



COVID-19 Impact Assessment

Executive Summary

**North East Lincolnshire: COVID-19 Impact
Assessment (State of the Borough 2021)**

This report provides a narrative summary of the key points of the impact of COVID-19 in North East Lincolnshire and forms a significant part of our Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for 2021.

The COVID-19 pandemic has fundamentally affected every child, adult, family and community in North East Lincolnshire. It has touched upon every aspect of our lives some of which are: the way we work, our enjoyment of sport and the arts, our leisure activities and holidays, our family, and relationships. The impact of social isolation on emotional well-being and mental health is an overarching area of concern for all age groups but particularly for children.

COVID-19 has also put pressure on health and social care services in North East Lincolnshire, that is, primary and secondary care services, children's services, social care, and public health services. Necessary action (national directives) to manage the pandemic has had a devastating consequence for our local economy and jobs that will be with us for years to come.

This report is themed around the following seven sections, all of which are key to the wellbeing of the North East Lincolnshire population. This report provides a summary of each of these sections but much more detailed reports for each are available in the North East Lincolnshire Data Observatory <https://www.nelincsdata.net/jsna/> :

- Economy
- Education and Skills
- Children and Young People
- Health and Wellbeing
- Communities and Environment
- Housing
- Adult Social Care

1.0 Economy

Economy

Emerging Issues

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact across populations globally, nationally and locally. The effects have reflected and in some areas exacerbated our social and health inequalities. The interdependence between health and the economy has never been closer and the need for a fairer and more inclusive economic system has never been clearer.



Unemployment in NEL has increased since the start of the pandemic in March 2020. Youth have seen the largest increase in unemployment. As the number of individuals are taken off furlough support increases over the coming months, there is likely to be an increase in unemployment locally and subsequent impacts on mental health and wider impacts on physical health and relationships.



Citizens Advice NEL has reported increased mental health issues locally linked to uncertainty from issues such as being furloughed and redundancy. Furloughed workers that do return to work, are likely to experience slower pay growth as a result and will have missed out on the growth in skills. This will be especially acute for young people and another way in which this generation will continue to feel the pandemic's effects long after the immediate crisis ends.



Our financial resilience model suggests that the pandemic has not hit equally. There are low levels of financial resilience across NEL and the pandemic has negatively impacted, particularly since the second wave. Financial resilience scores were on the whole below the national average. Poor financial resilience can lead to more universal credit claimants, homelessness and large debt. There is strong evidence to suggest that the pandemic will continue to exacerbate the disparity in income inequalities.



NEL is considered to be part of Britain's older industrial local authorities. Research has suggested that as a consequence of the pandemic in terms of potential business failure and associated job losses, North East Lincolnshire is ranked in the top ten locations where there is the highest business risk. This suggests that, at the business level, comparatively more firms in poorer and peripheral areas will disappear during the Covid-19 epidemic and that this inequality of impact on the business population will further disadvantage these areas in the post-Covid-19 era.

Ongoing Solutions

COVID-19 has generated a series of economic effects that will have long-term impacts: we are in a COVID decade and, many of these effects will be felt far beyond that. The pandemic has exposed, exacerbated and solidified existing inequalities in society. However, the pandemic has also exposed areas of strength, resilience, creativity and innovation within the economy.



Within NEL, mobility to grocery and pharmacy and retail and recreation have continued to recover since February 2021. Although they are still lower than pre-pandemic levels, the mobility has recovered above the baseline which is encouraging. Furthermore, workplace and transit stations have also seen an increase in mobility since January 2021.

Despite the impact of COVID-19, there are good reasons to be optimistic and look forward to the sector's recovery, through staycations for example. As well as currently supporting local businesses through grants, business advice and accredited schemes, NEL's tourism plans for 2021-22 focus on those positive opportunities. By providing a safe and welcoming place to live and visit, whilst continuing to work with tourism businesses to help achieve economic recovery.



When comparing NEL commercial land and property enquiries in 2020 to previous year's data, enquiries slowed between March and May 2020 however as in line with national business investment, enquiries increased in the latter months of 2020. There was an increase in confidence and/or demand within the market based on the number of enquiries received by the Economy & Growth Team.

For the future, in NEL, our key growth sectors in green energy and sustainable technologies have seen significant commitments from national government which underpinned by the investment in the SHIP programme and town centre developments by NELC should place the area in a good position to attract future investment, creating more good quality jobs and prosperity.

The three national lockdowns have caused deep damage to public finances and the wider economy. Analysis undertaken by the Centre for Progressive Policy (CPP) provided a rank listing of all local district and unitary authorities in the UK in terms of most to least negatively affected by the pandemic. Of the 383 local authority areas in England, North East Lincolnshire ranked 277 indicating that the area has been highly negatively affected by the pandemic.

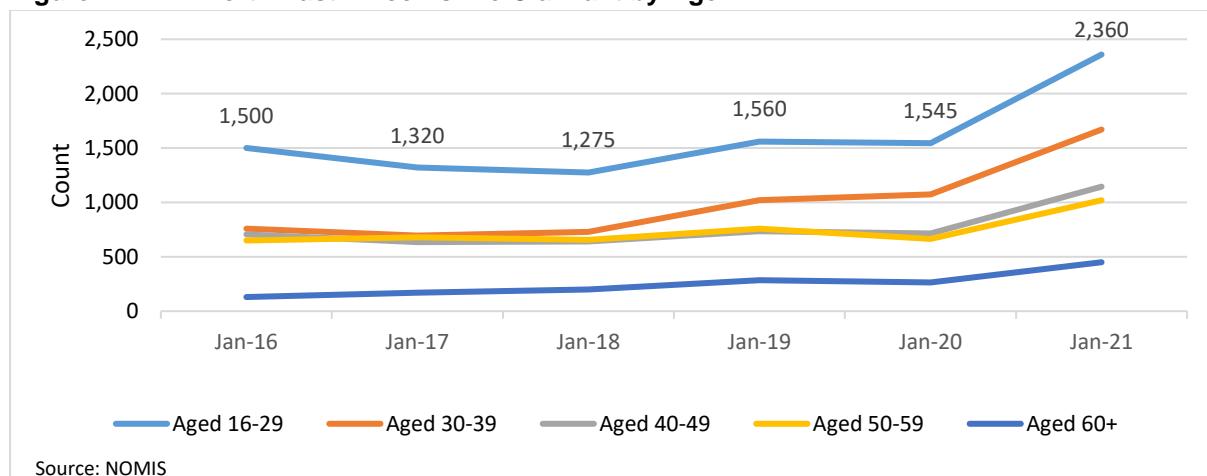
The **tourism industry** has been one of the hardest hit sectors by COVID-19. Tourism in the area has been greatly affected by the pandemic with the number of visitors coming into the area dropping dramatically due to the three national lockdowns. Taking a holiday can help support the public's health and wellbeing, connect communities with the area's heritage and natural environment, and inspire local pride.

