



# Life Under Lockdown During Covid 19

Analysis of an online survey

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**Zoë Millington & Mary Meilton**  
**User Engagement Team**

Wiltshire Centre for Independent Living  
11 Couch Lane Devizes Wiltshire SN10 1EB  
0300 1233 442 [www.wiltshirecil.org.uk](http://www.wiltshirecil.org.uk) [info@wiltshirecil.org.uk](mailto:info@wiltshirecil.org.uk)  
Charity no. 1120611 Company no. 5480761

# Life Under Lockdown

## Key Messages

**There are people in our community whose lives are being lived in a continuous state of lockdown due to disabilities or health issues.**

**People being active members of their community and connecting with others has been the key thing that has helped during the lockdown.**

**Access to technology and social media is vital and has helped many people to keep in touch and feel connected. It has also helped community groups to develop and grow and for communities to support people.**

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## Introduction

The United Kingdom, as well as the rest of the world is experiencing the effects of the COVID-19 Virus. To slow and stop the spread of the Virus the government has introduced measures that limit the free movement of people.

The governments guidance stipulates that 'when we reduce our day-to-day contact with other people, we will reduce the spread of the infection'. Initially this included three new rules that came into effect on Monday 23 March.

1. Requiring people to stay at home, except for very limited purposes.
2. Closing certain businesses and venues.
3. Stopping all gatherings of more than two people in public.

(these rules have been amended since our survey closed)

The general term describing these circumstances is 'Lockdown', a term which has rapidly become part of everyday language and commonplace in the media.

Living in this unprecedented way had an immediate and huge impact on our community. Wiltshire CIL have therefore sought to gather people's experiences of what life is like during lockdown.

## Methodology

Due to the social distancing measures that are currently in place and being practiced and observed by Wiltshire CIL and those that we work with it was not possible to utilise our usual methods of engagement for this piece of research.

Ordinarily we would have a face to face emphasis on any engagement that we carry out in order to be able to understand people's views, promote their involvement and to ensure that they have the opportunity to have their voice heard. Our engagement methods would usually include 1-1 meetings, focus groups, knowledge cafes and workshops. We will go to people to engage with them, rather than them coming to us.

We have, like many other organisations, had to adapt how we work to the circumstances that we are in.

To gather people's experience of life under lockdown we used Google forms and posted links to the survey out on social media. Facebook, Twitter and Instagram were used in addition to the Wiltshire CIL website.

We asked nine questions focussing on four themes;

- Personal experience of what has worked and what has not
- Connection to community
- Changes in the community
- Feelings about life now and post COVID-19

We also included an additional question for people to include any other thoughts or experiences.

The questions were all open and there was no restriction to how long responses could be. We wanted to enable people to respond in depth if they wished.

