

Accessing services and leisure activities in Hartlepool is a major challenge and barrier for people living in poverty. Many feel excluded due to the high costs of activities, transport, and participation. Basic services, like healthcare, are also hard to access, with long waiting lists for doctors and delaying treatment for those with ongoing health issues.

Navigating online services is difficult for those with limited digital skills or internet access, further delaying support. Additionally, underfunded local services result in stretched resources and limited availability.

Some young people have expressed that youth services are poorly promoted, leaving many young people unaware of available opportunities.

Mental health services, especially out-of-hours care, are hard to reach, leaving individuals unsupported during crises. Together, these barriers create a sense of isolation and limit opportunities for improving quality of life.

Some other leisure costs to consider and give context include (but not exhaustive):

- **Vue Cinema – you can pay online from £7.99 and in the cinema from £8.99**
- **Jump 360 – need to buy socks @£2.50 (can be used again) and off-peak ticket for 60 mins is £12**

Here's an example of the costs associated with activities like dancing, tumbling, and gymnastics in Hartlepool: For those participating in these activities, the cost of a single session is typically £4. However, many participants attend multiple sessions per week, and weekly costs can reach around £16 for regular classes or £23 if they are involved in competitions.

Outfits can be a significant expense, ranging from £50 to £80 for second-hand gear, while new outfits may cost £200 or more. Appropriate shoes, even when purchased second-hand, can cost £40. Additional accessories, like those needed for specific outfits, can add £20 or more per outfit.

Families also face extra costs for registering in competitions, including travel, hotel stays, and tickets for family members to watch the events. During school holidays, 'Tumble camps' are offered, which can cost £40 per week.

These cumulative costs make participating in such activities financially challenging for families living in poverty.

Adults – access to mental health support on weekends was highlighted.

-access to doctors was mentioned as a problem, plus waiting times.

-GP survey in 2023 recorded only 13% of respondents indicated a positive experience in relation to their ability to book appointments via telephone.

-On-line consultations and e-consult forms are of particular concern to those who are digitally excluded.

-Removal of some services from GP's -eg ears being syringed at local pharmacies and costs associated with this £35 one ear, £60 for both ears.

Cost of Leisure Activities

People living in Poverty feel excluded from many leisure activities due to high costs, including fees for entry, transport, and participation, making it difficult to engage in recreational and social opportunities.

Limited Youth Services and Promotion:

Youth services are underutilised because they are not well-promoted. As a result, young people in poverty may miss out on important opportunities for development, social engagement, and support.

Difficulty Navigating Online Services:

Many essential services are increasingly moving online, but people living in poverty often struggle with digital skills or lack access to the internet, making it hard for them to navigate and apply for services.

Long Waiting Lists for Healthcare:

Access to healthcare is limited by long waiting times for GP appointments and specialist services, causing delays in diagnosis and treatment, especially for those with chronic health conditions.



Underfunded Services:

Many local services, such as healthcare, community support, and public amenities, are underfunded and overburdened. This leads to reduced availability and longer waits for support, impacting the quality of life for those who rely on these services the most.

Barriers to Mental Health Support:

Mental health services are difficult to access, especially out-of-hours. Those experiencing mental health crises often face long delays or find that help is only available during standard working hours, leaving many without support when they need it most.

Social Isolation:

Due to the barriers in accessing services and activities, many people in poverty feel socially isolated. The lack of affordable, accessible services compounds feelings of exclusion from their community.

Transport and Accessibility Issues:

Public transport options are often limited or costly, making it harder for people in poverty to reach services, healthcare appointments, and leisure activities, further worsening social isolation and exclusion.

HARTLEPOOL



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Affordable Leisure Activities for All:

Everyone in Hartlepool, regardless of income, would have access to affordable leisure activities. Costs should no longer be a barrier to participating in recreational and social opportunities.

Accessible and Promoted Youth Services:

Youth services would be well-promoted and accessible to all young people in Hartlepool. We need to ensure that young people and their families are aware of and engaged in the wide range of activities and support services available.

Easy-to-Navigate Services:

Services should be user-friendly and accessible both online and in-person. Clear communication and support could help people, especially those with limited digital skills, to access the help they need quickly and efficiently.

Timely Access to Healthcare:

Healthcare services could be accessible to all, like GP appointments and specialist care. This could improve health outcomes in the town and reduce overall health inequalities.

Well-Funded and Responsive Services:

All essential services, including healthcare, mental health, and community support, should be properly funded and well-resourced. This would ensure that services are readily available, responsive, and able to meet the needs of the community.

24/7 Mental Health Support:

Mental health services should be available 24/7, providing accessible and immediate support to individuals in need. Out-of-hours care would ensure that no one is left without help during a crisis..

Social Inclusion and Community Engagement:

Hartlepool could be a place where everyone, regardless of income, feels included and connected to their community. Affordable and accessible services and activities would foster social engagement and reduce isolation.

Affordable and Reliable Transport:

Public transport should be affordable and reliable, allowing people to easily access services, healthcare, and leisure activities without being limited by cost or availability. This would enhance mobility and improve access to essential services for all.

