation to question 8. The following sections outline the themes that emerged in each Levenmouth ward area.

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

Thirty-one responses were submitted for Ward 21. Four responses highlighted a poor sense of community in the local area, one of these noted that the majority of community activities are led by the same group of people. One respondent did note a strong sense of community, particularly during the period of national COVID-19 lockdowns.

Twelve responses suggested that their street/local area was a good place to live, although there were some issues highlighted. Five responses noted that their area was not a good place to live, being described as 'deprived' and 'run down'.

Two responses highlighted the impact of a lack of employment opportunities within the local area. Three responses noted that whilst they liked their own street, they would be concerned about entering other areas, including at night. Three responses noted a distrust of the police, one respondent commented that the police 'are not approachable, are unfair and on most occasions are economical with the truth when writing reports'.

Ward 22: Buckhaven, Methil, Methilhill, Wemyss Villages

Twenty-one responses from Ward 22 were negative. They noted the generally poor condition of the local area, and the impact of youth anti-social behaviour (e.g. vandalism, and general poor attitudes from local youths), drugs and alcohol, substance abuse, and motorbikes/quadbikes on the area (including speeding).

Numerous respondents found their local areas to be 'neglected by community policing' and noted a lack of visible police patrols and the generally poor policing of the area.

Respondents from one area highlighted that it has been gradually declining for years due to 'a lack of jobs and inequality', 'many drug dealers, drug users, motor bike clowns', and 'lacking solutions tried in other areas'.

Fifteen responses were positive and highlighted a sense of community in some form, but that this could still be improved. One respondent highlighted that the area 'has significant challenges in relation to poverty' and that, whilst locals are proud of their community, the cost of living crisis has put a strain on community efforts.

Confidence and Trust in Police

Confidence

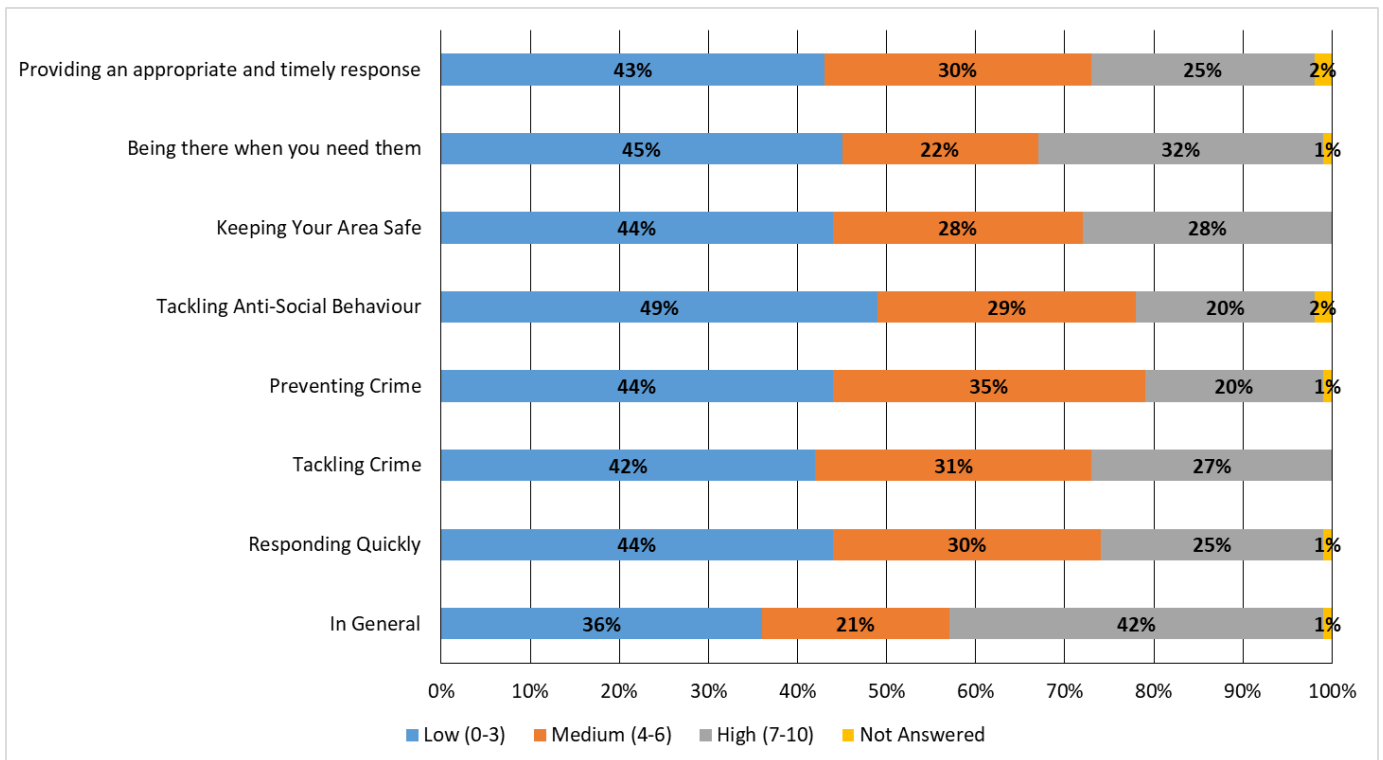
Figure 2 shows that across the range of indicators a higher proportion of respondents scored 'Low' confidence for:

- Providing an appropriate and timely response (43%, n=43)
- Being there when you need them (45%, n=45)

- Keeping your area safe (44%, n=44)
- Tackling antisocial behaviour (49%, n=49)
- Preventing crime (44%, n=44)
- Tackling crime (42%, n=42)
- Responding quickly (44%, n=44)

With the exception of 'In general', 'Being there when you need them' and 'Keeping your area safe', the next most common score across all indicators was 'Medium'. For 'Keeping your area safe', 'Medium' and 'High' each scored 28%.

Figure 2: Q9 How much confidence do you have in the police in your local area (n=100)



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 (45%, n=19)
- Tackling Crime (38%, n=16)
- Preventing Crime (48%, n=20)
- Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour (45%, n=19)
- Keeping Your Area Safe (43%, n=18)
- Being there when you need them (43%, n=18)
- Providing an appropriate and timely response (45%, n=19)

'General' was the only indicator in which a higher proportion scored 'High' than 'Low' (40%, n=17).

Ward 22: Buckhaven, Methil, Methilhill, Wemyss Villages

In Ward 22, across the range of indicators a higher proportion of respondents scored 'Low' confidence for:

- Responding Quickly (43%, n=25)
- Tackling Crime (45%, n=26)
- Preventing Crime (41%, n=24)
- Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour (52%, n=30)
- Keeping Your Area Safe (45%, n=26)
- Being there when you need them (47%, n=27)
- Providing an appropriate and timely response (41%, n=24)

'General' was the only indicator in which a higher proportion scored 'High' than 'Low' (43%, n=21).

