



COVID-19 Mental Health Wellbeing Survey Results - June 2020

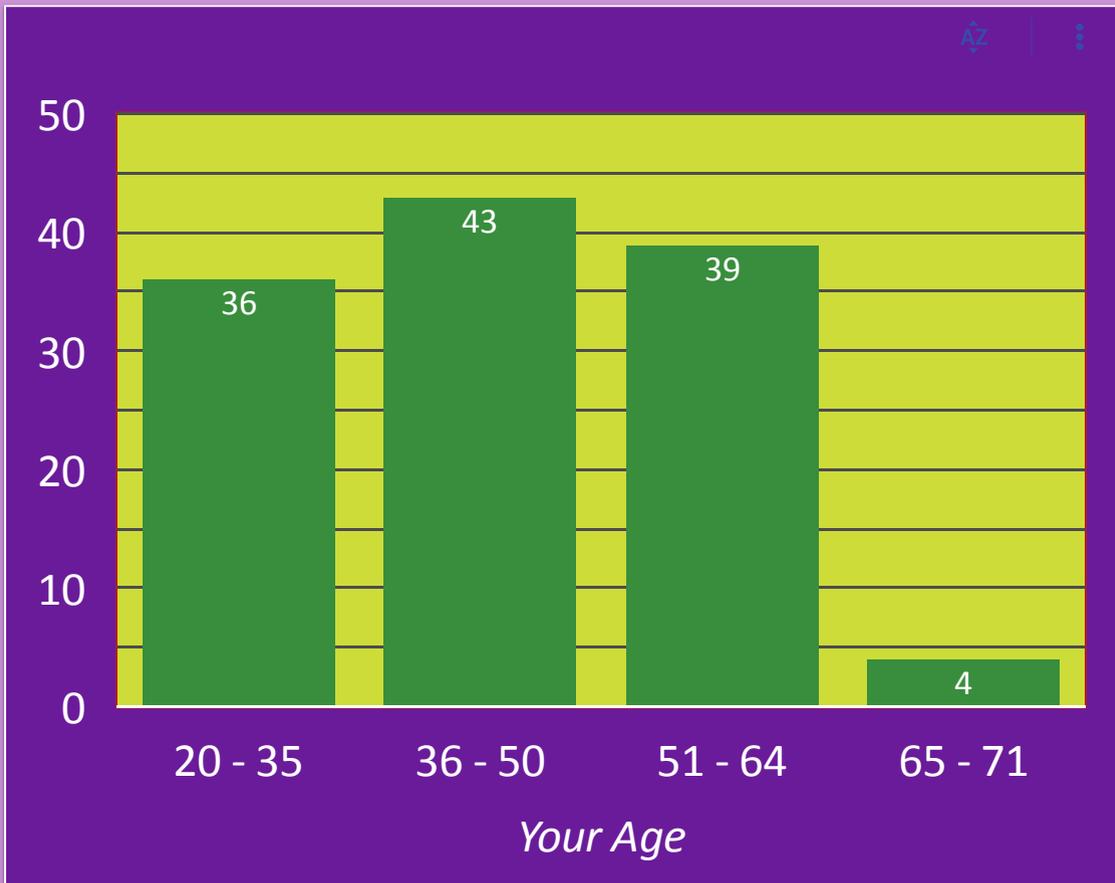
Coronavirus (COVID-19): How Is Your Mental Wellbeing?

We wanted to hear thoughts & experiences during these challenging times.
How are people in Plymouth feeling, coping & managing?

