

# Final Report: Ageing Well in Cumberland

April 2025



# Contents

About Healthwatch	<b>Pg 4</b>
Executive Summary	<b>Pg 5-10</b>
Introduction	<b>Pg 11</b>
What did we do	<b>Pg 13</b>
Sample Demographics	<b>Pg 14</b>
Service Availability	<b>Pg 15</b>
Preferences of care	<b>Pg 16-17</b>
Barriers to Ageing Well	<b>Pg 18</b>
Focus Groups	<b>Pg 19-66</b>
Case Studies	<b>Pg 67-75</b>
Recommendations	<b>Pg 76-81</b>
Appendices	<b>Pg 82-151</b>

# Contents Continued

## Appendices: Individual Location Summaries:

Ageing Well in Aspatria	<b>Pg 86–89</b>
Ageing Well in Brampton	<b>Pg 90–93</b>
Ageing Well in Carlisle	<b>Pg 94–97</b>
Ageing Well in Cleator moor	<b>Pg 98–101</b>
Ageing Well in Cockermouth	<b>Pg 102–105</b>
Ageing Well in Dalston	<b>Pg 106–109</b>
Ageing Well in Egremont	<b>Pg 110–113</b>
Ageing Well in Keswick	<b>Pg 114–117</b>
Ageing Well in Longtown	<b>Pg 118–121</b>
Ageing Well in Maryport	<b>Pg 122–125</b>
Ageing Well in Millom	<b>Pg 126–130</b>
Ageing Well in Silloth	<b>Pg 131–134</b>
Ageing Well in Whitehaven	<b>Pg 135–139</b>
Ageing Well in Wigton	<b>Pg 140–144</b>
Ageing Well in Workington	<b>Pg 145–149</b>

# About Healthwatch

**Healthwatch Cumberland (HWC)** is the local health and social care champion. With a statutory duty to engage with local people, communities, and neighbourhoods, we listen to their views, feelings, and experiences, and share these with commissioners of services.

We are independent of all services and work to reduce inequalities and barriers to services by seeking out the experiences of those who are identified as 'seldom heard' and sharing intelligence gathered to drive improvements.

**More information on our statutory duties can be found here:**

<https://healthwatchcumberland.co.uk/our-mission/>

To fulfill our statutory functions, Healthwatch undertakes a range of engagement. From pop-up engagements in villages and towns, attending existing support groups and running focus groups

By law, there must be a Healthwatch in every local authority area, therefore, Healthwatch is funded by, and accountable to, local authorities. Healthwatch England (HWE) acts as the national consumer champion for all local Healthwatch organisations, enabling and supporting HWC to bring important issues to the attention of decision makers nationally.

## Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Cumberland would like to recognise and thank Cumberland Council for their support to carry out this piece of work.

Furthermore, we thank the residents of Cumberland who engaged with us and kindly shared their stories.



# Executive Summary

## Context

**Between September 2024 and February 2025, Healthwatch Cumberland undertook an 'Ageing Well' tour roadshow across Cumberland.**

This 'Ageing Well' tour aimed to capture the views of residents of Cumberland in order to understand what is in place to 'age well' in their community. This project encompassed views of the present and future older generation in relation to their current experiences, barriers they have faced and what changes they hope to see to improve their quality of 'ageing well' in Cumberland.

## Methodology:

This 'Ageing Well' project engaged 607 people across Cumberland with our survey with more having taken part in Focus Groups and Case studies.

Our engagement officers engaged with multiple seldom heard groups to gather a fair in-depth view of what it takes to 'age well'.

The data was collected through:

- 9 Focus Groups
- 3 Case Study Interviews
- An Online Survey, which had 607 responses.

**676** people engaged with throughout our 'Ageing Well' tour



# Conclusions: Themes

## Independence

Through survey data analysis, the key word 'independence' has come up a significant amount. The ability to stay in one's own home with sufficient service availability in their area is an utmost priority to residents of Cumberland, no matter which area they lived.

## Transport

The 15 towns that Healthwatch Cumberland visited on our tour were drastically different in size, service availability in the area and proximity to other towns. It was highlighted especially by those in Millom that transport opportunities without the use of a personal car, are very difficult. This causes residents concerns around their care when getting older as it is a requirement to travel for their nearest medical services.

More generally, our survey data reveals a large reluctance to travel for care needs. During our project, we gave opportunity to feedback why travel was a problem however, results were varied with many explaining their difficulties with accessing transport their area. Even in areas with a variety of transport options such as Whitehaven with rail, bus and taxis, responses still showed a desire to have services closer limiting the need to travel.



# Recommendations

## 1. Help People Understand Their Care Options

Create a clear, accessible campaign to raise awareness of all the care choices available in Cumberland—especially home care.

Work with local people, carers, healthcare providers, and community groups to co-design the campaign.

## 2. Make Care Availability Easier to See

Map out where care services are available and where there are gaps, so people can easily find support near them.

Use existing health and care data and feedback from local residents (e.g. Ageing Well project, Age Friendly Communities engagement and learning).

Share findings in a public report and create an easy-to-use online map on the Cumberland Council website.

## 3. Bring Services Closer to Home

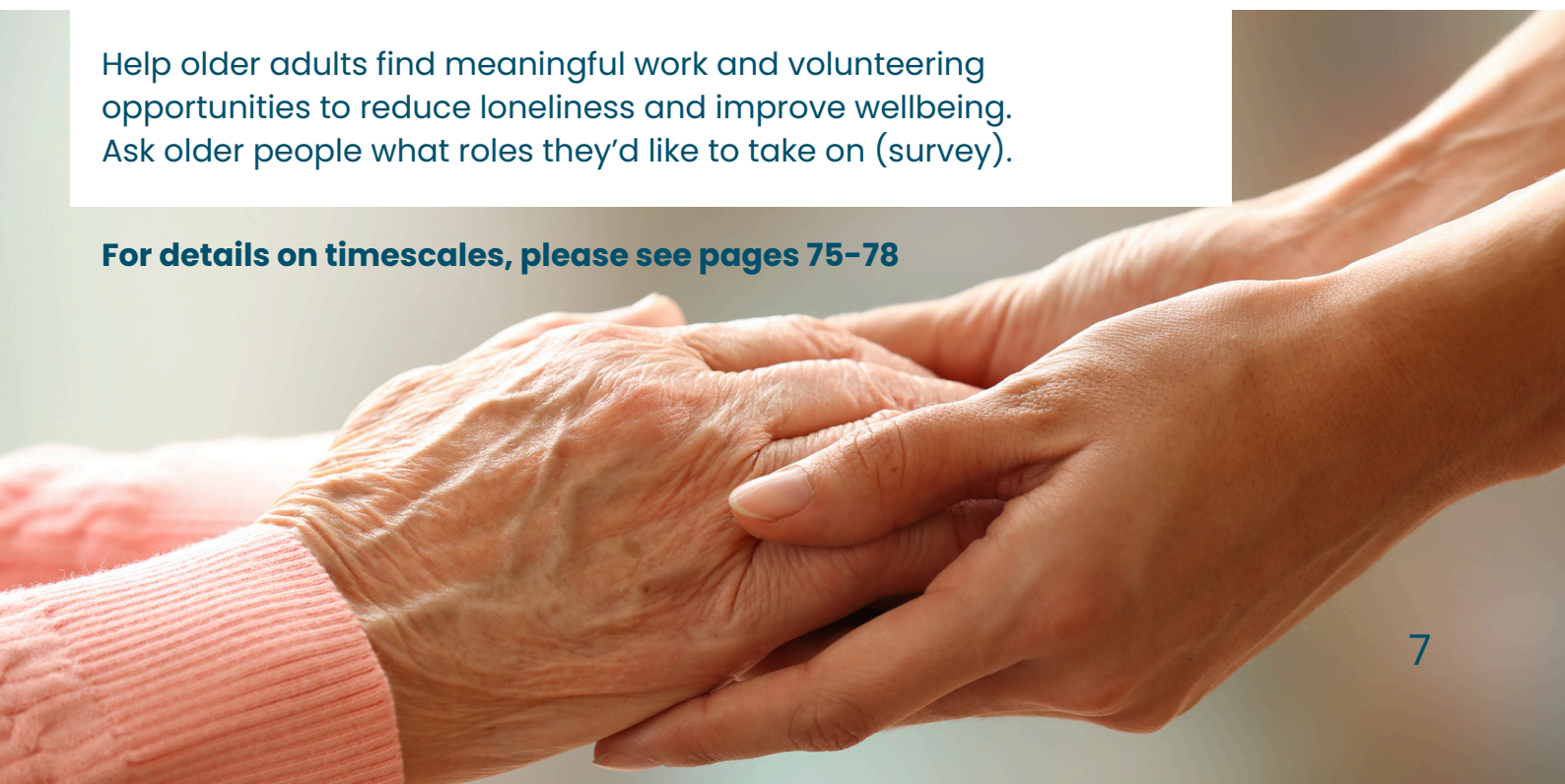
Test new ways to bring care to people, like virtual GP appointments and better transport to services.

Start pilot programs in rural areas where access to services and transport is limited, and check if people are using and benefiting from them.

## 4. Support Older Adults to Stay Active and Involved

Help older adults find meaningful work and volunteering opportunities to reduce loneliness and improve wellbeing. Ask older people what roles they'd like to take on (survey).

**For details on timescales, please see pages 75–78**



# Recommendations

## 5. Make It Easier to Get to Health and Fitness Activities

Set up community transport in three rural towns—starting with Longtown—to help older adults get to exercise and wellbeing sessions working with local leisure providers e.g. GLL (this could be included in future commissioning of leisure services).

Keep route and booking info up to date online and in local centres.

## 6. Understand Why Travel Can Be Difficult

Find out what stops people in rural areas from getting to care e.g. cost, confidence, or transport gaps.

## 7. Share What's Going On Locally

Create a monthly printed and online guide to local health, social, and leisure activities, developed with local communities. This could be like the weekly 'Good News Fleetwood' newsletter, providing up-to-date information on what is happening in their area with images.

Send it to all households with residents aged 55+ and check its impact through regular feedback.

## 8. Healthwatch Cumberland presentation to Cumberland Age Friendly Board, Health and Wellbeing board, and Integrated Care Partnership to share project findings.

Present findings from Ageing Well engagement, discussing barriers to 'Ageing Well' from a person-centered point of view with our case study and focus group collection.

Explore how we can work together to co-develop Ageing Well strategies, drawing on Healthwatch Cumberland's community insight and public engagement experience to ensure the voices of local people shape priorities.

## 9. Recognise Unpaid Carers as a Priority Group

Older unpaid carers often face their own health challenges while still caring for others. Cumberland Council should work with local services to help recognise carers as a group with specific needs and consider treating unpaid carers as an additional protected group when planning support and services.



# Recommendations

## 10. Make Services More Accessible for Carers

Carers told us that they often struggle to access services because reasonable adjustments aren't made for their needs. Health and care services should offer flexible options — like home visits, clear communication, and easy-to-access appointments — to support carers properly.

## 11. Create Support Tailored to Older Carers

Older carers need services that take their age and health into account. This should include regular health checks, emotional support, advice on money matters, and access to breaks from caring. Carers should also be supported to get an assessment of their own needs.

## 12. Identify and Support Carers Earlier

Many carers don't realise they're entitled to support. GPs, hospitals, and social care workers should be trained to spot and record when someone is a carer and offer early help and signposting to services before problems get worse.

## 13. Involve Carers in Planning Services

Carers want their experiences to shape the services they use. Cumberland Council and NHS services should actively involve carers — especially older carers and those from different backgrounds — in designing and improving care and support.

## 14. Work Together to Support Carers

Cumberland Council, NHS, and community groups should work more closely together and share responsibility for improving carers' lives.

A clear local carers plan should be put in place, with actions and timelines, to show how services will support unpaid carers now and in the future.



# Key Findings

---

**Home care**  
52.09%

**From a sample of 382 Cumberland residents, 52.09% would choose to be cared for in their own home if needed in older age.**

**Transport**  
55%

**Out of 371 Cumberland residents, 55% see transportation as a significant barrier to 'Ageing Well'**

In relation to the recent **2025 Public Health Annual Report**, Cumberland Council's key initiatives based on the World Health Organization (WHO) domains of age-friendly communities are very applicable to our **fourth recommendation** (See previous).

The key initiative of **Community-Based Support Networks** involving befriending programmes, social clubs and volunteer networks is great step forward in line with our findings as older adults need these opportunities to combat loneliness.



Furthermore, one of the WHO domains of age-friendly communities involves **civil participation and employment**. Throughout this project and referenced in **recommendation four**, older age adults desire opportunity to use their skills in volunteer or part-time employment settings. This promotes social inclusion and life satisfaction.

# Ageing Well In Cumberland



Cumberland Council asked Healthwatch Cumberland to explore the feelings, wishes and aspirations of our population as they grow older. As experts in community engagement, we were selected to carry-out this 'ageing well' project. Cumberland is known for being a rural and coastal area, with mountain landscapes and lakes. The rural nature is a key influential factor for issues in the area with limited services available. This report gives insight into what the people of Cumberland believe they need to age "well" in multiple facets such as social activities and care provisions available to them.

Healthwatch Cumberland hosted engagement events and distributed a survey in both physical and digital formats to gather the views from people in a range of Cumberland towns. The targeted sample was to include a wide variety of demographics and seldom heard groups to provide representative results of what the Cumberland population views are.

The life expectancy in the Northwest is significantly lower than other areas of the country. The figures for the Northwest are similar to the Northeast which has the lowest life expectancy in the country (Office for National Statistics, 2024). It is widely recognised that economic factors in the North/South divide of England highlight an association between income deprivation, health issues and learning disabilities (House of Commons Library, 2019).



In 2019, Public Health England (PHE) published a report summarising evidence in coastal and rural areas of health inequalities for an older population. Thirty-six studies examined determinants of health inequalities experienced by an older population including “more elective and emergency hospital treatment in rural areas”, “lack of community support” and “exclusion or lack of social connection felt by particular groups such as LGBT+”. Areas of Cumbria can be described as coastal rural areas, therefore the report from PHE is very applicable to Healthwatch’s current topic of interest.

These determinant themes were expected to arise in communication during our public engagements and throughout survey data.

This final ‘Ageing Well’ report features our statistical and qualitative findings from engaging with the Cumberland population. Healthwatch identified themes and recommendations from these results. This report may be considered by Cumberland Council to help shape services and improve issues highlighted in this report.



This report has given the public a voice for their worries about their care when getting older and can provide recommendations for areas of improvement. This is for not only the current ageing population but also for what the younger generation hope to see throughout their lifetime to “age well”.

# What did we do?

Beginning in September, Healthwatch Cumberland have been interacting with residents in Cumberland via engagement events, focus groups and interviews to gather views on health and social care for what 'Ageing Well' looks and feels like in Cumberland. Feedback was gathered through completion of our survey which was completed at engagements and available online.



**Total number of people of survey responses.**

Note: Some survey respondents did not complete every question in this survey.

## Seldom Heard Groups engaged with:

- Refugees/Asylum seekers
- Language Barriers
- Carers
- Long Term Conditions
- Physical Disabilities
- Learning disabilities
- Autism
- Mental health conditions
- Dementia
- Young People
- Ethnic Minorities
- Veterans

**Healthwatch Cumberland ran engagements from September 2024 until February 2025.**

## Areas visited:

**Aspatria  
Brampton  
Carlisle  
Cleator Moor**

**Cockermouth  
Dalston  
Egremont  
Keswick**

**Longtown  
Maryport  
Millom  
Silloth**

**Whitehaven  
Workington  
Wigton**

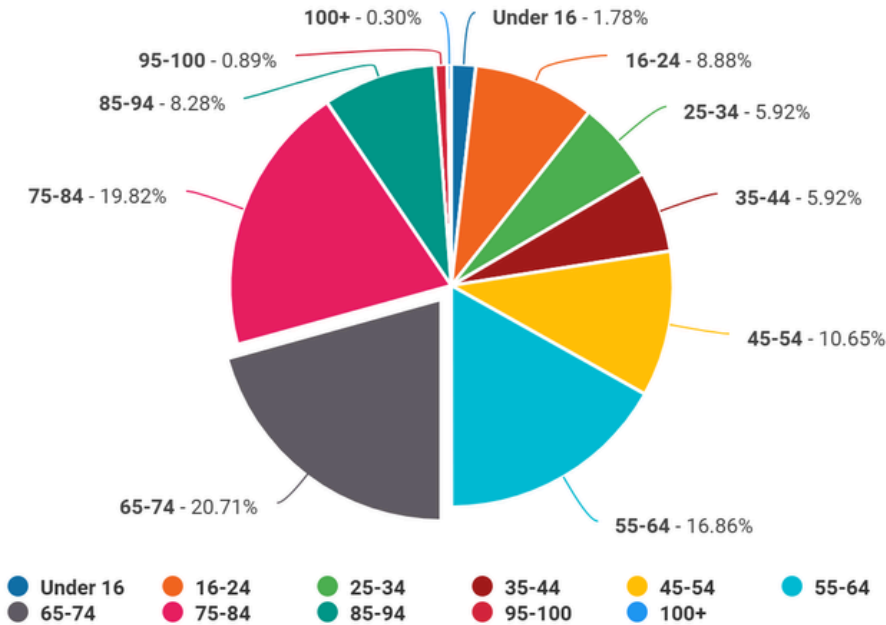
Detailed analysis specific to individual towns highlighting local variations where applicable have been collated in the report appendix. See Contents (Pg 2) for page numbers.

# Demographic Information

## Who did we speak to?

### Age Groups Reached

Out of 338 complete responses:

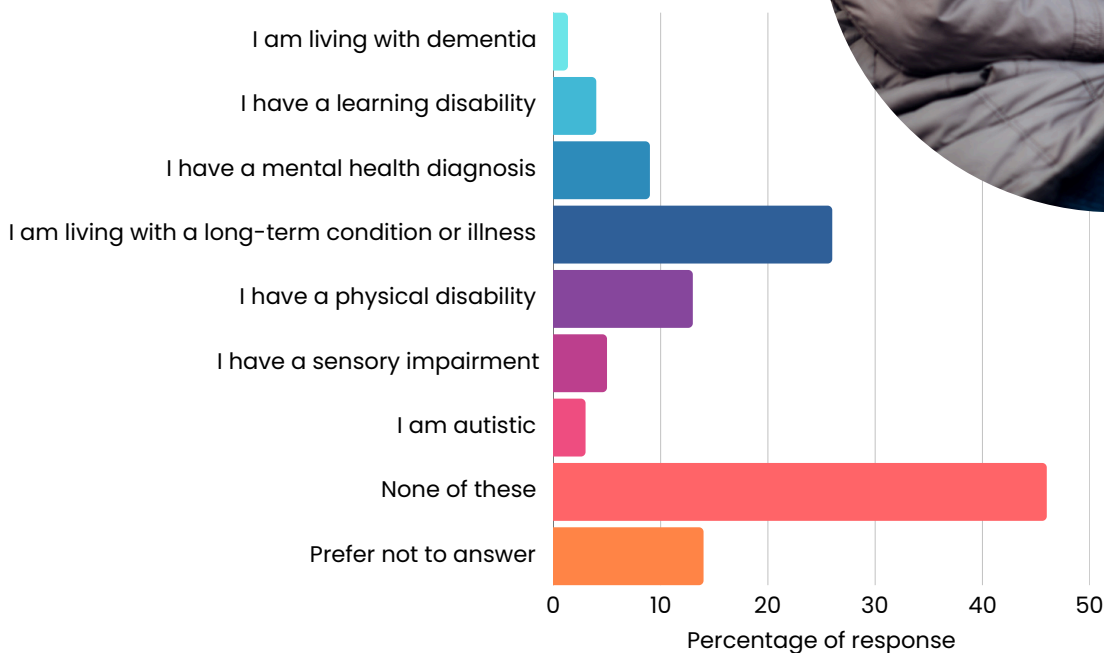


**74.3%  
Female**

**25.7%  
Male**

### Disability Seldom Heard Groups reached:

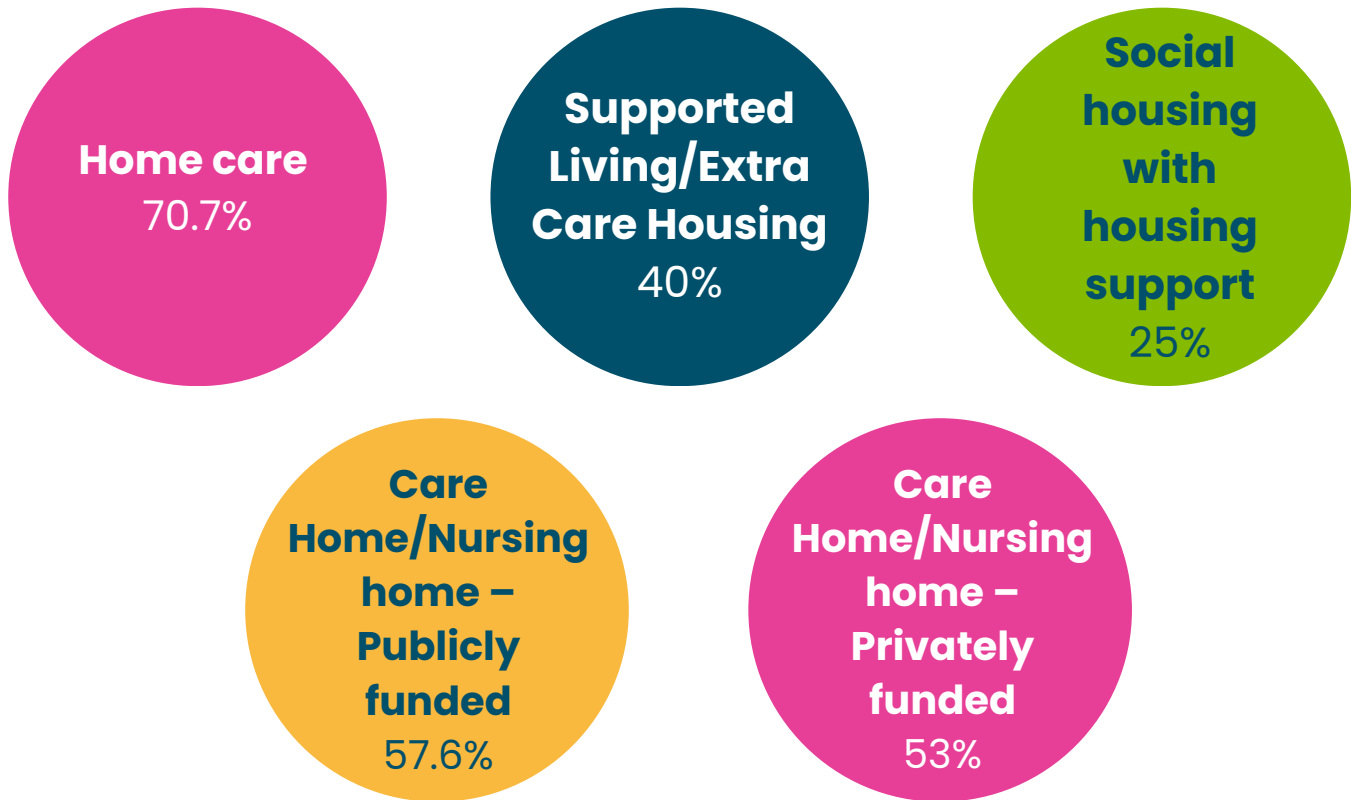
Out of 368 complete responses:



# Service Availability within Cumberland



Within our Ageing Well Survey, we asked “Which of the following services are you aware of being available in your local area?”



Percentage of responses from 15 towns and 368 complete responses

## HWC also gathered written feedback about service availability in Cumberland:

“All these are two miles away but not accessible to people in surrounding villages without public transport”

“As I am fortunate in not needing these services I don't have details, but feel hopeful that there would be some help if needed”.

“Long waiting list for above”.

# Healthwatch Cumberland asked about preference of care if needed.

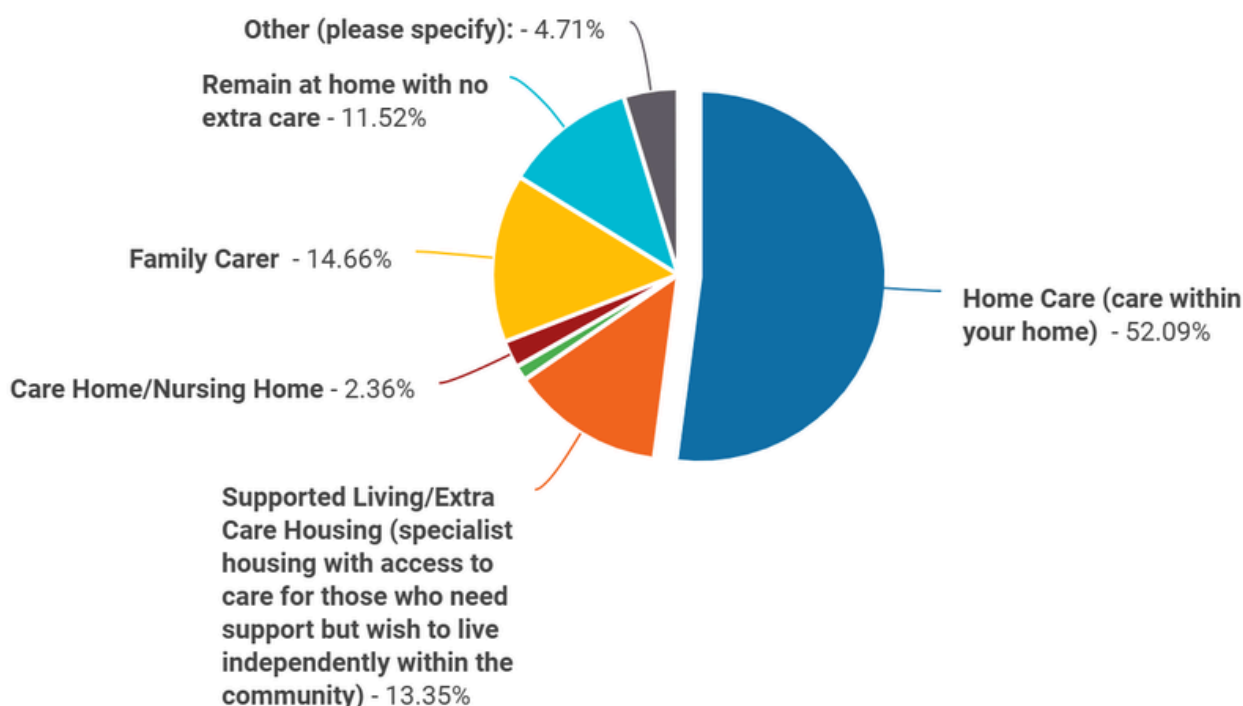
As our sample aimed to include a wide range of seldom heard groups and a range of ages, factors influencing this choice were important for our report.

This question also gave respondents an opportunity to tell Healthwatch why they made this choice.



## These findings were gathered from 382 complete responses:

Evident below is a clear overarching preference for Home Care. HWC investigated this further asking why this choice was made. Please see following pages for our findings.



- Home Care (care within your home)
- Supported Living/Extra Care Housing (specialist housing with access to care for those who need...
- Social housing with housing support (without access to care)
- Care Home/Nursing Home
- Family Carer
- Remain at home with no extra care
- Other (please specify):

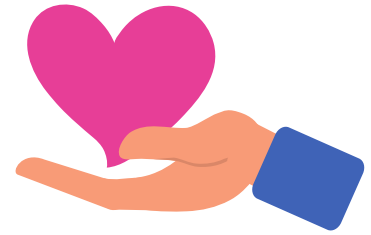
# What did residents of Cumberland say impacts their preferred care choices (if needed)

"I would like to stay home as long as possible. Familiar environment. I am quite introverted and like to be quiet at times"

"As I was a carer, people are more happier in their own homes than being institutionalised."

"My dignity and independence"

"Social anxiety"



"I don't want to burden family with care needs"

"I would like to stay independent as long as I can. However, if I will need care, I would prefer to stay at home and maintain my normal life."

"I have spent a long time in my home, it is full of memories and I don't want to have to sell it to be put in a room by myself."

"I would want as much independence as possible, but to know support was available as and when needed would be reassuring. Structured/rigid care calls take away a lot of choice, flexibility and freedom."

"Care homes- take care of you all the time, support everything"

"I've been in a care home, people go in others rooms and I've seen dementia patients lashing out."

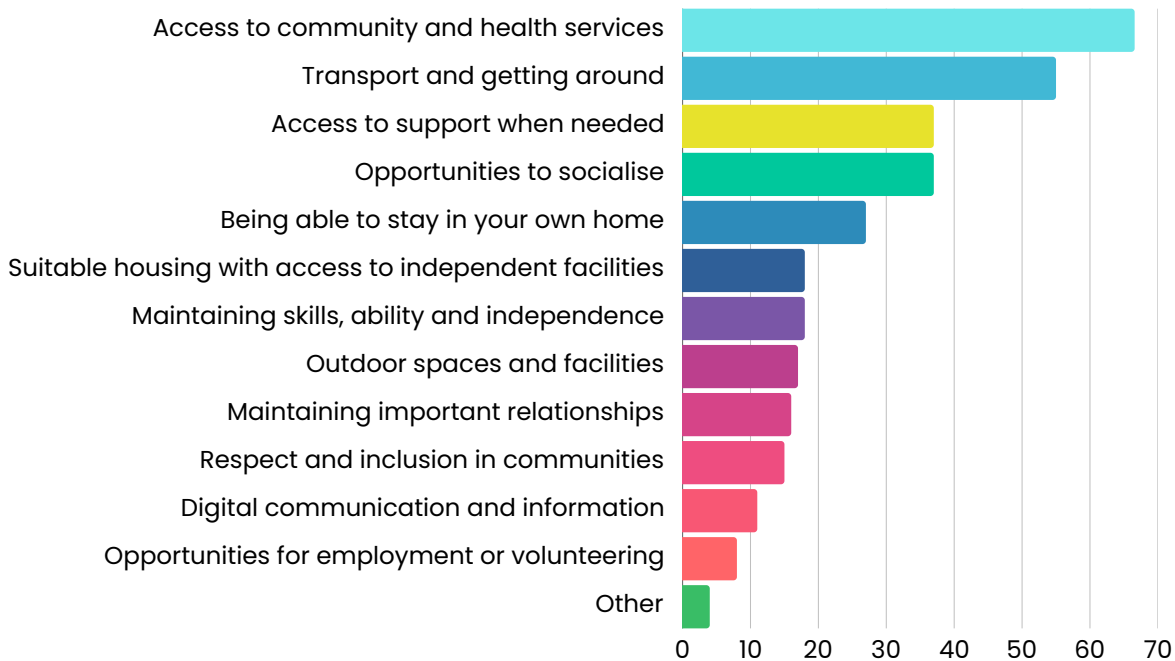
"Home Care is very quick and cares only for the basic needs of the person"

# Barriers to 'Ageing well'

Healthwatch Cumberland asked about barriers that can prevent people from living a happy, healthy and fulfilled life as they grow older.

The survey asked what three things with the lack of access to would prevent people from 'ageing well'.

**Data from 371 complete responses.**



## The top three factors that prevent people from "Ageing Well" when lacking access are:

**Access to community and health services** -66.6%

**Transport and getting around** -55.3%

**Access to support when needed** -37.5%

## The survey also asked a relating question about how far one would be willing to travel for their care services.

Within the nearest town  
47%

Within the nearest city  
16.7%

Within the county  
13.1%

Willing to travel to another county  
8.6%

I do not wish to leave my home  
14.7%

From a dataset of 396 complete responses

# Collection of Focus Groups with the people of Cumberland

To create a diverse portfolio of findings from our 'Ageing Well' project, HWC conducted multiple focus groups to gather more detailed, personal and open responses.

**Millom**

**Maryport**

**Egremont**

**Whitehaven**

**Longtown**

**Carlisle**

**Brampton**



# Focus Group in Millom

A focus group was held in Millom to collect detailed feedback in relation to our survey's more open questions. 6 out of 8 participants had moved to the area in later life. Regarding what those in Millom think is most important to help age well independently in their community, we gathered the following feedback.

“Public transport is really limited”. This individual spoke to us during our focus group about how transport and getting around is important to them. They must rely on people to take them to hospital appointments.



**“I want reassurance that everything will be okay after I am gone”**

“Independence is important for my identity”. Older adults often lose their independence in some form which can be very detrimental to their wellbeing and sense of self. Similarly to other towns, this individual stressed the importance of being able to be themselves and being independent.

“Opportunities to socialise are important to me”. As people age, social interaction opportunities gradually decrease due to reasons like retirement and mobility issues. Local social groups such as “men’s group” as this individual spoke about, provide social opportunities which are necessary for a healthy and fulfilled lifestyle.



**In response to what barriers people of Millom think prevent people from living a happy and fulfilled life, this is a snapshot of what feedback we gathered during the focus group.**

“

“There is only one supermarket in Millom, so we don't have much choice. If I want to go to Barrow to another supermarket I have to get the train. I find the supermarket here expensive”.

”

**This feedback shows that those in Millom without the ability to drive are left in a difficult situation to buy necessary groceries.**

“

In relation to those in Millom staying contact with people, some spoke about mobile phones. “I don't have a mobile phone – I wouldn't know how to use it”, “Mobile phone signal is bad in Millom. Landline can also be very crackly, and you cannot hear who is on the phone”

”

**These quotes suggest a digital barrier for those in Millom and due to the rural location, a mobile may be one of the few ways one can get social interaction.**

“

“I like to read but I cannot walk to the library, it is too far, I have had to buy a mobility scooter to get there”  
“There are some amazing outside spaces near here if you can drive. If you don't drive or have mobility issues it is difficult. Even the park here has a hill up to it”

”

**This suggests that there are not any accessibility services to aid those in need in Millom to help them live a fulfilled life.**

## In response to what age the Millom population think they should begin thinking about their care needs in later life.

The qualitative feedback we gathered during the focus group gave us an insight into reasons why these ages are suggested.

1. "We knew we would be retiring at 55 due to our jobs so we could plan for that. It is more difficult for people these days and they have to work for longer". This feedback provided useful insight into how different careers and lifestyles play into care plans for later life.



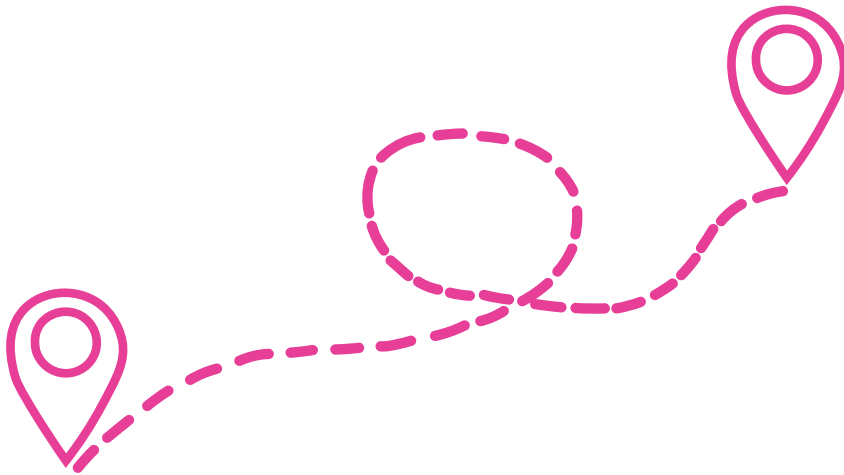
2. "Technology is advancing so fast it is difficult to plan ahead. We don't know what will be available in the future". This shows that some people are not thinking about their care needs early in life as they assume there will be many more options in future.

3. "I think we have been lucky and lived in a better age than the youth of today".

4. "It depends on your health and circumstances". This feedback suggests that some may not think about their care needs until it is needed.

## In response to how willing the Millom population is to travel for their care choices, we received the following qualitative feedback.

1. "The nearest place". This suggests some of Millom is very unwilling to travel. This may be a result of insufficient transport and the rural isolated nature of Millom.
2. "If you are really ill you have to travel to Barrow, Kendal or Whitehaven". This feedback follows the theme in the previous point. This individual phrased their response with the words "have to". This illustrates a forced requirement to travel, rather than a willingness to travel. This may be due to a difficulty of getting transportation and the distance to these areas.



3. "My husband was sent an appointment for Kendal Hospital. There is no public transport to get there from our house. He called Patient Transport Service but they told him he could get public transport and refused to supply hospital transport for him. He ended up asking for his appointment to be changed to Barrow instead which he had to wait longer for". This feedback shows how isolated some of the Millom population is especially when accessing healthcare. This individual should have not been rejected for hospital transport or forced to wait for a future appointment for a situation out of their control.

## Healthwatch Cumberland asked about what preferred care options the Millom population would choose if it was needed and why.

1. "I would like support to stay at home. I want to be at home as long as possible". This individual indicated an unwillingness to receive care involving moving from their own home. This theme of home care is prevalent throughout our Ageing Well data. Many people do not wish to move to care homes.

2. "For me it would depend how bad things were". This response suggests that the care choice that this individual was to receive would be entirely dependent on their health circumstances.

3. "I've had a stroke and someone arranged for equipment and adjustments to be made to my house to make it easier for me to cope". This individual gave us insight into how home adjustments can be made to help minimise the care needed.

