



Eastbourne Listening Tour Survey

Published – March 2023

healthwatch
East Sussex

Introduction

Our rationale for exploring experiences in Eastbourne

Each year Healthwatch East Sussex undertakes a dedicated 'Listening Tour' to explore the health, care and wellbeing themes within a specific location or community.

In 2022, following an interruption due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we undertook our first face-to-face Listening Tour since 2019. Our focus was the experiences of residents, community groups and professionals in Eastbourne Borough.

Between the 15th and 30th October 2022, we focused on '*meeting people where they are*' and visited a wide range of organisations and locations across the Borough so that we could hear as many voices as possible.

Our goal was to learn as much as we could and use this information to identify local issues and priorities that we will share with decision-makers.

Our aims were to:

1. Explore (and raise) awareness of Healthwatch amongst local people and groups
2. Capture a snapshot of people's experiences of health and care services
3. Identify people's current and future priorities for health and care services
4. Explore the impacts of the 'cost of living' crisis on people's lives and wellbeing

What we did



Do you have ideas that could help improve health and social care?

Each year we undertake a 'Listening Tour' to engage local people where they live and work.

During 2022 we will be collecting views and experiences in Eastbourne, we are keen to hear about:

- Have your experiences of local health and care services been good, bad or indifferent?
- Whether local health and care services are meeting your needs?
- How you feel health, care and wellbeing support could be improved?

Complete our survey:

<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/HWESListeningTour2022/>

Healthwatch East Sussex are the local independent watch dog for those using health and care services in East Sussex

healthwatch
East Sussex

www.healthwatcheastsussex.co.uk
0333 101 4007 (Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm)
enquiries@healthwatcheastsussex.co.uk
@HealthwatchES
Facebook.com/Healthwatcheastsussex

You can also download and print the survey via our website and return via our



Between the 15th October and 13th November 2022, Healthwatch East Sussex ran a public survey to gather the health and care experiences of people in Eastbourne Borough, including residents, workers and visitors.

Our 20 questions were developed through reviews of previous Listening Tour surveys, engagement with partners and piloting with local people. A shorter survey using several of the same questions was used where engagement time was limited – see our separate report.

An electronic version of our survey was widely distributed through our newsletter, bulletins, social media, staff, volunteers and partner networks. We also distributed hard copies of the survey at engagement events throughout the Listening Tour, and a household mail-drop at locations across Eastbourne.

Paper versions were available, with staff on hand to complete the survey online or over the telephone.

150 responses were received by the 13th November deadline.

This report summarises the experiences of the respondents and identifies our key findings.

6 What we heard – Our key findings

What you told us about health services:

- We asked people about their levels of confidence in accessing health and care services when they need them. We heard that: **35.4%** were **Very/Quite Confident**, **32.0%** were **Not Confident at all** and **22.7%** were **Unsure**.
- We asked people about their direct experiences of health and care services over the last 12 months. We heard that: **40.7%** felt they had **Got worse**, **33.3%** felt they had **Remained the same** and **4.7%** felt that they had **Got better**.
- The **health services** most rated by respondents as **Excellent/Good** were: **COVID Vaccination Services** (62.7%), **Pharmacy** (52.0%) and **GP Practices** (32.0%).
- The **health services** most rated by respondents as **Poor** were: **GP Practices** (27.3%), **NHS Dentists** or Dental Services (20.7%) and **NHS 111** (10.0%).
- **Access to services/Waiting times, Quality of care and treatment, Communication and Quality of Service** were the attributes most identified as those appreciated by respondents. Poor ratings for services generally reflect poor performance in these areas, especially where more than one affected respondents at the same time.
- Of the comments received on **people's experiences of health services** over the last 12 months: **46.2%** expressed a **negative** sentiment, **29.9%** a **mixed** sentiment and **18.8%** a **positive** sentiment.
- We heard that the five most identified health services for urgent improvements were: **GP practices** (59.3%), **NHS Dentist or dental services** (33.3%), **Adult Mental Health services** (26.0%), **Ambulance Services** (25.3%) and the **Hospital Emergency Department** (25.3%).

6 What we heard – Our key findings

What you told us about care services:

- Feedback on Care services was relatively low, with no more than 10% of all survey respondents offering responses on these.
- The **care services** most rated by respondents as **Excellent/Good** were: **Community based services** (5.3%), **Children's Social Care Services** (2.7%) and **Supported accommodation/Other Adult Social Care Services** (1.3%).
- The **care services** most rated by respondents as **Poor** were: **Community-based services** (2.0%), **Children's Social Care Services** (2.0%), **Supported accommodation, Support to live independently** and **Other Adult Social Care Services** (all 1.3%).
- Of the 35 comments received on people's **experiences of care services** over the last 12 months: **31.8%** expressed a **negative** sentiment, **22.7%** a **positive** sentiment and **2.9%** a **mixed** sentiment.
- We heard there is a lack of consistent understanding amongst the public about the provision of care services, and the responsibilities of different organisations in delivering them.
 - 54.0% respondents thought they or their partner would have the primary responsibility for someone they care for if they became frail or disabled.
 - 45.3% respondents thought they or their partner would pay the most if they or someone they cared for moved into a care home.
 - 24.0% people said the NHS would be their first port-of-call for advice about obtaining care for themselves or a family member.
- We heard that the five most identified care services for urgent improvements were: **Home care** (17.3%), **Support to live independently** (13.3%), **Dementia services** (12.7%), **Community-based Services** (12.7%) and **Residential Care/Nursing Home** (10.0%).

6 What we heard – Our key findings

What you told us about health and wellbeing:

- We asked people about the issues they were **Very worried/Slightly worried** about now. They told us: **Finances** (e.g. income, utility bills etc.) (72.0%), **The wellbeing of friends and family** (60.0%) and **Paying for/affording food** that meets my needs (48.7%)
- The themes which respondents most rated as **not worrying** about now were: Obtaining medications or prescriptions (61.3%), Personal relationships (58.7%) and Own safety/security (57.3%)
- We heard about changes to respondents' behaviour since the cost-of-living crisis had begun earlier in 2022.

