

 *mind*
Tameside,
Oldham
and Glossop

Mental Health and the Pandemic: Covid Survey Results



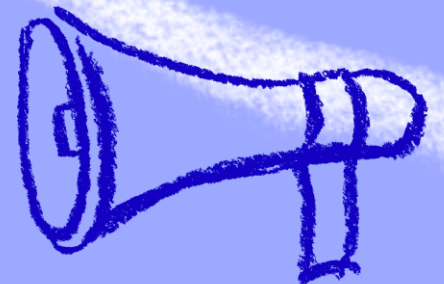
In October, government announced £25m for the Community Champions Scheme across the nation funded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and local Government (MHCLG). It used a data driven decision to work with communities with multiple complex needs.

Tameside was identified and successful in being awarded funding to support our Community Champions programme which launched in September 2020.



The Community Champions funding allocated to TOG Mind's project was used to gain a better understanding of how residents emotional wellbeing and mental health has been impacted by COVID-19.

We captured the voice and stories of service users during the pandemic and will share with you today what we have learnt to help contribute to designing future services and decision making.



Survey Overview:

- Our target was 100 clients with 73 responses in the form of online via Survey Monkey or in paper form for those attending services in person
- Participants were TOG Mind clients who had or were currently accessing services (Counselling, Peer Support or Wellbeing)
- In addition to this we conducted two focus groups made up of service users aged from 30 – 80 years of age. One group (*Next Steps*) was conducted face to face, and the other (*Bob in for a Brew*) was held online via Zoom, this enabled us to gather opinions and views of those both who needed the support of face to face services and those who were reliant on isolating for their own safety.

Comments and observations given in response to survey questions:

It's difficult having to repeat your story to each person or agency

We need easier access to support, and check-in's to help during the long waiting times

I work in MH, I find it difficult to talk to others, I cant say I have issues, I would be asked to leave

People tend to ask for help when in crisis, but there is no immediate help

Why do we need to be absolute breaking point to get help fast

Long Covid has wrecked my brain

It would appear things have to be at crisis point before any talking therapy or care is accessible

More evening and weekend appointments and services

I feel that I have become much more anxious in social situations

I've been a worse parent and employee because it is just not possible to do both at the same time well



I feel like I've been robbed of my retirement years. This is when I'm supposed to enjoy travel and days out, Covid has taken that away from me.



Comments and observations given in response to survey questions:

I was able to work from home, which I enjoyed

I tried to stay as active as possible

I went for walks each day and tried to take each day as it comes

I have had help from Mind and CGL

More regular time scheduled to talk to friends and family

Spoke to mates online

I appreciated I could have my sessions over the phone when I was too anxious to come in face to face

We made WhatsApp groups

Having my daughter phone me every day

Followed guidelines and attended TOG Mind sessions via Zoom



Safe-haven was a godsend for me. Look beyond box ticking, why do we need to be at absolute breaking point to get help fast. Early help is better than hoping a suicide attempt fails.



Focus Groups

We met with two of our groups:

Bob in for a Brew: This is a group that has been running since 2020, accessible via Zoom, with a demographic of Males & Females aged 28 – 70

Next Steps: A face to face peer support group for those 65 and over. Predominantly female.

Isolation / loneliness was the biggest struggle for over 65's

There was no escape from Covid, it consumed every part of life

Family were a big factor in getting through low points

Fear for their own safety and that of their loved ones

Zoom sessions provided a chance to talk and connect with others

Mixed response to face to face vs. technological routes

Findings and Recommendations

Findings:

- 25% of survey participants said their Mental Health **hadn't** been impacted since the first national lockdown in 2020
- With 52% saying they hadn't faced any barriers when accessing support for their Mental Health
- In the surveys Anxiety, Stress and Depression ranked highest in symptoms experienced, however, in the focus groups Loneliness and Isolation were the more prevalent.
- In response to how people managed their Mental Health '**Connections with others**' was stated more than '**Professional Services**' (ie NHS, TOG Mind, CGL etc.)
- 50% of those who answered Q4 of the survey (how did you cope with the pressures and changes) responded with "*I didn't*".

