

# Healthwatch Harrow Covid-19 Survey

*Next Stage: 'Lockdown Changes'*



June 2020

“Loosening lockdown is very concerning - there are very good signs of a second wave coming in October and having many more due from this.

The economy can always be recovered but human lives cannot.”

Harrow resident

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## 1. Background

In response to COVID-19, health and social care services have had to change the way they provide support overnight. Some non-urgent treatment has been suspended and face-to-face appointments have been replaced with video and telephone calls.

While health and care staff are doing everything they can to keep us well and safe, changes to how services work has naturally affected people's experiences of care.

Our role is to find out what matters most to people and to make sure their views shape the support they need. Whilst the current pandemic, changes how support is provided, our key priority at this stage is to identify areas of concern, provide clarity where we can, address issues which can be resolved and learn for the future.



### 1.1 Methodology

In April, we launched our first COVID-19 Survey after the UK lockdown was announced, to find out about some of the issues people had been facing and to help NHS and social care services understand the effect of COVID-19. The Interim Report for this phase can be found here:

<https://www.healthwatchharrow.co.uk/insight-and-reports>.

On the 28<sup>th</sup> May 2020 we launched our second COVID-19 Survey, in line with lockdown restrictions easing, to see how the changes were affecting people 2 months into lockdown.

Again, we kept the survey short, asking 3 key questions:

- a) How has the loosening of the lockdown affected you and your loved ones?
- b) What is your postcode?
- c) Which GP practice are you registered with?

By keeping the question as broad as possible, we were able to reach people who might not have heard of Healthwatch before and it allowed everyone to give as much detail as they wanted regarding whatever aspect that is affecting them.

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of what the people living in Harrow are sharing with us through our survey. Please note that this is purely survey-based and at this stage does not include other intelligence that we are obtaining, however, the key themes / trends from both are similar.

We are aware that there is a real issue across North West London on how we can gather the views of those people that do not have access to the internet and we are working to identify alternative methods of doing this. The survey was launched on our website at the end of May 2020 and ran until the beginning of July 2020.

Information shared through the survey is anonymous, however, if there are any areas where we can follow up and share information generally through our website and newsletters, we are doing that.

There are now a number of different surveys in the public domain, going forward Healthwatch Harrow will take a Harrow wide view, working with other organisations to minimise the ask of our residents for the same information, whilst ensuring views are captured and shared.

At the beginning of July 2020 Healthwatch England launched their joint campaign with the Care Quality Commission [#BecauseWeAllCare](#). As we emerge from COVID-19, the campaign aims to encourage people using NHS and social care services to give feedback on their experiences, to help improve services for everyone. This information is captured on a regional / county basis, therefore, going forward Healthwatch Harrow will promote this campaign and share the local results.

In addition, we are capturing additional information via our social media channels and through online resources, the findings of our 2 surveys and the additional feedback will be summarised in a short report and shared via our website, distribution channels and key stakeholders in the Clinical Commissioning Group, Health & Wellbeing Board, Care Quality Commission and Social Care.

## 1.2 Key findings

- Not surprisingly resilience (mental wellbeing) is one of the top themes, accounting for 27% of issues. It is notable that the vast majority of people who comment on mental wellbeing (79%) feel negative overall, with just 9% feeling more positive.
- Overall, a fifth of people (20%) comment on the ability to socialise and connect with family and friends. With 85% of feedback positive, regarding families and friends, it is clear that the lifting of lockdown has also lifted people's spirits in this area but longer term there is a real issue emerging regarding the mental wellbeing of individuals and how to ensure the appropriate support is in place for those who need it. Please see below for full details.
- Regarding overall sentiment, over a third of comments (38%) are, this compares with 45% from the initial survey in March - May 2020. While the proportion of negativity is still significant, we can say it has improved by 7% during June 2020.

- In addition, there is an emerging concern around the impact of COVID-19 on our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) community. Subject to funding Healthwatch Harrow would like to work with organisations across North West London, to see how we can support the BAME community.

## 2. Summary of Findings

This report is based on the experience of 145 people, who completed the survey in June 2020.

Key findings are summarised below.

