# Wave 17
# Access to services

Fieldwork 23 November – 16 December 2006

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# 1 Executive Summary

This wave of the Life in Lancashire panel dealt with accessing services. All 1850 members of the panel were sent two mailings of the survey. In total 1289 questionnaires were returned, giving an overall response rate of 70%.

## 1.1 Accessing services

- People are most likely to use the car to **visit friends and families** (78%), **go to the hospital** (76%), and take **shopping trips** (74%).

- Panel members are most likely to walk to **go to the local corner shop** (79%), or the **pharmacy** (50%). A sizeable proportion will also usually walk to reach the **doctors** and to **get money from their bank** (both 36%).

- **Going to the local corner shop** is seen as the easiest of the given tasks to reach, and the four easiest tasks to access are the four with the most people walking to them.

- **Going to the hospital** is the most difficult task, with three in ten people saying it is fairly or very difficult (30%).

- Panel members are five times as likely to say travelling generally has got harder (28%) as easier (5%). About one in three respondents who travel to work said it had got harder in the last year (35%).

- The factor most likely to prevent panel members from using public transport more is the **length of time needed to make the trip** (61%). **Infrequency** (38%) and **high cost** (36%) are also mentioned by a sizeable minority. Respondents who drive are particularly likely to mention the length of time and infrequency compared to those who mostly walk or use public transport.

# 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 i.e. the views of panel members become too informed with county council services to be unrepresentative of the population as a whole. The current panel was recruited in 2004 and 2005, so this effect should be small.

# 3 Research Objectives

The objectives of this wave of the Life in Lancashire panel are:

- to investigate access to services across Lancashire;
- to gain insight into the readership of Vision, the county council's newspaper;
- to obtain an indication of the service areas that residents believe should be budget priorities for 2007/2008; and
- to obtain an understanding of what residents perceive to be an acceptable level of increase in council tax for 2007/2008.

# 4 Methodology

This wave of Life in Lancashire was sent to 1850 members of the panel on 8 November. A reminder was sent on 29 November. The fieldwork ended on 15 December 2006.

No incentive was given for respondents to complete the questionnaire. In total 1289 questionnaires were returned, giving an overall response rate of 70%.

All data are weighted by gender, age, ethnicity and district to reflect the Lancashire overall population, and figures are based on all respondents unless otherwise stated. The weighted responses have been scaled down to match the effective response of 1076, 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 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.

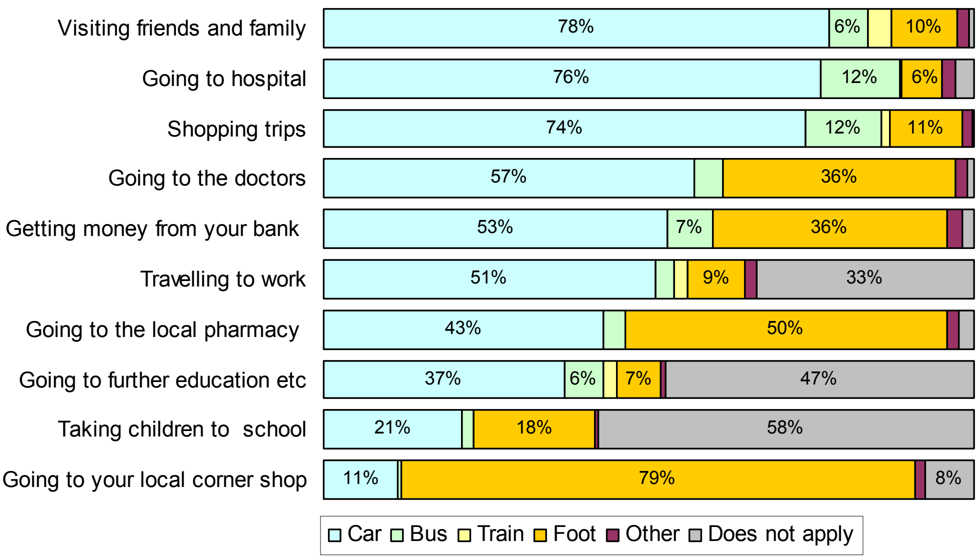
In charts or tables where responses do not add up to 100%, this is due to multiple responses or computer rounding.

# 5 Main Research Findings

## 5.1 Getting to services

After giving some introduction on accessibility, the first question on the survey asked how members of the citizens' panel travelled for a range of activities.

