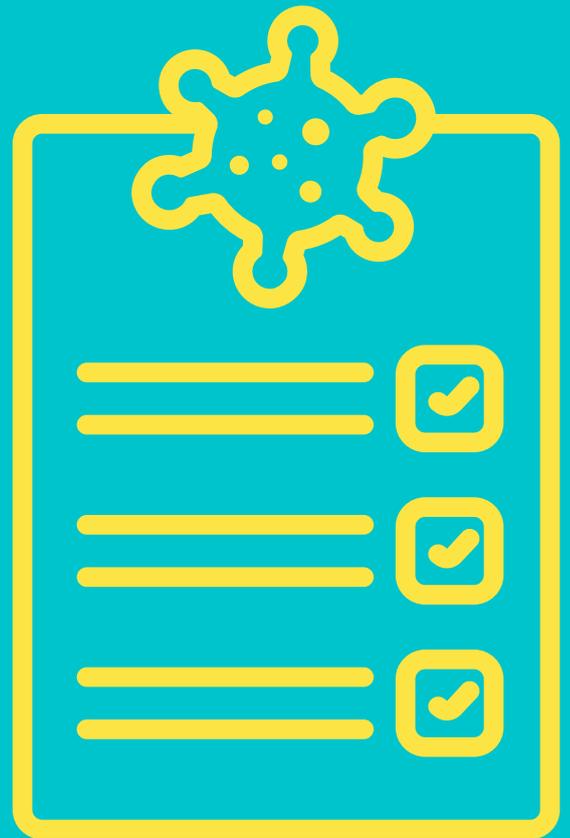




Summary: Generation Lockdown - Wellbeing Audit

AUGUST 2020



SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

We heard from 511 children and young people, 54% were female, 45% male and 1% preferred to described 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 AND LOCKDOWN 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

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, mental health 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

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

INTRODUCTION

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

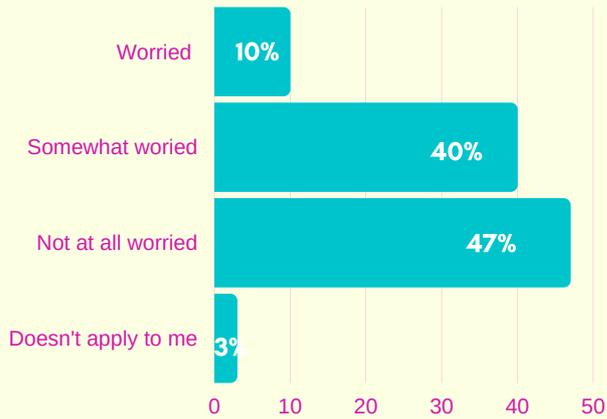
CHANGES TO WELLBEING AND MENTAL HEALTH

Findings from this survey suggest many children and young people have adapted well to the pandemic and lockdown, the closure of schools and home learning.

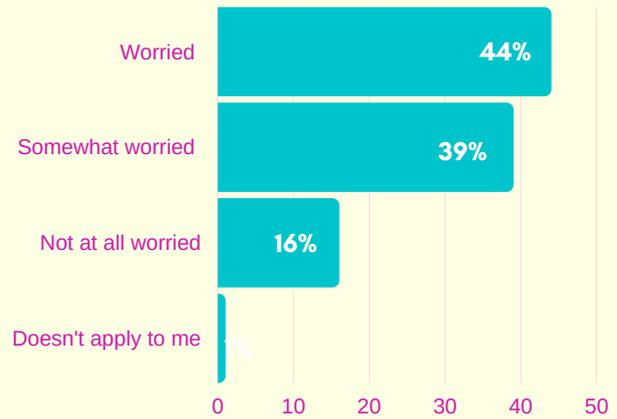
- A quarter of all children and young people reported a decline in their mental health, with 4% stating that it had got worse much and 21% worse during lockdown. Factors contributing to this decline in mental health include worries about their own physical health, friends and loved ones catching the virus and the stress of home learning.
- Sixteen per cent 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.
- Of the 126 children and young people who 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 feeling lonely, social isolation and missing close friends and family who were often part of their network of support.
- When children and young people were asked 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%).
- Young women were almost twice as likely to be worried across all areas of their lives. However, 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 to acknowledge a decline in their mental health, for fear of being seen to be weak.

