



Here For You Report

Insights from the people of Westmorland and Furness

About Healthwatch

Healthwatch Cumbria (HWC) was established in April 2013 as part of the implementation of the Health and Care Act 2012.

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 decisions makers nationally.

A key role of HWC is to champion the views of people who use health and care services in Cumbria, seeking to ensure that their experiences inform the improvement of services. HWC are constantly listening, recording, and reporting on the views of local people on a wide range of health and care issues, ensuring that people in the county are able to express their views and have a voice in improving their local health and care services.

By law, there must be a Healthwatch in every local authority, thus, Healthwatch are funded by and accountable to local authorities.

Therefore, legislation states that every local Healthwatch must carry out the following statutory functions:

- Obtain the views of people about their needs and experiences of local health and social care services. Local Healthwatch make these views known to those involved in the commissioning and scrutiny of care services.
- Make reports and make recommendations about how those services could or should be improved.
- Promote and support the involvement of people in the monitoring, commissioning and provision of local health and social care services.
- Provide information and advice to the public about accessing health and social care services and the options available to them.
- Make the views and experiences of people known to Healthwatch England, helping us to carry out our role as national champion.
- Make recommendations to Healthwatch England to advise the CQC to carry out special reviews or investigations into areas of concern.

About Healthwatch

Cumbria has undertaken a Local Government Reorganisation, which took effect on the 1st April 2023. This means that there are two new local authorities (one in Cumberland, and one in Westmorland and Furness), which will be responsible for all council related services in the area including public health and social services.

Therefore, consequently, from the 1st April 2023, Healthwatch Cumbria became Healthwatch Cumberland and Healthwatch Westmorland and Furness, commissioned by the two new local authorities. But the goal remains the same, to obtain the views of local people, to promote and support the involvement of people in the monitoring, commissioning and provision of local health and social care services.

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Westmorland and Furness would like to thank all the people who contributed to this project by completing the survey. We also thank our volunteers for generously volunteering their time to support this piece of work.

Introduction

A key role of Healthwatch is to speak to the public about their experiences of health and care services. This is so that we can make recommendations to decision-makers on how to improve the services they are delivering, enacting positive change.

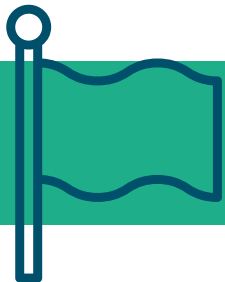
Here For You is the first collaborative engagement project from Healthwatch Cumberland and Healthwatch Westmorland & Furness.

The project was designed to allow us to hear what matters most to local residents so that we could address the key issues in our upcoming projects. It is all part of our continued efforts to keep the public involved in everything we do and tackle the subjects that really matter to them.

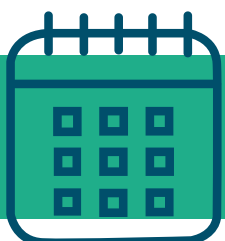
Therefore, we wanted to find out what residents' love about their area and what they would like to change about it, as well as what works about services locally and what needs improvement. This report correlates our findings.



We engaged with 72 people



At 9 different pop-up events



Over a 6 week engagement period

Methodology

Westmorland and Furness is home to a vast number of different communities, many of which are isolated due to their rurality locations.

However, whilst the diversity of the areas results in it being a unique and exciting place, it also has a direct impact in creating health inequalities amongst the population.

Therefore, specific areas were chosen for engagement due to their unique characteristics and to ensure good coverage of the Westmorland and Furness area.

These three areas were:

- **Penrith**
- **Kendal**
- **Barrow-in-Furness**

During the pop-up engagements, the following questions (plus standard demographic questions) were asked to every respondent:

- 1. What do you like about living in your area?**
- 2. What do you not like about living in your area?**
- 3. What is your experience of health and wellbeing in your area?**
- 4. What is your experience of social care in your area?**
- 5. To gather the thoughts and opinions of local residents about their area, as well as to hear what matters most to them in relation to health and social care.**

Where we visited

Timeline of engagement:

