

Coronavirus and Me:

A second nationwide survey
of the views and experiences
of children and young people
in Wales.

January 2021



Comisiynydd
Plant Cymru
Children's
Commissioner
for Wales

Introduction

By Professor Sally Holland, Children's Commissioner for Wales

This report presents the views and experiences of 19,737 children and young people, age 3-18, in the current lockdown. It is essential reading for decision-makers and those who support our children every day in Wales.

On 8 January 2021 when the First Minister for Wales spoke to the nation, it became clear that Covid-19 remained a significant threat and lives would not be returning to normal for some time. We began assessing the impact of new lockdowns on children and young people's lives and discussed how we could continue ensuring their voices played a part in decision making here in Wales.

We had been encouraged by how the Government and others had responded to the initial consultation we led in May 2020, which saw nearly 24,000 children and young people share their views with us, and felt that it was the right time to gather children's views and experiences again. A month ago — on 12 January 2021 — we decided to re-run the consultation. We approached the original partnership organisations — Welsh Government, Children in Wales and Welsh Youth Parliament — and all agreed to support by cascading the consultation to as many children and young people as possible. As with the first nationwide survey, we established an agreement with the Government so that they will have access to the full anonymous dataset to inform their decisions.

As a result of our robust project management approach, which sees policy, participation and casework experts from across my organisation work as one relentlessly to protect children's rights, we were able to update our survey questions, our equalities assessment and distribution plans and launch by 20 January. My small team have read and coded every response we received, responded to safeguarding concerns as they arise, analysed and authored what I present to you today in a very tight timescale. We are not aware of any other survey that has brought together UK children's views on such a scale during this pandemic.

What did we find out?

Unsurprisingly, life has been difficult for all age groups. Strong negative feelings were expressed by many children and young people. They expressed frustration and sometimes anger, about the impact of the pandemic on their lives. 3 — 7 year olds spoke about missing friends, family members and experiences. 7-11 year olds' most common comment at the end of the survey related to missing friends, followed by missing their teacher or school and thirdly enjoying time with their families. From mid-teens on, we saw signs of additional distress potentially compounded by worries about exams and their futures. 30% of 17 and 18 year olds who took part are worried 'most of the time'.

Loneliness rates are high and not being able to see friends is having the biggest impact on children's lives, followed by not being able to see other family members and the impact of school and college closures.

Over half enjoy learning at their own pace from home, but many are worried about falling behind with learning — levels of confidence and motivation with education are seen to be decreasing with age. A large majority of 15-18 year olds are concerned about falling behind, their qualifications and are reporting low motivation to do school work.

When comparing results of our surveys it can be seen that 12-18 year olds responding in January 2021 report that they are happy 'most of the time' markedly less than those who responded in May 2020 and rates of feeling worried 'most of the time' are notably higher.

As we found in the May survey, children who often face more barriers to accessing their rights even when there is no global pandemic, have also faced more struggles on average than their peers. Disabled children and young people are more likely to be worried about coronavirus, more likely to feel sad, more likely to feel unsafe.

Children and young people of Black, Asian and other ethnic minority ethnicities are more likely to feel lonely and less likely to say they feel safe.

Despite the worries and concerns that children and young people are reporting, many are also reporting positive experiences, as they did in May 2020, including enjoying spending time at home and receiving good support from schools and youth workers.

What will happen next?

1. In my view these results provide a clear road-map for Welsh Government on what needs to be prioritised for children and young people over the next few weeks and months.
2. The weight of evidence presented here should be considered by TAG, Welsh Government's Technical Advisory Group, alongside the other scientific advice they assess, to curb the disruption to children's lives in a way which is safe to public health.
3. As we believe this work provides such a unique insight into children's lives during the pandemic, we will also be presenting the data to SAGE, the UK's Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies, to provide another dimension to their deliberations on the reopening of schools.

I want children and young people who've shared their views with us recently and throughout this pandemic to know their opinions and experiences shape conversations and negotiations that my team and I have with the Government and others on a daily basis. I will continue to work tirelessly to ensure they're doing all they can to protect children's rights and wellbeing as a key part of the complex major public health decisions required during this global pandemic.

