

Harpur Hill, Buxton
Derbyshire, SK17 9JN
T: +44 (0)1298 218000
F: +44 (0)1298 218590
W: www.hsl.gov.uk



**Effective Communication: The People, The
Message and The Media**

HSL/2007/35

Project Leader: **Roxane L. Gervais, Ph.D**

Author(s): **Roxane L. Gervais, Ph.D**

Science Group: **Human Factors**

© Crown copyright (2007)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author thanks all of the individuals who kindly agreed to be interviewed for this project, as well as all of the organisations that considerately completed and returned the questionnaires. Thanks also to HSL colleague Gill Faulkner for her much appreciated assistance in transcribing interviews and ensuring that questionnaires were mailed to the selected businesses.

CONTENTS

1	Introduction	1
1.1	Background.....	1
1.2	Aim and Objectives.....	1
1.3	The Value of Communication to Organisations	1
1.4	An Overview of SMEs and Ethnic Minority Businesses	3
2	Method	4
2.1	The Case Studies.....	4
2.2	The Interviews	5
2.3	The Survey	5
2.4	Limitations of the Research	7
3	Results - Case Studies	8
4	Results - Interviews	26
4.1	Overview of the Participants.....	26
4.2	Thematic Analysis	26
5	Results - Survey	31
5.1	Demographic Details	31
5.2	Contact Preferences and Reasons	34
5.3	Perceptions of Health and Safety Material	35
5.4	Awareness of Services of the LBC	37
5.5	Perceptions of Compliance/Comfort Levels with Health and Safety Regulations ...	39
5.6	Belief in and Willingness to Work with the LBC's Health and Safety Service	40
5.7	Levels of Satisfaction with the LBC's Health and Safety Service	44
5.8	Perceptions of Areas to Improve.....	47
6	Discussion	49
7	Recommendations	52
8	Methods to Overcome Potential Barriers to the Success of Interventions	54
9	Appendices	55
9.1	Appendix 1: Interview Schedule for the Case Studies.....	56
9.2	Appendix 2: Interview Schedule for the Interviews	60
9.3	Appendix 3: Duty Holder Questionnaire and Covering Letters	64
9.4	Appendix 4: Listing of the Themes and Sub-Themes (Interview Data)	70
9.5	Appendix 5: Detailed Responses to the Questionnaire.....	72
10	References	84

List of Figures

Figure 1: Ratings of communication factors (case study 1).....	10
Figure 2: Ratings of communication factors (case study 2).....	13
Figure 3: Ratings of communication factors (case study 3).....	16
Figure 4: Ratings of communication factors (case study 4).....	19
Figure 5: Ratings of communication factors (case study 5).....	22
Figure 6: Ratings of communication factors (mean levels - interviews).....	26
Figure 7: Businesses by size.....	32
Figure 8: Businesses by sector	32
Figure 9: Respondents by gender and age.....	33
Figure 10: Ethnicity of respondents	33

List of Tables

Table 1: Reasons listed for questionnaire returns	6
Table 2: Factors influencing communication (case studies)	8
Table 3: Reasons for contact by size of organisation.....	34
Table 4: Contact preferences by size of organisation.....	34
Table 5: Contact preferences by ethnic groups	35
Table 6: Sourcing health and safety information from LBC by size of organisation.....	35
Table 7: Sourcing health and safety information from LBC by ethnic groups	35
Table 8: Ability to understand material by size of organisation	36
Table 9: Ability to understand material by ethnic groups	36
Table 10: Reading of material/information by size of organisation.....	36
Table 11: Reading of material/information by ethnic groups	37
Table 12: Accessibility of website by size of organisation	37
Table 13: Accessibility of website by ethnic groups.....	37
Table 14: Knowledge of the services that LBC provides by size of organisation.....	38
Table 15: Knowledge of the services that LBC provides by ethnic groups	38
Table 16: Knowledge of getting information from LBC by size of organisation	38
Table 17: Knowledge of getting information from LBC by ethnic groups.....	39
Table 18: Perception of knowledge of health and safety regulations by size of organisation	39
Table 19: Perception of knowledge of health and safety regulations by ethnic groups	39
Table 20: Perception of compliance with health and safety regulations by size of organisation	40
Table 21: Perception of compliance with health and safety regulations by ethnic groups	40
Table 22: Trust in the LBC by size of organisation	40
Table 23: Trust in the LBC by ethnic groups.....	41
Table 24: Belief in officers by size of organisation	41
Table 25: Belief in officers by ethnic groups	41
Table 26: Receipt of information by size of organisation	42
Table 27: Receipt of information by ethnic groups.....	42
Table 28: Belief can get assistance from the LBC by size of organisation.....	42
Table 29: Belief can get assistance from the LBC by ethnic groups.....	43
Table 30: Belief that LBC can assist with H&S needs by size of organisation	43
Table 31: Belief that LBC can assist with H&S needs by ethnic groups	43
Table 32: Interest in discussion groups by size of organisation	44
Table 33: Interest in discussion groups by ethnic groups	44
Table 34: Satisfaction with the services provided by the LBC by size of organisation.....	44
Table 35: Satisfaction with the services provided by the LBC by ethnic groups.....	45
Table 36: Perceptions of benefit by size of organisation	45
Table 37: Perceptions of benefit by ethnic groups	45
Table 38: Rating of overall experience by size of organisation	46
Table 39: Rating of overall experience by ethnic groups.....	46
Table 40: Extent of response to information from the LBC by size of organisation	46
Table 41: Extent of response to information from the LBC by ethnic groups	47
Table 42: Perception of the areas for improvement by size of organisation	47

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The element of communication is an important part of the working environment. It allows individuals to gain information and knowledge on which they can then act. Most importantly, when communicating with others the party for which the message is intended needs to receive and accept it. Due to this two-way interface, the sender and the receiver should ensure that both parties interpret and act on the message in the same way. This project, to assess communication processes, arose as the Luton Borough Council's (LBC) health and safety enforcement service experiences considerable difficulty in establishing and maintaining effective contact with its duty holders, particularly with small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The Council has used a variety of approaches in the past, inclusive of mail shots and promotion of non-enforcement activities, to connect with business groups. Unfortunately, the reaction to these initiatives has been very low, with response rates ranging from zero to three per cent.

Due to the low level of response the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) in conjunction with the LBC commissioned the Health & Safety Laboratory (HSL) to assist with establishing the most effective channels of communication that could be used in order to provide advice to local businesses, so that planned interventions and initiatives achieve the greatest effect and compliance with LAC 67/1. Specifically, the aim of the project was to identify effective methods and media for communication of Health & Safety messages and information with target stakeholder groups, particularly SMEs. These included any preferred methods of communication, how to provide advice effectively, and the identification of those communication media of which businesses are more likely to take notice and respond.

The project entailed using two methods, interviews and a survey. They generated case studies, interview data and questionnaire data to allow an overview of the perceptions and attitudes which stakeholders, employees and duty holders have towards the communication process.

The results showed a combined approach is necessary to achieve effective communication. The approach is inclusive of: the usage of a variety of methods, the use of intermediaries, the use of face-to-face communication, the need to determine those methods that work best for specific groups, and evaluating the process. Overall, all of the data highlight that businesses are for the most part receptive to information, but there are challenges to the communication process that need to be worked through systematically, consistently and continuously, and in a way that is sustained over time.

The following recommendations arose from the research as methods or techniques that would improve the interaction that needs to be made with duty holders. While they are by no means exhaustive, they do provide a starting point that can be developed and built upon.

- The formation of a communication plan
- The consolidation of outward bound correspondence
- The use of a variety of methods
- The establishment of an evaluative process
- The incorporation of cultural nuances
- The use of intermediaries (inclusive of prominent figures in the community)
- Maintaining links with established contacts
- The use of sector specific information

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

This project arose as the Luton Borough Council's (LBC) health and safety enforcement service experiences considerable difficulty in establishing and maintaining effective contact with its duty holders, particularly those categorised as small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The Council has used a variety of approaches in the past, inclusive of mail shots and promotion of non-enforcement activities, to connect with business groups. Unfortunately, the reaction to these initiatives has been very low, with response rates ranging from zero to three per cent.

Due to the low level of response the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) in conjunction with the Luton Borough Council commissioned the Health & Safety Laboratory (HSL) to assist with establishing the most effective channels of communication that could be used in order to provide advice to local businesses, so that planned interventions and initiatives achieve the greatest effect and compliance with LAC 67/1.

1.2 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the project was:

To identify effective methods and media for communication of Health & Safety messages and information with target stakeholder groups, particularly SMEs. These should include any preferred methods of communication, how to provide advice effectively, and the identification of those communication media of which businesses are more likely to take notice and respond.

The objectives were:

1. To produce a brief overview of research into communicating with and influencing target business groups, particularly SMEs and ethnic minorities.
2. To contact Local Authorities (LAs) with responsibilities for large numbers of SMEs and other specific target groups to discuss their experiences in dealing with such groups.
3. To use the data gathered from the first two objectives to develop a series of methods (based on case study approaches) focusing on the practical aspects of communication and intervention and methods for overcoming potential barriers to the success of such interventions.
4. To explore organisational factors that may impact on the communication processes that are currently in place.
5. To explore the general and specific attitudes of the duty holders in Luton to the Borough Council.

1.3 THE VALUE OF COMMUNICATION TO ORGANISATIONS

Communication is an important part of the working environment. It allows individuals to gain information and knowledge on which they can then act. However, when communicating with others it is essential that the message is received and accepted by the party for which it was

intended. The communication between organisations tends to be generally a two-way process. Due to this two-way interface, the sender and the receiver should ensure that both parties interpret and act on the message in the same way, as noted, “*The goal of communication is the acceptance of the sender’s message by the receiver. If the receiver understands the meaning of a message that asks for action, but fails to act, the goal of communications is not achieved. But if the receiver does respond to the message by taking the appropriate action, the goal of the communication has been achieved.*”¹ It is fundamental in any sort of two-way communication that the end result is attained. Unfortunately, communication does not always result in a positive action.

In addition to acting on the information received it is important that the sender knows that the receiver is acting on the information, and this can be achieved only through the appropriate feedback:

- Feedback is the sender’s way of determining the effectiveness of his/her message.
- Feedback measures influence.
- Feedback provides a method of eliminating mis-communication.²

Without feedback it is difficult and may at times be impossible to move the relationship forward in a constructive and purposeful manner. The LBC’s health and safety service present situation of very poor feedback does not lend itself in being able to ensure that it is providing services that are required and that are providing value.

One issue that has been shown to influence positively on the communication process include trust (Paine, 2003), but as Frewer (2001) has highlighted, an improvement in the communication process, specifically on the transfer of information, does not work necessarily to overcome issues of distrust. Other issues include courtesy (Ling, 2004) to ensure that the message is conveyed successfully, and the openness to communication (COI Communications, 2003) which can include those businesses that want to keep up to date with issues that affect the business or those that want to get on with the running of the business.

Due to the limited resources and restraints under which many small businesses operate it is essential that any means of communication need to be relevant and provide good value to the business. Research has substantiated that small businesses when interacting with government-funded services would prefer the following: a customer-focussed approach; staff that are approachable, knowledgeable and responsive; a single point of communication; easier access to information; faster response times; locally based sources of information and advice; and one-to-one advice and consultancy (Rajkumar and Thomas, 2004). Specifically in respect of health and safety, research has shown that intermediaries, such as banks, professional and trade associations and business advice organizations have been able to impact on the attitudes and practices on health and safety in small businesses (Walker and Tait, 2003). However, it is well documented that small firms, although they trust the information that the HSE provides, are hesitant to contact them for fear of inspection (see O’Hara and Dickety, 2000).

¹ *Communication/Diffusion-Adoption Process. Agricultural Communications and Journalism.*
<<http://www.aged.tamu.edu/agjour/howto/Communication.htm>> accessed 10 May 2006.

² *Ibid.*

1.4 AN OVERVIEW OF SMES AND ETHNIC MINORITY BUSINESSES

There is great value in contacting and maintaining contact with SMEs and ethnic minority owned businesses. This is due mainly to the fact that SMEs account for 4.3 million business enterprises in the UK, with 99.3 per cent of all businesses classified as small, 0.6 per cent as medium and 0.1 per cent as large (DTI, 2005). Of these, the number of enterprises without any employees amounted to 3.1 million (72.8%), with most of the new jobs created by micro enterprises of up to six people (Vinten, 1999).

Although SMEs are seen as one group, in reality they constitute a very diverse sector (COI Communications, 2003; Ling, 2004; Stephens, Hickling, Gaskell, Burton and Holland, 2004; Vinten, 1999; Woolgar, Vaux, Gomes, Ezingear and Grieve, 1998), with ethnicity comprising one of these diversities. Businesses owned by ethnic minorities constitute close to ten per cent (9.8%) of all small businesses in England, are more likely to have employees than non-ethnic minority businesses (43.2% to 29.2%), and are more likely to be micro businesses than non-ethnic businesses (90.2% to 83.0%; Whitehead, Purdy and Mascarenhas-Keyes, 2006). Further ethnic minority businesses with employees were less likely to seek advice about regulations and to have contact with government than non-ethnic minority businesses (Whitehead et al., 2006). Other research has highlighted the closeness of some ethnic communities and the need to keep a low profile from government bodies to reduce any perceived threat of enforcement (Marlow, 2006).

2 METHOD

The researcher used two methods, interviewing and a survey for the present project. From these methods, the researcher was able to generate case studies, interview data and questionnaire data. All of these data allowed an overview of the perceptions and attitudes, which stakeholders, employees and duty holders have towards the communication process. The methods are detailed below.

2.1 THE CASE STUDIES

2.1.1 The Sample

The HSE's nine Partnership Managers were contacted by e-mail describing the scope of the study and asking for assistance in identifying any Local Authorities that either had some success in engaging with SMEs and ethnic minorities, or engaged to some extent with large groups of SMEs and ethnic minorities. Replies were received from three of the managers who supplied the names and e-mail addresses of individuals who they felt would be able to contribute to the project. The researcher contacted the individuals and they agreed to be interviewed about the project on which they were working, or had worked.

As a result of these initial interviews one of the interviewees recommended two other individuals who were involved with similar projects, who he felt would be able to make a contribution. The researcher got in touch with the recommended persons and they agreed also to be interviewed about their work.

2.1.2 The Interview Schedule

The interview schedule was devised to include those processes and factors that are shown to have an impact on communicating with SMEs (see Gervais, 2006). The interview schedule was semi-structured in nature and consisted of twenty-three questions. The questions included sections on *establishing contact*, *methods of communication*, *influences on businesses*, *barriers to communication*, *key lessons learned* and *demographic details*. See Appendix 1 for a copy of the interview schedule.

2.1.3 The Interviews

Four of the interviews were telephone based and recorded, and one was conducted face-to-face and recorded also. At the start of each interview the participants were informed of the study, its objectives and the confidential nature of the interview. The researcher recorded the interviews to ensure that all the information was collected verbatim, as it would be used to build a case study. The respondents were given the option of not having their interviews recorded, but they all agreed to the process. The researcher asked the questions in the order that they appeared on the question set, but did pursue any interesting views that arose. The interviews lasted from just over 17 minutes to two hours, at the end of which the participants were thanked for their time and offered the opportunity to ask any questions.

2.1.4 The Analysis

The taped interview data were transcribed verbatim in order to ensure that all of the information was available to construct the case studies. Case studies are part of a research strategy that utilises both qualitative and quantitative evidence (Yin, 2002), and are designed by examining events, collecting the data, analyzing the information, and reporting the results. The researcher

conducted an in-depth assessment of the data in order to draw out the salient facts pertinent to the relevant issues pursued during the interview.

2.2 THE INTERVIEWS

2.2.1 The Sample

The LBC's main contact for the project was asked for assistance in identifying any employees of the council who would be willing to be interviewed about the communication processes within the organisation. The researcher was supplied with seven individuals who were approached by e-mail to ask if they were interested in participating in the project. Three individuals agreed to be interviewed. Follow-up requests by e-mail did not generate any additional assistance.

2.2.2 The Interview Schedule

The interview schedule was devised to include those processes and factors that are shown to have an impact on the communication process and specifically communicating with SMEs (see Gervais, 2006). The interview schedule was semi-structured in nature and consisted of twenty-six questions. The questions included sections on *establishing contact, methods of communication, processes, influences on businesses, barriers to communication, key lessons learned and demographic details*. See Appendix 2 for a copy of the interview schedule.

2.2.3 The Interviews

All of the interviews were telephone based and recorded. At the start of each interview the participants were informed of the study, its objectives and the confidential nature of the interview. The researcher recorded the interviews to ensure that all the information was collected verbatim. The respondents were given the option of not having their interviews recorded, but they all agreed to the process. The researcher asked the questions in the order that they appeared on the question set, but did pursue any interesting views that arose. The interviews lasted on average 35 minutes, at the end of which the participants were thanked for their time and offered the opportunity to ask any questions.

2.2.4 The Analysis

The researcher analysed the transcriptions of the interviews using a thematic analysis approach. The interview schedule was able to provide a deductive framework for the analysis, while an inductive approach was used to allow themes to emerge from the data (Patton, 1990). A process of constant comparison, among the responses to the questions and among interviews, elicited all of the overarching themes.