03/04/2023 - 16/04/2023 - Penrith

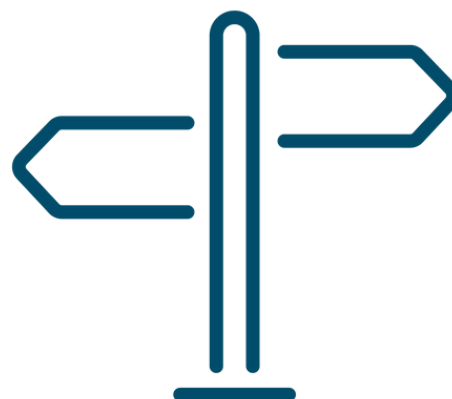
Wednesday 5th April	Penrith Library
Saturday 8th April	Penrith Town Centre

17/04/2023 - 30/04/2023 - Kendal

Tuesday 18th April	South Lakes Foyer
Thursday 20th April	Westmorland General Hospital Canteen
Thursday 27th April	Harri Bus Kendal

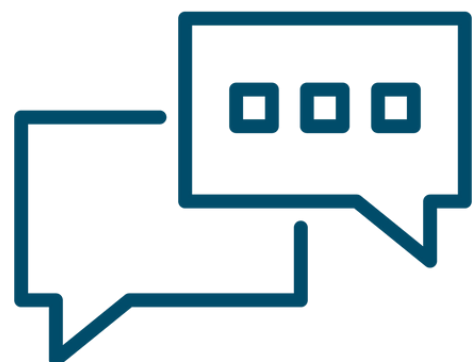
01/05/2023 - 14/05/2023 - Barrow

Tuesday 2nd May	Barrow Leisure Centre
Wednesday 3rd May	Barrow Market Hall
Wednesday 10th May	Furness General Hospital Canteen
Saturday 5th May	Tesco Roose, Barrow-in-Furness



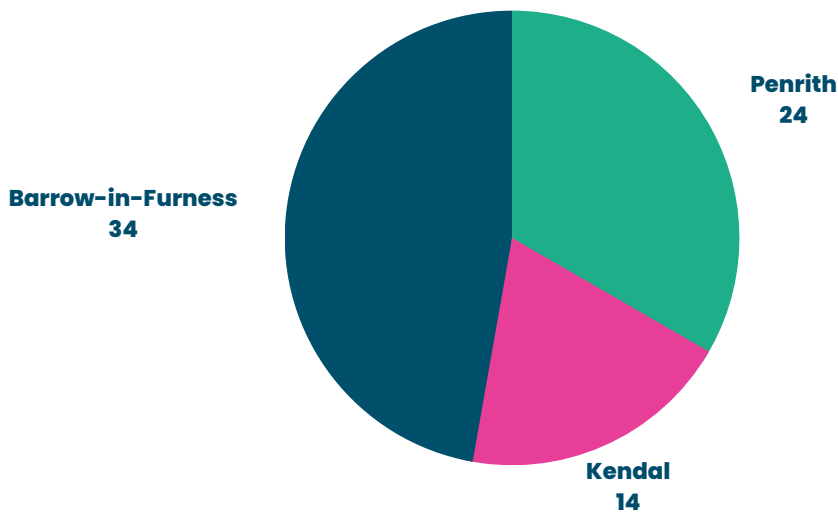
Your views were

- **People like living in their areas mainly because they have a nice friendly community**
- **Many liked that they lived somewhere rural and close to big green spaces**
- **Lack of public transport was an issue for many**
- **Spaces/services for young people need improvement in the local areas**
- **Town centres are struggling due to lack of shops**
- **It was mentioned that there are issues with getting a GP appointment**
- **Difficulty with getting a dental appointments or accessing any dental care**
- **Accessing mental health services is difficult**
- **Staff recruitment in social care is a problem**
- **Social care can cost a lot of money for family members**

