healthwatch
Sutton

Your thoughts on NHS Test and Trace

Survey Report
February 2021

Background

The Government website describes NHS Test and Trace as follows;

NHS Test and Trace:

- 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.

Testing was launched relatively quickly following the escalation of the spread of the virus, though initially access to testing was reserved for specific groups and those who were experiencing symptoms. Later, the availability of testing increased and anyone who wanted a test was were given access including those that may not be displaying symptoms.

Initially, the 'Trace' part of the system was mostly paper-based with businesses and other places that people visited being asked to collect the name and contact details of those who had visited them. Later, a smart phone app was developed that enabled users to check-in to venues and receive notifications if they were found to be in close proximity for a period of time to people who later tested positive.

In general, the media has been critical of the system, giving examples of the failure of the system to function correctly and pointing out vulnerabilities in the way it worked.

Our survey

We received a variety of anecdotal feedback that people were concerned about the effectiveness of the system, especially towards the end of 2020. As the organisation charged with ensuring that the residents of the London Borough of Sutton have a voice in decision-making relating to health and social care, we put together a short survey to collect the views of local people concerning the 'NHS Test and Trace' system. This was carried out to ensure that local and potentially national decision-makers are aware of the views and experiences of local residents with a view to potentially improving the service or ensuring that people receive accurate information. The feedback could also be used if similar systems, possibly with a different purpose need to be developed in the future.

In total, 113 people completed our survey between 25th November 2020 and 7th January 2021.

**Question 1 – How much do you know about the NHS Test & Trace system for COVID-19?**
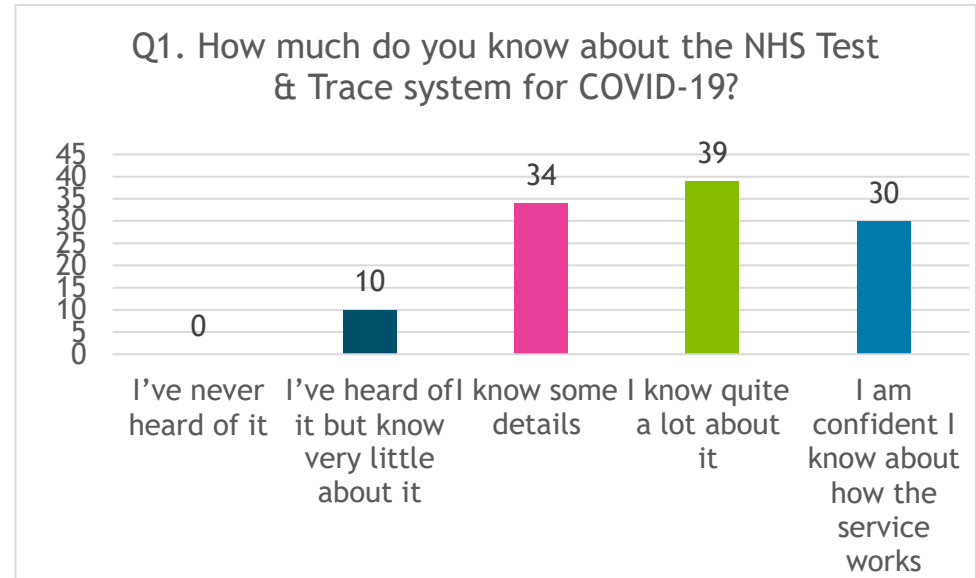
Q1. How much do you know about the NHS Test & Trace system for COVID-19?
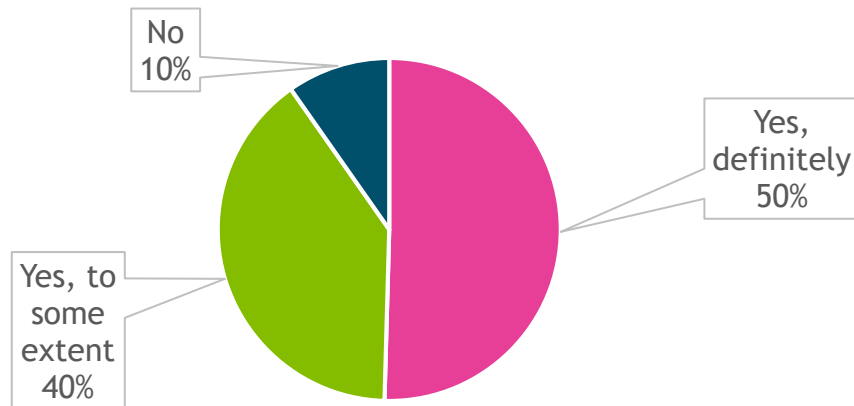
Question 2 – Do you know how to organise a test if you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms?

