

Living with Covid 19

Coronavirus testing, self-isolating and NHS Test and Trace

Sept 2020

Background

In these difficult times during the Covid 19 pandemic, Healthwatch Bolton in partnership with Bolton Public Health, wanted to find out people's views on coronavirus testing, the NHS Test and Trace service, being asked to self-isolate and about any Covid tracking apps people may be using.

The NHS Test and Trace service:

Ensures that anyone who develops symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) can quickly be tested to find out if they have the virus, and also includes targeted asymptomatic testing of NHS and social care staff and care home residents.

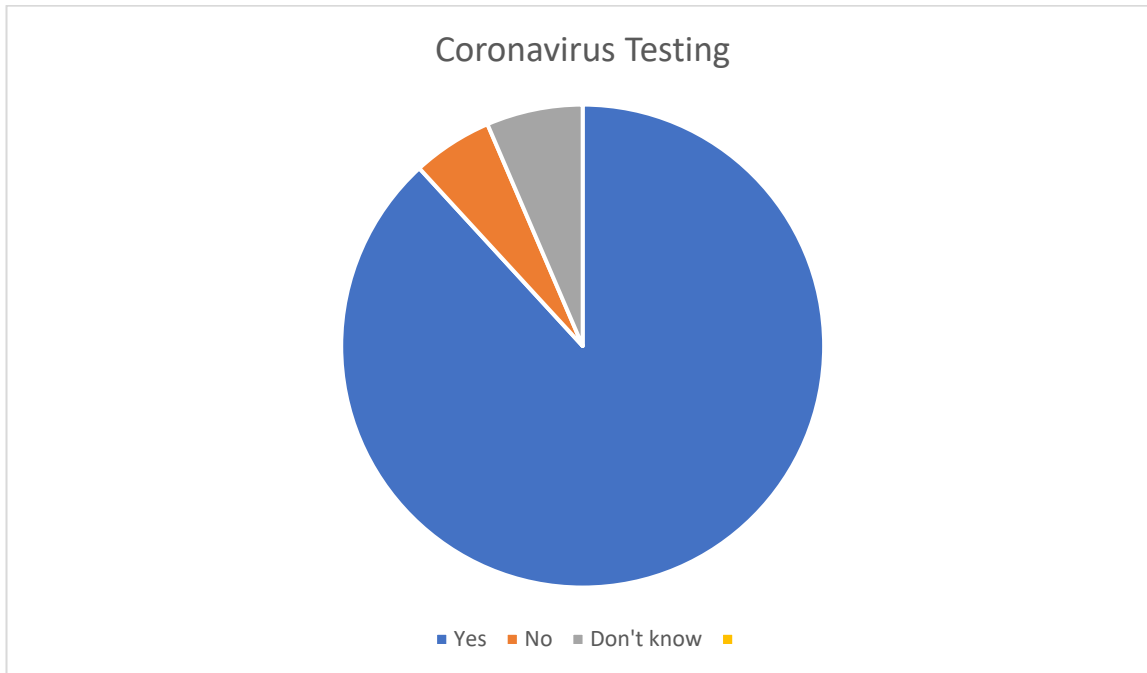
Helps trace close recent contacts of anyone who tests positive for coronavirus and, if necessary, notifies them that they must self-isolate at home to help stop the spread of the virus.

Methodology

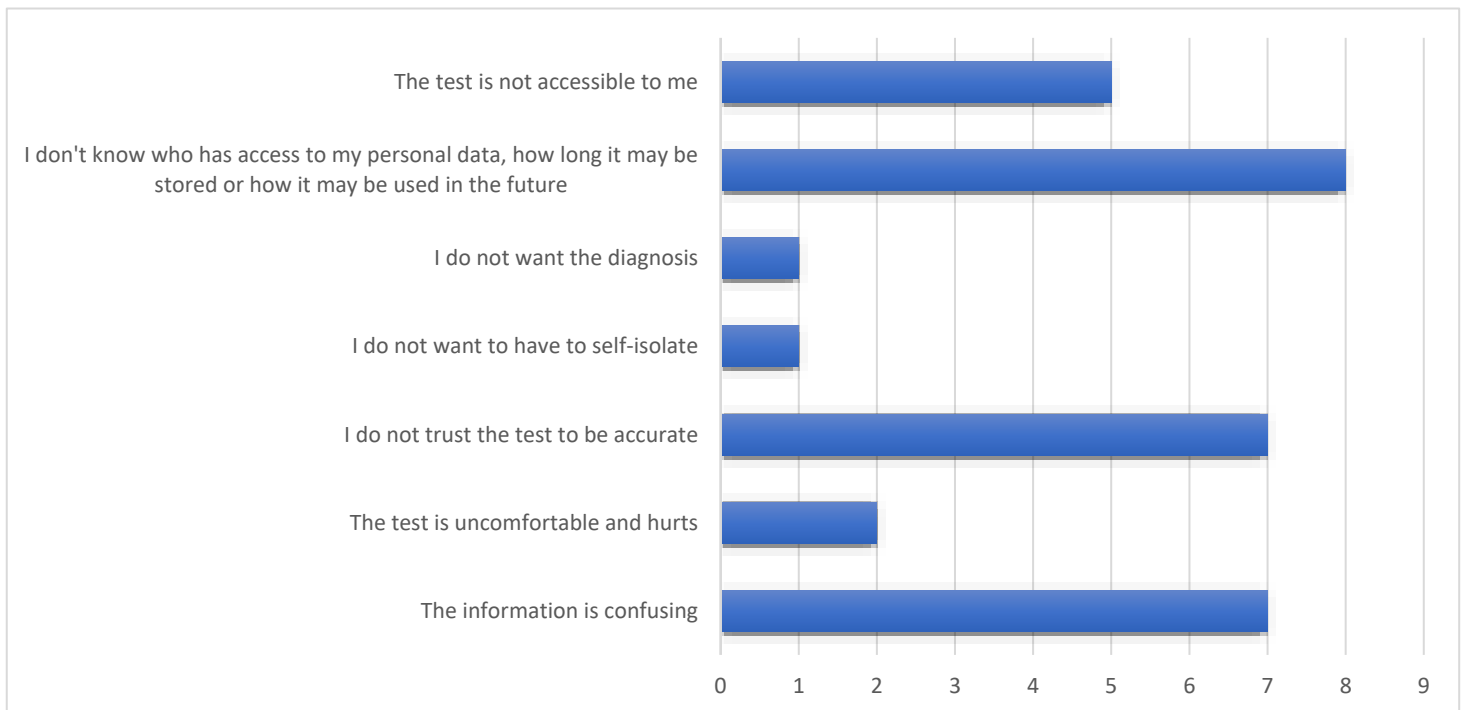
A survey was launched on 24th August which closed on 14th September. In total **93** people responded to the survey. The survey was shared on social media channels including Facebook Bolton neighbourhood groups and Healthwatch Bolton website, mailing lists and Bolton Public Health mailing lists.

Summary of Findings

Q1. If you developed symptoms of coronavirus (Covid 19): (continuous cough, fever and loss of taste and smell), would you get tested?



