



in Lancashire

Life in Lancashire Wave 15

Fieldwork 15 February – 24 March 2006
Contacting Lancashire County Council
Contacting your district council
Road Safety
Living in Lancashire

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April 2006

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1 Executive Summary

Wave 15 of Life in Lancashire was sent to 2,406 members of the panel on 15 February. A reminder was sent to non-respondents on 8 March. The fieldwork ended on 24 March 2006.

No incentive for respondents to complete the questionnaire was given. In total 1,640 questionnaires were returned, giving an overall response rate of 68%.

1.1 Contacting the county council

- Three in ten of the citizens' panel have contacted Lancashire County Council in the last 12 months (30%).
- People contacting were most likely to do so to ask for information or help and advice (36% and 34%), or to report a problem (30%). The majority did so by telephone (70%).
- Two in five people (41%) did not have their problem resolved by the first person they spoke to (apart from the secretary). These people are only half as likely to be satisfied with the service they receive than those whose query was resolved by the first person they spoke to.
- The majority of respondents were satisfied with the final outcome of their call or visit (64%), though one in six said their query was still not resolved (16%).
- Respondents who contacted the council to complain were the least satisfied with the final outcome of their query, (with 34% dissatisfied and 26% saying their complaint is still not resolved). People who said that finding the right person was easy were much more satisfied (81%) than those who described it as difficult (28%).
- All factors of customer service were seen as important, especially the accuracy of information and the helpfulness of staff (90% and 87% definitely agree respectively).
- A single telephone number for the county council is seen as the highest priority for getting in touch easier (56%), especially by respondents aged sixty or over (67%).

1.2 Contacting the local district council

- Panel members were about half as likely again to contact their district council as the county council, with nearly half answering that they had contacted in the last year (46%).
- Those contacting the district council were most likely to do so about refuse collection (29%). They were also more likely to make a complaint compared to the county council (39%).
- About seven in ten use the phone to contact the district council (72%).
- The total proportion satisfied was the same as for the county council (64%).
- Respondents who complained were again less likely to be satisfied, (51% satisfied), but were less dissatisfied than those complaining to the county council and were more likely to have their problem resolved.

1.3 Buying services online

- About half of respondents have made payments online using a credit or debit card (52%).
- Panel members aged 60 years or over (31%), from socio-economic groups C2 (42%) and DE (37%) or living in a council or housing association home (25%) are significantly less likely to have done so.
- About half would pay for goods or services from the county council using their card. People aged over 60 are more reluctant to make payments over the internet (66% answering no), as are people from socio-economic backgrounds DE or living in a council or housing association background (58% and 74% saying no respectively).

1.4 Road safety

- Nine in ten of the panel have either a full or provisional licence (90%), the vast majority for a car.
- Only about a quarter of drivers have had any training since their test (26%) and few actively plan to take any in the next two years (9%).
- Nine in ten of the panel say they definitely agree that road safety education is an important part of a child's education (89%). Two in

three answer that they definitely agree it should be part of the school curriculum (66%).

- Most people felt that the child's parents (92%) and school (87%) should provide road safety education. About half think that Lancashire County Council has a role to play (47%).
- Three in five of the panel had not heard of any of the services provided by the Road Safety Group (39%). About one in four of the panel have heard of the Passport to Safer Cycling (24%).
- There is a high awareness of the Think! logo, with about three-quarters of respondents having seen it (73%). About one in five have also seen both the Lancashire Partnership for Road Safety and the Road Safety logos, (both 19%).
- Local newspapers are the most common current and most preferred media for finding out about road safety. The youngest 16-24 years age group are also likely to prefer communications by radio (52%) and leaflets (45%).

1.5 Living in Lancashire

- There has been an 8% increase in the proportion very satisfied with the provision of **household waste disposal sites** on the 2003 BVPI survey.

1.6 Recommendations

1.6.1 Contacting the council

Making finding the correct person as easy as possible is a priority, since this is strongly related to the customer satisfaction. One problem that has been identified in other research is the strong confusion between district and county council services and it may well be that many unresolved calls have gone to the wrong council. The new contact centre must make a particular effort to deal with this problem, and passing people across directly to the correct place is a priority. Investigate the reasons why problems aren't resolved.

