



# Big Leeds Chat

Emerging findings report  
November 2019



## Background

The Big Leeds Chat (BLC) is a new way of the health and care system in Leeds coming together to listen to what is important to the people of Leeds about their health and wellbeing, particularly those with the greatest health inequalities. The first Big Leeds Chat took place in October 2018 and the report for this can be found at <https://healthwatchleeds.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/BLC-report.pdf>.



The second BLC happened in November 2019 and again brought together the leaders of the health and care system in Leeds to talk with the people of Leeds at Kirkgate Market about what is important to them and how do we become the best city for health and wellbeing. In addition, a number of local Big Leeds Chats also took place to support putting people's voices into the emerging Local Care Partnerships decision making processes as well as other community-based organisations such as food bank, college, GP practice.

Since the Big Leeds Chat month in November 2019, the data has been analysed and the emerging findings are within this report. The next steps include: analysis of the findings and identify the key messages for key strategic boards both within health and care and outside.

## What we found

### Question 1: What do you love about where you live?

405 people responded to this question, with some giving multiple responses. Responses were very similar to last year.

1. Community (180)
2. Green space and close to countryside (112)
3. Shopping and places to eat (87)
4. Culture & entertainment (77)
5. Easy to get around (63)
6. Public services & facilities (34)

Community was the top thing that people said they loved about where they lived – this included people talking about their friends, family, neighbours and local roots, as well as how they enjoy living in a multicultural, diverse and friendly city.

***“The people are friendly, they help out, do shopping, hang out washing, check you are OK.”***

***“That Leeds is a place for everyone, whoever you are, wherever you're from and whatever you like!”***

People said that they loved the parks and other green space in Leeds and that it is so close to the countryside. Some people enjoyed the fact that where they live is quiet and peaceful.

***“Local parks - being able to be in nature. Feel the seasons in parks.”***

In third place came shopping and places to eat. A lot of people mentioned valuing the market, not just as a place to buy good value food, but also for its atmosphere and people. There was also mention of the range of independent shops in Leeds as well as big shopping centres.

***“Leeds is a special place, it's got a great city centre, shops, bars, theatres, music venues, etc. And we are so close to beautiful countryside too!”***

The culture and atmosphere of Leeds was often mentioned, along with the variety of things to do, whether sports, cultural or arts activities. The nightlife in the city and Leeds United were also mentioned!

People liked the size of Leeds, making it easy to get around and giving it “a local feel”. Some people were positive about the good public transport links, and that it was easy to travel to other places, including the surrounding countryside.

***“Big enough to do things, but small enough to leave”***

Under public services and facilities, healthcare especially the services offered by hospitals were the most often mentioned along with schools.

## **Question 2: What do you do to keep healthy?**

444 people responded to this question, with some giving multiple responses. As for last year, exercise, healthy diet and family and community activities were the top responses.

1. Self-directed exercise (278)
2. Exercise class/centre (134)

3. Healthy diet (143)
4. Family & community (75)
5. Self-care (43)
6. Hobbies and interests (39)
7. Avoiding alcohol & smoking (26)
8. Work (18)
9. Engaging with health services (12)

What do you do to keep healthy?	How we defined it
self-directed exercise	Exercise that can be done solo and doesn't require a specially equipped facility. This includes things like walking, cycling, running and yoga.
exercise class/centre	Activities that require specially equipped facilities or are done in groups eg. Gym (72), swimming (26), dancing (13), football (10) and golf (5).
Healthy diet	Eating fruit and vegetables, cutting out sugar, watching weight, attending weight loss groups or counting calories, home-cooking.
Family & community	Seeing friends, going to social groups and centres, volunteering and helping others, generally interacting with other people.
Self-care	Consciously caring for mental health (eg taking baths, work-life balance, holidays), using self-help apps and avoiding pollution.
Hobbies and interests	Art and craft related activities, gardening and reading
Avoiding alcohol & smoking	Restricting or completely avoiding alcohol and not smoking
Work	Paid employment as a way of keeping mentally and/or physically healthy.
Engaging with health services	Regular health check-ups, counselling & therapy

28 people told us about **barriers** that prevented them from living a healthy lifestyle. The main barriers were:

- A lack of time and inconvenient shift patterns
- Physical and mental ill health (e.g.: painful periods, depression)

Accessing **public spaces** is a very important part of how people in Leeds stay healthy: 257 (58%) of people who responded to this question said they use public green spaces to help them stay healthy by doing things like walking, cycling, running or dog walking.