### Findings in brief...

#### Top Themes

The top themes detected are:

- Resilience and Wellbeing (27% of total feedback)
- Family and Friends (20% of total feedback)
- Mobility and Isolation (18% of total feedback)
- Infection Risk (18% of total feedback)
- Lesser trends: Communication; Activities and Stimulation; Environment and Empathy (17% of total feedback)

#### Sentiment (How People Feel)

When comparing with the initial survey (March - May 2020), people are feeling 7% more positive on the whole. However, overall feedback is 38% negative, with significant concerns detected.

#### Leading Negatives

- Widespread reports of anxiety and worry.
- Fears that it is 'too soon' to lift the lockdown and expectations of a 'second wave'.
- Lack of clear guidance adding to confusion.
- Carers, vulnerable people and those shielding much more likely to be isolated.
- Observed lack of social distancing a concern for many.
- Safety in the workplace questioned.

#### Leading Positives

- Many benefitting from the greater ability to socialise and connect with family and friends.
- More freedom to be outdoors - particularly important with good weather.

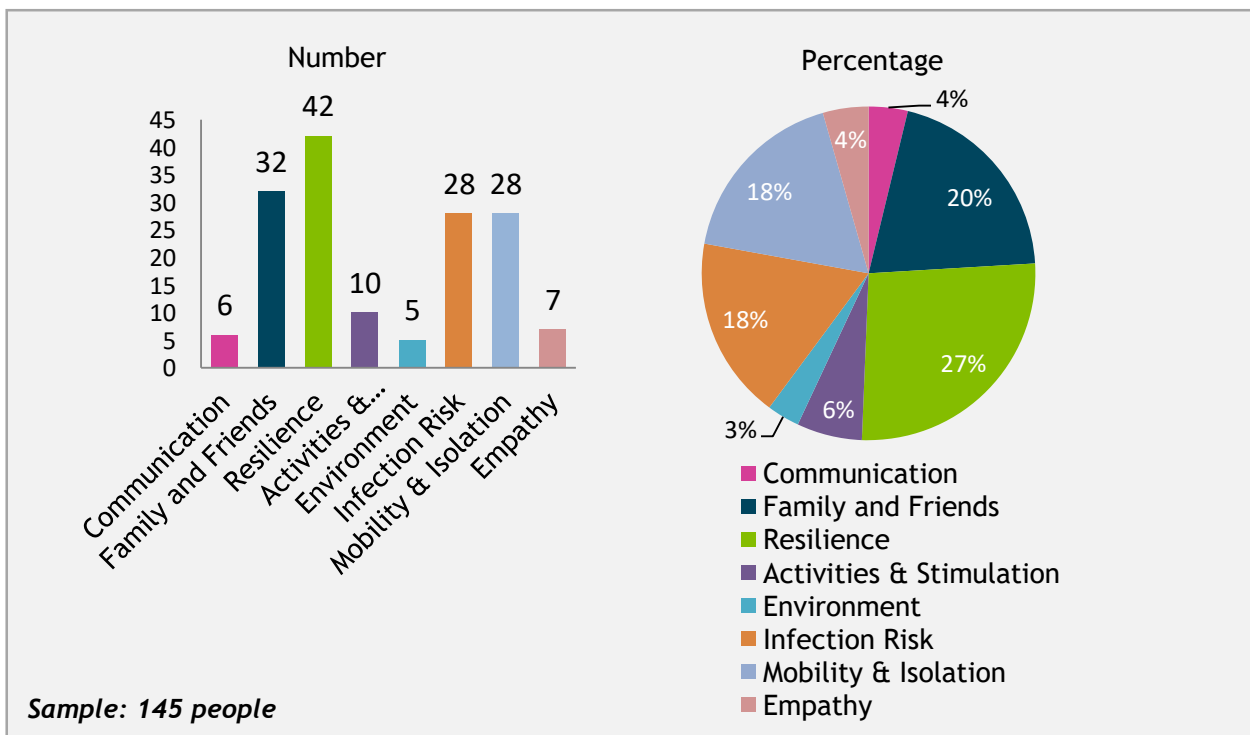
### 3. Top Themes - What are people most commenting on?

145 surveys were completed during June 2020.

The top theme, accounting for over a quarter of responses (27%) is resilience (mental wellbeing).

A fifth of people (20%) comment on the ability to connect with family and friends, while a further 18% mention the often-related issue of mobility and social isolation.

