



Living in Lancashire Survey

Trading Standards

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1. Executive summary

This wave of the Living in Lancashire panel looked at people's views on Trading Standards. The survey was sent by email or by post to all 2,585 members of the panel on 12 September and the fieldwork ended on 19 October 2012. In total 1,860 questionnaires were returned, giving an overall response rate of 72%.

1.1 Key findings

1.1.1 Scams

- Three quarters of respondents said that, if they thought they had been the victim of a scam, they would tell friends and family members to be aware of the scam (77%), while two thirds of respondents said they would report the scam (67%).
- Just over half of respondents who have been the victim of a scam in the past two years did not report it (56%).
- Four fifths of respondents knew they could report scams to the police (80%) and three quarters knew they could report scams to Lancashire County Council's Trading Standards (73%).
- Nine out of ten respondents would report a scam which resulted in them losing what they consider to be a small amount of money (89%). Nearly all respondents would report a scam which resulted in them losing what they consider to be a significant amount of money (97%).
- Around three quarters of respondents agreed that they know how to report a scam (72%).
- Four fifths of respondents would prefer to report a scam by phone call (81%). Around half of respondents would prefer face-to-face reporting (47%) and two fifths would prefer to report a scam by email (41%).

1.1.2 Trading Standards

- Around one in eight respondents feel very well informed (13%) and three fifths feel fairly well informed (59%) about their rights as a consumer.
- Half of respondents said they know at least a little about Trading Standards (52%).
- Around three fifths of respondents would prefer to receive information on consumer protection and other Trading Standards services through leaflets

(63%). Other popular channels are local newspapers (56%) and the internet (42%).

- The most common responses given by respondents when asked which areas should be the top priorities for Trading Standards over the next three years were protecting older and vulnerable people, preventing illegal trading practices, and protecting children and young people (68%, 58% and 49% respectively).

1.2 Recommendations

- Around three quarters of respondents said they knew they could report a scam to Trading Standards and the majority of respondents would prefer to report a scam by phone call. It would therefore be useful to make sure that the telephone number to report scams to is prominent on any Trading Standards promotional material (eg website, leaflets).
- BME respondents are more likely to say that they wouldn't report scams but also more likely to have been the victim of scams over the past two years. As it is unclear why this is the case, it may be worth doing some further research with this group to determine what prevents them from reporting scams and if there is anything that could be done by Trading Standards or the Communications Service to improve this.
- Respondents said they are more likely to report a scam if it caused them to lose a significant amount of money. While this is useful, it may mean that scams which don't cause people to lose money, but are a problem in other ways, are not being reported. The service may want to explore how to encourage people to report all types of scams.
- Only around half of respondents said they know anything about Trading Standards. Further research could be done to determine whether participants would like to know more about Trading Standards and what, in particular, they would like to know. This information could then be provided through respondents' preferred information routes (leaflets, local newspapers and the internet).

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 ie the views of panel members become too informed with county council services to be representative of the population as a whole.

3. Research objectives

The objective of this survey is to look at people's views on scams and Trading Standards. Questions looked specifically at:

- what panel members would do if they were the victim of a scam;
- reporting of scams;
- panel members' awareness of Trading Standards; and
- which areas panel members think should be priorities for Trading Standards over the next three years.

4. Methodology

This wave of Living in Lancashire research was sent to 2,585 members of the panel on 12 September. A reminder was sent on 3 October, with a final closing date of 19 October 2012.

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 1,816 members and the online questionnaire was sent to 769 members.

In total 1,860 questionnaires were returned, giving an overall response rate of 72%.

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 1,273, 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%
1,000	3%	3%	2%
2,000	2%	2%	1%

On a question where 50% of the people in a sample of 1,000 respond with a particular answer, the chances 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.

The following table shows what the percentage differences between two samples on a statistic must be greater than, to be statistically significant.

Size of sample A	Size of sample B	50/50	70/30	90/10
100	100	14%	13%	8%
100	200	12%	11%	7%
500	1,000	5%	5%	3%
2,000	2,000	3%	3%	2%

(Confidence interval at 95% certainty for a comparison of two samples)

For example, where the size of sample A and sample B is 2,000 responses in each and the percentage result in each group you are comparing is around 50% in each category, the difference in the results needs to be more than 3% to be statistically significant. This is to say that the difference in the results of the two groups of people is not due to chance alone and is a statistically valid difference (eg of opinion, service usage).

