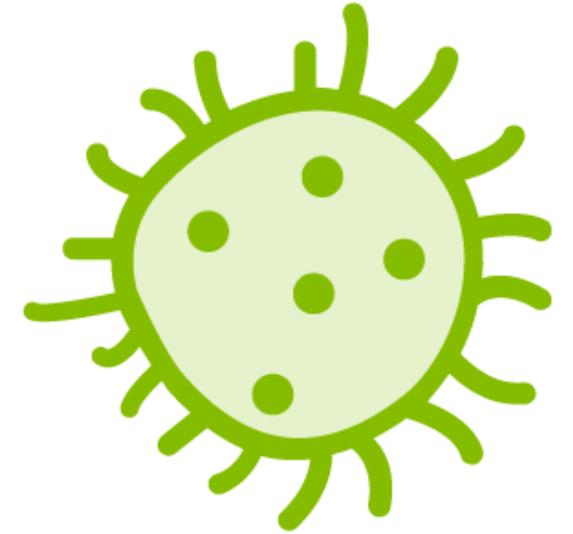


# Our response to the Corona Virus Outbreak

March to June 2020



**healthwatch**  
Wigan and Leigh

## INITIAL RESPONSE

As the COVID-19 cases climbed, our number one priority was to protect our people: our staff and our volunteers.

In line with guidance from Healthwatch England this meant postponing all our planned public events and engagement activities

- We produced a Healthwatch Wigan and Leigh Covid-19 Business Continuity Plan
- We put structures and processes in place to react in an agile fashion
- We paused our planned campaigns and thought instead about the resources and communication mechanisms we would need
- We set up dedicated sections on our website to share and collect information

## FOCUSING OUR RESOURCES

We knew we needed to do all we could to support the response to COVID19 and to make clear to our communities and stakeholders that we were here to help

- Throughout this crisis, there has been a huge demand for clarity and certainty - this has been challenging in a rapidly shifting environment
- At this stage, this meant making clear to our staff and volunteers that we should focus any spare capacity into:
  1. Helping the public with their questions and queries
  2. Alerting services to the issues and experiences the public were telling us about
  3. And, supporting local efforts to combat COVID-19 (such as sharing information and supporting vulnerable people and those who are shielding)

## COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

- We have produced 8 factsheets on changes to services during the corona virus outbreak :
  - Dental services
  - Maternity services
  - Sexual health services
  - Stroke Support
  - Shielding
  - Our support offer
  - End of Life care
  - GPs working differently
- We have provided up to date information from:
  - North West Boroughs Healthcare NHS Trust
  - Wroughtington, Wigan and Leigh NHS Trust
  - Wigan Borough Clinical Commissioning Group
  - Wigan Council
  - Care Quality Commission
  - NHS England
  - Domestic Abuse Support services
  - Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership

## COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT continued .....

- We have generated 24 information campaigns, landing 10,115 emails to our community, volunteers and local statutory and voluntary organisations
- We have regularly shared messages and information through our social media platforms with 43,531 interactions via twitter and facebook, almost the same amount as the whole of 2019-20
- We have received 2,329 hits to our website, where the public could access our factsheets and up to date information. This records a 90.4% increase of new users
- We have recorded an individual experience “What can we learn from those forced to self-isolate because of a long term health condition or disability?” and published it on our website
- We have recorded a case study from an individual staying with a family member in the Wigan Borough during lockdown and attempting to register as a temporary patient at a local GP practice and access mental health services. Recording the difficulties and how Healthwatch helped to resolve the situation

## COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT continued .....

Our staff have :

