

Community Engagement

Safeguarding is everybody's business

Safeguarding Survey 2022

October 2022



What is Healthwatch Havering?

Healthwatch Havering is the local consumer champion for both health and social care in the London Borough of Havering. Our aim is to give local citizens and communities a stronger voice to influence and challenge how health and social care services are provided for all individuals locally.

We are an independent organisation, established by the Health and Social Care Act 2012, and employ our own staff and involve lay people/volunteers so that we can become the influential and effective voice of the public.

Healthwatch Havering is a Community Interest Company Limited by Guarantee, managed by three part-time directors, including the Chairman and the Company Secretary, supported by two part-time staff, and by volunteers, both from professional health and social care backgrounds and lay people who have an interest in health or social care issues.

Why is this important to you and your family and friends?

Healthwatch England is the national organisation which enables the collective views of the people who use NHS and social services to influence national policy, advice and guidance.

Healthwatch Havering is your voice, enabling you on behalf of yourself, your family and your friends to ensure views and concerns about the local health and social services are understood.

Your contribution is vital in helping to build a picture of where services are doing well and where they need to be improved. This will help and support the Clinical Commissioning Groups, NHS Services and contractors, and the Local Authority to make sure their services really are designed to meet citizens' needs.

*'You make a living by what you get,
but you make a life by what you give.'*
Winston Churchill

Community engagement

Under Section 221 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, Healthwatch Havering has a statutory duty to ascertain the views of health and social care services and to make them known to the commissioners and providers of those services so that they can be taken into account in the development, commissioning and delivery of services.

We do this in a variety of ways, such as surveys, interviews and focus groups.

We also participate, with other Healthwatch organisations across North East London, in the Community Insights System, which gathers views and comments on health and social care from people across the area.

Intelligence gained from Community Insights is used directly in, or to inform, many of the surveys and other public engagement events that we carry out.

The results of our community engagement are shared with Havering Council, NHS North East London, NHS and other provider organisations and Healthwatch England.

The project

In 2021, the Havering Safeguarding Adults Board asked us to carry out a survey to gain some insight into the extent of people's understanding of safeguarding¹. Together with the Havering Safeguarding Children Partnership, the Board asked us to carry out a further survey this year. The survey was open from

¹ See "Safeguarding Adults is everybody's business – Survey report", Healthwatch Havering, April 2022

the beginning of September and was due to close at the end of that month. Sadly, shortly after the survey opened, the death was announced of Her Late Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II and a period of national mourning followed; as a result, the closing date for the survey was extended into October.

The hiatus resulting from national mourning lost the survey some impetus and resulted in fewer responses to the survey than in 2021 or had been hoped for. Nonetheless, some 78 responses were received and have been analysed for this report.

Introduction

All Safeguarding Adults Boards are obliged to prepare a Safeguarding Strategic Plan annually. Safeguarding is a key function and responsibility of both Adult Social Care services and Children's Services, and professionals in those and related professionals such as Healthcare and Education.

However, there continues to be a concern and a responsibility to ensure that the general public's understanding of safeguarding, which might not be so keen, is regularly updated and supported to ensure that every opportunity to detect and rectify safeguarding issues is taken. We have reflected this in our recommendations.

Safeguarding issues regularly appear in the media but they are often raised in sensationalised contexts such as the exposures of

individuals' sexual and other misconduct, or as a result of reports of court cases: there is a danger that more everyday safeguarding issues pass people by.

As in 2021, the survey was kept relatively brief and was designed to highlight headline safeguarding issues, although some questions were re-worded and new ones added: among the new issues was hoarding, now recognised as a potential source of vulnerability especially in the case of house fires. A range of both public authorities and voluntary organisations was asked to draw the survey to the attention of their members and others that might have an interest in responding.