Changes identified by our respondents included:

- » 53.3% telling us that they had become **more anxious about the future**.
 - » 34.0% had **good quality sleep less often**.
 - » 32.0% had **socialised** with friends and family **less regularly**.
 - » 22.0% engaged in **physical activity less often**.
 - » 21.3% **felt lonely**, in part due to the other impacts of the cost-of-living crisis.
 - » 29.3% **ordered fast food** or takeaways on a **less** regular basis.
 - » 10% **consumed alcohol less** regularly.
- We asked people '**If you could change one thing to improve your health and wellbeing, what would it be?**'. In order of frequency of response, they told us: More physical activity/exercise; Improvements in support services; Change diet or food habits; Lose weight; Maintain interaction with friends/family.



Your experiences of health and care services

What you told us about health services

Please describe the overall quality of any health services you have used or tried to access in the last 12 months.

Respondents told us that the health services they accessed may vary in quality, but some services and providers were more consistent than others. A summary of responses received is presented overleaf.

The health services most rated by respondents as **Excellent/Good** were:

1. **COVID Vaccination Services** (62.7%)
2. **Pharmacy** (52.0%)
3. **GP Practices** (32.0%)

The health services most rated by respondents as **Poor** were:

1. **GP Practices** (27.3%)
2. **NHS Dentists or Dental Services** (20.7%)
3. **NHS 111** (10.0%)

The identification of GP Practices in both lists illustrates that experiences may vary between services of the same type, or at the same service when accessed at different times.

It is important to acknowledge that respondent's experiences may vary based on the number of interactions had with any health services, the nature of their circumstances or need and the status of the service at the time it was used.

What you told us about health services

Service area	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Did not use	No response
Adult Mental Health Services	3.3%	2.7%	4.0%	6.0%	46.7%	37.3%
Ambulance services (not patient transport)	4.0%	6.0%	0.7%	6.0%	46.7%	36.7%
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%	2.7%	56.0%	40.7%
COVID Vaccination services	36.0%	26.7%	8.7%	2.0%	8.7%	18.0%
District Nurse	2.7%	4.7%	2.0%	2.0%	50.0%	38.7%
GP practice	12.0%	20.0%	19.3%	27.3%	8.7%	12.7%
Health Visitors	2.0%	1.3%	2.7%	0.7%	52.7%	40.7%
Hospital – Emergency Dept.	6.7%	8.7%	7.3%	5.3%	37.3%	34.7%
Hospital – Inpatient (on ward)	4.0%	4.0%	2.7%	1.3%	50.0%	38.0%
Hospital – Outpatient (Appoints.)	16.0%	12.0%	8.7%	4.7%	28.7%	30.0%
Urgent Care Centre	2.7%	1.3%	1.3%	1.3%	54.7%	38.7%
NHS Dentist or dental services	6.7%	14.0%	9.3%	20.7%	25.3%	24.0%
NHS 111	5.3%	4.0%	8.7%	10.0%	33.3%	38.7%
Opticians	15.3%	14.0%	6.0%	3.3%	30.0%	31.3%
Out-of-hours GP service	2.0%	1.3%	1.3%	2.0%	54.0%	39.3%
NHS Physiotherapy	2.0%	3.3%	0.7%	1.3%	53.3%	39.3%
NHS Chiropody	0.7%	2.7%	1.3%	0.0%	57.3%	38.0%
Non-Emergency Patient Transport	2.0%	2.0%	0.7%	0.7%	56.7%	38.0%
Pharmacy	27.3%	24.7%	12.7%	2.0%	12.0%	21.3%
Sexual Health Services	1.3%	2.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	96.7%

What you told us about health services

Please describe the overall quality of any health services you have used or tried to access in the last 12 months.

We asked people to tell us more about their experiences and why they had offered the ratings to health services that they had. We received 117 comments. The most common themes in the comments received were:

Access to services and **Waiting Times** (*identified in 63 comments*)

People were often concerned about the length of time it took to be able to access services and get appointments and/or treatment. Comments were almost exclusively negative, and concerns were most identified in relation to GPs, dentists and hospital services.

These focused on the amount of time and effort often required to successfully contact services such as GPs, as well as the wait times for appointments for dentistry and some hospital procedures.

Quality of care and treatment (*identified in 19 comments*)

Comments indicated some very positive experiences of treatment received by health services, especially via hospitals and specialists. However, there were also some poor experiences of hospital services, GPs, dentists and NHS 111, with inadequate advice, lack of follow-up and poor communication all highlighted.

Of the 117 comments received on people's experiences of health services over the last 12 months: **46.2%** expressed a **negative sentiment**, **29.9%** a **mixed sentiment** and **18.8%** a **positive sentiment**.

What you told us about health services

Please describe the overall quality of any health services you have used or tried to access in the last 12 months.

Communication (identified in 14 comments)

A range of communication-related issues were identified. These included: delays to results being communicated with patients; poor communication between health services, especially between primary and acute care; conflicting advice between different services and professionals; a lack of clarity on how and when to access services; and concerns over the capability of systems used for booking appointments, especially GP practice phone systems.

Quality of service (identified in 12 comments)

Respondents commented on the quality of the service they received. Positive comments often highlighted the professionalism, dedication and care offered by NHS staff in various roles across different services, as well as quick and efficient access and follow-ups by services. Positive comments tended to highlight good experiences once treatment had been accessed.

Negative aspects were identified as a lack of professionalism by individuals, staff breaking confidentiality, challenges in obtaining timely access and poor communication on occasion. Negative comments also highlighted poor experiences due to challenges in accessing appointments and treatment.

COVID-19 Vaccinations (identified in 9 comments)

Several comments highlighted how efficient and effective the roll-out of COVID-19 vaccinations had been, with the process generally easy to book and access.

What you told us about health services



appointment

phone poor getting call use weeks lack dentist service time blood eastbourne

trying impossible covid book seen check

doctor nhs hospital staff access excellent go emergency services difficult one long health ambulance

appointments issue months surgery told need doctors even telephone

waiting first

Positive feedback about health services

"I was diagnosed with cancer in October 2020. I have been treated by oncology, the Pevensey Bay Unit Radiography, MRI. Everyone has been professional considerate, efficient and kind."

"GP contacts- very proactive- easy to contact via email. Don't have a dentist, dentist left, so registered but now no dentist. Pharmacy - give prescriptions without any problems."

"Heart nurses re: my husband - excellent!! Chiropody/podiatry clinic - very good. Physiotherapy appointments - good, but sometimes long waiting time."

"My Doctor is amazing - he listens to me and sometimes I just need reassurance of my condition."

"Pharmacy first port of call in most instances - excellent service. GP welcoming, genuinely cares."