2.3 THE SURVEY

2.3.1 The Sample

A random sample was obtained from the 2144 businesses in the database obtained from the Luton Borough Council. The data were entered in the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software package and a random sample of 55 per cent was requested. The over sampling was necessary as some of the businesses in the database either did not have a name for the business or the postcode was missing. From this sampling process a total of 873 businesses

were realised, from which the first 800 were selected. Businesses with the word ‘vacant’ in the address field were removed also from the sample.

Eight hundred questionnaires were sent out on the first mailing and 70 were returned. After a six week period the second mailing of 685 questionnaires was done, and realised a further 99 responses. The second mailing consisted of a fewer number of questionnaires to ensure that the businesses from which questionnaires were returned unopened were not included. In total 169 completed questionnaires were returned allowing an overall response rate of 21 per cent.

Out of the 800 mailed questionnaires, 104 were returned unopened as *addressee has gone away*, 17 *refused to accept* the questionnaire, and seven were returned listing the *address as incomplete*. Table 1 presents the full list of reasons for the return of 141 of the questionnaires.

Table 1: Reasons listed for questionnaire returns

Reasons	<i>n</i>
Addressee has gone away	104
Refused	17
Address incomplete	7
Addressee unknown	7
Address inaccessible	1
No such address	1
No reason listed on envelope	1
Do not respond to questionnaires and no reason to contact LBC’s Health and Safety Service	1
Have not had contact with LBC’s Health and Safety Service and cannot complete the questionnaire	1
Questionnaire needed to be sent to Head Office in (city named), as it could not be completed in regional office in Luton	1
Total	141

2.3.2 The Questionnaire

The questionnaire was devised to include those perceptions and attitudes that duty holders within Luton would have about the services that the Luton Borough Council provides and about health and safety in general. Demographic questions were included, for example, to determine the size of the businesses and the sector within which they fell. See Appendix 3 for a copy of the questionnaire, and the covering letters, sent at both times of the mailings.

2.3.3 The Analysis

The data were entered into an SPSS database for analysis, and to enable the calculation of frequency and descriptive statistics. The results that are presented include, where relevant, an average measure, the mean (*M*), as well as the standard deviation from the mean (*SD*). The *SD* illustrates the range of responses to the various questions. For those data where it was appropriate a test of significance (chi-square) was applied to assess any differences between the groups.

2.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The case study and interview data for the present project were qualitative in nature and used a very small sample. Even though qualitative research generates very rich and holistic data, the findings, although comprehensive, present very specific perceptions and attitudes of communicating with SMEs and ethnic minority groups. Additionally, while the findings do corroborate previous research they should be seen as learning points on which to build, rather than to generalise explicitly to a wider group of businesses.

The survey's sample size has a margin of error of $\pm 7.7\%$ and although it is arguable (just) within an acceptable range from which findings can be generalised, caution should be used about their extrapolation due to the diversity of SMEs and ethnic minority groups.

3 RESULTS - CASE STUDIES

Five interviews were conducted with individuals who have had various levels of success with communicating with SMEs and ethnic minority business groups. The individuals had worked for their organisations for periods ranging from three years to 18 years ($M = 8.40$, $SD = 5.94$), and had worked in their present roles for periods ranging from 6 months to 18 years ($M = 7.50$, $SD = 7.58$).

The researcher constructed case studies from each of the interviews and these are presented below. Overall, Table 2 shows that the participants rated (on a five-point scale where 1 = not important to 5 = very important) some factors or methods in the communication process, more importantly than others. For instance, the incubation period, culture, seminars and an evaluative process were considered as more important than, for example, gatekeepers, the reading level of leaflets or the literacy levels. The use of ICT and the Internet was rated the lowest of all factors/methods.

Table 2: Factors influencing communication (case studies)

Factors	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Culture	4.20	1.15
Face-to-face communication	4.00	0.71
Gatekeepers	3.80	1.64
Incubation period/start ups	4.40	0.42
Intermediaries, e.g. accountants, banks and trade associations	3.90	0.89
ICT and the Internet	3.00	0.71
Leaflets - reading level	3.40	1.14
Literacy – level	3.70	0.97
Networking/partnerships/sharing good practice	4.10	1.02
Sector specific information	4.00	0.71
Seminars	4.20	0.45
Simple language	4.00	0.71
Verbal communication	4.00	0.00
Evaluating the communication process	4.20	0.84

The information in the case studies is presented under the following headings:

- The Issue
- The Process
 - Communication Technique
 - The Ways to Communicate
 - The Impact of Communication on Business
 - The Barriers to Communication
 - The Key Lessons Learned by the Interviewee
- The End Result

Case Study 1

Government Organisation based in the North-West of the United Kingdom.

The Issue

To improve the attendance of ethnic minority business owners at health and safety events within (*place name*), as these individuals never or rarely attend these types of events.

The Process

The Field Inspector, who was responsible for this project, found the following approaches beneficial in addressing the problem.

Communication Technique

Safety and Health Awareness Day (SHAD).

SMEs/Ethnic Minority Targeted Groups

Mainly Asian, but also Afro-Caribbean and Chinese.

The Methods of Contacting Businesses

The Field Inspector used a variety of methods to gain contact with businesses owned and managed by ethnic minorities, and these are detailed below. He noted that the main reason to use a variety of methods is that it is difficult to know the exact individual to approach in the business, as the business is usually family run, and Inspectors experience difficulty in identifying the person who actually owns the business.

1. Target Influential Business Leaders

He found that the most effective way of contacting businesses was to communicate with influential businesses figures in the various ethnic communities and get them to send out the messages on his behalf. He went into the community, spoke to individuals and resourced the Internet to determine the influential persons in the community. He then contacted these individuals and asked if they would be willing to be interviewed. The interviews, which lasted on average 30 minutes, involved selling the benefits of working together with the HSE.

His success with using this method is reflected in the number of attendees who turned up for the event. The Field Inspector held 10 meetings with 10 influential people and attracted over 130 businesses to the event. These figures can be compared to a previous event within the organisation that used a direct mailing technique to 700 ethnic managed/owned businesses, but only realised 7 to 8 attendees.

2. Use Databases Specific to the Group

The Asian community has an Asian business directory with the names of local business in the retail and manufacturing sector. The Field Inspector used the directory to contact businesses about the SHAD.

3. Use Any Available Cultural Links

The Field Inspector is of Asian origin and is able to speak Punjabi and Urdu. As such when he called businesses to invite them to the SHAD he was able to speak with the owners/managers in a language with which they were more comfortable, and was able to discuss health and safety issues. This assisted in reducing the tendency to build defensive walls, such as stating that the Manager was not in, or that they could not speak English.

4. Use The Community

He noted also that it is important to use the small hubs within the communities, such as advice centres, in order to get the message across. He found that leaving leaflets at these types of organisations resulted in phone calls for further advice.

The Ways to Communicate

The Field Inspector noted that some techniques were more important than others in contacting ethnic minorities. Culture, face-to-face communication, gatekeepers, seminars were assessed as slightly more important than reading levels or literacy. The full range of responses, on a scale of 1 to 5 is presented in Figure 1.

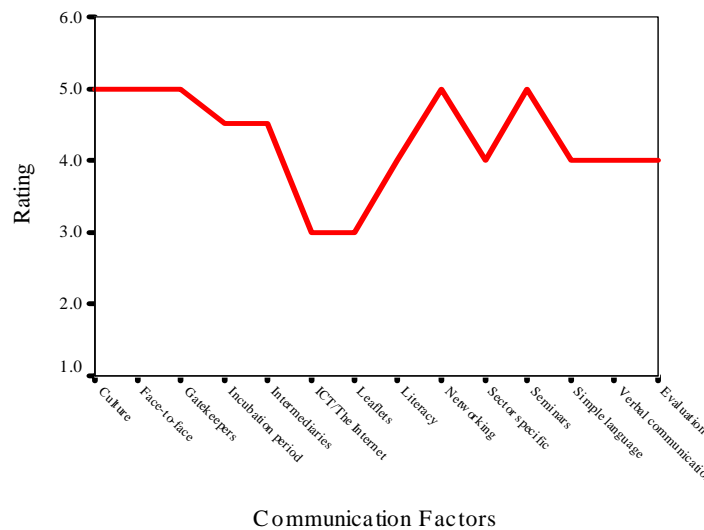


Figure 1: Ratings of communication factors (case study 1)

He noted that the incubation period within the business cycle was a good opportunity to disseminate information about health and safety to business owners. As he stated,

“If you can actually get them when they are starting up I would say that’s very important. Because as an inspector, when I go out and it is a new company, you always provide advice and education and you will be surprised how many times you get oh, I wasn’t aware of that or I did know about that and basically something to block the inspector’s visit. They were aware of that, it’s an easy way out. But it is a genuine response what I found with the small ethnic businesses, if they are not aware of what kind of legislation actually applies for them, they know how to run a business, open a business, they approach banks who will loan them all kinds of money but I haven’t come across one business plan which quotes ‘have you ever planned for health and safety’ which I think is an area that HSE should actually work with. If they can get the loan companies or the bank companies to actually say as part of the business plan we want you to have a plan for health and safety, whether it just means having a policy and then implement it later on. But they need to make them aware when they are giving them the money and if we can actually get them at that point, because money to a business is very, very important and if they can’t get the loan to start the business, and one of the criteria is have you planned for health and safety. I think you will go a long way in getting, everyone to adopt a health and safety culture as I say.”³

³ The text in italics enclosed within quotation marks relates to verbatim comments from the respective participants

The other main method that was used to attract attendees to this event included asking various trade and ethnic businesses associations to place the flyer about the event on their websites. This method was effective as it generated interest from those business owners with access to the Internet. However, he did note that not many of ethnic-owned small businesses had a computer, or even knew of the schemes and initiatives that would facilitate sourcing a computer or getting connected to the Internet.

The Impact of Communication on Businesses

Once the link and relationship with the influential individuals is established then it is important to maintain these relationships. If they are not maintained then there is a high possibility that they are a resource that then cannot be accessed easily in the future. Maintaining the relationships need not be time intensive and could consist of the occasional e-mail about future events. For example, after the SHAD the Field Inspector was conducting a *Height Awareness Campaign*. He sent out four pieces of correspondence by e-mail about the event to his contacts, from which 16 individuals from an ethnic origin attended. This represented seven per cent of the total delegate turn over and is a much higher percentage than is found normally at these types of events, for which one or two individuals from an ethnic background usually attend. The higher attendance level is moreover more representative of the true ethnic owned or managed business population.

The initial contact has facilitated the ease of promoting other health and safety events. The Field Inspector was able to promote a '*slips and trips campaign*' on a radio station that broadcasts to the Sikh community, and provided the information in both Punjabi and English; to speak at an Asian businesswomen's event; to contribute to local breakfast meetings; and to represent the HSE at the annual Asian business awards dinner.

He highlighted also that another benefit of nurturing the communication process is that Asian business owners are more willing to call the HSE to ask for advice where in the past they would not have done.

The Barriers to Communication

One major barrier is breaking down the defensive walls that business owners tend to build once they realise that the individual making the contact is from a government body. He noted that they would sooner approach various associations within the community for advice rather than the enforcing authority, because of their fear of the Inspectors and of being closed.

Another barrier was working to placate those individuals who had been contacted by the HSE in the past and had never received any follow up communication. Businesses need to feel that they can trust and rely on government bodies, otherwise it is much harder to get them on board with ensuring that they are compliant with health and safety regulations.

The Key Lessons Learned by the Interviewee

- Cultural links and understandings are able to facilitate a smoother relationship with ethnic minorities, as it puts them at ease, and allows an initial connection that can then be progressed.
- Business owners trust the influential members in the community, and would be willing to listen to the advice of these individuals, who can then assist in promoting health and safety within the community.
- It is essential to establish a core list of influential people that may include local councillors, local Members of Parliament (MPs), the Institute of Asian Business, the

Chinese Business Society, Black Women in Business, and the Afro Caribbean Development Agency.

- Once contacts have been established, they need to be maintained; otherwise the trust that is in place will slowly dissolve.
- Businesses are more receptive between the hours of 10:00 and 14:00, as during this period they have more time to deal with administrative and other issues.
- There is a greater chance of businesses attending health and safety events if they are held late on a Saturday afternoon or Sunday, or early morning or late afternoon, as during these times owners can be away from the businesses, without undue economic hardships.
- Small businesses benefit from receiving more advice, education and awareness, which makes it easier for them to adopt and act on the necessary regulations.
- Understanding the key cultural issues when inviting different cultures to a health and safety event, for example, if providing food know the different foods that are restricted due to religious beliefs and ensure that cross contamination does not occur when the different foods are laid out.

The End Result

- The attendance of ethnic minority business owners at HSE events within the area increased dramatically.
- Due to the seminar one individual completed a NEBOSH certificate course, and from this new knowledge, was able to write a health and safety policy, as well as conduct a risk assessment for his business.
- There has been an increase in the number of Asian business owners telephoning for advice, when in the past they would not have done.
- Trade associations are contacting actively the HSE to check on future events.

Case Study 2

Government Organisation based in the West Midlands of the United Kingdom.

The Issue

To maintain effective contact with black and ethnic minority owned businesses.

The Process

The Business Manager of the organisation on which this case is based operates as part of a network that has compiled a database of over 500 companies, and has found the following techniques useful, in sustaining contact with the members of the database.

Communication Technique

Seminars, Presentations, Newsletters, Press releases, e-shots, Letters, One-to-one interaction and Business support.

SMEs/Ethnic Minority Targeted Groups

Primarily Afro-Caribbean, but also Asian and other Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) organisations, with mainstream businesses and organisations including intermediaries, also targeted.

The Methods of Contacting Businesses

The organisation's main method of contacting businesses is through its network, but it uses also customer magazines (Chamber and Business Link), the Internet, correspondence by e-mail and an ethnic minority business forum.

The Ways to Communicate

The Business Manager noted that some techniques were more important than others in contacting ethnic minorities. Culture, face-to-face communication, and evaluating the communication process were assessed as slightly more important than using intermediaries or ICT and the Internet. The full range of responses, on a scale of 1 to 5 is presented in Figure 2.

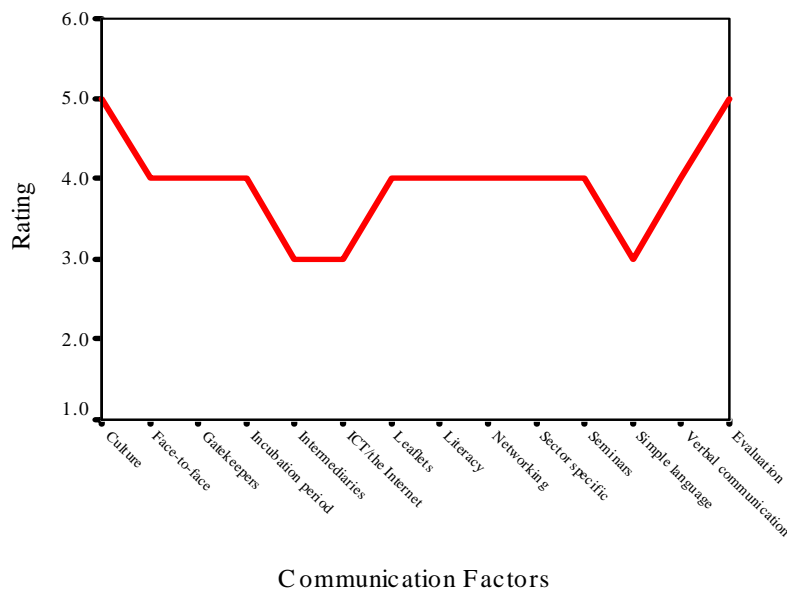


Figure 2: Ratings of communication factors (case study 2)

He noted that more than one way of communicating with businesses was standard within the organisation as it added variety to the process.

The Impact of Communication on Businesses

Although many of the organised events do not attract a high attendance rate, those who attend are very positive about the information that they receive, and tend to request support in respect of the themes and topics that are presented.

The Barriers to Communication

Owners of micro and small businesses tend to work in the business so rarely have time to assess new information or add value to the business. The timing of events is very important if the organisation wishes to attain adequate attendance.

The Business Manager noted that one major barrier to achieving effective communication with businesses was the lack of communication between the different sections within the organisation itself. The organisation comprises different sections, and each section used to send mailings to businesses about different issues. This amounted to at least twelve pieces of mail at any one time. This resulted in the businesses receiving bulk mail from the organisation, which they would consider then as junk mail, and discard them. The organisation has now streamlined its process so that every quarter the different sections provide the events that they are running and this is sent to the organisation as one document.

The Key Lessons Learned by the Interviewee

- It is most beneficial to hold seminars or events between the hours of 18:00 - 21:00, as this is the best time to ensure adequate attendance. The scheduling of seminars at other times, such as for a breakfast meeting realises very low attendance.
- It is necessary to simplify the way that businesses receive information, such as one piece of mail every quarter, rather than several every week. This can be followed up with an e-mail flyer and then by a telephone call.
- Businesses should be happy to receive information, and if not, be given the option to be taken off any mailing list, or any telephone or fax preference service, if they no longer wish to receive information about events.
- Businesses can be contacted by a variety of techniques and methods as they add variety to the process.

The End Result

- The businesses are provided with information in a more timely fashion, and the information is centred on those topics and themes that add direct value to the business.
- The process is considered very successful, as it is efficient in terms of the use of time and resources.

Case Study 3

Government Organisation based in the North-East of the United Kingdom.

The Issue

To obtain feedback from duty holders about the level of service provided to them, and their knowledge levels in respect of health and safety after being inspected by the Local Authority (LA).

