

COVID-19 Survey - Report 2

30th April to 13th May 2020

1. Summary

1.1. About Healthwatch Norfolk

Healthwatch Norfolk is the independent voice for patients and service users in the county. We gather the views of local residents about health and social care services to ensure they are heard by the people responsible for commissioning and providing services.

1.2. About the survey

We have been working with Norfolk health and social care organisations to look into residents' experiences of accessing information and support during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) outbreak in the UK. It was felt that the best way to collect this feedback would be through a survey, which was launched on 16th April 2020 and will run until further notice.

Every two weeks, the results of the survey will be reported to Norfolk's 'Recovery and Resilience Cell', a virtual meeting comprising of staff from health and social care providers as well as Norfolk County Council and the local councils, and voluntary sector organisations.

The aim of the survey is to gather constructive information from service users that can provide real-time insight into community need, experience and awareness of available support.

1.3. About this report

This report contains the findings of the survey during the second two week period of it running, from 30th April to 13th May 2020. During this time period there were 87 completed responses, in comparison to 320 full responses from the first two week period.

This report will be taken to the Recovery and Resilience Cell also be shared with other partners from NHS trusts and clinical commissioners.

The findings are grouped thematically and include numerical results as well as comments from respondents.

1.4. Overview of findings

The full results of the survey for the second two weeks begin on page 3. There were 87 completed responses from people across Norfolk. The key findings are:

- Of those filling out the survey on behalf of someone they care for, 75% said that they would have preferred the person they care for to receive information about COVID-19 via a personal letter.
- Several respondents stated that information about support available is not always clear. It is important to note here that this was also a theme for weeks 1-2 of the survey being live. As a result, we added contact information for Norfolk County Council’s Community Response Team as well as local mental health support to the final page of the survey.
- Some comments indicated that there is still confusion about the “at risk” groups particularly regarding the letters advising to self-isolate. Some people said they received a letter but did not know why, whilst others did not receive a letter and felt they should have.
- Mental health and home care were cited as the most difficult types of appointment to access. 55% of people who have had mental health appointments since early March 2020 and 50% of people who have had home care visits since early March 2020 said they were difficult or very difficult to access.
- The most positive experiences of appointments have been for GP surgeries and pharmacies. Of people who had used these services, the proportion of those who said they were ‘satisfied’ or ‘very satisfied’ were 61% for remote GP appointments, 51% for in-person GP appointments, and 64% for pharmacies.
- Of those who have had treatment during the COVID-19 outbreak, 53% said that the risks were not explained to them throughout.
- Of the respondents who had cancelled or postponed appointments, the most common were hospital appointments (51%) and dentistry (41%).

2. About survey respondents

From 30th April to 13th May 2020, the survey received responses from 126 people, of which 87 were completed responses which make up the following report.

2.1. Age

We received responses from across age groups as displayed in Figure 1.

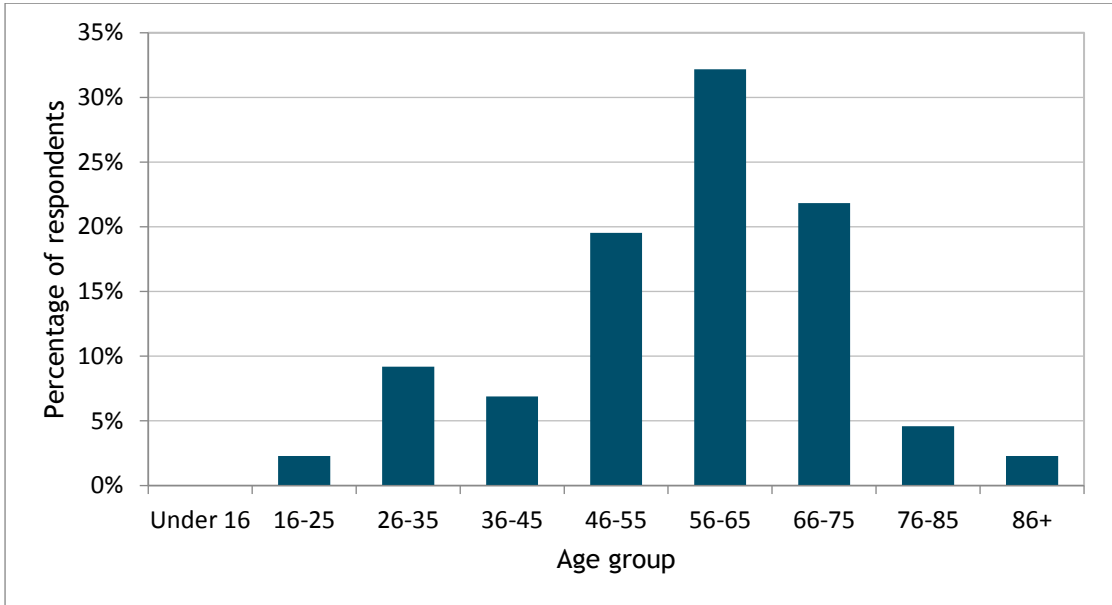


Figure 1. Responses to the question “how old are you/is the person you care for?”

