

# 'Happier and Healthier Lives roadshow'

Wyre Rural Extended Neighbourhood  
Primary Care Network



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## Abbreviations

WREN Wyre Rural Extended Neighbourhood

PCN Primary Care Network



## About Healthwatch Lancashire

Healthwatch was established in April 2013 as part of the implementation of the Health and Social Care Act 2012. Healthwatch Lancashire uses people's feedback to better understand the challenges facing the NHS and other care providers. We make sure people's experiences improve health and care for everyone – locally and nationally. We can also help people receive information and advice they need to make the right decisions for them and to get the support they deserve.

## Primary Care Network

A PCN is a group of GP Practices who work closely together to provide integrated care and services across the local population. Some of the aims of a PCN is to improve the integration of the wider health and social care system, and provide opportunity for GP practices to share expertise to enhance to the health and wellbeing of the local population.

## Acknowledgements

### Healthwatch Lancashire would like to thank:

- Wyre and Rural Extended Neighbourhood Primary Care Network
- The local community for taking time to share their views and experiences
- Garstang Booths
- Kirkham Morrisons
- Kirkham and Garstang Libraries
- Great Ecclestone, Wesham and Hope Community Centres
- Kirkham Family Hub
- Knott End Café
- Garstang Food Club
- Garstang Carers



'NHS England » Primary care networks (PCNs)

# Executive Summary

**Between 1st –21st April 2024, Healthwatch Lancashire conducted the 'Happier and Healthier Lives Roadshow' across communities within the Wyre and Rural Extended Neighbourhood Primary Care Network.**

WREN (Wyre Rural Extended Neighbourhood) Primary Care Network is a collective of five GP surgeries:

- Garstang Medical Practice
- Great Eccleston Health Centre
- Over-Wyre Medical Centre
- Kirkham Health Centre
- Ash Tree house surgery

Across the five practices it is estimated that the PCN footprint covers approximately 59,000 patients. A large proportion of this population live within rural communities and may be isolated in accessing services which may improve their health and wellbeing.

According to the Quality and Outcomes Framework 2023 (QOF) the most prevalent health concerns across the PCN were hypertension (19.3%), depression (12.8%) and obesity (10.8%)<sup>2</sup>.

To ensure that the population are living happy and healthy lives, WREN PCN set out to investigate barriers that may impact a person's health and wellbeing. By WREN PCN investigating these barriers, the PCN can work towards ensuring that there are preventative measures and targeted interventions in place

Healthwatch Lancashire facilitated pop-ups within local communities, attended community groups and ran an online survey to gather feedback from local people about their health and wellbeing.



## 111 Respondents



<sup>2</sup>WYRE RURAL EXTENDED NEIGHBOURHOOD (WREN) PCN - QOF Database ([gpcontract.co.uk](http://gpcontract.co.uk))



Conversations were held with the local community around what was working well in terms of their own personal health and wellbeing, and where they felt improvements could be made to live healthy happy lives for both them and their families.

Conversations were held across the WREN PCN footprint with the local community around what was working well in terms of their own personal health and wellbeing, and where they felt improvements could be made to live healthy happy lives for both them and their families.

### Feedback revealed four key themes:

- The need for a lifestyle and preventative holistic approach including healthy eating, exercise, quit smoking etc.
- The need for better access to health and wellbeing services including GPs, dentists, physiotherapists etc. as well as shorter waiting times for scans, diagnosis and treatment from external services
- Better access to mental health support and shorter waiting times
- More community inclusion to reduce social isolation/loneliness as well as more peer led community support.

It was found that the key themes interconnected throughout, i.e. attending a community group would reduce social isolation and consequently help improve mental health.

Whilst engaging with the local community it was found that many people saw their health and wellbeing as a whole and didn't differentiate between whether they needed support losing weight or eating healthy, rather just that they wished to 'get in shape' or 'keep fit and healthy'; therefore it is suggested that local services need to work in a holistic method based on individual needs to reflect this.

People reported little awareness or understanding of the roles of social prescribers with 18% saying that they were aware of and/or had been referred to a social prescriber. There was also low awareness or understanding was also demonstrated around health and wellbeing coaches with 26% saying that they were aware of and/or had been referred to services.

