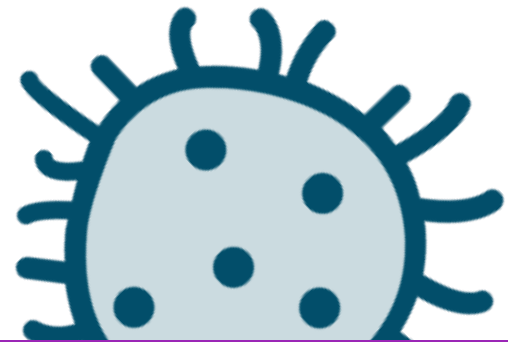
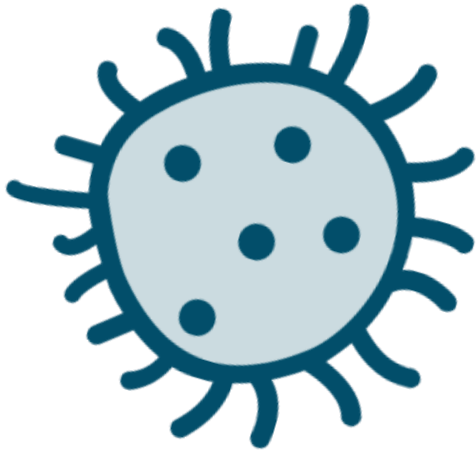


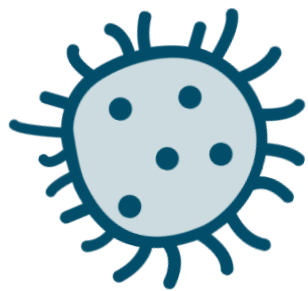
healthwatch Sunderland



What you told us about COVID-19

Mental health and wellbeing

July 2020



Distribution List:

Sunderland Local Authority

Councillor Graeme Miller, Leader of the Council
Graham King, Head of Commissioning
Anne Wilson, Commissioning Specialist
Fiona Brown, Executive Director of Adult Services
Ann Dingwall, Lead Commissioner Adults
Jane Hibberd, Senior Policy Manager
Jessica May, Sunderland Partnership Manager
Yusuf Meah, Tobacco Control, Public Mental Health & Workplace Health Lead

Healthwatch England

Delana Lawson, Development Officer
Research Helpdesk

Sunderland Clinical Commissioning Group

Dr Neil O'Brien, Chief Officer
Gillian Gibson, Director of Public Health
Ann Fox, Executive Director of Nursing, Quality & Safety
Debbie Burnicle, Lay Member Patient and Public Involvement
Debbie Cornell, Head of Corporate Affairs
Wendy Thompson, General Practice Commissioning Lead
Michelle Turnbull, Senior Joint Commissioning Manager for Mental Health & Learning Disabilities
Daisy Barnetson, Strategic Commissioning Manager, (Also Together for Children)

Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne & Wear NHS Foundation Trust - John Lawler, Chief Executive

South Tyneside and Sunderland Foundation Trust

Ken Bremner, Chief Executive
Liz Davies, Director of Communications

All Together Better Sunderland

Philip Foster, Managing Director
Penny Davison, Senior Commissioning Manager

North East Ambulance Service - Mark Johns, Engagement, Diversity and Inclusion Manager

Academic Health Science Network - Philip Kyle, Programme and Project Support

Voluntary and Community Sector

Sunderland Counselling Services - Toby Sweet, Chief Executive
Sunderland Headlight - Tricia Doyle, Centre Manager
Sunderland Mind - Dot Gardiner, Project Manager
Washington Mind - Jacqui Reeves, Services Manager
Voluntary Community Action Sunderland - Jeanette Hilton, Chair

Sunderland Echo

Joy Yates, Editorial Director
Fiona Thompson, Senior Multi-media Journalist

Executive Summary

In June 2020, Healthwatch Sunderland gathered feedback from 714 respondents, gathering people's general experiences of using health and social care services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A report 'What you told us about COVID-19' was published sharing the findings. The aim of this report is to understand the experiences of those who responded to the Mental Health and Wellbeing impact questions.

The purpose of this report is to share the findings with key health and social care providers and commissioners, to help them identify what is working well and highlight those areas that need to be improved. It should be read in conjunction with the 'What you told us about COVID-19' report.

Key themes and findings

The findings from the survey results have a wealth of qualitative feedback, such as what services those who needed support found useful. The areas that are working well are as important to focus on as the gaps in provision which the respondents to the survey also highlight. It is hoped that key service providers and commissioners will afford both the good and not so good feedback from all respondents similar attention, and use this report to continue to improve mental health services for all who need them.

Gender

Women reported a greater mental health impact than men, with 56% of women responding that their mental health was impacted a great deal, a lot or a moderate amount compared with 44% of men. More women (25%) sought help for their mental health, than men (18%).

Women were more likely to seek support from their friends and family. 41% of women responded to say that they would seek support from this source, with only 35% of men doing so. It is interesting to note that men would rather look for support at work, mental health groups and GPs - all areas commissioned by Sunderland CCG and vital in the provision of care to those who need it.

Age

The age group who reported the highest levels of negative impact were the 25-34 year olds, with 67% of respondents showing that it had impacted them a great deal, a lot or a moderate amount. This contrasts to just 36% of those over 75 years old.

The 18 to 24 year old category were the highest percentage (33%) who stated they were not able to access the support they needed. This is a critical area for the provision of mental health services.

Information and advice

Page 15 in this report is a good source of information on where the respondents of different age ranges accessed information during the pandemic.

Shielding

It was interesting to note the reliance for mental health support on Housing Managers and CCG commissioned services.

Next steps

The response to our survey has been incredible, we appreciate the time taken by all 714 respondents who shared their experiences with us, including those whose mental health was impacted.

We are sharing that feedback with commissioners and providers via a suite of reports to provide robust information upon which to build future service responses. The other summary reports focus on certain areas or individuals experiences during the pandemic. These are titled;

- Keeping yourself well
- Use of North East Ambulance Service
- Shielded vs general population

Comments received from survey respondents on specific services will also be shared with service providers and commissioners where appropriate.

Contents

Executive Summary..... 3

Introduction 6

Findings 7

Demographics 7

Mental health and wellbeing..... 9

Gender and mental health and wellbeing 9

Age and mental health and wellbeing..... 13

The shielding and mental health and wellbeing 18

Ethnicity and mental health and wellbeing 22

Pregnant women and mental health and wellbeing..... 25

Introduction

What is Healthwatch Sunderland?

Healthwatch Sunderland is the independent local champion for people who use health and social care services. We're here to make sure that those running services put people at the heart of care.