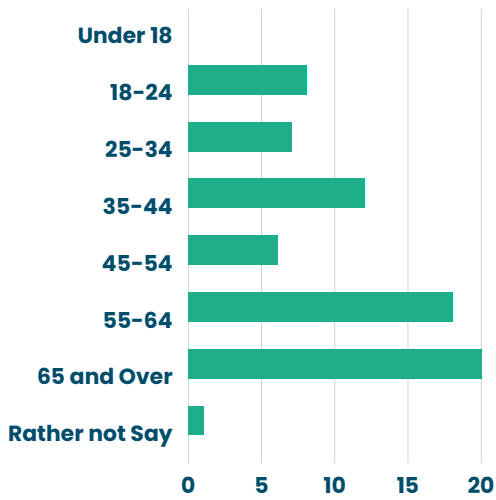


Respondent Deographics

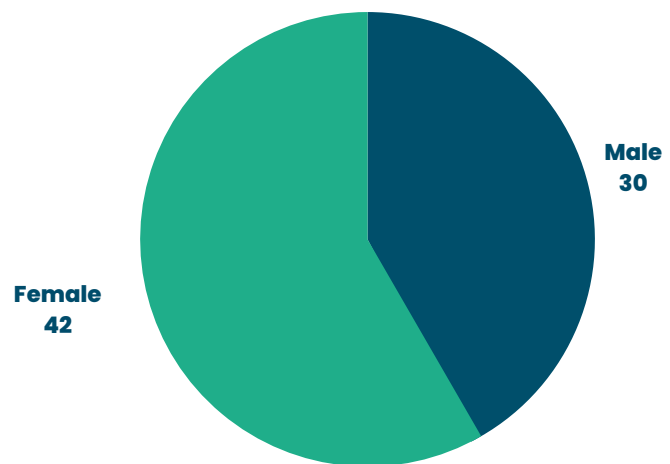
By Area:



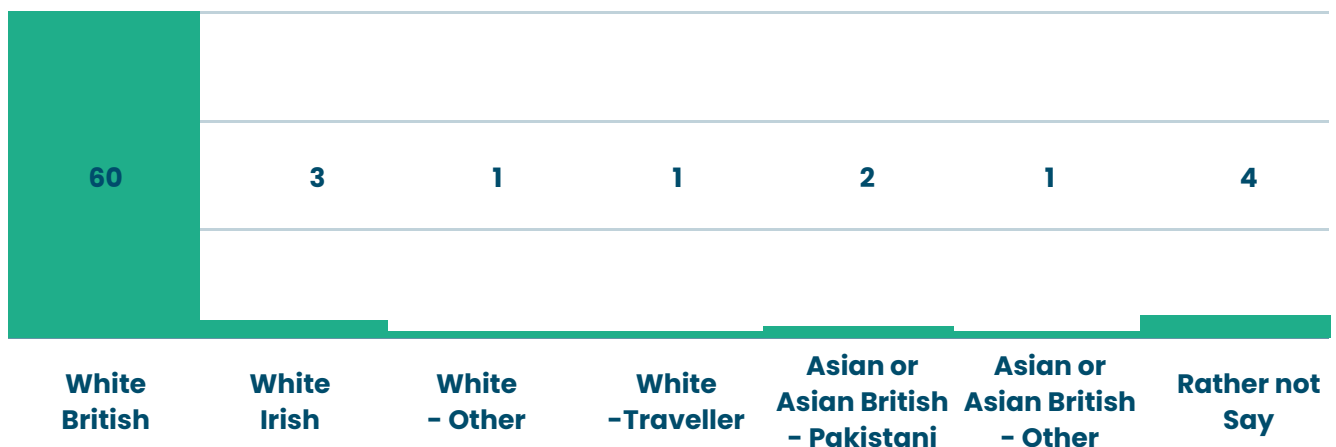
By Age:



By Gender:



By Ethnicity:



Here for You: Penrith

24 Respondents

What do you **like** about living in your area?

- **Good , friendly community**
- **Nice, quiet, rural area**
- **Have local shops and services (though could do with more)**
- **Feels safe**



"The town is relatively small so is easy to get everywhere. People so extremely friendly and its a nice place to spend a day outside."

"I love the area, it's close to the Lake District. Everybody speaks to you, I've lived down south and it's totally different, nobody speaks to you."

"Access to countryside, good local amenities."

"There's nice green open spaces, it's good for your physical and mental wellbeing."



What do you **not like** about living in your area?

- Car traffic
- Lack of public transport
- Spaces/services for young people need improvement
- Lack of shops (too many empty)
- Smell from the factory
- Increased housing (effect on house prices, population growth without supporting infrastructure)

“People don't realise we haven't got everything they've got in the city. There's no transport.”

“I don't like the holiday traffic in the Summer, I think Penrith, I don't like the empty units and I would like to see something for younger people, maybe a bowling alley. There's nothing for young people here, unless they're sporty - they can go to the leisure centre.”