More people reported to be aware of mental health practitioners with 41% of people saying that they were aware of and/or had been referred to services.

This indicates that services need promoting more and that they are not being fully utilised by the local community.

The rural aspect of the WREN PCN footprint was seen as a positive by many respondents in helping towards living a healthy happy life and could be seen as a great resource for services to make use of.

# Methodology

Face to face engagement activities were carried out across the WREN PCN to hold conversations with local people, and an online survey was created for the WREN PCN practices to share with their patients asking what would help them to live happy and healthy lives and what barriers they face to achieve this.

Total number of people engaged with:



Questions included what was good about where they lived to ascertain any themes that could be utilised by the PCN. There were also questions around awareness of additional roles provided by the practices such as Social Prescribers and Health and Wellbeing Coaches.

Pop-up Location/ Group attended	Date attended
Garstang Carers	2nd April
Garstang Booths	6th April
Men's Monday- Hope community Care Hub, Presall	8th April
Kirkham Library- Wellbeing Group	10th April
Kirkham Family Hub	10th April
Hope Community Care Hub, Presall	10th April
Garstang Food Club	15th April
Garstang Library	16th April
Great Ecclestone Village Centre	17th April
Knott-End Cafe	18th April
Kirkham Morrisons	20th April
Talking Tables, Garstang Booths	23rd April
Wesham Over 50's Dinner & Social Club	23rd April

**Thirteen pop-ups and drop-ins** were carried out in the local community with the aim to gather information from a diverse patient community including young working families, over 60's, men's groups, and carers. General public engagement was facilitated at two supermarkets, Knott End Café and Great Eccleston Community Centre and market.

For people not wishing to/were unable to complete a survey there was an opportunity to answer three questions: **How I am feeling today, what makes me happy and what would help me be healthier.**

This was achieved by having jars on a table where people could write their answers down and put in the jar thus allowing for anyone who may be in a hurry or preferred not to answer a survey an alternative option of having their say. Answers from these have been incorporated into the relevant comment sections.

The survey was made available online and promoted using leaflets and posters made available in all WREN PCN GP practices, as well as key community locations including cafes, community centres and shops. Leaflets were also distributed during engagement activities to those who didn't have time to stop and talk.



# Demographic information

This section of the report details the demographic data for the 'Happier and Healthier Lives Roadshow' projects. Some of the survey questions did not have a full response rate and therefore, the findings in this chapter are based on the actual number of full responses.

Age	Number of Respondents
18-24	1
25-49	25
50-64	28
65-79	31
80+	21
Prefer not to say	1

