

SERVICES FOR COMMUNITIES

# Parks Survey

June 2008 - June 2009

Customer Information & Research Team

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Version	Comments	Author	Location	Date
0.1 – Draft	Draft Report	David F Porteous	CI&R	12/06/09

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the topline results of the first full year of operation of the Parks Survey.

This report is based on 1,156 responses from residents and other park users and non-users.

The key findings of this report are:

- 73% are very or fairly satisfied with Edinburgh's parks
- 67% feel the upkeep of Edinburgh's parks is good or very good
- 67% say that Edinburgh's parks meet their needs. Unmet needs generally related to upkeep and cleanliness of parks and maintenance of sports facilities
- 80% of people are frequent users of parks, visiting at least once a week
- The most important aspects of parks were the "core products" of trees, grassed areas, nature and wildlife
- Also stated as important aspects of parks were public toilets, facilities for young people, sports facilities and signage
- Respondents had generally not tried to get information about parks before
- Respondents would like to receive information about parks via the internet (33%), park notice boards (21%) and local newspapers (20%)
- Most respondents had little or no experience of parks staff, however those who had rated parks staff highly against the attributes of politeness, friendliness and fairness

The parks survey was closed for redesign in June 2009 and will be opened again at the beginning of July 2009 when data collection for the current year will begin.

## METHODOLOGY

The Parks Survey questions were developed in consultation with staff and stakeholders of the service, including several “friends of parks” groups. The process of developing the survey also took account of existing surveys in Services for Communities (SfC) and the requirements of internal and external assessments of service performance (e.g. Customer Service Excellence, Edinburgh Improvement Model, Green Flag).

The survey was delivered online using surveymonkey.com and publicised on the City of Edinburgh Council web site and through emails to groups with a known interest in parks.

The survey remained open throughout 2008 / 09, but was closed to new data in June 2009. The survey is currently being reworked in light of the usefulness of the findings and will be re-launched in July 2009.

During the first year of survey operation 1,156 responses were received. However it should be noted that not all respondents answered all questions, so some questions have fewer responses recorded against them.

## SATISFACTION WITH PARKS AND GREENSPACE IN EDINBURGH

73% of respondents were satisfied with parks and greenspace in Edinburgh overall. This figure is similar to the figure obtained by the Annual Neighbourhood Survey of 5,015 Edinburgh residents (71% satisfied). Although the Parks Survey is undertaken online, it is clear that general perceptions of the whole population are very close to this.

The response to the Parks Survey can be broken down as follows:

Response	Number	%
Very satisfied	219	19%
Fairly satisfied	620	54%
Neither	103	9%
Fairly dissatisfied	140	12%
Very dissatisfied	60	5%
Don't know	4	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,146</b>	

Age does not appear to be a factor in determining satisfaction. This may be because different parks are used for a number of different reasons. However this survey has a very small sample of those aged older than 65 and younger than 16 – who are known to use parks but have not responded to this survey.

## USAGE OF PARKS

Edinburgh's parks are widely used, though for the purposes of this survey use can be both active sports and a more passive activity, such as walking by the park.

Under this broad definition only 3% of respondents said that they had not used parks in the month prior to them completing the survey.

80% of respondents could be classed as frequent users of parks, visiting at

least once a week. This is shown in full in the table below.

Visit frequency	Number	%
Almost every day	357	31%
At least once a week	563	49%
At least once in last month	187	16%
Not visited in last month	36	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,143</b>	

Satisfaction varies significantly by the amount of use. Frequent users are less likely to be satisfied than those who use parks infrequently.

- Those who visit **almost every day** are 66% satisfied;
- those who visit **at least once a week** are 76% satisfied;
- and those who visit **at least once a month** are 79% satisfied.

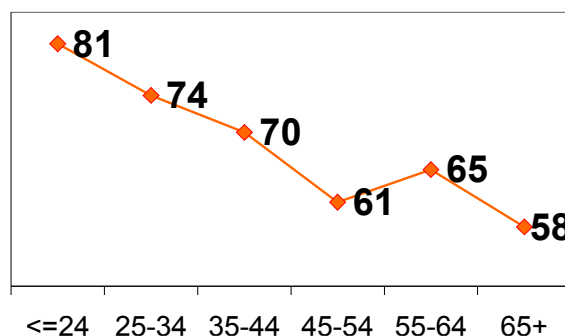
This pattern is logically anticipated. Those who use a park infrequently are making a specific effort to do so; they are therefore unlikely to make a specific effort to visit a park of inferior quality or which does not provide facilities for them.

Those who use a park more frequently, especially those visiting every day, may live near that park and would have little choice about walking by it every day, regardless of its condition.

### EDINBURGH'S PARKS MEET MY NEEDS

67% of respondents said that Edinburgh's parks met their needs. This varied significantly by age, with the youngest age group being most likely to agree, and the oldest age group being most likely to disagree. This is shown in the following graph showing age compared against

agreement with the statement "Edinburgh's parks meet my needs".



Reasons given for parks failing to meet needs are almost entirely upkeep and sports facilities issues, rather than accessibility. From the feedback provided, it does not appear that older people with disabilities are not having these met.

It may be that people of different ages have different maintenance standards, however it may also be that younger people are more likely to be users of large, well-maintained parks (for sports and recreation) while older people are more likely to use community gardens for relaxation.

### IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF PARKS

Respondents were asked to say which aspects of parks they thought were important. The following table shows the combined percentage of people who thought each aspect was "very important" and "quite important".

Aspect	%
Trees and woodlands	96%
Nature reserves	94%
Presence of wildlife	93%
Grassed areas	92%
Public toilets	77%
Facilities for young people	76%
Sports facilities	74%
Signage	74%
Educational activities	72%

Formal planting	68%
Allotments	65%
History of parks information	59%
Events in parks	57%
<i>Respondents varied from 1,039 -1,045</i>	

These figures show that all customers value the core elements of parks, i.e. grass, trees and nature.

Of the remaining aspects, some are particular priorities for individual groups – for example the number of people who said allotments were “very important” was the same as the number of people who said public toilets were “very important”.

While the importance of events in parks is ranked as lowest, this is from a survey on parks and not a survey of customers of events. As such this ranking provides only one point of view on the use of parks space.

### **PARKS INFORMATION**

Respondents were asked two questions about information on and provided by the parks service.

16% of respondents said that information about parks was easy to access. 12% said it was not.

21% of respondents felt that information supplied by the service was accurate. 7% said that it was not.

In both cases the clear majority of respondents felt they could not express an opinion, perhaps because they had never attempted to obtain information about parks before.

The percentage of respondents who didn't know or didn't express a strong opinion was 62% and 72% respectively.

Respondents were also asked to select the single way they would prefer to receive information about parks. The following table summarises the response.

<b>Response</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Internet	324	33%
Park notice board	205	21%
Local newspaper	201	20%
Edinburgh Outlook	73	7%
Parks newsletter	62	6%
Park friends group	50	5%
<i>All others</i>	80	8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>995</b>	

### **PARKS STAFF**

As part of the survey on parks, respondents were asked to rate several aspects of the performance of parks staff. The table below shows the attributes and the percentages of people who agreed, disagreed and didn't know if parks staff had those attributes.

<b>Attribute</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
Polite	36%	2%	61%
Friendly	34%	3%	63%
Fair	30%	3%	67%

In all cases the percentage of respondents who didn't know, or didn't feel able to express a strong opinion was the largest. Discounting the “don't know” responses, the scores staff achieve are high and comparable with staff ratings achieved in other research for other SfC services.