

# Social Isolation & Loneliness Survey

A report by Healthwatch Harrow



February 2025

“Everything is online and digital.

I am trying my best to learn modern technology, but it's not easy for my generation. There should be some provision for people like me.”

Local Resident

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# 1. Introduction

## **Healthwatch Harrow**

Healthwatch Harrow are the independent local champion for people who use health and social care services in Harrow. Our role is to find out what matters to people and to help ensure that their views shape the services provided.

We are interested in looking at how Harrow residents are affected so the insights can be shared with providers and commissioners to drive improvement in services.

## **Social Isolation and Loneliness**

Social isolation and loneliness can have a massive impact on how someone lives their life. It can affect both their mental and physical health. Therefore it is important we understand more about how it is affecting people so we can help inform and shape services designed to reduce or prevent social isolation and loneliness.

Loneliness and social isolation have always been experienced by various people but during the pandemic when social interaction was not encouraged, more people experienced it and were able to recognise it when comparing how they felt before, during and after Covid.

Social isolation is a measure of the number of contacts people have whilst loneliness relates to the quality of those relationships.

A variety of factors can be the cause of loneliness and examples are the loss of a spouse or loved one, moving away to a new area where one does not know anyone, children leaving home or not being able to participate in activities that used to be regular interactive hobbies. In making choices, some people may choose to have lots of friends whilst others may enjoy their own company as everyone is different. People more affected seem to be older, poorer and likely to have ill-health.

Insights will be shared with providers who deliver services that address loneliness and isolation. Healthwatch will promote what opportunities are out there for residents to enable them choose. We will promote through our newsletter and social media and through signposting.

## 2. Executive Summary of Findings

During November 2024 – January 2025, 82 local people in Harrow completed our survey on social isolation and loneliness.

This section summarises key findings – see section 3 for findings in full.

### Survey Response – In Summary

#### Lacking Companionship

- Almost half of respondents (45%) sometimes lack companionship, while for a fifth (20%) this is 'often'.
- Those in poor health are twice as likely as respondents in good health, to often lack companionship (33% comparing with 17%). On age, 50 to 64 year olds are most likely to (27%).
- Men (23%) are noticeably more likely to often lack companionship, than women (16%).

#### Feeling 'Left Out'

- Half of respondents (49%) sometimes feel 'left out', while for 12% this is 'often'.
- Responses suggest that those in poor health are most likely to often feel 'left out' (20% – this is 8% above the average).
- Interestingly, those living with others are three times more likely than single occupants, to often feel 'left out' (19% comparing with 6%).
- On age, 50 to 64 year olds are most likely to often feel 'left out' (14%), as are male respondents (13%).

#### Feeling Isolated

- 17% of respondents say they often feel isolated from others. For a third (34%) this is 'sometimes' the case.
- A sizeable proportion of respondents in poor health feel isolated (40%), comparing with just a fraction of those in good health (8%). On age, 65 to 79 year olds are most likely to often feel isolated.
- According to responses, women are notably more likely than men – to often feel isolated (20% comparing with 13%).
- Surprisingly, no difference is recorded between sole occupants and those living with others (both at 19%).

## Survey Response – In Summary

### Feeling Lonely

- Almost half of respondents (46%) sometimes feel lonely, while for 17%, this is 'often'.
- Those in poor health are noticeably more likely to often feel lonely, than respondents in good health (27% comparing with 17%).
- On age, there is a significant gap between 50 to 64 year olds (26%) and the next group, 65 to 79 year olds (15%).
- There is little difference between genders (both around 17%) or between sole occupants and those living with others (around 19%).

### Life Satisfaction

- Two thirds of respondents (67%) are currently satisfied with their life generally, while a sizeable minority (23%) are not.
- The oldest respondents - aged 80 plus are most satisfied with life currently (82%) and this compares to 70% for the next age group (50 to 64).
- Those in fair health are much more likely than respondents in poor health, to feel satisfied (79% comparing with 33%).
- Women (70%) are more satisfied than men (63%) while those living with others are marginally more satisfied (70%) than sole occupants (66%).

### Support Networks

- Three quarters of respondents (74%) have somebody to call on, if they need help. 11% do not.
- Those in fair health are significantly more likely than those in poor health, to have people to help, if needed (82% comparing with 53%).
- On age, 65 to 79 year olds are most likely to (84%) with the next group (80 plus) at 76%.
- Men (77%) are noticeably more likely to have people to help than women (68%).
- Surprisingly, sole occupants are much more likely to have people to help, than those living with others (81% comparing with 70%).

## Survey Response – In Summary

### Going Out

- 80% of respondents have somebody to socialise with.
- A clear majority of those in good health (92%) have somebody to socialise with, while this is just 47% for those in poor health.
- The oldest respondents (aged 80 plus) are most likely to have somebody to socialise with (94%) with the next group (50 to 64 year olds) on 82%.
- The difference between men and women is marginal (both around 81%).
- We find that sole occupants (84%) are more likely to find somebody to socialise with – than those living with others (77%).

### General Free Time

- A clear majority of respondents (90%) go out during the week – 70% often, and 20% less so. Just 4 respondents indicate that they never go out.
- Of those specifying where they go, and why, 70% socialise with friends and family, 51% undertake exercise and 44% visit local shops. A tenth (11%) attend medical or other appointments.
- It appears that those in poor health, are much less likely to often go out (33% comparing with the average – 70%).

### 'Feeling Worthwhile'

- A clear majority of respondents (90%) feel that the things they do, are worthwhile.
- Socialising – is notably the 'most worthy' activity. When looking at time spent, 60% of socially active respondents (socialising, clubs, volunteering) chose 'very worthwhile' and this lowers to 52% for those undertaking exercise, and to 46% for those with hobbies or interests (reading, television, radio).
- Almost all respondents in good health (96%) feel the things that they do are worthwhile, comparing with two thirds (67%) of those in poor health.
- Younger respondents (aged 50 to 64) are most content (96%), with the next group (aged 65 to 79) at 91%.
- Those living with others (91%) are marginally more content than sole occupants (88%).
- Little difference is recorded between genders – both at around 91%.



## Survey Response – In Summary

### General Positives

- The importance of social interaction is underscored, in meeting people, getting 'out and about' and feeling appreciated.
- We hear that exercise improves both physical and mental health.
- Remote contact – through the phone or internet helps.
- Transport and travel cards are an enabler.

### General Negatives

- Many lacking companionship cite the loss of a loved one – a partner, or key family member.
- When partners or loved ones pass, this can additionally result in the loss of wider relationships.
- Health, either physical, sensory or mental health, can present challenges and issues.
- Related to this, a level of 'stigma' is reported and people can be reluctant – to seek help.
- Carers in particular, feel isolated.
- Many respondents feel they lack potential or direction. In part, this could be due to a lack of local opportunities – such as age appropriate clubs.

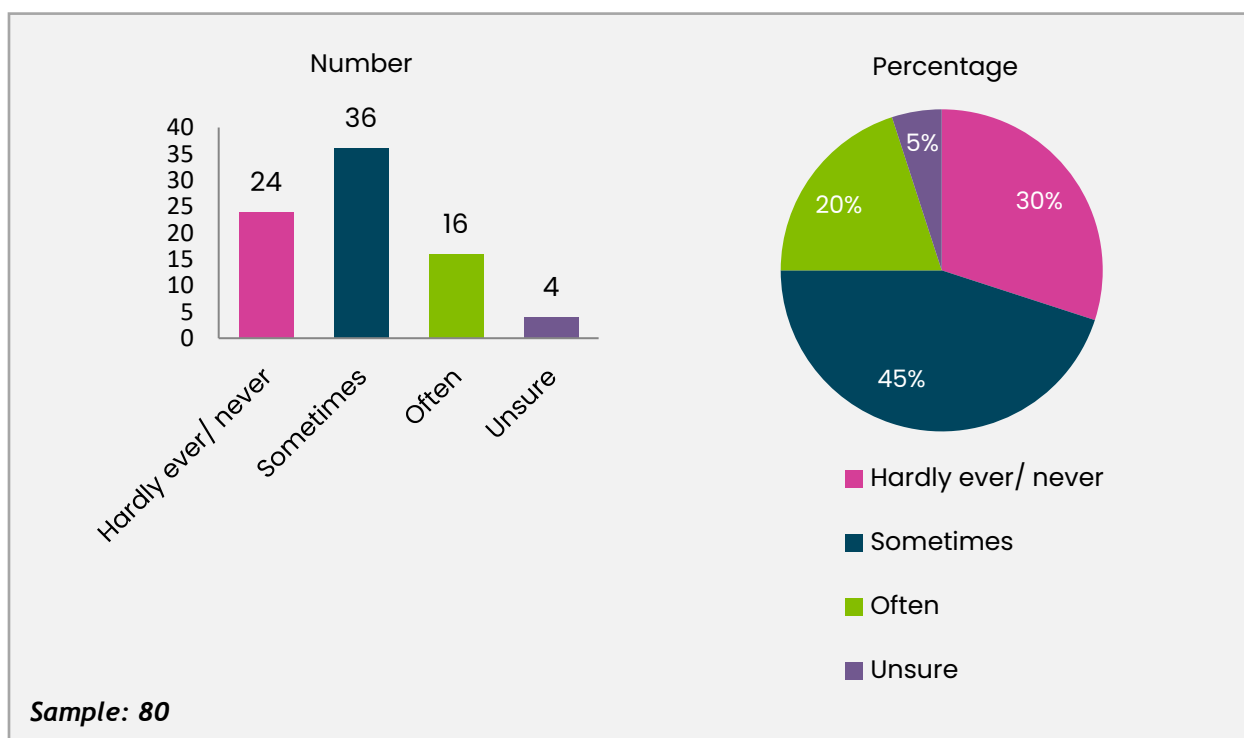
### 3. Our Survey – Analysis of Feedback

During November 2024 – January 2025, 82 local people in Harrow completed our survey on social isolation and loneliness.

