

**Coronavirus
(COVID-19)
Experience Survey
Report**

August 2020

Context

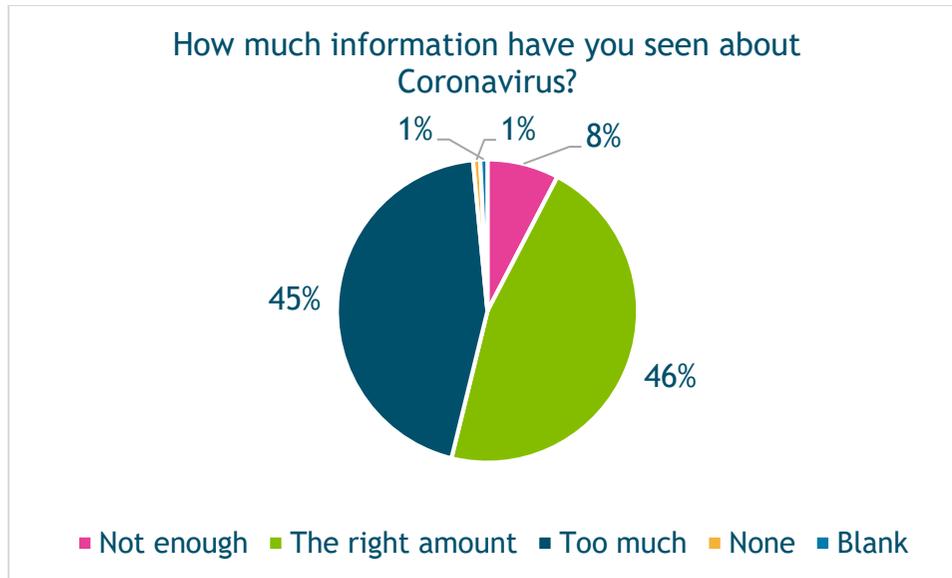
Following the emergence of the COVID-19 virus in early 2020, Governments worldwide started to implement measures to impede the spread of the virus that became a global pandemic. The number of measures put in place increased as the scientific evidence emerged giving further insight into effective ways to reduce the spread of infection. These measures had a considerable impact on the normal day-to-day activities of citizens that had been carried out before the pandemic. This impacted on the people who experienced symptoms after catching the virus and their families and also had a severe impact on the delivery of health and social care services in the UK.

We (Healthwatch Sutton) have a remit to find out the views of local people concerning any issues that relate to health and social care. On 8th March 2020, as the effect of the pandemic increased in England, we decided to create a short survey to capture the views and impact of the pandemic on the people who live in the London Borough of Sutton. At the time the survey was launched, we did not foresee the major changes that would come about as a result of COVID-19. On 18th March 2020, we added two additional questions to find out how people's access to health services may have been affected. On 23rd March 2020, the Prime Minister of the UK, announced a series of stricter measures now often referred to as 'lockdown'.

The survey was promoted through our e-bulletins, social media and disseminated by other voluntary and statutory organisations. All responses were collected electronically using an online survey tool. In order to limit the number of questions to a minimum to increase the completion rate, no demographic questions were used.

This report analyses the findings of 134 survey responses collected between 9th March 2020 and 12th August 2020. We received 43 responses in March, 45 in April, 23 in May, 18 in June, 4 in July and 1 in August.

