



**COVID Prevent:
Living in Gipton and
Harehills during the
Pandemic and Beyond**



LOOK AFTER YOU



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SCAN THIS QR CODE TO SEE A RANGE OF USEFUL VIDEOS ABOUT COVID, THE VACCINE AND STAYING SAFE IN YOUR LANGUAGE.



An example of a leaflet created to support the COVID Prevent project that has been distributed around Gipton and Harehills. For more examples, please turn to Appendix 2 on page 40.



The COVID Prevent project is funded by Public Health, Leeds City Council

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June 2021



Key Messages

Six themes emerged throughout the conversations we have had with people in Gipton and Harehills. To read about them in detail, please turn to page 28.

1. People will need time and support to recover from a year of mixed messages about COVID.

Recommendation: Make building trusting relationships an explicit part of any project done in the area.

2. Everyone's COVID experience has been unique.

Recommendation: Ensure services and organisations which help people through life's stresses are robust and well-supported.

3. Community is a source of both tension and loyalty.

Recommendation: Invest in spaces and activities for young people. Open up spaces to give people of all different backgrounds the opportunity to meet.

4. Gipton and Harehills are felt to be held back by stigma.

Recommendation: Make fostering local pride an explicit aim of every project in Gipton and Harehills

5. Nature and the environment have the potential to enhance lives.

Recommendation: Find a solution for people to get rid of their waste and create corridors of greenery throughout the area.

6. Better services around crime, transport and rents make for a better life.

Recommendation: Redesign road use in Gipton and Harehills so that bus users are the priority; take more effective and visible action to make people feel safer; and protect private renters by better enforcing legislation.

Part 1: About the Project

About this report

This report summarises what we have heard from the residents of Gipton and Harehills during the Covid Prevent project. It is designed for people working in public health, people living in the local area and anyone with an interest in health, wellbeing and inequalities. It was written by Healthwatch Leeds.

About the Covid Prevent Project

The Covid Prevent project aims to inform a framework for a strategic, community-led response to the pandemic's impact in Gipton and Harehills. This framework will provide the basis for a plan that will provide opportunities for long-term engagement across the ward.

The project is funded by Public Health, Leeds City Council. It has been collaboratively led by Space 2, Zest, Healthwatch Leeds, Shantona, People in Action and Gipton Old Fire Station.

It took place from February to June 2021, with organisers using a multi-pronged approach to gathering residents' experiences so that they could hear from people with as diverse a range of profiles as possible. Workers sometimes spent as long as two hours talking to people about their COVID experiences. All in all, dozens of hours of conversation were had.

- 6 third-sector organisations worked together to support the project
- 10 days were spent distributing flyers
- 820 leaflet packs were delivered through door-knocking and leafleting
- 4 weeks of phone calls were undertaken with a total of 45 residents
- 120 people talked about Covid prevention and joined in table-top activities in Banstead Park and Compton Road



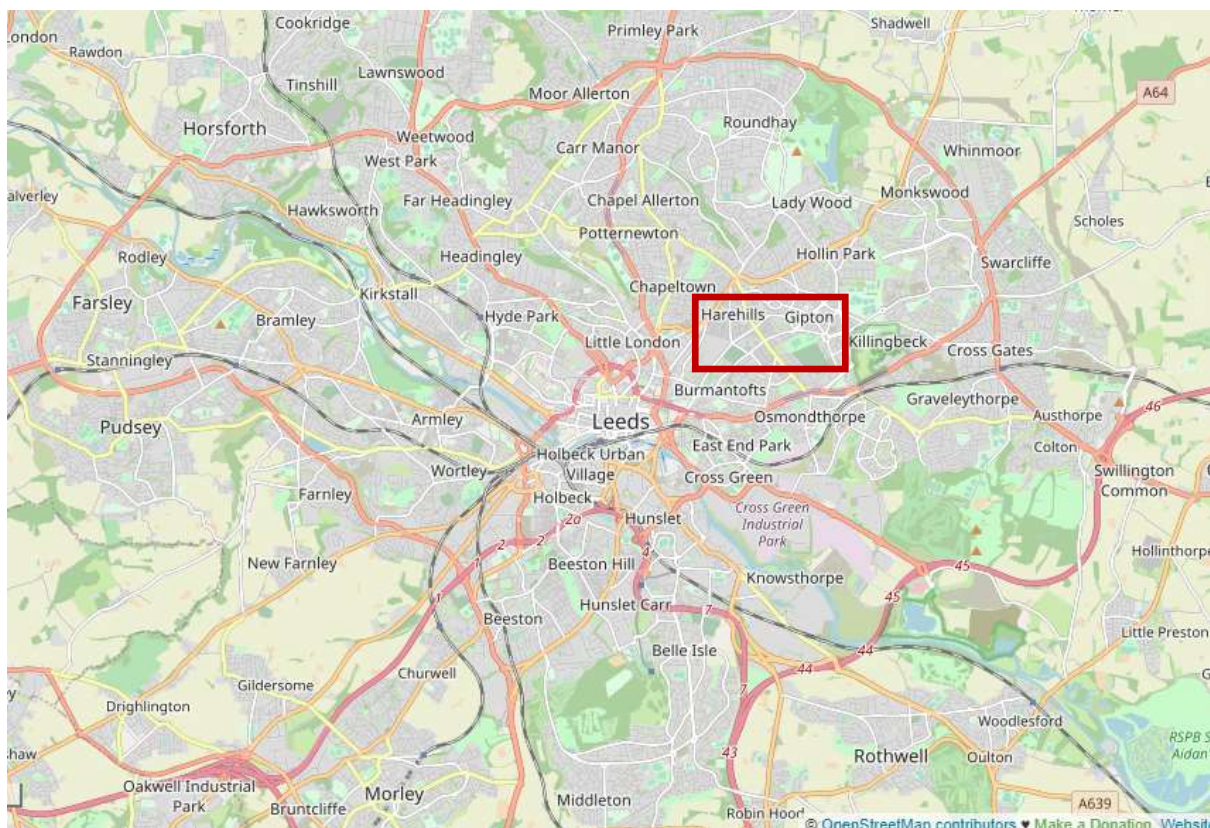
An activity in Banstead Park

- 80 responses were given to the survey, including 44 from Banstead Park and Compton Road
- 12 people with learning disabilities were supported to talk about their experiences
- 10 local residents were interviewed on camera about their aspirations for the area

The project events were marketed on social media. For examples please turn to Appendix 2 on page 40.

About Gipton and Harehills

Welcome to Gipton and Harehills! Around the time of the last census, over 70,000 people lived here. This ward is the second largest in Leeds and sits in the “Inner East” area of the city.



Gipton and Harehills is also the second most deprived ward in the city, with the majority of its residents living in the most deprived fifth of Leeds. It is more ethnically mixed than Leeds as a whole and has a younger population, according to GP records.

About our respondents

80 people filled in our survey.

40 came from the LS8 area.

32 came from LS9.