We asked questions on companionship and feeling involved, isolation and loneliness, general life satisfaction, and worthiness. Additionally, we looked at people's ability to get out, their favourite activities, and the barriers which may lead to becoming more lonely and isolated.

Feedback is analysed as a whole, and additionally by demographics, health and household circumstances for selected questions.

#### 3.1 How often do you feel that you lack companionship?



Almost half of respondents (45%) sometimes lack companionship, while for a fifth (20%) this is 'often'.

### 3.1.1 Often lacking companionship

	% Yes
In poor health	33%
Aged 50 to 64	27%
Male Respondents	26%
Living with others	23%
All Respondents (Baseline)	20%
Living alone	19%
In fair health	18%
Aged 80+	18%
In good health	17%
Female Respondents	16%
Aged 65 to 79	13%

Those in poor health are twice as likely as respondents in good health, to often lack companionship (33% comparing with 17%). On age, 50 to 64 year olds are most likely to (27%).

Men (23%) are noticeably more likely to often lack companionship, than women (16%).

Many lacking companionship cite the loss of a loved one – a partner, or key family member. Separation is also mentioned, examples include a care home admission, and end of a relationship.

#### Selected Feedback

*"Recently bereaved widower."*

*"Having lost some one dear to you."*

*"After being a carer for over 20 years, when my mum passed I was thrown back into society after years of being in an isolation bubble, I'm still navigating the real world being at home often limits the conversation and human contact."*

*"I have lots of good friends but lack a partner for special times."*

*"My wife is a long term care home resident."*

*"I am on my own after separating from relationship."*

One person feels less connected, since retiring.

### **Selected Feedback**

*"Basically since I stopped working."*

Living alone is a key issue.

### **Selected Feedback**

*"I live alone hence I feel lonely."*

*"I am the sole occupant of the house/home."*

*"I live alone and some days feel lonely on my street."*

*"I am single and live by myself, sometimes it would be nice to share moments with someone."*

*"I live alone with no UK family."*

Health, either physical, sensory (hearing) or mental health, can present challenges and issues.

### **Selected Feedback**

*"When I can't do certain things."*

*"I am hard of hearing. When I cannot hear clearly I feel left out."*

*"Stigma for mental illness."*

Those who are socially active are much less likely to lack companionship. Family and friends are mentioned, along with volunteering, and membership of faith and other groups.

### **Selected Feedback**

*"I have family and friends."*

*"I have a family who keep in touch and am a member of a church and attend regularly."*

*"I have close family and am involved with charity and community work."*

*"I meet many people during my classes as a volunteer."*

*"I try to take positive action to engage with others through voluntary organisations."*

We hear though, that friends are not always available, or easy to reach.

### **Selected Feedback**

*"It depends on when friends are free for me to see them."*

*"I can't get out to see my friend and they don't like to talk on the phone. I don't live in a place they can visit."*

Some people keep themselves 'busy'. This can be through hobbies (such as studying a language) or simply through every day activity.

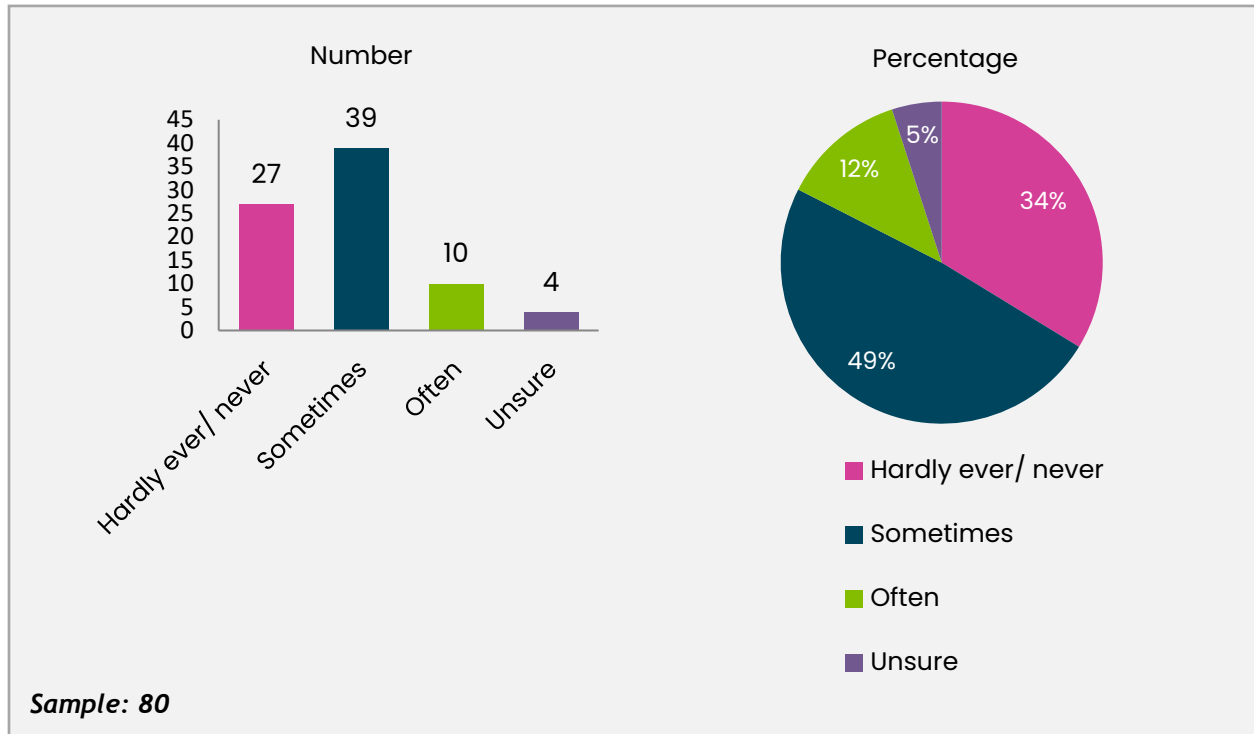
### **Selected Feedback**

*"I enjoy radio and study French."*

*"Too busy."*

*"As long as I solve my everyday issues. I don't feel lack of companionship."*

### 3.2 How often do you feel left out?



Half of respondents (49%) sometimes feel 'left out', while for 12% this is 'often'.

#### 3.2.1 Often feeling left out

	% Yes
In poor health	20%
Living with others	19%
Aged 50 to 64	14%
In good health	14%
Male Respondents	13%
All Respondents (Baseline)	12%
Female Respondents	11%
In fair health	10%
Aged 65 to 79	9%
Aged 80+	6%
Living alone	6%

Responses suggest that those in poor health are most likely to often feel 'left out' (20%).

Interestingly, those living with others are three times more likely than single occupants, to often feel 'left out' (19% comparing with 6%).

On age, 50 to 64 year olds are most likely to often feel 'left out' (14%), as are male respondents (13%).

Those bereaved are missing their daily interaction with partners and loved ones. For one person, making 'decisions about the house' is now a lonely experience.

### **Selected Feedback**

*"Since I lost my husband nine months ago, I feel left out as he is no longer with my everyday life."*

*"I feel the loss of my husband when decisions about the house have to be made when my family are not available."*

*"Lost friends and relatives after separation."*

Living alone has restricted opportunities for some, and being isolated from family can be an issue.

### **Selected Feedback**

*"As I live alone."*

*"Being on my own, I can't share my thought with somebody."*

*"My children don't live near me."*

Caring responsibilities restrict opportunities to take part, we hear.

### **Selected Feedback**

*"Unable to join friends; sick husband."*

Health challenges mentioned include a lack of hearing and mobility (being housebound).

### **Selected Feedback**

*"Always. My health stops me doing things which means I never see anyone."*

*"I feel left out when I fail to hear clearly."*

*"Mainly because I am housebound."*

One person cites a cultural barrier (language).

### **Selected Feedback**

*"When my friends speak in another language I feel left out. Sometimes I'm shy to speak especially with new people or in a large group."*

Friendship is important.

### **Selected Feedback**

*"I have family and friends that I can spend time with if I choose."*

*"I am happy with my contacts."*



However, we hear that friends are not always considerate, or reliable.

### **Selected Feedback**

*"When I hear friends meet up and don't include me."*

*"Friends have family visiting or busy with other friends."*

*"Some people have not called or spoken to me as promised."*

Remote contact – through the phone or internet helps. One person has attended computer classes – and this has helped in contacting (and making) friends online.

### **Selected Feedback**

*"By phone, sometimes my friends call."*

*"Although I live alone I never feel lonely – I joined tech classes and through them I have found many friends who I can contact if I need to."*

In some cases, there is a 'drive' or a passion to stay connected.

