

Engaging Communities in Fighting Crime

Review by Louise Casey –
Have Your Say responses

Have your say

Crime&Communities
review

Have your say

The Casey Review into Engaging Communities in Fighting Crime has put at its heart the public's view on crime and justice and listened carefully to what more communities would like to see done to tackle crime and improve their feelings of confidence and safety.

Crime is a major concern for the public, despite reductions in overall levels of crime since the mid-1990s. This concern matters because communities become weaker and less able to play a part in tackling crime if they live in fear and lack confidence in the Government, the police and other criminal justice agencies to punish and prevent it.

As part of the review's evidence-gathering process with the public, which included surveys, discussion groups, events, visits and meetings, the review team produced a Have Your Say questionnaire that asked questions about some of the key areas of the review. The total number of responses was 1,502 and this document gives an analysis of its main findings.

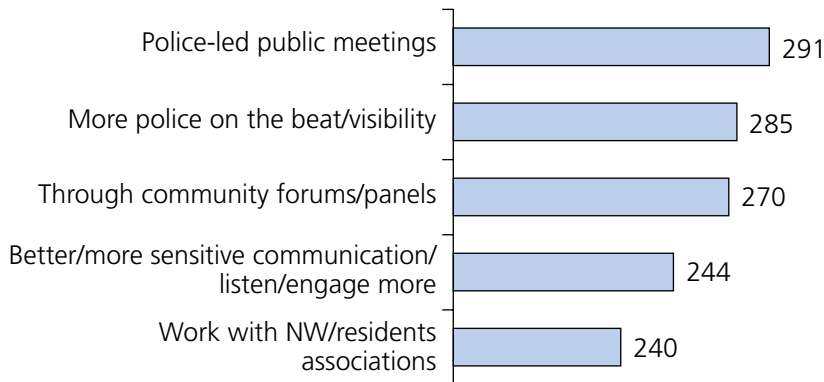
The questionnaire was available to the general public and was publicised to various groups including victims, witnesses, those active in their community, young people and the elderly. The findings outlined here therefore do not reflect the views of a representative sample of the population, but are more likely to represent the views of the public who are actively involved in their community or affected by crime.

Thank you to all those who took the time to take part in the questionnaire.

We asked: What are the best ways in which the police and others should listen to, and work with, local people so that the public can have their say on how crime is tackled in their area?

The respondents to the Have Your Say questionnaire wanted the police and other criminal justice agencies to listen to, and work with local people by being visible in their area, holding public meetings, working with existing local groups and trying harder to communicate and connect with local people.

Top 5 responses:



Top 20 responses (number of times mentioned in brackets):

- 1 (291) Police-led public meetings
- 2 (285) More police on the beat/visibility
- 3 (270) Through community forums/panels
- 4 (244) Better/more sensitive communication/listen/engage more
- 5 (240) Work with Neighbourhood Watch/residents associations
- 6 (201) Face-to-face contact/door knocking
- 7 (154) Build local knowledge/relationships
- 8 (141) Provide feedback to community
- 9 (124) Surgeries/walk-ins/ad hoc street meetings
- 10 (105) Make contact easy/known/named officers
- 11 (99) Attendance at parish council/local meetings
- 12 (83) Surveys/questionnaires
- 13 (79) Pro-active/positive policing
- 14 (75) Work with council/agencies
- 15 (68) Attendance at schools

- 16 (67) Work with young people
- 17 (64) Online/website/email
- 18 (46) Respond quicker/when needed
- 19 (40) More Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs)
- 20 (20) Police stations open longer/24 hours

Largely the respondents wanted police and others to be visible, to communicate well and develop better ways to connect with local communities. Public meetings were the most favoured way of the police and others listening to the community. It was felt by many that any meetings should seek as wide a range of views as possible.

Using and linking up with groups and networks already established in the community was also popular, for example residents associations, Neighbourhood Watch or parish councils. Furthermore, creative and direct ways of involving the public were also mentioned frequently, such as 'street meetings' (where the police have their meetings out on the street where local people can see them), knocking on people's doors to talk, and a presence at local meetings, events, and schools. People also wanted making contact to be easier by having known and named officers.

"Local PCSOs are good – they can listen to local people more than the normal police. But they need more back up from the hierarchy!"

Overall in the questionnaire, people most often mentioned wanting their police to be visible – to be able to 'see bobbies on the beat'. The impact of this being that it would allow the police to listen to, work with and reassure local communities.

"...be available to all of us, not stuck behind desks doing endless paperwork. Civilians could do this and free up the police to do THEIR job."

They also wanted the police to be on foot and not in patrol cars.

"...and NOT in cars – it's PC Plod not PC Zoom."

Many of the responses around 'Better/more sensitive communication/listen/engage more' referred to a general feeling that the police needed to 'connect' more with the communities they serve. This is supported by responses referring to the need for local police to establish local knowledge and relationships.

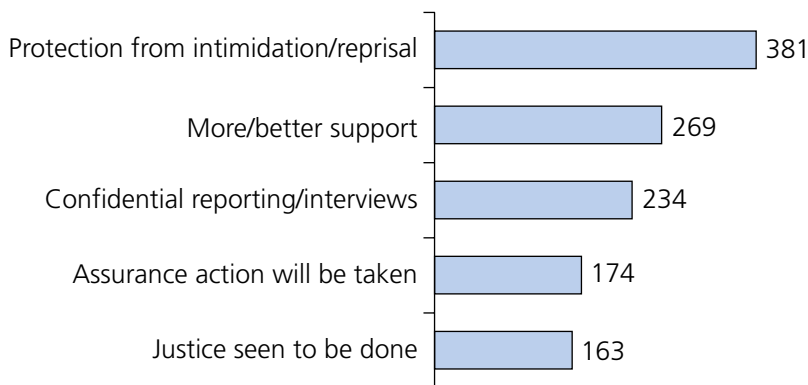
"Neighbourhood [Policing] teams that have a real understanding of their neighbourhood can stop crime before it starts."

We asked: What more can be done to help people who have witnessed, or been a victim of crime to come forward in reporting and giving evidence?

The responses to the questionnaire showed that to feel confident to come forward, people need to be reassured that they wouldn't be putting themselves at risk, that they would be supported and treated well through the process, and that ultimately it would be worth it.

By far the most popular reaction to this question was the need to guard against reprisals and intimidation. For many people, this fear appeared to be the biggest barrier to becoming involved and reporting crime.