### Question 3: How can we make Leeds the best City for Health and Wellbeing?

444 people made some great suggestions around how we can make Leeds the best city for health and wellbeing. Most people made more than one suggestion in response to this question which we have categorised under different themes where appropriate. Themes were very similar to last year but there was a shift in emphasis with more of a focus on the improving health and care services and being more inclusive.

#### Top 3

1. Better transport (31%, 137)
2. Be more inclusive and have communities that talk to each other (22%, 97)
3. Improve health and care services (24%, 106)

#### Other responses

4. More health education and promotion (15%, 66)
5. Look after the environment (16%, 72)
6. Improve Community facilities (51) public spaces (17) =(73, 15%)
7. Tackle poverty and homelessness, and improve housing (7%, 32)
8. Make gyms, exercise classes and other services more affordable (7%, 30)
9. Deal with crime (6%, 26)
10. Less unhealthy fast food (4%, 16)

## **Better transport**

People want better public transport to make it easier to travel around and commute to work. They want buses to be cheaper, more frequent and reliable, with less cancellations and more bus lanes and bus routes available. Many people also suggested a better cycle infrastructure with more safe cycle lanes, particularly in the city centre.

*“Improve cycle infrastructure, and mentality of other road users.”*

*“Transport needs serious improvement - my 6-mile commute took 1hr 45 mins last night”*

37 (8%) mentioned reducing traffic congestion as a priority. There were several mentions of incentives to encourage people to use public transport such as in London where under 12s travel free, having ‘free days’ or reducing fares.

*“More investment in public transport to ensure services are frequent and encourage people to stop using their cars.”*

Several people also told us how they thought that better and cheaper public transport would help reduce social isolation.

*“Often I can't get to the events I'd like to as buses don't run frequently enough or I to get two buses from different operators meaning it is very expensive to get there.”*

## **Be more inclusive and have communities that talk to each other**

*“Ensuring that everybody regardless of background (race, gender, socio-economic group) has access to services across the city”.*

People wanted Leeds to be a place where places, services and activities are more accessible to everyone, including those with disabilities, hearing impairments, long term conditions, mental health issues, homeless people, and those living in deprived communities.

*“Increase inclusivity, city centre now focuses on certain people (people with money)”*

*“Adopt opening early for citizens with hidden disabilities (Autism, Aspergers, Learning disabilities) across all Council public services as well as shops.”*

*“Do more with the "come in" signs in shops. Encourage people to go in city centre with wheelchair.”*

*“Make pavements easier to walk on and less risky for people who need to use a mobility aid or who have limited vision. Stop people parking on the pavement.”*

Over a third of the responses in this category (39) showed a desire to encourage people to come together and talk to each other more so that people don't become isolated. People felt there should be more community activities and groups where people can meet others, and that perhaps parks and green space could be used more for this.

*“More outdoor activities. Eg. gardening and encouraging community participation and encouraging taking care of our environment as a healthy activity.”*

*“People coming together to be positive about the future no matter what their race or religion.”*

*“People to be more open - have a voice and connect with others for help”*

Also, around a third (34) of the responses mentioned having more facilities, activities and support for both older people and children and young people, as well as the those who care for them.

*“More parks, kids are always inside, more activities for youths”*

*“They took street furniture away- need more for senior citizens. Colour coded so younger people know when to vacate for older people.”*

### **Improving health and care services:**

*“Health and care is underfunded and we need to prioritise it. Prevention is key.”*

*“Lots of different teams and coordination of complex health conditions wasn't managed well. Need health literacy or confidence/assertive to get things resolved. Worried about vulnerable people not being able to navigate the system.”*

Improving and investing in health and care services was the third biggest issue for people. This included improving follow-up care, waiting times,

staffing levels and patient transport. Two of the key areas mentioned for improvement were accessing GPs (30) and mental health support (20). Difficulties getting an appointment at their local GP surgery is still a major issue for people and people want investment in more GPs and GP surgeries to make this easier.

