



# West Lothian Citizens Panel Newsletter

2014



West Lothian  
COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP

# Welcome to the Citizens Panel Newsletter 2014.

We would like to thank you for being part of the Panel – whether you have been a member for years or have just joined us. Panel membership is voluntary therefore we appreciate the time and effort you give to completing the surveys we send out. We know it's important that organisations that deliver public services in West Lothian take account of people's views and experiences. Being part of the Citizens Panel is one way that local people can express their views about living in West Lothian.

This newsletter gives you information on the results of the Quality of Life Survey that was carried out in 2013. This was the sixth Quality of Life Survey that has been carried out in West Lothian in the last 15 years. The Quality of Life Survey was sent to all members of the Citizens Panel.

## West Lothian Citizens Panel Profile

West Lothian Citizens Panel is now the biggest it has ever been. The panel was refreshed last year, resulting in an additional 698 new members. There are now 3000 members on the panel which makes it the largest panel in Scotland. It is important that the panel represents the West Lothian population and every effort was made to make sure that the panel truly reflects the make-up of West Lothian. It was also important that we made sure we had a representative sample from each area in West Lothian - the table below shows how the panel population is in line with the wider West Lothian population.

Multi Member Ward	Population %	Panel %	Difference
Armadale & Blackridge	8.6%	8.0%	-0.6%
Bathgate	10.3%	10.2%	-0.1%
Broxburn Uphall & Winchburgh	10.9%	10.7%	-0.2%
East Livingston & East Calder	11.7%	12.3%	0.6%
Fauldhouse & Breich Valley	9.9%	9.5%	-0.4%
Linlithgow	9.3%	11.5%	2.2%
Livingston North	11.8%	10.7%	-1.1%
Livingston South	14.2%	14.7%	0.5%
Whitburn & Blackburn	13.3%	12.3%	-1.0%
Grand Total	100.0%	100.0%	

48% of panel members are female and 52% male. 32% reside within the social rented sector and 67% own their own home. 97% are White British and 3% are of other ethnic origin.

