

How good is your home and your local place?



How good is your home and your local place? 22nd June to 4th September 2020

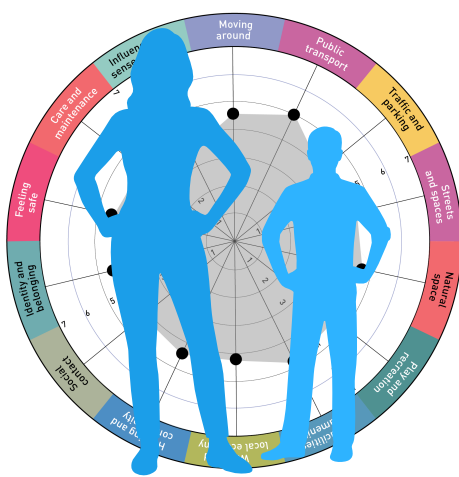
What we did

We know that where you live is about more than just bricks and mortar. Staff from Kirklees Council and KNH asked what it's really like to live in your council home and local place. We used a tool called the "Place Standard". This is a way of talking about any place (it could be your street, neighbourhood or town), by using some simple questions. We also asked some questions about how housing services should be managed and how you'd like to be involved (you can see learn more in our 'Future of housing services in Kirklees' summary). We'll use what we learned to work with you to improve our local places.

Who participated?

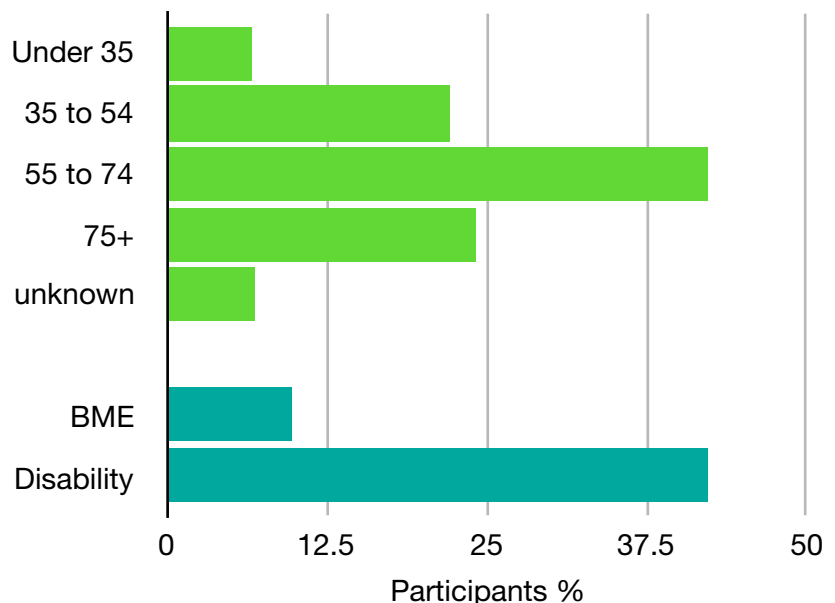
We sent a printed questionnaire to every KNH tenant and leaseholder in Kirklees. There were also other ways to take part - by talking through your experiences on the phone, by completing an online questionnaire or by taking part in an online group discussion (these were designed for communities where we had received fewer comments at the time).

2,432 People participated



Female 47.9% Male 27.55%

Other / unknown 24.55%



What participants said

Housing and community



Key issues: Most participants said that they would like to see more investment in their home. Issues mentioned include roofs, space heating, kitchens (including extraction), bathrooms, windows and doors. A small number of participants mentioned providing solar panels. Some participants would also like to see investment beyond their home, including better communal entrances and environmental improvements.



Anti-social behaviour and fear of crime were highlighted as concerns by many participants. Issues mentioned include dealing with anti-social behaviour, evicting nuisance tenants, more police presence and the control of drug use. Some said they would feel safer if better doors and CCTV were provided. Many people commented on the need for working more closely with the police, especially in relation to drug dealing and nuisance motorbikes.

Lot of participants mentioned grounds maintenance, including grass cutting (concerns include the frequency of grass cutting and the clippings not being taken away) and the general upkeep of estates (concerns include poor maintenance of footpaths and overgrown hedges). Garden maintenance issues were frequently mentioned. Some tenants are struggling to maintain gardens due to poor health or for age related reasons, and some are finding that tree management is too big a job or is too expensive.

Many participants mentioned household waste management, recycling facilities and garden waste collections. A small number of people said they would like support with dealing with garden waste. This suggests that some tenants may not know about the garden waste collection scheme or that the cost of the collections is an issue.

Car parking was a relatively common theme, with suggestions including more road parking and installing driveways as well as allocated parking bays. A few people mentioned the poor condition of highways and footpaths, sharing concerns about slips and falls.

Participants who mentioned repairs commented on the quality of work not being good enough.

Many people commented on their relationships with Housing Officers, including how often they see officers, their role and whether action is taken. A number of people said that they would like officers to check in with tenants more frequently both to see if tenants are safe and well and to take tenancy action where appropriate due to untidy gardens and the condition of a property. Tenants also mentioned working closely with residents to make estates better places.

A number of people commented about engagement and communication with tenants. There's need for a range of different communication methods to be used for making contact, to suit the needs of tenants. People would like more opportunities to engage with other tenants and officers. Other comments included tenants not knowing what services they can access and the need for regular engagement between tenants and Area Housing Managers.

Comments about services for older people include checking up on people to make sure they are ok, support around the home such as changing a light bulb and providing more activities for older people. Some participants made general comments about support for disabled people, but did not say how they feel that services could be improved. A very small number of people mentioned support for young people including family and employment support. Other points to note were concerns over the removal of age designated accommodation and the suitability of lettings.

"The houses are desperately in need of modernisation, as is the estate. My kitchen taps are from 1970 and my friends think it's a retro kitchen. It's embarrassing!! Stop patching the place up and get it modernised."

"My 21-year-old disabled son used to have access to a local group for people with SEN every Saturday. This service was withdrawn leading to a lot of unhappy people. They were offered to go to Huddersfield that is too far to go."

"When Kirklees cut the grass, they don't collect it, so it blows into the properties, this is a lazy service."

"When you phone the council, you have to explain things several times, one department doesn't speak with another department... it's frustrating."

Current workmen feel they are not required to finish off a job well as "it is only a council house."