Top 5 responses:



Top 15 responses:

- 1 (381) Protection from intimidation/reprisal
- 2 (269) More/better support for victims and witnesses
- 3 (234) Confidential reporting/interviews
- 4 (174) Assurance action will be taken
- 5 (163) Justice seen to be done
- 6 (147) Better police/Criminal Justice System (CJS) attitude/sensitivity
- 7 (133) Easier to report/better call centres
- 8 (130) Anonymous evidence giving/video links/proxy witness
- 9 (117) Feedback on outcomes
- 10 (107) Build trust in/relationships with police
- 11 (88) Speedy response from police
- 12 (80) Explain importance of getting involved (advertising/campaign/education)
- 13 (34) Punishment/legislation for witness intimidation

14 (32) Assigned contact in the system/buddy system

15 (24) Speed up CJS process

Those responding to the Have Your Say questionnaire were clear that efforts could be made to help victims and witnesses come forward in reporting crime and giving evidence. People pointed to 'confidential reporting', 'anonymous evidence giving' and 'increased punishment for witness intimidation'. Respondents often referred to the attention drawn to a person by the police visiting them. The public had a range of suggestions for improving this including:

- being invited to the police station instead of being visited at home;
- visits from plain clothes officers;
- providing a place to report crime that isn't a police station;
- reporting through a community representative;
- reporting as a community group or network; and
- preventing leaks of details once reported.

"I'm a victim. The offenders get away with the crime they have committed. We have to live in fear, in darkness and silent so that we don't get targeted again and again. Why doesn't the system look after us?"

Another specific suggestion for better protection was the separation of victims/witnesses and accused at court.

"I was a key witness...Myself and others were offered NO witness support. Many said they would never do it again...Because our case was 'civil' no witness protection was offered. I even had to sit next to the persecutors who were threatening me in court in front of the barristers."

And the 10th most popular response – 'Building trust in/relationships with the police' was also often linked to the fear of confidentiality not being respected.

People were also concerned with what happens to the victim or witness once a crime has been reported; 'More/better support' was the second most popular response and included a strong emphasis on switching the focus to the victim rather than the offender.

"There just has to be greater emphasis on what effect crime and anti-social behaviour has on people, rather than the needs and justification of the wrongdoers."

Also linked to supporting victims and witnesses was the 'Feedback on outcomes' response and the 'Better police/CJS attitude/sensitivity' response.

"The public are left in a limbo, they need to know what happens to the perpetrators and criminals, not see them hiding behind some ridiculous data protection rubbish."

There was a strong sense that in order to come forward to report crime, it must be seen to be 'worth it', with 'justice seen to be done' – this included knowing that action would be taken, being told about what happened in the criminal justice process, and knowing that the proper punishment would be meted out.

“Punishment should fit the crime. You should get a slap on the wrist only if you have slapped someone else on the wrist, not if you’ve been terrorising the local neighbourhood. It makes me scream inside sometimes to see them smirking at the community after the courts basically let them off.”

Making coming forward 'worth it' also meant that people wanted assurance that their contact was taken seriously and that action would be taken, and speedily, no matter how 'low-level' or minor the incident.

“Often people say that they don’t bother reporting to the police because ‘it’s not worth it/they’re more bothered about catching motorists’. The police need to get the message across that any crime, no matter how small should be reported.”

People also felt that there should be more explanation of the importance of reporting, for example through a public campaign – both to educate people about the importance of reporting and to get across that reported crime would be taken seriously.

Other popular ways of increasing reporting included simply making reporting easier – with police call centres singled out for criticism by some.

“People are fed up of reporting crime and being passed from pillar to post.”

We asked: Do you think the public can play a role by both helping to prevent and tackle crime, as individual citizens or on behalf of their local community? If so, what is that role?

The vast majority of respondents felt that the public could play a role in tackling crime. Largely, they felt that they could play their part to help make their communities safer by fostering a sense of togetherness, by communicating and engaging with the police and by joining community-based groups.

Only 6% of respondents stated that the public should not play a role and that it was solely the responsibility of police and Criminal Justice System to tackle crime.

“The public are sick of the headlines ‘we need the community to help us solve crime’ from the police and government, it’s a two way thing, the police should do their job – and the public need to be treated well and valued. Usually they are not.”

Others said that although they thought the public could play a role, there were some qualifications – the main ones being:

- if they were more confident in the response and outcome;
- if they felt protected from intimidation; and
- if the role they could play was made clearer or given a positive lead.

“Yes, except that nowadays the police and the useless courts will just undo it all anyway, so what’s the point?”

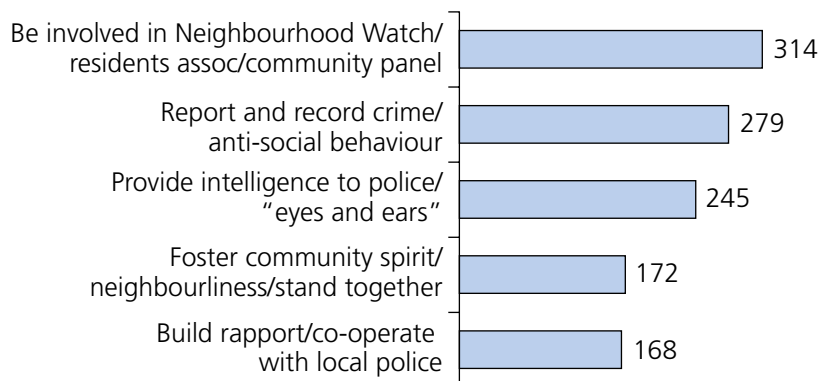
“Yes, as long as it was safe to do so.”

“Yes, as long as it was a bit clearer what we should and shouldn’t do.”

Despite these reservations, the majority unequivocally stated that the public had an important role in tackling crime in their communities.

“Yes they have a role – the public are the eyes and ears of their community, and should take pride in their community, tackling crime. They should be rewarded and credited for their efforts and support.”