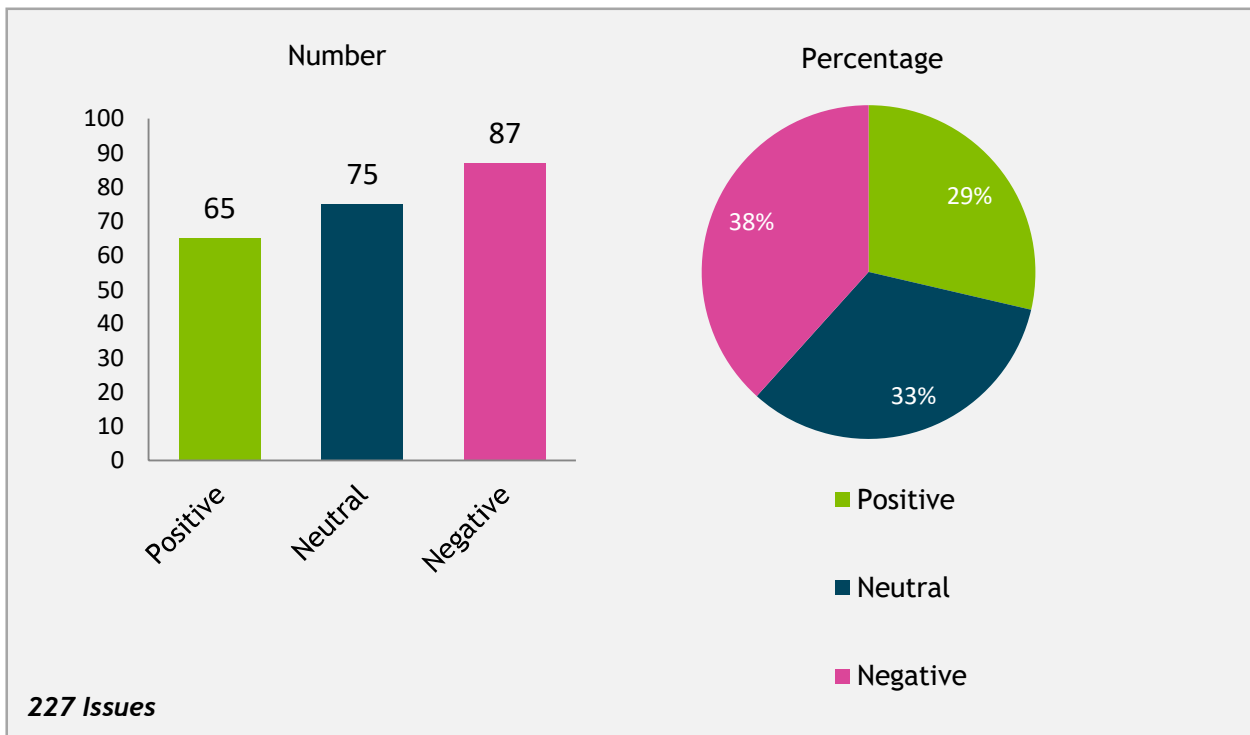
For 18% of people, the risk of infection is an important topic.



Lesser themes, together accounting for 17% of total feedback include communication, activities and stimulation, environment and empathy.



### 3.1 Sentiment - How do people feel as a whole?



Over a third of comments (38%) are negative on the whole, this compares with 45% from the initial survey in March - May 2020. While the proportion of negativity is still significant, we can say it has improved by 7% during June 2020.

