

Summary report for North Tyneside Health and Wellbeing Board

Talking health inequalities:

**Views about North Tyneside's Equally
Well Strategy and implementation plan**

November 2022

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1. Background

Healthwatch North Tyneside was asked by North Tyneside's Health and Wellbeing Board to gather voluntary sector and service user feedback to influence the local Health inequalities work associated with North Tyneside's [Equally Well Strategy](#) and [implementation plan](#). See <https://my.northtyneside.gov.uk/category/1238/health-and-wellbeing-board>

The aim was to hear the views of the voluntary and community sector in North Tyneside and the people they work with.

Funding was available to organisations to:

- Discuss the strategy and implementation plan with local residents
- Provide feedback based on their instructional knowledge and experience.

This summary report provides:

- [Section 2](#) - a summary of the key findings presented to North Tyneside's Health and Wellbeing Board on 29 Sept.
- [Section 3](#) - details about how this work was delivered and who was involved.

In addition to this report, a more detailed summary of findings under each of the seven themes of the strategy and the detailed feedback we received has been shared with the teams leading the work on the themes. Healthwatch North Tyneside has also offered to meet with these leads to discuss the feedback in more detail.

2. Equally Well strategy and implementation plan – feedback and key issues

2.1 General feedback

While much of the evidence gathered relates to the specific areas of the Equally Well strategy (see below), some general themes have emerged.

Primarily, people are broadly happy with the outcomes detailed in the implementation plan as they are. However, people also said...

- **‘The plan isn’t relevant to me’** - We heard from adults/older people/carers and people with mental health issues who felt the plan was too focused on children/young people and missed outcomes for them. North Tyneside’s Public Health team have explained that the strategy and implementation plans are written in this way in line with the approach highlighted by Professor Marmot.
- **‘It’s happening already’** - Many people felt a lot of this was already happening.
- **Opportunity to prioritise** - It’s a complex plan with lots going on. People said it would be great to pick out a few key priorities to focus on alongside all the other activity - ‘the ambition is getting lost in the day to day’ and ‘can’t see the wood for the trees’.
- **Cost of living concerns are dominating people’s thinking** - This is impacting on people’s health, wellbeing and ability to support their family.
- **Opportunity for coordinated responses to issues** - Bringing together the public, voluntary and private sectors to respond to such issues as fuel poverty, benefits/debt, access to food and transport. The voluntary sector is very keen to be involved.
- **Opportunities to involve people in designing solutions that work for them** - People involved were keen to help develop responses further.
- **Access to reliable trusted information is a real issue** - People don’t know where to go to get help and when they do ask they are often told ‘we can’t help you with that’. This presents an opportunity to build on the Living Well North Tyneside online information hub with both the general population and with professionals. Access needs to be easy and Making Every Contact Count approaches would support this.
- **Many people want face to face support not support at a distance** - People say they are not accessing some services because they can’t talk to someone face to face. Uptake of some services could improve if these services were offered in person.
- **Accessing services digitally continues to be a problem** - The requirement to be able to use technology, such as for online or phone services, was raised as

an issue by different age groups. This means that while some people are struggling to use services, others are just giving up and not accessing them at all.

- **Adopting a kinder attitude to people who need help** - Across the theme areas of the strategy, issues of shame, worry over accessing help, and negative attitudes from professionals were raised. Feeling judged and stigmatised puts people off using or engaging with services.

2.2 Specific feedback

The following slides show feedback about each of the seven individual themes within the Equally Well strategy and implementation plan (see below). These have been shared with North Tyneside's Health and Wellbeing Board in September 2022. The full details of the views and comments received are being shared with the leads for each individual theme (shown at the bottom of each slide), alongside an analysis of the key issues within that theme.

Best start in life : key consultation feedback



'A vital and productive society, with a prosperous and sustainable future, is built on a foundation of healthy child development.'



Every child in North Tyneside will be given the best start in life supported by families, communities and high-quality integrated services.

- **Many families are not aware of support available which reinforces the need for seamless access to support and information.**
- **Credible, trusted information should to be presented in a variety of formats and not only online – examples given included videos, via social media and paper based.**
- **Families who have children with additional needs feel they have to reach crisis point before support is offered.**
- **The high cost of living is having an impact on raising families and risks widening inequalities – high costs of childcare particularly highlighted.**
- **The importance of professionals acting in non-judgemental, supportive ways cannot be underestimated and is really valued by families.**



In-depth consultation feedback : Children and Young People's Partnership

Enable all children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives

Enable all children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives : key consultation feedback

“People who feel in control of their lives are more likely to feel able to take control of their health.”

