



in Lancashire

Wave 19 Attitudes to Road Safety

Fieldwork 18 July – 17 August 2007

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1 Executive Summary

This wave of the Life in Lancashire panel dealt with road safety. All 1827 members of the panel were sent two mailings of the survey. In total 1467 questionnaires were returned, giving an overall response rate of 80%. The responses to the survey are weighted to reflect the population of Lancashire.

1.1 Key findings

- The majority of the panel drive every day (57%), with another quarter driving most days (26%).
- **Almost every driver rates themselves as either a very or fairly safe driver (98%).** The only demographic difference is that west Lancashire residents feel slightly more confident in their own safety than those from east Lancashire (50% and 38% rate themselves as very safe respectively).
- Panel members are much less likely to **feel safe on the roads** generally however, with a fifth not feeling safe (22%).
- Less than half of respondents who sometimes drive for work are aware of their employer having a policy on **mobile phone usage** while driving (45%), and only a quarter are aware of a company policy on **taking planned breaks from driving** (23%).
- More respondents **feel safe as a car passenger** than as a driver (79% feel safe as opposed to 70%), while seven in ten **feel safe on the roads as a pedestrian** (71%). Cycling however is not seen as a safe activity on the roads, (54% feel unsafe).
- The highest road safety priorities for the authorities are to **ensure young people drive more safely, ensure driving standards reflect the skills needed for driving today, to have better initial driver training and education, and to make roads safer.** Respondents are least likely to prioritise **requiring drivers to periodically re-take their driving tests.**
- The Driving Standards Agency (53%) and the Drivers Instructors Association (46%) are who respondents would most likely contact if they wanted to take further driver training.
- The vast majority of panel members agree that **cars are safer than they used to be** (85%), while more disagree than agree that **drivers are better than they used to be** (42% against 18%).

- Almost two thirds of respondents consider that road safety campaigns are effective (63%), while one in three disagree (33%).

1.2 Conclusions

There is general agreement that cars are safer now than ever, and that the authorities are more interested in road safety. However opinion is mixed on whether roads are safer, and there is disagreement that drivers are better than they used to be. That driving standards are falling or at least not improving ties in with the priorities given for the authorities, which are to help other drivers, (especially young drivers), to drive more safely.

This means, as was found on the national RAC Report on Motoring 2007¹, that the behaviour of other drivers is the most important concern for Lancashire residents. Taking steps to improve driving behaviours is the highest priority, even above improving the safety of roads. While this may or may not reflect the actual likeliest risk of accident, it is important to consider the perception. Therefore consider communications encouraging better driving behaviour, perhaps by focussing on how this makes others feel.

This is the most important priority for residents: there is comparatively little support for making drivers re-take their tests, which possibly contradicts the high priority for ensuring driving standards meet the needs of modern motoring. Encouraging drivers to take more personal responsibility for safety on the roads, instead of simply blaming others, should also be a key priority.

It may also be worthwhile considering:

- how to improve the perceived safety of cyclists; and
- whether to take a different approach to road safety campaigns for men, since they are less likely to say they are effective.

¹ Another key finding of this piece of research was that while safety on the roads was seen as the highest priority, “road safety” was not, being considered as something more for pedestrians and cyclists than drivers. Changing the wording round to better reflect people’s understanding may well also be a priority.

2 Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

3 Methodology

This wave of Life in Lancashire was sent to 1827 members of the panel on 18 July 2007. A reminder was sent on 8 August 2007. The fieldwork ended on 17 August 2007.

No incentive was given for respondents to complete the questionnaire. In total 1467 questionnaires were returned, giving an overall response rate of 80%.

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 down to match the effective response of 1267, which is the equivalent size of the data if it had not been weighted and was a perfect random sample.

3.1 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 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.