2.2. Location

Figure 2 shows that responses were received from across Norfolk.

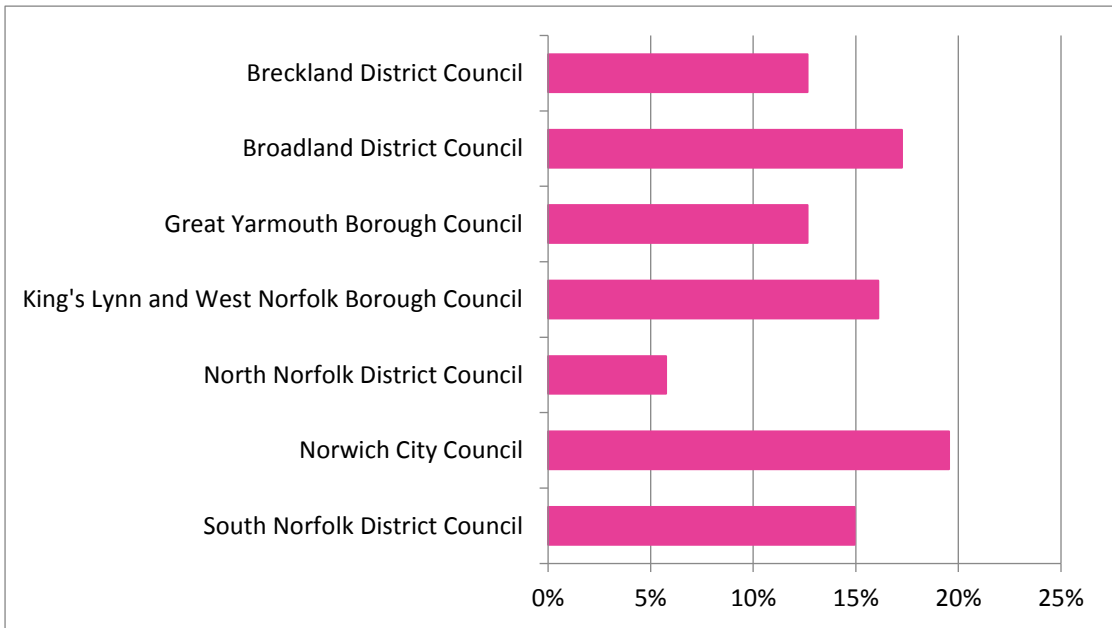


Figure 2. Responses to the question “in which local council area do you/the person you care for live?”

2.3. Disability

Thirty percent of respondents (22) told us that they or the person they care for has a disability.

2.4. Carers

Respondents were asked if they are a carer, 28% (24) of respondents told us they are a carer, of these carers 33% (8) told us they were answering the survey on behalf of the person they care for.

2.5. Internet usage

Most respondents (95%, 83 respondents) told us that they or the person they care for currently use the internet.

2.6. Self-isolation

When asked if they have been advised to self-isolate for 12 weeks because they are at risk due to a long-term condition, are over 70, or for other health-related reasons, 37% (32) of respondents told us that they, or the person they care for, have been advised to self-isolate.

3. Practical support

Of the 32 respondents who had told us they or the person they care for were asked to self-isolate, 34% (11) told us they had received practical support to help them or the person they care for manage in isolation. The most common provider of this support was family or friends or neighbours each with 45% (5) of respondents as displayed in Figure 3.