Top 5 responses – What is that role?:



Top 10 responses:

- 1 (314) Through Neighbourhood Watch/community groups
- 2 (279) Report crime and anti-social behaviour
- 3 (245) Provide intelligence to police/authorities/'eyes and ears'
- 4 (172) Foster community spirit/neighbourliness/stand together
- 5 (168) Build rapport/co-operate with local police
- 6 (110) Be active in community/attend meetings
- 7 (90) Take safety precautions/crime prevention measures
- 8 (62) Work with young people
- 9 (51) Good parenting
- 10 (48) Stand up to anti-social behaviour (ASB)/bullies/yobs

Providing authorities with information was the most common response overall (when adding responses 2 and 3 together) to how the public could play their part in tackling crime. These responses may well reflect a sense that those answering the questionnaire recognise their prominent role in detecting crime, as well as a sense that in some ways it is the public themselves that are often at the front line of ensuring safety in their areas.

The most direct way of playing a role and mentioned most frequently was that the public could join Neighbourhood Watch schemes or other community groups with an interest in helping to tackle crime.

Some respondents also mentioned getting involved by volunteering to be a nominated contact with the police, or participating in street patrols (where residents walk around their neighbourhood together, noting anything from litter and graffiti to suspicious behaviour to report to the council or police).

On a more general level, many people mentioned that the way the public could play their part was by fostering a sense of community spirit and neighbourliness. This was often expressed in terms of 'standing together' against crime and anti-social behaviour.

"If they get the courage and motivation to stand up together, that may help too."

"If people feel an integral part of their community, where they know their neighbours and feel a desire to contribute to making their neighbourhood a better place."

"People need to report every single incident, and in the case of anti-social behaviour by the kids, we need to confront them 'en masse' and support each other until the message gets through that we won't put up with it."

A number of people talked about the need to address 'youth issues' – these comments included both the need for better discipline as well as working with young people.

Several of those responding felt that individuals should stand up to unacceptable behaviour, anti-social behaviour and crime. However, the issue of direct intervention often prompted concerns about the consequences, particularly in terms of risk and lack of support.

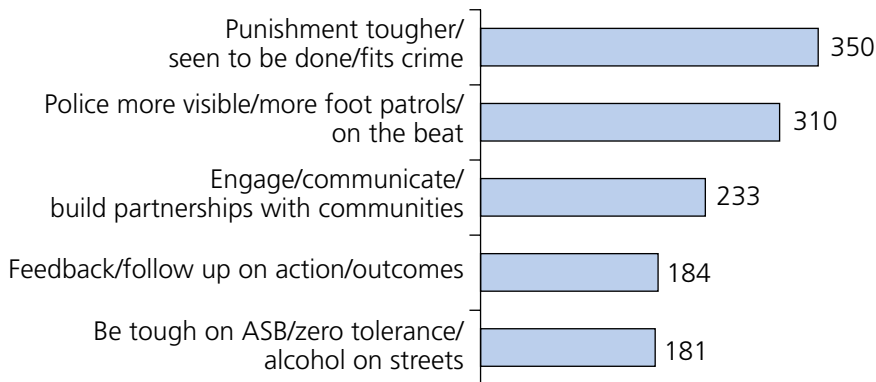
"People are only classed as a have a go hero if they lose their life. If they survive, they will be dragged through the courts and be treated like a criminal themselves."

"I would stand up more if I knew there was the police about to back me up."

We asked: What more do you think needs to be done by those responsible for reducing crime and anti-social behaviour so that the public can be confident that crime is being tackled in the right way?

Those responding to the questionnaire were clear that there are several key ways to make them confident that crime is being tackled in the right way. They wanted to see that crimes are punished. They wanted to see that the police are on their streets and working with the community. They wanted to hear about what is being done to tackle crime and the outcomes of action. And they wanted tackled the things that they see in their neighbourhoods which affect the quality of their lives.

Top 5 responses:



Top 15 responses:

- 1 (350) Punishment tougher/seen to be done/fits crime
- 2 (310) Police more visible/more foot patrols
- 3 (233) Engage/communicate/build partnerships with communities
- 4 (184) Feedback/follow up on action/outcomes
- 5 (181) Be tough on anti-social behaviour/zero tolerance
- 6 (131) Tackle youth issues/put on activities/more discipline
- 7 (103) Build trust in police/Criminal Justice System
- 8 (82) Police response is quick/adequate
- 9 (81) Reliable/clear facts/information
- 10 (78) More balanced/positive media/publicity/debate
- 11 (71) Tackle poor parenting
- 12 (68) Police more accessible/contactable/contact easier
- 13 (58) Engage with/more support for victims/witnesses
- 14 (52) Less paperwork/targets for police
- 15 (38) Police priorities fit community concerns

The responses to the questionnaire suggest that confidence is most at risk if the public do not feel that crime has consequences for the perpetrator. If they feel that punishment is proportionate to the crime committed, and is sufficiently tough, and importantly, that they see for themselves that this is the case, they will feel more confident. The term ‘slap on the wrist’ appeared many times in the responses – the sense that people are ‘let off lightly’ for committing crime, which leads to lack of confidence.

“We finally see [offenders] in court, only to see them let off with a warning, and back out on the street causing trouble in time for tea.”

“The Crown Prosecution Service and judicial system need looking into. The police do an excellent job, however they are fighting a losing battle as these services are letting them down.”

“...so-called punishment is a slap on the wrist. Public are fed up of the criminals getting off lightly. Do they care???”

Linked to the idea of adequate punishment were responses advocating building trust in the police and Criminal Justice System. With regard to building trust in the police, respondents also focused on improved police attitude, upholding confidentiality, and a quick or adequate response to reported crimes.

Another related popular response was that anti-social behaviour and minor crime should be tackled forcefully.

“I believe we should know who is on ABCs [Acceptable Behaviour Contracts] and ASBOs, and what their [conditions] are, or how do we know when they are being broken? WE are the ones who can do it, the police can’t be everywhere.”

“Though crime may be down, I doubt very much anti-social behaviour is, and these are the small persistent quality of life-ruining incidents that get to people, but also feel brushed aside by the police, so no point acting on.”

Visibility was second most often mentioned, and sometimes in conjunction with reducing paperwork and police targets. Many people who talked about police visibility also talked about the importance of being able to access the police when they need them. The message is that the public will have confidence when they know that the police are in their communities, tackling crime.

The third major link in the chain to improve confidence, in addition to visible, proportionate punishment and policing, was a need for the police and others to work with the community. Involving and connecting with communities was the third most mentioned issue, which included desire for feedback and follow up, being kept informed, and two-way communication. In other words, the public do not want a ‘remote’ police service or Criminal Justice System.

“...feedback is so important as it lets the public know the result of their input.”