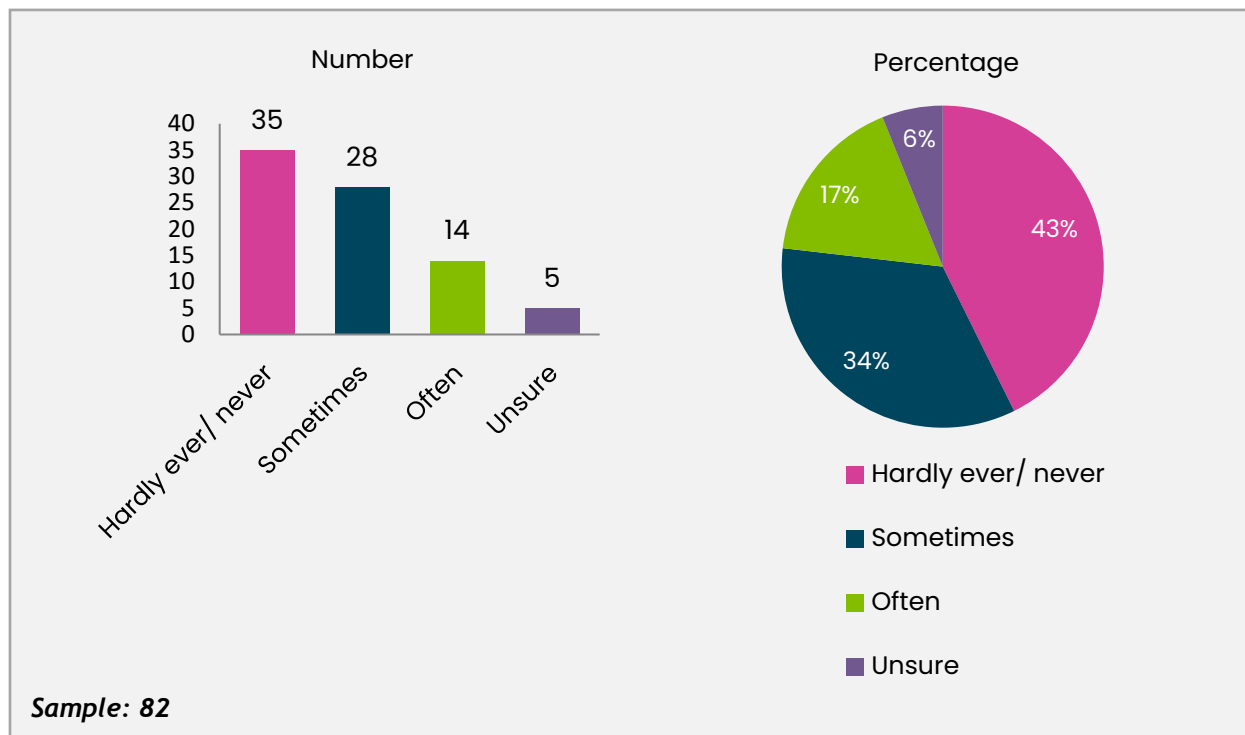
### **Selected Feedback**

*"Super busy."*

*"I am not a person who stayed in the background."*

*"I think I'm pretty gregarious and do OK in social situations."*

### 3.3 How often do you feel isolated from others?



17% of respondents say they often feel isolated from others. For a third (34%) this is 'sometimes' the case.

#### 3.3.1 Often feel isolated from others

	% Yes
In poor health	40%
Aged 65 to 79	21%
Female Respondents	20%
Living with others	19%
Living alone	19%
Aged 50 to 64	17%
All Respondents (Baseline)	17%
In fair health	15%
Male Respondents	13%
In good health	8%
Aged 80+	6%

A sizeable proportion of respondents in poor health feel isolated (40%), comparing with just a fraction of those in good health (8%). On age, 65 to 79 year olds are most likely to often feel isolated.

According to responses, women are notably more likely than men – to often feel isolated (20% comparing with 13%).

Surprisingly, no difference is recorded between sole occupants and those living with others (both at 19%).

While some are able to stay in touch with friends, neighbours and colleagues, others are finding it to be more difficult.

### **Selected Feedback**

*“Always make an effort to stay in touch with others.”*

*“Being on my own, I always make an effort to stay in touch, with my friends, ex-colleagues and neighbours.”*

*“Lack of company and neighbours.”*

*“Always. I never see friends. I never see work colleagues in person. I occasionally see family.”*

*“Not connecting with my work colleagues.”*

When partners or loved ones pass, this can additionally result in the loss of wider relationships.

### **Selected Feedback**

*“I miss my wife. She had all the social contacts and I went along.”*

Remote contact has helped one person to make friends, while for another, it is no substitute for meeting in-person.

### **Selected Feedback**

*"I joined computer classes and met a number of people."*

*"If I can't leave the house I feel isolated. WhatsApp helps but only for a short time."*

Exercising, or keeping generally busy (including hobbies) helps. Access to public transport is appreciated.

### **Selected Feedback**

*"I am out mixing (example – exercises)."*

*"Super busy."*

*"I take the opportunity to finish doing what I was unable to complete."*

*"I can go out when I want. Walk, use public transport."*

Poor physical and mental health are cited as barriers – along with stigma.

### **Selected Feedback**

*"Due to my physical and mental health issues."*

*"Because of my condition and how I am made to feel."*

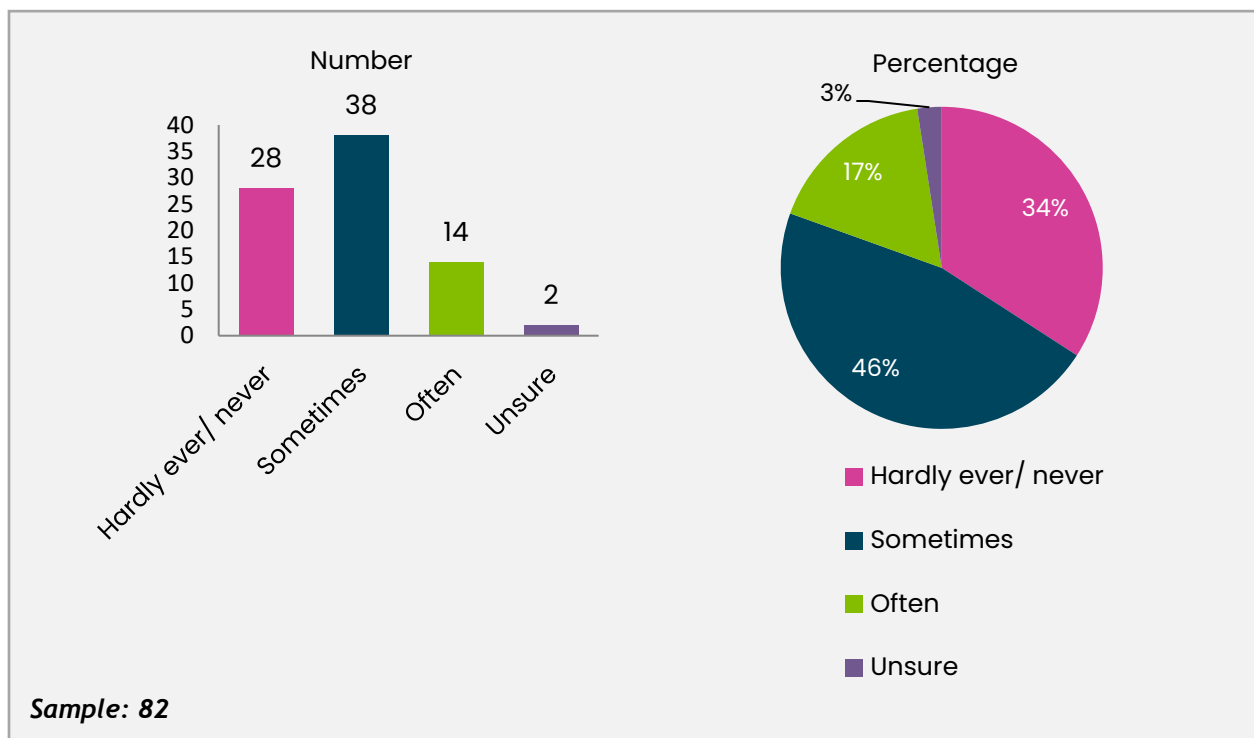
There is also a sense that people don't have the time or inclination, to help.

### Selected Feedback

*"Knowing that everyone feels the same, working life, family life, shopping etc. it is understandable."*

*"Feeling people are not on my side and not trying to help. They have their own agenda."*

### 3.4 How often do you feel lonely?



Almost half of respondents (46%) sometimes feel lonely, while for 17%, this is 'often'.

### 3.4.1 Often feel lonely

	% Yes
In poor health	27%
Aged 50 to 64	26%
Living alone	19%
Living with others	18%
In good health	17%
Female Respondents	17%
All Respondents (Baseline)	17%
Male Respondents	16%
Aged 65 to 79	15%
In fair health	15%
Aged 80+	12%

Those in poor health are noticeably more likely to often feel lonely, than respondents in good health (27% comparing with 17%).

On age, there is a significant gap between 50 to 64 year olds (26%) and the next group, 65 to 79 year olds (15%).

There is little difference between genders (both around 17%) or between sole occupants and those living with others (around 19%).

We receive varied examples of loneliness – this can be missing loved ones and friends, lacking company in the evenings or more generally in winter, and simply ‘coming home to an empty house’.

#### Selected Feedback

*“After a long marriage it is sometimes hard to be alone.”*

*“I haven’t seen a friend in over year.”*

*“I’m 86 and have lost four good friends, who I miss.”*

*“In the evening there is no company.”*

*"Especially in the winter months."*

*"Sometimes coming home to an empty house."*

Disability of a partner, and with it caring responsibilities, increases loneliness.

