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HUDDERSFIELD TOWN CENTRE AUDIT 2002

FACT SHEET 5: PERCEPTIONS OF THE TOWN

Introduction

This document, produced by Kirklees MC's Planning Service, is designed to provide supplementary information on the surveys of business and shopper/visitor perceptions of Huddersfield to accompany the 2002 Town Centre Audit (in A1 folded form). This is one of a series of Fact Sheets that contain detailed analysis of the indicators of town centre performance presented in the main publication.

Assessing perceptions: Methodology

Questionnaire surveys were undertaken in Huddersfield town centre during September and October 2001 to gauge the views of shoppers/visitors and business owners/managers on various town centre issues. Tabulated full results from both questionnaires are given at the end of the Fact Sheet.

It is important to note that both the business and shoppers questionnaire surveys were undertaken **prior** to the opening of Kingsgate. Further questionnaire surveys will be undertaken during the summer of 2003 to gauge the impact of Kingsgate on business and shopper/visitor perceptions of the town.

Businesses: Self-completion questionnaires were distributed by hand to 430 businesses and 195 market traders within the town centre. Whilst the response from market traders was a poor 23% (45 completed questionnaires), the response from town centre businesses was much higher (35% completed questionnaires).

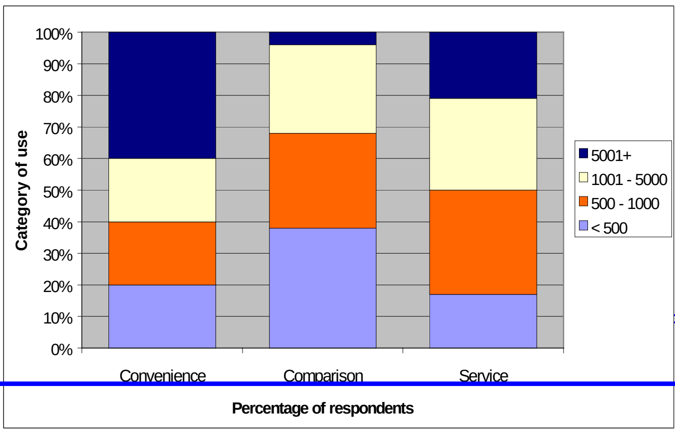
Shoppers: A sample of 522 visitors to Huddersfield were interviewed at various locations around the town centre over several days in September and October 2001 (weekdays and weekends).

Business survey: main findings

Business characteristics: 56% of all returns were from comparison goods traders of which 38% occupy shop units of less than 46 sq.m. (500 sq.ft.). Figure 1 illustrates the relationship between the nature of use and size of unit.

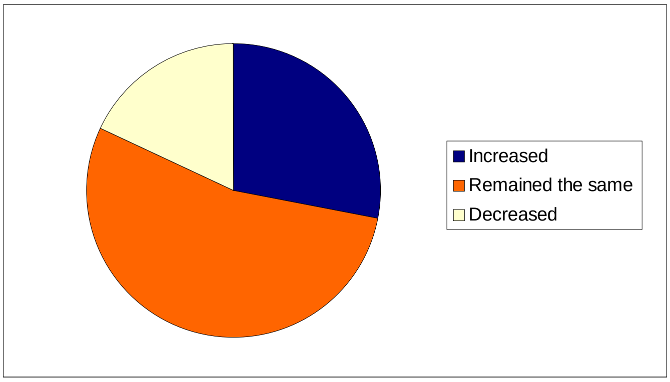
Figure 1: Nature of use and size of unit (sq.ft.)

Only 26% of respondents are members of the Huddersfield Town Centre Association and over half (59%) are independent traders. The majority (59%) of business respondents have been trading in the town centre for more than 10 years. Traders that are new to the town (up to 2 years) constitute 13% of respondents.