The Process

The Health Safety & Licensing Manager, who is responsible for this project, found the following approaches beneficial in addressing the problem.

Communication Process

A survey.

SMEs/Ethnic Minority Targeted Groups

All business groups, inclusive of small and medium sized enterprises, and ethnic minority owned businesses. The percentage of businesses owned by ethnic minorities is very low (approximately 1.3%).

The Methods of Contacting Businesses

The main method used in this particular context is an end-user survey, administered within three months of the local authority's visit.

Other ways to communicate with businesses have included:

- Sector specific leaflets and information
- Face-to-face interaction
 - Inspections
 - Guidance visits

The Ways to Communicate

The Manager noted that some techniques were more important than others in contacting ethnic minorities. The incubation period, the use of intermediaries, networking and evaluation were assessed as slightly more important than understanding culture or the use of leaflets. The full range of responses, on a scale of 1 to 5 is presented in Figure 3.

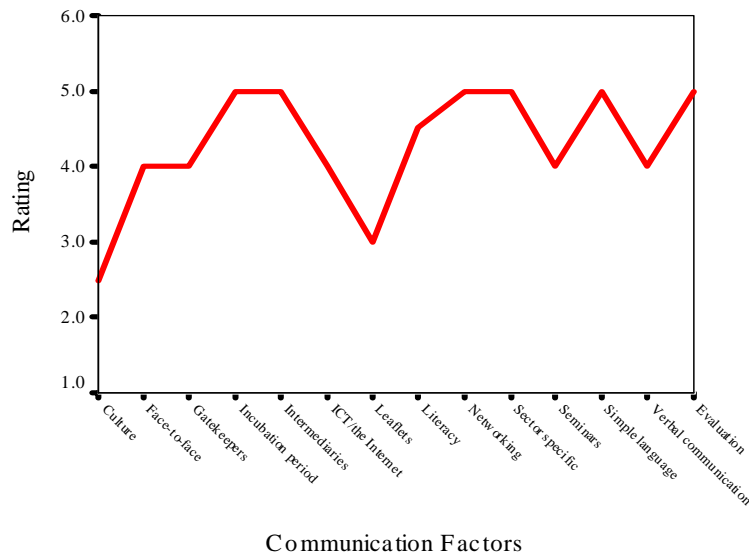


Figure 3: Ratings of communication factors (case study 3)

One of the areas that he felt was not making a major impact on the communication process at the present time was the Internet. As he stated:

“Not at the moment. I can quite honestly say that hand on my heart. Applications wise is very limited I must admit. Whether or not it is getting the message out that it is there and available I don’t know and whether it is getting over that culture thing with a lot of people that they still want to come in and deal with people face to face.”

He noted also that the provision of sector specific health and safety information was better received than any generic content:

“Again that is something we have found with our safer working community. We are targeting them on some areas particularly on florists and dermatitis and by producing something that is specific to them. We have had some very good feedback as officers have taken it round on face to face issues, because it has just been an issue where we have had one officer delivering the material out, but we have had good feedback on it. It is specially at them rather than a general sort of generic leaflet.”

One of the areas in which he wanted to engage more was the evaluation process. This was due to the fact that although the survey’s response rate was relatively high (50%), the Manager wanted to explore if the responses were due to an implicit threat of non-response increasing the chances of being inspected. He wanted to ensure that the customer satisfaction ratings were not biased.

The Impact of Communication on Businesses

Although the survey approach is the preferred one, there have been instances within the local authority when they did not realise any significant results. The first scenario involved a consultancy exercise on the health and safety enforcement policy. Fifty ethnic minority businesses were selected at random to comment, but only three responses were received. The second scenario involved a similar exercise in respect of the licensing enforcement policy, but in that instance no responses were received.

The Barriers to Communication

One barrier is that the use of a survey has restricted the ability to understand fully if those customers who do not return the survey have or do not have problems with the LA and the services that they offer. The Manager notes that non-response to the survey may indicate that those businesses are dissatisfied with the services that they receive and this assumption needs to be verified.

The Key Lessons Learned by the Interviewee

- The Manager feels that at times the respondents may complete the question automatically, without really taking specific note of the question. Due to this, he is redesigning the questionnaire to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of the Local Authority as well as their clientele.
- One lesson that he has learnt is that businesses prefer to receive sector specific information that is more relevant to their business needs.

The End Result

- The survey has a high response rate (50%).
- Awareness levels in respect of health and safety has improved in businesses.
- Repeat visits by the Inspectors have shown that businesses have improved their safety management systems.

Case Study 4

Private Organisation based in the Midlands of the United Kingdom.

The Issue

To serve and represent the interests of members by providing complimentary business support services to that of the local Chamber of Commerce, of which the organisation is a part.

The Process

The Operations Manager, who is responsible for facilitating this service, found the following approaches beneficial in addressing the problem.

Communication Process

This includes events, business support programmes and networking.

SMEs/Ethnic Minority Targeted Groups

Primarily Asian but also some of the other Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) businesses.

The Methods of Contacting Businesses

The Manager provided several interaction practices by which the organisation was able to make contact with ethnic owned businesses. These included the following:

1. Attend Community Events and Have Exhibit Stand/Stalls at these Events

The main way to get in touch with businesses and to make the organisation's presence felt among the community is to exhibit at community events. For example, the organisation attends the various Melas (Eid, Vaisakhi, Bangla, Diwali) during the year at which they present DVDs for start up businesses.

2. Communicate Through Word of Mouth

This is a process that allows the information to be disseminated easily and swiftly to those businesses that are members of the organisation. This is especially useful to any potential members introduced by existing members, and allows the organisation to work in partnership with other organisations. The organisation feels that this approach (personal contact) adds value to the interaction and it is preferred over other methods such as using e-mail or mailing literature.

3. Use the Press

The organisation uses the ethnic press, and at times the mainstream press, to highlight its profile and the services that they can provide.

The Ways to Communicate

The Manager noted that some techniques were more important than others in contacting ethnic minorities. The understanding of culture, the use of gatekeepers and the use of intermediaries were assessed as slightly more important than reading levels or literacy levels. The full range of responses, on a scale of 1 to 5 is presented in Figure 4.

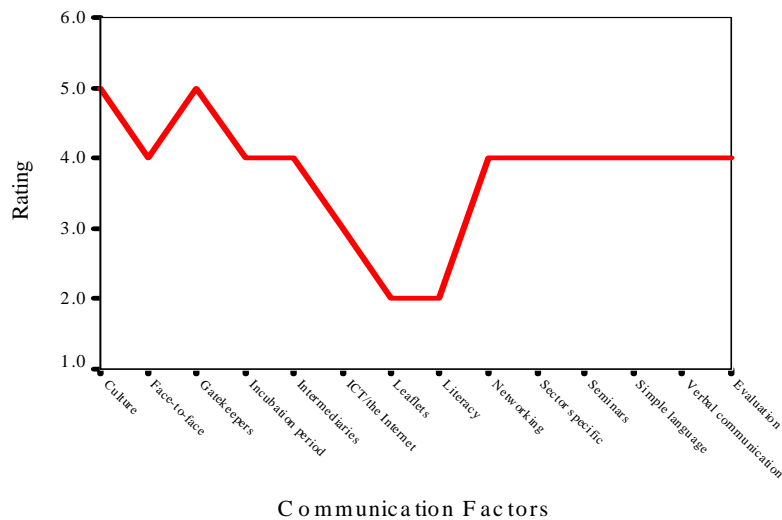


Figure 4: Ratings of communication factors (case study 4)

Additionally, while he noted that the Internet was an important resource for communicating with business, he was aware that it was limited in scope at the present time, especially for those Asian owned businesses. As he stated:

“That is a big issue for a lot of small businesses, certainly from our communities. A lot of them don’t necessarily have the resources to buy the equipment. A lot of them don’t invest in the skills to understand it particularly from the older generation. So in answer to that question, I think it is an important issue, but it is saying to me, which is the way that you are going to get regional committees, e-mail through Internet, not many of our people will be reached through that.”

He did highlight that the organisation is making its information more sector specific,

“We try and give information; they’re generic as well as sector. We are becoming more sector specific because obviously as a restaurateur, you don’t want to keep being bombarded about manufacturing, do you?”

The Impact of Communication on Businesses

From the Manager’s perspective, the communication process is dynamic and needs to cater to the needs of the business,

“It’s on-going, the lesson in that sense is to make sure that what you have is informative, relevant and interesting because at the end of the day, business people are very busy, they to some extent need to grow and develop their business. They themselves need to understand and to run the business better, they need to interact and meet other people. So it is really a question of having enough of a valuable proposition for those businesses to engage with us as clients for business support services.”

Overall, he felt that his organisation is able to impact on its target audience, but the communication process needs to change and update to ensure that its message is appropriate and satisfactory.

The Barriers to Communication

As the organisation caters mainly to the Asian community, the Manager remarked that some business owners might see that their affiliation with the organisation labels them as “Asian”,

and from their perspective this could be construed as negative. Although this occurs very rarely, it limits the ability to interact with some of the businesses.

Another barrier is that some organisations prefer not to be contacted by the organisation for any reason, and this restricts the transfer of information.

The Key Lessons Learned by the Interviewee

- The organisation cannot be complacent about the number of businesses wishing to maintain their membership. New events and activities need to be planned constantly in order to maintain the interest of the membership.
- The organisation has realised that businesses prefer to receive sector specific information that is more relevant to their business needs.
- It is important to restrict the number of cold calls to businesses to respect the businesses' time. The organisation very rarely uses this method to establish contact.
- It is important to respect the wishes of businesses that would prefer not to be contacted. The organisation keeps records of those businesses that it has contacted and no longer wish to receive information, or those that would prefer to be approached at a later date, and ensures that its staff adheres to the requests.
- Any dissatisfaction by the membership needs to be addressed immediately.

The End Result

- Regular attendance to events by those business owners who value their membership and feel that they benefit from the interactions.
- A newsletter is distributed by e-mail or standard mail to the members, and is available also at community events.
- Some of the members sponsor the organisation's annual dinner.

Case Study 5

Private Organisation in the North-West of the United Kingdom.

The Issue

To improve the health and safety knowledge and practices of ethnic minority groups in (*name of place*).

The Process

The Health and Safety Awareness Officer, who was responsible for this project, found the following approaches beneficial in addressing the problem.

Communication Process

Seminars, Leaflets and One-to-one interaction.

SMEs/Ethnic Minority Targeted Groups

Mainly Asian and a limited number of business owners from the Chinese community.

The Methods of Contacting Businesses

The Officer used a variety of methods to contact businesses. These are listed below.

1. Use Databases Specific to the Group

The Officer's organisation has a database with the core groups of Asian owned businesses in the area. The Officer used the database to contact businesses about the services that he could provide.

2. Use Available Contacts

The Business Support Officers spoke to businesses about the Officer and his work, and then supplied the Officer with the contact details.

3. Use Any Available Cultural Links

The Officer is of Asian origin and is able to speak Urdu and Punjabi. He had also the services of a translator and was able to communicate with the Chinese community in Mandarin.

4. Use the Community, Inclusive of the Media

Local associations within the area, such as a restaurant association, most likely have regular meetings that can be used as a resource to gaining access to businesses. The local community radio stations and newspapers can be used to promote any events, such as workshops and seminars.

The Ways to Communicate

The Field Inspector noted that some techniques were more important than others in contacting ethnic minority groups. The reading level of leaflets, the incubation period and verbal communication were assessed as slightly more important than gatekeepers, the use of ICT and the Internet, or networking/partnerships/sharing good practice. The full range of responses, on a scale of 1 to 5 is presented in Figure 5.

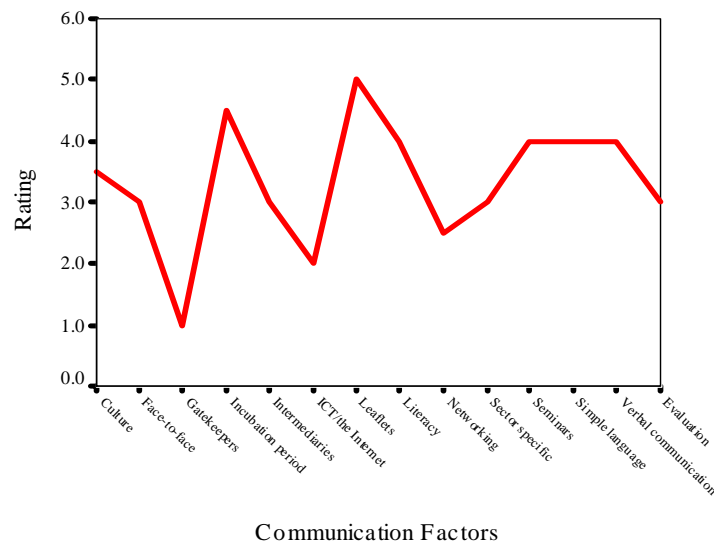


Figure 5: Ratings of communication factors (case study 5)

He stressed the importance of needing to ensure that the literacy level of information was set at an appropriate level to encompass all employees within the businesses who may not be as well educated as the management. As he stated,

“As I say the people that I am seeing on a day-to-day basis their literacy is good. So they’re educated to a good standard. If you are dealing with the older generation you have then got the barrier because they don’t understand some of the terminology or they don’t understand, in some cases even the basic language. Because what they will say to you is, speak to my son, speak to my son-in-law if you like or who ever it is going to be, because as soon as you start speaking English they are not going to be understanding what you are saying to them. So they do have a literacy problem. Organisations such as the (name) they run literacy courses. So they are in the process of identifying people who need a better level of understanding. But this can relate to employees as well. It is just not the employer because some of the employees in this company, especially from the manual labour side of things, again they have literacy problems as well. So what you have got to be sure about is that you are actually speaking to the manager who is, who might be a son who is well educated but you have got to be confident that he is going to relay the information in the right terms to the employees and to a larger extent it is their issue of how they are going to communicate. But obviously you have got to be happy that the employees are understanding the risks involved in the activity they are undertaking as well. And this is where the (name) are looking at improving literacy levels of employees.”

He noted that regardless of the communication technique it is important to ensure that the recipients understand what is required of them, and they know how the information should be used.

The Impact of Communication on Businesses

The Officer noted even the best methods of trying to get the message across may not work consistently if the business is not prepared to acknowledge the information,

“Yes. Some businesses yes and some no. I mean this is irrespective of them being ethnic minority businesses. The same as using general, some you are going to be effective influencing some you are not because some will listen to you and understand and will try to do something about it. And because they have had that information they feel better equipped to be able to deal with it. Some of them will be the usual yes, yes, yes go away and never do anything about it. As I say that is across SMEs in general and that applies to inspectors as well as people like myself. So, it is really a mixed bag of whether people are going to listen or not. All you can do is really try to get the message out in the best possible way using whatever method you can do using your own personal skills, communication skills and hope that they do take on board what you are saying in part if not fully. And they start these changes into place.”

The Officer noted that businesses, once they are receptive to the information that is given, do make changes that impact on their efficiency, effectiveness and health and safety in the workplace.

The Barriers to Communication

One major barrier to communicating with SMEs or those businesses owned by ethnic groups, as highlighted by the Officer, is admitting that you work for an enforcement body, but this is reduced if you are affiliated with a business group with which they are more comfortable. As he stated,

“What I found is in terms of the Asian community, because I am working with this external organisation (name), I am going in saying I am working on secondment with the (name). However I work for the Health and Safety Executive, which is the enforcing body, but I am working on behalf of them to advise their clients on health and safety issues. They are receptive because they see you as the (name) support service, they don't see you as a government organisation because I think you have got the values there. Until you have gone on a lot of visits in areas and broken down barriers, you are going to have this sort of defence mechanism in place, which means that people are reluctant to talk to you. What I am actually finding is, in terms of the Asian community is that, they are more receptive to talking to you when you are saying you are from the (name), even though they understand that you ultimately work for HSE. They know you are if you like with the (name) that on going into the workplace. Because they are used to talking to the (name) because the (name) offer more sort of business support services, in terms of setting up their business, or whatever the case maybe. So they, I find in a lot of ways they are more easier, or they are more open to talking to you.”

Language and cultural barriers tend to slow down the communication process. Some individuals if provided with information would indicate (e.g. nodding of the head) that they understand the information and anything required of them. Unfortunately, this is not necessarily the case and hinders any changes that they need to make to be compliant with health and safety. This raises the importance of checking understanding.

Other major barriers include the resistance of some businesses to changes. This can stem from the fact some businesses are not receptive to any messages about improving health and safety, and make it difficult to establish any type of rapport or engage in any interaction. Other businesses may not see health and safety as a problem within their workplace and so do not see the need to receive any new information.

