

COVID - 19 - Public Feedback Survey & Social Media Results: 9/4/2020 - 8/5/2020

Background

In these difficult times during the Covid 19 pandemic, Healthwatch Bolton wanted to gather some feedback from the public about how the crisis is affecting their everyday lives. Working in partnership with Bolton Public Health, and students from Bolton University, it was agreed to seek the views of the public on particular areas of interest regarding information and health and wellbeing. In addition to this, Healthwatch Bolton are harvesting data collected via social media groups to provide information as to what people are talking about that is affecting their everyday lives. The survey and social media feedback will continue throughout the duration of the pandemic which will assist both Bolton Public Health, Bolton Council and Bolton CCG to tailor their public messages and information. Healthwatch Bolton will also make recommendations based on the intelligence collected.

Summary

Information

- ✚ People who use social media platforms on Facebook and Next Door are making good use of community groups and Covid-19 response groups. People look for solutions to problems in these groups and are finding them very beneficial, particularly for the sharing of information.
- ✚ People would like less confusing messages coming from the government particularly around self-isolation and social distancing.
- ✚ People would like information that is non-digital, in hard copy format if possible.
- ✚ People with sensory disabilities struggle to find accessible information

Health and wellbeing

- ✚ People are managing to get physical exercise and are using digital technology to stay connected with friends and family
- ✚ People are keeping busy with hobbies and leisure activities as much as they can
- ✚ Some people feel their mental health is suffering - trying to manage anxieties about the pandemic, but also juggling their lives at home particularly if they have school age children or children with disabilities
- ✚ People report they are eating and drinking too much and sleep patterns are disrupted
- ✚ People report seeing more rubbish and fly-tipping in their neighbourhoods
- ✚ Adults and children are suffering dental pain and dental problems as they are unable to see a dentist as they don't meet the criteria for 'urgent care'.

Recommendations

- ✚ ***We recommend Bolton Council consider producing reliable and up to date information in formats that are non-digital.***
- ✚ ***We recommend that Bolton CCG and Public Health consider re-enforcing the messages about primary care, that people continue to seek medical help and advice when they need it. Consider using social media groups to promote health messages (not just Twitter)***
- ✚ ***We recommend Bolton Council & Bolton CCG consider producing local information for people with sensory disabilities***
- ✚ ***We recommend Bolton Council & Bolton CCG share information about mental health support, healthy eating and drinking be shared more widely and via social media groups***
- ✚ ***We recommend more information is made available about access to dentistry including children***
- ✚ ***We recommend the council remind the public that fly-tipping is illegal***

Information

Q1. Are you happy with the information you have seen locally on what you should do in the COVID 19 crisis? If no, please tell us what you think is missing?

Positive

Overall people are reasonably happy with the information they have seen locally on Covid 19. Some people are confused with the messages coming from the Government on isolating and social distancing. Some people would welcome some information to be posted out to them. Better information from GPs would also be welcome to ensure people will still attend for routine appointments.

People made the following comments regarding information:

Negative

- ✚ More accountability and input by Bolton council
 - ✚ Nothing sent by email or post from Bolton council and the council website is not informative enough
 - ✚ Harsher penalties and a more rapid response by authorities regarding lockdown breaches needs to be applied
 - ✚ Info is available but has been scattered and patchy particularly off line
 - ✚ Confusing messages from the government about going outside
 - ✚ Not a lot for sensory disabled people out there. I asked council for information and they said ask friends and relatives to shop for you as I am shielding. I have no relatives. Not helpful. Local councillor gave a phone number after the local Labour party had helped with contacts. I guess they did their best but it was not well organised enough
 - ✚ Need info in paper format for those not using digital
 - ✚ On discharge from hospital the information on self-isolating was sketchy and contradictory
 - ✚ Communication from my GP would be nice. I think my GP practice is so backwards. We have all this technology but they can't use it to communicate with their patients. I'm a new diabetic. I want information on managing it amidst this crisis. I'm fasting but the lockdown meant the GP wasn't able to hold Managing Diabetes in Ramadhan session. So why can't my GP send me information via email? They have our emails and mobile numbers so why can't they send us information via these? I get headaches with worry. Right now I'm relying on messages on social media for helpline numbers etc. But how can I ring a helpline to talk about my anxieties with 3 kids and a husband in the house all the time? I don't want them to know what I'm going through. I don't want them to hear me on the phone talking to someone about my problems. Our phones are on our hands almost 24/7 now. I'm sick of reading fake news all the time. It's all doom n gloom. WhatsApp has been crazy these past few weeks with people blasting un-authenticated info. Where am I supposed to go locally for info? Everything's closed. We have to look online for info. I don't want to be glued to the phone all the time.
 - ✚ Nothing been posted out to me
 - ✚ So far I'm searching for information online. I'm not going out of the house. Where can I find information locally? There is a lot of wrong information out there online too. I only go on official websites to be on the safe side.
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Health and Wellbeing