My request to those making and implementing pandemic responses is clear; whilst accepting that the over-riding priority must be on preventing death and serious illness, there are many more dimensions to children's lives that need to be considered. Listen and consider what we've heard through this consultation and take all measures possible to curb the crushing impact this pandemic is having on many young lives.

Lockdown

by Aaruni Bhattacharjee (age 9)

Here is a poem that was submitted as part of a survey response and reproduced here with the kind permission of the poet and his parents.

Lockdown

It was the year 2020
When Coronavirus came
Wiping out the population,
Driving people insane!

There were mostly parked cars
On every single street
You had to follow isolation-
No one to come in and greet.

The school doors were shut to most
We couldn't see our friends.
Zoo animals were stuck in cages
Nobody could even see them!

Lockdown would've been the duller time
Without the internet
Zoom classes, WhatsApp videos-
Without them, boredom would set!

The doctors tried to fight.
Though my Dad had PPE,
The COVID infected him;

He started with a violent cough
The situation was grim.

Corona went on a rampage,
Infecting left and right.
The hospitals got busier.

Despite corona being merciless,
The weather was not.
With the sun smiling on us,
The garden was rather hot!

So, when I think of Lockdown,
I think of it happily.
Lockdown's an opportunity,
To spend time with family.

The four of us were in quarantine
But we made the most of it.
With board games and gardening
And Yoga to stay fit!

How the survey was carried out

This was a cross-sectional survey that was freely available online for all children and young people in Wales aged 7-18, to opt in to completing over a period of 9 days in January 2021 (during the Level 4 lockdown in Wales).

Most of the survey repeated the same, tested questions from our first *Coronavirus and Me* survey in May 2020, however some changes were made to reflect current concerns and following an evaluation of the first survey. Examples of changes included a follow-up question on safety where children had indicated that they felt unsafe 'some of the time' or 'all of the time' and additional questions on experiences of home learning and access to digital equipment. The updated surveys were piloted with children from our advisory panel and community ambassador groups and adjustments made following feedback. This built on the more extensive survey development work with children and young people that was done to create the original survey in May 2020.

Similar to the first survey in May 2020, as participants were to be self-selecting, care was taken to ensure that children and young people in as wide a range of situations as possible could participate and we therefore made the following provisions:

- The survey was open bilingually to ages 7-18 and took three forms: a version for 12-18s, a slightly shorter and simpler version for 7-11s and an accessible version with symbols to assist reading for 7-18s.
- We also made available an option to share views using pictures or words that was mainly aimed at 3-7s but also available to older children who preferred to communicate in that way.
- We used similar methods of distribution and promotion to diverse groups as in the first [Coronavirus and Me survey](#).

Limitations of method used

It was important for us that the surveys were quick and easy to complete for a wide range of ages and abilities; to ensure a broad spectrum of views and also to feed in quickly to the Welsh Government during the Level 4 lockdown. This restricted the number of demographic questions we could ask, meaning it is not possible to compare results with confidence to the whole population. The survey was only available online due to the ongoing public health restrictions which will have limited accessibility for some, but through our networks and partner agencies we were able to reach a wide range of children from across Wales.

Comparability with the first Coronavirus and Me survey results

The first and second Coronavirus and Me surveys are cross-sectional surveys and each designed to take a 'temperature test' of large numbers of children's experiences and views at crucial times in the pandemic. Not all of those completing the survey will have completed the survey on both occasions and therefore the survey cannot confirm with statistical confidence the changes or trends between the two time periods. However, due to the large size of the samples each time, the results give a strong indication of children's views and experiences at each of the sampling time periods, and we have noted where there are large differences arising between the two survey periods.

Safeguarding

The survey asked a number of questions relating to feelings and safety. During the survey children had access to information about how to seek help if they needed it. On submitting the survey, children arrived at the Children's Commissioner's [Information Hub](#) webpage, which contains information about ways of accessing help as well as advice on rights, mental health and safety.