Q2. Do you know how to organise a test if you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms?

No 10%

Yes, definitely 50%

Yes, to some extent 40%

.

Question 3 – Where would you go for information about NHS Test and Trace (please tick all that apply)

Percentage of total respondents that selected each source of information.

Q3. Where would you go for information about NHS Test and Trace?
(please tick all that apply)
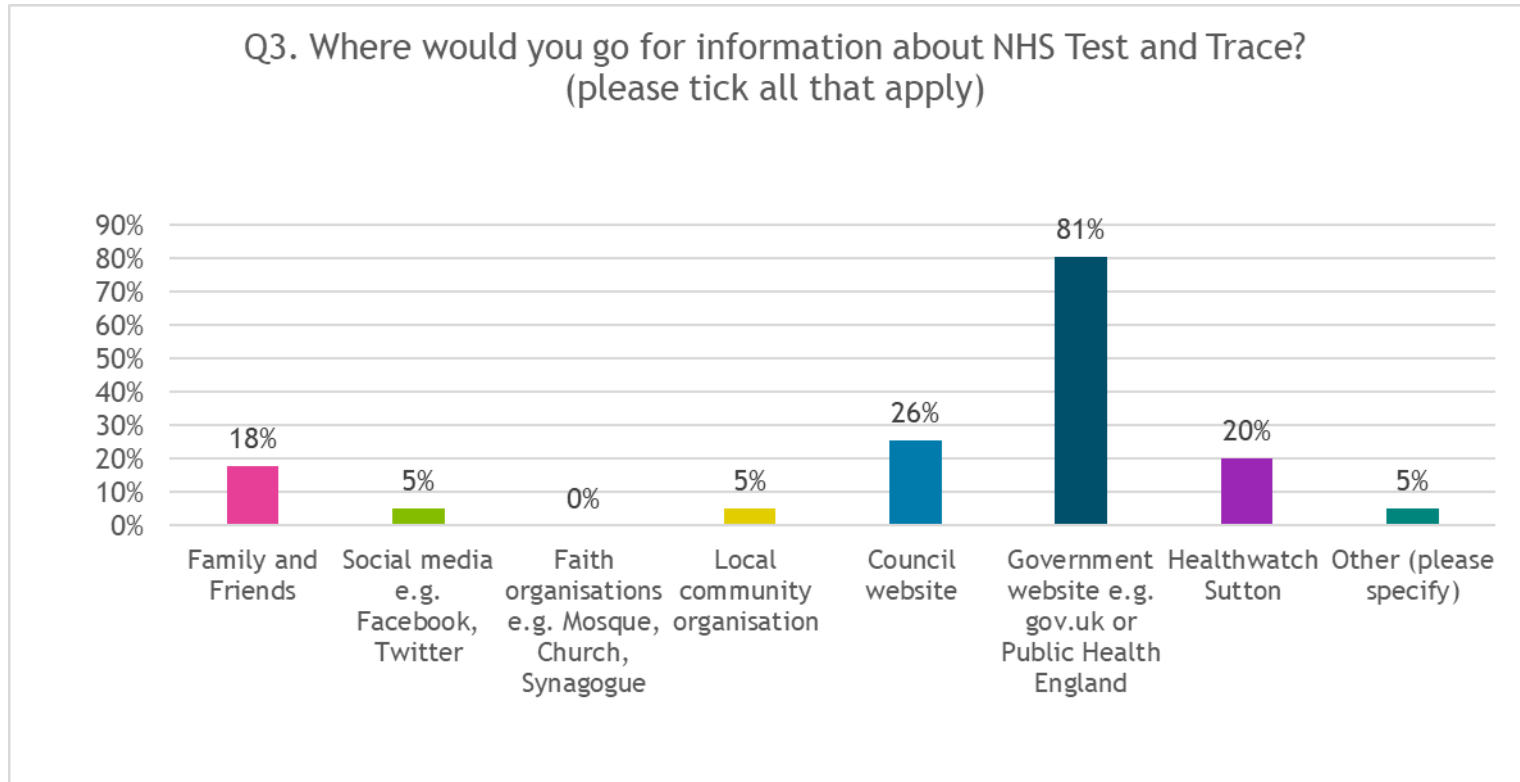
Question 4 – Do you know where the nearest test centre is located?

Q4. Do you know where the nearest test centre is located?