A related issue was that 'Police priorities fit community concerns' which incorporated a desire for local versus central objectives.

"Why can't you just let the police get on with stuff that worries us around here, instead of telling them what to do all the...time?"

Another dimension to improving confidence was tackling youth issues and improving parenting – which were felt to be key problems in relation to crime. 'Tackle youth issues/activities/discipline' covers quite a wide range of responses, from providing youth facilities and tackling boredom, to curfews, boot camps and instilling discipline.

"Parenting should be taught in secondary education."

Better information was also felt to play a part in increasing confidence. The responses to the questionnaires indicated that people felt there to be a lot of confusion and unreliable information in relation to crime, which damaged their confidence. 'Reliable/clear facts/info' and a 'More balanced/positive media/publicity/debate' capture unhappiness with the way information is presented (by the media, Government and Criminal Justice System).

"...hearing about shootings and stabbings on the radio and TV increases overall perception that crime is escalating."

"There are lies, damn lies and statistics. Does the government think we are fools?"

"Unfortunately, people rely on the media – who take absolutely no responsibility for their actions."

"Even if you haven't experienced crime, the media can still make you fearful and worried about crime going up!"

"The media has a lot to answer for. People think if it's in the paper it's true, and is going to happen to them. Gets blown up out of all proportion. I'm sick of it."

Frequently mentioned throughout the responses was a desire for more positive news.

"Give us some of the good news...Report on the work still going on and give it value."

"Give people more reporting on cases which have had a positive outcome."

The treatment of victims also featured as an issue affecting confidence. 'Engage with/more support for victims/witnesses' was often accompanied by comments about the need focus on the needs of the victim rather than the offender.

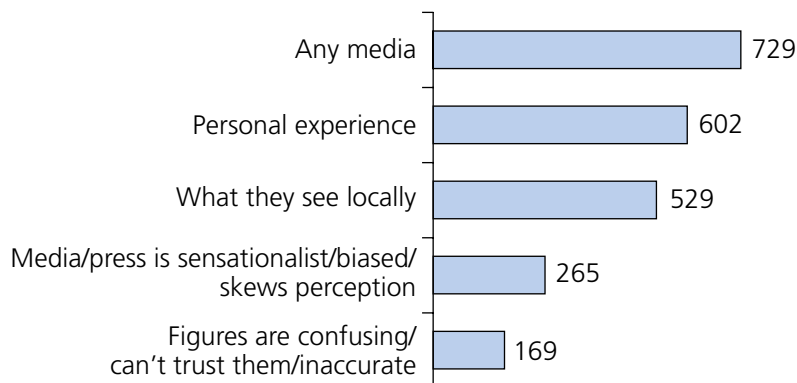
"The courts have got to listen to the victim every time, instead of constantly [being] worried if the offender is being violated."

"Stop being on the side of the criminal and start being on the side of the victim."

We asked: How do people decide whether crime is going up or down? Do they rely on what they see in the media, what they see around them in their area, or their personal experience?

It is clear that the media is a way in which people get a sense of the crime rate. However, personal experiences and what people see in their local area are key ways in which people form their views on crime. Finally, people are wary of both crime figures, and media stories on crime.

Top 5 responses:



Top 10 responses:

- 1 (602) Personal experience
- 2 (495) General/whole media
- 3 (529) What they see locally
- 4 (265) Media/press is sensationalist/biased/skews perception
- 5 (169) Figures are confusing/can't trust them/inaccurate
- 6 (141) Word of mouth/gossip
- 7 (128) Friends/neighbours/family experiences
- 8 (115) Local press
- 9 (73) National/local TV
- 10 (51) Action/punishment by police/courts

The responses to the questionnaire suggest that it is people's experiences and what they hear about second-hand that determines their view on what is happening with crime.

"What they see going on around them and in the local media."

"In any given area of the UK, on each and every estate, those who live there are aware of how bad their own patch is, and who is responsible for what."

"They see what's going on in their own street."

As in the previous question, two issues cropped up frequently in relation to sources of information – relating to mistrust both of media stories, and of crime statistics. For the former, the charge often levelled was that media sensationalised crime; for the latter, that the statistics were confusing or manipulated.

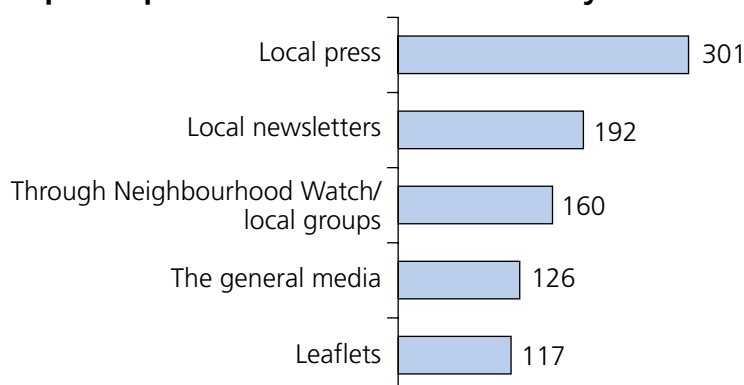
"The media make up some of it and they highlight what sells rather than what informs."

"People are infected with fear by media and TV news. 'Crime figures' mean very little."

We asked: What is the best way to provide the public with information about crime nationally and locally? What kind of information are people interested in both nationally and locally?

Responses were in favour of information being provided directly as well as via local media. People are most keen on information about action taken to tackle crime, and feedback on the results of that action. They want to know about local crime rates and issues, and what happens to those caught. And they want all this information to be presented clearly and honestly.

