



**MIDLOTHIAN
COMMUNITY JUSTICE
PARTNERSHIP**

**Midlothian Community Justice
Partnership
Public Consultation 2025 Findings**

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Summary/Key Findings

- Majority (60%) of the respondents to the public consultation understood the role of the Community Justice Partnership in Midlothian.
- The public's idea of community justice is that it is a type of justice that uses multi-partnership working to reduce crime, and benefits communities by supporting both offenders and victims.
- Heightened police presence would be the public's priority to reduce offending, although this fluctuates between demographics.
- The public would most like to see unpaid work activities that improve the look of their communities such as litter picking, gardening, and cleaning graffiti.
- The Midlothian public find the difficulty in accessing services as moderate, although this can alter with different demographics.
- Mental health and neurodiversity services are the most difficult to access.
- The Midlothian public has a negative view of the performance of Midlothian's services ability of inter-service working, attributed mostly to a lack of cohesion/communication.
- Most of the Midlothian public (76%) expressed that they felt barriers to accessing services; the biggest barrier to accessing services being long waiting times/lists.
- The public shared that they wished to be made more aware of available services, and for these services to serve the specific needs of the Midlothian public.
- The public wish to be kept up to date with community justice updates, specifically digitally.

Background

Section 20 of the Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016 places a duty on Community Planning Partnerships to make all reasonable efforts to secure participation in the development of their Community Justice Outcomes Improvement Plan (CJOIP). Statutory partners must be able to demonstrate how they have engaged with stakeholders to agree the potential content or scope of the CJOIP.

To engage with the public, Midlothian's Community Justice Partnership coordinated a public consultation survey on community justice from the 7th July 2025 to the 31st of October 2025.

285 responses received from people either living or working in Midlothian.

As the 2023 public consultation was not completed due to staffing changes, the results from this consultation could not be compared in the analysis.

Survey Design

The public consultation survey was developed by Midlothian's Community Justice Partnership and was informed by the four national aims established in the Scottish Government's National Strategy for Community Justice (2022).

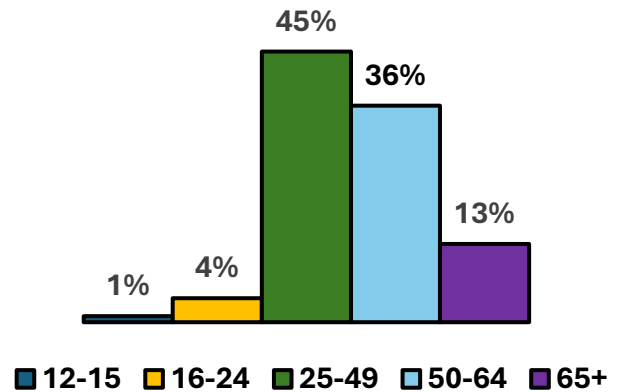
There were nine main survey questions, with seven additional questions for demographic analysis. The printed survey can be found in Appendix (a).

To be eligible for the survey, individuals were required to be 12 years-old or older and to either live or work/study in Midlothian.

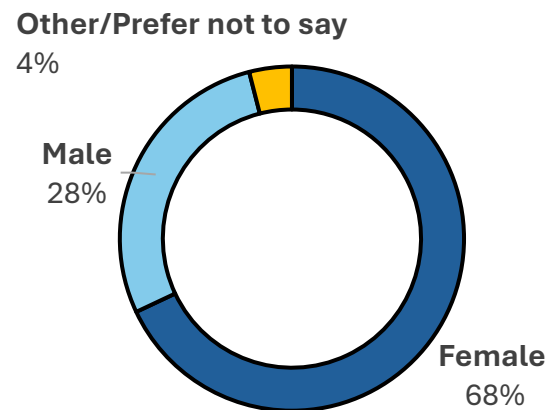
The survey was available online (via Citizen Space) and in paper form on request. The survey was advertised on Midlothian Council's social media pages and internally to Midlothian Council staff. Survey posters featuring a QR code were also advertised in council buildings in all major towns/villages in Midlothian as well as retail establishments. Partners within the Midlothian Community Justice Partnership also advertised the survey to their staff/clients.

Demographics

Age: The most common age of respondent was 25-49. Only 5% of respondents were under the age of 25.

