



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

Healthwatch Key Findings
Health Inequalities 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.



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.



Health Inequalities

Healthwatch asked men a number of demographic questions to better understand how certain aspects of their ability to manage their health may be influenced by their age, ethnicity, employment status, financial status, disability and if they provide a caring role to others.

Finance: and it's impact on men's health

Looking at how the men we spoke to described their current state of health there is a clear link between health and finances.

None of the men who faced financial difficulty rated their health as good or reasonably good.

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Out of the men who answered 'I don't have enough money for basic necessities and sometimes run out of money' NONE rated their health as good or even reasonably good.

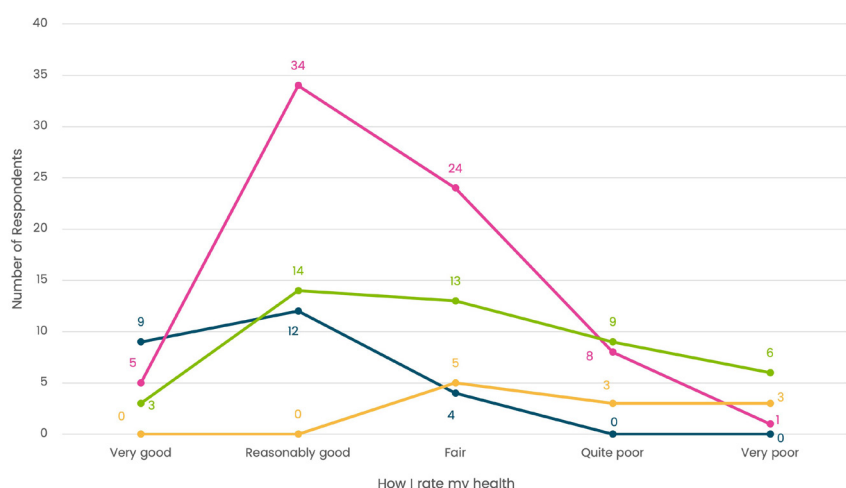
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Compared to those who answered 'I have more than enough money for basic necessities and a little to spare' – OVER HALF of this group described their health as very good or reasonably good.



Mens view of their health in relation to their financial status:

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



The graph shows the relation between men's financial status and how they view their health.

Key:

- more than enough money for necessities and a lot to spare
- enough money for necessities and a little to spare
- just enough money for necessities and little else
- not enough money for necessities and sometimes run out

Men: How does money impact your health choices?



[Play video](#)

Carers

Healthwatch spoke to 36 male carers and 61 men with caring responsibilities such as looking after children, partner or another relative's health.

