Funded by UK Government

Leeds Community Anchor Network:

UKSPF Listening Exercise Findings Phase One Report

Published: January 2025

Author: Voluntary Action Leeds

Voluntary Action Leeds
Supporting Communities Together

Leeds City Council

LCAN Leeds Community Anchor Network

Supported by West Yorkshire Combined Authority | Tracy Brabin Mayor of West Yorkshire

Contents

Executive summary	2
Background	3
Who was involved?	4
How did the listening exercise work?	5
Findings	8
Analysis methodology	8
Equality monitoring	8
What do communities love about their area?	13
Valued assets in communities	15
Focus group feedback and opportunities	16
Analysis by ward	20
Next steps	29
Appendices	32

Foreword

One of the most beautiful findings in The Listening Project is the love — the genuine, powerful love — that people in Leeds have for their communities. Again and again, we heard about strength, about pride, about deep connections. People told us what they value most about where they live, and it turns out there is so much to celebrate.

This piece of research, led by the Leeds Community Anchor Network (LCAN), isn't just a report. It's a conversation — ongoing, growing, and deeply rooted in place. And crucially, it has been facilitated by community anchors and our local ecosystems of partners — local organisations that are trusted, embedded, and hold both a deep local knowledge and a city-wide perspective. These are not organisations who come and go. We stay. We care. We're part of the neighbourhoods we serve, and that gives this project its integrity.

We approached this work with an Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) lens. That means we didn't ask what's wrong. We asked what's strong. We didn't come to fix. We wanted to listen. And when people spoke, we heard not only their views, but also their visions and their capacity to lead change.

We know this first round of listening isn't perfect. It's not exhaustive. Many of the themes are familiar. But it is real. It's relational. It's rooted. And we are committed — truly committed — to doing this again and again, learning as we go. We want this to be deep listening. Developmental listening. Long-term listening.

As community anchors, we hold this listening with care and with accountability. We will keep showing up. We will check in with our communities. We'll work with them to take what's been heard to power — because community voices should shape local and city-wide decisions.

We listened in ways that matter:

- Accountably, because we're here for the long haul and will keep the conversation going.
- Inclusively, because we made space for voices not often heard — and we'll continue to do so.

- Community-led, because we believe in the power of people to shape their own future.
- With a consciousness of power, because we want to share it, not hoard it.
- Through strengths, because our communities have so much to offer.
- Developmentally, identifying new leaders and nurturing passion.
- Networked, collaborating across communities, organisations and sectors.
- Locally nuanced, because each neighbourhood is unique and deserves to be heard on its own terms.

This project is a celebration — a celebration of what's already good, and a call to build even more together. And while some solutions will be hyper-local, others will benefit from a citywide approach. We see three broad types of challenges:

- **"Bread and butter"** — the essential work LCAN is already doing and will continue to champion.
- **"Belly stuff"** — the initiatives that just make sense to pursue now.
- **"Knotty stuff"** — the complex issues where we'll need others to join us in finding answers.

From this listening, key areas have emerged that we're keen to explore further with partners:

- Community assets and community buildings
- Crime reduction and community safety
- Tackling discrimination and understanding difference
- Young people: mentoring, leadership, pathways
- Health and what neighbourhood wellbeing could look like
- Communication — how we talk to each other, and how we make sure people feel heard (?)

We don't have all the answers. But we believe — deeply — that by working with communities, and with each other, extraordinary things are possible.

So as you read this document, we invite you to listen too — with openness, curiosity, and the same belief we carry: that every voice has value, and that change rooted in community and strength is not only possible — it's already happening.

Warmly,
Howard Bradley
Strategic Lead, Leeds Community Anchor Network

Executive summary

This report summarizes the first round of a Community Listening Exercise conducted by the Leeds Community Anchor Network (LCAN) in priority wards of Leeds from March to August 2024. LCAN, a network of 29 locally rooted organizations covering all 33 wards in Leeds, serves as a vital bridge between grassroots organisations, local communities and decision-makers in Leeds.

The Listening Exercise, a cornerstone of LCAN's activities, was designed to gather insights on community strengths, aspirations, and priorities. This annual initiative aims to inform the work of LCAN and its member organizations, ensuring their activities address community needs while advocating for change at the strategic level. The process is iterative, and LCAN will continue to critically analyse both the insight generated and the process itself. The data gathered through this process is complex and nuanced, and the aim of this report is to summarise the key themes. A further round of the listening exercise, with a more specific question which builds on these initial findings, will be conducted in early 2025.

Background

This report outlines the key themes from the community listening exercise, funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and conducted by Leeds Community Anchor Network between March and August 2024 across the city.

Leeds Community Anchor Network (LCAN) is a network of locally-rooted organisations covering all 33 wards in Leeds. These organisations act as the 'gateway' in their community, connecting and facilitating collaboration between smaller and grassroots organisations in the area, to better serve their local communities, with an emphasis on collaboration not competition.

Leeds City Council commissioned LCAN to:

- Target the six priority wards in Leeds (Armley; Beeston & Holbeck; Burmantofts and Richmond Hill; Gipton & Harehills; Hunslet & Riverside; and Killingbeck & Seacroft).
- Develop a new system for community engagement in the six priority wards which collects, analyses, and distributes (subject to information governance and partnership agreements), resident feedback which can be used to improve services and deliver better outcomes for local people.
- Develop new ways of engaging with people and advises on how we can make better use of the information that services and partners collect.
- Consult with and collect information regarding how residents feel about where they live and identify opportunities for them to play an active role in their community.