For each question in the survey, comparisons have been made between different sub-groups of respondents (eg age, gender, disability, ethnicity, geographic area) to look for statistically significant differences in opinion. Statistically valid differences between sub-groups are described in the main body of the report.

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

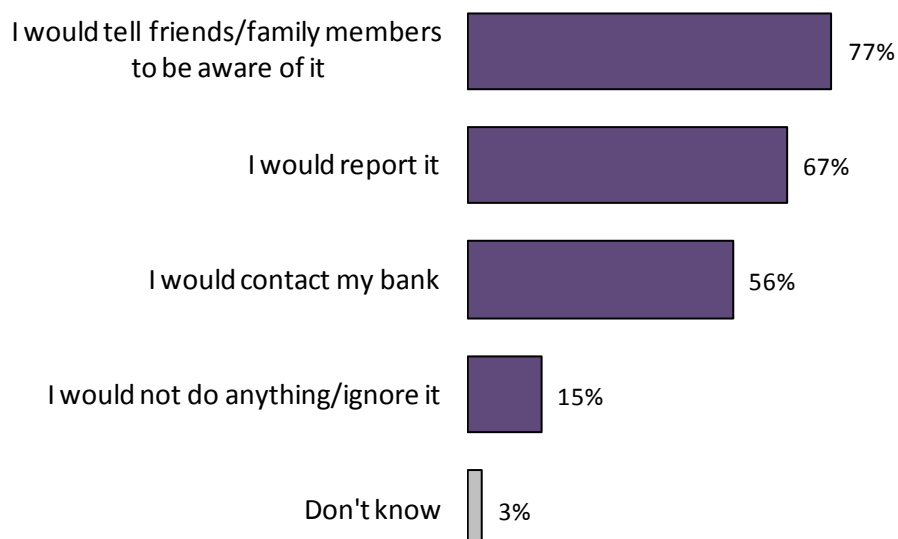
5. Main research findings

5.1 Scams

Panel members were asked a number of questions about scams. An introduction to the section explained some of the more common forms of scams that panel members may have come across.

If they thought they had been the victim of a scam, three quarters of respondents said they would tell friends and family members to be aware of the scam (77%) and two thirds of respondents said they would report it (67%). Only around one in seven respondents said they wouldn't do anything or would just ignore it (15%).

Chart 1 - If you thought you were a victim of a scam what would you do?

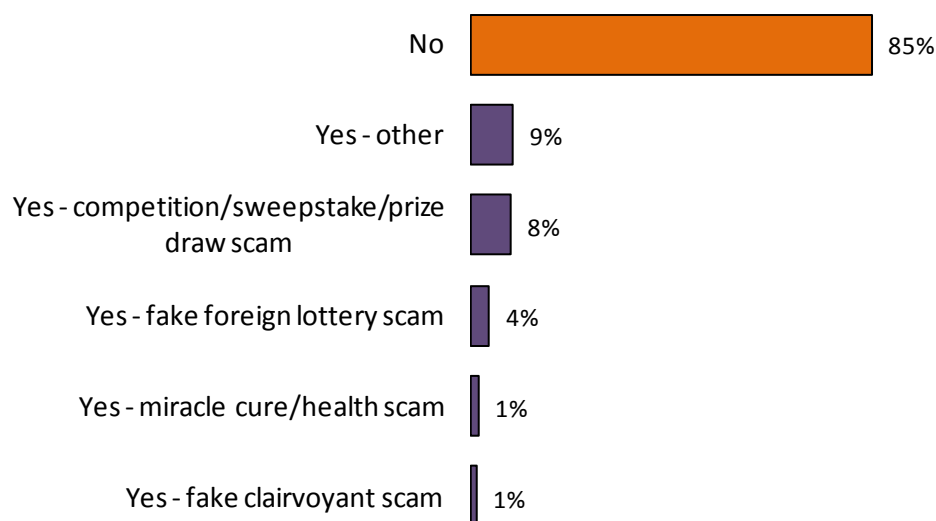


Base: All respondents (unweighted 1,849, weighted 1,333)

BME respondents are more likely to say they would not do anything or would ignore the scam (25%).

Most respondents have not been the victim of a scam in the past two years (85%). However, around one in ten respondents have been the victim of an unspecified type of scam (9%) or a competition/sweepstake/prize draw type scam (8%).

Chart 2 - In the last two years, have you been the victim of a scam?

