

Report

UTMC Public Consultation

Autumn 2009

Urban Traffic Management & Control
Highway & Transportation

1. The aim of the consultation

The aim of the consultation was to obtain feedback from those who use traffic signals in Leeds, to see how they as customers value the facilities provided by the UTMC section.

This was a virtual repeat of a customer survey done in 2005. Comparing the results will show if there are any significant changes in people's perception of the service.

The work of the UTMC section is extremely customer focussed, in that staff design and operate traffic signals for the benefit of the public, and all types of users are borne in mind at every stage. However it is not normally possible to get balanced feedback. The design, operation and maintenance of traffic signals is geared to ensuring, as much as possible, that all users have a safe, efficient and comfortable experience of any traffic signal installation, whether they use it as a pedestrian, cyclist or driver. In the past the difficulties of obtaining representative views from the community has meant that in most cases the degree of customer satisfaction is assessed by the objective and subjective judgments of engineers.

There are some people who contact UTMC with comments by phone, letter or email. Some comments are received by engineers working on site. These comments are usually made with regard to specific problems or complaints. While UTMC listen carefully to this group, and often alter details of designs/timings to tackle specific problems raised, these comments only represent a small number of users. Another possibility would be to conduct a survey of residents in the vicinity of a specific set of signals, however views expressed would concentrate on detailed local issues.

The users of any traffic signals include pedestrians and vehicle drivers. Pedestrians can be regular users of a facility, or occasional visitors. Vehicles include cars, HGVs, and buses/coaches. Drivers can be local, from Leeds, national or international. People pass through on business and on leisure. Interested groups include the police, bus companies, taxi drivers, etc. Cyclists and horses also use traffic signals. Consulting this wide group is difficult, and virtually impossible without creating a sampling bias.

2. Method used to get representative responses

2.1 Choice of method

To get as wide a cross section as possible of drivers, pedestrians, locals, commuters & visitors an internet survey was conceived. While this has some drawbacks (anonymity, unknown bias) it has many advantages for a service affecting such a widespread clientele as UTMC.

2.2 The questionnaire

The 2009 questionnaire was based on the one used in the 2005 survey, with a few questions changed to reflect the fact that the travel information database is up and running (see appendix 1). Care was taken to phrase the questions so as to encourage objective responses. There were some general questions, a section headed 'pedestrians point of view', a section for those who had contacted the UTMC centre asking about the quality of the response, and a section on signals at junctions. There were 6 questions to give sampling information. There was also a space for additional comments.

2.3 Publicising the questionnaire

To gain a widespread customer base three methods were used to publicise the questionnaire and encourage responses from a widespread clientele.

- The LCC Internet public web site. The questionnaire was put on the 'Talking Point' consultation page for a month.
- The Leeds Travel Info web site. A pop-up asked viewers if they would be prepared to fill in the questionnaire.
- Those members of the public who have contacted UTC by email or letter in 2009 were written to specifically to invite them to complete the questionnaire. While this may encourage a bias towards those who have complained in the past it was important to get feedback on how the public viewed the response to complaints and queries from the public. Interestingly, exactly the same percentage of responses as in 2005 (12.6%) were from this group.

2.4 The response

292 forms were completed. This compares with 510 done in 2005. The lower number probably reflects the much lower profile of 'Talking Point' compared with the LCC web site front page. While this smaller sample is a good indication of the public's view it is recognised that results are not as valid statistically as the 2005 results.

2.5 Equality and diversity

The respondents characteristics were as follows:

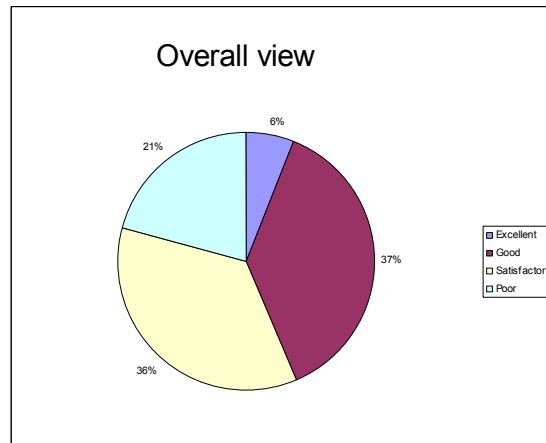
- 62% males and 38% females.
- 88% from within the Leeds postcode, 12% outside.
- 95% White, and 5% from ethnic minorities (the UK average is 7.9%).
- 9% said that they were registered disabled (the UK population has 14%).
- Multiple responses were permitted to the question about the respondents' interest in signals: 88% stated their interest was as a Car User, 72% as a Pedestrian, 48% as a Public Transport user, 18% as a Cyclist and 2.5% as a Motorcyclist

