

Disabled Panel Survey 2022

Analytical report

August 2022

**Disabled
People's
Panel**

**Doing things differently
for Greater Manchester**

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The Survey

This analytical report presents some of the findings from a survey of 1495 disabled people in Greater Manchester that took place between June and August 2022. The survey asked a series of questions around different topics including:

- Your Money
- Social Care and Personal Assistance
- Where you live
- Lifestyle
- Your Mental Health
- Health Services
- Problem Solving
- Education and Employment
- About You

As well as asking participants closed ended questions with categories (e.g. yes/no), there were several opportunities for participants to type in to 'free text' boxes. This gives participants an opportunity to further elaborate on their opinions and add context to their reasons. It should be said, however, that those who choose to write in the free text boxes often use this space to talk about their negative experiences more than positive ones. Whilst these views have been presented within the analysis, they do represent the 'extremes' and not everyone that responded to the survey will have felt this way.

Alongside the survey, focus groups were carried out with some groups. The write ups from these focus groups have been included within the qualitative analysis.

The Sample

1495 disabled people living in Greater Manchester responded to the survey. Responses by those living outside of Greater Manchester have been excluded from this analysis as well as those who did not identify as disabled or did not choose a particular condition or impairment.

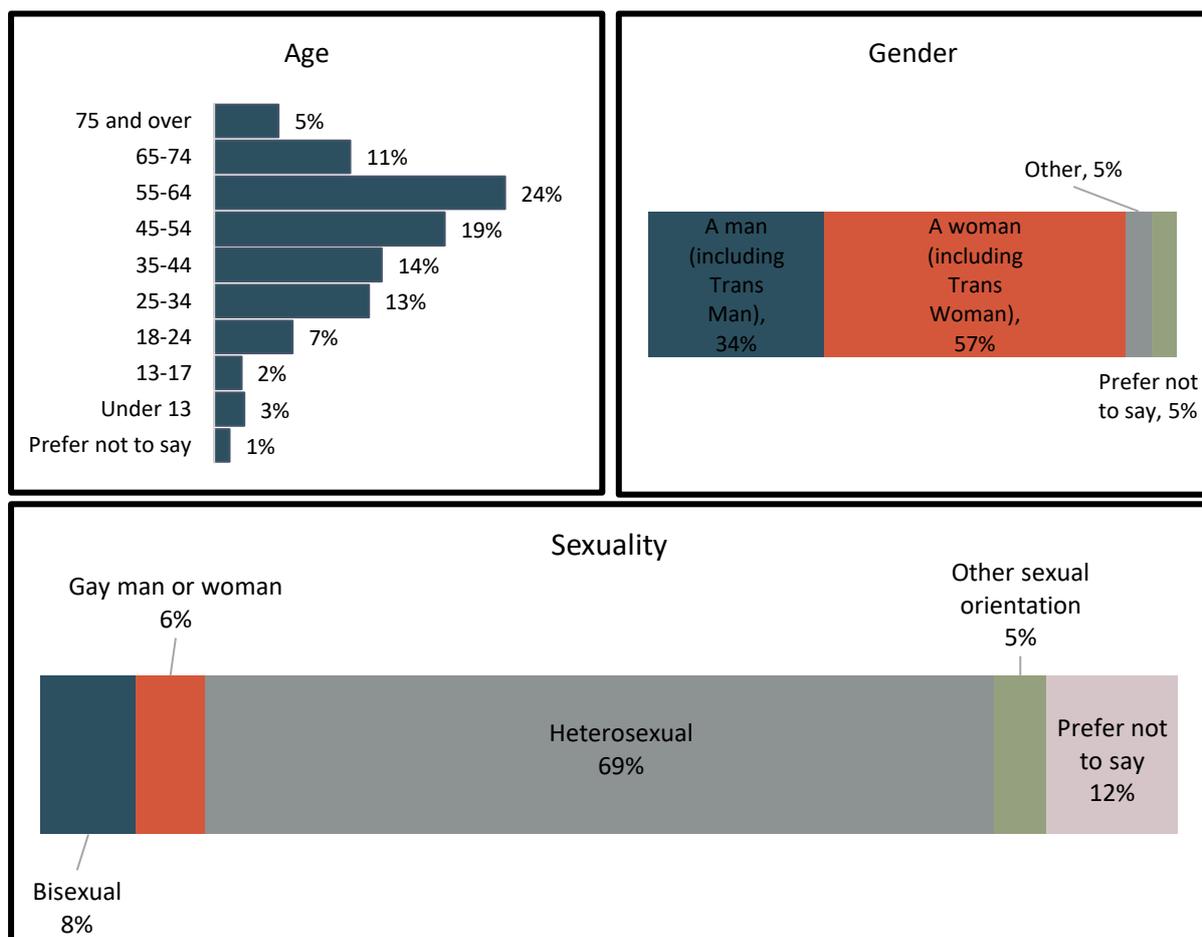
Whilst nearly 1500 disabled people took part in the survey, each respondent did not have to answer all of the questions within the survey and therefore the

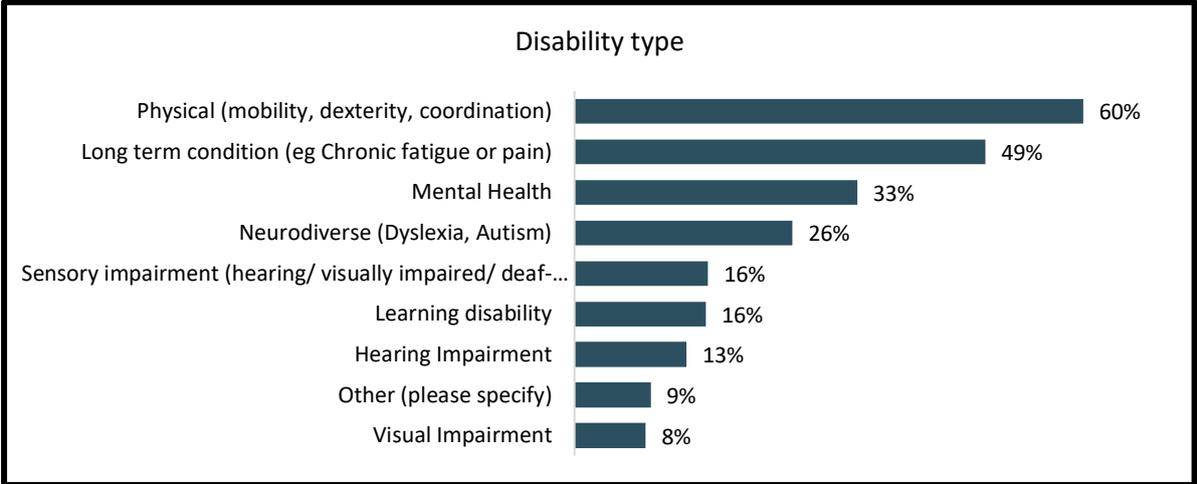
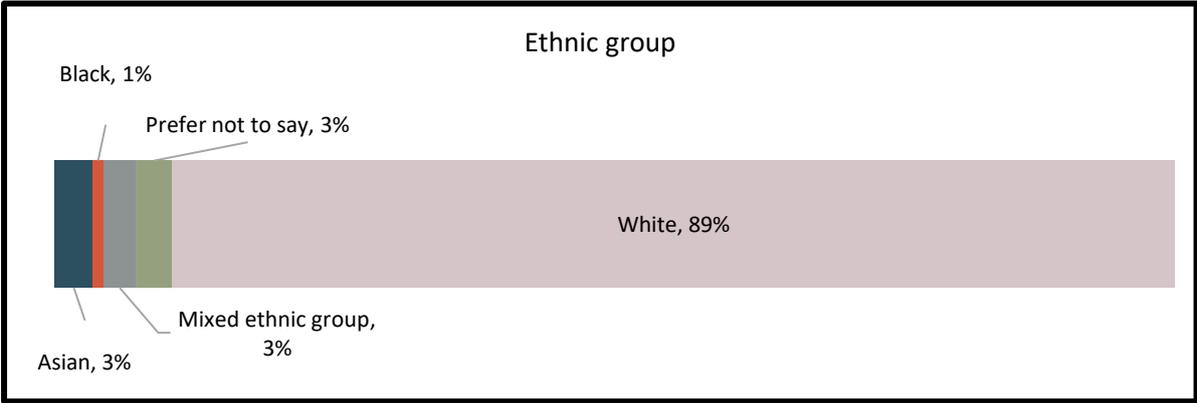
sample size for each question varies. Charts are presented with percentages of those that responded to the question.

The charts below show the demographic information and disability type of those that responded. More women than men responded to the survey and there is an underrepresentation of ethnic minorities within the sample as only 7% of respondents identified their ethnic group as something other than white. There are probably several reasons for this including the reach of the survey, what is known about gender and disability, the lack of diversity in the disability movement and the strong sense of stigma attached to disability within some communities.

Data quality statement

A sample size of 1495 is notable and means that the statements made within the report carry weight. However, because the sample is not representative, it is not possible to make statements about statistical significance as we cannot be sure that this is an accurate representation of the disabled population in Greater Manchester.

