

**CHESHIRE EAST HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD**  
**Reports Cover Sheet**

<b>Title of Report:</b>	COVID 19 – Mental Health impacts, interim findings from Healthwatch surveys.
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	28 <sup>th</sup> July 2020
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**Executive Summary**

<b>Is this report for:</b>	Information <input type="checkbox"/>	Discussion X	Decision <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Why is the report being brought to the board?</b>	To inform the debate about the mental health impacts of COVID 19 on the population of Cheshire East and how best the Cheshire East Health and Care System should respond to the challenges this may bring.		
<b>Please detail which, if any, of the Health &amp; Wellbeing Strategy priorities this report relates to?</b>	Creating a place that supports health and wellbeing for everyone living in Cheshire East <input type="checkbox"/> Improving the mental health and wellbeing of people living and working in Cheshire East <input type="checkbox"/> Enable more people to live well for longer <input type="checkbox"/> All of the above X		
<b>Please detail which, if any, of the Health &amp; Wellbeing Principles this report relates to?</b>	Equality and Fairness <input type="checkbox"/> Accessibility <input type="checkbox"/> Integration <input type="checkbox"/> Quality <input type="checkbox"/> Sustainability <input type="checkbox"/> Safeguarding <input type="checkbox"/> All of the above X		
<b>Key Actions for the Health &amp; Wellbeing Board to address. Please state recommendations for action.</b>	To note the preliminary findings of the Healthwatch Cheshire East survey and to bear these in mind these when considering and planning the Cheshire East Health and Care System's response to the growing needs of the population.		
<b>Has the report been considered at any other committee meeting of the Council/meeting of the CCG board/stakeholders?</b>	No		

Has public, service user, patient feedback/consultation informed the recommendations of this report?	Yes
If recommendations are adopted, how will residents benefit? Detail benefits and reasons why they will benefit.	Listening to the experiences of residents and considering their needs will be important in determining the best way for the Board, commissioners and service providers to respond to the impacts of COVID 19 on people's mental health and wellbeing.

## 1 Report Summary

- 1.1 The information contained within this paper is taken from interim reports of the findings from the Healthwatch Cheshire 'Health and Wellbeing During Coronavirus' survey. It is based upon the 1,071 responses up to Friday 26th June 2020, of which 518 are from Cheshire East. These responses have provided a wealth of rich information, totalling 1,745 qualitative comments from residents of Cheshire East. This is a short overview of the findings from these responses, with more in-depth analysis to come as the situation develops. The survey will be ongoing and findings will be reviewed regularly in order to provide up to date information to partners.
- 1.2 87% of respondents have indicated that there has been some impact upon their mental health with 40% of those feeling that they needed support to help them, although a lot of this has been sought from friends and family, possibly as a result of concerns regarding accessing GP and health services during the pandemic. It is also clear that many of the concerns relate to the wider economic impacts of the virus.

## Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Cheshire East Health and Wellbeing Board note the findings of the Healthwatch Survey and consider these as the Board considers the most appropriate way to effectively respond to the challenges posed by the COVID 19 outbreak.

## 2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 To ensure that the experience of the residents of Cheshire East is used to inform strategic and Service based decision making.

## 4 Impact on Health and Wellbeing Strategy Priorities

- 4.1 Improving the mental health and wellbeing of people living and working in Cheshire East is a priority of both the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Cheshire East Health and Care Place Partnership's Five Year Plan.