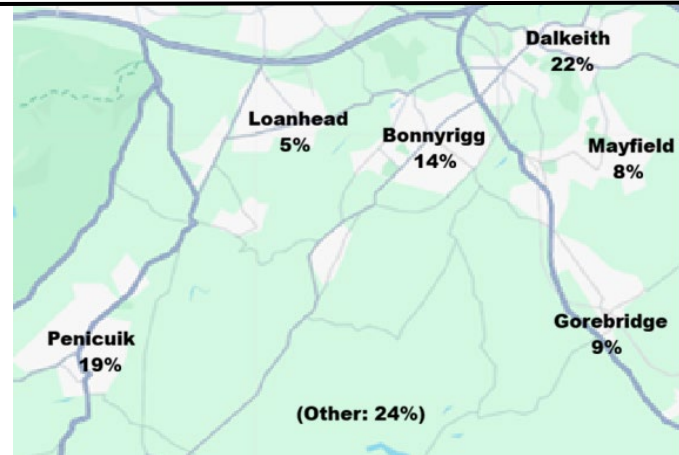


Gender: 2/3 of the respondents were female (n=192). 78 of the respondents were male. 11 preferred not to answer. 1 answered “other”. 3 left this question blank.



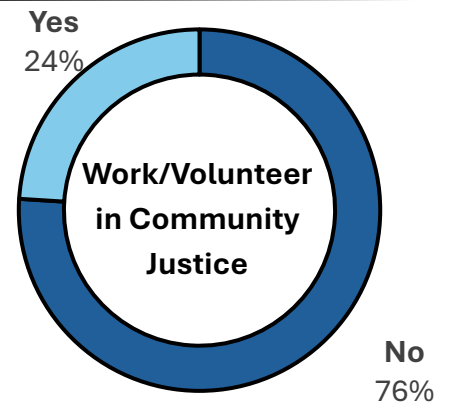
Locality: 87% of respondents lived in Midlothian and 64% worked/studied in Midlothian.

- 22% lived in Dalkeith
- 19% lived in Penicuik
- 14% lived in Bonnyrigg
- 9% lived in Gorebridge
- 8% lived in Mayfield
- 5% lived in Loanhead;
- 24% selected “Other”



Community Justice Role: 3/4 of all respondents did not work in roles connected to community justice.

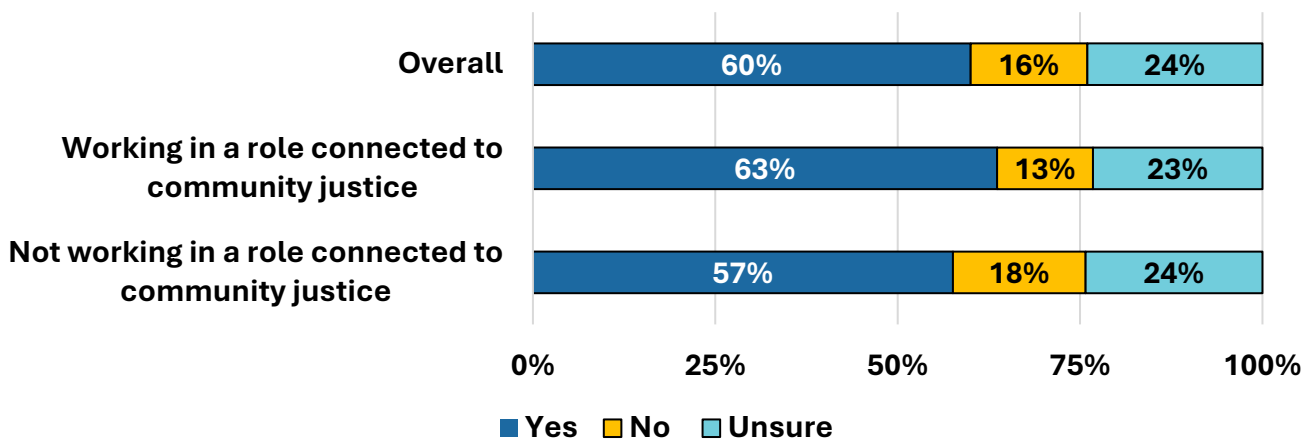
Experiences of Crime: 6% of all respondents answered that they had previously committed a crime (17% of Males and 3% of Females). 53% said that they had previously been a victim of a crime (65% of males and 48% of females).



Understanding of Community Justice

Most of the Midlothian public believed that they understood the role of the Community Justice Partnership in Midlothian.

