

# Healthwatch Bracknell Forest

## 'What Matters Most'

Results of our resident prioritisation survey

April 2023

# Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	3
<b>Findings</b> .....	5
<b>Overall Demographics (where provided)</b> .....	6
<b>Breakdown of Results for Top 5 Priorities</b> .....	7
GP Services (65 votes) .....	7
Adult Mental Health Services (28 votes) .....	10
NHS Dentistry (23 votes) .....	12
Children & Young People’s Mental Health Services (21 votes) .....	14
Cost of Living Concerns (17 votes) .....	16
<b>Next Steps</b> .....	18

# Introduction

The purpose of this report is to share our priority work areas for 2023/24.

It documents the topics chosen by local people and the reason why they chose those areas for us to prioritise.

## **Who we are and what we do:**

We are the independent champion for people who use health and social care services. We're here to make sure that those running services, put people at the heart of care.

Our sole purpose is to understand the needs, experiences and concerns of people who use health and social care services and to speak out on their behalf.

We focus on ensuring that people's worries and concerns about current services are addressed. We work to get services right for the future.

## **How we work**

We listen to what people like about services and what they think could be improved. No matter how big or small the issue, we want to hear about it.

Where possible, we let people know when changes are planned to services in our community and help them have a say. We also encourage those in charge of local care to involve people when changes are being planned to services.

## **Our approach**

People's views come first – especially those who find it hardest to be heard.

We champion what matters to people and work with others to find ideas that work. We are independent and committed to making the biggest difference to our local communities.

## **How we decide on our priority work areas**

Local Healthwatch cover both health and social care services for children and adults. That is a huge remit and therefore we need to prioritise where we spend our time and resources each year to make the most difference.. Local

Healthwatch choose priority areas in different ways, but all priorities are set within our local health and social care context and taking into account the views and experiences of local people. However, even though we may be working on new priority areas for 2023/24, we will continue to monitor progress on work we have done previously.

When deciding on priorities we take into account Information from local people, voluntary and community organisations working with local people, statutory organisations (such as the NHS and local authority) and the feedback we already hold in our information database. The findings below are from our survey of local people undertaken during March and April 2023.