All free-text comments were read by members of the Children's Commissioner's team on a daily basis and any comments that gave rise to concerns about safety were highlighted and we checked whether the child had volunteered any identifying information. On two occasions a young person submitted a name along with some safety concerns and we made an immediate referral to local safeguarding services.

In writing the mental health and wellbeing sections of this report, particularly any references to self-harm, we have followed [Samaritans'](#) advice.

Analysis of free-text comments

All free-text responses were coded using a coding frame developed based on the first 1,000 responses. Quantified findings of free-text comments are therefore included in this report and direct quotations are also used to illustrate key themes.

The 3-7s pictorial tasks were all read and coded by one member of our team, using a coding frame developed for the first *Coronavirus and Me* survey.

A note about numbers and statistics

This report notes some large observable differences in experiences between groups, for example disabled and non-disabled children and between children from different ethnic groups. Where differences appeared smaller, or where sub-sample sizes were relatively small, Chi Square tests were conducted on variables to check whether this result could have happened by chance. Wherever differences are reported between groups (for example, stating that one group is 'more likely' or 'less likely' to have stated something) it has been found to be statistically significant (using p-value <.05).

Some questions were answered by large numbers of respondents and some had fewer responses. The survey was designed so that respondents saw tailored questions according to their answers on their age or education setting, which meant that children weren't asked questions that would not be relevant to them. In addition, it was not compulsory to answer every question for a response to be submitted.

Numbers given as percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number. Where percentages are used they refer to the percentage of respondents answering each individual question, rather than to the percentage taking part in the survey overall.

Who took part?

In total, **19,737** children and young people participated in the January 2021 *Coronavirus and Me* consultation.

19,528 took part by completing a survey:

- **8,832** completed the 7-11 survey
- **10,363** Completed the 12-18 survey
- **333** completed the accessible survey (ages 7-18)

In addition, **221** children took part by completing an open-ended activity to express their experiences through writing and drawing. **202** of these responses were completed by children under 7 and **19** did not include their age.

This compares with a total of **23,719** children and young people that took part in the May 2020 consultation. This difference possibly reflects that the May 2020 consultation was open for fourteen days, whereas the January 2021 consultation was open for only 9 days. This was a deliberate choice to ensure the results could be made available quickly to inform Government decision making.

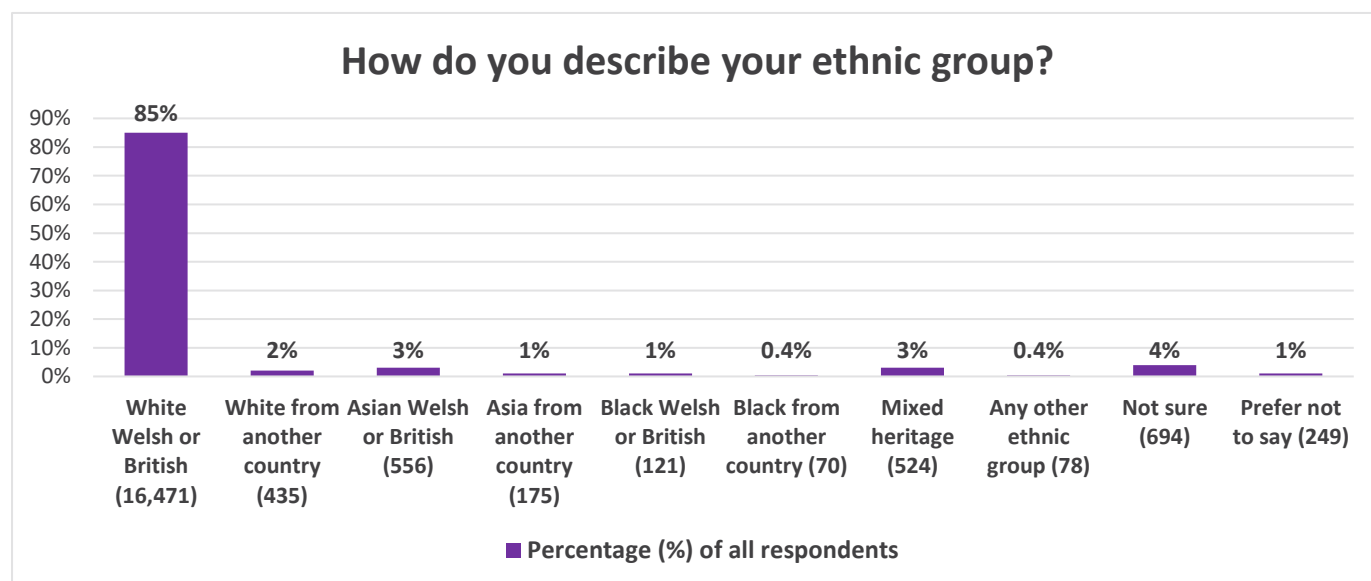
Survey responses were received from every local authority area in Wales.