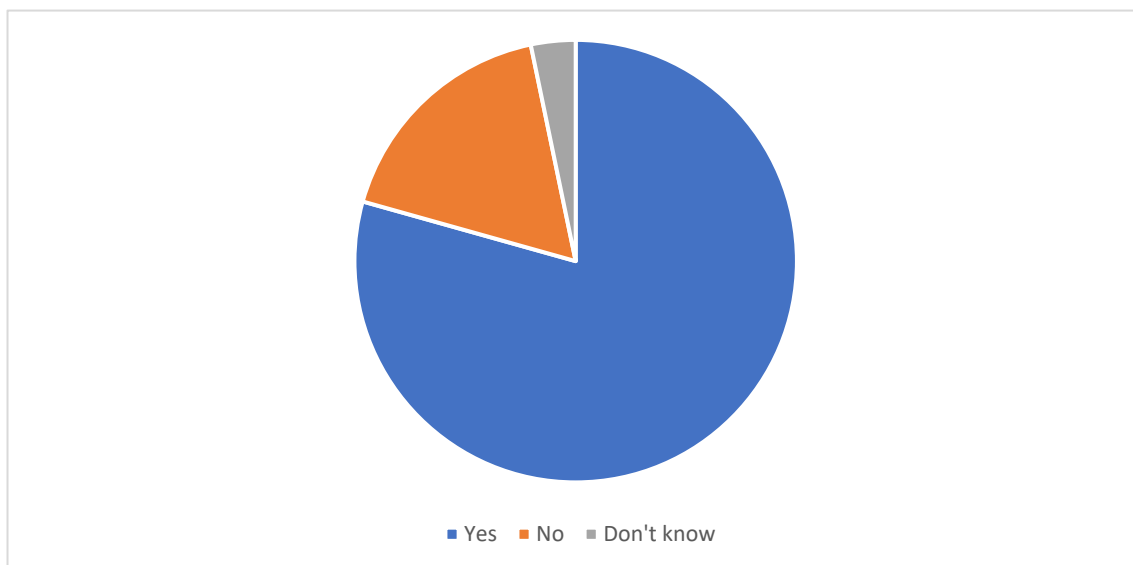
Q2. If you would not get tested, please tell us why?



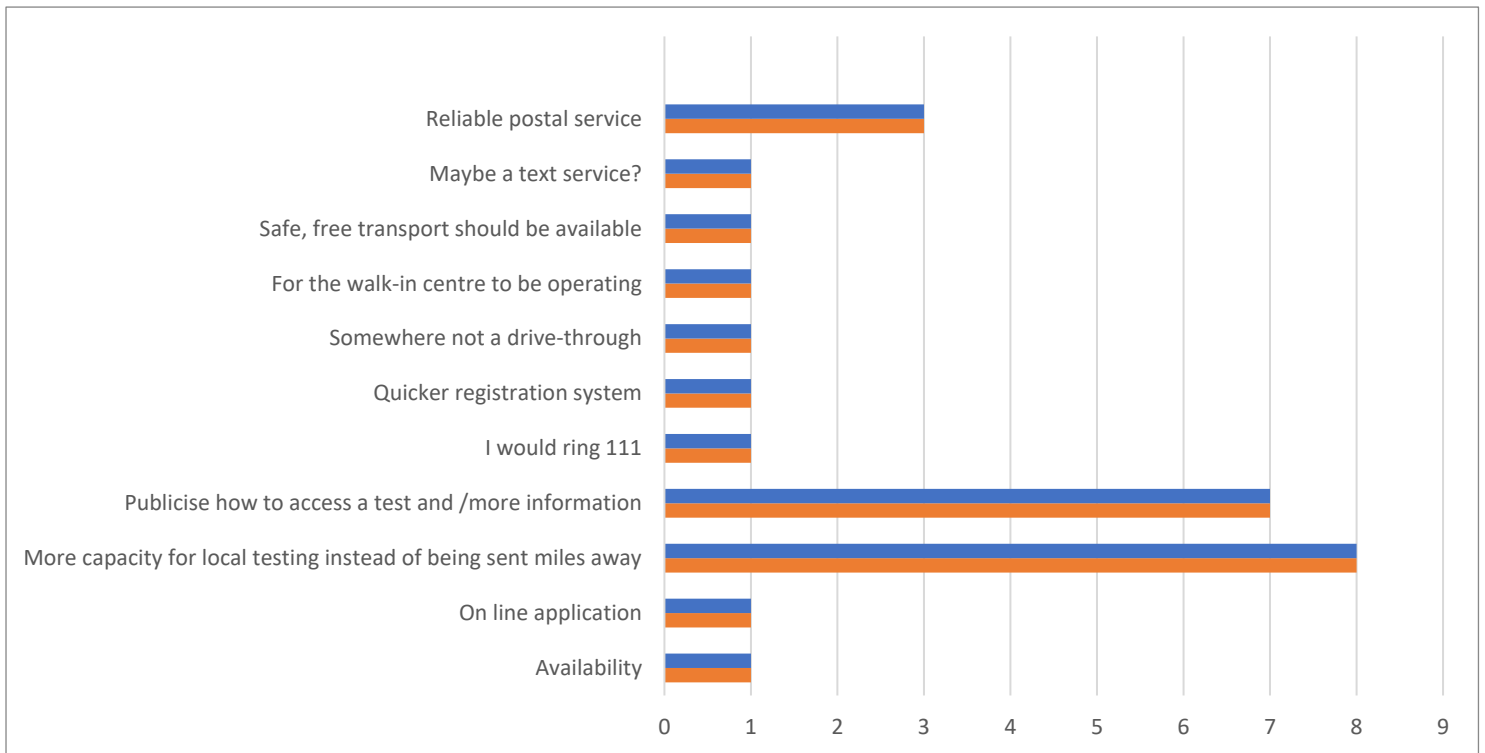
Comments

- ✚ No tests available
- ✚ Despite Bolton having the highest number of cases it is practically impossible to book a test as the site keeps crashing and when one can be booked, an appointment is offered miles away! We need testing centres in Bolton to open urgently!
- ✚ I believe anyway there is no testing available
- ✚ Would have a test if it was accessible but I don't drive
- ✚ I have info to confirm that 8 people out of 10 last week got results back some 6 days later, saying tests unclear. I can't believe that all 8 people didn't do their test correctly, all were done at a walk-in centre, so were supervised.
- ✚ I would have the test, although I believe I do not have coronavirus. I would take the test to give myself peace of mind.
- ✚ Most test-centres are drive-through, so useless to me. Have sent for postal tests twice, never arrived.
- ✚ I might have a normal cold, maybe the test can say I have Covid 19. I don't trust the system.
- ✚ As I live in Tonge Moor, I do not know where the nearest place is and would be unable to do the test myself. I won't use public transport or taxi and do not drive.

Q3. Do you know how to access a test for coronavirus?



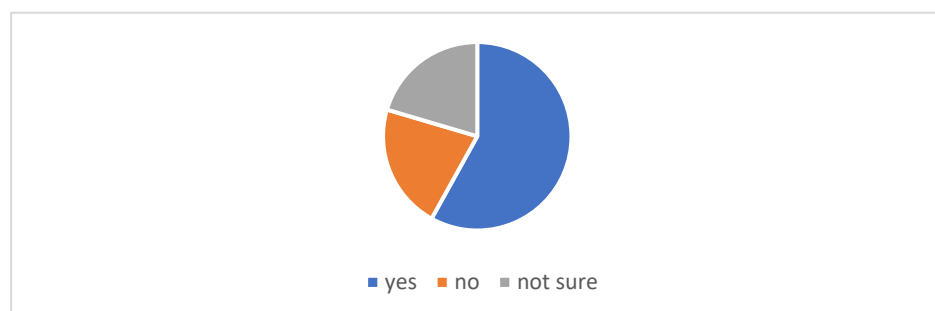
Q.4 Is there anything you feel could help you to arrange a coronavirus test?



