

Blyth Valley Borough Council

Lifestyle Survey 2004-05

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction	This report presents findings from the 2004-05 Lifestyle Survey conducted in Blyth Valley. This is the second lifestyle survey conducted in the Borough, following that undertaken in 2002. The results from this survey therefore allow comparisons to be made with the earlier 2002 results.
Objectives	<p>The objectives of this 2004-05 survey were to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an up-to-date measure of the key lifestyle indicators for the Blyth Valley population • Allow comparisons between the new results and those obtained in the 2002 baseline survey • Provide data at ward level across the borough on the 18+ population • Provide a 'boost' of data for the Neighbourhood Management Initiative ICCQ area • Give results for a sample of black and minority ethnic (BME) residents of the borough.
Report Structure	<p>This report gives the main results from the recent survey. It is structured as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 2 reviews the methodology used to conduct the survey • Section 3 provides a profile of residents included in the survey • Sections 4-10 contain key results for each of the major lifestyle factors (social capital, physical activity, etc.). • Section 11 examines a number of multiple risk factors relating to healthy lifestyle. • Section 12 provides concluding remarks from the survey.
Methodology	<p>As in 2002, this survey was conducted using face-to-face interviews with residents from the Blyth Valley area. This approach was chosen to both provide comparable results to 2002 and to alleviate literacy problems faced by potential respondents.</p> <p>The survey was conducted by a team of staff recruited from the local area, trained in survey fieldwork techniques and based in Information by Design's North East Office in Blyth. In total, interviews were completed with 3,300 residents aged 18+ of the borough. These comprised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 150 interviews in each of the 20 electoral wards of Blyth Valley • A boost to approximated 400 interviews in the ICCQ area • A boost to give 100 interviews with BME residents <p>The survey data has been weighted to correct for slight variations from the census profile in the collected data.</p>
Respondent Profile	<p>In total, of the 3,300 interviews in the Blyth Valley area, 49% of respondents were male and 51% female. It should be noted that in 2002 the survey included interviews with 1445 respondents. Around a half of respondents are working full or part time, 8% were looking after home and family and 32% retired.</p>

Internet Access	Overall a half of respondents in Blyth Valley indicated they had internet access at home. Nationally 52% of households now have access to the internet at home – this proportion has been increasing rapidly over the last few years
Car and Cycle Access	73% of households in Blyth Valley had access to one or more cars in their household, 27% did not have access to a car – this is comparable to national figures (nationally, 29% do not have access to a car). Overall, 31% of respondents in Blyth Valley own a cycle.
Satisfaction with Neighbourhood	Social Capital is the ‘pattern and networks among people and the shared values which arise from those networks’ (ONS). Overall, in this current survey, 43% of residents indicated they were very satisfied with the neighbourhood they live in. This represents an increase on the 2003 figure where 31% said they were very satisfied. There are no differences in the level of neighbourhood satisfaction by gender, but there are differences by age group – older residents were more likely to be very satisfied. Residents from BME groups were slightly less likely to be satisfied. There are also differences in neighbourhood satisfaction across the wards of Blyth Valley.
Area Improvement	Overall, one-in-five residents (21%) thought that living in their neighbourhood had improved a lot or a little over the last 3 years. Those residents in older age groups were more likely to think the area had improved a little or a lot. Residents from BME groups were also slightly more likely to perceive an improvement. In some wards of Blyth Valley where neighbourhood satisfaction is low, there is a higher proportion of residents recognising an improvement in the area.
Interaction with Neighbours	Overall, 43% of residents said they speak to their neighbours daily. The comparable national figure is 27%. In this survey, only 12% of respondents spoke to neighbours less than once a week. Younger respondents were less likely to speak to neighbours daily and more likely to say they spoke to them less than once a week. Two – thirds of all residents (66%) said they know most or many of the people in their neighbourhood. This figure is the same as that recorded in 2002. Nationally, 46% of people said they know most or many of the people in their neighbourhood.
Walking	There was some evidence of an increase in walking to certain venues. Overall 58% of respondents walked to the shops, a 3% increase compared to the 2002 Blyth Valley Lifestyle survey. In 2002, 15% walked ‘whilst at work’, and in 2004 this has increased to 22% - a 7% point increase. There were also some small levels of increase for those who walked to school with children, to leisure activities and as a sport or hobby. However, there was a decline in the proportion of respondents walking to work.
Cycling	There was a slight decrease in cycling in almost all categories between 2002 and 2004-05. However, it should be noted that these changes are very small in percentage terms.

<p>Travel to School</p>	<p>For those who had children at school, the majority of children walked there (56%). 21% of parents had children who travelled by car, a 9% increase compared to the 2002 Blyth Valley Lifestyle survey. Only 3% of parents indicated their children cycled to school. Between 2002 and 2004, the proportion of those travelling to school by car has increased substantially (12% in 2002 compared to 21% in 2004), and those travelling by bus decreased in equal proportion (25% in 2002 to 16% in 2004).</p>
<p>Physical Activity Levels</p>	<p>Government guidance suggests that adults should aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate activity on 5 or more days of the week. Overall in Blyth Valley, a quarter of respondents did no exercise. The survey indicates that, on average, Blyth Valley residents do three periods of 30 minutes or more of exercise in a week. 44% of residents do five or more periods of exercise.</p> <p>18% of residents are achieving the government's recommended levels of physical activity – 20% of men and 16% of women are at this level locally. Nationally, data suggests that 37% of men and 24% of women achieve 30 minutes of moderate physical activity of 5 occasions a week. Those results are obtained using slightly differing approaches, but point to Blyth Valley being below the national average for levels of physical activity. The results can be partly explained by the age and socio-economic profile of Blyth Valley.</p> <p>Whilst the physical activity measures used in the 2002 and 2004/05 surveys were different (due to developments in recommendation levels and health policy), the survey results provide some comparisons of change over time. The 2004/05 results show, for example, an increase on 2002 for walking to the shops, heavy housework, walking or hiking, and keep-fit.</p>
<p>Barriers to Physical Activity</p>	<p>Respondents were most likely to indicate they 'don't have time' (33%) as the main reason that would prevent them from doing more physical activities or sport. This figure is 3% higher than in the 2002 Blyth Valley Lifestyle survey. Common reasons for respondents not having enough time were work commitments, housework, busy lifestyle and childcare issues. There are some differences in the reasons given by age, gender and ethnicity.</p>
<p>Providing Opportunities for Sport and Physical Activity</p>	<p>Overall 94% of respondents felt that providing opportunities for people to participate in sport and physical activity were fairly or very important. There has been no significant change in this figure compared to the 2002 Blyth Valley Lifestyle Survey.</p>
<p>Local Sports Facilities – Usage</p>	<p>Around half of respondents had used Blyth Sports and Concordia Leisure Centres in the past. Of those 11% said they had used Blyth and 14% had used Concordia within the last 4 weeks, a slight decrease compared to the 2002 Lifestyle survey. 59% of respondents had used the local parks; an 11% increase compared to the 2002 lifestyle survey. 28% had used local parks within the last month. The results indicate a slight increase in usage of private health clubs or gyms.</p>

<p>Satisfaction with Local Sports Provision and Facilities</p>	<p>Overall, 45% of respondents felt that the local sports provision was good or very good. However 21% rated it poor or very poor - an increase of 7% compared to the 2002 lifestyle survey. Respondents were asked to rate each local facility, based on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 was not at all satisfied and 10 was very satisfied. Overall 42% of respondents gave Blyth Sports Centre a score of 8+, rising to 48% for Concordia Leisure Centre. 47% of respondents gave local parks a score of 8 or more, a 5% increase compared to the 2002 lifestyle survey. 75% of respondents gave Private Health Clubs a score of 8+, a 5% increase on 2002.</p>
<p>Cultural Activities</p>	<p>Respondents were asked about cultural activities – broadly defined as activities that residents do in their spare time at weekends or in the evenings. The most common activity was watching TV or DVD's or listening to the radio. Smaller proportions engage in Arts/Crafts/Hobbies or in Music/Drama. Almost one-in-three (29%) residents said there were things they wanted to do more in their spare time but didn't at the moment. Of those that wanted to do more activities in their spare time, a large proportion (48%) wanted to do more sports or exercise.</p>
<p>Barriers to Cultural Activities</p>	<p>30% of those wanting to do more activities in their spare time felt they 'lacked time' to do so. Other reasons for not undertaking more spare time activities included 'age/illness' (12%), 'work' (11%) and 'cost' (10%).</p>
<p>Missing Meals</p>	<p>The survey included a measure of meals missed by residents. This question was not included in the 2002 survey, but was in the 2003 Blyth Valley Young People's Survey. Overall, one-in-five residents (21%) indicated that they did not eat breakfast on a 'normal day'. Smaller proportions missed eating or drinking at lunchtime or for the evening meal. In this 2004-2005 survey, the proportion of residents skipping breakfast increases with age. Those aged under 45 are most likely to not have something to eat for breakfast.</p>

<p>Fruit and Vegetable Consumption</p>	<p>Residents were asked about their fruit and vegetable consumption using two different approaches:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where they were asked to just give an overall estimate of the number of portions of fruit and of vegetables that they ate a day (where 'portion' was defined for them). • Where they were asked to detail what they ate yesterday and how much they ate (from a range of different fruit and vegetable categories). <p>As expected, the first of the above approaches results in what appears to be an over-claim of fruit and vegetable consumption. Using the spontaneous estimate of how much fruit and vegetables they ate, over three-quarters of residents claim to eat 5 or more portions of fruit and vegetables a day.</p> <p>When asked to detail what fruit and vegetables they ate on the previous day, the estimate of consumption is far lower. For example, just considering fruit consumption, 46% of residents had one or no pieces of fruit in the last 24 hours. When the total fruit and vegetable consumption detailed for the previous day is calculated, the average number of portions per person is 3.67 in the last day. Overall, 38% of residents ate 3 or fewer portions on the previous day. 28% were meeting the government target of at least 5 portions a day.</p>
<p>Encouraging Higher Consumption of Fruit and Vegetables</p>	<p>Those interviewed were asked for the reasons why they didn't eat more fruit and vegetables. The main reasons given were centred around:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • disliking the taste • being unable to eat more • perceptions of the effects of eating more (fruit in particular) • quality of products • accessibility.
<p>Food Co-op</p>	<p>Over a quarter of residents interviewed (28%) said they had heard of Blyth Valley Food Co-op. There were differences by age and gender – younger residents were less likely to have heard of the food co-op, as were residents from BME groups. Awareness was also higher in some wards than in others.</p>
<p>Take-Aways</p>	<p>Overall, 41% of residents have a take-away such as fish and chips or Chinese meal) as their main meal on at least one occasion a week. This is the same proportion as in 2002. Almost one-in-ten have a takeaway as the main meal on 2 or more days a week. As expected, there are large differences by age. For the younger group (under 25) 57% have a take-away as a main meal on at least one occasion a week – 17% on 2 or more days a week. Almost one-in-ten residents (8%) have food from a fast food restaurant (such as McDonalds or Pizza Hut) on at least one occasion a week. This proportion increases to almost a quarter (24%) for those aged under 25.</p>

Pre-Prepared meals	Almost a third of residents (32%) have pre-prepared foods such as ready meals on at least one occasion a week. 10% of residents have a ready meal as their main meal on 3 or more occasions a week. The frequency of eating pre-prepared/ready meals increases amongst the younger age group.
Food cooked from Fresh	A half of residents have food cooked from fresh ingredients as a main meal on 5 or more days a week. A quarter of residents have food cooked from fresh less than 3 times a week. This figures increases to a third for the under 25 group.
Vegetarian	9% of residents have a vegetarian meal at least once a week.
Damp and Heating	This 2004-05 survey measured for the first time the proportion of residents in Blyth Valley with damp problems. Overall, 15% said they had damp or condensation problems in their home, with 4% suggesting the damp was a serious problem. There were large differences by ward.
Keeping Homes Warm	Overall, 13% of residents said there are times in winter when they cannot keep their home warm enough. 5% said this was the case most of the time. Again, there were differences across the wards of Blyth Valley – those in Cramlington Eastfield and East Hartford, Cowpen and Croft most likely to say they faced heating problems. Residents from BME groups were more likely to say they faced problems due to damp and condensation than the general population of Blyth Valley. Among BME residents, 20% faced damp problems. In addition, 30% of those from BME groups said they couldn't keep their home warm enough in winter (compared to 13% of all residents).
Weight	Residents were asked if they thought, for their height, they were too heavy, too light, or about the right weight. Overall, almost a half (48%) thought they were too heavy. This is a slight increase on the 2002 figure of 45%. Those most likely to think they were too heavy were aged 45-64.
Visiting the Doctor	In this survey, residents were asked when they last visited their doctor (again, a new question since 2002). Overall, 16% said they had visited their doctor in the last week; almost a third (32%) said they visited over 6 months ago. Nationally, 12% of men and 18% of women had visited their GP in the last week. There were differences by age, gender, ethnicity and ward.
Perceptions of Health	Overall, 64% of residents felt that their health was either excellent or good (for someone of their age). This is a small increase on the 2002 results where 62% described their health as excellent or good. The 2004 results also point to a smaller percentage describing their health as poor. As expected, the proportion perceiving their health as good or excellent declines with age. In addition, there are some large differences by ward.
Improving Health	Respondents were asked if there was anything they would like to do to keep themselves healthy (but didn't currently do). Overall, 44% said that there was – this is a lower figure than in 2002 where almost 60% indicated this. The younger age group was most likely to say they wanted to do things to keep themselves healthy (60% of this group, only 23% of those 65+). The most popular thing that residents wanted to do to keep themselves healthy was sport/exercise. In this 2004 survey, almost a half said this – a large increase on the 2002 results.

<p>Well-Being</p>	<p>Residents were asked two questions about mental health/well-being – these were concerning how happy the respondent felt on most days and whether the respondent had faced a problem they thought they couldn't cope with. Overall, 27% of residents said they felt very happy on most days; 61% felt fairly happy, 3% felt unhappy. Overall, 14% of residents said in the last year they had had a problem they felt they couldn't cope with. Women were more likely to say they had faced such problems in the last year than men (18% of women, 12% of men). There are also differences by ward.</p>
<p>Smoking</p>	<p>From the base of all respondents, 28% of respondents in Blyth Valley smoke nowadays, which is a small decrease on 2002 (29.4%). 69% would like to give up smoking, which is a slightly higher proportion than nationally (67%).</p> <p>The prevalence of smoking declines with age – with only 17% of those aged 65+ smoking, compared to 40% of those under 25. There are differences in the proportions of those who smoke by working status: smoking prevalence is higher amongst those who are currently not working/unemployed, or looking after home/family. Looking at those who smoke, those who are in the lower social class occupations are more likely to smoke compared to those in managerial, administrative and professional occupations.</p>
<p>Smoking Amounts</p>	<p>Those who do smoke, tend to smoke more at weekends than weekdays – 15 cigarettes per day being the average during the weekdays, and 18 per day at weekends. In addition, those who are unemployed tend to smoke more than those who are employed full-time - over 20 per day at weekends, and 19 per day on weekdays.</p>
<p>Alcohol</p>	<p>Overall, approximately three-quarters (77%) drink alcohol nowadays. 26% drink on most days (of last week) – this is higher than nationally – where 21% drink on most days. There are differences by gender – with just over one-fifth of women drinking on most days, compared to nearly one-third of men. There are differences by age – with 35% of those over 65 drinking on most days, nearly 30% of those aged 45-64, and around 20% of those aged under 44.</p>
<p>Average Consumption of Alcohol</p>	<p>Overall, the average consumption on the previous drinking occasion was 7.3 units (median = 5 units). The average figures for men and women were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Men – 8.8 units (median = 6 units) • Women – 5.5 units (median = 3 units) <p>The government guidelines recommend a maximum of 2-3 units per day for women and 3-4 units per day for men.</p>

Multiple Risk Factors	<p>The survey points to links between various lifestyle risk factors. For example, there appears to be a link between alcohol consumption and smoking – those who currently smoke having higher levels of alcohol consumed on the previous drinking occasion. The average alcohol consumption is 7.3 units on the previous drinking occasion. This figure increases 8.8 units for residents who smoke (compared to 6.7 units for those who do not smoke). For male smokers, the average volume of alcohol consumed on the previous occasion rises to over 10 units. There appears to be less of a link between alcohol consumption levels and whether a person is physically active. The survey results also point to a link between smoking prevalence and 5-a-day consumption; those who smoke also eating less fruit and vegetables.</p>
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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report presents findings from the 2004-05 Lifestyle Survey conducted in Blyth Valley.

1.2 The survey was commissioned by:

- Blyth Valley Borough Council (BVBC)
- Blyth Valley Leisure Trust
- Northumberland Care Trust (NCT)
- Improving Croft and Cowpen Quay (ICCQ), the local Neighbourhood Management Initiative

and conducted by Information by Design.

1.3 This is the second lifestyle survey conducted in Blyth Valley, following that undertaken in 2002. The results from this survey therefore allow comparisons to be made with the earlier 2002 results and changes in lifestyle factors to be measured over the 2 year period.

1.4 The objectives of this 2004 survey were to:

- Provide an up-to-date measure of the key lifestyle indicators for the Blyth Valley population
- Allow comparisons between the new results and those obtained in the 2002 baseline survey
- Provide data at ward level across the borough on the 18+ population
- Provide a 'boost' of data for the Neighbourhood Management Initiative ICCQ area
- Give results for a sample of black and minority ethnic (BME) residents of the borough.

