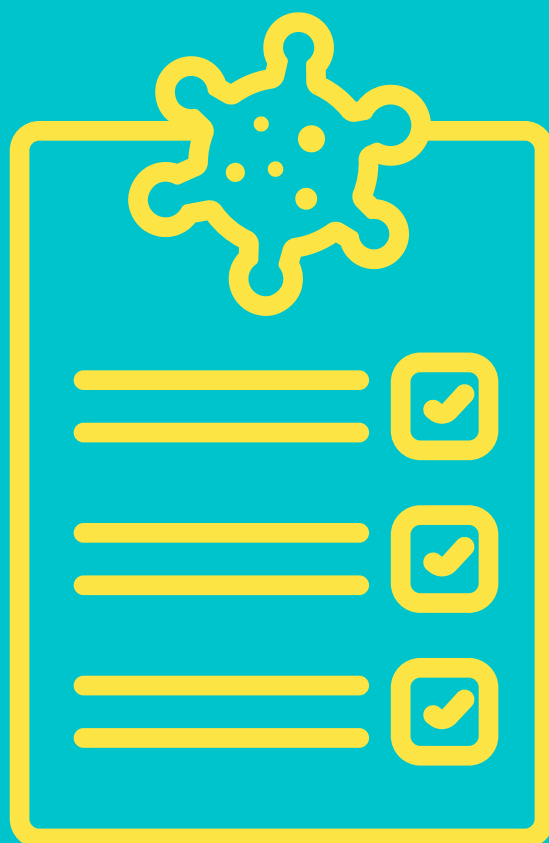


# Generation Lockdown: Wellbeing Audit

JULY 2020



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to thank all the children, young people and parents who took part in our wellbeing survey. A special thank you to staff from schools in Hailsham, Newhaven and Brighton for promoting the survey to their students and parents.

## ABOUT EAST SUSSEX COMMUNITY VOICE

East Sussex Community Voice (ESCV) is an independent Community Interest Company specialising in community engagement and insight and delivers the Healthwatch contract in East Sussex.

As a CIC, it has built in flexibility to include a wider remit beyond how people experience health and care services and how local communities support people's overall health and wellbeing.

## ABOUT PRIORITY 1-54

Priority 1-54 is a Brighton based Community Interest Company. Our aims are to:

- Work collaboratively with vulnerable and disadvantaged children and young people and community partners to deliver innovative and creative youth-led projects
- Offer youth-led projects that build self-efficacy, emotional resilience and wellbeing so young people reach their full potential
- Use an 'asset-based' approach so young people are at the heart of everything we do, ensuring our work is relevant and solution focused

For more information visit our website: [www.priority154.com](http://www.priority154.com)

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# RECOMMENDATIONS

## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

- Professionals working directly or indirectly with children and young people must provide meaningful and inclusive opportunities for them to be involved in decision making processes, drawing on their unique perspectives on the pandemic and lockdown
- Enhance the use of peer-to-peer support or mentoring programmes in schools and colleges, for those at significant transition stages i.e. new Year 7 intake, ensure staff providing support receive appropriate guidance and training
- Adults and services must trust children and young people to identify the best way to promote meaningful participation, to ensure their voices and experiences are heard in all aspects of their learning and wellbeing

## WELLBEING AND MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES

- As communities recover from the pandemic, they must reset how they respond to mental health challenges, and support and promote children and young people's wellbeing
- With the economic aftershock of the pandemic and potential restructuring of budgets, essential and non-essential mental health services should not be lost
- Parents, specifically key workers, must be provided with self-care strategies to build resilience and address mental health challenges brought about by the pandemic

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## SCHOOLS AND HOME LEARNING

- Schools must work with children, young people, parents and mental health professionals to develop and implement a whole-school wellbeing recovery plan
- School senior leaders must recognise and examine the significant challenges that home learning has had on children, young people and families and that online instruction is not an adequate replacement for in-person instruction
- School senior leaders must set out clearly how they will address the inequality experienced by children and young people from low income and disadvantaged families in their abilities to access online learning resources, learning portals and live or recorded lessons
- Schools must work with children, young people, parents and mental health professionals to develop and implement a whole-school wellbeing recovery plan
- Schools should revisit their parent engagement strategy so parents can voice ideas and opinions and work collaboratively with schools to support their child's re-engagement with learning, wellbeing and positive mental health

# SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

We heard from 511 children and young people. 54% were female, 45% male and 1% preferred to describe themselves another way.

## WELLBEING AND MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES

**25%**

of young people said their mental health had got worse or much worse since lockdown

**16%**

said their mental health had got better or much better since lockdown

**48%**

said they were feeling lonely and isolated as a result of lockdown

**41%**

who had an existing mental health challenge said it had got worse or much worse during lockdown

**9%**

young people wanted wellbeing support to help with their return to school

## EDUCATION AND HOME LEARNING

**66%**

said they were worried or somewhat worried about missing their education

**30%**

said they wanted support with their learning to help with their return to school

**47%**

said they were worried or somewhat worried about returning to school

**1%**

said they did not want to return to school after lockdown

**61%**

said they were worried or somewhat worried about the future

## IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC ON FAMILIES

We also heard from 191 parents and carers, of which 90% were female and 10% male.

**47%**

of parents said their family had been adversely affected during lockdown

**39%**

were worried or somewhat worried about not having enough money at home

**48%**

said they were worried or somewhat worried about their mental health

**85%**

said they were worried or somewhat worried about their child(ren)'s mental health

**61%**

said they were worried or somewhat worried about the future

# 1. INTRODUCTION

This report provides a 'snapshot' of the wellbeing of young people and their families during the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown, across Sussex but with a particular geographical focus on the Newhaven and Hailsham areas of East Sussex.

Priority 1-54 carried out two separate surveys and creative workshops in schools on behalf of East Sussex Community Voice, as part of the VRAC project. We heard from 511 children and young people and 191 parents/carers, who completed the surveys between Monday 22nd June and Friday 10th July. The surveys were hosted on surveymonkey and promoted through schools, social media and charity mailing lists.