Q2. How are you looking after your physical and mental health? What helps to keep you well and what are you struggling with?

Keeping Well

Many respondents valued seeing friends, keeping in contact with others, using social media, and taking exercise such as walking, running, gardening, dog walking, table tennis, tai chi. In addition respondents found the following beneficial:

- ✚ Seeing children
- ✚ Learning a new language (Duo lingo free language site)
- ✚ Taking suggested precautions
- ✚ Not watching the news is important. Using reliable sources to stay well
- ✚ Reading
- ✚ Meditating
- ✚ Zoom choir
- ✚ Zoom book club
- ✚ Mentally engaging with projects that need doing
- ✚ Using meditation apps - Headspace and Calm
- ✚ Crafts
- ✚ Listening to music
- ✚ Practicing mindfulness
- ✚ Laughing a lot
- ✚ Eating healthily
- ✚ Making jam and baking
- ✚ Sustaining a routine
- ✚ Praise the way the community has come together
- ✚ Not watching the news
- ✚ Reading One Day at a Time by Charles Schulz
- ✚ Getting outside
- ✚ Online gym classes

Struggles

Respondents gave a range of examples of what they are having difficulty managing or struggling with:

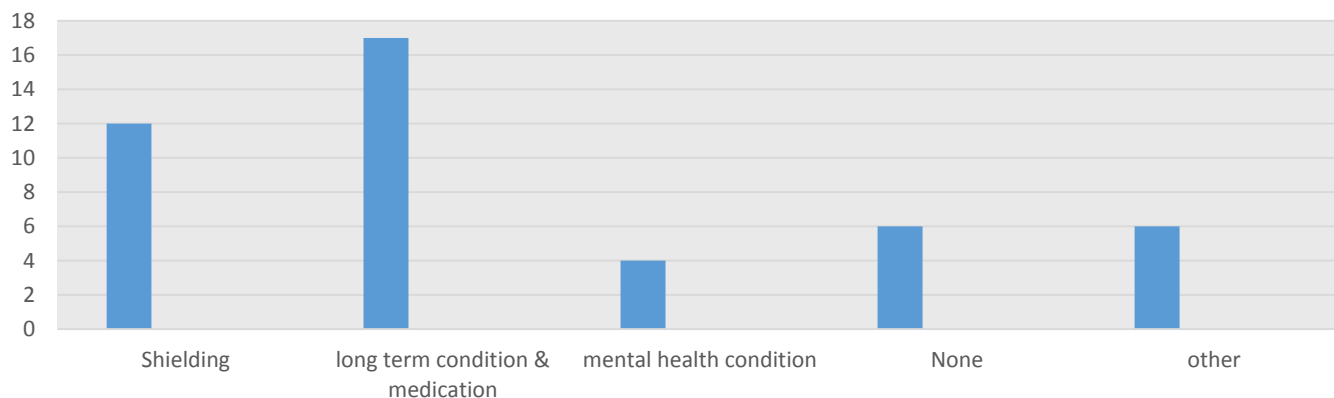
- ✚ Difficult to get shopping deliveries or click and collect. Husband is disabled with difficulties but gets no help as not deemed vulnerable
- ✚ Drinking too much alcohol
- ✚ Desperate for respite - disabled daughter is struggling with massive change
- ✚ Isolation is very hard
- ✚ Worried about rubbish bins being covered which may lead to a rubbish tip problem - health hazard
- ✚ Others in household are key workers - they can only protect me by changing their clothes and handwashing
- ✚ Mental health is just about holding up - worried about tripping into depression and anxiety
- ✚ Needs to be a way to split child benefits between parents during the crisis. Because only one parent can claim this is causing problems for some people who have split up and are in lockdown with the child whilst the other parent claims tax credits. Requests being denied as child not deemed as living with parent but is doing so in lockdown. Leading to serious financial problems, parent is diabetic, skipping meals to pay for child - left parent on verge of a medical emergency endangering life
- ✚ Struggling with physical contact as hearing impaired - hard to liaise on the phone
- ✚ Eating too much