“The way it's been developed with additional housing without regard for the population and also the way developments are taking place without the supporting infrastructure. When you go around Penrith it's swamped with housing without the school places or anything.”

What is your experience of **health and wellbeing** in your area?

- **Positive comments about the doctors, but many had issues with getting a GP appointment**
- **Don't get to see the same doctor (inconsistent)**
- **Difficulty with getting a dental appointment**
- **Negative perception of Cumberland Infirmary**
- **First Steps have been good (but need to be severely in need before can get access to the support they provide)**

"You never get to see the same person every time, that's if you can get to see them in the first place."

"My concern is with GP practices, it's the difficulty with access to GPs and I think that's putting more pressure on A&E. I remember the days you could go and see a GP and they remembered who you were."

"Like everywhere else it's getting a GP appointment or a dental appointment."

"Getting an appointment can be a pain, good service when you see someone worry about reputation of Carlisle hospital."

"Good, currently making use of first steps therapy, bad unable to register for NHS dentist at all."



What is your experience of **social care** in your area?

- Several have had to pay to get care for themselves or a family member
- Supported living is good

"A friend of mine, her daughter ended up having to pay privately for her 12 year old daughter, she's just been diagnosed with autism but she's had to pay thousands for a diagnosis."



"I've just lost my husband to dementia, when he went into a care home, I had to pay for all of it."

"My dad received free homecare as he'd just come out of hospital. Not enough carers and can't understand that people who work all their lives and pay into the system have to pay full cost."

"I'm doing a social work degree at the minute and I work in supported housing and it's good, people want to make a difference."



"I've been there two years now (in a supported living situation). We do loads of activities like coffee mornings, bingo and then every so often we have a lunch or a tea and I can come and go if I want to."

Penrith Case Study

Over 65, Female: Called an ambulance for her husband when he had a heart attack, but it took over an hour to arrive.

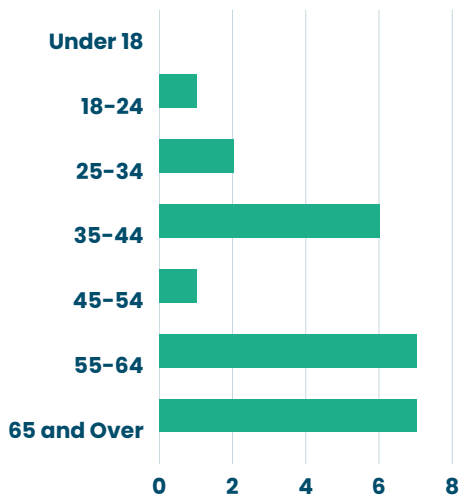


Although you've got the response time that they're supposed to get there by, after calling an ambulance, it is difficult living in a rural area. We've had ambulances from outside Lancashire coming in. The 999-response time, when I called for my husband's heart attack, was one and a quarter hours, that wasn't an acceptable response time then. Although there is someone on the way, you wonder if it'll turn up.

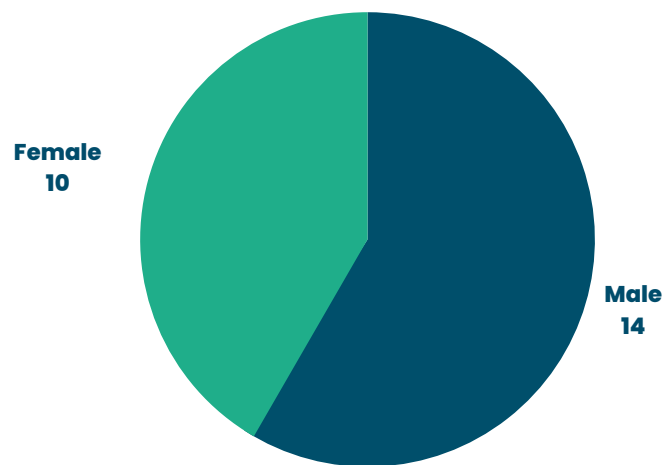


Deographics of Penrith Respondents

By Age:



By Gender:



By Ethnicity:



Here for You: Kendal

14 Respondents

What do you **like** about living in your area?