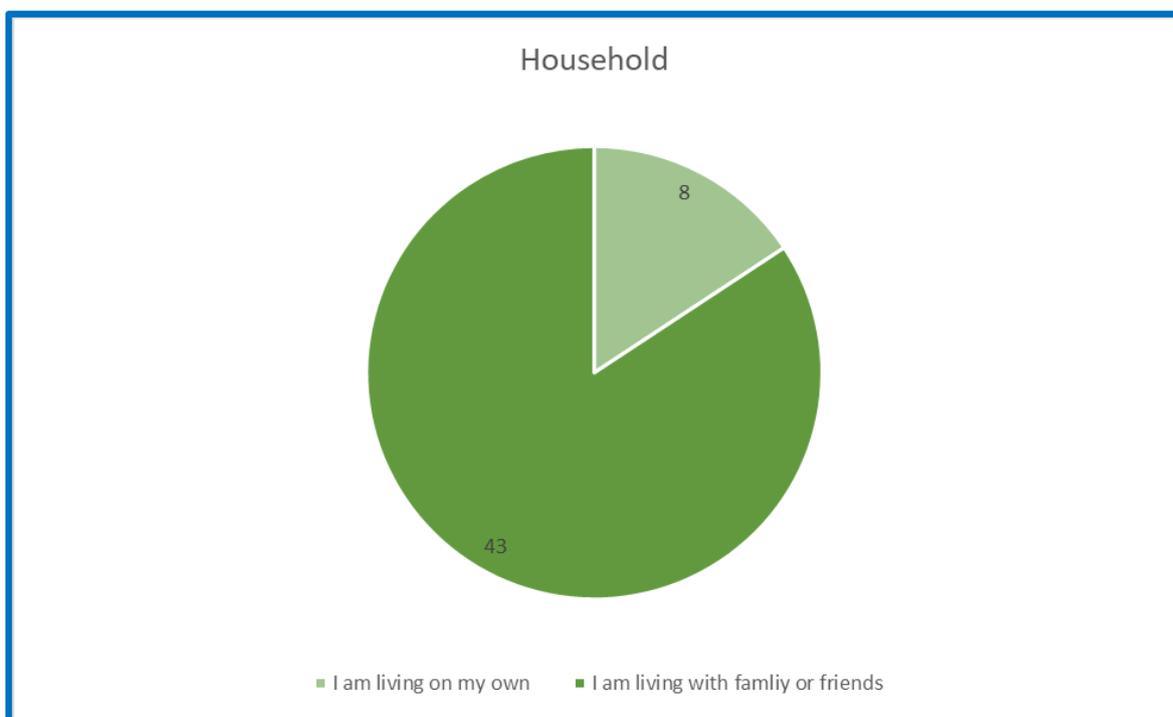
The survey was designed to be completed in about 10 minutes. However, the responses indicated that some people spent a considerable time, giving in-depth replies.

## Experiences of Covid 19 Report

This report, published in June 2020 researched experiences of shopping arrangements, care and mental wellbeing and can be found at <https://www.wiltshirecil.org.uk/my-life-my-experience/>

### Who we engaged with

51 responses were received to the survey. We asked if people were living on their own or with family or friends.





One respondent expressed that lockdown has had a levelling effect.

“I feel more visible as everyone lives my locked-in life”

For some the focus was very much on being able to work effectively and safely when it cannot be business as normal.

“These (meal collections for homeless at wharf) provide opportunities to follow up on various other needs, not least the need to find somewhere to live (however temporary).”

Being able to help others in the community was also important, with people talking about “Delivering prescriptions” and helping with shopping “We have been able to help people to get things from the shops”

## Is there anything that has been a problem for you?

Issues that have been a problem for people fell into a range of areas from everyday practical challenges about getting groceries to problems families were having in managing work and childcare.



**Practical** problems people reported were mostly related to getting online shopping slots or certain food items.

“Could only secure 1 online delivery slot in 9 weeks”

“Couldn't get a delivery and was refused entry to shop as had children with me”

One respondent talked about the practicalities of continuing to provide an important service during Covid 19.

“Now, as most are housed we are opening our outdoor takeaway to other homeless people”

The **Emotional** impact of life under lockdown was also a common theme that impacted in different ways. “mental issues with not being able to go outside and do normal life things”

“boredom and being without purpose”

“anxiety”





**Safety** of individuals and those close to them was an issue for some.

“not knowing how to keep carers safe”

“people not following the rules when I am out shopping”

“worried about husband going to work as there is a confirmed case on his shift”

The impact of lockdown on **families** was significant with people reporting difficulties balancing work and childcare and keeping their teenage children motivated. People also reported that their children’s behaviour had become challenging.

“4 year old having serious behavioural problems”

The impact on families was not restricted to dependent children.

“although my sons are adults I still worry for them”



Missing out on social **Connections** was a common theme, understandably people told us they miss friends, family, and social activities. “constantly feeling sad I can’t see my mum”

“Very isolated missing friends company”

“Groups are not operating - NAS, Walking group”

People recognised the importance that social media can play in keeping people connected. “it’s harder to reach people who don’t have internet or use Whats App”

**Health** issues were a problem for some people “We had to isolate for 14 days. Getting help from GP was very difficult”



Some challenges were specific to certain individuals, e.g.