The North East Lincolnshire tourism landscape is set to change in an attempt to try and adapt to COVID-19. North East Lincolnshire tourism businesses are considering changing their company financial plans and marketing plans, with 11% considering redundancies or layoffs. This will put further pressure on the sector. Another quarter are also planning on cancelling or deferring planned investments while over a fifth are planning on implementing cost containment to their tourism business. However encouragingly, 15.5% are planning further investment in renovations and developments, according to the North East Lincolnshire Tourism Business Survey.

North East Lincolnshire **investment** enquiry levels have decreased in number over the last 5 years, and this could be due to several contributing factors including Brexit and COVID-19. Commercial land and property enquiries in North East Lincolnshire in 2020 slowed between March and May 2020 compared to the same period in 2019. However as in line with national business investment, enquiries increased in the latter months of 2020. There has been an increase in confidence and/or demand within the market based on the number of enquires received by the Economy & Growth Team.

The pandemic had a great impact on **unemployment** in the borough. The greatest impact of the pandemic on unemployment figures has been in the younger age groups and youths. This is reflected in claimant figures in December 2020 compared to those of December 2019. The most affected age groups in our area are the 18 to 24 (increase of 63%) and the 25 to 49 age groups (increase of 61%). Figure 1 shows a sharp increase in North East Lincolnshire claimant count between January 2020 and January 2021 across all age groups.

Figure 1: North East Lincolnshire Claimant by Age



This figure again shows that the greatest numbers of claimants are in the younger age groups aged between 16-29 and 30-39 while the lowest numbers of claimants are in the older age groups, 50-59 and 60 plus.

Before the pandemic, North East Lincolnshire claimant figures were consistently higher than that of the regional and national figures. However, as a result of the COVID-19 lockdown in early 2020, North East Lincolnshire's figure increased significantly. The 2019 average for North East Lincolnshire stood at 4.3% and in 2020 North East Lincolnshire average increased and averaged 6.5%. This average was higher than both the Yorkshire and Humber region (5.6%) and England averages (5.4%).

Across all North East Lincolnshire wards, more males than females claimed benefits. Claimants for both males and females decreased into the latter months of 2020 and into 2021. However, in East Marsh, West Marsh and Croft Baker wards there was a further increase in claimants towards the end of 2020 and into 2021, particularly for female claimants. East Marsh, West Marsh, South, Sidney Sussex and Heneage wards had the highest number of claimants for both males and females.

On 20 March 2020, the UK Government announced a series of wide-ranging measures to assist businesses and employees through the COVID-19 crisis, including a **Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) or furlough scheme**. North East Lincolnshire saw a higher uptake of the furlough scheme by women compared to men. This may in part be because women were more likely to be working in a sector that has been shut down by the pandemic. The North East Lincolnshire average uptake between July 2020 and February 2021 for women was 10.8% compared to 9.2% for men. The sectors in our area that have seen the highest number of jobs furloughed (as of 28th February 2021) are accommodation and food services (2,040 jobs), wholesale and retail (1,810 jobs) and arts, entertainment, and recreation (800 jobs).

The furlough scheme is currently set to run until 30th September 2021 after multiple extension while the number of individuals in North East Lincolnshire taken off furlough support has increased over the months. There is a likelihood of an increase in unemployment locally and this in turn is likely to have impacts on mental health and wider impacts on physical health and relationships.

Financial Resilience Scores within North East Lincolnshire, as a whole, are well below the national average. In North East Lincolnshire, 2,250 (64%) of postcodes within the area achieved Financial Resilience scores within the bottom two deciles, equivalent to the UK's lowest levels of financial resilience. Poor financial resilience can lead to more universal credit claimants, homelessness, and large debt. East Marsh, Sidney Sussex, South and West Marsh wards had no postcodes achieving Financial Resilience Scores above the national average.

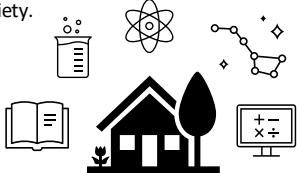
2.0 Education & Skills

Education & Skills

Emerging Issues



Across N.E. Lincs, the areas where children were reported having fallen back the most were personal and social development and communication and language. Students' physical development, Mathematics, Arts and Design and Literacy largely stayed the same. The most common problem reported was separation anxiety.



There has been an increase in the number of students who have started Elective home Education, however it is not clear whether this is due to COVID-19 or due to the predicted increase in students being educated at home.



In N.E. Lincs, there has been an increase in the number of NEET students and a decline in the number of NEET students seeking employment.



The exam series was cancelled due to COVID -19 in 2020. This meant that Students were awarded either a centre assessment grade or their calculated grade using a Model developed by Ofqual.

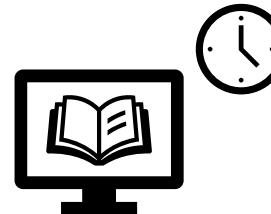


Children with neurocognitive disabilities have been frustrated with disruptions in their routines and struggled with staff in PPE. Children suffering from anxiety and depression have felt stressed and overwhelmed from fear of contracting COVID -19. This stress has been seen to worsen the obsessions and compulsions of children with OCD.

Ongoing Solutions



Ongoing support is being provided to students who have been affected the most by working from home (SEND students, pupil premium students etc). The LA distributed 1032 laptops to students from low income backgrounds and schools were opened for some of the pandemic to vulnerable children and children of key workers.



schools reported a positive picture with virtual learning. Many students in Tertiary/higher benefit from the additional 1 to 1 support which is available now that remote learning has become a norm in education and students who struggled with anxiety found it much easier to engage with online lessons



Student attainment scores within North East cannot be directly compared to previous years (as they were not exam assessed) however, attainment 8 scores were higher in 20/21 than previous years, indicating the change in assessment approach was beneficial to students. Regular GCSE assessments are also planned to roll out in 2022.