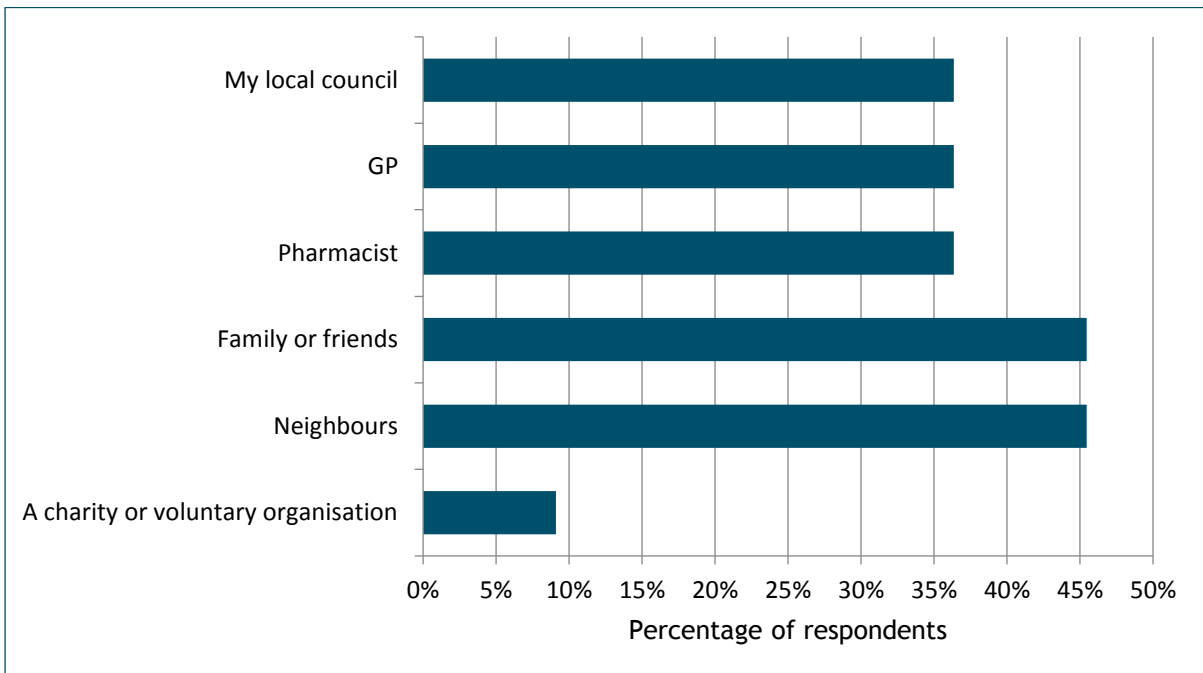


Figure 3. Responses to the question “who has provided this support?”, respondents could select more than one option. No respondents selected home care agency, hospital, or other.

3.1. Local Council Support

Of the 11 respondents who told us they or the person they care for had received practical support, 4 told us that practical support was received from the local council. Table 1 displays the types of support people are receiving.

Table 1.

COVID-19 support arranged for respondents or the people they care for by their local council.

	Percentage of respondents	Number of respondents
Picking up prescriptions	75%	3
Food ordering and deliveries	50%	2
Advice on staying well	25%	1
Arranging emergency home and heating repairs	25%	1
Contact with community groups	25%	1
Weekly check ins	25%	1

Three quarters of respondents (75%, 3 respondents) were either satisfied or very satisfied with the practical support they had received from the local council as displayed in Figure 4.

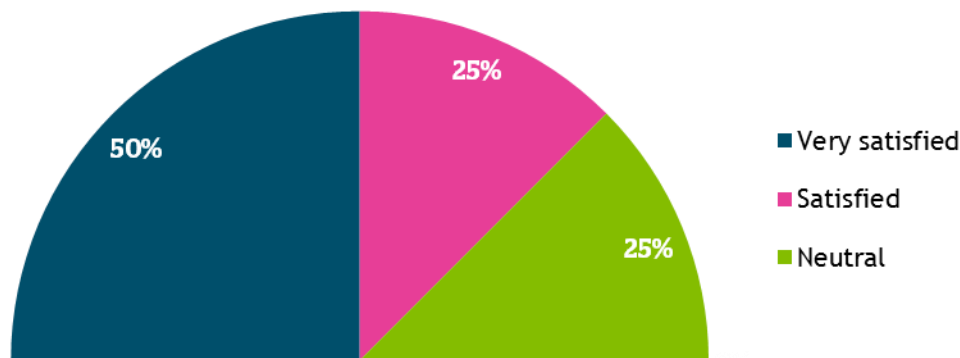


Figure 4. Responses to the question “how satisfied are you with the practical support you/the person you care for have received?”

Those who answered that they received support from their local council were also asked to comment on whether there is any support they would like but have not received. Only one person responded to this¹, stating that they had “*no follow up call from [South Norfolk District Council] as promised*”. This respondent had

¹ Please note: comments in italics and quotation marks throughout the report are direct quotes from survey respondents. These have been left unchanged to ensure originality. Any major spelling or grammar errors are noted with “[sic.]”.

contacted the council for advice on weekly check-ins, contact with community groups, and picking up prescriptions.

4. Information about Coronavirus

4.1. Format of information

Respondents were asked how they or the person they care for have found information about coronavirus. The responses to this question are displayed in Table 2, the most common information source was television broadcasts with 77% of respondents (67).

