

# COVID-19 Survey

Peoples Experiences of Health and Care  
Services and Accessing Information

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## Aims of the survey

The coronavirus pandemic has meant that health and social care providers have had to change the services they offer, and the way their services are delivered. The aim of the survey was to collect the views of residents in Wokingham Borough, in order to find out their experiences of changed services and whether they have been able to access the information and support they need during the pandemic.

To understand residents' experiences Healthwatch Wokingham ran a survey between May and July 2020. We received 173 responses from people across the Borough.

## Summary and Key Findings

From the comments and experiences shared with us, it is clear that people are hugely grateful to the NHS and social care and their dedication during the pandemic to take care of people.

There were a lot of examples of where services worked well. However, there are things that can be learnt:

**Information and Advice** – Some people found it difficult to find information about services, service change and how to access services. Some information was hard to find. Information wasn't always provided in a timely way and sometimes information wasn't updated during the pandemic and therefore signposted people incorrectly. Not all information was produced to help the disadvantaged for example easy read information for learning disabled or for those whose first language isn't English.

**Accessing Services** – There were problems accessing certain services, especially dental care and phlebotomy

**Video Consultation** – The majority of those people who used video consultations were satisfied with the service and the majority would be happy to use it again.

**Not Using NHS Services** – It was a concern that some of those who didn't use services, didn't do so because they didn't want to bother the services or thought their problem could wait

**Mental Health Impact** – Unsurprisingly, a majority of people who responded to the survey experienced an impact on their mental health to one degree or another

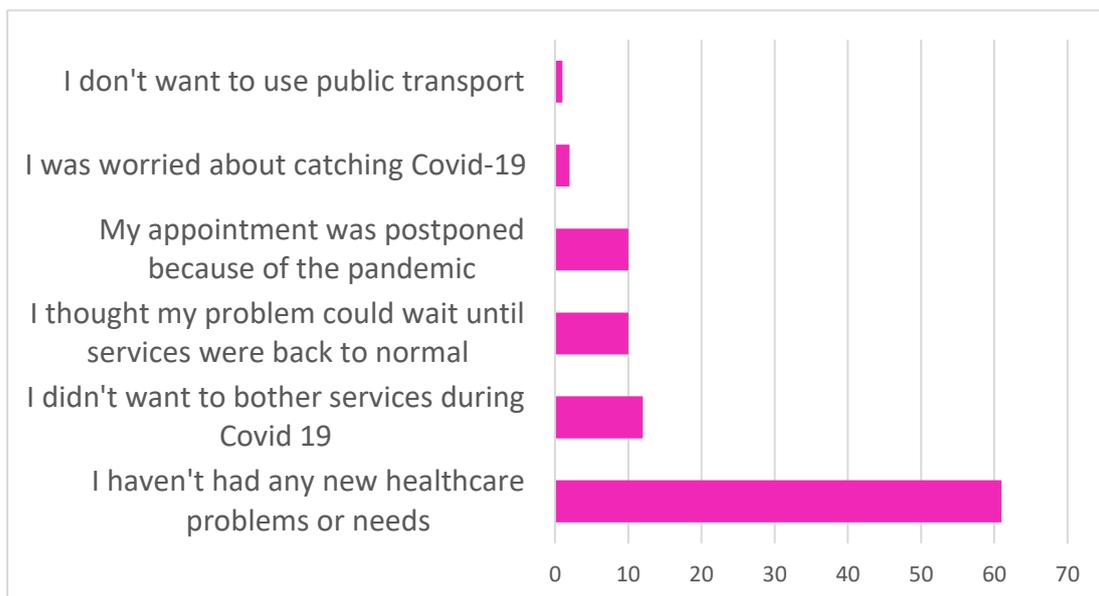
## Shielding and Covid

We asked people if they were shielding and whether they'd had Covid19. 14% of respondents had received a letter from the government asking them to shield. Most people did not believe they'd had Covid19, only 1 person had received a positive test and a further 10 people had been advised by NHS 111 that they probably had it based on their symptoms.

