

CARMARTHENSHIRE VOICE newsletter

Carmarthenshire
Voice

Llais
Sir Gâr

AND THE WINNER IS...



Thank you to everyone who took part in our last survey. Completing the surveys takes time and the responses we have received make it clear that you have given each question a great deal of thought.

To show that we appreciate your efforts and as a mark of our thanks, we enter each returned survey into a prize draw. The draw for survey 27 has already taken place and our winner from the Johnstown area is now £50 richer!

HOW YOUR INFORMATION IS USED...

All Panel members' replies are analysed and reports are sent to each of the partner organisations; Carmarthenshire County Council, Dyfed-Powys Police and Hywel Dda Health Board directly.

We condense these findings into our newsletters, and also update you on actions taken by the partners or let you know how the information has or will be used. As some decisions take longer than others to be made, we aim to revisit some of our previous topics both in this and future newsletters, and report back on any actions taken.

Survey 27

Many thanks to all of you who replied to survey 27 (523 in total), giving an overall response rate of 61%.

Carmarthenshire County Council asked for your views on:

- Carmarthenshire Direct
- 2010 / 2011 budget
- Local Service Board

Dyfed- Powys Police asked about:

- The police on TV
- The Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC)
- Rape Awareness Campaign

Hywel Dda Health Board asked about:

- Good Neighbours Scheme
- Medicines Waste Campaign

Dyfed-Powys Probation Trust also included questions about the service they provide.



CARMARTHENSHIRE CITIZENS' PANEL

A DIFFERENT FORMAT?

If you require this information in large print, Braille or on audiotape, please telephone 01554 742304.

CARMARTHENSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Carmarthenshire Direct

Carmarthenshire Direct is a one-stop-shop which aims to make it easier for people to contact the authority on a wide range of issues. Help and assistance concerning Council services can be obtained by:

Telephone: 01267 234567
E-mail: direct@carmarthenshire.gov.uk
SMS: 0789 2345678
Fax: 01558 825346
Web: www.carmarthenshire.gov.uk
Face to face: At our Customer Service Centres – Ammanford (Town Hall), Carmarthen (3 Spilman St.) or Llanelli (Ty Elwyn).

Carmarthenshire Direct is split into two areas:

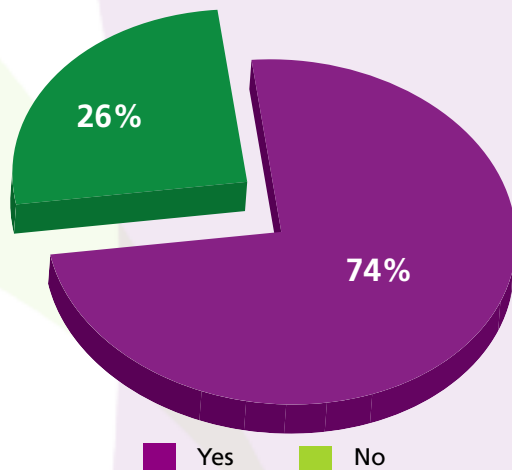
- The Customer Service Centres see customers with a varied range of queries about Council services.
- Our telephone Contact Centre deals with phone calls, e-mails, faxes and SMS text messages coming into the Council. The main office is located in Llandelio, with smaller offices in Carmarthen and Llanelli.

Did you know there were Customer Service Centres in...?

The majority of you were not aware that there were Customer Service Centres in Ammanford, Llanelli and Carmarthen. Of those who were aware of the Council's Service Centres, almost half of you knew about them through information provided by the Council e.g. Community News. Of those who had used them, 83% of you were 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied'.

Most of you who hadn't used the Centres simply said you had no reason to, while a large number of you also said you did not know they were there.

The current opening hours of the Customer Service Centres are Monday to Thursday 08:45 to 17:00 and Friday 08:45 to 16:30. Do you think that these opening hours are adequate?



74% of you felt that these hours were adequate. Of those who did not agree, Saturday opening was the favoured option.