Top 5 responses – What is the best way?:



Top 15 responses:

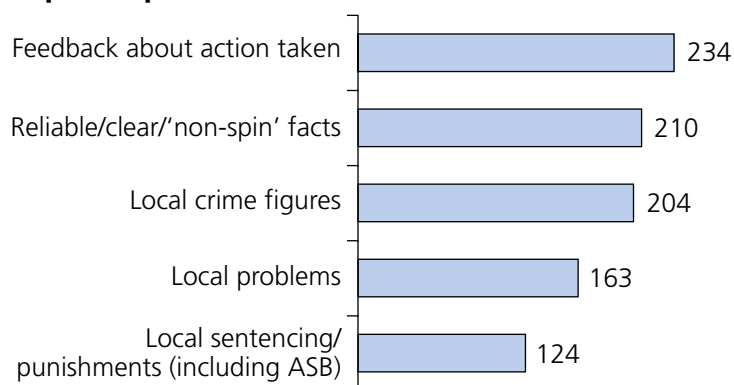
- 1 (301) In the local press
- 2 (192) Local newsletters
- 3 (160) Through Neighbourhood Watch/local groups
- 4 (126) The media generally
- 5 (117) Leaflets
- 6 (111) Local TV
- 7 (91) Public meetings
- 8 (88) From police on the beat
- 9 (87) National press
- 10 (85) National TV
- 11 (71) Chief Constable/correspondence to residents
- 12 (70) Local radio
- 13 (65) Websites
- 14 (62) Email/text/messaging network
- 15 (48) Notice boards/information centres/town hall

People favoured a variety of ways of being given information. There was a strong preference for it to come from local media – often not traditional journalism, but rather dedicated factual spots or pages.

“Have a slot on local [radio] station every week, and a page that looks the same across the country – in the local free paper. You could even have a dedicated page number, e.g. page 10 is known everywhere as the local crime figures page.”

Direct methods of providing information were also a popular response, and a lot of people specified that the format and content of newsletters were important to get right, for example by being clear and concise. A lot of people expressed a preference for face-to-face information, whether at public meetings, from police on the beat, or at street meetings/surgeries.

Top 5 responses – What kind of information are people interested in?:



Top 10 responses:

- 1 (234) Feedback about action taken/cases solved
- 2 (210) Reliable/clear/'non-spin' facts
- 3 (204) Local crime figures (including information on specific crimes)
- 4 (163) Local problems
- 5 (124) Local sentencing decisions/punishments/bail/release information
- 6 (63) Local good practice/positive news
- 7 (60) Name and shame offender
- 8 (55) National statistics/crime figures
- 9 (44) How to act on crime/anti-social behaviour/who to contact
- 10 (12) Comparisons with other areas

For those that responded to the questionnaire, it is clear that the most important information to have is what is being done to tackle crime as well as feedback on the effects of that action.

“I do believe that if the public are honestly and fully informed of what crime is being committed, but more importantly what the police are doing to prevent and detect the crime, then the police and Criminal Justice System as a whole will gain more respect and members of the public will feel more reassured.”

An issue that came through strongly around information was the desire to see information that was trustworthy, independent and easy to understand. Many respondents felt that crime figures were often ‘spun’ and that this needed to end.

“I just want to know what’s actually going on around me. Nowadays, I just switch off when I hear someone get up to talk about crime. I know that all they’ll do is twist and select until they’re telling you whatever they want to tell you.”

“Our [local police] report to us with actual figures not percentages. He tells us how many moreless crimes in each category. I think this is the sort of information people are interested in.”

“People need to be informed by an independent body of all crime figures, both nationally and locally, with the inclusion of numbers solved, convictions achieved and the numbers remaining unsolved.”

Although there was some appetite for national crime figures, the responses were heavily dominated by a desire for local information, as opposed to national.

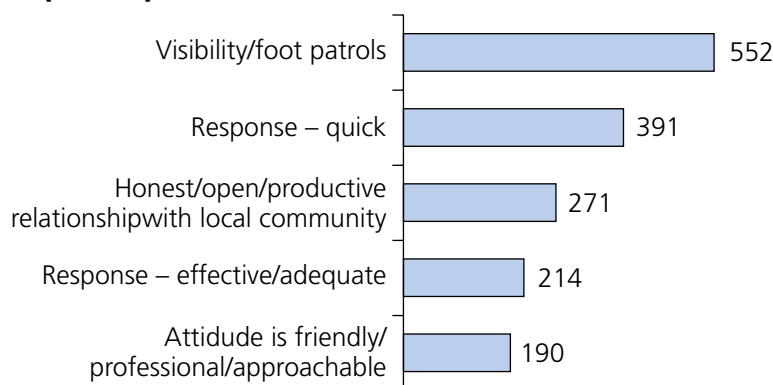
The responses also showed that people were interested in more than just what the police are doing to tackle crime. They were also interested in sentencing decisions and punishment – as part of the ‘whole story’ on crime.

“The public like to read: crimes committed, crimes solved, who committed them, what was the sentence.”

We asked: What are the kinds of things people should expect from a first-rate local police service?

The questionnaire responses showed that people view a first-rate police service as one that is visible, responsive, and connected up with local people. They want to know that the police service cares about their community. Local and visible foot patrols, a quick response when needed, a serious response to all reported crime, a good relationship with the community and a courteous approachable attitude, are all considered the key features of good service.

Top 5 responses:



Top 20 responses:

- 1 (552) Visibility/foot patrols/attendance at local events
- 2 (391) Response – quick
- 3 (271) Honest/open/productive relationship with local community
- 4 (214) Response – effective/adequate
- 5 (190) Attitude is friendly/sympathetic/professional
- 6 (189) Ease of contact/accessibility/better call centres
- 7 (153) Feedback on action/following up
- 8 (147) Good communication
- 9 (105) Prevention/intervention/pro-active policing
- 10 (99) Local knowledge/police live in local area
- 11 (97) Sense of security/safety/protection
- 12 (95) Response – to minor crimes/anti-social behaviour/all reported
- 13 (75) 24-hour police stations/policing
- 14 (72) Named officers
- 15 (70) Continuity of local team

- 16 (68) More PCSO power/more 'real' police
- 17 (67) Targeted policing (geography/time/crime type)
- 18 (65) Partnership working
- 19 (64) Reduction in crime/anti-social behaviour
- 20 (44) Response – to local priorities

The responses show that for the public the crucial elements in policing are visible foot patrols and a quick response.

“Local people expect a fast, reliable response...not days later or a phone call with a crime number...And what’s worse is you never get an apology for leaving you worrying for days. It’s an utter disgrace.”

Again it was mentioned that the police should take reports of crime seriously no matter how minor.

People said they wanted ‘honest, realistic advice’, ‘listening better’ and building mutual trust and respect. A number of people described Neighbourhood Policing and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) as a positive step towards achieving this.

“To feel listened to. Protected. Respected.”

“We already have our dedicated police officer. It works very well, as we have our own policeman who we can get to know and trust, as well as the other way round.”

People mentioned continuity – wanting the police in their areas not to be frequently replaced – and often stressed the frustration of having to build and re-build relationships with local police. They also thought of this as advantageous to the police if officers have the time to gain local knowledge which helps to tackle and prevent crime.

