



Barrier's experienced in accessing healthcare and wellbeing services.

When living in rural areas of West Sussex

September 2024



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Context

The aim of the Community Transport Sussex Journeys to Better Health Project was to support people and families living in rural communities to go on trips to support their physical, emotional and mental wellbeing.

NHS Sussex funded Community Transport Sussex through the Healthcare Inequalities Small Grants Programme 2023/2024. Healthwatch West Sussex supported -free of charge- with tools and reports to evaluate the work.

Part of this work was to provide a West Sussex wide survey, to learn about the barriers people experience accessing healthcare and wellbeing services when living in rural areas of West Sussex. 34 people completed this Survey.

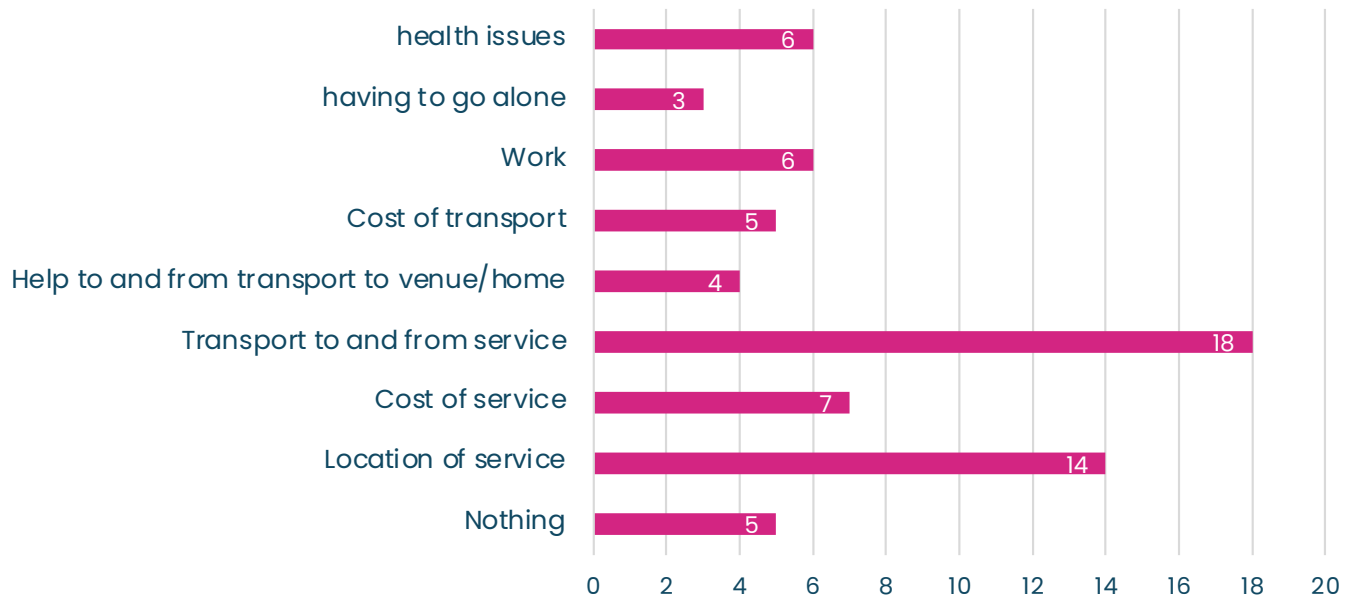
We would like to 'Thank' all who completed the survey.

However, it is recognised that this is a small sample size to be regarded as statistically significant. It does provide an indication of some of the barriers local residents experience trying to access healthcare and wellbeing services when living in rural areas of West Sussex.

Survey summary

We were told that the main barriers to accessing services were transport (53%, n18), and location of the service (41%, n14).

Barriers to accessing services



Key words extracted from other comments.

time
consideration
physically
visit
assessment
brighton
emotionally
parking
support
physio
issue
dentist
users
rural
hospital

If I drive, need to know there is adequate and affordable parking. If use transport, (I) need to know, (I) can get back home again without issue.

Expected to travel for an hour to receive radiotherapy.

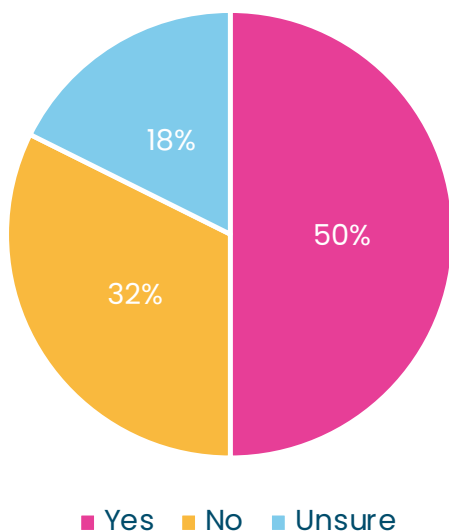
The bus service is intermittent, does not stop close to the GP surgery and has cost implications.

Through a multi answer question, responders are currently accessing the following services: 76% (n26) GP services, 56% (n19) community optician, 44% (n15) dental services, 41% (n14) accessing community pharmacy, 23% (n8) hospital outpatients, and 20% (n7) A&E.

However, accessing dental services is challenging with regards to access and cost of the service.

50% of responders know how to access community services. However, just under one third (n11, 32%) do not know how to access community services such as smoking and weight loss services, mental healthcare, and community groups.

Know how to access community services



How do I contact them!

Can find how to access services via the internet but they change frequently.

You are directed by people to services but have too long waiting list or you do not meet the criteria, and don't fit other services criteria.

Keys words from comments about community services currently being accessed.