"I didn't understand that I was entitled to this many services, as I've not been told and I'm dyslexic. I would like the information shared verbally so I can fully understand what help I can get as I require a few repairs."

Suggestions from participants: Dedicated neighbourhood teams to include staff and residents all working together to improve estates. Loans of equipment or use of gardening equipment for a small hire fee would make gardens easier to maintain (this could work for lawnmowers, wallpaper steamers, drills etc). Regular estate walkabouts with our Estate Management Officer to give a chance to discuss any problems that may arise and to request works that would improve the look of the area. A yearly review on how a tenant feels about things, either with their home or the community they live in. More services available for disabled people and more properties adapted for vulnerable and disabled people. Checking up on elderly people more to make sure they are OK. Recycling facilities for high density housing. More secure gates and fencing should be installed along with cameras "so that us older people can feel safe alone in our homes". Efficient enforcement of tenancy rules. Stricter measures imposed on those causing anti-social behaviour. Check that the work workmen do in homes is done to council standards. Email contacts to each department, "particularly for those like me with mental health issues or people using the phone this would be invaluable". A named person to contact: "Sometimes we can be unsure of what to do about a problem, i.e. when the really heavy rain fell a few months ago".

2,472 comments on this theme (from two questions about housing)

Influence and sense of control

Key issues: A high number of participants said they simply do not feel that they have any influence or control and as a result are not able to participate in decisions. Several participants said the removal of the age designation (part of the Allocations Policy changes) is an example of where they had no say or influence.



Where people have been involved in engagement activities in the past (for example, as a member of a Tenants and Residents Association or as a Community Voice) their comments are more positive: “Previous experience as Community Voice helped the estate to be included in more improvement and wellbeing”. By being involved previously, people have felt noticed and included in decisions. Some said that estates with tenant involvement are more and better maintained.

Participants mentioned a lack of time, age, ill health, disability and work commitments as things that have been barriers to them being able to participate, or to have influence and control. The main service areas where participants want the opportunity to have more influence include crime and anti-social behaviour, repairs, grounds maintenance and investment in houses and the local environment.

People who took part feel that Housing Officers can have a very important role, being able to better communicate with tenants and leaseholders about their ability to influence and control. Some leaseholders also feel that they do not have enough opportunities for their voice to be heard.

Suggestions from participants: Tenants should have more say on the look of estates. More opportunity to attend Estate Inspections. More visual Housing Officers and Housing Managers to have discussions with and share views about the surrounding area. Make sure there are ways of getting a representative voice. Emails asking if there are issues tenants and leaseholders want to raise. Talk with tenants more face to face, “don’t hide behind a computer” and “stop making everything online”. Call those who cannot easily get out, who would happily say what they think. Young people want to be engaged through social media – Tik Tok, Snapchat and YouTube. Decision makers need to put faith in young people – their input is important. Create short films about what things that matter. Opportunities to give quick feedback through commenting on content. More questionnaires and newsletters. Help people to speak more as a community.

1,265 comments on this theme
(from two questions about influence)

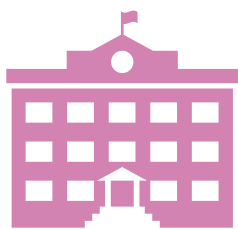
“There seems to be a requirement to be a member of a political party to even be allowed to speak to people that have the real control.”

“Tenants should be listened to more because they know what they need.”

“I don’t think decision makers listen to young people due to age.”

“The council have tough decisions to make, and while they can listen, they don’t always have the finances to make things work.”

Streets and spaces



Key issues: The main issues raised by tenants and leaseholders were overgrown and poorly maintained greenspaces, parking, litter, flytipping, pavements and road repairs. As well as these, there were a number of other issues including dog mess, grass cutting, disabled access, street cleaning and access to open spaces.



Many people talked about the maintenance of greenspaces, with a mix of comments about overgrown trees, greenery and bushes that are not maintained, large weeds growing and overhanging shrubbery. People feel that the standard of maintenance has fallen over the years. This not only makes the area look uncared for and neglected, it also has a negative impact for those who have limited mobility or may use a wheelchair. People's ability to go out and about is limited because it's difficult to navigate with a wheelchair or frame. Most comments about maintenance were negative, but there are also a few positive comments, including some about how residents have made efforts to keep their area looking cared for.

Parking issues commented on are largely about the lack of parking for tenants, irresponsible parking (for example on kerbs), blocked access and tenant only parking. Irresponsible parking has a negative impact on people with mobility scooters, making the footpaths dangerous and difficult to use. Quite a few participants have suggested turning scruffy grass verges into resident parking. Whilst most people said there's not enough parking, a small number have plenty of parking and are very satisfied with it.

Ongoing problems with litter and flytipping were often mentioned, including litter on streets, people dumping rubbish anywhere, litter dropped by kids, litter blowing into people's gardens and that there's litter and rubbish all around, including on estates and in parks and greenspaces. Empty bottles, cans, broken glass and drug vials are also common issues. People feel that more bins are needed in some areas, as well as more street cleaning, which isn't regular enough now or only covers main roads and not side streets.

Issues with pavements and road repairs include resurfacing of pavements, uneven and broken pavements which are trip hazards (many people commented on this), overgrown pavements, footpaths full of weeds or leaves, potholes and roads in need of repair. Dog mess on pavements and paths, in football fields, parks and in private gardens was mentioned by a large number of participants. People would like more bins and also more fines or penalties for irresponsible dog owners. Grass cutting was mentioned often, with dissatisfaction about the quality of grass cutting provided by the council, grass cuttings not being collected as well as the state of some of the tenants' gardens and the need for more action from Kirklees Council to address this.

Participants talked about access to parks and greenspaces in relation to children and young people having places to play, fields being properly maintained so people can enjoy them and ways of making the most of greenspace such as benches, courtyards, play space and events. Not only is this important for young people but for also people who are lonely. If places are clean and tidy it will make people want to go out and use them – this is good for helping lonely people get out and about so they can meet friends. Other access issues include parked cars blocking people's houses and hilly areas restricting opportunities to get out. People feel that streets and spaces play a vital role in the community to help people interact.

“Grass cutting left uncleared looks like cow pats half the time.”

“When grass is cut it is left to rot and clog up drains.”

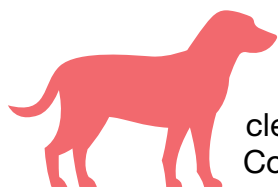
I belong to Lepton Community Link, so we have arranged for things to be done in Lepton to make it look better.