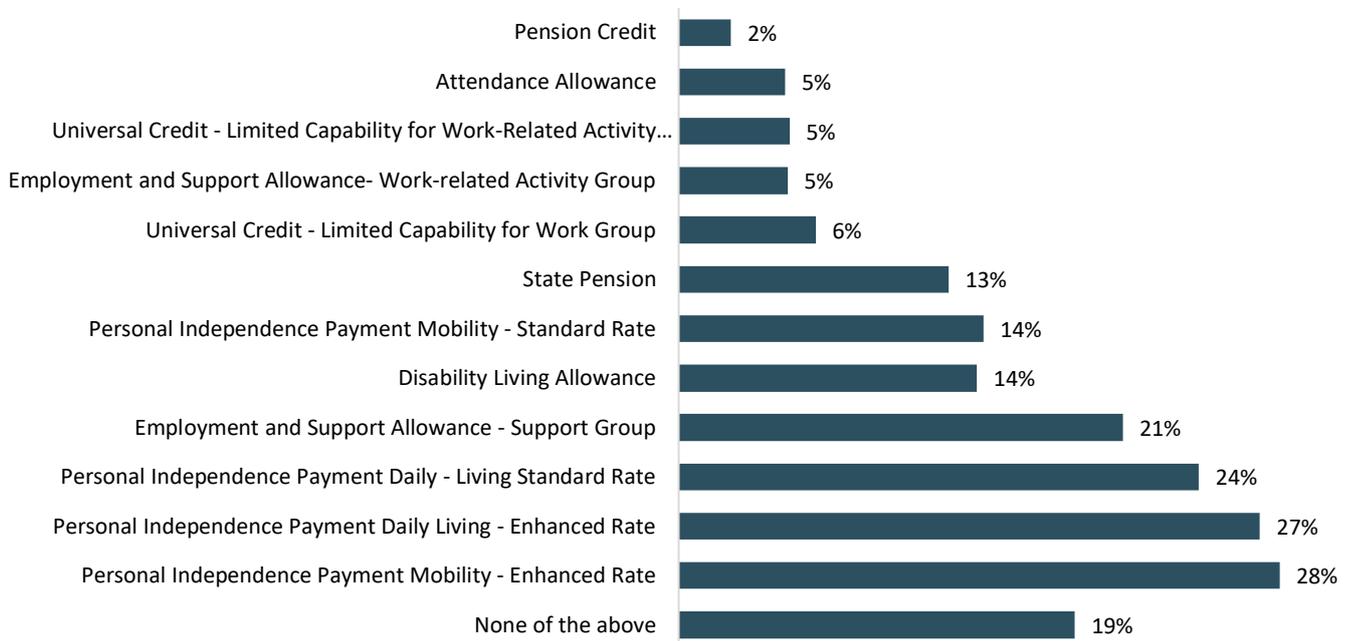




Your Money

Benefits

81% of respondents are on some type of benefits. The percentages do not total 100% because several respondents are on multiple types of benefits. The most common type of benefits is Personal Independence Payment, with 79% of



respondents receiving some form of these.

Respondents were asked how easy they found applying for and receiving benefits on a scale of 1 (very easy) to 100 (impossible). The chart below displays the distribution of responses with the red line representing the average (67). This shows that the majority of people think that applying for benefits is closer to impossible than very easy. 13% of people responded with 100 (impossible).



The written responses around benefits demonstrate the severe challenges that disabled people are facing when applying for and receiving benefits. Many commented on the stress and anxiety brought on by having to apply. In particular, people commented on the challenges associated with applying for personal independence payment (PIP). Many respondents have had to go through the appeals process to receive the right benefits, which people found particularly stressful.

“Claiming PIP was a very stressful and deflating experience, it left me in tears and caused extreme anxiety and low moods. I still don't believe I'm receiving the right amount based on my support needs but I'm too afraid to ask for a reassessment because it was so stressful to even get to the point I'm at now. ESA was an utterly different experience, I felt heard and supported during my assessment.”

“I appealed, but they didn't really consider the things I said, and just read through the whole thing again and concluded the same. It was soul-destroying and I couldn't cope with appealing further as it was making me really ill.”

Another theme that came through strongly from the qualitative responses was that whilst applying for benefits they constantly had to ‘prove’ their disabilities, many of which are ‘hidden’. It is clear that this takes a toll on people’s mental health as they do not feel believed.

“Constantly having to "prove" my mostly hidden disability has a knock on effect on my mental health”

“It took me a long time to get pip at my rates and had to appeal and even had to prove my disability and my impairment. They made me feel like a liar and questioned my mental health”

People also commented on the fact that they have to regularly re-apply for benefits. Not only does this cause people a lot of stress, but many felt that it was an unnecessary process as their disability would not change.

“I am always going to be disabled, yet I still have to fill in a form every few years which causes me stress and anxiety as the dwp are very difficult”

“People are being harassed over life long conditions. About things that are not going to change, i.e. having a learning disability.”

Furthermore, lots of disabled people found that the forms were very long and complicated and made applying for benefits really challenging.

“Need a degree to fill out the forms and even then have to be well versed in using the wording the benefits agencies are looking for.”

Affording things

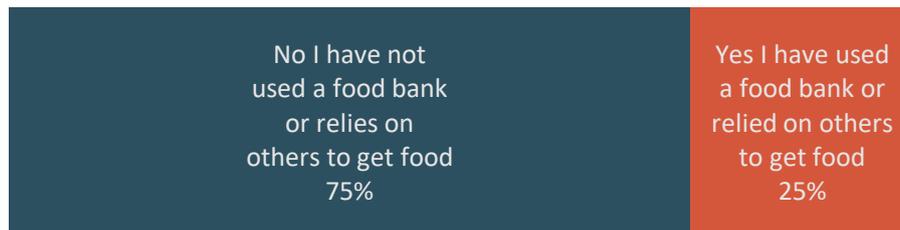
Respondents were asked a series of questions related to the cost of living. These graphs highlight the financial challenges that disabled people are facing within Greater Manchester. 20% of disabled respondents cannot afford all essentials whilst 28% can afford essentials but nothing else. This represents nearly half the sample that cannot ever afford to buy luxuries.



A quarter of disabled people who responded to the survey have had to use a food bank or have relied on others to get food. 68% of people have had to change the food that they buy or what they eat because of money since 2020. A report from the Women’s Budget Group titled ‘The Income Crisis: A Gendered Analysis (June 22)’ shows that in the year up to March 2022 food bank use increased 81% compared to the same period in 2016. This need is disproportionately experienced by disabled people, who constitute 62% of working-age adults referred to Trussell Trust food banks (three times the rate of disabled people in the population).¹

25% of male respondents have used a food bank or relied on others to get food compared to 21% of female respondents. There is also a split by age amongst respondents with those aged 18-24 the most likely (33%) to have used a food bank and those aged 65-74 the least (13%).

¹ [The Income Crisis: a Gendered Analysis - Women’s Budget Group \(wbg.org.uk\)](https://www.wbg.org.uk/reports/the-income-crisis-a-gendered-analysis-june-22/)



The qualitative responses show that disabled people rely on family members, neighbours and food banks to get by.

“My parents support me financially for food every month”

“My neighbour brings me leftovers sometimes”

In addition to this, lots of disabled respondents have had to start changing their spending habits by looking around for cheaper prices, buying own brand products or shopping at cheaper supermarkets.

“I have to look for bargains or reduced prices. I just can't afford to buy what I use to do. It's very difficult+ sad really”

“Stopped branded shopping and only buy from the cheaper priced supermarkets: home bargains, B&M, Lidl, Aldi, Iceland etc. These supermarkets do not have online delivery so I am usually reliant on others to do my shopping here. “

Many also said that they cannot afford to buy ‘fresh’ or ‘healthy’ food and instead rely on poor quality, processed food because this is cheaper to buy and to cook.

“Have to buy the cheapest food not necessarily the best for me”

“I would love to cook healthy food but have to get cheaper meals”

“I eat only one meal a day unless someone brings me leftovers as I'd need to buy cheap processed food if I wanted 3 meals a day and that seriously affects by health.”

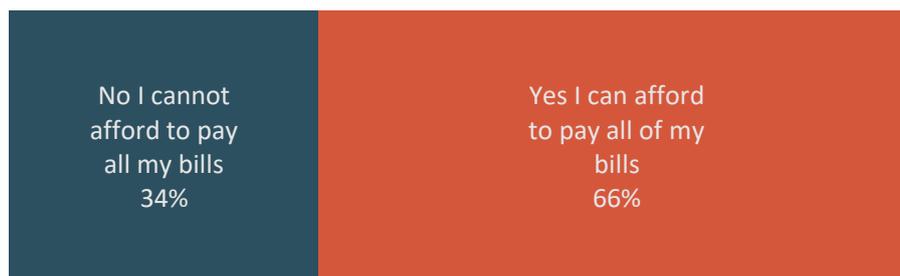
Some disabled people also commented that whilst they had not used a food bank yet, they were worried that they may have to over the winter because of the cost of living increases.

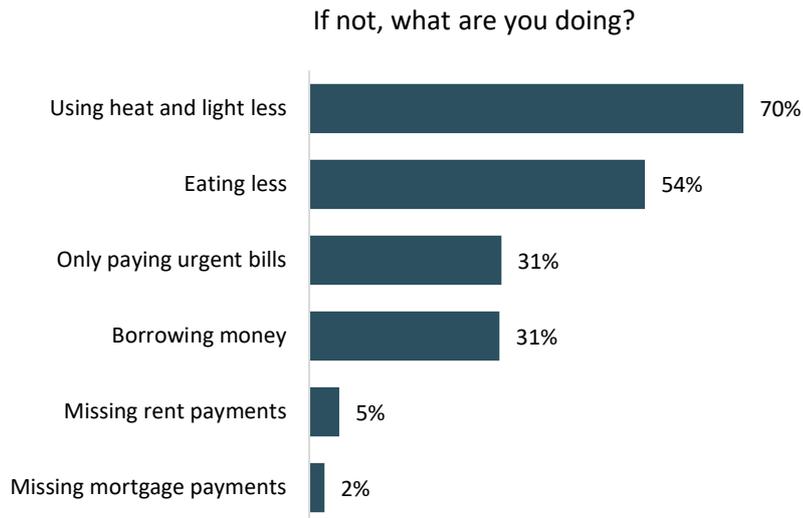
“Not yet - but worried about having to rely on them over winter.”

In addition, some disabled people commented that food banks often do not provide the food that they need due to the type of diet they are on.