Despite the wider use of the internet and mobile phones, there is still greatest preference for a single helpline telephone number for the county council. This particularly true for those aged over 60 years, people from an ethnic minority and people with a disability.

1.6.2 Buying goods and services online

Allowing online payments may well make paying for services easier and faster for certain sections of the community. However there still need to be other methods available for people who are unable or unwilling to make payments over the internet.

1.6.3 Road safety

There is strong agreement that road safety education is both an important part of a child's development and should be a part of the school curriculum. There is also some agreement that Lancashire County Council has a part to play, though there is an implication that some of this should be through schools.

There is certainly scope for encouraging more uptake of driver training, since few actively plan to take some. Almost half of people say they don't know whether they will take any training, (rather than do not plan to), and this may be a useful group of people to give more information to. By emphasising the benefits of driver training (eg lower insurance premiums) through suitable media, such as local newspapers, it may well be possible to increase uptake.

The Passport to Safer Cycling is the Road Safety Group's highest profile service. This possibly again highlights the importance of working with schools, since awareness is highest amongst those with children and who get information from schools and colleges. It is also important of course to consider the rest of the population.

When publishing information and undertaking campaigns consider the prospective audience. Local newspapers and television are suitable for all audiences, but radio may be the best medium for younger audiences for example. It may be worth considering whether Roadlife is viable, or whether it would be better to divert funds into other communications activities.

2 Introduction

Lancashire County Council has used Life in Lancashire regularly since August 2001. A panel of willing participants is recruited and is approached on a regular basis to seek their views on a range of topics and themes. Panel members are voluntary participants in the research they complete and no incentives are given for completion.

The panel has been designed to be a representative cross-section of the county's population. The results for each survey are weighted in order to reflect the demographic profile of the county's population.

The panel provides access to a sufficiently large sample of the population so that reliable results can be reported at a county wide level. It also provides data at a number of sub-area and sub-group levels.

Each Life in Lancashire wave is themed. Firstly, it enables sufficient coverage on a particular topic to be able to provide insight into that topic. And secondly, it comes across better to the residents completing the questionnaires if there is a clear theme (or 2-3 clear themes) within each survey.

The panel is refreshed periodically. New members are recruited to the panel and some current members are retired on a random basis. This means that the panel remains fresh and is not subject to conditioning ie the views of panel members become too informed with county council services to be unrepresentative of the population as a whole. The current panel was recruited in September 2005.

3 Research Objectives

The research objectives for wave 15 focus on contacting the county and district council, road safety and satisfaction with county council services and the local area. The main questions areas looked at:

- usage and satisfaction with contacting the county and district council;
- the likely use of online payments for Lancashire County Council services;
- the usage of road safety education and the awareness of the Road Safety Group; and
- satisfaction with the county council and the local area.

4 Methodology

Wave 15 of Life in Lancashire was sent to 2,406 members of the panel on 15 February. A reminder was sent to non-respondents on 8 March. The fieldwork ended on 24 March 2006.

No incentive for respondents to complete the questionnaire was given. In total 1,640 questionnaires were returned, giving an overall response rate of 68%.

All data are weighted by gender, age, ethnicity and district to reflect the Lancashire overall population, and figures are based on all respondents unless otherwise stated. The weighted responses have been scaled down to match the effective response of 1328 which is the equivalent size of the data if it had not been weighted and was a perfect random sample.

4.1 Limitations

The table below shows the sample tolerances that apply to the results in this survey. Sampling tolerances vary with the size of the sample as well as the percentage results.

Number of respondents	50/50 + / -	30/70 + / -	10/90 + / -
50	14%	13%	8%
100	10%	9%	6%
200	7%	6%	4%
500	4%	4%	3%
1000	3%	3%	2%
2000	2%	2%	1%

On a question where 50% of the people in a sample of 1,000 respond with a particular answer, the chance are 95 out of 100 that the answer would be between 47% and 53% (ie +/- 3%), versus a complete coverage of the entire Lancashire population using the same procedure.

