

## **Qualitative research June 2022: mental wellbeing and retirement – key findings**

This report summarises the key findings of qualitative research that was conducted by Hampshire County Council on mental health and retirement to get a depth of understanding of attitudes towards retirement (the positives as well as the fears), planning undertaken, and barriers to turning for help.

The research was carried out in four online group discussions and one in-depth interview with Hampshire residents aged 60-79, mixed gender. Two of the groups and the in-depth interview were conducted with the Hampshire Perspectives forum, whilst the additional two groups were externally recruited Hampshire residents of the C2DE socioeconomic grade. Social grade C2 includes skilled manual worker categories and social grade DE includes semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers, those on state benefit, unemployed and the lowest grade workers categories.

This research was completed on the 9 June 2022.

### **Key findings were as follows:**

1. Respondents' attitude towards retirement were varied; people were feeling both positive and negative about retirement. However, many of those who were more positive also realised that their circumstances could change at any point due to health or finances.
2. Flexibility, freedom and time to focus on what you enjoy were considered as the benefits of retirement whereas, fears reflected the continuum of where someone was in their retirement journey, and these were present even for those who were positive about retirement.
3. Keeping busy and staying connected, keeping the brain active and looking after yourself physically were three areas recognised by respondents and seen as important to maintain during retirement. They often recognised the interlinked holistic benefits of these.
4. The term 'mental health' is not the right language for this generation and should be avoided. The vast majority of respondents were uncomfortable with the term, as during their lifetimes it typically meant dementia or other severe conditions and most now see it as a modern 'buzzword'.
5. Most respondents resonated with 'Connect' and 'Be active' of the Five Ways to Wellbeing, which could be potential sources of support for mental wellbeing.