**Chart 1 - Which of the following modes of transport would you normally use for the following tasks if you had to do them?**




Base: All respondents (Unweighted 1289, Weighted 1076)

The car is the usual transport for many tasks, with around three-quarters of respondents driving to **visit friends and families** (78%), **going to the hospital** (76%), and **shopping trips** (74%).

Using the car is the main form of transport for all groups for the above three tasks, but there are variations. Ribble Valley residents are the most likely use the car to **visit friends and families** and **go to the hospital** (both 93%). People who live in a rural area are also significantly more likely to use their car for each factor than urban or market town dwellers, reflecting the lower levels of public transport outside of towns, or further travel distances. Respondents over 60 years are the most likely to use the bus, with a quarter saying they would use it to **go to the hospital** (24%) and one in five saying they usually use it for **shopping** (21%).

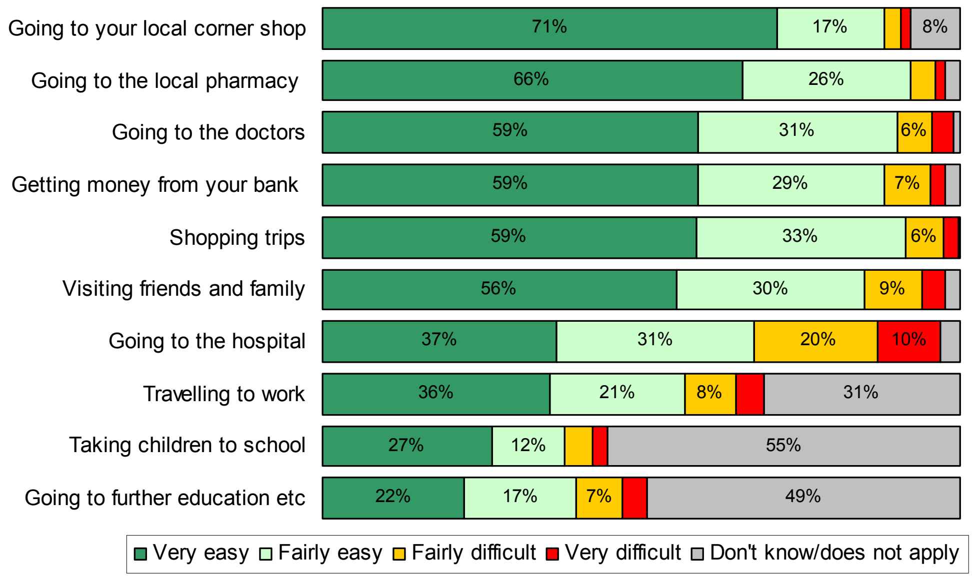
Over a third of panel members will usually **go to the doctors** and **get money from a bank or savings account** by foot (both 36%), though more people still drive. Rural residents are again more likely to drive (72% and 70% respectively). The youngest age group of 16 to 24 years are the most likely to walk, with 68% and 67% going by foot to each respectively.

The vast majority of respondents who said they **travel to work** do so by car (76%). Similar proportions take their **children to school** by car (21%) and walk (18%).

Finally, the majority of people can still walk to the **local corner shop** (79%). This varies from almost all respondents aged less than 25 years (95% will usually walk to the local shop) and 86% of urban residents to only seven in ten rural dwellers (69%).

The next question asked how easy it was to get to each of the tasks above.

**Chart 2 - From your home how easy or difficult would it be for you to get to each of the following tasks using your usual form of transport?**




Base: All respondents (Unweighted 1289, Weighted 1076)

**Going to the local corner shop** is seen as the easiest of the tasks to reach. The four easiest tasks are the four with the most people walking to them. For the corner shop, there is no significant difference between the 77% of walkers who find it very easy to reach and the 73% of car users. There is a significant difference between the 72% of walkers who consider it very easy to **get to the doctors**, and the 54% of drivers who answered the same. One possibility is that this difference could reflect doctor's surgeries tending to have less parking than shops.

People who **visit friends and family** by car are more likely to say that is very easy (60%) than people who use other methods (41%).

**Going to the hospital** is the most difficult task, with three in ten people saying it is fairly or very difficult (30%). People who drive there are slightly more likely to say it is very easy than other transport users (39% against

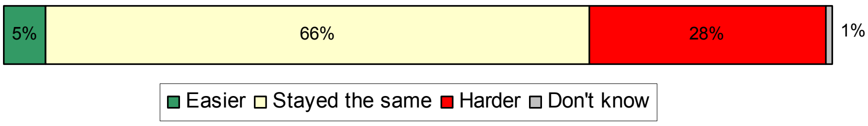
31%). Respondents aged less than 25 years are also less likely to say they find it very easy (21%).

