Lewisham Positive Ageing Council Survey June 2022

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Report By: Dr Rebecca Charlton,
               Department of Psychology, Goldsmiths
               University of London.

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Highlights

- 164 Lewisham residents completed the Positive Ageing Council survey (March-May 2022)

- Respondents were representative of older people living in Lewisham

- The best things about Lewisham were Transport, Diversity, and Community Feel

- The worst things about Lewisham were Rubbish and Fly-tipping, and Traffic and Road Closures

- Respondents were involved in groups and other activities for entertainment

- Walking, Housework and Gardening were ways people stayed active

- Most people get around by taking the Bus or Walking

- Difficulties accessing transport were due to access, either difficulties getting on transport or distance to stops

- Most concerns when out and about related to places being easy to walk around

- One-fifth of older people in Lewisham do not have access to the internet

- Older people (those over 80) are less likely to have access to the internet

- Age-friendly Lewisham Priorities should be Transport and Community & Health Services

- Positive Ageing Council Priorities should be Adult Social Care, Transport, and Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

- Lewisham Environmental Priorities should be Air Quality, Protecting Green Spaces, Insulating Homes, and Encouraging everyone to live sustainably

- More needs to be done to raise awareness of Government and Lewisham initiatives to support older people

Background

This report summarises the results of a Positive Ageing Council survey, run between March-May 2022. The survey was designed and administered by Lewisham Positive Ageing Council. The Lewisham Positive Ageing Council is an open forum that meets four times a year. Anyone aged over 60 who lives, works, learns or volunteers in the borough can join. The Positive Ageing Council has a smaller group of 20 dedicated local volunteers aged 60 years or over, who act as representatives (the Steering Group).

This report has been independently prepared by Dr Rebecca Charlton and Dr Gavin Stewart, from the Department of Psychology, Goldsmiths University of London at the behest of Lewisham Positive Ageing Council. Doctors Charlton and Stewart were not involved with the design of the survey.

Note: responses were requested in a range of formats including selecting responses from options (either as many as true or up to three responses), forced choice (single response), or open text responses. For this reason questions are not always directly comparable.

Who took part?

In total, 164 Lewisham residents completed the survey. People were aged from 60 to over 85 years old, and were mostly female (82%).

Responses were mostly made via paper copies of the survey (n=117, 71.3%), with other responses being made online (n=47, 28.7%). Comparisons to Lewisham Council demographics use data from council statistics (please see https://www.observatory.lewisham.gov.uk/population/#/viewhttps://www.observatory.lewisham.gov.uk/population/report/9df901355f4b4c11bb9d09d277001261/___iaFirstFeature).

How representative of Lewisham are people who took part?

Demographic Information

Age: Respondents were aged from 60 to over 85 years old. All age groups were represented in the sample. Compared to the demographics of Lewisham's over 60s population, the responding sample underrepresents those aged between 60-69 years (approx. 50% of Lewisham's over 60s population) and overrepresents those aged 75 years and older (approx. 30% of Lewisham's over 60s population).
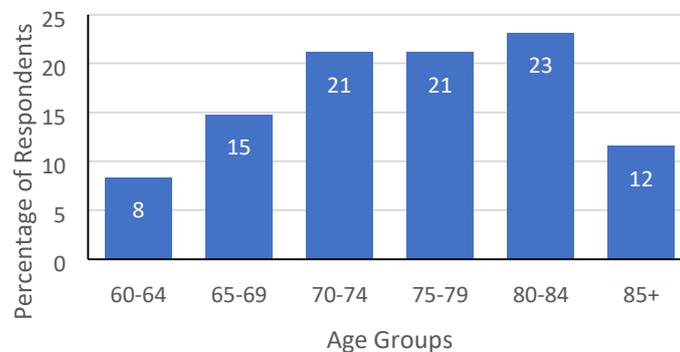
Gender: The responding sample were mostly female (n=134, 81.7%). The remaining sample were male (n=21, 12.8%), non-binary (n=1, <1%), or did not answer or disclose their gender (n=8, 4.8%). Compared to Lewisham's over 60s population (49.5% female), the responding sample overrepresents females.

Ethnicity: The sample included a diverse range of ethnicities. Respondents were White British (n=79, 48.2%) or Ethnic Minorities (n=76, 46.3%). The largest Ethnic Minority groups was African, Caribbean or Black British ancestry (n=48, 29.3%). Respondents were broadly representative of the borough (48.3% Ethnic Minority).

Neighbourhood Deprivation: Respondents were asked to provide their postcode, which was used to estimate an index of deprivation. Estimates of deprivation were from [English indices of deprivation 2019: Postcode Lookup (opendatacommunities.org)](), and were represented as deciles (1-10) where low numbers represent greater deprivation. Respondents lived in neighbourhood with a range of deprivation levels (Mean=4; 1-10 decile). These were fairly representative of deprivation levels across Lewisham (Mean=4; decile 1-8).

Respondents were fairly representative of older people living in Lewisham

Individual Circumstances

Health: Almost half (48%) of the survey respondents reported having health conditions that limited day to day activities.

Finances: Most respondents (75%) reported concerns about the increasing energy prices, and almost half (41%) reported having other financial concerns.

Living Situation: 60% of respondents lived with other people (60%), and 38% lived alone. Most people who participated owned their own homes with outright or with a mortgage (70%). Other participants lived in Social Housing (15%) or Private Rentals (5%). Other living situations including Care Homes or Living with Family occurred but were less common (1-2 people).

Pros and Cons of Living In Lewisham

What is your favourite thing about living in Lewisham?

Most people (96%) provided a response, although 3% (n=5) of these people provided a negative response (i.e. "nothing any more").

The most common responses reflected Diversity (31%), Transport (25%) and Community feel (23%). Other positive responses reflected access to parks (6%), activities for older people (5%) and knowing what was happening in the community (3%).