“The communal space around the back of where I live is a disgrace and will not be helping the mental wellbeing of any residents.”

Suggestions from participants: Improvements to local communal areas would be welcomed. Good to have an attractive place to sit in and be around as it helps mental health. More wildflowers, trees and flower planting. Weed killing and upkeep of footpaths and roads. More maintenance of gardens and tidying up. Council should inspect on a yearly basis to make sure gardens are tidy. Dog poo bags and bins provided, designated areas in parks for dog walking, signs to be put up, especially where schools are. Clear up flytipping. Residents only parking sign. Ban smoking of drugs in communal garden spaces. Perhaps some grass verges or areas could be turned into more parking spaces. Access to better and more and better public toilets - maybe a scheme where local shops would allow their facilities to be used. Walkways should be wheelchair friendly. Have more local meetings with people to discuss issues and concerns.

1,090 people commented on this theme.

Care and maintenance



Key issues: There are a few clear issues that people raised. Several participants commented on the limited cleaning and maintenance of streets and footpaths. Communal areas were mentioned often, with lots of comments about areas not being cleaned effectively, how

spaces are used and whether areas are looked after by the residents. Some people say they do take care, but feel that others don't show the same respect.



Greenspace management was a common theme, including grass cutting (many commented that the grass clippings are not collected), fencing, hedges, tree issues (people wanting trees removing, tidying or generally maintaining) and overgrown paths. Comments about roads and paths were particularly negative.

On the subject of property repairs, some people say they have received a good service, with high quality workmanship - a timely and appropriate response. Others said that the service lacks care, quality and cost effectiveness. Some participants commented on poor insulation, work needed with roofs and pipes and a lack of consistent modernisation. There were several comments about damp, and a feeling that small repairs and equipment could prevent lots of the issues.

People want to be able to raise concerns face to face - to talk to someone local to get things done. Contact with Estate Managers or Wardens is important to people, as are estate inspections. Participants also said they would like to help out and be able to take pride in their area, place or property. Some tenants would like to have the opportunity to help undertake tasks alongside staff and feel that if the council showed a bit more pride then people would follow the example if given the opportunity.

There were several comments around enforcing tenancy rules more strictly or more evenly, encouraging better behaviour of tenants and also offering support for tenants when things are not up to required levels.

Suggestions from participants: Let residents know when grounds work is going to happen, then if they wished they could help (litter picking or moving furniture etc). Support for residents who want to garden, but maybe under normal circumstances.

1,078 people commented on this theme.



Natural space



Key issues: Most participants commented that they have easy access to surrounding natural space in their own gardens, communal open spaces, local parks, nearby woodlands, fields, rivers, canals or greenways. Many enjoy watching wildlife from their gardens.



Communal outdoor spaces have been improved by tenants: “planting, community spirit and friendly tenants.” Some said the gardeners are excellent and do the best they can given the short time they have to spend on each site they look after. Some said the upkeep of grassed areas is very poor, and some have started to cut the grass outside their homes.

Some pathways are not suitable for muddy weather, where there’s no concrete such as Red Ash Park, Dalton. In Dewsbury Town Centre between Slaithwaite Road and Market Street the cobbles are full of cones, skateboards, rubbish and overgrown verges which are narrowing the space for walking on. Some are concerned that sheep roaming the streets of Marsden are a danger to drivers.

Since the covid lockdown maintenance of spaces has been neglected generally, with overhanging branches and bushes obstructing footpaths. For example, the corner of Crawshaw Crescent and Glenfield Avenue, Deighton, on New Hey Road, Salendine Nook, the left hand pavement on Muffit Lane, Gomersal. Large trees overhanging gardens are preventing direct sunlight to gardens and properties. Too many overlapping trees in the park at Hubert Street, Salendine Nook “makes it dark, cold and unkempt.”

A participant commented that despite repeated requests to KNH to remove rubbish that has built up in overgrown trees this has not been actioned. A lot of money has been spent on pavements and walkways, but they have become overgrown and can’t be used. Some footpaths and walking routes are overgrown and not maintained.

Some said that they are disabled and housebound but would like to go into natural spaces with help or improved access. Scholes Park, Cleckheaton was improved by volunteers but there is nothing for wheelchair users. Trees and tree roots in the middle of pavements make it difficult for wheelchairs and prams. For some families who live on main roads, there are no paths and nowhere for children to play. For example, there is no park area around Lockwood Road, Huddersfield.

Dog poo on footpaths is a concern, for example on the path from Brooklyn Flats, Cleckheaton to Man Dam. People also mentioned used needles in spaces where children play and rubbish on the river and greenway. Many estate park floors are sinking and are regularly covered in glass. There's a build-up of rubbish at the skatepark on Cross Lane, Skelmanthorpe. People cannot walk on Walpole fields at times as they are not level and there's no access for prams or wheelchairs. Local cemeteries in Scholes and Liversedge are felt to be neglected.

Some said that other tenants don't bother to tidy up their gardens. One communal seating area has been spoilt by piles of rubbish left outside a neighbouring house. There is a nice area to sit out on Carr Street estate, but it can feel unsafe as a result of anti-social behaviour and there is dog poo. Some natural spaces are also neglected, "park behind my house, no care into how it looks, kids can't play in it." The area around a playing field is used for wildlife so there is no access to the play area due to nettles.

A few people commented that local parks are used by youths for drinking, drugs and hanging around. Natural spaces are being used by drug dealers and users. There's also dumped waste, litter, dog mess and anti-social behaviour. One woodland area has make-shift tents, plastic sheeting strung about with furniture and small fires. A local football field and play area has been covered in graffiti and glass bottles smashed all over the changing rooms. There's fly tipping of large items such as mattresses in woodland areas and paths, such as around Sheepridge.

Participants commented that natural spaces should be protected. People are worried about loss of natural spaces for new housing and the impact on wildlife. Some are also concerned that communal spaces will be replaced with concrete as part of improvements, resulting in loss of wildlife – trees, squirrels and birds.

Anti-social behaviour puts tenants off from using communal spaces. "I'd love to sit in our communal garden. Noise and smell of cigarettes and cannabis all make me stay indoors. Sometimes with windows shut in high temperatures." A tenant commented that the fenced off grassy communal area by the bungalows used to have a bench, flowers and plants, but these have all gone. One tenant put in to make a small patio, but never heard anything: "It would be lovely to sit out with neighbours."