Equalities Information

510 disabled children and young people took part in the survey, a total of 3% of the overall respondents. Another 2% of children and young people preferred not to say if they were disabled.

Survey responses were received from all ethnic groups listed, with numbers of respondents across all surveys shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Ethnicity of respondents



Survey responses were received from children and young people of all ages between 7 and 18. Representation is fairly evenly split for ages 9 to 15, with slightly lower figures for those aged 7 and 8. Representation was lower again for 16, 17 and 18 year olds, with 18 year olds the age group with the lowest representation (356 respondents, 2% of total). It is noted that young people aged 16+ may also be accessing other surveys designed for the adult population.

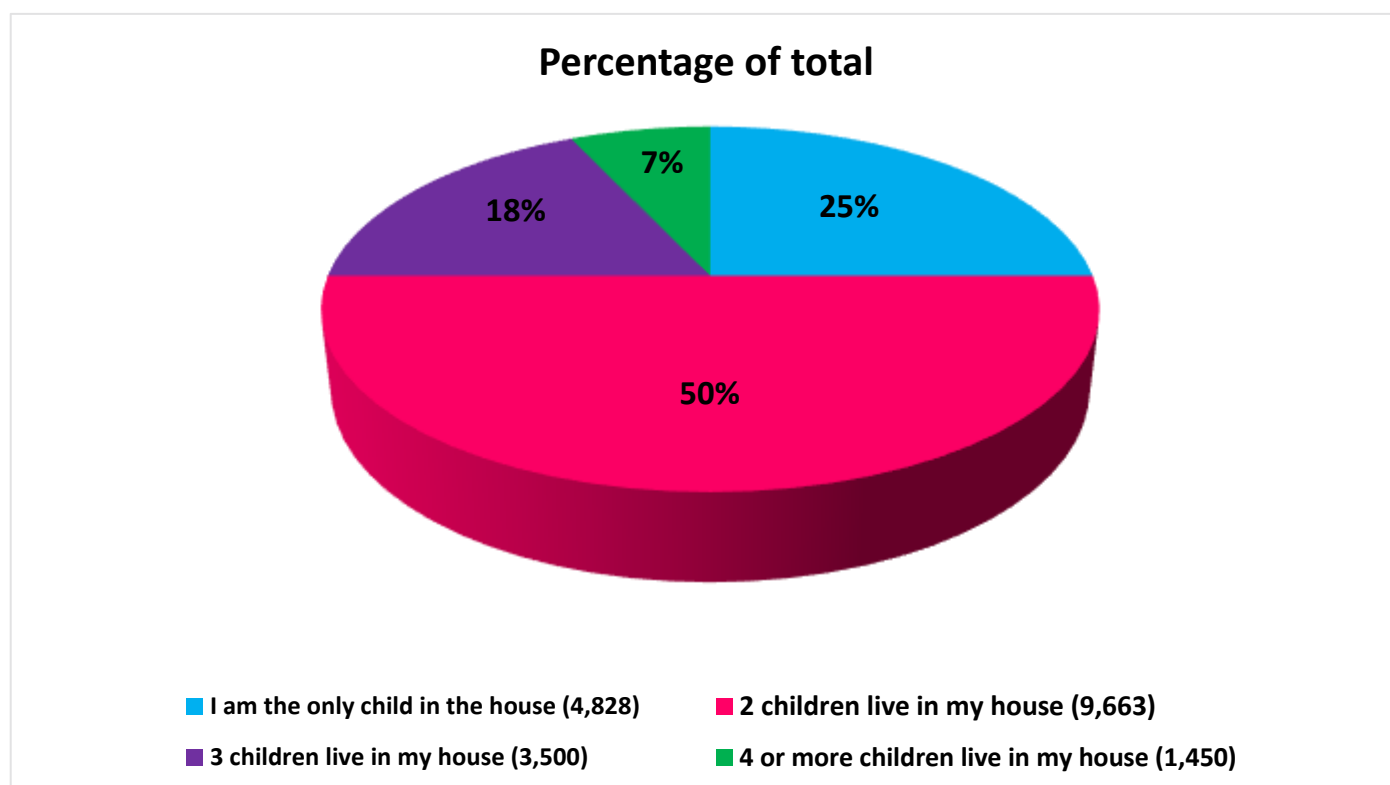
Place of education

Respondents told us about their usual place of education. 18,551 (96%) of respondents go to school, 320 (2%) go to college, 543 (3%) are usually educated at home, 9 (<1%) are doing traineeships or apprenticeships and 31 (<1%) are not in education. Where relevant we break down the information in this report to show the different experiences of children and young people who attend different education settings.

Numbers of children in the home

Experiences of only children were brought to our attention through the May 2020 survey period, and one child suggested we ask a direct question about siblings. So in the January 2021 survey we also asked respondents to tell us how many children lived in their home. This was so we could see if the number of children in the home affects how children are feeling about coronavirus or how they are accessing their rights. The numbers are shown in the table below. Where relevant we break down information in our report to show the different experiences of children and young people from households with different amounts of children.

