

# Warrington Adult Health and Wellbeing Survey 2023 Home, Neighbourhood and Communities Briefing



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Warrington Borough Council Public Health Team

A comprehensive, large-scale survey of adults aged 18 years and above in Warrington was undertaken during April-June 2023. The survey was sent to a stratified sample of the Warrington population to explore a wide range of factors that are known to impact on an individual's health and wellbeing. A total of 4,932 respondents completed the survey. The Home, Neighbourhood and Communities report provides information on levels of neighbourhood connectedness, volunteering, provision of unpaid care, access to the internet, facilities and services, transport, leisure activities, and attitudes to climate change. The results will inform system planning to effectively target services, programmes, and interventions to the population groups experiencing the greatest need and inequality. The full report is available via the JSNA webpage: [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment \(JSNA\) | warrington.gov.uk](https://warrington.gov.uk/jсна) This briefing outlines the key findings.

## Neighbourhood Connectedness

Connecting with others is one of the Five Ways to Wellbeing and research has highlighted its benefits in improving social relationships and mental wellbeing<sup>i</sup>. Respondents were asked nine questions to assess how they felt about living in their neighbourhood e.g. 'I feel like I belong to this area' and 'I regularly stop and talk with people in my area', which were scored. A total score of 28 or more was categorised as 'poor neighbourhood connectedness'.

Overall, 14.0% of respondents had poor neighbourhood connectiveness, with levels slightly higher among men (14.6%) than women (13.1%).

**Notably younger people and those living in more deprived areas were less connected to their neighbourhood.** 1 in 5 (20.4%) of 18-39 year-olds had poor neighbourhood connectedness, compared with 1 in 7 (13.0%) of those aged 40-64 years and 1 in 13 (7.3%) of those aged 65+. There was also a stark relationship with deprivation, with over three times as many respondents living in the most deprived areas of Warrington experiencing poor neighbourhood connectiveness (26.6%), compared with the least deprived (7.7%).

**Almost 1 in 3 18-39 year-olds and 1 in 4 40-64 year-olds living in the most deprived areas had poor neighbourhood connectedness.**

## Volunteering

Research has identified that helping others can support happiness and giving is also one of the recommended Five Ways to Wellbeing<sup>i</sup>. Volunteering and time banking help to build social relationships, community participation and social capital, and in turn, increase mental wellbeing<sup>ii,iii</sup>. Respondents were asked whether they had volunteered, assisted at groups or activities, or undertaken fund-raising in the previous year.

Overall, 1 in 5 (21%) of respondents had volunteered frequently in the past year, and a further 14% occasionally, equating to over a third of respondents (35%) volunteering in the previous year.

**Notably women were significantly more likely to frequently volunteer than men and volunteering increased with age.** Men and women aged 18-39 years were significantly less likely to frequently volunteer (11.9% and 15.8% respectively) than Warrington overall, whilst men and women aged 65+ were significantly more likely to frequently volunteer (27.2% and 25.8% respectively). In 40-64 year-olds, women were significantly more likely to frequently volunteer (26.0%), but men were not significantly different (18.8%) to Warrington overall.



**Volunteering was also less common in deprived areas.** Respondents living in more deprived areas were less likely to frequently volunteer than those in the least deprived, ranging from 12.7% in Quintile 1 to 26.5% in Quintile 4.

#### **What does this suggest for local action in Warrington:**

- Work with system partners to strengthen and expand pathways into community activities and services to improve levels of social connectedness and capital<sup>iv</sup>, with a focus on younger and middle-aged adults living in the most disadvantaged areas.
- System partners should sustain support to Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) organisations to build volunteering opportunities and social connectedness for younger adults aged 18-39 years and those living in deprived communities. This could include the creation of a buddy scheme to support residents to attend leisure activities.
- To support initiatives for younger adults to access recreational activities that are cost effective. With an emphasis on participation and future opportunities to develop skills and experience.
- Engage with younger adults to ascertain their requirements for participating in volunteering and raising awareness of opportunities and associated benefits in the short and long term.

#### **Provision of Unpaid Care or Support**

Around 1 in 6 (15.4%) respondents provided unpaid help or support to someone that was either living with a long-term physical or mental health condition, or experiencing issues related to older age.

**Women, particularly middle-aged women, were more likely to provide unpaid care.** 1 in 5 (18.9%) women provided unpaid help and support compared with 1 in 8 men (11.7%). Furthermore, a significantly higher proportion of 40-64 year-olds provided unpaid care (20.2%) compared with the 18-39 (8.5%) and 65+ (16.4%) age groups. **Notably, more than 1 in 4 (26.2%) women aged 40-64 years provided unpaid care.** There was little difference between deprivation quintiles.