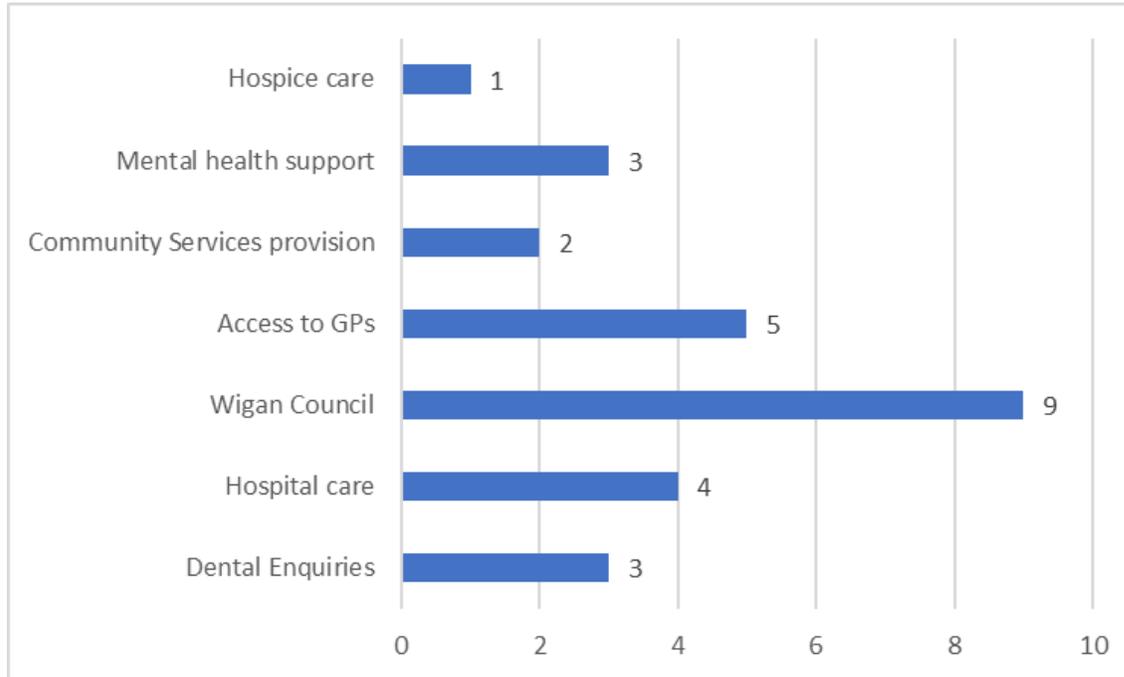
- Completed online training sessions with Healthwatch England
- Worked with Healthwatch England to plan a national project on Hospital Discharge
- Taken part in fortnightly meetings with the Wigan Borough CCG Engagement Group
- Held regular video calls with the WBCCG Engagement team
- Held regular video calls with local Commissioners of services
- Maintained contact with local voluntary and community sector organisations to offer our support and to gather their experiences
- Produced 3 snapshot reports from projects started but paused due to lockdown
- Produced a report 'Are you living with a disability or a long term condition during the Coronavirus Outbreak?'
- Produced our Annual Report 2019-20
- Started to plan an online workshop to continue our CAMHS Project 'Who supports the parents?'
- Had discussion with Groundwork about working with the National Citizen Service 'Keep doing good' project
- Moved our office location!

## COMMENTS AND FEEDBACK

- We have recorded an issue from The Brick Hospital to Home team around hospital discharge for one individual who normally resides out of Borough
- We spoke with and recorded the feedback from 22 volunteers at Pensioners Link to ask :
  - Are you happy with the information you have seen locally on what you should do in the COVID-19 crisis? If no, please tell us what you think is missing?
  - How are you looking after your physical and mental health? What helps to keep you well and what are you struggling with?
  - *See Appendix 1*
- We attended a virtual coffee morning with the Willow Project and spoke with approximately 7 individuals, asking:
  - How are you finding using technology at the moment? Everything we are doing seems to be online or on the telephone; GP appointments, hospital check-ups, work meetings, school/college, family and friends. What does everyone think about this because the increased use of technology, especially for services, is probably here to stay
  - *See Appendix 2*

## INFORMATION AND SIGNPOSTING

- We have received 27 information and signposting enquiries



- All enquirers were offered information or signposted to services, and on some occasions escalated to the appropriate service for immediate action