## NATIONAL CONTEXT

There is no doubt, the restrictions imposed as a result of COVID-19 pandemic have caused unprecedented social disruptions, with the potential for untold long-term impact on the wellbeing of whole communities.

Numerous reports have highlighted the negative impact of the pandemic and lockdown on children and young people, particularly those from low income and disadvantaged backgrounds.

For example:

- The digital divide and access to remote learning
- Falling behind with their education
- Safeguarding concerns regarding vulnerable children missing from education
- Increased hunger and food insecurity
- Greater exposure to domestic abuse during lockdown
- Increased risks of online grooming as online predators exploit lockdown
- Long-term adverse impact on children's physical and emotional wellbeing

## LOCAL CONTEXT

Findings from this survey will inform the “It Takes a Village to Raise a Child” (VRAC) project, which will provide support to vulnerable young people aged 12 – 18 years and their families through two pilots in East Sussex (Hailsham and Newhaven). VRAC will provide two forms of support:

- Innovative learning opportunities for young people, co-created with partners in leisure, education and voluntary sector
- Fund professional front line support to young people struggling at school. The project will help build an integrated response to their needs, including activity outside of schools

## VRAC OBJECTIVES

- To reduce the number of vulnerable young people, in Hailsham and Newhaven, who leave education early or are excluded from school
- To support young people and their families to overcome the barriers they face in remaining in education and reaching their full potential
- To support young people at risk of exclusion and improve their wellbeing and mental health – with an emphasis on early intervention and prevention
- To create guidance and policy recommendations to allow policy makers to implement an integrated approach that jointly improves the wellbeing of young people and their school attainment



## 2. WELLBEING AND MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES

Children and young people's responses to stressful life events are both varied and unique. Findings from this survey suggest that many children and young people have adapted well to the coronavirus pandemic and lockdown, the closure of schools and home learning.

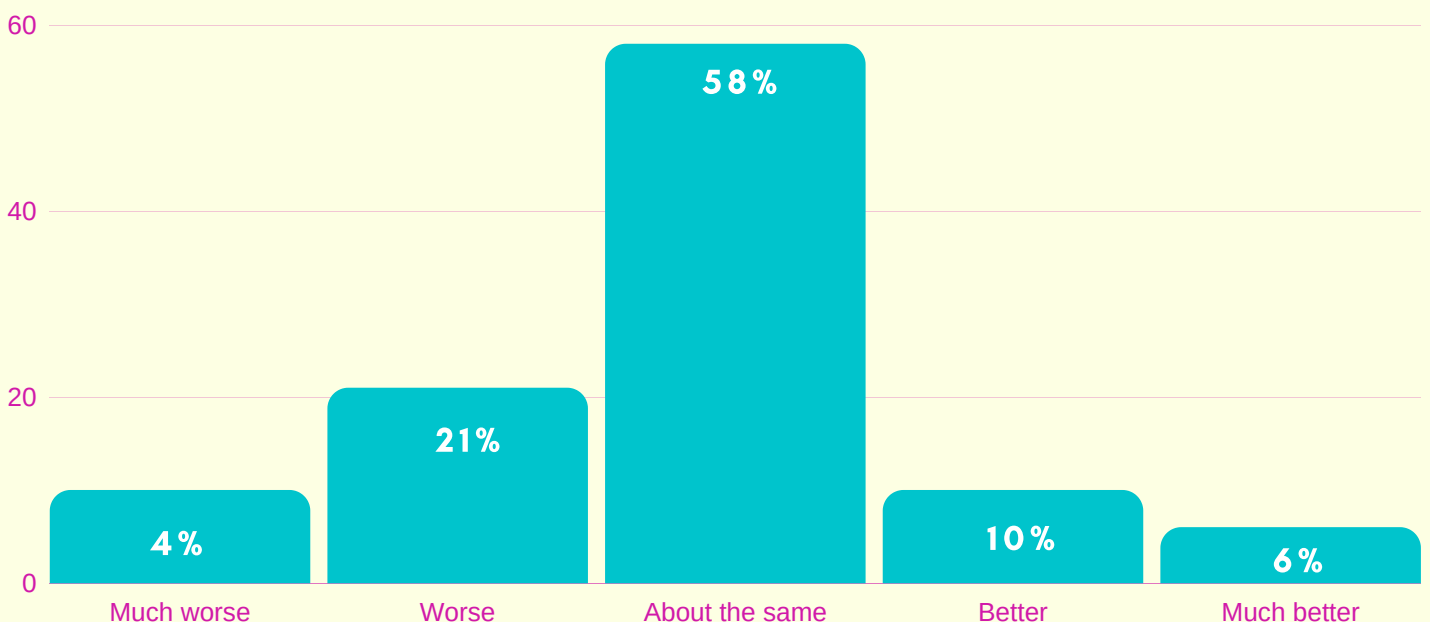
### CHANGES TO MENTAL HEALTH

16% of children and young people reported their mental health had improved during lockdown. The reasons cited for improvements included: spending more time with their family; not being in school; and preferring home learning. There were a few who mentioned enjoying home learning due to bullying behaviour at school.



**My mental health is better because I'm not at school. I have a lot of problems in school and I am always alone and never happy. I don't have any friends, I'm always stressed, I get made fun of, and have been bullied. Since I have been at home and when I'm not thinking about the pandemic, I am actually happy for once. It feels nice to be happy again** [Year 10 young woman]

#### IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC ON THE MENTAL HEALTH OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE



The pandemic and lockdown has had a profound impact on the wellbeing and mental health of children and young people with many reporting feeling worried, stressed, lonely and unhappy about elements of their life under lockdown.

A quarter of all children and young people reported a decline in their mental health, with 4% stating that it had got much worse and 21% worse during lockdown.

Factors contributing to this decline in mental health include worries about their own physical health, friends and loved ones catching the virus, together with the stress of home learning.