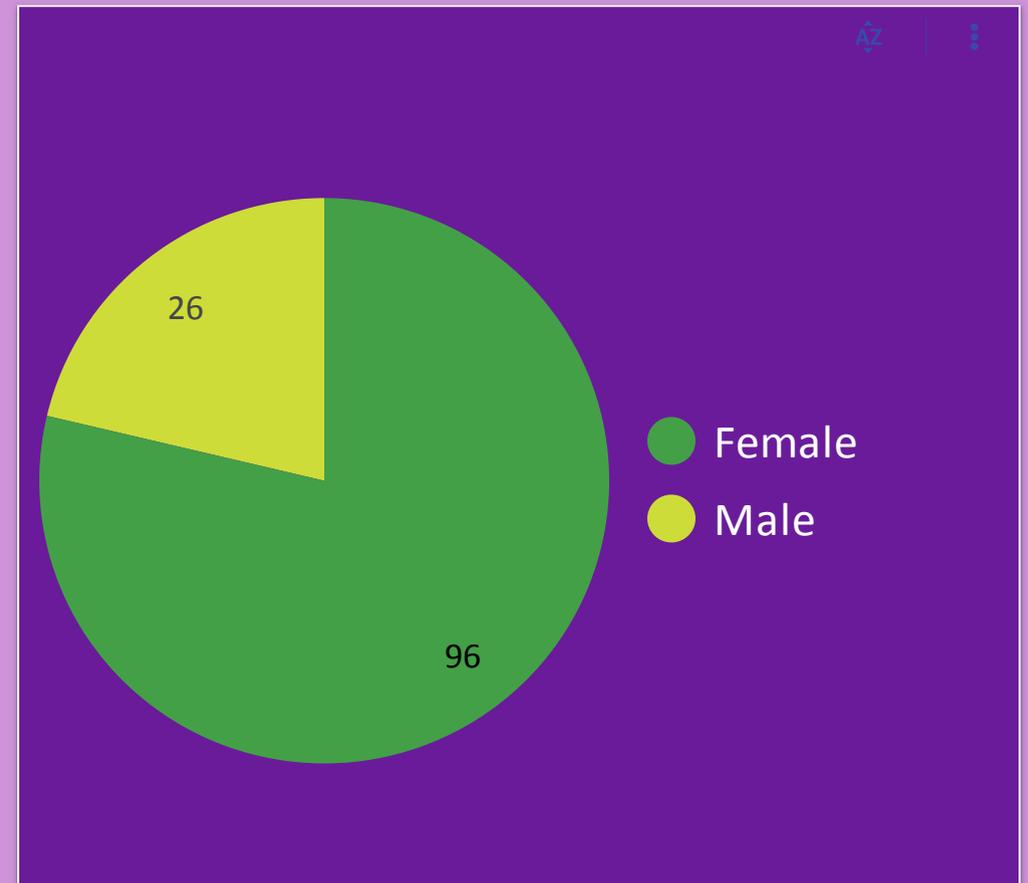
Questions were designed to be easy to answer & include a chance for those taking part to tell us what has been helpful & not so helpful during lockdown. We hope this has helped people feel connected, valued & part of the community.