- 1.5 This report gives the main results from the recent survey. It is structured as follows:
- Section 2 reviews the methodology used to conduct the survey
 - Section 3 provides a profile of residents included in the survey
 - Sections 4-10 contain key results for each of the major lifestyle factors (social capital, physical activity, etc.).
 - Section 11 examines a number of multiple risk factors relating to health and lifestyle.
 - Section 12 provides concluding remarks from the survey.
- 1.6 Key results from this survey for each of the Community Assembly areas of Blyth Valley are provided in Annex A to this report.
- 1.7 Results are also presented in this report at ward level. This is particularly to highlight differences between the Priority Wards in Blyth Valley and other wards (with higher IMD scores). The priority wards of Blyth Valley are:
- Cowpen
 - Cramlington East
 - Cramlington, Eastfield and East Hartford
 - Cramlington West
 - Croft
 - Isabella
 - Kitty Brewster
 - Plessey.

2 METHODOLOGY

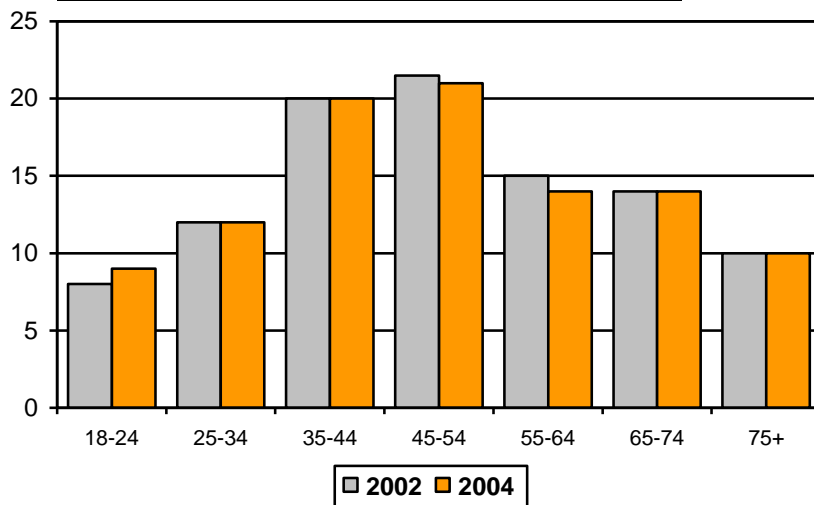
- 2.1 As in 2002, this survey was conducted using face-to-face interviews with residents from the Blyth Valley area. This approach was chosen to provide comparable results to 2002, and to alleviate literacy problems faced by potential respondents.
- 2.2 The survey was conducted by a team of staff recruited from the local area, trained in survey fieldwork techniques and based in Information by Design's North East Office in Blyth.
- 2.3 Interviews were conducted during the day, evening and weekends at residents homes. Those to be interviewed were selected at random with controls placed upon age, gender and geographical area (ward). These controls were established using census data and used to provide a sample which was representative of the Blyth Valley area.
- 2.4 In total, interviews were completed with 3,300 residents aged 18+ of the borough. These comprised:
 - 150 interviews in each of the 20 electoral wards of Blyth Valley
 - A boost to approximated 400 interviews in the ICCQ area
 - A boost to give 100 interviews with BME residents
- 2.5 The survey data has been weighted to correct for slight variations from the census profile in the collected data.

3 PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

Demographic Profile

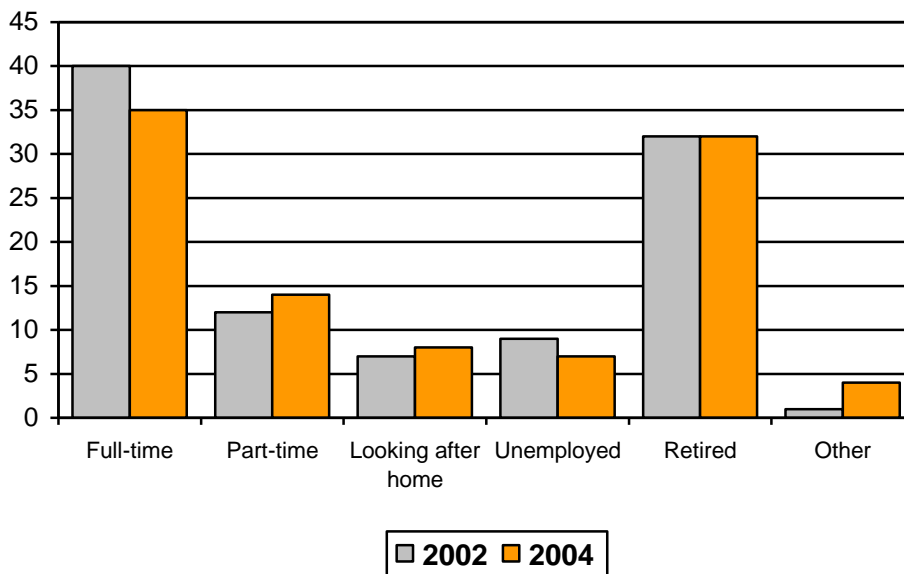
3.1 In total, of the 3,300 interviews in the Blyth Valley area, 49% of respondents were male and 51% female. The age profile is shown in figure 1 below, giving the comparison to the profile of 2002 respondents. It should be noted that in 2002 the survey included interviews with 1445 respondents.

Figure 1: Age Profile of Respondents (2002 and 2004)



3.2 Around a half of respondents are working full or part time, 8% were looking after home and family and 32% retired. The sample fairly closely matches the profile of the 2002 lifestyle survey. This is shown in figure 2 (below).

Figure 2: Employment Status of Respondents



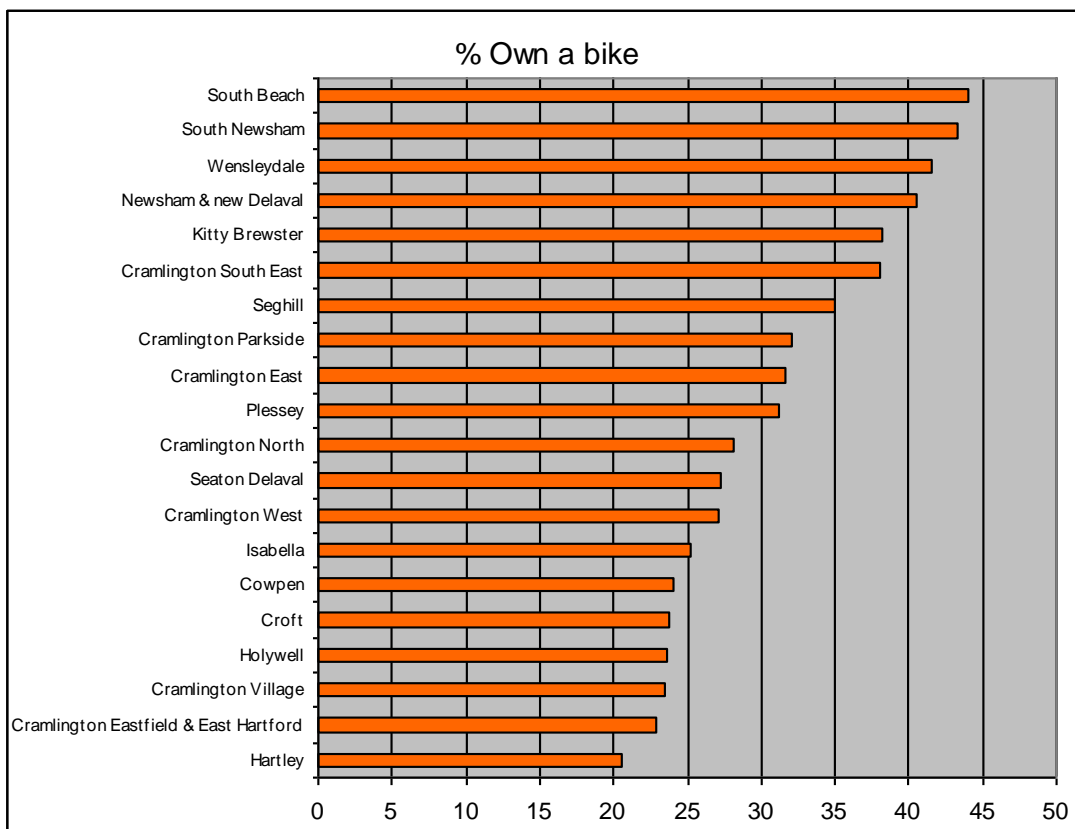
Internet Access

3.3 Overall a half of respondents (50%) in Blyth Valley indicated they had internet access at home. Nationally 52% of households now have access to the internet at home – this proportion has been increasing rapidly over the last few years – rising from less than 10% in 1998.

Car and Cycle Ownership

3.4 73% of households in Blyth Valley had access to one or more cars in their household, 27% did not have access to a car – this is comparable to national figures (nationally, 29% do not have access to a car). Overall, 31% of respondents in Blyth Valley own a cycle: results by ward highlight cycle ownership being highest in South Beach, South Newsham, Wensleydale and Newsham and New Delaval. This is shown in the chart below (figure 3).

Figure 3: % of respondents owning a cycle



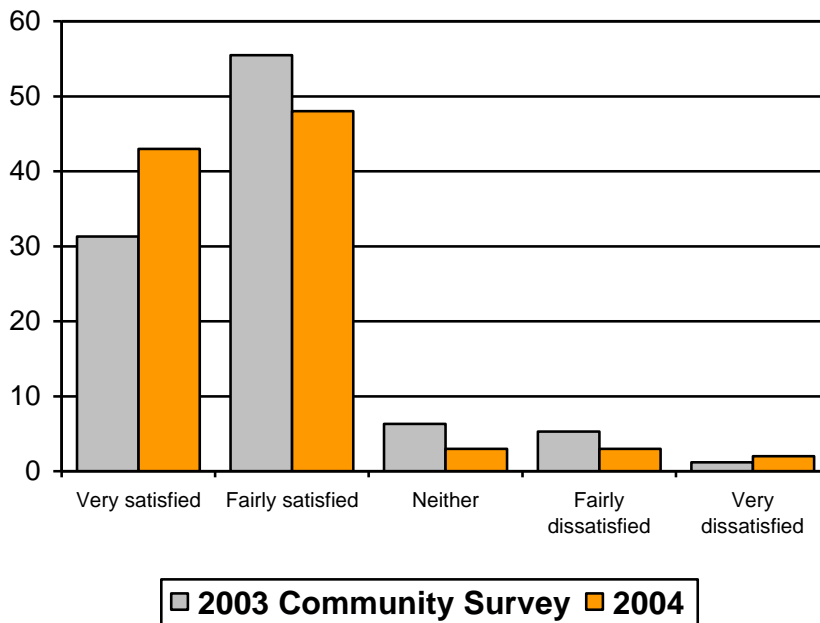
4 SOCIAL CAPITAL

- 4.1 Social Capital is the 'pattern and networks among people and the shared values which arise from those networks' (ONS). Evidence suggests that improved social capital and a greater feeling of community spirit result in improved quality of life. Social Capital is increasingly seen as a key factor in the lifestyle of residents.
- 4.2 Questions on social capital were included in the 2003 Blyth Valley Community Survey. These questions were repeated in this survey with residents giving their views on the local neighbourhood, how it has changed and the number of people they are in contact with locally.

Neighbourhood Satisfaction

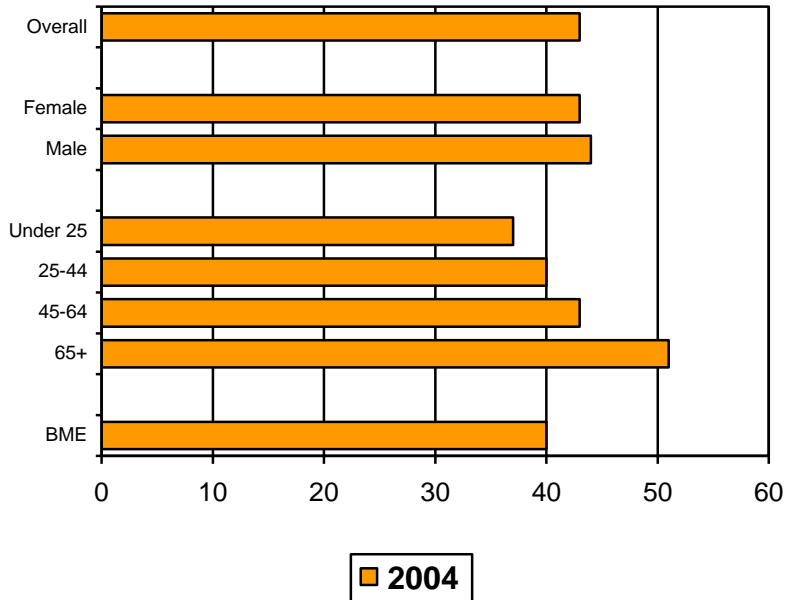
- 4.3 Overall, in this current survey, 43% of residents indicated they were very satisfied with the neighbourhood they live in. This represents an increase on the 2003 figure where 31% said they were very satisfied. This is shown in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4: Satisfaction with the Neighbourhood



4.4 There are no differences in the level of neighbourhood satisfaction by gender, but there are differences by age group – older residents were more likely to be very satisfied. Residents from BME groups were slightly less likely to be satisfied with the neighbourhood than those from the white ethnic groups.

Figure 5: % Very Satisfied with the Neighbourhood



4.5 There are also differences in neighbourhood satisfaction across the wards of Blyth Valley. The highest and lowest levels of satisfaction are shown in Table 1 below. Those wards highlighted in yellow are the priority wards.

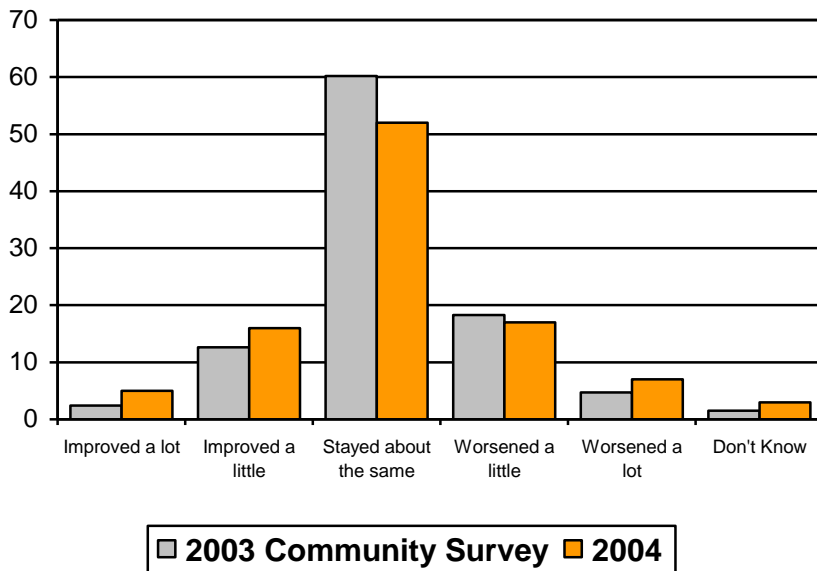
Table 1: % of Respondents Very Satisfied			
Highest		Lowest	
South Beach	61	Cramlington Eastfield and East Hartford	32
Cramlington Village	57	Newsham and New Delaval	32
South Newsham	56	Croft	32
Holywell	55	Kitty Brewster	29
Cramlington South-East	54	Cowpen	28



Area Improvement

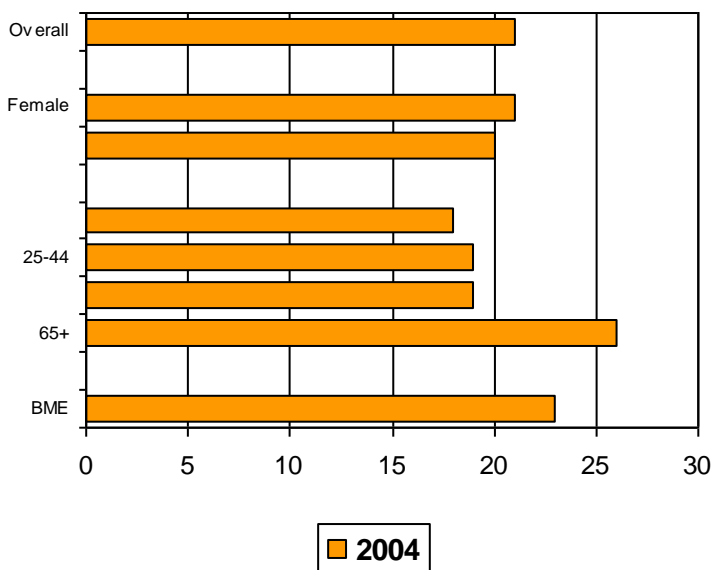
4.6 Overall, one-in-five residents (21%) thought that living in their neighbourhood had improved a lot or a little over the last 3 years. This is a higher figure than in the 2003 Community Survey – where 15% felt the area had improved a lot or a little (figure 6).

Figure 6: Opinion of Residents on Whether their Area had Improved (%)



4.7 Those residents in older age groups were more likely to think the area had improved a little or a lot. Residents from BME groups were also slightly more likely to perceive an improvement.

**Figure 7: % Thinking Area Improved a lot or a little
by Gender, Age, Ethnicity**



4.8 There are differences in perceived improvements by ward, as shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: % Area Improved A Lot Or A Little			
Highest		Lowest	
Kitty Brewster	27	South Beach	17
Isabella	27	South Newsham	16
Cowpen	26	Cramlington South-East	15
Croft	26	Cramlington Parkside	14
Cramlington Village	25	Holywell	11

Interaction with Neighbours

- 4.9 Residents were asked about how often they speak to their neighbours and also how many people they know in their neighbourhood. Overall, 43% of residents said they speak to their neighbours daily. The comparable national figure is 27%. In this survey, only 12% of respondents spoke to neighbours less than once a week.
- 4.10 Younger respondents were less likely to speak to neighbours daily and more likely to say they spoke to them less than once a week. Whereas overall, 12% spoke to neighbours less than once a week, this figure increases to 22% for those aged under 25. BME residents were also less likely to speak to neighbours daily – 31% said they spoke to their neighbours less than once a week.
- 4.11 Two – thirds of all residents (66%) said they know most or many of the people in their neighbourhood. This figure is the same as that recorded in 2002. Nationally, 46% of people said they know most or many of the people in their neighbourhood.
- 4.12 Again, younger residents are less likely to know most or many of the people in their neighbourhood – 60% of the under 25 group, 71% of those 65+. Less than a half (48%) of BME residents said they know most or many of the people in their neighbourhood (compared to 66% overall).