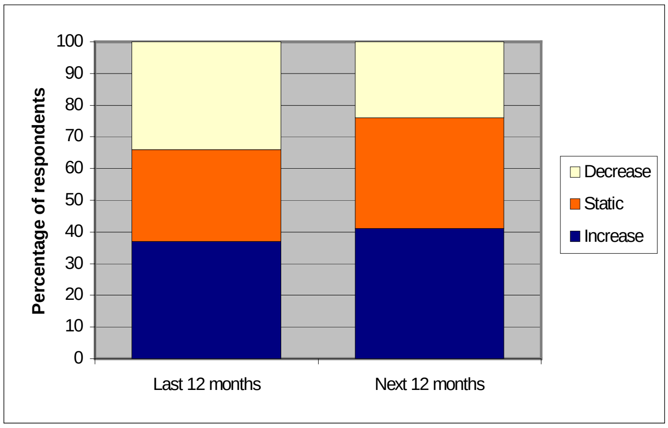
Employment: Figure 2 shows the changes experienced by respondents during the last 12 months in respect of employee numbers. Clearly, over half (54%) recorded that their staff numbers had not changed whilst 28% registered an increase. The employment sector in the town continues to be characterised by part time jobs, and by a predominantly female workforce. This is particularly true of the convenience goods retail sector where only 19% of employees are full time.

Figure 2: Changes in staff numbers (last 12 months)



Turnover trends: Two thirds of respondents recorded that they had experienced increasing or static turnover during the last 12 months. Optimism for the future is reflected in the high number of respondents expecting increases or static turnover for the next 12 months – amounting to 76%. These trends are shown in Figure 3.

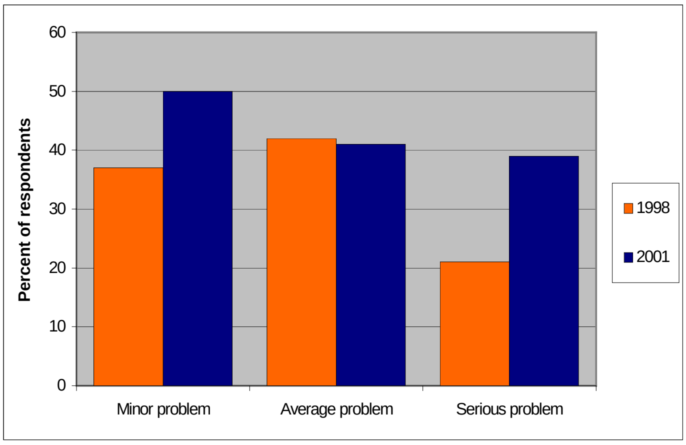
Figure 3: Trends and predictions in turnover



81% of those experiencing increases in turnover during the last 12 months are expecting this to continue during the coming 12 months.

Crime in the town centre: 39% of businesses and market traders considered crime to be a serious problem in Huddersfield. Of these, 88% had experienced some form of crime during the past 12 months. However, the experience of crime was also high amongst those who did not consider it as a serious problem with 69% of these also experiencing some form of crime over the past 12 months. The perception of crime in both the 1998 and 2002 assessments is illustrated in Figure 4.

Figure 4: The problem of crime (1998 and 2001)

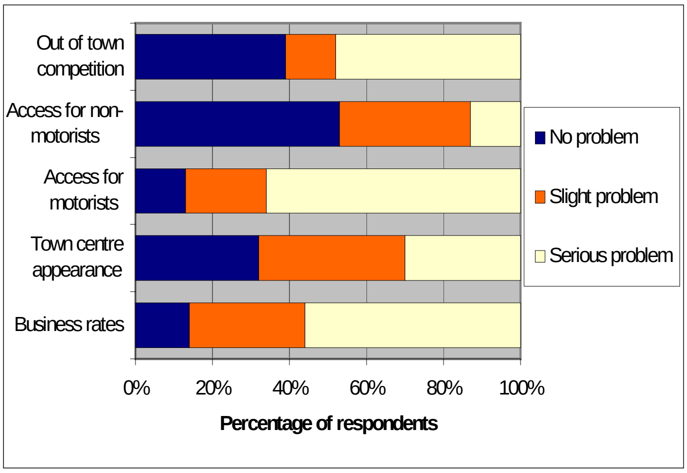


Major concerns relate to burglary/theft, shoplifting, vandalism and anti-social behaviour in particular. In terms of the actual crimes experienced by traders, shoplifting is by far the most common with 62% of respondents experiencing this crime type. This was followed by vandalism which has affected 38% of respondents. It was suggested by 76% of respondents that more policing would allay fears of crime in the town centre, whilst 17% suggested an increased use of CCTV would be beneficial to the town centre area.