Who and what is important to respondents are family and friends. Followed by going out for walks in the countryside and doing activities they love.

Feeling lonely, isolated, or socially excluded

Responders were asked how often they felt lonely, isolated or socially excluded.

Never	32%	n11	Some of the time	29%	n10
Hardley ever	15%	n5	Often	23%	n8

68% (n23) stated that they have done things to ensure they feel less lonely, isolated or socially excluded such as, joining groups – gardening, church, other groups, craft and art classes, going out with family and friends and volunteering.

However, 32% (n11) have not done anything, to reduce feeling lonely, isolated or socially excluded. The main reasons stated transport, some groups range of activities is limited, waiting for autism assessment (3-6 years.)

Confidence and Motivation Levels

How confident responders (n22) feel currently to go on Trips on their own or with others.

1 No confidence	2	3	4	5 Full confidence
3	4	3	3	9

How motivated responders (n22) feel currently to go on Trips on their own or with others

1 No confidence	2	3	4	5 Full confidence
3	2	5	5	7

It is interesting when comparing these responses how aligned the results are. With 54% (n12) stating high confidence and motivation an average of 27% (n6) with no confidence or motivation.

NHS Sussex

Responders shared how NHS Sussex could support their needs better:

Be available when needed - no long waiting lists.

Better access to treatments, support and communication.

Better support groups.

Better transport.

Easier contact GP. As the new Tralee phone system is very off putting, and the online submission is over structured for general queries.

Services are accessible and that appointments are flexible can be arranged around work and travel plans.

Make NHS dental services more available.

Well to quote St Richards, I'm not dying, they can't help me.

Provide more help for people with autism and ADHD as we find life more stressful, need more help relieving that stress in healthcare ways.

Things NHS Sussex need to stop doing:

Making it difficult to get appointments, not communicating and assuming our needs.

Dictating who I see, where, when I see them, need choice and options.

No calendar to book access to a GP more than 1 month at a time.

Telephone consultations - impersonal and inhibit conversation.

Other comments

Better transport for appointments.

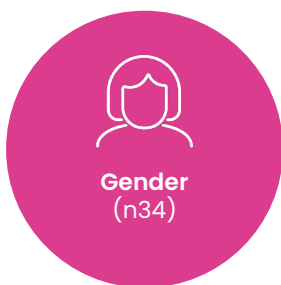
Too much computerisation and little interest in anything else.

Stop seeing different conditions as best served in different hospitals. Surely rural communities could have specialists visit local surgeries or something.

Improve 111, if you are a parent who is scared their child or elderly relative is very sick, being told by someone they will be in touch is not helpful. Neither is having operatives telephoning to tell you that someone will be ringing!!! Seriously, it's this sort of thing that can push you over the abyss, especially if you have mental issues.



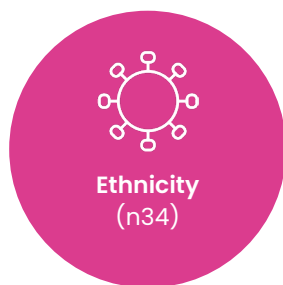
Respondent's Characteristics



Male (n8)
Female (n26)

Is your gender different to the sex that was assigned to you at birth?
(n32)

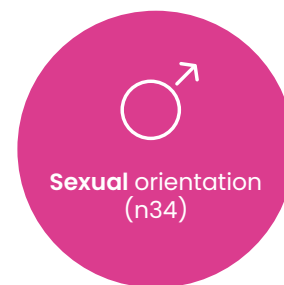
Yes (n4)
No (n26)



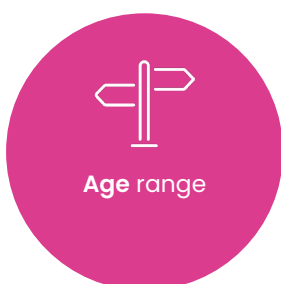
White British (n32)
Prefer not to say (n2)



Christian (n20)
No religion (n12)
Prefer not to say (n2)



Heterosexual (n28)
Asexual (n1)
Bisexual (n3)
Prefer not to say (n2)



Below 19 (n0)
20-34 (n2)
35-49 (n10)
50-65 (n9)
66-74 (n7)
75+ (n6)



Working full-time (n8)
Working part-time (n9)
Retired (n4)
Unemployed (n2)
Self-employed (n2)



Yes (n9)
No (23)

Long-term condition (n11)

Disability (n8)
A carer (n10)



Arun (n4)
Chichester (n5)
Crawley (n1)
Horsham (n9)
Mid Sussex (n12)
Worthing (n1)
West Sussex (n1)



Talk to us

If you have questions about the content of this report, please either call 0300 012 0122 or email cheryl.berry@healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk

How this insight will be used?

We recognise that all health and care services are under pressure at this time and have had to adapt their ways of working. We will share this report with the local NHS, Local Government, and other providers to help them understand where things are working well and services are adapting to meet peoples' needs, and to help them identify any gaps. We see this as a continuation of discussions taking place and will continue to use this fresh insight and the solutions presented to challenge for a better future.

For help, advice, and information or to share your experience

We also help people find the information they need about health, care and community and voluntary health and care support services in West Sussex. Here to help you on the next step of your health and social care journey



You can review how we performed and how we report on what we have done by visiting our website www.healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk

Community Transport Sussex



Community Transport Sussex (CTS) is the leading provider of community transport services in West Sussex, working to help relieve social isolation and loneliness across the county through the provision of safe, accessible, supported, door to door transport for those who have difficulty accessing the mainstream transport network. To find out more, visit their [website](#).



Healthwatch West Sussex works with **Help & Care** to provide its statutory activities.

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