

# Community

**'The best thing about living in the area is the sense of community and the people'**

We found that

**Our communities are strong**

- 'Smaller tight knit communities tend to look after each other and offer support networks.'
- In the floods in 2020 and throughout Covid-19 our resilient communities have come together to help each other.
- Volunteers have made a big difference during the pandemic.
- Throughout the pandemic, £1.8 million in emergency assistance payments and individual assistance payments were made in this area.

- The number of people here is projected to be lower over the next 20 years
- In the future there are expected to be fewer young people (0-15 years old) in our area whilst there will be more people aged 65+. This means more people may need to use services.
- Families are more spread out and this can lead to feelings of loneliness and isolation for people of all ages.
- Whilst many places in our area are highlighted in the Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation as having particular challenges, people living there feel very positive about their communities.
- We are concerned that the need for more types of housing to suit our changing population can put pressure on our environment.
- Overall, the percentage of ethnic minority groups in the Area is lower than the Wales average.

We found that

**There's nearly 450,000 living across Bridgend, Merthyr and RCT**

We found that

**We're proud of who we are and where we come from**

- Our past has shaped the people we are, the places we live and the things we like to do like sports and arts.
- People were described as friendly, supportive and looking out for each other
- People get along well:
  - Older people are more likely to agree that people treat each other with respect.
  - More people believe people from different backgrounds get on and treat each other with respect.
  - 'Everyone coming together and learning about different religions, languages, cultures and history – we can all learn from one another.'
- Young people don't feel listened to.

We found that

**Feeling safe in our community is important to us**

- There are lots of things working to help us feel safe and prevent crime from happening but some people in our communities feel unsafe after dark or in certain areas.
- The most common crime reported in the region is 'violence against the person'
- Recent data shows an increase in reported hate crime. In the National Survey for Wales in 2018/19 indicated:
  - Men aged between 25 and 34 are more likely to feel safe in their local area.
  - People aged over 75 are least likely to feel safe, particularly women walking or at home after dark.
- People living in less well off areas are more likely to feel that crime has increased.
- Between September 2019 and August 2020 there were more reports of domestic abuse in RCT and Bridgend.

- Feeling lonely can have a bad impact on our health and well-being.
- We feel that during lockdown being isolated and lonely has become more of a problem. Twice as many people self-reported mild or severe depression during lockdown.
- Not having much money to spend can make someone feel lonely. 'Need more community centres or meeting places for people to go to. I can't afford to keep buying coffee.'
- Communities and local organisations have worked throughout the pandemic to help reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation.

We found that

**Loneliness can affect anyone**