

# Citizens Panel News

## Welcome



**H**ello and welcome to the third issue this year of Citizens' Panel News.

In this newsletter I will update you on the opinions which you gave, as a panel, in the June survey. I will also tell you about the topics which have been asked previously.

So this will be a chance for you to find out what the panel has been involved in over the last 6 years since it was first set up.

This newsletter will also include, details of how the feedback and opinions we gather through the panel have helped to shape and change services provided by Wigan Council and its partners.

Many thanks to every one of the **954** of you who took the time to fill in the June survey. The

response rate for this survey was **80%** which is fantastic! We hope to have another great response to the August survey.

The topics we asked questions about in the June survey were:

- the Community Plan;
- The Reassurance Agenda (crime and fear of crime); and
- Hospital Services.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue and find the information informative, interesting and helpful.

August 2007  
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### Special points of interest:

- ♦ *56% of you said you agreed to some extent that you are worried about becoming a victim of crime—yet only 17% of you have been in the last 12 months*
- ♦ *87% of you agree that Wigan Borough is a good place to live*
- ♦ *37% of you agree that the Royal Albert & Edward hospital provides high quality care*

## Still to come in 2007...

**T**his year's August survey consists of 4 sections which are:

- information provision;
- key communications including Borough Life;
- the reassurance agenda; and
- your local area and community involvement.

All of the sections have been set to gain an insight into what you, as residents, think of

services and to help us make decisions on how we improve or change these services in the future.

Watch out for the next survey which we will send to you in November, just in time to avoid the Christmas rush!

We'll be asking you about a few different topics in the November survey, such as:

- The traffic asset management plan
- council budgets

- consumer protection and noise; and
- your experience of crime.

Again these questions are being asked to gain your views to understand, local knowledge, and to help us make future decisions. We have asked some of the questions before. We hope that by repeating

these, we can continue to use your help to understand what residents want from these



## The Community Plan

Over the last few years we have repeated some of our questions about Wigan Borough's Community Plan. The reason we repeat certain questions is so that we can compare answers to see if the opinion and perception of residents are changing.

Wigan Borough's current Community Plan 2005-2010, outlines the vision for the future of the borough. To help us set priorities for the next Community Plan, we want to find out your opinions about the borough as a place to live, what you think is getting better, what you think is getting worse and what your priorities for the future are. It is important that we gather public opinion on how we are

doing across the borough. It is from these opinions that we can change or improve our services or learn from areas where we are already doing well.



Some of the interesting results which came out of this section were that:

- 60% of you are proud to live in Wigan Borough;
- 31% are not; and
- the remaining 9% had no opinion on this issue.
- You are more likely to be proud to be living in the borough if you agree that you:
  - can influence local decisions;

- are involved in the community; and
- believe that anti social behaviour is the same or less than last year

Those of you who are proud to live in Wigan were asked for their reasons why. The main reasons you gave were:

- friendly people;
- born/raised/lived here all your life;
- green spaces/parks/open countryside; and
- good community spirit

I'll keep you informed in the newsletter as to how your answers to this have helped shape the plan further.

## The Reassurance Agenda

Section 2 of the June survey concentrated on the Reassurance Agenda for the Community Safety Partnership.



The Community Safety Partnership has been set up to prevent and reduce crime, disorder and drug misuse within the Borough. It is made up of Greater Manchester Police, Wigan Council, The Probation Service, Greater Manchester Fire Service, the Local Health Authority and Voluntary and Community Groups like Victim Support and Witness Service.

In order to measure how we're performing on our key objectives, it's crucial that we ask you about your perceptions of your neighbourhood regarding anti-social behaviour and your overall feelings of personal safety. The



information will be used to check that we're moving in the right direction in making you feel safer. The Police and the Criminal Justice System have a very important role to play in reducing crime.

We asked this section of questions because we need to know what you think of these agencies and how much confidence you have in them. The information we obtained through your answers in this section will be used to inform our activities across the Partnership. Our key aim is to improve how we not only respond to your issues, but how we tell you what we've done, and how well we've done it.