The Key Lessons Learned by the Interviewee

- Individuals respond better if they are in a 'comfort zone,' i.e. if they are communicated in a language with which they are more comfortable.
- Cultural differences, such as within the Muslim community, for example, waiting to be offered a handshake by men, or refraining from offering a handshake to women should be respected.
- Respect religious differences, such as asking if an empty room is allocated as a prayer room before entering. If it has been allocated as a prayer room, then it may be necessary to remove shoes before entering.
- There are certain days and times that would facilitate a better interaction process. For example, Fridays are not necessarily the best day to approach businesses for which the owners are Muslim as that day is their holy day. However, Fridays and Wednesdays are good days on which to approach restaurant owners in the Chinese community, as most of the managers have Mondays as their day off. Afternoons and early evenings are good time periods to approach restaurant owners as well. A courtesy telephone call can establish quickly the best time to visit businesses.
- Face-to-face communication works better with certain communicates, such as those from the South East Asian community, who prefer this type of contact than by telephone. Once the rapport is established, then future telephone contact is facilitated much more easily. Additionally, some groups may see a personal interaction, rather than a cold call, as a form of respect, and may be more receptive to moving forward more easily in the process.
- Businesses need to be involved from the start of the process. The process needs also to be interactive and practical to ensure that they get the information that they need and they are able to put it into the context of their own businesses.
- The processes need to be evaluated to ensure that the message is going out effectively and to find ways to improve on the process.
- Accept that some businesses will not be prepared to accept the information and enforcement will be the only option in getting them to comply.
- Follow-up visits are important to ensure that the businesses are addressing any necessary changes and to take account of any challenges that they may be experiencing with these changes.
- Understand that any perceived negative actions, such as enforcement notices, spreads faster across a community than any positive messages that may be promoted.
- It is essential to gain an understanding of the community with which you need to engage and provide with information.
- Any progress within the community needs to be sustained, such as by occasional contact, and maintaining a visible presence.

The End Result

- At the end of a seminar, owners and managers of business requested visits from the organisation to obtain information and guidance on health and safety.
- When visited by the Officer, businesses noted that they had heard/read about the event/information in the newspaper/radio.
- Businesses contact the Officer to check and be reassured that they are making the right changes, or if they need to have in place additional control procedures.

4 RESULTS - INTERVIEWS

4.1 OVERVIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS

Three interviews were conducted with members of staff of the Luton Borough Council. Thematic analysis was used to generate the main issues that emerged from the data. The individuals had worked for the LBC for periods ranging from three years to 18 years ($M = 10.67$, $SD = 7.51$). Overall, they rated the understanding of culture, gatekeepers and literacy level as more important than face-to-face communication, sector specific information or the evaluative process. The use of seminars was rated the lowest of all the factors/methods. See Figure 6.

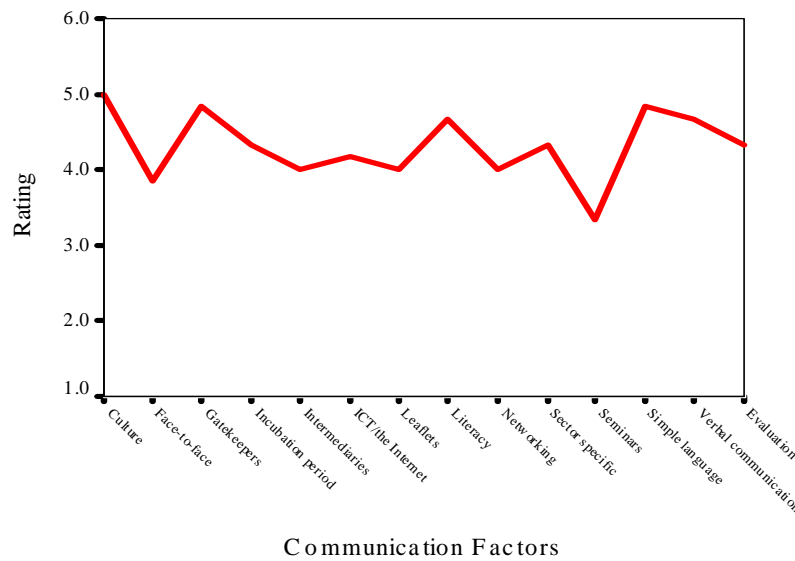


Figure 6: Ratings of communication factors (mean levels - interviews)

4.2 THEMATIC ANALYSIS

The transcriptions of the interviews with the staff at the LBC were subjected to a thematic analysis from which four main themes emerged as listed below. Each of these themes consists of various sub-themes, and the full listing is presented in Appendix 4. The themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data are discussed below, and where relevant verbatim quotes are provided to illustrate the findings.

1. Methods of Contact
2. Facilitations of the Process
3. Barriers to the Process
4. Improving the Process

4.2.1 Methods of Contact

The participants listed a variety of ways in which to get in touch with duty holders. These included *liaising with local organisations*, such as Business Chambers or Business Links, *press*

releases, telephone calls, and inspections/enforcement visits. All of the participants advocated the use of more than one method to ensure that the information was being disseminated to the audience. As they stated:

“Generally in most instances we maybe send them a letter and then do a follow up telephone call. Again it sort of depends what rapport we already have with them. If it is a new approach or an existing approach because then some people we know obviously to give them a call for a brief chat first and then send them the information. So it’s (sic) really depends on if it’s a new lead or somebody that we have a past relationship with.” (Participant 1; P1)

“The type of events we have done we kind of cater for so many we have not had to chase or follow up in any sense. We have got a fairly high demand on those, a high take up. So we haven’t had to sort of use more than one method. But what we have done in selling it initially, we used every method possible so if there is an event to happen we will send out the leaflets, we would send out particular personal letters, we will advertise it in the newspapers and we also, if there are other events happening, we will advertise it there as well. So once we have done all of that up front we don’t need to do follow up or anything, we do a range different methods right from the outset. We make sure we hit every target we can.” (P2)

All of the participants mentioned the use of *face-to-face communication*, and in some instances it was to ensure that the information was being received and understood by the recipients.

“A lot of the Asian business men are in a retail trade, they don’t want any support but they actually don’t know what they need if you like. So if use (sic) face-to-face, go and do it. If they are shown the opportunities and that needs face to face and it means walking round on foot.” (P2)

Only one participant used CDs to disseminate information and while they all used the Internet and e-mail facilities, they acknowledged that they did not assume that all businesses, especially SMEs and ethnic minorities would have access to such services.

4.2.2 Facilitations of the Process

There were several features that the participants acknowledged could facilitate the communication process. In total, 12 features were listed. All of the participants listed the majority of them, but the need to *establish and maintain rapport*, and using *a method that have worked previously*, were listed by one respondent. Similarly only one of the participants noted that it is necessary to acknowledge that businesses may know what is best for them:

“(D)on’t rely on preconceptions about what businesses want. There is a thing that we know best and actually we don’t know best on occasions and businesses, what businesses want might be different from what we think they want.” (P3)

All of the participants stated that they use feedback from the businesses to determine their preference for receiving information. This is illustrated in the comment:

“Generally feedback, well initially we sort of used the mail shots but obviously when we receive feedback from which methods people prefer to be communicated by. Some people prefer to be e-mailed from people, some prefer a letter, some people prefer a call. So sort of business preference really.” (P1)

One feature that highlights the singularity of the communication process within the organisation is the ability for the departments to communicate directly to duty holders without needing approval:

“Generally I would just go ahead. What I do I actually report into a management group every two weeks and generally I am planning ahead so it would be on the agenda in advance, so I would sort of say I am going to target these people, these organisations and then I do sort of get feedback in, does anybody else think that should be approaching etc. from that. It is not having to sort of go through a whole major process.” (P1)

All of the participants believed that the material that they were promoting was relevant to the business, which then resulted in requests from a wider area than targeted initially. As Participant two highlighted:

“Definitely. The proof of that is, that over the last year or two we have done a general update to businesses in terms of informing them of what is happening in the town. We have got massive projects happening and the feedback we have got is evidence to the feedback from our business breakfast was that they welcomed that information and help, and also from that, because our information goes wider, we also been contacted from outside the town and area because they have obviously found out about the work that is happening in the town and want to be part of that. Developers and other people so I definitely think it has influenced businesses.” (P2)

Two of the participants recognized that it was important to use local contacts within the community, especially when needing to get in touch with ethnic minority groups. One participant described one contact as a ‘champion caller’ as he maintained frequent links with ethnic owned businesses.

“He is a champion caller. He tends to hold regular sessions where, the key events pulling together the groups to general announcements on opportunities that might exist. So we use that vehicle to promote other opportunities that are in the town.” (P2)

All of the participants used feedback from the businesses to gauge their perceptions of the communication process.

“The reason I have is the feedback we had from businesses following the event comments like, we didn’t understand what service you provide. We now understand what you do and we now know how to get in contact with you should we have any questions about health and safety for example. So I felt there was some positive feedback from businesses as a result of those events.” (P3)

4.2.3 Barriers to the Process

The analysis brought to light several barriers to the communication process. The participants were not consistent in listing barriers and did experience different challenges to the process. However, they all affirmed their lack of knowledge of the contact procedures in the other departments within the organisation, and did stress that it is one area that they would like to see developed in order to have a more consistent approach.

“I am aware, but I know that we don’t really pool our resources and pull together. So I am obviously aware that other people are from other departments but I totally agree

that we should be sort of sharing resource and like working together but I would say we do all sort of work very, very separate.” (P1)

One participant knew that the communication process was greatly affected by the (at times limited) resources in businesses to access adequately information. This was particularly in respect of small and medium sized businesses.

“(U)nderstand the pressures that SMEs in particular face both in terms of red tape or bureaucracy, finance, hours of openings, staff issues, all the things that make it difficult for people to really get to grips with having to address particular issues in their business.” (P3)

One interesting barrier was very specific in terms of a technique, from which businesses should benefit, was the attitude towards networking, partnership and sharing good practice. One participant highlighted that within the Asian community this is a technique that would not benefit the businesses owned by this group as it is not one with which they would engage, mainly for fear of losing ground in the market place.

“They need one to one networking, but they tend to vie against each other and hold back a lot more than they should. Networking is supposed to bring that out of people but it doesn’t in the Asian community.” (P2)

Two of the participants recognized that they used a general contact process, which could cause the exclusion of certain groups, and this needed to be addressed.

“I would say for the events that we have been doing I would say 100% for key events. For general things because we have done focus and target on particular groups, I think those groups actually might be missing out. So in that sense perhaps we are not as perfect as I would like to think and I couldn’t really put an assessment on how big that gap is. Generally it exists, we may be missing out on particular groups or particular businesses because of doing a general sort of contact.” (P2)

Two of the participants stated that they were consistent in sending information to businesses, mainly in order to inform and to get a response.

“I am just thinking where that happens, if they refuse. Well we do because over the years what we will do is keep pumping out information. So if they haven’t come to us, we don’t give up on them, we will keep on sending them information on the basis that there may be something at some time relevant to them. No we keep trying. And as I said before we are moving through different types of communication which is the e-mail, the website, the news letters that we do and then personal letters that we do. So over the year, the course of the year, we will hit them in different ways. If we are mailing out to 1500 businesses we don’t expect a reply. So we can’t measure the number of replies if you like, so we don’t know who has binned it or read it.” (P2)

4.2.4 Improving the Process

The analysis revealed very few ways to improve the process. The three that were revealed were *contacting businesses to ask for their preferences to receive information, assessing the needs of the businesses, and ensuring that the response time to businesses is quick.* One participant listed the efforts made in ensuring that the businesses received the information in a format with which they were most comfortable.

“(W)e are trying to do is approach them when they say we would prefer to be contacted but you know we would prefer if you gave us a call or we would prefer if you sent us an e-mail. We always do endeavour to send them the information in the format that they request, obviously because you know, if there is a person who is more likely to open their e-mail first thing in the morning and you know, and not read their post.” (P1)

All of the participants tried to assess the needs of the businesses to ensure that they were providing an effective and valuable service.

“No. I think we had to do it this way because it was, most of the sessions were not about giving information, it is was about receiving and listening to businesses as opposed to giving information.” (P3)

One participant noted that it was important to respond to businesses in a timely manner. In this participant’s department the response times were within one or two days, which it was felt that the duty holders appreciated.

“A lot of businesses either come and contact us fairly early or fairly late. The right time for them. Generally we take the call and will call them back. And we follow up within a day or so. We have not had any complaints on that.” (P2)

5 RESULTS - SURVEY

The results of the survey were subjected to the analytic procedures previously mentioned using the SPSS software program. Under each section, the responses to the questions are reported providing the relevant information (numbers and percentages) of those who replied. Appendix 5 provides detailed responses to all of the questions that the respondents were asked. Some of tables may total either 99 per cent or 101 per cent due to the rounding of the figures.

The findings presented in this section are organised according to the seven key areas addressed by the questionnaires:

- Contact Preferences and Reasons for Contact
- Perceptions of Health and Safety Material
- Awareness of Services of the LBC
- Perceptions of Compliance and Comfort Levels with Health and Safety Regulations
- Belief in and Willingness to Work With the LBC's Health and Safety Service
- Levels of Satisfaction with the LBC's Health and Safety Service
- Perceptions of Areas to Improve

The questionnaire was self-report. There are concerns about the use of self-report data in research due to the issue of social desirability, in that individuals may respond according to how they think they need to respond to any particular question. However, despite these concerns self-report data are useful to provide an overview of perceptions and attitudes, and can work to clarify any particular perceptions of individuals (Turk and Kerns, 1985). Further, the data are checked to highlight any outliers, and the responses are averaged, to allow a more consistent interpretation of the information.

5.1 DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS

One hundred and sixty-nine businesses responded to the questionnaire. The majority of them can be classified as small (78%, DTI⁴), see Figure 7, and existing within the retail/wholesale sector (32%), see Figure 8.

⁴ <http://www.sbs.gov.uk/sbsgov/action/layer?r.l2=7000000243&r.l1=7000000229&r.s=sm&topicId=7000000237>

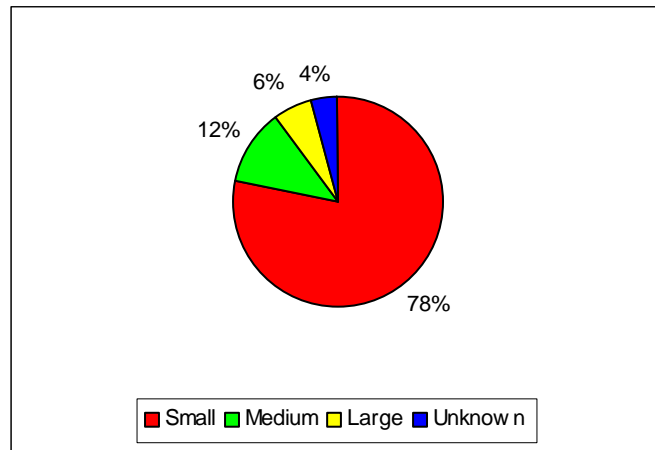


Figure 7: Businesses *by size*

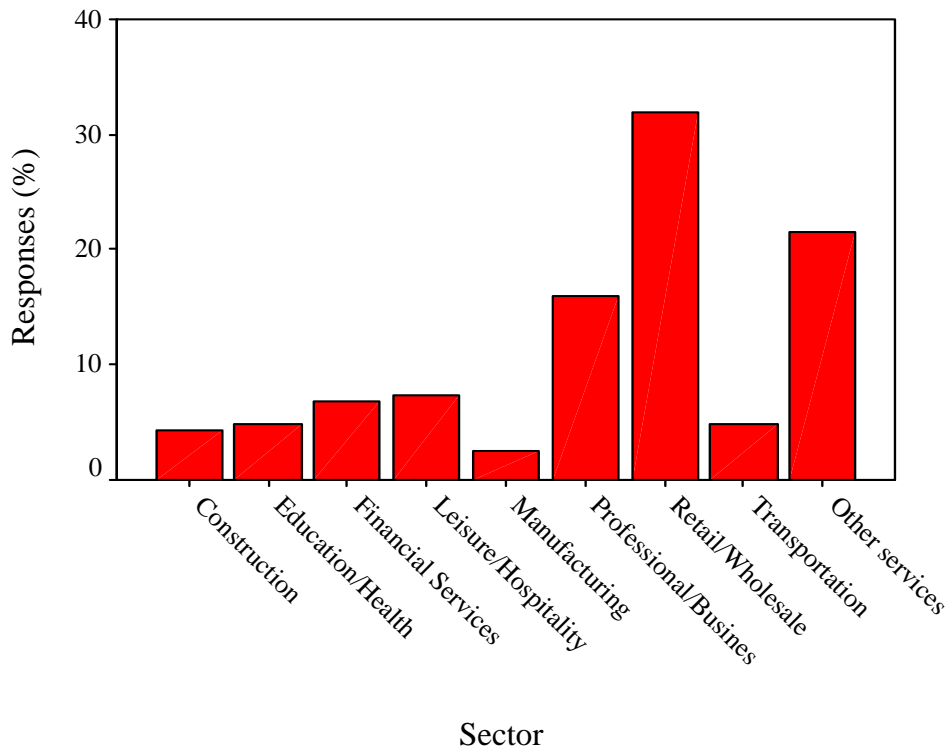


Figure 8: Businesses *by sector*

The respondents were mainly men (63%), with an average age of 45.38 ($SD = 12.14$). See Figure 9.