## INFORMATION AND SIGNPOSTING continued .....

### ENQUIRIES

- How do I get urgent dental treatment. I have been told to take pain relief as the emergency centre is not open yet
- A bloke from the Council just knocked on our door with a walker and commode and asked would I take it in ready for the man next door for when he's coming out of hospital – not corona related – but didn't know when that is. I apologised but said no you'll have to re-arrange for when he is coming home. It would have meant having two bulky items in the house for a start, then when he's home how is he actually going to get it because I wouldn't go into his house at the best of times and I'm certainly not going in now
- Gentleman wanted to make an anonymous comment about his mother chiropodist still practicing during COVID-19 with no PPE and was concerned about visiting elderly patients - this was passed to HW St Helens as his mother lives in Haydock
- Question from two Start Well Centres. They have families asking what they should do when their children are unwell. Are GP practices open?
- Lady contacted us via twitter to say she had the shielding letter and had registered with LA for support but had no reply and wanted to know how she could get welfare support
- I've been discharged from hospital last Saturday and where myself and my girlfriend was staying at her friends have been told we can't stay there now so we have nowhere left to go I was wondering if you could help us
- Gent rang unhappy that his GP practice had temporarily closed the site he usually used, and he had to go to their main site. Asked if it is legal. Also concerned that his usually GP site has a pharmacy attached and that would probably be closed so where would he go for his medication
- Gentleman making a formal complaint against Wrightington hospital and wanted to make sure that during the pandemic his complaint will be logged
- My sister and husband both in their seventies are in self isolation following a close family member being hospitalised and diagnosed with the virus. What help is available for them to get essentials delivered.... i.e. food and medication?

## INFORMATION AND SIGNPOSTING continued .....

### ENQUIRIES continued .....

- 78 year old lady living alone isolating was told someone would contact her to see what help she needs but has heard nothing . Has spoken with GP and had District Nurse dressing visit but was given our details. She needs support with purchase and delivery of non-prescription medication (and in my opinion some human contact). Her son has told her not to bother him as he is very busy and her neighbours are either elderly or have suffered the virus and are isolating. Had a number of health conditions and got a little forgetful but given the time to chat and think she was ok. On phone over an hour as I think she was keeping me on to chat.
- Gentleman staying with family member during lockdown and wanted to register as a temporary patient at mum's surgery. Tried 2 surgeries who said they were not taking new patients during Covid 19. Also required mental health support and didn't know what to do
- Lady rang to say she is shielding and to ask how she could access a food parcel for her family as they have no money until the end of the month
- Lady rang about her 93 year old nan. Has memory problems but seem to be worse since covid and thinks she may need an assessment
- Lady rang to say her GP had suggested she contact HWWL. She suffers personality disorder and completed her treatment and under care of GP but she is struggling. She is also shielding and had a food parcel delivered and someone collected her prescription but she has heard nothing since then and her next prescription is due
- I am a mum at home on furlough. I have 2 primary school age children and my husband is working nights and I am really struggling with my mental health. Can you point me in the direction of some support please. I have spoken to my GP who has referred me to mental health services but I am wondering if there is something I can do while I wait
- My son is disabled and having problems with his teeth at the moment which means he cannot feed and he will get dehydrated. Our dentist is closed. What do I do?

## INFORMATION AND SIGNPOSTING continued .....

### ENQUIRIES continued .....

- Lady telephoned on behalf on her friend whose husband is under care at Wigan Hospice - not happy with his care and want some help in understanding his care package and wanting to understand how to make a complaint
- Do you know where I can get 2 teeth filled and my false front tooth really done has fell off please .thank you. I have only bus transfer
- Lady concerned about length of time it takes to print repeat prescription
- I am due my B12 injection, but the doctors have told me I can't have it as the district nurses are working and that I should increase my B12 intake through food. I explained I need the injections because I can't absorb B12 through food. He has written a prescription for tablets, but the chemist doesn't have them in and say they will take a few days to get here. I am due my injection and really struggling
- Lady rang looking for the number of her GP
- Lady emailed asking for information on how to be considered for iPad and internet as a vulnerable person. An offer the Council have made
- Lady telephoned to say her mum is in WWL following attempted suicide and resulting injuries and suffering from corona virus. She has been on 3 wards. First 2 wards family got regular updates on her condition but since she moved to corona ward (Langtree) difficult to get updates and now her mobile phone has been turned off for 2 days. Nan is down as next of kin, but she can get no information either
- A lady telephoned to say her husband has been suffering some mental health issues. He has been waiting 3 weeks since his mental health assessment for a follow-up and for a prescription he was told he would receive. She had telephoned her GP this morning but was told the GP would only be able to ring back on Monday morning and that if she was worried, she should call the police. She didn't want to do that as she felt it would further upset her husband but wanted some advice on who she could contact. While we were on the telephone her husband threatened suicide and was leaving the house. I asked if she wanted me to make the call, but she refused and said that she would.
- Lady telephoned concerned that her partner is receiving confidential medical information about her from his ex-wife who is a nurse at WWL. The lady explained that this information was so precise it could only be accessed through her notes so wanted to ask if she could contact WWL

