

Men's Health **In Salford**

A report looking into how Salford men keep themselves healthy and their experiences of health and care services

June 2020

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Healthwatch Salford

The Old Town Hall

5 Irwell Place

Eccles

M30 0FN

T: 0330 355 0300

W: www.healthwatchsalford.co.uk

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Background and Introduction

Healthwatch Salford is the independent consumer champion for children, young people and adults who use health and social care services in the city of Salford.

Healthwatch Salford:

- Provides people with information and support about local health and social care services
- Listens to the views and experiences of local people about the way health and social care services are commissioned and delivered
- Uses views and experiences to improve the way services are designed and delivered
- Influences how services are set up and commissioned by having a seat on the local Health and Wellbeing Board
- Passes information and recommendations to Healthwatch England and Care Quality Commission

Healthwatch Salford has statutory powers that enable local members of the public to influence Health and Social Care services under the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

To celebrate International Men's day, we wanted to run a project that allowed men from across Salford to share their experiences of health and care. This report captures what men have told us about their experiences, with the aim being to help inform commissioners and providers of services to understand the barriers that some men are facing when trying to keep themselves healthy.

Early conversations were had with Salford Clinical Commissioning Group (SCCG) who also wanted to celebrate International Men's Day and a joint approach to the project was agreed upon.

This report captures the voices and experiences of **194** men who either live or work in Salford and use the health and care services of the City. Whilst we acknowledge that this is a relatively small sample size and not indicative of every man living in Salford, it is nevertheless a true reflection of what they told us at the time. Figures and percentages throughout the report may fluctuate as not every man who responded to the survey answered every question.

Methodology

Initially we got together a group consisting of ourselves, SCCG and Equality Leads from the Northern Care Alliance, to develop a set of questions and an engagement plan.

The Survey

A draft set of questions were proposed to this group for comment where it was agreed for the survey to be split into 3 parts: the first exploring what men do to keep themselves healthy and their understanding of screening services; the second focussed more on their experiences with health and care services over the last year; and the third looked at participant's demographics.

A virtual group made up of male volunteers was then put together to 'sense check' the detail of the questions: were we asking the questions in a way that was easy to understand (language, terminology etc); did the volunteers feel that any of the questions were unnecessary; and were there any questions we were missing?

A final version of the survey was agreed and uploaded onto SmartSurvey (online survey facility) as well as 500 hard copies printed for distribution across Salford.

It was apparent after the survey was produced and into the early stages of engagement that the ordering of the questions wasn't perhaps the best way to engage with men (who are considered by some as 'hard to reach'). From some conversations, men told us that they would have preferred more quantitatively formatted questions (tick boxes) instead of the opened ended question we had as a starter - which we had hoped would encourage them gently into the rest of the survey. This feedback has been noted by the team at Healthwatch Salford for all future engagement activities.

The webpage

A webpage dedicated to Men's Health was hosted on our main Healthwatch Salford webpage and included information about the project, survey and useful links for information to other websites (NHS, cancer awareness, mental health support etc) as well as short instructional videos showing men how best to check themselves for signs of testicular cancer.

The Engagement

A social media campaign was led and devised by Healthwatch Salford which ran throughout the duration of the survey and shared by SCCG as well as other health and care partners to increase awareness of the survey and the web information page.

A static information stand was also created with relevant information on Men's Health. Together with paper copies of the survey and lots of information leaflets we were very kindly able to leave the stand in each of the main libraries (Eccles, Swinton, Walkden, Pendleton and Broughton Hub) in rotation. Staff from the library service were extremely friendly and helpful in ensuring the board would be best positioned for maximum exposure to male library goers and assisted men with completing the survey.

As part of our regular engagement at Salford Royal, we were also able to take this information stand along to promote men's health. It was encouraging to also be able to engage with male staff members from the hospital, who despite the environment they were working in, still had questions and comments of their own about men's health.

We also attended several events which enabled us to reach out to more men and share details of the project with other organisations including a wellbeing event aimed at the staff and volunteers of RHS Bridgewater.



Swinton library



Salford Royal Hospital

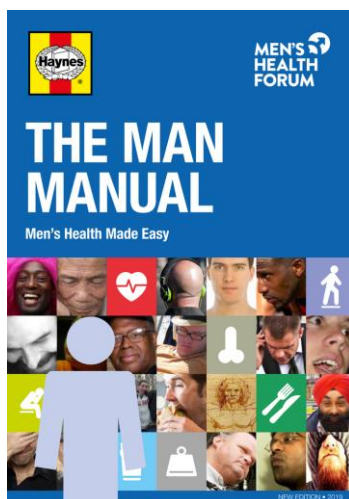


RHS Bridgewater

Other organisations and businesses that helped to distribute our survey amongst the wider public included: Adam James Hairdressing (Eccles), Beech Court Tenants and Residents Association, Salford Dementia Champions Network Group, Manweb (Langworthy Cornerstone Men's Group), Salford Heart Care (Eccles and Irlam), Swinton Civic Hall and University of Salford (through one of our student volunteers).

The 'Man Manual'

We purchased 200 Man Manual's from the Men's Health Forum, which we were able to give away to men who engaged with us through the survey, focus groups and general chat.



These manuals were commissioned by the Men's Health Forum and designed around the familiar Haynes Car Manual format providing an easy-to-read handbook that would show men how to keep themselves healthy in body and mind.

In the handbook it explained the little changes that can make a big difference, such as:

- how to be good to your heart
- how to get active
- how to handle the ups and downs

To find out more about the Man Manual, please visit <https://shop.menshealthforum.org.uk/products/man-manual-2019-edition>

The Focus Groups

As part of the wider engagement plan, we wanted to have discussions with men whom we otherwise would find difficult to reach normally. Engaging with men, especially working men, is challenging but given the focus on seeking to reduce male health inequalities it seemed vital that we should talk to some working men. SCCG contacted 10 local employers to ask if we could host an information stand and offer some support to men in completing the survey. Four employers came back to us with a positive response and they all also agreed to share information about the work and a link to the survey with their staff. During discussions with these employers it became apparent that they were willing to go a step further and support us to facilitate focus groups with some of their male employees. Facilitating focus groups would enable us to engage in far more meaningful conversations and gather rich intelligence about issues of importance to local men.

We carried out focus groups at the following organisations:

Organisation	Number of men in focus group
BOC (Swinton) x 2 sessions	23
Salford City Council, Turnpike House (Eccles)	7
BASF (Swinton)	10
Salford City Council, Swinton Civic Hall	6
Eccles taxi rank (taxi drivers)	9
Salford Men's Group (Pendleton)	9

This gave us a total of **64** men we were able to engage with who we might not have reached in any other way.