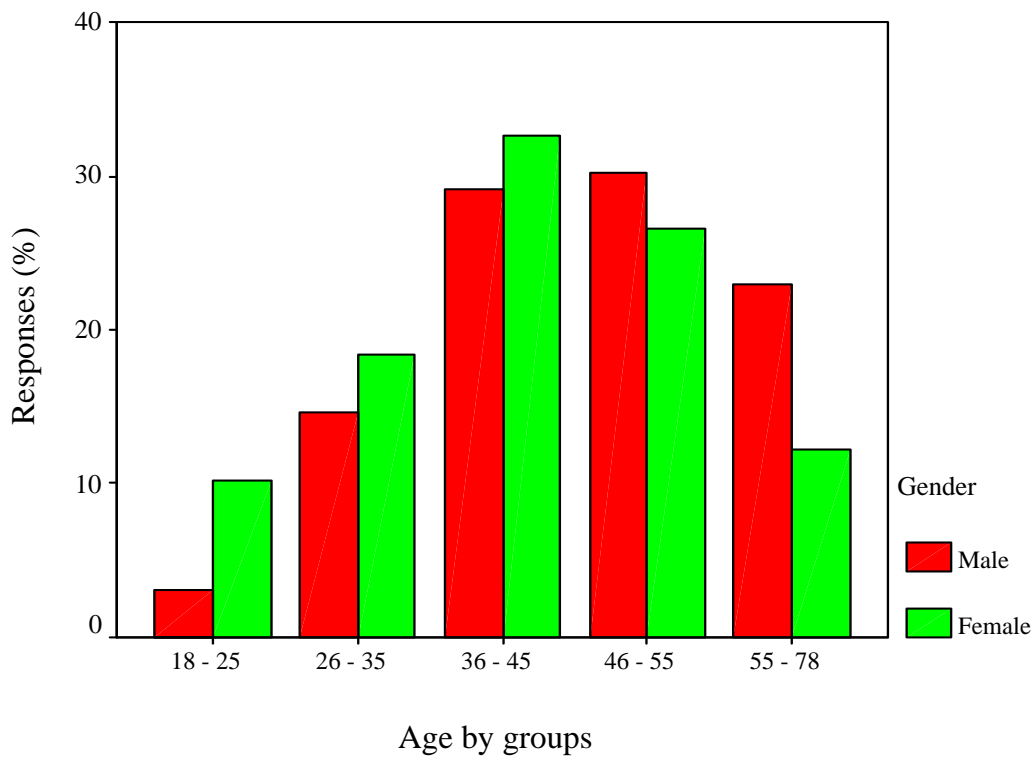


Figure 9: Respondents by gender and age

Most of the respondents were White ($n = 127$) with Asian ($n = 29$) and Black ($n = 6$) individuals forming the rest of the sample. See Figure 10.

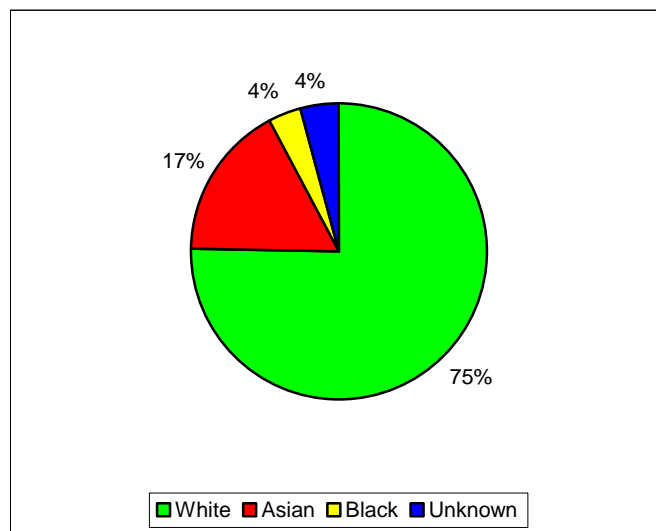


Figure 10: Ethnicity of respondents

5.2 CONTACT PREFERENCES AND REASONS

The main reason to contact the LBC’s health and safety service was to obtain information, with medium-sized businesses (58%) slightly more than small-sized or large businesses needing this reason to get in touch with the Council. See Table 3.

Table 3: Reasons for contact *by size of organisation*

<i>Reasons contacted LBC</i>	Size of Organisation (%)			<i>n</i>
	<i>Small</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Large</i>	
To get information	54	58	40	78
To respond to a query	25	21	40	37
To get information/to respond to a query	11	11	10	16
Safety	2	0	0	2
Do not contact	6	11	10	10
To answer questionnaire	1	0	0	1
No reason listed	2	0	0	2
Total	100	100	100	146

One respondent noted that the Council was contacted to get some information with respect to a health and safety issue, but did not feel that the query was handled appropriately. See below.

“An (sic) surgical issue in regards to health & safety. Needles left besides building. Not very helpful with accommodating my query or where I should contact to have them removed.” (small organisation, leisure/hospitality)

The majority of businesses preferred to receive information by post, with over half (56%) of all small-sized businesses preferring this method. See Table 4. Just over and close to one-third of medium-sized (35%) and large (30%) organisations listed the use of e-mail as a preference, but this was greatly reduced for small-sized businesses (15%). Only one business wished to receive information through the Internet.

Table 4: Contact preferences *by size of organisation*

<i>Method of Contact</i>	Size of Organisation (%)			<i>n</i>
	<i>Small</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Large</i>	
Face to face	12	25	30	24
Post	56	30	20	80
Telephone	16	10	20	24
e-mail	15	35	30	29
The Internet	1	0	0	1
All	1	0	0	1
Total	100	100	100	159

Respondents of Asian origin showed a higher preference for face-to-face contact (21%), than White (15%) or Black (0%) respondents. Overall, a higher number of respondents, regardless of ethnicity, preferred to be contacted by post. See Table 5.

Table 5: Contact preferences by ethnic groups

<i>Method of Contact</i>	Ethnic Groups (%)			<i>n</i>
	<i>White</i>	<i>Asian</i>	<i>Black</i>	
Face to face	15	21	0	24
Post	49	59	67	82
Telephone	15	17	17	24
e-mail	21	3	17	28
The Internet	1	0	0	1
Total	100	100	100	159

Over half of all small-sized (69%) and medium-sized (60%) businesses stated that they would contact the LBC's health and safety service to get information on health and safety. See Table 6. The researcher assessed the level of agreement by combining the responses of agree and strongly agree. This was consistent in the remainder of the analysis.

Table 6: Sourcing health and safety information from LBC by size of organisation

<i>Level of Agreement</i>	Size of Organisation (%)			<i>n</i>
	<i>Small</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Large</i>	
Strongly disagree	5	15	10	11
Disagree	7	15	20	14
Neither disagree nor agree	18	10	30	28
Agree	47	45	40	73
Strongly agree	22	15	0	32
Not applicable	1	0	0	1
Total	100	100	100	159

More than half of all individuals regardless of ethnicity would contact the LBC's health and safety service to get information on health and safety. See Table 7.

Table 7: Sourcing health and safety information from LBC by ethnic groups

<i>Level of Agreement</i>	Ethnic Groups (%)			<i>n</i>
	<i>White</i>	<i>Asian</i>	<i>Black</i>	
Strongly disagree	7	7	0	11
Disagree	10	0	0	13
Neither disagree nor agree	20	0	33	27
Agree	45	61	50	76
Strongly agree	17	32	17	31
Not applicable	1	0	0	1
Total	100	100	100	159

5.3 PERCEPTIONS OF HEALTH AND SAFETY MATERIAL

The majority of organisations were mainly ambivalent in their ability to understand the material sent by the LBC's health and safety service. See Table 8. Interestingly, larger rather than smaller organisations seemed to be more ambivalent.

Table 8: Ability to understand material *by* size of organisation

<i>Level of Agreement</i>	Size of Organisation (%)			<i>n</i>
	<i>Small</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Large</i>	
Strongly disagree	2	5	0	3
Disagree	6	5	0	9
Neither disagree nor agree	43	55	70	73
Agree	43	30	20	63
Strongly agree	4	5	0	6
Not applicable	3	0	10	5
Total	100	100	100	159

Comparable with the different sized businesses, two of the ethnic groups (White, Asian) were mainly ambivalent in their ability to understand the material. Black individuals (83%), rather than Asian (44%) or White (43%), agreed to a higher extent that they found the material easy to understand. See Table 9.

Table 9: Ability to understand material *by* ethnic groups

<i>Level of Agreement</i>	Ethnic Groups (%)			<i>n</i>
	<i>White</i>	<i>Asian</i>	<i>Black</i>	
Strongly disagree	1	7	0	3
Disagree	5	10	0	9
Neither disagree nor agree	48	34	17	71
Agree	39	41	83	65
Strongly agree	4	3	0	6
Not applicable	3	3	0	5
Total	100	100	100	159

The majority of businesses admitted to reading the material/information that was sent by the LBC's health and safety service. See Table 10. Less than one-quarter of all the businesses did not read the material. Two per cent of the small-sized organisations did admit to not receiving any information.

Table 10: Reading of material/information *by* size of organisation

<i>Extent of Agreement</i>	Size of Organisation (%)			<i>n</i>
	<i>Small</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Large</i>	
Yes	80	84	89	126
No	16	16	11	24
Have not received information	2	0	0	3
Not applicable	2	0	0	3
Total	100	100	100	156

The reading of material or information did not differ across ethnicity, with most individuals admitting to reading the material. See Table 11.

Table 11: Reading of material/information *by ethnic groups*

<i>Extent of Agreement</i>	Ethnic Groups (%)			<i>n</i>
	<i>White</i>	<i>Asian</i>	<i>Black</i>	
Yes	82	83	80	127
No	15	14	20	23
Have not received information	2	0	0	2
Not applicable	2	3	0	3
Total	100	100	100	155

The majority of organisations were mainly ambivalent about their perception of the accessibility of the LBC’s website. See Table 12. Less than half of all businesses thought that the website was easy to access, with this percentage decreasing dramatically for large businesses (20%).

Table 12: Accessibility of website *by size of organisation*

<i>Level of Agreement</i>	Size of Organisation (%)			<i>n</i>
	<i>Small</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Large</i>	
Strongly disagree	1	0	0	1
Disagree	4	0	10	6
Neither disagree nor agree	50	63	70	83
Agree	39	37	20	58
Strongly agree	3	0	0	4
Not applicable	3	0	0	4
Total	100	100	100	156

Comparable with the different sized businesses, all of the ethnic groups were mainly ambivalent about their perception of the accessibility of the LBC’s website. Just over or one third of all individuals thought that the website was easy to access. See Table 13. Black individuals were less likely to think that the website was easy to access.

Table 13: Accessibility of website *by ethnic groups*

<i>Level of Agreement</i>	Ethnic Groups (%)			<i>n</i>
	<i>White</i>	<i>Asian</i>	<i>Black</i>	
Strongly disagree	0	4	0	1
Disagree	2	11	0	5
Neither disagree nor agree	55	43	67	84
Agree	39	32	33	59
Strongly agree	2	7	0	4
Not applicable	2	4	0	4
Total	100	100	100	157

5.4 AWARENESS OF SERVICES OF THE LBC

Two-thirds of small-sized and medium-sized businesses and 80 per cent of large businesses did not know about the services that the LBC’s health and safety services provides. See Table 14.

Table 14: Knowledge of the services that LBC provides *by size of organisation*

<i>Extent of Agreement</i>	Size of Organisation (%)			<i>n</i>
	<i>Small</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Large</i>	
Yes	35	35	20	54
No	64	65	80	103
Not applicable	1	0	0	1
Total	100	100	100	158

White individuals were more likely than Asian or Black individuals to know about the services that the LBC's health and safety service provided. See Table 15. Further, this result was statistically significant, $\chi^2(4) = 11.82, p < .05$, implying that the difference between the groups did not occur by chance.

Table 15: Knowledge of the services that LBC provides *by ethnic groups*

<i>Extent of Agreement</i>	Ethnic Groups (%)			<i>n</i>
	<i>White</i>	<i>Asian</i>	<i>Black</i>	
Yes	40	14	17	54
No	60	83	83	103
Not applicable	0	3	0	1
Total	100	100	100	158

More than half of small-sized (67%) and medium-sized (60%) businesses were aware that they could get information on health and safety regulations from the LBC's health and safety services. This knowledge did not extend to large businesses where only 40 per cent were aware that they could get information. See Table 16.

Table 16: Knowledge of getting information from LBC *by size of organisation*

<i>Level of Agreement</i>	Size of Organisation (%)			<i>n</i>
	<i>Small</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Large</i>	
Strongly disagree	2	0	10	3
Disagree	2	10	0	5
Neither disagree nor agree	28	30	50	47
Agree	58	50	40	90
Strongly agree	9	10	0	14
Not applicable	1	0	0	1
Total	100	100	100	160

More than half of all individuals, regardless of ethnicity, were aware that they could get information on health and safety regulations from the LBC's health and safety services. See Table 17.

Table 17: Knowledge of getting information from LBC by ethnic groups

<i>Level of Agreement</i>	Ethnic Groups (%)			<i>n</i>
	<i>White</i>	<i>Asian</i>	<i>Black</i>	
Strongly disagree	2	4	0	3
Disagree	4	4	0	6
Neither disagree nor agree	28	32	33	46
Agree	56	54	67	90
Strongly agree	10	7	0	14
Not applicable	1	0	0	1
Total	100	100	100	160

5.5 PERCEPTIONS OF COMPLIANCE/COMFORT LEVELS WITH HEALTH AND SAFETY REGULATIONS

Less than one-third of small-sized (31%) businesses felt that they knew all that they needed to know about health and safety regulations, with this number decreasing to 15 per cent for medium-sized businesses and 20 per cent for large businesses. See Table 18.

Table 18: Perception of knowledge of health and safety regulations by size of organisation

<i>Level of Agreement</i>	Size of Organisation (%)			<i>n</i>
	<i>Small</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Large</i>	
Strongly disagree	8	5	10	12
Disagree	24	45	30	44
Neither disagree nor agree	36	35	40	58
Agree	26	10	10	37
Strongly agree	5	5	10	9
Not applicable	1	0	0	1
Total	100	100	100	161

Individuals' perception of their knowledge of health and safety regulations was consistent across ethnicity with an agreement of less than one-third. See Table 19.

Table 19: Perception of knowledge of health and safety regulations by ethnic groups

<i>Level of Agreement</i>	Ethnic Groups (%)			<i>n</i>
	<i>White</i>	<i>Asian</i>	<i>Black</i>	
Strongly disagree	8	7	0	12
Disagree	25	31	50	43
Neither disagree nor agree	39	38	17	61
Agree	23	14	33	35
Strongly agree	5	10	0	9
Not applicable	1	0	0	1
Total	100	100	100	161

The majority of respondents felt that they complied with the health and safety regulations for their businesses. Across all the businesses this was 80 per cent or higher and rose to 90 per cent for medium-sized businesses. See Table 20.

Table 20: Perception of compliance with health and safety regulations by size of organisation

<i>Level of Agreement</i>	Size of Organisation (%)			<i>n</i>
	<i>Small</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Large</i>	
Strongly disagree	1	0	0	1
Disagree	1	5	0	2
Neither disagree nor agree	16	5	20	24
Agree	64	60	50	101
Strongly agree	18	30	30	33
Total	100	100	100	161

The extent to which individuals, regardless of ethnicity, felt that they were complying with health and safety regulations was very high. Across all of the groups this was above 75 per cent. See Table 21.

Table 21: Perception of compliance with health and safety regulations by ethnic groups

<i>Level of Agreement</i>	Ethnic Groups (%)			<i>n</i>
	<i>White</i>	<i>Asian</i>	<i>Black</i>	
Strongly disagree	0	3	0	1
Disagree	1	0	0	1
Neither disagree nor agree	14	17	17	24
Agree	63	72	33	102
Strongly agree	22	7	50	32
Total	100	100	100	160

5.6 BELIEF IN AND WILLINGNESS TO WORK WITH THE LBC'S HEALTH AND SAFETY SERVICE

Over two-thirds of all businesses, regardless of size, trusted the LBC's health and safety service. See Table 22.

Table 22: Trust in the LBC by size of organisation

<i>Extent of Agreement</i>	Size of Organisation (%)			<i>n</i>
	<i>Small</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Large</i>	
Yes	89	89	80	132
No	9	11	10	14
Don't know	2	0	10	3
Total	100	100	100	149

Most individuals, regardless of ethnicity, trusted the LBC’s health and safety service. See Table 23.

Table 23: Trust in the LBC by ethnic groups

<i>Extent of Agreement</i>	Ethnic Groups (%)			<i>n</i>
	<i>White</i>	<i>Asian</i>	<i>Black</i>	
Yes	89	88	80	133
No	8	12	20	14
Don’t know	3	0	0	3
Total	100	100	100	150

Over 50 per cent of small-sized and medium-sized businesses believed that officers who contacted them about health and safety were knowledgeable, approachable and fair. This belief decreased to 40 per cent for large sized businesses. See Table 24.

Table 24: Belief in officers by size of organisation

<i>Level of Agreement</i>	Size of Organisation (%)			<i>n</i>
	<i>Small</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Large</i>	
Strongly disagree	2	0	0	2
Disagree	2	6	0	3
Neither disagree nor agree	39	33	50	61
Agree	46	50	30	70
Strongly agree	9	11	10	14
Not applicable	3	0	10	5
Total	100	100	100	155

Close to or just over 50 per cent of all individuals, regardless of ethnicity, believed that officers who contacted them about health and safety were knowledgeable, approachable and fair. See Table 25.

Table 25: Belief in officers by ethnic groups

<i>Level of Agreement</i>	Ethnic Groups (%)			<i>n</i>
	<i>White</i>	<i>Asian</i>	<i>Black</i>	
Strongly disagree	1	3	0	2
Disagree	2	3	0	3
Neither disagree nor agree	37	41	50	59
Agree	49	41	33	73
Strongly agree	8	7	17	13
Not applicable	3	3	0	5
Total	100	100	100	155

The large sized businesses either were ambivalent or did not agree that they got all their information about health and safety regulations from LBC’s health and safety service. See Table 26. Just under one-third (32%) of medium-sized businesses admitted to getting their

information from the LBC, while this was admitted by under one-half (40%) of small-sized businesses.