No 35%

Yes 65%

- Yes
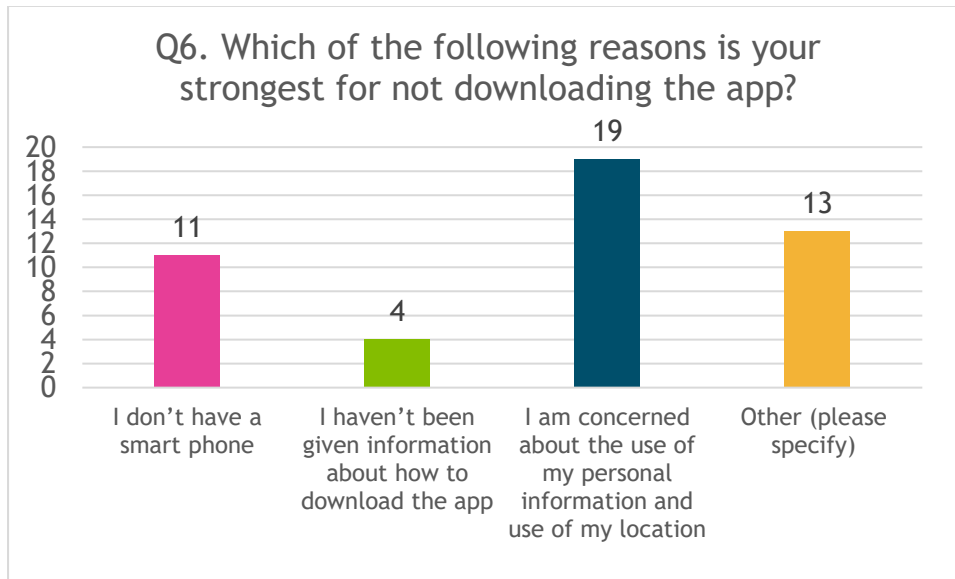- No
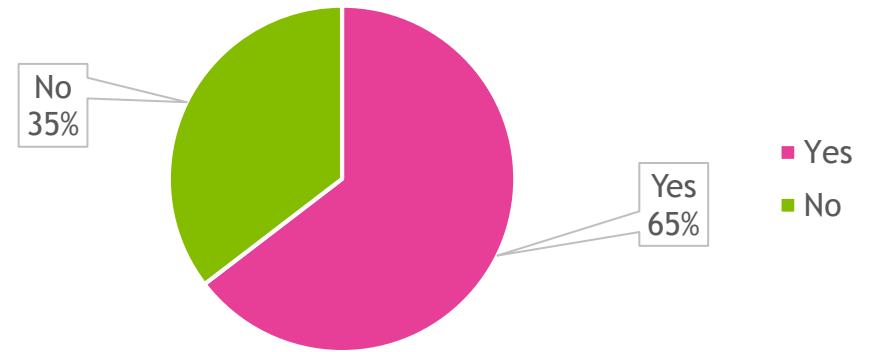
Q5. Have you downloaded the NHS COVID-19 app from the app store for your phone?

No 42%

Yes 58%

- Yes
- No
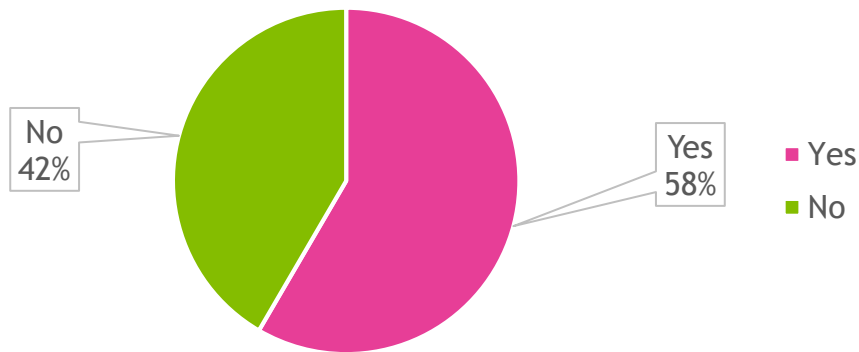
Question 5 – Have you downloaded the NHS COVID-19 app from the app store for your phone?

Question 6 – Which of the following reasons is your strongest for not downloading the app?

Q6. Which of the following reasons is your strongest for not downloading the app?

Reason	Count
I don't have a smart phone	11
I haven't been given information about how to download the app	4
I am concerned about the use of my personal information and use of my location	19
Other (please specify)	13

As an older person living alone, I am not tech savvy, can't read or write well either. My daughter is filling this in for me.

I don't want it.

I rarely use my mobile phone, it is there for emergencies.

I have no confidence in the service.

Tried to but does not appear to be compatible with phone.

I did download it then deleted it as found it unreliable.

I have no confidence in the system.

