

# UNDERSTANDING LOCAL PERSPECTIVES

SOUTH STANLEY ONLINE SURVEY: PHASE 1



UK Research  
and Innovation



Northumbria  
University  
NEWCASTLE

This report presents the findings of a resident survey undertaken in South Stanley between December 2023 and January 2024. The survey was developed by Northumbria University in partnership with the Wear Rivers Trust as part of ongoing research into community resilience, local lived experience, and sustainable approaches to neighbourhood development.

The purpose of the survey was to gather the views of residents on issues affecting their local area, including community priorities, use of local spaces, and concerns such as flooding and environmental management. By capturing the perspectives of residents, the research aimed to inform both local policy discussions and practical community initiatives.

In total, 140 residents participated in the survey. Respondents met eligibility criteria of being aged 18 or over and living within the South Stanley area (DH9 6XX; DH9 7XX). Responses were collected confidentially, and participation was voluntary.

This report summarises the key insights, identifies common themes raised by residents, and offers recommendations for strengthening community resilience and supporting sustainable development in South Stanley.

# Survey Method

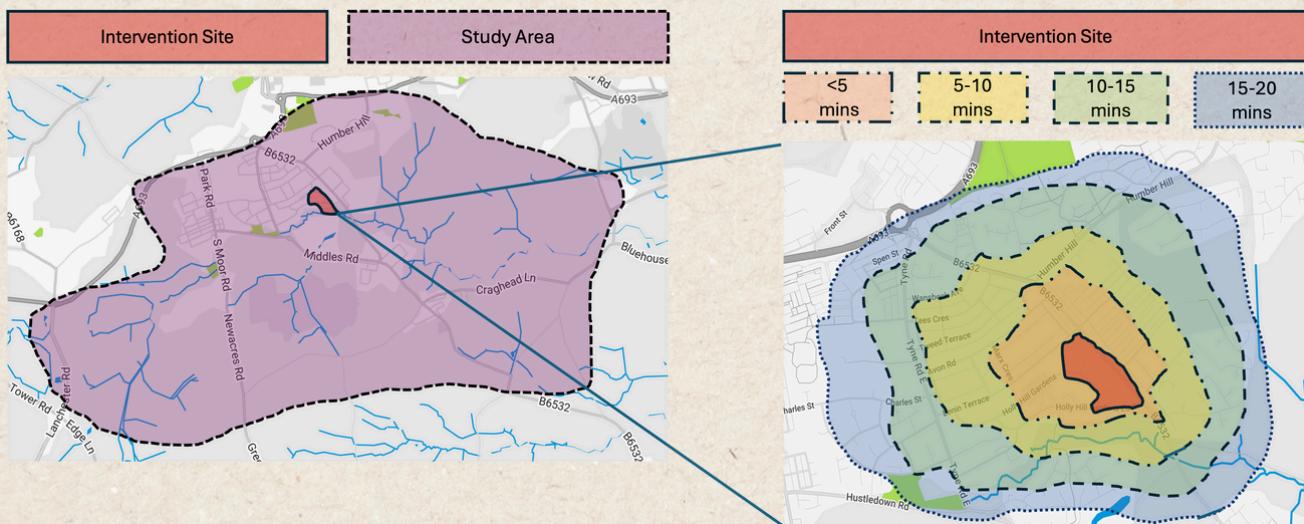
A resident survey was carried out in Lenin Terrace, Stanley to gather views on flooding, environmental responsibility, and use of local green space. The survey focused on a flood-prone area where new measures such as bunds (raised earth banks) and meadow planting are being introduced to reduce flood risk.

The survey contained 18 questions, with a mix of multiple-choice and open text. These asked about:

- Demographic details (such as age and length of residence)
- Distance from the flood-prone site
- Experiences of flooding and awareness of local risks
- Attitudes to looking after the local environment
- Connection to nearby green space
- Interest in volunteering for community activities

Leaflets were delivered to 150 nearby households, and the survey was also shared through the Wear Rivers Trust's local Facebook group. Only residents living within the specified postcodes could take part. The survey was hosted online using Jisc Online Surveys, which meets UK data privacy standards.