## Using NHS or Social Care services

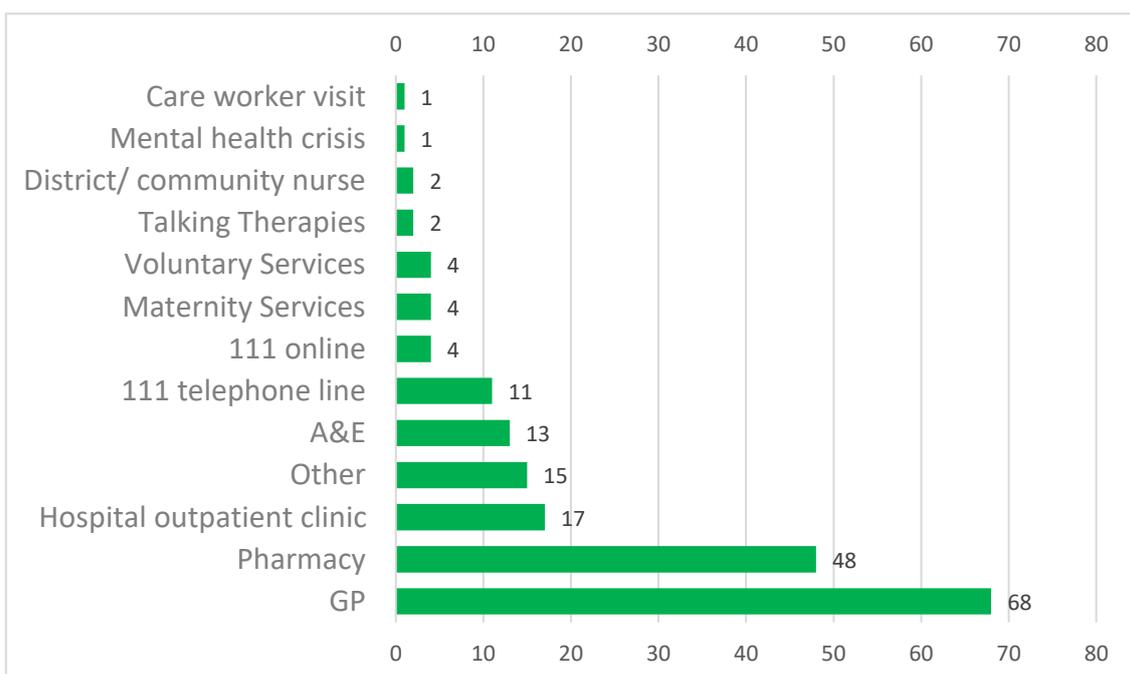
We asked people if they had used NHS or social care services since March 23<sup>rd</sup> (when lockdown began). 51% of people had used services, 49% hadn't used services.

For those that hadn't accessed services we asked why not. The reasons given were:



Back in April the NHS launched a [campaign](#) to encourage the public to continue to use NHS services as soon as they are needed. It is a concern that some of the 42% of people who said they hadn't used services felt they couldn't or didn't want to.

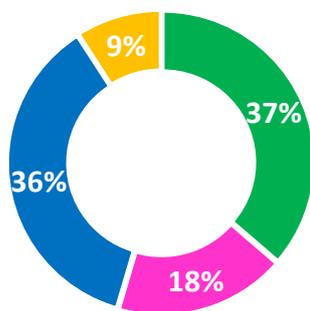
We also asked what services people had used from May-July. The majority focussed on GP and Pharmacy.



## Video Consultation

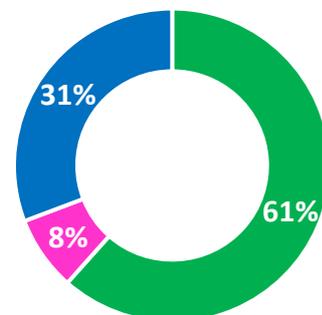
We asked people if they had used video or phone consultations. 15% of people who had used services had been offered a video consultation and we asked them more about this. 55% were either very satisfied or satisfied. 36% seem undecided while only 9% were dissatisfied. Of those who had used video consultation, 61% would be happy to have a video consultation again. 31% were undecided and only 8% would not want to use video consultation again.

How satisfied were you with your video consultation?



■ Very satisfied      ■ Satisfied  
■ Not sure          ■ Dissatisfied

Would you be happy to have a video appointment again in the future?



