



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

Calderdale

healthwatch
Kirklees & Calderdale

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Summary

Women aged 16+ and those identifying as female

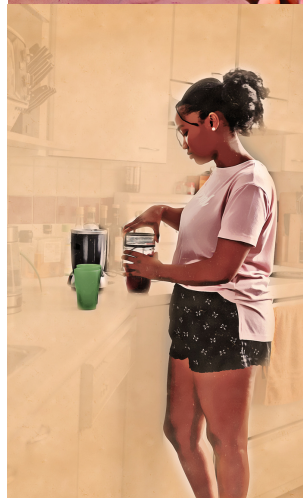
Let's hear it from

you...

"Women's health is more than just our reproductive organs and menopause. When people talk to me about my health and wellbeing, I want to be seen as a whole person, looking at all aspects of my life."

At Healthwatch Kirklees and Healthwatch Calderdale, we wanted to find out what women in our community are currently doing to look after their health and wellbeing and how confident they feel doing so. We invited women to talk to us about how they manage their health and what barriers they face. We provided a welcoming and safe platform for them to share their ideas about how women look after themselves.

During October and November 2023, we heard from 665 women aged 16+, from all walks of life and ethnic backgrounds, and from every postcode area in Kirklees and Calderdale.



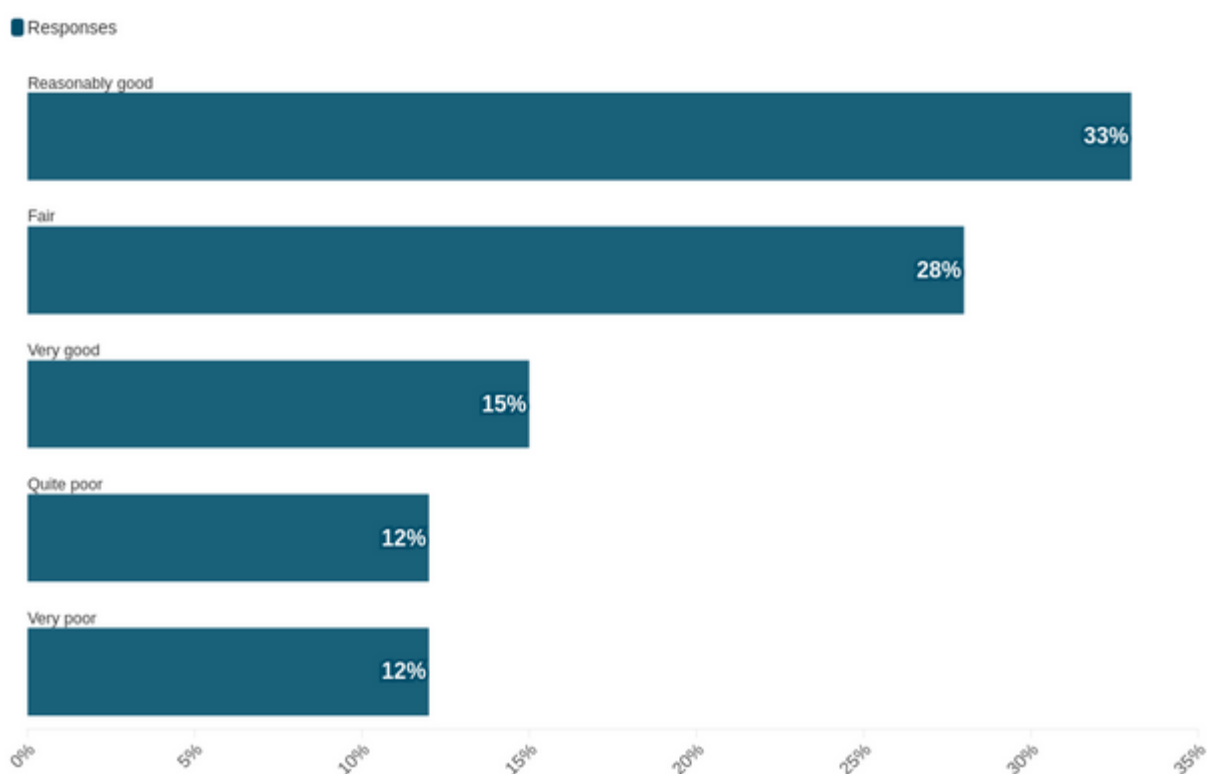
Calderdale Summary

Healthwatch Calderdale received 157 responses from women.

