

**Thurrock Council
Citizen's Panel: Parks and Fear of
Crime Survey**

June 2007

Prepared For: Thurrock Council

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Executive Summary

This report presents the key findings from a survey with residents of Thurrock who belong to the Citizen's Panel. The survey was carried out by **mruk** research limited, an independent market research company. The survey aimed to assess resident's views on parks in their local area and explore their views on crime and anti-social behaviour in the area.

Usage of Parks

- The most popular local parks were Grays Town Park, Blackshotts, Corringham Town Park and Dilkes Park.
- Two fifths of respondents said they never used their local park.
- The majority of respondents use the park both in the week and at weekends (69%).
- The most common time to use the park was the afternoon.

Reasons for using Local Park

- The main reason respondents used the park was to take children to play or to use the play areas or to take the dog for a walk.
- One in ten respondents used the park to relax, to play sports or games, to take another form of exercise, to take fresh air or to take a short cut.
- Relatively few respondents used the park to meet friends and neighbours, to run, to cycle, to observe wildlife or to enjoy floral displays and nature.
- The main things that would encourage respondents to use the park more often were a cleaner park, more or better play areas, better facilities for young people and improved security in the park. However nearly half the respondents (45%) said nothing would encourage them to use the park more often.

Best Features of Local Park

- The three things residents like most about their local park are that the park is peaceful and relaxing, the trees and flowers and having a park near to their home.

Worst Features of Local Park

- The three things respondents dislike most about their local park are the gangs of children or youths in the park, the park being unclean and graffiti.

Fear of Crime

- The majority of respondents said they were worried about crime in Thurrock.
- Half the respondents said their fear of crime was based on personal experience.

Victims of Crime

- A fifth of respondents said they had had something damaged by vandals in the past 12 months.
- One in ten respondents said in the last twelve months someone had threatened, pestered or insulted them in a way that had caused them to feel harassed, alarmed or distressed,
- Relatively few residents had been a victim of other crimes.
- On the whole respondents who reported their crime to the police said it was easy to report.
- The main reason for not reporting the crime to Police was that the respondent did not consider it a serious crime.

Problems in Thurrock

- The main problems in Thurrock were considered to be youths causing a nuisance, motor cycle nuisance and graffiti.
- Respondents in South Thurrock considered the following to be more of an issue than respondents living in other areas of Thurrock: graffiti, burglary, violence and motor cycle nuisance.

Anti-social behaviour

- Three in five respondents considered anti-social behaviour to be a problem in the area.
- Respondents in South Thurrock considered anti-social behaviour to be more of a problem than respondents living in other areas.
- The majority of respondents said if they had a problem with anti-social behaviour they choose the police to report it to.

Safer Thurrock Partnership

- The majority of respondents had not heard about the Safer Thurrock Partnership.
- Younger respondents were more likely to have heard of the Partnership.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

This report presents the key findings from a survey with residents of Thurrock who belong to the Citizen's Panel. The survey was carried out by **mruk** research limited, an independent market research company. The survey aimed to assess resident's views on parks in their local area and explore their views on crime and anti-social behaviour in the area.

This report details the findings from the survey.

1.2 Methodology

The survey took place in May and June 2007 and was conducted using telephone interviews.

The questionnaire was designed in conjunction with the Thurrock Council. Following client agreement, the questionnaire was programmed on to **mruk** research's CATI (computer-assisted telephone interviewing) system. The fieldwork was conducted via the CATI unit at **mruk** research. Interviews were conducted using the latest CATI technology and **mruk** research used its own fieldwork team of social interviewers all trained to Interviewer Quality Control Scheme standards (IQCS) in accordance with the Market Research Society.

1.3 Response

A total of 300 completed interviews were achieved with members of the Citizen's Panel of Thurrock Council. In terms of accuracy, the survey results, if grossed up to represent the views of all residents in Thurrock, are accurate overall to within a margin of error of $\pm 5.6\%$ at the 95% confidence limit.

Table 1 shows response by area.

Table 1: Response by area

Methodology	Number	Percentage
South	87	29%
West	58	19%
Central	102	34%
North East	53	18%
TOTAL	300	100%

1.4 Notes to the Figures

Throughout this report, the figures show the results as percentages. Base numbers are shown where appropriate. Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number, and for this reason may not in all cases add exactly to 100. In some figures, totals do not add to 100% where more than one response was possible to a single question.

In the figures and tables, respondents who answered 'Don't know' are excluded and we have excluded those who were not eligible to respond to a particular question.

Throughout the report, each question as appropriate has been analysed by one or more key units of analysis, as follows:

Gender: Analysis was carried out by gender – male and female.

Age of respondent: Analysis was carried out by age of respondent – 16-25 years, 26-50 and 50 years and over.

Area: Analysis was carried out by area – South, West, Central and North East.

The key units of analysis have been noted in the text where there were significant differences when compared to overall results.

2 Local Parks

2.1 Local Park

Respondents were asked to name their local park or open space. Three quarters of respondents were able to name their local park (72%). Of those who could name their local park, the most popular parks were:

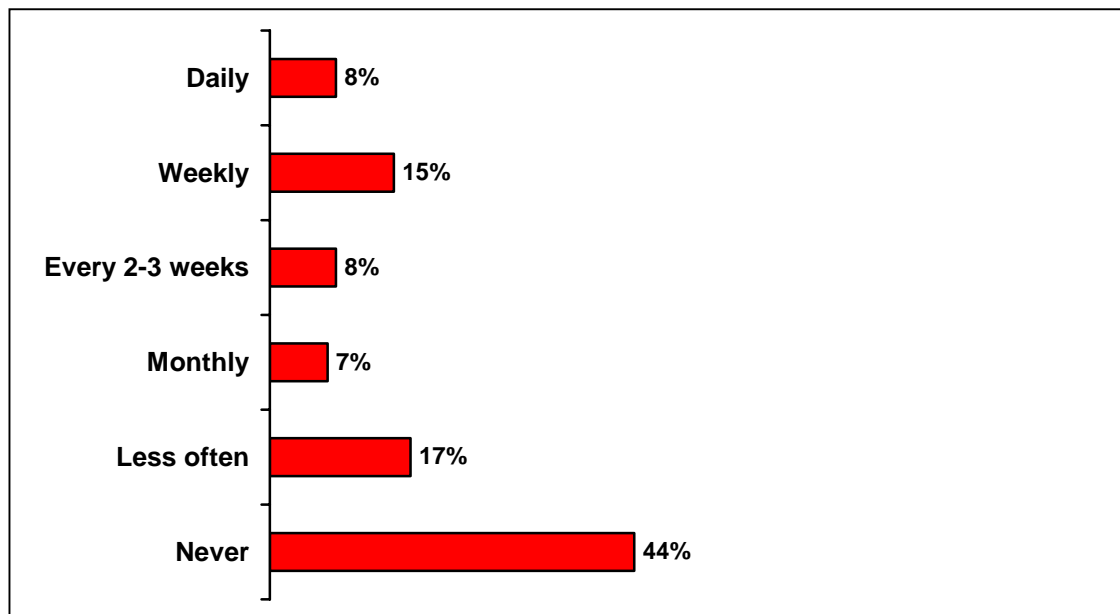
- Grays Town Park (17%)
- Blackshotts (11%)
- Corringham Town Park (8%)
- Dilkes Park (8%)
- Gobions Park (5%)
- Kenningtons Park (4%)
- Grays Beach (3%).

2.2 Usage of Local Park

Respondents were asked how often they used their local park.

- Two fifths of respondents said they never used their local park (44%).
- Fifteen percent used their local park on a weekly basis and around one in ten (8%) said they used the park on a daily basis.
- Fewer than one in ten used the park every 2-3 weeks (8%) or monthly (7%).
- A fifth (17%) said they used the park less often than once a month.
- Men were more likely than women to say they never used the park: 51% compared to 40% of women.
- Respondents aged 16-25 were more likely to use the park on a daily basis: 18% compared to 9% aged 26-50 years and 6% aged over 50 years.

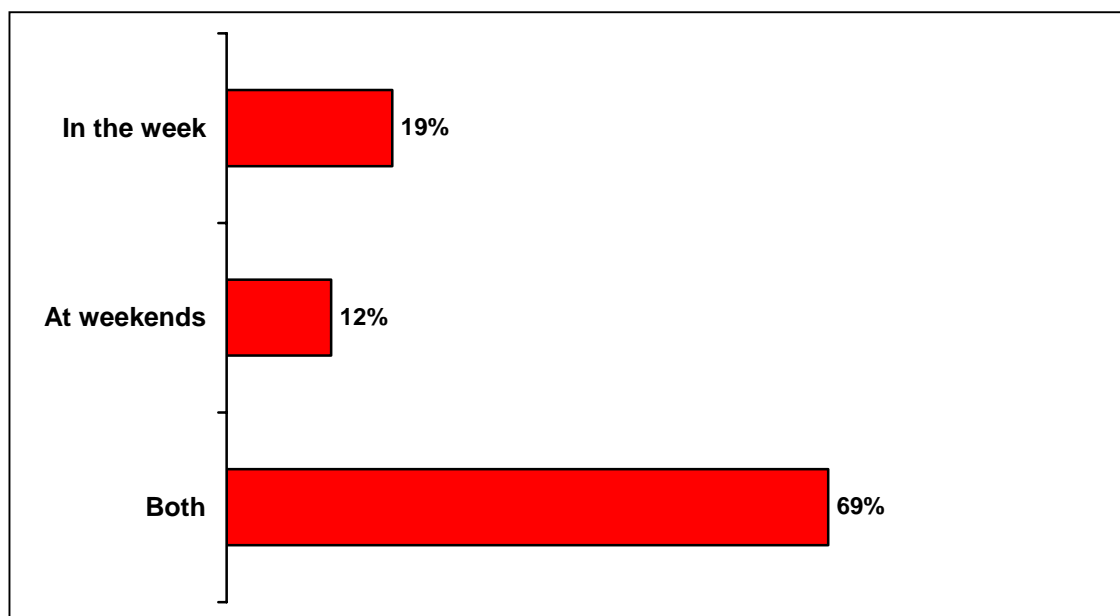
Figure 1: Frequency of use of local park



Base = 299 respondents

Respondents were asked when they used their local park.

