

Calderdale Local Area Agreement Baseline Survey 2007



Research Study Conducted for



September 2007

27829

Executive Summary

Main findings

LAA Indicators

The main findings in regard to the LAA indicators are summarised below;

Views on Safety (Indicators SS7a-d and e-h; SS8a-d and e-h)

- Residents in the three neighbourhoods feel much safer than the district average when outside during the day either in their local area or in the wider Calderdale area.
- The same pattern occurs after dark, although one-in-five residents in Mixenden and Park do not go out after dark.

Anti-social behaviour (SSC9,11,12,14a, 14b-h)

- Drug dealing and drug use is perceived as a serious problem in Park but is below the district average in Ovenden. Residents in all three neighbourhoods feel much better informed about what is being done to tackle anti-social behaviour than the district overall.
- Residents are less concerned about parents not taking responsibility for their children in Park than in other areas.
- On the list of anti-social behaviours, (SSC 14 b-h), the pattern of concerns is varied. The only aspect where concerns in the three neighbourhoods are significantly above the district level is with abandoned cars but on other aspects, notably in Ovenden, the levels of concern are below those in Calderdale overall.

Engagement and cohesion (SSC19 and 20)

- Residents in Park are much more confident that they can influence decisions in their local area than the other two neighbourhoods or in the rest of the district.
- Both Park and Ovenden residents are more confident about people from different backgrounds getting on well together in their areas than the district overall but this is not the case in Mixenden.

Other Indicators (SSC21, SSC26, EV02, HC07)

- There is a strong view in Ovenden and Mixenden that their local areas have improved in the last two years and residents in Ovenden have a high satisfaction level with services to keep public land clear of litter and refuse.
- All three neighbourhoods are less satisfied with the cultural offer (sports facilities, parks, libraries, museums, theatres).

- Fewer residents in the three neighbourhoods are taking part in physical activity on a regular weekly basis.

Topic Findings at the Calderdale Level

The findings for the non-LAA indicator questions are presented below. There is reference only to the wider Calderdale area within this section. Information relating to the individual Neighbourhoods can be found in the following section.

Your Local Area

- The majority of respondents (82%) have lived in Calderdale for more than ten years.
- Three quarters of respondents (77%) are satisfied with their local area.
- There is greatest perceived improvement to education provision (+8% net score) and health services (+2%).
- Issues which are perceived to have deteriorated the most over the last two years are; traffic congestion (net score -68%), the level of crime (-53%) and affordable decent housing (-47%).
- Whilst chemists, GP services and library facilities are easy to access (87%, 82% and 79% respectively say this is so), two fifths believe it is difficult to access activities for young children (39%) and affordable childcare (35%).

Your Community and Neighbourhood

- Typically, the strength of belonging to an area increases with relative proximity to a respondent's home. In this case, 59% of respondents felt very or fairly strongly that they belong to Calderdale, a belief that increases to 76% when considering their local area.
- Nine in ten respondents consider most or some of the people in their local area to be friendly (90%), whilst seven in ten believe that at least some can be trusted (68%) or are willing to help their neighbours with small favours (69%). A further 58% believe that most or some will help their neighbours a lot, for example, looking after their home while they are away.
- The most common acts of neighbourliness are - taking in the post (69%) or looking after a neighbour's house, garden or pets while they are away (45%).
- Whilst 42% of respondents believe that at a local level residents respect ethnic differences between people, this positive perception falls to 29% when Calderdale as a whole is considered.

Getting Involved in your Community

- When asked how they would prefer to get involved in local decision making, the majority chose reactive involvement, such as signing a petition (67%) or taking part in market

research (65%). Around half would prefer to telephone or write to the Council and one in three to attend a public meeting.

- Almost two-thirds of respondents (64%) have not participated in any form of community consultation or been involved in community activities.

Community Safety

- A small proportion of respondents believe that people not treating them with respect and consideration in their local area or in the wider Calderdale area is a problem (15% and 19% respectively).
- The most common reasons for feeling unsafe include – the presence of groups of youths hanging around, a general lack of trust in people and the presence of drunks and drug users.

Satisfaction with Council Services

- The most frequently used cultural and recreational facilities are parks and open spaces (51% use at least once a month) and less so libraries (30%) and sports/leisure facilities (25%).
- Satisfaction is highest with regard to libraries (69%) and parks & open spaces (66%). Users of all of the services are more likely to be satisfied than non-users.

Physical Activity

- A lack of time was considered to be the main barrier to doing more physical activity (55%). One quarter of respondents said that it was because of the poor facilities near to their home, whilst a further 13% said they could not afford it.