Table 2.

How respondents or the people they care for have found information about coronavirus, respondents were able to select more than one option. Other responses included: COVID symptom tracker, self research, British Red Cross, Alzheimer’s Society, New Scientist, and WHO

	Percentage of respondents	Number of respondents
Television broadcasts	77%	67
Online news articles	60%	52
Official websites/articles	54%	47
Social media	44%	38
Radio	38%	33
Newspapers	32%	28
Through friends/family	28%	24
GP surgery	22%	19
Local council	18%	16
NHS 111 (online)	15%	13
NHS app	10%	9
Through a carer	10%	9
NHS 111 (phone)	3%	3
Other	9%	8

The most common format respondents would prefer to receive information about coronavirus was through email with 37% of respondents (32), the responses to this question are displayed in Figure 5 overleaf. However, it is worth noting that the majority of the people who answered on behalf of a person they care for would have preferred the information to be received through a personal letter (75%, 6 respondents).

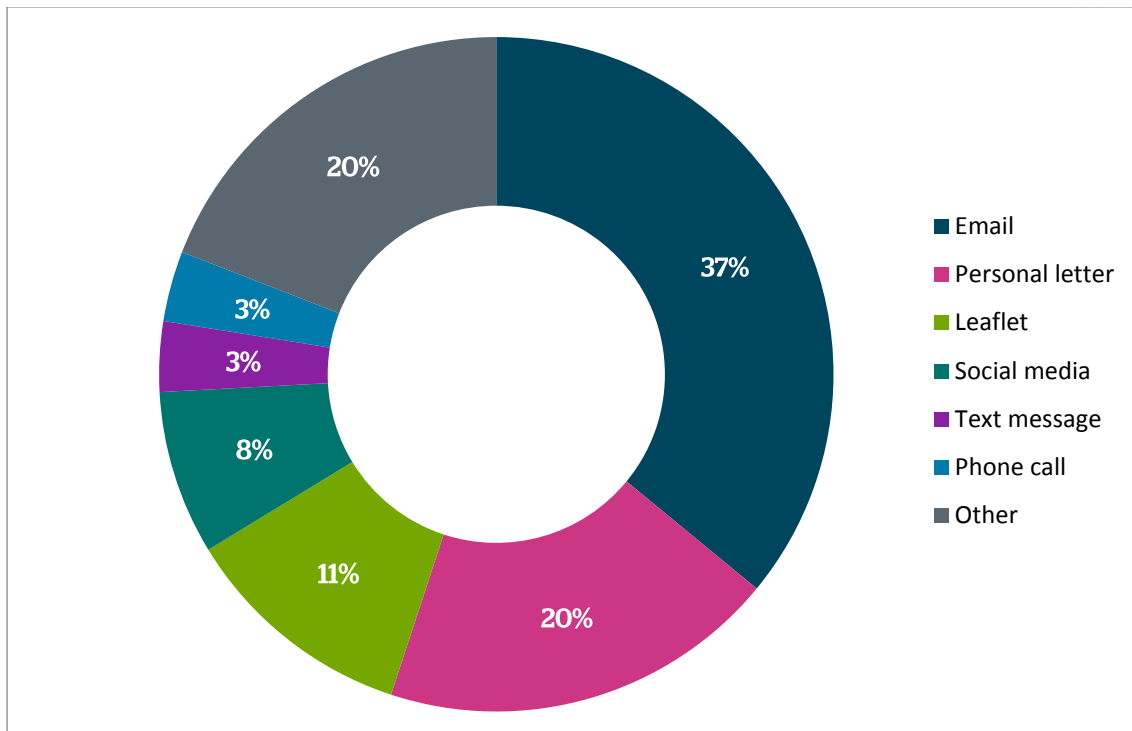


Figure 5. Respondents preferred way of receiving information about coronavirus for themselves or the person they care for. Other responses included: television and websites, particularly official ones, including “better information on council websites”.

4.2. Extra information or guidance

Respondents were asked if they felt they had received all the information about coronavirus they feel they, or the person they care for, need at the current time; 69% (60) of respondents answered “yes”. Respondents who chose “no” or “somewhat” were asked what extra information or guidance would be beneficial; 23 people left responses. The most common answer was respondents wanting more information about support:

“Support organisations not advertised”

“How to manage being a carer for someone with severe mental health problems who has been told to self isolate when you have also been told to self isolate.”

Two people mentioned support either being offered too late, or not at all:

“Correct information about support that will be provided. Was offered support but it did not materialise.”