Favourite thing about living in Lewisham

Transport
Diversity
Community feel
Parks
You know what's going on
Activities on offer for older people
Open text negative response
Other
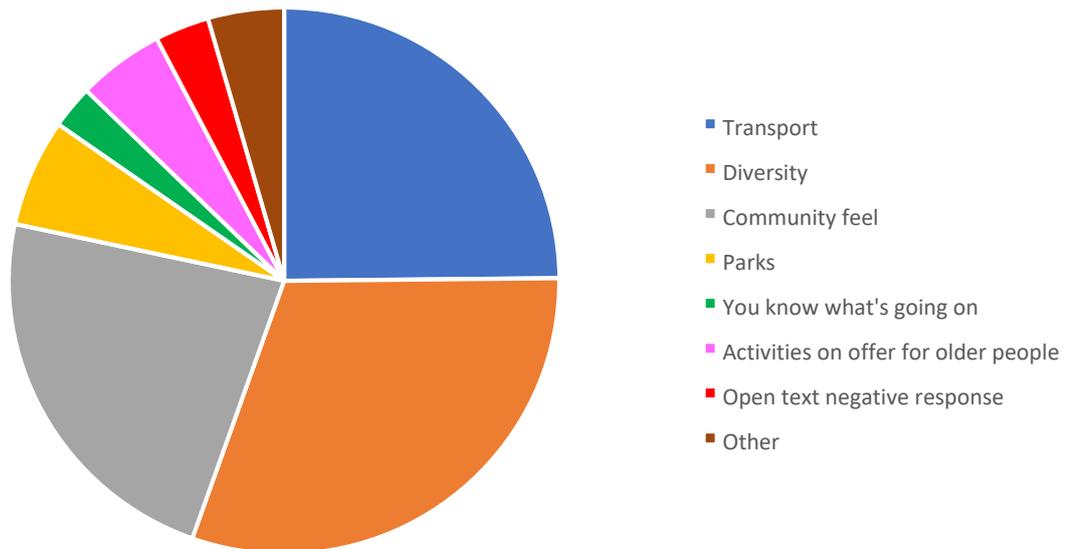
The best things about Lewisham were Transport, Diversity, and Community Feel.

Open text responses reflected these positive responses, including diversity

"The diversity of my immediate estate"

and

"Transport links and doctor near my home".

What is your least favourite thing about living in Lewisham?

70% of people mentioned at least one thing that they disliked about living in Lewisham, although 30% of people (n=50) repeated positive statements or said there was nothing they disliked about living in Lewisham.

The most common complaints were regarding:

- Litter, rubbish and fly tipping (21%)
- Transport issues including traffic, road closures and road condition (18%)

Other common complaints were:

- Council and Health systems being ineffective or expensive (11%)
- Pollution (10%)
- Regeneration, new buildings, overcrowding and a built-up environment (9%)
- Uncared for and unsafe pavements and buildings (8%)
- Lack of access to resources and activities (8%)

Included in other categories were lack of toilets or places to sit and rest; and explicit comments were made about difficulty accessing services due to digital inequalities.
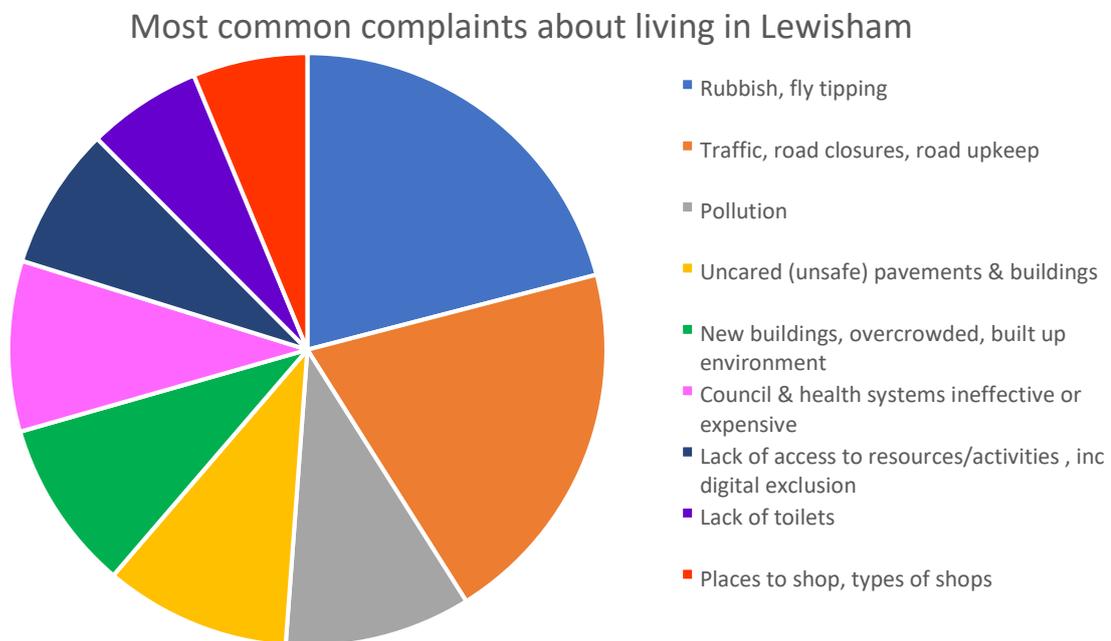
Most common complaints about living in Lewisham

- Rubbish, fly tipping
- Traffic, road closures, road upkeep
- Pollution
- Uncared (unsafe) pavements & buildings
- New buildings, overcrowded, built up environment
- Council & health systems ineffective or expensive
- Lack of access to resources/activities , inc digital exclusion
- Lack of toilets
- Places to shop, types of shops

The worst things about Lewisham were Rubbish and Fly-tipping, and Traffic and Road Closures.