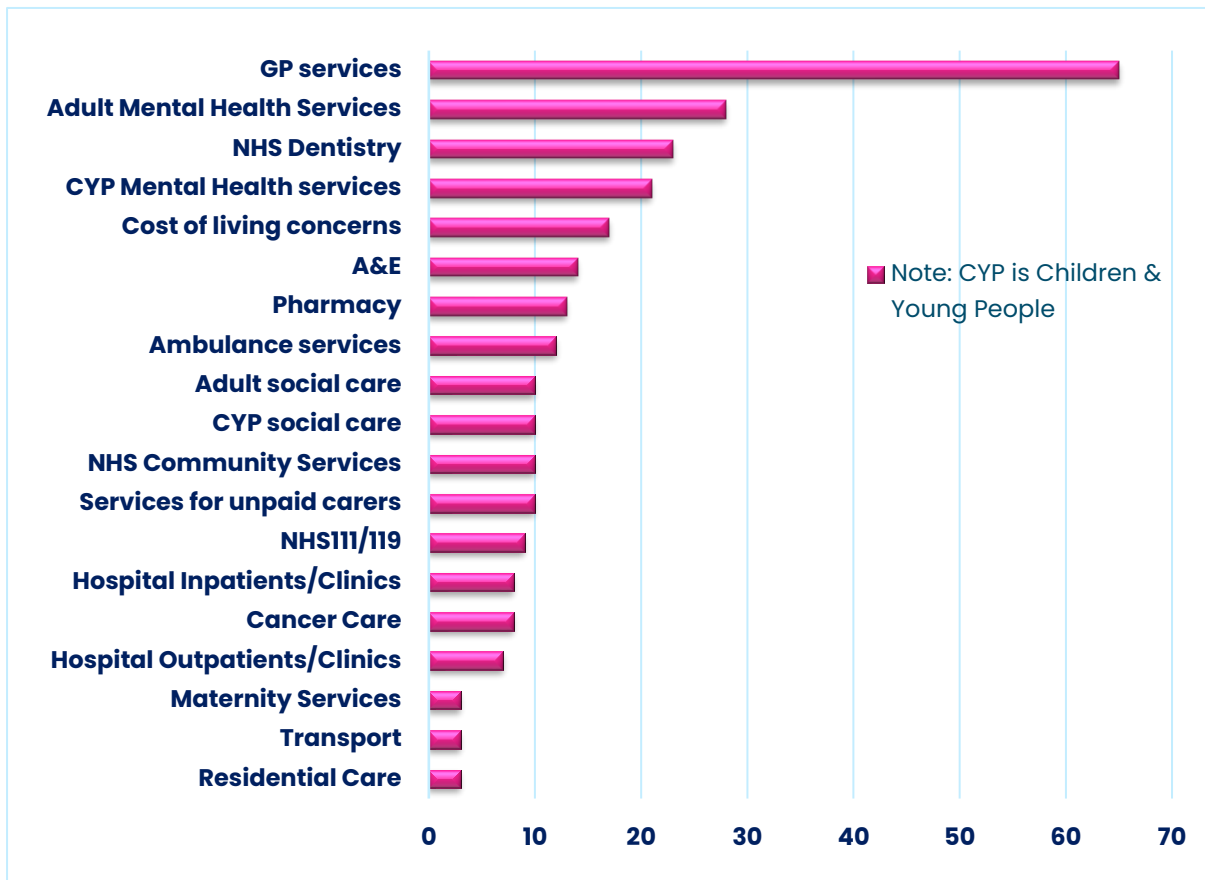
## Findings

We received 73 completed responses to our survey asking local people about the areas they would like us to focus on.

The top 5 topics chosen were:

- GP Services
- Adult Mental Health Services
- NHS Dentistry
- Children & Young People’s Mental Health Services
- Cost of living concerns

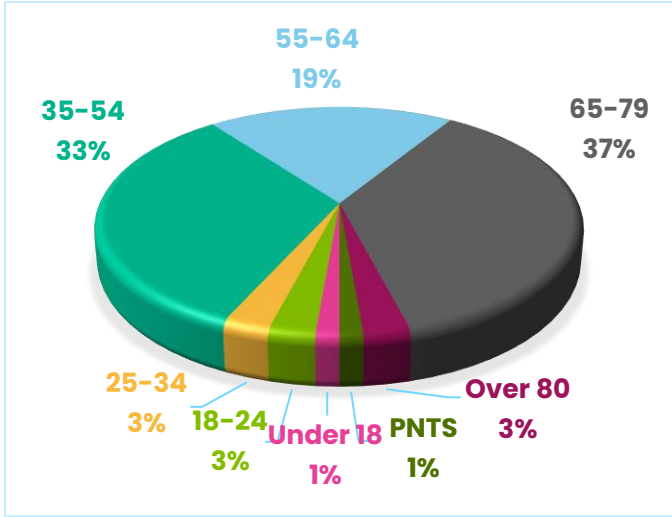
The graph below shows the number of times each topic was chosen:



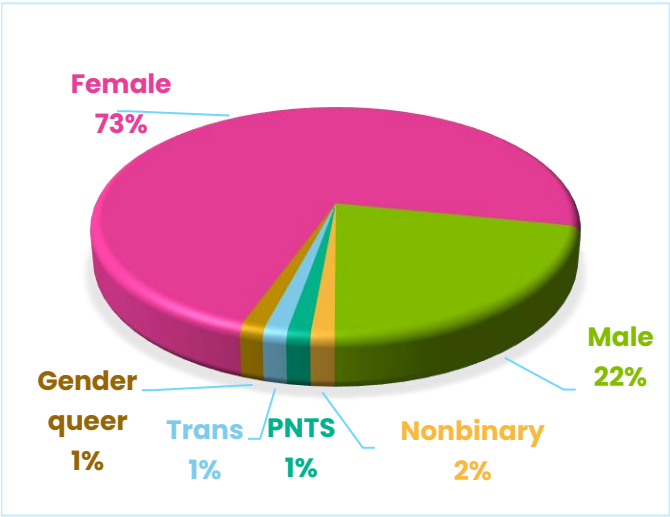
Topics that received only 1 vote: Benefits, Hospices, Housing, Sensory/deaf support services and Trans Healthcare.