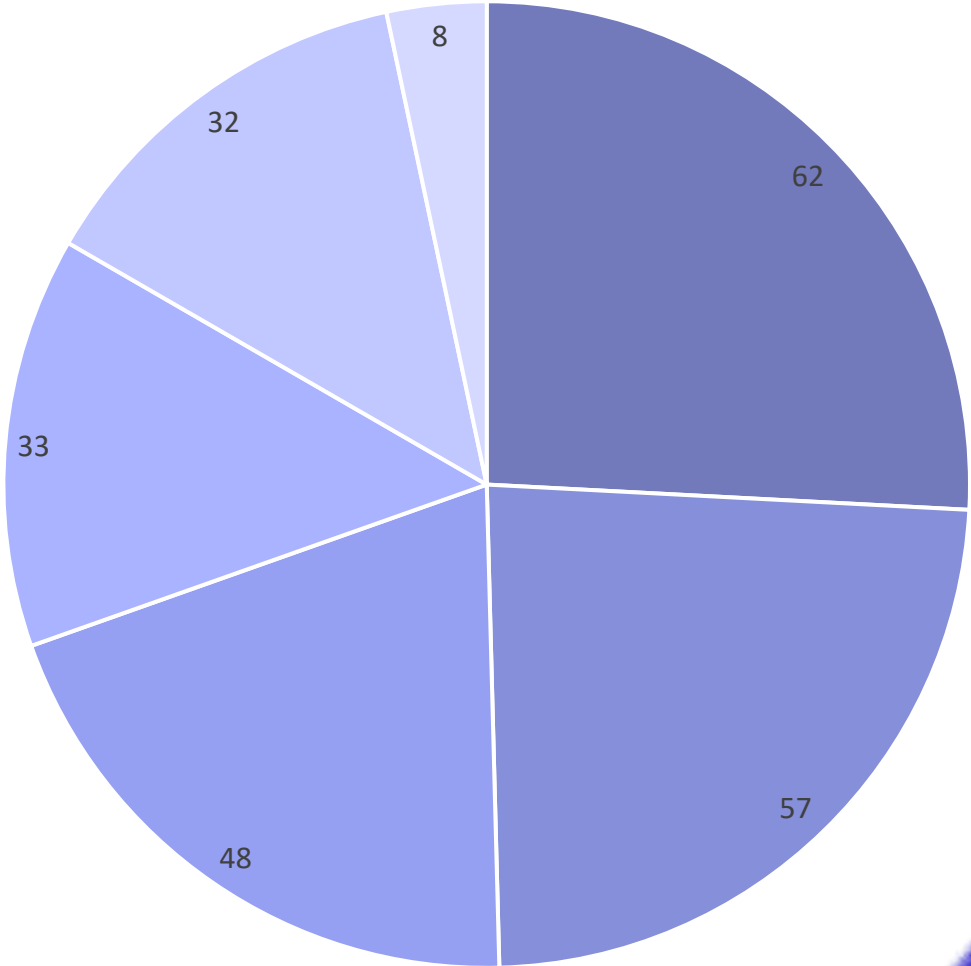
Findings and Recommendations

Recommendations:

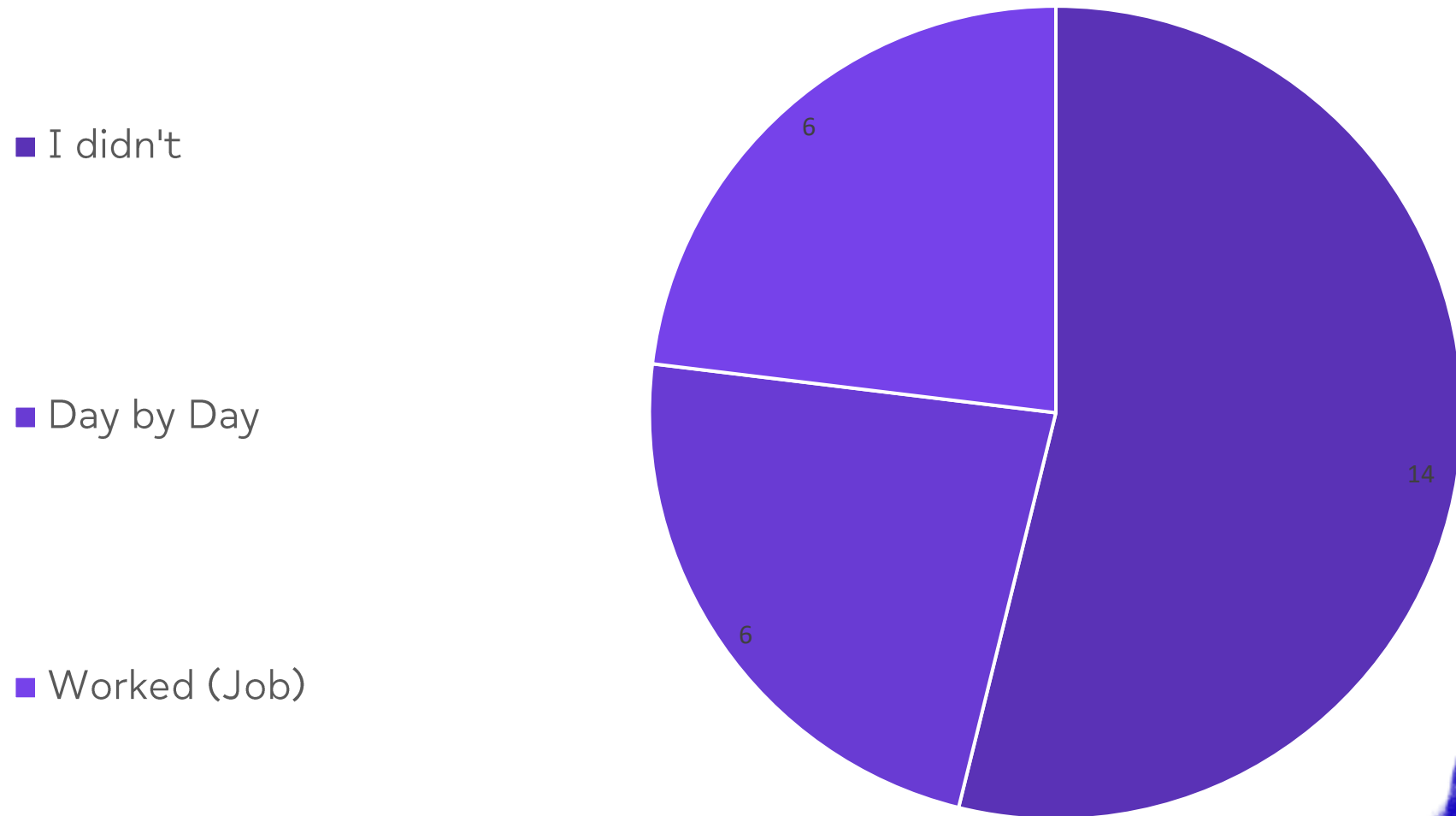
- The results for *'how people managed their Mental Health'* where **'Connections with others'** was stated more than **'Professional Services'** highlighted the Wellbeing services TOG Mind has been delivering throughout and after the pandemic is as vital as therapeutic interventions.
- Keeping the option of phone / zoom services still available post pandemic to ensure vulnerable & isolated individuals can access therapies and wellbeing services.
- More early interventions & preventative services, including drop-in support and immediate walk-in provisions
- Transparency with Funding, showing the public where the money goes to, and what difference it is making to Mental Health services in their area