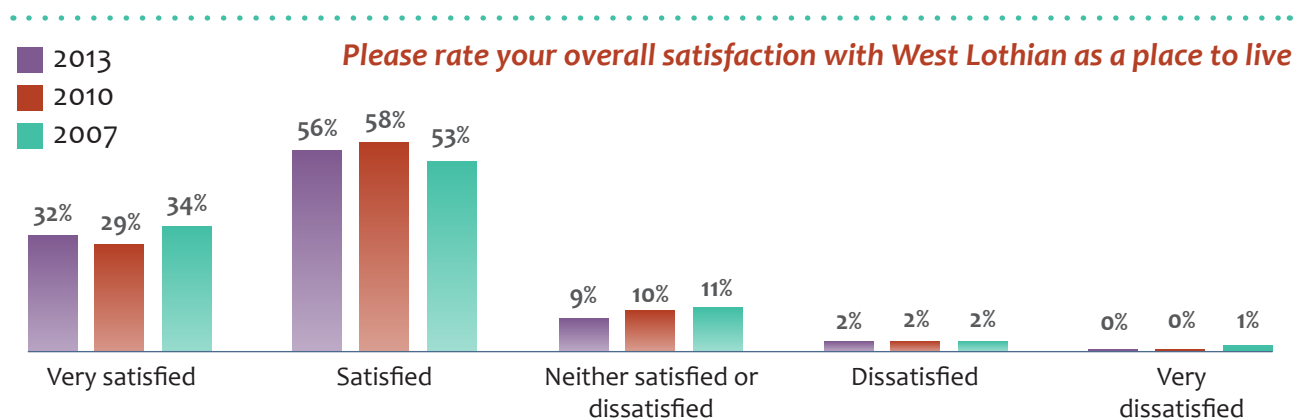




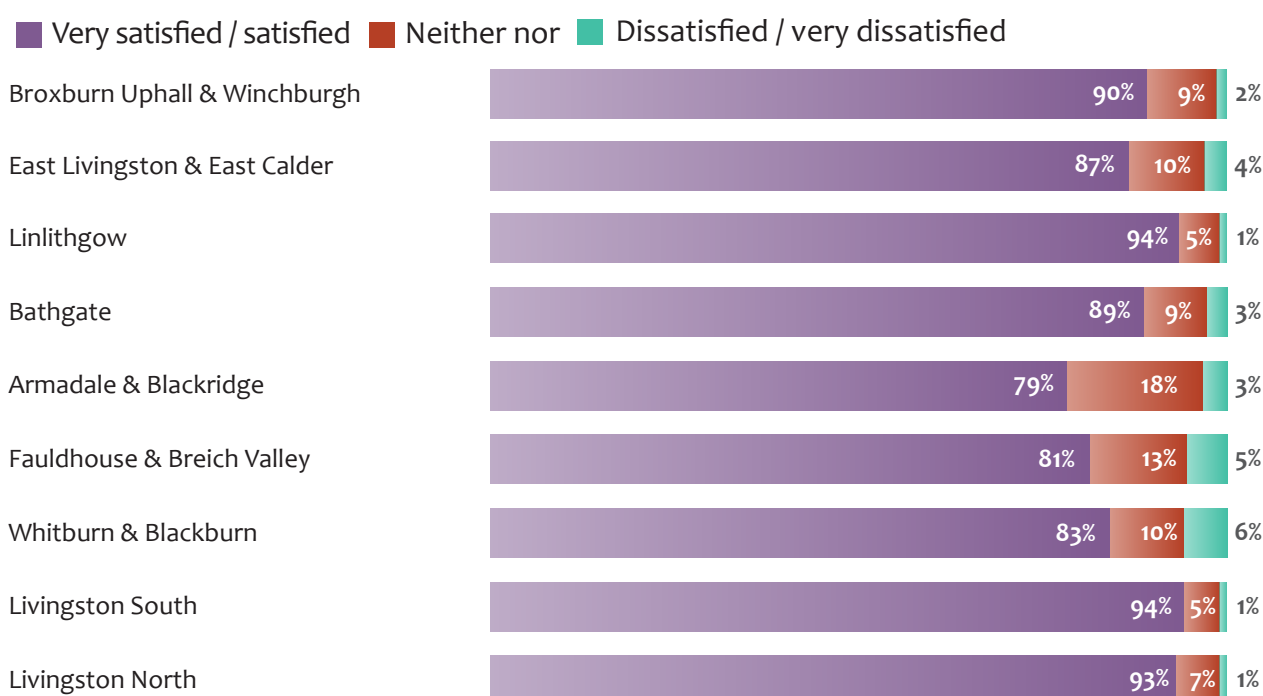
# Quality of life results

Overall levels of satisfaction with West Lothian as a place to live are very strong, remaining high at 88%, similar to the 2010 rate of 87%.

The graph below illustrates the proportion of individuals who were satisfied compared to the last two surveys which were carried out in 2010 and 2007.



The diagram/table below shows the satisfaction levels with West Lothian by Multi-member ward.



Satisfaction with neighbourhood has also increased, with 85% of residents stating that they were satisfied with their neighbourhood compared to 5% who were dissatisfied – an increase from 2010, when 80% were satisfied and 6% were dissatisfied.

When asked if West Lothian had improved over the last few years, 57% agreed that it had whilst 9% of respondents disagreed.

