

Coronavirus Survey

2021



Healthwatch Thurrock

Healthwatch Thurrock is the independent Health and Social care services champion for the people of Thurrock. We gather and represent views of local residents in order to build up a picture of services that are doing well and where they can be improved.

Along with consultation work and gathering the voices of residents, Healthwatch Thurrock also provide an information guidance and signposting service.

Residents are invited to “speak out” via an online forum as well as through targeted surveys, conversations and face to face engagement within the community.

Healthwatch Thurrock presents the voices of Thurrock to aid in identifying the need for change, considerations before commissioning and to support best practice across services.

Through conversation and engagement with people actually using the services Healthwatch Thurrock highlight and promote improvements.

We know that services are better when people are treated as individuals and are actively involved with shaping support.

To do this, services need to learn from examples of real experiences, how they can be adapted and fit around local needs.

It is also important to understand where services are working well and that should be considered to be a blueprint of change when designing services and support.

Acknowledgements:

Healthwatch Thurrock would like to thank all the contributors and respondents to this survey.

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Executive Summary

Healthwatch Thurrock conducted a survey around services and quality of information received during the Covid-19 pandemic 2020.

A total of 103 responses were collected over several months and it asked residents to describe their experience through open and closed questions.

The report looks at the information and support Thurrock residents described they have received through the Coronavirus lockdown period.

40% have not been able to access support for mental health and wellbeing

75% felt they had all the information they needed during the pandemic

64% found keeping physically fit easy during the pandemic

47% considered themselves to be at high risk of Coronavirus

45% were currently caring for or supporting someone at high risk of Coronavirus

70% found the biggest challenge during the lockdown was lack of contact with friends and family

The majority of respondents (40%) were aged over 60 years old, white British and female.

Risk

Of the 103 respondents to the survey just under half (47%) considered themselves to be of high risk from Coronavirus. The main reason was due to having an existing health condition (26%) and being over 70 years old.

Over half (51%) felt they were at no greater risk of Coronavirus.

Not all respondents answered, but from a cohort of 98 people, under half (43%) were caring for someone who was at high risk of Coronavirus.

Again the reasons for being high risk were due to an existing health condition and/or being over 70 years old.



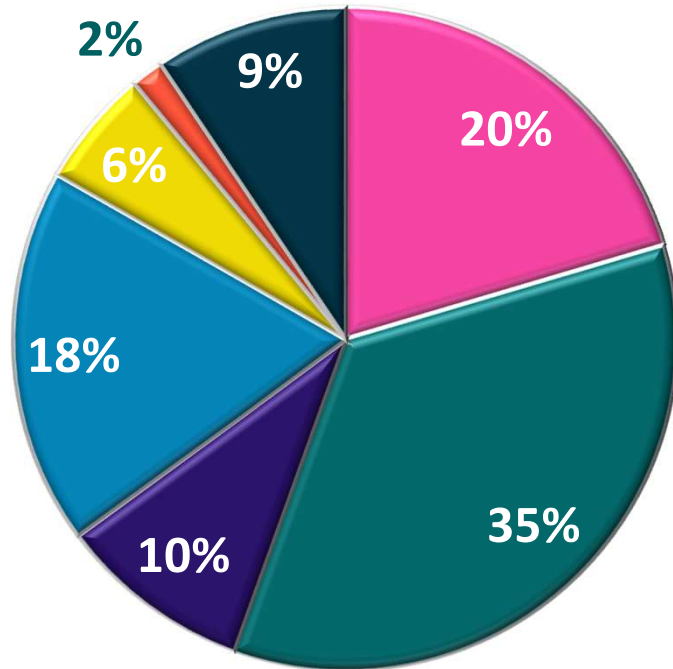
Challenges

When asked what were the biggest challenges faced during Coronavirus, most respondents said that it was lack of contact with friends and family followed by feelings of isolation.



Challenges

- Feelings of isolation
- Lack of contact with friends and family
- Worry about financial situation
- Concern for own health
- Ability to leave house for exercise
- I don't know
- Other



Other Challenges

From the 'other' challenges, there was a slight majority based on anxiety or fears of the virus and culminating impacts.

“Home-schooling”

“Anxiety and high stress”

“One member of household works in a supermarket so could bring virus home”

“Others not complying with the guidelines”

Accessing support for mental health



A quarter of respondents (24%) told us that they had been able to access support with their mental health and wellbeing, although a larger majority (40%) had not.