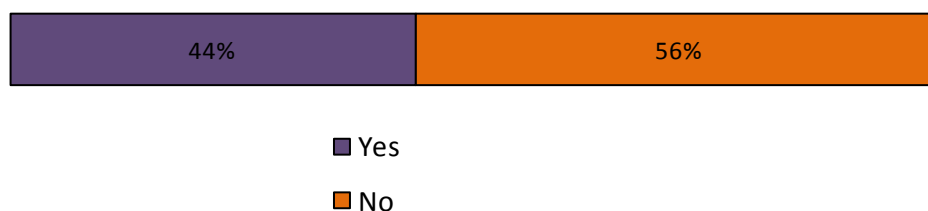


Base: All respondents (unweighted 1,842, weighted 1,326)

BME respondents are more likely to have been the victim of a scam in the last two years (only 73% responded 'no'). In particular, BME respondents are more likely to have been the victim of a competition/sweepstake/prize draw type scam (19%).

Just over half of respondents who have been the victim of a scam in the past two years did not report it (56%).

Chart 3 - If you were a victim of a scam in the last two years, did you report it?

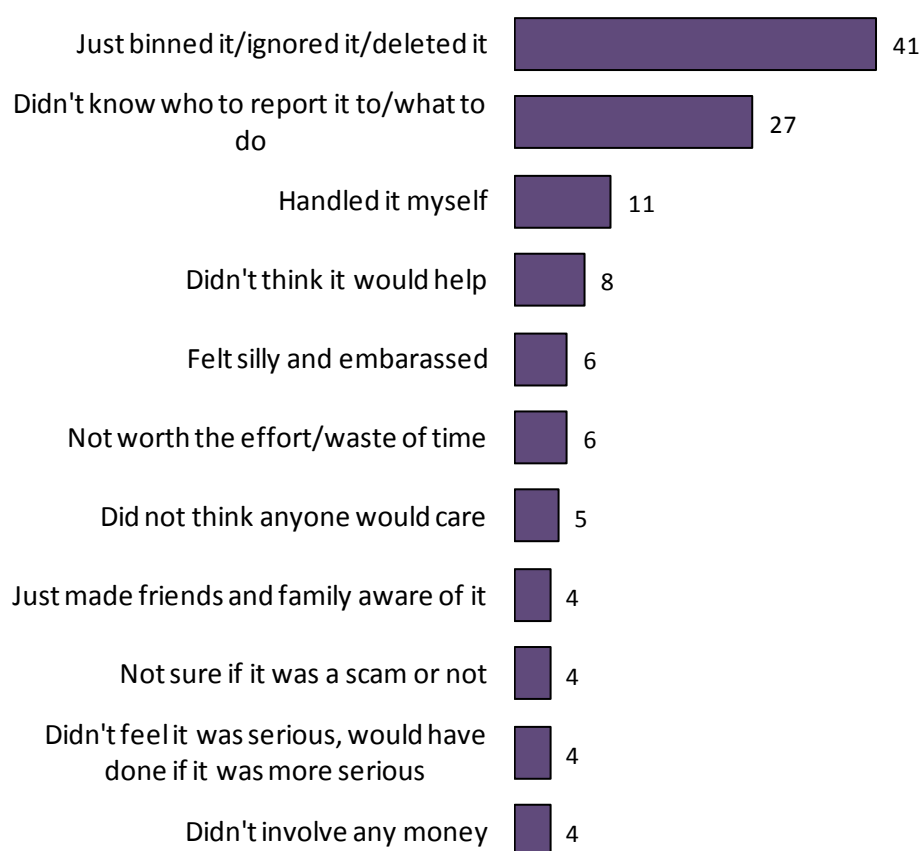


Base: Respondents that have been the victim of a scam in the past two years (unweighted 349, weighted 234)

Respondents that had been the victim of a scam in the past two years but didn't report it were asked why they didn't report it. This was an open ended question and 134 panel members gave a response. The responses received were categorised and the most common categories are shown in chart 4. The number of respondents to each category rather than the percentage of respondents is shown on the chart due to the low numbers involved.

The most common category was that the respondent just binned, ignored or deleted the scam (41 respondents). 27 respondents said they didn't know who to report the scam to or what to do about it.