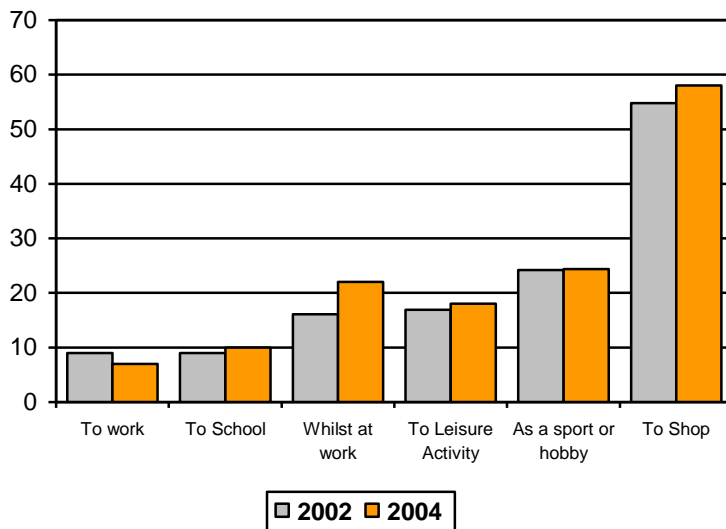
5 PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

5.1 This section of the questionnaire asked respondents about their physical activity levels, including walking and cycling as part of their daily life, participation in various types of physical activity, and their use of leisure activities. In the 2004 questionnaire (but not in 2002), respondents were also asked about their cultural activities, broadly defined as being those activities which people engage in, in their 'spare time'. These results are given in Section 6.

Walking

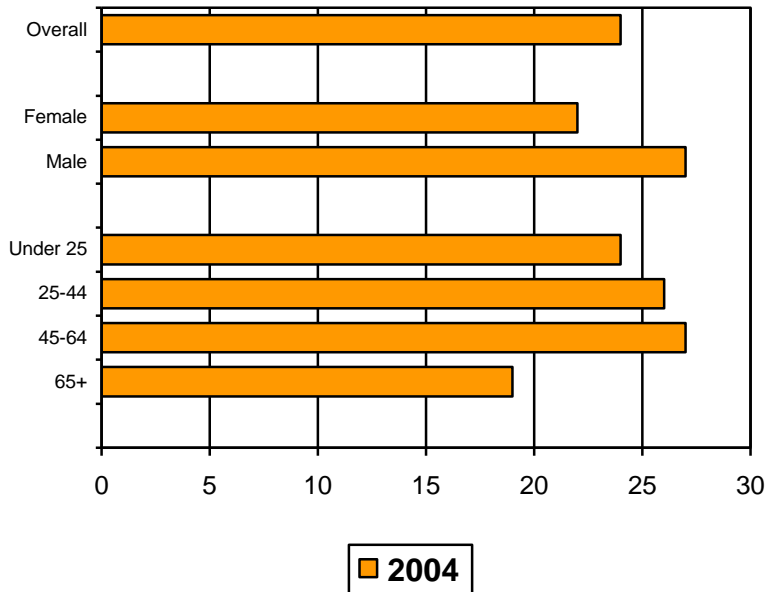
5.2 There was some evidence of an increase in walking to certain venues. Overall 58% of respondents walked to the shop, a 3% increase compared to the 2002 Blyth Valley Lifestyle survey. In 2002, 15% walked 'whilst at work', and in 2004 this has increased to 22% - a 7% increase. There were also some small levels of increase for those who walked to school with children, to leisure activities and as a sport or hobby. However, there was a decline in the proportion of respondents walking to work.

Figure 8: % Walking to Various Places



5.3 There are differences in walking activity by age, gender and ward. For example, men are more likely than women to say they walk as a sport or hobby than women.

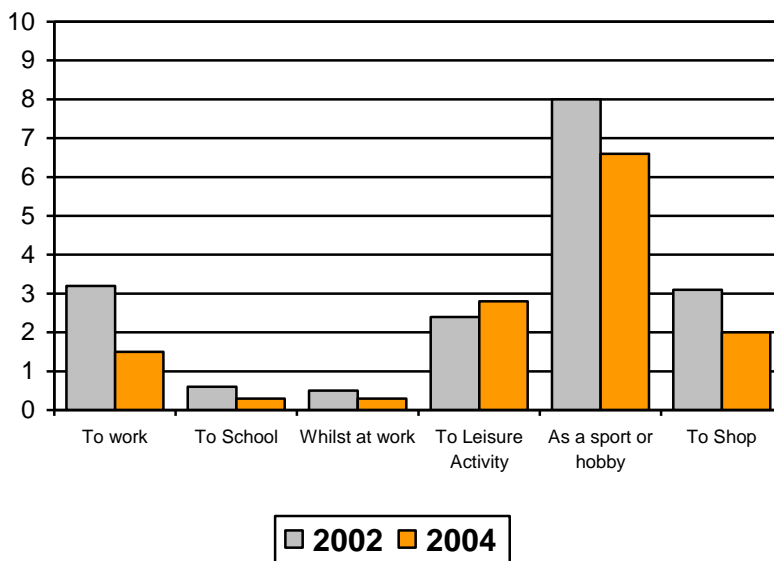
Figure 9: % Walking as a sport or hobby



Cycling

5.4 There was a slight decrease in cycling in almost all categories between 2002 and 2004. However, it should be noted that these changes are very small in percentage terms.

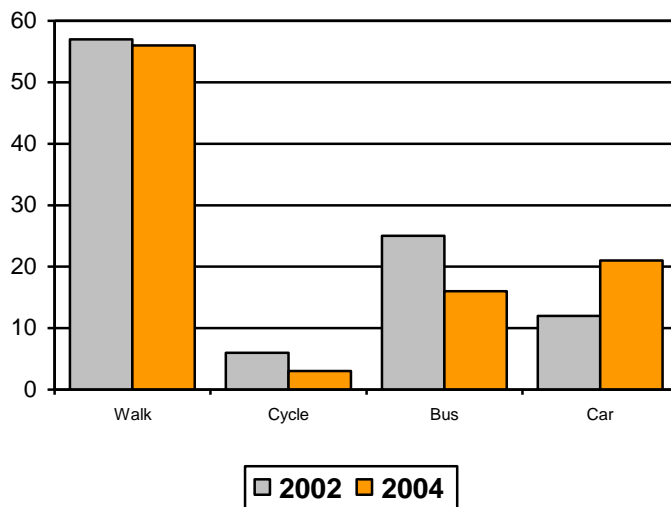
Figure 10: % Cycling to Various Activities/Venues



Travel to School

- 5.5 For those who had children at school, the majority of children walked there (56%). 21% of parents had children who travelled by car, a 9% increase compared to the 2002 Blyth Valley Lifestyle survey. Only 3% of parents indicated their children cycled to school. Between 2002 and 2004, the proportion of those travelling to school by car has increased substantially (12% in 2002 compared to 21% in 2004), and those travelling by bus decreased in equal proportion (25% in 2002 to 16% in 2004).

Figure 11: % Using Method to Get to School



Levels of Physical Activity

- 5.6 This section of the questionnaire asked respondents about their level of physical activity. Questions were included about the type of activity respondents were undertaking and reasons for not taking part in any activities.
- 5.7 Government guidance suggests that adults should aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate activity on 5 or more days of the week.
- 5.8 Participation in physical activity was measured in two ways:
- By asking residents to say how many times they did **exercise** for 30 minutes or more in a week.
 - By listing a range of activities (which could be described as resulting in **moderate or vigorous physical activity**) and asking residents to say whether they had done the activities for 30 minutes or more during the last week.

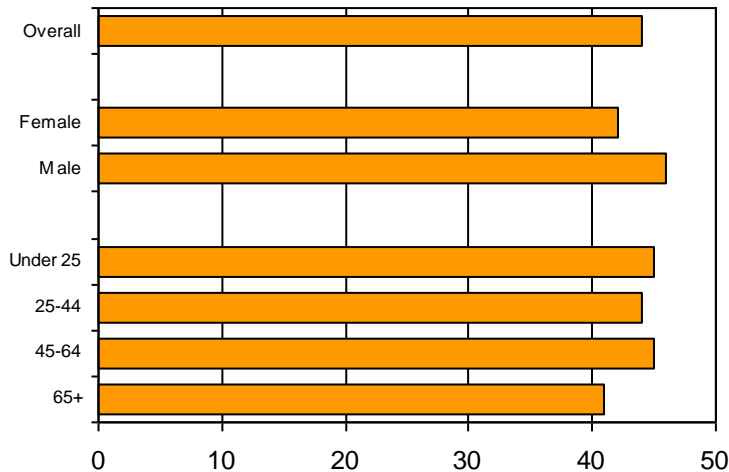
The first of these measures results in an over-estimate of 'moderate physical activity' because:

- residents over-claim their level of activity
- residents frequently include walking to the shops, the pub etc, or dog walking, horse riding, or decorating, some of which have previously been excluded from measures of moderate physical activity.

The second of the two measures is likely to give a low estimate of moderate activity and better estimates of participation in vigorous physical activity.

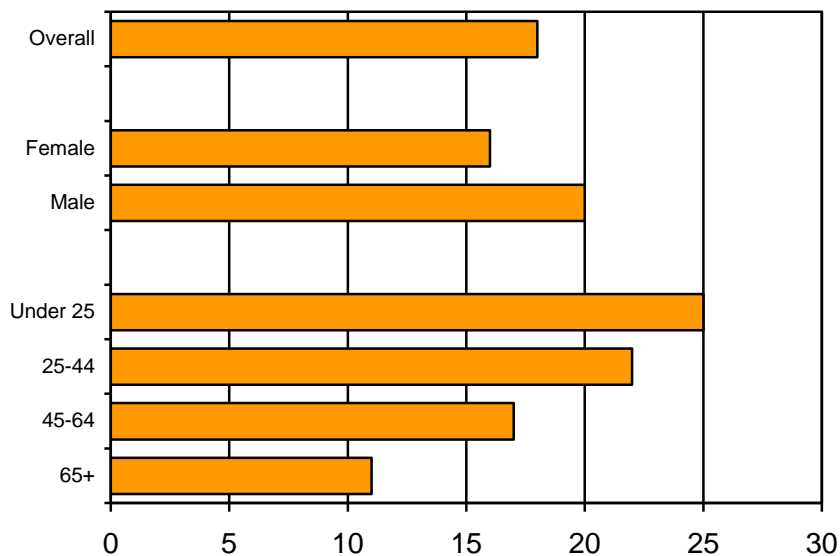
5.9 Using the first of the two measures of physical activity, the survey indicates that, on average, Blyth Valley residents do three periods of 30 minutes or more of exercise in a week. 44% of residents do five or more periods of activity – but note, as discussed in 5.7 (above), these include light exercise such as walking. There are only small differences in this measure of physical activity by gender and age.

Figure 12: % Doing 5 periods or more of 30 minutes of Light to Moderate Physical Activity in a week



5.10 Using the second of the two measures, the survey results indicate that 18% of Blyth Valley residents do five or more periods of moderate or vigorous activity each week. The average number of periods of such activity is 2 per week. There are large differences by age and gender.

Figure 13: % Doing 5 periods or more of 30 minutes of Vigorous Physical Activity in a week

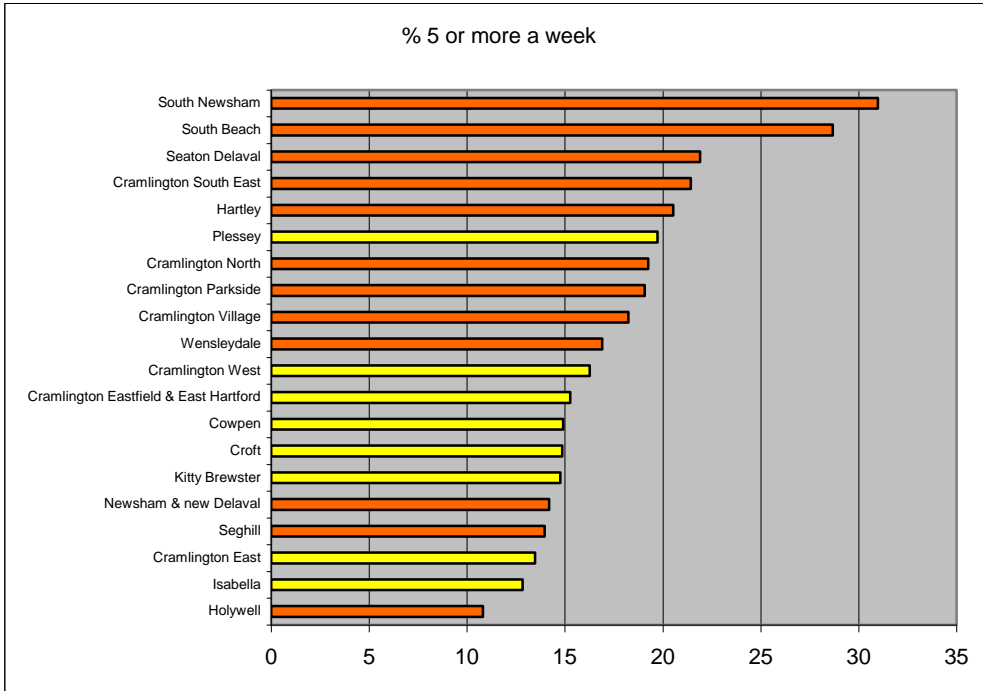


5.11 From the above, the 2004-05 survey in Blyth Valley shows 18% of residents are achieving the government's recommended levels of physical activity – 20% of men and 16% of women are at this level locally. Nationally, data suggests that 37% of men and 24% of women achieve 30 minutes of moderate physical activity of 5 occasions a week. Those results are obtained using slightly differing approaches, but point to Blyth Valley being below the national average for levels of physical activity. The results can be partly explained by the age and socio-economic profile of Blyth Valley:

- Blyth Valley has a higher proportion of residents in their 50's (than nationally).
- Nationally, results suggest that those in higher socio-economic groups are more likely to be more physically active. Blyth Valley has a lower proportion of residents in those groups.

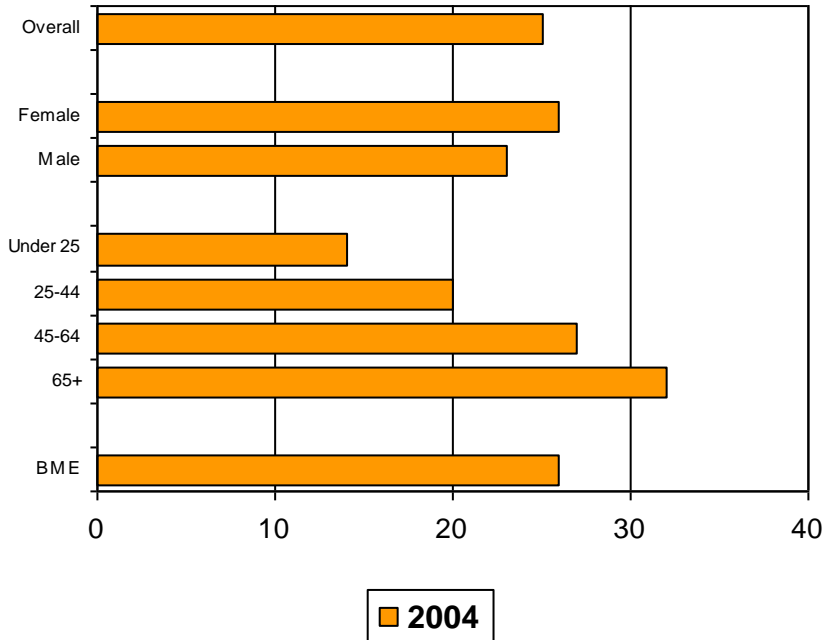
5.12 There are also differences in this measure across the wards of Blyth Valley. Again, the priority wards of Blyth Valley are highlighted in yellow.

Figure 14: % 5 or more periods of Moderate or Vigorous Physical Activity in a Week



5.13 The measures of physical activity also give the proportion of people who do no periods of physical activity – this is approximately a quarter (23%) of Blyth Valley residents. Again, women are slightly more likely than men to do no periods of physical activity. The proportion doing no periods of activity increases with age.