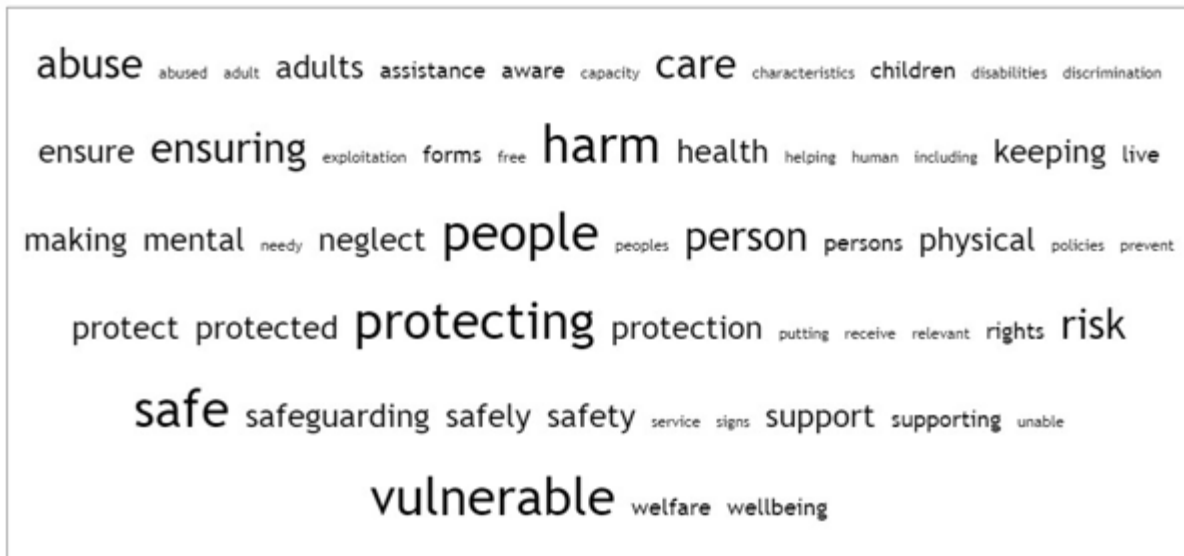
We also asked responders to give us some demographic information and, for Havering residents, an indication of where in the borough they lived.

Service Users' responses

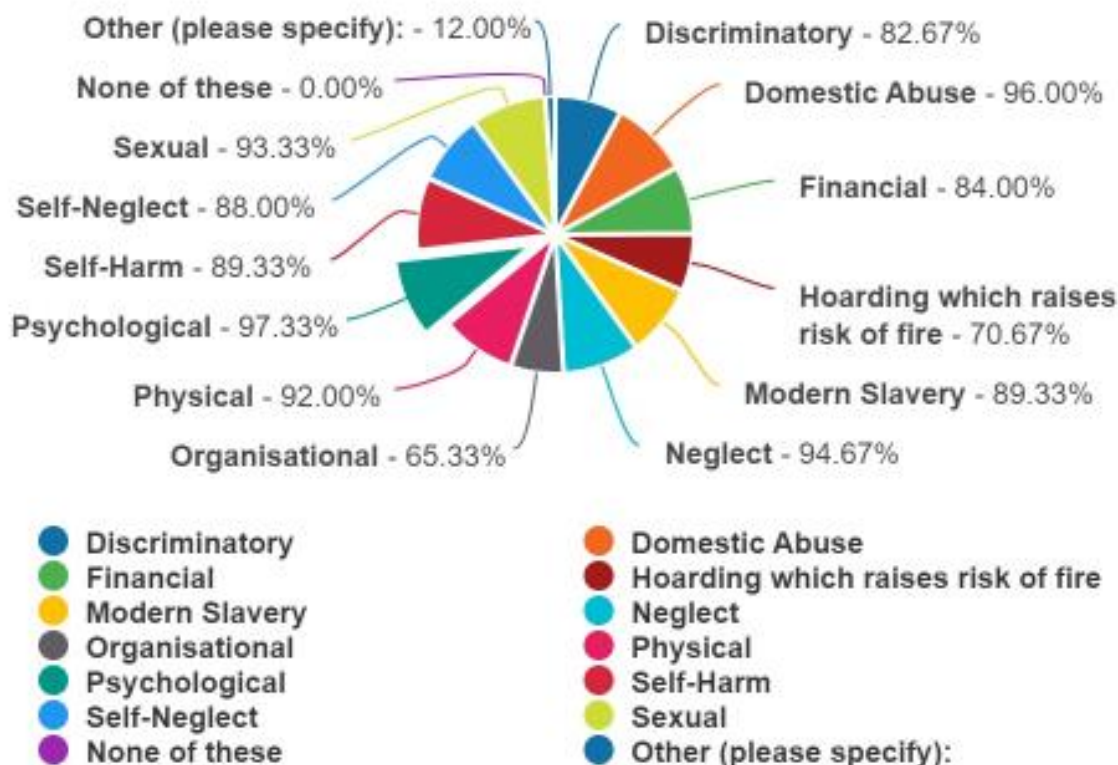
Relatively few of those responding told us that they had had direct involvement with Adult Social Care as a service user – 11 (15%) – all of whom had referred someone else as possibly in need of safeguarding.

