Healthwatch Herefordshire

Covid-19 Survey Report August 2020

Introduction

In response to the Covid-19 Pandemic, Healthwatch Herefordshire developed a survey (based on a Healthwatch England template) to gather views and experiences of Herefordshire residents on health and social care services during this challenging period.

The survey was launched at the start of May 2020 and continued until 7ᵗʰ July 2020, receiving 258 responses. We promoted the survey via online and social media channels using organic and paid advertising. The team also encouraged partner organisations and other networks to promote the survey to as many members of the public as possible.

Healthwatch Worcestershire have also undertaken the same survey in Worcestershire over a similar timeframe.

Key Findings

The geographical spread of responses across the county was; 21.9% from HR1; 19.6% from HR2; 19.2% from HR4; 14.0% from HR6 and 6.0% from HR9.

83.1% of respondents were aged 45 or over.

43% of respondents considered themselves to be at high risk of Coronavirus/COVID-19, and 23% of this group had had a letter or text message advising them to shield themselves.

39% of respondents said that they were caring for/supporting someone who was at high risk of Coronavirus/COVID-19 and of this group, 32% of the people being cared for had had a letter advising them to shield themselves.

85% reported that they had been able to find information and advice in the format or language they needed.

67% of respondents had found it either 'very easy' or 'easy' to find the information they needed about how to keep themselves and others safe during the Coronavirus / COVID-19 pandemic, with only 9% reporting that it had been 'difficult' or 'very difficult' to find the right information.

When asked about which topics have been difficult to get clear information and advice about, the top five topics were as follows :

Topic	%	Number of Responses
Testing for Coronavirus / COVID-19	28.5%	73
Using mask, gloves or other personal Protective Equipment	28.1%	72
Changes to the health care services I usually access	23.4%	60
Managing existing physical health conditions	22.7%	58
Avoiding transmission of Coronavirus / COVID-19 (e.g. deliveries, packaging etc.)	18.8%	48

24% of respondents had heard of the Talk Community Covid-19 response team with 5% saying they had used them, this was mainly for advice & information. 93% of those that had used the service said it was either 'helpful' or 'very helpful'. 31% reported that it would be useful if the Talk Community Covid-19 response team continued beyond the pandemic response.

The public were asked how helpful they have found a variety of sources and the majority of responses reported they found services helpful (full details can found in the full data report Appendix C).

They were also asked to rate the communication received following changes to health services. The table below illustrates the main responses :

| Service	% reporting Good / Excellent Communication	% reporting to not have received any communication
Pharmacy	44%	21%
GP	40%	26%
Dentist	26%	34%

When asked whether the public had needed to use these services during the pandemic, the results were as follows :

| Service	Response
Pharmacy	63% reported Yes & it was easy to access
GP	31% reported Yes & it was easy; 32% said No they haven't needed it
Dentist	52% reported No they haven't needed it

When asked about the reasons for not accessing health care services, the results were as follows :
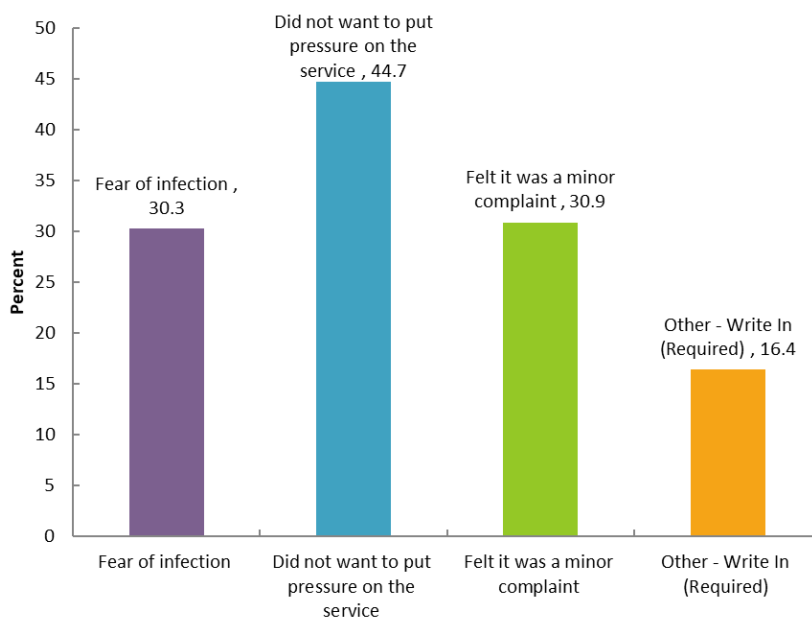
When asked about the communication regarding changes to care or support services due to the Coronavirus / COVID-19 pandemic, the results were as follows :
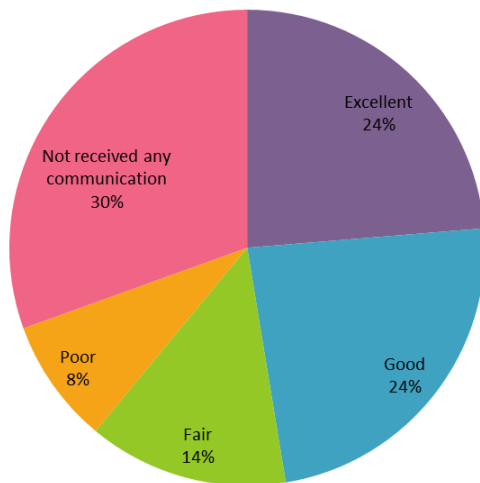
When asked about the (negative) impact of Coronavirus / COVID-19 on their mental health, the results were :
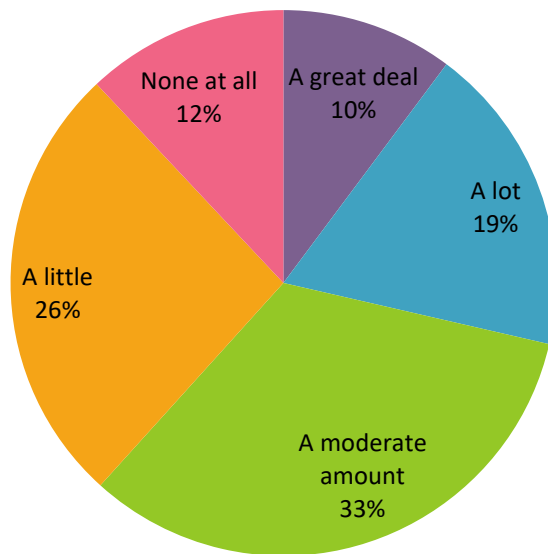
37.6% said that they had accessed support from family, friends or neighbours; 7.1% from a community, voluntary or charity organization; 10.5% said that they hadn't accessed help and 48.5% said they hadn't needed support.