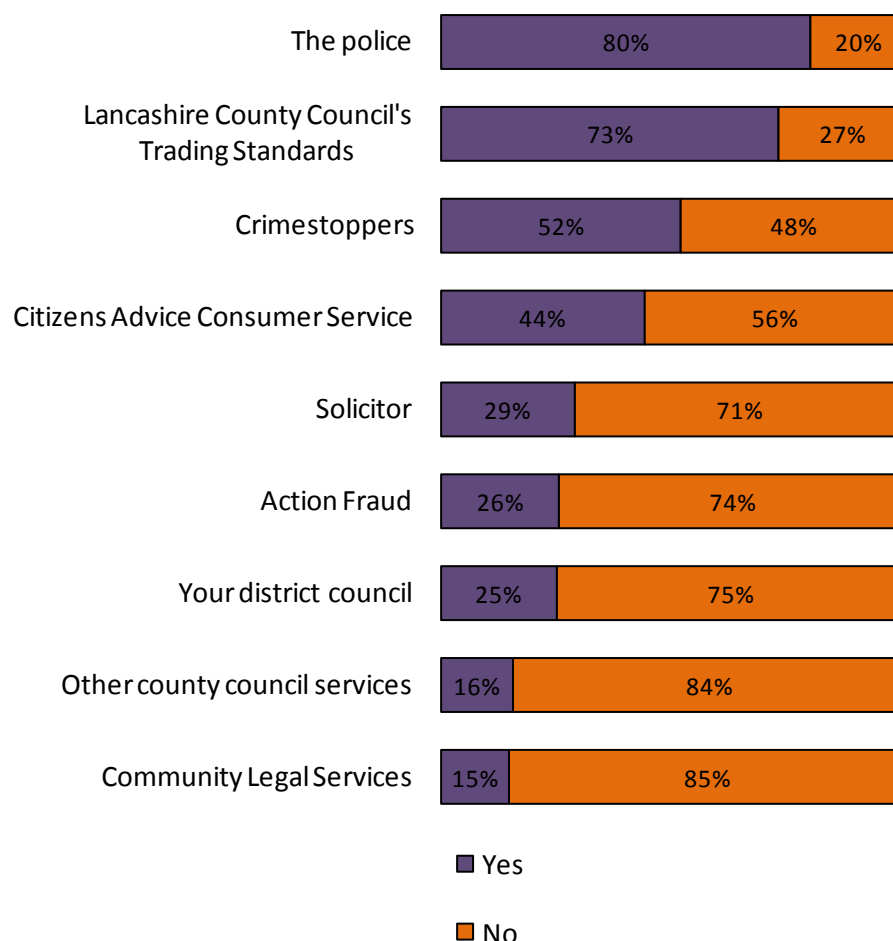
Chart 4 - If you did not report the scam, why not?



Base: Respondents that were victim of a scam but didn't report it (unweighted 134)

Respondents were then asked whether they knew they could report scams to a number of different organisations. Four fifths of respondents knew they could report scams to the police (80%) and three quarters knew they could report scams to Lancashire County Council's Trading Standards (73%).

Chart 5 - Did you know that you could report scams to...?

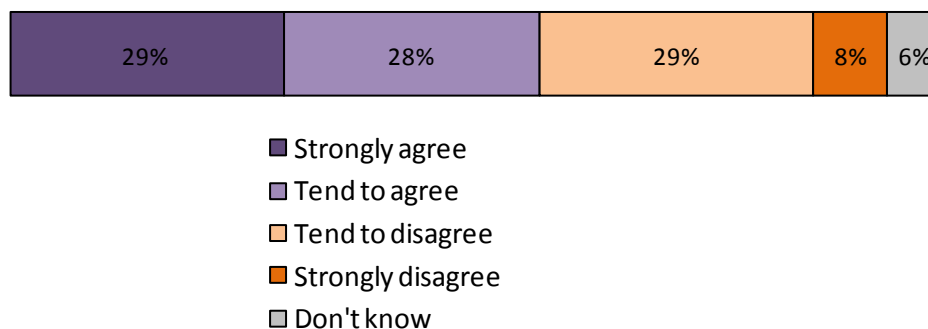


Base: All respondents (unweighted 1,465, weighted 1,095)

BME respondents are less likely to know that they could report scams to Lancashire County Council's Trading Standards (58% responded 'yes').

Around three fifths of respondents agreed that if they received a letter or email which they recognised as a scam they would report it (57%).