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

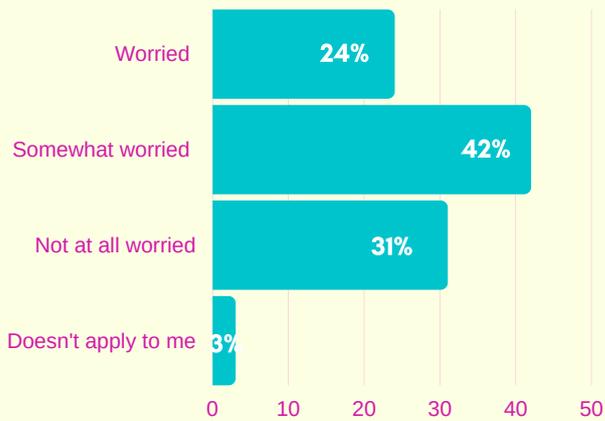
Catching the virus



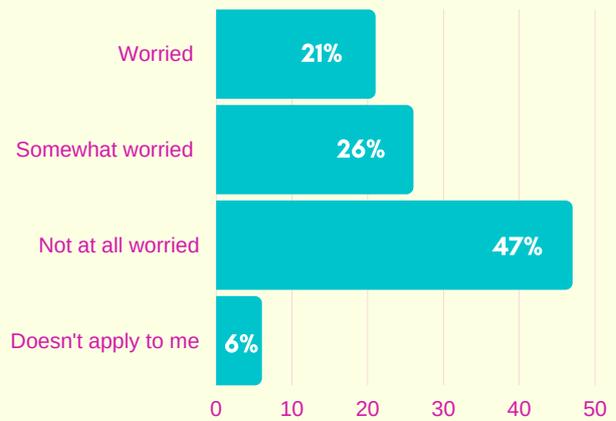
Friends and family catching the virus



My education



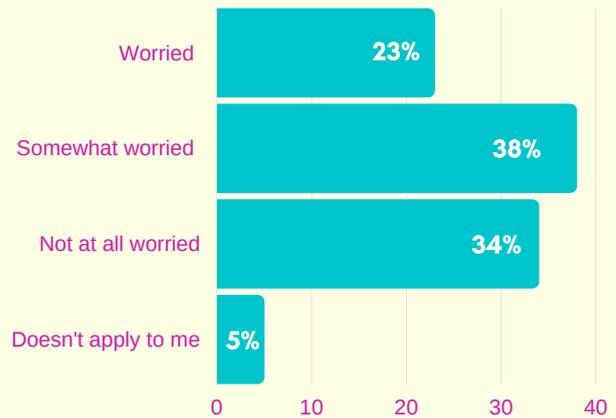
Returning to school after lockdown



Feeling lonely and isolated



The future



HOME LEARNING

Evidence from this and other national surveys suggests many children and young people have found being away from school and the challenges of home learning extremely problematic.

MISSING BEING AT SCHOOL

It was clear the effects of not going to school for some children and young people during the pandemic went way beyond boredom or lack of socialisation, with many missing the routine of school, teachers, learning and seeing school friends.

BENEFITS OF HOME LEARNING

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

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 had been set 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.

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, with the return back to school likely to take some period of adjustment, for children and adults alike.

Children and young people were asked what would help with their return school. The top priorities include:

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

IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC ON FAMILIES

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

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.