Provisions were put in place to support apprentices who lost their jobs in lockdown in finding new apprenticeships and many have since found new employment. Many Apprentices who were furloughed also appreciated the additional free time to consolidate their off-the-job learning

A Survey carried out across North East Lincolnshire by children's public health services shows that **our children have fallen back mostly in the areas of personal and social development and communication and language**. However, our children's physical development, mathematics, expressive arts & design and literacy have largely stayed the same. **The most common problem reported in this survey was separation anxiety in young children.** Many early years children in our area are struggling with being away from home, especially new starters who have found it extremely difficult to settle in. Many children have also struggled with practitioners wearing masks/visors, which has had a further negative effect on their speech and language skills.

Most **exams** were cancelled nationally due to COVID-19 in 2020. This meant that students including children in our area were awarded either a centre assessment grade or their calculated grade using a Model developed by Ofqual. As a result, our **pupils level attainment statistics** increased more than would be expected in a typical year between the 2018/19 and 2019/20 academic years.

Nationally, evidence is emerging that students losing long periods of teaching can have the long-term impact of **students falling months (and sometimes years) behind on their education**. Additionally, research by the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (OFSTED) also supports the fact that student who were particularly impacted by COVID-19 regressed in their basic skills and learning, with some families reporting children who can no longer eat with a knife and fork, children who have lost their early progress in numbers and words and, in some cases, children who have lapsed back into wearing nappies. This finding was also mirrored in North East Lincolnshire.

Children with autism spectrum disorders and/or neurocognitive disabilities in North East Lincolnshire have experienced frustration due to disruptions in their daily routines while those suffering from anxiety and depression have experienced stress and feelings of being overwhelmed. This is due to the constant news of death and disease, as well as fear of contracting the virus. This stress has also been seen to worsen the obsessions and compulsions of children with obsessive-compulsive personality disorder (OCD) in the area.

The **Pupil Premium** is a government scheme that was set up to help improve the education of underprivileged children. Evidence has shown that children who require additional support from the pupil premium scheme are more likely to struggle academically. The pupil premium scheme has been expanded due to the pandemic, to provide additional support to these children in the form of catch-up lessons, 1-to-1 tutoring, etc. Schools in North East Lincolnshire are therefore expected to have utilised the funding for the scheme as directed by the government.

There has also been an increase in the number of students who have started **Elective Home Education** in North East Lincolnshire, which reflects a national trend.

3.0 Children & Young People

Children & Young People

Emerging Issues



Partners not being able to attend scans and appointments and only stay for a limited time after birth has been one of the main concerns for pregnant women, in some cases women have felt pressure to leave hospital early which has impacted on breastfeeding initiation. There has also been an increase in postnatal depression.



Increased screen time and behaviour are the main issues as children settle back into school.



There has been an increase in time spent caring and no respite for young carers, there has been an increase in referrals for mental health, a lack of school places during lockdowns and a struggle to access the internet for home learning.



Settling back into childcare, separation anxiety and regression in speech and language and toileting were an issue. Access to childcare for children from the most deprived areas is a concern.

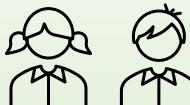


Over 1,000 NEL families used food banks each week in December. Food insecurity has increased during the pandemic, especially for families with 3 or more children.



There has been an increase in the complexity of cases for children known to children's social care.

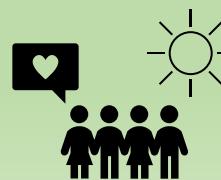
Ongoing Solutions



Children and young people services have been massively affected by the pandemic. Extensive work is being carried out across these services to mitigate the damage of COVID -19, but it will be some time before all services are back to full capacity.



Change from face to face services to phone / video calls have had some advantages, however clinicians have raised concerns regarding delayed diagnoses and identifying hidden harm in vulnerable children. Additionally, parents feel it is harder to get accurate information virtually and overwhelmingly prefer face to face appointments.



Overall, the majority of 10 to 17 year olds said they are coping well with the challenges brought about by COVID-19, with the biggest challenge not being able to see their friends and family. Only a small proportion were really concerned about their exams being cancelled, although unsurprisingly this was more of a concern for older pupils.



Although there have been many negatives for children and young people, many reported that they feel more grateful for their life and the people around them, additionally many children felt positive about the extra time they have spent with their families.



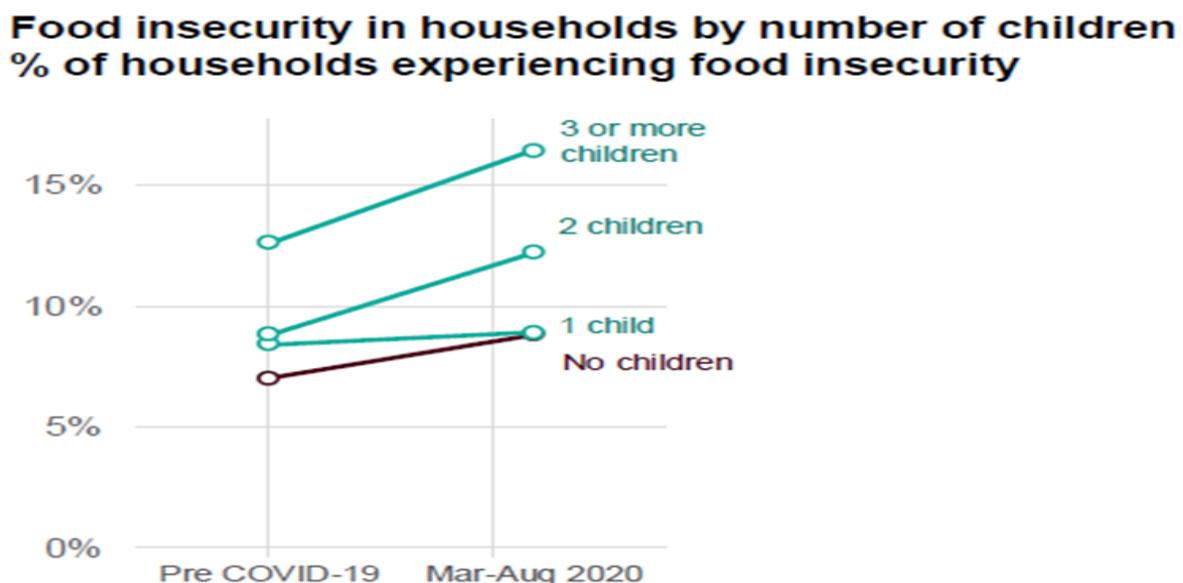
Nationally, Some children in children's homes experienced improved mental health and reported feeling happier. Some staff used the time to improve their relationships with children and young people. However, some children reported feeling more anxious, felt isolated from friends leading to an increase in alcohol and drug use and self-harm.

