

Understanding the impact of Covid 19 on the communities of Kent

The Kent Equality Cohesion Council a registered charity which works to tackle discrimination and promote community cohesion in Kent and Cohesion Plus, a not for profit organisation which uses the arts to bring communities together and celebrate the cohesion of Kent have produced this report. Although it may not be statistically valid, that was never the intention. Rather the intention was the capture an overview which could inform policy makers and community groups of the impact the pandemic has had as we start to ease out of lockdown and return to a semblance of normality.

Overview

- Between July 1 - July 10 we made use of community, faith and organisational networks to better understand the impact that Covid 19 has had in Kent. This was conducted through a short online questionnaire which was shared via **email, text** and **WhatsApp**.
- In total **896** responses were received across the **12 districts of Kent and the Unitary Authority**. Gravesham, where our organisations are based, made up 18% of respondents followed by Dover with 17% and Thanet with 10%. The area with the lowest response was Sevenoaks with 2% which equates to 22 responses.
- 74% of respondents were from the British White community, 19% of respondents were from BAME communities, 3% were White Other, whilst the remainder preferred not to say. BAME community response levels included 7% British Asian Indian, 4% Black British Caribbean and 3% Black British African. Although the respondents' make-up may not be in line with the 2011 Census, it is clear that the demographics of Kent have changed significantly since then and we feel this report provides a more accurate picture of the diversity of the County.
- In terms of disability, 87% of respondents said they were not disabled, 8% stated they had a disability which equates to 72 responses, whilst 5% preferred not to say.
- With regards to the age breakdown of respondents, the 2 largest age groups were 45-54 which made up 29% of respondents, followed by the 35-44 age group which made up 22%. The lowest response was in the under 18 category with 1% which equates to 5 respondents. This was to be expected as the survey was not targeted at young people.
- In terms of gender, the most overwhelming response was from females including Trans Women which made up 68% of respondents compared to the 29% Male response including Trans Men. Whilst 3% preferred not to say. This again was not seen as too much of a surprise due to the networks and organisations that were contacted.

Context

One of the motivating factors around preparing this report was not only to understand the impact that Covid 19 has had on the communities of Kent, but to also look at how it has had a different impact on communities depending on their ethnic background. Nationally, a number of studies including the **Public Health England Report – Beyond the data: Understanding the impact of COVID-19 on BAME groups published in June 2020** have highlighted the disproportionate impact on BAME communities. We wanted to better understand this especially as the lockdown eases and the economy begins to re-open.

Our Research Findings

“Do you know anyone that has suffered from Covid 19?”

Overall from the 896 responses 520 said they knew somebody who had suffered from Covid 19. 73% of these were from a British White background and 24% were from a BAME background.

If you look at the responses within the context of all 896 respondents to the survey, 57% of British White respondents said they knew someone who suffered from Covid 19 compared to the 61% from BAME backgrounds.

Delving into the figures further, if we compare the number of British White respondents who knew someone who had Covid 19 compared to specific ethnic groups the results provide some interesting data. As stated 57% of British White respondents knew someone who had Covid 19. This compares to 69% of any Other White background respondents, 65% of British Asian Indian respondents, 58% of Black British African respondents and 48% of Black British Caribbean respondents. For the purposes of the question we looked at a minimum of 26 respondents by ethnic background.

The BAME respondents that said they knew someone who had suffered from Covid 19 are disproportionately higher compared to their British White counterpart; this is significant especially for the British Asian Indian community.

“In which ways did the pandemic affect you and your household?”

For this question we gave respondents four options and they were able to select as many as required. In total 896 responded to this question, 85% of respondents said their work had been affected, 40% said education was affected, 39% said access to healthcare was an issue and 16% said access to support services was affected.

Looking first at impact on work overall, of the 765 respondents that chose this option, 77% of respondents were British White and 20% were BAME. Within the context of everyone taking part in the survey, 88% of British White respondents and 76% of BAME respondents had their work affected during the pandemic.

The ethnic data was broken down further to see whether BAME communities were affected differently around work. 82% British Asian Indian, 81% White Other, 72% Black British African and 49% Black British Caribbean respondents said their work had been impacted. Traditionally British Asian Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities have done less well economically than other BAME communities. For the purpose of this answer we grouped together the British Asian Pakistani, British Asian Bangladeshi and Any Other Asian due to their small numbers individually. This equated to 85%.

Looking at education 354 respondents chose this option. Breaking this down 76% of these were British White and 23% were BAME.

Then we broke down these figures further within the context of the 896 total responses to the questionnaire. 49% of total British White respondents were affected around education compared to 39% of BAME communities.

Looking at the BAME figures within the wider context of the total 896 respondents further, the broad similarity is striking especially if you factor in the small sample size. 46% British Asian Pakistani, British Asian Bangladeshi and Any Other Asian which equates to 26 responses, 45% of Black British African which equates to 29 responses, 38% of British Asian Indian which equates to 66 responses, 38% of White Other which equates to 26 responses and 31% of Black British Caribbean which equates 35 responses were impacted in terms of education.