5 Main Research Findings

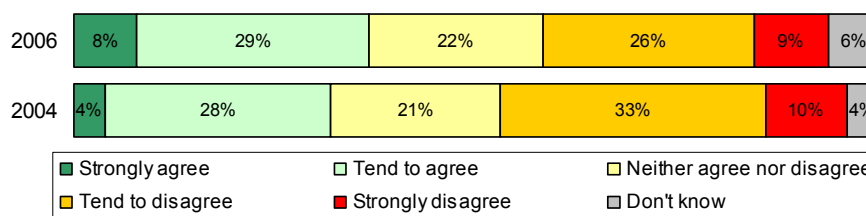
5.1 Living in Lancashire

The final section of the questionnaire asked members of the panel a wide variety of questions set as key performance indicators for the county council. Some of these questions have been asked to the Life in Lancashire panel before, in one of two waves from 2004. The panel has since been refreshed several times however, so only a small minority had seen any questions before.

The first question asked whether people felt they could influence local decisions. About the same proportions of people agree and disagree that they can influence decisions affecting their area, (37% and 35% respectively). Respondents from an ethnic minority were more likely to agree that they could influence decisions (43% agreeing).

The same question was also asked as part of the Life in Lancashire Wave 12 questionnaire in October 2004. There is an increase in the proportion agreeing and a reduction in the proportion disagreeing, adding to a significant difference between the two panels. However this could be due to a difference in panel make-up rather than a difference in the wider public.

Chart 1 - Do you agree or disagree that you can influence decisions affecting your local area?

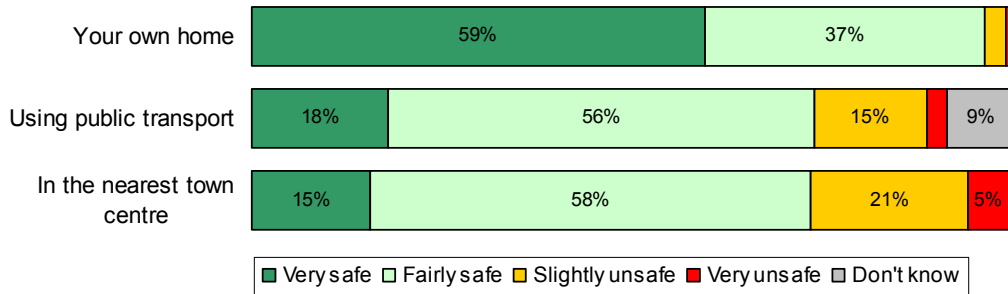


Base: All respondents 2006 (unweighted 1640, weighted 1328); 2004 (unweighted 2006, weighted 1577)

Panel members were next asked how safe they felt in various different situations, both during the day and after dark. During the day almost all people feel safe while in their own home (96% safe), and the majority feel safe using public transport and in the nearest town centre (74% and 73% respectively).

Looking by demographics, people aged 25 to 44 years and from socio-economic groups AB feel significantly safer at home during the day (both 70% very safe). Respondents living in council or housing association housing or rented privately are less likely to say they feel very safe (47% and 55% respectively). People with a disability feel less safe out in the local town centre (66% very or fairly safe) as are Hyndburn (62%) and Rossendale (67%) residents.

Chart 2 - Thinking about the neighbourhood you live in, how safe would you say you feel on your own in each of the following situations during the day?

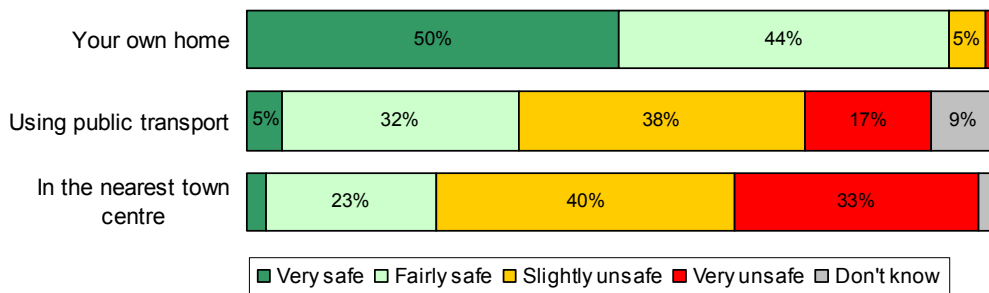


Base: All respondents (Unweighted 1640, Weighted 1328)

After dark, while most people feel safe in their own homes (94%), the majority feel unsafe using public transport and out in the nearest town centre (55% and 72% feel unsafe).

