

The Living Self-Care Survey 2024

Top 5 messages for Self-Care Week

The Self-Care Forum & Imperial College London Self-Care Academic Research Unit (SCARU) collaborated on major research to study people's perspectives on self-care. The 'Living Self-Care Survey' collected data from 3,255 UK residents including 227 health & care professionals. A preprint of the research paper will be available soon. Here are the top 5 messages.

Most people self-care when they have symptoms



People are already self-caring.

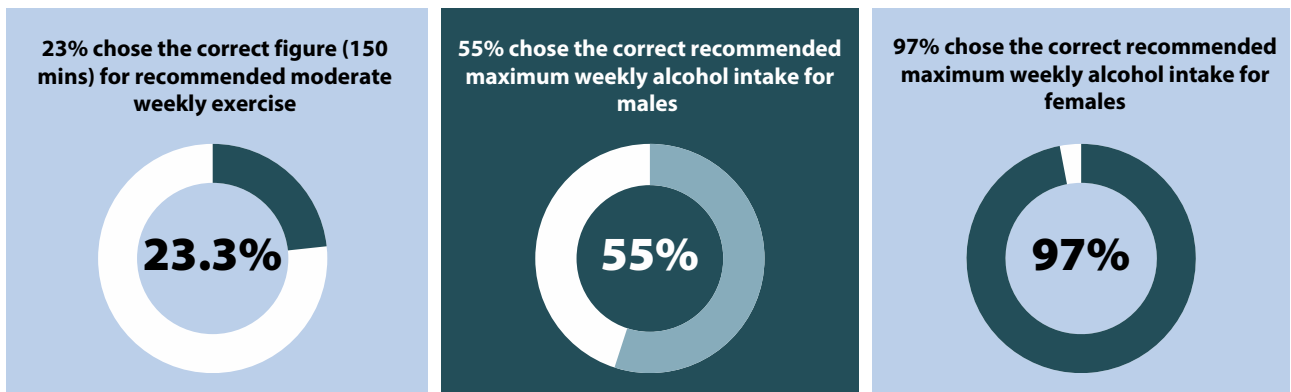
Most people are confident in their ability to self-care, but some did not feel supported by their health & care professional to do so

Professionals said the main barriers are patients' willingness to engage and take responsibility

But people are already self-caring and many say they want more responsibility

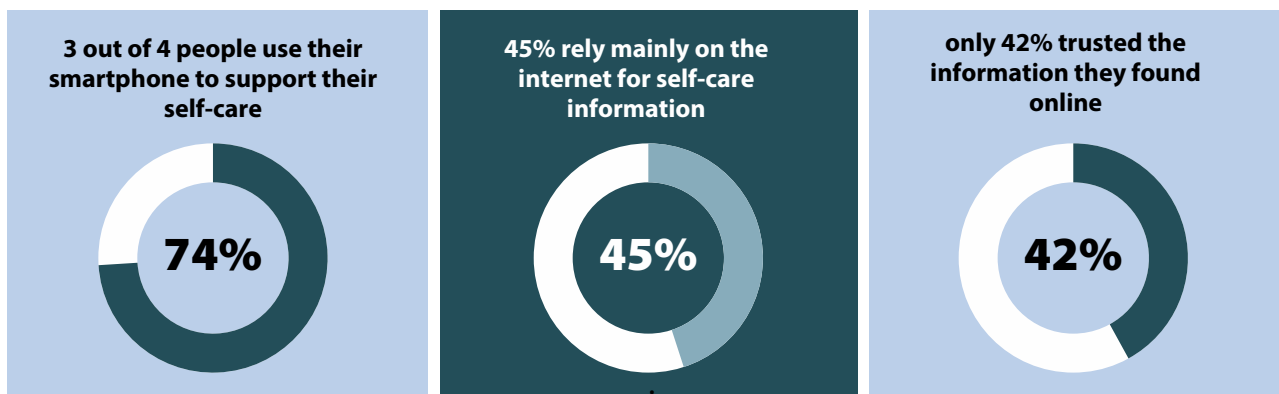
People have different ideas about what self-care is. We need a common language to talk to each other.

Most people could not remember basic NHS advice - including health and care professionals



Consistent good, understandable health information should be shared regularly throughout life starting from school age.

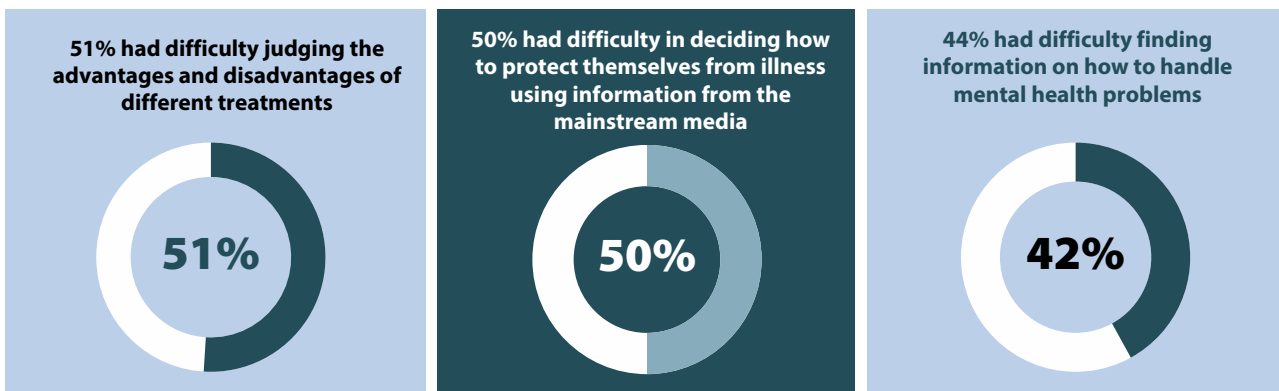
People use technology to support their self-care journey, but many are unsure about the quality of the information they find online.



There is a need for consistent, trustworthy advice, quality assured and easily sourced.

The main barriers to self-care are the availability of good information, understanding of self-care and health literacy

We used the validated HLS19-Q12 tool to measure the health literacy of respondents. Although confidence and knowledge of self-care was reported as strong, the UK had some of the lowest scores when compared to 17 other countries!



The full health literacy table is available on the Self-Care Forum website.



There is a need for consistent, trustworthy advice, quality assured and easily sourced. The PIF Tick is a guarantee of good quality, readable advice. The NHS and every organisation involved with self-care should apply for it to make sure their information gives people what they need.

“There have been many attempts to gain an understanding of what UK residents feel self-care is about. We now present the early high-level findings of national research study that seeks to capture the UK voice regarding their perception of self-care, the barriers and their behaviours, to be published soon in a scholarly journal. We intend to collect follow-up data via the Living Self-Care Survey every 2-3 years to get an understanding of how people’s perspectives on self-care is changing over time as the international self-care movement continues to grow”.

Dr Pete Smith OBE, Lead author & President of The Self-Care Forum UK