Open text responses commented negatively about rubbish,

"The street environment is very bad no one comes to clean the street it remains dirty on a weekly basis, rubbish everywhere, the area in Moremead Road is infested with rats running everywhere"
new high-rise building and gentrification,

"Coming in all the tower blocks - ruins the area. Where is the infrastructure to accommodate the extra people?"

and traffic

*"Road closure and pushing all the traffic onto the roads (side roads closure)"*

"… blocking off roads has increased traffic and pollution on the South Circular Road. This has slowed down bus journeys considerably eg 202. Also this policy is Ageist and discriminates against those more likely to use public transport - eg the elderly to use".

Living In Lewisham: Activities, Entertainment and Getting Around

Pass the time / Entertainment

Respondents reported accessing a wide range of activities and entertainments (note, they could endorse as many items as relevant). Most respondents included Reading (72%) as a common way to pass the time. Other activities endorsed by about half of respondents were Listening to the Radio (58%), Puzzles and Quizzes (52%), Shopping (52%), Spending time with Family and Friends (52%), Cooking (49%), and Gardening (46%). See Appendix 1 for full list of activities.

People indicated that they participated in a number of ways to pass the time (range 0-20). The average number of activities people endorsed was 8.3, with most people (63%) endorsing between five and eleven activities.

Number of activities to pass the time endorsed

Legend:
- 0 or 1
- 2 - 4
- 5 - 8
- 9 - 12
- 13 - 16
- 17 - 20
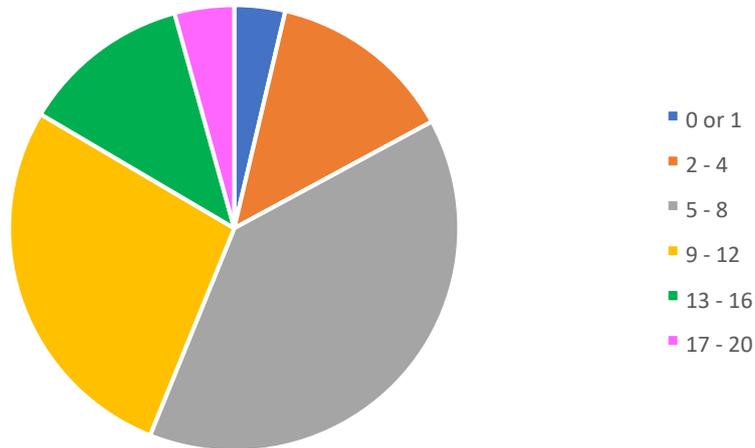
Groups

Respondents reported being involved in a wide range of different types of groups (note, they could endorse as many items as relevant). The most commonly attended groups were Meet and Chat, Special Interest and Singing groups.

*Most respondents were involved in groups and other activities for entertainment*

People often attended more than one group (range 0-7 groups). The average number of groups attended was 1.7, and most people (70%) attended between one and three groups. A small number of people (9%) attended between four and seven groups. It is worth noting a significant proportion (21%) of people reported not being involved in any groups.

Percentage of respondents invovled in groups by type
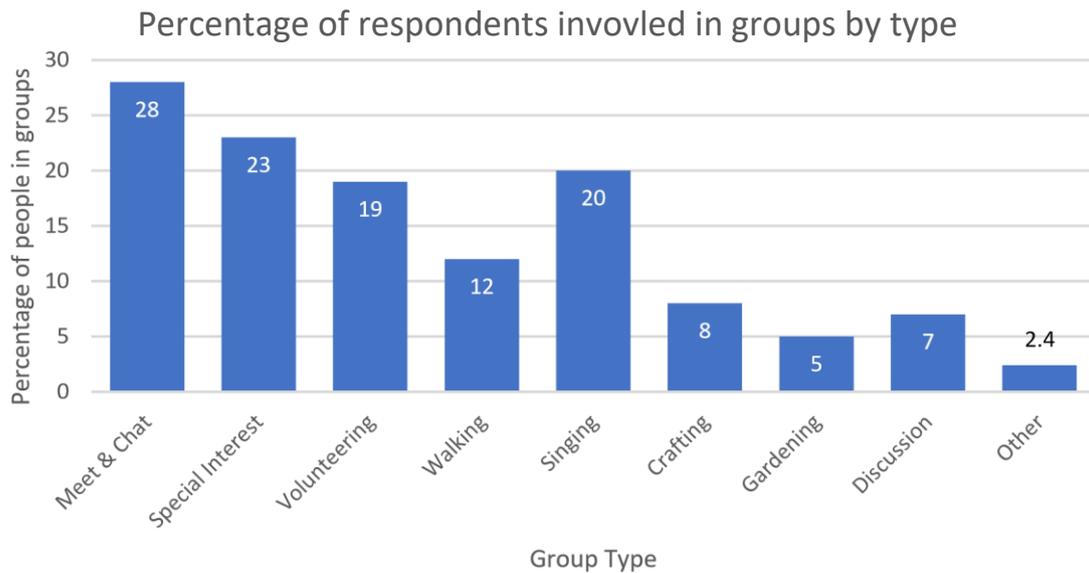
Keeping Active

People reported a range of ways they kept active (note, they could endorse as many items as relevant). The average number of activities was 2.9 (range 0-8). The most commonly endorsed activity was walking, with 66% of people saying they walked to keep active either near home (57%) or in parks (32%). Housework (60%) and gardening (48%) were also commonly endorsed ways to keep active. About one quarter of people reported other activities, including working, exercise classes or going dancing. Importantly, 7% of people reported that they took part in no activities.