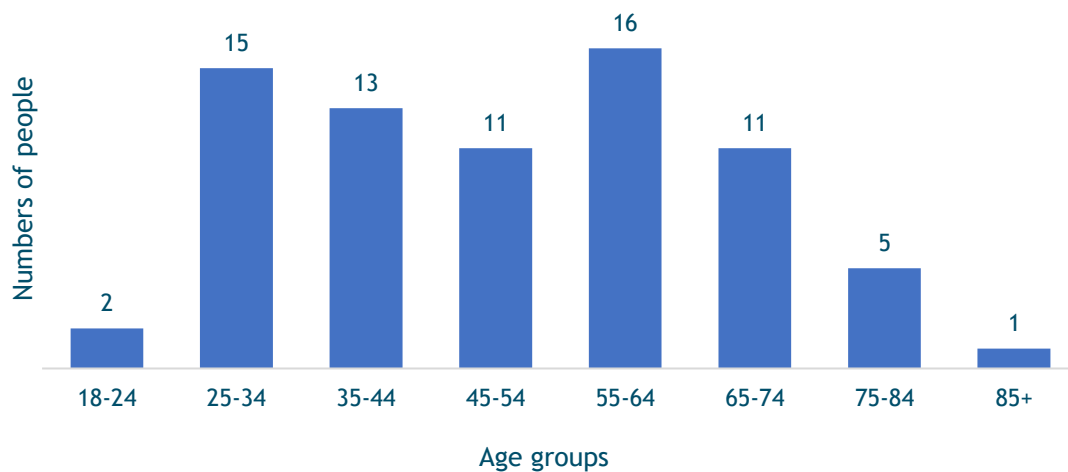
3 people were visiting Gipton and Harehills from neighbouring LS7 and LS14.¹



David spoke to us in the gardens outside Gipton Old Fire Station

Most of our respondents were aged between 25 to 74, with comparatively few aged 24 and younger or 75 and older.²

Our respondents' ages

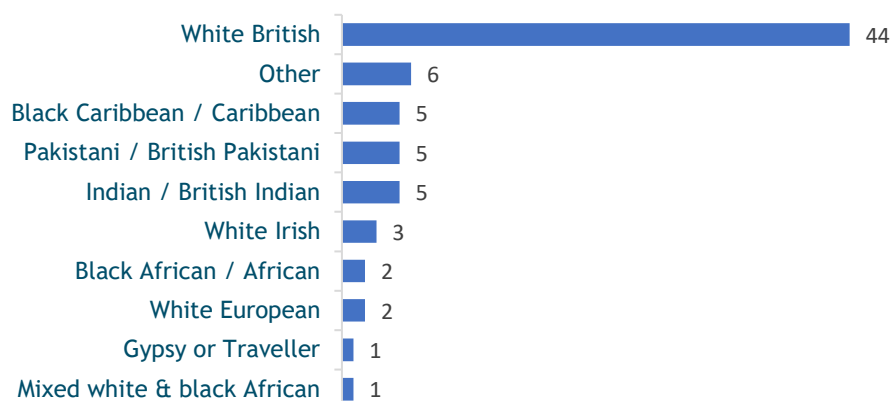


¹ 5 people didn't tell us their postcode.

² 6 people didn't tell us their age.

60% of our respondents described their ethnicity as “White British”.³

Our respondents' ethnicities



About the survey

We asked people 7 sets of questions:

1. How are you feeling about coming out of lockdown? What are your hopes and fears?
2. How has lockdown been for you? What have been the positives and negatives?
3. What positives might you want to keep from lockdown?
4. How are you feeling about the vaccine? Do you have all the information you need? Are you ok with the rules and next steps?
5. Have you been able to access health and care services during lockdown?
6. Have you been able to use online or phone health and care services during lockdown?
7. What are (up to) 3 things you'd like to see change in the next 5 years in Gipton/Harehills?

We also asked people for their postcode, their age and their ethnicity.

³ 6 people didn't tell us their ethnicity. Please note that this graph only lists those ethnicities which our respondents ticked as their own. Respondents were able to choose from a list of more than 15 ethnicities.

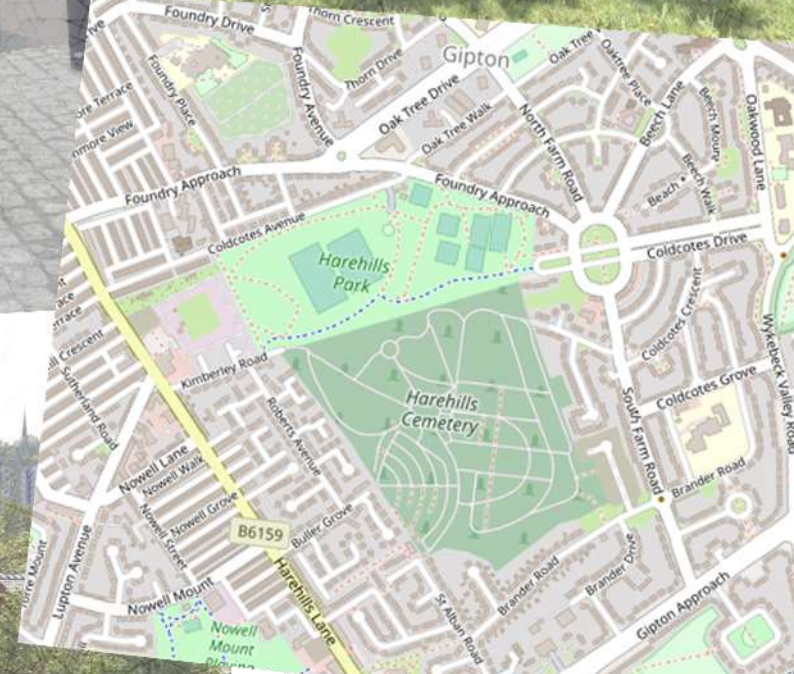
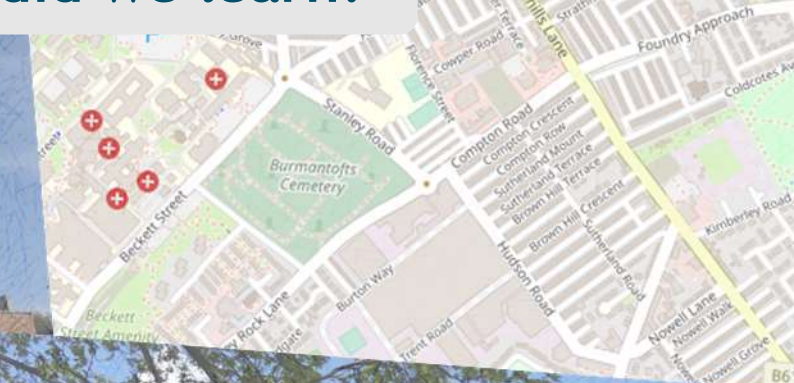
Acknowledgements

We would like to say a huge thank you to the people of Gipton and Harehills for sharing their views and ideas with us, and to the volunteers who worked with us on this project.

Except where stated, all photos in this report are by Gemma O'Connell.



Part 2: What did we learn?





How are you feeling about coming out of lockdown?

What are your hopes and fears?

“I'm looking forward to it. I don't usually plan stuff and take each day as it comes but I feel like I have no freedom now. I am looking forward to some normality. I've only been seeing one other person and I have felt really lonely at times. I hope this will improve again once I am able to go to my usual groups, like the ones at the Fire Station. My main fear is that we might end up in lockdown again, Boris has said a few times now this will be the end and it makes it difficult to believe him. I'm trying not to get my hopes up too much as I don't want to be disappointed, and then if it does happen it'll be a nice bonus.”

June 2021

Out of all the responses we got to this question, the most common was the worry that we'll see another rise in COVID cases. People often linked this to their observation that residents haven't been following social distancing guidelines.

“I don't think Harehills has ever been in a lockdown. This place doesn't stop. It's always busy. I'm glad to be back in work now but I don't think people will stick to any more rules and regulations”

That said, lots of people also expressed a sense of relief and even elation that normal life will soon be able to resume, however temporarily.

“I'm usually a half empty person, but I'm feeling really positive about coming out of lockdown, mainly due to the vaccine roll out and how the NHS has handled it. I hope the vaccine gets taken by everyone. I've seen a split between young people and elders in terms of how serious it's been regarded so I hope the youngsters pick it up too. I do have concerns though as in general I don't see a lot of seriousness, I hardly see anyone at all sanitising in the supermarkets and shops even though it's right there as you go in and out”



A view of Leeds city centre from Banstead Park, Harehills



How has lockdown been for you?

What have been the positives and negatives?

“One of my friendships has become much stronger because he is the only person I am seeing. I feel like his confidence has improved too. I have lost weight from all of the walking I've been doing. I'm getting out every day, and when you're stuck at home you definitely eat more. My general fitness has improved, I've managed to walk further than I ever have before.

The negatives are that it's been like school again. The majority of us are suffering for a small minority's actions. It's like when you're at school and one person does something wrong and no-one owns up so you all get a detention. It makes me feel more angry towards people when I'm out at the shops, I mutter more under my breath and feel stressed when I'm out in social environments. I don't want to talk to anyone.