■ Yes    ■ No    ■ Maybe

I felt safe and able to show the GP a rash on the screen

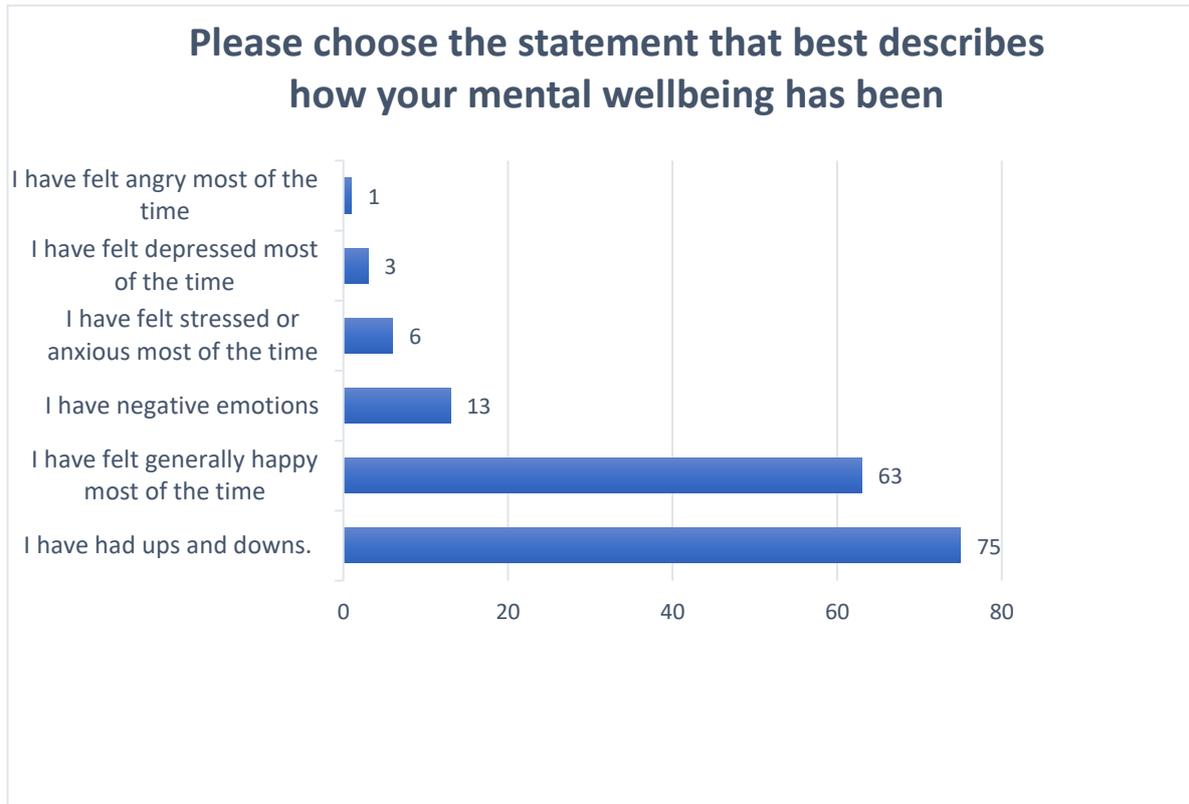
I live on my own and couldn't physically reach around my back to show the doctor

I used push doctor it was fast and efficient

The audio was bad so I had to revert to a normal phone call

## Mental Health

We asked people about the state of their mental health during coronavirus. Of those who responded, 61% indicated they experienced an impact on their mental health to one degree or another. However, 39% reported feeling generally happy most of the time.