We gave you a list of various aspects regarding a visit to Customer Service Centres, and asked which three were most important to you. The top three aspects you highlighted were:

- > The ability of staff to deal with your enquiry 63%
- > Convenience of location 48%
- > Having your enquiry resolved 43%

Carmarthenshire Direct by telephone - 01267 234567 / 0845 658 0445

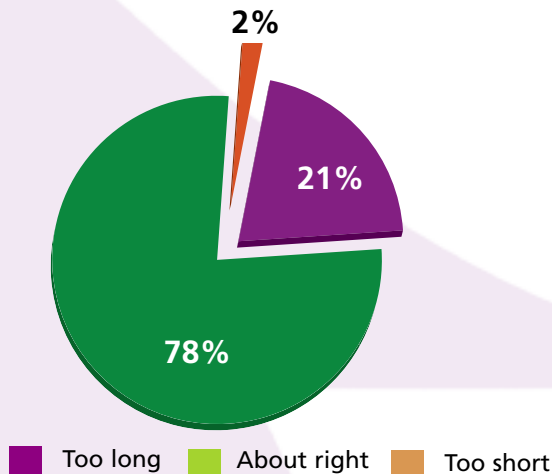
35% of you had phoned the above number, and were satisfied with service you had received. You felt that the current opening hours for the telephone service of Monday to Friday 08:30 to 18:00 were adequate, however Saturday opening was suggested by those who weren't.

We gave you a list of various aspects of a telephone call to Carmarthenshire Direct, and asked which three were most important to you. The top three aspects you highlighted were:

- > The ability of staff to deal with your enquiry 79%
- > Having your enquiry resolved 61%
- > The length of time you wait before your call is answered 50%

Service Standards

Our target waiting time in Customer Service Centres is for your enquiry to be dealt with is under 10 minutes. How do you feel about this target time?



Just over three quarters of you (78%) felt that this target time was about right

Our target in Carmarthenshire Direct is to answer 85% of telephone calls within 15 seconds. How do you feel about this target time?

Almost two thirds of you said this target time matched your expectations, 31% said it exceeded your expectations, while 5% (24 of you) said it fell below your expectations.

The Council's current target for responding to written correspondence in the form of a) a letter and b) an email is 10 working days. How do you feel about this timescale?

- A) 50% of you believed the target time for responding to written correspondence in the form of a letter was about right, however this was immediately followed by 49% of you who felt it was too long.
- B) 71% of you believed the target time for responding to written correspondence in the form of an email was too long.

UPDATE

One of this year's priorities for Carmarthenshire Direct is to achieve the new Cabinet Office Customer Service Excellence standard accreditation (formerly called 'Charter Mark').

By developing our services in line with the standard we will be able to focus on and improve, the areas that research has confirmed are important to our customers:

- Delivery
- Professionalism
- Timeliness
- Staff attitude
- Information

Penelope Graepel, Customer Services Manager thanked the Citizens' Panel for their feedback. She added, "We regularly consult with our existing service users and have found that we have built up a great deal of knowledge and information about their interaction with us and what aspects of our service are most important to them. We used the Citizens' Panel to widen our range of consultation in order to develop our knowledge of Carmarthenshire residents as a whole – both users and non-users of our service. This insight proved extremely valuable as we were able to find out, for example, why residents don't use our service - in some cases they don't know about us or how to find us. This is an area we will work on and develop. For those who had used our service, we were able to gain a greater understanding of their customer experience and will use this to try and improve customer satisfaction with the service".

During 2010, Carmarthenshire Direct will undergo a rigorous assessment for the Customer Service Excellence standard accreditation. The assessment includes detailed written submissions followed by onsite inspections involving the assessment team talking to staff, partner organisations, and customers. We will update you on our progress via future newsletters.

Budget Consultation 2010 / 11

This was the seventh time Panel members had the opportunity to have their say on where they think the Council should be heading in terms of developing its services.

We gave you a list of our key priorities, and asked you to rank them in order importance to you (these are placed in order of precedence below):

- 1) Feeling Secure - Safer communities
- 2) Feeling Fine - Health and well being
- 3) A Better Place – Environment
- 4) Making better use of our resources
- 5) Investment and Innovation - Regeneration
- 6) Building a better Council
- 7) Opening Doors - Lifelong learning

The figures highlighted in the table below show how successful or unsuccessful you believed the Council were in delivering their key priorities.

| | Very successful | Fairly successful | Neither | Fairly unsuccessful | Very unsuccessful |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|---------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Environment | 4% | 61% | 27% | 6% | 2% |
| Lifelong learning | 6% | 52% | 37% | 4% | 2% |
| Health and well being | 6% | 52% | 34% | 7% | 1% |
| Regeneration | 2% | 34% | 47% | 15% | 3% |
| Safer communities | 7% | 54% | 30% | 7% | 2% |
| Building a better Council | 3% | 28% | 42% | 18% | 9% |
| Making better use of resources | 3% | 31% | 36% | 22% | 9% |