**Because a lot of my family are ill I'm worried I'm going to catch it...my dad can't walk much and had pneumonia...I don't want to spread it**

[Year 7 boy]

## EXISTING MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES

Of the 126 children and young people who said they were already receiving or waiting to receive support for their mental health, 41% said their mental health had got worse or much worse during lockdown. For many, the decline in mental health was largely attributable to feelings of loneliness and social isolation and missing close friends and family who were often part of their network of support.



**Although I have seen my friends...it isn't the same due to not being allowed to hug. Not having that human contact has been really tough! Not seeing my grandparents since August due to distance and now the virus has been difficult due to them being my safety blanket**

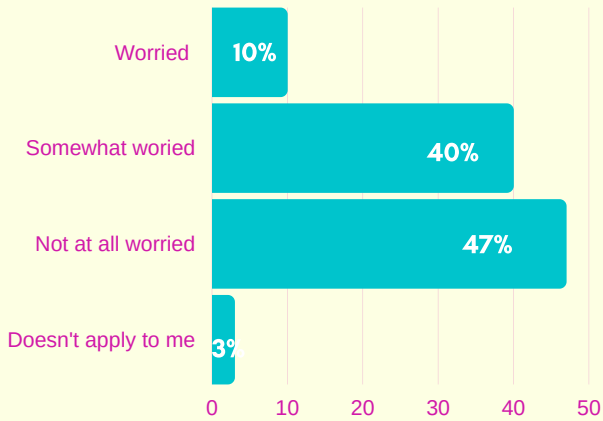
[Year 9 young woman]

**Not being able to see my friends means I have struggled as they are a strong part of my support system** [Year 12 young woman]

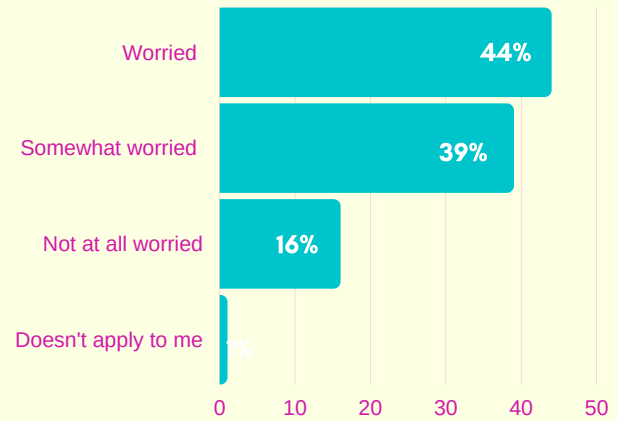


# EXTENT TO WHICH CHILDREN AND YOUNG WERE WORRIED ABOUT AREAS OF THEIR LIVES

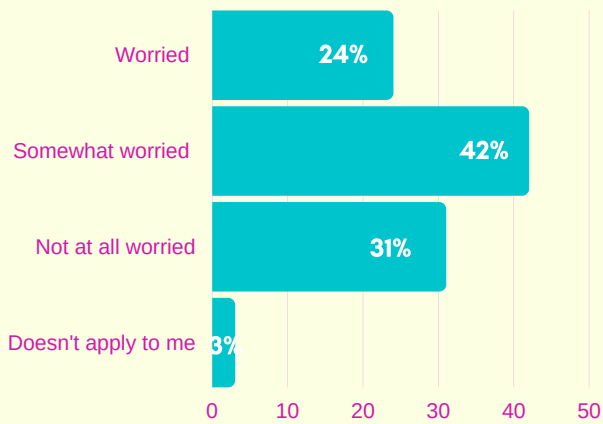
## Catching the virus



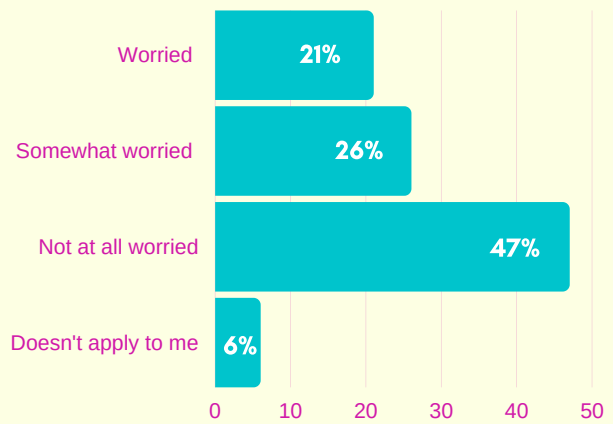
## Friends and family catching the virus