LCAN designed and planned an annual community listening exercise as a core element of their network activity. The listening exercise provides a regular opportunity to hear from local communities on what they value about where they live, strengths and assets in the community and ideas for making change. The process enables them to ask questions of community members at a hyper-local level but then analyse responses and track trends; this will give LCAN mandate to advocate for change to decision makers at city / strategic level. This aligns with LCAN's belief in the wisdom of communities, and that those facing the most challenging situations hold the key to developing sustainable solutions. LCAN's listening exercise will be conducted across all 33 wards of Leeds, and is funded by the National Lottery Community Fund. The UKSPF-funded portion of the listening exercise allowed LCAN to listen to more people in the six priority wards.

This report outlines findings from the first round of the listening exercise, funded through UKSPF. A further round of the listening exercise, with a more specific question which builds on these initial findings, will be conducted in early 2025.

Who was involved?

The UKSPF-funded Listening Exercise was carried out by eight community organisations who gathered views from their communities through structured activities. These views were recorded and subsequently returned to Voluntary Action Leeds who then collated, processed and thematically analysed these findings.

Community Anchor organisations listened to people who attended their regular activities as well as seeking out new communities and voices to hear from through collaborative working with other groups and organisations. A breakdown of the equality monitoring information from the people who took part in the listening exercise is available on page X.

The organisations involved across each ward, and the number of people who took part in listening activities were:

Ward	Funding	Organisation	No. of postcards completed	No. of focus groups completed	No. of focus group attendees (total)
Armley	UKSPF	New Wortley Community Centre (on behalf of Armley CAN)	205	3	55
Burmantofts & Richmond Hill	UKSPF	BRHCAN (Community Learning Partnerships)	237	4	42
Beeston	UKSPF	Hamara	271	1	42
Holbeck	UKSPF	Holbeck Together	98	1	39
Killingbeck & Seacroft	UKSPF	LS14 Trust on behalf of We Are Seacroft	260	1	60
Gipton	UKSPF	Space 2	40	1	20
Harehills	UKSPF	Give a Gift	100	1	13
Hunslet & Riverside	UKSPF	St Lukes Cares	130	1	31
Total			**1341**	**13**	**278**

How did the listening exercise work?

The listening exercise was designed by LCAN as a way of gathering insight from communities across Leeds that builds upon the expertise that Community Anchor organisations already have.

Training

Ahead of the listening exercise taking place, individuals from all Community Anchor organisations completed training and development around active listening in partnership with the Leeds Poverty Truth Commission (delivered by Together for Peace). The purpose of this training was to provide some consistency across Community Anchor organisations, whilst allowing each organisation to use methods and approaches that they know work in their communities. The training covered:

- Listening well – moving from listening to the things we want to hear towards generative listening
- Listening in groups, creating space to hear all voices and being mindful of different contexts
- Moving conversations from listening to words to acting together

The methodology involved two structured activities in each ward; postcard activities and focus groups.

Postcards

Postcard activities made up the first step for Community Anchor organisations in gathering views from communities. Anchors undertook brief 5-10 minute discussions where residents were asked three short questions, with Community Anchors recording notes from these on a postcard (appendix A):

- **What's great about your area?**
- **How could it be better?**
- **What could it look like in 10 years?**

These questions were intentionally asset-focused, to reflect the values of LCAN by purposely seeking to highlight the strengths of communities, what communities can achieve collectively, and identify what change could be supported by the third sector (in this case, local anchors networks) and by the local or regional authority.

The question "what could it look like it 10 years" was intended to draw out the longer-term, systemic change that communities wanted to see, encouraging them to be aspirational and ambitious rather than focusing on responding to short-term issues.

Participants in the postcard-based activity were then invited to participate in a focus group in order to gain more in-depth views from the participants and to have conversations focused on between three to five particular themes that participants had chosen as the most important in their community.

Community Anchor organisations would then summarise the key points from all their postcard discussions, add their own reflections and return this summary document (appendix B) to Voluntary Action Leeds.

Focus groups

Focus groups were structured in a way that both asked participants specific questions but focussed on particular themes they had flagged up in their area. Questions in focus groups were posed as follows for each theme identified:

- **Opportunities (What does change look like?)**
- **Ideas and Solutions**
- Each focus group was asked to summarise their discussion as a 'lift question':
- **"If you had 30 seconds with the head of Leeds City Council (or whoever is the decision maker in this scenario) what would you tell them about what you have talked about today?"**

Having this structure coupled with the 'themes' in each area meant that all groups could address opportunities specific to their communities whilst also making it easier to compare findings from different groups and establish where there are key similarities and differences.

The data from these focus groups and postcards was subsequently collected and shared with Voluntary Action Leeds to analyse the feedback and present overall findings from across the Listening Exercise.

What will listening exercise findings be used for?

When asked about why they should carry out this listening exercise, LCAN members gave the following reasons[1]:

- To discover aspirations and strengths
- Deepen relationships
- Find out what people need /don't need
- To update our understanding
- (Local) knowledge is power
- Develop our practice
- To find rarely heard voices

Findings from the listening exercise will be used by LCAN to shape:

- How Community Anchor organisations support communities to take action themselves, drawing on their own knowledge and understanding about their local area and communities
- Their work and offer based on the areas communities identified as being best delivered by the third sector
- How they work with communities and wider partners to make longer-term, systemic change

[1]LCAN Listening Exercise Guide, pg 3

Findings

Analysis methodology

All the data provided by anchor organisations had already undergone a level of analysis, as anchor organisations presented the findings under themes and highlighted what they felt were the points that came out most strongly in the postcard discussions and focus groups.