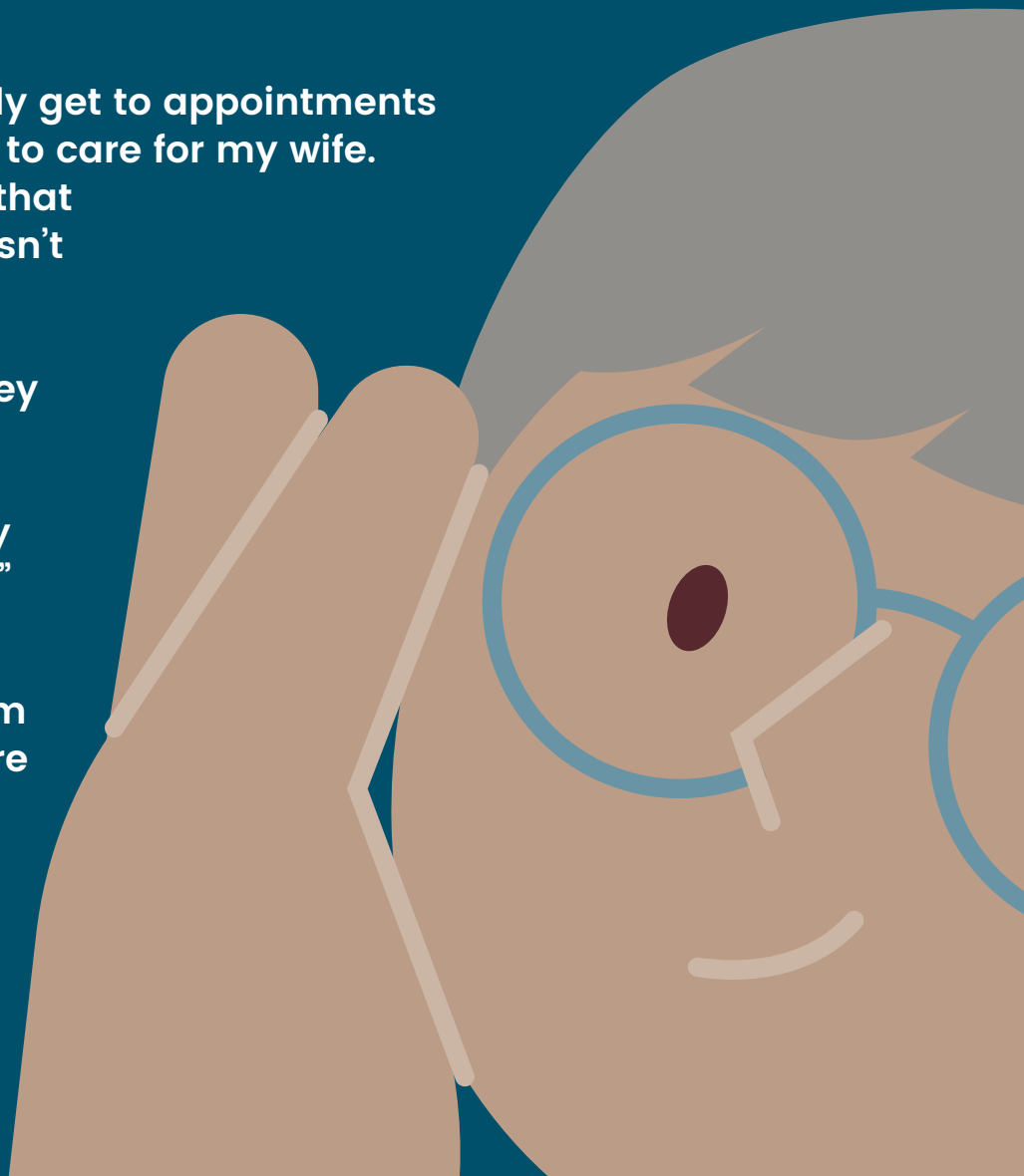
Having the time to look after their own health is a common issue among male carers

“I was a carer for my wife for many years before she died in March 2023 – I didn't have time to look after my health or to even consider my health. I always just pushed any issues to the back of my head and focused on my wife's health” – Kirklees, age 80+

“Being a carer for my disabled wife makes it hard for me to manage and improve my health. I don't have enough time and I'm tired a lot. In the past we were signposted to Health Trainers, but by the time we were assigned with staff to help us, this service was stopped.”
– Kirklees, age 65-79

“As a carer I cannot easily get to appointments as I would have no-one to care for my wife. I'd have to bring her so that makes it harder. There isn't someone to sit with her either. If I used a paid sitter it would cost money to cover a health appointment for me and how easily can they be booked last minute?”
– Calderdale, age 65-79

“Lack of involvement from the NHS means carers are struggling to know what care their loved one should get. I heard most things from coming to a social group, without it I'd know nothing.”
– Calderdale, age 80+



What male carers say they need to stay well:

When Healthwatch asked 'What health advice or support would help to improve the way you manage your health?', male carers said they would like support to manage their time more effectively and to have a break for themselves:

"I'd like a GP to do house calls for me when needed so I don't have to leave the house - they do house calls for her but not for me." — Kirklees, age 65-79

"I need an affordable hot food delivery service or carers that can come to the home." — Location, age not provided

"Guidelines of what we can expect with reviews, after care, care while we look after our own health, sitters who are trained by Admiral or Overgate. Knowing where to go for support." — Calderdale, wife of a male carer, age 80+




Disabled men and men who have long-term conditions

Healthwatch heard from 131 men with a disability or long-term condition.

Our data suggests that disabled men and men with a long-term condition face some of the most challenging barriers when trying to look after their own health and wellbeing. Better access to information is an important current need for disabled men.

“When I was first diagnosed with diabetes, I didn’t understand what I needed to do. I moved back in with my mum so she could help me with my diet and what to eat.” – Calderdale, age 25-49

“I can hardly read or write so I can’t use the internet to look up my symptoms. I can’t read medication labels – I go to the pharmacy every time I need any medication even for something little like a headache or toothache, so they can tell me what I need to take and how much. A couple of years ago I went for a scan and then got a letter from the hospital, but I couldn’t read it. I rang my doctors and the receptionist just kept telling me I had to get my results from the hospital. Eventually I spoke to someone from the hospital, they told me that the same letter had been sent to my GP. I booked an appointment with my GP, and he told me what the letter said – the results were normal, and I had been discharged but it took so much effort to get my results it has put me off going to the GP or hospital.” – Kirklees, age 50-64



Are there things that make it more difficult for you to be able to manage or improve your health?

