



PRESS INFORMATION

Ref: 430-Blue light
Date: 23 October 2009

Local people show their confidence in the Police

A recent survey has shown that public confidence in Bedfordshire Police and the work they do is on the increase. Over 88% of local respondents expressed their confidence in the Bedfordshire Force, a rise of 11% since January 2009.

As well as an increase in overall confidence in the police, the survey shows that people locally are feeling safer when it comes to different types of crime;

- The vast majority of people, 97%, stated that they felt safe in their local area when outside during the day, with more than half feeling 'very safe' an increase of 3% since the last survey.
- Almost two thirds, 65%, did NOT perceive personal crime - classed as theft or robbery - to be an issue in their local area and there was a 9% decrease in the number of respondents who have felt worried to some extent about being a victim of crime in their local area since January 2009.

The Bedfordshire and Luton Blue Light Survey* was conducted with residents across Luton, Bedford and Central Bedfordshire. The report provides an insight into how the residents of Bedfordshire and Luton currently feel about the level of service provided by the Police Service in their local area, including levels of satisfaction with the Police and residents' concerns about crime in local areas.

Peter Conniff, Chairman of Bedfordshire Police Authority said, "The Blue Light Survey is an invaluable tool for us. Our priority is to ensure our community feels safe and is confident in the work of the Police. This survey not only helps us understand public opinion on how the Police Force is performing, but also gives us an indication of concerns that need addressing in the future.

"It also highlights different concerns in different communities across the region, which can assist in setting strategies which work at a very local level."

As well as looking at people's perceptions of crime levels, the survey also provides a benchmark as to the areas of crime that the public want the Police to focus efforts on. Bedfordshire Police Authority and the Police Force have identified domestic burglary, vehicle crime, robbery and rape as among the top priorities and the survey confirmed that the vast majority, 96%, agreed with this approach.

Mr Conniff added: "Overall we believe these results are very positive, as they show we are addressing the areas that are of key importance to the public, and that on the whole, people are confident in our approach to Policing and the impact it is having on crime locally. We are particularly pleased that more than one third of people felt that their increase in confidence had been because of positive initiatives put in place, such as the increase in Police and PCSO visibility and the Safer Neighbourhood Scheme.

"It is also reassuring to know that, in these difficult economic times, the people of Bedfordshire recognise the link between funding and excellent standards of policing. As we begin to make budgetary considerations, the Authority will be mindful of the effect this will have on front line officers, and will do everything we can to maintain the confidence of residents.

"However, we recognise there is still more that can be done to improve people's confidence in the Police, both in reducing crime levels across the board and reducing people's fear of crime, as well as then tackling, with our local authority partners, more specific issues such as anti-social behaviour."

Gillian Parker, Chief Constable of Bedfordshire Police added, "I am delighted with the results of this survey which reflect the many improvements we have made over the last two years. We are determined to continue to improve the service we give to our local communities to attain even greater confidence in the police."

Ends

Media Enquiries: Sallie Blair, Bedfordshire Police Authority 01283 821012

Notes to editors:

*Bedfordshire and Luton Blue Light Survey undertaken by SMSR in September 2009 on behalf of the Bedfordshire Police Authority and Bedfordshire Police and Bedfordshire and Luton Fire and Rescue Service with a sample of 998 residents.