## Gender

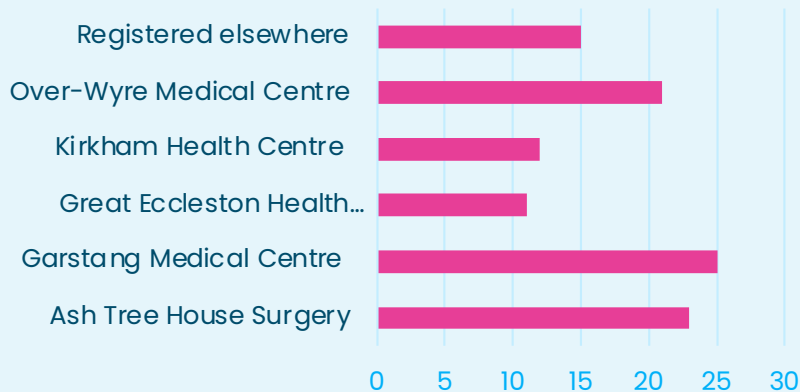
67 female

27 male

8 prefer not to say



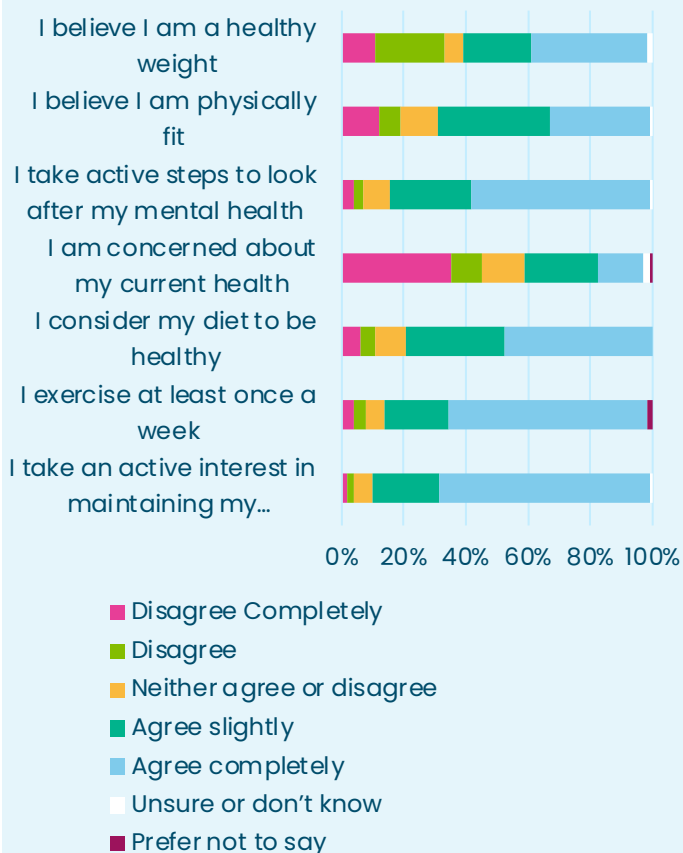
## Number of participants registered at each GP Practice



Ethnicity	Number of Respondents
Asian/Asian British: Pakistani	1
White: British/English/Northern Irish/Scottish/Welsh	92
White: Any other White background	4
Prefer not to say	6

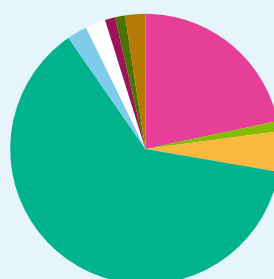
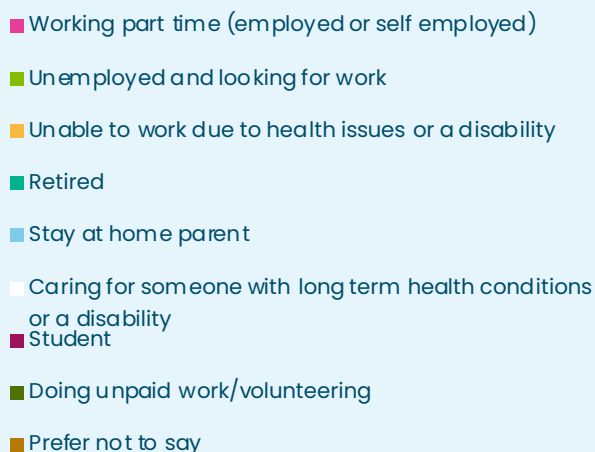


### Perceived health status of participants



Disability/ Long-term conditions	Number of Respondents
High blood pressure	31
A physical or mobility impairment	25
None	23
Asthma, COPD or respiratory condition	18
Diabetes	15
Other	14
Deaf or hearing impairment	13
Cardiovascular condition	13
Mental health condition	11
Cancer	6
Blind or sight impairment	4
Chronic kidney disease	4
Neurological condition	3
Learning disability	2
Prefer not to say	1

### Employment status of participants



# Findings

This section details the voices and experiences of 111 participants residing across the WREN PCN footprint.

Of the overall survey total, eight were registered at practices outside of the WREN PCN, three preferred not to/were unable to answer which GP they were registered with; and three were registered elsewhere but had recently moved to the area and were about to register with a local GP practice within the PCN footprint.