Table 26: Receipt of information by size of organisation

<i>Level of Agreement</i>	Size of Organisation (%)			<i>n</i>
	<i>Small</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Large</i>	
Strongly disagree	2	11	10	6
Disagree	13	16	20	21
Neither disagree nor agree	35	37	70	59
Agree	35	32	0	51
Strongly agree	5	0	0	6
Does not apply	10	5	0	14
Total	100	100	100	157

Fewer than half of all individuals, regardless of ethnicity, stated that they got all the information on health and safety regulations that they needed from the LBC's health and safety service. See Table 27.

Table 27: Receipt of information by ethnic groups

<i>Level of Agreement</i>	Ethnic Groups (%)			<i>n</i>
	<i>White</i>	<i>Asian</i>	<i>Black</i>	
Strongly disagree	4	3	0	6
Disagree	14	7	17	20
Neither disagree nor agree	39	41	17	60
Agree	31	38	33	51
Strongly agree	3	3	0	5
Does not apply	9	7	33	15
Total	100	100	100	157

The majority of businesses believed that the LBC's health and safety service could assist them in complying with the necessary health and safety regulations. This was as high as 76 per cent for small-sized businesses. See Table 28.

Table 28: Belief can get assistance from the LBC by size of organisation

<i>Level of Agreement</i>	Size of Organisation (%)			<i>n</i>
	<i>Small</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Large</i>	
Strongly disagree	2	0	0	2
Disagree	1	0	0	1
Neither disagree nor agree	21	37	40	37
Agree	64	53	50	96
Strongly agree	12	11	10	18
Not applicable	1	0	0	1
Total	100	100	100	155

The majority of individuals, regardless of ethnicity, believed that the LBC's health and safety service could assist them in complying with the necessary health and safety regulations. This was as high as 78 per cent for individuals of an Asian ancestry. See Table 29.

Table 29: Belief can get assistance from the LBC by ethnic groups

<i>Level of Agreement</i>	Ethnic Groups (%)			<i>n</i>
	<i>White</i>	<i>Asian</i>	<i>Black</i>	
Strongly disagree	1	4	0	2
Disagree	1	0	0	1
Neither disagree nor agree	24	18	33	36
Agree	62	71	50	98
Strongly agree	12	7	17	17
Not applicable	1	0	0	1
Total	100	100	100	155

Large businesses (40%), rather than small-sized (57%) or medium-sized (60%) were less likely to believe that the LBC's health and safety service could assist them with their health and safety needs. See Table 30.

Table 30: Belief that LBC can assist with H&S needs by size of organisation

<i>Level of Agreement</i>	Size of Organisation (%)			<i>n</i>
	<i>Small</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Large</i>	
Strongly disagree	2	0	0	2
Disagree	5	5	0	7
Neither disagree nor agree	36	35	60	60
Agree	49	45	40	76
Strongly agree	8	15	0	13
Not applicable	1	0	0	1
Total	100	100	100	159

Individuals in Asian ethnic groups (76%) were more likely than those in Black (67%) or White (52%) groups to believe that the LBC's health and safety service could assist them with their health and safety needs. See Table 31.

Table 31: Belief that LBC can assist with H&S needs by ethnic groups

<i>Level of Agreement</i>	Ethnic Groups (%)			<i>n</i>
	<i>White</i>	<i>Asian</i>	<i>Black</i>	
Strongly disagree	1	3	0	2
Disagree	5	3	0	7
Neither disagree nor agree	42	17	33	59
Agree	44	69	67	78
Strongly agree	8	7	0	12
Not applicable	1	0	0	1
Total	100	100	100	159

Large sized businesses (50%), rather than medium-sized (30%) or small-sized (25%) were more interested in participating in business discussion groups about the services provided by LBC's health and safety service. See Table 32.

Table 32: Interest in discussion groups by size of organisation

<i>Extent of Agreement</i>	Size of Organisation (%)			<i>n</i>
	<i>Small</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Large</i>	
Yes	25	30	50	43
No	75	70	50	117
Total	100	100	100	160

Individuals in Black ethnic groups (67%), rather than those in Asian (41%) or White (22%) were more interested in participating in business discussion groups about the services provided by LBC's health and safety service. See Table 33. Further, this result was statistically significant, $\chi^2(2) = 9.71, p < .01$, implying that the difference between the groups did not occur by chance.

Table 33: Interest in discussion groups by ethnic groups

<i>Extent of Agreement</i>	Ethnic Groups (%)			<i>n</i>
	<i>White</i>	<i>Asian</i>	<i>Black</i>	
Yes	22	41	67	43
No	78	59	33	117
Total	100	100	100	160

5.7 LEVELS OF SATISFACTION WITH THE LBC'S HEALTH AND SAFETY SERVICE

The medium-sized (53%) and the small-sized businesses (52%) were more satisfied than the large businesses (30%) with the services provided by the LBC's health and safety service. See Table 34.

Table 34: Satisfaction with the services provided by the LBC by size of organisation

<i>Level of Agreement</i>	Size of Organisation (%)			<i>n</i>
	<i>Small</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Large</i>	
Strongly disagree	2	0	0	3
Disagree	2	5	0	3
Neither disagree nor agree	41	42	70	68
Agree	45	42	30	69
Strongly agree	7	11	0	11
Not applicable	2	0	0	3
Total	100	100	100	157

More individuals from Asian ethnic groups (55%), rather than from White (50%) or Black (33%) groups were more satisfied with the services provided by the LBC's health and safety service. See Table 35.

Table 35: Satisfaction with the services provided by the LBC by ethnic groups

<i>Level of Agreement</i>	Ethnic Groups (%)			<i>n</i>
	<i>White</i>	<i>Asian</i>	<i>Black</i>	
Strongly disagree	2	3	0	3
Disagree	2	0	0	3
Neither disagree nor agree	44	38	67	69
Agree	43	48	33	69
Strongly agree	7	7	0	10
Not applicable	2	3	0	3
Total	100	100	100	157

More small-sized businesses (41%), rather than medium-sized (37%) or large businesses (20%) felt that they benefited when they responded to information from the LBC's health and safety service. See Table 36.

Table 36: Perceptions of benefit by size of organisation

<i>Level of Agreement</i>	Size of Organisation (%)			<i>n</i>
	<i>Small</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Large</i>	
Strongly disagree	2	0	0	2
Disagree	4	0	0	5
Neither disagree nor agree	51	63	80	84
Agree	35	32	20	52
Strongly agree	6	5	0	8
Not applicable	3	0	0	4
Total	100	100	100	155

More individuals from Black ethnic groups (50%), rather than from Asian (45%) or White (38%) groups felt that they benefited when they responded to information from the LBC's health and safety service. See Table 37.

Table 37: Perceptions of benefit by ethnic groups

<i>Level of Agreement</i>	Ethnic Groups (%)			<i>n</i>
	<i>White</i>	<i>Asian</i>	<i>Black</i>	
Strongly disagree	1	3	0	2
Disagree	3	0	0	4
Neither disagree nor agree	55	48	50	83
Agree	34	38	50	54
Strongly agree	4	7	0	7
Not applicable	3	3	0	4
Total	100	100	100	154

The medium-sized (59%) and small-sized businesses (51%) had higher ratings than large businesses (30%), of their overall experience during their last contact with the LBC's health and safety service. See Table 38.

Table 38: Rating of overall experience by size of organisation

<i>Level of Agreement</i>	Size of Organisation (%)			<i>n</i>
	<i>Small</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Large</i>	
Poor	1	0	0	1
Fair	20	16	10	28
Good	31	32	10	44
Very good	12	16	10	19
Excellent	8	11	10	13
Does not apply	28	26	60	45
Total	100	100	100	150

Individuals from White ethnic groups (51%), rather than from Asian (49%) or Black (33%) groups had higher ratings of their overall experience during their last contact with the LBC's health and safety service. See Table 39.

Table 39: Rating of overall experience by ethnic groups

<i>Level of Agreement</i>	Ethnic Groups (%)			<i>n</i>
	<i>White</i>	<i>Asian</i>	<i>Black</i>	
Poor	1	0	0	1
Fair	17	28	33	29
Good	31	28	0	44
Very good	13	7	33	19
Excellent	7	14	0	12
Does not apply	31	24	33	45
Total	100	100	100	150

The majority of business stated that they always replied to information from the LBC's health & safety service. See Table 40.

Table 40: Extent of response to information from the LBC by size of organisation

<i>Extent of Agreement</i>	Size of Organisation (%)			<i>n</i>
	<i>Small</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Large</i>	
Yes	67	75	50	106
No	30	25	50	49
Not applicable	2	0	0	3
Total	100	100	100	158

Individuals from Black ethnic groups (80%), rather than from Asian (72%) or White (66%) groups were more likely to reply to information from the LBC’s health & safety service. See Table 41.

Table 41: Extent of response to information from the LBC by ethnic groups

<i>Extent of Agreement</i>	Ethnic Groups (%)			<i>n</i>
	<i>White</i>	<i>Asian</i>	<i>Black</i>	
Yes	66	72	80	107
No	32	28	20	49
Not applicable	2	0	0	2
Total	100	100	100	158

5.8 PERCEPTIONS OF AREAS TO IMPROVE

Less than half of the respondents completed the section assessing those areas in which the Luton Borough Council’s health and safety enforcement service could improve, as officers from the Council had not paid them visits. Small-sized businesses, rather than medium-sized or large businesses were more likely to provide comments about the areas that they thought needed improvement. See Table 42.

Table 42: Perception of the areas for improvement by size of organisation

<i>Areas to Improve</i>	Size of Organisation (%)			<i>n</i>
	<i>Small</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Large</i>	
Appointments made before visiting	86	10	4	81
Quicker response to requests for information or guidance	76	21	3	34
More time spent on site by the officer	79	16	5	19
Better feedback following visits	79	17	5	42
Clearer reports on what work is needed	96	2	2	46
More comprehensive Internet content on health and safety enforcement matters	85	7	7	27
Ability to contact the Environmental Health Service electronically at any time	86	10	3	29
Officers who better understand my business	88	10	2	52

The majority of respondents ($n = 111$) provided comments, and these are categorised in Appendix 5. Some of the comments made about the LBC were not favourable, but some businesses were interested in engaging in more interaction as detailed below:

“In the hope that the findings may prompt a more amenable approach by the local E.H.Os. We have a very stringent H&S regime here and a more educational or helpful approach would be welcomed in place of the autocratic, bureaucratic and sometimes operationally impossible stance taken.” (medium-sized organisation, retail/wholesale)

“Hopefully it may give the inefficient bureaucracy at the council a kick up the arse. Too many people who couldn’t get a job in the private sector because they are pen pushers

are employed by the council. A load of jobsworths!" (small organisation, leisure/hospitality)

"Some of these questions I have left unticked. The reason for this being that I have not received any information from the council on health and safety but I know a fair bit about health and safety. As my English is weak I had this form filled out by my nephew." (small organisation - self employed, retail/wholesale)

"The reason I responded to this questionnaire was because I was hoping the council could send me an information pack, which I could study and if any questions I can get in contact with the council." (small organisation - self employed, retail/wholesale)

"I apologise for and (sic) vagueness in my responses, but I have received very little contact from the Authority regarding safety issues. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can assist further." (other services)

6 DISCUSSION

The present study looked at sourcing ways to improve the communication process between the LBC's health and safety service and its duty holders. The research highlighted that there is no singular method that improves the communication process. The findings from the present study is consistent with previous research that has shown that interventions with duty holders are best pursued using a variety of methods, inclusive of partnership, the supply chain, education and awareness, inspection and enforcement, intermediaries and best practice (Howard and Galbraith, 2004a, b). One of the key points to emerge from the case studies is the need to engage with other organisations and facilities if consistent and effective communication is to be attained. This could include the use of intermediaries, the use of the media, the use of influential members within the community or using already established links within the community. Organisations have to use any and all available sources in order to move forward with initializing and maintaining effective communication procedures.

One of the benefits of using outside sources, as noted by a few of the case studies, is the opportunity to get new businesses on board with respect to occupational health and safety requirements. For example, the incubation period allows businesses to receive a substantial amount of information that they need to take notice of from the onset, before they get caught up in the actual running of the business. This is the time in the life of the business, i.e. when they are putting procedures in place to ensure that the business runs smoothly, to stress the importance of implementing and maintaining health and safety measures. Similarly, as close to 80 per cent of small firms tend to approach a bank when they are raising funds to launch a new business (Walker and Tait, 2003), banks could be approached to ask new businesses to submit a health and safety plan along with a business plan, in order to be considered for a loan.

Another finding to emerge from the case studies, especially with respect to ethnic minority groups is the importance of understanding and working within religious and cultural norms. This can include being able to converse in the language, respecting religious practices within the workplace and facilitating specific dietary requirements during any interactions. While the HSE and the LAs do focus already on respecting differences, sometimes some of the nuances of these differences may be missed. For example, ordering the different types of food for an event, such as halal or kosher, and then serving it alongside non-halal or non-kosher foods. The simple act of making certain that the foods are separate would highlight that individuals' religious and cultural requirements and preferences are respected.

The case studies illustrated the importance of face-to-face communication with ethnic minorities, especially with older individuals. This finding supports previous research where older Asian SME owners showed a preference for this method of communicating (COI Communications, 2003), and should be considered for future interactions with this group of duty holders.

One interesting finding to emerge, as noted by a few of the interviewees (case studies, LBC interviews), was the perception among Asian individuals about the use of networking, partnerships and sharing good practice. As outlined in the results this method for the transfer of good practices would not work with this group due to the competitive nature of the businesses within which they normally operate. This finding may be appropriate also for SMEs across specific sectors and should be followed up in subsequent research.

As mentioned previously, only three interviewees from the LBC agreed to be interviewed for the project, but the interviews were able to underscore some key areas of the communication process. Comparable to the case studies, the interviews noted the importance of using a variety

of methods to contact duty holders, and the use of face-to-face communication. Face-to-face communication was especially useful in getting individuals to understand what the sender of the information was trying to achieve, and for the receiver to get a better idea of the benefits that could be gained from interacting with the sender.

The interviews seem to emphasise the continuous amount of information that is sent to duty holders, without an extensive amount of feedback about the impact of this information. There seems also to be an assumption among the interviewees that no feedback or no negative feedback means that the duty holders are not adverse to the processes or to receiving the information. While the lack of negative feedback may imply satisfaction with the process, this can be confirmed only by an appropriate evaluation of the methods being used at present, and this is one area that would benefit from future assessment by the LBC.

All of the interviewees (case studies, LBC interviews) rated the use of evaluation as a very important process in understanding how to move forward when communicating. However, they acknowledged that it is not done as often as it should, and proposed that it is a factor that should be used with more consistency. Overall, this is one factor that should be considered as essential in any communicative process.

Another factor that underlined all of the interviews was ensuring that businesses understand the benefits that they could gain once they became involved in interacting with the individual(s) initiating contact, and acting on the information given. Shearn (2003) found that health and safety interventions realised direct benefits, inclusive of: reduced insurance premiums; reduced sick pay costs; improved production/productivity rates; and reduced product and material damage. There were also indirect benefits, inclusive of: reduced absenteeism; reduced staff turnover; improved chances of winning contracts; and improved job satisfaction/morale. This is one aspect of positive results that should be stressed when contacting and communicating with businesses, especially about health and safety issues.

The duty holders were surveyed to obtain their perceptions of the LBC's health and safety service. The response rate, while not high, realised an adequate number of returns from which an initial overview of the duty holders' perceptions and attitudes was attained. One of the first findings involved the survey method itself, in that a second mailing of the questionnaire improved the response rate by over 100 per cent. Research has substantiated that multiple mailings improve on response rates (Fox, Crask and Kim, 1988; Heberlein and Baumgartner, 1978). This is one recommendation made in the literature that work to improve responses using a questionnaire methodology, with others including prenotification of the questionnaire, which works to establish trust; examining the type of outgoing postage used (with most individuals having a preference for stamps); and showing a preference for coloured rather than white paper in respect of the colour of the questionnaire, from studies done by universities (Fox et al., 1988).

Although the response rate was low, this should not negate the significance of the information provided by the respondents. The receipt of any information is able to indicate those areas that could benefit from future research or interaction and most importantly surveys with low response rates have shown high levels of representativeness (Krosnick, 1999).

There was a high preference by businesses to receive information by post, especially for small businesses. However, medium and large businesses listed fairly equal preferences for face-to-face contact, and contact by e-mail. There was only one business that listed the Internet as a way to get in touch and substantiates the findings from the case studies and interviews of the present study, regarding the low prioritisation of this method.

Some of the results implied that many of the business did not have a lot of contact with the LBC's health and safety service. This contact extended to getting in touch with the LBC,

knowing about the website or knowing about the services on offer by the LBC. Additionally, there were a few negative comments from some of those people who did have contact. The LBC may think about raising its profile in the community, as a low profile or a negative perception of the organisation would contribute to a low interaction with the duty holders.

Quite a few organisations admitted that they did not know all they could about health and safety regulations, but they did feel that they were compliant with health and safety regulations. Obviously, there is a discrepancy between both sets of responses, but as noted by a few of the interviewees of the present study, most businesses do, for the most part, believe that they are compliant, even though they may not be, and need to be guided accordingly. This information raises the importance of the LBC emphasising duty holders' responsibilities.