We asked responders what the word "safeguarding" meant to them. As might be expected, they gave a variety of responses,

but the main theme emerging was that of protecting vulnerable people from harm, as shown in this wordcloud:



Asked what types of abuse they had heard of, responders told they were aware of a wide range of abusive activities:



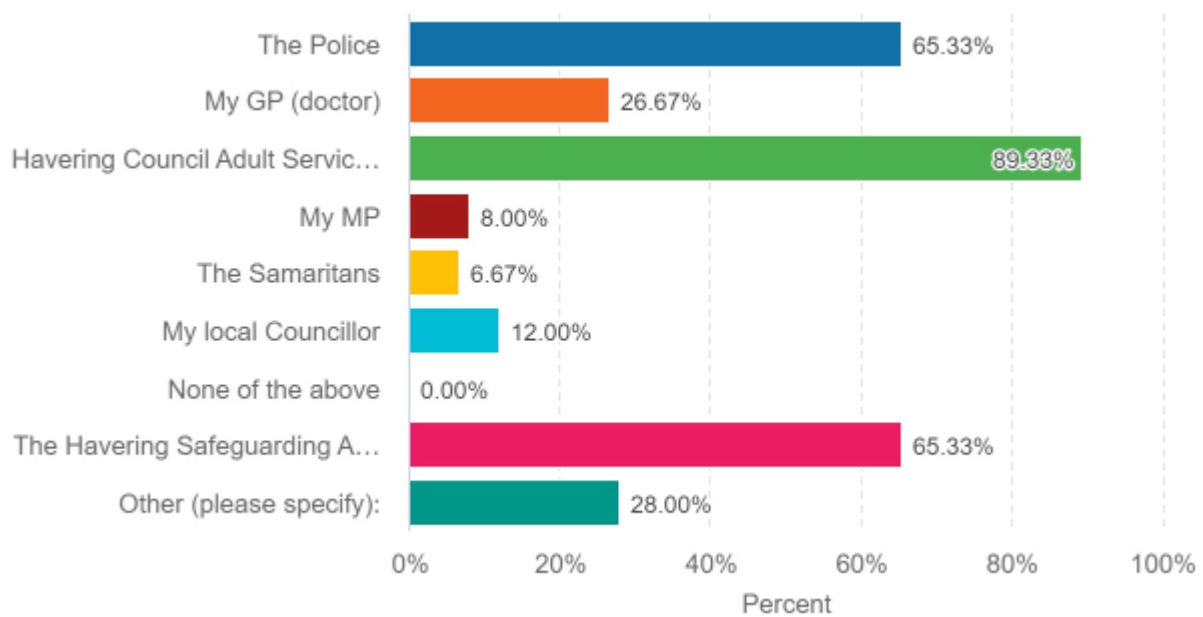
“Other” types cited included:

- The effects of the cost-of-living crisis
- Elder abuse
- “Cuckooing” (where a vulnerable person’s living accommodation is taken over by invasive people, often for criminal purposes such as drug dealing)
- Controlling and coercive behaviour
- Radicalisation
- Verbal abuse