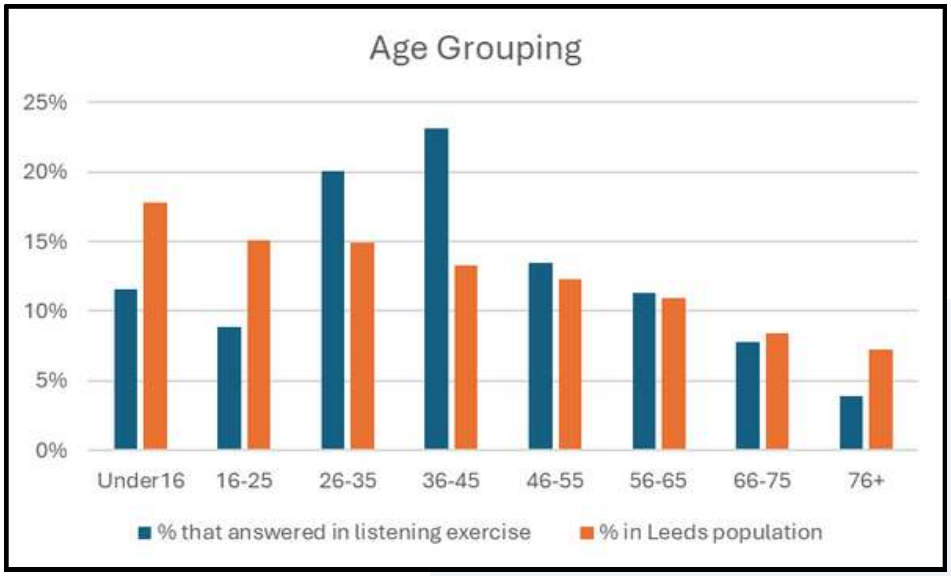
This data then underwent a further thematic analysis by Voluntary Action Leeds, who were not involved in any of the listening activities directly. Themes, quotes and explanation were all categorised and thematically analysed. The findings of this analysis are set out below.

Equality Monitoring

People who took part in the postcard activity, as part of the listening exercise, were invited to share some information about themselves for equality monitoring purposes. In this section of the report, responses have been compared to data from the 2021 Census, from people living in Leeds. As noted throughout, there is not always data available that is directly comparable. However, this has been included to give an indication of how representative the group of people that community anchor organisations listened to was of the population of Leeds, and to identify any groups of people had not been included.

Age groups of partcipants

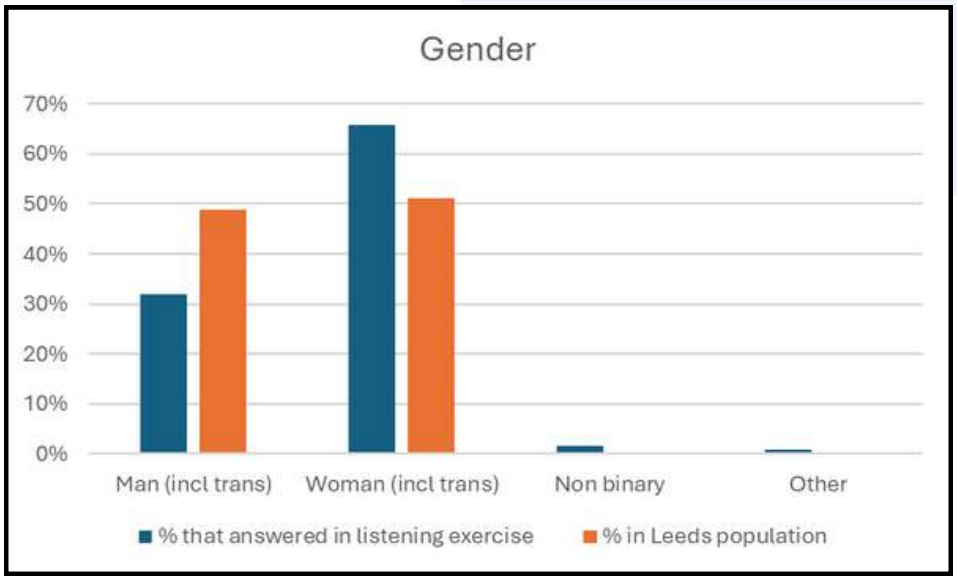
Community anchor organisations listened to proportionally fewer people under the age of 25 than in the general population, and proportionally more people in the 36-45 years age bracket.



Data from the equality monitoring in LCAN's listening exercise has been compared with data from the 2021 census for Leeds. This analysis will not be completely accurate, as the age groupings used by LCAN in the listening exercise were slightly different to those used in census data (e.g. 16-25 and 15-24), and therefore not fully comparable.

Gender of participants

Community anchor organisations listened to proportionally more people who identified as women, and proportionally fewer people who identified as male. Again, this may not be fully accurate as it is compared to census data, where participants could only identify as 'male' or 'female,' where listening exercise participants had more options. Of those that identified as 'other,' answers included 'demi-girl' and 'mixed gender.'



