

Living in Lancashire Wave 28 survey

Communications

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1 Executive Summary

This wave of the Living in Lancashire panel looked at communication channels in terms of what channels people use, and looked at information in the media about the county council. The survey was sent by email or by post to all 2,626 members of the panel on 10 February and the fieldwork ended on 26 March 2010. In total 2,019 questionnaires were returned, giving an overall response rate of 83%.

1.1 Key findings

Media consumption

- The most commonly read types of newspaper were national tabloids (62%) and local dailies (57%). Those people in the highest socio-economic group (AB) are more likely to read a national broadsheet (68%), respondents from a BME background are more likely to have read a local daily (68%).
- Daily national newspapers are read more often than daily local newspapers (37% versus 15% read it every/most days respectively). There are also more people who never read a daily local newspaper (20%).
- Local weekly newspapers and national Sunday newspapers are read by a similar proportion of respondents on a regular basis (45% and 42% every week respectively), but a quarter never read a Sunday paper. Both types of paper are more frequently read by the over 60s.
- The BBC stations have the highest overall listenership (70% national, 68% local ever listened to), and more than half of respondents have listened to local and national commercial stations in the past (54% and 51% respectively).
- Stations listened to in the last 7 days shows a marked preference for a national BBC station (62%). Similar proportions listen to BBC radio Lancashire (39%), local commercial stations (37%) and national commercial stations (33%). Younger respondents are more likely to listen to a local commercial station, whereas for older respondents its BBC Radio Lancashire.
- People are most likely to listen to the radio when they are travelling (50%) or at breakfast (35%).
- The most popular television news programme was BBC North West Today/Tonight (50% every/most days), and Granada Reports is also regularly watched by a third of respondents. Only one in ten watch the Politics Show every week. The likelihood of watching each of the three types of news programme on the television increases with age.

- Three in ten respondents don't use the internet (30%), higher among the over 60s (61%). The news websites respondents visit most regularly is the BBC national news website (36%), though the BBC regional news pages are also used by 17% of respondents.
- The mean number of media channels respondents have ever used is 3.28. The type of respondent who uses fewer media channels are more likely to be older (over 60 mean of 2.96), from a BME background (mean of 2.92), and those in the lower socio-economic groups (C2 mean of 3.1, DE mean of 3.0).

Communicating information about the county council

- A similar proportion of respondents feel informed (50%) as feel uninformed (47%) about the county council, which is in line with previous findings from the Life in Lancashire 2007 survey. How informed respondents feel increases with the number of media channels they use (52% uninformed who use two or fewer channels, versus 46% uninformed who use three or more media channels).
- Respondents don't regularly see, hear or read stories about the county council in the media (35% a few times a month, 42% less often).
- However, respondents do have a perception of the county council from media coverage. Perceptions are more positive (29%) than negative (17%), though the majority are either neutral (46%).
- When asked about direct experience of dealing with the county council, one in five said they hadn't had experience (22%). Among those who have had experience perceptions are twice as positive (42%) than negative (20%).
- The most commonly viewed service in the media over the last month was gritting (50%), followed by highway maintenance (39%), waste recycling centres (34%), schools (31%) and libraries (31%). The over 60s were less likely to have heard, read or seen media coverage of council services in the media even though this group is more likely to have read local weeklies.
- The services that came out top for additional media coverage were highway maintenance (48%), gritting¹ (41%), services for older people (37%), services for young people (32%), countryside recreation (32%, which shows the biggest overall increase) and libraries (31%).
- Generally preferences for methods of finding out news about the county council and its services match peoples' current methods of accessing this information, which are newspapers and the county council newspaper.
- One in three respondents feel that the amount of coverage in the media is about right (29%), but the majority say it is not enough (56%).

¹ Though this is likely to be a seasonal effect in the fieldwork dates

1.2 Recommendations

The findings show that there are opportunities to improve the effectiveness of communications as many respondents don't feel informed about the county council and its services, and feel the council doesn't have enough coverage in the media. The following are some recommendations resulting from the research.

- Use the information on media consumption to help evaluate the effectiveness of current media campaigns. For example, look at where most of the current news items appear and compare this to how respondents access news to maximise reach.
- Use the information on media consumption and preferences to target communications more effectively at different audiences. For example:
 - When using the internet as a communication channel, bear in mind that the older audiences are less likely to use it.
 - When targeting older people concentrate on local weekly newspapers with geographically relevant content, but less time-sensitive material.
 - The highest socio-economic groups (AB) are harder to reach as they are less likely to encounter local media, especially newspapers. However, they are more likely to be satisfied with the amount of information they receive about the county council.
- Bear in mind when selecting media channels that newspapers, and Vision the council's newspaper, are respondents most preferred ways of finding out news about the county council.
- Look at opportunities for increasing media coverage for the services that respondents wanted more information on, for example highway maintenance, services of older and younger people, countryside recreation and library services. This may help improve how informed people feel about the council and its services.
- Compare the subjects covered in current media coverage with preferences for future media coverage to ensure the balance between proactive and reactive content is balanced appropriately.
- To enable maximum reach to be achieved through radio, ensure news items are broadcast early in the day or during drive times.
- Continue to monitor media usage to keep up-to-date with preferences and make communications more effective.

2 Introduction

Lancashire County Council has used Living in Lancashire regularly since August 2001 (formerly known as Life in Lancashire). 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 wave of Living in Lancashire 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 i.e. the views of panel members become too informed with county council services to be unrepresentative of the population as a whole.