- The importance of ensuring good social and emotional development should be balanced against educational attainment - especially for children with additional needs or vulnerabilities.
- Early identification of difficulties is crucial to ensure children and young people can maximise their capabilities. Prompt access to support subsequently is also important.
- Young carers, mental health and SEND were identified as a specific groups who need support so they are able to maximise their capabilities.
- Young people should have a choice of good quality apprenticeships or employment in good jobs – both should be well paid.
- Adults and older people’s mental health needs to be considered to ensure they can maximise their capabilities.
- Greater focus on adults.

Making North Tyneside an even greater place for children and young people to thrive, where all can access a high-class education with a culture of inclusion and achievement.

Our employment and skills service aims to raise aspiration and release potential.



In-depth consultation feedback : Children and Young People’s Partnership and Employability Strategy Group

Create fair employment and good work for all : key consultation feedback



“Good work improves health and wellbeing across people’s lives, not only from an economic standpoint, but also in terms of quality of life.”



We will empower people with the skills and resources they need to take ownership of their future and secure good jobs with living wages.

- The issue of in work poverty is a real issue for many individuals and families and was consistently highlighted.
- Many people are on very low wages and there is a real fear that the cost of living crisis will widen inequalities. Cost of childcare is also a real barrier.
- Recognition of the difficulty in juggling work with other commitments e.g. caring or childcare responsibilities and the need for flexible working patterns.
- Respondents agree with the aim of ‘good work’ but some felt pressure to ‘take any job, not a good job or a job that was right for them’.
- Jobseekers do need empathy and support, particularly to get better paid and secure jobs. People are concerned that they are underemployed.
- Support for particular groups to enter/stay in employment to address disadvantages – carers, long term unemployed, women returning after childcare, disabled people etc.



In-depth consultation feedback : North Tyneside Employability Strategy and Partnership Group

Ensure a healthy standard of living for all : key consultation feedback

“Poverty is the greatest preventable threat to health, and tackling it is fundamental to addressing health inequalities and boosting life chances.”

We want an inclusive economy that works for and includes everyone, where the benefits of the economy are spread, so that all communities in North Tyneside flourish and grow equally.

- Cost of living crisis was prominent in most of the consultation discussions and is a real risk to achieving the ambitions of 'Equally Well' as inequalities could widen.
- A co-ordinated response is needed to address the cost of living crisis as many people are already struggling – e.g. fuel poverty, food, clothes, bills, transport costs.
- Debt advice and support was identified as a key need as once in debt it is difficult to get out of debt and need is growing.
- There is a perception that only the most vulnerable will get support but there are lots of struggling families and people who are 'just about managing'. For example - using Free School meals as a criteria for support excludes lots of people in need.
- Many respondents reported an increase in stress and anxiety due to worries about money.
- Face to face services are important, particularly when people are feeling vulnerable.



In-depth consultation feedback : Poverty Partnership

Places and communities we live in and with : key consultation feedback



“Those living in the more socio-economically deprived areas are likely to have a lack of green space, poor air quality and poorer housing compared to the least socio-economically deprived areas.”



We will create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities.

- **Having decent and affordable homes is crucial to health and wellbeing - social housing, private rented etc**
- **Transport was identified as an issue regarding access and affordability**
- **Communities are keen to be involved in improving their local areas and want more ownership and involvement in initiatives such as community hubs**
- **Agreement that feeling safe in your community has a big impact on health and wellbeing**
- **Accessible green space should continue to be maintained, with accessible toilets park, transport access.**
- **Social isolation is a concern with many people appearing to not have re-connected after covid.**



In-depth consultation feedback : Safer North Tyneside Partnership, Climate change partnership, Wallsend and North Shields Masterplan

Our lifestyles and health behaviours : key consultation feedback



“Households in the bottom 10% of household income would have to spend 74% of their money on food to eat healthily.”



We will strengthen the role and impact of health prevention.

- **Agreement that the wider determinants of health are key to addressing unhealthy lifestyle choices.**
- **Cost of living was raised again and this is making it more difficult to lead a healthy lifestyle e.g. eating or heating.**
- **Agreement that working directly with communities to co-produce solutions is important to understand the barriers and complex social issues behind unhealthy behaviours.**
- **Some respondents said it was difficult to access support once motivated e.g. to give up smoking or lose weight. Need for kindness when accessing support.**
- **Mental health has an impact on the ability for individuals to lead healthy lifestyles.**



In-depth consultation feedback : Tobacco alliance, alcohol alliance, healthy weight alliance, drugs partnership

An integrated health and care system : key consultation feedback



Enabling different parts of the health and care system to work together effectively, in a way that will improve outcomes and address inequalities.