Parking and accessibility: The cost of car parking was considered to be the most serious problem in terms of accessibility to the town by 41% of business respondents, with the availability of parking also being of great concern (36%). Huddersfield has a ratio of 57.1 spaces per thousand square metres of net retail floorspace. This is comparable to ratios in Halifax (54.9) and Barnsley (65.3%) but is much lower than that of Wakefield (70.3).

Town centre problems: Figure 5 shows the issues affecting business performance in the town. The most serious concerns relate to motorist access, business rates and out of town competition (identified as a serious problem by 66%, 56% and 48%, respectively).

Figure 5: Issues affecting business performance



Improving the town: When asked how they would most like to see the town centre improved, 45% of respondents cited improvements to car parking as the main issue, with environmental improvements and an improved quality of shops being mentioned by 18% and 11% of respondents, respectively.

Shoppers survey: main findings

Accessing the town centre: It is clearly evident from Figure 6 that public transport continues to be a well used means of accessing Huddersfield town centre, although the car remains the most used transport method.

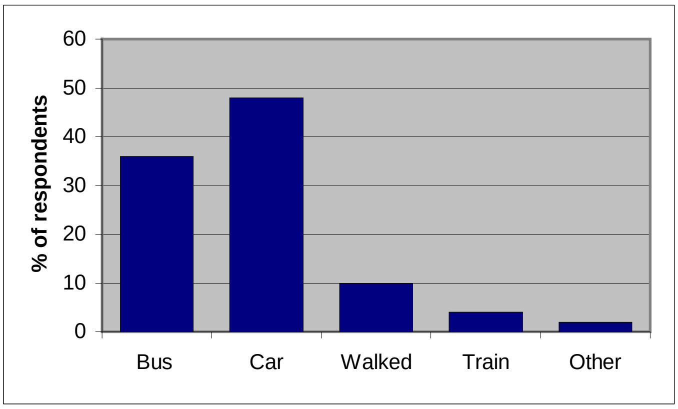


Figure 6: Mode of transport used to access the town centre

Of those survey respondents travelling into town by car, only 31% had difficulty finding a place to park. 62% of those interviewed were visiting the town for shopping purposes with 15% using town centre services such as banks.

Shopping preferences: 52% of respondents do their main grocery shopping at stores within the town centre – with Sainsbury's being the most popular destination, closely followed by Tesco. Freestanding supermarket sites are also well used in the area as shown by the Morrisons Waterloo (13% of respondents) and Asda Fixby (9%) stores.