Ways of Keeping Active
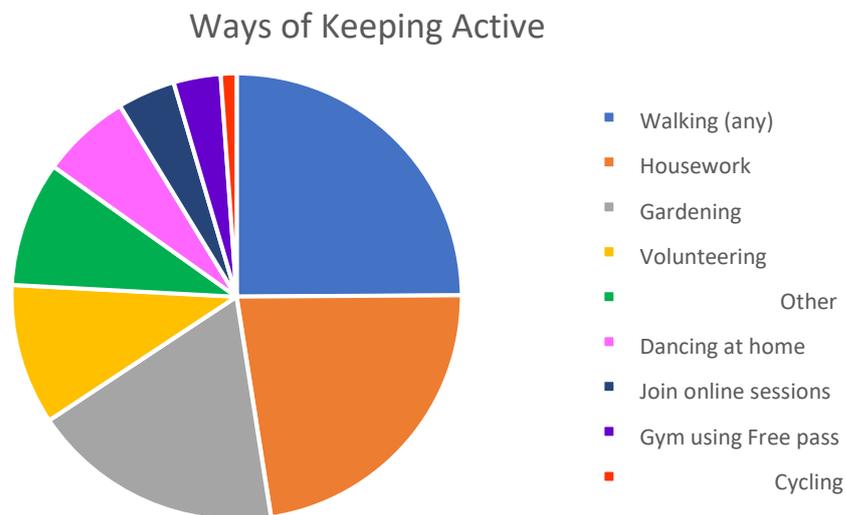
Walking, Housework and Gardening were ways people stayed active.

Gym and Swim

Only 9% of the respondents said that they used the Gym and Swim free pass. The most common reason given for not using Gym and Swim, was being unaware of the scheme (33% of respondents). Other reasons endorsed were not knowing how or where to access facilities. A small proportion of people would use Gym and Swim but were not doing so due to difficulties with booking due to the system or appointment availability.

Why people don't use Gym & Swim

- Didn't know about it
- Don't know how to access
- Not sure where nearest facility
- Not interested or exercise in other ways
- Lack of Transport
- COVID concerns
- Poor booking system or availability
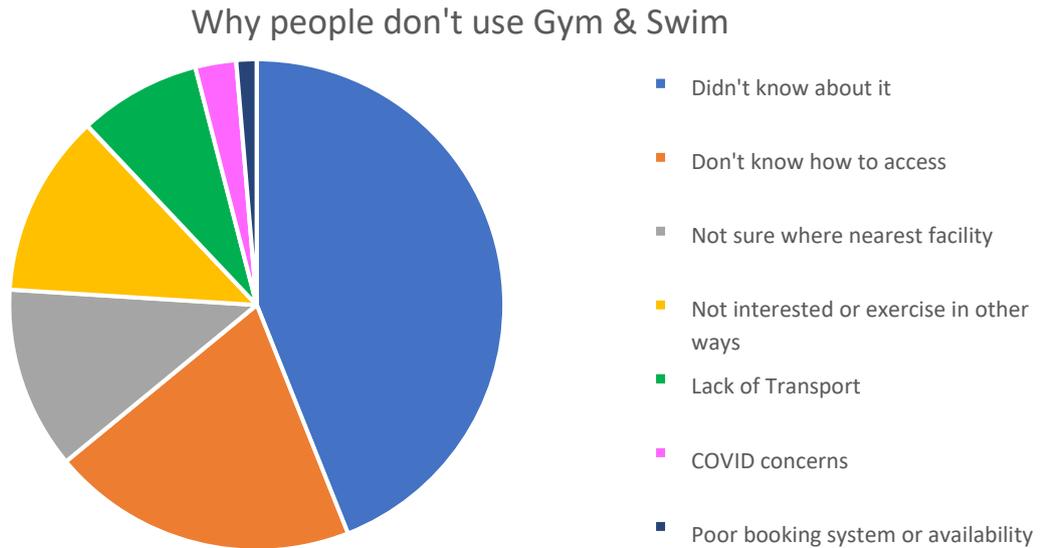
Getting Around

The most common ways that people reported getting around was by Bus (82%) and Walking (66%). Other forms of public transport such as Train (29%) and DLR (20%) were also endorsed. Twentyseven percent of respondents reported Driving. Other ways of getting around included help from Family (16%), Friends and Neighbours (14%), Church (13%) and Cycling (4%). It is worth noting that few respondents were relying on Community transport schemes (1%), and 2% of respondents said they were unable to get out. Note, people were asked to endorse up to three responses.

Most people get around by taking the Bus or Walking

Getting Around

Legend:
- Bus
- Walk
- Train
- Drive
- DLR
- Family
- Friends & Neighbours
- Church
- Other
- I don't go out
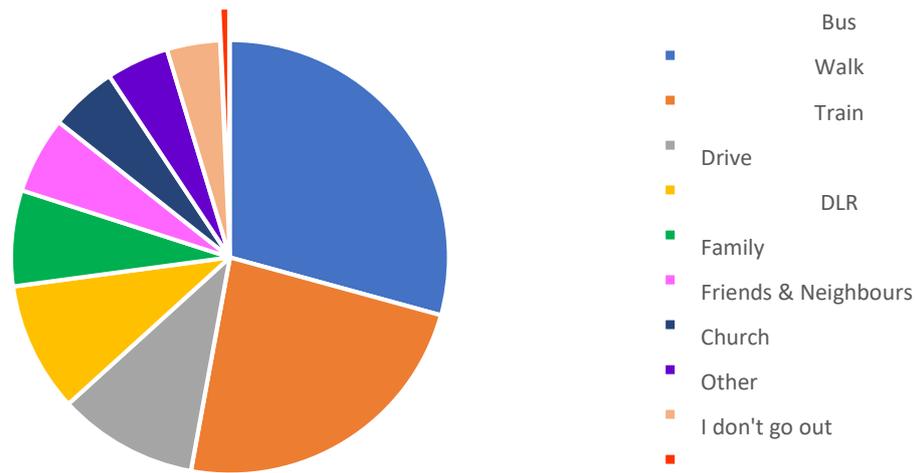
Attitudes to transport were generally positive, with people commenting on

"(Good) Transport to central London"

and that maintaining the Freedom Pass was important to them

"Keep pressure on to maintain the Freedom Pass".