Figure 15: % Undertaking No Periods of Physical Activity

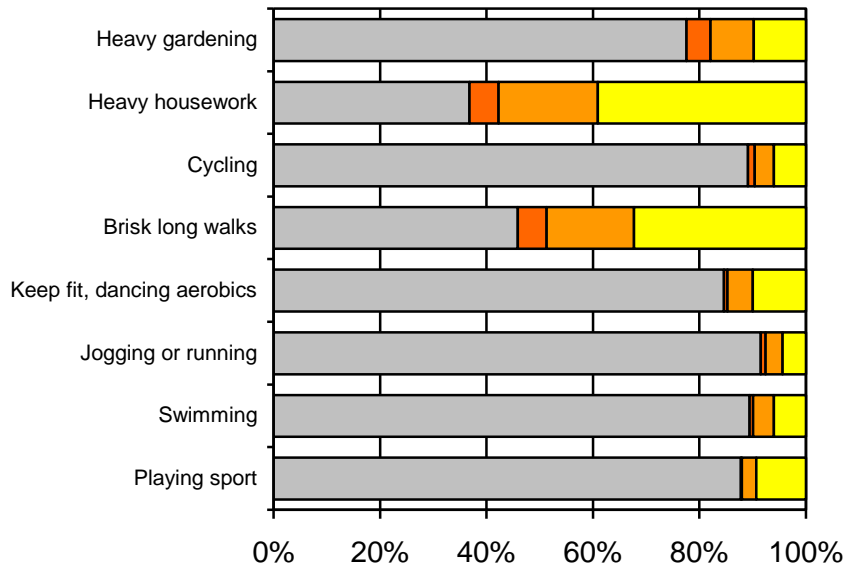


The wards with the highest proportion doing no periods of physical activity are:

- Isabella (33% no activity)
- Newsham and New Delaval (32%)
- Cowpen (31%)
- Cramlington East (29%)
- Croft (26%)

5.14 Overall, 58% of respondents had undertaken 'heavy housework' and 49% had undertaken 'brisk long walks' for 30 minutes or more within the last week. 15% had undertaken keep fit, dancing or aerobics and 12% had played sports. 9% had played sport for an hour or more in the last week. A high proportion of respondents had not undertaken any activities within the last week.

Figure 16: Percentage of respondents undertaking various activities (%)



None Less than 30 mins 30 mins to 1 hour 1 hour or more



Comparisons between 2002 and 2004

5.15 Whilst the physical activity measures used in the 2002 and 2004/05 surveys were different (due to developments in recommendation levels and health policy), the survey results provide some comparisons of change over time.

Periods of No Activity – Measure of Inactive or Sedentary Behaviour

2002 Measure	No periods of sport and leisure activities of 20 minutes or more in the last 7 days	39%
2004-05 Measure	No periods of moderate physical activity of 30 minutes or more in the last week	23%

Five Periods a Week – Government Recommended Measure

2002 Measure	5 or more periods of sports and leisure activity of 20 minutes or more in the last 7 days	6%
2004-05 Measure	30 minutes of moderate physical activity a day on 5 or more days of the last week	18%

Specific Activity Measures

Activity	Proportion undertaking Activity for Period in Last Week	
	2002 %	2004-05 %
Cycling as a sport/Cycling	4	10
Swimming or diving/Swimming	8	10
Keep fit/yoga/aerobics/dance	5	15
Walking or hiking (of 2 miles or more)/Brisk long walks	13	49
Jogging, cross-country, road running/jogging or running	2	8
Heavy Housework	56	63
Heavy Gardening	44	22
Walking to the Shops	55	58

Note: For the above measures, some of the question wording is slightly different (the 2002 survey used the Sport England measures at that time. Also 20 minutes was used as a reference period in 2002, 30 minutes in 2004-05.

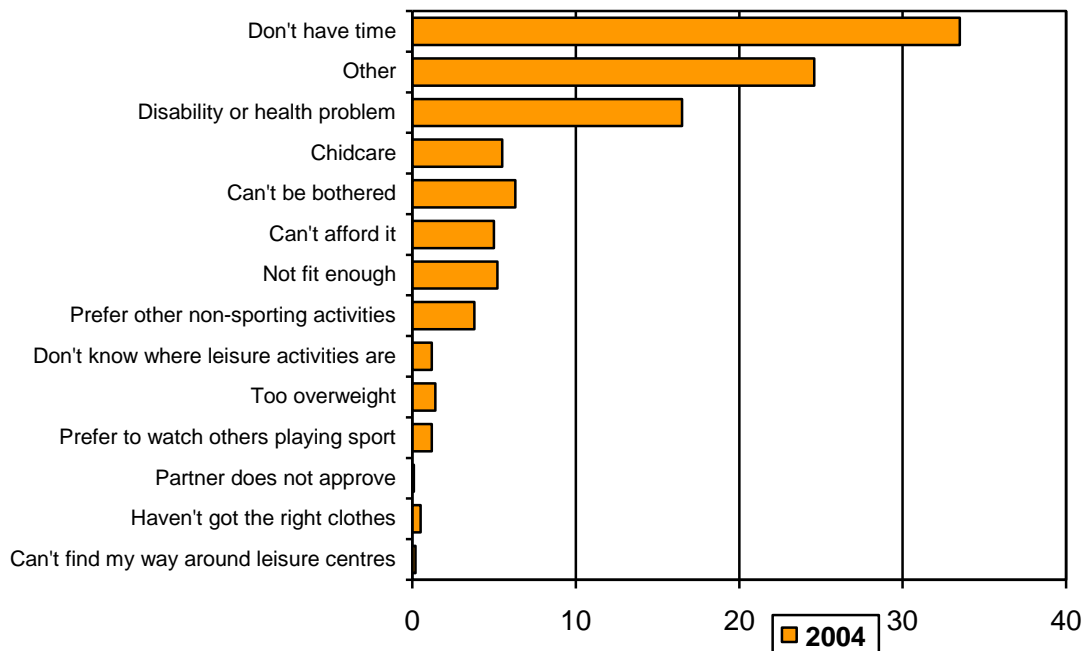
Activity	Proportion undertaking Activity for Period in Last Week	
	2002 %	2004-05 %
Heavy Housework	44	22
Heavy Gardening	44	22
Walking to the Shops	55	58
Note: In 2002, no time period was specified; in 2004-05, 'last week' was used.		

Barriers to Physical Activity

5.16 Respondents were most likely to indicate they 'don't have time' (33%) as the main reason that would prevent them from doing more physical activities or sport (figure 14). This figure is 3% higher than the 2002 Blyth Valley Lifestyle survey. Common reasons for respondents not having enough time were work commitments, housework, busy lifestyle and childcare issues.

Other main reasons included 'disability or health problems' (17%), 'Can't be bothered' (6%), 'Childcare' (5%) and 'I am not fit enough' (5%).

Figure 17: Main reason for not participating in physical activity or sport



5.17 There are some differences in the reasons given by age, gender and ethnicity. For example:

- Women are more likely than men to say they don't have time.
- Those aged 25-44 are most likely to say they don't have time (the proportion giving this reason rises to almost a half (48%) for this age group).
- Those from BME groups are more likely to say that they don't have time.

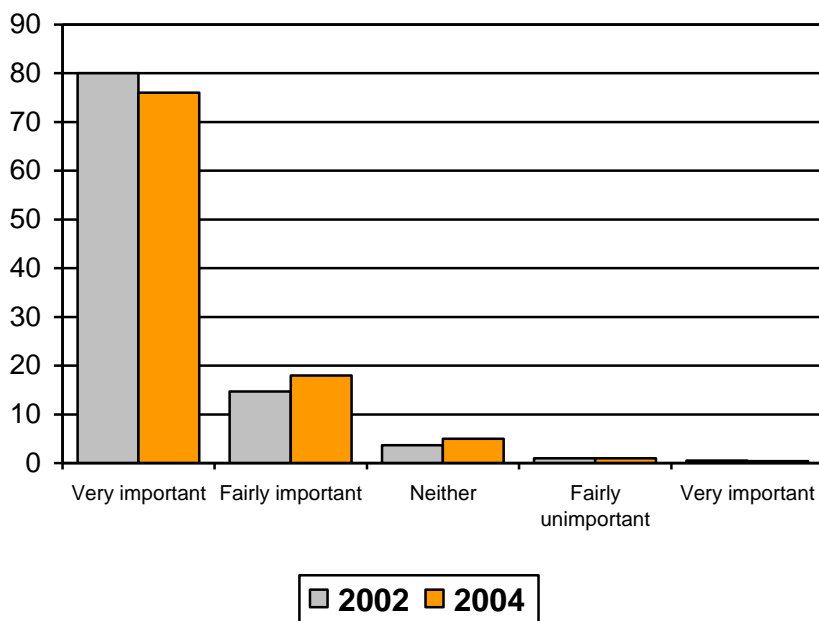
- Childcare is given as a barrier to physical activity by 6% of all residents – but by:
 - 12% of those under 45
 - 8% of women
 - 16% of women aged under 45
 - 19% of women with children in the household

- ‘Can’t afford it’ is a barrier given by 5% of all residents – but by:
 - 9% of those under 25
 - 8% of those with children in the household
 - 11% of those under 25 with children

Importance of Providing Opportunities for Sport and Leisure

5.18 Overall 94% of respondents felt that providing opportunities for people to participate in sport and physical activity were fairly or very important. There has been no significant change in this figure compared to the 2002 Blyth Valley Lifestyle Survey (Figure 15).

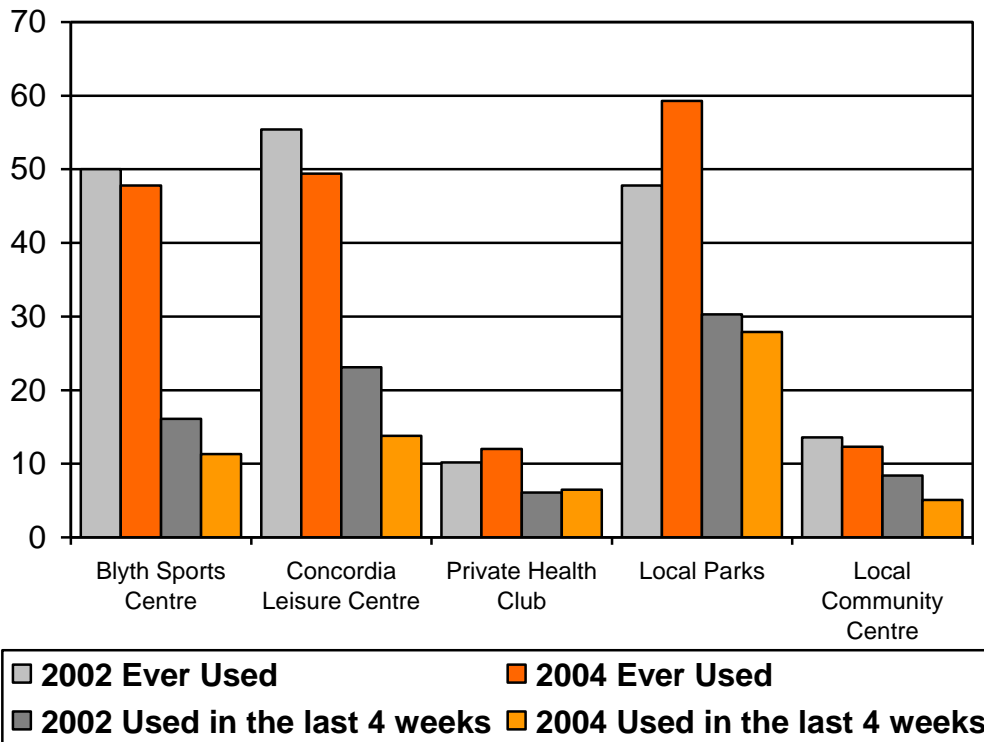
Figure 18: Respondents views on Providing Opportunities for People to Participate in Sport and Physical Activity (%)



Local Sports Facilities – Usage

- 5.19 Around half of respondents had used Blyth Sports and Concordia Leisure Centres in the past. Of those 11% said they had used Blyth and 14% had used Concordia within the last 4 weeks, a slight decrease compared to the 2002 Lifestyle survey.
- 5.20 59% of respondents had used the local parks; an 11% increase compared to the 2002 lifestyle survey. 28% had used local parks within the last month.
- 5.21 The results indicate a slight increase in usage of private health clubs.

Figure 19: Frequency of Use (%)



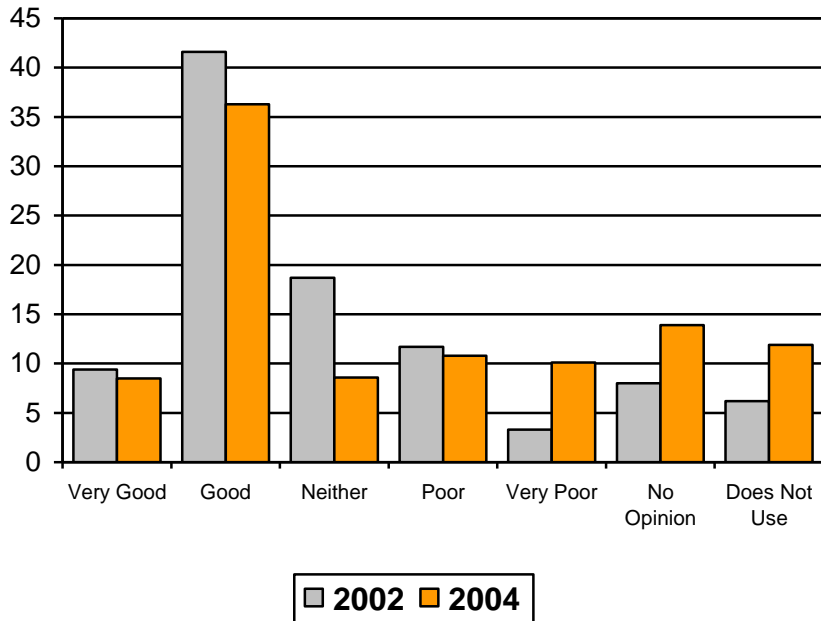
- 5.22 Usage of the Blyth Valley Centres varies considerably with age. For example, whilst 11% claim to have used Blyth Sports Centre in the last 4 weeks, this is the case for 19% of those aged under 25 and only 3% of those aged 65+.



Local Sports Provision and Facilities – Satisfaction

5.23 Overall, 45% of respondents felt that the local sports provision was good or very good. However 21% rated it poor or very poor - an increase of 7% compared to the 2002 lifestyle survey.

Figure 20: Rating of Sports Provision Overall (%)



5.24 There are differences in the opinion of local sports provision by age and gender:

- those from younger age groups are more likely to describe provision as good or very good
- women are less likely than men to describe provision as good or very good

Those who are physically active are more likely to describe local sports provision as good – 54% of those who exercise 5+ times a week describe position as good or very good.

5.25 Residents in this survey were asked to explain why they felt local sports and physical activity provision was either good or bad. The responses in many ways contradict each other. Those with positive perceptions focused on:

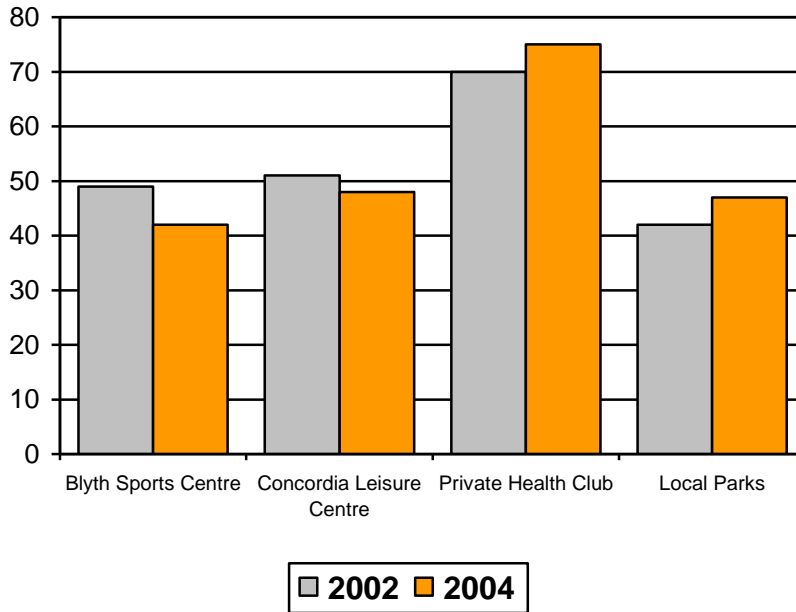
- the choice available
- new facilities being developed
- location and close proximity
- cheapness of facilities

Those with negative views of the local provision focused on:

- the limited range or options available
- need for improvement or modernization
- lack of facilities in Seaton Delaval
- limited facilities for young people
- expensive facilities.

5.26 Respondents were asked to rate each local facility, based on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 was not at all satisfied and 10 was very satisfied. Overall 42% of respondents gave Blyth Sports Centre a score of 8+, rising to 48% for Concordia Leisure Centre. 47% of respondents gave local parks a score of 8 or more, a 5% increase compared to the 2002 lifestyle survey. 75% of respondents gave Private Health Clubs a score of 8+, a 5% increase on 2002.