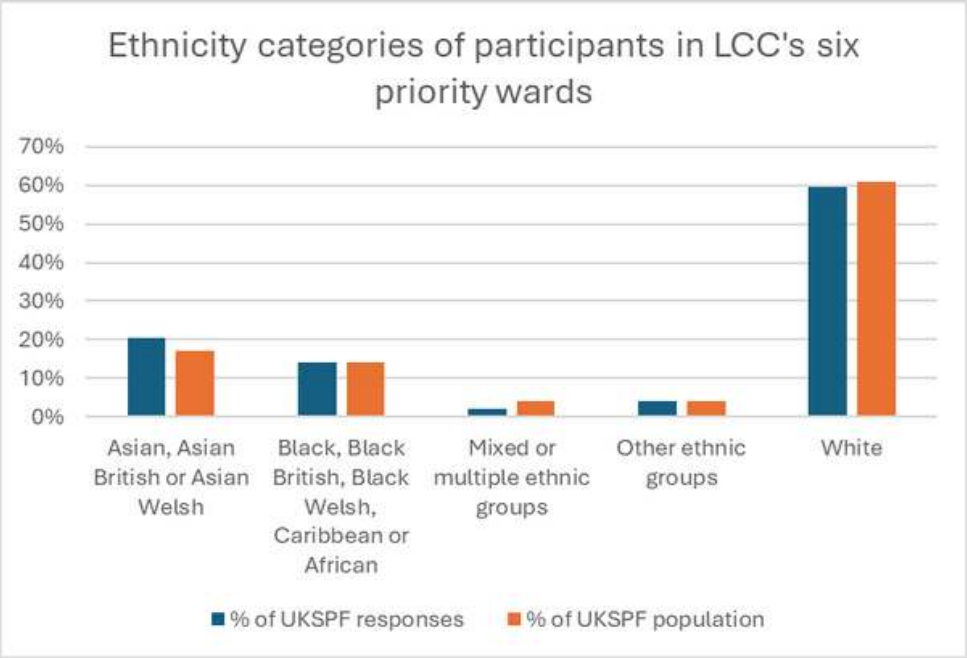
Ethnicity of participants

As part of the postcard activity, participants were invited to state their ethnicity. Participants could write whatever they felt best described their ethnicity, rather than being asked to select a category that they best fit. Due to this, a wide range of responses were collected for this question.

In order to effectively compare these responses with wider census data, the responses were broadly categorised using census groupings. As this categorisation happened after the data was collected, and required some degree of assumption, it may not be completely accurate to how people identify. All responses, and how they have been categorised, are listed below:

Ethnicity	Frequency	Percentage
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh	**261**	**19%**
Asian British	38	3%
Asian Indian	13	1%
Asian Other	128	9%
Asian Pakistani	79	6%
Chinese	3	0%
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African	**181**	**14%**
Black African	126	9%
Black British	36	3%
Black Caribbean	10	1%
Black Other	9	1%
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	**24**	**1%**
White & Asian	4	0%
White & Black	20	1%
Other ethnic group	**50**	**3%**
Gypsy/Traveller/Roma	6	0%
Other	44	3%
Prefer not to say	**84**	**6%**
Prefer not to say	84	6%
White	**764**	**56%**
White British	696	51%
White European	58	4%
White Irish	10	1%

The demographics of LCC's six priority wards (some of the most deprived areas of Leeds) differ from the rest of the city, and tend to be more culturally diverse. The graph below shows that community anchors in these wards listened to a broadly representative group of people in terms of ethnicity:

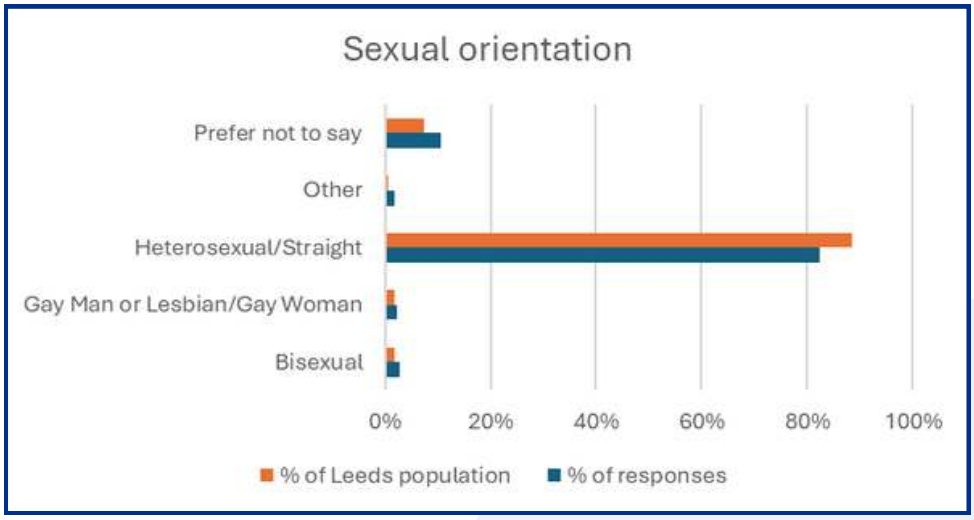


Sexual orientation

Participants were asked "how would you describe your sexuality?" and given the following options:

- Bisexual
- Gay or lesbian
- Heterosexual/Straight
- Lesbian/Gay Woman
- Other
- Prefer not to say

Community anchor organisations listened to proportionally fewer people who described their sexuality as heterosexual/straight, than those who answered the same way in the 2021 census. Proportionally more people in the listening exercise said they would prefer not to say.



N.B. Census data only captures whether people identify as homosexual, rather than a gay man or lesbian/gay woman, and therefore these categories have been grouped on the graph above to provide a clearer comparison.