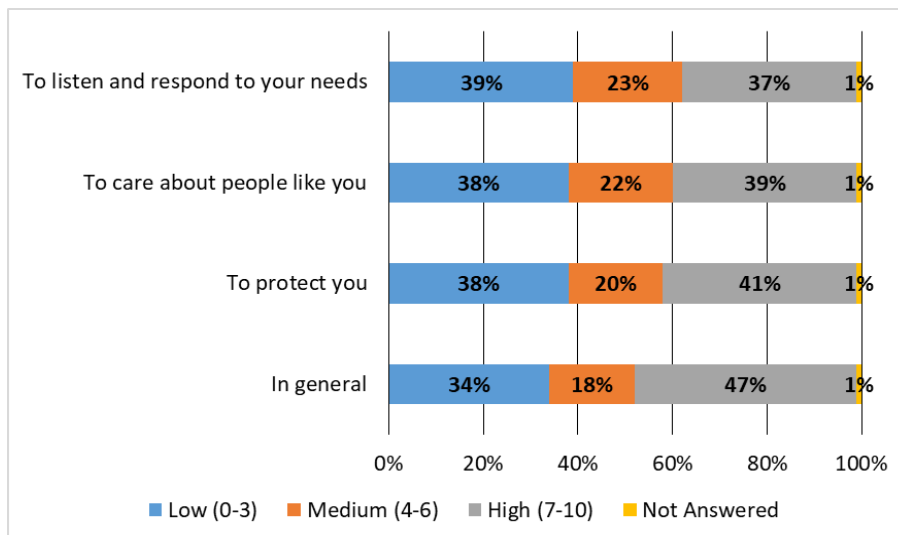
Trust

Regarding trust, **Figure 3** shows the highest proportion of respondents across three of the four categories scored 'High' (for 'In general', the trend mirrors that with confidence with the second most common being 'Low').

For 'To listen to and respond to your needs', the most common score was 'Low'.

With the exception of 'To listen to and respond to your needs', the second most common score was 'Low'. The second most common score for 'To listen to and respond to your needs' was 'High'.

Figure 3: Q10 How much trust do you have in the police in your local area (n=100)



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

A higher proportion of respondents scored 'Low' for:

- To care about people like you (38%, n=16)

OFFICIAL

- To listen and respond to your needs (38%, n=16)

A higher proportion of respondents scored 'High' for:

- In general (45%, n=19)

For 'To protect you', 38% scored 'Low' and 'High' (n=16).

Ward 22: Buckhaven, Methil, Methilhill, Wemyss Villages

A higher proportion of respondents scored 'Low' for:

- To listen and respond to your needs (40%, n=23)

A higher proportion of respondents scored 'High' for:

- In general (48%, n=28)
- To protect you (43%, n=25)
- To care about people like you (41%, n=24)

