

Life in Lancashire Panel Wave 7
Report from panel research
carried out on behalf of
LANCASHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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1. Introduction

This report contains the main findings to emerge from a survey of members of the Life in Lancashire citizens' panel. RBA Research recruited a panel covering the 12 districts within Lancashire County Council in June 2001.

This is the seventh time that the main Lancashire Panel has been surveyed.

1.1 Background and Objectives

The Life in Lancashire panel provides an opportunity to approach willing participants on a regular basis to seek their views on a range of topics. Panel members are all volunteers. The panel has been designed to be a demographic cross-section of the population of the County, and the results of each survey are weighted in order to reflect the demographic profile of the County's population.

The panel provides ready access to this broad cross section of the population. It also provides access to a sufficiently large sample of the population that reliable results can be reported at County-wide level and at a number of sub-area or sub-group levels.

Each activation of the Panel is 'themed' for two key reasons. Firstly, it enables us to have sufficient coverage on a particular topic to be able to provide insight into that topic. Secondly, it comes across better to the residents completing the questionnaires if there is a clear theme (or two clear themes) within each survey.

For Lancashire County Council, this latest survey focuses on protecting the consumer and the Trading Standards Service, and on disability:

- The Trading Standards questions were designed to help the council understand what the public knows about the work of Trading Standards, and to find out the public's views on priorities for this service.
- The Disability questions were designed to help the council understand the attitudes held towards disability, to help it develop its existing work with and on behalf of disabled residents.
- Panel members were also asked a number of questions about their general perceptions of their local area, partly to provide some 'general interest' questions to start the questionnaire, but also to provide useful information about residents' concerns and priorities.

1.2 Methodology

Postal questionnaires were sent out to all those on the Lancashire panel database (1477 residents) on 27th January 2003. A reminder was sent out on 6th February 2003. The cut off period was extended and a third reminder was sent out on the 27th February to just over 600 people who had still not responded. By 11th March, 980 questionnaires were returned. The final return represents a response rate of 66%. The results of the survey have been weighted by district size, age, gender and housing tenure.

1.3 Interpretation of the Data

This report contains several tables and charts that show the survey results. In some instances, the responses may not add up to 100%. There are several reasons why this might happen: the question may have allowed each respondent to give more than one answer; only the most common responses may be shown on the table; or individual percentages may have been rounded to the nearest whole number such that the total comes to 99% or 101%.

All of the figures given in this report are taken from the weighted dataset.

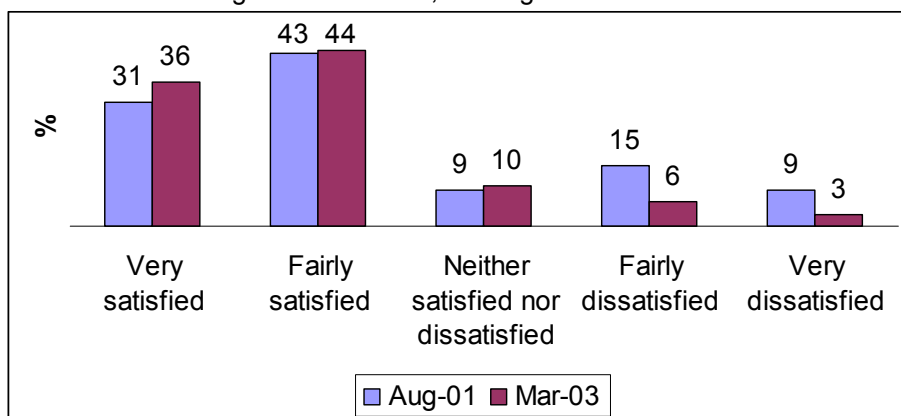
2. LIVING IN LANCASHIRE

2.1 Overall Satisfaction with the Area

As an introduction to the survey, panel members were asked a short series of questions about their satisfaction with the area. This repeats questions asked in the recruitment questionnaire, so it is possible to compare data over time. The encouraging result is that at this time, eight out of ten panel members say they are satisfied with the area in which they live (80%) – which is more than the 73% who said they were satisfied in August 2001. Chart 1 shows that there has been a corresponding fall in dissatisfaction:

Chart 1: Satisfaction with Area as a Place to Live

Base: All: 2001 Weighted base 1483; Unweighted base 1208
2003 Weighted base 1184; Unweighted base 980



Note that we cannot infer from this that the population as a whole is more satisfied – simply that panel members are! It is possible that the increased satisfaction is a direct result of panel participation (panel members are probably better informed than the population as a whole, and this may have led to higher satisfaction). It is also possible that the people who have stayed on the panel are those who tend to be more satisfied – perhaps those who have chosen to leave the panel or not to participate in this survey are less satisfied.

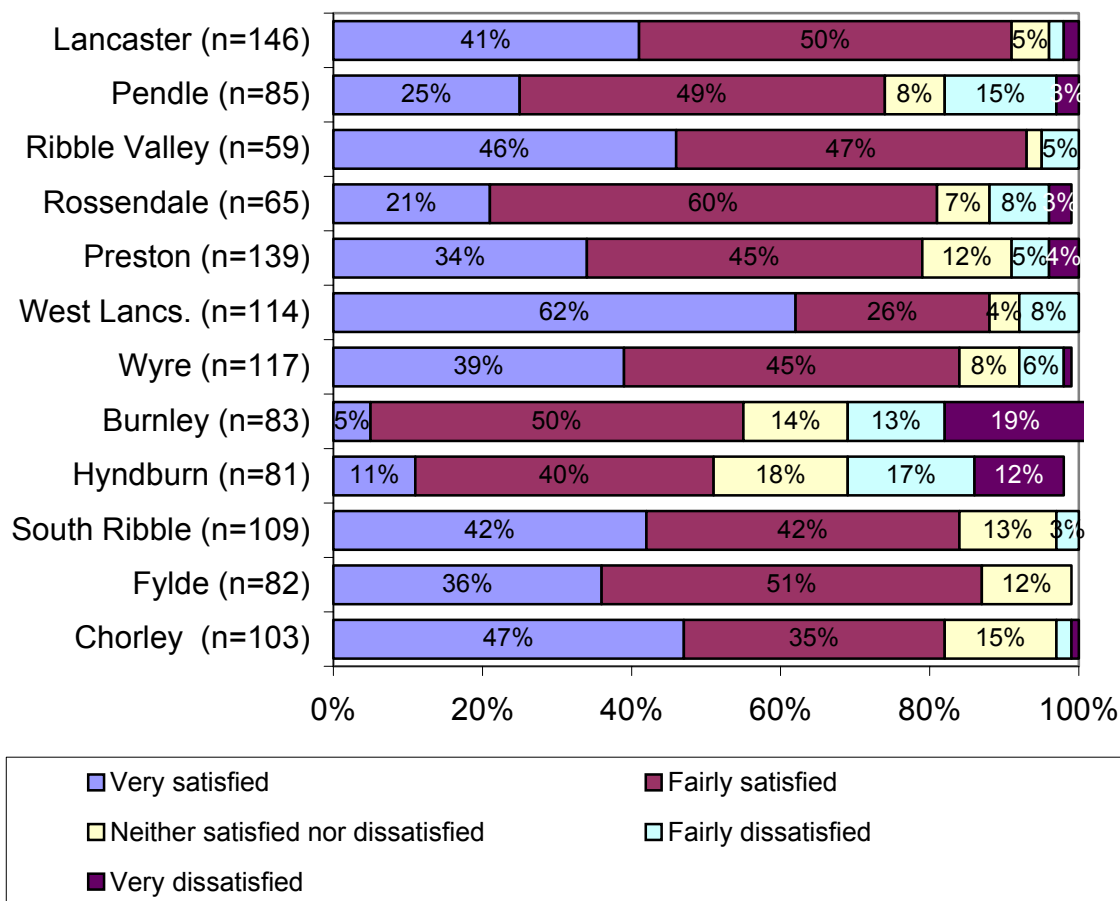
The overall satisfaction does mask significant differences within the panel, with certain groups being far more likely to be dissatisfied:

- those with a disability (13% dissatisfied compared to 7% of non-disabled);
- those without a car (13% dissatisfied);
- C2DEs (13% dissatisfied);
- those living in urban areas or market towns (14% and 11% respectively).

There are also differences by area as shown in Chart 2, with Ribble Valley, Lancaster, West Lancashire and Fylde standing out as being more satisfied than average. In fact, 62% of those living in West Lancashire say they are 'very' satisfied, compared with 36% overall. In comparison, panel members in Burnley, Hyndburn and Pendle feature as being more likely to be dissatisfied:

Chart 2: Satisfaction with Area as a Place to Live, by District

Base: All (Weighted base 1184; Unweighted base 980)



2.2 Good Things About the Area

The good things about the area in which panel members live tend to relate to the rural environment, convenience of facilities, and community factors, including education facilities (they were asked to select up to four from a list). Table 1 summarises the results, and highlights particular groups of respondents who are more likely to mention each aspect. It is worth noting that Ribble Valley features more highly on several positive aspects, notably the environment and education facilities, and Fylde on environment and convenience of facilities.

Table 1: Good Things about the Area

Base: All (Weighted base 1184; Unweighted base 980)

Environment		Groups most likely to mention:
Openness / greenery / countryside	54%	Rural areas, West Lancashire, Rossendale, Ribble Valley, Pendle and Chorley
Access to countryside / coast	41%	Fylde
Peace and quiet	36%	Rural locations, Fylde, Ribble Valley
Convenience of Facilities		
Convenient for shops	47%	With a disability, without a car, urban and market town locations, Burnley
Access to other places / centrally located	40%	Burnley, Preston and Chorley
Adequate public transport	27%	Aged 60+, with disability, no access to a car, urban (& market towns to a lesser extent), Burnley, Preston
Convenient for work	22%	Aged under 25
Good shopping facilities	11%	No access to car, Wyre
Community Factors		
Near to family / friends	37%	Aged under 45, urban and market town locations
Friendly neighbours / people / good community spirit	37%	Aged 60+, Wyre, Pendle
Good schools / education	31%	Age 25-44, with children in household, Ribble Valley
Safe area / low crime rate	29%	Abs, rural locations, Wyre, Ribble Valley

2.3 Bad Things About the Area

The bad things identified by respondents relate more to crime / potential crime, lack of facilities, environment and transport issues. These are summarised in Table 2 (again, respondents were asked to select up to four from a list). Certain groups of panel members feature particularly highly: those living in Council / housing association property, and those in Hyndburn, Burnley, Rossendale and Ribble Valley, but the dissatisfactions vary for the different areas. It is worth noting that the environment and crime feature particularly for panel members living in Burnley, and crime for those living in Hyndburn. In contrast, the lack of facilities feature for those in Rossendale, while transportation issues are higher profile for those in Ribble Valley.

Table 2: The Bad Things about the Area

Base: All (Weighted base 1184; Unweighted base 980)

		Groups most likely to mention:
Facilities		
Poor facilities for young people	43%	Children in household, Rossendale
Poor leisure / recreation facilities	19%	Living in Council / housing association property, Rossendale
Poor public transport	19%	Rural areas, West Lancashire, Ribble Valley
Poor shopping facilities	16%	West Lancashire, Pendle
Inconvenient for shops	10%	Pendle, Ribble Valley
Environment		
Streets not clean enough	35%	Aged 60+, DEs, living in urban areas, Hyndburn, Burnley
Lack of peace and quiet	10%	Living in Council / housing association property, Burnley
Transport		
Speed of traffic	32%	DEs, West Lancashire, living in Council / Housing Association property
Too much traffic	30%	Living in urban areas, Chorley, Preston, South Ribble
Poor conditions of roads	29%	Have access to a car, C2s, particularly Rossendale (61%)
Poor parking	23%	Living in market towns, Ribble Valley
Crime		
Too much vandalism / graffiti	20%	Those without access to a car, DEs, Hyndburn, Burnley
Drug misuse	18%	Those without access to a car, DEs, living in Council / housing association property, particularly Burnley (51%)
Unsafe / high crime rate	15%	Those with a disability, living in Council / housing association property, Hyndburn, particularly Burnley (53%)

2.4 Quality of Life

Panel members were also given the opportunity to identify from a list up to four changes to their area that they think would make the greatest improvement to their quality of life. These are summarised in Table 3, highlighting different priorities in the different areas. As might be expected, the anticipated most significant improvements relate quite closely to the differing concerns of different groups of respondents.

Table 3: Changes that would make the Greatest Improvement to Quality of Life

Base: All (Weighted base 1184; Unweighted base 980)

		Groups most likely to mention:
Better road and pavement maintenance	41%	Those with a disability
Better services for young people	41%	Those with children in the household, Rossendale
Reducing the level of crime	30%	Those without access to a car, DEs, those in urban and market town locations, those living in Council / housing association properties, Burnley
Fewer new developments	26%	Fylde, West Lancashire, Wyre, Ribble Valley
Less congested roads	25%	South Ribble, Chorley
Reducing drug crime in the area	24%	Those without access to a car, DEs, those living in urban and market town locations, Burnley, Pendle
More say on decisions affecting local services	23%	Fylde, Burnley
Better public transport	21%	Those in rural locations, West Lancashire
Better leisure facilities	21%	
More affordable housing for local people	20%	Those in Council / housing association or other properties, Ribble Valley, Fylde
Better street lighting	16%	Those without access to a car, those living in Council / housing association property, Burnley
Better facilities for cyclists and pedestrians	15%	Those without access to a car
Better sports centres and facilities	14%	
Better job prospects	13%	Those living in market towns, Wyre
Better facilities for disabled people	10%	Those aged 60+, DEs, those with a disability
Better road links	8%	Lancaster
Less air pollution	8%	
Better facilities for working parents	8%	

3 PROTECTING THE CONSUMER

3.1 Experience of Consumer Problems

Half of panel members say they have experienced one or more problems in relation to goods or services purchased in the past 12 months (49%). Almost half of these have experienced just one problem (46%, or 23% overall), but a quarter have experienced two (24%, or 12% overall), almost a fifth have experienced three (19%, or 9% overall) and some have experienced four or five or more problems in the previous year (9%, or 4% overall experienced four; 3%, or 1% overall experienced five or more). Those more likely to have experienced problems include:

- men (53%);
- those in work (54%);
- C2s (60%);
- those with children at home (61%);
- those living in West Lancashire (68%).