Figure 2: Number of children in the home



Section I: THEMES

Feelings

All participants were asked how worried they were about Coronavirus on the day they answered the survey. 19,395 children and young people answered this question. 33% reported not feeling worried about Coronavirus, 14% were more worried than the previous week, 8% were less worried and 45% felt the same amount of worry as the previous week.

It is clear, and unsurprising, that children and young people have concerns about the virus. As seen in figure 6: What is making you feel unsafe? (see page 13) this is more often a concern about others in their family catching the virus, rather than concerns about catching the virus themselves.

There are some marked differences in reported feelings between the January 2021 respondents and the May 2020 respondents. In May 2020 50% of 12-18s reported feeling happy 'most of the time'. This reduced to 39% in January 2021. Other feelings for 12-18s also show negative trends, including a jump in those reporting feeling worried 'most of the time' from 14% of respondents to 20%.

7-11s responding in January also report more negative feelings on all indicators than the May 2020 respondents, but these differences were smaller.

Figure 3: How have you been feeling during the Coronavirus crisis?

	Most of the time		Some of the time		Not very often	
Age	7-11	12-18	7-11	12-18	7-11	12-18
Happy %	59	39	34	44	7	17
Worried %	11	20	39	43	50	37
Sad %	8	22	41	45	51	33
Safe %	86	70	12	24	2	6
Lonely %	14	28	35	38	51	34

It is noticeable that while feelings are fairly stable between the ages of 7 and 11, between the ages of 12 and 17 feelings become more negative in a linear fashion with age (we observed a levelling off for 17-18 year olds). For example, 53% of 12 years olds report feeling happy 'most of the time' while only 21% of 17 year olds do. 13% of 12 year olds report feeling worried most of the time, while 30% of 17 year olds do.