"I am regularly monitored for an ongoing illness and the service has been excellent, prompt, little delay."

"My experience is totally with urology who are excellent."

Negative feedback about health services

"Very poor 111 service. Too long a wait to get a proper answer. Then told to go to Emergency Dept. Time wasted. Might as well go to ED in first instance."

"No GP appointments Long call waits No CMHT [Community Mental Health Team] contact since February. Rheumatologist appointment after 3 year wait. Now no X-ray results or follow up despite leaving countless messages Feel abandoned and uncared for."

"In general services have been good but access seems to be an issue. I have been unable to see my dentist and have been taken off their list and accessing GP appointments is always tricky."

"Impossible to get GP appointment, waiting five hours for ambulance, it never arrived. No NHS dentist."

"9 month wait for a NHS dentist to remove completely broken and disintegrated tooth absolutely shocking. I had to go private which I can ill afford. Haven't seen a doctor, just get to see hca or practice nurse for my asthma and diabetes."

"My appointment for follow-up with maxillo-facial doctor has been postponed 3 times."

"119 service would not offer advice until I'd been to hospital despite testing positive for covid-19."

What you told us about care services

Please describe the overall quality of any care services you have used or tried to access in the last 12 months.

We received very limited levels of feedback about the quality of care services, primarily as an overwhelming majority of respondents had not accessed or used these in the last 12 months. Consequently, the number of responses received is very low.

The care services most rated by respondents as **Excellent/Good** were:

1. **Community-based services** (5.3%)
2. **Children's Social Care Services** (2.7%)
3. **Supported accommodation/Other Adult Social Care Services** (1.3%)

The care services most rated by respondents as **Poor** were:

1. **Community-based services** (2.0%)
2. **Children's Social Care Services** (2.0%)
3. **Supported accommodation/Support to live independently/Other Adult Social Care Services** (1.3%)

It is important to acknowledge that respondent's experiences may vary based on the number of interactions had with any care services, the nature of their circumstances or need and the status of the service at the time it was used.

What you told us about care services

Service area	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Did not use	No response
Children's Social Care Services	0.7%	2.0%	0.0%	1.3%	63.3%	32.7%
Community-based services	2.0%	3.3%	2.0%	2.0%	57.3%	33.3%
Day Care Centres	0.0%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	65.3%	34.0%
Dementia services	0.0%	0.0%	2.0%	0.0%	65.3%	32.7%
Home care	0.7%	0.0%	0.7%	0.0%	66.0%	32.7%
(Care workers at your home)	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%	0.0%	65.3%	34.0%
Learning disability services	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%	0.0%	65.3%	34.0%
Respite services	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%	0.0%	65.3%	34.0%
Residential Care	0.0%	0.7%	1.3%	0.0%	64.7%	33.3%
(Care/Nursing home)	0.0%	0.0%	1.3%	0.0%	64.7%	34.0%
Supported accommodation	1.3%	0.0%	0.7%	0.7%	64.0%	33.3%
Support to live independently	0.0%	0.7%	0.0%	0.7%	64.7%	34.0%
Other Adult Social Care services	1.3%	0.0%	1.3%	0.7%	61.3%	35.3%

What you told us about care services

Please describe the overall quality of any care services you have used or tried to access in the last 12 months.

We asked people to tell us more about their experiences and why they had offered the ratings to care services that they had. We received 35 comments. The most common themes in the comments received were:

Improved information (identified in 3 comments)

Respondents highlighted that information could be improved to make it easier to find and understand about services and eligibility, such as support for independent living and occupational therapy. Communication between and within services could also be enhanced.

Community-based services (identified in 3 comments)

Comments primarily focused on praise for community-led initiatives such as Food Banks.

Support for independent living (identified in 2 comments)

We heard that people wanted more information on the support they could receive to help them live independently at home for longer.

Experiences in care homes (identified in 2 comments)

Concerns were raised about the availability and capacity of staff in care homes.

Of the 35 comments received on people's experiences of care services over the last 12 months: **31.8%** expressed a **negative sentiment**, **22.7%** a **positive sentiment** and **2.9%** a **mixed sentiment**. Not all comments included a clear sentiment.

What you told us about care services

mother
operation day
finding unit food allowed
lifeline health told replacement
though advice weeks
used staff concerned administration
burns knowing faces dementia
ability difficult poor stayed
needs dependent care just
hold support enough carers
covid recuperate service
mind support great giver
opened call essential totally
call knee familiar express

What you told us about care services

*"Help the Aged – adaptions.
Brilliant staff – keep updated and
provide all needed."*

*"Mother stayed in a care home for 2
weeks to recuperate after
replacement knee operation. Not
enough carers, administration was
poor."*

*"Not used personally. I have
tenants with arranged care
packages that do not deliver what
promised don't attend or don't
seem to notice problems. Mental
Health Support is impossible to get
unless suicidal."*

*"My husband is in a care home. He
has dementia. He has no ability to
express himself or care for himself
and is totally dependent on staff
knowing him and his needs. I am very
concerned that the home is finding it
difficult to hold into staff. There are
very few familiar staff faces. The
home has only just opened up after
COVID, though I have been allowed in
as an essential care giver."*

*"Nurse cancelled home visit as I did
not have a sharps bin for my used
injections."*

*"Regular face to face
appointments available for my
father who has dementia."*

What you told us about care services

We asked survey participants to tell us about their awareness of social care to help us understand what would happen to them or a loved one if the need arose.

The responses suggest that there is a lack of consistent understanding amongst the public about the provision of care services, and the responsibilities of different organisations in delivering them.

This also impacts on how and where people seek information and advice, with the greatest proportion of respondents looking to the NHS rather than Adult Social Care for guidance.

If you or someone you care for becomes frail or disabled, who would have the main responsibility to look after you/them?

- 54.0% of respondents indicated that they thought they or their partner would have the primary responsibility for looking after them. 15.3% indicated family and 12.7% didn't know.

Who would pay the most if you or someone you care for needed to live in a care home?

- 45.3% of respondents indicated that they thought they or their partner would have to pay the most, 26.7% didn't know, 6.0% indicated the local Council and 5.4% the NHS.

Where would be your first port-of-call for advice about obtaining care for you or a family member?

- 24.0% people said the NHS, 24.0% highlighted an 'internet search', 16.0% didn't know and 10.0% indicated the local Council.