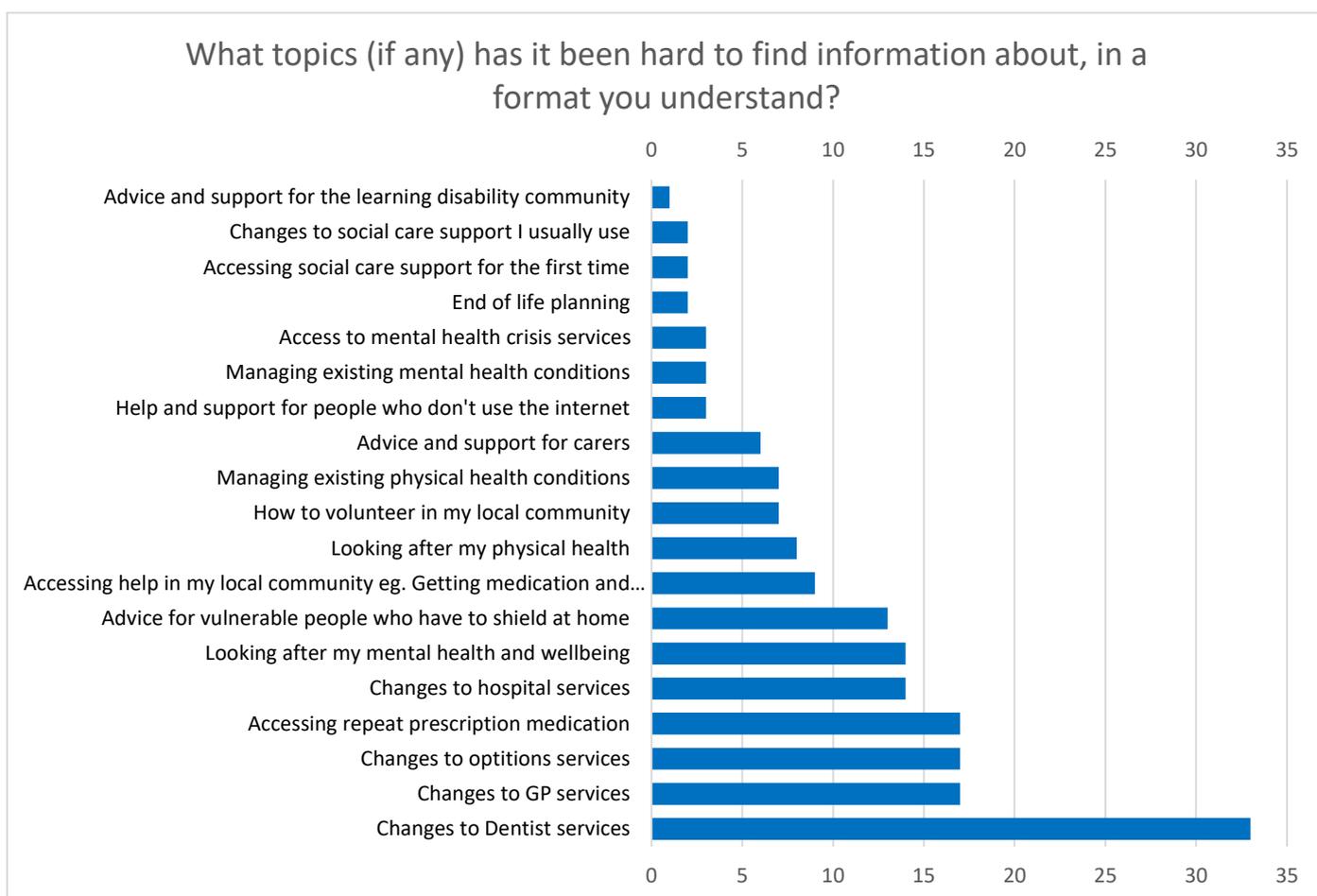
- Living alone in lockdown (well over 70) not good. Son and daughter in law are caring for me - my son phones every day for a chat and to check on me. But I've not been out since lockdown - it's hard.
- Used to living on my own so it has affected me minimally.
- Stressed because of increased work commitments and challenges caused by working online which were exhausting to get used to.
- I have been fine but really emotional.

## Information and Advice

Healthwatch Wokingham had been hearing from people throughout the pandemic who were finding it difficult to find up to date and timely information about some services. In the survey we asked people which services it was hard to find information about. People reported that they couldn't always find the information they wanted about a range of services. The top 5 services that people had difficulty finding information were: Dental, GP, Opticians, Pharmacy and Hospital.

Healthwatch Wokingham had fed back to the Royal Berkshire Hospital that it was difficult to navigate their website and find clear information. In response have begun a project to build a new website and we have fed in our comments, based on discussion with local VCSe groups.

In addition, based on comments from the public and the results of this survey question, we have carried out a review of all Wokingham Borough GP surgery and Dentists web sites, with the help of CLASP (adult learning disability group,) to see how clear and accurate their information is.



# Recommendations

## Information and Advice

All health and care services need to Provide timely up to date information about any changes to services and how they are delivered. This is important for everyone but particularly to disadvantaged individuals. People need up to date information that is easy to find in order to know if services are open and if so how are they accessed. It is important that people are well informed particularly if they are currently undergoing treatment.

Services need to provide information that is easy to find and presented in formats for those who are disadvantaged or don't have English as a first language or are learning disabled and need easy read documentation. This needs to be done in parallel with the original information source and not afterwards.