Figure 4: the percentage of young people who feel happy and safe 'most of the time'

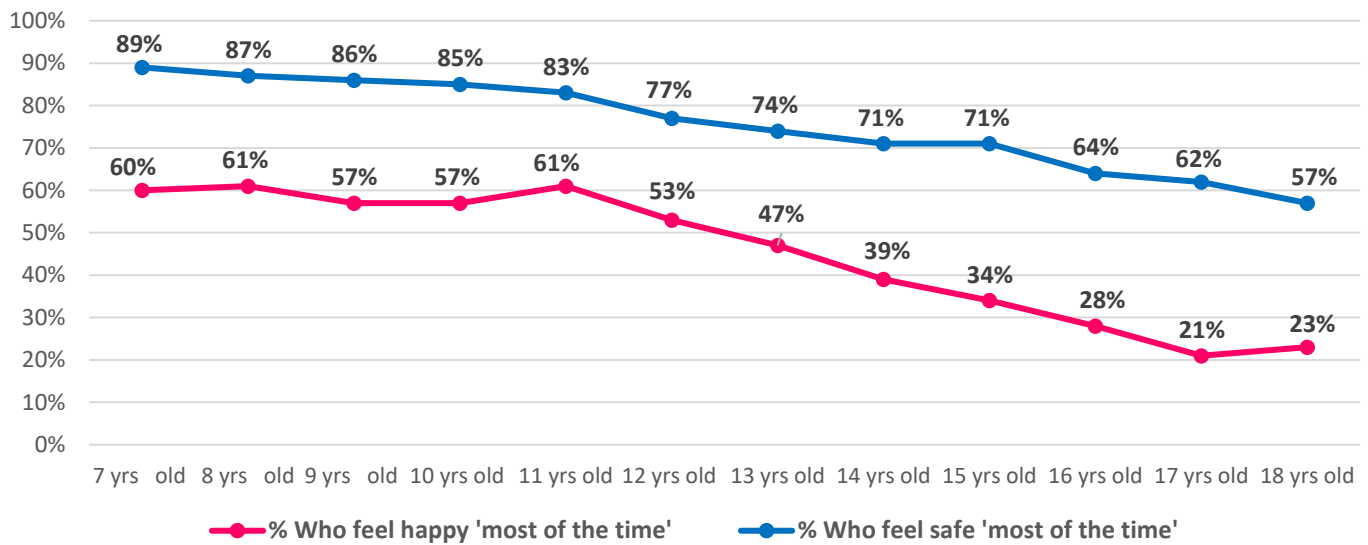
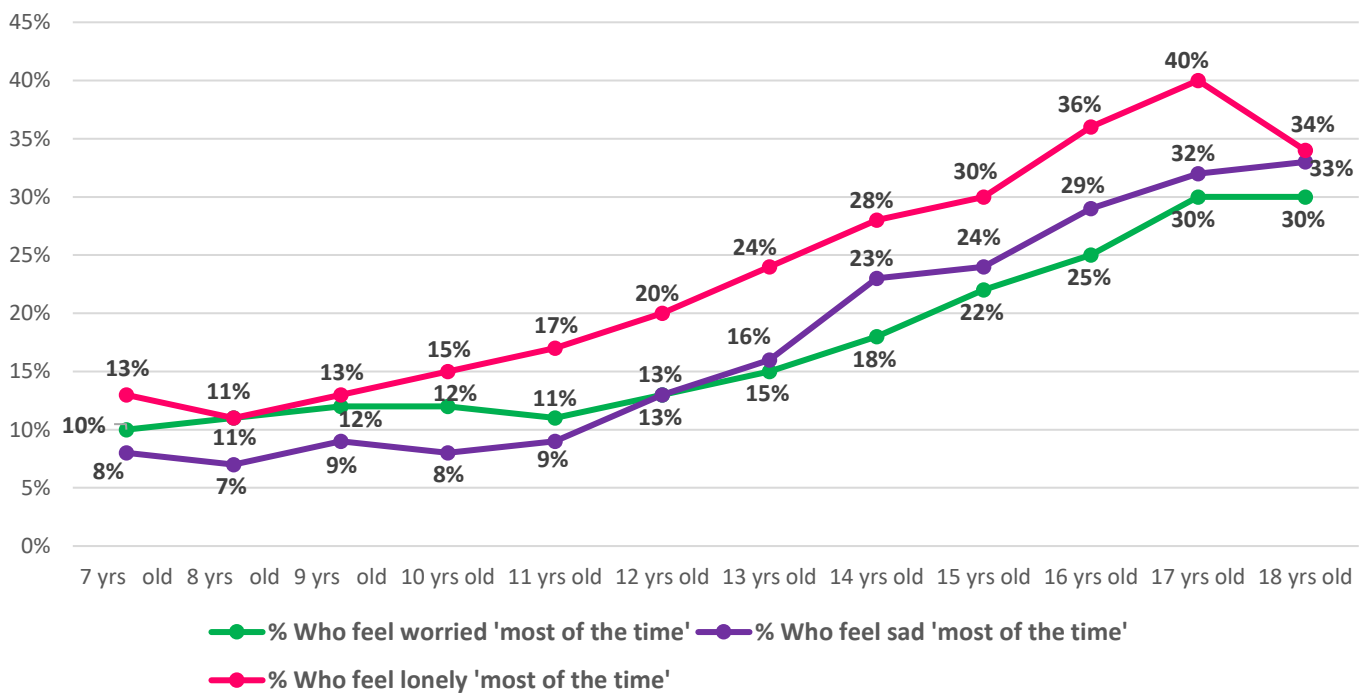