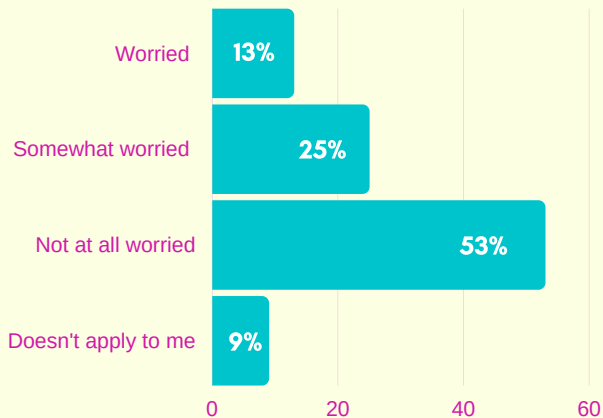
## My education



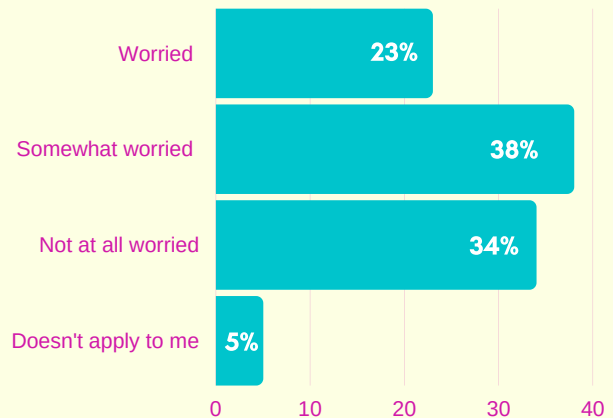
## Returning to school after lockdown



## Feeling lonely and isolated



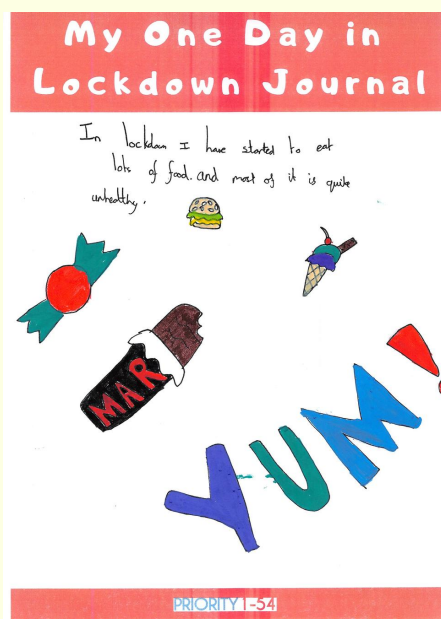
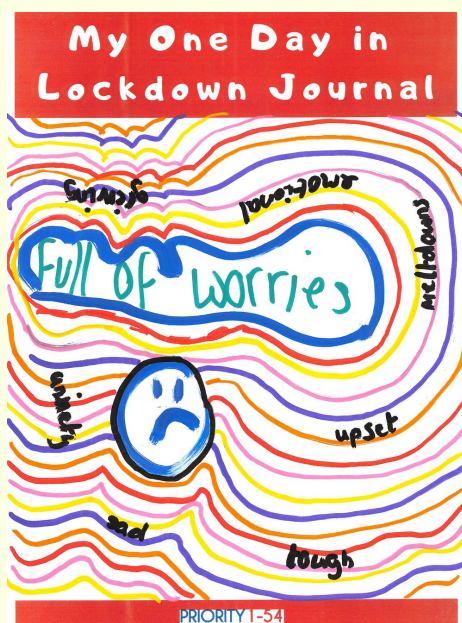
## The future



# LACK OF ROUTINE

Since the onset of the pandemic and lockdown, most, if not all children and young people have had to make significant adjustments to their routines, which in turn has affected their sense of structure, predictability and safety.

Creative art-based workshops were undertaken with 33 Year 6 children, offering additional insight into their experiences during lockdown. Many spoke of significant disruption to family routines. For example, we know that good sleep is essential to health and becomes even more important in times of stress and uncertainty. Many mentioned getting into bad habits during lockdown, including poor diet and sleep patterns. This will clearly present a challenge when schools re-open in September 2020.



# FEELING ISOLATED AND LONELY

With most of the world experiencing some kind of restricted movement, social isolation has been one of the biggest mental health challenges facing children and young people. With the closure of schools, spending most if not all of the day at home, enforced physical distancing from close family members and friends, 38% children and young people said they were worried or somewhat worried about feeling socially isolated and lonely, with many missing physical contact with family and friends.



**I feel lonely since my parents aren't home that often because they are key workers. I hardly see them, because when they are there, I'm sleeping** [Year 7 young woman]

**I was already struggling with anxiety and loneliness and my family are unsupportive. Not being able to see my friends and other life stuff, these just made the problems [mental health] SO much worse'** [Year 10 young man]

**I've been quite concerned about losing my connection with friends and my family's wellbeing** [Year 9 young woman]



## STAYING CONNECTED WITH OTHERS

We know that children and young people are more connected to each other than ever, thanks to smartphones, online gaming, the web and social media. Yet despite many parents reporting their child(ren) spending more time online to stay in touch with friends and family, it was surprising that so many still felt lonely and isolated.

However, it was clear that access to technology, particularly online gaming, had been essential in keeping children and young people both entertained and connected with friends and family members.



**My parents are both key workers and at work everyday. I have been spending time with my older sister at home. I have stayed in touch with my friends on Xbox and social media** [Year 7 young man]

## UNCERTAINTY ABOUT THE FUTURE

The sudden changes the pandemic and lockdown brought about, left nearly two-thirds of children and young people feeling uncertain or worried about the future. For those moving up to secondary school, there will be heightened anxiety due to missing crucial transition taster sessions, some will fear a second lockdown, whilst for others, uncertainty about the future will be linked to a general sense that things no longer feel safe and predictable including school.

## GENDER DIFFERENCES

Studies have highlighted gender differences in the pandemic's impact on mental health. This survey reflected many of these differences, with young women twice as likely as young men to report a decline in their mental health.

Many young men may be feeling extremely vulnerable during lockdown, but struggle to articulate these feelings, whilst others may be unwilling to admit feeling worried or acknowledge a decline in their mental health, for fear of being seen to be weak. However, mental health challenges amongst young men may well be manifesting in more risk-taking behaviours. For example, large groups of boys and men have continued to gather in public places despite the lockdown and evidence suggests that more males are dying because of the virus [Deuchar and Goulden: TES 2020].

It is worth noting that where parents raised major concerns about their child's mental health being adversely affected by the pandemic and lockdown, a significant majority related to young men.



**As a family we have struggled the last few weeks, my 7 year-old son has become very emotional, he is feeling very lonely and missing friends and school** [parent]

**Our teenage son has felt a great sense of loss in not being at school as he loved being there and learning, missing his teachers and the routine** [parent]



## GENDER DIVERSITY

Although small in number, gender-diverse young people, i.e. those who preferred to describe their gender another way, reported poorer mental health outcomes than both female and male participants.



## YOUNG CARERS

Evidence suggests young carers have experienced increased vulnerabilities during the lockdown, in terms of having to take on greater caring roles as local health and community support networks have been curtailed, resulting in an increase in their caring responsibilities [Childhood Trust: 2020]. Some children and young people will be taking on caring responsibilities for the first time as a direct result of a close family member catching the virus, with potentially little or no support mechanisms in place.