Older panel members (aged 60+) are significantly less likely to say they have experienced a problem (30% do).

Quality of goods/services and pricing top the list of problems experienced. The kinds of problems experienced are summarised in Table 4, together with highlighted groups who are most likely to say they have experienced each problem.

Table 4: Problems Experienced in the Past 12 Months

Base: All (Weighted base 1184; Unweighted base 980)

		Groups most likely to mention:
Poor quality of goods and services	25%	Those aged 25-44, those in full time employment, C2s, those with children at home, West Lancashire
Problems with pricing	22%	Those with children at home
Misleading information	16%	
Unfair trading practise	11%	
Poor or inadequate labelling	10%	Those living in Council / housing association property
Unsafe food	8%	Those in housing other than owner / Council / housing association
Poor safety of goods or services	3%	
Incorrect weights and measures	1%	

Almost a quarter of those who experienced a problem say they did not contact anyone about it (23%). Of those who did, in most cases they sorted it out with the trader (57%). One in seven say they contacted a friend or family member (14%), and a similar proportion say they did contact the Trading Standards Service (13%). This proportion increases to around a fifth of those panel members who say they know something about the Trading Standards service (19%).

A few contacted Citizens' Advice (7%) and / or the District Council (4%), and / or a trade association (4%), and 3% went as far as to contact a solicitor. There are no significant differences in approach between different groups of panel members.

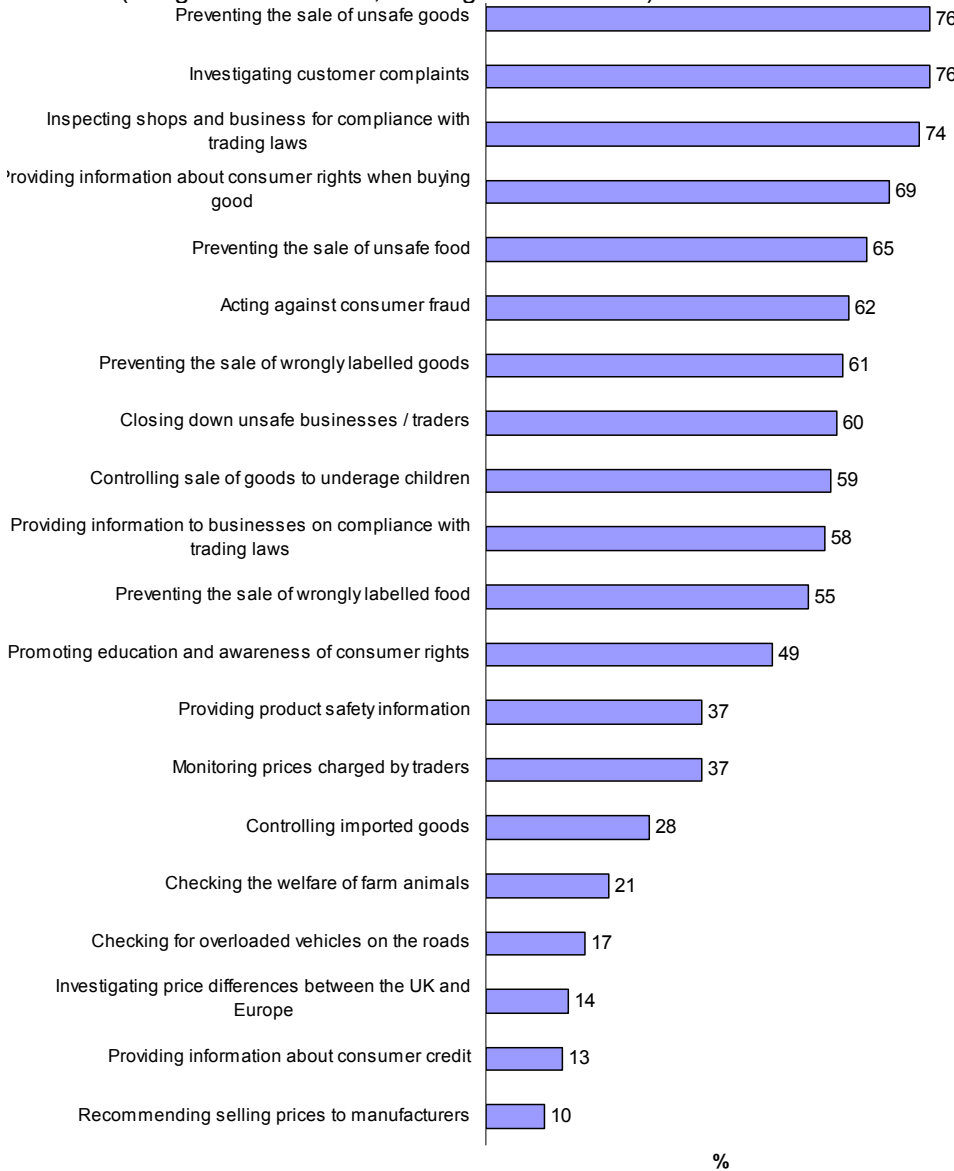
3.2 Current Awareness of the Trading Standards Service

Most panel members have at least heard of the Trading Standards Service (84%), although this proportion decreases amongst the youngest panellists and those living in Pendle (68% and 73% respectively). Two-fifths say they have heard of the name but know nothing about it (39%), and the same proportion say they know a little (40%). Just one in twenty claims to know a lot about the Trading Standards Service (5%).

Respondents were given a list of possible responsibilities; Chart 3 summarises those that panel members believe are attributable to the Trading Standards service:

Chart 3: Perceived Responsibilities of Trading Standards Service

Base: All (Weighted base 1184; Unweighted base 980)



As Chart 3 shows, the most commonly perceived responsibilities include investigating customer complaints, preventing the sale of unsafe goods and inspecting shops and businesses for compliance with trading laws – each recognised by around three-quarters of panel members. At the other end of the scale, a fifth or less perceive the responsibilities as being the checking on the welfare of farm animals, checking for overloaded vehicles, investigating price differences between the UK and Europe, providing information about consumer credit, and / or recommending selling prices to manufacturers.