Satisfaction with public services was generally high. Similar to 2010, respondents were most satisfied with Fire & Rescue Service (86% satisfied), Refuse Collection (86%) and Local health services (82%)

Overall factors which are most important to respondents in terms of their quality of life were

- |   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| 1 Good Health (92% stated very important) | 6 Quality of your home (63%)          |
| 2 Feeling Safe in your community (87%)    | 7 Money (45%)                         |
| 3 Cost of living (70%)                    | 8 Belonging to a good community (43%) |
| 4 A good job (69%)                        | 9 Hobbies (25%)                       |
| 5 Support of family or friends (69%)      | 10 Religion or belief (22%)           |

Analysis shows that priorities varied depending on the profile of respondents. Having a good job was more important for younger members of the panel, with 85% of under 25's stating this is very important. Belonging to a good community was important for older members with around half of the 60+ group stating as very important compared to 20% of 25-34 year olds. Feeling safe in the community and good health were important to all groups within the panel.

Services which were identified as most important to panel member's quality of life were

- 1 Access to health facilities (81% stating as very important)
- 2 Good quality education (77% very important)
- 3 Good quality roads (69% very important)



# Economy & Employment

**Respondents were positive about West Lothian's position as a place to do business.**

- 62% agreed that West Lothian feels like a successful place
- 61% agreed that West Lothian has a diverse economy
- 57% agreed that it is easy to travel to work in West Lothian
- 50% agreed that West Lothian is a good place to start a new business – an increase from 31% in 2010

**There were less positive views in relation to West Lothian as a place to work or find employment**

- 13% of panel members thought it is easy to find a job in West Lothian
- 19% agreed that there were plenty of skilled or professional jobs in West Lothian
- 79% were satisfied with their present job
- 73% were satisfied with their job security – an increase from 64% in 2010
- 65% were satisfied with their work-life balance

Respondents aged 25-34 were most satisfied with their present job and respondents aged under 25 least satisfied. Respondents aged 45-59 were most satisfied with their job security and those under 25 least satisfied.

## What We Are Doing

- Business Gateway in West Lothian has continued to support start-ups and in 2013 - 14 recorded the highest number ever (458). This figure included an increase in the number of high-growth business starts creating additional employment opportunities across a range of sectors.
- The Economic Growth Plan launched in April 2013, has already helped growing businesses to secure additional funding for investment in capital expenditure and new jobs.
- Additional funding has been used to create extra employment and training opportunities for young people in particular. One example, the Steps n2 Work Wage Subsidy Programme has created 417 job opportunities for young people within West Lothian businesses employing less than 50 employees and 16 opportunities within the voluntary sector since its launch in 2012.
- Access2employment continue to provide support to local residents to gain the skills and confidence to secure and sustain employment. In 2013/2014 834 local residents secured employment as a result of engaging with the service.