3 Research Objectives

The objectives of this survey are to look at communication channels in terms of what channels people use (eg newspaper, television, radio and internet). The survey then went on to look at information in the media about the county council, looking specifically at:

- how well informed they are about;
- what information they have received and how;
- the effect on perceptions of the council; and
- preferred communication channels.

4 Methodology

This wave of Living in Lancashire research was sent to 2,626 members of the panel on 17 February. A reminder was sent on 10 March, with a final closing date of 26 March.

The survey was conducted through a postal questionnaire, and an online version of the same questionnaire being emailed to members who had previously requested to take part online. The postal questionnaire was sent to 2,019 members and the online questionnaire was sent to 607 members. Where members didn't respond to the online questionnaire they were sent a paper reminder.

In total 2,169 questionnaires were returned, giving an overall response rate of 83%.

All data are weighted by 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 to match the effective response of 1,432, 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 1000 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.

In charts or tables where responses do not add up to 100%, this is due to multiple responses or computer rounding.

5 Main Research Findings

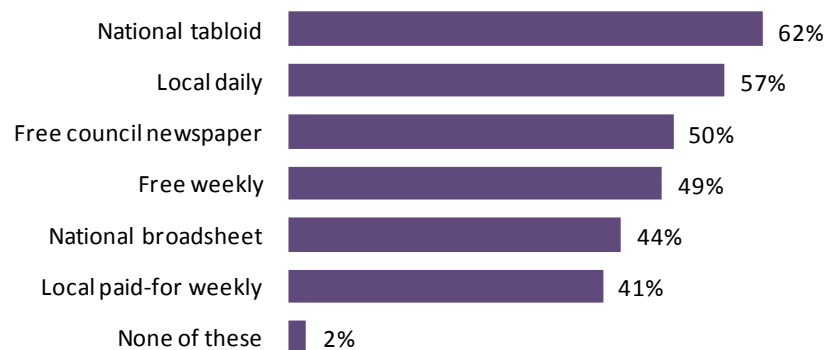
5.1 Media usage

The first section of the questionnaire looked at overall consumption of different media channels including newspapers, radio, television and internet.

5.1.1 Newspaper readership

The first questions looked at newspaper readership among respondents. The question asked which types of newspaper people had read for at least two minutes in the last year, regardless of whose copy it was. The most commonly read types of newspaper were national tabloids (62%) and local dailies (57%). A free council newspaper and free weeklies were also widely read by half of respondents (50% and 49% respectively).

Chart 1 - Which of the following types of newspaper have you read for at least two minutes in the last 12 months? It doesn't matter whose copy it was, where you saw it or how old it was.



Base: All respondents (unweighted 2118, weighted 1481)

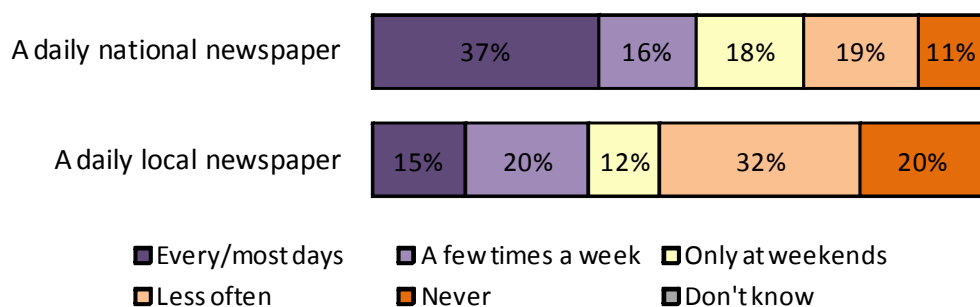
There are a number of differences in newspaper readership among different groups of respondent. By age group, it is the older person (over 60 years) who is less likely to read a local daily (45%) or a national broadsheet (35%). Whereas those people in the highest socio-economic group (AB), are more likely to read a national broadsheet (68%) and less likely to read a national tabloid (51%) compared to the other groups. Respondents from a BME background are more likely to have read a local daily in the last year (68%).

Looking at differences geographically, it is east Lancashire residents who are more likely to have read a local paid-for weekly in the last year (63%), and urban residents who are less likely to read one (34%). Residents of Preston district are more likely to have read a local daily newspaper (86%).

These differences may well reflect the availability of each type of publication in the local area.

Daily national newspapers are read more often than daily local newspapers (37% versus 15% read it every/most days respectively). There are also more people who never read a daily local newspaper (20%).

Chart 2 - How often, if at all, do you typically read the following types of daily newspapers?



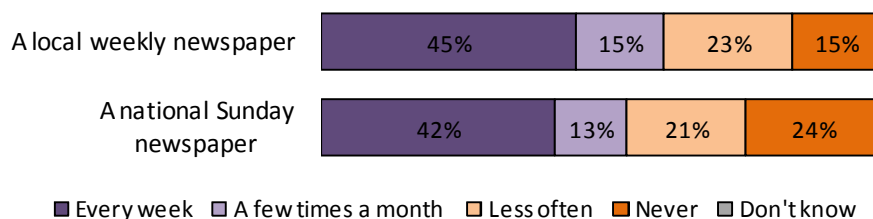
Base: All respondents 2010 (unweighted 1862, weighted 1339)

Daily *national* newspapers are read more frequently by the over 60s and men (55% and 45% every/most days respectively).

