

Local Members Interest
N/A

Corporate Review Committee – Thursday 21 January 2021

Staffordshire Covid-19 Residents Survey – Key Findings

Recommendations

I recommend that:

- a. The Committee consider and comments on the key survey findings.
- b. The Committee advise of any follow up actions in response to the survey findings.

Report of the Leader of the Council

Summary

What is the Select Committee being asked to do and why?

As part of the Select Committee’s scrutiny of Q2 (2020/21) Integrated Performance, it was agreed to share the full findings of the Covid-19 Resident Survey.

In response to this, a summary of the headlines and a full report of the results are included as part of this report.

The Select Committee is asked to consider and comment on the findings and work being undertaken in direct response to the feedback.

Report

Background

1. In order to build an understanding of the impact that Covid-19 has had on people’s lives, and how residents feel about how the county can recover from the pandemic, Staffordshire County Council undertook a survey of our residents.
2. A full report, setting out key results and themes from the survey, can be found at Appendix 1.
3. The online survey took place between 10th August to the 13th September 2020 and was aimed at the Staffordshire adult (18+) population. To reach a broad cross section of communities the survey was well promoted using existing communication channels and networks, and supported by partners and Elected Members.
4. A total of 3,921 completed responses were received, with results highlighting both key social impacts and views on recovery priorities to inform recovery and business planning.

Key Messages

5. The following set out the key messages from the survey findings.
 - a. Majority (63%) experienced overall negative impact, with some at greater disadvantage.
 - b. Key negative impacts - Not seeing family/friends, worried about vulnerable family and loneliness.
 - c. Some evidence of behaviour change:
 - i. Acceleration of digital change
 - ii. Increasing use of the local area
 - iii. Mixed picture for healthy lifestyles
 - d. Local economy a key concern for how Staffordshire recovers.
 - e. Capitalise on rise in community action to further strengthen and empower local communities.
 - f. Build trust and confidence among communities to feel safe.

Reflections and Next Steps

6. Findings from the survey have been shared and discussed with the Senior Leadership Team and Cabinet in November 2020.
7. Key reflections were as follows:
 - a. Timing of survey provides a snapshot in time of resident views, and therefore important context when considering the feedback.
 - b. Results provide a key evidence base that validates thinking regarding the social impact of Covid-19, especially mental health and wellbeing
 - c. Reinforces Strategic Plan priorities.
 - d. Survey feedback underpins our key priorities:
 - i. Communities Principle – Place Based Approach, Supportive Communities & VCSE
 - ii. Economic Recovery, Renewal and Transformation Strategy
 - iii. Digital Programme
 - iv. People Strategy
 - e. Findings from the survey, alongside wider Covid learning, to inform how we deliver against our priorities moving forward.
 - f. Findings to inform MTFs process, considering Covid community impact.
8. Cabinet noted much work is already underway in response to what residents have said matter most. As such, Cabinet agreed that a strong 'you said, we're doing' narrative is published alongside the results to reflect key activities in response to the feedback. Since the meeting, both results and the supporting narrative has been shared widely and can be viewed [here](#). A copy of the 'you said, what we're doing' messaging can also be found at Appendix 2.
9. Resident concerns were also noted and discussed by Cabinet, alongside the challenges and opportunities this data presents. Lead Cabinet Members committed to taking forward the key priorities as part of current and future work

plans and strategies, working collaboratively with other organisations, partners and communities, to take action.

10. In response to the economy being a key priority for the organisation, Cabinet agreed to a standing Economy and Employment item for Cabinet, to reassure the public of what is being done to support this.

11. Finally, Cabinet also supported conducting a follow up Covid-19 Resident survey in May/June 2021, following purdah and elections, to understand how views and opinions have changed and to identify any new or emerging themes. Work on this will commence in the coming months.

Link to Strategic Plan

12. Findings from the survey reinforce current Strategic Plan priorities remain relevant, with direct delivery of all areas of the Strategic Plan informed by the survey results and wider Covid learning.

Link to Other Overview and Scrutiny Activity

13. Detailed scrutiny of the council's activities in response to the findings will form part of specific service plans and activity, with discussion on these taking place at the Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee, Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee, Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee or Corporate Review Committee, as appropriate.

Community Impact

14. This report presents a summary of the key survey findings, which will feed into recovery plans and business planning for 2021/22. A full CIA has been completed, and recently updated in October 2020, as part of the council's recovery planning process. As recovery shifts and where significant changes to services occur, individual CIAs will be produced as necessary. As such there is no community impact presented with this report.

List of Appendices:

1. Staffordshire Covid-19 Residents Survey – Summary Report
2. Staffordshire Covid-19 Residents Survey – You said, what we're doing

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Staffordshire COVID-19 Resident Survey

Summary report

October 2020



1. Background

In order to build an understanding of the impact that COVID-19 has had on people's lives, and how residents feel about how the County can recover from the pandemic, Staffordshire County Council undertook a survey of our residents.

This report provides an analysis of the survey findings, setting out key results and themes.

The online survey took place between 10th August to the 13th September 2020, and was aimed at the Staffordshire adult (18+) population.