We used the same 5 questions in each of the focus groups that linked well to the broad themes of the survey whilst enabling more detailed conversations. Those questions were:

1. What do men do to look after their health?
2. What do men think they should do to look after their health but don't?
3. What do men worry about with regard to their health?
4. What barriers do men experience in accessing healthcare (including self-care)?
5. What else could be done to make things easier for men to access healthcare (including self-care).

Focus groups were facilitated by 2 staff members: a process facilitator and a recorder which lasted for about an hour.

Focus
Groups

Some very clear themes were evident and have been included throughout this report highlighted by the blue boxes

What did the results say?

How do the men take care of themselves?

We started the survey by asking the men what things they did to take care of themselves. 119 men responded to this question and for the majority, taking care of themselves meant being active, eating well and being socially connected to families and their friends. Finding time to relax and where possible, time to do the kind of things they liked were equally as popular.

‘Keep to a healthy diet with minimal processed food, exercise and avoid stress’

‘Taking time to do the things I enjoy’

‘Pets - looking after them gives you a good outlook on life’

‘Get lots of fresh air’

‘I socialise with friends, go on a morning run on the weekends and aim to achieve 6000 steps a day on a workday and I try to eat 5 pieces of fruit a day’

A range of views were expressed on taking regular exercise, walking to work, going to the gym, gardening, sports, and taking part in activities with others such as volunteering or dancing.

‘Play golf, singing in a choir, socialising with friends’

‘I cycle to work and back every day’

‘Swim once a week, walking with friends’

‘Reading and walking to the shops’

Men described what helped them to look after themselves which had a positive impact on their mental health and well-being.

'Have a relationship, have sex, go to the gym, be social, eat well, see family, have downtime, sleep well, reduce time on phone and social media'

'Understand my own medical condition, take control, follow advice from healthcare professionals, attend check-ups'

Some men made positive changes to their behaviours and attitudes to their own health and well-being:

'Vegetarian, don't drive so walk a lot, drink alcohol sparingly (average 2-3 units a week), don't smoke, don't do drugs'

'Try to eat well'

'Try to keep active'

'Try to avoid ready-made, processed and take-away food in my diet'

'I generally eat healthily but have the odd curry or Full English Breakfast. I cook and do so using with health and weight in mind'

Others struggled and admitted to not being physically active, sometimes as a result of their health condition, or did other things to stay mentally alert:

'Don't do exercise'

'Sadly nothing'

'Not enough . . . My diet is generally poor. Ready meals etc. with very little fresh vegetables'

Men need to be encouraged and supported in their efforts to keep well:

‘Try to watch what I eat but usually fail. Doing dry January but drink to excess for the other 11 months’

‘Come to Salford Heart Care Group. It gets me out of the house and meeting people. And my basic health checks are carried out’

Men described needing time to keep active, to eat well and to be connected:

‘Not much time to do anything really. Work all day and have to pick up kids up from school. No time to be ill. I usually get to sit down and relax at 9 each night but then I’m soon off to bed’

‘I don’t have time to exercise, or meet up with friends more than occasionally, and I eat what I can on the fly’

‘Not much a little bit of exercise and catching up with friends occasionally’

Screening and health checks

73 (57%) of the respondents told us that they were aware they could have a free NHS health check between the ages of 40 and 75. Out of the men that knew, 62 (48%) had had the health check. 17 (13%) of the men who fitted into this age category said they didn't know about the health check with the remainder 38 (30%) who told us that they were outside the age range.

Focus Groups

In the focus groups the men told us that workplace interventions do make a difference. Some of these are mandatory as company policy for the types of jobs the men were doing but, in some organisations, public health teams would routinely come in and offer advice, flu jabs, health checks etc. This has however been scaled back over the recent years, something that the men feel should be reintroduced.

One of the barriers that men experience when trying to keep themselves healthy is not having the information on what is out there for them in terms of screening and health checks. Some men feel that these health checks don't seem to be gender equal compared to lots of publicity and awareness for women's services and only find out about care and support when a problem has been identified - more reactive than preventative.

From the men who identified as being between the ages of 60 and 74 years old, 30 (53%) of them said that they had undertaken the free NHS home bowel screening test with 10 (17.5%) saying that they hadn't. The remaining 17 (30%) said they did not know about the test.

37 (29%) of the men who took part in our survey told us that they do not check their testicles for signs of changes, cancer etc with 25 (20%) saying that they don't know what to look for. It was encouraging to see that 90 (71%) men do check their testicles with 45 (35%) of these checking more regular than others.

Out of the 74 men who identified to being in the age range for a prostate examination/PSZ blood test (over 50 years old), only 37 of these (50%) had undertaken the test. One of the biggest worries amongst men has been around the misunderstanding of what happens during a prostate examination. Comments raised through this survey, focus groups and to our engagement staff highlighted that even if men have a worry about their prostate, the fear and perceived

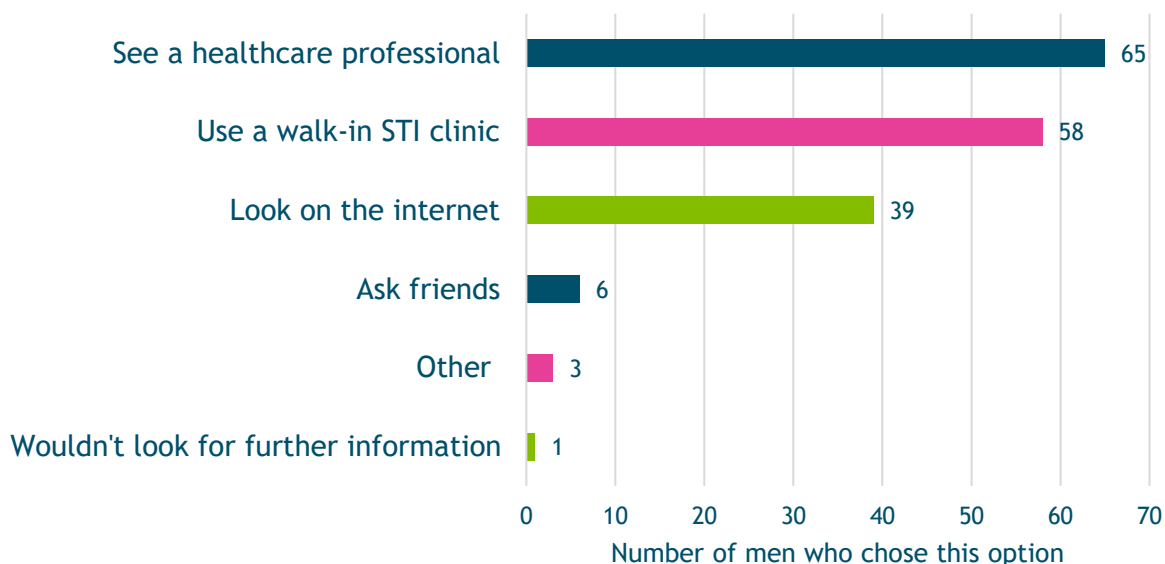
embarrassment of undergoing a physical examination is sometimes enough to put them off and ‘bury their heads in the sand’ hoping that the problem will go away.

