



# Barrow-In-Furness District General Engagement Report

June 2022

**healthwatch**

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# About Healthwatch Cumbria

Healthwatch Cumbria (HWC) was established in April 2013 as part of the implementation of the Health and Care Act 2012.

Healthwatch England acts as the national consumer champion for all local Healthwatch organisations, enabling and supporting HWC to bring important issues to the attention of decisions makers nationally.

A key role of HWC is to champion the views of people who use health and care services in Cumbria, seeking to ensure that their experiences inform the improvement of services. HWC are constantly listening, recording and reporting on the views of local people on a wide range of health and care issues, ensuring that people in the county are able to express their views and have a voice in improving their local health and care services.

## Background

HWC decided that a substantial proportion of engagement during the first half of 2022–2023 was to be dedicated to collecting information from the residents of Cumbria about the issues that they are facing with the health and social care services. The reason for this is that from people's experiences and feedback HWC can develop a stronger understanding of the current challenges facing the health and social care providers within Cumbria, the issues that matter most to Cumbrian residents and the wider impact these have on people's lives, to identify key themes. This information will then inform HWC's future core work plans, when designing projects that look into these issues in more detail and work with the health and social care providers to make improvements to local services.

# Methodology

On Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2022, HWC attended the “Barrow Raiders Health and Wellbeing Event – Veteran’s Day” with the HARRI van, which was held at the Barrow-In-Furness rugby ground, The Matt Johnson Prestige Stadium. For this event a very short general survey was created, asking just 2 main questions, with the purpose of gathering people’s opinions on the concerns with local health services;

- Which is your biggest concern?
  - Access to GPs
  - Access to dentistry
  - Hospital waiting lists
  - Covid testing
  - Mental health
  - Don’t have any concerns
  - Other (please specify)
- Could you explain your reasons for your choice?

Additionally, to these main questions, residential location, age and gender demographic data was also collected.

Further, face to face engagement was done on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> April and Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> April, in Barrow-In-Furness’s, Dalton Road, for approximately an hour each time.

On the 20<sup>th</sup> April, a 3<sup>rd</sup> main question was added to the survey with the purpose of gaining some feedback on local social care services. The question that was added was;

- Have you or any of your family members, had any experience of the adult social care system?

The survey link was also more widely circulated to HWC contacts based in the Barrow area, as well as shared via social media, on the HWC website, and in the HWC newsletter.

The survey **ran from Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2022 to Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> May 2022**, with a total of **41 responses** from residents from the Barrow-In-Furness district.

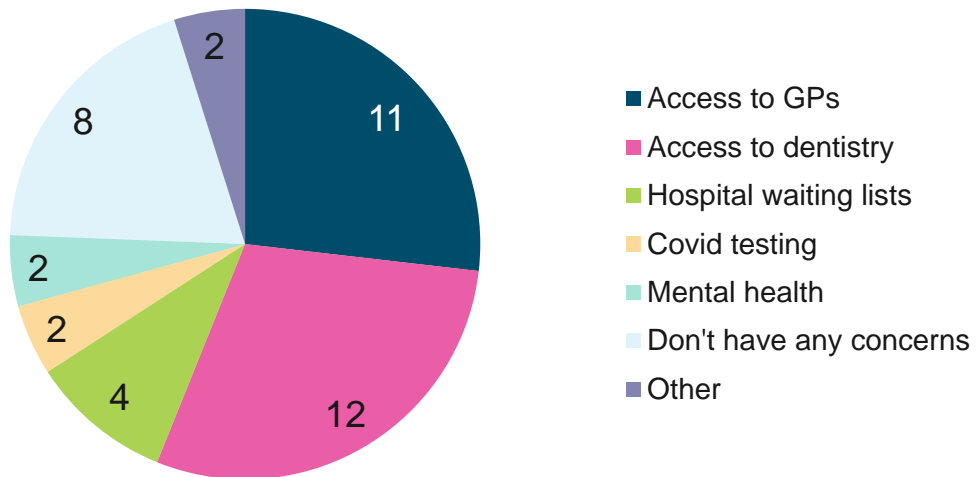


*HWC doing engagement at Barrow Raiders Health and Wellbeing Event, Veteran's Day*

# Findings

## Which is your biggest concern?

- 41 responses



The main area of concern identified by survey respondents, was accessing dentistry. With 29.3% of respondents sharing that this is their top concern.

Access to GPs was another key concern for residents in the Barrow-In-Furness district area, with 26.8% stating that this was their primary concern.

However, 19.5% of the 41 respondents shared that they did not have any concerns, indicating that they were happy with their health services at the time of responding to the survey.