These percentages are much the same as 2005, with the only significant difference being the percentage of public transport users which has gone up from 39% to 48%

3. Analysis of responses

3.1 The overall view

Overall people seemed fairly positive with 79% of the total responses to all questions marking either Excellent (6%), Good (37%) or Satisfactory (36%). This is very similar to the 2005 results (80%), though in fact the 'Good' response has increased by 3%

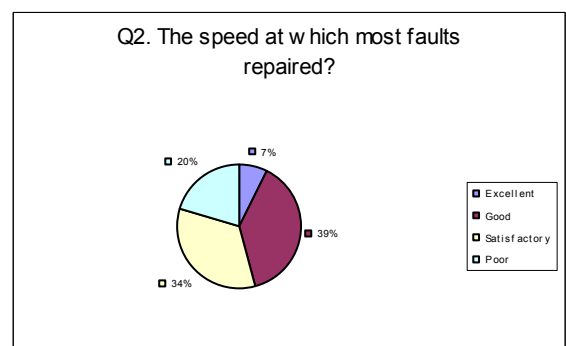
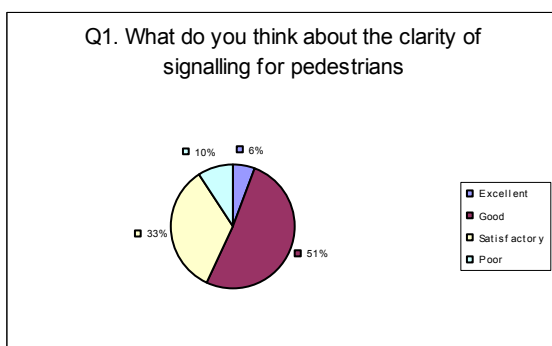


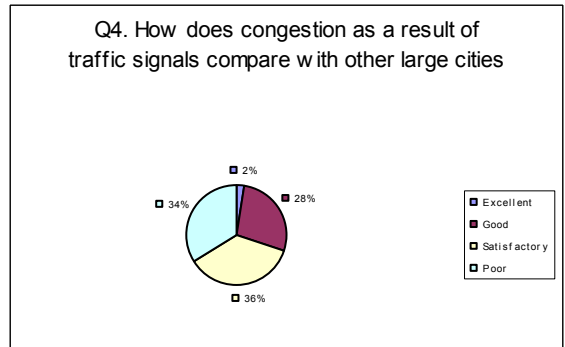
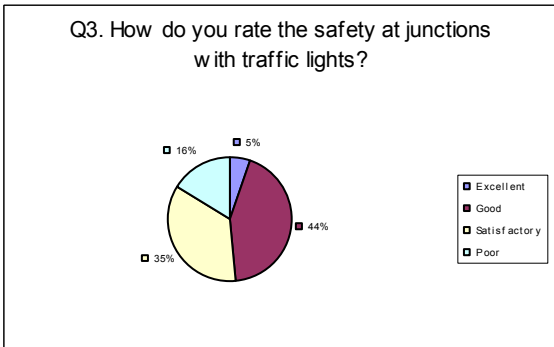
The following paragraphs look at the detailed response to each part of the questionnaire. This is done under sections corresponding to the four subsections of the questionnaire: General Satisfaction, Pedestrian Perspective, Response to the Public, and Signals at Junctions. The information used to summarise each sub-section is contained in a separate document available on the Leedstravel.info website or from the Urban Traffic Management and Control section. Note that where a person has put "don't know" or simply not answered a question this response has been excluded from the percentage figures given.