Disability

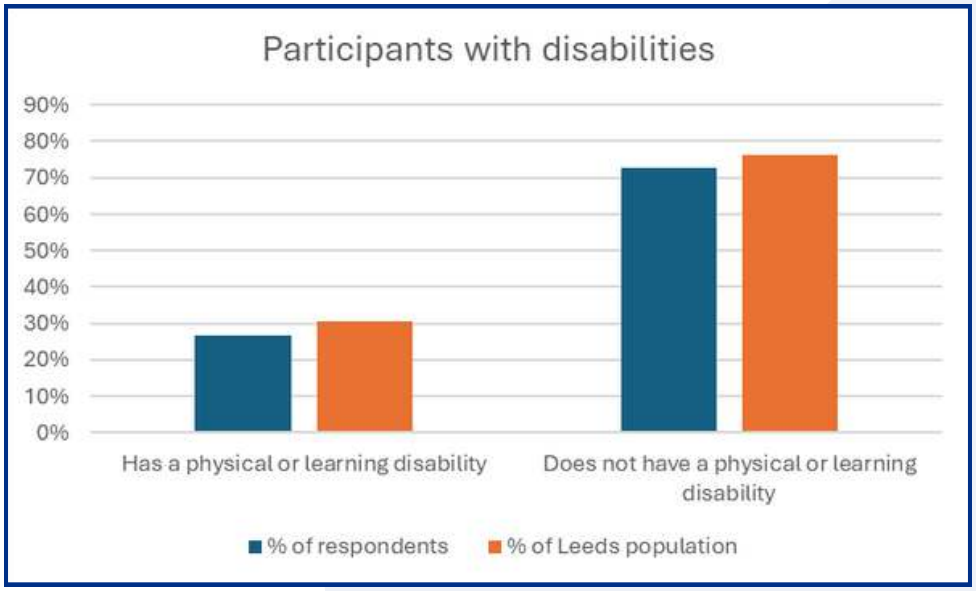
Participants were asked "do you consider yourself to have a disability?" and given the following options:

- Yes, learning disability
- Yes, physical disability
- No
- Other
- Prefer not to say

Responses were:

Do you consider yourself to have a disability?	Frequency	% of respondents
Yes, learning disability	144	7%
Yes, physical disability	327	17%
No	1283	67%
Other	7	0%
Prefer not to say	167	9%
Grand Total	1928	

Census data does not differentiate between physical and learning disabilities, but records whether or not someone is disabled under the Equality Act and whether their day-to-day activities are impacted a little or a lot. For the purpose of comparison, the data used here is from people in Leeds who have a long-term condition, including those considered disabled under the Equality Act and those who are not. This will not be a fully accurate comparison.



Community anchor organisations listened to slightly fewer people proportionally who had a physical or learning disability.

What do communities love about their area?

The vast majority of responses to the listening exercises were positive, and focused on what people really valued about where they live. The word cloud below shows the terms that people most commonly used when talking about their communities and where they lived:

Responses to the question "what's great about your area?" have been categorised by theme, and are set out by ward below. In areas where the listening exercise was funded through UKSPF, communities were asked slightly different questions. For this reason, responses are separated below.

UKSPF feedback – 'What's great about your area?'

Armley:
Community spirit and togetherness
Green spaces
Community activities
Educational facilities

Beeston:
Community Spaces
Community spirit and togetherness
Green Spaces
Diversity

Burmantofts & Richmond Hill:
Community spirit and togetherness
Green Spaces
Community Activities
Proximity to town

Gipton:
Green Spaces
Community spirit and togetherness
Shopping
Transport

Harehills:
Healthcare
Local charities/organisations
Religious buildings
Educational facilities

Holbeck:
Community spirit and togetherness
Local charities/organisations
Community Spaces
Community Activities

Hunslet & Riverside:
Community spirit and togetherness
Local charities/organisations
Diversity
Green Spaces

Killingbeck & Seacroft:
Community spirit and togetherness
Green Spaces
Local charities/organisations
Shopping

Valued assets in communities

In around 5% of responses, people named specific assets that they valued in their communities. These ranged from parks and green spaces to community and public buildings. Some of the places that people who were involved in the listening exercise most valued are set out below.

Armley:
New Wortley Community Centre
Armley Festival
Wortley Recreation Ground Armley Park
Armley Library
Armley Action Team
Charley Cake Park

Gipton & Harehills:
The Old Fire Station, Space2
CATCH
Henry Barran Centre, Gipton Together
Church of the Epiphany
Shine

Seacroft:
LS14 Trust
SCOT/Denis Healey Centre
Kentmere Community Centre
Chapel FM
Rein Park

Holbeck & Hunslet
Holbeck Together
Holbeck Moor Park, SlungLow
Holbeck Gala
JamYang Buddhist Centre

Beeston:
Hamara Centre
Bengal Square
Beeston Library

Focus group feedback and opportunities

Across the 13 focus groups carried out in communities, numerous themes were raised that reflected a mixture of similarities and patterns as well as differences between the separate wards of the city. Each theme is ordered based on how frequently it was mentioned in focus groups.

1. **Reduce crime, anti-social behaviour (ASB) and improve community safety (discussed in 88% of the focus groups)**

Young people seeking a sense of belonging, more opportunities or more support was something people in the majority of areas felt contributed to crime and antisocial behaviour and perceptions of these issues.

“If you don’t help the teenagers they will do something bad. Keep them busy, help them get jobs, there is nothing for them to do. It is easy to take money selling drugs.”

Neighbourhood watch schemes, better communication with local police, and easier ways to report crime were common suggestions to address crime and anti-social behaviour in areas across Leeds. There is also a desire for a more united community with greater collaboration between local agencies, police, and residents to promote safety and rebuild trust in policing.

“It was much better when they improved the area 2015/2016 but then it all stopped and it’s going back. The problem is the Landlords, selective licensing protected the tenants as well."