“[My parents] also had a call from the [King’s Lynn and West Norfolk Borough] council very late on in lock down which was very surprising given the information they have, they know mum is very vulnerable and do not know that I have moved in with her whilst lock down is on. Had she not had family I feel she would have been in great difficulty”

Some respondents stated that more or clearer information about risk groups would have been useful. One person wanted to know “*why diabetics are at risk*”. Two people said they or the person they care for are either incorrectly on the ‘extremely vulnerable’ list, or should be on the list and are not:

“I’d also like a contact number so I can correct that I am on the extremely vulnerable list incorrectly.”

“The person I care for is in the ‘extremely vulnerable’ group - being 90 yrs & with heart condition & severe asthma - but never got a letter stating what she should & shouldn’t do!”

There were also comments about government or national-level guidance. One respondent said they would like to see “*evidence underpinning the government decisions*”, whilst another person commented similarly that they would “*like to know the science behind the decisions the government has taken*”.

Other comments included respondents wanting more information on “*what local NHS services are doing*”, the progress of a vaccine, “*more advice about testing*”, and the symptoms of COVID-19.

5. Health or social care appointments

Most respondents told us they have had a health or social care appointment or treatment since early March 2020, 57% of respondents (50) told us that they or the person they care for have had a health or social care appointment or treatment.

5.1. Appointment or treatment ease of access

Table 3 displays the service that respondents or the person they care for used for their appointment or treatment and how easy it was to access. Remote GP appointments, hospital outpatients, and pharmacies were considered “very easy” to access most frequently, whereas mental health appointments and home care visits were reported to be “very difficult” to access by respondents.

Table 3.

A table displaying which services were used by respondents or people they care for, for appointments or treatment and how easy they were to access. The most common response for each appointment or treatment type is highlighted.

	Very easy	Easy	Neutral	Difficult	Very difficult
GP practice (in person) 25 respondents	20% (5)	28% (7)	16% (4)	12% (3)	24% (6)
Remote GP appointment 31 respondents	39% (12)	29% (9)	19% (6)	6% (2)	6% (2)

Hospital outpatients 24 respondents	29% (7)	21% (5)	21% (5)	13% (3)	17% (4)
Pharmacy 33 respondents	48% (16)	21% (7)	3% (1)	21% (7)	6% (2)
Home care visit 9 respondents	11% (1)	-	33% (3)	11% (1)	44% (4)
Health visitor 7 respondents	-	-	57% (4)	14% (1)	29% (2)
Walk-in centre 6 respondents	-	-	83% (5)	-	17% (1)
A&E 10 respondents	20% (2)	10% (1)	60% (6)	10% (1)	-
Paramedic 7 respondents	29% (2)	-	71% (5)	-	-
Dentistry 13 respondents	8% (1)	-	46% (6)	8% (1)	38% (5)
Mental health services 12 respondents	-	25% (3)	25% (3)	17% (2)	33% (4)

5.2. Satisfaction with appointment or treatment

Table 4. displays how satisfied respondents were with the services used by them or the person they care for, for appointments or treatment. Respondents most frequently reported being “very satisfied” with GP appointments and pharmacies. On the other hand they most frequently reported being “very unsatisfied” with mental health services.

Table 4.

A table displaying how satisfied respondents were with services used by them or people they care for, for appointments or treatment. The most common response for each appointment or treatment type is highlighted.

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Unsatisfied	Very unsatisfied
GP practice (in person) 24 respondents	38% (9)	13% (3)	25% (6)	13% (3)	13% (3)
Remote GP appointment 31 respondents	48% (15)	13% (4)	23% (7)	-	16% (5)

Hospital outpatients 22 respondents	27% (6)	23% (5)	27% (6)	5% (1)	18% (4)
Pharmacy 28 respondents	57% (16)	7% (2)	4% (1)	21% (6)	11% (3)
Home care visit 9 respondents	11% (1)	-	44% (4)	11% (1)	33% (3)
Health visitor 6 respondents	-	-	83% (5)	-	17% (1)
Walk-in centre 7 respondents	14% (1)	-	71% (5)	14% (1)	-
A&E 10 respondents	30% (3)	10% (1)	40% (4)	10% (1)	10% (1)
Paramedic 7 respondents	29% (2)	-	71% (5)	-	-
Dentistry 12 respondents	8% (1)	8% (1)	58% (7)	-	25% (3)
Mental health services 12 respondents	17% (2)	8% (1)	25% (3)	17% (2)	33% (4)

5.3. Other services

Respondents were asked if they have used any other medical services and how they found it in terms of ease of access and overall satisfaction. Ten respondents answered. There were a variety of services named, some which were included in the previous question (such as 111 or GP surgery). Some people stated satisfaction with their experience:

“Excellent Private GP and Alzheimer society support.”

