

## **Public Survey 2006 Summary of Consultation Results**

### **Introduction**

This public satisfaction survey is undertaken by all Fire and Rescue Services every three years to measure the public's opinion regarding the Fire and Rescue Service, the services it provides and its performance.

In 2006, an independent company, Opinion Research Services (ORS) was commissioned by 20 Fire and Rescue Services in England to undertake this survey.

The questionnaire was distributed to a random selection of addresses in the Tyne and Wear area in September 2006. In total 3432 households received the questionnaire with 1224 completed returns, representing a response rate of 36%.

Findings of the survey are presented under headings representing the four key areas of focus within the survey; your Fire Authority, Communication, Fire Safety Messages and Fire Safety in the Home.

### **Your Fire Authority**

The majority of respondents (73%) are 'satisfied with the way the Authority runs things'. Only 1% stated they were dissatisfied.

Similarly, 73% are satisfied with the service provided by the Authority and again only 1% are dissatisfied. These scores show an increase on the 2003 survey results of 63%

### **Communication**

With regard to Communication, a significant number of respondents do not feel well informed about how the Fire and Rescue Service is delivering on its promises (49%), its performance (46%) and what it spends its money on (62%).

The majority of respondents would like more access to information about Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service. Of the thirteen options available, local newspapers was the most preferred method selected by 63% of people.

With regard to contact, 12% of respondents have had contact with the Service in the last twelve months. Of those, 96% report they were satisfied with the response they received.

## **Fire Safety Messages**

The majority of people are aware of fire safety messages and 72% of people can recall having seen or heard one in the last twelve months. Television appears to be the most effective medium with 70% recalling the message viewed.

Of those who could recall a fire safety message, 99% understood the message and 98% understood what they had to do to improve their fire safety.

## **Fire Safety in the Home**

With regard to fire risk awareness, 86% consider chip pans and 73% consider cigarettes to be among the most common causes of house fires. In addition to this, candles, faulty electric wiring and children playing with matches were also listed, registering responses of 27%, 26% and 23% respectively.

The vast majority (90%) report feeling safe from the risk of fire in their home, whilst 2% feel unsafe from the risk of fire. 17% report having had a Home Fire Risk Assessment in their current home. Only 1% of respondents had experienced a fire in their home during the last twelve months.

Smoke alarm ownership has increased by 5% since the 2000 survey with 89% of respondents reporting they have at least one smoke alarm in their home - 53% test their smoke alarms at least once a month whilst 6% report that they test them less than once a year or have never tested them.

## **Comparison with other Fire and Rescue Services**

As the survey was undertaken by an independent organisation on behalf of 20 Fire and Rescue Services in England, comparison between Services is possible. As a result Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service was ranked in the top five for 16 of the 22 areas covered by the survey and it was ranked top in six of these:

- Informed about standard of service
- Feel FRS working to make area safer
- Feel FRS efficient and well run
- Feel FRS trustworthy
- Feel FRS listens to concerns of residents
- Seen or heard fire safety message

## **Outcome**

As a result of this consultation, strategies are developed to improve areas of weakness and maintain levels of good performance. For example in response to the finding that people do not feel informed regarding the Service's performance and how it spends its money, further consultation has been undertaken which has resulted in the publishing of an Annual Report.

The statutory duty to undertake a public survey every three years has been replaced by the 'Place Survey' which will be undertaken in partnership with local authorities however it is intended that Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service will independently conduct a further public satisfaction survey in 2009.