People who **take their children to school** by foot are more likely to say it is very easy than those who drive (65% against 49%).

Perhaps surprisingly, almost all significant differences for the ease of access come from the type of travel used rather than any demographic differences. There are no differences between urban and rural residents for these questions for example.

The next question asked respondents whether travelling generally had got easier or harder in the last 12 months. Panel members are five times as likely to say it has got harder (28%) as easier (5%). Respondents from an ethnic minority (16%) are significantly more likely to say travelling has got easier than white panel members (5%). Panel members from socio-economic group C2 (skilled manual workers) are the most likely to say that it has got harder (44%).

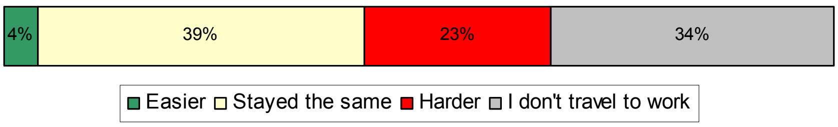
**Chart 3 - Overall, do you think that travelling about generally is easier or harder for you than it was 12 months ago, or has it stayed the same?**




Base: All respondents (Unweighted 1289, Weighted 1076)

About one in three respondents who answered on travel to work said it had got harder in the last year (35%).

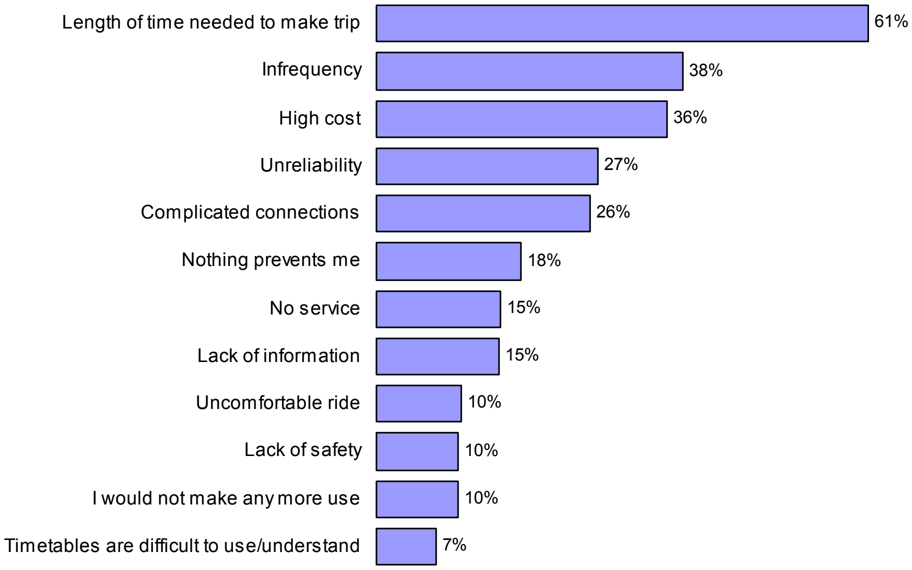
**Chart 4 - And, overall, do you think that travelling to work is easier or harder for you than it was 12 months ago, or has it stayed the same?**




Base: All respondents (Unweighted 1289, Weighted 1076)

The final question on accessibility asked what things prevent respondents from using public transport more. The length of time needed is the top reason, given by three in five respondents (61%). People from the oldest age group, aged over 60, are significantly less likely to say this with only half mentioning the length of time. People aged over 60 years are also significantly less likely than all other ages to suggest unreliability (15%), and particularly high cost (only 17%), presumably due to reduced travel prices for people in this age group. People aged less than 25 are significantly more likely to suggest unreliability than other ages (55%).

**Chart 5 - Which three or four things, if any, prevent you from using public transport more?**




Base: All respondents (Unweighted 1289, Weighted 1076)

Rural residents and panel members from West Lancashire are most likely to mention **infrequency** as the reason that prevents them from using public transport more (49% and 51% respectively).

Respondents who used their car for most of the tasks on the first question were significantly more likely to name more reasons for not using public transport than people who mainly did not drive. The biggest differences were that seven in ten car users answered that the **length of time needed** was a reason (69% against 42% of mainly non-drivers) and **infrequency** (43% against 27%) were. This suggests that time is the biggest concern for drivers.

# 6 Appendix

## 6.1 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