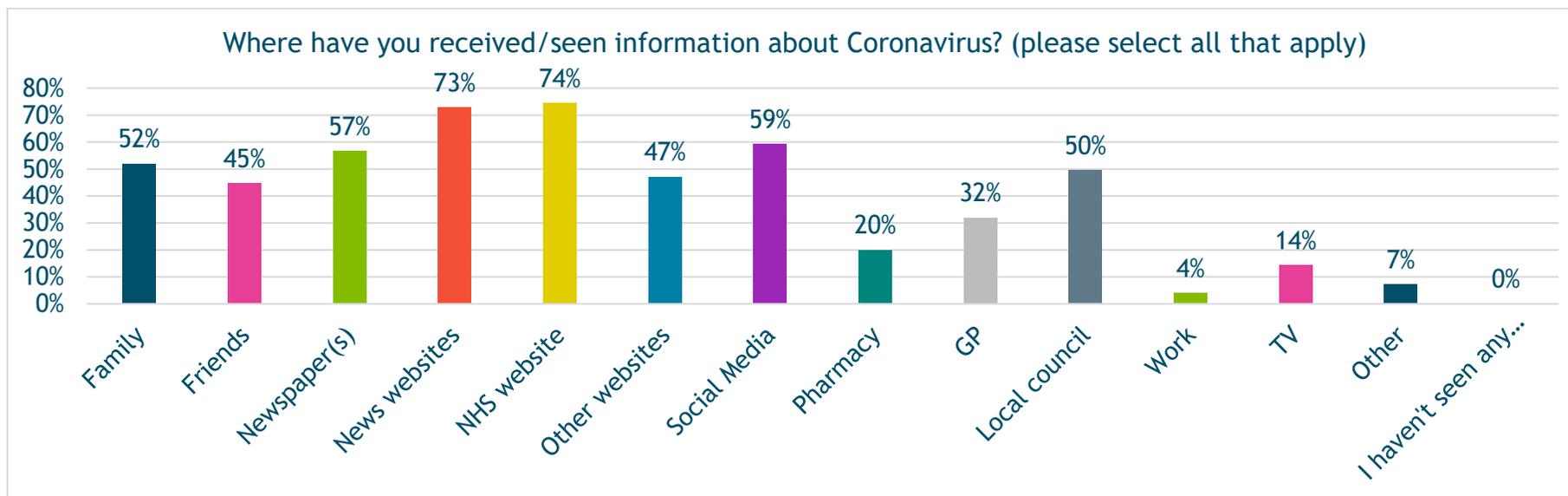
Question 1 - How much information have you seen about Coronavirus?



Very rarely do survey questions about information available in a health survey show such a high number of people stating they had seen ‘too much’ information. In light of the seriousness of the pandemic and the Government’s efforts to ensure that everyone is aware of the protective measures they can take to reduce the chance of spreading the infection, this result is less surprising. There was no significant shift away from this position as time progressed.

Approximately, 1 in 12 people stated that they had not received enough information.

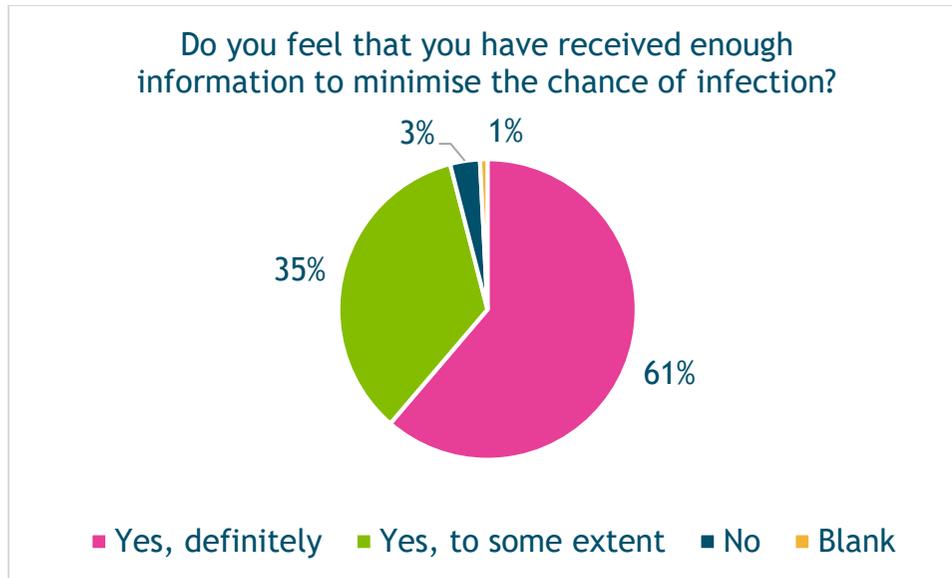
Question 2- Where have you received/seen information about Coronavirus? (Please select all that apply)