Focus Groups

The subject of prostate health came up at each focus group where men echoed the sentiments of the main survey, highlighting a fear and embarrassment of having a check done. Men suggested that health services needed to be clearer about what happens during these procedures (specifically that the prostate test is now a blood test) and be more proactive in their approach as most men will not ask for a check in the first instance.

We asked men where they would go to seek advice if they thought they had contracted a sexually transmitted infection (STI). 121 (93%) of the men responded to this question with ‘seeing a healthcare professional’ and ‘using a walk-in clinic’ as the most popular options. Only 1 man told us that he wouldn’t look for further information and another who told us that felt he was ‘excluded from local GUM services as a Gay man’.

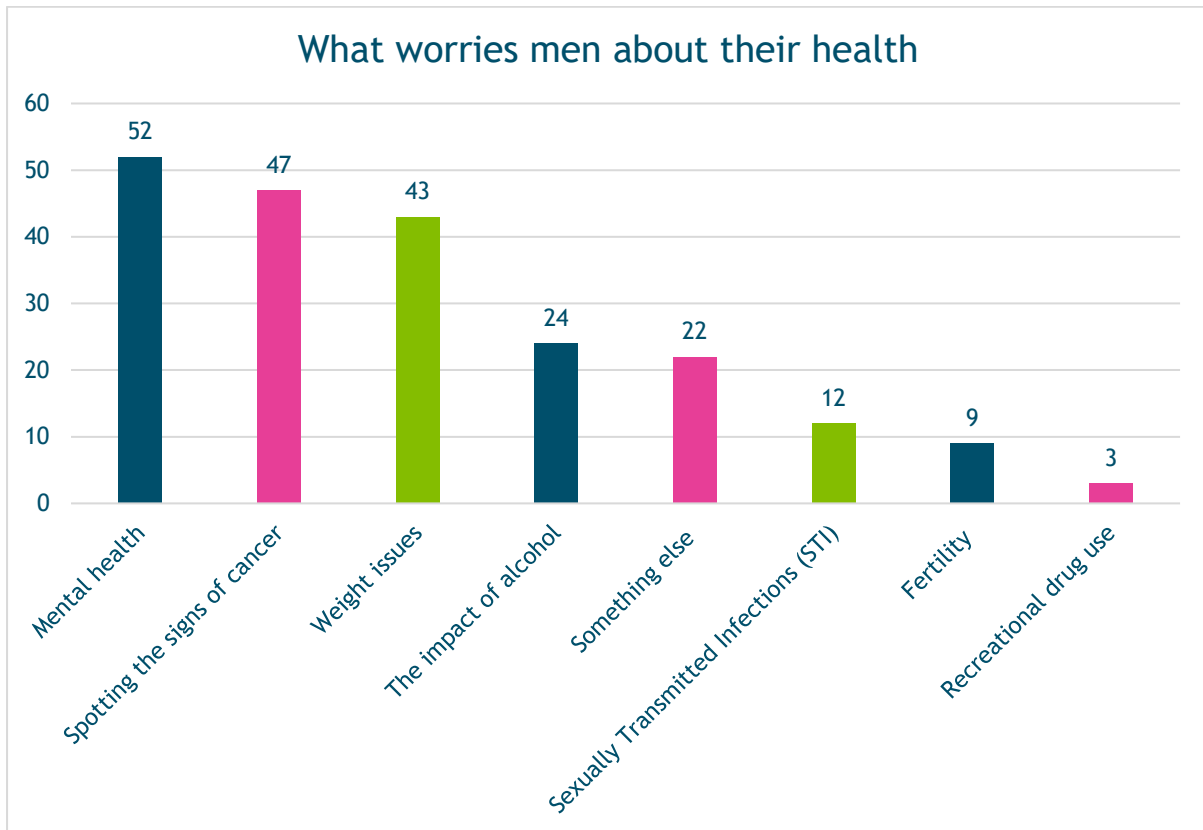
Where men would go for further information on STI's



We asked the men if they understood what was meant by the term ‘self-care’. 127 (98%) of them responded to this question with 113 (89%) telling us that they did understand, and just 14 (11%) of them saying that they didn’t.

What things worried men?

We asked the men if they had worried about any aspects of their own health over the last year. 103 (79%) responded to this question with just over half of the men (52 men 51%) identifying **mental health** as the most worried about topic followed by **spotting the signs of cancer** (47 men 46%) then **weight issues** (43 men 42%).



One in five men who answered said that they were worried about something else related to health including smoking, diet, heart burn, memory problems, insomnia, and coping with grief. Some also mentioned specific illnesses such as Syncope (Blackouts), Arthritis, Hernia, Diabetes, MS (Multiple sclerosis), Crohn's Disease, and Prostate Cancer as worrying topics.

'I'm one of those people who just get on with it'

'Not sleeping well enough'

'Loss by suicide but as a 'man' I keep my feelings inside.'

The question of what worries men was a main feature question in our focus groups. From this we learnt that mental health was quite high up on what worries men most. Some men mentioned the pressures of how social media depicts how other men are leading seemingly perfect lives. Examples of this included Facebook, with them telling us that they didn't want to see photos and status updates of friends out having a good time, when they themselves were 'stuck at home unable to afford joining in'.

Finances and debts contributed quite heavily to men's mental ill health. Taxi drivers told us that the pressure of making ends meet and paying the bills had an impact on how they looked after themselves with regards to diet and exercise - they had a rough idea of what they needed to do (regular exercise and healthy diet), but just felt that pressures of work prevented them from doing this leading to added stress and worry.

Some men told us that receiving work emails outside of their working hours also contributed to their worries and suggested future restrictions being put upon these by their employers would help to alleviate this.