By speaking to Sunderland residents we aim to understand their needs, experiences and concerns of accessing and using local health and social care services. We can then speak out on their behalf to local service providers, focusing on people's concerns about current services and ensuring they are listened to and addressed by those who are running services.

We encourage and work with local services to involve Sunderland residents in the changes to health and social care provision. The ultimate aim is to get things right for the future, with health and social care services which meet the needs of the local community.



*We champion what matters to you and
work with others
to find ideas that work.*

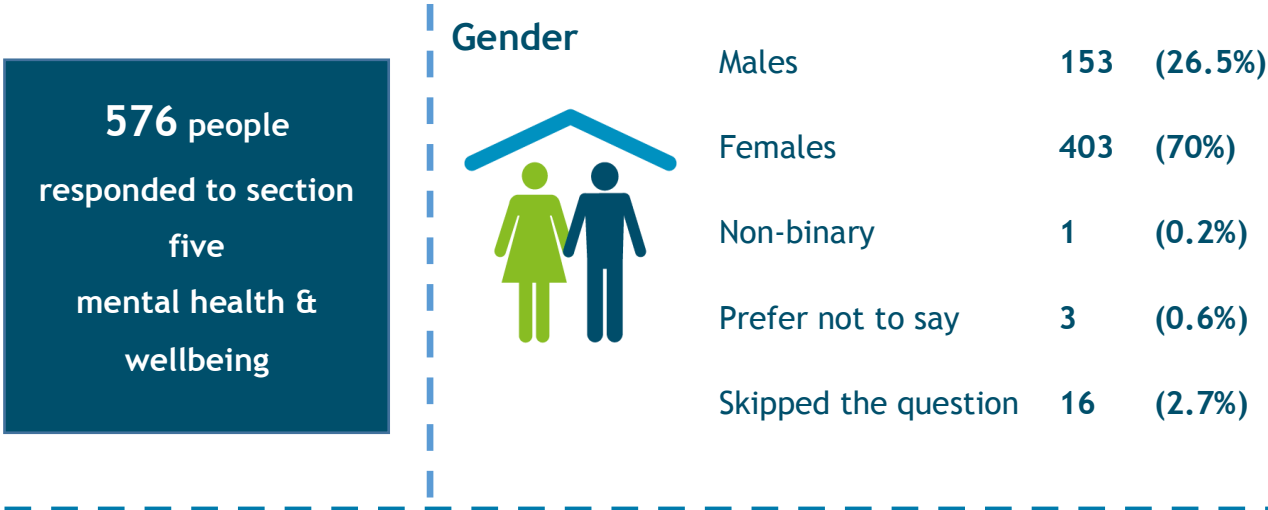
*We are independent and committed to
making the
biggest difference to you.*



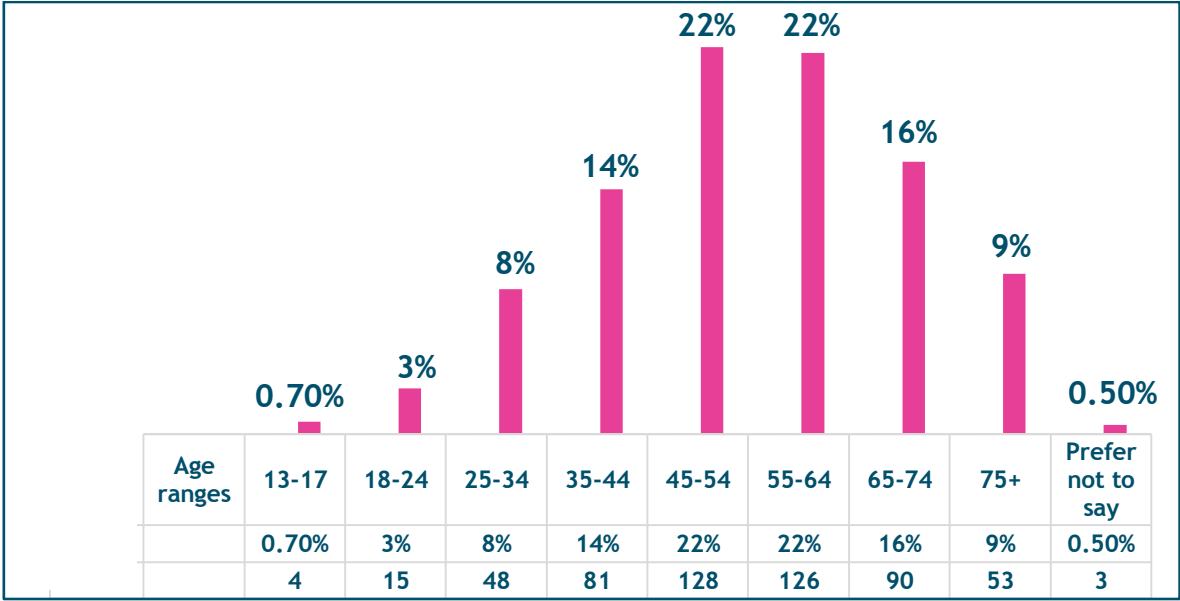
Findings

Demographics

The demographic breakdown of the 576 individuals who completed section five of the survey- mental health and wellbeing is given below:



Age ranges



*(4.8% (28) people skipped the question which asked their age range).