#### **Selected Feedback**

*"Since my wife's stroke, isolation has increased."*

Lack of family contact or support is an issue.

#### **Selected Feedback**

*"Due to living alone and no family."*

*"I only see my children at weekends and my neighbours keep to themselves."*

While some are easily able to make friends, others are not. One person fears being 'rejected'.

#### **Selected Feedback**

*"I am popular with lots of friends."*

*"Because I'm not good at making friends."*

*"Difficult being rejected."*

*"Not interested in superficial relationships."*

We hear about the benefits of generally keeping active.

### Selected Feedback

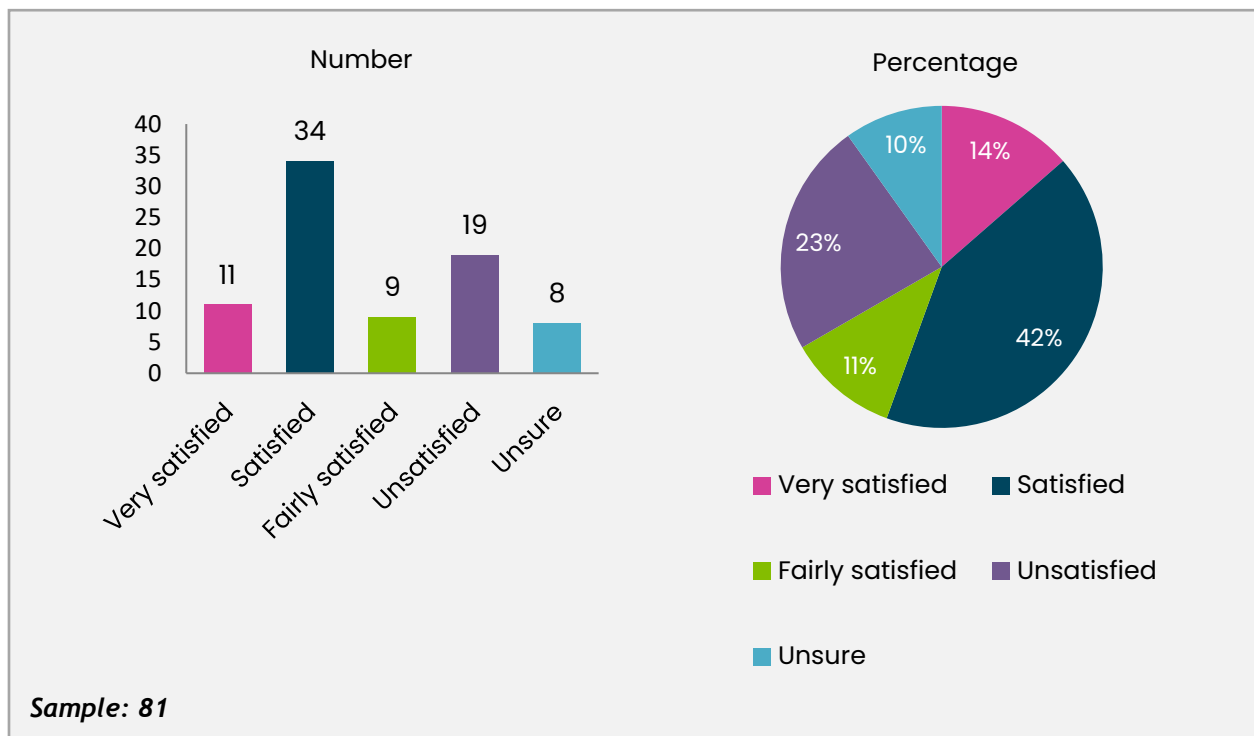
*"I keep myself occupied with various activities. It helps me keep moving."*

*"If I am alone I find myself something to do."*

*"Tried to keep myself occupied with various things."*

*"I occupy myself with my iPad."*

### 3.5 How satisfied are you with your life currently?



Two thirds of respondents (67%) are currently satisfied with their life generally, while a sizeable minority (23%) are not.



### 3.5.1 Satisfied with life currently

	% Yes
Aged 80+	82%
In fair health	79%
In good health	71%
Female Respondents	70%
Aged 50 to 64	70%
Living with others	70%
Aged 65 to 79	69%
All Respondents (Baseline)	67%
Living alone	66%
Male Respondents	63%
In poor health	33%

The oldest respondents - aged 80 plus are most satisfied with life currently (82%) and this compares to 70% for the next age group (50 to 64).

Those in fair health are much more likely than respondents in poor health, to feel satisfied (79% comparing with 33%).

Women (70%) are more satisfied than men (63%) while those living with others are marginally more satisfied (70%) than sole occupants (66%).

Those with friends, and family support express comfort and satisfaction while those without, are less satisfied.

#### Selected Feedback

*"I am very comfortable with my life - I have peace of mind knowing I have family living 3 miles away and a quick phone call and they will help."*

*"I am satisfied, I have friends, and family around me."*

*"The kids have left home and I live on my own so miss them."*

Many respondents feel they lack potential or direction. In part, this could be due to a lack of local opportunities – such as age appropriate clubs.

### **Selected Feedback**

*"I do not live up to my potential."*

*"I could achieve more."*

*"I would like to feel able to do more."*

*"Feel I lack direction and any positivity."*

*"I would like to have clubs for my age in my area."*

A similar number take a more philosophical view – life 'isn't perfect' but it's 'not bad, either'.

### **Selected Feedback**

*"Reasonably healthy, able get out on my own."*

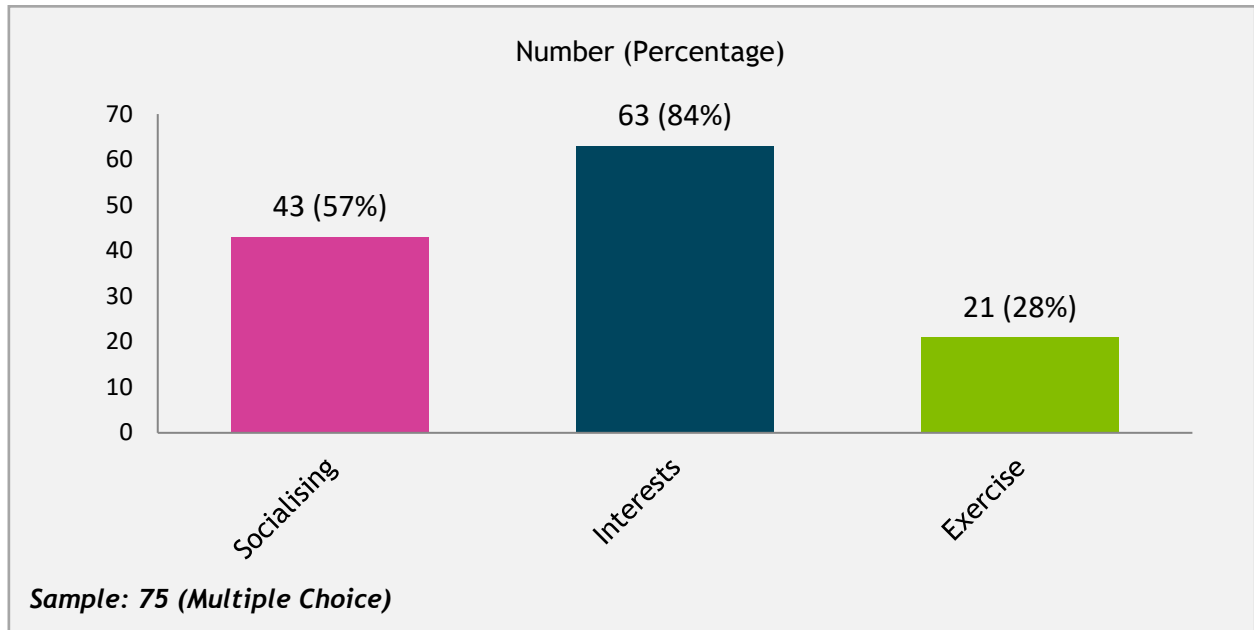
*"I try to make the most of my time and am grateful for what I have. I don't focus on what's missing in my life except I wish I have a partner sometimes. I'm lucky with my health, friends and financially."*

*"Made peace with the situation. Not dissatisfied."*

*"Life would be easier if I was younger and had less aches and pains but in general I feel quite lucky to be in the position I am."*