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

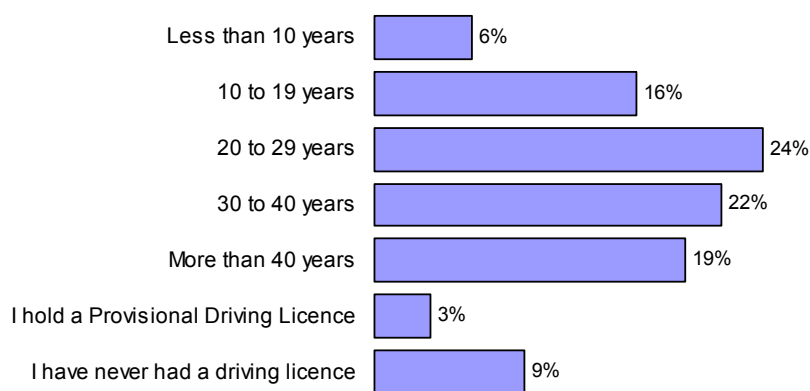
4 Main Research Findings

4.1 Road Safety in Lancashire

The aim of this section of the Life in Lancashire survey is to investigate into attitudes towards road safety in Lancashire, and gain an understanding of the public’s opinions on how to improve it.

The first question asked panel members to answer when they passed their driving test. Seven in eight members of the panel have a full driving licence.

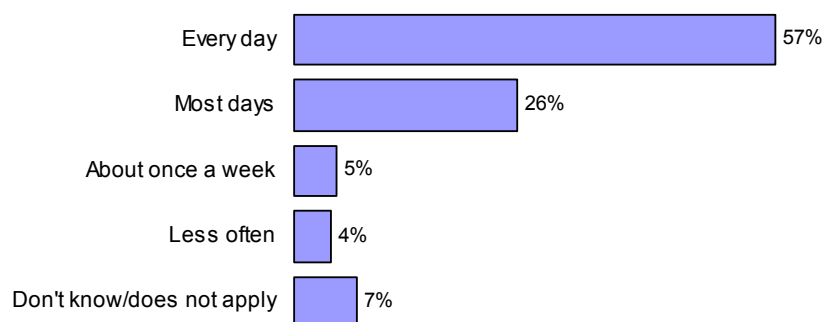
Chart 1 - How many years ago did you pass your driving/riding test?



Base: All respondents (Unweighted 1467, Weighted 1267)

The majority of respondents **drive every day** (57%), though this does vary particularly by age. Close to twice the proportion of those aged 25 to 44 years and 45 to 59 years drive every day (67% and 62% respectively) as those aged 60 years or over (35%). Having to drive to work will play a large part in this, since three-quarters of full-time workers (75%) and two-thirds of part-time workers drive every day (66%), compared with only just over a third of those who do not work (37%).

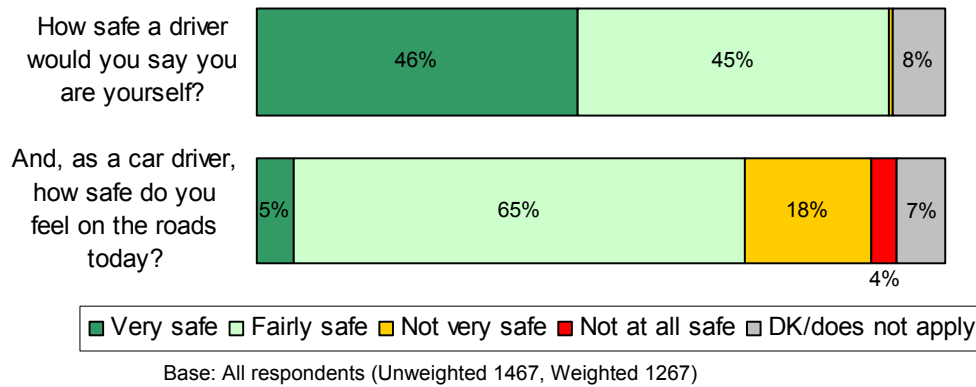
Chart 2 - About how often do you drive a car (not as a passenger)?



Base: All respondents (Unweighted 1467, Weighted 1267)

The next two questions asked panel members to rate their own safety as drivers, and how safe they feel when driving. Nine in ten respondents answer that they are **very or fairly safe drivers**, with only four people considering themselves not very safe, and three describing themselves as not at all safe. (These three respondents are all aged over 70 and do not drive often, if ever). Of all those who drive at least some of the time, 98% rate themselves as very or fairly safe drivers. It should be noted though that this question only gives personal perceptions, and may well have no relation to actual ability on the road. These proportions are significantly similar across almost all demographic groups, with the only difference being west Lancashire residents feeling slightly more confident in their own safety than those from east Lancashire (50% and 38% rate themselves as very safe respectively).

