

County Views – spring 2021 survey

Engagement report 4

Communications and engagement team

June 2021

Appendix A: County Views results May 2021

1. Executive Summary

The fourth County Views survey was delayed to avoid issues during the pre-election period. It was available between 19 April and 17 May 2021 to capture the views of residents across Greater Lincolnshire. To increase panel representation, the public was encouraged to sign-up to the County Views panel before receiving the survey link and an intense early period of promotion seemed to boost responses and panel membership, compared to the same point in the summer. There were 254 respondents to the survey; 37 more than the last county views survey. Following a 'one week to go' promotion to panel members on 12 May, the panel had over 400 members.

Key findings:

- Just under eight out of 10 residents who responded (78%) in Greater Lincolnshire think their area is a great place to live. This is the lowest score ever given, albeit only three to four percentage points lower.
- Three in 10 respondents feel they have a strong voice and can make a difference locally. However, the most frequently given answer was 'tend to disagree', which three in 10 residents gave. The 29% agreement figure drops to two in 10 at a Greater Lincolnshire level so this will be the focus of the next general marketing campaign. Young people will be the focus of targeted promotion.
- The top three areas respondents said were the most important in making an area a good place to live remain access to nature, coast, parks and open spaces (81%); safety (67%); and education provision (66%), as was the case throughout 2020.
- The top three areas that respondents said need improvement also remain road networks and highway maintenance (78%); public transport (also 78%); and job prospects (76%) as on all three 2020 surveys.
- When asked about caring responsibilities, 20% of respondents from the general population said they supported a family member or friend to live independently.
- Practical support and access to services were the most frequently raised thoughts and ideas among carers. All 51 carers who responded offered their thoughts and ideas.

2. Background

The County Views panel is made up of residents across Greater Lincolnshire. Residents are encouraged to sign-up to the panel and, as well as other engagement opportunities, are sent three surveys a year. The questions provide local authorities with benchmarking data in relation to perceptions of council services. The survey also enables residents to have their say about their local area. The feedback helps the 10 councils to understand what needs to improve and highlights where those councils are getting it right. The spring 2021 survey was delayed slightly to enable existing and new councillors the opportunity to contribute and promote it to their electorate if they so wished, without breaking pre-election period rules. Its service-specific focus was 'unpaid carers'. This was timed to coincide with carer's service recommissioning activity happening in Lincolnshire.

3. Summary of responses

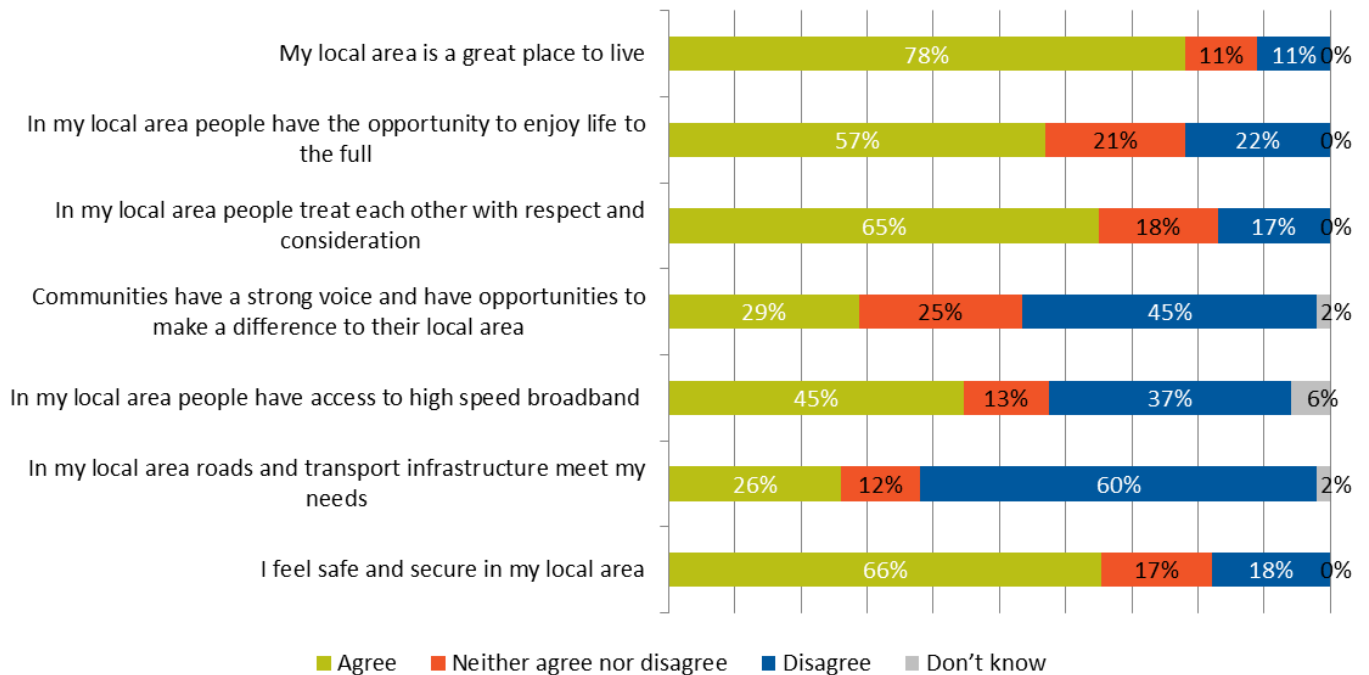
A total of 254 responses were received from the 425 panel members, giving a return rate of 60%. As a percentage of the Greater Lincolnshire population it equates to less than 0.01%. These rates are lower than the previous two surveys, but to be expected as a number of people establish themselves as regular participants on the panel.