Some patterns are noticeable amongst the sub-groups of panel members, particularly relating to age, SEG group and tenure:

- The youngest panel members (aged <25) are more likely to be aware of Trading Standards Service responsibilities to monitor prices charged by traders (69%), and preventing the sale of unsafe food (85%);
- The oldest panel members (60+) are *less* likely to be aware of the role in controlling the sale of goods to underage children (49%), preventing the sale of wrongly labelled goods (49%), monitoring prices charged by traders (29%), preventing the sale of wrongly labelled food (46%), and preventing the sale of unsafe goods (66%);
- DEs and those living in Council / housing association property are less likely to be aware of the responsibilities to prevent the sale of wrongly labelled goods (49% of DEs and 48% of those in Council/HA housing), provide information to businesses about compliance with trading law (48% and 45% respectively), and promote education and awareness on consumer rights (41% and 32%). DEs are also less likely to be aware of Trading Standards' role to inspect shops and business for compliance with trading law (65%), and preventing the sale of unsafe goods (66%). C1s in contrast are more likely to be aware of this latter responsibility (84%).

As might be expected, those panel members who have children in the household are more likely to be aware of the role controlling sale of goods to underage children (66%).

There are also differences in awareness according to the area in which panel members live. Those in Hyndburn are significantly more likely to know that Trading Standards is responsible for providing information about consumer rights when buying goods (82%), and for preventing the sale of wrongly labelled food (69%). Those in Preston are more likely to be aware of the role investigating consumer complaints (84%), as are panel members in Rossendale of the role for providing information on consumer credit (24%).

3.3 The Role of Trading Standards Services

Panel members were given the four areas currently covered by the Trading Standards Service, and were asked to rank them in importance to them personally. The four areas are:

- Preventing the sale of unsafe products
- Reducing and preventing undesirable trading practices
- Undertaking inspections of business premises to check they are complying with trading standards laws
- Providing advice and education to consumers and businesses on their rights when buying / supplying faulty goods and services, in order to help them resolve their problems

The most important area overall is perceived to be preventing the sale of unsafe products, with 52% of panel members ranking it as the most important, and a further 23% ranking it as second most important. Panel members with children at home are significantly more likely to rank this aspect as the most important (59% do).

The second most important function is considered to be undertaking inspections of business premises, with a fifth ranking it as the most important (21%), and a further three out of ten ranking it second (30%). Panel members aged 25-44, and those living in Chorley tend to rate such inspections as *less* important, with respectively 42% and 43% ranking this aspect first or second most important.

The third most important area of service is thought to be reducing and preventing undesirable trading practices. One in seven rank this as most important (14%), a quarter rank it second (25%), and almost two-fifths rank it third (38%). Those living in Rossendale tend to give this factor higher importance, with significantly more ranking this factor as second most important (39%). Younger panel members, on the other hand, tend to give this factor less importance, with three-fifths ranking it third (60%).

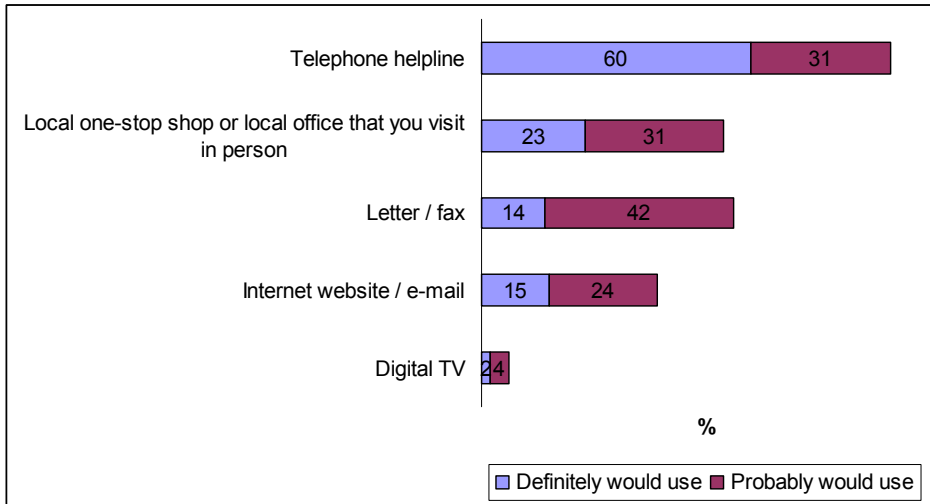
The comparatively least important function is that of providing advice and education. Almost three-fifths of panel members rank this as the least important of the four (58%). Those living in West Lancashire are least likely to consider this aspect important (71% rate it as the least important).

3.4 Contacting Trading Standards Service

Panel members were asked which method(s) they would use if they wanted to contact Trading Standards Service. The preferred options are summarised in Chart 4 below:

Chart 4: Preferred Means of Contacting Trading Standards Service

Base: All (Weighted base 1184; Unweighted base 980)



A telephone helpline is far and away the most popular form of contact, with nine out of ten saying they would definitely or probably use that method. It is the most popular option among all sub-groups, but slightly less so for panel members with a disability and those living in Council or housing association homes (85% and 75% respectively say they would definitely or probably use one).

Almost a quarter (23%) say they would definitely visit a local 'one-stop shop', and three in ten (31%) say they probably would. Writing a letter/fax is similarly popular, with 57% saying they would definitely or probably use this method of contact.

As might be expected, using the website or e-mail is a more attractive option for younger panel members (74% of those aged under 25 and 58% of those aged 25-44 say they would definitely or probably use this form of communication), and those in households with children (54%). Conversely, it is a less attractive option for DEs and those living in Council or housing association property (22% in each group).

The least popular form of contact would be by digital TV – just one in sixteen say they definitely or probably would use this (6%), although this number increases to 16% of panel members in South Ribble.