Neighbourhood Findings

The following boxes summarise significant findings for each of the Neighbourhoods of Mixenden, Ovenden and Park. For completeness, reference is made to the LAA indicators as well as the findings of the Topic questions. See also Part 2 of the report for further information on significant variations in responses by different demographic sections of the population.

Mixenden

- Residents in Mixenden are significantly less likely to be satisfied with their local area compared to the district average. However, they are significantly more likely to have seen a general improvement within their area over the last two years, with particular reference to cleaner streets, the level of crime and the level of traffic congestion.
- In line with the other Neighbourhoods, it is activities for teenagers and facilities for young children which are perceived to have deteriorated the most, although sports and cultural facilities are also significantly more likely to be highlighted as getting worse by residents compared to the rest of Calderdale.
- Residents within Mixenden have no particular issues compared to the rest of the district with access to Community services, indeed they are more likely than the rest of Calderdale to say they have easy access to GP services, hospital outpatients and affordable childcare.
- The extent of neighbourly activity is less in Mixenden than in the other Neighbourhoods or the district overall. Respondents within this area are least likely to say that they have a strong sense of belonging to their area and they have least regard for their neighbours. They are also significantly less likely to say that people from different backgrounds get on well, or that local residents respect ethnic differences between people.
- In line with the other Neighbourhoods, there is significantly less evidence of participation or involvement in community activities compared to the district average.
- The feeling amongst residents in Mixenden, and the other Neighbourhoods, that they are not treated with respect and consideration by other people within their local area is stronger than in the district as a whole.
- That said, respondents within the three Neighbourhoods feel significantly safer than other Calderdale residents when outside during the day or after dark either locally or within the wider Calderdale area. A contributing factor may be that as a result of neighbourhood management initiatives these residents are significantly more likely to feel informed about what is being done to tackle anti-social behaviour in their local area compared to the district overall.
- Those who say they feel unsafe in Mixenden, as in Ovenden and Park, are significantly more likely than the rest of Calderdale to say this is because of the poor image of the area ie they have heard of people being robbed/harassed or attacked or they have heard or read about crime in the media.
- Specific anti-social behaviour issues perceived in Mixenden include: abandoned or burnt out cars and noisy neighbours.
- In line with the other Neighbourhoods, residents in Mixenden are significantly less likely to use each of the cultural and recreational facilities than in the district overall.
- Residents within the three Neighbourhoods are significantly less likely to take part in physical activity on a regular weekly basis compared to the district average.

Ovenden

- Ovenden would appear to be a relatively stable community. More residents have lived in the area for at least ten years than in the other Neighbourhoods or the district overall and they are more likely to say that they feel they belong to their Neighbourhood. They are also more likely than the district overall to feel that people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area.
- That said, residents in Ovenden are significantly less likely than the district average to have done favours for their neighbours in the last six months, reflecting the behaviour of residents in Park and Mixenden.
- Residents within Ovenden are significantly more likely to have seen a general improvement within their area over the last two years, with particular reference to cleaner streets, availability of affordable housing and the level of crime.
- In line with the other Neighbourhoods, it is activities for teenagers and facilities for young children which are perceived to have deteriorated the most, although education provision and cultural facilities are also significantly more likely to be highlighted as getting worse by residents compared to the rest of Calderdale.
- Residents within Ovenden have no particular issues compared to the rest of the district with access to Community services, indeed they are more likely to have easy access to hospital outpatients and affordable childcare.
- As is the case with the other Neighbourhoods, there is significantly less evidence of participation or involvement in community activities compared to the district average.
- The feeling amongst residents that they are not treated with respect and consideration by other people within their local area, is stronger among those in Ovenden and the other Neighbourhoods than in the district as a whole.
- That said, respondents within the three Neighbourhoods feel significantly safer than other Calderdale residents when outside during the day or after dark either locally or within the wider Calderdale area. A contributing factor may be that as a result of neighbourhood management initiatives these respondents are significantly more likely to feel informed about what is being done to tackle anti-social behaviour in their local area compared to the District overall.
- As in Mixenden and Park, those who say they feel unsafe in Ovenden are significantly more likely than the rest of Calderdale to say this is because of the poor image of the area ie they have heard of people being robbed/harassed or attacked or they have heard or read about crime in the media. However, Ovenden residents are also more likely to mention groups of youths hanging around, a lack of people on the streets and a poor environment as contributing factors.
- Residents in Ovenden are significantly more likely than the district average to be satisfied with the cleanliness of open public land, although residents are still significantly more likely to say that abandoned cars are a problem in their Neighbourhood.
- Residents within the three Neighbourhoods are significantly less likely to take part in physical activity on a regular weekly basis compared to the District average. Although the sample base is small, cost appears to be a barrier to doing more exercise. There is a specific desire to use a gym among residents who wish to undertake more exercise.

