

Derbyshire Citizens' Panel
A Brief Guide.

September 2004

Derbyshire Citizens' Panel : A Brief Guide

What is the Citizens' Panel?

The Derbyshire Citizens' Panel comprises approximately 8,000 Derbyshire residents (approximately 1000 in each district area) who broadly represent the make-up of the 18+ population of the county. Panel members are chosen at random and have been recruited through the use of a postal questionnaire sent to Derbyshire residents.

The Panel is a joint venture between the county council, the police and each of the district councils in Derbyshire. However enquiries are welcome from other statutory agencies and the voluntary and community sector.

The Panel is updated regularly to ensure that people who no longer wish to participate or move out of the area are replaced. No one individual should be on the panel for more than three years.

Please note that the data on the panelists is confidential and only used for panel surveys. Personal details will not be revealed or passed to any agency outside the partnership.

How does the Citizens' Panel operate?

Panelists agree to receive up to four surveys per year, which are sent out in mid February and May, and early in September and November. They are usually distributed by district and borough councils on the County Council's behalf. A newsletter accompanies each survey, giving feedback to Panel members on the results of previous surveys and any action taken as a result.

The Panel can also be used for telephone interviews or to recruit focus groups. Some panelists have also given the council permission to contact their children (aged 11+), so the panel can be used for gathering the views of young people.

The costs of recruiting, refreshing and running the panel are covered by the county council and district councils. Other agencies and the voluntary and community sector are charged according to the number of pages they use on a questionnaire.

When to use the Panel

The Citizens' Panel whilst a powerful consultation tool, is only one of the potential consultation methods that are available and should not be used in isolation. It will not always be appropriate to use the Panel for the information you require. Assistance is available from the Policy and Research team in Chief Executive's, on the suitability of using the Panel and on alternative consultation techniques.

As the Panel comprises a representative sample of Derbyshire residents, the best questions are those that have an interest for the general public, rather than for specific service users, and are likely to achieve better results. This

does not mean, however, that you can only use the Panel for the services used by everyone.

A service may, for example, find it relatively easy to consult existing users through regular and recorded contact with them. But finding out why people do not use a service can often be more difficult. The Panel can be a useful tool for this purpose.

The Panel can also be used to gauge levels of awareness about specific county council services or initiatives. It can be particularly useful to track public interest or satisfaction with a particular issue over time.

Examples of previous surveys include:-

- Community Safety
- Quality of Life
- Travel Diary

How long does it take?

Use of the Citizens' Panel will need to be considered well in advance. There should be some time allocated for preparing questions, quality assurance, piloting them and submitting them for inclusion in the Panel Survey.

Figure 1 below gives an indication of the timescale involved in preparing for, running and receiving feedback from a Panel survey.

TIMETABLE			
	ACTION	NOTES	WEEKS
1	Think about the questions you wish to ask and discuss this with your departmental representative on the Corporate Consultation Group	Is the Citizens' Panel the right vehicle?	1 - 4
2	Consultation with Policy & Research personnel – type of questions, timescales, analysis, interpretation of results		5 - 8
3	Taken to Derbyshire Consultation Technical Group		8 - 12
4	Questionnaire designed and circulated to district		12
5	Survey sent out to Panel members to complete		13 - 15
6	Completed surveys returned and data input	Dependent on District staffing	16 - 19
7	Analysis – provision of topline statistics, reports	Depends on complexity and quality of data	20 -24
8	Feedback – newsletter reporting back results to panellists		24
9	Informing service development		ongoing

Feedback

Feedback from the results of the consultation are used in several ways

- to inform service development
- to update the panellists with relevant information usually by newsletter
- to produce survey reports and topline statistics (raw data is also available for further analysis)

Please note that Panelists are less likely to return questionnaires in the future if they do not feel that the council is listening to and acting upon their concerns or services are not improving as a result.

Next Steps

Please refer to the Appendix for advice notes and proforma on survey questions and using the panel plus a copy of a recent survey.

If you would like to submit a question or series of questions for the Citizens' Panel to consider please complete the attached proforma and discuss it with your departmental representative on the Corporate Consultation Group before sending it to:

Fen Jones (e-mail: fen.jones@derbyshire.gov.uk) or
Barbara Ackrill (e-mail: barbara.ackrill@derbyshire.gov.uk).
C/o Policy and Research, Chief Executive's Office

Appendix 1

Designing the right questions.