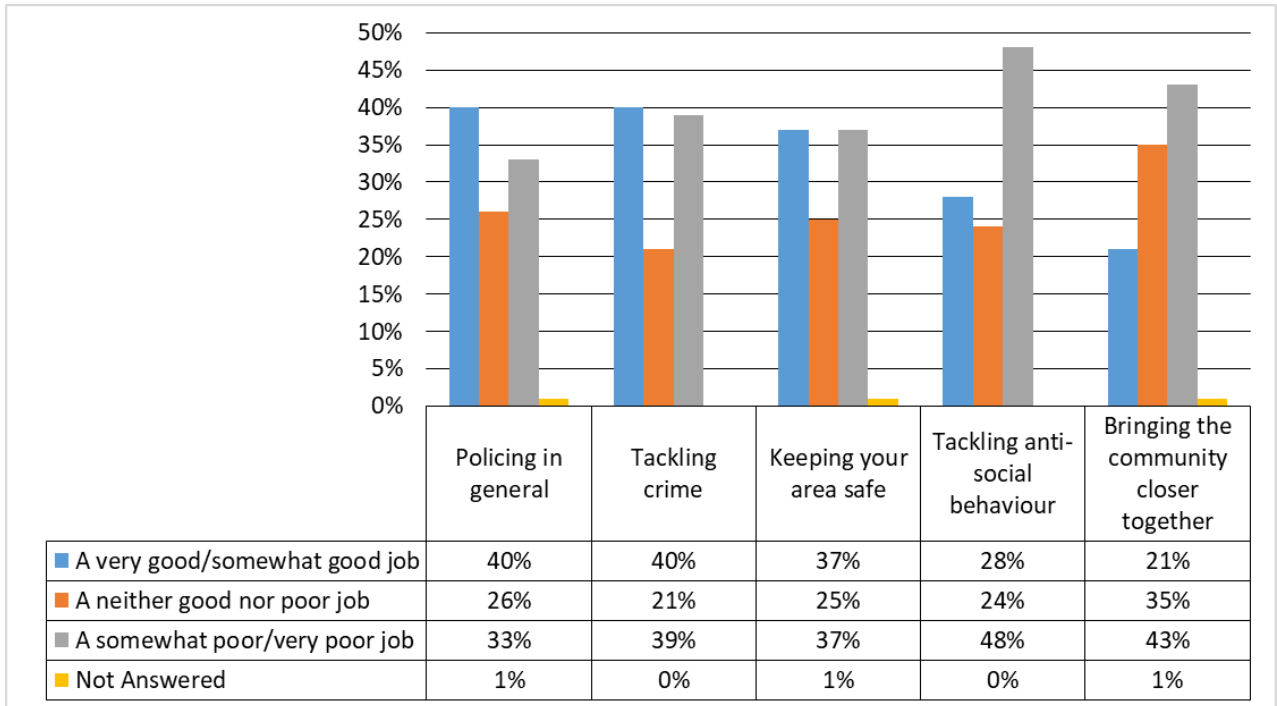
Performance

Regarding the performance of police in their local area, **Figure 4** shows 'A very good/somewhat good job' received the highest proportion of responses in 'In general' (40%, n=40) and 'Tackling crime' (40%, n=40) scenarios. In SPA [national polling](#) conducted in Jan/Feb 2023 a higher proportion of respondents also selected 'A very good/somewhat good job' for these scenarios.

Again, chiming with the SPA national polling, 'A very poor/somewhat poor job' received the highest proportion of responses for 'Tackling anti-social behaviour' (48%, n=48) and 'Bringing the community closer together' (43%, n=43) scenarios.

37% of respondents selected 'A very good/somewhat good job' and 'a somewhat poor/very poor job' for the 'Keeping your area safe' scenario, whereas in the SPA national polling in Jan/Feb 2023 these were 38% and 27% respectively.

Figure 4: Q11 How good or poor a job do you think the police in your local area are doing at the moment in the following regards? (n=100)



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

A higher proportion of respondents felt police were doing a 'very good/somewhat good job' for the following scenarios:

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

A higher proportion scored a 'somewhat poor/very poor job' for:

- Tackling anti-social behaviour (43%, n=18)

Ward 22: Buckhaven, Methil, Methilhill, Wemyss Villages

A higher proportion of respondents felt police were doing a 'very good/somewhat good job' for the following scenarios:

- Policing in general (40%, n=23)
- Tackling crime (40%, n=23)

A higher proportion scored a 'somewhat poor/very poor job' for:

- Tackling anti-social behaviour (45%, n=26)
- Keeping your area safe (38%, n=22)

Changes/Views on Local Police

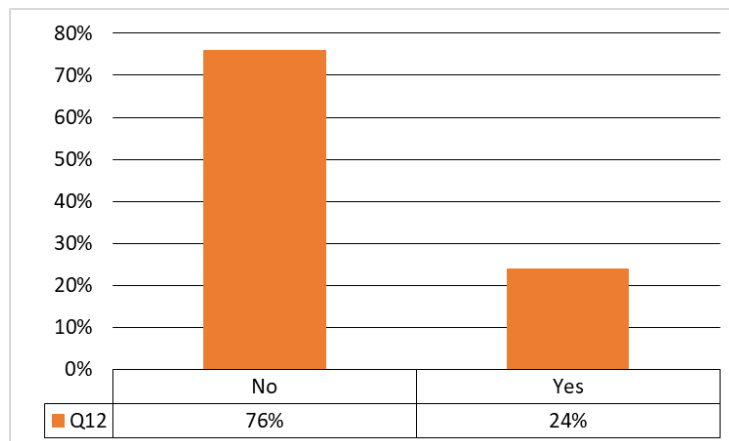
Changes

Figure 5 shows the majority of respondents from Levenmouth noticed no changes in how local police engaged in the local area in the last six months (76%, n=76).