We also asked you to indicate the service areas that were most important to you under each priority heading and you replied as follows:

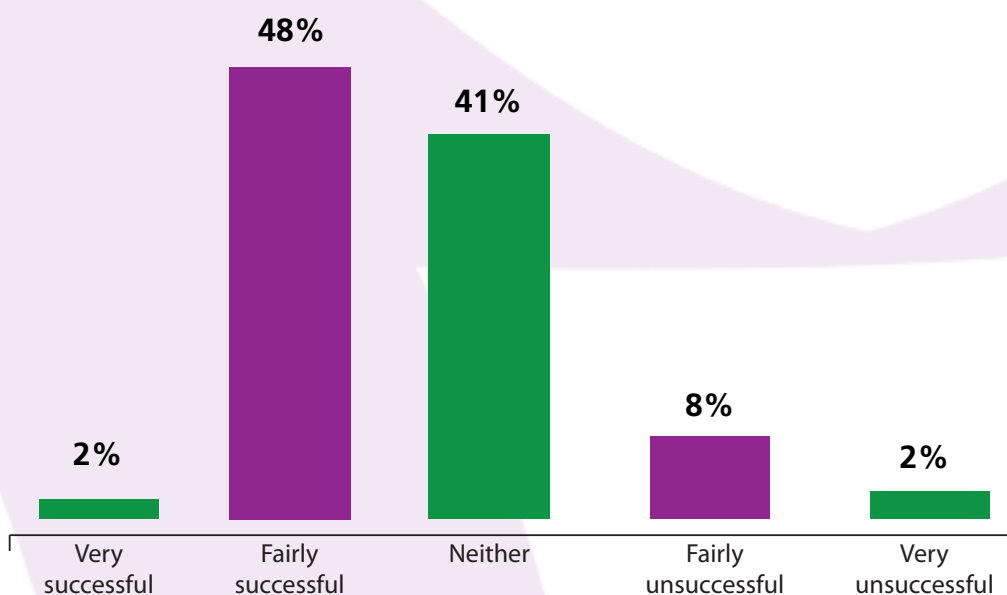
- Environment – Street scene services e.g. refuse collection, pavement maintenance, street cleaning and lighting
- Lifelong learning – Primary and secondary schools
- Health and well being – Services and facilities for ill and disabled people
- Regeneration – Support for local businesses e.g. helping local companies grow
- Safer communities – Control of anti-social behaviour

We gave you the following three statements concerning decisions about spending for the forthcoming year, and asked you which option you agreed with:

- 45% of you believed that current levels of service should be maintained, even if it meant an increase in Council Tax.
- 31% felt levels of service should be reduced, to keep any increase in Council Tax to a minimum and
- 24% felt levels of service should be improved, even if it meant a greater increase in Council Tax

Carmarthenshire County Council's mission is to 'Improve the way we live and work'.

How successful or unsuccessful would you say that Carmarthenshire County Council is in achieving this mission?



48% of you believed that Carmarthenshire County Council have been fairly successful in achieving their mission to 'improve the way we live and work'.

The Council aims to provide its customers with good value for money in return for the Council Tax payment. How strongly do you agree or disagree that 'Carmarthenshire County Council gives residents good value for money'?

37% of you neither agreed nor disagreed that 'Carmarthenshire County Council gives residents good value for money.' 35% agreed with the statement, 22% disagreed, 4% strongly disagreed with the statement and 2% strongly agreed.

UPDATE

In relation to this year's budget consultation, Chris Moore, Carmarthenshire County Council's Head of Finance said, 'The Citizens' Panel provided excellent results that Carmarthenshire County Council used to help it decide its spending plans for 2010/ 2011. This was an extremely important initiative that highlights the significance of the Citizens' Panel and the type of decisions Panel members can inform.

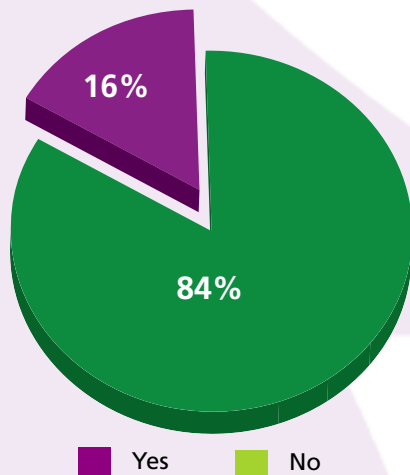
Councillors considered the views of the consultees and the issues raised prior to taking the final decisions on the overall level of expenditure and its distribution between the various Council services.'