Companies working for profit involved.

It doesn't work.

Question 7 – How worried are you about your privacy in relation to the information collected by the app?

Q7. How worried are you about your privacy in relation to the information collected by the app?

- Not at all worried 30%
- Very worried 5%
- Worried 15%
- Not worried 50%
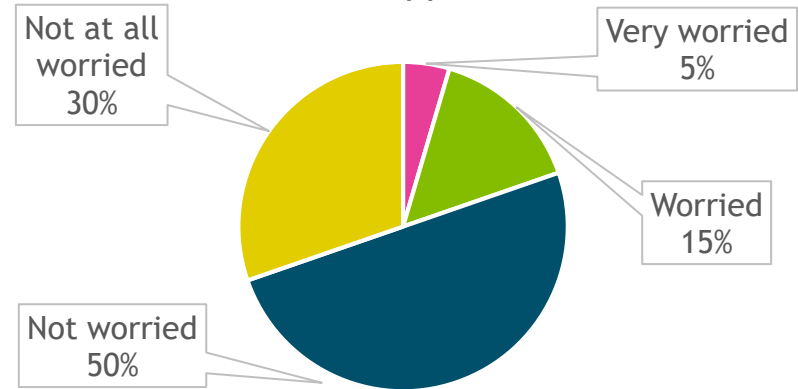
Q8. Have you used the app to check into a place (pub, restaurant etc.) using the barcode scanner (QR code)?

- No 14%
- Yes 86%

- Yes
- No
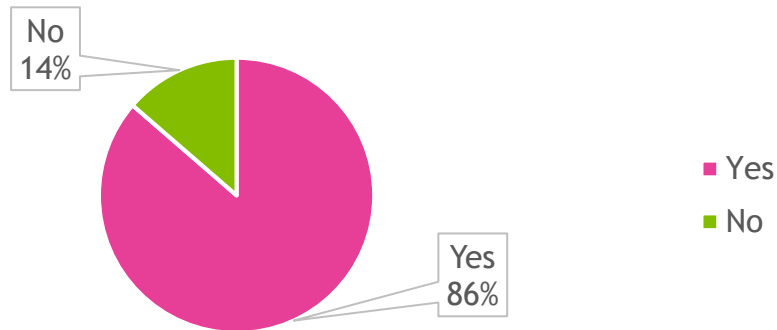
Question 8 – Have you used the app to check into a place (pub, restaurant etc.) using the barcode scanner (QR code)?

Question 9 – Have you received any contact notifications from the NHS Test and Trace system (via the app, test or phone etc.)?

Q9. Have you received any contact notifications from the NHS Test and Trace system (via the app, test or phone etc.)?

Yes 14%

No 86%

- Yes
- No
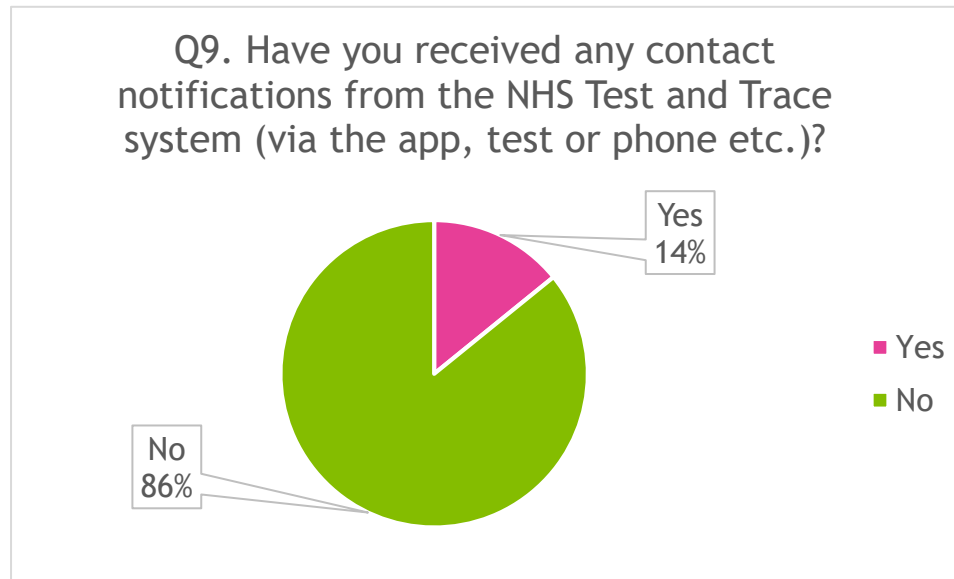
Question 10 – What did the message say, and what did you do?