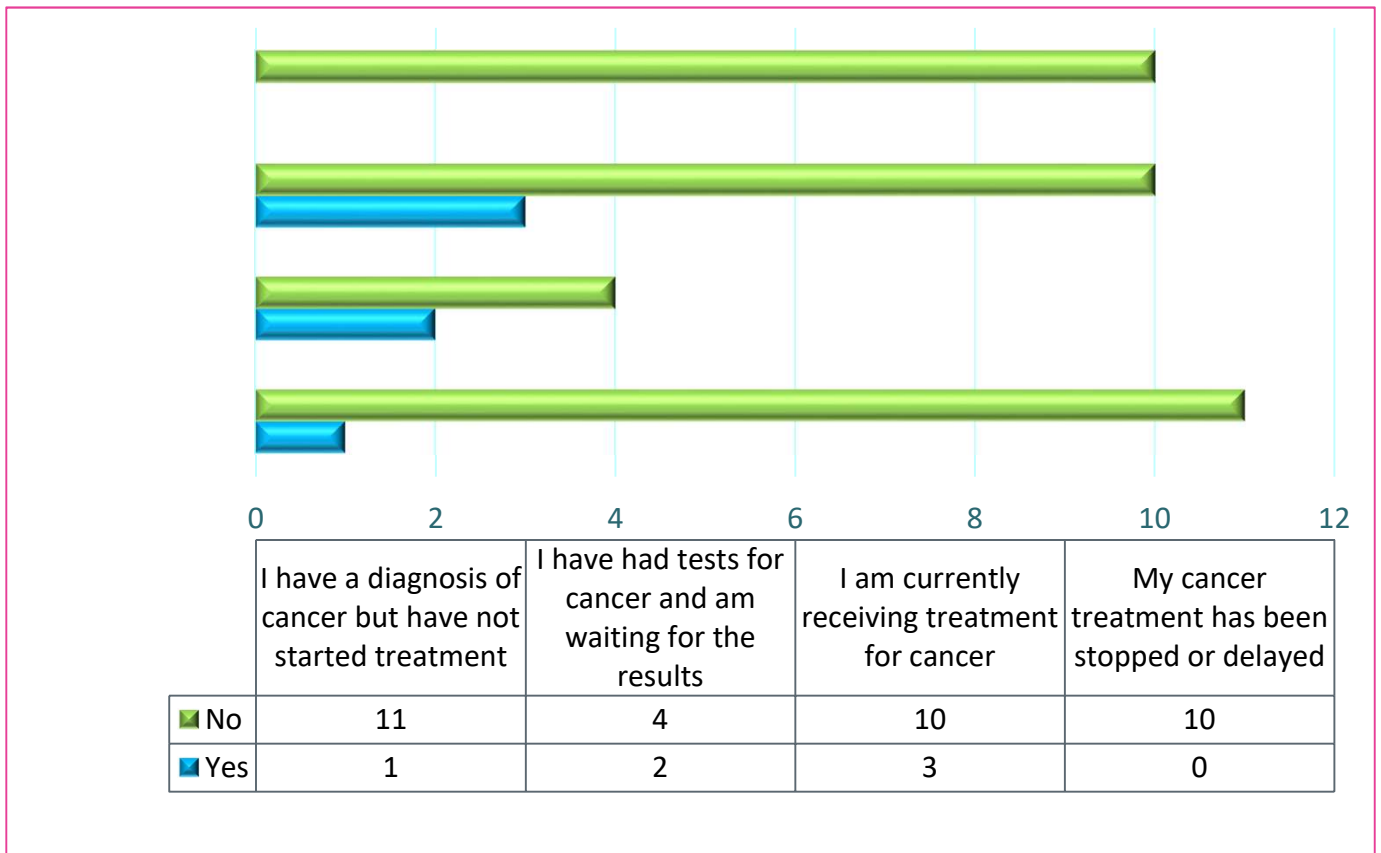
Of the people who had accessed support for mental health, most had used work provided schemes. Some people however, although recognising that they had needed help, had not accessed any support.

“I’ve felt too low to help myself”

“I have not been able to access support as the only support is by telephone which as an autistic adult, I am unable to do as I find it impossible to describe my feelings.”

“As a key worker in adult social care, its not appropriate to feel this way or ask for help”

Cancer treatment during Coronavirus



Healthwatch Thurrock wanted to take a snapshot for those people with Cancer concerns and their treatment / services access during the pandemic.

Of those that had a diagnosis and was receiving treatment prior to the pandemic, nothing had changed and this treatment had continued.