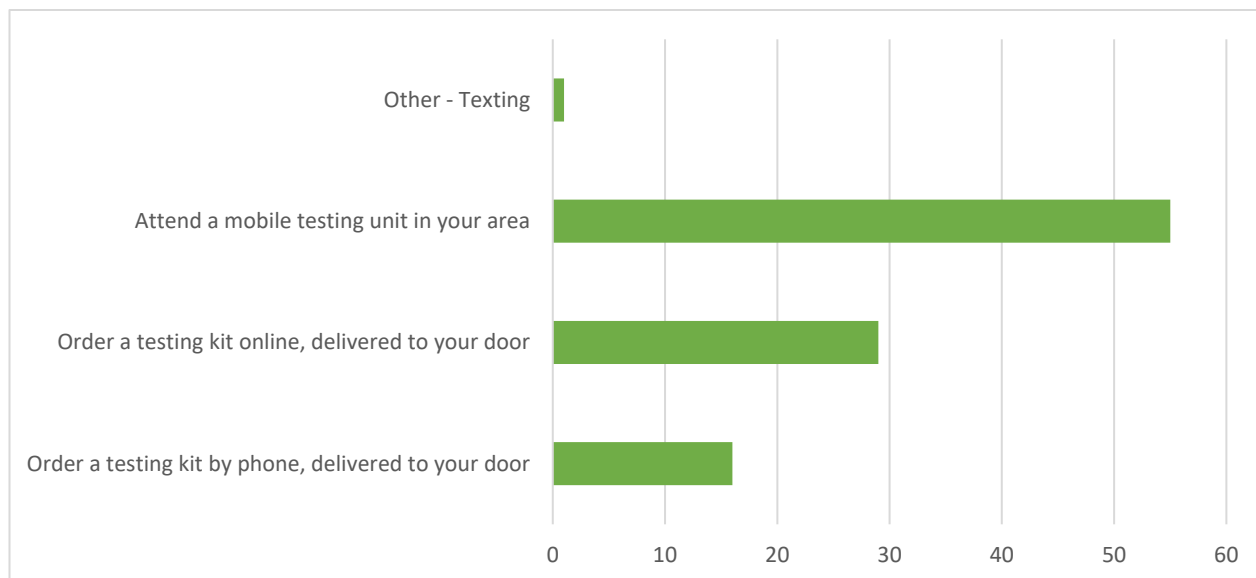
Other comments

- ✚ Yes, I have tried to arrange a test and have been told to travel from BL1 to Inverness - 278 miles for the nearest available test via the government website
- ✚ I just want to be able to ring my GP or chemist and get one delivered to my door through letterbox, it needs to be this easy so more people will take the test
- ✚ Bolton needs testing centres urgently!
- ✚ The test and trace app was not working on some phones and was never ever told or shown a picture of the app.

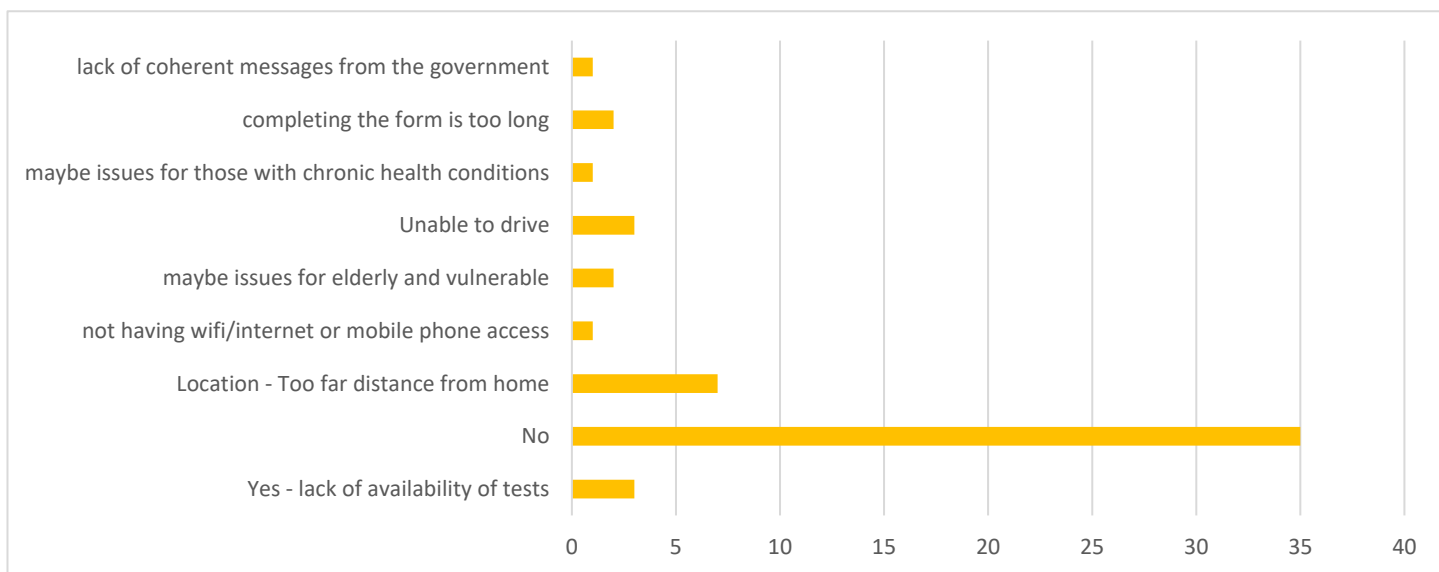
Q.5 Do you know there are a number of ways you can access testing?



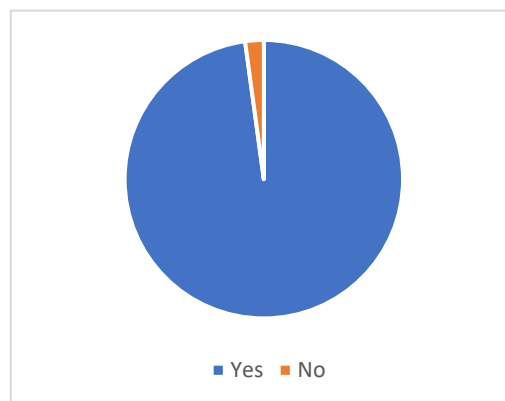
Q.6 What would be your preferred way to get a test for coronavirus?



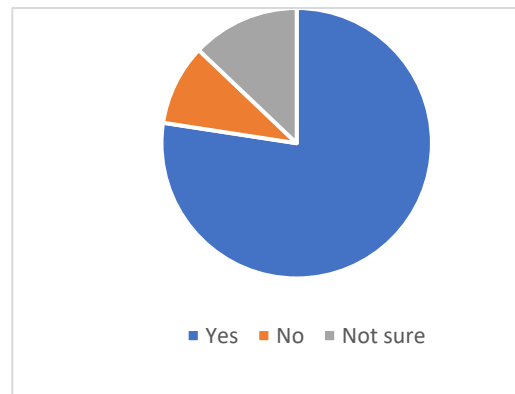
Q.7 Thinking about the ways to access testing, do you think you would have problems in getting tested for coronavirus? Do you think there are any barriers?