For daily *local* newspapers it is the highest socio-economic group (AB) who read them less frequently (38% less often) and a quarter never read them (25%). Not only is it Preston residents who are more likely to have read a daily local paper, they also read them more frequently (30% every/most days). Whereas a third of Lancaster district residents never read them (33%) because the area doesn't have a daily local newspaper.

Local weekly newspapers and national Sunday newspapers are read by a similar proportion of respondents on a regular basis (45% and 42% every week respectively). However, there are more people who never read a Sunday newspaper (24%), than a local weekly (15%).

Chart 3 - How often, if at all, do you typically read the following types of weekly newspapers?



Base: All respondents (unweighted 1956, weighted 1372)

National Sunday and local weekly newspapers are more frequently read by the over 60s (60% and 56% every week respectively). Looking specifically at *national Sunday* newspapers, they are less well read by the 25-44 age group (25% every week) and BME respondents (18% every week). For *local weeklies* it is again people from the highest socio-economic group (AB) who are less likely to read them (21% never), and those living in the districts of South Ribble, Wyre and Preston² (33%, 22%, 19% never respectively).

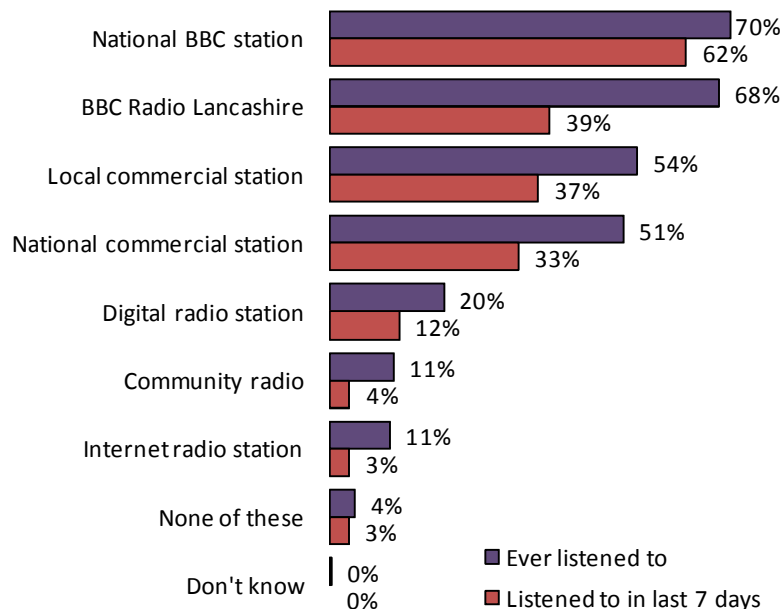
5.1.2 Radio listenership

A couple of questions looked at radio listenership, looking in particular at the type of station listened to and when people tune in. It is the BBC stations that have the highest overall listenership (70% national, 68% local ever listened to). However more than half of respondents have listened to local and national commercial stations in the past (54% and 51% respectively).

Looking at what people have listened to in the last 7 days shows a marked preference among respondents for a national BBC station (62%). Although the overall rankings are consistent with the stations respondents have ever listened to with BBC radio Lancashire (39%), local commercial stations (37%) and national commercial stations (33%) having a similar proportion of listeners.

² Preston and South Ribble have a local daily newspaper which is likely to have affected this result

**Chart 4 - a) Which of the following radio stations have you ever listened to?
b) And which have you listened to in the last 7 days?**



Base: All respondents (unweighted 1818, weighted 1282)

Looking at differences in the radio stations respondents have *ever listened to* there are some differences by subgroup, listed below.

- The over 60s are less likely to listen to most stations, especially local commercial (26%) and national commercial stations (34%).
- 25 to 44 year olds are more likely to have listened to community radio (17%).
- Men are more likely to have listened to a BBC station (national 75%, local 71%), and women are more likely to have listened to a local commercial station (56%).
- Listenership of community radio (28%) and an internet station (19%) is higher among respondents from a BME background, though they are more likely to say they never listened to any of these stations (17%).
- The highest socio-economic group (AB) are more likely to listen to a national BBC station (85%).
- Chorley residents more likely to have listened to a community radio station (27%), Rossendale residents less likely to have listened to a local commercial station (29%), and West Lancashire³ residents less likely to have listened to BBC Radio Lancashire (52%).

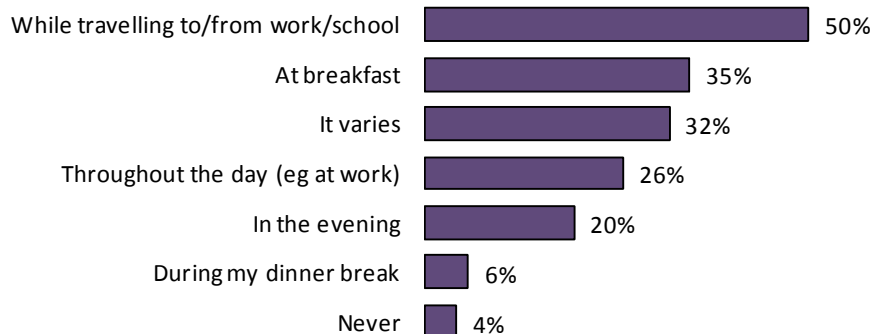
³ This may be partly attributable to the availability of other local BBC stations in the area (eg BBC Radio Merseyside) which may have more relevance to these respondents.