Figure 7: Preferred shopping destinations

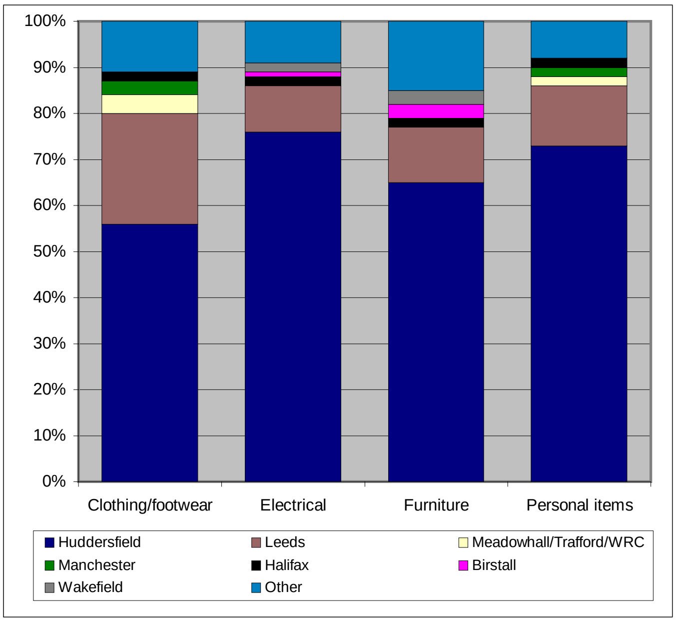
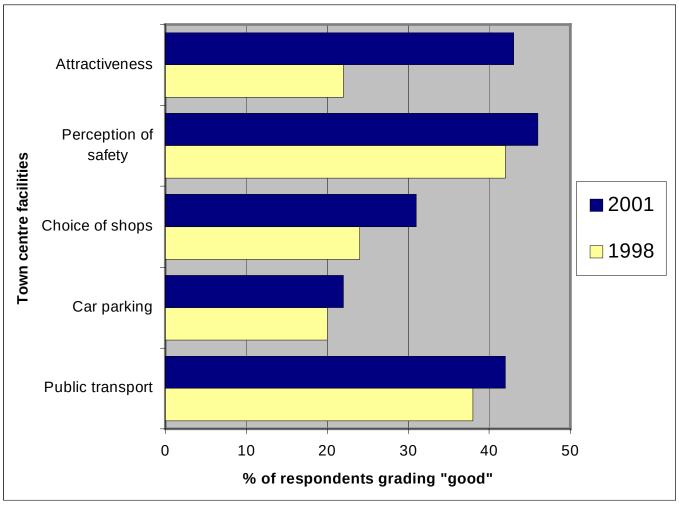


Figure 7 illustrates the preferred destinations for the purchase of different types of goods. Huddersfield dominates the pattern as expected. However, competition is evident in particular from Leeds, especially in terms of clothing and footwear. The quality and choice of shops was identified by 63% of interviewees as the reason for taking their custom elsewhere. This opinion is reflected in the grading of town centre facilities by respondents, where 74% considered Huddersfield's choice of shops to be only 'average' or 'poor'.

Town centre facilities: Figure 8 gives the changes in grading of various town centre facilities since the 1998 shoppers survey. It concentrates on the 'good' grades accorded to each aspect and shows that more shoppers now have a positive opinion of all town centre facilities covered, especially the attractiveness of the centre and the perceptions of safety within the town.

Figure 8: Positive grading of facilities



Business questionnaire survey: full results

The following tabulated results relate to each of the questions asked of traders and business managers in Huddersfield town centre. * denotes questions that were asked of both market traders **and** businesses.

1. Length of time trading in Huddersfield Town Centre*

	No. of respondents	% of total
Less than 1 year	13	7
1-2 years	11	6
3-4 years	21	11
5-9 years	34	17
10-14 years	21	11
15-24 years	34	17
25 years or more	60	31
Total	**194**	**100**

2. Sales floorspace (sq.ft.)

	No. of respondents	% of total
500 or less	36	28
501 – 1,000	39	31
1,001 – 5,000	37	29
5,001 – 10,000	8	6
10,001 and above	8	6
Total	**128**	**100**

3. Number of staff employed*

	Males	Females	Total
Full time	820	615	1435
Part time	403	979	1382
Total	**1223**	**1594**	**2817**

4. Number of employees from an ethnic minority background

	Males	Females	Total
Full time	177	53	230
Part time	95	131	226
Total	**272**	**184**	**456**

5. Changes in staff (previous 12 months)

	No. of respondents	% of total
Increased	41	28
Remained the same	80	54
Decreased	26	18
Total	**147**	**100**
Not stated	3	-

6. Business part of a larger company

	No. of respondents	% of total
Yes	61	41
No	88	59
Total	**149**	**100**

7. Turnover in the last 12 months*

	No. of respondents	% of total
Increased	69	37
Remained the same	55	29
Decreased	63	34
Total	**187**	**100**