Set out below are some suggestions on how to prepare questions for the Panel:

- **Keep it simple** – write simple, clear questions keeping them as short as possible.
- **Ambiguity** – avoid ambiguous or vague statements.
- **Double Negatives** – avoid double negatives, as they are confusing and difficult to understand.
- **Avoid Jargon** – try to avoid technical terms and jargon that respondents may not understand.
- **Be logical** – if you want to ask a range of questions, organise them logically. Group the items on the same content or those that have the same response options.
- **Mostly avoid several words!** – avoid words like several, most and usually which have no precise meaning.
- **Make responding easy** – make the questions as easy as possible for respondents to read, understand and complete.
- **Closed or Open Questions?** –
 - Closed questions, which offer respondents a limited set of response alternatives, are the best.
 - Open questions, which could elicit as many different responses as there are respondents, will be more difficult to analyse. However this does not mean that open questions cannot be used, but other consultation techniques may be more useful if you want to explore a range of open-ended issues e.g. focus groups.
- **Piloting Questions** – to test out the clarity of the questions you have designed, it may be helpful to pilot them with colleagues or a small number of service users before you try them out on a wider audience. The Policy and Research section will be developing a database of good practice questions.

DERBYSHIRE CIVIL REGISTRATION REVIEW

In England and Wales, the records from civil registration date back over 160 years and have become a key source of information for statisticians and family historians. Today's system of civil registration has changed little since it was first introduced in the 1830's. People still have to give information about births, deaths and marriages in person in the area where the event occurred. The registrar uses pen and ink to enter the information into a paper register. A certificate is then issued which is used to help prove entitlement to a variety of services, and for example in support of applications for benefits, passports and driving licences. The system was designed in this way to suit the needs and expectations of society at that time. However, society has changed immeasurably and there have been advances in technology. Consequently, many of these needs and expectations no longer apply.

Government plans to modernise civil registration to respond to the changing needs of society, provide a customer focused service and take advantage of the opportunities provided by technology. This questionnaire is designed to find out your views on the Government's proposals. Please try to answer all questions even if you think the issues are not currently applicable to you.

SECTION A: BIRTHS

Please answer all of the following questions even if you may not think the questions are applicable.

Q1. How would you prefer to register a birth? (Please **X one** box only)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> "Face to Face" | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please X & specify below) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Via the Internet | <input type="text"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> By telephone through a national call centre | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> By post | |

Q2. What are the main reasons for your choice of how you would prefer to register a birth? (Please **X all** that apply)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Convenience | <input type="checkbox"/> Dislike of call centres |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal service / contact | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please X & specify below) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Information / advice | <input type="text"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Internet convenience | |

Q3. Where would you prefer to register a birth if it was "Face to Face"?

(Please **X one** box only)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Register Office | <input type="checkbox"/> GP's surgeries, clinics, mother and toddler groups etc. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Another council building (e.g. library) | <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhere else |
| <input type="checkbox"/> At a non-council building (e.g. supermarket, post office, community centre etc.) | (Please X & specify below) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hospitals | <input type="text"/> |

Q4. When registering a birth "Face to Face", what kind of system would you like?

*(Please X **one** box only)*

- Appointment
- Drop in
- Don't know

Q5. If birth certificates were abolished would you buy a commemorative certificate?

*(Please X **one** box only)*

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

SECTION B: DEATHS

Q6. How would you prefer to register a death? *(Please X **one box only)***

- "Face to Face" By telephone through a national call centre
- Via the Internet By post
- Other *(Please X & specify below)*

Q7. What are the main reasons for your choice of how you would prefer to register a death? *(Please X **all that apply)***

- Convenience Dislike of call centres
- Personal service / contact Other *(Please X & specify below)*
- Information / advice
- Internet convenience

Q8. Where would you prefer to register a death if it was "Face to Face"?

*(Please X **one** box only)*

- Register Office GP's surgeries, clinics, mother and toddler groups etc.
- Another council building (e.g. library) Somewhere else *(Please X & specify below)*
- At a non-council building (e.g. supermarket, post office, community centre etc.)
- Hospitals

Q9. When registering a death "Face to Face", what kind of system would you like?

*(Please X **one** box only)*

- Appointment
- Drop in
- Don't know

SECTION C: MARRIAGES

Please answer all of the following questions even if you are currently married and / or may not think the questions are applicable.

