



Let's hear it for men's health and wellbeing

Healthwatch Key Findings
Mental Health Summary

healthwatch
Kirklees & Calderdale

**Never
Heard**

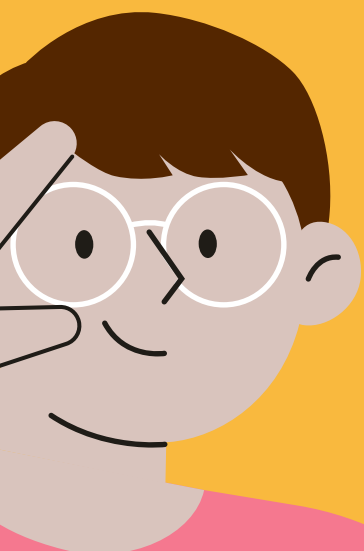
Giving a voice to people who need it most

Let's hear it for men's health and wellbeing

What is it and why are we doing it?

'Some men are reluctant to go to doctors, some men don't feel able to talk about their health and wellbeing' – But what about Kirklees and Calderdale men?

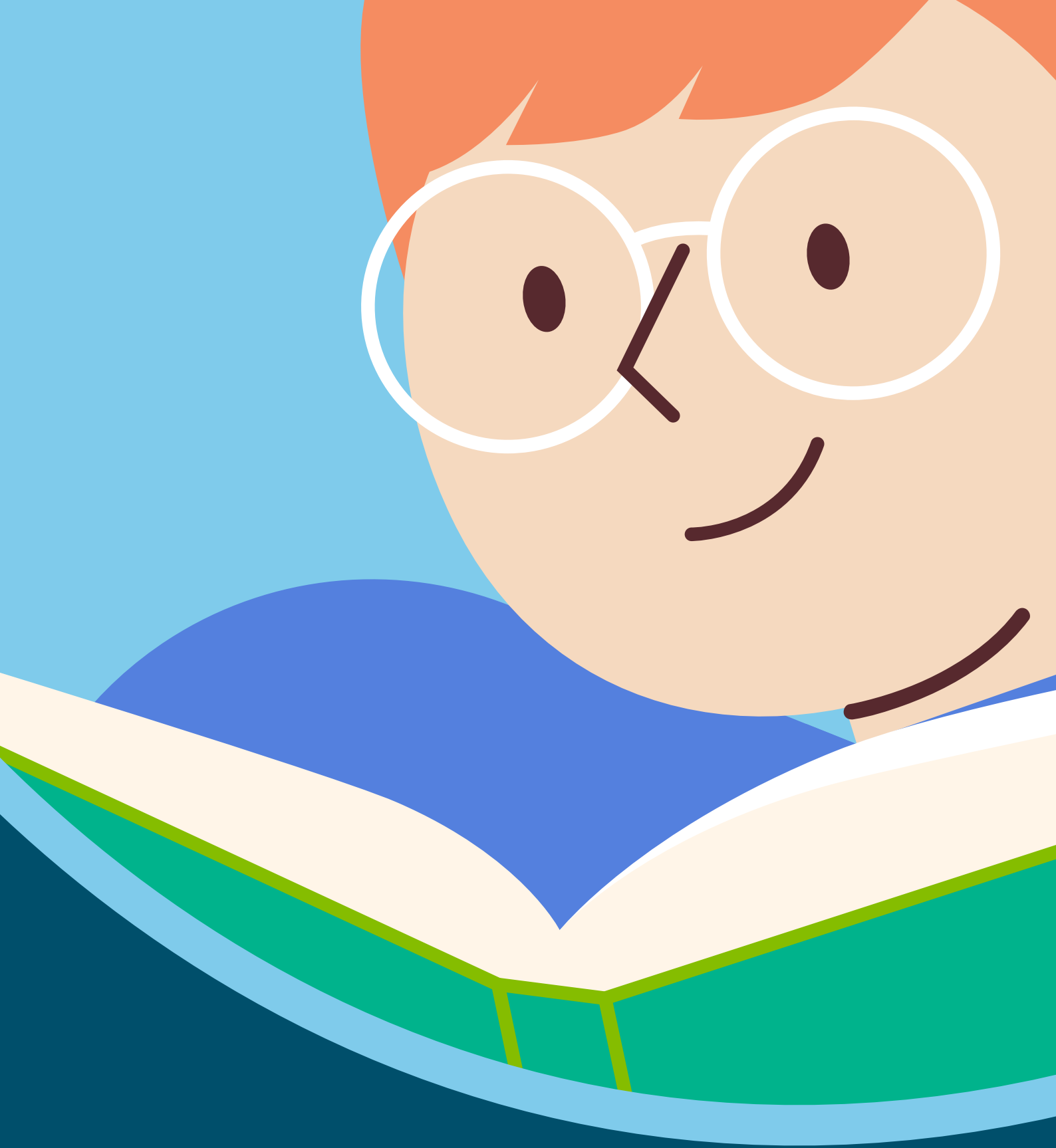
At Healthwatch Kirklees and Calderdale, we wanted to find out what men in our community are currently doing to look after their health and wellbeing and how confident they feel doing so. We provided a platform to debunk myths about men's approach to health and wellbeing where men could safely voice their thoughts and opinions.