In total, 140 valid responses were received after removing incomplete or duplicate entries. Each participant was given a £10 voucher as a thank you for their time.



**Figure 1:** Left: Lenin Terrace (red) within the wider Stanley South study area (purple). Right: Close-up of Lenin Terrace showing walking distances from the site. These layers give a general idea of how close households and survey participants live to the site.

# Demographics

**Table 1:** Demographic's of resident survey respondents (N = 140).

| Age           | Gender            | Occupation            | Years in Area     | Proximity to Site |
|---------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 18-24:<br>17% | Male:<br>56%      | Full Time:<br>59%     | 1-2 yrs:<br>1%    | <5 min:<br>39%    |
| 25-34:<br>61% | Female:<br>42%    | Part Time:<br>16%     | 3-5 yrs:<br>14%   | 5-10 min:<br>39%  |
| 35-44:<br>17% | Non-binary:<br>1% | Self-Employed:<br>14% | 6-10 yrs:<br>23%  | 10-15 min:<br>16% |
| 45-54:<br>4%  | PNTS:<br>1%       | Education:<br>3%      | 11-15 yrs:<br>17% | 15-20 min:<br>6%  |
| 55-64:<br>1%  |                   | Unemployed:<br>5%     | 16-24 yrs:<br>14% |                   |
|               |                   | Retired:<br>3%        | 35+ yrs:<br>31%   |                   |

Survey respondents were predominantly younger adults, with over three-quarters aged under 35. The survey was hosted online which may have reduced participation among groups less comfortable with digital formats. Men were slightly more represented than women in the survey, and a small number of non-binary residents also took part and respondents were mostly in employment (full-time, part-time, or self-employed).

Despite the younger age profile, the survey also captured a good balance of long-term residents, with nearly one-third living locally for over 25 years, as well as people living very close to the site. This helps ensure that the findings reflect the views of those most directly affected by local changes.

# Why do Residents Use the Space?

## Everyday Uses of Lenin Terrace:



Walking  
**93 Responses**



Daily Activities  
**55 Responses**



Nature Appreciation  
**38 Responses**



Dog Walking  
**29 Responses**



Exercising  
**22 Responses**



Social Activities  
**15 Responses**



Leisure/Enjoyment  
**15 Responses**

## How often Residents Visit the Space:

**41% Daily**

Many residents visit Lenin Terrace as part of their daily routines, like walking to the bus, going shopping, or passing through on the way to other places. These regular visits mean they quickly notice issues such as litter, flooding, or overgrown plants.

**48% Weekly**

People with structured routines, like those who work or study, tend to use the space most often. In contrast, residents with more flexible schedules, such as retirees, visit less frequently. This shows that how often people use the space affects how connected they feel and how much they care for it.

**11% Less than once a year**

## This indicates that:

### Emotional Wellbeing

The space contributes positively to residents' wellbeing and quality of life.

### Place Attachment:

Regular use and familiarity strengthen feelings of pride and belonging.

### Design Value:

Maintaining comfort and accessibility sustains community benefit.

