



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

June / July 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 34 respondents to the survey, we have had a good geographical spread across the Metropolitan Borough of Barnsley (appendix one)

The majority of respondents to this survey were male 22 out of 34

Do you think you have/have had Coronavirus?

26 of the 33 who responded stated that they had not had any symptoms whilst 7 of the 33 said possibly; I have experienced symptoms (now recovered) but have not been tested.

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

Some people provided more than one answer. The majority of respondents 19 of the 34 said Online - National organisation websites e.g. Government/NHS England, 11, followed by 16 of the 34 who said Media e.g. radio/TV/newspaper and 13 stated from family and friends

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

Some people provided more than one answer. Of the 30 respondents, 20 had a telephone consultation with a GP, practice nurse or clinical pharmacist and 9 respondents had spoken to another professional on the phone (e.g. midwife, hospital nurse, and consultant) and 17 had ordered a repeat prescription online

Has the Coronavirus pandemic affected your mental health and wellbeing?

Some people provided more than one answer. Of the 32 respondents, 25 said I worry about the health of friends or family members, and 17 of the 32 worry about their own health more now than before the pandemic, 13 of the 32 said they felt socially isolated, 11 of the 32 were worried about their job or financial security and 6 of the 32 said that relationships with people I share a house with are tense or unpleasant

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

Some people provided more than one answer. Of the 30 respondents, 16 said I do not require mental health support currently, but 7 of the 30 said I think I need mental health support but cannot access it, and 3 people said, I became unable to use the mental health services I was using before; with a further 3 people saying, I was using mental health support services before and continue to do so.

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

Some people provided more than one answer. Of the 24 respondents 11 said that they could not find over-the-counter medication they needed in shops or pharmacies and 4 could not get prescription medication; 10 people said planned procedures e.g. elective surgery, dental treatment that were needed were cancelled, and 5 people said that regular hospital based treatment was disrupted e.g. dialysis, chemotherapy, physiotherapy. 9 of the 24 needed a GP appointment and were provided with a telephone/Skype or email appointment but 4 of the 24 respondents could not get a GP appointment at all. 6 of the 24 have not attended or contacted their GP even though they have experienced symptoms, which would normally require attendance at their local surgery, and 1 person did not attend Accident and Emergency even though they experienced symptoms, which would normally result in attendance at the hospital

Has the current pandemic affected your experience of social care?

Of the 29 respondents 7 said yes and 22 said no

How has the current pandemic affected your work?

Some people provided more than one answer. Of the 13 respondents, 8 had experienced a financial impact.

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

Some people provided more than one answer. Of the 32 respondents 15 have helped a friend, family member or neighbour they knew before the crisis with shopping, errands or other needs; 7 had contacted a local or national charity to ask for advice and information; and 6 had donated money or goods to a local or national charity to help the pandemic crisis response.

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

Some people provided more than one answer. Of the 34 respondents 23 said they had been keeping in touch with friends and family online or by phone, 18 said housework, such as spring-cleaning and 17 said walking.

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

Of the 34 respondents 12 said they were less active, 11 about the same and 11 more active.

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*):

- Stoma
- Hypertension x 3
- Thyroid issues
- Hydrocephalus
- Arthritis
- Osteoarthritis x 2
- Interstitial cystitis

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*):

- Going out in wheelchair
- I can't do any of these. Watch telly.
- Training
- Using cross trainer more
- Watching TV
- Yoga on Zoom

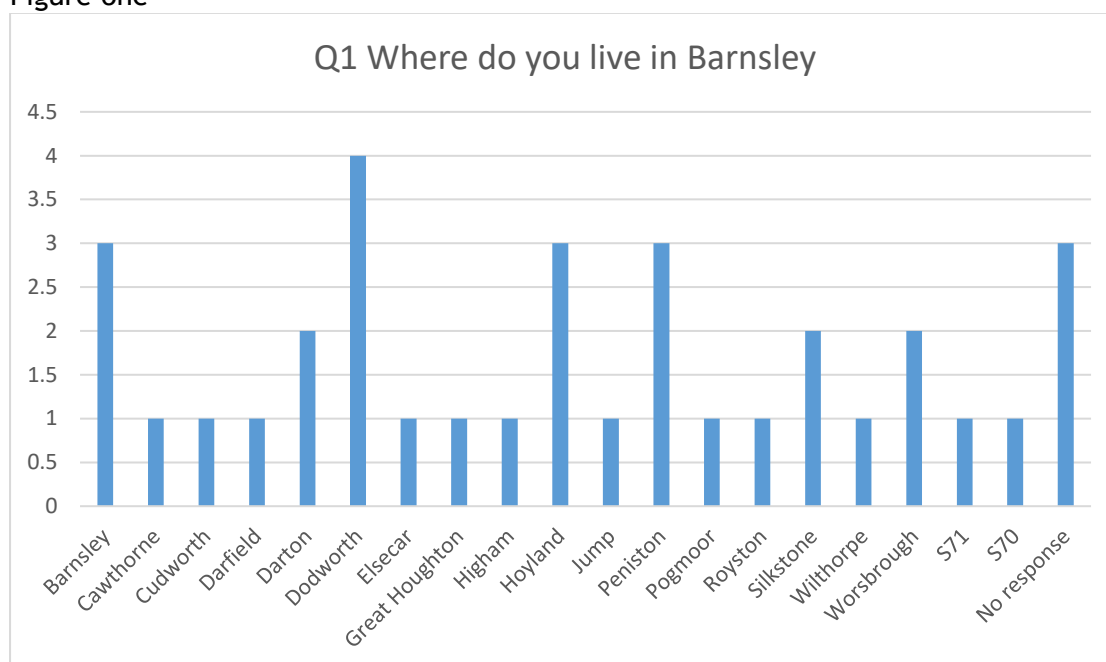
At question 17, we asked, “Do you have any other comments?” (*responses unedited*):