It has also shortened my days. I spend much more time overall in the house. There is no variety in my day.

The essential travel rule has really affected people in Gipton and Harehills more than other parts of the city. Now we can only use the bus to go to the shops or work. It's alright for people with cars who can get about, we rely on buses to get anywhere else. Alright for people with big houses and big gardens because it's easier to social distance in those situations. I'm in a terraced house surrounded by other houses at the front and back. There's lots of dog muck and rubbish dumps everywhere. If you try to tell people to pick their rubbish up, you get trouble... you get intimidated, you feel like you might get chinned. This has got worse in lockdown, everyone is really tense and stressed and people seem to get into scraps more easily.

The rule of 6 has split groups up when they're already feeling isolated. We had to make decisions about who to include in the rule of 6 and one of our friends took it very personally. We don't speak anymore and he doesn't go to other groups as he doesn't have the confidence.”

June 2021

For most people, lockdown has been a mixture of positives and negatives (although, overall, the latter have tended to outweigh the former).

One of the stronger themes to come out of people's responses was isolation from loved ones and the things that make them happy, like community groups. When people talked about struggling with mental ill health, they often linked it to separation from loved ones.

Family life was another theme. Some people welcomed being able to spend more time with their partner and children, but others said that **“spending too much time with family”** had worn them down.

A number of respondents noticed the positive impact lockdown had on air quality.

Several respondents mentioned public transport. Lockdown has forced some people to rely on buses, while others have welcomed



Killingbeck Fields, Gipton

not having to travel on the bus so often or buses being quieter.

“Having to get buses everywhere can be quite demanding and tiring. The kids that get on our bus have no manners, push in and make lots of noise. Would like this to change.”

A couple of people told us that being pregnant during lockdown had

been a challenge, and three told us about how deaths had impacted on

their pandemic experience, whether those were the deaths of loved ones or unknown victims of COVID.

“I have lost four people during Covid some because of covid some not. I have had to go through with four Covid funerals, nobody should have

to experience that. It makes me emotional thinking about everything that has happened in the world. its mind-blowing.”

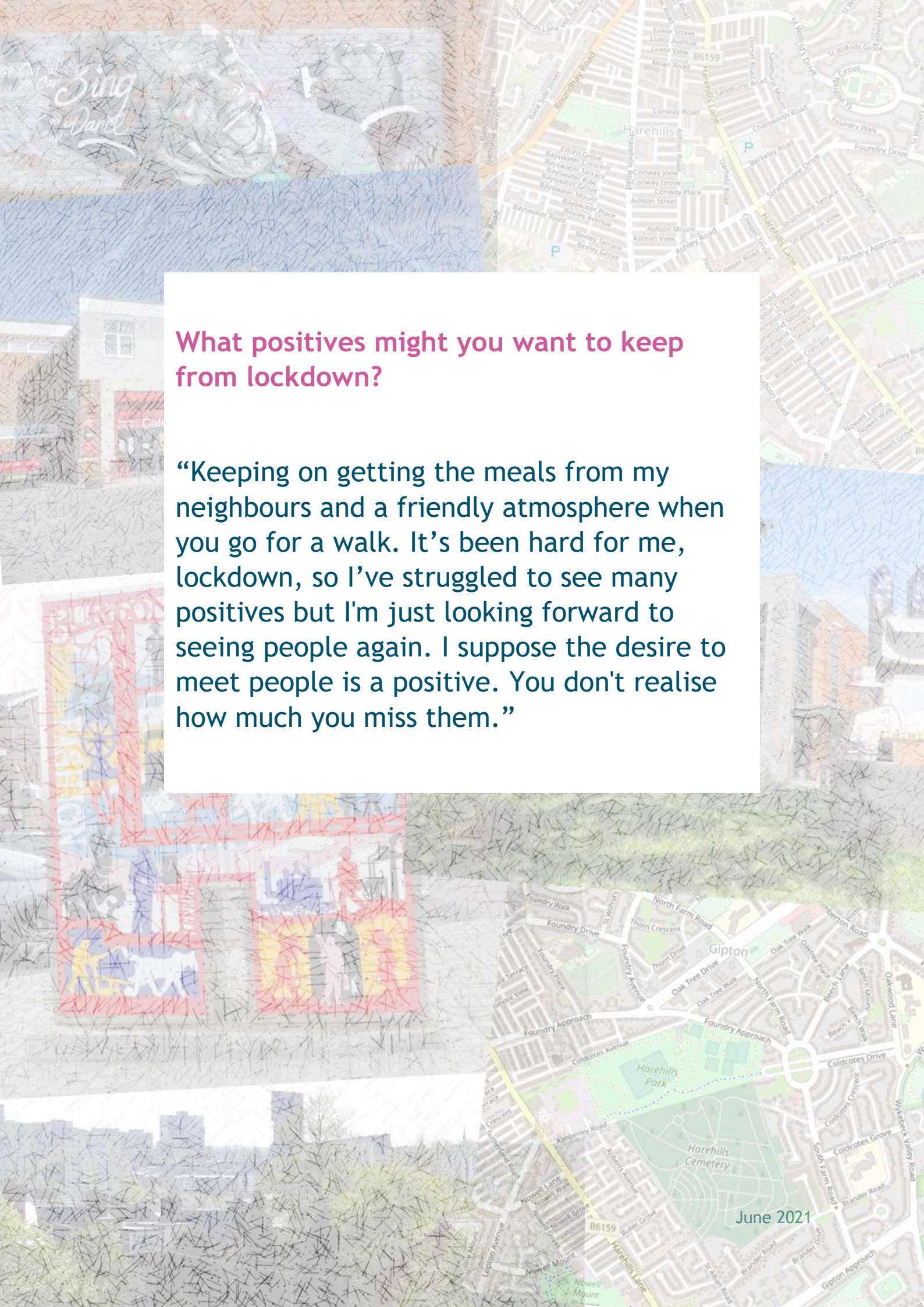
Three of our respondents spoke specifically about how being in Harehills affected their lockdown experience. They were acutely aware of the poverty and lack of opportunity they see around them, and of how this was compounded under lockdown.

“sometimes the anti-social behaviour and crime in Harehills can bring you down, pre-covid, this was balanced against the affordability of low cost housing and being a great location for access to town and country and access to good schools. With lockdown - there was, of course, less access to the benefits afforded by this. We've had some challenging neighbours over the years - but with lockdown there is no escape from them or their thumping music!”

“I have a car - so many in Harehills do not. This means I can get out about within limits to good open space and areas of beauty. If you don't have a car you need to walk or get an expensive bus. Harehills lacks in greenery in general. Covid has highlighted inequalities hugely, it's a covid of 2 cities. Those living in poverty, and the affluent middle classes. Whilst the middle classes are enjoying the free time with the children, the deprived families have a huge increase of pressure. The poor are vilified in the press if in Harehills, even if it's the same behaviour that the middle classes in Chapel Allerton display such as meeting friends on a walk. Its highlighted inequality and prejudice. I'm quite infuriated that the area of Harehills has no positive plan and is always put down.”

“a lot of the stuff that was good had to stop. Not everyone can access Zoom or social media, or want to. Opportunities in Harehills are limited, no green streets, or trees unless you go to a park in another area which are often packed out.”

In addition to these commonalities, however, it's important to note that there was huge variety in people's lockdown experiences. Every one of our respondents had a unique lockdown story to tell.



What positives might you want to keep from lockdown?

“Keeping on getting the meals from my neighbours and a friendly atmosphere when you go for a walk. It’s been hard for me, lockdown, so I’ve struggled to see many positives but I’m just looking forward to seeing people again. I suppose the desire to meet people is a positive. You don’t realise how much you miss them.”

June 2021

More often than anything else, people said they'd like to keep a sense of community and reconnection with people.

“it brought out best in people - people helping by organising food hubs in the area”

“I'm saying hello more to everyone, I'm more willing to speak to strangers on the street etc. Old fashioned communication has become important, manners, speaking over the fence, saying hello, politeness.”