Do you understand the role of the Community Justice Partnership in Midlothian?



63% of those working in a role connected to community justice had believed that they understand the role of the community justice partnership, this would have been expected to be higher.

All respondents were given the option to explain what they would describe community justice as. Collectively the responses described **community justice as a type of justice that uses multi-partnership working to reduce crime and benefit communities by supporting both offenders and victims.**

Reducing Offending

The public were asked “How effective would you say the following are in reducing offending?” and given six options to rank on a scale from “1 (Not effective at all” to “5 (Very effective)”.

The results showed that the overall Midlothian public believed all 6 options were effective in reducing offending.

A Heightened Police Presence was seen as the most useful intervention, scoring a 3.6 out of 5. The least effective (although still scoring an effective score of 3) was Housing Support.

Scale	Option
1	Heightened Police Presence
2	Positive Role Models
3	Education and Employment Opportunities
4	Social Connection
5	Having Access to Support Services
6	Housing Support

When looking at the answers from those connected to roles in community justice, the importance placed on Heightened Police Presence decreases - to the second lowest rated option.

This was also shown with those aged over 50 and those under. Those over 50s highest scored answer was Heightened Police Presence whilst those under 50 scored this the 4th highest, with Positive Role Models being their top-rated option.

The public were offered to comment further on this question; many took the opportunity to express ideas which they believed would reduce offending.

The most common theme was the need for a heightened police presence/activity in Midlothian. **“More police on the street will act as a deterrent, the problem is the police have limited powers regarding what is described as soft crime”** – 50–64 year-old, Male, Dalkeith.

Another theme was support for youth and spaces for young people to socialise. **“In addition to these, including spaces for children and youth to play, socialise, to counteract boredom participation in high risk behaviours.”** – 25-49 year-old, Male, Dalkeith.

Unpaid Work

The Midlothian public were asked if they had any suggestions to the type of unpaid work they would like to see in the community. Most suggestions called for visual improvements of the community (e.g., litter picking, gardening, cleaning streets etc...)

Litter picking was the most popular response, being mentioned 106 times.

Gardening was the second most popular response, being mentioned multiple times in different varieties (e.g., community gardening, general gardening, gardening for vulnerable)/

Maintaining and improving the look of the community was the third higher suggested activity.

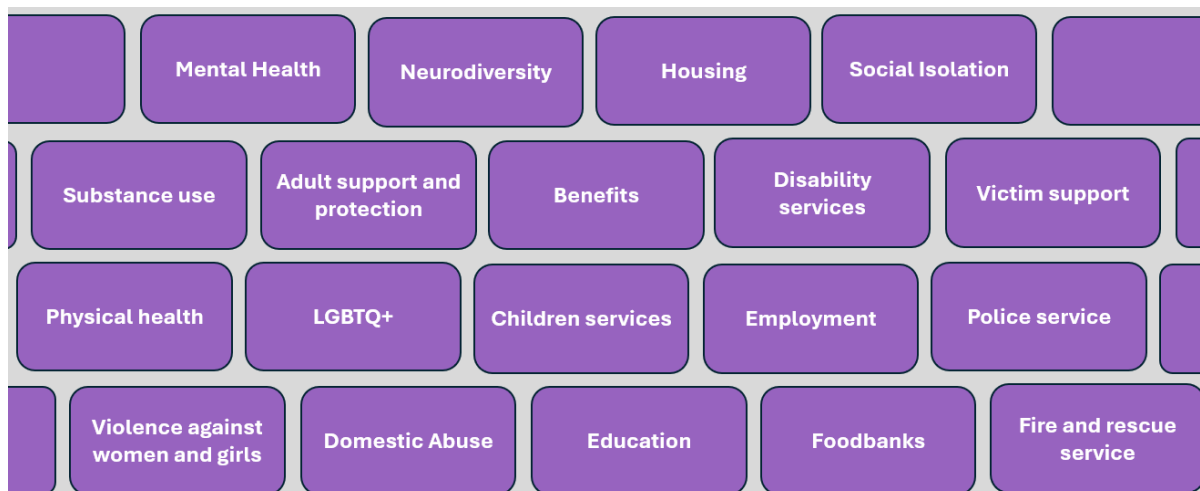
Although the unpaid work team are already meeting many of these suggestions with current work, it is important to consider that the unpaid work team are unable to complete work that is the responsibility of paid Midlothian Council employees.