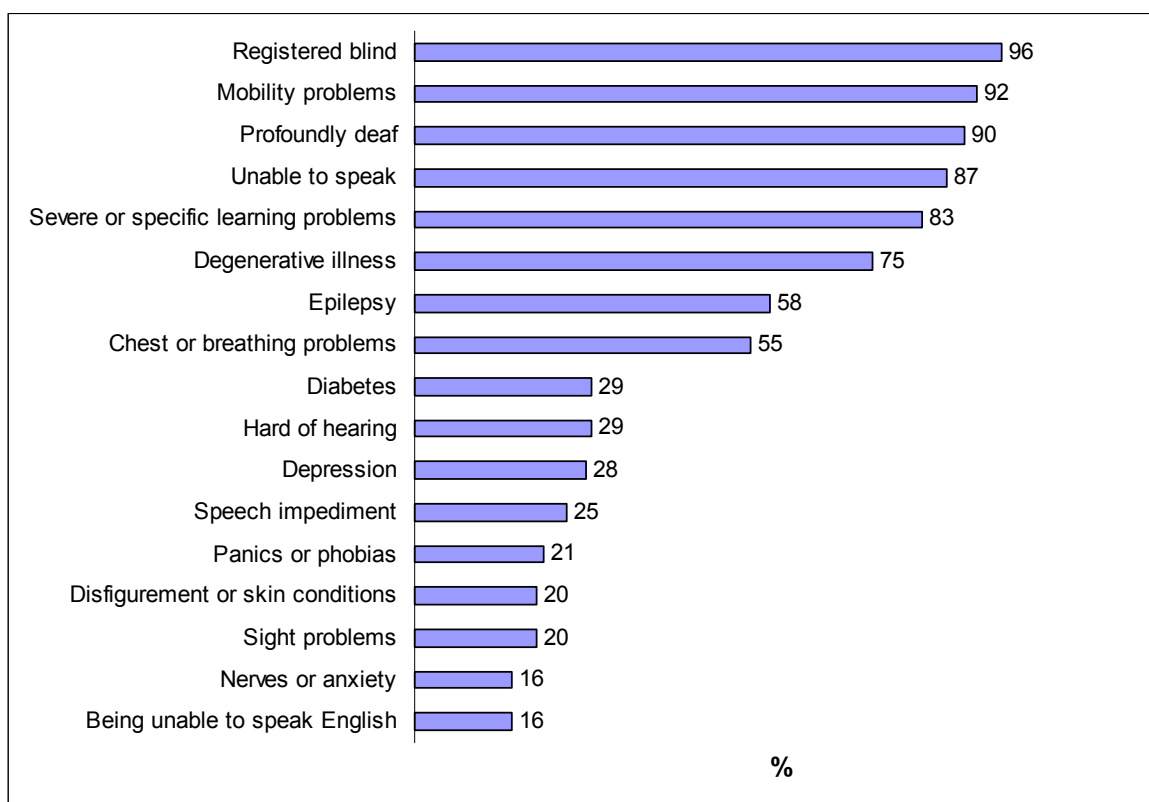
4 DISABILITY IN LANCASHIRE

4.1 Perceptions of Disability

Panel members were given a list and asked which, if any, they would consider to be a disability in an adult. Chart 5 summarises the results, which indicate that the vast majority considers being blind, deaf, unable to speak, or having mobility problems as being a disability. At the other end of the scale, a fifth of panel members or less say that they consider panics or phobias, sight problems, disfigurement or skin conditions, being unable to speak English, or nerves or anxiety to be disabilities.

Chart 5: Conditions/Situations That Are Considered a Disability

Base: All (Weighted base 1184; Unweighted base 980)



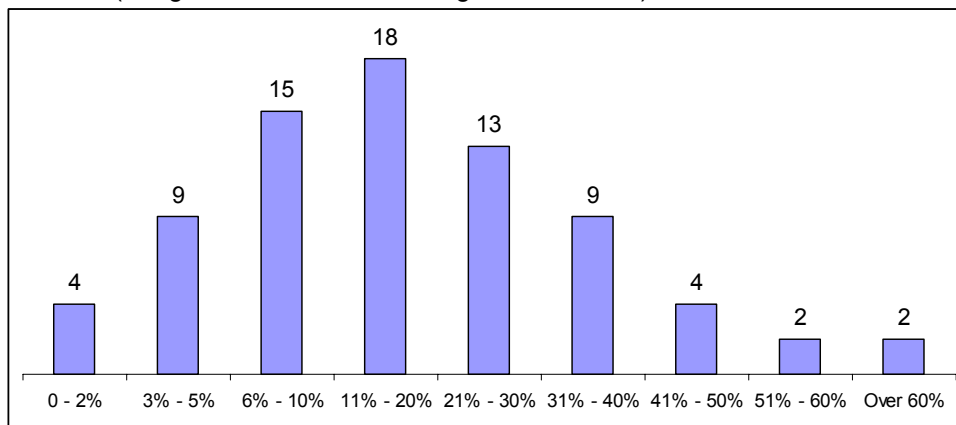
Older panel members (aged 60+) are less likely to consider profound deafness (80%), severe/specific learning difficulties (71%), speech impediment (18%), or disfigurement or skin conditions (12%) to be disabilities. Those with a disability are slightly *more* likely to consider some of these things disabilities than those without disability:

- degenerative illness (81%)
- epilepsy (62%)
- diabetes (35%)
- depression (34%)

Chart 6 shows that panel members tend to think that between 6% and 30% of the adult population in Lancashire has a disability (by their own definition of the word). A significant minority, however, (17%) estimates the proportion to be higher than this¹.

Chart 6: Estimated Proportion of Adults in Lancashire with a Disability

Base: All (Weighted base 1184; Unweighted base 980)



Men appear more likely to estimate a smaller proportion of the population as disabled than do women, with 38% of men estimating 10% or less, compared to 17% of women.

4.2 Attitudes Towards Disability

Panel members were given a series of attitude statements about adult disability and were asked to what extent they agree or disagree with each. Table 5 summarises the results and shows a net score which is helpful to define an overall sense of agreement or disagreement – simply calculated by deducting the % who disagree from the % who agree.

Table 5: Attitudes Towards Disability

Base: All (Weighted base 1184; Unweighted base 980)

	Agree	Disagree	Net Score [agree - disagree]
Non-disabled people do not appreciate the difficulties faced by disabled people	76%	18%	+58
Disabled people do not have equal opportunities for employment	69%	19%	+50
Disabled people are not able to do the things they want to do	66%	18%	+48
Employers do not appreciate the difficulties faced by disabled people	63%	23%	+40
Non-disabled people are uncomfortable around disabled people	60%	33%	+27
Disabled people are not aware of the support services available to them	43%	29%	+14
Disabled people are able to look after themselves	33%	43%	-10
Disability benefits provide disabled people with a good standard of living	32%	43%	-11
Disabled people find it easy to acquire suitable support services	25%	46%	-21
Non-disabled people understand what disabled people need	28%	66%	-38
Employers understand the needs of disabled people	22%	67%	-45

¹ It is likely that responses to this question were influenced by the previous question, which listed a wide range of conditions or situations that could be described as a disability. It is likely that, had the preceding question not been asked, estimates would have been somewhat lower. Putting that question later in the questionnaire would probably not have made much difference, as it was a self-completion questionnaire and therefore we have no control over the order in which the questions are read/considered.

The pattern of responses to these statements demonstrates the negative view that people have of the opportunities and conditions for those with a disability – there is stronger agreement with the negative statements and stronger *disagreement* with the positive statements.

The greatest agreement is with: *non-disabled people do not appreciate the difficulties faced by those with a disability*. Three-quarters of panel members agree with this statement (76%), and less than a fifth disagree, giving an overall net agreement of +58. Over a fifth agree strongly (23%). There are differences in view according to sub-group:

- panel members living Preston are more likely to agree with this (86%)
- the youngest panel members (aged <25), C2s and those living in Chorley are all more likely to *disagree* (respectively 39%, 27% and 27%), ie they have a greater tendency to feel that non-disabled people do appreciate the difficulties faced by disabled people

Similar levels of agreement are evident in relation to disabled people *not having equal opportunities at employment, not being able to do the things they want to do, and employers not appreciating the difficulties faced by disabled people*. Around two-thirds of panel members agree with each of these statements and around a fifth disagree.