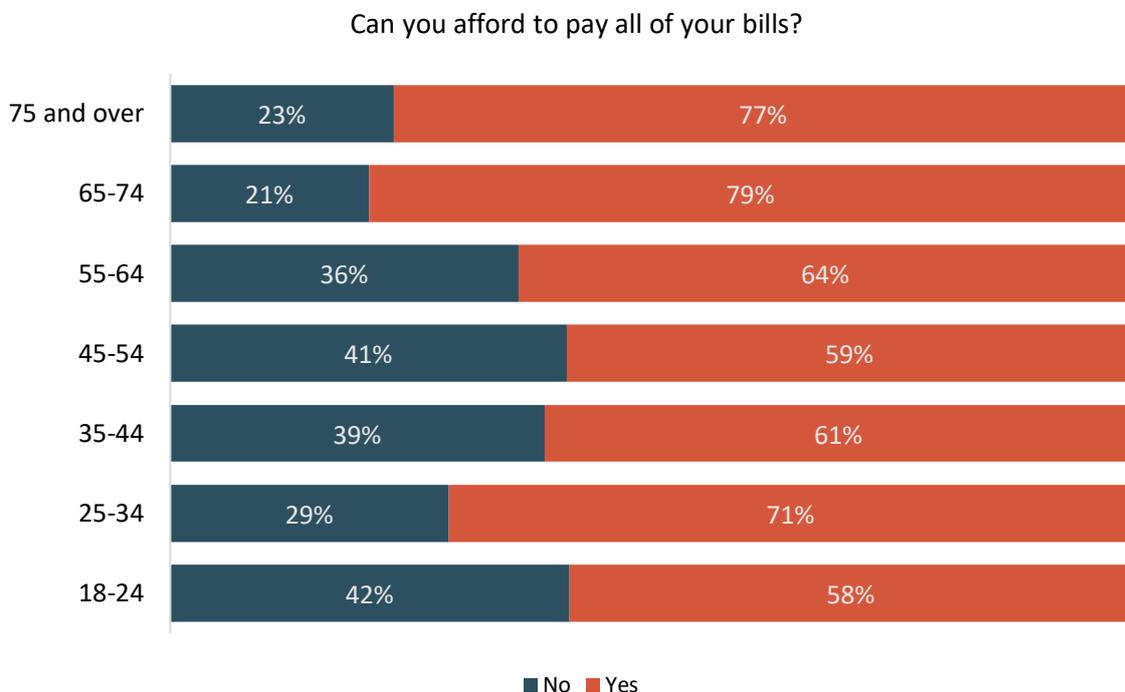
“Food banks rarely stock the food items I need. During lockdowns (classed as extremely vulnerable) the food parcels were useless for me.”

A third of disabled people who responded to the survey cannot afford to pay all their bills. When asked what they were doing about this, 70% said that they were using heat and light less and 54% were eating less. Some were missing payments (7%) and 31% were borrowing money.





Older respondents appear to be struggling less with paying their bills than younger respondents. Those aged 65-74 and 75 and over are much less likely to say that they cannot afford to pay all of their bills (79% and 77% respectively) compared to the average (66%). These results should be interpreted with caution however, as the sample sizes for some age groups are small.



The qualitative responses highlight the extent to which some disabled people are reducing the amount of food they eat and the amount of energy they are

using to save money. This mirrors the findings of the GM residents survey² that found that 40% of disabled people have cut the size of a meal or skipped a meal due to finances compared to a Greater Manchester average of 25%.

“I skip meals, I half every portion, I live very minimally, I never go shopping for anything other than bits of food, I pay minimum amounts off debts as I need to keep them happy so that I can order a new vaccume [sic] or washing machine in the future as I have no other means of affording/replacing needed items I am currently in rent arrears of £535 as I could not afford to pay the rent last month and got so sick of having empty cupboards and freezer. I am hungry”

“Cut down to maybe 2 so called meals a day. No snacks or luxuries in anyway. Behind on rent, council tax paid late every month and other debt is under payment plan reviews.”

“I pay my bills first when I get my benefits once they are paid I live off what is left some weeks I live off breakfast cereal.”

Disabled people are having to make choices about what they can and cannot afford and this is leaving them without things that they need, for example toiletries and mobility vehicles.

“Stopped any kind of subscriptions or days out. Just surviving in the house. Its miserable”

“Cut all our insurance including house insurance, use the car only once a week, do not buy anything. Use fabric softener as hair conditioner.”

“I have returned my motability vehicle as I can no longer afford to run it”

People overwhelmingly responded that the amount of money they have affects their quality of life. Respondents commented that more money would allow them to eat healthier, leave the house more, go on holiday and do more activities.

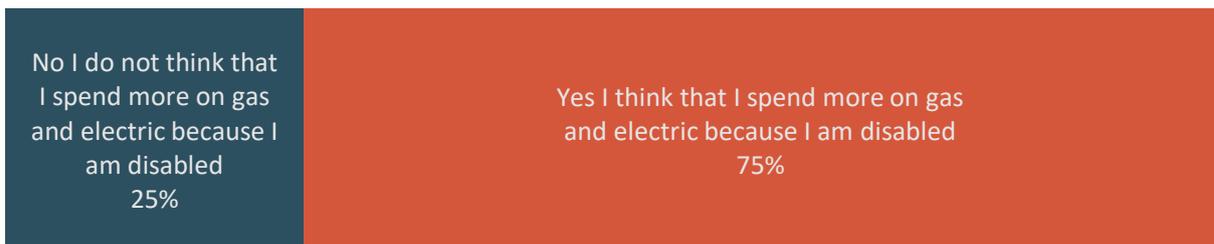
39% of respondents owed money. Qualitative responses show that respondents predominantly owe money to credit cards, loans, overdrafts or

² [PowerPoint Presentation \(greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk\)](http://greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk)

family members. Some disabled people commented that they were on debt management plans for their debts.



Respondents were asked whether they think that being disabled meant that they had to spend more on gas and electric. Three quarters agreed with this statement.



Qualitative responses highlight the extent to which having certain conditions or impairments requires more energy use. For example some disabled people need to have more things plugged in or need to keep warm to reduce their symptoms.

“I have numerous items of equipment that run off electricity, all of which are needed. This is inclusive of hoists and machines that allow me to breathe, my ventilator is to be used for nine hours a night and incorporates a heating element which heats water to ensure my airways don't get to dry.”

“Since fuel prices went up it takes over half my pension which leaves us short for anything else. I have cut down on all we can, I am diabetic so have to keep the fridge on, have breathing difficulties so need my nebuliser, have to use electric for my mobility scooter because I can't walk very far. Feel cold a lot

because of my various illnesses so need to keep warm but can't keep heating on."

Furthermore, lots of disabled people rely on taxis because of lack of accessibility of other forms of transport. This costs more and puts further strain on their finances.

"Because of poor transport, I rely on taxis. This means I live in my overdraft and can afford little else. I'm so far behind on my energy bill."

When asked how concerned they were about next winter, for example, keeping warm and having enough to eat on a scale of 0 (not at all worried) to 100 (extremely worried), 28% said that they were extremely worried. The graph below shows the distribution of responses between 0-100, with the red line representing the average (73). This chart highlights that disabled people in Greater Manchester are very concerned about next winter.



Whilst it is clear from the qualitative responses that some disabled people are already facing extreme financial challenges, lots more disabled people commented about the worries that they have around affording the basics over the winter as many have already cut down on everything that they can.

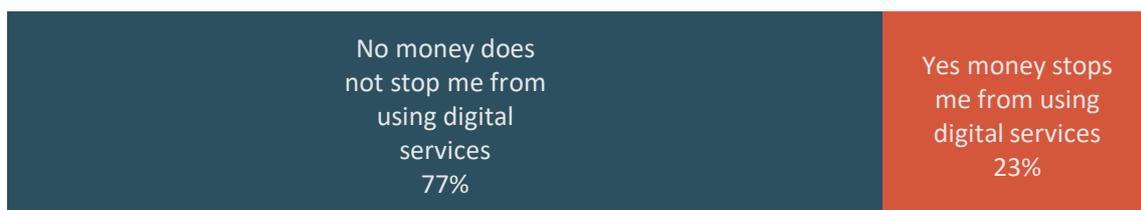
"Although I have been able to afford an occasional luxury previously the significant increase in the cost of basics and gas and electricity means that I will be unable to do this going forward"

“We don't smoke, drink or eat out. Our last holiday was 24 years ago. We have always managed to get by & put something away each month towards big items eg washer, cooker, Christmas, Birthdays & clothes, that's not possible anymore. By luxuries we mean meat & other dietary items we need for my diabetes & my husband's heart condition (he is also disabled)”

“The only time we go out is to our allotment or to walk around the park. I love baking with my mum but can no longer afford to put the oven on. We don't go on holiday. We are really worried how we will cope over the winter.”

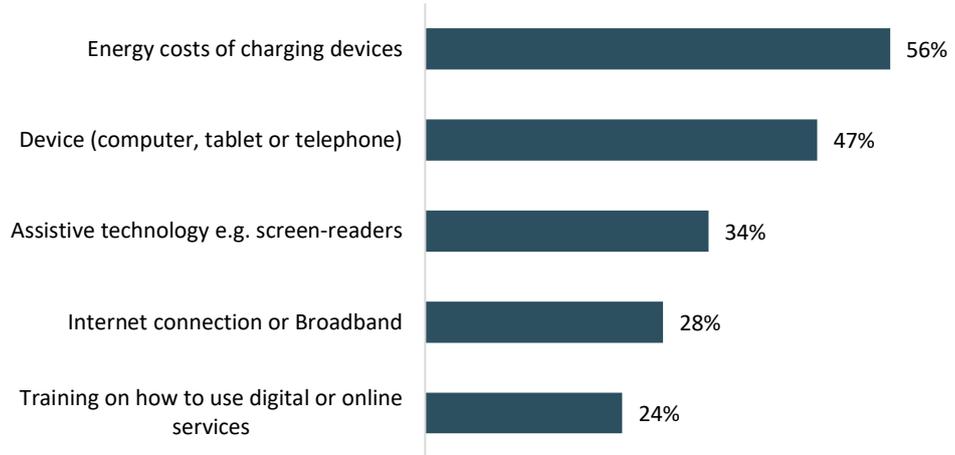
Digital exclusion

Respondents were asked some questions around digital exclusion. Nearly a quarter of disabled respondents felt that money stopped them from using digital services.



