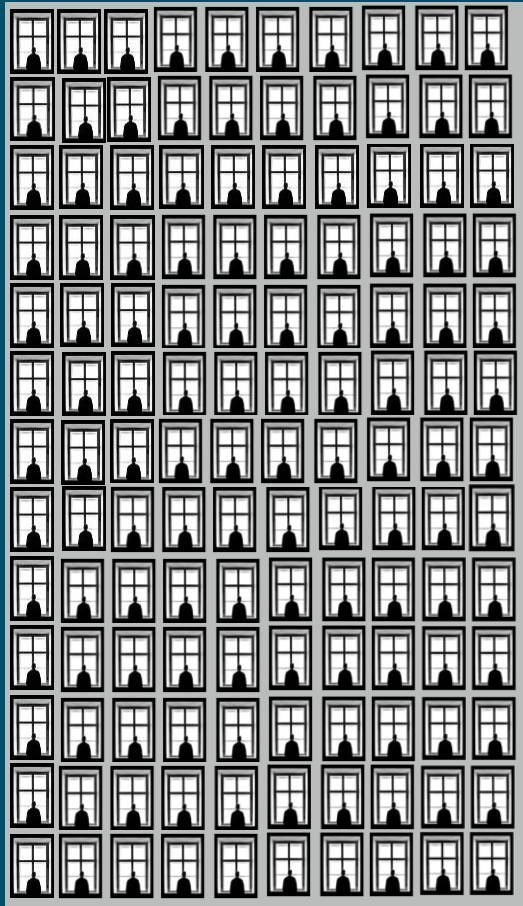
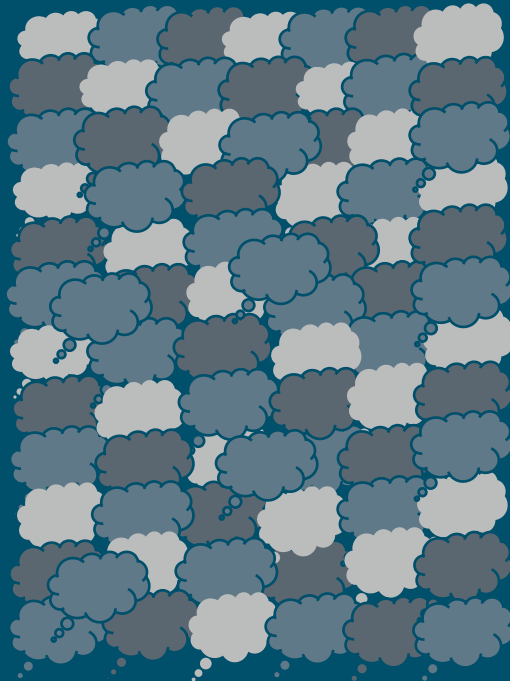


130 (62%) replies mentioned the challenge of **staying well while social distancing**



79 (37%) of the replies voiced **mental health** concerns



We asked residents of Central West London,

How is the Covid-19 outbreak affecting you and your loved ones?

This is what **209 people** told us:

32 (15%) of the replies said that **money worries** were a factor that affected health and wellbeing



45 (22%) of the responses mentioned **health issues that are not Covid-19**, which are being neglected or produced as a result of the Coronavirus response.



The other issues that are affecting you during the Covid-19 lockdown

Residents of Westminster, Kensington & Chelsea and Hammersmith & Fulham are concerned about:

Accessing GP and hospital services

Of the 209 responses we received, **15 (7%)** of these included concerns about being able to visit the GP or hospital as you ordinarily would.



Social Care

14 (7%) of the responses we received expressed concerns about social care for themselves, loved ones or the general public.

Public Health

13 responses (6%) expressed concerns not only about their health, but about the general health of the public and the pressure on the NHS.

Covid-19 symptoms

16 (23%) of the responses we received were from people who were experiencing Covid-19 symptoms and were either self-isolating or recovering from the illness.