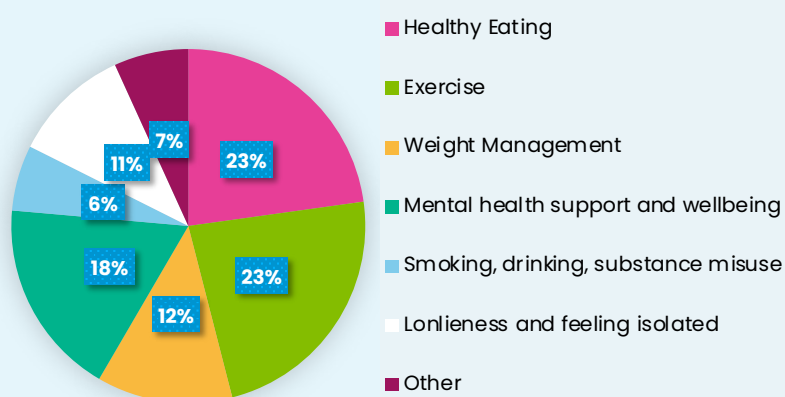
Whilst eight respondents were not registered with WREN PCN GP practices their comments have been included as part of this report as they remain indicative of local people's views on living healthy happy lives.

Demographic information has been analysed to highlight any themes within specific demographic groups.

## Helping me lead a 'happier and healthier life

What support is needed?

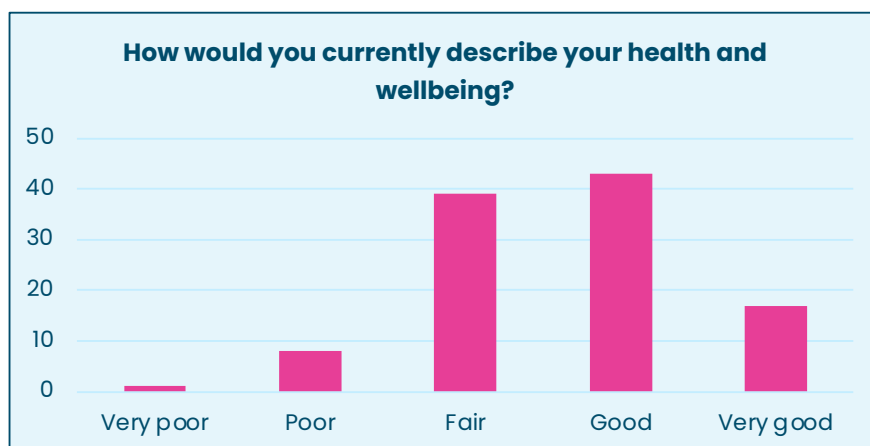
### Which of the following would support you lead a 'happier and healthier' life?



"More assistance with diabetes, refresher courses on managing it"  
Patient quote

## How would you currently describe your health and wellbeing?

Overall, those who completed the survey rated their current health as fair to good with 82 out of 108 overall (76%). One respondent felt that their health was very poor and 17 felt that their current health was very good (16%).



## What support is needed?

115 people answered the question of what support they felt was needed to help them live healthy and happy lives.

Discussions determined that people answered this question based on their current health and wellbeing, i.e. those who walked regularly didn't see exercise as a priority; it is important to remember that these priorities may change in line with personal circumstances.

Support with exercise received the highest score with 59 out of 107 (55%) people choosing this option. This was closely followed by healthy eating which had a result of 58 out of 107 (54%).

Increased mental health support was also rated as important by 48 out of the 107 (45%) people who answered this question.

Weight management was seen as a need by 31 out of 107 (29%) responses, and this could be seen to link in with the need for support around exercise and healthy eating.

27 (25%) people who completed the survey said that they would like to reduce their social isolation and/or loneliness, with one stating that this was mainly over the winter months when they don't get out as much.



"Healthy eating, maybe healthy cooking for children"  
Patient quote

Out of the 107 respondents, 15 people stated that they would like to see more support with stopping smoking, drinking and/or substance misuse. Whilst smoking cessation was discussed with several members of the community during engagement, further research would be required should there be a need to break this down further.

4 out of 107 people who answered this question stated that access to a GP and/or shorter waiting times was important to their health and wellbeing.

Individual responses also included the need for more support and information around women's health including the menopause, support with diabetes, sleep, access to childcare, and a better community offer for children and young people.

Friends and family were also seen as a support network for many people when responding to the survey about their health and wellbeing.