Services

Accessibility of Services

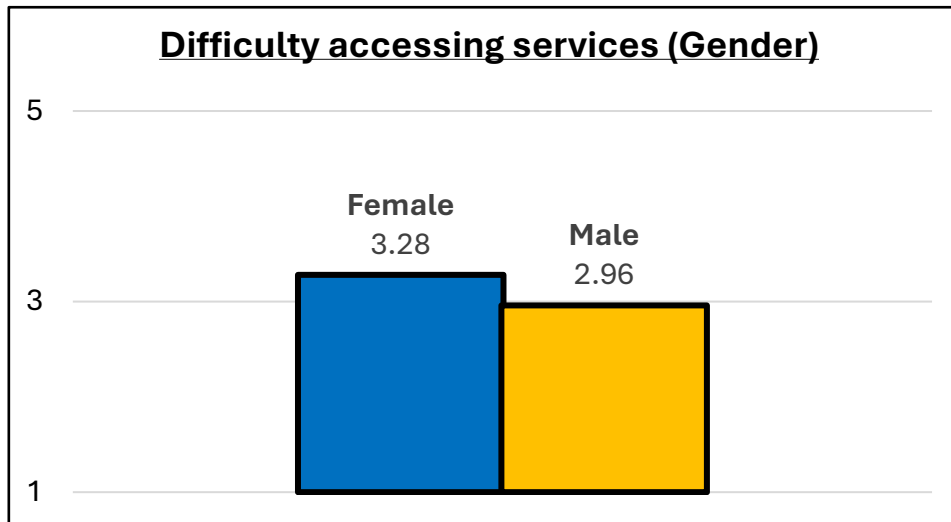
Services are a crucial aspect of community justices as it allows individuals to receive support that improves their lives and which can reduce their likelihood of reoffending. It is therefore important that gauge to ease of access to all services in the community.

The Midlothian Public were asked to attribute a rating to the level of difficulty they have ever experienced in accessing services in the community. **The scale of difficulty was from 1 (Easy), to 5 (hard)**. The following services were listed:

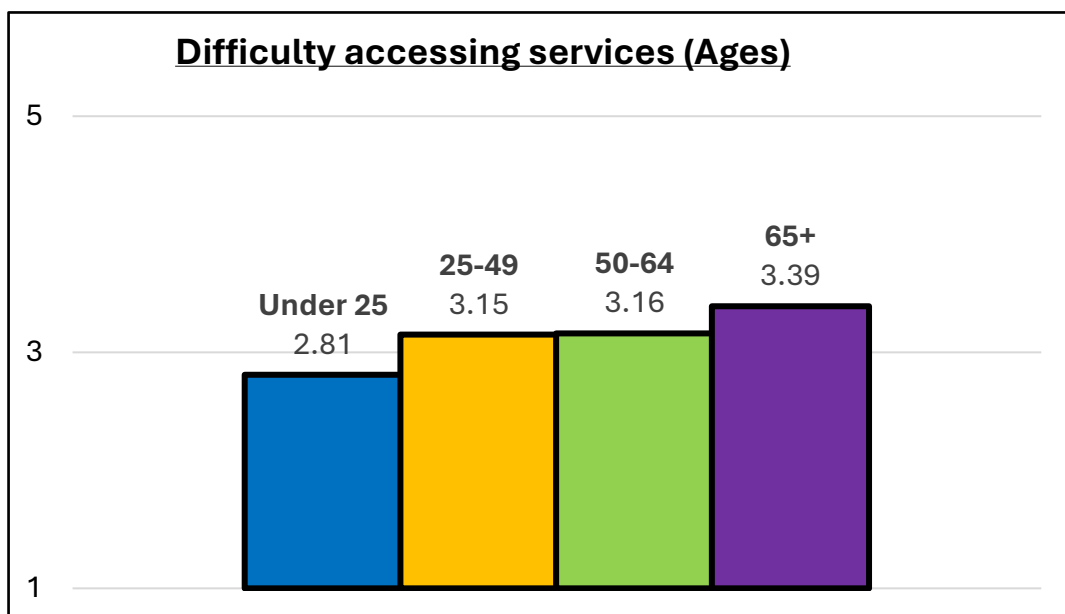


Overall, The Midlothian public rated the **difficulty of access** of all services collectively as **moderate** with a total score of 3.15.

