

Herefordshire Voice

August 2007

THE HEREFORDSHIRE
partnership 

Thank you The Herefordshire Voice survey we carried out during December and January was completed by more than three quarters of you, which is a brilliant response. Thank you!

Mind the gap

Unfortunately, there has been a bigger gap since the last survey than we would have liked. Every three years, all councils are required by the government to carry out a series of major surveys on a range of services. Analysing the results of these thoroughly is a major task and has taken longer than anticipated, so the Herefordshire Voice programme was delayed. However, we're getting back into the swing of things, and the next Herefordshire Voice is planned for late September. This will look at ways local people can get involved with shaping the future of their community. This survey will be followed by another in February of next year, which will investigate planning and housing issues.

What you told us

December's survey looked at accessing various services in Herefordshire. You said you found it easiest to get to a doctor's surgery and a chemist. Most difficult to get to were theatres or cinemas, and a Council office. Parking was seen as being a big problem in accessing most of the services covered. Other major problems included getting a convenient doctor's appointment, getting an NHS dentist, finding the nearest dentist, the cost of dental treatment, getting to the local hospital, and the cost of tickets at the Courtyard. Many respondents gave specific details of problems they had encountered with accessing the services, which will be really useful in helping identify things that need to be fixed. If you would like to see the results in more detail, the full report can be found on the website, www.herefordshirepartnership.com.

What's happened to the results?

For each of the services we covered, we asked you to say which "service point" you normally used – e.g. which GP surgery, which library. This means we have been able to supply each of these service points with results specific to them, as well as the overall results. Obviously, your responses and comments were kept totally anonymous.

Your views in action

In the survey before, in July 2006, we asked about cultural and recreational services, public transport and volunteering.

Cultural and recreational services

At libraries, you said that the thing most in need of improvement was the range of books. Libraries have responded to this by increasing the proportion of paperbacks rather than hardbacks, enabling them to buy more books. Other recent improvements include more family events during school holidays, and a new "Babe in Arms" book group. The opening hours have been extended at Kington, changed at Colwall, and are under review at other libraries.

You said museums needed more space available for exhibitions, and more activities available. The Friar Street museum store and resource centre will open to the public this September, which will give more access to collections and more display space. More family activities now take place in the Museum and at heritage sites.

Public transport

You said that bus timetable booklets and the information at bus stops were in need of improvement. This provided some valuable evidence to back up plans for improvements which are now in place. Timetable layout has been redesigned with larger font sizes and a clearer typeface, more illustrations and colour, and text in a number of languages. Information at bus stops has been updated to make it more legible. A stop-specific text messaging service has been introduced, allowing passengers to get timetable information about a specific bus stop direct to their mobile.

Volunteering

Some of the main things you said would encourage you to volunteer more included being asked and also having more information about the roles available. This information, along with data from a survey that went to voluntary organisations, has helped to reinforce the need for a publicity drive to encourage more people to volunteer. This has included posters on buses, volunteer fairs, redesigned literature and presentations aimed at the newly retired, and training courses delivered to organisations to help them recruit and retain new volunteers.

**Look out for the next Herefordshire Voice survey in September.
If you have any questions, please contact Tony Cramp on 01432 383 615.**