What you told us about care services

We asked survey participants to tell us '**What one change would help you or a family member to live at home for as long as possible?**'

The five most common changes people told us about were:

Support for independent living (*identified in 30 comments*)

The requested support was primarily linked to household adaptations (e.g. handrails, stairlifts etc.), as well as affordable, flexible and quality support with daily household tasks.

Improvements in care home (*identified in 20 comments*)

Many respondents were seeking high quality and affordable home care. Regularity, reliability and support tailored to people's needs were the attributes commonly sought.

Help with funding (*identified in 12 comments*)

Several aspects of funding were raised by respondents, including how and where it could be accessed, the need for affordable services and financial support able to cover costs.

Improved information (*identified in 5 comments*)

Respondents requested improved guidance to explain the process of seeking support from health and care services, with access to expert advice and support when required.

Support from health and care services (*identified in 5 comments*)

We heard that people wanted a flexible and comprehensive package of support, where health services (e.g. GPs) worked in collaboration with community and care services.

Views on health and care services



Positive experiences of health and care services

Please tell us about your most positive health and/or care experience from the last 12 months

We received 86 comments, relating to a range of primary, acute and community services. The positives raised were generally similar across the different services.

The most common themes in the comments received were:

Quality of service (identified in 21 comments)

Respondents valued a person-centred approach within services, where it was obvious their needs sat at the heart of the process. Flexibility which catered for individual needs was particularly valued. People appreciated engaging and professional staff at all levels, as well as the ability to interact with health and care staff.

Quality of care/treatment (identified in 17 comments)

People valued efficient care and treatment which delivered the outcomes they were seeking with minimum fuss. They appreciated clear communications, a smooth transition between services (where appropriate) and clarity on how to access further support or information as required.

Access to services/Waiting times (identified in 15 comments)

Prompt access was expected of some services more than others e.g. GPs, A&E, NHS 111, Ambulances and Pharmacy Services. Clear updates on wait times were appreciated so that false expectations were not created. People generally didn't mind waiting if they could receive the treatment they needed. Being kept up-to-date with any delays was valued.

Positive experiences of health and care services

Positive experiences of health and care services

"Got flu jab, Covid jab, blood test and colonoscopy. All services were very timely and efficient."

"In general my pharmacy are great. They always provide a timely service and are happy to provide information and advice when needed."

"Conquest hospital A&E staff were very good when I was checked for issues when I was taken in with covid-19. They were concerned because I suffer with C.O.P.D asthma overlap syndrome."

"Ringing 111- they acted immediately, explained really well- told to get to hospital- less than 20 mins ambulance was there."

"Had brilliant surgeon - he listens and gave a choice. Will need to have an operation in the future."

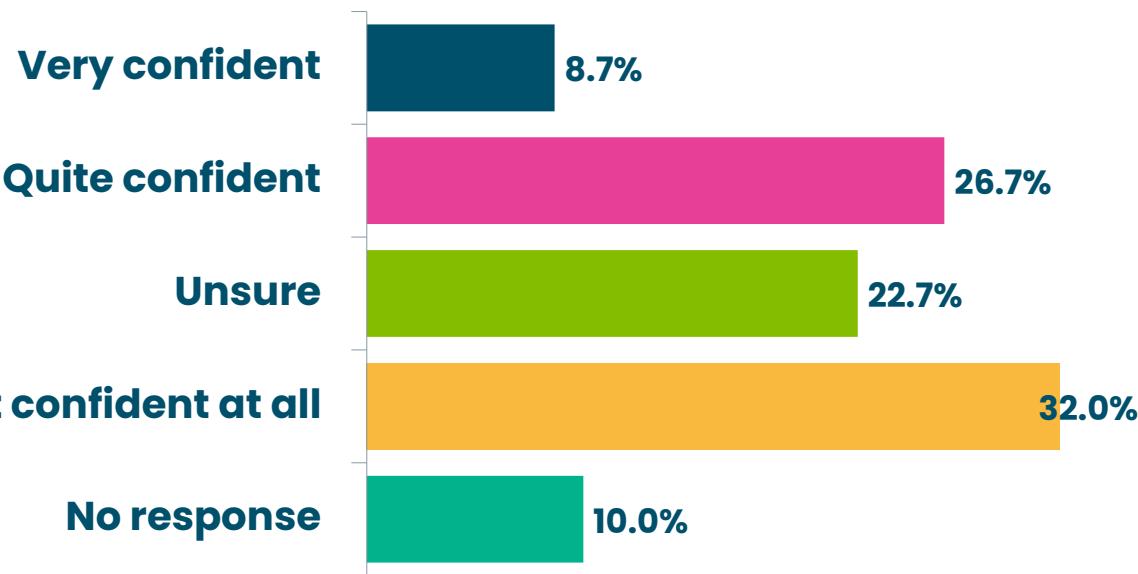
"All staff that I have come into contact with have been very friendly and professional. Once in the system, healthcare has always been excellent."

"GP called me at 8pm and gave me an appointment that late at night to accommodate my needs."

What you told us about health and care services

Your confidence about accessing health and care services

How confident do you currently feel about accessing health or care services when you need them?

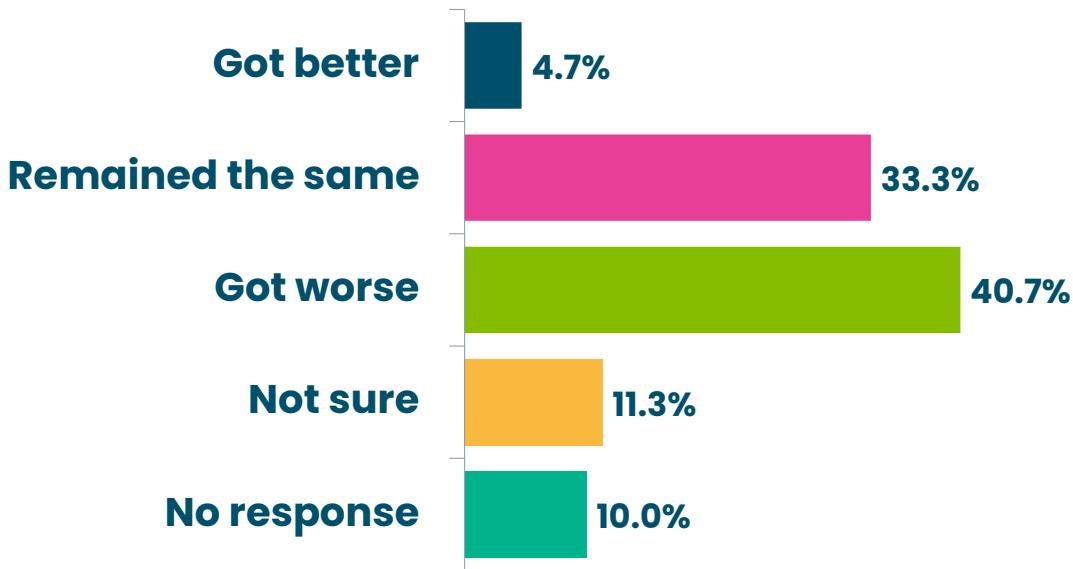


It is concerning that only around a third of respondents have confidence that services will be accessible when they need them.