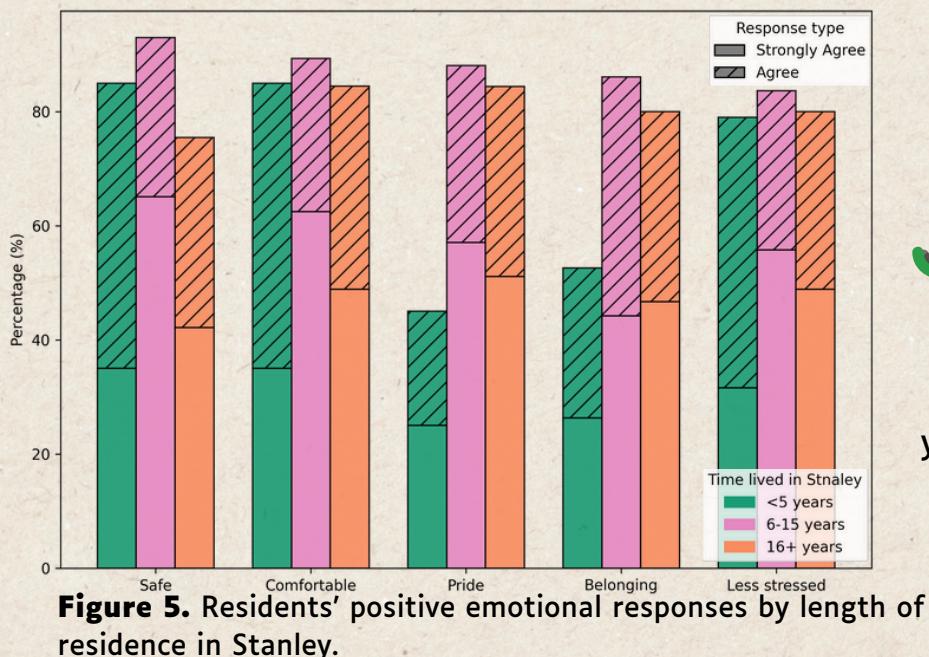
# Spending Time in the Space – How Residents Feel

Most residents reported positive emotional experiences when spending time in Lenin Terrace. Feelings of comfort and safety were most common, while many also associated the space with pride, belonging, and reduced stress. These responses highlight the site's role as a practical and emotional asset for the community.



Safe: **82%** Comfortable: **85%** Pride: **76%** Belonging: **74%** Less stressed: **80%**

Perceptions of safety, comfort, and calm were consistent across all groups, but feelings of pride and belonging were stronger among longer-term residents (6+ years) and those visiting more frequently.



**90%**

of residents living in Stanley for over 16 years reported pride and belonging, compared with less than half of newer residents.

This indicates that:

## Emotional Wellbeing

The space contributes positively to residents' wellbeing and quality of life.

## Place Attachment:

Regular use and familiarity strengthen feelings of pride and belonging.

## Design Value:

Maintaining comfort and accessibility sustains community benefit.

# How Residents See the Space

**Respondents thought it was a good place for people to ...**



Gather  
**86% Agreement**



Socialise  
**84% Agreement**



Take part in events  
**79% Agreement**

Survey results show that residents see Lenin Terrace as an important place for gathering, socialising, and community activities. However, many felt it doesn't reflect local culture or identity, describing it as "bland" or "lacking character."

People who have lived nearby for many years often associate the space with memories, routine activity, and health-related use, while others linked disengagement to flooding and limited opportunities for use.

**When asked if this space reflected the culture and community it Stanley residents said:**

*"I loved playing there as a kid but it's a bland wasted piece of land now, I never see kids play there anymore"*  
(Respondent 3)



*"This is a space to be preserved as much as possible"* (Respondent 138)



**This indicates that:**

## **Social Value:**

The site remains a recognised social space for the community.

## **Engagement Barriers:**

Flooding and maintenance issues reduce community use and interaction.

## **Cultural Identity:**

Future design could integrate local expression to strengthen belonging.

# Local Flooding Awareness

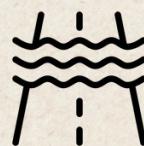
Residents were asked to indicate how strongly they agreed that flooding had affected their property or surroundings in the past. Agreement was highest for:



Driveways: **97%**



Gardens: **96%**

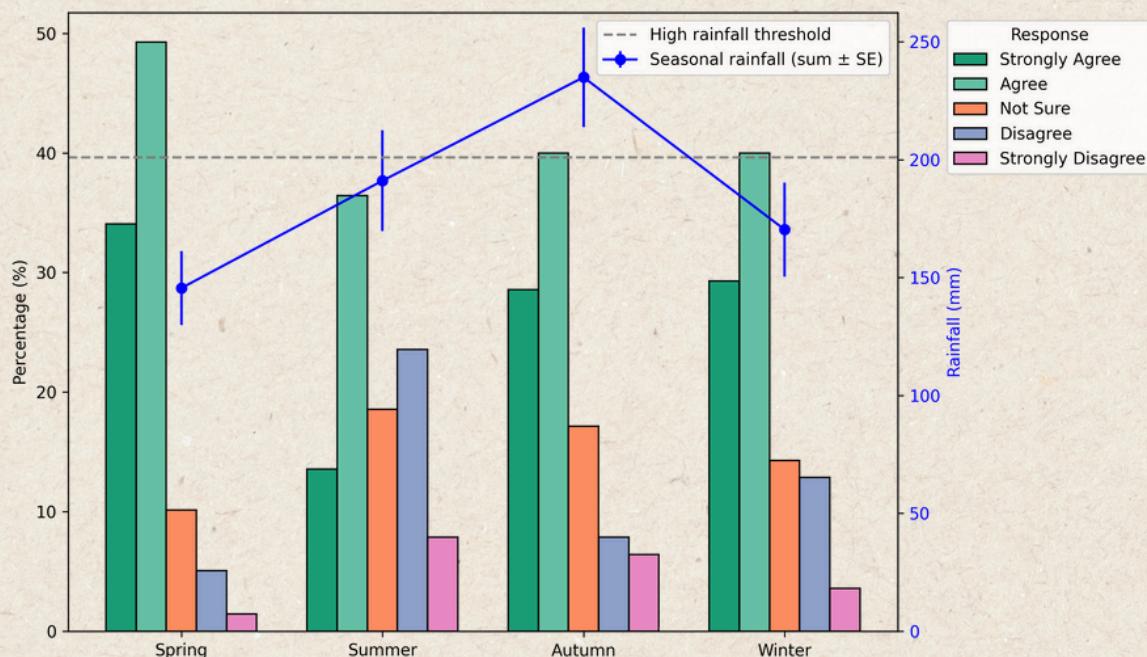


Roads & paths: **95%+**



Inside homes: **48%**

Alongside these observations, rainfall perception data shows that residents have an accurate understanding of seasonal patterns. Autumn was correctly identified as the wettest season, while rainfall in Spring and Winter was slightly overestimated, and perceptions of Summer rainfall were more varied.



**Figure 3.** Residents' perceptions of seasonal rainfall compared with measured rainfall (2013–2024).

This indicates that:

## High Awareness:

Residents are highly attuned to local flooding issues.

## Accurate Perception:

Seasonal rainfall perceptions largely align with measured data.

## Planning Insight:

Combining local knowledge with monitoring can guide maintenance and infrastructure decisions.

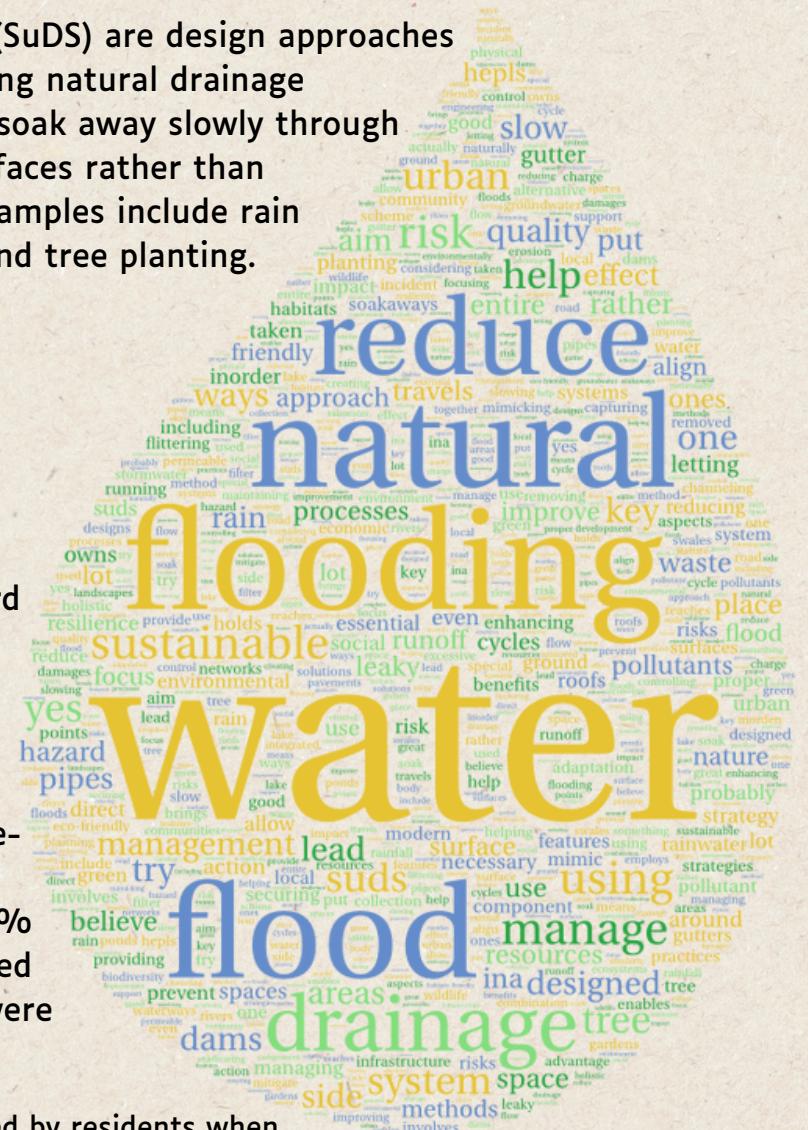
# **Understanding Sustainable Drainage**

