

1. The relationship between health, cost of living and other factors

Summary: People in Lancing are keenly aware of the relationship between health and wellbeing, and other factors including income, housing, access to good food and services and lifestyle.

Lancing's story	Quotations
<p>We heard about the relationship between health and environmental factors in five out of seven of our community conversations and in our survey responses.</p>	<p><i>"We (Lancing) are above average for most chronic conditions...this is why much of GPs' work needs to be about prevention...We are looking for opportunities to work with partners to build a different kind of health infrastructure that enables good health and prevention, access to open spaces and that is sustainable over the next 25 years."</i> - 'Lunch and Learn' for Health and Community Professionals.</p>
<p>The impact of cost of living on children and families was first raised by health and community professionals who work with young people and families in school and community settings. In a following conversation with young people, participants spoke of a desire for healthier food shops on the high street and made the connection between the prevalence of takeaways and Lancing's higher than average rates of diabetes, heart disease and high blood pressure; something also noted by survey respondents. Participants in our 'volunteers' coffee morning described the need for education about and access to affordable fresh food and volunteers from the local foodbank reported that the food bank was being used by key workers.</p>	<p><i>"I myself suffer with certain health issues and due to low income and having children, to help our money situation myself and my husband and children have moved into a home with my parents."</i> - Resident parent / carer, aged 30-39, survey respondent.</p>
<p>In survey responses, we saw a pattern in our responses from residents who were parents or carers and who commented on the negative impact of 'cost of living' and the pandemic on their financial and mental health.</p>	<p><i>"I have experienced homelessness,I'm living on a knife edge trying so hard not to go back to that place, living with constant anxiety and depression...under a court suspended possession order due to 3000 rent arrears and no hope of getting rid of these anytime soon..."</i> Resident parent carer, aged 40-49, survey respondent.</p>
<p>Participants from our 'volunteers' group discussed how the shortage of affordable housing and prevalence of single occupancy dwellings was impacting on mental health of individuals and families at both ends of the spectrum; those living alone experiencing social isolation; and multi-generation families experiencing stress due to overcrowding.</p>	<p><i>"We are encountering more young people who are hungry...and this can be due to the cost of living crisis and families struggling with the rising costs of feeding families. To meet this need, we are having to ensure our sessions are providing more substantial foods than we have had to in the past."</i> - Youth worker speaking at 'Lunch and Learn' for Health and Community Professionals.</p>
<p>A week later, in our 'Eat, Meet and Learn' event with parents and carers we learnt more about social isolation and caring responsibilities. We heard about the closure of the Lancing Family and Children's Centre and the Boundstone Centre both of which had previously played important roles in the lives of local parents and their infants. The conversation highlighted the gap left by the closure of these centres and the potential impact on health and wellbeing of families and children. These perspectives were also shared by survey respondents who asked for the return of these facilities and activities.</p>	<p><i>"There are loads of fast food places..people will become overweight"</i> - Youth Focus Group.</p>
<p>On a more positive note, there is plenty of evidence that local people, organisations and institutions are actively working in partnerships on projects that can further community health and wellbeing including: youth provision on Monks Rec (LPC and WBC Cares UK); community gardening and food growing (Fabric Community Garden); and new approaches to developing health and wellbeing services (Lancing and Sompting Primary Care Network) among others.</p>	<p><i>"I live in North Lancing which is generally considered to be more affluent, lots of retired people and some families"</i> - Resident local professional, aged 50-59, survey respondent.</p>
	<p><i>"Bring back the family centres for stay and play and drop in advice please."</i> Resident parent/ carer aged 40-49, survey respondent.</p>

Unanswered questions:

- We have to ask why are there so many angry kids in Lancing? ('Lunch and Learn' with Health and Community Professionals)
- Can we find out more about the impact of diabetes on young people? (Volunteers 'Coffee Morning')
- "How many takeaways are there...it makes people lazy.." (Youth Focus Group with Electric Storm Youth)
- Is life expectancy impacting the health figures? (Lunch and Learn' with Councillors and Officers)
- Are there enough things to do that are health related? (Lunch and Learn' with Councillors and Officers)