What you told us about health and care services

Your overall experience of health and care services in the last 12 months

What has your direct experience of local health or care services been over the last 12 months:



It is concerning that the most common response was that respondents felt that their experiences of using health and care services had got worse during the last 12 months.



**People's everyday health
and wellbeing**

What you told us about your everyday wellbeing

How worried are you about the following?

We asked respondents to tell us about the levels of worry they had.

We focused on the wider social determinants of health, to help us understand what wider factors may be affecting people's physical and mental wellbeing, especially given the recent 'cost of living' crisis.

A detailed breakdown of the responses is presented on the next slide.

The themes which respondents most rated as **Very worried/Slightly worried** were:

- 1. Finances (e.g. income, utility bills etc.) (72.0%)**
- 2. The wellbeing of friends and family (60.0%)**
- 3. Paying for/affording food that meets my needs (48.7%)**

The themes which respondents most rated as **Not worried** were:

- 1. Obtaining medications or prescriptions (61.3%)**
- 2. Personal relationships (58.7%)**
- 3. Own safety/security (57.3%)**

What you told us about your everyday wellbeing

How worried are you currently about the following:	Very worried	Slightly worried	Not worried	Not applicable	No response
Paying for/affording food that meets my needs	18.0%	30.7%	42.0%	4.0%	5.3%
The wellbeing of family or friends outside of my household	22.0%	38.0%	23.3%	12.0%	4.7%
Childcare and schooling	6.7%	10.0%	14.7%	62.7%	6.0%
Becoming seriously ill from COVID-19	7.3%	34.0%	47.3%	6.0%	5.3%
Work tasks (even if job is safe)	4.7%	17.3%	34.0%	36.7%	7.3%
Finances (e.g. income, utility bills, transport)	26.7%	45.3%	22.0%	2.0%	4.0%
Future plans (e.g. holidays or events)	13.3%	36.0%	31.3%	14.0%	5.3%
Friends or family in my own household	14.0%	26.7%	24.7%	28.0%	6.7%
Obtaining medication or prescriptions	6.7%	21.3%	61.3%	6.0%	4.7%
Treatment for ongoing medical condition	15.3%	31.3%	31.3%	18.0%	4.0%
Own safety/security	5.3%	25.3%	57.3%	7.3%	4.7%
Losing job/unemployment	5.3%	16.7%	27.3%	45.3%	5.3%
Personal relationships	5.3%	13.3%	58.7%	16.7%	6.0%
Housing (including upkeep, rent and mortgage payments)	15.3%	24.7%	36.7%	16.7%	6.7%

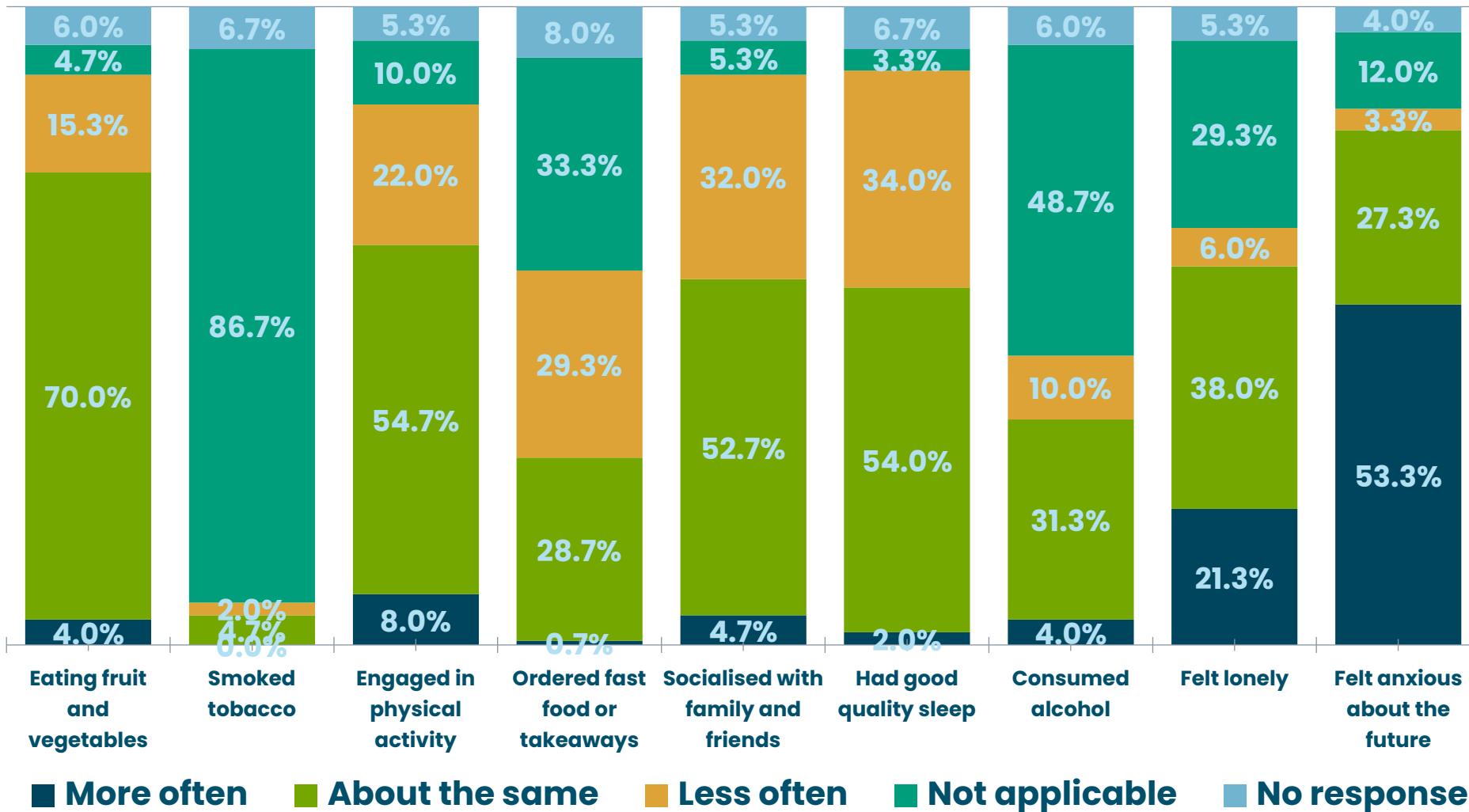
What you told us about your everyday wellbeing

Since the 'Cost of Living' crisis began, have any of the following things changed for you?