We received a total of 122 responses from residents across Plymouth

Ages Ranged from 20 - 71



96 respondents identified as Female
26 respondents identified as Male

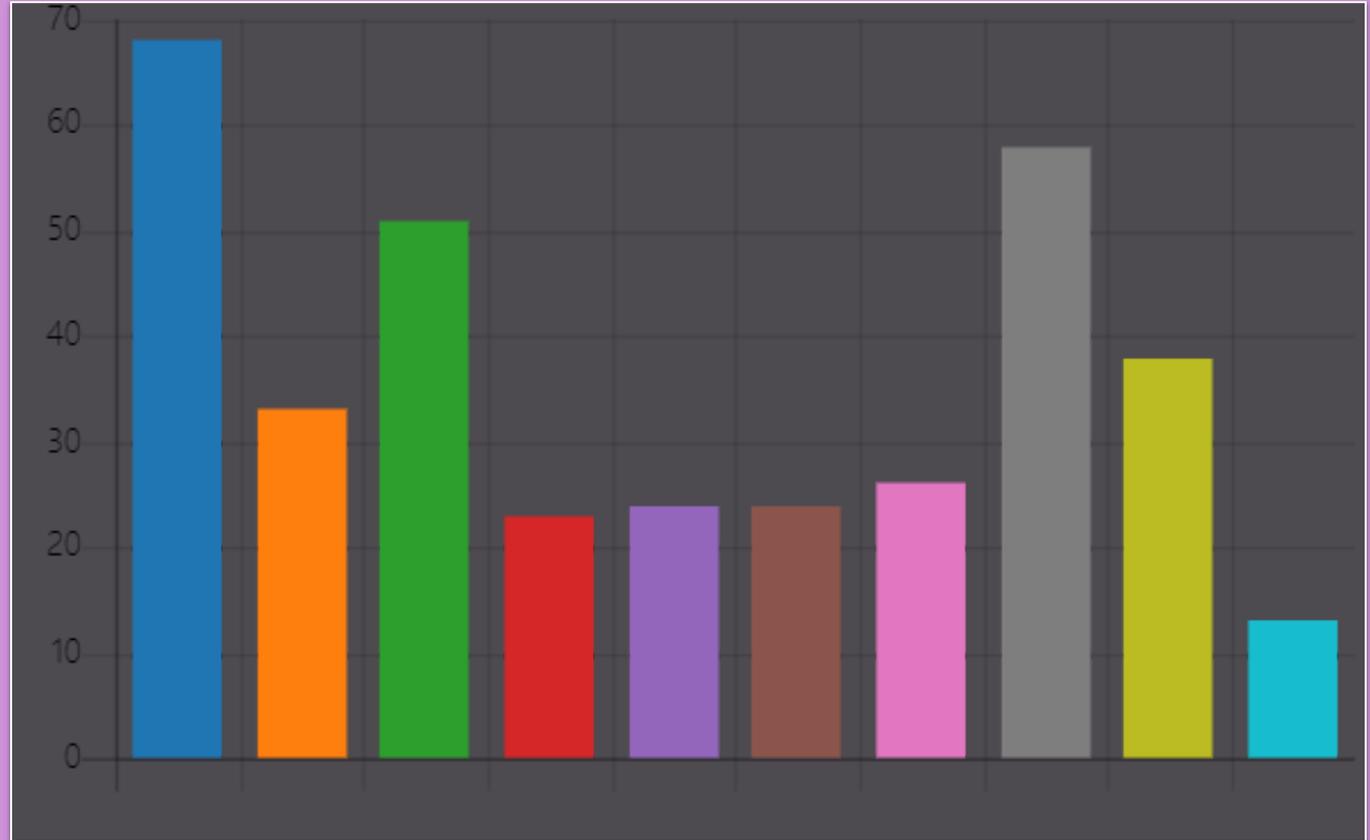


Mental Wellbeing - Your Mental Health

I Have No History of Mental Health Problems;	38
I Have Lived Experience of Mental Health Problems;	34
I Have Existing Mental Health Problems;	30
I Have Existing Mental Health Problems;I Have Lived Experience of Mental Health Problems;	8
I Am a Carer for Someone With Mental Health Problems;	6
I Have Lived Experience of Mental Health Problems;I Am a Carer for Someone With Mental Health Problems;	5
I Have Existing Mental Health Problems;I Am a Carer for Someone With Mental Health Problems;	1

We Asked - How Do You Feel?

 I'm Doing OK	68
 I'm Struggling	33
 I'm Anxious	51
 I'm Depressed	23
 I'm Hopeful	24
 I'm Lonely	24
 I'm Bored	26
 I'm Worried About Others	58
 I'm Worried About the Future	38
 Other	13