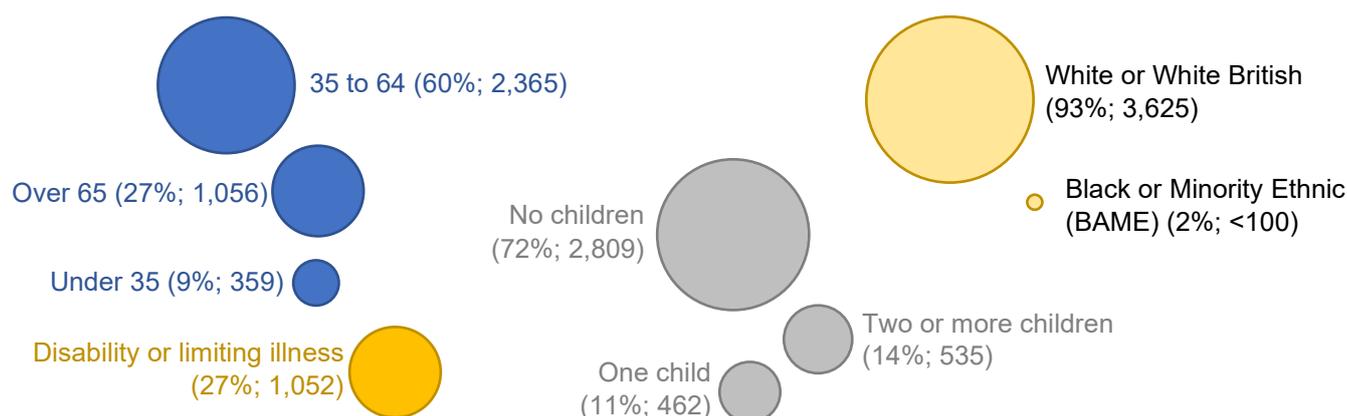
To ensure we reached a broad cross section of communities, the survey was well promoted by partners, in particular District/Borough Councils, key voluntary and community sector partners such as Support Staffordshire. In addition, a wide range of existing County Council networks and community assets were used, including Staffordshire libraries and children centres, Elected Members/Parish Councils, as well, as targeted community groups and press/social media.

A total of 3,921 completed responses were received – the largest response to a County Council cross cutting survey for some time.

Results are statistically robust¹ at a District/Borough level, and at a County level a good response was achieved across age ranges and disability.

2. Respondent Characteristics

Fig 1. Characteristics of respondents



- Female respondents slightly over-representative (66% female, 31% male, 3% other).
- More likely to be middle working age (35-64; 60% of respondents) or aged 65+ (27%).
- Majority were White or White British, accounting for 93% of all responses.
- 27% (1,052) indicated they had a disability or limiting long term illness (LLTI).
- A large proportion (71%) had no dependent children living in their household.

Compared to the Staffordshire population overall, survey respondents were slightly over-representative of female residents, those aged 35 to 64, White or White-British residents and those with disabilities or limiting illness. In contrast, despite targeted efforts, respondents from BAME backgrounds and those aged under 35 were under-represented when compared to the Staffordshire population overall.

¹ At a 95% confidence level, margins of error are as follows:

All respondents/County +/- 2%; Single district or borough +/- 5%; Age under 35 +/- 5%; Age 35-64 +/- 3%; Aged 65 or over +/- 2%

This indicates that should the survey be repeated 100 times, in 95 instances, results would fall within the cited margins of error.

3. Summary

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an **overall negative impact** on day-to-day life for the majority (63%) of respondents, particularly for a number of key groups.

- People furloughed during the pandemic (70%);
- People who have taken a break from work to look after family and/or children (68%); and
- People who have a disability or limiting long-term medical condition (67%).

Key common negative impacts include not seeing wider family and friends (80%), feeling concerned about vulnerable family and friends (55%), as well as loneliness and isolation (35%).

Many (59%) have **embraced new and different opportunities, such as digital technology** to stay connected with loved ones, as well as to help with day to day life. Most plan to keep doing more online. Parents with dependent children (41%) and younger age groups (45%) have spent more time discovering what their local area has to offer, and plan to do this more in the future.

The local environment is considered important to many, 55% of respondents are concerned about it and 10% of free text responses highlighted it as a key opportunity in the recovery of Staffordshire. Respondents particularly recognised the **value of Staffordshire's green spaces** and how important access to and the upkeep of these are.

The majority (over 74%) of those with children have seen the chance to spend more time with immediate family as a positive, but very **few (14%) have found home-schooling to be a positive** experience.

Staffordshire's economy and protecting local jobs was a key theme throughout, in terms of people's greatest concerns (79% worried about local economy) and biggest opportunity (22% see opportunity to develop local businesses). Job creation, regeneration of High Streets and incentives to attract new businesses are all key to recovery.

Fostering community spirit, experienced during the pandemic, is important to many. A large number commented on the **rise in social action** and believe capitalising on the momentum is key a part of Staffordshire's recovery. Reinforcing this is a desire for better engagement with communities, who are keen to be **directly involved in decision-making**.

Access to **healthcare services is a key concern (51%) and identified as a challenge for Staffordshire**, particularly the potential impact of reduced services on longer term health outcomes. The ability to maintain **healthy lifestyles has been mixed overall** – with increases in exercise reported by some (31%), balanced against decreases amongst others (29%). The same is also true for healthy eating, however many are keen to exercise more and eat healthier going forward.

Concerns about COVID-19 guidance and restrictions continue to cause concern and provide local challenges for Staffordshire's recovery. There is a **need for effective enforcement of restrictions** (e.g. social distancing, wearing of face coverings) both in public and in local businesses, with many drawing a link between this and having the **confidence to return to public spaces**. In contrast, there are a number who feel that some guidance (particularly face coverings) makes them feel less confident about returning to public places.