- ✚ Not enough PPE
 - ✚ Why are airports still open?
 - ✚ Fed up
 - ✚ Local pharmacies and supermarkets and GPs have struggled. When you say you can't get out for prescriptions or food you are told to ask a friend or relative. Many folk do not have family and many friends may be just as vulnerable
 - ✚ Still suffering the after-effects of Covid-19 - bi-lateral pneumonia, pleurisy, kidney infection and on lots of medication
 - ✚ I feel that I should have been offered a test on discharge from hospital to determine whether or not I was still Covid positive. The fact that I was wheeled out of hospital wearing a mask by a porter also wearing a mask and handed over to my partner who was offered no protection or advice was very scary for both of us.
 - ✚ A phased relaxation of restrictions needs to come soon. I get a sense from my daily walk that more people are not adhering to the rules, especially young men driving round in cars. Evidenced from daily walk along Moss Bank Way
 - ✚ I've developed anxiety. I'm stressed out. I have 3 children aged 15, 18 and 22 in the house 24/7. Each with their school/college/work stuff to do. "Me time" has ceased to exist. I need peace n quite but it's not happening. I go for a little walk but can't wait to get back home. It's very creepy n eerie outside. It's scarily quiet. The streets are filled with litter and parks with dog poo bags. I don't go shopping as I fear half the essential stuff I need won't be there. Then there's the queues to get inside the supermarket or shop. We normally eat more vegetables than none veg. But recently fruit n veg have become more expensive than meat n chicken. And the shops blame the suppliers for hiking their prices. We've all put weight on. Everyone's always hungry. Constantly in the kitchen making different things. Kids go out n buy junk food which we all end up eating. I need to keep busy to get my mind off things. There's no focus right now. There's a lot of uncertainty.
 - ✚ People that live in terraced houses with no garden are at a disadvantage. Our mental health needs are more. People with gardens can enjoy gardening, sitting in the sun etc. They have more fresh air. People living in terraced houses don't have any of this.
 - ✚ How do I cope with anxiety?
 - ✚ Can't sleep for more than 5 hours at a time. Everyone's sleeping patterns have changed in my house. Currently we are eating more, couching more, Netflixing more. We are 2 adults and three young people in my house living in the BL3 ward. No matter how old the kids are they still argue n fight. I'm mentally exhausted playing mediator between them three. Going out is a struggle. People in the BL3 ward in Daubhill aren't social distancing properly. Most don't even wear masks when out. I have high blood pressure. Every time I go to the shop I get very stressed out which probably makes my BP go higher. We go for walks. Not together, in our own times. It's filthy around Daubhill right now. There's lots of fly tipping and rubbish everywhere, all very displeasing to the eyes and mind. Covid has taken away my mental peace. I'm not even making a GP appointment for fear of them turning me away and saying they're only taking on urgent cases.
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Survey Monkey Demographics