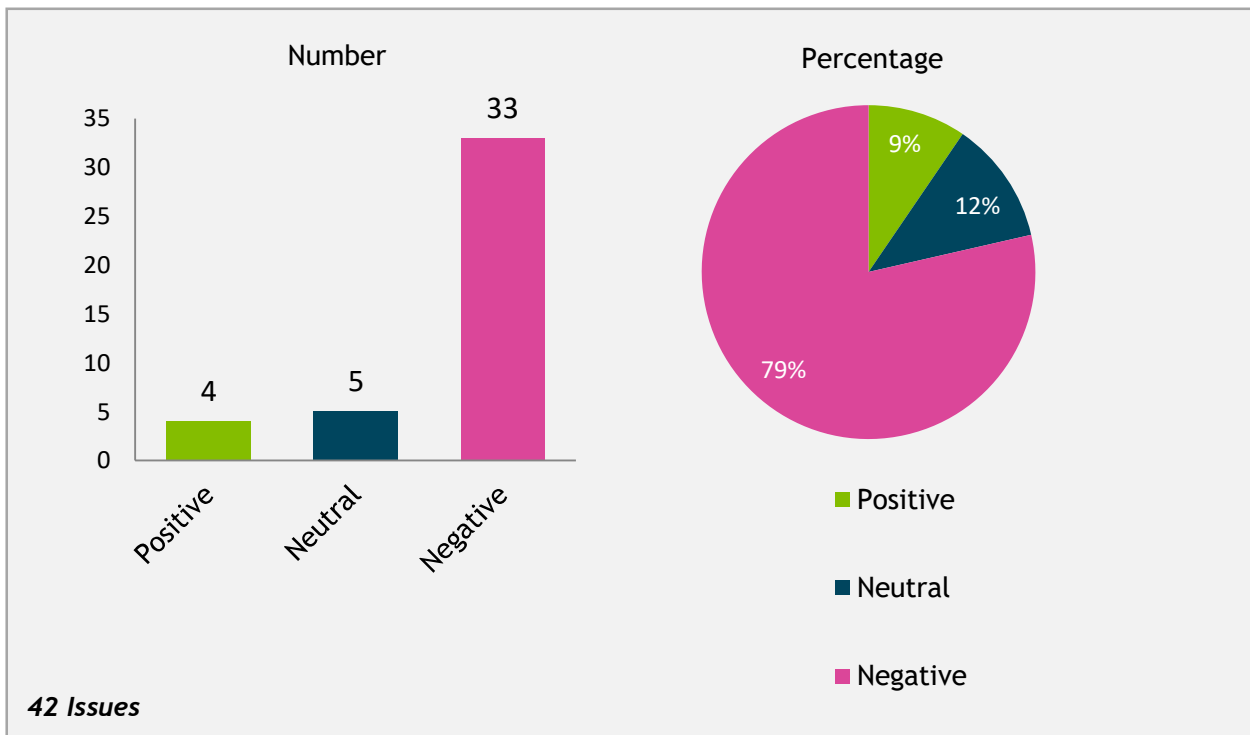
A large proportion of people (33%) report feeling 'no change', while 29% feel positive.

### 3.2 Resilience (Mental Wellbeing)

The top theme, accounting for 27% of issues is resilience (including mental wellbeing).

It is notable that the vast majority of people who comment on mental wellbeing (79%) feel negative overall, with just 9% feeling more positive.

### 3.2.1 Sentiment, Resilience (Mental Wellbeing)



A large number of people say it is ‘too soon’ to lift the lockdown and fears of a ‘second wave’ are prevalent. We hear common accounts and anxiety and worry, and for some, the sudden easing of lockdown has added to confusion.

Many people are not confident about leaving the house, or engaging with the wider community.

A small percentage of people feel more positive, with some expressing ‘relief’, and others feeling more confident to go out.

#### Selected Comments

##### Positives

*“It’s been a relief!”*

*“Not much change but there is slightly less fear to go out - if you want to get takeaways for example.”*