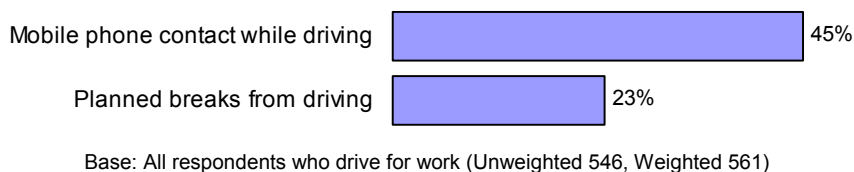
Chart 3 - How safe a driver would you say that you are yourself? And, as a car driver, how safe do you feel driving on the roads today?



Panel members are much less likely to **feel safe on the roads** generally however, with a fifth not feeling safe (22%). Men are significantly more likely to feel safe than women (75% very or fairly safe, compared with 67%).

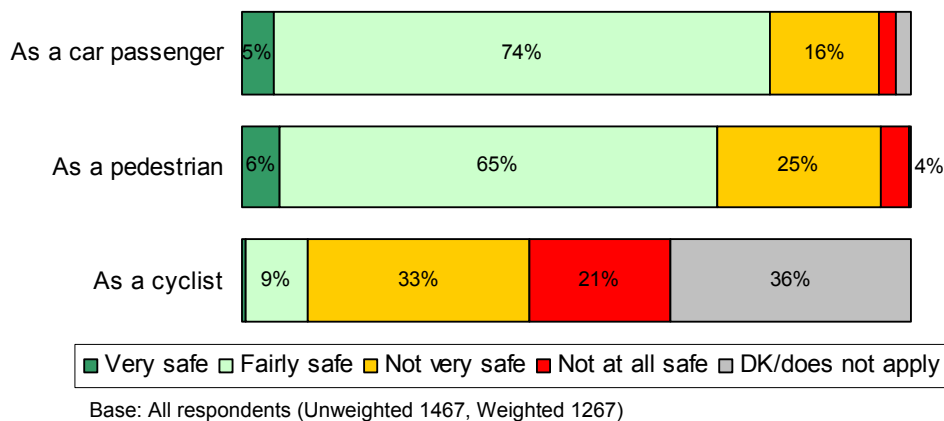
About half (49%) of respondents said they sometimes **drive for work** (including training or travel to meetings). Of those, less than half are aware of their employer having a policy on **mobile phone usage** while driving (45%), and only a quarter are aware of a company policy on **taking planned breaks from driving** (23%). Whether this is because there are no policies or a lack of awareness of them is unclear, in either case encouraging increased awareness could be important for communications with employers.

Chart 4 - Does your employer have a policy on either of the following?



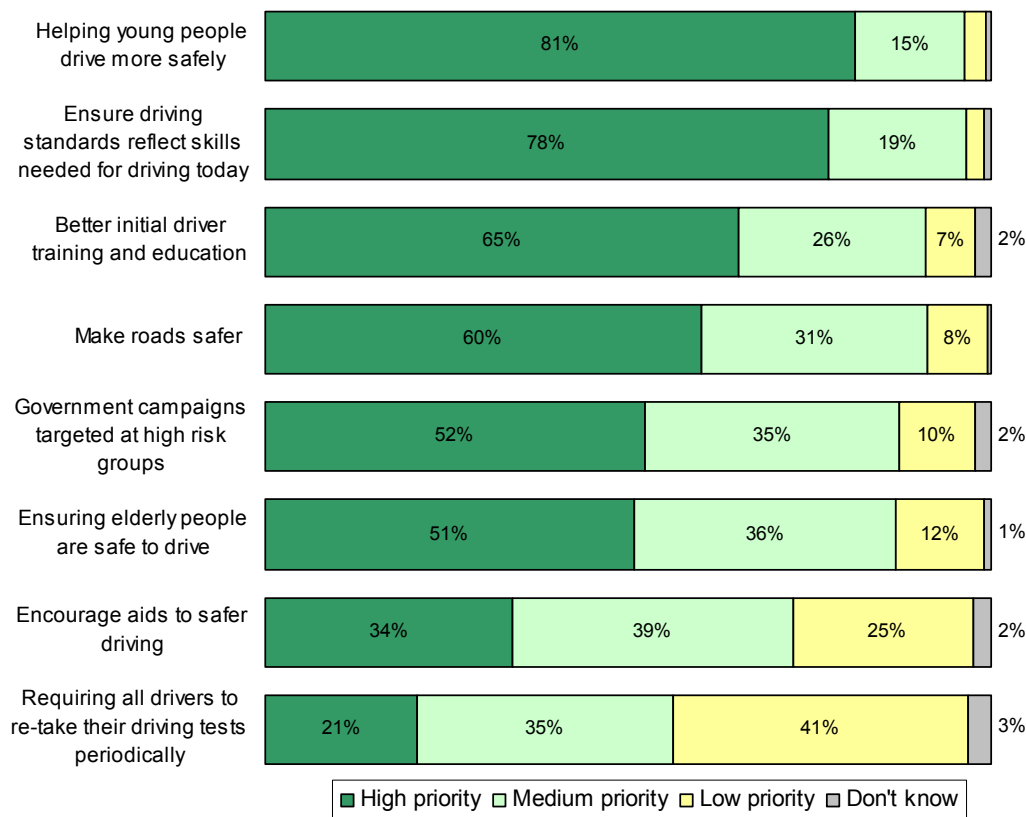
The next set of questions asked how safe people feel as car passengers, pedestrians and cyclists. Interestingly, more respondents **feel safe as a car passenger** than as a driver (79% feel safe as opposed to 70%). Seven in ten **feel safe as a pedestrian** (71%). Respondents with a disability feel particularly unsafe, with 38% answering they feel not very or not at all safe. Only one person in ten would **feel safe as a cyclist** (10%), and cycling is not seen as a safe activity on the roads, (54% feel unsafe).