Not all men are comfortable with needles and the pressure for them to be 'brave' and 'stoic' creates a level of anxiety that at times can be compounded by the language that some clinical staff have used towards them e.g. 'man up', often resulting in a difficult situation being made even worse.

Whilst most men worry about their health, some of them are more worried about finding out if anything is wrong with them, and so feel they are not allowed to be worried.

Had men worried about any of these issues during the last year, but not sought medical advice about it?

124 (98%) of the men responded to this question with just under half of them (51, 41%) telling us that they had been worried about something during the past year but not sought medical help about it.

These men were worried about a range of health-related issues: physical health such as losing weight, prostate and other cancers, and mental health including anxiety, stress and thoughts of self-harming. Some men were engaging in risky behaviours, sometimes as a result of peer pressure, and struggled with issues of self-esteem, money and job insecurity.

'Fear of something being wrong'

'I don't drink much but I tend to binge drink when I go into town with pals'

'Mental health and suicidal thoughts'

'Excess weight, mental health/stress due to work and family issues'

'Risky sexual practices'

'I was worried what it might be, before it became more obvious'

We explored their reasons for them not seeking help with 13% of the men saying ***'embarrassment'*** was a key reason and 30% of men thought ***'it would get better on its own'***. For 19% of men ***'work got in the way'*** while 15% of men were prevented from seeing a health professional ***'as they could not get an appointment'***.

Among the other reasons given by men for not looking for medical help included ***'time'***, ***'money'***, ***'laziness'*** and ***'lack of motivation'***. For some men, they ***'did not think it was important'***, were fearful of being diagnosed with an illness or being stereotyped or stigmatised by medical staff as to what it means to be a man. Other key concerns highlighted were ***'not knowing where to ask'*** or ***'don't know where to go'***.

'I get judged too much because 'I'm a young strapping lad' which means in most people's eyes I shouldn't be worried about passing out'

'Don't like to say how I feel'

'It makes it real (I can't deny/avoid it any longer)'

Men also gave other reasons for not seeking help in the first instance such as personal fears, the stigma of men asking for help, being unaware of any support services, or that they stopped seeking advice as they didn't initially get an appropriate or helpful response from the service provider.

'There are so many hidden cancers that I don't know how to get them checked'

'I did not seek advice because I believe that seeing a professional about it makes it 'real''

'I was being prescribed Fluoxetine which I stopped taking without the support of my GP due to the ongoing cost implications of buying it'

'I know I have an STI but when I called a place online, they didn't answer. I haven't gone to get treatment due to this reason'

From the focus groups, men told us that:

1. Men are reluctant to talk about their health with each other, with their families or to healthcare professionals. Societal attitudes exacerbate this with men expected to be stoic.
2. Men said that they would prefer to not know if they have a health issue, even though they know early detection relates to better health outcomes.
3. Previous experience of difficulties in accessing services or being treated poorly by services (mainly not listened to or having to say more than they want to receptionists), prevented the men from seeking to access services.

Where do men usually go to for advice about health-related matters?

We asked men to tell us where they go to seek advice about health-related matters. The most popular avenue was for them to speak to health care professionals followed by looking on the internet and asking friends or family. A few men sought advice from the TV, Healthwatch Salford, pharmacies and local community centres. Only 8 men told us that they seek advice from their place of work, which was interesting as through the focus groups we heard that workplace health information and intervention was welcomed as an avenue to overcome barriers by the men.

If men felt unwell but couldn't get an appointment with their GP, did they know what other services were available to them?

It was encouraging to read that the majority of men (101) knew what alternatives were available to them should they not be able to get a GP appointment, but there were still a significant number (26) who were unaware of such alternatives.

The issue of availability of appointments was a big discussion in the focus groups. Some men felt that there simply were not enough doctors and nurses and in turn, health appointments available, so felt there was little point in trying to get an appointment in the first place.

Men's experience with health and care services across Salford

We asked the men to identify the different health or care services that they had interacted with throughout the last year with visits to the Doctor, Dentist, Hospital Outpatients and Pharmacies being the most popular.

	How many of the men accessed these services during the last year
GP	104
NHS dentist	63
Hospital outpatient	60
Pharmacist	60
A&E	30
Private dentist	14
Mental health support	13
NHS 111	11
Sexual Health Services	7
Hearing aid check	1
Physiotherapy	1
Practice nurse	1
Walk-in centre	1
Neuropathy	1
Optician	1
<i>Total interactions from 112 men</i>	368

Mental health services were only accessed by 13 men despite them telling us that 53 of them had been worried about their mental health over the last year. We did not explore the reasons behind this disparity but some discussions from the focus group may suggest that waiting times to access mental health support may be a contributing factor to this. This is a topic that we will keep on our radar at Healthwatch Salford with the view to possibly looking into it in more detail later this year.

Only 11 men (8%) had used the NHS 111 service, which is relatively low number considering the service is designed to *'make it easier and quicker for patients to get the right advice or treatment they need, be that for their physical or mental health, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.'*¹

Focus Groups Participants in the focus groups also told us that they had very little confidence in NHS 111 following negative previous experiences. Some of the men seemed to feel that the service 'just sends everyone to A&E anyway' and that this only happened because the call takers were not clinicians so gave the impression of 'covering their backs'.

We further went on to explore which services those men had last accessed within the year. Unsurprisingly, GP services came out as the most used with 58 men having accessed a GP during the last year. This was followed by hospital outpatients (18 men), NHS Dentists (9 men)

	Which of these services was last accessed by the men during the last year
GP	58
Hospital outpatient	18
NHS dentist	9
A&E	6
Private dentist	6
Mental health support	4
Pharmacist	4
Sexual Health Services	2
Hearing aid check	1
NHS 111	1
Physiotherapy	1
Practice nurse	1
<i>Number of men</i>	110

¹ About NHS 111: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/urgent-emergency-care/nhs-111/>

Looking at the top 5 services last used over the previous 12 months we were told:



GP services

50 men who had last used GP services rated their experience as **'good or very good'**, with 5 saying that it was **'neither good nor poor'** and 3 rated their experience as **'poor'**.

19 of those men further went on to tell us what would have made their experience better with most of them suggesting reduced waiting times and better opportunities to get a timely appointment in the first place.

48 men told us that they felt **'completely safe'** when using GP services with the other 10 saying that they felt **'mostly safe'**.

34 men felt that their needs were **'completely met'** by GP services in an appropriate way, with 17 feeling that their needs were **'mostly met'** and 7 having had their needs met **'to some degree'**.