We asked respondents about any changes they had made to their behaviour since the cost-of-living crisis had begun earlier in 2022, or wider effects it may have had on them.

- More than half of the people (53.3%) told us that they had become **more anxious about the future** since the 'cost of living crisis' began.
- A third of respondents (34.0%) had **good quality sleep less** often.
- Approximately a third (32.0%) had **socialised with friends and family less** regularly.
- Approximately a fifth (21.3%) highlighted that they **felt lonely**, in part due to changes in other parts of the behaviour.
- Nearly a quarter (22.0%) had **engaged in physical activity less often**.
- 29.3% had **ordered fast food or takeaways** on a less regular basis.
- One-in-ten (10%) had **consumed alcohol less regularly**.

Since the 'Cost of Living' crisis began, have any of the following things changed for you?



If you could change one thing to improve your health and wellbeing, what would it be?

People told us a range of factors that would help with their health and wellbeing, including changes to their own behaviour (diet, exercise etc.), support with wider aspects of their life (jobs, finances, education, housing) and changes to local services.

The five most common changes people told us about were:

More physical activity/exercise (*identified in 24 comments*)

Many people recognised that regular physical activity was important for their physical and mental wellbeing. Comments highlighted the desire for more low-cost local facilities.

Improvements in support services (*identified in 16 comments*)

People told us that getting fast access to health, care and support services would help minimise negative effects. Better access to information would also help reduce anxiety.

Change diet or food habits (*identified in 11 comments*)

Respondents recognised the need to eat healthily but some raised concerns about cost and know-how. Reducing alcohol consumption was also highlighted.

Lose weight (*identified in 11 comments*)

People understood the benefits of losing weight, both directly and on their wider wellbeing, such as helping deal with other issues such as joint pain and mobility.

Maintain interaction with friends/family (*identified in 8 comments*)

The importance of maintaining social connections [for both parties] as a means of maintaining support were identified as a goal that people aspired to.

If you could change one thing to improve your health and wellbeing, what would it be?

stop people nothing future
diet activities government time difficult keep doctors live
family food able lose medical go need loose
mental walk gp less leisure appointment pension
walk able less leisure appointment pension
weight particular care right active cheaper
social secure free covid services check help

If you could change one thing to improve your health and wellbeing, what would it be?

"Reduce alcohol intake, lose weight and increase activity."

"Money - to enable me not to worry."

"Be more disciplined about doing vigorous exercise."

"Go back to the old system where I can walk into the GP's surgery and make an appointment. I can't get an appointment by calling."

"Not to worry about any future care my mum may need."

"Better access to health services for early intervention i.e. more access/knowledge about schemes like social prescribing."

"More leisure facilities within walking distance, in particular swimming pool or gym that is either free or subsidised."

"The "people"- government/ local authorities making decisions know what it is like to "walk in my shoes", live my life as a disabled person. Actually not just listen but actions are made/taken."

Health and care priorities



Priorities for urgent improvements in health services

We asked respondents to identify where improvements in health services were most urgent, and then to explain why this was the case.

The services most identified as priorities for improvement were:

1. **GP practices** (59.3%)
2. **NHS Dentist or dental services** (33.3%)
3. **Adult Mental Health services** (26.0%)
4. **Ambulance Services** (not patient transport) (25.3%)
5. **Hospital Emergency Department** (25.3%)

GP practices

GP services were identified as important based on the services they provide themselves, but also crucial in obtaining referrals and access to other services. Timely access and in the format people preferred (mainly face-to-face) was highlighted as a priority. Access out-of-hours and at weekends was also flagged. Delays in access was identified as impacting on other services e.g. A&E and NHS 111.

NHS Dentist or dental services

Access to NHS dentistry was commonly identified as something that people wanted to see improved. Challenges in getting access to appointments of all types were highlighted, and these extended to people of all ages. Comments indicated that there weren't enough dentists, so people experienced long wait times, regular cancellations and major barriers to getting urgent and emergency treatment.

Priorities for urgent improvements in health services

Mental Health services

Responses and comments to the survey highlighted that improvements were needed across mental health services for both adult and children and young people. People highlighted long-wait times as a major problem, but acknowledged feeling that they were under-funded and overworked. It was felt that the problem was worse after the pandemic as demand for support has increased. Other comments highlighted that some mental health provision was too short-term and a temporary fix, rather than a long-term solution.

Ambulance Services (not patient transport)

Comments highlighted several experiences where delays had negative consequences for those involved, but also heightened levels of anxiety and worries about the ability to access ambulance services if and when they are required. Respondents called for more resources and staffing to be provided, and also for blockages in transfers to hospitals to be resolved.