- Badly designed questionnaire. Eg I have not joined the Barnsley volunteers because I joined a national one. The local village helpers was also organised badly. But you didn't include those options. Etc etc
- I think there is too much information about and it makes things seem even scarier than they are. A more coordinated approach would be better.
- I was diagnosed diabetic just prior to lockdown and have received no help or support as to how to manage it. GP hasn't contacted me at all
- Open-Ended Response
- Some of the question I have not answered as they do not apply to me and i needed further options on the questions. Overall I think the options for the answers have not been considered sufficiently and the survey needs redesigning to elicit more useful information.
- The uncertainty about whether I will have a job is taking its toll on my mental health
- too much online focus. I am not online!

Appendix 1

Survey Monkey results, based on 34 respondents during the period June/July 2020

Figure one



1. Where do you live in Barnsley? *See above*

2. Do you think you have/have had Coronavirus? 33 individuals responded.

Answer Choices

Yes, I have had and currently experiencing symptoms	0
Yes, I have been tested; but I am now recovered or no longer experiencing symptoms	0
Possibly, I am experiencing symptoms but have not been tested	0
Possibly, I have experienced symptoms (now recovered) but have not been tested	7
No, I have not experienced symptoms	26

3. Do you have any of the following conditions? Select any that apply; 23 individuals responded, some with more than one answer.

Answer Choices

Asthma	5
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COPD, emphysema or another long-term lung condition	1
Long-term heart condition	0
Long-term kidney condition	3
Diabetes	5
Immune system condition	3
Mobility issue (e.g. I need to use a wheelchair in my daily life)	5
Sensory disability (e.g. I am blind)	0
Mental health condition (e.g. bipolar)	9
I take immunosuppressant medication (such as steroids) to manage a long-term condition	2
I am undergoing chemotherapy for cancer	1
Other (please specify)	

Other answers for this were

- Stoma
- Hypertension 3
- Thyroid issues
- Hydrocephalus
- Arthritis
- Osteoarthritis 2
- Interstitial cystitis

4. Do any of these describe you? 27 individuals responded, some with more than one answer.

Answer Choices	
I am aged over 65	9
I am aged over 70	2
I am currently pregnant	0
My partner is currently pregnant	0
I am the parent or carer of a child under 5	1
I am the parent or carer of a child 5 or over, but under 10	7
I am the parent or carer of a child 10 or over, but under 18	6
I am a carer for another adult (e.g. ageing parent, adult with a disability)	6

5. Where have you found USEFUL information/advice relating to Coronavirus? 34 individuals responded, some with more than one answer.

Answer Choices	
Online - National organisation websites e.g. Government/NHS England, 111	19
Online - local statutory organisation websites e.g. Barnsley Council/Barnsley Hospital	9
Online - local voluntary and community group websites	6
Online - social media e.g. Twitter/Facebook. Please specify where from e.g. BMBC	7

Media e.g. radio/TV/newspaper	16
Received by email/text/post	7
From family/friends	13
From a healthcare professional e.g. district nurse	8
Other (please specify)	

6 Since the beginning of the pandemic, have you done any of the following? 30 individuals responded, some with more than one answer.

Answer Choices	
Called 111	4
Used 111 online service	1
Looked up my symptoms on a different website	5
Had a telephone consultation with a GP, practice nurse or clinical pharmacist	20
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)	9
Spoke to another professional online, including text based chat and video calls (e.g. midwife, hospital nurse, consultant)	1
Ordered a repeat prescription online	17
Downloaded DrLink app	0
Accessed my test results or medical referrals online	0

7. Has the Coronavirus pandemic affected your mental health and wellbeing? Please select all that apply. 32 individuals responded, some with more than one answer.