4. Resident Impact

- Nearly two thirds (63%) feel COVID-19 has had an overall negative impact on their life
- Not being able to see friends and family has been the worst aspect for many (80%)
- Just over half were able to benefit from being able to save money during lockdown
- Furloughed individuals and those with disabilities/limiting illness have had the worst experience

Overall Impact

The majority (63%) of respondents felt that COVID-19 had an overall negative impact on their life, with the minority (12%) feeling that the impact had been positive overall.

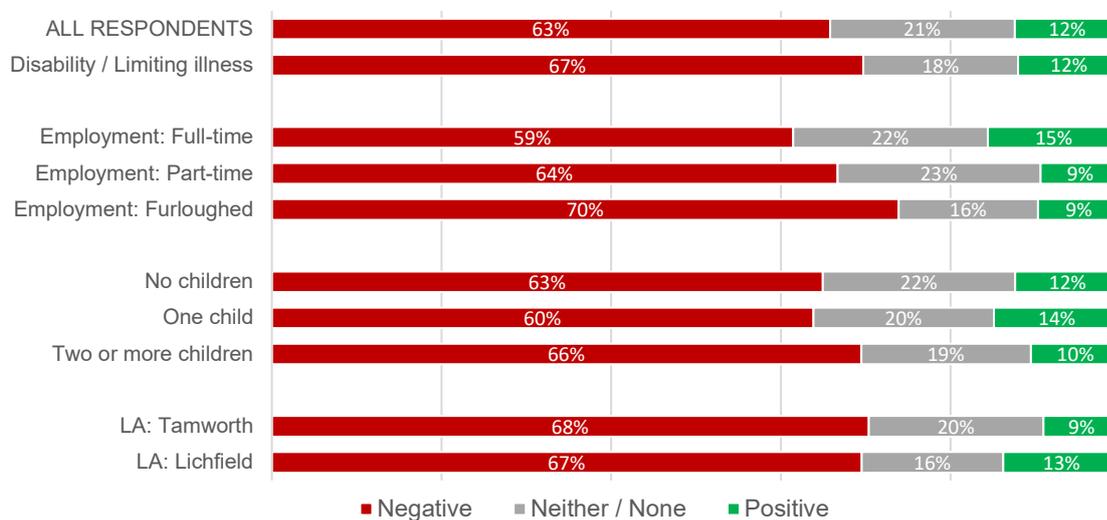
There is little variation in overall impact by age or gender, however, the experience has been more negative for the following respondent groups:

- Those placed on furlough during the pandemic (70% negatively impacted)
- Those who stopped working so they could care for children or family members (68%)
- Individuals with a disability or limiting illness (67%)

No single district or borough appear to have had an overall 'better' experience than average, although some reported a greater negative experience. Respondents from Lichfield (67%) and Tamworth (68%) experienced a slightly more negative impact than others, with the lowest level of negative impact (61%) reported in East Staffordshire – although allowing for margin of error, this is statistically similar to the 63% reported countywide.

Those who remained in full-time employment throughout were more likely to report a positive impact overall (16%), however more than half (55%) of this group still felt the overall impact had been negative.

Fig 2. Overall COVID-19 Impact by key group



Negative Impacts

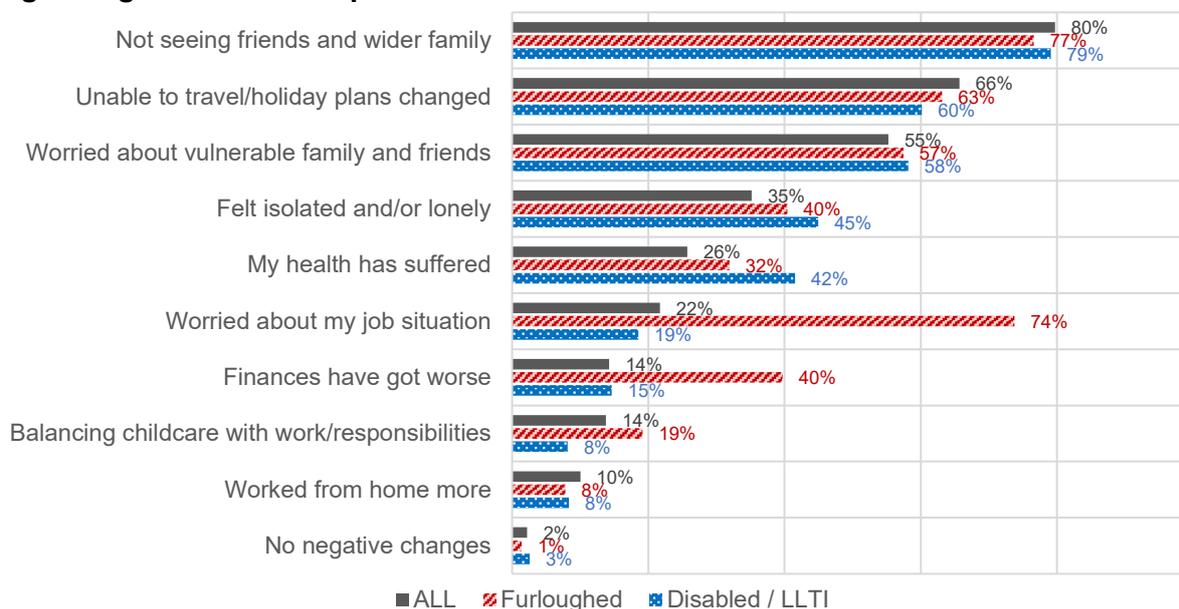
A large majority reported not seeing friends and family (80%) or being concerned about vulnerable friends and family (55%) as key negative impacts. For those placed on furlough, the increase in negative impact may be driven by *worries about their employment* situation (74%, compared to 22% overall) and a *worsening of their financial situation* (40% of this group, compared to 14% overall).