Ethnicity

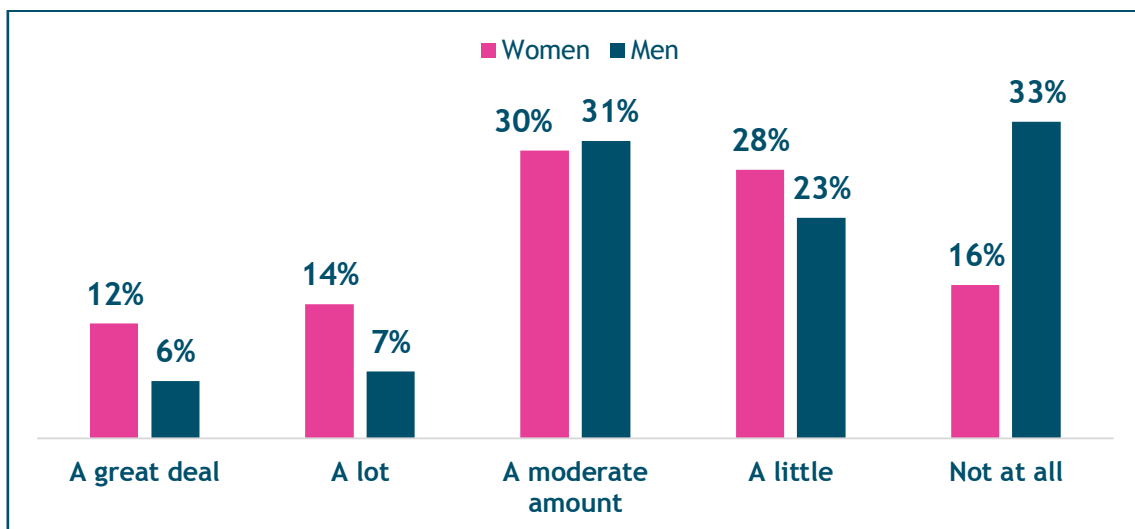
	Percentage	Count
Arab	0.2%	1
Asian/Asian British: Bangladeshi	1.6%	9
Asian/Asian British: Indian	0.5%	3
Asian/Asian British: Pakistani	0.8%	5
Asian/Asian British: Any other Asian/Asian British background	0.4%	2
Black/Black British: African	0.2%	1
Black/Black British: Any other Black/Black British background	0.2%	1
Gypsy, Roma or Traveller	0.2%	1
Mixed/ Multiple ethnic groups: Asian and White	0.5%	3
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups: Black African and White	0.4%	2
White: British/English/ Northern Irish/Scottish/Welsh	80.9%	466
White: Irish	0.3%	2
White: Any other White background	6.6%	38
Another ethnic background	0.4%	2
I'd prefer not to say	1.6%	10
Skipped the question	5.2%	30

Mental health and wellbeing

Gender and mental health and wellbeing

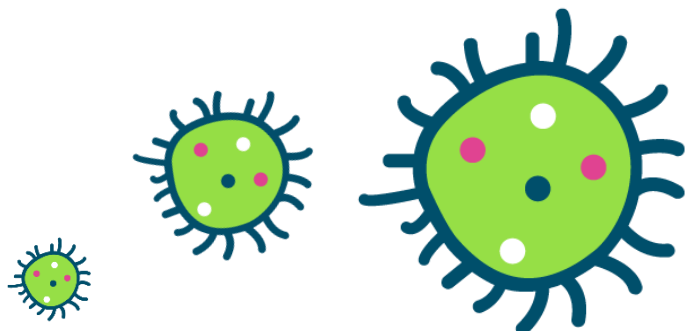
Section five of the survey looked to see if the pandemic had effected people's mental health and wellbeing.

The graph below shows the comparison, in percentage terms, between the effects on men and women. Results showed that the majority of people's mental health and wellbeing had been impacted to a certain degree, with women being more adversely effected than men; **56%** of women have been effected a moderate amount to a great deal compared to **44%** of men.



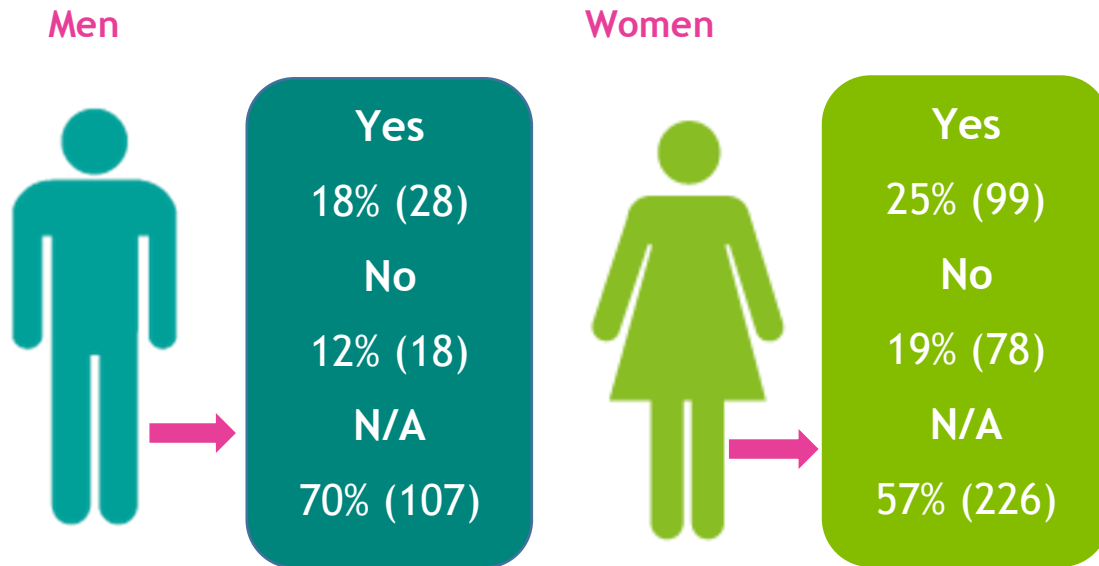
1 person who completed the questions in section five identified as non-binary and indicated that their mental health and wellbeing had been effected a lot due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

From **3** people who preferred not to give their gender on the survey, **1** stated that their mental health and wellbeing had been effected a lot, **1** stated it was effected a moderate amount and **1** said it was effected a little during the pandemic.



Accessing support for mental health and wellbeing

The diagrams below show the comparison of men and women when we asked if they had accessed any support for their mental health and wellbeing. The information highlights that more women (**25%**) than men (**18%**) sought help for their mental health and wellbeing.



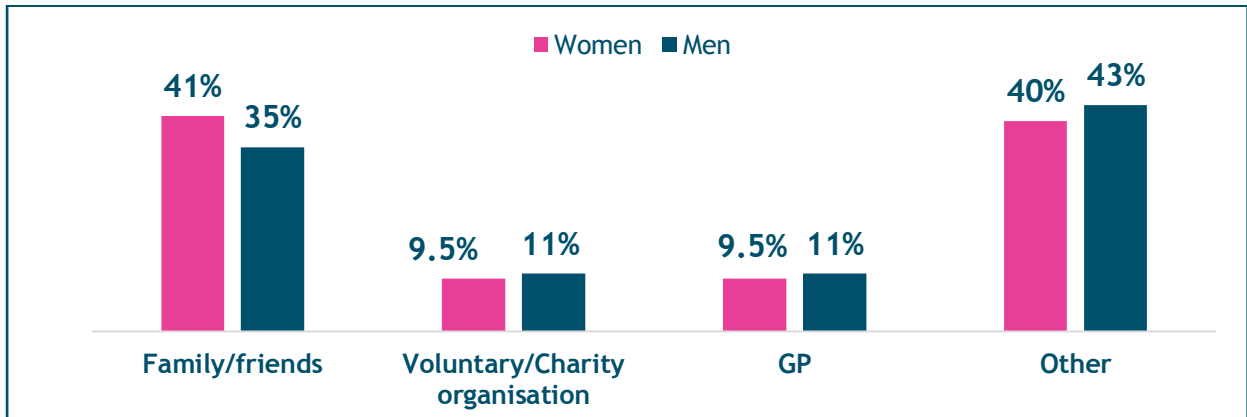
The person who identified as **non-binary** stated that they had not accessed support for their mental health and wellbeing during the pandemic.