Q.8 Do you know that if you are identified as a close contact of someone who has tested positive for coronavirus you will be asked to self-isolate for 14 days?



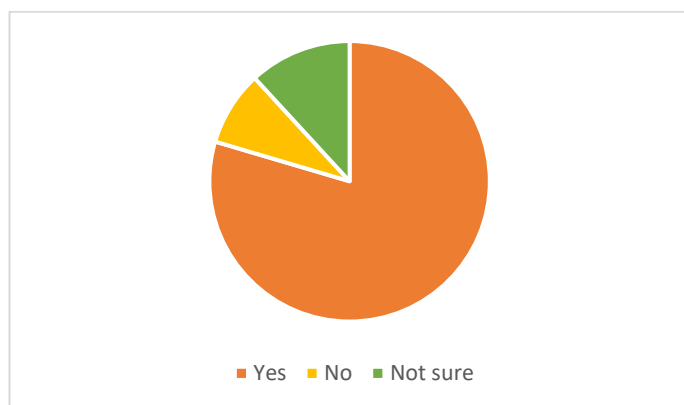
Q.9 If you were asked to self-isolate for 14 days, would you feel confident you could do this?



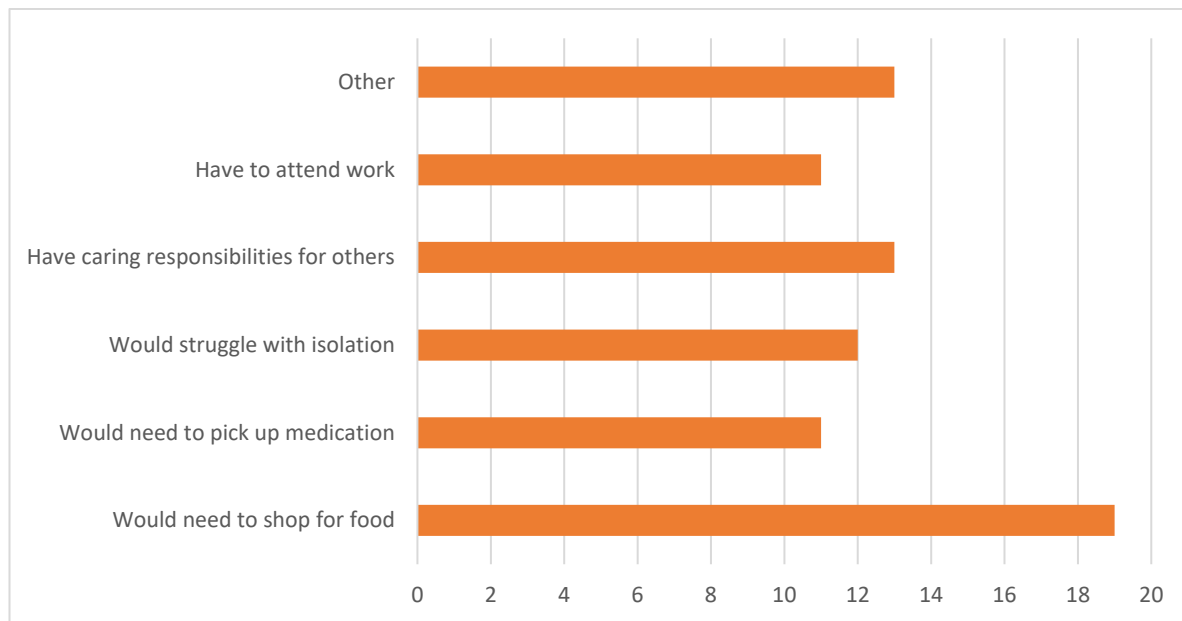
Q.9 Comments

- I am a carer for my husband and I drive which he can't do. We need to live so I have to go out for shopping. I know you can get delivery but they don't always have what you want so you need to go elsewhere, but with paying delivery fees this is not feasible.
- Currently yes, but job soon and cannot afford to lose it
- I am working from home so not a problem
- I have already done it in preparation for hospital day care unit
- You must be joking, asking me to self-isolate because someone has got flu!
- Work would be a problem
- It wouldn't be easy as our son is on the autistic spectrum and needs us, but I would do so
- I'm shielding with my dad and daughter meaning I'm triangulating between 3 houses to ensure that my high risk 88 year old father and high risk severe asthmatic daughter and her three children would be left without support and food and help at home with chores and help managing medications and their post and their errands for everyday life.
- Can't afford to
- I would, however I would feel isolated
- Already isolating for protection
- I'd go mental if I had to self-isolate

Q.10 And if asked to, would you self-isolate for the full 14 days?



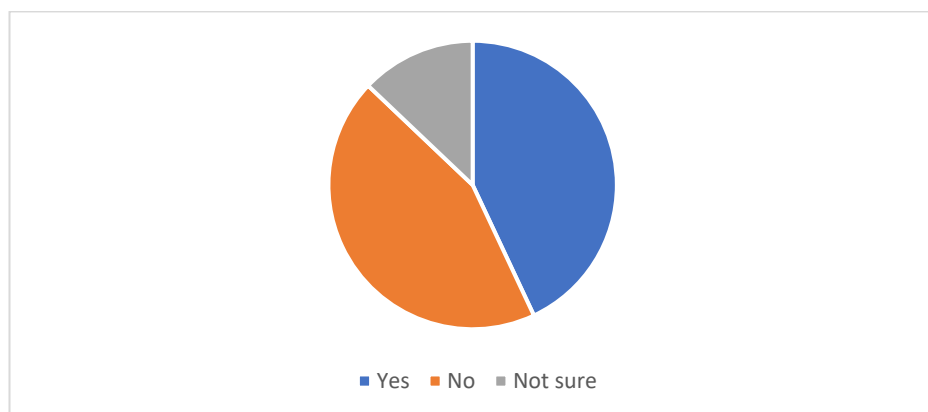
Q.11. If you could not self-isolate, please tell us the reason(s) for this.