One tenant has reported trees in their garden encroaching over the top of the bungalow, dangerous in high winds. "I have reported it to the council, but nothing ever happens." One tenant said the "leylandii trees are bad for our health, we get no light in our flats." One tenant said trees make the street look lovely, but the roots prevent the garden gate from closing and leaves make the garden slippery and dangerous.

There's a lack of public transport to some natural spaces. One young person commented that buses take people into town but not to places like Castle Hill.

"I can't stress enough how much value I have for natural spaces. More please. Trees, woodlands and fields. Especially streets that have bus routes or where there are a lot of car owners."

"It is difficult for me to regularly experience good quality natural space as I would have to go to another neighbourhood to do it. My community should have more natural space."

"It's just concrete outside my flat. Nowhere nice for me to sit and chat with my neighbours. Nowhere for the kids on the block to play."

"Since coronavirus I think we all need these spaces now more than ever and they should now be a priority in all areas."

Suggestions from participants: Regular maintenance of parks and walkways and grassy areas in front of properties. Natural spaces need to be maintained more regularly to avoid bollards getting hidden by grass. Streams and rivers need to be cleaned of rubbish and patrolled. A guide to where there are local footpaths. More variety of trees and flowers - for example, limes, lemons, cherries and oranges for wellbeing. More flower beds in the parks and bulb planting in grassy communal areas. More places for disabled people to access and more toilets on the Greenway. Handrails to communal spaces. More fixed seating in grassed areas for mainly elderly tenants. More designed spaces to sit without abuse from teenagers or addicts. Communal spaces need to be maintained and council estate caretakers need to move any waste that has been dumped illegally, more often. CCTV should be installed to encourage people to pick up their dog poo. Move drug users into housing where there are no children. Lights on the MUGA for kids playing at dusk. Outdoor gym equipment at the local park for over 50s. Schools and parents should do more to get children out in the local environment and help make their surroundings better. Don't cut the grass as often, it impacts on wildlife. Encourage farmers to keep or install hedgerows. Thin out or prune large, overhanging trees. Get rid of weeds on the road (weeds are a trip hazard) and clean out drains. People who have plants growing on their own land overhanging on to public paths should be forced to cut back their own plants and not wait for the council.

892 people commented on this theme.

"We have three local areas for children with all sorts of activities and my granddaughter loves to go to the park to feed the ducks, play on the swings and see all the wildlife, like squirrels."

"If my kid's comments are any indication, then my area is doing a good job of creating recreation areas for kids to play. We are pretty well served, but would rather older people would leave less litter, so others could enjoy them better."

"I'm so pleased that Dalton Ridge is accessible by everyone."

"There is a good playground and skate park for the children, but it would be nice to have a few more benches for older people on the field for them to be able to sit."

Play and recreation



Key issues: Participants commented on the maintenance of play areas. Some said they are concerned that although there is a local play area, the maintenance of the equipment is poor and there may be litter, such as broken glass, crisp packets and cans. Some think that the play equipment is out of date, and not geared to what young



children want nowadays. Participants in some parts of Kirklees said

that more play areas with more facilities are needed for young people, although those living near parks such as Greenhead Park, or a well maintained local play area, said there are enough. Some play areas have been removed and not replaced.

Participants commented on the lack of suitable spaces and activities for older children and teenagers. In some places, parks for young children are being used by older children or teenagers to hang out. This intimidates the younger children and can even stop parents and young children using them. A small number of people said that play areas and remoter areas within parks are used by teenagers for alcohol and drug use. A couple of younger children have been bullied by older ones, but the police could not respond, so no-one could sort the matter out. Some reported not using parks and open spaces for fear of being the victim of crime if they did so.

People who have physical disabilities or mobility issues are concerned that not enough is being done to make sure they can access and use local parks, open recreational areas and play areas. Wheelchair accessibility is one of the issues. Some people mentioned the need for seating or garden areas for older people to sit in, especially if they do not have gardens of their own. Several older people just did not see the significance for them of this question – saying they are “too old for it to matter” or that “I don’t play any more.”

Some people are concerned that open areas have already been earmarked for house building and other development (or will be in future), which will mean the loss of play spaces and recreation. Some said that communal gardens are not usually suitable to sit out in and it would be good if they could be sectioned off to enable householders to each have a patch that could be theirs. Some people are annoyed that local children might play on the street rather than in a park or open space, causing noise or potentially damaging cars. In open spaces, people are still not picking up and taking away their dog waste.

Suggestions from participants: Would be nice to have a communal garden where older people could sit and socialise. Check the accessibility of the seats on swings and ladders on slides as some are way too high to lift children onto. Involve more young people in positive activities out of school such as litter picks in the community. Small play areas need regular maintenance and cleaning – could this be done by those on Community Service? A crazy golf area in the large parks would be a good idea. Could we have a youth centre in Cleckheaton as we need to offer more for older kids to do? Honley could benefit from an adult park for residents, and the park my granddaughter uses is too small and could do with an outdoor basketball and football area. Honley is getting bigger and needs more spaces teenagers will want to use. Lovely area near Hillside Crescent and Ing Lane (Newsome) that would make a lovely play area for our children.

876 people commented on this theme.

Social contact



Key issues: Participants shared mixed views about how socially connected they feel, especially due to the impact of covid. However, a significant number of people said there is good community spirit and people are looking out for each other - for some, more so now than they did before covid. Many residents have valued meeting up in their gardens, chatting over their fences and meeting up in communal spaces, along with going to local parks to see family and friends.



A large number of participants feel that there aren't as many facilities and activities in their local area. Community centres have been closing over the years due to a lack of funding and volunteers, which has been made worse due to covid. Many buildings are now closed and many activities have stopped all together. People shared the added concern that many groups and activities won't restart after covid, especially where older volunteers have been running local activities.

Covid has restricted people's movements and their ability to share time with family, friends, and neighbours. Feeling isolated can be damaging to our health and wellbeing. Spending time with others offers a number of mental health benefits, such as increased feelings of belonging, purpose, increased levels of happiness, reduced levels of stress, improved self-worth and confidence.

Lots of participants said there's a need to replace benches and put in extra benches, shelters and picnic seating areas to encourage people of all ages to meet outside their homes, in open spaces, in parks and in villages. We heard an overwhelming need for this in the comments people shared. People want to meet up with others and to have the space to make new friendships in their local places.