Younger people (under 35's) are also more concerned about their employment situation (39% compared to 24% across all ages) and about their financial situation (43% compared to 31%). Those aged 65 and over were considerably less likely to be worried about household finances

(13% worried). Taking into account the margin of error, those aged 65+ reported similar levels of isolation and impact on health compared to respondents overall.

Those with disabilities or limiting illnesses were considerably more likely than others to have stated that their *own health had suffered* (42% of this group, compared to 26% overall) and were also more likely to have *felt isolated or lonely* (45%, compared to 35% overall).

Fig 3. Negative factors experienced

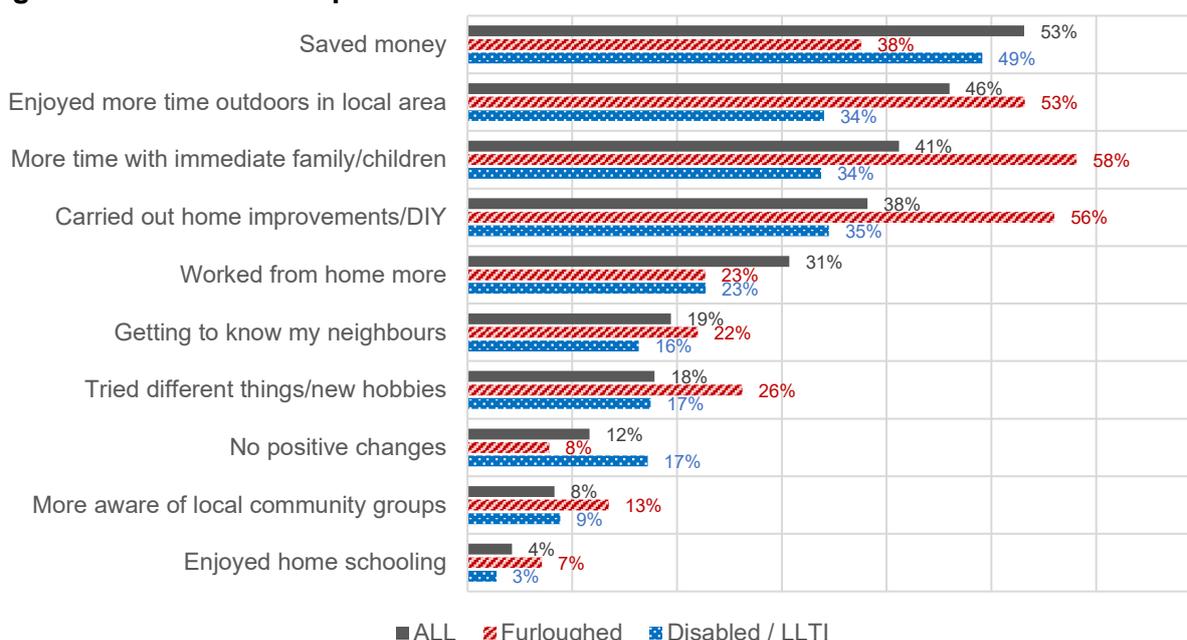


Positive Impacts

Although a much smaller proportion experienced an overall positive impact, many were able to identify some positive impacts, such as *being able to save money* (53%) and *enjoying more time outdoors/their local area* (46%).

Whilst almost half of respondents have reported *enjoying more time outdoors* as a positive (46%), this has only been the case for around a third (34%) of those with disabilities or limiting illness. Those furloughed were more likely to enjoy time outdoors and with immediate family.

Fig. 4 Positive factors experienced



Families with Children

There is some variation among parent respondents - those with one child report the pandemic having less of a negative impact (60%), compared to those with two or more (66%). Although both groups report average positive impact.

Those with two or more children at home have also found it more difficult to *balance childcare with work and other responsibilities* (40% of those with one child, 58% of those with more than one). Home-schooling is generally not perceived as a positive, with very few (14%) parents indicating *home-schooling* to have been a positive outcome.

Employment status

Respondents whose employment status has remained consistent throughout consider themselves to be the least negatively impacted. In contrast, 70% of those who were placed on furlough during the pandemic and 68% of those who were previously working but now looking after family or dependents, consider COVID-19 to have had a greater negative impact. This is also true for those who became unemployed or unable to work.

This survey suggests that the pandemic has had an impact on employment for almost 1-in-5 respondents - 18% (691 out of 3,921) saw their level of employment reduce in some way compared to before the pandemic.

Those who worked part-time were more likely to see a change in their employment than those working full time, with 13% of part-time workers having to look after family or dependents, and 8% being furloughed. Overall, 78% of those working full time prior to the pandemic were still working full-time, compared to just 60% of part-time employees.

5. Changing Behaviours

- Big increase in online activity/use of digital across all age groups, including the over 65s
- Increases in people exploring and making use of their local area (32%) and high street (29%)
- Almost half intend to focus on healthier personal lifestyles going forwards

To better understand how the pandemic has affected people's behaviours and habits, respondents were asked whether they had spent more, less, or the same amount of time doing specific activities. For those doing more of an activity, they were also asked which of these they planned to continue doing in the future.