A fifth of respondents agree *strongly* that disabled people *do not have equal opportunities for employment* (21%). This proportion more than doubles amongst those living in Council / housing association homes (43%). Overall, eight of ten panel members living in Council or housing association homes agree with this statement (80%). Those living in Pendle are also more likely to agree (79%).

A fifth of panel members agree *strongly* that disabled people are *not able to do the things they want to do* (20%).

- those with a disability are more likely to agree with this statement than those who do not have a disability (72% compared to 61%). Three out of ten of those with a disability agree strongly (30%)
- agreement is also stronger among older respondents, being strongest amongst those aged 60+ (76%), falling to almost equally divided opinions amongst those aged under 25 (39% agree, 38% disagree)
- those in Preston are more likely to agree (79%)

Agreement with *employers do not appreciate the difficulties faced by disabled people* is less strong, with just 12% saying they agree strongly and 50% saying they tend to agree. Panel members living in Council or housing association property are more likely to *disagree* with this statement, ie feel that employers *do* appreciate the difficulties (40%), while those in Pendle are more likely to agree (74%).

There is net agreement with the statement that *non-disabled people are uncomfortable around disabled people* (+27), but a third of panel members do disagree with this statement. The only difference by sub-group is that young panellists are again more likely to disagree, ie hold a positive view (52%).

There are mixed views about whether disabled people are aware of the *support services available for them*, although on balance there is net agreement. Just over two-fifths think they are *not* aware (43%), but most of those tend towards this view rather than holding it strongly (37% and 6% respectively). Panel members with a disability are more likely to think that they *are* aware (54% do), whereas those in Burnley and Pendle are more likely to hold a negative view on this issue (68% and 55% respectively).

There are mixed views on whether disabled people are *able to look after themselves*, and whether *disability benefits provide a good standard of living*. Around a third in each case agree, and two-fifths disagree, giving a net disagreement overall.

Opinions on whether disabled people are *able to look after themselves* are quite tentative, mainly 'tend to' agree or disagree (30% and 33% respectively) – this could be due to a feeling that some disabled people are able to look after themselves, and some are not. Both older panel members and those with a disability are more inclined to disagree with this statement (52% and 50% respectively) – those with a disability being twice as likely to disagree strongly as those without a disability (14% compared to 7%). Their views are perhaps more likely to be based on their own situation rather than thinking of disabled people generally, which may explain their being more likely to give a strong opinion.

Views on whether *disability benefits provide a good standard of living* are also tentative, with in each case around three out of ten saying they tend to either agree or disagree (27% and 31% respectively). There are very limited differences in view across the sub-groups on this statement, the only variation being that panel members living in Council or housing association property are more likely to agree (46%).

Of those who feel able to give an opinion, there is clear net disagreement that disabled people *find it easy to obtain support services* (-21). Almost two-fifths of panel members tend to disagree (37%), and another one in eleven strongly disagree (9%). While panel members with a disability are significantly more likely to agree that it is easy (34%), a similar proportion of disabled and non-disabled residents disagree (44% compared with 42%).

The greatest level of net disagreement is with the two statements referring to others understanding what disabled people need: *non-disabled people understand what disabled people need*; and *employers understand the needs of disabled people*. In each case, around two-thirds of panel members disagree that this understanding exists (66% and 67% respectively) – a fifth disagree strongly (20% and 19% respectively).

There are some differences in views about whether non-disabled people understand what disabled people need. Those living in Council or housing association properties are more likely to agree (44%); whereas C1s are more likely to disagree (77%).

There are also some differences in view about whether employers understand the needs of disabled people. ABC1s are more likely than C2DEs to feel that employers do *not* understand (75% of ABC1s and 58% of C2DEs); as are panel members in Chorley (80%).

4.3 Perceived Difficulties for Disabled People

4.3.1 Overview

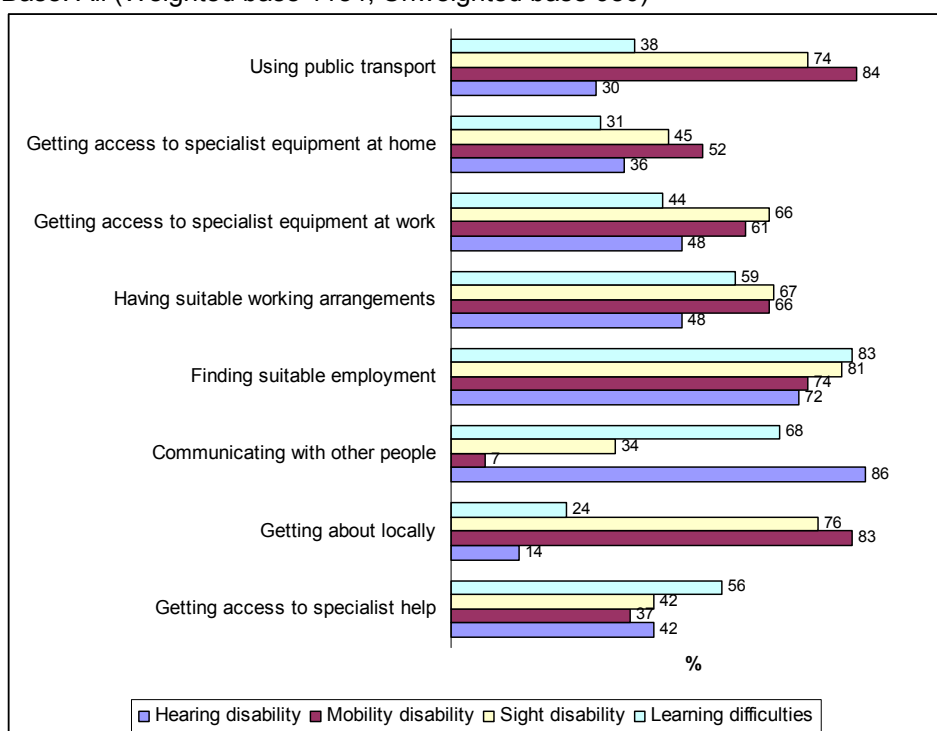
Panel members were given a list of possible situations and for each, were asked which they think would cause difficulties for adults with each of four disabilities:

- hearing
- mobility
- sight
- learning difficulties

The results are summarised in Chart 8:

Chart 8: Perceived Difficult Situations for Disabled People

Base: All (Weighted base 1184; Unweighted base 980)



Finding suitable employment is perceived to be a difficulty for all groups by the majority of panel members, from 72% saying it would be difficult for those with a hearing disability to 83% saying it would be difficult for those with a learning disability.

The following sections look separately at each type of disability:

4.3.2 Hearing Disability

Communication is perceived to be the most difficult aspect for those with a hearing disability, with just under nine out of ten saying would cause difficulties (86%). Then it is aspects to do with finding work: finding suitable employment as already noted (72%), and to a lesser extent getting access to specialist equipment at work and / or access to suitable working arrangements (48% each). Other problems most likely to be anticipated would be access to specialist equipment at home (36%). People with a hearing disability are least likely of all the disabilities covered to be perceived as having a difficulty getting about locally (14%).