Chart 6 - How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements? If I received a letter/email which I recognised as a scam I would report it

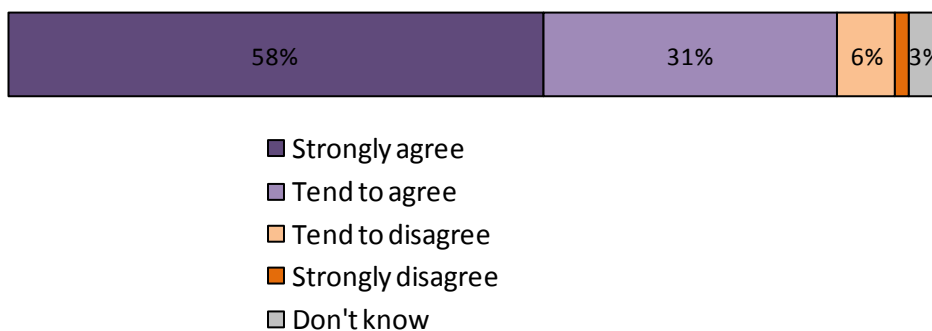


Base: All respondents (unweighted 1,814, weighted 1,314)

Respondents aged 60 and over are more likely to agree that they would report a letter/email if they recognised it as a scam (71%). Respondents who work full-time are more likely to disagree (47% disagree).

Nine out of ten respondents agreed that they would report a scam which resulted in them losing what they consider to be a small amount of money (89%).

Chart 7 - How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements? If I was a victim of a scam which resulted in me losing, what I consider to be, a small amount of money, I would report it

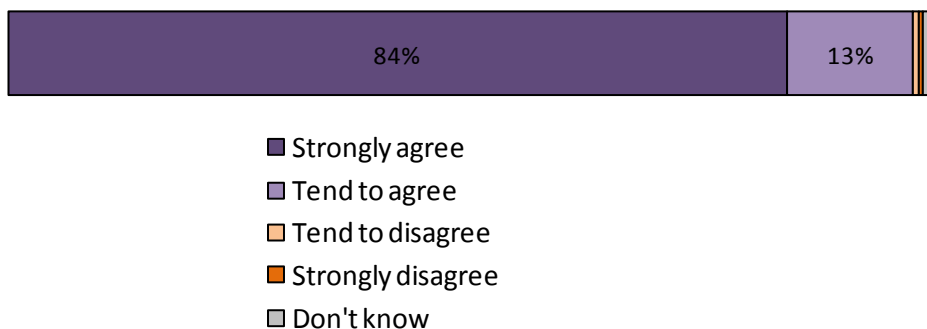


Base: All respondents (unweighted 1,819, weighted 1,314)

Respondents who work full-time are more likely to disagree that they would report being the victim of a scam that resulted in them losing what they consider to be a small amount of money (11% disagree).

Nearly all respondents agreed that they would report a scam which resulted in them losing what they consider to be a significant amount of money (97%).

Chart 8 - How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements? If I was a victim of a scam that resulted in me losing an amount of money that I considered to be significant, I would report it

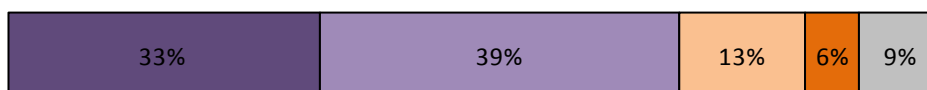


Base: All respondents (unweighted 1,819, weighted 1,317)

BME respondents are more likely to disagree that they would report being the victim of a scam that resulted in them losing what they consider to be a significant amount of money (8% disagree).

Although most respondents would want to report a scam if it meant they had lost money, only around three quarters of respondents agreed that they know how to report a scam (72%).

Chart 9 - How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements? I know how to report a scam



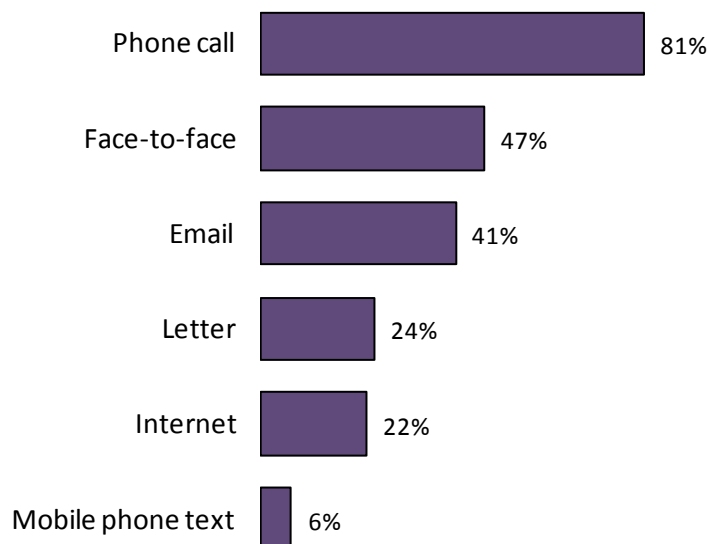
- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Base: All respondents (unweighted 1,810, weighted 1,302)

Respondents who were the victim of a scam in the past two years but didn't report it are more likely to say they strongly disagree that they know how to report a scam (18%).