The most popular places to find information were news websites and the NHS website, followed by social media, family and local council. The omission of TV as an option for this question led to a significant number of people adding this under 'Other'. We have added the category for each person that added TV under 'other' so that it can be added to the table. Had this been included, it is likely to have been selected as a major source of information.

7% of respondents gave 'other' as a response to this question. Removing the references to TV as these were accounted for in the analysis. These are other sources given by respondents: church emails, charity e-bulletins, agricultural organisations, local MP, medical journals and podcasts.

Question 3 - Do you feel that you have received enough information to minimise the chance of infection?



96% of respondents agreed 'Yes, definitely' or 'Yes, to some extent' that they had received enough information to minimise the chance of infection. Only 3% stated that they did not receive enough information.

Question 4 - What information have you received? (Please list all advice/information you have seen/received)

How it gets transmitted. How to avoid getting it.

The pharmacist told me to stay at home and they delivered my medication.

Wash your hands regularly for 20 mins with soap and water.

Self-isolate for 14 days if you have symptoms

Symptoms of virus.

All the information about over 75s not socialising.

Letter from St Helier with comprehensive advice on my level of risk and self-isolation.

Not enough facts, just waffle.

Use hand sanitiser.

Stuff from Healthwatch

Trouble is, there is so much information that is conflicting. Too much scare-mongering, especially the newspapers, re-interpreting the official Government guidelines.

Stop panic buying.

Don't touch face.

Use of face masks.

Personal letter warning me I am 'high risk'.

Avoid close contact with people.

Some unhelpful posts (mainly on social media) that just scare people.

Use of PPE in clinical settings.

Moving to home working

Stay home.

Have one walk daily.

Don't visit friends or family; keep in touch by phone.

Keeping 2m away from people.

Avoid close contact with people.

Wash your hands immediately before leaving the house and on arrival at work.

Letter from Boris.

Don't call 111.

Stay indoors!

Too much to list here.

Info from my children's school.

Information regarding self-isolation.

Cough into a tissue or the crook of your elbow.

Shop only when necessary and only buy as needed.

Stay away from older people.

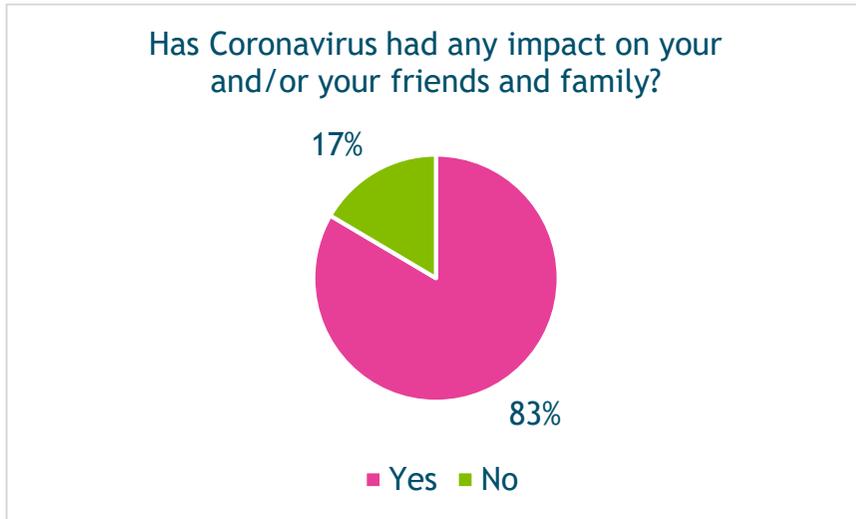
Not touching people other than members of the household.