Figure 2: When respondent uses local park



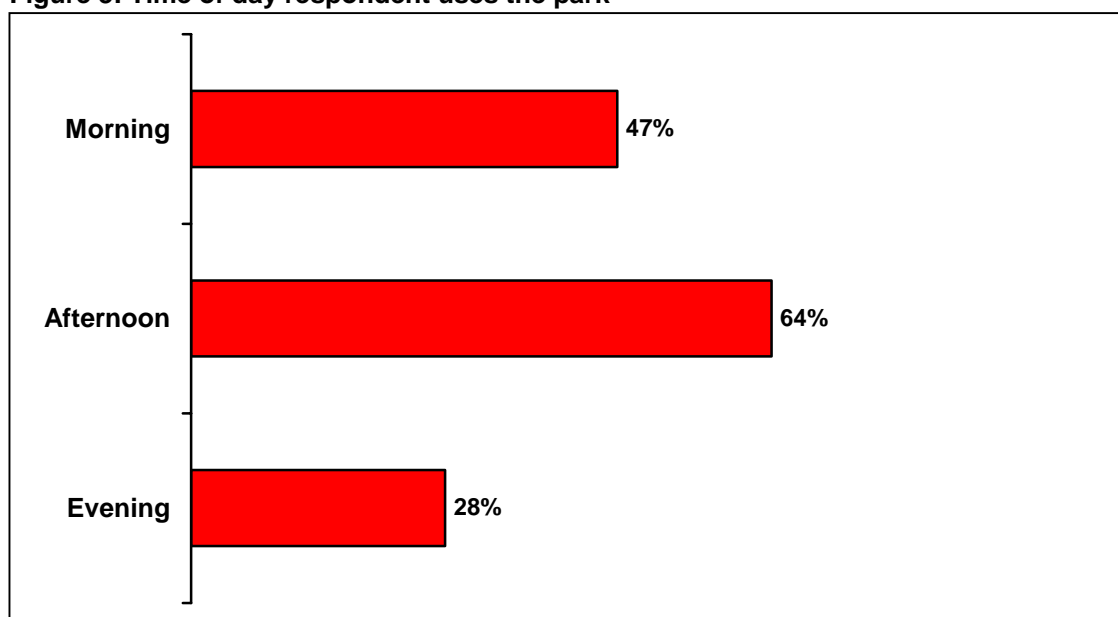
Base = 162 respondents

- The majority of respondents use the park both in the week and at weekends (69%).

- A fifth use the park in the week (19%).
- One in ten residents use their local park at weekends only (12%).
- Women were more likely than men to use the park in the week: 26% compared to 8% of men.
- A fifth of respondents aged over 50 years said they used the park in the week (22%).

Residents were then asked at what time of day they used the park.

Figure 3: Time of day respondent uses the park



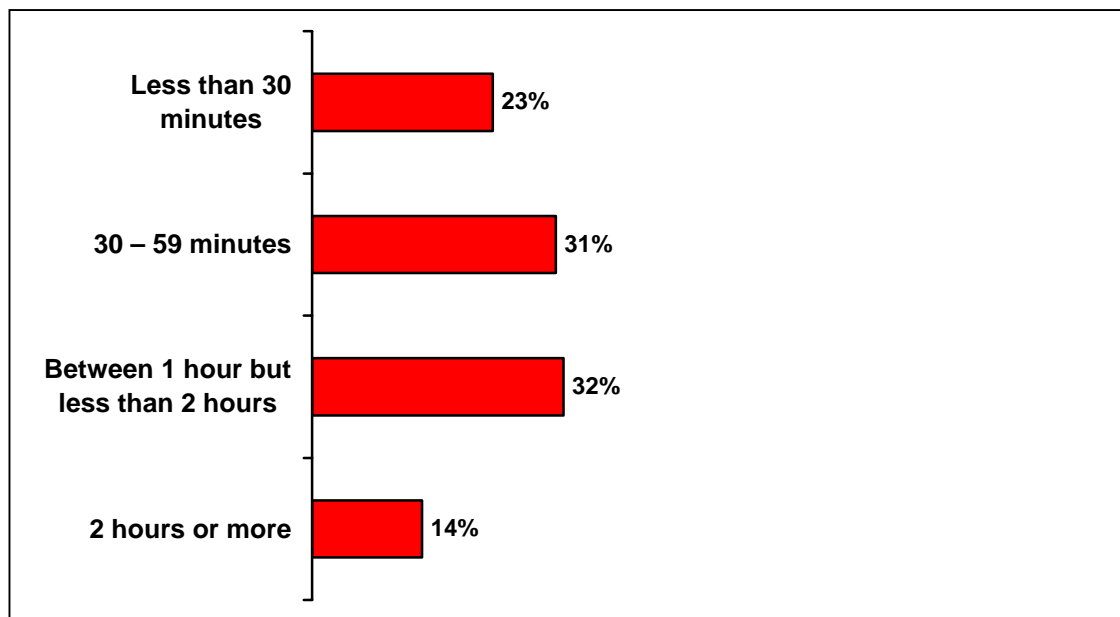
Base = 163 respondents. Results do not total 100% as respondents could choose more than one answer.

- Two thirds of residents use their local park in the afternoon (64%).
- Around half use the park in the morning (47%).
- Just over a quarter of respondents said they use the local park in the evening (28%).
- Three quarters of respondents living in North East Thurrock used the park in the morning. This compares to 52% living in South Thurrock, 34% in West Thurrock and 42% in Central Thurrock.
- Men were twice as likely as women to use the park in the evening: 41% compared to 20% of women.

- Two thirds of respondents aged 50 years and over said they used the park in the morning: 62% compared to 36% of respondents aged 16-25 years and 25% aged 26-50 years.

The next question asked how long on average the respondent spent in the park per visit.

Figure 4: Length of time spent in the park per visit



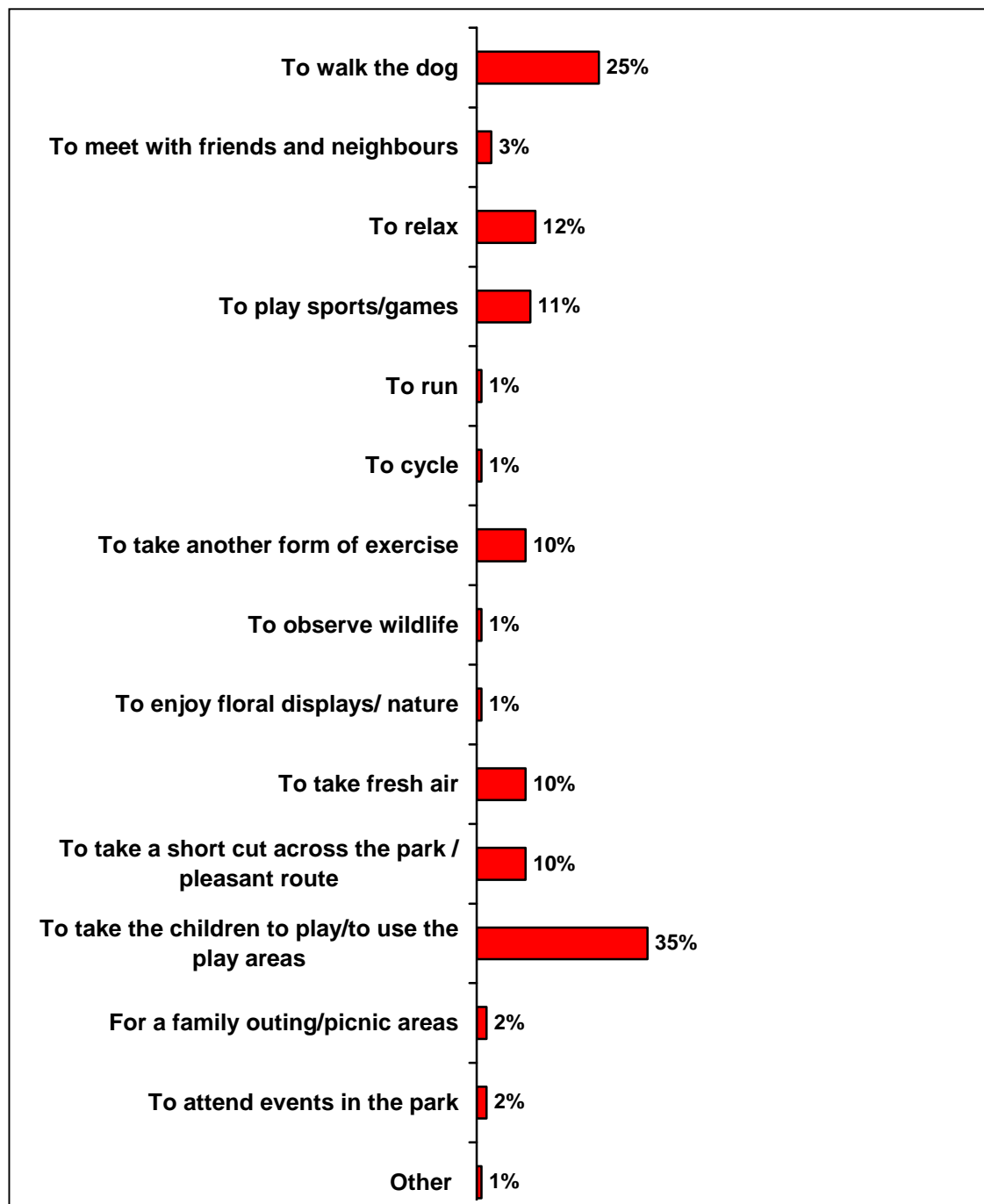
Base = 166 respondents

- A third of respondents spend either 30-59 minutes in the park (31%) or between one to two hours in the park (32%).
- A quarter spend less than 30 minutes in the park per visit (23%).
- Over one in ten said they spend two hour or more in the park (14%).

2.3 Reasons for using the Local Park

Respondents were asked why they used their local park.

