



# Wellbeing amongst People who are Unemployed or facing In-work Poverty

This report has been produced based on findings from the Public Mental Health and Emotional Needs project, in collaboration with Suffolk County Council.

**March 2023**



**Only 35%** of those facing in-work poverty are meeting their Needs well overall

**Just 16%** of unemployed people are meeting their Needs well overall

**Sleep** is the worst met Need on average

**Community** is the least met emotional Need on average

**Under 18s** are among the most well demographic groups on average

People's **physical and mental health** is the biggest barrier to wellbeing

**People with mental health conditions** are among the least well demographic groups on average

**3 in 4 unemployed people** don't feel safe and secure in their lives



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## The Emotional Needs

**Sleep** helps calm emotions and repairs our body. We can tell our Need for Sleep is met when we feel rested after waking up

**Food & Drink** is about feeling you get energy, nutrition and pleasure from your diet – however that looks for you

**Control** is feeling we are free to make choices for ourselves, and part of meeting this Need is recognising that there are things we can't control

**Meaning & Purpose** is feeling motivated and that there is a point to getting out of bed in the morning. This can be met through meeting our Need for Achievement, through helping other people, or by being part of something bigger than ourselves

**Achievement** is met by feeling stretched and challenged by the things we do

**Emotional Connection** is about feeling connected in smaller, more intimate groups. **Close Relationships** is about feeling we can be completely ourselves around at least one other person (or a pet!)

**Movement** isn't just about going to the gym or out for a run. Getting our heart rate above resting level just three to four times a week – whether that's a brisk walk, dancing or hoovering – is enough to trigger an endorphin release equivalent in its effect to anti-depressant medication

**Security** is to do with our need to feel safe and secure in our surroundings. Some examples of where we meet our Need for Security is in our housing situation, financially or in relationships

**Privacy** is about being able to get time away from distractions and have time to process our thoughts and emotions

**Status** is met by feeling appreciated and respected as a person. **Value** is about feeling appreciated for our actions and contributions

**Giving and Receiving Attention** is about exchanging positive attention with those around us. It is a finite resource, but can be replenished by better meeting the Need for Privacy

**Community** is met when we feel we're part of a group

## Key Findings

Only 35% of those facing in-work poverty\* and 16% of unemployed people\* are meeting their Needs well overall.

Wellbeing is lower amongst people who are unemployed or facing in-work poverty on average, when compared with the average wellbeing of Suffolk's general population.

Alongside the three physical Needs, there are three emotional Needs that are particularly less well met amongst those who are unemployed or facing in-work poverty on average, and that could therefore benefit from targeted interventions to better support individuals to meet these Needs.

These are:

### 1. Community

**58%** of those facing in-work poverty are not meeting this Need well\*\*

**80%** of unemployed respondents are not meeting this Need well

#### **The biggest barrier to this Need being met?**

People's physical and/or mental health

#### **The biggest supporting factor?**

People's relationships or community involvement

### 2. Security

**58%** of those facing in-work poverty are not meeting this Need well

**76%** of unemployed respondents are not meeting this Need well

#### **The biggest barrier to this Need being met?**

People's physical and/or mental health or the cost of living

#### **The biggest supporting factor?**

People's home environments or relationships

*\* Please refer to Appendix 1 to see the definitions for these groups.*

*\*\* We define a Need as being 'well met' when it has a score of 1 or more, out of a scale of -3 to 3. For more information on our methodology, please refer to Appendix 1.*

For more information on our Emotional Needs & Resources approach, visit our website: [www.suffolkmind.org.uk/emotional-needs-resources](http://www.suffolkmind.org.uk/emotional-needs-resources)

# Key Findings

## 3. Control

**54%** of those facing in-work poverty are not meeting this Need well

**74%** of unemployed respondents are not meeting this Need well

### **The biggest barrier to this Need being met?**

People's physical and/or mental health

### **The biggest supporting factor?**

People's relationships or day-to-day environments

## 4. Physical Needs

**70%** of those facing in-work poverty are not meeting their Need for **Sleep** well

**56%** of those facing in-work poverty are not meeting their Need for **Movement** well

**57%** of those facing in-work poverty are not meeting their Need for **Food & Drink** well

### **The biggest barrier to these Needs being met?**

People's physical and/or mental health

### **The biggest supporting factors?**

People's home environments, physical and/or mental health, their hobbies or interests, and work situations

**84%** of unemployed respondents are not meeting their Need for **Sleep** well

**76%** of unemployed respondents are not meeting their Need for **Movement** well

**70%** of unemployed respondents are not meeting their Need for **Food & Drink** well

### **The biggest barrier to these Needs being met?**

People's physical and/or mental health

### **The biggest supporting factors?**

People's home environments and day-to-day environments, their access to the outdoors, and their hobbies or interests

Some groups of people are notably more or less well than the average. Of those facing in-work poverty, individuals aged 65 to 74 are the most well group on average, meeting 6 of the 15 Needs well. Under 18s are the most well group out of unemployed respondents on average, meeting 5 of the 15 Needs well.

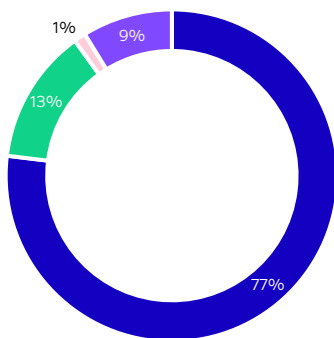
The least well group on average for those facing in-work poverty is people living with mental health conditions, who are meeting just two of their Needs well on average – Privacy and Giving Attention. Of unemployed respondents, the least well group on average is those who have separated from a long-term partner or spouse, who are meeting only their Need for Privacy well on average.

*Any questions about our findings? Please contact us on [Research@suffolkmind.org.uk](mailto:Research@suffolkmind.org.uk)*

# Engagement from people facing in-work poverty

We received 615 responses from those facing in-work poverty in Suffolk from 13<sup>th</sup> June 2022 to 8<sup>th</sup> March 2023. We collect information on a number of demographic factors, alongside the Emotional Needs Audit (ENA) data, including gender, age, sexual orientation, ethnicity and nationality, economic status, and income. Of the demographic groups, this report focuses on age and income in particular – due to the biggest disparities in wellbeing existing amongst these groups.

## Response rates by gender:



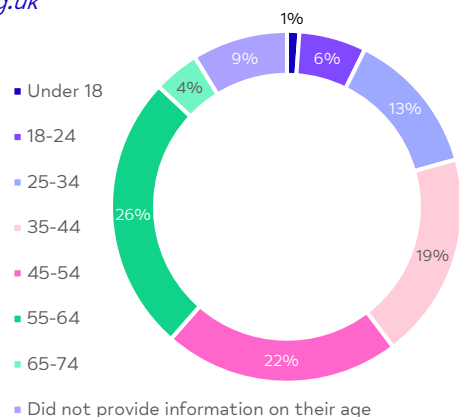
- 77% of respondents were women (including trans women)
- 13% were men (including trans men)
- 9% chose not to provide information on their gender
- 1% identified as non-binary or gender fluid

We often struggle to collect information on men’s wellbeing compared with women, and this is worth keeping in mind as it can affect our results. For instance, men’s average wellbeing amongst people facing in-work poverty is slightly higher than women’s (average overall score of 0.46 for men, compared with 0.42 for women – on a scale of -3 to 3). However, we don’t know the extent to which this is influenced by the fact that our sample size for men is nearly 6 times smaller than is for women. It is also possible that men who do choose to answer our survey *may* be generally more well than those who don’t.

*Could you help us connect with individuals who are less represented in our data? If so, please reach out to us on [Research@suffolkmind.org.uk](mailto:Research@suffolkmind.org.uk)*

## Response rates by age:

We heard the most from those aged between 35 and 64 years old. Just 4% of respondents were aged between 65 to 74, which is among our most well demographic groups on average. It’s therefore worth bearing in mind that the fewer responses we have for a group, the less reliable the conclusions we’re drawing are.

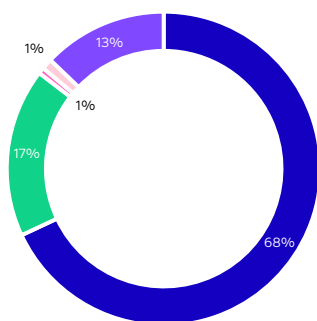


*Where we receive fewer than 3 responses per reportable group, we do not report on the average wellbeing of this group – to ensure all responses remain anonymous.*

## Engagement from unemployed respondents

We received 1,270 responses from unemployed individuals in Suffolk from 13<sup>th</sup> June 2022 to 8<sup>th</sup> March 2023. During the same timeframe, we also received 8,694 responses from Suffolk-wide respondents of all demographic backgrounds.

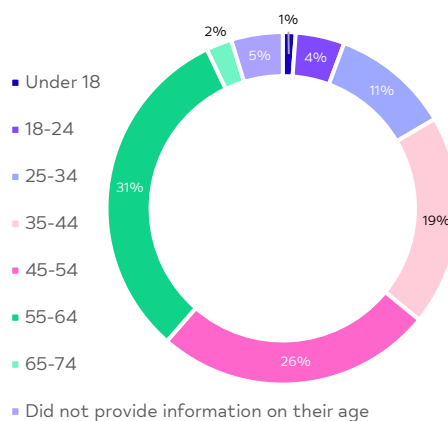
### Response rates by gender:



- 68% of respondents were women (including trans women)
- 17% were men (including trans men)
- 13% chose not to provide information on their gender
- 1% identified as non-binary or gender fluid
- 1% chose to self-describe their gender identify

### Response rates by age:

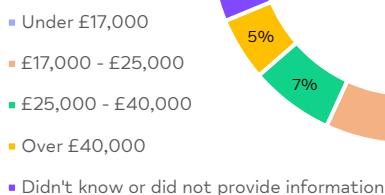
As with those facing in-work poverty, once again we heard the most from those aged between 35 and 64. We heard the least from the age group that happens to be among our most well groups on average – those under 18 years old.