Wash your hands immediately before leaving the house and on arrival at work.

Unfortunately, there is a lot of false, potentially dangerous advice on social media.

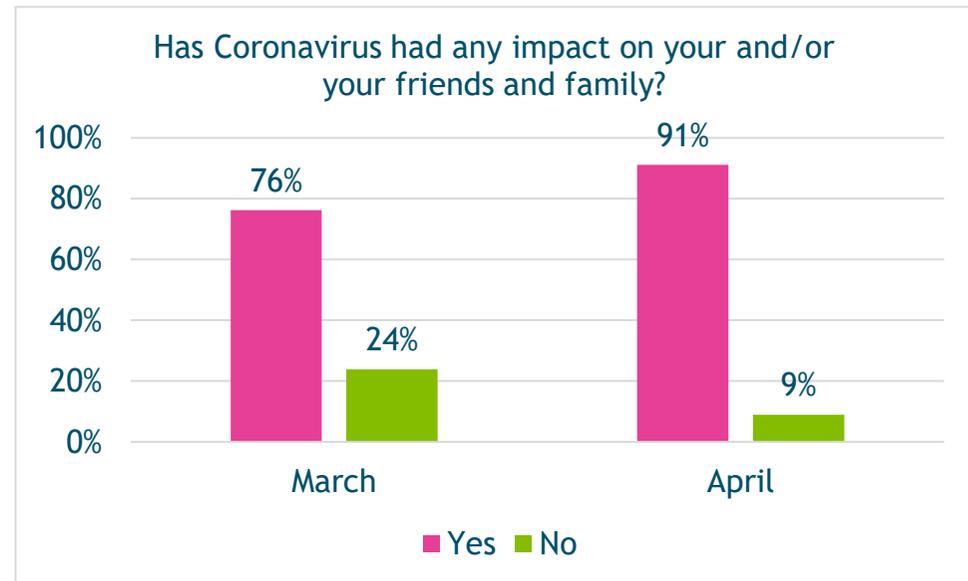
Do not visit GP or pharmacy if you have symptoms.

Question 5 - Has Coronavirus had any impact on you and/or your friends and family?



A high proportion of respondents stated that they had felt the impact of COVID-19 on themselves or their friends and family. The survey started at a point before the most stringent restrictions were put in place.

The impact was felt more acutely in April than in March. There were 43 responses in March and 45 in April. The response number for later months are insufficient to rule out significant potential variance.



Question 6 - How has coronavirus impacted on you and your friends and family?

Being pregnant, it has meant I have had to stop work completely and has changed some of the maternity services available to me. For my husband, it has completely affected his industry and he has had to take a significant pay cut. I also have family who work for the NHS so life has got a lot busier for them.

I am not going out at all - I have the garden to take the air. The pharmacy brings my medication and friends leave groceries I want on the doorstep. I have had so many telephone calls and e-mails that I am kept busier than usual talking to people!

Depression and lethargy is beginning to set in. Everything has been an upwards battle and because of lockdown I cannot get the outside help that I usually hire in. It's hard in your 80s to suddenly become super at DIY, lifting heavy weights etc.

It's changed our lives completely, self-isolation especially. Our physical and mental health, as well as our social lives have all been impacted. It's made us realise that we should appreciate the small things, and not take things for granted (especially loo roll!)

My mum died in February and I was unable to visit her grave for several weeks as the cemetery was only allowing funerals. My partner and I do not live in the same household at present. We used to spend each weekend together but I have not seen him now for almost 8 weeks. This has been extremely difficult for me, especially whilst still grieving the loss of my mum.

My husband was off work for 3 weeks because of it. A friend died because of it. My daughter works in A&E and has to go to work every day so is stressed more than usual.

My 8* year old mother was admitted to A&E by ambulance from her care home with suspected pneumonia and sepsis. She then tested positive for COVID-19. After 12 days in hospital she has made a full recovery and returned home.