Generally, 49 men thought that GP services had understood their needs as men with 5 saying that they weren't sure and 1 man who didn't feel his GP service understood his needs as a man.

For those men who were referred to another service, 18 of them felt that the referral was **'completely made in a smooth way'**, and 10 said that it was **'smooth to some degree'**. 2 of the men told us that it **'wasn't smooth at all'** citing lost referrals as their reasons for this.



Hospital Outpatients

15 men who had last used the hospital outpatient service rated their experience as **'good or very good'** and 2 saying that it was **'neither good nor poor'**.

4 of the men further went on to tell us what would have made their experience better with suggestions including better access to car parking and the need for the patients' needs to be addressed which would reduce further stress and complaints.

14 men told us that they felt **'completely safe'** when using Hospital Outpatient services with 3 saying that they felt **'mostly safe'**. 1 man told us that he felt

unsafe most of the time though he explained his reasons for this was due to an ongoing complaint.

12 men felt that their needs were '**completely met**' by Hospital Outpatient services in an appropriate way, with 5 feeling that their needs were '**mostly met**' and 1 having had his needs met '**to some degree**'.

14 men thought that the Outpatient services had understood their needs as men with 2 saying that they weren't sure.

For those men who were referred to another service, 7 of them felt that the referral was completely made in a smooth way, 3 said the referral was mostly smooth and 2 said that it was smooth to some degree.



NHS Dental Services

8 of the men who went to an NHS Dentist as the last service they accessed said that their experience was '**good or very good**' whilst 1 man told us that his experience was '**very poor**', further suggesting that his experience would've been made better if he had received pre-visit information and a notification to his change in practitioner.

Another man told us that his experience would've been made better if more evening appointments were available as it is sometimes difficult to get appointments that fit in around work.

8 men told us that they felt '**completely safe**' when using NHS dental services with 1 saying that he felt '**mostly safe**'.

7 men felt that their needs were '**completely met**' by NHS dental services in an appropriate way, with 1 feeling that his needs were '**mostly met**' and the other 1 having had his needs met '**to some degree**'.

6 men thought that NHS dental services had understood their needs as men with 1 saying that he left they didn't understand and the other 2 saying that they weren't sure.

For those men who were referred to another service, all 3 of them felt that the referral was smooth to some degree with one commenting that:

"Protocols require repetition of trivial info and explanations and recommendations don't match".



Hospital A&E

5 men who had last used Hospital A&E services rated their experience as **'good or very good'**. One man told us that his experience was very poor as it 'made him feel like a piece of rubbish after being spoken to like an idiot and having to wait for painkillers even though he was in agony. He went on to tell us that his experience would've been made better if he had been treated with a little more care and compassion and listened to what he was saying.

All 6 of the men told us that they felt safe when using the A&E service.

3 men told us that they felt **'completely safe'** when using A&E services with 1 saying that they felt **'safe to some degree'**.

3 men felt that their needs were **'completely met'** by A&E in an appropriate way, with 1 having had his needs met **'to some degree'**. 2 men told us that they didn't feel their needs were met at all, one of whom explained he felt this because he was given 3 different diagnoses and miscommunication around discharge led to him 'being told off like a child, instead of a grown man'.

5 men thought that the A&E service had understood their needs as men with the remaining man telling us that he felt A&E didn't understand as he 'does not cry unless in extreme pain'.

For those men who were referred to another service, all 3 of them felt that the referral was completely made in a smooth way.



Private Dental Services

5 of the men who went to private Dentist as the last service they accessed said that their experience was **'good or very good'** whilst 1 man told us that his experience was neither good nor poor.

2 men commented on improvements that would've made their experiences better, including the need for more advice and clarity on future health care issues with access to regular check-ups which could in turn boost the patient's confidence. Other comments centred around the need for lower cost treatment.

"Lower the cost! The quality of dental care is far superior to my experiences with the NHS - however it comes at a cost"

4 men told us that they felt ‘**completely safe**’ when using private dental services with 1 saying that he felt ‘**unsafe some of the time**’ as he lacked confidence in the health and care system and still had symptoms of migraine and toothache despite having used a private dentist.

4 men felt that their needs were ‘**completely met**’ by private dental services in an appropriate way, with 1 feeling that his needs were ‘**mostly met**’.

5 men thought that private dental services had understood their needs as men.

For those men who were referred to another service, one man felt that the referral was made completely smoothly, two men said that their referrals were mostly smooth and another man’s referral was smooth to some degree. One man, however, did say that his referral was not smooth at all, but did not give his reasons for this.

What did they say about other services?

How did they rate the services?

	Good or very good	Neither good nor poor	Poor or very poor
GP	50	5	3
Hospital outpatient	15	2	-
NHS dentist	8	-	1
A&E	5	-	1
Private dentist	5	1	3
Mental health support	2	1	1
Pharmacist	4	-	-
Sexual Health Services	1	-	-
Hearing aid check	1	-	-
NHS 111	1	-	-
Physiotherapy	1	-	-
Practice nurse	1	-	-

Number of men who answered this question

A few suggestions about how to improve experience around mental health services included the need for a more appropriate venue for hosting the Access to Work interview as the current arrangement felt quite intimidating as well as more timely appointments and getting to see a psychiatrist instead of a social worker

“Talking helps, but it’s not enough”

How safe did they feel?

	Completely safe	Mostly safe	Felt unsafe some of the time	Felt mostly unsafe
GP	48	10	-	-
Hospital outpatient	14	3	-	1
NHS dentist	8	1	-	-
A&E	3	3	-	-
Private dentist	4	-	1	-
Mental health support	2	2	-	-
Pharmacist	4	-	-	-
Sexual Health Services	1	1	-	-
Hearing aid check	1	-	-	-
NHS 111	1	-	-	-
Physiotherapy	1	-	-	-
Practice nurse	1	-	-	-

Number of men who answered this question

Where their needs assessed and met in an appropriate way?

	Completely met	Mostly met	Met to some degree	Not at all met
GP	34	17	7	-
Hospital outpatient	12	5	1	-
NHS dentist	7	1	1	-
A&E	3	-	1	2
Private dentist	4	1	-	-
Mental health support	2	1	1	-
Pharmacist	4	-	-	-
Sexual Health Services	1	-	1	-
Hearing aid check	1	-	-	-
NHS 111	1	-	-	-
Physiotherapy	-	-	1	-
Practice nurse	1	-	-	-

Number of men who answered this question

Did they feel that the services understood their needs as men?