The lockdowns have had an impact on **young children**. Some of our children have found it difficult settling back into childcare, some have had separation anxiety, others have had their developmental milestones impacted upon. Early language development is a significant health inequalities issue and evidence shows that poor speech development can have long-term effects on learning. **Many parents in our area are noticing regression in their young children's development during the current COVID-19 crisis** for example, regression in speech and language and toileting amongst other developmental issues. Access to childcare for children from the most deprived areas in the borough is also a concern.

School closures, social distancing and the lockdown have seriously affected the ability of our local services to support **children and families** at the very time that these families are facing even greater challenges. The easing of lockdown restrictions which allowed children to go back to school was welcomed by most parents. However, many of our children found it difficult to settle back into school/ transitioning to school. Also, with children learning virtually from home during lockdown, increased screen time and behaviour became main issues on returning to the classrooms.

Children living in poverty have been greatly affected indirectly by the pandemic and the resulting lockdowns. Over 1,000 North East Lincolnshire families used **food banks** each week in December 2020. Food insecurity during the pandemic, especially for families with 3 or more children in the borough was observed as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2:



Nationally, the lockdown restrictions and the anxiety related to the risks associated with COVID-19 have been central to **young carers'** difficulties, increasing their caring load, preventing them from getting a break or from turning to their established coping strategies such as spending time with friends, going to school, or engaging in a hobby. This has also been the situation for young carers in North East Lincolnshire. The pandemic has led to an increase in time spent caring and with no respite for the young carers. There was a lack of school places for young carers during the lockdowns and a struggle by young carers to access

the internet for home learning. All these have led to an increase in referrals for mental health in our young carers.

The lockdowns led to a change from **face-to-face services to phone / video calls**. These have some advantages; however, clinicians and other service providers in the area have raised concerns regarding delayed diagnoses and identifying hidden harm in vulnerable children. Additionally, parents feel it is harder to get accurate information virtually and overwhelmingly prefer face-to-face appointments.

The pandemic has caused an increased demand for **emotional / mental health support** and more complex mental health cases are being picked up by both children's and adult's mental health services. Kooth¹ saw an increase in demand for therapeutic support among North East Lincolnshire users aged 11-25 years via chat sessions and therapeutic messaging locally during lockdown. Demand for **therapeutic support** decreased between June 29th and September 27th, 2020. However, new registrations increased by 50% between September 28th and December 27th, 2020.

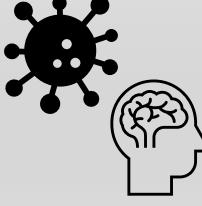
Compared to 2019, the **prevalence of anxiety & stress and self-harm & suicidal thoughts** in our children and young people increased in 2020 by 34% in March and 42% by December 27th. There was also increased referrals to the Bereavement partnership through Young Minds Matter and children's services. Some of our young people (16-18-year-old learners) in further education were reported to have withdrawn with emotional issues, mostly young males.

From April to December 2020, **North East Lincolnshire Young Minds Matter** received 646 referrals (42 urgent & 26 emergency), which was a 6% increase in the total number of referrals and 45% increase in urgent referrals (whilst emergency referrals decreased by 27%) compared to the same time period of 2019.

COVID-19 prevention measures helped to ensure that the number of pregnant women catching COVID-19 was relatively low in North East Lincolnshire. However, one of the main concerns for pregnant women in the borough during the pandemic was that their partners were not able to attend scans and appointments with them and partners could only stay for a limited time after birth. This has led to some women feeling the pressure to leave hospital early which has impacted on **breastfeeding initiation**. An increase in **postnatal depression** in the area has also been reported.

¹ Kooth is a web-based, confidential support service available to young people in North East Lincolnshire.

4.0 Health & Wellbeing

Health & Wellbeing		
<p><u>Emerging Issues</u></p>   <p>A&E attendances have been increasing back up to pre-COVID levels and have now exceeded numbers (as of May 21). There is emerging evidence nationally of increased late presentations for cancer.</p>  <p>School based vaccination programmes have been impacted the most seeing a decrease in HPV vaccine coverage, other childhood vaccination programmes have been able to catch up. Screening programmes which were paused in the first lockdown could have a long-term impact on early detection of cancers.</p>  <p>There is emerging evidence of increased alcohol related problems with insight from Grimsby Hospital that they are seeing more people with complex alcohol issues currently.</p>  <p>The COVID-19 pandemic has not created health inequalities but has exposed and exacerbated longstanding inequalities affecting BAME groups in the UK.</p>		
 <p>There has been an increase in demand and acuteness across all mental health services. There has been an increase in post-natal depression and feelings of loneliness in new mums, for young people there has been an increase in anxiety, OCD and eating disorders. Stress, anxiety, loneliness and uncertainty has increased in adults and for older people. Locally we saw an increased number of suicides during 2020.</p>  <p>Some adults have increased smoking to cope with stress, anxiety and boredom in lockdowns, so children who live in households with a smoker may have been exposed to more second-hand smoke.</p>  <p>Access to contraception has been more difficult as services have moved online, condom supply decreased by 74% in the under 20's and by 64% in the 20+ population. However there is no evidence as yet that unwanted pregnancies or STIs have increased.</p>	<p><u>Ongoing Solutions</u></p>       <p>New triage services put in place during COVID -19 have received widely positive feedback from patients. Patients highlighted how they liked the additional privacy that came from being able to take these calls from home and felt safer limiting contact and reducing travel by only visiting COVID secure surgeries when absolutely necessary. However, Patients preferred way to see a health professional was still face-to-face.</p>  <p>The COVID-19 vaccine uptake in North East Lincolnshire has been good, however, a significantly lower uptake of the vaccine in the most deprived residents and in those from BAME groups.</p>  <p>Ongoing support and research is being invested into patients affected by long COVID. The main symptoms reported are mental health problems, fatigue and headaches. In those admitted to hospital or intensive care symptoms may be more severe with a third being readmitted to hospital and a similar proportion going on to be diagnosed with a respiratory condition.</p>	

The COVID-19 pandemic has had major effects on **health services** within the area and also led to disruption to routine healthcare that could lead to delays and missed diagnoses. COVID-19 has led to different models of working particularly around the mode of appointments.

