



Healthwatch
Together

Blackburn with Darwen,
Blackpool, Cumbria and
Lancashire working
in partnership



How are you coping with the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic?

“12 months of Covid, 12 months of
experiences”

Overview of the Healthwatch Together Covid-19 series

May 2021

| | |
|---|-------|
| About Healthwatch and Healthwatch Together | 3 |
| Timeline of events | 4 |
| Rationale for research | 5 |
| Overarching themes | 6 |
| Demographics | 7-8 |
| Version 1 | 9-10 |
| Version 2 | 11-13 |
| LGBTQ report | 14 |
| Millom report | 15 |
| Version 3 | 16-18 |
| Version 4 | 19-21 |
| Location themes | 22 |
| Demographics | 22-25 |
| Mental health | 26 |
| Financial impact | 27 |
| Health concerns (including pre-existing conditions) | 28 |
| Caring responsibilities | 29 |
| Restrictions and safety measures/guidance | 30 |
| Access to healthcare | 31 |
| Community spirit | 32 |
| Impact on lifestyle | 33 |
| Vaccine/tests | 34 |
| Distribution | 35 |
| Outcomes | 35-36 |
| Conclusion | 37 |
| Recommendations | 38 |
| References | 39 |
| Appendices | 40 |

About Healthwatch and Healthwatch Together

Healthwatch was established in April 2013 as part of the implementation of the Health and Care Act 2012.

Healthwatch England acts as the national consumer champion for all local Healthwatch organisations, enabling and supporting individual Healthwatch to bring important issues to the attention of decisions makers nationally.

A key role of each individual Healthwatch is to champion the views of people who use health and care services in their area, seeking to

ensure that people's experiences inform the improvement of services. Healthwatch are constantly listening, recording and reporting on the views of local people on a wide range of health and care issues, ensuring that people are able to express their views and have a voice in improving their local health and care services.

Healthwatch Together consists of Healthwatch Cumbria, Healthwatch Lancashire, Healthwatch Blackpool and Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen, working in collaboration together.



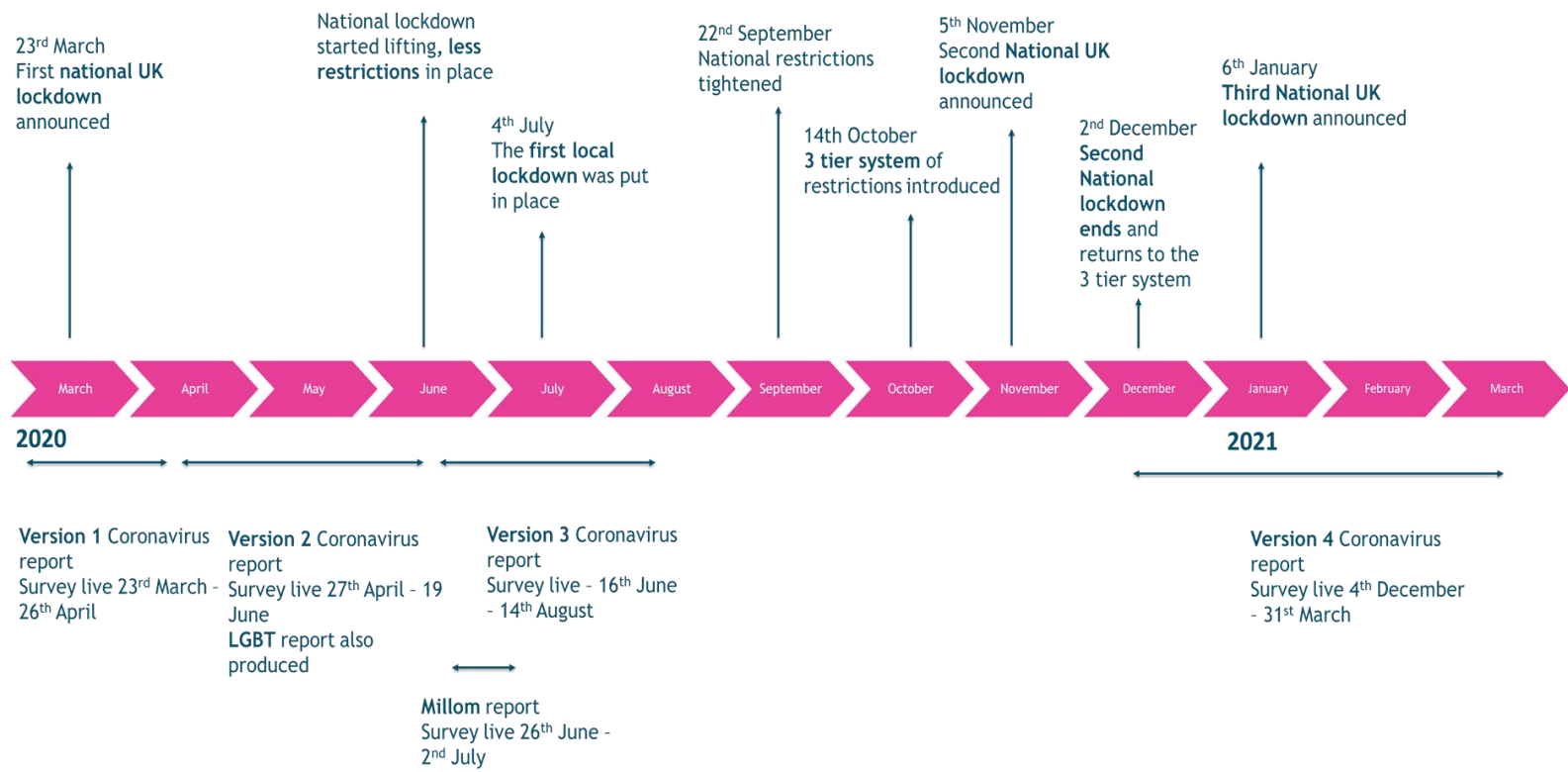
Healthwatch **Together**

Blackburn with Darwen,
Blackpool, Cumbria and
Lancashire working
in partnership



Timeline of events

Below is a timeline of events¹ from the first national UK lockdown to when Version 4 of the coronavirus survey was closed. It is useful to consider and acknowledge this context as it will have influenced respondent's answers.





Rationale for research

This research project took place as a result of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic and the subsequent lockdown that took effect in England in March 2020. HWT quickly created a survey in response to the pandemic, with the aim of finding out how the people of Cumbria and Lancashire were coping during this difficult time. The online survey link for each version was promoted on the websites and social media platforms of Healthwatch Lancashire, Cumbria, Blackpool and Blackburn with Darwen.

The survey was developed as a ‘temperature check’ designed to find out how people were feeling and coping during the initial first weeks of this unprecedented pandemic. We wanted to tell people’s stories and their personal experiences.

Since the start of the pandemic in March 2020, HWT has produced four reports as part of the *How are you coping with the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic? Survey* research project. There were also two separate reports published within the version 2 report to further investigate LGBTQ respondents and Millom residents.

- The initial survey (v1) was launched on Survey Monkey on 23 March 2020 and ran until 26 April 2020.
- A second version of the survey (v2) was launched on 27 April 2020 and ran until 19 June 2020.
- A third version of the survey (v3) was launched on 16 June 2020 and ran until the 14 August 2020.
- A fourth (and final) version of the survey (v4) was launched on 4 December 2020 until 31 March 2021.

It was decided that the 4th version of the survey was to be the last version of the Covid-19 survey series. This was because we had surpassed the one year on mark of when the first UK lockdown had been enforced. Instead, this report will tell the overarching story of the last 12 months and peoples experiences, told through the responses received from all four of the Covid-19 surveys.

Analysis of emerging themes was done as each version progressed, to portray how themes changed over time as well as how people’s experiences were changing. It was also decided that there would be an in-depth analysis of themes from each area (Lancashire, Cumbria, Blackpool and Blackburn with Darwen) to show the experiences and journey of the pandemic for residents of each location, as well as identifying and comparing whether certain issues/concerns were more prominent in a specific area.



Overarching themes

For each survey in the 'How are you coping with the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic? Survey' series, the questions that were asked were changed. Some questions remained the same across multiple surveys, some were slightly altered, some new questions were added, and others were removed if they were no longer relevant. This means that themes differ slightly between surveys, depending on what stage of the pandemic the respondent answered. However, there were some overarching themes that were dominant in all four or multiple coronavirus surveys and their subsequent reports:

Mental health

- Isolation and missing physical social contact (particularly with friends and family)
- Adaption to digital communications
- Main source of support has come from friends and family.

Financial concerns

- Worries about the future of the national economy (the long-term impact)
- Some are worried about their financial situation
- Some people are financially better off due to spending less on extras

Health conditions (including pre-existing conditions)

- Worries about people (themselves and others) catching and spreading the virus
- Concerning amount of people not seeking professional medical help for their health concerns.

Caring responsibilities

- Main source of support has come from friends and family
- Difficult to balance full time work and caring responsibilities.

Access to healthcare

- Frustrations towards those who have not obeyed the rules and guidelines

Restrictions and safety measures/guidance

- A large number of cancelled and postponed appointments and treatments
- Often telephone and video consultations instead of face-to-face.

Impact of lifestyle (habits/exercise)

- More time for oneself (for family time, hobbies, exercise and gardening)

Community spirit

- Displays of 'in it together' attitude/mentality (friendlier and more supportive)
- Helping with getting food shopping for those who are unable to do it themselves

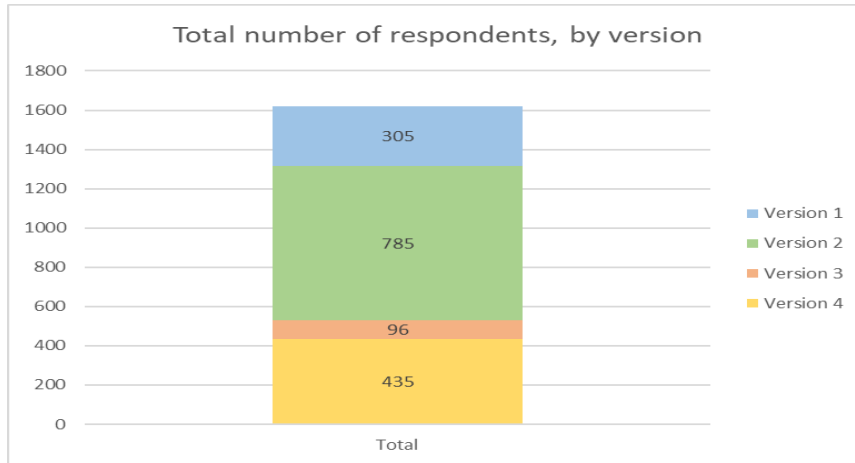
Vaccine and Covid-19 tests

- A desire for vaccine and home testing
- Vaccine brought hope.

In this report the themes for each individual version of the Coronavirus survey will be further explored and discussed in more detail. Including themes that were only connected to a single version of the survey.

