



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

Kirklees

healthwatch
Kirklees & Calderdale

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with Healthwatch Kirklees on telephone: 01924 450 379
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Summary

Women aged 16+ and those identifying as female

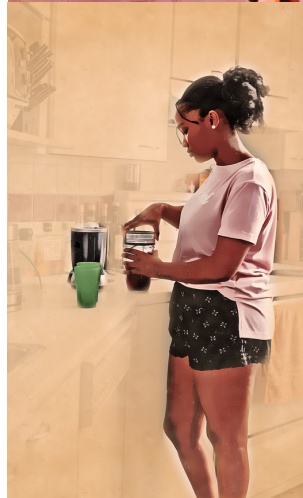
Let's hear it from

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.



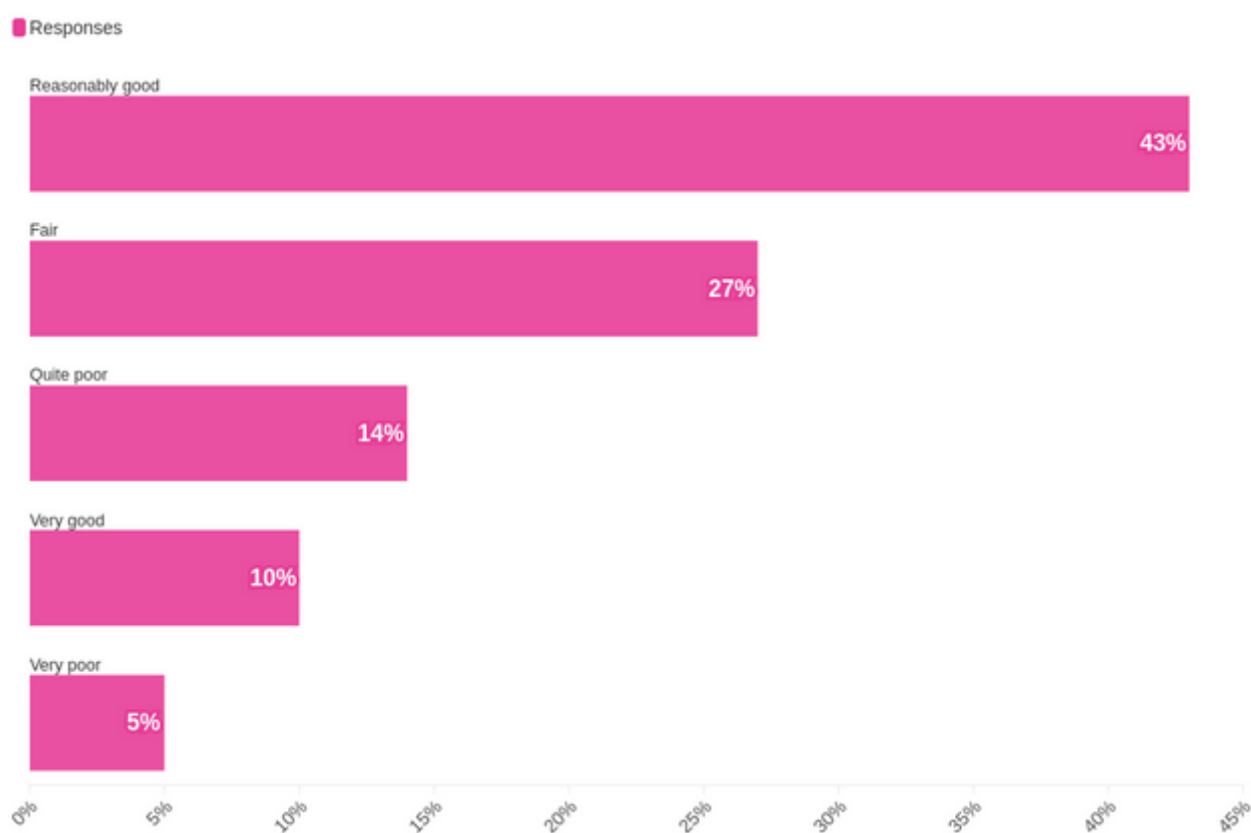
Kirklees Summary

Healthwatch Kirklees received 436 responses from women.

We received feedback from women in all postcodes in Kirklees, with the highest from WF12 (12%) and HD5 (12%).

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?



This graph shows that most women told us they rated their health more positively than negatively.