- Close to the lakes, and green spaces
- Quiet area
- Nice community/small town
- Good schools



"It's a small town, lots of nature around, beautiful scenery, the location is good, not too touristy but still benefits from being near the lake district national park."



"Nice community, walks near to the sea and the fells."

"Proximity to the lakes, great schools."

What do you **not like** about living in your area?

- Lack of 'good' shops
- Not enough services/facilities for young people
- Potholes

"Shopping wise lots of shops are closed down, any replacement shops aren't as good."

69

"Not so good for young people - if not living in central Kendal, then bus service very poor, Bad for young people they have nowhere to live and poor availability of accommodation."

69

"No decent shops - shopping centre has no shops in anymore- shops are now out of town. Kendal needs more facilities especially for teenagers."

What is your experience of **health and wellbeing** in your area?

- **Mixed opinions of GP appointments and dentists**
- **Lack of mental health services**

“NHS great, dentistry rubbish, passed from pillar to post.”

“Dentist is really good, GP is not so good, can't always get an appointment.”

“However, mental health referrals are too long for adolescents and children (CAMHS) young person has to be in crisis and end up in A and E to be seen. First steps waiting list is too long, up to a year now (speaking from experience working within education).”

“Doctors are fine, dentist fine, no issues.”

“I've got a dentist so I'm alright there. Relatively easy to see a doctor except for the 8am rush.”

“GP's aren't good, you have to ring before 8.30 or book on computer - for the elderly it's confusing. My mum is 88 and finds it difficult.”



What is your experience of **social care** in your area?

- **Very expensive to self-fund**
- **Not enough properties**
- **Not enough properties**
- **Struggling to recruit staff**

“My mum needed care - self funding - very difficult to get a care company in general but we were lucky finding one. had it free for the first six weeks when she was discharged from hospital then ASC took over and let me choose a company for mum/ the one we had was fantastic, but very expensive.”

“There are staff issues, and they are generally struggling to recruit.”



“Not enough properties that have good housing or providers. Oaklea Trust and Impact are good but remaining properties are unsafe, unsanitary and appalling. Cumbria Community Care, for example and Victoria Apartments in Kendal are unsafe.”



Kendal Case Study

45-54, Female: Had a negative experience with the emergency services, as the ambulance response time was very long, and then as a patient had to wait many hours for a bed in A&E.

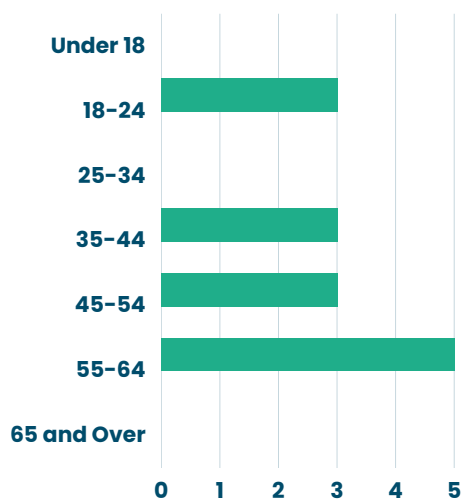


I collapsed and an ambulance was phoned they said it would be at least 2 hours before they would arrive, and they asked my family to take me to E.D. department themselves. They couldn't and we had to wait for ambulance. Eventually, I was taken to Royal Lancaster Infirmary. I was in A and E for 48 hours till they found me a bed. I needed an endoscopy, but that department refused to take me till a permanent bed was found. I was one of the lucky ones I was in a cubicle but there was an old lady in front of me in her 90s in a bed in the corridor.

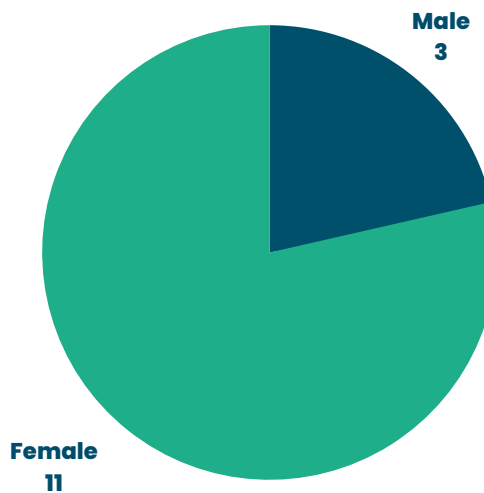


Deographics of Kendal Respondents

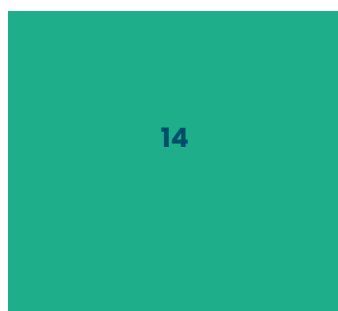
By Age:



By Gender:



By Ethnicity:



White
British

Here for You: Barrow-in-Furness

34 Respondents

What do you **like** about living in your area?

- Great community – very friendly people
- Family near by
- Close to Lake District, the seaside and countryside
- Quiet place
- Safer than other places

“Stone’s throw from the lake district.”

“Environment is gorgeous, very peaceful, people are friendly.”

“Nice easy, going place. I used to live near Glasgow. It was rough there and the town had lots of fighting. Barrow is more laid back and safer.”

“The nature we have around us, it’s a big town but feels rural, lots of greenery.”

“The beaches - love the area originally from Manchester. Much safer place and friendly communities.”



What do you **not like** about living in your area?

- Poor transport links (and can feel isolated as it is far away from other places)
- Town centre needs more investment (i.e. shops have shut, vandalism)
- No place for young people to spend their time
- Road conditions are not good

“Not good shopping anymore - lots of shops closed and vandalism on them... Not like it used to be. Also, opportunities for young people almost non-existent.”

“Not easy to get to other cities, driving takes long time.”

“Poor transport links. Isolation. Barrow doesn't get as much as Kendal.”

“Lack of services on roads, pavements and potholes everywhere.”

“No opportunities, nothing for youths, nothing to startup businesses, business rates too high.”

“Lots of empty shops in area, isolated area, town looking run down.”

What is your experience of **health and wellbeing** in your area?

- Many expressed positive thoughts of their GP surgeries but others mentioned that it can be difficult to get an appointment
- Several said that they didn't have an NHS dentist, as it was hard to get one/an appointment – mentions of a local NHS dentist closing
- Positive comments about the hospital staff
- Lack of mental health services available

"Generally, very good, staff need praise in the hospital, they are very friendly."

"Don't have a dentist and I desperately need treatment for a cracked tooth."



"Mental health help scarce and long waiting times. local mental health practitioner attached to our doctors has left leaving people with mental health conditions having to wait for referral to first steps etc."

"Dentist and doctors are good."

"Access to dentists is a problem, difficult to get GP appointments - 8.00 am ringing!!!"

"My NHS dentist has closed, and I've been given no options as to where to go next."



What is your experience of **social care** in your area?

- **Adult Social Care received mixed reviews**
- **Support workers/Carers are not given enough time to spend with each client**
- **There is not enough social care staff**

“Mixed - think time factor a problem. Time given for support workers to spend with clients are bad. Not enough time to chat and keep them from feeling isolated, only enough time to wash them or give them a sandwich etc. It’s sad.”



“Adult Social Care’s weren’t very helpful. I felt lost and felt isolated. Difficult finding dementia care for my mum as self-funding.”

“Adult Social Care were very nice and responded well to us. Age concern were very good too, they helped her get a chiropodist and a blue badge.”

“I work in social care and notice lots of staff vacancies, we need more bank staff where I work. Support workers not paid enough for what they do, this needs addressing if they want people to stay or come into profession.”



Barrow-in-Furness Case Study

Female, over 65: Her mother has cancer which the GP failed to spot at an early stage.

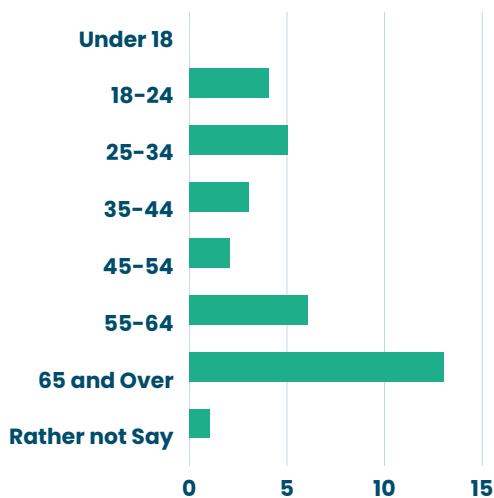


Issues with our GP, they have been extremely neglectful. My mum is 99 and is on ward 4 at Furness General Hospital. The GP didn't discover that she had cancer in her lung, instead it was discovered by a doctor from Morecambe when they answered 111. We never had the chance to allow mum to choose where she would like to die, and it's too late for that now, and she can't be moved. Our doctors didn't check on my mum's symptoms, they just thought it was a continuation of her COPD. by the time it was discovered it had spread and metastasised everywhere.