##### Negatives

*“Feeling anxious about a second wave of Coronavirus.”*

*“Brought more fear, confusion & worry.”*

*“It’s been anxiety provoking trying to adjust to the changes.”*

*“Scared to take that step.”*

*“Spreading a sense of insecurity.”*

*“Think it’s too early to do this ...so very wary.”*

*“We are more cautious than previously.”*

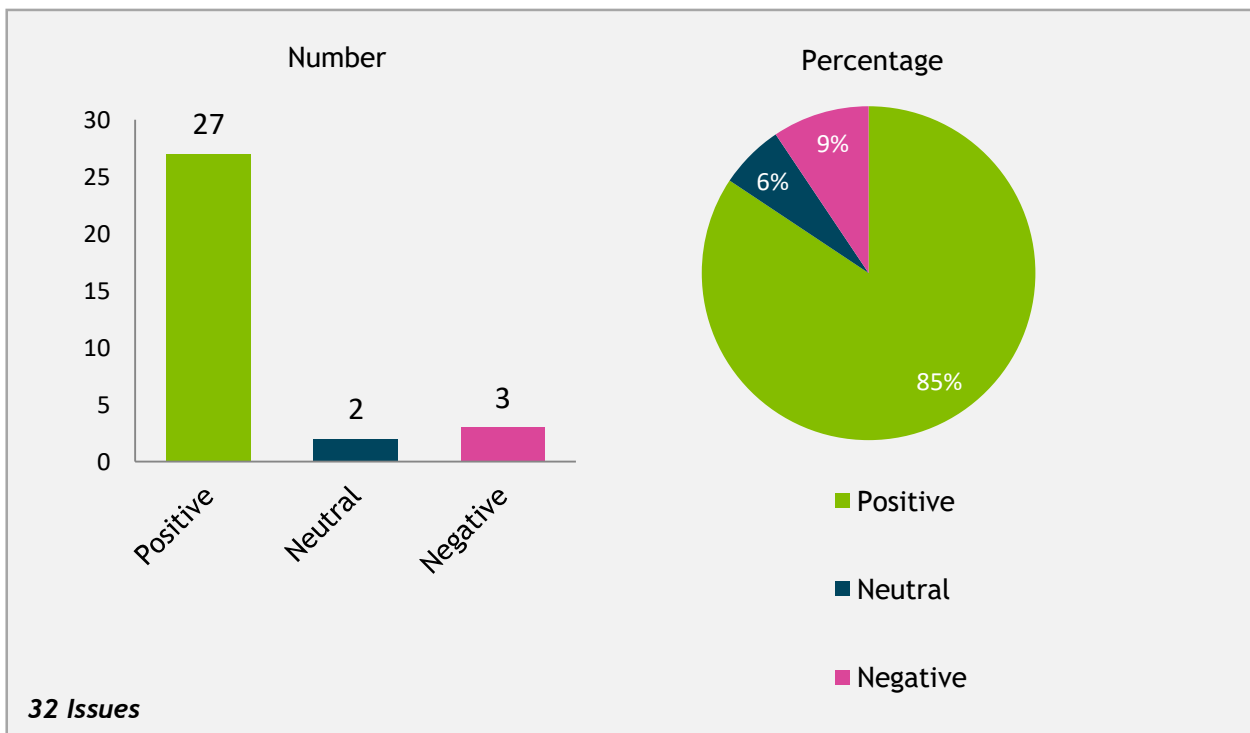
*“Loosening lockdown is very concerning - there are very good signs of a second wave coming in October and having many more due from this. Economy can always be recovered but human lives cannot.”*

### 3.3 Family and Friends

Overall, a fifth of people (20%) comment on the ability to socialise and connect with family and friends.

With 85% of feedback positive, it is clear that the lifting of lockdown has also lifted people’s spirits in this area. Just 9% of comments are negative overall.

#### 3.3.1 Sentiment, Family and Friends



With the lockdown eased, families are able to see more of each other - with parents and grandparents particularly pleased. The greater ability to socialise generally is also appreciated - one person comments that a simple walk with a friend makes all the difference.

Some people also appreciate the ability to meet in person (rather than online).

For some, the risks of infection (for example travelling on public transport) remain a barrier.

### Selected Comments

#### Positives

*"We can get more contact with our loved ones. "*

*"Been able to socialise with friends."*

*"It means I can meet my daughter and see my grandchildren."*

*"It's much better now we can meet friends outside. "*

*"Not really affected me too much as I live alone but it has been lovely to meet a friend for a walk."*