However, several people also commented on difficulties caused by the Freedom Pass time restriction

"Not able to use public transport before 9am. When I have an early hospital appointment especially it's in the middle of London".

Difficulties accessing public transport coded

People were asked if they had any difficulties using public transport. Thirty percent of respondents reported difficulties accessing transport, whereas 70% reported no difficulties. Responses were open text and have been coded by category.

Among the people who reported difficulties accessing public transport, the most common difficulty (40%) was directly relating to Modes of transport such as steps being too high, buses stopping too far from pavement to utilise kneeling buses, or the driver leaving before they were seated. Other common complaints related to Access to Transport (14%) such as distance to bus stops and difficulties crossing the road to stops due to poor visibility; and Cancellation or Cuts to services (10%).

Difficulties Accessing Transport
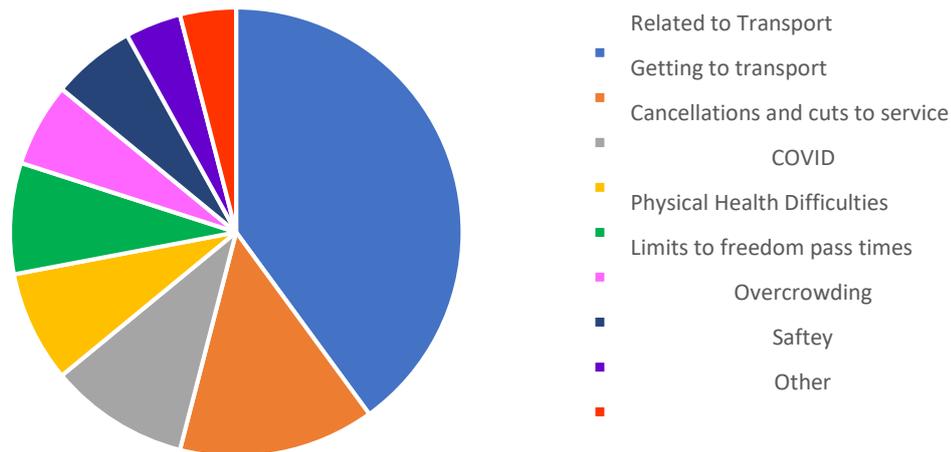
Related to Transport
- Getting to transport
- Cancellations and cuts to service
- COVID
- Physical Health Difficulties
- Limits to freedom pass times
- Overcrowding
- Saftey
- Other

Difficulties accessing transport were due to access, either difficulties getting on transport or distance to stops

Examples of issues with transport were often related to being able to access buses and trains

"That the buses do not pull in nearer to the curb to enable better entering or exiting the bus and not lower the bus to help with getting heavy shopping on and off. On the trains the big gaps between the train and platforms especially when you have had two knee replacements",

difficulties when on transport

"Buses can move very quickly from stops and many older people are in danger of falling",

and difficulties reaching stops

"Walking to nearest bus stop takes a long time"

"Some train access difficult. Honor Oak Park especially Overground very steep climb to the platform".

Important when out

People were asked what was important when they were out in the community (response type: tick all that apply).

The most common concerns related to walkability of the surroundings. Almost all (79%) of participants endorsed the need for pavements to be well kept to avoid trips, and 65% endorsed that spaces should be easily walkable. Also important were ease of accessing transport (71%) and safety (60%). The most common addition to the free text responses was the importance of access to toilets (spontaneously mentioned by 7% of respondents). Respondents seemed unaware of Lewisham's community toilet scheme (https://www.lewishamlocal.com/community-toilets/), which may benefit from more publicity in a non-digital format.

Important when out and about

Legend:
- Maintained footpaths
- Ease of accessing transport
- Walkable
- Saftey
- Places to stop
- Clean
- Plants & trees
- Access to toilets
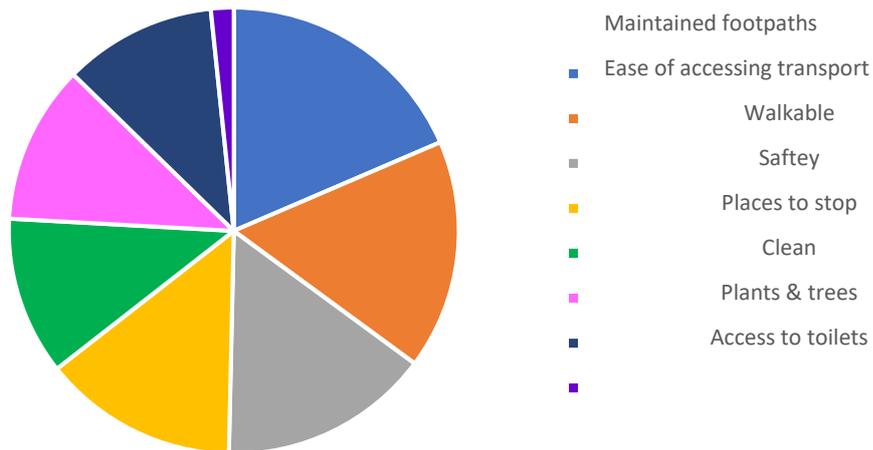
Most concerns when out and about related to places being easy to walk around

Managing at Home

People were asked to indicate if there was anything at home that they struggled with or were concerned about (and to indicate top three). Most people (74%) did not report any concerns.

Among the people who did report concerns, they mostly related to outdoor (15%) and indoor (13%) home maintenance, and decorating (10%). Concern about getting rid of large items (13%) and clutter (7%) were also endorsed.