### Response rates by income:

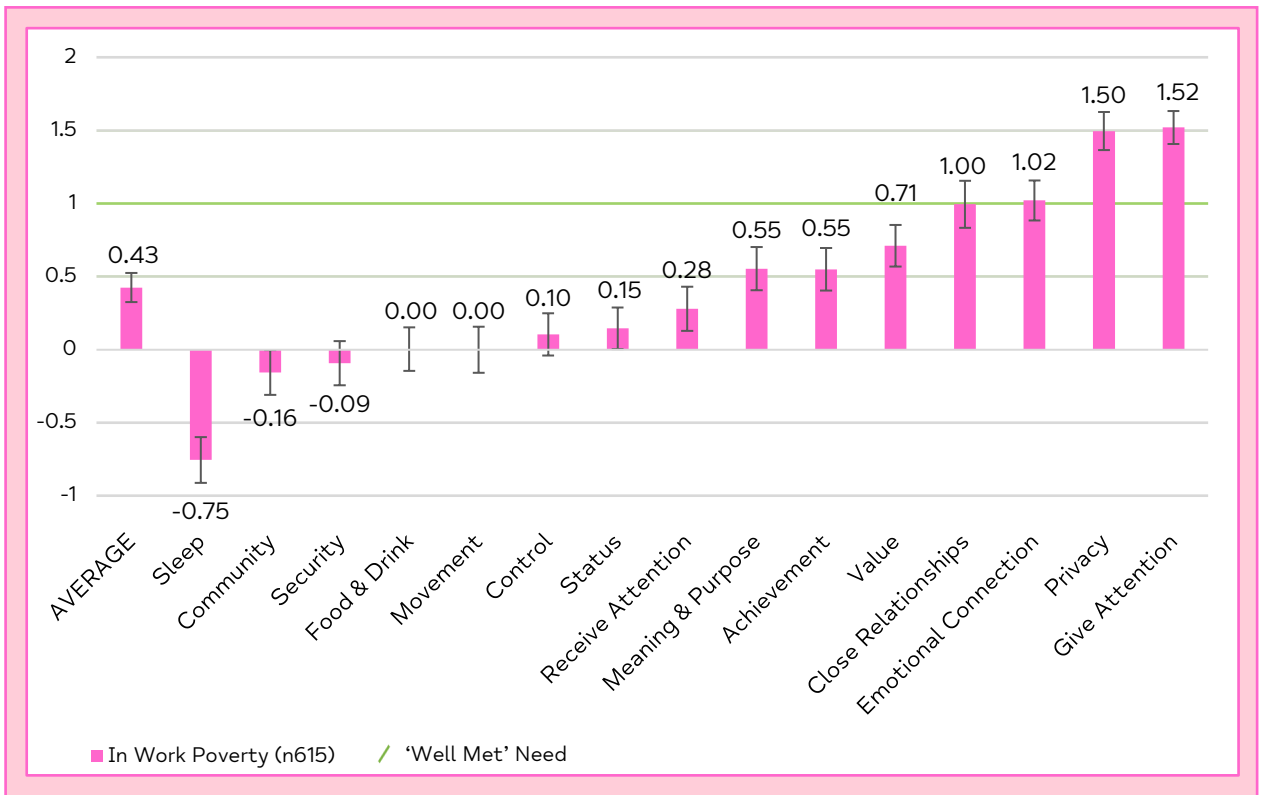
If we look at response rates by household income, we can see that 43% of our unemployed respondents are living in households that earn less than £17,000 per year. We heard the least from those who have a household income of more than £40,000 per year, with this 5% also happening to be among the most well groups for unemployed respondents on average.

31% of respondents either didn't know their household income or declined to answer the questions.





## Wellbeing amongst those facing in-work poverty



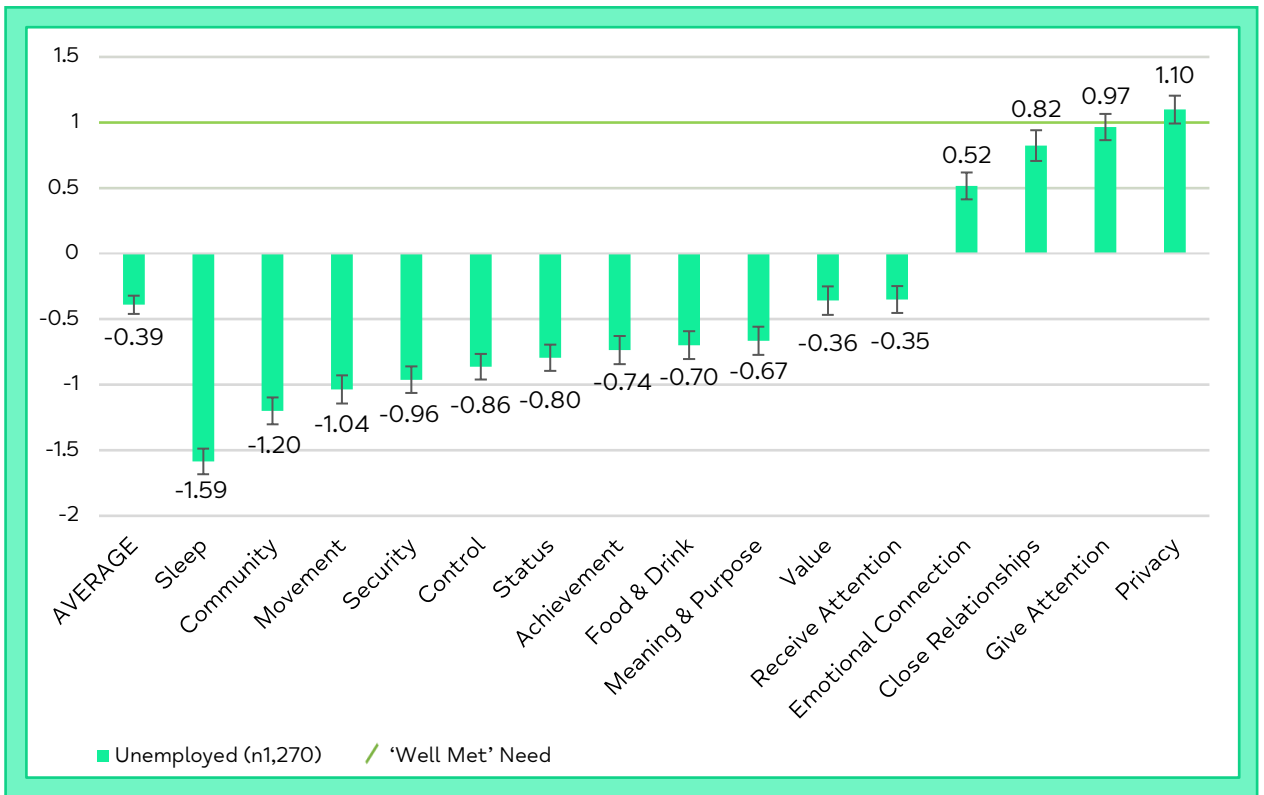
Here we have the average results from the Emotional Needs Audit of those who we identified as being in work but facing poverty. This was defined as those working full-time, part-time, being self-employed or on a zero-hour contract *and* having a household income of less than £17,000 per year. The Emotional Needs are along the bottom on the x axis, arranged from least to best met on average from left to right, with the average of all Needs combined on the far left. How well the Needs are met is shown on the y axis. Within the audit, each Need can be scored from -3 to 3, however, from this graph, we can see that the averages land between -1 and 2 (a view of the results on the full scale can be found in Appendix 2).

The error bars indicate the values we would expect our averages to fall within if we repeated this research. We used a 95% confidence interval; therefore, we can be 95% certain that the averages would fall within these ranges if we were to collect data on the wellbeing of those facing in-work poverty again in future.

The green line shows where we define a Need to be 'well met' – a score of 1 or more. At a glance, we can see that Needs are not well met by those facing in-work poverty on average, with an overall average score of 0.43. Similarly, only 4 of the 15 Needs are well met overall.

On an individual level, we deem someone to be meeting their Needs well overall if they have an average score of 1 or more across all their Needs. From the in-work poverty data, we can see that just 35.45% of respondents (or 218 out of 615) are meeting their Needs well overall. Therefore, just 35% are classed as being in wellbeing on the mental health continuum. This is lower than Suffolk's average wellbeing, based on fixed dates of 13 June 2022 to 8 March 2023 for the Suffolk-wide comparison point throughout this research, for which 41.12% of respondents are meeting their Needs well overall. This suggests that those facing in-work poverty may be a particular area of concern in Suffolk, which was expected as we chose to focus on demographic groups that we knew to be less well. We therefore anticipated slightly lower wellbeing amongst those facing in-work poverty on average, however we can use our findings to prioritise Needs and interventions for those in this position.

## Wellbeing amongst unemployed respondents



To view this graph on the full scale (-3 to 3), see Appendix 2.