Figure 5: Reasons for using local park



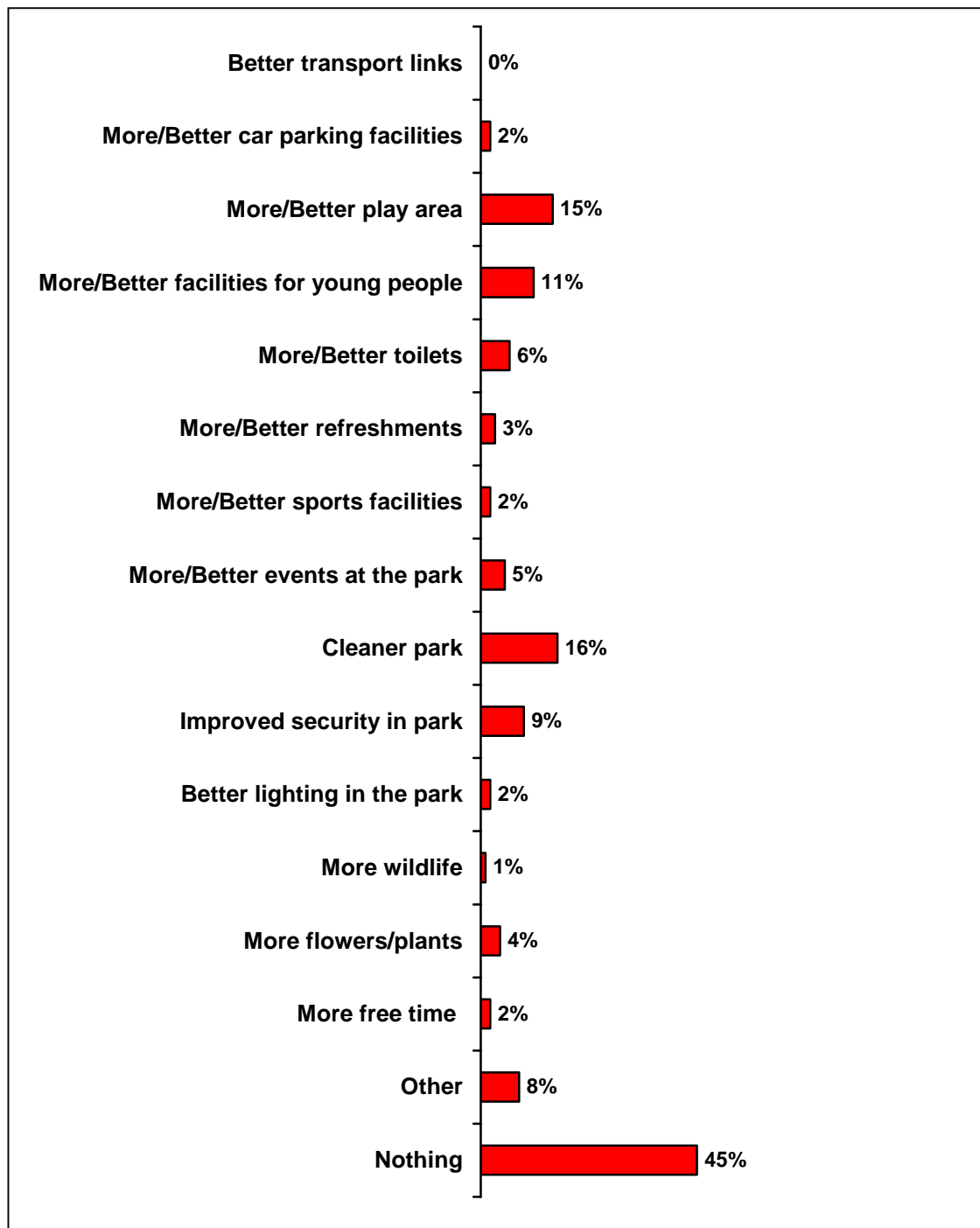
Base = 166 respondents. Results do not total 100% as respondents could choose more than one answer.

- The main reason respondents used the park was to take children to play or to use the play areas (35%). This was followed by taking the dog for a walk (25%).
- One in ten respondents used the park to relax (12%), to play sports or games (11%), to take another form of exercise (10%), to take fresh air (10%) or to take a short cut (10%).
- Relatively few respondents used the park to meet friends and neighbours (3%), to run (1%), to cycle (1%), to observe wildlife (1%) or to enjoy floral displays and nature (1%).
- Men were more likely than women to use the park to relax (21% compared to 7% of women), to play sports and games (23% and 5% respectively). Half the women said they use the park to take children to play (47% compared to 15% of men).
- Half the respondents aged 16-25 years used the park to play sports or games (55%).

Respondents who used the park weekly or less often were asked what would encourage them to use the park more often.

- Nearly half the respondents (45%) said nothing would encourage them to use the park more.
- The most common responses were a cleaner park (16%); more or better play areas (15%), better facilities for young people (11%) and improved security in the park (9%) would encourage the respondent to use the park more.
- Females were twice as likely as males to say a cleaner park would encourage them to visit more often: 21% compared to 9% of males. Men were more likely to say nothing would encourage them to use the park: 60% compared to 34% of females.
- A third of respondents aged 16-25 years said more facilities for young people would encourage them to use the park more often.

Figure 6: What would encourage respondent to use local park more often

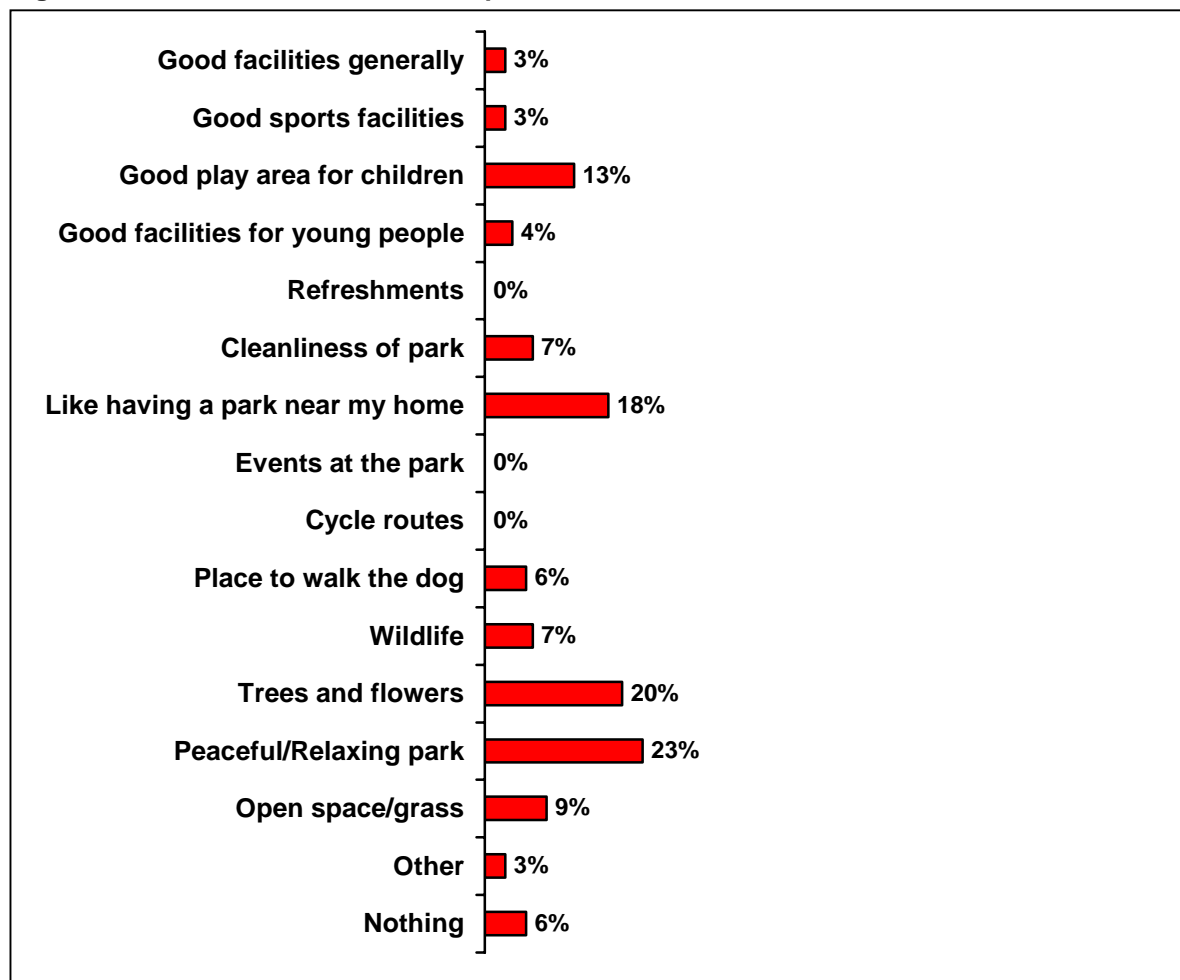


Base =276 respondents. Results do not total 100% as respondents could choose more than one answer

2.4 Best Features of Local Park

The survey then asked residents to list the three things they liked most about their local park.

Figure 7: Three best features of local park



Base = 232 respondents. Results do not total 100% as respondents could choose up to three answers.

