

**SPOTLIGHT REPORT - HIGHLIGHT RESULTS FROM
HEALTHWATCH WORCESTERSHIRE COVID-19 SURVEY-
5th MAY - 25TH MAY 2020**

THIS REPORT IS NOT IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN AND NOT FOR FURTHER PUBLICATION

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Context

HW developed a Survey based on Healthwatch England's template, and in collaboration with the NHS and Worcestershire County Council (WCC), to find out people's experiences of health and care services during the Covid-19 Pandemic. The Survey was launched on 22nd April 2020 and has been aimed at the general public rather than specifically at known users of health and social care services. By 4th May 2020 we had received 1969 responses. We issued a Report setting out our findings to that date. Between 5th May - 25th May 2020 we received a further 172 responses. This shorter Executive Summary Report sets out highlights from the findings and comments received during this period that will be of interest to Providers and Commissioners.

Although there are fewer respondents there are some common themes with our previous Report.

- The same three themes were identified by the public as difficult to find information about i.e. testing for Covid-19, use of masks, gloves and other PPE by the public and avoiding transmission of Covid-19 (e.g. deliveries, packaging etc).
- 17 respondents had additional communication needs, and of these 8 had not been able to find information and advice in the format needed.
- In particular, we heard of issues for people who are blind or partially sighted with social distancing when they need to be guided / assisted and issues for people who are deaf / hearing impaired who rely on lip reading when staff are wearing face masks.
- A similar proportion of respondents (39%) had heard of "Here2Help" Worcestershire, suggesting that there is still opportunity to further promote this initiative
- The communication most frequently rated excellent or good, by respondents who had received communication about that service, were from GP, Pharmacy and Dentist. Although the numbers are small mental health services for both children and adults were most frequently identified as providing poor communication by those in receipt of this
- Looking only at respondents who needed to access each service the services that were easiest to access were: Pharmacy, GP and Ambulance services. Those services that people had needed but found it difficult to access were: Therapists (e.g. Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy), Dentist and Planned Hospital Treatments and NHS 111 (phone). It should be noted that numbers who needed to access these services are small.

- Maternity and mental health services for children and young people and adults, were identified as the services that people most frequently said they needed but chose not to access, again numbers are small.
- Reasons for choosing not to access services were in the same order of frequency as in our previous Report: not wanting to put pressure on the service; fear of infection and feeling it was a minor complaint. This suggests that the public are still concerned about putting pressure on NHS services
- 11 respondents receive care or support services or cared for someone who required care and support services to carry out daily activities. Most were happy with the communication they received about changes to the service
- As in our previous Report most respondents had not needed any support for their mental health or emotional wellbeing. Of those that had most were receiving this from family and/or friends and neighbours. However, 13 respondents had not been able to access support for their mental health, suggesting that there may be further opportunity to promote the availability of these services.
- Once again the use of phone and video for GP and other health services was the most frequent positive comment that we received, followed by praise for the NHS and its staff.
- Although numbers are small we again heard concern re planned treatments and ongoing care, including about outpatients' appointments - cancellation of appointments, not being offered a telephone appointment as a substitute or not knowing when a new appointment would be received.

From the responses it would seem that the public are still experiencing some of the issues that we highlighted last time. We would suggest commissioners and providers continue to give consideration to our previous points:

- Adequacy of communication to address people's concerns re planned treatments and ongoing care, perhaps with a focus on Outpatient appointments in particular
- Opportunity to further promote "Here2Help" Worcestershire within the general population
- Enhancing communication about available mental health services and addressing the perception that services are unavailable / inaccessible

And in addition:

- Give further consideration to the needs of people with vision and hearing impairments in the light of changes made to services in responses to the Covid-19 pandemic and ensure that information is available in a variety of formats

In the next phase of communication about the Survey HWW will aim to target BAME communities, people experiencing health inequalities and those Districts with lower response rates. We will also be aiming to gather views of people with a learning disability through an Easy Read Survey.

Further support from the NHS and Councils with encouraging circulation and completion, particularly at the above audiences, would be appreciated.