Lots of people also told us that they would love to keep the ways in which Gipton and Harehills' environment changed, as roads have become quieter and locals have been able to appreciate nature more. Several people said they appreciated the air being less polluted.

“Absence of traffic in general. In the main 50% do not have a car in this area so the majority of traffic is through traffic, people passing through, using us as a rat run or free car park. I'd like to see a real concerted effort to improve our Harehills environment and cut through traffic. This would reduce pollution, smog and noise, plus be safer. Harehills has been too long overlooked. For example there are no good cycling routes into town, the streets have no trees or greenery in general.”

“the clear sky with no plane trails in the air, less pollution and clean air, birdsong, time to stop and listen and notice your neighbour.”

Some people saw a link between being able to get out into nature more often and the change of pace that lockdown brought to their lives. This in turn made them feel healthier and gave them some much-appreciated time to reflect.

“[I'd like to keep the] Routine we have developed and the pace of life we have now. We can take time and have a slower pace. It's brought people together and neighbours talking and looking out for each other.”

“I had time to reflect, space, I made personal changes for myself which I want to keep. We have proper time as a family together. We have time to sit and eat together, mindful eating. No rushing, not tied

to the clock, less stress of everyday life, cooking from scratch and healthy eating.”

Being able to work from home also emerged as a theme. Technology was seen as a real positive for those who benefited from home-working and others who had been able to connect with the online world.

“Will continue to work from home - removes stress and time spent travelling especially during severe weather and rush hour. Work - having the flexibility as a single parent is very important. It is something they have been asking for for some time so the pandemic has made it equal across all staff so everyone can have the option.”

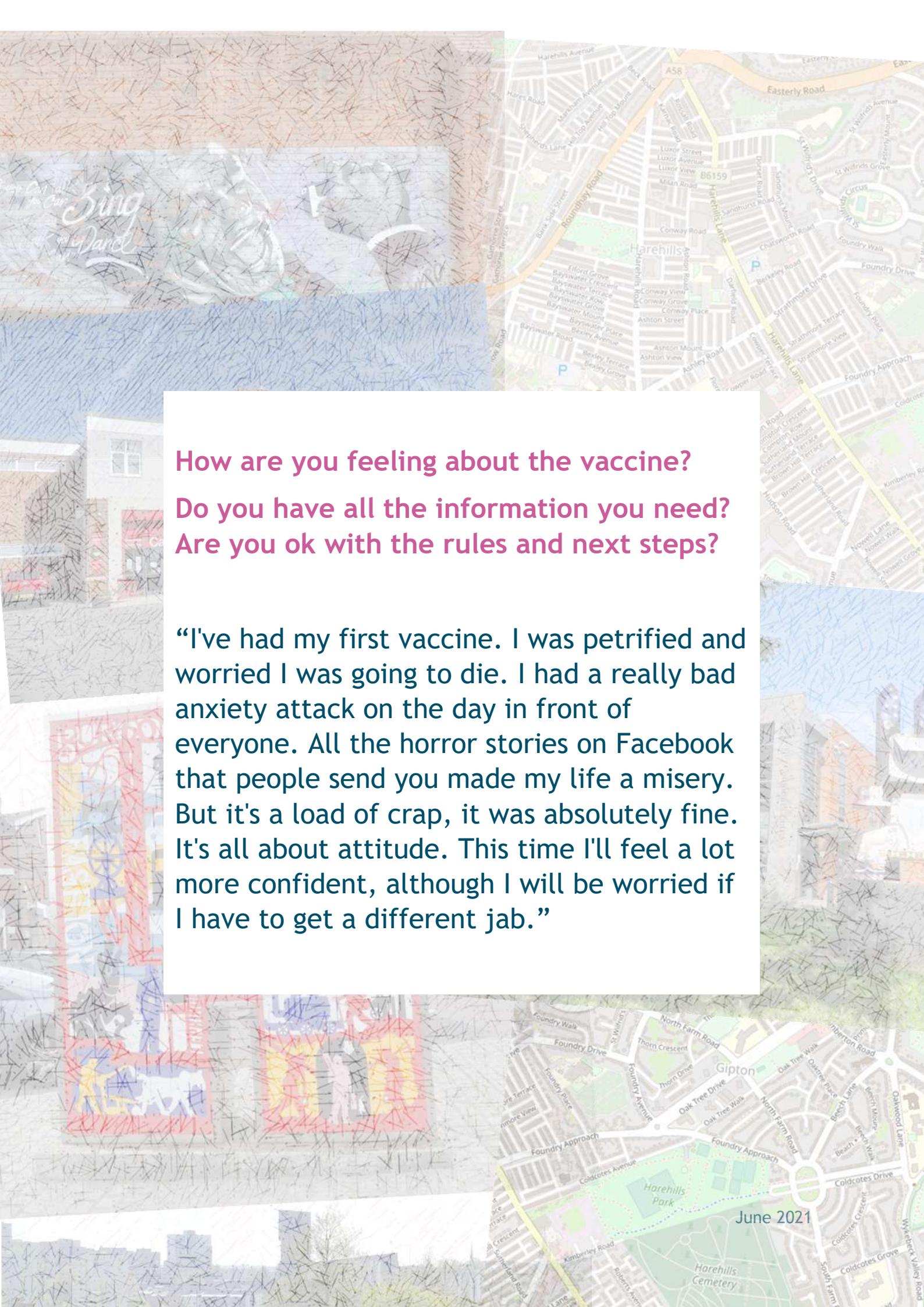
“Using a digital device (tablet) and accessing the internet and Zoom to attend groups. Would like to continue to use these after lockdown, very useful tool. Wouldn't have access to the internet without the tablet.”

It should also be noted that a minority (just over 15%) said there was nothing they would want to keep from lockdown.



People told us that getting out into nature was a positive they would like to keep from lockdown.

York Road, Gipton; photo by Space 2



How are you feeling about the vaccine?

Do you have all the information you need?

Are you ok with the rules and next steps?

“I've had my first vaccine. I was petrified and worried I was going to die. I had a really bad anxiety attack on the day in front of everyone. All the horror stories on Facebook that people send you made my life a misery. But it's a load of crap, it was absolutely fine. It's all about attitude. This time I'll feel a lot more confident, although I will be worried if I have to get a different jab.”

June 2021

Three-quarters of our respondents told us that they had already had their jab or that they had no qualms about getting it. A minority of these respondents said they would have liked more information about things like side effects or that they weren't sure where we go from here.

“I've had my vaccine, I'm waiting for my second one, I had to go to East End Park for mine which was a bit weird but it was absolutely fine, I was a bit worried as I'm scared of needles but by the time I had had it I didn't even realise, I had a sore arm but other than that I was fine. I am not keeping up with the news, I don't really know what I can do and when I can do it. I'm just going with the flow.”

A quarter of our respondents talked to us about issues related to vaccine scepticism. In several cases, people said they were happy to get their jab but they knew that many others weren't. People from ethnic minority backgrounds were more likely than white British respondents to tell us they knew people who were reluctant.

It should also be noted, however, that the majority of our respondents from minority backgrounds said they had got or would get vaccinated: 73% said this was their intention (compared with 83% of those from White British backgrounds).

“I will take the vaccine and will encourage people. Half the population here do not trust the vaccine and how it has been rolled out. We don't know enough. Using the mosque would help people find trust in the vaccine and the process.”

“I won't have the vaccine but the children will when they can. If I get it [Covid] I get it. I don't know what's in the vaccine, some countries are not using the vaccine anymore. I know anything can make you sick, all drugs, but this gives you Covid. Nobody in my family has been sick, when my time comes, my time comes”

“I have just been to Romania: people are lying about Covid and are scared of the vaccine. I'm not having the vaccine.”

Notably, four people also told us that they had either delayed their jab or wouldn't get it at all because they were worried about who would care for children or other loved ones if they got sick.

71% of our respondents said they had been able to access health and care services over lockdown, and 79% had been able to get medical attention over the phone or online.