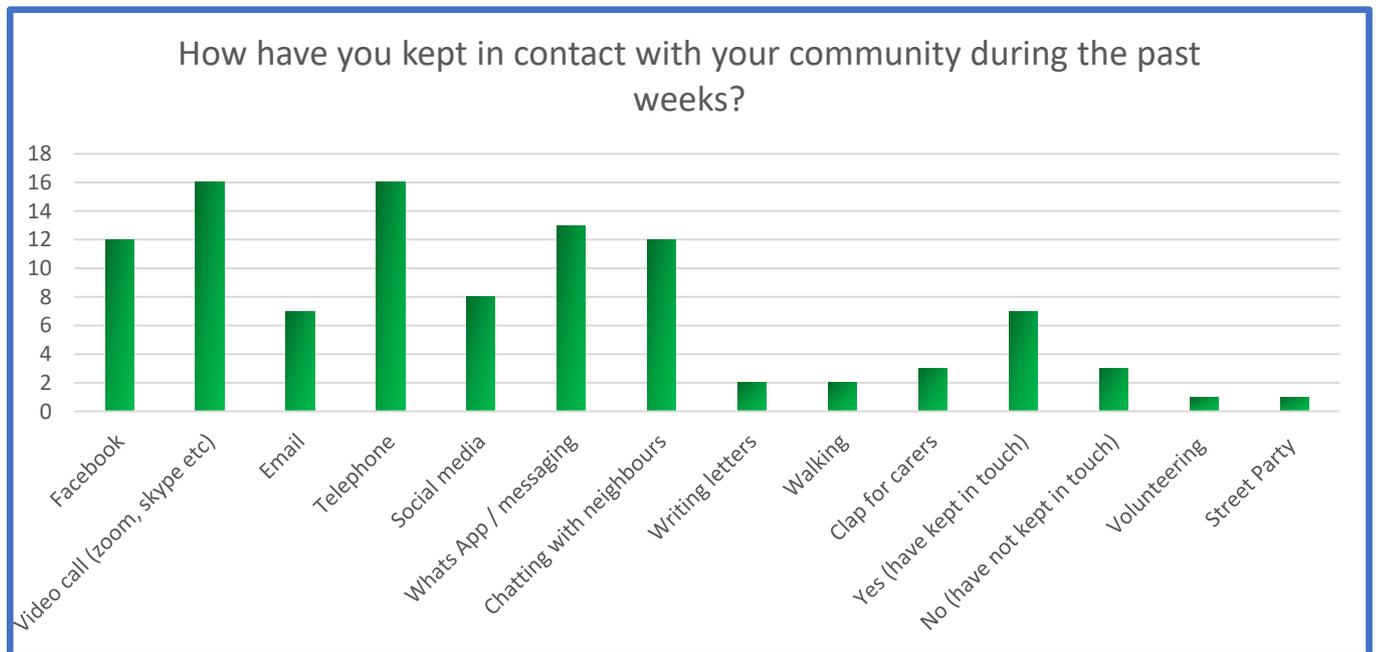
**Homeless people**

“‘meetings’ at the wharf have not been conducive to one to one conversations”



People responded that they have had no problems during the lockdown

## How have you kept in contact with your community during the past weeks?



Clearly the responses show how important technology is for people in maintaining contact with their community. Given that this research was carried out online this would be expected. It does, however, raise the question of how people without access to technology can be connected during a lockdown and the impact this might have on their wellbeing.

Many people use a variety of ways of keeping in contact and for different reasons.