The response rate saw an increase from the last survey of 2020 (14%, 37 more responses), which might be due to the panel and survey being promoted more broadly across social media and with a direct reminder/push to panel members to complete the survey. There was a more even spread of responses from across all council areas, although North East Lincolnshire and Boston had single figure response rates. Like previous surveys, no one under the age of 16 answered the questions, but for the first time there was a slight increase in membership among young adults. Increasing representation among younger people will be a focus for forthcoming surveys.

Please note that where the word 'residents' is used in this report, this means residents who responded, not residents as a whole. It is also noteworthy that the number of respondents from Black, Asian and other Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups is very small and therefore not necessarily representative of their peers' views.

Question one – Thinking about your local area, to what extent would you agree or disagree with the following statements

How residents feel about their local area (within 15 - 20 minutes walking distance from home)



(a) – My local area is a great place to live

Almost eight in 10 (78%) residents agreed that their local area is a great place to live. This is a four percentage point drop compared to previous surveys, which might reflect the general mood of the country after over one year of restrictions on movement. There were differences between districts, for example 64% of respondents from Boston agreed, compared to 94% of East Lindsey respondents who agreed; a 30 percentage point difference.

(b) - In my local area people have the opportunity to enjoy life to the full

Another four percentage point drop compared to the last survey means just under six out of ten respondents (57%) agreed that they have the opportunity to enjoy life. Less than a quarter of residents (22%) disagreed, but this reiterates the more negative shift in attitude when compared to the 17% who disagreed, strongly or to some extent, in the previous survey.

(c) - In my local area people treat each other with respect and consideration

Almost one third of residents (65%) agreed that people in their local area are treated with respect and consideration, while 17% disagreed. There was very little difference in response when data was broken down to look at geography, ethnicity or disability.

(d) - Communities have a strong voice and have opportunities to make a difference to their local area

Responses to this statement have returned to the levels seen in summer 2020. Where four and a half people from every 10 (45%) disagreed and only 29% agreed. People living in districts to the south of the county were more likely to disagree with this statement than those living in more northern local authority areas.

(e) - In my local area people have access to high speed broadband

More residents agreed (45%) than disagreed (37%) with this statement. The most frequent response was 'tend to agree', with twice as many tending to agree than tending to disagree (30% compared to 14% respectively). There were no particular geographic patterns identified.