Demographics

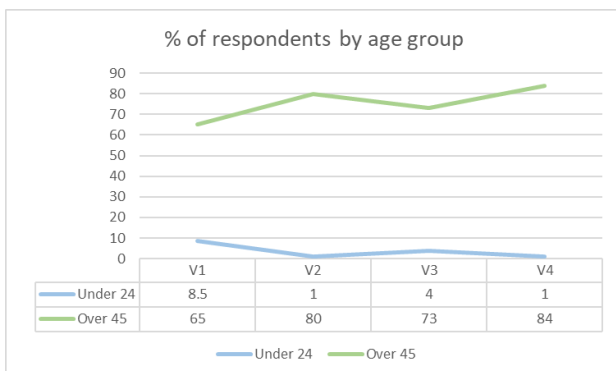
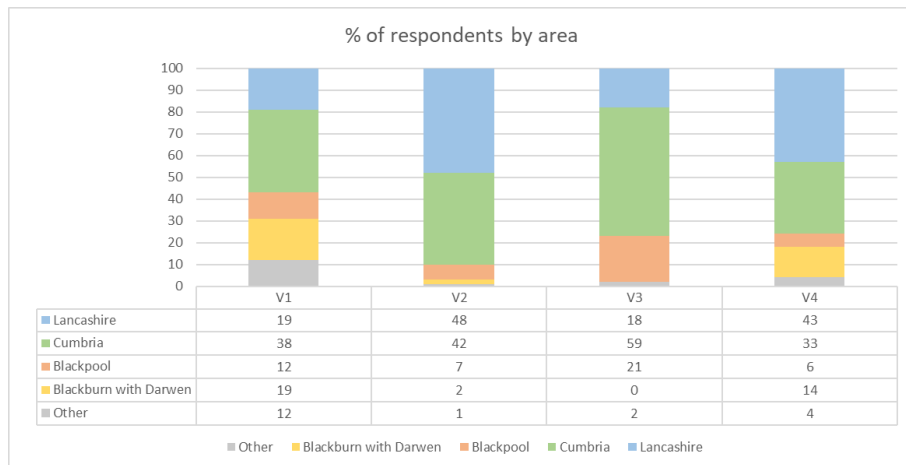
The demographics of the survey respondents should be acknowledged as the data from their responses will be skewed towards their concerns, experiences, and views of the pandemic. In this case, the respondents to the ‘How are you coping with the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic? Survey’ series, have been mainly from the white/white British, heterosexual, female and over 45, demographic categories. There were 1621 respondents over the entire coronavirus series (version 1 to version 4), below is a compilation of the demographics for the entire series.



Area/location

In each version respondents were asked where they resided in. However, in version 1, the geographical area (Cumbria, Lancashire, Blackpool and Blackburn with Darwen), was determined by respondents giving the first half of their postcode. Out of the total number of respondents, the location break down is:

- 40% were from Cumbria
- 39% were from Lancashire
- 9% were from Blackpool
- 8% were from Blackburn with Darwen
- 4% other



Age

Throughout the series the respondents were asked what age group they were in. The majority of respondents were over 45, and the minority were under 24. Out of the total number of respondents, the age group break down is:

- 78% were over 45
- 3% were under 24

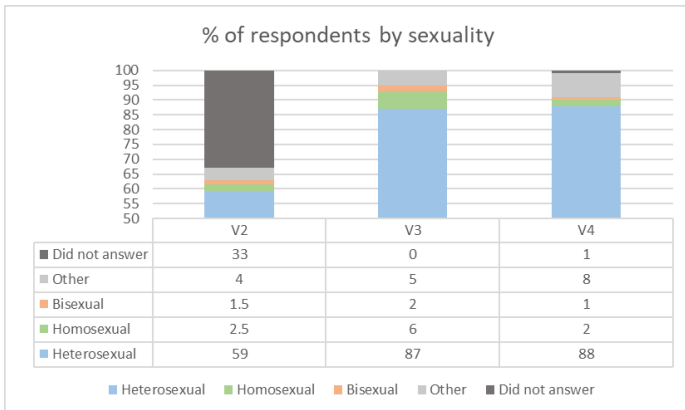
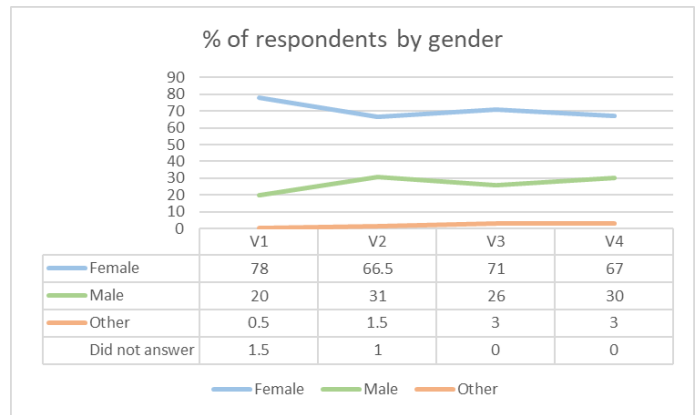


Demographics - continued

Gender

In each version of the survey the respondents were asked what gender they identified as. Most of the respondents identified as female. Out of the total number of respondents, the gender breakdown is:

- 69% identified as female
- 28% identified as male
- 2% identified as 'other' (including non-binary and prefer not to say)



Sexual orientation

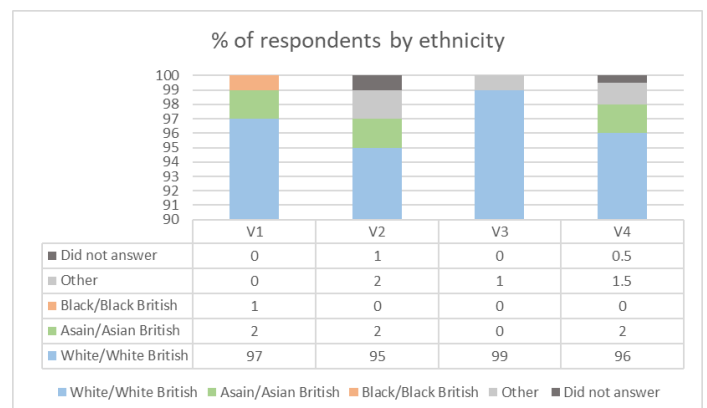
Respondents were only asked to describe their sexual orientation in versions 2,3, and 4 of the survey, therefore there is no data from version 1 relating to this demographic. Out of the total number of respondents, the sexual orientation breakdown is:

- 71% described themselves as heterosexual
- 2.5% described themselves as homosexual
- 1.5% described themselves as bisexual
- 5% described themselves as 'other' (including asexual, pansexual and rather not say)

Ethnicity

Respondents were asked in all four surveys to share their ethnicity. Out of the total number of respondents, the ethnic breakdown is:

- 96% were White/White British
- 1.5% were Asian/Asian British
- 0.5% were Black/Black British
- 1% were 'other' (including Mixed/Multiple)





Version 1 of the Covid-19 survey

Context

On the 23rd March 2020 the first national UK lockdown was announced. In response to the Coronavirus pandemic and its subsequent lockdown, HWT created a survey developed as a 'temperature check' for the initial first weeks of the unprecedented pandemic. With the aim of finding out how people were feeling and coping during this difficult time.

Questions

The survey was launched on the 23rd March 2020 and ran until the 26th April 2020, when it was replaced by a second version of the survey. The questions for version 1 were limited to only 20, to keep the survey relatively short and quick to complete, to encourage responses. Most of the questions that were asked were deliberately constructed to be 'open questions' to gather as much information as possible about people's opinions, feelings and experiences of the pandemic and the initial few weeks of the national lockdown. Open questions also allowed an exploratory approach as it was not clear what the emerging themes would be. The full list of questions can be found in appendix A.

Findings

A total of 305 people responded to this survey. From the responses there were some key themes identified:

Mental health

As the initial weeks of the lockdown progressed it was already having an impact on some respondents who shared that they felt severely anxious, stressed and/or depressed. Unfortunately, around 1 in 10 respondents stated that they were struggling with their mental health.

Financial worries

Respondents expressed anxieties for the future, often specifically around the economic impact of the lockdown and its ultimate negative affect on the UK population. Respondents raised concerns about the financial impact of job losses, being furloughed and the possibilities of losing a business or state benefits.

Social impact (of safety guidance)

Families continuously followed the lockdown rules that were enforced during this period, such as following instructions to stay home. This forced many households to spend significantly more time together than previously, which in some cases caused its own problems. Respondents also shared that they were maintaining social distancing, with most feeling that they had managed to cope with this, but some stated that they were missing contact with their family and friends.

Caring responsibilities

The lockdown forced many households to spend significantly more time together than previously, which resulted with many struggling to maintain harmony within the household. Especially those households with young children, or children who have learning difficulties and/or autism. But there were others who became hugely reliant on other people and lost their independence as a consequence of the lockdown. Furthermore, there was a rise (from the initial weeks) in the number of people reporting that they were finding it difficult to look after vulnerable individuals (including elderly relatives).



Version 1 cont.

Health concerns

Most people shared that they were concerned about their health, as well as the health of others. People looked after their physical health through a combination of exercise and healthy eating.

Other comments

Respondents also mentioned issues caused by others panic buying, frustration with those who were not obeying social distancing guidelines and the broader government guidelines and rules.

Demographics

- 38% were from Cumbria (this data was obtained through respondents sharing the first half of their postcode)
- 65% aged over 45
- 78% were female
- 97% white British or white other
- 61% in some form of employment

“You have forgotten the carers and the parents of children with additional needs who struggle and isolated in the normal world but who are now ultra isolated.”

“It can be very, very lonely, makes you cry sometimes.”

“Being furloughed has made me feel unvalued by my employers and that my contribution to my workplace was/is irrelevant especially as other colleagues are still working. This has affected my mental health quite badly.”

“I look after my 100 year Mum who lives with us and my 76 year old husband as well as being a part time carer for my disabled daughter who lives close by.”

“How beautiful is the natural world around us, in this time of spring awakening. I hope we will learn to appreciate the precious things in life more, and maybe take better care of each other and the natural world.”

Summary

The majority of respondents to this survey were managing to cope but were still finding it a challenge being in lockdown. However, this survey also highlighted there were a minority who were being disproportionately affected by the pandemic and lockdown. Mainly those who were already struggling with **mental health** issues or **pre-existing medical conditions** prior to the lockdown, as well as those who were **caring** for elderly relatives or their own children who have learning difficulties and/or autism.

The first version of the coronavirus survey gave an insight into what the initial 4-5 weeks of the pandemic and national lockdown was like for some residents. But, as it became increasingly evident that the lockdown was not going to be lifted nor was the pandemic going to be over after a few weeks, a second version of the survey was required to allow individuals to fully share their experiences and views on the situation. It also allowed us to further explore key themes which were identified including mental health, caring responsibilities and financial worries.



Version 2 of the Covid-19 survey

Context

The second version of the survey was launched the day after the first survey closed. Version 2 ran from the 27th April 2020 until the 19th June 2020. This period covers a particularly intense time of the pandemic, starting in the middle of the first lockdown and closing when the lockdown restrictions were beginning to ease. HWT believed it was essential to find out how people were feeling and coping during this period of the Coronavirus pandemic, and to tell people's stories and personal experiences.

Public Health England highlighted major inequalities in the disparities in the risk and outcomes of Covid-19, it was also further identified that there has been a disproportionate negative impact of the pandemic on **ethnic minorities**². In version 1 of the survey the response rate from ethnic minorities was low, therefore, in version 2 HWT aimed to confront this lack of diversity among participants at the promotion stage. Based on the demographic response of this survey, HWT should further focus on engaging with such communities in the future.

Questions

Using the findings from version 1, acknowledging media response³ and working collaboratively with Healthwatch partners in health and social care, a new series of questions were produced. Designed to explore the themes identified in version 1 including the impact of respondent's **mental health**, the **financial impact**, as well as finding more detailed information about groups who had been **disproportionately affected** (including carers and those with pre-existing conditions).

Working with Dr Lewis Turner of LGBT Lancashire, the decision was made to update the demographic questions for version 2 of the survey. This was to ensure that the questions accounted for the diversity within the **LGBTQ community**, which also helped to identify any particular issues that were affecting them.

The full list of the questions for version 2 of the survey can be found in appendix B.