I have children and they are not in school and I have to work from home meaning I am not attending to their school work needs. It is a lot of pressure of working parents especially those who are lone parents. My mother has been self-isolating and cannot offer support, my children feel lonely and isolated.

Question 6 continued....

I was very poorly, just getting over suspected COVID-19. My husband was hospitalised with COVID-19 for 5 days. My husband's job is unstable. My children's school is closed. My ASD son is very anxious. We miss seeing our family and friends.

Self-employed family members have lost work for the next 3 months, closure of schools, cancellation of A-levels and GCSEs, has impacted on my grandchildren. Keeping isolated at home on my own and not seeing anyone apart from my carer (twice a week). I usually have my milk and groceries ordered online - no delivery slots are available until after April 15th so don't know how I will manage. One of my sons cannot get back to the UK - all flights stopped. Cancellation of urgent total knee replacement as elective surgery cancelled because of the virus. Cannot get my hair cut.

My husband is one of those with severe ***** and must stay home for 12 weeks. My daughter - a wheelchair user - her husband has ***** too and is high risk so although he is her main carer he cannot go out - she has autistic daughters also. We cannot help them. My ***** has not been able to visit his mum or dad both in different dementia homes. On Good Friday the nursing home rang to say his father had died. My ***** is distraught that he has been unable to visit his father for over 5 weeks and will never see him again. He will be unable to go to the funeral because he is high risk himself.

Husband is in vulnerable category. He had to register himself - no letter from NHS or Govt. Sons not working, brother staying with us - supposed to be abroad at home. Shielding husband - not getting the right equipment or meds on time because of problems between GP/supply company and pharmacy. No information coming when meds or plasters, dressings delayed. Left without. GP and Pharmacy both blaming other for loss of prescription when in fact they've gone to (supply company). As a carer having to take on a lot of responsibility with little support. No contact from Council or Govt re support.

I think I am coping well. I live alone but I am good in my own company and have a number of solitary hobbies I enjoy! I also have plenty of contact with family and friends via technology. Everyone coping/struggling in different measures depending mainly on personalities I think. Certainly, the lack of human contact, missing cuddling, children/grandchildren is the biggest issue. Also, some feeling very frightened or claustrophobic.

Question 6 continued....

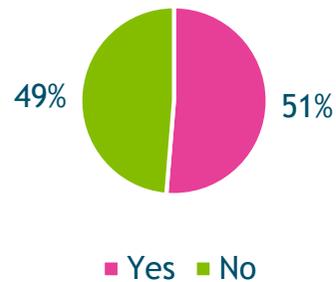
I am in lockdown as I have an underlying chronic condition which makes me breathless. Most of my friends are also in lockdown for the same reasons. The Church is closed. I have not been shopping but I have one or two friends who get me the bits and pieces I want and I can survive on my freezer for 4 months as I buy usually in bulk.

My family is stocked up but we're worried about getting food in the coming weeks. Also, there are 2 school workers in my family so jobs are uncertain and we're also worried if we need to go to the GP or hospital for any reason as non-emergency services may not be available.

Mentally, I'm sick and tired of hearing about it and treated like a child who can't look after himself. It's no bigger threat than a flu outbreak in a bad year. The Government are complete idiots taking bad advice from mad scientists.

Question 7 - Has your ability to access health services been affected by the coronavirus outbreak?

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Question 8 - How has your access to health services been affected?

Cancellation of urgent total knee replacement which means I am very limited physically in what I can do.

Telephone interviews replacing face-to-face appointments.

Booked GP appointment - now to be on phone. My B12 weekly injection overdue.

I can't access mental health services.

Phone consultations instead of hospital appointments & nurse & GP visits for husband, myself and son.

Wife has just had a diagnosis of dementia, but Uplift service appointment delayed.

Dental and podiatry appointments cancelled

Practice stopped doing face to face appointments and was closed.

Took 12 hours to speak to GP on 111. 45mins to get through to the Ambulance service on 999.