Answer Choices	
I feel socially isolated	13
I worry about my own health more now than before the pandemic	17
I worry about the health of friends or family members	25
I worry about my job or financial security	11
Relationships with people I share a house with are tense or unpleasant	6

8. Have you been able to access support from mental health services (e.g. psychotherapy, community mental health team, support groups)? 30 individuals responded, some with more than one answer.

Answer Choices	
Yes, I was using mental health support services before and continue to do so	3
Yes, I started needing mental health support after the start of the pandemic and was able to access it	0
No, I became unable to use the mental health services I was using before	3
No, I think I need mental health support but cannot access it	7

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	4
I do not require mental health support currently	16

9. Has the current pandemic affected your access to healthcare for other conditions? Please select all that apply. 24 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	9
I needed a GP appointment and could not get one at all	4
I have not attended or contacted my GP even though I have experienced symptoms which would normally require my attendance at my local surgery	6
I have not attended Accident and Emergency even though I have experienced symptoms which would normally result in my attendance at the hospital	1
I could not get my prescription medication	4
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	5
Planned procedures e.g. elective surgery, dental treatment that I needed to have were cancelled	10

10. Do any of these describe you? 7 individuals responded.

Answer Choices	
I live in a care home or nursing home	0
I live in sheltered or supported accommodation	1
I receive care at home from care workers	3
I receive care at home from family members or friends	2

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. 29 individuals responded.

Answer Choices	
Yes	7
No	22

12. If yes to Q11, how would you rate the communication you received about changes to these services because of the pandemic? 8 individuals responded

Answer Choices	
Poor - no communication	4
Fair - very basic information provided	2
Good - an acceptable level of communication	1

Excellent - a high standard of information supplied, including telephone calls from services explaining the changes 1

Does your answer above relate to a specific service? If yes, which service?

- BMBC
- BMBC and Government
- Care service
- Diabetes

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

I am currently working from home	4
My workplace is temporarily closed and I am not being paid	1
My hours and pay have been cut	3
I have been made redundant from my job	0
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	1
My workload has increased	2
I feel unsafe in my workplace and/or travelling to work	2

14. Since the start of the pandemic, have you done any of the following? Select all that apply to you. 32 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)	5
Asked members of an online mutual support group to help you with shopping, errands or other needs	0
Helped someone from an online mutual support group with shopping, errands or other needs	1
Asked members of an online mutual support group for information and advice	2
Given information or advice to someone in an online mutual support group	4
Asked a friend, family member or neighbour you knew before the crisis to help you with shopping, errands or other needs	1
Helped a friend, family member or neighbour you knew before the crisis with shopping, errands or other needs	15
Contacted a local or national charity to ask for advice and information	7
Contacted a local or national charity to ask for help (e.g. food bank, help with shopping)	1
I have volunteered for the Barnsley Community Responder Scheme	4
I have used the Barnsley Community Responder Scheme	2
I have donated money or goods to a local or national charity to help the pandemic crisis response	6

15. What are you doing to keep well both physically and mentally, during the current pandemic? Please select all that apply. 34 responded.

Answer Choices

Following online craft and/or cookery sessions	6
Joining online exercise sessions	8
Gardening	13
Housework, such as spring cleaning	18
Keeping in touch with friends and family online or by phone	23
Walking	17
Other (please specify)	

- Going out in wheelchair
- I can't do any of these. Watch telly.
- Training
- Using cross trainer more
- Watching TV
- Yoga on Zoom

16. Do you feel that you are more or less active than before the pandemic? 34 individuals responded.

Answer Choices

More active	11
Less active	12
Doing the same amount as before	11

17. Do you have any other comments?

- Badly designed questionnaire. Eg I have not joined the Barnsley volunteers because I joined a national one. The local village helpers was also organised badly. But you didn't include those options. Etc etc
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Demographics

Q18 What is your gender?

Answer Choices	
Male	22
Female	11
Prefer not to say	1
Other (please specify)	

Q19 What is your ethnicity?

Answer Choices	
White British	32
White Irish	
White other - Polish	1
White other - Romanian	
White other - Bulgarian	
Roma or Traveller	
Any other white background	1
Asian - Bangladeshi	
Asian - Pakistani	
Asian - Indian	
Asian - Chinese	
Asian - Vietnamese	
Any other Asian background	
Black - Somali	
Black - African	
Black - Caribbean	
Any other black background	
Latin American	
Mixed	
Other	

Q20 What is your age?

Answer Choices	
Under 18	0
18-24	3
25-49	11
50-64	9
65-69	8
70+	3