

# LIVING IN WARWICKSHIRE

## Community Cohesion & Personal Finances report



## **Introduction to topic**

Defining what a 'sense of belonging' to an area means is not clear cut. However, the term tends to be used as a proxy for assessing community cohesion or engagement; how people feel about their neighbourhood is likely to influence the extent to which they would get involved in local projects or initiatives. Similarly, volunteering rates help build a picture of community cohesion.

Additionally, asking residents about their concerns with everyday living also helps provide an insight into the issues which are of most concern to people on a day-to-day basis and which are likely to be the priorities for support.

Results from these questions are available at county and District/Borough level as well as by age and gender of respondent. However, for the purposes of this analysis these criteria are referred to only where clear difference is evident.

### **How strongly do you feel you belong to your immediate neighbourhood?\***

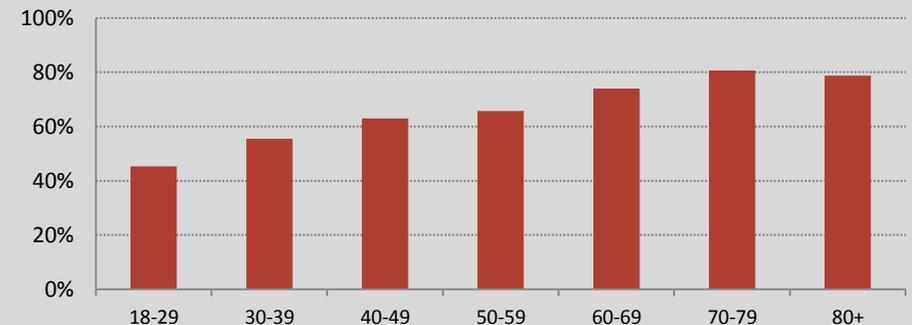
\*By immediate neighbourhood we mean the street that you live in

- Very strongly
- Fairly strongly
- Not very strongly
- Not at all strongly

Overall, around 65% of residents felt either very strongly or fairly strongly that they belonged to their immediate neighbourhood. This figure was

highest in North Warwickshire Borough (70%) but lowest in neighbouring Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough (59%). This is roughly in line with the national picture which suggests around 63% of people felt a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood (Office for National Statistics, ONS, 2016).

In general, older residents were more likely to report that they felt they belonged to their immediate neighbourhood than younger people although this dips slightly for the 80+ age group. The graph below demonstrates how positive responses to this question increase with age.



**Figure 1 Proportion of respondent who felt either very strongly or fairly strongly that they belonged to their immediate neighbourhood, by age**

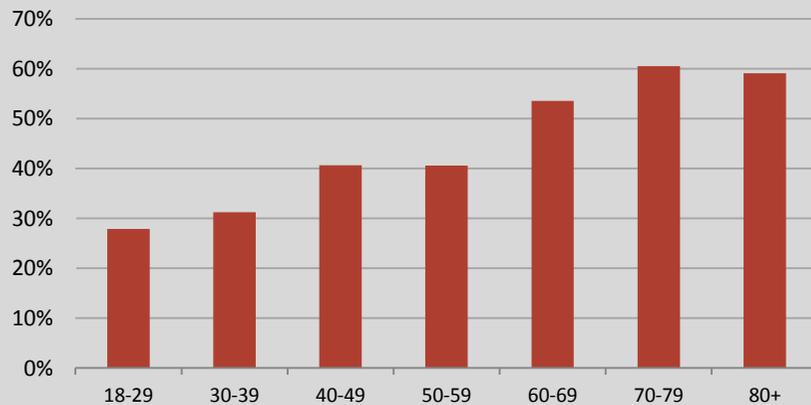
### **Have you engaged in formal volunteering or local activity over the past year?**

Research suggests that volunteering may have a positive impact on wellbeing. In particular there is an observation that older people appear to benefit more from volunteering than younger people (ONS, 2013). Across Warwickshire, around 43% of residents report that they have done some volunteering or community activity in the last year. Nationally, figures of around 20% are often quoted, suggesting



rates in the county are considerably higher than the national picture.

However, rates do vary around the county. North Warwickshire Borough records the highest levels of volunteering with around half of residents reporting that they have done some volunteering or community action in the last year. Warwick District records the lowest rates where just over a third report doing some volunteering or community activity in the last year.



**Figure 2 Proportion of residents who have volunteered or engaged in community activity in the last year, by age**

The above graph suggests that levels of volunteering/community activity generally increase with age. The survey also identified that slightly more men engaged with volunteering or local community activities than women; some 47% of men and 49% of women reported they had volunteered in the previous year.