*"No such thing as a perfect 10."*

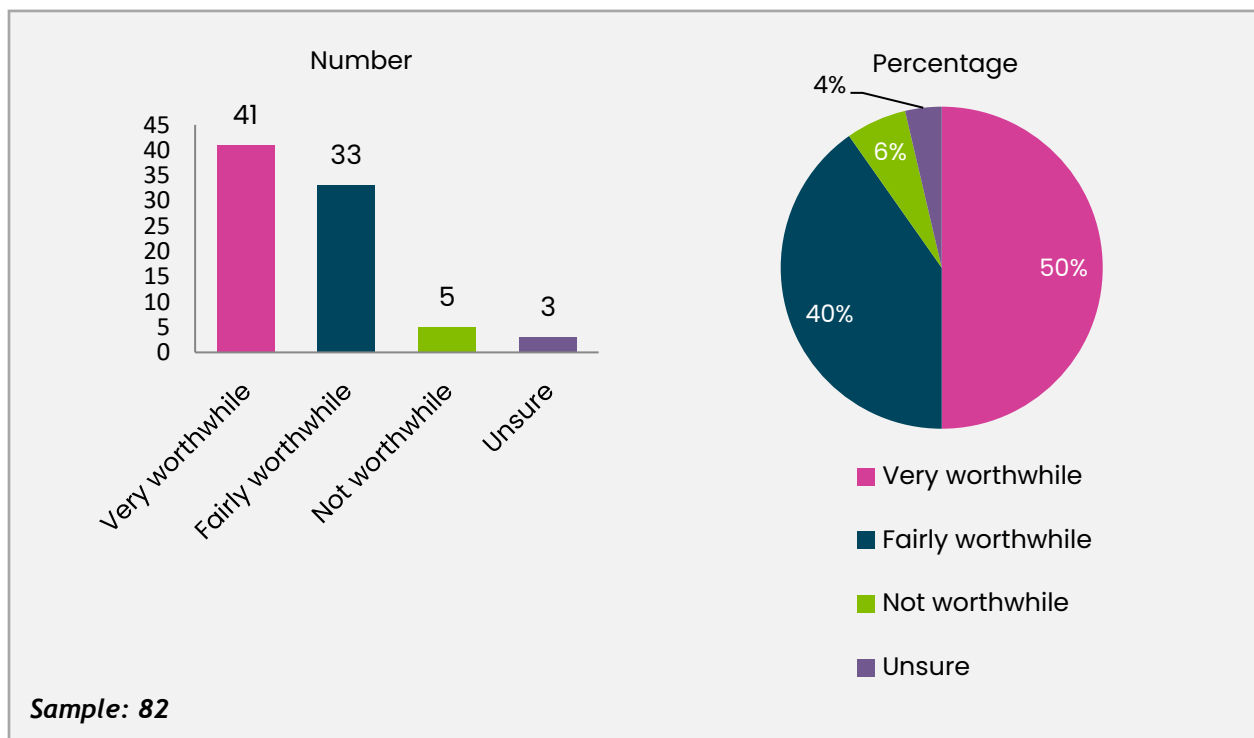
### 3.6 How do you usually spend your free time?



On free time, a broad majority of respondents (84%) enjoy a hobby or interest, with reading and television clear favourites – along with the radio.

Over half (57%) like to socialise – this could be with friends, families or wider groups (clubs or volunteering). 28% of respondents like to exercise. Activities mentioned include walking and dog-walking, yoga and swimming,

### 3.7 To what extent do you feel that the things you do are worthwhile?



A clear majority of respondents (90%) feel that the things they do, are worthwhile.

Socialising – is notably the ‘most worthy’ activity. When looking at time spent, 60% of socially active respondents (socialising, clubs, volunteering) chose ‘very worthwhile’ and this lowers to 52% for those undertaking exercise, and to 46% for those with hobbies or interests (reading, television, radio).

### 3.7.1 Find things worthwhile

	% Yes
In good health	96%
Aged 50 to 64	96%
In fair health	95%
Aged 65 to 79	91%
Living with others	91%
Female Respondents	91%
Male Respondents	90%
All Respondents (Baseline)	90%
Aged 80+	88%
Living alone	88%
In poor health	67%

Almost all respondents in good health (96%) feel the things that they do are worthwhile, comparing with two thirds (67%) of those in poor health.

Younger respondents (aged 50 to 64) are most content (96%), with the next group (aged 65 to 79) at 91%.

Those living with others (91%) are marginally more content than sole occupants (88%).

Little difference is recorded between genders – both at around 91%.

The importance of social interaction is underscored, in meeting people, getting ‘out and about’ and feeling appreciated.

### **Selected Feedback: Socialising, Clubs and Volunteering**

*"I always stay in touch with neighbours and friends. Even talk to strangers when waiting at bus stops. Even converse with bank and supermarket staff. Social interaction plays an important part in my life"*

*"Meeting friends and family very important to me."*

*"Gets me out of the house and meeting people."*

*"Gives me a nice break, takes my mind off work (friends and shows)."*

*"I am learning from everyone including children (courses and music)."*

*"Volunteering makes me feel useful in the community and I appreciate what I have more. Social activities give me fun and connection with others."*

*"I take an active role with a community association (administration)."*

We hear that exercise improves both physical and mental health.

### **Selected Feedback: Exercise**

*"Yoga keeps me healthy."*

*"They keep me mobile (swimming, yoga, gym)."*

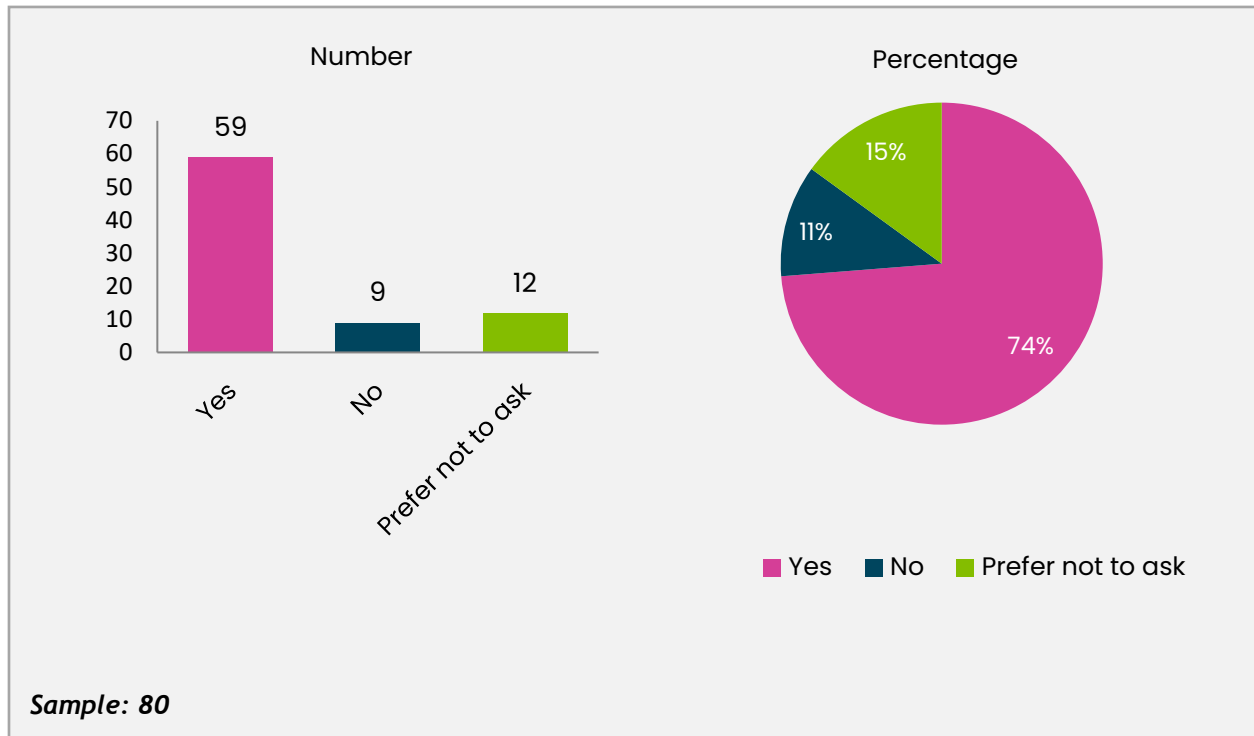
*"Fitness classes improve my health and mood."*

Hobbies, such as arts and crafts are appreciated.

### **Selected Feedback: Hobbies and Interests**

*"Arts & crafts help my mind and I like doing it."*

**3.8 If you had a problem and needed help, are there people who you can call on?**



Three quarters of respondents (74%) have somebody to call on, if they need help. 11% do not.

Of those with support – almost all (with few exceptions) mention their families, neighbours and friends.

### 3.8.1 Have people to help, if needed

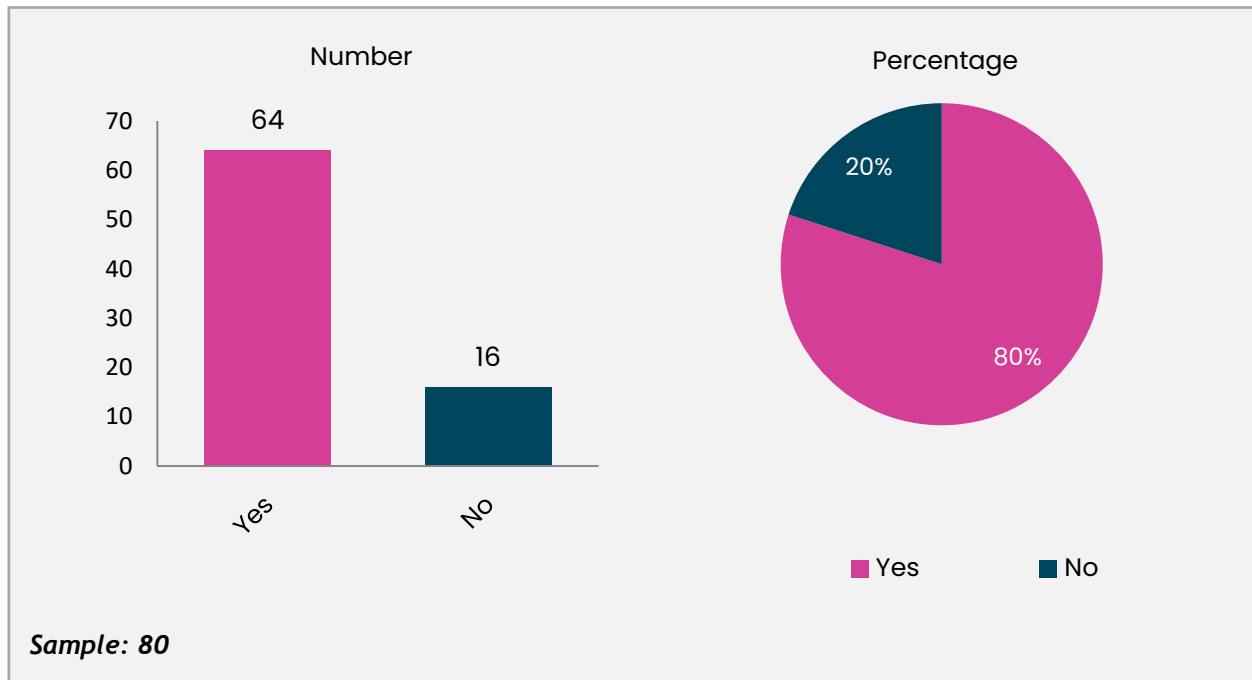
	% Yes
Aged 65 to 79	84%
In fair health	82%
Living alone	81%
Male Respondents	77%
Aged 80+	76%
All Respondents (Baseline)	74%
In good health	71%
Living with others	70%
Female Respondents	68%
Aged 50 to 64	64%
In poor health	53%