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) are design approaches that manage rainfall by imitating natural drainage processes – allowing water to soak away slowly through soil, plants, and permeable surfaces rather than running directly into drains. Examples include rain gardens, green roofs, swales, and tree planting.

**41%**

of residents said they had heard of SuDS before.

Residents were asked which types of measures can help reduce flooding. Overall, nature-based solutions (trees, plants, flowers) were supported by 84% of respondents, while engineered solutions (sandbags, cement) were supported by 66%.



**Figure 4.** Most frequent words used by residents when describing Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS).

## This indicates that:

### **Low Formal Awareness:**

Most residents are not familiar with the term or formal concept of SuDS.

## **Strong Intuitive Support:**

Despite this, residents see nature-based solutions (trees, plants, flowers) as most effective for reducing flooding.

## Practical Alignment:

Community perceptions naturally align with sustainable, nature-positive flood management approaches.

# **Key Takeaways**

**1**

## **Community Awareness & Observation**

- Residents are aware of flooding and environmental issues in public and semi-private spaces.
- Frequent visitors notice problems quickly, highlighting the value of combining community observation with official monitoring.

**2**

## **Nature-Based Solutions**

- People perceive green approaches (trees, plants, flowers) as more effective than traditional engineered solutions.
- Support for nature-based solutions aligns with Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) principles.

**3**

## **Social & Emotional Value of the Space**

- Lenin Terrace is an important place for gathering, socialising, and everyday routines.
- Frequent use strengthens pride, belonging, and wellbeing, particularly for longer-term residents.

**4**

## **Engagement & Cultural Identity**

- Some residents feel the space does not reflect local identity and have noted a decline in informal social activity.
- Integrating local expression, culture, and history into design could strengthen attachment and engagement.

**5**

## **Practical Barriers**

- Flooding, maintenance, and underuse limit engagement for some residents.
- Addressing these issues is key to supporting both social and environmental functions.

*This report has been shaped by many voices.*

*Thank you to the local residents who shared their opinions, reflections, stories, and observations—your words and actions brought these pages to life. Thanks also to the Wear Rivers Trust whose support and collaboration helped make this work possible.*

**Want to know more?**

If you would like to learn more, share your own reflections, or get involved in future community projects, scan the QR code below.



[stanleysuds.co.uk](http://stanleysuds.co.uk)

This booklet was created in collaboration with:  
Anna R L Carter, Eleanor Starkey, Chukwubunkem Okezie, Isabel  
Edwards, Austin Toombs & Mark Davinson  
[Anna.r.l.carter@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:Anna.r.l.carter@northumbria.ac.uk)