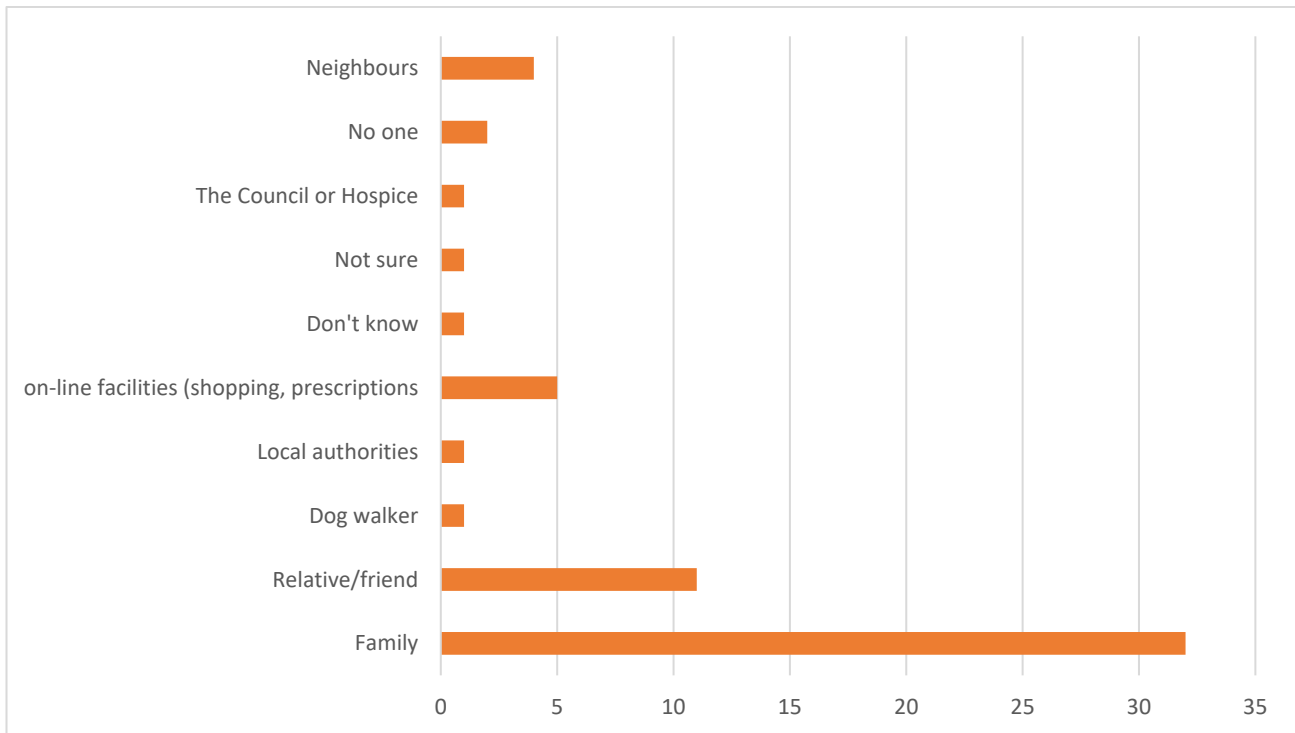
Comments from respondents who ticked 'Other'

- ✚ It would be hard but it is necessary
- ✚ Dog
- ✚ I have had Covid 19 and blood test confirms I have anti-bodies
- ✚ Would need to go back to shielding and therefore need support with food and medications etc
- ✚ Losing half a month's wage!!!
- ✚ Do not believe that self-isolation is clinically justified or practically possible
- ✚ Dog would have to be walked
- ✚ I'd go crazy, eat a lot, put on weight when I'm obese anyway. I'm diabetic and other health conditions. I'd need fresh air

Q.12 Would you need any support to self-isolate?



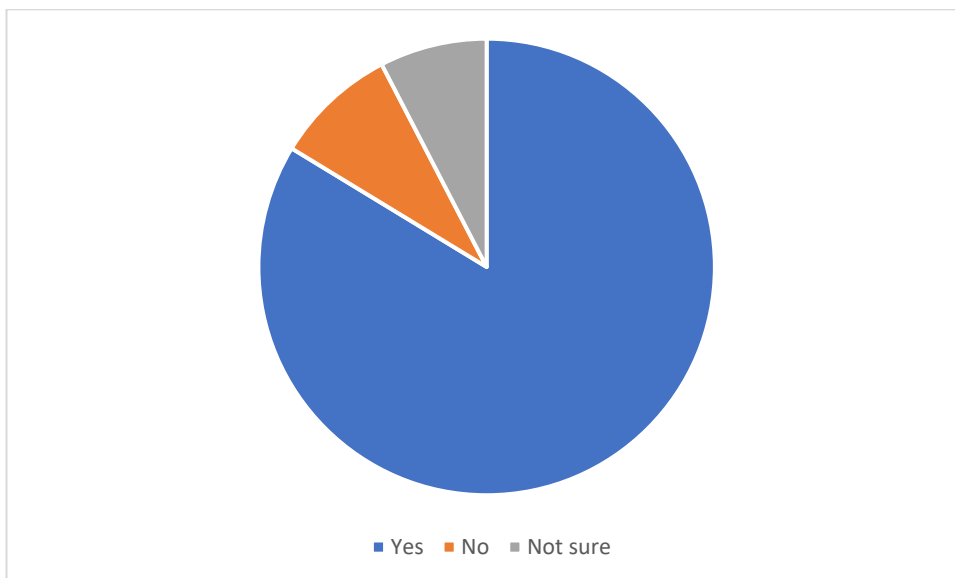
Q.13. If yes, where would you turn to?



Other comments

✚ Struggling with new baby, need support to help depression

Q.14 NHS Test and Trace may ask you to share personal details of people you have been in contact with. Would you be willing to do this?

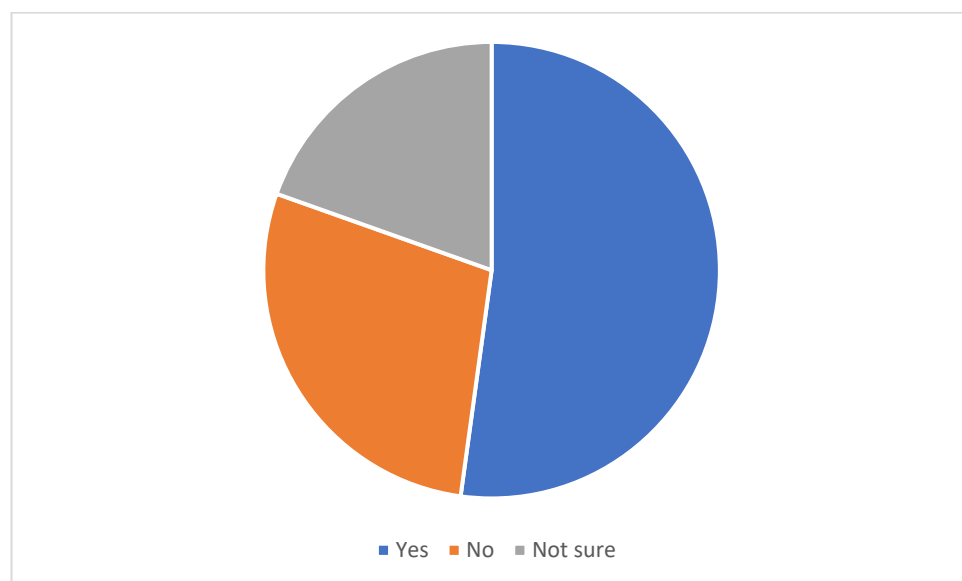


Q.15, If you are not willing to share contact details of those you have been in contact with, please tell us why?

Comments

- I don't believe the info would not be shared/sold
- Would share telephone number but nothing else
- Am willing
- May not know details of people been in contact with
- Need their permission first and won't know a lot of them
- It's all slowly becoming Orwellian state
- Would like to ask their permission
- Don't want people to know everywhere I have been
- I would prefer to contact them myself
- I feel that any insistence on sharing private information is an infringement of human rights
- There would be data protection issues. I am not willing to share personal info about people I have been in contact with without their consent, and I am not going to ask for consent either.

Q.16 If you test positive for coronavirus, you will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace. Do you feel you would remember all the people you had come into contact within the last 5-7 days and know their contact details?

