



# What people told us about their experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic

*May 2020*



## The survey

Healthwatch Barnsley seeks to understand people's experience of accessing health and social care services during the COVID-19 pandemic and consider how this is affecting their everyday lives.

## Methodology

A survey was designed using Survey Monkey, to gain the views of the public about what they believe is working well during the pandemic, and where they think things could be improved. We shared the draft survey with our partners at Barnsley Clinical Commissioning Group, Barnsley Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, South West Yorkshire NHS Foundation Trust and Barnsley Council and following their input the survey was distributed widely. Data collected from the survey is included in this intelligence report, which we will share with our stakeholders.

## Key findings and summary

Of the 100 respondents to the survey, we have had a good geographical spread across the Metropolitan Borough of Barnsley (see figure one, appendix one).

### **Do you think you have/have had Coronavirus?**

We found that 75% of respondents had not experienced any COVID-19 symptoms, whilst 21% said they had experienced symptoms but were now recovered and had not been tested. One person believed that they might have Coronavirus.

### **Where have you found USEFUL information/advice relating to Coronavirus?**

The majority of respondents reported that the most useful information and advice relating to Coronavirus was found from the media such as radio/TV/newspaper (64%) and national websites e.g. Government/NHS England, 111 (63%). 33% cited local statutory organisation websites e.g. Barnsley Council/Barnsley Hospital and 19% cited social media e.g. Twitter/Facebook.

### **We asked what people had been doing since the beginning of the pandemic in relation to healthcare.**

We found that 44% of respondents had ordered a repeat prescription online, 22% had used another type of online service and 27% had a telephone consultation with a GP, practice nurse or clinical pharmacist. 17% had spoken to another professional on the phone (e.g. midwife, hospital nurse, consultant), 15% called 111 and 11% looked up symptoms on a website.

### **Has the Coronavirus pandemic affected your mental health and wellbeing?**

72% of respondents worried more about the mental health and wellbeing of their friends and family than their own. 24% are more worried about their own health now than before the pandemic. 20% of people responded that they felt socially isolated and 17% were worried about their job and financial security. 8% responded that relationships with people they shared a house with were tense or unpleasant.

### Have you been able to access support from mental health services (e.g. psychotherapy, community mental health team, support groups)?

75% of respondents did not feel that they needed support currently with their mental health, whilst 7% were having difficulty accessing support for their mental health. 11% have used a website or app to support mental health, e.g. mood tracker or meditation apps, meditation YouTube tutorials, mental health support groups on social media. *Quotes unedited.*

“Mental health service have been slow to respond, or not responded at all, and have cancelled appointments with no follow up or support”

“I work for Barnsley rape crisis service and my experience of support for my clients is that it has drastically reduced around mental health services, which is concerning at a time when their mental health is likely to be further impacted”

### Has the current pandemic affected your access to healthcare for other conditions?

When asked if the current pandemic has affected access to healthcare for other conditions, the biggest impact (according to 27% of respondents) has been in relation to planned procedures such as elective surgery or dental treatment, which were still needed but then cancelled. 10% experienced disruption to regular hospital based treatment e.g. dialysis, chemotherapy, physiotherapy, whilst 11% could not find over-the-counter medication they needed in shops or pharmacies. 13% of respondents have not attended or contacted their GP, even though they have experienced symptoms that would normally require attendance at their local surgery. 3% have not attended Accident and Emergency, even though they have experienced symptoms that would normally result in attendance at the hospital. 2% of respondents were unable to obtain a GP appointment, whilst 18% of respondents that needed a GP appointment were provided with a telephone/Skype or email appointment. *Quotes unedited.*

“Need hip operation urgently”

“Had telephone consultation with hospital consultant and await the routine procedure required to be started up again (Sigmoidoscopy)”

### Has the current pandemic affected your experience of social care?

Of the 9% of respondents that felt that their social care had been affected by the pandemic, the majority felt that communication in relation to the changes had been good or excellent.

### How has the current pandemic affected your work?

39% of respondents were working from home and 8% had experienced an increase in workload. *Quotes unedited.*

“I am a peripatetic admin worker for NHS in the community and have been asked to work extra hours to compensate for team members being ill”

7% feel unsafe in their workplace and/or travelling to work. 9% of respondents had experienced a negative financial impact.