## Helping my family lead a 'happier and healthier' life

Out of the 111 people who completed the survey 96 responded to this question, with 65 people stating that this was not relevant to them. Reasons for this included having a family that is grown up and left home, or not having a family; this was especially evident

## What support is needed?

Thirty-one people responded to this question and answers varied greatly depending on individual needs and requirements. The main themes were:

Healthier lifestyle: healthy eating, more exercise, and smoking cessation, **"healthier eating, discipline and exercise"**

Better access to local health and wellbeing services including GPs, dentists, physiotherapists and social prescribers **"access to medical services and community help"**

Better mental health support and shorter waiting times for mental health services, **"more mental and health wellbeing groups..."**

Less social isolation and better community access for those who may be lonely, as well as more for children and young people, **"more family group events to include teens."**



## What matters most to your family with your health and wellbeing?

Ninety-five people answered this question with the main themes consisting of:

**Health services:** 33 comments centred around health services as important for good health and wellbeing, including good GP accessibility, accessing a dentist, ambulance services and short waiting times for referrals such as scans **“prompt access to NHS services when you need them”**.

**Preventative and healthy lifestyle:** 20 comments centred around living a healthy lifestyle, managing diet and preventative measures to maintain own health and wellbeing **“holistic community approach to wellbeing is key”**

**Being outdoors:** 16 comments focused on being outdoors including walking, cycling and gardening as important for health and wellbeing **“our allotment, being outdoors”**

**Social and community inclusion:** 8 comments centred around maintaining good social inclusion and the importance of seeing others **“ability to undertake full life of community and be able to contribute to the locality”**

**Mental health support:** 7 people discussed maintaining good mental health and wellbeing. Good mental health was also linked in with many of the other themes such as outdoor activities, family and friends and lifestyle **“being outdoors for our mental health”**

**Family and friends:** 7 comments were around the importance of family and friends and supporting each other **“time with each other”**

**Independence and safety:** 3 comments were around feeling safe and keeping their family safe, as well as maintaining their independence when older **“pendant - security if have a fall or feel unwell”**

**Faith:** 2 respondents discussed how their faith is important to them, as well as the church community **“my faith is very important to me. Socialising with my friends both through the church and in the sheltered accommodation where I live”**

**Other:** 3 respondents talked about living a caring and loving life. 1 person stated that football was important (although unclear as to whether they are referring to watching or participating) and 1 person felt that being listened to was important **“being happy and positive with life, and love for each other.”**

3 respondents stated that they had no significant priority to living a healthy happy life.

## Anything preventing you and your family (if relevant) from leading a happier and healthier life?

Eighty-four people responded to this question and answers varied dependant on individual circumstances at the time of the survey, some of which were temporary i.e. waiting for a scan and may have since been resolved.

During face-to-face engagement there were many comments around the difficulty of getting GP appointments and/or waiting times for an appointment; and whilst this did not form part of the survey it was felt that it should be noted as an issue the local community see as a barrier.

Out of the eighty-four people who responded to this question thirty stated that they faced no barriers to live healthy happy lives.

### Key themes around barriers were:

**Existing health condition:** 16 respondents said that one or more health condition(s) of either themselves and/or a close family member is currently preventing them from living a healthy happy life; this included diabetes, cancer, and chronic kidney disease, as well as injury such as a broken ankle **“I have a back issue and have been waiting for physio for months”**

**Access to health services:** 12 people who completed this section stated that long waiting times for appointments, availability of support services such as mental health and/or accessing NHS services was a barrier to good health and wellbeing. This included GP appointments, access to a dentist, diagnosis and waiting times for treatment **“unable currently to access treatment under the NHS due to long waiting lists”**

**Cost:** 6 respondents cited costs/cost of living as a barrier to accessing services, this included paying for private services such as dentists **“I suffer from a chronic respiratory condition and deciding whether to put the heating on affects my physical and mental wellbeing”**

**Poor mental health:** 5 people talked about their current mental health, including stress and anxiety, which is impacting on their health and wellbeing **“access to mental health services”** and **“whilst such services are on offer via NHS the waiting times can be excruciating and have further negative impact” (mental health)**

