

COVID – 19 Social Impact Assessment

The following report provides a snapshot of the data collected from 13 May – 20 May 2020 from 202 respondents. The survey has been designed to measure community perceived social impact of COVID-19 in Kingston across 6 domains:

1. Resilience
2. Loneliness and social isolation
3. Anxiety and fear around mortality
4. Employment and income
5. Access to basic needs and services
6. Sense of community and safety

Colour coding represents the proportion of respondents rating their experience at 7 or more on each scale*:

- Greater than 70% report a rating of 7 or more
- 30-69% report a rating of 7 or more
- Less than 30% report a rating of 7 or more

**The higher the rating the higher the level of negative impact experienced.*

Additional data is presented in the grey boxes as a pre-COVID-19 comparison. This data is not from the same source/s and acts as an indication only.

1. Resilience

- 66% of people had a stress rating of 7 or more out of 10

The Victorian Population Health Survey 2017¹ identified that 25% of people in Kingston report a *moderate* level of psychological distress, this is lower than compared to during COVID-19. However, 60% reported a *mild* level of psychological distress which is comparable to during COVID-19.

- 39% of people were volunteering or helping other members of their community

The Kingston Public Health and Wellbeing Survey 2016² identified that 28% of people volunteer regularly, this is lower than during COVID-19 however a higher proportion reported playing an active role in their community (43%).

2. Loneliness and social isolation

- 38% of people felt lonely

The Kingston Public Health and Wellbeing Survey 2016³ identified that 14.6% of people sometimes felt isolated and out of contact with other people, this is lower than during COVID-19.

- 11% of people were not maintaining regular virtual contact with friends and family, which means 89% of people were connecting virtually

The 2016 census⁴ identified that 12.4% of households did not have internet connection, this is in line with the proportion of people not maintaining virtual contact during COVID-19.

3. Anxiety and fear around mortality

- 52% of people were worried about being infected by COVID-19
- 41% of people believed themselves and their family would not recover if they were to become infected
- 5% of people did not have access to accurate facts and information on when to get tested for COVID-19, which means that 95% of people did have access to accurate facts and information on testing.
- 3% of people did not have access to accurate facts and information on when to self-quarantine, which means that 97% of people did have access to accurate facts and information on self-quarantining.

The Kingston Public Health and Wellbeing Survey 2016⁵ identified that 72.4% of people could easily find information on local services, and 91% have access to a local GP.

4. Employment and income

- 33% of people felt their job was at risk because of COVID-19

Economy .id⁶ forecast that 14% of Kingston residents (including JobKeeper recipients) will lose their jobs in the June Quarter 2020, this is comparable to losses expected in Greater Melbourne and Victoria.

- 67% of people said their spending habits had changed since the COVID-19 pandemic
- 21% of people said that they are unable to continue providing for their families because of the COVID-19 pandemic

5. Access to basic needs and services

- 4% of people were worried that their household supplies would run out, which means 96% of people were not worried about running out of household supplies
- 6% of people were worried that they would not be able to afford basic supplies, which means 94% of people were not worried about being able to afford basic supplies

The Kingston Public Health and Wellbeing Survey 2016⁷ identified that 92% of people have access to fresh/affordable food to meet their household's needs.

6. Sense of community and safety

- 43% of people said that social distancing had a negative impact on their community
- 20% of people felt that the vulnerable members of their community were not well supported during this time, which means that 80% of people did feel vulnerable community members were well supported
- 34% of people did not feel safe going out

The Kingston Public Health and Wellbeing Survey 2016⁸ identified that nearly all respondents (97%) felt safe walking alone during the day and 63% felt safe walking alone at night, this is higher than during COVID-19.

Free text responses

In addition to the domains, respondents were invited to share additional information on their experience of COVID-19 and impact on their lives. Below is a sample of the information shared.

Activities providing relief

- 31% of people were exercising and keeping active

“Reading, exercise and healthy food”

“Seeing people in real life. I live on my own and didn’t see another human in real life for over 3 weeks at one point”

“Going to the supermarket and walking. That’s all I can do as I’m working from home fulltime which was stressful at first”

“Walking, reading, spending time with wife, baby, pets, daily yoga practice”

“Online exercise classes, walking, having a space away from children, puzzles.”