There are also differences in the listenership preferences in the stations respondents' have listened to *in the last week*. These are described below.

- Younger respondents are more likely to listen to a local commercial station (25-44 years 53%), and older respondents are more likely to listen to BBC Radio Lancashire (52%).
- Again men were more likely to listen to the BBC stations (national 69%, local 43%), as were those from the highest socio-economic group (AB 81% listen to national BBC station).
- For respondents from a BME background their preference is for a national commercial station (45%) rather than a national BBC station (41%).
- The pattern also matches the stations ever listened to geographically as Rossendale residents listen to local commercial stations less (9%), and West Lancashire residents listen to BBC Radio Lancashire less often (22%).

People are most likely to listen to the radio when they are travelling (50%) or at breakfast (35%). Around a third of respondents said their listening of the radio varies (32%). Fewer people listen throughout the day (26%) or in the evening (20%).

Chart 5 - When do you generally listen to the radio?



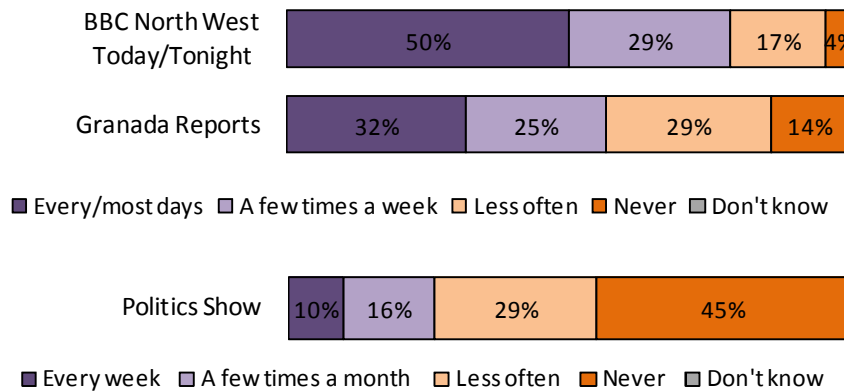
Base: All respondents (unweighted 2101, weighted 1470)

The time of day people listen to the radio changes too. Understandably those without access to a car were less likely to listen to it when travelling to and from work or school (10%). The over 60s were more likely to say that they listen to the radio at different times (42% it varies), and the 25 to 44 group listen to the radio more while travelling (69%). The people in the highest socio-economic group are less likely to listen to the radio throughout the day (19%).

5.1.3 Television

Respondents were then asked about how often they watch news programmes on the television. The most popular programme was BBC North West Today or Tonight (50% every/most days, 29% a few times a week). Granada Reports is also regularly watched by a third of respondents (32% every/most days). Three in seven people never watch the Politics Show (45%), only one in ten watching it every week (10%).

Chart 6 - How often, if at all, do you watch the following types of regional news programme on the television?



Base: All respondents (unweighted 1777, weighted 1273)

The likelihood of watching each of the three types of news programme on the television increases with age. So among the over 60s viewing of:

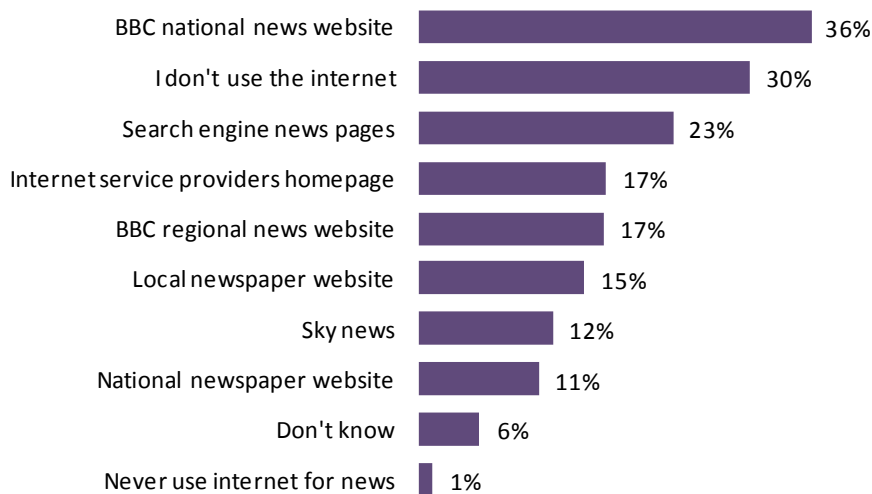
- BBC North West Tonight is 72% every/most days;
- Granada Reports is 44% every/most days; and
- Politics show is 19% every week.

Viewing of BBC North West Tonight is also lower among BME respondents (34% every/most days), and for Granada Reports it is lower among socio-economic group AB (21% most days).

5.1.4 News websites

Three in ten respondents said that they don't use the internet (30%). The news websites respondents' visit most regularly is the BBC national news website (36%), though the BBC regional news pages are also used by 17% of respondents. Search engine news pages are also regularly viewed (23%), fewer looking at news on internet service providers homepages (17%).

Chart 7 - Which of the following news websites go you visit regularly (ie at least once a week)?



Base: All respondents (unweighted 1947, weighted 1359)

The groups least likely to use the internet are the over 60s (61%) and people who are less economically prosperous (C2 43%, DE 46%), which is consistent with findings from previous surveys.