Respondents aged 25-44 years feel the safest in their own homes at night, with three in five considering themselves very safe (58%). Women feel significantly less safe on public transport after dark than men (63% unsafe compared with 44%). Women also feel significantly less safe than men in the nearest town centre (78% unsafe against 65%). Preston (18% safe), Burnley (18%) and Rossendale (16%) residents also feel significantly less safe in town at night with only around one in six feeling safe.

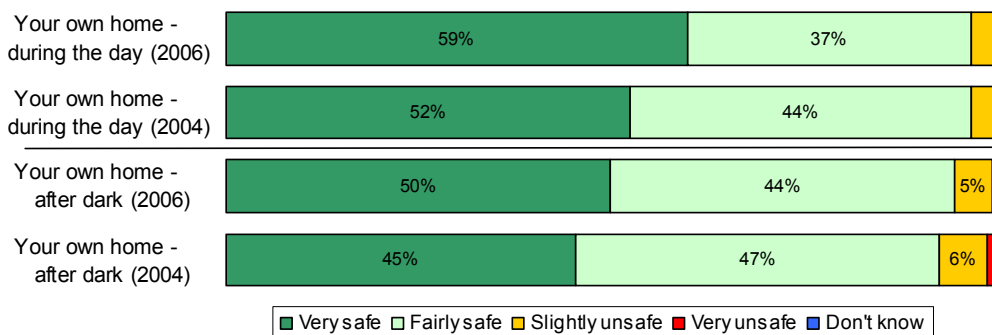
Chart 3 - And how safe would you feel on your own in each of these situations after dark?



Base: All respondents (Unweighted 1640, Weighted 1328)

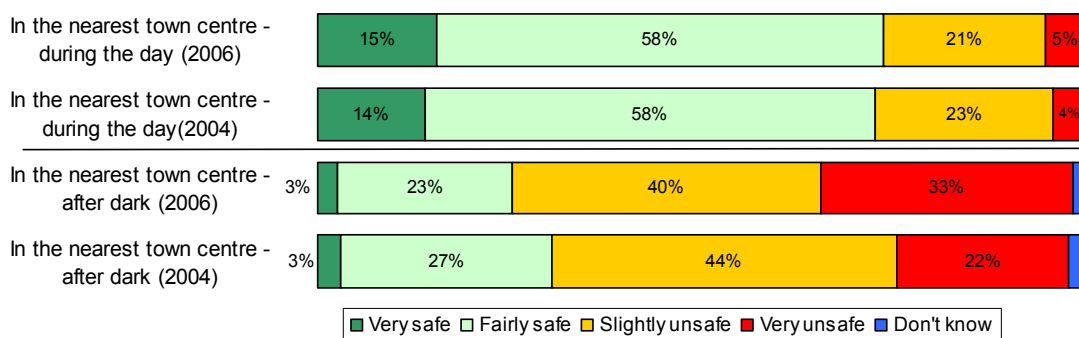
The questions on perceived safety at home and in the nearest town centre were asked previously on wave 11 of Life in Lancashire. All members of the panel at the time of the research, in summer 2004, have since been retired. Members of the panel feel significantly safer in their own homes than in 2004, though feel significantly less safe in the nearest town centre after dark. As mentioned previously, this may be due to differences in panel makeup this time.

Chart 4 - Thinking about the neighbourhood you live in, how safe would you say you feel on your own in each of the following situations...in your own home?



Base: All respondents 2006 (U 1640, W 1328); 2004 (U 1654 W 1318)

Chart 5 - Thinking about the neighbourhood you live in, how safe would you say you feel on your own in each of the following situations...in the nearest town centre?



Base: All respondents 2006 (U 1640, W 1328); 2004 (U 1654 W 1318)

Respondents were next asked a range of questions assessing the state of several aspects of the Lancashire County Council 'brand'. The majority of people feel that county council services are broadly good overall (59%). People living in council or housing association accommodation are significantly more likely to agree (70%), while Rossendale residents are less likely to (37%).