**Lack of facilities/activities:** 4 respondents stated that a lack of facilities prevented them from living a healthy happy life, this included gyms and leisure facilities as well as facilities/activities for young people **“Swimming is something we found very therapeutic but our local pool closed...”** and **“not enough for Teens to promote healthy lifestyle”**

**Travel:** 4 people discussed the cost of travel, public transport and parking as barriers to accessing services **“the bus service to Great Eccleston is really poor”**. 2 members of the community discussed how poor quality roads and footpaths is impacting on their health and wellbeing **“the roads in the centre of Garstang are frightening and for my own health and wellbeing these need to be addressed, I am fearful of walking on the uneven paths and driving on the awful roads”**

**Caring for others:** 3 respondents stated that they are caring for others which is impacting on their current health and wellbeing, as well as restricting their access to services **“working full time and caring for an elderly relative...”**

**Environment:** 4 people who completed the survey stated that their local environment is creating a barrier to their health and wellbeing. This included neighbouring commercial properties and current housing development work, with concerns around a consequent increase on demand and access to local health services **“what will happen when the 500 new houses (north of Cop Lane) are built”**

**Not being listened to:** 3 respondents talked about how they don't/didn't feel listened to by the healthcare professional **“I have chronic health conditions and have given up accessing professionals who believe me”**

**Other:** 2 respondents said that their age was a barrier, 1 respondent spoke about family living abroad and being unable to visit as waiting for a scan, issues around acquiring medication was raised by 2 respondents, 1 respondent stated that anti-social behaviour deters them from exercising locally and 1 member of the community spoke about a lack of healthy food options in sheltered accommodation **“the meals at the sheltered accommodation where I live are very high in carbs and there is no healthy choice. I'm here buying some fruit and healthy snacks even though I pay for my meals at home - I'm paying twice just to try and eat healthy.”**





## What's great about living in my area?

Ninety-eight people responded to this question, although fifty specified where they lived, seven respondents stated where they lived but did not comment further.

Four people who responded stated that they felt that there were no outstanding positives about living in their area **"nothing special."**

Several comments in the Kirkham and Wesham areas centred around the possibility of a new health centre and GPs merging, with the local community unclear as to what may be happening with a degree of anxiety around this. Further information for the local community would be advised to maintain good patient relations and trust.

Other issues raised included poor roads and footpaths, on-going housing developments and the closure of a local church (Preesall).

**Community:** 32 respondents said that their local community was great, including social groups, faith communities, community events and the friendliness of local people.



"Great Ecclestone: everyone takes pride in their village and is still kind and considerate"

"Garstang: lovely people, great community spirit"

"Preesall: lovely community"

"Close knit neighbourhood in Kirkham"

"There is so much going on here, the arts centre is incredible and the speakers club in Garstang has been life changing for me."

**Patient quote**

**Rural:** 23 people across the WREN PCN footprint said that living in a rural area is great and that they regularly access the local countryside for outdoor activities including walking, cycling, and nature **"access to the countryside to go for walks/hikes with family/friends and pets"**

**Local businesses/services:** 22 respondents discussed the positives of having local services where they live; this included shops, post offices, libraries, schools, churches, community centres, GPs and pharmacies **"love having a good library on my doorstep" (Kirkham)**

**Locality:** 218 people cited the geographical location of where they live as a positive; with close proximity to the coast, access to the motorway network, public transport and easy access to neighbouring towns and cities being talked about **"easy access to Preston and Lancaster and the M6" (Garstang)**



**Quiet:** 8 respondents were positive about their neighbourhood being quiet and peaceful  
**“quiet area, less busy life” (area not specified)**

**Safe:** 26 people stated that crime levels were low where they live and that they felt safe in their local community  
**“love having a good library on my doorstep” (Kirkham)**

**Family and Friends:** 5 people discussed having family and/or friends close by and being able to spend time together on activities such as walking as a positive. Good neighbours was also mentioned by 1 respondent. **“Family live close by”**

**Other:** Other comments included local history and heritage, cleanliness, flat for easier walking and opportunities for investment.