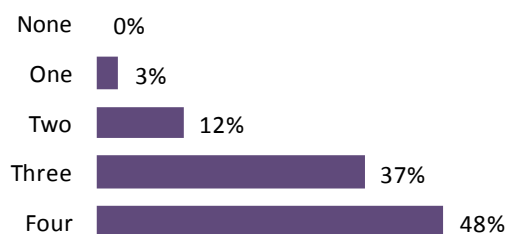
Looking at usage of specific news websites, those aged between 25 and 44 are more likely to use a BBC site (national 49%, local 24%) and a local newspapers website (23%). Whereas respondents from a BME background are more likely to use a search engine's news pages (41%) or visit the Sky News website (32%).

5.1.5 Overall media consumption

It is possible to calculate how many media channels respondents use by combining responses to the previous questions showing usage of newspapers, radio, television news programmes and internet news sites. Usage is calculated on the basis of if a respondent has ever used a media channel.

The mean number of media channels respondents use is 3.28. Almost half of respondents have used all four media channels (48%), and a further 37% have used three of them. No-one has used none of the four types of media in the past, and a small proportion has only used one (3%).

Chart 8 - Total number of media items ever used



Base: All respondents (unweighted 2170, weighted 1517)

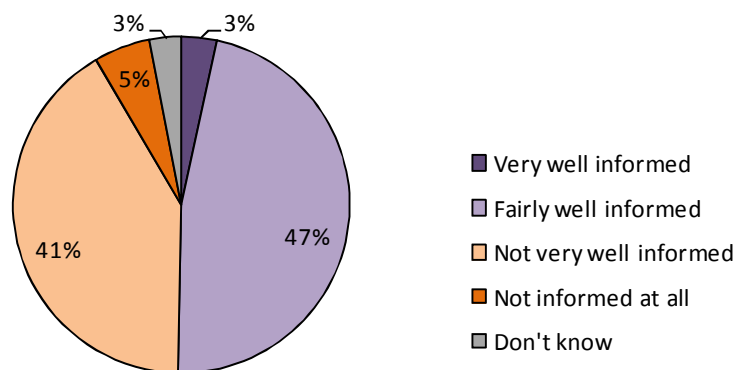
The type of respondent who uses fewer media channels are more likely to be older (over 60 mean of 2.96), from a BME background (mean of 2.92), and those in the lower socio-economic groups (C2 mean of 3.1, DE mean of 3.0).

5.2 Communicating information about the county council

A number of questions looked into information about the county council. The first asked how informed people felt about the county council. A similar proportion of respondents feel informed (50% very or fairly well informed) as feel uninformed (47% not very or at all informed).

A similar question was asked in the Life in Lancashire 2007 survey. The question asked "How well informed do you think Lancashire County Council keeps residents about the services and benefits it provides?". The results for this question were that 41% felt informed, and 52% felt uninformed, which is in line with the current findings and shows slight improvement. However, it must be borne in mind that the two surveys are not strictly comparable due to differing methodologies as Life in Lancashire was a face-to-face survey, and a slightly different question wording.

Chart 9 - How informed do you feel about Lancashire County Council?

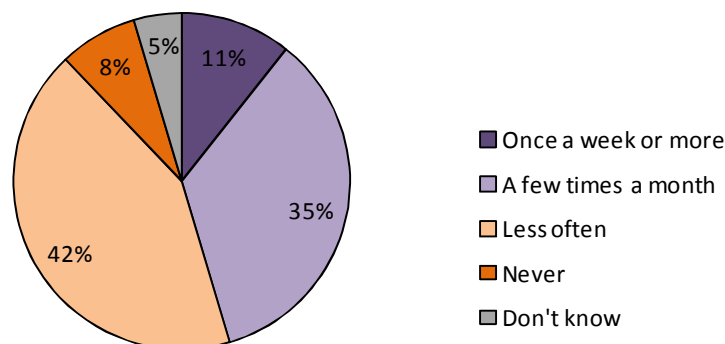


Base: All respondents (unweighted 2152, weighted 1500)

Respondents with a disability feel less informed about Lancashire County Council (54% not informed) compared to people without a disability (44% not informed). Respondents who access fewer media channels (two or fewer) are also less likely to feel informed about the county council (52% not informed).

Respondents don't regularly see, hear or read stories about the county council in the media (35% a few times a month, 42% less often). Only one in ten people see information in the media once a week or more (11%).

Chart 10 - How often do you hear, see or read stories about the county council and its services in the media?



Base: All respondents (unweighted 2154, weighted 1502)

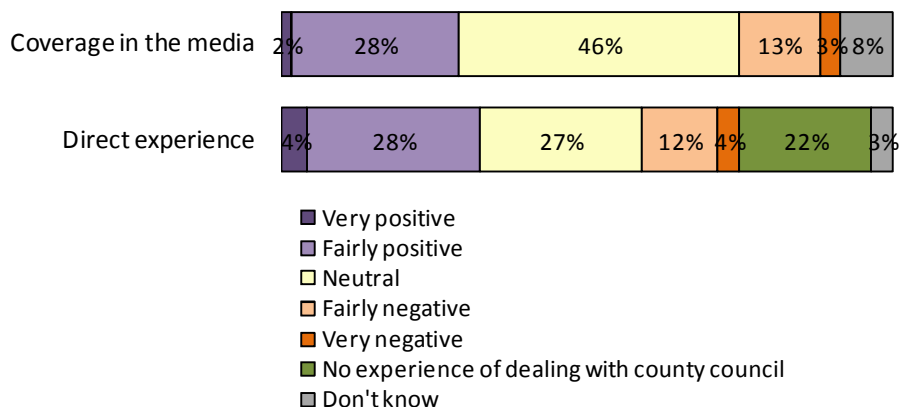
There are no differences in how often different types of respondent view media coverage about the county council and its services. This is perhaps surprising given that media consumption shows variation by demographic and geographic group. This could be caused by a lack of awareness of council services meaning that coverage doesn't get picked up as being about the county council, or it could be that the coverage the council gets in the media isn't having the desired impact because the message is getting lost.