With reference to access to healthcare 346 respondents felt this had been impacted. 68% of respondents to this question were British White and 28% were from a BAME background.

When you look at the figures within the context of all 896 responses, the results are as follows: 57% of Black British Caribbean respondents, 55% of Black British African, 46% of British Asian Indian, 42% British Asian Pakistani, British Asian Bangladeshi and Any Other Asian and 38% White Other said they were impacted by access to healthcare compared to 42% of British White respondents.

Of the four options, access to support services had the lowest response rate with 142 respondents selecting this. 60% of respondents to this question were British White and 36% were BAME.

Looking at the responses within the context of the overall figures, 15% of British White respondents said they were impacted when it came to accessing support services compared to 24% from BAME communities.

Breaking down the BAME data further, of the 51 responses to this specific question 60% of Black British Caribbean selected this option followed by 42% of British Asian Pakistani, British Asian Bangladeshi and Any Other Asian, 17% British Asian Indian and 10% Black British African.

“As a result of the pandemic are you more or less likely to go out?”

All 896 respondents participated in this particular question. Only 1% said they were more likely to go out. 83% said they were less likely to go out whilst 16% answered same as before.

83% of British White respondents and 85% of BAME respondents who took part in this survey said they were less likely to go out as a result of the pandemic. 16% of British White respondents said they would go out the same as before whilst 13% of BAME respondents answered similarly.

Looking at the BAME responses in further detail, 100% of Black British Caribbean, 83% of British Asian Indians, 80% of British White Other and 79% of Black British African said they were less likely to go out.

“Which of the following would you feel confident attending in the following months?”

Overall, 813 respondents answered this question whilst 83 skipped. Of those that responded 67% said they were confident in attending the Town Centre and Shopping Centres, 48% said hospitals, 32% stated restaurants and outdoor sporting events, 26% said weddings, parties and social gatherings, 22% said places of worship, 17% said cinema and theatre and 8% said festivals.

Of the 547 respondents who said they felt confident in attending the Town Centre and Shopping Centres, 74% were from a British White background which equates to 405 responses whilst 22% were from BAME backgrounds which equates to 122 responses. The remaining respondents preferred not to state their ethnicity.

Looking within the context of the overall 896 responses, 61% of British White respondents said they were confident in attending the Town Centre and Shopping Centres and 60% of BAME respondents felt the same.

Delving further into the responses of the various ethnic groups, compared to the 61% of British White respondents, who said they were confident in attending the Town Centre and Shopping Centres, 59% of British Asian Indian, 69% of Black British Caribbean, 66% of Black British African and 58% of White Other responded that they were also confident.

264 respondents said they were confident in attending restaurants. 78% of these respondents were British White and 19% were from a BAME background. Looking at these figures within the context of the overall survey 31% of British White respondents were confident in attending restaurants compared to 25% of BAME responses.

Breaking down the BAME responses further 20% of British Asian Indian, 34% Black British Caribbean, 21% Black British African and 30% White Other said they were confident compared to 31% of overall British White respondents.

Looking at outdoor sporting events there were 257 responses of which 71% were from British White and 25% from BAME communities. Looking within the context of the wider survey, 28% of British White respondents and 32% of BAME respondents said they were confident in attending outdoor sporting events.

24% of overall British Asian Indian respondents, 29% Black British Caribbean, 48% Black British African and 42% of White Other felt confident compared to the 28% of British White respondents.

In terms of the consumption of culture, looking first at attending cinemas and theatre's, 140 respondents felt confident in attending one or both. 71% of respondents to this question were British White, and 24% were from BAME communities.

Within the context of the wider survey 15% of British White respondents felt confident in attending the cinema and theatre compared to 17% from BAME backgrounds.

12% of British Asian Indian, 37% of Black British Caribbean, 10% Black British African and 12% of White Other felt confident compared to the 15% British White respondents.

In terms of festivals there were 69 favourable responses, 38 of these responses were from British White backgrounds and 26 were from BAME backgrounds.

Within the context of the overall survey 6% of British White respondents are confident in attending outdoor festival compared to 13% of BAME respondents. Breaking down the BAME responses, 31% of Black British Caribbean were most confident compared to the 14% of Black British African and 5% of British Asian Indian.

With reference to attending parties, weddings and social gatherings there were 208 responses of which 159 were British White and 40 were from BAME backgrounds, whilst the remaining preferred not to say. Within the overall survey this equates to 24% of British White respondents feeling confident in attending parties, weddings and social gatherings compared to the 20% from BAME communities. Delving further into the BAME responses, 28% of Black British African, 20% British Asian Indian and 14% of Black British Caribbean said they were confident in attending parties, weddings and social gatherings.

There were 180 responses around whether individuals were confident in attending places of worship, 55% of respondents to this question were British White and 38% were BAME.

Looking at these responses within the overall survey, 15% of British White respondents were confident in attending a place of worship compared to the 34% from BAME backgrounds. In terms of the BAME responses 45% Black British African, 43% of Black British Caribbean, 37% of British Asian Indians, 31% for British Asian Pakistani, British Bangladeshi and Asian Other and 15% British White Other and felt confident in attending a place of worship as the lockdown eases.