## 5 Summary of Survey Findings

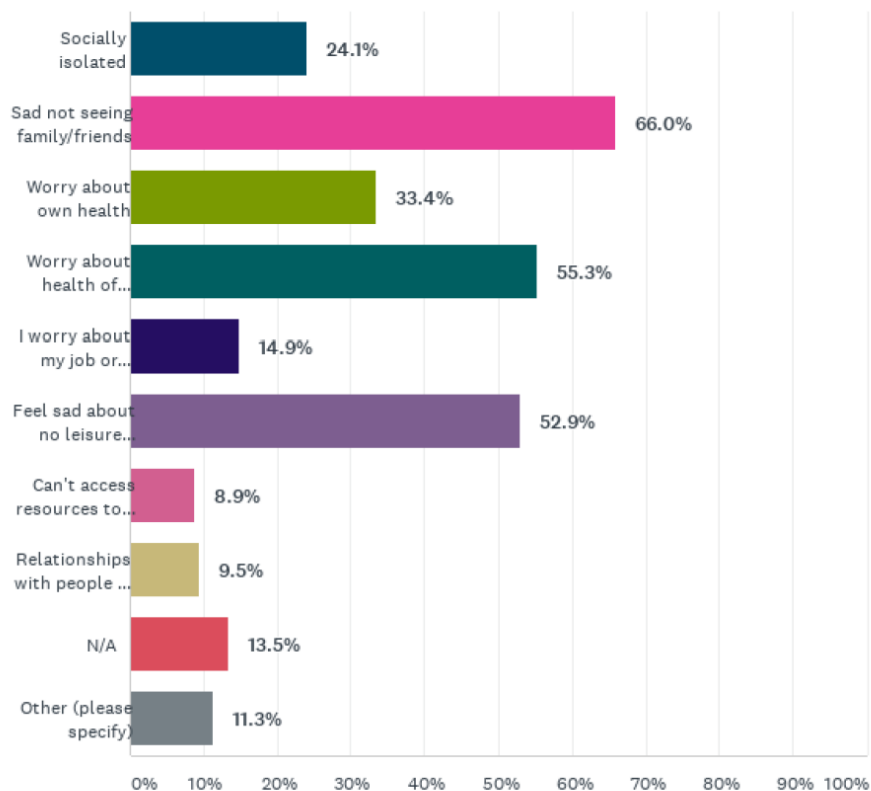
**5.1 Effects on Mental Health** – Current Concerns: A number of comments related to coronavirus, worries about getting the virus, the development of testing and a future vaccine. People also talked broadly about the huge impact the pandemic has had on their everyday life and concerns as to what the future will look like. People talked about social distancing issues and others 'breaking the rules'. Anxiety and worry and concern for their own mental health are a thread throughout this.

There are some positive responses with people feeling happy and no problems. Cooking, exercise, and gardening cited as positive activities that aid this.



### Mental Health and Wellbeing

Do you feel the pandemic had affected your mental health and wellbeing?



Answer	%	Responses
I feel socially isolated	21.1%	100
I feel sad about not seeing family/friends	66.1%	314
I worry about my own health	30.5%	145
I worry about the health of friends or family members	56.6%	269
I worry about my job or financial security	16.4%	78
I feel sad about not having access to leisure activities (e.g: going out, holidays)	48.0%	228
I can't access resources that help me manage my mental health (e.g: therapy, support groups)	8.0%	38
Relationships with people I share a house with (e.g: family members, flatmates) are tense or unpleasant	9.1%	43
N/A	12.8%	61
Other	11.6%	55

Comments from people included:

#### **Carer concerns:**

- Mental health changes daily due to how stressed they are feeling about caring roles.
- The cared for person being made to feel like they are being demanding by asking the carer to collect food, prescriptions, etc.
- Somebody staying with elderly relative during lockdown, worried about the support that will be available when they have to return home.

#### **Concerns about children:**

- Worry about children's education and social development.
- Increasing stress trying to home school whilst homeworking.
- Worried about childcare if parents/carers became ill.
- Separated parents refusing childcare due to one parent working with Covid patients.

#### **Employment:**

- Being made to go into work and feeling unsafe.
- Concern about mental adjustment to eventual return to work.
- Being redeployed at work with no consideration for mental health.
- Working 60+ hour weeks on the frontline without access to usual coping strategies such as the gym.

#### **Financial:**

- Zero-hour contract – no work.
- Isolating meaning reduced income, resulting in increased anxiety.
- Financial concerns.

#### **Government messaging:**

- Unclear messaging of Government. People interpreting different ways.

**Health concerns:**

- Concern over own health/what would happen if fell ill.
- Concerns about mental health effects for somebody who needs carers after a spell in hospital.
- Concerns of having contracted Covid-19 from work, suffering from PTSD.
- Not possible to go out for someone in a wheelchair.

**Other health conditions:**

- Cancer treatment, not being able to go out leads to sitting and thinking about condition.
- Unable to visit ill relatives in care homes.

**Social:**

- Loneliness, feel isolated.
- Not being able to see family, friends or partners.
- Limited access to outside activities. Leisure facilities and shops closed, i.e. gym, coffee shops, cinema.
- Strained relationships at home.
- No motivation to exercise.

**Social distancing:**

- Keeping to 2m rule, i.e. enough space to walk on pavement.
- Too early to ease lockdown, concerned by people's behaviours. Risks second wave.
- Volume of patients means social distancing can't be observed in working environment (health).
- Not being able to see friends or family whilst other people break the lockdown rules.
- "I am concerned how my life can be impacted by those not following government rules/guidelines."

## **6 Access to Information**

- 6.1 The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

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