However, there is a difference in how often respondents view media coverage based on the amount of media channels they use. Those respondents who use two or fewer media channels are more likely to never see coverage on the county council and its services (13%).

Even though not all respondents regularly come into contact with media coverage about the council, they do have a perception of the county council from media coverage. Perceptions are more positive (29%) than negative (17%), though the majority are either neutral (46%) or don't know (8%).

When asked about direct experience of dealing with the county council, one in five said they hadn't had experience (22%). Among those who have had experience (ie excluding no experience of dealing with county council answers), perceptions are more positive (42%) than negative (20%).

**Chart 11 - a) Based only on coverage in the media, what is your overall view of the county council and its services?
b) Based only on any direct experience you've had of dealing with the county council, what is your overall view of the county council and its services?**



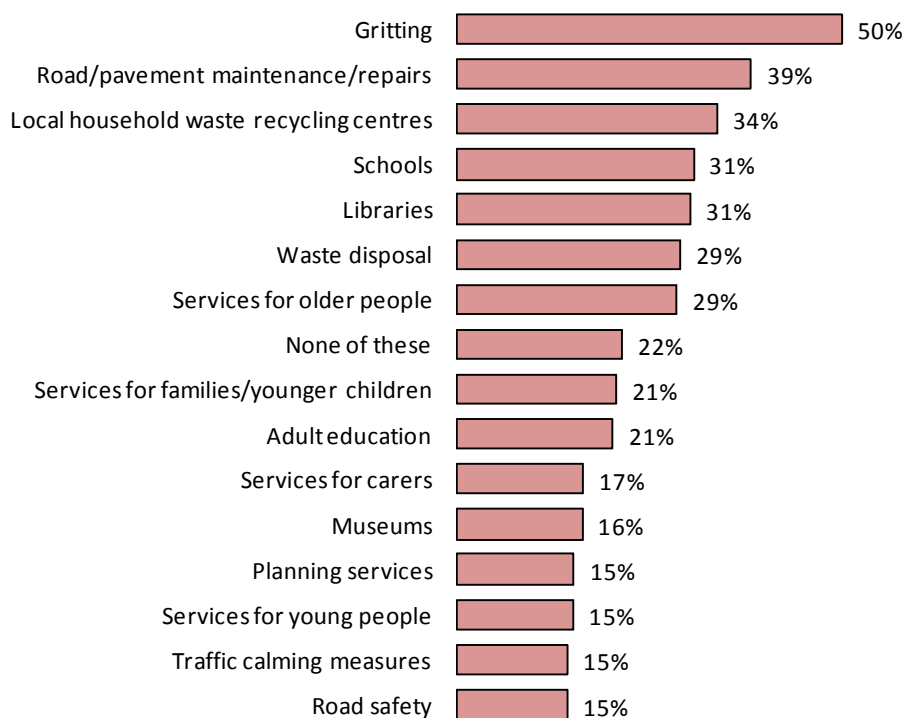
Base: All respondents (unweighted 2152, weighted 1505)

Respondents have a slightly more negative view of the county council based on media coverage when they consume fewer media channels (two or fewer channels 21% negative), compared to those accessing three or four channels (16% negative).

The only significant difference in perceptions of the council based on direct experience is that respondents in Rossendale have a less positive view of the council and its services (28% negative).

Given the time of year when the survey went out it is not surprising that the most commonly viewed service in the media was gritting (50%). The other top stories in the media that respondents were aware of were covering highway maintenance (39%), waste recycling centres (34%), schools (31%) and libraries (31%).

Chart 12 - Within the last month, which of the following county council services have you heard, seen or read about in the media?

