



MY HEALTH, OUR FUTURE
...At home

Exploring the mental health and emotional wellbeing of young people, parents/
guardians and education staff during the coronavirus pandemic

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INTRODUCTION

On 23rd March 2020, the UK went into lockdown due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Businesses and schools were closed, workers were furloughed, and the public were asked to stay at home in order to help slow the spread of the virus and also to ensure that the NHS did not become overwhelmed.

With no indication of when or how restrictions would be lifted the UK entered a period of great uncertainty.

The lockdown brought significant challenges for schools and other educational establishments. With little time for pre-planning, schools, colleges and universities were required to deliver learning and support in new socially distanced ways, with technologies that were sometimes unfamiliar to both students and staff themselves.

For families, the pressures of lockdown were equally daunting. Parents and guardians faced uncertainties over their jobs, how to feed the family when supermarkets shelves were empty and concerns about their family's health. In addition to all of this, many also found themselves having to take on a more significant role in supporting their children's learning and education.

Combined responsibilities, with little divide between them, increased pressures on people's lives and impacted on relationships within households.

Across the last four years, Healthwatch Suffolk has, as a part of its "My Health, Our Future" programme of work, asked more than 26,000

children and young people across Suffolk about their mental health and emotional wellbeing both inside and outside of school. The closure of schools due to the pandemic inevitably prevented the continuation of this work this year.

"My Health, Our Future - AtHome" and "Kids@Home" (see page 126) were launched by Healthwatch Suffolk because there was a clear need for local health, care and community leaders to understand more about the impact of the COVID-19 lockdown and subsequent school closures on people's wellbeing.

The aim of the projects has been to ensure that people have access to information that can shape, influence and improve the response to coronavirus in Suffolk by schools and local public services. Updates on the insights from the "At Home" survey series have been provided to local leaders and key forums throughout the pandemic (e.g. the Suffolk Health and Wellbeing Board and the Suffolk and North East Essex Integrated Care System Board).

HWS has drawn upon its experiences of delivering the "My Health, Our Future" research programme, in order to gather feedback from children and young people during this significant and unprecedented period. HWS has also used this opportunity to extend the programme to include the views and experiences of parents and guardians, school and college staff and children aged 6 - 11 years.

METHODOLOGY

Due to the closure of schools during the lockdown, it was not possible to co-produce the questionnaires as might have been possible with the routine "My Health, Our Future" (MHoF) project work..

Instead, the learning gained from delivering MHoF over the previous four years was used by the Healthwatch Suffolk team to develop three separate questionnaires for:

- Children and young people aged 11-25.
- Parents and guardians
- Education staff working within schools and colleges

A further questionnaire was co-developed with the Mental Health Support Teams (in the west of Suffolk) aimed at primary school aged children aged (6 - 11).

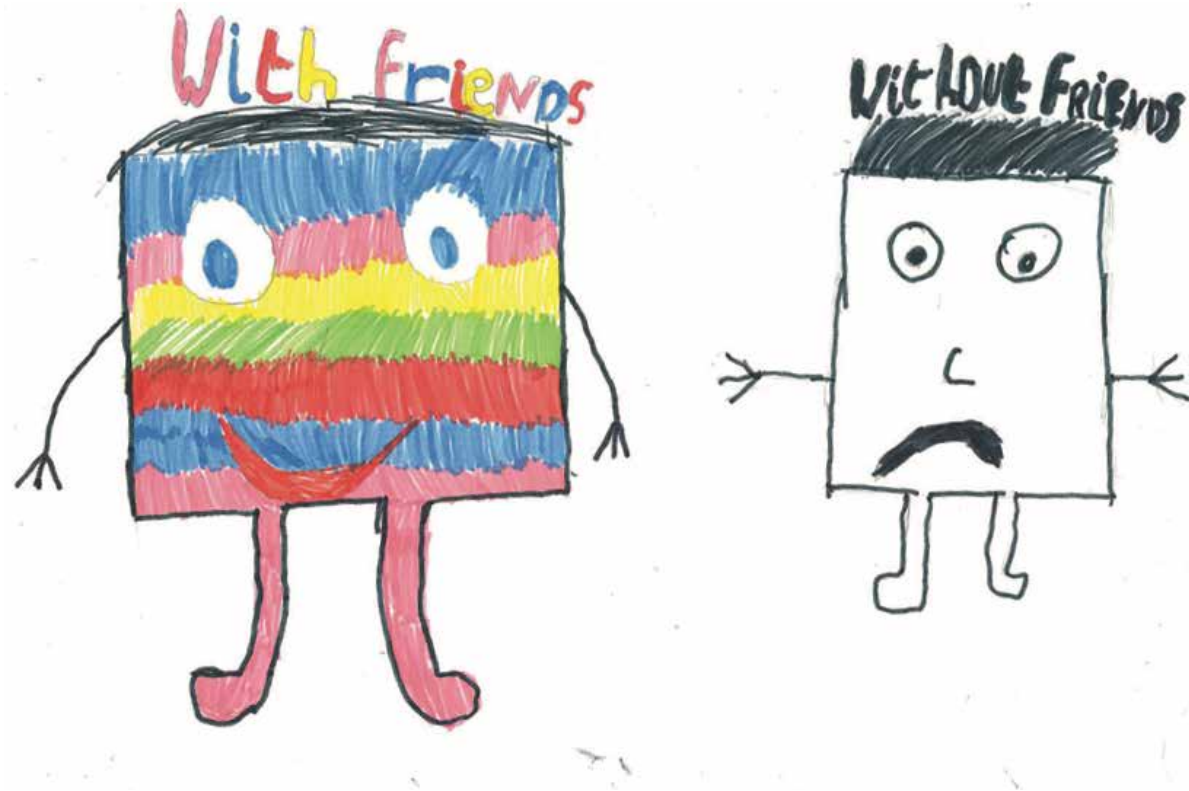
The questionnaires broadly covered the same topic areas, although not every question featured on all four surveys. There was also some variation in the way questions were worded to account for differences between the groups. Topic areas within the surveys were:

- Worries
- Mental health before the COVID-19 lockdown
- The impact of the COVID-19 lockdown on mental health support
- Mental health during the pandemic
- Rating of support provided by schools during the pandemic

- Returning to school post lockdown
- Household coping during the pandemic
- The impact of the COVID-19 lockdown on family relationships
- Loneliness during the pandemic

The surveys were promoted widely in order to encourage responses.

- All schools who had participated in the 2018, 2019 and the planned 2020 MHOF project were contacted and asked if they would be willing to share the surveys with pupils, their families and amongst their staff groups.
- The survey was promoted across Healthwatch Suffolk social media platforms.
- The questionnaires were shared through relevant networks e.g. Suffolk Parent Carer Network (SPCN) and Parents and Carers Together (PACT) and with partner organisations across Suffolk.
- The 6 - 11 survey (Kids@Home) was initially shared with primary schools associated with the west Mental Health Support Teams, but was later shared with all primary schools through promotion in the 'Suffolk Headlines' newsletter, and through social media.



DISCUSSION SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

“MHoF - At Home” and “MHoF Kids@Home” present a unique first look at the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting lockdown have had on the wellbeing of children and young people, parents and families, and education staff in Suffolk.

Healthwatch Suffolk (HWS) released four surveys engaging these groups in April 2020. Due to the unknown impact of the lockdown at the time, the surveys were qualitative and exploratory.

Most respondents replied in May 2020 when the lockdown measures were beginning to ease. This section explores the most important findings and offers an interpretation regarding the meaning of the results overall.

Demographics and Sample

Responses were received from:

Kids@Home

- **Over 500** primary school age young people (6 - 11's), developed in partnership with the Suffolk Mental Health Support Teams

MHoF - At Home

- **Over 2,500** secondary school and college age young people (11 - 25). This age range was applied to be inclusive of young people with Special Educational Needs (SEND).

- **Over 1,200** parents and guardians (all ages)
- **Over 700** teachers and school staff (all ages)

The overall sample was generally representative of the Suffolk population with regard to:

- **Ethnic composition** - The proportion of non-white British or minority ethnic respondents [including white minority ethnic groups] was generally in line with data from previous “My Health, Our Future (MHoF) projects [HWS, 2019, 2020] and the Suffolk Observatory [2020], using data from the 2011 Census). It is important to consider that the total population of black Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) residents has increased since 2011.
- **Geographical representation** - Across east and west Suffolk, although less well in Waveney.
- **Vulnerabilities** - There was a good sample of young people and parents/guardians with a range of vulnerabilities (including existing mental health difficulties) and parents of children with Special Educational Needs (SEND).
- **LGBTQ*+** - LGBTQ*+ young people were well represented in the young people’s survey. Numbers of students reporting an LGBTQ identity were generally in line with previous MHoF project findings (HWS 2019, HWS 2018). Parents and school staff with a non-heterosexual or non-cisgender identity were not distinguished in the findings at all.

The samples were less representative in terms of gender. There were more female respondents to all three “MHoF – At Home” age surveys. Parents/Guardians and school staff were more biased in favour of female respondents than the CYP survey. The 6 - 11’s “Kids@ Home” survey was relatively evenly split.

The sample size and demographic breakdown suggest that the findings of the survey are generally robust, except for a lack of engagement from male and LGBTQ*+ parents and guardians, as well as respondents in Waveney.

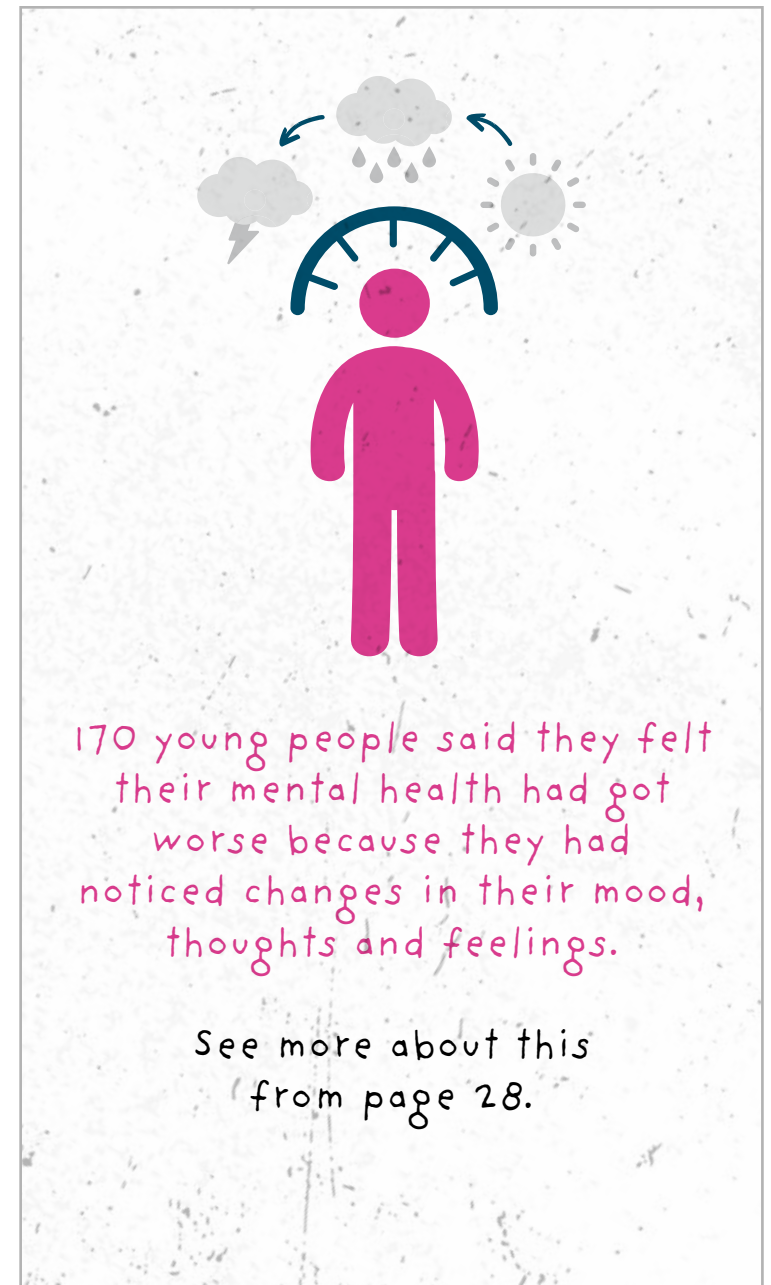
Mental health and wellbeing during the COVID-19 lockdown

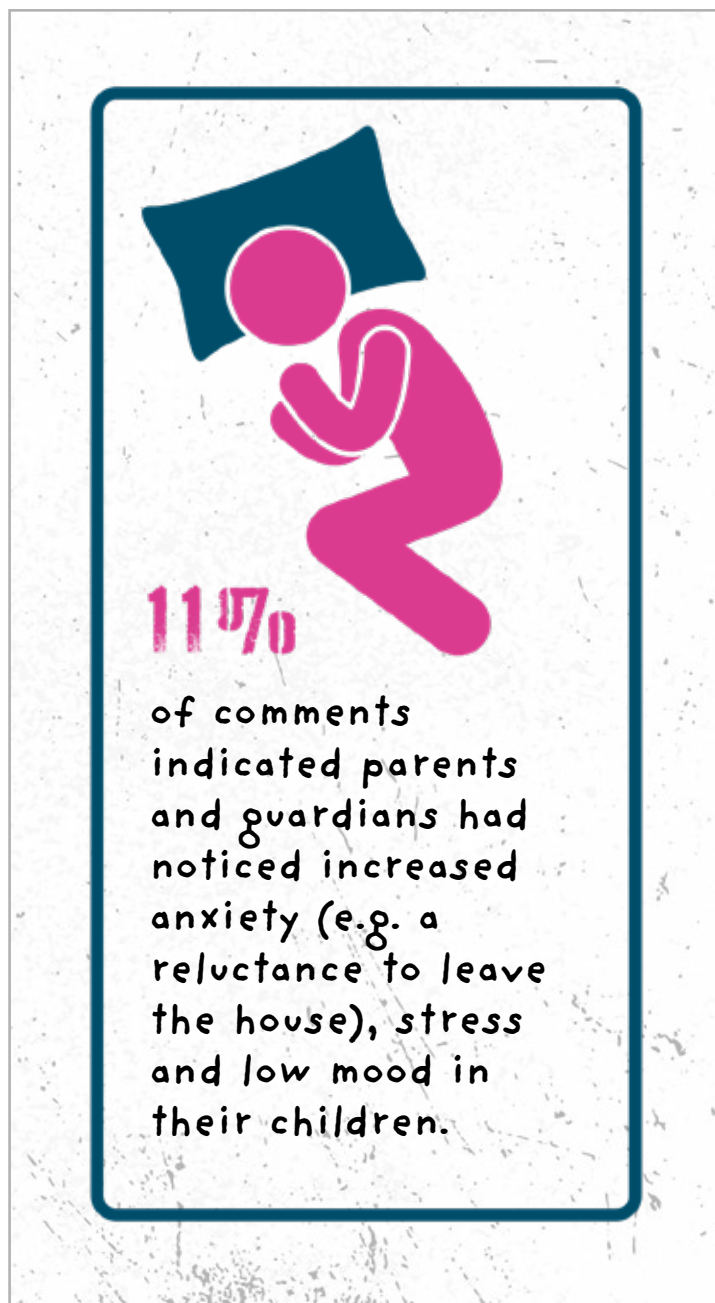
Young people, parents/guardians and education staff reported similar levels of change in self-reported mental health.

- **Around half** of the respondents to the CYP (11 - 25), parents/guardians and education staff surveys said their mental health was about the same following the COVID-19 lockdown.
- **Around a third** of each sample said their mental health had got worse, and the remaining **15 -**

20% said their mental health had improved.

- Those with at least one vulnerability were **more likely** to report “worse” or “much worse” mental health.
- Primary school age children were **more likely** to report a change in “feelings” during lockdown than secondary and college age students. **A third** indicated that they felt “good” or “much better”, but equally, **a third** reported a negative impact.
- Many responses to the questions about mental health focussed on broader wellbeing and practical issues such as stress, workload, schoolwork and relationships rather than mental health diagnoses. Despite this, there were references by parents/guardians and young people that suggest people have had difficulty managing existing mental health conditions. Some experienced a worsening of symptoms, especially with regard to anxiety. Others said they had found it harder to manage depression, eating disorders, suicidal ideation or self-harm.





- Amongst children and young people, common reasons for poorer mental health were a lack of social contact and increased stress or anxiety. Many 11 - 25 year olds said that they were struggling with schoolwork and were more likely than primary age children to report that lockdown had worsened symptoms of existing mental health conditions. Some said that they were worried about the impact of the virus on their families.
 - Parents/Guardians and education staff also reported that isolation and relationship changes were impacting on their mental health. Many referenced the additional strains of balancing their parenting or caring responsibilities and their paid employment. Education staff also expressed concerns about pupils and returning to work.
 - References to increased levels of stress and anxiety were common in responses from 11 - 25 year olds, parents/guardians and education staff who reported a negative impact on mental health.
 - Common reasons for improved mental health for both primary and 11 - 25 year old CYP included being able to spend more time with household members, siblings or parents and relief from pressures or stressors (e.g. bullies) at school.
 - Parents/Guardians and education staff who said their mental health had improved most commonly said this was because of decreased work pressure or an improved work/life balance, reduced stress and being able to spend more time with family members at home. Parents from a BAME background were more likely to report a negative impact on mental health.
- 11 - 25's receiving or waiting for mental health support, and their parents/guardians, commonly said changes to their support had detrimentally affected their mental health.***
- This included:
- References to increased anxiety or worsening symptoms, stress or low mood.
 - Reports of a reduction in support or that they were struggling with the change to digital or telephone services.
 - The majority of 11 - 25's who reported poorer mental health

during lockdown said no support could help them or that they did not know what support could help. Young people most often indicated they would like more social interaction with family or friends and increased support with their school work. A small number said they would like support from a counsellor, or to have someone professional to talk to.

It is notable that the distribution of self-reported impact on mental health appeared to be similar amongst children and young people, parents/guardians and education staff.

Although the majority of these three groups felt their mental health had stayed the same, those who experienced changes were more likely to report a negative effect than a positive one. Where positive changes had resulted from lockdown, these were often as a result of reduced school or work pressures.

Those who were already experiencing other difficulties or vulnerabilities were more likely to report a negative impact on their mental health. This suggests that recovery plans focussing on mental health and wellbeing should continue to support vulnerable groups such as BAME communities, people who identify as LGBTQ*+, or who have existing mental health conditions.

Lockdown appears to have had a negative impact for some people already experiencing mental health difficulties or caring for someone with mental health difficulties. This, combined with the difficulties some reported in accessing support and existing issues with access to mental health support in Suffolk highlighted by the ongoing transformation work (A Very Different Conversation [Healthwatch Suffolk 2018]) could leave some families feeling unsupported or having difficulty managing mental health needs.

School Support During Lockdown

Education staff were overwhelmingly the most positive about the learning and emotional wellbeing support provided by schools.

- Where they had concerns, these related to the difficulty engaging with large numbers of students, the limits of welfare checks, hidden families, the limits of digital technology and a lack of face-to-face contact.

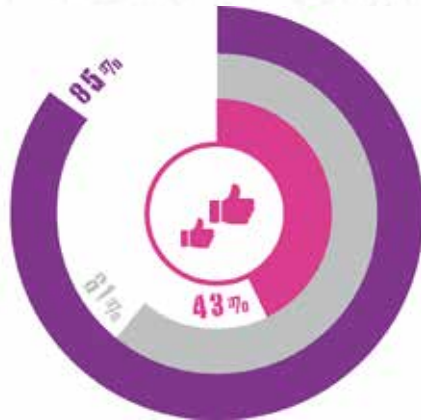
Secondary and college age CYP were the least likely to rate the support from schools during the pandemic as good.

- Most were positive that their school had kept in touch with them via email or phone, but some said that they had received little contact and only limited outreach concerning their emotional wellbeing. Some young people referenced difficulties with the amount of schoolwork they were receiving or the support and feedback they received.

Parents/Guardians views of support generally focussed on the amount of communication they had received from the school or college.

- Communication included telephone and email check-ups and where teachers were supportive in talking about wellbeing. Some said that they had received no communication from the school or information about wellbeing from the school. Primary age children were not asked about EWB support.

SCHOOL WELLBEING SUPPORT "GOOD" OR "VERY GOOD"



■ Young people
 ■ School or college staff
■ Parents & guardians

Read more about people's perceptions of school support from page 90.

Education staff reported a number of concerns about the support for vulnerable pupils and the difficulties associated with being unaware of their home situation.

This included:

- Concerns about being able to identify potential safeguarding concerns without face-to-face contact with students.
- Concerns that families may not have the skills required to motivate learning at home.
- Worries that school or college can be seen as a sanctuary for some students and that the removal of this may make them vulnerable to toxic relationships or abuse.
- Concerns that difficulties (of any kind) may be masked by students or their parents/guardians.
- That students may feel unsupported at home, particularly if facing a reduction in support from external agencies.
- Concerns that students basic psychological, wellbeing and physical needs may not be met and the impact of this on their mental health and also their ability to learn effectively at home.
- Worries about the mental health and attainment impact for vulnerable

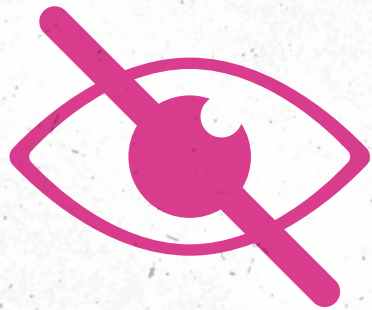
students.

- Concerns that students may not have sufficient access to provision of technology or internet in order to engage effectively with learning or to access needed support.

Some education staff said their institution had plans in place, suggesting that like education and wellbeing support more generally, the support for vulnerable pupils varied by institution.

The majority of secondary and college age school pupils, parents/guardians and education staff were positive about levels of emotional wellbeing and education support. However, all three groups referred to concerns about the amount and quality of work provided during the lockdown period.

For all three groups, concerns and positive comments about both learning support and emotional wellbeing support appeared to revolve around the amount and efficacy of telephone or digital communication. Positive comments were generally associated with schools and colleges still being in touch with pupils and families for learning and wellbeing support needs.



13% of the comments from school staff expressed concern that lack of regular observation may mean problems go unnoticed. Also, some feared that problems may be masked deliberately by students or parents.

Read more from page 58.

Worries During the Pandemic

Secondary and college age CYP worried the most about their friends or family catching the virus, the impact of the COVID-19 lockdown on their education and their future prospects post pandemic.

- A small number worried about having enough food or money.
- Female, BAME and LGBTQ*+ students were more likely to report being worried across categories.
- A large proportion of 11 - 25's reported not being worried about catching the virus themselves.

Parents/Guardians worried most about their friends and family catching the virus and also the impact of the COVID-19 lockdown on their children's education and general wellbeing.

- A small number were worried about food, money or job prospects.
- Parents with vulnerabilities and female parents were more likely to be concerned about all of the questions asked.
- BAME parents were more likely to be worried about catching the virus.

Primary school age children were most likely to worry about others getting the virus and also their schoolwork.

Although they asked differing questions, the most common worries about the pandemic for primary age children, 11 - 25's, and parents/guardians were quite similar.

Chief concerns were about friends or family members catching the virus and the impact on schoolwork or education.

11 - 25 year olds were much more likely to report not being worried about catching the virus than their parents or guardians. This may reflect differing attitudes to the health risk of the virus or transmission for different age groups.

A small number of each sample reported being worried about basic needs such as having enough money or food as a household. In addition, a majority of parents reported not being worried about their future job prospects. Despite this, concerns about basic financial needs may increase as the economic impact of the pandemic develops.

Relationships in the Home and Loneliness During the Pandemic

Impact of lockdown on household relationships for both groups of CYP and parents was mixed. There were generally more positive or neutral responses from parents and 11 - 25's than negative ones, however a large number said that the lockdown had a detrimental impact on relationships within the home.

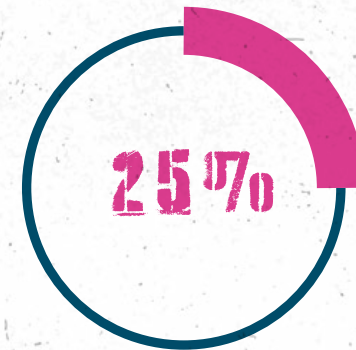
- Many primary and secondary or college age CYP were positive about the impact that the COVID-19 lockdown had on their relationships with siblings. In addition, many 11 - 25's and parents/guardians were also positive about the relationships between parents and children.
- Positive relationship outcomes were often associated with spending more time together, feeling closer or better communication. Where the lockdown was associated with a negative impact on relationships, respondents often referenced increased stress or arguments, spending more time together or feeling stuck with each other. Lockdown measures had

exacerbated problems for some already experiencing relationship difficulties within their household.

- Education staff with dependents at home most often felt their caring responsibilities had increased. Almost none said they had decreased, and a small proportion considered they had stayed the same.

Lockdown has had a mixed impact on primary and secondary or college age children and young people's levels of loneliness.

- Nearly half of both primary age pupils and 11 - 25's said that their levels of loneliness hadn't changed as a result of lockdown. However, **48%** of 11 - 25s and **12%** of primary age children said that they had felt lonelier as a result of lockdown.
- For both groups, those with vulnerabilities were more likely to feel lonely during the lockdown.
- Common reasons for increased levels of loneliness were not being able to see family, friends or school peers as a result of lockdown. Those who felt less lonely referenced spending more



A quarter of parents and guardians said lockdown had a negative impact on relationships within their family.

Read more from page 66.

time with their household or siblings.

- For primary school age children, the role of siblings was interesting. Time together playing and interacting with siblings is the most common reason children offered for improved sibling relationships. Some comments directly acknowledge the important role a sibling has played in offsetting the social loss of friends and other family members.

The theme of missed social interaction was present in all groups' responses. Many respondents were clearly finding it difficult not being able to see or visit friends and relatives. However, lockdown also appears to have been a period when many households have enjoyed spending more time together.

This increase in household cohesion may explain why there was not a more significant increase in self-reported loneliness. This may also have had a protective influence on people's mental health and general wellbeing, particularly amongst families that have not experienced heightened levels of conflict within their household.

Some families reported experiencing increased tension, stress and arguments as a result of having to spend more time together. In a minority of comments, it was clear that the lockdown had exacerbated existing relationship tensions between parents/guardians, children and siblings, particularly for those who may have already been experiencing relationship difficulties. Many families appear to have experienced difficulties having time or space to themselves at the height of lockdown, and problems with work/life balance for key workers or those with increased responsibilities at home have contributed to tensions.

Older students were more likely than their peers to report feeling lonely. This finding may reflect the increased importance of social interaction

outside of the family unit for older young people. For example, MHOF 2019 (and other reports from the series) have found that the importance of the family unit for support when young people felt they were not coping decreased with age. . In previous HWS MHoF research (e.g. in 2017), older students were also more likely to report that their family was a source of stress..

Household Coping During the Lockdown

Most 11 - 25's, parents/guardians and school staff agreed that their household was coping with the lockdown.

- Common difficulties that caused respondents to feel they were not coping were completing schoolwork for CYP and balancing their children's schoolwork with paid employment for parents/guardians and school staff.
- Some had worries about the virus and difficulties coping with existing mental health concerns, either their own or their family members.

6 - 11 year olds were almost twice as likely to say that other members of their household were feeling "okay" than "not ok".

- Common themes for those who said that their household was not okay were that they had perceived others to be worried or upset or that others in their household had concerns about employment, their health status and the virus.
- For those who felt others in their household were "okay", children said their family appeared unworried, that they felt safe or protected at home and that there was talking or reassurance about the pandemic at home.

Despite most agreeing that they were coping, other sections of the



43 young people felt anxious about returning to a social environment. 10 were concerned about seeing bullies again. For some, they had continued to face bullying in lockdown.

Read more about this from page 106.

report reflect high levels of concern about similar themes. This perhaps highlights differing levels of resilience amongst individuals and that the total number of people who had felt they were not coping may not be truly reflective of the actual number of families experiencing difficulties during the lockdown period, or who may have required further support.

Returning to school

Over half of the 11 - 25's were negative about returning to school. Around a third were positive.

- Positive responses often related to going back to see friends, though some had highlighted worries about the practicalities of social interaction because they had not experienced it for such a long time.
- Negative responses related to concerns about falling behind in schoolwork, safety and the virus.
- Some said they were anxious about seeing people again, particularly if they had experienced bullying prior to lockdown. Some highlighted that they had continued to face

bullying whilst they were at home, highlighting that digital means of contact mean such students are continuously at the mercy of their bullies both inside and outside of their education setting.

- Students who were transitioning to college or university often expressed worries about what their experience would be like and how they could start a new phase of their lives whilst social distancing was in place (e.g. new friendships). They also had concerns about course practicalities and exam performance.

Around half of the parents and guardians felt their children would struggle with the return to school.

- This was higher for parents of those with SEND or existing mental health difficulties.
- Parents/Guardians felt that children would need a phased return (both in terms of the education environment and also their workload), a focus on wellbeing support, and assurances about safety from the virus.

Seventy-two percent of education staff said families would need additional support to return to school.

- Key themes were safety concerns, support to return to structured education routines and varied gaps in learning amongst students.
- Education staff (**43%**) said they would not need additional support to return to work.
- For those who felt they needed support, key themes were assurances about a safe work environment, a phased return to work and support with workload because of student learning gaps and the need for them to catch-up. Some staff at risk of the virus (e.g. because of a health condition or because they had a dependent at risk in their household) expressed serious worries about what coronavirus might mean for their future career.

Thirty-three percent of 6 - 11 year olds were worried about the return to school. **38%** were positive.

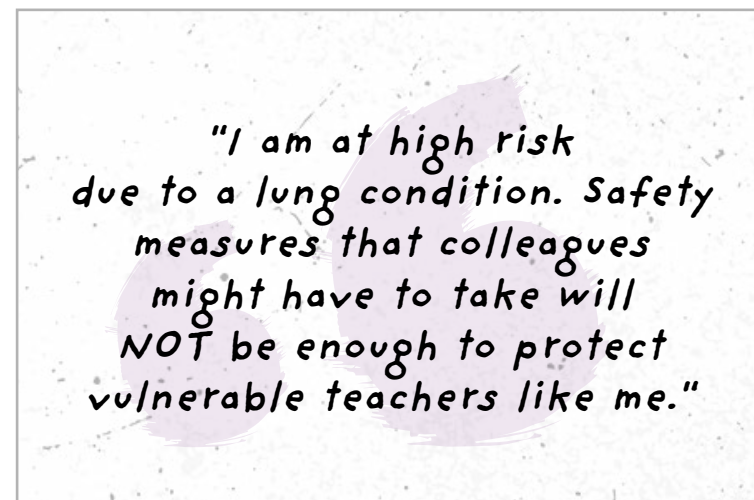
- Common worries for the primary age respondents were safety and the virus, changes in relationships with friends and catching up with schoolwork. Some expressed anxieties that friends may not like them anymore or that dynamics within friendship groups may have changed in some way.

Not every respondent was negative about the return to school.

- For primary and secondary or college age young people, many felt “okay” or were positive about the return and seeing their friends. However, all groups had references to concerns, particularly about a safe return and catching-up with school work. Many also acknowledged the difficulty some students may face in returning to a structured routine and, for CYP, the potential impact of social

changes following four to five months away from their peers.

- It is notable that a high proportion of education staff felt children and families would need support to return, however, only a little under half said they would need support themselves.



Conclusion

“My Health Our Future - At Home” and “Kids@Home” has shown that the impact of the pandemic on the mental health of Suffolk’s children and young people, parents and guardians, and teachers and school staff has been extremely variable.

Many respondents reported greater cohesion within households and improved mental health and wellbeing as a result of removing day-to-day stressors from school or work. Many secondary or college age CYP, parents/guardians and education staff reported that the lockdown had little or no impact on their mental health or feelings of loneliness.

Despite this, some common themes emerged that suggest greater difficulty. CYP, parents/guardians and education staff all reported increased levels of anxiety, worries about the virus itself, school work and emotional wellbeing during the lockdown. All groups referenced the impact of not being able to see friends and family outside the home. Some parents, guardians and carers also appear to have faced significant stresses by being forced to balance work and their family or caring responsibilities.

Support from schools and colleges appears to have been mixed. Some students reported working well under lockdown, and staff were generally positive about levels of education and wellbeing support. However, schools and colleges are operating under unprecedented conditions, and staff and parents/guardians both questioned the efficacy of online learning and support in place of face-to-face.

Difficulties with schoolwork and pupil engagement are likely to result in an additional need for wellbeing and learning support now schools have returned. Notably, it was felt by all groups that not every young person was thriving without the structure of the school or college and there were well-founded concerns amongst education staff about the impact on vulnerable students (e.g. with respect to safeguarding concerns). Despite this, “MHOF - At Home” has highlighted that schools

and colleges can be a crucial source of support for young people, particularly those with vulnerabilities or SEND.

It is difficult to conclude from the findings what the impact of the lockdown has been on statutory mental health support. Some young people and parents/guardians reported a reduction in support. Some also said they had struggled with the move to digital or telephone services and it was clear that a number of young people felt this change had led them to feel both isolated from sources of help and unsupported. These issues had been compounded by technical difficulties that had interrupted important conversations with professionals. It is also unclear whether there will be an increase in demand on already stretched services as a result of lockdown.

The data also suggests that the pandemic and resulting lockdown have had an impact on existing inequalities, particularly for those from BAME communities, people with LGBTQ*+ identities, and those with vulnerabilities such as existing mental health diagnoses, disabilities or caring responsibilities. This is a finding consistent across all HWS “MHoF” research projects. A second UK or Suffolk lockdown will exacerbate these issues further. In addition, the emerging economic impact and resulting job losses or financial hardship will very likely contribute to overall lower levels of mental health and wellbeing.

Local recovery plans developed by education settings and also statutory services will need to ensure that education and mental health services are adequately supported and suitably integrated. Plans will need specific focus on addressing existing inequalities and vulnerabilities, including bespoke support targeted at meeting the differing needs of specific communities and groups. They must contribute to an adequate standard of education as well as mental health and wellbeing support for Suffolk young people and families. There must be serious thinking about how the value of remote support could be improved, particularly for those who may struggle

to access adequate provision of technology or who live in areas with poor internet connection. Serious concerns and risk may develop under a second lockdown for some of the most vulnerable families if other solutions are not found. Young people must feel secure in using alternative platforms to engage with their school and also to access support when they need it.

Plans can be supported through further research to be proactive and adapt to the continually changing conditions of the pandemic's progress. The road to recovery will be challenging for policymakers, families, children and professionals, and it is unlikely the country will return to a previous norm.

As the county adjusts to a “new normal”, Suffolk must continue the trend of improvement in support for mental health and wellbeing in services to ensure that young people, families and education staff have the opportunity to thrive.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Who responded?

This report incorporates the findings from two surveys and four separate groups of people including young people (aged 11+), children (aged 6 - 11), education staff and parents and guardians.

The responses received from these groups were as follows:

"My Health, Our Future - At Home" surveys

- **2,573** Children and young people
- **1,058** Parents
- **747** School staff

"My Health, Our Future - Kids@Home" survey

- **512** children aged 6 - 11

The following demographics are applicable only to the "At Home" surveys of young people, education staff and parents and guardians. See from page 128 for more information about respondents to our "Kids@Home" survey of 6-11 year olds.

At Home survey demographics

All groups were asked to give basic information about who they were. This section provides information on each of the samples.

Location in the county

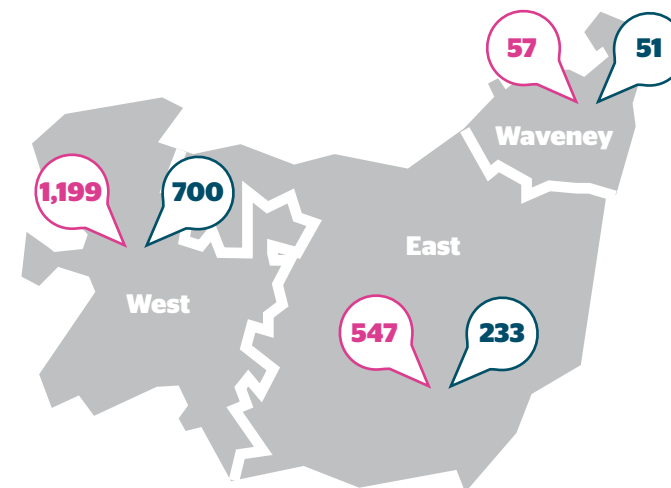
CYP and parents were asked to provide the first part of their postcode. This data was used to map their responses by area of Suffolk: East, West and Waveney (see figure one right).

1,806 CYP and **984** parents provided a valid Suffolk postcode.

COVID period

Lockdown in England began on the 23rd of March 2020. The first easing measures began on the 10th May.

Most of the responses to all three surveys were recorded in May 2020. A small number were recorded in April 2020.



Children & young people Parents and guardians

Figure 1: Location of respondents (west Suffolk, east Suffolk and Waveney).

Fifty-five per cent of CYP and **57%** of school staff completed the survey before lockdown was eased on the 10th May. **82%** of parents and guardians completed the survey before this date.

Age of respondents

Children and young people

Children and young people were asked for their age and year group. Most responses were from secondary school-aged pupils. There was a good spread of responses across most year groups (see figure two).

Parents and school staff

Parents and school staff were also asked for an age category. Most parents and school staff who responded were aged between 30 and 59 (see figure three).

Parents survey - children's age

Parents were asked to identify how many children they had and how old they were. 945 responded to the question.

The parent's survey was promoted for parents of secondary school children. However, some also reported having younger children too.