Additionally, hospital waiting lists, covid testing, and mental health were all areas of main concern for some individuals who responded to the survey. But 'other' key issues that were raised, included the lack of community services available in the area (to accommodate the aging population).

All individuals who shared that covid testing was their main area of concern were over 65 years of age.

# Could you explain your reasons for your choice?

- 29 responses

## Access to dentistry

### Can't get a dentist

7 respondents highlighted the difficulties of being able to see a dentist, as they have been unable to find a dentist that is taking on new patients.

*"If you are in pain and need something for your teeth, a doctor can't help you, only a dentist can and you can't get to see one if you are not on a list."*

*"No NHS dentists left and those that remain are not taking on new patients."*

*"There aren't any."*

*"Nearly all of our tenants can't get a dentist."*

*"My daughter can't get a dentist around here."*

### Waiting times/lists

3 respondents shared that while they or family members have a dentist, they either have not yet been able to get an appointment or have had to wait years to get seen or receive the required treatment.

*"I can't get in to see my dentist and I need my teeth filling."*

*"The waiting times is bad, 2 years to be seen by a specialist service for a root canal."*

*"My children waited 4 years to see a dentist."*



## Access to GPs

### Face to face appointments

7 respondents shared that the inability to get a face to face appointment is a problem for them.



*"Since Covid it's much harder to see a doctor face to face. I don't like talking on phones so it puts me off ringing."*

*"I have emphysema and need to see a doctor often and I have a rescue pack for chest infections, but when in need they won't listen to my chest and still talk to me on the phone. They just change my antibiotics."*

*"People have told me that you can't get face to face appointments, and in case I need to see someone that worries me."*

*"Everything is done over the phone."*

### Waiting times

2 people mentioned that the length of time they have had to wait for an appointment is their main reason for their concern.

*"Inadequate appointments available when needed in timely manner."*

*"Long waiting list."*



### Hospital waiting times

*"Mum has been waiting over a year to be seen."*

*"I work in supported living and residents are waiting over 6 months to be seen."*



### Mental health

*"Children's mental health service in particular is very poor. Access to rehab places for people with substance abuse issues is very rarely available. Charity's then have to take over."*



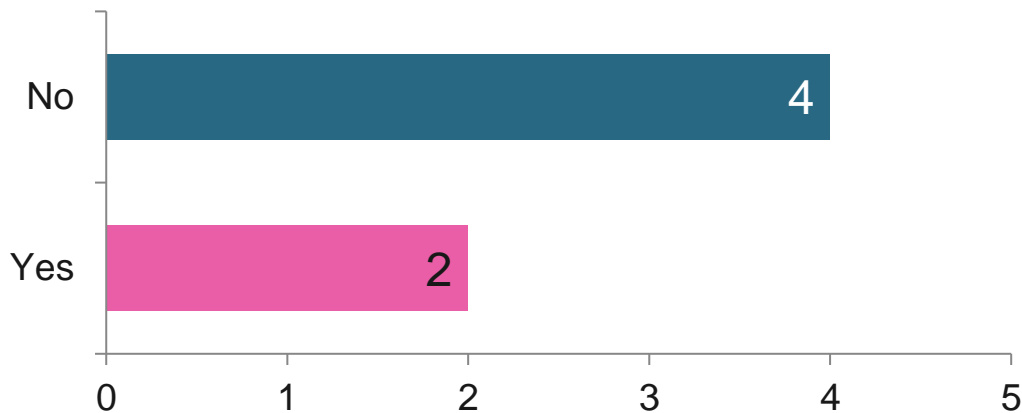
### Covid Testing

*"Have a box [of tests] left but that's it."*

*"Worried about new variants."*

# Have you or any of your family members, had any experience of the adult social care system?

- 6 responses



Out of the 2 respondents that have had some type of experience with the adult social care system, one was a family member who felt that they had a positive experience. While the other was a professional who had a more negative view point and believed that the adult social care system in the Barrow-In-Furness needs improvement.