“Sleeping and resting, not rushing about, going for walks in the sunshine, cooking, gardening, working in my pjs”

Support being asked for

- 23% of people did not need any support
- 18% of people needed someone to talk to
- 15% of people needed financial support
- 11% of people needed access to essential services and supplies

“I do not have a car, so shopping with heavy items”

“Very little but the support of friends and family is great”

“Work has provided mental health webinars that are a great help. It has been very distressing. Also financial help would be good as we have lost lots of salary. Whilst our rental fees and bills are the same. Finance is a struggle.”

“home deliveries, financial and psychological support. Reliable information”

“Not too much except it is lonely so phone calls become important.”

“Support to feel less isolated, grief support”

“Finding work. My hours at work have been reduced and I’d love to find a part time job to boost my income, but it’s proving difficult.”

Top concerns about being socially isolated

- 15% of people were concerned about a loss of connection with their social network
- 10% of people were concerned about a loss of connection with extended family
- 9.5% of people were concerned about a loss of routine/motivation/freedom

"not seeing friends/ family"

"Lack of connection"

"Something happening to me whilst alone"

"Unable to see family"

"Family arguments and stress on relationships"

"Fear of getting sick/losing loved ones"

"Not having help from those I usually reach out to"

"Children's behaviour and emotions"

"Having to worry if other people are following the required hygiene measure when we go back to normal living"

"I miss social interaction"

"I am concerned when I go out at the moment - less anxious now that stock is returning to supermarkets, but it feels odd to be out and about"

Impact on life due to economic impact of COVID-19

- 18% of people were impacted by the financial strain on their household
- 16% of people were impacted with less social outings
- 15% of people were impacted by reduced hours /wages

"Started working from home, not being able to go out and spend money on things needed such as dentist"

"Husband has lost a lot of income, we are struggling to pay rent bills food, but we are getting there"

"It's almost shut down my business as I have had to home school and look after children full time. Living with someone who is extremely anxious has made life pretty miserable for our whole family"

"My partner works in construction. It's expected that economic impacts will be felt in 6-12 months as work is not financed by the builders he works for."

"As a pensioner/ retiree I am obviously not at risk of losing my job, but the essential shopping has become a lot more expensive"

"Not personally - but seeing the economic impact on local businesses, close friends, family members"

"Pay cut and reduced hours. 38% salary cut. Niece who lives with us lost casual position can't get a job. Husband on 10% of previous salary so getting government help. Rents are crippling us."

"Less spending on eating out, gym fees, childcare etc"

"How am I going to provide the money to survive Will I have a job can I find a new job Will I be forced out of my home"

"I am a self-funded retiree, so I am concerned that our investments are jeopardised. We were not eligible for the government handout as we do not receive a pension, so things have become a bit tighter."

"Impacted very badly as I can't go out and financial situation looks grim"

References

- ¹ Department of Health and Human Services, Victorian Population Health Survey 2017, <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/population-health-systems/health-status-of-victorians/survey-data-and-reports/victorian-population-health-survey/victorian-population-health-survey-2017>
- ² Kingston City Council 2016, Health and Wellbeing Survey, prepared by Metropolis Research, September 2016
- ³ Kingston City Council 2016, Health and Wellbeing Survey, prepared by Metropolis Research, September 2016
- ⁴ .id consulting 2016, City of Kingston community profile, 2016 ABS Census Household internet connection <https://profile.id.com.au/kingston/internet-connection>
- ⁵ Kingston City Council 2016, Health and Wellbeing Survey, prepared by Metropolis Research, September 2016
- ⁶ .id consulting 2020, City of Kingston economic profile, COVID-19 Economic Outlook Tool <http://economy.id.com.au/kingston/covid19>
- ⁷ Kingston City Council 2016, Health and Wellbeing Survey, prepared by Metropolis Research, September 2016
- ⁸ Kingston City Council 2016, Health and Wellbeing Survey, prepared by Metropolis Research, September 2016