**I have been housebound and debilitated for 8 weeks so far with fatigue, chest pains and trouble breathing with COVID-19. My 14 year old son is my carer. I have been unable to support him as I should. I have been unable to carry out my key worker job. Big worry is the uncertainty of why I feel so ill and how long it will go on for** [parent affected by the COVID-19 virus]

**My days during lockdown were difficult because it took away all of my daily routines, like going to the gym and my walks. Being indoors everyday was having a huge impact on my mental health. I felt like I was gonna be stuck indoors for the rest of my life** [young male carer]



## MITIGATING MENTAL HEALTH RISKS

When children and young people were asked to list what activities, if any, have been most helpful in supporting their wellbeing during the pandemic and lockdown, the top five answers included: taking part in some form of physical activity (70%); listening to music (37%); online gaming (36%); spending time with family (13%); and reading (6%)



**There were some things that kept my mind off the lockdown and they were my Xbox, art, my dog, my mates and the art pack that was given to me by** [name of young person's support worker]. **All these things kept me sane through the hard times** [young carer]

**I've been listening to music and horror podcasts to gain some sense that this is all going to wrap up and be okay** [Year 10 young woman]



## 3. HOME LEARNING

The pandemic has shown that schools are more than just places of learning. For many children and young people, schools are places of safety and refuge, a place to learn social and emotional skills, exercise, access mental health support and many aspects that cannot be provided via remote learning.

With the sudden closure of schools, millions of children, young people and families, were left with the challenge of remote learning. Evidence from this survey and other national surveys suggest some children and young people have found being away from school extremely hard and will be looking forward to being back at school with friends, while others have enjoyed being away from school and are really not looking forward to going back.

## MISSING BEING AT SCHOOL

It was clear that the effects of not going to school for some children and young people during the pandemic, go way beyond boredom or lack of socialisation. It is clear many had missed the routine of school, teachers, learning and seeing school friends. As one parent noted:



**He has not thrived with the home learning and seems to feel quite disengaged and will not discuss it with us, which makes me concerned for the longer term** [parent]

## BENEFITS OF HOME LEARNING

School and learning can be a source of great stress and anxiety for some children and young people, as such a small proportion of children and young people said they were happy at the opportunity for home learning.





**School has always had a negative impact on my mental health since the end of Year 6 to Year 9. I feel much better surrounded by trusted family, being in the comfort of my own home and alone with myself**

[Year 10 young man with mental health challenges]

## THE STRESS OF HOME LEARNING

Many children and young people spoke of feeling overwhelmed by the volume of work set by schools, or work that was sometimes too hard to complete outside of a classroom setting, particularly without support or communication from teachers.

As a result of these challenges, many struggled to maintain their motivation, which in turn, further impacted negatively on their wellbeing and mental health.



**I have struggled with my English whilst off as I believe I am dyslexic. My counsellor has helped me with coping methods around this** [Year 9 young man]

**If the teachers didn't set so much work I wouldn't be stressed everyday**  
[Year 9 young woman]

**Less school work to reduce stress. This could be done by teachers communicating more or just following the time table** [Year 9 young woman]



## RETURNING TO SCHOOL

Nearly half of all children and young people reported being worried or somewhat worried about returning to school once the lockdown was over. It is clear many will struggle with the transition to a 'new normal' after lockdown restrictions ease, with the return back to school likely to take some period of adjustment, for both children and adults alike.

Children and young people were asked what would help with their return to school. Nearly a quarter said that they did not need or want support and a further 16% were unsure about the support they might need.

For those who wanted support, top priorities include:

- Extra support with their education, including support to catch-up with lost learning, without being overwhelmed by this work
- More information and reassurances of COVID-19 measures being implemented within their schools
- Support around emotional wellbeing and mental health to help with the anxiety of returning safely to school
- Support with their transition from primary to secondary

**“ Having the opportunity to talk to a trusted member of staff about how we have coped and how we honestly feel in terms of mental health, schoolwork, home lives and the future [Year 12 young man]**

**I feel like staff in schools need an updated idea on how to deal with mental health. As someone who suffers quite severely with mental health, schools have never been completely understanding of panic attacks and flashbacks and have never been able to accommodate or help me very well [Year 9 young woman]**

**”**





# My One Day in Lockdown Journal

**BORED!**

Lockdown started very fun

Until my siblings annoyed me a ton

I got closer with them around  
this time

Stay safe



## 4. IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC ON FAMILIES

This section focuses on impact of the pandemic and lockdown on the lives of families. Of the 191 parents who took part in the survey, experiences of adjusting to the pandemic and lockdown were mixed.



**It's been a rollercoaster of emotions for all the family, positive and negative. I am classed as 'vulnerable' which increases anxiety for the kids as they do go out to see friends again. There have been meltdowns and arguments with the 18 year-old, mostly due to frustration and boredom and too much screen time which has increased tension and further isolation in his bedroom [parent]**

### BUILDING RESILIENCE

Over half (53%) of parents said that despite the everyday ups and downs of family life, their families had adapted well to the lockdown and the changes to family routines and spending more time with each other, had brought many families closer together.



**Generally, we have all pulled together and worked as a team. I have had to lessen my expectations on myself as it became clear very early on that supporting a Year 5 and Year 7 child with school work, running the house and attempting to work from home all at once was not going to work [parent]**

**We are very grateful to have had extra time together as a family. It's been hard trying to explain the pandemic to our 4 year-old but we've just tried to make things fun at home as much as we can [parent]**

**We have been spending a lot more time with each other and enjoyed good quality time together [parent]**



# FAMILIES IN CRISIS

Of the 47% of parents who spoke of their family being adversely impacted by the pandemic and lockdown:

- Nearly a third referred to concerns about their family's overall physical and emotional wellbeing and mental health
- Many raised real concerns about struggling to manage their own wellbeing and mental health challenges as well as those of other family members, particularly children and young people
- Families with frontline key workers appeared to be experiencing significant levels of stress and anxiety because of their work and risk of catching the virus, and balancing work with childcare, together with home learning
- Those adjusting to home working reported the pressure and stress of juggling the competing demands of work, home learning and childcare
- Many spoke specifically of the difficulties of home learning and the impact it was having on their child(ren), with little guidance or support from schools

## FAMILY WELLBEING

Parents were asked what impact the lockdown was having on their children's mental health, with nearly three-quarters expressing concerns over their child(ren)'s wellbeing and mental health.