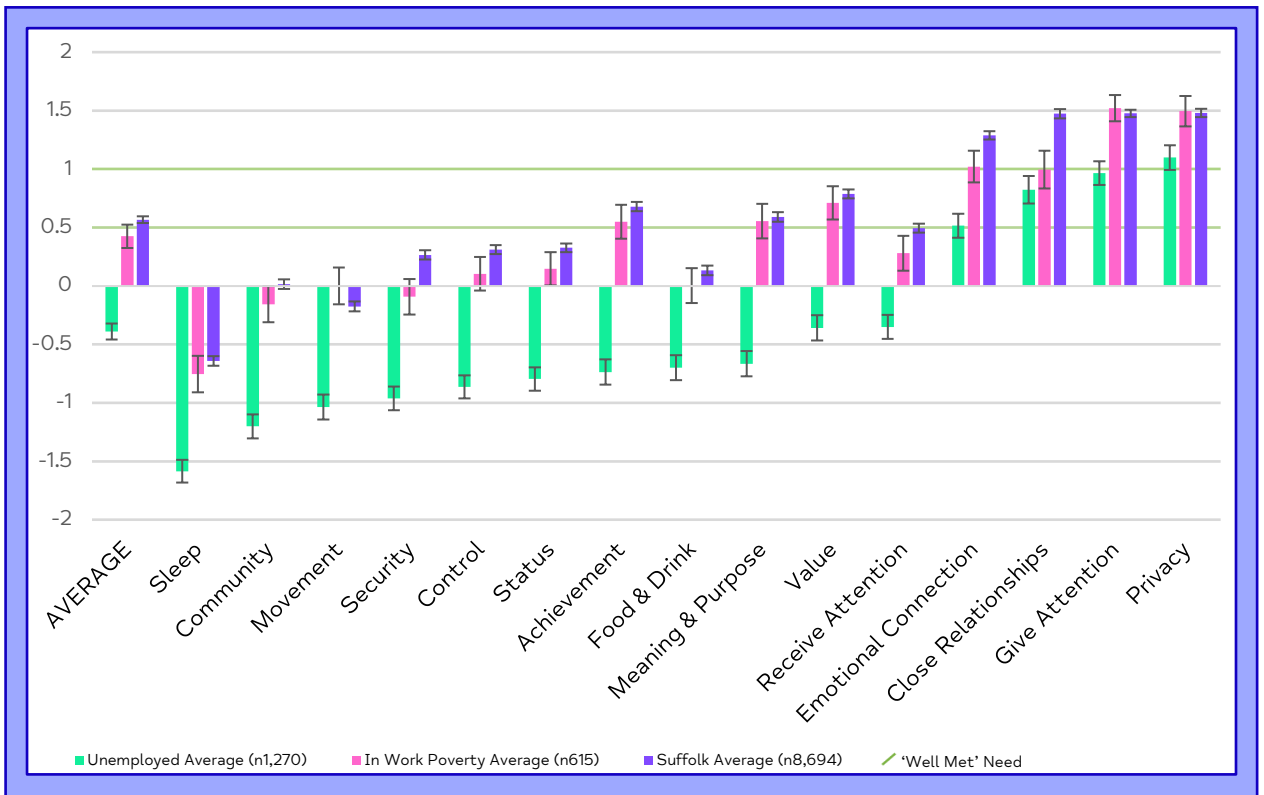
Here we have unemployed respondents' average results from the Emotional Needs Audit. This includes responses from anyone in Suffolk who identified as being unemployed, not employed by choice, or unable to work. The Emotional Needs are once again arranged from least to best met on average from left to right. From this graph, we can also see that the averages land between -2 and 1.5.

As with those facing in-work poverty, we can see that Needs are not well met by unemployed respondents on average. In fact, Needs are generally unmet by unemployed respondents, with an overall average score of -0.39, and only 1 of the 15 Needs is well met overall.

Similarly, just 16.46% of respondents (or 208 out of 1270) are meeting their Needs well overall. Therefore, the number of individuals meeting their Needs well is actually lower amongst unemployed respondents, compared with in-work poverty respondents (218 out of 615), despite the sample size for unemployed respondents being over two times greater.

Therefore, despite this project's focus on groups that are expected to be less well, these results are lower than we expected to see.

## How does this compare to Suffolk's average?



To view this graph on the full scale (-3 to 3), see Appendix 3.

We can make a comparison between the data we have collected on those facing in-work poverty or unemployment with the Suffolk-wide data gathered as part of this research. These results are compared with the Suffolk average, based on data gathered between 13<sup>th</sup> June 2022 and 8<sup>th</sup> March 2023. There were 8,694 responses within that time period for Suffolk as a whole, which we can compare with the 615 responses from those facing in-work poverty and 1,270 responses from those who were unemployed.

Here, we can see that the confidence intervals do not overlap between the in-work poverty and unemployed overall averages and Suffolk-wide overall average. Therefore, we can deduce with 95% confidence that the difference between how well Needs are met overall amongst these groups and the Suffolk-wide average is statistically significant. We can see that, on average, respondents from all over Suffolk are meeting their Needs better overall than those facing in-work poverty or unemployed respondents. While the same number of Needs are well met on average for Suffolk-wide respondents and those facing in-work poverty (4 of 15), the percentage of respondents meeting their Needs well overall is highest amongst the Suffolk-wide ENA data – at 41.12%, compared with 35.45% for in-work poverty and just 16.46% for unemployed respondents.

The Suffolk average is also meeting each Need statistically significantly better than unemployed respondents are on average. Although, the same cannot be said for those facing in-work poverty, as for some Needs – such as Value – the confidence intervals overlap between the Suffolk average and in-work poverty average.

Interestingly, despite the differences, we can still see a similar trend in terms of the least and best met Needs across all data sets – with Sleep being the worst met Need on average, and Giving Attention and Privacy being the best met Needs on average. To analyse the results further, we can separate the Needs into four groups based on similarities in theme.



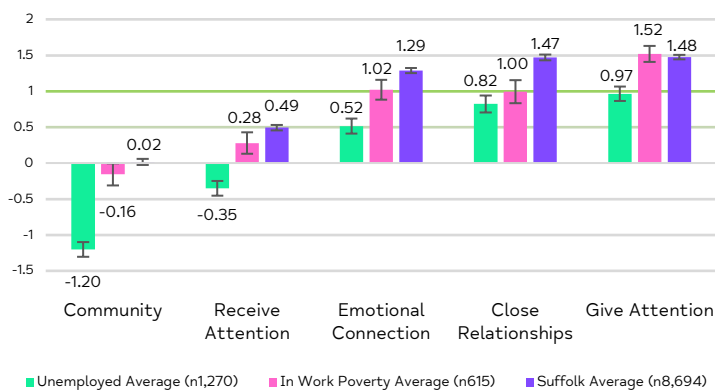
## Interpersonal Relationship Needs

We can see that the Need for a **Close Relationship** is only just well met for those facing in-work poverty on average, with an average score of 1 (out of a scale of -3 to 3), showing that people are feeling emotionally and/or physically accepted for who they are by at least one person in their lives. Those who are unemployed are not meeting this Need well on average, however, with a score of 0.82. **Emotional Connection** is also just about well met by those facing in-work poverty on average, at 1.02, suggesting that respondents are mostly feeling connected in small, intimate groups. Although, once again, this Need is not well met by unemployed respondents on average, with a much lower average score of 0.52.

It's helpful to compare these two Needs to **Community**, as this reflects the difference between feeling connected in smaller groups compared with bigger groups. Community is the least well met emotional Need on average for both groups, falling into the negatives with an average score of -0.16 for those facing in-work poverty and -1.20 for unemployed respondents. This suggests that people aren't feeling well connected in larger, less intimate settings.

The Need for Community has taken a considerable hit in recent years, with Suffolk's average score for Community reaching an all time low during Summer 2022 compared to previous years. Community was, therefore, one of the Needs focused on during action planning.

The best met Need amongst those facing in-work poverty, on average, is **Giving Attention**, with a score of 1.52 making it a well met Need. It's also the second best met Need amongst unemployed respondents, though it is not well met on average with a score of 0.97. For both groups, however, it does score much more highly than **Receiving Attention**, which is among the less well met Needs on average. This shows that people feel they give others more attention than they receive back. We asked those who weren't meeting this Need (i.e. scoring less than 0) to identify any barriers that prevent them from doing so and, across both groups, respondents' top barriers were their physical or mental health and their relationships.



**Community is the lowest met emotional Need**

Aside from Giving Attention and Community, all the interpersonal relationship Needs are statistically significantly less well met by those facing in-work poverty and unemployed respondents than the Suffolk-wide average. Unemployed respondents are meeting all their interpersonal relationship Needs statistically significantly less well than the Suffolk average, and than those facing in-work poverty (aside from Close Relationships for the latter). The Need for Community is particularly less well met by unemployed respondents than those facing in-work poverty or the Suffolk average. One reason for unemployed respondents meeting this Need significantly less well may be due to more financial barriers existing for such individuals, as unemployed respondents have commented that the cost of transport prevents them from getting out in the community. People’s work can also often support them to meet their Need for Community, as is reflected by it being a top supporting factor for the Suffolk average and those facing in-work poverty who are meeting this Need well. Therefore, a lack of work can prevent people from feeling part of a community. This is reflected in the comments we received from unemployed respondents, with those who have lost their jobs also feeling as though they have lost their sense of community.

## Barriers

Respondents who weren’t meeting their Need for Community (scoring below 0) were asked to identify barriers that prevent them from doing so. Of the respondents who chose to identify barriers:

- 81% (n339) of unemployed respondents and 53% (n67) of people facing in-work poverty believed that their physical and/or mental health presented an obstacle
- 33% (n136) of unemployed respondents and 34% (n43) facing in-work poverty reported that their financial situation presented a barrier
- 29% (n121) of unemployed respondents and 46% (n58) facing in-work poverty attributed not meeting this Need to the cost of living

## Supporting factors

Respondents who were meeting their Need for Community very well (scoring 2 or more) were asked to identify factors that support them to do so. Of those who provided information on supporting factors:

- 62% (n29) of unemployed respondents viewed their relationships as enabling them to meet this Need well
- 51% (n24) of unemployed respondents and 57% (n20) facing in-work poverty identified their community involvement as a supporting factor
- 54% (n19) facing in-work poverty believed that their work situation helped them to feel connected

## What helps people's wellbeing?

**“People being kind is one thing... Any outdoor time helps. Spending time with my daughter and granddaughter. Spending time with people outdoors”**

**“ I have a really close friend, we share everything and are completely honest with each other about our mental health”**

**“Receiving love in relationships can support my wellbeing”**

## What are specific barriers to wellbeing?

**“Inequalities in income present a barrier”**

**“Isolation is difficult. Both physical isolation and knowing that you're not part of a group people care about”**

**“Covid 19 prevents me from living my life as I am petrified of catching it. I do not socialise anymore or see all of my friends. I feel my life has been put on hold”**

## What could be done to improve wellbeing?

**“Getting people together to support one another. Walking groups or outdoors groups, where people can support each other's mental health. I think publicising the existence of services better, and asking people where they found out about them”**

**“Free events and outdoor activities - all of the stuff in the forests and big parks”**



## Achievement and Value Needs

Among those facing in-work poverty, we can see that people are feeling some internal achievement about their actions but may not be feeling stretched – as **Achievement** is a less well met Need on average, scoring 0.55 (on a scale of -3 to 3). Achievement is better met amongst Suffolk-wide respondents than those facing in-work poverty on average, although this difference is not statistically significant. The primary barrier identified by respondents who were facing in-work poverty and weren't meeting their Need for Achievement well was their work situations. One respondent told us that working on a low income is stressful, and this may be impacting upon individual's abilities to feel like they're achieving and stretched. Achievement is an unmet Need on average among those who are unemployed, with an average score of -0.74. People living with mental health conditions (n650) or impairments with fluctuating or recurring effects (n363) scored particularly low for Achievement, with their hobbies or interests and their relationships being the top barriers identified among those not meeting this Need well.