*"Our single daughter will be able to visit us and stay."*

*"Able to see in person, rather than Zoom."*

#### Negatives

*"I don't want to travel by public transport so can't go to see them."*

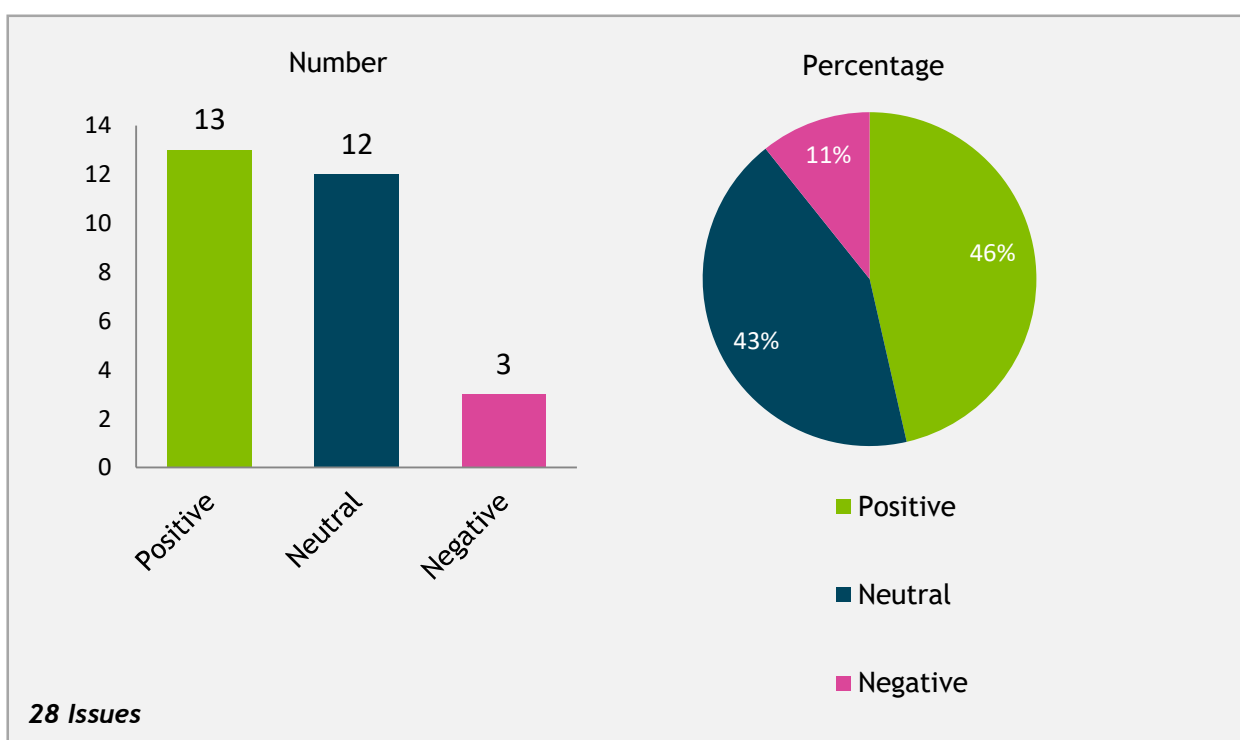
### 3.4 Mobility and Isolation

18% of people overall comment on mobility or isolation.

Feedback suggests sentiment is mixed, with 46% feeling more positive and 43% reporting no or little change in their circumstance.

Few people (11%) leave negative reviews.

### 3.4.1 Sentiment, Mobility and Isolation



Some people express the freedom of being able to enjoy more of the outdoors - this was especially beneficial for one family, whose son has a learning disability and did not fully understand the lockdown.

However not everybody is able to leave the house often, with carers, the vulnerable and those shielding citing various difficulties. One parent, who has a disabled son says that the requirement to wear a mask is a challenge.

We also hear that 'lack of guidance' from the government can be a disincentive to leave the house.

#### Selected Comments

##### Positives

*"Less isolation and enjoying the weather."*

*"Some part of me is relieved. And other parts of me still stressed. But nice to be able to see grandchildren and my son with learning difficulties who has been indoors for 10 weeks. He can be taken out in the fresh air to visit his sister whom he cannot understand why he couldn't see."*

##### Negatives

*"Mum and disabled son don't want to go out because of having to wear masks."*

*“Big dilemma, my husband in shielding group makes it very difficult for me to go out as there are too many people around. Secondly no proper guidance from the government.”*

### Other

*“Father is high risk and so until a vaccine continues to need to shelter.”*

*“Very little change, as parents we have to share our time with our daughter, who is disabled.”*

*“We are still not going out because my daughter has special needs and my husband is under shielding. My sister is doing my shopping.”*