“My husband had an oncology appointment at Southend which was carried out by phone on the time and date arranged. Very successful”

“Consultant had telephoned to give blood test results”

“Problem is my wife’s chemo is ongoing and her immune system is low with greater chance of catching Coronavirus”

Care Services during Coronavirus

The survey revealed that most respondents (90%) did not receive care services or support within their own home.

Of those that did receive care (10%), only 2 people had seen either a change or had stopped receiving those services.

With other care services only a small number (2%) had seen a change to health and care provision. These were care services such as hospital and GP appointments.

“Hearing clinic at hospital cancelling appointment to fit my elderly mother with new hearing aids, very frustrating and had led to my mother feeling very isolated and unable to communicate properly”

“All now by phone”

“Education has been withdrawn for child with disability”

“The person in my care had their hip replacement postponed but it is now rebooked in a private hospital (under NHS) for June”

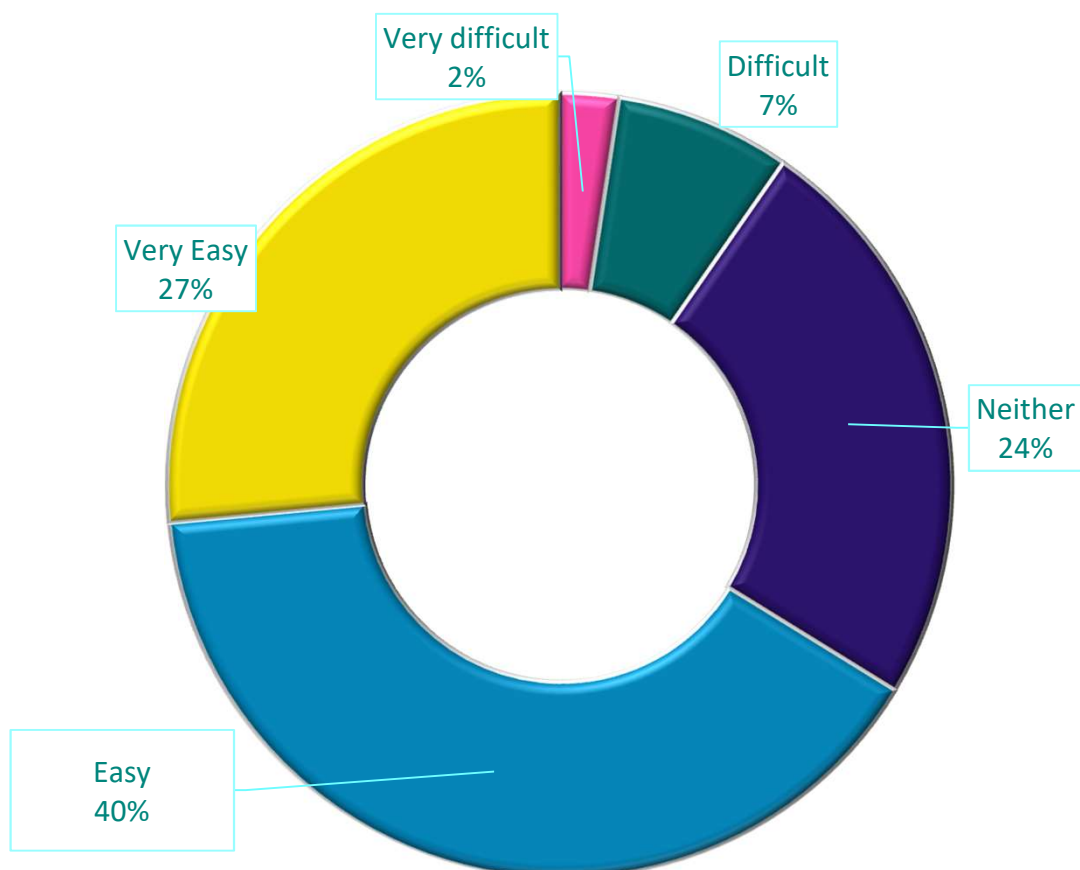
“I haven’t been able to have blood tests or attend routine follow up appointments”

Information and Advice

In general most people felt that keeping up with information around staying safe was either easy (40%) or very easy (27%).

Only a small amount found it difficult (7%) or very difficult (2%).