Open text responses indicated the need for help with odd jobs,

"Help with household jobs, repairs, decorating",

finances and bill paying

"Help with managing the house and finances, paperwork. Need lots of help dealing with providers - energy BT, banks and workmen etc. Also CAP phone contact etc",

and technology (including how to pay bills on line)

"Someone to take me through mobile or computer".

Technology Use and difficulties

Internet Access

Respondents were asked whether and how they accessed the internet. Although most people did have access to the internet, one fifth (20%) of people did not. Half of those without access to the internet reported wanting to have access. The barriers to access were not clear from the questions asked.

People who did have access to the internet connected through computers or laptop, tablets, and smartphones. About half of those using the internet used multiple devices to connect.

One-fifth of older people in Lewisham do not have access to the internet.

Do you have access to the Internet?

- Yes
- No
- No but would like to
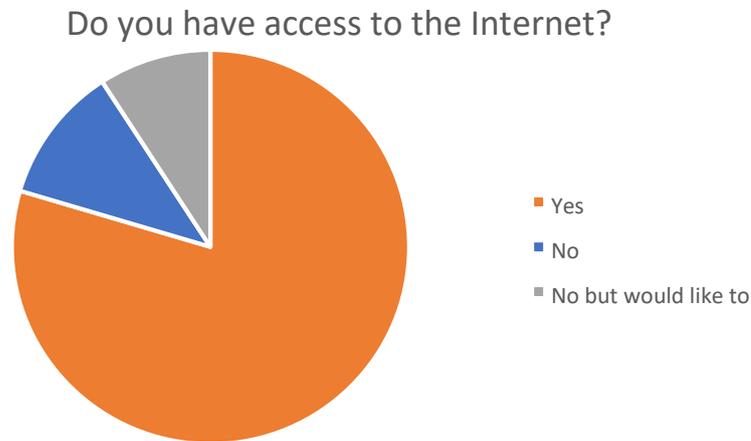
People without access to the internet were significantly older than those who did access the internet. There were no differences in internet access according to ethnicity or deprivation index.

Older people (those over 80) are less likely to have access to the internet.

The difficulties of accessing services without access to technology was expressed in response to several open text questions (including "least favourite thing about living in Lewisham"). One person commented on the

> *"lack of consideration for those not having or able to use technology",*

another on how this impacted accessing healthcare and the need for

> *"… face-to-face consultation with our GP and the different hospital clinic appointments and not online as some of us are not proficient with the internet or even own a device".*

People were aware of the fact that lack of access to technology was limiting, and many were keen to learn to use technology. In response to the question about help that people needed by didn't have, several people commented on need for technical or internet support.

> *"Not having much success with learning how to zoom. I find a lot of digital stuff confusing"*

> *"To learn to be more proficient in using a computer and accessing the internet (when I'm able to purchase a computer?)"*

Many older residents would like help to learn how to use technology and access the internet.

Technology Use

People reported using technology for a range of purposes. The most common were to keep in touch with friends and family across a variety of platforms. Almost half of people (40%) used technology for shopping. Approximately a quarter of people used technology for entertainment, including music, films and TV, and reading. The average number of types of technology used was 3.7 (range 010).
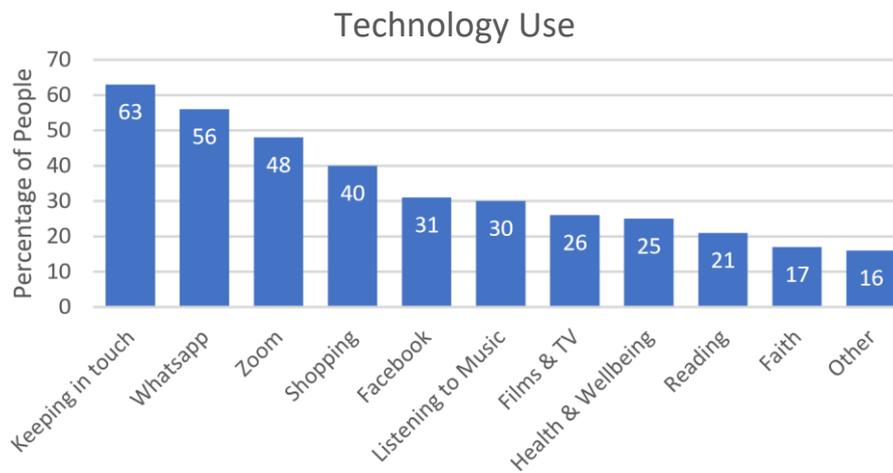
Notably, 15% of people reported using no technology. Almost all of the people (91%) who were not using technology, also had no access to the internet. Non-technology user came from all age groups although 63% of them were aged over 80.

Fifteen percent of people reported using no technology

People were aware of the need to access information and services through technology, but it was not the preferred method of communication.

> *"Sadly these days everything is online - you can't communicate over the phone".*

Many older residents would prefer to speak to people to resolve problems.

<u>*Priorities*</u>

Which Age Friendly Lewisham Priorities matter most?

Respondents were asked to select up to three answers. The most common concern was Transport, endorsed by nearly three quarters of respondents. The other priority areas endorsed by more than a

third of respondents were Community and Health Services (52%), Outdoor Spaces and Buildings (40%), Social Participation (37%) and Respect and Inclusion (34%).