8. Turnover* : 117 (60%) of respondents gave specific details of turnover.

9. Prospects for the next twelve months*

	No. of respondents	% of total
Increasing turnover	77	41
Static turnover	66	35
Decreasing turnover	45	24
Total	**188**	**100**

10. Identification of crime as a problem in Huddersfield town centre*

	No. of respondents	% of total
Minor problem	37	20
Average	78	41
Serious problem	75	39
Total	**190**	**100**

11. Nature of crime as a problem in Huddersfield town centre

	No. of respondents	% of total
Vandalism	41	18
Shoplifting	47	20
Robbery/theft/burglary	62	26
Anti-social behaviour	44	19
Fraud	15	6
Assault/mugging	25	11
Total	**234**	**100**

12. Experience of Crime in the last 12 months*

Response =141	Count of crime type identified	% of total crimes	% of respondents
Shoplifting	88	38	62
Vandalism	53	23	38
Burglary	20	9	14
Personal attack on employees	19	8	14
Alcohol/drug related crime	36	16	26
Other	14	6	10
Total	**230**	**100**	**na**

13. Proportion of turnover lost to crime in the last 12 months

	No. of respondents	% of respondents
1 %	22	15
2 %	3	2
3 %	2	1
4 %	1	1
5 %	5	3
More than 5%	7	5
None/not stated	110	73
Total	**150**	**100**

14a. Security measures undertaken to reduce business losses – yes or no

	No. of respondents	% of total
Yes	127	85
No	23	15
Total	**150**	**100**

14b. Specific security measures taken to reduce business losses

Response = 127	Count of security type used	% of total security measures	% of respondents
Alarms	106	41	84
CCTV	49	19	39
Product tagging	18	7	14
Shutters	42	16	33
Security staff	11	4	9
Retail radio	20	8	16
Other	12	5	9
Total	**258**	**100**	**N/a**

15a. Security measures introduced/upgraded over the past 12 months – yes or no

	No. of respondents	% of total
Yes	54	36
No	96	64
Total	**150**	**100**

15b. Specific security measures introduced/upgraded in the last 12 months

Response = 54	Count of security type used	% of total security measures	% of respondents
Alarms	25	41	46
CCTV	18	29	33
Product tagging	4	7	7
Shutters	6	10	11
Security staff	1	1	2
Retail radio	4	7	7
Other	3	5	6
Total	**61**	**100**	**na**

16. Benefit of Closed Circuit Television (CCTV)

	No. of respondents	% of total
Great benefit	72	52
Average benefit	44	31
Little or no benefit	24	17
Total	**140**	**100**

17. Perceptions of safety in Huddersfield town centre during the day

	No. of respondents	% of total
Very safe	84	58
Average	43	30
Very unsafe	18	12
Total	**145**	**100**

18. Perceptions of safety in Huddersfield town centre during the evening

	No. of respondents	% of total
Very safe	19	14
Average	47	34
Very unsafe	72	52
Total	**138**	**100**

19. Suggestions to improve the perception of safety and security

	No. of respondents	% of total suggestions
Better/more policing	105	76
More CCTV	23	17
Better lighting	6	4
Private security measures	4	3
Total	**138**	**100**

20. Views on the general availability of car parking*

	No. of respondents	% of total

Little or no problem	15	8
Average problem	30	16
Serious problem	142	76
Total	**187**	**100**

21. Problems with car parking*

	No. of respondents	% of total
Cost	106	41
Capacity/availability	94	36
Time restrictions – on street parking	24	9
Security of car parks	8	3
Abuse of restrictions	4	2
Other	22	9
Total	**258**	**100**

22. Extent to which business rates are considered a problem

	No. of respondents	% of total
No problem	19	14
Slight problem	41	30
Serious problem	75	56
Total	**135**	**100**

23. Extent to which town centre appearance is considered a problem

	No. of respondents	% of total
No problem	43	32
Slight problem	52	38
Serious problem	40	30
Total	**135**	**100**