4. "If I had to move, it would be in to sheltered accommodation. I would like support if it was needed but to keep my independence". This theme of maintaining ones independence despite a need for support and care has been heavily present throughout our Ageing Well project.

5. "I would like to go in to a care home but only if I was allowed to take my technology with me like my smart TV". This individual response suggests that the facilities within a care home may impact care choices. For instance, this person is concerned about is having their own smart TV present.

6. "Being supported at home would mean that I would need to consider how I would keep some kind of social aspect in my life. That might be difficult". This response shows us how those receiving care struggle with socialisation needs once care is required. This is also an important aspect of living a healthy lifestyle.

# Focus Groups in Maryport

## Maryport Coffee and Craic Focus Group 10/12/2024



We held a focus group at The Centre West, which is a community hub for those in the area.

We attended their weekly coffee and craic lunch club, which can have up to 70 people attending each week.

We chatted to a group of people who were keen to share their views of living in the area/surrounding area.

## In relation to what was most important to them to Age Well independently the answers were:

### **Being able to get around.**

“If it wasn’t for my daughter being able to drive me, I wouldn’t be able to go anywhere. There are no buses near where I live and taxi’s are too expensive”

“I have to travel for appointments a lot at the minute and that can be expensive in a taxi, sometimes I can get a lift though and that helps”

“When they merged the GP ages ago it changed everything for me”

## **Socialising.**

"I love coming here, I come to this and to bingo every week. If I didn't come here, I wouldn't see anyone for days at a time. I only live round the corner, and I know everyone here"

"I come to the centre, my Mam and my niece are here too. We do loads together and all get on. It's not just the cheap meal but it is seeing our friends and having a laugh"

"I have volunteered here for years; we are like a family. Never been a cross word between us. I would be bored if I didn't volunteer"

"I go walking with a walking group twice a week, we will regularly walk from here to Allonby and back. It takes as long as it takes"



## **Keeping active.**

"Walking, as much as possible. I think the fresh air is good for my mental health and keeps my mind being sharp"

"I go line dancing each week, it is a good laugh and we get out"

"The best thing I ever did was get a dog, I must go out whether I want to or not. It has been freezing but I still must force myself out for a walk. My dog is my best friend, she is beautiful"

# What prevents people from ageing well in your community?

## Living rurally.

"We are always years behind the rest of the country, and we get forgotten"

"There are pros and cons to living in Cumbria, the positives are that we know everyone and we are quite a close knit community but the down side is that nothing gets improved. There is very little investment in the area, the old people get forgotten about"

"I worry about the young 'uns – there is nowt for them"

"I would like to go swimming, but we don't have a pool"

"There isn't much for people our age to keep fit"

## Opportunities to Socialise.

"If I didn't have the Centre, I wouldn't have anywhere else to socialise. I live just over the road but I can't walk far so if it was any further I would be stuck in the house"

"These lot are amazing here, we would be lost without them. They will help anyway they can"

"I help out at the primary school quite a bit, since my husband died"



## **Access to healthcare/support.**

"I struggle to get appointments at my GP, I can't do the online thing and if you don't ring at 8am and wait for ages you don't get seen and even then the appointment might not be for weeks. If I am phoning now, I am ill now"

"It is so hard to get mental health support in person these days"

"I am due to have my benefits stopped and there is nobody to help me with my pensions until next year, I don't know what to do about Christmas"

"Going back and forth to the hospital is hard work and they don't communicate with each other. I went for 2 different appointments in 1 day"

"There are no specialists in the area even if you can travel to Whitehaven"



## When in life should you start to think about your care needs for later life

The group felt that it would be beneficial to think about these things sooner rather than later but did say you don't know you're getting old until something goes wrong.

Those that had a close-knit family, felt like they were better off as they looked out for each other whereas those who live on their own or didn't have family nearby had to give it more consideration.

## How far are you willing to travel for your care choices

The group felt like they would like to stay within Maryport if possible but acknowledged that due to lack of specialist care there may be an expectation to go elsewhere within the county.

"It would be up to my family, I will just let them decide as it is them who will have to travel to visit"

"I had to have a triple heart bypass and happily went to Middlesborough for the right care"



## Which services are you aware of being available in your local area?

The group were able to name some of the care homes in the area but there wasn't clarity as to what the difference between care home/nursing home. They also did not know which of them was private these days.

## What would your preferred care option be?

One member advised that they will be putting her Mam in a home as that is where her Grandparents both went, "it is just what you do". Another stated they would have kept her Mam at home if she could but there just wasn't the room.

Ideally the group would stay home but this posed the question of cost, the difference of owning your home and renting as well as the quality of care that can be provided within their own home. Along with health conditions etc.



## What things are happening in your area, what do you do

Some members of the group are volunteers here at the Centre West and describe it as 'a lifeline', this is where people come to help others but to socialise and care for their own wellbeing.

Members who attend the centre regularly believe that it has an important role to play in keeping people active, fed and socialised.

There are a few exercise groups that people attend also.

There is a walking group that is a great way to meet people and stay active.

Some do feel like there isn't enough in that area for the ageing population.

# Healthy Hopes Health and Wellbeing Focus Group

Maryport 16/01/2025

HWC held a focus group at the Healthy Hopes Facility in Maryport with the Health and Wellbeing group.

The group meets on a weekly basis to chat, have a cuppa and share their thoughts and feelings about their lives.

There were 8 members at the session ageing from 30-85yrs, some with long term illnesses, disabilities and special educational needs.

We asked them what ageing well looked like for them.



## What is important to you to age well independently in your community?

### **Socialising**

"I think ageing well is a state of mind, its just a number, however being socially active keeps you young, keeps your mind working and makes you feel like you aren't alone. Without groups like this and other things happening in town it can become very lonely"

"Having somewhere to meet with friends which doesn't cost me anything like buying coffees etc is really important. We don't all have money to spend in coffee shops, everything seems to cost money"

## Transport

“Luckily I can drive but if I didn’t I would really struggle. Services and facilities seem to be getting more centralised into Workington so we need to get there to access things such as swimming and buses aren’t always convenient”

“I rely on buses to get out and about so having regular services is really important to me”

## Being able to stay in my own home

“I’m really worried about being able to stay in my own home. I don’t want to go into a care home, I’m happy here”

“I would like help with household things later in life so I can stay in my own home as long as possible, maybe meals a couple of times a day, some cleaning up etc., I hope this would be possible.”

# What barriers can prevent people from living a happy and healthy life as they grow old?

## Health facilities

“We used to have a swimming pool in Maryport which was well used. I loved going there but they closed it down and now the nearest pool is Workington. I’ve stopped going now, it was the main bit of exercise I got each week”

“ They have gyms here but they are too expensive and I don’t feel comfortable using them, they need some form of exercise more relevant to people with physical needs”



## Respect

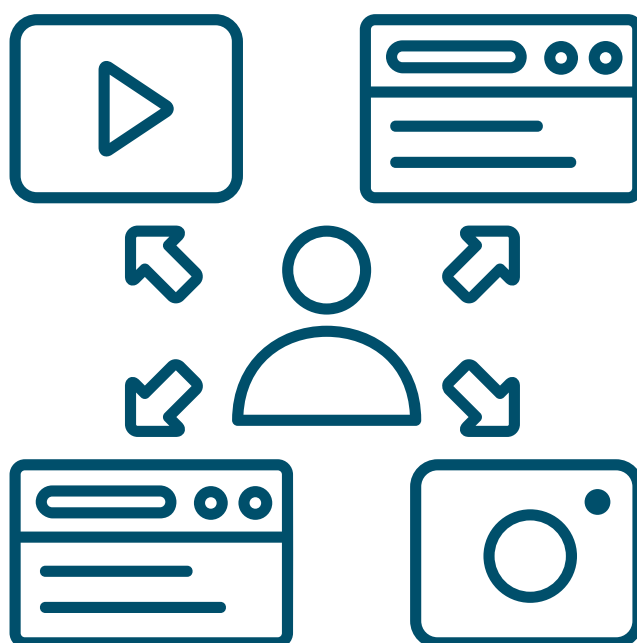
"I feel like that when you get older you get ignored, especially by younger people, they see you as worthless and useless, that's not the case"

"I don't think anyone wants to hear what older people have to say, once we aren't useful to people anymore they don't care"

## Digital Communication and information

"The world is becoming more complicated and its becoming hard to keep up, everything is online. Our banks have disappeared, its impossible to get a doctors appointment, all these things are so difficult if you aren't on line"

"I don't know what's happening in Maryport. I presume you can find things online if you are good at that but if you aren't, there is no way of knowing what events are on, what groups are meeting or anything. Maybe there should be a regular newsletter posted somewhere or sent out so we are kept informed better"

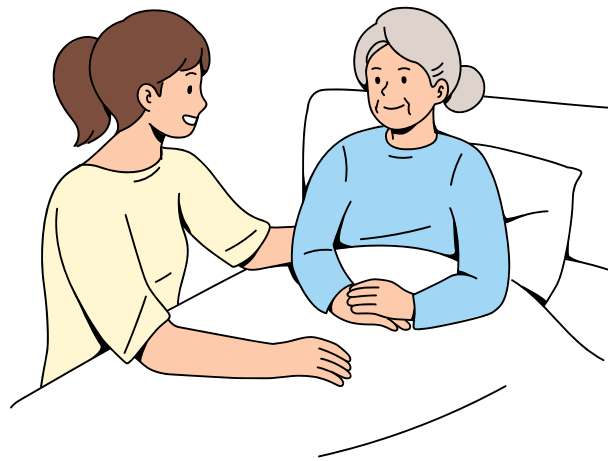


## When do you think you should start thinking about care needs for later life?

The group said that it depends what your situation is.

Financially you should start planning as early on as you possibly can. In terms of your health needs, they felt it was hard to judge as you don't know what you are going to need and it's very individual.

"My son has autism and struggles to manage his daily life. I don't want to be a burden to him as I get older so I've already started putting things in place, even my funeral plan so he doesn't have to worry"



## How far are you willing to travel for your care choices?

The group would like to stay in Maryport, there are quite a few care homes there which they said they would go into if they needed to.

"I'm happy here in Maryport but I know I won't always be able to stay here if I have extra needs. In that case I would want to stay as close to the town as possible, Workington maybe"

## Which care services are you aware of being available in your local area?

The group knew of several care homes in the town but didn't really know what level of care they offered and the difference between them. Some did say that they hadn't heard good things about care homes and were hopeful that they could be cared for in their own home although weren't sure of the expense to do that.

They also expressed concern about having to sell their own home to go into a care home and didn't know how this worked, they would be interested in having some sort of easy guide to tell them what their choices would be and the implications of each.



## What would be your preferred care option?

The group unanimously said that they wanted to stay in their own home as long as possible and be supported to do so.

"Being made to go into a care home is like the beginning of the end to me. I've lived in my home for over 30 years, it would have a massive impact on me mentally if I had to move out of it"

"I have a lot of relatives who live nearby who I'm sure would help out so I can stay at home where I'm happy. I don't want to be a burden so if I can get some kind of social care as well that would be the ideal for me"

## What things are happening in your area, what are you doing to live well?

"I like to come here when I can and speak to friends. I don't have much spare money so I'm very limited in what I can do. I like to walk on the front as well when the weather is good"

"I know there are different things happening in Maryport, like the community centre for example, but would be even better if there were more, maybe cooking classes, games, quizzes, things like that, but I know that costs money"

"I like to get on the bus to Workington as there is a little more happening there"

"Socialising with friends and family is what I love doing, it keeps me young and makes me feel included"



# Focus Group in Egremont

## Calderwood House Focus Group 21/11/24

HWC held a focus group at Calderwood House which is a temporary residential place for people who are homeless, although some had been there for over a year.

There were 8 residents who spoke to us about what was important to them.

The age range was from early 20's to early 70's and they were all male; some residents had been there over 18 months and had begun to lose hope that they would find a place of their own.

**In relation to what was most important to them to Age Well independently, these topics were highlighted.**

### **A reliable bus service**

"Being able to get to appointments and support groups is really important for my mental Health"

"Unfortunately, if Sellafield are short of Buses they take our regular service ones leaving us without"

### **Respect and inclusion in communities**

"Being homeless means people can look down on us, but they don't know us"

### **Suitable Housing**

"All we want is somewhere to call home, somewhere my family can come and visit but there isn't anything for us which worries me as I'm getting older"



# What prevents people from ageing well in your community?

## Opportunities to Socialise

They felt that there were no spaces or opportunities for people to socialise other than the pub which for people with addictions isn't healthy.

**“I don't know of anywhere that the elderly can go to meet, it's important for their mental health that they can have regular meet up with friends”**

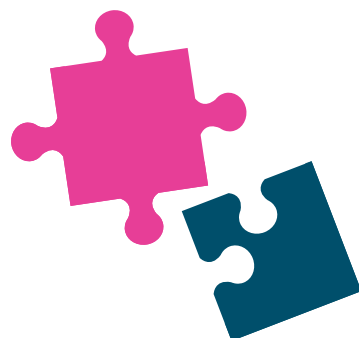


## Suitable Housing

“The housing market in Egremont and all West Cumbria is crazy, there is no way we can afford somewhere of our own, how can we age well if we don't have a home”

## Places to keep fit

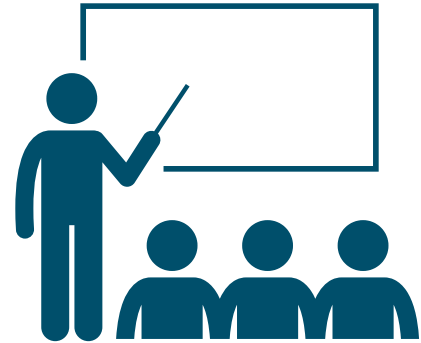
The group were not aware of fitness classes in the area for older adults and they felt that being able to stay fit and healthy was important to age well.



## When in life should you start to think about your care needs for later life?

The group felt that the sooner the better, even include planning for later life as part of the school curriculum.

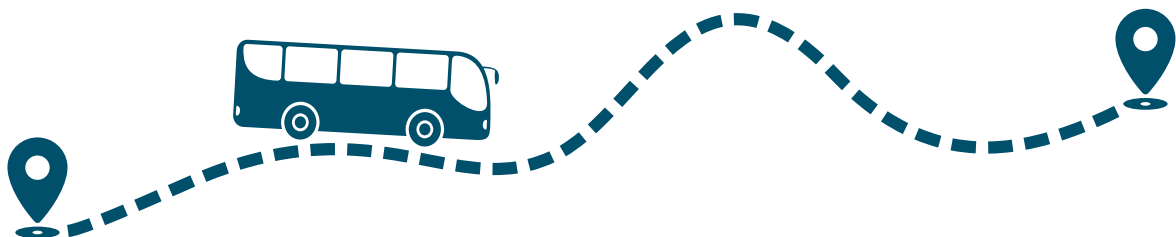
“Teach kids as part of lessons how to plan, financially and in every other way. Get them into good habits which will stay with them for the rest of their lives, don’t leave it until it’s too late”



## How far are you willing to travel for your care choices?

All the residents felt that they wanted to stay as local as possible, one saying..

“I don’t want to travel for care, how would my family and friends get to see me. The further away from them that I am, the less I would see them”



## Which services are you aware of being available in your local area?

The group weren't aware of exactly what was available in Egremont or the surrounding area however, they thought there would be care homes, private and public funded, home care and social housing.

They weren't sure which they would need but most said they would want to stay in their own home as long as they can.

## What would your preferred choice of care?

All the residents wanted to stay within their own home and receive care there as long as possible.

"We've gone for so long without our own home, we wouldn't want to give it up so would want to be cared for there.. if that was possible"

## What things are happening in your area, what do you do?

A few of the group said they volunteered for various organisations, and it meant a lot to them to help, especially with younger people.

"It gives me a purpose and a goal to help people, maybe I can tell them about mistakes I've made so they can make better choices. I would like to be able to volunteer and help my community, young and old for the rest of my life"

"I don't think there is enough available for older people, they need to have places to meet up and chat, so they don't get isolated, we need to treat them better"

# Focus Group in Whitehaven

Whitehaven Library Social Group 22/01/2024

We held a focus group with the Whitehaven Library Social group which is open to anyone to pop along for a coffee and catch up.

We chatted to a group of 5 people who were keen to share their views on living in the area/surrounding area.

## What things are important to you to age well in your community

### Being able to stay in my own home

“Being able to stay healthy is important for keeping our independence, having a good Medical practice nearby is all part of this and we have this in Whitehaven”

“I like living in my own home amongst my own things, it makes me feel safe, I don't want to have to move into a home

### Opportunities to Socialise

“I don't want to be stuck in the house, I like having a purpose to make me go out, things like coffee clubs, bingo, Knit and natter are things I like to do. We need some sort of newsletter to inform us what is going on, its difficult to find out if you aren't online”



## Transport and getting around

“If you live in and around the town it’s fine, you can get to things, if you live beyond walking distance or can’t walk far I don’t know how you can get to things”

“The bus service is really good in Whitehaven, rely on it a lot and also use it to get out of town, going to Keswick etc”



## What prevents people from ageing well in your community?



### Digital communication and information

“Luckily I can use the internet and email well enough to get by, it’s a struggle for some of my friends to use it and I know they feel a bit left out at times”

### Lack of family or friends

“I moved to Whitehaven about 10 years ago, I don’t have any immediate family and don’t have any friends to speak of.

I feel quite isolated and would like to join some groups with similar interests to me but there aren’t any. I would like a more diverse range of things to do in Whitehaven for the elderly, we don’t all want to have bingo or knit!”

## Opportunities for employment or to Volunteer

“I know there are a lot of organisations out there that are looking for volunteers, but I feel it can be too difficult to get taken on and maybe its because I’m too old to. I still feel I have a lot to give”

“No one will want to employ me despite all the experience I have, as soon as they see how old I am they wont be interested. I understand that the younger people need jobs but we aren’t ready to be put on the scrap heap yet!”



## When in life should you start to think about your care needs for later life?

The group felt that you start thinking about the location where you live later in life, maybe 50–60 years old. Services are more centralised now so living in a more rural area may not be practical plus you probably want to downsize your home to make it easier to maintain.

“I have a garden which I’m struggling to look after now, I don’t know where to go to get someone to look after it for me and I worry about trusting whoever would come to do it”

“It comes down to health, if you’re healthy you won’t need to make any major adjustments to what you are doing or do very much planning”

## How far are you willing to travel for your care choices?

The whole group said they wanted to stay in Whitehaven, they are familiar with it and being uprooted would really upset them.

“Our immediate family are spread around the world so we don’t have any family ties to Whitehaven, however, we are comfortable here, we know the town well and have lots of friends, we would be lost if we had to move”



## Which Services are available in your town?

The group couldn’t name any care services which were available in the town but presumed there would be home care, supported living, social housing and care/nursing homes.

“With Whitehaven being a large town for Cumbria I imagine there are lots of facilities that provide care for the elderly. I haven’t needed to explore that yet so I can’t name any of them”



## What would be your preferred care option if it was needed?

All the group said they wanted to stay in their own homes as long as they could. They presumed that there would be care available to enable them to do this but hadn't investigated it yet.

They were asked if they knew how to go about getting a remodel of their home done, if they ever had physical limitations, they said they would go learn to find out how to do this.

"It also depends on whether I'm on my own or not. I live with my husband and if one of us should pass away I'm sure my views of staying in my own home will change. I will miss the companionship and company"

## What are you doing to Age well?

"I like to keep my mind active, so I read a lot and like to have intellectual conversations. I'm still searching for somewhere I can go for stimulating conversations as I find Whitehaven boring in this way. "

"I visit the library a lot, it's a really good facility but wish there was more on offer than coffee and a chat"

"We like to get out everyday just to have a purpose and keep active, even just going for a coffee. We are both careful about what we eat and being in our 80's I think we are doing very well. Up until a month ago we went to dance classes in Whitehaven every week but it's just become a bit much for us now"

**The value of community groups is shown above.**

**These groups promote inclusion and socialisation. Keeping your mind and body active as an older adult in rural areas can be difficult.**



# Focus Group in Longtown

Longtown Social Focus Group 23/01/2024

Healthwatch Cumberland held a focus group at Longtown Community Centre with the Pensioners Lunch Club.

We chatted to a group of 8 people who were keen to share their views on living in the area/surrounding area about what Ageing Well looked like for them.

## What things are important to you to age well in Longtown?

### Age relative fitness classes

The group said that there used to be fitness classes at the community centre which they really enjoyed as they were appropriate for their age and ability. These classes don't exist anymore which they felt was a shame as it was a chance to socialise with friends while staying healthy. We are hearing however, that some sort of class may start up again in the near future!

**"I miss the fitness class, sometimes we could do it in a chair so it meant everyone could take part however physically able they were"**

Greenwich Leisure Ltd operate leisure centres and libraries with local council support. Activities available include swimming and various sports. As shown from engagement with Longtown residents, fitness activities are important to their lifestyle as older adults. Volunteer drivers or organised car-pools could allow Longtown residents to access such facilities. Furthermore, community transport for accessing fitness facilities would promote healthier living.

**Related recommendation:**

**Please see pages 73-74**

**"I don't want to go to a gym, I don't feel comfortable going there and I don't think they are suitable for people of our age"**

## Access to Community and health services

**“The Doctors surgery in Longtown is excellent, I know if I need something that I can generally get an appointment”**

**“Although we have most things in Longtown which are easily accessible they don't offer a chiropodist anymore which I used a lot”**

**“The community centre is fantastic; the staff are so helpful”**

## Transport and getting around

The group said that there are good bus services that go through the town both South towards Carlisle and North into Scotland to Gretna Gateway etc, however, if you live just outside the town it isn't so good.

**“I use the buses a lot, they are very regular to Carlisle for my shopping, and I can go to Gretna gateway really easily for a coffee”**



# What prevents people from ageing well in your community?

## Digital communication and information

The group felt that there were lots of things going on in and around Longtown but unless you were online, people are relying on word of mouth to find out.

**"The community centre don't advertise things very well so how am I supposed to know what is happening"**

**"Maybe a community type newsletter would be a good idea but I don't know who would do that or how it would be funded"**

## Maintaining Skills, ability and Independence

"I would like to think I can still be of use in society in some way, maybe working a few hours a week, but I know that no one will employ me because of my age, I could maybe volunteer I suppose"

"I want to be able to stay in my own home and have some independence, but I don't know if I can afford to get help in to sort my garden and things like that which I am struggling to manage now"

## Keeping Healthy

The group said that they used to have a swimming pool in the town which was well used but was closed down a while ago. They couldn't remember ever receiving an explanation why but thought it was probably down to costs. Although they were aware of a public pool in Carlisle no of them were prepared to travel there to swim.

## When in life should you start to think about your care needs for later life?

The group felt that they would start thinking about their care needs from age 60-69.



**"Longtown has some good services, a small local shop etc so I will be happy to stay here as long as I can"**

**"I've never given it a huge amount of thought. I suppose I will wait and see how my health is and the health of my husband and take it from there. Its hard to predict what you are going to need"**

## How far are you willing to travel for your care choices?

Most of the group had lived in and around Longtown most of their lives and didn't want to live anywhere else. They had friends and family in the immediate area, doctors, shops and community centres and a good bus service.

**"We aren't far from Carlisle which has everything in terms of care with the hospital and that is far enough to travel for me"**

## What services are you aware of being available in your Longtown?

The group knew of a care home in the town but didn't know what qualified you to get there or what the process was. They didn't know what type of Care/Nursing homes there was and what they provided.



## What would be your preferred care option if it was needed?

All the group said they wanted to stay in their own homes as long as they could. Many had family nearby who could cater for some needs they may have such as maintaining their home, shopping, transport to appointments etc.

**"I don't want to be a burden on my family so I'm a little worried about what will happen when I need more care than they are able to provide. I think it would be a good idea to start looking into what is out there"**

## What are you doing to 'Age Well' in Longtown?

As the group have mentioned, there are quite a few things going on in Longtown which probably need to be advertised better. The lack of a swimming pool was an issue for them and a form of exercise they enjoyed.

**"I like meeting up with friends and relatives for a coffee, it keeps me in the loop of what is happening, bit of a gossip!"**

**"I love playing bingo, unfortunately they don't do it anymore in Longtown so I don't do it as much as I used to"**

# Focus Group in Carlisle

University of Cumbria, Carers Group

07/02/2025

This group primarily cares for those with mental health conditions and members are mainly from Carlisle with some from Dalston and Wigton.

## We asked about their thoughts on barriers to “Ageing Well” in Carlisle.

**A large topic of conversation involved accessing the GP and medical services.**

From the group responses, it was clear there is difficulty gaining appointments to access the GP across a range of local practices. It was evident it was very rare to have good experiences.

Members spoke about the ease of booking a GP appointment in the past with much shorter waiting times and better appointment outcomes. They explained how back then it wasn't “almost impossible” to get an appointment unlike present day.

The Urgent Treatment Centre have been seeing very high visit numbers due to the lack of General Practitioner availability.

It's been mentioned the addition of technology in GP settings is making appointment booking difficult. Many practices are now only allowing bookings via e-consult and can only request one issue at a time therefore forcing patients to book multiple appointments. Members of the group explained how many GP's don't seem to view at the issue given.



One member shared an experience explaining from when her husband had a bad accident. They shared that A&E provided a very speedy service and were able to set up a GP appointment for next day.

The group spoke about a need for a wider range of access to services available with better training for medical professionals in this area. Furthermore there is a lack of drop in style hubs for minor health issues. However, there are pharmacies for minor injuries and for medications.

In relation to the medical service systems, members spoke about how a carer badge on file would help as this would show you are a carer and create a better identification of help needed.

Furthermore, it was discussed how limiting digital booking systems and the reliance of the internet to find information can be to the community.

Not everyone has access to the internet (computer), social media or a smartphone and this makes it difficult to access care.



The closure of the intensive care mental health clinics in Cumbria caused huge issues for getting support. Carleton clinic was very good when it was not overwhelmed with patients. It was explained that in the past they were able to take time to talk to each patient individually and understand needs effectively.

# Carer Difficulties

Stress was communicated within the focus group as a big issue in the carer community. The workload for a carer can be intense and emotionally demanding. In relation to this stress, members of the group spoke about their worries over practicalities of being able to fulfil their role as a carer. When they themselves become injured, ill or develop mental health conditions they are unable to provide the same care for their loved one.

Furthermore, there are a lack of services to offer support such as when the carer themselves are unable to fulfil their role or even with assistance at meal times. This is likely resulting from Cumberland's rural setting and a lack of information sharing within the carer community especially those new in the role of a carer. Improvements in service availability to assist carers would help prevent or prolong loved ones having to move into a care home.

Members of the group spoke about the importance of common sense confidentiality. Information needs to be shared at times especially to family carers who are involved in their care and need to know all aspects of what is currently going on.

There was also mention of collective co-production and a less political involvement would help the carer community.



# What does the future look like?

## From a Carer Perspective

Members explained it's hard to know as they don't know what challenges there will be or what support they'll require.

Most of the group stated they would like to remain in their own home with some supported living if required.

This would also help combat loneliness even if its just for a couple of hours.

A deciding factor for many is how expensive to be in a care home as it is unaffordable to many.

Some members of the group stated they have no future plans in place as this causes more fear and worries of what will happen as they age.

“

**“My dream is for Rufus House to be a one stop shop with an open door policy where you can access all kinds of advice, guidance and support”**

”



# 'Positives' of being a part of the Carers Group

The group meets once a month and is “very good” for support within the carers community. The social opportunity that this brings helps people to talk about their similar life experiences and struggles. The group also brings about a sense of belonging helping carers feel less alone and isolated.

The group includes activities between meetings to keep the group active as well as social. They have day trips and weekends away occasionally.



**The group offers workshops that have been positively received and many found helpful:**

- 1) Student nurse training** – for student nurses to understand role of carers more and be able to feel comfortable supporting them whilst loved one is in hospital
- 2) Qualities and values** required to be a medical professional/carer
- 3) Paramedic training** like with nurses
- 4) Lived experience learning** – carers share experience with new carers
- 5) Carlton clinic workshops** – were part of staff training, Interviews, inductions and patient experience groups

# 'Positives' of being a part of the Carers Group

The group plans to do more in future such as a collaboration with University of Cumbria. They also plan to grow more through networking. The group is working on advertising the group more for newer carers however, they are cautious of many joining to maintain the dynamic of the group.

The group collaborates with the NHS, mental health services and other care providers. They help by giving advice, information and support as "experts through experience". Carlisle Council will be providing a carer board which will be made up of carers who have lived experiences in various areas such as mental health, physical health to make their voices better heard and to improve services.

## Carer quotes regarding 'Ageing Well':



*"I need to be able to live in my house until I die. I need an occupational therapist to help me make my house suitable"*

*"Everything is online and it is a serious barrier"*

*"Conversation and social contact are really important to prevent feeling isolated and alone."*

*"Care homes cost too much. I know someone that moved to Thailand to live in a care complex over there as it is so much cheaper. She was able to trial it for 3 months then she moved over there because she loved it so much".*

*"Being a carer feels isolating particularly as you grow older, and the responsibility is harder. Groups like this are so important for us."*



# Focus Group in Carlisle

@ Eden Manor Care Home 18/02/2025

## Context

Within this particular care home, the residents who took part in the focus group had varied mental capacity and awareness. A few of the residents showed signs of early dementia with some being unaware that they lived in the home. Most residents were able to give clear concise answers however, some needed assistance from staff members.

We asked a small selection of questions based on our 'Ageing Well' survey which we adapted. Two members of Healthwatch Cumberland staff were present and hosted separate focus groups with 3 groups to allow each resident a chance to be heard. We spoke to 10 residents of the home.



**HWC Research and Data Officer Caitlin, with residents of the home.**

# In your opinion, when in life should you start to think about your care needs for later life?

“

“I never thought about it until I needed to. I should’ve thought about it sooner to be honest. I had caring responsibilities and they were always the priority so I never thought about myself. I never thought about a life without them.”

“I didn’t want to leave my home.”

“Me and my husband would talk all the time about what we wanted.”

“At retirement.”

“In the past, families would look after each other.”

“Depends on situation.””



“

## Was moving here, your preferred care option? ... Why?

“It wasn’t a choice, I would prefer to be at home.”

“I would not like to be in a care home, where everyone is there. I would want to be a home. But I know that’s not always possible.”

“My family chose for me.”

“It was my own choice.”

“I had to come here as my home became unsuitable.”

“An independent flat would be ideal, but there are none suitable in Carlisle.”

”

# What factors did you consider when deciding to move into a Care Home?

“

“I didn't, it just happened when the time came.”

“It wasn't my choice.”

“It's a big step to leave your home. It can be the making of people, sometimes it's good. Sometimes it's terrible.”

“Depends on your own family relationships.”

“I had the care provision I needed for my injury.”

“First home I seen, so I stayed.”

“Distance to family.”

“Ambiance.”

“Cost, I'm needing to sell my home.”

“I viewed seven homes before this one.”

“Space for me, I needed urgent placement.”

”



# What do you like about being in a Care Home?

“

“Someone to look after me.”

“Knowing you’re going to speak to someone everyday.”

“Comfortable way of living.”

“General care is good.”

“I like the company.”

“It’s nice to be looked after, no ironing, cleaning or cooking etc.”

”



“

“I love the James Rennie visits, card service, ballroom dancing etc.”

“Making it my own space.”

“I don’t have to bother about anything.”

“It’s like being on holiday but also not.”

“I like that it’s a mixed home.”

”



# What does Ageing Well mean to you, e.g. do you feel all of your needs are met being here?

"I need company."

"People are mixing better."

"Food is nice."

"My own room is vital."

"Having independence is key."

"Transport is important."

"There could be more activities and more entertainment."

"My family are nearby."

"Having my own phone in my room."

"I went to visit two care homes before this. I chose this style as it's what I'm used to. A high standard of living."

"I wish I could drive. I wish I could see my children more."



# Focus Group in Carlisle

26/02/2025

**Healthwatch Cumberland asked a group of six young people (Aged 16-18) from Carlisle and Brampton about their thoughts on 'Ageing Well'.**

**We asked "What three things are most important to help you age well independently in your community?"**

- Being able to stay in your home
- Opportunities to socialise
- Digital information and Communication

## **Why?**

"Digital access will help to combat isolation. As a generation who are tech savvy it will be more appropriate to have online info and access to services. It will also help us keep in touch with family and friends if we are not close by to them. "

"If I have Wi-Fi and a device to use I will be happy. I know I can access what I need online - shopping, medical advice etc"

## **Then, we asked about barriers to "Ageing Well":**

**"Access to the things I need in the community will make ME feel as though I am still part of the community."**

**"Suitable housing would be essential to keep me safe but keep some independence and feel at 'home'"**

**"Lack of digital communication would stress me out. I would feel disconnected from the world. "**

# When in life should you start to think about your care needs for later life?

As we held this focus group with young people, we were especially keen to hear their views for this question.



I hadn't thought about it until now. But now we have, it would make sense to plan for the future before it is needed.

We don't know where we will be when we are old. we could be in another town or even another country. It would be interesting to see what is available in other countries.

I don't think I would think about it until I needed it.



## How far would you be willing to travel for your care choices?

**"As close as possible although I know that sometimes you need to travel to another area for some medical treatment as it isn't available here."**

**"I would be willing to travel if I had to but it would be nice if everyone had the same options of care in every area."**

**"I would want to travel as little as possible."**

# What services are you aware of in your area?

- Home Care (Care within your home)
- Care Home/Nursing Home



"I know there are care homes but didn't understand the difference between publicly funded and private."

"I know that care home fees are very expensive - My Grandad was in a home and my mum had to sell his house to pay for it."

"My friends mum is a home carer and she travels a lot!"



# What would be your preferred care option if it was needed?

- Home Care



"I think I would like to stay at home as long as possible but that might change as I get older. I'm too young to decide now."

"I wouldn't want to be a burden on my family so would be happy to have home carers help me out."


"I don't think I would like to go in a Care home."



# Healthwatch Cumberland are keen to hear about the good things happening in your area to support people to age well what do you do?

This might include groups or events you attend, hobbies, volunteering roles or anything else that you do that supports both your community and yourself to age well.

Can you give any examples of something you are doing to live well as you get older?



**I play football at the moment and would like to keep doing that. There is walking football group in Carlisle that I could join if I slow down.**

**I like to meet with my friends. I would like to keep doing that.**

**My social life is important. I don't want to sit at home all day lonely. I would be bored.**

# Collection of Case Studies

Personal impact stories from residents in Cumberland, painting a picture of what 'Ageing Well' looks like in their community.



# Ageing Well in a Rural Community

Healthwatch Cumberland had the privilege to speak to someone who lives in **Aspatria**, a tight-knit rural community with challenges in terms of transport and services.

In Autumn of 2024, this individual was referred to the Cumberland Infirmary for a procedure in relation to concerns over a lump which they had found.

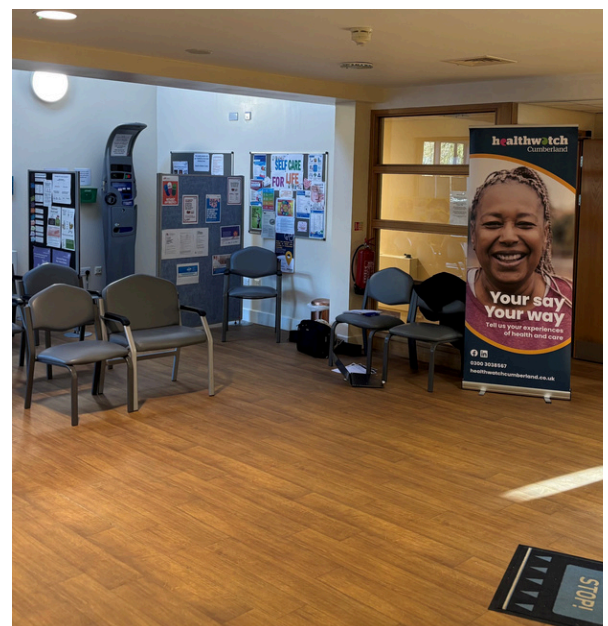
They had an initial appointment at the Cumberland Infirmary then was told to wait notification of a date to go in for a biopsy.

**“I was told to expect a quick response, hopefully it would be done and dusted by Christmas, so we didn't have the worry”**

A couple of weeks later, they received a phone call from the hospital asking why they hadn't turned up for their appointment that same morning. They explained to them that they had sent a letter out by first class the previous week.

Having now missed the appointment, they would have to wait until the new year, why has a letter sent out over a week ago by first class post not arrived in time?

**“I was obviously concerned being in my 60's, but I felt my doctor was very supportive and, on the ball, I was happy that it was being dealt with as quickly as possible”**



“The postal service in Aspatria is awful which is why I generally try to use email for urgent things. I didn't realize the appointment would be sent by post or else I would have insisted they notified me by email. Receiving post is one of the many challenges of living in Aspatria. We tend to get delivery only once a week as it comes from the main office in Wigton, everyone in the town will tell you how poor the service is.

Generally, we are okay as both my wife and I can use email and the internet so we can manage, however, if you don't have access to those things I don't know how it's possible to get by in Aspatria. I do worry how those without internet access manage, especially the elderly. It certainly makes you think about whether it's sustainable to continue living in rural areas as you grow older”

Unfortunately, themselves and their family had this hanging over them during the festive period. We asked what improvements they would like to see to services in the town to help them Age well.



