Rethink
Mental
Illness.

Service User Perspectives:

# Evaluating Experiences at Rethink Mental Illness

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# Introduction and foreword

## I am pleased to introduce our first national service user satisfaction report.

I would firstly like to thank the people that have used our services and participated in this survey for sharing their voices and perspective. This is sincerely appreciated; their willingness to share their experiences helps us to better understand what is needed. We can use their feedback to help shape and improve services.

Over the last year we have transformed the way that we engage with people using our services. Increasing reach and accessibility has been important part of implementing the survey. To make sure we are asking the right questions we coproduced the survey with people who use our services with lived experience and our staff.

The aim of the survey is to provide us with feedback and self-reported outcomes plus information we can use to improve our performance. The survey questions have been developed to reflect the specific context of our range of services and are now embedded across services as a crucial touchpoint to understand our impact. The way we now ask people about their satisfaction with Rethink Mental Illness' services place a stronger emphasis on understanding this and how this may impact overall quality of life - from an individual perspective.

To develop and enhance our services it is imperative that we hear directly from the people who use them. Their feedback is instrumental in steering our efforts towards improvement, influencing the quality and outcomes of our services.

The analysis in this report is based on contributions from the largest sample size of service users we've ever had, who provide valuable insights into the impact of our services based on feedback and self-reported outcomes. This report marks the first time that our charitable mission to improve quality of life for people severely affected by mental illness has been assessed on such a comprehensive scale.

By including the 'I statements' from our Rethink Impact Framework, responses to the survey help us to track quality of life over time and to better understand the difference our services make to people. Learning more from people who use our services helps us to understand what is most important to them and can help us develop our service offer to maximise support around the things that people find most valuable and which has the greatest impact. For example, privacy and respect, how staff communicate, confidence, accessibility. Also service specific areas such as move on and quality of accommodation in accommodation services.

Responses which highlight changes or gaps can help us address these. For example, where peoples' responses tell us they would like more activities and opportunities for social connection, this can help us to incorporate more opportunities within services in future to meet these needs. Responses may help us to identify and meet staff training needs or they may help us to see opportunities for more effective partnership working in communities to meet peoples external needs.

The services we deliver across communities are deliberately varied, as we try to help support people and offer services which meet their needs at different stages in peoples lives and with different experiences and diverse backgrounds. We are committed to fostering an inclusive environment that acknowledges and respects the varied experiences of people using our services.

So, it is fantastic to see that a significant majority of service users reporting positively about satisfaction with their experience of our services. People describe the importance of accessible and personalised support from Rethink services and what this has meant for them in terms of improving both quality of life and daily living.

A massive thank you, once again to everyone who participated in the survey; we are committed to continue listening and learning from you.

**Rebecca Silvester,**
**Director of Quality and Business**
**Intelligence**

## Methodology

The Service User Experience Survey covers all Rethink services. It is a mixture of closed questions and open free text questions. This ensures we obtain a mixture of both quantitative and qualitative evidence about feedback, outcomes, areas for improvement and impact of Rethink services. There is a distinct focus on quality of life, driven by our mission, that people affected by severe mental illness have the best possible quality of life.

## Accessibility

Accessibility has been a key component of the survey research design. In order to ensure the survey has remained accessible for as many people as possible, we have a standard version of the survey as well as an 'easy read' version. The easy read version is written in plain English, which is clear and easily understandable, with star rating visuals also integrated in some of the questions where appropriate.

The survey design has also been conscious of the scope for digital exclusion with both online and paper versions available.

## Coproduction

The survey has been coproduced, with lived experience being part of all aspects of the design process. Rethink services and staff have also been integral to the design of the survey.

## Sampling

In total there have been **1,587 responses** to the Service User Experience Survey throughout 2023. This compares to around 22,000 people accesesing our services in the same 12 month period.