**We asked people what sort of things they had been doing since the start of the pandemic.**

47% of respondents had helped a friend, family member or neighbour that they knew before the crisis with shopping, errands or other needs. 7% had volunteered as a Community Responder, with no respondents receiving a service from the Community Responders.

38% had donated money or goods to a local or national charity to help the pandemic crisis response.

“I have been busy supporting the community with different services and keeping in touch with family and friends”

**We asked what people were doing to keep well both physically and mentally during the current pandemic.**

6% followed online craft and/or cookery sessions, 9% joined online exercise sessions, 58% did gardening, 56% carried out housework such as spring-cleaning, 83% kept in touch with friends and family online or by phone and 63% enjoyed exercise such as walking.

**We asked if people were more or less active than before the pandemic.**

51% stated that they are less active than before the pandemic, with 33% doing the same amount as before. 15% were more active than before. *Quotes unedited.*

“Being fortunate to have Trans Pennine Trail nearby is fantastic - a million times better than walking / running / cycling on the streets. I used it prior to Covid -19 but lately it’s been a god send and I appreciate it even more”

Some of the survey questions had free text boxes to enable detailed additional comments. These comments are unedited for transparency.

**Additional comments left by respondents**

At question 3 of the survey (appendix 1) we asked, “Do you have any of the following conditions?” In addition to the list provided the following were highlighted (*responses unedited*):

Anxiety, previous cancer patient	2
Arthritis	1
Coeliac disease	1
Chronic Fatigue/ME	1
Chronic Liver disease	1
Crohn’s	1
Depression	1
Dry cough which I have had for over 2 years	1
Hay fever	1
Hypertension	1
No/none of these	2
Parkinson’s/neurological	3
Pre diabetic-Thyroid	1
Refractory Epilepsy	1

At question 5 of the survey (appendix 1) we asked, “Where have you found USEFUL information and advice relating to Coronavirus?” In addition to the list provided the following were highlighted (*responses unedited*):

Government Daily Corona Briefing

From work

Local community support Facebook groups giving advice around shopping etc.

Family as 3 members are NHS workers with 2 clinicians

General social media with links to newspaper articles

BMBC Facebook/intranet/general x3

Unison

Information booklet from John Healey MP

Nowhere, far too contradictory

At question 15 of the survey (appendix 1) we asked, “What are you doing to keep well both physically and mentally, during the current pandemic?” In addition to the list provided the following were highlighted (*responses unedited*):

Allotment

Box sets of films/TV

Computer - editing monthly charity newsletter

Crafting/sewing

Jigsaws online/museums online

Mindfulness exercises such as colouring, guided meditations

Online research project/online games such as chess

Painting a bedroom

Reading/watching information videos online

Baking

Running/cycling/treadmill/exercise bike/home exercise programme

Volunteering

At question 17, we asked, “Do you have any other comments?” (*responses unedited*):

Need hip operation urgently

I work for the NHS and had a lot of support from colleagues. I live alone which has been both positive and negative

My answer to question 2 refers to a 3 week period of illness in January, during which I remained home on my own. It was two of my nieces who pointed out to me later that the symptoms I suffered were like those of Covid 19, when they subsequently became public. I have wondered ever since if it were possible and I raise the issue now having heard that at least one other person in Europe may have suffered from the virus in Europe in December. Of course, my symptoms may have been coincidental

I live alone and manage well but there have been odd days when I have felt isolated.  
Nature - flowers, birds animals are helping

The powers that be have been very slow to offer support/help to some older people who live on their own, do not have close relatives, have health issues and do not drive. They have not yet accepted that they are people in Barnsley not on the internet and to buy the Chronicle have to leave their home. The letters sent out should have been sent weeks ago

Couldn't answer question 13 as I'm retired and there was nowhere to state that

My mum was admitted to hospital with non related coronavirus problems. coronavirus tested on admission but NOT on discharge. Considering risk level in hospital why not tested on discharge, is there not even a slight chance a patient could come out with the virus and risk infecting others?