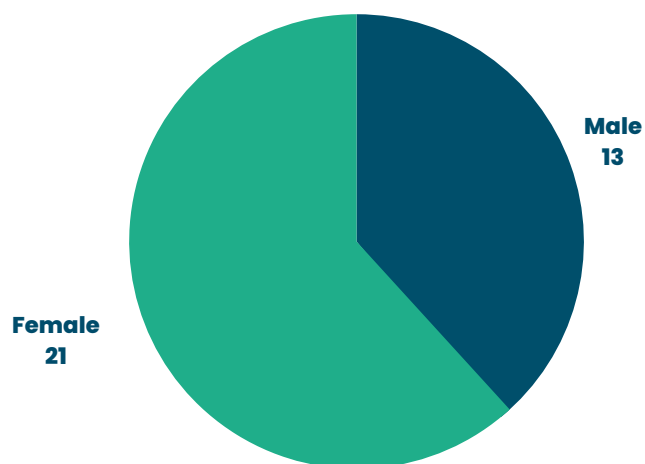


Deographics of Penrith Respondents

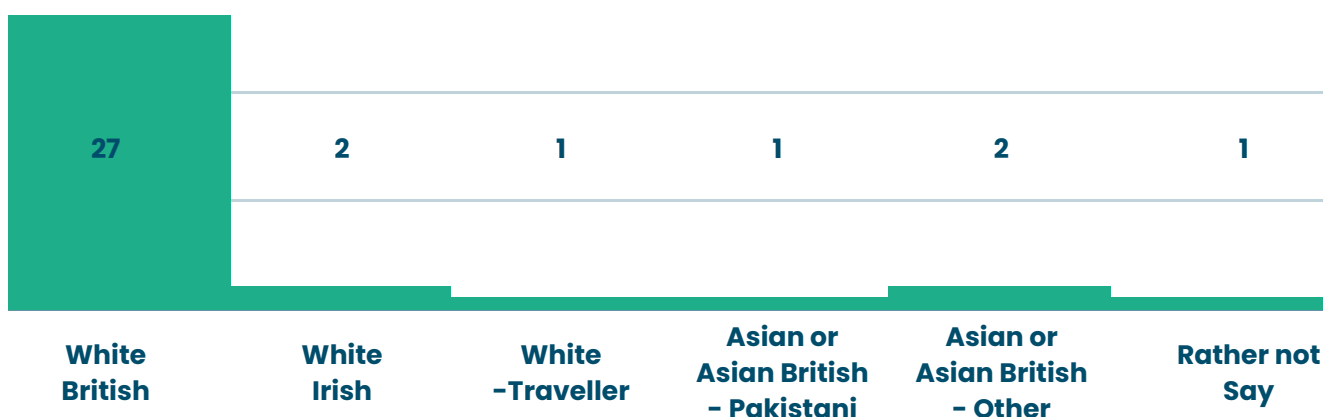
By Age:



By Gender:



By Ethnicity:



Conclusion

Following the split of Healthwatch Cumbria, it was decided that with a new Healthwatch we had the opportunity to ask residents about their likes and dislikes of the area they reside and their experiences of their local services.

The purpose of the 'Here for You' project was to allow us to hear what matters most to local residents so that we could address the most key issues in our upcoming projects. It is all part of our continued efforts to keep the public involved in everything we do and tackle the subjects that really matter to them.

From the **72** people we engaged with in the Westmorland and Furness area, the following areas have been highlighted as needing focus to drive improvements in the local area:



Address access to health services

- Including GPs, dentists and mental health support



Providing more spaces for young people



Increasing staff recruitment in social care



Improving public transport links



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