## COMPLIMENTS

- The information you are providing and sharing is much appreciated and will help so many people
- Mum passed her first CHC assessment with the nurse. She had an appointment for the Panel to come and see her for second assessment but they had to cancel due to virus. So they have sent a letter to say until they see her she can have free care! Which is good. Thank you so much for your help
- Thank you for keeping us updated with all the latest information. I hope that you and all the other staff at Healthwatch stay safe
- I'd like to say I think your website and the information you are providing and sharing around Covid and changes to services is fantastic. You are the only organisation pulling information together in one place and sharing it in a clear and concise way. Thank you
- I wanted to say thank you, your help has made all the difference, thank you very much. My son has now registered as a temporary patient with a local GP and following your advice in regards to contacting mental health services he has now been assessed and is receiving help and support
- I just wanted to say thank you for your support and advice. With your help and intervention we are now accessing welfare support from the Council
- Thank you for speaking to PALS for the family. We now have an agreement in place in getting updates on my mum's condition
- Thank you for your advice and support and for the email to check that my family was safe

## IMPACT

- Locally, we have :
- Increased our social media presence locally, regionally and nationally
- Increased the number of visitors to our website
- Supported members of the public to receive information and advice as requested
- Supported members of the public to resolve issues which required escalation to the appropriate service
- Worked in partnership with local statutory and voluntary organisations to share clear and concise information to people of the Wigan Borough
- Maintained a Healthwatch presence in our communities



I think that the information that you've been sharing, along with the open door approach to the community being able to inform you about things that could be done better, have really helped some of our service users. So important that the message that you have widely circulated has been one of 'we're all in this together' and that members of the community feel valued by having their views heard and considered.



Great job, thank you!

**Karen Little**  
**Project Manager**  
**Willow Project**

## IMPACT



Healthwatch Wigan & Leigh have continued to be an important partner during the COVID-19 response. They've helped to keep residents informed about the latest guidance and how to safely access health and care services. The 'Fact Sheets' they've produced on different services for example have been a really valuable resource that we've shared within our own networks and over social media. They've also provided us with feedback from local residents to help us understand what's been working well and where people have had questions or concerns. I know they have been there for many residents who've needed help, advice and reassurance during this difficult time and I would like to thank them all for their hard work and support

**Professor Craig Harris**  
**Manging Director and Accountable Officer**  
**Wigan Borough Clinical Commissioning Group**



Nationally, all local Healthwatch have worked with Healthwatch England to :

- Shape the rollout of the NHS Volunteers Responders Scheme and how they work with local initiatives. This led to Healthwatch being appointed as the first non-health and care service able to refer people to the scheme for support.
- Flag the issues volunteers face such as shortages in PPE, and problems picking up prescriptions from pharmacies.
- Alert Government and the NHS to the lack of accessible information on COVID-19
- Prompt regulators to clarify that guidance on the use of Do Not Attempt Resuscitation notices had not changed
- Trigger an expansion of the emergency dental service
- Ensure that privacy issues with the NHSX COVID-19 tracking app are considered

## APPENDIX 1: FEEDBACK FROM PENSIONERS LINK VOLUNTEERS

**Q1: Are you happy with the information you have seen locally on what you should do in the COVID-19 crisis? If no, please tell us what you think is missing?**