People often mentioned wanting to be able to contact the police whenever they were needed. A number of people registered frustration with call centres, answer phones, non-local handling centres and poor staff training.

“Easily accessible. A visible police force. Even the smallest of anti-social behaviour incidents being tackled. Courteous, friendly.”

The many mentions of wanting ‘feedback on action’ and ‘good communication’ indicates the importance placed by the respondents on having good communication and information as an aspect of first-rate policing.

Neighbourhood Policing was often referred to in responses to this question, generally very positively.

“Neighbourhood Policing Teams are the best thing since sliced bread.”

“For years people have been asking for ‘bobbies on the beat’, and PCSOs fit the bill. It’s good to talk face-to-face and it’s often information gathering.”

“We really feel our community beat manager and PCSOs are committed to our area and residents and actually care about the people they serve.”

Where there was criticism, it was usually because they didn’t have – or hadn’t seen – any local team.

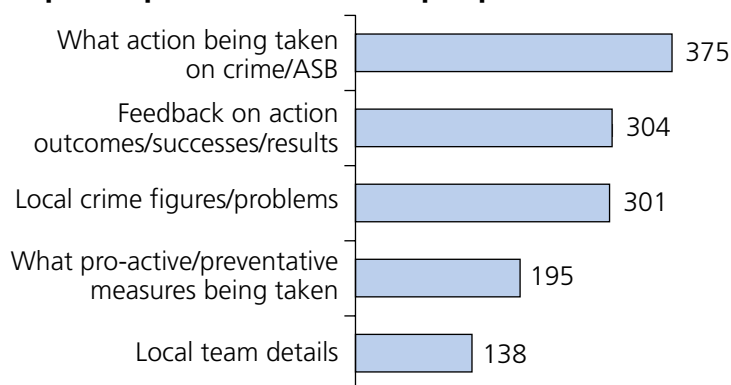
“Neighbourhood Policing?! I live in XXXX, and have never seen a local police officer.”

Some felt that PCSOs did not have sufficient powers, whilst others expressed a preference for police officers instead of PCSOs. Several people suggested that rules, regulations, and paperwork prevented the police from being effective.

We asked: What do you think people want to hear about from their local Neighbourhood Policing Team and how do they want to hear about them?

People want their Neighbourhood Policing Team to tell them what they are doing to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour and the outcomes of action taken – as well as who they are and how they can be contacted. They would welcome face-to-face contact both informally and at meetings. They also want to hear from their team through direct communication as well as in the local media.

Top 5 responses – What do people want to hear?:



Top 10 responses:

- 1 (375) What action they are taking on crime/anti-social behaviour
- 2 (304) Feedback on action outcomes/successes
- 3 (301) Local crime figures/problems/information
- 4 (195) What pro-active/preventative measures are being/could be taken
- 5 (138) Local team details
- 6 (90) How to report/be involved/why important
- 7 (75) Convictions/punishments
- 8 (56) Police priorities/allocation of resources
- 9 (46) The truth/facts
- 10 (30) Support information for victims and witnesses

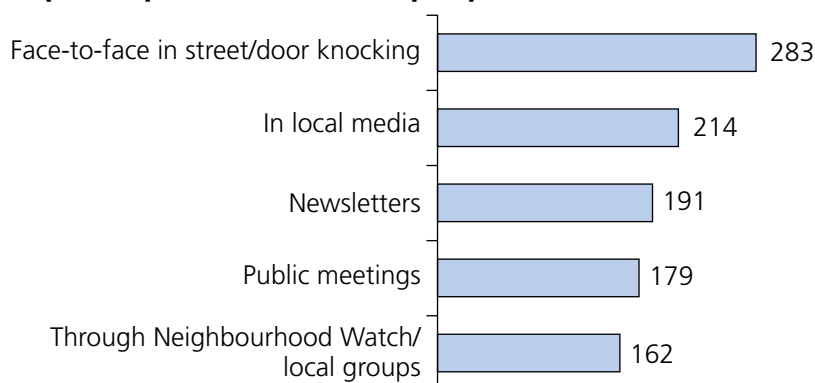
As well as the overwhelming desire for information on action and feedback, responses also showed that respondents want to know about local crime problems and figures to get an idea of the 'real picture' on local crime – information that isn't just facts and figures.

“I want to know and hear about real issues/experiences, not national strategy, targets, and politics all mixed up together.”

“Crime figures locally, what is being done about them and the outcomes of arrests and cases.”

In addition to tackling crime that was already happening, many people also wanted to know what was being done to tackle the causes of crime, captured in ‘What pro-active/preventative measures are being/could be taken’. At the other end of the process, people were interested in hearing from their Neighbourhood Policing Teams about convictions and punishments.

Top 5 responses – How do people want to hear it?:



Top 10 responses:

- 1** (283) Face-to-face in street/door knocking
- 2** (214) Via local media
- 3** (191) Newsletters
- 4** (179) Public meetings
- 5** (161) Through Neighbourhood Watch/local associations/groups
- 6** (107) Leaflets
- 7** (77) Email/ringmaster/messaging network
- 8** (72) Presence at community events/groups
- 9** (49) Surgeries/walk-ins/ad hoc street meetings
- 10** (45) Website

In regard to Neighbourhood Policing Teams there was a real appetite for face-to-face contact of one kind or another.

Once again local media was a popular vehicle for information, and again a factual or dedicated page was more commonly preferred to news articles.

“I wish I could just open my [local] paper and get some straight facts...black and white, no spin, no story, just facts.”

Leaflets and newsletters were most commonly mentioned – but often with the warning that they should use simple and understandable language.

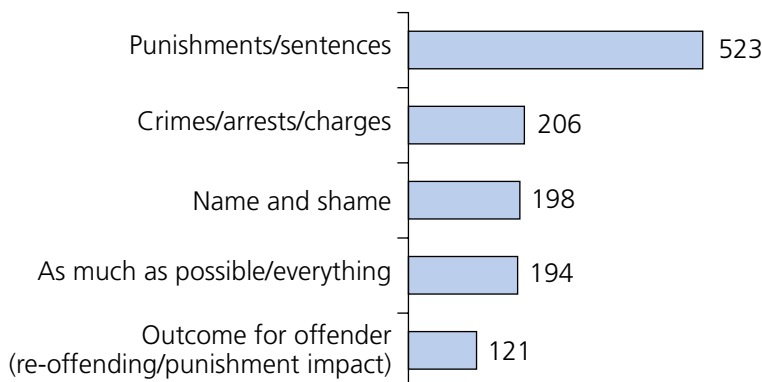
We asked: Do you think the public get told enough about what happens to those who have committed a crime? What do you think the public should be told about?