Park

- Park residents are most likely to have just moved into the area compared to the district average, perhaps reflecting the younger profile of the area, and the recent influx of migrants from Eastern Europe to the area.
- More than half of the respondents within Park are from an ethnic minority background. There would appear to be a greater sense of respect for cultural differences between people within this area than in the other Neighbourhoods or the district overall.
- That said, residents are significantly less likely than in the district overall to have done favours for their neighbours in the last six months. This is in line with the behaviour of those who reside in Ovenden and Mixenden but it is more marked in Park.
- Residents in Park are significantly less likely to be satisfied with their local area compared to the district average. However, there have been higher perceived improvements in cultural and shopping facilities, the level of traffic congestion and the level of crime than in the district overall
- In line with Ovenden and Mixenden, facilities for young children are perceived to have deteriorated significantly more within Park compared to the rest of Calderdale. However, in Park, residents are also more likely to say that although it is easy to access activities for young people, access to safe play areas is significantly harder.
- Although a significantly greater proportion of Park residents believe that chemists are not easily accessible, residents within this area have no particular issues compared to the rest of the district with access to the rest of Community services.
- As is the case with the other Neighbourhoods, there is significantly less evidence of participation or involvement in community activities within Park compared to the district average. However, residents in Park are significantly more likely to believe that they can influence local decisions.
- The feeling amongst residents is stronger in Park and the other Neighbourhoods that they are not treated with respect and consideration by other people within their local area, than the district average. Park residents are also more likely to say this is the case outside of their local area.
- That said, respondents within the three Neighbourhoods feel significantly safer than other Calderdale residents when outside during the day or after dark either locally or within the wider Calderdale area. A contributing factor may be that as a result of neighbourhood management initiatives these respondents are significantly more likely to feel informed about what is being done to tackle anti-social behaviour in their local area compared to the District overall.
- As in Mixenden and Ovenden, those who say they feel unsafe in Park are significantly more likely than the rest of Calderdale to say this is because of the poor image of the area ie they have heard of people being robbed/harassed or attacked or they have heard or read about crime in the media.
- Anti-social behaviour issues perceived to be a significant problem include: drug dealing and drug use, abandoned or burnt out cars, noisy neighbours and rubbish and litter.
- Residents within the three Neighbourhoods are significantly less likely to take part in physical activity on a regular weekly basis compared to the District average. Park residents are significantly more likely to be satisfied with sports and leisure facilities. Although the sample base size is small, there is a specific desire to use a gym among residents who wish to undertake more exercise.

Conclusions and Recommendations

- There is not a consistent gap or relationship between the Calderdale-wide results for the LAA indicators and those in the three neighbourhoods of Ovenden, Mixenden and Park. The variations suggest that whilst all three Neighbourhoods have high levels of deprivation there are many factors impacting on perception levels, local factors are important and that local initiatives are currently having a positive effect on the views and outlook of residents in the areas concerned.
- Similarly, there are differences between the three neighbourhoods – some issues are more or less important in some areas than in others, reflecting the diverse characteristics of the neighbourhoods, recent experiences, attitudes and expectations and the impact of local initiatives. Characteristics such as ethnicity, age, gender and employment status are clearly important in informing perceptions on many of the indicators.
- The LAA indicators where the neighbourhoods are *below* the Calderdale level relate to undertaking physical activity, satisfaction with cultural facilities and some aspects of anti-social behaviour. They are generally *above* the Calderdale level on the different aspects of feeling safe, being informed about what is being done to tackle anti-social behaviour and in belief that their local area has got better in the last two years.
- The positive findings on several topics in the three neighbourhoods probably reflect a number of factors. They are stable communities (more than half of the residents in each neighbourhood have lived in the same area for more than 10 years, although 15% of Park residents have been there for less than one year) and have a strong feeling of belonging to their neighbourhood (and, indeed, to Halifax and Calderdale). Other reasons include the impact of the Neighbourhood Management initiatives in the three areas, bringing with them a focus on local improvements, close liaison with residents and strong communications. Surveys of residents in Ovenden in the last three years as part of the Neighbourhood Management Programme indicate a consistent increase in satisfaction levels.
- In interpreting these findings it should be kept in mind that relatively high satisfaction levels are regularly found in areas with high levels of deprivation and associated characteristics. Equally, as the Tracking Studies of the West Central Halifax SRB and elsewhere have found, maintaining these high levels of satisfaction can be problematic as local communities become better informed about the services they should expect, more aware of comparisons with other areas and develop increasing expectations.
- The Survey findings suggest that when the NTG perception indicators in the Calderdale LAA are updated there is a need to address the different concerns in each Neighbourhood, also having regard to the different demographic characteristics of these areas.

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