**“I understand it's our choice to live in a rural area but surely there are some basics things which we all deserve and need to get by. I never expected a simple thing like receiving post could have such a knock-on effect, it can't be too much to ask to have deliveries more than once or twice a week. Although it seems like a very minor thing, the consequences for us and the worry we had over Christmas were quite impactful, hopefully we won't have to wait much longer for another appointment”**

# My Life as a Full Time Carer

**Living in Wigton, a single mum of two young children and a full-time carer for her 68-year-old mother. This is her story.**

Living in a small rural West Cumbrian town has its challenges in terms of logistics and transport, this becomes even more apparent when you're caring for an older adult with specific needs. Earlier this year (2024), this woman's life was turned upside down when she unexpectedly became a full-time carer for her mum.

**“Although life was busy, I was fulfilled, the children were happy and I was leading the life I had always hoped to. Although Mum was in full time care in the Manchester area, she seemed content and we visited her at every opportunity. Things were good! However, it soon became clear that Mum was getting distressed every time I would leave, it was heartbreaking seeing her like that. I knew something had to change but didn't know where to turn”**

She explored moving her mum to a home closer by, but it was living in a care home that was causing her distress.



**“I wasn’t sure how it would work and didn’t think too far ahead but I knew I had to take my mum out of full-time care and bring her to live with us”**

Within a short space of time, a care plan was put in place, she left her job, and her mum moved into the family home.

Her mum has several physical and emotional needs which means she can’t leave the home or venture too far around the house without assistance. She describes her mum as having a “Cinderella Complex”, an unconscious desire to be taken care of by someone else.

The family settled into a new dynamic, carers coming into the home twice a day to help with practical needs such as bathing, while her two young children (aged 11 and 12) and herself try to meet her mums nutritional and emotional needs. She said this new way of living has had an impact on the family, not only in terms of financial pressures but also on their emotional well-being.

**“My life is on hold.”**



**“I want to give my mum everything she needs but to do this I need to make sacrifices; this includes spending less quality time with my kids. I can’t go out of the house without feeling guilty and constantly check my watch to make sure I haven’t left mum alone for too long. I loved my career in pharmacy, and although I don’t regret giving it up for mum, I wish there was some way I could return to it, even in a small way, part-time maybe”**

Healthwatch Cumberland asked what she felt was lacking locally which would not only provide her mum with the necessary physical and emotional support to “Age well” but would also allow her and her family to thrive.

**“Physically, within reason, Mum’s needs are being met, it’s her emotional state that I worry about, it’s just an existence for her, I wouldn’t describe it as living. I would love to take her to day care, much like you do with children, somewhere she would be provided with stimulation, company and a reason to get up in the morning.**

**I know the care home had these facilities, but my mum couldn’t cope with that environment. If there was the facility to drop her off in the morning, even for just a couple of days a week, this would allow me to work and spend more time with the kids. That way she would be happy in the knowledge I was coming back to pick her up. I know this is something she would like. Unfortunately, nothing like that exists near where we live”**

She is currently exploring the idea of opening a day centre for older adults in Wigton, somewhere people like her mum can go for company and emotional support.



# **“We’ve always been best placed to be his full-time carers.”**

**This is the story of a retired couple who live in a small community near Aspatria and how their lives have been shaped caring for their disabled son.**

The couple’s son, now 43 years old suffers from a rare condition called “Dravet” syndrome. It is an incurable genetic disorder which he was born with and amongst other things, causes severe epilepsy and development issues.

As the years have gone on there have been many challenges which have had to be faced, made more complicated by the condition being so rare.



**“We’ve had to fight every step of the way to receive the care our son needed and deserved. Most doctors had no experience of this condition and the number that do can be counted on one hand nationally and only slightly more internationally.**

**Our son was only diagnosed approximately eight years ago; before diagnosis it was down to us to research and push for treatments which were being used in other countries for intractable epilepsy. Since diagnosis we had more help from the experts and the Dravet charity (UK) but there is still wide scale ignorance of the condition and additional symptoms associated with the condition.**

**We’ve learned to read our son’s behaviour, so we know how he’s feeling, what he needs which is why we’ve always been best placed to be his full-time carers.”**

When covid hit, in around 2019/2020, it was getting to a point where due to their age and physical ability, they were finding it increasingly difficult to care for their son.

**“When he had a seizure, we were struggling to manage him, the lifting, keeping him safe was getting beyond us”**

At this point one carer was coming to the house for six hours a day which was a big help.

**“We were in our seventies, the carers were amazing, it made such a huge difference to have some help, it also meant we could get out and have some time to do other things like shopping etc”**



Most retired couples at this stage are looking to slow down, enjoy life and spend their time relaxing and doing the things they've always wanted to do. Although the extra help did ease the burden a little, outside of the six hours there was still a lot of pressure and worry. It was clear that their son would eventually need to go into full time care.

**“We reluctantly decided to place our son in supported living, this was essentially the first time we had fully handed over the responsibility of his care to someone else. We found the whole process very difficult, being able to find information about what benefits he was entitled to, what help he could get etc. Again, we were in the position where we felt we were having to fight for everything which just isn't right”**

They felt that there should be a 'one stop shop' where they could get all the information they needed but this wasn't their experience of the process. As older adult carers it was having a big impact on their quality of life.

After some serious concerns about the quality of care their son was receiving, including safeguarding issues, he was moved to Carlisle where he lives now with full time carers. The Care Quality Commission was involved.

**“We are more confident now that our son is finally receiving the appropriate level of care. We visit him once a week and he seems to be happy and content. He visits Royal Victoria Hospital in Newcastle approximately seven times a year, some of these visits are for quick checks which are carried out by a nurse and take five to ten minutes which we feel is a waste of time and resources when it could and should be done more locally”**

The couple were asked to sum up what ageing well has looked like for them, what things they would change if they could.

**“Our lives would have been made a lot easier and less stressful if health and care services had a more joined up approach. It's been difficult enough emotionally and physically to care for our son all these years without the constant lack of information. Fortunately, we are more than able to use online tools to research and find out what's out there, we can't see how people less tech savvy than us would cope. I'm sure there will be many other elderly carers having similar struggles, hopefully by highlighting some of these things it will make things easier in the future”.**



# Recommendations

---

## 1) Help People Understand Their Care Options

- Create a clear, accessible campaign to raise awareness of all the care choices available in Cumberland—especially home care.
- Work with local people, carers, healthcare providers, and community groups to co-design the campaign.
- Use digital and community channels to reach people and track how many are engaging.
- The suggested timeline is to develop and launch the campaign within 6 months, with a 6-month pilot phase and a review after 7 months.

## 2. Make Care Availability Easier to See

- Map out where care services are available and where there are gaps, so people can easily find support near them.
- Use existing health and care data and feedback from local residents (e.g. Ageing Well project, Age Friendly Communities engagement and learning).
- Share findings in a public report and create an easy-to-use online map on the Cumberland Council website.
- To be launched within 6 months as a suggestion and it should be tracked how many people use the map on the council's website.

## 3. Bring Services Closer to Home

- Test new ways to bring care to people, like virtual GP appointments and better transport to services.
- Start pilot programs in rural areas where access to services and transport is limited, and check if people are using and benefiting from them.
- HWC suggest beginning within 12 months, then a review of progress at 6 months, and sharing recommendations for wider rollout.



**Timescales are suggestions based on our Ageing Well feedback.**

# Recommendations

## 4. Support Older Adults to Stay Active and Involved

- Help older adults find meaningful work and volunteering opportunities to reduce loneliness and improve wellbeing.
- Ask older people what roles they'd like to take on (survey by October 2025).
- HWC suggest a pilot programmes to be developed by April 2026, aiming to involve at least 100 older age participants in work and volunteering roles.
- Gather feedback to shape future opportunities.

## 5. Make It Easier to Get to Health and Fitness Activities

- Set up community transport in three rural towns—starting with Longtown—to help older adults get to exercise and wellbeing sessions working with local leisure providers e.g. GLL (this could be included in future commissioning of leisure services).
- Keep route and booking info up to date online and in local centres.
- Follow similar timing suggestions as recommendation 3, with regular reviews to check effectiveness.

“I understand that the younger people need jobs but we aren't ready to be put on the scrap heap yet!”

## 6. Understand Why Travel Can Be Difficult

- Find out what stops people in rural areas from getting to care e.g. cost, confidence, or transport gaps.
- Use surveys and focus groups, building on Ageing Well findings.
- Share results with transportation decision-makers to improve future planning and access.



# Recommendations

---

## 7. Share What's Going On Locally

- Create a monthly printed and online guide to local health, social, and leisure activities, developed with local communities. This could be like the weekly 'Good News Fleetwood' newsletter, providing up-to-date information on what is happening in their area with images.
- Send it to all households with residents aged 55+ and check its impact through regular feedback.
- Start developing this as soon as possible, in line with Cumberland's age-friendly commitments.

## 8. Healthwatch Cumberland presentation to Cumberland Age Friendly Board, Health and Wellbeing board, and Integrated Care Partnership to share project findings.

- Present findings from Ageing Well engagement, discussing barriers to 'Ageing Well' from a person-centered point of view with our case study and focus group collection.
- Explore how we can work together to co-develop Ageing Well strategies, drawing on Healthwatch Cumberland's community insight and public engagement experience to ensure the voices of local people shape priorities.

## 9. Recognise unpaid Carers as a Priority Group

- Cumberland Council to work alongside HWC to increase awareness of unpaid carers being a Priority Group
- Start developing this as soon as possible, in line with Cumberland's age-friendly commitments.

## 10. Make services more accessible for Carers

- Health and care services to embed policies and procedures to allow for flexibility and reasonable adjustments/accommodations when Carers require access to Health and Care services
- Healthwatch Cumberland to seek ongoing feedback from carer services users and work with organisations to enhance the carer experience.

# Recommendations

---

## 11. Create support tailored to Older Carers

- Cumberland Council to work with carers to ask them what they need to have in place for them to access support on health checks, emotional support, advice on money matters and respite from their caring duties.
- Consider a 'Carer Champion' role who would be a point of contact for carer queries.
- Start developing this as soon as possible, in line with Cumberland's age-friendly commitments.

## 12. Identify and support Carers earlier

- Services of Cumberland to receive training on carer awareness. Make every contact count and robust signposting.
- Develop a comprehensive system to record carer contacts, early help offers and signposting opportunities - to be designed with carers for carers.

## 13. Involve Carers in planning services

- Cumberland Council to work alongside HWC and NENC ICB to involve carers with lived/living experience in the designing and improvement of services.
- Start developing this as soon as possible, in line with Cumberland's age-friendly commitments.

## 14. Work together to support carers

- Cumberland Council to work with NHS, Healthwatch Cumberland and community groups to produce a local 'Carers Plan'
- Cumberland Council to take overall responsibility of ensuring actions are completed within the agreed timeframe.

Healthwatch Cumberland have developed below a table to track progress of the recommendations developed and allocate responsibility. These **suggested** timescales are drawn from our perception of urgency following our Ageing Well project engagements.

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Suggested Timescale</b>	<b>Review</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Response</b>
(1) Care Options	6 Months	7 Months	Cumberland Council	
(2) Make care availability easier to see	6 Months	12 Months	Cumberland Council	
(3) Bring services closer to home	12 Months	18 Months	Cumberland Council	
(4) Support older adults to stay active and involved	5 to 12 months	24 Months	Cumberland Council	
(5) Make health and fitness more accessible	6 Months	12 Months	Cumberland Council	
(6) Understand why travel can be difficult	12 Months	24 Months	Cumberland Council & HWC	
(7) Share what's going on locally	6 Months	Regularly (Every 3 Months)	Cumberland Council & HWC	
(8) HWC present findings to Cumberland Council and partners	6 Months	N/A	Cumberland Council	

Healthwatch Cumberland have developed below a table to track progress of the recommendations developed and allocate responsibility. These **suggested** timescales are drawn from our perception of urgency following our Ageing Well project engagements.

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Suggested Timescale</b>	<b>Review</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Response</b>
(9) Recognise unpaid Carers as a priority group	6 Months	12 Months	Cumberland Council	
(10) Make services more accessible for Carers	6 Months	12 Months	Cumberland Council	
(11) Create support tailored to older Carers	6 Months	12 Months	Cumberland Council	
(12) Identify and support Carers earlier	6 months	9 Months	Cumberland Council	
(13) Involve Carers in planning services	6 Months	12 Months	Cumberland Council	
(14) Work together to support Carers	6 Months	12 Months	Cumberland Council HWC	

# Appendices

**Presented here are survey findings in graphs and charts for easy viewing.**

**These findings are individual to the 15 towns we gathered views from.**

For specific town page numbers,  
please refer to the contents  
pages.

# Details of Project Location and activities

Date	Where	Event	Seldom heard group
19/09/2024	Workington	Pop up Workington Library <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>English Language Cafe</li> <li>Resettlement drop in</li> <li>Social Prescribers</li> </ul>	Refugee Language Ethnic Minorities
20/09/2024	Workington	Pop up Oval Centre (Foodbank)	
26/09/2024	Wigton	Pop up Wigton Bingo Night	Carers
09/10/2024	Wigton	Pop up Wigton Market Hall Café	
01/10/2024	Millom	Pop up Millom Coffee Morning, Make New & Mend	Disabilities
04/10/2024	Millom	Pop up Millom Library Social Drop In	Long-Term Health Conditions
09/10/2024	Wigton	Pop up Wigton Market Hall	
16/10/2024	Dalston	Pop up Dalston Country Kitchen	
18/10/2024	Dalston	Pop up Dalston Medical Practice	
24/10/2024	Brampton	Pop up Brampton Community Centre	

<b>Date</b>	<b>Where</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Seldom heard group</b>
24/10/2024	Brampton	Visit to William Howard School Health and Social Care class	Young people
06/11/2024	Cleator Moor	Pop up Cleator Moor Sports Centre	
06/11/2024	Cleator Moor	Pop up Skills 4 U	
08/11/2024	Cleator Moor	Pop up St. Johns Church The Living Room Community Group	
18/11/2024	Carlisle	Veterans Lunch Carlisle Castle	Veterans
14/11/2024	Cockermouth	Pop up/Focus Group, Carers Support	Carers
15/11/2024	Cockermouth	Pop Up T'Gether Exercise Class	Carers
15/11/2024	Cockermouth	Pop Up T'Gether Singing Group	Carers
21/11/2024	Egremont	Calderwood House Focus Group	Homeless
27/11/2024	Keswick	Keswick Library Pop Up	
28/11/2024	Keswick	Keswick Library Pop Up	
28/11/2024	Keswick	Skiddaw U3A	

<b>Date</b>	<b>Where</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Seldom heard group</b>
06/12/2024	Aspatria	Park Lodge Care Home Visit	Older Adult
06/12/2024	Aspatria	Aspatria Library Pop Up	
10/12/2024	Maryport	The Centre West Coffee and Crack	
17/12/2024	Whitehaven	English Cafe and Resettlement Group	Refugees Ethnic Minorities Language Barrier
17/12/2024	Whitehaven	Community Social Focus Group	
08/01/2025	Aspatria	Case Study Interview	
16/01/2025	Aspatria	Aspatria Medical Practice Pop Up	
16/01/2025	Maryport	Healthy Hopes Focus Group	
23/01/2025	Longtown	Community Centre Pop Up	
23/01/2025	Longtown	Pensioners Lunch	Older Adult
29/01/2025	Egremont	Meeting Place Warm Space Pop Up	
18/02/2025	Carlisle	Eden Manor Focus Group	Older adult
26/02/2025	Carlisle	Young Person Focus Group	Young People

# Ageing Well in Aspatria

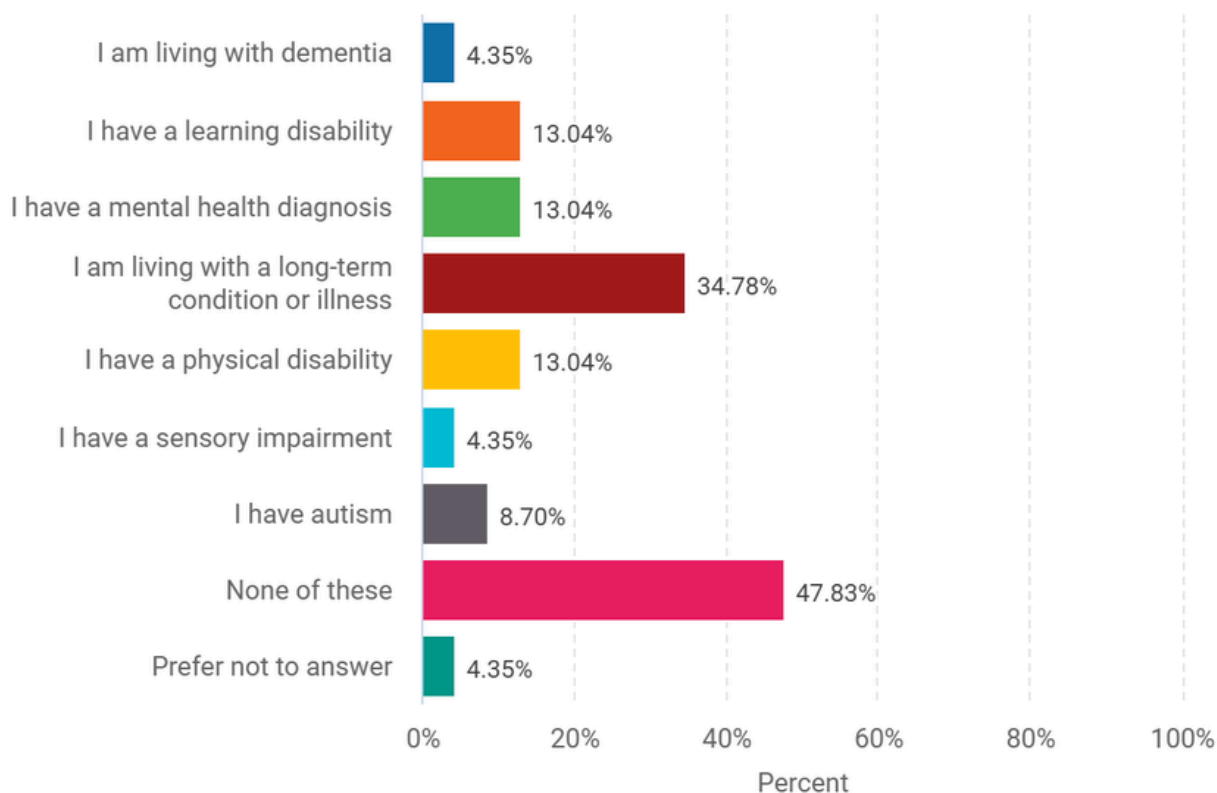
The name Aspatria is rarely pronounced in full with many Cumbrians using “speatrie” when speaking of the town. Facilities of the town includes a few shops, post office, railway station, care home and community centres.

With a population of 2810 people (ONS, 2021), despite adequate transport links, the town is very rural and can be very isolating to older people who are not very mobile. Healthwatch give small towns like Aspatria a voice to spread their concerns where otherwise these places could go unnoticed.



Through distribution of our ‘Ageing well’ survey and engagement events, we gathered valuable feedback from Aspatria’s residents. In relation to the demographical profile of who we spoke to, the most common age group was aged 55-64 years old. The ethnicity profile of our sample was White British with 100% of respondents giving this answer.

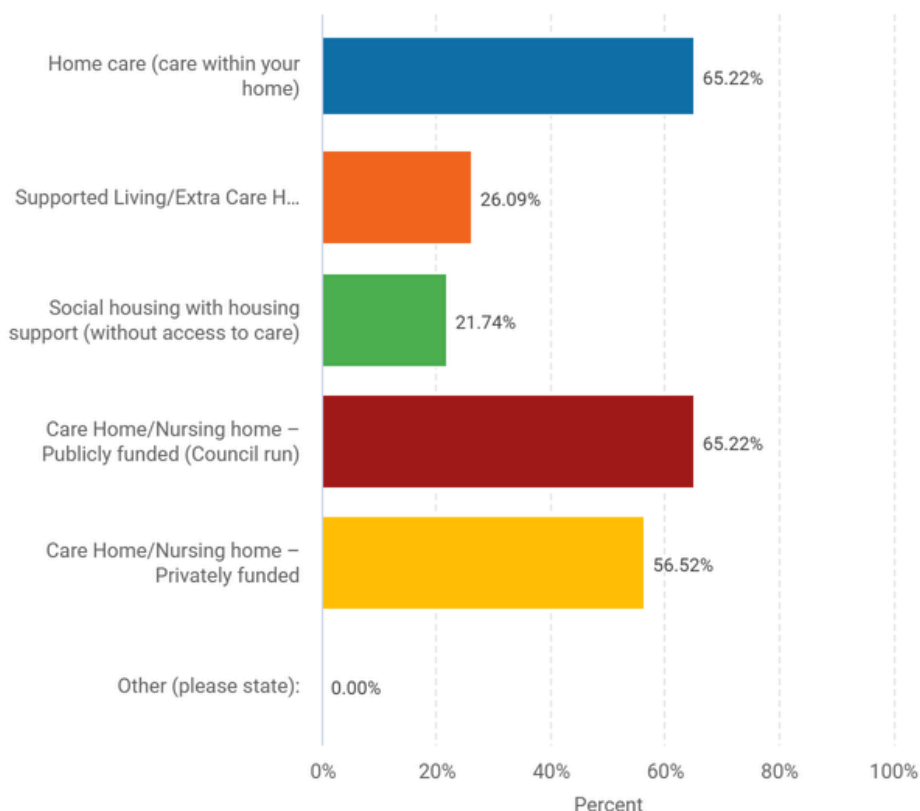
## Responses from those within disability seldom heard groups which are presented below:



## Healthwatch Cumberland asked about care service availability in each area visited.

Healthwatch Cumberland were interested in how aware the Aspatria public are of care services in their area should they need them. This data was gathered via our 'Ageing Well' survey.

**The table below features Aspatria responses only.**



This chart provides a small overview of service availability in **Aspatria**. There were results for a variety of services suggest the breadth of options for care is good. However, more information for what is available is required in terms of Home Care and Supported Living especially for social housing.

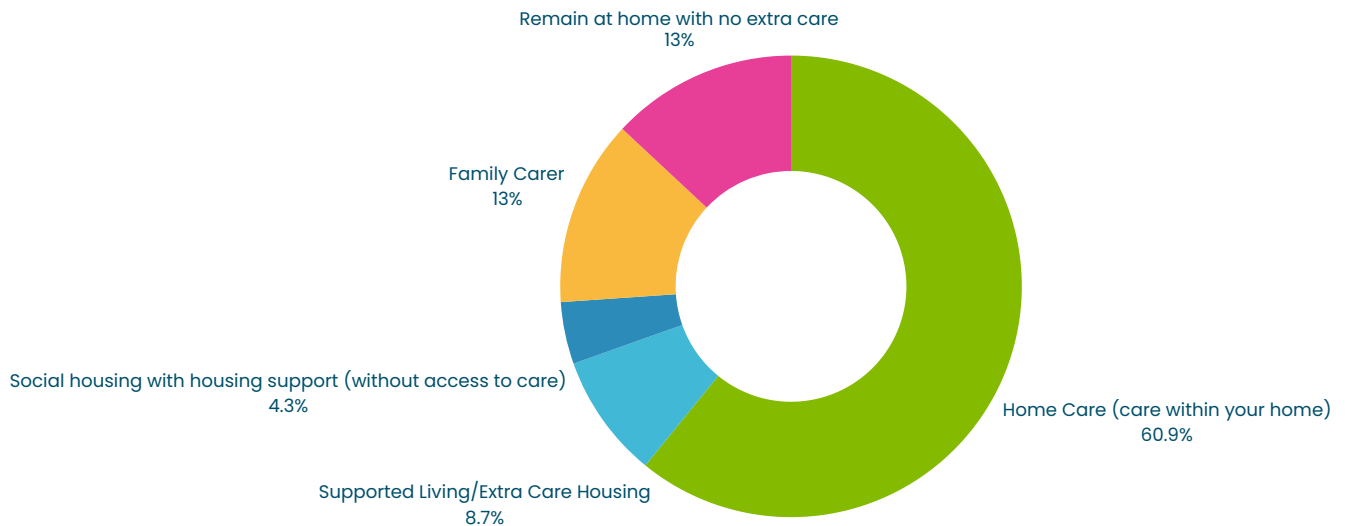
**The survey also asked a relating question about how far one would be willing to travel for their care services.**

20% of responses said that residents of Aspatria do not wish to leave their home for their care. 44% stated they would travel within their nearest town.

These figures were taken from a data set of 25 responses.

# Healthwatch Cumberland also asked about preference of care if needed.

As our sample aimed to include a wide range of seldom heard groups and a range of ages, factors influencing this choice was important for our report. This question also featured the opportunity to tell Healthwatch why they made this choice.



As displayed above, it is clear that there is a large preference for Home Care if and when it is needed.

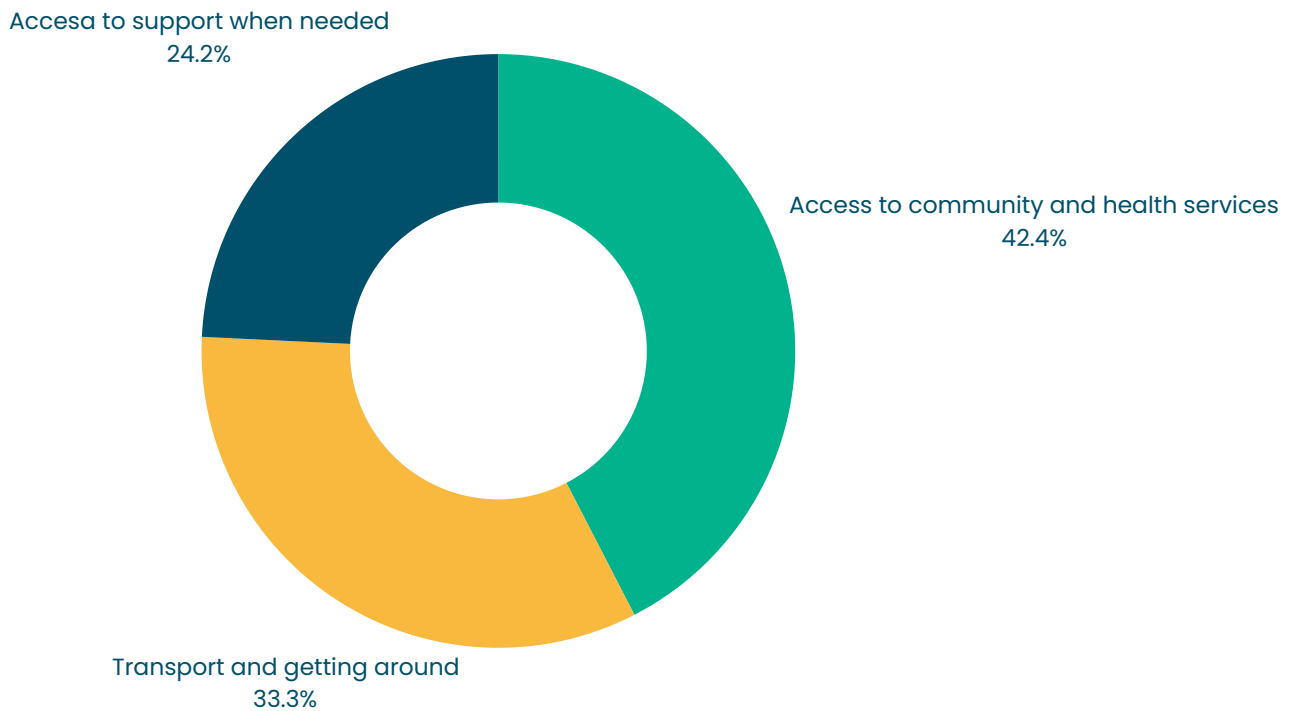
In the follow up question asking why this was their preferred choice, most respondents did not wish to answer, however one of the responses was:

“  
“Being cared for frightens me. There are so many people in the system who are meant to care but don't show it.”  
”



# Healthwatch Cumberland asked about barriers that can prevent people from living a happy, healthy and fulfilled life as they grow older.

The survey asked what three things with the lack of access to would prevent people in Aspatria from 'ageing well'.



Percentage of responses from our 'Ageing Well' survey for the three most commonly answered categories.

Respondents were given the opportunity to tell us why they made these choices. Someone said there are **"These 3 things are lacking where I live. I often wonder who I would turn to for help."** which is a notable issue as it relates to another comment stating **"I need to be able to travel - my village has certain facilities, but not enough."** This suggests that there are areas of improvement to aid people in ageing well, such as increasing accessibility to transport.



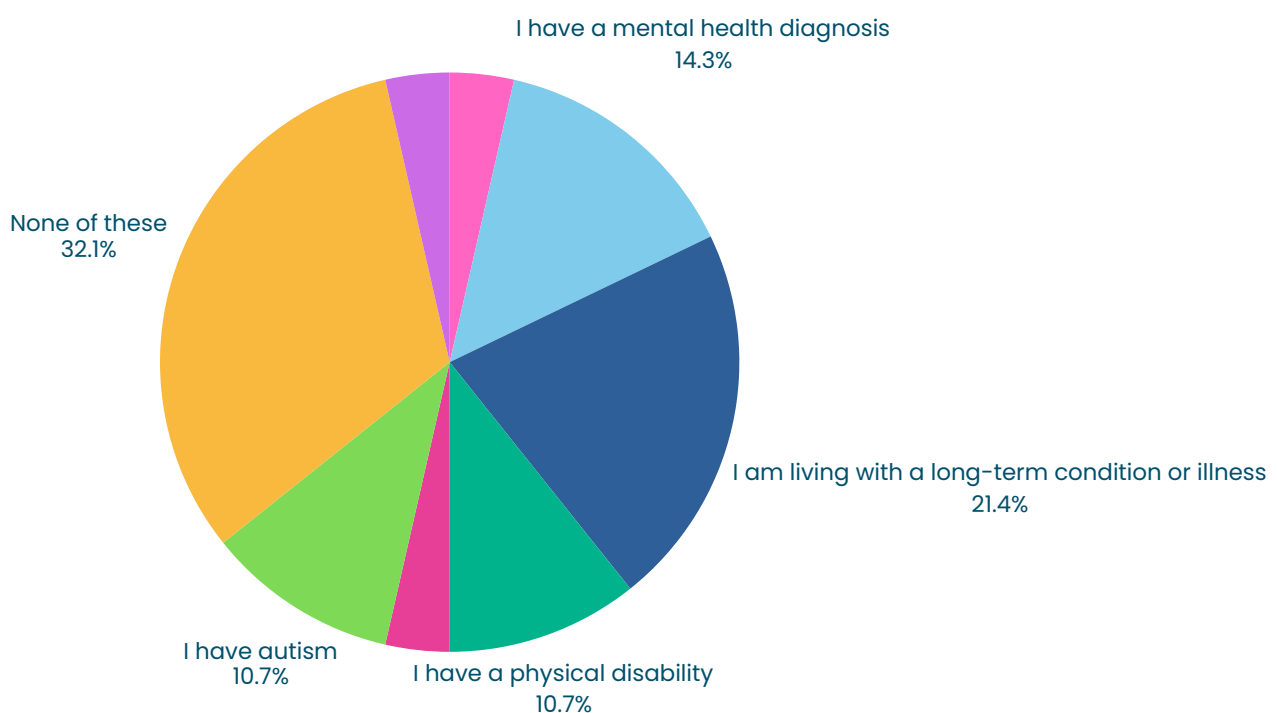
# Ageing Well in Brampton

The small market town of Brampton with a population of approximately 4300, is slightly smaller than Wigton and is known to be a good spot for quiet walks to escape from the much busier Carlisle. It is ideal for those wanting a rural residence with woodland areas and Hadrian's wall close by. Brampton is rich in culture and heritage with the original 7th century settlement of Brampton having developed by an old church which historically was a site of a roman fort. The 'lord' at the time had the town cleared for a deer park leading to the re-establishment of the town a slight distance away in 1250.

In relation to other towns mentioned, the rural aspect of Brampton comes with challenges for locals. Healthwatch Cumberland established their presence through engagement events to speak to the public about how they feel about what is available to them to age well.

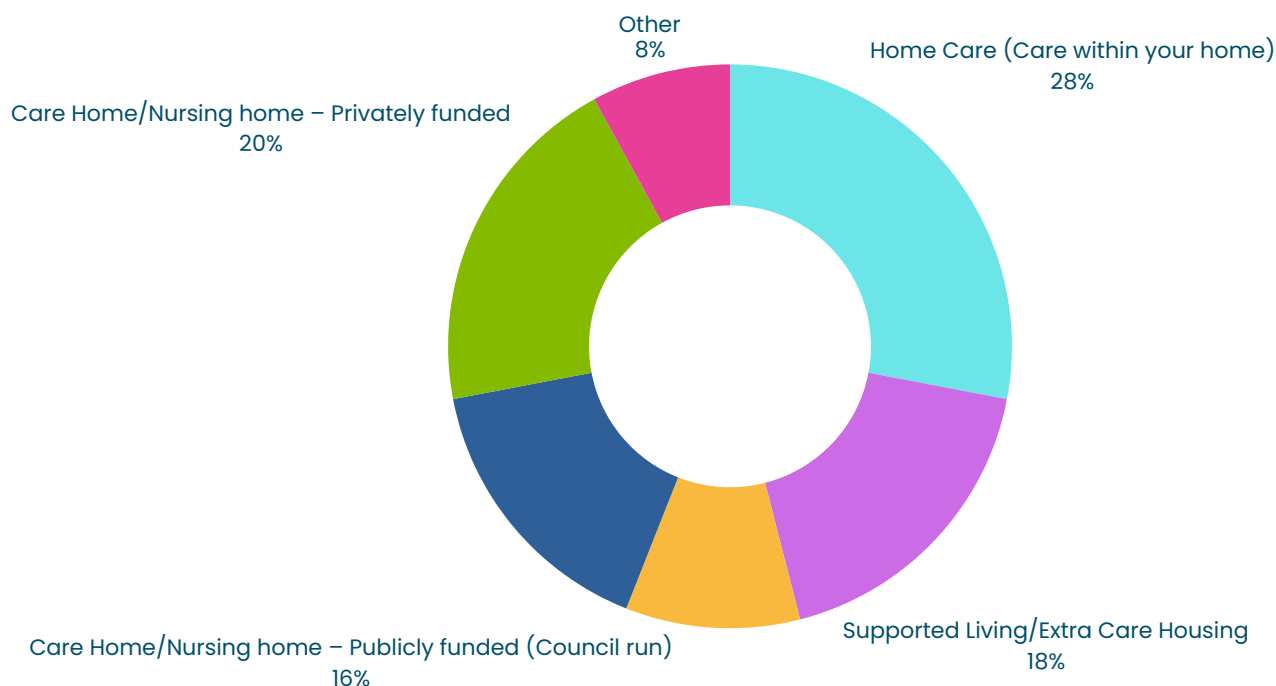


## Responses from those within disability seldom heard groups which are presented here:



## Healthwatch Cumberland asked about care service availability in each area visited.

Healthwatch Cumberland were interested in how aware the population of Brampton are of care services in their area should they need them. This data was gathered via our 'Ageing Well' survey.



The chart above provides a brief overview of what variety of care provisions that Brampton residents are aware of. However, those responding with “other” said the following: “None”, “Long waiting list for all above”, “No knowledge, nursing home in Brampton is now shut” and “Don’t know”. This suggests that this chart does not represent the awareness of care provisions accurately and further information sharing of what is available needs to occur. By communicating what is available, this allows those in need of care to make informed decisions.

### The survey also asked a relating question about how far one would be willing to travel for their care services.

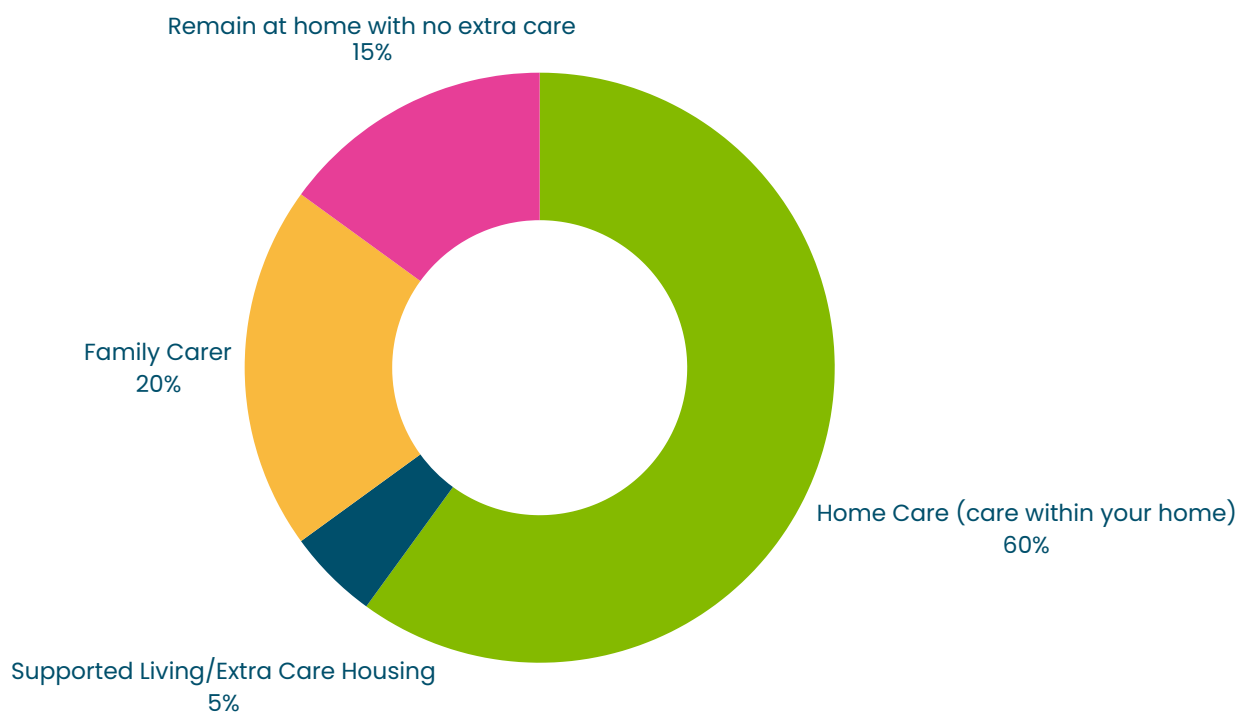
From a sample of 20, 45% of responses said they would not travel outside of their nearest city for care services.