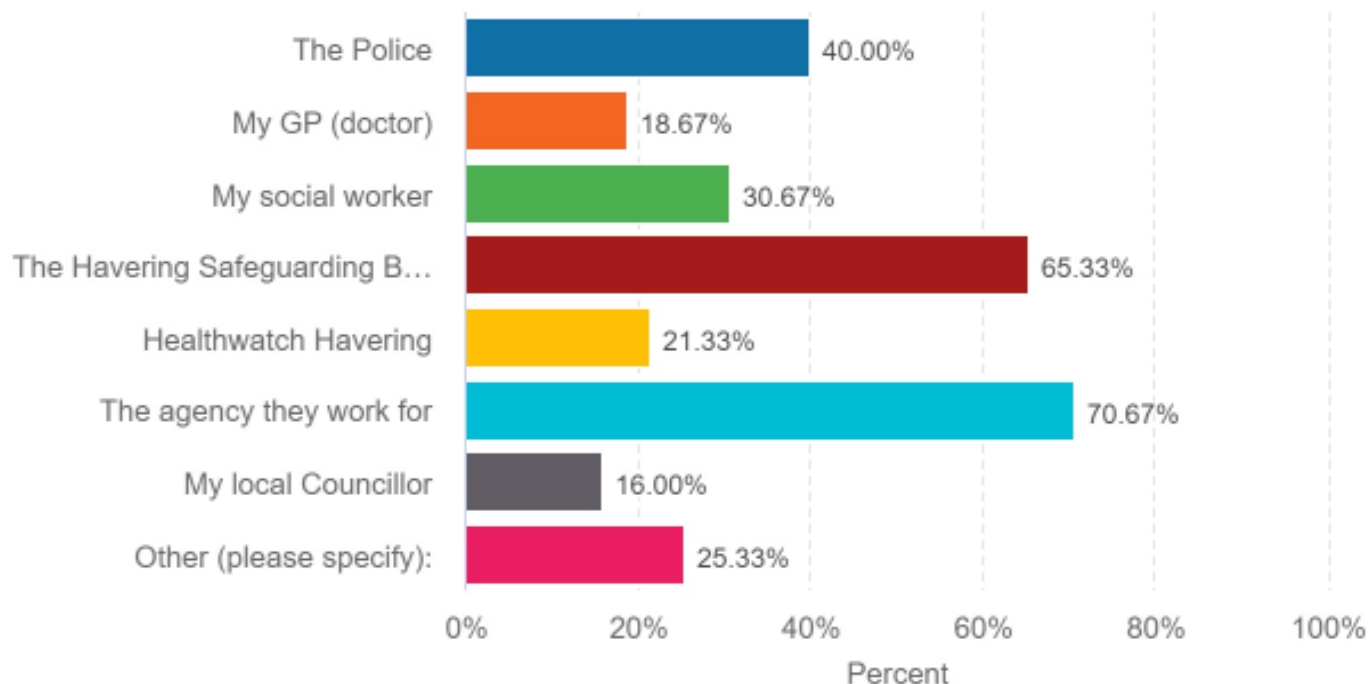
We asked what made responders feel worried about the safety of adults with care and support needs. Again, we received a range of replies, summarised in this wordcloud:



Asked who they would contact if they had concerns, our responders told us:



And asked to whom they would turn with a concern about a health or social care professional, responders said:



“Other” possible contacts included:

“My manager at work, or the safeguarding lead”

“I would research on line who to contact in a specific situation”

“NELFT safeguarding team”

“Mental health services”

“The individual or their carers or family members”

“Possibly AGE UK or a similar voluntary agency”

“Relatives or next of kin, if they are not implicated”

One respondent observed:

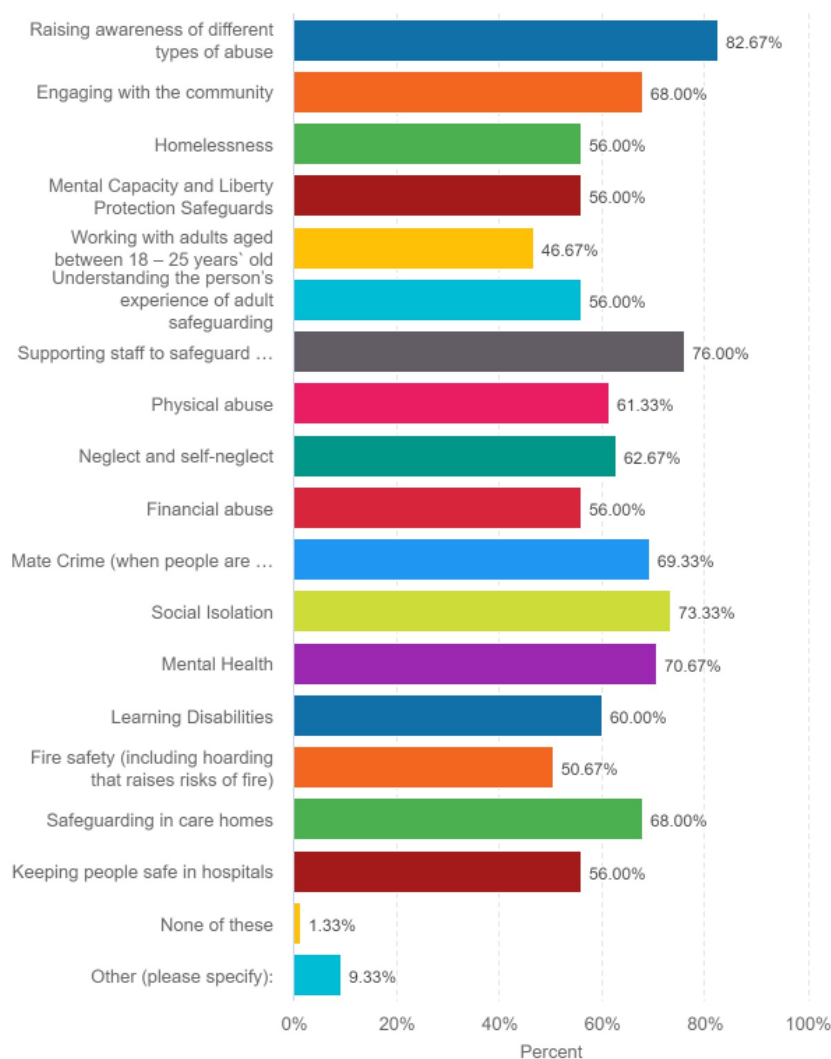
... can only contact if personal details known - I have stopped carers before and pointed out area of neglect - to be met with a blank stare or shoulder shrug - I'm concerned as see more and more of this neglect ... need a way public can report any concerns or more checks completed on these vulnerable adults. I know of family members in past who have had carers - they arrive late, leave early - do minimal tasks and made mistakes to cause more harm - i.e.-

not using equipment (leaving sling under client – so next move is easier) using incontinent pads removing dignity – hospital staff is just as bad, becomes normal and this worries me.

Another said:

If I felt that nothing was improving, I would escalate it to my MP or anywhere else I felt would highlight the problem to ensure that person was having their needs met in a safe way