The results showed that most of the businesses (82%) stated that they trusted the LBC's health and safety service, and this was fairly consistent across size of organisation and ethnicity. This is an important factor in moving forward in communicating with duty holders, as individuals who trust the source of information are more likely to work with the organisation. Frewer (2001) has highlighted that improving communication does not reduce issues of distrust, and as such the LBC is able to move forward knowing that the information they provide would be received positively. This is assisted as the business for the most part believed in the knowledge of LBC's officers and that the LBC's service could assist them. Additionally, more than one-third of businesses were satisfied with the services provided by the LBC, and felt that they benefited when they responded to information sent by the LBC.

Overall, all of the data highlight that businesses are for the most part receptive to information, but there are challenges to the communication process, such as developing a greater understanding of the audience or consistent evaluation, that need to be worked through systematically, consistently and sustained over time.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations arose from the analysis of the data, and should assist the LBC with obtaining a better response rate when contacting its duty holders.

1. *The formation of a communication plan*

The LBC should think about developing a communication plan that is reviewed annually. This plan could incorporate all of the actions that the LBC wish to pursue over the short, medium or long term, the timeframe for achieving these actions and the resources that are available for delivering, acting on, and evaluating these actions. This should help to establish a clear perspective of what needs to be accomplished and the reasons for these choices. The elements of the communication plan could include for example, that for each activity there is a clear objective and process, such as:

- A clearly defined receiver (who - e.g. to all communities/a specific ethnic community/a specific type of business)
- A clearly defined message (what - i.e. is it generic or specific)
- A clearly defined communication process (how - i.e. how will it be presented)
- A clearly defined timeframe (when - i.e. within a month, within a day, within a week, or the time of day)
- A clearly defined evaluative process (how - to assess success that the message has been received and acted on)

2. *The consolidation of outward-bound correspondence*

The LBC may wish to consider establishing one communications office from which all correspondence to duty holders would be despatched. This will ensure that the communication process is co-ordinated better within the organisation and the duty holders are not over burdened with material.

3. *The use of a variety of methods*

The use of a variety of methods would ensure that the message(s) are disseminated as widely as possible. Face-to-face communication may work well with the majority of ethnic minority groups, but networking/partnerships/sharing good working practices may not be the most appropriate for the Asian community due to the competitive nature of the businesses in which they usually operate, i.e. the retail/trade sector.

4. *The establishment of an evaluative process*

The LBC should consider evaluating all its communication processes and comparing them against each other to determine those that are the most effective. Moreover, the evaluation should be set against a quantifiable objective.

There seems to be a heavy reliance on anecdotal data, and this may skew the perception of the individuals conducting programs within the LBC into believing that the services are benefiting the majority of the clients. The clients may indeed be satisfied but without an objective evaluation, this is an assumption that could lead to the alienation of some businesses.

Additionally, there is a tendency to accept the non-provision of comments, or the receipt of no negative comments as indicating that the duty holders are happy with the service. It is essential that the appropriate evaluative processes support these perceptions.

5. *The incorporation of cultural nuances*

While the HSE and LAs do work to respect cultural differences, sometimes some of these differences might not be readily apparent. The LBC should try to implement a system of checks to ensure that these nuances are brought to the forefront before and during interventions. However, the LBC might not have the resources (financial, human, structural) in place for either short-term or long-term checks, but the implementation of such a system could work to the advantage of the organisation.

6. *The use of intermediaries (inclusive of prominent figures in the community)*

The present study has supported previous research in acknowledging the use of intermediaries in contacting and communicating with ethnic owned businesses and SMEs. The LBC should look towards using intermediaries in the vicinity to facilitate communication with its duty holders.

7. *Maintaining links with established contacts*

The present research noted that although it is important to establish links with intermediaries and prominent figures within the community, it is just as important to maintain links with existing contacts. The contact need not be an exhaustive process, but it is needed to ensure that the relationships do not lapse, which would involve a process of breaking down barriers and re-establishing relationships, which could be time consuming and costly in terms of getting out information quickly.

8. *The use of sector specific information*

It is established that duty holders prefer information that is specific to their business needs. The LBC should look at providing more sector specific information to its duty holders. Of course the provision of this type of information needs to be made within the constraints of the LBC.

8 METHODS TO OVERCOME POTENTIAL BARRIERS TO THE SUCCESS OF INTERVENTIONS

The following methods focus on the practical aspects of communication and intervention and should assist in overcoming potential barriers to the success of interventions.

- 1) All of the communication with duty holders should be as a result of a well-established and clearly defined communications plan.
- 2) The communication process in the LBC should be streamlined to allow a more focused approach.
- 3) The LBC should try to ensure that its duty holders are approached or sent information only once every quarter, if possible.
- 4) Any communication that is sent to duty holders should use very simple language and be provided in other languages if requested.
- 5) The LBC should use a variety of methods to contact and communicate with duty holders. Face-to-face communication seems to work best with Asian ethnic groups, while quite a few large-sized business show a preference for e-mail.
- 6) Any method used should be followed up by a second method. For example, if a leaflet is distributed, this could be followed up by a telephone call to ensure that the information is received and to check that the duty holders understand the information.
- 7) The duty holders should be informed of any indirect or direct benefits of interventions.
- 8) Efforts should be made to establish links with influential individuals within the local community. Once these links are in place, they should be maintained by occasional contacting the individuals.

9 APPENDICES

9.1 APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR THE CASE STUDIES

Influences on the Communication Process with Duty Holders

Introduction:

State my position in the organisation and the purpose of the research.

Establishing Contact:

1. Could you tell me about your experience(s) of contacting and communicating with duty holders (particularly SMEs/ethnic minorities)?
2. Which groups of ethnic minorities have you contacted?
3. How did you contact the SMEs/ethnic minorities?
4. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 representing *not important* and 5 representing *very important*, how important were the following in deciding how to contact and communicate with SMEs/ethnic minorities:

Method/Technique/Factor	Not Important				Very Important
	1	2	3	4	5
Culture - understanding of					
Face-to-face communication					
Gatekeepers					
Incubation period/start-ups – during					
Intermediaries, e.g. accountants, banks and trade associations – use of					
ICT and the Internet					
Leaflets – reading level					
Literacy - level					
Networking/partnerships/sharing good practice					
Sector specific information					
Seminars					
Simple language					
Verbal communication					
Evaluating the communication process					

Methods of Communication:

5. What types(s) of communication did you use?
[*prompt* - interviews; leaflets; face-to-face; providing literature; CDs; DVDs]
6. If more than one method of communication was used, when in the process did you decide to use more than one method?

Influences on Businesses:

7. How effective were the methods that you used?
8. Do you think that you were able to influence the businesses?
9. What reasons/evidence do you have for thinking that you were able to influence the businesses?

Barriers to Communication:

10. How receptive were the businesses to your requests?
11. If not receptive, what reason did they give for not responding to your request?
[*prompt* - did not understand (unclear or incomplete messages); lack of time]
12. Do you think that you contacted/communicated with the businesses at an appropriate time?
[*prompt* - for them; for you; was it poor timing, good timing i.e. relevant to them at that particular point in time]
13. Could you feel any conflict between yourself, as the communicator, and the recipient when the initial contact was made?
Subsequent contact?
14. If the business refused the first time, did you try a different approach?
15. What reason(s) did the businesses give for not responding to your queries/requests?

Key Lessons Learned:

16. What lesson(s) did you learn from the process?
17. Did you change the way that you communicated with SMEs/ethnic minorities?
18. Do you know of any other groups within HSE/LAs that have used this approach?
Successfully contacted SMEs/ethnic minorities?
19. How would you rate your approach? Successful/not successful
Why?
20. Did you receive any feedback from the duty holders on your contact/communication procedures?

Demographics:

- 21) Would you tell me your position in the organisation?
- 22) How long have you worked for this organisation?

23) How long did you work on this project?

Thank you for taking the time to answer my questions. Your assistance is greatly appreciated.

Organisational Factors that May Influence the Communicative Process

Introduction:

State my position in the organisation and the purpose of the research.

Establishing Contact:

1. Could you tell me about your experience(s) of contacting and communicating with duty holders (particularly SMEs/ethnic minorities)?
2. Which groups of ethnic minorities have you contacted?
3. How did you contact the SMEs/ethnic minorities?
4. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 representing *not important* and 5 representing *very important*, how important were the following in deciding how to contact and communicate with SMEs/ethnic minorities:

Method/Technique/Factor	Not Important				Very Important
	1	2	3	4	5
Culture - understanding of					
Face-to-face communication					
Gatekeepers					
Incubation period/start-ups - during					
Intermediaries, e.g. accountants, banks and trade associations - use of					
ICT and the Internet					
Leaflets - reading level					
Literacy – level					
Networking/partnerships/sharing good practice					
Sector specific information					
Seminars					
Simple language					
Verbal communication					
Evaluating the communication process					

Methods of Communication:

5. What types(s) of communication did you use?
[*prompt* – interviews; leaflets; face-to-face; providing literature; CDs; DVDs]
6. If more than one method of communication was used, when in the process did you decide to use more than one method?

Process:

7. What is the process that you use when you wish to contact/communicate with duty holders?

[*prompt* - contact directly; need approval of supervisor; need approval of communications officer; need to inform that communications officer; any specific organisational routine to follow; long chain of command; red tape]
8. Do you know if other persons in the organisation were contacting the duty holders at the same time as yourself?
9. Was it essential to contact the duty holders?

[*prompt* - could the information have been provided at a different time *or not at all*?
10. Do you think the appropriate medium (method e.g. written, electronically etc) was used?
11. Was the language targeted at the right level?

[*prompt* - not too complex, and easy to understand?]

Influences on Businesses:

12. How effective were the methods that you used?
13. Do you think that you were able to influence the businesses?
14. What reason(s)/evidence do you have for thinking that you were able to influence the businesses?

Barriers to Communication:

15. How receptive were the businesses to your requests?
16. If not receptive, what reason(s) did they give for not responding to your request?

[*prompt* - did not understand (unclear or incomplete messages), lack of time]
17. Do you think that you contacted/communicated with the businesses at an appropriate time?

(*prompt* - for them, for you, was it poor timing, good timing i.e. relevant to them at that particular point in time)
18. Could you feel any conflict between yourself, as the communicator, and the recipient when the initial contact was made?

Subsequent contact?
19. If the business refused the first time, did you try a different approach?
20. What reason(s), if any, did the businesses give for not responding to your queries?

Key Lessons Learned:

21. What lesson(s) did you learn from the process?
22. Did you change the way that you communicated with SMEs/ethnic minorities?
23. How would you rate your approach? [*prompt* - Successful/not successful]
Why?
24. Did you receive any feedback from the duty holders on your contact/communication procedures?

Demographics:

25. Would you tell me your position in the organisation?
26. How long have you worked for this organisation?

Thank you for taking the time to answer my questions. Your assistance is greatly appreciated.

9.3 APPENDIX 3: DUTY HOLDER QUESTIONNAIRE AND COVERING LETTERS



Understanding the Health & Safety Business Needs in Luton

Please return this questionnaire in the enclosed envelope within 7 days

Please answer all of the questions

1.	How would you prefer to be contacted by the Luton Borough Council's Health & Safety Service? Face-to-face <input type="checkbox"/> Post <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone <input type="checkbox"/> e-mail <input type="checkbox"/> The Internet <input type="checkbox"/>
2.	Why do you get in touch with the Luton Borough Council's Health & Safety Service? To get information <input type="checkbox"/> To respond to a query <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="text"/>
3.	I would contact the Luton Borough Council's Health & Safety Service if I needed to get information on health and safety. Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Neither disagree nor agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>
4.	I feel that I know all that I need to know about health and safety regulations. Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Neither disagree nor agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>
5.	I always reply to information from Luton Borough Council's Health & Safety Service. Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
6.	I know the services that Luton Borough Council's Health & Safety Service provides. Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
7.	The material/information sent to me by Luton Borough Council's Health & Safety Service is easy to understand. Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Neither disagree nor agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>
8.	I would be interested in participating in business discussion groups about the services provided by Luton Borough Council's Health and Safety Service. Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
9.	I believe that Luton Borough Council's Health & Safety Service can assist me with my health and safety business needs. Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Neither disagree nor agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>
10.	I trust Luton Borough Council's Health & Safety Service. Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
11.	I know that I can get information on health and safety regulations from the Luton Borough Council's Health & Safety Service. Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Neither disagree nor agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>
12.	I believe the health and safety information on the council's website http://www.luton.gov.uk is easy to access. Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Neither disagree nor agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>
13.	I believe that I comply with all the health and safety regulations for my business. Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Neither disagree nor agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>

Please turn over ↶

14. I always read the material/information that is sent to me by Luton Borough Council's Health & Safety Service.
 Yes No

15. I believe that officers who contact me about health and safety are knowledgeable, approachable and fair.
 Strongly disagree Disagree Neither disagree nor agree Agree
 Strongly agree

16. I believe that the Luton Borough Council's Health & Safety Service can assist me in complying with the necessary health and safety regulations.
 Strongly disagree Disagree Neither disagree nor agree Agree
 Strongly agree

17. I get all the information on health and safety regulations that I need from Luton Borough Council's Health & Safety Service.
 Strongly disagree Disagree Neither disagree nor agree Agree
 Strongly agree Does not apply

18. Overall, I am satisfied with the services provided by Luton Borough Council's Health & Safety Service.
 Strongly disagree Disagree Neither disagree nor agree Agree
 Strongly agree

19. I benefit when I respond to information from Luton Borough Council's Health & Safety Service.
 Strongly disagree Disagree Neither disagree nor agree Agree
 Strongly agree

20. How would you rate your overall experience during your last contact with the Luton Borough Council's Health & Safety Service?
 Poor Fair Good Very Good Excellent Does not apply

21. Please list the areas in which you feel Luton Borough Council's Health and Safety Enforcement Service could improve. Select all that apply:

21a. Appointments made before visiting

21b. Quicker response to requests for information or guidance
Please suggest a response time you feel to be reasonable
 Less than one day
 One day to three days
 Four days to five days
 More than five days

21c. More time spent on site by the officer

21d. Better feedback following visits
Please suggest the type of feedback you prefer
 Specific to the visit
 Specific to my business
 Specific health & safety
 General health & safety

21e. Clearer reports on what work is needed

21f. More comprehensive Internet content on health and safety enforcement matters

21g. Ability to contact the Environmental Health Service electronically at any time

21h. Officers who better understand my business

Please turn over ➡

22. Are you? Male Female

23. What is your age?

24a. What is your ethnic group?
a) White - British b) White - Irish c) White - Other d) Indian
e) Indian - British f) Pakistani g) Pakistani - British h) Black - British
i) Black - Caribbean j) Black - African k) Chinese l) Chinese - British
m) Korean n) Korean - British

24b. Please give your ethnic group if it is not listed above:

25. In which sector is your business?
a) Construction b) Education/Health c) Financial services
d) Leisure/Hospitality e) Manufacturing f) Natural resources/Mining
g) Professional/Business h) Retail/Wholesale i) Transportation
j) Other services

26. What is your position in the business?
Owner Employee Self employed

27. How many employees work in the business?
0 1 - 9 10 - 49 50 - 249 250 or more

28. Please provide any other information that you feel may be necessary

29. Why did you respond to this questionnaire?

Thank you for taking the time to answer our questions. Your assistance is greatly appreciated. Please return to Dr. Roxane L. Gervais (Social and Organisational Factors Section, Harpur Hill, Buxton, SK17 9JN) in the FREEPOST envelope provided.

Harpur Hill, Buxton
Derbyshire, SK17 9TN
Telephone: +44 (0)1298 218000
Facsimile: +44 (0)1298 218390



03 October 2006

Name
Address

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Roxane L. Gervais and I am a Senior Scientist working at the Health and Safety Laboratory in Buxton. The Laboratory is helping the Luton Borough Council to assess the health and safety needs of businesses within the Luton area. In order to understand your needs, we would appreciate hearing from you, and as interaction works best when there is two-way communication, please give us your views by filling in this brief questionnaire.

You should be able to complete the questionnaire in about 10 minutes. It asks for your thoughts about your contact with the Luton Borough Council's Health and Safety Service, and any information that you give us will be very valuable. The information that you give us is both anonymous and confidential and will be considered as part of a group and not as individual responses. I can be contacted directly on ----- to answer any queries or questions that you may have, or if you would like to know more about the results of the study.

When you have completed the questionnaire, a FREEPOST envelope is provided for you to return it to me. Please return it by 13th October 2006.

I would like to thank you for helping us to understand the health and safety business needs in Luton, which will assist you in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Roxane L. Gervais
Senior Scientist
Social and Organisational Factors

Direct Tel: -----
Direct Fax: -----
Email: -----

enc: Questionnaire



Harper Hill, Buxton
Derbyshire, SK17 9JN
Telephone: +44 (0)1298 218000
Facsimile: +44 (0)1298 218590

Name
Address

15 November 2006

Dear Sir/Madam,

I sent you recently a questionnaire to fill out on behalf of the Luton Borough Council's Health and Safety Service. The questionnaire asks for your thoughts about your contact with the Luton Borough Council's Health and Safety Service. If you have completed the questionnaire and returned it to me, THANK YOU very much for assisting me with finding out your thoughts on the services provided to you by the Luton Borough Council's Health and Safety Service.