Got a notification one evening that I might have come into contact with someone with Covid-19, next morning got another notification saying that I was safe and didn't need to self-isolate.

I downloaded the app after I was told by my friend I needed to self-isolate so haven't used it since then as I had Covid and haven't eaten out since then. I entered my test results in the app but was contacted separately by NHS and told to isolate. There was some confusion between my isolating date and my husband's as the whole family isolated due to our friend's positive test but then had different release dates, which was confusing.

I had a message to say I had been in contact with someone who tested positive.

I had to isolate for two weeks due to contact with a positive case.

It told me a test would be delivered to me at home.

Isolate for 9 days.

It said my test results were negative. I did nothing.

I have been tested at the walk-in and got a message with my results which was negative, also been asked to download the app in a message which I don't wish to as if the test and trace system was working as they say it does and premises are taking the rules and protocols and recording people's details, an app doesn't make this any easier or more convenient.

It told me that 10 days before I received the message that I had been in contact with someone with covid and should self-isolate for 14 days. 10 days had already passed by the time I received the message (the same had happened to my friend – contact seemed to be when we had travelled back from holiday). During the 10 days I had been in hospital unaware of this and had had 2 negative COVID tests. I therefore minimised contact with people for remaining 4 days.

It was confusing but it said no action necessary. I didn't do anything.

Myself and my wife been negative in test results.

Said I was negative after having had a test.

That I had been in contact with someone who had tested positive and I should self-isolate.

Told me to isolate as I had been in contact with someone who tested positive.

Said I was negative after having had a test.

Told me to load the app, which I tried but my phone does not support it.

You have been near someone who has tested positive. Stayed at home.

Question 11 – How confident do you feel that the NHS Test and Trace system will effectively reduce the transmission of COVID-19?

Q11. How confident do you feel that the NHS Test and Trace system will effectively reduce the transmission of COVID-19?

Q12. Would you follow any advice received from NHS Test and Trace?
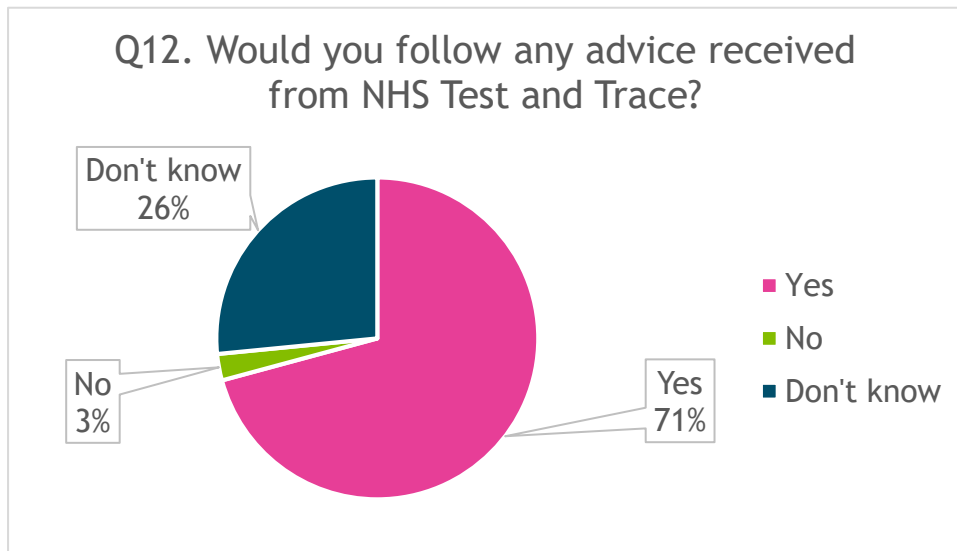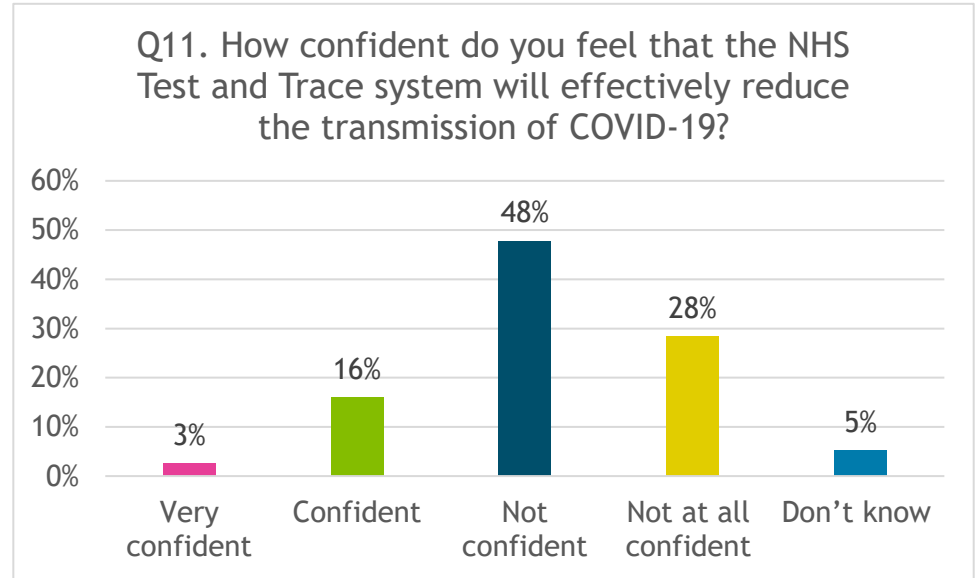
Question 12 – Would you follow any advice received from NHS Test and Trace?