#Coronaviruswatch

You can find information and guidance about all of these issues in our dedicated Coronavirus resource pack at:

www.healthwatchcwl.co.uk/coronavirus

Medication

Seven (3%) of the responses we received mentioned difficulties or concerns about being able to collect their prescriptions.



Media

Three people (1%) mentioned the media and social media as having the potential to harm people's mental health during the lockdown.



Staying well, while staying at home

Over half of the responses we received mentioned socially distancing and self isolating as factors that were impacting their health and wellbeing.



14 of you shared worries about relatives and neighbours who have been classed as vulnerable.

For some of the respondents, this was because they couldn't visit relatives in the vulnerable group, and some were additionally coping with the pressure of being a sole carer.



Six of you mentioned coping mechanisms that were helping you with social distancing.

These included exercising, sitting in the garden, working, writing and keeping a routine.



11 of you were struggling with having less space to yourself, and less time outdoors.

This was attributed to living in small flats, sharing with housemates and family members who were working from home or children who are home from school, and some who were living in low quality housing.



12 of you said were missing family and friends while you socially distanced.

For some respondents, this was felt more acutely because they were also living alone and self-isolating.



12 of you wrote that you were self-isolating alone.

Most of the people who responded said that they were self-isolating because they are in a vulnerable group. Not everyone mentioned how they were feeling about it, but those who did reported feeling lonely.



Nine of you said that you were “following the rules” or “doing as we are told”

Some people mentioned their duty to follow the rules on lockdown. Some expressed fears that if the rules were not followed, permission to go outside for exercise could be removed.

Managing mental health in lockdown

40% of the responses we received made specific references to mental health and how they were managing.

Feeling trapped

Six people described being indoors using claustrophobic terms. One person already had OCD, one PTSD and one psychosis, which were all made worse by time spent confined indoors. Two replies mentioned their “freedom” being taken away.

2%

7%

Lonely

Ten people responding to our question described feelings of isolation and loneliness. Some were supported by calls, visits and social media. **Four** people described feeling depressed or sad on their own.

Worried for others

18 people expressed fears for others, mainly friends and relatives they cannot visit, and key workers who are being exposed to the virus.

Four were carers, who were experiencing heightened stress and were afraid of infecting vulnerable people.

9%

Anxiety

The scale of the pandemic and the upheaval had **26** respondents experiencing stress and anxiety. This included generalised anxiety about the future (**eight** people mentioned uncertainty around the economy and as to when and if their lives would go back to normal) and for their studies and employment (next page).

12%

Mental Health

Healthwatch Central West London has produced a bulletin with guidance, resources and local signposting for you to use if you are experiencing mental health problems:
<https://healthwatchcwl.co.uk/support-with-mental-health-during-the-covid-19-lockdown/>

Planning for the future: worries about employment and income

The responses we received about financial concerns increased during April, with **15%** of those completing the survey writing that they were concerned about future employment, their business resuming, and the global economy.

Not working

15 (7%) of you mentioned that you are not currently working.

Some people were on zero hours contracts or contracts that had ended shortly before the lockdown, causing concerns about how to earn an income.

Some people were self-employed and had to halt business activities, some were furloughed and some had been made redundant.

Three respondents mentioned the added pressure of an unstable job market to look for new opportunities, and **two** mentioned anticipating redundancy.

No income

Five (2%) of you stated “income” as a key concern.

Some of these appeared to be related to employment, although this was not explicitly stated.

One person mentioned losing out on returns on investment, and another on being unable to rent their house.

Financial Anxiety

Healthwatch Central West London has produced a bulletin with guidance, resources and local signposting for you to use if you are worried about money:

<https://healthwatchcwl.co.uk/support-for-financial-anxiety-during-the-covid-19-lockdown/>

Managing money

Three (1%) respondents mentioned difficulties with money management and other financial matters.

These included being unable to set up online banking and not being able to shop online, which added further challenges to accessing essential goods.

One person mentioned being unable to arrange benefits or bank payments.

Information on managing money is included in our Financial Anxiety resource, linked to above.



Living with other health conditions during the lockdown

22% people mentioned that their existing conditions were affected by the response to Covid-19. We will be sharing information about the services that remain available to you, and how to get in touch with them.