Participants also shared lots of examples of how they have kept in touch, such as sitting outside during the nice weather, socially distancing while chatting to neighbours they have not met before. Some feel that lockdown brought out the best in people, with some younger people showing more concern for older residents and doing jobs around the estates - for example, cutting communal grass areas when council staff were not doing it.

Some people have travelled to neighbouring villages or towns and public parks (such as Greenhead, Crow Nest, Honley, Oakwell Hall, Thornhill Lees, Beaumont and Batley parks) or to pubs in order to meet up with other people. But the closure of public toilets has made this difficult for some (for example, in Mirfield), as they cannot access local facilities and outdoor spaces as easily. For some older residents mobility issues also pose problems as many disabled people find it harder to access outdoor spaces and travel to neighbouring towns and villages. Having activities (such as bingo, luncheon clubs, craft groups and social coffee mornings) in and around local neighbourhoods is really important to people.

For some families, the lack of youth clubs, school holiday activities and after school provision is an issue, along with the closure of Children's Centres. This makes it more difficult for families to meet others and for young people to have positive things to do. For many people, covid has had a big impact on their mental wellbeing, so residents would value opportunities to encourage them to leave their homes and to socialise with others, young and old.

"I don't know about spaces to meet people and no one comes to my door to talk other than the carers"

"Good community spirit, people look after each other."

"We have 'our neighbourhood nest' which has done amazing work throughout the pandemic just need more people to know about it and come"

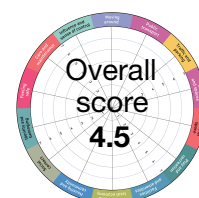
Suggestions from participants: Put more benches in public areas and open spaces to encourage more people to socialise outdoors. Having local information about what is available nearby would be helpful (for example, local walking routes, activities at local community centres, village halls, churches and libraries, neighbouring villages, pubs, bingo, slimming clubs and exercise classes), especially as people are uncertain what will be available during and after covid. Communal areas and gardens should be improved (some areas where washing is hung out are uneven, making these spaces unsafe for some residents to access and meet up with others). Space outside homes, especially for those living in flats, needs to be well-kept so it can be used for socialising with family and friends. Better kept communal lounges that are more welcoming and accessible going forward - currently they are locked due to covid. Estate inspections should be widely promoted, and residents engaged for their views. Families with smaller children would appreciate children's play areas and activities being invested in for parents and children, so that they can get to know each other on their estates.

855 people commented on this theme.

Identity and belonging



Key issues: Some people feel there has been a stronger sense of community during the pandemic, with people pulling together and helping each other out. Our participants said that most of the community are friendly and welcoming and that their local community is very positive. People who have lived in their homes for a long time have more of a sense of belonging. Some people have lived in their local area for many years and are happy to bring their families up here too. People like the feeling of belonging, which is important to them. Schools give a good sense of community, but some do not feel there's a sense of it outside of school. People said they have a stronger feeling of belonging if they are actively involved in their local area.



"Born and brought up here 91 years ago and still feel secure and welcome."

"No chance of building strong community, mostly older people around shut away and forgotten."

"The sense of being from Holmfirth is being killed off and the concept of being a part of "The Borough" does not work."

Living alone in Netherton is a very solitary way of life.

"It is a wonderful place to live, fantastic."

"Been here 18 years and still feel like an outsider."

"Thornhill is steeped in history"

"We don't even have Pride anymore, and given our history in this town, that's pathetic."

Good neighbours are key to people feeling that they belong and neighbourliness gives people a positive outlook on the area where they live. Residents said they take pride in their surroundings and gardens, the borders and shared spaces. Most people look after their homes and gardens, helping to achieve a good reputation.

Some people shared that although they do feel they belong to their area, there are many issues to address. People feel that some areas have a negative identity or bad reputation and have done for many years. Some areas are portrayed as being rough and having a problem with drugs and anti-social behaviour. Some people feel that their place does have an identity, but not a positive one, and they are looking to move as soon as possible.

Some participants feel there has been little improvement over the years to some people's local areas and estates - everything looks old and out of date, which impacts on the sense of local identity. Some said that with a diverse community people do not have things in common. The generation gap between young people and the elderly, and differences between those who have lived in their area for a long time and new people moving in, have led to a lack of a sense of community spirit and places losing their identity. Some shared concerns about older and younger people living in the same block of flats and said that age related areas should be re-introduced.

A lack of Tenants and Residents Associations, community buildings, shops and the post office closing has had a negative effect on some communities. People keep themselves to themselves and do not want to engage with some people in their community. Some people feel that they are not aware of what is going on in their community, so they feel out of the loop. Some estates are set apart from the local village or town (for example, in Holmfirth) which has an impact on community spirit and whether people feel a sense of belonging.

Suggestions from participants: Positive identity could be improved with council input, perhaps emphasising local history. Library to have local heritage classes or lessons. Offer more support to people who have issues with anti-social behaviour, drugs or alcoholism - and support the people who their behaviour affects. There could be a community cafe where everyone would benefit. Ask if people would like to take up gardening to make the place look good. An over 50s lunch club would be nice to get people out a bit more.

783 people commented on this theme.

Feeling safe



Key issues: Although some people said they do feel safe, the vast majority of our participants said that most people do not feel safe in or around KNH properties. Those who do feel safe told us that they feel supported and cared for by their neighbours and local community, or that they live in smaller, more rural villages or towns (for example, Grange Moor, Marsden and Honley). Those who don't feel safe said this is for a number of reasons. A lot of people said they feel less safe now than they have done in the past, as well as feeling less safe at night than they do in the daytime.



Some are concerned about the quality and maintenance of their property. Issues include concerns about the security measures in their block or on their property and fencing around their property. One person said that they believe the electrical wiring in their property is a hazard, another said they have a problem with rats. Issues with the built environment are also making some people feel unsafe, such as uneven pavements, poor lighting and speeding.

Most of those who don't feel safe gave reasons such as anti-social behaviour, racism, crime and neighbour disputes in their area. Many people mentioned that they or their neighbours have been burgled or have had their cars broken into. Others regularly mentioned that they feel intimidated by (or are in a dispute with) their neighbours. Many people mentioned that they feel intimidated by groups of young people (often men) who will often congregate near their property, that their neighbours often play loud music and there are regular arguments or fights outside their homes.