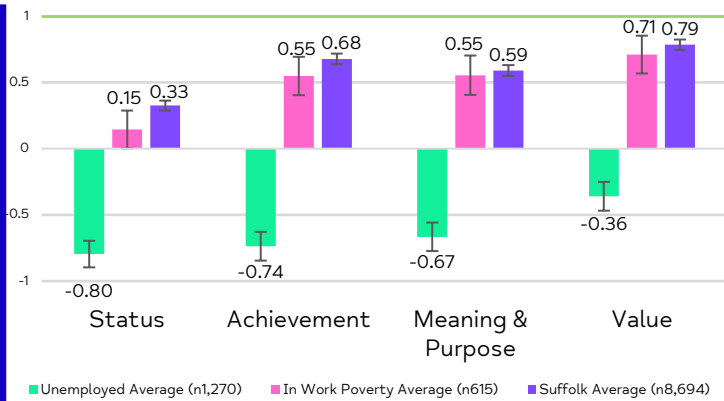
**Meaning & Purpose** is strongly correlated to Achievement within both data sets, meaning that on average we'd expect to see that if Achievement is high for unemployed respondents or those facing in-work poverty, then so is Meaning & Purpose (and vice versa). It's therefore unsurprising that Meaning & Purpose is also less well met on average for those facing in-work poverty, with a score of 0.55, showing that respondents may not always be feeling purposeful about their actions. Meaning & Purpose is statistically significantly worse met by unemployed respondents, compared with both the in-work poverty average and the Suffolk-wide average. With an average score of -0.67 for Meaning & Purpose amongst unemployed respondents, respondents may be struggling to see the purpose in their actions or the meaning of life. Contributing to something bigger than ourselves can help us to meet this Need better, and this is reflected in the results we see amongst Volunteers (n54) within this dataset, who have a much higher average score of 0.13 for Meaning & Purpose.



## Achievement and Value Needs

As with the other Needs, **Value** is also not well met on average, scoring 0.71 for in-work poverty and -0.36 for unemployed respondents. Value indicates how much people feel others appreciate them for their actions and contributions. Therefore, since both groups aren't meeting this Need well, this suggests that individuals may not be feeling as valued for their actions and contributions as they would like. **Status**, on the other hand, tells us how much people feel others appreciate and respect them as a person. Across both groups, Status is significantly less well met than Value – with an average score of 0.15 for in-work poverty and -0.80 for unemployed. This shows that the appreciation and value people may at times feel for their actions doesn't always translate to them feeling valued as a person. This was reflected in comments we received from respondents, which showed that some individuals feel unsupported at work or may not always feel recognised for what they do at work or home.





**Status** is one of the **lowest** met Needs

At first glance, those facing in-work poverty are meeting all of their achievement and value Needs less well than the Suffolk average; although, the differences between these averages aren't statistically significant. On the other hand, people who are unemployed are meeting all these Needs statistically significantly less well than those facing in-work poverty and the Suffolk average. People's work situations, or lack thereof, is the second biggest barrier for unemployed respondents to meet their Need for Status. Based on comments from unemployed respondents, some feel they've been left behind without any financial or emotional support after a mental health diagnosis or once being out of work.

## Barriers

Of the respondents who chose to identify barriers to meeting their Need for Status:

- 72% (n271) of unemployed respondents and 57% (n62) of people facing in-work poverty stated that their physical and/or mental health prevented them from meeting this Need
- 31% (n116) of unemployed respondents and 57% (n62) facing in-work poverty attributed not meeting this Need well to their work situation
- 30% (n113) of unemployed respondents and 44% (n47) facing in-work poverty identified their financial situation as an obstacle

## Supporting factors

Of the respondents who chose to identify supporting factors to meeting their Need for Status:

- 59% (n23) of unemployed respondents and 56% (n23) facing in-work poverty felt supported to meet this Need due to the relationships in their lives
- 44% (n17) of unemployed respondents believed that their day-to-day environment enabled them to meet this Need well
- 56% (n23) facing in-work poverty saw their work situation as a support factor

## What helps people's wellbeing?

**“Even the briefest of check-ins is appreciated”**

**“Self help groups... What is powerful is face to face contact”**

**“When I received mental health help, the people were really good and they tried to help. I have nothing but admiration for those who helped me”**

## What are specific barriers to wellbeing?

**“Pockets of massive deprivation and then significant wealth - it's not addressed and people see it not being addressed. This leads to disempowerment and disenfranchisement. Inequalities in power - e.g. institutional inequalities and housing inequalities”**

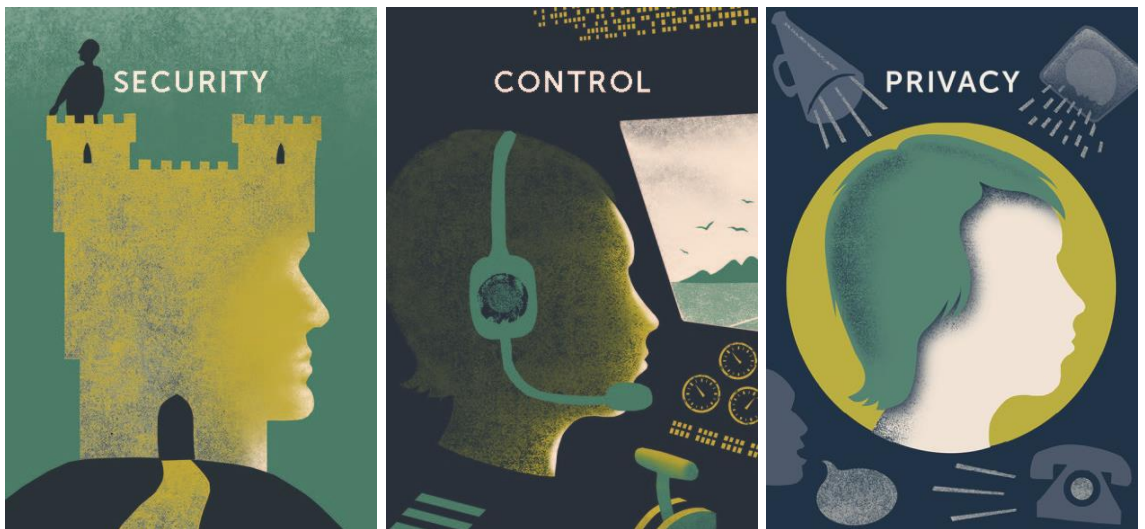
**“I feel like it is extremely difficult to get tailored help and your needs aren't listened to the first time properly”**

**“Not having Specialist Mental Health Service for people with Autism Diagnosis”**

## What would people like to see done to improve wellbeing?

**“More needs to be done to help the people that fade into the background”**

**“Personally I would like better distance support via the internet. Too many people are left behind when they are housebound. We should be keeping a check on people and including them in as many ways as possible”**

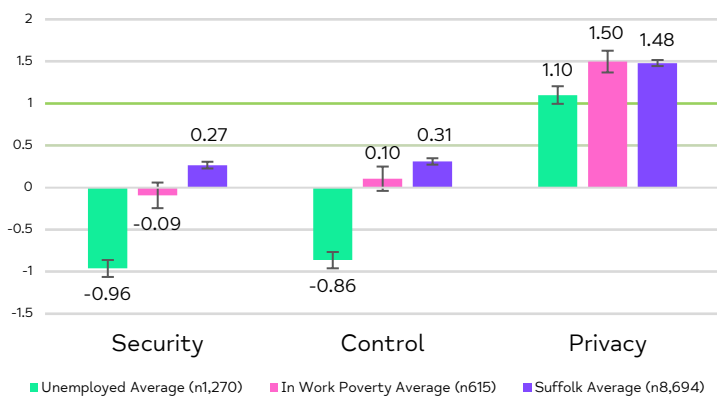


## Security and Control Needs

**Security** is the second least met emotional Need on average for those facing in-work poverty and unemployed people, with a score below 0 for both (on a scale of -3 to 3). While the average score for in-work poverty is statistically significantly lower than the Suffolk average, at -0.09, unemployed respondents' average score falls even lower to -0.96. This shows that individuals within these groups are not always feeling safe and secure in their lives and, due to the statistically significant difference, on average feel less secure than the Suffolk average. The biggest barriers to these groups meeting their Need for Security are their physical or mental health, the cost of living, and individuals' financial situations. When asked if there is anything specific that presents a barrier to having good mental health, case study respondents stated that their finances and money worries were a significant barrier. It's clear from the comments we received too that the cost-of-living crisis is negatively impacting people's mental health, and their ability to feel safe and secure in their lives.

**Control** is another less well met Need on average, being the third least well met emotional Need and having an average score of 0.10 for those facing in-work poverty and -0.86 for unemployed people. This suggests that these respondents do not feel like they have enough control over their lives or their surroundings. These groups also have a statistically significantly lower score than the Suffolk average, which stands at 0.31. As with Security, financial concerns and current economic uncertainty are presenting real barriers to unemployed individuals and those facing in-work poverty meeting their Need for Control. Security and Control were therefore Needs that were focused on during action planning.

On the other hand, **Privacy** is well met by both groups. In fact, it's marginally better met by those facing in-work poverty (1.50) than the Suffolk average (1.48) – although the difference is not statistically significant. Although unemployed respondents score the lowest on Privacy (1.10), being statistically significantly lower than in-work poverty and the Suffolk average, this is the only Need to be well met by unemployed respondents on average. This is positive, since it reflects the fact that respondents feel able to take time to themselves when they need it – with the top supporting factor for both groups being people's home environments.