At the start of the pandemic, many hospital appointments, including non-essential clinical procedures were cancelled whilst GP services were restricted with consultations largely shifting to the telephone or on-line. Inevitably, this led to a **substantial reduction in the number of appointments and clinical procedures undertaken in this period which has created a large backlog in the system and growing evidence of late diagnosis in some conditions.**

Prior to COVID-19, the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) averaged just over 20,000 appointments a week in General Practice. However, numbers fluctuated throughout 2020 with activity dropping down to half the pre-COVID number in early April to 10,281 and 11,303 appointments in early May. The **level of appointments by week** peaked in the middle of September (around the time of the first wave to hit North East Lincolnshire) and stayed almost in-line with rates seen before COVID-19 restrictions throughout September to December. Activity then dipped dramatically around Christmas time to 10,273 appointments and have begun to rise again in the new year. This issue was **addressed** by repeated communications to the public about the importance of attending their appointments with their GPs.

New triage services were also put in place in GP surgeries locally during COVID-19 and these services have received widely positive feedback from patients. Patients welcomed the additional privacy that came from being able to take these calls from home and felt safer limiting contact and reducing travel by only visiting COVID-19 secure surgeries when absolutely necessary. However, most patients preferred way to see a health professional was still face-to-face.

Our hospital trust, **Northern Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Foundation Trust (NLaG)** also saw a 50% drop in the **Accident and Emergency (A&E) attendances** for both minors² and majors³ at the beginning of lockdown in 2020. Attendances for majors still remain low whilst the number of people attending minors has risen to more than twice the numbers attending in January and February (2021). A&E attendances have been increasing back up to pre-COVID levels and have now exceeded numbers (since May 2021). However, there is emerging evidence nationally of **increased late presentations for cancer** and this has also been mirrored locally.

In North East Lincolnshire, there has been an increase in demand and acuteness across all **mental health services and age-groups** since the pandemic began and especially with the lockdowns. There has also been an increase in post-natal depression and feelings of loneliness in new mums in our area. Increase in anxiety, obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) and eating disorders have been noticed in our young people. Stress, anxiety, and uncertainty have also increased in adults and for older people the main issues have been loneliness and

² Minors are injuries that are not critical or life-threatening.

³ Majors are injuries that could potentially lead to death, prolonged disability, or permanently diminished quality of life.

isolation. There has also been an increase in the number of suicides in the area during 2020 and so far in 2021.

Alcohol related problems have increased in the area since the pandemic and with the lockdown. There is emerging evidence of this with insight from Diana Princess of Wales Hospital (Grimsby Hospital) that they are seeing more people with complex alcohol issues currently.

Screening and Immunisations

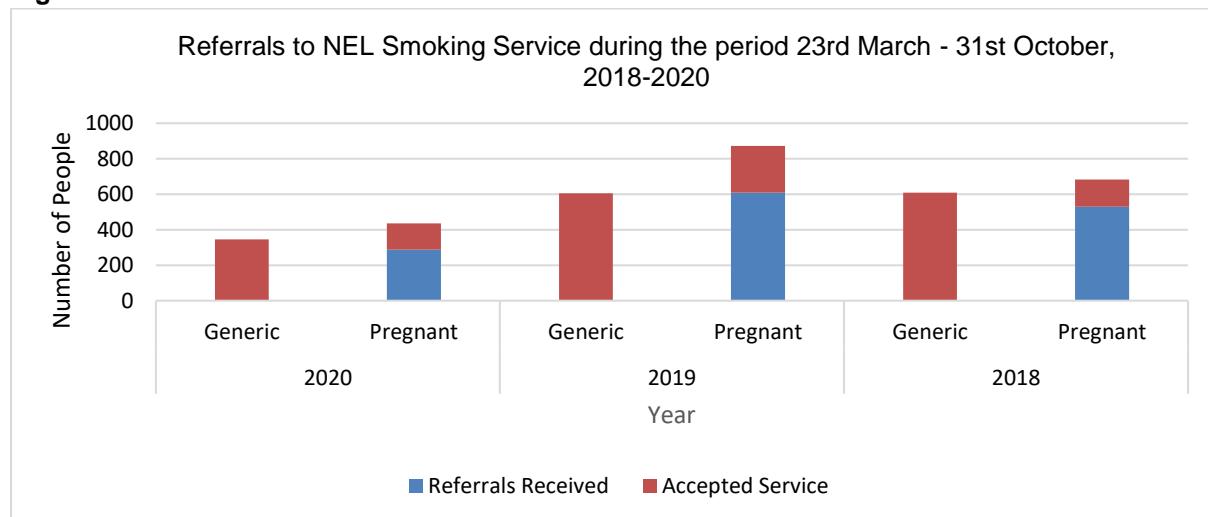
School based **vaccination programmes** have also been impacted upon in North East Lincolnshire. There has been a decrease in vaccine coverage with human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine coverage impacted the most; other childhood vaccination programmes have been able to catch up.

The **COVID-19 vaccine uptake** in North East Lincolnshire has been good, however, there has been a significantly lower uptake of the vaccine in the most deprived residents and in those from Black, Asian, and minority ethnic (BAME) groups and white minority groups (e.g., people from European Union countries).

Screening programmes which were paused in the first lockdown are now engaged in a catch-up programme, but it will inevitably take some time to catch up on all the missed appointments during this period and there will inevitably be some cancers diagnosed later as a result.

The **lifestyle** of people living in North East Lincolnshire has also been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. There has been a decrease in referrals to stop smoking services locally for all adults including pregnant women as shown in Figure 3. Children who live in households with a smoker may have been exposed to more second-hand smoke than usual because of the increased amount of time spent at home. Some adults have increased smoking to cope with stress, anxiety, and boredom in lockdowns.

Figure 3:



Local surveys undertaken have shown that people have eaten more through the lockdowns, have consumed less healthy food and that 40% of adults have gained weight. The survey also

shows that children from poor backgrounds have eaten less fruit and vegetable during school closures and had more sugary drinks.

Access to **contraception** was more difficult during the lockdowns as **sexual health** services in the area moved predominantly online. Condom supply decreased by 74% in the under 20's and by 64% in the 20+ population. However, there is no evidence as yet to suggest that unwanted pregnancies or sexually transmitted infections (STIs) have increased in the area. Service disruption and the diversion of resources away from sexual and reproductive health care due to prioritising the response to COVID-19, could increase the risks of maternal morbidity, unplanned pregnancies, and undiagnosed STIs.

There is still a lot to learn about **Long COVID**. Emerging evidence has shown that the main symptoms reported by people with Long COVID are mental health problems, fatigue and headaches. In those admitted to hospital or intensive care, symptoms may be more severe with a third being readmitted to hospital and a similar proportion going on to be diagnosed with a respiratory condition.