“work wise through zoom, family by WhatsApp”

“Most of the groups I am involved with have used electronics to enable us to stay connected with writing, exercise and singing”

“Over the wall chats with our neighbour”

“for family further afield we have set up weekly bingo games and a weekly quiz on skype so we can see each other and interact with each other”

“I’ve been keeping in touch with my online community”

Existing online groups have also grown during the lockdown and new groups have been set up

“we already had a community group in place...mid March we created another wider group for everyone in the street and delivered leaflets with a couple of phone numbers”

“We have also set up a Facebook group to help communication”

Three people responded that they have not kept in contact with their community, one that their community contact is “via work only” and one that they have had minimal contact. “knocked on neighbours’ door for a brief chat but have had no contact with wider community”

For those who used technology to keep in contact it was not without challenges.

“keeping younger children in touch with each other is much harder. One of my children finds video calls with friends upsetting”

## Do you think your community has changed? Please tell us how



Most people felt that their community has been changed by COVID-19. Only 8% of people felt that their community had not changed. A small percentage of people (7%) said they did not know due to being in isolation.

“I don’t know because I have been locked in my house for the past two months”.

60% of people thought that their community had changed for the better whereas 24% of people thought it had changed for the worse.

The most prominent theme of positive changes in the community is friendship and communication with neighbours. People mentioned that they are starting to talk to each other, and for some this is the first time they have got to know the community they live in.

“Yes, people are talking to each other more”

“Everyone acknowledges each other nowadays whereas before they ignored you.”

“We have got to know each other much better. I’ve lived here for 20 years and this is the first time I have spoken to any of my neighbours.”

Some responses given referred to supporting and helping each other. Some mentioned the volunteer groups and networks that have been set up in response to the pandemic, whereas others talked more about informal support between neighbours.

“The creation of Devizes Covid19 (Support Group) is a matter of some pride”,

“Village has set up a network of volunteers to pick up medication and do shopping for the elderly”.

“We try to be extra vigilant towards people we know may be struggling”

Other positive responses given talked about an increased “sense of community”. People were noted to be more “tolerant and respectful” of each other. Several people said that “more people are walking and cycling” and subsequently the “roads are much quieter”. One response referred to the online community as being “more visible as people have more time and are stuck at home.”

Many of the responses from people who thought their community had changed for worse, talked about not being able to see and meet friends and family.

“I’m not able to check in on friends”

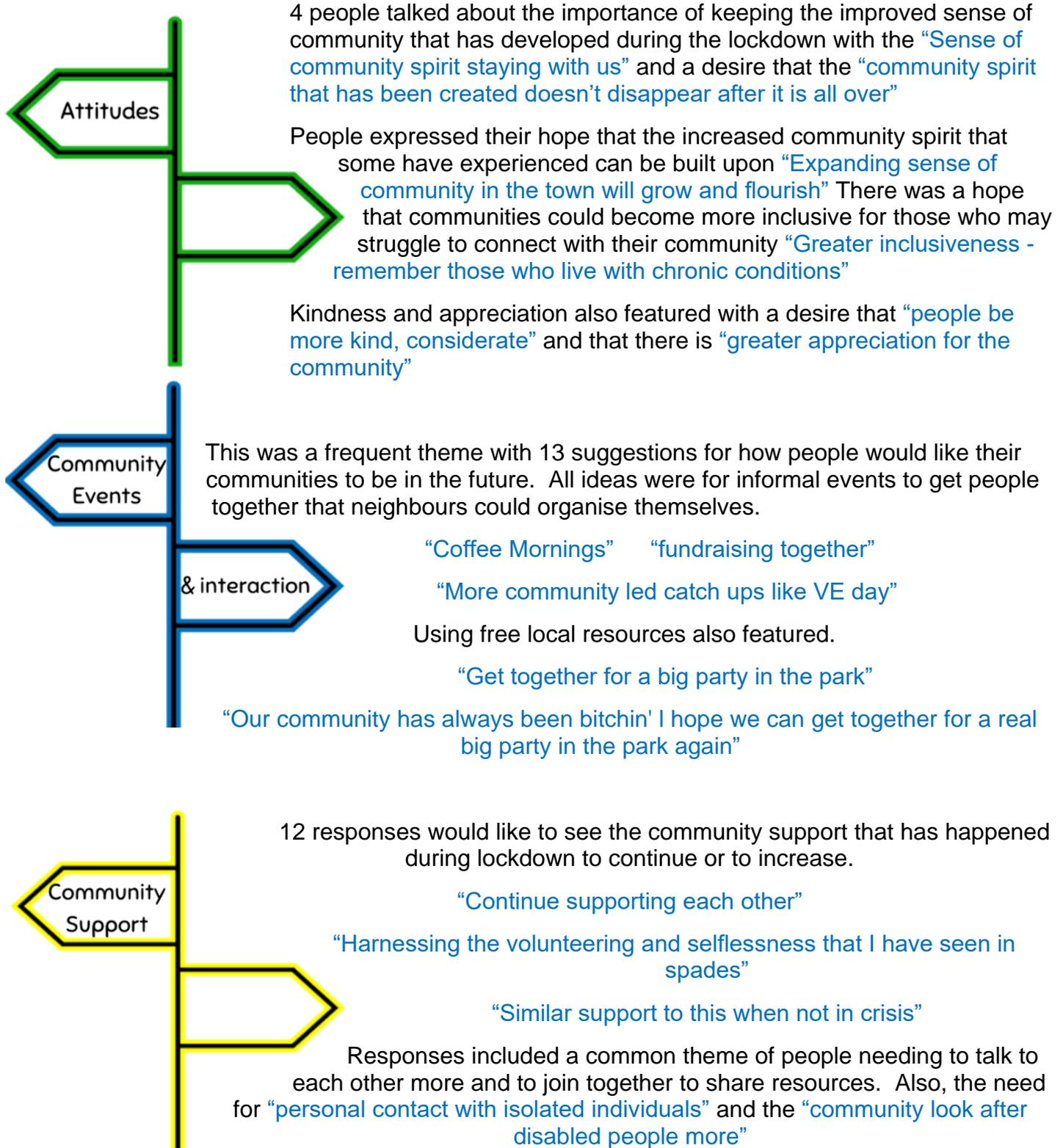
“Completely cut off as no-one can visit”