The **3** people who preferred not to give their gender on the survey stated that they did not need support for their mental health and wellbeing during the pandemic.

Although **99** women stated that they had accessed support for their mental health and wellbeing during the pandemic **136** told us where they had received support.

Again only **28** men informed us that they had accessed support for their mental health and wellbeing during the pandemic but **37** men told us where they had accessed support.

People informed us where they had received support. The graph below shows the results:



The majority of **men** who responded to this question stated that they received their support from other sources, saying that this was from work or work colleagues. Some men also accessed support from support groups, mental health services, including the Crisis Team, Sunderland Clinical Commissioning Group, Community Integrated Team, Dietician and the Speech and Language Team.

“I care for my wife who has Alzheimers. We get regular calls and information from the Essence Service, we have good family support, and support from Marjorie the scheme manager (sheltered accommodation).”

“I am a counsellor and I have received support from my supervisor and colleagues.”

The majority of **women** who responded to this question also stated that they received their support from other sources saying that this was from work or work colleagues. Some women also accessed support from mental health services, including the Crisis Team and Sunderland Psychological Wellbeing Service.

Women also told us that they had accessed online and helpline support, with one women adding that their Gentoo Housing Scheme Manager had supported her in the sheltered accommodation where she lives.

“My dog helps my mental attitude.”

“Phone calls from church. Colouring books, Facebook and games on my tablet, reading magazines and books too.”

“Self-help guides in press; on social media and the Wellbeing Guide from Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust, which came through my door.”

“My Line Manager at work and senior colleagues. They talk mostly in relation to wearing PPE and having enough available and safe procedures.”

Positive effects on mental health and wellbeing

When asked what had a positive effect on them during the pandemic the majority of **men** told us this included speaking more to family and friends and more time for cooking and exercise.

When asked what had a positive effect on them during the pandemic the majority of **women** spoke about speaking or spending time with family and friends, more time for cooking, exercise, hobbies and gardening. Some women also stated that they enjoyed working from home, which made them feel less pressured. Women also spoke about walking their dog, with some using this time to get a new puppy. Spending time outside and enjoying the nice weather was also a favourite for the women who completed our survey.

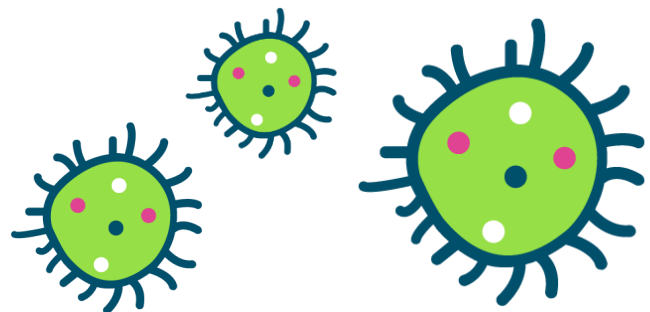
“Being able to take stock of your life...what is important? Spending time in my garden, doing DIY jobs in the home, spending time with my partner on lunch times outside. I signed up to Mindful Chef as I became vegan early last year so I have had semi guaranteed meals to cover four days and I have added my shop to my daughters delivery as I also wanted to limit my time amongst others. Zoom and House Party apps have meant that I can talk to my family and friends ('night out in') for quizzes and chats.
We've embraced the new normal in different ways.”

“I have absolutely loved lockdown.
I moved back in with my parents for it and we have had fantastic family time. I have worked throughout and worked overtime so made a lot of money. I haven't been drinking so my mind is very clear and I am very, very happy. I do understand we have been very fortunate not to have lost anyone to Coronavirus and also had no health conditions.”

Age and mental health and wellbeing

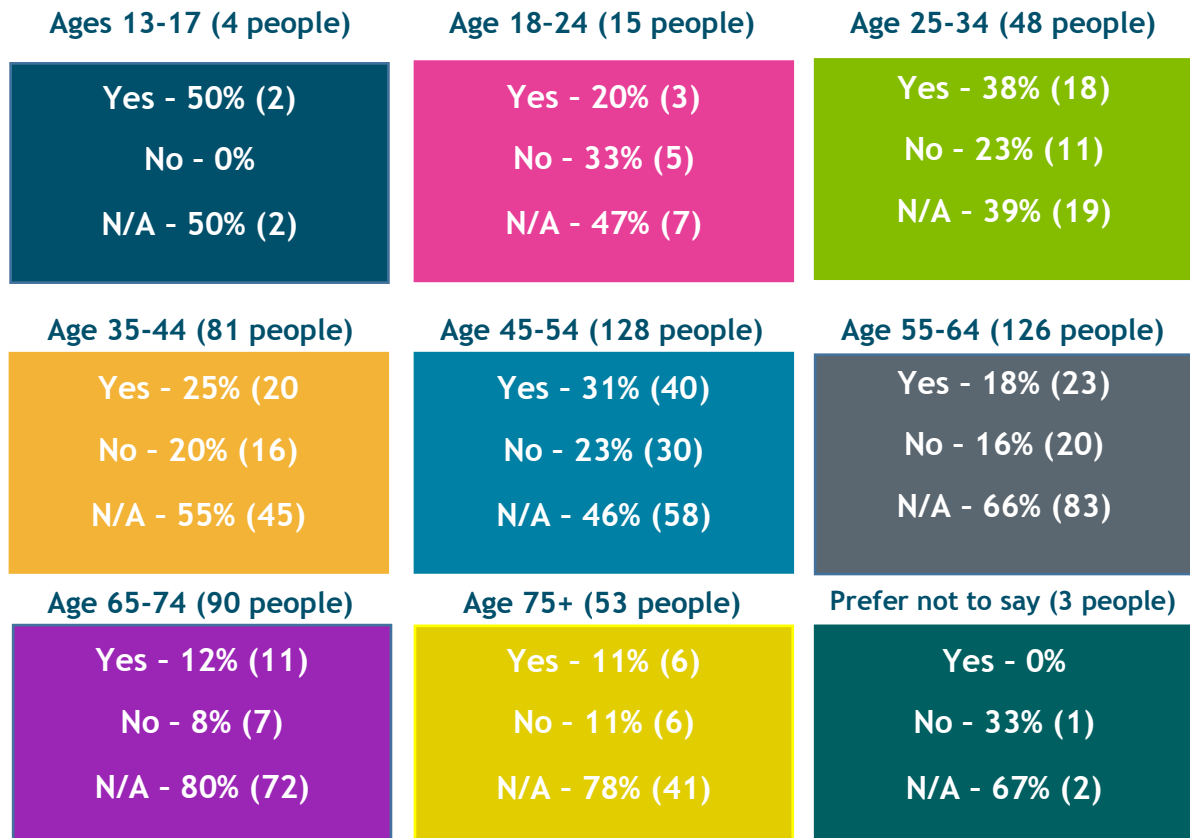
The table below shows the different age ranges and what they told us when they were asked how much of an impact the COVID-19 pandemic had on their mental health and wellbeing. The responses highlight that the mental health and wellbeing of the majority of people was impacted to some degree by the pandemic. 25-34 year olds showed the highest level of negative impact with **67%** responses showed that it had impacted them a great deal, a lot or a moderate amount. However the people aged 75+ showed the least level of negative impact with only **36%** responding that it had impacted them a great deal, a lot or a moderate amount.