Details figures for the comparison with 2005 results are given in Appendix 2

3.2 General Satisfaction [Q1 – Q4]

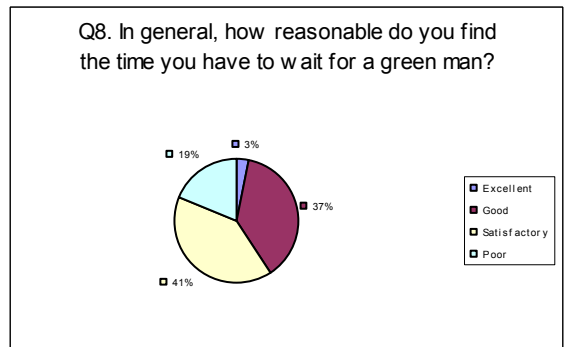
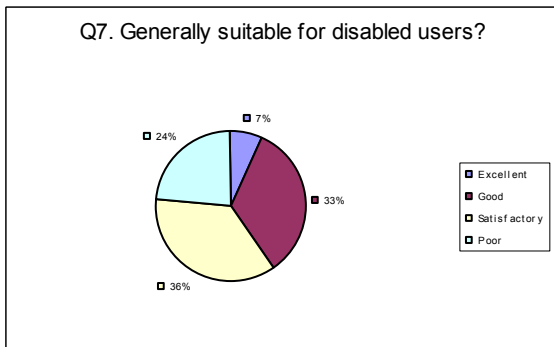
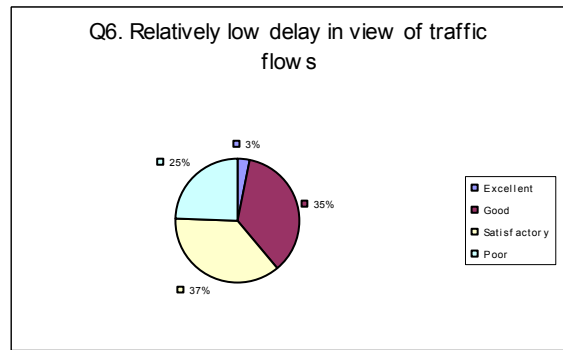
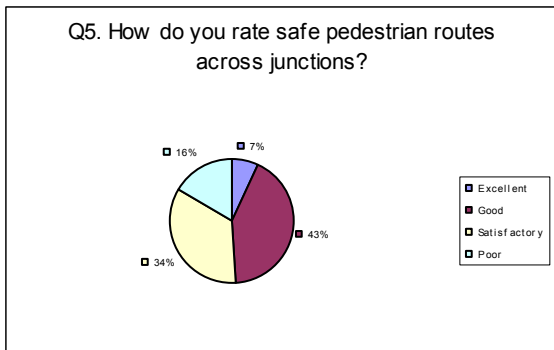
Questions 1 – 4 were aimed at ascertaining the public's general level of satisfaction with the traffic lights in Leeds. When combining the results for all four questions of this section, 80% felt the system was either Excellent (5%) Good (41%) or Satisfactory (35%). The results for question 1 on the clarity of signalling for pedestrians stands out as having an especially positive response. Question 2 on speed of repairs shows reasonable satisfaction with the council's performance. There is a slight decline in satisfaction from 2005 – this is surprising since the Council's performance monitoring of the contractor shows an improvement in response time. The results from question 3 on the safety of junctions show that the public are concerned with this issue: while 48% say Excellent or Good, 16% rated it as Poor. Last time these figures were 42% and 19%, showing a significant increase in satisfaction. Figure 3.2.4 shows that congestion is also a concern with 34% saying Poor. This has increased from 27% in 2005, showing growing concern over this issue. A number of additional comments were made about congestion, mostly relating to problems at specific sites.