Fig 5. Proportion with increase in specific behaviours or activities (% of all respondents)

Activity/Behaviour	Did more of	No change	Did less of	Plan to keep doing
Online shopping	59%	31%	4%	47%
Online chat / calling	58%	35%	3%	45%
Discover local area	32%	48%	14%	43%
Exercise	31%	39%	29%	46%
Buy locally / visit high street	29%	33%	35%	43%
Alcohol consumption	27%	46%	10%	9%
Online banking	22%	70%	1%	40%
Eating healthy	21%	56%	23%	48%
New hobbies	18%	66%	7%	20%
Learn a new skill	17%	67%	4%	18%
Time with wider family / friends	6%	26%	63%	46%

Digital

Increased digital adoption to both connect with family members and friends and go about their daily lives (e.g. online shopping). Just under half also plan to maintain this moving forwards. This was true across all age groups, including over 65's where more than half (58-60%) had increased the use of online services for both staying in touch with others and for shopping.

Healthy Behaviours

This presents a more mixed picture. A similar proportion stated they eat *more* and *less healthily* since the start of the outbreak, which is also true for amount of exercise - the larger proportion report no change to these habits. When asked how frequently they are physical active, a similar proportion reported at least 150 minutes of physical activity per week before the pandemic (44%), compared to 43% during the outbreak. Slightly more stated they did fewer than 30 minutes (14%), compared to 21% during.

A similar trend can be seen with alcohol consumption, with 46% stating no change, however the greatest increase in alcohol consumption has been among parents with 40% stating they were consuming more alcohol since the start of the pandemic.

Shop Local

Those aged under 35 were more likely than average to have visited their local high street or bought locally (45%, compared to 35% overall). However, parents were considerably more likely to have done less of this, with almost two-thirds (64%) stating that they had done this *less often*.

Local Area

The environment and local area has been important for both younger age groups and those with children - 45% of under 35s and 41% of parents have spent more time in their local area (compared to 32% overall) and both groups plan to spend more time doing this in the future.

6. Help and Support

- 29% received help and support, primarily to access essential supplies
- Over half (52%) provided support to others during the first wave of the pandemic
- Almost all (91%) of those who provided support, would be willing to do so again if required

Receiving Support

29% (1,128) of respondents received help or support during the pandemic, with common support networks being:



Those with disabilities or limiting illness and those in older age groups, were most likely to have received support during the pandemic; 45% (473) of those with disabilities and 43% (457) of those aged 65 and older. This reflects Government guidance for older and clinically extremely vulnerable groups to self-isolate during lockdown. This is broadly supported by the most popular support need being *getting essential supplies*.

Levels of support varied, with Lichfield and Staffordshire Moorlands both slightly above average, with 32% and 31% receiving support respectively. Respondents from Newcastle-under-Lyme appear to have needed less support than average, with around 24% receiving help.

The range of support needs are set out below:

Fig 6. Individuals supported with specific needs (n=774)

Type of Need	Number and %
Getting essential supplies	427 (38%)
Getting prescriptions	387 (34%)
Mental health (incl. bereavement support)	137 (12%)
Loneliness / befriending	85 (8%)
Food parcels	80 (7%)
Advice about work / employment	68 (6%)
Support with technology (i.e. online shopping)	62 (5%)
Help with own business (e.g. PPE, grants)	49 (4%)
Advice on staying active / healthy	43 (4%)
Financial advice	35 (3%)
Transport	35 (3%)
Childcare	32 (3%)
Support with free food	23 (2%)

Unmet Need

Of those who didn't receive any help or support (2,785), a small proportion (496) stated *they needed help but didn't receive any*. Reasons given were:

- *Ineligible for support* (219; 44%)
- *Didn't feel confident in asking for support* (150; 30%), particularly for those under 35s.
- *Did not know where to go to ask for support* (127; 26%), higher for those aged 65 and over.

Providing Support

Over half of respondents (52%; 2,044) provided help or support to others during the pandemic. Those living in both East Staffordshire and Staffordshire Moorlands (55% from each) were slightly more likely to have provided help and support to others.

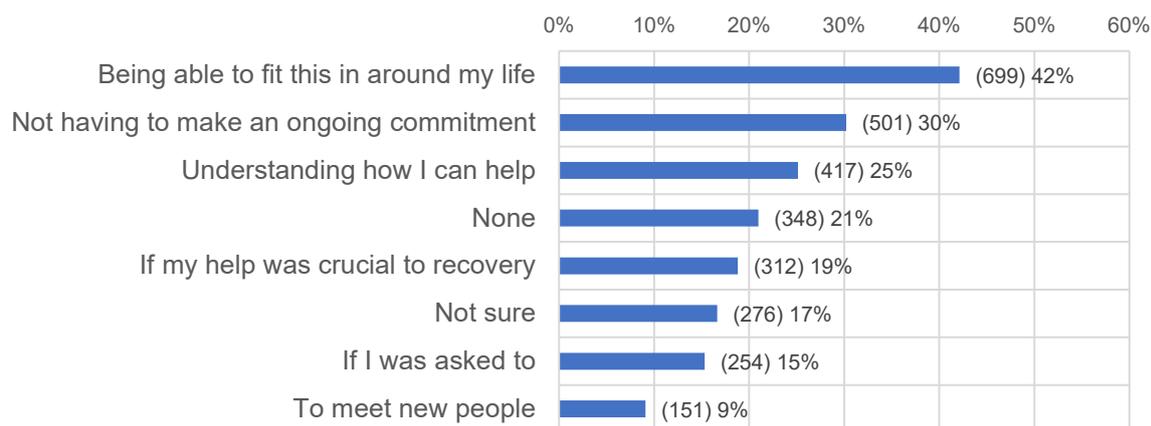
Although those aged under 35 were less likely to have provided help and support, many indicated they would like to know how they can help (14% of under 35s, compared to 4% of other age groups).