**Security is the second least met emotional Need**

These Needs are all met significantly less well by unemployed respondents, compared with the Suffolk average or those facing in-work poverty. Those facing in work-poverty are, however, only meeting their Need for Security significantly less well on average than the Suffolk-wide average. Across the Suffolk-wide data, those on the lowest household incomes (under £17,000) are meeting their Needs for Security and Control the least well on average (i.e. compared with those with household incomes of over £17,000 per year). Respondents who identified as being unable to work also scored the lowest on average for Security and Control out of all economic groups, suggesting that one's finances can have a notable impact on their ability to meet these Needs. One case study respondent who was facing in-work poverty told us that money worries present a significant barrier to having good mental health.

## Barriers

Of the respondents who chose to identify barriers to meeting their Need for Security:

- 78% (n332) of unemployed respondents and 58% (n80) of people facing in-work poverty viewed their physical and/or mental health as a barrier
- 50% (n210) of unemployed respondents and 59% (n82) facing in-work poverty believed their financial situations prevent them from meeting this Need well
- 48% (n203) of unemployed respondents and 72% (n100) facing in-work poverty identified the cost-of-living crisis as an obstacle

## Supporting factors

Of the respondents who chose to identify supporting factors to meeting their Need for Security:

- 63% (n34) of unemployed respondents felt their relationships supported them to meet this Need
- 61% (n33) of unemployed respondents and 73% (n24) facing in-work poverty believed their home environments enables them to feel safe and secure
- 44% (n24) of unemployed respondents and 61% (n20) facing in-work poverty viewed their day-to-day environments as a supporting factor

## What helps people's wellbeing?

**"I've always been hugely lucky to have fantastic family support & amazing medical care from NHS"**

**"Very supportive partner and lovely caring neighbours, family and friends"**

**"Relationships, time with people, support structures around me, community"**

## What are specific barriers to wellbeing?

**"If people can't eat well, sleep well, or are worried about money that can be significant barrier"**

**"Being a private tenant is one of the biggest barriers to feeling safe and secure... given the lack of rental properties and social housing"**

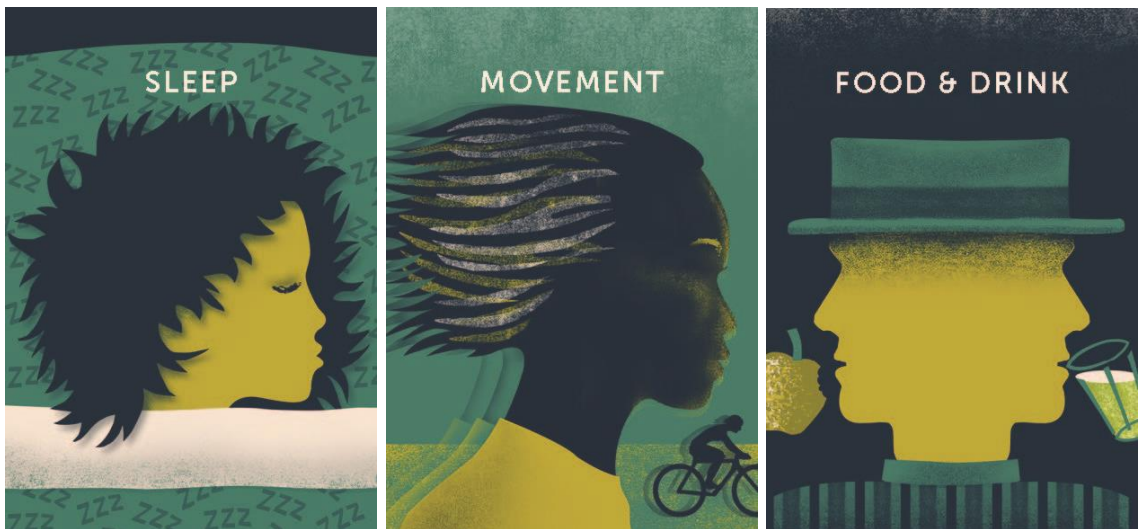
**"Money always presents a barrier especially with increased prices on everything"**

**"Lack of access to secure housing presents a barrier"**

## What would people like to see done to improve wellbeing?

**"More support and help from mental health professionals would be amazing with not just mental health but things that effect it like help with some food or a bit of electricity just to make that stress a little less for a day or so"**

**"Support network for full time workers who struggle with emotional, financial, housing, or social issues"**



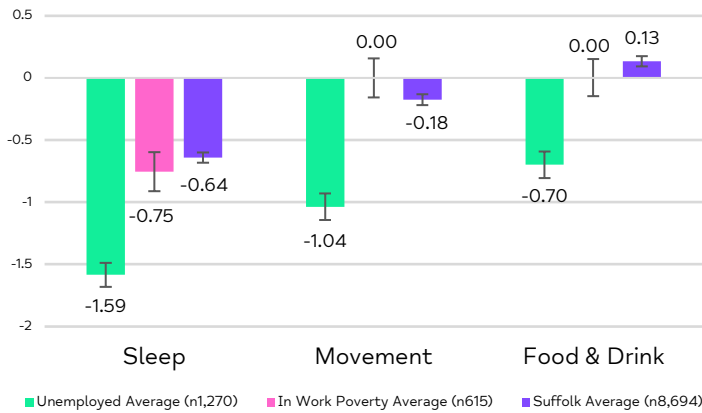
## Physical Needs

As for the physical Needs, it can seem like these aren't as connected to wellbeing as some of our emotional Needs. However, there are many connections between our emotional Needs and physical Needs, and what happens during the waking day can have a significant impact on our physical Needs, even **Sleep**.

We can see that none of the three physical Needs are well met on average among those facing in-work poverty or unemployed respondents, with Sleep being the worst met Need on average for both groups. The average score for Sleep is -0.75 for those facing in-work poverty and -1.59 for unemployed respondents. Although Sleep is less well met by those facing in-work poverty than the Suffolk population on average, this difference is not statistically significant. However, Sleep is significantly less well met by unemployed respondents compared with the Suffolk average. In fact, all the physical Needs are statistically significantly less well met by unemployed respondents compared with the Suffolk average and the in-work poverty average.

Whilst there doesn't always feel like there is a huge amount we can do to improve our sleep, our in-work poverty data shows that there is a strong positive correlation between the Needs for Sleep and Control. Therefore, if we make changes to better meet people's Need for Control, we may see that their Need for Sleep also becomes better met. Sleep can also be a good indicator of when people are starting to move down the mental health continuum, so it is important to keep an eye on.

**Movement** and **Food & Drink** are also unmet Needs on average, with those facing in-work poverty scoring 0 for both Needs on average and unemployed respondents having average scores of -1.04 and -0.70, respectively.



All three **Physical Needs** are **unmet**

The three physical Needs are all unmet Needs amongst those facing in-work poverty and unemployed respondents on average. People’s financial situations and the cost of living are likely impacting upon their ability to meet these Needs well, with these being identified as the top barriers by those not meeting their Needs. Comments from respondents also tell us that people have been struggling to eat well or keep their gym memberships due to rising costs.

## Barriers

Of the respondents who chose to identify barriers:

- 83% (n446) of unemployed respondents viewed their physical and/or mental health as a barrier to Sleep, while 87% (n379) identified this as barrier to Movement and 73% (n261) for Food & Drink
- 52% (n71) of people facing in-work poverty voiced that the cost-of-living crisis was preventing them from meeting their Need for Food & Drink
- 39% (n141) of unemployed respondents and 45% (n62) facing in-work poverty viewed their financial situation as a barrier to their Need for Food & Drink

## Supporting factors

Of the respondents who chose to identify supporting factors:

- 62% (26) of unemployed respondents and 62% (n18) facing in-work poverty viewed their home environment as a supporting factor for Sleep
- 40% (n18) of unemployed respondents and 60% (n24) facing in-work poverty attributed meeting their Need for Food & Drink well to their home environments
- 53% (n34) of unemployed respondents saw their access to nature or the outdoors as a supporting factors for Movement, while 53% (n35) facing in-work poverty viewed their hobbies and interests or their work situation as enabling them to meet this Need

## What helps people's wellbeing?

**“We're really lucky in Suffolk, in that we've got really good access to greenery”**

**“Living near the sea in a peaceful area with some beautiful countryside”**

## What are specific barriers to wellbeing?

**“Paying to park in the forests/when visiting green spaces is frustrating and feels unnecessary”**

**“Not eating so the children can be fed”**

**“Before the pandemic I used to access group exercise classes... The availability of instructor led classes has diminished (compared to prior to the pandemic) particularly on weekday days. Classes are frequently over subscribed which make it difficult for me to get booked in”**