*In this question respondents could choose to apply multiple answers

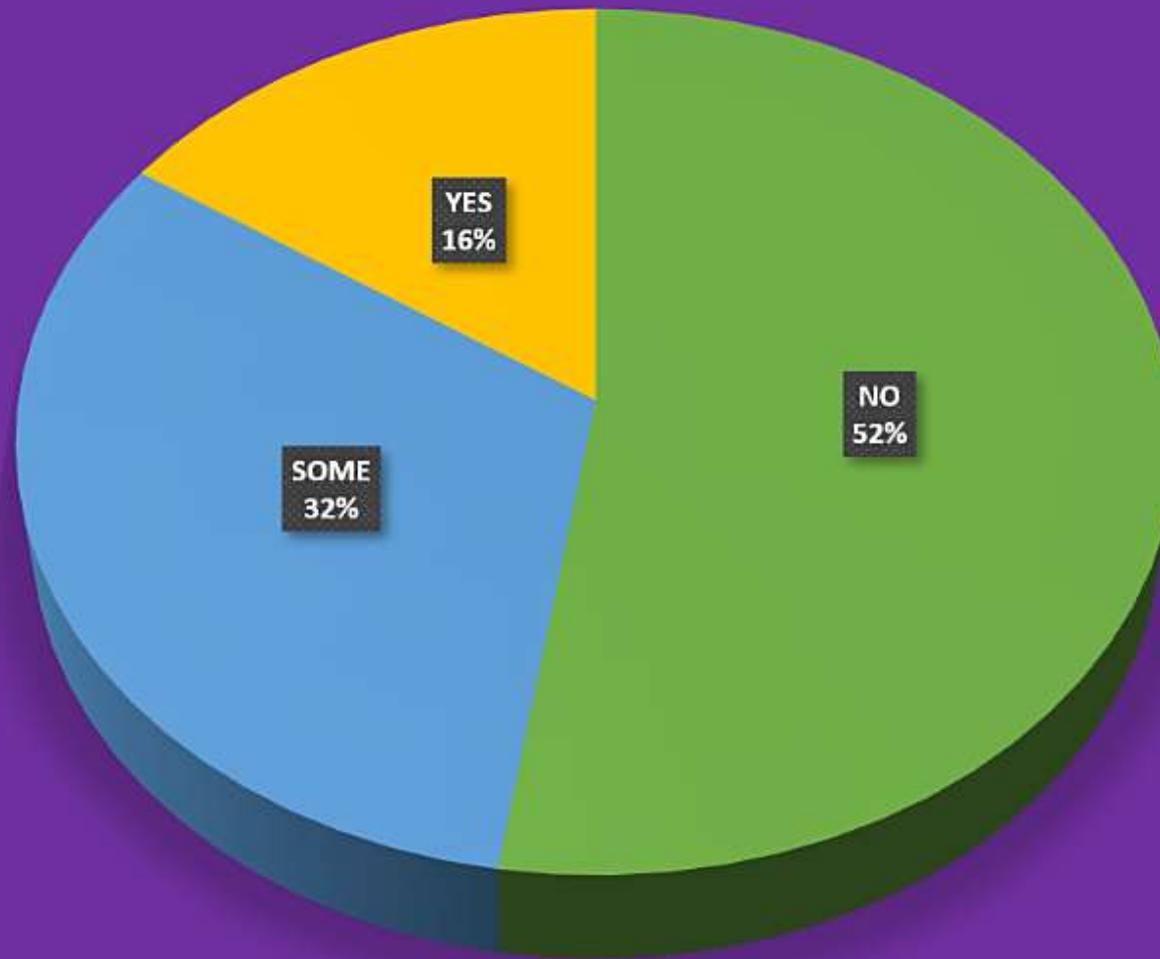
Some Examples of What You Said About Your Mental Health

- *Hard to find things to keep me occupied. Have good days and bad days.*
- *I'm doing fine as a live with 2 people but worried about others, friends and family, that live alone*
- *I've have no history of mental health issues but doesnt mean I dont struggle with anything. Like everyone i struggle a bit but that's normal to anyone.*
- *It's the not knowing that makes me anxious. There are no definite answers or information. The press seems to be providing lots of information but upon further investigation it appears to be false.*
- *I can struggle to see an end to the current measures, I am worried about my family and friends getting ill, and even dying, I am worried about the economic impact. I don't know what the world will look like in the future and I can't plan for this. I am less worried about myself getting ill.*
- *Have suffered from depression in the past. Now work as a support worker and I have never been happier!*
- *I work as a keyworker and I feel torn between doing my job and trying to protect my family. I have to do support my 89yr old father and travel an hour to drop off shopping. I worry but try not to show it. I could be a carrier but have had no symptoms I feel I am on auto pilot*
- *I feel fine as I can still work and find things to do but my partner is struggling on furlough and missing the end of uni and a job opportunity. It's hard to watch her depression and lack of motivation with no end in sight and nothing to look forward to*
- *I'm struggling, on the shielding list and looking after 3 children with SEN. I'm worried about all of us.*
- *I'm now starting to miss going out. Even now the lockdown has eased slightly. My husband and I won't go out just to be safe.*
- *I am doing ok and seem to keep myself busy. But I do worry about my family and hope they stay well.*