Around half (51%) of those providing unpaid care lived separately from the person they were supporting, whilst 38% lived with them all the time and 3% lived with them some of the time.

Respondents were asked about the types of practical or emotional support and services that they had accessed over the previous year to help them with their caring role. The most common source of support by far, accessed by a third of respondents (32%), was from family and friends. Other types of reported support were social services e.g. a care package (9%), charity/voluntary organisations (7%), GP (5%), private sector (4%), Warrington Carers Centre (3%), and a carers support group (3%). However, **a third (32%) of those providing unpaid care said they had no help or support, and a further quarter (23%) didn't identify themselves as a 'carer'**, which may preclude them from seeking further support.

Around two-thirds (68%) of those providing unpaid care said that they could look after themselves in terms of getting sufficient sleep and eating well. However, **1 in 9 (11%) felt that they were neglecting themselves and a further 21% reported that sometimes they could not look after themselves well enough.**



Furthermore, compared with respondents not providing unpaid help or support, those providing unpaid care were more likely to report:

- That their caring responsibilities were a barrier to participating in leisure activities (19% vs 1%) and physical activities (15% vs 1%).
- They have low emotional wellbeing (34% vs 29%).
- They are troubled by sleep 'quite a bit' or 'very much' (37% vs 28%).
- They felt constantly or frequently stressed for at least 3 reasons (34% vs 20%).
- Going without food (13% vs 8%) and heating (24% vs 14%) sometimes or frequently to financially manage.
- Borrowing money to cover the cost of basic necessities (13% vs 8%).
- Missing work (5% vs 2%) or important appointments (8% vs 5%) at least occasionally due to financial circumstances.
- Being unable to pay for prescriptions or medication at least occasionally (14% vs 6%).

#### What does this suggest for local action in Warrington:

- Develop a communications plan to raise awareness of the support services available for residents providing unpaid care to maintain their physical health and mental wellbeing and access advice on debt and benefits from organisations such as Citizens Advice and Warrington Carers Centre.
- Work with system partners to strengthen pathways and increase referrals into carer services.

### Internet Access and Digital Skills

The majority (92%) of respondents said that they used the internet daily or almost every day, with a further 5% reporting weekly use, and 1% citing less than weekly. **Daily or almost daily internet use was highest in younger adults and decreased with age**; 97% in 18-39 year-olds, 95% in 40-64 year olds and significantly reducing to 80% in those aged 65+. Notably, within the 65+ age group, more men reported daily use than women (84% versus 76% respectively).

A small proportion of respondents hadn't used the internet within the last three months (0.2%) or at all (2%), the majority of whom were aged 65+ (79%). Reasons cited for not using the internet included: no interest (46%), lack of equipment such as a computer, tablet or smartphone (26%), distrust regarding privacy and use of personal information (17%), experiencing an impairment that prevents use (11%) and the expense (9%). Notably, a quarter of those not using the internet (24%) would like to use it but didn't know how.

Respondents were also asked whether they had sufficient digital skills to manage their day to day life, including work. Over half (54%) felt they had good digital skills, a third (34%) rated them as adequate, whilst 11.2% thought their digital skills were very limited or they had no digital skills at all.

**Notably older respondents were more likely to report limited or no digital skills.** This was cited by 25.6% of those aged 65+, compared with 9.4% of the 40-64 age group and only 3.0% of 18-39 cohort. More women in the 65+ age group felt they had very limited or no digital skills (28.2%) than men (22.5%).



## What does this suggest for local action in Warrington:

- Under the framework of the poverty action group and informed by the poverty truth commission approach, develop our strand of activity linked to digital inclusion.
- Provide comprehensive support for residents, particularly those aged 65+, to access digital resources and services through delivery of digital inclusion initiatives in local venues to guide them to effectively navigate online platforms. This includes assistance with online shopping, accessing NHS services, and utilising the Job Centre Plus platform.

## Access to Facilities and Services

Respondents were asked to rate how easy it was to access a range of facilities and services from their neighbourhood. Easy access was defined as within a 15-20 minute walking distance from the home.

**Notably 1 in 4 respondents (25%) said it was not easy to access the hospital A&E department.** Difficulties were also reported in accessing leisure facilities (20%), colleges (19%), libraries (14%), a GP surgery (11%), supermarkets (10%), general shops (6%), schools (4%) and green spaces such as parks or the country for walks (4%).