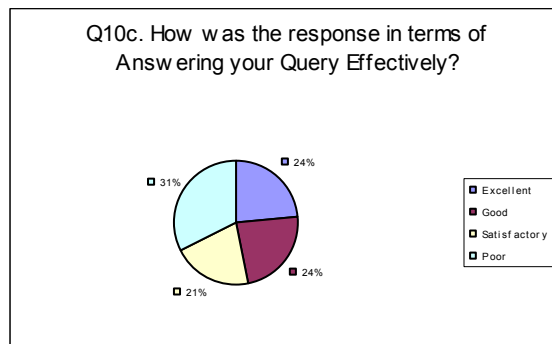
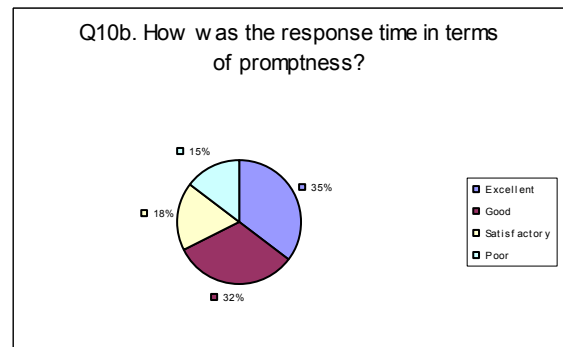
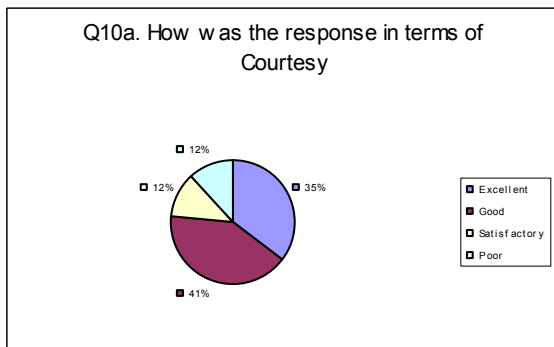
3.3 The Pedestrians' Perspective [Q5 - Q8].

Questions 5 – 8 were aimed at understanding how pedestrians view the performance of traffic lights in Leeds. When combining the results for all four questions in this section, 79% felt the system was either Excellent (5%) Good (38%) or Satisfactory (37%). The results for each individual question follow a similar pattern. Interestingly, question 7 on provision for disabled users shows a significant improvement from 2005: 24% put Poor against 32% last time. This reflects the work done on DDA improvements at traffic signals. Likewise the pedestrians view of the waiting time at pedestrian crossings (Question 8) is favourable, and slightly up from last time with 81% giving Excellent, Good or Satisfactory.



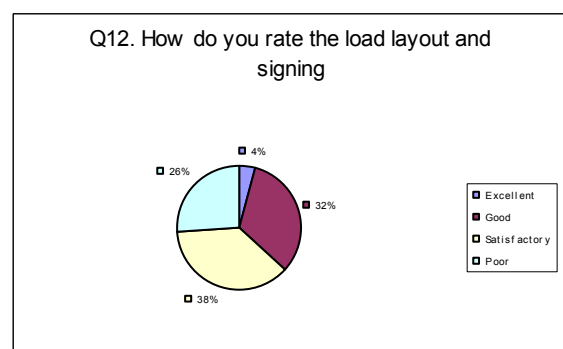
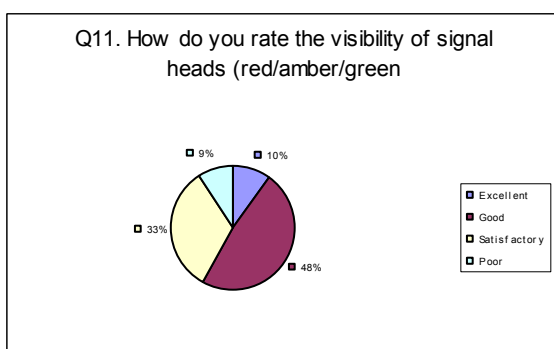
3.4 Contact with UTMC [Q9-10]

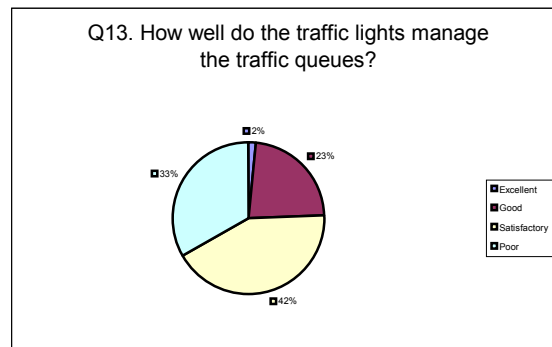
Staff in the UTMC section put a high priority on giving the public quality responses within a week – though obviously it is not possible to do everything that is asked for. 12% of the people taking part in the survey had contacted the UTMC control room in the past. Three questions were asked about how well the public feel the section responded. When combining the results for all three questions in this section, 80% felt the response was either Excellent (31%) Good (32%) or Satisfactory (17%). Comparisons with last time are confusing. For “courtesy” the Excellent response has dropped by 7% while the Good response has increased by 15%. People were more pleased with the Promptness of the response, but less satisfied with the outcome – perhaps it is harder to give people what they ask for in a busy city.