# Overall Demographics (where provided)

**AGE**

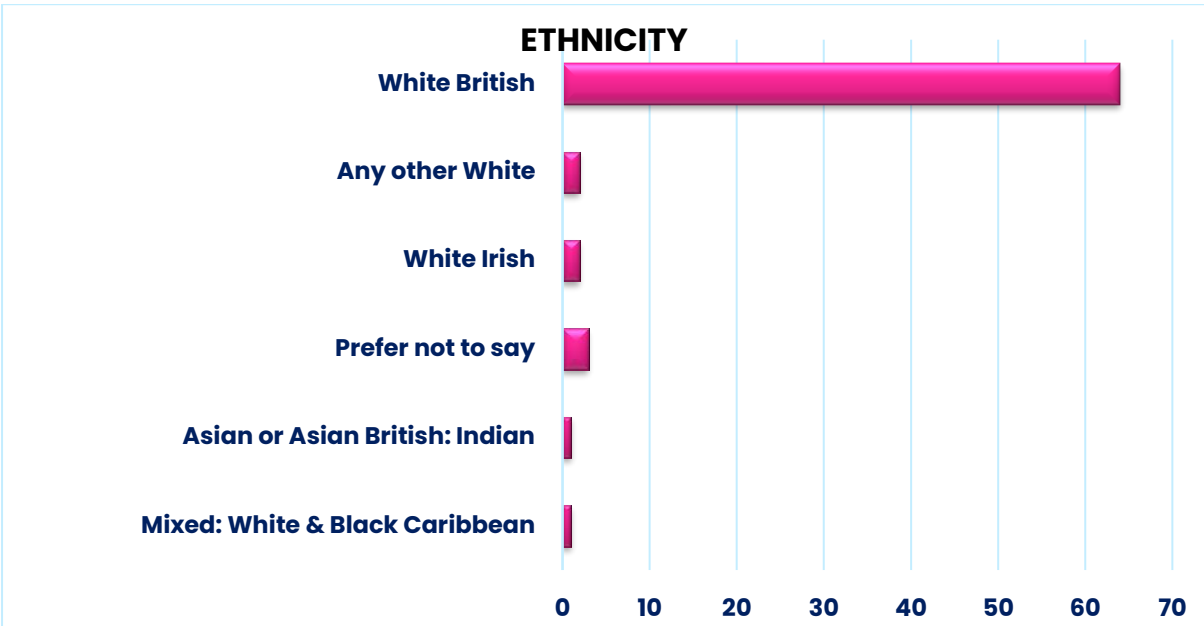


**GENDER**



PNTS – Prefer Not To Say

**ETHNICITY**



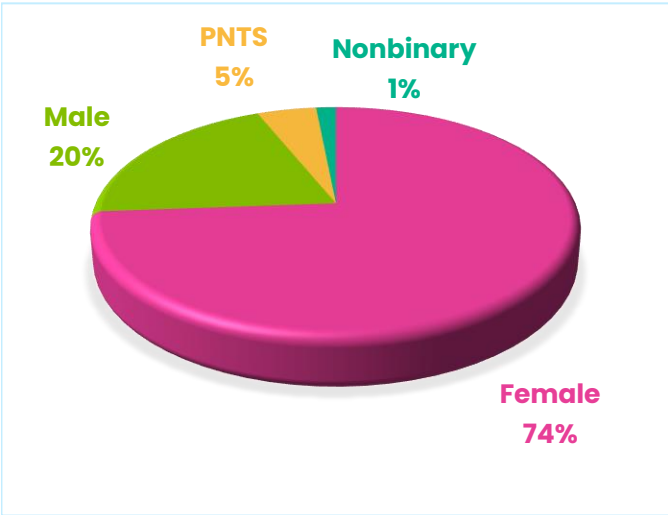
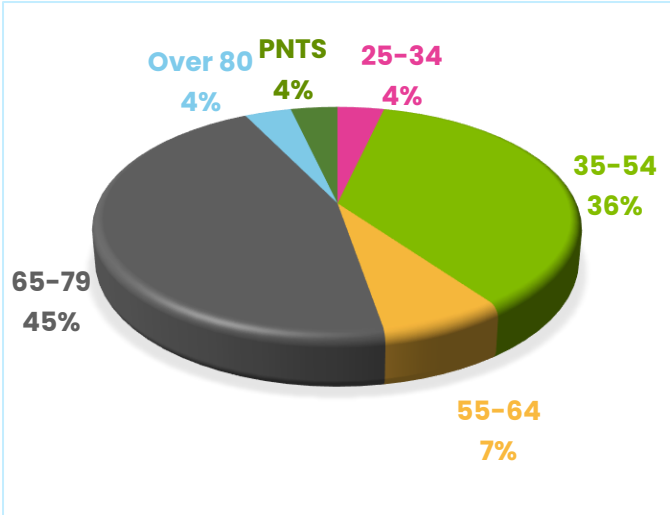
**47% of respondents identified as having a disability or long-term condition.**

# Breakdown of Results for Top 5 Priorities

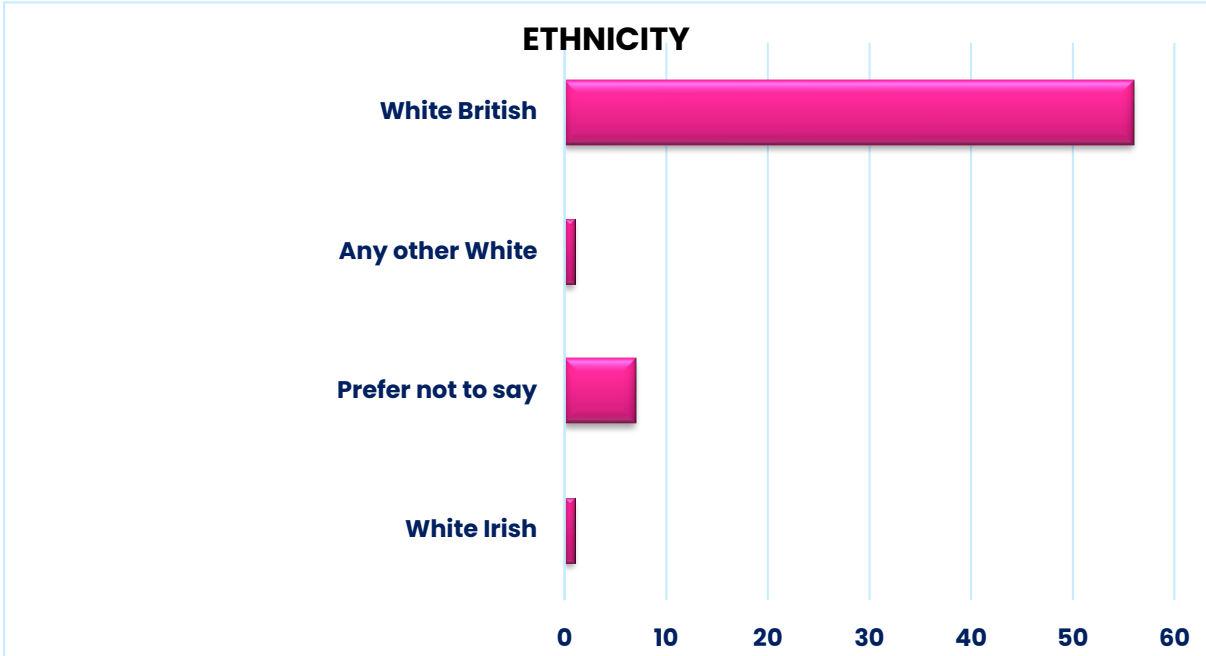
## GP Services (65 votes)