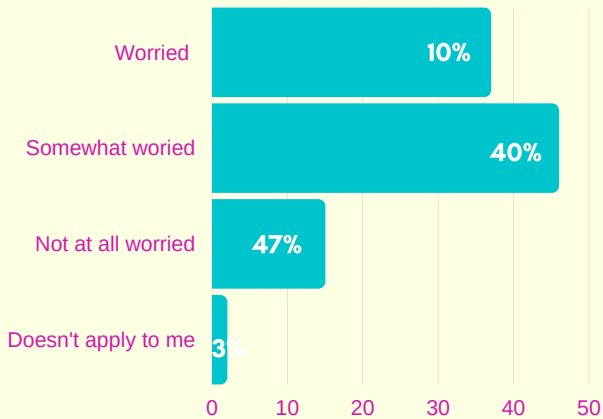
**The prolonged lockdown and abrupt end to school has affected our children, probably the worst effects have been felt by our Year 11 child [parent]**

**Living in lockdown has greatly exacerbated my daughter's mental health issues and made her very anxious. My partner is also very anxious and stressed, and very concerned about possibly catching the virus. Both rarely go out, even for walks [parent]**

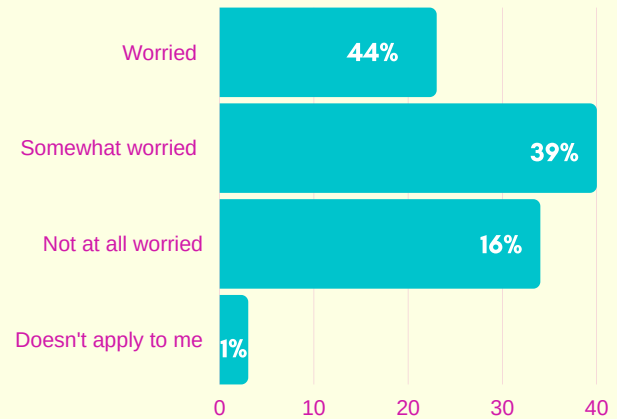


# EXTENT TO WHICH PARENTS WERE WORRIED ABOUT AREAS OF THEIR LIVES

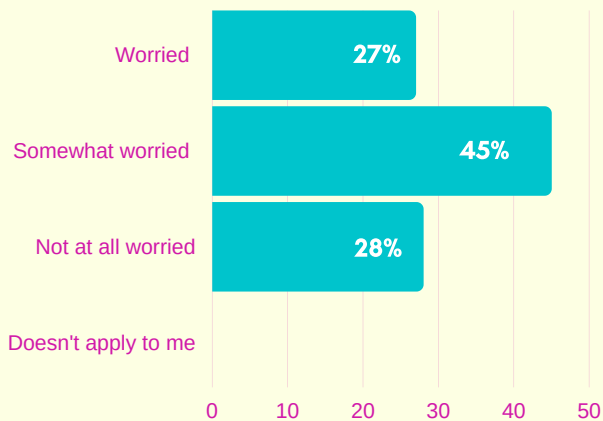
## My child(ren) missing education



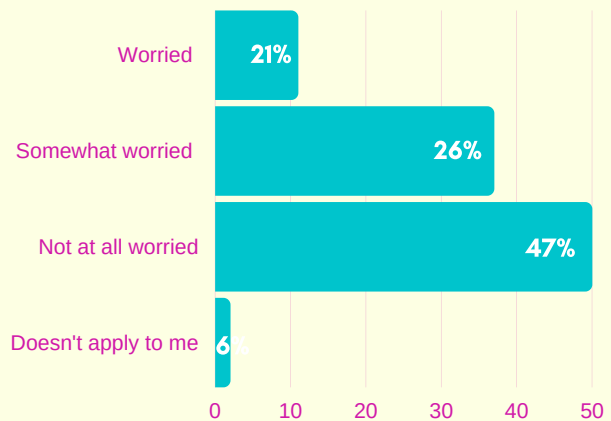
## My child(ren) returning to school



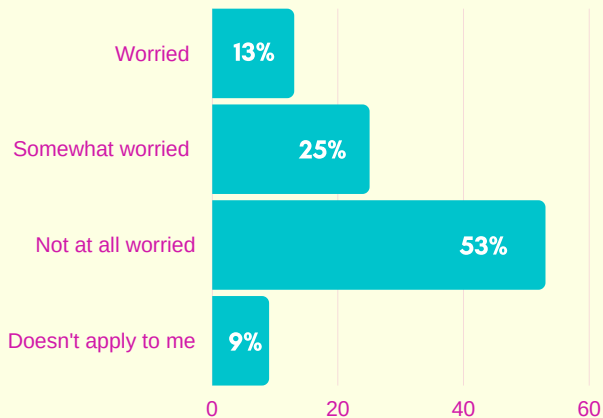
## My child(ren)'s wellbeing



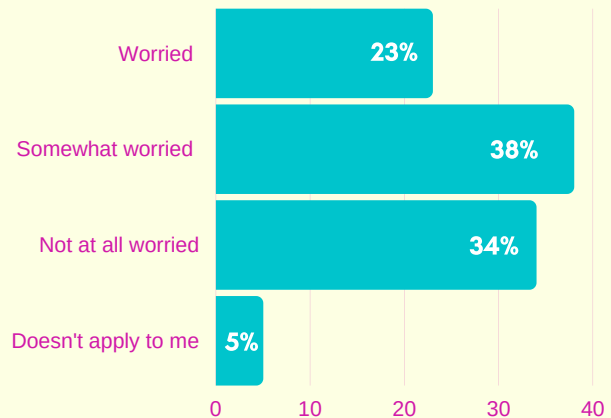
## My mental health



## Having enough food in the house



## My future job prospects





## PARENTS' WELLBEING

Children and young people's wellbeing clearly depends on the wellbeing of their parents/carers. Parents/carers were asked what impact the lockdown was having on their mental health, with 47% reporting that their mental health had been negatively affected. Parents must be given the support to take care of themselves, both now and in the long-term, so they have the resilience and resources to take care of others.