Chart 5 - How safe do you feel on the roads today?



For the next set of questions, panel members were given a set of possible priorities for the authorities, which are outlined in priority order below.

Chart 6 - Would you rate the following priorities for the authorities as high, medium or low?



Base: All respondents (Unweighted 1467, Weighted 1267)

Helping young people to drive more safely is seen as the highest priority (81% rating as high). This increases with age, from 63% of those aged less than 25 years, up to 88% of those aged 60 years or over. In comparison only half of people consider **ensuring elderly people are safe to drive** is a high priority, (51%), though this is significantly higher among those aged 16 to 24 years (63%). Women are slightly more likely to say this than men (55% versus 46%), and those from an ethnic minority are more likely to say this than white respondents (64% against 50%). This may reflect differences in the age make ups of the groups on the panel.

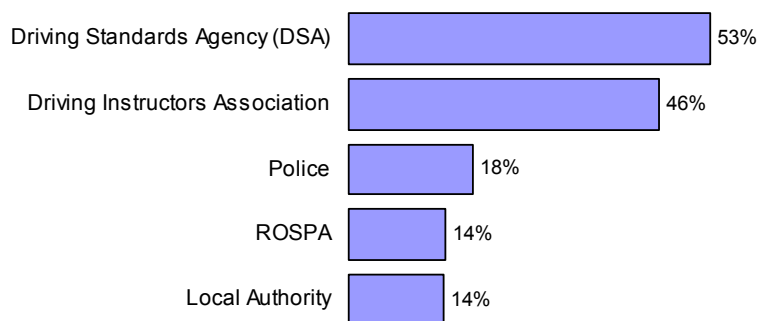
Ensuring driving standards reflect the skills needed for driving today is the second highest priority (78%). This is highest for the oldest, 60 years and over age group (87%), which is perhaps surprising, and possibly reflects the changes in driving in the last 40 years that most of the group have been driving for. However, only a quarter of those aged 60 and over, and only one in five of all respondents feel it is a high priority to **require all drivers to periodically retake their tests** (21%). This suggests that while it is seen as very important for standards to be up to date, testing whether current drivers can keep to them is much less important.

This echoes the concerns of the RAC Report on Motoring 2007, which found motorists being most concerned with the behaviour of other drivers, whilst distancing themselves from their own errors. Improving safety on the roads was seen as something for other drivers to do rather than those interviewed themselves. It is therefore of key importance to ensure that all road users accept their own responsibilities on the road, rather than blaming others for problems with safety. The same set of priorities were asked on the RAC survey as above, with the almost the same results, only with a higher priority for ensuring older people are safe to drive (61% rating as a high priority).

