

# The COVID-19 Outbreak Plan — A Qualitative Interview Study



## Introduction

What was the aim of the study?

What did we do?

What did we find?

Acknowledgements

Thank you to all the District and County Council staff who participated in the interviews.

At the onset of COVID-19, Hertfordshire County Council was asked by national government to devise a local outbreak plan to deal with the pandemic. The local outbreak plan was compiled by staff from County and District councils.

"Be fast, have no regrets. You must be the first mover. If you need to be right before you move you will never win. The virus will always get you if you don't

**Protection, WHO** 

The aim of the qualitative study was to explore the experiences and perceptions of council staff who took part in delivering the outbreak plan including the barriers and enablers to successful implementation.

Ten people agreed to participate in an online interview via MS Teams®. The interviews were conducted between August and September 2021. An iterative approach was used to inform the questions in the interview guide. The interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim.

NVivo v.12 was used to handle and code the data. A combination of inductive narrative and thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. Five themes were developed from the analysis.

The COVID-19 Outbreak Plan qualitative study has demonstrated the requirement for better pandemic preparedness. Key findings from the participant interviews outlined the need for:

- Better working relationships and communication with organisations involved in infectious disease management
- Improved support for staff working on future pandemics and other public health emergency situations.

#### References

Braun, V, Clarke V. Successful Qualitative Research. SAGE, London, 2013.

Murray, E. 2020, March 17. "Be fast, have no regrets – Dr Michael Ryan on what's been learned from Ebola. Irish Independent. <a href="https://www.independent.ie/videos/be-fast-have-no-regrets-dr-michael-ryan">https://www.independent.ie/videos/be-fast-have-no-regrets-dr-michael-ryan</a>.

**Evaluation by:** Martin Logue

move quickly. Speed trumps perfection."

Dr Michael Ryan on COVID-19, Health



Themes and quotes

**Perceptions of COVID-19** 

"So yes, I think the whole COVID thing started off as something different and new, it started off as fairly, maybe exciting's not the right word but it was a new piece of work and people were quite keen to see what they could do to help. But as it went on and on, between December, January last year it became really difficult."

#### **Relationships and organisations**

So, I think I've certainly learnt a lot about other organisations, and I think others in the group have as well. So, I think it's been a good, positive move and I think any partnership working going forward will be a lot easier because of this process."

### Data, planning and information

"So, there's an awful lot of uncertainty, and that makes it hard to plan for. It's hard to plan both in terms of what the processes should be."

#### Challenges

"I think all the challenges were at the beginning where we didn't know what we were supposed to be putting in the plan."

#### Learning points

"So, I think some form of trying to get things off their chest in a professional way, some sort of drop in centre, or something I don't know, that might have been helpful, or just to know that yeah, that overall, we were looking out for our staff's mental health really."