Age, (number & percentage of respondents)	Age 13-17	Age 18-24	Age 25-34	Age 35-44	Age 45-54	Age 55-64	Age 65-74	Age 75+	Prefer not to say
	4 0.7%	15 3%	48 8%	81 14%	128 22%	126 22%	90 9%	53 9%	3 0.5%
A great deal	0%	27%	19%	12%	16%	7%	4%	4%	0%
A lot	25%	13%	15%	22%	12%	9%	7%	4%	33%
A moderate amount	0%	13%	33%	20%	36%	29%	32%	28%	0%
A little	75%	33%	25%	33%	23%	29%	24%	26%	33%
None	0%	13%	8%	12%	14%	26%	33%	38%	34%



Age and accessing support

When we asked the people from different age ranges if they had been able to access support for their mental health and wellbeing, we received the responses shown below. The findings show the highest numbers of people who weren't able to access support for their mental health and wellbeing during the pandemic were the 18-24 year olds (33%).

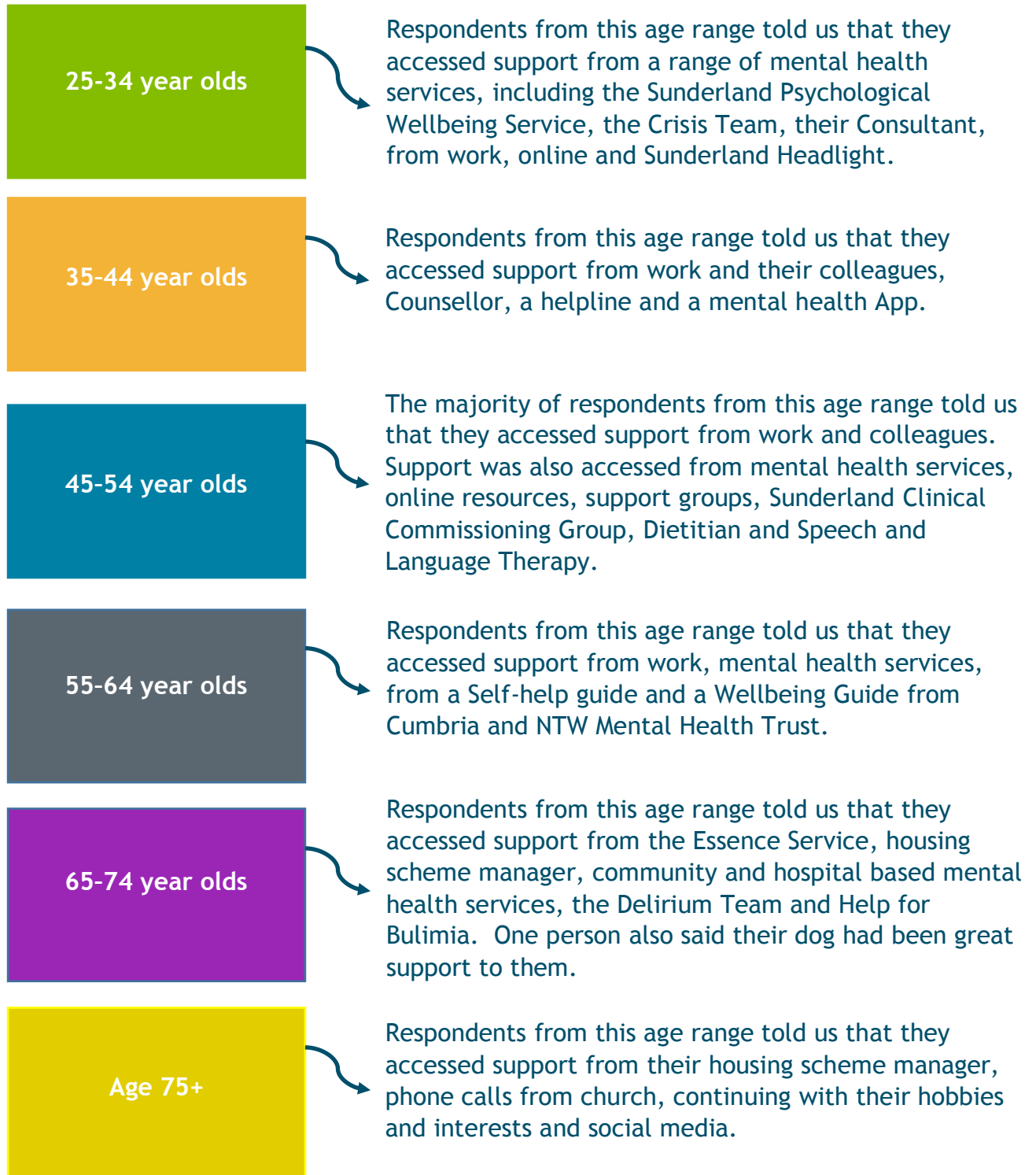


The following table indicates where the different age ranges accessed support for their mental health and wellbeing with some people accessing support from more than one source.

It shows the majority of people who accessed support, accessed it from friends and family or other sources. None of the younger demographic (13-24 year olds) accessed support from their GP compared with **33%** of the people 75+ who accessed their GP for support.