There is a strong willingness among this group to continue their support within the community - 91% of respondents who provided help or support would be willing to continue in the future.

Overcoming Barriers

Of the 48% (1,659) who did not provide any help or support to others, the following were viewed as potential opportunities to encourage greater social action.

Fig 7. What would encourage you to provide help and support to others in your community?



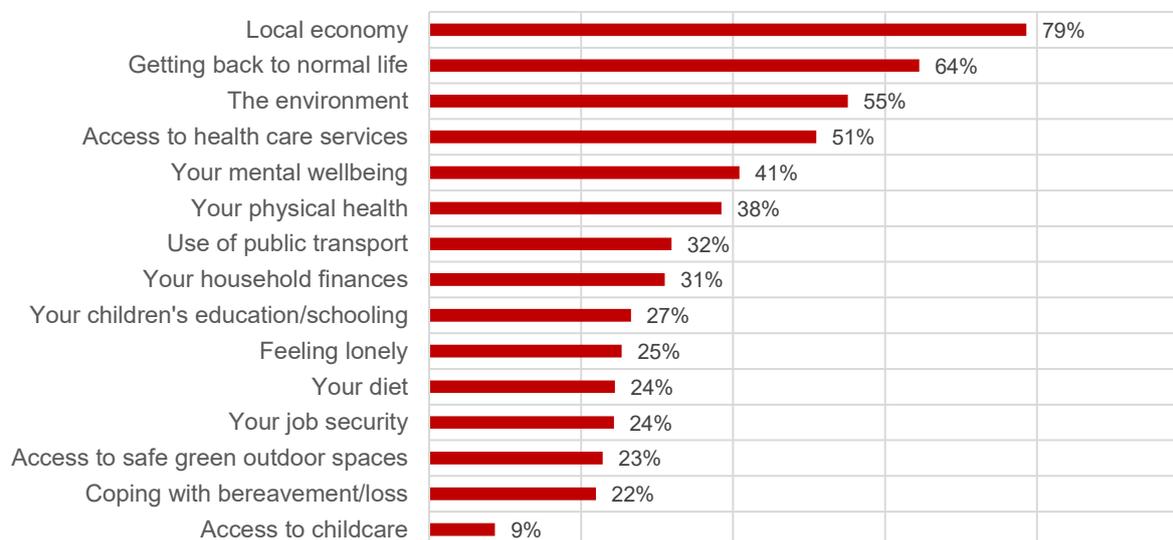
7. COVID-19 Recovery

- Key concerns about the local economy, environment, and access to health care services
- Opportunities to build on community action and further strengthen and empower communities
- Communities keen for more engagement and involvement in decision-making

Greatest Concerns

Respondents were asked what they were most worried about in the next three months, with many expanding on their response.

Fig. 8 Thinking about the next 3 months, how worried are you about...?



The greatest level of concern was the local economy. Free text responses indicate survival of local businesses and high streets, as well as concerns about employment and jobs are key to future recovery. Many respondents also indicated that more needs to be done to “*regenerate the high street and town centres*”.

That said, many indicated that COVID-19 had made them more likely to support local businesses (63%) and around half are more likely to support their local high street (48%). More than half of respondents in all districts reported being more likely to support local businesses, ranging from 59% in South Staffordshire to 68% in Cannock Chase.

Comments also highlighted a key concern in returning to normal life, specifically “*building public confidence and feelings of safety so people feel safe and comfortable in public spaces again*”.

Many provided comments about their concerns regarding the environment, specifically the challenge of maintaining the “*significant reduction in road traffic seen at the start of lockdown*.”

There were some interesting variations in opinion.

- Around 25% of over 65s were worried about their *mental wellbeing*, compared to 61% of under 35s and 50% of those with disabilities or limiting illness.
- Those aged under 35 were also more likely to be worried about how *lonely* they feel (42%, compared to 18% of over 65s), possibly linked to restrictions on social activity. This was also true for those with disabilities (33%, compared to 25% overall).
- Concerns about *household finances* were also above average for under 35s (43% worried, compared to 31% overall).
- *Access to health services* and *physical health* were more of a concern to those with disabilities or a limiting illness.

Challenges and Opportunities

Survey respondents were asked to provide free text comments regarding the challenges and opportunities in helping Staffordshire recover from the impact of the pandemic. These are summarised below.

Challenges (2,643 responses)

Economy and employment (1,038; 39%)

- Grow the economy, create jobs and town centre regeneration

Confidence and trust (952; 36%)

- Communicate and enforce guidance, control outbreaks.

Access to healthcare services (206; 8%)

- Support the vulnerable, and greater focus on mental health impact for children and adults.

Leadership and resources (170; 6%)

- Secure government funding and effective local leadership.

Education and skills (140; 5%)

- Impact of school closures on learning and attainment on life chances.

Maintaining social action (86; 3%)

- Continue to foster community spirit and provide vital support to help groups sustain.