Selective licensing, more regulations for private rented properties and AirBnB properties were highlighted as potential solutions, particularly in Burmantofts & Richmond Hill and Gipton.

2. Access to improved green spaces (discussed in 75% of the focus groups)

Many communities felt they already had many different green spaces readily available to them that were also highly valued in their community. Residents also described how there were many opportunities for these existing green

green spaces to be improved, building upon existing facilities in the spaces along with introducing new ones.

The green spaces that residents described in their areas and the assets they already contained included:

- East End Park - Bike track (Burmantofts and Richmond Hill)
- Cross Flatts park - Gym equipment (Beeston)
- Armley Hill Top Moor - Exploring an orchard (Armley)

Communities therefore placed emphasis on further developments to existing green spaces that were already heavily-used by local people, with suggestions such as *"a café in East End Park where people can meet and make it more sociable"*, as well as more community initiatives such as gardening or litter-picking projects that could be owned by the local community and involve a wide range of people.

"We need more planting projects on green spaces – Armley Common Rights Trust are planting an orchard – we need more things like this that the community can take responsibility for"

Along with building on the assets in green spaces, communities also felt security measures should be put in place to prevent anti-social behaviour thought to be taking place in some green spaces. This could involve measures from statutory organisations such as more lighting and more security cameras in place, along with community volunteers who can take part in *"litter picking"*, *"a community grow garden"* and overall *"take pride in their community"*.

All solutions were centred around the green spaces already established in the city, suggesting that, rather than establishing new spaces or parks, emphasis should be placed on developing existing ones with new and improved facilities led by the community.

3. More activities, opportunities and support for children & young people (mentioned in 50% of the focus groups)

People from many UKSPF areas felt that there were few options available for young people aged 13-17 in their area that were varied, accessible at multiple times of the day and widely known to their community.

Many felt that crime rates were high in their community, and were subsequently concerned that this may normalise crime for young people or make them feel that they have no other options. One person felt that *"Kids struggle more in this area*

(Burmantofts and Richmond Hill) because all I've seen growing up is stealing cars and violence".

Attendees therefore emphasised the need for more youth-oriented activities that would help to address these issues amongst young people, with a range of activities such as *"cookery classes"*, *"drama"*, or *"gymnastics"*, being set up for young people. Where activities were already happening, people spoke positively about them, but frequently felt they weren't promoted as widely as they could have been.

More activities for young families and children that are free or low cost were suggested in many areas, particularly in the school holidays and including food or parental support. People felt this would help families in the long run in terms of mental health, stronger family bonds, reducing crime and feeling part of a community.

4. Improved connectivity through public transport (mentioned in 37.5% of the focus groups)

Improved public transport was a priority for a significant amount of areas involved in the focus groups, who felt that currently, the transport systems such as buses and trains *"aren't very reliable"*.

In general, buses were seen as generally unreliable and not frequent enough for communities, particularly for older people, people with limited mobility and students who regularly relied on public transport to get to regular appointments such as hospitals.

"Not everyone can use the Park & Ride bus stop on the motorway bridge, for an older person walking up there is quite difficult – imagine having a disability"

Ultimately, communities saw public transport as an area that required clear improvement across the city, making different amenities and services accessible for all in the hopes of *"fantastic and reliable bus routes, every 10 mins being the normal"*.

5. Cleaner streets (litter) (mentioned in 37.5% of the focus groups)

Communities reflected a desire for more community-led activities such as litter-picking and gardening which would inspire *"a sense of ownership and responsibility"* amongst community members, particularly young people, to keep their area clean.

These activities could be organised by the community and advertised in numerous ways, with Facebook groups suggested along with visiting schools and distributing zines and flyers around the local area.

It was reflected in Harehills and Burmantofts and Richmond Hill that the local council could be “more proactive” in supporting communities to expand these ideas, stating that "we want to be able to make a change in the areas we live. We need help from our community members and the LCC”.

Aside from the ideas of community groups proactively setting up regular activities to make streets cleaner, many areas felt that more public bins were needed in locations such as parks and outside schools and bus stops to support community efforts to keep public space litter-free.

Analysis by ward

This section of the report sets out analysis of the key themes and findings from the exercise in each ward. Some wards are split into specific areas; for instance, Gipton and Harehills are shown separately, detailing the findings of the listening exercise that was carried out by different Community Anchor organisations in each area. For Gipton and Harehills, this is The Old Fire Station and Give a Gift, respectively.

The ward analysis is designed to be printed by each Community Anchor organisation to display in community centres and to be used to feed back to people who took part.

Funded by UK Government

Listening exercise in: Armley

205 postcard responses

55 focus group attendees

What's great about your area?

- "Friendly people"
- "Parks"
- "Community Spirit"
- "Community events"

What people loved about their community:

- Residents valued the community cohesion in Armley, getting along well with their neighbours and people they encountered
- They valued community events that they could attend and come together with the rest of their community

"I'm Armley born and bred and I love where I live!"

Supporting young people

People felt that there are lots of activities for young people, but many parents aren't aware of them. One idea is a monthly newsletter promoting youth activities. Others suggested more weekend and evening events and creating a "Team Armley" identity for young people. A youth council was also proposed, along with more involvement with local sports teams.

High street & infrastructure

People wanted to see community-based patrols on Town Street, and for it to become an alcohol-free zone. People want better awareness of councillor surgeries and support for reviving local groups, like a Resident's Association in Upper Armley.

"It's not what we ask you to do for Armley, its what Armley can do for itself! Just help us do it"

Investment in Green Spaces

People want more opportunities to engage in environmental projects like litter picks and gardening, increased investment in local green spaces and long-term support for community-led initiatives such as planting and outdoor gyms.