This is the largest sample size of service users living with severe mental illness we've ever had. This report represents the first time Rethink has brought together such a large sample in one survey and the results and conclusions offer us real insights in the impact of our services, based on feedback and self reported outcomes from our service users.

A summary of some of the demographics of the sample and how this compares to Rethink service users more widely:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| There is a good mixture of current and recent service users by service type | There is a representative mix of longer and shorter term service users | The is a varied age range |
| There is an underrepresentation of male service users | There is a balanced representation of ethnicity types | There is a higher proportion of LGBTQ+ communities |

# Results all services

## Quality of Life

All service users are asked to what extent the support they received improved their quality of life. This is in line with Rethink's Impact Framework and organisational mission – the best possible quality of life for all people living with severe mental illness.

**High Level of Agreement:** A significant majority (83%) of respondents agree or completely agree that the support they have received from Rethink has improved their quality of life. This indicates a strong positive impact of the support services on the individuals' well-being and daily living.

**Minimal Disagreement:** Only a small fraction (6%) of respondents disagree or completely disagree with the statement, suggesting that the negative experiences or perceptions of the support received are relatively rare among the surveyed individuals.

**Some Neutrality:** A notable portion (12%) of respondents neither agree nor disagree, indicating a neutral stance on the impact of Rethink's support on their quality of life. This could suggest that for some individuals, the impact of the support is not as clear-cut or that they may have mixed feelings about it.

## 83%
**of people feel the support they have received improved their quality of life**

## 73%
**of people gave 5 out 5 for our service**

## Service Ratings

All service users were also asked to rate overall the support they had received.

Collectively, 82% of respondents were positive, rating the service as either 4 or 5 out of five (or 'good' or 'excellent'[1]). There are some neutral responses, with 5% being either 3 out of 5 or 'average'. There is also a combined 2% of responses which were negative, with a rating of either 1 or 2 out of 5, or a rating of 'poor' or 'very poor'.

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1 Responses to the easy read version use a numbered star rating scale and responses in the standard version use a Likert scale ranging from 'very poor' to 'excellent'.

## Friends and Family test

Rethink asks service users, would you recommend this service to a family member or friend, if they were in a similar position? This is in line with the NHS Friends and Family Test, which has been used over many years to track satisfaction.

91% of respondents said that they would recommend the service, which is a very positive result – it compares to 86% for NHS Mental Health Services, as of the end of January 2024.

# 91%

**of people would recommend our services to a family member or a friend**

## Quality of Life Detailed (I statements)

Responses to the 'I statements' asked of all service users are shown in the graphic on the following page. Service users are asked to what extent they agree with the I statements, focusing on quality of life domains.

**Home and Safety:** A significant majority feel they have a place they can call home (80%) and feel safe (66%), indicating a strong foundation of physical security and shelter.

**Social Connections and Support:** Social connections (72%) and access to the right support (72%) are highly valued, showing the importance of meaningful relationships and timely support in individuals' lives.

**Opportunities for Development:** 60% of respondents feel they have opportunities to develop the way they want, suggesting room for improvement in enabling personal growth and development.

**Financial Security:** Financial security appears to be a concern, with only 57% agreeing they have enough money to meet their needs, highlighting an area where more support may be needed.

**Health Management:** The ability to look after physical health (62%) and manage mental health (55%) shows a positive trend, though the latter suggests a need for enhanced mental health support.

**Personal Relationships and Feeling Valued:** Fulfilling personal relationships (59%) and feeling valued (62%) contribute significantly to individuals' sense of well-being, though there is still a portion of the population that feels these areas could be improved.

**Enjoyment and Acceptance:** Enjoyment of time (58%) and feeling accepted (65%) are crucial for overall happiness and inclusion, with a notable percentage of individuals feeling positive in these areas.

Overall, the findings suggest that while there are strong areas of support and well-being, such as safety, social connections, and feeling accepted, there are also areas where improvements could be made, particularly in financial security, opportunities for personal development, and enhanced support for managing mental health.

