

COVID-19
Survey



Healthwatch Barnet COVID-19 Survey:

Access to health and social care services in Barnet
during Covid-19 lockdown

21st July 2020

About this survey

We asked Barnet residents and people who use health and social care services in Barnet about their experiences of accessing health and social care services during Covid-19 pandemic.

The survey included questions about:

- Accessing physical healthcare services (including GPs and hospitals)
 - Accessing mental health and wellbeing services
 - Accessing social care services
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- The survey was live from 5 April 2020 – 1 July 2020





Who completed the survey?

In total **68 people** completed the survey

- **71% of respondents** identified as **female** compared to **29% as male**
- **62%** of respondents were **older adults** (aged 65+)
- **38%** of respondents were **working-age adults** (aged 18-64)
- **41%** of respondents told us they **had a long-term health condition or disability**
- **31 %** of respondents identified as **carers**

- **Ethnicity**

- **76%** of respondents identified as being **White British/English/Welsh/ Scottish/ N.Irish**
- **4%** identified as being **Asian/ Asian British**
- **4%** who identified as being of **multiple ethnic background**
- **12%** identified as **White/Irish**
- **4%** who identified as **any other ethnic group**



Physical healthcare

- **48%** of respondents who completed the survey told us about an experience of accessing physical healthcare services during lock-down
- Of these, **78% told us they had experienced changes to their healthcare** due to the Covid-19 pandemic



Physical healthcare

Respondents reported changes to wide range of services including...

- GP services
- Hospital blood tests
- Pain management clinics
- Immune therapy services
- Dental services
- Hospital outpatients appointments
- Ophthalmology services
- Planned procedures
- Getting injections
- Haematology services
- Cardiac services
- Podiatry services

Physical healthcare

Many respondents told us that changes to their healthcare provision had had a negative impact on them including...

Difficulties making
GP appointments

Lack of access to routine
healthcare (including
getting blood test and
injections)

Outpatients
appointments
being cancelled

Delays in receiving new
appointments when an
appointment had to be
cancelled

Services being moved
online without
residents being given
enough support or
information about how
to access them

Poor communication
about changes leading
to worsening of
conditions or pain

Face-to-face
appointments being
substituted for phone
calls or video calls

Changes in the
frequency of treatment
schedules





Physical healthcare

However, some respondents told us they had experienced positive changes to their healthcare services during this period including....

Appointments being on time and extremely prompt

Services were much quieter and easier to contact

GPs keeping in regular contact with vulnerable people

Nurses doing home tests for patients who couldn't leave their homes



Physical healthcare and communication

Communication about changes in healthcare provision emerged as a key area of concern and anxiety for respondents...

- ✓ However, a majority of respondents (50%) who reported changes to their healthcare told us that communication about these changes had been either **'excellent' or 'good'**
- ✓ This rose to 80% of respondents who told us about changes to their GP services
- × However, nearly a third of respondents (29%) described communication about service changes as generally **'poor' or 'very poor'**



Physical Healthcare: Key findings

- The majority of respondents told us that their healthcare provision was affected by some kind of change(s) during the Covid-19 outbreak
- Many respondents reported **negative impacts** resulting from these changes
- However, some respondents also told us about **positive impacts** including services being quieter and offering new more accessible ways to speak medical professionals
- **Good communication** about changes in healthcare provision emerged as an important key theme both in terms of ensuring on-going accessibility of healthcare during lockdown but also in ensuring that certain groups did not face digital exclusion



Mental health and wellbeing

Q: We asked respondents if they had tried to access support for their mental health and wellbeing over the lockdown period?

62% of respondents told us that they had tried to access some kind of formal or informal support for their mental wellbeing during lockdown



Mental health and wellbeing

Of those who had tried to access support...

- **38%** accessed this informally through family/friends
- **19%** accessed this through a community/voluntary/charity group
- **13%** accessed this through a mental health care provider
- **6%** accessed this through an app or an online resource

However, **13%** of respondents told us that, despite feeling that they needed support, they were unable to access either informal or formal support for their mental wellbeing



Mental health and wellbeing

Several key themes were identified in feedback about the mental health support during lockdown...

Many people experienced increased levels of anxiety and depression during lockdown

Difficulties accessing the same level of support previously provided by Community Mental Health Teams

Carers struggling to get mental health support for themselves and those they care for during lockdown

A lack of information about how to access mental health support

Difficulties accessing support for mental health from GP services

Individuals turning to private counselling and other paid-for support services due to difficulties getting support from GP or Community Mental Health team



Mental health and wellbeing

Feedback also showed that respondents had significant anxieties about what would happen post-lockdown...

Worries about longer waiting lists for mental health support due to increased demand

Concerns about widening health inequalities during and after Covid-19 lockdown

Concerns about having to rely on private mental healthcare due to lack of support or long waiting lists

Concerns that some people may face digital exclusion if mental health services were to only offer support using e-methods

Anxieties about what the end of lockdown will mean for people who have been shielding



Mental health and wellbeing: Key findings

Your feedback suggests that...

- The Covid-19 lockdown had a significant impact on respondents' mental wellbeing
- Many respondents in Barnet struggled to access mental health support during lockdown
- Respondents were concerned about the long-term impact of the Covid-19 on the provision of mental health services including risks of longer waiting lists and increased health inequalities in the borough



Social Care and Support

Nearly 1/3 of respondents told us that they, or the person they care for, needed care or support to carry out daily activities during lockdown

- 61% respondents told us that they, or the person they cared, had **experienced changes** to their normal package of care during lockdown
- And more than half of respondents (53%) who reported changes told us that **communication** about changes had been '**poor**' or '**very poor**'

Social Care and Support

Many respondents told us they were left struggling after changes to their social care...

I was told carers will not clean my home [even though I can't do it myself]

It has been very difficult to source PPE

I got a phone call saying all appointments were cancelled. Was told someone might call me in 2 weeks but they did not know who.

I am now unable to access the community...day centres, shops...

I now receive hardly any support

The care staff have changed and now I don't know the person

Even after dozens of calls to the voicemail still no contact



Social Care and Support: Key findings

The feedback we received from the survey suggests that...

- Many Barnet residents experienced changes to the frequency or delivery of their care
- Poor communication from care providers exacerbated stress and anxiety around changes in care



Making it work for you...

Many of your replies commented on the ways you were staying well and helping each other to cope with the uncertainty of Covid-19 and the lockdown. Here are tips you shared with us...

Staying in touch with family and friends: 'regular contact by Skype and phone'

Volunteering to help neighbours with shopping

Using the internet and social media to connect with people and stay informed

Do you need help?

Healthwatch Barnet has a dedicated resource page to help you find the services you need at <https://www.healthwatchbarnet.co.uk/find-services>. Also check out our partners' websites offering a range of information and advice about everything from the latest Covid-19 guidance to where to mental health support or help making a complaint.



Did we miss something important?

The feedback we receive from local residents helps to shape the information we share and the support we provide.

Please do get in touch by email at info@healthwatchbarnet.co.uk or we are still reachable on the phone by calling **0203 475 1308** between the hours of 09:00 -17:00 Monday – Friday.

Because all our staff are working for home right now the quickest way to contact us is by email or by using the contact us form on our website; alternatively check our Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/HealthwatchBarnet/> and Twitter pages <https://twitter.com/hwbarnet>



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