**“It is easiest to have healthcare as near as possible. Carlisle is easy for me to get to by bus or train.”**



## Healthwatch Cumberland also asked about preference of care if needed.

As our sample aimed to include a wide range of seldom heard groups and a range of ages, factors influencing this choice was important for our report. This question also featured the opportunity to tell Healthwatch why they made this choice



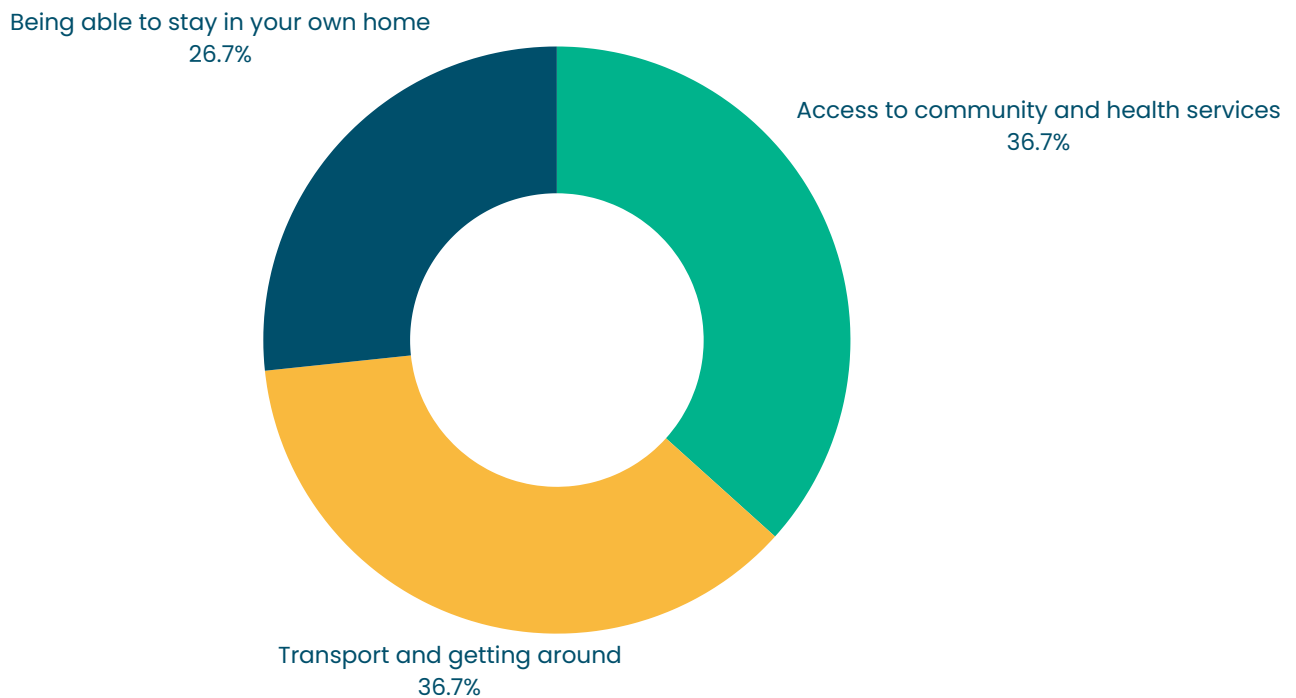
The chart above shows that residents in Brampton show a great reluctance to leave their home in relation to preference of care. There is a growing theme across the towns we have visited for the preference of home care. Brampton residents gave many responses for the follow up question to this. One that encompasses this body of results said "If I needed care support, I would always prefer to have my own independent living space"



Resident of Greenlane Care Home, Brampton, Cumbria

# Healthwatch Cumberland asked about barriers that can prevent people from living a happy, healthy and fulfilled life as they grow older.

The survey asked what three things with the lack of access to would prevent people in Brampton from 'ageing well'.



Percentage of responses from our 'Ageing Well' survey for the three most commonly answered categories.

Respondents were given the opportunity to tell us why they made these choices.

**“Many of my neighbours are lonely due to lack of transport which makes it difficult to get to social events/groups.”**

**“I wish to lead a independent life.”**

# Ageing Well in Carlisle

The 2000-year-old city of Carlisle is rich in culture & history. The roman name for the city was “Luguvalio” which was then changed to “Carleol” around the year 1106. It is likely to be derived from the Welsh word “caer” meaning “fort” in relation to Carlisle’s roman history. There was a roman settlement based here, likely to be in proximity of Hadrian’s Wall.

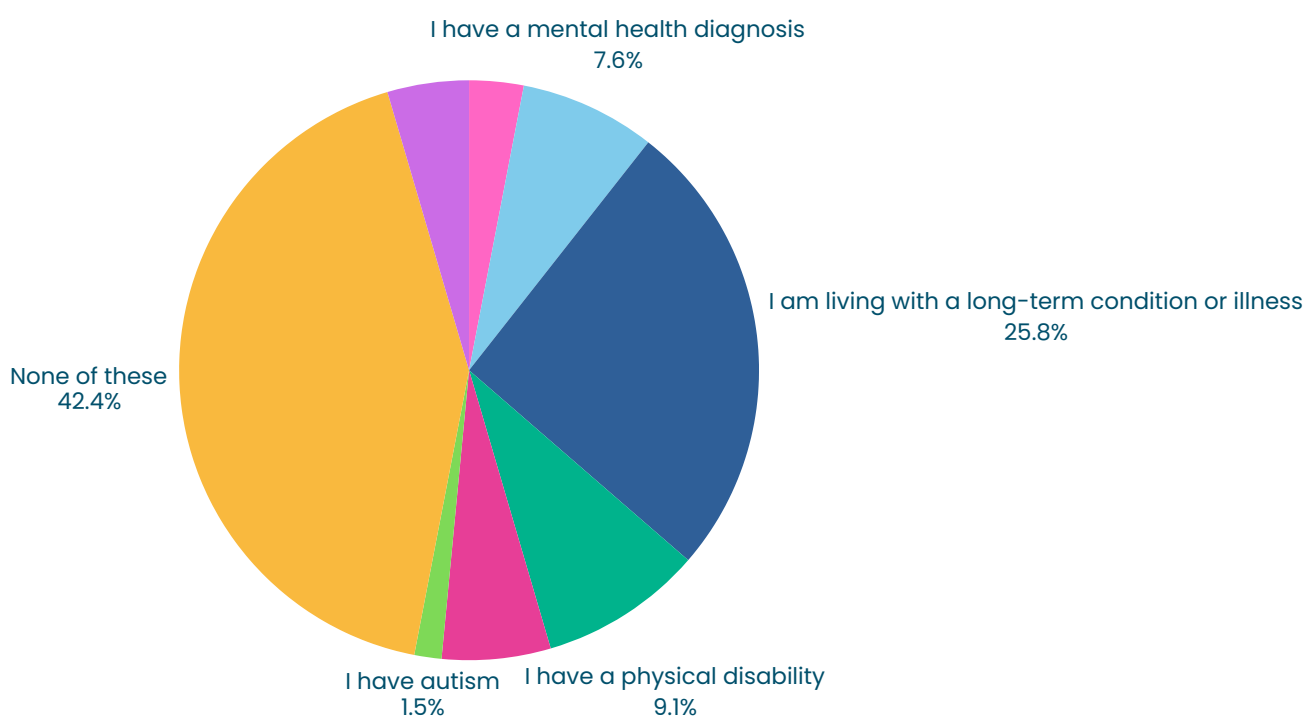
In modern times, Carlisle is now the main shopping and industrial base for North Cumberland and Southern Scotland.

With a population of 110,000 people, Carlisle is one of the largest areas in Cumberland which is reflected in a rich array of services available, the most notable being the Cumberland Infirmary.



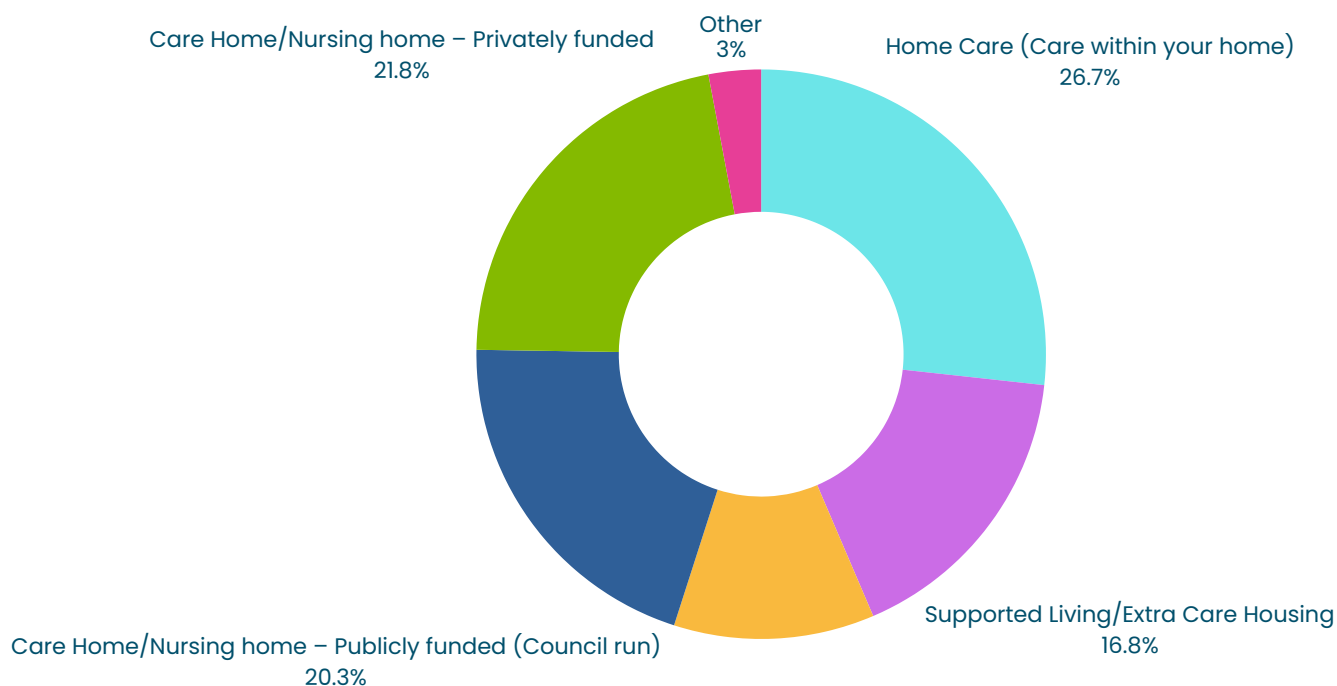
Healthwatch Cumberland engaged with the public in Carlisle to gather their views on health and social care regarding what is available to “age well”.

## Responses from those within disability seldom heard groups which are presented below:



## Healthwatch Cumberland asked about care service availability in each area visited.

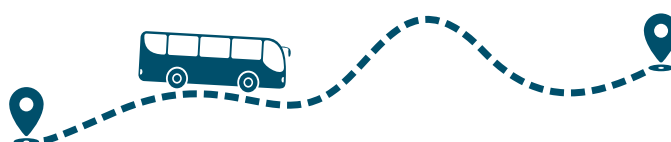
Healthwatch Cumberland were interested in how aware the population of Carlisle are of care services in their area should they need them. This data was gathered via our 'Ageing Well' survey.



The chart above displays the awareness of services by residents of Carlisle. The large percentages of responses for the variety of services suggests an excellent availability for care provisions in this area. This is likely the result of Carlisle being one of the largest areas we covered during our ageing well project. Despite these results, it remained important to Healthwatch Cumberland to gather qualitative feedback about services and care choices to inform continuous improvement. Therefore this chart paints a basis of our results however, our findings are not limited to this.

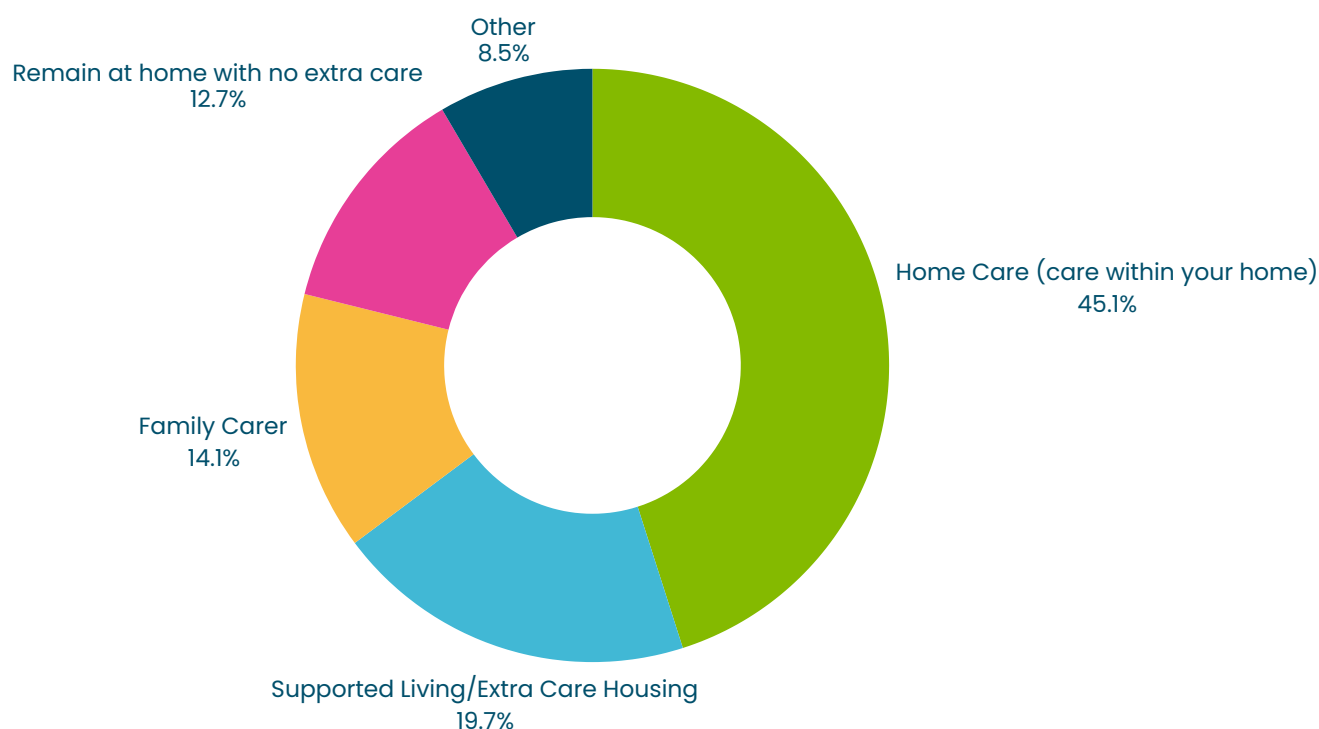
### The survey also asked a relating question about how far one would be willing to travel for their care services.

Residents of Carlisle responded with a 31.88% result to be willing to travel within their nearest town for their care choices.



## Healthwatch Cumberland also asked about preference of care if needed.

As our sample aimed to include a wide range of seldom heard groups and a range of ages, factors influencing this choice was important for our report. This question also featured the opportunity to tell Healthwatch why they made this choice



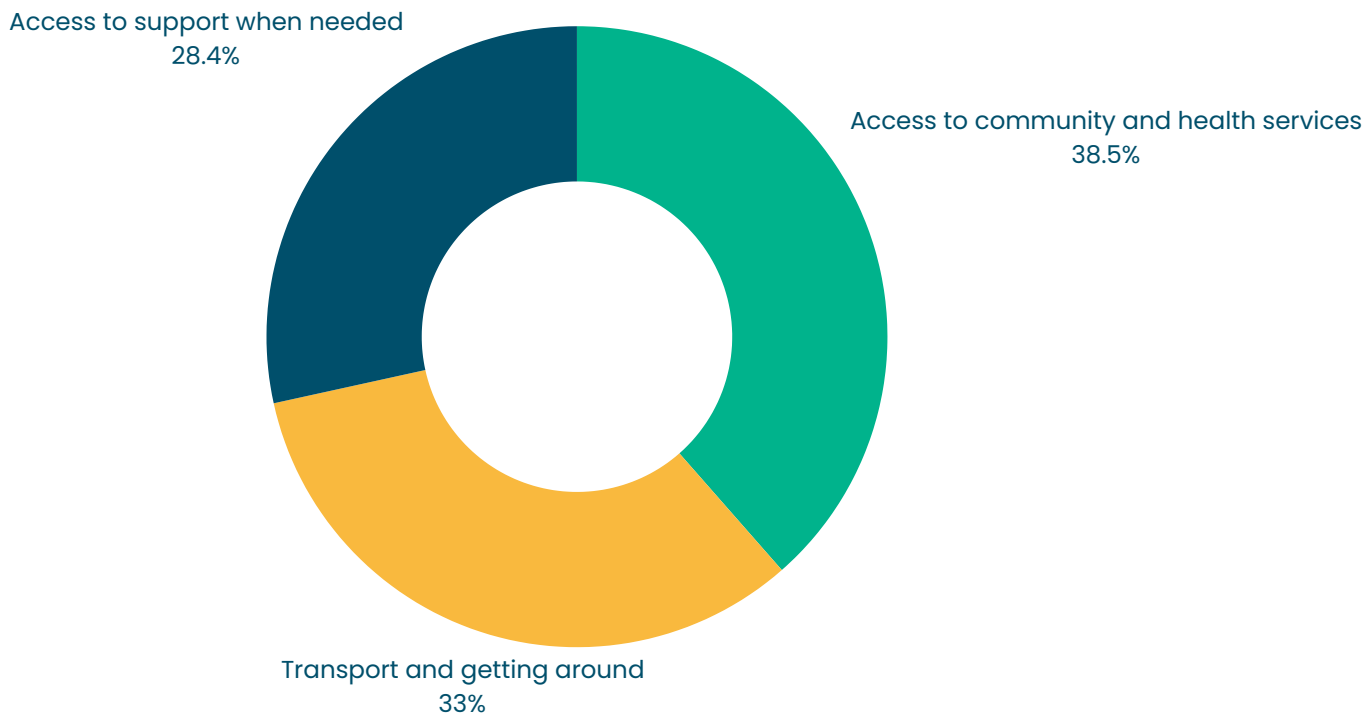
The chart above displays an evident dislike for any care choice requiring leaving ones' own home. This follows the general consensus from other town findings where few praised care homes as a preferred form of care.

Furthermore, these findings are likely a result of the vast size of Carlisle containing most necessary services which reduces the need to move when and if care starts to be required.

Therefore, positively it is likely that residents in Carlisle do not feel they are lacking any necessary factors to 'age well' in relation to care provisions and social opportunities.

## Healthwatch Cumberland asked about barriers that can prevent people from living a happy, healthy and fulfilled life as they grow older.

The survey asked what three things with the lack of access to would prevent people in Carlisle from 'ageing well'.



Percentage of responses from our 'Ageing Well' survey for the three most commonly answered categories.

Respondents were given the opportunity to tell us why they made these choices.

**“The access to services is at times too difficult, complex, and time consuming.”**

**“I want to keep the feeling of self worth and respect.”**

# Ageing Well in Cleator Moor

The small town of Cleator moor in Cumbria, was nicknamed “little Ireland” as a result of an abundance of Irish immigrants throughout the 19th century. The town began as a village, growing when iron ore deposits were discovered transforming the area into a thriving mining community.

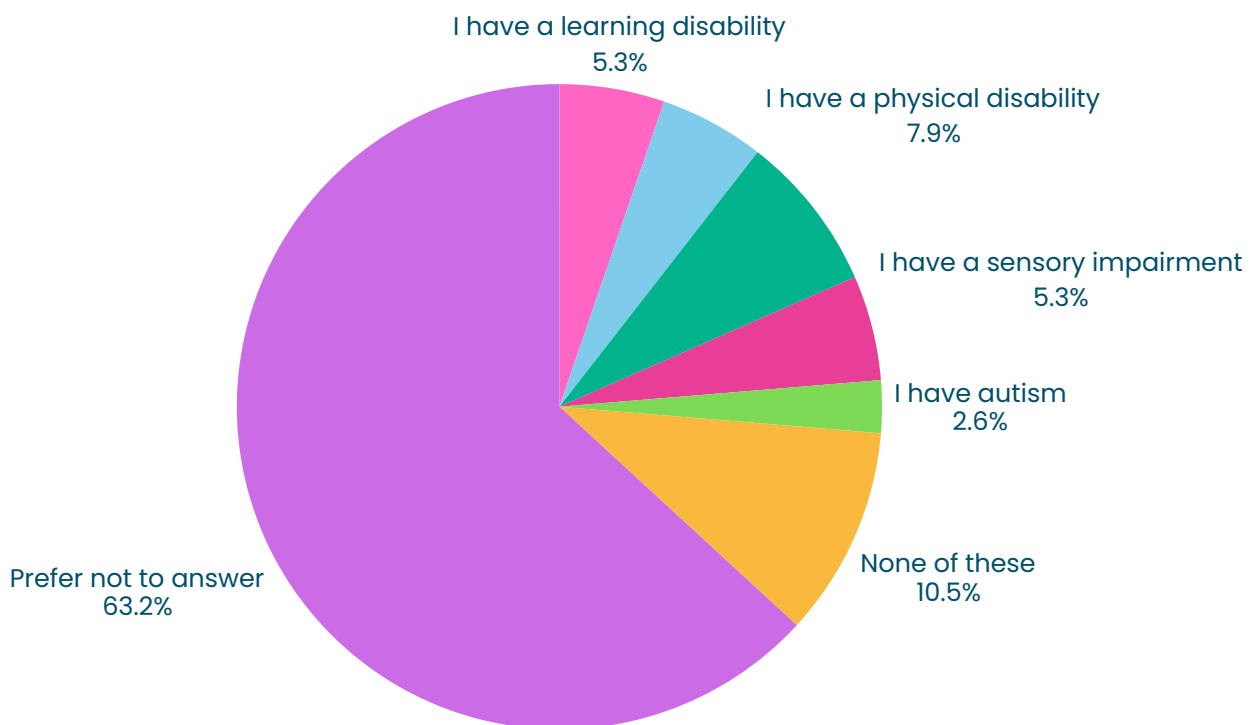
The town is situated on the western side of the Lake District with a small population of around 7000 people. The town includes some amenities such as a pharmacy, post office, shops, school and community centre plus much more.



Despite a small population, the availability of necessary facilities seems to be abundant for those living in Cleator Moor.

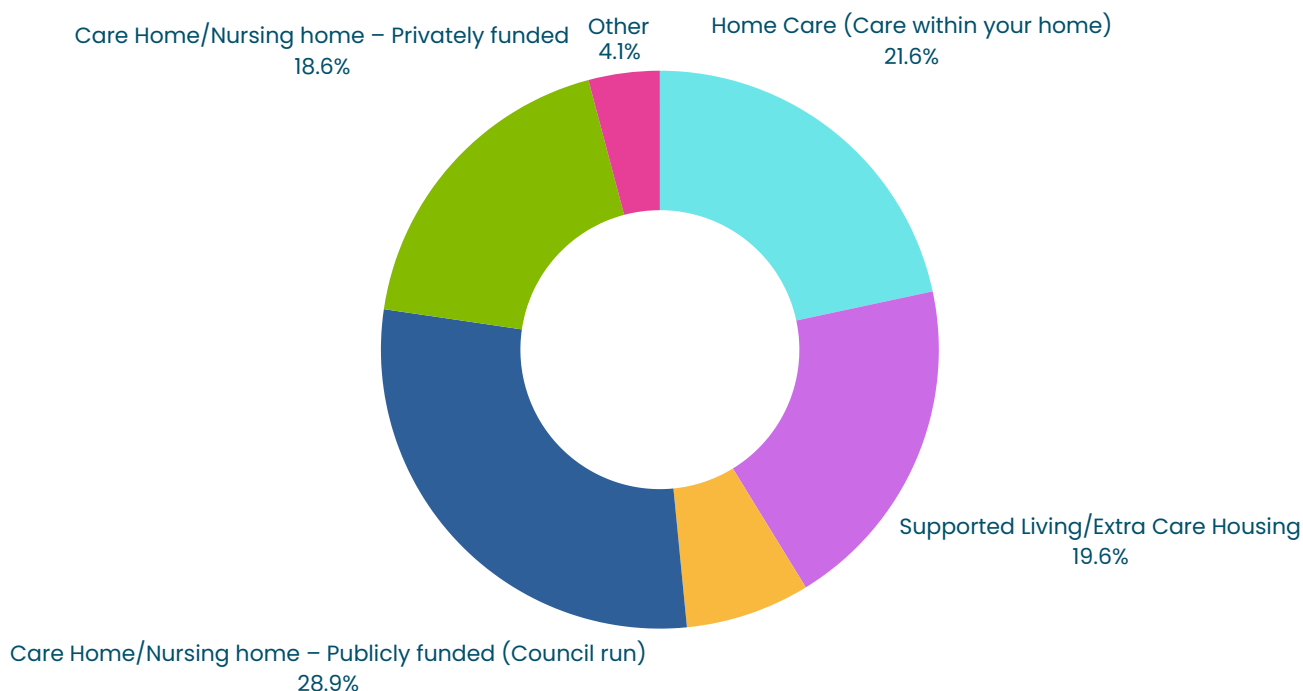
Healthwatch Cumberland engaged with residents to hear their views about what is available to them to “age well”.

## Responses from those within disability seldom heard groups which are presented below:



## Healthwatch Cumberland asked about care service availability in each area visited.

Healthwatch Cumberland were interested in how aware the population of Cleator Moor are of care services in their area should they need them. This data was gathered via our 'Ageing Well' survey.



The chart above displays awareness of care services by residents within Cleator Moor. Significant percentage results were gathered for a variety of care provisions suggesting adequate availability.

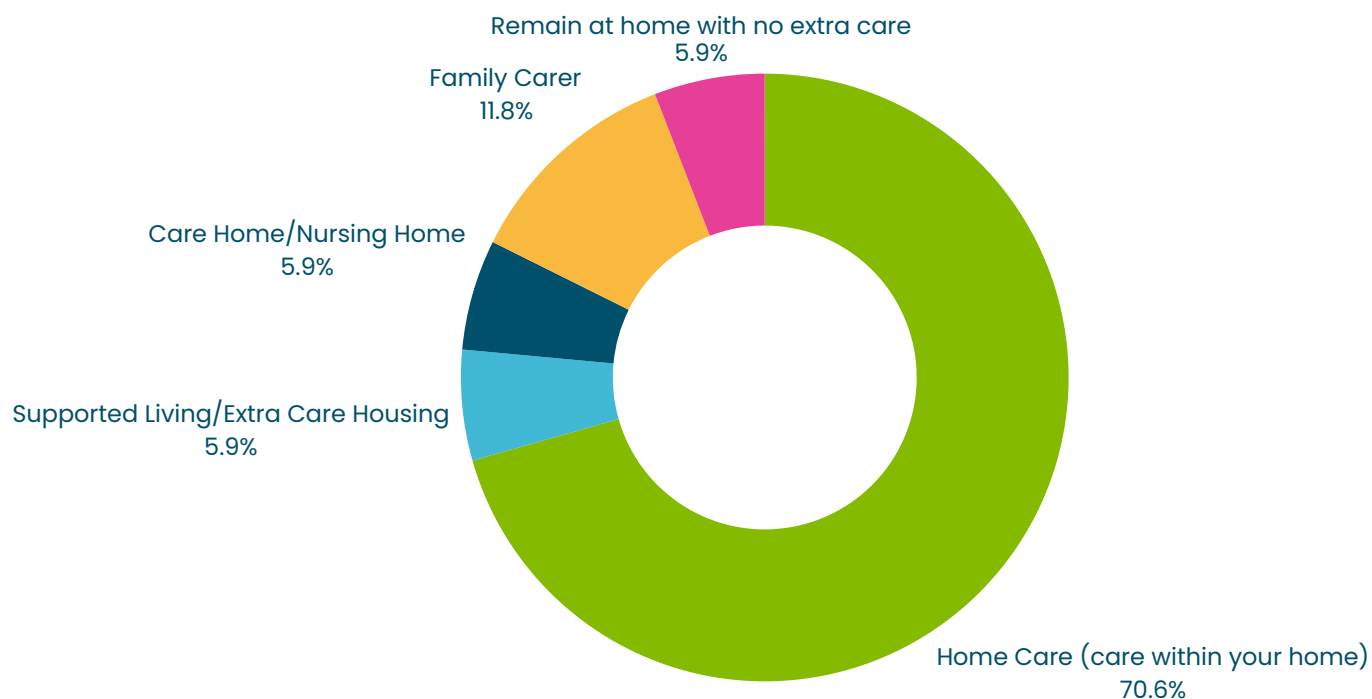
Despite these findings, it is important for Healthwatch Cumberland to give residents an opportunity to provide greater feedback than a chart can provide. Through engagements and open question boxes in our survey, this gave residents the ability to tell us more about the care services in Cleator Moor.

### The survey also asked a relating question about how far one would be willing to travel for their care services.

Responses showed a large result of 71% stating they would be willing to travel only within their nearest town for their care choices.

## Healthwatch Cumberland also asked about preference of care if needed.

As our sample aimed to include a wide range of seldom heard groups and a range of ages, factors influencing this choice was important for our report. This question also featured the opportunity to tell Healthwatch why they made this choice



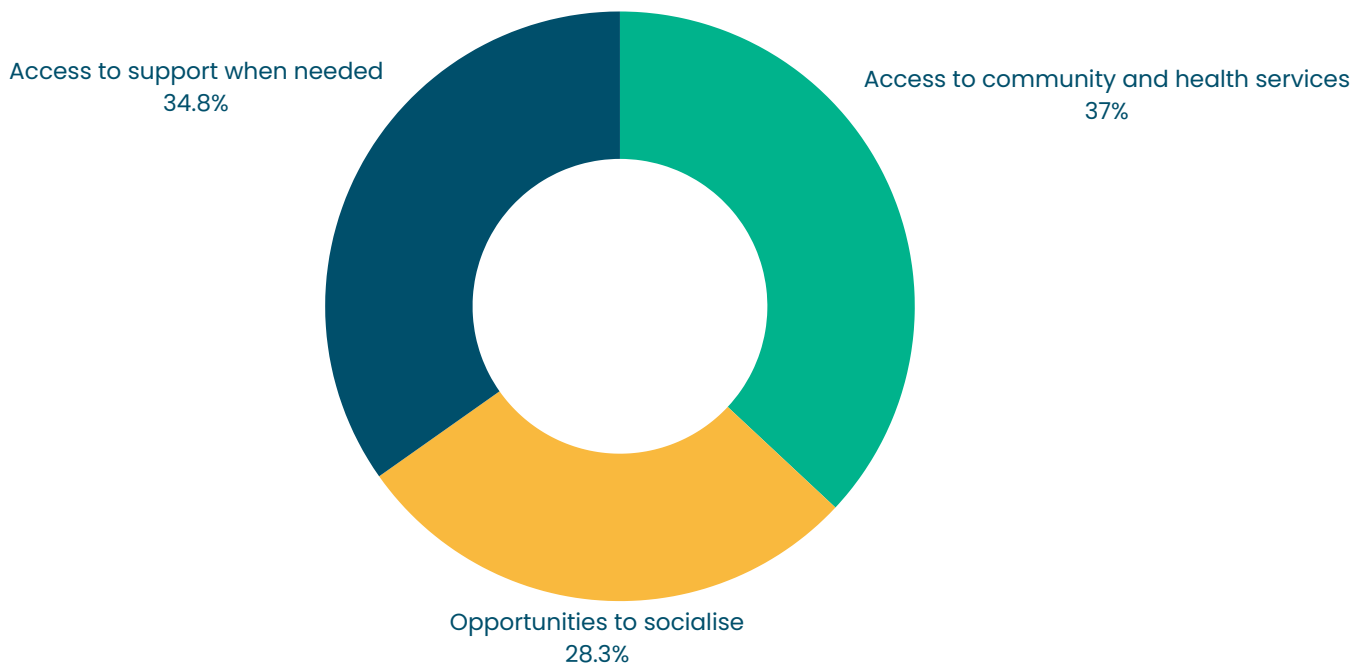
The findings above follow the general pattern of findings for this project whereby Home Care is the most preferred care option if and when required by residents in **Cleator Moor**. Compared to other town findings, Cleator Moor has a significantly large percentage for preference of home care. Although this was a similar case with other towns, this is one of the largest responses.

When investigating the reasons why these responses were selected, key words of “independence” and being able to stay in their “own home” were frequently featured in answers. This continues following the trajectory of the entire Ageing Well project with residents of Cumberland repeatedly reiterating the importance of retaining independence as long as possible.



# Healthwatch Cumberland asked about barriers that can prevent people from living a happy, healthy and fulfilled life as they grow older.

The survey asked what three things with the lack of access to would prevent people in Cleator Moor from 'ageing well'.



Percentage of responses from our 'Ageing Well' survey for the three most commonly answered categories.

Respondents were given the opportunity to tell us why they made these choices.

**“Affordability of care, worried about feeling isolated and heard negative experiences with care providers from word of mouth”**

**“Not a lot available and my needs are not listened to”**

# Ageing Well in Cockermouth

The market town of Cockermouth is a designated “gem town”, therefore is recommended for preservation as it is an important part of national heritage for Great Britain. It is situated on the boundary of the lake district national park and is less overwhelmed with a tourist atmosphere in comparison to Keswick.

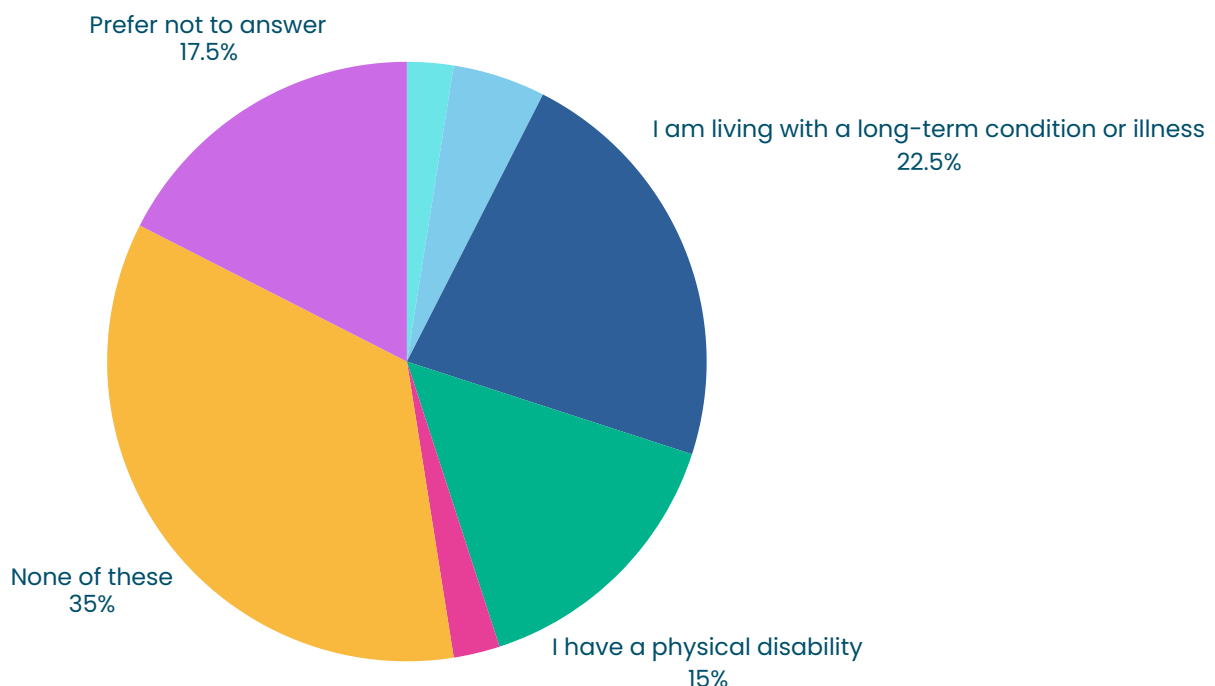
The town is home to 8761 people according to the 2011 census. The name of the town means “the mouth of the River Cocker” originating from a 12th century Norman castle being built where the River Derwent and River Cocker meet. This was a result of the rivers providing sustenance and trade routes.