Unfortunately, although 800 questionnaires were sent to businesses, I only received responses from 69 businesses in Luton. I do appreciate tremendously the questionnaires that were returned to me as they allow me to get an initial overview of your opinions that I would then compile and forward to the Luton Borough Council's Health and Safety Service in order that they could improve the services that they provide to you. I know that the Christmas season is rapidly approaching and you may have various other tasks added to your working day, however I do ask that you consider filling out the questionnaire at the earliest opportunity.

As I stated before you should be able to complete the questionnaire in about 10 minutes, and any information that you give me will be very valuable. The information that you give me is both anonymous and confidential and will be considered as part of a group and not as individual responses. I can be contacted directly on ----- to answer any queries or questions that you may have, or if you would like to know more about the results of the study.

When you have completed the questionnaire, a FREEPOST envelope is provided for you to return it to me. Please return it by 30th November 2006.

I would like to thank you for helping us to understand the health and safety business needs in Luton.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Roxane L. Gervais
Senior Scientist
Social and Organisational Factors
Direct Tel: -----
Direct Fax: -----
Email: -----

enc: Questionnaire

An agency of the Health and Safety Executive

Investor In People
ISO9001 Approved

**9.4 APPENDIX 4: LISTING OF THE THEMES AND SUB-THEMES
(INTERVIEW DATA)**

Interviews Themes and Sub-Themes

1 *Methods of Contact*

- 1.1 Liaise with any local organisations, e.g. Business Chamber
- 1.2 Direct mail/mail shots/newsletters
 - 1.2.1 Bought local company databases
 - 1.2.2 Build and maintain in-house databases
 - 1.2.3 Databases do not facilitate contacting certain groups
- 1.3 Press releases
- 1.4 Telephone calls
- 1.5 Use more than one method (letter followed by telephone call)
- 1.6 E-mail/website links
- 1.7 Face-to-face interaction/consultations
- 1.8 Business breakfasts/discussion groups
- 1.9 Compact Discs (CDs)
- 1.10 Inspections/enforcement visits

2 *Facilitations of the Process*

- 2.1 Establish and maintain rapport
- 2.2 Use the same methods to contact businesses regardless of size
- 2.3 Use a more individual approach in supporting application forms/negotiation process
 - 2.3.1 Acknowledge that businesses may know what is best for their business
- 2.4 Use feedback to determine business preference for receiving information
- 2.5 Method has worked previously
- 2.6 Can communicate directly to duty holders without needing approval
- 2.7 Use available resources to ensure momentum is maintained
- 2.8 Ensure material is at a level that is easily understandable
- 2.9 Target a specific named individual/specific business
- 2.10 Ensure that the material is relevant
- 2.11 Use local contacts within the community
- 2.12 Use feedback to gauge perceptions of the communication process

3 *Barriers to the Process*

- 3.1 Working to specific timescales
- 3.2 Limited resources
 - 3.2.1 No combined resources so not aware of other departments' contact procedures
- 3.3 Assumption that no feedback (inclusive of no negative) equates to satisfaction with service
 - 3.3.1 No evaluation procedures in place
- 3.4 Businesses that are reluctant to receiving information
 - 3.4.1 Acknowledge the limitations of resources in businesses to access adequately information
- 3.5 Businesses that work against certain techniques
- 3.6 Using a general contact process so certain groups may be excluded
- 3.7 Send out a variety, consistent and continuous amount of material
- 3.8 No procedures in place to follow-up on non-response
- 3.9 Limited knowledge about businesses and their working practices

4 *Improving the Process*

- 4.1 Contacting businesses to ask for their preferences to receive information
- 4.2 Assessing the needs of the businesses
- 4.3 Ensure that the response time to businesses is quick

9.5 APPENDIX 5: DETAILED RESPONSES TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Detailed Questionnaire Responses

Mailing of Questionnaire

Mailing of questionnaire	<i>N</i>	%
1st mailing	70	41
2nd mailing	99	59
Total	169	100

1. How would you prefer to be contacted by the Luton Borough Council's Health & Safety Service?

Preference	<i>N</i>	%
Face to face	25	13
Post	84	44
Telephone	33	17
e-mail	42	22
The Internet	2	1
All	1	1
No response	3	2
Total	190	100

The number of total responses is more than the number of respondents as some individuals gave more than one response.

2. Why do you get in touch with the Luton Borough Council's Health & Safety Service?

Reasons to contact LBC	<i>N</i>	%
To get information	99	53
To respond to a query	55	30
Other	15	8
No response	16	9
Total	185	100

The number of total responses is more than the number of respondents as some individuals gave more than one response.

Reasons for 'Other' Response

Reasons for getting in touch with the LBC	<i>N</i>	%
Do not contact/Never had the need to contact	10	6
Report an accident	1	1
Safety	1	1
To answer questionnaire	1	1
Total	13	8

3. **I would contact the Luton Borough Council's Health & Safety Service if I needed to get information on health and safety.**

Contact LBC if need Health and Safety Information	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Strongly disagree	11	6
Disagree	16	9
Neither disagree nor agree	28	17
Agree	78	46
Strongly agree	32	19
Not applicable	1	1
No response	3	2
Total	169	100

4. **I feel that I know all that I need to know about health and safety regulations.**

Knowledge of Health and Safety Regulations	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Strongly disagree	12	7
Disagree	45	26
Neither disagree nor agree	62	37
Agree	38	22
Strongly agree	10	6
Not applicable	1	1
No response	1	1
Total	169	100

5. **I always reply to information from Luton Borough Council's Health & Safety Service.**

Reply to LBC	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	110	65
No	51	30
Not applicable	3	2
No response	5	3
Total	169	100

6. **I know the services that Luton Borough Council's Health & Safety Service provides.**

Knowledge of LBC's H & S Services	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	57	34
No	107	63
Not applicable	1	1
No response	4	2
Total	169	100

7. **The material/information sent to me by Luton Borough Council's Health & Safety service is easy to understand.**

Material/Information Easy to Understand	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Strongly disagree	3	2
Disagree	9	5
Neither disagree nor agree	73	43
Agree	70	41
Strongly agree	6	4
Not applicable	5	3
No response	3	2
Total	169	100

8. **I would be interested in participating in business discussion groups about the services provided by Luton Borough Council's Health and Safety Service.**

Interest in Discussion Groups	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	45	27
No	122	72
No response	2	1
Total	169	100

9. **I believe that Luton Borough Council's Health & Safety Service can assist me with my health and safety business needs.**

Belief in Assistance of H & S Business Needs	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Strongly disagree	2	1
Disagree	7	4
Neither disagree nor agree	62	37
Agree	81	48
Strongly agree	13	7
Not applicable	1	1
No response	3	2
Total	169	100

10. **I trust Luton Borough Council's Health & Safety Service.**

Trust in LBC's H & S	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	139	82
No	14	8
Don't know	3	2
No response	13	8
Total	169	100

11. **I know that I can get information on health and safety regulations from the Luton Borough Council's Health & Safety Service.**

Knowledge of Health and Safety Information	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Strongly disagree	3	2
Disagree	6	4
Neither disagree nor agree	48	28
Agree	95	56
Strongly agree	14	8
Not applicable	1	1
No response	2	1
Total	169	100

12. **I believe the health and safety information on the council's website <http://www.luton.gov.uk> is easy to access.**

Website Easy to Access	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Strongly disagree	1	1
Disagree	6	4
Neither disagree nor agree	87	51
Agree	61	36
Strongly agree	4	2
Not applicable	4	2
No response	6	4
Total	169	100

13. **I believe that I comply with all the health and safety regulations for my business.**

Compliance with Health and Safety Regulations	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Strongly disagree	1	1
Disagree	2	1
Neither disagree nor agree	25	15
Agree	106	63
Strongly agree	33	19
No response	2	1
Total	169	100

14. **I always read the material/information that is sent to me by Luton Borough Council's Health & Safety Service.**

Read Information	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	131	77
No	25	15
Have not received information	3	2
Not applicable	3	2
No response	7	4
Total	169	100

15. **I believe that officers who contact me about health and safety are knowledgeable, approachable and fair.**

Perception of Officers	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Strongly disagree	2	1
Disagree	3	2
Neither disagree nor agree	64	38
Agree	74	44
Strongly agree	14	8
Not applicable	5	3
No response	7	4
Total	169	100

16. **I believe that the Luton Borough Council's Health & Safety Service can assist me in complying with the necessary health and safety regulations.**

Perception of Compliance	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Strongly disagree	2	1
Disagree	1	1
Neither disagree nor agree	38	22
Agree	102	60
Strongly agree	18	11
Not applicable	1	1
No response	7	4
Total	169	100

17. **I get all the information on health and safety regulations that I need from Luton Borough Council's Health & Safety Service.**

Obtaining Information	<i>N</i>	%
Strongly disagree	6	4
Disagree	23	13
Neither disagree nor agree	61	36
Agree	53	31
Strongly agree	6	4
Does not apply	15	9
No response	5	3
Total	169	100

18. **Overall, I am satisfied with the services provided by Luton Borough Council's Health & Safety Service.**

Satisfaction with Services	<i>N</i>	%
Strongly disagree	3	2
Disagree	3	2
Neither disagree nor agree	71	42
Agree	73	43
Strongly agree	11	6
Not applicable	3	2
No response	5	3
Total	169	100

19. **I benefit when I respond to information from Luton Borough Council's Health & Safety Service.**

Perception of Benefits of Information	<i>N</i>	%
Strongly disagree	2	1
Disagree	5	3
Neither disagree nor agree	86	51
Agree	56	33
Strongly agree	8	5
Not applicable	4	2
No response	8	5
Total	169	100

20. How would you rate your overall experience during your last contact with the Luton Borough Council's Health & Safety Service?

Rating of Overall Experience	N	%
Poor	1	1
Fair	29	17
Good	46	27
Very good	20	12
Excellent	13	8
Does not apply	48	28
No response	12	7
Total	169	100

21. Please list the areas in which you feel Luton Borough Council's Health and Safety Enforcement Service could improve. Select all that apply:

One respondent stated on the questionnaire that he did not have experience with the service and did not respond to the questions

Areas to improve	n*	%
21a. Appointments made before visiting	85	50
21b. Quicker response to requests for information or guidance	35	21
Response times that are reasonable		
Less than one day	9	5
One day to three days	56	33
Four days to five days	25	15
More than five days	3	2
21c. More time spent on site by the officer	20	12
21d. Better feedback following visits	44	26
Type of feedback preferred *		
Specific to the visit	33	20
Specific to my business	47	28
Specific health & safety	23	14
General health & safety	21	12
21e. Clearer reports on what work is needed	49	29
21f. More comprehensive Internet content on health and safety enforcement matters	27	16
21g. Ability to contact the Environmental Health Service electronically at any time	30	18
21h. Officers who better understand my business	54	32

*Some respondents provided more than one response

22. Gender

Gender	N	%
Male	107	63
Female	56	33
No response	6	4
Total	169	100

23. What is your age?

Age Groups	N	%
18 - 25	8	4
26 - 35	23	14
36 - 45	44	26
46 - 55	42	25
55 - 78	29	17
No response	23	14
Total	169	100

24a. What is your ethnic group?

Ethnic Groups	N	%
White - British	120	71
White - Irish	4	2
White - Other	3	2
Indian - British	12	7
Pakistani	9	5
Pakistani - British	7	4
Black - British	2	1
Black - Caribbean	2	1
Black - African	2	1
Other	1	1
No response	7	4
Total	169	100

24b. Ethnic groups not listed:

Description of other ethnic groups	N	%
British Bangladeshi	1	<1
Human	1	<1
Kashmiri British	1	<1
Portuguese - South African	1	<1
White English	4	3
Total	8	5

25. In which sector is your business?

Sector	N	%
Construction	7	4
Education/Health	8	5
Financial Services	11	6
Leisure/Hospitality	12	7
Manufacturing	4	2
Professional/Business	26	15
Retail/Wholesale	52	31
Transportation	8	5
Other services	35	21
No response	6	4
Total	169	100

25a. Other sectors to include for businesses

Other Sector	n	%
Education/Health	1	<1
Professional/Business	2	1
Retail/Wholesale	3	2
Transportation	2	1
Social/Community	1	<1
Total	9	5

26. **What is your position in the business?**

Position	N	%
Owner	58	34
Employee	90	53
Self-employed	13	8
Volunteer	1	1
No response	7	4
Total	169	100

27. **How many employees work in the business?**

Number of Employees	N	%
0	9	5
1 – 9	76	45
10 – 49	47	28
50 – 249	20	12
250 or more	10	6
No response	7	4
Total	169	100

28. **Please provide any other information that you feel may be necessary**

Information	N	%
Information on type of organisation and services provided	8	5
Compliant with health and safety regulations	4	2
Have not received information from the council	2	1
Good relationship with LBC	2	1
Unaware of LBC health and safety service	1	<1
Would like to receive information from LBC	1	<1
LBC - need to sort themselves out	1	<1
Criticism of questionnaire	1	<1
Total	20	12

29. Why did you respond to this questionnaire?

Reasons for Responding	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Need assistance with health and safety	4	2
Business may benefit from responding to questionnaire/importance to work place	8	5
Help to improve health and safety service	42	25
LBC needs to improve	2	1
Interested in finding out more about service	1	1
Requested/asked to complete/politeness	44	26
To assist the low response rate	4	2
Total	105	62

10 REFERENCES

- COI Communications. (2003) *Common Good. Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). Final Report*. <<http://www.commongoodresearch.gov.uk/smes>> [accessed 07 December 2005].
- Department of Trade and Industry. (DTI, 2005) URN 05/92 - *Statistical Press Release*. <http://www.sbs.gov.uk/SBS_Gov_files/researchandstats/SMESTats2004.pdf> [accessed 12 October 2005].
- Fox, R. J., Crask, M. R. and Kim, J. (1988) Mail survey response rate. A meta-analysis of selected techniques for inducing response, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, **52**, pp. 467-491.
- Frewer, L. J. (2001) Environmental Risk, Public Trust and Perceived Exclusion from Risk Management. *Research in Social Problems and Public Policy*, **9**, pp. 221 - 248.
- Gervais, R. L. (2006) *An Evaluation of Successful Communication with Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs)*. HSL Report SOFS/06/04.
- Heberlein, T. A. and Baumgartner, R. (1978) Factors affecting response rates to mailed questionnaires: A quantitative analysis of the published literature. *American Sociological Review*, **43**(4) pp. 447-462.
- Howard, M. and Galbraith, A. (2004a) *Factors influencing Local Authority health and safety interventions and enforcement activity. Part One: Interventions*. <<http://www.hse.gov.uk/research/misc/lainterventions.pdf>> [accessed 14 March 2006].
- Howard, M. and Galbraith, A. (2004b) *Factors influencing Local Authority health and safety interventions and enforcement activity. Part Two: Enforcement Activity*. <<http://www.hse.gov.uk/research/misc/lainterventions2.pdf>> [accessed 14 March 2006].
- Krosnick, J. A. (1999) Survey Research. *Annual Review of Psychology*, **50**, pp. 537-567.
- Ling, K. S. (2004) *The Effectiveness of one-on-one Communication in Small Businesses*. <<http://www.sbaer.uca.edu/research/1998/ICSB/s008.htm>> [accessed 07 December 2005].
- Marlow, P. (2006) *Occupational Health & Safety Issues in the Korean Community*. HSL Report SOFS/06/07.
- O'Hara, R. and Dickety, N. (2000) *Communicating Health and Safety Information in Small Firms using Chemicals*, HSL Report RAS/00/16.
- Paine, K. D. (2003) *Guidelines for Measuring Trust in Organizations*. The Institute for Public Relations <http://www.instituteforpr.com/pdf/2003_measuring-trust.pdf> [accessed 14 March 2006].
- Patton, M. Q. (1990) *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*. Newbury Park: Sage.
- Rajkumar, R. and Thomas, A. (2004) *Qualitative research into small business experiences of using government services*, Small Business Services, BMRB/RR/AT- 45-102-156.
- Shearn, P. (2003) *Case Examples: Business Benefits Arising From Health & Safety Interventions*, HSL Report ERG/03/14.

Stephens, P., Hickling, N., Gaskell, L. Burton, M. and Holland, D. (2004) *Occupational health and SMEs; Focused intervention strategies*. Vectra Group Limited. RR257 ISBN 0 7176 2883 3.

Turk, D. C. and Kerns, R. D. (1985) Assessment in health psychology: A cognitive-behavioral perspective, in *Measurement Strategies in Health Psychology*, P. Karoly, ed., New York: John Wiley & Sons, pp. 335-372.

Vinten, G. (1999) Corporate communications in small- and medium-sized enterprises, *Industrial and Commercial Training*, **31**(3), pp. 112-119.

Walker, D. and Tait, R. (2003) Using intermediary organisations to improve health and safety performance in small firms in the UK, in *12th International Conference on Safe Communities*, pp. 1-5.

Whitehead, E., Purdy, D., and Mascarenhas-Keyes, S. (2006) *Ethnic Minority Business in England; Report on the Annual Small Business Survey 2003 Ethnic Boost*, Small Business Service, URN 06/958.

Woolgar, S., Vaux, J., Gomes, P., Ezingard, J. N., and Grieve, R. (1998) Abilities and competencies required, particularly by small firms, to identify and acquire new technology, *Technovation*, **18**(8), pp. 575-584.

Yin, R. K. (2002) *Case Study Research. Design and Methods*. Third Edition. Applied social research method series Volume 5. California: Sage Publications.