“111 and out of hours GP -Very Satisfied”

“corona virus test via NHS - very quick and easy to book as a key worker - very satisfied”

“Infliximab infusion as an out patient. Very satisfied.”

Those who were less satisfied commented as follows:

“111 Service. This took an hour before I was connected. The first time I felt too ill to carry on holding.”

“Norfolk social care. Very dissatisfied”

5.4. Advice about safety and hygiene

For those who attended in-person appointments, respondents were asked how clear the advice was about safety and hygiene measures regarding coronavirus before attending the appointment, 26 respondents answered this question responses are displayed in Figure 6. As the graph shows 38% of respondents (10) told us that the advice was very clear.

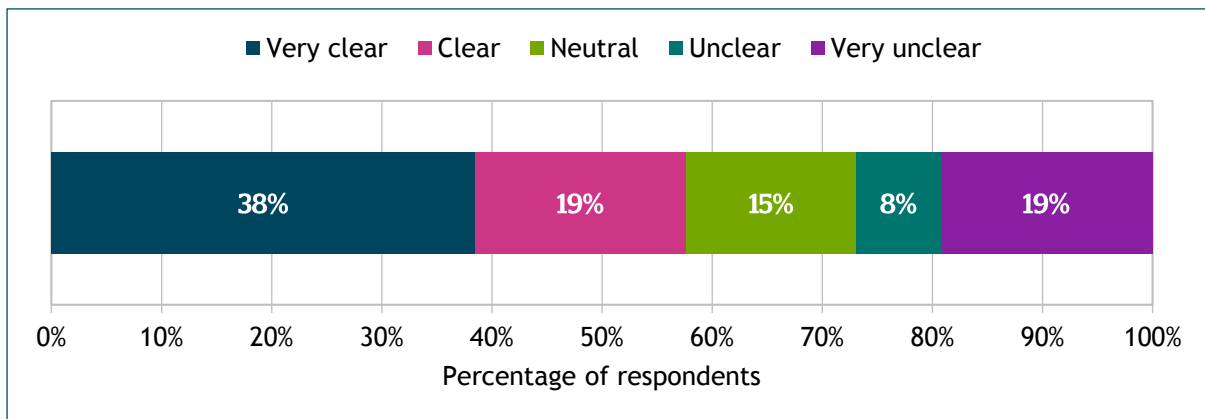


Figure 6. Responses to the question “if you/the person you care for had an in-person appointment, how clear was the advice given about safety and hygiene measures regarding coronavirus before attending the appointment?”.

5.5. Risks of treatment

Respondents were asked whether the risks around having treatment during the coronavirus outbreak explained throughout, 53% (16) told us that that the risks around having treatment during the coronavirus outbreak were not explained throughout.

5.6. Overall experience of treatment

Respondents had the option to expand further about their experience of treatment. Twenty-one people left comments.

Some stated that they had experienced positive treatment from a variety of services including GP surgeries, hospitals and community care:

“I had problems with my asthma and had a phone call with a nurse and my GP practice. She took a full history of my asthma and I have some tablets which have eased the symptoms. I also received a leaflet in which I message the NHS daily to explain how I am. a wonderful service.”

“The hospital staff and ambulance crew were amazing”

“My Cpn [Community Practice Nurse] has been wonderful, phoning me every week.”

“I had a blood test at my surgery and it was a positive experience in terms of walking through the process and feeling safe”

Three people mentioned dentistry. One stated that their dentist was unable to help *“until Monday at 9 when I phoned on Friday at 3.40 pm”*, whilst another said that it was *“extremely difficult”* to access emergency dental care.

Some people commented on difficulties with remote appointments:

“I called my GP and they said I will receive a call back. This was at no specific time. So I waited for my phone to ring, explained my symptoms which I had pretty much self diagnosed myself and the GP just agreed and told me to call back if it gets worst.”

“midwife booking appointment via telephone. Was very rushed, did not feel that they were particularly interested in me. Bloods/urine tests to be taken at dating scan. Notes not available until dating scan.”

One respondent also commented that, whilst the appointment was successful, it relied on the patient being able to use the internet:

“The appointment was made very easy. However, it was because I was able to access the service and follow the doctors instructions to take photos and send them to him. Mum would not have been able to access this if she had been on her own as she does not use the internet”

There were also comments about difficulties accessing medication. One respondent said that their pharmacy *“could not access my prescription and gave no indication of where I could source my medication”*. Another made a similar point that the pharmacy were *“unable to obtain medications”* leaving the patient to *“go without until I persevered and got a GP to contact me and offer something different”*.