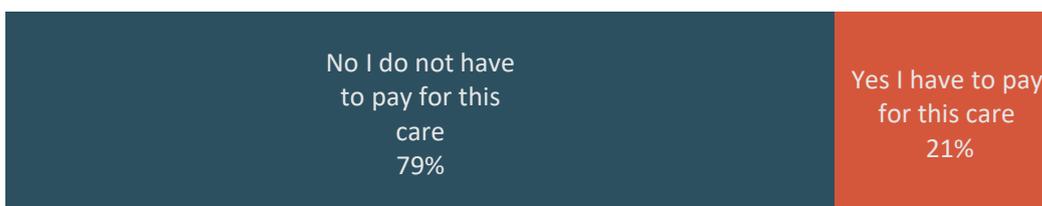
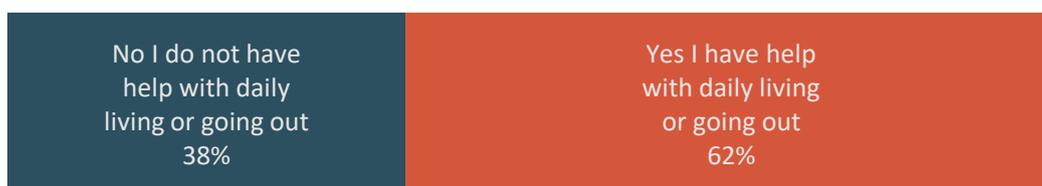
For those that said money stopped them from using digital services, more than half cannot afford the energy costs of charging devices. Nearly half cannot afford a device and over a quarter cannot afford Internet/Broadband. Respondents could choose multiple options so totals will not equal 100%.

If yes, what can you not afford?

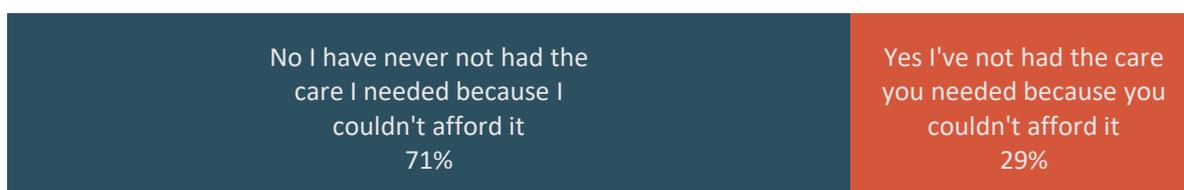


Social Care

Disabled people were asked about the care they receive. 62% have help with daily living or going out. 21% said that they have to pay for this.



29% of disabled people who responded to the survey have not had the care they needed because they could not afford it.



Disabled people commented that they could not afford to pay for the hours of care that they required, leaving them struggling or relying on family and friends. Some commented that the rate of pay that they could offer to carers was not attractive so they struggled to find personal assistants or people to care for them. Others said that changes to their benefits meant they could no longer afford care.

“Haven't had full cover since the start of the pandemic. Difficult to find staff at the terrible pay rate.”

“My husband had to give up his full time work to care for me. It is very expensive having a carer.”

“I had a PA for 20 hours a week, to help me wash, dress and prepare meals. They wanted more in contributions from me, than her weekly wage, and I couldn't afford it at all! So now I injure myself and am exhausted because I have no help”

“Family and friends are relied on too much. It makes them ill. Eventually friends leave.”

The majority (63%) of disabled people felt that the support they received had not changed over the last two to three years but 29% thought it had gotten worse.



Respondents were asked whether their social care met their needs for having a social life on a scale of 0 (not at all) to 100 (fully met). The graph below shows the distribution of responses, with the red line representing the average of 40. Nearly a quarter of people (23%) scored between 0 and 5.



Respondents were also asked what difference having the right support makes. The responses focused on increased independence, allowing their family to have a break, better employment opportunities and improved quality of life.

“Would improve my outcomes for getting a good job”

“more independence and less stress, be able to work more self-employed hours, eat more healthier and exercise a little more”

“It would mean me and my mum could go out a lot more together if there was someone to help us. It would also mean my mum could have some time to herself to visit her friends.”

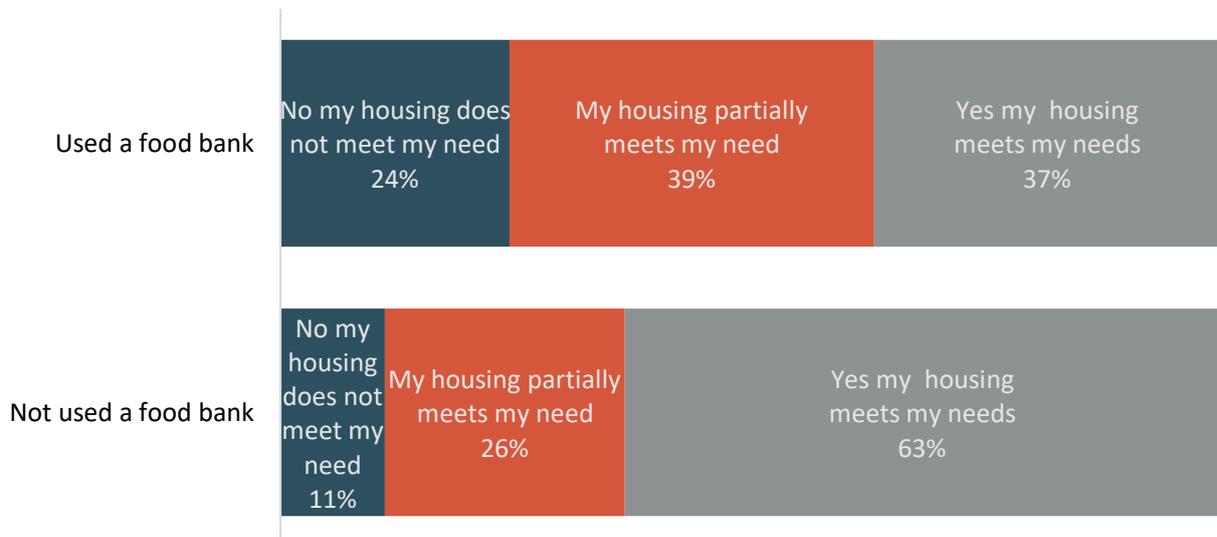
“Quality of life. I am able to attend to my basic needs but can't do many cleaning/ housework tasks like taking my rubbish out or making the bed so I've had to sit in a room full of bin bags and garbage and flies with no bedsheets when I can't find a friend to help out which really affected my mental health”

Housing

57% of disabled people felt that their housing met their needs. This means that 43% of disabled people that responded to the survey are living in housing that either partially meets their need or does not at all. When a similar question was asked in the 2020 Covid survey of disabled people, 37% of respondents said that they were in inaccessible or partially accessible housing which suggests that the problem is worsening.



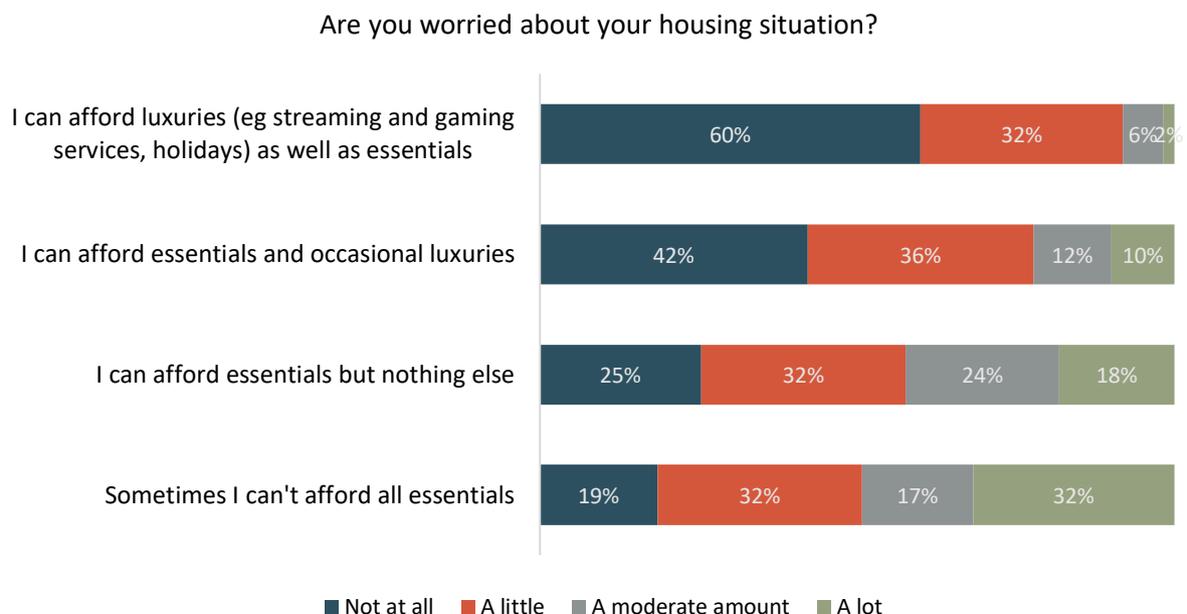
When this is split by those who have used a food bank and those who have not used a food bank or have relied on others to get food, there are clear differences. Only 37% of those who have relied on a food bank have housing that meets their need. This compares to 63% of those who have not relied on a food bank. This demonstrates the multiple challenges that some disabled people in Greater Manchester are facing.