Four fifths of respondents would prefer to report a scam by phone call (81%). Around half of respondents would prefer face-to-face reporting (47%) and two fifths would prefer to report a scam by email (41%).

Chart 10 - How would you prefer to report a scam?



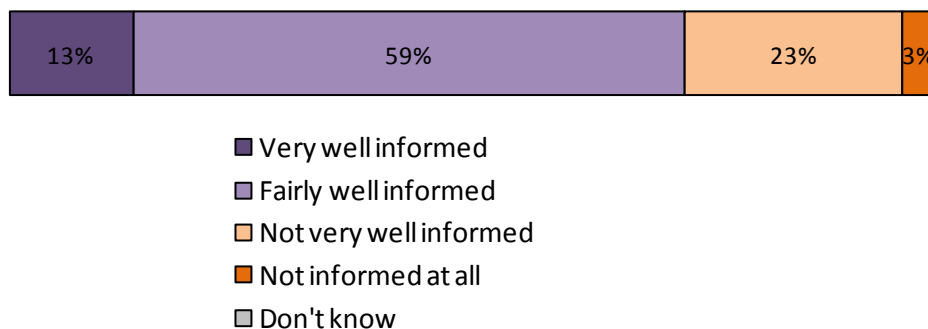
Base: All respondents (unweighted 1,843, weighted 1,328)

BME respondents are more likely to say they would prefer to report a scam face-to-face (59%). Respondents who work full-time are more likely to say they would prefer to report a scam by email or the internet (54% and 34% respectively).

5.2 Trading Standards

Panel members were asked how well informed they feel about their rights as a consumer. Around one in eight respondents feel very well informed (13%) and three fifths feel fairly well informed (59%).

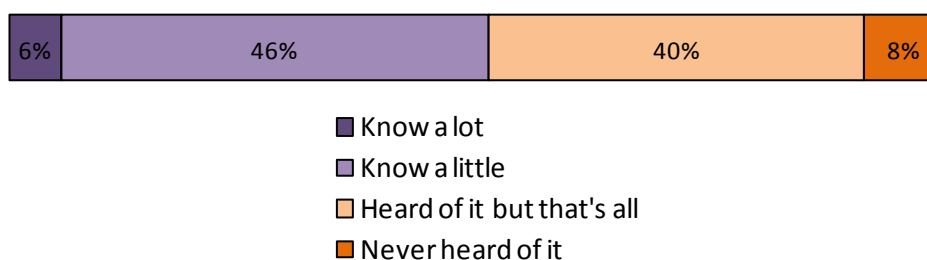
Chart 11 - How well informed do you feel about your rights as a consumer?



Base: All respondents (unweighted 1,851, weighted 1,333)

Panel members were then asked how much they know about Lancashire County Council's Trading Standards service. Around half of respondents said they know at least a little about Trading Standards (52%).