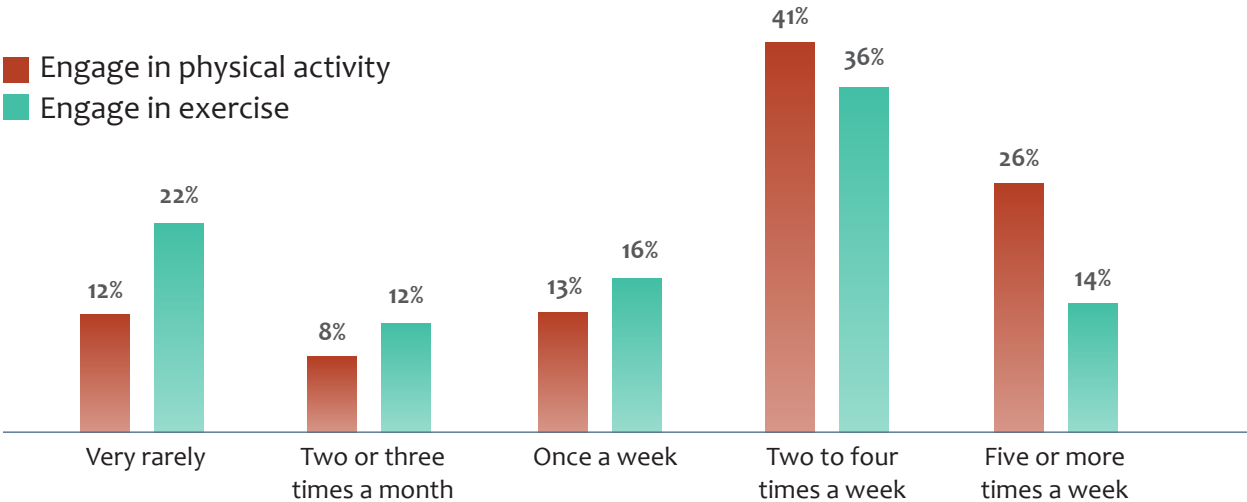
# Health & Wellbeing

The majority of respondents rated their general health as good. 73% told us that their health is good or very good compared to 6% who said their health was bad or very bad.

- 22% of panel members stated that their day to day activities were limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted or is expected to last more than 12 months.
- 75% agreed that a wider range of good quality, affordable fruit and vegetables in their local area would make it easier for them to eat more healthily.
- Just over one in ten respondents stated that they currently smoke.
- The majority of respondents stated that they participated in physical activity at least once per week (80%). Just 12% stated that they never or rarely engage in physical activity. Two thirds of respondents (66%) stated that they engage in exercise at least once per week. 22% stated that they never or rarely participate in exercise.

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## How often do you engage in physical activity / exercise?



*Note: Physical activity is defined as an activity that makes you feel warmer and makes your heart beat faster and get you mildly out of breath. Exercise is defined as more vigorous activity – where you are short of breath, have rapid heartbeat and unable to carry on a conversation*

- Two thirds of respondents (67%) stated that they usually have an alcoholic drink at least once per week. Almost half (49%) drink more than the recommended allowance of 3 units for females and 4 units for males on one or two days per week (a reduction from 70% in 2010). The majority (69%) stated that their use of alcohol had stayed the same in the last 12 months. 4% stated that it had increased and 27% stated that it had decreased.
- When asked what they believed would be most likely to reduce the amount of alcohol consumed, respondents believe that most effective would be:
  - 1 Stricter enforcement of licensing laws (70% agree that this would be effective)
  - 2 Raise the age to purchase alcohol in an off licence to 21 (56%)
  - 3 Reducing the number of shops which sell alcohol (55%)