Ages and number of people	Friends and family	Voluntary/charity organisation	GP	Other
13-17 (2)	100% (2)	0%	0%	0%
18-24 (3)	67% (2)	33% (1)	0%	67% (2)
25-35 (18)	56% (10)	28% (5)	11% (2)	56% (10)
35-44 (20)	60% (12)	0%	20% (4)	35% (7)
45-54 (40)	40% (16)	10% (4)	8% (3)	70% (28)
55-64 (23)	60% (16)	22% (5)	13% (3)	44% (10)
65-74 (11)	46% (5)	9% (1)	18% (2)	55% (6)
75+ (6)	83% (5)	0%	33% (2)	33% (2)
Prefer not to say	0%	0%	0%	0%

When asked where respondents accessed support for their mental health and wellbeing during the pandemic, we received the responses shown below. The majority of people from the 45-54 year old group told us that they accessed support from work and their colleagues and people across all age ranges, apart from the 75+ year olds accessed a range of mental health services for support:



(There were no responses from the 13-17year olds, 18-24 year olds and prefer not to say groups).

Age and positive effects on mental health and wellbeing

When asked what had a positive effect on them during pandemic we received the following responses, which show that all of the age ranges cited friends and family as their main source of positivity and, with the exception of the 13-17 year olds, all age ranges had people who could not find any positives during the pandemic:

13 - 17 All of the people in this age range stated that their family had a positive effect on them and the majority added their friends. Cooking, meditation apps and working were also mentioned by this age range.

18 - 24 The majority of people stated that their friends and family had a positive effect on them as well as exercising, being outdoors, cooking, creative activities, following their faith, trying new things, catching up on sleep, reading and having time to themselves. Some people said that smoking tobacco and cannabis had a positive effect on them. 4 people in this age range told us that nothing had a positive effect on them during the pandemic.

25 - 34 The majority of people told us that they got positivity from and enjoyed supporting their family and friends, doing exercise, gardening and getting outside. People also enjoyed their pets, hobbies, cooking, trying new things, saving money, less travelling, their religion, continuing to work/time out of work and working from home. In general people enjoyed the slower pace of life, not rushing around and having more time for themselves and their loved ones. 23 people from these four age ranges told us that nothing had a positive effect on them, 13 of these were people from the 55-64 age range.

35 - 44

45 - 54

55 - 64

65 - 74 The majority of people told us that they got positivity from family and friends, with the majority of these keeping in contact via online platforms, doing exercise, getting outside and undertaking hobbies and interests. People also told us that they had received great positivity through being able to still work during the pandemic. Others enjoyed the peace and quiet and walking their dogs. 7 people from this age range told us that nothing had a positive effect on them during the pandemic.

75+ The majority of people told us that they got positivity and support from family, friends, neighbours and their housing scheme managers. They enjoyed exercise which was mainly walking, also reading, gardening and cooking. 12 people from this age range told us that nothing had a positive effects on them during the pandemic.

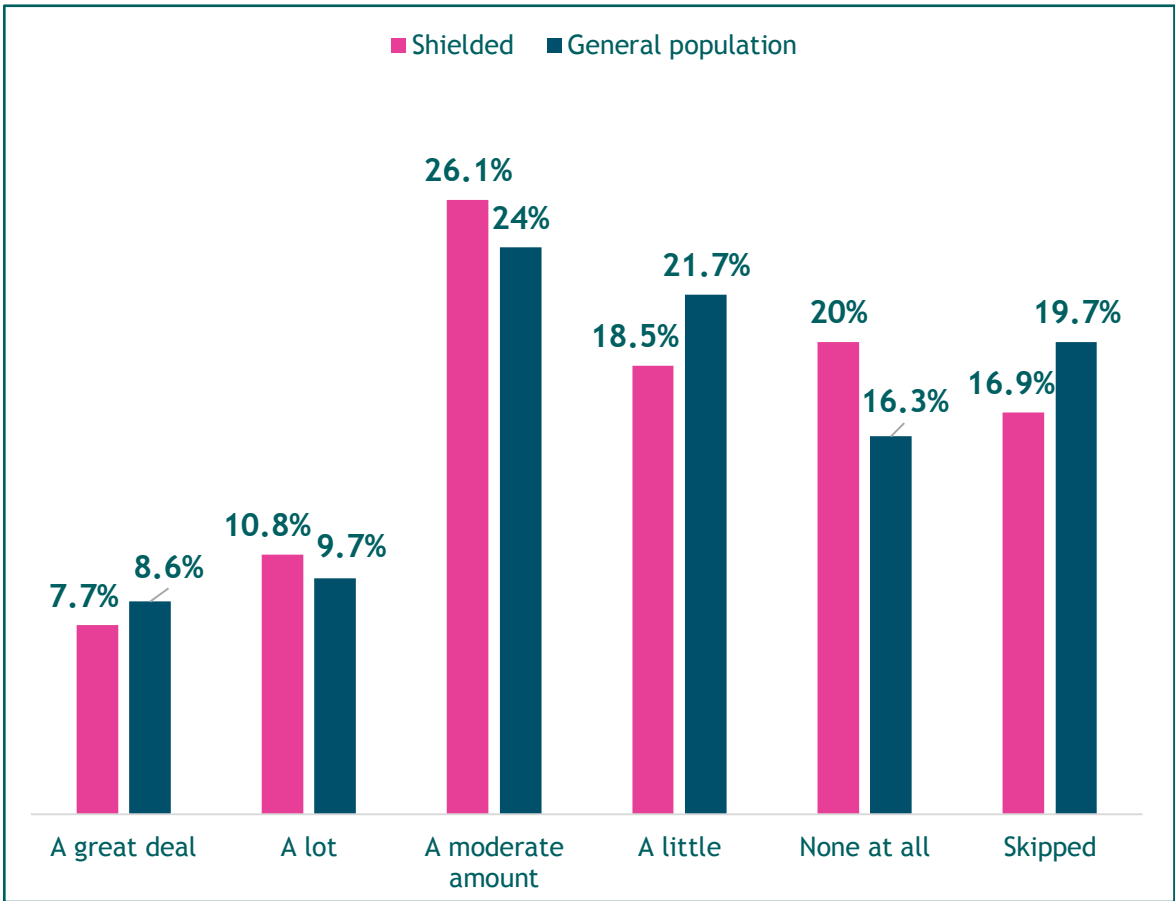
Prefer not to say These people gained positivity from, gardening, talking to other people, exercising, reading and politics.

The shielding and mental health and wellbeing

65 people who completed the general survey stated that they have received either a letter or text advising them to shield. This section gives a comparison between those people and the general population when completing section five of the survey - mental health and wellbeing.