How easy has it been to follow government guidelines during lockdown?



Do You Feel There is Enough Support in Place?



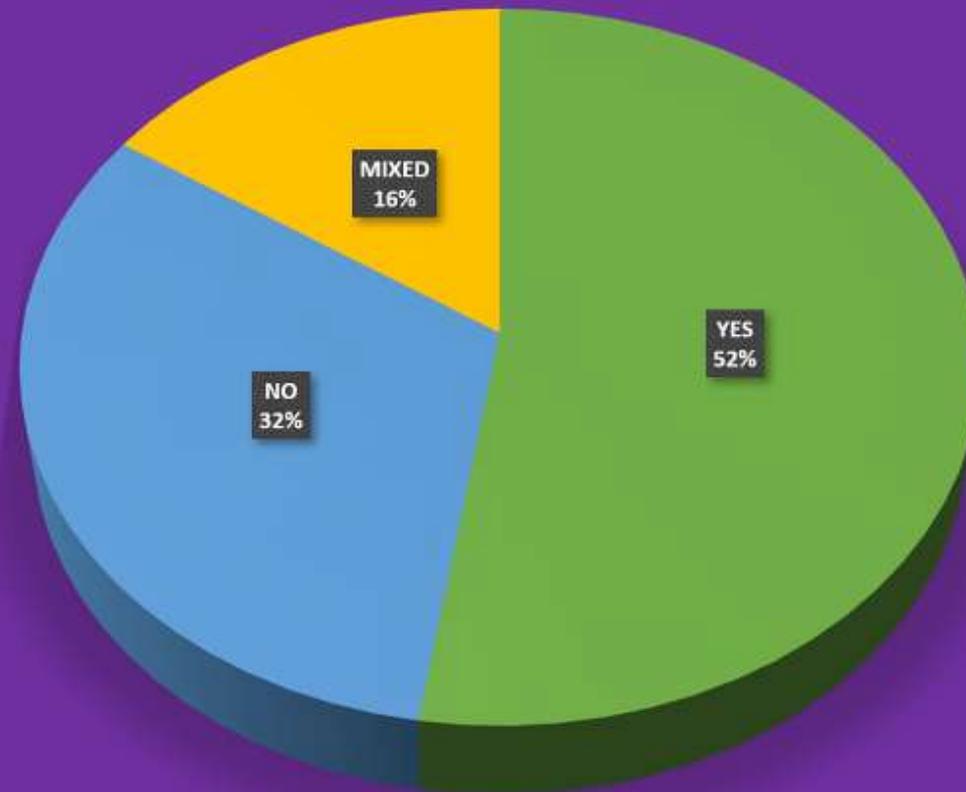
Some Examples of What You Told Us Has Been Helpful

- Social media support groups, organisations with helpful advice, Shout texting service and Marbles Lost and Found website.
- Maintaining contact by phone and social media with my friends and loved ones.
- Having work to do, keeping myself active and trying to set an example for others. Trying to eat well and taking things one day or one week at a time.
- Having Head Space on the phone.
- Being able to work from home for 3 days per week allowing me to be with my children.
- Seeing people pull together. Hearing about positive stories. Some information produced in guides.
- Those most useful are local community based organisations, often unfunded, sometimes voluntary.
- Calls from support worker. Continued psychotherapy sessions on Zoom.
- Your questionnaire. Community spirit and support.
- Carrying on working in the mental health team I work for knowing they get the struggles and we get each other through.
- Friends family work colleagues staying in touch. Limiting my time watching the news.
- Services that were upfront from the beginning about changes and kept us informed, we didn't expect everything to stay the same but needed the communication to ease anxiety.
- My employer has been very understanding and has provided me with a lot of support.
- Keeping busy and taking up hobbies and walking in the woods
- Developing a work like routine. Regular exercise & a good diet.