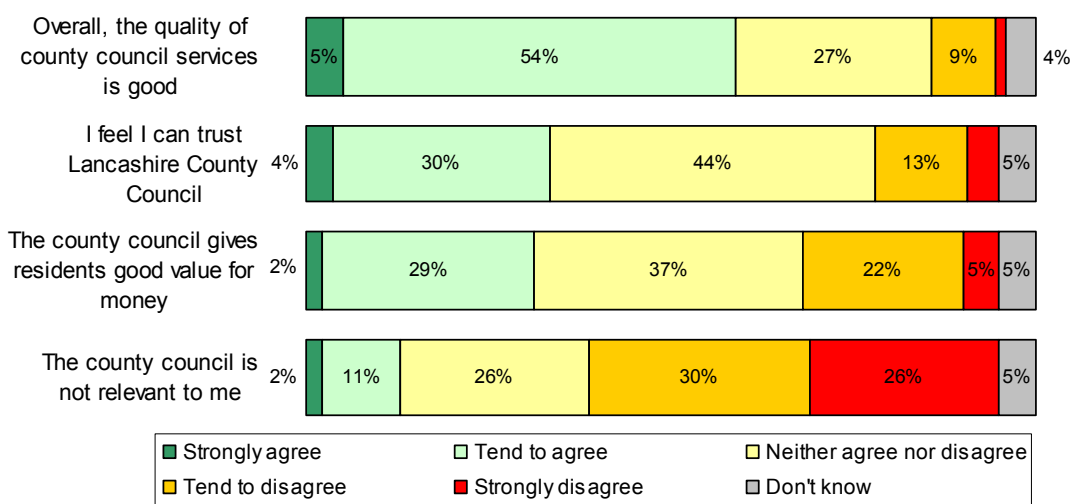
Twice the people trust (34%) than distrust (17%) the county council, though the highest answer is that respondents do not know whether to agree or disagree (44% neither agree nor disagree). Panel members aged over 60 years (41% agreeing) and those living in council or housing association accommodation (51%) were more likely to agree.

Similar proportions agree (31%) and disagree (27%) that the council gives good value for money. Again the over 60s (40% agreeing) and council tenants (51%) agree more. There is also either a fair proportion of either uncertainty or apathy, with about half of the panel answering that either they

don't know or neither agree nor disagree (49%) about whether they trust Lancashire County Council.

The majority of the panel disagree that the county council is not relevant to them (56% disagree), though it should be remembered that those answering are members of a citizen's panel and therefore may not be completely typical of the wider public. Having said this, this group of questions were put to the wider public in face to face questions as part of the Life in Lancashire 2003 survey. Due to the different methodologies, the surveys are not directly comparable, but the results are still very similar, with nearly identical agreement for the quality of services overall (58% against 59% here) and for value for money (32% against 31% this time).

Chart 6 - Thinking about Lancashire County Council, how much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements...?

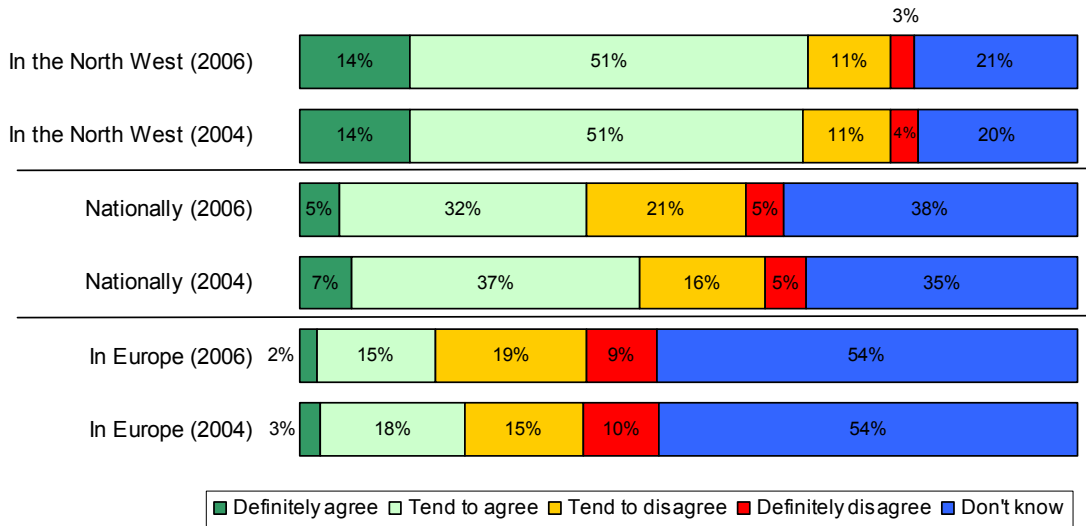


Base: All respondents (Unweighted 1640, Weighted 1328)

The final questions asked whether Lancashire County Council speaks up for Lancashire at different levels. About two in three respondents agree that the council speaks up for the county in the North West (65%), while there is less certainty nationally (37% agree) and for in Europe (17% agree), where about half of people answer they don't know (54%).