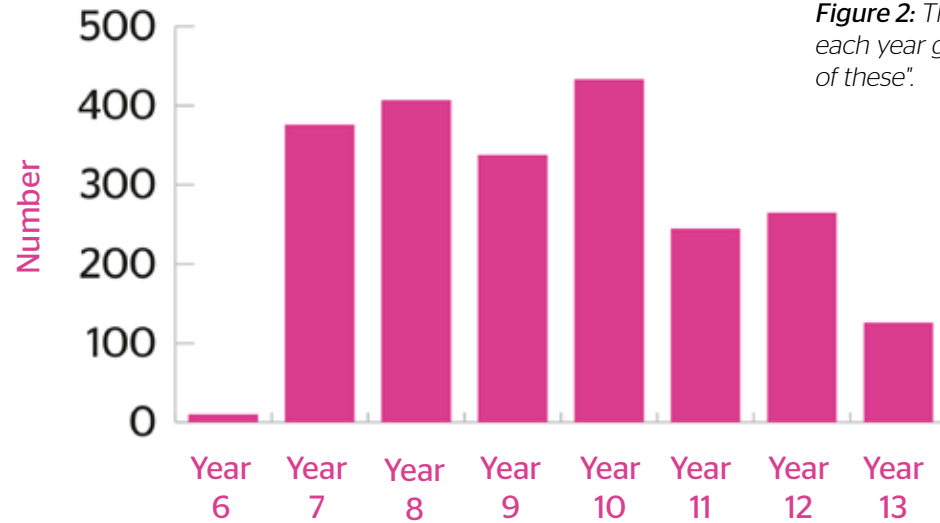


Figure 2: The number of responses from each year group. 27 young people said "None of these".

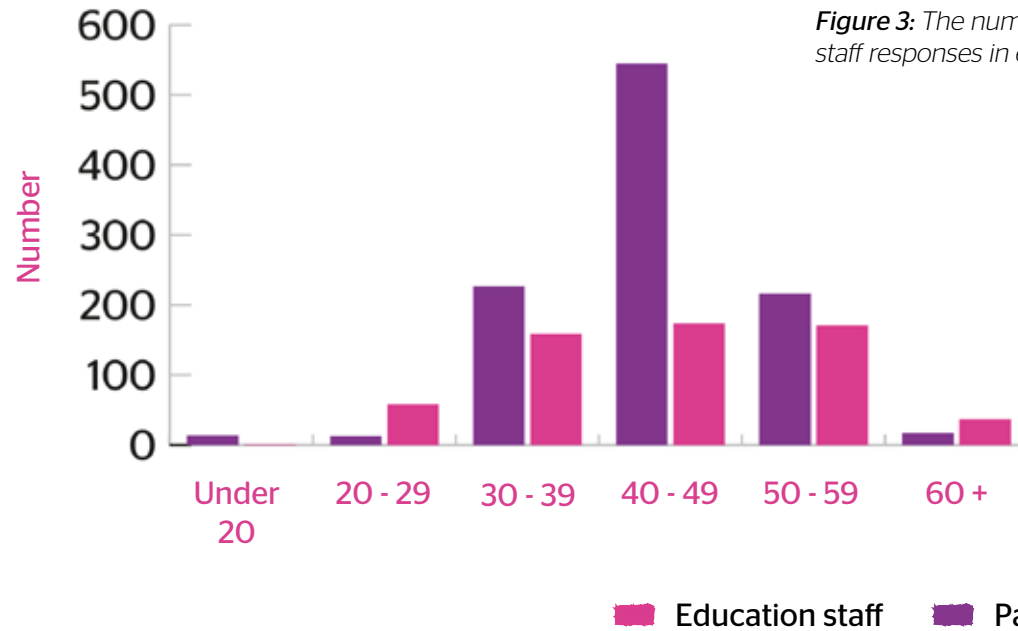


Figure 3: The number of parents and school staff responses in each age category.

The majority of parents had one or two children (83%). 17% had three or more.

School year	Percentage
Pre-school	7%
Primary school & reception	47%
Secondary	86%
College / Sixth Form	22%
Not at school (Excluded)	0.1%
Not at school (Usually home schooled)	1%
Not at school (Left education)	5%

Table 1: Children's education stage from the parent's survey. Please note, the percentage total is greater than 100% to represent parents who have more than one child.

Education status - Children and young people

CYP were asked how they were educated before lockdown and how they were educated now. The majority were attending secondary school, sixth form or college (94%) and were having education provided online (72%).

Education before lockdown	Percentage
I attended secondary education or sixth form	94%
I was at college	4%
I attended a middle school	1%
I was at university	0.4%

I was home schooled	0.2%
I attended a special school	0.2%
I attended a primary school	0.2%
I had left the education system	0.2%
I attended alternative provision	0.04%
Responses	2,413

Table 2: Children and young people's education status before lockdown.

Education before lockdown	Percentage
Education is being provided by teachers online	72%
Organising own learning and education at home	10%
I am taking part in minimal, or no education	9%
Physically going to school, college or university	5%
Education is being provided by parent/guardian	3%
Responses	2,247

Table 3: Children and young people's current education status.

Free text responses included:

- "Finished formal education" - 0.8%
- "Preparing for transition to college or university" - 0.4%

Staff roles

School staff were asked what type of school they worked in and their role. Table four shows their responses below.

Education before lockdown	Percentage
Secondary school	59%
Primary school	20%
College	16%
Special school	2%
Middle school	1%
Nursery	1%
Independent school	0.8%
Other	0.3%
Alternative provision	0.3%
Responses	747

Table 4: Education staff workplace.

Education before lockdown	Percentage
Teaching	52%
Key support role	31%
Support role (non-pupil facing)	13%
Leadership	10%
Support role (pupil facing)	4%
Responses	743

Table 5: Education staff role. Note - Percentage total is greater than 100% as teachers could have more than one role within the school.

There were many different school staff roles reported in the survey. Generally, the categories above included:

- **Teaching** - Teachers (primary, secondary, college, nursery), lecturers and newly qualified teachers.
- **Key support role** - SEND Support, pastoral support and teaching assistants.
- **Support role (non-pupil facing)** - Receptionist, administration, technical or business support and break staff.
- **Leadership** - Headteachers/principals and senior leadership team.
- **Support role (pupil facing)** - Careers advisor, exams officer, apprenticeship tutor and programme tutor.

Gender

In all three surveys, respondents were asked to identify their gender. Respondents could choose “Male”, “Female” or “I prefer to describe my gender in another way” (see figure four).

For CYP, the most common self-described gender responses were non-binary (19), unsure (3), transgender (2), gender neutral (1), gender fluid (1), or preferred not to say (1). Six described another gender identity.

Sexual orientation (Young people)

CYP were asked to identify their sexual orientation. There were 2,182 responses. Of these, 76% identified as straight, 7% said that they would prefer not to say, and 3% said that this did not apply to them.

Sexuality	Percentage
Straight	76%
Bi-sexual	8%
I'd prefer not to say	7%
This does not apply to me	3%
Gay	3%
Pansexual	1%
Questioning	1%
Asexual	1%

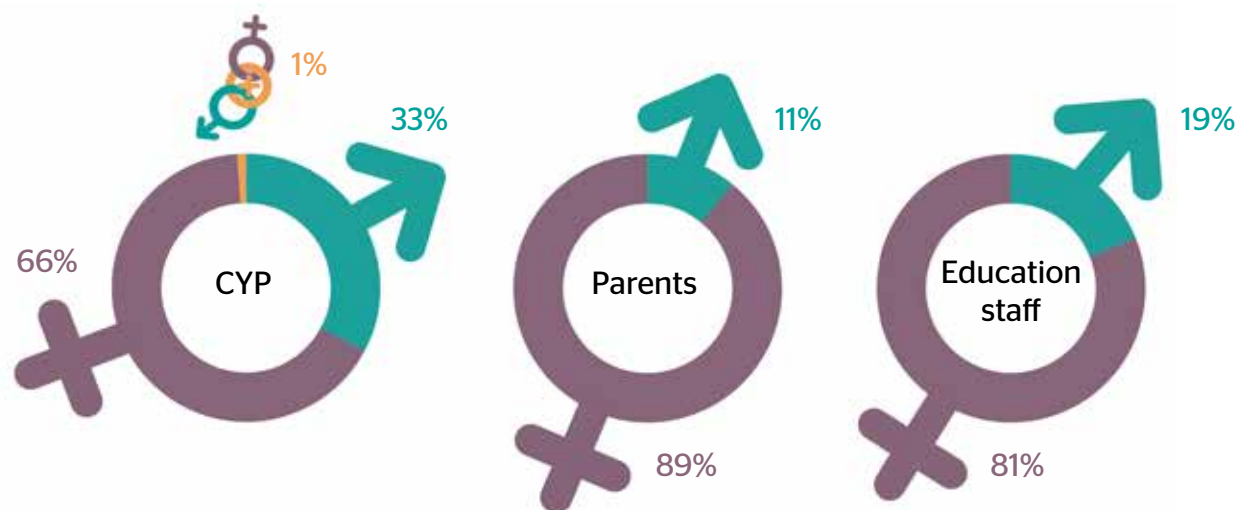


Figure 4: The gender of respondents. Possible choices were male, female and prefer to describe my gender in another way.

Queer	0.4%
Responses	2,182

Table 6: Young people's sexual orientation.

Ethnicity

Young people in Suffolk are part of a diverse range of ethnic groups. At the time of the last census (2011), 90.8% of Suffolk's population was White British. In comparison:

- 84% of CYP who responded to the survey identified as White British. (This also reflects findings from Healthwatch Suffolk's 2019 'My Health Our Future' report.)
- 89% of parents who responded identified as White British.
- 75% of school staff identified as White British.

Ethnicity	Children and young people	Parents and guardians	Education staff
White - English/ Welsh/ Scottish/ Northern Irish/ British	84%	89%	75%
White - Irish	1%	0.8%	0.5%
White - Gypsy, Traveller or Irish Traveller	0.2%	-	-
White - Any other White background	4%	5%	2.5%
Romanian	0.5%	0.4%	-
Portuguese	0.8%	0.7%	0.1%
Polish	1.7%	1.3%	-
Mixed/ Multiple ethnic groups - White and Black Caribbean	1.4%	0.9%	-
Mixed/ Multiple ethnic groups - White and Black African	0.8%	0.1%	0.1%
Mixed/ Multiple ethnic groups - White and Asian	0.8%	0.3%	0.1%
Mixed/ Multiple ethnic groups - Other	0.9%	0.3%	0.5%
Black/ African/ Caribbean/ Black British - Other	-	0.2%	-
Black/ African/ Caribbean/ Black British - Caribbean	0.2%	0.1%	-
Black/ African/ Caribbean/ Black British - African	0.6%	-	0.1%
Asian/ Asian British - Pakistani	0.4%	0.2%	-
Asian/ Asian British - Other	0.6%	0.5%	-
Asian/ Asian British - Indian	0.8%	0.5%	-
Asian/ Asian British - Chinese	0.2%	0.1%	-
Asian/ Asian British - Bangladeshi	1.3%	-	-
Arab	0.1%	-	-
Responses	2,183	1,044	747

Table 7: Respondents ethnicity.

Additional needs

The survey asked young people, parents and school staff which of the following statements applied to them. They could agree with more than one statement.

Number of additional needs	Percentage
0	55%
1	20%
2	7%
3+	3%
No response	15%

Table 8: CYP number of additional needs.

Additional need	Percentage
None of these apply to me	55%
I have a mental health difficulty	12%
I have a long-term medical condition (e.g. diabetes)	10%
I get free school/college meals	6%
Learning difficulties & special educational needs	4%
I need help with English	4%
I am a carer	3%
I have autism or Asperger's	2%
I have ADHD	2%
I am in care or have been	1%
I have a physical disability	1%

No response	15%
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Table 9: CYP breakdown of additional needs. Note - Percentage total is greater than 100% as CYP could report more than one additional need.

Sexuality	Parents and guardians	Education staff
None of these apply to me	50%	52%
I have a long-term medical condition	11%	9%
I care for/support another adult (not living in this household)	11%	13%
I have a mental health difficulty	10%	8%
English is not my first language	6%	1%
I care for another adult (within the household)	4%	6%
I have a physical disability	3%	1%
I have a visual or hearing impairment	1%	1%
I am a foster carer	1%	0.4%
I have a learning difficulty or disability	1%	-
No response	14%	17%

Table 10: Parent/Guardian and education staff breakdown of additional needs. Note - Percentage total is greater than 100% as respondents could report more than one additional need.

Special educational needs (Parent's survey)

As well as the questions about additional needs, parents were also asked if their children had any special educational needs (SEN). Parents could choose from the below statements or provide a free text response.

Special Educational Need	Percentage
Social, emotional or mental health difficulty	10%
Cognition and learning	8%
Communicating and Interacting	7%
Other (Free text response)	5%

Table 11: Parent/Guardian choices about their child's special educational needs.

Other Special Educational Need	Percentage
ASD	2%
Dyslexia/ Dyspraxia	1%
Other	1%
ADHD	0.5%
Deaf or hearing impaired	0.2%
Mental health	0.1%
Learning difficulty	0.1%
Responses	54

Table 12: Parent/Guardian other choices about their child's special educational needs.

Parents/guardians and educational staff working situation

Parents and school staff were asked how the lockdown had affected their working situation. Most parents were working from home some or all of the time (39%), or were furloughed (16%). Almost all school staff were working from home all or some of the time (92%).

Forty-five percent of parents identified as a key worker, however, some

of these still said they were furloughed, not in work or working from home.

Working situation	Percentage
I am now working from home 100% of the time	27%
I've been furloughed (not currently working, but still employed)	16%
I am now working from home more frequently, but I still go into work some days	12%
It has had no impact on my working situation	11%
Not applicable - I was not in work before the lockdown	10%
I am self-employed and my work has dried up/reduced	8%
My work has increased	6%
I have had my working hours reduced	4%
Other (see below)	6%

Table 13: Parent/Guardian choices about their working situation.

Other responses included "shielding" (10), lost job [either due to pandemic or other reasons] (13), full-time parent/carer (6), maternity leave (4), student (3).

Working situation	Percentage
I'm 100% working from home	47%
Some days I'm working from home, other days I'm going to my workplace	45%
Other	4%
I'm going into my workplace each day	3%
I've been furloughed (not currently working but still employed)	1%

Table 14: Education staff choices about their working situation.

ALL GROUPS

... OUR RESPONDENTS

In total, we heard from nearly **4,900** children, young people, parents and guardians and education staff across all four surveys.

The majority of responses were recorded in May 2020 during the COVID-19 lockdown. Just over **50%** of both young people and parents and guardians completed the survey before the coronavirus lockdown restrictions were eased on 10th May 2020.

The "Kids@Home" survey (from page 126) gathered responses from **512** children aged 6 - 11. This survey was promoted from 28th May 2020.

Our ambition is that people's views should be used to inform current and future responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in light of any future lockdown.



MENTAL HEALTH DURING THE PANDEMIC

Young people, parents/guardians and school staff

Across all three surveys, CYP, parents/guardians and education staff were asked how their mental health had changed during the pandemic.

Overall responses across the three cohorts of respondents were generally similar – with around half saying there has been no change, a third saying their mental health has got worse and the remainder saying their mental health had improved. Responses are shown in table 15 below.

There were some slight differences:

- School staff were more likely to say their mental health had improved (20%) than Parents (16%) or Children and Young People (15%).
- Children and young people were more likely to say their mental health worsened during the pandemic (37%) compared to Parents (33%) and school staff (35%).
- Children and young people had the highest proportion (7%) of respondents reporting their mental health had got ‘much worse’.

Option	Children and Young People	Parents/Guardians	School staff
Much better	4%	3%	4%
Better	11%	13%	16%
About the same	50%	51%	45%
Worse	29%	30%	31%
Much worse	7%	3%	4%

Table 15: Responses from all three groups to the question 'Since the start of the pandemic, would you say your mental health is generally'.

More than $\frac{1}{3}$ of children & young people said their mental health had worsened during the pandemic. They were the most likely group to report this.

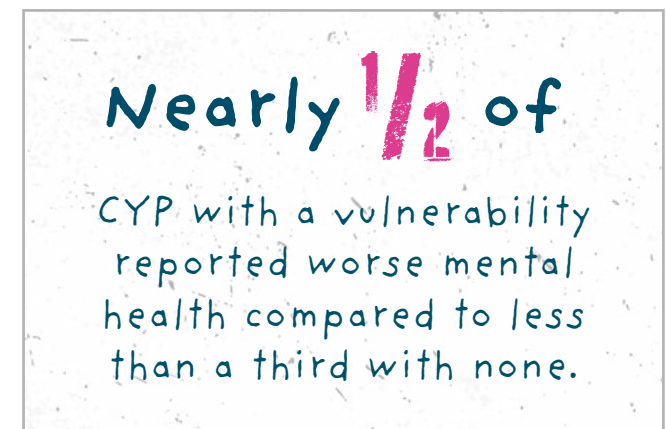
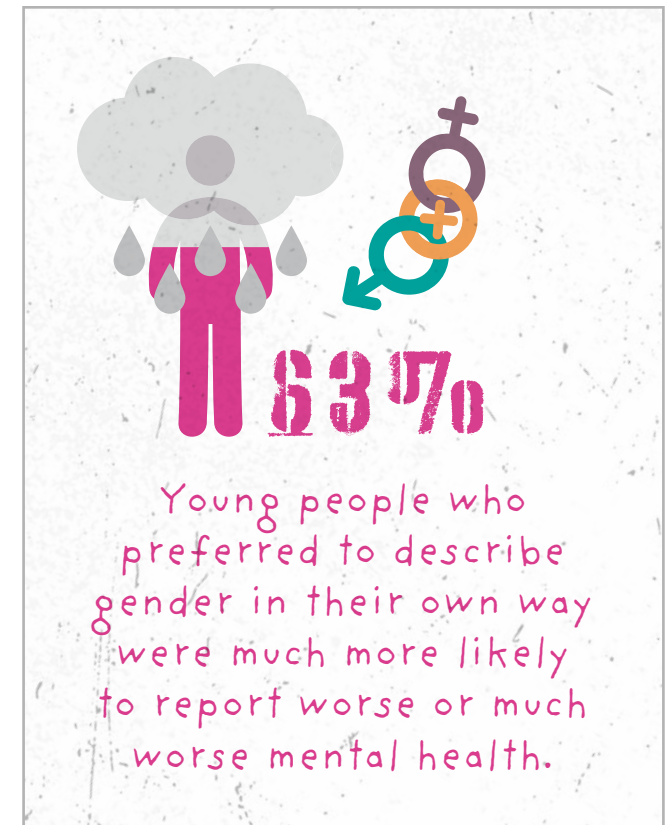
CYP mental health during the pandemic

Amongst Children and Young People impact on mental health varied by demographic characteristics. Key results are shown below (note: sample numbers (“n”) are the total number of CYP within each demographic who answered the question about impact on mental health).

- CYP who reported having at least one vulnerability were more likely to say that their mental health had been “worse” or “much worse” since lockdown (**46%** compared to **28%** of those with no vulnerabilities). Within this:
 - Those who had a mental health difficulty (n = 309) were more likely to report that their mental health had been worse or much worse since lockdown (**68%**) compared to their peers (**30%**).
 - Those who were a carer (n = 65) were more likely to report worse or much worse mental health since the start of lockdown (**57%** compared to **35%**).
 - CYP who reported that they had Autism or Asperger’s (n = 59) were more likely to say that their mental

health was worse or much worse since lockdown (**58%** compared to **35%**).

- CYP from a BAME background (n = 178) were no more likely than their peers to report having experienced worse or much worse mental health since the start of the pandemic (**34%** and **35%**). In comparison **38%** of White British CYP said that their mental health was worse or much worse.
- CYP who selected a sexual orientation other than straight were **16 percentage points** more likely to report that their mental health was worse or much worse since the start of the pandemic than their straight peers (**31%**).
- Female CYP were more likely than males to report that their mental health had been worse or much worse (**40%** compared to **25%**). However, males were no more likely to report that their mental health had improved. The majority of male CYP (**59%**) said that their mental health had remained “about the same”. Those who said that they preferred to describe their gender in their own way (32 CYP) were much more likely than their peers to report worse or much worse mental health (**63%**).



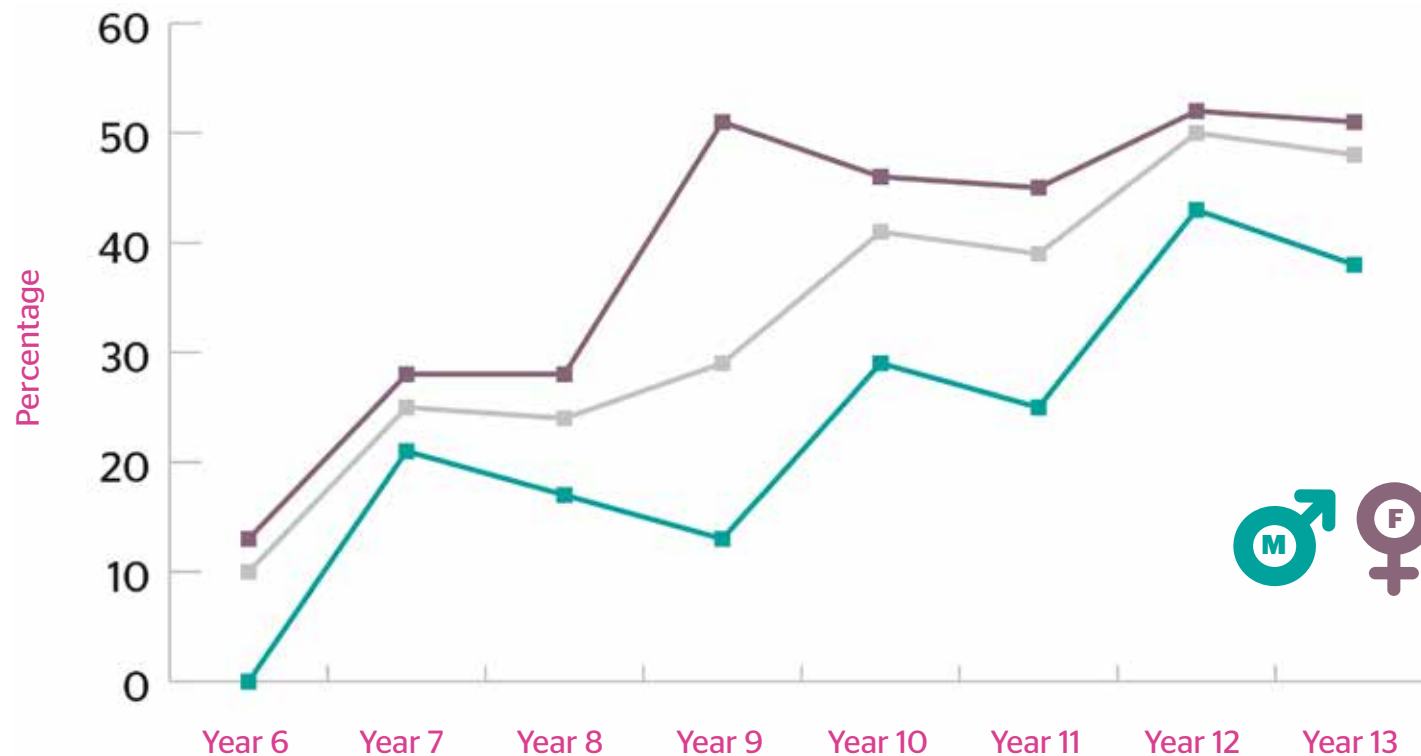


Figure 5: CYP who felt their mental health was “worse” or “much worse” following the lockdown by year and gender.

The prevalence of self-reported worsening mental health generally increases with age. There is a 38% difference in self-reported “Worse” and “much worse” mental health between young people in year six and those in year 13.



CYP free text responses

CYP were asked why they felt their mental health had been affected. 1847 gave an open text response. Key themes in the responses are shown below:

Isolation or lack of social contact

By far the largest theme in the responses was that CYP were feeling isolated, lonely or missing their friends (12%, n = 220).

“ School is stressing me out as we are getting set more work

than normal with little to no help. Also, I'm missing my friends and feeling lonely in general which is causing me to reach out to people I probably shouldn't (people who have affected my mental health badly in the past). ”

- Female (Age 15)

“ I find it hard to distract myself from negative thoughts and I used to rely a lot on socialising to do this, so I miss my friends a lot. I also miss my brother since he doesn't live with us. ”

- Female (Age 18)



Negative Impact on wellbeing

Nine percent (n=170) mentioned the lockdown having a negative impact on their emotional wellbeing. Most of these comments related to feeling increased stress or anxiety. A smaller number talked about low mood or worsening mental health symptoms such as depression, panic attacks or eating disorders.

“ I was already really depressed, now I'm depressed with a hint of anger and thoughts of suicide. ”

- **Non-binary (Age 14)**

“ My anxiety was much better before but now I struggle everyday and I also can't see my friends or family to talk about it. ”

- **Female (Age 15)**

“ I have felt much more anxious about everything my mood has been very low and I have become very unmotivated. ”

- **Female (Age 16)**

Less stress/time to relax

Eight percent (n=139) said their mental health had improved because they were experiencing less stress or had more time to relax. **Fifty-seven** found school in general stressful and were enjoying the break from the school environment. **Fifty-five** simply said they felt less stressed and **27** made specific mention of the reduction in stress due to the cancellation of GCSEs, A-levels and other exams.

“ I get bullied a lot at school for being trans and was assaulted twice last year. The teachers I am supposed report to do nothing, I once got a GM for pushing a boy who attacked me away. I generally feared for my safety for a while after coming out because students were tripping me and shoving me in the hallways. I was terrified it would escalate. I also use drawing as a stress reliever in class and it helps me concentrate and the teachers hate it. ”

- **Non-binary, age 13)**

“ I feel more relaxed about things as I am not going to school, etc (which triggers my anxiety). ”

- **Female (Age 18)**

“ I don't have the stress of exams anymore and I don't have to force myself to go to school. ”

- Female (Age 16)

Struggling with Schoolwork

One hundred and thirty-seven

comments referred to schoolwork or online learning (7%). Many said that they felt stressed or anxious about the amount of schoolwork they had been set or what the impact on their education or results would be. Some said that they were struggling with working at home or being out of routine.

“ I believe the volume of work has increased dramatically with some teachers. I sometimes completing ten hours of work in a day, which is not sustainable. This has caused me stress and left me feeling uncertain and worried about my future. ”

- Female (Age 14)

“ I have had a lot of anxieties over my education and my grades that I'm getting or may get in the future. A lot of my worries stem from schoolwork and feeling like I'm not

good enough. ”

- Female (Age 17)

“ Because it's boring and I've played too much Xbox, and it's hard to work from home without teachers. I have too much work given to me by my teachers, and not enough help. ”

”

- Male (Age 12)


Feeling trapped

Eighty CYP referred to feeling stuck or trapped in the house having a negative impact on their mental health (4%). Some referred to increased rumination or being unable to escape their thoughts.

“ I chose it because although I am getting out of the house for bike rides and things like that into the country, I hate being locked up like this, and what makes it worse is that I know it is for good. If it wasn't for good I might try to escape but as it is for a good cause it just diminishes all hope. ”


”

- Male (Age 13)



80 CYP said their mental health had got worse because they felt trapped.

Some young people described a feeling of being unable to escape their own thoughts.



“ Because it’s stressful because you don’t have anything to take your mind of things you’re always thinking about them. ”

- Female (Age 13)

“ I’m feeling trapped and gender dysphoric. ”

- Transgender (Age 17)

Other Positive comments

Key themes in the positive comments included:

- **43 (2%)** said that they found that having more time to pursue hobbies, have fun or have time to themselves had a positive impact on their mental health.
- **35 (2%)** said that they normally felt socially anxious, or were enjoying time where they were not under pressure to interact with their peers.
- **29 (2%)** said that they liked the flexibility of working outside of school or being able to set their own schedule.

“ I’ve been listening to a lot of music and broadening my taste, and I’ve found that it has been boosting my happiness and confidence. ”

- Non-binary (Age 13)

“ I don’t have the stress of friends and I don’t have the feeling that I constantly have to impress classmates. ”

- Female (Age 14)

“ I’ve had time to relax and I’ve had my own time to complete work. I’ve also had time to do what makes me happy so my mental health improved a lot. ”

- Female (Age 15)

CYP - What support could help?

CYP who said that their mental health was “worse” or “much worse” as a result of lockdown were asked a follow up question:

“Is there any type of support that could help you feel better during lockdown?”

Four hundred and eighty-eight CYP offered a response. Key themes are shown below:

Nothing will help

Two hundred and eight (43%) said that no support could help them during the lockdown. These respondents mostly gave simple answers such as “no” or “not really”. Some CYP clearly felt that there was no effective support available for them, while some others said they felt that they did not need support.

“ I don’t think so, I don’t like speaking to others about how feel and I find it difficult to do so. ”

- Female (Age 14)

“ No, everyone is going through it and it will get better in the end. ”

- Female (Age 13)

“ Online lessons, encouragement it will all be ok, but not really sure there is anything to be honest. ”

- Female (Age 17)

Social interaction

Fifty-nine (12%) said that they would like to be able to see or speak to their family or friends or be able to go to school and interact with others. Some said that they already felt supported by these relationships.

“ To know I can see my friends again and a routine. The routine of waking up and going to school is very calming and I know what the day will bring me. ”

- Female (Age 12)

“ I usually talk on the phone to my best friend about my mental health and she helps me alot. ”

- Female (Age 15)

“ No but just seeing friends would make me feel a lot better. ”

- Male (Age 13)

“ No I don't think so I just need to see and hug my friends and

be around them I think that that will make me feel so much better. ”

- Female (Age 14)

I don't know

Forty-six (9%) said that they didn't know what support could help them. Most of these comments were very generic, for example “I don't know”.

“ I don't really know at this point I just feel like things are only going to get worse and I'm past the point were talking about my problems helps because I've said it all before and no one ever says anything new to me. ”

- Non-binary (Age 17)

Support with schoolwork

Forty-four (9%) said that they wanted support from their school or help with schoolwork.

“ Less work from school, and more encouragement from school to go outside in my garden etc. ”

- Male (Age 12)

“ I think it would be nice if teachers just generally told us that what we are doing is enough and we are all doing very well instead of telling us that we might fail if we don't do a certain amount of work or hours etc. ”

- Female (Age 17)

“ More contact from school. ”
- Male (Age 11)

Counselling, therapy or someone to talk to

Thirty-four (7%) said that they would like counselling, therapy or just someone to talk to for support. Some CYP had already been accessing mental health support before lockdown.

“ Talking to someone who I don't know counsellor or therapist ”
- Female (Age 14)

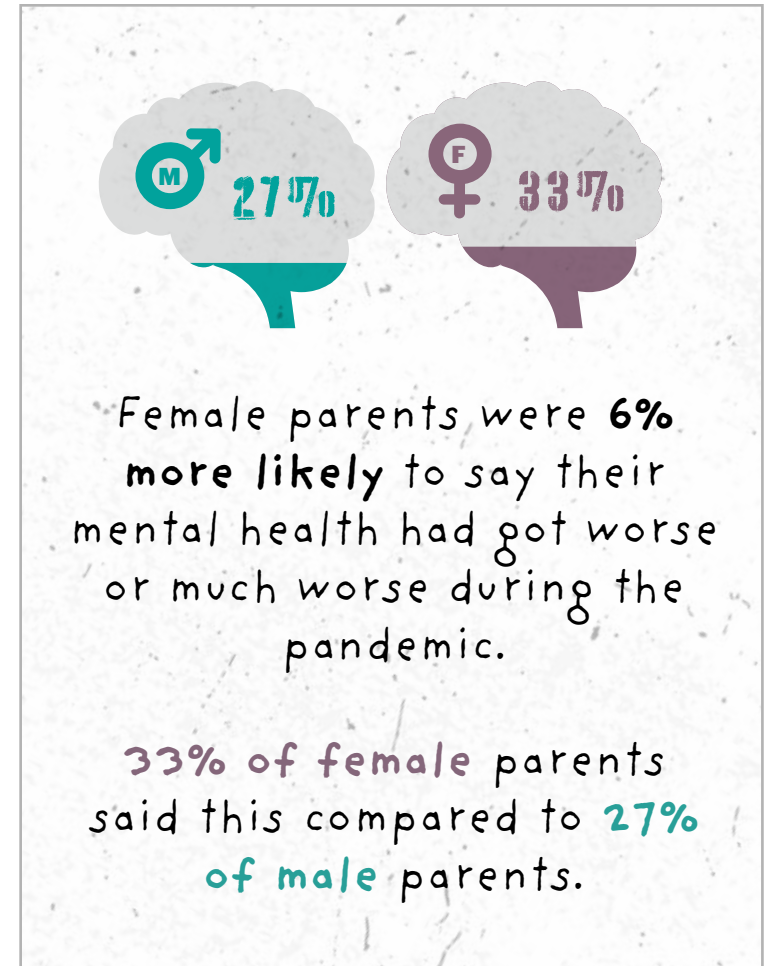
“ Maybe speaking to someone ”
- Gender Fluid (Age 12)

Parent's and guardians mental health during the pandemic

There was less variation across demographic characteristics, in the parent's responses about the impact of the lockdown on their mental health than there had been amongst CYP.

Key comparisons are shown below (note: sample numbers (“n”) are the total number of parents within each demographic who answered the question about impact on mental health).

- Parents or guardians from a BAME background (n = 26) were more likely than White British and White Other parents to report a negative impact on mental health (46% compared to 32%).
- Female parents or guardians were slightly more likely than males to report a negative impact on mental health. Of 844 females, 33% said that their mental health was “worse” or “much worse” since the lockdown, compared to 27% of the 102 male parents.
- Parents or guardians, who reported at least one vulnerability were 11 percentage points more likely to report that their mental health was “worse” or “much worse” (39%). Those who had a mental health difficulty (n = 103) were much more likely to report that their mental health had been negatively impacted (59% compared to 30% for those who did not report a mental health difficulty).



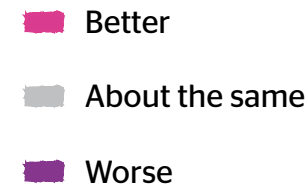
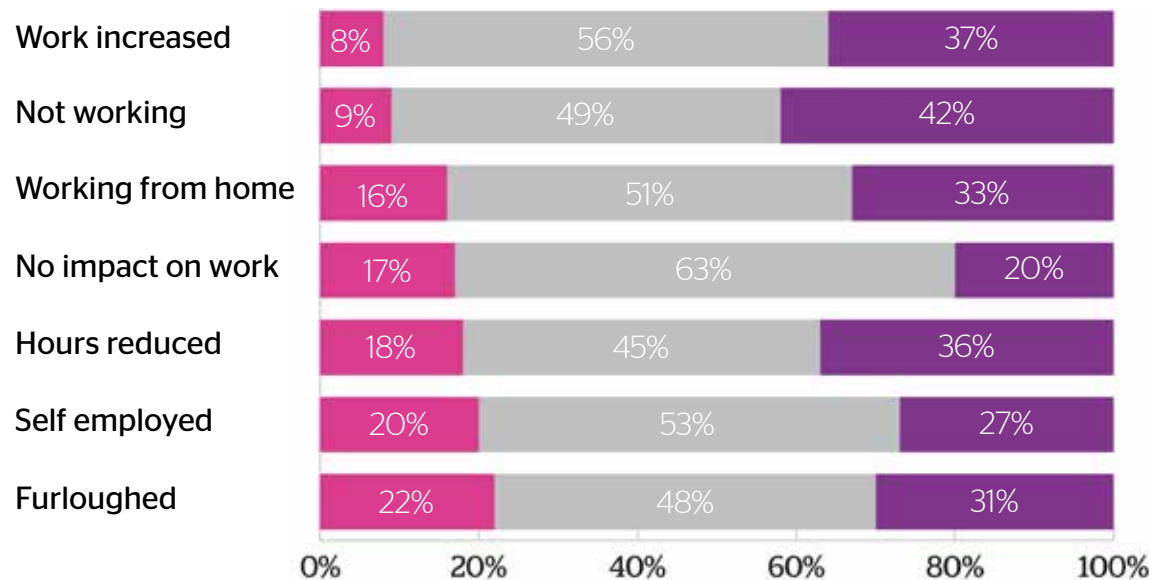
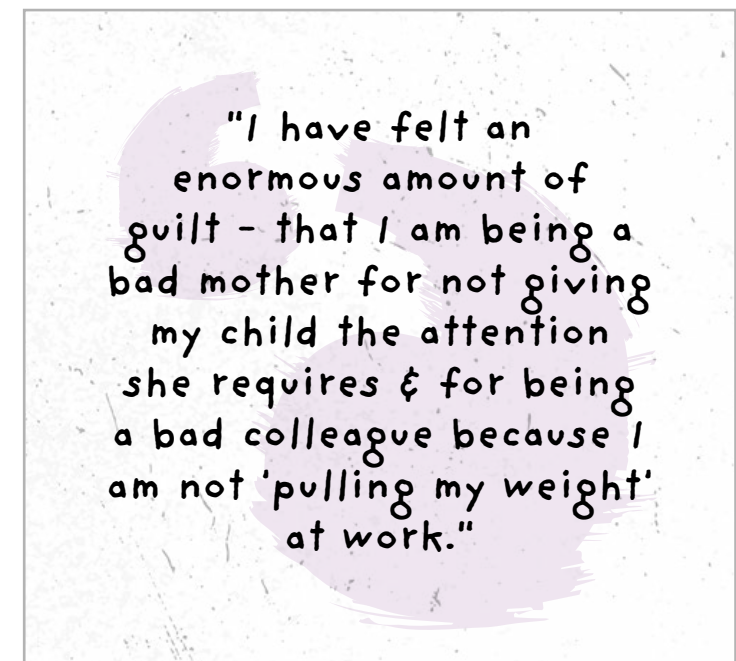


Figure 6: Parent's reported impact of lockdown on mental health by current working situation.

The graph shows that parents or guardians who experienced an increased workload, began working from home or who were not working prior to the pandemic indicated lockdown had impacted on their mental health the most. Parents or guardians who were furloughed during the lockdown indicated higher levels of better mental health.

- Parents or guardians of children with a special educational need (n = 186) were more likely to report that lockdown had a negative impact on their mental health (42% compared to 31%).
- Those living in an urban area were eight percentage points more likely that those living in a rural area to report a negative impact on mental health (37% compared to 29%).
- Those who were furloughed were the most likely to report that their mental health had improved as a result of lockdown (22%).
- Those who were not in work before lockdown were the most likely to report that the lockdown had a negative impact on their mental health.
- Parents or guardians who had experienced no change in their working situation were the most likely to report that their mental health was about the same.