The background of the page is a collage. It features several maps of the Gipton and Harehills areas, showing streets like Roundway Road, Harehills Lane, and various residential streets. Overlaid on these maps are abstract, hand-drawn patterns in various colors (blue, red, yellow, grey) and textures, resembling scribbles or digital noise. The overall aesthetic is layered and artistic.

What would you like to see change in the next 5 years in Gipton and Harehills?

“I'd like to see people have more respect for the local area. They should start fining people for dropping dog poo / fly tipping. Kids won't want to play down there because it's disgusting. You can't fault the council, they try really hard to make it nice. What they need is a "friends of Middleton Park", it means there is more of a presence. People keep it tidy and do litter picking, but they also organise things like activities and groups. It gives people a bit more of a sense of pride and a reason to keep it nice. Would like to see more green corridors - like the one from Meanwood to Woodhouse/ Little London.

Council shouldn't charge £20 to pick up waste items like old sofas. People round here can't drive and can't afford to pay the council, so people end up fly tipping. They got rid of the local tip so now people have to go all the way to Seacroft without transport - it just encourages people to leave rubbish around.

We need more police on the streets. There have been less and less in the last 5 years. Means more crime/ social disorder. People don't talk to each other anymore. In the 70s I'd know people on every street in Gipton. Now I don't know a single person on my own street, let alone other streets. There needs to be more integration between us and people of other nationalities. People don't speak to each other and it makes you feel alone, like you don't belong on your street.”

June 2021

Seven themes emerged really clearly when people told us what they would like to see change in Gipton and Harehills. They are listed as follows, with the percentage of people who referred to them given in brackets.

1. Cleaner, greener streets (55%)
2. More activities and spaces to bring people together (36%)
3. Less crime and anti-social behaviour (32%)
4. Better quality housing and protection for private renters (14%)
5. Better, cheaper public transport (14%)
6. Less traffic (9%)
7. Greater fairness for the people of Gipton and Harehills (6%)

1. Cleaner, Greener Streets

Fly-tipping and litter was reported as an issue by most people who said they wanted Gipton and Harehills to be greener and cleaner. While some would like to see more frequent bin collections, a great many drew a direct link between tip closures and charges and an increase in the amount of rubbish dumped on streets.

“Harehills never should have had the public dump closed. This has led to an increase in rubbish and huge fly tipping and an increase in the rat population which is a public health issue. The council now also charge for bulky removals, adding to the problem”

“Fly tipping rubbish and litter getting to be a big problem in Gipton. People leave stuff on the street and expect someone else to clear up.”

Dog poo and broken glass in parks were also identified as an issue.



There was a real appetite to see both parks and streets filled with greenery.

“We spent lockdown walks leaving the area to get to green spaces. I’d like to see the greenery start as I leave my door, green corridors of streets, cared for areas. Designed low maintenance areas that show care. No aggressive council cutting and pruning. Improved aesthetics.”

“If they can plant trees in the centre of Dortmund square in town why can’t they add beauty to our thoroughfares? More people live here than in Dortmund square.

Why can’t hedges be reinstated, why can’t we have trees planted on the streets??”

Some people pointed out that projects to beautify the area would help bring communities together and enhance their pride in their surroundings.



Oak Tree Drive in Gipton

2. More Activities and Spaces to Bring People Together

Over a third of our respondents told us they wanted more activities to be available to help people get to know one another. They were particularly keen for activities to be set up for children and young people, with a number of people suggesting that this would reduce the amount of anti-social behaviour in the area.

“More children’s playgrounds as there’s not enough for all the kids in the area. More youth activities as young people are getting into trouble for want of anything to do.”

It was felt that space wasn’t made available to communities as much as it should be.

“A community cafe for Gipton, to bring people together in a cheap way that can be affordable, open for everyone”

“We need rooms to meet and gather and talk. Churches have a lot of space. They could be a central meeting point for so many good things.”

“The only thing that is open access in the area of Harehills is the library and even that has a security guard. I want resources for all regardless of age, sex, gender, ethnicity or faith. Open access. The buildings are already there...schools, churches, with resources for staffing access can be widened, stop limiting how community space is used.”

Shine, Harehills Road



A few people told us they wanted Fearnville Sports Centre to be reopened and refurbished.

“Well being centre in Gipton - we need it more than ever now. My biggest worry is that it [Fearnville Sports Centre] has now been closed for so long it will be used as an excuse not to reopen the leisure centre. It was already run down. We need investment in the area and the people here. We want something to be proud of.”

3. Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour

A third of our respondents said crime was something they wanted to see change in Gipton and Harehills.

The issues most often referenced were street drinking and drug dealing, although people also talked about violence and generally not feeling safe in streets and parks.

“I would like the streets to be safer so my kids can play out.”

Some people said more policing was needed.



4. Better Quality Housing and Protection for Private Renters

Most people who said they would like to see housing improved in Gipton and Harehills believed that

private landlords needed tackling. It was felt that rents were too high, and landlords were allowing houses to fall into disrepair.

“I’d like to see the Selective Licensing Scheme in Harehills properly administered, ensuring that a decent standard of housing is protected in the private sector in Harehills. Unregulated landlord activity in the area is responsible for the most run down and unsafe properties in the area, and most of the flytipping too. I want to see the exploitation of poor vulnerable families stop via unscrupulous landlords”

People also suggested more council housing would help.

“It’s a pit stop for people, the price for rental properties is ridiculous. Council housing or better regulated housing is needed, private landlords need stricter rules and regulations, the houses are in a mess.”

5. Better, cheaper public transport

The buses in Gipton and Harehills were felt to be too expensive and not very good at getting people to where they want to go. The number 11 service was cited several times as being too infrequent.

“more buses, cheaper and affordable, more bus stops



and better routes”

6. Less traffic

Traffic was felt to be too much and too fast, causing pollution and noise.

7. Greater fairness for the people of Gipton and Harehills

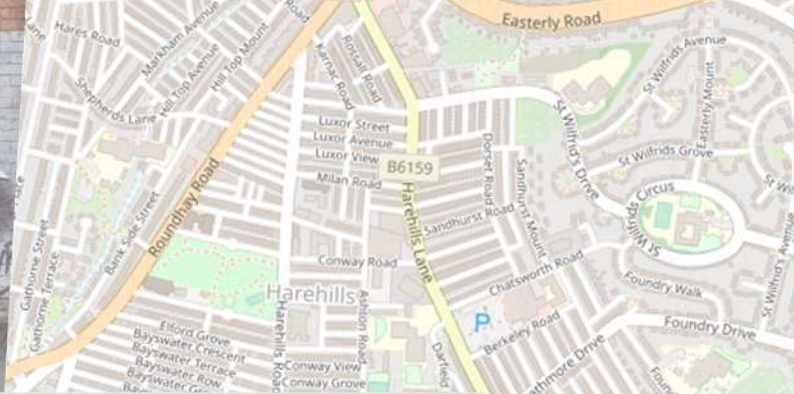
Some people felt that Gipton and Harehills weren't treated as favourably as other areas due to the stigma of being seen “just as a rough estate”.

“More money spent. Not left to ruin. There's more people living in Harehills and Gipton than Roundhay yet it seems more money is spent in Roundhay, how does that work?”

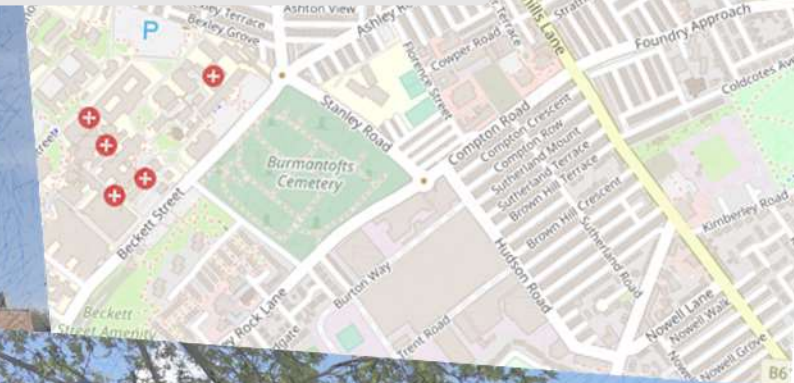
“I want to see more inclusivity for the area, it deserves the same recognition as everywhere else. The same behaviour is penalised in Harehills but ignored in Alwoodley or Chapel Allerton. We need to celebrate our positives here: heritage, great architecture, wonderful world food, cultural diversity, rich life experiences.”