(f) - In my local area roads and transport infrastructure meet my needs

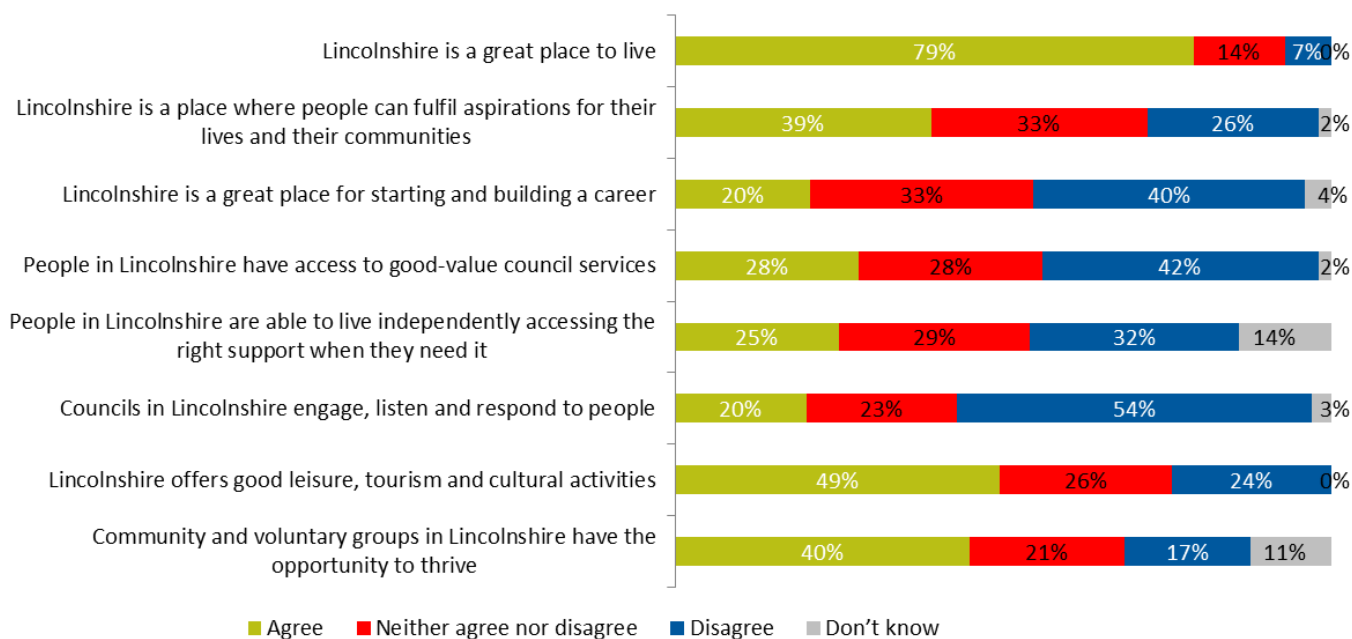
Over one quarter (26%) of residents agreed with this statement, but more than double that figure (60%) disagreed. More people strongly agreed than ever before (7%, vs 5% one year ago) and fewer people tended to disagree than ever before (26% in spring 2021 compared to 29-30% in all previous surveys), but the total figures remain similar so it cannot be claimed looking at this data that there has been any trend in attitude change at a county or district level.

(g) - I feel safe and secure in my local area

The lowest number of residents (66%) agreed with this statement compared to previous surveys. More residents disagreed with this statement (18%) compared to the previous survey when just over one in 10 residents (11%) disagreed. There is no clear conclusion why this change has occurred, but the respect and safety statement responses tend to follow the same patterns.

Question two – Thinking about Lincolnshire, to what extent would you agree or disagree with the following statements

How residents feel about Lincolnshire (including North and North East Lincolnshire)



(a) – Greater Lincolnshire is a great place to live

The majority (79%) of residents agreed with this statement, slightly down again from the previous survey of 81%, but still 11 times more people agree than disagree. There was another single percentage point drop in the number of residents who disagreed; 7% compared to 6% on the last survey and 5% on the one before that. This reflects a general, anecdotal downturn in attitude compared to the end of 2020, but not necessarily a broader trend.

(b) - Greater Lincolnshire is a place where people can fulfil aspirations for their lives and their communities

Almost four in every 10 residents (39%) agreed with this statement, showing a seven point decrease since the survey last spring. Over one quarter (26%) disagreed compared to 21% on the previous survey, but reflects attitudes in the summer of 2020 when 26% of respondents disagreed.