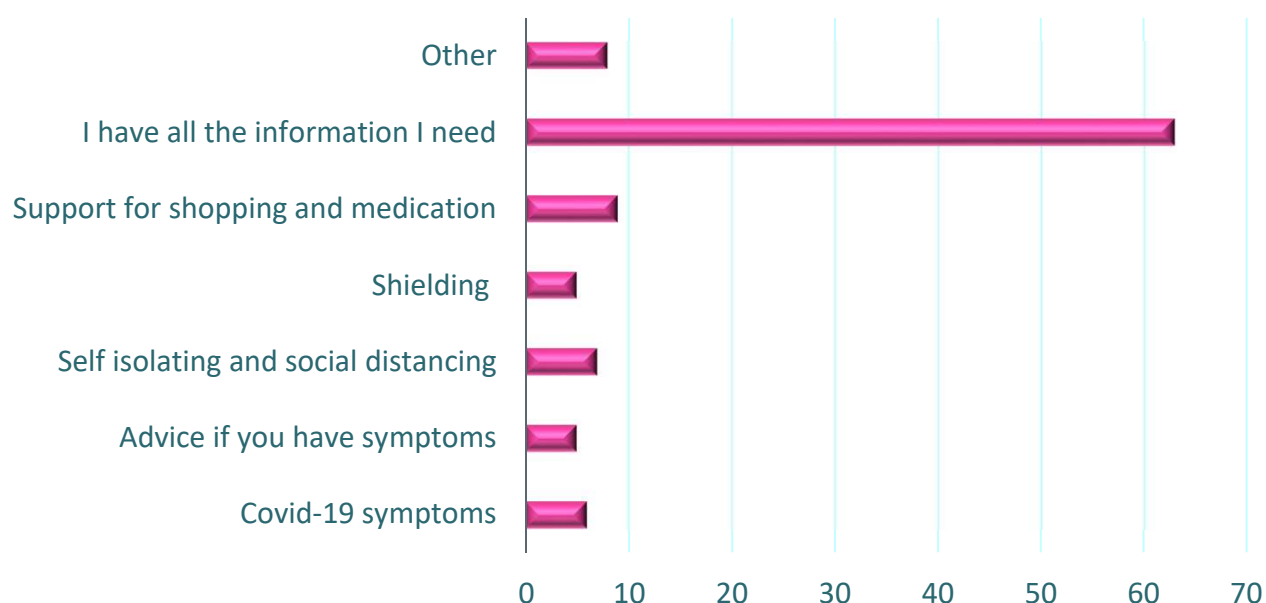
Keeping up to date with information about keeping safe



Additional Information

Healthwatch Thurrock asked whether residents had enough information around other areas, but also where they would like more.

Information in other areas



“I have found the language used is not uniform when receiving NHS letters and the government website. One example are the terms clinically extremely vulnerable which is used on the gov website but not NHS letter”

“Information about how to access blood tests as an adult or dental treatment for a child under 11”

“Where to go when food parcels are coming with mouldy food etc”

Source of Information

Most people received information from national organisations eg: government, NHS (76%) and other media eg: television, radio (71%).

Local information such as community organisations and Council communications also were used to find information out (43%).

The lowest source for information was through the post (7%).



“Friends and family working out on the front line”

“Daily work updates”

“Excellent GP Posts”