Differences between the sexes and ages can be seen in the Scoring. **Females expressed a 6% higher difficulty rating than Males.**



The survey results would also suggest that **the older an individual is, the more difficulty they have in accessing services.**



Service:	% of respondents who had previously used:
Police Service	68%
Education	59%
Physical Health	57%
Employment	45%
Mental Health	44%

The most used service of the Midlothian Public according to the public consultation was the Police Service with 195 (68% of all respondents) answering that they had used this service. The least used service was those related to support for LGBTQ+ individuals with 44 respondents (15%) answering that they have used a service in this category.

Service:	% of respondents who had previously used:
Victim Support	68%
Domestic Abuse	59%
Substance Use	57%
Violence Against Women and Girls	45%
LGBTQ+	44%

Full results can be found in Appendix (b).

The Midlothian public scored **mental health services as the most difficult to access in Midlothian**. Followed by neurodiversity, housing, social isolation, then substance use.

Service:	Difficulty of Access (1-5)
Mental Health	4.1
Neurodiversity	4.06
Housing	3.67
Social Isolation	3.69
Substance Use	3.38

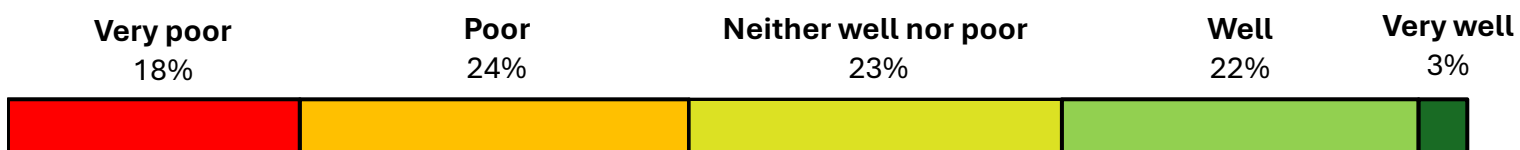
The easiest to access service according to the experience of the Midlothian public was the fire and rescue service. Followed by foodbanks, education, domestic abuse, then violence against women and girls services.

Full results can be found in Appendix (c).

Service:	Difficulty of Access (1-5)
Violence against	2.9
Neurodiversity	2.67
Housing	2.36
Social Isolation	2.27
Substance Use	2.1

Collaborative Working of Services

Following the scoring of the accessibility of the 19 listed services, respondents were asked to rate how well services worked together to serve the Midlothian community. There were five options given on a scale from Very Poor; Poor; Neither Well nor Poor; Well; Very well. 214 answered on this scale with 71 answering “unsure”



Of those who did not answer “unsure”, **42% answered that services were poor/very poor at working together**, compared to 25% answering they did this well/very well. **Only 3% of respondents believed services worked very well together**, in comparison to 18% answering that they were very poor.

Respondents were able to add a further comment to their answer, with the most common themes being a lack of cohesion and communication. The next page contains some of the quotes taken from the public’s responses that illustrate these themes.

I feel that there is very little link up between services. The waiting lists are too long as some people need urgent help but do not get it at the time they need it. It is not easy to navigate all the different services; people do not know where or how to access things that might help them.

It sometimes feels that services do not work in partnership with constant barriers in place for those trying to attend they services. A more holistic approach is needed.

Needs to be better collaboration, joined up working, communication & actually listen to their local communities needs.

None of the services communicate with each other. The charity I work for is all about connection and supporting people in the community. The people we support have real difficulty getting the support they need there are so many barriers that are not considered a lot of the time when helping people.

The above services do not communicate effectively, nor do they include the person. Decisions are made often without the person being heard. The shortage of these services is worrying! Esp within education, neurosiversity, mental health and adult services

In addition to these constructive comments, there were comments made praising the role services play in Midlothian communities such as:

Women's aid and children's first I feel are one of the best services I have used and that in Midlothian has to offer I feel they communicate well together and a great understanding of that not everything is black and white and have other knowledge of access to help within the community.

Barriers to Services

The consultation gave a list of 12 barriers to service use (Appendix A: Question 6) and asked if the respondent had ever experienced these when trying to access services in Midlothian, allowing for further comments if necessary.

Around 3/4 (76%) of all respondents answered that they did face either one or more barriers when accessing services in Midlothian. Further to this, 60% of respondents said they experience two or more barriers; 20% experience five or more barriers; and 2% experience 10 or more barriers. This shows that although the below presents the 5 barriers experienced the most by the Midlothian public, the overall reason for difficulty in service access is multifaceted and can often be a combination of multiple barriers.