The Council approved the budget at its meeting in February 2010.

CARMARTHENSHIRE CITIZENS' PANEL

CARMARTHENSHIRE LOCAL SERVICE BOARD

Before reading this survey, had you heard of the Local Service Board (LSB)?



84% of you had not heard of the Local Service Board before reading this survey, and 96% of you were unaware that they were writing a new Community Strategy.

UPDATE

Carmarthenshire has a strong record of partnership working between the Council, public, private, voluntary and community sectors and has developed a Local Service Board. The 'Board' cuts across the usual organisational and cultural boundaries to develop a 'public service' which will focus on customers and the type of service they need and want.

What is it?

The Local Service Board (LSB) is a voluntary arrangement which brings together Leaders and Chief Executives from key organisations, representatives from voluntary and community sectors, and a senior Civil Servant from the Welsh Assembly Government. Its purpose is to plan services and overcome barriers and blockages to ensure that all the organisations which provide services within Carmarthenshire do so in a way that puts the customer first. The community and voluntary sector representatives ensure that local communities have a voice, whilst the senior Civil Servant from the Welsh Assembly Government offers a link between local, regional and national interests. The board meets every 2 months.

Interested and want to know more?

There are a number of ways you can find out more –

- Minutes of meetings, and information on a wide range of partnership working are available online at www.thecarmarthenshirepartnership.org.uk
- You can be invited to attend the annual forum meeting
- You will receive regular updates and annual reports through Community News

Contact the Community Planning team at CommunityPlanning@carmarthenshire.gov.uk or by telephoning 01267 224659.

CARMARTHENSHIRE
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DYFED – POWYS POLICE

The police on TV

56% of you had seen a police fly on the wall/reality programme on TV over the last year, however only 28% of you had seen one which included Dyfed-Powys Police. Over half of you said that watching these programmes did not make you feel more or less worried or confident about the police or the work they do.

Rape Awareness Campaign (All Wales Police Forces)

Only 13% (65 of you) had heard of the Rape Awareness campaign, however the vast majority felt that it was an effective way of making these issues known to the public. The top 3 places you thought the campaign should be advertised were in GP surgeries, newspapers and on local radio. Those of you who had looked at the Rape and Sexual Assault web page www.dyfed-powys.police.uk/en/advice/rape/, rated it as 'very' or 'fairly' good.

Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC)

The Sexual Abuse Referral Centre is a single site specialist facility designed for victims of sexual assault which is staffed by specially-trained, experienced professionals who can give medical advice, one to one counselling, practical emotional support, and advice relating to pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections. It also provides a confidential self-referral service whereby victims can attend the centre directly without the involvement of the Police.

The SARC is based within the grounds of West Wales General Hospital, Carmarthen and is staffed between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Thursday. An out of hours helpline is also available. You can also find information about the SARC by logging on to www.newpathways.co.uk/, phoning 01267 235464 or visiting Elm Tree House, West Wales General Hospital, Carmarthen, SA31 2AF.

UPDATE

DI Owain Richards thanked Panel members for their feedback adding, 'Your responses have been used to evaluate the effectiveness of the service we provide to the public, and in particular how we market these services to ensure the most vulnerable people in our community have access to the service. The information you have provided has also been shared with statutory and voluntary agencies as a way of taking a more joined up approach to protecting vulnerable people.'

Police Authority

Before receiving this survey, had you heard of the Dyfed Powys Police Authority?

95% of you had heard of Dyfed-Powys Police Authority. 56% of you said you had a basic idea of what the Police Authority did, 24% had heard of them but didn't know what they did, and 20% had a good understanding of what the Police Authority did.