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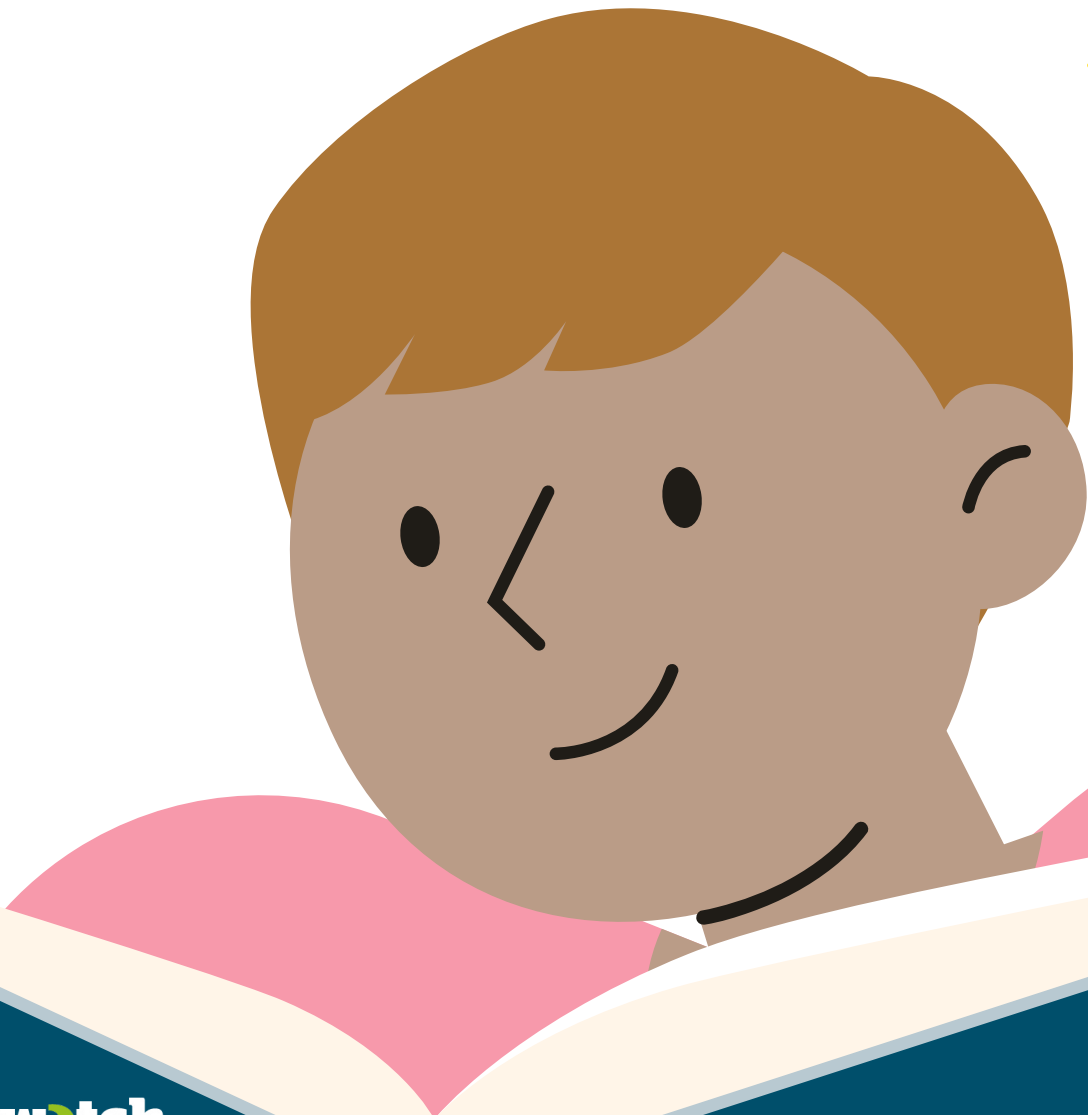
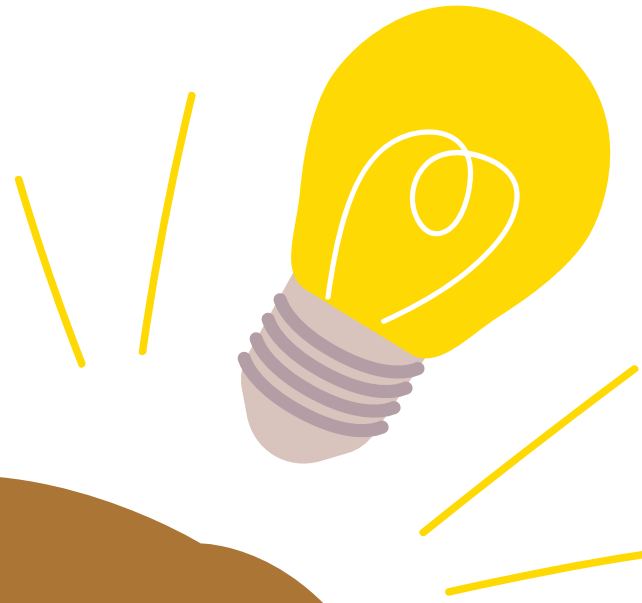
Males with a learning disability or difficulty told Healthwatch they struggle to get the information they need to manage their own health. Having to rely on family or professionals to find information takes away from their independence.