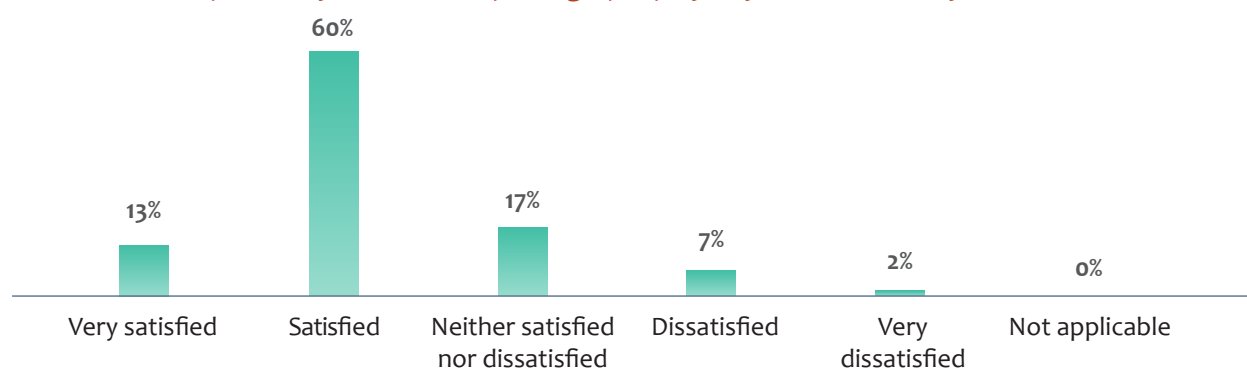
## What We Are Doing

- Put Your West Foot Forward is a walking programme delivered by trained volunteer health walk leaders across West Lothian. There are approximately 280 people involved in the walking programme with walks delivered in 12 communities.
- A Cycle Lending Library has been developed in 4 communities in West Lothian that will include led cycle rides and trained volunteers in cycle maintenance.
- A Roots of Empathy programme is being delivered to P3 pupils in 9 primary schools in West Lothian – this programme aims to raise children’s emotional competence and increase empathy – children learn about childhood development, attachment through working with a local mother and her new-born baby.
- Visits to West Lothian Xcite venues increased to over 2 million – largely due to the significant investment into the facilities in response to many customers being unable to access facilities at peak times.
- Over 150 patients a month are referred to West Lothian Leisure from local GP’s for a structured, targeted exercise programme. After the free 12 week programme, 26% continue to exercise at WL Leisure on a regular basis.
- The Sport and Outdoor Education team provides a range of learning, development and club capacity-building services targeted at increasing participation rates and improving performance in sport and outdoor education activities. In 2013/14 the team supported 63,485 participant sessions – a 39% increase on the 2012/13 figure.
- The Active Schools team recruited and supported 523 volunteers to help deliver over 7,000 after-school sport and activity sessions for West Lothian primary and secondary pupils during academic session 2013-14. These figures indicate that school pupils in West Lothian are now more active than ever before with over 27% of pupils now taking part in regular extracurricular activity.
- Free breakfast provision is provided to all pupils in primary schools and to young people with free school meal entitlement in secondary schools. This has had a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of children and young people.

# Community Safety

- 73% respondents stated that they are either very satisfied or satisfied with the feeling of safety in their community, whilst 9% were dissatisfied.
- 8% stated that they had been a victim of crime within the last 12 months, a slight reduction on 2010 where 10% stated this. Most commonly, these crimes were either against their house or their property.

## Overall how satisfied are you with the feeling of safety in your community?



One quarter of respondents (25%) stated that they have not been directly affected by any form of anti-social behaviour in the last 12 months. The most commonly experienced forms of anti-social behaviour were:

- Dog fouling (51% affected personally in the last 12 months)
- Litter (36%)
- Broken glass (22%)

When asked about their feeling of safety in a range of circumstances, respondents were most likely to feel safe:

- Being at home alone during the day (94% feel safe)
- Being at home alone after dark (87%)
- Walking alone in the local area during the day (85%).

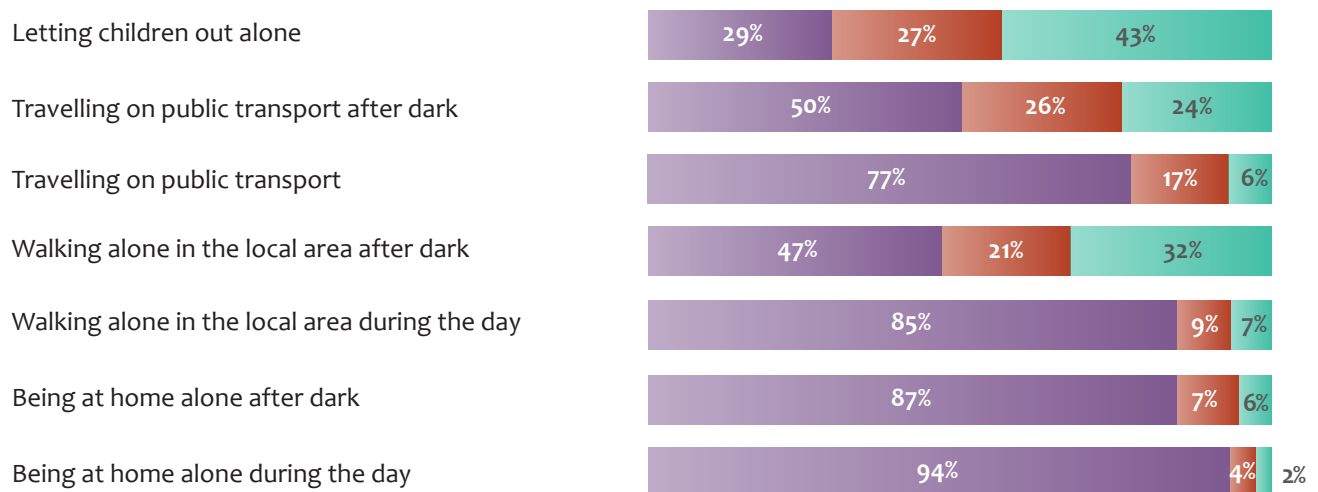
They were less likely to feel safe:

- Letting children out alone (29% feel safe and 43% feel unsafe)
- Walking alone in the local area after dark (47% feel safe and 32% feel unsafe)
- Travelling on public transport after dark (50% feel safe and 24% feel unsafe).



**How safe do you feel in the following?**

■ % Very safe / safe ■ Neither nor ■ % not very safe / not safe at all



Respondents were asked what they believed should be high, medium or low priority for the police in their area. Respondents stated their greatest priorities were;

- Violent crime (88% considered high priority)
- Serious and organised crime (80%)
- Drug dealing and drug misuse (80%)
- Housebreakings and theft (76%)

**What We Are Doing**

- The West Lothian 'Straight to the Point' anti-knife campaign highlights the risks associated with possessing or using a weapon. This is part of the national 'No Knives Better Lives' campaign which works with local partners to deliver a range of activities in schools and communities, including diversionary activities, to deter youths from participating in knife crime, whilst promoting positive life choices.
- The 'Best Bar None' licensed venues scheme focuses on public safety and consumer care and important issues such as prevention of crime and disorder, public safety and prevention of public nuisance. The scheme rewards high safety standards and encourages partner agencies to work together with licensed premises to create a safer West Lothian.
- The Partnership developed a wheelie bin fire initiative in response to a rise in deliberate fires in parts of West Lothian. This aims to reduce wheelie bin fires, educate the community to the risk associated with wheelie bin fires, reduce the fear of crime within the targeted areas and increase the feeling of community safety in communities.
- Anti-social behaviour has continually decreased since the introduction on partnership community policing teams and the establishment of the Community Safety Unit which focuses on preventing crime and anti-social behaviour and . Anti-social behaviour has decreased by 9.7% between 2012/13 and 2013/14, resulting in 1,172 fewer victims. Youth disorder in particular has decreased by 19% from last year.



# Education & Lifelong Learning

**Just over one in ten respondents (11%) stated that they are currently accessing learning or training opportunities. 54% stated that this is being done for their job. 30% are doing this to further their education, 20% for leisure and 12% for some other reason.**

- 71% agreed that adults in West Lothian have access to a range of appropriate learning opportunities (65% in 2010).
- 63% agreed that training and further education facilities in West Lothian are good (57% in 2010).
- 54% agreed that they were satisfied with the state of education in West Lothian, (49% in 2010).

## Early years and school education

**One quarter of respondents (25%) had children at school. Of these, 59% had children at primary school, 53% had children at secondary school, 11% had children at a local authority nursery school, 4% at a private nursery school and 1% at a special school.**

Analysis by those who have children at school compared to those that do not indicates that those that have experience of school education are significantly more positive in their responses.

Positively, views have improved since 2010.

Respondents with children at school were significantly more likely to state that they were satisfied with the state of education in West

Lothian nowadays (61% agree) than those who did not have children at school (52% agree).

80% of respondents with children at school agree that nurseries and early years centres support young children and their families effectively and 78% agree that our schools help ensure that young people are responsible citizens.