Some Examples of What You Told Us That Has NOT Been Helpful

- Too much media! I hate all the speculation.
- Lack of options for those individuals without access to internet from home.
- Occasionally feeling slightly overloaded by receiving emails with links on what & what not to do , despite them being sent to help.
- Overthinking late at night and bottling up my worries.
- The uncertainty of the future, not knowing when it will end
- Governmental advice, often confusing and contradictory; media both TV and online.
- Not being able to see my family & worried about a second spike. Pharmacy access & waiting times.
- People still not following the rules. Guidelines for being outdoors and exercising have not been at all clear.
- Panic buying and scaremongering - blaming and shaming - people putting their opinions across when it is not fact, it is just perception.
- Busy phones, limited hours, shops & opticians shut, doctors no access to appts. Shops letting too many customers in at one time.
- Isolation. Lack of access to normal coping mechanisms that involve going out of the house.
- Speaking over the phone to a GP i'd never met meant that I couldn't open up to them fully. It also felt like I was just another call to them.
- No access to counselling support (I'm in a grey area so not getting the support I needed before let alone now)
- Partner getting no help (yet) as he's self-employed so I'm having to pay all rent & bills with only 80% of my wages
- Community mental health are struggling to accommodate my needs as they are uncertain of how they are meant to be operating during these times.

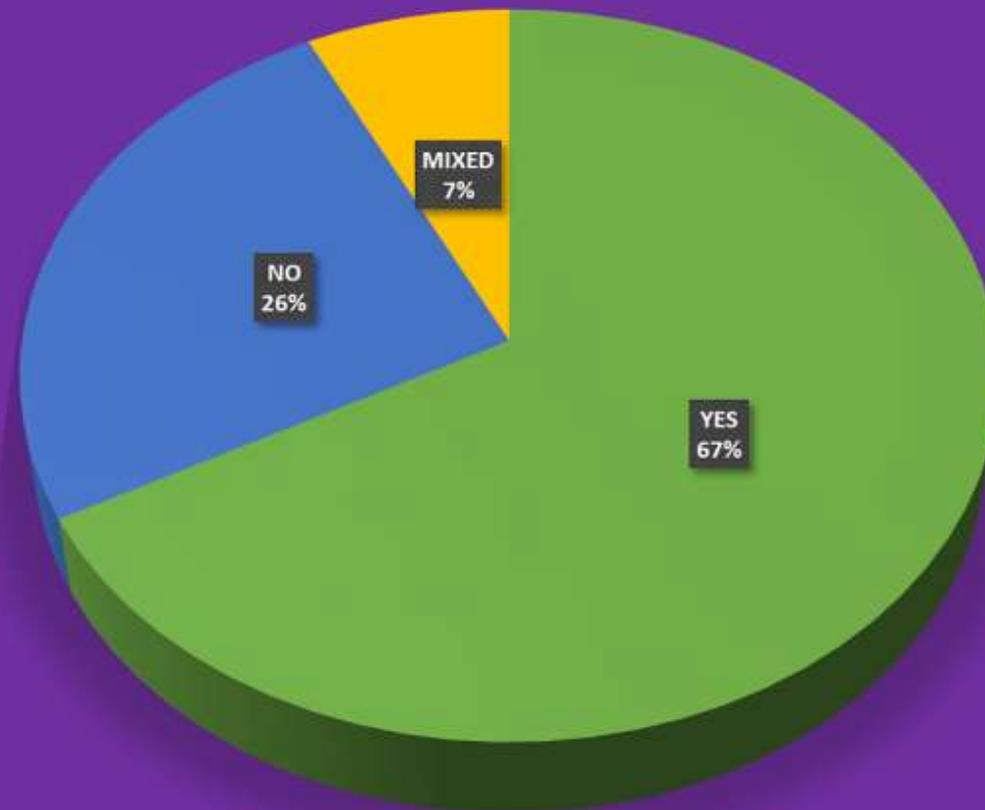
I've Been Sleeping Well?