Creating a community where people feel safe

People wanted to see more community-led initiatives and direct channels for people to connect with local officers. They highlighted the need for more youth-focused activities, particularly during weekends and evenings, and stressed the importance of fostering trust in local services, with anonymous reporting options to ensure accurate representation of local concerns.

Leeds City Council

Leeds Community Anchor Network LCAN

New Wortley Community Association

Supported by West Yorkshire Combined Authority | Tracy Brabin Mayor of West Yorkshire

Funded by UK Government

Listening exercise in: Beeston

271 postcard responses

18 focus group attendees

What's great about your area?

- Green spaces
- Local groups
- Diverse
- Accessible amenities

What people loved about their community:

- People loved how accessible the local park was, along with the wide diversity of residents who lived in the area
- They valued activities and support available through charities and easy access to public transport

"I think there is a promising future for Beeston"

Sense of Community

People wanted to make sure that the community was at the heart of decision making. They suggested celebrating and strengthening the diverse groups in Beeston, and ensuring decision makers are visible and connected.

Clean streets

People felt a clean environment is important, and wanted to see more bins and collections, and educational initiatives to address littering.

Better access and use of green spaces

People want to see more visible youth workers, improved access to parks, and increased police presence to make green spaces safer and more usable for families and young people.

Caring for each other

People expressed care and concern for others in their community. They wanted to ensure that there were safe spaces for women, and for people struggling. They suggested closer collaboration with mosques, parenting classes, and more community support for groups like sex workers.

"Working with the local mosques. They have lots of wisdom and are trusted in the area."

Community events

People were keen to get involved with community celebrations and collaboration with local mosques to foster unity and cultural exchange.

Leeds City Council

Leeds Community Anchor Network (LCAN)

HAMARA

Supported by West Yorkshire Combined Authority | Tracy Brabin Mayor of West Yorkshire

Funded by UK Government

Listening exercise in: Burmantofts & Richmond Hill

237 postcard responses

46 focus group attendees

What's great about your area?

"Community"

"Parks"

"Close to town"

"Quiet"

What people loved about their community:

- Residents mostly valued the feeling of community within the area, along with the amenities existing in the area such as local parks and the close proximity to Leeds city centre.

"We all look after each other and we know each other"

Amenities

People felt there is a need for more accessible, affordable activities, better healthcare, and a variety of services, especially for children, the elderly, and those with ESOL needs.

Safer communities

People had concerns around crime and anti-social behaviour, and wanted to see more police presence, better regulation of shops and properties, and support around addiction, which they felt would help.

Transport links

People would like to see more frequent buses and additional routes to destinations other than the city centre. They also called for more traffic calming measures to improve traffic flow and reduce accidents.

Green spaces

People identified opportunities to enhance the park with improved maintenance, additional equipment, increased safety measures, and greater community involvement, which they felt would help foster pride and create a more enjoyable environment for everyone.

"Would love to see a café in East End Park where people can meet and make it more sociable."

More activities for teenagers

People wanted to make sure that local teenagers had the right opportunities and activities, including sports, cookery, and creative opportunities like drama. They suggested targeting activities that were affordable or free, and for those moving from year 11 to college.

Leeds City Council

Leeds Community Anchor Network

BRH CAN
Burmantofts & Richmond Hill Community Anchor Network

Supported by West Yorkshire Combined Authority | Tracy Brabin Mayor of West Yorkshire

Funded by UK Government

Listening exercise in: Gipton

40 postcard responses

20 focus group attendees

What's great about your area?

"Community"

"Shops"

"Transport links"

"Green spaces"

What people loved about their community:

- People felt that the community cohesion in their area was the best aspect of living there, along with friendly people and strong access to transport, shops and green spaces.

"A brilliant, social community"

Wider use of community assets

There is a desire to foster stronger community connections through better awareness of local spaces, more accessible social opportunities, and improved green spaces where people feel comfortable gathering.

"It's an age old thing: eating and drinking does bring people together. Tea and Sympathy! It breaks down barriers"

"A simple message (like keep Gipton clean) - you think people don't see it, but the more that it is there, people will follow it"

Cleaner streets

People wanted to see a cleaner environment with less litter, improved bins, and initiatives to promote community pride, alongside efforts to keep valued places like the nature reserve tidy and well-maintained for others to enjoy.

Communities that feel safe

People want to feel safer in their neighbourhood, particularly in areas that others perceive as less safe or unclean, with suggestions for group walks and befriending schemes to foster a greater sense of security.

Leeds City Council

Leeds Community Anchor Network (LCAN)

The Old Fire Station

Supported by West Yorkshire Combined Authority | Tracy Brabin Mayor of West Yorkshire

Funded by UK Government

Listening exercise in: Harehills

100 postcard responses

13 focus group attendees

What's great about your area?

"Charity support"

"Hospitals"

"Places of worship"

"Schools"

What people loved about their community:

- People talked about the importance of local amenities such as shops, transport, schools, hospitals, places of worship, and charity support services. These facilities are seen as key to community well-being.

"Our community groups would help, we would work together to make this happen"

Cleaner streets

Residents wanted to see a cleaner Harehills, with more frequent bin collections and public education on littering, along with community initiatives like litter pick days and school involvement.

Free or affordable activities for children

People would like to see more supervised indoor and outdoor activities during holidays, especially for those facing financial barriers to childcare. They also support organizing community fun days that involve local schools, shops, and groups to bring people together.