**Older respondents aged 65+ consistently reported greater difficulty accessing facilities compared to the younger age bands;** hospital A&E department (30.8%), leisure facilities (26.9%), colleges (23.4%), libraries (17.0%), a GP surgery (14.2%), supermarkets (14.1%), general shops (9.2%), schools (4.2%) and green spaces (4.8%).

Overall, reported **access to colleges, the hospital A&E department, and general shops was worse among respondents living in the least deprived areas** of Warrington, which are generally located in the outer parts of the borough. Whereas **access to libraries and green space was poorer for those living in the most deprived areas**, located in and around the centre of Warrington.

## What does this suggest for local action in Warrington:

- Local planning and transport infrastructure should design developments that support community connectivity and cohesion<sup>v</sup>, including good transport links<sup>vi,vii</sup>, co-housing, co-location of schools, retail, health, leisure and community facilities and provision of communal green spaces<sup>viii,ix</sup>.
- Raise awareness of current transport initiatives, services and resources through promotional campaigns and work with providers to identify gaps in accessibility providing a coordinated approach to facilities and services.

## Transport

### Car or Van Ownership

Over three-quarters (77.0%) of respondents own a car or van. A further 9.2% said they have regular access to a car or van but don't own it, whilst **13.8% do not have regular access to a vehicle.** Car or van ownership was higher in men (85.2%) than women (73.0%) in every age band and deprivation quintile, and more common in the 40-64 age-band (84.1%), compared to those aged 65+ (75.6%) and 18-39 years (68.6%).



**There was an inverse relationship between car or van ownership and deprivation**, steadily rising from 61.6% among those living in the most deprived areas of Warrington to 85.5% in the least deprived. **More than 1 in 4 (27.4%) respondents living in the most deprived areas had no regular access to a vehicle.**

### **Public Transport**

Overall, 14.1% felt it was not easy to access public transport. Difficulties in accessing public transport were more commonly reported by women (15.7%) than men (12.4%) and the older 65+ age group (15.6%) compared with 40-64 year olds (13.7%) and 18-39 year olds (13.7%).

**Access to public transport was worse in the least deprived areas of Warrington**, generally located in the outer parts of Warrington borough, with 20.4% of respondents living in Quintile 5 reporting difficulty accessing public transport, compared to 8.9-12.1% in the other Quintiles.

### **Walking and Cycling for Travel**

There are a number of factors that impact on the choice to walk or cycle for travel. This includes affordability, convenience (proximity or lack of alternative transport), physical ability and experience of health conditions, time constraints, and safety.

Nearly three-fifths (59.4%) of respondents reported walking for travel e.g. to get to work or the shops at least once a week. **Walking for travel was more common in younger respondents and decreased with age** from 64.0% of 18-39 year-olds, to 58.2% of 40-64 year-olds and 55.6% of those aged 65+. There was little difference between men and women, and no clear pattern by deprivation.

Overall, 7.7% of respondents cycled for travel at least once a week. **Cycling for travel was more common in men (10.6%) than women (4.9%) and was highest amongst men living in the most deprived areas of Warrington (13.8%)** compared to 9.5-10.3% in other areas. There was no straightforward pattern by deprivation in women.

### **What does this suggest for local action in Warrington:**

- Local planning and transport infrastructure should continue to prioritise active design that provides a supportive environment for all residents to walk, wheel, or cycle for travel. This includes the delivery of the Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan ([LCWIP](#)), which comprises:
  - Primary Routes connecting to the town centre, key hubs and employment areas
  - Neighbourhood Routes improving access by foot and cycle to local destinations and facilities
  - Strategic Greenways, which maximise the benefit of the parks and opens spaces in Warrington.
- Improve pedestrian priority through delivery of crossing improvements and measures to reduce the dominance of traffic.
- Through the planning process, new developments receive design guidance support to help them to produce a Travel Plan. This will provide sustainable transport choices including active travel and public transport, to enhance connectivity for residents, the community, schools and businesses.



- Review public transport provision and services to ensure they provide an affordable, attractive and viable option for all residents. This includes both the less deprived communities living within the outer wards of Warrington who typically have fewer service options, as well as those residents in more deprived central areas, who still require a better range of bus services, but for whom affordability and cost is a key issue. This work is enshrined within the Bus Services Improvement Plan (BSIP), which seeks to deliver cheaper fares, more frequent, punctual services, highest standard vehicles, faster and more reliable journeys.
- Provide opportunities to support residents, particularly women to regularly cycle, including bike loan and hire schemes, cycle awareness and bike repair programmes, provision of cycle route maps and secure bike storage, workplace cycle mileage allowance and on-site changing facilities.
- Continue to provide a comprehensive range of accredited cycle training activities for pupils in primary and secondary school alongside adult cycle training and led guided rides.
- With support from Warrington Cycle Hub, Warrington Borough Council will continue to raise awareness of guidance and resources available to enable cycling across the community.
- Support delivery of active travel resources, advice and promotion of opportunities to Warrington residents using the Living Well Hub by all constituent organisations.