318

MEN RESPONDED
THROUGH SURVEYS,
GROUP DISCUSSIONS,
SOCIAL MEDIA,
PHONE CALLS
AND 1-2-1
CONVERSATIONS.

From June to August 2023, we spoke to 318 men from all walks of life, and ethnic backgrounds, aged 18 to over 80, and from every postcode in Kirklees and Calderdale.



Mental Health

Men talked to Healthwatch about how having good mental health helps them to make better choices when it comes to their physical health. Half of the men we spoke to prioritise their mental health as much as their physical health.

Men's Mental Health Summary – Kirklees and Calderdale

50%

Only half of the men Healthwatch spoke to prioritise their mental health as much as their physical health. 30% said they did and 20% were unsure.

74%

74% of men Healthwatch spoke to are experiencing sleep issues, lack of motivation, isolation, poor hygiene, other negative effects due to stress or mental ill health.

“I have struggled with anxiety and find discussing it with work hard. I feel work are unhappy if I ask for time off for an appointment but if I get signed off that will make my anxiety worse.”

– Calderdale, age 25-49

How does stress and mental ill health affect men?



[Play video](#)

Barriers to improved mental health:

Men told Healthwatch they often struggle with access to health services, including GP practices and mental health services and that communication, information, advice and support offered by these services could be improved.

Some men spoke about delays getting treatment and support. When they have access to mental health services, the offer is often time-limited and some men feel they need longer term support. When discharged from services, men would like the option to return to the service easily if they need to, rather than having to be re-referred by their GP.

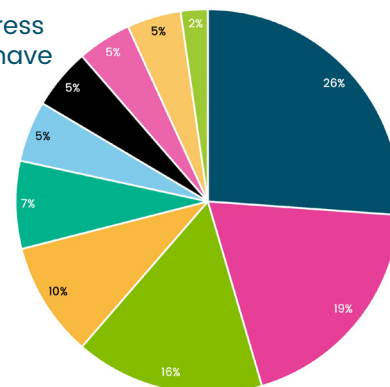
Older men we spoke to didn't always understand what mental wellbeing meant. They were more likely to talk about using medication for things like depression. Younger men understood better and talked more easily about how they support their own mental wellbeing.

The majority of men, (74%), said that mental ill health had an effect on their ability to manage their health. These men told us that their motivation, sleep, hygiene, diet, and social lives are affected.

On the other hand, 26% of men said that mental ill health did not have a palpable effect on their ability to look after their health.

Q. What effect does stress or mental ill health have on your lifestyle choices and ability to manage your wellbeing?

- none
- mental health
- less motivation
- social reclusion
- substance abuse
- other
- less sleep
- physical health
- diet
- hygiene



The graph shows the effect that stress or mental ill health have on the life of respondents. 26% of men said that these factors do not have any type of consequence on their health.

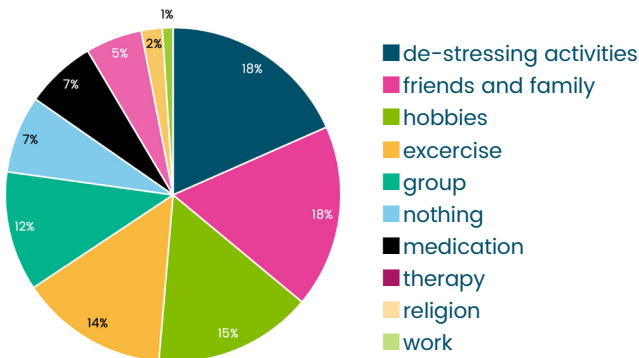
What are men doing to look after their mental health?

Healthwatch found that family and friends were a common and popular source of support for men. Many men told us how they use socialising, exercise and hobbies to manage their mental health.

How men manage stress:

Men told Healthwatch about pro-active steps they take to recognise and reduce stressful situations. Things men do included talking to family and friends, taking up hobbies, volunteering, attending groups, engaging online with wellbeing talks/therapy, taking regular medication, attending medical/care reviews, and faith or distraction methods like working and keeping busy.

Q. What, if anything, do you do to look after your mental health?



The graph shows what respondents do to look after their mental health. De-stressing activities, and their friends and their family were chosen by 36% of respondents.

Positive ways the men who spoke to Healthwatch are managing their mental health and wellbeing.