Six respondents who selected 'No' and three respondents who selected 'Yes' described the need for local police to have greater visibility in the local area. However, four respondents who selected 'No' noted that local police were more visible than before.

Two 'Yes' respondents and two 'No' respondents described positive developments in how local policing engaged with the community, including describing the community policing model as '...very positive [but] the resource is small and could do with being increased to give more capacity'.

Figure 5: Q12: Have you noticed any changes in how local police engage in the local area in the last six months? (n=100)



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

90% (n=38) of respondents from Ward 21 answered 'No', 10% (n=4) of respondents answered 'Yes'.

Four respondents noted improved community engagement by local police. The Levenmouth Together initiative was highlighted by one respondent as 'a really good example of how things can work and really work well'. Two respondents noted that local police require improvement in responding to issues, specifically anti-social behaviour and general police attitudes towards the local community.

Ward 22: Buckhaven, Methil, Methilhill, Wemyss Villages

66% (n=38) of respondents from Ward 22 noted they had not noticed any changes, whereas 34% (n=20) said they had.

Two respondents who answered 'Yes' noted that local policing was proactive in embracing new community initiatives.

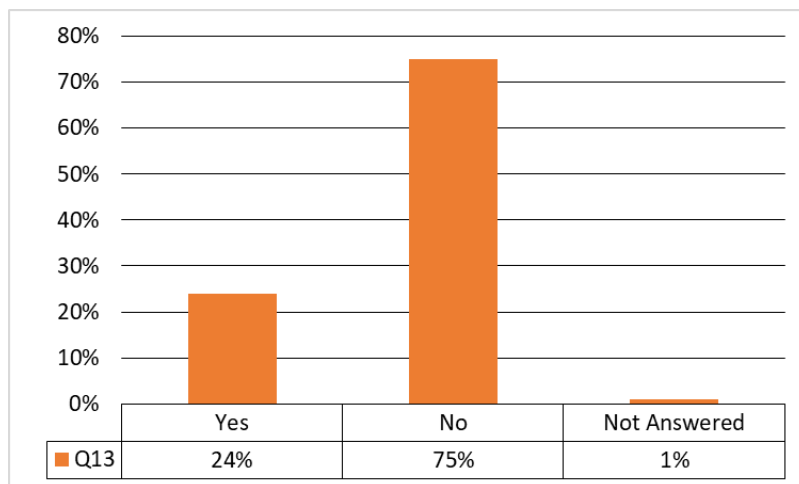
Two respondents who answered 'No' each noted a lack of police patrols, one respondent noted concerns regarding 999/101 waiting times. One of the respondents who answered 'No' also noted a lack of local police attendance at community council meetings. Two respondents who answered 'No' noted the impact of a lack of police resources, one respondent noted the closure of the local police station.

Three respondents who answered 'Yes' and two who answered 'No' noted a lack of police visibility in the local area which has resulted in an increase in crime. However, one respondent who answered 'No' noted a recent increase in police visibility

Views on Local Police

Figure 6 shows the majority of respondents from Levenmouth views on policing locally had not changed in the past six months (n= 75%, n=75)

Figure 6: Q13: Has your view of policing locally changed in the past six months? (n=100)



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

26% (n=11) of respondents from Ward 21 answered 'Yes', 74% (n=31) of respondents answered 'No'.

One respondent who answered 'Yes' and one respondent who answered 'No' noted issues related to 999/101 answer times, the 'No' respondent in particular stated issues regarding the call handler being unaware of local geography. One respondent who answered 'Yes' described local police as 'worse' and 'more aggressive' than before. One respondent who answered 'Yes' and one who answered 'No' each found that local police responses to some offenders were too lenient compared with other offenders.

OFFICIAL

Two respondents who answered 'No' and two respondents who answered 'Yes' each noted the lack of local police presence. One respondent who answered 'Yes' noted a lack of evidence that policing strategies targeting off-road motorcycles are being present in the local community.