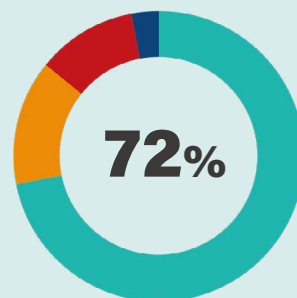# "I" statements: To what extent do you agree...

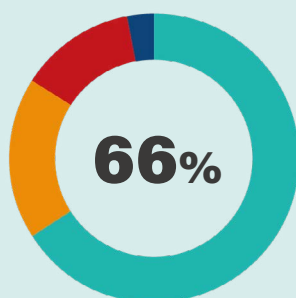**Legend:** ■ Agree and completely agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree and completely disagree ■ N/A
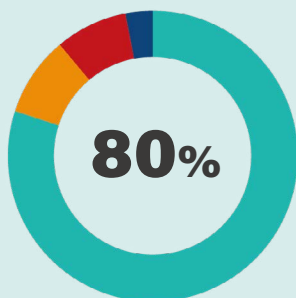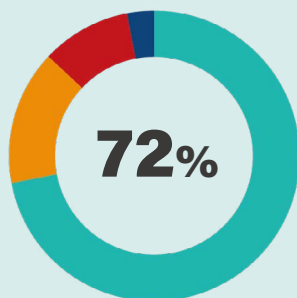
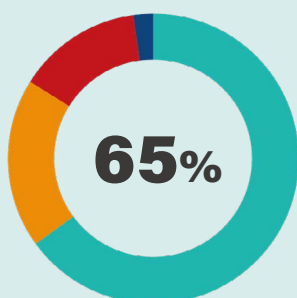**80%** — I have a place I can call home
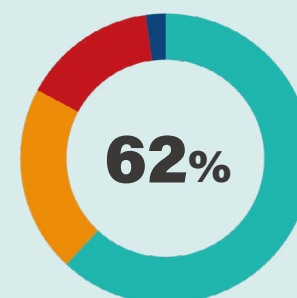
**72%** — I have access to the right support when I need it

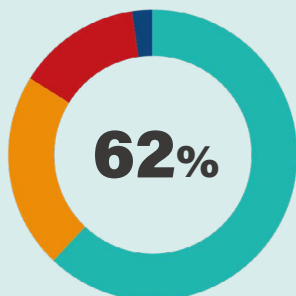**72%** — I have social connections that are meaningful to me

**66%** — I feel safe

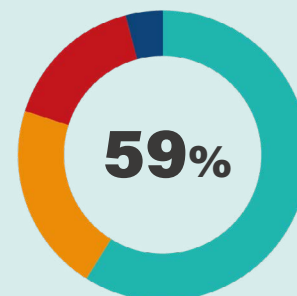**65%** — I feel accepted
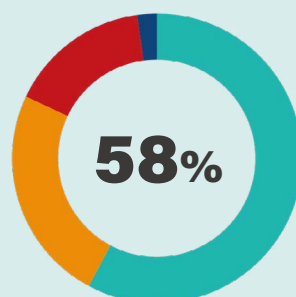
**62%** — I feel valued

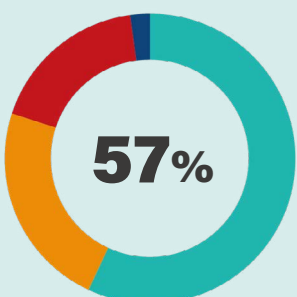**62%** — I am able to look after my physical health
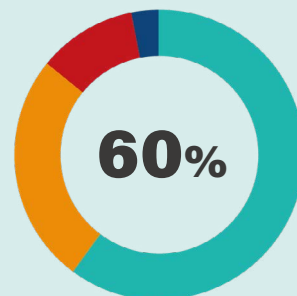
**60%** — I have opportunities in my life to develop the way I want