Dental service providers need to provide more information on their websites about their services, how to access the service, if the service isn't open what alternative services are in place and what to do out of hours.

## Video Consultation

Whilst responses regarding GP and hospital video consultation were very positive in general, there were some issues and service providers need to ensure they continue to offer a choice for those who can't use the technology or don't want to use the technology.

## Not Using NHS Services

Some people didn't use NHS services because they felt fearful of accessing services. Service providers need to provide clear, consistent messaging to people in a way that makes people less anxious about visiting services and understand what to expect when they access the service. This might make use of photos/videos to explain, this is particularly helpful for those who might find it difficult to read information.

## Mental Health Services

Commissioners to make timely provision for any increase in need for mental health services as a result of the mental health impact of coronavirus on the local population.

## APPENDIX A

### Responses - Examples Of Where Services Worked Particularly Well

- The staff on Loddon ward were very good with calling me with daily updates.
- Covid test centre was very efficient.
- Brookside surgery worked very well.
- I had contact from WBC which was very positive and helpful.
- Telephone consultation from the surgery was excellent.
- Wokingham cpe very fast to triage mental health crisis.
- Staff at Royal Berks were incredibly reassuring, especially as I had to attend the scans alone.
- Wokingham One Front Door - Food delivery very helpful as we have not been out since March
- Wokingham One Front Door - Made it possible for me to receive my essential medications on time
- Wokingham One Front Door - Out of this world all fine. wonderful wonderful service
- Wokingham One Front Door - service was second to none I did not know where to turn it was wonderful
- Wokingham One Front Door - It was like Christmas a wonderful - lovely fresh food
- Wokingham One Front Door - Sorted food & medicine and provided advice on will
- Wokingham One Front Door - Got some food in the house without having to break shielding
- Wokingham One Front Door - Just a huge relief to know that there is someone we could call on to get our meds. wonderful service
- Wokingham One Front Door - I can not go out with COPD and depression and anxiety. I needed this help a lot
- Wokingham One Front Door - Somewhere to turn to, as I was hitting dead ends
- Wokingham One Front Door - Relieved. Service brought a tear to my eyes, as I was very impressed.
- My GP surgery was efficient and kind. They kept non-COVID patients separate.
- RBH was particularly impressive. Although the condition turned out to be minor, the breast team reassured me that I had done the right thing.
- Talking therapies have been amazingly quick and supportive.
- Doctor provided a thorough consultation on phone to discuss a medical problem my daughter was having.

- Very quick service at outpatients.
- Outpatient dermatology was very efficient.
- Brilliant telephone support from The Nursing Practitioner at Woosehill surgery.
- Excellent safe service at Brants Bridge.
- My wifes discharge went quite well and the barriers were up in the car park so it cost nothing to park.
- WBC in conjunction with CAB very helpful. Volunteer rang every week to see if I needed help.
- Regular phone call from social care to check all was well. Much appreciated.
- RBH phone consultation from pain clinic for husband was excellent, GP video call service worked really well.
- Telephone consultations are much easier and quicker than going into the doctors surgery.

## APPENDIX B

### Responses - Where Services Could Have Worked Better

- Better communication generally from RBH departments except Loddon Ward.
- Having to go from Reading to Bracknell for a Blood Test. Why is it closed at the RBH in a town this size.
- Problems from outset regarding shielding letter and seemed to be lack of interest by GPs practice and even more so by the specialist team at RBH who were not interested.
- Communication from RBH maternity services has been confusing. Told one thing on the phone by a midwife and then receive a letter that says another. They are still sending out standard letters saying you can bring someone with you to scan when this is not the case.
- I was not forewarned by the doctor's receptionist when arranging to give a blood sample to wear a mask/scarf when attending.
- Clarification from RBH of what I should be doing would have been nice, while I waited for treatment.
- CAMHS have not been particularly organised and clear at times about services and appointments.
- speak to a nurse for a very important yearly screening who was unable to fully grasp my situation leaving me very despondent.
- Had to make a number of calls and several emails to surgery to get a shielding letter.
- No letter or text confirmation of outpatient appointment just a phone call.
- Pharmacies have been a nightmare, don't always have all your medication, complete lack of customer communication and car.
- 111 service. I called and was on hold. Got cut off. Happened 10 times before I gave up.
- Was sent to rbh for xray when got there told I should have gone to Bracknell.
- DId not get feed back from RBH Dawn system from Haematology dept without me making phone calls to them. Felt a bit abandoned by the system.
- Eye casualty had removed their emergency phone number which caused hassle. Felt abandoned.
- I couldn't find the information I needed about dentistry services during covid-19.
- It is difficult to find information about dentists and impossible to find a local NHS dentist.