Mental health service have been slow to respond, or not responded at all, and have cancelled appointments with no follow up or support

I work for Barnsley rape crisis service and my experience of support for my clients is that it has drastically reduced around mental health services, which is concerning at a time when their mental health is likely to be further impacted

Q6 - the past participle of 'to speak' is 'spoken': 'spoke' is the past tense. [I'm slightly bored, sorry.]

Had telephone consultation with hospital consultant and await the routine procedure required to be started up again. (Sigmoidoscopy.)

I have just been diagnosed with terminal cancer

Council needs to offer more help to people in category u severe mentally impaired council tax/billing exemptions so they receive help or can apply for white goods- i have a dementia parent urgently needing a new washer and rainwater ingress thru their bedroom attic ceiling-yet in private house

Very disappointed by the government response and very grateful to the people who have gone far and beyond expectations

Uncertainty causes stress. Even bad news, delivered clearly, is better than not knowing

Doing some mindfulness meditation is helping me

I am high risk and shielding for 12 weeks

I am a peripatetic admin worker for NHS in the community and have been asked to work extra hours to compensate for team members being ill

Being fortunate to have Trans Pennine Trail nearby is fantastic - a million times better than walking / running / cycling on the streets. I used it prior to Covid 19 but lately it's been a god send and I appreciate it even more

Think your questionnaire is poorly constructed in the main - feels like you are almost looking for the answer you want to hear rather than the experience of the person

Q13 needs to include furloughed

I am due a cervical screening test but my GP has temporarily suspended this service (Huddersfield Rd Surgery)

I have been busy supporting the community with different services and keeping in touch with family and friends

I like to read and I think some sort of travelling library would be helpful. Social distancing accepted. On line books are often not the type that I like

I will be glad like others when this Pandemic comes to an end, deaths are still happening still to man, feel very much for families whom have lost loved ones .. Hoping to be able to go out soon, get back to some normality

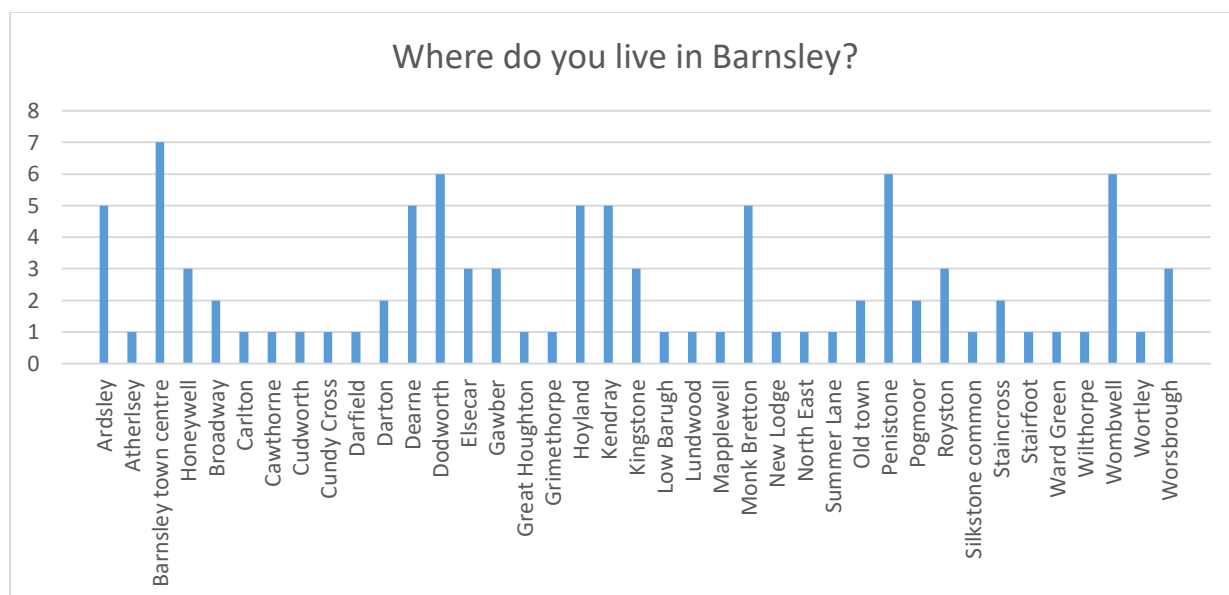
N/A x 2

I am currently volunteering with the NHS Listening Ears service at Barnsley Hospital