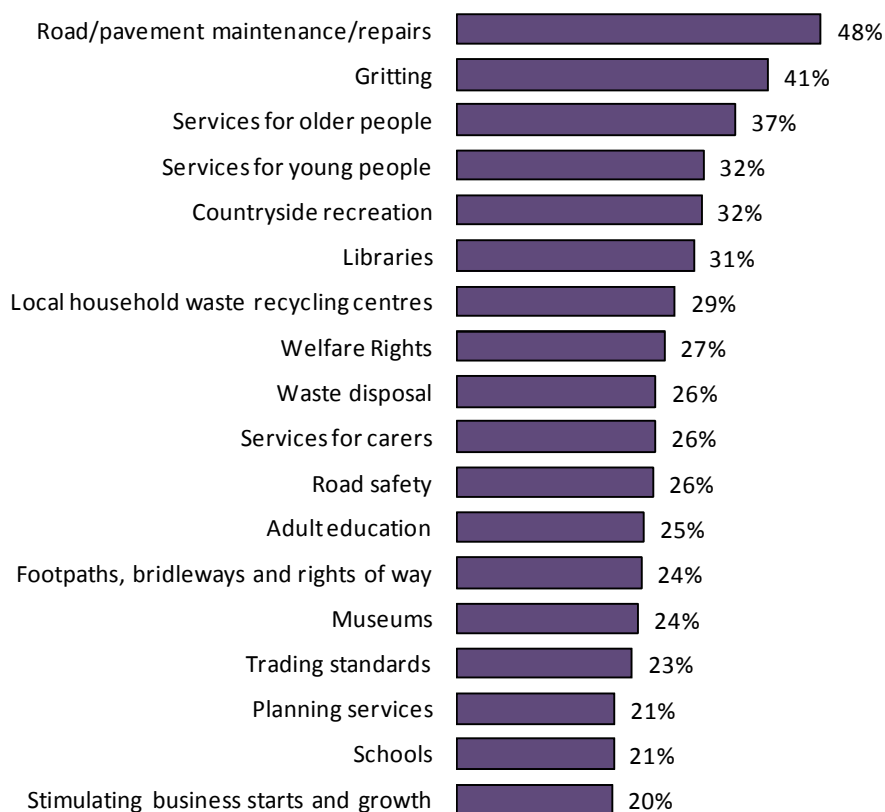


Base: All respondents (unweighted 2122, weighted 1480)

It was the over 60s who were less likely to have heard, read or seen media coverage of council services in the media in the last month (29% none). Men were more likely to see media coverage about road and pavement maintenance (42%), waste disposal (33%), road safety (19%), traffic calming (18%) and traffic management (17%). Whereas women were more likely to have seen media coverage about schools (33%) and services for families and young children (27%). Waste disposal coverage is also more commonly seen by residents in Wyre district (46%) and the over 60s (37%). Coverage on cycle facilities is more commonly seen by Lancaster district residents (23%).

Respondents were given the same list of services and asked which they would like to see more coverage of in the media. The services that came out top were highway maintenance (48%), gritting⁴ (41%), services for older people (37%), services for young people (32%), countryside recreation (32%) and libraries (31%).

Chart 13 - And which of the following county council services, if any, would you like to see more coverage of in the media?



Base: All respondents (unweighted 2057, weighted 1441)

Not only do men see more coverage of road and pavement maintenance, waste disposal and traffic management they also want to see more media coverage on these subjects (52%, 31% and 23% respectively). This pattern is also reflected in part-time workers and women wanting additional coverage around services for families and young children (30% and 20% respectively). The over 60s are naturally want more coverage on services for older people (54%), but also on road and pavement maintenance (62%).

There are similar patterns for people with disabilities and those living in council or housing association property in terms of their subject preferences

⁴ Though this is likely to be a seasonal effect in the fieldwork dates

for welfare rights (39% and 54% respectively) and services for disabled adults (32% and 42% respectively). Those in council or housing association property are also interested in coverage on services for carers (39%).

Among respondents from a BME background preference is clearly business related, with more coverage around support and advice for business investment (34%) and support for key business sectors (24%) wanted.

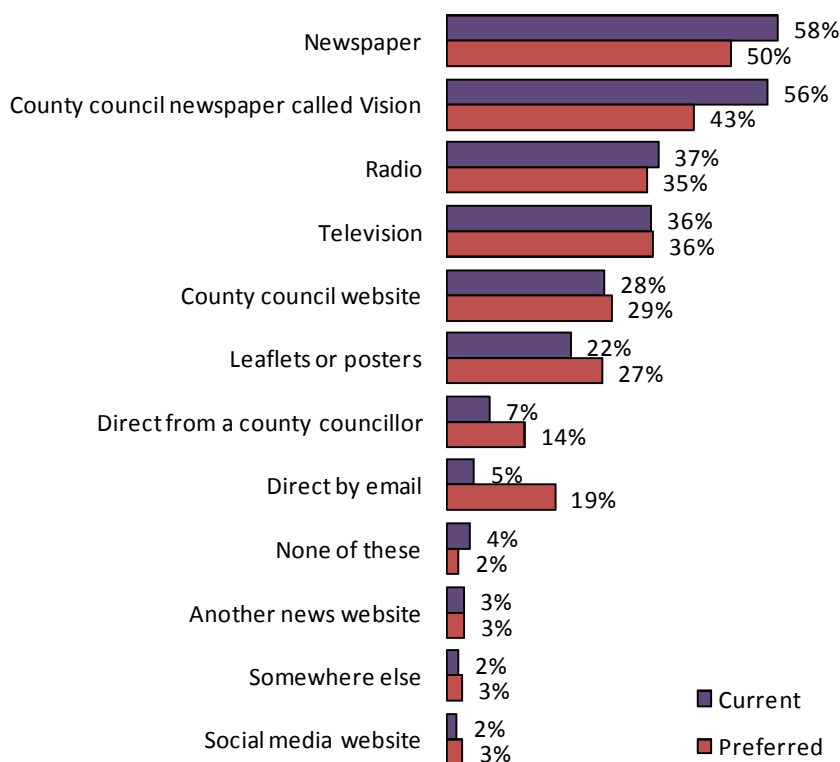
It is possible to compare the difference between awareness of current media coverage against preferences for future coverage. The results are shown in table one below. The biggest increase is for countryside recreation (22%); and services for young people, footpaths, bridleways and rights of way, and welfare rights are also areas people would like to see more media coverage than there currently is (all increasing by 17%). The two services respondents would like to see less coverage of compared to what they currently see are gritting services and schools (drop of 10%), though gritting still remains a high preference.