	Yes, most of the time	Yes, sometimes	Not really sure	No
GP	28	21	5	1
Hospital outpatient	10	4	2	-
NHS dentist	5	1	2	1
A&E	3	2	-	1
Private dentist	3	2	-	-
Mental health support	2	1	-	1
Pharmacist	1	2	1	-
Sexual Health Services	-	-	1	1
Hearing aid check	1	-	-	-
NHS 111	-	1	-	-
Physiotherapy	1	-	-	-
Practice nurse	-	-	1	-

Number of men who answered this question

If men were referred to another service, was this referral made smoothly?

	Completely	Mostly	To some degree	Not at all
GP	18	-	10	2
Hospital outpatient	7	3	2	-
NHS dentist	-	-	3	-
A&E	-	-	-	-
Private dentist	1	2	1	1
Mental health support	-	-	1	1
Pharmacist	-	-	-	1
Sexual Health Services	-	-	-	1
Hearing aid check	1	-	-	-
NHS 111	-	-	-	-
Physiotherapy	-	-	-	1
Practice nurse	-	-	-	-

Number of men who answered this question

“Physiotherapy -took me several attempts to get from physio to Active Lifestyles Program”

“Pharmacy - I was advised to go for counselling, but due to a bad previous experience I have yet to call them to arrange an appointment for this”

What else did they say about men’s health in general?

We gave men the opportunity to have their say on any other aspect of health and care that was not covered by this survey. From what they told us, we found several themes around: the need to improve men’s awareness of health issues as well as accessing advice, support and treatment:

- Some men do not feel their health is seen as a priority
- Men need to feel able to speak up and voice their concerns as men
- Men need better access to advice, support and treatment
- Recommendations on what would help to improve men’s health

Some men do not feel their health is seen as a priority:

‘Generally [feels] second rate to women’s health. Promoted much less than women’s health.’

‘Men’s health often gets pushed to one side and comes late in life - or so it seems’

‘There is still work to be done regarding men and the social stigma of mental health.’

Men need to feel able to speak up and voice their concerns as men:

‘I feel some people are embarrassed to talk about their health - it’s the way they are brought up’

‘It’s hard for men to get their feelings out. Men need to speak up and have a voice, but some men don’t have this.’

‘Men don’t talk about their problems like ladies do. More emphasis needs to be on getting me(n) to open up to each other about their health worries’

‘There is too much pressure to maintain a job and look after a family so no time to get sick. Bosses don’t understand the pressures and seem reluctant to let us have time off work to see a doctor. If we take time off, its usually unpaid’

‘As a young male, I get judged and fobbed off a lot after they take one look at me and see this big muscly lad, crying in pain, panicking about passing out. . . even nurses spout the “big lad like you” . . . ‘a young lad like you shouldn’t have all this time off . . . getting mum to phone in because you’re a soft lad’ . . . ‘I do feel like people (even medical experts) feel like being male somehow means I should be coping better . . . but the reality is: doesn’t matter what age or gender you are, we all look the same unconscious’.

Men need better access to advice, support and treatment:

‘There are still blockages for men to access services which are both mental and physical barriers to accessing the appropriate healthcare’

‘Appointments to see a doctor are getting worse - surgery where I go to is oversubscribed yet they cannot close their book’.

‘It’s hard to access counselling services. I had to pay privately.’

‘My concern is there does not seem to be a general check on prostate health, I don’t have any specific concerns about my prostate so don’t feel I can ask my GP or a healthcare professional for a quick check for reassurance.’

‘Doesn’t feel like there enough services for males to be comfortable to talk about mental health issues without feeling ashamed or embarrassed’

‘I think mental health issues are vastly underreported’

‘Easier to obtain information which was in one place’

‘Where can I get advice about prostate problems?’

‘Why do health checks stop for over 75s?’

Suggestions on what would help to improve men’s health

- Men taking care of themselves:

‘We need to look after ourselves’

‘I think a lot of it is to do with your own idea of health and the choices you make’

‘ill health began with problems with my teeth. I was reluctant to go the dentist. I would only go the GP if necessary. I recommend people go to their dentist’

- More accessible appointments for GPs outside their normal hours:

‘I don’t go to the doctors as there is no point as they cannot see you without me having to take time out of work’

- Affordable leisure services

‘If leisure facilities were a more reasonable price . . . I would use them more to exercise . . . joint work between the Local Authority and CCG to create more opportunities to exercise would be good to see particularly team sports or easy sports to get involved with like badminton, tennis, basketball etc’

'When you use services its only for 6 weeks. I feel that's far too short, especially mental health'

- Early prevention work with children and in communities:

'Needs to start much younger. Health needs to be far more prominent at schools if we are to see a long-term change in society'

'More needs to be done, more community projects that teach men about their problems, not to be embarrassed, not to feel ashamed for asking for help'

- Better promotion of men's health in male settings:

'They don't advertise enough, where do they get the messages out to? Need to go to sports clubs, football, rugby, etc'

- Male workers in health and social care settings:

'more recognition of male unpaid voluntary carers in Salford - there are a lot of us'