- **Importance of social care was highlighted and its impact on wider health and care systems and delays.**
- **Recognition that the voluntary sector is providing support and connecting people to community assets.**
- **Maximise opportunities to involve service users and carers in service development and delivery.**
- **Accessibility is important and having a choice of online, remote or in person support.**
- **Workforce challenges were identified and should be prioritised – recruitment, retention and retirement.**
- **Role for all NHS Trusts, other providers, voluntary sector organization to all work and support with this.**

In-depth consultation feedback : TBC – Place based arrangements

3. Approach and who we heard from

3.1 Approach

Consultation on the North Tyneside Equally Well strategy took place during July and August 2022, facilitated by Healthwatch North Tyneside. We wanted to hear from local voluntary and community sector organisations and residents who used their services.

An invitation for organisations to apply for funding to participate in the consultation was promoted in April 2022 via Healthwatch North Tyneside partners and e-news. The application deadline was 20 June with notification of success by 4 July 2022.

Applications were reviewed as they were received where possible to enable consultation to begin promptly. The spread of organisations and consultation across the borough was closely monitored to ensure full coverage of all areas. Further organisations were approached on an individual basis to fill in gaps, particularly in the West and North West of the borough.

A pack of materials was developed to support the consultation. This included a more accessible version of the Equally Well implementation plan, sample session plan and guidance on adapting the consultation to suit the needs of both organisations and service users. One-to-one support was offered, primarily at the planning stage, but was available throughout if required.

To maximise the quality of engagement, emphasis was placed on flexibility and on group discussion to allow people the opportunity to reflect on their experiences and form their views on the strategy's proposals. However, as the consultation progressed, this was supplemented with simple online and paper surveys, and one-to-one engagements and interviews for organisations that felt this would be of benefit.

Generally speaking, group engagements were carried out with pre-existing groups, although some were advertised as 'Conversation Cafés and events specifically for the purpose. A number of these sessions incorporated an art or craft activity to enable expression of views through a variety of forms. To extend the reach, some spoke to people in shopping centres, sent paper or online surveys, or visited people at home.

Running alongside engagement with North Tyneside residents and service users; staff, trustees and volunteers were also asked to share their views based on their experience of working in the locality. This was an opportunity to make the most of the wealth of expertise in the area relating to the aims and actions of the Equally Well implementation plan. This was conducted via both group and individual discussion, and interviews undertaken by Healthwatch.

Organisations were asked to complete their evidence gathering and submit their feedback by the end of August, however some were slightly delayed due to later involvement in the consultation and because of staff absence.

A substantial amount of feedback has been collected from across North Tyneside, both addressing the elements of the implementation plan and the aims of the Equally Well strategy as a whole. It has enabled the identification of key issues and the things that matter most to the people who responded, as well as providing a perspective on the

extent to which the plans remain representative of the needs and wishes of residents in the borough.

3.2 Who we heard from

Organisations involved

28 organisations were involved in the Equally Well consultation from across the borough, some serving the whole of North Tyneside and beyond and others mainly a specific locality.

Organisation/ Group	Area covered by organisation	Organisation only perspective
Age UK	Across North Tyneside	
Citizens Advice Bureau	Across North Tyneside	Yes
Carers' Centre	Across North Tyneside	
Cedarwood Trust	Mainly Meadow Well and North Shields; some Battlehill, Howdon, Wallsend; few in North West and coast.	
Community and Health Care Forum	Across North Tyneside	
Citizen's UK	Across North Tyneside	Yes
Ethnic Diversity Community Taskforce	Across North Tyneside	
Family Gateway	Howdon, Wallsend	
First contact clinical	Across North Tyneside	Yes
Healthwatch North Tyneside	Across North Tyneside	Yes
Helix Arts	Across North Tyneside	
Justice Prince	Across North Tyneside, including: Longbenton, North Shields, Wallsend, Whitley Bay, Killingworth	
LD:NorthEast	Across North Tyneside	
Linskill Centre	Across North Tyneside, mainly North Shields	
Meadow Well Connected	Meadow Well, North Shields	
MumSpace	Across North Tyneside	
North Tyneside Arts Studio (NTAS)	Across North Tyneside, mainly North Shields, Wallsend	
North Tyneside Cultural Education Partnership (NTCEP)	Across North Tyneside	
Out of sight	Mainly north west North Tyneside	
Phoenix Detached Youth Project	Chirton, Meadow Well, East Howdon, Percy Main, Royal Quays	
Shiremoor Health Advice Resource Project (SHARP)	Shiremoor	
Springfield Community Association	Forest Hall	
Support & Grow	Across North Tyneside, including: Wallsend, Battle Hill, Howdon, Whitley Bay, North Shields, Killingworth, Backworth, Shiremoor	
The Bay Foodbank	Across North Tyneside, from Tynemouth to Walker	Yes

VODA - NT LIFE Recovery College	Across North Tyneside	
Wallsend Children's Centre (Wallsend Community Champions)	Wallsend	
Whitley Bay Big Local	Mostly Whitley Bay, Cullercoats; some Shiremoor, Wallsend, North Shields	
YMCA	Across North Tyneside	

Seven of these organisations/groups did not receive funding, instead volunteered their contribution.