The most common comment was in relation to drug use or drug dealing, either within their block of flats, on or near their estate or in car parks meant for residents. One person mentioned that the regular misuse of their car park made them fear that emergency vehicles will not be able to reach them if they are needed. Fears around knife and gun crime featured less regularly than comments about substance misuse, but they are still commonly held fears. Huddersfield Town Centre was mentioned as a specific concern for knife crime.

Many people said they think that neither the police or the council take action once issues are reported. This seems to contribute to people feeling unsafe, as they consider the support to be ineffective. Many people strongly want more lighting, CCTV and a more visible police presence. We also heard overwhelming feedback that allowing young people and older people to live within the same estate or block has made people feel very unsafe.

Suggestions from participants: Talk to Tenants and Residents Associations more. Install CCTV in corridors and outside properties. Improve or install fencing and lockable gates. Increase visible police presence. Don't mix young people and older people in the same areas. Create more neighbourhood watches. Employ night-watchmen. Develop informal ways of dealing with anti-social behaviour. Improve lighting on streets and around properties. Install intercoms with a camera facility.

1,065 people commented on this theme.

"I am still afraid after my house was burgled in broad daylight. Luckily, I was not in the house when they broke in, but they ransacked the house."

"We all look out for one another."

"This is the benefit of living on a quiet road! Everyone knows everyone and we have a good sense of community despite being small!"

"I don't feel safe walking around due to drug dealers, agitated users hanging around and moped riders riding on the pavements and nearly running you over."

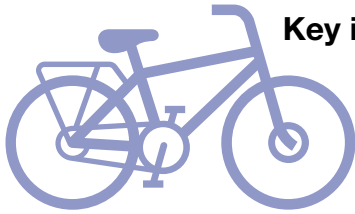
"Ok in daylight. Never go out alone after dark."

"Park is not safe to walk in with the dog as gangs go there to drink, take drugs."

"There are plenty of places here to walk. You can go in all directions and find a good route."

"The paths are uneven for my wheelchair; bushes are overgrown onto the pavement and a lot of drop kerbs are not flush. There is too much illegal parking on pavements, and nothing is done about it."

Moving around



Key issues: Many people who commented about moving around said that they are older or have a disability. Participants often mentioned the hilly nature of the local area. They also mentioned particular barriers to moving around.



Issues include: the condition of paths and pavements, not enough dropped kerbs for mobility scooters, having no pavements or narrow pavements, not leaving enough space for wheelchairs or walking frames, overgrown trees, bushes and vegetation on pavements and down ginnels, uneven surfaces, the quality of the paving and uneven pavements due to them having been dug up and a shoddy repair made.

Paths that are covered with leaves and moss from bungalow roof tops are very slippery. Obstacles left out and steps are also preventing people from moving around easily. People also mentioned the lack of lighting, potholes and ill-maintained roads, litter, rubbish dumping and dog poo. People would like more wheelchair accessible walks. Some have problems storing and charging a disabled scooter. The reduction in town centre disabled parking due to carpark and street closures is also an issue.

Traffic and parking are affecting people. Pavement parking at times forces people to step into the road and this was mentioned by many. People are frightened by traffic and expressed concerns that roads are dangerous for cyclists and pedestrians due to speeding, dangerous driving and the volume of traffic. Sometimes quadbikes, bikes, and cars block corners. Several people said that not feeling safe has stopped them moving around. Some mentioned fear of assault, feeling unsafe or intimidated due to drug dealing and drug taking, feeling unsafe especially in winter when it's dark or on the greenways, and cycle paths being unlit or overtaken by youths.

Suggestions from participants: Gritting paving slabs in winter to stop them being slippery for older people. Ramps and slopes to bungalows would help. More seating so we could have a rest whilst out walking. Kilner Bank needs the walkways sorting out – maybe a community activity. Cycling needs physical separation from motor traffic to really take off. Painted cycle routes in town centres connected to routes between towns and housing areas. Stop cars parking on street corners. Clear the litter on the pathway leading to Bradley Boulevard. More needs to be done about the upkeep of hedges, pathways and pavements. More cycle paths and good quality walking routes with good signposting. More is needed for disabled people. Improving the condition of paths and making dropped kerbs would be helpful. Focus less on cycling and more on providing parking spaces for blue badge holders. Maintaining the vegetation around snickets on estates is absolutely crucial to families being able to negotiate their way. It would be great to open up more Greenway routes as walkers can benefit as well and it's safe for kiddies.

913 people commented on this theme.

Public transport



Key issues: Participants made a mix of positive and negative comments about public transport, with most being about buses rather than rail. Many feel that their homes are well connected with town centres,

particularly by bus. Those who live close to a bus stop are generally happy with the service. Others said they are able to travel to places such as Bradford and York fairly easily. People mentioned valuing their free bus pass, being able to access regular services, and being able to travel sustainably. Some gave praise for the helpful and knowledgeable bus drivers.



Those who raised issues mainly commented on the cost, frequency and reliability of bus services. Few people commented about trains, though some mentioned the poor rail connection for those based around Holmfirth, and issues with accessing Mirfield station. Many feel that bus frequency is an issue, often saying that one bus per hour isn't enough. It means that people struggle to get to medical appointments or find it difficult to fit using public transport around existing commitments like school drop offs. Some have to take taxis or rely on family to drive them instead. The lack of buses in the evening and at weekends is also an issue for some. Some feel that routes and service frequency have reduced over recent years and this has a wider impact on towns. Generally people think our public transport infrastructure is shrinking rather than growing or improving.

In some cases, people's dissatisfaction with bus services may be linked to changes during the pandemic, as bus companies have had to change or temporarily reduce services. Some mentioned that frequently changing timetables are an issue, particularly causing confusion to elderly users of public transport. People feel that the service provided by bus companies during the pandemic has been disappointing, with a lack of consideration for the transport needs of NHS staff and other essential workers, and a reduced service affecting people who still need to travel.

Participants said that fares are too expensive and are rising disproportionately. Some compared the cost of local bus fares to that of other Yorkshire areas and feel it's cheaper to travel elsewhere, or that it's cheaper for a family to get a taxi than a bus. A few people commented that contactless payment technology is a barrier for some. People are also concerned about safety and some mentioned the direct impact of the pandemic on their current travel. Others commented on generally poor levels of cleanliness, and said that buses are sometimes in poor condition, too slow, too noisy and prone to breaking down.