Impact on mental health and wellbeing, shielding versus general population

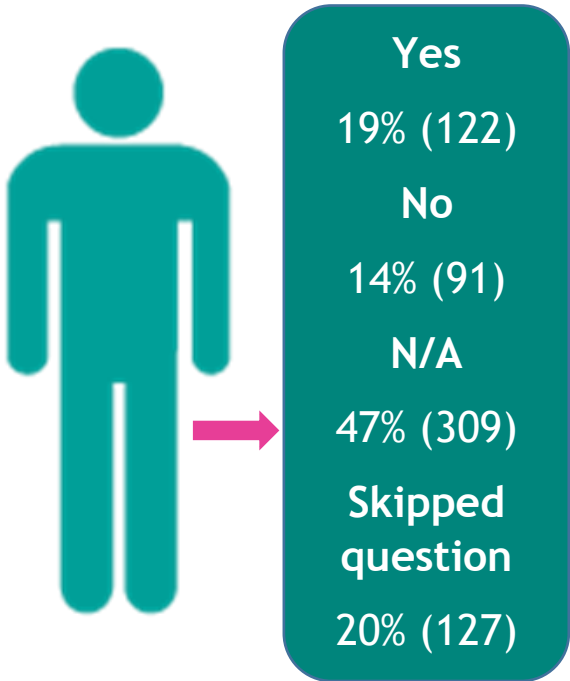
The graph below shows there is little comparison between those who shielded and the general population when we asked how much of an impact the COVID-19 pandemic had on their mental health or wellbeing. The majority of people in both sets were effected to some degree.



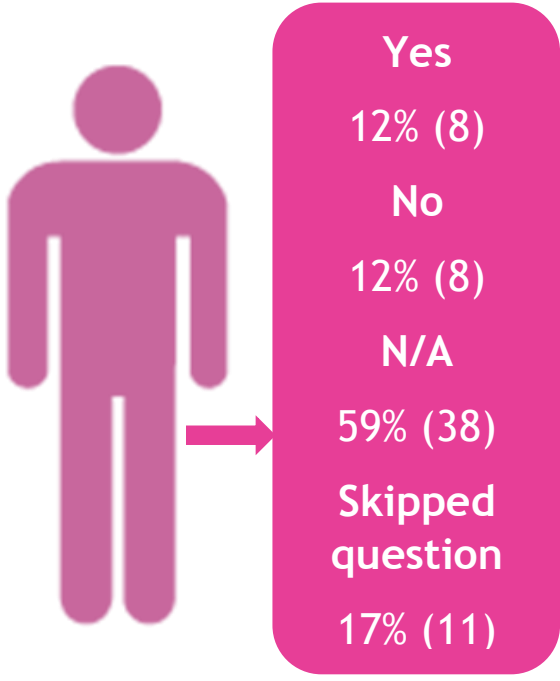
Accessing support, shielding versus general population

The diagram below depicts the responses when we asked if the shielded and the general population had been able to access support for their mental health and wellbeing during the time of the pandemic, with **12%** of the shielded saying yes in comparison to **19%** of the general population and **12%** of the shielded were not able to access support, against **14%** of the general population.

General population



Shielded



The table below shows the comparison between where the **8** shielded who accessed support for their mental health and wellbeing received their support and where the **45** people from the general population received theirs. Please note that respondents were given the option to tick one or more boxes for this question:

Support	Shielded (number of people)	General population (number of people)
Family / friends	4	67
Voluntary or Charity organisation	0	17
GP	1	17
Other	4	63

The **shielded** informed us that they received support from other sources, such as; a Gento Scheme Manager, the Sunderland Psychological Wellbeing Service, their work and engaged in Psychotherapy.

The **general population** informed us that they got their support from a range of other sources, with the most popular being; work and colleagues, support groups, community and hospital based mental health services, online resources, continuing their hobbies and interests and their pets.

Positive effects on mental health and wellbeing, shielding versus general population

We asked both sets of people what had a positive effect on their mental health and wellbeing during the COVID-19 pandemic. We received the following responses:

From those who were **shielding**, this included; speaking to friends and family either over the phone or online, doing exercise, time out of work, accessing home delivery of groceries, continuing with hobbies and interests, looking after pets and cooking from scratch.

“Keeping busy, gardening, cleaning and tidying and reading.”

“Less rushing around. Time to review priorities.”

“More time with my cats who keep me amused. Lots of reading and catching up on other things.”

“Writing down my thoughts and doing a bit of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) - what I can change and what I cannot change.”

From those in the **general population** who told us what had a positive effect on them during the pandemic, the most popular responses were; exercise, walking the dog, spending time with family and friends face to face and online with those outside of their households, cooking, relaxing and meditating, having more time for hobbies and interests, being able to enjoy the lovely weather, saving money and the general flexibility around work and school.

“The greatest help for me through it all has been the constant company and affection of my dogs.”

“Not being around crowds, help from my Carer, support from the local Council, the Mental Health Team and Psychiatrist.”

“Support from the volunteers. The support we have had each week from these people is amazing. I cannot thank them enough. Fantastic help.
WELL DONE SUNDERLAND.”

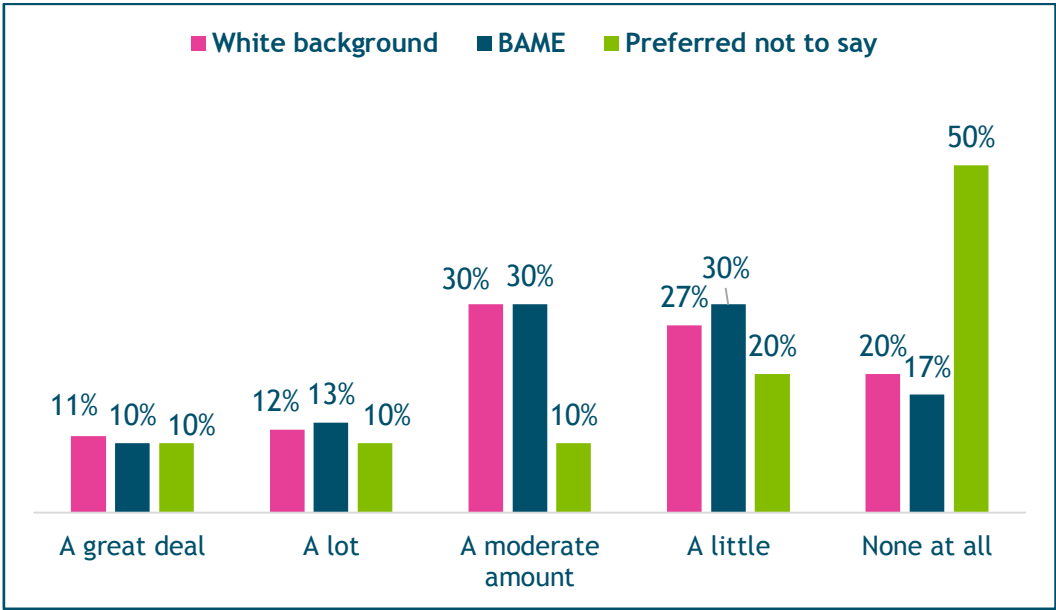
“More time at home with my family. Time spent with my son, understanding his learning needs. (He was missing a lot of school before the pandemic. Now we understand him better having had more time with him.)”