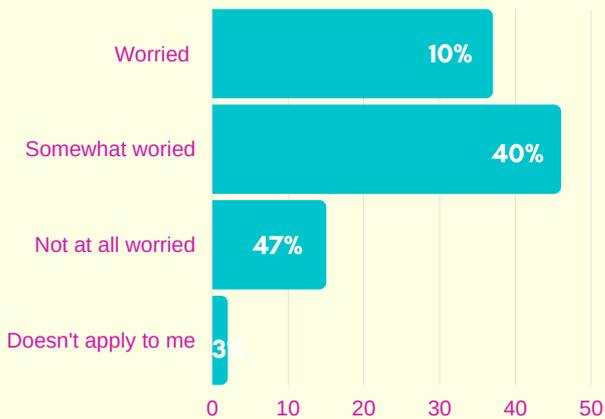
The survey has highlighted that many parents feel let down or in certain cases, totally abandoned by schools. As such, it will be essential for schools to rebuild trust with parents as part of their ongoing recovery plan.

SUPPORT DURING LOCKDOWN

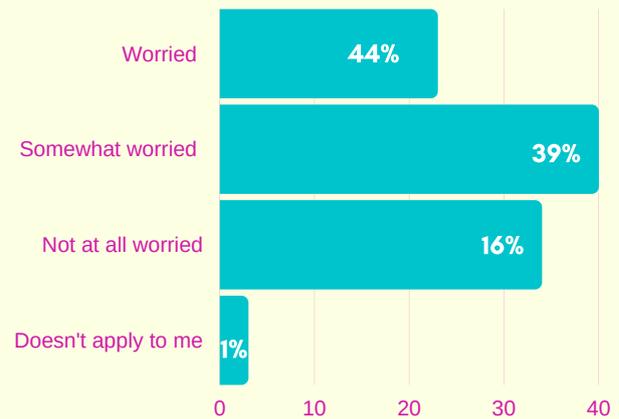
Almost half of parents said they had not received any support during lockdown. Offline and online community support had proved helpful for 14% parents offering some respite, whilst others mentioned a number of social media groupchats that neighbours had set up to offer mutual support during lockdown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

EXTENT TO WHICH PARENTS WERE WORRIED ABOUT AREAS OF THEIR LIVES

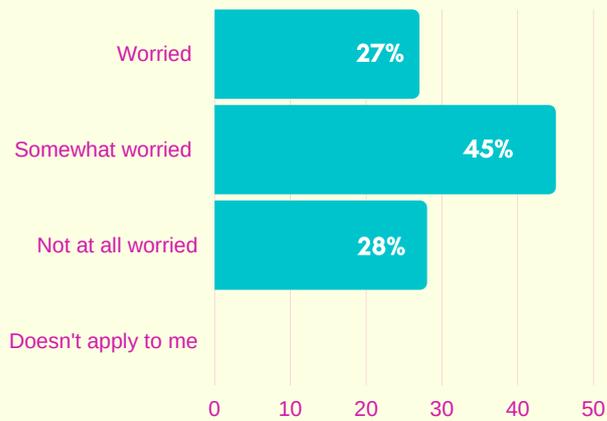
My child(ren) missing education



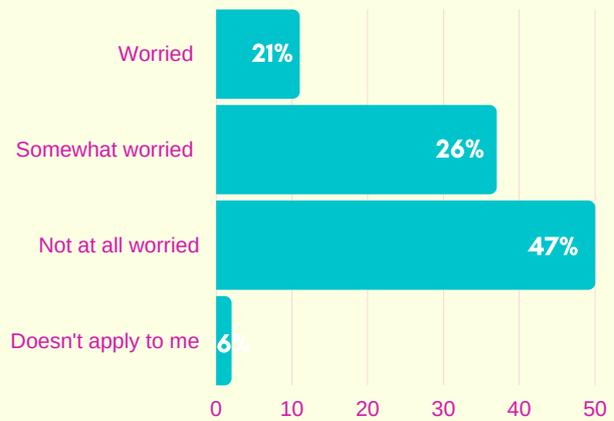
My child(ren) returning to school



My child(ren)'s wellbeing



My mental health



Having enough food in the house



My future job prospects