Most respondents (90%) said they are not told enough about what happens to those who commit crime, and are most interested in knowing about the sentences and punishments that those convicted of offending receive.

“No they don’t!! Why do criminals suddenly become invisible when they are caught? We have a right to know about what happens to them, but the powers that be all conspire to keep us in the dark!”

The minority that felt the public were told enough, tended to be concerned about vigilantism.

Top 5 responses – What should the public be told about?:



Top 10 responses:

- 1 (523) Punishments/sentences
- 2 (206) Crimes/arrests/charges
- 3 (198) Name and shame
- 4 (194) As much as possible/everything
- 5 (121) Outcome for offender (re-offending/punishment impact)
- 6 (90) Outcome for victim/witness/reparation
- 7 (63) Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) decisions/justification
- 8 (51) Community sentence information
- 9 (37) Youth offending information
- 10 (35) Bail decisions/early release information

By far the most popular response was for people to know more about sentences and punishments – to know that ‘justice has been done’. Many responses to this question displayed a frustration with this aspect of the Criminal Justice System. Others wanted to know about outcomes prior to court decisions, such as arrests and charge information, or Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) decisions and justifications. Some simply wanted to know what various sentences meant.

“Not enough information about what some orders mean. So for instance, what does a supervision order actually mean...or a suspended sentence...or reparation order?”

There was also strong support for what people regularly referred to as ‘naming and shaming’.

Several respondents pointed to what they felt to be the obstructive qualities of health and safety, data protection and human rights legislation in this area.

“People think present laws, data protection, human rights, favour the guilty and punish the law abider.”

“I’m all for human rights but what about the people who have been victims?”

“I think it’s about time the tables were turned on the offenders. I’d like to see how smug they would all be if they didn’t have the human rights act to protect them.”

Finally, many wanted to know about what the impact is of what happens to offenders, i.e. whether the punishment has stopped them re-offending, as well as what help and payback there has been for the victim. People were also interested in more information about reparation and community-based punishments.

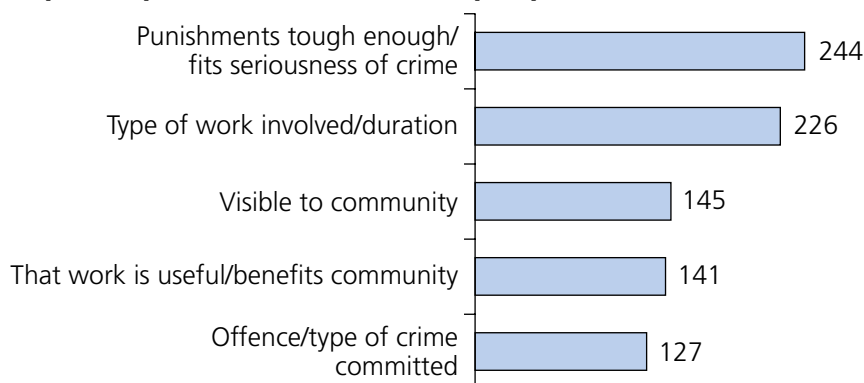
“I think the public want to see people who have committed crime being made to put something back into the community or even making right the wrong they’ve committed.”

We asked: Do you think the public need to know more about community sentences carried out in their area? What would people like to know about these punishments?

People felt strongly that the public needed to know more about community sentences. People primarily wanted to know that they fit the seriousness of the crime and are appropriately tough. They wanted to know what work was involved, that it benefited the community and that it had a tangible effect. For justice to be seen to be done, they often felt that community sentences should be more visible. Many wanted to know the details of the sentences, and some wanted opportunities for local people to have a say in the sentence – for example where work should be carried out or what work would benefit the local area. They wanted to know the sentences were properly and rigorously enforced.

Over 90% of those responding thought that the public needed to know more about community sentences. Those that did not think the public needed to know more tended to take this view because they disagreed with community sentences and were opposed to their use.

Top 5 responses – What would people like to know about these punishments?:



Top 15 responses:

- 1 (244) That punishment is harsh enough/justice is done
- 2 (226) Type of work involved/duration
- 3 (145) Visible to community
- 4 (141) Work is useful/benefits community/environment
- 5 (127) Offence/type of crime committed
- 6 (120) Resulting effect – on re-offending rates/positive effects
- 7 (119) Name and shame
- 8 (105) Time/place of work
- 9 (88) Completion rates/carried out properly/supervised well

- 10 (87) What community punishments are
- 11 (57) Public have a say in what is done
- 12 (54) As much as possible/everything
- 13 (42) Work is not visible/specific details not publicised
- 14 (41) That work is carried out in local area
- 15 (38) Work is related to offence

There were lots of things that people wanted to know about community sentences – suggesting that people know very little about them currently. The sense that community sentences must be seen as a just response to crime was very strong. ‘That punishment is harsh enough/justice is done’ captured a strong sense of wariness towards community sentences, and the view that they can be seen as a ‘soft touch’. The main concern for the respondents was that community sentences are ‘tough enough’ and that they are proportionate to the crime committed.

“...all the criminals regard community service as a joke. As far as they (and the rest of us) are concerned they have got away with it once they hear those words come out of a judge’s mouth.”

“It should be made very clear...to find out whether it is a deterrent, or just farcical as seems to be the case.”

“People need to know that these punishments are not a soft option.”

“Local people who know about a crime eagerly await to see if conviction is suited to the crime. They are often disappointed as community sentences are an easy option.”

“Yes. That they are appropriate to the crime committed and that they are of benefit to the community and not a soft option.”

There was a desire for community sentences to be more visible in a range of ways. For some, this meant simply informing people that community sentences were occurring, or giving such sentences a higher profile generally. For others, visibility meant having signs where the work is carried out or having the offenders in clearly recognisable clothing. Making sentences more visible was cited as a way to achieve ‘justice being seen to be done’.

“These people getting community sentences are not shown as criminals – they work with legitimate workers – how would I know they are not working for the council? How does that make the council workers feel? They need to be shown to the public as having done something wrong, as a deterrent.”