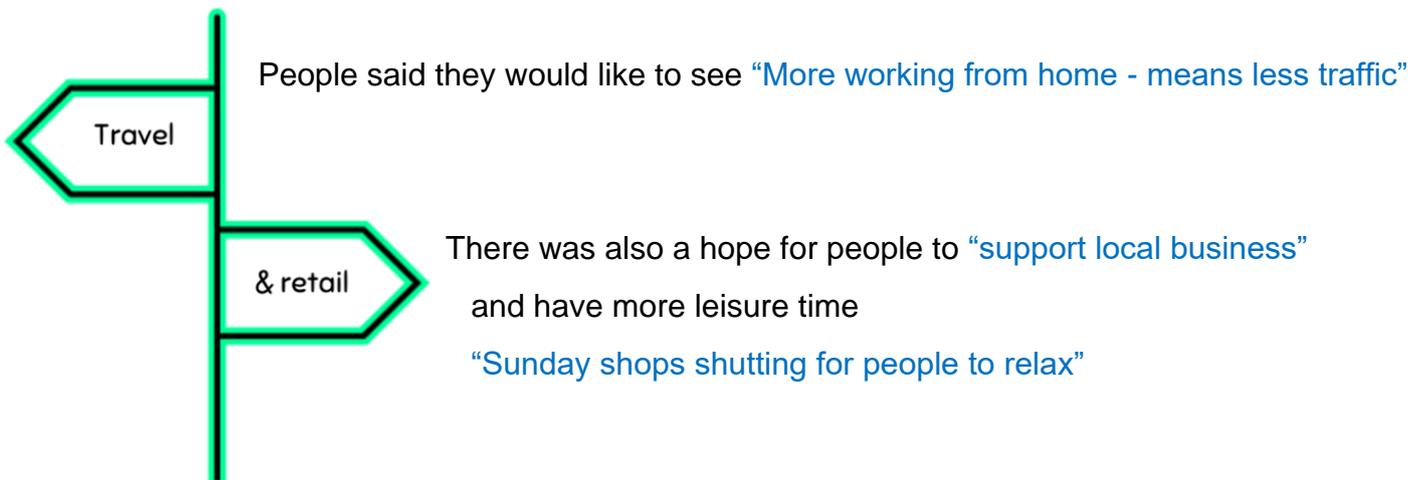
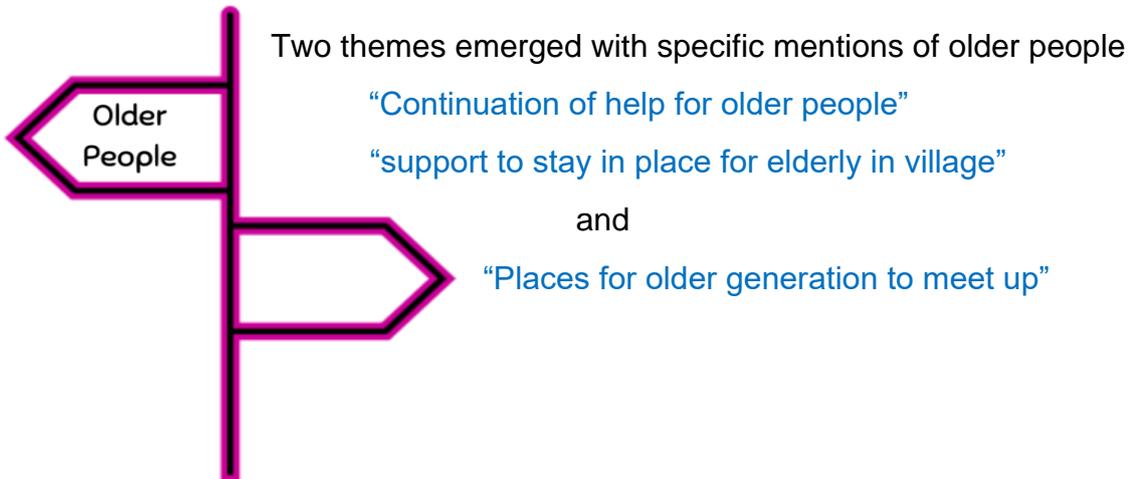