64% of disabled people said that they were worried about their housing situation. 15% said that they are worried 'a lot'. In 2020, 32% of respondents said that they were worried about their housing situation. This is a huge increase in the last two years.



Once again, there is a clear financial split amongst respondents with the poorest disabled people feeling the most worried about their housing. For those that say they sometimes cannot afford all essentials, 81% are worried about their housing, with 32% saying they are worried 'a lot'. This compared to 40% of people who can afford luxuries as well as essentials saying they are worried about their housing situation, with only 2% saying they worry a lot.



The qualitative responses around housing highlight two issues around housing that disabled people are facing. Firstly, some are living in deprived areas with poor housing stock, damp problems and poor insulation. Secondly, some disabled people need adaptations in their house and they cannot afford these.

“needs maintenance for damp and some repairs but can't afford it”

“The house itself is fine, but the neighbourhood is rough. Constant shouting and fighting overstimulates [sic] me and fireworks trigger my PTSD frequently.”

“The place I am living is over run with rats I cannot leave my doors open there is antisocial behaviour all around it interrupts my sleep. I cannot move because I can't afford to”

Do not have a downstairs toilet and struggle with stairs at times.”

“Kind of cramped - 6 people (of which more than half are autistic) in a 3 bedroom house with small rooms, a tiny kitchen and small bathroom.”

“With the long term conditions I have I do need a downstairs toilet but no success yet.”

Disabled people were also asked how worried they were that they might not be able to live on their own because the right support is not available. 58% of people said that they were worried about this or sometimes worried about this. This is consistent across all types of disability.



Qualitative responses showed that disabled people were worried that a deterioration in their health would leave them struggling in the future. Many worried that their partners or family members might not be able to help them in the future but that they relied on their care.

“My husband is a pensioner with failing health, without him I could not carry on.”

“If anything happened to my husband I wouldn't be able to live on my own.”

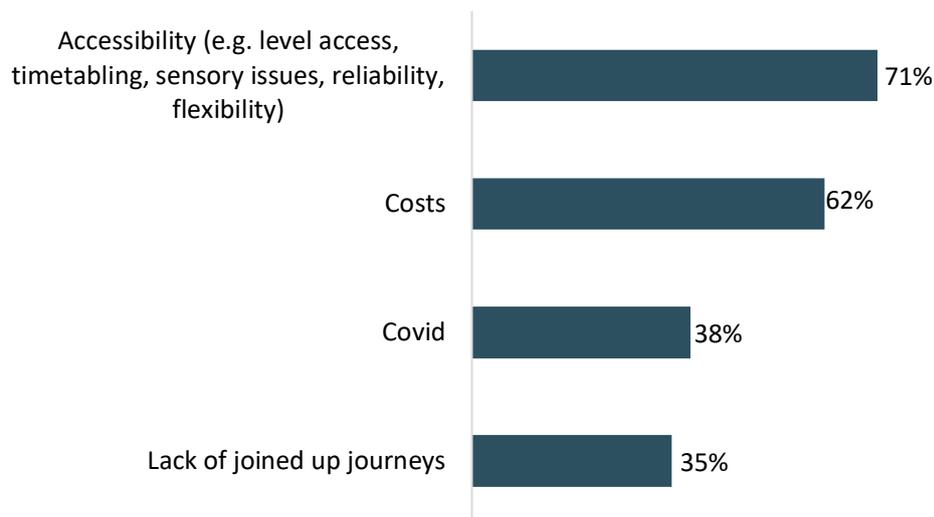
“I have a partner but he is 10 years older and has been unwell too.”

Accessibility

Only a quarter of disabled respondents (24%) felt that they could travel everywhere they wanted without difficulty with the other three quarters saying they cannot travel everywhere they like or that they have difficulty doing so.



When asked about the reasons they found travelling to places difficult, the most common reason was accessibility (71%) followed by costs (62%). Respondents could choose multiple options so totals do not equal 100%.



Qualitative responses also highlighted accessibility and cost as the two biggest barriers. The cost of public transport, trains and taxis was commented on as well as the inaccessibility of local train stations due to stairs. In addition, disabled people felt that shops were inaccessible and that there were fewer disabled toilets and parking when out and about. Some also said that reductions to bus services had affected them or that public transport was not joined up or was infrequent.

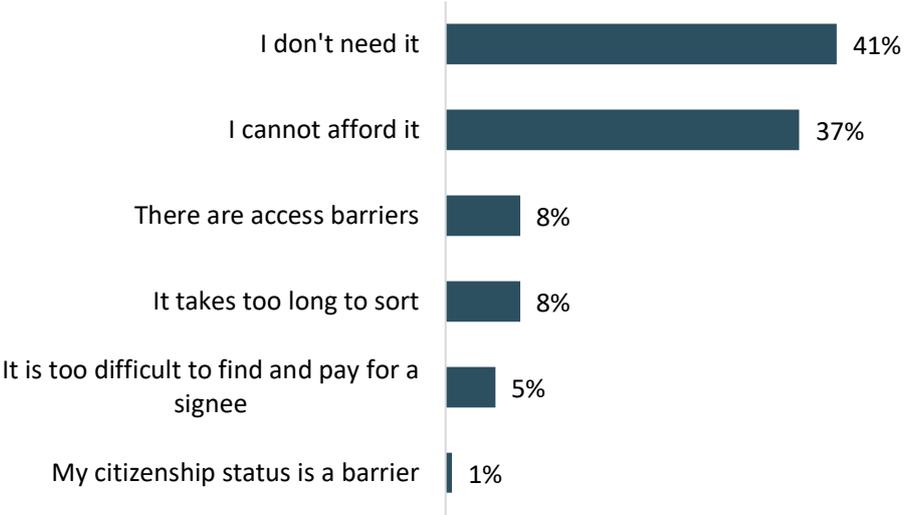
“I cannot use my local train station (Levenshulme) due to it having three flights of stairs. I have a blue badge but driving to accessible parking spaces in the city centre is increasingly difficult.”

“Access isn't available in possibly over 50% of where I try to venture”

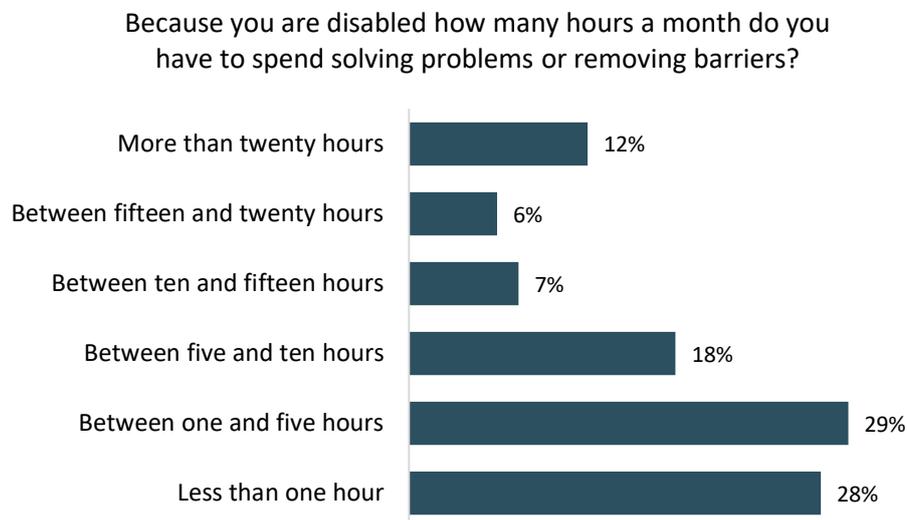
“I can't go out often due to my physical health and lack of transportation. I can't afford to pay for transport.”

“public transport in greater manchester is a joke, delays are constant, prices are too high and it can take so long to get from a - b when it wouldn't in a car and needing multiple changes and different bus companies”

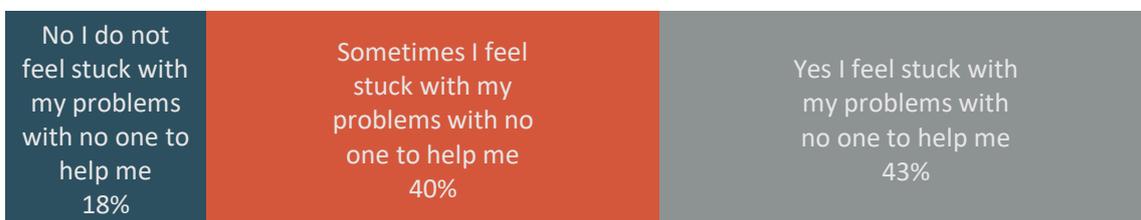
A small proportion of respondents to the survey do not have photo ID (20%). The reasons given for this were predominantly that people did not need it (41%) or could not afford it (37%). Again, the total is not 100% as respondents could choose multiple options.



Respondents were asked how many hours per month they spend solving problems or removing barriers. 12% said that they spend more than twenty hours doing this, whilst 28% said that they spend less than one hour and 29% said that it took them between one and five hours per month.



82% of those that responded said that they feel stuck or sometimes feel stuck with problems with no one to help them.



When asked who they go to for help, the overwhelming majority said that they rely on family for support. Some said that this was because they could not afford other help, others said that it was because their family knew their challenges and they felt comfortable with them. Others however, commented that they relied on their family because there was no other option available.

“Because there is nobody else to help everything is difficult and complicated”

“As can be trusted to listen to my needs and get good result”

“Because I feel more comfortable with them over other people”

Disabled people have also sought help from other disabled people because they have the experience and knowledge.