Those in fair health are significantly more likely than those in poor health, to have people to help, if needed (82% comparing with 53%). On age, 65 to 79 year olds are most likely to (84%) with the next group (80 plus) at 76%.

Men (77%) are noticeably more likely to have people to help than women (68%).

Surprisingly, sole occupants are much more likely to have people to help, than those living with others (81% comparing with 70%).

### 3.9 If you want company or to socialise, do you have people to call on?



A broad majority of respondents (80%) have somebody to socialise with, if wanted.

Social activities mentioned include visits to museums, exhibitions and restaurants. Respondents who are less (or not) socially active cite mobility issues, or feeling 'reluctant to impose'.

#### 3.9.1 Have people to socialise with, if wanted

	% Yes
Aged 80+	94%
In good health	92%
Living alone	84%
In fair health	84%
Aged 50 to 64	82%
Male Respondents	81%
All Respondents (Baseline)	80%
Female Respondents	80%
Living with others	77%
Aged 65 to 79	75%
In poor health	47%



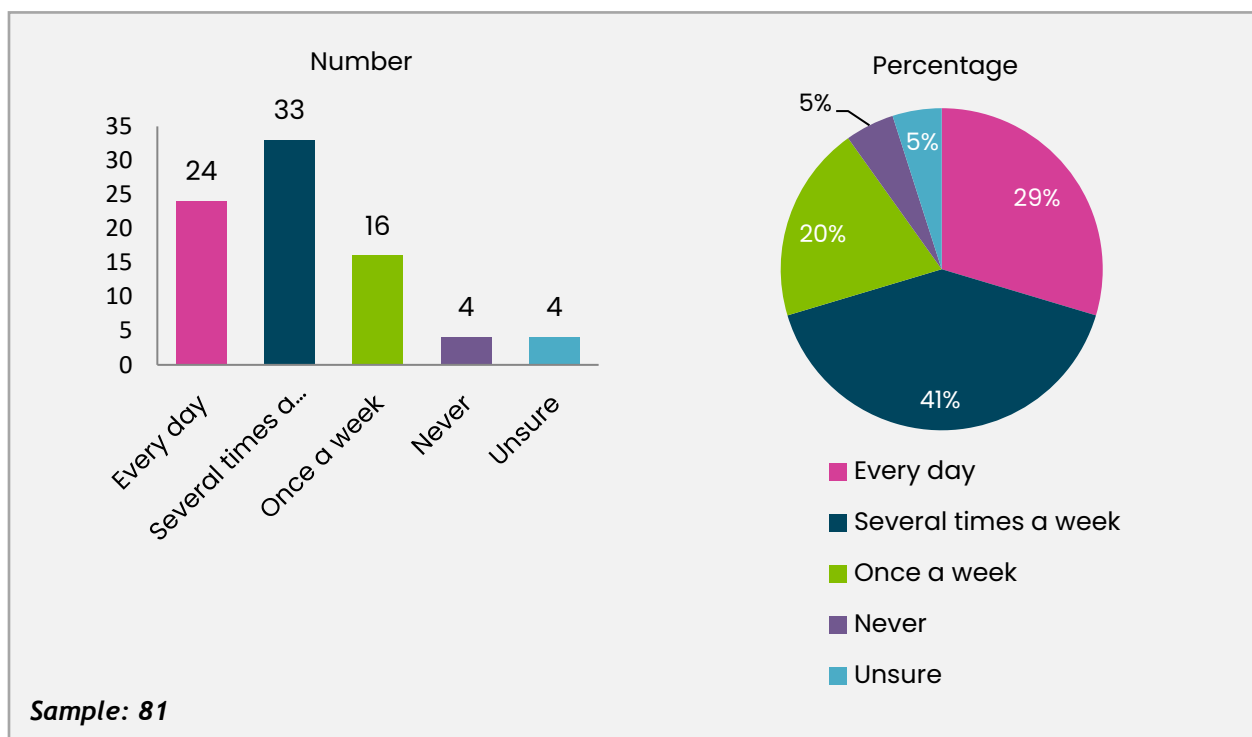
A clear majority of respondents in good health (92%) have somebody to socialise with, if wanted, while this is just 47% for those in poor health.

The oldest respondents (aged 80 plus) are most likely to have somebody to socialise with (94%) with the next group (50 to 64 year olds) on 82%.

The difference between men and women is marginal (both around 81%).

We find that sole occupants (84%) are more likely to find somebody to socialise with – than those living with others (77%).

### 3.10 How often do you go out during the week?



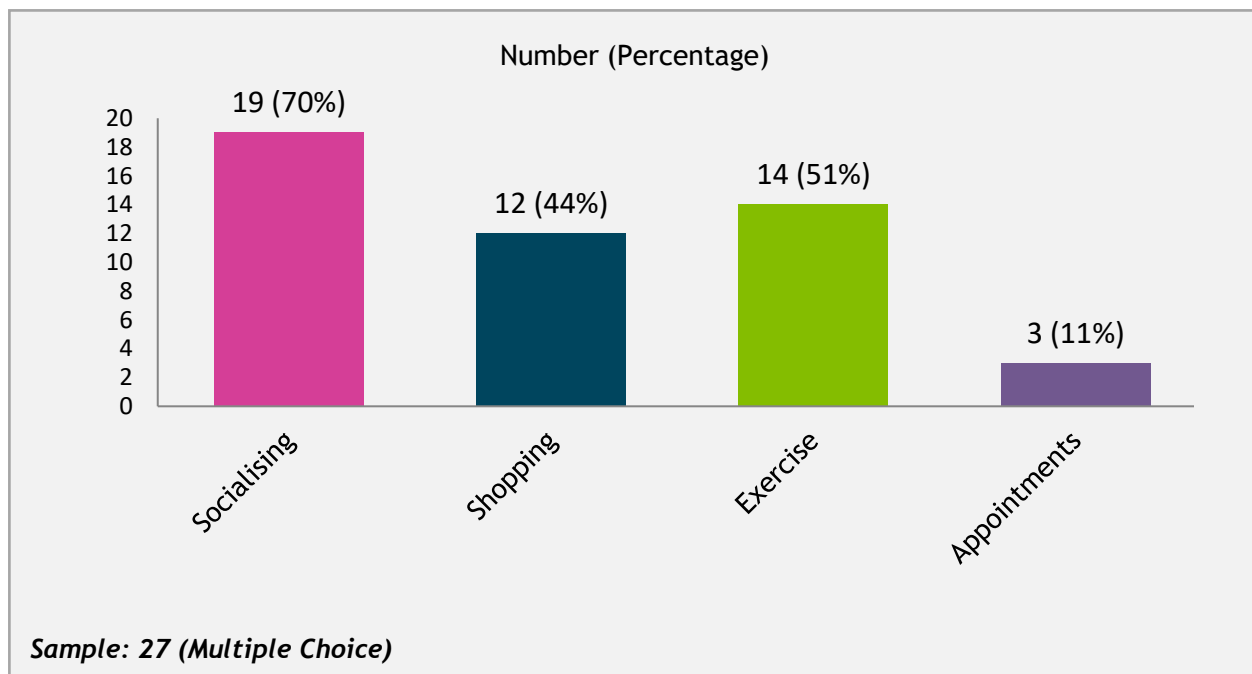
A clear majority of respondents (90%) go out during the week – 70% often, and 20% less so. Just 4 respondents indicate that they never go out.

### 3.10.1 Go out often (daily, or several times a week)

	% Yes
In good health	83%
Aged 50 to 64	77%
Aged 65 to 79	76%
Aged 80+	76%
In fair health	74%
Female Respondents	71%
Male Respondents	71%
All Respondents (Baseline)	70%
Living with others	70%
Living alone	69%
In poor health	33%

It appears that those in poor health, are much less likely to often go out (33% comparing with the average – 70%).

### 3.10.2 Please tell us more



Of those specifying where they go, and why, 70% socialise with friends and family, 51% undertake exercise and 44% visit local shops. A tenth (11%) attend medical or other appointments.



The feedback reveals a rich tapestry of activities.

### 3.11 Any other comments – about Social Isolation and Loneliness

Finally, we asked for any other comments on social isolation and loneliness. Themes are detected on feeling isolated or excluded, and disability, health and mental health.