***“A lot of help in Leeds is offered to people in immediate crisis, but very little is offered to people so that it never gets to that point in the first place.”***

### **Look after the environment**

People were very concerned about air pollution, particularly in the city centre.

***“Decrease the pollution, I have asthma and it affects this. More walking and cycling like Holland.”***

***“Make it a green city. Get all the cars out of the city. Get rid of diesel buses”***

They suggested that less cars on the road, more accessible green spaces and places to walk would help as well as protecting existing green space, including the green belt. People were also concerned about the wider climate emergency saying Leeds could do more to reduce carbon emissions, increase recycling and reduce plastic waste. People also wanted there to be less litter on the streets.

***“More tree and plant planting (including on buildings) Not relying too much on the big parks - we need smaller green spaces, pocket parks and places to socialise.”***

***“Promote and invest in sustainable energy usage- solar powered street lighting, housing being built with solar panels. Schools and public buildings to use rainwater like Leeds Beckett uni etc Continue to promote recycling.”***

### **Health Education and promotion**

People want to see more education and information made available to people of all ages about the importance of healthy eating & exercise, as well as what's available locally. They want more initiatives and groups to

get people involved and informed in staying healthy and more awareness about mental health. They see schools having a role in this, especially around how to cook healthy food and leading by example by providing healthy meals. (11,2%) Providing people with information about where and how they can access support.

*“widespread social media use - we need to raise awareness among the general population about its side-effects”*

*“Improve knowledge on what is available to manage my health”*

*“Bring back health educators to work with young people (used to have some- closed down). Improve well balanced school meals”.*

*“More regular stalls like today to give information about what is about.”*

*“Weekly/daily features about healthy lifestyles on Look North”*

### **Community facilities and improving public spaces**

People wanted to see more community facilities such as leisure centres, gyms and football pitches as well as community venues with ‘things to do’ such as youth clubs and day centres for the elderly. Several people mentioned the need for such places in the city centre, particularly since the international swimming pool closed, as well as longer opening hours for leisure centres. Several people suggested improvements in the market area (lower rents, more shops, seating area and heating!). Others wanted to see more things in the city like water fountains, more accessible public toilets and places to sit and rest.

*“Have services for things for people to do to get out and about. Variety of things to do. People just staying in rooms playing games.”*

*“Need to have pop up blood pressure / cholesterol checking locally eg in shops, market, centres.”*

*“Access to parks with lighting from October to April”*

## **Affordability**

30 people told us that they wanted more affordable access to leisure centres, gyms, and other activities, saying that Leeds City Council gyms were too expensive. They also wanted it to be more affordable to eat healthily, saying that healthy food is more expensive than junk food.

*“Affordable access to all of the health messages, such as eating well.”*

*“Exercise classes are expensive and a barrier”*

*“Introduce more affordable council sports centre membership/pay as you go gym use or free park gym (outdoor machines)”*

*“Have a free veg garden in Leeds”*

## **Homelessness, housing and poverty**

Some people told us that they that they could see rising numbers of homeless people in Leeds and that they thought there should be more housing and support for them as well more social housing housing generally. People also talked about the links between mental health, poverty and homelessness.

*“Get rid of the huge impact of poverty and austerity that is causing people lots of mental health and impacting on physical health.”*

*“Better regulation of private landlords who fail to maintain their housing stock.”*

## **Drugs, crime, police**

Some people felt that Leeds would be better for health and wellbeing if there were more police on streets, more action on drugs and alcohol-related incidents and less anti-social behaviour.

*“Not feeling very secure in the neighbourhood. Some areas lack security lighting, feels less secure now that day becomes shorter.”*

*“Drug problems (spice). Only see it getting worse.”*

## Fast Food

16 people told us they thought that there were too many fast food places and that they wanted more healthy alternatives.