“because i found they understood better than alot of healthy / able bodied people, simply because they havent experienced the same push back”

“Because they understand and we're able to help me navigate”

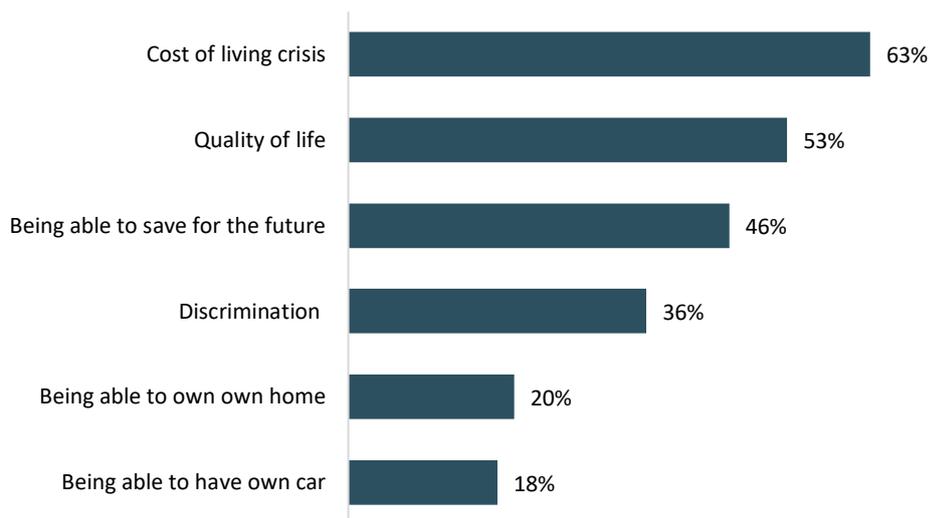
Furthermore, disabled people have also sought help from Citizens Advice and community and voluntary organisations when trying to deal with a particular challenge. For example, benefits or filling out a form.

“to check my rights in terms of employment”

“Help filling in benefits forms”

Wellbeing and Mental Health

Disabled people were asked about what they were concerned about. 63% said that the cost of living crisis and 53% were concerned about their quality of life. 36% were concerned about discrimination. They could choose multiple options and therefore the total is greater than 100%.



A quarter of respondents were worried about hate crime and a further 20% had experienced it. For those that described themselves as neurodiverse or having a learning disability, this increased to 30% and 28% respectively that had experienced hate crime.



Disabled respondents commented on the underreporting of hate crimes. Many said that they would not report, some felt that they would not be believed and others thought it was a waste of time. Others have had bad experiences reporting in the past.

“I'd feel like I was wasting police time if I rang them to report someone being mean because I'm disabled”

“I'd absolutely never report it to the police- they wouldn't take it seriously, and they perpetrate more hate crimes against us (trans, disabled people) than anyone.”

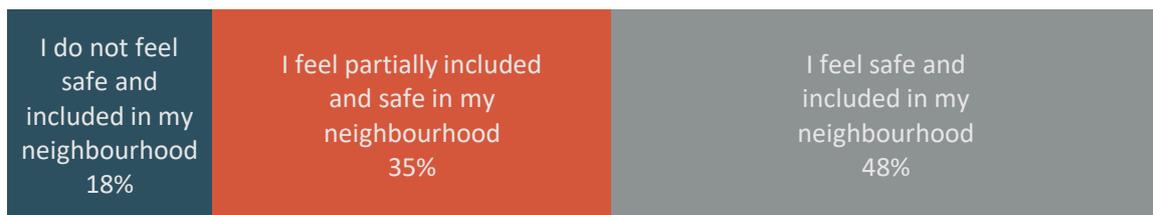
“Hate crime against disabled people is under reported because people don't know what that is. They are so used to the public treating them this way, and that nothing is done about it, they don't bother reporting it. More needs to be done on what is a hate crime and how to report it.”

“It was a few years ago. Reported to the police but they did not seem to think it was serious.”

39% of disabled people that responded to the survey felt that attitudes towards disabled people were worse than before Covid and just 6% felt that they were better.



When asked about how safe and included they feel in their neighbourhood, more than half do not feel completely included and safe. 18% said they do not feel safe and included and 35% that they only feel partially safe and included.



The free text responses particularly focus on feelings of safety. Many commented on the crime and antisocial behaviour within their neighbourhood which does not make them feel safe, such as burglary and youths loitering. There was also an overwhelming amount of responses which commented on the police's lack of action.

“There is a lot of anti social behaviour and violence locally with a bit of a sinister atmosphere. There's even passive aggression. Unfortunately the local police and authorities are useless and always pass the buck or just ignore the situation.”

“Somebody smashed the front door of our flats down in the middle of the night. Our flat is next to the front door and I was terrified. I called the police but they didn't come out or even call back.”

“Every time u ring 101 we given a number and never hear from them”

Lots of disabled people, however, talked positively about the way they are treated by their neighbours. They felt supported by those that they knew in their area but did also fear abuse from those that they didn't know.

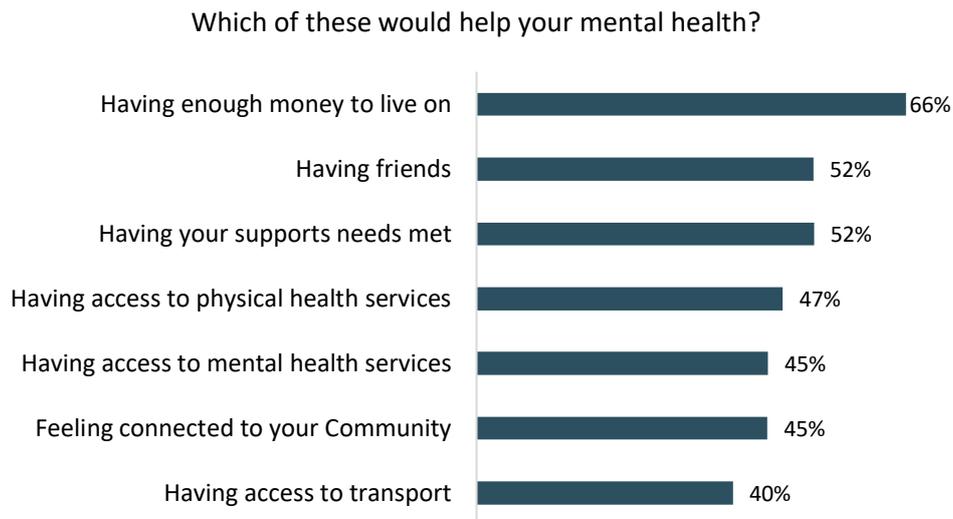
“People can be lovely and very helpful when you have a disability, my neighbours are outstanding. However, you do get the odd person who feels like they can shout abuse at you in the street. This makes you feel very vulnerable.”

“People are generally friendly and polite but I do worry on occasion about how someone might react if they saw me as a nuisance. Also, since many venues are not wheelchair accessible I do not feel welcomed there or thought about.”

“Most people are kind to me particularly where I live now. They see me when I am out and about and say hello. I like to go to the shops and out for my tea to the local pub. The staff and customers where I go are kind to me and welcoming. I like to walk a lot, most people are nice but there are always

mean people (usually teenagers but often men) about who are verbally abusive to me.”

Respondents were asked what would help their mental health. Two thirds (66%) said that having enough money to live on would help. 52% of people felt that having friends and having their support needs met would help. Again, the total is greater than 100% as respondents could choose multiple options.



The GM residents survey³ found that 56% of disabled people felt anxious yesterday compared to a Greater Manchester average of 40% and that 83% of disabled people were concerned about finances compared to a 68% Greater Manchester average.

Respondents to this disability survey were asked to write what affects their mental health (for good or bad) the most. Most people commented on what is bad for their mental health. These comments focused on stress, pain, anxiety, money, health and isolation.

“The lack of a social life Staying in doors 24 hrs a day No money”

“Not being able to get out and do the things I like doing gets me down”

³ [PowerPoint Presentation \(greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk\)](http://greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk)

*“Too much time alone, money concerns, lack of general health appointments
GP - don't want to clog up the system.”*

*“Stress. It also affects my physical health which has a knock on effect to my
mental health. Pain..... not being able to exercise increases my pain levels.
Money... not being able to afford the food or supplements I need.”*

Whilst there were considerably less comments about what is good for people’s mental health, disabled people found that getting out in nature and enjoying green spaces was particularly beneficial. Some also mentioned seeing family and friends. Similar findings were shared by disabled people around spending time with family and having hobbies in the Greater Manchester Mental Wellbeing & Disability Report⁴.

“Good - family, friends, nature, being able to prioritise joy over survival.”

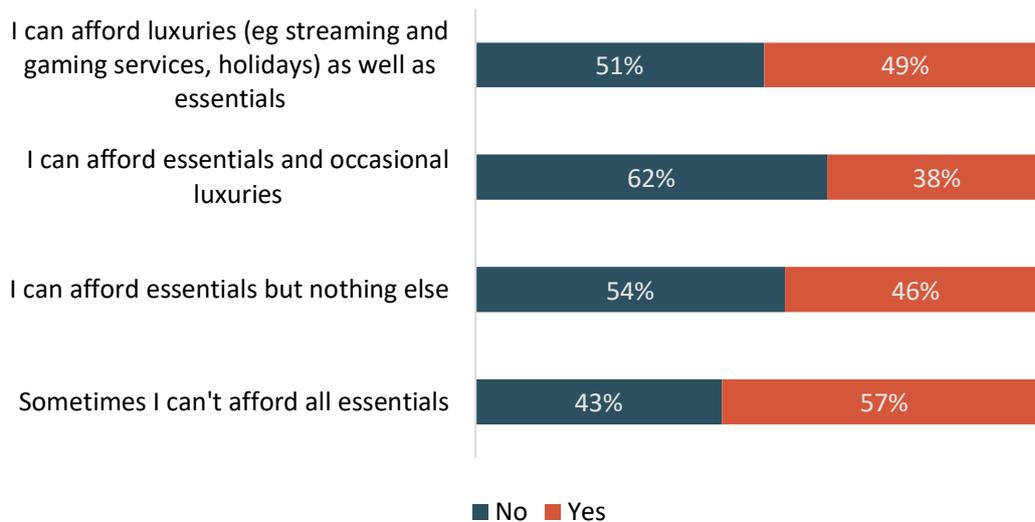
“good - time spent in nature or outdoors”

45% of disabled people that responded to the survey said that something had stopped them getting support with their mental health.