3.5 Signals at Junctions [Q11-Q13]

Questions 11 – 13 were aimed at ascertaining the public’s view of traffic signals at junctions. When combining the results for all three questions, 77% felt the provision was either Excellent (5%) Good (34%) or Satisfactory (37%). Question 11 revealed that 58% felt the visibility of signal heads were either Excellent or Good. Question 12 shows that only 37% rate the road layout as Excellent or Good, while a rather large proportion of 26% selected Poor. This may reflect the problems of designing junctions in a tight urban environment or the complexity of some of the larger junctions. Question 13 reveals that only 25% regarded the management of traffic queues using signals as either Excellent or Good, which was matched by 33% rating it as Poor. This is a slightly worse perception than in 2005.





3.6 Use of traveller information

10% of respondents used the Leedstravel.info web site frequently, and 35% occasionally. This represents an extremely high percentage, which probably reflects the fact that many of the responses came from the internet posting of the questionnaire. When asked if they would value text information about congestion on their travel route the response was very positive (including from people who had never accessed the web site). 21% said it would be very useful, 25% useful, and 27% occasionally useful. This confirms the appropriateness of LCC developing text messaging as a source of congestion information.

4. Summary

4.1 The overall response was encouraging, both in terms of numbers and content. The method used gave a good number of responses from a seemingly balanced section of the public using traffic signals in Leeds.

4.2 The general opinion was that Leeds traffic signals compare favourably with other cities. On the whole the people of Leeds are happy with the current system though they still see areas for improvement.

4.3 Areas for action have been highlighted to provide answers to general queries raised, address problems at specific sites, and to encourage greater interaction with the public in future.

4.4 The comparison with the survey done in 2005 has revealed little change overall. There are a number of minor fluctuations within the deviation expected with this sample size.

4.5 The questionnaire survey has been effective in sampling public opinion and will lead to further improvements in what is already considered a good service.

TRAFFIC LIGHT SURVEY

Your views matter....

We'd like to know what you think, whether you are a car driver, pedestrian or public transport user. Please circle the reply that you feel most appropriate.

GENERAL COMMENTS

In your experience how do you think Leeds traffic lights compare with other large cities in the UK

1. What do you think of the clarity of signalling for pedestrians?
(indications good and not confusing)
Excellent / Good / Satisfactory / Poor / Don't know
2. The speed at which most faults are repaired?
Excellent / Good / Satisfactory / Poor / Don't know
3. How do you rate the safety at junctions with traffic lights?
Excellent / Good / Satisfactory / Poor / Don't know
4. How does congestion as a result of traffic signals compare with other large cities?
Excellent / Good / Satisfactory / Poor / Don't know

PEDESTRIANS POINT OF VIEW

How do you think our signals rate in terms of...

5. Safe pedestrian routes across junctions?
Excellent / Good / Satisfactory / Poor / Don't know
6. Relatively low delay in view of traffic flows?
Excellent / Good / Satisfactory / Poor / Don't know
7. Generally suitable for disabled users?
Excellent / Good / Satisfactory / Poor / Don't know
8. In general, how reasonable do you find the time you have to wait for a green man?
Excellent / Good / Satisfactory / Poor / Don't know

URBAN TRAFFIC CONTROL CENTRE

9. Have you needed to contact the Leeds traffic signals section (Urban Traffic Control)?
Yes [Go to 10] **No** [Go to Q11]
10. How was the response in terms of ...
 - (a) Courtesy?
Excellent / Good / Satisfactory / Poor
 - (b) Promptness?
Excellent / Good / Satisfactory / Poor
 - (c) Answering your query effectively ?
Excellent / Good / Satisfactory / Poor

SIGNALS AT JUNCTIONS

11. How do you rate the visibility of signal heads (*the red / amber / green lights*)?
Excellent / Good / Satisfactory / Poor / Don't know
12. How do you rate the road layout and signing?
Excellent / Good / Satisfactory / Poor / Don't know
13. How well do the traffic lights manage the traffic queues?
Excellent / Good / Satisfactory / Poor / Don't know

TRAFFIC INFORMATION

Leeds provides a free web site, with information on traffic and travel in Leeds. Live CCTV images, car park occupancy, congestion information and much, much more is available on www.LeedsTravel.Info

14. Have you visited our information web site?
Often / Occasionally / Never
15. Do you think travel information should be more available?
Yes / No
16. How useful would it be to get a text message if your route is congested?
Very useful / Useful / Occasionally useful / Not at all

SAMPLING INFORMATION

This data will be used for sampling purposes ONLY.