The town is famously known as the birthplace and home to the poet Wordsworth. Wordsworth house dated to have been built in 1745 is situated on the main street and is characterised by its front gates and orange coloured exterior.

Healthwatch Cumberland held an engagement event to gather views from the public within Cockermouth about health and social care in relation to what is in place for residents to “age well”.

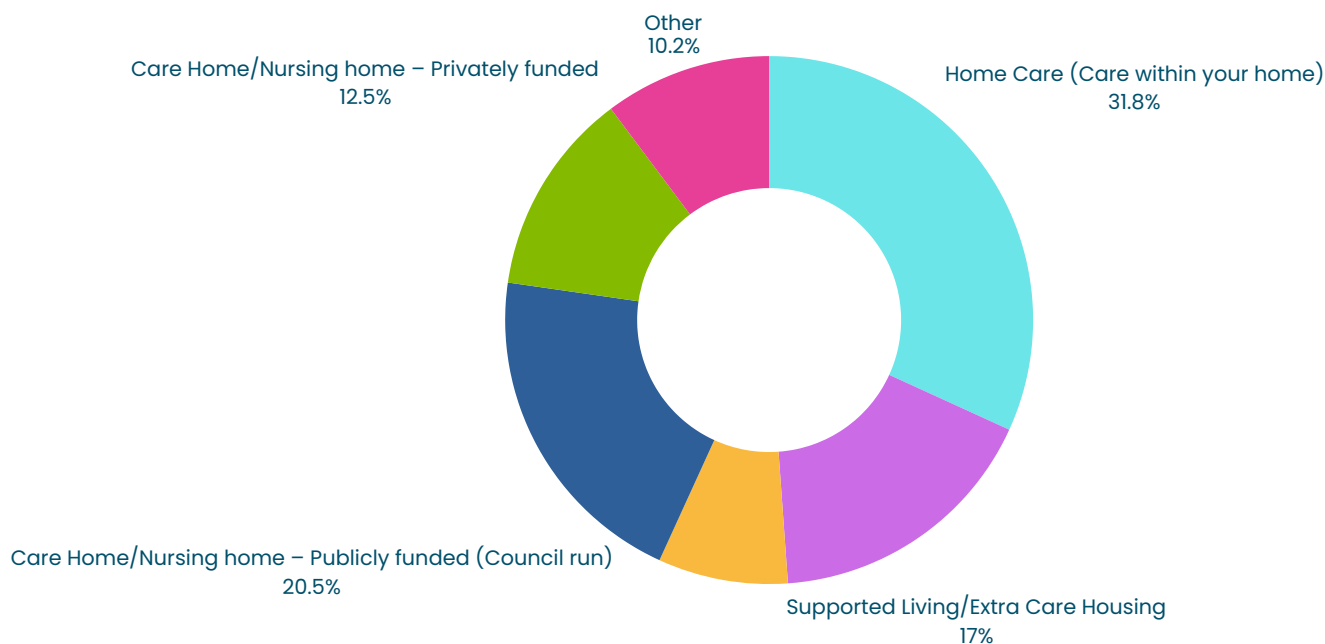


## Responses from those within disability seldom heard groups which are presented here:



## Healthwatch Cumberland asked about care service availability in each area visited.

Healthwatch Cumberland were interested in how aware the population of Cockermouth are of care services in their area should they need them. This data was gathered via our 'Ageing Well' survey.



The chart above displays service awareness and availability. Similarly to other towns, most residents of Cockermouth are aware of home care. This is likely due to the rural locations within and surrounding Cockermouth making home care the most preferable option to limit the need to move.

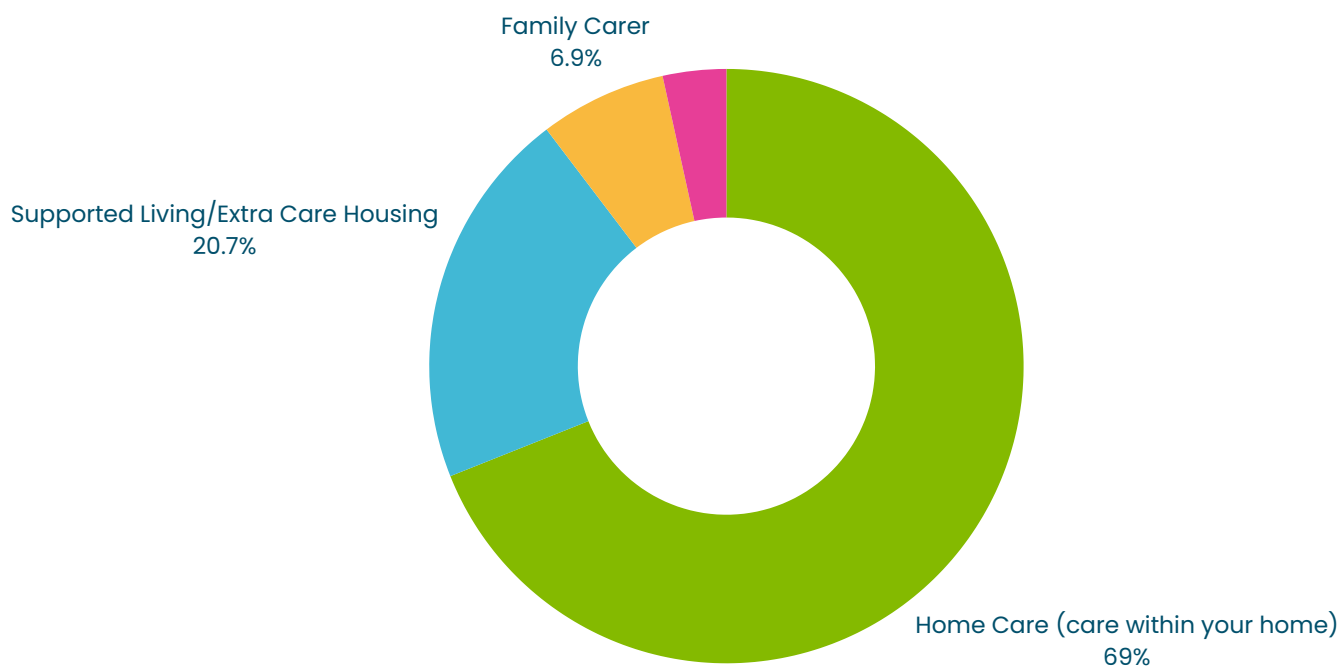
Furthermore, these findings show a good breadth of services available for residents in Cockermouth and is not an area of concern.

### The survey also asked a relating question about how far one would be willing to travel for their care services.

Responses showed 54.29% are only willing to travel within their nearest town for their care. This may be due to having sufficient services in their area, reducing the need and willingness to travel for services.

## Healthwatch Cumberland also asked about preference of care if needed.

As our sample aimed to include a wide range of seldom heard groups and a range of ages, factors influencing this choice was important for our report. This question also featured the opportunity to tell Healthwatch why they made this choice



Residents of Cockermouth have a large preference for home care. This is following the path of findings from the entire ageing well project. As we investigated service availability, we can rule out lack of services being a factor for home care being preferred. Following this question, respondents were given the opportunity to tell us why they made this choice.

Similarly, to other towns, the key word “independence” has come up numerous times in the responses.

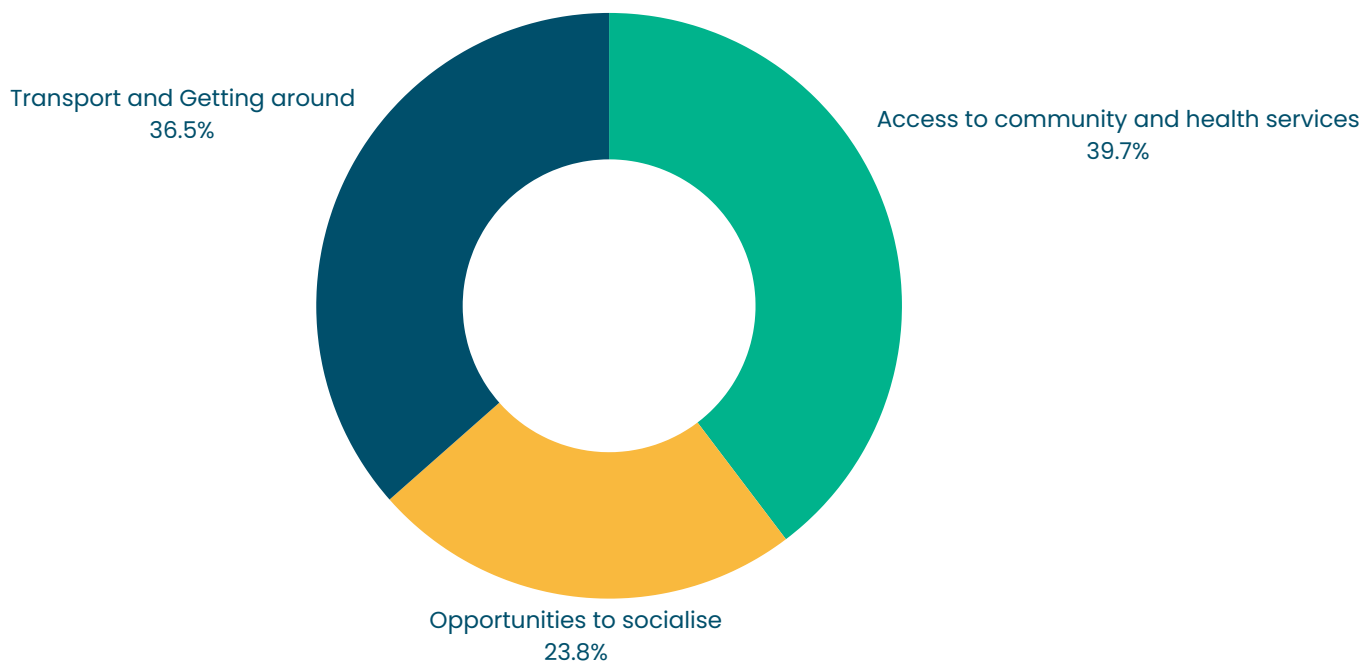


**Care homes seem to be for end of life – home care is better for me as I feel comfortable and it allows me to maintain my independence.**



# Healthwatch Cumberland asked about barriers that can prevent people from living a happy, healthy and fulfilled life as they grow older.

The survey asked what three things with the lack of access to would prevent people in Cockermouth from 'ageing well'.



Percentage of responses from our 'Ageing Well' survey for the three most commonly answered categories.

Respondents were given the opportunity to tell us why they made these choices.

"Transport is poor between villages and towns in local area, so hard to access social activities and keep healthy."

"Because removing these would prevent me for continuing a independent normal life."

# Ageing Well in Dalston

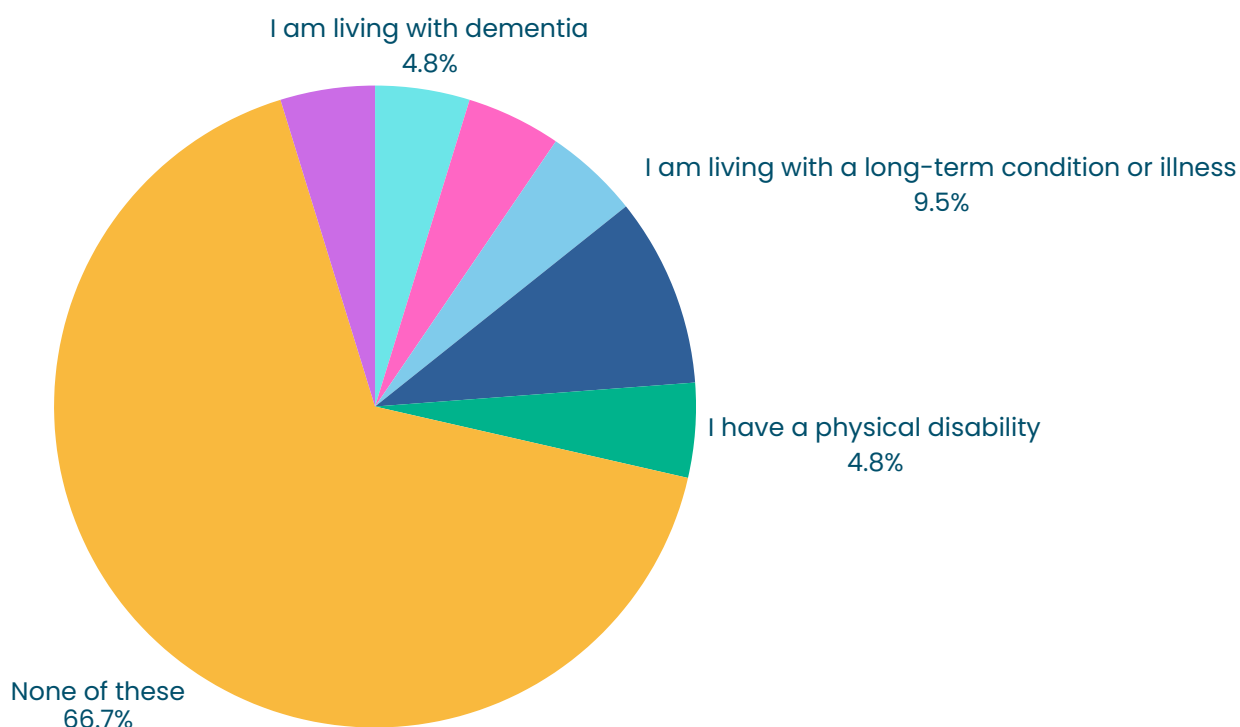
The village of Dalston is just four miles south of Carlisle. Historic prosperity for the area was a result of cotton and flax industries. Within the village square, stands the red sandstone church of St Michael built in 1750 and restored in 1850.

The river Caldew runs by the village with the source flowing from between the summit of Skiddaw Mountain and Sale How. With a population of 2590 people according to the 2011 census, the rural nature and small scale of residents can isolate residents particularly those without the capacity to travel to Carlisle for services.



Healthwatch Cumberland visited and listened to report the local's thoughts and feelings about what is available to them as they grow older.

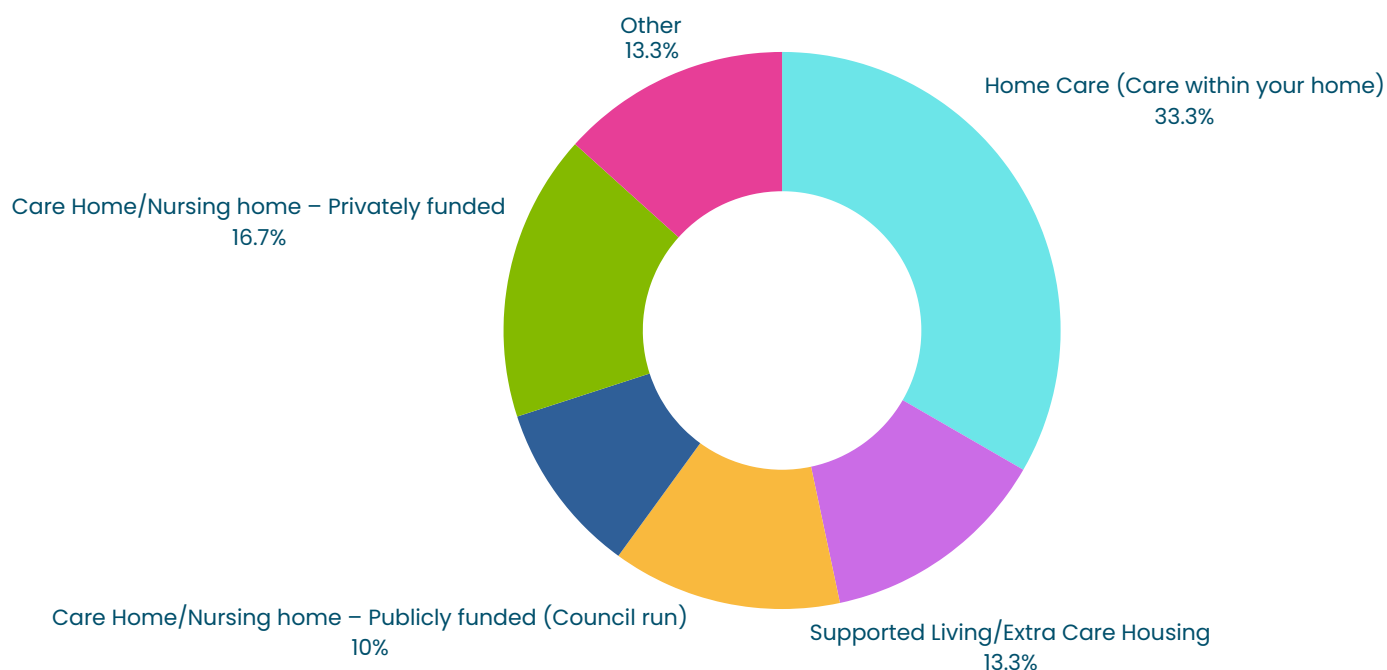
## Responses from those within disability seldom heard groups which are presented below:



## Healthwatch Cumberland asked about care service availability in each area visited.

Healthwatch Cumberland were interested in how aware the population of Dalston are of care services in their area should they need them. This data was gathered via our 'Ageing Well' survey.

**The table below features Dalston responses only.**



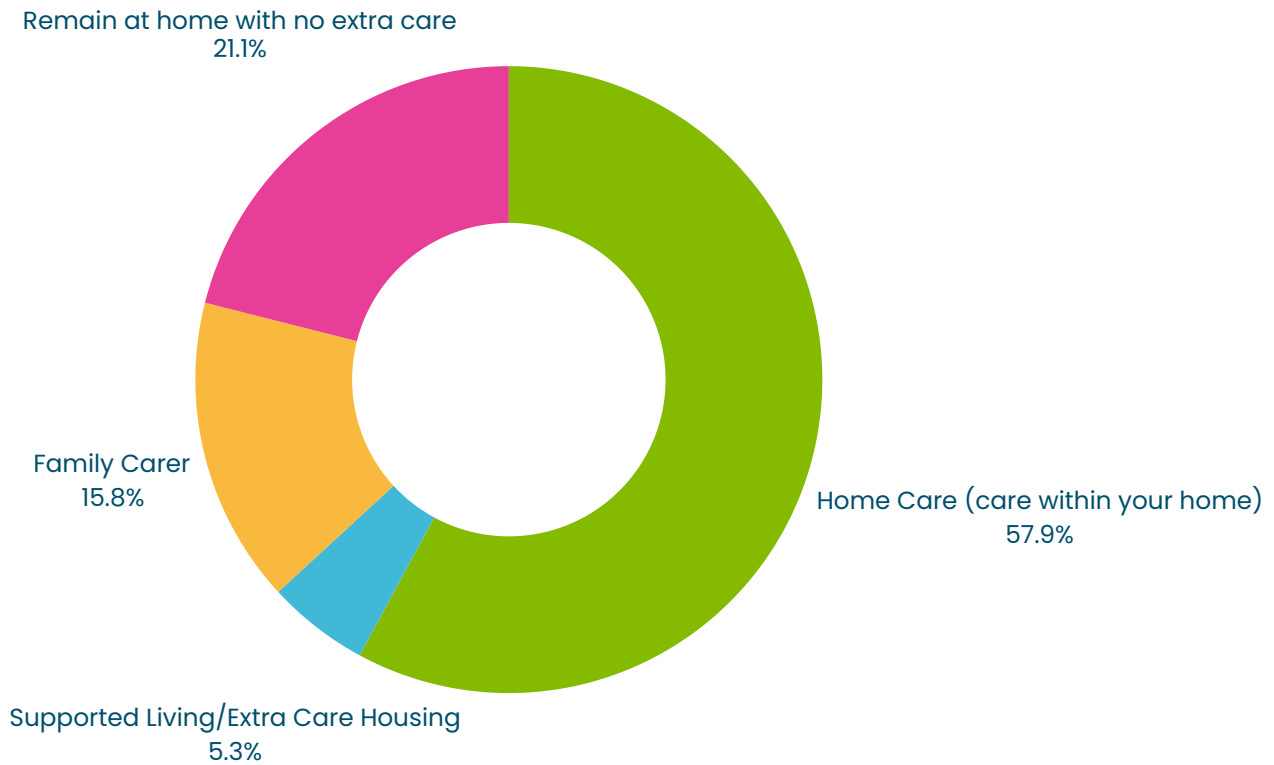
The chart above displays awareness of care provisions in Dalston. Due to the range that the public are aware of, this indicates a good variety of services available. However, those who answered "other" said they were "not aware of any" suggesting that the awareness of services may not be as wide reaching as this chart may indicate.

**The survey also asked a relating question about how far one would be willing to travel for their care services.**

Response percentages were almost equal ranging from travelling within their town to travelling to another county. However, 10% said they would not leave their home.

## Healthwatch Cumberland also asked about preference of care if needed.

As our sample aimed to include a wide range of seldom heard groups and a range of ages, factors influencing this choice was important for our report. This question also featured the opportunity to tell Healthwatch why they made this choice



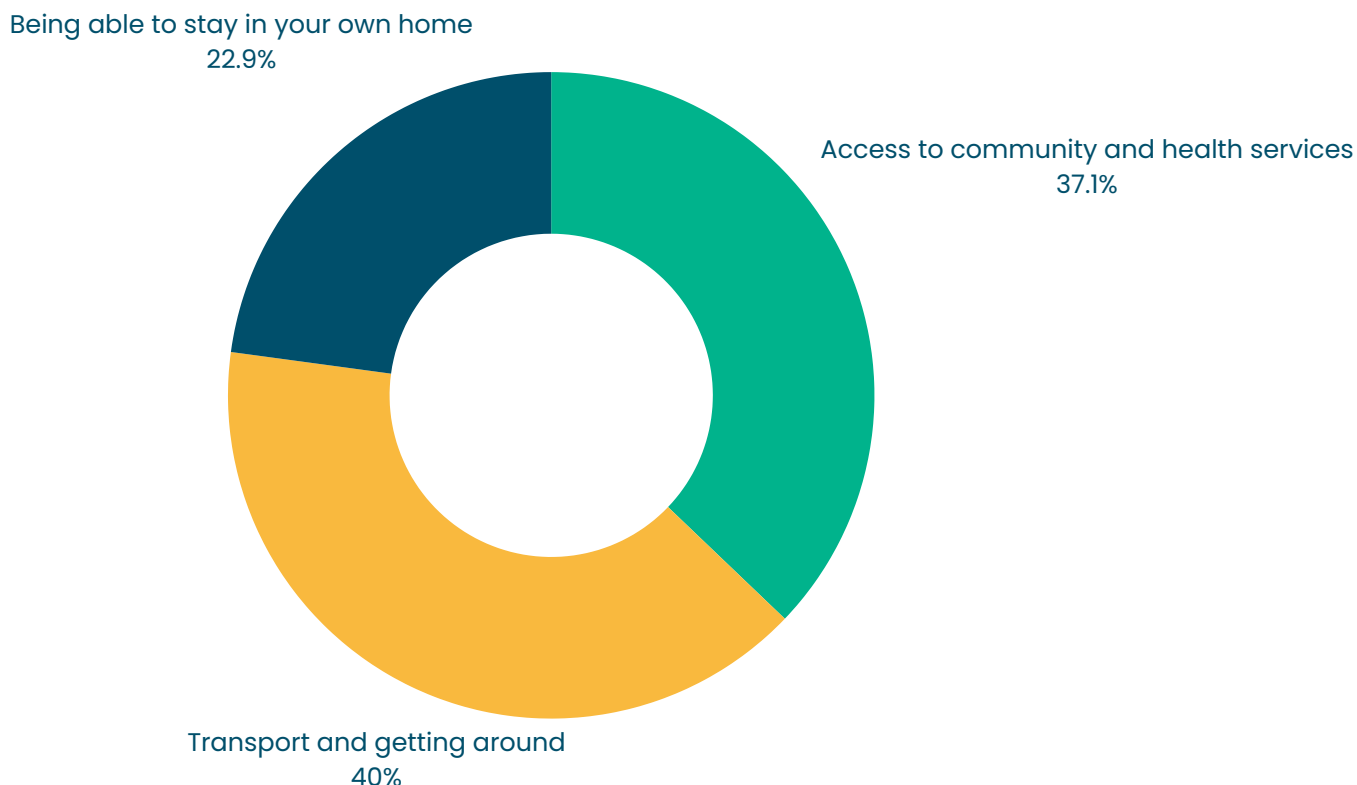
This chart indicates that the population of Dalston hold a preference for staying in their own home whether they are receiving home care or choosing to not receive any mode of help. In the follow up question asking why this was their preferred choice, a small selection of responses were gathered.

One notable response said “it would enable me to keep more in touch with the world”. It appears that those in Dalston value staying in their own home above all other options regardless of care needs.



# Healthwatch Cumberland asked about barriers that can prevent people from living a happy, healthy and fulfilled life as they grow older.

The survey asked what three things with the lack of access to would prevent people in Dalston from 'ageing well'.



Percentage of responses from our 'Ageing Well' survey for the three most commonly answered categories.

Respondents were given the opportunity to tell us why they made these choices.

There were limited responses for why these three factors are most important to age well. One response stated the "lack of access would be detrimental".



# Ageing Well in Egremont

The small market town of Egremont, situated between St Bees Heritage Coast and the western border of the Lake District National Park, is rich in heritage. At the end of Egremont main street are castle ruins from a structure built in 1130. Since 1266, Egremont has held a market charter and annual fair. The 'Crab Fair' is continuously held every September and is one of the oldest fairs in the world.

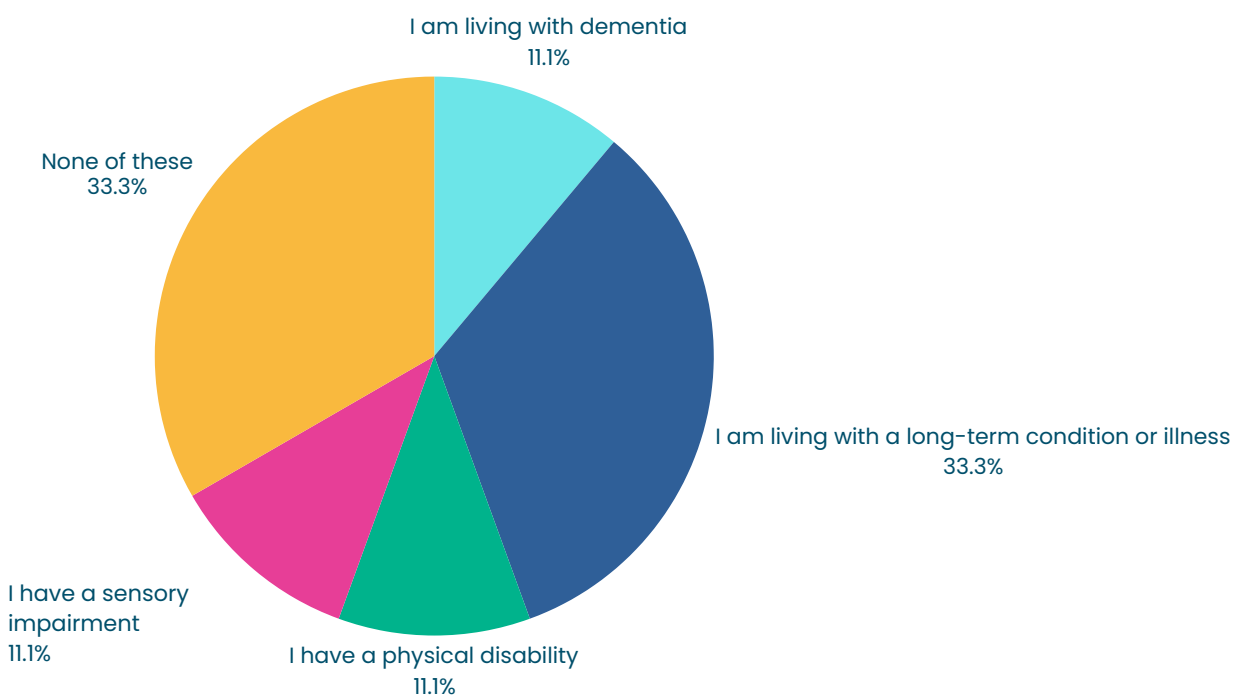
Egremont is home to independent shops and cafes where locally produced products such as Cumberland sausages, fresh vegetables and baked goods are available.

The town is home to a population of 8194 people as recorded in the 2011 census.

Healthwatch Cumberland held engagements to speak to residents about what is available to them to "age well".

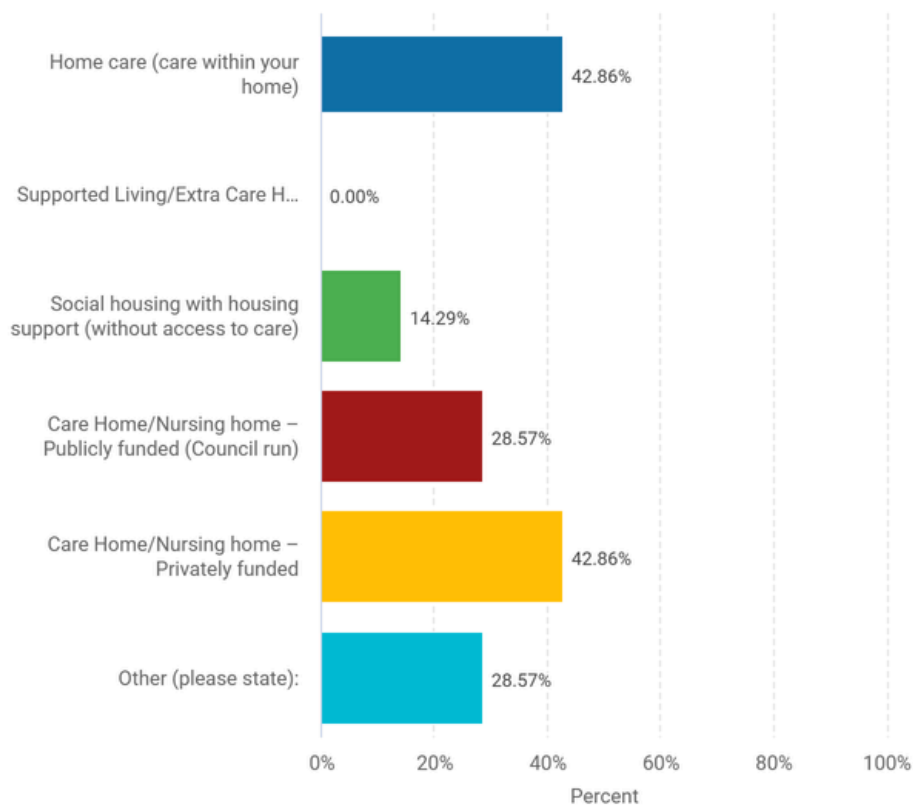


## Responses from those within disability seldom heard groups which are presented below:



## Healthwatch Cumberland asked about care service availability in each area visited.

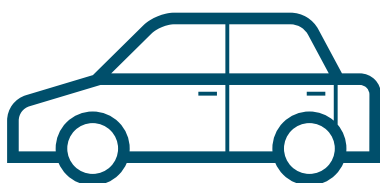
Healthwatch Cumberland were interested in how aware the population of **Egremont** are of care services in their area should they need them. This data was gathered via our 'Ageing Well' survey.



The chart above highlights a lack of awareness and therefore a potential lacking availability of Supported Living/Extra Care housing in Egremont. There were some responses of 'Other' stating they are unaware of what is available.

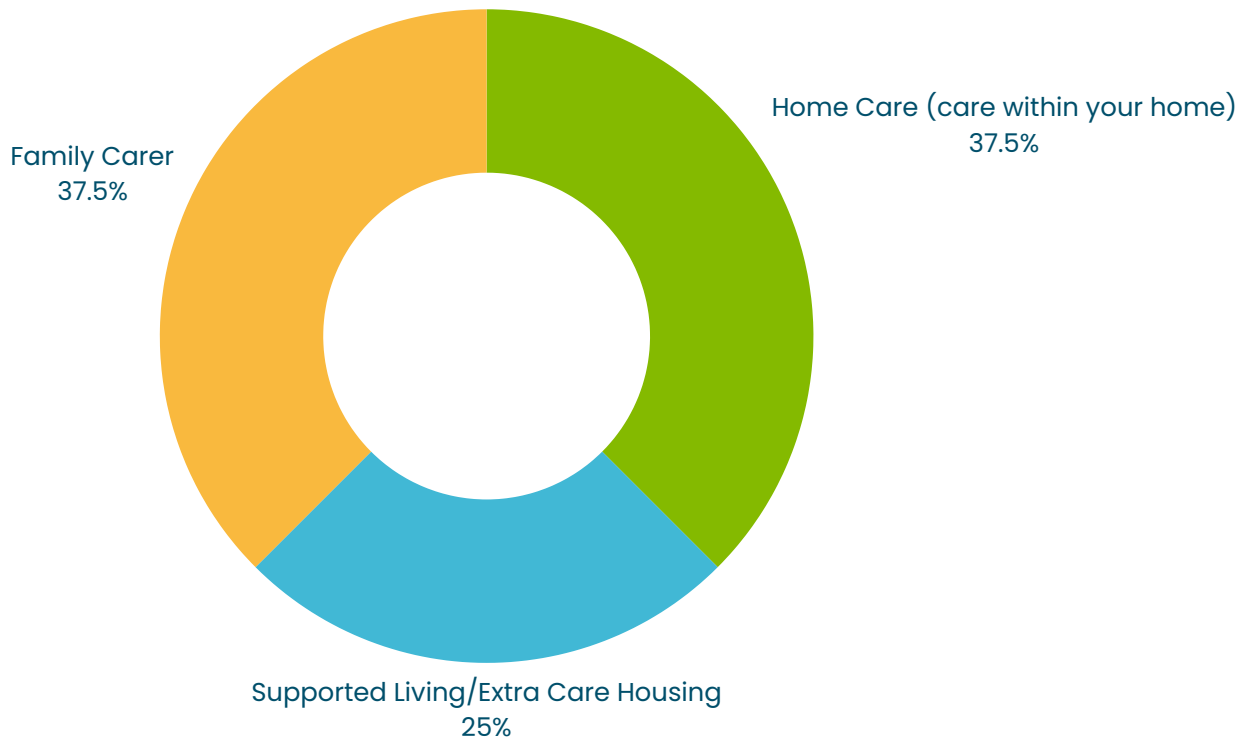
## The survey also asked a relating question about how far one would be willing to travel for their care services.

When asked how far those in Egremont are willing to travel for their care choices, 62.5% said 'Within their nearest town'.



## Healthwatch Cumberland also asked about preference of care if needed.

As our sample aimed to include a wide range of seldom heard groups and a range of ages, factors influencing this choice was important for our report. This question also featured the opportunity to tell Healthwatch why they made this choice



Similarly to the findings of other towns, residents of Egremont have shown through their response that moving out of their own home for care needs is very undesirable. The above chart shows a overarching preference for care in ones own home.

There was also the opportunity to tell us the reason why this was their preferred choice. See below for the reasons given:



“To keep my independence as much as possible.”

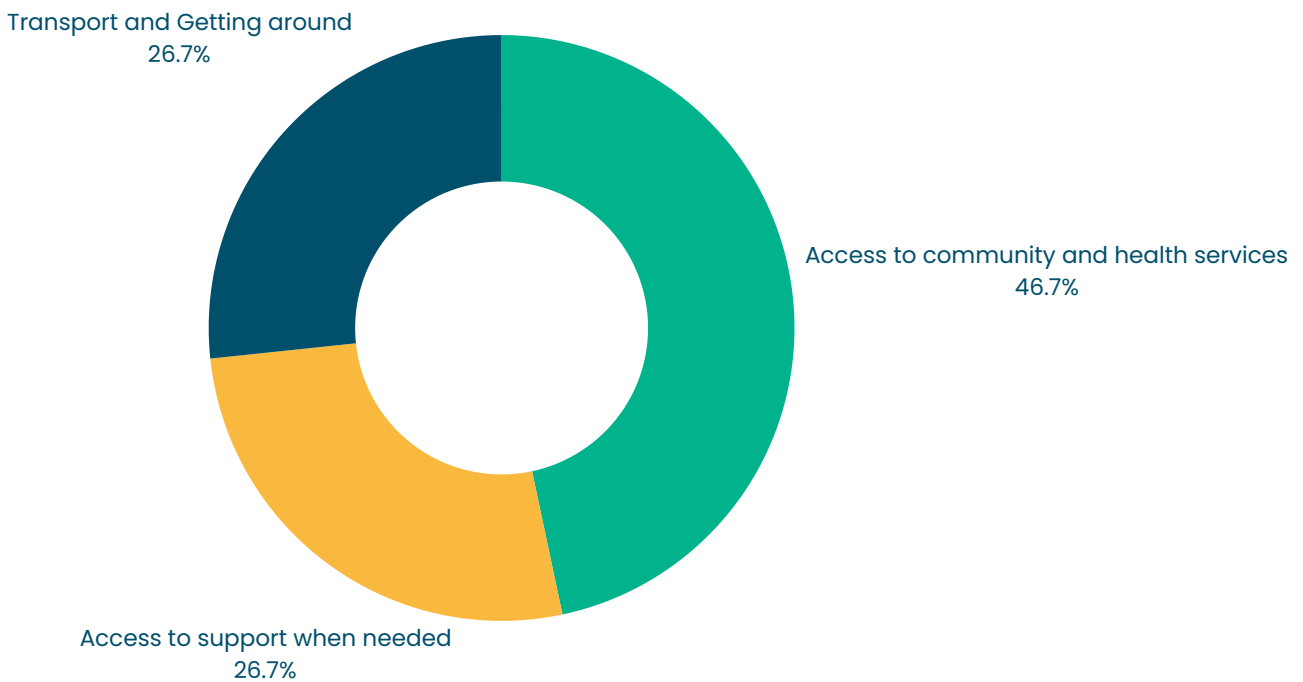
“Desire to stay independent and stay at home.”