“Celebrate Harehills events. Too much negative press fuelling negativity of area. Positive reporting and events over the year to reflect in the press and promote a positive Harehills. To promote and pride and love of the area.”





Part 3: What do planners need to know?



Six themes emerged throughout the conversations we have had with people in Gipton and Harehills. We recommend that these themes are built into planning for the area over the next half-decade, so that local people's experiences and views act as a driving force for change.

1. Recovering from a year of mixed messages about COVID

In the year since the pandemic began, people have experienced mixed messages and disappointment at repeated lockdowns, and there is a strong sense that the situation could rapidly deteriorate again. It will take time for people to recover their sense of security, and they will need support to regain trust in public health messages. There is also still work to do in terms of encouraging everyone to get vaccinated, whether they are worried about side effects or other concerns.

Recommendation: Make building trusting relationships an explicit part of any project done in the area. This means meaningfully involving people and regularly offering opportunities for open, honest conversations.

2. Everyone's COVID experience has been unique

There were commonalities between people's pandemic stories, such as isolation and the impression that being locked down in Gipton and Harehills was harder than elsewhere - but it's also important to note everyone's COVID experience was unique. For example, when people experienced births or bereavements, lockdown made them all the more difficult. Life's routine stresses and strains were often made more intense but, on the other hand, many people saw some upsides to lockdown, not least due to the reduced traffic and increased scope for enjoying nature.

Recommendation: Ensure services and organisations which help people through life's stresses are robust and well-supported enough to keep operating through crises such as lockdowns and their aftermath.

3. Community: a source of both tension and loyalty

There is a widespread impression that not everyone in Gipton and Harehills has been following social distancing guidelines, leading in some cases to anger and resentment. However, some people also told us that lockdown fostered a sense of community and neighbourliness that they hadn't previously experienced. This made a real difference to their wellbeing. There is a genuine appetite for more community space that brings people together, rather than separating them out into distinct groups, and more provision for children and young people in particular. There is a strong sense that younger generations have nothing to do.

Recommendation: Invest in spaces and activities for young people. Open up spaces to give people the opportunity to meet and shape community action in Gipton and Harehills. Actively encourage people from all kinds of backgrounds to meet, and invest in groups so that they are able to accommodate different access needs.

4. Gipton and Harehills: two areas held back by stigma

People believed that, because Gipton and Harehills are seen as a “ghetto” or “a rough estate”, they get less than their fair share compared to other parts of Leeds. It was clear from people's responses to all our questions that they care very deeply about Gipton and Harehills and would love to see it be a better supported place to live. People sometimes felt that the city of Leeds doesn't share the same aspirations for Gipton and Harehills as its residents.

Recommendation: Make fostering local pride an explicit aim of every project in Gipton and Harehills - and make sure local people know about what the city is doing and investing in the area.

5. Nature and the environment have the potential to enhance lives

People would like to see Gipton and Harehills' streets and parks transformed, with less litter, glass, traffic and air pollution and more greenery. People are clear that this would improve their physical and emotional wellbeing. Fly-tipping was seen as a real problem, the direct cause of which was believed to be the policy of shutting down the local

tip and charging for waste removal. People felt that beautifying the neighbourhood would give community members a reason to come together around a shared project and take pride in the area.

Recommendation: Find a solution so that people can get rid of their waste conveniently and at no or minimal cost. Create corridors of greenery throughout the area, prioritising areas with no plant-life. Form a “Friends of...” society for every park and support these groups to be accessible to all.

6. Better services for a better life: crime, transport and rents

There are things services could do to make people’s day-to-day experience of living in Gipton and Harehills better. The bus service is felt to be expensive, less than functional and, in some cases, less than pleasant to use. People are acutely aware of crime and antisocial behaviour, with some suggesting policing needs to be much more visible. Private landlords were seen as a drain on the local area, pushing down housing quality while “exploiting” some of Leeds’ poorest people.

Recommendation: Redesign road use in Gipton and Harehills so that bus users’ needs are the priority, rather than commuters from outer suburbs. Action that makes people feel safer on the streets of Gipton and Harehills needs to be more effective and more visible. Protect private renters by better enforcing legislation, make it clear to tenants (and their landlords) that renters will be robustly supported when they are being neglected and use whatever means available to control rents.

Conclusion

Thank you for taking the time to read this report. We sincerely hope it will assist planners in making the lives of people in Gipton and Harehills better over the next five years. While it's clear that there is much work to do in rebuilding the community, it's equally clear that residents care deeply about their local area and about making it a cleaner, greener, safer place to live.

We would welcome planners' feedback on how they will act upon the recommendations in the report and look forward to seeing Gipton and Harehills develop and grow over the next five years.



Appendix 1: Case Studies

The following case studies were recorded by staff from the project's lead organisations. All photos are staff's own, except where stated.

Case Study 1

A man and woman living near Banstead Park were out with their 6-year-old son and talked to us about living in the area. It was a hot spring day and the sun was strong. The boy was wearing black cycling gloves which was surprising on such a hot day.



Banstead Park is their local playground and one of only a few green areas in Harehills. The family come to the park often.

The park is covered in glass which is on the paths, in the playground, in the enclosed basketball area and in the grass, it is everywhere. The glass is mainly broken bottles, it is sharp and much of it is facing upwards as bottle ends or as shards of glass.

The son wears gloves to the park, his father told me, and this is the reason why:

A month or so ago the young boy fell and has sustained deep cuts to

the muscles in his right hand due to glass injuries. The wounds are not healing well.

Wearing cycling gloves is the way the family are trying to still enjoy the park.

Case Study 2

During work at Banstead Park in Harehills, I had a conversation with a 23-year-old mother of 4 from the Roma community. Across Europe and the UK, the Roma community have continually been persecuted. Half a million Roma people were killed during the Holocaust and whilst the Roma community is the second largest minority in Europe, they are still overrepresented in socially deprived areas, with poor educational and health outcomes widespread across the community.

For this reason, the woman was quite reluctant to chat to us and it was only through encouraging her children to paint pots with some of the other community development workers that we were able to build enough trust to have a conversation.

The woman told me that she had known several friends and relatives from the Roma community go to hospital. Many of these were not displaying covid symptoms and had attended hospital for other health reasons. She said some of them had then died and the cause of death listed on their death certificates had been coronavirus, however she didn't believe this was the real cause of death. She was fearful and described how the Roma community had historically been persecuted or killed by various governments across Western Europe. She said she had seen helicopters flying over Romania and spraying something which she felt must have been coronavirus; she thought that the government did not want her people there and were using coronavirus to remove them. For this reason, she did not feel safe getting the vaccine as she didn't know what was in it and felt there was a risk the government could be trying to poison her community. When I asked her how she might feel if she or her family became sick, she said she trusted God and would leave it in his hands to decide their fate. They did not need the vaccine.

In addition to the above, there were very few informational leaflets or resources available in Romanian. Community development workers on the project noted that all of the signs directing people to local vaccine centres were in English in Harehills, despite 33.7% of adults and 73.1% of children in Harehills speaking English as a second language (Leeds Observatory, 2018).

Despite this woman's concerns about the vaccine, she described feeling very happy in Harehills. She said the high street was brilliant for shopping and that she enjoyed the variety of foods available. She missed sitting in at restaurants as this is where she tended to socialise

with other mothers. She also appreciated that there were many other Romanians in Harehills, so she didn't feel isolated here compared with other parts of the city.