The three things residents like most about their local park are:

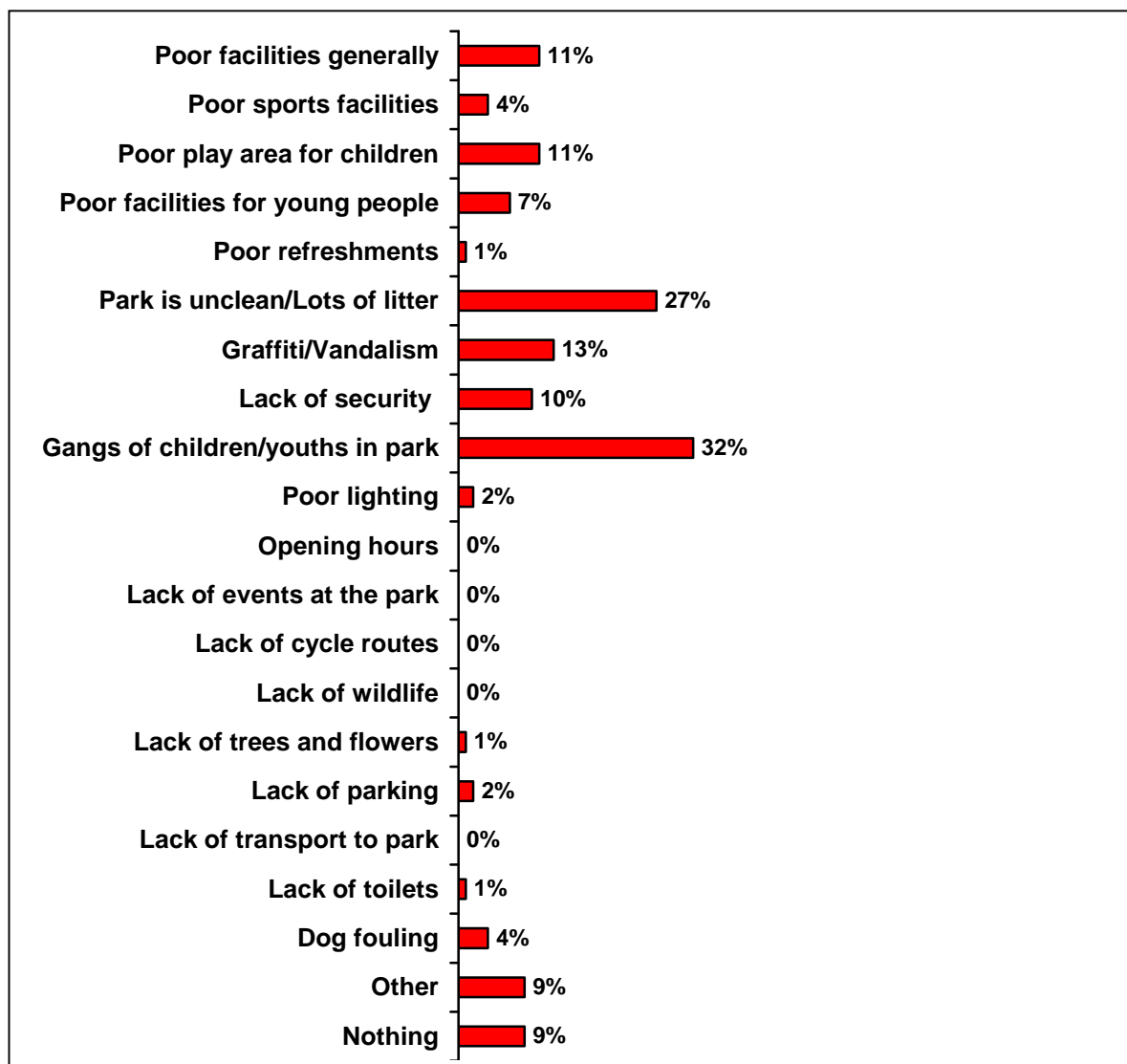
- That the park is peaceful and relaxing (23% stated this);
- Trees and flowers (20%);
- Having a park near to their home (18%).

- A third of men said the park was peaceful and relaxing. This compares to 17% of women.
- A quarter of the respondents aged 16-25 years said the park had good play facilities.

2.5 Worst Features of Local Park

Respondents were then asked to list the three items they disliked the most about their local park.

Figure 8: Three worst features of local park



Base = 235 respondents. Responses do not total 100% as respondents could choose up to three categories.

The three things respondents dislike most about their local park are:

- Gangs of children or youths in the park (32%);
- That the park is unclean and there is a lot of litter (27%)
- Graffiti (13%).
- One in ten respondents commented on the lack of security (10%) or said the general facilities in the park were poor (11%) or the sports facilities were poor (11%).
- Respondents living in West Thurrock were more likely to comment on the poor play facilities: 17% compared to 7% of respondents in South and North East Thurrock and 1% in Central Thurrock.
- The cleanliness of the park was less of an issue for respondents living in North East Thurrock: 16% commented on this compared to 26% in South Thurrock, 31% in Central Thurrock and 33% in West Thurrock.
- A third of women said the park was unclean (31%). This compares to 21% of men.
- A fifth of respondents aged 16-25 years said the play areas were poor: 20% compared to 12% of respondents aged 26-50 years and 10% aged over 50 years. A third of respondents aged 16-25 years commented on graffiti compared to 15% of respondents aged 26-50 years and 10% aged over 50 years.

2.6 Preferred Park in Thurrock

The final question in the section asked respondents which park they preferred to visit in Thurrock.

The preferred parks in Thurrock were:

- Grays Beach (15%)
- Coalhouse Fort (12%)
- Belhus Council Park (9%)
- Blackshots (7%)
- Dilkes Park (5%).

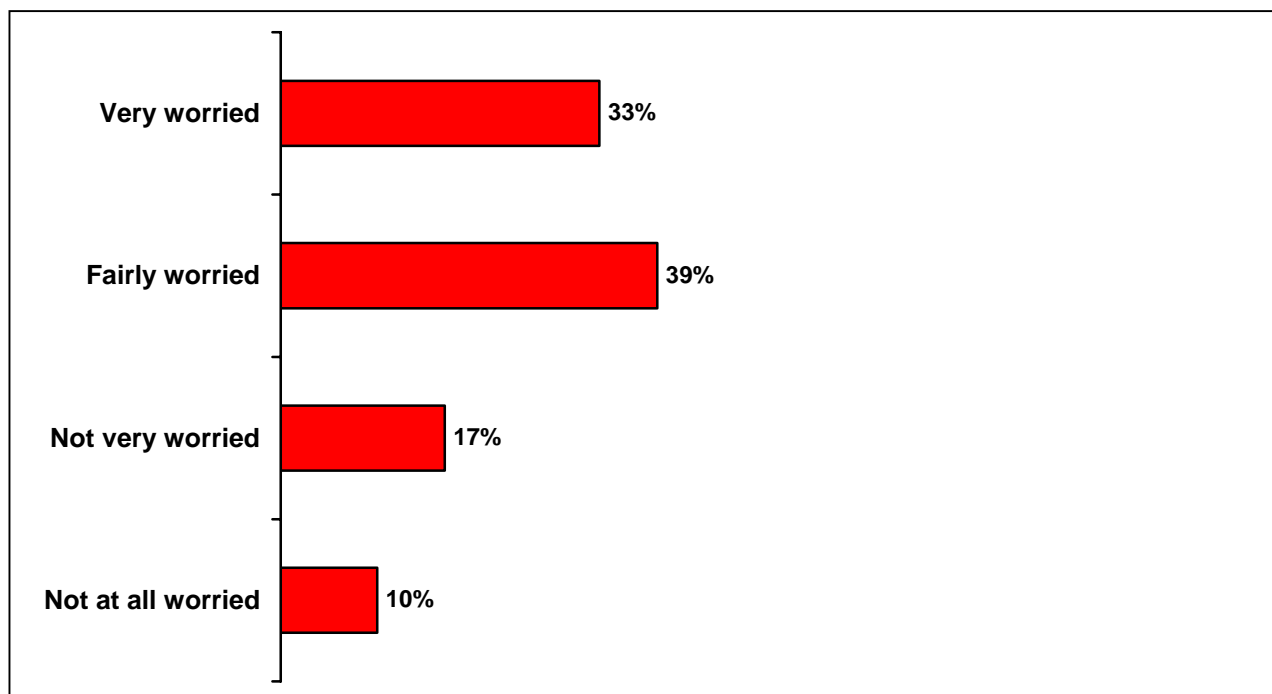
3 Fear of Crime

The next section of the questionnaire asked respondents about crime and anti-social behaviour in the local area.

3.1 Fear of Crime

Respondents were asked how worried they were about crime in Thurrock.

Figure 9: Fear of crime in Thurrock



Base =297 respondents

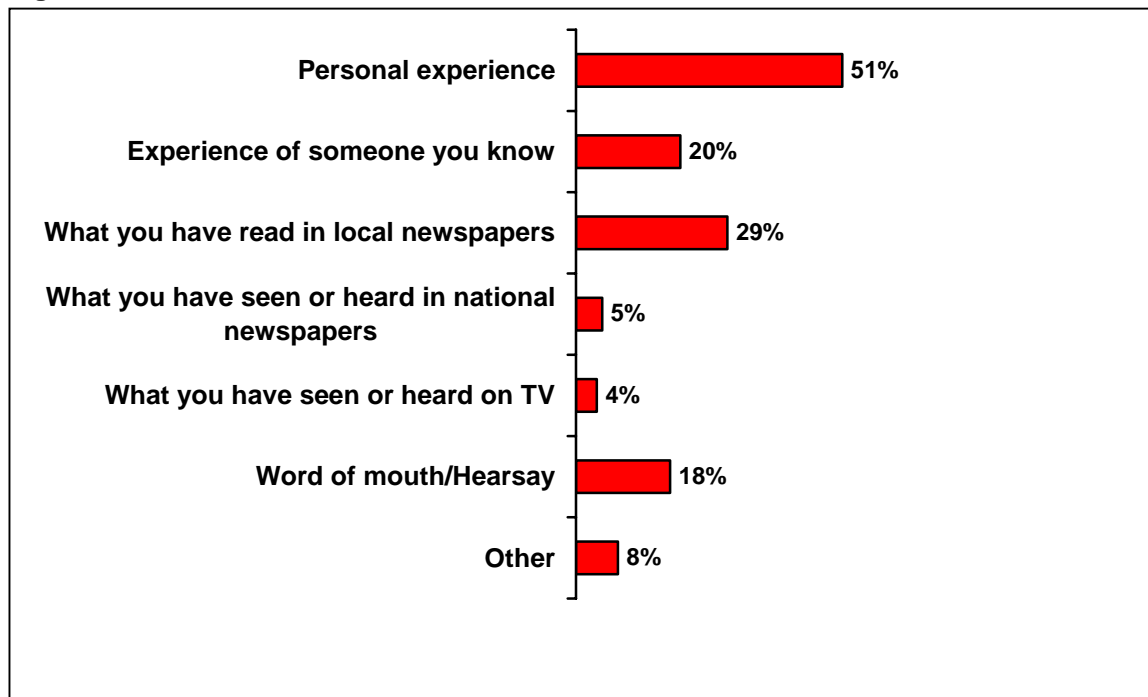
The majority of respondents said they were worried about crime in Thurrock.