As the lockdown eases, it is important that people feel confident in accessing healthcare. 392 people responded to this question around having confidence in attending hospitals. Of the responses, 312 were from British White backgrounds and 68 were from BAME backgrounds. Looking at the figures within the context of the overall survey this shows that 47% of British White respondents were confident in accessing health services at the hospital compared to 33% from BAME backgrounds.

Delving into the BAME data further, 20% of British Asian Indian, 49% Black British Caribbean, 24% of Black British African, 54% British White Other and 27% of British Asian Pakistani, British Bangladeshi and Asian Other said they were confident in attending hospitals compared to the 47% of British White.

“Do you think the pandemic has had an impact on your mental and physical health?”

All 896 participants to the survey answered this question. 70% which equates to 631 respondents said yes whilst 30% which equates to 265 respondents said no.

Looking first at the respondents who said that the pandemic has had an impact on their health, be it mental or physical 70% of British White participants said it had a negative impact on their wellbeing. This was the same figure for respondents from a BAME background.

Going into more detail with the BAME responses, 91% of Black British Caribbean, 77% of British Asian Pakistani, British Bangladeshi and Asian Other, 70% of British Asian Indians, 66% of British White Other and 59% of Black British African felt their mental and physical health had been impacted compared to 77% of British White respondents.

Looking at the breakdown for those who said the pandemic had not had an impact on their mental and physical health, 265 responses included 193 British White and 60 BAME. Within the context of the survey those from British White backgrounds said that the pandemic had no impact on their wellbeing equates to 29% of the overall survey which is the same response as those from BAME backgrounds.

The BAME respondents who said no can be broken down further to the following: 45% Black British Africans, 35% for British White Other, 31% of British Asian Pakistani, British Bangladeshi and Asian Other, 30% for British Asian Indians and 9% for Black British Caribbean.

Key Findings

- The BAME respondents that said they knew someone who had suffered from Covid 19 are disproportionately higher compared to their British White counterparts; this is significant especially for the British Asian Indian community.
- There was a striking similarity when looking at the impact on education across ethnic groups. This was especially the case when it came to comparing the impact on British White communities with Black British African, British Asian Indian and British Asian Pakistani, Bangladeshi and any other Asian background.
- When it came to access to healthcare, BAME respondents were disproportionately more impacted than British White respondents. Particularly those from Black British Caribbean, Black British African and British Asian Indian.
- Accessing support services during the pandemic was another area in which BAME communities were disproportionately impacted when compared to their British White counterparts. This was especially the case for Black British Caribbean and British Asian Pakistani, Bangladeshi and any other Asian ethnic groups.
- In terms of going out as the lockdown eases, there was a general consensus across the different ethnic groups that they were less likely to go out with remarkably similar responses. It was particularly striking that 100% of respondents from Black British Caribbean backgrounds said they were less likely to go out.
- With regards to visiting Town and Shopping Centres as the lockdown eases, there was a general agreement across all ethnic groups. However, when it came to attending restaurants, the British White respondents stated they were more confident, particularly compared to British Asian Indian respondents.

- When it came to the consumption of culture through theatre, cinema and also outdoor sporting events there was a similar response across the different ethnic groups. This is also the case when it comes to attending festivals although the figures are very low which would indicate that this is not seen as a priority at this time.
- With regards to attending places of worship there was a significant difference in terms of the British White response compared to BAME. Black British African and Black British Caribbean were nearly 3 times more confident in attending a place of worship. British Asian Indian and British Asian Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Other Asian were 2 times more confident in attending a place of worship.
- When it came to accessing healthcare there was again a clear dividing line with British White respondents much more confident in accessing healthcare services at the hospital compared to BAME communities. For example, British White respondents were twice as more confident than British Asian Indian and Black British African respondents.
- Over 2 thirds of respondents said the pandemic has had an impact on their mental and physical health. Although the figures for British White and BAME overall were similar when it came to impact, what was particularly striking, when breaking down the BAME responses, was that over 90% of Black British Caribbean respondents felt that their health had been impacted.

Next Steps

We already know that the pandemic has had a major impact on people's lives. Data is still being collected to better understand how the pandemic has affected different ethnic groups and we hope this report is able to contribute towards this discussion in some small way. What is clear however, is that some further work needs to take place quite urgently which could then help shape the work of government, local authority, charity and faith sectors as the country eases out of lockdown.

We believe that this work should not just be taking place at a national level but also at a micro, county and borough level so that a fuller picture as possible can be obtained. From the findings of this report and other reports published nationally it is clear that the pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on BAME communities. It is important that BAME communities are not looked at as homogenous, but rather as separate valid entities and future research needs to factor this in. Moving forward we are looking to share this report as widely as possible to start a dialogue in Kent.



For further information on the work of the Kent Equality Cohesion Council please visit www.kentecc.org.uk
info@kentecc.org.uk



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info@cohesionplus.com