Photo by Gemma O'Connell

Case Study 3: People in Action

A 32-year-old man living with his parents has a mild learning disability and is in good physical health. He is supported weekly by People in Action to develop independent living skills and provide social opportunities.

In March 2020 when the country went into lockdown, he understood that there was a pandemic but struggled to see the importance of avoiding shops and crowded places.

His support was moved from in-person to telephone at the end of May due to guidelines and risk assessments. He continued to go for a walk daily for the first couple of months but started to get up later each day as there were no activities he could engage in safely outside the house. By June 2020, he was very bored and started using public transport again to get about.

In-person support started again in August and he was able to start volunteering in September so things were looking up but this was short lived as the next set of restrictions meant that his volunteering finished at the end of September and telephone support returned in October.

Case Study 4

We spoke to a gentleman in his 60s near the Asda in Harehills. He told us that he was paying £800 a month before bills for a 3-bed property in Harehills. He said most of the property in Harehills is owned by private landlords which drives rent upwards and traps people into contracts that they then struggle to pay for. This gentleman was desperate to move to Blackpool to be closer to his family, as he and his wife were both suffering ill health and living on Universal Credit. He did not have 3 things he'd like to see change in Harehills, only that there should be more social housing available for people in his situation who are not well enough to work.

This is consistent with ONS statistics (2020), which show that only 11.6% of housing in Harehills is social housing, compared with 16.9% as an average across Leeds.



Case Study 5

During work at Banstead Park in Harehills a Muslim woman approached us to participate in the planting and pot decorating. We know she was Muslim as she mentioned this when chatting with her. Talking to the woman we discovered she liked Harehills for the shops and convenience of local amenities, however she felt it was very unsafe. She said she didn't mind living here whilst her children were young as they could play in the courtyard at the back of their house with the gate closed. She didn't want to live in the area when her children grew up due to the amount of gang crime, anti-social behaviour, street drinkers, domestic crime and litter. She said that she sees drug



deals going on in her street and it's not safe for the children. She doesn't want them being brought up around that. She mentioned she wanted to move for the children but was struggling for ideas on where to move where it would be any better. "My friend has just moved but she is getting racist comments from her neighbour." We tried to find out what area she had moved to but the woman was reluctant to give us full details. When we gave a few examples on where she might move, she was very against the idea of moving to Gipton although said it had nice green space. She said overall she is happy in her home but would like a better area for the children to grow up, learn and play to have a better chance in life.

In regards to the vaccine the woman said she would think about it as she has to look after her children so can't afford to get sick with side effects. She also said she would wait until after Ramadan despite our reassurance faith leaders had confirmed the vaccine was totally safe to take whilst fasting.



A sculpture in Harehills

Case Study 6

In our time outside the Compton Centre there was a common theme for the male Eastern European community. On numerous occasions they alluded to religion or their outlook on life when discussing the vaccine and Covid. One man in particular mentioned his family would take the vaccine and his children would when they get older, but he will not. He said “when my time comes it will come” and “there have been lots of reports of the vaccine causing blood clots, I don’t know what’s in it”.

One older man mentioned heaven and hell when discussing COVID, when mentioning the vaccine he said he wouldn’t be having it, he said “if I get poorly I will either go to heaven or hell” he was using hand gestures to help describe his feelings pointing to the sky and the floor.

Case Study 7

The participant has lived in Harehills for over 30 years on the same street. She says she has fantastic neighbours and they look out for each other. There are long term residents and newer ones too. There has been a shift to rented properties in recent years. She is passionate about the area and loves the diversity of the neighbourhood. She is an active member of local community groups and aims to bring the positivity of the area to the wider city.



Banstead Park, Harehills. Photo by Gemma O’Connell

However, in recent years she feels that the socio and economic challenges that the area faces have been aggravated by an increase in fly-tipping on a huge scale, takeaway and alcohol outlets, and large numbers of poorly maintained rented properties. This leads to a rapid turnover of tenancies and fly-tipping when properties are cleared. This is further aggravated by the loss of the area's refuse site.

She feels strongly that businesses and landlords are often profiting from the area, without putting anything positive back in. Furthermore, elected officials have businesses and vested business interests in the area.

Consistently negative press coverage feeds into the view that both the area and people are not worth investing in. She would like to see the area celebrated for its cultural diversity, architecture, creativity and strength.

Having been a community advocate for the whole time she has lived there, she finds her energies running low. She is considering moving from the area, as a lack of real positive action in the area for the people who live there is soul destroying.

Case Study 8

I chatted with a 26-year-old woman whilst working on the Covid Prevention Project on Compton Road. The woman has a 3-year-old son and is 12 weeks pregnant. She has found Covid-19, restrictions and lockdowns challenging. As a single mother she has been responsible for her son, who hasn't been able to go to school or childcare as she is not a key worker. She has been very concerned about catching Covid-19 and the vaccination, primarily because if she gets ill then it is very hard for her to look after her son.



The skate park at Fearnville Sports Centre in Gipton.
Photo by Gemma O'Connell

She was very poorly in her first pregnancy and so has been wanting health/medical support during this current pregnancy as she is experiencing similar health concerns. She has struggled to make contact with a health professional, unable to get a doctor's appointment for a long time and hasn't felt comfortable to attend A&E due to fear of catching Covid.

The woman was very happy about the prospect of activities starting again as her son is sociable and has missed interacting with others. He had just started at Compton Children's Centre and is enjoying it very much. She commented that there is not a lot for kids in the area, the closest swimming pool is Fearnville which is not within walking distance. She would love to see more activities being offered in the immediate local area.

She regularly has to deal with anti-social behaviour on her street and in the local area. Drink and drugs are a big problem, and she doesn't feel safe letting her child play in the garden without her, due to concerns of needles and other rubbish that he may pick up and hurt himself with. There is also the issue with the new bus stop on Compton Road being used by alcohol drinkers as a shelter whilst people waiting for the bus have to wait outside as there is no space or they are too intimidated to go inside.

The woman said she has always lived in the area and would like it to improve but that if she had a choice then she would leave if it meant that it would be safer for her and her children.

Case Study 9: People in Action

A 48-year-old man living independently is well known in his local area and has ongoing issues of vulnerability and potential exploitation. He has a mild learning disability with ongoing health concerns. He is supported throughout the week to develop life skills, increase money management and maintain positive relationships.

Concerns around exploitation meant it was important for support to remain in-person, and this has continued throughout the pandemic. Correct PPE, risk assessments and clear guidance have all been put in place and reviewed regularly.

He is a friendly person who has lots of contacts and likes to be out and about so lockdowns have been a struggle. However, he has worked with his support to understand the importance of social distancing and

not meeting with people indoors. He has maintained contact with family and friends through meeting in the street. His love of walking to most places kept him connected with his neighbourhood.

A long-term ambition to move to a new home was fulfilled at the end of November 2020, facilitated by joint working between People in Action support workers and Leeds City Council. The move was completed safely, and the new property has made a positive difference to his physical and mental health.

Money management has become easier as there were fewer opportunities to spend during lockdown and budgeting plans were developed.

The lifting of restrictions in travel now means that he is exploring public transport to get around and is growing in confidence in going further afield.



Harehills Cemetery, which borders Gipton and Harehills

Appendix 2: People in Action: A Learning Disabilities Perspective

People in Action has sought out its service users' experiences of lockdown. Below is a summary of their key findings.

- “Our members felt more isolated and dependent on support to be able to have any activities outside the home. Our support workers were often the only people they were engaging with outside the home or family unit.
- Where English was the family's second language, or the member is nonverbal, the whole family became much more isolated. Support workers were supporting the whole family with information.
- Boredom was common throughout, with members becoming demotivated which led to poor appetite or a lack of healthy eating and exercise. Conversely one member started walking more out of necessity due to a fear of using public transport.
- The lack of safe, green spaces locally was noted, as was the increase in fly tipping.
- Information was difficult to understand at the beginning and this led to some members not following the guidance in shops and getting shouted at, particularly early on.
- One member really struggled to accept that there was a pandemic and needed a lot of support and information to stay within the guidelines and to stay safe. Social media was a big influence here in spreading misinformation.
- Some members felt frustrated that they were complying with the guidance but then when they were out and about in local shops, they could see that others weren't wearing masks and keeping their distance.
- None of our members could think of any benefits from the lockdowns or wanted anything to stay the same. All were just really keen to get back their activities and their friendship groups. Nobody reported feeling a sense of more neighbourliness or connectivity with local residents.
- None of our members had struggled to get appointments with medical professionals during lockdown but that is quite possibly because their support worker helped with the planning and the attending. Some family members had struggled to get appointments. Dentists were mentioned in particular.”