There was some variation in parent's or guardian's responses about the impact of the lockdown on their mental health with their self-reported working situation:



"...Some days have seen one of us being a teacher, parent and colleague all in the same moment - stepping outside of important conference calls to change a nappy, prepare a sandwich, let the dog out and teach a reluctant child to learn how to write. It's been too much on some days and I have definitely felt stressed..."

Parents mental health: free text

Parents were also asked to tell us why they felt their mental health had been affected. **1,261** gave a response. Key themes are shown below:

Neutral/ no impact

204 parents (**16%**) gave a neutral response. These respondents said that they were generally coping with the lockdown, that they were still working or that their situation otherwise had not changed with regards to their mental health. Some said that they were simply getting on with it, or referenced having a few bad days but were generally managing under lockdown.

“ I've been happy to be at home so my mental health hasn't really changed much. I have felt a little anxious at the supermarket, but normal otherwise. ”

- Parent of children in secondary school and college

“ Good days and bad days happen during lockdown which was the case before this all started. ”

- Parent of children in primary school and secondary school

“ Because I do feel about the same. Once I got over the initial work stress and found a way round it I am into another groove. ”

- Parent of children in primary school and high school

Stress or anxiety

Ninety-three parents (**7%**) said they were experiencing increased stress or anxiety during lockdown, including increased worries about work, shopping or safety around the virus.

“ Only due to my job as a nurse working on the frontline, as I worry about my family's physical health if I was to pass on the coronavirus to them. My son really struggled at first worrying about me going to work, but now I think I carry around a lot of the anxiety and have trouble sleeping. ”

- Parent of children in high school

“ I'm more anxious, and worrying more about simple things, like shopping. Small issues seem to become bigger in my mind, and I feel more obsessive over small things, like how my partner is feeling. Before lockdown, although I had moments of anxiety or worry, it was easily shrugged off. ”

- Parent of children in high school

“ I think not being able to go out and see people and go away for weekends is really effecting my anxiety. ”

- Parent of children in primary school and high school

Free time or less pressure

Ninety-two parents or guardians (**7%**) said that they had more free time or less time pressure since the lockdown and that this was positively impacting their mental health. Some said that they had more time to spend together as a family or to pursue leisure activities.

“ I am enjoying having the children home with us and cooking with them and teaching them life skills such as cooking and other jobs

around the house. Which we wouldn't have had time for before. ”

- Parent of children in high school

“ I was getting stressed with the children and my husband, thinking he was not as involved as he could be. I feel that we have had the time to get to know each other again and find a good balance between childcare and doing our own projects ”

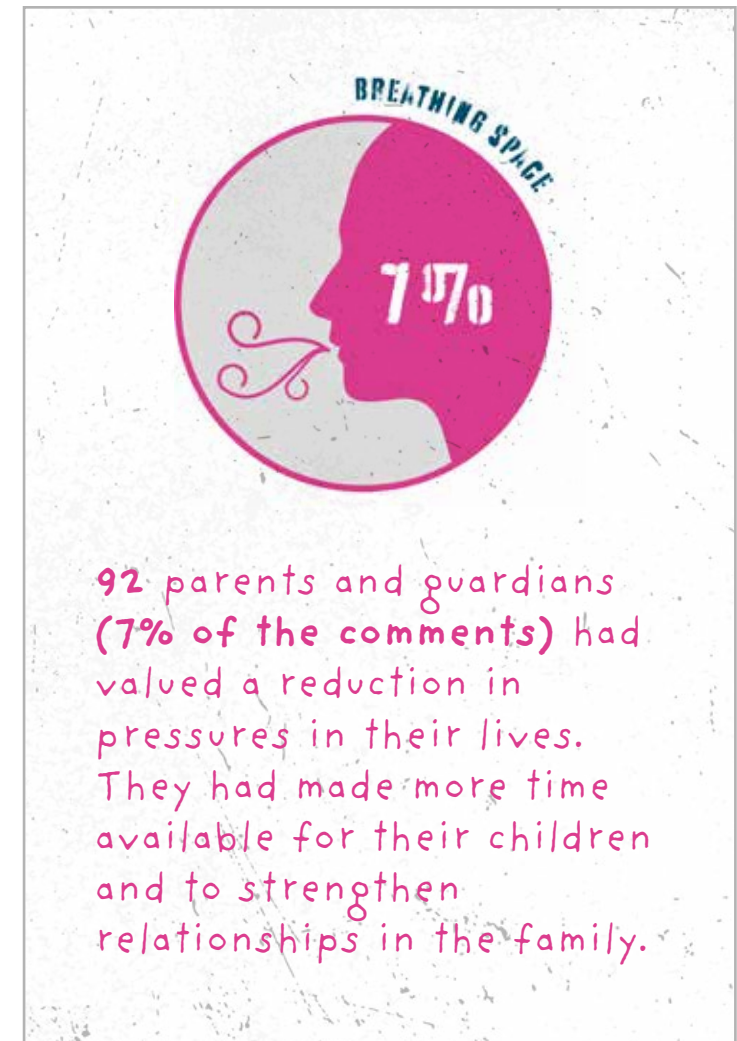
- Parent of pre-school child

“ I have loved having my family around me. Reduced amount of time at work has helped give me a bit of breathing space. Found it initially difficult coping with shopping and providing food for vulnerable members of the family but now deliveries have settled down this is much easier. ”

- Parent of child in high school

Social isolation

Fifty-nine parents or guardians (**5%**) said that feeling isolated and not being able to see family or friends was having a negative impact on their mental health.



“ Unable to be free to see close friend, realise what freedom we previously had. No longer in control of what I choose to do. Previously always active - would go to gym about once a week. ”

- Parent of children who has left education

“ I was already feeling I needed to get a social life as lonely and this has put a hold on that. Also, my life is on hold as I can't work with children at home and I can't claim as I have savings so very worried financially. ”

- Parent of children in primary school and secondary school

Worries about the virus

Fifty-eight parents said that worries about safety and the virus were negatively impacting their mental health. Parents expressed worries about transmitting the virus at home, concerns about elderly or otherwise vulnerable relatives and potential exposure outside the home.

“ Not coping with the worry of the virus, also I work in retail and don't feel that the company I work for has protected the staff at all. ”

- Parent of child in college

“ The stress of my family's health and potentially becoming ill. The stress of this government's decisions and delayed handling. ”

- Parent of children in primary school

Reduced domestic or childcare tasks

Forty-nine parents or guardians (4%) said that their mental health had improved from having a reduced number or more time to complete domestic or childcare tasks since the lockdown began. This included tasks such as cooking and cleaning, as well as having less children's activities to attend or school runs.

“ I am less stressed as I am not juggling work, cooking, ironing, cleaning the house, working out, arranging childcare and remembering everything to do with children's schools!! ”

- Parent of children in high school

“ I don't have to rush around as much, getting children to school, getting myself to work and fitting everything in. This is usually tough as a single parent. I can now spread my tasks throughout the day and spend less time travelling. ”

- Parent of children in high school and primary school

Reduced work pressure

Forty-nine (4%) were positive about reduced pressure from work or workload. Conversely 47 (4%) were negative about increased work pressure. Those who made positive comments about work pressure said that they had a better work/life balance, less stress or more time because of a decreased workload, working from home or being furloughed. Those who made negative comments said that it was difficult to manage their workload and care for their children.

“ My job demands a very unhealthy work/ life balance with long working hours and continuing work in the evenings and

“Stressed - Both parents working from home, whilst also trying to keep the children on task with schoolwork. Little time or space to escape.”

weekends. I have never felt so well and healthy and happy. ”

- Parent of children in high school

“ We have always worked hard, and I have not had a week off work in over a year so the stress of work has been taken away from me & I've enjoyed being at home. If we did not have the furlough wage & the 3-month break on our mortgage then I am sure I would be very worried. ”

- Parent of child in high school

“ I am working fulltime whilst studying for a degree full time too and now I have my children at home full time, whereas usually they go to their dads every other weekend. So, at the moment I am trying to do and be everything to all people and whereas I normally have time to study I currently don't have this extra time. ”

- Parent of children in primary school and high school)

Impact on existing mental health

Fifty parents or guardians (4% of the sample) mentioned an existing mental health condition or diagnosis in their response.

Most referred to the negative impact the lockdown had on their own mental health. **Nine** mentioned a negative impact on their families existing mental health. Only **two** mentioned a positive impact on their existing mental health. Some said that the lockdown had a mixed impact on their own or their family members.

Comments about negative impact on parent's mental health:

“ I had a very traumatic abusive childhood and when I am not busy am affected by lots of flashbacks as memories. There is no support available. Combined with not having any break from my children this has made me feel suicidal. ”

- Parent of children in primary school and secondary school

“ Because I was already going to be placed on a 2nd course of counselling before lockdown. I have had to now do this over a phone which made things worse. ”

- Parent of child in primary school

“ I suffer from PTSD and depression, anxiety, OCD, and other chronic illness. Been isolating for the

PARENTS & GUARDIANS

... IMPACT OF LOCKDOWN

Some parents had valued the lockdown period because they had less pressure and were able to invest more time into their family and household.

Others experienced high levels of stress as many previously separate aspects of their lives were brought together into the same space (e.g. managing work, family and personal wellbeing).

Some people said they had existing mental health concerns that were significantly exacerbated by the lockdown period.



last 8 weeks, all this makes my illness worse. ”

- Parent of children in primary school and secondary school

Comments about a negative impact on family member's mental health:

” My son who has mental health issues is becoming suicidal, my daughter is due to have our first grandchild in 2 weeks and we will be unable to support her. ”

- Parent of child in high school and college

” I have very limited support dealing with the mental health issues of the rest of the family. ”

- Parent of children in primary school and high school

Comments about a positive impact on mental health:

” Wasn't well at beginning of year but resting has improved. ”

- Parent of child in high school

” I had a breakdown in January 2020 and was off sick from work before pandemic started. I am happy to be at home more but miss the social contact with friends and family. ”

- Parent of children in primary school

Comments about a mixed impact on mental health:

” Yes my depression seemed to be not as bad but my anxiety was high. ”

- Parent of child in primary school

” My mental health has always been an issue and I manage it carefully. Despite a rocky start things have settled. ”

- Parent of child in primary school

Parents: Impact on Children's Mental Health

Parents were asked to tell us in a free-text question what impact the lockdown was having on their children's mental health and wellbeing. 834 gave a response. Themes in their responses are shown below: Isolation or lack of social contact

Two hundred and seventy-four parents or guardians (**33%**) said that isolation or lack of social contact was having a negative impact on their children. Most comments did not appear to relate directly to mental health concerns, but rather the impact of not having access to close relationships.

” They miss their friends, school routine, grandparents, going to the shops, and for days out (beach, park, forest). ”

- Parent of children in primary school

” Grief at the loss of community and friendship (in person) in the social setting. ”

- Parent of children in secondary school

” Not engaged, I struggle to make sure he gets work set done. No ability or requirement for work to be sent for marking or feedback. Not able to see his friends being an only child this can be hard. ”

- Parent of child in secondary school

Neutral or no impact

One hundred and seventy-three (21%)

were neutral or said that the lockdown had no real impact on their children's mental health. Many of these comments simply said "none" or "nothing".

“ They're doing ok but have lots of energy and get bored quicker. They seem to be ok mentally. ”

- Parent of children in primary school

“ My children seem to be coping well. They don't seem to be struggling with mental health issues at this time. ”

- Parent of children in primary school)

“ She had done well having CBT prior to lockdown and had just finished. She has coped well with lockdown. ”

- Parent of children in primary school and secondary school

Schoolwork

One hundred and twelve (13%) said that not being able to attend school or the amount of schoolwork that their children

were receiving was negatively impacting their mental health.

“ My children seem largely unaffected, the older child is sometimes finding not having the help of a teacher difficult, but we seem to work through it. My youngest is sad that she may not be able to finish year 6 or if she does it will be very different and is a little anxious she will not be able to have her induction days at high school! ”

”
- Parent of children in primary school and secondary school

“ Generally, they seem to be adapting well to the situation. I do have concerns with my oldest child who does not adapt well to change and as such he has concerns over what he is missing out with at school especially in relation to school life e.g. selecting GCSE courses etc. This missing of what he perceives as being important stages of his school life will come back to haunt us after all of this is over with as he is not good at letting negative things in his life pass/drop. ”

- Parent of children in secondary school

“All three of my children miss the routine of school - they enjoy school and being with their friends - 2/3 are still completing their school work as best they can.

“The eldest cannot engage with school work at all and becomes v depressed if we mention it at all”

“ My eldest child (year 8) has vast amounts of school work to complete daily. She is feeling overwhelmed and stressed and it is causing tension between us. She is a high achieving student so has never felt this pressure with school before. My youngest child (year 5) is SEN she is enjoying being at home as school and social interactions at school are normally a source of stress for her.

”
- Parent of children in primary school and secondary school

Stress or anxiety

Ninety-three (11%) said that the lockdown had caused their children increased anxiety, stress, low mood or other wellbeing issues such as poor sleep or difficulty with routine.

“ He has become more anxious, more emotional, worries more and is reluctant to go outside (he does eventually with lots of positive reinforcement and open talking about worries). ”

- Parent of child in primary school

“ He appears more stressed than

usual. He appears more anxious and some of the worries he had before (he was bullied at primary school) appear to be surfacing. The death of his nanny doesn't appear to have sunk in yet and that worries me. He is generally coping well... but it is clear that he is concerned. ”

- Parent of child in secondary school

“ They are anxious about their futures. Sometimes not sleeping... ”

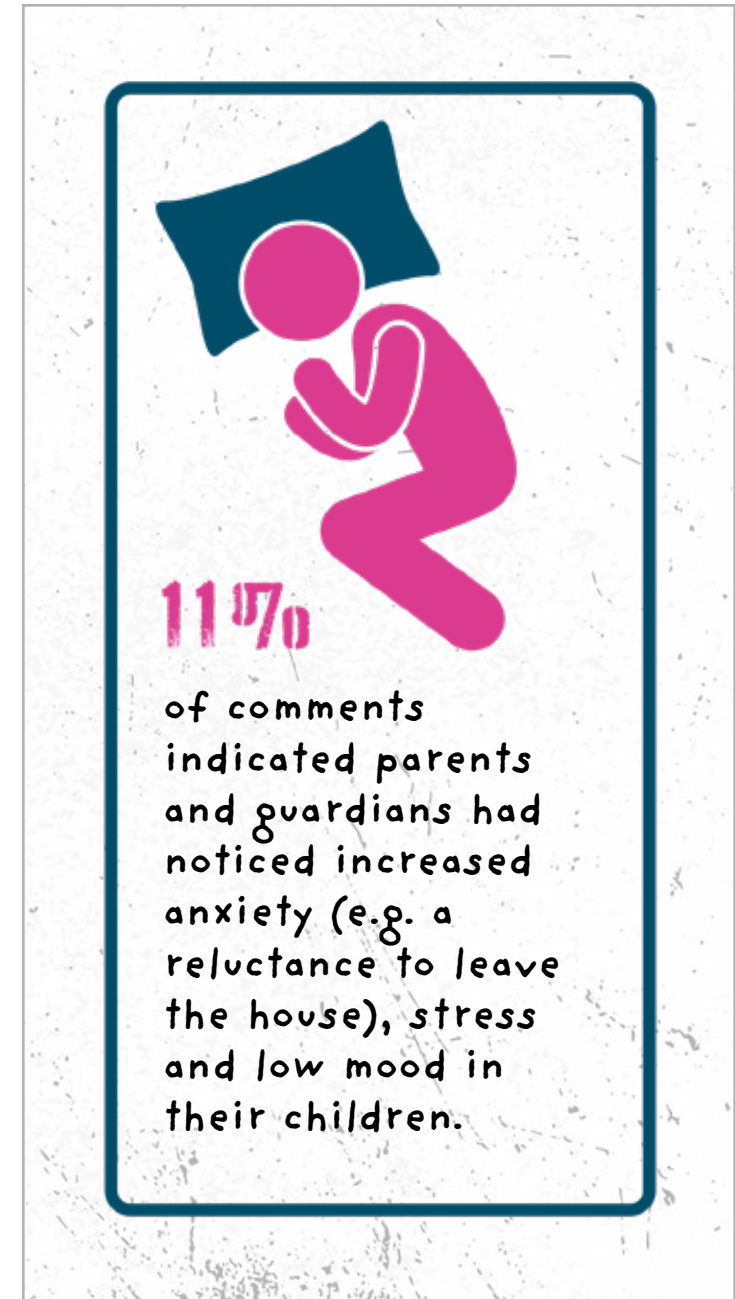
- Parent of children in secondary school and college

Worries about the virus

Fifty-five (7%) said that their children were concerned or worried about the virus. These comments related either to their own safety, or that of relatives.

“ They seem ok. My son is anxious about going out in public, more so now. Daughter upset and crying that I might have to go back to school/work on the 1st June she doesn't want me to die or to bring the virus back home. They are both happy at home and feel safe in our 'bubble'. ”

- Parent of children in secondary school



“ My children have been extremely understanding of the potential risk implications on family members that do not live with us but that do have medical conditions should they have come into contact with them. One child will panic and become upset if allowed to ponder on this. ”

- Parent of children in secondary school

“ He is aware of coronavirus and thinks everyone dies if they get it, so managing that is difficult as hard to explain. He has not been too bad though as we try not to have the news on when he is about. ”

- Parent of child in primary school

Positive impact of school closure

Forty-nine (6%) said that school closures had a positive impact on their children's mental health. These parents described how a relief from the work or social pressures at school or more time spent with family was positive for their child.

“ My eldest is unaffected. She is always a calm person who doesn't worry about anything. She is enjoying not being at school. My youngest mental health has improved. He dislikes school so loves the new routine and has learnt so much more at home. He enjoys the work we do and loves spending time at home. He is more calm and relaxed but is worried about having to go back to school. ”

- Parent of children in primary and secondary school

“ It has been very positive. My son no longer feels stressed about dealing with bullies at his school. He is only worried about going back. ”

- Parent of children in primary and secondary school

“ As stated above, my child has loved the lockdown and being off school. They have worked hard at the assigned tasks and has had no difficulty being motivated to complete the tasks set even though they do not find the work easy. It has felt like a far less stressful setup for my child and I believe has benefited their mental health. ”

- Parent of child in secondary school

School staff's mental health during the pandemic

Amongst education staff, people employed in non-pupil facing support roles (e.g office admin, receptionist, technician etc) were most likely to report that their mental health had improved during the pandemic, with **30%** saying their mental health had either got better or much better.

Staff employed in key support roles (e.g teaching assistant, SEND support or pastoral support) were least likely to report a positive change in their mental health but were most likely to say there had been no change in their mental health.

Staff employed in a pupil facing support role (e.g careers advisor, exam officer, librarian etc) were most likely to report that their mental health had got worse (**43%** compared to **35%** for all staff roles).

Option	All	Teaching	Leadership	Key support role	Support role (Student facing)	Support role (Not student facing)
Better	20%	23%	21%	13%	20%	30%
About the same	45%	44%	44%	49%	37%	36%
Worse	35%	32%	36%	38%	43%	34%

Table 16: Responses from school staff to the question 'Since the start of the pandemic, would you say your mental health is generally' and their job role.

Option	All	College	Primary school	Secondary school
Better	20%	19%	13%	24%
About the same	45%	46%	32%	49%
Worse	35%	36%	56%	27%

Table 17: Responses from education staff to the question 'Since the start of the pandemic, would you say your mental health is generally' and their educational setting. School staff working in primary schools were most likely to say their mental health had got worse during the pandemic (56%) compared to their peers working in colleges (36%) or secondary schools (27%).

1/2 More than half

of school staff working in primary schools said their mental health had got worse during the pandemic. They were 29 percentage points more likely to indicate this when compared with secondary school staff.

Three hundred and eighty-three school staff provided additional detail, in a free text box, as to why their mental health had changed (either improved or worsened) during the pandemic. Key themes are shown below:

Better work/life balance

Fifty-seven school staff (15%) said that their mental health had improved because of a better work/life balance under lockdown. School staff talked about being more in control of workloads and having more time for family or leisure activities.

“ More time to get things done, more time at home, more time with my family. ”

- Secondary school (Part of SLT)

“ It has given me the time to re-focus on goals without the pressure of work, school runs and extra curricular activities and improving my finances. I have enjoyed home schooling and training doing lots of CPD for my role. I am also enjoying creating structure to use time better, go outside more and cook for enjoyment not need. ”

- Cover supervisor (Secondary school)

“ More time for myself and a more realistic work: life balance. ”

- Teacher & Pastoral support (Secondary school)

“ Working at home has given me the work life balance I need and I have achieved so much to feel I am almost on top of my work. When I am in the academy I find managing my workload very difficult having a dual role in the largest academy in the Trust and having so many interruptions and changing demands that dominate the day leaving me feel that I am not achieving what I set out to do each day and leaves me feeling I am drowning. ”

- Principals PA (Secondary school)

Increased Stress or anxiety

Fifty-six school staff (15%) reported they had experienced low moods, increased anxiety and lack of motivation. These responses were very similar to parents, including heightened general levels of anxiety, anxieties about the virus or workload. Some school staff also referenced worries about returning to school.

“ I find that the pressure and workload has increased dramatically. Because of this, I have found it difficult to keep up with

the workload and to find a time to switch off. I have often worked through the evening and the weekends for fear of not being able to keep up and feeling like I am drowning in this. This constant need to work has meant that my mental health has worsened dramatically and I would describe myself as normally having a good work-life balance and having a positive mental health. I have found that for many days I have not stopped to have my lunch/dinner but eaten at a computer screen whilst still working and have missed out on my daily exercise which is something I am very dedicated to normally. I find that not only is the workload extremely difficult to manage, I am often being put in uncomfortable situations which effect my mood more. These situations did not occur before the lockdown. ”

- Teacher (Secondary school)

” Because I feel very depressed and miserable. I am not sleeping well and generally just feel very, very low! ”

- Lecturer (College)

” Constant anxiety and worry about keeping my staff and children safe. The huge decisions you have had to make - who gets a key worker provision place and now to try and create a way to safely re-open more including a 15 page risk assessment. Added to this is all you read all you hear and everyone has an opinion. ”

- Primary school (Head teacher)

Reduced stress

Fifty-three school staff (14%) said that they were experiencing less stress since the lockdown began. Many said that they were under less pressure and had more time to complete their work due to the school closures.

” I feel less stressed and rushed than usual. I am able to put more time into planning exciting projects and resources as the pace has slowed down. I am not travelling between sites etc. ”

- Teacher & Pastoral support (Secondary School)

“My anxiety levels have increased (I recognise the symptoms having suffered from fairly debilitating anxiety in my twenties). I have mood swings when it comes towards the time when government announcements are due to be made. My husband has taken some steps to stop me listening to the news etc as he recognised the effect it was having on me...”

“ I feel I am not as stressed, or under pressure. ”

Teacher - (Primary school)

“ A lot of the daily pressures of being a single parent juggling running a house and teaching full time have been removed. ”

- Teacher (Primary school)

“ Although initially I found this adjustment hard and say mental health dipped, now I'm use to it so much better as less stress, not caught up in workplace office politics. ”

- Part of SLT (College)

Lack of social contact

Forty-six education staff (**12%**) said that a lack of social contact was affecting their mental health. These comments referred to both family and friends, as well as colleagues and students.

“ Not seeing people, especially the students is really affecting my mood - I have had some very low days - about 2 a week. I am a teacher because I love working with young people - I really miss them. ”

- Teacher (Secondary school)

“ Constant battle of supporting others and knowing how best to do this, whilst also looking after myself and my family. I struggle with lack of personal connection to staff and children. ”

- Headteacher (Primary school)

“ I'm finding it harder to get / stay motivated. Days are blurred and indistinct. I'm living on my own and don't have any pets, so I have no physical contact with any living creatures. ”

- Course director (College)

Reduced workload

Forty-four (11%) people specifically mentioned that a reduction in their overall workload had helped to improve their general wellbeing.

“ Much much less stress with less marking and meetings. ”

- Teacher (Secondary school)

“ Work is not as full on and I am not under so much pressure at home. ”

- Pastoral support (Primary school)

Concern about Family members wellbeing

Forty-one education staff (**11%**) expressed concerns about the health and wellbeing of a family member. These included comments referencing worries about the virus and also health, mental health and wellbeing. **28** education staff expressed concerns about their own health and coronavirus, especially if they were in the vulnerable/at risk category.

“ Predominately to do with coping with the challenges of my teenage son. Personally, I have had no concerns about me, but worry about him and his drop in mental health has had a knock-on effect with me. ”

- **Teacher (Secondary school)**

“ Because I am at high risk and I worry about returning to school if a vaccine is still not available. How will I protect myself? Will I lose my job if I cannot return to work? How long will I be allowed to remain in self isolation? ”

”

- **Teacher (Secondary School)**

“ I am pregnant and therefore anxious about the effect of the pandemic on this. ”

- **Lecturer (College)**

“ I worry more about my health and my families as we have health conditions that could cause difficulties with COVID 19. ”

- **Part of SLT (Primary school)**

Balancing work childcare

Thirty-two school staff (**8%**) mentioned that balancing work with childcare/ home schooling needs had negatively impacted their mental wellbeing.

“ Having children at home while

supporting a class full time and keeping on top of senior leadership responsibilities is challenging. ”

- **Teacher and part of SLT (Primary school)**

“ Stress of trying to work full time remotely from home while trying to homeschool my 5 & 7-year-old. ”

- **Part of SLT (College)**

“ I am trying to juggle working from home and homeschooling 3 children (one with special needs-he attends the school I work at) this is stressful. My children could go to school as I am a keyworker but I am too worried about their health and that of the teachers that would need to support them. I also have to go to work at times and I am worried about catching the virus and giving it to my family. ”

- **Therapist (Special school)**

Safe return to school

Twenty-three school staff (**6%**) mentioned concerns about the safety of returning to school. These included general worries about safety, social

"I am genuinely scared about returning to work."

"I live with a vulnerable adult and care for another. I am going to find it very difficult to keep my family safe if I have to go back to working normally."

distancing, PPE and sending their own children back to school.

“ Very concerned about going back to school as I know the children will not be capable of social distancing and will inevitably pass the virus on to teaching staff on the front line. There will also be no PPE in place to help protect us!!!! ”

- **Teacher (Secondary school)**

“ I am genuinely scared about returning to work. I live on my own and although I interact with others via social media and walk my dogs. I shop via click and collect as too scared to go to the shops and mix with people. I feel I am losing my confidence as a result of this. ”

- **Pastoral support (Secondary school)**

“ I have been working alone as the other 3 members of the admin team have young children and have been unable to come in. I have increased my hours to cover the 4 roles in school. This has been running smoothly, the prospect of opening to more

children and the other members of staff having to return has caused a lot of anxiety to the head, myself and the rest of the team, who all have concerns about sending their own children either back to school or to pre-school. ”

- **Business Manager (Primary school)**

"I think even before we go back to work, we should take part in a school survey - with considered questions. For example, that address our concerns and fears over being in a confined space with 10-15 different students. What we as teachers would like to see to make us feel safe and supported such as PPE/ access to hand washing/sanitizer!"

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Young people and parents/guardians

The children and young people's (CYP) and parent's surveys asked whether young people were receiving mental health support before lockdown. They were also asked whether this support had changed and what impact this had on their mental health.

Children and young people

Four hundred and ninety-seven CYP said that they were receiving or waiting for mental health support before lockdown.

- **68%** of those receiving or waiting for support said that it had changed since lockdown
- **40%** said that this change had affected their mental health

Young people who said that the change had affected their mental health were asked to explain why. **Two hundred** responded to the question. Key themes in their responses were:

Impact on wellbeing

Eighty-eight (44%) mentioned a direct

impact of the lockdown and changes to support on their emotional wellbeing or mental health. These included increased anxiety, stress or low mood.

“ Not being able to see my regular counsellor has led to my mental health not improving and regressing to a time before I sought help. ”

- Male (Age 17)

“ I used to receive help with CAHMS, but I was let go because I had improved and the counsellor I was seeing left. I have since deteriorated again and while I am not currently in a formal waiting list to receive support, I do believe that I will need it in the future, or that I already do, due to the social isolation. I had also in the before times attended an LGBT youth group that offered support for mental health. It is no longer running. I feel like I am missing this stability and routine in my life. More specifically, I have relapsed into my eating disorder. I frequently feel numb and apathetic. My sleep schedule is all out

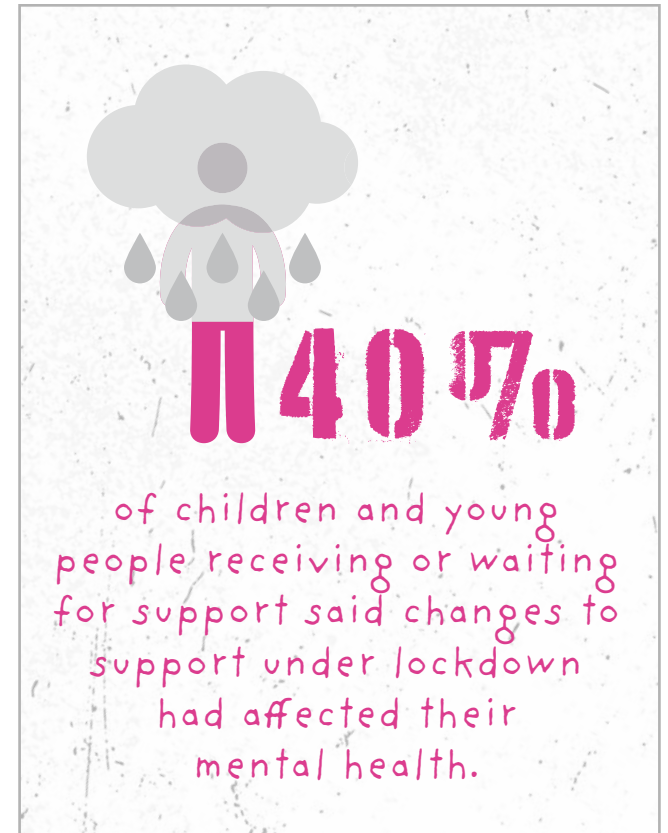


Figure 7: More than four hundred children and young people were waiting for, or receiving, support for their mental health before lockdown. Of these, 40% said changes to that support had impacted on their mental health.

of whack, and I am abusing alcohol and smoking more to cope. ”

- Male (Age 17)

“ I have started to feel even more anxious than before. I feel low and empty almost every day when I didn't use to. I feel like I'm hanging over a void just waiting for something to happen, and I feel almost emotionless and unable to express how I feel. Things I used to enjoy are not fun anymore and everything requires so much more effort. ”

- Female (Age 13)

Isolation or loneliness

Fifty-eight (29%) said that they felt lonely, unsupported or isolated.

“ Feel like I'm trapped in my own thoughts constantly and have no one to talk to as I can't even see my best friend to talk to about it. ”

- Female (Age 14)

“ Not seeing teachers and friends whom I relied heavily upon for support in person has massively impacted me, as I feel

communicating via text or call just doesn't provide the support I'm looking for as someone who consistently struggles with chronic loneliness and relies heavily on face to face interactions. ”

- Female (Age 15)

Reduction in support

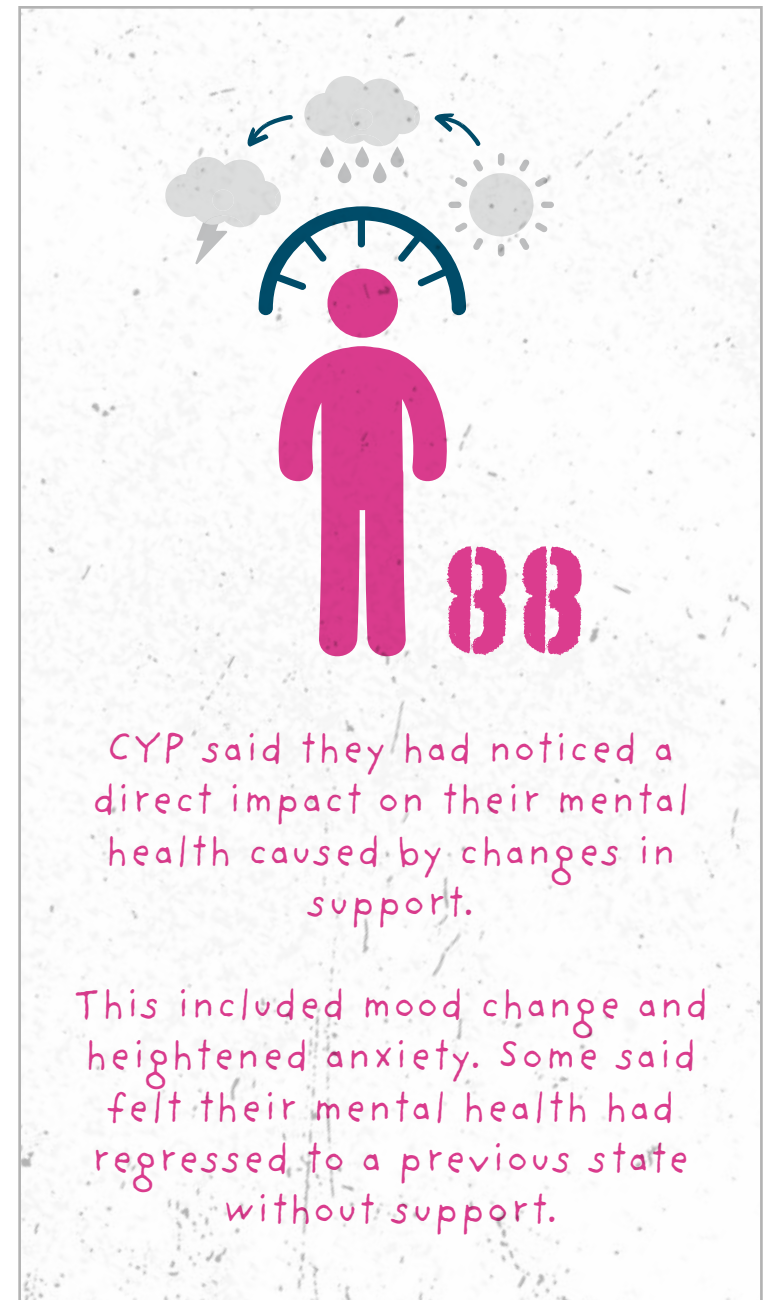
Forty-two (21%) said that their mental health support had been cancelled, reduced, postponed or were otherwise unable to access support.

“ I feel alone as all of my plans to get support for my mental health has been postponed when now is the time I need it most. ”

- Female (Age 15)

“ I cannot speak to the person who is helping me and I can't meet the other mental professional until COVID 19 is over, so it could be a very long time until I see either of them again, so I end up locking myself away from my parents 'cause I don't feel comfortable talking to them. ”

- Gender fluid (Age 12)





“Having to do mental health online via skype is just so different and because it’s personal it’s a lot difficult doing it via the internet.”

Female (Age 18)

Digital/telephone services

Seventeen (9%) said that there had been a change in the way that their support was being delivered, for example having consultations over the phone or online instead of face-to-face.

“ It has affected my mental health because I would normally have someone five times a month to talk to, but lately it’s been once a month on a zoom call, and it hasn’t really been the same. ”

- Female (Age 12)

“ I was meant to be receiving access to a councillor before lockdown however due to social distancing that access is no longer available unless I use video call (which I chose to decline due to personal preferences). This has left me trying to deal with things on my own, which makes schoolwork difficult and everyday tasks a bit harder than they would be if I wasn’t struggling with my mental health. ”

- Male (Age 15)

“ My therapy for OCD and basically life stress is now online, this

makes it harder to talk openly as there is a very thin wall between my room and my brothers room and he can hear everything. Also, spending all the time around my family is quite stressful as my brother insults me 24/7 and my Dad doesn’t like me, and my mum nags me about work all the time. She overlooks basically all my positives and only focuses on the negatives, it is hell. ”

- Female (Age 17)

“ I have spiralled massively and my issues are now completely out of control, I have to learn to cope with new therapists and supports online without the consistency of face to face interaction. I’ve also become scared of going out and seeing people due to all the talk about the virus. ”

- Female (Age 15)

Suicidal ideation and self-harm

Seven (4%) said that the impact of lockdown or changes in support had increased suicidal ideation or self-harm.

“ I suffer from mental health problems and I’ve found that my

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

... MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Many young people commented that lockdown had impacted upon their emotional wellbeing. This included that they felt isolated from support and that they had feelings of increasing anxiety.

Additionally, changes to the way support is being delivered have been difficult for some young people.



mood has been a lot lower and I've felt lonely. I've struggled to cope a lot of the time often resorting in unhealthy coping mechanisms, and suicidal ideation and thoughts have been a big issue for me. I don't take change very well and for it to be as drastic and as sudden as it was really made an impact. ”

- Male (Age 15)

“ *I've been spending more time on my own and my brain tells me stuff and end up in harming myself! I was going to get therapy through the NHS because my sister was really ill, and I could get help with some people in Addenbrooke's Hospital or West Suffolk! Because of this pandemic, it's made my potential appointment delay and go into the future.* ”

- Female (Age 15)

Positive

Only **two** CYP were positive about the impact of the lockdown and changes to support. Both were positive about not being at school and being at home with family.

“ *Since we haven't been at school, I have been much less stressed and have only had two panic attacks whereas I was having more than that in a week alone. The only thing worrying me is I have not been motivated at all to do work and I've got very behind and am finding it hard to complete it.* ”

- Female (Age 14)

“ *I have been less stressed whilst being at home with my family.* ”

- Female (Age 13)

Parents and guardians

One hundred and eighty-one parents and guardians said that at least one of their children was receiving mental health support before lockdown.

- **64%** of these said that their child's support had changed since lockdown
- **37%** said that changes in support had affected their child's mental health

Parents were also asked how changes in support had affected their children's mental health. Eighty-one gave a response.