- Using language/messages that men can relate to

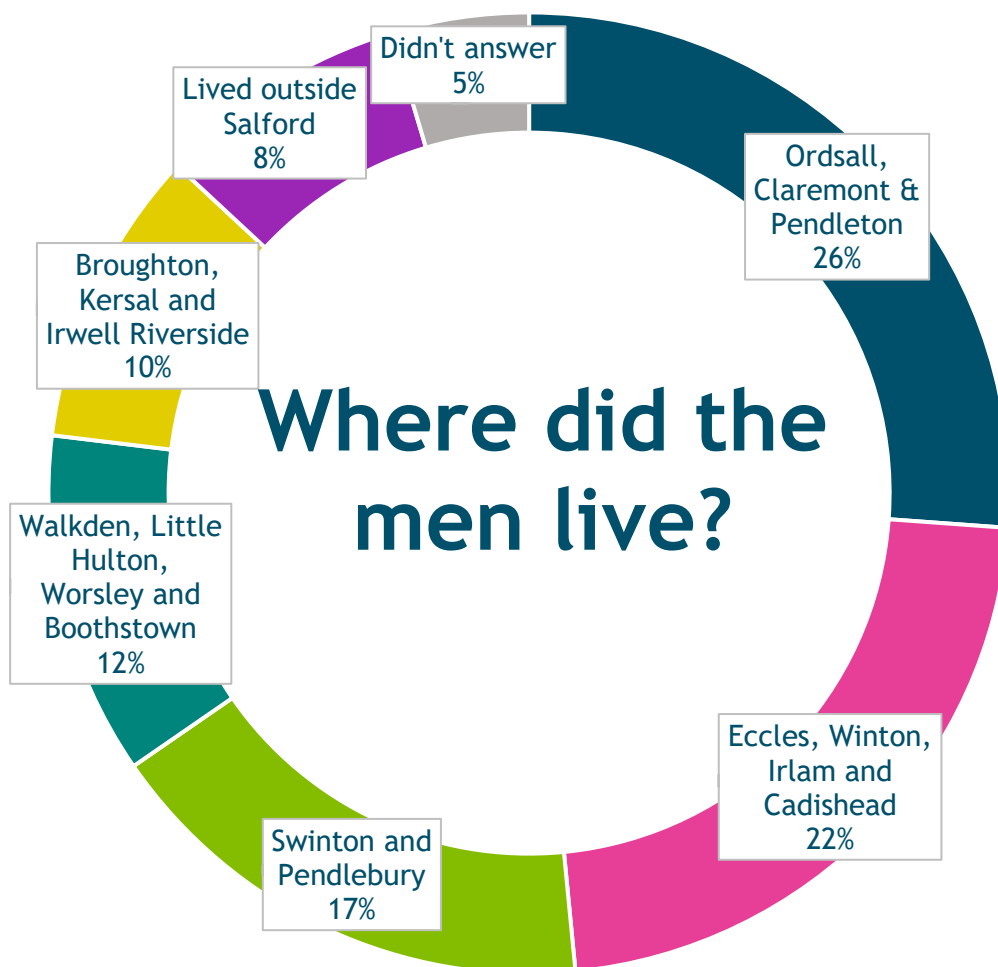
'it might help if the messages were delivered in language that men use by a bloke others can relate to'

Positive comments:

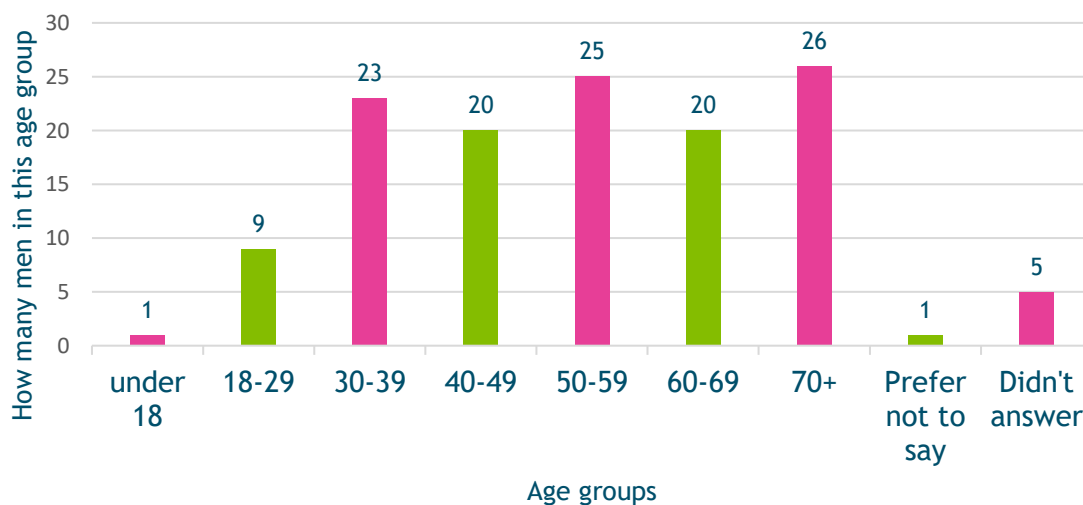
'I feel I'm receiving great care from my GP, local hospitals, and I feel very valued treated very fairly and very good'

Demographics

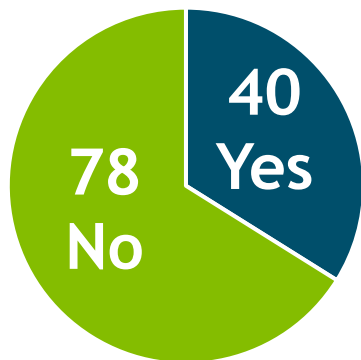
A little bit more about the men who answered our survey



What were their ages?

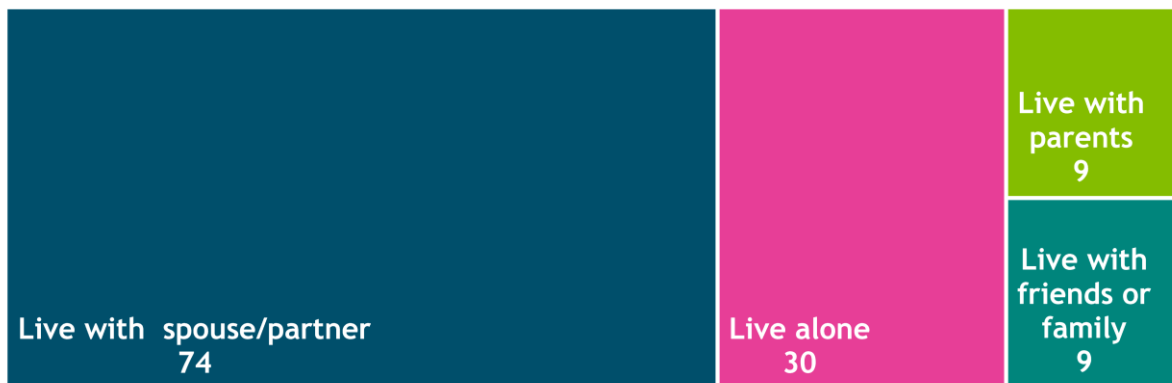


Did any of the men have a disability or impairment?