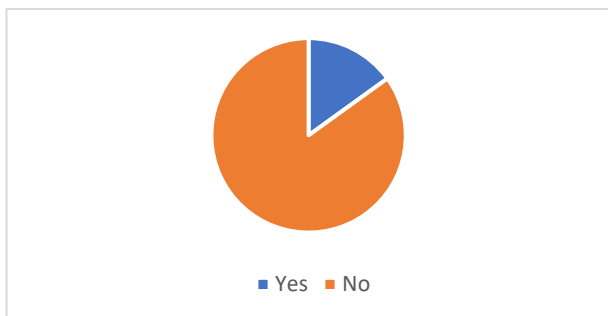


Q.17 If no, is there anything that help you do this?

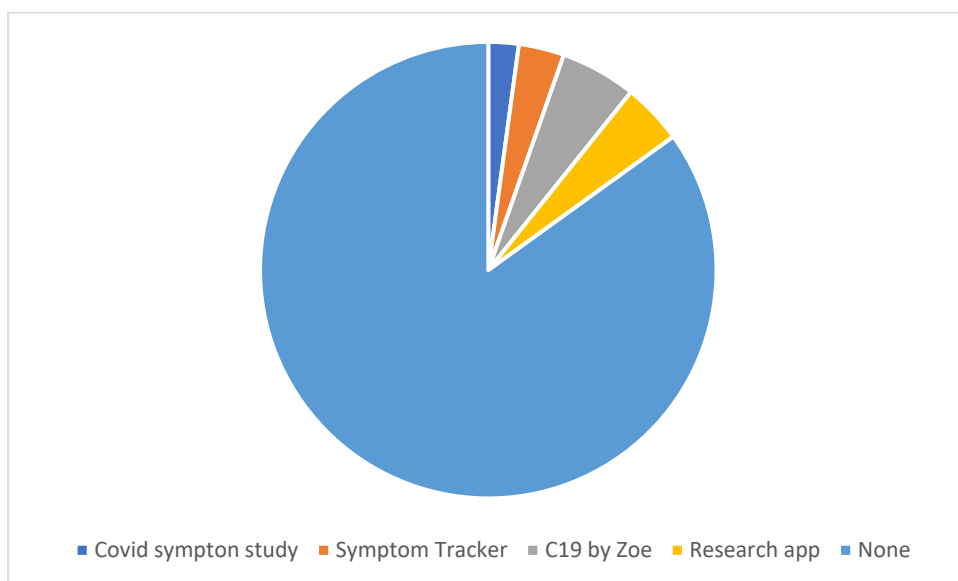
- No, work in a school
- Not really
- Well we don't have contact details for everyone
- You don't know when the symptoms are going to show so how can you possibly remember everyone, I wouldn't remember where I had been

- ✚ People in Tesco Farnworth wearing masks and social distancing would mean that I would not need to come into contact with them
- ✚ Not humanly possible
- ✚ No, how would I know the names of people who have passed me in the supermarket?
- ✚ Replace brain with supercomputer
- ✚ Template diary
- ✚ Very difficult, contact is made with people shopping, socially, in work etc. It would have to be a best estimate and judgement
- ✚ An app that logs where you go - like pins on a map, they can be stored privately for everyone in the cloud but then accessed by authorities if required, deleted after. There would be no data breach
- ✚ Could probably tell you pubs and shops been to
- ✚ Been shopping
- ✚ Time and call back later by the enquirer
- ✚ I could only name a store, not individual people
- ✚ Not really as you don't know who you come into contact with

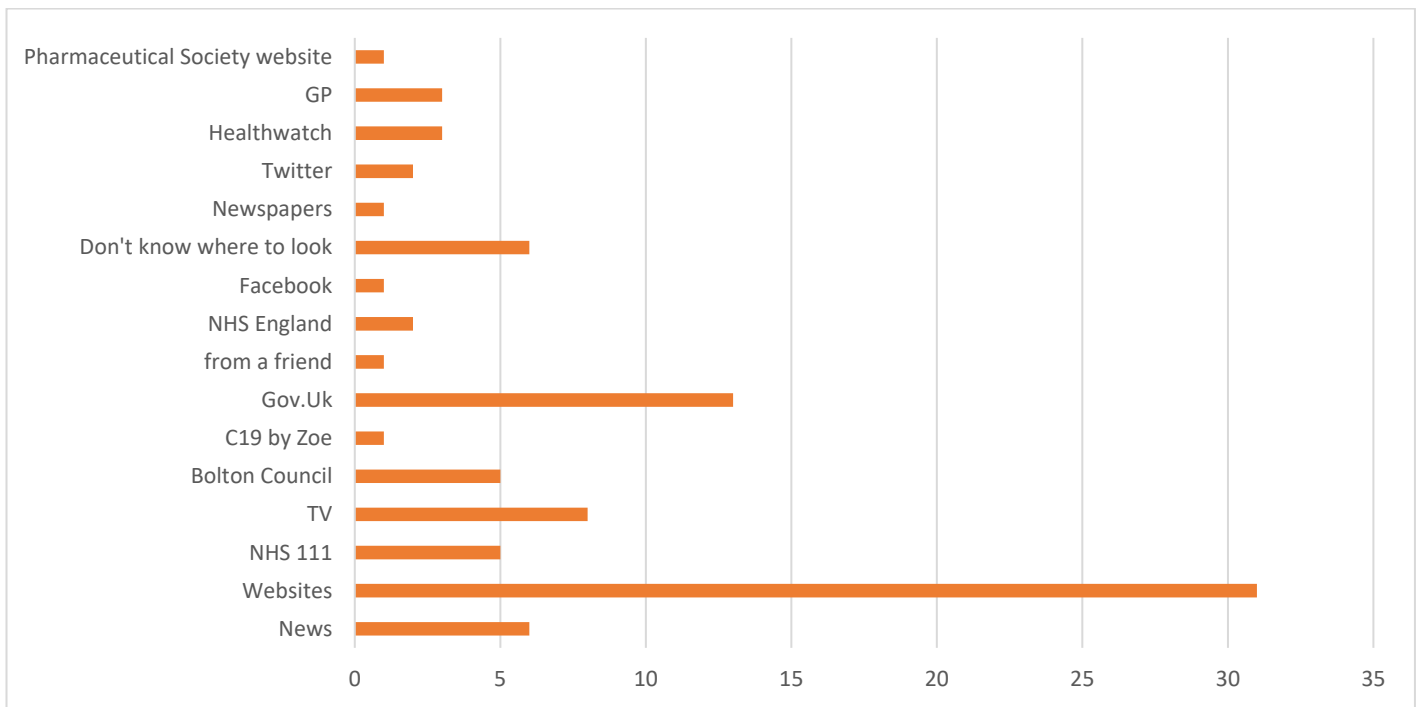
Q.18 - Do you use any Covid 19 Apps, such as a symptom tracker or Covid 19 research apps?