Findings

A total of 785 people responded to this survey. From the responses there were some main themes identified:

Mental health

The survey asked respondents to rate their mental health before the pandemic (on a scale of 0-100 with 0 being very poor and 100 being very good), with the average response being 78, as well as rating the impact the pandemic had on mental health (at the time of responding, with 0 being no impact at all and 100 being a huge impact), with the average score being 37. This shows that the majority were coping ok with the situation, but a minority were really struggling, and not always able to access the support that they needed. 122 respondents stated they had been diagnosed with or felt that they were suffering from depression. However, of those who were receiving support, most were relying on friends and family.

Financial impact

29% of respondents have been affected financially by the situation, with furlough and job losses being the main causes. However, this does suggest that around 71% of respondents have not been affected. Some respondents shared that they had been spending less and so they were actually financially better off.



Version 2 cont.

Pre-existing medical conditions

Half of participants stated that they had an existing medical condition. 18% of respondents said that they had an appointment cancelled. Others shared personal experiences and stories about postponed check-ups and operations, with a few cases of people having had their cancer detection and treatment delayed.

Phone and video consultations

Due to the pandemic and lockdown restrictions, many face-to-face appointments were replaced by phone and video consultations. 40% of respondents shared that they had a phone or video consultation. 82% of these individuals felt it was a positive experience and 53% stated that they would use it again. People liked the convenience and timeliness of this method, whilst others shared that they would still rather have face-to-face appointments.

Social care services

The majority of respondents claimed that their experience of social care services had not been affected by the pandemic, but 13% of respondents shared that their experience had been affected. For those who had been affected, responses centred on issues with access and support, such as the visitation restrictions in place, assessments were taking longer and that there were delays in getting people into care homes.

Caring responsibilities

¼ of respondents said that they had caring responsibilities for at least one other person during this period, including caring for an elderly relative or for a child with physical or learning disabilities. Out of those carers receiving support during this time of the pandemic, most carers were relying on help from friends and family which had been made difficult to access because of the lockdown.

'Hidden crime'

There were national concerns about the increase in 'hidden crime', such as domestic violence, as a result of the lockdown, as victims were being affectively trapped with their abusers⁴. 31 respondents shared that they had felt that their safety had been compromised and 5 of these people said that they did not know how to get help. The survey did not ask for any further details but did provide links to support services.

Positive experiences

Respondents shared a large range of personal stories and experiences, some of which expressed the 'community spirit' that had been felt by so many during this time (with frequent mentions of neighbours being friendly and helpful, people supporting each other and generally being nicer to each other). Other positive experiences respondents shared included focusing more on family, having extra time to do things (like exercising, cooking and gardening) and some were even seeing financial benefits.

Other comments

Respondents also shared concerns with an over-reliance on the internet, difficulties with getting doctors' appointments and finding support for their children, feeling isolated, being able to form and maintain a healthier lifestyle (cooking, exercising, positive changes to work practices).



Demographics

- 48% were from Lancashire
- 80% aged over 45
- 66.5% female
- 98% stated that their gender identity is the same as on their original birth certificate
- 87% heterosexual
- 95% white British or white other
- 54% in some of employment

“I have been in contact with family and friends more than before the pandemic particularly with those who live away and abroad.”

“My husband has stood down from his job due to the risk (construction sites) therefore has received no income whatsoever during the last twelve weeks.”

“I am being monitored over possible prostate cancer and my appointments have been cancelled and the next one is now in August rather than June.”

“Would prefer face to face consultation then you can show doctor where the pain is coming from instead of doctor guessing.”

“We have brought our learning disabled son back to live with us from his supported living house as not seeing us would have been detrimental to his mental health and would have been upsetting for him.”

Summary

The findings of version 2 of the survey suggest that despite the lockdown providing many different challenges for individuals, there were many respondents managing to deal with the situation. Multiple participants shared personal stories which showcased the support they had received, given or observed within their communities (family, friends and neighbours), which helped themselves and/or others navigate this difficult period. However, it also highlighted there were individuals who were struggling greatly, especially those who were not able to access support.

This survey further highlighted the themes already identified in the previous survey including **mental health issues**, **financial impacts**, and **caring responsibilities**. New themes also emerged including thoughts and feelings around **telephone and video consultations**, as well as more information on those with **pre-existing health conditions**.

The second version of the survey gave an insight into what the significant portion of the first UK national lockdown was like for respondents. However, as the national lockdown restrictions started to be lifted and the situation began to change, it was important to accurately capture people's views and experiences of these changes and the impact that they had. This required a new survey (a third version) with adapted questions specifically designed to gain the best insight into the next stage of the pandemic and its impact on people's experiences (such as on people's mental health and the potential financial implications).

There were two additional reports that were created from the version 2 of the Covid-19 survey. One report investigated further the experiences of LGBTQ respondents and the second, looked at the experiences of Millom residents.

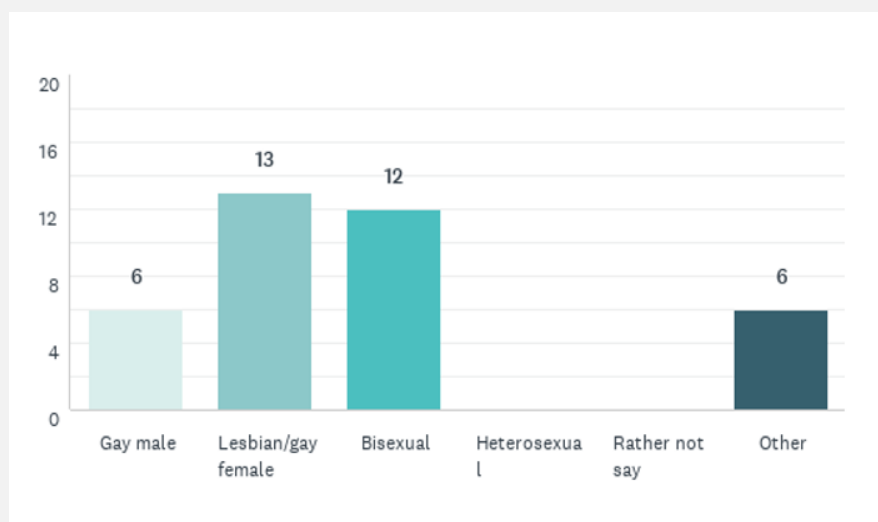


LGBTQ report (v2)

Whilst designing version 2, in consultation with Dr Lewis Turner of Lancashire LGBT, some of the demographic questions were updated to account for the range of diversity within the LGBTQ community and in order to identify particular issues affecting them. A separate LGBTQ report was published, using the responses we got from LGBTQ respondents in version 2, to further investigate the issues faced by these respondents and to compare their experiences of the pandemic with those of the general population of respondents. There are risks for some LGBTQ people who have been forced to quarantine with family members who may not be accepting of them⁵. Being stuck at home with family can also be difficult for people who have not yet come 'out'⁶.

Respondents included those who identified as: transgender, non-binary, non-binary transfeminine, gay female, gay male, bisexual, asexual and pansexual. 37 people responded to the survey; 54% were from Lancashire, 30% from Cumbria, 11% from Blackpool and 2% from Blackburn with Darwen.

- 68% said that they were in employment (either full-time, part-time or self-employed), 11% were retired and 8% were disabled and unable to work.
- 95% were white British
- 62% were aged over 45
- 65% of respondents identified as female (including trans woman), 24% as male (including trans man). 1 person identified as 'other' and 2 people told us they are non-binary.
- 86% told us that their gender identity was the same as on their birth certificate.



Other included asexual and pansexual

Mental Health

LGBTQ respondents rated their mental health worse than non-LGBTQ respondents with the average rating for mental health before the pandemic being 60 (compared to 78 in non-LGBTQ respondents). In addition, LGBTQ respondents felt their mental health had been adversely affected by the pandemic to a much greater degree, with an average score of 54 compared to an average of 37 for the general population.

Financial impact

73% said that they had not been affected financially as a result of the pandemic.

Pre-existing medical conditions

68% of LGBTQ respondents said that they have a pre-existing medical condition (compared to 50% generally).

Violence and abuse

Two LGBTQ respondents shared that they felt they were at risk of violence within the home and that they did not know how to get help. Neither of the respondents left their contact details so we were unable to contact them and signpost them to services that could have provided support.



Millom report (v2)

Millom is a town located in Southeast Cumbria. The Millom report and survey were created at the request of Jenny Brumby (a founding member of the Millom Health Action Group), with the intention of focusing on what the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic was having on the residents of Millom. The questions and format of the Millom survey were the same as version 2 of the Covid survey. However, the Millom survey had its own link on Survey Monkey and was only distributed to people who live in Millom. This was done by sending the survey link via the local Millom community newsletter 'Around the Combe'.

This survey was launched on 26th June 2020 and ran until 2nd July 2020. There were 51 responses received, with responses being overwhelmingly from white women over 55. Respondents were 88% female, 65% were aged between 55-74, and 100% white British.

The following are the key findings of the report:

Mental health

Millom respondents rated their mental health (minimally) better than non-Millom respondents with the average rating for mental health prior to the pandemic being 79 (compared to 78 from the general population obtained from version 2). In addition, 70% respondents said that they didn't suffer from any mental health issues. However, Millom respondents felt that their mental health had been adversely affected by the pandemic to a greater degree, with an average rating of 47 compared to an average of 37 for the general population (given in version 2).

Financial impact

22% of respondents stated that they had been affected financially as a result of the pandemic. 72% shared that they had not made any financial changes during the pandemic, but out of those that did the main change was spending less.

Pre-existing medical conditions

50% had a pre-existing medical condition. With 59% having had their appointment rearranged or cancelled, and 24% were unable to get unnecessary treatment.

Appointments

No respondents had a video consultation, however, 46% had a phone consultation. 47% said that the experience was positive, but 17% said that they would not use the service again.

Caring responsibilities

10 people shared that they did not receive any support prior to the pandemic, and this increased to 19 during the pandemic. However, more people did receive support from family and friends during the pandemic.

Positive experiences

Not everyone had positive experiences during the lockdown. But of those that did and were willing to share, most centred around more time spent with family, and the community spirit that was felt at this time, as well as enjoying a more relaxed pace of life.



Version 3 of the Covid-19 survey

Context

The survey for the version 3 coronavirus report was live from 16th June until 14th August. During this time there were various changes to restrictions, with the first national lockdown restrictions starting to lift gradually throughout June, but the first set of **local lockdowns** being introduced in July. This meant that there were differences in guidance and rules throughout the country at this time. It is important to recognise and acknowledge this context as it is highly likely the climate at the time influenced people's responses.

Questions

Questions asked in the third survey were designed considering findings from v1 and v2. We continued to ask about people's mental health, finances, experiences of being a carer (if applicable) and about pre-existing medical conditions. New questions which we asked included experiences of contacting GP's, people's feelings about lockdown ending and whether they have had any behavioural changes during lockdown. A list of questions asked can be found in Appendix C.

Findings

A total of 96 people responded to the survey. From these responses these were the main themes which were identified:

Mental health

Compared to version 2, respondents of version 3 had a higher incidence of mental health issues and gave a lower average score for their mental health prior to the pandemic. 35% of people who normally access mental health support, claimed they have been unable to access this support during the pandemic. Friends and family continued to be the main source of support for mental health.

Financial impact

71% of respondents had not been affected financially, 27% were better off financially during the pandemic. 6 respondents stated that they have struggled to pay for food and/or essential bills.

Pre-existing medical conditions

40% had a pre-existing medical condition, out of these 51% said treatment had continued, 25% had their treatment delayed and 20% had their treatment stopped. 27 respondents did not seek professional help for their medical issue. Reasons given for this included being a burden, concerns over catching the virus, the surgery was closed, or they felt their issue was not important enough to be seen.

GP surgeries

51% said contacting their GP was a positive experience, 39% said it was neutral and 10% said it was negative.