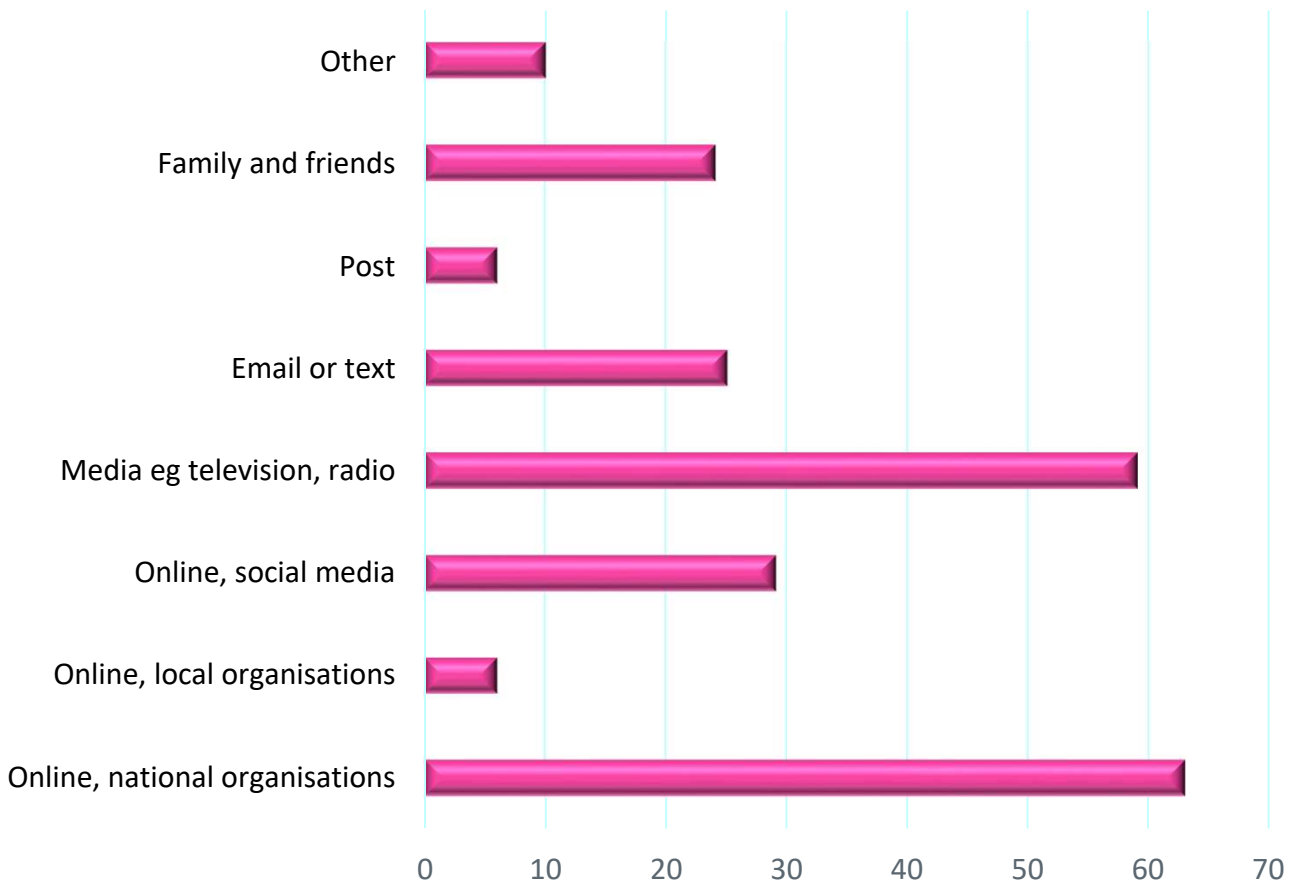
Source of Information

“NHS 111 site”

“BATIAS, Scope and Mencap”

“Through work, research, registering for updates with ONS, PHE, EQC, daily briefing, Gov.uk website. Local information to Thurrock for signposting/sharing”