Local Resources

The Healthwatch Central West London team is still answering signposting queries and answering your questions about accessing local health and social care at info@healthwatchcentralwestlondon.org and on 020 89687049

Waiting to be classed as part of the vulnerable group

Three people wrote to us that they were waiting to be added to the list of vulnerable people who could receive extra support.

Cancelled support groups and therapies

Three people mentioned the impact of cancelled activities on their condition (dementia, autism, unspecified condition).

Cancelled elective surgeries and treatment

Five people have had their elected surgeries or appointments cancelled. Some examples included chemotherapy and urology appointments.

Telling regular symptoms from Covid-19

Three people were struggling to discern whether tiredness, coughs and sore throats were Covid-19 or stress-related.

Lockdown exacerbating long term conditions

One person explicitly said that the Covid-19 outbreak and response had made them feel "more ill." This comment reflects others that related to mental health conditions.

Covid-19 symptoms

It should also be noted that we received **23** replies from people were ill with Covid-19 or who were recovering from the virus .

What you said

Going well

- “Sharing understanding of infection flows [is a way of] supporting each other positively”
- “I have a slot with Tesco for a food delivery, which will nicely see me [for] two weeks. Age UK have offered to help if I need to get in touch down the line, which is very encouraging. I was joking with my sister that I am quite looking forward to a hunky army officer delivering my shopping.”
- “Now into my third week of staying in but coping well, so far!”
- “[As an autistic person] if it were only for social isolation (and not so very serious) I would love it!”



Finding hard

- “I’m more concerned and fearful about how this will affect myself and my loved ones mental health in the long-term than I am about contracting COVID-19”
- “I am sole carer, no one else in household. He needs physical exercise; used to go out for three good walks a day with me or on one day a week with carer. My carer is self-isolating too, so I have no respite during which I used to go to my office job one day a week”
- “My wife can no longer obtain her medication due to the shortage, so she could fall very ill when it runs out”
- “I cannot, like a lot of people, work. I only worked half of March, so my wages were half. I’m stressed about money (it is my main worry).”



What's changing

Going up

Though many of the key themes remained consistent between the first two weeks and the second two weeks, there was a noted increase in **mental health** concerns, from 36 mentions to 43, following the announcement that the lockdown period was to be extended.

The number of people reporting **financial concerns** is steadily increasing, as is the number of concerns about existing health conditions.

Going down

A popular topic in the first two weeks of our engagement was the **struggle to access necessary food supplies** (eight people mentioned this), but this and other mentions of “panic buying” have dropped slightly in the second set of responses.

Making it work for you

Many of your replies commented on the ways that you were staying well and coping with the upheaval of Covid-19 and the lockdown responding to it.



Staying in touch: “My loved ones do not live with me but we keep in touch on social media/via video calls”

Making the most of exercise: “being able to go out to do one exercise a day really helps the mind and soul”

Managing media intake: “I could have been unbalanced to the point of fear and despair. I refuse to read every article on Coronavirus.”

Help from neighbours: “I have those around neighbours and church who keep in touch and offer help”

Do you need help?

Healthwatch Central West London has dedicated resource page with everything from Covid-19 guidance to mental health guidance and support; we have practical advice for accessing financial services, connecting to local mutual aid groups, changes to your local health and social care services, and much more useful information.

Visit www.healthwatchcwl.co.uk/coronavirus to view our full signposting directory.

Did we miss something important? Tell us!

The feedback we receive from local residents helps to shape the information we share and the support we provide. Please do take a minute to answer the two questions about how you are feeling about the outbreak on our [Share your Experiences](#) page, or email us at info@healthwatchcentralwestlondon.org.

We are still reachable by phone, and you can speak to any member of the Healthwatch CWL team on **020 8968 7049**.

We are [on Nextdoor](#) (search: **Healthwatch Central West London**), where you can keep up with our latest news and updates. You can also join our [Facebook discussion group](#) to share your views and chat with others.

 **@HealthwatchCWL**

 **@HWCWL**