## Cultural activities

Respondents were asked about the cultural activities they participated in. The most common cultural activities participated in or cultural venues visited by panel members were;

- Reading for pleasure (81% participating)
- Film at cinema or other venue (75%)
- Library (63%)

The most frequently participated in activities were (defined as at least once a month);

- Reading for pleasure (84%)
- Played a musical instrument (57%)
- Dance Class (55%)

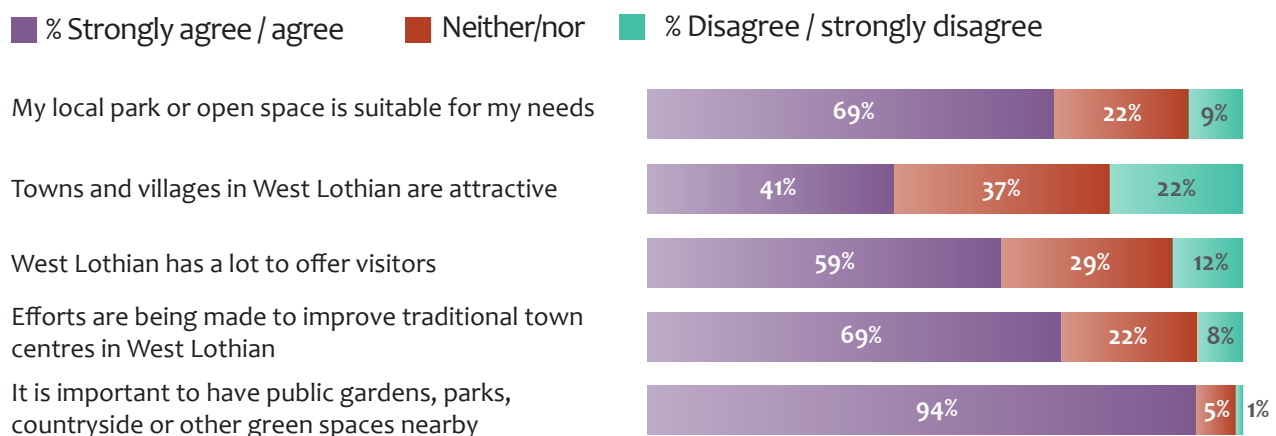
## What We Are Doing

- West Lothian College has invested an additional £1.9 million in education and training. Extensions to the Engineering, Motor Vehicle and Sports' facilities have further increased the number and range of skills courses that the College has on offer.
- Schools in West Lothian continue to implement Curriculum for Excellence and the new National Qualifications. Learning and Teaching for all children improved by ongoing investment in the school estate, staff development and IT resources.
- Community Arts is working with a number of partners, including the National Youth Choir of Scotland and the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland to deliver Year 12 of the Youth Music Initiative which will deliver the government's target of every school pupil in Scotland being offered a year of free music tuition by the time they reach primary 6.
- Community Arts is also developing a partnership with NHS Lothian and contributing to the delivery of the wellbeing outcomes outlined in their Arts Strategy.
- There has been a significant increase in school leavers into positive destinations, from 84.1% in 2009/10 to 92% in 2012/13. This is a result of significant work with partner organisations to support young people.

## Open Spaces and the Environment

The vast majority of respondents stated that it is important to have public gardens, parks, countryside or other green spaces nearby. People were generally positive about the environment in West Lothian as detailed in the figure below.

*Please say how much you agree with the following*





Almost half of respondents (43%) stated that they use their local green space areas at least once per week. 75% were satisfied with the quality of their local green space compared to 7% who were dissatisfied. Respondents were also positive in relation to the cleanliness and appearance of areas around West Lothian;

- 82% rated cemeteries as excellent or good
- 68% rated children's play areas as excellent or good (55% in 2010)
- 66% rated parks as excellent or good (57% in 2010)
- 57% rated main streets and town centres in this way.

Just under half (48%) of respondents stated that climate change is an immediate and urgent problem. Respondents aged 25-34

and 35-44 were most likely to state that they believed that climate change is an immediate and urgent problem (53% and 55% respectively). Respondents aged over 75 were most likely to state that they were still not convinced that climate change is happening (32%).