## What would people like to see done to improve wellbeing?

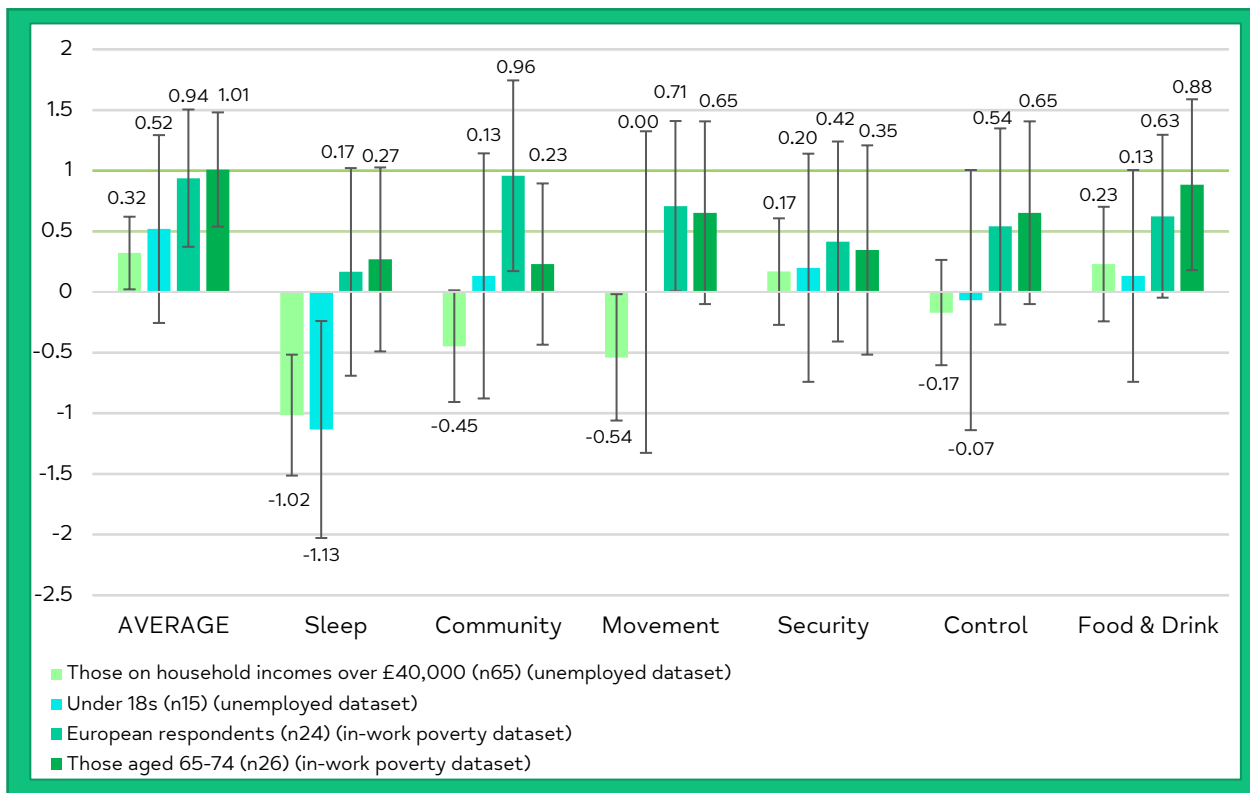
**“Free and easy to access outside spaces would be good, and encouraging people to use them - particularly young people”**

**“Subsidising swimming and other exercise activities, as that really helps. Not everyone can afford good, nutritious food. It's not possible to eat well on a tight budget”**

**“Cooking workshops and educating people to cook cheap, healthy meals from scratch would be good”**



## Who are the most well groups on average?



The graph above focuses on the most well met Needs amongst those facing in-work poverty and unemployed respondents on average. To view the full graph, with each Need shown, see Appendix 4.

Drawing on the demographic information we collect alongside the ENA, we can identify which demographic groups are particularly more or less well than the average. Here, we have the demographic groups with the highest average scores for either the in-work poverty or unemployed dataset.\*

We can see that for in-work poverty respondents, those aged 65 to 74 have the highest overall average score, at 1.01 (on a scale of -3 to 3). This is followed by respondents who identified as European, scoring an average of 0.94. Among unemployed respondents, under 18s are the most well on average, with a score of 0.52. Those with household incomes of over £40,000 are the second most well group, with an average score of 0.32. However, as this demonstrates, three of the four most well groups are not meeting their Needs well overall on average. Out of these most well groups, three of the four are statistically significantly more well than the average. Those aged 65-74 years old and facing in-work poverty are statistically significantly more well than the in-work poverty average, and those aged under 18 or on household incomes over £40,000 are both statistically more well than the unemployed average.

*\*It is worth noting that we have focused on demographic groups with a minimum of 10 respondents per group, to ensure the sample size is as representative as possible. Therefore, there may be some groups that are more or less well on average but that have been excluded from this report's analysis due to having a very small sample size.*

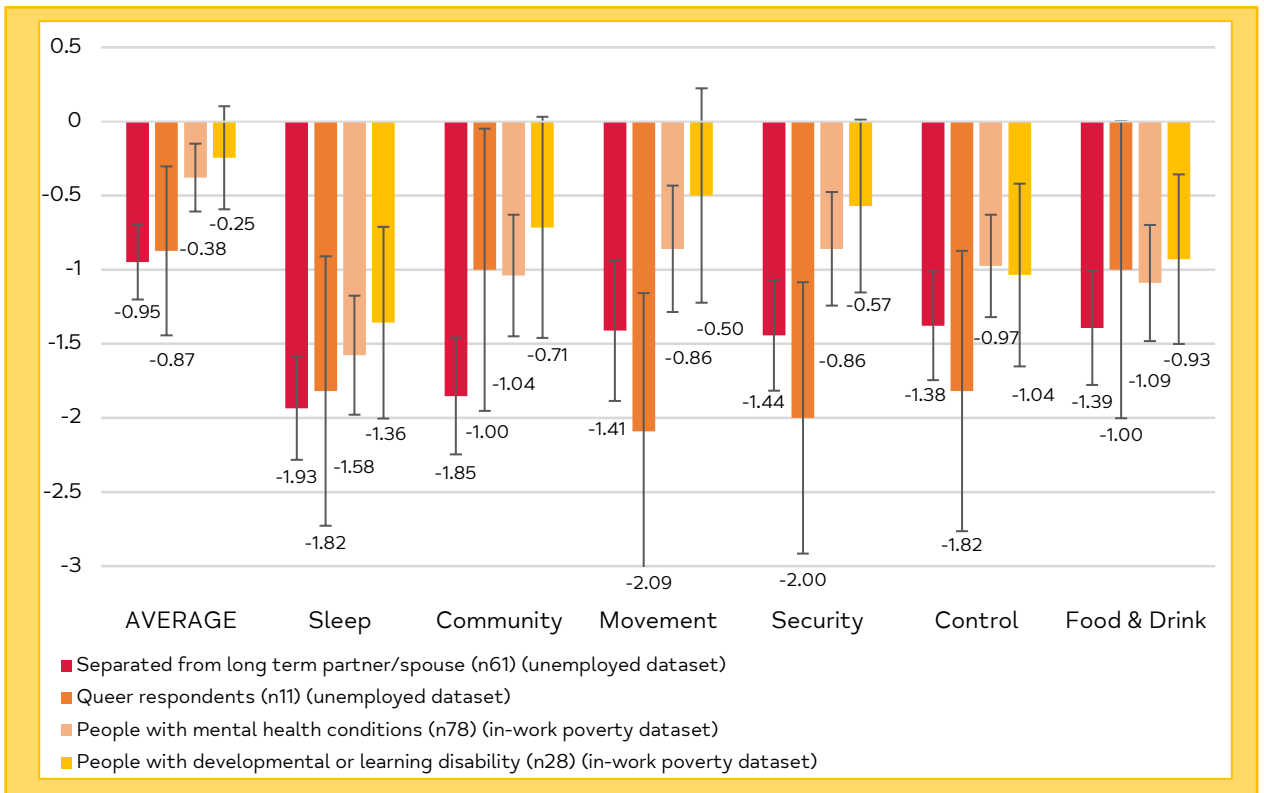
## Who are the most well groups on average?

From the graph on the previous page, we can see that even the most well groups aren't meeting the average least met Needs well. However, some groups are meeting these Needs statistically significantly better than their average counterpart.

Those facing in-work poverty and aged between 65-74, for example, are meeting their Need for Food & Drink significantly better than the in-work poverty average. Similarly, unemployed respondents with a household income over £40,000 per year are meeting their Needs for Security and Control significantly better than the unemployed average. It's clear that people's socio-economic situation affects their ability to meet these Needs well, since, among unemployed respondents who aren't meeting these Needs well, the biggest barriers to Security and Control are individuals' physical or mental health, their financial situations, and the cost of living. Therefore, unemployed individuals living in higher income households are likely to feel more safe and secure financially, and may feel as though their financial situation provides them with a greater degree of control than those who live in lower income households and are not in some form of employment.

Despite unemployed under 18s not meeting their Needs well overall on average (having an overall average score lower than 1), they are meeting their Needs much better than the unemployed average - meeting 5 of the 15 Needs well on average, compared with just 1 out of 15 Needs. Although not all of the Needs are significantly better met by this group, Under 18s are meeting their Need for Security significantly better than the unemployed average. This may be explained, in part, by the fact that this age groups are to still be living with their parents or guardian. Therefore, since they are less likely to be in charge of paying the rent or bills at home, they may feel more secure than those in older age groups as their employment status holds less weight than that of their parents or guardians.

## Who are the least well groups on average?



*The graph above focuses on the least well met Needs amongst those facing in-work poverty and unemployed respondents on average. To view the full graph, with each Need shown, see Appendix 4.*

If we look at the least well groups on average among those facing in-work poverty or unemployment, we can see that unemployed people who have separated from their long term partner or spouse are the least well on average, with an overall score of -0.95 (on a scale of -3 to 3). Of unemployed respondents, individuals who identify as queer are the second least well demographic group on average. Turning to the in-work poverty data, people living with mental health conditions are the least well on average, followed by individuals with development or learning disabilities.

Of these least well groups, three of the four are statistically significantly less well than the average. Unemployed individuals who have separated from their long term partner or spouse are statistically significantly less well than the unemployed average, and people living with mental health conditions or developmental or learning disability are both statistically less well than the in-work poverty average.

Community is significantly less well met by unemployed individuals who have separated from their long term partner or spouse than the unemployed average. Since our relationships can often be a key component to meeting our Need for Community, with it being the second biggest supporting factor identified by Suffolk-wide respondents meeting this Need well, a breakdown of a long-term relationship can destabilise our lives and cause us to lose our sense of community.

## Who are the least well groups on average?

Unemployed respondents who identify as queer are statistically significantly less well than the unemployed average and their average score for Movement is statistically significantly lower than the unemployed average as well. Due to the limited data available for this demographic group, it's not clear why this Need is particularly less well met. However, the biggest barrier to Movement identified by queer respondents was their physical or mental health. Based on a few comments we received from respondents, a few individuals have voiced feeling anxious about whether spaces are queer friendly and this may be preventing some from getting out and about more.