“For me, good health and wellbeing is that I can spend time with my children and do the same activity with them. This was not the case a few years back because of my back problem.” (Kirklees, age 35-49)

“Being in the right frame of mind and being in good health, which I cannot do.” (Kirklees, age 50-64)

“If my wellbeing isn’t great, my performance in my job, self-care and productivity is poor.” (Kirklees, age 18-21)

Health and wellbeing

27% of women told us feeling or being healthy was important to their wider health and wellbeing, followed by their mental health (19%), being able/independent (11%), and fitness and happiness followed, which is unsurprising as key health and wellbeing management activities included exercise (29%) and diet (26%) suggesting women in Kirklees are pro-active in managing their health and wellbeing.

"I follow a healthy eating plan. Walk when I can."(Kirklees, age 65-79)

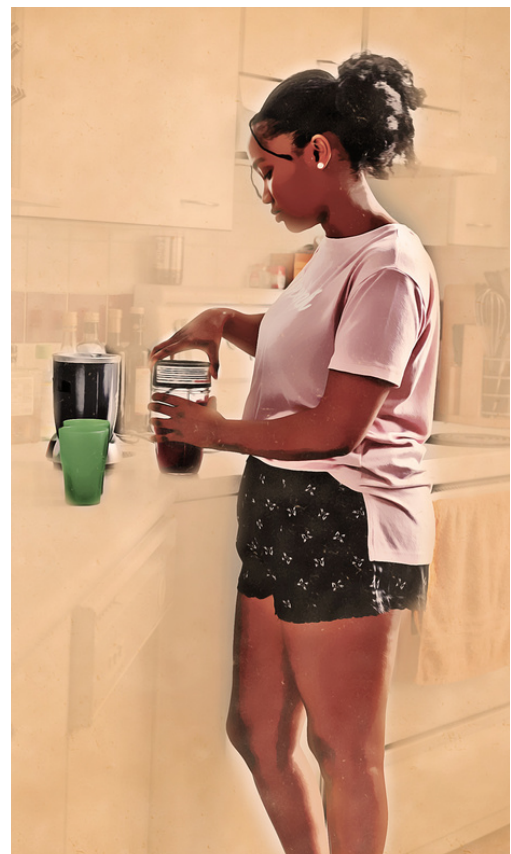
"I go every week to ladies-only swim session."(Kirklees, age 35-49)

"I eat well most of the time, but I don't really exercise I know I should but I don't like it, so I avoid sports and exercise. I smoke too and I know I shouldn't, but I don't have a plan to quit because it's good for my mental health." (Kirklees, age 50-64)

"I ask for support when need it - I'm receiving support for drug and alcohol recovery at the moment." (Kirklees, age 35-49)

"I've cut down on fatty foods, trying to eat more healthily to lose weight - try to do a little exercise when able but I'm currently receiving treatment and under a consultant." (Kirklees, age 50-64)

Exercise and diet is important to women in Kirklees



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Barriers

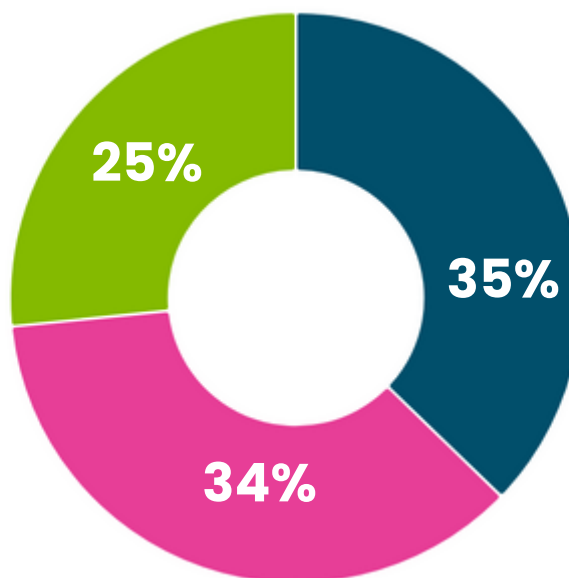
We asked women to tell us what made it difficult for them to manage their own health and the key barriers were:

Key:

■ Access to services

■ Current health

■ Time



“Consistent care from GPs and longer appointment times as often feel rushed.” (Kirklees, age 35-49)

“I had an Asthma review booked in with the nurse at Undercliff Surgery (my first since before the pandemic). I showed up to be told the appointment was over the phone. I queried how this would be appropriate for a review of my asthma, wouldn't the nurse need to listen to my chest and do a peak flow test, etc. I was told, 'All our staff are highly trained and can carry out appropriate assessments over the phone.' I feel like my asthma is worse than it ever has been, and I'm relying more on my inhaler than ever before, but I'm simply told this is to be expected with age, and they refuse to see me in person.” (Kirklees, age 65-79)

“Appointments with diabetic nurses are useful but are often cancelled at the last minute, and it is left to me to rebook them (and go through the frustrating process to do so).” (Kirklees, age 65-79)



Financial challenges were also reported by 25% of women who told us about their monthly financial pressures.