- I am very happy with the information I have seen, I know what to do and I also listen to my own instinct and I know it's best for me to stay inside until all of this is over so I don't risk anything
- No complaints from me, I feel informed about what's going on and if I have any questions, I just ask my daughters
- I believe that we have been given the right information to stay at home and don't go out, I don't understand those people who choose not to follow the advice but that's up to them
- I think the government have done the best of a bad job – what else can you really do. The information has been a bit hit and miss but the whole county is a mess at the moment with it all
- I have received information from doctor mainly – doctor informed me that I am in the high-risk category and need to stay home and not leave the house. Doctor gave information about how to contact council and see what support they are offering to local residents this was useful – Doctor has been very supportive and calls me every few weeks for check up appointment due to health complications. Overall, for me information has been clear and understanding.
- I found that the main news has come nationally from the media, mainly the TV and radio but I have found that there has been a lot of mixed messages which causes a lot of frustration. At the beginning I didn't think much of it all but my opinion quickly changed and this impacted how I behaved in terms of social distancing and isolating. I have had direct information from Wigan Council and different voluntary sector organisation which was good.
- Happy with the information received, it has been put all over TV and social media so hard to miss really. I do think we went into lockdown too late and you can see the effects this has had on society. I haven't received local information from the Wigan Council but I already feel informed about what is going on
- The information I have received has been fine, no complaints around it I can find out more information if I want to.
- Yes the information has been fine for me
- Yes the information has been fine for me when you receive too much information it can be confusing
- I think we have been given the right information, the message was loud and clear – to stay home. It just then up to people if they wish to follow it.
- I feel that I could have been told more about specifically what not to – it's a lot of mixed messages and for the older generation receiving something in the post would be better.

## APPENDIX 1: FEEDBACK FROM PENSIONERS LINK VOLUNTEERS continued .....

### Q1: Continued .....

- I think it has been difficult to get hold of organisations (such as BT) because everywhere is closed you can't speak to people on the phone, so I am reliant on asking my daughter to do things over the internet. I think giving people a list of services and numbers would really help.
- I feel well informed and have received information from Wigan Council
- I am fine with the information that I have received but I do worry about other people and how they must be feeling. For example, I have a neighbour who is vulnerable – if I had known earlier that there were charities delivering food parcels etc this would have helped. But I know this is a strange situation that people are constantly responding too.
- I am ok with the information I have received – mostly from the TV and radio I do try and form my own opinion but I think its best to follow what the government are telling us with this.
- I think the information has been limited, and this is central government that I am talking about. The daily news updates were repetitive and the only time there was a clear message was when we officially went into lockdown – now its just been left to people to decide what they do. I know that I have slightly broken the rules, but I needed to do this to keep sane – I have been going on walks with a friend.
- I am happy with the information I have received.
- I am fine with the information and I get plenty of stuff from Pensioners Link
- The message to stay at home has been fine for me, it's the younger people that it must be hard for.
- Overall, I am happy with information but I think each age group should have received information about what they can't do. I know that we all have to socially distance and stay home but it would be helpful for the older generation to know what organisations are out there to support them and the same for young families – so, a list of charities that help with home schooling. It's just a suggestion and I know there's a lot of good work happening out there for people.
- For me I listen to everything, whether that's on tv or radio and when my son gets me a paper, I read that. I have actively made sure that I have kept well informed as I want to know that's happening.
- I am fine with the information, but people aren't listening properly, there should have been tougher restrictions if you ask me.
- I get a lot of information from Pensioners link which is good and they pass on bits from the Council so that is fine for me.

## APPENDIX 1: FEEDBACK FROM PENSIONERS LINK VOLUNTEERS continued .....

### Q2: How are you looking after your physical and mental health? What helps to keep you well and what are you struggling with?