24. Extent to which access for motorists into Huddersfield is considered a problem

	No. of respondents	% of total
No problem	19	13
Slight problem	30	21
Serious problem	93	66
Total	**142**	**100**

25. Extent to which access for non-motorists into Huddersfield town centre is considered a problem

	No. of respondents	% of total
No problem	68	53
Slight problem	43	34
Serious problem	16	13
Total	**127**	**100**

26. Extent to which out-of-town competition is considered a problem

	No. of respondents	% of total
No problem	51	39
Slight problem	17	13
Serious problem	62	48
Total	**130**	**100**

27. Investment in the last 12 months

Response = 125	Count of type of investment	% of total investment	% of total responses
Staff training	100	29	80
Staff recruitment	73	21	58
Information technology	71	21	57
Property improvements	74	22	59
None/not stated	25	7	na

28. Suggested improvements to the town centre*

	No. of respondents	% of total suggestions
Better quality/choice of shops	20	11
Better policing/CCTV	11	6
Parking Improvements	80	45
Changes to road network	11	6
More pedestrianised	2	1
Environmental/aesthetic	31	18
Other	24	13
Total	**179**	**100**

29. Member of the Huddersfield Town Centre Association

	No. of respondents	% of total
Yes	37	26
No	106	74
Total	**143**	**100**

30. Awareness of the Town Centre Manager

	No. of respondents	% of total
Yes	93	62
No	57	38
Total	**150**	**100**

31. Importance of the Town Centre Manager in the performance and function of the town

	No. of respondents	% of total
Very important	57	58
Average importance	25	25
Not important	17	17
Total	**99**	**100**

32. Value of the work undertaken by the Town Centre Manager in terms of promoting and enhancing the town centre over the last 6 years

	No. of respondents	% of total
High value	43	40
Average value	42	38
Low value	24	22
Total	**109**	**100**

33. Sunday trading

	No. of	% of

	respondents	total
Currently trading on Sundays	27	18
Intending to trade on Sundays	2	1
Only trade on Sundays at certain times of the year	46	31
No intentions to trade on Sundays	74	50
Total	**149**	**100**

34. Use of the Internet to sell goods

	No. of respondents	% of total
Yes	53	36
Yes, but only through parent co.	11	7
Not currently, but intending to	12	8
No	72	49
Total	**148**	**100**

Shoppers questionnaire survey: full results

The following tabulated results relate to each of the questions asked of shoppers/visitors to Huddersfield town centre. The total number of respondents was 522 of which 209 (40%) were male and 313 (60%) were female.

1. Ethnic Origin

	No. of respondents	% of total
White	401	79
Black	57	11
Asian	53	10
Total	**511**	**100**

2. Age

	No. of respondents	% of total
16-25	159	31
26-40	194	38
41-60	135	26
60+	25	5
Total	**513**	**100**

3. Origin on day of interview

	No. of respondents	% of total
Home	425	89
Work	36	7
Somewhere else	18	4
Total	**479**	**100**

4. Mode of transport into town

	No. of respondents	% of total
Bus	188	36
Car	252	48
Motorcycle	4	1
Train	22	4
Walked	51	10
Taxi	4	1
Total	**521**	**100**

5. Difficulty in parking

	No. of respondents	% of total
Yes	81	33
No	166	67
Total	**247**	**100**

6. Purpose of visit

	No. of respondents	% of responses
Shopping	340	62
Sports/leisure/ social	81	15
Working	69	13
Education	41	7
Using town centre services (e.g. library)	17	3
Total	**548**	**100**

7. Preferred grocery shopping destination

	No. of respondents	% of total
Sainsburys (Huddersfield)	152	30
Tesco (Huddersfield)	110	22
Other Huddersfield Twn C'tre	10	2
Asda (Fixby)	47	9
Morrison's (Waterloo)	67	13
Other South Kirklees	41	8
Other North Kirklees	14	3
Bradford area	3	1
Leeds area	11	2
Brighouse area	7	1
Wakefield area	10	2
Elsewhere	37	7
Total	**509**	**100**