**59%** — I have fulfilling personal relationships

**58%** — I enjoy how I spend my time

**57%** — I have enough money to meet my needs
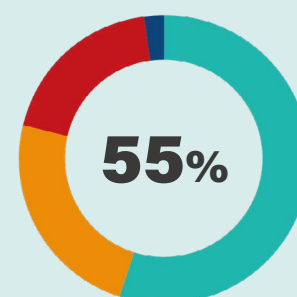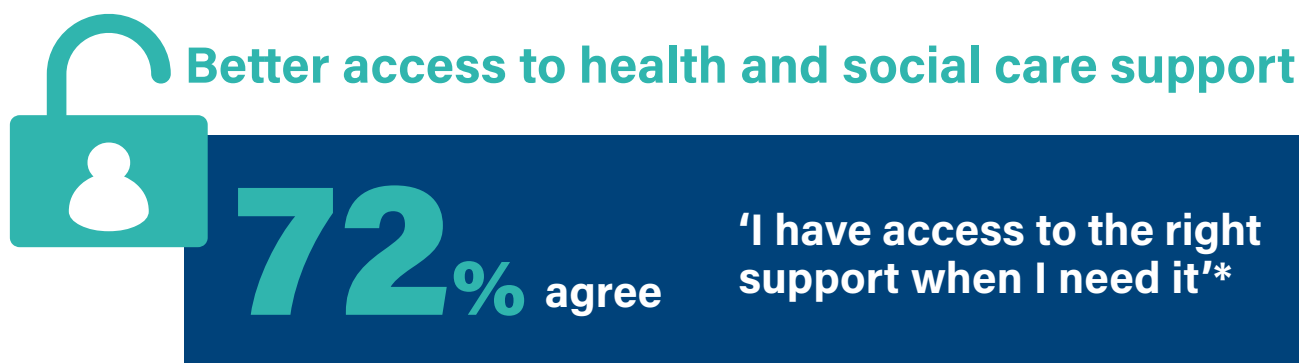
**55%** — I am able to manage my mental health

# Conclusions and next steps

## Our Impact

This survey shows us that we are on our way to our mission, that people affected by severe mental illness have the best possible quality of life. 83% of service users agree that the support they received improved their quality of life and we have examples for all service types of the specific ways in which the support has improved domains of quality of life for service users.

## Better access to health and social care support

### 72% agree 'I have access to the right support when I need it'*

**96%** of carers agree or completely agree with being supported to access appropriate information and accessing social care services they weren't previously aware of i.e. respite care.

**85%** of supported accommodation residents noted its positive impact on mental health and wellbeing through better access to health and social care interventions.

**85%** found the helpline service was accessible through various means of communication, improving access to telehealth interventions.

**81%** of supported accommodation were in agreement on the ability to access external organisations for additional support while staying at their accommodation.

**80%** of Care Quality Commission (CQC) residential residents, were in agreement on the ability to access external organisations for additional support while staying at their accommodation.

*An "I" statement question answered by all respondents, regardless of service type accessed.

## Having a place to call home

# 80%
**agree**

### 'I have a place I can call home'*

**For those accessing supported accommodation,**

**94%** of respondents agree or completely agree with the supportiveness and sensitivity of the staff in making them feel comfortable and secure while staying there.

**91%** of CQC residential residents had a high level of satisfaction with personal living spaces.

## Not ending up in debt because of their mental illness, or becoming more unwell because of money problems

# 3 in 5 (57%)
**people agreed**

## 'I have enough money to meet my needs'*

# Developing and sustaining social connections that are meaningful to them

**72**% **agreed**

**'I have social connections that are meaningful to me'***

**59**% **agreed**

**'I have fulfilling personal relationships'***

**77%**
of respondents accessing community support services were in strong agreement/ agreement on the service's role in reducing feelings of social isolation.

**76%**
of respondents accessing crisis accommodation services were in strong agreement/ agreement that being being at the house helped alleviate feelings of social isolation and diminishing suicidal thoughts.