Attitudes towards recycling and waste reduction were also positive. 96% agreed that it was important that we take part in recycling waste. 90% agreed that West Lothian Council makes it easy for them to recycle and 95% agree that a wide range of material can be recycled at the Councils Community Recycling Centres.

With regard to perceptions around housing, 24% agreed and 47% disagreed that there is enough affordable housing in West Lothian for people who need it.

### What We Are Doing

- More than £400,000 has been invested in play areas and play provision for young people across West Lothian. A further £ 603,000 will be invested in 2014/15.
- A Litter Action Plan has been developed for West Lothian.
- We have worked to improve the cleanliness of West Lothian's streets to the highest rating West Lothian has ever achieved.
- Attracted around 947,000 visitors to Beecraigs, Almondell & Polkemmet Country Parks.
- More than £1.5 million will be invested in parks and open spaces in Almondvale, West Calder, Linlithgow, Whitburn & Dedridge.
- A weekly food waste collection service has been introduced to 20,000 properties and will be extended to include a further 55,000 properties.
- Kerbside recycling has been introduced to over 200 flats and difficult to reach households.
- The Council is in the process of developing a Climate Change Strategy for West Lothian to help identify the work that is already being done to tackle climate change and raise awareness of the issues in local communities.



## Roads & Travel

- 68% rate their street lighting as excellent or good compared to 5% who rate it as bad.
- 64% agreed that public transport is easy to access.
- 39% agreed that public transport is affordable.

With regard to West Lothian's performance in treating areas during severe winter weather, 71% considered treatment of main roads as excellent or good, an increase on 53% in 2010. 21% agreed that treatment of roads in housing estates and residential areas was excellent or good, again better than the 11% in 2010.

### What We Are Doing

- 10,226 tonnes of salt was used on West Lothian's roads in winter 2013.
- 521 tonnes of salt was put into 2021 grit bins.
- 819 old street lighting columns were replaced in 2013/14 and a further 600 will be replaced in 2014/15.
- Reduced energy consumption of existing equipment by approx. 143,000kWh per annum through the use of replacement energy efficient light sources. A further 2500 new LED light sources will be installed within street lighting in 2014/15.



# Communities

Respondents were asked various questions on how they feel about their community.....

- 56% agreed that people in their community help each other when there is a problem.
- 56% agreed that their community is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together.
- 46% agreed that people in their community can influence decisions which affect their community.

- 46% agreed that people feel involved in their community.

53% of respondents stated that they had given some form of unpaid help over the last year to a group, club or organisation. Most commonly, this was given to children's education or schools (18%) local community or neighbourhood groups (15%) or hobbies/ recreation groups (15%) and sport and exercise groups (35%).

## What We Are Doing

**There is a range of ways individuals can get involved in their communities in West Lothian.....**

- There are 36 Community Councils in West Lothian and 319 community councillors.
- There are a number of forums and groups around West Lothian which seek to improve relations between different groups in society. The Community Race Forum aims to celebrate diversity and equality in West Lothian.
- The West Lothian Faith Group was set up to promote interfaith working in West Lothian, providing a forum for members of the faith community to get together to share ideas and experiences, helping to facilitate partnership working and encourage a dialogue between different faith groups.
- The Citizen Led Inspection (CLI) volunteer programme offers local people the opportunity to inspect and improve West Lothian Council services on behalf of everyone living and working in the area. It is the only council-wide programme of its type in Scotland designed to give citizens a stronger voice in the decision-making process. Inspections have been carried out in winter maintenance, pupil placement and waste services, among others. For more information, email [citizenled@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:citizenled@westlothian.gov.uk)



The results of the 2013 Quality of Life Survey are being used to inform the Council and its partners on how residents feel about living in West Lothian, and to influence how services are developed.

If you would like more detail on the Quality of Life 2013 results, you can access a range of reports on the Council's website <http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/4158/Community-Engagement> or email [community.planning@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:community.planning@westlothian.gov.uk)



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