People we heard from

It should be noted that the numbers below do not fully represent the breadth of opinion expressed within the feedback. Responses from an organisational perspective from staff, trustees and volunteers draw on a wealth of experience of working with local residents over many years.

Source of feedback	Number of responses
Clients/service users	800
Staff/volunteers/trustees	132
Total	932

You can see detailed information about the demographics of people we heard from in annex 1.

3.3 Examples of different approaches to engaging with local people

Organisations took varied approaches to gathering feedback to suit their ways of working, their capacity and their service users. The following are examples from a range of organisations.

MumSpace

MumSpace runs groups for expecting mums and mums with children up to pre school age, based around the North Shields area but open to all mums across North Tyneside. The focus is on combating social isolation and supporting mental and physical health and wellbeing.

Four Equally well consultation sessions were run based on different themes, with a community artist leading a creative activity to help mums feel comfortable to explore their views. Emphasis was placed on sessions being informal, fun and accessible, where issues could be discussed with children playing and crafting alongside their parent.

MumSpace noted that mums were particularly keen to discuss the elements of the Giving Every Child the Best Start in Life aspect of the Equally Well implementation plan, and shared their views openly. They valued being given the option to hear about the plan and to have their say.



Support and Grow

Support and Grow works at grassroots level in communities across North Tyneside focusing on poverty, social disadvantage and isolation. Support is provided via seven Cuppa Clubs and outreach to vulnerable clients in their own homes. Support and Grow volunteers live and work within the communities they serve and play a critical role in creating a pathway to accessing outreach services.

During the summer, Support and Grow were offered the opportunity to take over an under-used community centre in Shiremoor to set up a warm hub to support clients struggling with the increasing costs of living in the forthcoming months. Whilst the extra commitment interfered with consultation taking place in the way planned, it galvanised community action and brought together both local residents to the centre and service users who would not normally leave their homes. Volunteers were able to engage in informal conversation around the themes of the Equally Well strategy as they worked together on improving the centre. People were invited to take discussions further by attending themed Cuppa Clubs at the centre, and supported to record their views on a paper questionnaire. An online survey was also made available to those lacking the confidence to attend the centre.

A wide range of feedback was gathered, notably around barriers to accessing services and support. This was particularly evident for families with a child/ young person with SEND or LGBTQ+ young person, who felt the strategy offered nothing for them.



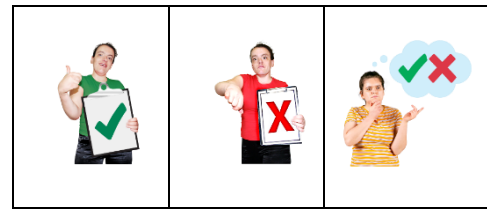
LD:NorthEast

LD:NorthEast are based in Wallsend and support people with learning disabilities and/or autism across North Tyneside. It was clear from the start that the materials summarising the Equally Well implementation plan would not be accessible to LD:NorthEast service users.

To address this issue, a meeting was set up to consider how to enable clients to engage in a way that was meaningful to them. Specific areas were selected, informed by current groups that were running e.g. Healthy Cooking and various exercise activities, and by topics that were felt to be of interest and relevance to service users.

Members from the Northern Voices group at LD:NorthEast were offered the opportunity to become peer researchers, whereby they would receive training from the Development Manager to interview service users at group activities and when visiting the centre.

Training session one included role play and listening activities to practice responding to a flow of conversation and to adjust questioning accordingly. A member of Healthwatch staff joined the second session, where simple questions were created for each topic. Layered questioning was devised that would allow those with the greatest communication and understanding difficulties to be able to participate using Yes/ No/ Not sure images.



Peer researchers used their existing relationships with service users to support their involvement in the consultation process, and were able to judge when to omit questions requiring a more complex response.



This approach proved very successful and allowed service users with learning disabilities and/or autism to share their experiences and concerns, providing many valuable and insightful responses.

NT Leaders Together

NT Leaders Together represents a partnership of seven organisations/members working together on the Equally Well strategy consultation.