**AGE**

**GENDER**



PNTS – Prefer Not To Say



**38% of respondents identified as having a disability or long-term condition.**

## Reasons for choice

Choices (where provided) have been themed:

Reason for choice	Number of times reason given
Hard to contact GP practice for appointment (issues with phone systems and queuing), long wait for actual appointment and wanting to have face to face rather than phone appointment.	38

Examples of comments from respondents:

"I just don't bother with the doctors these days. Lack of appointments when they are needed, lack of continuity of care, and removal of services such as far canal clearing means I just end up seeking alternative solutions."

"Impossible to get appointments or have to wait weeks to see someone."

"So difficult to get an appointment when you need it. Telephone appointments with no choice in timings don't work for many people."

"GPs should be the first port of call if you are unwell. They frequently fail and we need a much higher standard of GPs who actually care about their patients."

"Doctors as I don't get to see the doctor since covid. It is hard to get an appointment."

"Spend lots of time trying to get through and can be frustrating and also costly on mobile."

"So important to elderly residents and families with young children to have access to GP services. So much can be prevented and kept from emergency services with good access. It is the most commented on subject on the We love Bracknell Facebook page."

"GP - Problem getting hold of so just give up."



“GP services need to be accessible and available to everyone regardless of how they access the service. E.g., I wouldn’t know how to seek expert advice for a worrying condition.”

“Access face to face when needed. Easy to access appointments- reduces anxiety.”

“GP service. Can’t get face to face appointments.”

“It is so important to be able to contact and get a GP appointment in an acceptable timescale. It has taken more than an hour at times to get through to my GP surgery.”

“Being able to see a GP within a reasonable amount of time is essential. Prevented health measures for example Medicaid at certain ages would save money in the long run. At present these services are not available routinely in our surgery.”

“Doctors need to be available; the service has become rubbish to what it was years ago. Fix it by training more GPs.”

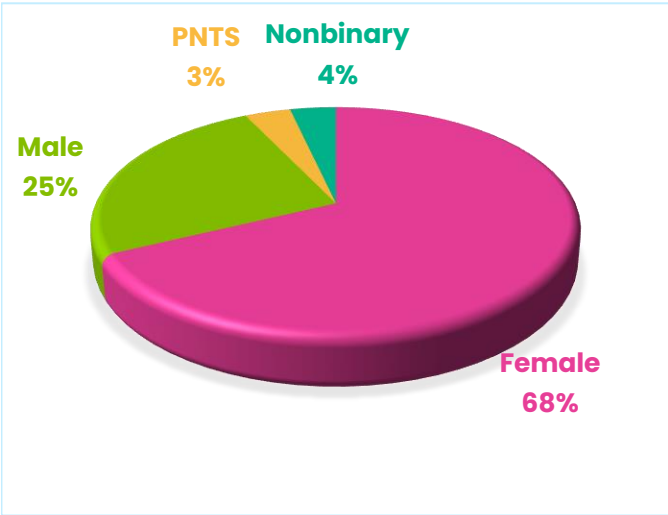
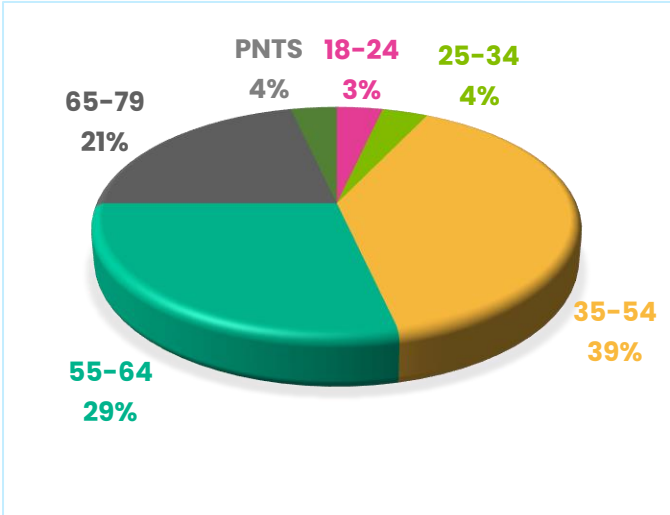
“Can not see GP face to face, can’t send photos as visually impaired.”