Ethnicity and mental health and wellbeing

From the **714** people who completed the general survey **507** people identified as white British, white Irish or any other white background (we will refer to these people as being from a white background throughout this section). **30** people identified as Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME). (The full breakdown of ethnicities is found on page 8). **10** people preferred not to state their ethnic background.

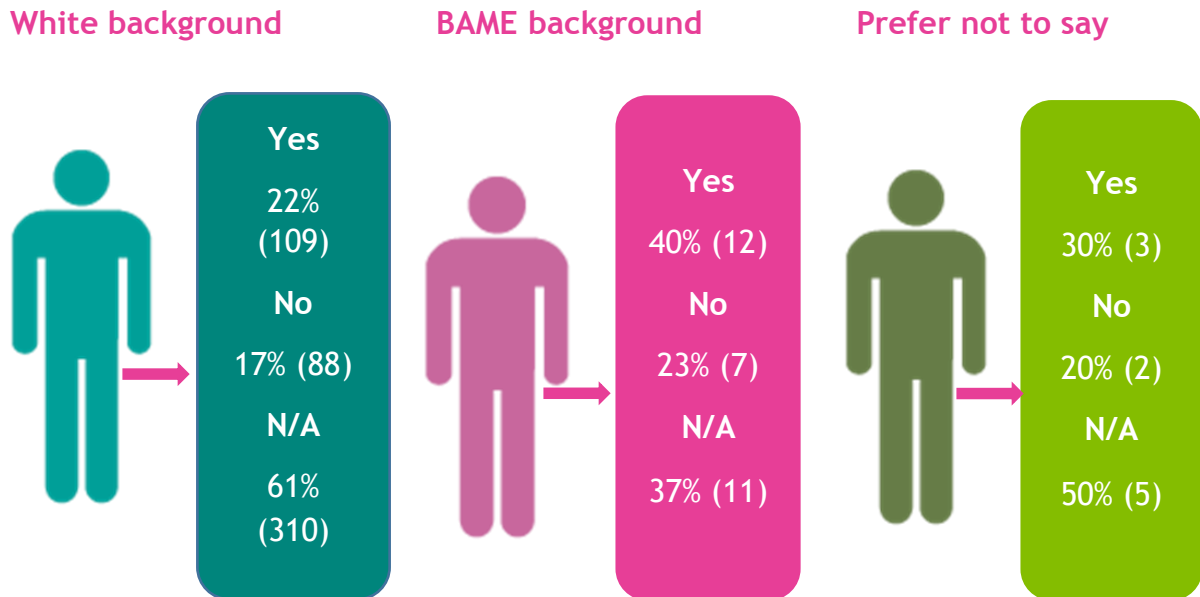
Impact on mental health and wellbeing and ethnicity

The graph below shows there were no real differences in responses between those who identified as from a white background and those who identified themselves as one of the BAME backgrounds.



Accessing support and ethnicity

17% of people from a white background did not access support for their mental health and wellbeing during the pandemic in comparison to **23%** of people from a BAME background and **20%** of people who preferred not provide their ethnicity.



The table below shows the comparison between each of the three groups who received support for their mental health or wellbeing. Some people told us that they received support from more than one source.

Support	White background	BAME background	Prefer not to say
Family / friends	54% (59)	58% (7)	67% (2)
Voluntary or Charity organisation	10% (11)	33% (4)	
GP	15% (16)	17% (2)	
Other	60% (65)	33% (4)	33% (1)

65 people who identified as being from a white background said they received support from other sources. The majority of these people stated that they received other support from their work place and colleagues. Others received their support from mental health services, including their counsellor or community mental health team. Accessing online resources was also very popular.

Only 4 people from BAME backgrounds stated that they received support from other sources. These were; Work (Young Asian Voices), counselling, the Crisis Team, Sunderland Clinical Commissioning Group, the Mental Health Community Integrated Team, Dietician and the Speech and Language Team.

1 person who preferred not to say when asked about their ethnicity, stated that they accessed support from a helpline.

Positive effects on mental health and wellbeing and ethnicity

When asked what had a positive effect on their mental health and wellbeing during the pandemic, people from a white background spoke predominantly about spending time with family and friends, whether this be within their own household or via the internet, using apps such as Zoom or WhatsApp. A high number of people also informed us that they enjoyed having additional time for hobbies and interests, including gardening and crafts. Exercise was also high up the list for people, with some mentioning walking, jogging and undertaking sessions online, such as yoga and Zumba. Some people also said that they enjoyed the slower pace of life in lockdown, which they found less stressful.

People from BAME backgrounds told us what had a positive effect on them during the pandemic which included spending time with or talking to family and friends, and having time to cook and undertake hobbies and interests. Continuing to practice their chosen faith and spirituality was high on the agenda, as well as relaxing and having time to themselves. Also people enjoyed exercising, meditation and relaxing in the hot weather.

“Daily prayer watch, spiritual input from church leaders and members via Zoom link.”

“My strength as a person and the fact I’ve been through other hard things in my life, so I know I can deal with it.”

“Family/friends and support from Sunderland Bangladesh International Centre.”

From those who preferred not to tell us their ethnicity, some people told us what had a positive effect on their mental health and wellbeing during the pandemic, this included; exercise, keeping in touch on a daily basis with family, friends and work colleagues, taking part in a Zoom choir, sewing, reading, radio, gardening and watching TV. Two people stated that they found that smoking and drinking alcohol had a positive effect on them.

Pregnant women and mental health and wellbeing

4 pregnant women completed the general survey. **2** of these women completed the questions about mental health and wellbeing.

1 women told us that their mental health and wellbeing had been affected a great deal by the pandemic. They had been able to access support and this was from the Sunderland Psychological Wellbeing Service and having time out of work had a positive effect on her.

1 women told us that her mental health and wellbeing had been effected a moderate amount by the pandemic and that she did not need support for this. She went on to say that exercise, going outside, craft activities and spending time with her family had a positive effect on her.



Healthwatch Sunderland
Hope Street Xchange
Sunderland
SR1 3QD



Tele: 0191 514 7145

Email: healthwatchesunderland@pcp.uk.net

Web: www.healthwatchesunderland.com