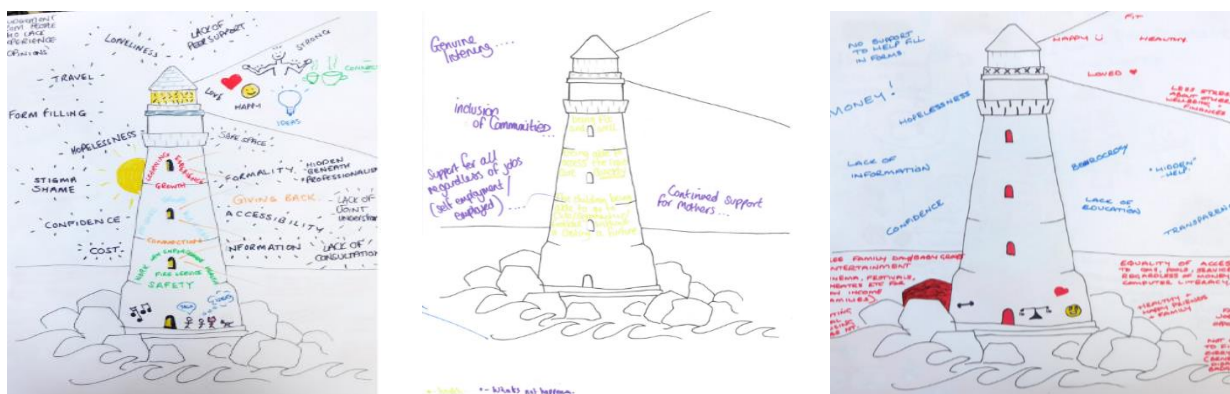
The organisations are:

- Helix Arts
- North Tyneside Cultural Education Partnership
- Family Gateway
- North Tyneside Arts Studio
- Linskill Community Centre
- Meadow Well Connected
- VODA NT LIFE Recovery College

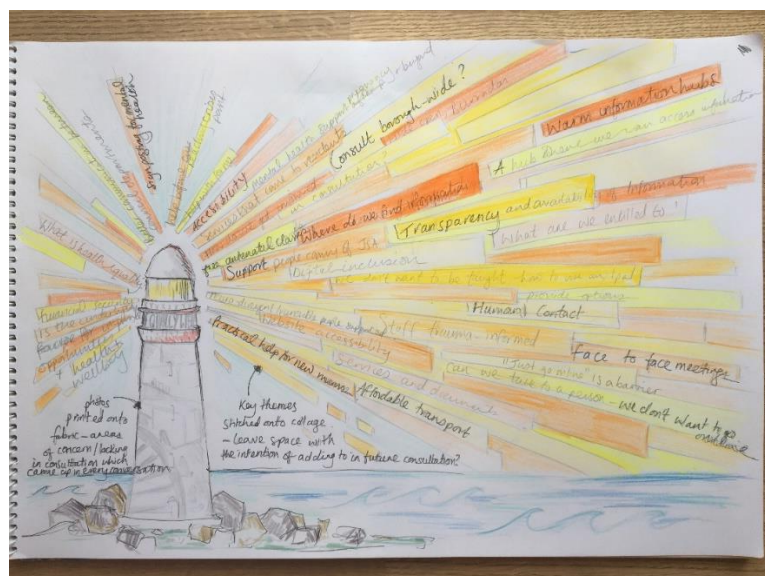


A series of sessions was arranged, mostly with pre-existing groups, to enable service users to explore what health equality meant to them, and what their healthiest and happiest life would look like in North Tyneside. People were asked to identify challenges to making healthy lifestyle choices and suggest potential ideas and solutions for moving forward.

To supplement evidence gathering, a simple survey was used to collect feedback both on paper and online covering similar areas as above.



This opportunity meant the partners agreed to a collective pledge and set of principles to work together. It was a pilot project to explore ways of working together collaboratively and sharing resources. By combining public engagement with an artistic activity, a complex strategy was made accessible, allowing people to contribute in a way that suited them. The artist is turning the image below into a textile piece.