- A third said they were very worried (33%) and two fifths (39%) said they were fairly worried.
- A fifth said they were not very worried (17%).
- One in ten were not worried at all (10%).

- Respondents living in West Thurrock were most concerned (81% said they were worried about crime) and those living in North East Thurrock were least concerned.

Respondents who said they were worried about crime in Thurrock were asked what their fears were based on.

Figure 10: What fear of crime is based on.



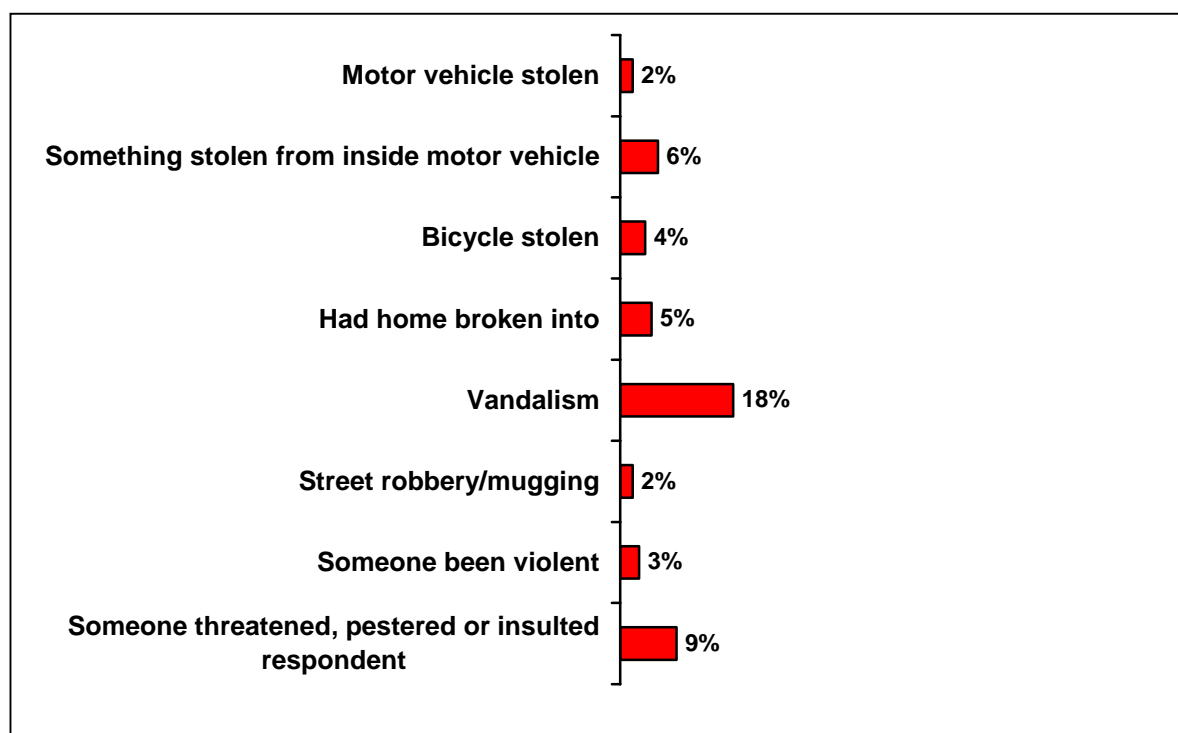
- Half the respondents said their fear of crime was based on personal experience (51%).
- Three in ten said their fear of crime was based on what they had read in their local news paper (29%).
- A fifth said their fear of crime was based on the experience of someone they know (20%) or word of mouth (18%).
- Respondents living in South and West Thurrock were most likely to say their fear was based on personal experience: 65% and 61% respectively. This compares to 39% of respondents living in Central Thurrock and 33% living in North East Thurrock.
- Women were more likely to say their fear was based on word of mouth: 23% compared to 12% of men.
- Two fifths of younger respondents said their fear was based on personal experience: 64% compared to 55% of respondents aged 26-50 years and 47% of respondents aged over 50 years.

3.2 Victims of Crime

The next set of questions asked whether the respondent had been a victim to a range of crimes over the past twelve months.

- A fifth of respondents (18%) said they had had something damaged by vandals in the past 12 months.
- One in ten (9%) said in the last twelve months someone had threatened, pestered or insulted them in a way that had caused them to feel harassed, alarmed or distressed.
- Nearly one in ten had been a victim to a crime relating to their motor vehicle: 6% had something stolen from inside their vehicle and 2% had their vehicle stolen.
- Five percent had their home broken into and 4% have had a bicycle stolen.
- Few respondents had something stolen from their person (2%) or have been subject to a violent crime such as physical assault or robbery).

Figure 11: Whether a victim of crime.

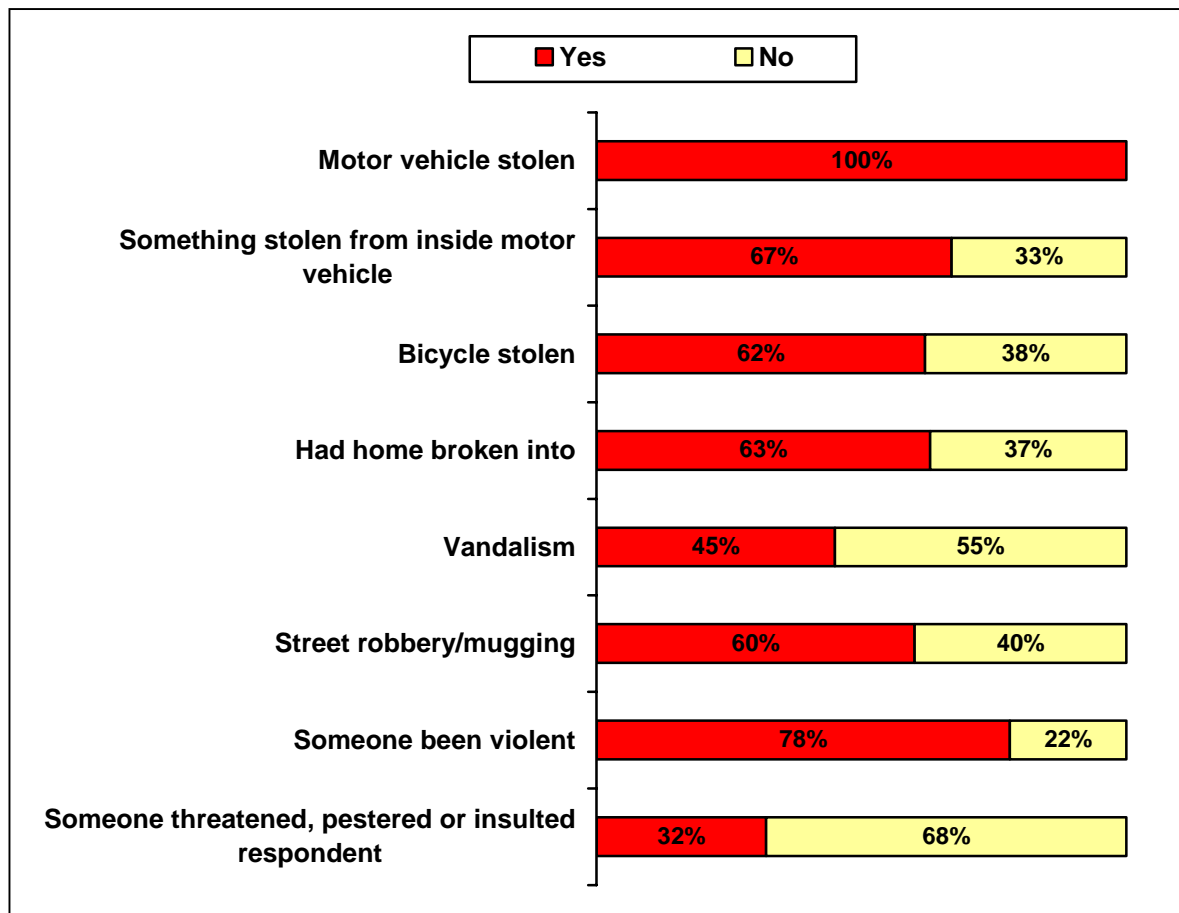


Base =300 respondents

3.3 Reporting Crime

Respondents who had been a victim of one of the crimes were asked whether they had reported the crime to the Police. Please note these results are based on a small number of respondents.

Figure 12: Whether reported crime to Police



Base varies (All those who had been a victim of crime).

- All the respondents who had a motor vehicle stolen reported the crime to the police.
- Respondents who had been threatened or pestered were least likely to report their crime: just a third reported the crime to the police (32%). The main reasons given for not reporting the crime were that the respondent did not consider it serious (33%) or they dealt with it themselves (27%). One in ten did not think the police could do anything about the crime (13%).
- Less than half the respondents who had experienced vandalism in the past twelve months reported their crime to the police. The main reasons for not reporting the crime

were it was not considered serious (36%) or the respondent did not think the police could do anything (29%).