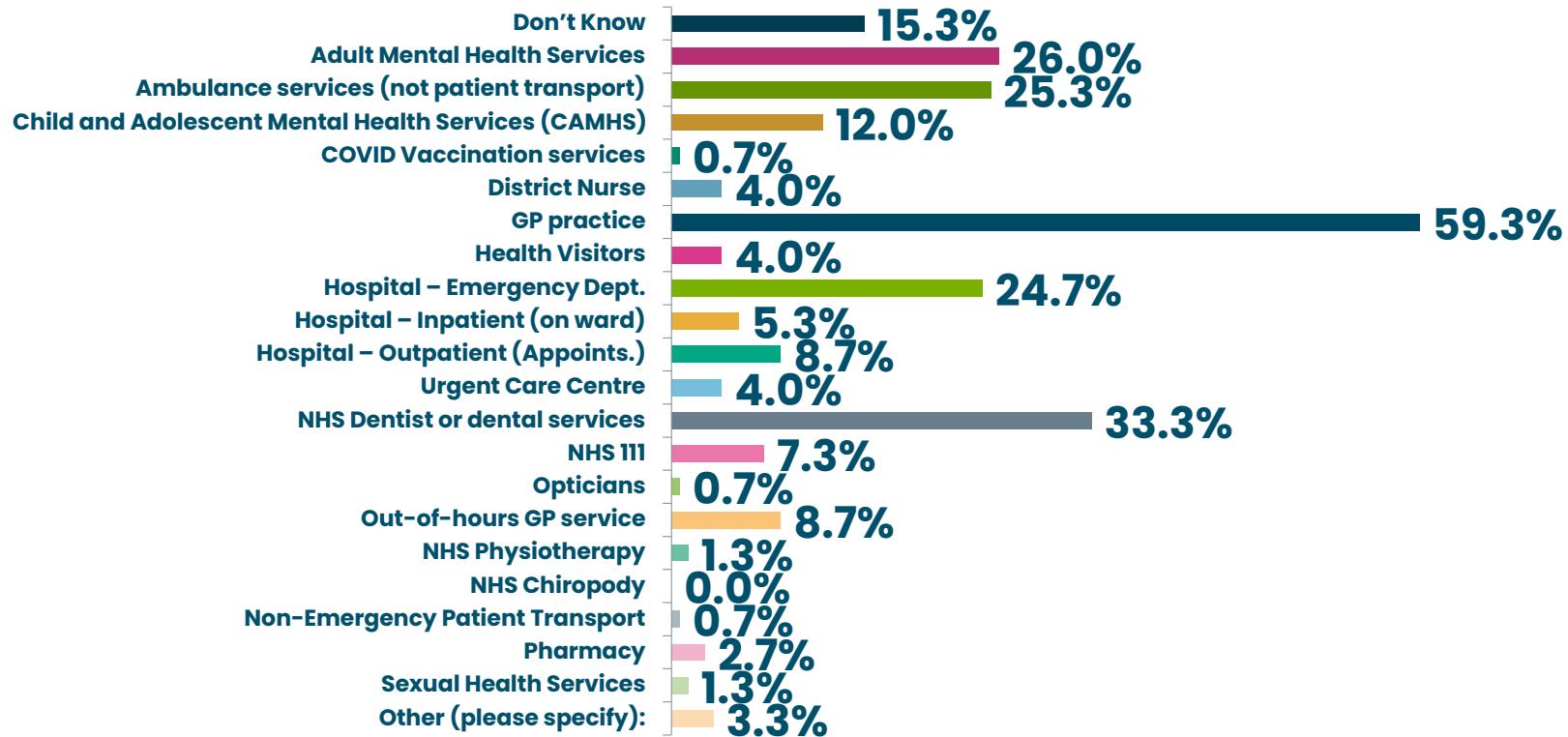
Hospital Emergency Department

Respondents acknowledged the pressures that A&E departments were under, suggesting they felt they were under-resourced and under-staffed, with pressures also being felt as a result of the pressures on and performance of other services e.g. GPs, dentistry etc. People also highlighted that there were few other places to turn for assistance during evenings and weekends.

Priorities for urgent improvements in health services

Where would you most like to see urgent improvements in health services?

Please tick up to three answers only



Priorities for urgent improvements in health services

"Because GP appointments so hard to come by I feel people leave it too late or go straight to A&E where they know they will be seen. Even for minor problems. improve GP availability."

*"Most health issues start with access to a GP.
Huge challenges, prevention has fallen to the wayside
Hospital care of elderly - appalling
NO NHS DENTISTS."*

"There is a great need for mental health services, many people of all ages have problems with their mental health and have to wait far too long for help/ treatment."

"All NHS services are accessed by the GP for the patient. However, GP services are not delivering. Mental health services are underfunded and not seen as a priority service. Dental pain is the worst sort. I can't access a dentist!"

"I feel that both adult and CYP mental health services need serious improvement and I feel that GP services need to improve accessibility. I also feel NHS 111 need to increase their capacity."

"I feel the NHS is overwhelmed. No fault of theirs. They need more funding."

Priorities for urgent improvements in social care services

We asked respondents to identify where improvements in social care services were most urgent, and then to explain why this was the case.

The services most identified as priorities for improvement were:

1. Home care (care workers at your home) (17.3%)

We heard that as people were increasingly keen to live at home as long as possible, so they needed access to affordable and flexible care workers who could meet their wide-ranging needs. The need for increased respite care capacity was also raised.

2. Support to live independently (13.3%)

Comments focused on people's desire to live independently in their own homes for as long as possible and to remain part of their community, which would benefit their physical and mental health and take pressure off health and care services. However, to do this, especially where friends and family were not available to offer support, a need was identified for flexible, cost-effective and tailored support including household adaptations, care visits and outreach services.

3. Dementia services (12.7%)

Respondents identified the increasing prevalence of the direct and indirect impacts of dementia as the demographic aged. Comments felt dementia services needed to keep pace, with more resources and staffing to respond to the increased levels and diversity of need. Greater investment in research for treatments was also flagged.

Priorities for urgent improvements in social care services

4. Community-based Services (12.7%)

Feedback identified the value people placed on community services. However, many of these comments focused on the desire for more services to be delivered 'in the community' rather than those traditionally classified as community-services by the NHS.

Comments focused on improved levels of outreach, enhanced support for carers (including increased respite provision), and improved links between health and care services at a community level.