Q10. Given complete freedom of choice, which type of venue would you chose to marry in?
(Please X one box only)

<input type="checkbox"/> Church	<input type="checkbox"/> Restaurant
<input type="checkbox"/> Register office	<input type="checkbox"/> Private home / garden
<input type="checkbox"/> Stately home	<input type="checkbox"/> Outside (marquee)
<input type="checkbox"/> Hotel	<input type="checkbox"/> Outside (open air)
<input type="checkbox"/> Other <i>(Please X & specify below)</i>	

Q11. Who would you prefer to conduct your marriage? *(Please X one box only)*

<input type="checkbox"/> Civil Celebrant (Registrar)	<input type="checkbox"/> Other <i>(Please X & specify below)</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Religious Celebrant	<input type="text"/>

Q12. Would you use a Register Office for a Sunday marriage even if the service was introduced at a higher price? *(Please X one box only)*

Yes No Don't know

Q13. Currently the law only allows marriages between 8 am and 6pm, this law will be changing. Given this new freedom, please indicate a time slot that you might ideally choose to marry for both a register office and any other venue.

Marriages at a register office		(Please X <u>one</u> box only)
<input type="checkbox"/> Mon - Sat 7am - 10am	<input type="checkbox"/> Sun 7am - 10am	
<input type="checkbox"/> Mon - Sat 10am - 1pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Sun 10am - 1pm	
<input type="checkbox"/> Mon - Sat 1pm - 3pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Sun 1pm - 3pm	
<input type="checkbox"/> Mon - Sat 3pm - 5pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Sun 3pm - 5pm	
<input type="checkbox"/> Mon - Sat 5pm - 7pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Sun 5pm - 7pm	
<input type="checkbox"/> Mon - Sat 7pm - 9pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Sun 7pm - 9pm	
<input type="checkbox"/> Mon - Sat 9pm - Midnight	<input type="checkbox"/> Sun 9pm - Midnight	
<input type="checkbox"/> No Preference		
Marriages at any other venue eg. hotel, restaurant, outside etc.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Mon - Sat 7am - 10am	<input type="checkbox"/> Sun 7am - 10am	
<input type="checkbox"/> Mon - Sat 10am - 1pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Sun 10am - 1pm	
<input type="checkbox"/> Mon - Sat 1pm - 3pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Sun 1pm - 3pm	
<input type="checkbox"/> Mon - Sat 3pm - 5pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Sun 3pm - 5pm	
<input type="checkbox"/> Mon - Sat 5pm - 7pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Sun 5pm - 7pm	
<input type="checkbox"/> Mon - Sat 7pm - 9pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Sun 7pm - 9pm	
<input type="checkbox"/> Mon - Sat 9pm - Midnight	<input type="checkbox"/> Sun 9pm - Midnight	
<input type="checkbox"/> No Preference		

SECTION D: OTHER SERVICES**Q14. Are you aware that Derbyshire County Council offers the following civil ceremonies?***(Please X Yes or No for each option)*

	Yes	No
Naming ceremonies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commitment ceremonies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Renewal of marriage vows	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q15. Would you support the introduction of the following new services?*(Please X Yes or No for each option)*

	Yes	No
Civil funeral ceremonies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commemorative / anniversary certificates	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SECTION E: OPENING HOURS**Q16. Full time register offices currently open between the hours of 9:00am and 4:30pm Monday to Friday to register a birth or death or to arrange a marriage. Offices open on a Saturday morning for marriage ceremonies only. Please indicate which of the following changes to our opening times would be of benefit to you.***(Please X all your preferred times for births, deaths and marriages)*

	Births	Deaths	Marriages
Monday - Friday 9am - 5pm	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Monday - Friday 9am - 7pm	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Monday - Friday 8am - 8pm	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Monday - Friday 9am - 5pm With late night opening once a week until 7pm	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Saturday 9am until 4pm	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sunday 9am until 4pm	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other <i>(Please X & specify below)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Thank you for completing this questionnaire

Derbyshire Citizens' Panel - Survey Questions

Please complete both pages of this proforma.

From:	Service:	Date:
--------------	-----------------	--------------

Please read the guidance notes 'Derbyshire Citizen's Panel – a Brief Guide' before completing this proforma.

Service/subject area for questions	
What will the results be used for? (e.g. best value review, service development etc)	
When do you need the response data by? (please give a date if possible)	
When can you provide feedback on actions taken as a result of the survey? (we report back to the panel on the survey results and action taken with the following survey)	
Is this information you will need on a regular basis to track progress? Yes/No? If yes, how often do you think you will need to repeat it?	
How do you intend to publicise the response data and your actions to your service users and the wider Derbyshire public if appropriate?	

On the next page, please give as much detail as you can on the information you need.

If you wish to also include draft questions, please do.
Either way, we will come back to you with suggestions for the final form of the questions to be included in the survey.