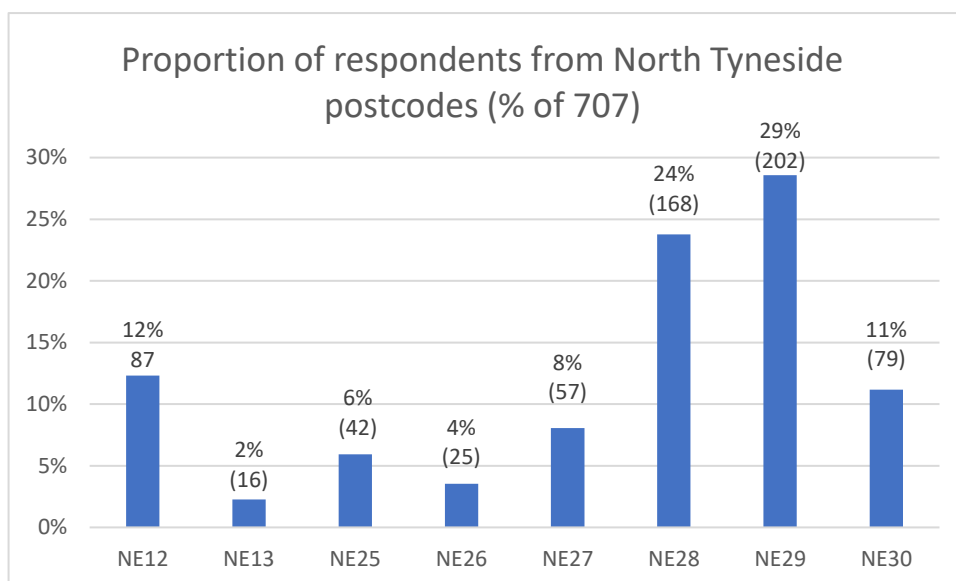


Annex 1 - Detailed demographic information

As often happens, not everyone shared information about their demographic information. Some groups found this information easier to gather than others and some individuals did not wish to share these details.

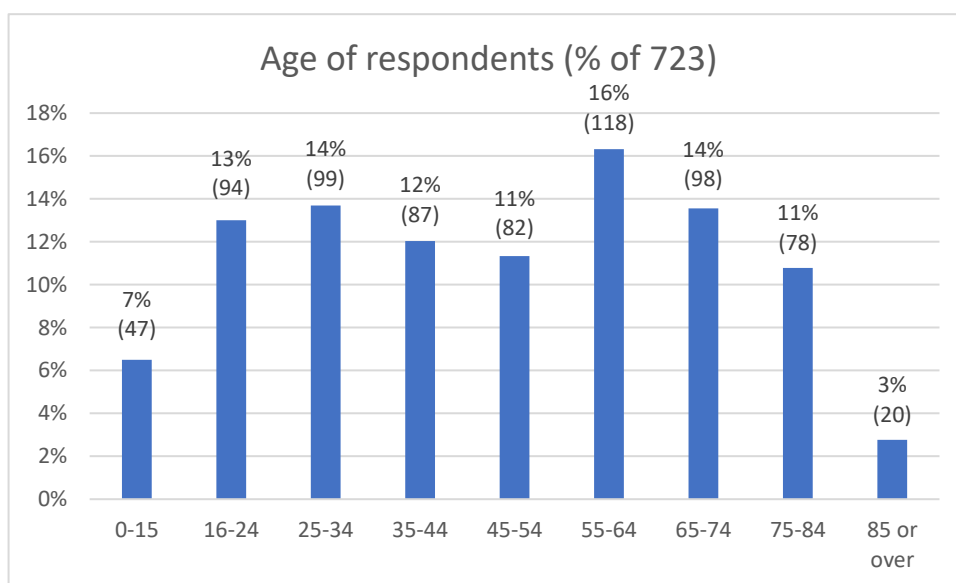
Postcode area

Postcode details were obtained from 707 people. 96% (676) of these were North Tyneside postcodes. 31 responses were from outside North Tyneside but used services within the borough.