(c) - Greater Lincolnshire is a great place for starting and building a career

Twice as many residents disagreed (40%) than agreed (20%) with this statement. This is significantly worse than at the end of 2022, but again reflects views seen in the summer and probably reflects the national situation. As this is a consistently negative area work has been done to promote the Greater Lincolnshire Enterprise Partnership career fairs over recent months, but there has not been a corresponding upturn in attitude.

(d) - People in Greater Lincolnshire have access to good-value council services

While double the number of residents strongly agreed with this statement compared to previous surveys (8% vs 4%) there has been a steady reduction in the number of people who tend to agree and a consistently rising number of residents disagreeing. In spring 2021 42% of residents disagreed with this statement and 28% agreed, representing a one percentage point (41%) and three percentage point (31%) shift respectively since the last survey, but more significantly a 10 percentage point reduction in those agreeing (38%) and 14 percentage point increase in those who disagree since County Views commenced in spring 2020.

(e) - People in Greater Lincolnshire are able to live independently accessing the right support when they need it

The number of people who strongly agree (6%) with this statement is the highest it has been across all four surveys (2% at its lowest), but the number who strongly disagree is also at its highest (10%, 3% at its lowest) since March 2020. Overall however, responses have remained fairly static with 23-28% of residents agreeing and 27-32% disagreeing and 27-32% neither agreeing nor disagreeing over the last four surveys. There were few differences between the general population and those who described themselves as having a disability, but more people in the general population answered don't know than the proportion with a disability.

(f) - Councils in Greater Lincolnshire engage, listen and respond to people

There is a slight increase in positive responses (25%) since the previous survey (22%). However, there was also a slight increase in negative responses (47%) compared to August (46%). The findings at a local authority level differed somewhat to the question about local influence in question one. The most frequent response given by people living in North Kesteven, South Holland and West Lindsey was 'neither agree, nor disagree', but those in Boston Borough, East Lindsey, North Lincolnshire and South Kesteven were more likely to disagree (strongly in the first three areas), while Lincoln was evenly split between 'disagree' and 'neither agree, nor disagree'.

(g) - Greater Lincolnshire offers good leisure, tourism and cultural activities

Almost half (47%) agreed with this statement, an increase of eight percentage points compared to the last survey (39%). Over one quarter (26%) disagreed, but this is six percentage points lower than the previous survey (32%). This could be due to the easing of restrictions due to Covid-19.

(h) - Community and voluntary groups here have the opportunity to thrive

The answers for this statement show a slight decline in positive responses than the previous survey, with 66% of residents who agreed, compared to 68% previously agreed and 17% disagreed compared with 3% who disagreed previously. The cause could be due to reduced funding opportunities that are available to these groups, with anecdotal evidence from voluntary sector partners that many have closed. The most frequent response in West Lindsey, South Kesteven, North Lincolnshire and East Lindsey was tend to agree and strongly agree in North East Lincolnshire. The other three authority areas (South Holland, North Kesteven and Lincoln) were most likely to neither agree, nor disagree with the statement.

Question three – Thinking about your local area, which of the things below are most important in making your area a good place to live, and which do you think most need improving?

The top three areas residents said need improvement are:

- road networks and highway maintenance
- public transport
- job prospects

The top three most important things residents said make an area a good place to live are:

- access to nature, coast, parks and open spaces
- education provision
- safety

The same areas have come up in each of the four County Views surveys with only small changes in response over the year. The importance of safety and education dropped very slightly over the year, but remain consistently in the top three otherwise.

Dissatisfaction with road networks and highways has been highlighted again; this information is shared with Highways colleagues to demonstrate the need for improvement. Over the coming months engagement will take place with stakeholders regarding the county's Local Transport Plan and documents that support it. Findings from the last four surveys will feed into that process and people will be invited to look in more depth at issues and potential solutions.