Carers

For those who had caring responsibilities, the issues faced were varied from trying to balance caring and paid work, to supporting other people's mental health.

Self-isolating and social distancing

57% were worried about coming out of lockdown. Worries included other people not sticking to the rules and catching the virus.



Healthy and unhealthy habits

40% wanted to continue with the regular exercise they were doing, 35% wanted to continue with video chats, whilst 27% wanted to decrease the amount of alcohol they had been consuming.

Other comments - included loneliness, confusing communication from the government, unnecessary deaths in care homes, difficulties in getting food shopping, medical treatment and problems with access to health and social care.

Demographics

- 60% were from Cumbria
- 73% aged over 45
- 71% female
- 87% heterosexual
- 99% White British or white other
- 73% in some form of employment

“I didn’t consider it [health issue] serious enough to burden very busy GP’s”

“Lockdown, unable to visit due to restrictions in Care Home. Parents are there temporarily, one had Alzheimer’s the other not and so are currently in a care home together to avoid separation during lockdown. Therefore paying care home fees £1,000 each a week while still paying rent and bills for own home until one can return home when lockdown finishes and visit to care home are reinstated again”

“I think that some other people are not currently following social distancing guidance, and that this will get worse as things are eased to the point that they will forget that the virus has not gone away!”

“Unable to access any MH support due to difficulties using phone. Major crisis in May, approx. 4 wks duration, only support was GP home visit to remove meds, & emotional support online by friends. It’s been tough trying to exist”

Summary

This survey reinforced the themes already identified in the previous surveys including **mental health issues, finances, pre-existing medical conditions and treatment** and issues faced by **carers**. New themes also emerged including thoughts and feelings towards **coming out of lockdown** and un/healthy **habits** developed during lockdown.

Mental health issues are still prevalent, and this has been a consistent theme throughout all surveys. **Family and friends** have been a consistent support system for those with struggling with mental health issues during the pandemic. Comments were still being made about **loneliness** and isolation. The amount of people who have been negatively affected financially has decreased since version 2, with 29% being negatively affected compared to only 2% in version 3.



In comparison to version 2, more appointments were being postponed but less were being cancelled over the course of the pandemic for those with a pre-existing medical condition (from our sample). Concerns and issues raised by those with caring responsibilities have been raised in the first three versions of the survey.

New questions were asked in this survey, raising new concerns which were reflective of the context and time in the year when restrictions were changing frequently. There were worries about coming out of lockdown and other people **not following the rules**. There was a mix of healthy and unhealthy habits which people had formed during the pandemic. New comments were also made about **care homes**, **difficulties in food shopping** and **confusing communication** from the government.

As this version of the survey gave a wealth of information and insight into people's experiences about the lifting of the first national lockdown as well as the introduction to local lockdowns, it was decided that a fourth version was required to further explore these new themes as well as gain further insight into experiences of the second (and ultimately a) third national lockdown.



Version 4 of the Covid-19 survey

Context

The survey for the final version of the coronavirus reports was live from the 4th December 2020 running until 31st March 2021. With these findings being reflective of the timeframe as we reached the one-year mark since the first national lockdown. During this time, the second national lockdown had been lifted in early December and the country went back into the 3-tier system, meaning there were large differences regarding rules and restrictions within the country. A fourth tier was added on 21st December meaning some people could not see family and friends around the Christmas period (whilst others in lower tiers could). The third national lockdown began on the 6th January 2021. These restriction changes need to be taken into consideration as some questions that were asked became less relevant depending on when the respondent was answering.

Questions

Questions were asked around **national and local restrictions** and how respondents were feeling about the future. Version 3 revealed that over half of respondents were worried about coming out of the first lockdown and felt that lockdown restrictions had been lifted too quickly and subsequently this seemed important to further explore. Questions about **safety measures** were asked to gain an idea about whether people were sticking to the rules and guidance to protect themselves and others. We continued to ask about **mental health** and **pre-existing health conditions** and seeking treatment as this has been a consistent concern throughout the series. A list of questions asked can be found in Appendix D.

Findings

A total of 435 people responded to the survey. From these responses there were main themes which were identified:

National and local restrictions

65% were slightly worried about the future with concerns around the government's approach to the pandemic, mental health, a negative economic impact as well as a general feeling of uncertainty for the future. Positive comments were made about the vaccine offering hope for the future. 91% understood both national and local restrictions and guidance.

Covid-19 safety measures

89% of respondents stated that they always follow the rules and frustrations were expressed towards those who do not follow the rules. A large number of people stated that they follow the guidance because of concerns about health and vulnerabilities of themselves and/or others. Around 11% stated that they sometimes follow the rules; reasons for not following the guidance included seeing friends and family, for their mental health, not always keeping 2 metres from others and guidance being unclear.

Specific health concerns and treatment

183 respondents stated they had a specific health concern during the pandemic, of which 67% had their health concern addressed. In many cases where respondents did not have their health concern addressed, this was because people chose not to seek professional medical help. Reasons for this included not wanting to bother already busy doctors and worries that they themselves would catch the virus.



Mental health and social needs

36% believed that they were getting enough support for their mental health, whilst 13% did not. Family and friends continued to be the main source for mental health support. Responses were similar for social needs, with 35% believing they were getting enough support for their social needs, whilst 12% did not. Digital technology was a very common source for allowing people to keep connected.

Vaccination

There were no specific questions about the vaccination, however, it was still a highly prevalent theme. There were a mix of positive and negative comments made. Many respondents praised the quick rollout of the vaccination. However, there were a large number of respondents who had concerns about the vaccination including the distance to the vaccination centre and how they would get there without relying on others when shielding. Many respondents questioned when they would get the vaccination.

Other comments

Praising of frontline staff and volunteers and a range of concerns including not feeling informed about local hospital coronavirus data, care home visits and isolation of residents, problems with GP's and other people not following the rules.

Demographics

- 41% from Lancashire
- 84% aged over 45
- 67% female
- 88% heterosexual
- 2% with a learning disability and/or Autism
- 96% white British or white other

“The vaccination is a light on the horizon which offers hope”

“There have been so many changes and nuances to tiers etc, that I have a vague idea but not absolute clarity”

“The social restrictions have been hard. I understand the need but have met outside on own with more than one other person. Its mentally difficult to only interact by social media, rather than face to face. All other precautions adhered to”

“I don't see the point of contacting the GP as there are people in more desperate situations that myself”



Summary

New questions were asked about lockdown restrictions and safety measures. While there were also questions exploring the continuous themes identified from previous surveys.

Mental health continued to be a pressing problem, and this has been evident in all four surveys, likewise, **friends and family** appear to be the main support source for mental health. A concerning number of people stated that they **did not seek professional medical** help because they did not want to bother already busy doctors and/or worries about catching the virus. This has been a consistent finding throughout our coronavirus series. Comments were still being made about **care homes** and isolated residents, problems with **GP's** and frustrations about others not sticking to guidance rules.

New information emerged about lockdown restrictions and guidance, with most respondents being **slightly worried about the future**. Concerns around the government's approach to the pandemic and general uncertainty for the future were expressed. There were a large number of comments about the **vaccination** which had not been discussed in previous surveys (due to the vaccination rollout starting in December when v4 was live⁷). Comments around the vaccination varied largely with positive comments made about its rollout, but also concerns raised about the distance of their assigned vaccination centre and how they would get there as well as questions about when they will get the vaccination.

Despite this survey giving us a wealth of new information about how people have been living and coping during the second and third lockdown including views about the vaccination, it was decided that this would be the last version in the coronavirus series. Instead, HWT would produce this overview of all four surveys, one year on since the first national lockdown to see the journey of how residents of Lancashire, Cumbria, Blackpool and Blackburn with Darwen have felt during the pandemic and their experiences.

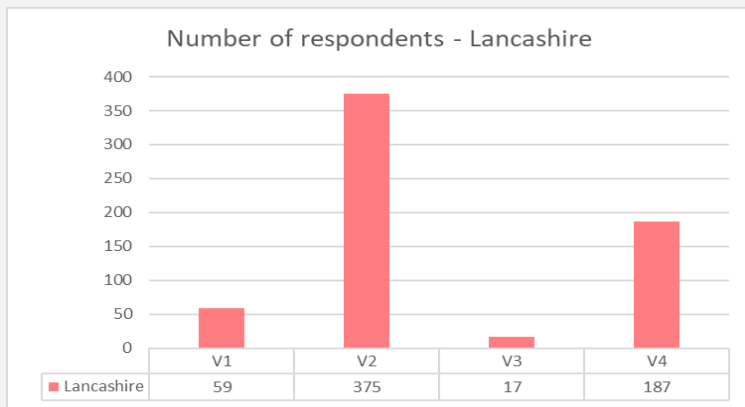


Analysis by location

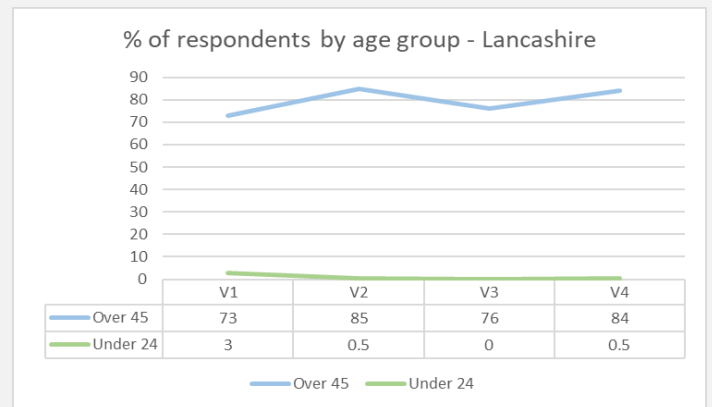
Despite having overarching themes which cover all four (or at least multiple) coronavirus reports, we wanted to explore whether these themes vary between Lancashire, Cumbria, Blackpool and Blackburn with Darwen. Subsequently, each overarching theme has been analysed by location and by each version. Findings are presented in the tables below.