Mixed Responses Included:

- Some very strange dreams
- Sleep pattern has changed but some of this could be down to change of season and weather.
- Wake up early / Broken sleep
- I take sleeping medication to assist with this.
- My sleeping routine has been messed up
- First 2 weeks were terrible for sleep bit more recently sleep has returned to normal

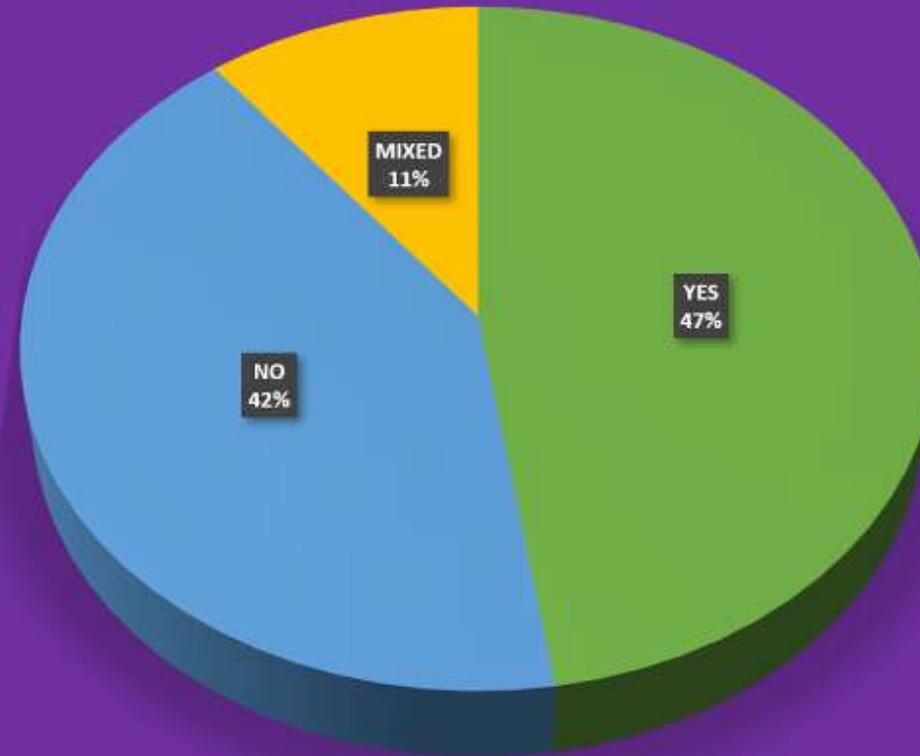
I've Been Eating Well?



Mixed responses Included:

- I'm probably doing some comfort eating which I shouldn't.
- As I wake up late, I tend to skip breakfast but still have lunch and dinner and keep drinking plenty of water.
- Eating has been very difficult for me due to my mental health issues combined with the lockdown.
- I have been eating ok, I've purchased health supplements that I feel are working and give me the vitamins I need.
- Snacking too much

I've Been Getting Enough Exercise?



Mixed Responses Included:

- Yes, but not to the amount I'm used to or what I would like.
- I am exercising daily but I would normally be exercising for at least 2 hours daily due to mental health.
- Not every day, I do need to do this.
- I walk the dog for about half an hour if I have the motivation.
- Using exercise to manage anxiety.
- Have difficulty walking so not easy to walk!
- Walking daily and trying to workout at home so mostly

We Asked - Do You Have Any Resources or Tips That May Help Others?