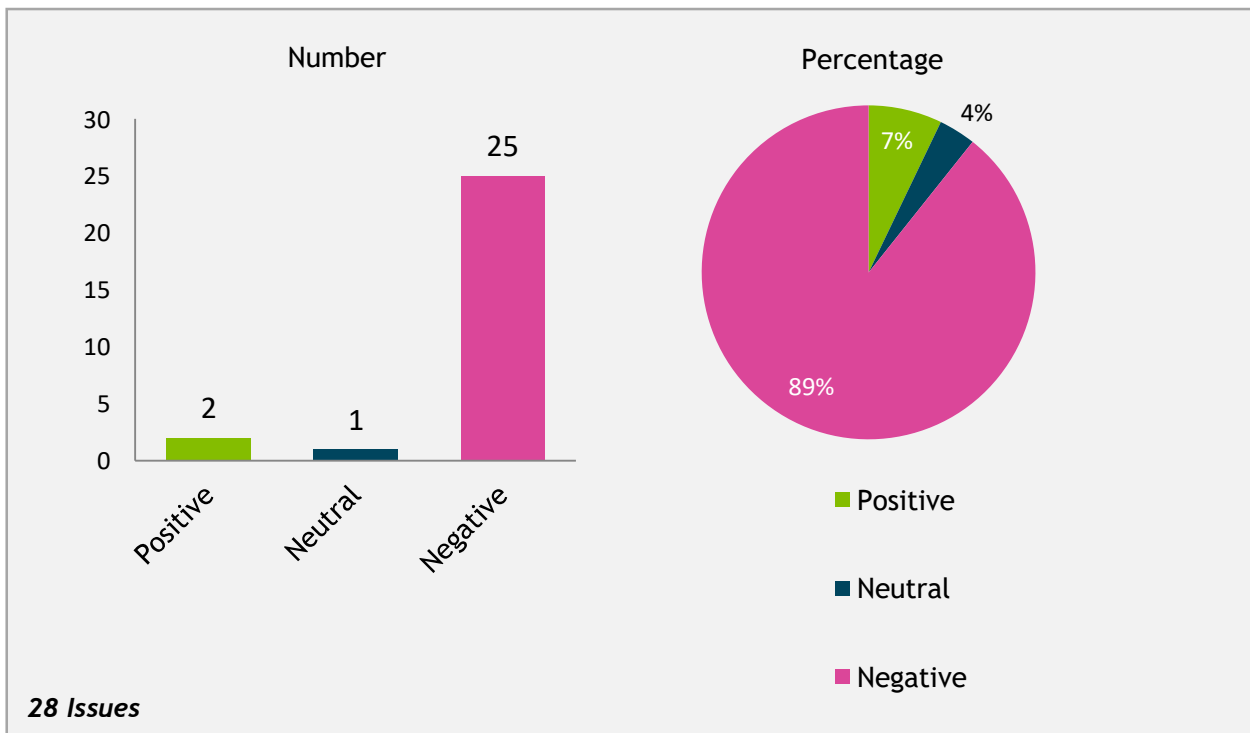
## 3.5 Infection Risk

18% of people overall comment on infection related issues.

With 89% of feedback negative, it is clear that people are concerned about the risk of infection.

Just 7% of people leave positive comments.

### 3.5.1 Sentiment, Infection Risk



While some observe good social distancing, the majority of people do not - with accounts of guidance not being followed. Busier streets and shops are a concern for many, it is also noted that lockdown easing can give the impression 'it is all over' - with less observation of social distancing.

The risk of infection at the work place is also highlighted.

### Selected Comments

#### Positives

*"Everyone still keeping the 2m distance."*

#### Negatives

*"Everywhere busier and people pushing the boundaries."*

*"More concern as other people not complying with social distancing. Some people think it's all over when it isn't."*

*"Confusing and farcical, unclear of genuine risk when one thing is allowed but other things are not (which are less safe) still not changing anything as and locking down as before - more fearful of going out as more people are around and are automatically socially distancing less."*

*"I haven't been affected yet but I'm worried about the re-opening of non essential shops. I'm worried about there being more people about and that it will be harder for people to social distance. Even without the re-opening of non essential shops I would say social distancing hasn't been properly adhered to in Harrow. In my opinion only about half of people I see out and about observe the social distancing regulations. This is only going to get worse with the re-opening of non essential shops. Too many people in Harrow just don't care about social distancing."*

*"Concern about my daughter returning to work in a retail shop on Monday. Hope they are Covid safe and that her journey on the tube in rush hour will be safe too."*

*"7 year old might need to go to school. I am not comfortable with that as have two over 80 year old parents at home."*

#### 4. Glossary of Terms

PPE Personal Protective Equipment

#### 5. Distribution and Comment

This report is available to the general public via our website, and is shared with our statutory and community partners. Accessible formats are available.

If you have any comments on this report or wish to share your views and experiences, please contact us.

#### About Us

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But nice to be able to see grandchildren and my son with learning difficulties who has been indoors for 10 weeks. He can be taken out in the fresh air to visit his sister whom he cannot understand why he couldn't see.”

Harrow resident