Table 1 – Awareness of media coverage versus preferences for coverage

Service	Seen in media in last month	Like to see more coverage in media	Difference
Countryside recreation	10%	32%	22%
Services for young people	15%	32%	17%
Footpaths, bridleways and rights of way	7%	24%	17%
Welfare Rights	10%	27%	17%
Stimulating business starts and growth	9%	20%	11%
Road safety	15%	26%	11%
Trading standards	12%	23%	11%
Services for vulnerable children/families	7%	18%	11%
Services for carers	17%	26%	9%
Support for the arts	5%	14%	9%
Road and pavement maintenance and repairs	39%	48%	9%
Provision of economic development services for Lancashire	7%	16%	9%
Cycle facilities	10%	19%	9%
Support and advice to the county's key business sectors	3%	11%	8%
Services for older people	29%	37%	8%
Support and advice for business investment	9%	17%	7%
Museums	16%	24%	7%
Street lighting	11%	18%	7%
Services for children with additional needs	9%	16%	7%
Services for adults with mental health problems	11%	17%	6%
Council run services and facilities for disabled adults	13%	19%	6%
Planning services	15%	21%	5%
Traffic management	14%	19%	5%
Adult education	21%	25%	4%
Services for adults with learning difficulties	10%	13%	4%
Traffic calming measures	15%	17%	3%
Libraries	31%	31%	0%
Waste disposal	29%	26%	-3%
Registration of births, deaths and marriages	10%	6%	-4%
Services for families and younger children	21%	17%	-4%
Local household waste recycling centres	34%	29%	-5%
None of these	22%	13%	-9%
Gritting	50%	41%	-10%
Schools	31%	21%	-10%

Generally preferences for methods of finding out news about the county council and its services match peoples' current methods of accessing this information. That is, newspapers (58% current, 50% preferred), and the county council newspaper (56% current, 43% preferred) are the most mentioned methods. Television and radio are also mentioned by more than a third of respondents as a preferred source of information (36% and 35% respectively). It is sending information directly by email that has seen the greatest difference increasing to one in five people preferring it (19%).

**Chart 14 - a) How do you currently find out news about the county council and its services?
b) And how would you prefer to find out news about the county council?**



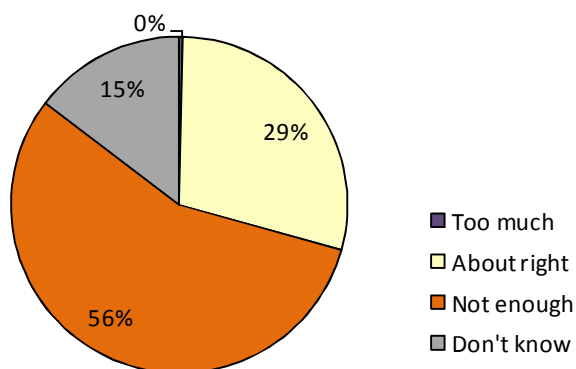
Base: All respondents (unweighted 1689, weighted 1209)

Current methods of finding out news about the county council and its services varies by demographic group. The over 60s were more likely to use a newspaper (67%), and those aged 25 to 44 and in socio-economic groups ABC1 were more likely to use the county council's website (41% and 34% respectively). Respondents from a BME background were more likely to receive information directly by email (22%), and less likely to use Vision (42%).

Preferences for information sources also vary, with the over 60s less likely to use the council website (13%) and those aged between 25 and 44 less likely to prefer Vision (36%) and television (27%). Respondents in the higher socio-economic groups were again more likely to prefer the council's website (AB 37%, C1 32%), and those in the lower groups preferred leaflets and posters (C2 35%, DE 37%). Again respondents from a BME background preferred to receive information directly by email (28%), and were less likely to prefer Vision (31%).

One in three respondents feel that the amount of coverage in the media is about right (29%), but the majority say it is not enough (56%).

Chart 15 - Do you think that the amount of coverage about the county council and its services in the media is...?



Base: All respondents (unweighted 2123, weighted 1479)

Respondents from socio-economic group AB and those who use fewer media channels are more likely to say that the amount of media coverage is about right (39% and 32% respectively).

6 Recommendations

The findings show that there are opportunities to improve the effectiveness of communications as many respondents don't feel informed about the county council and its services, and feel the council doesn't have enough coverage in the media. The following are some recommendations resulting from the research.

- Use the information on media consumption to help evaluate the effectiveness of current media campaigns. For example, look at where most of the current news items appear and compare this to how respondents access news to maximise reach.
- Use the information on media consumption and preferences to target communications more effectively at different audiences. For example:
 - When using the internet as a communication channel, bear in mind that the older audiences are less likely to use it.
 - When targeting older people concentrate on local weeklies with geographically relevant content, but less time-sensitive material.
 - The highest socio-economic groups (AB) are harder to reach as they are less likely to encounter local media, especially newspapers. However, they are more likely to be satisfied with the amount of information they receive about the county council.
- Bear in mind that newspapers, and Vision the council's newspaper, are respondents most preferred ways of finding out news about the county council.
- Look at opportunities for increasing media coverage for the services that respondents wanted more information on, for example highway maintenance, services of older and younger people, countryside recreation and library services. This may help improve how informed people feel about the council and its services.
- Compare the subjects covered in current media coverage with preferences for future media coverage to ensure the balance between proactive and reactive content is balanced appropriately.
- To enable maximum reach to be achieved through radio, ensure news items are broadcast early in the day or during drive times.
- Continue to monitor media usage to keep up-to-date with preferences and make communications more effective.

7 Appendix

7.1 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