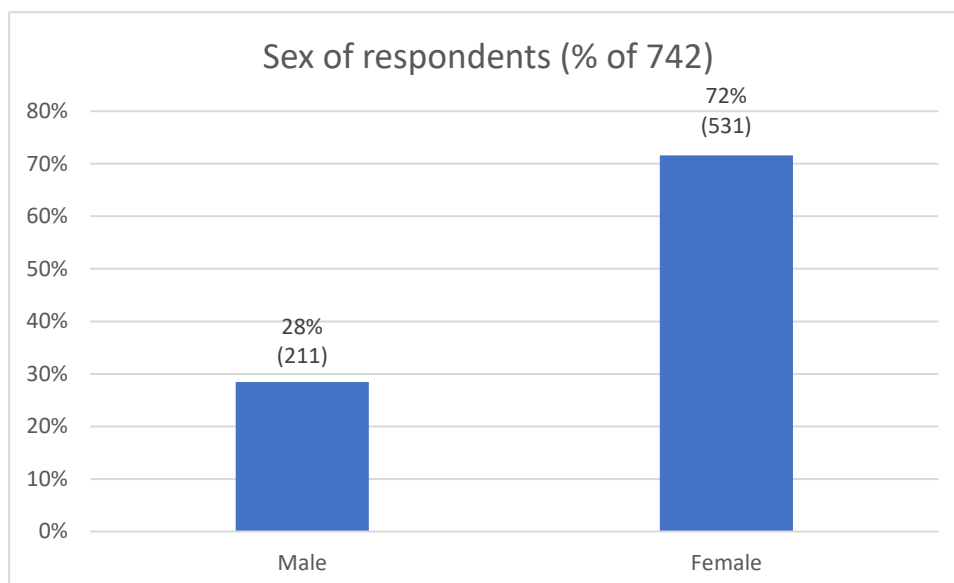
Age

A total of 723 respondents gave details about their age.



Sex/Gender

742 people provided details of their sex.

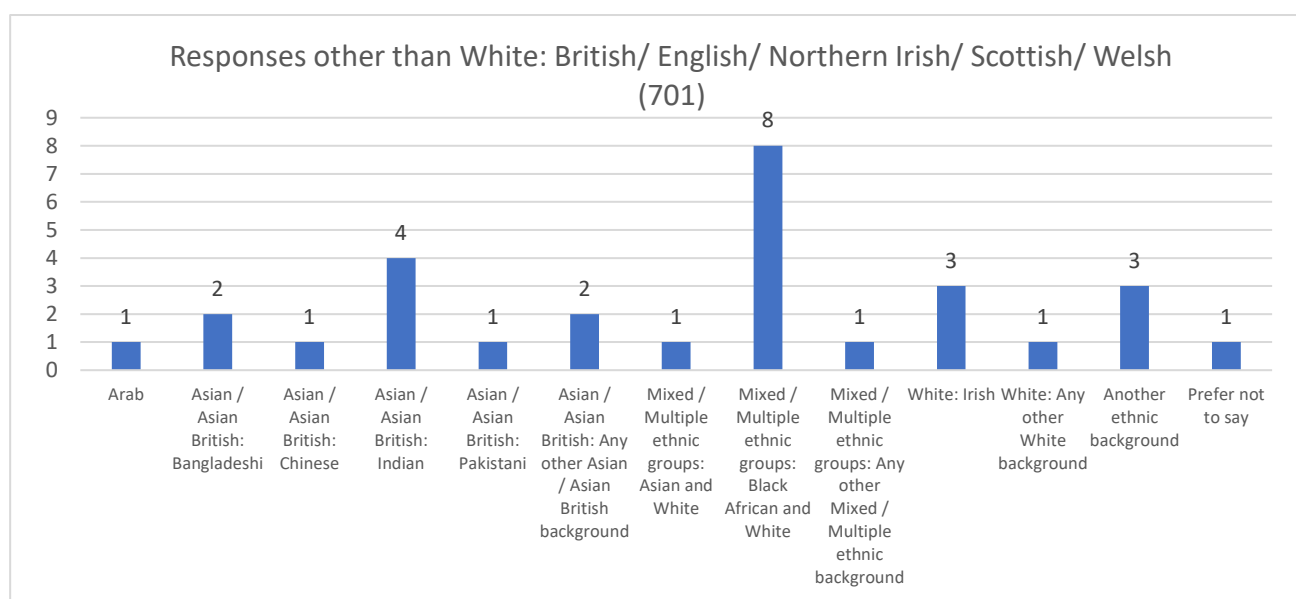


596 people responded to a question regarding whether their gender was the same as their sex as registered at birth. 97% (576) responded that it was the same. 14 people responded with 'Prefer not to say' and 6 people said it was not the same. Of these 6 people, 2 specified their gender identity: one person, born female, now identifies as non-binary; another is trans male.

Ethnic group

729 people gave details of their ethnic group. 96% (701) identified as White: British / English / Northern Irish / Scottish / Welsh.