National guidance published at the end of November 2020 required each area to develop post-COVID syndrome assessment clinics. A Humber wide approach has been taken to developing the new post-COVID service involving clinicians from General Practice, hospital, and community settings across the four Humber CCG areas. The new service is hosted by City Health Care Partnership CIC.

The Community Long COVID pathway has been developed and patients referred to the Humber Long COVID Triage and Assessment Service will be triaged at the point of access. The service had a soft launch on 8th March 2021 to get a feel for numbers coming through and to gauge capacity.

5.0 Communities & Environment



Overall recorded crime in North East Lincolnshire reduced from 20,370 crimes in 2019/20, to 17,524 crimes in 2020/21, which was a reduction of 14%. During lockdown there were reductions in anti-social behaviour and violent crime associated with the night time economy, however during 2020 the number of domestic abuse cases referred to MARAC was 58% higher than during 2019, therefore lockdown has had differing impacts on different crime types.



Significant involvement and support by the VCSE sector to support the COVID-19 response. The Blue Lights Brigade was our local voluntary emergency response organisation which worked to organise a cohort of Covid Support Volunteers (recruiting over 600 volunteers within the first few weeks of lockdown), and managed and mobilised these volunteers when specific voluntary support was needed across the borough.



Covid Support Team recruited to focus on providing advice and support to businesses on the high street and ensuring they were operating in a covid secure way to protect the public health of customers, suppliers, and staff, liaising with the multi disciplinary covid compliance team where enforcement action was needed.

Between August 2020 to the end of May 2021, the Covid Support Team undertook 8,400 visits to North East Lincolnshire businesses, which includes initial visits, revisits and observational visits.



Footfall data shows the impact of lockdown restrictions, with footfall in both Grimsby Town Centre and in St Peter's Avenue Cleethorpes, falling dramatically at the start of the first national lockdown in March 2020 (demonstrating the impact of the closure of non-essential shops), with footfall then remaining well below the corresponding level in 2019 for the rest of the year. Whilst numbers have increased since restrictions began to be lifted, they remain well below pre-pandemic levels.



There was a small increase (131) in the number of fly-tipping incidents in 2020/21 (2,364) whilst the total tonnage of fly-tipping reduced. Fly-tipping locations by ward tended to correlate with deprivation. COVID-19 site restrictions at the community recycling centres and charity shops being closed may have made it more difficult for residents to dispose of unwanted items.



There were considerable reductions in the tonnage of dry recycling and recycling waste collected at the bring sites / community recycling centres, particularly during lockdown periods, with the COVID-19 site restrictions at the community recycling centres a significant factor.



There were large reductions in Nitrogen Dioxide and Nitrogen Oxide concentrations during 2020 and which were most evident during the first national lockdown. Motor vehicle use also reduced and followed a similar pattern.

The COVID-19 pandemic and associated lockdowns had differing impacts on different **crime** types in North East Lincolnshire. Overall, during 2020/21, recorded crime in North East Lincolnshire reduced by 14% compared to the previous year as a result of the pandemic. During lockdown, North East Lincolnshire saw reductions in **anti-social behaviour and violent crime** associated with the night time economy. However, the number of **domestic abuse** cases recorded in North East Lincolnshire increased during the same period (2020), and cases referred to the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) were 58% higher than in 2019.

The lockdown saw a reduction in referrals to **Women's Aid** with drop-in referrals particularly affected. Due to reduced face to face contact with adult social care service users in the borough during 2020/21, there were concerns about reduced opportunities for either direct disclosures from adults at risk, and/or the missed opportunities for family and professionals to make observations and identify risks and raise concerns.

North East Lincolnshire saw significant involvement and support by the **voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE)** sector to the COVID-19 response. The **Blue Lights Brigade**, our local voluntary emergency response organisation, worked to organise a cohort of COVID-19 Support Volunteers (over 600 volunteers) and managed and mobilised these volunteers when specific voluntary support was needed across the borough. During the first national lockdown, cross sector support enabled coordinated support from 16 local VCSE organisations to provide 7,772 welfare calls, 912 shopping deliveries, and 326 prescription deliveries.

Sector Support North East Lincolnshire have also worked alongside the Council from the commencement of the pandemic and continue to maintain information on the local offer of services. The organisation has supported the promotion and distribution of grants to businesses in the sector, local food providers, organisations addressing hardship, and been part of a triage approach for individuals who contacted, or were referred into, customer services and the Single Point of Access (SPA).

Volunteer support has been integral to the local COVID-19 vaccination rollout in the borough. 145 volunteers have been placed at the four Primary Care Networks (PCN) vaccination sites and they have been involved in a range of roles such as queue marshal, meet and greet, usher etc. There are now opportunities to build upon and sustain the work that volunteers and the VSCE have achieved in supporting services/communities, delivering services, and looking after the welfare of our communities.

There was a small increase (131) in the number of **fly-tipping** incidents in the borough in 2020/21 (2,364). However, the total tonnage of fly-tipping reduced in the same period. Fly-tipping locations by ward tended to correlate with deprivation i.e., an increasing number of incidents of fly-tipping with higher deprivation. COVID-19 site restrictions at the community recycling centres and the closure of charity shops may have made it more difficult for residents to dispose of unwanted items.

North East Lincolnshire saw considerable reductions in the tonnage of **dry recycling and recycling waste** collected at the bring sites / community recycling centres in the borough,

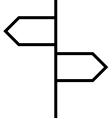
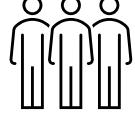
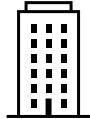
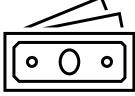
particularly during lockdown periods, with the COVID-19 site restrictions at the community recycling centres a significant factor.

The area also saw large reductions in **Nitrogen Dioxide and Nitrogen Oxide concentrations** during 2020 and these were most evident during the first national lockdown. Motor vehicle use in the area also reduced and followed a similar pattern as above.

Inequalities exist in the borough in access to good quality and **safe green space**, with some demographic groups finding it much harder to be active during lockdown. There is emerging evidence nationally and also locally that more affluent communities experienced more health promoting behaviours during lockdown, whilst more deprived communities saw the opposite effect.

The lockdown and impact of restrictions have also affected the **footfall numbers in our town centres**. Footfall data shows the impact of restrictions, with footfall in both Grimsby Town Centre and in St Peter's Avenue Cleethorpes, much lower than in recent years. Whilst numbers have increased since restrictions began to be lifted, they still remain well below pre-pandemic levels, and it is likely that the pandemic has permanently changed behaviour to some extent.