“Can’t get to appointments, as no transport support.”

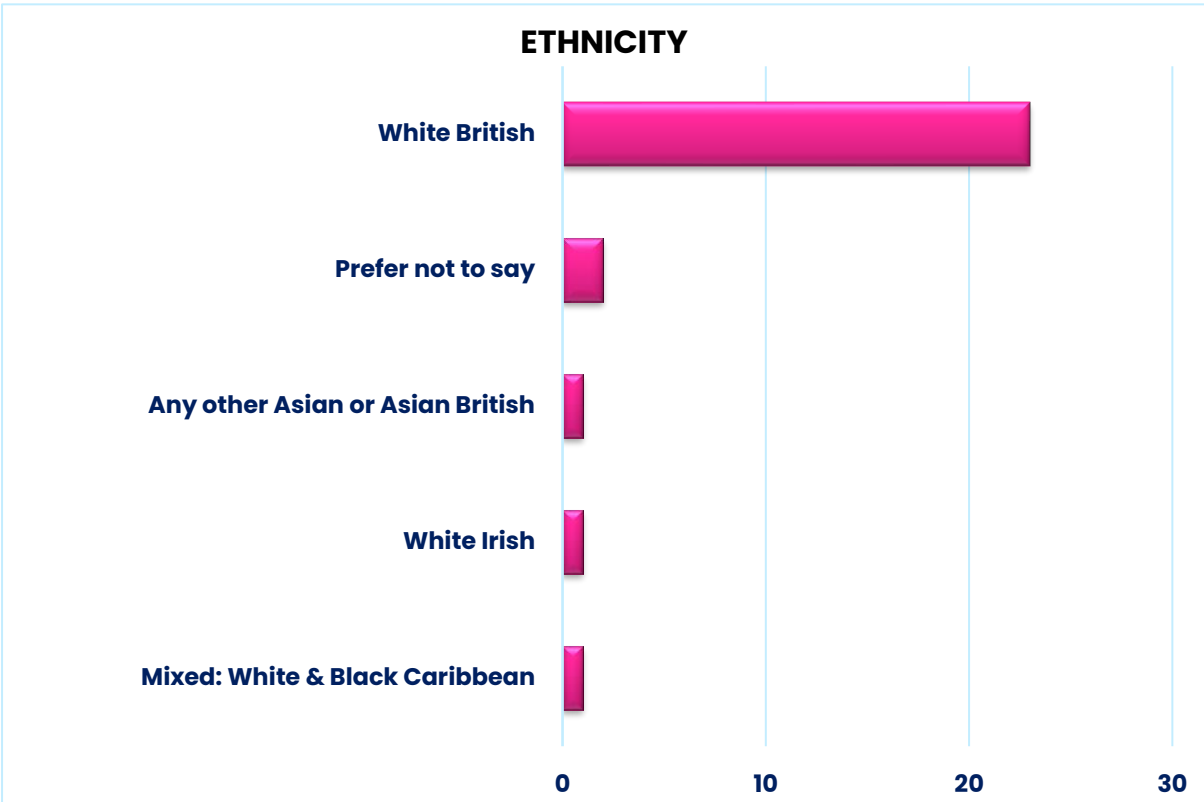
# Adult Mental Health Services (28 votes)

**AGE**

**GENDER**



PNTS – Prefer Not To Say



**50% of respondents identified as having a disability or long-term condition.**

## Reasons for choice

Choices (where provided) have been themed:

Reason for choice	Number of times reason given
Long waiting times to get support.	3
Services are underfunded.	3
Hard to access support.	2
Everyone deserves support when suffering from MH issues.	1
Often passed from pillar to post.	1
No connectivity between services.	1
Need to focus on this to prevent suicide.	1

Examples of comments from respondents:

“Getting help for people who are suffering with their mental health and are seeking face to face support when in crises.”