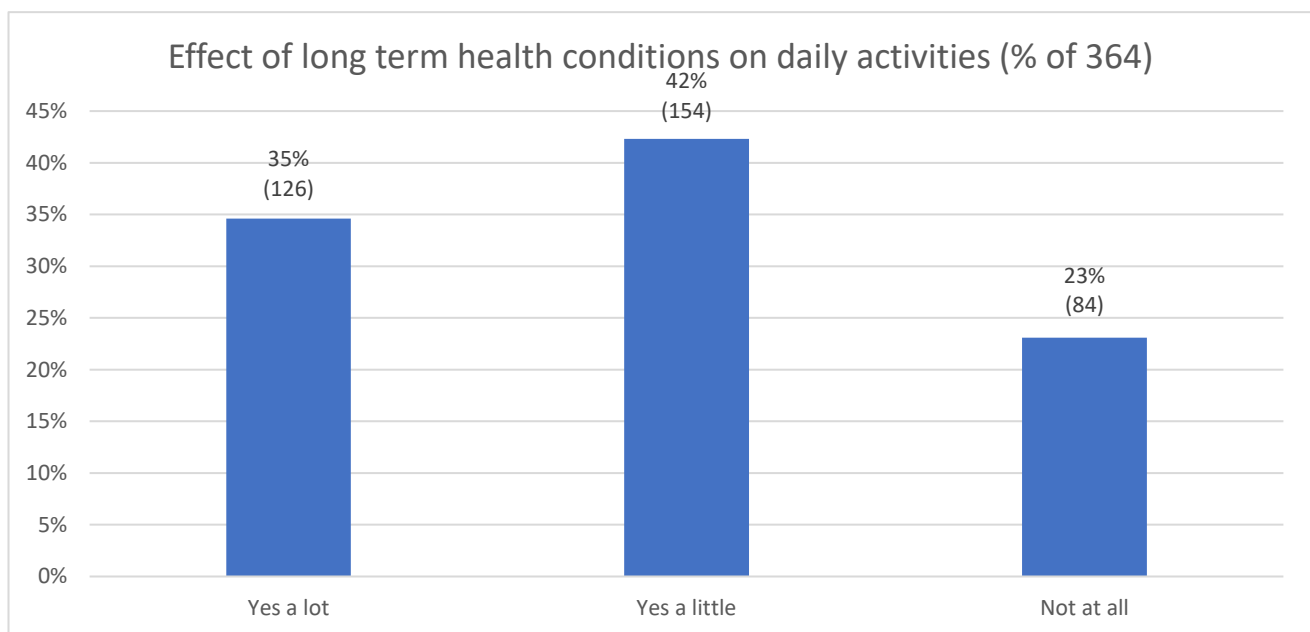
The remaining 4% (28) of responses are as below.



Long term health conditions

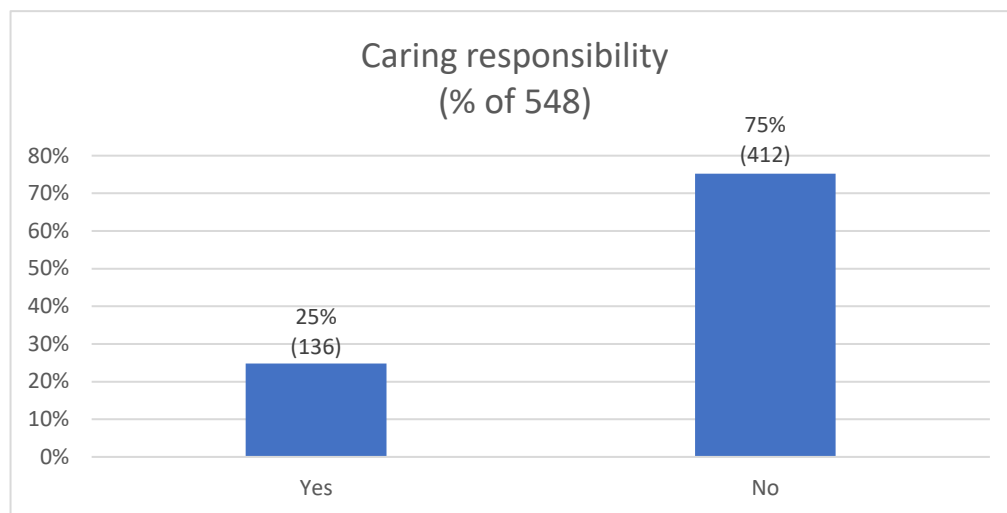
551 people responded to a question on long term health conditions, more specifically physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more. 50% (278) reported having a long term health condition, while the remaining 50% (273) did not.

Respondents were also asked if any of their conditions or illnesses reduced their ability to carry out day to day activities. 364 people responded. While this question was intended to be contingent on 'Yes' response about having a long term health condition, others also completed this question, resulting in 86 more responses than expected. While it is likely that the majority of these said they were 'Not at all' affected, this cannot be assumed. Some people may have focused on the part of the question that asked about the impact of their conditions or illnesses, rather than whether they had classed these as a long term condition.



Carers

548 people gave details about whether they had a caring responsibility, defined as giving help or support to someone with long-term physical or mental ill-health conditions or illnesses, or problems related to old age (excluding as paid employment). 25% (136) classed themselves as a carer.





healthwatch North Tyneside

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