

**'We have beautiful surroundings, green spaces to exercise, ride bikes, walk. The area has improved dramatically over the last 10 years and continues to do so.'**

**We found that**

**We value socialising as it strengthens relationships**

- Data shows mental wellbeing is improving in the area but still below the Wales average.
- Meeting with people helps reduce isolation and supports better mental health.
- There are lots of activities in the area that bring together people from all ages and backgrounds.
- Libraries are places that can support well-being: a place for people of all ages to meet, socialise and learn. "The library is one of my happy places."
- RCT are developing a 'human library' to bring people together from different backgrounds to get to know each other and share their life story.

**We found that**

**Being able to join in leisure and entertainment activities is important to us**

- Good transport links are needed for people to be able to socialise and use arts and leisure spaces.
- Safe and affordable leisure opportunities are important.
- There are many local sports teams and athletic clubs for people of all ages to be active.
- Local buildings such as Maesteg Town Hall and Pontypridd Municipal Arts Centre are being refurbished to improve access to community arts for everyone.

**We found that**

**The best things about living in the area are our communities and the natural environment**

- Communities are an important part of the cultural wellbeing creating a sense of belonging and reducing isolation.
- Music is important to us. There's lots of singing groups, music traditions and dance. Male voice choirs continue to thrive in the area.
- Music and arts programmes support young people's emotional and mental wellbeing. Those taking part they have shown an improvement in their wellbeing.
- We have a range of museums and heritage sites which show our industrial and cultural past.
- Our past shapes the landscape, coast and communities we live in and enjoy – the natural environment, green spaces and blue flag beaches.
- Volunteering makes a big difference to help each other and was especially important during Covid.
- 'Throughout Covid, and the storms before then, communities pulled together and looked out for each other.'

**We found that**

**Identity and language is important to us**

- The number of people in the area able to speak Welsh is increasing.
- The promotion of the Welsh language is important to us and we want our children to learn more Welsh language and history in school.
- RCT will be hosting the National Eisteddfod in 2024. This will be a chance to celebrate our Welsh language and culture.
- Welsh classes and coffee mornings are available in the local libraries for Welsh speakers and learners.
- There are lots of other languages spoken in our communities, such as Polish, Portuguese and Czech.