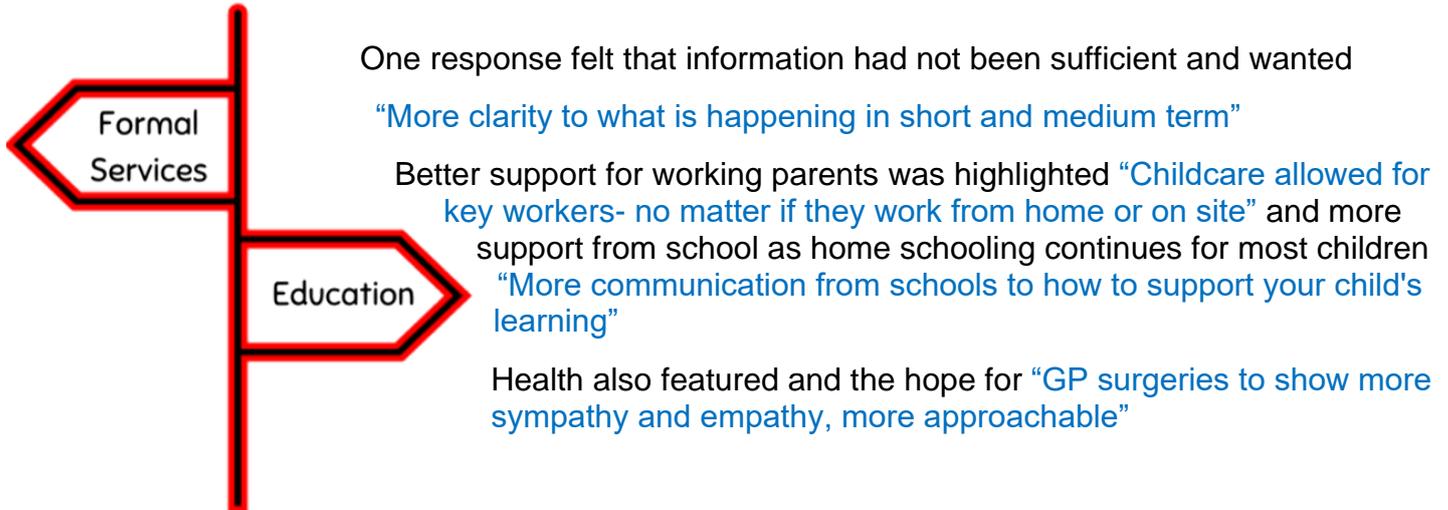
“Can’t see friends”