Age Friendly Lewisham Priorities
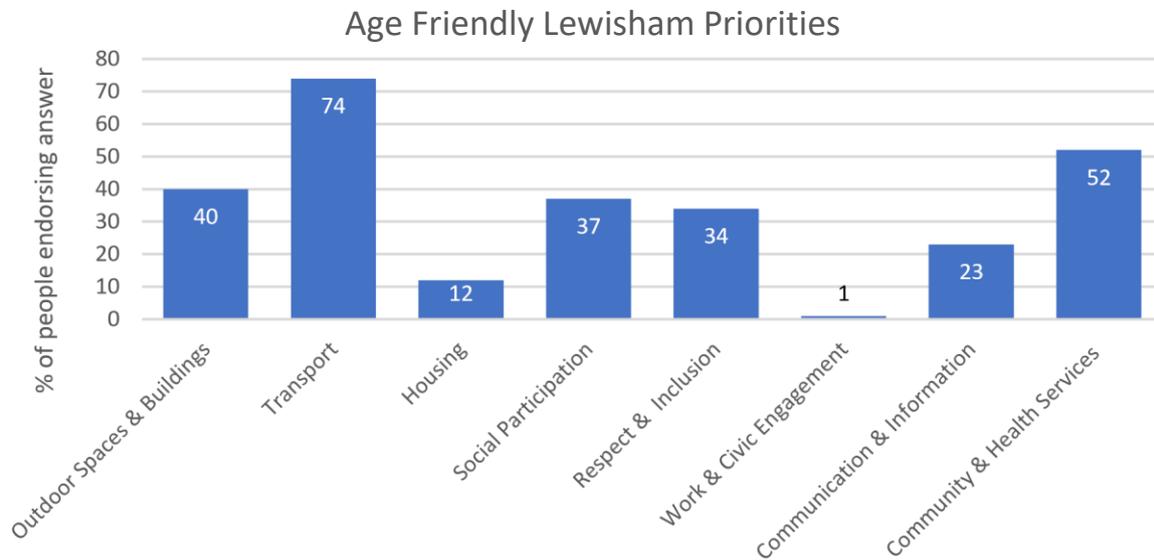
Age-friendly Lewisham Priorities should be Transport and Community & Health Services

What are the most important things the Positive Ageing Council can do?

Respondents were asked to select as many answers as were true from a list provided. All options were endorsed. Providing a magazine was the most commonly endorsed item. Other items indicating a desire for the Positive Ageing Council to represent and speak for older people were endorsed by over half of all respondents.

Open text response revealed a wide range of priorities, mostly relating to supporting and advocating for older people. Several people thought the Positive Ageing Council should offer activities,

"Drop in groups/coffee mornings where you can go to meet up with friendly faces for a chat. Knowing they are on regularly gives a good feel of having somewhere to go and meet others"

"Walking groups for elderly according to their mobility and capacity. Walking is the exercise for some elderly only",

practical support

"Provide transport to medical appointments for vulnerable people in the borough"

"Helping older people to avoid fraud and to protest and have a voice about things that affect them",

and advocacy and representation

"Campaign for face to face consultation with our GP"

16

"Being more of an advocate for older people on current issues and being representative of the population"

Rank	Priorities	Endorsed By
1	Provide a Magazine for older people 3 times per year	62%
2	Represent older people at public meetings such as Local assembly meetings	57%
3	Feed into council committees on plans that affect older people	56%
3=	Hold consultations on matters that concern older people	56%
5	Signpost you to activities and events from other organisations	46%
6	Hold Public meetings about issues that matter to you	45%
6=	Signpost you to information and support from other organisations	45%
8	Be a stronger voice for Black and minoritised communities and equality	43%
9	Hold Events specifically for older people	41%
10	Have a presence at festivals and fun days throughout the year	40%
10=	Signpost you to information and support from the council – such as adult social care or housing	40%
12	Hold intergenerational events	35%

**What should be the Positive Ageing Council Priorities over the next 2 years**

The three top priorities, endorsed by over half of respondents were: Adult Social (56%), Transport (54%) and Outdoor spaces and buildings including accessibility (53%). A focus on providing support and information across a range of topics (finances, community and health services, digital access) were also represented in responses.

Rank	Priorities	Endorsed By
1	Adult Social Care	56%
2	Transport	54%
3	Outdoor spaces & buildings	53%
4	Financial security including information	46%
5	Community & Health Services	43%
6	Digital Inclusion including support to be online and information about scams	41%
7	Communication & Information	38%
8	Social participation	35%
9	Respect & Social inclusion	34%
10	Art, Culture & Fun	33%
11	Housing	27%
12	Retirement	23%

Positive Ageing Council Priorities should be Adult Social Care, Transport, and Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

Which Lewisham Environmental Issues are greatest concern?

Respondents were asked to select up to three answers from a list provided. The largest concerns raised by approximately half of respondents were Air Quality (56%), Protecting Green Spaces (54%), Insulating Homes (52%) and Encouraging everyone to live sustainably (46%). A small number of people (n=7, 4%), reported that they were not concerned about the environment.
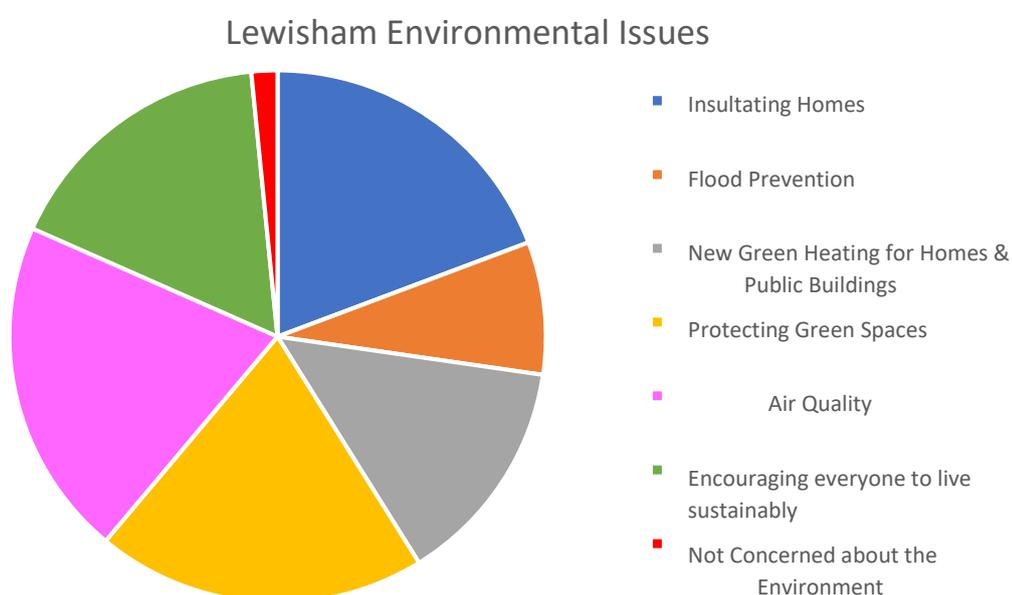
Lewisham Environmental Issues