6.0 Housing

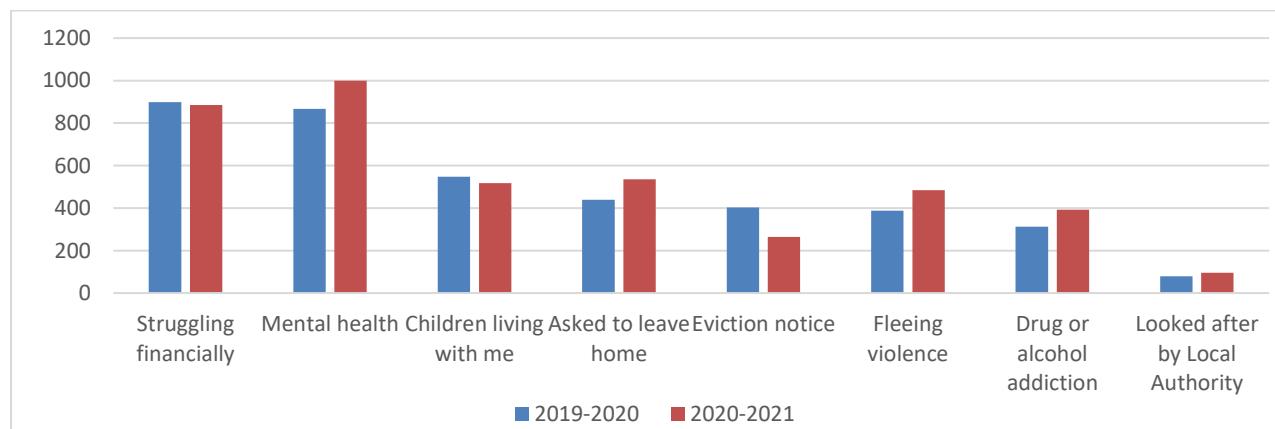
Housing	
<p><u>Existing Impact</u></p>   <p>At the start of the first lockdown a significant amount of work was carried out by the homeless prevention team to follow the MHCLG instructions to house all rough sleepers and individuals sleeping in communal shelters</p>   <p>There was a moratorium on repossession from social and private properties in place between March 25th 2020 and September 20th 2020 whilst lenders have been asked to utilise payment holidays, which must end on the July 31st 2021. There has been no such payment holiday for renters, however there was an extension of notice periods to a minimum of 6 months until May 31st 2021, which has now decreased to 4 months. These policy changes are likely to have been impactful in the reductions of homelessness referrals due to loss of evictions, assured shorthold and social tenancies</p>	 <p>There has been an increase in social housing applicants stating their home is no longer affordable due to job losses caused by Covid-19.</p>  <p>There are currently 4000 active applicants for social housing, 84% of applicants fall within the low priority band, amongst all other bands the most popular criteria for applying is being one bedroom short of requirements. Suggesting an issue of overcrowding, which would have made self-isolating and shielding more difficult during the pandemic</p>  <p>From 2019/20 to 2020/21 the number of homelessness referrals increased by 6%. There was also an increase in referrals having impacted mental health, fleeing violence and being asked to leave home. These increases are possibly influenced by lockdown restrictions.</p>
<p><u>Ongoing Impact</u></p>  <p>There is a rising number of referrals to the homelessness prevention team that require relief from duty from approach, which coincides with decreases in referrals requiring prevention duty over the last three years.</p>   <p>The Covid-19 financial impact on the affordability for people to remain in their current living situations will become clearer over time, as payment holidays, furlough schemes and extended notice periods end</p>  <p>Research has suggested an accumulation of arrears should be expected, which may risk a 'time bomb' of evictions that will continue to worsen as long as measures such as furlough continue. However a backlog of cases for the courts may further delay evictions.</p>	  <p>Anecdotally, a migration trend of people leaving the inner urban areas for suburban homes has been noticed, resulting in a relatively higher number of empty homes in the more deprived urban areas</p>  <p>The number of property purchases dropped significantly in first half of 2020, but levels appeared to reach pre pandemic levels by the end of 2020. Although the number of purchases dropped again during the lockdown at the start of 2021, a possible increase again could be expected</p> 

At the onset of the pandemic, a range of support measures were put in place by the Government to help people who were in financial difficulty as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. The main support during the pandemic was the offer of **payment breaks**⁴. Payment breaks were designed to help when a borrower is temporarily finding it hard to make payments – in this case because of the coronavirus pandemic. Mortgage payment breaks were offered from 20th March 2020 to 31st July 2021. The Government also ordered a moratorium on **repossessions** until March 31st, 2021. However, **from 1st April 2021**, people newly affected by the pandemic (or those affected again) and still as at the time of writing (August 2021), people who are continuing to struggle to pay their mortgage must be offered “tailored support” by their lender based on individual circumstances.

Again, at the start of the first lockdown (March 26th), all local authorities were instructed by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to move all **rough sleepers** and individuals sleeping in communal shelters into a safe place. Locally, a significant amount of work was carried out to house all rough sleepers, by the **homeless prevention team** based within the Council. The team housed those currently rough sleeping and also those that they were aware of that are in temporary accommodation but regularly experience rough sleeping.

The number of referrals for **homelessness** in the borough increased by 6% from 2019/20 to 2020/21. There was also an increase in individuals referred for homelessness having an impacted mental health, fleeing violence and being asked to leave home (Figure 4). These increases are possibly influenced by lockdown restrictions, increase in domestic abuse investigations as shown by police data, whilst mental health service providers have also reported how COVID-19 has led to increased demand.

Figure 4: North East Lincolnshire Circumstances Applicable to Referred Individuals



Whilst **payment breaks were not available for renters**, some rules were changed to support those **struggling to pay rent** due to the coronavirus outbreak. The Coronavirus Act 2020 provided protection to social and private tenants by delaying when landlords can evict tenants. The provisions in the Act increased the required notice period length that landlords needed to provide to tenants when seeking possession of a residential property and were extended

⁴ A payment break (also called a payment holiday or freeze or deferral) is a period of time agreed with the lender when the borrower does not have to make mortgage payments.

through additional legislation. **These notice rules have changed several times** during the coronavirus pandemic.

The current position is that from 1 August 2021, the notice period for cases where there are less than 4 months of arrears, reduced to 2 months' notice. Notice periods for the most serious cases are lower with most requiring 2- or 4-weeks' notice. The notice period for 'serious arrears' (4+ months) is 4 weeks' notice.