Negative changes

Fifty parents and guardians (**62%**) said that the lockdown and resulting changes had a negative impact on their child's mental health. Key themes in the negative responses were very similar to the CYP responses, including increased anxiety or low mood and difficulties with changes to the way support is delivered. Some mentioned the impact of being isolated from friends, family and school or teachers.

“ *She has waited longer for assessment due to having to do it by phone/video which causes her to panic.* ”

- Parent of children in secondary school and college

“ *No support for overwhelming anxiety issues in one and no face-to-face contact or support since another was discharged from MH unit.* ”

- Parent of children in primary, secondary school and college

“ Both children were accessing private counselling services (funded by me) which had to stop due to social distancing. The impact of counselling stopping has meant they feel abandoned, with nobody to talk to about their worries (apart from me). Neither child received support through local free services despite numerous requests for help. ”

- Parent of child in college)

Positive changes

Twelve (15%) were positive about support for their child's mental health during lockdown.

Most positive comments about support related to schools or mental health services continuing support during lockdown. Some parents said that not having to attend school or interact with peers had improved their child's mental health, particularly if they had experienced bullying.

“ Although I have ticked this box every day is different on the whole he is managing better as the main problem was anxiety caused by bullying at school in particular from children in the year above him. ”

- Parent of child in secondary school

“ One of my children was supposed to start CAMHS just as we went into shutdown. I am dealing with their problems and have been in contact via telephone with his allocated therapist. I am surrounded by a good support team including the school and all our needs are being met. ”

- Parent of children in primary and secondary school

Mixed changes

Eleven parents (14%) said that the lockdown and changes in support had a mixed impact on their child's mental health. Some said that their child was coping, but that they were worried about the return to school. Others said that they had received some support, but that not receiving face-to-face support made it less effective.

“ The situation has affected my child's mental health in that it has improved since lockdown. However, I feel the problems will hit much bigger when returning to 'normal', and the loss of transition from school to college and the support network no longer being there. Phone calls, emails and even Zoom meetings just do not hold the same weight as actually being face-to-face with some in a meeting/session. ”

- Parent of children in primary and secondary school

VULNERABLE STUDENTS

School staff

School staff were asked if they had any concerns about the vulnerable or “at-risk” pupils who they normally support at their school/ education setting. **651** answered the question. Of these, **60%** had concerns about vulnerable pupils (**52%** of the sample overall).

School staff were also asked to leave a comment about what concerns they had. **433** gave a response. Key themes in the responses were:

Home life and safeguarding

This theme is inclusive of **100** comments (**23%**) that refer to the concerns school staff have about the home circumstances of young people.

Various external factors and influences are considered and these include that the young person may be subject to abuse, neglect or safeguarding concerns, that their home environment may be ‘difficult’ or ‘fragile’ or that parents may not be suitably supportive of their learning and emotional wellbeing at home.

“Lack of support to cope with abusive relationships within the home or possibility that they could become targeted by opportunistic criminals / fraudsters.”
- Lecturer (College)

“I am concerned about their emotional well-being, particularly those that are used to having additional support in place when they are in school. Many of our most vulnerable students have instability within their home environment so I am concerned that they are not in a safe and nurturing home; many will struggle to access the work without adult support, many will not have structure in their days and some may not have enough food at this time.”
- Teacher and part of SLT (Secondary School)

“Being locked at home in difficult or dangerous family situations with limited support from outside of their homes.”
- Teaching Assistant (Secondary School)

“I have strong concerns about safeguarding issues, which is impossible to keep a close eye on as you would if students are in school.”

Administration (Secondary School)

“Are safeguarding issues now spotted whilst not all of these pupils are seen regularly?”

Teaching Assistant (Secondary School)

Less effective support available

This is a broad theme, consisting of **87** comments (**20%**) that suggest children may not be as well supported at home. This includes the perception that the education setting may previously have offered a form of protection or sanctuary from negative influences and concern that this is no longer available to vulnerable students.

Education staff also express the view that remote education cannot replicate the value of education delivered within a dedicated learning environment.

“ That school is their security, I worry about their mental health and how well they are coping at home without the support and structure of school. ”

- **Pastoral support (Secondary School)**

“ That you can't be there to support these students as much as you would like and at the time they might need it most. Email can feel too impersonal as you cannot 'read' their facial expressions, the tone in their 'voice' and other little behaviours that help to convey their true feelings. They may be unwilling to commit how they are feeling in words (in an email). It can be more difficult to work out exactly the support that they need. ”

- **Librarian/ Careers Advisor (Secondary School)**

“ Students with SEND are used to having differentiated work and often TA support. This cannot be replicated easily at home as families will have their own work loads, other children and relatives that need support. Teachers may find it difficult to provide differentiated work. Students are not getting the same amount of

feedback as they would normally so this is creating concerns. How students with SEND will cope on returning to school will have to be managed carefully as they may have increased gaps in knowledge. ”

- **SEND support (Secondary School)**

Related to this theme, was a subset of comments that specifically mentioned the lack of, or reduced, input from external agencies (e.g. social services). In total, **17** school staff considered this issue.

“ Financial, emotional, increased anxiety, parents not engaging with normal services parents not asking for help as "fear of failure " Ability to re-engage with school.”

- **Headteacher (Special School)**

“ I teach SEND, my concern is the level of support offered outside the college for the mental wellbeing of my families from social workers. Many parents are struggling financially or emotionally with the impact of having to look after a dependant with severe learning difficulties at home and not being able to go out. With the expectation of students who are registered under CAHMS many feel that they do not have the support of their social worker (or equivalent). ”

- **Lecturer (College)**

“ Hard for parents to have students at home all the time as some of them need constant support and there is no respite care available. ”

- **SEND support (College)**

School support in place

Eighty-two (19%) commented about support offered by their setting. Sometimes staff included a note about whether that support was effective or taken up by students. For most, these comments are simply a statement that support is offered or an acknowledgment that the setting had implemented all possible measures to protect vulnerable students.

“ We identified vulnerable students before the closure and allocated support for these. Other vulnerable students who may have been identified since the closure will be supported throughout the closure and added to welfare checks. ”

- **SEND support (Secondary School)**

“ My colleges in the pastoral team are workings hard to provide support and make contact but there may some who slip through the net. ”

- **Teacher (Secondary School)**

“ We have a superb welfare team, that are great at communication and giving support, and keeping contact with students and staff. ”

- **Pastoral support, College**

Lack of contact and engagement

The fourth most common concern (**79 comments [18%]**) amongst school staff was that vulnerable students or families may be out of contact with the school and that this might be indicative of more serious issues. Some indicated that attempts to contact young people, or their families, had been ignored and had not subsequently been responded to.

“ The lack of contact from some families is worrying- but there is a lot that we can't control at the moment. Concerned about the lack of external agency support during this period. ”

- **Teacher and SEND support (Secondary School)**

“ Concerned for those that are not making contact and we know they have awful home lives. ”

- **Lecturer (College)**

“ It is hard to know what is going on in all the different homes and getting in contact can be sporadic and some families aren't answering the phone. However, I know... most at risk students have been checked on. ”

- **Teacher (Secondary School)**



18% of the comments from school staff expressed concern that vulnerable students may be unreachable or that they have not been engaging with the support offered.

“It is difficult to support students who are being restricted in their communication with us.”

School work and falling behind

There were **78** comments (**18%**) that include a mention related to concerns about schoolwork and learning. Generally, these relate to worries that students may not be maintaining their learning either because of a lack of motivation on behalf of the young person or because they do not have the ability to manage their workload without teaching input and outside of a supportive environment.

Some expressed concern that the impact of coronavirus will mean young people who had shown progress across many aspects of their lives (e.g. social, emotional and academic) may now regress and require significant support when they return to school.

Other factors considered to impact upon this are the mental or emotional state of the young person (being able to cope), distraction at home (e.g. screens and the behaviours of others within the home), access to technology and learning resources and whether the individual has a structure to their home schooling.

“ It is clear that even the very brightest students find following instructions about online work difficult. ”

- Teacher (Secondary School)

“ That they are struggling at home, and when they return they will be anxious about their learning. They may realise that they have missed out on learning due to their circumstances and be reluctant to engage and become disruptive once we return to school. The support staff we have a re great, but there aren't enough of them, or enough hours for teaching staff to receive the full support that they will need, especially for these individuals at this time. ”

- Teacher (Secondary School)

“ Falling behind with their learning. Not coping with their workload/ deadlines. Mental Health Issues. These particular students are not coming into school; so how are they being encouraged, monitored and supported? ”

- Teacher (Secondary School)

Cannot observe and masked struggles

School staff expressed concern that not being able to interact with young people in person, or to observe their behaviours at regular intervals, may mean that students needs go unnoticed. A total of **57** comments (13%) have been attributed to this theme.

"That they are not able to complete the work without us! Many have mental health issues and are not responding to phonecalls or emails."



13% of the comments from school staff expressed concern that lack of regular observation may mean problems go unnoticed. Also, some feared that problems may be masked deliberately by students or parents.

Issues associated with lack of observation may be compounded by the nature of remote contact, which may prevent disclosures because of the presence of others (e.g. an abuser) within the home environment or because requests for contact are not responded to.

Some school staff considered that the difficulties experienced by some vulnerable students may be masked, or covered up, by young people or parents because of fears of possible retribution or embarrassment (e.g. because they feel that they should be able to cope at home).

“ It is harder for us to spot warning signs that something is wrong and harder for children to tell us if something is wrong/how they are coping. ”

- **Teacher (Secondary School)**

“ With remote contact there is not the same connection with other people, the nuances which are so important to good communication are missing, body language not seen. It is so easy for someone to potentially hide clues that we would see if we were face to face and therefore it seems inevitable that we will miss and issues and not be aware of any concerns we might have had were we to

see our learners face to face. ”

- **Programme Tutor, College**

“ I have concerns over students being missed from parents hiding things or students hiding things. I also worry about the pressure of the work and how they will access face to face support. Or if things get worse. Where we don't have visibility it makes it much harder for all staff to support or spot things. However, I do not see how this can change without being back in school. ”

- **Cover Supervisor (Secondary School)**

Mental health impact

There were 53 comments (12%) that encompassed a general concern about the impact of the coronavirus lockdown on the mental health and emotional wellbeing of students. School staff made reference to a number of factors that might contribute to poor mental health including isolation, lack of support, social influences, existing anxieties, routine disruption and other similar concerns.

“ I worry for the mental health of my students who should have been taking their GCSEs at the moment. Many were

already experiencing anxiety and stress and this situation is likely to be making things more difficult. ”

- **Pastoral support (Secondary School)**

” Mainly the isolation of these pupils. Our setting is for Autistic students and their mental health could increase due too the lack of routine, isolation and anxieties from their friends and other adults. ”

- **Pupil Support Coordinator (Special School)**

” I am worried about their mental health and home life. ”

- **Teacher (Primary School)**

Broken routines

There were 43 comments (10%) that referenced a concern about routines. School staff referred to both the negative impact of a lack of routine outside school and readjusting when school re-opened.

” They do not have the structure of the school day or the ability to go somewhere happy and safe. ”

- **Teacher (Secondary School)**

” Lack of routine. Progress in coping with mental health for our most vulnerable will be ruined. Students may pick up bad habits. Unlimited access to social media 24/7 could have damaging consequences. ”

- **SEND Support (Secondary School)**

” I'm sure all children will be missing the structure of school and seeing their friends and adults that they have a relationship with. I'm worrying that vulnerable children will be finding the situation very difficult particularly if they don't have a secure and loving family network to support them. ”

- **Teacher (Primary School)**

Access to technology and resources

Thirty-three school staff (8%) referred in their comments to concerns that vulnerable students would be able to access IT and would receive enough support at home to work digitally.

” Also due to differences in access to technology/differing support from parents/carers students may have issues completing the work. This will lead to gaps widening. It is worrying when we do not hear at all from the pupils we teach. ”

- **Teacher (Secondary School)**

” Lack of engagement with on line learning due to lack of access to IT, parental support, space to work. ”

- **Teacher (Secondary School)**

Basic needs

Thirty-three school staff (8%) referred in their comments to concerns that vulnerable students fundamental needs might not be met during lockdown. These comments included concerns about families having enough money as a household and pupils having enough food or eating poorly.

“ That they are getting food, love and care at home. ”

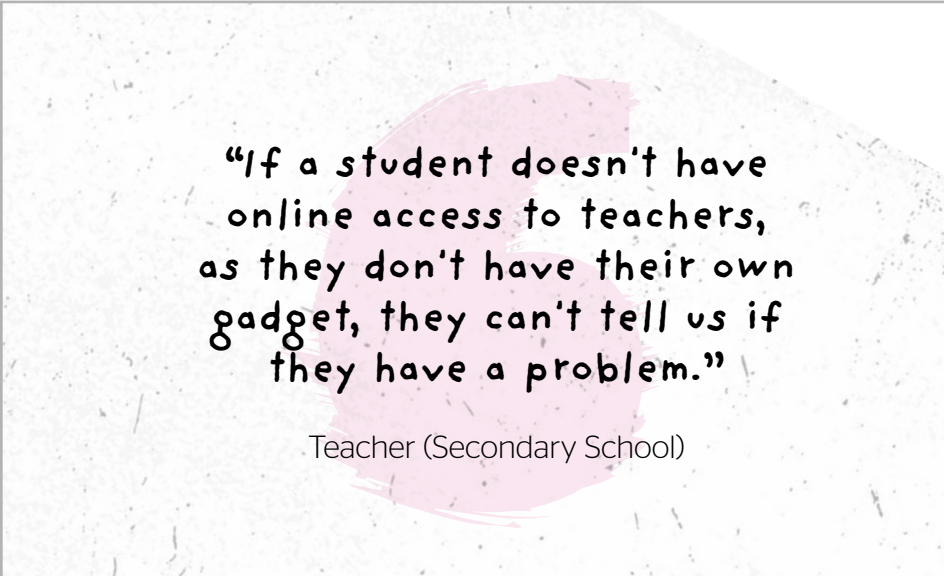
- **Teaching Assistant (Primary School)**

“ The lack of attention some children will be receiving at home - including attention to basic physical and emotional needs. Nothing to dilute family tensions without daily school routine and physical access to friends. ”

- **Teacher (Primary School)**

“ I worry about young carers and students who would have free school meals. Additionally, students who would not have classed as PP may know as a result of parents losing jobs/income will be struggling for basic necessities. ”

- **Instructor (Secondary School)**



“If a student doesn't have online access to teachers, as they don't have their own gadget, they can't tell us if they have a problem.”

Teacher (Secondary School)

SCHOOL STAFF

... VULNERABLE STUDENTS

School staff reported various concerns about the vulnerable students they may have ordinarily supported within the school environment. This included worries about students home lives, their access to technology and the availability of support.

33 school staff expressed specific concern about whether families were able to meet the basic psychological and physical needs of students such as access to nutrition.



HOUSEHOLD COPING

Young people, parents/guardians and school staff

All three surveys asked respondents questions about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their household, and how well they were coping. In addition:

- Children, young people and parents were asked how the lockdown had impacted on relationships in their household.
- School staff were asked if they had dependents living with them and if their caring responsibilities had increased.
- Parents were asked about how they had balanced work and childcare or looking after their family.

All three groups were asked whether they felt their family was coping with the current situation. In total, **2,344** children and young people, **1,049** parents/guardians and **678** school staff responded to the question. **Forty-three** school staff said that they lived on their own.

- **96%** of children and young people said their family was coping.
- **94%** of parents said that their family

was coping.

- **97%** of school staff who lived with others said that their family was coping.

Respondents who said their family was not coping were asked to explain why they had felt that way. Key themes in the responses for each survey are shown below.

Children and young people (CYP)

Seventy-one CYP told us why their family was not coping with the lockdown. Key themes in their responses were:

Stress and relationships

Forty-five (63%) said that they felt that their family was not coping with lockdown because of stress, arguments or relationship breakdowns.

“*Parents’ relationship has broken down and I have fallen out with my Dad,*

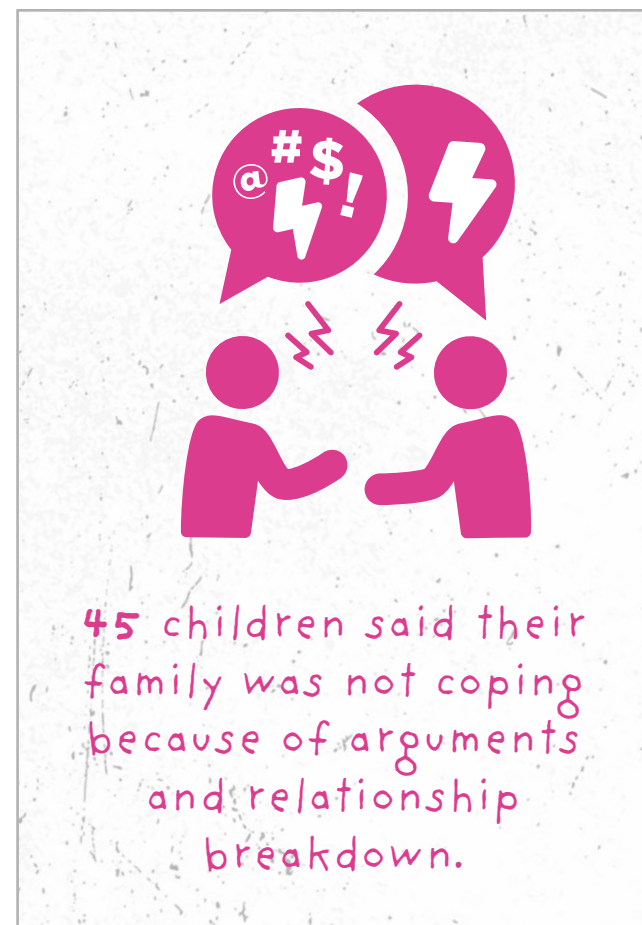


Figure 8: The number of children who said family conflict was a cause of not coping with the lockdown.

the stress and constantly being with them has destroyed it because there were pre-existing problems. ”

- Female, (Age 16)

“ Because it is making us start to argue with each other because we can't get away from each other when we are mad. ”

- Male (Age 12)

Personal space

Eight (11%) said that their family was not coping because of not having enough space or not being able to leave the house. Some said that this was affecting their schoolwork.

“ There are five of us in my household who are all trying to either work or educate themselves, so when we're all trying to do our work we have to rotate who can work at the table which means that I often have to attempt work from my bed as none of us have room for desks. My mum also takes a lot of conference calls so we have to be silent during them times which is hard with a full household which can sometimes create a tense atmosphere between us all. ”

- Female (Age 17)

Money and finances

Seven (10%) said that their family was not coping because of money or financial problems.

“ We getting worried every day and we don't really have enough supplies. My mum doesn't have a car to go shopping. ”

- Female (Age 15)

Worries about the virus

Four (5%) said that they were worried about the virus. Most of these comments related to vulnerable relatives.

“ My family has a lot of vulnerable people in it, so lockdown and isolation is making us more concerned and paranoid so that when someone does have to go shopping it is terrifying. ”

- Female (Age 16)

Schoolwork

Three (4%) were not coping because of schoolwork.

“ Because we all struggle with keeping up with the schoolwork and it puts us under a lot of stress. ”

- Male (Age 12)

Parents

Forty-nine parents told us why their family was not coping with the lockdown. Key themes in their responses were:

Children's existing health or mental health

Eleven parents (22%) said that their family was not coping and referred to their child or children's existing mental health, health problem, or disability.

“ I am a single parent feeling very depressed and struggling to motivate my children. My son is autistic and can sometimes be violent to his sisters. My oldest daughter has had serious mental health issues and won't leave her room except to get food or drinks. She even eats in her room and refuses any offer for spending time together... My youngest daughter isn't sleeping well and refuses to leave the house for fear of coronavirus. I can't get her up before 12pm and she's only doing a fraction of her schoolwork. She is very difficult to manage and rarely does what I ask of her now. She is really missing her friends and regular routine. ”

- Parent of three children in secondary school

Schoolwork

Eight (16%) said that their family was not coping and referred to struggling to motivate their children to complete schoolwork or having to home school in an already stressful period.

“ My husband has been ill for over a month (not COVID related), I'm not working but getting no help from the government, I'm

struggling with the amount of home schooling, I don't want my children to fall behind but I'm not a teacher. ”

- Parent of two children in high school

Adult existing health or mental health

Six (12%) said that their own or another adult in the household had an existing mental health difficulty, health problem or disability which was making it difficult for them to cope with lockdown.

“ Mental health support for the adult I care for has stopped as they cannot communicate unless it is face-to-face, so there is more pressure on me as all communication has to go through me. We have been allocated 28 hours of social care support a week through direct payments back in January and these have not yet been finalised, so we are having to pay for this ourselves. My partner cannot work currently due to the vulnerability of my health condition. My children are home from university and have no idea how they will be able to find jobs. I have no time to myself as I am having to support all the people in my household to cope and no

“My 8 year old son is struggling, his tempers to do with school work have been horrible. My husband is struggling to cope with him being furloughed and my eldest son's behaviour...”

Parent of children in pre-school and primary school

one is looking after me. My own care and support for my physical disability has been stopped and that about finished me off. I know I can't go on much longer and it makes me very sad and even though my house is full of people I feel so isolated and alone. ”

- Parent of children in college and who have left education

School staff

Eighteen school staff told us why their household was not coping with the lockdown. Themes in their responses included balancing their own children's schoolwork with paid work, housework, caring for their own children with existing mental health difficulties and worries related to work or students.

“ I am living with my family members. Three out of five of them suffer from depression and anxiety and I find myself, someone who doesn't suffer, trying to help them a lot of the time. Listening to their worries, calming them down when they are emotional or trying to raise their spirits where I can. I feel I am the human sponge, but I also have my own stresses. ”

- Secondary school teacher

“ I am not able to focus totally on my work at set times. I feel guilty if I am not working. I am struggling to look after everyone else's mental health. We get emails suggesting we let students off a little if they are bereaved which demonstrates a lack of understanding for grieving during this time. Two weeks doesn't make any difference to a family waiting for a body to be released etc... the information needs to be shared too if a staff member is distressed or grieving. ”

- Secondary school teacher

“I am a single parent feeling very depressed... My son is autistic and can sometimes be violent to his sisters.

“My oldest daughter has had serious mental health issues and won't leave her room... She refuses any offer for spending time together.

“My youngest daughter isn't sleeping well and refuses to leave the house for fear of coronavirus.”

Parent of three children in secondary school



Many young people with siblings said their relationship had improved because they had more time to be together.

Sibling relationships - Children and young people

Q: How has your relationship with your brother(s) or sister(s) changed since the lockdown?

CYP were asked if they lived with any siblings and if the lockdown had any impact on these relationships.

- **75%** of CYP lived with siblings.
- **90%** of CYP lived with their parents or guardians.
- **22%** of CYP said that their relationships with their siblings had changed as a result of the lockdown.
- **20%** of CYP said that their relationships with their parents or guardians had changed as a result of the lockdown.

Five hundred and fifty-one CYP told us about how their relationships with their siblings had changed. Of these, **50% (278)** were positive in sentiment, **38% (212)** were negative in sentiment, and **11% (61)** were mixed. Key themes are shown below:

Positive

CYP feeling closer to their siblings was a common theme in the positive responses. Many said that their relationships had improved because of spending more time together. Some said that they had less arguments than usual.

“ I think we have got closer during lockdown because we have spent more time together because we aren't doing separate activities which we would normally do on a weekly basis. ”

- **Female (Age 12)**

“ We have strangely had fewer arguments, and I think this is due to we are both in the same situation and we understand each other more. ”

- **Female (Age 12)**

Negative

Common themes in the negative responses were that CYP argued more with their siblings and that they found it difficult to get away or have their own space. Some were negative about being unable to spend time with siblings who lived in other households.

2 IN 10

22% of children & young people said their relationship with a sibling had changed and 20% said their relationship with a parent had changed.

“ Being around each other all the time has made us more irritable of each other. The children I live with both have brain damage as one is fostered and the other is adopted, so I can really struggle sometimes with their behaviour. I need a break from them but I can't which makes it harder to home-school too. ”

- Female (Age 14)

“ There have been some damaging arguments which have led to the whole house feeling hurt and distressed. ”

- Male (Age 16)

Mixed

Most mixed responses related to feeling closer to their siblings, but also having more arguments due to lack of space or time apart.

“ Sometimes even better and having more of a laugh than normal. If in an argument it's a lot worse. ”

- Female (Age 14)

“ Overall, we have become closer as we have more time to spend with each other, but at times we can get irritated with each other as we're together 24/7. ”

- Female (Age 17)

Parent relationships - Children and young people

Q: How has your relationship with parent(s) or guardian(s) changed since the lockdown?

Five hundred and three CYP told us about how their relationships with their parents had changed. Of these, 255 (51%) were positive in sentiment, 206

“My autistic son won't leave the house, my older son has mental health problems and doesn't like his brother my mental health is suffering.”

Parent of children in secondary school

(41%) were negative, and 42 (8%) were mixed. Key themes are shown below:

Positive

CYP who were positive about changes in their relationship with their parents often said they felt closer to their parents. Often, this was because of being able to spend more time together due to not being in school, or their parents having more time because of reduced work pressure.

“ Usually I wouldn't see my dad until about 6pm or get home until 7-8pm... I see him a lot more now than ever have. ”

- Female (Age 12)

“ I think I respect them a bit more, I've had more time to see what they actually do for me. ”

- Male (Age 12)

“ I feel closer to parents. We spend much more time together as a family and I think we're much better for it. Everyone in my household is much more stress-free and as a result, we are generally happier. ”

- Male (Age 17)

Negative

Common themes in the negative responses included that CYP were having more arguments with parents, difficulty with not being able to get space or time away and experiencing a worsening of existing tensions with their parents.

A small number of young people said that their relationship with their parents was negatively impacted because one of them was in a high-risk group. They described having to quarantine or have little contact with their parents or guardians.

“ I no longer have time alone with my closest parent in which we would both speak about what was going on in our lives, worries etc. and get advice. I am living in a very communal space. ”

- Female (Age 15)

“ My dad is a high-risk person, so I can't hug him and everything has to be separate for him. ”

- Male (Age 15)

Mixed

Some CYP felt closer to their parents or guardians, but also had some arguments and that they felt closer to one parent but not another. Some CYP referenced the impact of not being able to spend time with parents who were key workers.

“ There was a situation at the beginning of lockdown which put a strain on mine and my parents' relationship. I felt like my mum drifted away from me a lot and it is obvious she is disappointed in me... Mine and my dad's relationship has changed for the better though, I feel like he gets me, and I can talk to him about anything. The other day one of my ex-boyfriends and best friends killed himself. I took myself into a different room to cry about it. I only told my dad that he was my ex-boyfriend because it was a complicated situation at the time. ”

- Female (Age 16)

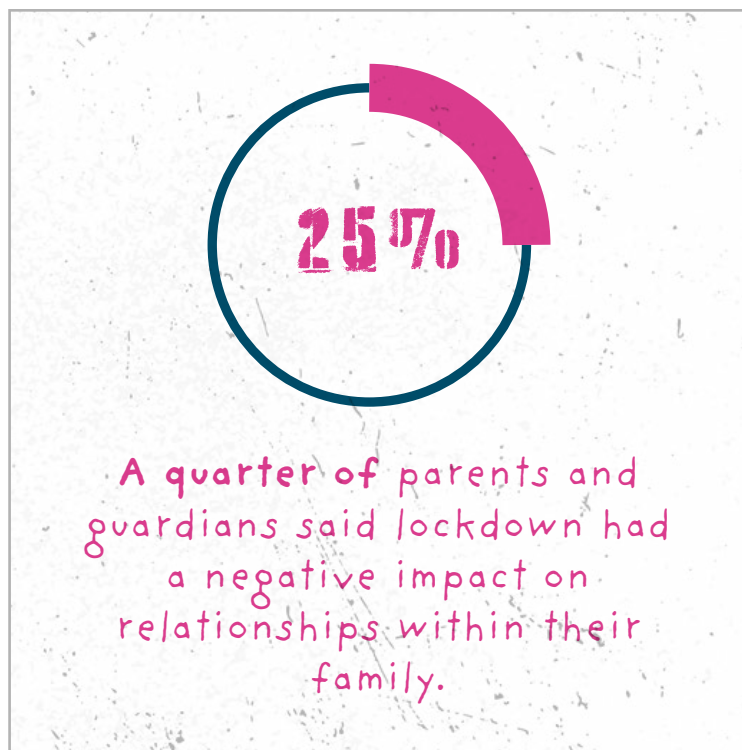
CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

... RELATIONSHIP CHANGES

More than a third commented negatively about changes in their relationship with a sibling.

4 in 10 commented negatively about changes in their relationship with a parent or guardian.





Family relationships - Parents

Parents were asked how the lockdown had affected the relationships in their household. **Nine hundred and seven** gave a response.

- **36%** said that the lockdown had a positive impact.
- **26%** were neutral or said that the lockdown had no impact.
- **12%** said that the lockdown had a mixed impact.
- **25%** said that the lockdown had a negative impact.

Parents were also asked to tell us about how the relationships in their household had been affected. There were **818** free text responses to the question. Key themes included:

Positive

Three hundred and thirty were positive about the impact of the lockdown on the relationships in their household. Most of the positive comments related to feeling that the lockdown had brought their household closer together. Many felt that this was a result of being able to spend more time together. Some talked about

how their family was communicating better or pulling together to get through the lockdown.

“ We are pulling together as a family. There are things that we need to be more aware about as we are spending more time together but hopefully we have got each other’s backs. ”

- **Parent of child in secondary school**

“ Ups and downs, but generally we are stronger for it and getting on OK. My husband travels a lot, so the children have been able to spend quality time with him (and me). ”

- **Parent of children in secondary school**

Negative

Two hundred and twenty-four were negative about the impact of lockdown on relationships in their household.

Many of these responses referred to communication between family members, including arguments or behavioural changes and not being able to get space from each other. Some said that they were experiencing increased levels of stress or anxiety.

A few referenced the impact of relationships for those with caring responsibilities or with family members who had existing mental health difficulties, health problems or disabilities.

“ We've been more short with each other, losing our tempers more than normal. As the lockdown has gone on, it's affected people differently, for example, our daughter was fine at the beginning but recent has begun lying - she didn't do this previously. We're constantly having to reassess how we are dealing with things and giving each other space when we need it. ”

- Parent of child in primary school

“ Increased stress levels, family members increased anxiety, stress generated by lack of money, increased bills, unsupported health problems. ”

- Parent of children in primary and secondary school

Mixed

Mixed comments often related to some family members being closer as a result of lockdown, but not others. For example, parents may have felt closer to their children, but not their partner. Some parents also said that they were able to spend more time together, but also that time competed with work or work pressure. Some said that relationships had started off difficult and then improved.

“ We are enjoying having a slower pace to our days and weeks and having the opportunity to spend more time together. Tension has only arisen when, for example, we are trying to juggle supporting our daughters with their schoolwork, working ourselves and keeping on top of housework and shopping. ”

- Parent of children in primary school and secondary school

“ Myself and my husband recently separated but have been isolated together, this was fine until the six-week mark and then became strained. I've had lots more time with the children which has been nice but also tiring and stressful at times. ”

- Parent of children in secondary school

Dependants - School staff

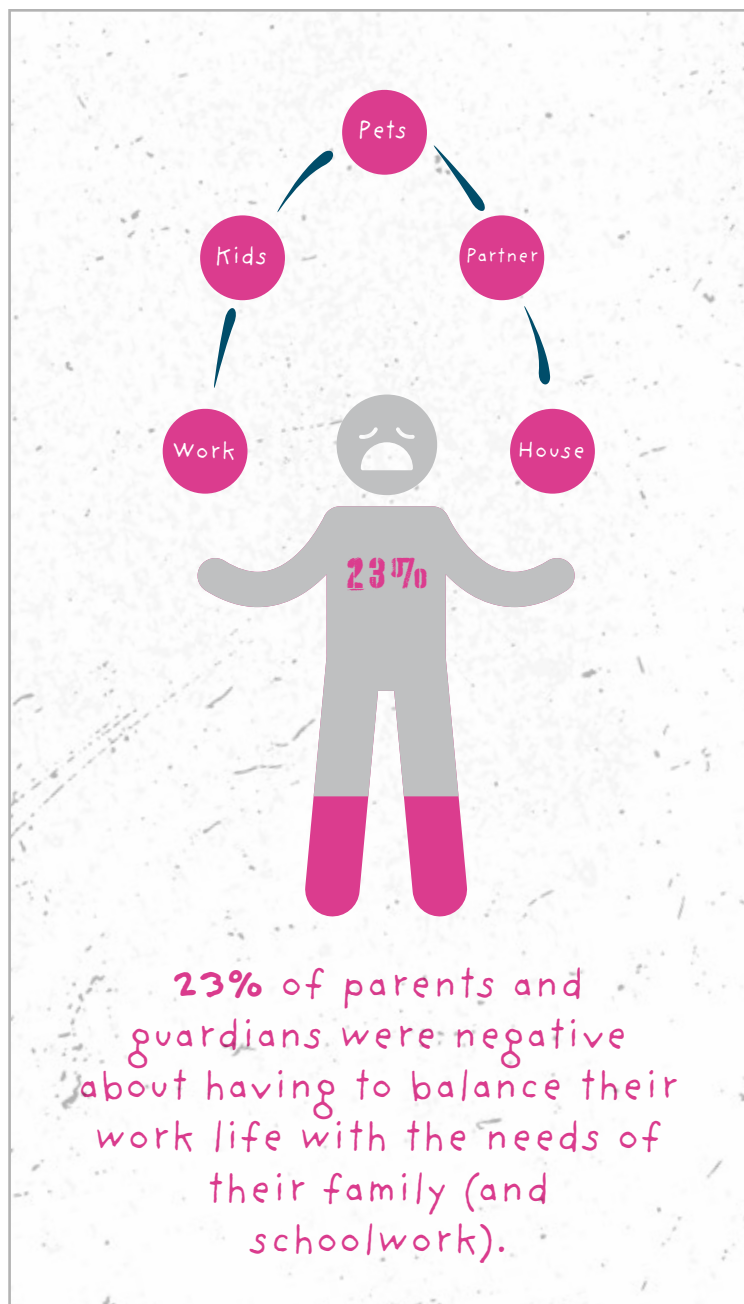
Q: If you have dependants at home (children or adults) how have your caring responsibilities changed since coronavirus?

School staff were asked: “If you have dependants at home (children or adults) how have your caring responsibilities changed since coronavirus?”

- 63% of school staff had dependants at home (adults or children).
- 82% said that their caring responsibilities had increased.

Four hundred and sixty-eight school staff had dependants at home. Of these:

- 45% said that their caring responsibilities had increased a lot
- 36% said that they had increased a little
- 18% said that there was no difference
- 0.4% (two staff) said that their caring responsibilities had decreased a lot



Parents - working situation

Parents were asked whether they were a key worker, what impact the lockdown had on their working situation and what had been the challenges to balancing both their children and their work.

Seven hundred parents responded to the open-ended question asking how they were balancing their children's needs with work. Key themes in the responses were:

Schoolwork

One hundred and fifty-nine (23%) were negative about balancing schoolwork with their paid work. Key workers were slightly more likely (**27% compared to 19%**) to report that they found balancing schoolwork with paid work difficult. Those who had been furloughed were much less likely to report finding schoolwork a challenge (**11%**).

“ Working full-time and also trying to assist my children with their schooling making sure they are up-to-date and helping, also sitting in the evenings looking at my SEN child's work trying to understand myself the

subjects he needs help in and how I can help him! ”

- Parent of children in high school

“ This has been hugely challenging. I don't think I have ever been so tired. My wife has not established a stable working pattern and has not had clarity of role throughout the pandemic (a source of stress in itself). Some days have seen one of us being a teacher, parent and colleague all in the same moment - stepping outside of important conference calls to change a nappy, prepare a sandwich, let the dog out and teach a reluctant child to learn how to write. It's been too much on some days and I have definitely felt stressed. Equally, there is pride in being able to manage so many things at once. It is definitely not sustainable though. I think the biggest difficulty is that it is so hard to find some time for yourself, to truly relax. ”

- Parent of children pre-school and primary school

Workload

Thirty-one (4%) were negative about their workload or the pressure from work. Some referenced increased stress or difficulties finding the time to provide childcare alongside work. Some said that their workload had increased since lockdown.

“ My work has increased considerably. Because we are being very clear about social distancing, I only see my children by virtual media. It's not enough quality time together. ”

- Parent of child in college

“ Not having time to support my child's schooling due to the

pressure being applied by my employer. My employer suggesting I should send my daughter to school because I'm a key worker even though both myself and partner have underlying health conditions. This resulted in what can only be described as a breakdown. ”

- Parent of child in primary school

Technology and space

Twenty-five (3.6%) were negative about the availability of technology in their house, including laptops or computers and available broadband.

Twenty-five were negative about having enough space for everyone to work or not having enough space appropriate for work.



“ Space in the house. Enough broadband width to allow multiple devices to be connected to the internet for work zoom calls etc. ”

- Parent of child in high school

Positives

One hundred and twenty-seven (18%) were generally positive about balancing the needs of their children and work.

These parents said that they had no challenges balancing work with their children's needs. Those who gave a reason often referred to having children who were old enough to take care of themselves.

“ It has not really been a challenge. I am lucky to have sensible children who have always understood I work from home. ”

- Parent of children in secondary school

Eighty-eight (13%) stated that they did not have to balance their work and family needs as themselves or a member of their household had been furloughed, was working from home or had working hours which allowed them to provide childcare.

“ I work part-time so it's quite well balanced anyway, but the children know which days I have to focus. It generally helps with the level of concentration in the house though. ”

- Parent of children in primary school and secondary school

“ I've been furloughed and at the moment being paid 100% of my wage but this will go down to 80%. I've been home all this time with my son so for me it's worked out well. I'm hoping the schools reopen when I have to return to work, if not I'm going to run into difficulties with childcare ”

- Parent of child in secondary school

“Myself and one of my sons are coping. However, my daughter was already attending CBT with NHS for a germ phobia.

“She has found the lockdown incredibly tough. She has had to give up her supermarket job as she did not feel safe. She is petrified to go to any shops and has totally withdrawn, stays up into the early hours and is terrified about having to go back to school and work.”

