



## What is the COVID Protect Service?

Covid Protect is a pioneering initiative developed by the NHS in Norfolk and Waveney which aims to support and protect people with the most medical need in our communities. Around 28,000 patients who are at higher risk of developing complications from coronavirus (Covid19) received letters from NHS Norfolk and Waveney Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) in April 2020 asking them to report their health and symptoms on a daily basis via a dedicated, secure NHS portal [www.nhspatient.org](http://www.nhspatient.org) using a unique code.

Patients were asked if they or anyone in their family is currently experiencing any coronavirus symptoms such as a cough or a fever. They were also asked if they have sufficient medicines and essential supplies such as food and whether they needed any additional support. These daily updates helped doctors identify quickly which patients were in need of additional medical or social support. Patients without access to the internet were asked to encourage a family member or friend to go online for them if possible.

CCG staff volunteers were recruited to telephone those people who were not using the portal because, for example, they were unable to use the service or were experiencing technical problems. Those who did not wish to participate were removed from the call list.

The service was 'paused' on August 1<sup>st</sup> when the lockdown restrictions for shielded people were eased, however the service remained ready to re-start should another lockdown occur.

## What questions did we ask?

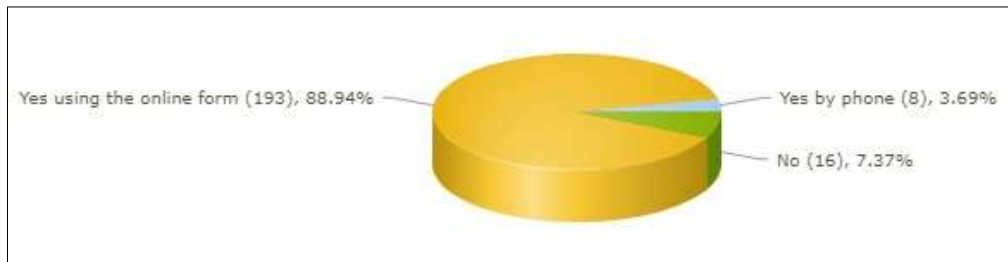
This engagement exercise was designed to find out what people who used the service thought, and to discover why some people chose not to engage. We were interested to know:

1. Whether people had participated in the service
2. How useful they found it
3. Whether they raised any requests for help
4. Who they were contacted by
5. Whether they got the help they needed
6. Whether they were contacted by their local council
7. Anything else they wanted to tell us about the service
8. Whether they were interested in getting involved in other engagement opportunities about health and care services in Norfolk and Waveney

## Who took part in the survey?

- 252 surveys were completed – 220 online and 32 using telephone interviews for those who do not find it easy to take part online
- 145 people expressed an interest in being involved in future engagement opportunities
- 17 letters were also received by people who had used the service. Issues and feedback raised in the letters have been reflected in the themes below

The vast majority of people who completed the **online survey** had participated in the Covid Protect Service.



All but one of those who responded using **telephone interviews** had taken part.

## What did we find out?

The people who responded gave us feedback which has been summarised and organised into the following themes:

### Question – Those who indicated that they did not take part in the service were asked why:

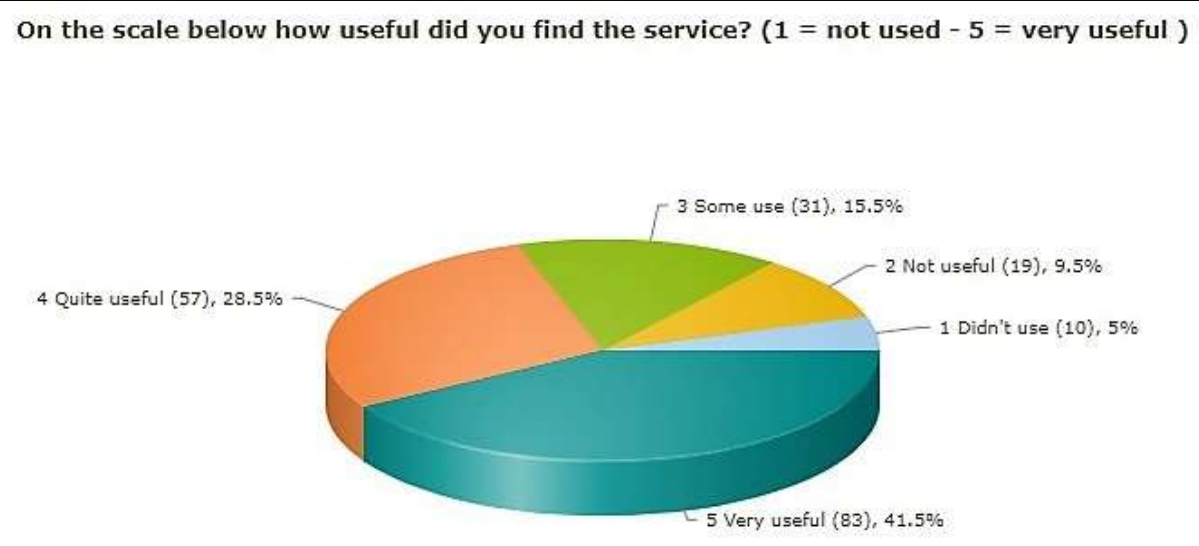
Theme	Comments
<b>Perceived low risk</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Some felt that the risk was too low to warrant shielding rather than just following the recommended distancing and other hygiene precautions</li><li>• Some older people felt that of the time they had left they did not want to spend it shielding</li></ul>
<b>Technical errors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Some people fed back that they had been unaware of the scheme and had not received the earlier letters</li><li>• Some did not feel they should be on the shielded list or had been incorrectly identified as needing to shield</li><li>• Several people reported that they asked for help but did not receive any</li><li>• Some people did not receive the letter advising them to shield at the start of the project</li><li>• Some had problems logging into the website to register, were not able to resolve them and so gave up</li></ul>

**Did not need support**

- Some people said they did not feel they needed any extra support as they already had systems in place

**Question – How useful did you find this service?**

The majority of people who completed the **online survey** found the Covid Protect Service very or quite useful.



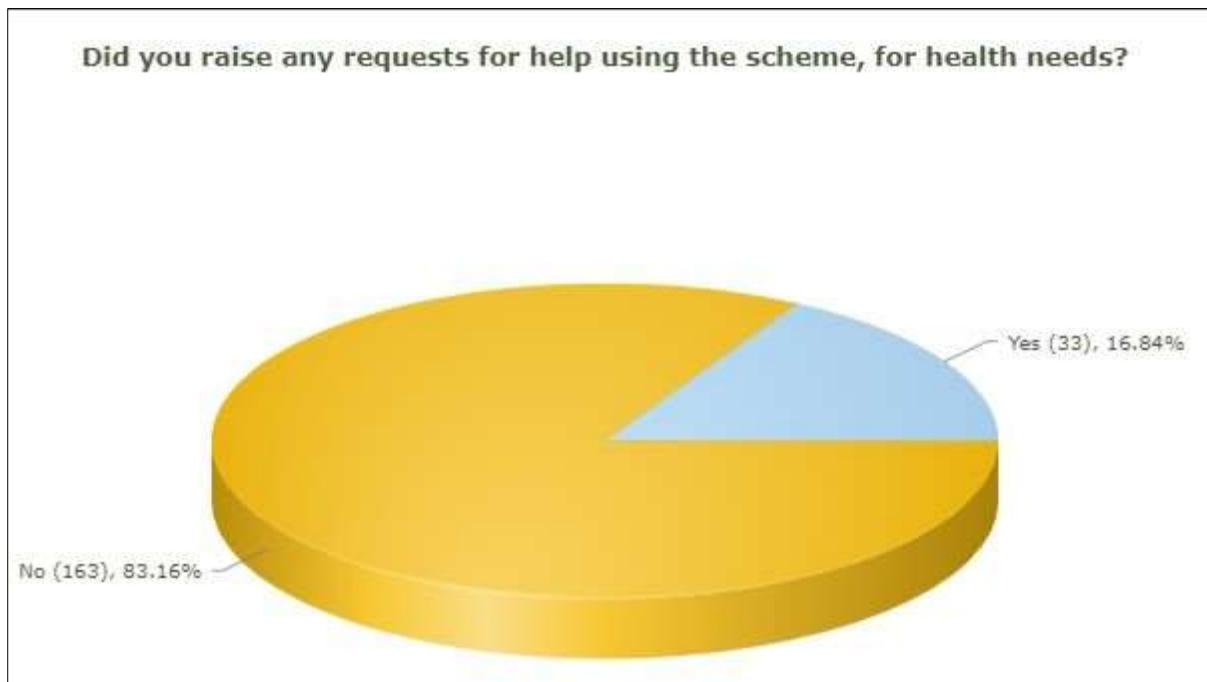
Of those who responded using **telephone interviews** 22 people found it very useful, 3 quite useful, 3 some use, 1 not useful, 3 skipped the question.