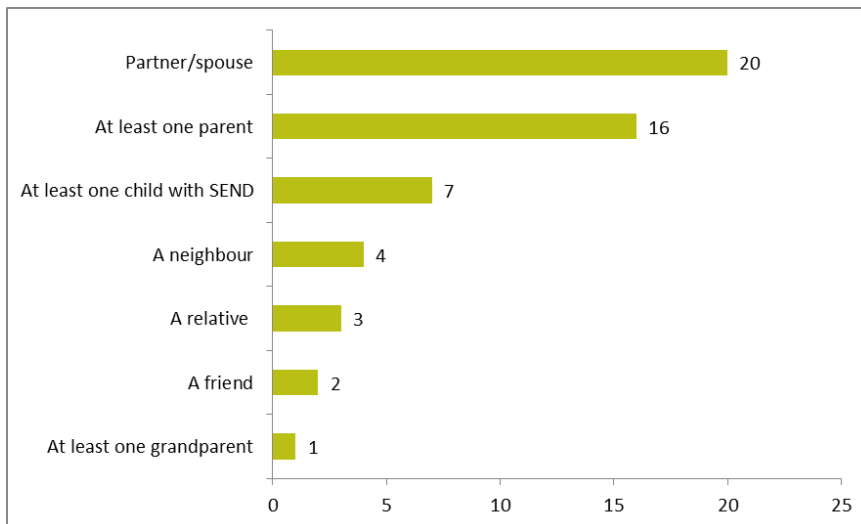
Residents can report, view, or discuss local problems like potholes, broken paving slabs or street lighting at the [FixMyStreet](#) website.

Agreement with Greater Lincolnshire being a good place to start or build a career also scored low. These results will be fed into travel and transport plans as one impacts on the other. They will also be shared with the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership (GLLEP) so that they can consider how to best respond to and address the issues raised. They continue to promote a series of online job fairs to help promote opportunities in the areas on <https://greaterlincsjobsfair.co.uk/>

Question four – Are you looking after someone (for any of the reasons listed above) who couldn't manage without your help or support?

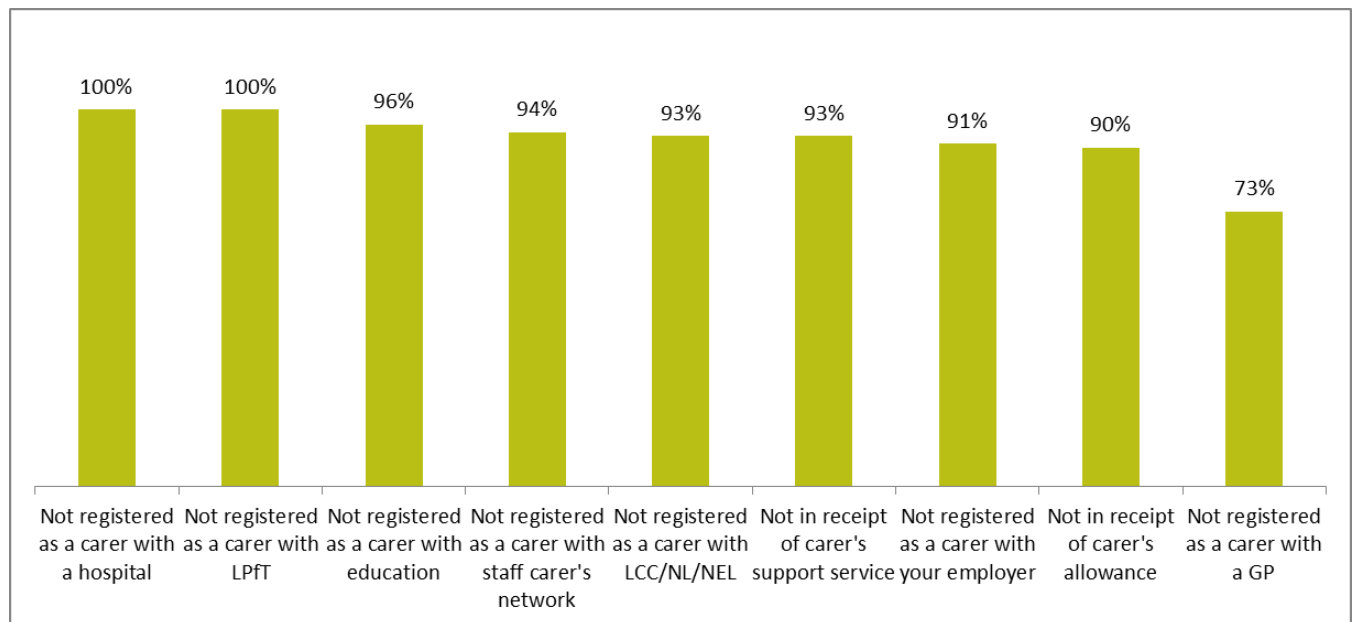
- There were 250 responses to this question. Four people did not answer it at all.
- One in five respondents have caring responsibilities, a slightly higher proportion than the estimated county average (16%).
- A further 16% of people weren't unpaid carers themselves, but knew someone who was.
- Two respondents said they were not sure if they were carers and were routed to further information about what a carer is and what support they could access if they needed it.
- More than one in 10 people (11, 22%) who identified as carers have a disability or long-term condition themselves.
- More than one in three people who responded East Lindsey identified themselves as carers (17, 32%).