“Great Eccleston is a lovely village with all the required facilities”

“Love living here” (Preesall)

“It’s just a lovely area” (unspecified)

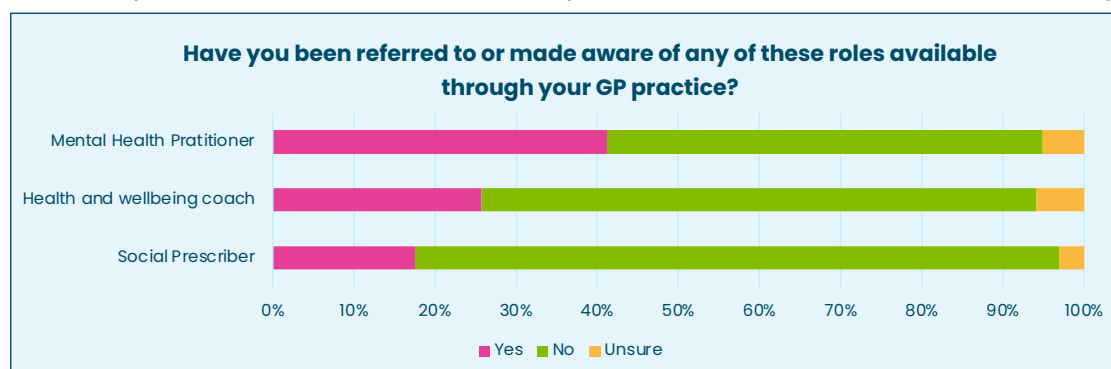
“Has a lovely high street” (Kirkham)

## Knowledge of additional roles

One hundred and six people answered this question although some chose to only answer for one or two of the listed roles; therefore 97 people responded to the question around mental health practitioners, 101 about health and wellbeing Coaches, and 97 about social prescribers.

Results indicate that people are more aware of mental health practitioners but less familiar with health and wellbeing coaches and social prescribers. Three of the people who answered this question stated that they were aware of the roles through their work or voluntary work/services.

One respondent stated that social prescribers need to be more easily accessible.



**Mental Health Practitioner:** 40 people stated that they were aware of mental health practitioners and their role, 52 people said they weren't familiar and 5 were unsure **"there used to be Talking Therapies at Ash Trees which was brilliant, they should bring it back"**

**Health and Wellbeing Coach:** 26 people stated that they were aware of health and wellbeing coaches, 69 stated that they weren't and 6 were unsure **"I am about to start a healthy eating course which was arranged through the health and wellbeing coach"**

**Social Prescriber:** 17 people stated that they were aware of a social prescriber and their role, 77 said they were unaware and 3 were unsure **"I'm aware of the social prescriber through the foodbank"**

Other comments included:



"I think if we had some guidance we could get into a better mindset",

"surgery needs to advertise"

"All waste of time"

"The health club is a god send for me, I love getting up in the morning and going there"

Patient quote



# Conclusion

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Throughout the WREN PCN footprint key themes were consistent, and centred around lifestyle, access to services, mental health support and community.

Living a healthy and happy life was seen by many as a combination of several factors and this highlights the need for services to be working in partnership, where ideally a personal plan can be tailored for each individual, dependant on their current needs and circumstances.

Lifestyle was seen as an overall priority for many, not only for those who are currently fit and healthy, but also for those wishing to lose weight, quit smoking or just generally improve their health and wellbeing. Many of the respondents for the survey linked mental health and lifestyle such as walking in the countryside supporting mental health. Barriers around lifestyle included ill health, access to support services, caring for a loved one or costs.

Survey results highlighted that many members of the local community are unaware of the health and wellbeing coaches and the services that they provide. Promoting this service more would allow for members of the local community to consider their lifestyle and make changes with support; this would not only help improve their health but also work towards better mental health.

Comments around access to leisure facilities was raised, including the closure of a local swimming pool in Kirkham and a lack of leisure facilities in Great Ecclestone. Those who discussed how they exercise mainly talked about utilising the rural aspect of where they live by way of walking and cycling.

The importance of the local community rated high with those who completed the survey, and this was seen as a support network where friendships can be made and peer support gained, as well as reducing social isolation and loneliness. Several respondents said that they would like to see more community groups as well as more activities/events, especially for children and young people. Collaborating with local schools to help educate children on healthy lifestyles would be beneficial, as well as identifying activities children and young people would engage with to live healthy happy lives. This could be peer led and enable children and young people to have a voice on future services.