Questions, 20, 25, 30,33, 34, 35 & 36 gave the public the opportunity to write specific comments about their views and experiences. These answers have been analysed and can be grouped together into a number of themes which are:

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1. GP's.
2. Mental Health.
3. Dentistry.
4. Wye Valley Trust (secondary care and community services).
5. Homecare agencies / Domiciliary care / Unpaid carers.
6. Talk Community.
7. Pharmacy services.

The answers relating to these seven themes can be found as separate reports in **Appendix B.**

This report has provided a useful insight into the public's experiences of health & social care services during this challenging time and provides services with information on what may need to be considered as they move forward into the 'new normal' in the future.

One of the challenges of doing this survey whilst the pandemic is still happening is that services are changing and improving quickly during this time and therefore there may be comments within this report where services have already made changes/improvements to help the public as the pandemic has progressed.

This survey has been a really useful exercise where the public have had a chance to provide feedback on their views and experiences. It has highlighted the main areas where people have had concerns or have wanted to show recognition of quality services during a difficult time.

The text answers within the survey have allowed the public to document individual stories, where they have been pleased or where they have felt improvements could have been made. We have presented this report so that the experiences have been grouped together into service themes, so that providers can acknowledge their own service area.

We intend to gather feedback from the public as the pandemic continues and will be focusing on targeted groups as lockdown restrictions ease to ensure we have heard from a diverse range of people in Herefordshire, in particular those who are not digitally enabled.

Appendix A

Covid-19 Survey Results –Frequency of comments

Q25 – Accessing Services

Service / Comment	Positive	Neutral	Negative
GPs	9	3	12
Mental Health Services	3	4	5
Wye Valley Trust	9	1	12
District Nursing		1	
Pharmacy	1		3
Cancelled appointments		2	
Care Agencies			1
Dentists		1	7
Specific Covid Stories		1	
Other		12	

Q30 – Experience of care & support services

Service / Comment	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Care Agencies	1	9	1
Alzheimer's Society	1		
GPs	1		2
Dentists			1
St Michael's Hospice	1		
Wye Valley Trust		2	
Mental Health Services	2		
Adult Social Care	1		2
Other		5	

Q33 – Reasons unable to access support for Mental Health

All comments relate to mental health support

Comment	Frequency
Not needed	3
Level of understanding	5
Negative comment	14
Positive comment	1

Q34 – Accessing Mental Health Support

All comments relate to mental health support

Comment	Frequency
Haven't needed	3
Support from community/support groups, family, friends, work, neighbours	15
Left no support	9
Didn't want to bother services as too busy / didn't ask	2
Support from private provider	3
Mental Health improved during lockdown	1
Slow / Poor response from services	2
Various groups have stopped	1
Accessed help	2

Q35 – Positive Changes – Top 10 comments

Comment	Frequency
None	41
Technology (Phone calls, video calls etc)	24
People not taking advantage of A & E	12
Respect / Appreciation for whole health & care system	8
24/7 Mental Health hotlines	3
Good Herefordshire Council response	3
Social distancing / better hygiene	3
Sense of caring for friends / neighbours	3
Emphasis on exercise / reducing obesity / stopping smoking	3
Easier access to GPs (telephone not as good but at least it's there)	2

Appendix B

Specific comments relating to themed services have been grouped into separate reports:

Comments about Wye Valley NHS Trust (secondary care and community health services)

Comments about Homecare

Comments about GP Services (Primary care)

[Comments about Dentistry](#)

[Comments about Pharmacy](#)

[Comments about Talk Community (Herefordshire Council)](#)

[Comments about Mental Health](#)

Appendix C

[The full raw data export is available here](#)