Lancashire

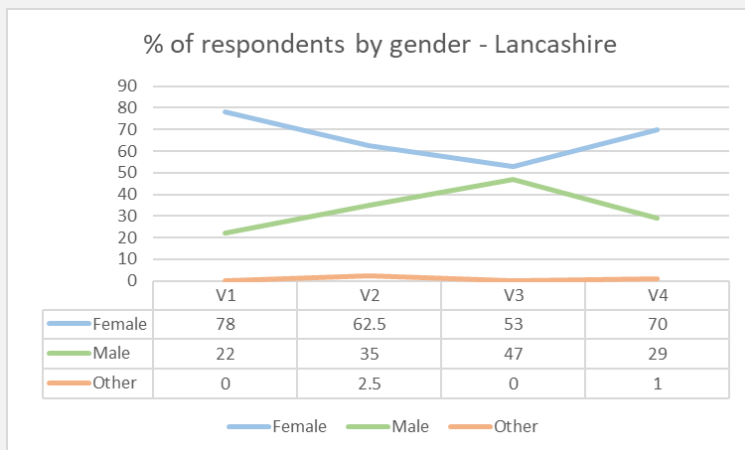
Respondents



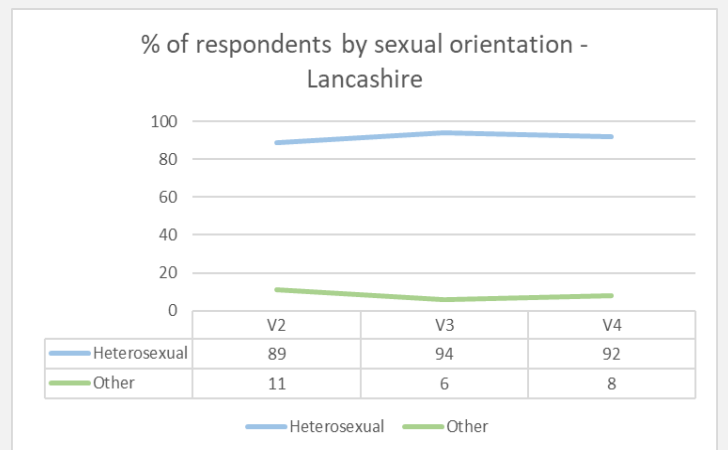
Age



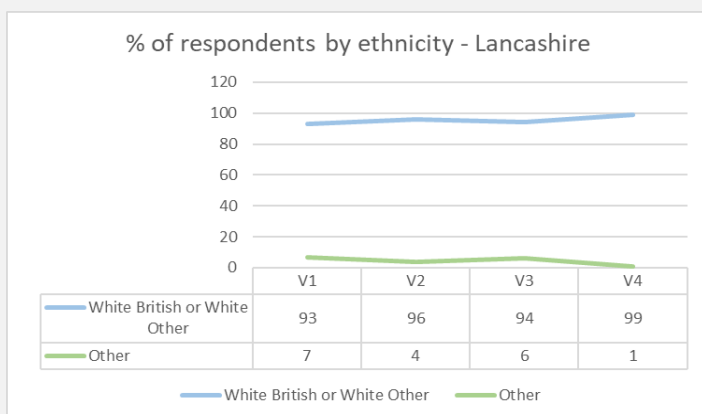
Gender



Sexual orientation



Ethnicity



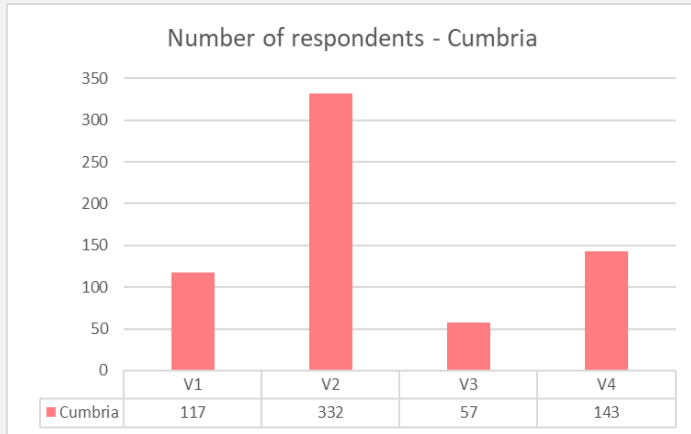
Additional comments

- Postcode data was given for location in V1
- Version 1 did not ask about the respondent's sexual orientation hence the lack of data