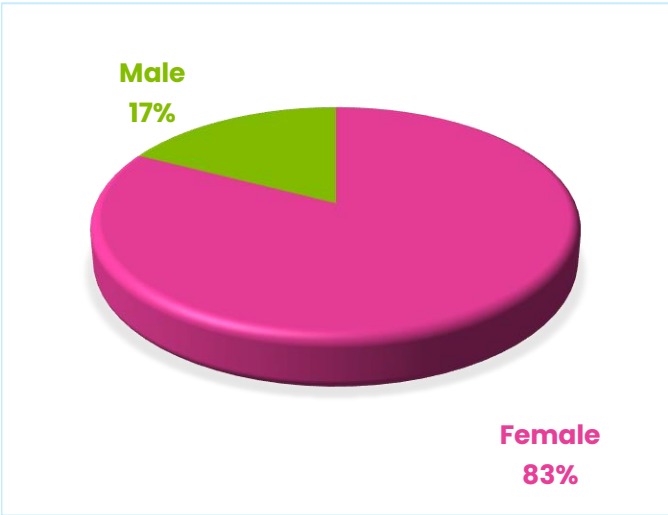
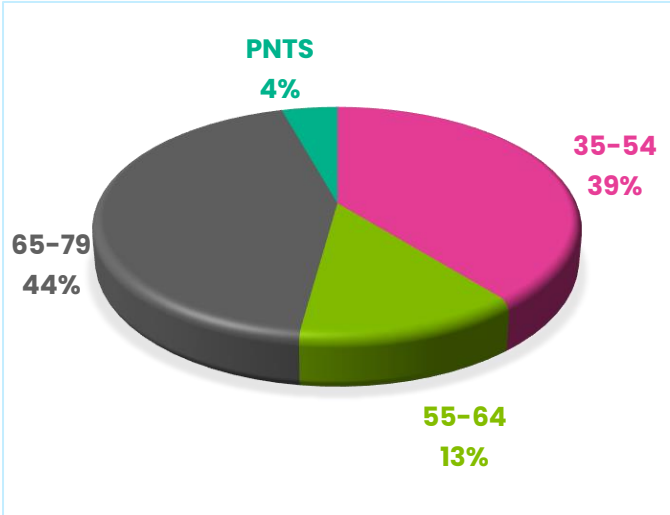
“Mental health services are more important than ever post covid. It exacerbated everything for everyone of all ages.”

“I’m a mental health social worker so I know the importance of MH services, ASC and A&E as I regularly see the impact of underfunding in all these services.”

# NHS Dentistry (23 votes)

**AGE**

**GENDER**



PNTS – Prefer Not To Say



**47% of respondents identified as having a disability or long-term condition.**

## Reasons for choice

Choices (where provided) have been themed:

Reason for choice	Number of times reason given
No NHS dentists.	12

Examples of comments from respondents:

“NHS dentistry. A service I would regularly use if it was available”.

“If the NHS doesn't provide regular check-ups and treatment when required, problems will worsen, patients will suffer, and costs will increase.”

“NHS Dentistry – lack of availability and appointments.”

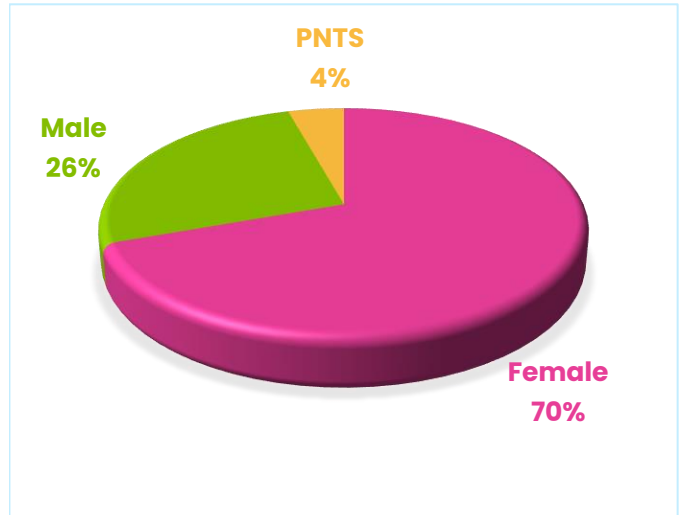
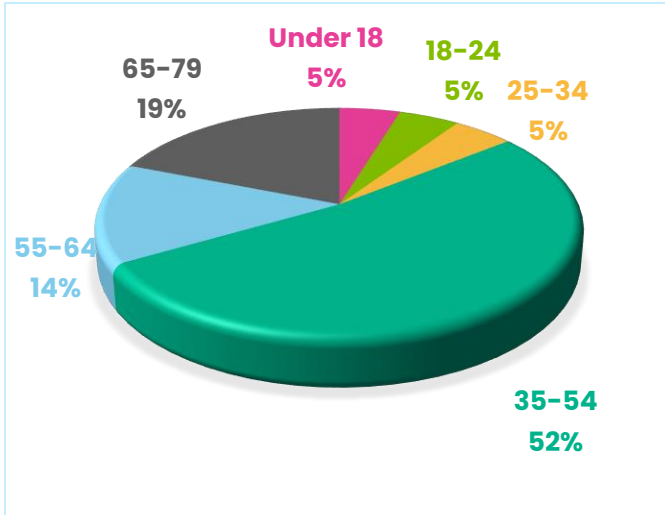
“Dentistry – They don't care about your teeth, very quick look, very rushed, no care I had to go to Upton from Bracknell to have a tooth removed why?”