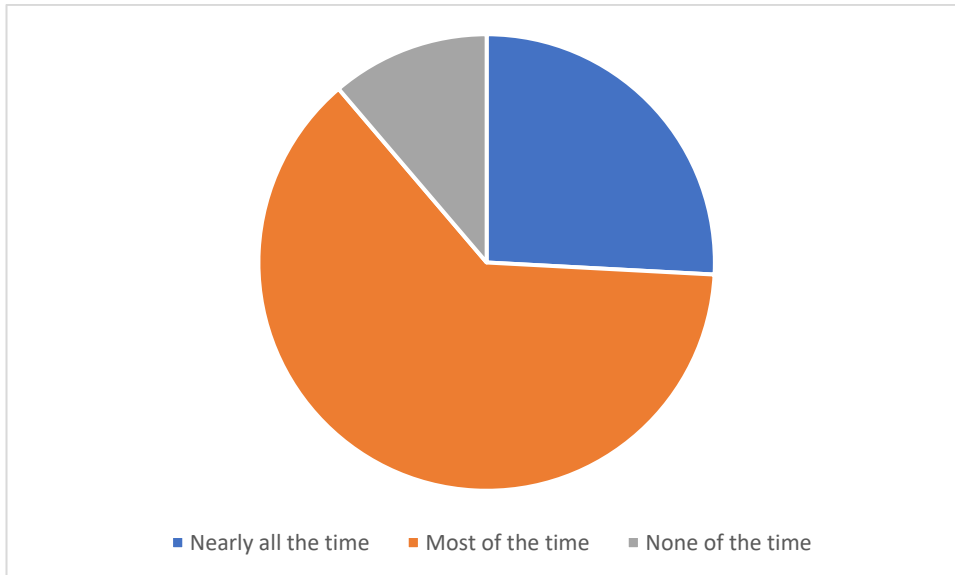
Q.19 Which apps do you use?



Q.20 Where do you turn to get information about coronavirus testing and NHS Test and Trace?



Q.21 Do you believe information to be factual, up-to-date and myth-busting?



Comments

- ✚ There are too many discrepancies
- ✚ All too crazy and confusion
- ✚ The Government and local councils are not giving clear, concise Covid information or updates
- ✚ It's clear that the media has led on only one agenda, lacking debate and alternative viewpoints

- ✚ I feel because this is a new virus, we still need to know more about it, more research needs to be done. However it is positive that people are taking more precautions like wearing masks, isolation etc.

Q.22 Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

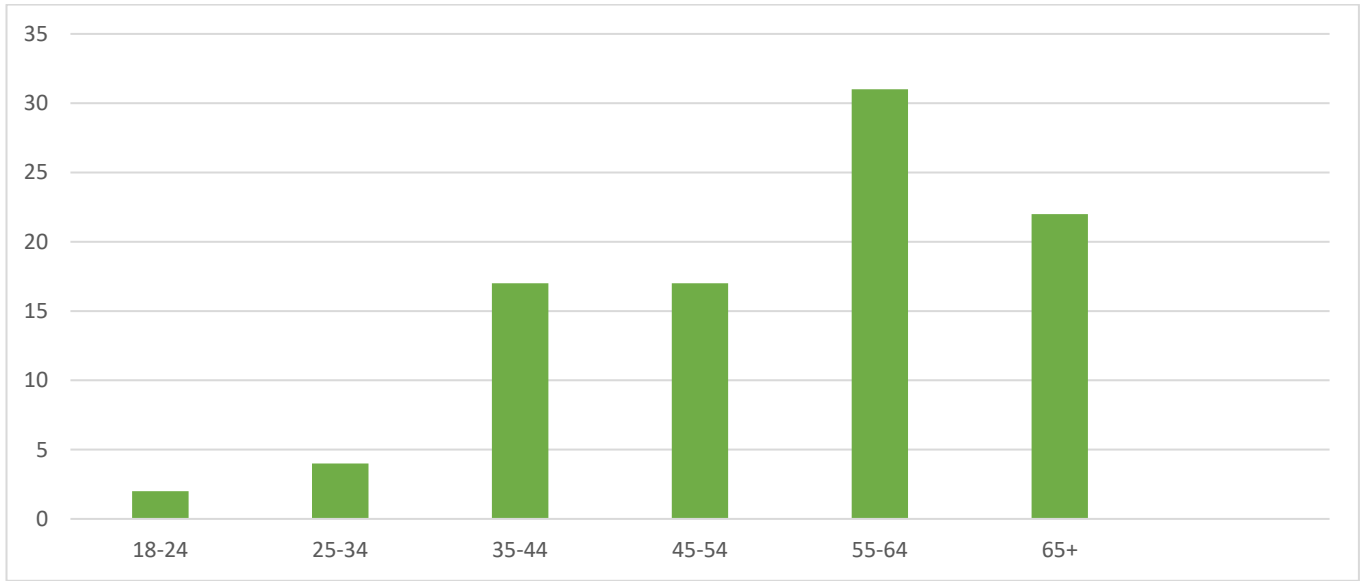
Comments

- ✚ I believe we had early symptoms but are fine now. I think people should be able to be tested to see if they have had Covid 19. If I had anti-bodies would gladly give plasma to help others
- ✚ What you can and can't do is all wrong and will not stop the problem. It is not rocket science what needs to happen, yet this can't be seen. Bolton people can't go to pubs to sit in or restaurants, yet you can go out of Bolton to do this? No more than 6 to meet, these are not causing issues are they not? 10pm to 5am curfew, because this is the only time the virus is out there, load of rubbish. Teachers, pupils being tested only that year isolate, it is not safe. Don't know where staff or pupils have been. Children won't be ill they say but my vulnerable husband could be seriously ill. Not being told when someone is positive is a common thing.
- ✚ Wish I'd been tested at the beginning of March. We self-isolated after returning by car and ship from a scheduled long stay in Spain. I got sick a week later, not confirmed and coped at home but it was frightening
- ✚ The more you test, the more you find, but this doesn't seem to be factored into the recent spike in Bolton
- ✚ Stop locking us all up. Many more thousands of people are dying of suicide, cancer etc., as a result of all this ridiculous lockdown. Let us get herd immunity
- ✚ I do not trust this government and believe the lack of tests available are intentional to keep numbers artificially low
- ✚ We need a proper breakdown of stats to be clear about the picture. Age, pre-existing health conditions. More support needed to encourage face mask wearing. Messages should be given to people on shopping areas/pubs. Need to sort out access to test kits
- ✚ Just confusion everywhere and blame culture going on
- ✚ When you receive the home testing kit, it is not easy to register the kit. I managed it with the help of my grown up children who live with me but if I didn't have them I perhaps would have given up. I have had 2 tests but my 20 year old son did his test and never received any results. I phoned up and an investigation was set up, but still not had any results
- ✚ There doesn't seem to be a sensible approach, eg. Can't visit close relatives but can still go to work/pub!
- ✚ The whole thing is a fiasco and there is a huge lack of joined up thinking and information sharing. Put the local public health at the controls
- ✚ I would like clearer advice, as I'm one of the shielding people, so really have no idea what I'm supposed to be doing this time around especially with being in the Bolton area
- ✚ Please let's sort out testing - it isn't working