Appendix 3: Project Marketing

A number of leaflets were produced and distributed as part of the COVID Prevent project, in addition to the example on page 2.

By washing your hands for 20 seconds...

By keeping a 2 metre distance...

By wearing a face mask...

By letting fresh air into enclosed spaces regularly throughout the day...

You are helping to reduce the rate of infection

Thank you for supporting the city.
#TogetherLeeds

www.leeds.gov.uk/coronavirus

Leeds

#TogetherLeeds

Logos: NHS, Leeds, #TogetherLeeds, and various partner logos.

NHS

Please come and register with your local GP

The NHS is here to support you and keep you safe

You do not need:

- ✗ proof of address or ID
- ✗ proof of immigration status
- ✗ an NHS number

How do I register with a GP?

- ✓ Find a GP and more information at www.nhs.uk/register
- ✓ Telephone your local GP surgery and ask to be registered as a patient

The NHS is here to help and to keep you safe and well

Logos: NHS, Leeds, #TogetherLeeds, and various partner logos.

A new, continuous cough

A high temperature

Loss or change to your taste or smell

If you experience any of these symptoms then stay at home and book a test.

www.leeds.gov.uk/coronavirus

Leeds

#TogetherLeeds

Logos: NHS, Leeds, #TogetherLeeds, and various partner logos.

NHS

Leeds

Get protected from COVID-19

Coronavirus can affect anyone. The COVID-19 vaccines will help protect you against the disease and reduce the risk of you becoming seriously ill.

Here's what you need to know:

- Like all vaccines, the COVID-19 vaccines teach your body to fight the virus. They cannot give you coronavirus and the components of the vaccine leave your body within a few days.
- The vaccines are safe, tested and they work. They have been tested in the same way as all other vaccines and medicines, which showed they are safe and offer very high levels of protection against the effects of COVID-19.
- There are no animal or foetal products in either vaccine and they do not alter your DNA.
- The vaccines have been approved as halal by Muslim leaders and Christian, Hindu and Jewish faith leaders have also endorsed the vaccines. Islamic scholars have also been clear that they don't invalidate the fast so you can still have your Ramadan during Ramadan.
- The vaccines are only available from the NHS by appointment and are free. They are being offered to people in order of age or who have conditions that mean they are at greater risk from COVID-19.
- The NHS will contact you when it's your turn - your GP practice will contact you or you will get a letter from the NHS national booking service. Please don't contact your GP practice for information or when you or a family member will be vaccinated, they will not be able to tell you and you may stop people getting through who need medical help.
- You need two doses to get the maximum amount of protection so please make sure you attend both appointments.
- The vaccine helps stop you becoming seriously ill from COVID-19 but you may still spread the virus to others, so it is still very important to follow safety guidance - in particular, wearing a face covering, washing your hands and keeping two metres apart.

Getting as many people as possible vaccinated against COVID-19 is our best hope for returning to normal life. Please have your vaccine when you are invited and help stop the virus.

Find out about the vaccine at www.nhs.uk/CovidVaccine

Logos: NHS, Leeds, #TogetherLeeds, and various partner logos.

The leaflet was also translated:

اگر آپ کے اندر کوویڈ 19 کی علامات موجود ہوں تو کیا کریں...



آپ کو اپنے رزلٹس بذریعہ ای میل، ٹیکسٹ یا فون کال کے ذریعہ موصول ہوں گے۔



جب تک کہ آپ کو اپنا رزلٹ موصول نہیں مل جاتا آپ کے ساتھ رہائش پذیر ہر شخص کو گھر پر ہی رہنا چاہیے۔



جب تک آپ کو اپنا رزلٹ موصول نہ ہو جائے آپ لازمی طور پر خود کو الگ تھلگ رکھیں



ٹیسٹ کروانے کے لئے آج ہی 119 پر فون کر کے کسی ٹیسٹ سائٹ پر تشریف لائیں۔ اگر آپ ٹیسٹ سائٹ پر تشریف نہ لاسکتے ہوں تو ہوم ٹیسٹ کٹ آرڈر کریں

ٹیسٹ کے بعد آگے کیا کرنا ہے ...



اس بات کو ذہن میں رکھیں کہ آپ جن لوگوں کے ساتھ رہتے ہیں کوشش کریں کہ ان سے الگ ہو جائیں۔



پھر وہ شخص جس کے ساتھ آپ رہتے ہوں خواہ وہ تھلگ بھی ہو تو بھی اس کو آپ کے بیمار محسوس کرنے کے پہلے دن سے لے کر 10 ایام تک گھر پر ہی رہنا چاہئے۔



اگر ٹیسٹ مثبت واپس آئے تو آپ کم از کم 10 ایام کے لئے خود کو الگ تھلگ رکھیں۔

خود کو الگ تھلگ کرنے کا مطلب ہے کہ آپ کو کسی صورت گھر نہیں چھوڑنا چاہئے، اور اگر ٹیسٹ مثبت آئے تو یہ ایک قانون ضرورت ہے۔



اگر ٹیسٹ منفی آ جائے تو آپ سب کو الگ تھلگ رہنے کی ضرورت نہیں ہے



اگر آپ کے گھر کے کسی فرد میں علامات یا نشانیوں نمودار ہو جائیں تو اسے ٹیسٹ کروانا اور الگ تھلگ رہنا شروع کر دینا چاہیے۔



آپ ہاتھ لگانے والی اشیاء اور جگہوں کو کثرت سے صاف کریں اپنے ہاتھوں کو دھو لیں اور جس قدر ممکن ہو اپنے گھر میں تازہ ہوا داخل ہونے دیں۔



اپنی یونیورسٹی / آجر / اسکول کو مطلع کریں کہ آپ کا ٹیسٹ مثبت آیا ہے۔



آپ کے ساتھ بذریعہ ٹیکسٹ، ای میل یا فون رابطہ کیا جائے گا اور آپ کو کسی ایسے شخص کے بارے میں معلومات فراہم کرنے کے لئے کہا جائے گا حال ہی میں آپ جس کے قریب رہے ہیں۔

کیا آپ کو سودے سلف کی خریداری یا دوائی منگوانے میں مدد کی ضرورت ہے یا اپنی خیر و عافیت کے بارے میں فون وصول کرنا چاہتے ہیں؟ ہم آپ کے لیے یہاں پر موجود ہیں، فون کریں 0113 376 0330 (سوموار تا جمعہ صبح 9 بجے تا شام 5 بجے تک)

کیا آپ کو کام نہ کر سکتے کی وجہ سے الگ تھلگ رہنے میں مشکل کا سامنا کرنا پڑے گا؟
آپ الگ تھلگ رہنے کے عرصہ کے دوران £500 کی ادائیگی کے اہل ہو سکتے ہیں۔ مزید معلومات یہاں پر دستیاب ہیں:
www.leeds.gov.uk/coronavirus/people-and-communities.

اگر موجودہ صورتحال خراب ہو جائے تو این ایچ ایس 111 کو فون کریں یا ایمرجنسی کی صورت میں 999 پر کال کریں۔



The project was promoted via social media. Here are a few example posts.





Space2 @space2leeds · Apr 7

...

Did you know @LeedsCC_News offers Coronavirus information on their YouTube channel in Urdu, Swahili, Polish, Slovak, Czech and more? Have a watch, spread the word and let's keep our local communities safe for all. #Leeds #Coronavirus



Coronavirus Information in Different Languages
[youtube.com](#)