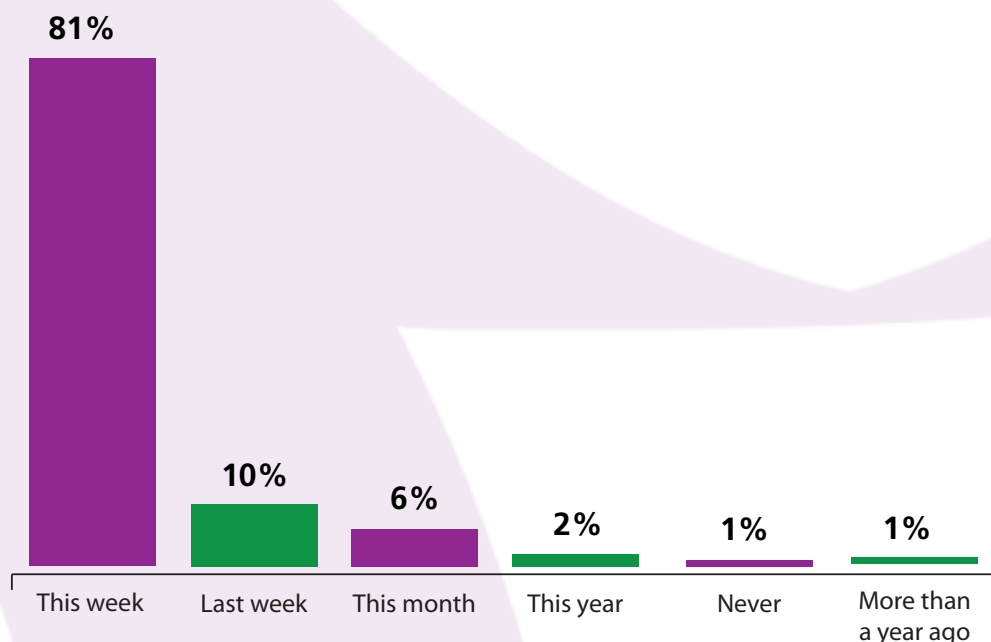
UPDATE

Dyfed Powys Police Authority would like to thank panel members for their feedback. The information you have provided has been combined with responses from other Citizens' Panels and will be used to inform the Police Authority's Communication and Engagement Strategy which will be effective from June 2010. This document will be available on the Police Authority's website: www.dyfedpowyspoliceauthority.co.uk, by phoning 01267 226440 or writing to; Police Authority, Dyfed-Powys Police Headquarters, Llangunnor, Carmarthen, SA31 2PF.

HYWEL DDA HEALTH BOARD

Good Neighbours Scheme

When did you last speak to a neighbour?



81% of you had spoken to a neighbour the week you replied to us, 10% (50 of you) the week before, and 6% (29 of you) within that month.

When did you last help a neighbour/did a neighbour help you?

52% of you last helped or were helped by a neighbour, the week you replied to us, 16% (81 of you) within the month, and 13% (63 of you) during the year. The largest number of you had simply popped in to see if a neighbour was ok.

Would you be interested in finding out more about the Good Neighbours Scheme?

55% (268 of you) would be interested in finding out more about the Good Neighbours Scheme, and 42% of you would be interested in being part of the Scheme.

UPDATE

The Good Neighbours Project Team would like to thank Panel members for their feedback. The information you have provided will be used to inform future funding bids for the Good Neighbours Scheme, and your comments and suggestions will be incorporated into the project plan, where appropriate.

The Scheme is based on the concept of a localised community network that will encourage people to engage with their neighbours. The project will seek to combat social exclusion by involving all members of the community, and its activities will be directed by the needs and wishes of the community.

The proposal has been developed with key stakeholders from voluntary and statutory organisations. Close working with local communities, as well as Community / Town Councils, will ensure the Scheme is tailored towards the individual needs of the community.

A part time agent will research an area to identify the needs and existing services available. With the support of a Co-ordinator and a Volunteer Recruitment Officer, volunteers will be recruited within local areas. The agent will continue to support and advise these volunteers to signpost and assist people in their community and set up activities such as vegetable box schemes and time banks.

It is anticipated that a range of services will be offered by community volunteers ranging from low level support such as befriending, shopping, transport, garden maintenance, to training opportunities, advice and community activities. In addition, this work will help the voluntary and statutory sector target resources where they are needed, and avoid duplication of services.

External funding will be sought to operate two pilot areas, one rural area in Whitland and St Clears and an urban project in Tyishia and Bigyn. We will keep you updated about how the Scheme is progressing in future newsletters.

If are interested in volunteering in Carmarthenshire, you can contact Carmarthenshire Association of Voluntary Services (CAVS) on 01267 245555, by emailing info@cavs.org.uk or by looking at the volunteering section of their website, www.cavs.org.uk to see what opportunities exist locally.