Parent of children in secondary school and college

LONELINESS

Children and young people

Children and young people (CYP) were asked if they had been feeling lonely since the start of the lockdown, and whether they were more lonely than normal. They were also asked to explain why.

- **Forty-five per cent** said that they had felt lonely “rarely” or “none of the time”. **Thirty per cent** said that they had felt lonely “often” or “all of the time”.
- **Forty-eight per cent** said that they feel lonelier now than before lockdown. Seven per cent said that they felt less lonely, and **46%** said that this had not changed.
- Female students were more likely than males to report feeling lonely “often” or “all the time” (**36% compared to 20%**). Males were much more likely to say that they felt lonely “none of the

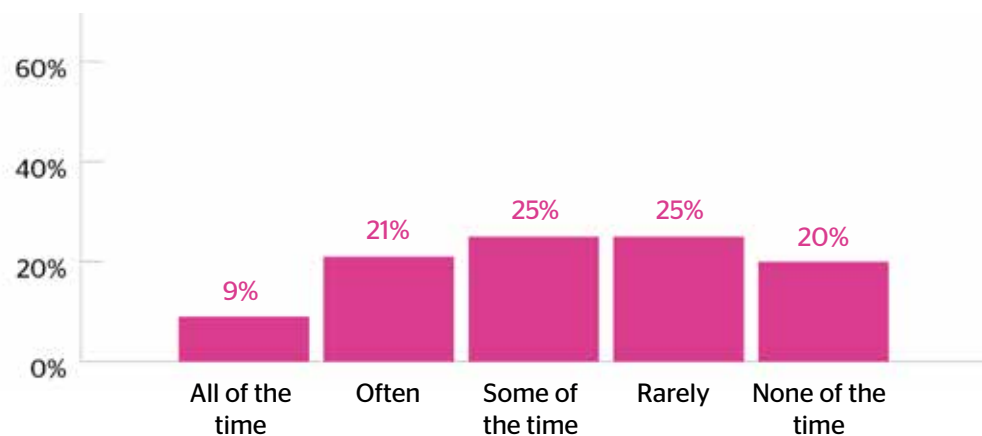


Figure 9: CYP self-reported loneliness during COVID-19 lockdown.

time” or “rarely” (**59% compared to 38%**). CYP who identified with another gender identity (**31**) were the most likely to report feeling lonely “often” or “all the time” (**61%**). Female students were also more likely than males to report feeling lonelier now than before lockdown (**51% compared to 40%**). **Seventy-one per cent** of those who identified with another gender said that they felt lonelier now.

- There was a weak positive correlation between year group and reporting feeling lonely often or all of the time (see graph below). No Year Six students reported feeling lonely “often” or “all the time”, however, only 10 Year Six students responded to the question. There was no correlation between year group and feeling lonelier now than before lockdown.

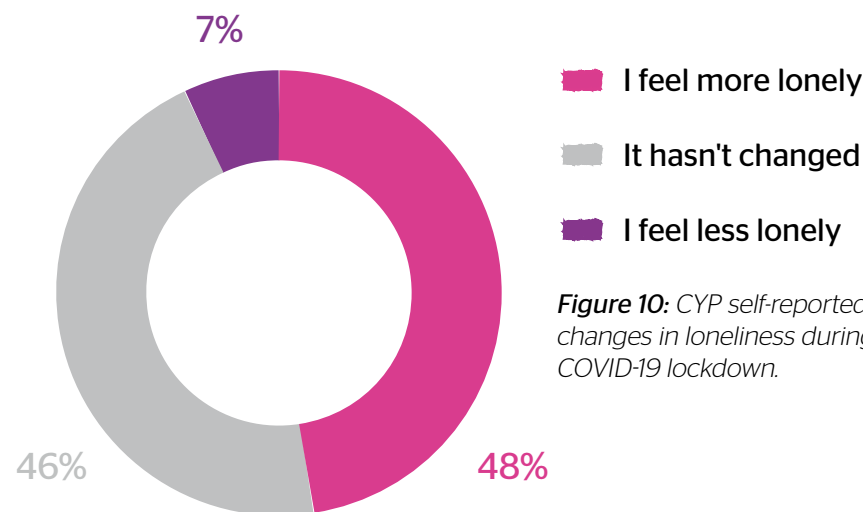


Figure 10: CYP self-reported changes in loneliness during the COVID-19 lockdown.

- There was no difference in reported feelings of loneliness by ethnicity, with **31%** of BAME students and **30%** of White British or other ethnic group students saying they felt lonely “often” or “all the time”.
- CYP who identified with a sexuality other than straight reported feeling lonely more often than their heterosexual peers (**47%** said “all of the time” or “often” compared to **27%** of straight CYP). However, non-heterosexual CYP were only slightly more likely to report that their feelings of loneliness had increased since lockdown (**52%** compared to **44%** of straight CYP).
- Those CYP who reported having at least one vulnerability reported higher levels of loneliness (44% said they felt lonely all of the time or often compared to 22% of those without vulnerabilities). CYP with vulnerabilities also reported feeling lonelier since the start of lockdown (**54%** compared to **44%** of those with no vulnerabilities).
 - **Sixty-seven per cent** of CYP who reported having a mental health difficulty said that they had felt lonely “often” or “all of the time” since the beginning of lockdown. **Sixty-five per cent** of these CYP said that they felt lonelier now.



Figure 11: CYP who reported feeling lonely often or all of the time by year and gender.

Self-reported loneliness appears to increase with age. Previous 'My Health, Our Future' (MHoF) research has shown that a young person's reliance on their parents or family for support reduces with age, whilst the importance of friends increases with age. In particular, female students have previously indicated that friends are more important to them than for male students (MHoF 2019). It is possible that, without the important influence of their friends, increasing loneliness with age within this sample is reflective of those findings.

- **Fifty-two per cent** of CYP who said that they were a carer (65) reported feeling lonely “often” or “all the time” since the start of lockdown. **Fifty-four per cent** said they felt lonelier now than before.
- **Forty-two per cent** of those who were in care or had been (38) said that they felt lonely “often” or “all of the time”. **Sixty-three per cent** said that they felt lonelier than before.
- **Thirty-nine per cent** of those who said they need help with English (101) said they felt lonely “often” or “all the time”. **Fifty-four per cent** said that they felt lonelier than before.

Feelings of loneliness – free text

CYP who told us that their feelings of loneliness had changed since lockdown were asked to explain why. **One thousand and eighty-six** gave a response.

Feeling more lonely

CYP who said that they had felt lonelier since lockdown talked about not being able to see friends or family and missing school.

Some talked about how they relied on specific relationships, for example, a boyfriend or girlfriend. A small number of CYP said that they felt lonely despite being at home with family. These often said that others in the house were busy or did not interact with them, or that they felt disconnected from their household members.

“ The adults of the house are busy all the time and my brothers just play together, and my step-sister isn't here all the time and when she is sometimes, she doesn't want to do anything with me and so I end up on my own. ”

- Female (Age 12)



A small number of CYP said they felt lonely despite being at home with family. This included that adults around them were busy or did not interact with them, or that they felt disconnected.

“ No interaction with anyone my age other than over social media and rare video calls (no siblings), when I don't want to be with my parents, e.g. after a disagreement, I'm in my room by myself so feel rather lonely. ”

- Female (Age 16)

“ I don't go out often enough to be a very social person but now that the option is away it feels like a true isolation. ”

- Male (Age 16)

“ Sometimes I feel like I'm on my own, and if I ask someone for help, they'll either be mad at me or just tell me to stop worrying about it.. ”

- Male (Age 13)

Feeling less lonely

Many CYP who said that they felt less lonely since lockdown referenced being able to spend more time with their family. Some said that they felt that they did not have close relationships at school. Some said that their friends had been in regular contact with them online during lockdown.

“ I guess because I'm with people who love me rather than having to brave it at school with people I like but don't really care about me. ”

- Male (Age 15)

“ Because I am with my mum all the time and she doesn't have to go out to work now, I can be with her 24/7. ”

- Female (Age 12)

“ At home, I'm never lonely because there's always someone else here with me whereas at school I can sometimes find myself in lonely situations. ”

- Male (Age 14)

“ I think it's because I am around my family constantly, so I feel more loved and also I am on tablets which sometimes make me feel lonely and sad for no reason. ”

- Female (Age 13)

WORRIES

Children and young people and parents and guardians

Children and young people (CYP) and parents and guardians were both asked how worried they were feeling about different aspects of their life during the pandemic. Parents were also asked what they were most worried about for their children.

Children and young People's worries

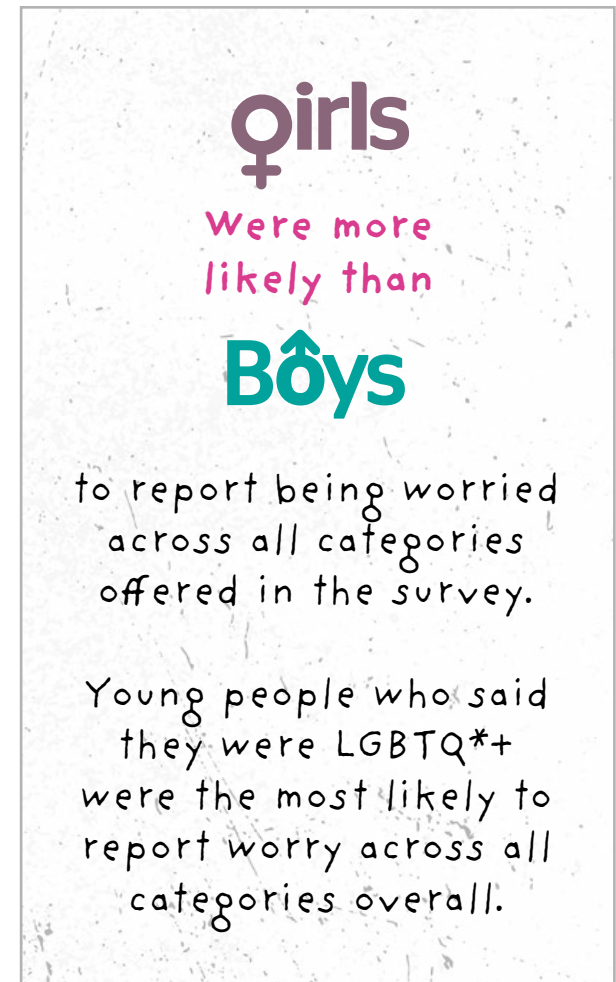
CYP answered questions about their key worries during the pandemic.

The range of responses is shown in figure 12. The most common worries were friends or family catching the virus (42%), their education (34%) and the future (33%). The options that CYP most commonly said they were not worried about at all were having enough food (72%), having enough money as a household (56%) and catching the virus themselves (45%).

- Female students were more likely than males to report being “worried” about all of the items. CYP who identified with another gender were the most likely to

worry about the future (45%).

- CYP in primary school were the most likely to say they were worried about catching the virus (11%), their friends or family catching the virus (78%) or giving the virus to other people (44%). They were also the most likely to say they were worried about their household having enough money (11%) or enough food (11%). Those in post-16 education were the most likely to be worried about the future (46%) and their education (48%).
- CYP from a BAME background, who identified with a sexuality other than straight or who reported having at least one vulnerability were more likely to report being “worried” across all of the questions than their peers.



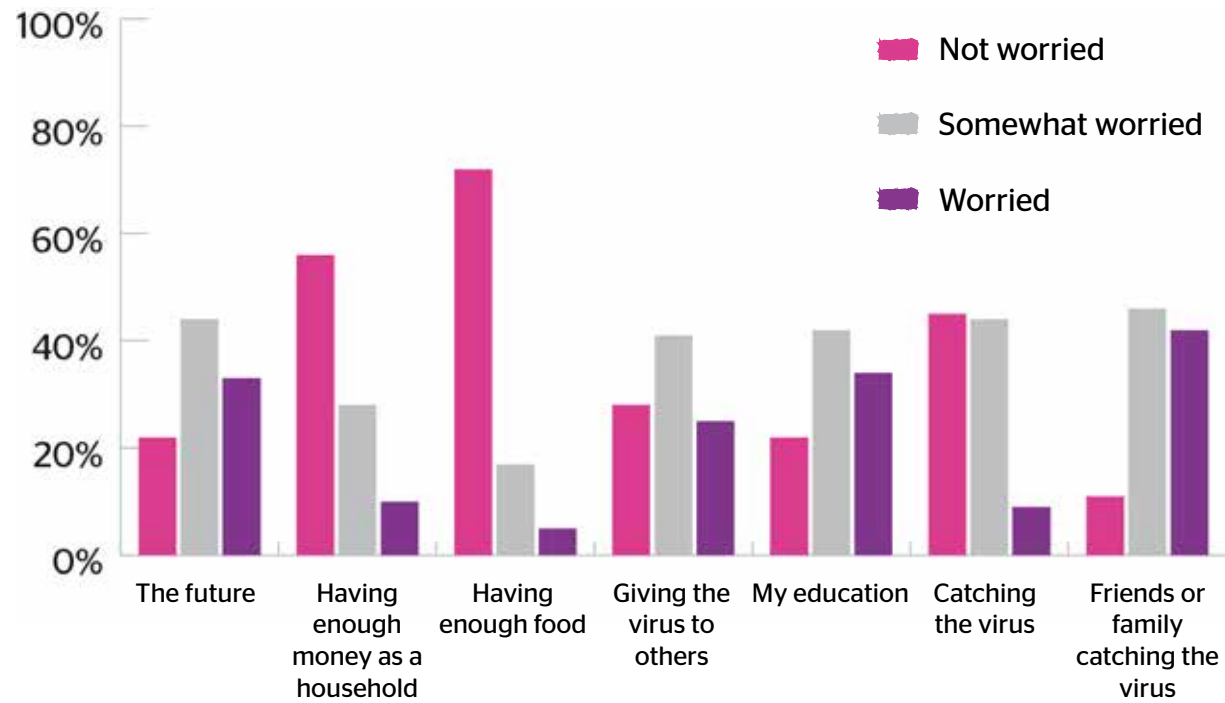
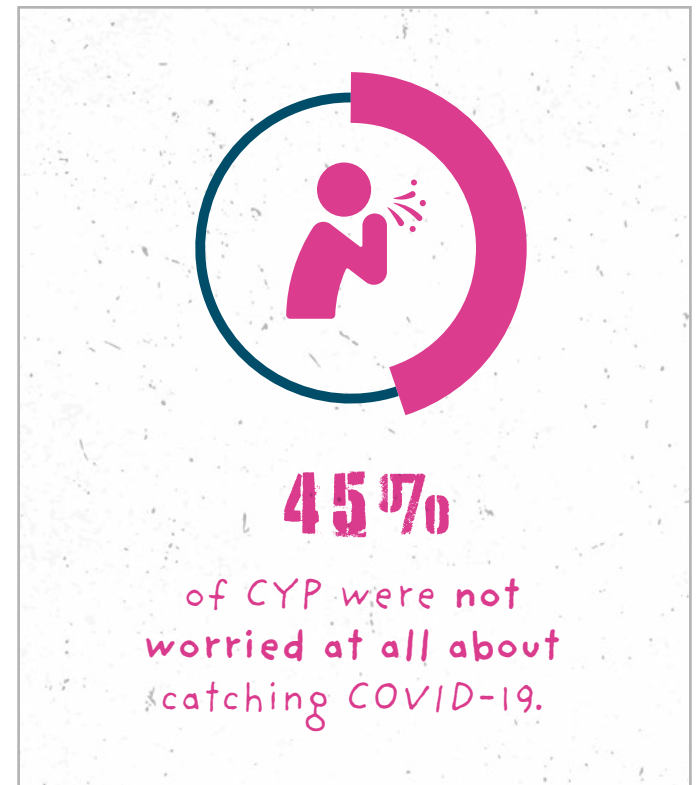


Figure 12: The percentage of CYP who said they were not worried, somewhat worried or worried about various categories.



Parent's and guardian's worries

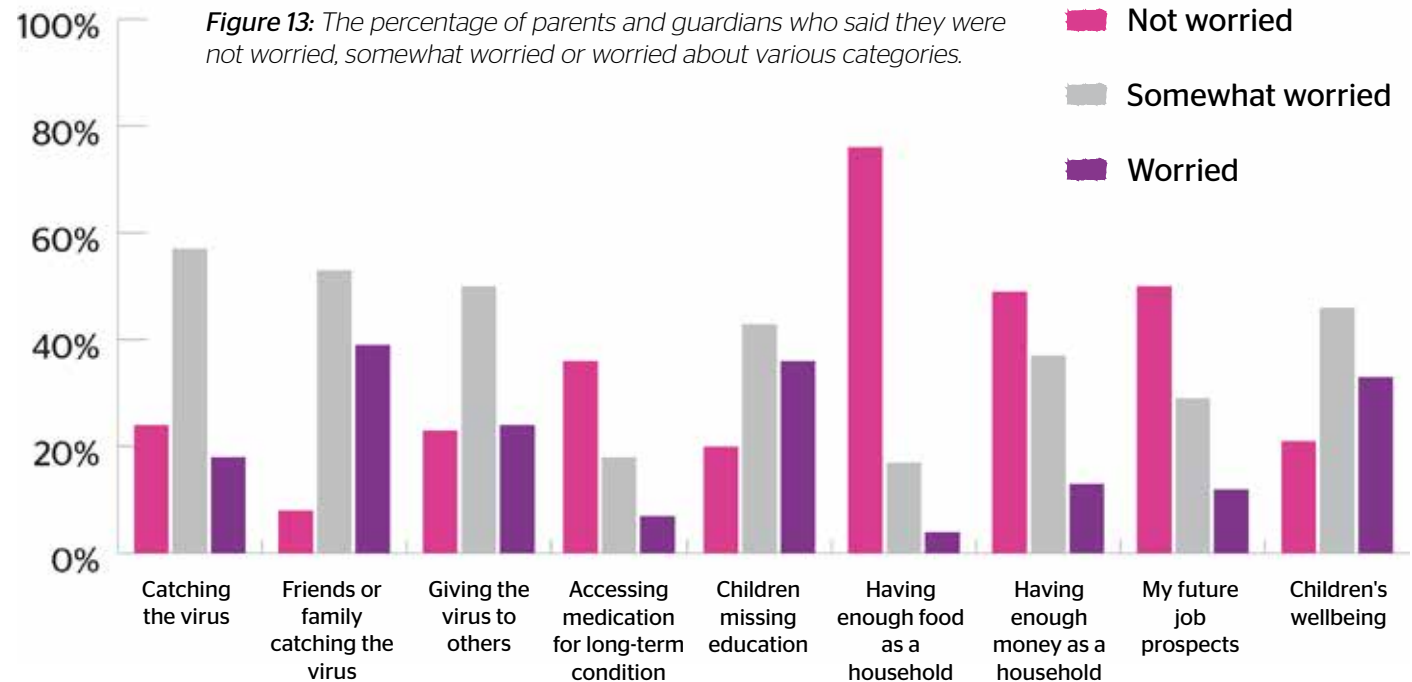
The most common worries for parents were friends or family catching the virus (39%), their children missing out on education (36%), and their children's wellbeing (33%).

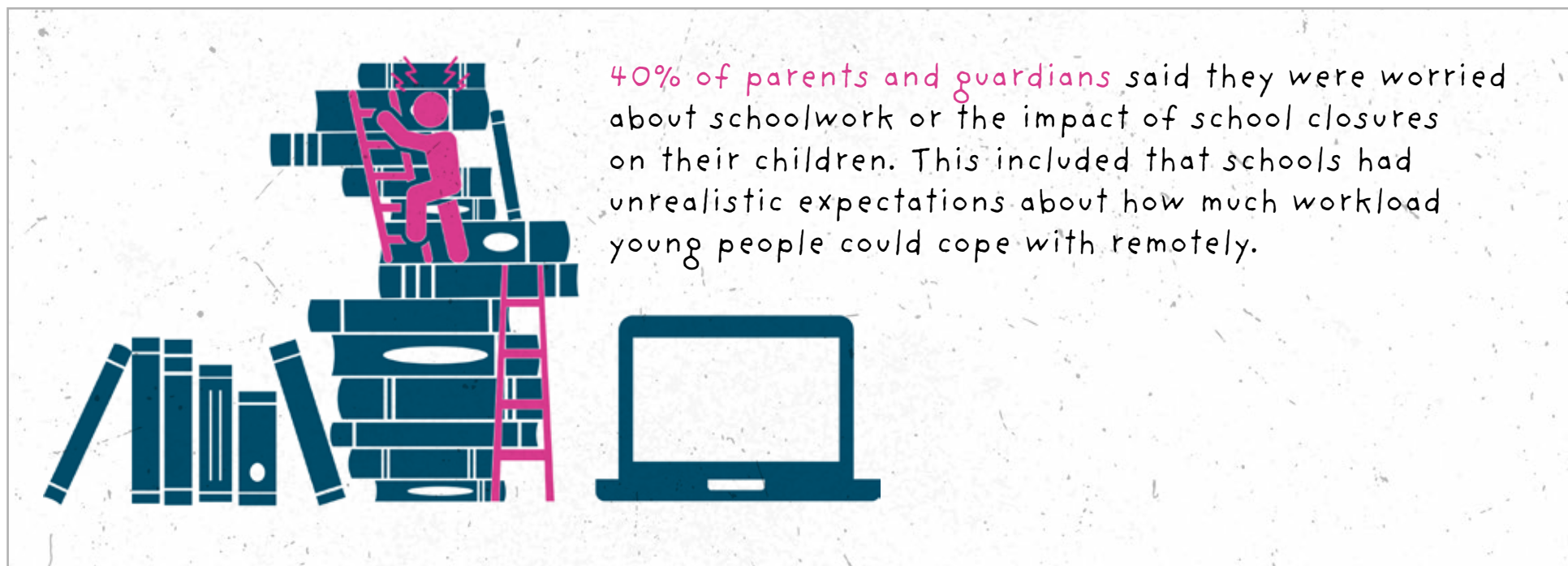
The majority of parents said they were "not worried at all" about having enough food (76%). Fifty per cent said that they were not worried at all about their future job prospects, and 49% said they were not worried at all about their household having enough money.

- Female parents were more likely to report being "worried" about all of the items, apart from having enough food (3% and 4% for males).
- There was not much variation in responses by school type. This may be because parents had children at multiple stages of education. Parents of sixth form or college-age children were slightly more likely to report being "worried" about their children's wellbeing. Those with pre-school children were the least likely to report being worried about their children missing education (28%).

- Parents from a BAME background were more likely to report being "worried" about friends or family catching the virus (48%) or giving the virus to other people (40%) than parents from a White British or White Other background. BAME parents were also more likely to be worried about accessing medication (16%) and their children missing education (56%).
- Parents with at least one vulnerability were more likely to report being "worried" across all of the items.

"None of the work is adjusted to meet the needs of a student with SpLD/SEN - no advice given by the SEND department... An impossible amount of work given, making students feel as if they have failed and imposes unnecessary pressure."





40% of parents and guardians said they were worried about schoolwork or the impact of school closures on their children. This included that schools had unrealistic expectations about how much workload young people could cope with remotely.

Parent's and guardian's worries about their children

Parents were also asked a free-text question to tell us what they were worried about for their children during the pandemic. **Eight hundred and seventy-three** gave a response.

Key themes in their responses are shown below:

Schoolwork

Forty per cent (427) said that they were worried about schoolwork or the impact of school closures on their children. Most of these parents talked about difficulties with the amount of schoolwork being set and missing out on education. Some also talked about worries about

returning to school, a lack of routine and a lack of interaction with others.

“ Their severe lack of structure for such a long period of time. For them getting into bad habits and not able to concentrate for very long and getting behind in their education. ”

- Parent of children in primary school

“ The stress of home-schooling. My child puts in over and above the hours normally at school and still has quite a bit of work left over, there appears to be unrealistic expectations of how much the children can accomplish. The more that's loaded on at one time (i.e. all the emails arriving together at the weekend) the more

stress it causes and causes a lot of stress if not all is accomplished. Concern is also all practical things being missed towards the GCSEs next year. ”

- Parent of children in secondary school and sixth form of college

“ Missing education and social contact. School is supplying work and feedback but the lack of “live” contact either at school or via Zoom or another platform leaves them feeling alone and more worried about schoolwork than usual. Also, teachers seem to be setting more work than if they were at school. Missing out on social time with friends in the real world is taking its toll too.” (Parents of children in secondary school and college)

“ That they keep up with their schoolwork, especially my son who has dyslexia. That they are coping okay with the strange situation and worries about COVID-19. ”

- Parent of children in primary school and secondary school

Lack of social contact

Thirty-three per cent (348) said that they were worried about their children being isolated or the lack of social contact during lockdown. Parents referred to worries about their children not being able to see friends or family. Some felt that this could impact their children’s social development.

“ I genuinely feel that my children have been really happy at home. They have loved spending time as a family and seem to be more relaxed without the pressures of school, friendships and rushing around to various activities. But they are also missing their friends and school, as well as extended family. I worry more about them when I return to work on 1st June and they will go

into school. ”

- Parent of children in primary school

“ Missing out on life changing experiences such as school trips and holidays. All extracurricular clubs have been stopped preventing some amazing opportunities from happening. Lack of socialising has been the biggest impact. ”

- Parent of children in secondary school and sixth form or college

“ Single child so doesn’t have anyone to socialise with. ”

- Parent of child in primary school

Concerns about mental health and wellbeing

Sixteen per cent (167) were worried about their children’s mental health or wellbeing. Many of these parents made a general reference to mental health or wellbeing, for example: “*The effect on their mental health*”.

Most comments appeared to be focused on what the long-term impact of the lockdown would be, and a smaller number talked about the impact on existing mental health difficulties. There were some references to current anxiety or low mood provoked by lockdown. There were a number of comments from parents about the impact on their children with a SEN, or a diagnosis, autism, or ASD.

“ My youngest’s mental health. Struggling without support from college which is making him feel suicidal. ”

- Parent of children in sixth form or college

“ The children’s understanding of the situation but especially their wellbeing and what the impact long-term will be. They are facing something we as adults haven’t faced before, and in our case whilst two are at very vulnerable ages. ”

- Parent of children in primary school and secondary school

“ My son was struggling with his mental health before lockdown and it had got worse. ”

- Parent of children in primary school and secondary school

“ My daughter has SM, severe anxiety, sensory issues and possible ASD so I am concerned especially about her because she is only 9 and concerned about what impact this will have on her. ”

- Parent of children in primary school and sixth form or college

Concerns about the virus

Nine per cent (94) were worried about themselves, their children or another family member catching the

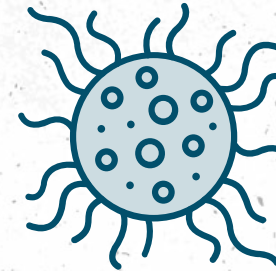
virus. Some comments referenced worries about family members with existing health conditions.

“ I am more worried about my child catching the virus than them missing time off school. Seeing people I know being ill with this virus and how deadly it can be even without having any other health conditions. I’m more worried about my child returning back to school than them being at home and safe. ”

- Parent of children in pre-school, primary school and secondary school

“ I’m still working so me catching it and being poorly or passing it on to my children. ”

- Parent of children in secondary school



94 parents and guardians expressed specific worries about COVID-19 and their children.

This includes worries about children or family members who may be vulnerable to the virus.

“I’m worried about sending four of my five kids to school, having to do school runs, and bringing the virus back to my 12-year-old son who is palliative care and my husband who has weakened lungs due to chemo.”

SCHOOL SUPPORT IN THE PANDEMIC

Children and young people, parents and guardians and school staff

Across all three surveys, children and young people, parents and school staff were asked how they felt about the support (both emotional wellbeing and learning or educational support) schools had provided during the pandemic.

- **43%** of CYP rated emotional wellbeing support as good or very good.
- **61%** of parents rated emotional wellbeing support as good or very good.
- **85%** of school staff rated emotional wellbeing support as good or very good.

Emotional Wellbeing Support

	CYP	Parents	School staff
Very good	11%	25%	40%
Good	32%	36%	45%
Average	43%	27%	14%
Poor	11%	9%	1%
Very poor	4%	3%	1%

Table 18: Rating of school wellbeing support during the pandemic.

The results show that there is a difference in how each cohort rated the emotional wellbeing support provided by schools, with school staff being most positive and CYP the least satisfied.

School & College staff

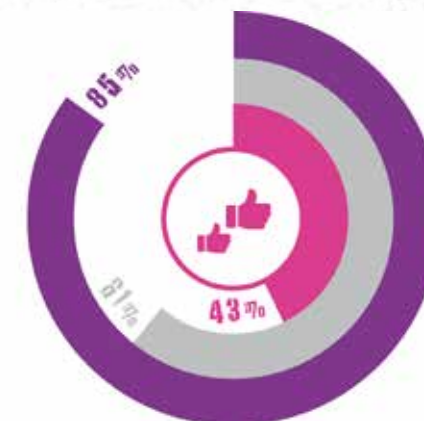
School staff were overwhelmingly the most positive in their responses about wellbeing support, with **85%** rating the support as either good or very good.

Analysis across the different staff roles reveals that those in pupil-facing support roles (e.g. exam officers, librarians and careers advisors etc.) were slightly less positive than other staff roles, with only **76%** giving a rating of “good” or “very good”.

Those working in primary schools were also less positive than their peers working in colleges or secondary schools (positive rating of **78%** compared to **82%** in colleges and **89%** in secondary schools).

School staff were asked what their concerns were about the emotional wellbeing support provided. **One hundred and sixty-five** school

SCHOOL WELLBEING SUPPORT "GOOD" OR "VERY GOOD"



- Young people
- School or college staff
- Parents & guardians

There is a marked difference in perceptions of school support during the pandemic between the groups.

staff provided details of their concerns within the text box. While most responded about the support provided by the school that they worked in, some responses related to the support they had received from their children's school(s). Key themes in their response were:

Student and family engagement

Twenty-four staff (**15%**) who responded mentioned the difficulties of engaging with students and their families. Their comments highlight the need for this to be a two-way process, with students actively seeking support as much as schools reaching out to provide support.

“ It is so difficult to really know how pupils are unless they contact us for support. ”

- **Teacher (Secondary school)**

“ The school is seeking to support students/families based on how the student is engaging with work and returning completed tasks. A pastoral call is made to students who appear not to be engaging to ascertain why. This can lead to conversations that explore how the student/family is coping and invites an opportunity to offer support. If the school waited for families/students to reach out and ask for help, a lot of potential issues would be missed. ”

- **Pastoral support (Secondary school)**

“ Parents that don't engage. Although we are doing everything possible to ensure these families do have contact. ”

- **Teacher and part of SLT (Primary school)**

Welfare checks

Twenty-four school staff (**15%**) mentioned the welfare checks that schools were employing during the lock down. Some felt that this approach was limited in being able to identify students in need.

“ The school only phones home when there has been no contact through emails with a family, they do not tell the class teacher about any issues so we cannot follow up and help support that family. ”

- **NQT (Primary school)**

“ I know that house leaders and pastoral staff are involved in phone calls etc. to the most vulnerable and food parcels are being delivered, however, I do not know how effective this has been as I don't see that side of the work the school does. ”

- **Teacher (Secondary school)**

Hidden families or vulnerable students

Seventeen school staff (**10%**) had particular concerns for vulnerable students.

“ The difficult to reach students - the ones who are not connected (internet/mobile phones) as it is harder to check on their wellbeing. ”

- **Part of SLT (Secondary school)**

“ The ghost children - the ones who on the surface seem fine but you are concerned there is something wrong. ”

- Teacher (Secondary school)

“ Families where domestic abuse is an issue, where parents have mental health problems who are trying to support their children while struggling with their own problems. ”

”

- Pastoral support (Primary school)

Doing the best we can

Sixteen staff members (**10%**) commented that they felt the schools were doing the best that they could, but that there were limitations on what was possible due to the numbers of students and the willingness of pupils to engage.

“ I feel the school is doing all it possibly can under the circumstances. ”

- Safeguarding Lead (Secondary school)

“ As a teacher I am in regularly in touch with my students. Concerns are where students are not getting in

touch with me, perhaps because they are struggling. The school is asking us to flag up any students of concern. But I feel I am doing everything I can to support my students at this time.

”

- Teacher (Secondary school)

“ The college is going the extra mile to support students/ families and we have made every effort to leave no one behind. ”

- Part of SLT (College)

Children and young people

CYP were most likely to rate emotional wellbeing support as average or below compared to parents and school staff.

Boys were slightly more positive than girls (**48%** rating “good” or “very good” versus **40%** amongst females), whilst those who chose to define their gender in their own way were least positive. Only **16%** rated support as “good” or “very good”. However, this was only a small cohort of students (**33**). Analysis across year groups reveals that Year 10 pupils were the least positive, with **22%** giving a rating of “poor” or “very poor”.



Some education staff were concerned about hidden families with whom they had little contact to determine any concerns.

“Even though senior leaders are in contact via phone etc. Things will still be missed. We just don't know what is going on at home.”

Primary School Teacher

Three hundred and twenty-nine children and young people (CYP) left an open text comment about their experience of emotional wellbeing support from their school. Key themes mentioned by CYP included:

Welfare checks

Ninety-nine students (30%) mentioned welfare checks being made by schools via email or phone. Whilst most students (83) were positive about the contact they were receiving, some were finding it difficult to contact their teachers, whilst others felt that the emails they were receiving were impersonal.

“ I got called once, and the teachers email me and sometimes ask how I'm doing. other than that, my school seems very distant. ”

- Male (Age 14)

“ Sent emails saying they were there if needed but nothing more personal (especially as I am a more vulnerable individual). ”

- Female (Age 18)

“ I think very good because every time I message a teacher within 24 hours, I get a response. ”

- Male (Age 13)

“ My teachers are very supportive and have been sending videos and emails to make us feel happier. ”

- Female (Age 13)

School work

Thirty-four of the 59 (18%) CYP who mentioned school work within their comments were negative. Students expressed dissatisfaction with the amount of work and tight deadlines being set. Others struggled with technology and being able to access work or found the lack of face-to-face contact with a teacher difficult.

“ The support is there but the education isn't the same, it's incredibly difficult to teach yourself from PowerPoints and textbooks and being sent emails for help isn't the same as a face to face interaction. ”

- Female (Age 17)



Some children and young people (34) said their had not been enough support to complete school work at home. Problems with technology had prevented some students from being able to access their work.

“ Teachers should all be more lenient with or set longer deadlines for schoolwork because everyone has different circumstances and they should all be understanding to reduce stress. ”

- Female (Age 15)

“ They just set homework online and some of us students can access it, for example my computer doesn't have the right software to open teachers' download files, If I do, then it will just come up with code, impossible to understand code. I wish our school had online classes like some others. ”

- Male (Age 15)

Some students, however, had a very positive experience of schoolwork, and the help they had received from their teachers.

“ They are being very understanding of everyone's situation and adjusting the levels of /work accordingly. ”

- Male (Age 15)

“ I like that teacher leave us to it but if we get stuck, they're just on the end of the emails. I emailed my English teacher and within minutes I had an answer. Brilliant! ”

- Male (Age 16)

“ Persistent and appropriate work set through Google classroom and teachers have been very helpful with emails. ”

- Female (Age 17)

Lack of communication from the school

Forty-seven students (14%) commented on the general lack of support or communication they had received from the school during the pandemic.

“ No one has bothered to call to see how I am. ”

- Female (Age 12)

“ This survey is basically the first thing the school have sent us concerning our wellbeing, apart from 'stay healthy'. ”

- Female (Age 12)

“ Don't really feel I've had any support. ”

- Male (Age 12)

Parents and guardians

The majority of parents were positive about the emotional wellbeing support provided by schools (61% “good” or “very good”) although they were not as positive as school staff (85% “good” or “very good”). Parents comments about wellbeing support mostly related to the communication received from their child's school or being able to contact teachers with any concerns.

There were 515 comments in response to the open-ended question about emotional wellbeing (EWB) support. Key themes in these responses are shown below:

General positive comments about communication

Thirty-seven per cent (189) of parents and guardians were positive about being contacted by the school. These parents received regular or one-off phone calls and emails from their child's school. Many did not directly mention EWB support.

“ Parents have been emailed by the school and I believe that positive comments are made on school emails to the children with their home learning. We don't have any need for this kind of support as a family, but I am sure that if we did then it would be very good. ”

- Parent of children in secondary school

“ Just had a personal call from tutor which was lovely. ”

- Parent of child in secondary school

“ Her primary school has been making regular contact. ”

- Parent of child in primary school

Positive about wellbeing support

Fifteen per cent (77) were positive about their children's school being generally supportive or talking about wellbeing.

“ My son school completely understand his difficulties. ”

- Parent of children in primary school

“ The school have been excellent and we have access to support if needed. ”

- Parent of children in primary school

“ The school has been supportive with my daughter. ”

- Parent of children in primary school and secondary school

Lack of wellbeing support

Ten per cent (49) said that they had received no EWB support from their child's school.

The comments often that the school had not provided any information about emotional wellbeing, had just focused on work or that they did not know what support was being offered. A small minority of comments said that they had been trying to access wellbeing support through their school prior to lockdown.

“ I am not aware of any formal conversation from the school I think this would be useful. ”

- Parent of children in primary school and secondary school

“ Very little proactive attempt to check on wellbeing specifically. ”

- Parent of pre-school and primary school children

“ Have been trying to get proper support from the school for 2.5 years without success. The school is sending out surveys to ask about wellbeing but they do not act on it. ”

- Parent of children in primary school and secondary school

General negative comments about communication

Six per cent (41) were negative about not receiving any phone or email contact from their school, or said that this contact was insufficient.

“ He has had no contact from teachers. Just option to contact if needed. ”

- Parent of child in primary school

“ I would have hoped for more regular contact from her personal tutor. ”

- Parent of child in secondary school

“ I know that they are there if we need them, but we haven't had a huge amount of contact. No video calls or lessons, no personal messages. School feels quite distant from us at the moment. ”

- Parent of children in primary school

Provision of wellbeing resources and information

Six per cent (33) were positive about the school providing wellbeing resources, activities or information.