- I'm taking each day as it comes. There are no deadlines. I have rebuilt my day around a nice little schedule
- Enjoy the weather while it lasts and the new spring growth of flowers and plants. Make use of the garden if you have one. Try new recipes and new interests.
- I've heard this time being referred to as 'the big pause'. Maybe this is a good chance for you to reach for your goals, or maybe it's a good time to do nothing at all.
- Take rest days and accept that bad days will come, but they won't last forever.
- If you're not keen on exercise, do some stretching. Spending 20 minutes stretching a day can just help stimulate your muscles and organs.
- Going for a "power walk" has helped to reduce the "sluggish" feeling. Writing a "to do" list - it's great seeing items being crossed off.
- Don't listen to all you hear in the press. Reach out to others when you're struggling
- YouTube workouts which are free to all.
- Find a new cheap hobby, listen to new music. Be mindful that your neighbours are home too.
- Keep talking. Reach out to others when you're struggling
- Try to be good to yourself and treat yourself each day in some small way, do something for you
- Avoid too long on social media and instead focus on searching local organisations that are offering support and help.
- To be mindful of others and offer help to vulnerable people where you are able
- I've found Skillshare and sites like that to learn new things have really helped
- Do not be afraid to show vulnerability - being vulnerable shows courage - have boundaries - ask yourself 'what would I be doing if I wasn't afraid' - is the fear you feel real.

Any Other Comments? - Acts of Kindness, Medication, Access to Professional Support or Personal Reflection.

- The system is overstretched and appointments with CMHT are few, with not much time when seeing the psychiatrist, you feel like you are there for a medication review only. Not much support for those with chronic disorders once you have exhausted NHS
- It has not been an easy process to get repeat prescriptions. The advise to visit the chemist for minor problems is not very helpful.
- I have been able to speak to my GP about my sleep issues over e-consult, they got back to me the next day and it was helpful.
- Stay connected. Now more than ever, people's mental health will be affected and the results will continue after this is all done due to change in structure and lifestyle.
- I believe employers should offer flexible hours there's more domestic violence and alcohol consumption, because people need ways to switch off from work.
- Whilst being wary of over exposure to the news there are some lovely stories on the news of how people are helping out either as individuals, in virtual groups & big businesses to help out.
- My mental health worker has been working incredibly hard to at least keep me in the loop through the lockdown and has ensured I do not feel forgotten.
- Despite being incredibly busy, the 111 line has constantly been kind and helpful throughout the lockdown in regards to both physical and mental illness concerns.
- Plymouth Options - an online resource wasn't going to help. I do not expect the counselling now but to then have to refer again isn't very helpful.
- I guess I'm lucky, I am using this time to 'sort my life out', make those phone calls that have been put off. Having a job helps immensely, I count myself lucky.
- My neighbour and I ask each other if we need anything else through the week as we go different days to each other to avoid going ourselves again.
- Wish there was more help. Feel let down by work and the system.

Summary:

It is clear that the Lockdown has had a massive impact on all parts of our lives. Faced with lots of uncertainty, fear & worries about what the future may hold, there have been some really inspiring examples of community spirit & people coming together to help & support each other.

Responses suggest that we do benefit from some routine, structure & purpose in life and that when those things are disrupted we can access a resilience that might not have been apparent before. Worrying about the welfare of others was highlighted which has led to higher anxiety for some as well as a decline in mental wellbeing from some people with no previous history of poor mental health.

The blanket & sometimes misleading coverage by some media & digital networks were noted to be particularly negative and for the majority it was an information overload which could have been more balanced. Telephone & video support replaced 'Face to Face' appointments in the main & whilst this is acceptable for some we need to remember that this is not suitable nor preferred by many others for their support needs.

We may also see a rise anxiety levels and poor mental health the longer the Lockdown continues but we are hopeful for the future.

Thank you to everybody who took the time to participate in this questionnaire during these particularly challenging times

Heads Count & our network of members continue to pursue our aim to help shape & improve mental health services with a collective voice. If you would like to share your views, ideas and experiences and help represent these views to service commissioners and providers, to improve mental health services for the future, please do get in touch:

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