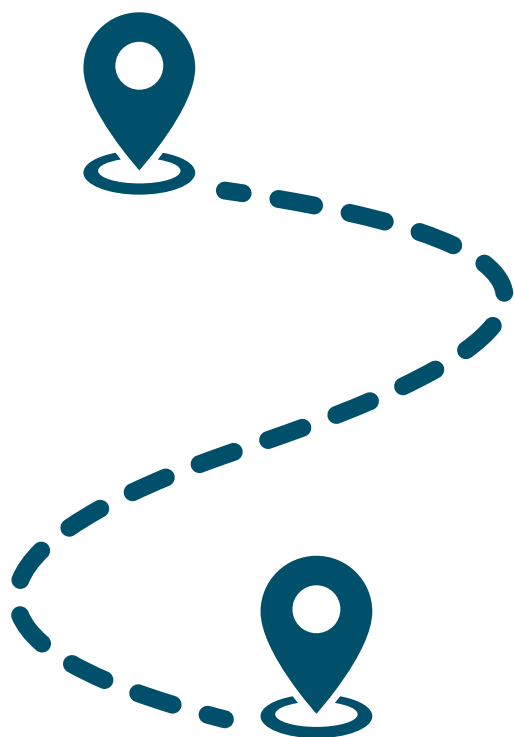
Women in postcodes WF12, HD1 and HD2 told us they were the least able to support their own health and wellbeing.

Further, in the WF12 postcode area 9 women told us they had 4 or more appointments with their GP in the past 12 months. In this postcode area more women (7%) told us they had an existing condition than not (4%).

“My cancer treatment has impacted my mental health, and I think may have triggered early menopause. I find it difficult to discuss and ask for help and it’s not helpful that when I do, the doctor is often someone I’ve never met before and they know very little about me and what I’m going through.” (Kirklees, age 35-49)

“I know I am overweight but I can’t find the motivation to keep up with diet and exercising.” (Kirklees, age 50-64)

“Working full time and having a young family it’s hard to find time for things like exercise and meditation like I used to before I had kids.” (Kirklees, age 25-39)



Geographical barriers at a glance:

Women in postcodes WF12, HD1 and HD2 told us they were the least able to support their own health and wellbeing.

Overcoming barriers

Women told us they would ask for support (31%), be persistent (22%) and seek alternatives (19%), to try to overcome the barriers they face in the hope of improving outcomes for them.

“After a knee injury I needed physio, but it was taking far too long on NHS so went private.” (Kirklees, age 35-49)

“I’d speak to the right person who can get me help by continuing to ask questions and push for answers” (Kirklees, age 35-49)

“Usually, I give up as I find it too difficult to fight for help.” (Kirklees, age 25-34)

“I generally try to avoid medicines and clinicians as much as possible. My mum is an alternative therapist, so I ask her advice on a lot of things.” (Kirklees, age 35-49)



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

1. Women in Kirklees told us that increased access to medical attention (39%) was the thing they needed most to improve the way they manage their health.

2. This was followed by someone to talk to (13%) who may not necessarily be a clinician; exercise (10%); diet advice (8%) and female-focused services (5%) would be welcomed.

“Something to get me moving more that isn’t the boring traditional aerobics/gym class – better varieties in what exercise is on offer such as roller skating for adults or dance classes – must be affordable.
(Kirklees, age 36-49)

“More menopause support groups – a lot of online support but not so much face-to-face, which would be good. I moved to the area from Ireland, and most of my female friends are my colleagues from work who are younger than me, so I need help finding women of a similar age experiencing similar things to me.” (Kirklees, age 50-64)

“I’m awaiting a care package from Adult Social Care – need quicker assessment wait period.” (Kirklees, age 80+)

“More joined up way of working between GP and social care services. I feel like GP should be able to tell housing services I need better accommodation without waiting for an assessment.”
(Kirklees, age 50-64)

“Diet, reduced cost for an exercise class, walking groups outside of 9–5pm for workers.” (Kirklees 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 Calderdale on our website.



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Healthwatch Kirklees and Healthwatch Calderdale
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