1. Long Waiting List/Times – 149 responses (52% of all responses).

The most common response for barriers to service use was the service having a long waiting list/time.



2. Lack of Awareness/Advertising of the Service – 107 responses (38% of all responses).

The second most common response for barriers to service use was the lack of awareness/advertising of the service.



3. Referral Process – 83 responses (29% of all responses).

The third most common response for barriers to service use was the referral process for services.



4. Employment – 67 responses (24% of all responses).

The fourth most common response for barriers to service use was the inability to access services due to opening hours clashing with own employment.



5. Location – 62 responses (22% of all responses).

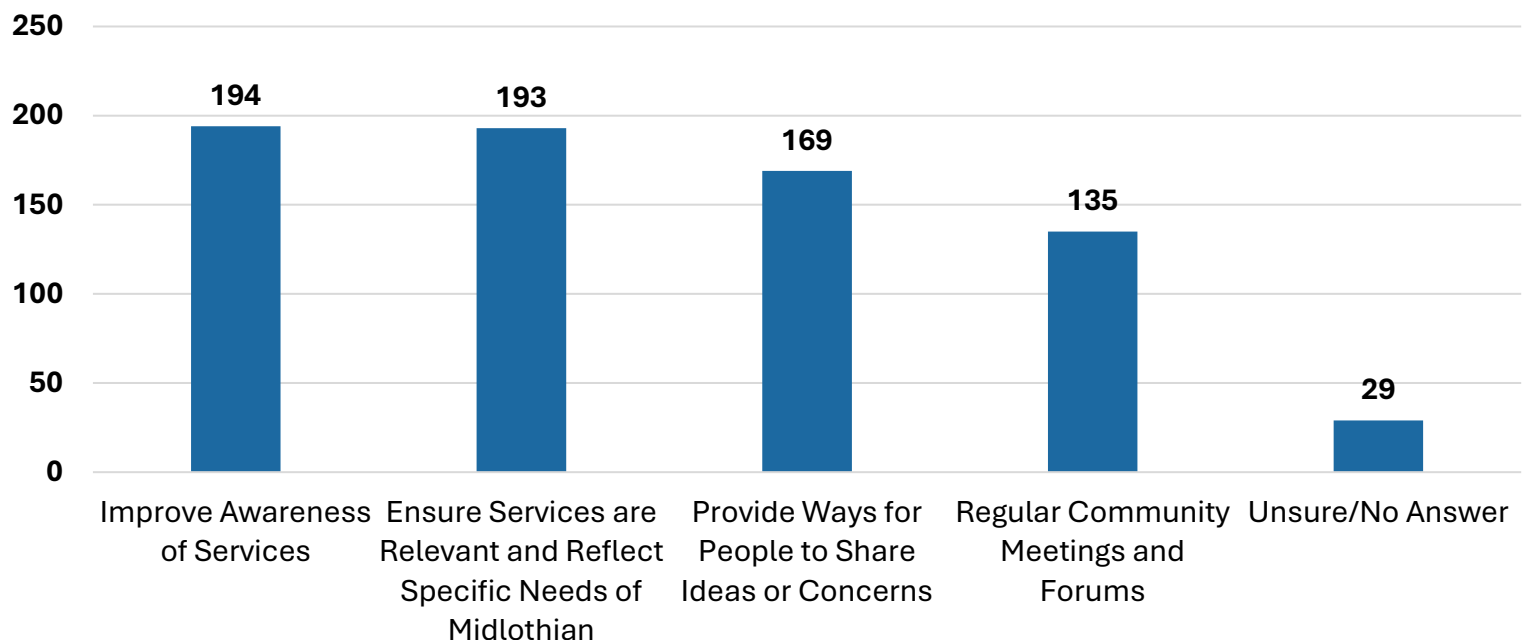
The fifth most common response for barriers to service use was the location of services.