Q3. During the pandemic, have you experienced any of the following:

- Anxiety
- Stress
- Depression
- Loneliness
- Isolation
- None of the above

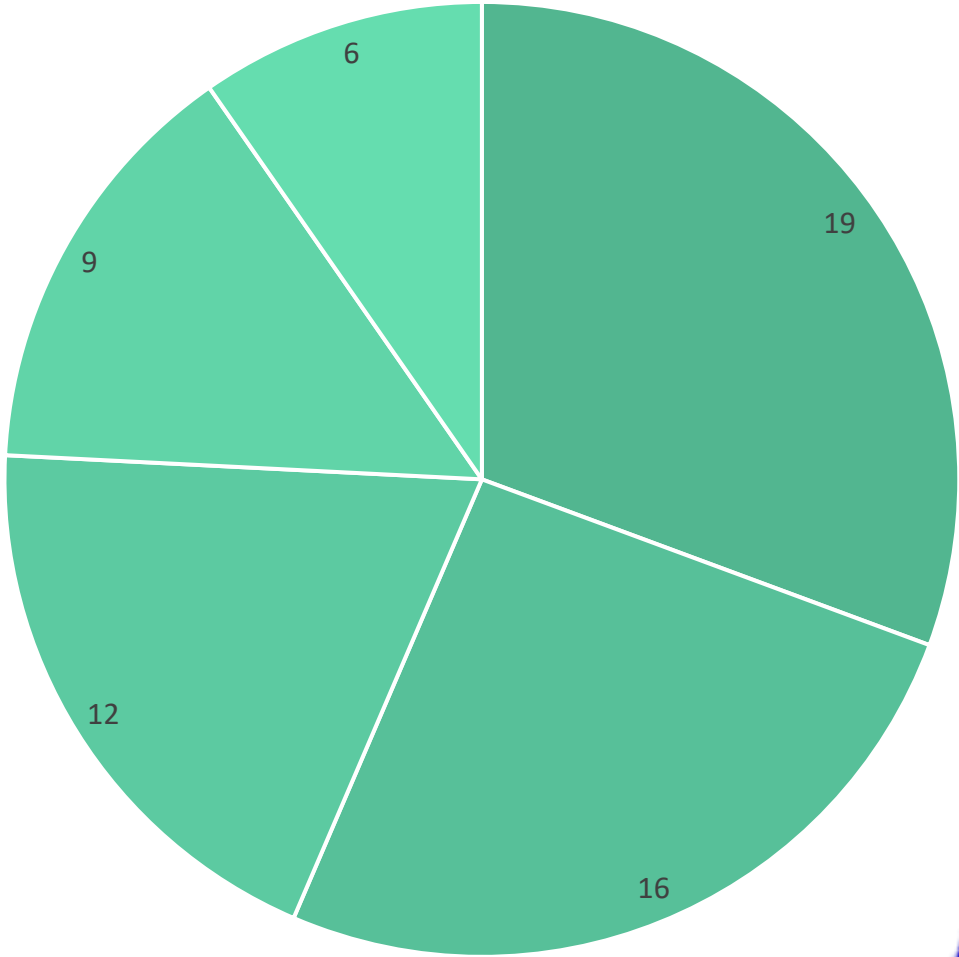


Q4. How did you cope with the pressures and changes during the pandemic?



Q7. What improvements would you like to see from Mental Health services in the future?

- No answer
- More funding
- Shorter waitlists / wait times
- Easier access to services
- Prevention services (Early Intervention)



Q8. Is there any information you want to tell us to help understand how you managed your mental wellbeing during the pandemic?