Question 13 – Why would you be unwilling to follow the advice?

I would use my own common sense. I'd like to know where has the flu disappeared to this year?

It's not NHS, it's Serco, a private company. The data it runs off is flawed (false positives etc.) and it can also force healthy people to isolate, which is madness!

The whole covid thing is a waste of public money we should just let it rip and get it over and done with. Why look for people who have a minor illness with no symptoms which in virtually all cases does not progress and if it does is now relatively easy to treat.

Question 14 – Do you have any other feedback about the NHS Test and Trace system?

App is very easy to use but have experienced issued at times scanning QR codes at venues.

Because the app is voluntary, some people use it and some don't. I therefore don't feel too bad for not using it myself. In contrast, I feel a lot more pressure to follow lockdown and social distancing rules, because they are compulsory, and, from my own observations, a majority of people follow them to at least some extent.

Don't see the point in it as you could be in your car and someone on the street could pick up as being positive.

Grandson had Covid. School was effective in tracing contacts and clear about isolation.

I am tested weekly, my test results arrive between 48 & 72 hours later – v slow.

I had no contact from Test and Trace England when I was living with 2 Covid positive people. One of the people was Welsh so I was contacted by Test and Trace Wales who were excellent.

It seems to be a hit-or-miss system by accounts in the press, radio and TV. I am really disappointed and angry that so much money has been given to an inexperienced private company to put this system in place.

I entered my test results in the app but was contacted separately by NHS and told to isolate. There was some confusion between my isolating date and my husband's as the whole family isolated due to our friend's positive test but then had different release dates, which was confusing. We called the NHS and emailed the Test and Trace team and were given different answers.

I didn't get contacted until 7 days into the 14 (I isolated prior to the text).

I think it's disgusting that my phone is too old to get Test and Trace, how stupid to only have this facility on a particular phone.

I don't think enough people are contacted for this to be totally effective. I have also known of people who have been left a voicemail and then not contacted after that.

I sometimes forget to enable Bluetooth as I usually have it off to save battery life.

I was emailed and texted to isolate which I did. But I never had a call or any follow-up to check I was actually isolating! I am also a self-employed mobile hairdresser. I lost all my earnings for two weeks but was unable to claim the £500 scheme as I don't also claim a benefit of any kind. I am lucky my partner has a good job. If I was in a different situation I'm not sure I would be able to stay home the two weeks.

I'd like to know if it would alert me if I was just next to someone in a shop or somewhere where I hadn't checked in.

I think it isn't sufficient and messages come with no further advice. Pointless.

I was surprised after I got the note from Test and Trace as it did not give me any clues as to who or when I had been in contact. It told me to self-isolate for 14 days from a date that was a week before I received the notification.

It should be run by local authorities and PHA.

It's not really effective and I feel it's not been organised that efficiently.

It would be better if it was used more.

It's only as good as the people using it.

It would be good when it works effectively.

It is a farce. My son has had 4 direct contacts with people who tested positive. He got one call – 2 days later – and none at all for the other ones. And I know of several other people who have received calls several days later after the person got their negative result. It is not worth anything unless the tracing kicks in immediately.

Public transport does not have a system for travellers.

You do not quarantine healthy people.

Told me to isolate even though I'd not been anywhere or been in contact with anyone.

Shops/cafes etc. do not enforce it.

Serco contract must be cancelled.

Too late, too chaotic, not confidence boosting.

Over rated and relies on individuals adhering to instructions.

Too centralised and not local enough.