There are some differences in perception of difficulties according to sub-groups:

- Those aged 25-44 are more likely to say they think that people with hearing disabilities would have difficulty with suitable working arrangements (60%), as are those living in Chorley (60%).
- DEs, and those in Council/housing association or other rented properties are less likely to say it would be difficult to get access to specialist equipment at work (34%, 35%, 33% respectively), whereas C1s are *more* likely to say it would be difficult (58%).
- Those in Rossendale are more likely to say it would be difficult for people with hearing disabilities to find suitable employment (82%).

4.3.3 Mobility Disability

People with a mobility disability are the most widely thought to have difficulty getting around, both on public transport (84%) and locally (83%). Secondary difficulties are perceived in relation to employment, on a scale similar to people with sight disabilities. Three-quarters anticipate someone with a mobility disability would have difficulty in finding suitable employment (74%), two-thirds anticipate difficulty in having suitable working arrangements (66%), and three-fifths anticipate difficulty with getting access to specialist equipment at work (61%).

Just over half say that they would expect people with a mobility disability to have difficulty getting specialist equipment for the home (52%), which is the largest proportion of all the disabilities mentioned. Contrastingly, people with a mobility disability are *least* likely to be expected to have difficulty with communicating with other people (7%).

As with hearing disabilities, there are differences in views by sub-group:

- Older panel members (60+) are *less* likely to say that people with mobility disabilities would have difficulty with getting access to specialist help (26%), finding suitable employment (63%), and / or finding suitable working arrangements (51%).
- Panel members in Rossendale are more likely to say that people with a mobility disability would have difficulty getting about locally (94%).
- Those in Ribble Valley are more likely to say disabled people would have difficulty getting access to specialist equipment at work (76%).

4.3.4 *Sight Disability*

Finding suitable employment is thought to be the most difficult of all tasks for those with a sight disability (81%), on a scale similar to someone with a mobility disability. Getting about is thought to be the second most difficult situation for people with sight disabilities. Three-quarters say they think that getting about locally and / or on public transport would be difficult for someone with a sight disability (respectively 76% and 74%).

Other work-related issues are thought to be almost as difficult. Two-thirds of panel members say they think that getting access to specialist equipment at work, and / or having suitable work arrangements would be difficult for someone with a sight disability (66% and 67% respectively). Of all the disabilities, the access to specialist equipment is thought likely to be the most difficult.

Differences in perception by sub-group include:

- Older panellists (aged 60+) are *less* likely to say that those with sight disabilities would have difficulties in getting access to specialist help (30%), getting about locally (64%), and / or getting access to specialist equipment at work (51%).
- Those with disability are also *less* likely to say it would be difficult for sight disabled people to get access to specialist equipment for work (54%).
- C1s are more likely to say there would be difficulties getting about locally (86%), while DEs are less likely to say so (65%).
- Those living in Council / housing association homes are less likely to anticipate difficulty in getting access to specialist help (30%).
- Those living in Wyre are less likely to expect difficulty communicating with other people (23%).
- Those in South Ribble are less likely to anticipate problems in getting access to specialist equipment at work (53%).

4.3.5 *Learning Difficulties*

Finding suitable employment is also perceived to be the most difficult task for people with learning difficulties (83%) – on a par with people with sight disabilities. Communication is the second most widely anticipated problem for this group – around two-thirds say they think that communication with other people could be difficult (68%), which is more than for the other three disability types.

Three-fifths say that they think having suitable working arrangements would be difficult for someone with learning difficulties (59%). Almost the same proportion thinks that it would be difficult for people with learning difficulties to get access to specialist help (56%).

Differences by sub-group include:

- Older panellists (60+) are less likely to say it would be difficult to get access to specialist equipment at work (31%).
- Those aged 25-44 are more likely to say it would be difficult for those with learning difficulties to use public transport (48%).
- Perceptions of ease of getting about locally appear linked to social grade. ABs are more likely to think it would be difficult for people with learning difficulties (35%), while DEs are less likely to think that way (14%).

- Those living in Rossendale are more likely to anticipate problems with getting access to specialist help (68%), and / or getting access to specialist equipment at home (47%).

4.4 Perceived Challenges for Disabled People

Respondents were asked to select up to three things from a list that would provide the greatest challenges for disabled people in Lancashire. By far the greatest perceived challenge is finding suitable employment. Three-quarters of panel members say this would be one of the three greatest challenges (75%) – supporting the findings in the previous section on perceived difficulties for various disabilities. Panel members in Chorley are particularly likely to identify finding suitable employment as a major challenge (86%).

Two-fifths say that disabled people being able to do what they want to do would be one of the greatest challenges (41%). Those living in Council or housing association properties are more likely to say this (54%).

Just over a third (35%) say setting up home would be a challenge, and a fifth say the same of raising a family (21%) – although panel members living in Council or housing association homes are less likely to say it would be a challenge to raise a family (11%).

Relating to non-disabled residents is identified as a challenge in several guises:

- lack of understanding amongst non-disabled residents (28% select this);
- lack of awareness (25%); and
- attitudes of non-disabled residents (23%).

Panel members living in Ribble Valley are significantly less likely to perceive the attitudes of non-disabled residents to be a challenge (13%), whereas those living in Council or housing association property are more likely to do so (35%).

Getting help and support is mentioned by just under three out of ten (28%), and getting access to support by a fifth (19%). Getting help and support is not anticipated a challenge by as many panel members in Preston (18%), but those in Pendle are significantly more likely to select it (43%).

Respondents were invited to write in other things that they think would provide major challenges for disabled people. Public transport and ignorance of non-disabled residents are each mentioned by 1%. Note that, had these items been included in the list shown on the questionnaire, it is likely that the proportion selecting them would have been much higher.

5 FURTHER QUESTIONS OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL

Just under a fifth say they do have questions they would like to ask of the County Council (18%). This proportion increases to almost three out of ten panel members in Rossendale (28%), but falls to just 4% of panel members in Chorley. Those panel members who have lived in Lancashire the shortest time (less than 10 years) are also less likely to have questions (8%). A full list of the questions that residents would like to raise can be found in Appendix B.

6 SUMMARY

6.1 Living in Lancashire

Eight in ten (80%) say they are satisfied with their local area as a place to live, and 36% are very satisfied. When this question was put to panel members in 2001, only 73% were satisfied. This may reflect an actual increase in satisfaction across the population as a whole, but it is more likely that being on the panel and/or being motivated to complete this particular survey is strongly related to respondents' satisfaction.

Panel members living in Ribble Valley, Lancaster, West Lancashire and Fylde are more likely to be satisfied, whereas those in Burnley, Hyndburn and Pendle are less so. Those living in urban / market town locations, C2DEs and those with a disability are also among those least satisfied.

When asked what are the good things about their local area, the two top answers are 'openness/greenery/countryside', and 'convenient for shops'. The main bad things are thought to be: 'facilities for young people', 'streets not clean' and 'amount' or 'speed of traffic'.