Some responses noted that the people in their community were “quite selfish”, “have shut themselves away” and “very tetchy”.

## What would you like to see in the future for your community?

Attitudes was the most common theme, with 14 people saying they would like to see a change of attitudes within their community.





6

people said they did not want any change to their community

## How do you feel about life during COVID-19?



\*text size denotes how frequently the word was used

There was mixed response as to how people felt about lockdown, but most answers (55%) were negative. 30% of responses had a positive opinion of lockdown and 15% of responses were neutral.

Many of the positive responses talked about having more time to spend with family. Some mentioned the environmental benefits of being in Lockdown, whereas others shared that they were enjoying a calmer, simpler lifestyle.

“Bonus family time”

“It’s a lot simpler, which we are thankful for, great time to reflect on life and find new hobbies”

“Quite enjoying it – more time to walk, have discovered new paths I didn’t know existed. It’s so quiet and peaceful, can really hear the birds singing.”

The negative responses painted quite a different picture of lockdown. The most common responses to this question were “difficult” and “frustrating”. Some people talked about their frustrations over the restrictions. Others shared the anxieties and fears they had about lockdown and the virus.

“I have struggled immensely trying to stay calm and rationalise my fears”

“Frustrated with not going out”

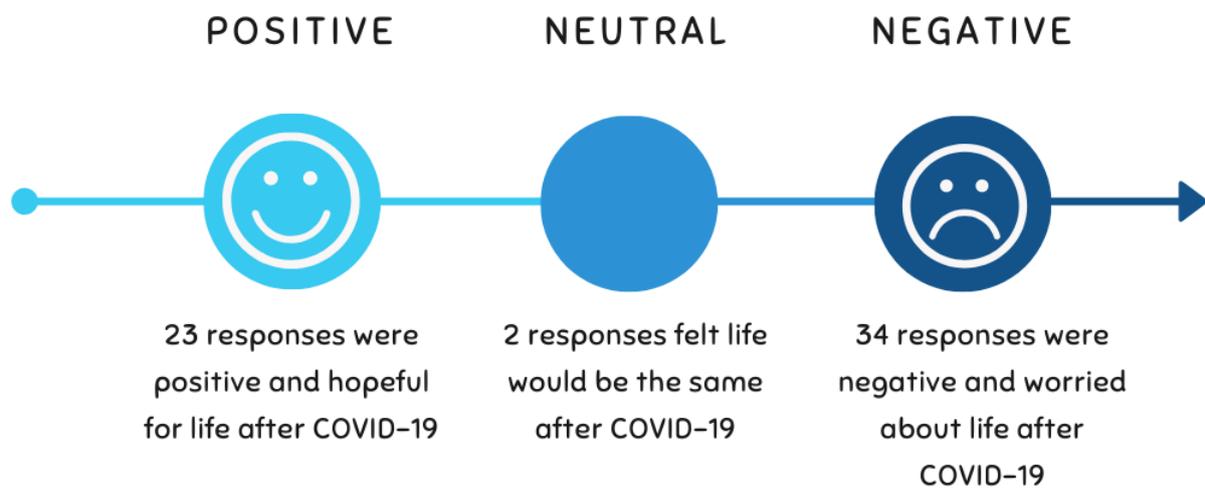
For some people, the period of lockdown has been very distressing and is something they feel will affect them for a long time to come.