## APPENDIX C



### Thank You to Health and Care Workers

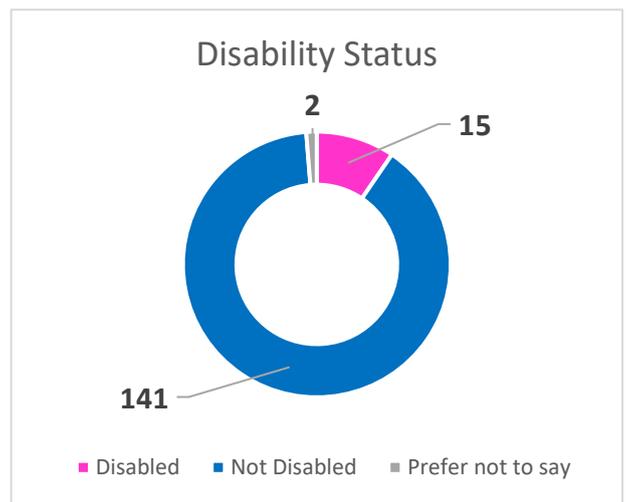
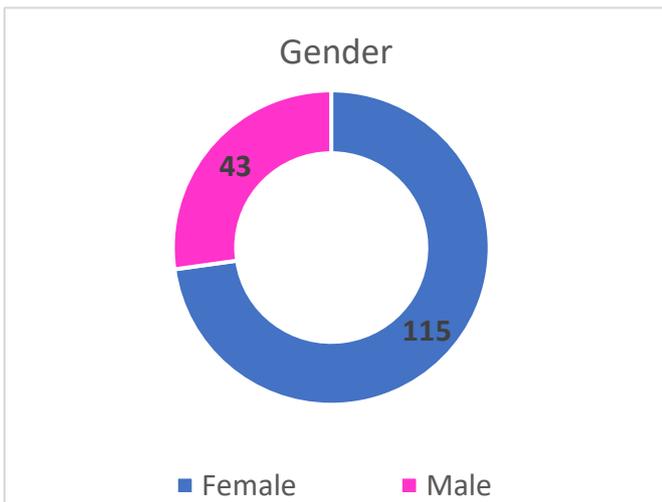
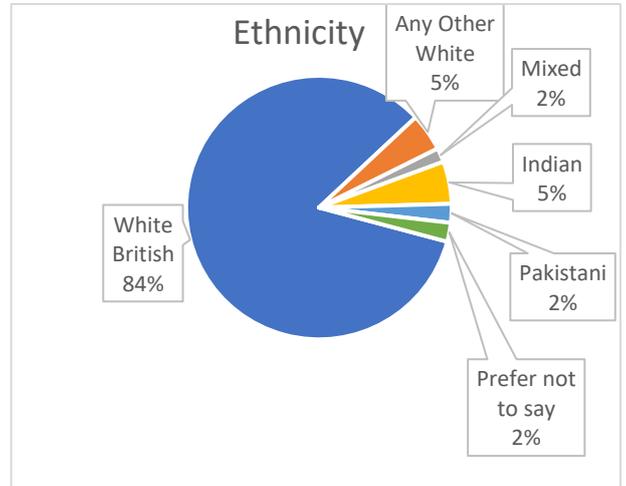
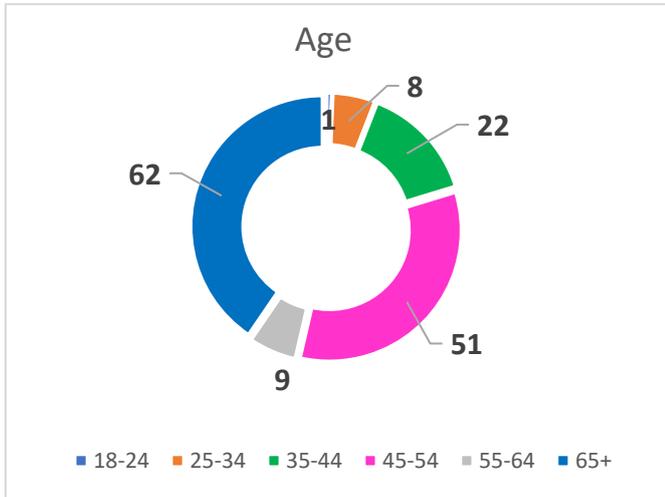