- 8 respondents lived alone
- 10 respondents lived with school age children

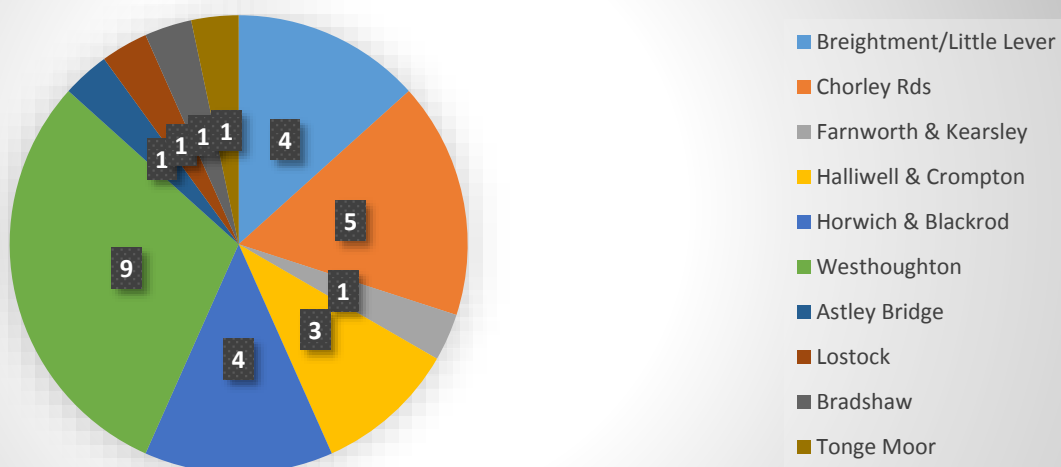
Pre-existing Health Condition in the Household