“It’s absolutely awful, stressful and very challenging and is having a great effect on mine and my children’s wellbeing”

“All I want is to never have to hear about these horrendous months again”

A small number of people reflected that the lockdown period was “not hugely different” to normal life.

## How do you feel about life after COVID-19?



There was a similarly mixed response as to how people felt about life after COVID-19. 58% of the answers given were negative, 39% were positive and 3% were neutral.

The most popular positive word in response to this question was “hope”. People are particularly hopeful that some of newly found community spirit will continue with some people “excited to see if it has changed communities for the better.”

Other responses mentioned being excited to see friends and family again. Some also expressed that COVID-19 had given them a “better sense of the important things in life” and they intended to change their lifestyle after lockdown.

“I hope that people will be kinder to each other”

“I want to really change the way I do things”

“Will be nice to go to a restaurant again, and to visit my family”

The negative responses showed that people have two main concerns about life after lockdown.

Many people recognised that it will be a very long time before we can say COVID-19 is over. Some said that they found it difficult to imagine life after lockdown, with others remarking that only when a vaccine is found will we be able to move on from COVID-19.

“I don’t know until we get to it all ending, IF it all ends”

“We have to fight this and learn to live with this virus until there is a vaccine”

“Can’t imagine life after”

The second main concern was around people’s mental health and emotional wellbeing. Many responses shared that they were “anxious”, “unsure” and “nervous” about what life will look like after lockdown. Some believed that this experience could have a long-term negative impact on their mental health.

“I am scared, and I don’t know if I will go back to my flat”

“Anxious but anything is better than living like this”

A smaller number of responses shared their concerns on the impact COVID-19 will have on the economy and on their employment.

“There will be serious economic consequences”

## Is there anything else you'd like to tell us?

This question gave a range of responses touching on many different aspects of life during and post lockdown. Some people expressed their appreciation of how the community has responded.

“To thank all local shops that have helped with special shopping times for the elderly and NHS etc”

“I’m very proud of, but not in the least surprised by the way our local community and our town has responded to this crisis.”



There was some frustration at being under lockdown and concern about longer-term impact it might have on peoples capability and mental wellbeing.

“While I appreciate that being (just) over 70 renders me more susceptible, frankly I would rather take slight risks, and regain a social life, than live longer in aspic, with no one to talk to, cook for, etc. If I died it would not be catastrophic for anyone, but this pointless life is not something I want to put up with for a very long time, by the end of which I may no longer be as capable and productive as I can be now.”



“I’m also worried about the long-term effects this will have on peoples mental health and whether there are the services to support them”

Some responded on how we might move towards normality and that people are fearful of this change.



“The next few weeks are going to be v tough as we try and reopen our community and get back to some sort of normality.”

“I think there is a fear of moving to a new normal and what that might mean and the impact it will have on people and the spread of the virus”

The importance of people, connection and helping as a community ran throughout the survey and was again highlighted in some responses.

“We need to be more active and connected at a local level to help services and community.”

“I have realised that people are more important than anything else”



## Conclusion

The lockdown caused by COVID-19 has been a challenging time for most people. In particular, the restrictions on movement has negatively impacted upon many people's mental wellbeing. During this time, communities have been important. Some people have discovered new communities, such as engaging with their neighbours for the first time. Whilst most people are looking forward to lockdown being over, there are many lessons and attitudes that we should take from the past few months.

This period of lockdown has given the general population a taste of what it can be like for some disabled people who live in isolation from their communities due to their illnesses and disabilities. As we return to some sort of normal, it is important to remember these people and think about how our communities can be inclusive to those who cannot leave their homes.

**Thank you to all of those who gave their time to and share their views and experiences.**

All consultation data is available on request from [zoe@wiltshirecil.org.uk](mailto:zoe@wiltshirecil.org.uk)

Researched and compiled by Wiltshire Centre for Independent Living User Engagement Team