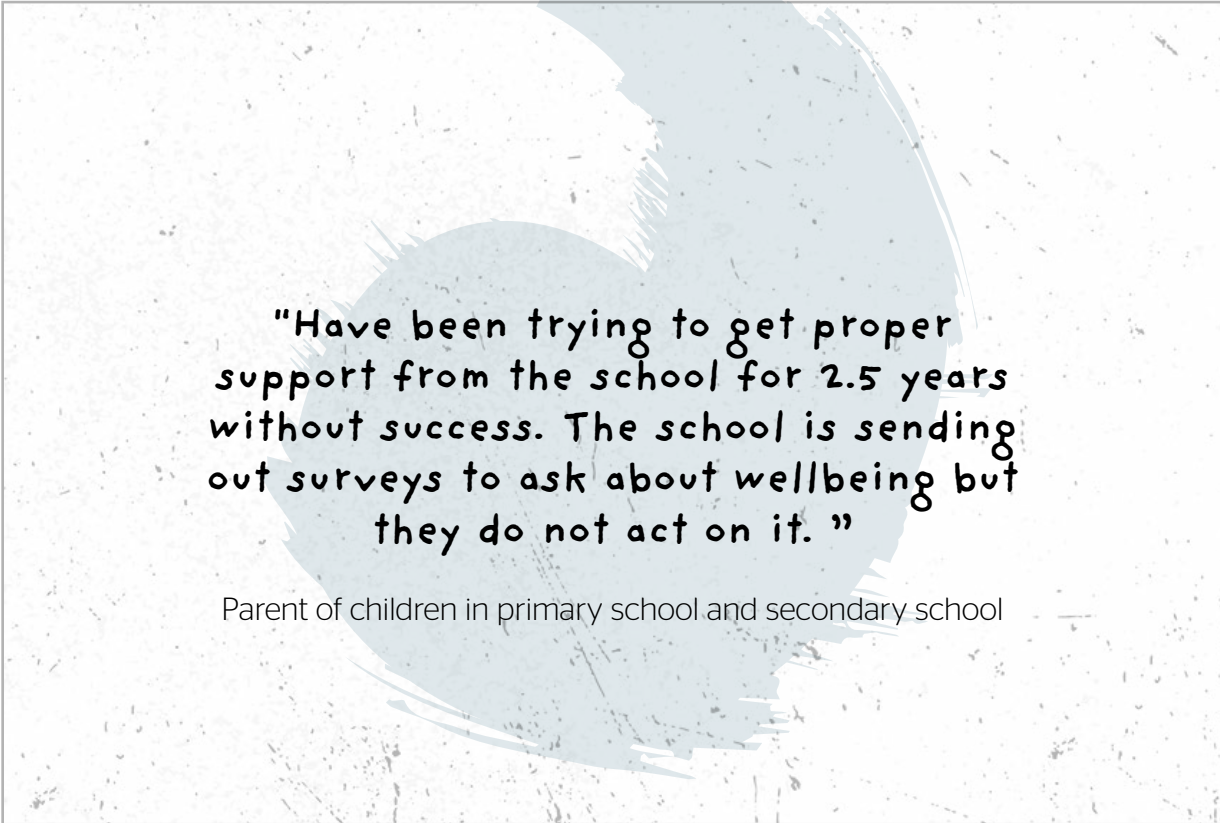
“ Lots of links to useful information and websites, emails from class teacher for my

Year 6 child very little support for my Year 9 child ”

- Parent of children in primary school and secondary school

“ Sending out questionnaires and mindfulness exercises. ”

- Parent of child in primary school



"Have been trying to get proper support from the school for 2.5 years without success. The school is sending out surveys to ask about wellbeing but they do not act on it. "

Parent of children in primary school and secondary school

Learning support

- **50%** of CYP rated learning and education support as good or very good.
- **67%** of parents rated learning and education support as good or very good.
- **88%** of school staff rated learning and education support as good or very good.

	CYP	Parents	School staff
Very good	13%	30%	41%
Good	37%	37%	47%
Average	39%	26%	11%
Poor	10%	6%	1%
Very poor	2%	1%	0%

Table 19: Ratings of school learning support during the pandemic.

The ratings for learning and education support given by the three cohorts (CYP, parent and school staff) generally mirror the ratings provided for emotional wellbeing support.

School staff were the most positive, CYP least positive. Whilst school staff and parent

ratings were very similar to those given for emotional wellbeing support, CYP were slightly more positive about the learning and education support provided by schools and colleges than they were for emotional wellbeing support (50% rate learning education support as “good” or “very good” versus 43% for emotional wellbeing support).

School staff

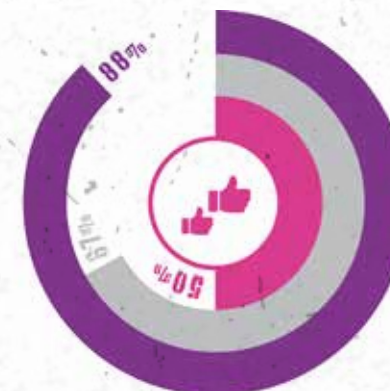
School staff were overwhelmingly the most positive in their responses, with **88%** rating the learning support provided by their school as either “good” or “very good”.

Analysis across the various staff roles reveals that those in non-pupil facing support roles (e.g. office admin etc) were slightly more positive (**93%**) whilst those in pupil facing support roles (e.g. exam officers, librarians and careers advisors etc.) were the least positive, with only **83%** giving a positive rating.

Those working in colleges were slightly less positive than their peers working in primary or secondary schools (positive rating of **83%** compared to **87%** in primary schools and **90%** in secondary schools).

School staff were asked what their concerns were about the learning and education support provided. **One hundred and seventy-**

SCHOOL LEARNING SUPPORT "GOOD" OR "VERY GOOD"



■ Young people
 ■ School or college staff
■ Parents & guardians

There is a marked difference in perceptions of school support during the pandemic between the groups.

eight school staff provided details of their concerns within the text box.

As before, while most responded about the support provided by the school that they worked in, some responses related to the support they had received from their child's school(s). Key themes in school staff's concerns about learning support included:

Student's and parent's engagement in online learning

With **39** mentions, student's willingness to engage with the online learning being set by schools was the biggest concern for school staff (**22%** of the comments). A further **10** school staff raised concerns about parent's time, ability and, in some cases, willingness to support and motivate their children with home learning.

“ We are providing good resources etc. My concern is that some of my students are not accessing it and although contact with parents have been made - still no action. ”

- Teacher and pastoral support (Secondary school)

“ Although home learning is going well with my own children because they are well supported at home. I can see via my job that some children are doing very little work at home, so when we do return to school, the gap between abilities will be huge. Home

learning just isn't working for a lot of families. ”

- Teaching assistant (Primary school)

“ Some families are struggling with the workload for various reasons... working from home, still working at their place of employment or just not having the skill to motivate their child(ren). ”

- Teaching assistant (Primary school)

Issues with digital technology

The move to predominantly online learning during the pandemic and the specific digital and technological difficulties this has created for some students, was mentioned by **35** school staff (**20%** of the comments). Responses fell into two main categories:

- Student lack of access to the appropriate IT equipment to access online learning, or in some cases limited access to IT equipment which needed to be shared with the wider family (both siblings and parents working at home)
- Lack of digital literacy skills to use and navigate around the online learning platforms, - not just amongst students but staff as well

20%

of the comments about learning support from education staff included a concern about students lack of access to devices or digital literacy skills to navigate them.

“Disadvantaged students struggle to engage with learning due to lack of or limited access to computers.”

Secondary school Teacher

“ The technology provision is not consistent for all students which makes it difficult to know which is the best way to set work. Staff have also not been trained well on the online platforms, so it feels like overload trying to teach yourself so many new things at once. ”

- Teacher (Secondary school)

“ Offering equal opportunities to all students when some do not have access to It equipment and internet or are sharing limited resources with their family who are also working at home. ”

- Part of SLT (College)

Quality and quantity of work set

Fifteen school staff (8%) had concerns about the quantity of work being set and the pressures that this was placing on students and their families. **Eleven** school staff also had concerns about the quality of the work being set and particularly the ability to provide differentiated content for all abilities.

“ Staff are working really hard to make sure that everyone has enough, appropriate work. However, the

amount is overwhelming for some families and is creating pressure that is not needed at this time. Some students, however, feel that they would like

more work. ”

- Part of SLT (Secondary school)

“ Less differentiated work being available for students with SEND and reduced work support possibilities.

”

- SEN support (Secondary school)

SEN students

Eight school staff (4%) raised specific concerns about how SEN students were coping with the online learning during lockdown.

“ Some of our students that would usually have 1 to 1 support are unable to have this and it is affecting their ability to work. Some of their courses are specialist so their parents/ careers/ support workers don't know enough to help them either. ”

- Pastoral support (College)

“ Online learning is hard for SEND students. ”

- Lecturer (College)

Children and Young People

Whilst overall CYP rated learning and education support more positively than emotional wellbeing support, they were still less likely to rate it as “good” or “very good” compared to parents and school staff.

There were no differences in the way that boys and girls rated the support, but again those who chose to define their gender in their own way (33) were least positive, with only 40% rating support as “good” or “very good”. This was, however, only a small cohort of students.

Students with ADHD (37) also rated learning and education support poorly, with 49% rating it as “poor” or “very poor”. Analysis across year

groups reveals that Year 13 pupils were the least positive with only 36% giving a rating of “good” or “very good”.

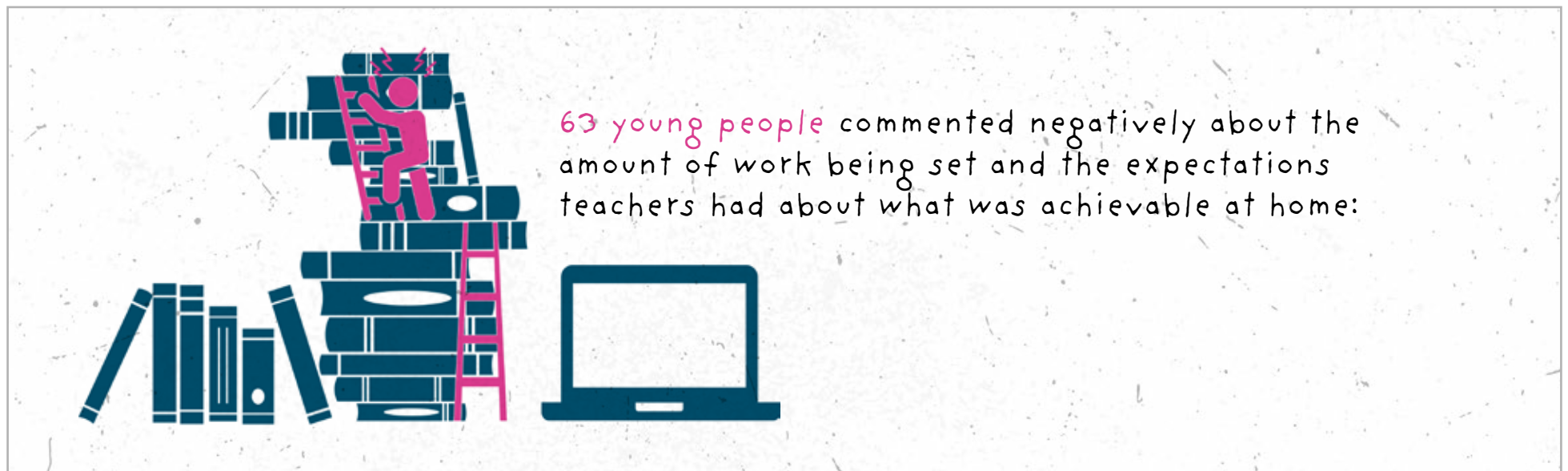
Key themes mentioned by CYP in relation to learning and education support included:

Workload

Of the 102 students (52%) who mentioned workload in their answers, 63 (32%) commented negatively about the amount of work being set and the expectations teachers had about what was achievable at home:

“ It is extremely hard to keep up with work and to actually learn and remember information. ”

- Female (Age 15)



“ They are setting a lot so not making it easy. I have reached out that it is too much and they say to do what I can but continue to set so much more and I am falling behind. ”

- Female (Age 15)

“ Given us an unrealistic amount of work to be doing. With little support and being told to just try and get it done. ”

- Male (Age 17)

The remaining 39 staff were more positive, commenting that the quantity of work was about right, clear instructions were being provided, and students knew how to contact their teacher if they were experiencing difficulties.

“ We are being provided with a good amount of work and are able to ask for support if needed. ”

- Non-binary (Age 13)

“ Most but not all teachers are providing work and quick support for their subject. ”

- Female (Age 17)

Communications

Of the 98 comments (46%) that were made about communication, 50 were positive in sentiment, 34 were negative and 14 were mixed.

Those who were positive, were happy that should they receive a timely response to contact, they had been informed how and who to contact and that they were receiving regular communication from staff.

Conversely, those who were negative commented that teachers were not responding to their emails, or else emails were not replied to for a long time. Some students found the written explanations of the work hard to follow.

“ Whenever I'm stuck on something, I would just email the school asking help and they would provide me with help. ”

- Female (Age 13)

“ Teachers not responding when I'm asking for help. ”

- Male (Age 13)

“ If I ask a teacher something through e-mail, it's somewhat harder to understand what they are saying. ”

- Male (Age 13)

“ Some teacher are amazing helping students if need help, but most of the other teachers I have are poor. I message them, and they don't answer till 3h after or don't answer. Most teachers don't even text us what we have to do so if we get stuck my classmates don't know what to do. ”

- Female (Age 15)

Feedback

Receiving feedback about completed schoolwork was mentioned by 25 students (13%). Overall, most (16) were positive in sentiment, however the remaining students said that they received little feedback from teachers about their work, leaving them unsure whether they had completed tasks correctly, or how well they were doing.

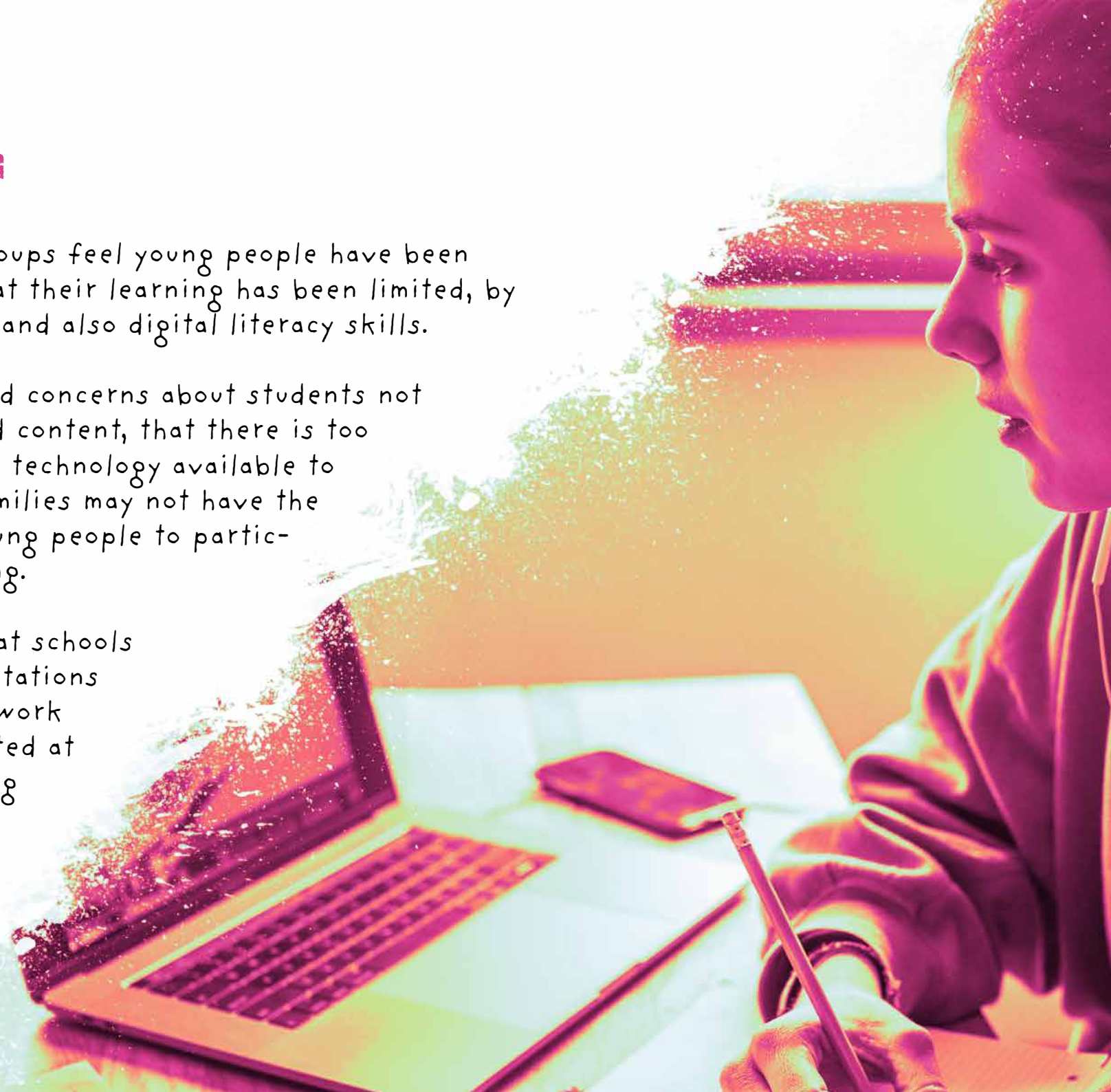
ALL GROUPS

... REMOTE LEARNING

It is clear that all groups feel young people have been disadvantaged, or that their learning has been limited, by access to technology and also digital literacy skills.

School staff expressed concerns about students not engaging with posted content, that there is too much variation in the technology available to students and that families may not have the skills to motivate young people to participate in home learning.

Young people felt that schools had unrealistic expectations about the amount of work that could be completed at home without teaching support.



“ I am getting great feedback from my teachers when I email them regarding my work. ”

- Female (Age 15)

“ Teachers have been supportive and given encouraging feedback with things that were great and things that could be improved. They have kept in touch well, giving regular updates for tasks and work. ”

- Female (Age 11)

“ Work is provided regularly with guidance but minimal reassurance that the work is adequate enough to obtain the same grades you might have done if able to access the college resources. ”

- Female (Age 17)

“ Feel very much on my own with my work. Teachers are setting work but not checking it/no online classes so cannot ask questions or understand if my work is correct. ”

- Female (Age 16)

Video lessons

Nineteen students (10%) criticised the lack of video lessons.

“ I think the school should do online lessons because that will help me concentrate and help me be in the zone for work. ”

- Female (Age 12)

Parents and guardians

Overall, the majority of parents were positive about the learning support provided by schools (**67%** “good” or “very good”) although they were not as positive as school staff (**88%** “good” or “very good”).

Five hundred and fifteen parents left a comment about schools learning support. Key themes in their responses were:

Workload quantity and quality

Most of the responses given by parents around the learning and education support provided by the school focused on the quality and quantity of work being set.



Of the 323 comments left on the survey, 316 were negative in sentiment (61% of the total comments).

“ The work for Year 4 does seem a bit too much to manage. ”

- Parent of primary school children

“ Getting the balance of work has been difficult. Some teachers give too much some too little. ”

- Parent of children in secondary school

“ Work is being set. I'm not sure how effective the learning is nor how useful the feedback is. For some there is no feedback, it's busy work which they really could do without, they need to feel like there is a point to what they are doing, not working to tick a box on a form to say work was set. ”

- Parent of children in secondary school

“ Child doesn't seem to be feeling they are doing enough work. Could the school have an increased the amount of extension activities. A child that normally achieves well is now doing low to average level of work. ”

- Parent of child in secondary school

“ Far too much work with very little 'teaching' and a lot of repetition. ”

- Parent of children in college

Communications

Of the 51 parents (10%) who commented on the way the school were communicating with their children, 36 were positive.

These parents felt that schools had made an effort to keep in regular contact with their children, that the communication they were receiving was personal to them and their children, and that the lines of communication with the school were always open.

Conversely, 14 parents felt that they had received little communication from the school, and what contact they had received was sporadic in nature, that messages were impersonal, and that emails often went unanswered.

“ They're sending videos of the preschool teachers singing the kids favourite songs, showing them what their up to, giving parents suggestions to do with the children and organising transitions to primary school. ”

- Parent of pre-school child

“ The children are receiving lots of communication from their school and teachers, some of which is personal to them and this helps them feel a part of the school still. ”

- Parent of children in secondary school

“ Good but only because I am helping my kids considerably. There is no personal contact from teachers. ”

- Parent of children in Primary and Secondary school

“ Some very poor contact especially for A levels which was shocking. Others have been excellent. ”

- **Parent of children in secondary school and college**

Feedback

Parents also appear to have had mixed experiences when it comes to teachers feeding back or marking work submitted. Of the **18** comments (**3%**) made on this subject, **nine** were positive and **nine** were negative.

“ Most teachers are giving good feedback on work that is submitted. ”

- **Parent of child at Secondary school**

“ The learning system they set up is easy to use and teachers always give feedback for their work. ”

- **Parent of child at Primary school**

“ No work is being looked at/checked/returned with feedback. ”

- **Parent of children at primary and secondary schools**

“ Work has been set but feedback has been less than 1 sentence. ”

- **Parent of children at secondary school and college**

RETURNING TO SCHOOL

Children and young people, parents and guardians and school staff

Children and young people

Children and young people were asked how they felt about returning to school after the lock down.

Of the **1,689** respondents who provided an answer about returning to school:

- **54%** were negative comments.
- **35%** were positive comments.
- **5%** were mixed in their views.
- **6%** offered neutral comments.

Three quarters of the positive comments were general in nature, expressing an overall excitement about returning to school:

“Excited, I just want things to go back to normal.”

- Female (Aged 14)

“Looking forward to going back.”

- Male (Aged 16)

The remaining positive comments expressed a

keenness to see friends again and enjoy more social interaction with people.

“I am happy for the social life I will have again.”

- Female (Aged 16)

“I can't wait to come back to school to see people.”

- Male (Aged 11)

Negative comments were more varied. Key themes that emerged from the responses included:

Falling behind in school work

Three hundred and one students were worried that the disruption to learning would leave them 'falling behind in work'. **106** of these made specific mention of the impact this may have on their exams and grades in the future.

“Stressed because I know we are very behind.”

POSITIVITY ABOUT GOING BACK TO SCHOOL

Of **1,689** comments, **35%** were positive about returning to school. Of these...

3/4 were general comments expressing excitement about a return to schooling.

“For once in my life, I'm basically begging to go back to school.”

- Female (Aged 17)

“ It’s a big step from year 11 to year 12 so I’m worried I’ll be behind. ”

- Female (Aged 16)

“ I’m a bit concerned that the next year of school (y13) will be even more busy/stressful than it needs to be due to the year as a whole catching up with work that could not be taught as well at home. ”

- Male (Aged 17)

Concerns about the virus

264 people were concerned about the virus, their personal safety and how schools would implement and enforce social distancing rules.

“ Awful because I will be cautious of getting the virus. ”

- Male (Aged 12)

“ Keen to get on with my education as long as social distancing etc is safely followed. ”

- Male (Aged 17)

“ I would feel a bit nervous as I wouldn’t want to transfer the virus or catch it. ”

- Female (Aged 12)

General negative comments

183 people made general negative comments simply stating that they do not want to go back to school, without giving a reason.

“ Don’t want to because I’m so used to being at home. ”

- Female (Aged 13)

“ Nooooo I don’t want to go back there. ”

- Male (Aged 15)

Transition from school to university

For 65 people, (mainly 17 and 18 year olds), the transition from school to college or university was causing them some concern. Students voiced a range of concerns including:

- Knowing how exams grades would be assessed, thereby determining whether they would get into university/college or not.

“I am slightly worried about what it’s going to be like when we go back and about how this may have impacted my education for the future.”

Female (Age 13)



Some young people planning for university expressed worry about how they will start life in a new place where social distancing and local lockdowns may impact on their ability to make new friends.



43 young people felt anxious about returning to a social environment. **10** were concerned about seeing bullies again. For some, they had continued to face bullying in lockdown.

"I get picked on and I don't want to go back as it is still happening even now during lockdown."

Female (Age 14)

- Concerns that they had got out of the habit of learning.
- Lack of clarity about the practical aspects of courses (e.g. start dates or how courses would be run).
- Worries about how to make new friends in a socially distanced environment.
- Anxieties about moving to areas where the coronavirus risk may be much higher.

" I am worried about moving to a different city when restrictions may still be in place. I am worried that my course won't run properly. **"**

- Female (Aged 18)

" It is still unclear based on government guidelines when or in what format a university education will be administered and I have not received communication from my university on changed start dates... I am unsure if my experience will be adversely affected because of this. **"**

- Female (Aged 17)

" I'm quite worried about going

to college because there is lot of new people there, it at a different place and the people I do know I wouldn't have seen for a while. "

- Male (Aged 16)

" I'm worried because I don't want to have to start the first term of Uni online - it's just too much uncertainty. **"**

- Female (Aged 18)

Anxious about seeing people/bullies again

Forty-three people felt anxious about having to return to an environment where they would need to socialise with people again. A further **10** young people specifically mentioned concerns about facing bullies again.

" I've forgotten how to talk to people outside of my household or close friends. **"**

Female, aged 15)

" I'm not looking forward to going back to school because I fell out with my friend before school split. **"**

- Female (Aged 15)

“ I am worried I'll still have NO friends. ”

- Male (Aged 12)

“ Dreading the chaos and the bullies again. ”

- Female (Aged 15)

“ I don't really want to be around certain people again. Not having to deal with some of the really toxic people and situations I would have come in contact with if I were at school is one of the main reasons I am enjoying the quarantine. ”

- Female (Aged 13)

Impact on mental health and wellbeing

Thirty-four respondents commented specifically about how the return to school would negatively affect their mental health.

“ Frightened and scared because I feel anxious at school. ”

- Female (Aged 13)

“ I will be incredibly behind my peers, who appear to be at least coping. I have no-one to blame for this laziness but myself. This guilt and the anxiety of failing will likely either cause me to fall further behind, drop out, or start engaging in "destructive" behaviours again. ”

- Male (Aged 17)

“ I am really anxious because my social anxiety was bad before lockdown but I had learnt how to deal with it at school but as soon as I go back I know it'll be 10 times worse. ”

- Female (Aged 13)

“ Dreading it, I hated school and my classes already that's what's depressing I have nothing to look forward to, I was behind already since the start of year 10 and now I'm going to be even more if that's possible. My academic self esteem is going to plummet even more than it already has. ”

- Female (Aged 14)

Structured routine

The return to structured routines was a cause for concern for **19** people.

“ it will be difficult getting back into my old routine. ”

- Female (Aged 17)

“ I am quite worried on settling back into school and trying to get back into a routine. ”

- Female (Aged 12)

Overall girls were more negative about returning to school than boys (61% compared to 39%). The biggest concern for girls appears to have been the impact the pandemic will have had on learning. For boys, the biggest concern was about safety and worries about catching the virus. Those who chose to describe their gender in their own way (n=21) were least positive, with only 19% commenting that they were feeling okay about returning to school.

Students in years seven, eight and nine were more positive than their peers in years 10 and above. Students in year 12 and 13 were most negative in their comment about returning to school. 63% of Year 13 students were concerned about the transition on to University. Students in Year seven and eight were most concerned about safety, whilst Year 10 and Year 12 students were worried about the impact there has been on their education and on future exam performance.

Students with at least one vulnerability were slightly less positive than those with no

vulnerabilities (30% vs 38%), however there was considerable variation depending on the type of vulnerability respondents had.

Students who said they had a mental health difficulty (n=246) and those who said they had a long term medical issue (n=182) were most negative in their responses (70% and 62% respectively compared to 54% for the overall sample). Respondents who said they were/or had been in care (n=29) were most positive with 52% saying they were looking forward to returning to school.

♀

girls

were most concerned about the impact on their learning.

♂

Boys

were most concerned about safety & catching the virus.

♀♂

those who described gender in their own way were the least positive. Just 19% said they were feeling "Okay" about going back.

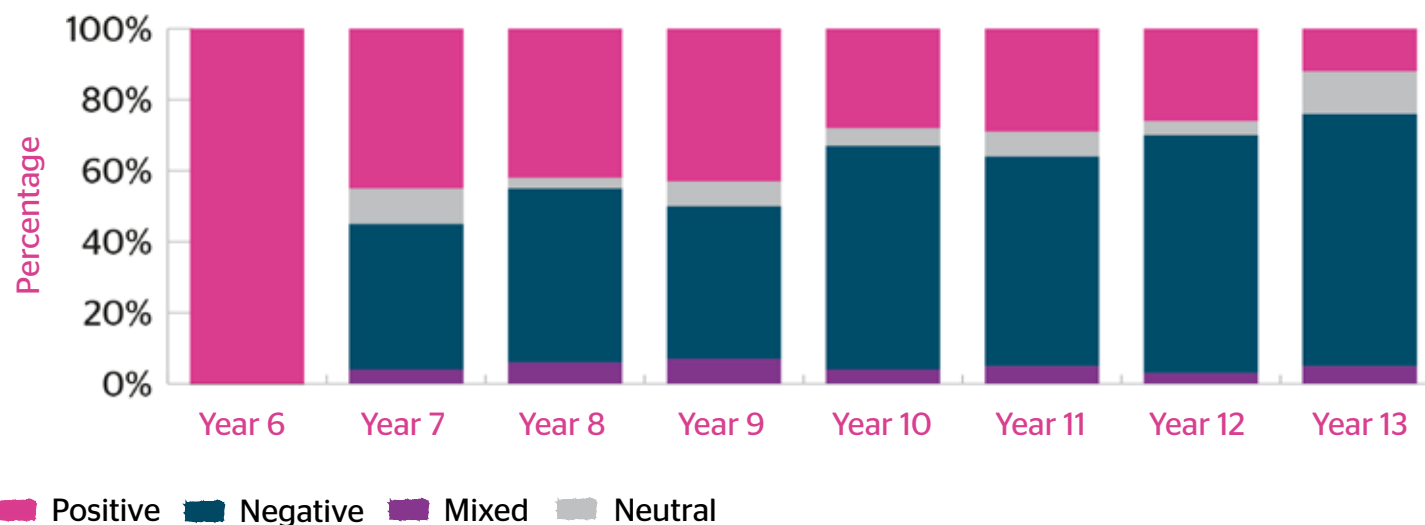


Figure 14: The percentage of students who are negative about returning to school increases with age.

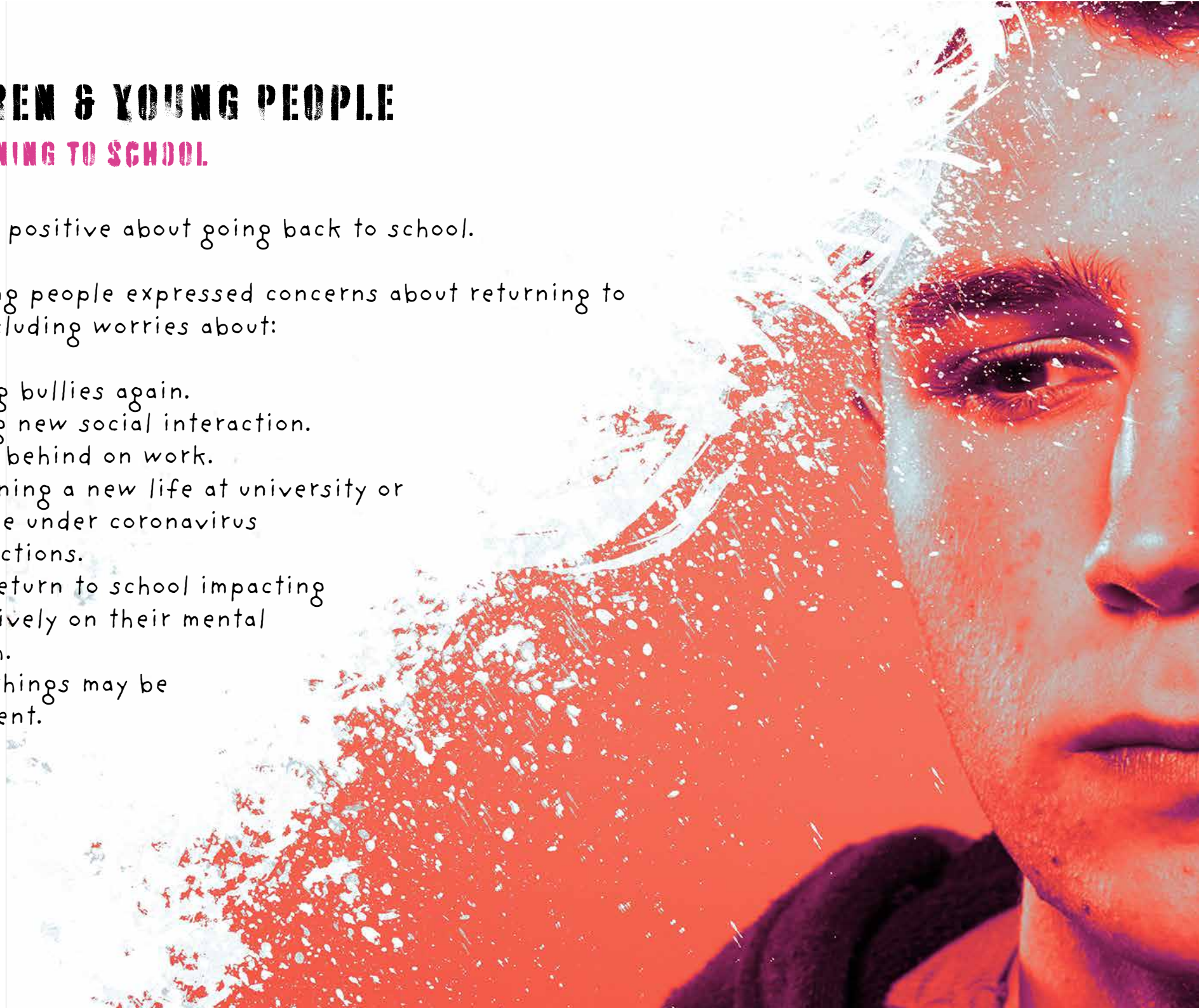
CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

... RETURNING TO SCHOOL

35% were positive about going back to school.

Many young people expressed concerns about returning to school, including worries about:

- Seeing bullies again.
- Facing new social interaction.
- Being behind on work.
- Beginning a new *life* at university or college under coronavirus restrictions.
- The return to school impacting negatively on their mental health.
- How things may be different.



Parents and guardians

- **48%** of parents felt their child(ren) will struggle with the return to school.
- **75%** of parents of children with a special education need said their child would struggle

Parents and guardians were asked whether their child(ren) will struggle with the return to school/college.

Of the **883** parents and guardians who responded, **48% (n=427)** felt their child would struggle. Parents of children with special educational needs and those who said their child was in receipt of (or waiting for) mental health support prior to lockdown were more likely to say their child would struggle.

Parents and guardians were also asked what support would help their child back to school/college. The top five themes mentioned in the comments left by parents are given below.

Time to adjust and Eased workload

With **115 (27%)** mentions, allowing children time to re-adjust to school environment through phased returns,

staggered start times, and shorter days was the most common way parents felt children could be supported back into school.

A further **19 (4%)** of parents and guardians felt that there should be a 'settling in' period with an easing of workload pressures on students.

“ Gentle, slow return. May find it hard getting back into the swing of studying. More help in settling back down into school routine. ”

- **Parent of child in Secondary school**

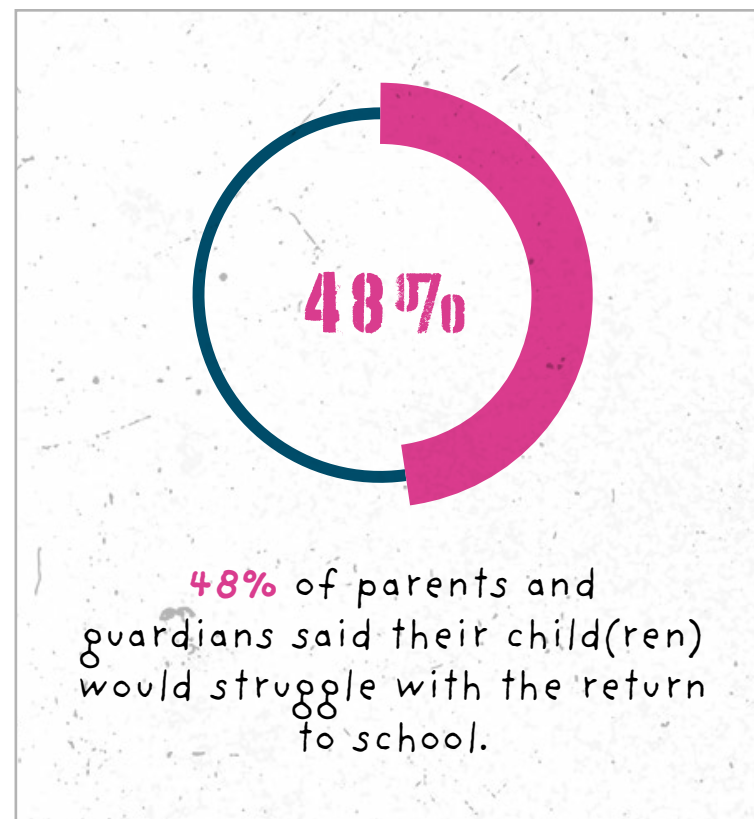
“ Gradual return rather than thrown straight back into a full timetable. ”

- **Parent of child in Secondary school**

“ Reduce workload for initial weeks and start with alternate days in school. ”

- **Parent of child in Secondary school**

“ Also that there won't be too much pressure on the learning and that they will be expected to work hard to catch up. I think they should be given some tlc on return and allowances made for what they've



42 parents and guardians said there is a need for provision of mental health and emotional wellbeing support that can help young people to return to full-time schooling. For most, this was to ensure young people had the opportunity to talk to someone if they were feeling concerned.



been through and getting through it all rather than cracking the whip and making them feel as if they've got to work even harder now to catch up. Spend some time in building confidence and some settling in time rather than work, work, work! ”

- Parent of child in Secondary school

Focus on, and provision of, Emotional Wellbeing Support

The provision of emotional wellbeing support was identified by 42 (10%) parents as being important to supporting their child back to school.