The third most common priority is to improve **initial driver training and education** (65%) which ties in with the top two priorities. **Making roads safer (eg signage, visibility, markings)** is a high priority for three fifths of the panel (60%). Women (65%) are significantly more likely to rate this as a high priority than men (54%). Similarly, **government public awareness campaigns to target high risk groups** are also a higher priority for women (56%) than men (47%).

The next question asked where respondents would turn for further driver training.

Chart 7 - If you wanted to take further driver training would you contact the...?

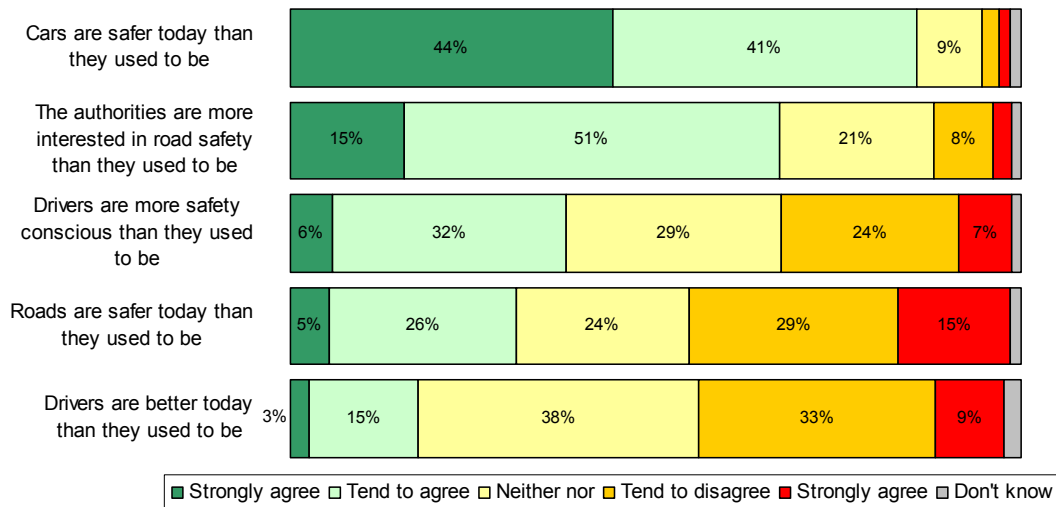


Base: All respondents (Unweighted 1467, Weighted 1267)

The Driving Standards Agency (53%) and the Drivers Instructors Association (46%) are the most preferred points of contact. On a previous Life in Lancashire survey in February 2006, nine per cent of the panel answered that they actively planned to take more driver training in the next two years. Younger respondents are more likely to answer that they would contact the DSA (75% of under 25's and 62% of 25 to 44 year olds), while older respondents are more likely than younger respondents to go to the police.

The next set of questions asked how aspects of road safety have changed over time, as shown below. Almost all respondents agreed that **cars are safer than they used to be** (85%), though men were about twice as likely to strongly agree (59%) as women (33%). The majority of the panel also agreed that **the authorities are more interested in road safety than they used to be** (67% agree). There were no significant differences by subgroup on this question.

Chart 8 - And how much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

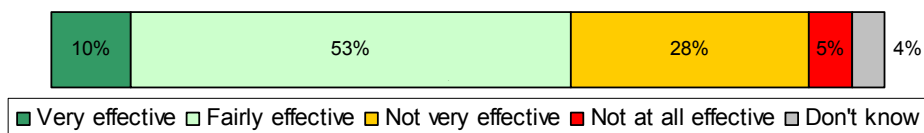


Base: All respondents (Unweighted 1467, Weighted 1267)

About two in five respondents agreed that **drivers are more safety conscious than they used to be** (38%). More respondents disagree than agree that **roads are safer than they used to be** (44% disagree and 31% agree). Again women are more negative than men, with half disagreeing (47%) compared to just over a third of men (38%). Only about one in six agree that **drivers are better than they used to be** (18%), while two in five disagree (42%).

The last question of the section asked how effective the panel considered road safety campaigns to be.

Chart 9 - How effective do you consider road safety campaigns are in changing your attitudes or behaviour?



Base: All respondents (Unweighted 1467, Weighted 1267)

Respondents were most likely to say that campaigns were fairly effective (53%), though a third either thought them not very or not at all effective (33%). Demographically the only difference is for more women to agree that campaigns are effective than men (68% very or fairly effective against 57%).

5 Appendix

5.1 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
- Principal 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