17. Postcode (first part only)
18. Gender
Male / Female
19. Age
Under 17 / 17-20 / 21-30 / 31-60 / Over 60
20. Ethnic Origin
Asian or Asian British / Black or Black British / Chinese / Mixed / White
21. Are you Disabled
Yes / No
22. Please state your interest in this survey
Car User / Pedestrian / Public Transport / Motor cyclist / Cyclist (multiples)
23. If you would like to make any comments on the traffic lights in Leeds or expand on any of your responses, please feel free to do so here.

Thank you for your help. These results will be fed into the decision making processes. If you want to discuss any of these questions, please email traffic.signals@leeds.gov.uk.

Appendix 2 – Comparison of 2009 and 2005 results

Question		Answer						Total of Ex, Pr, Sat
		Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Yes	No	
Q1. What do you think about the clarity of signalling for pedestrians	2009	5.9%	51.1%	33.5%	9.6%			90.4%
	2005	8.9%	50.1%	31.4%	9.7%			90.3%
Q2. The speed at which most faults repaired?	2009	7.5%	38.3%	33.9%	20.3%			79.7%
	2005	7.6%	40.8%	40.6%	11.1%			88.9%
Q3. How do you rate the safety at junctions with traffic lights?	2009	5.1%	43.3%	35.4%	16.2%			83.8%
	2005	4.1%	38.1%	38.7%	19.1%			80.9%
Q4. How does congestion as a result of traffic signals compare with other large cities	2009	2.4%	27.7%	36.1%	33.7%			66.3%
	2005	3.1%	22.6%	47.3%	27.1%			72.9%
Q5. How do you rate safe pedestrian routes across junctions?	2009	6.9%	42.4%	34.4%	16.3%			83.7%
	2005	4.1%	37.0%	39.2%	19.7%			80.3%
Q6. Relatively low delay in view of traffic flows	2009	3.4%	35.4%	36.6%	24.6%			75.4%
	2005	3.0%	28.4%	47.9%	22.8%			77.2%
Q7. Generally suitable for disabled users?	2009	7.1%	33.3%	35.9%	23.7%			76.3%
	2005	3.5%	30.4%	33.9%	32.2%			67.8%
Q8. In general, how reasonable do you find the time you have to wait for a green man?	2009	3.3%	37.5%	40.4%	18.9%			81.1%
	2005	3.1%	29.1%	45.3%	22.5%			77.5%
Q 9. Have you needed to contact the Leeds traffic signals section (Urban Traffic Control)?	2009					12.37%	87.63%	
	2005					12.35%	87.65%	

Q10a. How was the response in terms of Courtesy	2009	35.3%	41.2%	11.8%	11.8%			88.2%
	2005	42.2%	26.6%	23.4%	7.8%			92.2%
Q10b. How was the response time in terms of promptness?	2009	35.3%	32.4%	17.6%	14.7%			85.3%
	2005	39.1%	25.0%	21.9%	14.1%			85.9%
Q10c. How was the response in terms of Answering your Query Effectively?	2009	23.5%	23.5%	20.6%	32.4%			67.6%
	2005	28.1%	39.1%	18.8%	14.1%			85.9%
Q11. How do you rate the visibility of signal heads (red/amber/green)	2009	10.0%	48.0%	32.7%	9.3%			90.7%
	2005	9.1%	44.5%	35.0%	11.3%			88.7%
Q12. How do you rate the load layout and signing	2009	4.3%	32.4%	37.4%	26.0%			74.0%
	2005	3.8%	32.6%	40.7%	22.9%			77.1%
Q13. How well do the traffic lights manage the traffic queues?	2009	1.8%	22.8%	42.0%	33.5%			66.5%
	2005	2.6%	24.3%	46.5%	26.6%			73.4%

		Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
questions 1 to 13 total	2009	6.1%	37.5%	35.6%	20.9%
	2005	6.0%	34.2%	39.9%	19.9%

>5% imp		KEY	improvement	
>5% worse			no improvement	