An analysis of this by how much respondents can afford shows that money is not the only factor that stops people getting support for their mental health. More people that said they can afford luxuries as well as essentials also said that something had stopped them getting support for their mental health (49%) than those who can afford essentials and occasional luxuries (38%).

⁴ [GM-MWD-Report-Final-v7.pdf \(gmhsc.org.uk\)](#)



Qualitative responses show that there are a variety of reasons why disabled people have not sought help with their mental health. Overwhelmingly people have been put off by waiting lists or are in the process of waiting for the right help. Others have had challenges with professionals in the past and there was a couple of comments around the lack of neurodivergent professionals.

“lack of services and obtuse and indifferent so-called “mental health” professionals”

“Generally I would say that waiting lists and demand on services is the biggest barrier”

There was however evidence of the stigma attached to reaching out for help with mental health issues.

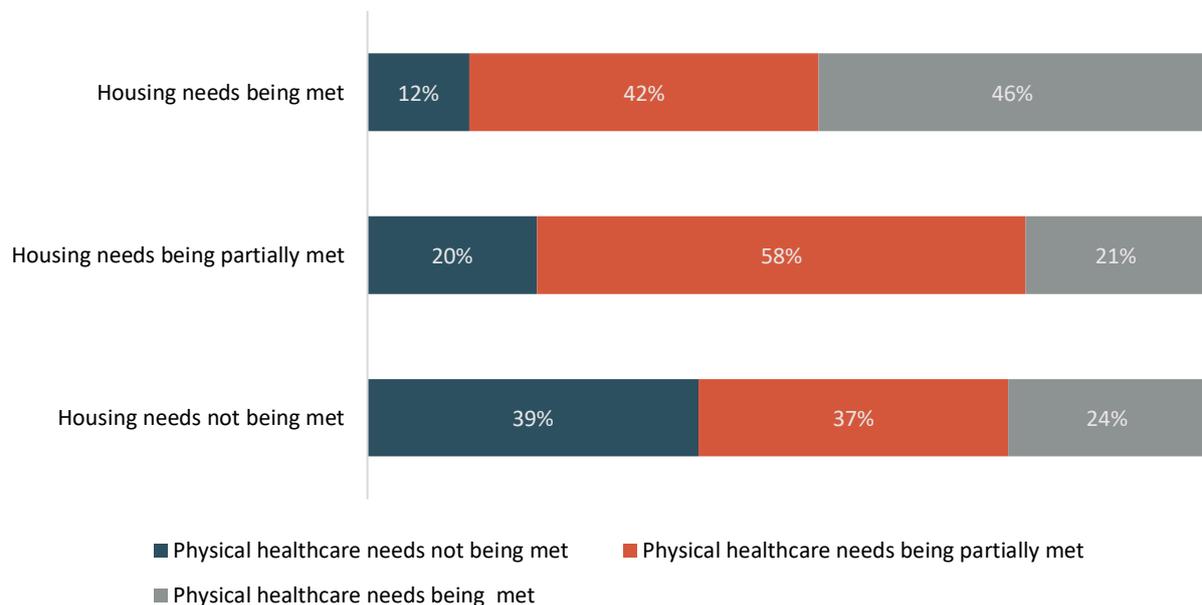
“Mental health. Its still carries the stigma.”

Physical Health

Over two thirds of respondents felt that their physical healthcare needs were not being fully met. 46% said that their physical healthcare needs were being partially met and another 19% that they were not being met at all.



39% of those that aren't having their housing needs met are also not having their physical healthcare needs met compared to 12% of those that are having their housing needs met. Again, this shows the layers of disadvantage which can impact on disabled people's quality of life.



42% of respondents said that they cannot afford all the things that they need to keep well.



In particular, some disabled people cannot afford the prescriptions that they need, Covid tests or the activities that could improve their health. In addition to this, some cannot afford the transportation costs to appointments and the heating bills at home.

“Prescription costs and transport to appointments (which are becoming more frequent lately) are difficult to fund. I can't afford to have the heating on anymore so try my hardest to get warm with layers and alternative methods such as hot water bottle and head pads. I'm eating less food than I should be doing due to the rising costs, but I do manage to get at least 1 meal a day with a snack or 2.”

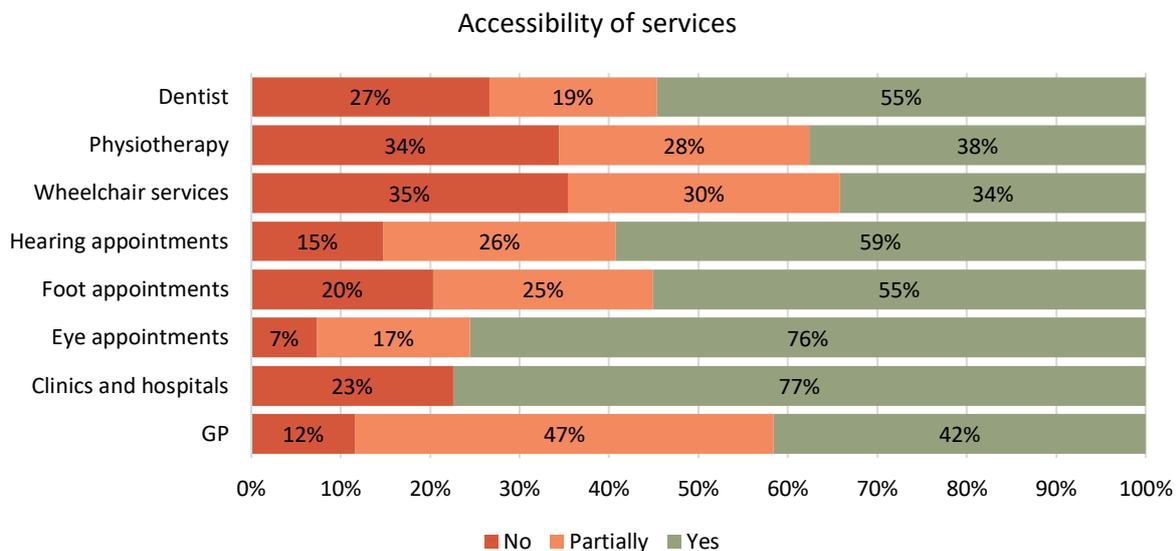
“Prescriptions are getting more expensive and I keep. Needing more of them. Heating is needed much more than for most and is becoming worse than ever. I cannot afford to have it on as much as I need”

“Can't afford social and leisure, games to play and no I can't afford lateral flow tests they are a luxury I can't afford”

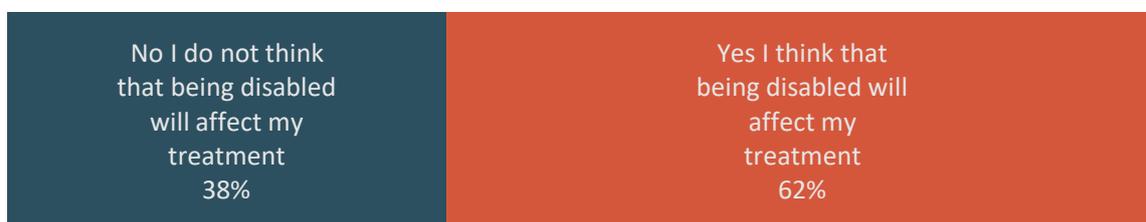
“Cannot afford to find appropriate exercise activities. Worried about ongoing heating expenses.”

Respondents were asked a series of questions about the accessibility of health services. Respondents felt that eye appointments, clinics and hospitals were the most accessible (76% and 77% respectively). Physiotherapy and wheelchair services were felt to be the least accessible (34% and 35% respectively saying that they were not accessible). Different disabled people will have different accessibility needs and therefore not all respondents will need to access all of these services. What the graph highlights is the particular challenges that some

parts of the disabled community experience around accessibility due to mobility issues.



62% of disabled people that responded to the survey felt that being disabled would affect the treatment that they receive.



Qualitative responses around physical healthcare highlight the challenges disabled people are facing getting appointments due to waiting times and the back log caused by Covid. They cannot get GP appointments and are experiencing long waiting times for hospital treatment, 111 and in some cases 999.

“It’s a nightmare trying to get gp or nurse appointment I have been waiting over 2 years to see some of my consultants and almost 3 years fir [sic] operations I need”

“Waiting lists are now obscenely long, and appointments when they finally arrive feel rushed and like they don't want to listen. When you have complex health needs this is disappointing.”

Others commented on the inaccessibility of some health services. For example some find telephone appointments challenging, such as those that are deaf.

“Most appointments are done on phone which is pointless. Most of my issues need people to look at them. Getting to see the right people is very hard especially at GP practices where receptionists all of a sudden seemed to think they are fully qualified GP's giving you grilling before you even have a chance of getting past them to speak to your GP.

“my GP is physically inaccessible (doors too small for a standard 18 inch wheelchair) as well as there being no appointments to make I literally do not have any kind of healthcare plan.”