Age of respondents

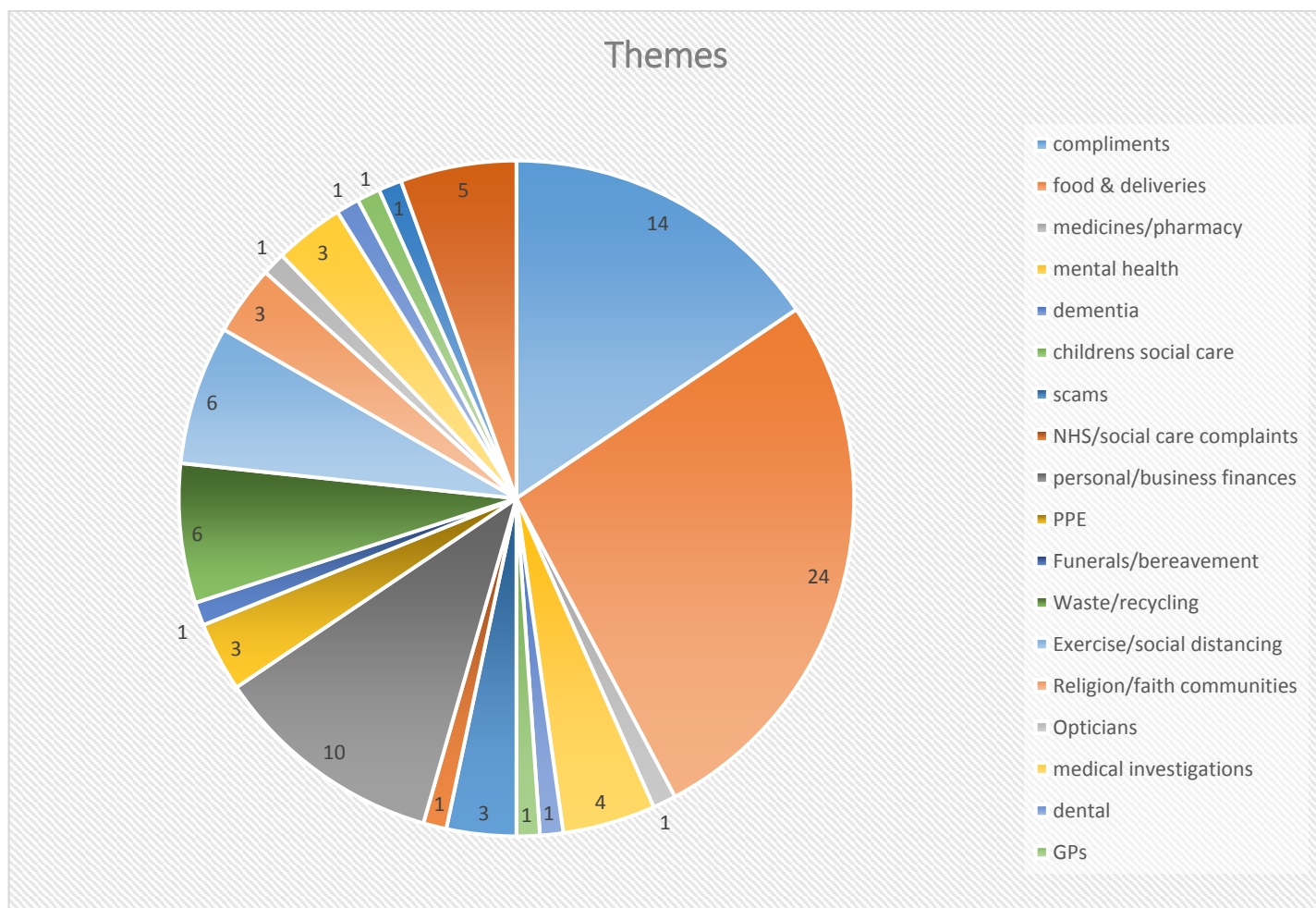


Neighbourhood/Area



Covid-19 Social Media/Digital Feedback - 20/4/20 - 8/5/20

In total 79 social media postings were captured over this period. The themes are listed below with **food deliveries** being the most common theme, followed by **personal and business finance**, then **compliments about NHS, social care and third sector organisations**. Comments were drawn from the following social media and digital groups: Harwood is our Home Town Facebook Group, Care Opinion, Westhoughton Covid 19 Support Facebook Group, Horwich & Blackrod Notice Board Facebook Group, Bolton Covid-19 Support Facebook Group, Horwich & Blackrod Village Facebook Group, Brightmet - What's Happening Facebook Group, and Next Door neighbourhood groups.



As well as collecting the themes of what people are saying, we are also collecting information about how some of the problems are being solved which we would like to share with you.

- ✚ Query about council tax payments - solution offered
- ✚ Elderly people struggling with IT and social media - local group plan to do more leaflet drops (exact location not known)
- ✚ Scams - urging people to report these and scammers phone number been shared to help others. Current telephone scam circulating around selling PPE to vulnerable people - this number is being used: 01204 565292
- ✚ Bolton NICE asking for help to buy public building - suggestions given about funding streams
- ✚ Medication/prescription pick up - neighbours offering to help

- ✚ People offering to make PPE (masks) - neighbours offering materials and call out for anyone that has PPE to give to NHS frontline workers
 - ✚ Local people are litter picking near Queens Park
 - ✚ Church St dentist giving out antibiotics to a child in pain without seeing the child - member of staff from other dentist offered to help.
 - ✚ People signposting people shielding to Homeless Aid for food parcels
 - ✚ Neighbours offering to do shopping for those unable to get out (vulnerable or shielding)
 - ✚ Problems with noisy neighbours causing anxiety to neighbour with autism
 - ✚ Unwanted food parcels being delivered - cancelled via Bolton Council website
 - ✚ VE Day celebrations - people encouraged to celebrate at home
 - ✚ Person with agoraphobia reframing their mental health condition - no longer feels bad about their condition now that social distancing is happening
 - ✚ Family with 3 children and not working at present, have no money for food and health conditions asking for help. Help offered by 7 individuals - shopping plus food supplies
 - ✚ Urban Outreach encouraging the community to donate to Grub Tub.
 - ✚ Burning waste in garden causing distress to neighbours (with asthma) - advised to report the neighbour
 - ✚ Breakdown Bolton sharing abstract art to encourage good mental health
 - ✚ Bolton Student Union promoting their support to students
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