People living with mental health conditions, who are also facing in-work poverty, are meeting their Need for Control significantly less well than the in-work poverty average. One possibility for this may be due to feelings of disenfranchisement or disempowerment, as comments from such respondents tell us that despite trying to get mental health support, people are feeling isolated and unsupported, with their financial situations often being a barrier to accessing the support they need.

Likewise, individuals with developmental or learning disabilities are meeting their Need for Control significantly less well than the in-work poverty average. The reason for this may be similar to why those with mental health conditions feel particularly less in control of their lives and surroundings, as respondents have told us that the lack of services for people with autism, for example, is leaving some without adequate support or treatment available to them. One case study respondent has called for specific services to be set up to support people with autism, to ensure no one feels invisible or left behind.



## What conclusions can we draw from these results?

Our research has revealed that the Needs for Community, Security, and Control, alongside the three physical Needs, are the least well met Needs amongst those facing in-work poverty and unemployed respondents on average. Therefore, targeting local interventions to better meet these Needs could help to improve wellbeing amongst these groups.

When asked what could be done to improve wellbeing, case study respondents had a number of suggestions, including:

- More information about services and events available locally, with these being advertised both online and offline
- Ensuring mental health services are accessible for all and catered to specific needs, such as specialist services for people with autism
- Putting on more free, local events
- Subsidising physical activities available locally

Our data and feedback collected from those facing in-work poverty or unemployment has been fed back to key individuals within Suffolk County Council. Based on our findings, discussions have now begun regarding the types of interventions that could be implemented to improve wellbeing for those who face in-work poverty or unemployment in Suffolk.

# Appendix 1

## Purpose of Report

Suffolk Mind and Suffolk County Council have embarked on an ambitious project to gain more insight into the mental health of Suffolk's population. The insight gained will be used to guide decision-making by Suffolk County Council on the interventions needed to improve public mental health. This research was conducted using our validated mental health measure, the Emotional Needs Audit (ENA), which has been distributed widely online, on foot by trained data collectors, and by mail drop to Suffolk residents' homes.

As well as analysing Suffolk-wide wellbeing, this research has paid particular attention to groups and locations in Suffolk that have worse mental health outcomes, according to pre-existing data gathered by Suffolk County Council and Suffolk Mind. This report focuses on the average wellbeing of those who are facing in-work poverty or unemployed, based on data gathered from 13<sup>th</sup> June 2022 to 8<sup>th</sup> March 2023. Throughout this report, those facing in-work poverty includes any Suffolk respondents who identified that they are in full-time or part-time work, self-employed, or on a zero-hour contract *and* had a household income of less than £17,000. Those who are deemed as unemployed includes Suffolk respondents who identified as being unemployed, not employed by choice, or unable to work.

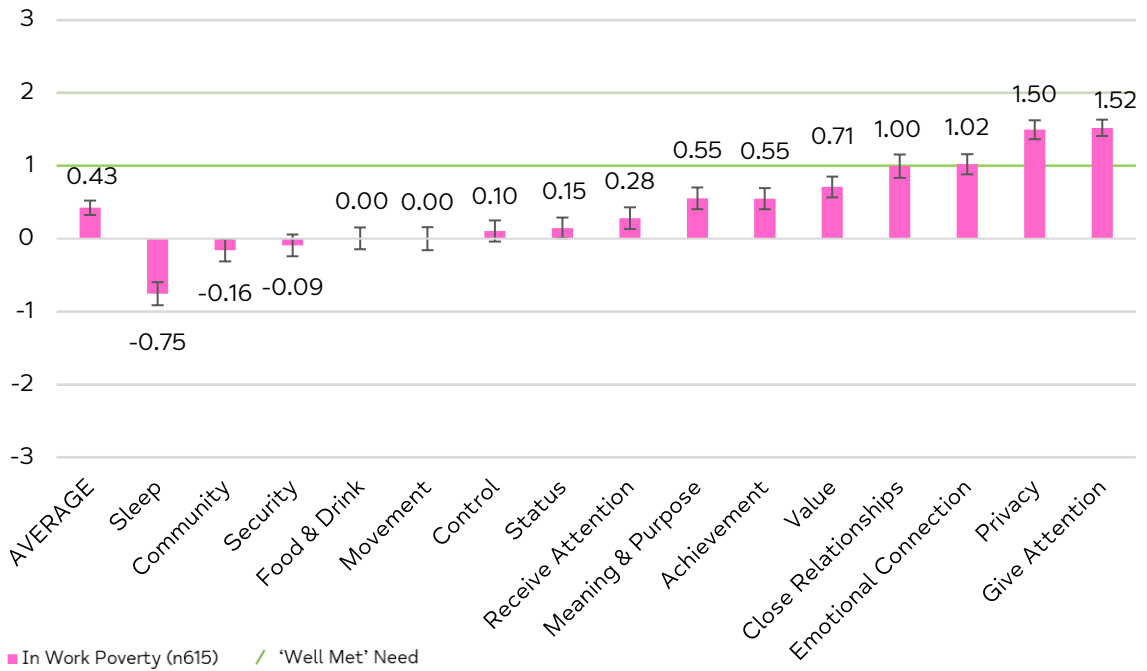
## Methodology

This research is based on the Emotional Needs and Resources approach, which outlines the 12 innate Emotional Needs that we must meet, in balance, in order to be mentally well. This approach can be used to provide a useful direction to help improve mental wellbeing, allowing us to identify when a specific Need is not met and enabling us to make changes to meet that Need and improve wellbeing. This idea applies to individuals, but also to groups of people, including samples of the population. Looking at which Needs are generally unmet in a sample population can help identify areas to work on to make Suffolk a healthier and happier place to live. If you'd like more explanation on each of the Emotional Needs, see the Suffolk Mind website.

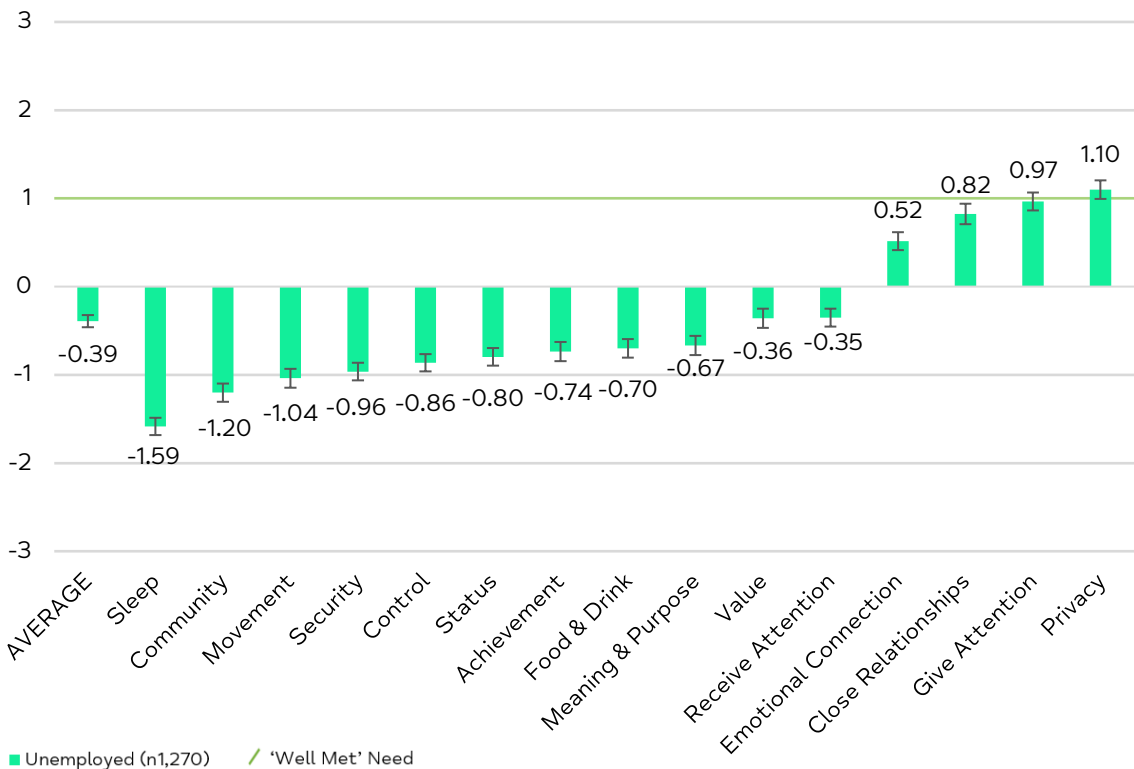
In the ENA, we ask 15 questions that encompass all elements of the 12 Needs, containing both emotional and physical aspects. These are scored on a scale from -3 (not at all met) to +3 (very well met). We also ask respondents to identify any environmental barriers that may prevent them from meeting their Needs, as well as any factors that support them to meet Needs well. We also collected data on demographic factors, such as age and gender identity, to determine how these factors affect wellbeing. Respondents were given the opportunity to participate in case studies to support this research and allow us to gain a deeper understanding of factors that may prevent or enable individuals to meet their Needs.