Survey results show that there is a lack of understanding about the role of social prescribers which highlights that more work needs to be done to promote this service more to those who may benefit from the support of a social prescriber; and there is the opportunity to utilise these services more by reaching out to vulnerable and/or socially isolated people, especially in the older communities.

Accessing mental health support was raised as a barrier to living a healthy happy life, with long waiting times, access to services and a shortage of community support discussed. Raising awareness of the mental health practitioners and their role would enable more support for those in the local community currently experiencing poor mental health.



Good access to health services was consistently raised as important for living health and happy lives, with comments around GP appointments, access to a dentist, access to physiotherapy, medication issues, waiting times for referrals and waiting times for diagnosis and treatment. Several respondents wanted to feel listened to by their healthcare professional(s), with good communication and transparency also seen as important.

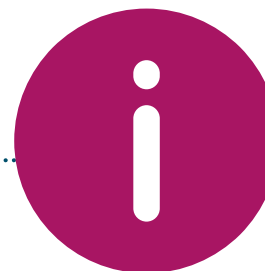
It must be acknowledged that services such as dentists, referrals and waiting time for diagnosis/treatment with other NHS services etc. are out of the control of the WREN PCN practices, and many of the issues raised are barriers being faced nationally. However, there was dissatisfaction around telephone call waiting times when making a GP appointment and/or long waiting times to see a GP across the PCN footprint. It was commented by members of the public that at times it was difficult to contact their GP practice due to wait times when they call, and for non-emergency appointments there was a wait before they saw an appropriate practitioner. It is therefore recommended that some work is carried out around this to determine what would help improve patient experience, and therefore help work towards a happy healthy life. The Patient Participant Groups (PPGs) could support with this by way of engagement with the local community.

The community responded well to having a voice in their local health care services and saw it as a positive in living healthy happy lives.





# Recommendations



Forest bathing | Mindfulness | National Trust

Recommendation	Provider Response
<p>Promote the additional roles; social prescribers, health and wellbeing coaches, and mental health practitioners available within the PCN within GP practices and within community settings. This will raise awareness and support with social isolation, mental health, and wellbeing.</p>	<p>Within the PCN there is an active campaign to raise awareness of the additional roles through social media posts, posters in the surgeries and promotional 'stands' in practice reception areas to promote the services. It should be noted that some of these roles and services have only recently been introduced to WREN PCN and are very much in a 'fledgling' state.</p>
<p>Utilise additional roles to increase partnership working with local services and community groups. This will support in establishing a holistic approach for individual needs and signposting to additional support.</p>	<p>The additional roles are an integral part of developing and strengthening the existing partnership relationships that we have in place. We have monthly meetings with our Social Prescribers, Health and Wellbeing Coaches and Mental Health practitioners to share good practice and any relevant community information that has been identified throughout the month.</p>
<p>Consider partnership working with local services to identify gaps within local support such as mental health, offer for children and young people and exercise facilities.</p>	<p>This is already in place and incorporated as part of the Integrated Neighbourhood Team meetings.</p>
<p>Investigate any additional funding and/or incentives that may support people on low incomes access leisure facilities</p>	<p>Within our Health Inequalities workstream we are looking at partnership working with Local Authorities with a view to re-introducing 'exercise on prescription'.</p>
<p>Liaise with Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB) to highlight concerns raised by members of the public about proposals for new health centres in the area. Consider requesting the ICB to communicate any proposals to patients of the WREN PCN.</p>	<p>ICB Communications team have confirmed that a statement to the public is planned and will be issued shortly.</p>
<p>Celebrate and utilise what is working well for people and their health and wellbeing. An example would be making the most of the surrounding countryside and consider activities in this area such as 'wellbeing walks' and 'mindfulness forest bathing'</p>	<p>Based on the feedback from our patients, we will look at how we can build on this further. We do have wellness walks etc in place in some of the network practices – but not all. This is something we will discuss with our Social Prescribers, health and wellbeing coaches and the practice teams.</p>

# healthwatch

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Your voice matters