6. Cancelled or postponed appointments

Nearly half of respondents (45%, 39 respondents) told us that they or the person they care for had an appointment postponed or cancelled since early March 2020. From these, the most common appointment cancelled or postponed was hospital appointments with 51% of respondents (20), followed by dentist appointments with 41% of respondents (16) reporting a cancellation or postponement, Figure 7 below displays the type of appointments cancelled or postponed.

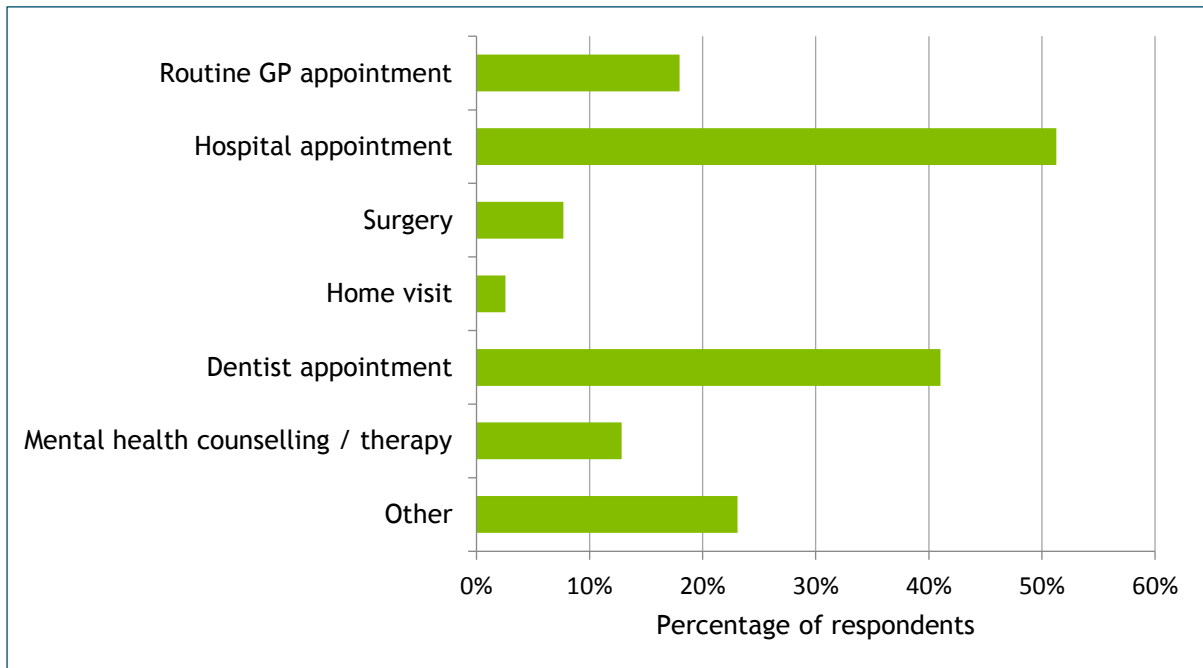


Figure 7. Responses to the question “what type of appointment/s was/were cancelled or postponed”. Respondents could select more than one response. Other responses included: blood test, ultrasound, colonoscopy, physio, podiatry, and community health team.

Respondents were then asked how they or the person they care for were notified about the cancellation or postponing. The most common notification method was through a phone call with 54% of respondents (21), responses are displayed in Figure 8 overleaf.