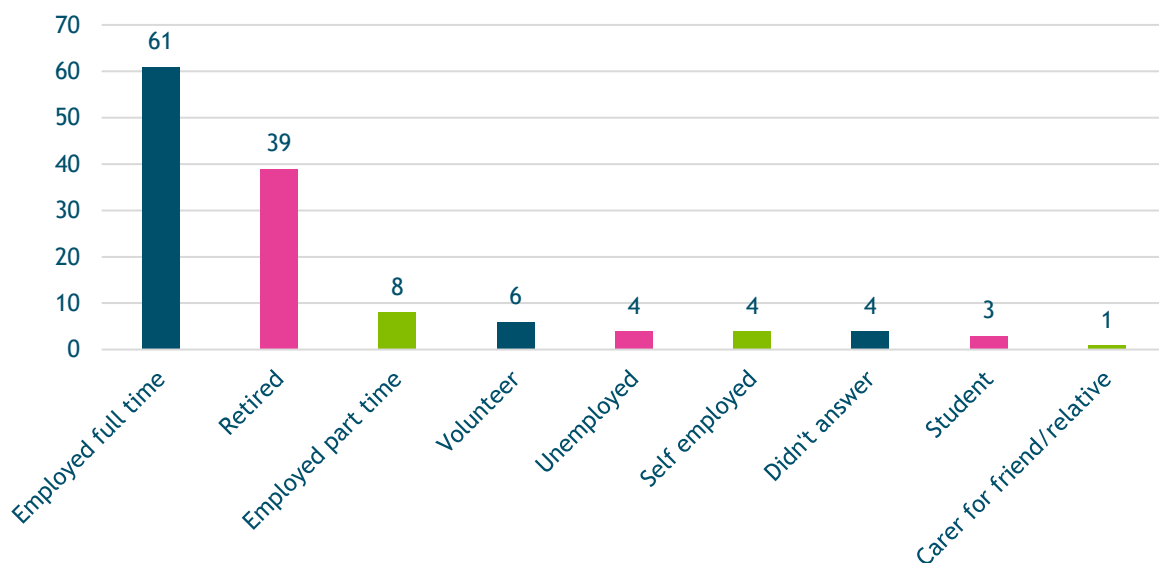


49 (38%) of the men told us that they had children

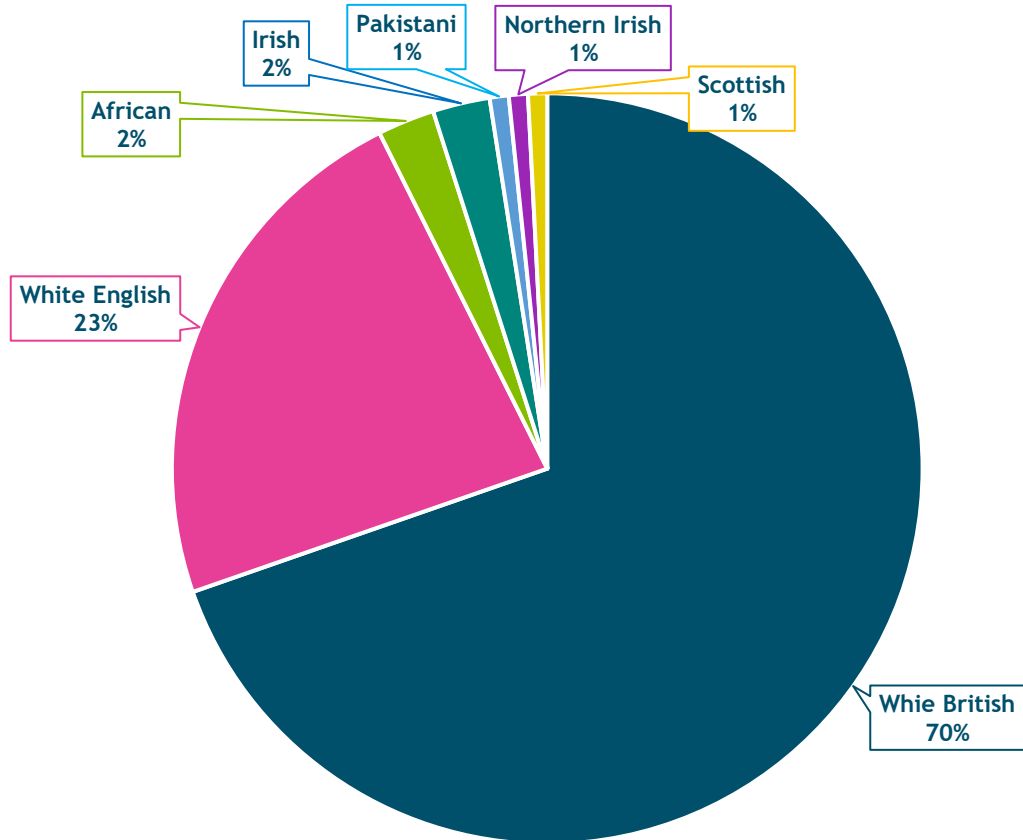
What was their living circumstance?



What was the men's employment status?



How did the men describe their race?



■ White British
 ■ White English
 ■ African
 ■ Irish
 ■ Pakistani
 ■ Northern Irish
 ■ Scottish

How did the men describe their sexual orientation?

7	11	106	1
Bisexual	Gay man	Heterosexual (straight)	Human

Conclusion

We have learnt through this project some of the difficulties that men in Salford have faced when trying to keep themselves healthy.

Whilst we acknowledge that this isn't a definitive conclusion on the subject of men's health, or that of their experiences with health and care services across the City, our findings do nevertheless give the providers and commissioners in Salford a starting point in which to improve this.

To summarise, we found that:

Health and care providers need to be more proactive in their approach in encouraging men to access their services

- Signposting or passing on further contact details doesn't always work - men would benefit from the initial steps being done for them e.g. making a referral appointment instead of expecting men to follow this up themselves.
- Men are usually put off from trying to access services by negative experiences from the past.

Get the messages right

- Prostate checks - tell the men it's a blood test, not necessarily a physical examination.
- Men need reliable and non-conflicting information on exercise and dietary advice.
- Information should be targeted at men and shared in more diverse ways than just the internet or social media.

More workplace interventions are needed

- Workplaces need to start or scale up the opportunities for staff to access visiting health and care organisations as men who have accessed these in the past, told us they are beneficial.

Men need to be treated with a degree of sensitivity by clinical staff

- If society is to break down the 'macho' stereotype, it needs to include the way in which some clinical staff talk to men - This can be a major barrier to men seeking help and support.

Easier access to mental health support

- Throughout the survey and our discussions, we found that men often require a low level of mental health support to help them manage the day to day stresses of modern life. Most men will not attempt to access support through fear of stigma and those that try, often feel they are not taken seriously enough or listened to.

At Healthwatch Salford, we hope to undertake a more detailed evaluation of the impact of our previous engagement projects on mental health services later in the year.

This report has been published on our website and shared with SCCG, Salford Health and Wellbeing Board, Salford City Council, Healthwatch England as well as our local NHS health Trusts.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks go out to all the men in Salford who took part in completing a survey or attending one of our focus groups.

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