Figure 21: Satisfaction with Leisure Facilities
(% giving score of 8+)

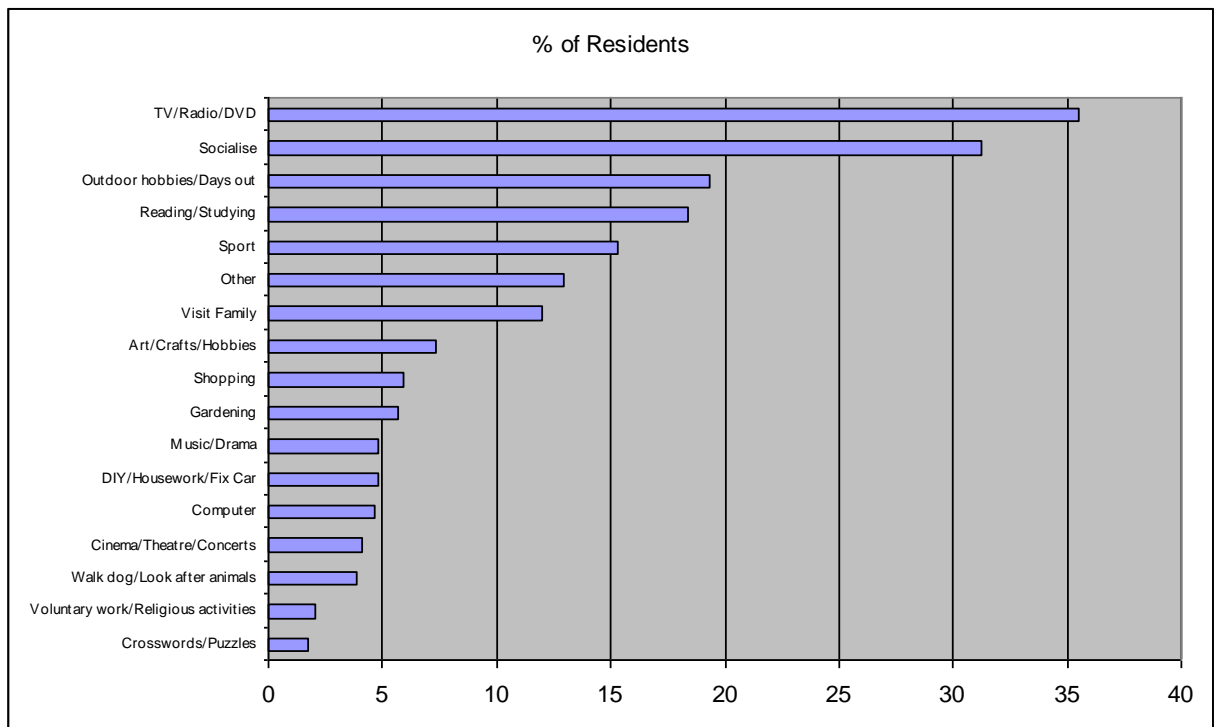


6 CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

6.1 Respondents were asked about cultural activities – broadly defined as activities that residents do in their spare time at weekends or in the evenings. In general, residents gave 2 or 3 different weekday or weekend activities. A wide range of different activities were listed, for example, including:

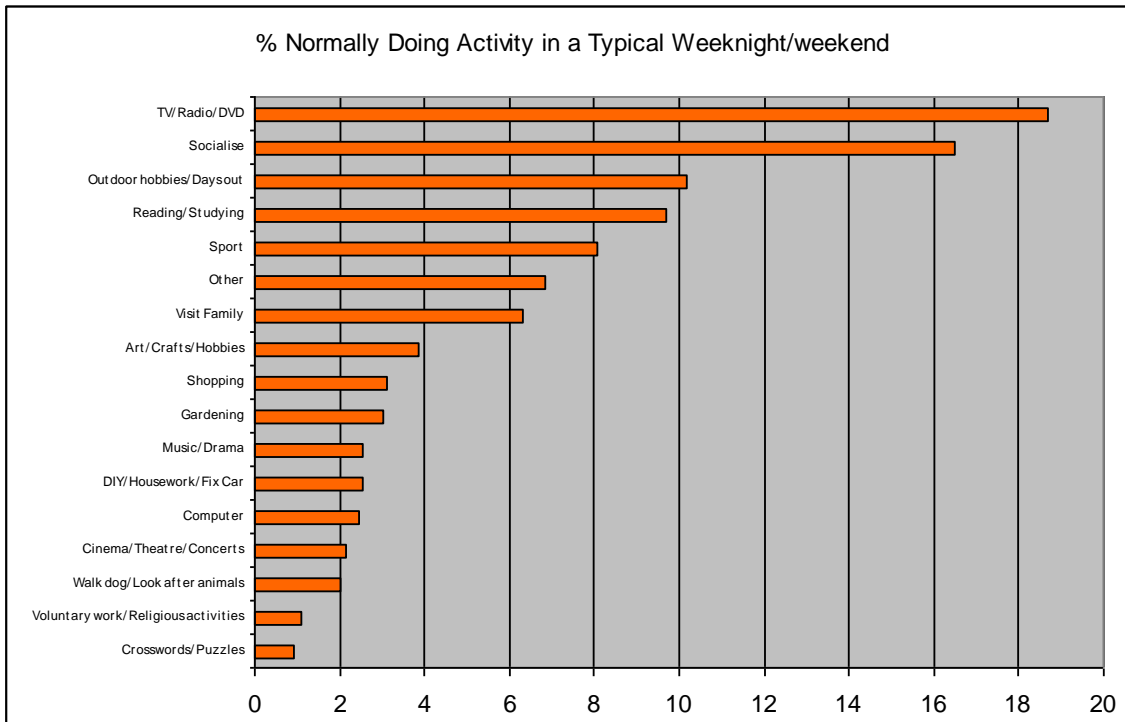
- walking the dog
- playing with the children – babysitting
- gardening
- going to the cinema or to bingo
- crosswords and quizzes
- listening to music
- shopping

Figure 22: % of Residents Undertaking Different Cultural Activities

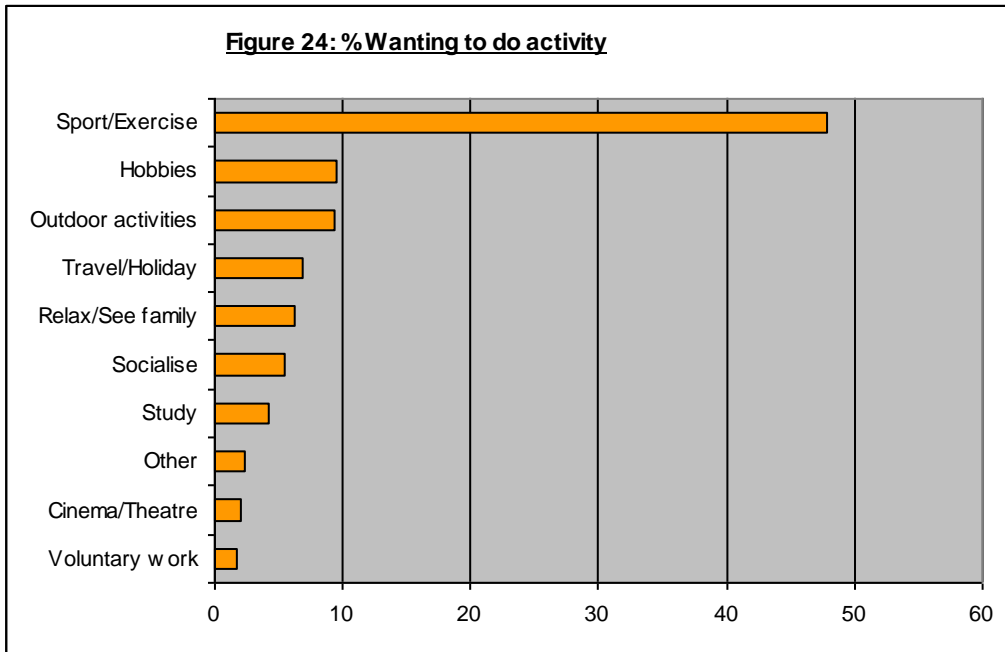


6.2 The most common activity was watching TV or DVD's or listening to the radio. Smaller proportions engage in Arts/Crafts/Hobbies or in Music/Drama. Note that these activities were spontaneously given by residents (not from a prompted list). The figures give the relative proportions involved in the activity, but may underestimate the level of total involvement. For example, we would expect watching TV to be most common, but be an activity to be engaged in by more than the 35% shown.

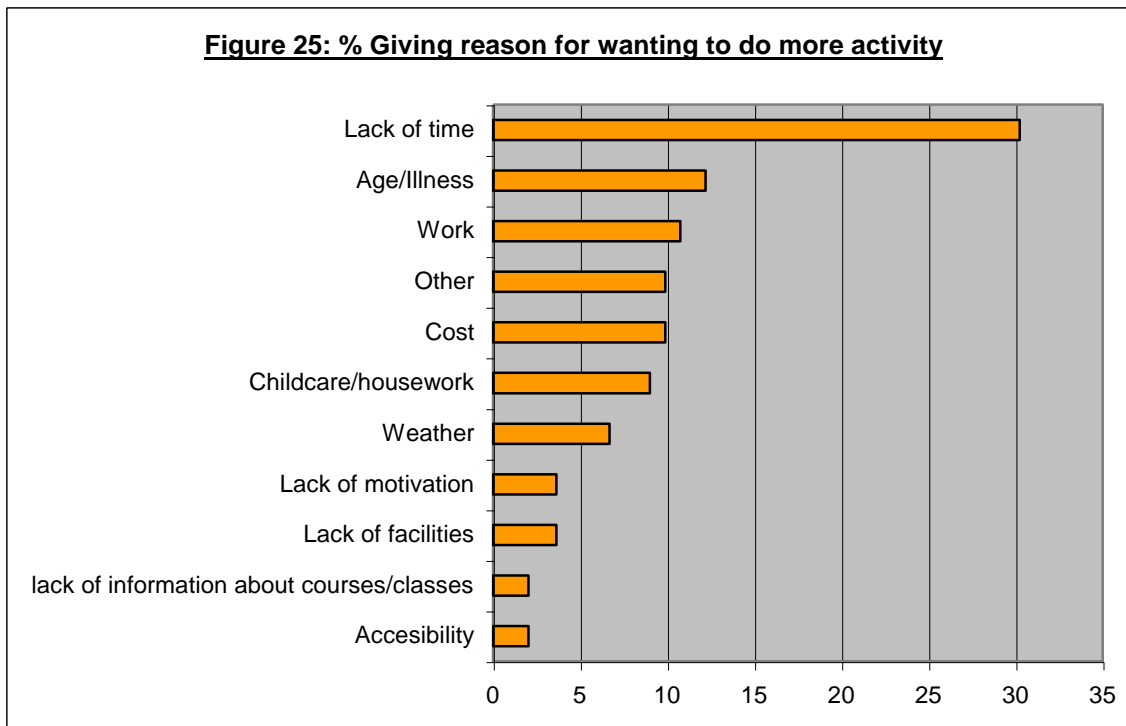
Figure 23: Proportion Engaging in Various Activities



6.3 Almost one-in-three (29%) residents said there were things they wanted to do more in their spare time but didn't at the moment. Of those that wanted to do more activities in their spare time, a large proportion (48%) wanted to do more sports or exercise.



6.4 30% of those wanting to do more activities in their spare time felt they 'lacked time' to do so. Other reasons for not undertaking more spare time activities included 'age/illness' (12%), 'work' (11%) and 'cost' (10%).



6.5 When asked, respondents gave more information about why they did not undertake activities in their spare time – some examples are:

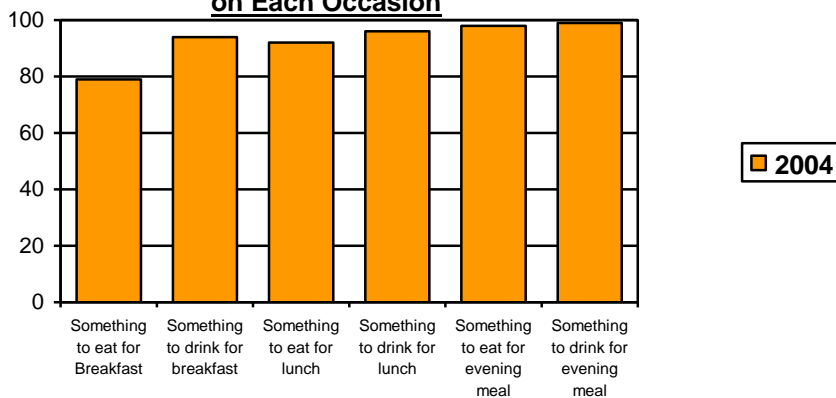
- *I do a part time degree and study.*
- *I work, study run a home and need to spend time with my mother and husband*
- *Work commitments*
- *When I come in from work do the house work that enough*
- *Will wait until children are older*
- *Busy lifestyle*
- *Age and expense*
- *I'm overweight*
- *Could not afford child care*
- *Old age and bad legs*
- *Consider myself too old*
- *Because of cancer and knee*
- *I'm happy the way I am*

7 DIET

Skipping Meals

- 7.1 The survey included a measure of meals missed by residents. This question was not included in the 2002 survey, but was in the 2003 Blyth Valley Young People's Survey.
- 7.2 Overall, one-in-five residents (21%) indicated that they did not eat breakfast on a 'normal day'. Smaller proportions missed eating or drinking at lunchtime or for the evening meal.

Figure 26: Percentage of respondents Eating/Drinking on Each Occasion



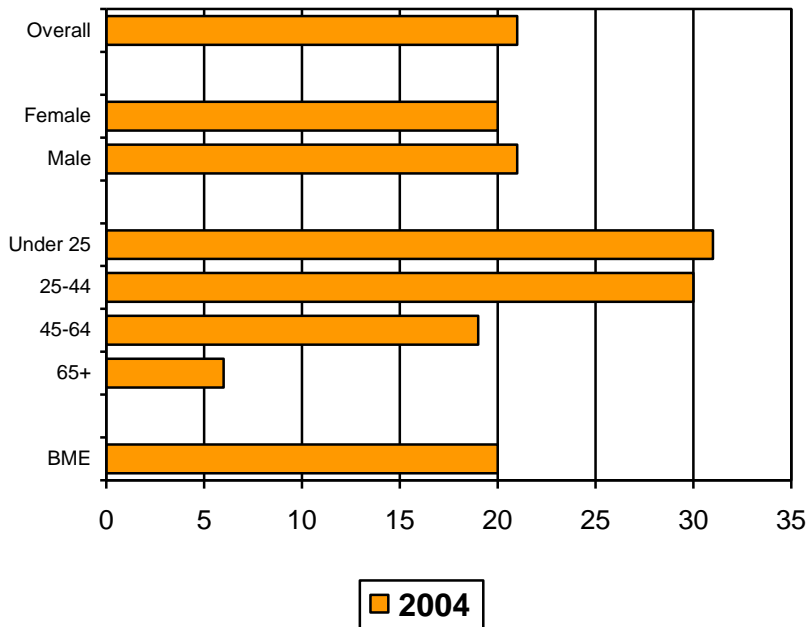
- 7.3 The comparable figures from the Blyth Valley Young People's Survey were as follows:

Table 3

BV Young Peoples Survey	Breakfast (%)		Lunch (%)		Evening Meal (%)	
	11-15	16-24	11-15	16-24	11-15	16-24
Something to Eat	72	61	90	85	88	88
Something to Drink	74	76	88	86	89	88

7.4 In this 2004 – 05 survey, the proportion of residents skipping breakfast increases with age. Those aged under 45 are most likely to not have something to eat for breakfast.

Figure 27: % Who do not have something to eat for breakfast



Fruit and Vegetable Consumption

7.5 Residents were asked about their fruit and vegetable consumption using two different approaches:

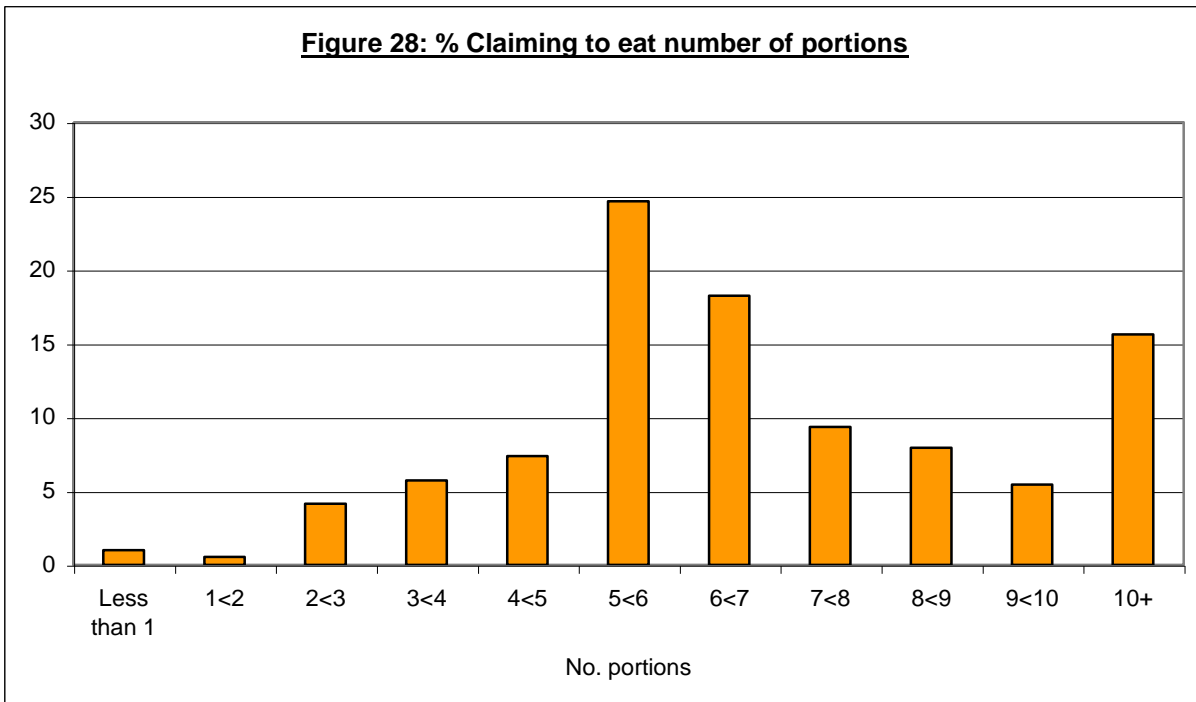
- Where they were asked to just give an overall estimate of the number of portions of fruit and of vegetables that they ate a day (where 'portion' was defined for them).
- Where they were asked to detail what they ate yesterday and how much they ate (from a range of different fruit and vegetable categories).

7.6 As expected, the first of the above approaches results in what appears to be an over-claim of fruit and vegetable consumption.

Residents, when asked spontaneously, think they eat far more fruit and vegetable than they can account for when asked to detail a days consumption. The following paragraphs summarise the results.