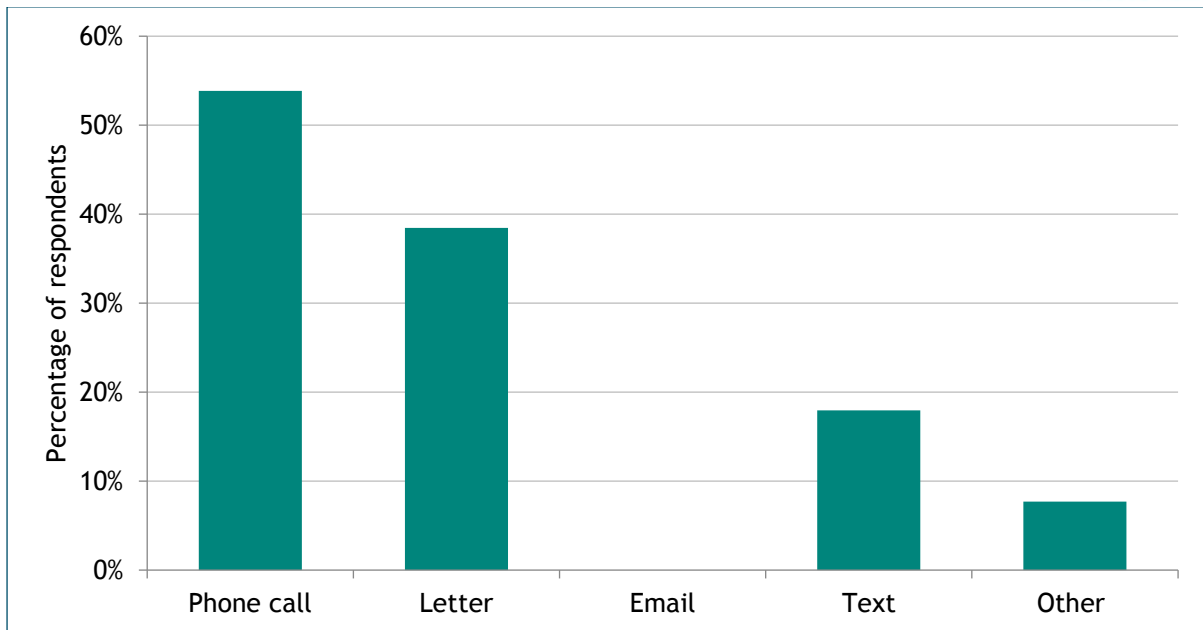


Figure 8. Responses to the question “how were you/the person you care for notified about the cancellation/s or postponing?”. Respondents could select all answers which apply. Other responses included: no notification and contacting the service themselves.

7. Any other comments

The final question allowed respondents to leave any further comments about information, support or access to healthcare since early March 2020. Thirty-six people answered.

Information

Several comments mentioned access to information. Most of these were regarding clarity and reliability:

“There has been too much fake news during this pandemic.”

“Local NHS providers and commissioners do not provide clear information”

“Important to have access to reliable, scientifically based information eg NHS.”

“Better transparency and fuller details”

Some comments were about awareness of information available:

“I have had no information regarding what is available or how to find what is available or how to access it.”

“Needs to be clearer information for people who are shielding about how it is safest to get medical help.”

“[This] is the first time I have come across the Norfolk County Council community response team.”

Lack of support

Some comments were in reference to difficulty accessing support.²

“I have no contact from GP or council in 4 months, i have autism and cant leave my leave home. No slot on gp website, No food delivery slots, I went 3 weeks without fresh food. No has contacted me.”

“GP letter was very late. Call to LA [Local Authority] was not helpful.”

“Was offered support, but it did not materialise because Norwich City Council gave incorrect information. Very distressing and potentially dangerous for a vulnerable person. Also received food parcel which did not request, want or need.”

One respondent indicated that support for her mother was positive but that her mother may not have received it if dealing with issues on her own:

“I was very pleased with the way in which the local GP responded to two concerns I have had over mums health during the pandemic. However, I recognise that she would not have been able to access the service if she had been on her own [...] as far as both the GP and the local council are concerned she is living alone. I am aware that the GP knows I am her carer but nobody asked if I was caring at this time”

Non-COVID health issues

One respondent stated that they find it “unclear what support is available for persons with non COVID health issues”, whilst another said that her husband’s health issues “have not been addressed or resolved during COVID”.

Mental Health

Several comments mentioned the effect that COVID-19 is having on people’s mental health:

“By being identified as a high risk person from covid 19 my anxiety levels sky rocketed, knowing that if I was too catch it I was unlikely to survive”

“I did feel too scared to go anywhere especially to a hospital or doctors surgery even being a healthy young woman. I could google things which took me to 111 symptom page and then that would tell me to see a doctor as soon as possible”

“[My son] has become psychotic because of anxiety about Covid 19 and GP, NSFT and NNUH seem to need me to be a go between to coordinate help while putting barriers in the way of me doing this ie patient confidentially”

² Please note: comments collected in weeks 1-2 of the survey being live indicated that many people were struggling with accessing support. As a result, we added contact information for Norfolk County Council’s Community Response Team as well as local mental health support to the final page of the survey.

Positive experiences

Several respondents highlighted positive experiences they have had with a range of services including GP surgeries, pharmacies and charities:

“I think they are all doing a terrific job under very difficult circumstances”

“have been very impressed that my repeat prescriptions have arrived in good time all the way through this crisis. Well done, Campingland Surgery and Well pharmacy in Swaffham”

“Appointments were with nursing staff - very efficient, kind and reassuring”

“thanks to the Alzheimer society for their support”

“Very good system for collecting prescriptions (ordered via App) - when ready [...] call received with timed collection from window of surgery pharmacy. No or very short queue spaced out with tape.”

“I have been extremely heartened by the care given to me regarding free food boxx delivery and the fact that I need gluten free foods. I cannot say thank you enough”