“Like to be independent but can socialise and care if necessary.”  
“I need my family.”



# Healthwatch Cumberland asked about barriers that can prevent people from living a happy, healthy and fulfilled life as they grow older.

The survey asked what three things with the lack of access to would prevent people in **Egremont** from 'ageing well'.



Percentage of responses from our 'Ageing Well' survey for the three most commonly answered categories.

Respondents were given the opportunity to tell us why they made these choices.



"If I didn't have friends to help me, it would be difficult to get to some places."

"Without them it would not be possible/harder to remain healthy and independent."

"If things changed I would need transport - they is very limited public transport available"



# Ageing Well in Keswick

Keswick is a northern lake district town and is a largely popular tourist destination. The town is surrounded by Skiddaw and Blencathra fells, and is situated at the north side of Derwentwater Lake.

Since 1276, Keswick has held a market charter with the popular market hosted every Thursday and Saturday.

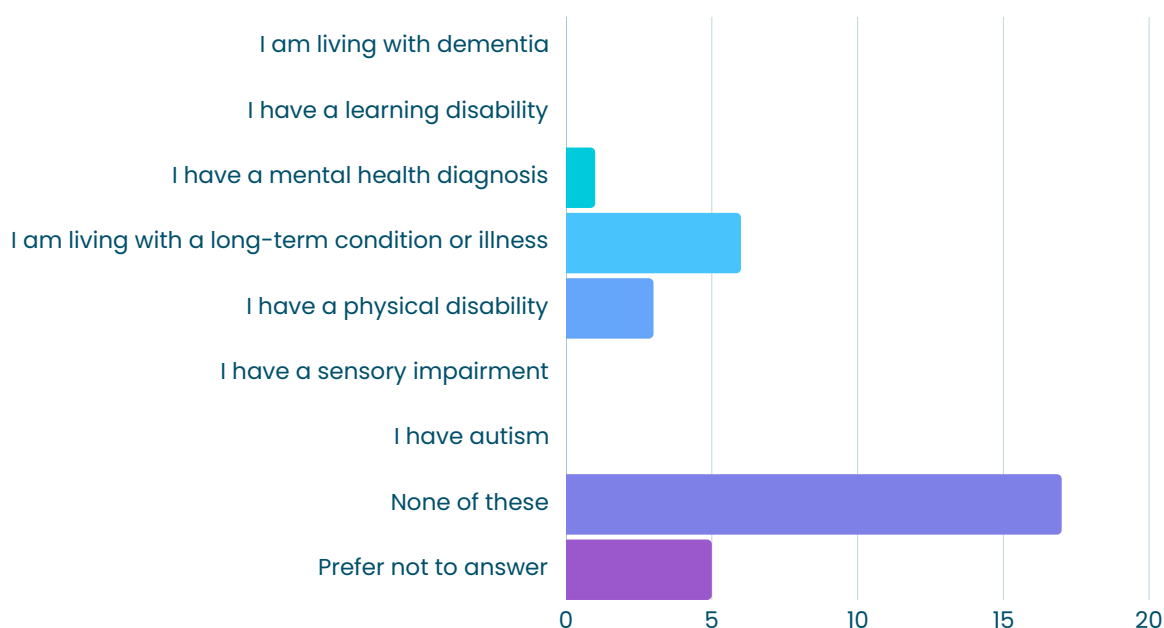
Visitors have continuously increased since the 1700s in relation to Keswick's association with poets Southey, Coleridge and Wordsworth.

The population of the town is only 4466 according to the 2021 census. This is likely due to the tourist culture of the town allowing many hotels, B&B's and holiday homes to encompass much of the area. The town is also somewhat isolated due to being in the heart of the Lake District.



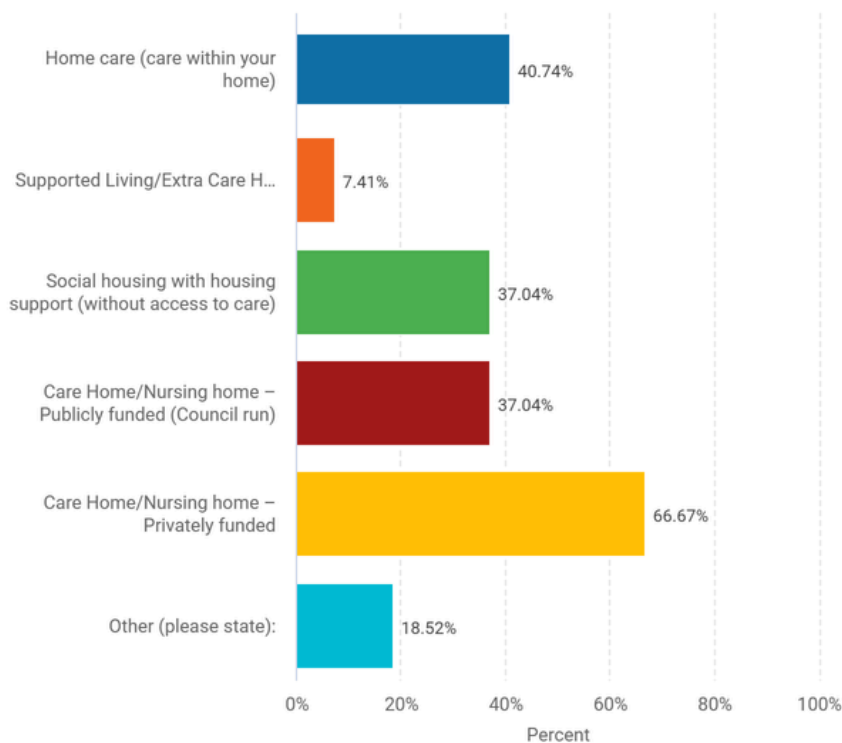
Healthwatch Cumberland engaged with the public to get their views on health and social care availability in Keswick in relation to how this impacts ones' ability to "age well".

## Responses from those within disability seldom heard groups which are presented below:



## Healthwatch Cumberland asked about care service availability in each area visited.

Healthwatch Cumberland were interested in how aware the population of **Keswick** are of care services in their area should they need them. This data was gathered via our 'Ageing Well' survey.



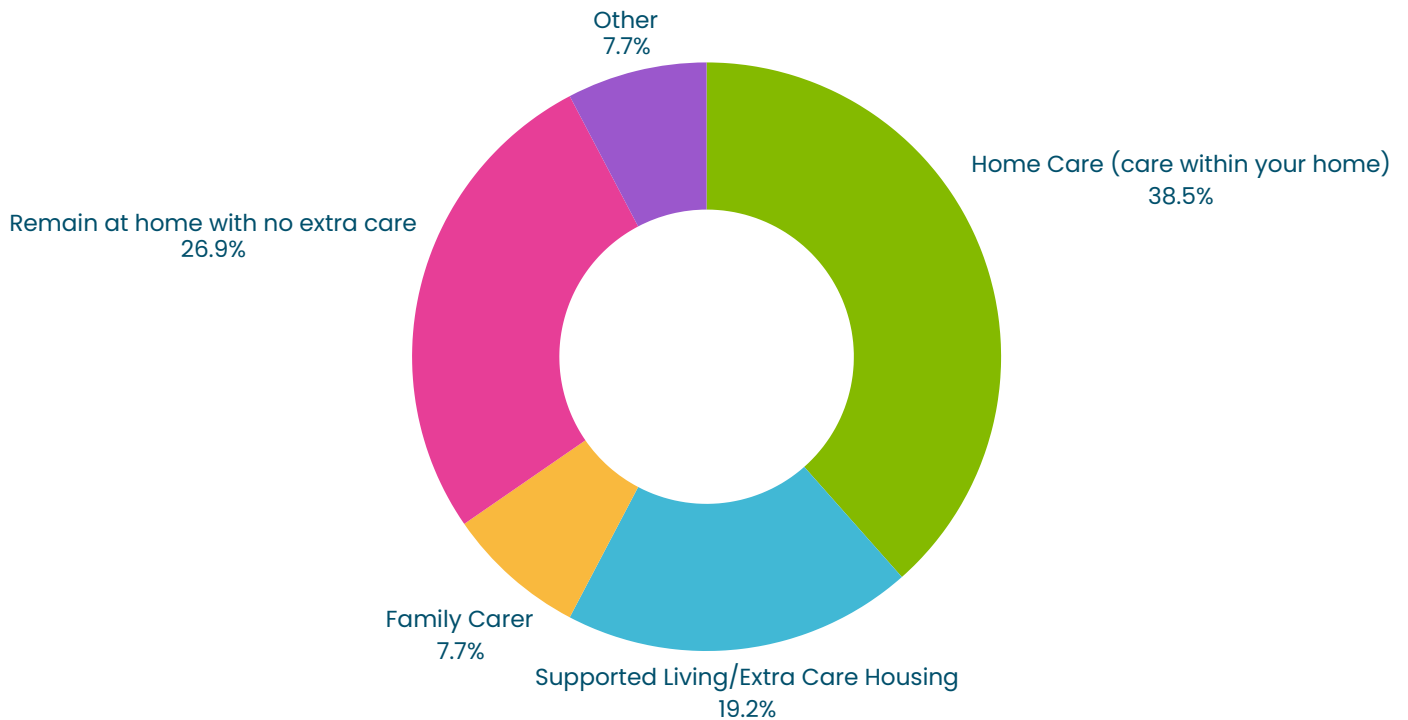
The chart above displays an abundance of care options available to residents of Keswick, there is potentially limited availability of Supported living opportunities. On the next page, we investigated what the preferred care options are by those in Keswick which highlights if the lack of supported living facilities is a problem.

### The survey also asked a relating question about how far one would be willing to travel for their care services.

Travel is not an issue to residents of Keswick with 60.71% stating they would travel within the nearest town for their care.. Only 3.57% of responses stated they do not wish to leave their home. This is a surprising result due to the geographical location of Keswick. However, these findings suggest residents may be willing to travel but not very far.

## Healthwatch Cumberland also asked about preference of care if needed.

As our sample aimed to include a wide range of seldom heard groups and a range of ages, factors influencing this choice was important for our report. This question also featured the opportunity to tell Healthwatch why they made this choice

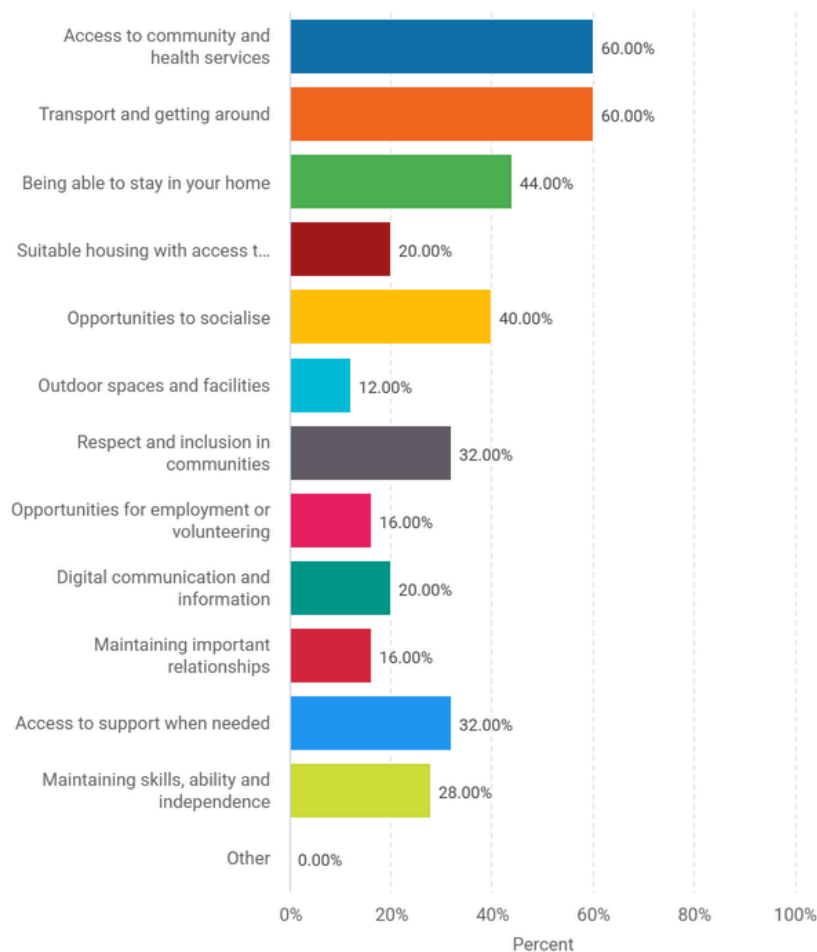


Above displays the care preferences as stated by residents of Keswick who engaged with Healthwatch Cumberland. In contrast to other towns, Keswick had a significant response for remaining at home without extra care as their preferred care. This may be a result of the rural nature of Keswick with the fear of having to move towns for other care options. This may also explain the large response for Home Care.

Survey respondents were given the opportunity to tell us why this was their preferred choice, the theme that arose from this was what residents are “unsure” of what they want if it is needed.

# Healthwatch Cumberland asked about barriers that can prevent people from living a happy, healthy and fulfilled life as they grow older.

The survey asked what three things with the lack of access to would prevent people in Keswick from 'ageing well'.



We have included the data for all barrier options as a large range was collected. the three with the most responses were:

- Access to community and health services.
- Transport and getting around.
- Being able to stay in your home.

Respondents were given the opportunity to tell us why they made these choices.

“

“Being isolated leaves you vulnerable to abuse from others and is really bad for mental health”

“Appointments are not always straight forward as I would like. I require to use IT as have to book online, which can be stressful”

”

# Ageing Well in Longtown

Longtown is just six miles out from Carlisle and three miles from Gretna Green placing the town right on the English/Scottish Border!

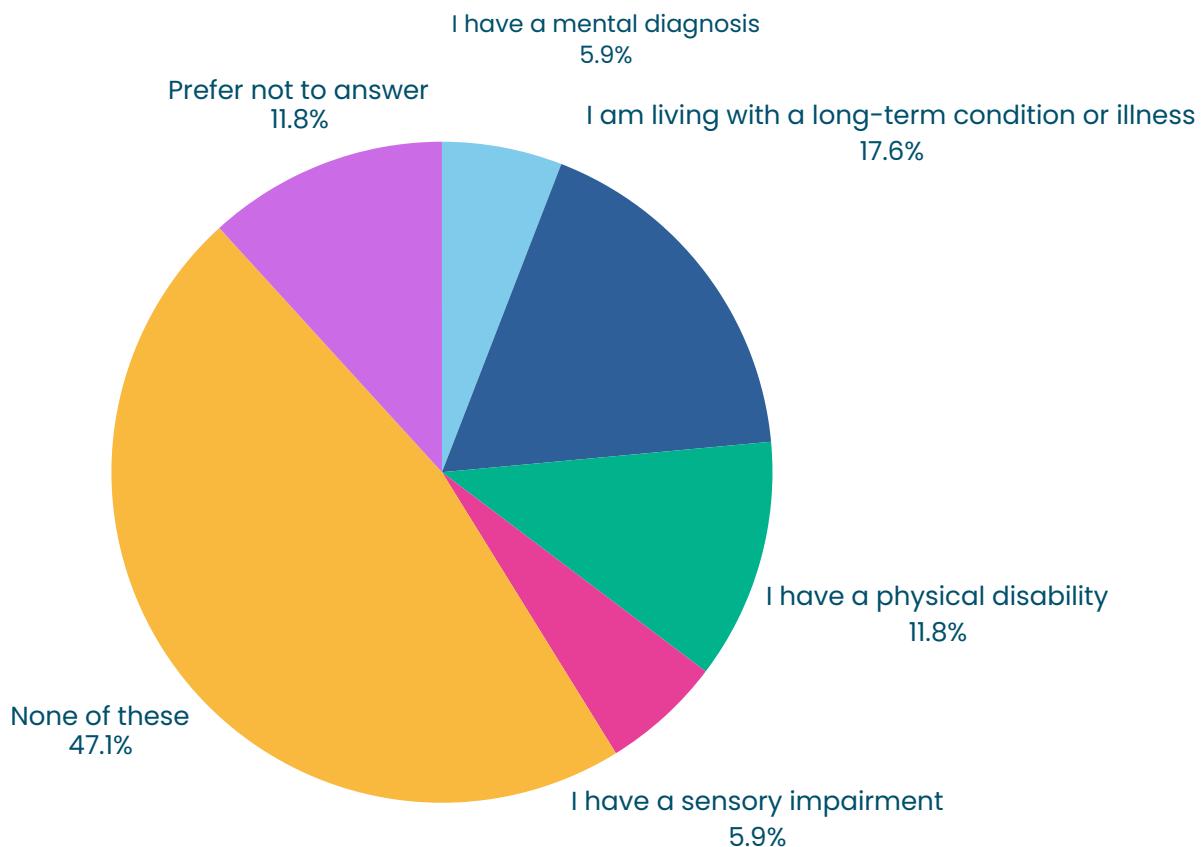
Longtown was a planned town and built in the 18th century. The original bridge makes a great beginning for nature walks along the River Esk! The north bank of the river is also home to the largest sheep market in all of England! The town is home to around 3000 people therefore is on the smaller side compared to other areas featured in this project. The area that Longtown is situated at, despite being in the beautiful English countryside, can cause residents to feel lonely.



Healthwatch Cumberland held engagements to speak about what is in Longtown to help residents age well and what improvements could be made.

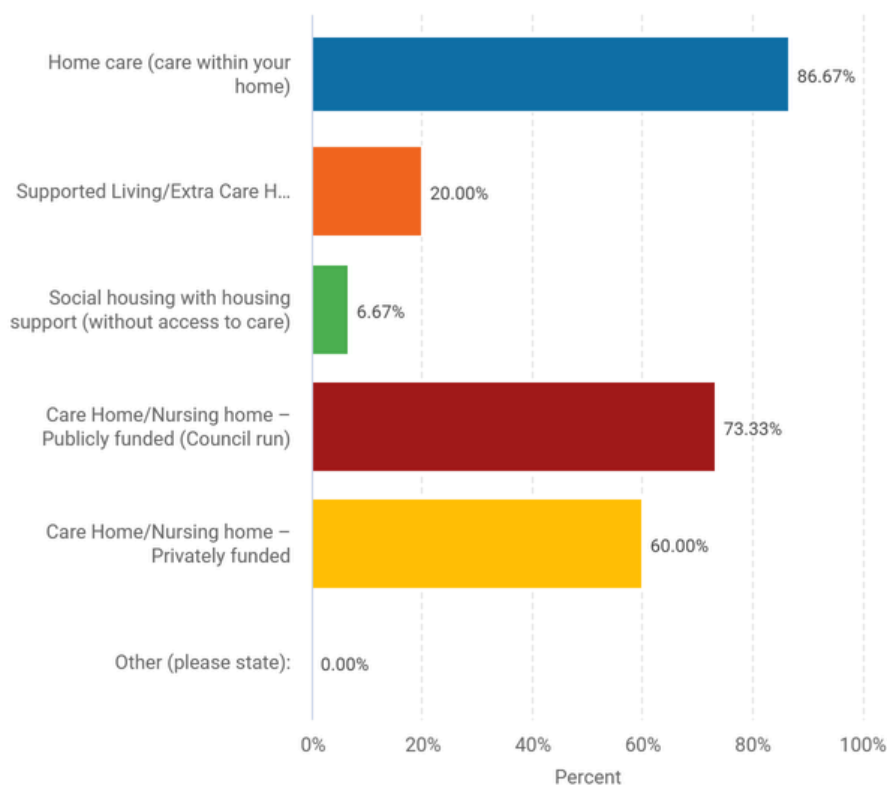
Healthwatch is providing a voice to those in isolated areas as everyone deserves to 'age well'.

## Responses from those within disability seldom heard groups which are presented below:



## Healthwatch Cumberland asked about care service availability in each area visited.

Healthwatch Cumberland were interested in how aware the population of **Longtown** are of care services in their area should they need them. This data was gathered via our 'Ageing Well' survey.



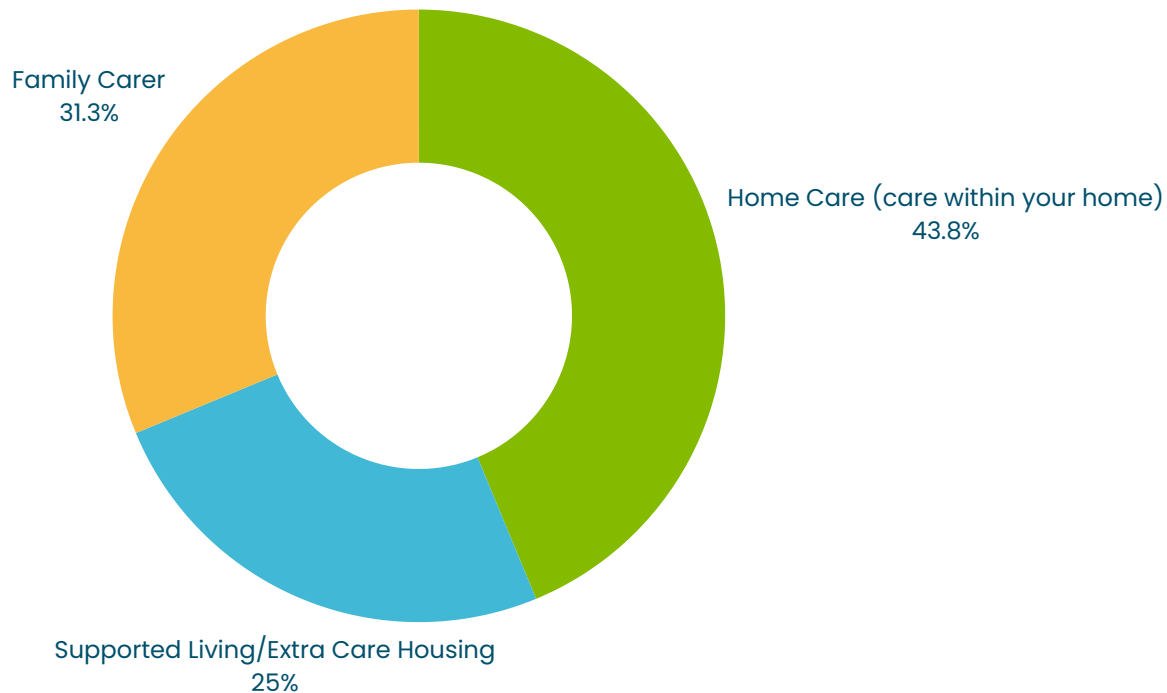
The chart above displays the perceived service availability by residents of Longtown. Although there are responses for all categories provided, there is evidence of lacking awareness for Supported Living/extra Care Housing and Social Housing which may also reflect availability of these care options.

### The survey also asked a relating question about how far one would be willing to travel for their care services.

When asked about willingness to travel for care needs, 43.8% stated they would travel within the nearest town. A further 31.3% said they would travel within their nearest city.

## Healthwatch Cumberland also asked about preference of care if needed.

As our sample aimed to include a wide range of seldom heard groups and a range of ages, factors influencing this choice was important for our report. This question also featured the opportunity to tell Healthwatch why they made this choice



The findings above suggest a large preference for care involving staying within ones own home. Across the towns visited and evidently here, it is clear that options requiring moving are very undesirable.

There was also the opportunity to tell us the reason why this was their preferred choice. See below for the reasons given:



“I want to still be part of the community but get the support I need.”

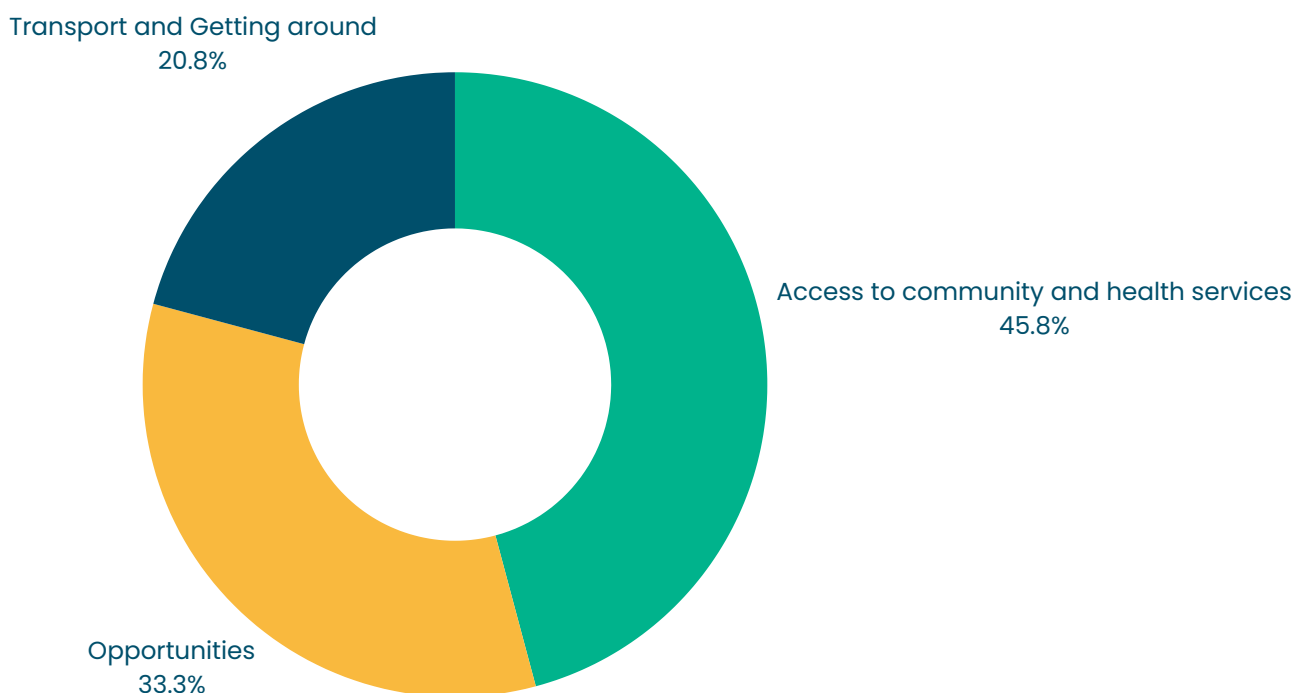
“You feel more comfortable with family.”

“I think it’s important to let people have their independence while also getting support.”



# Healthwatch Cumberland asked about barriers that can prevent people from living a happy, healthy and fulfilled life as they grow older.

The survey asked what three things with the lack of access to would prevent people in **Longtown** from 'ageing well'.



Percentage of responses from our 'Ageing Well' survey for the three most commonly answered categories.

Respondents were given the opportunity to tell us why they made these choices.



“Finding support from anywhere can be difficult when you live in a rural town.”

“Need to be able to have access to these amenities to sustain a healthy mind as body.”

“If I can't get out to meet friends, it would affect me mentally”



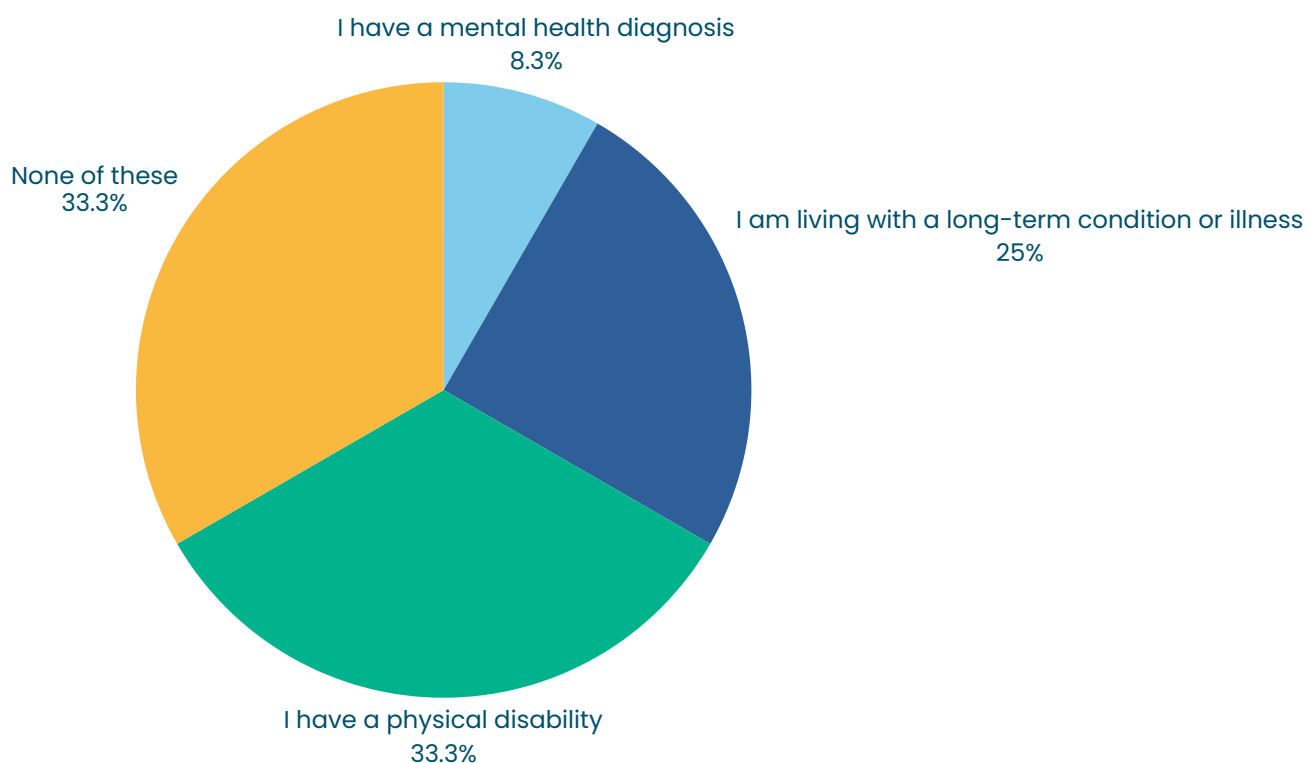
# Ageing Well in Maryport

The town of Maryport was 'planned' with terraces of houses being built on a grid system to bring accommodation to those employed in the coal mining and ship building industries. There is also roman history in Maryport with the town being the site of a roman port to add to the harbour in Ravenglass further south.

A lesser-known fact is that Thomas Henry Ismay was born in Maryport in 1837, who went on to own the White Star Line shipping company that built the Titanic. Family relations still reside in West Cumbria! The town is home to around 11200 people according to the 2011 census and has many amenities for its residents.

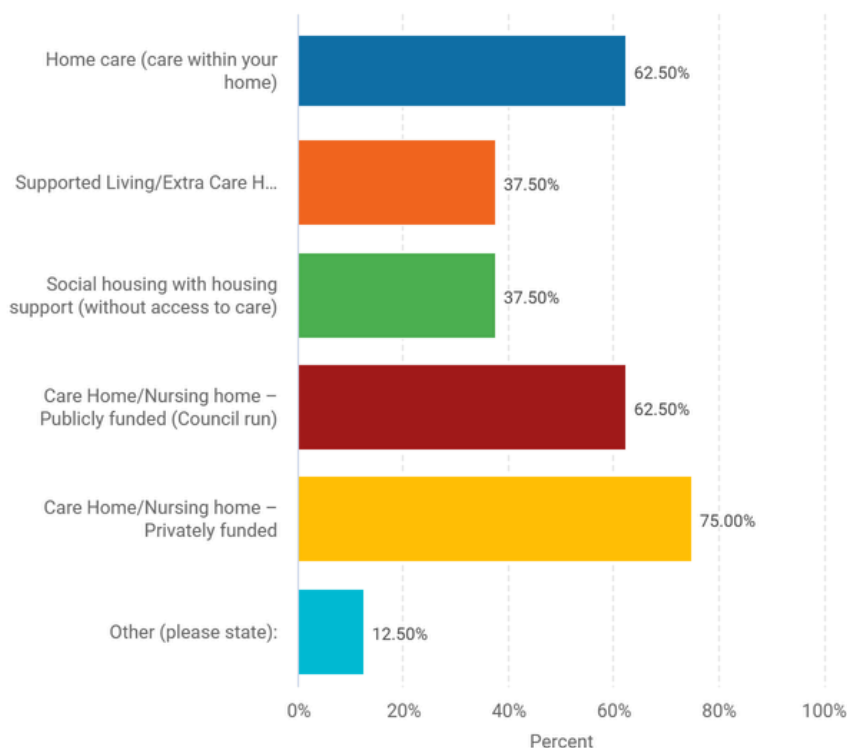
Healthwatch Cumberland spoke to the public about what is in Maryport to help them 'age well' and what their area may be lacking.

## Responses from those within disability seldom heard groups which are presented below:



## Healthwatch Cumberland asked about care service availability in each area visited.

Healthwatch Cumberland were interested in how aware the population of **Maryport** are of care services in their area should they need them. This data was gathered via our 'Ageing Well' survey.



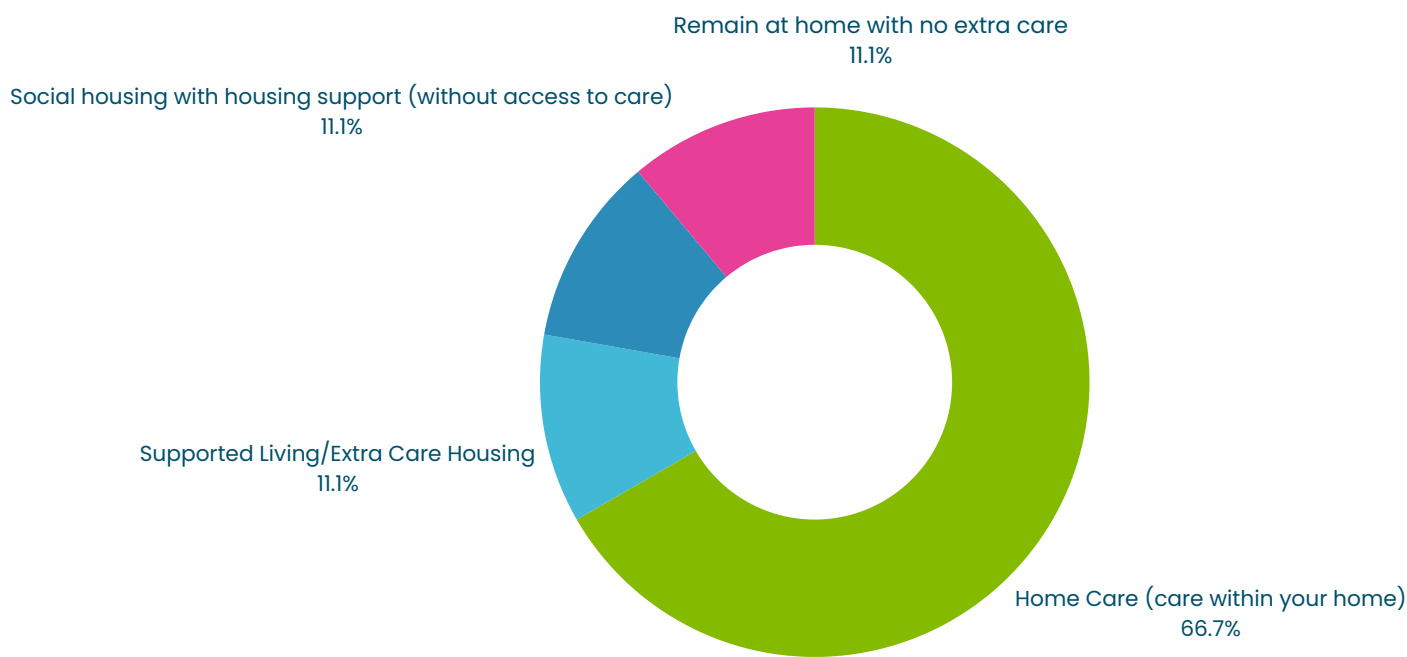
The chart above displays the perceived service availability by residents of Maryport. A great range of services appears to be available. In contrast, the responses for other stated “none” indicating awareness of services available may be an issue in Maryport.