**It has been awful. Husband is a keyworker, I have a busy job. Our son has learning difficulties. I will not look on this period with fond memories. I suspect I will have post-traumatic stress at some point**  
[parent]

## KEY WORKERS

While much of the country has had to stay at home, key workers and their families have clearly been feeling the pressure. Highly stressful working environments, increased working hours, anxiety of catching the virus and attempts to balance work with their child(ren)'s education and childcare, have clearly challenged the resilience of many families.



**'I am a key worker. Home schooling and working full-time has been very challenging and we have all found it stressful. It's also complicated by the fact that the children go between mine and their father's houses, with different rules and home school schedules**  
[parent]

This survey suggests many children and young people of key workers have been adversely affected. As one young person noted.



**I feel lonely since my parents who are key workers and aren't home that often. Only on weekends, mornings. I hardly see them**  
[Year 8 young woman]

## WORKING FROM HOME

It is estimated that around 18.5 million adults are working from home during lockdown. Despite many adults welcoming this opportunity, for others it has created a childcare crisis, with many finding it extremely difficult juggling home working and looking after their child[ren].



**It's been a really tough time trying to manage work commitments with childcare, especially as our child is getting extremely frustrated at being stuck at home with no interaction with other children** [parent]

**Fine at first but we are all under huge strain now. Motivation is a problem. As a parent having to educate them and make sure they are doing schoolwork on top of their exercise, entertainment, food and trying to keep my job too. It's a lot'** [parent]



## LONE PARENT FAMILIES

For lone parent families, particularly those relying solely on one income with no one to share childcare responsibilities with, the pressure has been immense [IPPR: 2020]. This survey suggests there may also be additional safeguarding concerns for children and young people.



**I'm a single parent and a key worker so my 12 year old daughter has been home alone 8 hours a day struggling to stay on top of school work. The school seemed to be actively dissuading key workers to send children in. It's all been horrifically stressful, my daughter has become very isolated and rarely leaves the house** [lone parent]

**It's very challenging to be a solo parent with a child with learning difficulties and endless feeding and shopping made more time consuming by the queuing** [lone parent]

**I have struggled emotionally with lots of ups and downs. I have found it very difficult to continue to work and to look after the kids when all my support systems were suddenly removed** [lone parent]





## ECONOMIC HARDSHIP

The economic hardship brought about by the pandemic is yet to be fully realised, but evidence suggests those in disadvantaged and low-income families are being hardest hit.

Within the context of existing levels of deprivation across Hailsham and Newhaven, it was interesting to note that only 16% of children and young people and 15% of parents reported being worried or somewhat worried about having enough food in the house. However, 38% of parents and nearly a third of children and young people reported being worried or somewhat worried about not having money at home.

Not surprisingly, in a time of extreme economic uncertainty, 40% of parents said they were worried or somewhat worried about their future job security and prospects.

We recognise that this survey by its very nature of being online, was less likely to reach some of the most vulnerable young people and their families, who have limited access to digital technology. Therefore, figures outlined within this section need to be treated with caution, as they may be masking the true extent of the economic hardship being faced by many families.

## IMPACT OF HOME LEARNING

Even those parents who reported coping well during lockdown, many still expressed concerns about supporting their child's home learning, with 50% of worried or somewhat worried about their child missing their education. A minority spoke specifically of the enormous pressure and difficulties home learning was having on their family's wellbeing.

In a recent ONS survey [ONS: 2020], 43% of parents said their children's wellbeing was being negatively impacted by the experience of remote learning. Not surprisingly, some parents said that they were prioritising their child(ren)'s wellbeing over and above home learning, to reduce family conflict.

Parents in this survey specifically mentioned:

- Feeling ill-equipped to support their child(ren)'s home learning and education
- Unrealistic demands from school about the amount of work to be completed leading to children feeling overwhelmed
- A lack of communication and support from schools to keep children motivated and engaged with their education
- Little, if any, access to online lessons and learning



**To be honest it [support from school] would have made no difference. School is the only place to be and there are only so many arguments parents want to have with children about home learning [parent]**

**Essentially, I feel both my children's schools, have landed my children's education as my responsibility, as neither school has actively taken responsibility for it. There has been no online learning provision, no recorded/video lessons or messages, no calls [parent]**

**We have had literally one phone call from a teacher, that's it! There have been a few whole-class Zoom sessions but they don't work that well and discriminate against those kids who don't have access to IT [parent]**



## PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

All schools recognise that parental involvement in children's learning has an extremely positive effect on their performance in school (Clark, 2007) but for a small minority of parents during lockdown, this appears to have been tested to the absolute limits. The survey has highlighted that many parents feel let down or in certain cases, totally abandoned by schools. As such it will be essential for schools to rebuild trust with parents as part of their ongoing recovery plan.



**The only time we have had any interaction from the school is when I have emailed in to ask if the school has a policy to be in contact with its pupils. There will be a lot of work needed to rebuild the school community [parent]**

# RETURNING TO SCHOOL

The majority of parents said they were worried or somewhat worried about their child(ren)'s return to school and were asked what support could help with their child(ren)'s return to school?

Of those who responded, a very small proportion said that their child may not be returning school and a further 10% felt that their child(ren) did not need any support because they had already returned to school.