Question five – If yes, please tell us who you care for



- Four in every 10 carers who responded care for their partner/husband/wife.
- Three in 10 care for at least one of their parents and around half that number care for a child with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- At least three of the 51 respondents care for multiple people (this figure is likely to be higher as the family categories were 'at least one'); all three care for at least one parent plus a spouse, friend or neighbour.

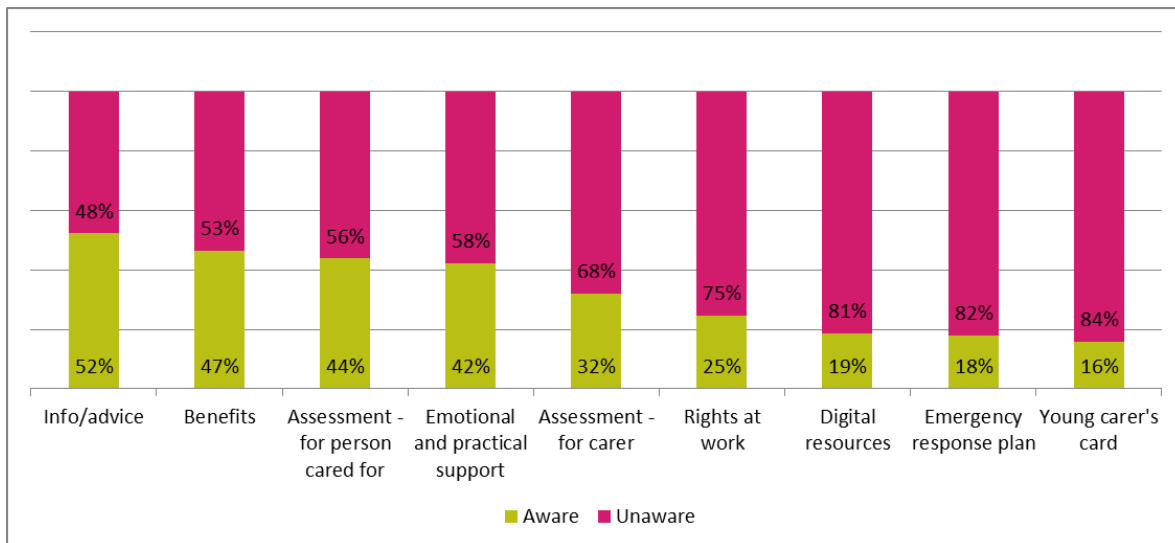
Question six – Are you any of the following?