In our survey we gave people the opportunity to give words of thanks to health, care and other keyworkers. Those responses have been captured below:

- Thanks to Ambulance, A&E and AMU staff who cared for me.
- I have tremendous admiration of the NHS and all their support staff for their dedicated and committed work ethics.
- Woodley centre surgery I think all the services are going a great job, including bin men, retail workers and post people - I feel they are overlooked with everything focusing on NHS.
- NHS/postie/bins/cop/fire/local shops. Well done all!
- Wokingham Medical Centre and Boots Pharmacy have been very helpful.
- Thank you to everyone helping to keep us safe and providing deliveries and shopping facilities.
- Jay at Jats Pharmacy for persistently trying to get my out of stock medication!
- The NHS are doing a fantastic job and deserve all the praise they can get.
- Twyford surgery and Fields pharmacy for their sympathetic and positive help with questions and help.
- Thank you to all key workers as I am one myself, I know what you are all going through.
- Thank you to all staff and teams on frontline and behind the scenes.
- Thank you to Dr Fairey and all the staff at Woosehill Medical Centre who are working really hard under great pressure. Everything you are all doing is appreciated. Keep well.
- Thank you to ALL those working hard to keep us all safe - we should never take them for granted
- Thank you to all who are still working hard in ways you didn't think possible, even when you were worried about your own health.
- I would like to extend my thanks to Dr Gordon at RBH for her excellent care and communication when my son's follow up appointment was switched to a telephone call. It was actually easier for my son than going into the hospital.
- Thanks to GP and Royal Berks for sorting pain in varicose veins.
- Thank you to all key workers, post office, council, teaching staff, supermarket staff, medical staff and anyone else. Thank you to every parent who has managed to support their children through lock down.

- A big thank you to all the volunteers of course. But often overlooked and taken for granted, our refuse collection operators provide an excellent service and continue through the pandemic - a big thank you to them.
- I have thanks for all the people who have gone above and beyond the line of duty during this pandemic.
- Thank you to my brilliant neighbours who regularly get my shopping.
- Funeral staff - they have said nothing and yet they must be overwhelmed by the changes to the service they offer loved ones and their families.
- Twyford surgery deserve recognition for their Facebook outreach. Lots of useful information and some light-hearted humour. Made them feel very approachable.
- Thank you to Caroline Jennings. Neuropsychologist within community neuro rehab team Wokingham.
- Wokingham Volunteer pharmacy delivery was excellent.
- Twyford Surgery have been friendly calm and reassuring as if mine was the only call they handled: which I know wasn't true!
- Big thank you to Finchampstead Surgery: Reception, doctors, the organisation and the pharmacy too. Use of telephone consultation to sort problems out fast is excellent.
- Totally respect them all, especially putting lives of family on the line.
- Appreciate the phone calls from Wokingham Social Services to check on our current situation. So far have not had to use them.
- Thank you to the fracture clinic at West Berkshire Hospital Thatcham.
- The CAB/Wokingham council group provided me with essential foodstuffs, free of charge, before I could get a vulnerable supermarket slot. I have expressed my thanks whenever possible and put funds to cover into the charity named. Many thanks again. It was a lifesaver.
- Thanks to the volunteers for food and prescription collection and delivery help especially Sherrie Foo and Alistair. To our neighbour Sandy and to Apex Care Services especially Beverley for weekly support for my wife.
- The SCAS staff who took my wife to the RBH and thence to the JR were magnificent and there was one particular nurse at the JR who was also very good.
- The Citizens Advice, were really helpful. A big thank you to them.
- Thanks to WBC, CAB and Volunteer service.
- Think WBC and volunteer hub have been great. And dustbin men etc.
- Excellent service from Finchampstead Surgery. Wokingham Volunteer service very helpful with collection of prescriptions. Jats Pharmacy very supportive.
- Parkside Family Practice in Woodley have been great.
- Loddon Surgery, thank you for the fantastic support and care given to me.

## APPENDIX D Demographic Information



## Contact us

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