

50+ FORUM – RESULTS FROM SURVEY 3

Older People & Their Ability to Access a Healthy Diet

When asked which types of food you eat regularly (at least two or three days a week) you said.....

Fresh vegetable/salads/fruit	27%
Fresh meat/chicken/fish	25%
Dairy products (milk; cheese; yoghurt; butter etc.)	27%
Ready made meals (e.g. those that can be heated in an oven or a microwave)	8%
Other convenience foods; frozen or packaged food	10%
Take away foods (chip shop/Chinese/Indian etc.)	2%
None of the above	0%
Don't know	0%

The majority of you (44%) said that you 'always cooked / prepared meals yourself'; this was followed closely by two fifths of you (40%) who said that you 'cooked / prepared meals yourself on most days'. One in ten of you (10%) said that you 'occasionally cooked / prepared meals yourself' and only 4% said that you 'rarely (approx. once a week) cooked / prepared meals yourself'.

When asked who (if anyone) cooked / prepared meals for you, the most popular response was 'other household members' followed by 'family / friends outside the home'.

The majority of you (64%) said that you had cooked meal 'once a day'; this was followed by those of you (18%) who said that you had a cooked meal 'most days'.

We then asked you about your current shopping patterns. Almost a half of you (48%) said that you did most of your food shopping in supermarkets. Local shops (including greengrocers, butchers, and bakers) came second with a quarter of you (25%) carrying out most of your food shopping here. Local markets were the next most popular choice with 15% of you saying that you did most of your food shopping here.

When asked how you normally travelled when shopping for food, by far the most popular means of transport was 'car' (75%). Walking was the second most popular choice with 11% of you using this method of transport; this was closely followed by 'bus' at 9%.

Over a half of you (53%) carried out your shopping 'on your own' and over two-thirds of you (37%) said that a family member / friend went with you.

When asked if anything made it difficult for you to eat healthily, the cost of healthier food topped the list.

Lack of money	16%
Cost of healthier food	28%
Lack of local shops/retailer selling healthy food	9%
Lack of suitable transport to local shops/retailers	6%
Cost of public transport (including taxis) to local shops/retailers	2%
Mobility problems/difficulties in carrying shopping	9%
Lack of information about healthy eating	2%

Not knowing how to cook	1%
Not having help to cook	1%
Difficulties using some kitchen equipment	2%
Lack of motivation to prepare/cook meals	9%
Lack of time	7%
Lack of smaller portion sizes for pre-packed food	7%

When asked if you were aware of a number of initiatives operating in your area, the majority of you (40%) said that you weren't aware of any of them. Of those of you who were aware of some of the initiatives, the meals-on-wheels service topped the list (25%) followed by lunch club (19%). Even though most of you were aware of the meals-on-wheels service, only 2% of you said that you had used the service in the past 12 months. The most used service was a lunch club (used by 6%).

A 'food co-operative' was the initiative most of you (25%) would like to see introduced / expanded in your area, this was followed by a 'growing scheme' (19%) and 'local community café' (18%).

In order to assess what could be done to help older people eat more healthily we asked your opinion on a number of options / initiatives. 'Improving transport to local shops / food co-operatives' was the most popular option but opinion was quite evenly split across a number of options.

Improve transport to local shops/food co-operatives	17%
More practical advice/information on healthy eating	11%
More home delivery services/mobile shops	14%
More help with shopping/carrying shopping	13%
More community food initiatives, such as lunch clubs/community cafes	12%
More food co-ops/growing schemes	9%
Smaller portions/more meals for one at the supermarket	11%
Meals on wheels services	5%
Cooking classes	4%
Nothing needed	2%

Your Standard of Living

One fifth of you (20%) said that your income 'wasn't enough to meet your basic needs'. Over a half of you (56%) said that your income was 'just enough' to your basic needs and almost a quarter of you (24%) said that it was 'more than enough'. We then asked a series of questions about what you had done over the last 12 months to keep your everyday living costs down. The full results are detailed in the table below.