Some people are unable to use public transport due to a disability (directly or indirectly). For example, visually impaired people cannot cross the road to get on and off the bus, some are not mobile enough to walk as far as the bus stop and there are not enough shelters. Some wheelchair users are not being let on the bus if the chair-friendly space is already occupied by another wheelchair user, or they may be unable to access the bus if the stop isn't wheelchair friendly.

"The small bus that comes in the estate is the best"

"It's too expensive and unhygienic even with masks."

"Fabulous bus service as I live on the main road going up to local hospital."

Suggestions from participants: Campaign to reduce ticket prices. Support nationalisation of bus services. Increase the number of buses running in the evenings. Consistent service at bus stops, such as shelters (Close Hill in Newsome). Provide an access bus. Provide other modes of public transport, like rickshaws. More information for bus passengers to help them know the area and when to get off the bus. Increase parking restrictions (for example, park on one side of the road only) to make it easier for buses to get through. Stop people eating on buses. The buses need to be cleaned more frequently. CCTV on every bus. A small hop on bus to the village centre from Hilltop or Wilberlee. More offers or discounts for families. Repair broken bus stop monitors.

1,017 people commented on this theme.

Permit parking in Rawthorpe is not extensive enough and not policed or totally observed"

"Speeding up and down Newsome Road South mainly by non-residents."

"I think parking in Cleckheaton is excellent... it is free and there is enough."

"Parking in our street is a joke"

Traffic and parking



Key issues: Many people are unhappy with traffic and parking in their neighbourhood, although those who feel able to park where needed are more positive. Most who commented said that car owners don't have a space or a driveway to park

their car and that families who own more than one car cause problems. Many cars are parked on the kerb or pavement and these are hazards for pedestrians. People said they are not able to use their pram or scooter on the pavement and have to walk on the road with prams and children. This makes people feel unsafe and uneasy.



Having cars parked on either side of the road causes congestion. Many are worried that emergency vehicles will not be able to pass if needed. Buses often struggle to get through due to parked cars. Residents are keen to have more parking on estates so they can park their cars safely, near to where they live. People said they find parking charges expensive and there is not enough parking for those living with a disability.

When people have reported parking issues, they are frustrated that nothing has been done in response. Some said there are too few wardens to monitor areas, suggesting that resident-only parking permits are not worth having if they are not going to be monitored. Often others park in spaces that are marked for residents only. Many people who live near a school mentioned serious parking issues around school drop off and pick up times, causing a lot of issues for residents nearby.

Speeding in built-up areas is making lots of people feel unsafe. Some asked for more speed bumps, whilst others said these don't seem to stop speeding in other places. A few people reported potholes on the roads and said how dangerous they are for drivers. This includes potholes not being filled as quickly and becoming a bigger problem because they have taken too long to be repaired.

Suggestions from participants: Parking needs improving, with off road parking making streets safer. Need better parking by reducing the amount of grass and making parking space. Needs more short stay parking in Holmfirth. Move traffic wardens out of town centres and send to other areas where there are car parking issues. Parking should be free in Dewsbury like in Batley. Dropped kerbs should be installed so where there is space, gardens or space outside the property can be used to park. Free or affordable parking in town centres which would encourage people to come and shop. Put up clamping notices so people are deterred from parking where they shouldn't. Make people who have garages use them for parking and not storing items. Make narrow busy streets one way to solve the congestion caused by traffic coming both ways.

1,157 people commented on this theme.

Facilities and amenities



Key issues: There were many positive comments from people who feel there are adequate local facilities nearby, such as shops and cafes that meet people's needs. People value having a local shop in close proximity to where they live. However, some people mentioned the limited range and higher costs of local shops compared to supermarkets. This is more of a concern where people do not have access to a car or have to rely on public transport.



Many people are concerned about the lack of GP and dentist practices in their local area and said that many services are oversubscribed. It's difficult to book appointments without significant delay. The impact of new housing developments in some communities will make it even more difficult for people to access health services and schools locally.

Some mentioned a need for more independent local shops and suggested lower rents and rates to encourage new business. Several people said they feel there are far too many takeaways in their communities. In some villages and towns takeaways are increasing in number and there is a lack of variety in local shops. Being able to access independently run shops is major concern for people with disabilities. A lack of public toilets was mentioned several times, including the closure of local toilets.

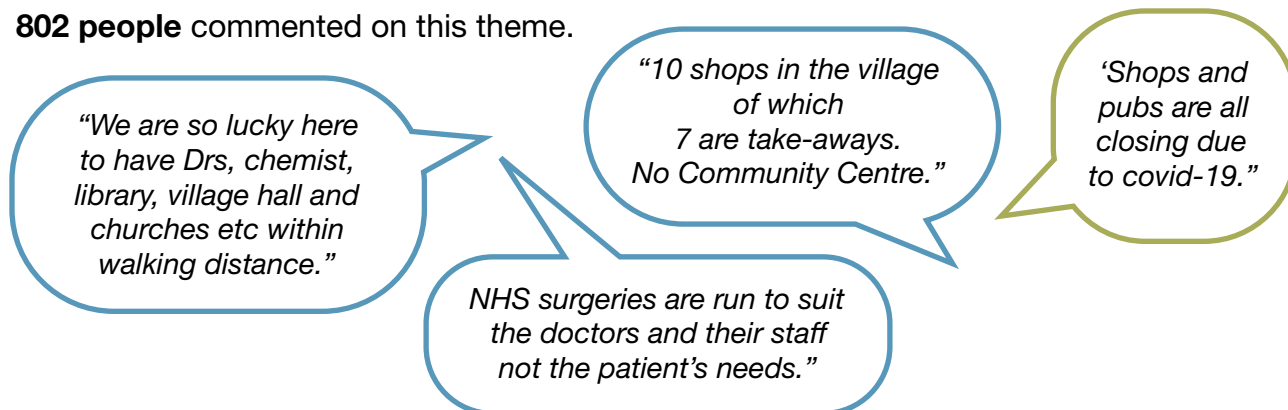
People see local libraries and community centres as essential facilities in communities and many are concerned about closures in recent years. They want their library to open regularly and would like a mobile library service in areas where there are no local libraries. In some areas the lack of parking is an issue. This includes limited parking areas near libraries and doctors' surgeries.

The strength of feeling people have for their local parks and green spaces is very clear - and how these spaces are valued by individuals, families and communities. People generally feel that parks need to be updated or upgraded for use by different age groups.