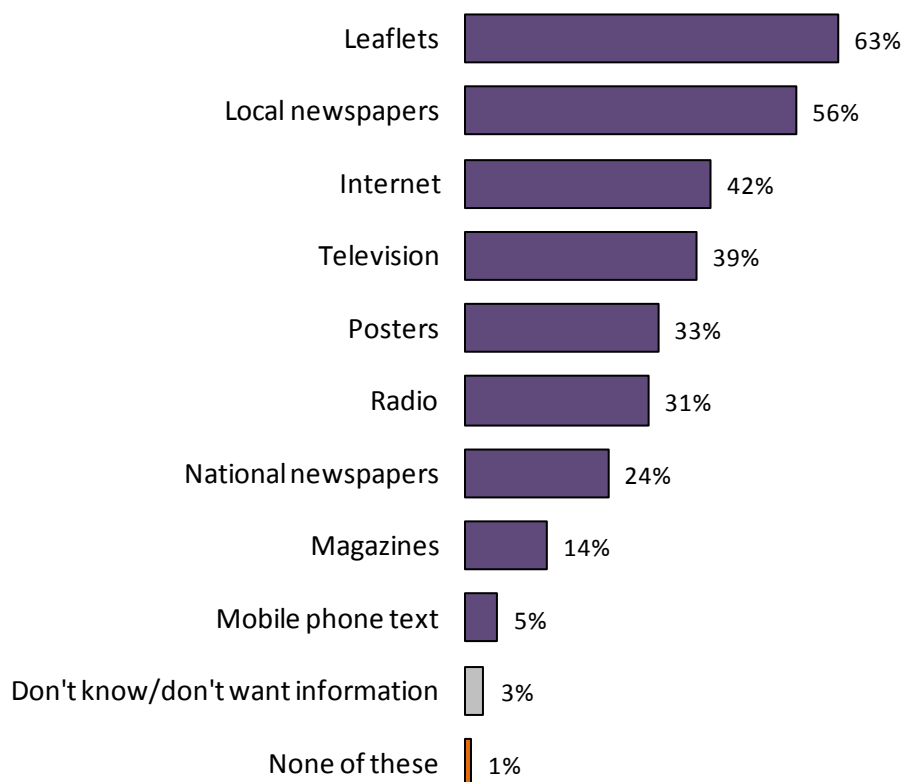
Chart 12 - How much would you say you know about Lancashire County Council's Trading Standards service?



Base: All respondents (unweighted 1,848, weighted 1,330)

Around three fifths of respondents would prefer to receive information on consumer protection and other Trading Standards services through leaflets (63%). Over half of respondents would prefer to receive information through local newspapers (56%) and two fifths would prefer to receive information via the internet (42%).

Chart 13 - From which, if any, of the following sources would you prefer to receive information on consumer protection and other Trading Standards services



Base: All respondents (unweighted 1,845, weighted 1,329)

Respondents aged 60 and over are more likely to prefer to receive information on consumer protection and other Trading Standards services through television (54%). Respondents in socio-economic group AB are more likely to prefer to receive information via the internet (59%).

Panel members were then given a list of areas that the Trading Standards service covers and were asked whether they were previously aware that these areas are covered by Trading Standards.

Around two thirds of respondents were aware that Trading Standards covers preventing illegal trading practices, fair trading, and protecting children and young people (71%, 67% and 66% respectively). Only around a third of respondents were aware that Trading Standards covers protecting the environment and rural issues (37% and 31% respectively).

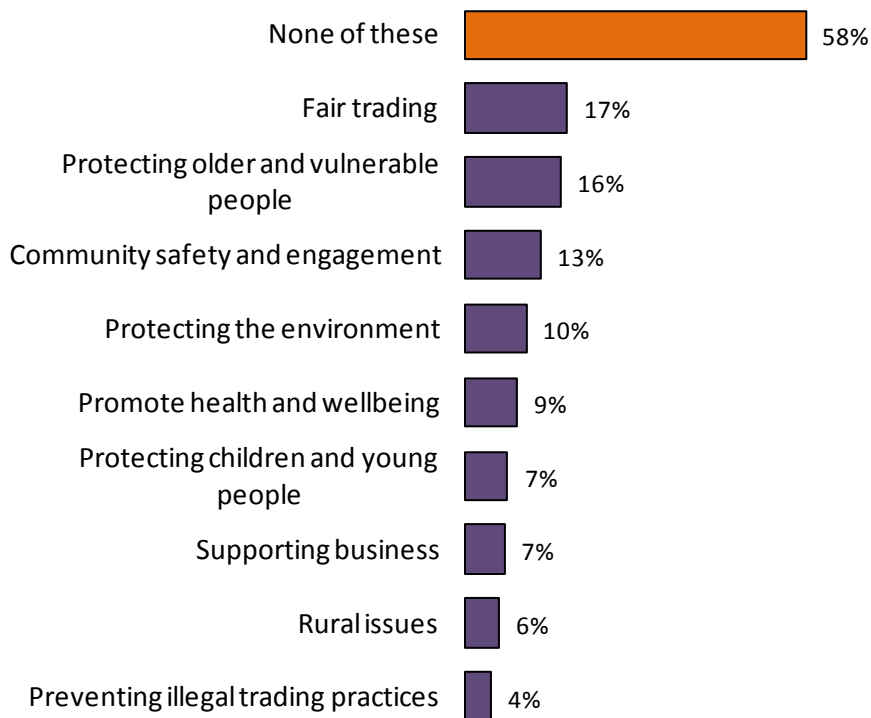
Chart 14 - Which of the following areas were you aware are covered by Trading Standards?