### Describe how you feel about your household income?

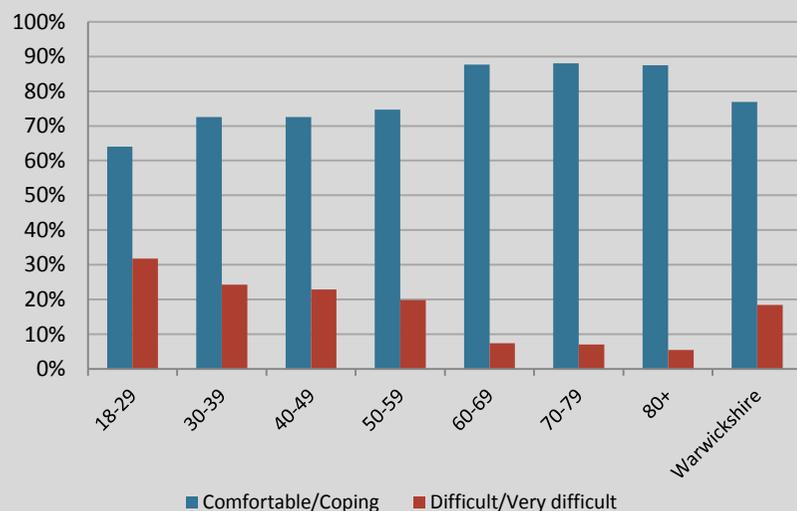
- Living comfortably on current income
- Coping on current income
- Finding it difficult in current income
- Finding it very difficult on current income
- Prefer not to say

Just over three quarters of residents reported that they were either 'living comfortably' or 'coping' on their current income. This compares with almost one in five residents who are finding it either 'difficult' or 'very difficult' to cope on their current income.

The picture of concern with household income varies a little around the county. Stratford-on-Avon District has the highest proportion of residents who feel they are either coping or living comfortably on their income while Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough has the lowest. In the latter, almost a quarter of residents report finding it 'difficult' or 'very difficult' to cope on current income levels.

Concerns about household income appear to be particularly evident in younger age groups. The level of concern felt by residents declines as age increases. Figure 3 below illustrates that in general the younger age categories report levels of concern above the county average while older age groups are below the county average.



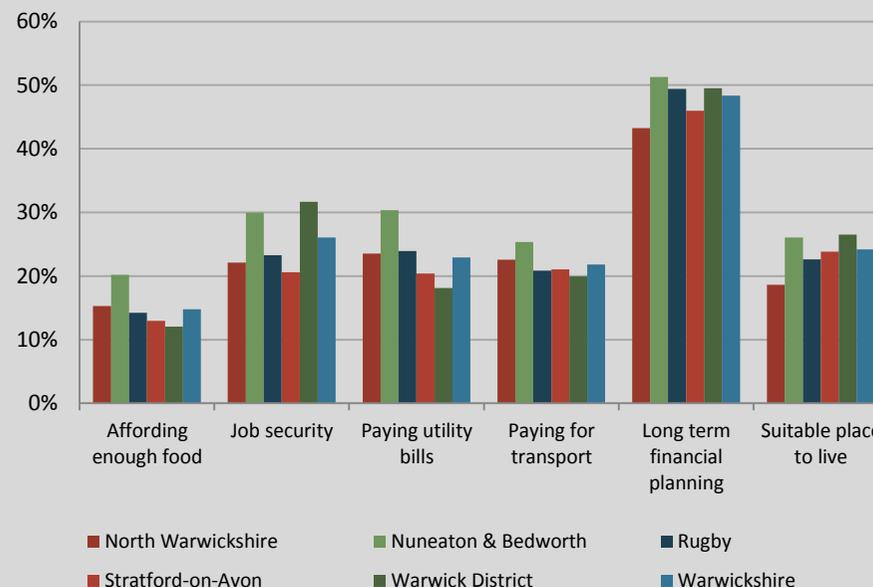


**Figure 3 Levels of concern regarding household income by age**

### Concern with day-to-day living

Residents were asked to rate how worried they were about a range of day-to-day living issues including affording enough food for the household, job security, paying utility bills, paying for transport, long term financial planning and having somewhere suitable to live.

Countywide and for all Districts and Boroughs, concerns about long term financial planning were highest. In Warwickshire, almost half of residents were either ‘fairly’ or ‘very worried’ about this. Job security and a suitable place to live were the next highest issues of concern countywide. Affording enough food was of least concern although around 15% of residents reported they were either fairly or very worried about it. There were some variations in levels of concern around the county and figure 4 provides an illustration of this.



**Figure 4 Levels of concern for day-to-day living issues by borough/district**

The level of concern with day-to-day living was also influenced by age. In general, levels of concern about day-to-day living issues declined with age.

All age groups had ‘Long term financial planning’ as their top concern. Priorities shifted slightly after this as the graph below highlights. Having a suitable place to live was the number two priority for both the youngest and oldest age groups. Job security was a higher priority for those aged 30 to 59 years. Affording enough food had the lowest levels of concern for each age group. However, it was still a concern for a quarter of those aged 18-29 years.