Medicines Waste campaign

The Medicines Waste Information campaign was launched in Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire in March 2009. The campaign concerned repeat prescriptions and unused / unwanted medicines.

Over half of you had noticed the campaign, mostly through posters at GP practices and pharmacies. Of those who changed how you ordered your prescription due to the campaign, 57 now only ordered what was needed, 41 checked your medication stock before ordering and 20 let your GP/pharmacist know if you were not taking medication anymore.

How do you dispose of the medicines that you no longer need?

76% of you took excess medication to the pharmacy, 24% threw them in the bin or down the toilet, and 4% took them to a GP practice.

Please return unwanted and unused medicines to your community pharmacy. Although they are unable to be re-used, it is very important for safety reasons that you continue this practice in order to ensure safe disposal.

A look at how your information has been used

Your Standard of Living and Benefits Take-Up Campaign (May 2009)

In September 2008, the Social Justice Scrutiny Committee resolved to establish a task and finish group, "To measure the extent of poverty in the county and ensure that we have relevant initiatives to reduce identified poverty embedded throughout the Council's and its partners' policy and planning frameworks" prior to the development of a county wide strategy responding to poverty issues.

It was aware that a vast range of activity in relation to key areas of debt and benefit advice, child poverty, economic inactivity, vulnerable groups and housing related poverty was already taking place in the county. Members were however concerned that there was not an overall co-ordinated approach to tackling poverty and recognised that development of partnership working with both the voluntary and faith sectors was crucial to achieving this. The Group also recognised that local members were ideally placed to make a valuable contribution in helping local people but needed access to the relevant information to do so.

The Group invited contributions from a wide range of partners including CAVS, CAB and Christians Against Poverty. It has worked closely with National Energy Action Cymru through its "Heat is On" project and held a Member and stakeholders workshop about fuel poverty late May 2009. This was followed by a half day public awareness raising "Helping Hand/Help Llaw" event. The fuel poverty workshop was extremely well attended and received by both Elected Members and a wide range of organisations including advice providers and credit unions. The key themes of income maximisation, energy efficiency and affordability of fuel were considered, as well as the role of local members in signposting and advice

In terms of statistical evidence, the Group reviewed available data in relation to indicators of poverty and considered existing key strategies and plans to establish what initiatives are already being undertaken to reduce poverty. However, it was considered vitally important to get an input from members of the public, and so in early in 2009, the Group commissioned public consultation via the Citizens' Panel and 50+ Forum in relation to standards of living, poverty issues and welfare benefits take-up. In the final report to the Social Justice Scrutiny Committee the task and finish group acknowledged that the results provided a useful indication of some of the issues affecting people in the county and a baseline for future consultations.

The full report from the Task & Finish Group was presented to the Social Justice Scrutiny Committee on 22nd Jan 2010 and the recommendations were accepted.

For further information on the review and the report please contact Bernadette Dolan, Senior Consultant, Scrutiny and Consultancy, Chief Executive's Department on 01267 246109.

CARMARTHENSHIRE
CITIZENS'
PANEL

Dyfed-Powys Probation Trust

Which of the following do you consider to be the most important aim for Dyfed Powys Probation Trust?

You ranked the list given as follows:

- | | |
|---|-----|
| 1. Reducing re-offending | 27% |
| 2. Protecting the public | 26% |
| 3. Proper punishment of offenders | 21% |
| 4. Ensuring offenders' awareness of the effects of crime on the victims of crime and the public | 15% |
| 5. Rehabilitation of offenders | 11% |

You were unaware that Dyfed-Powys Probation Trust provided assistance on citizenship, basic skills tuition, finance, benefit and debt advice, accommodation advice, specialist counselling and employment, education and training. You were aware that they provide drug and alcohol intervention.

84% of you were aware that offenders did unpaid work in the community as a way of paying back for their crimes. When asked what community work you would like to see carried out, your top two proposals were litter picking/community clean up projects and renovation work (schools, community facilities etc).

68% of you did not know where your nearest probation office was, and suggested that the Trust could best get its message across to the public through newspapers, local radio and leaflet/flyers to households.

FEEDBACK

Please keep giving us your views, so that we can continue to make improvements. If you would like to comment on any particular aspect of the Carmarthenshire Citizens' Panel, please contact:

Consultation Co-ordinator
 Customer Focus & Policy
 Carmarthenshire County Council
 Town Hall, Llanelli, SA15 3AH
 Telephone: 01554 742304
 E-mail: consultation@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

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