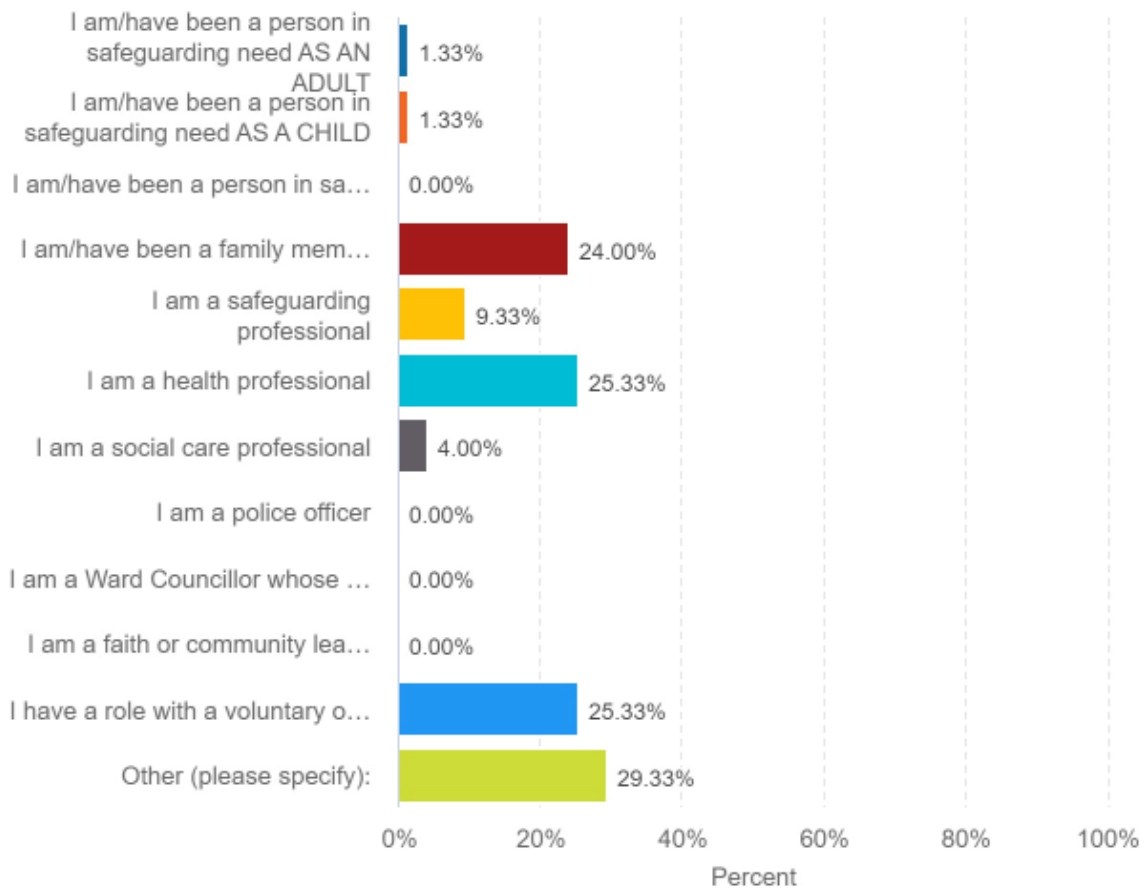
We asked what should be prioritised to keep adults with care and support needs safe. There was a wide range of suggested priorities:



“Other” suggestions included:

- Work with people of all ages as many elderly people are neglected, feel worthless and may be daunted by dealing with bureaucracy
- Taking family members’ concerns seriously and listen to what they have to say
- Allow staff time to raise concerns when they have them

We asked responders to tell us their experience of Safeguarding; they told us:

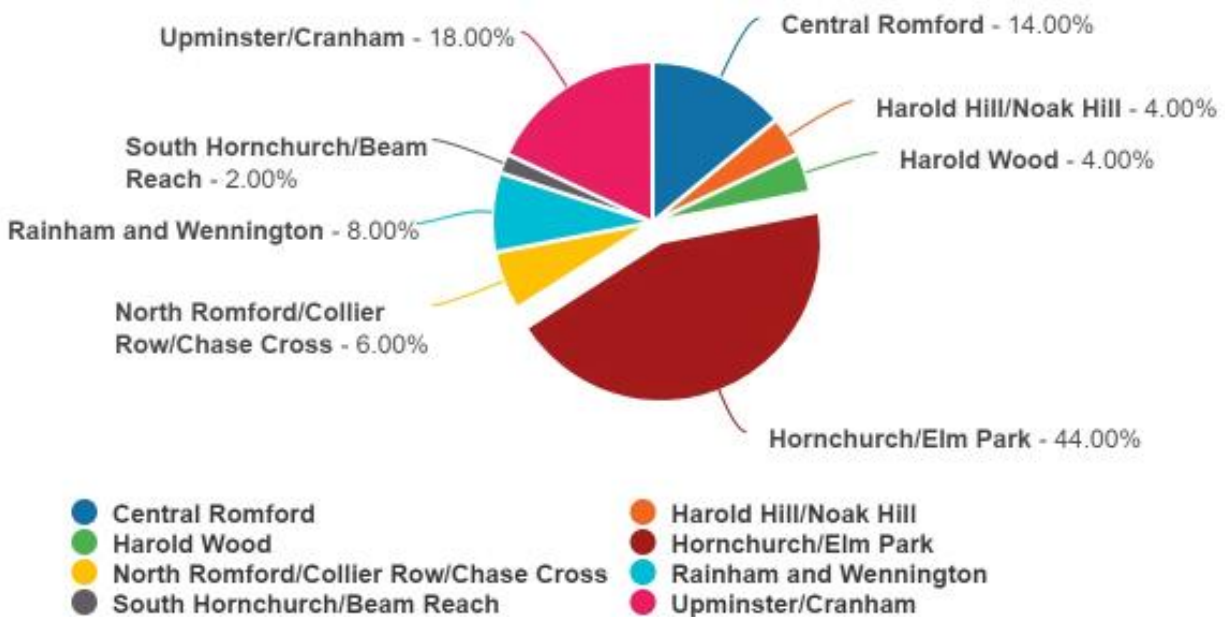


15 of the people who responded told us they wanted to find out more about Safeguarding.

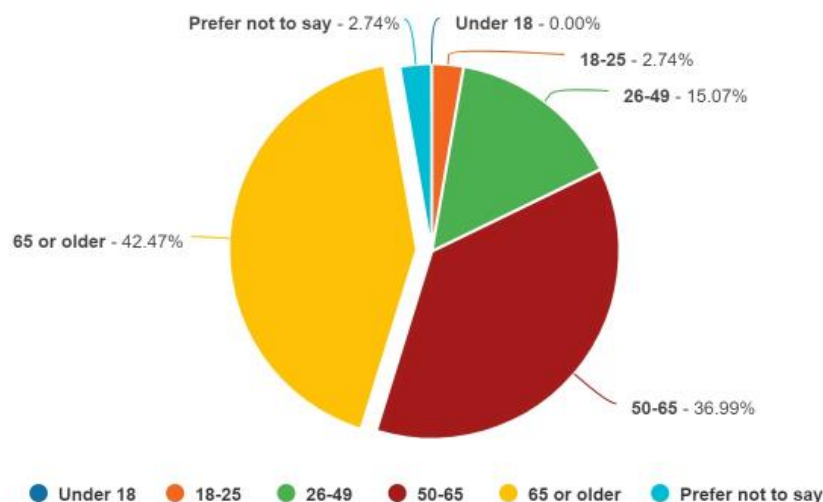
Demographics

43 (57%) of those responding told us they lived in Havering and 30 (40%) worked in Havering. 2 people lived and worked outside the borough.