[Play video](#)

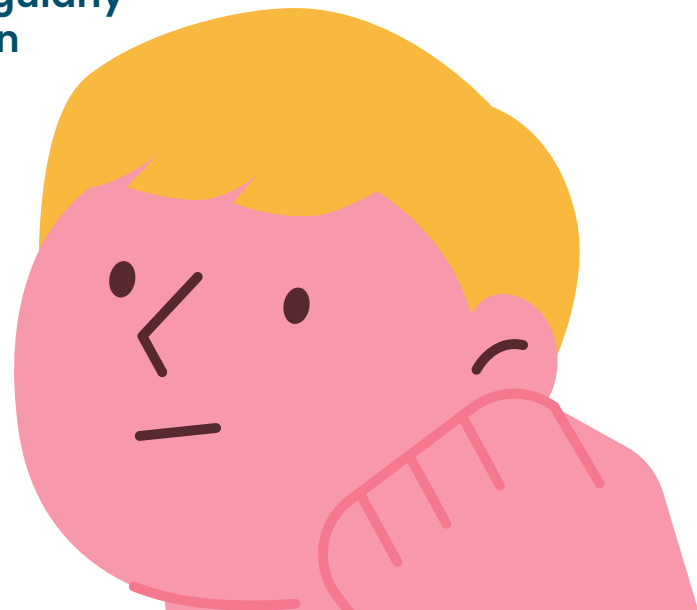
18%

Of the men Healthwatch spoke to look after their mental health with support from friends and family.

“I like to build models but can’t do it like I used to. Going to groups helps. I chat to people in the same position as me. I have no emotions now and speaking to someone in similar position helps me understand more.” — Kirklees, age 60-64

“Walking daily and speaking to friends regularly helps. I come to the coffee morning when I can and we go to the dementia cafe together too.” — Kirklees, age 65-79

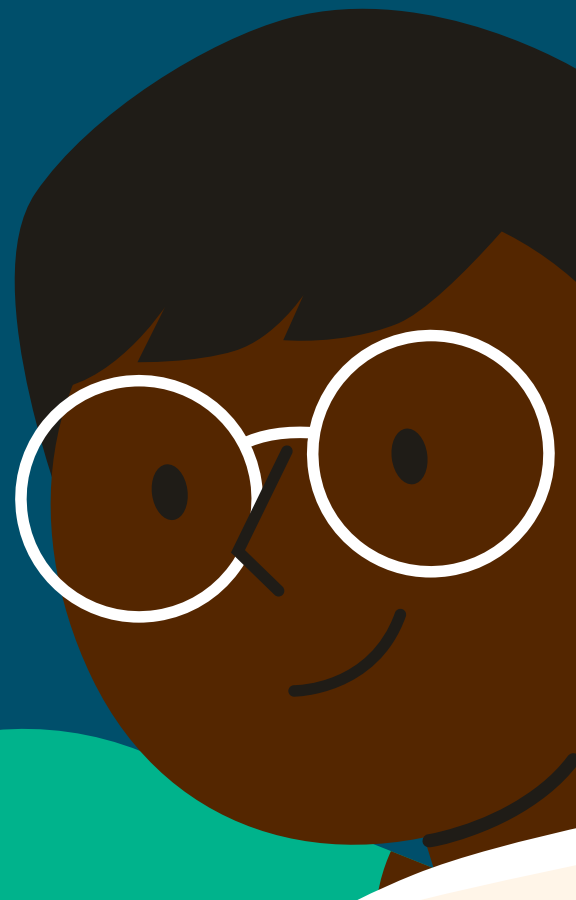
“If I get anxious and I can see work pressures building up, I go for a walk or plan a trip to the cinema so I’m distracted for a few hours.”
— Calderdale, age 50-64



What men say they need to improve their mental health:

- More access to a variety of community groups specifically for men.
- Access support from community based mental health team to help men eat healthily.
- Access support from Social Prescribing service
- More help for low level support and more opportunities just to talk to someone.
- Being able to access the adult Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) pathway in a more timely way.

“I struggled with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) after being in the Army, so I was unemployed for a long time, which affected my mental health. I wasn't able to get a job as I was struggling, yet it harmed me not working. I was supported well by military organisations, but I feel the NHS locally does not understand military mental health struggles. I now work in landscaping and feel much better about myself. I still struggle but I have an understanding boss – supportive workplaces are what is needed.” – Veteran, Kirklees



What's next?

Healthwatch will share this information with providers and commissioners of services. We'll be asking them to tell us what they could do to improve the service they offer to men, that will empower men to look after their own health and wellbeing.

For more from our men's health work, you can find reports on Key Findings, Health Inequalities, and local findings in Kirklees and Calderdale on our website.



healthwatch

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