Needs option to check out of a venue so that you are not contacted about a covid case arriving at the venue after you have left.
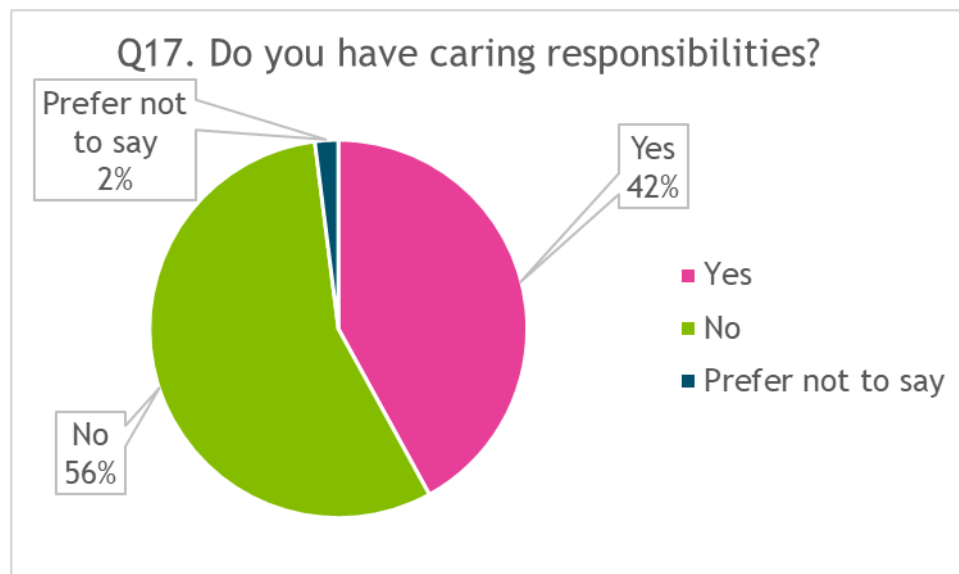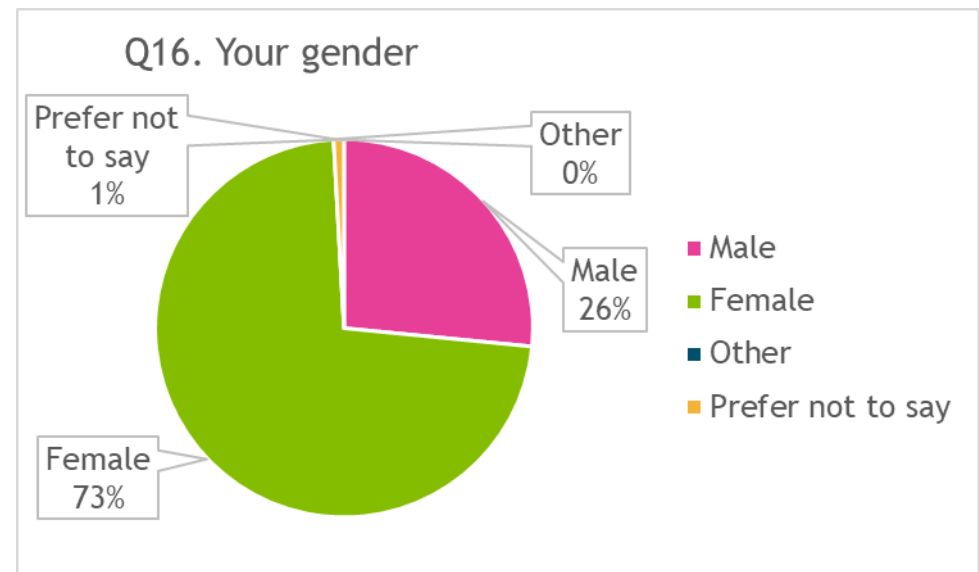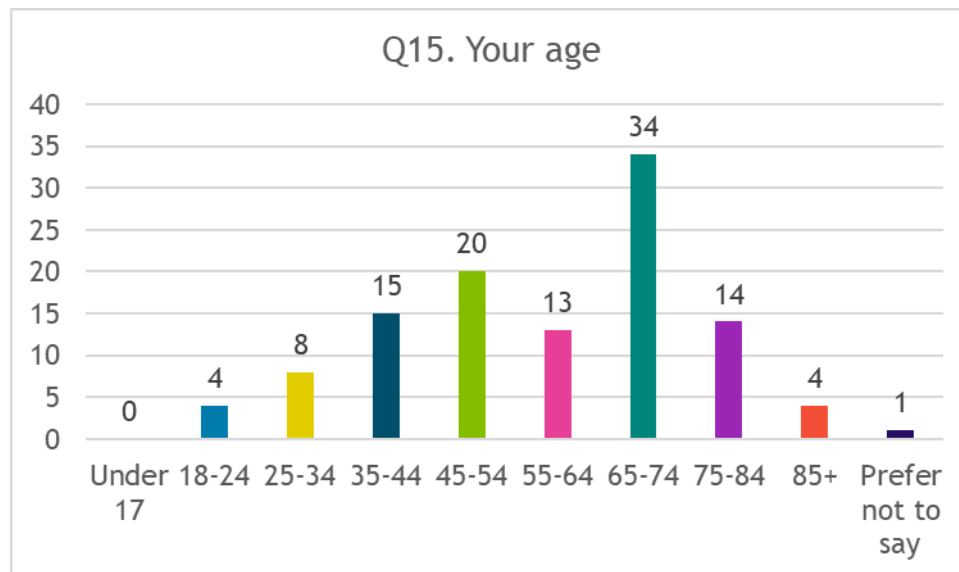
The test itself was easy to do and simple. The staff at the walk-in test and trace are very helpful and assist with technology and registration etc. however the process and suitability of who needs a test and when to test completely disregard the rules for someone who is experiencing symptoms who should be isolating. Also many don't have a smartphone and/or are very sceptical about giving their details and what is genuine and what is not.