Communities that feel safe

People are keen to build a safer community with a focus on reducing antisocial behavior and drug-related issues. They value increased street security, especially during the darker months, and support initiatives like neighborhood watch programs, as well as the use of surveillance in key areas to enhance safety.

Improved parks and green spaces

Residents seek improved public spaces with attractive, painted houses, benches, enclosed play areas, more greenery and surveillance to create more safe and pleasant green spaces.

"We could do this [...] we would need plants paints and tools"

Leeds City Council

Leeds Community Anchor Network (LCAN)

Give a Gift – Helping People • Changing Lives

Supported by West Yorkshire Combined Authority | Tracy Brabin Mayor of West Yorkshire

Funded by UK Government

Listening exercise in: Holbeck

98 postcard responses

39 focus group attendees

What's great about your area?

"Community spirit"

"Community Centre"

"Friendly people"

What people loved about their community:

- Community spirit was seen as the primary strength of Holbeck, with community centres and charities available for the local community, with residents seen as warm and friendly

"Holbeck is a family friendly community"

Improved housing

People would like to see improved housing conditions and increased consultation with residents to address issues like damp and safety. People advocate for more affordable housing, especially for single people and families, as well as consistent, quality repairs.

Parks

People valued Holbeck Moor Park, but would like to see it being updated to make it safer, more accessible, and cleaner, with additional equipment and better maintenance so that more people can enjoy it.

Communities that feel safe

People said they felt safer when police are visible. There's a call for better street lighting and the introduction of more CCTV. Community members also value the support of local guardians but feel more police engagement is needed.

Transport links

People felt there is an opportunity to enhance local bus services, as increased frequency and improved accessibility would better serve residents, particularly the elderly and disabled.

Community activities

Community events and activities are valued locally, and people would like to see more of these. People suggested more spaces for young adults, and wider use of community venues and Welcoming Spaces during winter. More local promotion of groups and activities would help connect newcomers to the community.

Leeds City Council

Leeds Community Anchor Network LCAN

Holbeck Together

Supported by West Yorkshire Combined Authority | Tracy Brabin Mayor of West Yorkshire

Funded by UK Government

Listening exercise in: Hunslet & Riverside

130 postcard responses

31 focus group attendees

What's great about your area?

"Community" "Diversity" "Green spaces" "Neighbours"

What people loved about their community:

- Various aspects of community cohesion were seen as making Hunslet a good area to live, such as the diversity of residents and the existing community organisations, while green spaces in the area were also highly valued.

Communities that feel safe

People want their community to feel safe, and feel that there needs to be more police presence, CCTV and community safety wardens, as well as positive youth engagement and building trust between the police and the community.

Housing

People would like to see larger, well-maintained homes with improved design, alongside more regulation of tenant rights and landlord responsibilities.

Green spaces

There is a desire for better-maintained parks with more amenities, accessible features for disabilities, and increased lighting, security, and community events to enhance safety and engagement.

Community activities

People value community activities and would like to see more of this, including local sports and educational programs, as well as improved communication about existing events, to foster social connections and support diverse needs.

Improved transport

People highlighted the need for improved public transport, with more frequent buses, better routes, and stronger connections across areas, with clear communication about delays, and free student travel.

"[I would love to see] fantastic and reliable bus routes, every 10 mins being the normal"

Leeds City Council · Leeds Community Anchor Network (LCAN) · St. Luke's Cares (www.stlukescares.org.uk)

Supported by West Yorkshire Combined Authority | Tracy Brabin Mayor of West Yorkshire

Funded by UK Government

Listening exercise in: Seacroft & Killingbeck

260 postcard responses

60 focus group attendees

What's great about your area?

"Friendliness"

"Community spirit"

"Parks"

What people loved about their community:

People valued the strong community spirit, inclusivity, and friendly atmosphere. They appreciated local amenities like shops, parks, and playgrounds, as well as key community organisations. A sense of safety, good schools, and accessible transport were also important.

"The community spirit and how people work together."

Communities that feel safe

People advocated for a stronger, community-led approach to safety, including a neighborhood watch, increased police presence, and regular engagement with local officers. They suggested youth programs, improved traffic safety, more proactive policing, and enhanced CCTV.

Communicating what's on

People were proud of the community activities, events and opportunities in the area, but thought this could reach even more people through stronger communication. They suggested using local magazine, digital signage, screens in public places, and receipts at local shops.

Improved housing

The community is focused on improving affordable and accessible housing options through collaboration with landlords, letting agents, and the council. There is interest in community-led housing initiatives, where local groups can take on the management of properties.

Improving community facilities

People wanted to grow the shops, cafes and public spaces they have. They saw potential for revitalising the local nursery through community-led initiatives and partnerships with local colleges, fostering affordable childcare options. They suggested exploring creative uses for underutilised spaces and encouraging private investment to further strengthen the accessibility and inclusivity of community amenities.

Environmental improvements

People supported community-driven efforts for cleaner, greener spaces, eco-friendly initiatives, and responsible development that considers the local ecosystem

Leeds City Council

Leeds Community Anchor Network (LCAN)

We are Seacroft

Supported by West Yorkshire Combined Authority | Tracy Brabin Mayor of West Yorkshire

Next steps

The next round of the community listening exercise will commence in 2025. Community anchor organisations will develop new questions, building on the findings in this report, and conduct another round of the listening exercise to hear from new voices.

Leeds Community Anchor Network will meet in January 2025 to review the findings of this report and discuss what each community anchor organisation is doing in its local area in response to this exercise.

APPENDICES

Research
&
Evaluation

- Postcard template
- Postcard feedback template
- Focus group feedback template