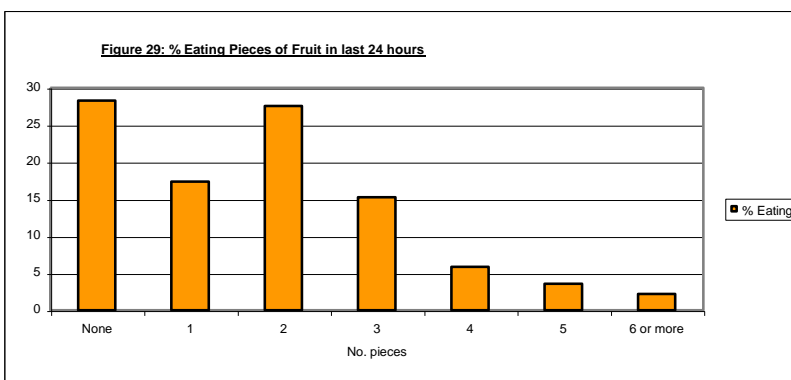


7.7 Using the spontaneous estimate of how much fruit and vegetables they eat, over three-quarters of residents claim to eat 5 or more portions of fruit and vegetables a day.



7.8 This approach gives an average claimed number of portions of fruit and vegetables consumed per day of 6.

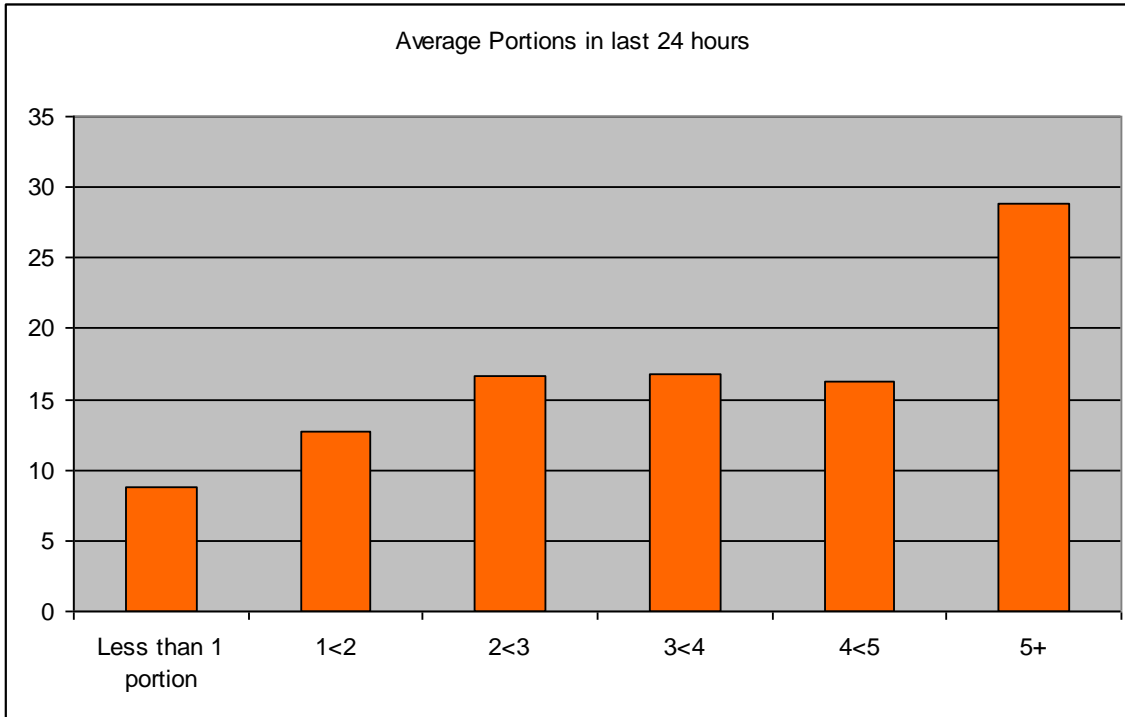
7.9 When asked to detail what fruit and vegetables they ate on the previous day, the estimate of consumption is far lower. For example, just considering fruit consumption, 46% of residents had one or no pieces of fruit in the last 24 hours.



7.10 When the total fruit and vegetable consumption detailed for the previous day is calculated, the average number of portions per person is 3.67 in the last day. This is lower than the claimed estimate obtained using peoples perceptions of what they eat.

7.11 The distribution of portions of fruit and vegetables eaten by residents in the survey is given below. Overall, 38% of residents ate 3 or fewer portions on the previous day. 28% were meeting the government target of at least 5 portions a day.

Figure 30: Average Portions in the last 24 hours



7.12 In terms of overall portions of fruit and vegetables consumed, there are differences by age group – younger people in Blyth Valley on average eat fewer portions of fruit and vegetables (Table 4).

Table 4	
	Average (median) portions of fruit and vegetables consumed on previous day
Under 25	2.73
25 – 44	3.33
45 – 64	3.87
65 +	3.87
Overall	3.67

7.13 Those interviewed were asked for the reasons they didn't eat more fruit and vegetables. The main reasons given were centred around:

- disliking the taste
- being unable to eat more
- perceptions of the effects of eating more (fruit in particular)
- quality of products
- accessibility.

"I eat as much as I can"

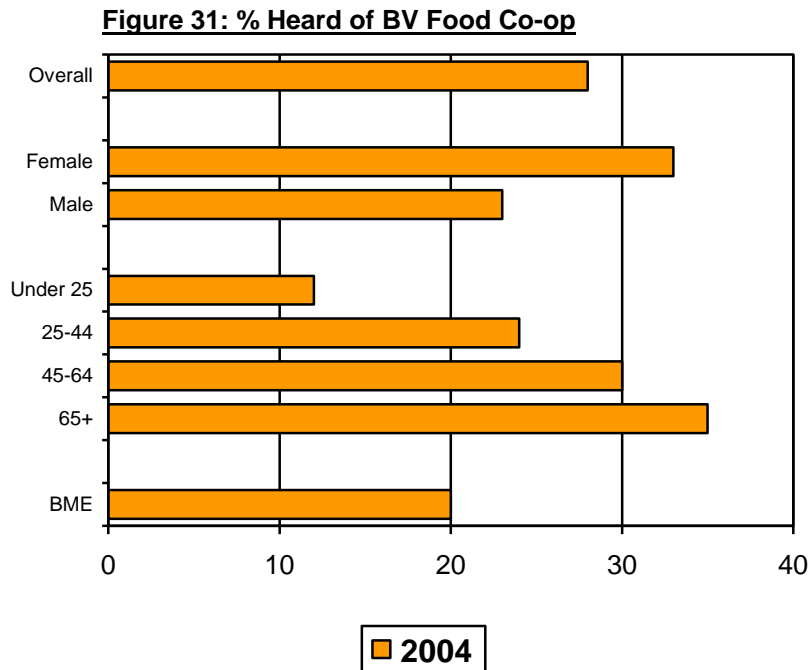
"I'm not a big fruit eater"

"Fruit disagrees with me"

"I don't buy vegetables, I don't like them. I would buy more fruit if it was easily accessible"

Blyth Valley Food Co-op

7.14 Over a quarter of residents interviewed (28%) said they had heard of Blyth Valley Food Co-op. There were differences by age and gender – younger residents were less likely to have heard of the food co-op, as were residents from BME groups. Awareness was also higher in some wards than in others.



7.15 In total, 136 residents (4.7% of those interviewed) said they had used the Food Co-op at some point. The data shows differences by gender (more women saying they have used the Food Co-op than men) and also differences across the wards of Blyth Valley – the highest usage being in the Blyth wards of Cowpen, Croft and Isabella and in some Seaton Valley wards (for example, Hartley).

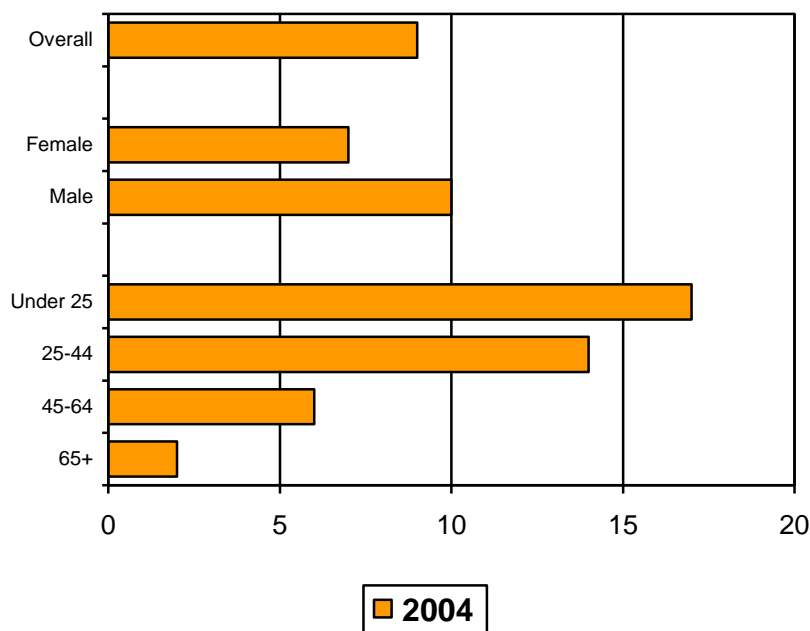


Main Meals

7.16 Overall, 41% of residents have a take-away (such as fish and chips or Chinese food) as their main meal on at least one occasion a week. This is the same proportion as in 2002. Almost one-in-ten have a takeaway as the main meal on 2 or more days a week.

7.17 As expected, there are large differences by age. For the younger group (under 25) 57% have a take-away as a main meal on at least one occasion a week – 17% on 2 or more days a week.

Figure 32: % Having Take-away as Main Meal 2+ Times a Week



7.18 Almost one-in-ten residents (8%) have food from a fast food restaurant (such as McDonalds or Pizza Hut) as their main meal on at least one occasion a week. This proportion increases to almost a quarter (24%) for those aged under 25.

7.19 Almost a third of residents (32%) have pre-prepared foods such as ready meals as their main meal on at least one occasion a week. 10% of residents have a ready meal as their main meal on 3 or more occasions a week. The frequency of eating pre-prepared/ready meals increases amongst the younger age group – 15% of those under 25 have a ready meal as their main meal on 3+ occasions a week.



7.20 A half of residents have food cooked from fresh ingredients as a main meal on 5 or more days a week. A quarter of residents have food cooked from fresh less than 3 times a week. This figures increases to a third for the under 25 group.

7.21 9% of residents have a vegetarian meal at least once a week.

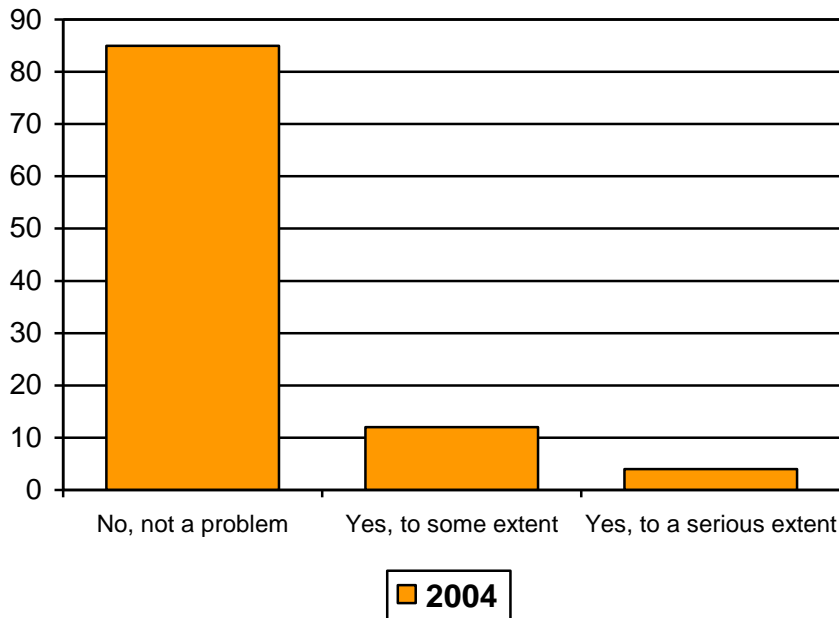


8 HEALTH

Damp and Heating

- 8.1 Damp and condensation in the home have been shown to be important determinants of health. This 2004 survey measured for the first time the proportion of residents in Blyth Valley with damp problems. Overall, 15% said they had damp or condensation problems in their home, with 4% suggesting the damp was a serious problem.

Figure 33: % of Residents with Damp Problems

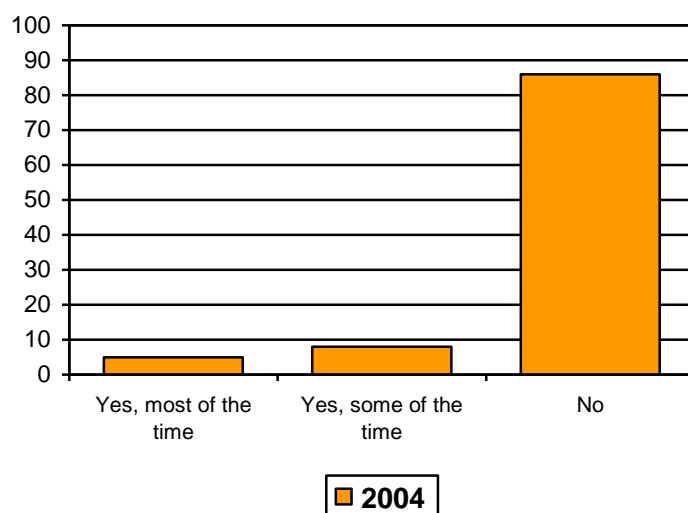


8.2 Damp or condensation was most commonly a problem to residents in the following wards:

Table 5: % % indicating damp or condensation a problem	
Ward	%
Croft	34
Cowpen	23
Cramlington Eastfield and East Hartford	20
Newsham and New Delaval	20

8.3 Overall, 13% of residents said there are times in winter when they cannot keep their home warm enough. 5% said this was the case most of the time.

Figure 34: % of Residents with Heating Problems



8.4 Again, there were differences across the wards of Blyth Valley – those in Cramlington Eastfield and East Hartford, Cowpen and Croft most likely to say they faced heating problems.

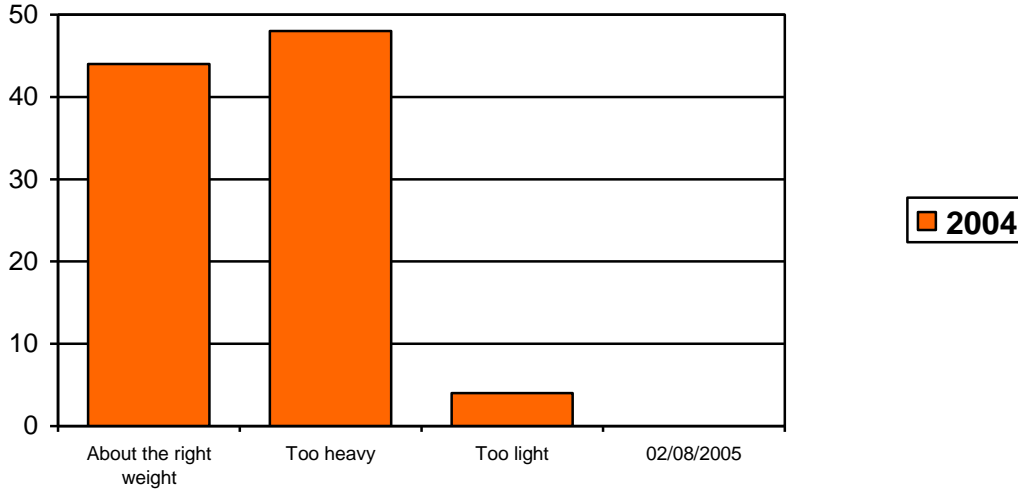
8.5 Residents from BME groups were more likely to say they faced problems due to damp and condensation than the general population of Blyth Valley. Among BME residents, 20% faced damp problems. In addition, 30% of those from BME groups said they couldn't keep their home warm enough in winter (compared to 13% of all residents).

Those facing both damp and condensation, and winter heating problems were more likely to have lower household incomes. For example, whilst 15% reported damp problems, this figure increases to 21% for those with a household income of under £10,000 pa.

Perceived Weight

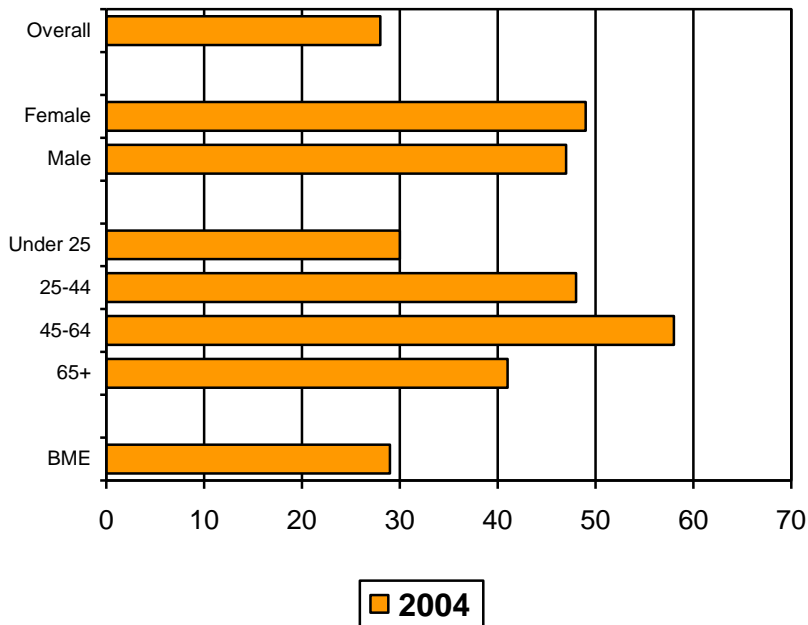
8.6 Residents were asked if they thought, for their height, they were too heavy, too light, or about the right weight. Overall, almost a half (48%) thought they were too heavy. This is a slight increase on the 2002 figure of 45%.