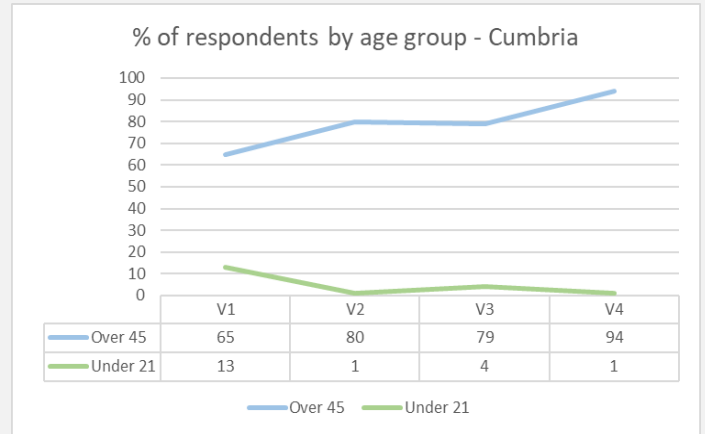


Cumbria

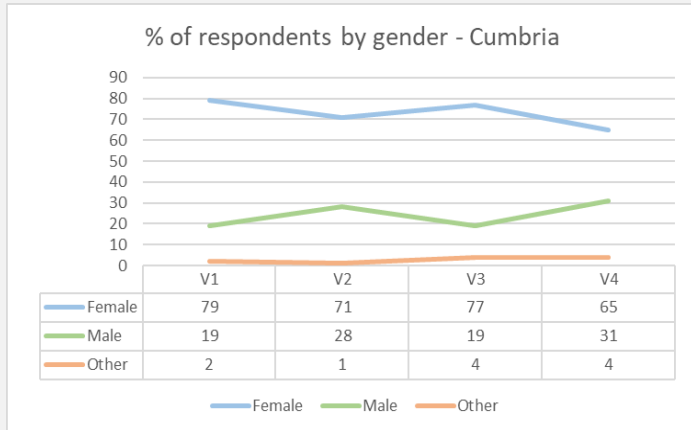
Respondents



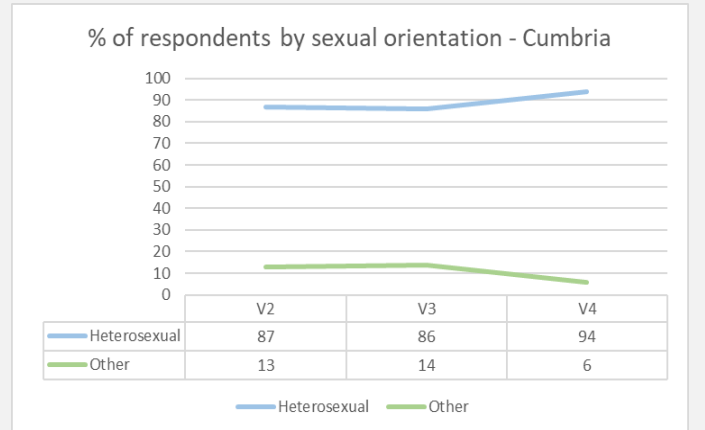
Age



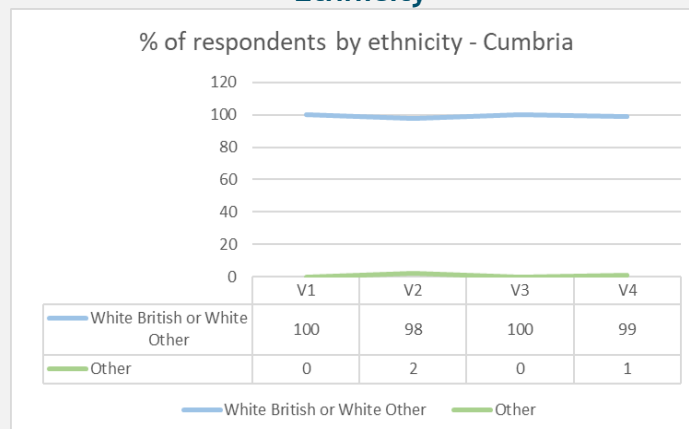
Gender



Sexual orientation



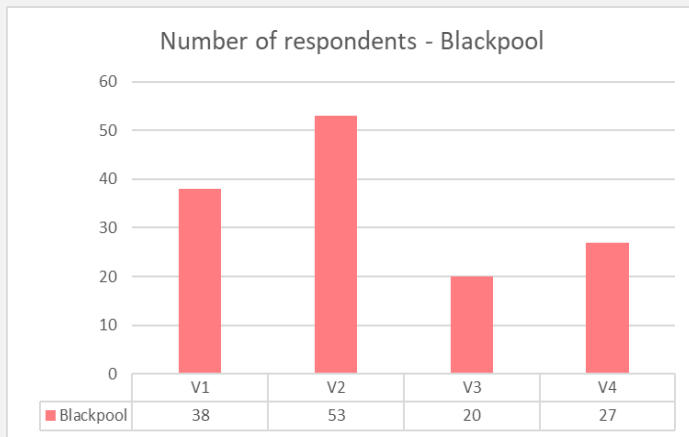
Ethnicity



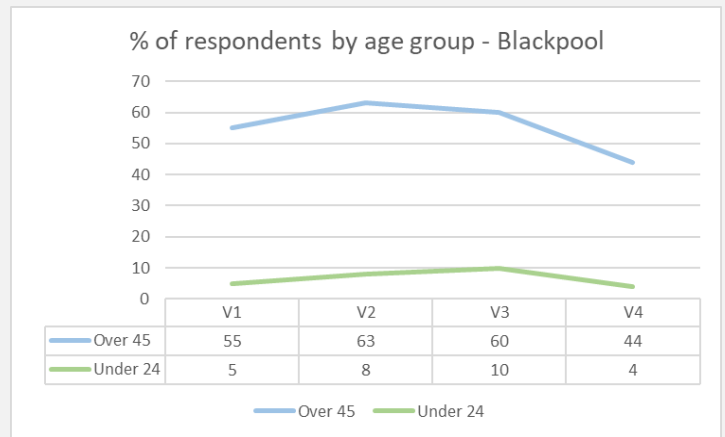


Blackpool

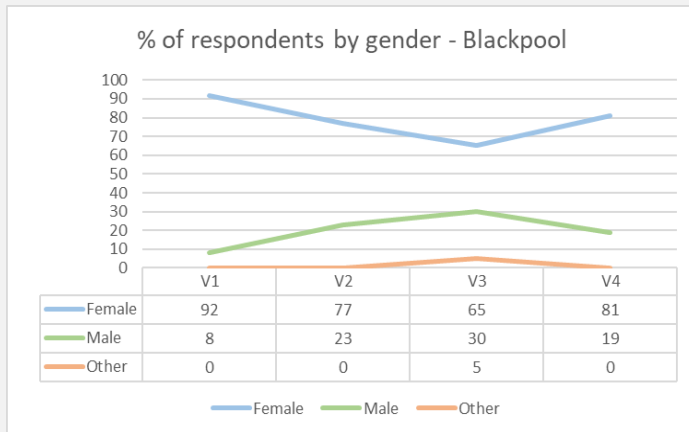
Respondents



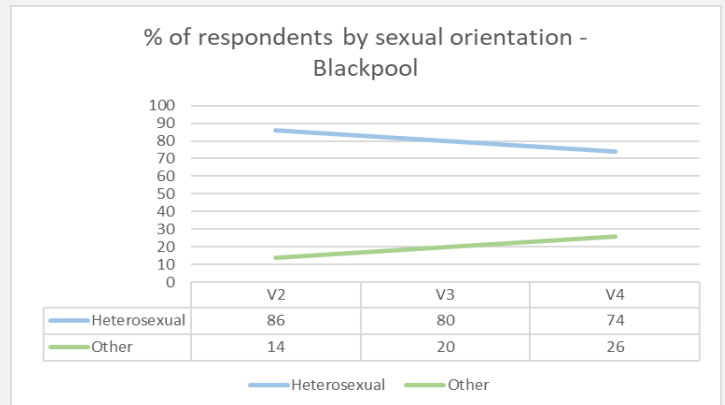
Age



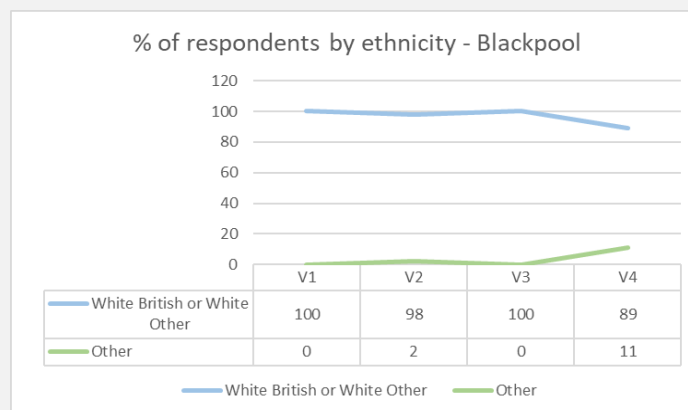
Gender



Sexual orientation



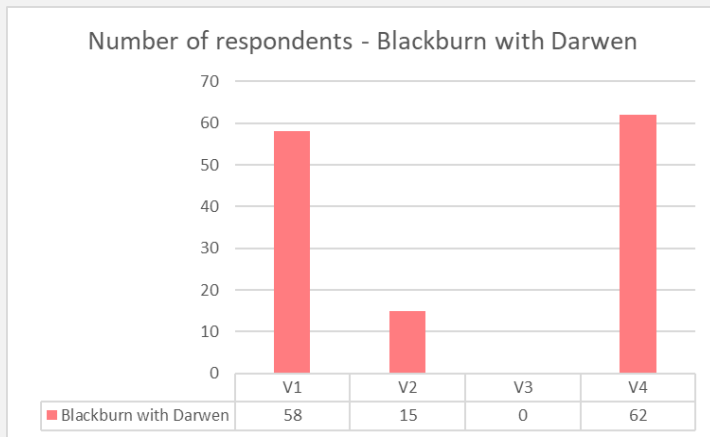
Ethnicity



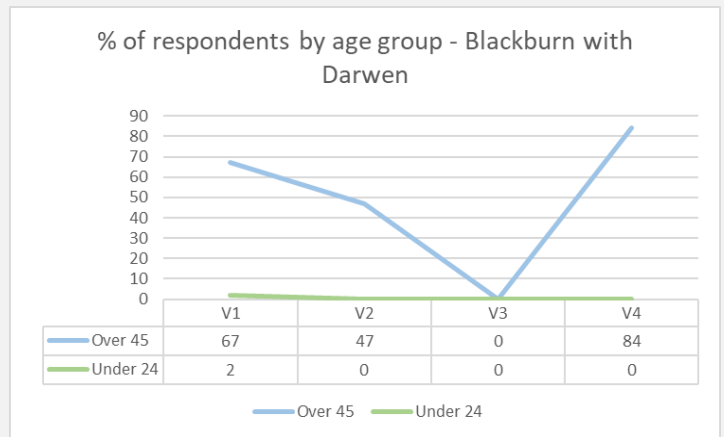


Blackburn with Darwen

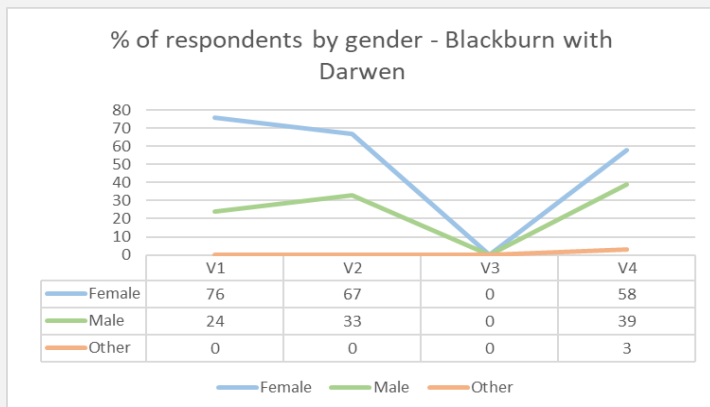
Respondents



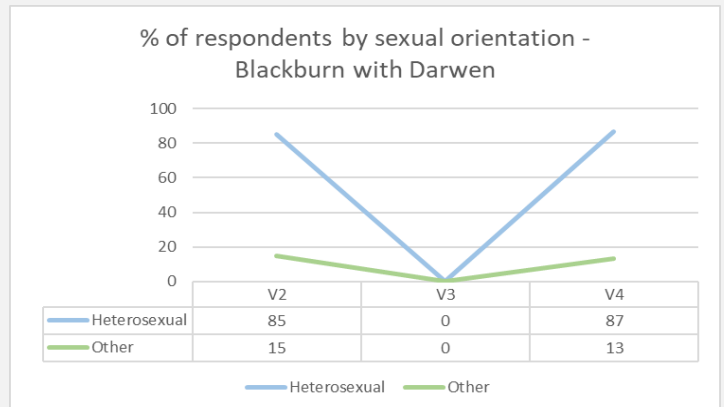
Age



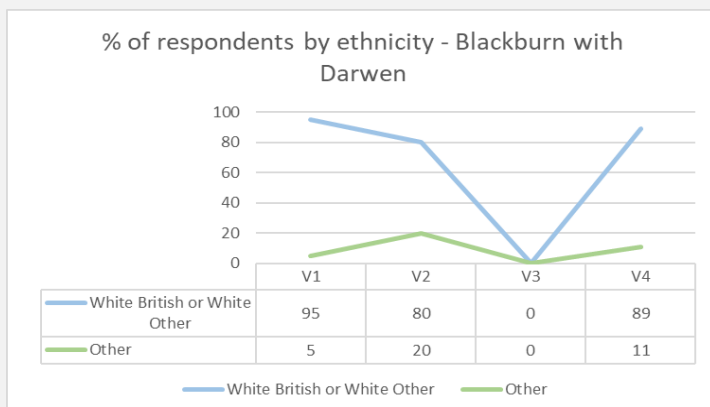
Gender



Sexual orientation



Ethnicity



Additional comments

- There were no respondents from Blackburn with Darwen for version 3 hence no demographical data



Overarching themes

Mental health:

| | V1 | V2 | V3 | V4 |
|------------------------------|---|---|---|--|
| Lancashire | A large concern was the mental health of respondents and others. Talking to friends and family, hobbies, walking/exercising and avoiding too much media/news were the main ways respondents looked after their mental health. | Average mental health rating before Covid-19 - 77. Average impact rating Covid-19 had on mental health - 37. 45% were still able to access mental health support. Friends and family were the main source of support. Many comments were made about loneliness. | Average mental health rating before Covid-19 - 65. Average impact rating Covid-19 had on mental health - 73. 100% of respondents were still able to access mental health support. Friends and family were the main source of support. | 33% agree/strongly agree that they were getting enough support for their mental health, whilst 16% disagree/strongly disagree. |
| Cumbria | Mental health struggles (mainly remotely talking to friends and family for support). Limiting news and social media intake. | Average mental health rating before Covid-19 - 81. Average impact rating Covid-19 had on mental health - 34. 39.5% were able to access support for mental health. Friends and family were the main form of support. | Average mental health rating before Covid-19 -67. Average impact rating Covid-19 had on mental health - 54. 58% were able to access support for their mental health (with the main form of support being from friends and family). | 35% agree/strongly agree that they were getting enough support for their mental health, whilst 7% disagree/strongly disagree. |
| Blackpool | Negative impact on mental health (isolated, missing friends and family and the physical interaction, talking more on the phone/video calls to maintain contact). | Average mental health rating before Covid-19 - 63. Average impact rating Covid-19 had on mental health - 49. 42% were able to access support for their mental health, the main form of support used was friends and family. | Average mental health rating before Covid-19 - 58. Average impact rating Covid-19 had on mental health - 64. 64% were able to access mental health support, with the main source of support being friends and family. | 40% agree/strongly agree that they were getting enough support for their mental health, whilst 20% disagree/strongly disagree. |
| Blackburn with Darwen | Respondents looked after their mental health by virtual communication with friends and family, exercise and doing hobbies. | Average mental health rating before Covid-19 - 71. Average impact rating Covid-19 had on mental health - 39. 57% were still able to access mental health support. The main form of support used was friends and family. | No respondents | 41% agree/strongly agree that they were getting enough support for their mental health, whilst 10% disagree/strongly disagree. |

Financial impact:

| | V1 | V2 | V3 | V4 |
|-----------------------|---|--|---|--|
| Lancashire | A main concern was the potential financial impact. | 25% had been affected financially. The main reason was someone else being furloughed. 27.5% made financial changes. | 35% had been financially affected, whilst 24% were financially better off. However, there were 2 respondents who stated they had struggled to pay for food and/or essentials bills. 47% continued their usual job. | When asked what further support could help at this time, 2 people mentioned food boxes would help. |
| Cumbria | Worries about the economy and employment (especially those who are self-employed). | 33% had been financially affected. Reasons included being on 0-hour contacts/self-employed. Others improved financially due to a reduction in additional spending. 37.5% made financial changes. | 27.5% had been affected financially, whilst 25.5% were financially better off. 51% continued their usual job. | |
| Blackpool | Economic impact with worries about employment, national economy, and concerns about paying the bills. | 35% had been financially affected. The main reason was reduced working hours. 39% made financial changes. | 35% had been affected financially, whilst 29% were financially better off. 62.5% continued their usual job and 31% did not work. | |
| Blackburn with Darwen | A main concern was the potential financial impact. | 20% had been financially affected. The main reason was being furloughed. 40% had made financial changes. | No respondents | |

Health concerns (including pre-existing conditions):

| | V1 | V2 | V3 | V4 |
|------------------------------|---|--|--|---|
| Lancashire | Many concerned about catching the virus. 39% were receiving treatment (unrelated to Covid-19). | 56% had an existing medical condition that required treatment or care. | 53% had an existing medical condition that required treatment or care. 23.5% had their treatment delayed, 18% continued as normal and 18% continued in a different way. 29% experienced a medical issue but did not contact their doctor about it. 18% had been told to self-isolate for health reasons. | 20% were identified as clinically vulnerable. 43% had a specific health concern during the pandemic, and of these 27% had their health concern addressed. |
| Cumbria | Many were concerned about catching the virus. 62% were receiving treatment (unrelated to Covid-19). | 47% had an existing medical condition that required treatment or care (51 had appointments cancelled, 58 had a telephone/video appointment). Mentioned that getting the treatment was not worth the risk of going to the hospital. | 39% had an existing medical condition that required treatment or care. 34.5% of appointments/treatment continued as normal, 24% were delayed. 27% experienced a medical issue but did not contact their doctor about it. 23% were self-isolating and shielding for health reasons. | 73% were identified as clinically vulnerable. 46% had a specific health concern during the pandemic, and of these 79% had their health concern addressed. |
| Blackpool | Many were concerned about themselves and family catching the virus. There were worries about resources being available to help if they got ill. 22% were receiving treatment (unrelated to Covid-19). | 35% had an existing medical condition that required treatment or care (10 had appointments cancelled, 9 had a telephone/video appointment). Many mentioned that they would rather have face to face appointments. | 35% had an existing medical condition that required treatment or care. 36% care/treatment was stopped, 18% continued as normal, 18% has been delayed. 30% experienced a medical issue but decided not to contact the doctor about it. 10.5% needed to self-isolate or shield for health reasons. | 15% were identified as clinically vulnerable. 35% had a specific health concern during the pandemic, and of these 67% had their health concern addressed. |
| Blackburn with Darwen | More respondents were concerned about people they care about getting the virus, than themselves. 44% were receiving treatment (unrelated to Covid-19). | 40% had an existing medical condition which required treatment/care (4 had phone/video appointment). | No respondents | 19% were identified as clinically vulnerable. 34% had a specific health concern during the pandemic and of these, 48% had their health concern addressed. |

Caring responsibilities:

| | V1 | V2 | V3 | V4 |
|-----------------------|---|---|--|----|
| Lancashire | | 19% had caring responsibilities. The main source of support came from friends and family. | 29% had caring responsibilities. Issues included struggling to work full-time and care, hard to care whilst recovering from Covid-19 themselves, loneliness. | |
| Cumbria | | 27% had caring responsibilities. The main source of support came from friends and family. | 36% had caring responsibilities. Issues included catching/spreading the virus, struggling to work full-time and care, and visitation restrictions. | |
| Blackpool | Worries about being able to look after elderly relatives. | 36% had caring responsibilities. The main source of support came from friends and family. | 1 respondent had caring responsibilities. | |
| Blackburn with Darwen | | 27% had caring responsibilities. The main source of support came from friends and family. | No respondents | |