Below is a summary of why people chose their rating:

<b>Felt supported</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The feeling of being supported and not being alone was a common theme</li> <li>• People reported feeling reassured that help was there if needed, even if they were coping well, and especially if they lived alone</li> </ul>
<b>Advice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many people liked being able to ask for advice, particularly about the national shielding guidance</li> </ul>
<b>Negative feedback</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• About 10% of people who answered this question said it was not useful, mostly due to the fact that they asked for help but were not contacted</li> <li>• Some people commented that filling out the online form when their circumstances had not changed became repetitive</li> <li>• Some people said they didn't get their first contact until quite late into lockdown</li> </ul>

## Question – Raising Requests For Help

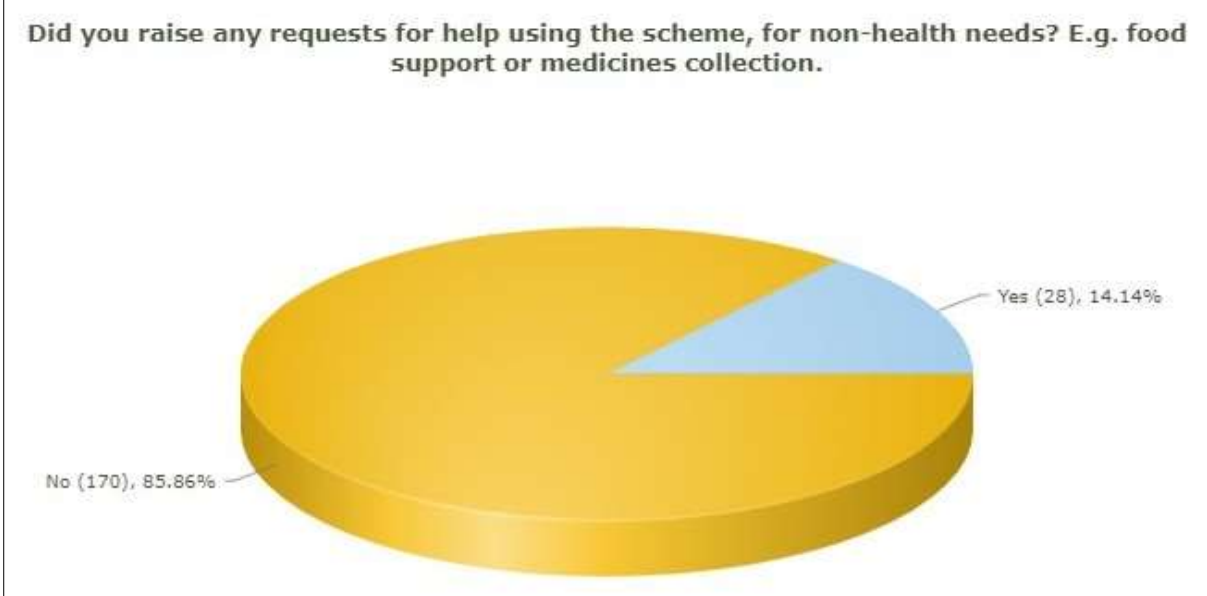
**Requests for help with health needs** - The majority of people who responded online did not raise a request for help dealing with a health need.



Only 6 out of the 29 people who responded using **telephone interviews** had raised requests for help for a health need.

Out of everyone who got a response 13 were contacted by a GP and 11 by a nurse. Other clinicians who contacted patients included paramedics, a specialist heart nurse and a learning disability duty social worker. Several reported that they did not receive any kind of contact despite asking for help, which meant they either went without any help or asked friends and family.

**Requests for help with non-health needs** - The majority of people who responded online did not raise a request for help dealing with a non-health need.



Only 4 out of the 25 people who responded using **telephone interviews** had raised requests for help for a non-health need.

Most of the requests for help were for collecting food and medicines, but other requests for help included having a lifeline alarm fitted, help with getting laundry done, and help with accessing online shopping slots.

Out of everyone who got a response 22 were contacted by the local council. Other groups who contacted patients included church groups, health-related charities, and NHS volunteers. Similarly to above, several reported that they did not receive any kind of contact despite asking for help, which meant they either went without any help or asked friends and family.