“My teeth are falling apart, and my child hasn't been seen in years as I can't get an NHS dentist and can't afford private.”

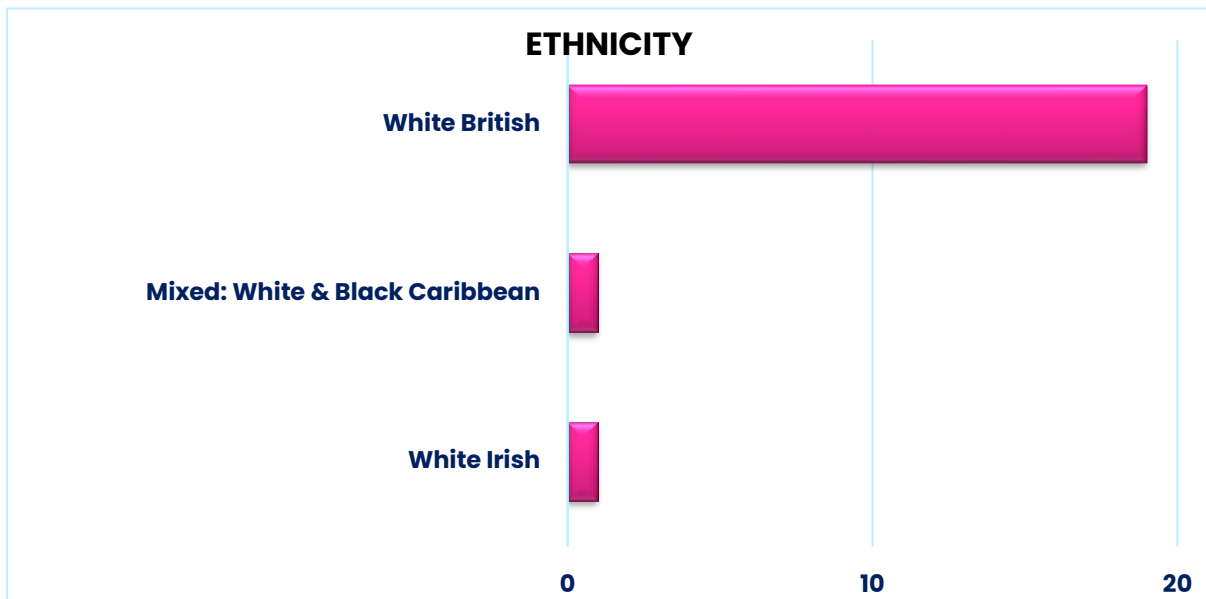
## Children & Young People’s Mental Health Services (21 votes)

**AGE**

**GENDER**



PNTS – Prefer Not To Say



**33% of respondents identified as having a disability or long-term condition.**

## Reasons for choice

Choices (where provided) have been themed:

Reason for choice	Number of times reason given
Long wait for support.	7
Services are overstretched.	5
Vital to raise importance of these services.	2
No connectivity between services.	1

Examples of comments from respondents:

“Need more support for children with mental health services that are overstretched.”

“My 11-year-old is really struggling with mental health, body image, self-harm and possible undiagnosed autism/ADHD”.

“Child Mental Health – The service is hard to access, and many people struggle to get the help they desperately need.”

“My daughter is at the xx unit, CAMHs community services are shockingly bad, understaffed and poorly trained.”

“There is a crisis on going in children's MH at the moment, and of the people remaining in the field locally, they are understaffed and waiting lists are so long that cases that could be quickly addressed and up waiting so long that they become far more serious as a result.”

“Children's mental health has been neglected for such a long time.”

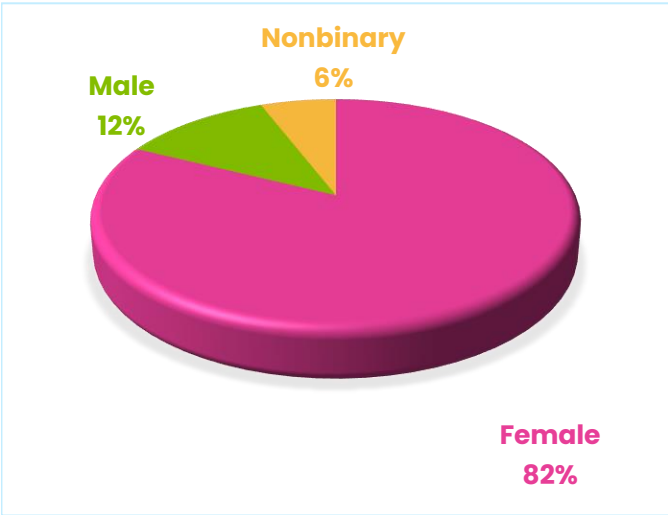
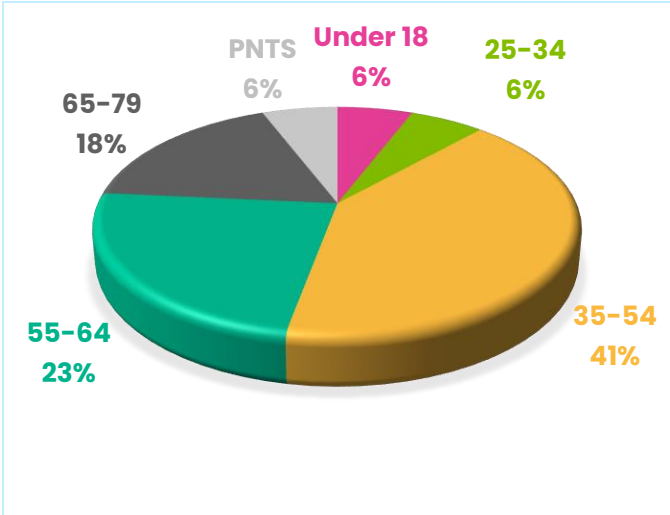
“As with children's MH services a lack of resources and growing demand means people are left to deteriorate while they await an appointment.”