Restrictions and safety measures/guidance:

| | V1 | V2 | V3 | V4 |
|-----------------------|--|----|---|--|
| Lancashire | 15% stated they were self-isolating. | | 65% were worried/anxious about coming out of lockdown. Concerns included vulnerable friends and family and other people not socially distancing. 41% felt that lockdown had been lifted too early. | 93% understood the current national guidance on restrictions, and 85% understood the current local restrictions. 86% stated they always followed the guidance. |
| Cumbria | Frustration with those not obeying the rules/guidelines. | | 56% were worried/anxious about coming out of lockdown. Concerns included catching the virus and people not following restrictions. 54% felt that lockdown had been lifted too early, while 30% believe it was the right time to start lifting them. | 93% understood the current national guidance on restrictions, and 79% understood the current local restrictions. 92% stated they always followed the guidance. |
| Blackpool | | | 50% were worried/anxious about coming out of lockdown. Concerns included catching and spreading the virus. 45% felt that lockdown had been lifted too early, 45% felt that it was the right time to lift lockdown restrictions. | 89% understood the current national guidance on restrictions, and 89% understood the current local restrictions. 92.5% stated they always followed the guidance. |
| Blackburn with Darwen | 12% had concerns about not knowing how long the pandemic/restrictions would last. Support needed included clearer advice and guidance from the government. | | No respondents | 82% understood the current national guidance, whilst 90% understood the current local guidance. 89% stated they always followed the guidance. |

Access to healthcare:

| | V1 | V2 | V3 | V4 |
|------------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| Lancashire | Cancelled and postponed appointments. There were concerns about running out of repeat prescription medication. | For those whose treatment/care had been affected by the pandemic, 95 had a phone/video consultation, 83 had their appointment cancelled, 38 had their appointment rearranged, 42 unable to get treatment, 39 unable to get medical tests, 16 difficult to get medication | 12 respondents contacted their GP during the pandemic, of these 7 said their experience was positive/very positive and 2 negative/very negative. | 54% felt that the NHS had been clear about any changes to services. When asked what further support would help at this time, 7 respondents stated better access to GP's. |
| Cumbria | Cancelled and postponed appointments. Many getting phone appointments instead of face to face. | For those whose treatment/care had been affected by the pandemic, 58 had a phone/video consultation, 51 had their appointment cancelled, 31 had their appointment rearranged, 10 unable to get treatment, 16 unable to get medical tests, 13 difficult to get medication | 23 respondents contacted their GP during the pandemic, of these 16 said their experience was positive/very positive and 2 negative/very negative. Comments were made about waiting times/being left on hold. | 72% felt that the NHS have been clear about any changes to the services in the area. |
| Blackpool | Cancelled and postponed treatments. | For those whose treatment/care had been affected by the pandemic, 9 had a phone/video consultation, 10 had their appointment cancelled, 2 had their appointment rearranged, 2 unable to get treatment, 6 unable to get medical tests, 1 difficult to get medication | 13 respondents contacted their GP during the pandemic, of these 2 said their experience was positive and 1 negative. | 52% felt that the NHS had been clear about any changes to the services. |
| Blackburn with Darwen | Cancelled and postponed appointments and treatments. Many getting phone appointments instead of face to face. | For those whose treatment/care had been affected by the pandemic, 4 had a phone/video consultation, 1 unable to get medical tests, 1 difficult to get medication. | No respondents | 52% felt that the NHS had been clear about changes to services. |

Community spirit:

| | V1 | V2 | V3 | V4 |
|------------------------------|---|--|--------------|--|
| Lancashire | | Respondents felt they were a lot closer to their neighbours during the pandemic and people were a lot friendlier | | |
| Cumbria | A large number of respondents stated that they been helping family/neighbours with food shopping. | People were a lot friendlier and more helpful during this time. | | There was a lot of praise shared towards the NHS from respondents. |
| Blackpool | A large number of respondents stated that they been helping family/neighbours with food shopping. | | | |
| Blackburn with Darwen | A large number of respondents stated that they been helping family/neighbours with food shopping. | Respondents stated that they felt their community had come together which was a positive experience | No responses | There was a lot of praise shared towards the NHS from respondents. |

Impact on lifestyle (habits and exercise):

| | V1 | V2 | V3 | V4 |
|-----------------------|---|--|---|----|
| Lancashire | Most respondents were going on walks to keep physically active and a large number of people were gardening. 8 respondents shared they weren't doing anything for their physical health and were struggling with motivation. | Many respondents were enjoying the more relaxed, slower pace of life. For some, having more time to work on their house/garden. | 41% planned on continuing regular exercise, 23.5% planned on continuing video calls, 35% felt they were not exercising enough and hoped to change this. | |
| Cumbria | Opportunity to do hobbies and exercise (dog walking, walking, gardening, cycling, running, online classes). Loss of social interaction (missing friends and family). | More time to oneself to do exercise and hobbies including gardening and DIY. Work life balance had improved for many with a slower pace of life. More focused family time (often remotely). | 38% planned on continuing regular exercise, 35.5% planned on continuing video chats, 28.5% had increased alcohol consumption which they wished to change. | |
| Blackpool | Aims to maintain a routine but both working from home and home schooling providing its own challenges. Respondents were doing more exercise and hobbies including dog walking, gardening, running, cycling. | Respondents found time to focus on themselves and what is important in life. | 41% wanted to continue regular exercise, 35% wanted to continue video chats, 33% increased their alcohol consumption which they wished to change. | |
| Blackburn with Darwen | A large number of respondents were exercising for both their physical health and mental health. | Respondents stated they were more physically active, enjoying working from home as it gives them more time to relax which they were enjoying. They were able to spend more time with family (they lived with). | No respondents | |

Vaccine/test:

| | V1 | V2 | V3 | V4 |
|-----------------------|---|----|----------------|---|
| Lancashire | Respondents wanted access to tests so they would know whether they have it/have had it. | | | |
| Cumbria | Desire for home testing. | | | The vaccine was very much desired, but also more information was required. |
| Blackpool | | | | |
| Blackburn with Darwen | | | No respondents | When asked what further support is needed at this time, comments were made about getting the vaccination. |



Distribution and outcomes

Distribution

The findings from the *How are you coping with the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic? Survey* research project were distributed and shared with representatives from the local CCG's, County councils and other relevant agencies and service providers (for example, Cumbria CVS and the Millom Health Action Group). They were then able to use this feedback during the pandemic, as well as in the future. The pandemic has forced everyone to change the way they work and findings from this series can be used going forward to reflect on what we have all learnt during this unprecedented time. The online survey link for each version was promoted on the websites and social media platforms of Healthwatch Lancashire, Cumbria, Blackpool and Blackburn with Darwen.

Outcomes

The findings of this series have contributed to changes in the way of working in the pandemic and has brought about new partnerships. By sharing our findings with other organisations, a number of outcomes have emerged and has allowed new ways of practice to benefit patients and service users.

'If you read only one thing from this Bulletin, make sure it's the most up to date report from Healthwatch's How are you coping with the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic? survey. As always, the report is well worth a read and yet again helps us to remember those who are really struggling to get through this crisis and need the help of all the great service that our third sector in Cumbria is providing'. Clare Edwards opening paragraph of email circulating the Action for Health Bulletin.

Direct outcomes:

Projecting the patient voice

Understanding and acting on the patient voice (including past experiences, wishes and needs) is paramount when delivering services. Healthwatch's main goal is to gather intelligence and raise awareness of trends and communicate these to relevant organisations who can take action. This research project has allowed us to spot current trends and concerns and use our platform to make these trends known.

Inspiring future projects

As well as informing relevant organisations about concerns/issues identified from this research project, we have also been able to commence new research projects. For example, this survey series informed us about the current lack of available treatment, postponed or cancelled consultations and people who are too anxious to attend future appointments. To address this, Healthwatch Cumbria (HWC) with the support of the HWC Board, have decided to focus on the impact for people in Cumbria living with new or existing health conditions (such as, but not limited to, mental health issues, long-term medical conditions and cancer tests or treatment).



Outcomes cont.

Keeping People Connected

This was a Covid-19 support service for people who have learning disabilities and/or autism. It was set up by People First Independent Advocacy (provider of HWL and HWC) and involved Lancashire County Council, Lancashire and South Cumbria ICS and other partner organisations. People with learning disabilities and/or autism can be extremely vulnerable, and it is likely this is magnified during the pandemic and so Keeping People Connected involved regular calls from specialist advocacy staff to speak with individuals and understand any current issues they were facing (for example, health and wellbeing, food, medication, safety and support needs) and offer signposting to relevant organisations.

Indirect outcomes:

New partnerships

The pandemic forced the population to change the way they work; many people had to work from home and communicate with others virtually. It was quickly made evident that online communication can be a quick and easy way to share information as efficiently as in person (perhaps more efficiently as there is no need to commute to meet in person). As a result of this, organisations and agencies collaborated more and the benefits of partnerships and working together was made evident. New initiatives were formed as a result to ensure high quality patient care is at the centre.

NHS adapting to new ways of working

Before the pandemic, GP appointments were face-to-face regardless of the severity of the health concern. The pandemic has changed this way of working, with a requirement to have phone and/or video consultations initially (with a follow up face-to-face appointment if required and deemed necessary by the health professional). Although a small number of respondents disliked this method, the majority of respondents liked having phone/video consultations (or having a mix of both face-to-face and phone/video consultations). This allowed patients to still have access to healthcare and have their concerns addressed during this period, but in a safe and efficient way.



Conclusion

These experiences are an historical record of what life was like for people living in Cumbria and Lancashire during these unprecedented times – a piece of social history.

HWT would like to say thank you to all those people who took the time to complete our survey, to share their stories with us and to contribute to this valuable piece of social research.

This report aimed to tell the overarching story of the past 12 months and people's experiences of the Coronavirus pandemic and national lockdowns, told through the responses received from all four surveys which were part of the 'How are you coping with the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic? Survey' research project.

An in-depth analysis of each version of the survey identified key themes. These key themes have been explored to tell the story of the past 12 months, based on experiences of the survey respondents. Themes highlighted the impact that the pandemic had on people financially, on their mental and physical health, their access to healthcare and their caring responsibilities. There were also positive experiences shared including the hopes about the vaccine and the increase in community spirit. An additional two separate reports were published alongside the version 2 report, which further investigated the experiences of LGBTQ respondents and Millom residents.

This report also groups respondents together based on residential location, to further explore how respondents' experiences of the pandemic differed and what was similar based on locality. The respondents were split down by Healthwatch Together locations; Lancashire, Cumbria, Blackpool and Blackburn with Darwen.



Recommendations

HWT have provided the following recommendations based off the findings of the Covid-19 survey series:

1. The respondents to the Covid-19 survey series, have been mainly from the white/white British, heterosexual, female and over 45, **demographic** categories. Thus, there is a need to target individuals who are not part of these mentioned demographic categories for future engagement, to ensure that there is a wider range of individuals sharing their stories and experiences with Healthwatch (which in turn will allow a more accurate general view).
2. **Collaborations** and connections between services that have been built and developed over this period should be continued and further developed for the future.
3. Increase awareness of **financial support options**, especially for those that are needing the extra support (for example, Self-employed individuals who have access to the Self-Employed Income Support scheme) because of the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic and the lockdowns.
4. GP surgeries and hospitals should aim to continue GP appointments as a combination of **telephone, video, and face-to-face appointments** in the future (or to at least consider the patient's preferences when arranging appointments).
5. Despite the advantages of flexible working and using a range of virtual and face to face communication techniques, **inspections into care homes** should revert back to face to face as soon as safe and possible. Results of this series made it clear that care home residents are highly isolated and this way residents and their concerns can be recognised and acknowledged.
6. There has been a concerning amount of people not seeking professional medical help for their health concerns during the pandemic, and thus health services should advertise the safety measures and procedures that are in place to **encourage people to seek the medical help** they require.
7. **Mental health** for many has been negatively impacted and largely affected by the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns, so services that are in place to support individuals in this area should be **accessible** and known for those who want/need them.
8. There needs to be an investigation and evaluation to identify what would be lost and gained when health and social care systems are forced to go back to their **pre-Covid systems** (which could mean continuing new developments and adapting systems in response to the pandemic).