The **stay on possession proceedings** also expired on 20 September 2020 when landlords were then able to progress their possession claim through the courts. Legislation preventing bailiff enforcement of evictions was in place from 17 November 2020, however this ended on 31 May 2021, reflecting the improved public health situation and easing national restrictions. **Therefore, from 1st June 2021**, orders can now be enforced where the landlord has a valid warrant of possession, however bailiffs must provide 14 days' notice of an eviction and have been asked not to carry out an eviction if they are made aware that anyone living in the property has coronavirus symptoms or is self-isolating.

The financial impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the ability of our local population to remain in their current living situation is still unclear. The impact of the ending of payment breaks, extended notice periods, and the moratorium on evictions, should start to become apparent shortly, however with lenders mandated to offer tailored support, it may still be some time until the full effects are understood. Things may become clearer after the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (furlough) which was in place from Spring 2020 and began to taper from 1 July 2021, ends on 30 September 2021.

There are currently 4,000 active applicants for **social housing** in North East Lincolnshire and 84% of these fall within the low priority band, amongst all other bands. The most popular criteria for applying for social housing is people who are one bedroom short of requirements. This suggests an issue of overcrowding, which would have made self-isolating and shielding more difficult during the pandemic. Anecdotally, there has been an increase in applicants in the borough stating their home is no longer affordable due to job losses caused by COVID-19. This is expected to increase after the lifting of the furlough scheme.

7.0 Adult Social Care

Adult Social Care	
<p><u>Emerging Issues</u></p>   	<p>Throughout 2020, the number of permanent admissions to residential and nursing care homes (for 18-64 year olds and 65+) varied but is now back on-track. There has also been a noted decrease in younger individuals with a severe learning disability needing residential care.</p>
	<p>Self-isolation had a disproportionately larger affect on elderly individuals, especially those affected by dementia, ill -health and those whose only social contact is outside of the home, such as at day-care venues and community centres. Many will have also struggled with digital isolation, due being unable to use the digital tech they have or not being able to afford to use the internet.</p>  
  	<p>Due to lockdown restrictions, many people in care stopped using their services and relied more on their informal carers. Services use went down in residential/ nursing care, supported living and support at home throughout the pandemic.</p>
	<p>Historically, NEL has low care home occupancy levels (average occupancy near 70% compared to an "efficient" market of 95%). There have been concerns for some years (i.e. years pre-covid) that occupancy levels are unsustainable for some providers. Despite National COVID-19 related funding mechanisms being put in place, 1 care home has been shuttered within North East Lincolnshire and 2 more are at risk of being closed due to the drop in occupancy numbers during the pandemic.</p>
	<p>The work to reduce the number of short term services leading to longer term services has fluctuated as people recovering from COVID-19 are taking longer to recuperate/ rehabilitate/ re-able.</p>
<p><u>Ongoing Solutions</u></p> 	<p>Many services have had to be adapted to be in line with COVID-19 restrictions. Staff, for the most part, adjusted well to the changes, showing resilience throughout lockdown. However, issues of sleep deprivation, burnout, compassion fatigue and personal and professional anxiety have shown across services.</p>
	<p>Extensive work has been carried out by services (i.e. Healthwatch) and people in community to support older people throughout the pandemic. Volunteers offered help including help with shopping, prescription collection, fuel top ups, telephone support and befriending.</p>
	<p>Many adult carers experienced heightened anxiety with the new level of responsibility that came with having to support and stimulate their relative 24/7. However, many adult carers are benefitting from the additional support as services re-open and return to full capacity.</p>

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a huge impact on **social care** in North East Lincolnshire. Throughout 2020, the number of permanent admissions to **residential and nursing care home** (for 18–64-year-olds and 65+) varied but this is now back on track. There has been a noted decrease in younger individuals with a severe learning disability needing residential care.

The work to reduce the number of short-term services leading to longer term services fluctuated as **people recovering from COVID-19** are taking longer to recuperate/ rehabilitate/ re-able. Additionally, due to lockdown restrictions, many people in care stopped using their services and relied more on their **informal carers**. Service use went down in residential/ nursing care, supported living and support at home throughout the pandemic.

Customer Intelligence feedback from the North East Lincolnshire CCG Customer Support team has highlighted a number of common issues faced by **paid & unpaid carers**. This feedback has highlighted how people have struggled with acquiring Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) or COVID-19 tests, understanding changes to health services, and not being given enough notice for their vaccination.

Older residents within North East Lincolnshire who participated in paid home care and supported living participants had accessed a range of social support services pre pandemic. Social support services accessed include day care centres, support groups, meal deliveries, respite, and paid carers. The **closure of day centres and support groups** during the pandemic has had a massive impact on the overall wellbeing of older residents and their carers across the area.

Social support service usage in **dementia and ageing** reduced significantly compared with pre-pandemic levels, for fear of potential virus transmission. Service usage numbers in the area have been slowly rising in the months post nationwide lockdown, however the restriction on services has impacted older residents mental and physical health. **Self-isolation** had a disproportionately larger effect on our elderly individuals, especially those affected by dementia, ill-health, and those whose only social contact is outside of the home, such as at day-care venues and community centres.

Many of North East Lincolnshire older people also struggled with **digital isolation**, due to being unable to use the digital technology they have or not being able to afford to use the internet. Many of our older residents have also become so **inactive** over the last year that they now need physical rehabilitation and others experienced serious mental health issues for the first time.

Many **social care services** in North East Lincolnshire have had to be adapted to be in-line with COVID-19 restrictions. Social care staff or workers, for the most part, adjusted well to the changes, showing resilience throughout lockdown. However, issues of sleep deprivation, burnout, compassion fatigue and personal and professional anxiety have shown across services.

Many **adult carers** in the area also experienced heightened anxiety with the new level of responsibility that came with having to support and stimulate their relatives 24/7. Without being able to take a break, some of our adult carers were forced to invite care staff into their homes.

In some cases, carers had to send the individuals they cared for into short-term respite care, but this has not been the case throughout North East Lincolnshire, due to the drop-in service uptake during COVID-19.

A small number of **care homes** experienced a relatively large number of deaths and overall, around half of all COVID-19 related deaths in North East Lincolnshire were in care home residents. Historically, North East Lincolnshire has **low care home occupancy levels** (average occupancy near 70% compared to an “efficient” market of 95%). There have been concerns for some years (i.e., years pre-COVID) that occupancy levels are unsustainable for some providers. Despite national COVID-19 related funding mechanisms that were put in place, 1 care home has closed within North East Lincolnshire and 2 more are at risk of closing due to the drop in occupancy numbers during and after the pandemic.