Opportunities (1,953 responses)

Developing local economy (448; 23%)

- Support businesses, create 'future proof' jobs & incentivise businesses to locate here.

Strong sense of community (332; 17%)

- Build on renewed sense of community, help grow and coordinate community groups.

Environment/Climate Change (193; 10%)

- Maintain and promote access to green spaces and develop low emission travel options.

Local Regeneration (175; 9%)

- Regeneration of local high streets/town centres, in terms of retail offer & appearance.

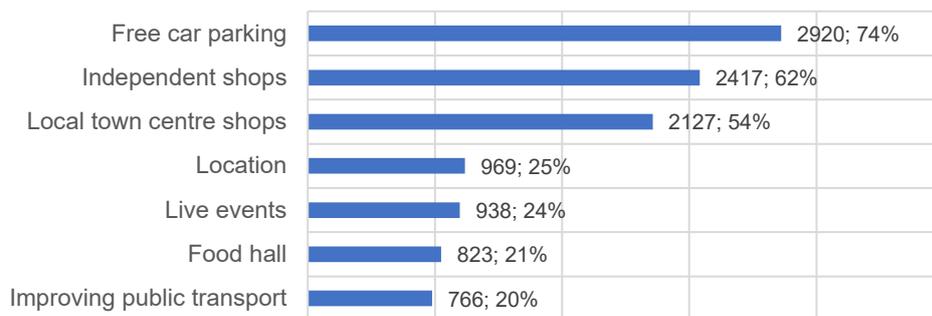
Digital Adoption (152; 8%)

- Consider digital service offer, as well solutions to tackle loneliness and isolation.

NB: Percentages are shown as a proportion of those respondents who provided a response to the question

Staffordshire's local economy was by far considered the greatest challenge and opportunity for its recovery. Respondents gave further views on what might encourage them to support local businesses, with a large majority stating free car parking (74%) and more independent shops (62%).

Fig 9. What would encourage you to support local businesses more?



Improving your Local Community

Over 1,700 free text responses were provided on how Staffordshire County Council and local partners can work with local people to improve communities. Many of the views were consistent with previous comments and have been summarised below. The top three were:

1. Better engagement with communities / involvement in decision making (14%)
2. Crime reduction / Community Safety / Visible policing (11%)
3. Maintenance / improvement of highways / footpaths / cycle-routes (11%)



8. Conclusions

Overall, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a negative impact on day-to-day life for the majority (63%) of respondents, especially for a number of key groups, such as those furloughed and individuals with a disability/limiting illness. Key negative impacts were linked to limited social interaction and impact on people’s wellbeing.

Responses represent a positive shift in behaviour as a result of the pandemic, with the acceleration of digital change being most evident. Many have embraced digital opportunities to connect with and support others, as well as help with day to day life. Embedding the County Council’s Digital Programme is a key element of recovery, with opportunities to transform future operations whilst also minimising COVID-19 impact

The local environment and sense of place has become increasingly important to people during the pandemic, particularly access to green spaces and a greater awareness of climate change challenges. The development of a new Climate Change Strategy and Community Fund will help to advance this agenda further, ensuring it is embedded across key recovery activity.

There are concerns regarding how Staffordshire recovers, particularly Staffordshire's economy and protecting local jobs. Delivering Staffordshire's 5 year Economic Recovery Strategy is key to ensuring our economy recovers, by supporting businesses to adapt and continue to operate. The work to develop a Staffordshire Place Brand will also be key to attracting new businesses to the county.

Many also recognised the growth of social action during the pandemic, seeing this as a key opportunity to maintain and build on existing opportunities to help grow community capacity and enhance community spirit. Leading the Communities Delivery Plan work is critical to this, through the implementation of a community led offer, increased volunteering and building capacity.

Linked to this there is a desire from communities for further engagement and involvement in decision making. This reinforces the importance of reviewing the County Council's engagement approach, including the delivery of a new Citizen Survey as a regular mechanism for hearing the views of our communities.

Appendix 2: Staffordshire Covid-19 Residents Survey – You said, what we're doing

Local Communities

- Community Help Points in libraries and voluntary organisations providing practical help and support for people to live well and stay independent for longer.
- Regular resident surveys that enable us to listen to what matters most to our communities.
- Doing our Bit Community Fund, offering grants of up to £2,500 to groups that are making a difference to vulnerable older people and children and families.
- Do-It Staffordshire online resource promoting community volunteering opportunities and linking volunteers to people who need support.
- Staffordshire Connects online directory of community support is helping to bring local people together.
- Working with our voluntary and community sector partners to support our communities, such as helping Mutual Aid groups become Good Neighbour Schemes.

Economic Recovery / Supporting Local Economy

- Immediate support to businesses at the start of the first lockdown, including distribution of grants of up to £1,000 to small businesses to support their survival, one million pieces of PPE distributed to businesses and an ongoing campaign of support to keep businesses updated on both local and national financial support.
- Establishing one of the first Redundancy and Recruitment Triage Service and County Wide Task Group to support businesses and individuals at risk of redundancy because of Covid-19, and helping them to transition into work in high-growth sectors.
- The #StaffordshireMeansBusiness campaign aims to ensure all local businesses understand the support available to them through a series of newsletters and social media, resulting in a LinkedIn following of over 10,000 and currently 178 individuals taking action to access some form of business support.