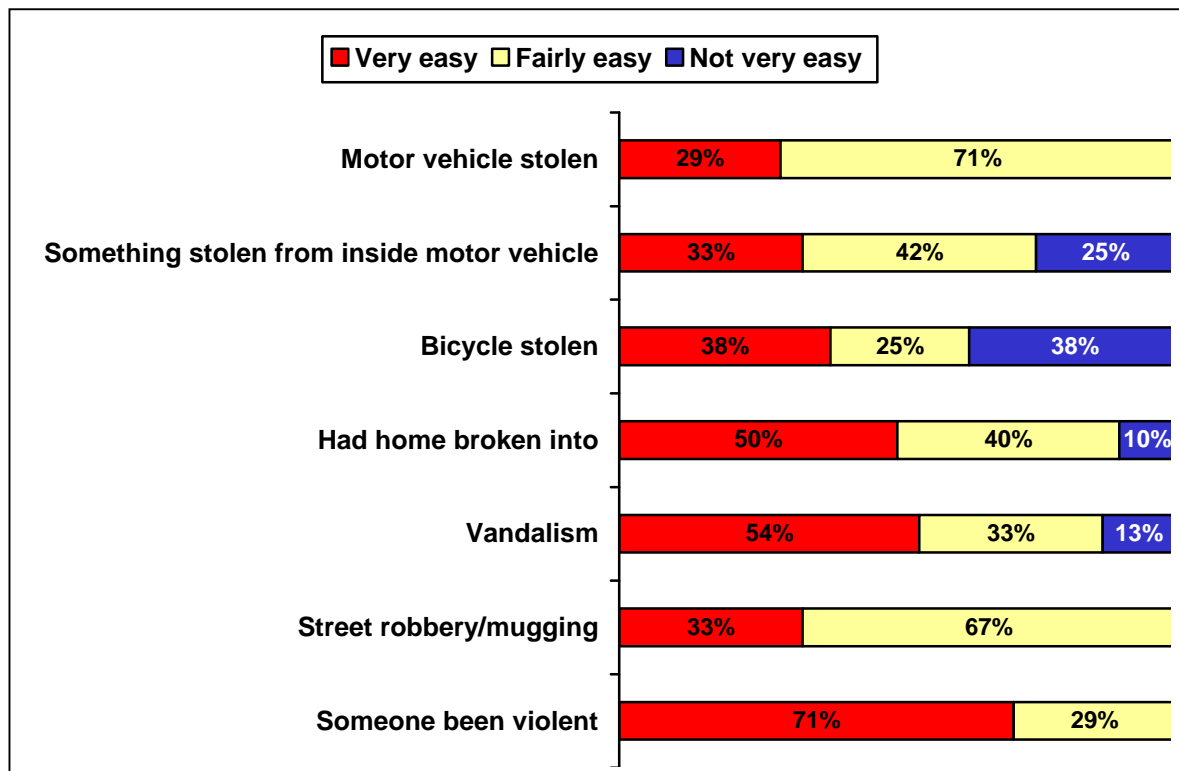
- A third of respondents (33%) did not report having something stolen from inside their motor vehicle. The main reason for not reporting the crime was that the respondent did not think the crime was important (50%). A quarter said they retrieved the items that were stolen (25%) or they did not think that the police would catch the criminals (25%).
- Two fifths of respondents said they did not report having their bicycle stolen (39%). Two fifths said they retrieved their bike back while a fifth did not think the police would be able to do anything. Other reasons for not reporting the crime were that the bike was not expensive (20%) or the respondent felt the crime was their fault (20%).
- Two fifths said they did not report having their home broken into. The main reason for not reporting this crime was that the respondent dealt with the crime themselves (50%). A quarter of respondents said what was stolen was not expensive (25%) or they thought the crime was trivial (25%).

Those respondents who had reported a crime were asked how easy it was to report a crime. Results should be treated with caution due to the small base sizes.

The majority of respondents found it easy to report their crime.

- Two fifths of respondents who had been threatened or pestered (44%) or had a bicycle stolen (38%) said they found it difficult to report their crime.
- A quarter of respondents (25%) who had had something stolen from inside their motor vehicle said they found it difficult to report their crime.

Figure 13: Ease of reporting crime



Base varies (All those who reported a crime).

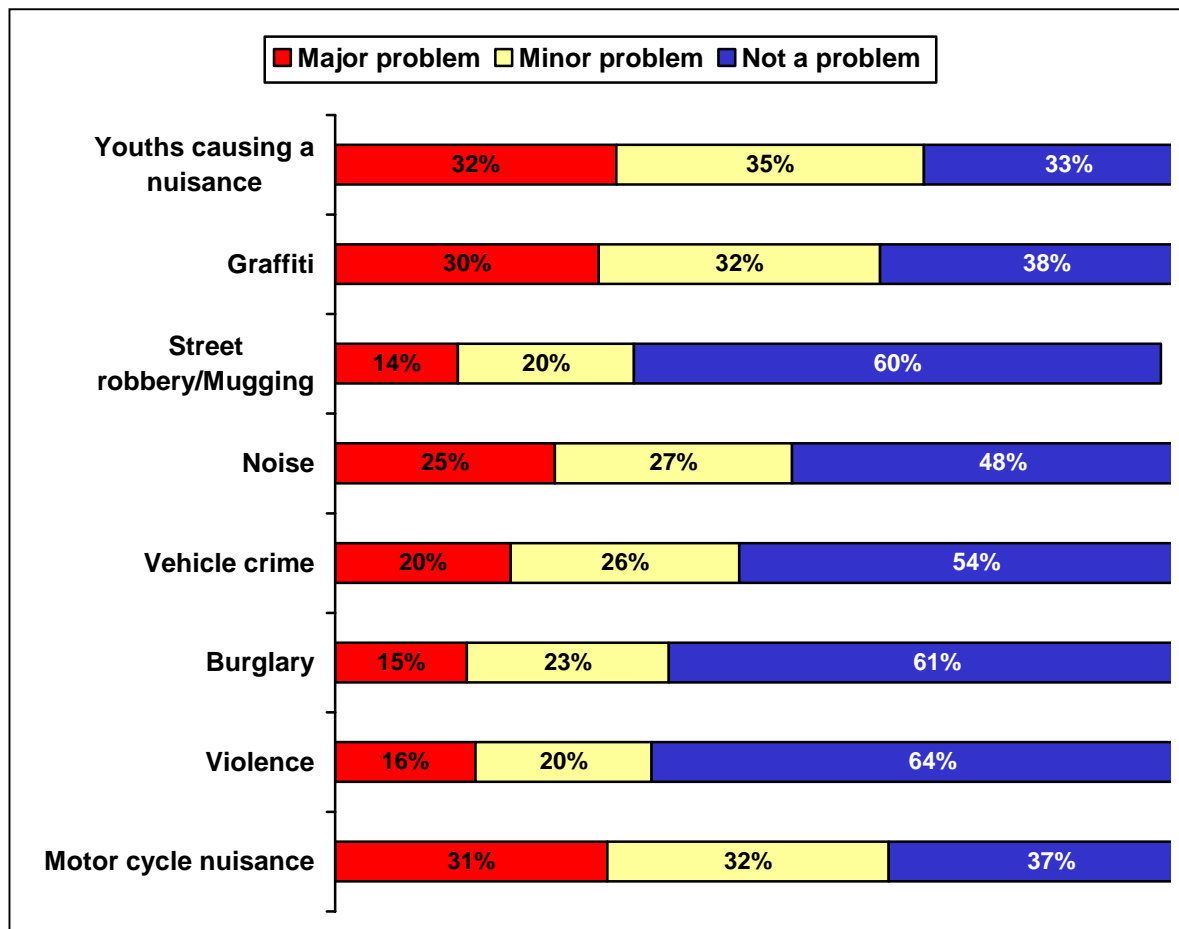
3.4 Problems in the Local Area

Respondents were given a list of potential problems in the area and asked if they were a major problem, a minor problem or not a problem at all.

The main problems in the area were considered to be

- Youths causing a nuisance (67% considered this a problem)
- Motor cycle nuisance (63% considered this a problem)
- Graffiti (62 considered this a problem)
- Few residents considered burglary (38%), violence (36%) and street robbery (34%) to be a problem in the area.

Figure 14: Problems in the local area



Base varies

- Graffiti was more of an issue for respondents in South Thurrock: 76% said it was a problem compared to 49% in North East Thurrock, 55% in West Thurrock and 62% in Central Thurrock.
- Half the respondents living in South Thurrock said burglary was a problem in the area. This compares to 33% in West Thurrock, 34% in North East Thurrock and 36% in Central Thurrock.
- Violence was more of an issue of respondents living in South Thurrock: 52% said it was a problem compared to 25% in North East Thurrock, 28% in West Thurrock and 33% in Central Thurrock.
- Four in five respondents in South Thurrock said motor cycle nuisance was a problem in the area (80%). This compares to 69% in West Thurrock, 60% in North East Thurrock and 47% in Central Thurrock.

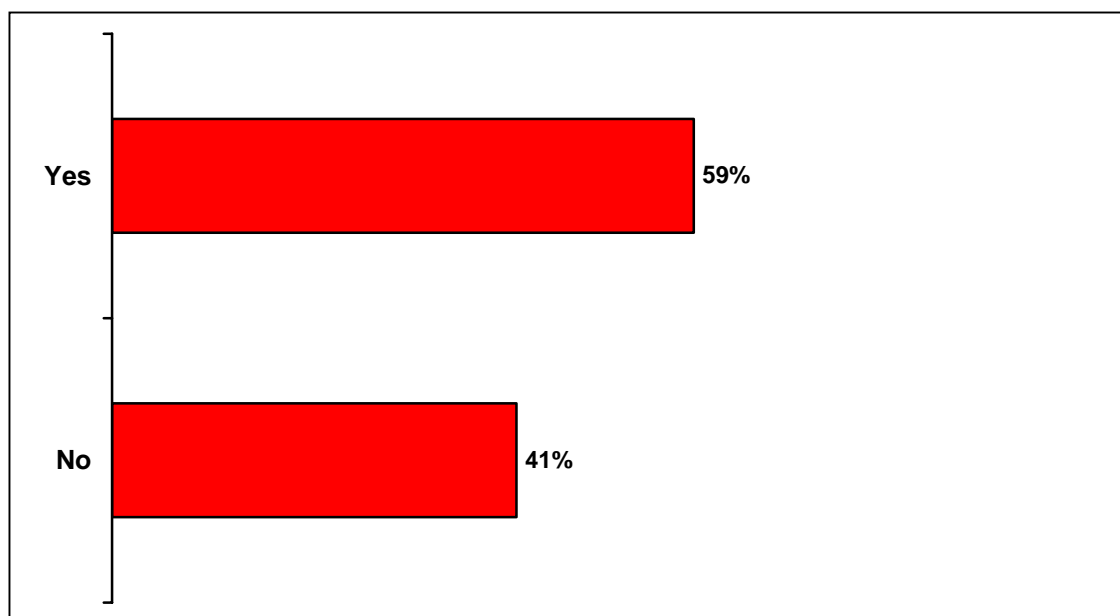
3.5 Anti-social behaviour

Residents were then asked about anti-social behaviour. Anti-social behaviour was described to respondents as anything which reduces the quality of people’s lives by causing them alarm, harassment or distress. Anti-social behaviour is not necessarily a crime but in can be in certain circumstances.