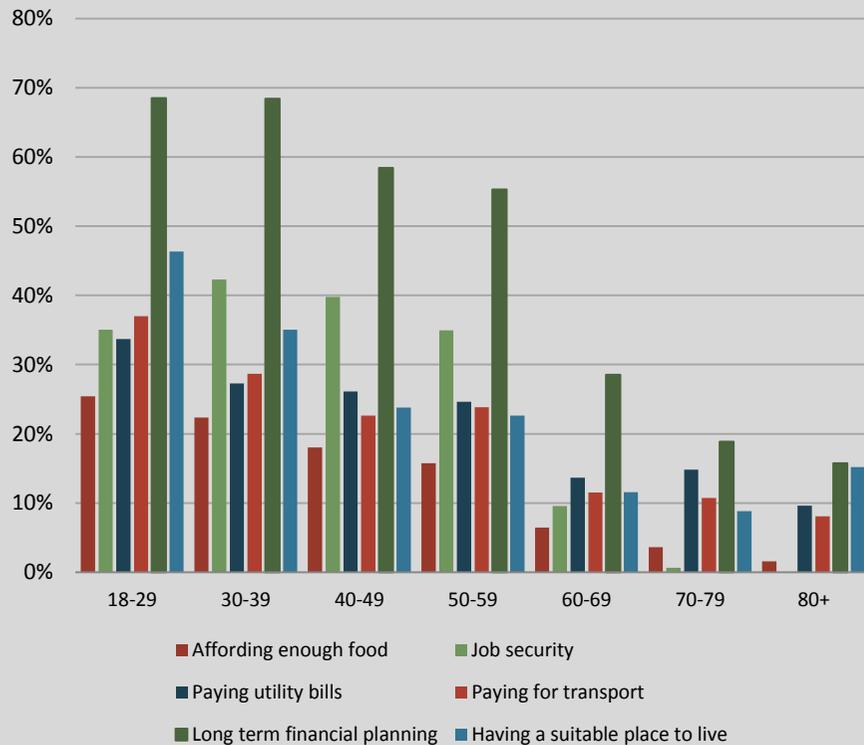


Figure 5 Levels of concern for day-to-day living issues by age

### Affording enough food for the household

Across Warwickshire, around 15% of residents indicated they were concerned (either 'Fairly worried' or 'Very worried') about affording enough food for the household. This figure varied between Districts and Boroughs. One in five residents living in Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough expressed concern while in Warwick District the number of people concerned was nearer one in ten.

There is considerably more variation in levels of concern across different age groups; younger age groups show the highest levels of concern – one in four residents aged 18-21 years were either fairly or very worried about affording enough food for the household.

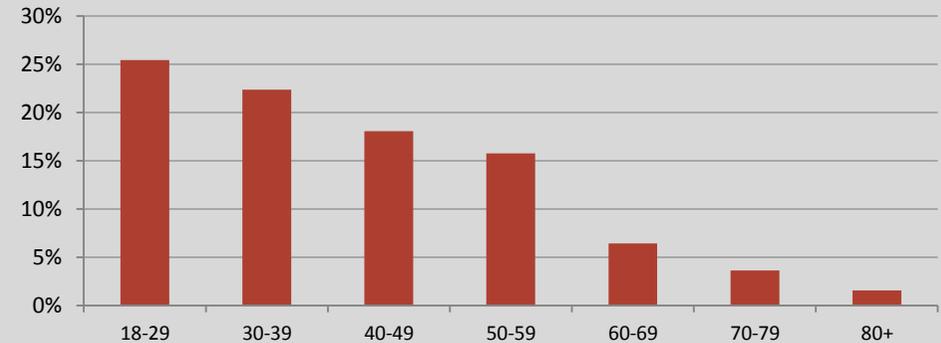


Figure 6 Proportion of residents expressing concern about affording enough food for the household, by age

### Job Security

Just over one in four residents in Warwickshire indicated they were concerned with job security. The rate was highest in Warwick District where almost a third of residents were either very or fairly worried about job security. Rates of concern were lowest in Stratford-on-Avon District although still at one in five residents.

Age appears to have more influence on concerns regarding job security. Understandably, a significant proportion of residents over the age of 60 felt this question was not applicable. However, among the working age population it was those in the 30-39 years and 40-49 years age brackets



who were most worried with around 40% of each age category expressing concern about job security.

### Paying Utility Bills

Just under one quarter of residents overall expressed concern about paying utility bills. This rose to 30% in Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough where concerns were highest. Warwick District recorded the lowest levels of concern at 18% of residents.