Some antenatal appointments have been cancelled.

All planned consultant appointments have been cancelled after 16 month wait.

Unable to access diabetes and mental health care.

Unable to have a GP appointment.

Cannot speak directly to anyone at the GP surgery - recorded message answering service.

Unable to see dentist with a new problematic tooth/gum issue.

Cannot see physiotherapist face to face for physical examination.

I've been waiting for results about an MRI I had in November 2019 and also about a CT scan and ultrasound scan I had in February this year and still haven't received any news from the hospital. c

Access to GP not easy and NO dentists! And no dentists at present which is very worrying.

Tricky to get prescriptions.

Unable to make appointments or make contact.

Inability to access an echocardiogram privately resulted in a heart attack.

My respiratory check-up appointment has been cancelled and I expect my renal consultant's appointment may be cancelled.

My **** was due an MRI because they believe he has a serious problem with his heart valve. This was cancelled a few days before.

Son's special dentist and orthodontist appointments cancelled. Optician appointments cancelled. My hospital appointment cancelled.

Question 9 - Is there any other feedback that you would like to share with us about coronavirus?

The Authority/Government waited far too long to come up with solutions to combat this viral infection/pandemic.

How come front line workers/staff are not equipped with the essential items such as PPE or tests? It's not acceptable.

We are seen as a rich country which does not make sense because of poor outcome!

I dread the second wave of COVID-19

Danger of mixed messages from too many sources and some official sources wildly optimistic.

Dentists, opticians and other necessary referrals should have remained open.

End the lockdown NOW

Would not go out or meet anyone after lockdown. Will stay in the confine of house. Will never use public transport.

I'm fed up with hearing/seeing anything to do with it. It's getting me down.

Concern at how many elderly, disabled and vulnerable people are still going to the local shop on Roundshaw, Wallington. They have to pass our house to go there so we see them walking past.

The situation in shops is crazy. Not being able to get enough good, nutritious food is becoming a real concern.

Could almost say too much information out there, and a lot of confusion. Not enough done to penalise those idiots who break the rules, putting the health of others at risk.

GP and mental health teams give excellent support via phone

Health service funding needs a great boost. Preparation for such a pandemic should have been better (as advised some years ago)

Phone consultation too short. Dr is rushing to speak to next patient.

On a positive, it has really made our community come together in a very special way!

I think a lockdown is imminent and I don't think enough people are mentally prepared for it!

Wish there weren't so many conflicting opinions about do's and don'ts. I have a suppressed immune system and a lung condition, so this virus make me all the more concerned about 'fake news'.

NHS seems to be doing a superb job but the government seem to be making this up as they go along.

Question 9 continued...

I had expected to receive a letter from GP about what I should do in the event of a flare up of my condition - nothing! I can manage very well and I can phone the renal unit for advice if necessary, but I do not feel that I am being supported by my GP practice because I manage things so well they feel that there is no need to bother with me.

I think the Government is ducking instructing pubs etc. to shut due to pressure from insurance companies. I don't think they are doing anything like enough for renters and people whose job is finishing. Both my daughter and her husband are likely to be laid off this week or next with no income other than ssp.

People are now anxious and terrified! Life is never without risk but the reaction nowadays is not normal.

So disgusted with the amount of teenagers and people in their early 20's on Roundshaw/Wallington walking around the estate with friends and in groups not taking this seriously.

There should be more tests available - priority to NHS staff but available for members of the public to buy. Asymptomatic cases need to be identified - this would really be a great help.

People will act as if nothing has happened once lockdown is eased. It cannot be like that if we are to avoid another spike of infections and deaths. People should be warned always to wear disposable masks and gloves when travelling, or going into crowded areas.

I think the 17-45 generation is selfish and they should not only be fined by having control orders put on them not to go out and to comply with the present restrictions.

Let's get rid of this virus then we can get back to living properly not under a cloud all the time.

Thank You

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