What Midlothian's Community Justice Partnership can do Better

Listening to Midlothian

The Midlothian public were asked "How can Midlothian's Community Justice Partnership show that they are actively listening and supporting local communities?" and given four options from which they could multi-select. Below are the results of the number of times each option was selected:

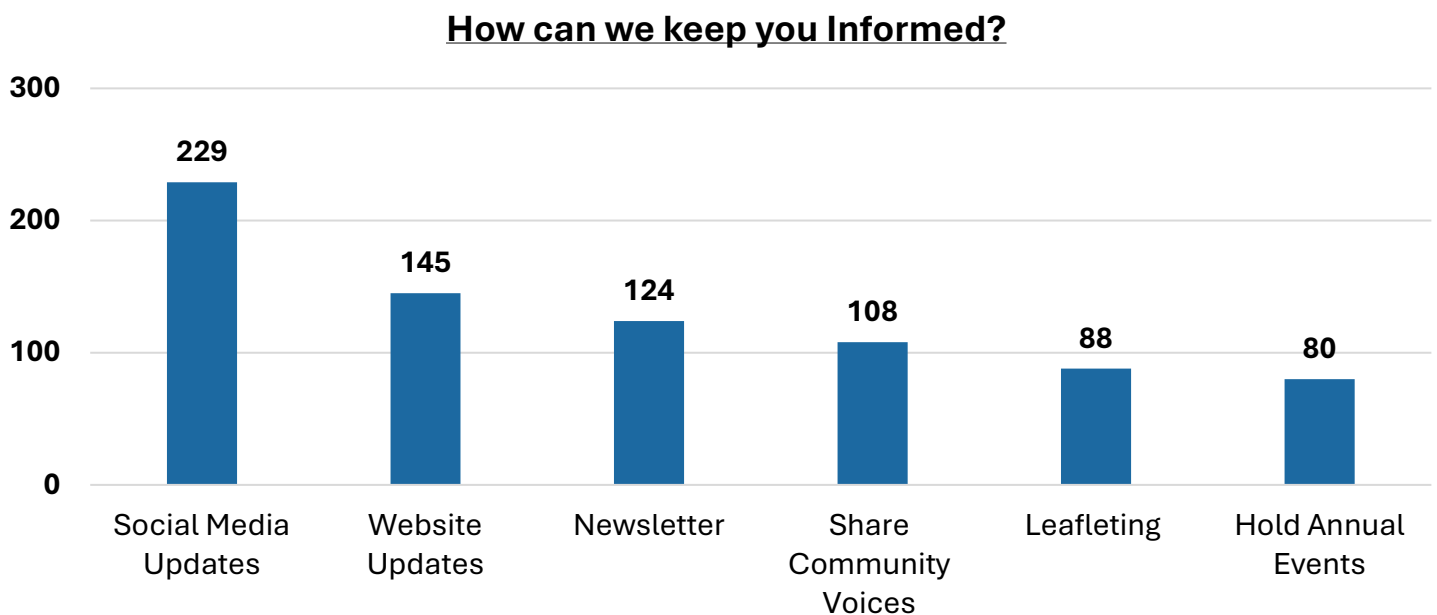


As shown above, **the Midlothian public wish that the Midlothian Community Justice Partnership work to ensure that awareness of services is improved and that the services are relevant to the needs of Midlothian.**

This question also allowed for "other" suggestion to be added, which 27 respondents used. The content of these Responses was vast, but a common theme on several was for the Community Justice Partnership to link in with community groups and to involve the public.

Keeping Midlothian Updated

The survey asked respondents how they would like to keep updated about the work the community justice partnership is doing in Midlothian. The most popular answer was for social media activity with 4/5 of all participants answering this:



From the above, the Midlothian public has expressed the desire to be kept up to date with community justice updates in an increasingly digital way. However, many respondents used the “other” to specifically request in person options such as attending community meetings as they and others do not use, or have trouble with, using tech.

Further Comments

At the end of the survey respondents had the opportunity to leave any further comments to their completed survey. 42 responses were received, with many of the themes shared already covered earlier in the survey. Some used the question to further outline the desire to be updated about community justice/unpaid work. 5 of the 42 shared that they believed that community justice was a “soft” option to treat crime. One notable theme that came up was concerns regarding youth offending. Below are some of the responses that illustrate these concerns:

Folk are becoming increasingly frustrated with the lack of respect from - in the main- young offenders. There has to be a greater deterrent.

Youths causing fear and alarm on busses, all gangs are very intimidating for women and elderly own their own.

The streets are definitely becoming a more dangerous place with much more happening although not always reported. Things need to change for young people now if you want to stop the prison population rising and less adults being dealt with on community orders.

