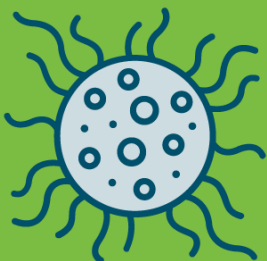


healthwatch

What are people telling us about COVID-19?

Key messages from our evidence – 24 March 2020



About

Healthwatch England has been gathering insight from the Healthwatch network about information and advice requested and views expressed by members of the public regarding COVID-19. The following insight is informed by data from **70** local Healthwatch – via responses to two surveys, findings from public engagement carried out by local Healthwatch, and our usual processes for gathering intelligence from the network.

This regular internal briefing aims to provide an update for national health and social care stakeholders about the COVID-19 related:

- information and advice the public are asking us about,
- experiences people have shared about care with us.

Key findings from the data gathered so far are as follows:

Which groups of people Healthwatch are hearing from

Whilst some local Healthwatch have reported being contacted by members of the public across the board, several have found that the people seeking advice are from vulnerable groups or are supporting those from vulnerable groups – e.g. family carers, people with existing health conditions, homeless people and parents of school-age children.

Several have highlighted the need for information in other languages, as well as Easy Read and BSL formats.

Concerns have been raised about people who are socially isolated and without internet access – how can they access reliable sources of up-to-date information?

Access to GPs

People have told Healthwatch that they are struggling to get through to their GP practice on the phone, resulting in difficulty accessing repeat prescriptions – particularly for those who are not able to use online systems.

The impact on people with long term health conditions

People have expressed concerns about managing long term condition(s) at this time, including the potential effects of self-isolation on those with severe mental health conditions.

Information

People have reported receiving conflicting or confusing advice – for example: NHS111 giving advice regarding the use of ibuprofen that differs from government advice, and advice from a housing provider about residents going for walks also differing from government advice.

Access to support

People who rely on care at home have raised concerns about getting the support they need, particularly surrounding a potential shortage of care workers, the provision of personal protective equipment in home settings, and getting support if they use direct payments to employ a PA and their PA becomes unwell.