**Selected Feedback**

#### Feeling Isolated

- Having lost my husband my life revolves around my children but as they are getting older my purpose seems to be diminishing. I am fine in the day it's the evenings that are hard.
- I think at times we don't realise how lonely we are – things become habit forming. It can overwhelm you suddenly and is an emotional time.
- I wish I could touch base with most friends, but time is short.

- I go out and am in contact with other people, but you can be lonely in a crowded room. I don't really feel close to many people and the people I do feel close to are too far away to see often.
- My life is not my own as a carer, and there is no relief from it, other than going to work (part time).
- Loneliness at night after people you would call could probably be in bed.

### **Feeling Excluded**

- Everything is online and digital. I am trying my best to learn modern technology, but it's not easy for my generation. There should be some provision for people like me.
- There are a lot of people who are lonely. Relationships are hard. With everything online I feel that a generation of older people are left behind and are also isolated.
- There aren't enough opportunities for my age group.
- More activities for the elderly even those who are not on benefits.

### **Disability, Health and Mental Health**

- People don't understand health and mobility issues even when you explain. They say things like "when you feel better, let's meet up."
- I am disabled and have difficulty with my mental health and mobility. I am also autistic. When I go out I always need to be accompanied, this is limiting as the carers only come for a couple of hours a day. I used to use my taxi card with com cab, but this has become unreliable.
- Makes me feel suicidal.

### **Other Comments**

- As an unpaid carer both my mum and I were very used to being alone and isolated, so at first during lockdown after Covid-19 it made no difference to us. But the longer it went on and the more we needed to keep her safe (over 2 years), the more isolated and lonely we became.
- More details required about social gathering and events in each Borough.
- Social isolation is something I suffered for a few years. Sometimes cutting yourself off with nothing to do can be the worst thing you can do to yourself.
- As we get older we need to connect more in the community, sharing , meeting locally in our areas, break down barriers.
- People just need to socialise.
- I think loneliness is a state of mind.
- People feel isolated and lonely if they don't have a confidant.

- If I feel down or lonely, I get up and go out for a walk or window shop.
- I have made a conscious effort to maintain friendships and join new groups once I retired.
- It's important to look after older neighbours

## 4. Closing Statement

The study showed that people need to make an effort to break the cycle of loneliness. It usually involves taking action or getting involved in activities that will cause us to interact with others. It does not have to cost money to access activities. There are some who rely on others to get out of the house or have a befriender, neighbour or family member.

Where there are gaps, Healthwatch Harrow will also raise issues with commissioners and providers.

## 5. Glossary of Terms

There are no acronyms in this report.

## 6. Distribution and Comment

This report is available to the general public, and is shared with our statutory and community partners. Accessible formats are available.

If you have any comments on this report or wish to share your views and experiences, please contact us.

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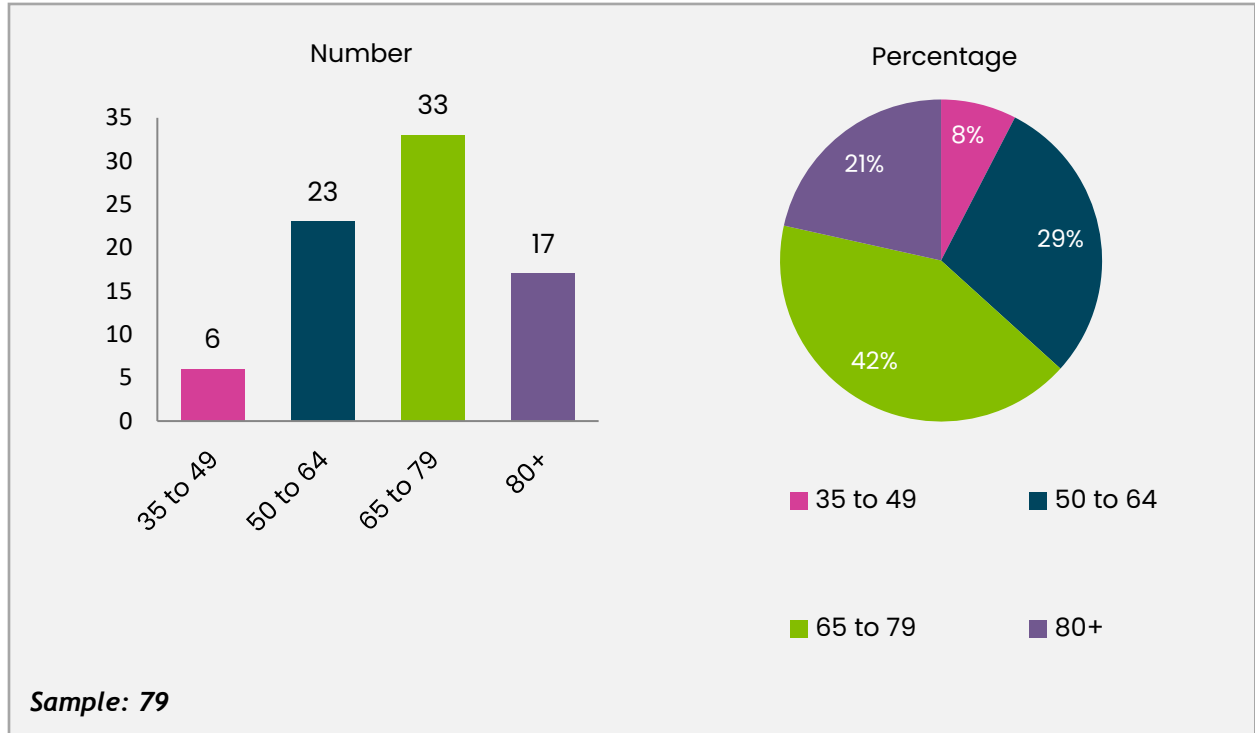
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/HWHarrow/>

Instagram: healthwatchharrowRegistered Charity Number: 1088435

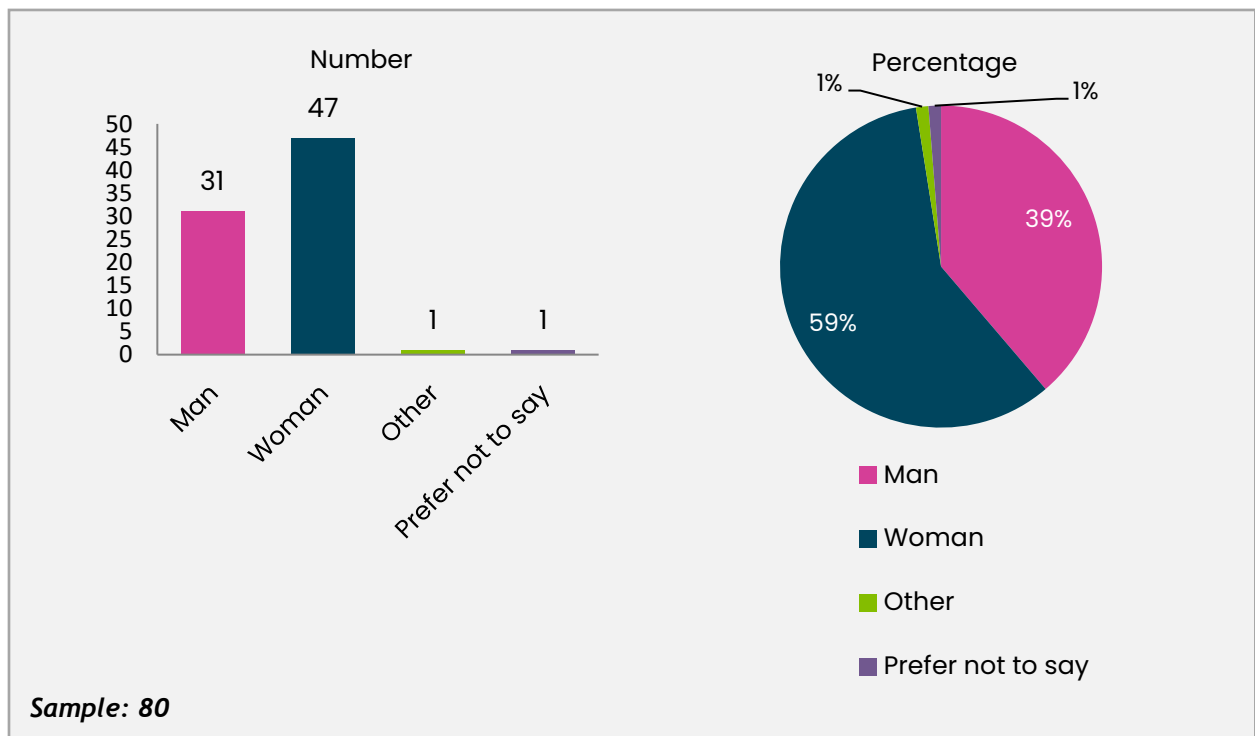
## Appendix - Demographics

The demographics of participants are stated as follows:

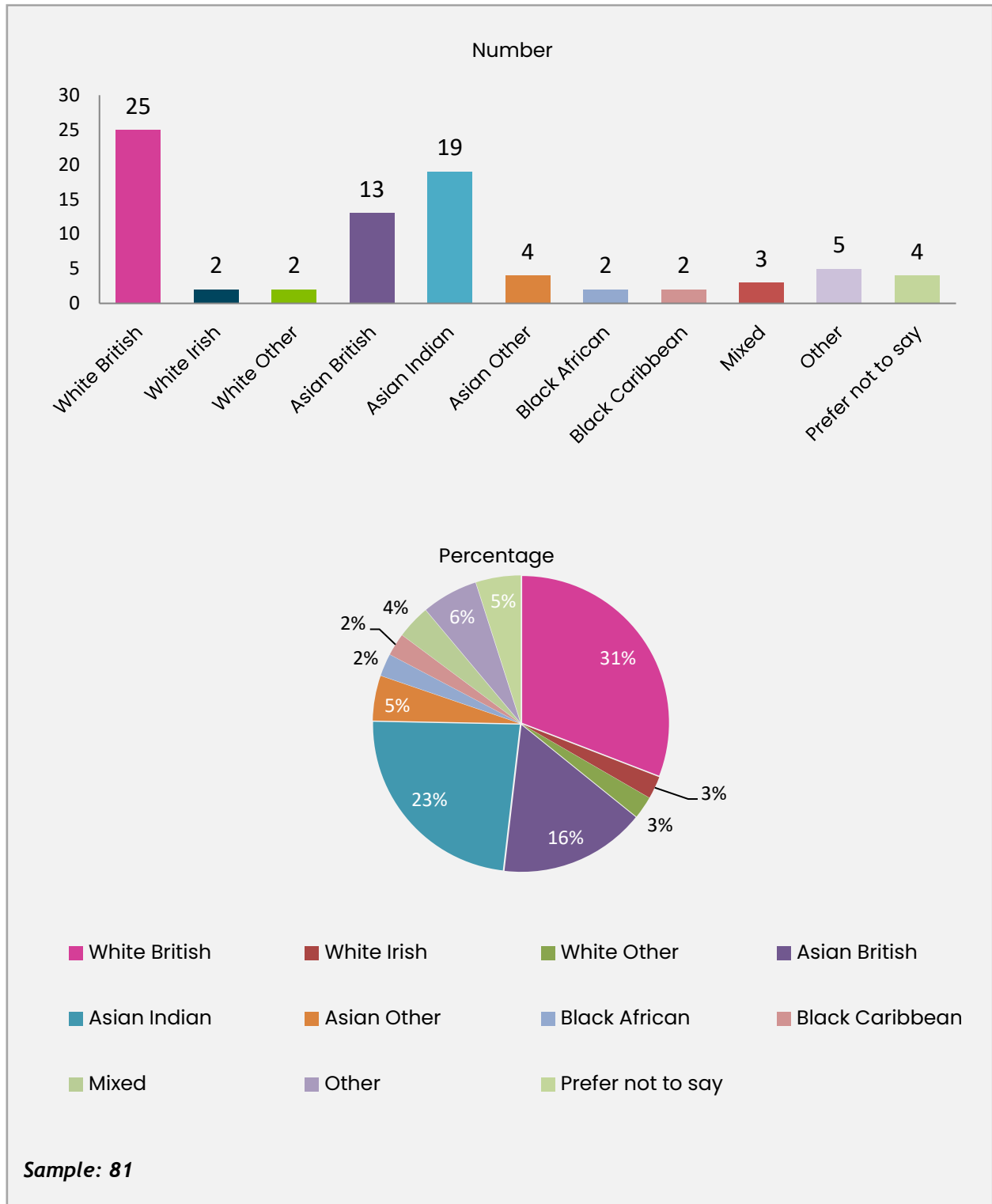
### Age



### Gender

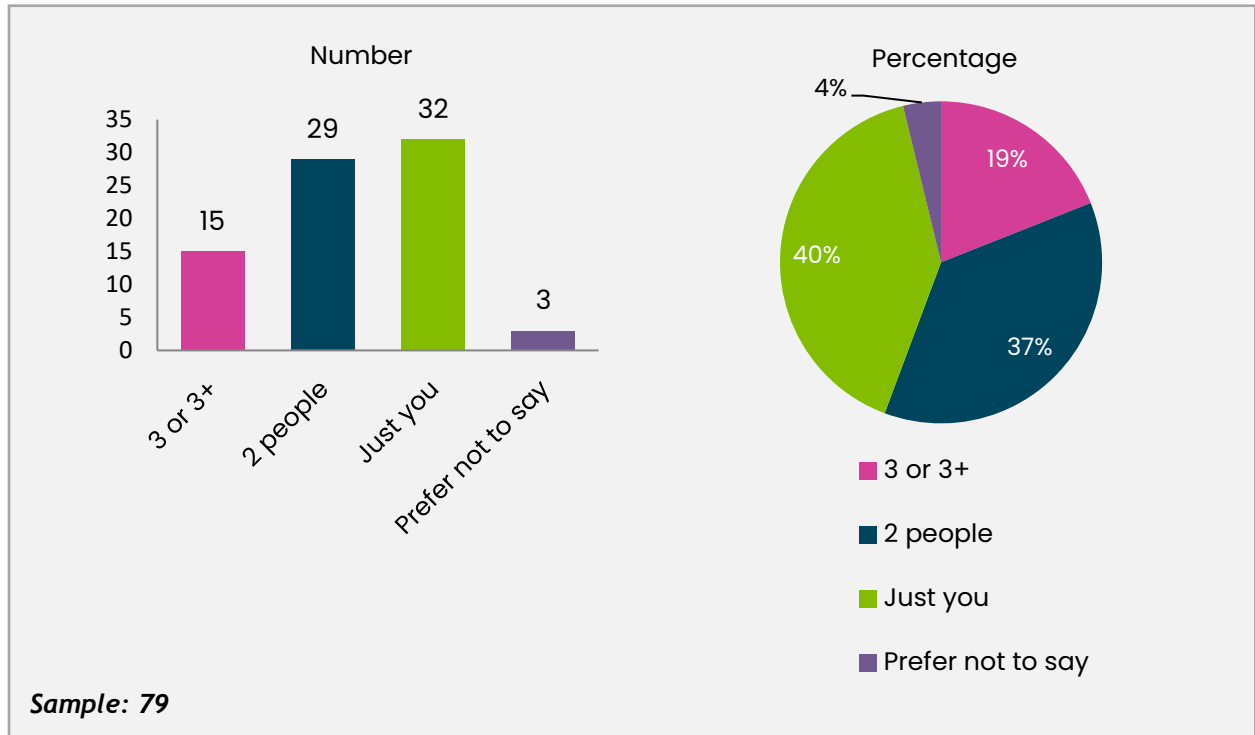


## Ethnicity

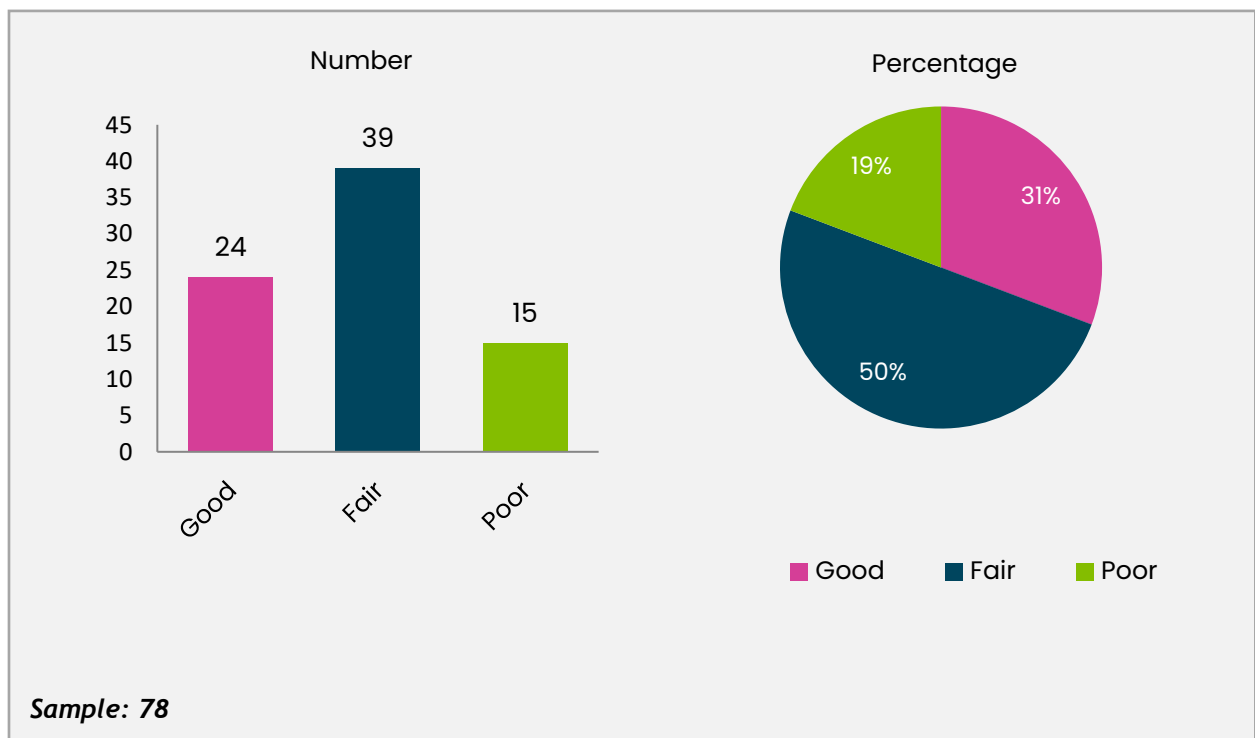




## Household



## Health



“Volunteering makes me feel useful in the community and I appreciate what I have more.

Social activities give me fun and connection with others.”

Local Resident