“Notices should be put up saying who did it and why...only for about a week, just giving people a chance to see, the community is getting something back.”

“By advertising community service being carried out in your area, you will encourage and improve public confidence that the sentences given by local courts are being carried out and local criminals are putting something back for their misdeeds.”

“The perpetrators should wear clothing that identifies them. Gardening and decorating are not punishments, they are pastimes. They should be shamed.”

That the work is useful or benefits the community and the environment was also a popular theme. There was a strong sense that such punishments should attempt to pay back the community that they had offended, and that the community could have some say in what work was done. That ‘work should be related to offence’ was a similar theme quite specifically concerned with direct reparation.

“I think if they graffiti they should clean walls. If they drop litter they should pick up litter. Fly tip? Muck out the canal. I cannot understand why this doesn’t happen, and neither does anybody I speak to.”

“I think we are interested in the benefits of a community sentence to the community, the person sentenced and the environment if applicable.”

“The punishments should be related to making the areas we live in nicer, not just ‘shop’ jobs. Manual outside labour, where parks and graffiti is cleaned up, and fences mended as well as maintenance of council houses.”

“Communities should also be able to direct authorities as to what work would best be served by the guilty party.”

The desire to know that punishment is proportionate was often a motivation behind people wanting to know about what offence had been committed.

“I have read about cases where it is obvious the crime warrants a heavier punishment. People should be told what crimes people have done to get community service.”

Many were keen to know about the impact of community sentences and whether they had a positive effect – i.e. whether they worked. This mainly focussed on whether doing a community sentence had affected the offender, deterred them from offending, or had an effect on re-offending rates.

People also wanted to know that community sentences were properly supervised and completed, and that there were proper consequences for not completing or not turning up to carry out the work.

“People need to know that if you’re sentenced, you jolly well have to turn up, not phone in sick! Can you imagine people phoning in sick for prison?! That’s not justice!”

“What on earth happens if they don’t turn up or complete it? Nothing, I suspect.”

“Community sentences with proper supervision can be successful. Without adequate supervision it can be a nightmare, and give public more ammunition for the feeling that these people are not being punished or rehabilitated.”

“It would be nice if the people enforcing the sentences actually seemed to care whether they are actually completed properly. I knew of a scheme where 75% of the people who were supposedly being ‘punished’ didn’t turn up, and the guy in charge just shrugged it off as if it didn’t matter!”

But there was a sense of frustration from some this aspect of community penalties in particular was restricted by red tape/bureaucracy.

“We asked about a group of people on community service to help tidy up our community as part of their punishment. We were told they would have to be insured against accidents, and would we pay for it!! WHAT’S THE POINT?”

The evidence presented here has fed in to the review by Louise Casey into Engaging Communities in Fighting Crime.

Appendix 1:

Differences in responses from practitioners

Those that indicated that their responses to the questionnaire related to their paid employment ('practitioners') were analysed separately. In general, they were found to have similar views to those expressed by the public.

A notable difference was a greater focus on Neighbourhood Policing Teams as a way of working with local people. There was also a stronger emphasis on 'multi-agency working' and a desire for local accountability to public satisfaction.

To encourage victims and witnesses to come forward there was more of an emphasis on support for victims, and punishment/legislating for witness intimidation. Practitioners also mentioned the importance of feedback more, mentioning it almost as many times as 'Protection from intimidation/reprisal', which was the general public's number one response.

One of the most striking differences between the practitioners and the general public was the response to the issue of raising public confidence. Where the general public mentioned punishment and visibility the most, practitioners mentioned 'More balanced/positive media/publicity/debate' as their most popular response, and 'Engage/communicate/build partnerships with communities' as the next most popular. Practitioners also frequently talked about better partnership working.

In terms of providing crime information, noticeable differences were that Neighbourhood Watch and local groups were far less popular methods for routing information through to communities for the practitioners (only 2 out of 162 people mentioned it), and that practitioners mentioned websites more often.

Regarding whether the public are told enough about what happens to offenders practitioners were less likely to mention naming and shaming or 'Crimes/arrests/charges', and more likely to mention 'Outcome for victim/witness/reparation', and 'Community sentence information'.

Over 90% of practitioners also felt that the public should know more about community sentences but were much less likely to mention 'name and shame', and far more likely to mention 'Resulting effect – on re-offending rates/positive effects'.

Appendix 2:

Methods

The questionnaire was available to the public in hard copy and online on the Cabinet Office website and other government and non-government websites. The call for evidence was also publicised to groups such as victims, witnesses, community activists, older people (via Age Concern), Criminal Justice staff, local government, the third sector, community safety staff, young people, Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, business etc. through a variety of routes including direct mailing, websites and features in newsletters.

The survey does not guarantee that responses reflect the views of a representative sample of the population. Respondents are those that decided to respond to the questionnaire and are likely to represent more of the public involved in their community or affected by crime.

The total number of responses received was 1,502. 162 of these indicated that their responses related to their paid employment, and were analysed separately.

This summary report presents the most common responses to each question, as well as discussion and illustrative quotations.

The survey produced a vast amount of qualitative information. Each questionnaire was read in full as part of the analysis and first 100 questionnaires were used to develop a coding-frame. In addition to coding, analysts made comments on emerging themes and marked illustrative quotes. Coding specialists assisted with coding the questionnaires. Checks were made between coders to ensure intra-coder reliability.

Other evidence gathering

The Have Your Say questionnaire was one of many sources of evidence feeding into the Casey Review. Three Have Your Say events took place on the 4th, 7th and 13th March in Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield. Those invited were people active in their community in addressing crime and anti-social behaviour. In total 606 members of the public attended the events. The events included open discussion of issues relevant to the review, as well as an interactive element whereby the audience were able to provide their views electronically to questions raised by the review team. The Have Your Say questionnaire was distributed at these events.

Alongside the Have Your Say questionnaire and events, evidence gathering for the Casey Review into Engaging Communities in Fighting Crime included meetings with victims and witnesses, ministers, Government officials, Chief Constables, charities, lobby groups, professional bodies, think tanks, academics, Members of Parliament, criminal justice staff and judges amongst others. The review also conducted visits across the country including with frontline police officers, criminal justice staff, residents groups, victims of crime, young people's groups, local authorities, local councillors, probation service, Neighbourhood Watch groups and others. There was also desk research, general public surveys and public discussion groups.

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