Base: All respondents (unweighted 1,795, weighted 1,296)

Panel members were then asked to select areas from the same list that they had experienced a problem with. Around three fifths of respondents have not experienced problems in any of the areas covered by Trading Standards (58%).

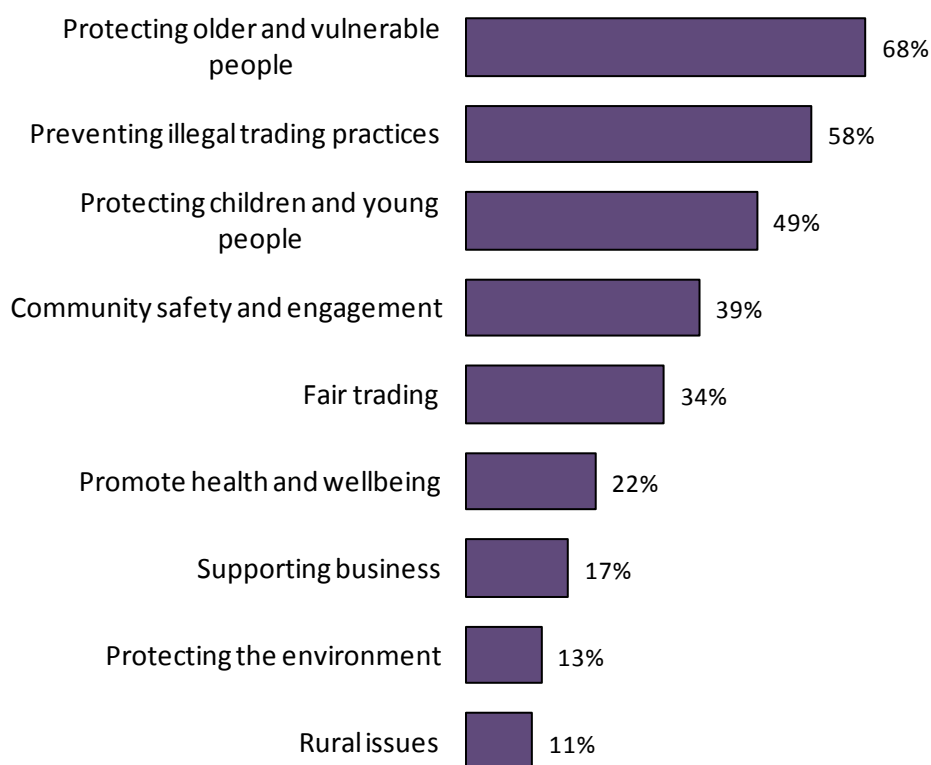
Chart 15 - Which of the following areas have you experienced a problem with?



Base: All respondents (unweighted 787, weighted 616)

Finally, panel members were asked which three areas from the same list should be the top priorities for Trading Standards over the next three years. The top three responses to this were protecting older and vulnerable people, preventing illegal trading practices, and protecting children and young people (68%, 58% and 49% respectively). Protecting the environment and rural issues were chosen as top priorities by the fewest respondents (13% and 11% respectively).

Chart 16 - Which of the following areas of work do you think should be the top three priorities for Lancashire County Council's Trading Standards over the next three years?



Base: All respondents (unweighted 1,831, weighted 1,320)

6. Recommendations

- Around three quarters of respondents said they knew they could report a scam to Trading Standards and the majority of respondents would prefer to report a scam by phone call. It would therefore be useful to make sure that the telephone number to report scams to is prominent on any Trading Standards promotional material (eg website, leaflets).
- BME respondents are more likely to say that they wouldn't report scams but also more likely to have been the victim of scams over the past two years. As it is unclear why this is the case, it may be worth doing some further research with this group to determine what prevents them from reporting scams and if there is anything that could be done by Trading Standards or the Communications Service to improve this.
- Respondents said they are more likely to report a scam if it caused them to lose a significant amount of money. While this is useful, it may mean that scams which don't cause people to lose money, but are a problem in other ways, are not being reported. The service may want to explore how to encourage people to report all types of scams.
- Only around half of respondents said they know anything about Trading Standards. Further research could be done to determine whether participants would like to know more about Trading Standards and what, in particular, they would like to know. This information could then be provided through respondents' preferred information routes (leaflets, local newspapers and the internet).

Appendix 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 with 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 dependent 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