- Ongoing support to promote the government's Kickstart scheme to businesses, encouraging those in growth sectors to take on six-month work placements for 16 to 24-year olds at high risk of long term unemployment. This supports young people to get on the career ladder where opportunities no longer exist as a result of Covid-19.
- The survey showed that local people understand the importance of supporting local businesses. The #ThinkStaffordshireFirst is a direct response to this, aiming to raise awareness of how a small local spend makes a big difference to local jobs and communities, especially in economic downturns.
- With an expected rise in the number of people wanting to start up their own business, Staffordshire County Council funded a new Start up Scheme supporting people with how to start up a new business, and preparing them to be more resilient to any future economic shocks.
- Continued development of new strategic employment sites, creating the infrastructure to unlock economic growth, support co-ordinated growth, increase cash injection into the supply chain and create new and better paid jobs e.g. i54 South Staffordshire Western Extension , Stafford Western Access Route and the Stafford Eastgate Regeneration Scheme.
- Continued support to tenants of Enterprise Centres with a rent-freeze, along with the extension and refurbishment of Cannock Chase and Silverdale Enterprise Centres to provide more opportunities for small businesses to start up and grow.
- Helping younger people and those at risk of redundancy with the skills needed for a more digital future through the promotion of a Skills Toolkit, delivering a Community Learning Offer and continuing with the apprenticeship programmes for the county and our schools

Environment and Local Area

- Investment of £100,000 to improve the Rights of Way network to support safe and enjoyable access to the countryside, encouraging more residents to enjoy their local area and contributing to the health agenda.

- Recent bid for funds to improve facilities at country parks, as well as improving an all ability route on Cannock Chase and creating a dementia-friendly trail at Chasewater Country Park.
- Continuing to deliver an intensive highways maintenance programme, including the investment of an additional £2m to improve community highways maintenance, such as problem road drains, roadside grass cutting and more road sweeping. Alongside an additional £8m in LED street lighting, helping to reduce annual carbon emissions and provide savings.
- New Climate Action Fund to fund new projects that reduce the amount of carbon produced, improve air quality or help people deal with climate change events.
- £2.5m of Active Travel Funding to provide additional walking and cycling infrastructure and the move to a greener economy, contributing to the carbon neutral agenda.
- Electric Scooter trials in Stafford and Newcastle under Lyme, introducing an alternative and environmentally friendly mode of transport for commuters, supporting the transition to green travel.

Using More Digital

- Health app finder, making it easier for people to find apps that can help them to stay healthy and well.
- Rolling out virtual social work practice where appropriate, such as video and telephone social care assessments and reviews to prevent the spread of infection to vulnerable people.
- A new Assistive Technology campaign has been launched, with online resources available to help people remain independent in their own home.
- Staffordshire libraries continue to offer a successful digital service, with downloads of e-items increasing by 159% in the last 12 months.
- Staffordshire History Festival was delivered online, promoting wellbeing and networking. The event successfully engaged a significant number of local people, including a Facebook reach of over 66,000.

- Introduction of a new digital IT Support Service, in partnership with Adult Community Learning, which will make digital support more accessible to people who are digitally excluded.
- Investing in superfast broadband, helping to transform day-to-day life for people living and working in Staffordshire, whilst providing a timely boost during this Covid period.

Health and Wellbeing

- More than 3 million items of personal protective equipment (PPE) have been delivered by the County Council to front line care staff, social workers and other roles in direct contact. This has helped ensure every care home/provider has what it needs to care for the most vulnerable.
- Implementation of an Emotional Wellbeing in Schools programme, that is supporting children's emotional wellbeing following their return to school, including training for school staff and promoting ways in which schools can access support for children and young people.
- Increased funding made available to the Staffordshire Emotional Health and Wellbeing Service, delivered by Action for Children, to support children's emotional wellbeing.
- Children's Centres remain open to those families most in need.
- Creation of Family Hubs are providing vital support to families, including working with partners to deliver over 4,000 survival kits to families most in need and offering virtual activities for families to take part in. Children's Centres also remain open to those families most in need.
- The #TalkSuicide campaign aims to bring individuals, organisations and businesses together to help prevent suicide in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, increasing awareness and giving local people easy access to support and training.
- Refreshing our Public Health & Prevention Strategy, with a £750,000 investment to mitigate ongoing public health risks from Covid-19, such as obesity, mental ill health and addiction.
- Everyone Health service is supporting people to stay healthy long term, including weight management, exercise and more. A recent Stay in Touch programme is also helping to combat loneliness during lockdown.

- Staffordshire's Obesity strategy, aimed at increasing the number of people engaging in physical activity, includes a range of local initiatives already underway to improve people's health.

Building Public Confidence

- Implementation of Covid-19 Local Outbreak Control Plan to facilitate the effective management of outbreaks.
- Providing expert public health information, advice and guidance in areas such as testing to help contain the spread of the virus.
- In response to people wanting there to be more 'enforcement' of the rules, we continue to work with Staffordshire Police to check compliance with isolation where we have intelligence that people are not following the rules. We are also working with District and Borough Councils to support businesses to maintain Covid security and enforce restrictions on those that are non-compliant.
- Established a dedicated contact tracing team which carries out local contact tracing for all cases in Staffordshire, contributing to much more rapid isolation of contacts and reducing further transmission of the disease. This intelligence also allows us to act upon outbreaks more quickly.
- The County Council has 7 day specialist advice and response to local outbreak control, including an NHS infection control and swabbing team that can be arranged as and when required.
- Successful roll out of a flexible and responsive testing model across Staffordshire, including most recently the use of lateral flow rapid testing, with results in approx. 30 minutes.