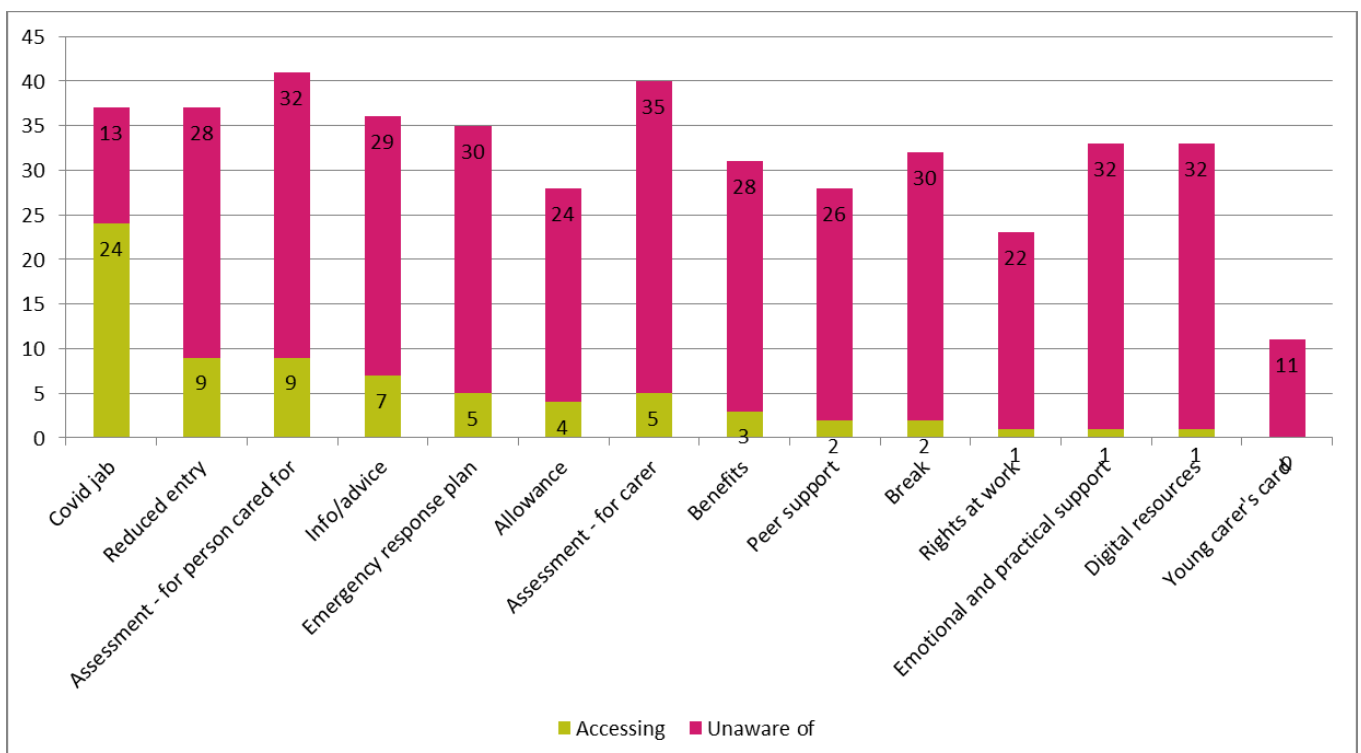
- The chart above shows the percentages of people who potentially could be, but are not registered as carers with particular organisations or not in receipt of support (practical/emotional or financial).
- Not a single person who responded (37) is registered as a carer with a hospital.
- The vast majority are not registered with an educational institute either (26 out of 27 respondents). It should be noted that a similar proportion reported that this was not applicable to them.
- The place a carer is most likely to be formally registered is with a GP. This is just over one quarter (27%, 12) of the 43 respondents who answered this question.

Question seven (to non-carers) - Did you know that there is support available to carers, of all ages, including younger carers, who help a friend or relative that couldn't manage without them?

- People who aren't currently unpaid carers were asked about awareness of support available to those who do provide care. Chart data below is presented as percentages
- Between 170 and 175 people answered each element shown in the chart below.
- Awareness of the Covid jab was marginally higher among non-carers than carers (67% compared to 65%).
- Just over half (52%, 91 of 174) were aware that advice and information is available.
- Awareness of the young carer's card was lowest (27/171 respondents), but the number of younger adults responding was lower.
- 68% (117/172) of respondents were not aware carers were entitled to an assessment.



Question eight (to carers) - Did you know that there is support available to carers, of all ages, including younger carers, who help a friend or relative that couldn't manage without them?