## Positive experience

*"My mother had Alzheimer's. There were no problems with the care she received."*

## Negative experience

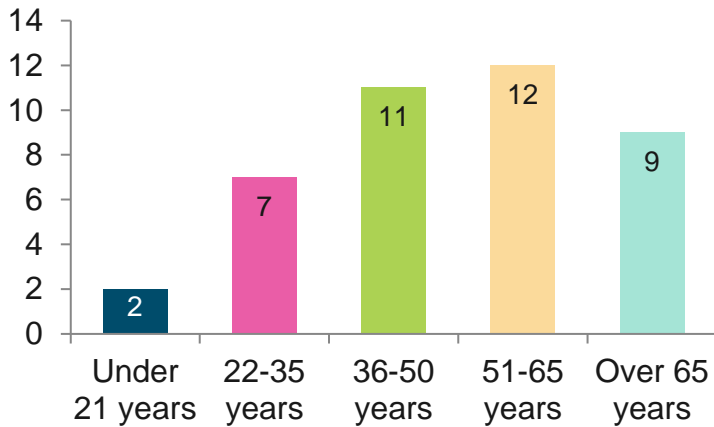
*"As a professional, ASC [Adult Social Care] is poor compared to in other areas such as Lancashire, needs are not being met in a timely manner which results in patients coming to harm or social admission to hospital which is increasing the pressures of the NHS."*



# Demographics

## How old are you?

- 41 responses



Age group	Top concern
Under 21 years	Don't have any concerns (100.0%)
22-35 years	Access to GPs (42.9%)
36-50 years	Access to dentistry (45.5%)
51-65 years	Access to GPs (33.3%)
Over 65 years	Access to dentistry (33.3%)

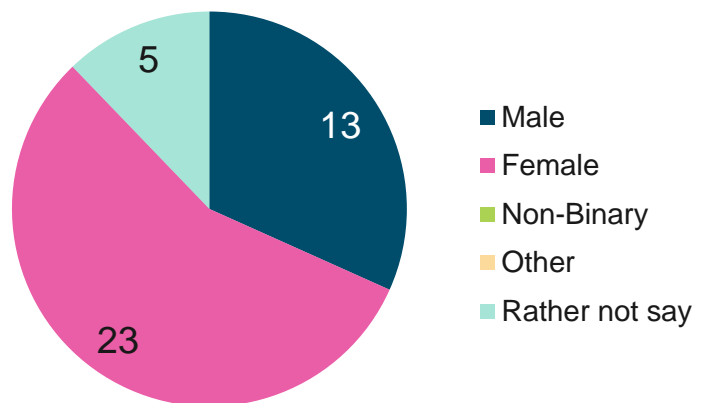
\*% of the specified age group who shared that the stated concern was their biggest concern

## What gender are you?

- 41 responses

Gender	Top concerns
Male	1. Access to dentistry (23.1%) 1. Access to GPs (23.1%) 1. Hospital waiting lists (23.1%) 1. Don't have any concerns (23.1%)
Female	1. Access to dentistry (34.8%) 2. Access to GPs (26.1%) 3. Don't have any concerns (17.4%)

\*% of the specified gender who shared that the stated concern was their biggest concern



# Conclusion

HWC would like to say thank you to the Barrow Raiders for hosting the Veteran's Day Health and Wellbeing event, and to the HARRI van giving us the opportunity to join them. Also, a huge thank you to all the people who filled out our survey and spoke to us about their health and social care experiences and concerns.

HWC chose to undertake some general engagement in the Barrow-In-Furness district area, with the aim of collecting information from the local residents about the issues that they are facing with the local health and social care services. Particularly to do with the health service concerns that matter the most to them and the reasons for this.

To do this HWC developed a short survey which ran from 3<sup>rd</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> May 2022, which received a total of 41 responses, from residents of the Barrow-In-Furness district area.

The key themes that have been identified from the responses, are:

- The main areas of concern for respondents in relation to health services, is accessing GPs and accessing dentistry.
- Key problems that people are facing with the accessibility of GPs is around obtaining face to face appointments and the lengthy waiting times for appointments.
- A substantial number of respondents shared that they have been unable to obtain a dentist.
- There is a mixed opinion on and experience with the adult social care system, with both negative and positive experiences/opinions being shared .

From hearing first hand from Barrow-In-Furness district residents, about their experiences and their feedback of health and social care services, HWC has developed a stronger understanding of the current challenges being faced by residents and the issues that matter to them the most. Thus, further research and future core work plans will be designed to look into these areas in more detail. With a purpose to raise issues with health and social care providers, with the ultimate aim to make positive improvements to local services.

If you would like to hear more about HWC's work and receive updates, you can sign up to receive our newsletter. At: <https://healthwatchcumbria.co.uk/home/join-our-mailing-list/>

# For more information

Healthwatch Cumbria  
People First Conference Centre  
Milbourne Street  
Carlisle  
Cumbria  
CA2 5XB

[www.healthwatchcumbria.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchcumbria.co.uk)

t: 0300 303 8567

e: [info@healthwatchcumbria.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchcumbria.co.uk)

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