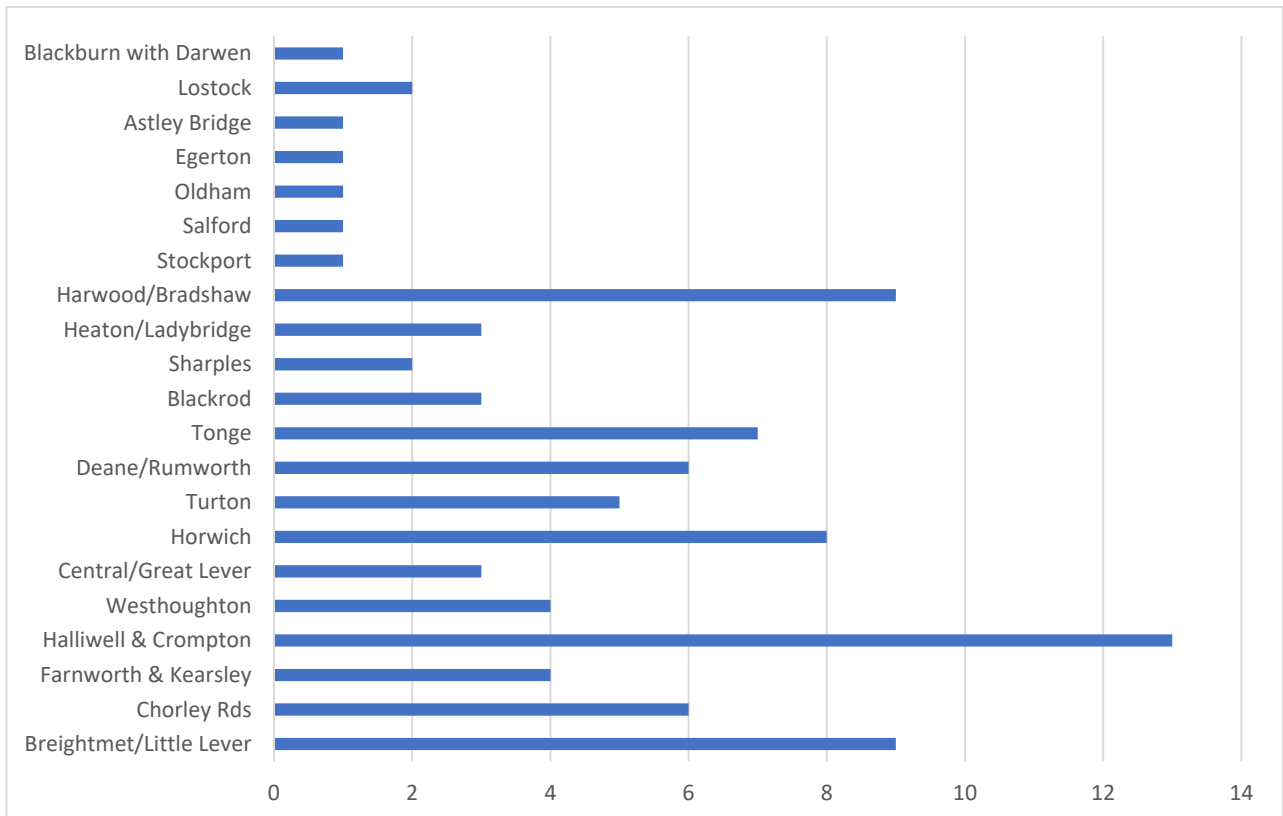
- ✚ The instructions and info provided is too confusing for people to absorb and understand. Needs to be much clearer
- ✚ Set up of test and trace seems good but this week seemed to be failing and even the 119 number was unreachable. Local contact number on what to do/how best to proceed in this situation would help people feel less anxious
- ✚ The testing outlets need to be more professionally run and organised, people are nervous when they attend
- ✚ My mental health is bad
- ✚ Do not feel that the restrictions are specific enough to small cluster outbreaks in certain areas. Restrictions are adversely affecting those that have strictly followed the guidelines. Those that haven't are unlikely to unless Greater Manchester has a more targeted approach
- ✚ I feel that 'tracking and tracing' is an unwarranted infringement of our rights and a virus with such a high recovery rate that has affected so little of the population. Cases are not deaths and clearly daily death figures are now no longer emphasised since they are so low and would not support further infringements of our rights. I accepted a 'temporary' situation to 'flatten the curve' so that the NHS was not overwhelmed. The curve was flattened and the NHS was nowhere near capacity. Months later the 'temporary' measures are getting worse and these further invasions of privacy are absolutely unjustifiable
- ✚ I think there is a stigma attached to the disease even when you have isolated for two weeks, people will still be afraid to come into contact with someone if they know they have had Covid
- ✚ The government has made a complete mess of dealing with the pandemic and are responsible for many deaths and much grief
- ✚ Having self-isolated, in view of new local restrictions, should we still be self-isolating?
- ✚ Involved with Office of National Statistics - Covid 19 infection survey
- ✚ Track and trace is an absolute farce

Demographics

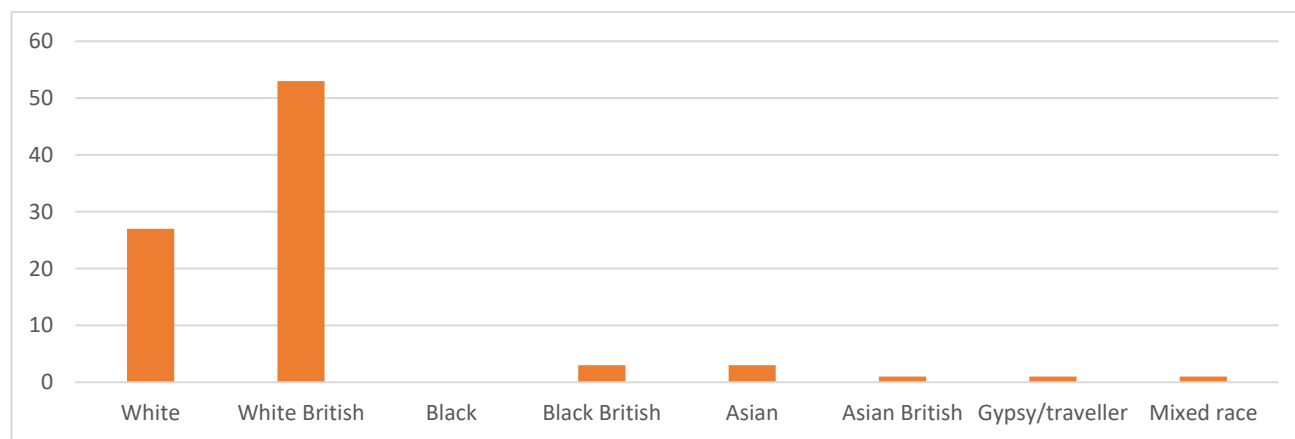
Age of respondents



Where respondent live



Ethnicity



Summary and recommendations

- ✚ People are finding the information around coronavirus confusing and would welcome local tailored information specific to Bolton. Particularly around local lockdown information, restrictions and shielding. People appear to be using the internet more than newspapers or TV. Healthwatch would recommend Bolton Council consider producing a dedicated local information page be made available.
- ✚ People are frustrated at the availability of coronavirus tests and also the location of the test centres being much too far away to travel to. It would also seem that the registration process is not easy to navigate. Healthwatch would recommend Bolton Council produce some easy read literature/videos that explain the steps to obtain a coronavirus test and the registration procedure.
- ✚ Many respondents have expressed concerns about how their personal data may be used. Healthwatch Bolton recommends that Bolton Council produce information about the safeguards around people's personal data: how it is stored, how long for, who has access to it and offer reassurance that personal information will not be used for any other purposes.
- ✚ Some people who have already been tested for coronavirus have never had the results back. Healthwatch recommend Bolton Council produce some information about how to go about getting results back and what to do if this does not happen.
- ✚ People are unsure about how the NHS Test and Trace is supposed to work. Healthwatch would recommend that much more local information is made available about this together with simple visuals/videos.