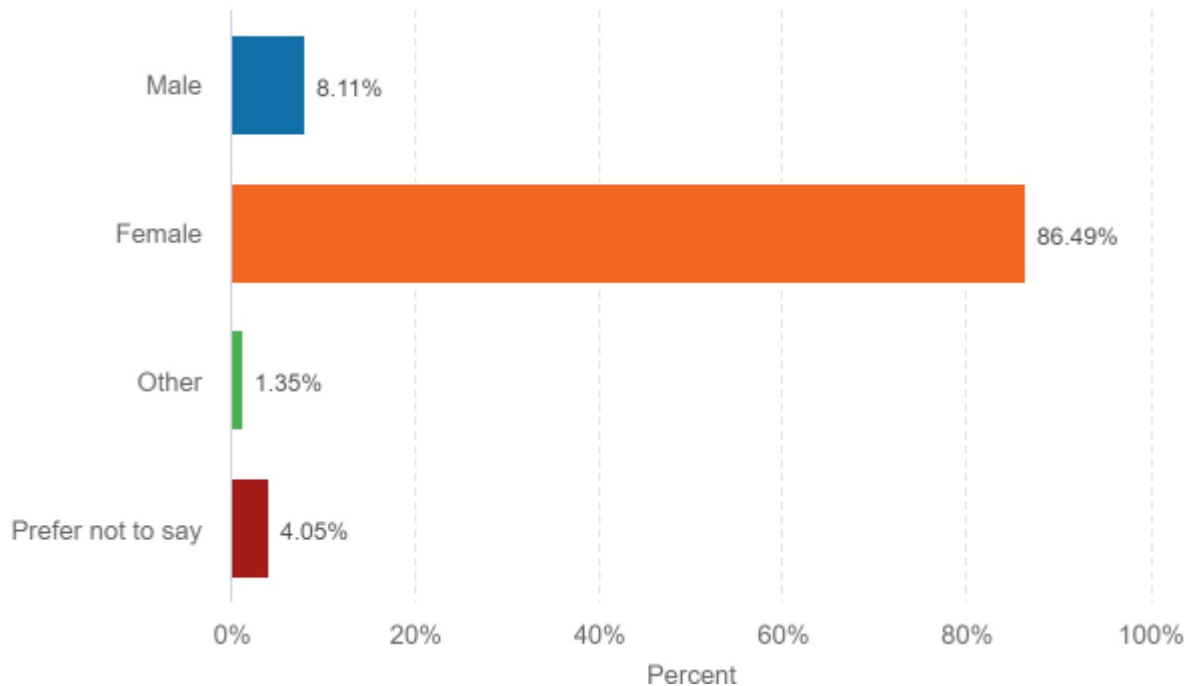
Havering residents came from the following areas:



The majority of responders were aged 55 or over:



And the great majority were female:



Most responders were of white ethnicity – 74% white British, 1% white Irish and 7% of “other white background” – 2% were Asian, 6% were Black African or Caribbean, and 10% declined to state their ethnicity.

Conclusions and recommendations

There remains a need to raise awareness among the public of what safeguarding means, and in particular to dispel myths and misunderstandings that may arise from the sensational reporting of safeguarding issues in the media. Responders to the survey demonstrated a generally good understanding of

what safeguarding means but, given their backgrounds as self-reported, that is unsurprising.

Setting up and following good safeguarding policies and procedures means keeping children and vulnerable people safe from adults and other children who might pose a risk.

- We recommend that consideration be given to how it might be possible to encourage and develop the voluntary sector, community organisations, faith groups and private sector providers to play a more prominent part of the important work of the Safeguarding Board.
- Given the responses to the question about whom to report abuse to, we also recommend that consideration be given to ensuring that voluntary agencies, their staff and volunteers are aware of the procedures to follow when reporting safeguarding concerns.
- Finally, we recommend that safeguarding procedures be further reviewed to ensure that they are able to accommodate referrals from informal sources who may not have the access to personal details that professionals reporting concerns would have.

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank everyone who responded to the survey and those who helped draw attention to it.

Participation in Healthwatch Havering

Local people who have time to spare are welcome to join us as volunteers. We need both people who work in health or social care services, and those who are simply interested in getting the best possible health and social care services for the people of Havering.

Our aim is to develop wide, comprehensive and inclusive involvement in Healthwatch Havering, to allow every individual and organisation of the Havering Community to have a role and a voice at a level they feel appropriate to their personal circumstances.

Members

This is the key working role. For some, this role will provide an opportunity to help improve an area of health and social care where they, their families or friends have experienced problems or difficulties. Very often a life experience has encouraged people to think about giving something back to the local community or simply personal circumstances now allow individuals to have time to develop themselves. This role will enable people to extend their networks, and can help prepare for college, university or a change in the working life. There is no need for any prior experience in health or social care for this role.

The role provides the face to face contact with the community, listening, helping, signposting, providing advice. It also is part of ensuring the most isolated people within our community have a voice.

Healthwatch Havering Friends' Network

Join our Friends' Network for regular updates and other information about health and social care in Havering and North East London. It cost nothing to join and there is no ongoing commitment.

To find out more, visit our website at

<https://www.healthwatchhavering.co.uk/advice-and-information/2022-06-06/our-friends-network-archive>



Healthwatch Havering is the operating name of
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