## Appendix 1

Survey Monkey results, based on 100 respondents during the period 1 May 2020 - 31 May 2020

Figure one



1. Where do you live in Barnsley? See above

2. Do you think you have/have had Coronavirus? 99 individuals responded.

**Answer Choices**

Yes, I have had and currently experiencing symptoms	1
Yes, I have been tested; but I am now recovered or no longer experiencing symptoms	1
Possibly, I am experiencing symptoms but have not been tested	1
Possibly, I have experienced symptoms (now recovered) but have not been tested	21
No, I have not experienced symptoms	75

3. Do you have any of the following conditions? Select any that apply; 57 individuals responded, some with more than one answer.

**Answer Choices**

Asthma	16
COPD, emphysema or another long-term lung condition	7



Long-term heart condition	11
Long-term kidney condition	2
Diabetes	14
Immune system condition	6
Mobility issue (e.g. I need to use a wheelchair in my daily life)	3
Sensory disability (e.g. I am blind)	3
Mental health condition (e.g. bipolar)	8
I take immunosuppressant medication (such as steroids) to manage a long-term condition	1
I am undergoing chemotherapy for cancer	1
Other (please specify)	18

4. Do any of these describe you? 59 individuals responded, some with more than one answer.

Answer Choices	
I am aged over 65	9
I am aged over 70	22
I am currently pregnant	0
My partner is currently pregnant	0
I am the parent or carer of a child under 5	3
I am the parent or carer of a child 5 or over, but under 10	3
I am the parent or carer of a child 10 or over, but under 18	12
I am a carer for another adult (e.g. ageing parent, adult with a disability)	13

5. Where have you found USEFUL information/advice relating to Coronavirus? 100 individuals responded, some with more than one answer.

Answer Choices	
Online - National organisation websites e.g. Government/NHS England,	111
Online - local statutory organisation websites e.g. Barnsley Council/Barnsley Hospital	33
Online - local voluntary and community group websites	10
Online - social media e.g. Twitter/Facebook. Please specify where from e.g. BMBC	19
Media e.g. radio/TV/newspaper	64
Received by email/text/post	18
From family/friends	14
From a healthcare professional e.g. district nurse	9
Other (please specify)	11

6 Since the beginning of the pandemic, have you done any of the following? 66 individuals responded, some with more than one answer.

Answer Choices	
Called 111	15

Used 111 online service	13
Looked up my symptoms on a different website	11
Had a telephone consultation with a GP, practice nurse or clinical pharmacist	27
Had an online consultation with a GP, practice nurse or clinical pharmacist	6
Spoke to another professional on the phone (e.g. midwife, hospital nurse, consultant)	17
Spoke to another professional online, including text based chat and video calls (e.g. midwife, hospital nurse, consultant)	2
Ordered a repeat prescription online	44
Downloaded DrLink app	1
Accessed my test results or medical referrals online	1

7. Has the Coronavirus pandemic affected your mental health and wellbeing? Please select all that apply. 81 individuals responded, some with more than one answer.

Answer Choices	
I feel socially isolated	20
I worry about my own health more now than before the pandemic	24
I worry about the health of friends or family members	72
I worry about my job or financial security	17
Relationships with people I share a house with are tense or unpleasant	8

8. Have you been able to access support from mental health services (e.g. psychotherapy, community mental health team, support groups)? 94 individuals responded, some with more than one answer.

Answer Choices	
Yes, I was using mental health support services before and continue to do so	1
Yes, I started needing mental health support after the start of the pandemic and was able to access it	3
No, I became unable to use the mental health services I was using before	4
No, I think I need mental health support but cannot access it	3
I have used a website or app to support my mental health e.g. mood tracker or meditation apps, meditation YouTube tutorials, mental health support groups on social media	11
I do not require mental health support currently	75

9. Has the current pandemic affected your access to healthcare for other conditions? Please select all that apply. 53 individuals responded, some with more than one answer.