**Question – is there anything else you would like to tell us?**

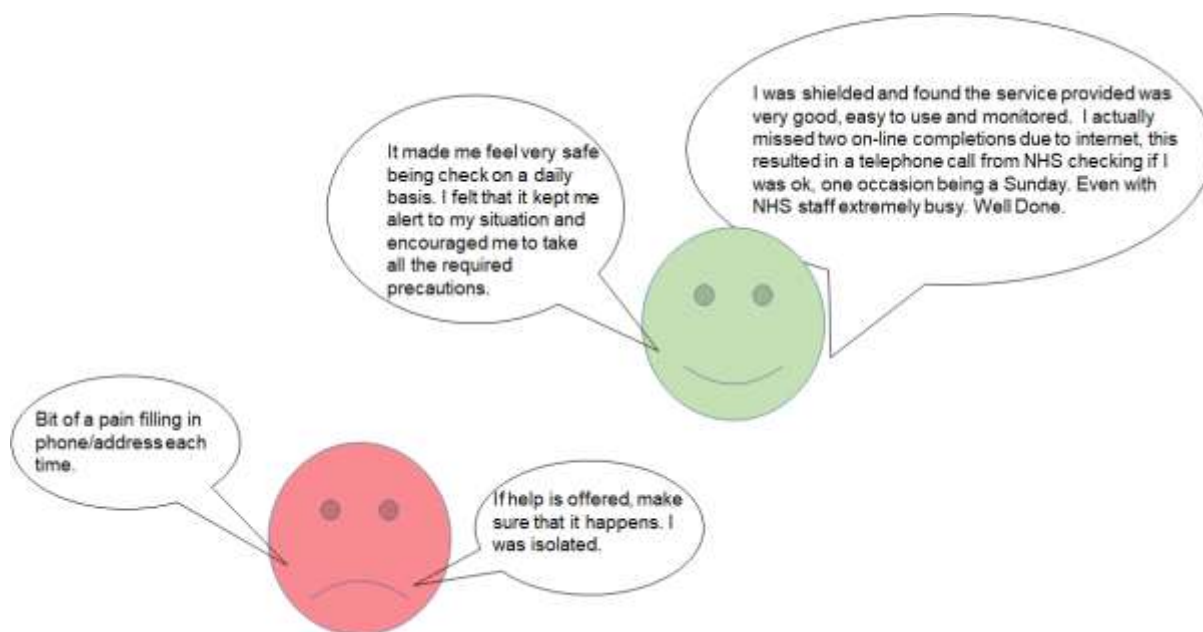
Below is a summary of the suggestions raised under this question:

<p><b>Technical issues</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daily statement felt laborious – could have added single question to start with ‘Do you want to report any changes to your health or circumstances?’ Y/N – if yes can go on to answer other questions</li> <li>• Concerns that someone was receiving and checking the forms – acknowledge the forms each time they are sent</li> <li>• Felt missed out on a regular phone call if completed the form online</li> <li>• Several people commented on the lack of any email contact despite giving their email address each time</li> <li>• Suggestion that the system should tell the shielding person when they last logged in online in case they can’t remember</li> <li>• Several people reported that the system would not accept their COVID codes and they were unable to login</li> </ul>
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<b>Support appreciated</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lots of people saying they were very grateful for the extra support</li> <li>• Felt very cared for</li> <li>• Scared and often lonely so glad to know someone was keeping an eye out for them and that there was support if needed</li> </ul>
<b>Issues with raising requests for help</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Several people underlined the need to make sure people get help if they ask for it</li> <li>• Several comments were made that the response times could be quicker than the 3-5 days stated, especially for mental health issues</li> </ul>
<b>Issues with language used</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Several people felt upset or even insulted by the term 'extremely vulnerable'</li> <li>• Some people mentioned that initially they were not clear what the scheme was and how it worked</li> </ul>

**Below are some of the comments we received:**



**What will we do as a result of what you told us?**

This report will be shared with the Protect NoW project group which is leading the work to extend this type of project into other areas where patients would benefit from targeted support, such as uptake of flu vaccine and diabetes self-care. Once the Protect NoW project group have reviewed the feedback, we will publish on our website and share widely:

- the outcome of their discussions
- this report

People who have volunteered to take part in further engagement will also be contacted and offered various opportunities. Focus groups have already taken place around cancer services, and others are planned for diabetes.

If you would like this document in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call us on **01603 257000** or email [nwccg.haveyoursay@nhs.net](mailto:nwccg.haveyoursay@nhs.net). Or write to us at Lakeside 400, Old Chapel Way, Broadland Business Park, Thorpe St Andrew, Norwich NR7 0WG.