- Feel restricted by the all the new rules in place – big impact on mental health, but I think that everyone feels that in some way their mental health has been impacted, even the strongest people may struggle in these circumstances. I have a good support system in place from family and friends and they phone me to keep contact, this is a lifeline for a lot of people. I do feel that my physical health has been impacted, I already had health complications before COVID-19 and feel that this has set me back even more so. My physical health has been impacted because I cant do much, I do have difficulty walking but as I can't go out I feel this could get worse so it has been a real adjustment, I also am struggling to control my diabetes because I am physically not doing much. All of this then has a knock-on effect on my mental health.
- My family have been helping me as I live alone and I am self-isolating. At first I didn't self-isolate as the main message I received was the COVID-19 was just like the flu or a bad cold but I quickly changed my opinion and started to take it seriously. I have recently had a serious operation before COVID-19 and was instructed to keep active so I go on a daily walk but I make the effort to not to go where a lot of people are and to stay away from people if I do see anyone. Mentally, I am fine as I am used to living on my own its not a big change for me, but I do get frustrated when I see that people are not following the rules. It really irritating that people are not taking it seriously and are flippant about the situation. I was speaking to a friend of the phone who said, 'you can get rid of it by taking an aspirin' and these comments just made me think that there are a lot of people with this attitude and its concerning. But I do think part of the problem is due to the mixed messages that we have received, everyone seems to be making their own interpretations of what to do and now that some restriction have been lifted people behave like we are back to normal – it is very concerning to me
- I have kept busy with the dog which has been a life saver for me as my husband has still been working very long hours so I am on my own a lot but overall it has been fine. I have done some volunteer work and that lifts my spirits knowing that I am doing some useful for people. I have noticed that my sons mental health has been impacted due to what is going on. He has been furloughed and is now at home all day and the adjustment has been difficult , especially having no childcare break spending all day at home can be very draining, as I am sure it is for everyone.
- Overall, I am doing ok. I go out for walk to stay active and speak to my family. Technology has 100% helped me as I can facetime my grandchildren, it's not the same but you feel connected. One thing that does stress me out is people not sticking to social distancing rules, it is irritating and makes me feel anxious about going out. I am personally choosing to stay in strict lockdown rules for an extra four week as I feel the government have eased the restrictions too early.

## APPENDIX 1: FEEDBACK FROM PENSIONERS LINK VOLUNTEERS continued .....

### Q2: Continued .....

- This has definitely impacted my mental health, I feel very isolated – I only have careers visiting me and because I can't go out I don't see anyone else so it is lonely. This then impacts my mental health. I do feel that my physical health has gotten worse because I can't go out so it's hard because this has a knock on effect on my mental health again. It would be nice if there was some more emotional support actual contact with people but I know it's difficult.
- Not really struggling, I have a lot to be thankful for, I am fit and healthy and passing the time well doing jobs in the house. I have never redecorated so much and painted the house this quickly. I think I am an optimistic person, so I am trying to remain that way during all of this. I do miss volunteering at Pensioners Link and not having that physical contact with people is hard – I have built a lot of great relationships volunteering so I do miss speaking with people face to face. My family are very supportive – they get my shopping for me every week (although I think I can do this myself but they have said I am over 70) Of course, I miss the physical contact with my family and would love to hug my grand daughter but hopefully it won't be long. I have taken a conscious decision to not let this all impact my mental health and get me down.
- I feel ok – as with everyone I do get fed up but it's only for a short while. I have a big family and lots of friends so I keep in contact with everyone I am actually on the phone a lot more people we can't go out and see each other. I do find socially distancing hard, I have only left the house once since lockdown and that's when the restrictions were slightly lifted to see my son. I miss the human contact and community feel of just getting on a bus and chatting with people or sitting in a café and at the moment it doesn't feel like that is going to happen again anytime soon. My physical health has been impacted by not being able to go out, I have lost weight and can feel it so I know this is something I need to keep an eye on.
- I wouldn't say I have struggled. I have spent a lot of time in the garden when the weather has been nice, this has kept me physically active as I would usually go to the local leisure centres but obviously, they have closed. I have kept busy with reading, crosswords and sudoku. I feel that I haven't been bored, boredom is an attitude of the mind, so I have made sure that I have had lots of things to do. Occasionally, I go out and speak to my neighbours which is pleasant. Overall, I have been ok.
- I have been ok with it all, we did lose my son in law to the virus so that of course has been extremely sad. I have nurses visit me twice a week due to an operation I have had on my leg, they are very helpful and I feel well informed about the care I get. I am on the shielding list so I am taking it seriously. I have kept active in the garden, I make sure I walk round the garden and house at least twice a day. I have lots of family and friends to keep in touch with, including people at Pensioners Link. I wouldn't say I have been that bored, you can always find jobs that fill the day up it's more a frustration. I am frustrated at not knowing when it is all going to end and it's the not knowing part that makes you feel like it will last forever, but I am ok and well that's the main thing.

## APPENDIX 1: FEEDBACK FROM PENSIONERS LINK VOLUNTEERS continued .....

### Q2: How are you looking after your physical and mental health? What helps to keep you well and what are you struggling with?