“2 year wait for CAMS referrals. If you have a child with severe issues how is it even humane to make people wait that long for help.”

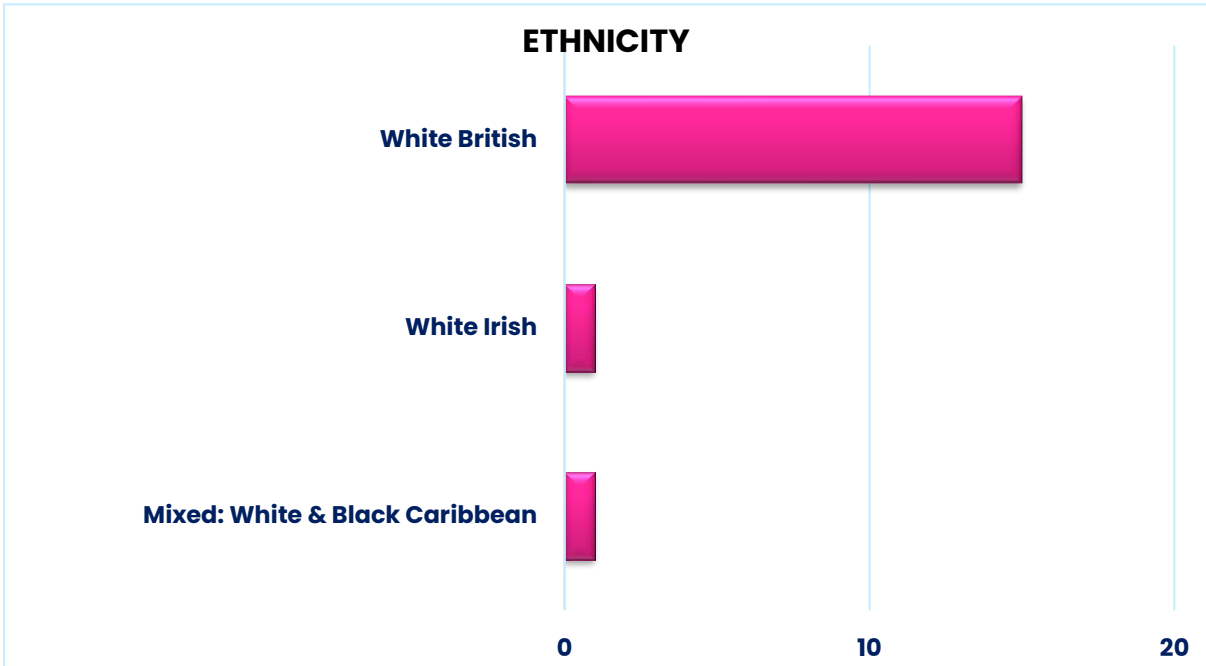
### Cost of Living Concerns (17 votes)

**AGE**

**GENDER**



PNTS – Prefer Not To Say



**53% of respondents identified as having a disability or long-term condition.**



## Reasons for choice

Choices (where provided) have been themed:

Reason for choice	Number of times reason given
Cost of living is out of control with many people struggling.	11

Examples of comments from respondents:

“Cost of Living – this topic is important to me as I feel that it has got out of control!  
It is nice to see people have support in this area.”

“Absolutely everything is going up and wages are not accordingly. This has a knock-on effect with mental health, stress, and higher impact on services in the community.”

“Cost of everything is insanely high. Even for things that don’t need to be. House prices are out of control. Future generations are doomed.”

“Not been able to afford gas or electric, food shopping, medication and living in general.”

“Everything is going up all the time; bills do cause worry and stress.”

## Next Steps

We will meet with our East Berkshire Healthwatch Advisory Group to agree our priorities for 2023/24 from the findings of this report.

We will also work with our Integrated Care System (ICSs) and Local Authority to share findings and work in collaboration on any projects agreed to help improve the lives of people in Bracknell Forest.

# healthwatch

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