For many, this was simply the opportunity for their child to talk through what had happened and any concerns they had e.g through PSHE classes. Others felt their child would require more structured, formal and one to one support. A couple of parents had clearly had difficulties accessing support for their child in the past and were sceptical about whether adequate EWB support would be available now.

“ More PSHE sessions alongside academic studies to ensure

that they are 'phased' back into the system of education and the learning environment rather than a rush to catch up on lost time. ”

- Parent of children in secondary school

“ Year group sessions to support the children on return to school. Keep talking to the children, offer support sessions for those that need it. ”

- Parent of children in secondary school

“ He is often reluctant to talk to anyone else about how he feels although I think having the opportunity to discuss his worries beforehand would help. ”

- Parent of child in secondary school

“ Any form of consistent support from mental health worker/ early intervention worker. IDT team not fit for purpose as do not follow through on what they say they will do. Just excuses and



40 parents and guardians felt support to catch-up with missed learning and repeating learning from lockdown would be important.

defensiveness. ”

- Parent of child at college

” More emotional and wellbeing support from outside agencies. Group therapy, special assemblies, questionnaires throughout the year so support can be adjusted as time goes on. A lot will worry that this will happen again and will need reassurance about what if. ”

- Parent of child at secondary school

” Have proper wellbeing and pastoral care in place. More focus on wellbeing and less focus on results. Children who have their wellbeing needs taken care of will achieve better anyway. ”

- Parent of children at primary and secondary schools

Support to catch up on missed learning

Supporting children with missed learning was a key requirement for **40 (9%)** parents. Catch up lessons, recapping work set during the lockdown and assessments of learning gaps were seen as required in order to get students 'back on track' with learning.

” Recapping some of the work they have completed independently. Details about how they will be supported to get back on track for their exams. ”

- Parent of children in secondary school and college

” A return to where they were in their lessons before lockdown so the teacher can see/feel/hear where vital information has been missed - having a 'we will get everyone where they should be attitude' - literally having 1:1 with the students who are in their final year(s) and then fill the gaps. Whatever the cost - whatever time it takes. Encourage the student that what they may have missed is easily resolved and that together it will be achieved. ”

- Parent of child in secondary school

” Individual meeting with the student to assess their home schooling experience so the students feel 'heard' and can express their own concerns. For yr 10, setting out a clear route of how to complete knowledge gaps ready for taking their exams next year... ”

- Parent of children in secondary school

Assurances about safety and the implementation of social distancing

Thirty-nine (9%) parents commented on the need for some assurances around their child's safety at school, how social distancing would be implemented and enforced, and rules about the wearing of PPE.

“ We would need reassurance that social distancing and sanitation regimes are in place and that there won't be large gatherings of students allowed. ”

- Parent of child at secondary school

“ Help with anxiety about coronavirus. School should not resume until it is very safe to do so and there should be clear steps to keep children safe and minimise the risk of infection. ”

- Parent of children at secondary school

“ Not sure about support, but I am concerned they won't be properly social distanced and it won't be safe, they could still bring it home to us. ”

- Parent of children at primary and secondary school

“ Everyone needs to have a negative covid 19 test. They need to wear masks. They need to maintain social distancing. Hygiene must be paramount. ”

- Parent of child in secondary school

Communication

In addition to the information parents requested about safety measures, 29 (7%) parents mentioned the general need for good lines of communication between schools and families. Through sharing

information at an early stage, parents felt they could help support the school in preparing their children for school. Some parents felt that individual communication, in the form of a phone call or email from their child's teacher, would help the transition back to school.

“ Keeping parents in the loop as to what is happening daily and how the children are coping mentally and academically. Are they falling further behind. ”

- Parent of children in secondary school and college

“ Plenty of info and advice given ahead of time and for both parents and children to know who to contact specifically. ”

- Parent of child at secondary school

“ A year group email offering personal support if needed. ”

- Parent of children at secondary school and college

Other themes that emerged from parents comments included:

- A need for continued access to online learning (11 mentions)
- Support for children to re-socialise with peers (11 mentions)
- Need for personalised approaches and individualised support (10 mentions)

Education staff

School staff were asked what mental health and wellbeing support students and their families would need when schools re-open. **56 (8%)** people said they did not think children and families would require any additional support, a further **151 (20%)** chose not to answer the question at all. Amongst the comments left by the remaining 540 **(72%)** respondents the following key themes were identified:

Addressing safety concerns

Eighty-six (16%) members of school staff highlighted the need to address parents' and childrens' concerns about the safety of the school environment and to provide assurance that the school had the ability to adopt safe working practices.

“ Reassurance that safety measures are in place. ”

- **Teacher (Secondary school)**

“ Communication will be key to ensuring that all feel safe at the college whilst knowing they will still receive excellent tuition. ”

- **Lecturer (College)**

“ I think many will need reassuring that it's safe for the students to be in school. They will understandably worry about the safety aspects. ”

- **SEND support (Secondary school)**

Routines

Seventy-six (14%) people made general comments about the support

students would need in returning to a structured school routine, while a further **49 (9%)** highlighted the specific support needed to help students adopt new Covid routines such as increased hand sanitizing, social distancing etc.

It was recognised that some students (such as those with autism) would struggle with the changes to routines.

“ Support in readjusting to being back in a school environment. ”

- **Teacher (Secondary school)**

“ They will have to readjust to college life and different routines again which, particularly for those on the autistic spectrum, will be hard. ”

- **SEND support (College)**

“ Adapting to new routines in familiar places. ”

- **Co-ordinator (Primary school)**

“ Support around maintaining any strict guidelines especially around distancing. ”

- **Lecturer (College)**

Addressing concerns regarding gaps in learning

Overall **53 (10%)** staff members left made reference to gaps in learning within their comments. These fell into two main subthemes:

- Schools would need to provide emotional support to pupils to

help them cope with the stress and anxiety they may feel about falling behind, or not having completed the online work set during lockdown.

- Schools would need to provide additional learning support to help students catch up.

“ Some will need help with pressures of falling behind with any practical work not carried out during lockdown that is needed to get their qualification. ”

- Administrator (College)

“ Coping with the feeling of having fallen behind and the need to catch up - particularly year 10. ”

- Teacher (Secondary school)

“ Reducing stress as some students may feel that they are behind others. Students that have not completed the set work will need time and regular support to manage time and stress levels. ”

- Teacher (Secondary school)

Time to adjust

Forty-four (8%) school staff felt that students would need a phased return to school and time to re-adjust to structured learning again. This was felt to be particularly important for SEND pupils and those with vulnerabilities.

“ I think we need to phase in very gradually and VERY carefully as many families are going to be scared. ”

- Teacher & Pastoral support, Secondary school)

“ Our more vulnerable will need easing back after the disruption of Covid - 19 they will need to acclimatise again to a full timetable and feel assured they are safe in their environment. ”

- Cover Supervisor (Secondary School)

“ Children might find it hard to adjust to a full week of learning once this is over. Maybe a Friday afternoon 'golden time' could be used as an incentive for the children to keep them motivated during the week. ”

- NQT (Primary school)

“ The students and many of the staff who are yet to go into school will need a recovery curriculum. After so long out of school, even being in the building will be a challenge. Learners in my school have SLD, PMLD and a high proportion are ASD. ”

- Teacher (Special school)

Time to talk

Giving pupils the opportunity, time and permission to talk about their experiences during lockdown was mentioned in 43 (8%) staff members comments. While comments suggested different formats for how this should take place – ranging from informal peer group chats, to structured discussions as part of PSHE lessons, formal meeting with a counsellor to one to ones with trusted members of staff - all agreed that talking about what has happened, and giving pupils the opportunity to voice their concerns would be the first step to supporting them back to school.

“ Understanding that it is not going to be straight back to normal. Chance to share what happened in lockdown. People to talk to that were in the same position. ”

- **Teacher (Secondary school)**

“ Regular contact, not being afraid to talk about their situation whether it be emotional or financial. A friendly voice. This can be supported by all pastoral staff. ”

- **SEND and Pastoral Support (Secondary school)**

“ Group sessions where students can talk with others who are feeling the same. Where they can talk openly about their experience and learn that they are not going through this alone. ”

- **Teaching Assistant and SEND support (Secondary school)**

“ I think time and structure to talk. I'd really like some guided questions for adults to work through with children and for families to work through together. ”

- **Headteacher (Secondary school)**

Reintegration/resocialising

Thirty-three (6%) staff members recognised the need to support pupils with re-socialising and re-building relationships with peers and making the transition from the secure home bubble to the noisy crowded school environment.

“ Socialising again - some will become used to quiet, enclosed spaces. ”

- **Teacher (Secondary school)**

“ Coping with mixing with each other. ”

- **Teacher and Pastoral support (Secondary school)**

“ Fitting into the community, coping with being around large numbers of people again and the anxiety it brings. ”

- **Part of SLT (Secondary school)**

“ The students will need to be re-integrated into a world outside of their home which is self-contained and reassured that they are in a safe environment. They will need to re-



engage with other people and so re-build the confidence they had gained before lockdown. ”

- SEND support (College)

“ *Support may also be needed about relationships that may have changed after a period of not seeing/speaking to each other. ”*

- Teacher (Secondary school)

Reassurance and understanding

Simply offering reassurance and understanding to pupils and their families was the main support 26 members of school staff felt the schools could provide in helping children back into the classroom.

“ *Understanding and empathy for whatever the families need at the pace they need it. ”*

- Safeguarding lead (Secondary school)

“ *Lots of reassurance and support to start back on courses both practically and emotionally. ”*

- Teaching assistant (College)

“ *Reassurance that we are doing everything we can to support their children both with their education and their health. ”*

- Teacher (Secondary school)

Support around Behaviours

Setting clear guidance on how to deal with negative and disruptive

behaviours was an issue raised by **20 (4%)** staff members. Staff felt that schools would need to establish what the rules will be, communicating these with pupils and their families, and ensuring that sanctions for poor behaviour are applied consistently.

“ *Students will need to clearly understand the acceptable behaviours within the new conditions, and be very careful of those with additional concerns. ”*

- Teacher (Secondary school)

“ *Students and staff will need very clear guidance on expectations and sanctions will need to be enforced. ”*

- Teacher (Secondary school)

“ *Students will need a great deal of support coming to terms with the structure and discipline of the school day again. Teachers will need to be incredibly patient and firm at first, and all sanctions will need to be applied consistently until students have found their feet again. ”*

- Teacher (Secondary school)

“ *Clear guidelines and reassurances to students and their families about protocols and advice for a safe existence in school. Some more vulnerable or anxious students will certainly be fearful of many aspects of a return to school. Equally, some may manifest poor behaviour or attitude at having to be back in an education setting. ”*

- SEND Support (Secondary school)

“ *They need to be advised on the protocol of dealing with*

and the consequence of, bad behaviour which is dangerous, such as purposely spitting or coughing at a member of staff or other students. ”

- Teacher (Secondary school)

Impact on Pastoral Teams

Twenty (4%) people highlighted the increased demand that would be placed upon the school pastoral teams and the need to ensure that these are well resourced. In order to meet this demand, some respondents considered new ways in which pastoral support could be delivered and enhanced e.g through better connections with outside agencies and virtual support sessions.

“ I think that things will come to the surface over time and the strong pastoral systems we have in place at school will no doubt be stretched. We will need extra support from other agencies to help when this happens. ”

- Teacher (Secondary school)

“ I think this will had a huge impact on the well being and mental health of students. We currently have 1 pastoral worker, who is always fully booked. ”

- Teacher (Middle school)

“ Surely we'll need a lot of support for the Pastoral teams! Potentially just more teachers 'manning' the phones and emails and 1-1 chats etc. with kids. It's going to be a bizarre time, especially for the more vulnerable students in the SEND department who might not consistently understand what's going on. ”

- Teacher (Secondary school)

“ We have a student welfare department on site for our college, but I can imagine they will become very overwhelmed if and when we go back. Some support for them to deal with the loads, perhaps some virtual support sessions could be provided? "drop ins" I think everyone, not just students need to be sign posted to coping mechanisms for anxiety and keeping well, promotion of self-care. ”

- HR officer (Secondary school)

Separation anxiety

Nineteen (4%) members of school staff felt that there would be specific support that pupils would require around separation anxiety. Several felt that this would lead to increases in non-attendance and school refusers.

“ There will be separation anxiety for many students as they have spent so long in confined spaces with their family. ”

- Teacher (Secondary school)

“ I think we are going to have one huge mess. There will be those who were border line refusers who just won't come back. There will be those already with, or who have developed attachment disorders. ”

- Teacher (Secondary school)

“ Students will need a staggered return to schools as there will be an element of separation anxiety as they would have become accustomed to being with their parents for the 'new norm' and may have some difficulty in readjusting to routines and rules/discipline required within the school setting. ”

- Lecturer (College)



109 education staff commented about the need to ensure people are safe at work. For those with existing health concerns and other vulnerabilities, this was a major issue.

"I am at high risk due to a lung condition. Safety measures that colleagues might have to take will NOT be enough to protect vulnerable teachers like me."

“ Some have got very comfortable at home and will struggle to leave their family to come in to school. I think there will be students who school refuse as well as parents who choose to home-school. ”

- Part of SLT (Secondary school)

Support for teachers

In addition to the support pupils will require school staff were also asked what support they personally would need when the school reopen.

Three hundred and twenty (43%) said they did not feel they would need any additional support, 97 (13%) did not answer the question, the remaining 330 (44%) respondents left a comment in the open comment box. The most common themes within the comments were:

Assurances about a safe work environment

One hundred and nine (33%) people said that having some assurances about returning to a safe working environment would help alleviate some of their anxieties. Staff wanted to know how social distancing rules would be

implemented and enforced, how pupils who do not behave appropriately would be dealt with, how classrooms would be adequately cleaned and sanitized, how one way systems would be introduced into crowded corridors and hallways.

For those with specific medical conditions that place them in the vulnerable categories, the concerns about returning to school were considerable.

“ I think even before we go back to work, we should take part in a school survey. For example, that address our concerns and fears over being in a confined space with 10-15 different students. What we as teachers would like to see to make us feel safe and supported such as PPE/ access to hand washing/sanitizer. ”

- Teacher (Secondary school)

“ Reassurance that social distancing will be observed and that cleaning of the school, especially my classroom, will be a LOT more thorough will go a long way to helping me mentally be in a good place for work. ”

- Teacher (Secondary school)

“ The thought of going back to work before the death rate numbers have dropped significantly and no PPE fills me with dread. How are you supposed to keep young children social distancing from each other and from staff? Tying shoe laces, dealing with accidents and toilet accidents to name but a few possible problems. I don't know. ”

- **Teaching assistant (Primary school)**

“ have diabetes so I'm in the higher risk group. I am worried in case children carry the disease and I am putting myself at risk. ”

- **Teaching assistant and pastoral support (Primary school)**

“ I am at high risk due to a lung condition. Safety measures that colleagues might have to take will NOT be enough to protect vulnerable teachers like me. I will not be able to be exposed to about 100 pupils a day if there is no vaccine or cure available. So what is going to happen to teachers like me (and I know many in this situations)? How can we possibly return to work? This is a huge concern at present. ”

- **Teacher and part of SLT (Secondary school)**

Time to adjust/transition

As with students, **48 (15%)** education staff said they would like to see a phased return to work that gives them time to adjust to being back in a crowded, noisy environment and to settle back into a structured routine. Some staff members also said that they would like to see a continuation of the flexible working approaches that have been adopted during the lockdown.

“ I think staff and pupils will need ALOT of transition, return should be very phased and the wellbeing of all needs to be factored in. I know that I would appreciate still having some time at home to enjoy my house and life in the way I have been. ”

- **Part of SLT (Primary school)**

“ A gradual build up of being in a busy, loud environment all week again. ”

- **SEND support (College)**

“ I am going to struggle going back to 'normal' feel I will need a phased return and ideally would like to continue working from home as part of my standard working practice, as I have proved this is doable. ”

- **Support staff (Secondary school)**

“ I think just some adjustment time - I think we get used to working from home and as desperate as we all are to get back to normality - I think a phased approach would be best so it is not such a mental shock. ”

- **Business support/Marketing Officer (College)**

Workload concern

Forty (12%) members of staff were concerned about how workload pressures would be managed when school re-open. Overall respondents felt workload would increase because:

- Of a backlog of work that has built up over the lockdown and which could not be addressed whilst working at home

- Demand for catchup lessons for students that have fallen behind in their learning
- Additional demand on teachers' time providing emotional wellbeing support to pupils

“ Teaching being restructured so that we have time to do our teaching work, and allocated time for data etc. And a reduction in the paperwork style jobs. More efficient use of my time so it is not wasted. I don't want to come back to work and then feel stress creeping in with unrealistic deadlines and lack of communication again. ”

- **Teacher (Secondary school)**

“ I am concerned about overload on return, as although trying hard , there are some things that cannot easily be done from home. ”

- **SEND support (Secondary school)**

“ I think the transition back to work will be challenging, supporting the students will be difficult and ensuring that they are caught up with the work missed. To be expected

to resume normal work load is unrealistic as we will be required to support students mentally much more than before. ”

- **Teacher (Secondary school)**

Time to talk

As with students, **22 (7%)** staff members said they would appreciate having the opportunity to talk with their colleagues and reflect back on their experiences during lockdown.

“ The opportunity to process the experience of lockdown with colleagues who've also been through it. ”

- **Teacher (Secondary school)**

“ Reflection time with colleagues as a group and 1:1 which we haven't always had previously. ”

- **Admin (Secondary school)**

“ The opportunity to talk with someone and reflect on what we have been through. ”

- **Pastoral support (College)**



Concern for other family members health

As well as concerns for their own health and safety, **17 (5%)** members of staff commented on the concerns they had about other family members health and the risks a return to school may pose for them should adequate precautions not be in place.

“ I live with a vulnerable adult and care for another. I am going to find it very difficult to keep my family safe if i have to go back to working normally. ”

- **Pastoral support (College)**

“ I want my children to be SAFE. If I feel they are unsafe there is very little you could do to support my mental health. I don't want my children to go to school but feel they will be forced to if I have to return to work full time as my own school re-opens. Practical steps to ensure social distancing (?how?!?) and deep cleans of school settings. ”

- **Therapy assistant (Special school)**

“ I'm a teacher of a practical subject and my health when coming home to a child in a vulnerable category at home is a major concern to me. I don't think there will be a feasible way of protecting myself. This is a source of worry and stress as I don't want to be an annoyance/useless to my school who are doing a fantastic job for the young people. ”

- **NQT (Secondary school)**

Flexible model of working to continue

Twelve (4%) respondents hoped that some of the positive aspects of

working from home would be continued once schools re-open.

“ I hope working from home becomes much more regular. ”

- **Digital resource facilitator (College)**

“ Options for working differently. If I have work to complete that requires me to be in a space where I can focus to have the option to work from home. ”

- **Part of SLT (College)**

“ The ability to still have an element of flexibility within my job role and to continue to use some of the new ways of working that have been initiated during the lockdown. ”

- **Lecturer (College)**

“ I think education leadership in the county publicly supporting remote working unless being present is essential will assist in ensuring we can continue to benefit from the positive dimensions of the lockdown. This will aid positive mental health (for some). Also encouraging more online working where appropriate would be good. I think all organisations reverting to pre-covid 100% would be a backward step. ”

- **Part of SLT (College)**

EDUCATION STAFF

... RETURNING TO SCHOOL

Education staff expressed a variety of concerns about returning to work. Some with existing health conditions or other vulnerabilities (e.g. they are a parent to a child who may be vulnerable to COVID-19) expressed serious concerns about what coronavirus might mean for their future.

Others expected their workload to increase significantly as a result of coronavirus and felt there must be opportunities made by school leaders for staff to reflect on their concerns, either as a group or individually in one to ones.





Exploring the mental health and emotional wellbeing of children aged six to eleven during the coronavirus pandemic

INTRODUCTION

My Health, Our Future - Kids at Home (Kids@Home) is an adapted version of the *My Health, Our Future - At Home* survey for young people, education staff, and parents or guardians.

The survey was developed in partnership with the Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs) in Suffolk and sought to record views from primary school children (aged six to 11) across the county.

The MHSTs include a mix of mental health and wellbeing professionals including clinicians, emotional wellbeing practitioners, family support workers and education psychologists. The team provides support to children, young people and teachers across many schools in east and west Suffolk.

The primary aim of the *Kids@Home* survey was to make sure that children's thoughts, feelings and opinions could help local teachers, doctors, and other professionals put things in place that can support their wellbeing during the coronavirus pandemic and afterwards. The MHSTs in Suffolk will use the results to help schools they support

promote wellbeing.

This includes when young people return to school or start secondary education from feeder primary schools.

Updates on the results of all *My Health, Our Future - At Home* surveys have been provided to the health and social care system in Suffolk and North East Essex (and also Norfolk and Waveney) at regular intervals throughout the pandemic. This has helped to ensure that local insights have shaped the thinking of NHS and social care leaders and commissioners as they have sought to meet people's care needs during the outbreak.

Learning from the *Kids@Home* survey approach will be included in the future of the Healthwatch Suffolk *My Health, Our Future* research project, which has so far incorporated the responses of more than 26,000 young people in Suffolk about their mental health and wellbeing.

You can read more about this work on www.healthwatchsuffolk.co.uk/mhof.



DEMOGRAPHICS

Parental/Guardian support to complete the survey

It is important to note that parents/guardians were asked to support children to complete the survey, including to aid their understanding of what was being asked. It was emphasised that all responses should be written in the child's own words.

Gender

A total of **512** responses have been recorded from children attending at least **109** different primary schools in Suffolk. Of these respondents:

- **257 (50%)** children said they were male
- **246 (48%)** children said they were female.
- **Eight** children chose not to answer the question.
- **One child** (aged 12) chose to describe their gender in their own way:

“I was born a girl, but identify as a boy.”

Age

There was a fairly even spread of respondents across most age categories. Five-year-old and twelve-year-old children are the least represented children within the sample. Thirteen children chose not to provide their age.

The age breakdown across the whole sample is shown in table 20 below.

Age	Number	Percentage of sample
5	15	3%
6	81	16%
7	87	17%
8	77	15%
9	89	17%
10	80	16%
11	65	13%
12	5	1%

Table 20: The age of respondents.



Figure 15: Total responses to the survey.

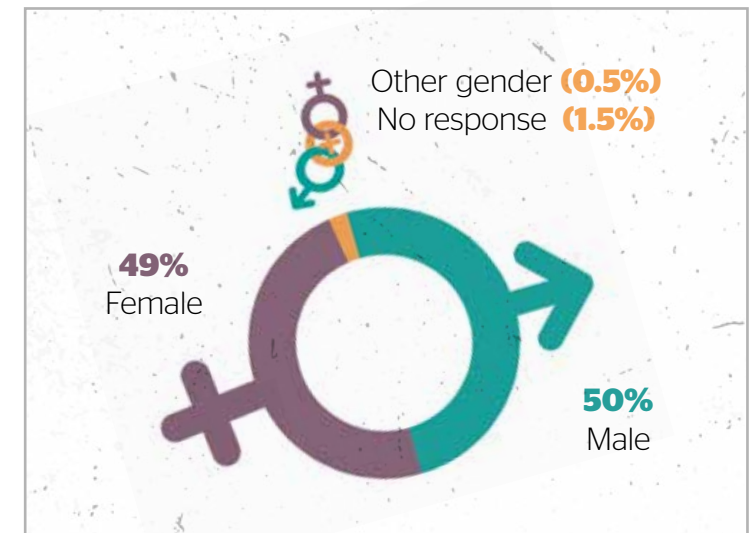


Figure 16: The gender of respondents.

Year group

There was a mostly evenly distributed spread of respondents across most year groups. Reception children and home educated children are the least represented groups within the sample. **Fourteen** children either did not provide an answer or said 'none of these'.

Children's responses are shown in table 21 below.

Year	Number	Percentage of sample
Home school	1	<1%
Reception	10	2%
Year 1	70	14%
Year 2	79	16%
Year 3	85	17%
Year 4	92	18%
Year 5	81	16%
Year 6	80	16%
None of these	10	2%

Table 21: The number of responses from students in each year group.

Ethnicity

One hundred and forty-five (28%) children did not provide a response. Of those who did, the majority were White English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, British or from another White background (**86%**). **Forty (11%)** children said they were from a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME) background. This represents **8%** of the total sample. Table 22 shows the breakdown of responses to this question.

Ethnicity	Number	Percentage of sample
Asian	1	<1%
Asian / Asian British - Indian	5	1%
Asian / Asian British - Pakistani	3	1%
Black/ African / Caribbean/ Black British - African	1	<1%
Black/ African / Caribbean/ Black British - Caribbean	2	<1%
Black/ African / Caribbean/ Black British - Other	1	<1%
English / South American	1	<1%
Indian White mix	1	<1%
Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups - Other	5	1%
Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups - White and Asian	6	1%
Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups - White and Black Caribbean	10	2%
Polish	2	<1%
Portuguese	1	<1%
White - Any other White background	10	2%
White English / Welsh / Scottish / Nother Irish / British	317	62%
Chose not to respond	145	28%

Table 22: The ethnicity of respondents.



Figure 17: The number of children who said at least one 'vulnerability' applied to them. In total, 157 (31%) of children selected at least one of the vulnerabilities shown in table four.

Other sample characteristics (vulnerabilities)

It was possible for children to indicate that a number of vulnerabilities were applicable to them. These are shown in table 23 below.

Vulnerability	Number	Percentage
I am a carer for someone	58	11%
I need extra help with English	21	4%
I get free school meals	77	15%
I am in care or have been	2	<1%
I have a physical disability	21	4%
I have a long-term health condition	41	8%
I have a mental health difficulty	32	6%
I have ADHD	11	2%
I have autism or aspergers	25	5%
I have learning difficulties	40	8%

Table 23: The number of children who said each characteristic applied to them.

Further analysis identifies that a number of children said more than one of the above characteristics (vulnerabilities) applied to them. This information is shown in table 24 below.

Vulnerability	Number	Percentage of sample
No vulnerabilities	355	69%
One vulnerability	72	14%
Two vulnerabilities	39	8%
Three or more vulnerabilities	46	9%

Table 24: The number characteristics (vulnerabilities) children said applied to them.

Pre-pandemic education

One hundred and thirteen (22%) children did not respond to this question. Three hundred and eighty-eight (97%) children attended a primary school, three (1%) attended a special school and six (2%) children were educated at home. Two (1%) children said they “didn’t go to school”.

Locality and rurality

A total of 181 children said they lived in the west of Suffolk, 144 said they lived in east Suffolk and 16 said they lived in Waveney.

Two hundred and three (40%) children said they lived in a “rural” area or “village” and 166 (32%) said they lived in an “urban” area “like a town”. One hundred and forty-three (28%) children chose not to answer this question.



Figure 18: The location of respondents (west, east and Waveney).

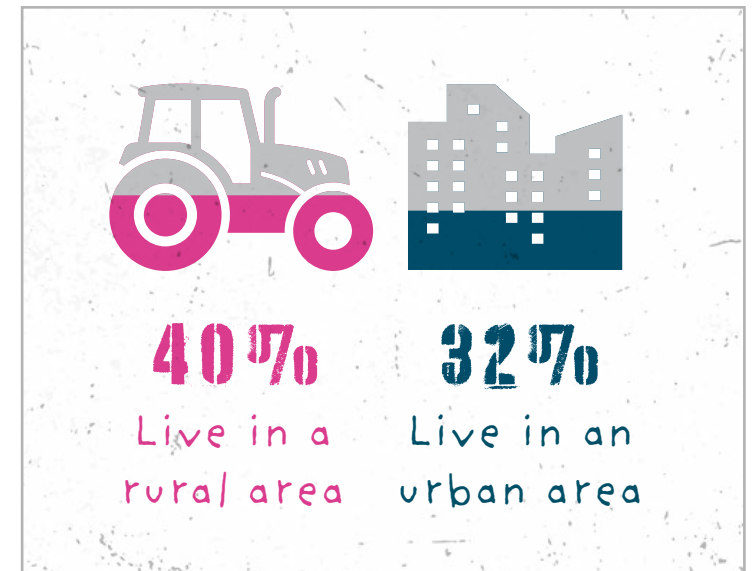


Figure 19: The percentage of children who said they either live in a rural area of Suffolk or an urban area of Suffolk.

WORRIES AND FEELINGS

Q: Choose a face for each question to let us know how worried you have felt about each of these things this week.

Respondents were asked to choose from a selection of faces that represented different levels of worry (“very worried”, “a little worried”, “okay”, “haven’t thought about it”) about the following options:

- Getting coronavirus
- Others getting coronavirus
- School work
- Having enough food at home
- Having enough money at home
- What will happen after coronavirus

Table 25 shows the breakdown of responses across the sample.

Option	Very worried	A little worried	Okay	Haven't thought about it
Getting coronavirus	73 (14%)	153 (30%)	101 (20%)	87 (17%)
Others getting coronavirus	160 (31%)	169 (33%)	39 (8%)	50 (10%)
Schoolwork	38 (7%)	95 (19%)	214 (42%)	58 (11%)
Having enough food	10 (2%)	29 (6%)	276 (54%)	100 (20%)
Having enough money	20 (4%)	63 (12%)	201 (39%)	131 (26%)
What will happen after coronavirus	30 (6%)	94 (18%)	162 (32%)	130 (25%)

Table 25: Levels of worry. The number, and percentage, of children who selected each face.



Figure 20: Children worried the most about other people getting coronavirus. In total 329 children said they were worried to some extent about this compared with 226 who said they worried about getting the virus themselves.

The data indicates that children are worrying most about other people getting the virus (64% said they are either “a little worried” or “very worried” about this). This was followed by:

- **Getting coronavirus** - 44% were “a little worried” or “very worried” about this.
- **School work** - 26% were “a little worried” or “very worried” about this.

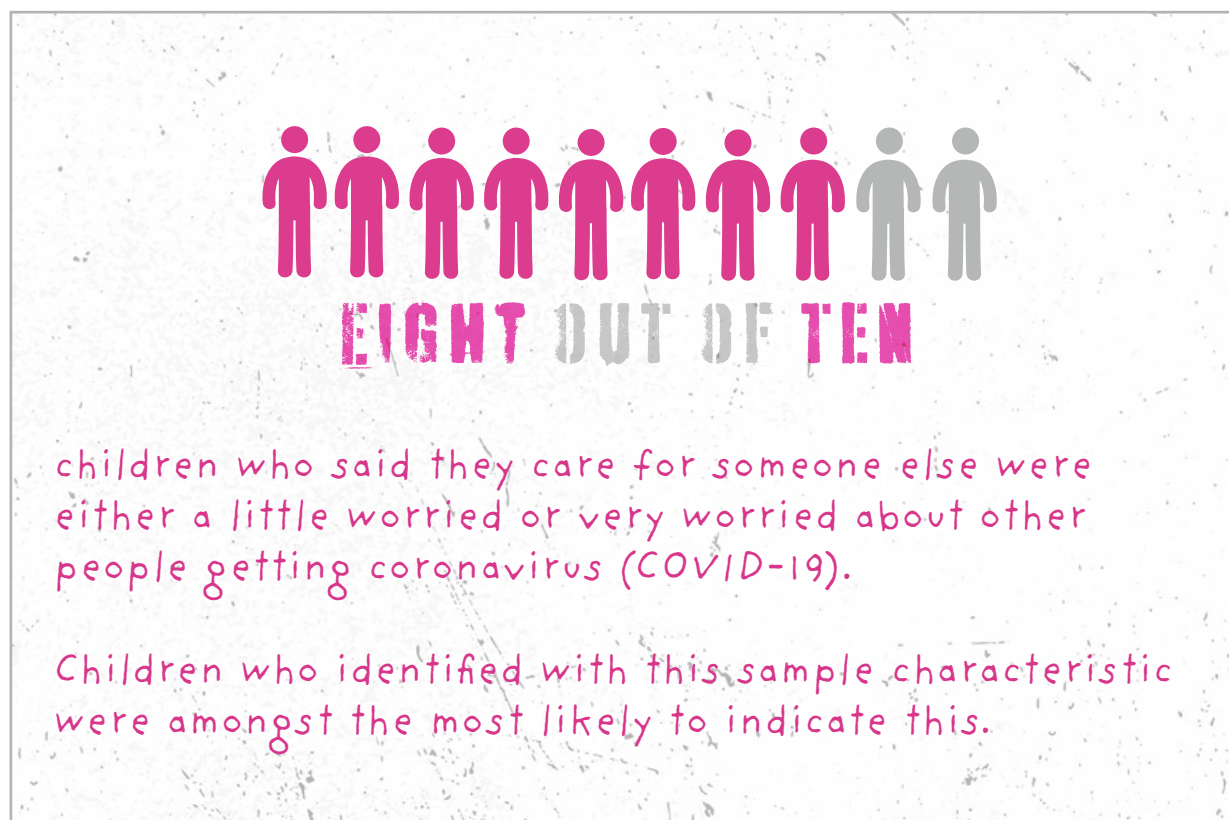
When we examine particular demographics and vulnerabilities, the following key findings are of note:

- Children with a physical disability (21) or a long-term condition (21) were more likely to say they were worried to some extent about others getting the virus (90% and 93% respectively).
- Children with a long-term condition (21) or a mental health difficulty (32) and those in receipt of free school meals were most likely to say they were worried about getting coronavirus (61%, 59% and 61% respectively).
- Children with a mental health difficulty (32) were the most likely to say they were worried about having enough money (61%) and about what might happen after coronavirus (89%).
- Children who said they care for someone else were amongst the most likely to

indicate they worried about other people getting the virus. 83% of 58 children were either “a little worried” or “very worried” about this.

- Children who said their ethnicity was something other than ‘White’, were 7% more likely to say they were worried about getting coronavirus.

Figure 21: Children who said they care for someone else were amongst the most likely to say they were worried about other people getting coronavirus.



Q: Is something else worrying you?

The survey also asked children to explain if they felt something else was worrying them. One hundred and ninety comments were recorded. A number of themes were evident, and these are explained below

Nothing is worrying me

Thirty-six per cent of the comments (68) indicated that the child felt nothing else was worrying them. For example:

“No, nothing is worrying me.” -
Age six (Year One)

Social changes

Fifteen per cent of the comments (29) related to worries and anxieties about social change.

This included references to worries about being isolated, missing friends or family, missing out on social events (e.g. celebrating a birthday) perceived changes in the interpersonal dynamics of friendship groups, or a fear that others may have changed in some way.

Some children expressed a fear that

their friends may have forgotten about them and that their relationships may be different because of that.

“My friends will forget about me.”
- **Age 10 (Year Five)**

“What I am/I will miss out on, i.e. the traditional end of year things with Year 6 at school and social things I can no longer go to.” - **Age 11 (Year Six)**

“Missing my birthday party for this year as my birthday was in lockdown.”
- **Age 10 (Year Five)**

Family safety

Fifteen per cent of the comments (28) related to worries about the personal safety of family members. This included worries that someone may catch the virus within the child's family and that family members may die if they do.

“I hope no one in my family gets coronavirus.” - **Age 10 (Year Five)**

“I would like to go back to school but I don't want sister to catch the virus.” - **Age 10 (Year Six)**

“My friends will forget about me.”

Age 10 (Year Five)

SOCIAL CHANGE

Children expressed a number of worries about social change including:

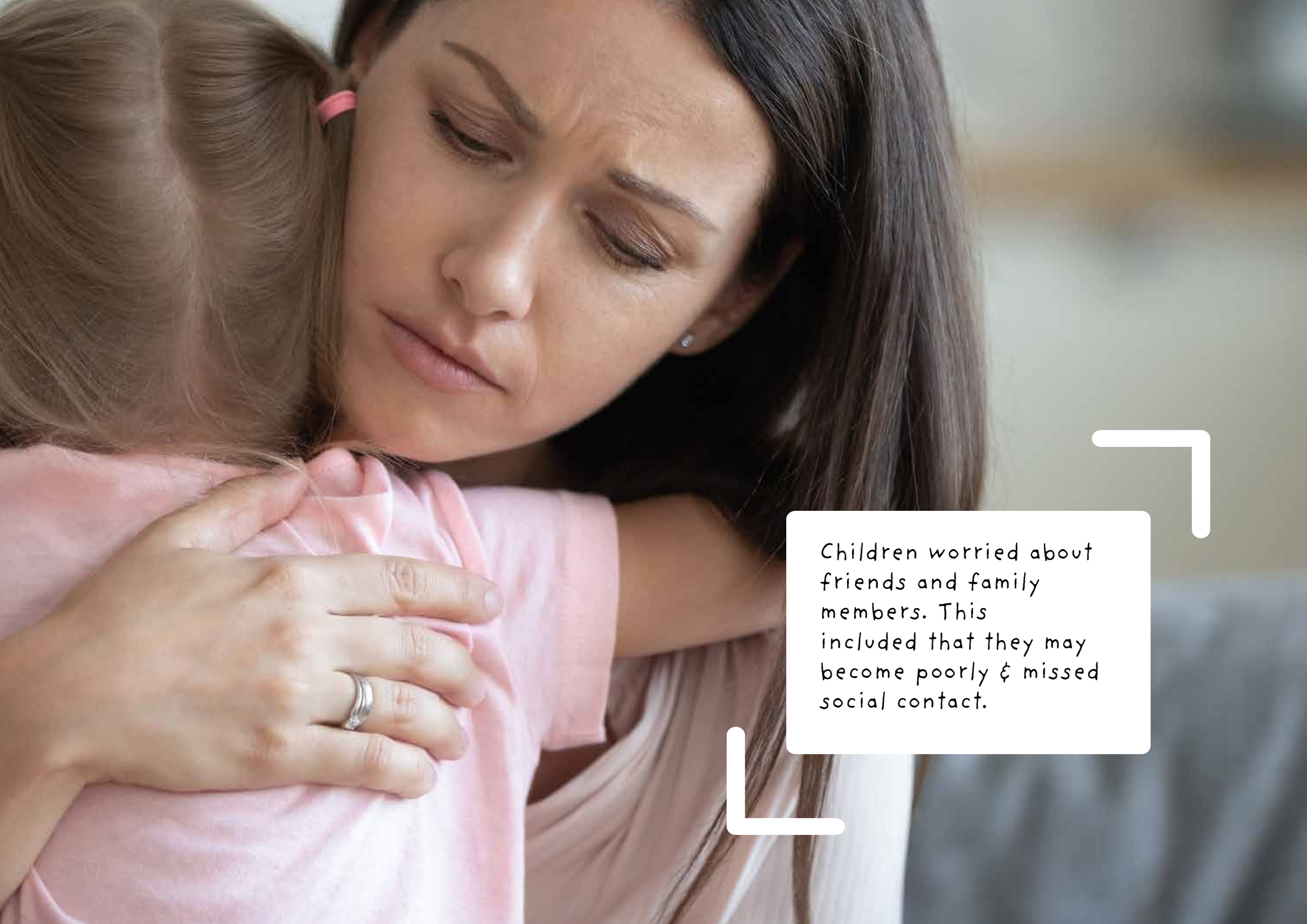


Anxieties that friendships may have changed during lockdown.