Answer Choices	
I needed a GP appointment and was provided with a telephone/Skype or email appointment	18
I needed a GP appointment and could not get one at all	2

I have not attended or contacted my GP even though I have experienced symptoms which would normally require my attendance at my local surgery	13
I have not attended Accident and Emergency even though I have experienced symptoms which would normally result in my attendance at the hospital	3
I could not get my prescription medication	3
I could not find over-the-counter medication I needed in shops or pharmacies	11
My regular hospital based treatment was disrupted e.g. dialysis, chemotherapy, physiotherapy	10
Planned procedures e.g. elective surgery, dental treatment that I needed to have were cancelled	27

10. Do any of these describe you? Four individuals responded.

Answer Choices	
I live in a care home or nursing home	0
I live in sheltered or supported accommodation	0
I receive care at home from care workers	0
I receive care at home from family members or friends	4

11. Has the current pandemic affected your experience of social care? This might include visits from care workers, social workers, family support workers or access to residential/nursing care etc. 79 individuals responded.

Answer Choices	
Yes	9
No	70

12. If yes to Q11, how would you rate the communication you received about changes to these services because of the pandemic? 10 individuals responded, some with more than one response.

Answer Choices	
Poor - no communication	1
Fair - very basic information provided	2
Good - an acceptable level of communication	5
Excellent - a high standard of information supplied, including telephone calls from services explaining the changes	3
Does your answer above relate to a specific service? If yes, which service?	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Occupational therapy &amp; domiciliary physio</li> <li>• Autism East Midlands</li> </ul>	

13. How has the current pandemic affected your work? 53 individuals responded, some with more than one response.

I am currently working from home	39
My workplace is temporarily closed and I am not being paid	2
My hours and pay have been cut	3
I have been made redundant from my job	1
I have my own business but I have lost profit and/or clients	3
I had my own business and I have had to permanently close it	0
My workload has increased	8
I feel unsafe in my workplace and/or travelling to work	7

14. Since the start of the pandemic, have you done any of the following? Select all that apply to you. 87 individuals responded, some with more than one response.

Answer Choices

Joined a local mutual support group on social media (such as Facebook or WhatsApp group)	14
Asked members of an online mutual support group to help you with shopping, errands or other needs	1
Helped someone from an online mutual support group with shopping, errands or other needs	8
Asked members of an online mutual support group for information and advice	3
Given information or advice to someone in an online mutual support group	13
Asked a friend, family member or neighbour you knew before the crisis to help you with shopping, errands or other needs	27
Helped a friend, family member or neighbour you knew before the crisis with shopping, errands or other needs	47
Contacted a local or national charity to ask for advice and information	2
Contacted a local or national charity to ask for help (e.g. food bank, help with shopping)	4
I have volunteered for the Barnsley Community Responder Scheme	7
I have used the Barnsley Community Responder Scheme	0
I have donated money or goods to a local or national charity to help the pandemic crisis response	38

15. What are you doing to keep well both physically and mentally, during the current pandemic? Please select all that apply. 96 responded.

Answer Choices

Following online craft and/or cookery sessions	6
Joining online exercise sessions	9
Gardening	58
Housework, such as spring cleaning	56
Keeping in touch with friends and family online or by phone	83
Walking	63
Other (please specify)	27

16. Do you feel that you are more or less active than before the pandemic? 99 individuals responded.

Answer Choices	
More active	15
Less active	51
Doing the same amount as before	33

17. Do you have any other comments?

See from page 5 to 7

## Demographics

Q18 What is your gender?

Answer Choices	
Male	36
Female	62
Prefer not to say	1
Other (please specify)	0

Q19 What is your ethnicity?

Answer Choices	
White British	94
White Irish	0
White other - Polish	0
White other - Romanian	0
White other - Bulgarian	0
Roma or Traveller	0
Any other white background	2
Asian - Bangladeshi	0
Asian - Pakistani	1
Asian - Indian	0
Asian - Chinese	0
Asian - Vietnamese	0
Any other Asian background	0
Black - Somali	0
Black - African	1
Black - Caribbean	0
Any other black background	0
Latin American	0
Mixed	0
Other	1

Q20 What is your age?

Answer Choices	
Under 18	0
18-24	2
25-49	28
50-64	38
65-69	9
70+	21