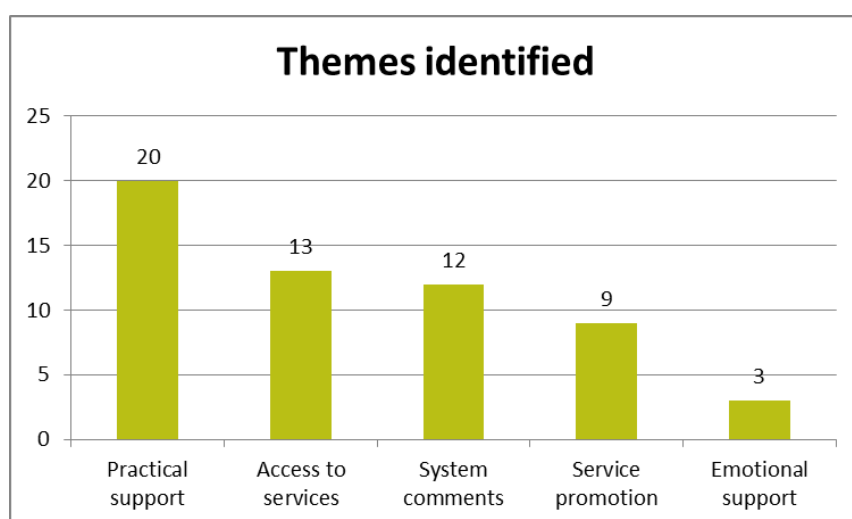
- The chart above shows that those responding who identified as an unpaid carer were more likely to be unaware of a service than accessing it. Chart data is presented in numbers.

- No respondents were accessing the young carer's card and 11 people were unaware of it. Around three quarters of the people who answered this part of the question (76%, 35) did not feel it was applicable to them anyway (due to the age-specific nature of it).
- Almost nine in every 10 (88%, 35) respondents who are carers were unaware of access to a carer's assessment. Interestingly, among non-carers around one third of people were aware of carer's assessments.

Question nine – thoughts and ideas about how a carer's service could support you or those you know

Those who identified themselves as unpaid carers or knew someone who cared for a loved one were asked to share their ideas for support and all 51 did, for which we are very grateful. What they said reflected what was fed back during the carer's service recommissioning programme engagement.

The chart below illustrates the number of comments relating to each theme, with a clear desire for a focus on practical support.



Questions 10 - 13 – about you

There was a similar pattern of responses to the last survey across local authority areas. East Lindsey had the highest number of responses again (21% of all responses).

A fairly representative percentage (56%) of people who responded were aged 25-64; this age group accounts for just under half the county population according to GLLEP demographic data; but no one under 25 answered the questions.

A slightly smaller proportion of respondents (92%) compared to (93%) autumn 2020 (and 89% previously compared to the county's 97% in 2019) described themselves as coming from a White background; but again no one that responded described themselves as being from a Black background. Three per cent of respondents describe themselves as from an Asian or mixed background, which better reflects the make-up of the 2.9% of non-white county population, but is

too small a number to truly represent views of minority individuals (7) and communities across Lincolnshire.

In spring 2021 16% of respondents described themselves as disabled, which is two percentage points higher than in the autumn, but four percentage points lower than the county figures in the last census.

Results are broken down to see if there are any differences in the way people respond among particular groups. Any patterns or themes are highlighted throughout the body of the report.

Conclusion and recommendations

The spring 2021 County Views survey saw a slightly higher response rate compared to the previous two surveys. It is important to establish a regular and representative panel to ensure we are on track and identify areas for improvement. It is also worth remembering that a 59.8% response rate is actually far higher than many surveys receive and still provides valuable insight.

Care should be taken when looking at the data as numbers are very small in some cases and not statistically reliable. This suggests a need to further target and expand representation on the panel, but the use of percentages, rather than numbers is important when comparing findings to previous and future survey responses.

There had been little change in attitudes on the baseline data throughout 2020, and almost an identical proportion of respondents remain happy with the area in which they live, although it dropped (by just three percentage points) to its lowest level in spring 2021. This might reflect the mood of the country and on-going pandemic, but could equally be an indicator of dissatisfaction in some parts of Greater Lincolnshire and provides areas on which to focus our efforts.

The specific focus in the spring survey was services to carers. The findings from this report were passed to those leading work to develop and purchase support. Feedback supported findings from their own engagement and thoughts shared by those currently using the service. It will also inform where information needs to be targeted so that when people take up an unpaid caring role they are able to access what they need.

The next survey will focus on climate change and is timed to coincide with a local summit on the matter. This subject is of interest to all, but particularly a younger audience, so it is hoped this will encourage uptake among this age group.