Missed social events like birthday parties.



Missing friends and family and wanting to see them again.



Children worried about friends and family members. This included that they may become poorly & missed social contact.

“ My family dying. ” - **Age seven (Year Two)**

School changes

Seven per cent of comments (17) were about worries children have about changes at school. This includes worries about moving to a new class or, for children in Year Six, moving up to a new secondary school from primary school. There are also a number of general comments about being worried about “going back” to the school environment.

“ Nothing really just going in a new class without my teacher. ” - **Age eight (Year Three)**

“ Going to big school. ” - **Age 11 (Year Six)**

“ Worried about going back to school. ” - **Age 10 (Year Five)**

Mood changes

For some children, lockdown has had a profound impact on their general wellbeing or may have compounded existing anxieties. **Five per cent** of comments relate to this (**nine**).

“ I get a little angry sometimes and I don't know why. ” - **Age seven (Year Two)**

“ I'm worried about my anxiety getting worse as I see more people again. ” - **Age 11 (Year Six)**

“ I get nightmares every night. I am worried about people close to me dying. ” - **Age seven (Year Three)**

“ I have scary dreams about coronavirus. ” - **Age nine (Year Four)**

Other themes

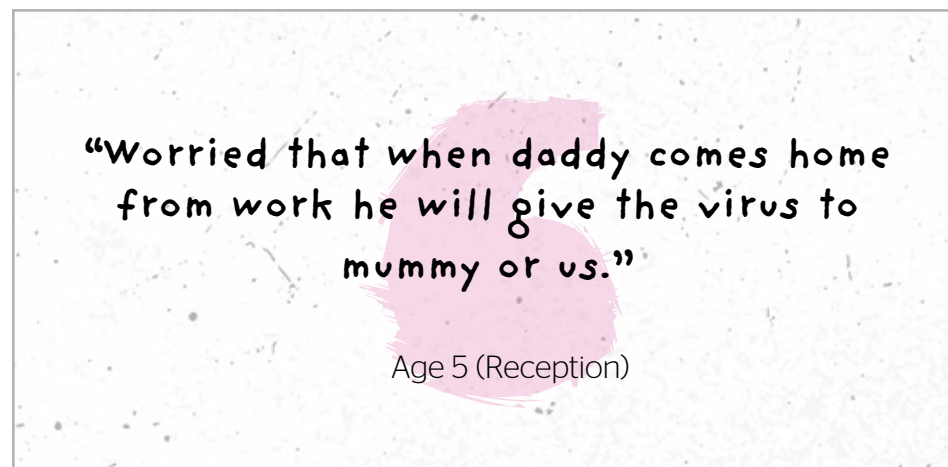
Other themes include comments expressing concerns about a fear of a second wave of the virus, worries about personal safety and protection from viral transmission and worries for people who have existing illness within the child's immediate or extended family.

“ Worried about getting the virus on the sink when we wash our hands. ” - **Age eight (Year Three)**

“ Having to control myself to social distance. ” - **Age eight (Year Three)**

“ I'm worried about passing the virus onto teachers or my parents if I go back to school. ” - **Age eight (Year Three)**

“ My granny has cancer and I'm worried that if she gets coronavirus she might die. ” - **Age Nine (Year Four)**



Q: Since the start of the coronavirus lockdown, I have been feeling...

The survey asked children to indicate how their feelings had changed since the start of the coronavirus lockdown.

A number of options were presented within the survey. These were “much better than before”, “good”, “the same as before”, “not good” and “much worse than before”.

Four hundred and five children responded to this question. Responses from those who did are shown in table 26 below.

Key findings include:

- In total, **just over a third** of children indicated their feelings had been negatively impacted by the coronavirus lockdown (**7%** said they had been feeling “much worse”).
- **Just over a third** of children said they had been feeling “good” or “much better” since the coronavirus lockdown had started.
- Children who did not identify with any specific vulnerability (**355** children), were less likely to say they had been feeling “not good” or “much worse than before”. Nearly a quarter (**24%**) indicated this compared with more than a third (39%) of children who identified with at least one vulnerability. This figure increases to **57%** of children who said three or more vulnerabilities were applicable to them.
- Children who said they have a “physical disability” (**21**) or “mental health difficulty” (**32**) were the most likely to indicate that their feelings had been negatively impacted by the coronavirus lockdown (**53% and 50% respectively**).
- Children in Year Two and Year Three were most likely to say they

were feeling “not good” or “much worse than before” (**33% and 31% respectively**). All other year groups ranged between **20%** and **25%** of their respective samples.

Option	Number	Percentage of sample
Much better than before	54	13%
Good	106	26%
The same as before	125	31%
Not good	92	23%
Much worse than before	28	7%

Table 26: Changes in feelings since the start of the coronavirus lockdown.

The survey asked children to explain why they had chosen their answer. Two hundred and ninety-eight comments were recorded. Broad themes include:

Social change

Twenty-four per cent of the comments (**72**) referred to social changes. They include that children were feeling worse because of a lack of social contact with friends or others outside of their immediate family.

Of those who referred to social changes within their comments, **94%** were from children who indicated they had been feeling “the same”, “not good” or “much worse than before”. Comments from children who said the coronavirus lockdown had impacted positively upon the way they had been feeling, generally indicated that other factors had contributed to their response but that they had continued to miss social contact with others in spite of this.

“Because I can't see my friends or certain family members. Also, I couldn't go to conventions because they have been postponed.” - Age 11 (Year Six)

“I miss my friends. I don't want my daddy to go back to work and catch the coronavirus. I want to see my nanny and grandad and not have Boris tell me off if I cuddle them.” - Age six (Year One)

“I like being in lockdown because I don't like school, but I have missed seeing my friends.” - Age eight (Year Three)

More time with family

Fourteen per cent of the comments (43) refer to having more contact time with family as having an impact on how they had felt since the coronavirus lockdown began. Of these comments, **42** were made by children who said they had been feeling “much better”, “good” or “the same” as before the lockdown.

“Because I get to spend more time at home, playing with my toys and dog and with my mum and dad. I watch more telly and have more free time.” - Age six (Year One)

“Because I have got to spend the WHOLE time with my mum!” - Age six (Year Two)

“Because I get to spend more time with my family.” - Age 11 (Year Six)

Mood and thoughts

Fourteen per cent of comments include references to children's thoughts and their mood and how they have been affected by the lockdown period. The inference of these comments is dependent upon whether the child has stated they feel more positive or more negative since the coronavirus lockdown began.

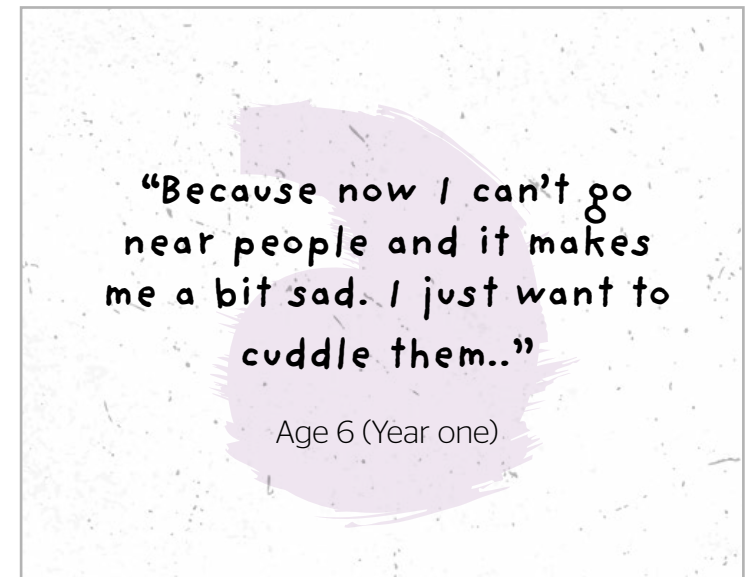
Comments with a negative inference (**24**) express concern about new or existing worries, thoughts and feelings, including boredom, anxiety, and feeling worried or scared. One hundred per cent of children who commented about this theme had said they were feeling the same or worse since the lockdown had begun.

“Things upset me more and I have meltdowns over nothing.” - Age eight (Year Three)

“Because I always feel nervous.” - Age nine (Year Four)



Figure 22: 14% had commented about changes (good and bad) to their thoughts and emotions.



“ Having emotional days and concentration issues with schoolwork.” - **Age eight (Year Three)**

For some, lockdown had improved their emotional state. Their thoughts and feelings, or their general happiness, had not changed because of the virus. The majority of these comments (13) were general expressions of happiness (e.g. “I’m happy”), with no further detail or explanation to justify the statement.

“ I have been calmer away from school, I feel more relaxed.” - **Age eight (Year Four)**

“ Just happy.” - **Age five (Reception)**

Personal or family safety

Nine per cent of the comments allude to whether the child feels their safety has been protected during the coronavirus lockdown, or that it may be compromised by the virus (27). Of these comments, 55% were made by children who said they had been feeling worse since the lockdown had begun and 33% were from children who said they had felt better.

The key difference between these groups is that children who said they were feeling better tended to attribute this to feeling safe at home, whilst those who felt worse tended to express worries about the nature of the virus (e.g. that people may die from exposure to coronavirus).

“ Because I know I’m safe at home.” - **Age nine (Year Four)**

“ Because it’s making people poorly and die.” - **Age six (Year One)**

“ My house is safe, and my family is safe at home.” - **Age eight (Year Three)**

Fun and free time

Nine per cent of comments (26) make a reference to the positive influence of having more fun and free time under lockdown conditions. One hundred per cent of these comments were made by children who indicated they were feeling “the same”, “good” or “much better” since the lockdown had started.

“ I’ve been able to play and watch screens all day!” - **Age 11 (Year Six)**

“ Because I spend more time playing in my garden.” - **Age seven (Year Two)**

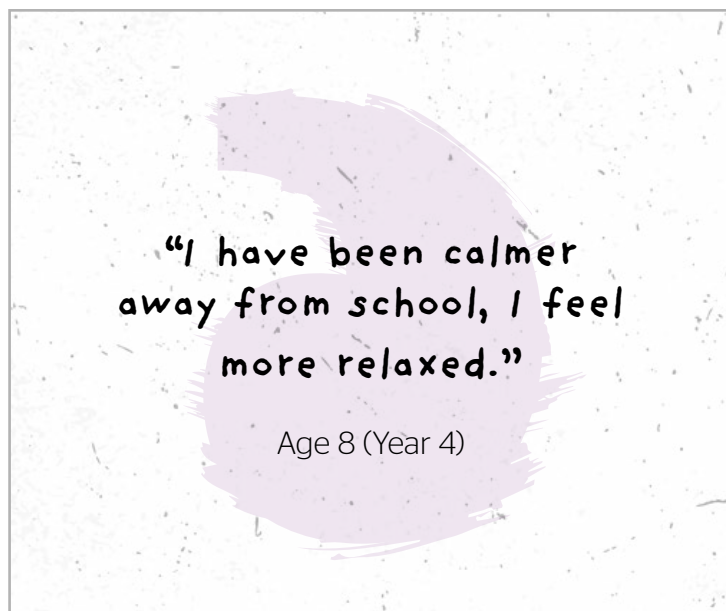
“ Outside sun water pool trampoline family. Fun games.” - **Age six (Year One)**

Respite from stressors

A number of children noted that lockdown had helped them to feel better because it had forced respite from factors that had previously caused them stress (10 comments, 3% of the total responses). Such comments intimated that the child had felt relief from being bullied by others in school or feeling more relaxed because they had previously struggled at school or found it to be a stressful environment.

“ I am home with family and not by myself with bullying and getting hurt.” - **Age 11 (Year Six)**

“ I like not being at school and having fake friends.” - **Age 11 (Year Six)**



“There are bullies at school who can't touch me now.” - **Age eight (Year Three)**

Other themes

A number of other themes were evident within children's comments. For example, there were both positive and negative comments about schoolwork (15).

Positive comments (six) indicated that the child is happy with completing schoolwork at home, perhaps with the support of a parent, and at their own pace. Negative comments (nine) tended to express worry about schoolwork in general, or that the child had been finding it harder to complete schoolwork at home without the support of their teacher or peers.

Additional themes include comments about the negative impact of disruption to normal routines (nine), that children like to be at home as opposed to being at school (22), general worries about coronavirus (10) and the impact of imposed new rules or restrictions (17).

“Because I'm getting more support and help with schoolwork than what I was getting at school.” - **Positive about schoolwork (Age 11, Year Six)**

“Because I'm not allowed out to play and I get very frustrated when I'm in a small place.” - **New rules and restrictions (Age nine, Year Four)**

“I like being in a routine. I am finding it hard doing schoolwork at home, my parents try the best to help but they are not teachers.” - **Negative about schoolwork and routine disruption (Age 10, Year Six)**

How often have you felt lonely this week?

The survey asked children to identify how often they had felt lonely during the previous week.

They could choose a selection of possible responses including “not at all”, “a little”, “sometimes”, “quite a lot” and “all of the time”. Responses from across the sample are shown in table eight. **One hundred and twenty-three** children did not answer this question.

Key findings from those who did include:

- **One in two** children said they had felt lonely to some extent during the last week. **Forty-two per cent** had not felt lonely at all.

Despite being at home with family around them, more than a third of children said they had felt lonelier since lockdown had begun.



- **Twelve per cent** of children said they had felt lonely “quite a lot” or “all of the time” (**46 children in total**).

Option	Number	Percentage of sample
Not at all	163	42%
A little	99	25%
Sometimes	81	21%
Quite a lot	38	10%
All of the time	8	2%

Table 27: Children's responses to the question 'How often have you felt lonely this week?'

When we examine particular sample characteristics (vulnerabilities), the following findings are noteworthy:

- Children who did not identify with any specific vulnerability (**355 children**), were less likely to say they had been feeling lonely to some extent. **Fifty-three per cent** indicated this, compared with **61%** of children who identified with at least one of the possible vulnerabilities. This figure increases to **70%** of children who said three or more vulnerabilities were applicable to them.
- **Forty-three per cent** of children with a sibling (**334**) said they had not felt lonely at all compared to **35%** of children who do not have a sibling (**57**).
- Children who said they care for someone else (**58**) indicated higher levels of loneliness. **Nearly half** said they had felt lonely “sometimes”, “quite a lot” or “all of the time”. **Seventy-three per cent** had felt lonely to some extent.

Q: Is this different to how you felt before?

The survey also asked children to indicate whether their feelings of loneliness had changed because of the coronavirus lockdown. They could choose from three options including “I feel less lonely now”, “I feel more lonely now” and “it hasn't changed”.

Responses from across the sample are shown in table nine below. **One hundred and twenty-three** children did not answer this question. Key findings include:

- **More than a third** of children said they felt lonelier now.
- **One in eight** children said they had felt less lonely and half had not noticed any change.

Option	Number	Percentage of sample
I feel less lonely now	51	13%
I feel more lonely now	145	37%
It hasn't changed	193	50%

Table 28: Children's responses to the question "Is this different to how you felt before?' (levels of loneliness).

LONELINESS

Children who said they care for someone else were amongst the most likely to indicate they had felt lonely to some extent. Almost 3/4 indicated this and nearly half said they had felt lonely "sometimes", "quite a lot" or "all of the time".

The same is true of children who indicated more than three 'vulnerabilities' applied to them. 70% of these children said they had been feeling lonely to some extent.

"miss seeing people. I have no brothers and sisters."

Age 8 (Year 3)

FAMILY

The following insights are about children's perceptions of their family during the coronavirus lockdown, including how they perceived others in their household to be feeling and the impact of the period on their relationship with siblings.

Q: Do you think the other people in your house are feeling okay about the coronavirus lockdown?

The survey asked children to indicate whether they thought other people in their household were feeling okay about the lockdown. They could respond with "yes", "no" or "not sure". **One hundred and twenty-five** children chose not to answer this question.

- **One in five** children suggested others in their household were not feeling okay.
- **Nearly half** of the children who did respond (**47%**) said they felt others in their household were feeling okay.

Q: Why did you choose this option?

Children were asked to explain why they felt others were feeling okay or why they felt others were not feeling okay about the lockdown. **One hundred and eighty-four** children provided a comment.

Top four themes (household not okay)

The top four themes identified within the comments of children who felt people in their household were "not okay" are as follows:

1. Parent/family worry or concern (**37** comments)



"My mum had a new baby and cant help me with my school work anymore, and most of the time my dad is at work."

Age 10 (Year 5)

2. Family employment worries (14 comments)
3. The health status of other family members (Eight comments)
4. Feeling worried in general (Seven comments)

Children who said their family were not okay tended to focus on the worries of their parents, including that they had concerns about work or that the child had perceived they were worried about them or someone else. Children also referred to the health concerns of others (e.g. a sibling with a disability or the health status of elderly grandparents).

Top four themes (household okay)

The top four themes identified within the comments of children who felt others in their household were “okay” are as follows:

1. People are happy or not worried (47 comments)
2. Feeling safe or being protected at home (15 comments)
3. Talking and reassurance (11 comments)
4. Having more time with family (nine comments)

Children who said their family were okay tended to have the impression that others were happy, not worried or unphased by the virus. They also had a focus on feeling safe at home, or that their family were taking steps to protect them from the virus. These children were also more likely to indicate that they had talked to someone about the virus and that this had help to reassure them.

Broad themes (all children)

Themes identified within children’s comments about their household included:

Happy or not worried

Forty-seven children (26% of the total comments) said they felt others in their household were okay because they had not noticed a change in the behaviours of their parents or others within their household. They had perceived people around them to be generally happy, calm or not worried. Of the children who responded in this way, 89% said they felt others were okay and the remaining 11% said they were not sure.

“Because they don’t look worried” - Age seven (Year Three)

“Because they are calm.” - Age seven (Year Three)

“My mum hasn’t shown any worrying.” - Age eight (Year Four)

Parent or family worry

This theme consists of any comments suggesting children have observed that their parents or other family members around them are worried or upset. Thirty-seven made a reference to this theme. For example, some children specifically stated that their parents were worried that they may catch the virus. Others express that they have perceived, or know, that their parents are stressed.

Thirty-five of the comments within this theme (95%) were recorded by children who felt people in their household were not okay. The other children said they were “not sure”.

“My dad is nervous about getting coronavirus and having to stay home with no pay.” - Age eight (Year Three)

“Mummy scared... we have asthma and my brother need help.” - Age six (Year One)

“ Because they are very worried about me and themselves. ” - **Age 11 (Year Six)**

Feeling safe and being protected

Fifteen children (8% of the total comments) suggested others in their household were feeling okay and connected this with a perception that they, and their family, were safe and protected from exposure to the virus at home.

“ Because we have all been safe in the house looking after each other. ” - **Age eight (Year Three)**

“ We stay at home together to keep well. ” - **Age seven (Year Two)**

“ Because they are safe and follow the rules. ” - **Age six (Year One)**

Parent/Family employment

Fourteen comments (8% of the total comments) were attributed to this theme.

Eleven children said others in their household were not okay because of their worries related to employment status. This included an understanding that their family members may lose their job because of the virus (and the financial

impact of this), or that they may be exposed to the virus by virtue of being at work (e.g. because their parents are key workers).

“ My mum might not have a job to go back to. ” - **Age six (Year Two)**

“ Because mum and dad are at work because they're key workers. ” - **Age nine (Year Four)**

“ My dad is nervous about getting coronavirus and having to stay home with no pay. ” - **Age eight (Year Three)**

Three children made positive comments about the employment status of their parents or other family members. All three felt that other people in their household were feeling okay. Their comments were:

“ Because mummy and daddy would have a face mask at work and daddy doesn't have to go out of the house for work. ” - **Age six (Year One)**

“ My dad is happy because he can work from home and my mum makes him sandwiches at lunchtime. ” - **Age eight (Year Three)**

“ Daddy's back at work and happy



Figure 23: Children often picked up on the worries and concerns of others in their household. This includes concerns about work environment during the pandemic (e.g. key workers) and the potential for lost income.

now. Mummy and my sister were sad at first but now they have got used to this. ” - **Age six (Year One)**

Talking/Not talking and reassurance

Twenty-one comments (11% of the total comments) make reference to people talking (or not talking) about the virus or how they are feeling within the household. Children who said people in their household were okay were more likely to say they had spoken with people to reassure themselves of this.

” We talk about our worries and I made a worry monster post box. ” - **Age seven (Year Two)**

” I asked my mummy and she said she is okay with the lockdown. ” - **Age six (Year One)**

” We are family together and we all talk about the situation. ” - **Age 9 (Year Four)**

Ten children suggested that people around them were not talking about the virus. This had both a negative and a positive impact on their perception of how others in their household were feeling. Some considered that, if people in their household were not talking about

the virus, it was a positive sign that they were feeling okay.

” Because we don't talk about it. and I've spent my days having fun in lockdown. ” - **Age eight (Year Four)**

” Because they aren't talking about it much. ” - **Age seven (Year Two)**

For others, not talking meant they had a lack of clarity about how others were feeling in the household.

” Because they haven't told me. ” - **Age six (Year One)**

” Because I've not really asked them. ” - **Age eight (Year Three)**

Other themes

A number of other minor themes were evident within children's comments. These included a perception that others in the household were okay because they had more opportunity and time to engage as a family unit (nine comments).

” We love being together as a family as we have extended brothers and sister too. We wouldn't normally get this much time together. ” - **Age nine (Year Four)**



“Because we can spend more family time with each other.” – **Age eight (Year Three)**

Some children noted that others were not okay because of changes within their immediate or extended family (e.g. relationships and family circumstances). For example, a new birth within the immediate family or a death within the immediate or extended family.

“My mum had a new baby and can't help me with my school work anymore, and most of the time my dad is at work.” – **Age 10 (Year Five)**

“Mummy is sad because some of her relatives have died during the outbreak.” – **Age seven (Year Two)**

Q: “Do you have brothers or sisters living at home?”

Three hundred and thirty-four (65%) of the children said they had a brother or sister living at home with them. **Fifty-seven (11%)** of the children did not. **One hundred and twenty-one** children chose not to respond.

Q: “How has your relationship with them changed?”

We asked children who said they did have a sibling to indicate how their relationship had changed since the coronavirus lockdown had started. They could choose from a number of options including “much better than before”, “better than before”, “the same as before”, “worse than before”, “much worse than before”. Children’s responses are shown in table 29 below.

Key findings include:

- **More than a third (37%)** felt their relationship with a sibling had improved.
- **Sixteen per cent** of children felt their relationship with a sibling had got worse. **Forty-six per cent** had noticed no difference.

Option	Number	Percentage of sample
Much better than before	38	11%
Better than before	88	26%
The same as before	153	46%
Worse than before	43	13%
Much worse than before	11	3%

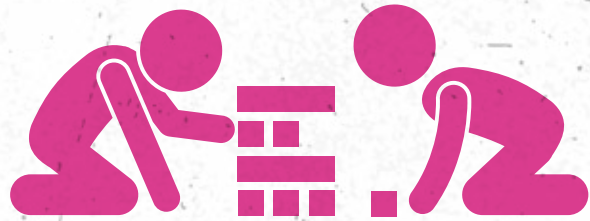
Table 29: Children’s responses to the question ‘How was your relationship with them changed?’ (siblings).

Children were asked to explain their answer with a comment. **One hundred and forty-six** children provided an answer. Key themes include:

Time together

This theme, consisting of **69** comments (**47%** of the total comments), includes all references to either positive or negative time together with siblings. The inference of these comments is very much dependent upon whether or not the child feels their relationship has improved with their sibling.

Time together is the most common reason offered by children for improved sibling relationships. In total, **60** children felt this way. Play



To grow and develop, children need time and attention from someone who is happy to play with them. Siblings are agents of socialisation and the value of this is evident within children's comments.

Time together playing and interacting with siblings is the most common reason children offered for improved sibling relationships. Some comments directly acknowledge the important role a sibling has played in offsetting the social loss of friends and other family members.

is commonly recognised as a crucial component of young children's social development and this appears to be supported by their responses. Although more research is needed, this appears to suggest that time previously spent at school may have been detrimental to sibling relationships, and that forced lockdown had helped to correct for this.

“Because we used to argue a lot but now we don't. We play together.”
- **Age eight (Year Four)**

“We play together much more.”
- **Age seven (Year Three)**

“My sister has been playing with me more.”
- **Age nine (Year Four)**

“More time together to tell each other what we like and make up when we fall out.”
- **Age nine (Year Four)**

Nine children identified that their relationship with a sibling had got worse and attributed this to the extra time they have been spending together. The majority suggested additional time together had led to increased conflict, which had been detrimental to their relationship.

“We didn't really argue before because we had friends to play with.”
- **Age 10 (Year Five)**

“Because I am spending more time with him, so we argue a bit more.”
- **Age 11 (Year Six)**

“We fight more because we are at home.”
- **Age nine (Year Four)**

Conflict

Conflict is the most common reason offered by children to justify their choice that lockdown had been detrimental to the relationship they had with their sibling.

Fifty comments mention conflict. With the exception of one comment, all have been made by children who said their relationship had stayed the same, got worse, or got much worse under lockdown.

“He's angry and has lots meltdowns and sometimes hurts me.”
- **Age seven (Year Two)**

“Because my little sister always annoys me.”
- **Age seven (Year Three)**



Children said their relationship with a sibling had got better because they had time to play and to be together. Siblings had made more effort to get along.

“ My sister is back from uni and very bossy to me. This makes me cross. ” - **Age 10 (Year Six)**

Getting along and being nicer

Forty-six comments suggested that sibling relationships had improved, either because the children were naturally inclined to enjoy each other's company or because there had been a conscious effort to be nicer to each other during lockdown.

Comments include:

“ My brother is nicer to me. ” - **Age 10 (Year Five)**

“ She isn't so mean. She doesn't hit me all the time when she gets angry. ” - **Age six (Year One)**

“ My sister is my best friend and we always play nicely together. ” - **Age eight (Year Three)**

Other themes

There were several other minor themes within the comments. This included the role siblings have played in offsetting the social loss of others (six comments). Whereas children may previously have dedicated significant amounts of time to their friends, under lockdown, siblings had become a way to counter the loss of that social contact.

Comments include:

“ Because we have seen each other more and relied on each other more and started playing together because we don't have any friends. Our brother and sister have become our best friends. ” - **Age eight (Year Three)**

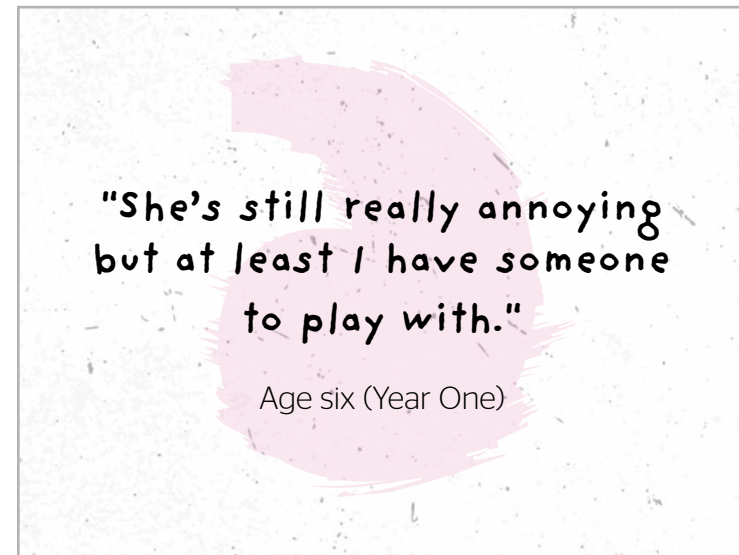
“ Since we have been in lockdown, we have played a lot more with each other because we cannot see other people. ” - **Age nine (Year Four)**

Five left comments about the health or wellbeing status of a sibling. Some children commented that their relationship with a sibling had got worse, or stayed the same, because their sibling has a diagnosed mental or physical health condition.

“ My brother and sister have a poorly brain, and so have not coped well being at home. ” - **Age six (Year One)**

“ Because my brother might be worried, he might get the virus and die because he has autism. ” - **Age six (Year Two)**

“ My brother has learning disabilities and is finding lockdown hard, but I understand how he feels and try to be the same as before. ” - **Age 10 (Year Five)**



GETTING SUPPORT

Q: “Before coronavirus lockdown, were you getting extra help?”

The survey asked children to identify whether or not they were getting extra help before the pandemic, including support within school and at home. This extra help was defined within the survey as follows:

“Getting extra help could be from someone at your school, doctor or somewhere else. They may help you with things at school or at home.”

Four hundred and eighteen children responded. Of these, **91 (22%)** children said they were getting extra help, **252 (60%)** said they were not, and **30 (7%)** said they were waiting to receive support. **Forty-five (11%)** children said they did not know.

Q: “Has this support changed since the lockdown?”

The survey subsequently asked children to

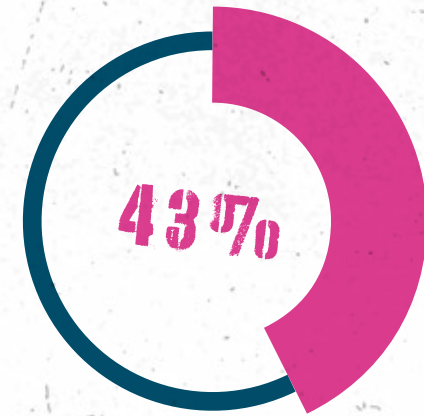
identify whether they felt their support had changed since the start of lockdown.

Sixty-nine children provided a response. Of these, **just over three quarters (76%)** felt their support had changed. **Thirteen per cent** said it had not changed and **10%** did not know.

Q: “What has school been helping you with during the coronavirus lockdown?”

Children were asked to identify how their school had been supporting them during the coronavirus lockdown. There were two areas of support presented to children (“help with feelings and emotions” and “help with schoolwork”). Respondents could select either “yes”, “no” or “I don’t know”.

Three hundred and eighty-five children responded about feelings and emotions and **386** children responded about schoolwork.



Said their school had not supported them with feelings or emotions during the coronavirus lockdown. 27% said their school had offered this support.

Children who felt supported in this way were 10% less likely to indicate they were feeling 'not good' or 'much worse' than before lockdown.

- **Nearly two in 10** children felt their school had not supported them with schoolwork. **Sixty-five per cent** said their school had offered help with schoolwork and **12%** said they did not know.
- **More than four in 10 (43%)** said their school had not offered help with feelings and emotions. **Twenty-seven per cent** said their school had offered support and **30%** did not know.
- Children who said their school had not been supporting them with their feelings and emotions were more likely to say that they were feeling “not good” or “much worse than before” during lockdown. **Thirty-six per cent** of children said this, compared with **26%** of children who felt they had been supported.

RETURNING TO SCHOOL

Q: “How do you feel about going back to school after the coronavirus lockdown?”

Children were asked about how they felt about going back to school after the coronavirus lockdown had ended. They could choose from a number of options including “worried”, “happy”, “excited”, “okay” or “not sure”.

Five hundred and twelve children responded to this question. Their responses are shown in table eleven below. **One hundred and fifty** children selected more than one response e.g. “happy” and “excited”. Their responses are identified as “mixed” within table 30.

Key findings include:

- **Thirty-three per cent** of children are “worried” or “not sure” about returning to school. **Thirty-eight per cent** said they were either “happy”, “excited” or “okay”.
- Children who said their school had

not been supporting them with their feelings and emotions (**164 children**) were also more likely to feel “not sure” or “worried” about returning to school. **Nearly half** of these children (**45%**) felt this way, compared with **38%** of children who said they had been supported.

- Children who did not identify with any specific vulnerability (**355 children**), such as a mental health difficulty, physical disability or learning disability, were less likely to say they were “not sure” or “worried” about returning to school. **A quarter** (**25%**) indicated this, compared with **half** (**52%**) of children who identified with at one of the possible vulnerabilities. This figure increases to **59%** of children who said three or more vulnerabilities were applicable to them.

1/2 More than half

of the children who said a vulnerability applied to them were 'not sure' or 'worried' about going back to school compared with **25%** of students who said no vulnerabilities applied to them.

1/3 A third of

of children said they were 'not sure' or 'worried' about going back to school.

Option	Number	Percentage of sample
Excited	101	20%
Happy	40	8%
Okay	53	10%
Not sure	96	19%
Worried	72	14%
Mixed	150	29%

Table 30: Children's feelings about going back to school after the coronavirus lockdown.

Q: "Can you tell us about any worries you might have about going back to school?"

Children were asked to share any worries they may have about going back to school. One hundred and sixty-nine children provided a comment. A number of themes were evident in their responses, and these are explained below.

Safety and virus transmission

The most common worry related to safety from the virus and protection from transmission (55). This included comments about the possibility that coronavirus could spread again, that others may be infected, or that the child could become sick themselves.

“If I get corona and then pass it on to an elderly in my family and it has a big impact on them.” - Age nine (Year Four)

“Never no someone could still have it.” - Age 10 (Year Five)

“If someone has it and comes to school, I could catch it, and plus it's not calmed down yet and if I go out and someone has it, I could catch it then.” - Age nine (Year Four)

Social changes

Thirty-four children made a comment expressing worries about social factors. This is a broad theme, encapsulating a number of worries including fears that friendship groups may have changed, forced social change at school (e.g. moving to a new school, school “bubbles”), the strangeness of not being able to have contact with friends (e.g. hugging), and how others perceptions or feelings about them as an individual may have changed.

“It might not be the same as before. My friends might not want to play with me.” - Age six (Year One)

“I worry because the friends I have will be going on different days, so I won't see them.” - Age 10 (Year Six)

“Getting coronavirus. And not being able to play or hug my friends.” - Age seven (Year Two)

Schoolwork

There were 22 comments about schoolwork worries. This included that the child may have fallen behind on their work, or that they may not be able to cope with an increased workload at school.

“If I haven't caught up on the work or I'm like really dumb.” - Age eight (Year Three)

“Maybe I forget something in class and am embarrassed.” - Age eight (Year three)



The most common worry children had about returning to school related to safety from and transmission of the virus.

“ I am worried that I didn't do schoolwork correctly. ” - **Age eight (Year Four)**

New rules and restrictions

There were **21** comments that included worries about new rules or restrictions at and outside of school.

“ Being bossed around with the social distancing rule like if I accidentally get too close to someone I might be shouted out. ” - **Age 11 (Year Six)**

“ Not sure what will be there or what will happen with rules. ” - **Age seven (Year Two)**

“ Social distancing with my friends. ” - **Age six (Year One)**

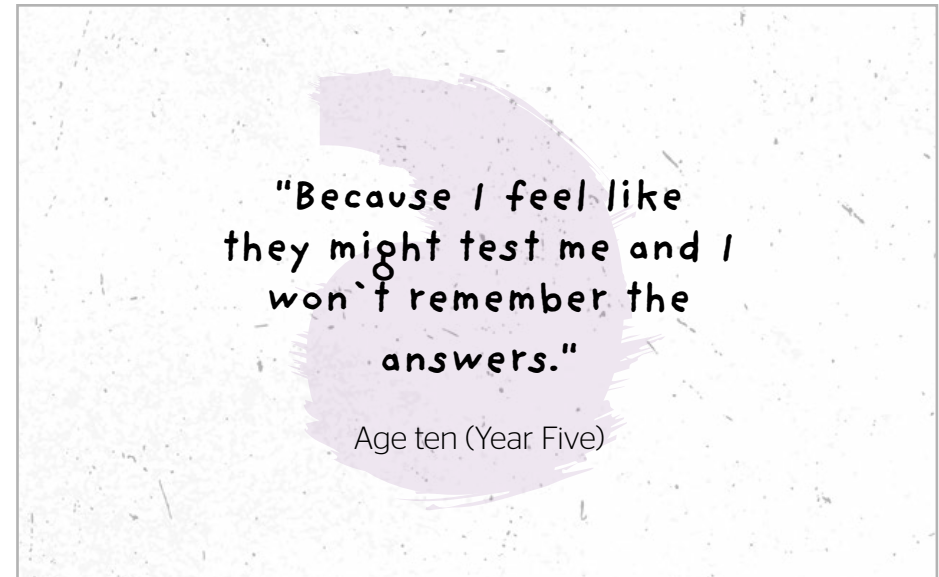
Other themes

A number of other minor themes were identified. These included worries about being bullied at school (**three**), concerns about viral transmission from school to family members or friends (eight), and a general dislike of school (**six**).

“ About me having to do extra work and about getting bullied again. ” - **Being bullied (Age 10, Year Five)**

“ Getting coronavirus and spreading it and mummy and daddy dying. ” - **Transmission of the virus to family (Age seven, Year Two)**

“ I don't want to go back to school. I don't like school. ” - **Dislike of school (Age nine, Year Four)**



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It will be publicly available on the Healthwatch Suffolk website. It will also be made available to Healthwatch England and bodies responsible for the commissioning, scrutiny or delivery of local health and care services. This may include Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Groups, the Suffolk Health and Overview Scrutiny Committee, the Suffolk Health and Wellbeing Board and Suffolk County Council.

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