Figure 35: Respondents Views on their Weight (%)



8.7 Those most likely to think they were too heavy were aged 45-64.

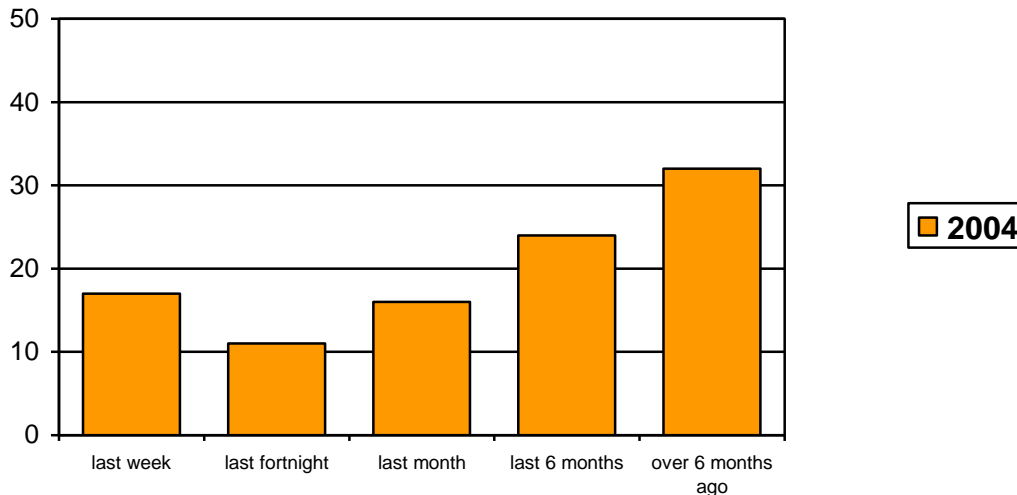
Figure 36: % Thinking they were too heavy by age, gender, ethnicity



Visits to the Doctor

8.8 In this survey, residents were asked when they last visited their doctor (again, a new question since 2002). Overall, 16% said they had visited their doctor in the last week; almost a third (32%) said they visited over 6 months ago. Nationally, 12% of men and 18% of women had visited their GP in the last week.

Figure 37: % of Respondents Visiting GP



8.9 Differences by age, gender and ethnicity indicate that:

- One-in-five (20%) of those aged 65+ had visited their doctor in the last week (16% overall).
- Men are more likely than women to have not visited their doctor in the last 6 months (37% of men, 29% of women).
- 14% of BME residents had visited their doctor in the last week (compared with 16% of all residents).
- Some wards have higher proportions visiting a doctor in the last week than others.

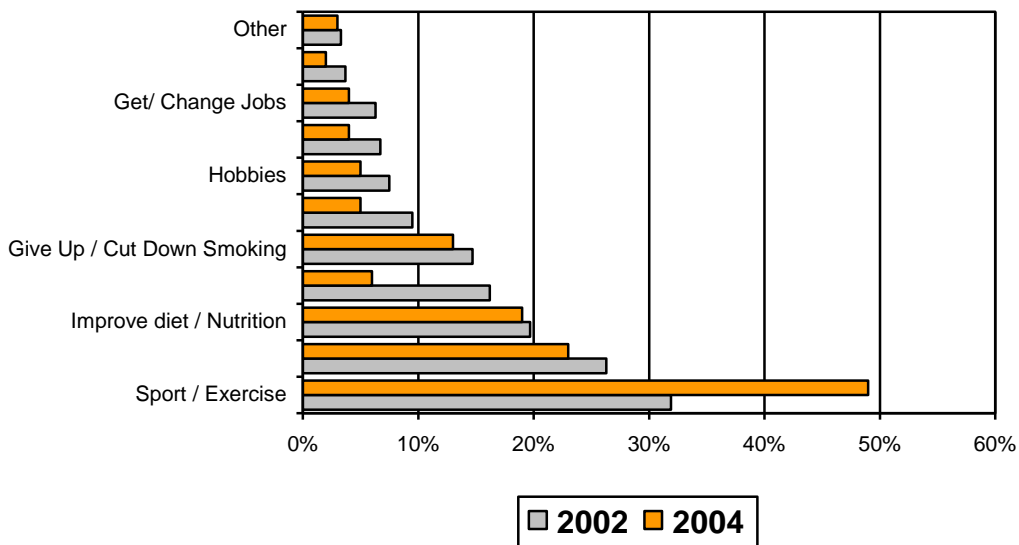
Perceptions of Health

8.10 Overall, 64% of residents felt that their health was either excellent or good (for someone of their age). This is a small increase on the 2002 results where 62% described their health as excellent or good. The 2004 results also point to a smaller percentage describing their health as poor.

8.11 As expected, the proportion perceiving their health as good or excellent declines with age. In addition, there are some large differences by ward. For example, only 12% of residents in Cowpen described their health as excellent, compared to over 20% describing it in this way in some other wards.

- 8.12 Respondents were asked if there was anything they would like to do to keep themselves healthy (but didn't currently do). Overall, 44% said that there was – this is a lower figure than in 2002 where almost 60% indicated this.
- 8.13 The younger age group was most likely to say they wanted to do things to keep themselves healthy (60% of this group, only 23% of those 65+).

Figure 38: % Wanting to do Things to Keep themselves Healthy



- 8.14 The most popular thing that residents wanted to do to keep themselves healthy was sport/exercise. In this 2004 survey, almost a half said this – a large increase on the 2002 results. For all other aspects, there has been a reduction since 2002.

Well-being

- 8.15 Residents were asked two questions about mental health/well-being – these were concerning how happy the respondent felt on most days and whether the respondent had faced a problem they thought they couldn't cope with. Overall, 27% of residents said they felt very happy on most days; 61% felt fairly happy, 3% felt unhappy.
- 8.16 Overall, 14% of residents said in the last year they had had a problem they felt they couldn't cope with. Women were more likely to say they had faced such problems in the last year than men (18% of women, 12% of men). There are also differences by ward. The wards with the highest proportion of residents who had faced problems they felt they couldn't cope with were:

Plessey	17%
Cowpen	18%
Isabella	18%
Croft	21%
Cramlington West	21%

All of these are priority wards of Blyth valley.

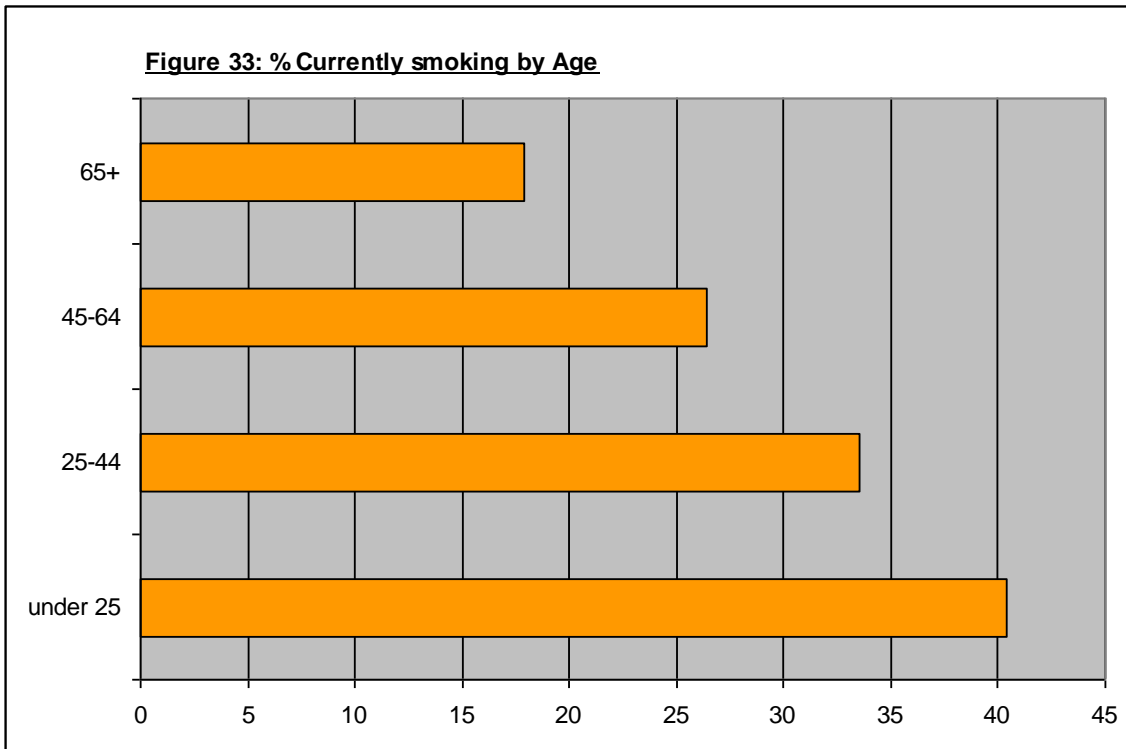
- 8.17 Problems people thought they couldn't cope with frequently focused around an illness. Problems affecting mental well-being included:
- Illness (28% of cases)
 - Bereavement (14%)
 - Family/relationships (13%)
 - Work (8%)
 - Depression/stress (8%)
 - Home/local area (6%)
 - Money (4%)
 - Victim of crime or anti-social behavior (4%).

9 SMOKING

Smoking Prevalence

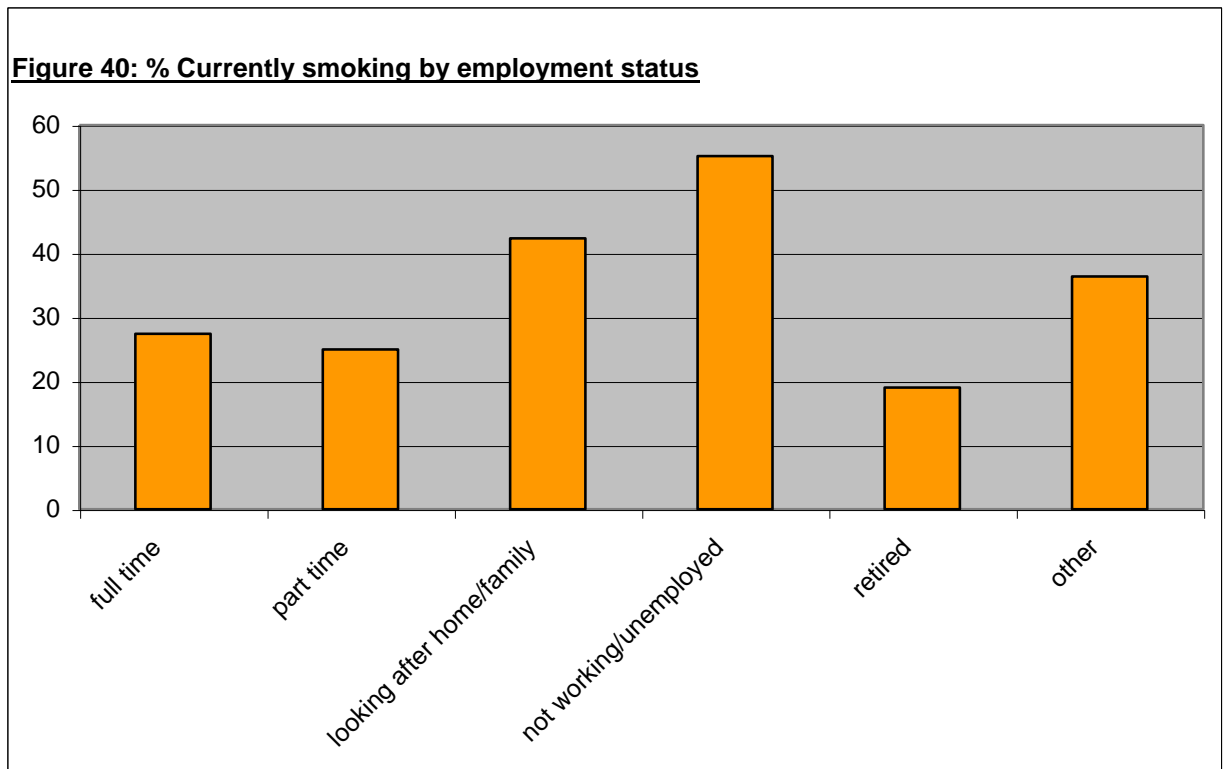


- 9.1 Respondents were asked about smoking habits – to measure both the prevalence of smoking in the area and the potential for smoking cessation.
- 9.2 From the base of all respondents, 28% of respondents in Blyth Valley smoke nowadays, which is a small decrease on 2002 (29.4%).
- 9.3 69% would like to give up smoking, which is a slightly higher proportion than nationally (67%).
- 9.4 The prevalence of smoking declines with age – with only 17% of those aged 65+ smoking, compared to 40% of those under 25.

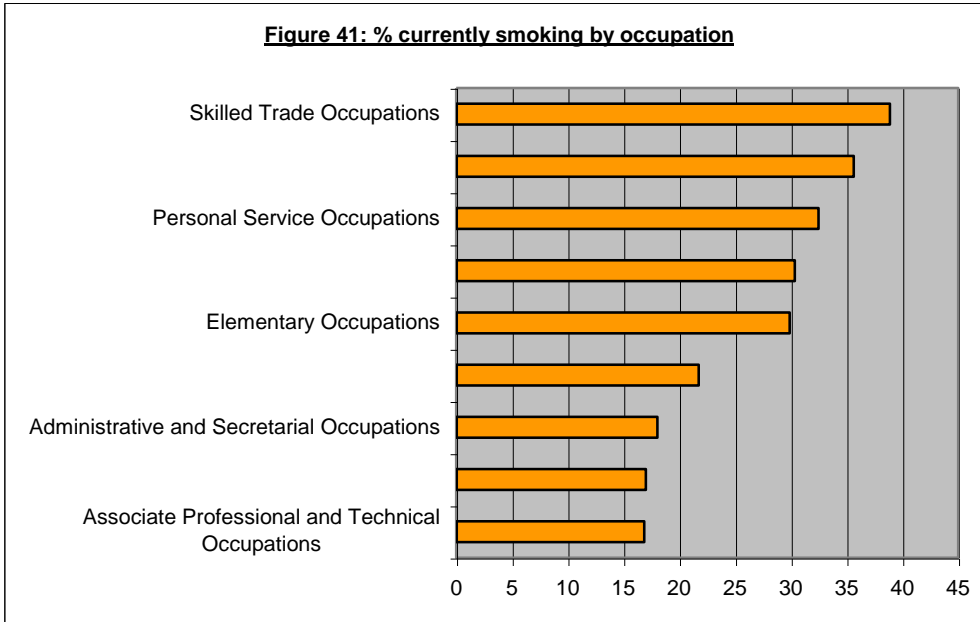


Equal proportions of men and women smoke in Blyth Valley. Amongst those aged under 25, 38% of men and 43% of women smoke.

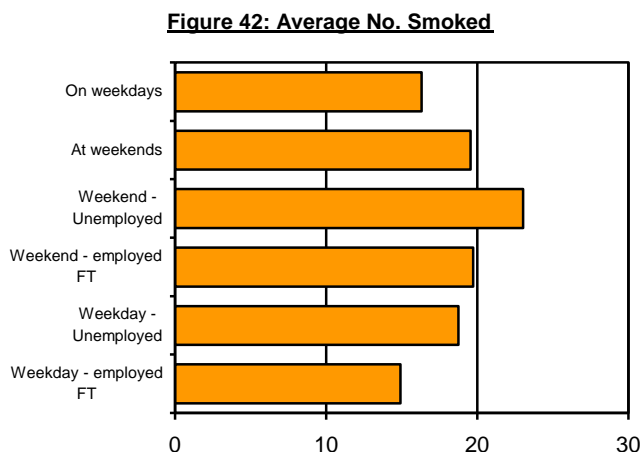
9.5 There are differences in the proportions of those who smoke by working status: smoking prevalence is higher amongst those who are currently not working/unemployed or looking after home/family.



9.6 Looking at those who smoke, those who are in the lower social class occupations are more likely to smoke compared to those in managerial, administrative and professional occupations.