Respondents were asked if they thought there was anti-social behaviour in their area.

- Three in five respondents considered anti-social behaviour to be a problem in the area (59%).
- Two fifths did not think it was a problem (41%).
- The majority of respondents living in South Thurrock said anti-social behaviour was an issue in the area: 85%. This compares to 56% in West Thurrock, 48% in North East Thurrock and 44% in Central Thurrock.
- Older respondents were less likely to think anti-social behaviour is a problem: 53% of respondents aged over 50 years said it was a problem. This compares to 71% of respondents aged 16-25 years and 64% aged 26-50 years.

Figure 15: Whether there is anti-social behaviour in the area

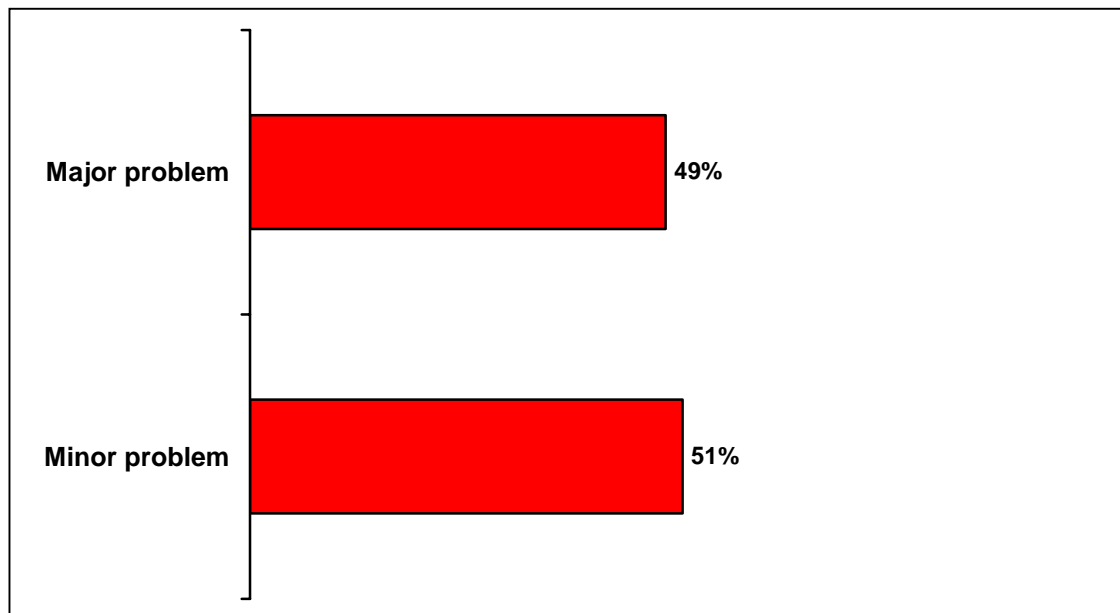


Base = 295 respondents

Respondents who thought there was anti-social behaviour in the area were asked if it was a major problem, a minor problem or not a problem at all.

- Half the respondents considered anti-social behaviour to be a major problem (49%) and half considered it to be a minor problem (51%).

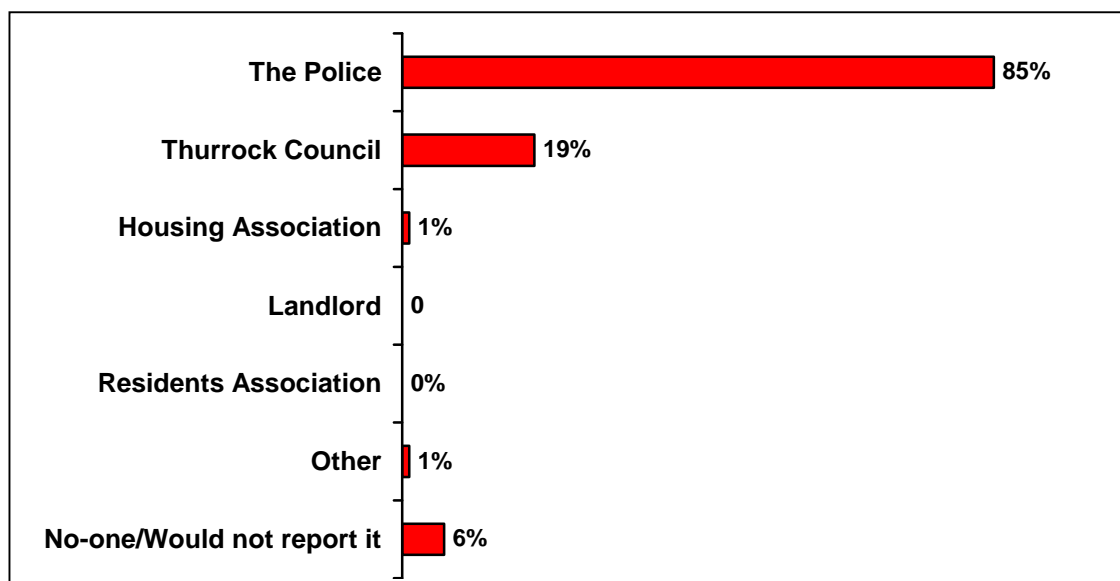
Figure 16: Extent of anti-social behaviour in the area.



Base = 172 respondents (All those who thought there was anti-social behaviour in the area)

Respondents were asked who they would report an anti-social behaviour problem to.

Figure 17: Who respondent would report an anti-social behaviour problem to



Base = 285 respondents. Results do not total 100% as respondents could choose more than one answer.

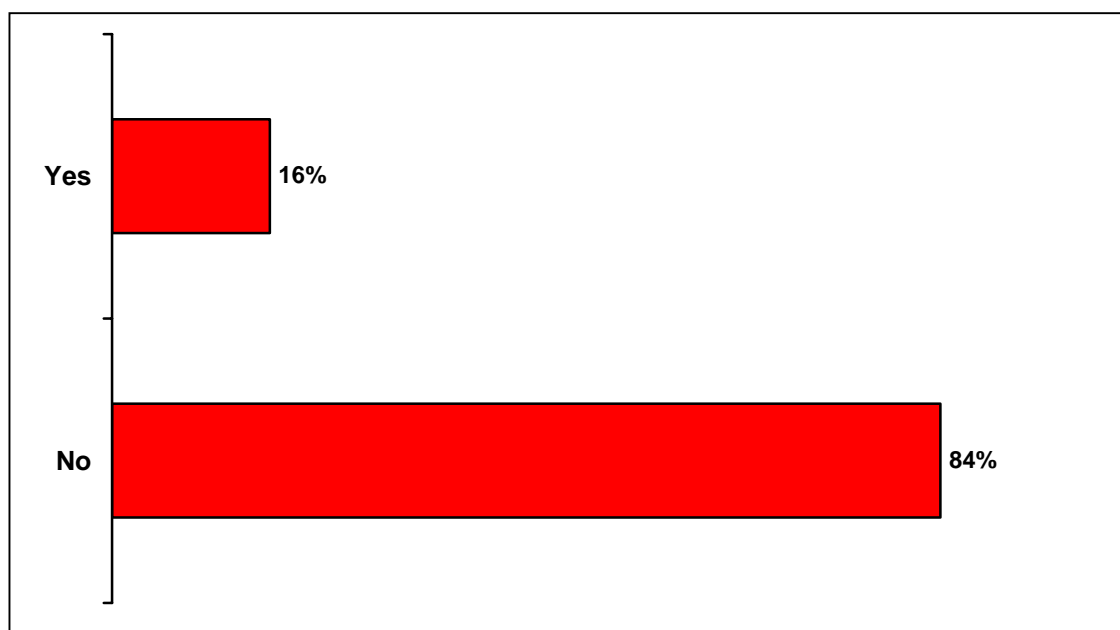
- The majority of respondents would report anti-social behaviour to the police (85%).
- A fifth said they would report the problem to the Council (19%).

3.6 Safer Thurrock Partnership

Respondents were asked if they had heard of the Safer Thurrock Partnership.

- The majority of respondents had not heard about the Safer Thurrock Partnership (84%).
- Younger respondents were most likely to have heard about the Safer Thurrock Partnership: 24% had heard about the Partnership compared to 19% aged 26-50 years and 14% of respondents aged over 50 years.

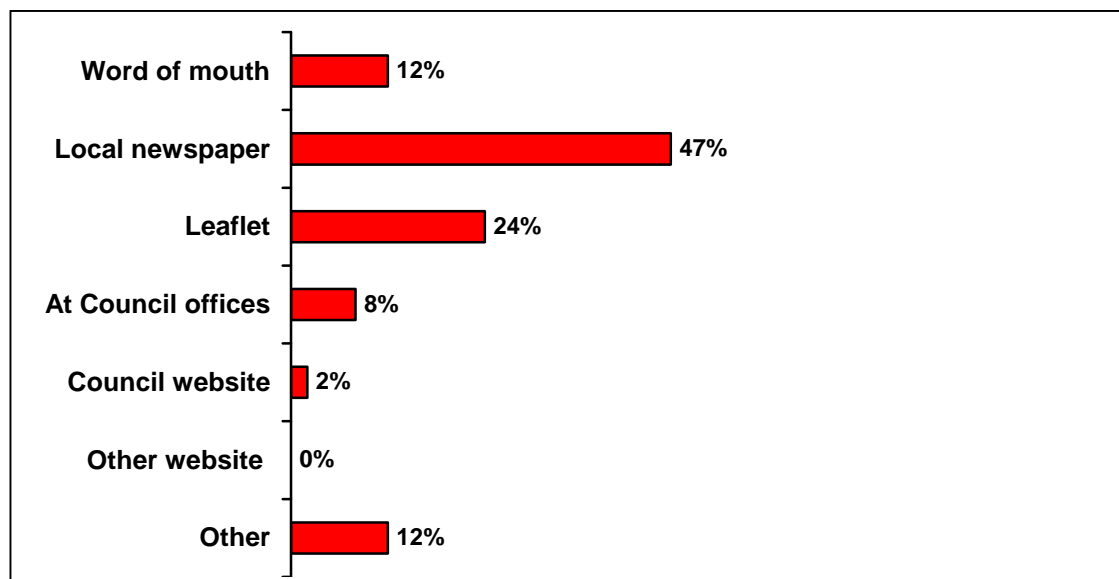
Figure 18: Whether heard of Safer Thurrock Partnership



Base =300 respondents

Those who had heard about the Safer Thurrock Partnership were asked how they had heard about it.