*“There's lots of fast food outlets but not enough healthy choice. Difficult as that's what children want.”*

*“Replace/ reduce number of fast food outlets in deprived areas with fresh food healthy affordable options.”*

## Local Chats

### Morley

#### Question 1: What do you love about where you live?

62 people told us what they love about living in Morley.

- 50% of people (31) said they loved the community (compared to 39% Kirkgate)

#### Question 2: What do you do to keep healthy?

69% of people (44) in Morley use public space to keep healthy. (compared to 58% Kirkgate)

#### Question 3: What can we do to make Leeds the best city for health & well-being? (58 responses)

58 people answered this question. The top 3 answers were about improvements to:

Improving health and care services (21, 36%) instead of Kirkgate (24%) – just under half of these (10) related to people wanting better access to GPs, as well as improving mental health services (9)

*“Promote more mental health services in the city. A lot of waiting lists need cutting down. A drop in centre will be great”*

*“Mental wellbeing - provide education and training to people to be more resilient. Cheap wellbeing classes to make it more available. Lack of GP appointments.”*

## Otley

### Question 1: What do you love about where you live?

66 people told us what they love about living in Otley.

Over half the people we spoke to (38 people, 58%) told us they like the community in Otley (compared to 38% Kirkgate)

*“Everyone is very friendly. Got time for us. Accepting of everyone.”*

### Question 2: What do you do to keep healthy?

69 people told us what they do to keep healthy. The findings were near-identical to Kirkgate market.

### Question 3: What can we do to make Leeds the best city for health & well-being? (53 answered)

Community facilities and improving public spaces were a slightly bigger concern for people in Otley (23%/12) than people at Kirkgate (15%). This included more sports facilities and exercise classes as well as better shops.

*“Get a wider variety of shops - too many charity shops”*

## Hunslet

### Question 1: What do you love about where you live?

22 people told us what they love about where they live.

68% of people in Hunslet (15) told us that community was what they loved about where they lived, but only 14% (3) said they loved the green space in Leeds. (compared to 39% Kirkgate community and 28% green space)

### Question 2 – 25 answered

Self-directed exercise and walking in particular are a major part of how people in Hunslet stay healthy, with 80% of people (20) keeping fit this way (compared to 63% Kirkgate). As such, public space is especially important to them, with 76% of people (19) making use of it. (compared to 58% Kirkgate)

*“I walk everywhere as bus prices are too high”*

### Question 3 – 23 answered

Affordability was particularly important to people in Hunslet, with 26% (6) saying making services and facilities cheaper would help Leeds become healthier:

*“free activities for families struggling e.g free swimming, more skate parks, things for people with less money to feel included”*

*“cheaper rates for people on a low income. subsidized access to gym and fitness facilities”*

### Deaf & Blind (BID + Leeds society for deaf and blind)

#### Question 1 (22 responses)

Nearly half the people we spoke to said they loved Leeds’ green spaces (43%, 10, compared to 28% Kirkgate), but only 1 person said its culture and entertainment scene was something they loved (4% instead of 19% Kirkgate).

#### Question 2 (23 responses)

Diet was a very important part of how the people we spoke to stayed healthy: 57% (13) said they watched what they ate. By contrast, only 6 people did self-directed exercise (26%, 6) and only 2 (9%) used an exercise class or centre compared to (Kirkgate 63% self-directed exercise and 33% exercise class or centre).

#### Question 3 (18 responses)

Inclusive communication was a really important part of how we can make Leeds the best city according to these respondents: 56% gave this response (10).

A lack of sign language interpreters was identified as a major issue:

*“There is a problem with dentist and optician. Need more interpreters”*

*“Deaf awareness for all”*

## Bramley

### Question 1 (21 responses)

The responses were broadly similar to Kirkgate.

### Question 2 (21 responses)

Self-directed exercise in parks and other public places were really important ways in which people in Bramley told us they stayed healthy. 81% (17) gave this response compared 63% Kirkgate. Family and community were also significant, with a third (7) of people saying they helped their wellbeing by doing things like volunteering, playing in a band and seeing friends (compared to 16% Kirkgate).