	Often	Sometimes	Never
Bought cheaper cuts of meat or less than you would like to buy	26%	41%	32%
Gone without fresh fruit and vegetables	5%	20%	75%
Bought second hand clothing instead of new continued wearing clothing that was worn out because you couldn't afford replacement	18%	24%	58%
Put off buying clothing for as long as possible	23%	35%	41%
Relied on gifts of clothing	7%	13%	80%
Continued wearing shoes that were worn out because	10%	24%	66%

you couldn't afford replacements			
Put up with feeling cold to save heating costs	13%	34%	53%
Stayed in bed longer to save heating costs	8%	15%	77%
Skimped on food so that others in the household would have enough to eat	7%	10%	83%
Postponed visits to the dentist	13%	18%	69%
Gone without or cut back on visits to family and friends	13%	34%	53%
Gone without or cut back on telephone calls to family and friends	15%	30%	54%
Gone without or cut back on trips to the shops or local places	20%	41%	39%
Spent less on hobbies than you would like	23%	26%	52%
Not gone to a funeral you would have liked to attend because of the costs	12%	11%	77%
Cut back on visits to the local pub	30%	19%	51%
Ever used less than you needed of gas, electricity and the telephone because you couldn't afford it	22%	35%	43%

When asked what you had personally gone without in the last year because of a shortage of money, recreational activities such as 'going out' (18%), a 'holiday' (14%) and 'visits to the pub' (13%) top the list, however, 'heating' came close after (11%).

The majority of you (73%) said that in the past 12 months you hadn't been seriously behind in paying within the time allowed for items such as rent, gas, electricity, credit cards, telephone, TV licence. For those that had been seriously behind in paying bills within the time allowed, electricity (4%) and credit card payments (4%) seemed to cause the most problems closely followed by gas, water and telephone at 3%

When asked 'Have you ever been disconnected in relation to water, gas, electricity and the telephone because you couldn't afford it?', 94% of you said that you hadn't for any of them, 5% of you had had your telephone disconnected and 1% of you said that you had had your gas disconnected.

When asked 'Have you ever used less than you needed to in relation to water, gas, electricity and the telephone because you couldn't afford it?' 41% of you said that you hadn't for any of them. Almost a fifth of you (19%) said that you had used less electricity, 18% of you had used less gas, 18% of you had used less telephone and 4% of you had used less water.

Transportation

Country Cars is a voluntary social care scheme service which is designed to fill gaps in the rural areas and also caters for people who are physically unable to use public transport in both town and country areas. Almost two-thirds of you (62%) said that you were aware of this service.

The Concessionary Fares Scheme which exists all over Wales for people aged 60+ offers benefits on bus journeys. There are also discretionary elements within Carmarthenshire that offer benefits on local rail and Country Cars journeys. Just over three-quarters of you (78%) said that you were aware of the Concessionary Fares Scheme.

A number of specific services were outlined and you were asked if you were aware of them and then if you had used them. The results are outlined in the table below.

	Aware of service	Have used service
Free bus travel on bus services in Wales	36%	57%
'Heart of Wales' train line discounts (26%)	26%	23%
'West Wales' train line discounts	16%	13%
Country Cars Scheme	21%	8%

When asked *'How often do you travel by public transport within Carmarthenshire?'* the most popular response was 'never' (39%) followed by 'less often than once a week but at least once a month' (22%) and then 'less often than once a month but at least 4 times a year' (19%). Only 3% of you said that you travelled by public transport 'every day or nearly every day'.

Those that didn't travel frequently (less often than once a week) were asked the reasons for not travelling more frequently. 'Service frequency' topped the list (20%) followed by 'availability of services within easy walking distance' (19%).

Those that did use public transport within Carmarthenshire (frequently or infrequently) were asked rate a number of sources of information on a scale of 1-5 where 1 = very useful and 5 = least useful. Looking at the responses rated '1' i.e. 'very useful'; the most popular option was 'timetable information at bus stops' (72%) followed by 'real-time information at bus stops – offering notification of delays; (64%).

Switch-2-Share is a free car-share scheme for South West Wales which links drivers and passengers to share car journeys. When asked if you were aware of the Switch-2-Share Scheme only 6% of you were aware of it. Finally, you were asked to suggest how transport services and infrastructure may be improved to make Carmarthenshire public transport and network more user-friendly with regards to bus users, car users, rail users or cyclists. Suggestions included using smaller buses when appropriate, introducing 'request' stops on all routes, improved transport links & more cycle tracks. Several people would like better heating on buses & rest assured that all these comments have been passed along to appropriate officers for consideration.