

healthwatch



# Healthwatch **Together**

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





# How are you coping with the Coronavirus Pandemic?

## HWT survey - version 1

- Survey launched on Survey Monkey on 23<sup>rd</sup> March.
- Version 1 was created as a ‘temperature check’ to find out how people were feeling and coping during the initial days of the pandemic.
- It ran for 5 weeks and gathered 305 responses.
- HWT produced four reports from version 1 of the survey.



# Survey questions -v1

- Basic demographic questions including employment status.
- How have you been affected by the coronavirus pandemic?
- What are your biggest concerns?
- How are you looking after your physical and emotional/mental health?
- Where do you find information about Coronavirus?
- What changes would help you cope?
- What information would support you?
- Has your medical care or treatment been affected?



# Findings - v1

As the weeks progressed some people began to feel severely anxious, stressed or depressed.

“Anxiety is getting bad having to work from home with three children, trying to school two of them at the same time is a disaster.”

The biggest impact by far was being unable to visit and spend time with family and friends.

“Not being able to have close contact with family.”

Many respondents also told us that they deliberately cultivated an acceptance of the current situation and tried to remain positive about it, seeking the good in their situation.

“Trying to remember that it’s the same for everyone.”

However, as with physical health, it was a challenge for some to look after their emotional and mental health, the lockdown has affected them disproportionately.

“I am struggling and have no support with this. My partner is not very understanding.”

“I’m not coping well, I’ve always had bouts of depression and I’m already feeling low.”



## HWT survey - version 2

- In co-production with our partners across Cumbria and Lancashire we developed version 2 by concentrating on emerging themes and concerns, such as mental health, carers and the financial impact of the pandemic.
- Version 2 launched on 27<sup>th</sup> April and closed on 19<sup>th</sup> June.
- In total we had 785 responses.



## Version 2 - questions

- V2 kept the same demographic questions as v1.
  - Other questions focused on mental health, financial concerns, existing medical conditions and caring responsibilities.
  - We also included a question about people's experiences of 'hidden crime' such as domestic and child abuse.
- V2 includes links to websites where people can find information and support.
  - Using information from v1 & 2 we created a Q&A which is published on our websites and social media.



## Version 2 - findings

- Most people rated their mental health as good/very good, prior to the pandemic.
- 12% of respondents felt that the pandemic has had a big impact on their mental health.
- 1/3 have been affected financially.
- 82% of people who have had a phone or video consultation found it a positive experience. They liked the convenience of them and that they happened on time.
- ¼ of respondents told us they have caring responsibilities.
- An issue we have consistently identified is the struggle for people with caring responsibilities; for elderly relatives, children with learning difficulties and relatives with dementia. Most rely on family and friends for support, but are not always able to access this during lockdown.
- 19 people told us that they were at risk of ‘hidden crime’ within the home. Five of them said they did not know how to get help.



# Positive outcomes from the pandemic

Although there is no denying that the pandemic has caused upheaval and affected almost everyone in some way, there have been positives come from this experience.

- A community spirit.
- People being kinder and more friendly.
- Spending time with family.
- Having more time.
- Appreciating the slower pace of life.
- Less stress.
- Less pollution.
- Spending time outside.
- Regular exercise.
- Appreciating other people.





## HWT survey - version 3

The third version of our survey went live on 16<sup>th</sup> June and has had 91 responses so far.

The questions had a similar focus to v2, but also asked for views about leaving lockdown and the lifting of restrictions.



## HWT survey v3 - preliminary findings

- People gave a lower rating for their mental health.
- 30% who normally access support for their mental health, say they've been unable to do this.
- 65% said the pandemic has not affected them financially, although 6% said they have struggled to pay essential bills.
- 26% say they are financially better off.
- 28% told us they have experienced a medical issue during the pandemic, but avoided consulting a medical professional about it.



- 59% are worried about coming out of lockdown.

“Because life is never going to be the same as it was before.”

- 53% feel the restrictions have been lifted too early, 15% said they didn't know.

“I'm worried about a second spike as people get complacent. Wanting this to be over is much different to behaving as if it's over.”

“The guidance changes weekly. I'm not sure if I am doing right or wrong , some of my family are shielding and I don't want to put them at risk. Its a scary situation.”



We have been very privileged to share in these individual stories and would like to thank everyone who has taken part and been so honest and open about their personal experience.

It has enabled us to track the impact of the pandemic on the people of Cumbria and Lancashire and to create a narrative of their experiences.

For more detailed information about the survey findings, please visit the Healthwatch Cumbria website to view our reports:

<https://healthwatchcumbria.co.uk/coronavirus-survey-reports/>