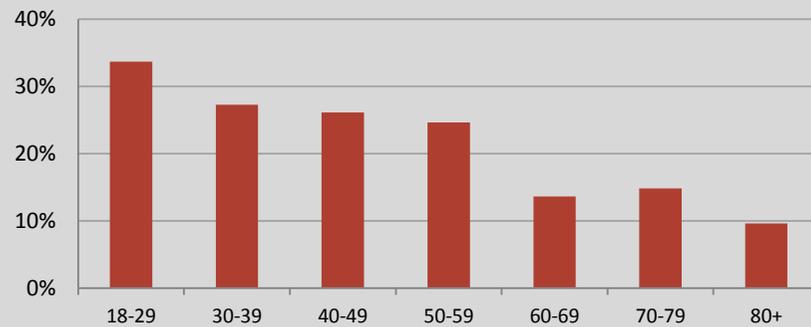


Figure 7 Proportion of residents expressing concern with paying utility bills, by age

The graph above indicates that, in general, there is a decline in levels of concern over paying utility bills with increasing age.

### Paying for transport costs

A quarter of residents from Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough expressed concern with paying for transport costs. However, this rate is only slightly higher than the county average of 23%. Concern with paying for transport was most evident among younger age groups who had the highest rates

of concern; over a third of 18-29 year olds were either ‘fairly’ or ‘very worried’ about transport costs.

### Long term financial planning

Around half of respondent reported they were concerned (either fairly worried or very worried) about long term financial planning (pensions, savings and investments). There was some variation around the county with slightly lower rates of concern in North Warwickshire Borough (43%). There was some marked variation in levels of concern about long term financial planning – again, younger age categories have higher rates of concern than older residents.

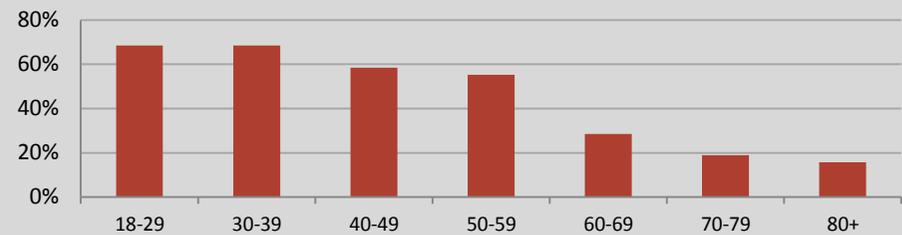


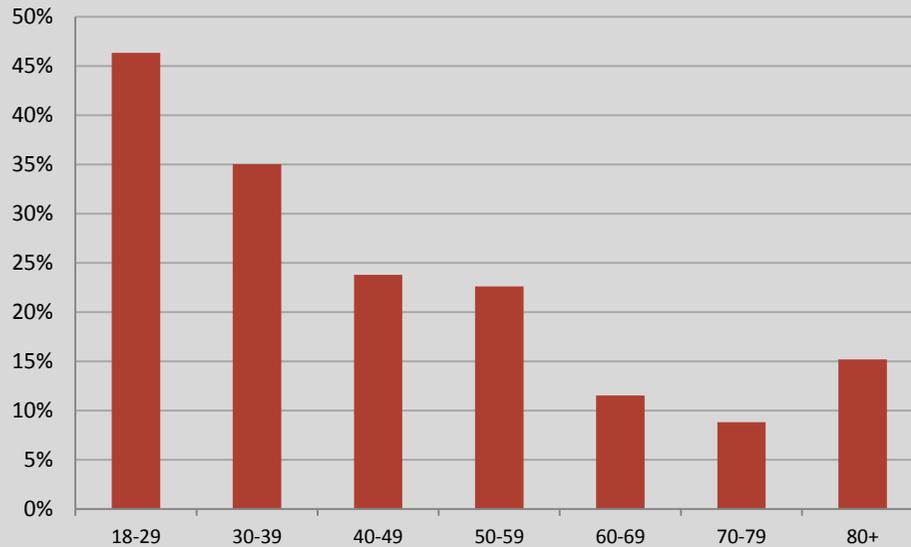
Figure 8 Proportion of residents expressing concern about long term financial planning, by age

### Having a suitable place to live

Countywide about a quarter of residents had concerns about having a suitable place to live. There was slight variation around the county with Warwick District and Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough have slightly higher rates – 27% and 26% respectively. Lower levels of concern were expressed by residents living in North Warwickshire Borough (19%). Rates of concern declined with age up to age 70-79 years. Rates increased



again for those aged 80+.



**Figure 5 Proportion of residents expressing concern about having a suitable place to live, by age**

### **Conclusion**

The survey indicated that Warwickshire was in line with national trends regarding residents 'sense of belonging' to their immediate neighbourhood. Additionally, rates of volunteering were comfortably above those quoted nationally.

Concerns about day to day living issues were highest among younger age groups and tend to decline with age. Long term financial planning was a key concern across all age groups and in each district and borough.