### The survey also asked a relating question about how far one would be willing to travel for their care services.

There was a large response for willingness to travel within the nearest town for one’s care (70%), furthermore 20% said they would travel within the nearest city. This could reflect reliable and accessible transport options in Maryport making travel easy for residents.

## Healthwatch Cumberland also asked about preference of care if needed.

As our sample aimed to include a wide range of seldom heard groups and a range of ages, factors influencing this choice was important for our report. This question also featured the opportunity to tell Healthwatch why they made this choice.



The findings above display the care preferences as stated by residents of **Maryport**. The care options above all maintain some independence for the individual which has repeatedly been a key theme throughout this project.

There was also the opportunity to tell us the reason why this was their preferred choice. See below for the reasons given:

“

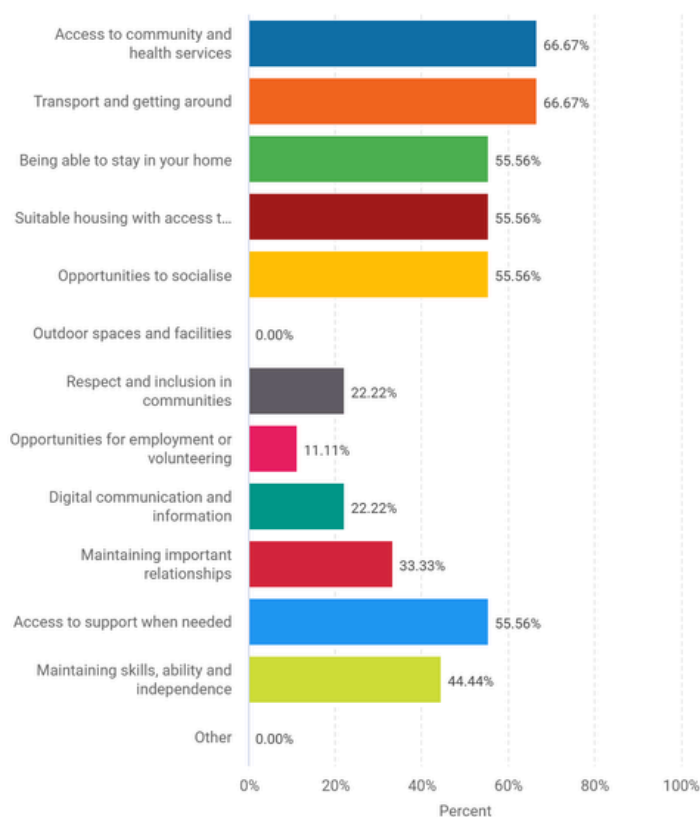
“It enables people to maintain their environment and minimises upheaval and disruption.”

“I have installed a down stairs shower room for this eventuality.”

”

# Healthwatch Cumberland asked about barriers that can prevent people from living a happy, healthy and fulfilled life as they grow older.

The survey asked what three things with the lack of access to would prevent people in **Maryport** from 'ageing well'.



Here we have displayed the whole dataset as responses were large for many options. It is evident that the barriers we included are recognised importantly by those in Maryport.

Respondents were given the opportunity to tell us why they made these choices.



“Lack of transport in rural communities.”

“Independent living is key to wellbeing, but one needs facilities on ground level such as a bathroom for people with autoimmune conditions, the infirm, bed bound or people on end of life care.”

“Opportunities to foster brain plasticity keeps people young and motivated to keep going and not give up on life.”



# Ageing Well in Millom

The small coastal town of Millom was home to a large iron ore mine and steel making industry back in the 19th century which influenced the large expansion of what was once a rural hamlet. Through being situated close to the Lake District National Park, the rural town offers a relaxing quiet lifestyle.



Millom can be accessed by train with the Cumbrian Coastline running between Carlisle and Barrow-in-Furness. The train line often has problems due to weather inflicting delays and cancellations despite the frequency of the train timetable being desirable for such a rural area.

Many issues remain in Millom such as the fact there are no available dentists, issues with residents being able to book GP appointments and their closest hospitals being 40 minutes away. Healthwatch investigated what the locals of Millom believe they have in place currently and what they need to “age well”.

Engagements were held to hear from the Millom population and aimed to include seldom heard groups such as refugees and those with disabilities.

These pop-up engagements were held in Millom Library and Local cafes. Through distribution of our ‘Ageing well’ survey, we gathered valuable feedback from Millom’s residents.

We also conducted a focus group with participants from a Millom based wellbeing group sharing their views.



Our survey tells us the most common age group of respondent was aged 75-84 with 55% of a sample of 20. Survey results reported a lack of diversity in responses with all responses being “white” or “white British”.

**However, a range of responses from those within disability seldom heard groups were collected which are presented here.**

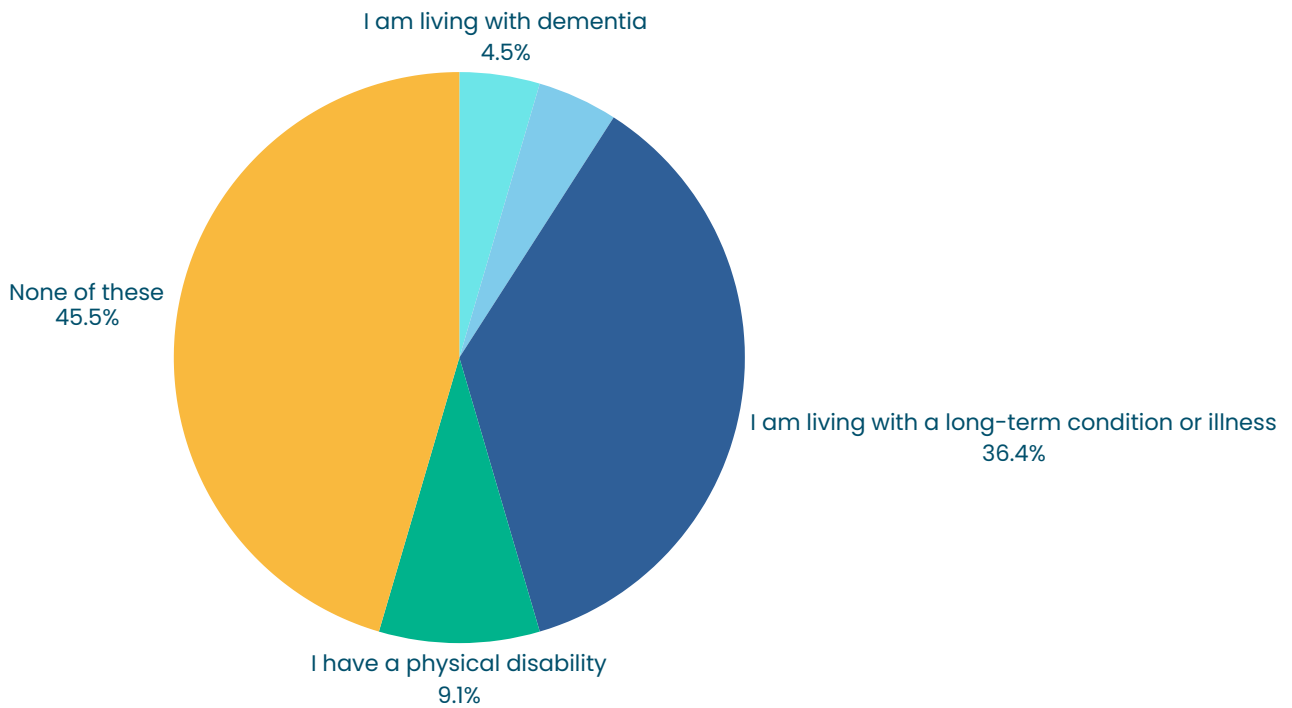
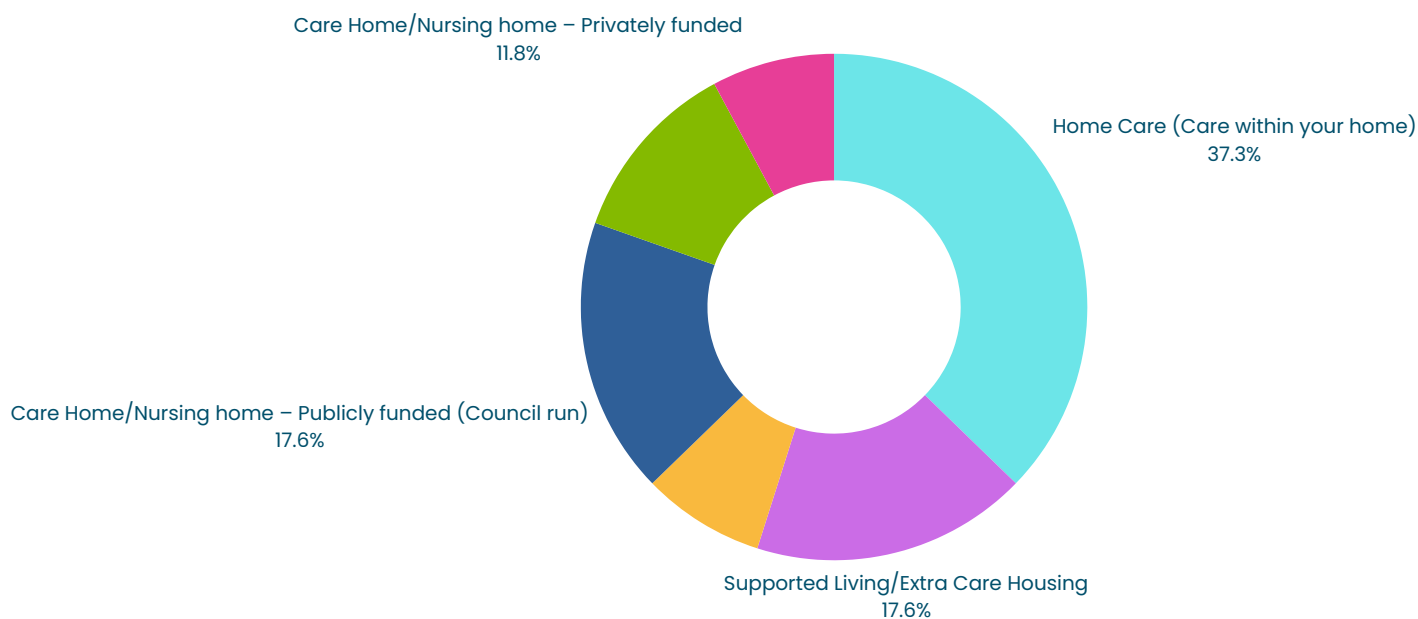


Image of part of Millom Town

## Healthwatch Cumberland asked about care service availability in each area visited.

Healthwatch Cumberland were interested in how aware the population of Millom are of care services in their area should they need them. This data was gathered via our 'Ageing Well' survey.

**The table below features Millom responses only.**



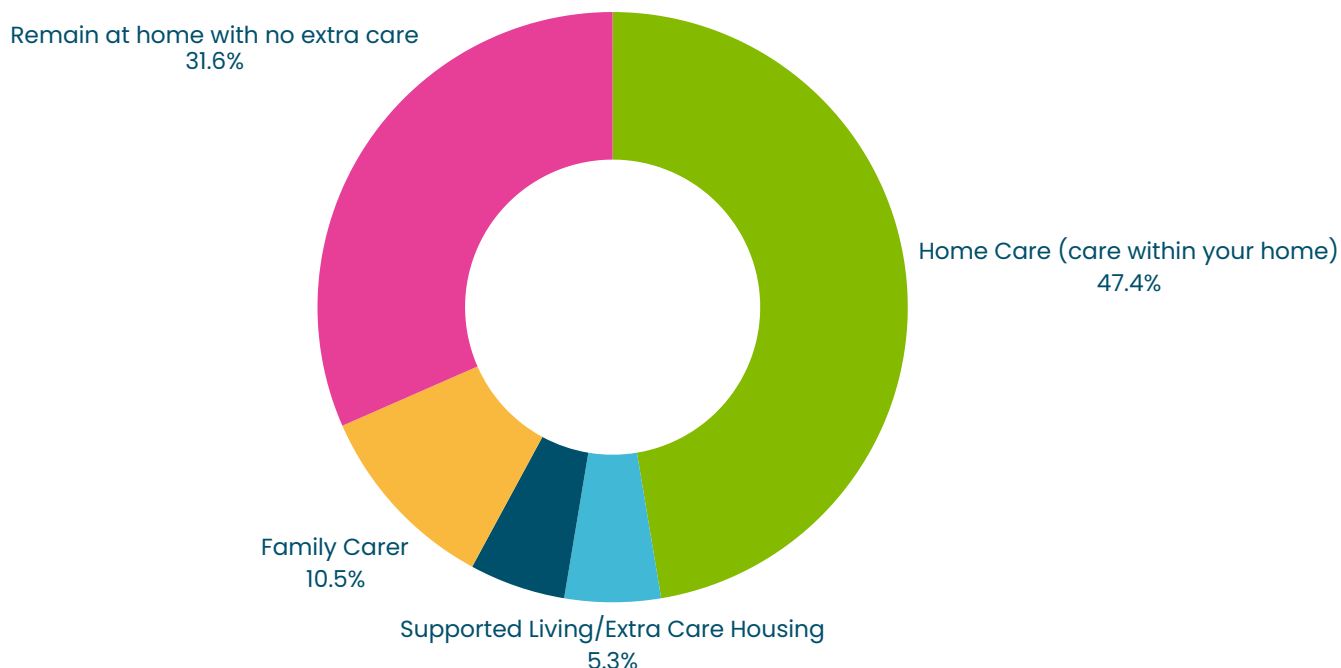
The chart above displays awareness of care provisions in Millom. Due to the range that the public are aware of, this indicates a good variety of services available. However, these services are only applicable to those in need of care. Service availability of more mundane services also impact ageing well. This information was collected through various other means, for instance the focus group we held featured in later pages.

### **The survey also asked a relating question about how far one would be willing to travel for their care services.**

55% of responses said they would not travel further than their nearest town for care. Furthermore, 35% said they would not leave their home for services. This is likely related to the town being very rural and reaching services outside of Millom means long distance travel.

## Healthwatch Cumberland also asked about preference of care if needed.

As our sample aimed to include a wide range of seldom heard groups and a range of ages, factors influencing this choice was important for our report. This question also featured the opportunity to tell Healthwatch why they made this choice



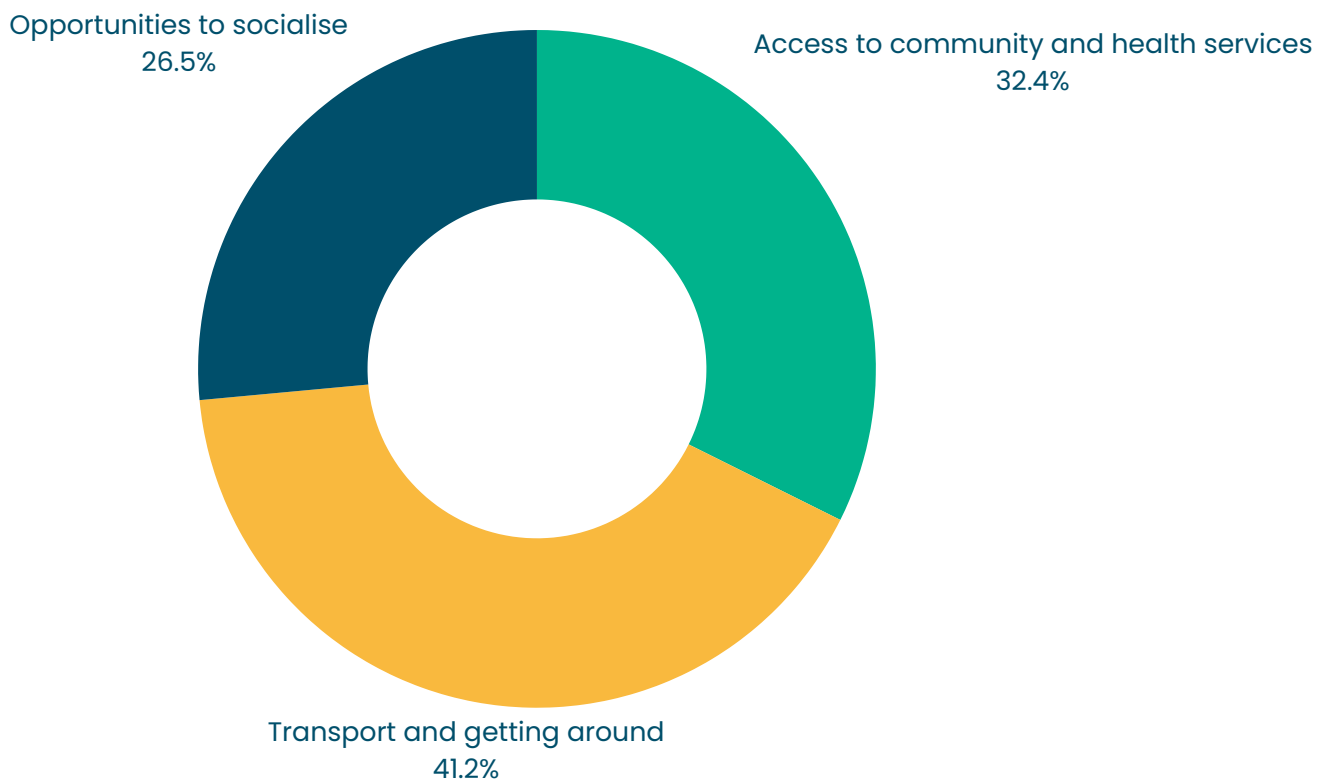
This graph illustrates that the Millom population largely hold a preference for staying in their own home whether they are receiving home care or choosing to not receive any mode of help. In the follow up question asking why this was their preferred choice, a range of responses were gathered. A clear theme of retaining independence into later life despite a need for care was prevalent in the follow up responses.



“It would always be my wish to remain in my own home with no extra care. But who knows what the future holds”

# Healthwatch Cumberland asked about barriers that can prevent people from living a happy, healthy and fulfilled life as they grow older.

The survey asked what three things with the lack of access to would prevent people in Millom from 'ageing well'.



Percentage of responses from our 'Ageing Well' survey for the three most commonly answered categories.

Respondents were given the opportunity to tell us why they made these choices.

Multiple responses stated Millom seems to be "a forgotten town" with these three choices being "key" to maintain independence and are "priorities".



# Ageing Well in Silloth

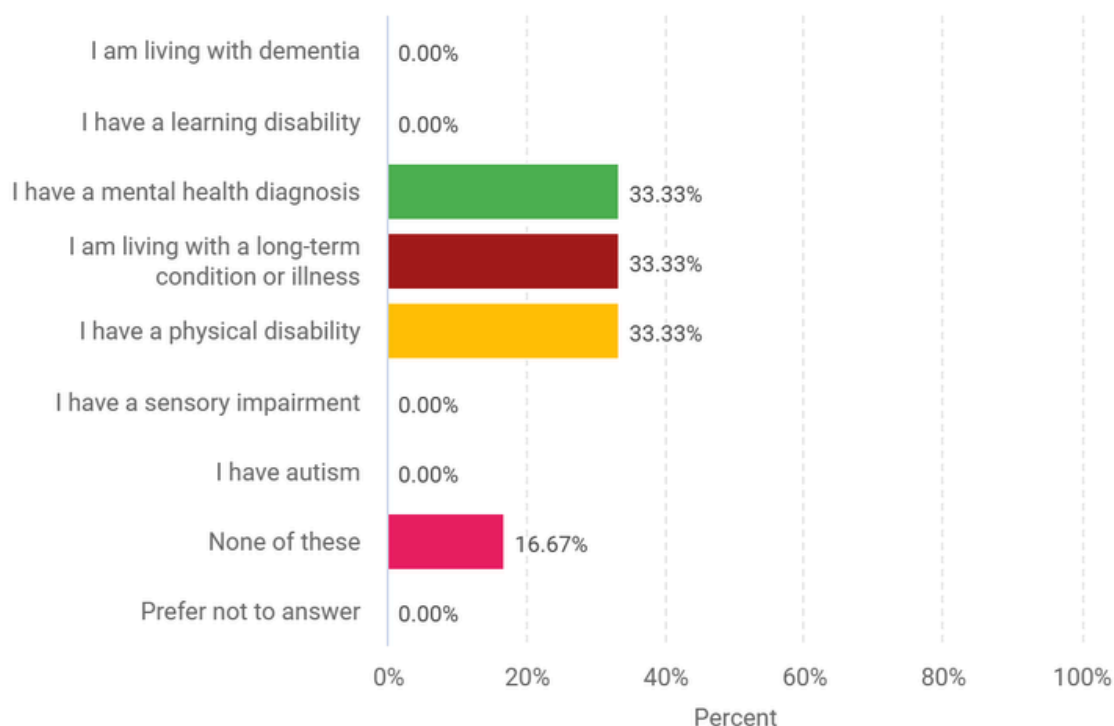
Silloth on the Solway coast has a significant role in the history of England. There has been evidence of a roman presence with the nearby town of Maryport playing a key role for importing supplies. In the 1850s, the town was developed as a railhead and port where grey granite from Ireland was shipped in for the building of Christ Church.

Silloth in modern times is a popular spot for locals to go for relaxing seaside walks and holds public events on the large green. With a population of 2805 (ONS, 2021), the size of Silloth is very similar to that of Aspatria but, lacks greatly with transport links in comparison. There is a bus service however, the regularity of the service is not as accessible as other towns.

Through distribution of our 'Ageing well' survey, we gathered valuable feedback from Silloth's residents. In relation to the demographical profile of who we spoke to, the age of respondents ranged from 25-84.



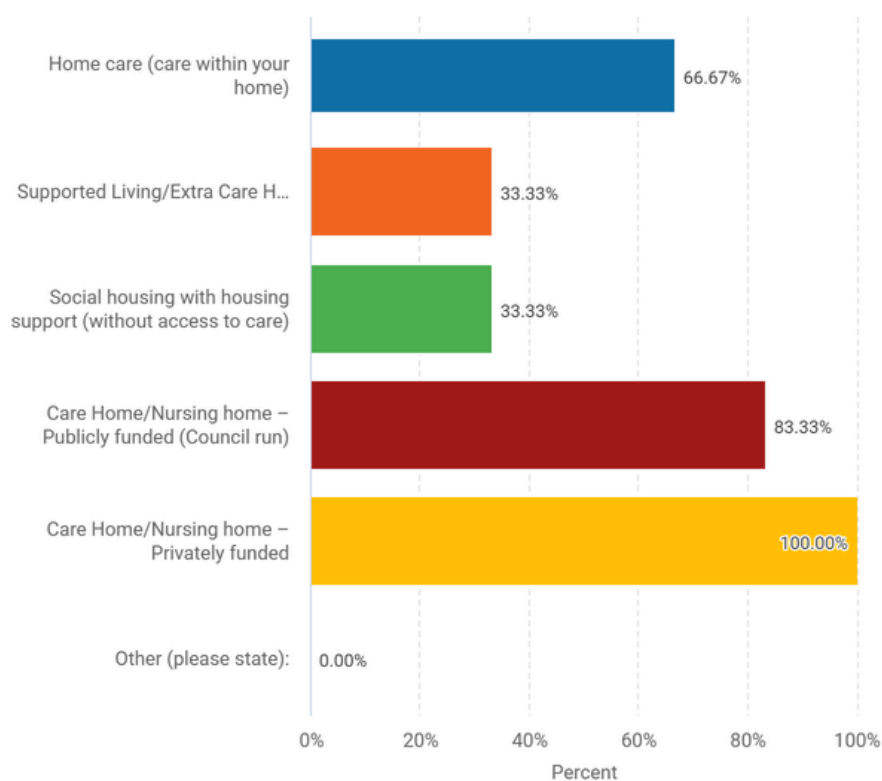
## Responses from those within disability seldom heard groups which are presented below:



## Healthwatch Cumberland asked about care service availability in each area visited.

Healthwatch Cumberland were interested in how aware the Silloth population are of care services in their area should they need them. This data was gathered via our 'Ageing Well' survey.

The table below features Silloth responses only.



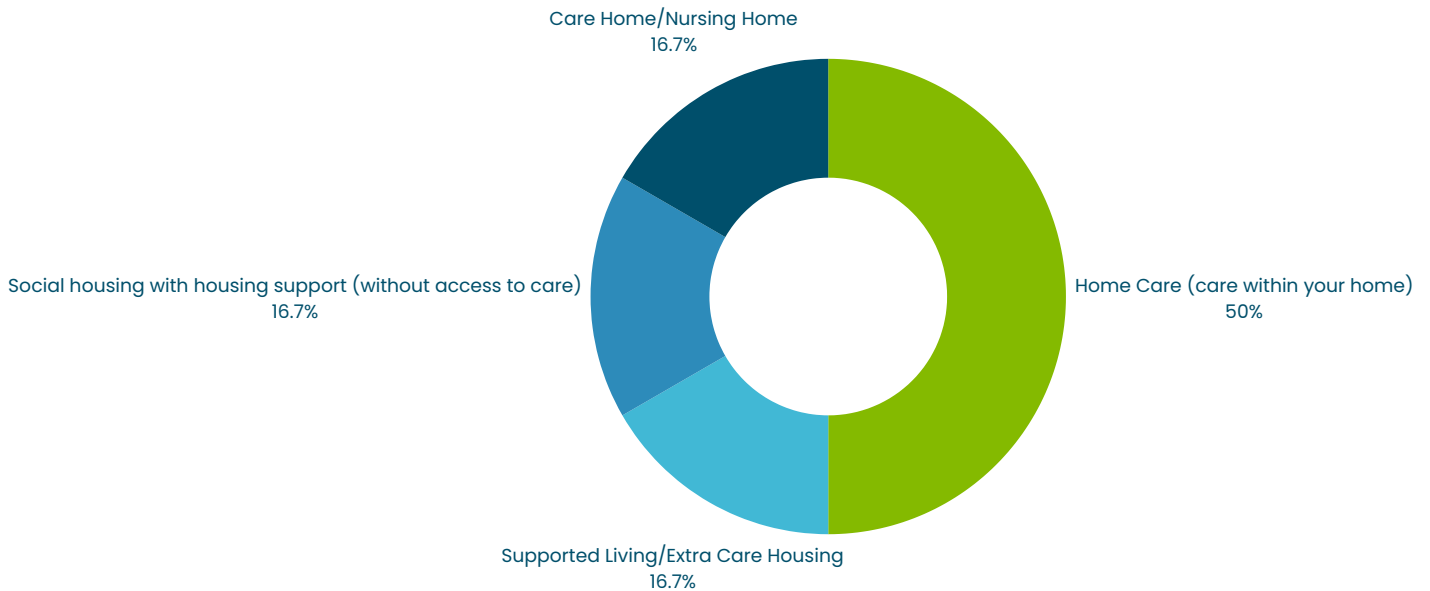
The survey also asked a relating question about how far one would be willing to travel for their care services.

There is a clear preference by residents of Silloth to not travel out of their nearest town for care with **83.33%** giving this response.



# Healthwatch Cumberland also asked about preference of care if needed.

As our sample aimed to include a wide range of seldom heard groups and a range of ages, factors influencing this choice was important for our report. This question also featured the opportunity to tell Healthwatch why they made this choice



Following the general consensus of this project, there is a large preference for Home Care if and when required.

Our survey also gave space for respondents to provide their reasons why this is their preferred choice.

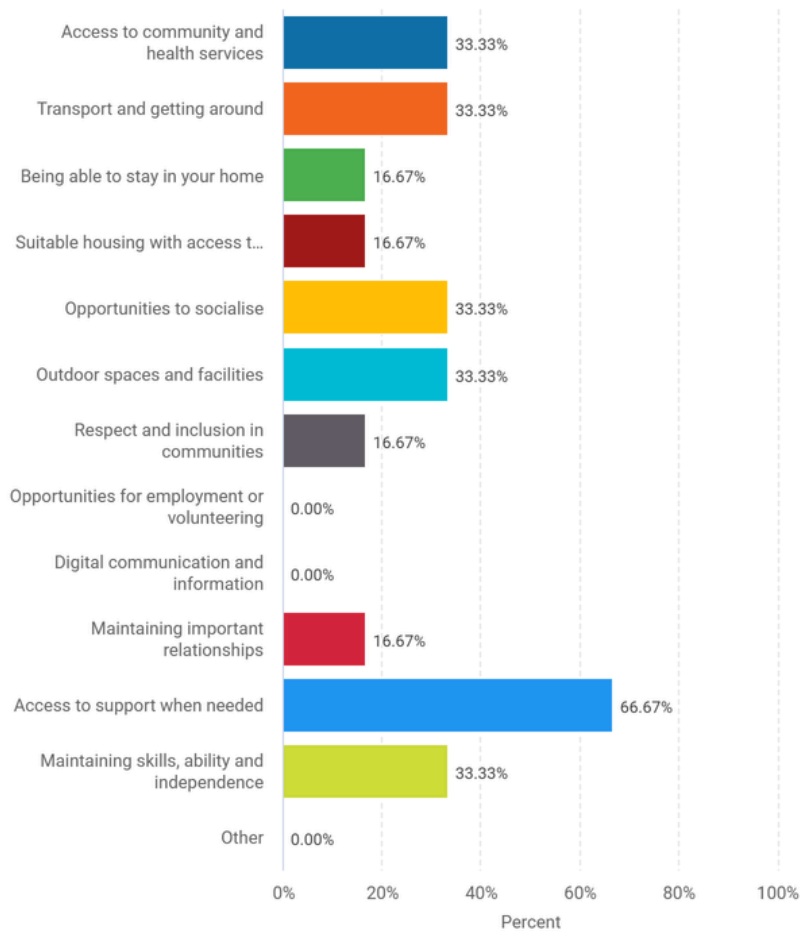
**“I want to remain independent for as long as practical”**

**“I feel better at home”**

**“My dignity and independence”**

# Healthwatch Cumberland asked about barriers that can prevent people from living a happy, healthy and fulfilled life as they grow older.

The survey asked what three things with the lack of access to would prevent people in Silloth from 'ageing well'.



Residents of Silloth had a range of responses for barriers to 'age well'.

Here we have included percentage of responses for all options to accurately present our findings.

There was the opportunity for those completing our survey to also tell us why they made these choices.

**“As you get older and have more ailments, I need the health service. I love walking and to mingle in communities”**

**“Outdoor space is important for your wellbeing. Support is very much a huge reason for mental health.”**

# Ageing Well in Whitehaven

The Georgian town of Whitehaven was a 'planned' town built upon the coal and mining industries.

The first English undersea mine was constructed in Whitehaven in 1729. It was the deepest undersea mine anywhere by 1931.

A memorial to the town's rich mining history was developed with a sculpture of four figures to signify the mine management, safety work, manpower and hardship was unveiled in 2005! This can be seen near the Beacon on the harbourside.



The town was built on a grid system of streets which instructed the type of houses that were to be built where. This grid system was inspired by Christopher Wren's rebuilding of London following the great fire of 1666 and it was Sir John Lowther who laid out these plans after being inspired. It is believed that New York's street system was inspired by Whitehaven's grid layout!

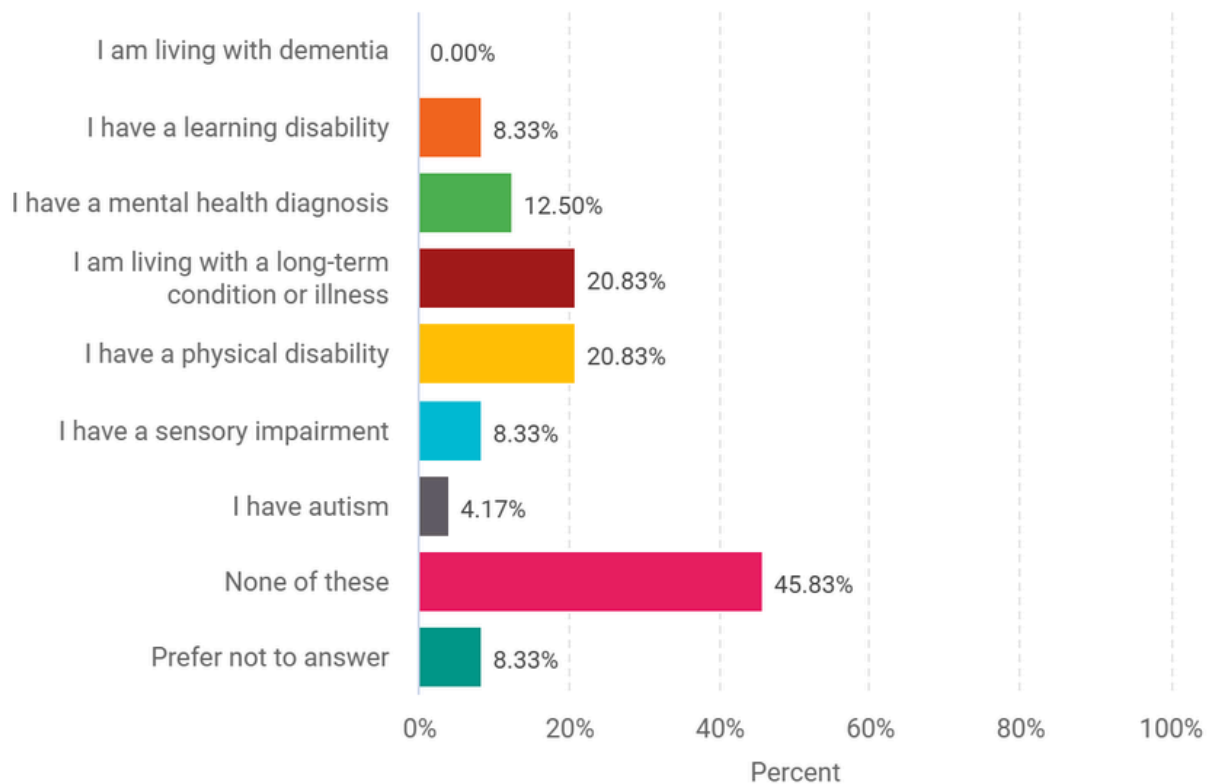
The town is an ideal place to live with being situated on the coast however only a short drive from fells and lakes of the lake district.



The population of **Whitehaven** is around 23990 people according to the 2011 census, as a result there are many services available to residents. Healthwatch Cumberland visited the area engaging with the public to gather their thoughts on what is available to those living in the town when it comes to “ageing well”.

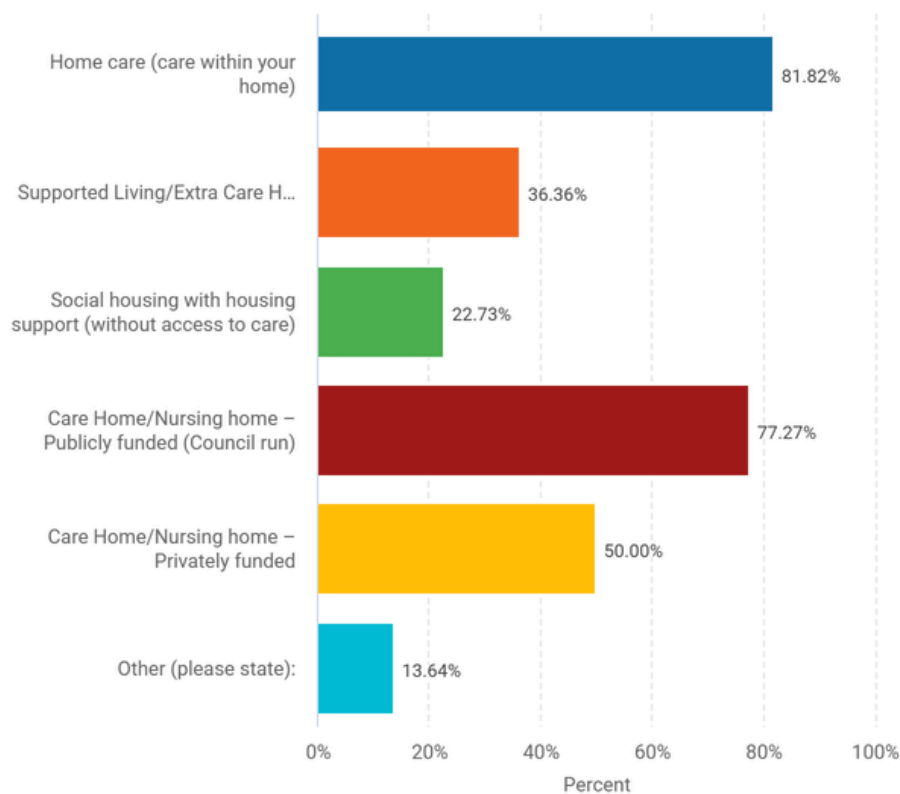


### Responses from those within disability seldom heard groups which are presented below:



## Healthwatch Cumberland asked about care service availability in each area visited.

Healthwatch Cumberland were interested in how aware the population of **Whitehaven** are of care services in their area should they need them. This data was gathered via our 'Ageing Well' survey.