One respondent who answered 'No' noted the continuing anti-social behaviour in their area despite previously contacting the police 18 months prior.

Ward 22: Buckhaven, Methil, Methilhill, Wemyss Villages

22% (n=13) of respondents from Ward 21 answered 'Yes', 76% (n=44) of respondents answered 'No' (2%, n=1, did not answer).

One respondent who answered 'Yes' and one respondent who answered 'No' highlighted the impact of resource restriction and demand upon their ability to complete their role. Two respondents who answered 'Yes' noted frustrations regarding their overall communications with local police.

One respondent who answered 'Yes', one respondent who answered 'No' and one 'Not answer' respondent each noted that the police were understaffed and lacked resources. One respondent who answered 'Yes' stated that 'officers are not too keen to interact with anything going on within towns/villages'.

Q14: A key part of this project is focused on understanding why people may be less confident in policing in the area. Please let us know below the things you think may impact confidence

In total there were 42 responses in relation to question 14. The following sections outline the themes that emerged in each Levenmouth ward area.

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

Respondents from Leven, Kennoway and Windygates, and Lundin Links and Largos predominantly noted issues related to staffing numbers and police patrol visibility.

Issues related to response times to 999/101 calls and the opening times/overall closure of local police stations were also highlighted as having an impact upon confidence. Tackling crime is also a recurring issue for respondents.

Ward 22: Buckhaven, Methil, Methilhill, Wemyss Villages

Respondents from Buckhaven, Methil, Methilhill, and Wemyss Villages predominantly noted the lack of police visibility.

Six respondents were concerned about the police being unable to tackle crime. One respondent also highlighted feelings of 'stigma' and 'unconscious bias' from the local police.

OFFICIAL

One respondent described the slow response time of police and suggested the placement of a 'high street officer at least at busy times of year or when dark nights start'.

Q15: If you have any comments on the topics raised within this survey, please detail them in the text box below

In total there were 24 responses in relation to question 15.

A notable theme was the desire for a greater level of engagement in community policing, including greater police patrol visibility. One respondent stated that they'd 'much rather see individual police out' and queried if the police attendance at 'organised activities (school, community etc) [...] is [...] the best use of time'.

One respondent highlighted the need for 'pro-active measures' towards young people as it may impact upon 'manag[ing] the levels of crime and anti-social behaviour they face in the years to come'.

However, it has also been recognised by various respondents that the issues related to police resourcing may impact upon the police's ability to engage at a wider level than what they are at present.

Three respondents have highlighted positive experiences when engaging with the police on their respective issues, whilst other respondents are also grateful for the efforts of the local police.

Conclusions and Key Findings

Just over one-third of respondents agreed that Levenmouth has a strong sense of community. However, it is notable that more respondents neither agreed nor disagreed that Levenmouth had a strong sense of community, and over a quarter of respondents to the Levenmouth survey disagreed. Respondents who commented in this section noted the poor condition of their local areas, the high levels of poverty and inequality, youth anti-social behaviour, and drug use.

The highest proportion of respondents scored 'Low' confidence in the police for the majority of indicators. The most common response which wasn't a 'Low' confidence rating was 'High', although this was only in relation to the indicator 'In General'.

Regarding trust in police, the highest proportion scored 'High' trust for the majority of indicators. The most common response was 'High' for policing in general, followed by 'High' for to protect you. This suggests that while there are issues of trust in the Levenmouth area, there is a much greater level of trust than there is of confidence.

When scoring how good a job local policing were doing in the area, 'A very good/somewhat good job' and 'A somewhat poor/very poor job' were each the most common responses in two scenarios - similar to SPA national polling. These responses were equally common in 'Keeping your area safe'.

OFFICIAL

Three-quarters of respondents noted no changes in local police engagement and stated that their view of policing locally had not changed in the past six months.