**15%**
of responses for overall experience believe 'Social and Community Engagement' is a key part of their recovery, while 10% in Supported Accommodation indicated he importance of social connections to them. **Taken from our CQC Residential and supported accommodation services, when thematically analysing set goals and progress.**

An "I" statement question answered by all respondents, regardless of service type accessed.

## 3 in 5

**(60%)**

**people agreed**

**'I have opportunities in my life to develop the way I want.'***

An "I" statement question answered by all respondents, regardless of service type accessed.

## Being supported into meaningful employment, education, training and volunteering opportunities, which enhances self worth

**92%** of those accessing employment support services agreed the service was helping them look for competitive employment and listening to their employment preferences.

**92%** agreement rate for the provision of ongoing, individual support while at work. This means service users are more likely to stay in employment or voluntary positions.

**52%** highlighted the value placed on 'getting into work/volunteering' as a key part of their support received in our BAME service. **Taken from our BAME services, when thematically analysing set goals and progress.**

**15%** highlighted the value placed on 'Employment and Education Achievements' from using our community service. **Taken from our community services, when thematically analysing set goals and progress.**

## Improved physical health

**62%**

**'I am able to look after my physical health.'***

**83%** of Black and minoritised ethic communities agree that the service has improved both physical and mental wellbeing.

**82%** of those accessing carers support services are in agreement the help has allowed them to have the time to improve their health and fitness.

**25%** of supported accommodation responses, from thematically analysed free-text responses, said their progressed goals were being met on improving 'Health and Well-being'.

An "I" statement question answered by all respondents, regardless of service type accessed.

# Areas for Improvement

We've been able to identify some key areas where we think there is scope for improvement based on the feedback received in the survey. Some of these are specific to service types, and others are more general, or in relation to the survey itself.

## Service specific

- There should be more focus on reducing social isolation and improving confidence for carers services.

- We should look to expand our activities offer in CQC regulated and supported accommodation services.

- There should be a greater focus on service users ultimately moving into independent accommodation in the future for CQC regulated services.

- We should focus on how helpline service users can be supported to more positive outcomes when they require more in depth support.

- We must ensure we are more strongly promoting anti-discrimination of people due to their mental illness in our employment services.

## General points

- We should be improving levels and variety of activities available to all service users.

- We must promote more co-production and involvement of service users in service development and improvement.

- We should consider areas of impact and best practice demonstrated by other services within the same respective area of service provision.

## In the Service User Experience Survey

Through implementing the Service User Experience survey for over a year now, we have some key areas for improvement which we have learned.

## Translations into the most common spoken languages

We realise the survey is limited in its scope, regarding language, with the survey only available in the English language. We appreciate staff that have painstakingly translated surveys into English from the original language it was filled in with. We want to create both online and paper versions of the survey in the most commonly-spoken languages. This will be a future area of development by us to further increase the accessibility of the survey.

## Increase reach and scope of service user experience survey

There has been some confusion with the accessing the right survey for those using care navigation services. The majority of respondents are using the incorrect service path; this is partially our fault for not having enough depth within the first version of the published surveys. We intend to include the more nuanced and bespoke surveys, already creating surveys for physical health and outreach/crisis navigation workers.

## Improving response rates

To improve response rates, we need to address this twofold:

- Continue promoting and tailoring our service user experience survey to an expanding and ever-changing organisation.

- Working with services to target underrepresented groups in service use representation i.e. underrepresented ethnicities or religions, where possible.

## Artificial intelligence (AI)-driven semantic analysis

Continue to develop and refine our deployment of AI-driven semantic analysis in our analysis of service users' responses. This includes staying at the 'cutting-edge' of using software developments available to us while also being mindful and considerate of the ethical debate surrounding AI as a tool of analysis.

**We are always seeking to improve and learn, and are open to more suggestions on how to improve the service user experience survey, so if you have any suggestions, please email: glenn.raymond@rethink.org**

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Leading the way to a better quality
of life for everyone severely
affected by mental illness.

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