- I do feel lonely, I miss my family and going out and about seeing people. I am at home all day and my TV has stopped working so that has upset me. I do feel that my physical health has gotten worse because I don't go out, so I have stayed in since the start of lockdown. My family are close by so I can talk to them which is good for me
- We are keen gardeners and keep physically active doing that and walking the dogs, staying active has been really important during the pandemic has been important you its an effort to do it. I am also member at a church so regularly use Zoom to join meetings, so this is good for my mental health. Being a nurse keeps me busy but there have been times were my mood has been low. Not being able to see family has been difficult, not gone this long without physically seeing them before so it's hard for everyone
- Mainly I have been fine, of course I miss family, but we keep in contact. I meditate twice a day, and this has really helped my mental and physical health but I did this before lockdown so it is not something new
- My husband and me go for walks every day, we both have arthritis so we can feel it more if we sit for too long during the day. Each day we have tried to walk a little bit further so that has been good and we make sure we walk in big open spaces to avoid people. Lockdown has not been too difficult, but we miss the social interaction of being with friends and family and my husband misses going to the leisure centre for a swim
- The good weather has really helped, and I have spent a lot of time in the garden, I speak to friends on the phone to keep in touch which is nice to do. I do feel bored, everything feels the same every day. I have tried to do exercises but its not the same when you are on your own. I had a fall before lockdown so I am not as fit as I would like to be, I miss going on long walks but it's not physical possible for me at the moment, so I am taking it slowly. My family do my food shopping, I miss the social interaction with people. It is not the same to see people through the window, especially my grandchild. I have found that I am struggling to sleep at night, I am restless and seem to wake up a lot, it's probably because I have been bored in the day time. I think if people know a time frame it would help, say in the next six months everything will be back to normal its something to work towards and keep you going. It doesn't look like that is going to happen. I worry that if we are still socially distancing in the winter that would be hard with the early nights and cold weather, I think that would have a big impact on people

## APPENDIX 1: FEEDBACK FROM PENSIONERS LINK VOLUNTEERS continued .....

### Q2: Continued ....

- Physically, I have been going on walks to keep active. I feel bad asking family and friends to do my shopping or get things for me. The main thing that's impacted me has been the lack of communication, I miss my family and its just not the same interacting with them this way. I am fortunate that my daughter gave me an iPad so I can facetime so that's a new skill I have learnt in lockdown. About two weeks ago, I just had enough with it all. I felt guilt asking my daughter to do the shopping when, although I am in my 70s, I feel fine. I felt that the longer I was staying inside, the more afraid I would be to eventually go out and I had just had enough. So now I am doing my own shopping, I needed to experience what it was like and the new adjustments, it may not seem like a big thing but when you have been inside all the time it I, getting out makes me feel like I am not completely fastened in at home now. I think this has been a hard lesson for everyone really
- My son found out that I am eligible for the meals being delivered by the Council, this I am very grateful for and my family have helped out too. Mainly I have tried to keep busy, the lovely weather has helped lift my spirits and I watch TV in the evening. I do miss going to exercise classes and seeing friends and family. I also used to attend a luncheon club and I miss organisation this and being part of something that helps people, but hopefully we will get back there soon
- I have just tried to keep busy in the garden and house, I have just got to accept what is going on really. Its hard staying away from family and friends but there isn't much I can do about it, this is life at the moment. I do worry about what my physical health will be like when all of this is over, I haven't been walking much due to being inside so don't know if I will be able to walk long distances. You get used to just being inside so it will be another adjustment
- Medically, I have a tumour so my treatment has stopped at Christies Hospital, they said my next appointment will be in October but if I need anything then I can call and it will be sorted. My sons lives with me so I don't feel lonely and he does the shopping. I just don't want to risk my health, so sometimes I feel anxious about it all. The district nurses also come to the house, I do feel safe as they wear all the gowns and face masks. I just feel like this is a waiting game really, I'm not sure when it will end but I have good friends that I phone and mostly try and keep myself busy
- I have been ok – I have broken the lockdown rule as I visited my allotment. I made sure I went at 6am when it would be empty. This was a matter of sanity over safety, I just needed to get out and have a slight bit of normality. I didn't see anyone but it helped me. I am extremely bored, although I am doing things all day long it just feels different to usual. All the days blur into one and weeks pass by, so I think it shows how much social interaction is important for humans. As much as sometimes we don't like it, we do need to interact with people. A separate comment I would like to make is – I noticed a few weeks ago that an Ice-cream van was down the street, no PPE and handling money. I wasn't sure if this was allowed so posted it on the Wigan Council Facebook page. The response was 'not sure – check the online advice' I felt that this was a poor attempt at giving feedback and just leaves people to decide for themselves if its ok – all I was asking was yes or no can Ice-cream vans work. Just a side comment that stood out to me.