This will help us to see whether what we are doing is actually making a difference.




## Hospital services

In the June survey we

asked a section of questions about local NHS Hospitals. This section was asked because Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh NHS Trust want to know how the general public view the Trust. We asked this set of questions as the Trust are interested in what you think of particular services. And they wanted you to tell us what your overall impression is of the various hospitals, including:

Royal Albert Edward Infirmary, Leigh Infirmary, Wrightington Hospital, Whelley Hospital and the Thomas Linacre Out-Patient Centre.

Even those of you who have

Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh 

not used any of the services, were asked to respond in this section. This is because all views and opinions are equally as important as each other and, even if you haven't used a particular service, we wanted to know whether or not you have a general



impression of it. Sometimes this perspective can be useful too.

The feedback you gave us in this section will be used to improve plans for hospital services in the future.

The results you provided have already been passed to the Director of Corporate Governance and Commercial Development, who is taking the information into account during the production of future business plans and marketing strategies for the Trust.

## Readers' Panel

Over the last 18 months since I started my job here in the Chief

Executives department, I have been in charge of managing our Readers' Panel.



Throughout this period we have consulted with a number of different groups from the panel and we have used the comments from these groups to improve, amend, change and update various documents, leaflets and services.

We have also passed on the feedback from residents to high level managers and directors within the council to ensure that they are aware of opinions and

issues raised by panel members all of whom are Wigan residents.



I am arranging 2 focus groups over the coming weeks which will be looking at a variety of interesting topics including:

- An Information pack for new governors; and a
- summary of accounts for both Wigan Council and the Fire Authority.

The great thing about being on the panel and attending groups

such as these is that you don't need to have any knowledge of a particular subject in order to be able to contribute. All you are asked to do is read through documents, see whether you think they make sense and offer your opinion on how you think this could be improved. Or simply say that you think it is fine the way it is.

If you are not a member of this panel, but are interested in finding out more about it, please get in touch with me using the details on the back page of this newsletter.





## Your questions answered...??



**T**hroughout the year we send out lots of information and questionnaires to you. You often get back to us with questions about these. We thought that this would be an ideal opportunity to give you the answers to some of the most frequently asked questions, so here goes.

**Q: My friend is interested in becoming a member of the Citizens' Panel. How do they get involved?**

**A:** We are always looking to recruit new panel members especially men and people aged 18-25 -although all of your views are equally important to us. If you, or someone you know, wants to join the Citizens' Panel ring, write to me or e-mail using the contact details on the back

page. I will pass your details on to the research company BMG when the panel is renewed once a year.



**Q: I have been away on holiday and missed the deadline for sending back my completed questionnaire—am I still able to send it in?**

**A:** Yes—definitely! Your input is vital and we would encourage you to always send back your questionnaires even if they are after the deadline, as BMG will update the results.

**Q: Why have I received a reminder letter saying I haven't received my completed questionnaire when you have posted it back already?**

**A:** This is a question that some of you have asked. BMG send out reminder letters a few weeks into each survey to encourage you to complete it. Sometimes there is an overlap with this mail-out which results in you posting back your form at the same time as BMG post their reminder letter to you. It is unfortunate and we know it can be irritating but you can be assured that, unless there are unforeseen problems with the postal service, if you send back your questionnaire we will receive it.

If you have any questions or queries about the Citizens' Panel you can telephone, e-mail or write to me using the contact details at the bottom of this page of the newsletter.

Dear all,

Thank you to all of you once again for taking the time to read this newsletter and also for completing another successful Citizens' Panel survey.

The sections being covered in the survey this time are once again very interesting and your responses will make a difference to the way Wigan Council moves on with the services we provide.

As always I appreciate hearing your opinions on both the questionnaire and the newsletter in general. If you have any feedback, questions or comments, please get in touch with me using the contact details below.

Many thanks

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**Next survey  
November 2007**