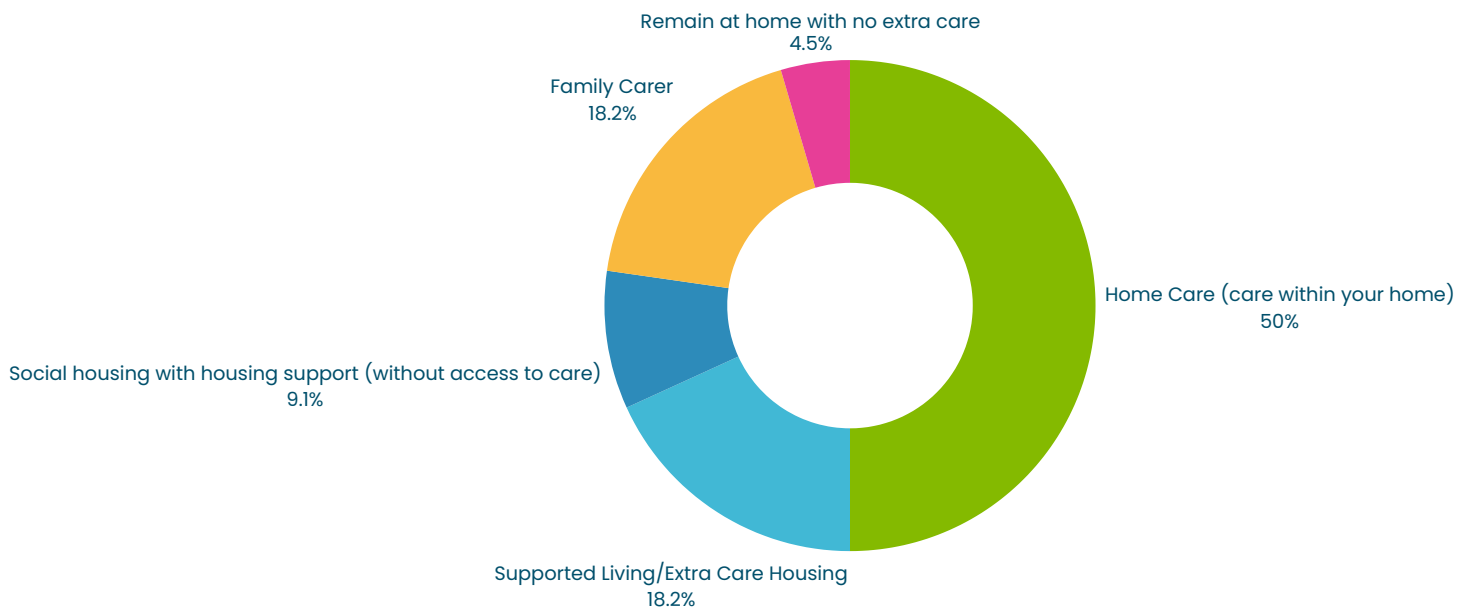
The chart above displays a large awareness for home care services and publicly funded Care Homes. The other care service options presented show some awareness by those in Whitehaven however significantly less than those previously mentioned. This may be a result of limited use or community knowledge lacking awareness of other options.

### The survey also asked a relating question about how far one would be willing to travel for their care services.

For willingness to travel for care, 58% of those responding from Whitehaven said they would be willing to travel within the nearest town.

## Healthwatch Cumberland also asked about preference of care if needed.

As our sample aimed to include a wide range of seldom heard groups and a range of ages, factors influencing this choice was important for our report. This question also featured the opportunity to tell Healthwatch why they made this choice.



The findings displayed above further supports the consensus of care choices being preferable that maintain a level of independence by those in Cumbria. In this case, there is a large range of care options that are preferable however, Home Care overall is the most preferred care option by residents of Whitehaven.

There was also the opportunity to tell us the reason why this was their preferred choice. See below for the reasons given:

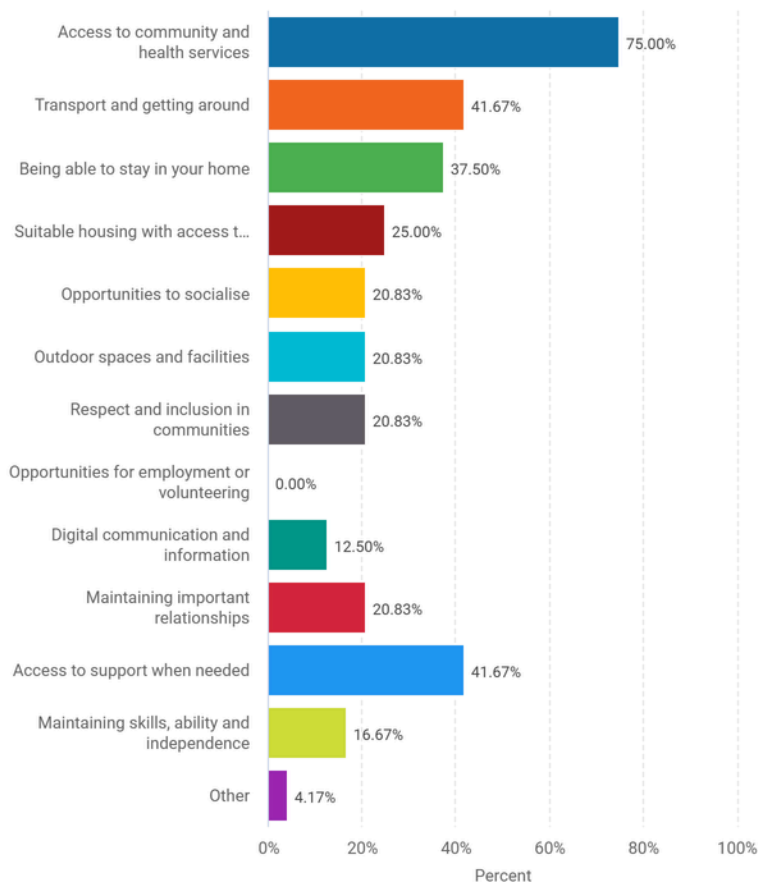
“I have spent a long time in my home, it is full of memories and I don't want to have to sell it to be put in a room by myself.”

“Care within the home is very quick and cares only for the basic needs of the person. My neighbours have supported living which provides them some company and healthcare is close at hand for them”



# Healthwatch Cumberland asked about barriers that can prevent people from living a happy, healthy and fulfilled life as they grow older.

The survey asked what three things with the lack of access to would prevent people in **Whitehaven** from 'ageing well'.



Here we have displayed the whole dataset as responses were large for many options. It is evident that the barriers we included are important factors to those in Whitehaven.

Respondents were given the opportunity to tell us why they made these choices.

“Quick access to healthcare services is really important, especially when you are getting older. Consequently, if there is no access and no efficient transport in the area, this can seriously affect ageing well. ”

“Discrimination is a key barrier, various reasons. ”



# Ageing Well in Wigton

The historic market town of Wigton is home to over 6000 residents (ONS, 2021). The town's name comes from "Wigca's tun" with "tun" being old English for townsted.

Although rich in services in relation to the town's small population, Healthwatch listened and reported what the locals' thoughts were for what is available to them when growing older.



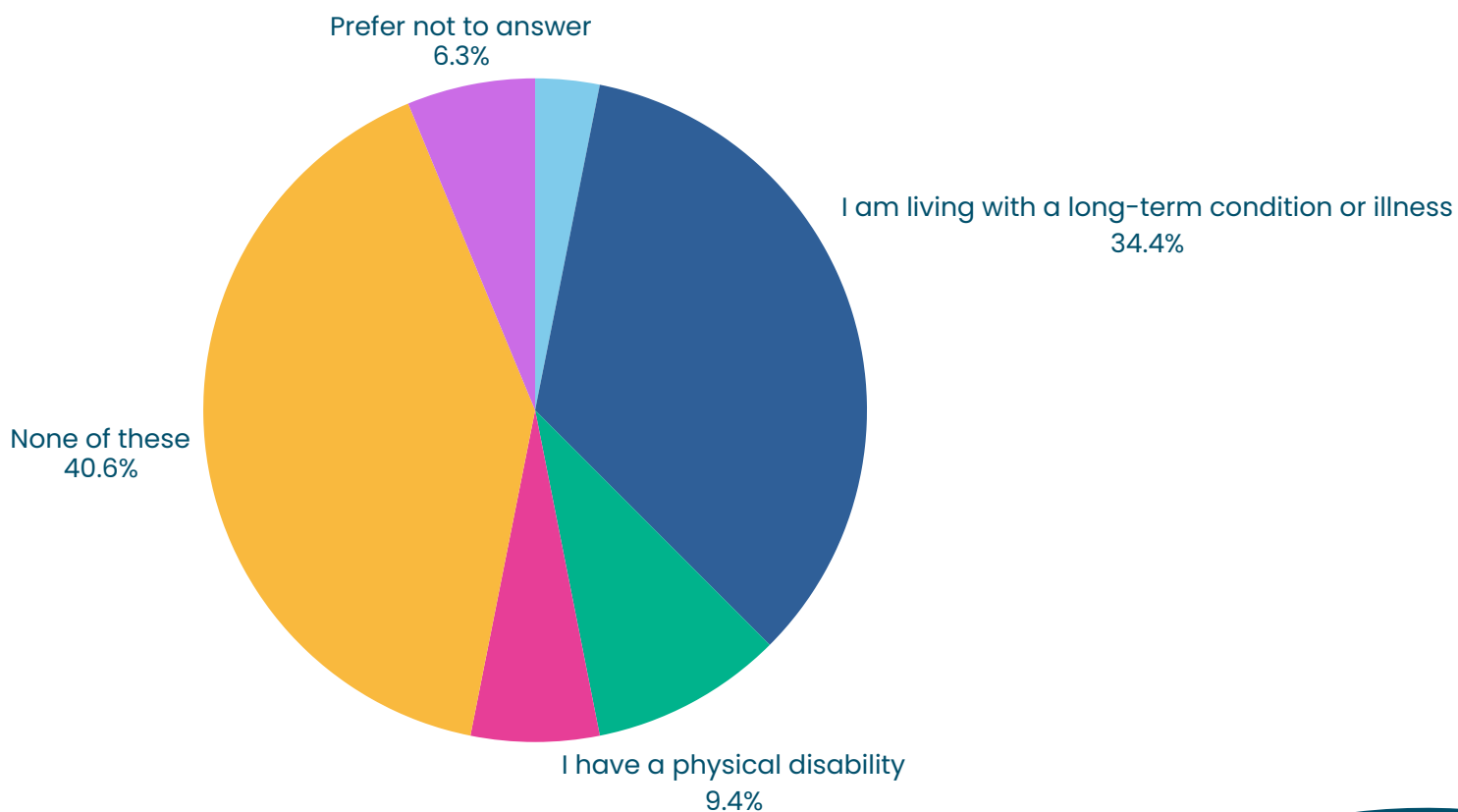
We held engagements to hear from the Wigton population and aimed to include seldom heard groups such as refugees and those with disabilities. These pop-up engagements were during the town's bingo event and in Market Hall Cafe.

Wigca is assumed to have been an Anglo-Saxon leader between the 5th and 11th Century. Wigton is full of history and a Heritage trail tour can be found online. Notably, St Mary's Church can be dated back to the medieval period. The small town offers a range of services such as shops, a theatre, an art gallery and the more essential services like care homes and a GP practice.



Through distribution of our 'Ageing well' survey, we gathered valuable feedback from Wigton's residents. In relation to the demographical profile of who we spoke to, the most common age group was aged 75-84 (27.6% of a sample of 29) which may have been skewed due to our locations of engagement not attracting younger audiences. Only 14.7% of respondents were male, however there were limited responses informing us of their identified gender. The ethnicity profile of our sample lacked some diversity with responses being either "white" or "white British". There were many responses from those with disabilities which means we achieved our aim of gathering information from a seldom heard group.

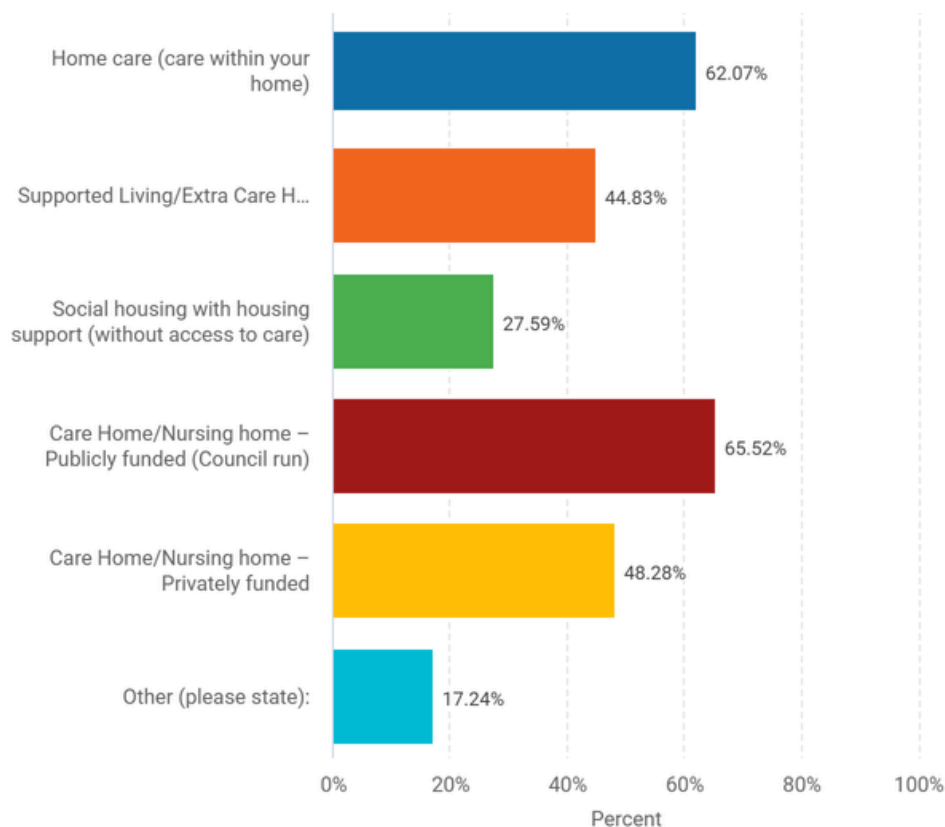
**Responses from those within disability seldom heard groups which are presented below:**



## Healthwatch Cumberland asked about care service availability in each area visited.

Healthwatch Cumberland were interested in how aware the Wigton public are of care services in their area should they need them. This data was gathered via our 'Ageing Well' survey.

The table below features Wigton responses only.



This chart provides a small overview of service availability in **Wigton**. There were five responses of "other" featuring content stating there is "not enough information of facilities available made known (e.g. leaflet posting)" and "I'm assuming I could get Home Care". Overall, these findings suggest a good variety of services available in the area however, more information for what is available is required especially for social housing.

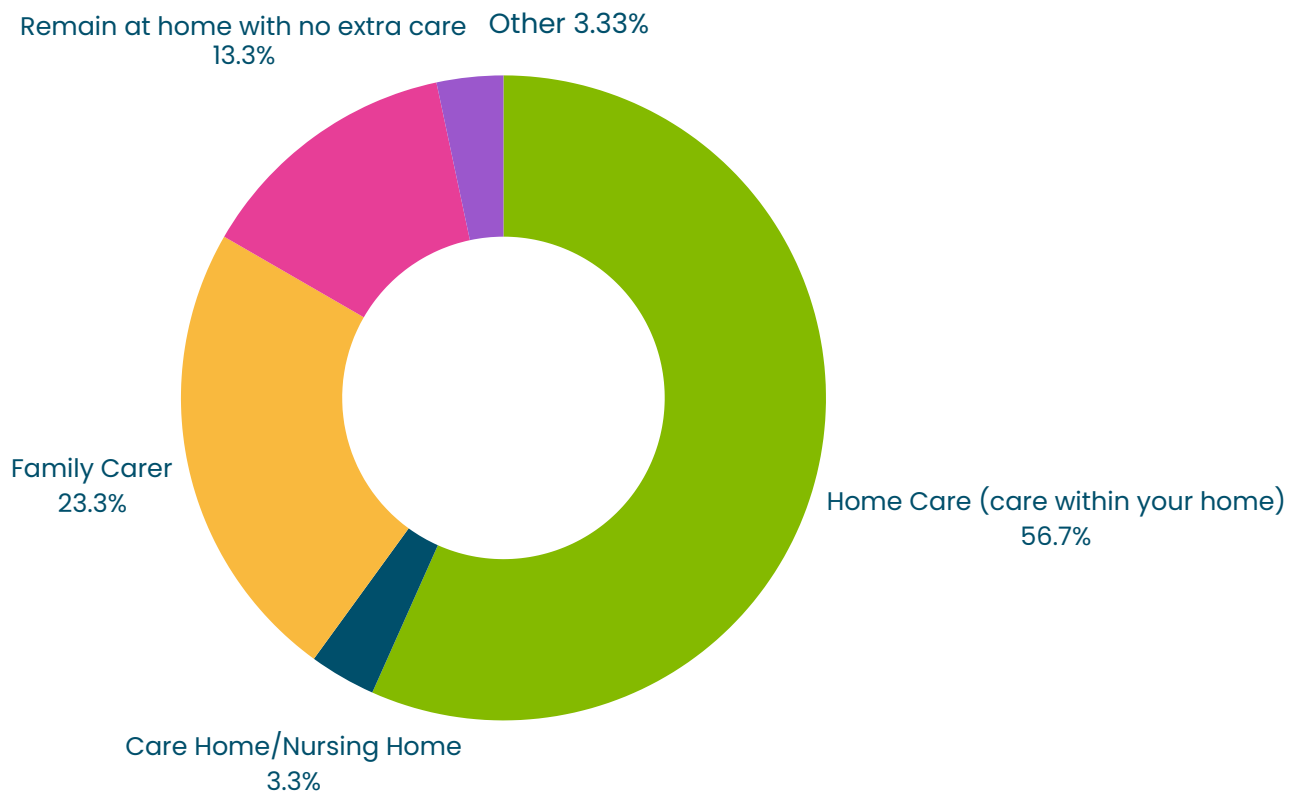
### The survey also asked a relating question about how far one would be willing to travel for their care services.

30% of responses stated they would not travel outside of their nearest town for care needs. Similarly, 20% stated they would not travel further than their nearest city.



## Healthwatch Cumberland also asked about preference of care if needed.

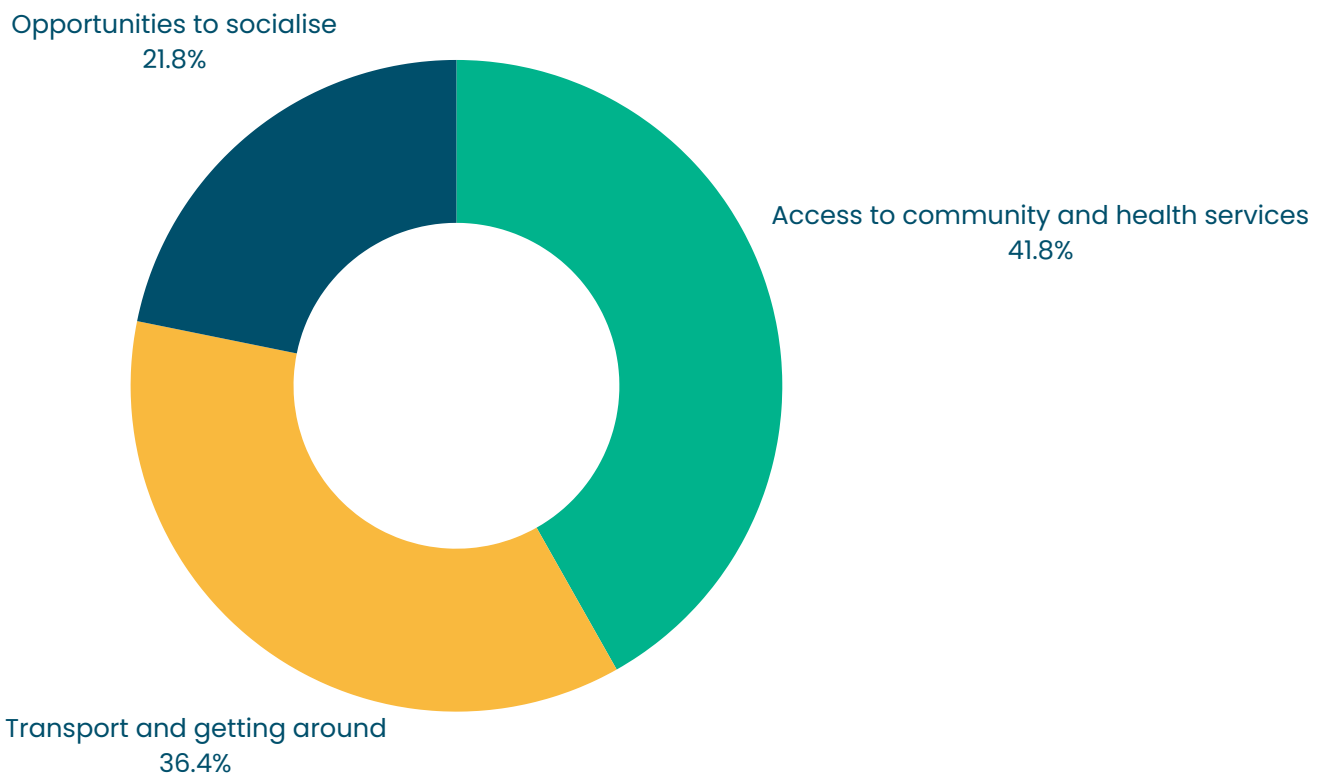
As our sample aimed to include a wide range of seldom heard groups and a range of ages, factors influencing this choice was important for our report. This question also featured the opportunity to tell Healthwatch why they made this choice



As our findings suggest, the **Wigton** population largely responded with a preference for home care. In the follow up question asking why this was their preferred choice, a range of responses were gathered. A notable response stated they had been in a care home and “didn’t like the setting” due to “people going in their room” and “dementia patients lashing out”. These issues may be better addressed from care home to care home however, it is important to report to spread awareness of these issues needing improvement.

# Healthwatch Cumberland asked about barriers that can prevent people from living a happy, healthy and fulfilled life as they grow older.

The survey asked what three things with the lack of access to would prevent people in Wigton from 'ageing well'.



Percentage of responses from our 'Ageing Well' survey for the three most commonly answered categories. This was from a dataset of 30 responses.

Respondents were given the opportunity to tell us why they made these choices. Someone said there are "no appointments at their GP" which is a notable issue as this can cause a drastic decline in Wigton's residents health and wellbeing.



# Ageing Well in Workington

The coastal town of Workington holds a rich history of industrial work. Defining features of the town include rows of terraced houses built way back when to accommodate the arrival of workers. The readily available iron, coal and limestone allowed various iron and steel works to run by the coast.



In the mid to late 20th century, there was a decline in these industries and Workington re-landscaped to develop modern industrial estates and the town shopping centre.

The town is now home to 25,400 people according to the 2021 Census (ONS, 2021). Due to the size of the town, it is one of the more developed areas of Cumberland in terms of services available to its residents. However, there is always room for improvement and Healthwatch is listening to the views of local residents.

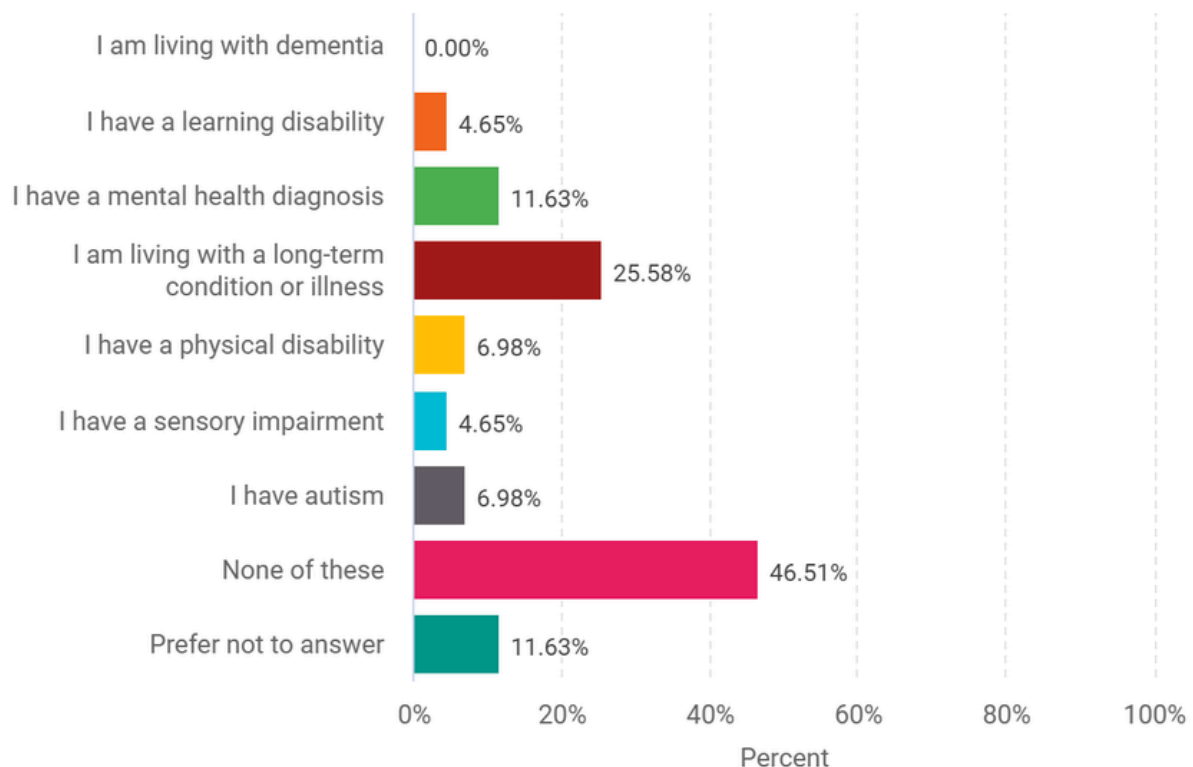
We held engagements to hear from the Workington population and aimed to include seldom heard groups such as refugees and those with disabilities. These pop-up engagements were within Workington library and the Oval Centre. We were able to speak to an excellent range of groups through the library with the English language café and resettlement group being based here. Through distribution of our 'Ageing well' survey, we gathered valuable feedback from Workington's residents.

In terms of the range of people we spoke to, our demographic information from our survey tells us the most common age group was aged 45–54 with 29% of a sample of 42 people responding with this option. Gender demographics stated 60% of respondents were female however 80% of overall responses skipped this question.

We also managed to speak to a range of ethnicities with Philippine, Chinese, Turkish, African, and Afghan individuals in addition to white British completed the survey and reported their ethnicity.



**There were also a range of responses from those within disability seldom heard groups which are presented below:**

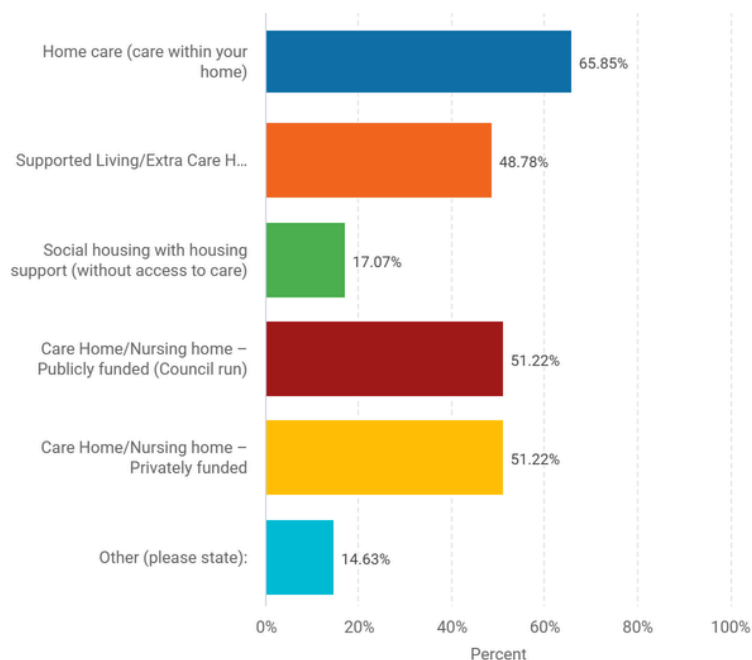


## Healthwatch Cumberland asked about care service availability in each area visited.

Healthwatch Cumberland were interested in how aware the Workington public are of care services in their area should they need them. This data was gathered via our 'Ageing Well' survey.

### The table below features Workington responses only.

This chart provides a small overview of service availability in **Workington**. The responses of "other" did not feature content answering the question and should be disregarded. Overall, these findings suggest a large breadth of services available in the area.



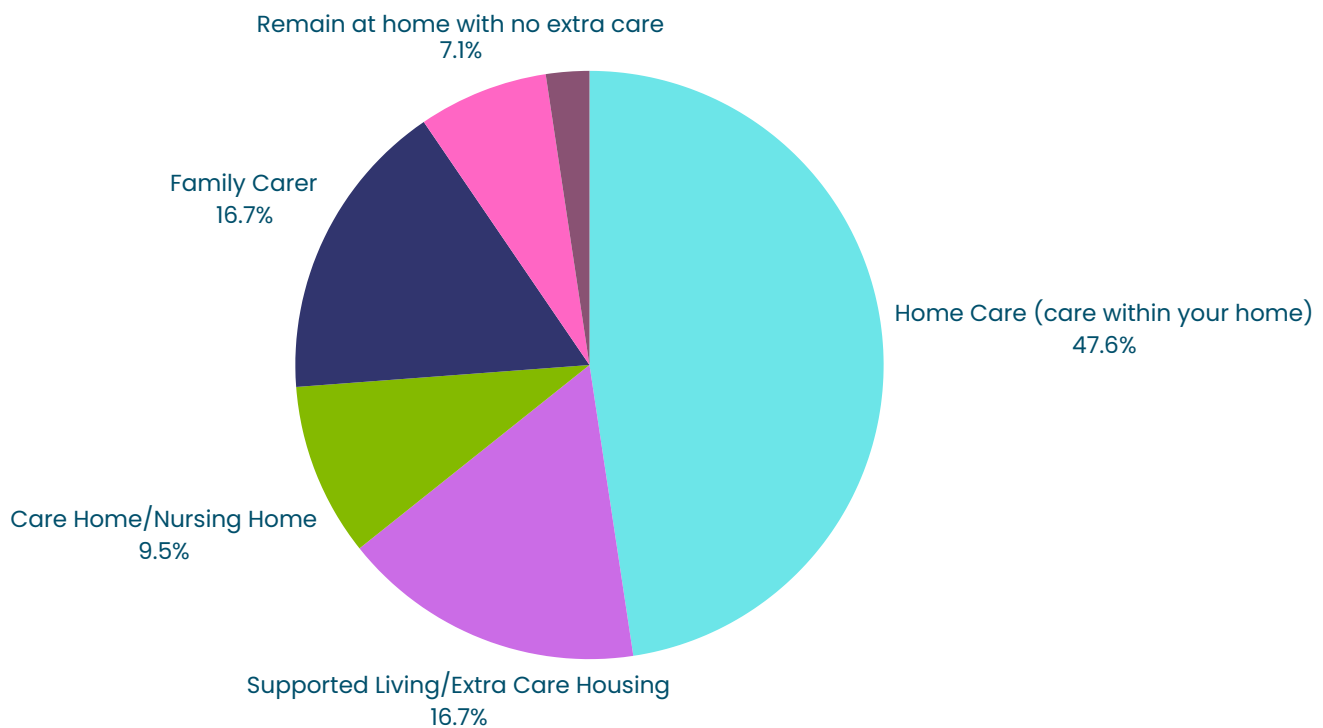
### The survey also asked a relating question about how far one would be willing to travel for their care services.

51% of responses stated they would not travel outside of their nearest town.

"Being comfortable and knowing how to access local community services is vital in older age to prevent social isolation. Having to leave your home community is not beneficial."

## Healthwatch Cumberland also asked about preference of care if needed.

As our sample aimed to include a wide range of seldom heard groups and a range of ages, factors influencing this choice was important for our report. This question also featured the opportunity to tell Healthwatch why they made this choice



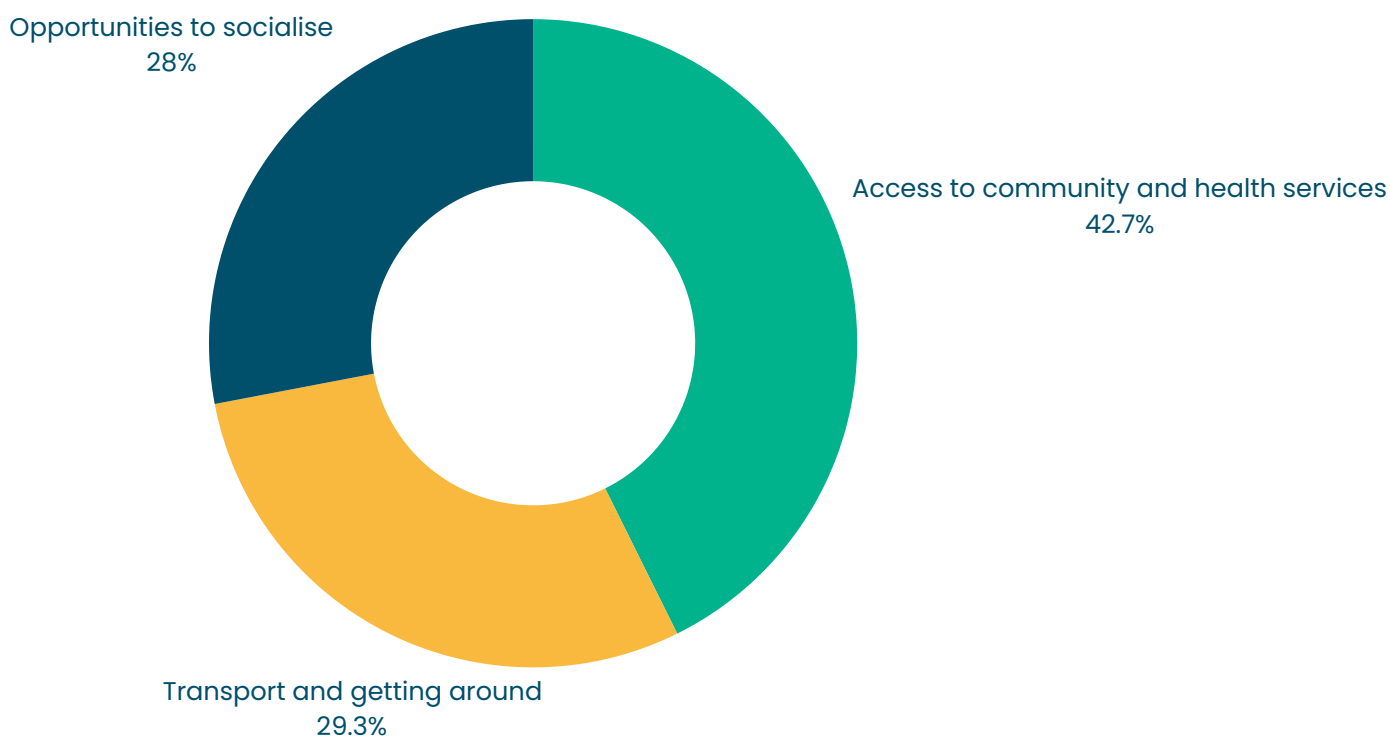
As our findings suggest, the **Workington** population largely responded with a preference for home care. In the follow up question asking why this was their preferred choice, a prevalent keyword of independence was featured.



This indicates that maintaining independence is a large deciding factor in relation to receiving home care as a preferential care option than others.

# Healthwatch Cumberland asked about barriers that can prevent people from living a happy, healthy and fulfilled life as they grow older.

The survey asked what three things with the lack of access to would prevent people in Workington from 'ageing well'.



Percentage of responses from our 'Ageing Well' survey for the three most commonly answered categories. This is from a dataset of 45 responses.

This survey question also allowed people to tell us why they made these choices for what is most important to them. Many written responses included transport issues, despite Workington's great transport links. For instance, "we have no public transport which could be a problem going forward". This may be the result of Healthwatch having asked people what their closest town was during engagements. Therefore, these responses may reflect the views of those living in the outskirts of the Workington area.

**“There are not a lot of facilities or access to outdoor spaces therefore, unable to interact with community.”**

# Number of Participants per town

Complete responses only

Aspatria	<b>25</b>
Brampton	<b>20</b>
Carlisle	<b>71</b>
Cleator Moor	<b>41</b>
Cockermouth	<b>35</b>
Dalston	<b>20</b>
Egremont	<b>8</b>
Keswick	<b>28</b>
Longtown	<b>16</b>
Maryport	<b>10</b>
Millom	<b>21</b>
Silloth	<b>6</b>
Whitehaven	<b>25</b>
Wigton	<b>30</b>
Workington	<b>48</b>



**404 complete responses**

In total, 607 survey responses were received.

Many did not state their nearest town therefore, this data was not included in these town specific pages.



**healthwatch**  
Cumberland

Healthwatch Cumberland  
The People First Conference Centre  
Milbourne Street  
CA2 5XB



t: 0300 303 8567  
e: [info@healthwatchcumberland.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchcumberland.co.uk)

[healthwatchcumberland.co.uk](http://healthwatchcumberland.co.uk)