## APPENDIX 1: FEEDBACK FROM PENSIONERS LINK VOLUNTEERS continued .....

### Q2: Continued ....

- I have been ok – I have broken the lockdown rule as I visited my allotment. I made sure I went at 6am when it would be empty. This was a matter of sanity over safety, I just needed to get out and have a slight bit of normality. I didn't see anyone but it helped me. I am extremely bored, although I am doing things all day long it just feels different to usual. All the days blur into one and weeks pass by, so I think it shows how much social interaction is important for humans. As much as sometimes we don't like it, we do need to interact with people. A separate comment I would like to make is – I noticed a few weeks ago that an Ice-cream van was down the street, no PPE and handling money. I wasn't sure if this was allowed so posted it on the Wigan Council Facebook page. The response was 'not sure – check the online advice' I felt that this was a poor attempt at giving feedback and just leaves people to decide for themselves if its ok – all I was asking was yes or no can Ice-cream vans work. Just a side comment that stood out to me
- My son is very supportive so that helps me, I just feel fed it up with it all. I don't do much and can feel myself stiffening up because I am not moving, I am also sleeping a lot more than I usually do. I don't feel stressed just a bit bored, but I suppose we have to get on with it really
- I have been keeping busy, I usually have a cleaner but with lockdown she is not coming so I have surprised myself with all the housework I have been able to do so that has helped me stay fit around the house. I also go on walks too but not as many as more people seem out and about now. My daughter had the virus but has luckily been ok, my other daughter is a nurse so she tells me exactly what I should do. I do get anxious quite a bit, sometimes I think its from being alone but it probably because I haven't been out to see people in such a long time. I love reading and doing cross words, so I suppose that helps my mind, but I do feel old sometimes doing them
- My daughter brings me food once a week and gets me more during the week if I need it, I feel very lucky to have a supportive family, so I don't feel alone. I chat with friends on the phone and we make each other laugh. I think the best thing to do is to take each day as it comes and not dwell too much on all the bad things that are going on
- Being locked up in the house for all this time has been awful for me, I miss my family a lot. My husband lives with me so I don't feel lonely but I am finding it very hard. I had a fall before lockdown so I am not walking very well so I don't get out even for a bit of exercise. I have been out this week though to go to the post office and after all of this time at home I found it really eerie, it was actually unnerving for me to go out with it being so quite and everyone is separate apart waiting in queues, it didn't feel nice. My daughter in law brother has passed away from COVID he was only 60 and didn't have any problems with his health, that has been a massive shock, it hits home how bad the situation can be when it effects your family. I have been so stressed worrying about I, also not seeing my grandchildren has made it worse. You can't hug and kiss them and as more time moves on I just worry that its going to keep staying like this if we reach a second wave, but I really hope not and suppose we just have to get on with it

## **APPENDIX 2: FEEDBACK FROM THE WILLOW PROJECT FACEBOOK COFFEE MORNING continued .....**

**How are you finding using technology at the moment? Everything we are doing seems to be online or on the telephone; GP appointments, hospital check-ups, work meetings, school/college, family and friends. What does everyone think about this because the increased use of technology, especially for services, is probably here to stay**

- I am enjoying the social contacts particularly with friends and family who live in other parts of the country – we have quiz nights, baking nights etc. but I am struggling not seeing people face to face
- Technology can give you a headache if you're constantly on your phone
- There are advantages and disadvantages to using technology – it's great being able to connect but it also feels like there is a pressure to connect
- It would be terrible if we couldn't use technology during this time
- I'm not very good with technology and have been getting less involved with technology and have started to use snail mail. There's nothing nicer than receiving a handwritten letter
- It is good to be able to connect with services and to join in groups through video chat, facebook and twitter like today with Willow
- This situation will change people's lives but I hope that reliance on technology dies a little. People need to be able to have the choice of face to face contact