The same questions were asked on wave 12 of Life in Lancashire in 2004. The proportions of those giving an answer agreeing have actually gone down nationally and in Europe, though this is dominated by the large proportion answering they don't know. More communication with Lancashire residents is needed for these proportions to change since clearly many people do not know whether Lancashire County Council has a presence or effect, in Europe especially.

Chart 7 - For each of the following, do you agree or disagree that Lancashire County Council speaks up for Lancashire and its people?



Base: All respondents 2006 (U 1640, W 1328); 2004 (U 2006, W 1577)

6 Summary

6.1 Living in Lancashire

- About the same proportions of people agree and disagree that they can influence decisions affecting their area, (37% and 35% respectively). Respondents from an ethnic minority were more likely to agree that they could influence decisions (43% agreeing).
- The vast majority of people feel safe while in their own home (96% safe in the day and 94% safe after dark). During the day, similar proportions feel safe using public transport as in the nearest town centre (74% and 73% respectively), though the majority feel unsafe at night (55% and 72% feel unsafe).
- The majority of people feel that county council services are broadly good overall (59%). People living in council or housing association accommodation are significantly more likely to agree (70%), while Rossendale residents are less likely to (37%).
- Twice the people trust (34%) than distrust (17%) the county council, though the highest answer is that respondents do not know whether to agree or disagree (44% neither agree nor disagree).
- The majority of the panel disagree that the county council is not relevant to them (56% disagree).
- About two in three respondents agree that the council speaks up for the county in the North West (65%), while there is less certainty nationally (37% agree) and for in Europe (17% agree), where about half of people answer they don't know (54%).

7 Conclusions

7.1 Living in Lancashire

Similar proportions of the panel agree and disagree that they can influence decisions affecting the local area. This is an improvement on when this question was last put to the panel in 2004, when more disagreed than agreed. Similarly a higher proportion of the panel felt safe in their homes and felt unsafe in the local town at night, but without definite reasons for these changes, they could just be due to slight differences in the makeup of the panel. It may be appropriate to compare this research with results from elsewhere, such as the police's Opinion! citizens' panel, which has asked similar questions.

There is a fair regard for the quality of county council services and about a third of the panel feel they can trust the council, though there is some doubt over whether the council provides value for money. These 'branding' measures match closely to another previous survey from 2003.

There is widespread uncertainty over the role of the county council speaking up for Lancashire nationally and in Europe. Any work the county council does nationally and in Europe needs to be better publicised and communicated to Lancashire residents, since so many do not know what work the council does here.

8 Appendix

8.1 Socio-Economic Group Definitions

These groups are based on Market Research Society definitions and on the respondent. They are graded as A, B, C1, C2, D and E.

Group A

- Professional people, very senior managers in business or commerce or top-level civil servants.
- Retired people, previously grade A, and their widows

Group B

- Middle management executives in large organisations, with appropriate qualifications
- Principle officers in local government and civil service
- Top management or owners of small business concerns, educational and service establishments
- Retired people previously grade B, and their widows

Group C1

- Junior management, owners of small establishments, and all others in non-manual positions
- Jobs in this group have very varied responsibilities and educational requirements
- Retired people, previously grade C1, and their widows

Group C2

- All skilled manual workers, and those manual workers for responsibility for other people
- Retired people, previously grade C2, with pensions from their job
- Widows, if receiving pensions from their late partner's job

Group D

- All semi skilled and unskilled manual workers, and apprentices and trainees to skilled workers
- Retired people, previously grade D, with pensions from their late job
- Widows, if receiving pensions from their late partner's job

Group E

- All those entirely dependant on the state long term, through sickness, unemployment, old age or other reasons
- Those unemployed for a period exceeding six months (otherwise classified on previous occupation)
- Casual workers and those without a regular income

8.2 Marked Up Questionnaire