Perceptions of good and bad aspects of living in Lancashire vary by district, notably:

- Ribble Valley – good environment and education facilities; poor transport, including public transport, condition of roads and parking.
- West Lancashire – good environment and convenience of facilities; poor public transport and shopping facilities.
- Burnley – noted poorly for environment and crime.
- Hyndburn – noted poorly for environment and crime.
- Pendle – good environment; noted poorly for shopping facilities.
- Rossendale – good environment; noted for lack of facilities, namely leisure and recreation and facilities for young people, and for poor condition of roads.

(Districts not mentioned in the above list do not differ much from the overall results.)

The top three areas identified as making the greatest improvement to the quality of life in Lancashire would be: 'better road and pavement maintenance', 'better services for young people' and 'reducing the level of crime'.

6.2 Protecting the Consumer

Experience of Consumer Problems

Half of panel members say they have experienced one or more problems in relation to goods and services purchased in the past 12 months (49%). Most of these have experienced just one or two problems (46% have experience one, and 24% have experienced two). Older people are less likely to report having experienced problems (30% of those aged 60+).

The most common problems experienced are poor quality goods or services (25%), pricing problems (22%), and / or misleading information (16%).

Around three-quarters of panel members who have experienced a problem say they contacted someone about that problem (72%). Most sorted it out with the trader direct (57%). One in eight overall say they contacted the Trading Standards Service (13%) – increasing to almost one-fifth of those who say they know something about the service (19%).

Current Awareness of the Trading Standards Service

Around nine out of ten panel members say they have heard of the Trading Standards Service (84%) – significantly fewer amongst the youngest panel members and those living in Pendle. Most say they either just know the name, or that they know just a little about the service.

The commonly perceived responsibilities of the Trading Standards Service include preventing the sale of unsafe goods, investigating customer complaints, and inspections of shops and business for compliance with trading laws.

Role of the Trading Standards Service

Panel members apply the following order of importance to the services provided by Trading Standards:

1. Preventing the sale of unsafe products.
2. Undertaking inspections of business premises.
3. Reducing and preventing undesirable trading practises.
4. Providing advice and education to consumers.

Very few panel members suggest any other things that they feel the Trading Standards Service should be addressing.

Contacting the Trading Standards Service

The most likely means of contacting the Trading Standards Service would be via a telephone helpline (91% say they definitely or probably would use this medium).

Alternatively, over a half of panel members definitely or probably use a letter or fax (57%), and / or visit a local office (54%).

Less attractive is the option of using the website or e-mail (39%), although it is more likely to be attractive to younger panel members.

The least likely means of contacting the Trading Standards Service is via digital TV (6%).

6.3 Disability in Lancashire

Perceptions of Disability

Being blind, deaf, unable to speak, or having severe mobility difficulties are the things most likely to be considered a disability amongst panel members. Least likely to be considered as disabilities are: panics/phobias, correctable sight problems, disfigurement/skin conditions, being unable to speak English and nerves/anxiety. Even for these conditions/situations, however, between 16% and 21% would consider them to be a disability.

Most panel members think that between 6% and 30% of the population in Lancashire has a disability (by their own definition of the word).

Attitudes Towards Disability

Panel members tend to hold negative views of the opportunities and conditions for people with a disability. Those living in Council or housing association properties stand out as having stronger views on several issues, and younger panellists are notable for tending to go against the majority view on some issues.

Three-quarters agree that non-disabled people do not appreciate the difficulties faced by those with a disability (76%).

- Those in Preston are more likely to agree;
- Younger panel members are more likely to *disagree*.

Around seven out of ten agree that disabled people do not have equal opportunities in employment (69%).

- Those in Pendle and / or living in Council or housing association homes are more likely to agree.

Two-thirds of panel members agree that disabled people are not able to do the things they want to (66%).

- There is stronger agreement amongst older panel members, those with a disability, and those living in Preston.

Just under two-thirds agree that employers do not appreciate the difficulties faced by disabled people (63%).

- Those living in Pendle are more likely to agree, whereas those in Council/housing association property are more likely to disagree.

Six out of ten agree that non-disabled people are uncomfortable around disabled people (60%).

- Younger panel members are more likely to *disagree*.

Around two-fifths agree that disabled people are not aware of support services that are available to them (43%).

- Those in Pendle and Burnley are more likely to think they are *not* aware.
- Those with a disability are more likely to think they *are* aware.

Around two-fifths of panel members *disagree* that disabled people are able to look after themselves (43%).

- Older panel members and those who are disabled are more likely to think they are not able to look after themselves. (Note that these respondents are probably more likely to have answered while considering their own situation rather than disabled people as a whole.)

Around two-fifths *disagree* that disabled benefits provide a good standard of living (43%)

- Those living in Council or housing association homes are more likely to think that they do.

Almost half of panel members disagree that disabled people find it easy to acquire suitable support services (46%).

- While panel members with a disability are significantly more likely to agree that this it is easy (34%), a similar proportion of disabled and non-disabled residents disagree (44% compared with 42%).

The greatest disagreement between the views of panel members relates to others' understanding of what disabled people need:

- 66% *disagree* that non-disabled people understand what disabled people need;
- 67% disagree that employers understand the needs of disabled people – more so ABC1s and panel members living in Chorley.

Perceived Difficulties and Challenges for Disabled People

The greatest challenge envisaged for disabled people in Lancashire is finding suitable employment (75%). It is perceived to be difficult for all types of disability by the majority of panel members.

For those with a **hearing** disability, communication is perceived to be the greatest difficulty (86%), followed by aspects to do with finding work: finding suitable employment, getting access to specialist equipment at work, and / or getting access to suitable working arrangements.

People with **mobility** disabilities are most widely thought to have difficulty getting around, both on public transport (84%) and/or locally (83%). Issues to do with employment are secondary: finding suitable employment, finding suitable working arrangements, and getting access to specialist equipment at work.

- Rossendale panel members are more likely to say they think it would be difficult getting about locally.

Half of panel members expect it to be difficult for people with a mobility disability to get specialist equipment for their home (52%).

Finding suitable employment is anticipated as being the greatest difficulty for those with **sight** disabilities. (81%). Secondary difficulties are expected to be getting about - both locally (76%) and / or on public transport (74%). Around two-thirds each anticipate other work-related issues being difficult: getting access to specialist equipment and / or suitable work arrangements (66% and 67% respectively).

Finding suitable employment is perceived to be the greatest difficulty for those with **learning difficulties** (83%) – on a par with sight disability. Communication is thought to be the secondary problem (68%) – a far higher proportion than for the other three disability types. Three-fifths say they envisage difficulties with finding suitable working arrangements (59%), and a similar proportion expect difficulty in getting access to specialist help (56%) – more so panel members in Rossendale.

6.4 Further Questions of the County Council

Just under a fifth say they have questions they would like to ask of the County Council (18%) – more so panel members in Rossendale (28%).

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