Appendices

Appendix (a)

1 Do you understand the role of the Community Justice Partnership in Midlothian?

Please select only one item

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

What would you describe community justice as? (optional) - Please do not share any information that may identify yourself or others.

2 How effective would you say the following are in reducing offending?

1 (Not effective at all) 2 3 (Effective) 4 5 (Very effective)

Having access to support services
Please select only one item

Education and employment opportunities
Please select only one item

Heightened Police presence in the community
Please select only one item

Housing support
Please select only one item

Positive role models
Please select only one item

Social connection
Please select only one item

Other/Further comments - Please do not share information that could identify you or others

5 From all the services in question 4, how well do you think they work together to serve Midlothian?

Please select only one item

- Very well
- Well
- Neither well nor poor
- Poor
- Very Poor
- Unsure

Further comments - Please do not share information that could identify you or others (optional):

6 What are the barriers you face when accessing services in Midlothian? (Select all that apply)

Please select all that apply

- Access to venues
- Childcare
- Employment (e.g., cannot access as you are working during the services opening hours)
- Financial Cost (cost associated with using service)
- Judgement/stigma
- Lack of awareness/advertising of the service
- Literacy/numeracy
- Location of services
- Long waiting list/time
- Referral process
- Technology (e.g., use of online/IT)
- Transport
- Other(s)
- I do not face any barriers to accessing services

If other(s) (Please do not share information that could identify you or others):

7 How can Midlothian's Community Justice Partnership show that they are actively listening and supporting local communities? (Select all that apply)

Please select all that apply

- Regular community meetings and forums
- Provide ways for people to share ideas or concerns
- Ensure services are relevant and reflect specific needs of Midlothian
- Improve awareness of services
- Other(s)
- Unsure

If other(s) or further comments (Please do not share information that could identify you or others):

8 How can we keep you informed about community justice updates? (Select all that apply)

Please select all that apply

- Hold annual events
- Share community voices
- Leafleting
- Newsletter
- Social media updates
- Website updates
- Other(s)

If other(s) or further comments (Please do not share information that could identify you or others):

9 Further comments for the Community Justice Partnership in Midlothian - Please do not share information that could identify you or others (optional):

Midlothian Community Justice Public Consultation 2025

Before submitting your survey, we need to ask a few questions which will help us with our reporting. Please do not share any identifying details.

Please note: Survey responses will only be processed for those who have confirmed they are over the age of 11 and either live, or work/study in Midlothian.

10 Age:

Age: *(Required)*

Please select only one item

- 0-11
- 12-15
- 16-24
- 25-49
- 50-64
- 65+

11 Gender:

Gender:

Please select only one item

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say
- Other

If other:

12 Do you live in Midlothian?

(Required)

Please select only one item

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

If yes, where in Midlothian is your most recent address:

Please select only one item

- Bonnyrigg
- Dalkeith
- Gorebridge
- Loanhead
- Mayfield
- Penicuik
- Other

13 Do you work/study in Midlothian?

(Required)

Please select only one item

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

14 Please select which applies to you:

Please select only one item

- I work or volunteer in a role connected to community justice
- I do not work or volunteer in a role connected to community justice
- Prefer not to say

15 Have you ever committed a crime?

Please select only one item

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

16 Have you ever been the victim or survivor of a crime?

Please select only one item

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

Appendix (b)

Service	Number of responses	% Of Respondents who had Previously used
Police Service	195	68%
Education	168	59%
Physical Health	163	57%
Employment	128	45%
Mental Health	126	44%
Benefits	105	37%
Housing	100	35%
Fire and Rescue Services	90	32%
Foodbanks	84	29%
Disability services	83	29%
Neurodiversity	83	29%
Children Services	76	27%
Social Isolation	65	23%
Adult Support and Protection	61	21%
Victim Support	58	20%
Domestic Abuse	57	20%
Substance Use	52	18%
Violence Against Women and Girls	52	18%
LGBTQ+	44	15%

Appendix (c)

Services	Difficulty of Access (1-5)
Mental health	4.10
Neurodiversity	4.06
Housing	3.67
Social Isolation	3.69
Substance use	3.38
Adult support and protection	3.26
Benefits	3.51
Disability services	3.59
Victim support	3.14
Physical health	3.04
LGBTQ+	3.16
Children services	3.13
Employment	2.84
Police service	3.01
Violence against women and girls	2.90
Domestic Abuse	2.67
Education	2.36
Foodbanks	2.27
Fire and rescue service	2.10