Nothing just think may take too long to get round to everyone and still not sure results would be accurate with so many to do, I really just don't know.

This system is unsuitable for the elderly who are unable to use a phone, who are not part of the next generation and don't have a computer. Everything is online these days, messages are sent as SMS texts but some people can't read them. This system excludes older people, especially those living alone with no family or friends to help. I am filling in this questionnaire for my mother who lives alone in Sutton. She can't read text messages, can't operate her mobile phone and is not online.

This test was never designed to be used for this. It gives only false positives and false negatives. I have no understanding why this test is being used apart from the organisation who were awarded the contract making a load of money. Shameful using tax payers money for a test never designed for this purpose. I do not trust this government whatsoever!

Demographics

Q15. Your age

Age	Count
Under 17	0
18-24	4
25-34	8
35-44	15
45-54	20
55-64	13
65-74	34
75-84	14
85+	4
Prefer not to say	1

Q16. Your gender

- Male 26%
- Female 73%
- Other 0%
- Prefer not to say 1%

Q17. Do you have caring responsibilities?

- Yes 42%
- No 56%
- Prefer not to say 2%

Key findings

1. Nearly 80% of respondents (removing those stating 'Don't know') stated that they were not confident that the NHS Test and Trace system will effectively reduce the transmission of COVID-19. Of which 28% stated that they were 'Not at all confident'.

2. By far, the most used source of information came from 'Government website' (81%), followed by 'Council website' (26%), Healthwatch Sutton (20%) and 'Family and friends' (18%).

3. When asked if respondents would 'follow any advice received from NHS Test and Trace', 26% responded 'Don't know'. Of those that stated 'Yes' or 'No', 96% advised that they would follow the advice.

4. The most common reasons for not downloading the app was 'concern about the use of my personal information' and 'use of my location'.

5. Fifty six people gave 'any other feedback' about NHS Test and Trace. Most expressed a negative experience or view on the service.

Other findings

6. Ninety percent of people stated that they know at least 'some details' about the NHS Test and Trace system with the remaining 10% saying 'I've heard of it but know very little about it' and none saying 'I've never heard of it'.

7. Ninety percent of people advised that they knew 'definitely' or 'to some extent' how to organise a test.

8. Sixty five percent of respondents knew where the nearest test centre is located.

9. Fifty eight percent of people confirmed they had downloaded the NHS Covid-19 app.

10. Of those who had downloaded the app, 80% were not concerned about their privacy in relation to the information collected by the app.

11. Eighty six percent of respondents had used the app to check in to a place.

12. Fourteen percent of people who completed the survey had received a contact notification from the NHS Test and Trace system.

13. There was a wide variety of responses to the open-text question asking 'What did the message say and what did you do?' There are a number of examples of confusion caused by the system and some short responses showing that people complied with the isolation requirements.

14. The respondents were mostly older people (65-74), predominantly women (74%) with 42% stating they have caring responsibilities.

Recommendations and actions

The NHS Test and Trace system has been set up nationally. As such the ability to influence the system locally is limited. Healthwatch Sutton will write to Sutton Council and NHS Sutton to share the report and ask for feedback.

We will also send this report to Healthwatch England and Public Health England so that these organisations can consolidate our findings with those of other similar initiatives with a view to improving the way the system works and learning for future similar programmes.

The responses we receive will be posted on our website with this report.

Thank You

We would like to thank all the local residents who completed this survey and all the organisations that promoted completion through their communication channels.