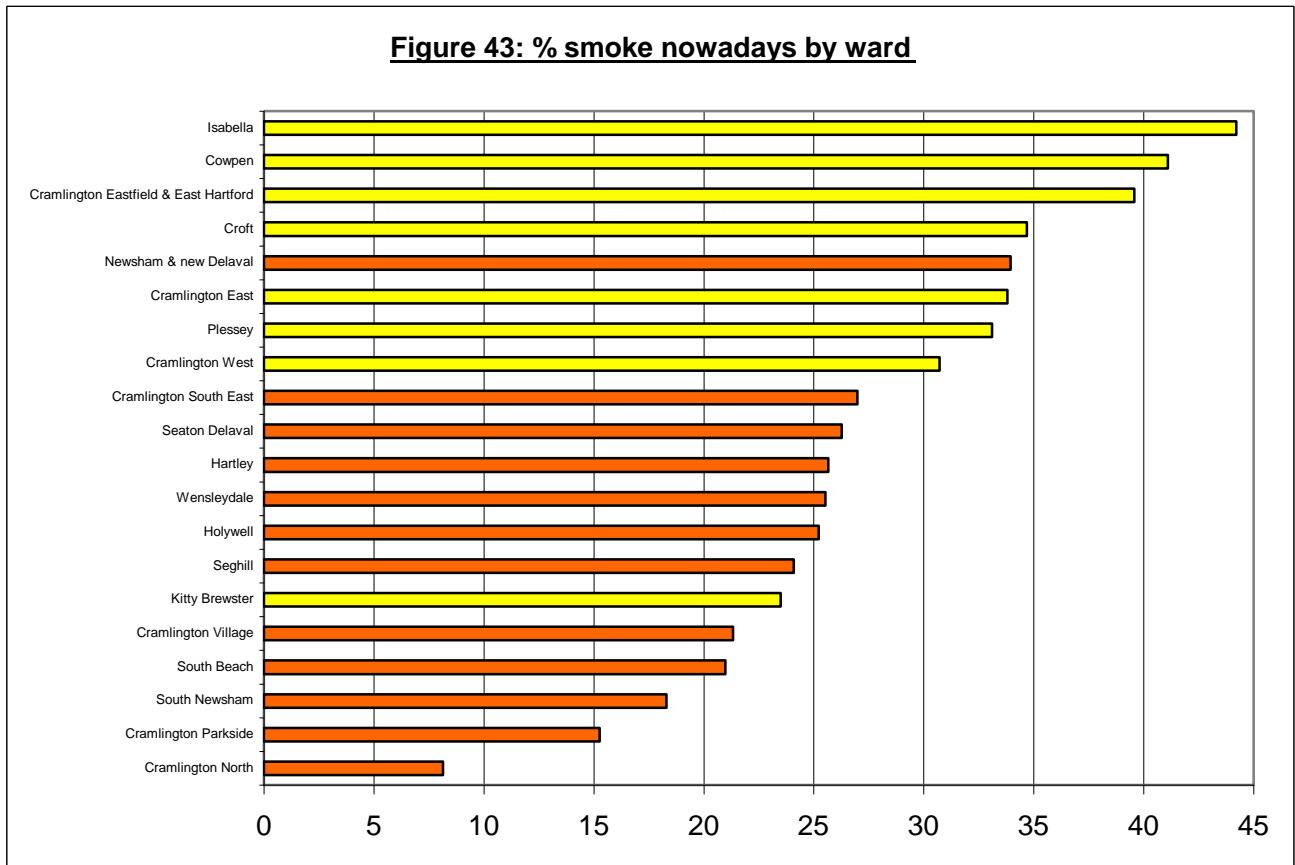


9.7 Those who do smoke tend to smoke more at weekends than weekdays – 15 cigarettes per day during the weekdays, and 18 per day at weekends. In addition, those who are unemployed tend to smoke more than those who are employed full-time - over 20 per day at weekends, compared to those who are employed full-time who smoke less than 20, and on weekdays smoking 19 per day compared to those who are employed full-time who smoke 15 per day.



Differences in Smoking Prevalence by Ward

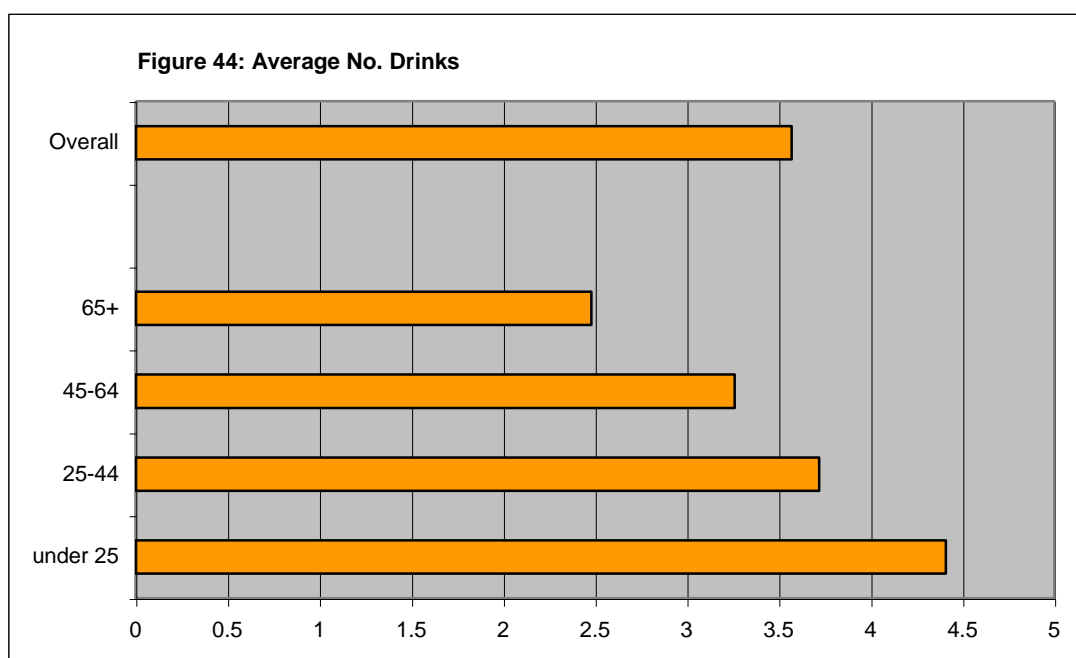
9.8 There are differences in the prevalence of smoking across the wards of Blyth Valley. The ward with the highest proportion of residents who currently smoke is Isabella, the lowest being Cramlington North.



10 ALCOHOL

Alcohol Consumption

- 10.1 Respondents were asked about their consumption of alcoholic drinks. Overall, approximately three-quarters (77%) drink alcohol nowadays. 26% drink on most days (of last week) – this is higher than nationally – where 21% drink on most days.
- 10.2 There are differences by gender – with just over one-fifth of females drinking on most days, compared to nearly one-third of males.
- 10.3 There are differences by age – with 35% of those over 65 drinking on most days, nearly 30% of those aged 45-64, and around 20% of those aged under 44.



- 10.4 Respondents were asked for an indication of the amount they had drunk on their last drinking occasion. This was broken down into types of drinks (for example, pints of strong lager etc) and from this the average number of units can be calculated. Overall, the average consumption on the previous drinking occasion was 7.3 units (median = 5 units). The average figures for men and women were:

- Men – 8.8 units (median = 6 units)
- Women – 5.5 units (median = 3 units)

The government guidelines recommend a maximum of 2-3 units per day for women and 3-4 units per day for men.

10.5 When analysed by age group, the average consumption on the previous occasions were:

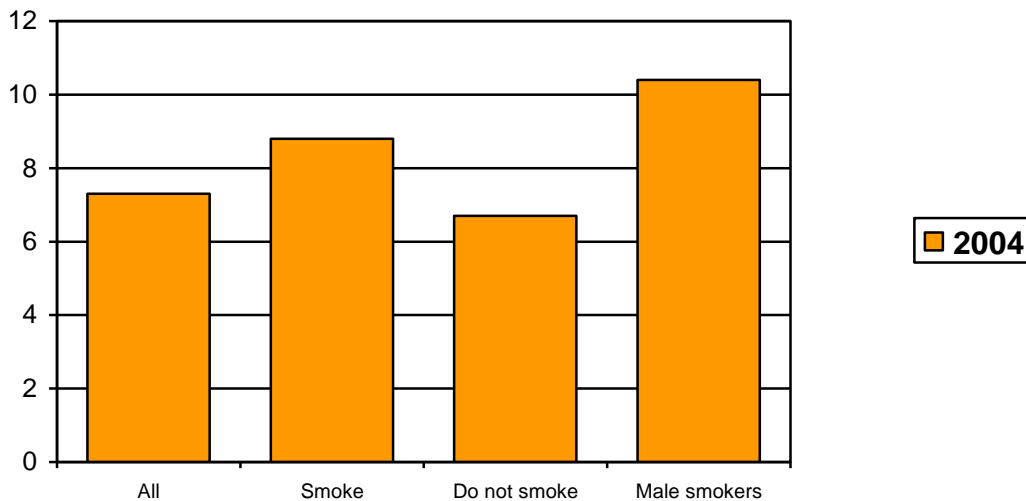
Average Consumption of Alcohol Units		
Age Group	Units	Median
Under 25	10.9 units	8.8
25-44	8.2 units	6
45-64	6.6 units	4
65+	4.7 units	4



11 MULTIPLE RISK FACTORS

11.1 The survey points to links between various lifestyle risk factors. For example, there appears to be a link between alcohol consumption and smoking – those who currently smoke having higher levels of alcohol consumed on the previous drinking occasion. The average alcohol consumption is 7.3 units on the previous drinking occasion. This figure increases 8.8 units for residents who smoke (compared to 6.7 units for those who do not smoke). For male smokers, the average volume of alcohol consumed on the previous occasion rises to over 10 units

Figure 45: Average units of alcohol consumed on last occasion



11.2 There appears to be less of a link between alcohol consumption levels and whether a person is physically active. For those who do no physical activity in a week, the average alcohol consumption on the last occasion was 7.4 units; for those who do some activity, the average consumed is only slightly lower at 7.2 units.

11.3 The survey results also point to a link between smoking prevalence and 5-a-day consumption. Current smokers on average have 3.4 portions of fruit and vegetables a day, compared with 4.1 portions for non-smokers.

12 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 12.1 This report is the second in a series of lifestyle surveys conducted in Blyth Valley. It provides both a repeat of numerous indicators collected in the 2002 survey, but also includes new measure (of, for example, visits to the GP, cultural activities, and 5 a day consumption). To be successful in monitoring trends over time, the survey has used, where possible, common questions. Choosing the 'best measures' for a lifestyle survey is difficult – government policy on lifestyle is evolving and common measures at the national level are not yet agreed. Future surveys in Blyth Valley will need to carefully balance the use of current measures with national indicators which are rapidly evolving.
- 12.2 The 2002 Blyth Valley Lifestyle Survey was a key resource to the local authority and provided them with the opportunity to use the data to develop policy, target resource, and improve applications for further funding. The 2004-05 survey can be used in a similar manner. Future lifestyle surveys and the data generated will become critical over the next few years as Local Area Agreements are put in place nationally. These agreements will have performance measures attached, some of which will come from lifestyle surveys. It will be important for the core lifestyle survey steering group of Blyth Valley partners to discuss these aspects over the next year.
- 12.3 This survey has an increased sample size over the 2002 baseline and therefore provides the opportunity for additional 'local level' analysis. It is therefore a valuable tool for evaluation of local programmes and neighbourhood interventions. The dataset and tables of results provide a valuable resource and need to be available over the next 2 years for further investigation. We would suggest that this is provided in 2 ways:
- By lbyD making key tables available via a web-based data warehouse
 - By lbyD providing a point of contact for further analysis.
- 12.4 This survey has highlighted a number of achievements and improvements over the period since the last survey. These include:
- An increase in neighbourhood satisfaction and perceptions of improvements to the local area.
 - A small increase in walking activity levels by residents – this has been a focus for Blyth Valley interventions in recent years.
 - A slight reduction in the proportion of residents in Blyth Valley who smoke.
 - An increase in the proportion who perceive their health as 'good'.

In addition, the results on social capital from this survey, along with the continued high levels of 'neighbourliness' in Blyth Valley, are positive aspects to promote from this survey.

- 12.5 Physical activity is a key approach in reducing obesity and in improving the general health of residents. Nationally, approximately 30% of those aged 18+ undertake the government's recommended level of physical activity (30 minutes of moderate activity on five or more days of the week). This survey estimates the Blyth Valley proportion at less than 20%. Nationally, physical activity is seen to be higher amongst those in higher socio-economic groups. This will partly explain differences in Blyth Valley. Reducing inequalities in levels of physical activity and potential access barriers are key.

Whilst the 'At least 5 a week' level of physical activity is lower in Blyth Valley than nationally, the survey results do highlight a general improvement in activity levels since 2002. As noted in section 5, the measures used in the 2002 and 2004-05 surveys were slightly different (reflecting changes in government and other policy), but do allow some comparison. For example, overall in 2002, 39% of residents do no periods of sport or leisure activity in the last 7 days. In 2004-05, only 23% of residents did no periods of moderate physical activity in the last week. In addition, some directly comparable measures reinforce the overall increase in local physical activity. For example, the proportion of residents walking to the shops, or doing heavy housework, increases between 2002 and 2004-05.

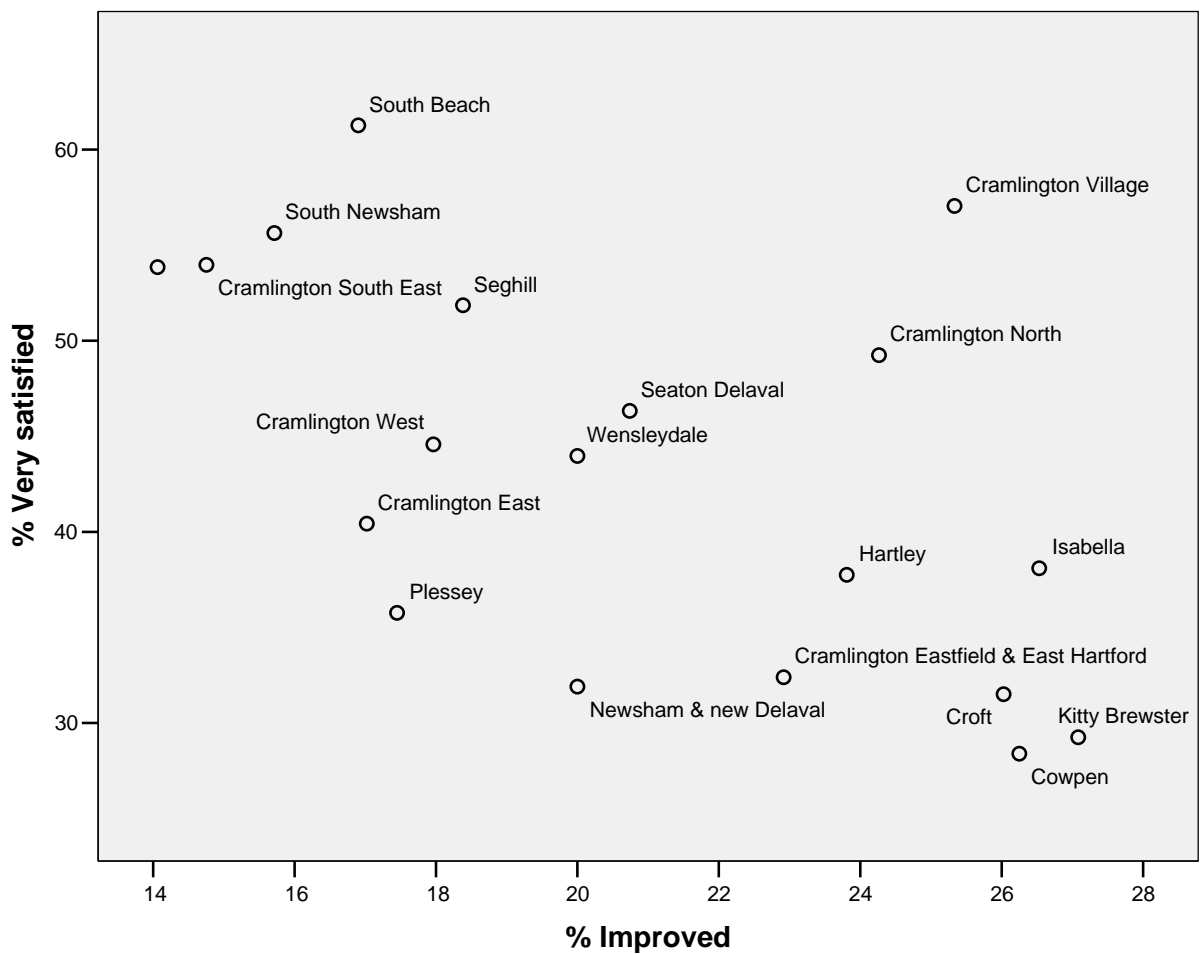
- 12.6 Sport and physical activity are clearly seen by residents as important as an approach to improving health, and as activities that residents want to do in their spare time. Lack of time, particularly for the younger groups, remains the major challenge to residents wanting to increase their physical activity. Further analysis of qualitative data in this survey may point to approaches that BVBC and the Arts and Leisure Trust can adopt to remove real and perceived barriers. The data at ward level also allows the opportunity to better target interventions and promotional material.
- 12.7 Perception of local sport and leisure provision is also important. The survey highlighted a lower level of opinion with provision from those who were less active – image and perceptions of residents may be a potential barrier to increased use of local public provision in Blyth Valley.
- 12.8 There are some areas of concern highlighted by this survey, including:
- The high levels of smoking, particularly by some sub-groups of the population and in some wards of the borough.
 - The high levels of alcohol consumption highlighted from the data on residents' previous drinking occasion, again particularly amongst the young.
 - The relatively small proportion of residents who are meeting the government's 5 a day target or targets for physical activity.
 - The differences in the results for BME residents included in this survey compared to those from the white ethnic group. These point to less (or different) 'community engagement' by black and minority ethnic residents.
 - The significant differences across the wards of Blyth Valley for many aspects of lifestyle, highlighting the need for continued targeting of resources.

The above provide the main foci for interventions in the coming years.

12.9 There is also evidence from the survey that some of the local interventions being made in Blyth Valley are having an effect on residents' perceptions of their local area. As shown in the following diagram, wards such as Croft, Cowpen and Kitty Brewster have low proportions of residents who are very satisfied with their local area, but high proportions who think that the local area has improved. Whilst some of this link might be expected (low satisfaction allowing more room for improvement), the work by the ICCQ, BVBC and others in these areas may be having an effect on local opinion. The challenge is to see the perceived improvement transferred into increased satisfaction in future surveys.

Figure 46

Correlation between Satisfaction and Improvement



12.10 This 2004 – 05 survey was the first time any large scale collection of data on ‘cultural activities’ has been undertaken in Blyth Valley. On this first occasion, very general questions were used – effectively asking residents to define ‘cultural activities’ by describing what they did in their spare time. This approach highlighted:

- spare time activities frequently focussing around the family or children, often socialising, relaxing or visiting different places at weekends
- a common occurrence of ‘walking’ as a spare time activity, often around the local area, sometimes with the family dog, or more widely a ‘ramblers’
- reading, bingo, quizzes, crosswords featuring as popular activities
- the frequent mentioning of gardening as a spare time activity
- the increasing use of the internet as a spare time activity.

*Blyth Valley Lifestyle Survey 2004-05 Report
Final Draft*