Figure 19: How heard about Safer Thurrock Partnership



Base = 49 respondents (All those who had heard about the Safer Thurrock Partnership). Responses do not total 100% as respondents could choose more than one answer.

- Half the respondents had heard about the Safer Thurrock Partnership through a local newspaper (47%).
- A quarter had heard about the Partnership via a leaflet (25%).
- One in ten had heard about the Partnership via word of mouth (12%) or at the Council offices (8%).

3.7 How to make Thurrock Safer

Respondents were asked what Thurrock Council could do to make residents feel safer apart from putting more police on the streets. Just a third of respondents made a suggestion (34%).

The most popular suggestions were:

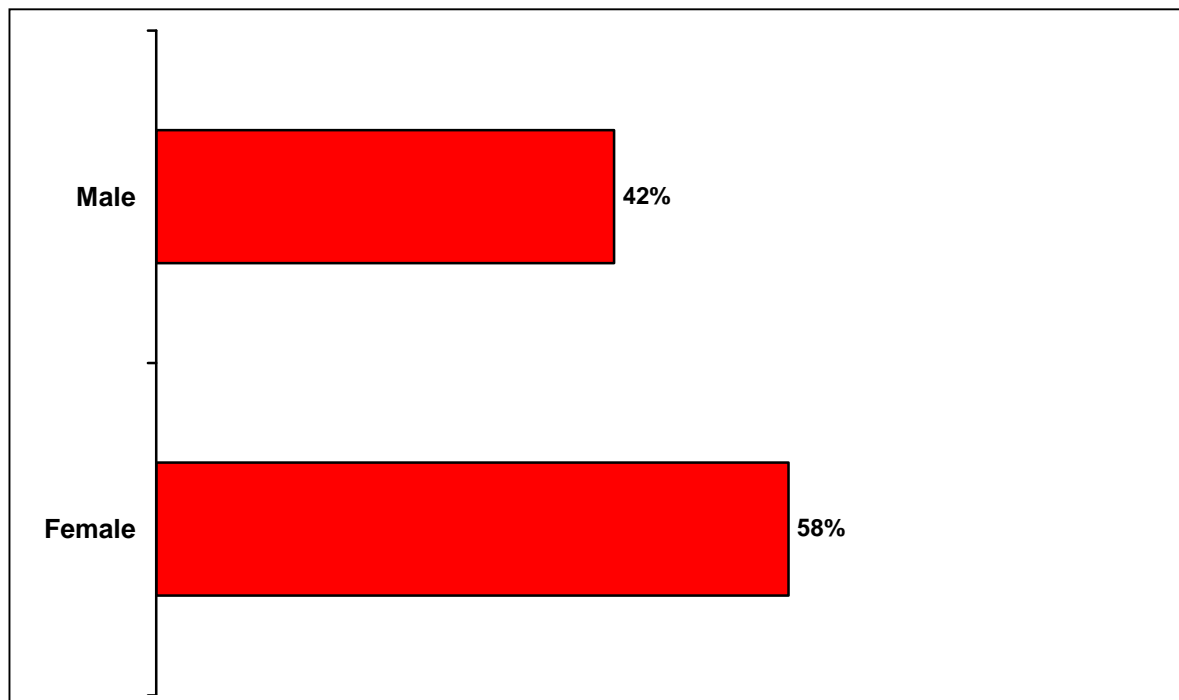
- Youth clubs for children (20%)
- CCTV (11%)
- Street Wardens (10%)
- Teaching of social skills in schools (10%)
- Community Officers (8%)

-
- Better lighting (8%)
 - Faster response from Police.

4 Demographics

The final section asked the respondent about themselves.

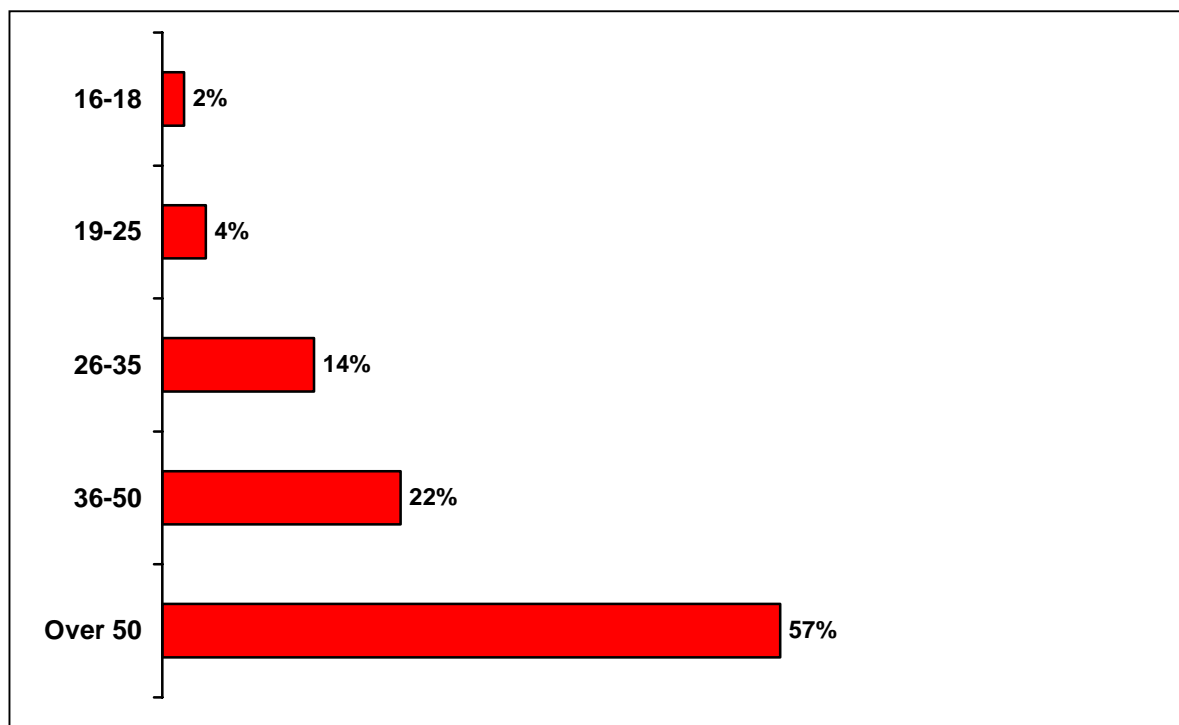
Figure 20: Gender of respondent



Base = 300 respondents

- Over half the respondents were female (58%) and 42% were male.

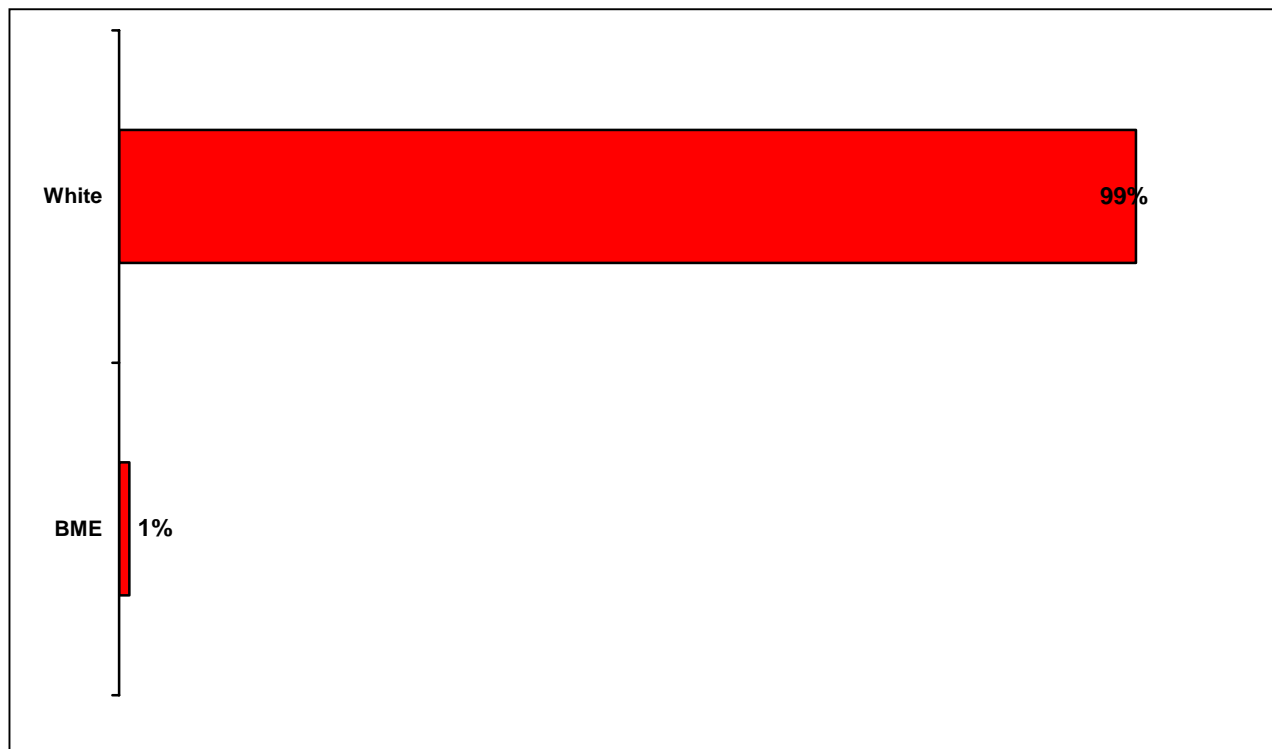
Figure 21: Age of respondent



Base = 299 respondents

- Over half the respondents were aged over 50 years (57%).
- A fifth were aged 36-50 years (22%).
- A fifth were aged 35 years or younger (20%).

Figure 22: Ethnicity of respondent



- The majority of respondents classed themselves as White (99%).
- The remaining 1% were of a Black or Ethnic Minority background.