## Leisure Activities

Overall, 80% of respondents reported undertaking leisure activities at least once a week. The most popular leisure activities were walking for travel (59%), walking or cycling in green spaces (47%), attending a fitness activity or exercise class (25%) and participating in a group activity such as football, netball or walking (12%).

The main factors that prevented more involvement in leisure activities included:

- Lack of time (27%)
- Being too tired or not having enough energy (15%)
- Unable to afford activities (14%)
- Not knowing what activities are on offer (14%)
- Health issues (13%)
- Having no-one to go with (10%)
- Lack of confidence or embarrassment (10%)

**Lack of time and feeling too tired were more commonly reported by the youngest 18-39 age group (39% and 20% respectively), whilst those aged 65 years and above were more likely to cite health issues (23%).**

**Women living in the most deprived areas were more likely to report affordability (31%), feeling embarrassed or lacking confidence (22%), and having no-one to attend activities with (17%).**



### What does this suggest for local action in Warrington:

- 1 in 7 respondents cited affordability as a barrier to participating in leisure activities. Leisure, community and VCFSE sectors should consider opportunities for widening the range of activities provided to include inexpensive options that enable all community members to take part, especially women living in our most deprived areas. These could utilise our existing green spaces to support civic participation in local amenities and social connectivity.
- Consideration should be given to develop schemes to support female residents living in our most deprived areas to overcome confidence issues and attend leisure activities, such as community buddies, or targeted group activities.
- System partners should support and maintain a directory within the virtual Living Well Hub that outlines the range of local leisure activities available for our citizens.
- Continue to invest in improvements for walking and cycling in parks and open spaces through delivery of Strategic Greenways and Neighbourhood Routes outlined in Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan.

## Climate Change

The survey supported collection of new data regarding residents' views on climate change. Most respondents reported that they want to do more to adapt to changes in the climate (70.2%) and reduce greenhouse gas emissions (65.6%), with more women reporting this than men.

**The majority (89.5%) of respondents stated that they believe climate change is happening, although this was lower among respondents living in the most deprived areas of Warrington (84.7%).**

Most (79.5%) respondents reported that they were aware of the expected changes to the local climate over the remainder of the century, although knowledge was lower among 18-39 year olds (75.7%) and those in Quintile 1 (71.3%).

Three-quarters (74.4%) said they knew what they could do to adapt to changes in the climate, nearly two-fifths (38.9%) reported being aware of the amount of greenhouse gas emissions associated with their activities, and over half (55.1%) said they knew how to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Overall, 69.1% of respondents said they had already changed their behaviour to adapt to changes in the climate, and over half (53.3%) had taken steps to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. **Individuals in Quintile 1 were less likely to have already changed their behaviour to adapt to changes in the climate (63.3%) or reduce greenhouse gas emissions (43.0%).**

### What does this suggest for local action in Warrington:

- People are keen to take more action related to climate change, although many did not always know their impact or what further actions they can take. There is a fertile ground for promoting action on this topic, which needs to be harnessed. This could be achieved through coordinated communications and engagement activities including making further guidance on practical action available.





For example, encouraging engagement with the existing Warrington Climate Emergency Newsletter and developing the Climate Commissions webpage into a Warrington climate action website.

- Those living in the most deprived areas of Warrington are least engaged yet most vulnerable to the immediate impacts of climate change. The Warrington Climate Emergency Commission, the forum established by the Council to lead the local conversation on the climate response, and other system organisations supporting local action on climate change, should consider targeting engagement activity to younger groups and those in the most deprived areas.
- There is a need for some caution when interpreting the results as self-reported awareness and activity is not the same as actual awareness and activity. Further, more in depth research is needed to confirm this.
- Reduce use of fossils fuels by supporting residents to transition to electric vehicles through delivery of the Warrington Borough Council Electric Vehicle Strategy and rollout of on street and charging hubs in local areas.
- Reduce use of fossils fuels by supporting residents to reduce their reliance on the car by providing more opportunity to travel on foot, cycle and by public transport through delivery of the Local Transport Plan 4, LCWIP, and BSIP.



## End Notes

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- <sup>i</sup> New Economics Foundation (2008) *Five Ways to Wellbeing*. Available at: [Five ways to wellbeing | New Economics Foundation](#) [Accessed 18 April 2024].
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