**I cannot envisage one of my children ever returning to school, he struggled before the pandemic so now its going to be even harder**  
[parent]

**He is doing really well with home schooling and we're happy for him to continue as long as it is the right choice for him. So, supporting parents who want to continue home-schooling would be helpful**  
[parent]



For those who wanted support, the top five priorities include:

- Support with child(ren)'s education i.e. catch-up lessons
- Reassurance and information about COVID-19 measures schools were introducing
- Strategies to support wellbeing particularly for children who were anxious about returning to school
- Increased communication from the school
- Transition support for moving to secondary in September 2020



**My daughter is very worried about going back to school because COVID-19 changes to the school, different teacher and class. Keeping it as the same set up as when she left would really give her stability and security when it is time to return** [parent]

**My son is in Year 6 and has returned to school but has high anxiety and feels unsafe and anxious all day. Anxiety counselling and proper enforcement of social distancing would help him** [parent]



## SUPPORT DURING LOCKDOWN

Almost half of parents said they had not received any support during lockdown. Offline and online community support had proved helpful for 14% parents which had offered some respite during lockdown, whilst others mentioned a number of social media groupchats that neighbours had set up to offer mutual support during lockdown and reduce people's sense of social isolation.



**WhatsApp group of my son's friends' parents has given mutual support and advice. It was a mainly social group before lockdown but now more practical and I expect that will continue [parent]**



## CONCLUSION

This survey has revealed the pandemic and lockdown has had a profound impact on the wellbeing and mental health of children, young people and their families, with many reporting feeling worried, stressed, lonely and unhappy about elements of their life under lockdown.

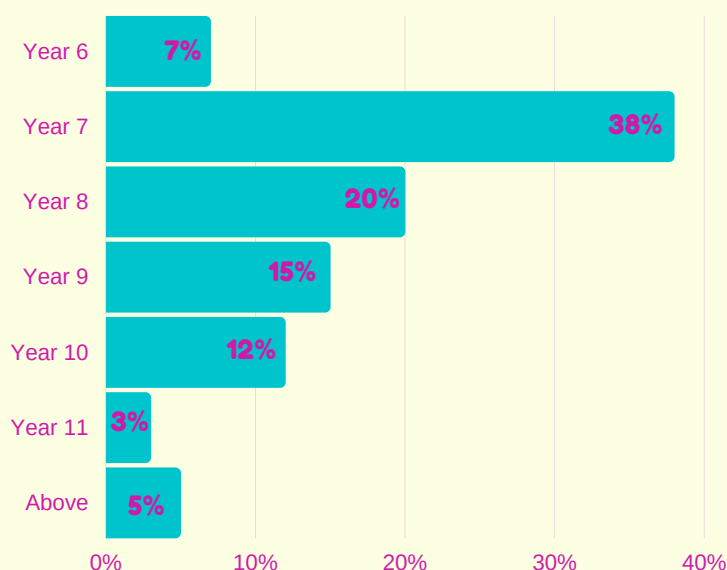
As we come out of lockdown and look to the future, we hope that the findings and key recommendations outlined in this report can go some way to informing local recovery plans for schools, local services and communities.

# APPENDIX - WHO TOOK PART

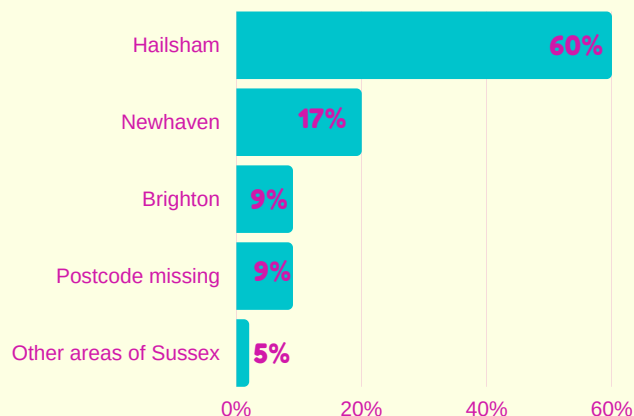
## We heard from 511 children and young people of which:

- 54% were female
- 45% were male
- 1% described their gender another way

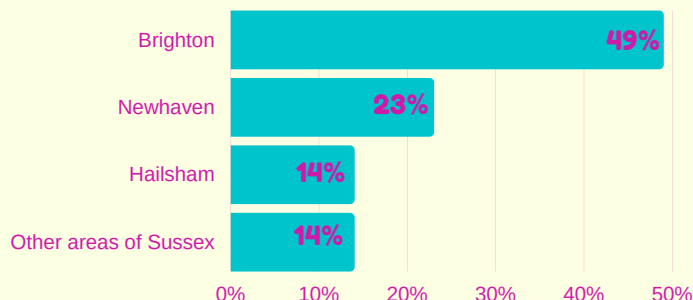
### Those who took part by year group



### Postcode (children and young people)



### Postcode (parents)



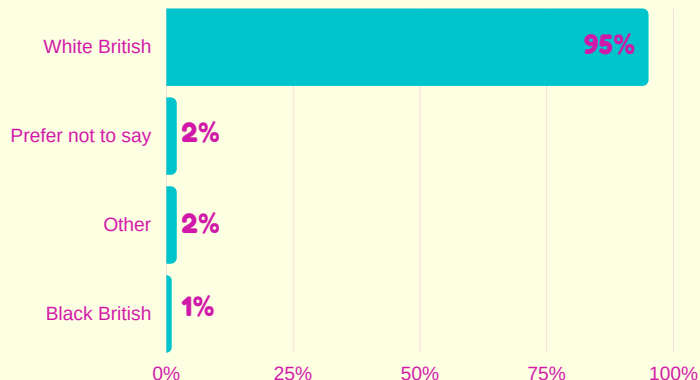
## We heard from 191 parents of which:

- 90% were female
- 10% were male

### Other findings of note:

- 8% cared for another adult
- 2% had a long-term medical condition
- 9% had a mental health difficulty
- 7% said English was not their first language
- 4% had a physical disability

### Ethnicity (parents)



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