### Question 3 (19 responses)

Being more inclusive and having communities that talk to each other was the biggest issue in Bramley (9, 47% compared to 22% Kirkgate)

*“Massive slice of marginalized men. Enable men to engage with services in their own way.”*

*“Offer facilities for everybody, often the facilities are aimed at specific group and not for general public.”*

## Wetherby

### Question 1 (59 responses)

People in Wetherby particularly appreciated how easy it was to get around the area and its small town feel (29% or 17 out of 59, compared to 16% Kirkgate), but they were less impressed by its shops, with only 10% (6) saying that is something they love about Wetherby (compared to 21% Kirkgate).

*“Community spirit, market town that is the right size. Plenty to do, xmas light and gardens. Volunteer sector strong here.”*

### Question 2

Broadly similar to Kirkgate

### Question 3 (61 responses)

People in Wetherby thought improving NHS services would help make Leeds the best city for health and well-being (23, 38%), almost half of

these responses (10) were about having better access to GPs. They also thought improving community facilities and public spaces were particularly important (34% or 21 out of 61 compared to 15% Kirkgate). There were several comments relating to improving the local swimming pool.

*“The leisure pool is dirty and cold. Cannot afford the posh gym. It needs an update.”*

## **Young people - Corpus Christi, Willow Young Carers & Leeds City College**

### **Question 1 (88 responses)**

For the young people we spoke to, Leeds’ culture and entertainment were a less important reason for loving the city than for other groups of people: only 5 (6%) said they loved this about Leeds (Compared to 19% Kirkgate).

### **Question 2 (90 responses)**

More young people said they go to an exercise class/centre to stay healthy (54, 60%) compared to 33% Kirkgate), this is because they often attend sports or activities clubs both inside and outside school.

### **Question 3 (85 responses)**

Young people were less concerned with improving public transport (6, 7% compared to 31% Kirkgate) and three times more concerned than the people at Kirkgate Market with having less fast food and more healthy options in food outlets (10, 12% compared to 4% Kirkgate)

*“Have a variety of healthy food outlets in the city centre”*

Being more inclusive and having communities that talk to each other was slightly higher than at Kirkgate (30, 35% compared to 22% Kirkgate), with nearly half of these (14) relating to having more activities and services available for young people. Young people were also concerned with services being more inclusive for people with disabilities.

*“Better education at schools for people with disabilities. Someone who can go into schools and give one to one support. People with disabilities have their say.”*

*“Build a huge gym for all people and abilities in the centre of Leeds”*

*“Help young people by have young people friendly doctors near where I live”*

## **Rutland Lodge Medical Centre**

### **Question 1 (15 responses)**

More people in this area appreciated ease of getting around (6, 40% compared to 16% Kirkgate) and shopping and places to eat (6, 40% compared to 21% Kirkgate).

*“Quiet, friendly, supportive towards one another. A mixed society. Great bus service for getting into town. Everyone caring.”*

### **Question 2 (15 responses)**

Responses were broadly in line with Kirkgate market.

*“I am active and involved. I attend an exercise class once weekly run by Yorkshire Dance. Eat healthily, garden, use a computer, I am still mobile.”*

### **Question 3 (14 responses)**

Wanted better inclusion and communities that talk to each other (8, 57% compared to 22% Kirkgate) and looking after the environment (5, 36% compared to 16% Kirkgate), particularly around reducing pollution.

*“We need more support for elderly people to deal with legal and personal problems (it gets harder when you can't see or hear well).”*

*“Be supportive by helping everyone. Carry on helping people with mental health issues and disabilities.”*

## **Garforth Net**

### **Question 1 (13 responses)**

Higher numbers of people in Garforth appreciated the sense of community and ease of getting around.

Community = 9 (69%) compared to 39% Kirkgate, ease of getting around = 6 (46%) compared to 16% Kirkgate

***“Easy access for busses and doctors and shops. A lot of friends nearby. Very good neighbours.”***

**Question 2 (12 responses)**

Broadly in line with Kirkgate responses

**Question 3 (10 responses)**

Improving health and care services was a bigger issue for people in this area = 7 (70% compared to Kirkgate 24%), the majority of which (6) related to improving access to GPs

***“Need more doctors and dentists in the Garforth area.”***

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