5. Residential Care/Nursing Home (10.0%)

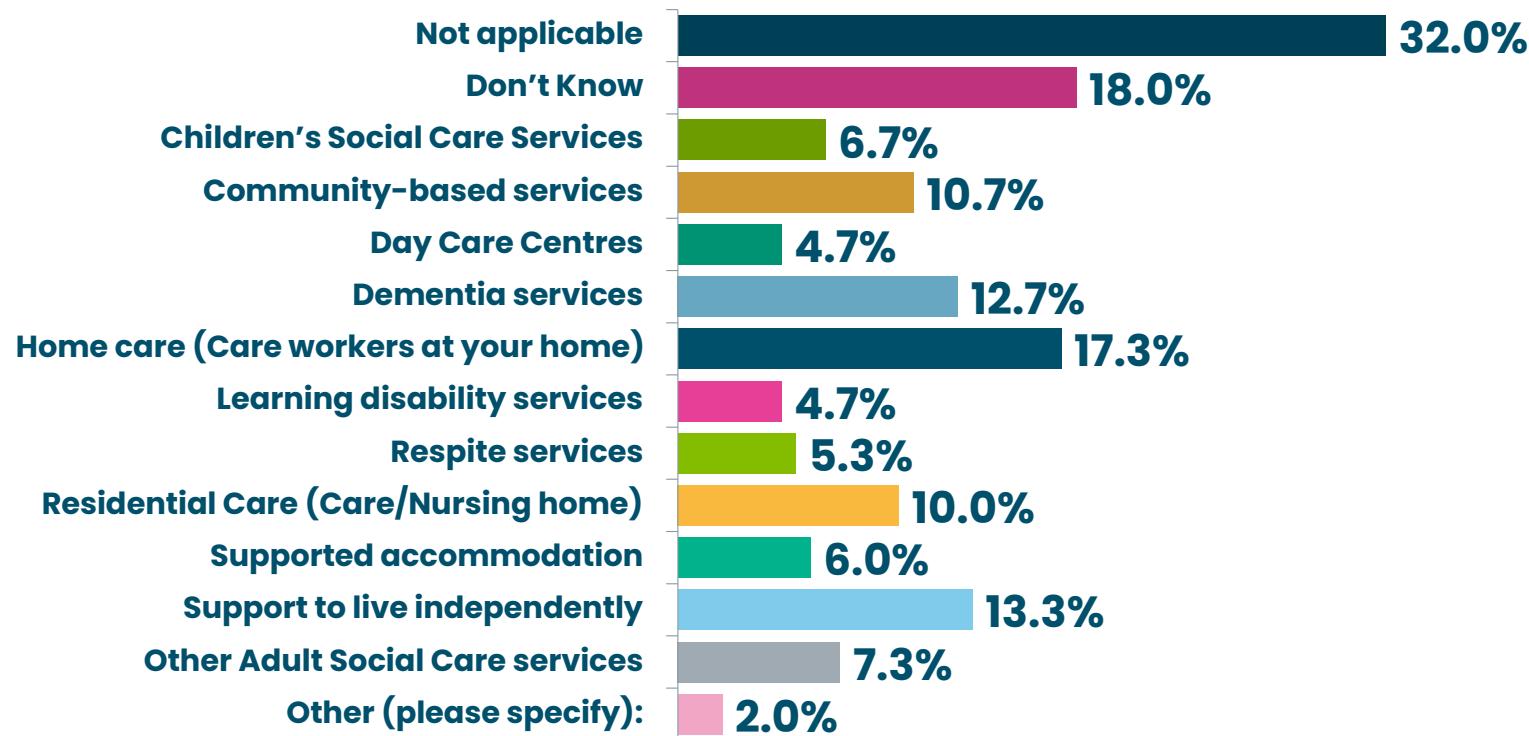
Concerns were raised about several aspects of care homes. These included the availability and quality of staff, the affordability of residential care and how the costs would be covered both now and in the future, variability in the experiences of those in nursing homes and clarity on how to identify and access residential care.

Suggestions highlighted that improvements would be beneficial across all these areas.

Priorities for urgent improvements in social care services

Where would you most like to see urgent improvements in social care services?

Please tick up to two answers only



Priorities for urgent improvements in social care services

"I'd like quicker response for child care services. Better dementia care. Both grandparents in unpleasant surroundings."

"Community based services take the pressure off hospital and GP's. Day Care Centre to provide users with interest outside the home, make friends and help with isolation. Give more respite to carers."

"Most persons want to stay in own home I know I do but if they don't have families there is just not enough support available for them or affordable care available."

"There's not enough staff to look after older people at home or in care homes."

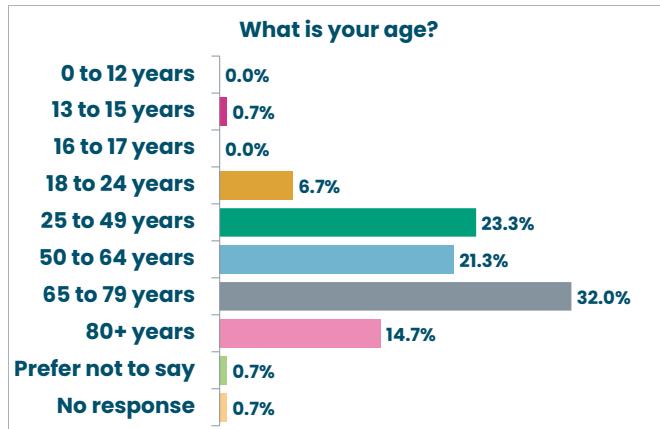
"As my disability increases i will need more care to stay in my own home. My wife will need respite so I need suitable place to go for respite or carers to come into my home. All at affordable costs."

"More assistance for the hearing impaired at home and in the community."

"An easy improvement could be better communications and sharing of knowledge and linking up services so that people know more about what is available to them."

Who did we hear from?

An equalities breakdown of our 150 respondents is provided below:



- 0.7% respondents were aged under 18, 51.3% were between 19 and 64 with 46.7% over 65. 1.4% did not respond.
- Most respondents identified as a woman (64.7%).
- 93.3% respondents had the same gender identity as the sex they were assigned at birth.
- 78.7% identified their sexual orientation as Heterosexual/Straight, with 3.3% as Bisexual.
- 76.0% identified as White: British / English / Northern Irish / Scottish / Welsh, with 5.3% preferring 'not to say'.
- 49.3% respondents were Christian, 36.0% respondents identified 'No religion' and 4.7% 'Preferred not to say'.
- 42.7% were married, 19.3% were single and 10.0% were co-habiting.
- 1.3% were currently pregnant, breastfeeding or had given birth in the last 26 weeks.
- 49.3% had a disability.
- 12.7% were carers.

For more information

Healthwatch East Sussex
Freepost RTTT-BYBX-KCEY
Healthwatch East Sussex
Greencoat House
32 St Leonards Road
Eastbourne
East Sussex
BN21 3UT

www.healthwatcheastsussex.co.uk

 @HealthwatchES

 [Facebook.com/HealthwatchESussex](https://www.facebook.com/HealthwatchESussex)

t: 0333 101 4007

e: enquiries@healthwatcheastsussex.co.uk