Some participants said they would like more places to join groups and would like more local meeting venues or spaces, especially in areas with limited (or no) library service. People are concerned about the lack of youth clubs in some areas.

Suggestions from participants: Reduce the number of licences granted for takeaways. Focus on promoting more healthy eating establishments including cafes. Look at ways to make independently owned shops more accessible to people with disabilities. Create more community drop in spaces such as community centres and libraries for people to meet, socialise and take part in activities. Provide mobile libraries. Provide more local GP and dental practices and chemists. GPs in the area need to accept the residents from their local area. Provide public toilets. More classes available at Batley Baths when it's open, for aqua and pilates. Many more daytime classes. More needed for older people, seating areas in the park. Better parks for children, which meet the needs of different age groups. Council to regulate how many shops of the same type are allowed in the area.

802 people commented on this theme.



Work and local economy

Key issues: Participants mentioned the impact of the pandemic on the local economy. Some shared concerns that Huddersfield was already struggling but after coronavirus may never recover. People are worried about the impact on local businesses, especially pubs and restaurants. Some people feel that the work and local economy theme isn't relevant for them as they are retired.



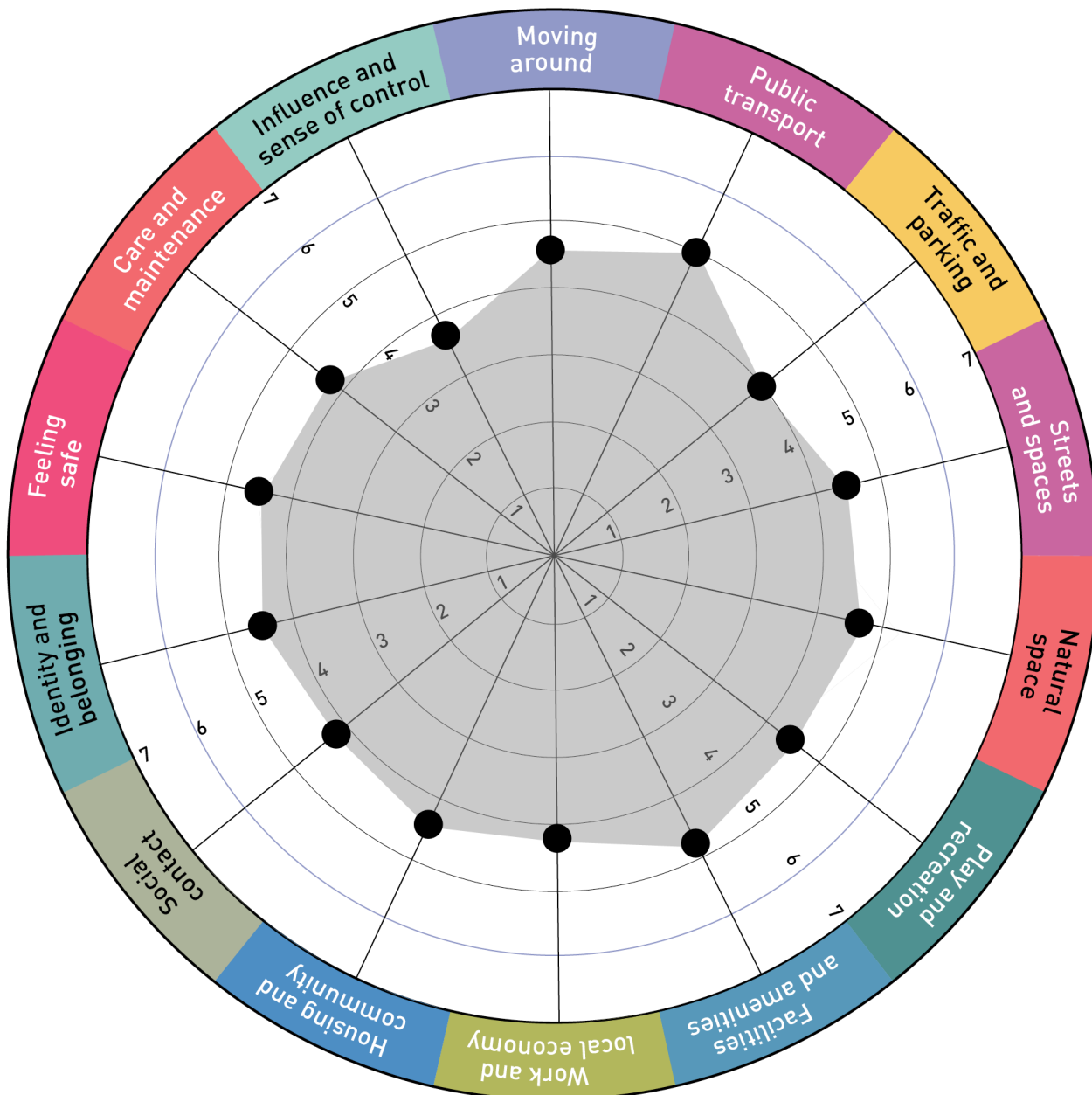
A few people said that there is not enough work for young people locally - there are poor contractual arrangements and the quality of work available is a concern. Participants commented on the lack of opportunities for employment in some parts of Kirklees, such as in Dewsbury where some people feel it's a struggle to find jobs. Some are working outside of Kirklees due to a lack of suitable jobs in the area and would prefer to work locally. Other concerns include poor engineering opportunities and major employers leaving the area.

There were a few positive comments on local employment. People mentioned Junction 27 as an area for employment opportunities. Some people are optimistic about work and feel that there are opportunities available for those who choose to look and to take them. Some people shared positive comments about Birstall and Batley having a good local economy.

Suggestions from participants: More jobs online for all ages. Set up meetings with tenants to identify their needs. More to be done with young ones on the estate. The country needs employment improvement. More apprenticeships, support people with disabilities. Should help the homeless and people begging on streets. A flourishing workforce can contribute immensely to the local economy.

749 people commented on this theme.

Overall scores: How good is your home and your local place?



Public transport	5
Facilities and amenities	4.8
Natural space	4.7
Moving around	4.6
Identity and belonging	4.5
Feeling safe	4.5
Housing and community	4.4

Streets and spaces	4.4
Play and recreation	4.4
Social contact	4.2
Care and maintenance	4.2
Work and local economy	4.2
Traffic and parking	4
Influence and sense of control	3.7



Full data is available at:

www.HowGoodIsOurPlace.org.uk