¹<https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/sites/default/files/timeline-lockdown-web.pdf>

²<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jun/02/key-findings-from-public-health-englands-report-on-covid-19-deaths>

³<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/our-work/research/coronavirus-mental-health-pandemic/covid-19-inequality-briefing>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-52295894>

⁴<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/world-53014211/coronavirus-domestic-violence-increases-globally-during-lockdown>

⁵https://www.ilga-europe.org/sites/default/files/COVID19%20_Impact%20LGBTI%20people.pdf

⁶<https://www.barnardos.org.uk/blog/how-coronavirus-has-affected-lgbt-community>

⁷<https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/explainers/coronavirus-vaccine-rollout>

List of *How are you coping with the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic?* Survey series published reports:

Version 1: <https://healthwatchcumbria.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/HWT-C19-v1-report-March-April-2020-Version-2.pdf>

Version 2: <https://healthwatchcumbria.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/HWT-C19-v2-report-June-2020-final.pdf>

Version 3: <https://healthwatchcumbria.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/HWT-Coronavirus-survey-v3-August-2020-final.pdf>

Version 4: <https://healthwatchcumbria.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/HWT-C19-v4-Final-1.pdf>

LGBTQ: <https://healthwatchcumbria.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/The-impact-of-the-Coronavirus-on-the-LGBTQ-community-final-version-A....pdf>

Millom: <https://healthwatchcumbria.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/The-impact-of-the-coronavirus-on-Millom-August-2020-final-version.pdf>



Appendix A

Version 1 - survey questions

How are you coping with the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic?

1. Where do you live?
2. Please provide the first half of your postcode (for example CA14)
3. How old are you?
5. What was your employment status before the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic?
6. Including yourself, how many adults (over 18) live in your household?
7. How many children (0-17 years) live in your household?
8. What is your ethnicity?
9. How have you been affected by the outbreak of Coronavirus (COVID-19)?
10. What are your three biggest concerns?
11. What impact has social distancing had on your daily life?
12. How are you taking care of your physical health?
13. How are you taking care of your emotional and mental health?
14. What actions have you taken for yourself and others?
15. Where do you look to find information about Coronavirus (COVID-19)?
16. What changes would help you cope?
17. What information would help to support you?
18. Are you currently receiving any medical treatment or care (not related to Coronavirus)?
19. If you are receiving any medical care or treatment, how has this care/treatment been affected by the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic?
20. Is there anything else you would like to tell us?



Appendices

Appendix B

Version 2 - survey questions

How are you coping with the COVID-19 pandemic? V2 April 2020

1. Where do you live?
2. How old are you?
3. Are you male/female/prefer not to say?
4. Is your gender identity the same as on your original birth certificate?
5. How would you describe your sexual orientation?
6. What was your employment status before the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic?
7. Including yourself, how many adults (over 18) live in your household?
8. How many children (0-17 years) live in your household?
9. What is your ethnicity?
10. How would you rate your mental health prior to the COVID-19 pandemic? (rate out of 100, 0 being very poor and 100 being very good)
11. Have you been diagnosed with, or do you feel you suffer from any of the following?
12. What impact has the COVID-19 pandemic had on your mental health? (Rate out of 100, 0 being no impact at all and 100 being a huge impact)
13. Have you been able to access support for your mental health? Please skip this question if you do not normally access support for your mental health.
14. What support have you accessed for your mental health? Please tick all that apply
15. Would you like to tell us more about this?
16. Has the pandemic affected you financially?
17. How?
18. Have you made any financial changes?
19. Would you like to tell us more about this?
20. Do you have an existing medical condition, including pregnancy, that requires treatment or care (that is not related to COVID-19)?
21. If you answered 'yes', how has your medical treatment or care been affected by the pandemic? This also includes any treatment or care during pregnancy. Please tick all that apply
22. Would you like to tell us more about this?
23. Have you had an appointment either by phone or video consultation? Please tick all that apply
24. If you have had an appointment by phone or video consultation, how was your experience?
25. Would you use the phone/video consultation service again?



Appendices

Appendix B cont.

26. Would you like to tell us a bit more about your experience?
27. Has your experience of social care services been affected by the pandemic?
28. How?
29. Are you a carer for someone else (either paid or unpaid)? Please tick all that apply
30. Before the pandemic what support did you receive as a carer? Please tick all that apply
31. What support are you receiving now, during the pandemic? Please tick all that apply
32. Would you like to tell us more about this?
33. We are aware that there has been an increase of 'hidden crime' in households due to the pandemic. Do you feel that your safety has been compromised due to having to stay at home?
34. Do you know how to get help?
35. Is there anything else you would like to tell us?
36. Have you had a positive experience as a result of the pandemic and lockdown that you would like to share with us?
37. If you would like us to contact you about any of the issues that you have raised or if you would just like to talk to someone, please leave your email address or telephone number below. You do not have to leave any contact details and can leave this question blank.



Appendix C

Version 3 - survey questions

How are you coping with the COVID-19 pandemic? V3 June 2020

1. Where do you live?
2. How old are you?
3. Are you male/female/prefer not to say?
4. Is your gender identity the same as on your original birth certificate?
5. How would you describe your sexual orientation?
6. What was your employment status before the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic?
7. Do you work in the health or social care sector?
8. Including yourself, how many adults (over 18) live in your household?
9. How many children (0-17 years) live in your household?
10. What is your ethnicity?
11. How would you rate your mental health prior to the COVID-19 pandemic? (Rate out of 100, 0 being very poor and 100 being very good)
12. Have you been diagnosed with, or do you feel you suffer from any of the following? If you tick the 'no' box for this question, please go straight to question 17.
 - Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
 - Anxiety/anxiety disorders
 - Bi-polar disorder
 - Depression
 - Eating disorder
 - Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)
 - Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
 - Schizophrenia
 - Substance abuse
 - Dementia
 - No (please go to question 17 if you have ticked this box)
 - Other (please specify)
13. What impact has the COVID-19 pandemic had on your mental health? (Rate out of 100, 0 being no impact at all and 100 being a huge impact)
14. Have you been able to access support for your mental health? Please skip this question if you do not normally access support for your mental health.



Appendices

Appendix C cont.

15. What support have you accessed for your mental health? Please tick all that apply

- None
- Friends and family
- Speaking to support services -either by phone or online
- Online counselling
- Self-support - through books, websites, meditation, etc.
- Other (please specify)

16. Would you like to tell us more about this?

17. We would like to ask you about how the pandemic has affected your financial situation. Please tick all that apply. Since the lockdown in March:

- I have lost my job
- I have continued in my usual job
- I have a new job
- I am currently furloughed
- I was furloughed but I am now back at work
- My partner has lost their job
- My partner has been furloughed
- My partner's job has remained the same
- I do not work
- My benefit payments have decreased
- My benefit payments have increased
- I have made a new claim for benefit payments
- I was self-employed, I have had to close my business
- I am self-employed, I have re-opened my business
- Other (please specify)

18. Please tick all that apply. Since the lockdown started in March:

- I have struggled to pay my rent/mortgage
- I have struggled to pay my credit cards/personal loans
- I have struggled to pay my car loan/finance option
- I have struggled to pay essential bills (such as electric bill or Council Tax)
- I have struggled to afford food
- The pandemic has not affected me financially
- I have been financially better off

19. Do you have an existing medical condition, including pregnancy, that requires treatment or care (not related to Covid-19)?

20. During lockdown, has your treatment or care for this condition:

- Been delayed
- Stopped altogether
- Continued as normal
- Continued, but in a different way (for example, by phone or video consultation)
- Other (please specify)



Appendices

Appendix C cont.

21. During lockdown, did you experience a medical issue but decide not to contact your doctor/medical professional about it?
22. Was this issue:
 - Related to your mental health
 - A physical injury (broken bone, cut, bump, etc.)
 - An illness (such as vomiting or a virus)
 - A long-term health issue (such as asthma, diabetes, etc.)
 - Related to treatment that you were already receiving (such as chemotherapy or radiotherapy)
 - Other (please specify)
23. What stopped you seeking help for this issue?
24. If you contacted your GP surgery during lockdown, how was the experience? Please go to question 27 if you did not contact your GP surgery during this time.
25. Could you tell us why you gave this rating, and how your experience could have been improved?
26. In future would you be happy to have more appointments: Please tick all that apply
 - By video consultation
 - By phone consultation
 - I would prefer to keep my appointments face to face
 - A combination of all three
 - Other (please specify)
27. Are you a carer for someone else (either paid or unpaid)? Please tick all that apply
28. What is the biggest issue that you face, as a carer right now?
29. Have you been advised to, or decided that you need to self-isolate or be shielded for health reasons?
30. Are you worried or anxious about coming out of lockdown?
31. If you answered 'yes' please tell us why you are worried or anxious
32. Are there any activities that you started during lockdown that you plan to continue with? Please tick all that apply
 - Regular exercise
 - Video chats with friends and family
 - Volunteering in the community
 - New hobbies
 - Other (please specify)
33. Is there any behaviour you started or continued with in lockdown that you want to change?
 - Lack of exercise
 - Increased alcohol consumption
 - Increased smoking
 - Increased gambling
 - Other (please specify)



Appendices

Appendix C cont.

34. Do you feel that lockdown restrictions have been lifted too early?

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

36. If you would like us to contact you about any of the issues that you have raised or if you would just like to talk to someone, please leave your email address or telephone number below. You do not have to leave any contact details and can leave this question blank.



Appendices

Appendix D

Version 4 - survey questions

How are you coping with the Coronavirus pandemic? v4

1. Please tick all that apply. Thinking about the national and local restrictions, I feel:
 - Slightly worried about the future
 - Hopeless about the future
 - Positive about the future
 - I don't think about it
 - None of these
 - Would you like to tell us why you feel like this?
2. Where do you go to find local guidance about coronavirus, local restrictions and other relevant information?
3. Where do you go to find national guidance about the coronavirus, restrictions and other relevant information?
4. Do you understand the current national guidance on restrictions?
5. Do you understand any current local local guidance on restrictions?
6. Do you think NHS services have been clear about any changes to the services in your area?
7. Have you been identified as clinically vulnerable?
8. Do you follow the current guidance on protecting yourself and others from coronavirus?
9. Would you like to tell us more about this?
10. Have you had a specific health concern during the pandemic?
11. Has your health concern been addressed?
12. I am getting enough support for my mental health during this lockdown period.
 - Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
 - Would you like to tell more about this?
13. I am getting enough support for my social needs during this time (e.g. access to befriending service, support for online communication etc.)
 - Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
 - Would you like to tell more about this?



Appendices

Appendix D cont.

14. Is there any further support that could help you at this time?
15. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about?
16. Where do you live?
17. How old are you?
18. Are you
 - Male (including trans man)
 - Female (including trans woman)
 - Prefer not to say
 - Other (please specify)
19. Is your gender identity the same as on your original birth certificate?
20. How would you describe your sexual orientation?
21. What is your ethnicity?
22. Do you consider yourself to have a learning disability and/or autism?
23. Would you like to be contacted about your experience? If so, could you please provide your email address.
24. Would you like to be contacted via this email for any future engagement with Healthwatch?



Healthwatch Cumbria

People First Conference Centre,
Milbourne Street, Carlisle
CA2 5XB

Telephone: [0300 303 8567](tel:03003038567)

Email: info@healthwatchcumbria.co.uk