8. Preferred centre for clothes and footwear purchses

	No. of respondents	% of total
Huddersfield	283	56
Leeds	121	24
Meadowhall/Trafford/WRC	26	5
Manchester	14	2
Halifax	9	2
Other	54	11
Total	**507**	**100**

9. Preferred centre for the purchase of electrical goods

	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Huddersfield	373	76
Leeds	51	10
Wakefield	11	2
Halifax	8	2
Birstall (junction 27 rwp)	5	1
Other	44	9
Total	**492**	**100**

10. Preferred centre for the purchase of furniture

	No. of respondents	% of respondents

Huddersfield	275	65
Leeds	52	12
Birstall (junction 27 rwp)	12	3
Wakefield	11	3
Halifax	9	2
Other	62	15
Total	**421**	**100**

11. Preferred centre for the purchase of personal items

	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Huddersfield	342	73
Leeds	62	13
Manchester	10	2
Meadowhall	9	2
Halifax	8	2
Other	36	8
Total	**467**	**100**

12. Reasons for shopping in towns/facilities other than Huddersfield

	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Better choice/quality of shops	161	63
Convenience/location	64	25
Parking facilities	8	3
Other	23	9
Total	**256**	**100**

13. Proportion of food shopping undertaken in Huddersfield town centre

	No. of respondents	% of respondents
All	76	15
75%	70	14
50%	66	13
25%	177	34
None	125	24
Total	**514**	**100**

14. Frequency of shopping in Huddersfield town centre

	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Daily	85	15
2/3 times a week	149	29
Weekly	214	41
Monthly	47	9
Less often	19	4
Never	6	2
Total	**520**	**100**

15. Frequency of usage of bank facilities in Huddersfield town centre

	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Daily	26	5
2/3 times a week	97	19
Weekly	176	34
Monthly	104	20
Less often	43	8
Never	72	14
Total	**518**	**100**

16. Frequency of usage of Huddersfield library

	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Daily	12	2
2/3 times a week	29	6
Weekly	64	12
Monthly	54	11
Less often	87	17
Never	271	52
Total	**517**	**100**

17. Frequency of usage of the Post Office in Huddersfield town centre

	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Daily	7	1
2/3 times a week	22	4
Weekly	96	19
Monthly	86	17
Less often	119	23
Never	186	36
Total	**516**	**100**

18. Frequency of usage of the sports centre in Huddersfield town centre

	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Daily	15	3
2/3 times a week	33	7
Weekly	43	8
Monthly	32	6
Less often	77	15
Never	315	61
Total	**515**	**100**

19. Frequency of usage of pubs and cafes in Huddersfield town centre

	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Daily	52	10
2/3 times a week	97	19
Weekly	133	26
Monthly	85	16
Less often	61	12
Never	88	17
Total	**516**	**100**

20. Frequency of use of the Internet for shopping

	No. of respondents	% of total
Weekly	8	2

Monthly	28	5
Occasionally	82	16
Never	401	77
Total	**519**	**100**

21. Nature of goods bought using the Internet

	No. of respondents	% of respondents
CDs/DVDs/Videos	29	29
Books/magazines	20	20
Holidays/flights	8	8
Electrical goods	8	8
Weekly shopping	7	7
Computer parts/software	7	7
Finance/banking	7	7
Clothes	4	4
Other	10	10
Total	**100**	**100**

Safety	243	218	61	522
%	(46%)	(42%)	(12%)	(100%)
Choice of shops	160	248	114	522
%	(31%)	(47%)	(22%)	(100%)
Leisure facilities	115	230	116	461
%	(25%)	(50%)	(25%)	(100%)
Car parking	103	192	168	463
%	(22%)	(42%)	(36%)	(100%)
Public transport	200	187	94	481
%	(42%)	(39%)	(19%)	(100%)

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22. Assessment of Huddersfield town centre facilities

	Good	Average	Poor	Total
Environment	223	245	54	522
%	(43%)	(47%)	(10%)	(100%)