We received feedback from women in all postcodes in Calderdale, with the highest from HX3 (16%) and HX2 (15%).

10% of women did not specify a postcode area in either Kirklees or Calderdale.

Q. How would you describe the current state of your health?



The graph above shows that most women rated their health more positively than negatively.

Health and wellbeing

33% of women said 'feeling and being healthy' was their definition of being healthy, with that theme occurring in every HX and OL14 postcode.

"Physically and mentally well - both are needed to be healthy and have positive wellbeing as being negative impacts both."
(Calderdale, age 25-34)

"Taking responsibility for looking after myself and not expecting others to do it for me." (Calderdale, age 35-49)

"Feeling good about myself, health-wise and generally in life. Being able to care for myself and having few worries (we all have some worries!) but being able to manage them." (Calderdale, age 35-49)

"At 93, good health and wellbeing just means being able to keep myself active and look after myself without care." (Calderdale, age 93)

Women in Calderdale are pro-active in looking after their health, with 29% telling us exercise was the main thing they did, followed by diet (25%).

Medical attention and medication combined (9% and 7%) came third, suggesting more women use self-help to look after themselves.

"Calorie counting: I think food producers need to be clearer how many calories there are in foods." (Calderdale, age 18-24)

"It's not medical advice I need but more lifestyle/fitness advice, someone to tell me why diets and exercise don't work for me."
(Calderdale, age 35-49)



Barriers

We asked women to tell us what made it difficult for them to manage their own health and access to services (33%) was the biggest barrier; followed by limitations due to their current health (13%).

"I feel unsupported and find I'm online looking at chat room advice which isn't always useful or supportive." (Calderdale, age 50-64)

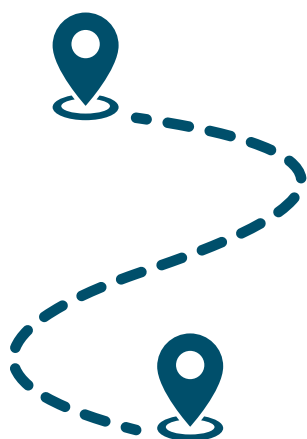
"I miss appointments because they change the time via text but I don't have a phone with text messages. I have a landline only. I want to get letters and phone calls." (Calderdale, age 65-79)

"I felt I struggled to lose weight. I didn't have any advice or support and had to figure it out myself. I don't have lots of spare money, so couldn't afford monthly gym memberships. Instead, I went out walking, bought some hand weights and watched a lot of YouTube exercise videos as they are free." (Calderdale, age 25-34)

In Calderdale, women told us 'time' was also a barrier (11%), especially among those with caring responsibilities; their current health (10%), followed by family and money (6%). 8% stated 'none' to this question.

In the postcode areas of HX2 (5%); OL14 (5%) and HX7 (4%), more women rated their health negatively; they also said they had just enough money left each month to get by on, or they had no disposable income each month, when compared to any other Calderdale postcode.

11 of these women were already retired, but 5% told us they could not work because of a health or disability, and those women were also working-age women (aged 35-49).



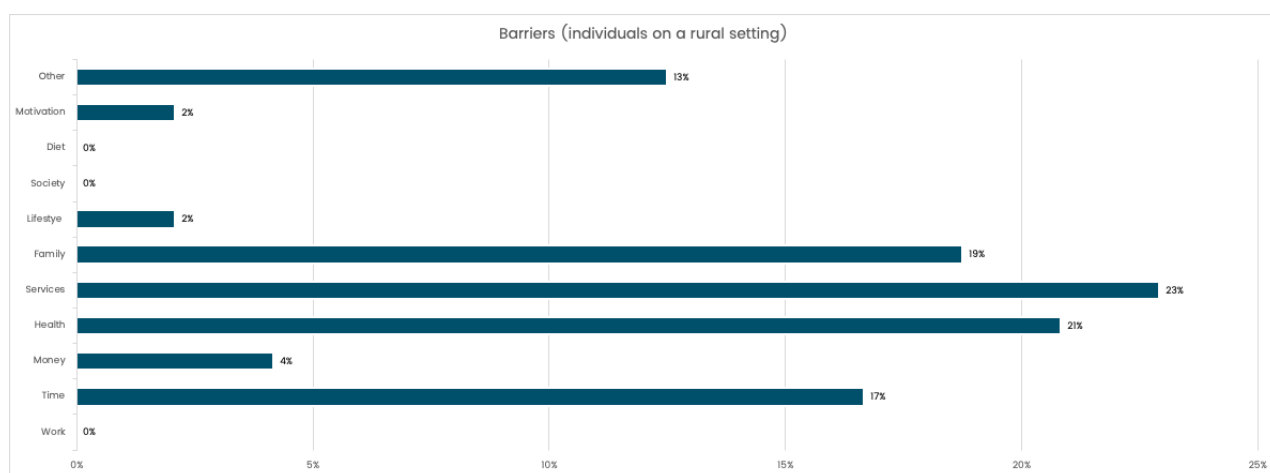
Geographical barriers at a glance:

Women in postcodes HX2, OL14 and HX7 rated their health more negatively than in other areas of Calderdale

Travel and transport was also raised by women in OL14 and HX7 postcode areas, which cover more rural parts of Calderdale. In both these postcode areas no women (out of a possible 31 responses) rated their health as 'very good'.

"Todmorden Health Centre used to have x-ray facilities as well as blood tests, physio, and consultant appointments, but since the pandemic, we have to travel to CRH or HRI. Between my husband and me, we travel every month to a hospital!" (Calderdale, age 35-49)

"Social groups during winter months for those who are socially isolated, ideally with transport to access." (Calderdale, age 65-79)



This graph is interesting as it not only shows that individuals living in rural areas are more likely to have issues accessing services but also that their existing conditions and their families are barriers to their health.

Overcoming barriers

When women experienced a barrier in getting the support or care they needed, they told us they were persistent (25%), asked for support (25%) or sought alternatives (21%); however, 7% told us they 'gave up'. 3% of women told us they sought private care.

7% of women gave up on asking for support



What would help women in Calderdale to look after their health and wellbeing

- 1.** Women told us medical attention (46%) was the thing they needed most to improve the way they manage their health, followed by mental health support (11%).

“Mental health support while waiting for an assessment. There are surely therapies we can try before we are told the inevitable. Happy with online therapies but need to know where to start.” (Calderdale, age 25-34)

“I have several health needs and am seen under neurology, pain management and gynaecology, also my GP. There is no joined-up system where all those departments work in unison; it is piecemeal. I manage it, trying to pull the strings together – chasing it up when one contradicts the other.” (Calderdale, age 50-64)

- 2.** Older women in Calderdale want improved information, advice, support and exercise opportunities.

“More exercise for older community locally.” (Calderdale, age 80+)

“Technology: I cannot use the online service. The doctors (Hebden Bridge GP) think we can all use it. I don't have a mobile phone or computer; some people will never manage this, so stop pushing it. Age: I feel I need someone to set out what there is for us as we get older. Not everyone has family to care for them or can afford private home care; I'd like a guide on what to expect, what's on offer, etc. Access: I rely on the bus and live in the Royd (Mytholmroyd), so if there are big cuts to the bus services, that will affect me a lot.” (Calderdale, age 65-79)

- 3.** In OL14 Todmorden women told us a return to pre-pandemic services and better use of the health centre for self-care activities was wanted.

“Age/ability appropriate exercise classes at Todmorden health centre.” (Calderdale, age 80+)

“There used to be consultant clinics at Todmorden Health Centre when it first opened, but since the pandemic, these have not returned and would benefit me.” (Calderdale, age 65-79)

“Having to travel to Calderdale hospital from Todmorden for a simple blood test that took all of 5 minutes but almost a full day of travel for me. Living in a rural area, it's hard to get out in winter months, so don't get as much exercise as I should for half of the year.” (Calderdale, age 50-64)

Next steps

Healthwatch will share this information with service providers and commissioners (the people who buy services in Kirklees and Calderdale). We'll ask them how they can improve the services for women, empowering them to take care of their health and wellbeing, whether they're just starting or continuing their health journey.

To learn more about our engagement with women, you can see our reports on health inequalities, mental health and local findings in Kirklees on our website.



healthwatch

Healthwatch Kirklees and Healthwatch Calderdale
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