- Insultating Homes
- Flood Prevention
- New Green Heating for Homes & Public Buildings
- Protecting Green Spaces
- Air Quality
- Encouraging everyone to live sustainably
- Not Concerned about the Environment

Lewisham Environmental Priorities should be Air Quality, Protecting Green Spaces, Insulating Homes, and Encouraging everyone to live sustainably
Lewisham Council and Government Support

Awareness of Government and Local Support or Initiatives

Approximately half of respondents were aware of Local and Government support initiatives, and half were not. Half (49%) of respondents did not know how to contact their Local Councillor and most

(71%) did not know what help they could offer.

Government warm homes
discount
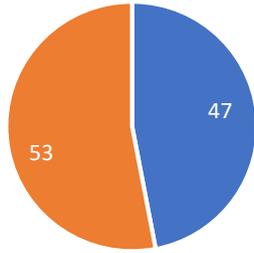
Lewisham incentive to insulate homes
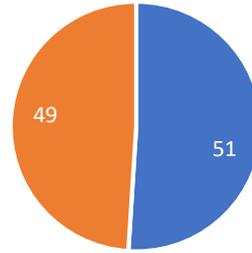
Police Safer Neighbourhood Scheme
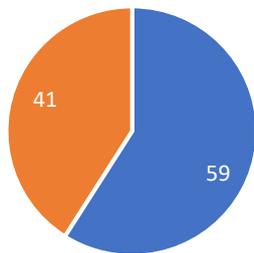
Live in a neighbourhood watch area
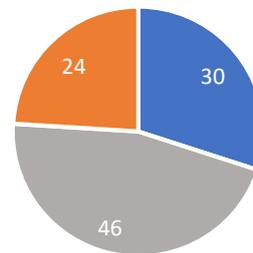
Know who local Councillors are
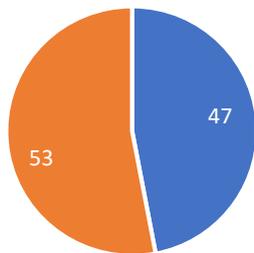
Know about Local Assembly
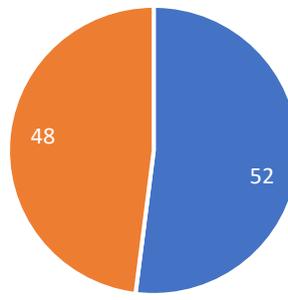
More needs to be done to raise awareness of Government and Lewisham initiatives to support older people

Attitudes to Lewisham Council

Across a number of questions (including "least favourite thing about living in Lewisham"), people commented on the difficulty of contacting the council,

"Not being able to get hold of a live human being at council, with an endless number of 'press this' 'press that' and an answerphone at the end with messages that are never answered" and

"Lack of responsiveness by the Council. Dreadful administration, Impossible to contact, calls and emails unanswered"

Summary

A representative group of older Lewisham residents completed the Positive Ageing Council survey. People were generally positive about living in Lewisham, praising the feeling of community and the benefits of living in a diverse borough. However people also mentioned a number of difficulties and concerns, including street cleanliness and traffic.

Most respondents were very active in the community and made an effort to keep fit. However a small proportion of people had access to few activities and reported that they didn't go out. Common difficulties with getting around when out related to concerns about falls of damaged pavements, and difficulties accessing transport (difficulties boarding transport and distance to stops). Key concerns for older Lewisham residents were Transport, Community and Health Services, Adult Social Care, and Outdoor Spaces and Buildings.

A recurring theme across a number of questions was the difficulty of needing to us technology and the internet to access service and information. This was true for council and health services, banking, and access to social groups. Results suggests that there is need to both upskill older people to use technology and to communicate with them without relying on technology.

As well we representing older Lewisham residents and promoting their concerns, a key priority for the Positive Ageing Council should be around communication. Almost half of older residents were unaware of Government and Lewisham initiatives such as the warm homes discount, incentives to insult homes, or the community toilet scheme. Residents were interested in hearing about and accessing both practical support and social activities. Awareness that many residents prefer information in paper formats or talking to people face-to-face or on the telephone (rather than through technology), is an important consideration.

Report prepared by Dr Rebecca Charlton, Department of Psychology, Goldsmiths University of London; June 2022.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Frequency of all responses to "How do you pass the time? What do you do for Entertainment?" questions

Rank	Pass the Time / Entertainment	Endorsed By
1	Reading	72%
2	Listening to the Radio	58%
3	Puzzles/quizzes	52%
4	Shopping	52%
5	Time with friends/family	52%
6	Cooking	49%
7	Gardening	46%
8	Time with grandchildren	37%
9	Church	34%
10	Connecting with Community	29%
11	Volunteering	29%
12	Attending the Cinema	26%
13	Attending the Theatre	26%
14	Listening to Live Music	25%
15	Attending Exhibitions	25%
16	Exploring the Internet	25%
17	Art/Crafts	24%
18	Singing/Choir	20%
19	Listening to or taking part in Debates	15%
20	Keeping informed	14%
21	Virtual Discussions & Talks	13%
22	History Walks	9%
23	Other	8%
24	Accessing Health & Social Services	6%