What disabled men say they need, to stay well:

When Healthwatch asked ‘What health advice or support would help to improve the way you manage your health?’, a common theme amongst disabled men was that they would like more opportunities to access gym or exercise facilities. Many told us they were unable or not confident to go on their own but that regular exercise was something they wanted to do more of if they had a friend with similar interest, more disability friendly gyms and more time with their support worker so they could add exercise to their regular routine.

“If I had a friend I would go to the gym with them every day - I want a gym buddy”

— Calderdale, age 25-49



Employment status

Healthwatch spoke to 81 men who were working full-time, or self-employed, 21 working part time or self-employed, 49 unemployed and either looking for work or unable to work, and 90 retired men.



54% OF WORKING MALES RATED THEIR HEALTH AS VERY GOOD /GOOD

75% OF UNEMPLOYED MALES RATED THEIR HEALTH AS FAIR/POOR



How does employment impact health?

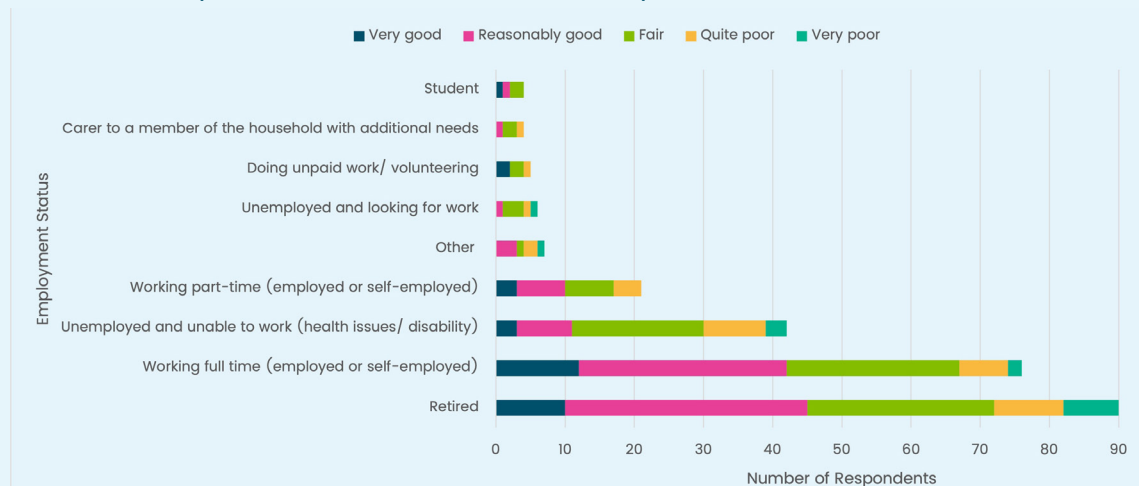
Just over half of the working males we spoke to rated their health between very good and good, compared to three quarters of the unemployed males who rated their health as fair to very poor. However, some men told us that being employed had a negative impact on their health and wellbeing, like:

- feeling unable to take time off if self-employed
- feeling under financial pressure to keep working
- employers and health services lack of flexibility when trying to fit in health appointments around work.

Amongst the 25-49 age group 'work' and 'time' were identified as prominent barriers to managing their own health when compared to other age groups.

Men's view of their health, by employment status:

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



This graph shows how men in different employment situations describe the state of their health.

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, Mental Health, and local findings in Kirklees and Calderdale on our website.



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