## Appendix 2 – Overall Wellbeing Graphs

Average wellbeing amongst those facing in-work poverty:

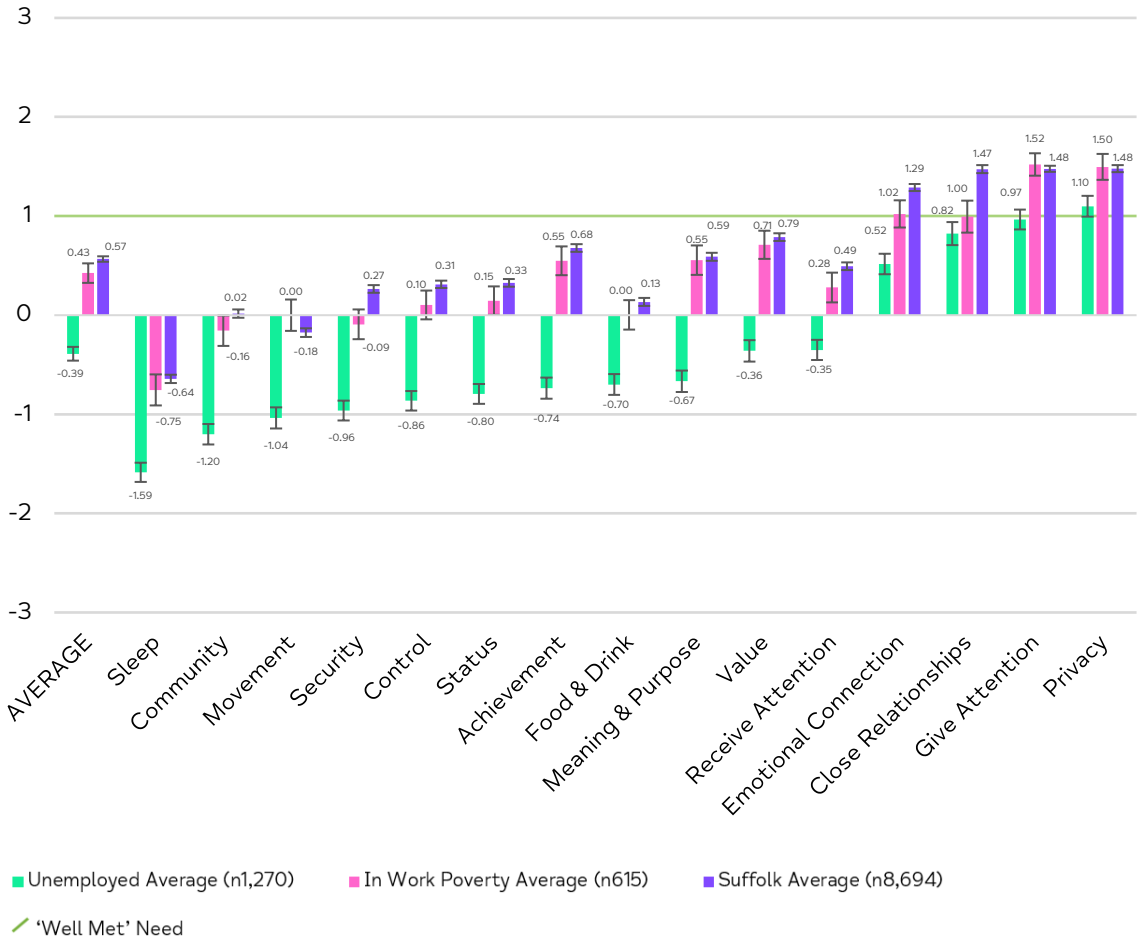


Average wellbeing amongst those who are unemployed:



# Appendix 3 – Suffolk Comparison Graph

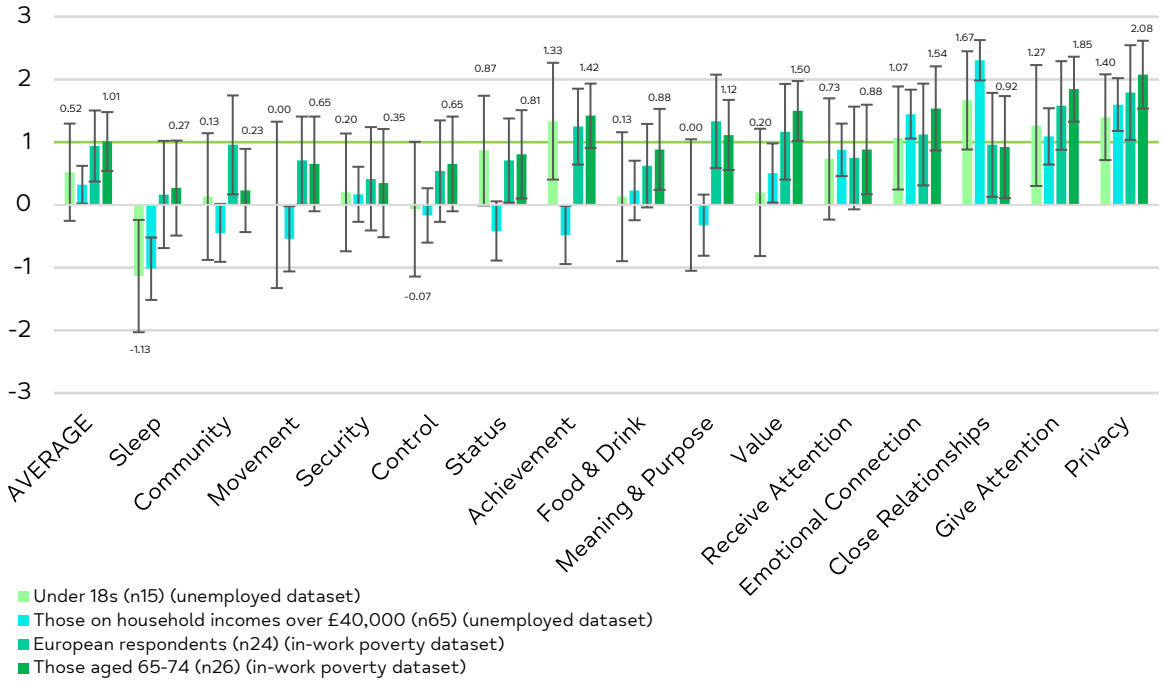
Average wellbeing compared with the Suffolk average:



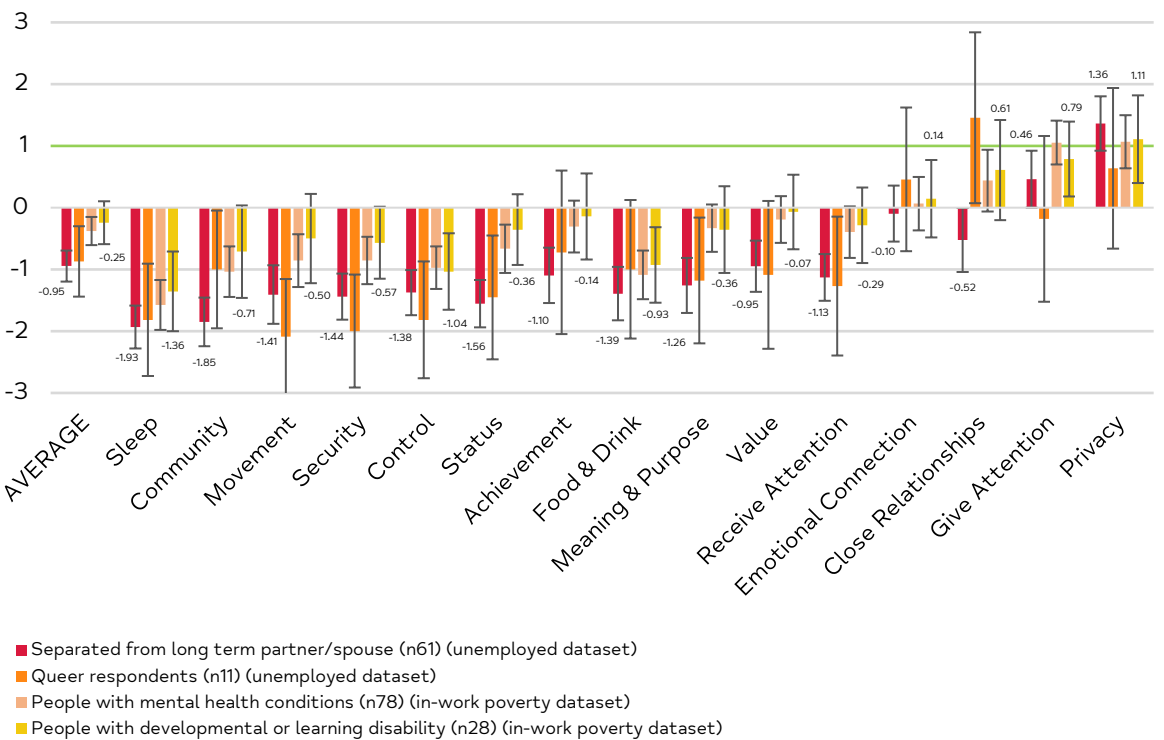


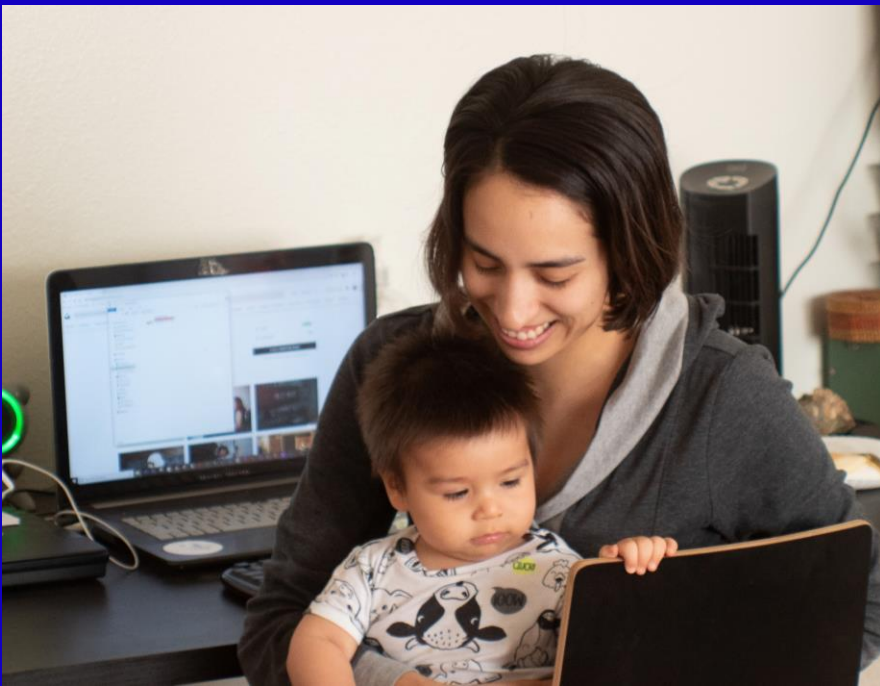
# Appendix 4 – Most & Least Well Graphs

The most well groups on average:



The least well groups on average:





 mind Suffolk

 **Suffolk**  
County Council