All sources of information

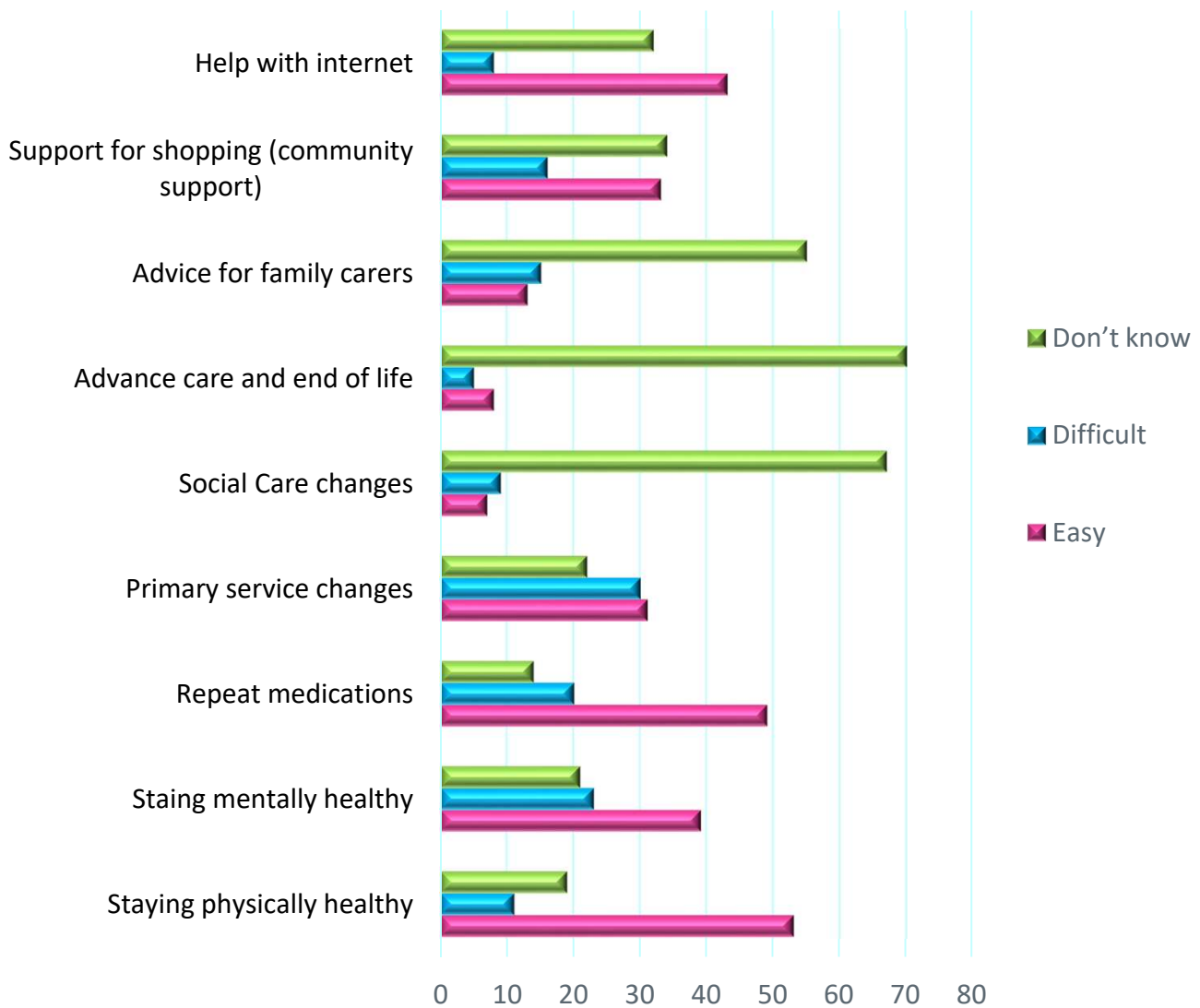


Specific Information

Residents were asked how easy it was to access information around specific topics such as staying healthy, repeat medications and changes during the pandemic.

The most difficult was around changes to primary services eg: GP, Pharmacy (36%) with the easiest being getting staying physically healthy (64%) followed by getting repeat medication (59%) and using the internet (52%).

Access to specific information



Community Support

Community support was available formally and informally throughout the pandemic.

Of those residents that answered the question, many had not needed to access community support (73%).

A small number had accessed (12%) and a slightly larger amount (14%) did not know about the community support.



“I have made several referrals to TCCA, worked closely with local support organisations in Thurrock. Very proud and impressed with continuing support and information for Thurrock”

“CVS volunteers were brilliant”

Other comments

At the end of the survey, residents were invited to give any further comments about their experiences.

A total of 21 residents left further feedback. Most (14) of these comments were negative with the remaining (7) being positive.

The negative comments were very specific about inability to access some services. The positives were mainly about support from the community.

“I feel that covid has been the only concern really of government and many organisations I have found the help I need very difficult and that my employer supports me in spite of the so called advice and not because of it”



“My food packages have come with mouldy fruit and potatoes the bread not sealed etc “

“Thurrock corona help & advice service has been brilliant. Government food boxes came in first week & every week of shielding since - very impressed & grateful.”

“Yes not being able to see a doctor. Feeling if need to see a doctor only way was go A&E. No good talking over the phone need to be touched for symptoms where pain is etc. Felt if doctors had PPE & gloves why couldn't they still see you at surgery.”

“My GP surgery and pharmacy have made the last ten weeks bearable by covering every medical need I have”

Other comments

“Anxiety about what normal will be after”

“No autism specific and acknowledgement for my autism, epilepsy, learning disabilities, fibromyalgia, as well as my depression anxiety and OCD as I feel that I have been forgotten and overlooked”

“In a strange way I've benefitted from lockdown as I've discovered other ways of doing things”

“Anxiety about what normal will be after”



Demographics

Ethnicity	Percentage
White	43%
White British / English	51%
Black	1%
Black British	1%
Asian British	3%
Other	1%

Gender	Percentage
Female	76%
Male	21%
Transgender	1%
Prefer not to say	2%

Age	Percentage
21-29	5%
30-39	5%
40-49	23%
50-59	27%
60+	40%

healthwatch
Thurrock

Healthwatch Thurrock
The Beehive Resource Centre
West Street
Grays
Essex RM17 6XP

www.healthwatchthurrock.org

01375 389883
admin@healthwatchthurrock.org