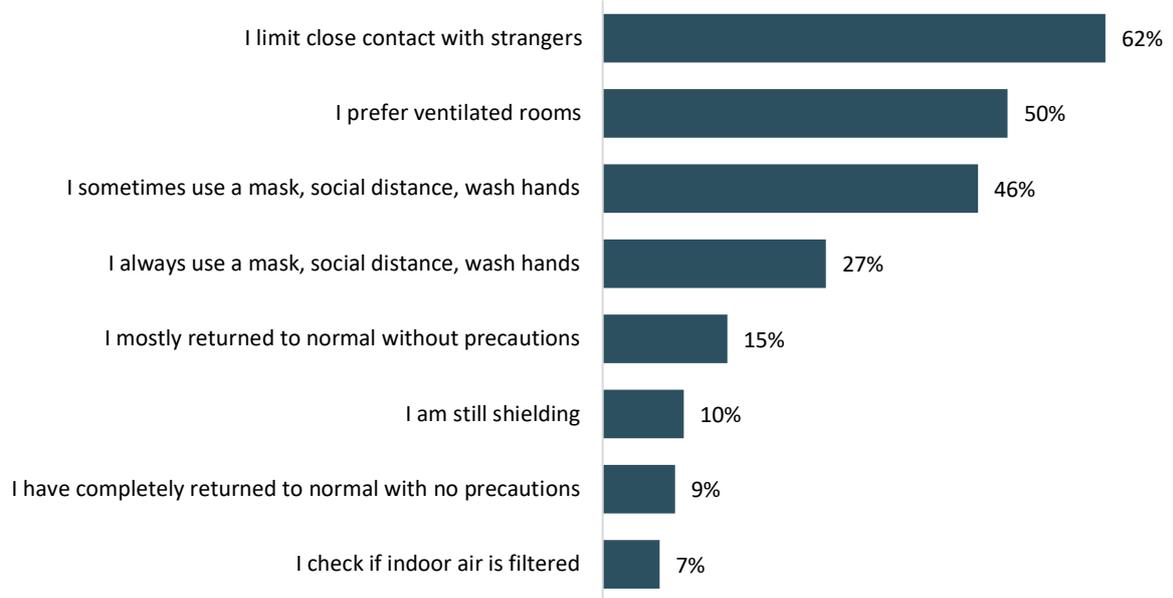
The need for carers to be present and this not always being possible was also raised as a challenge.

“Yes the rules about carers makes it very very difficult. A lot of people have to have 2 carers, especially as most hospital departments don't have hoists.”

“Well in my condition I will need someone by my side to care for me. So the hospital should have room to accommodate my full time carer.”

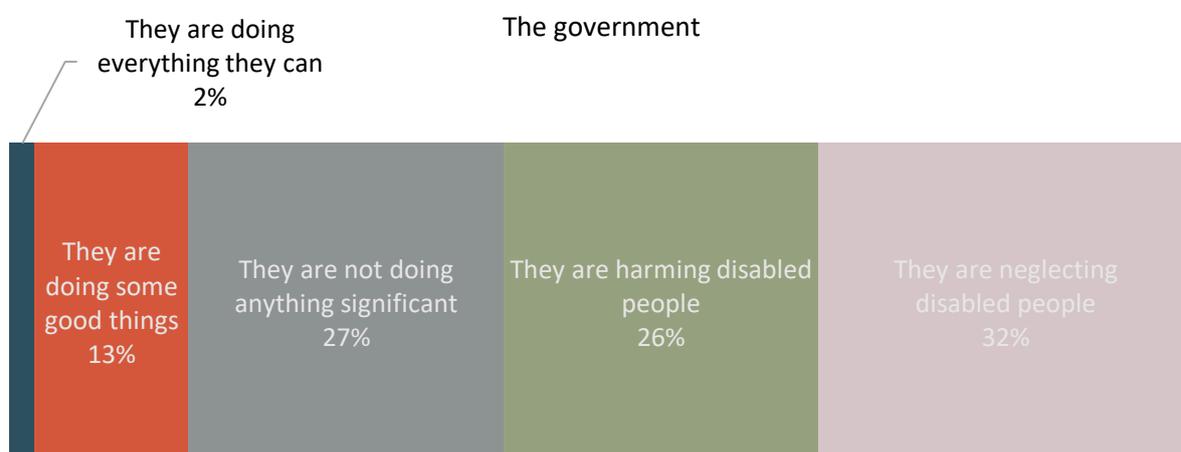
The vast majority of disabled respondents said that they were continuing with some precautions because of Covid (91%). 62% are limiting close contact with strangers and half prefer ventilated rooms. 46% are still sometimes using a mask, social distancing or washing hands more frequently. 10% are still shielding.

Covid precautions



Government and Social Support

Disabled people were asked about how they think the government and local authorities were doing in terms of the support they are giving to disabled people. 32% of respondents said that the government were neglecting disabled people and 26% said that they were harming disabled people. Only 2% said they were doing everything they can and 13% said they were doing some good things. Disabled people's perspective on the government has worsened since the last survey carried out in 2020. In 2020, 6% of respondents felt that the government were doing everything they could and 18% that they were doing some good things.

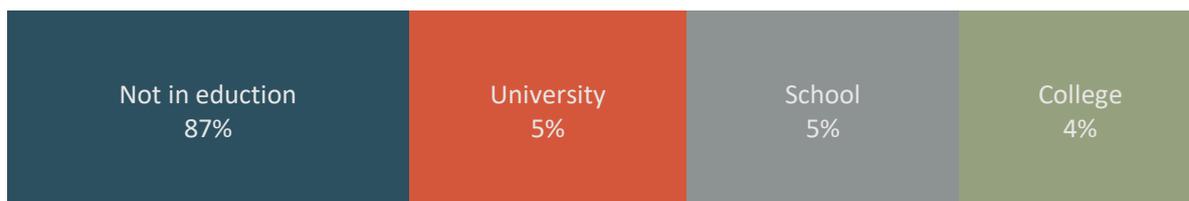


Respondents thought that local authorities were doing slightly better. 22% said they were doing some good things and 3% said they were doing everything they can. 9% said that they were harming disabled people and 29% that they were neglecting disabled people. Again, the perspective on local authorities has worsened since 2020. 10% of disabled respondents felt that the local authority was doing all they could and 28% that they were doing some good things in 2020.



Education

The majority of those that responded to the survey were not in education (87%). Only 211 were in education and chose to answer the questions on this topic. 5% were in university, 5% in school and 4% in college.



42% felt welcome in mainstream education.



There were not many qualitative responses about education. Some disabled people, however, did focus on the bullying they received at school.

“I have problems with bullying. I have been out of school for most of this academic year because my needs haven't been met by school. They haven't tried hard enough to meet my needs.”

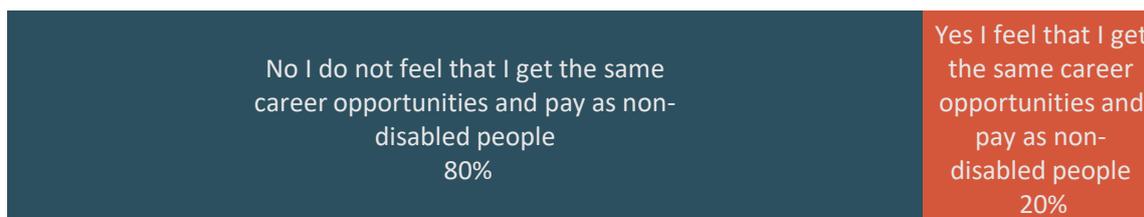
The cost of living was not affecting the majority of people's choices around going into education. 28% people said that the increase in the cost of living was affecting them going to school, college or university.

No the cost of living is not affecting me going
to school, college or university
72%

Yes the increase in the
cost of living is
affecting me going to
school, college or
university
28%

Employment

50% of respondents were not in employment. For those that were, they were asked whether they think that they get the same career opportunities and pay as a non-disabled person. 80% said that they did not feel that they did.

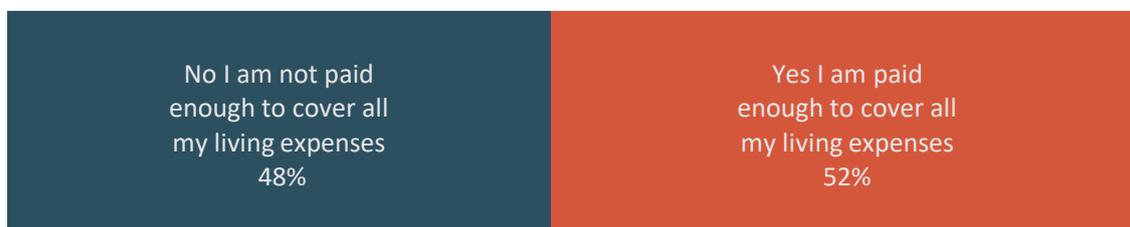


Qualitative responses focused on the fact that for some disabled people, working is never going to be an option. Others commented on the lack of progression in their jobs.

“I have been overlooked many times in my career with managers stating my health is a problem.”

“Constantly advised not to mention disability as its off putting”

Nearly half of those that are working said that they were not paid enough to cover all of their living expenses. A report from the House of Commons highlights that disabled people were paid £2 per hour less than non-disabled people in 2021⁵.



⁵ [CBP-9602.pdf \(parliament.uk\)](#)

27% of disabled respondents said that they had left their job because of disabling barriers since 2020.



Some commented that they find it exhausting within work having to constantly ask for suitable adjustments or adaptations. Many also said that working in the disabled sector meant that their needs were catered for within work.

“It can be exhausting to have to be the person who is saying they have a disability and that you need something that is actually quite simple and would probably be of universal benefit for all people. The building I work in has almost no disabled parking (7 spaces for 1400 workers and public) and it is a council building. If you have a disability then you have limited access to the building meaning that you are less likely to want to work there.”

“I work for charity that works with people with the same disability I have, therefore it's very inclusive. Not everyone has that benefit.”

The impact of Covid on working was also asked about. 42% of respondents did not feel safe going to work because of the impact on themselves or someone that they live with.

Do you feel safe going to work due to impact of covid or because of the impact on someone you live with?