Figure 5: the percentage of young people who feel worried, sad and lonely 'most of the time'



Children and young people aged 7-18 answering the accessible survey were asked a less complex question: How have you been feeling about Coronavirus? Choose as many as you like. The responses were: Happy 23% (77), Sad 47% (157), Safe 43% (143), Worried 40% (133), Lonely 40% (133). Results were similar to May 2020 except that January's respondents reported lower levels of feeling safe.

Strong negative feelings are expressed by many children and young people, expressing frustration and, in some cases, anger about the impact of the pandemic on their lives.

"I feel depressed about being stuck at home. I really want the school to open as soon as possible to see my friends and teachers. I realise now how important going to school is after not being able to go to school because of the coronavirus. The pandemic affects me physically and psychologically." (16 year old central south Wales)

"I feel really angry and frustrated that nearly a year of my childhood has been lost. I love and thrive in going to school and the total lack of any structure and routines is really affecting me now. I have put on weight as i can't even play football which i love. I'm really sociable and haven't seen friends for months and have no idea when i will again. Every day is the same and i feel quite hopeless as the Welsh government keep pushing back when we can get back to school which is what i really want to do more than anything, to have something to get up for each day. I want this to be over and start living my life again." (15 year old south east Wales)

"I hate this pandemic, and I hate locking down. I want to train football with my friends, go for walks with my family and gather with friends and have fun. Boring" (10 year old mid Wales)

The fundamental ways in which life has changed are mentioned by many children and young people. Although some are enjoying the change to their lives, others express worries about when things will change and the impact on them:

"All the normal things and routines have disappeared" (9 year old south-west Wales)

"Ni fyddwn ni byth yn cael yr amser yma nôl. Rydyn ni wedi colli ar gymaint o brofiadau. Rwy'n poeni'n fawr ar effaith hyn ar fy nghanlyniadau a fy nyfodol." (16 year old central south Wales)

"That we wont go back to normal for years" (14 year old central south Wales)

As we found in the May 2020 survey some children and young people in January 2021 report finding positives in their current situation or in some cases finding life better than before:

"I am enjoying lockdown more than school and am much less stressed than I used to be" (13 year old central south Wales)

"It's not been a bad experience for me to be honest. I've also decided on what I want to do in my GCSE's and my career as well. I've also had a lot of time for researching things (I do enjoy my research :) so that's nice. I've also had some amazing ppl come into my life!" (13 year old north west Wales)

"Yn ystod y cyfnod clo rwy'n teimlo fy mod i wedi datblygu fel person ac wedi aeddfedu'n sylweddol—rwy wedi bod yn eithaf hapus yn ystod y cyfnodau clo o'r herwydd." (16 year old south central Wales)

"I have loads of fun with my Mam and my cats. I see my friends online and play with them. I feel confident about maths now." (11 year old south central Wales)

Loneliness

We asked about loneliness for the first time in this survey. It is noticeable that 12-18s are twice as likely to report feeling lonely 'most of the time' (28%) than those aged 7-11 (14%). Children without siblings report slightly higher levels of loneliness than the average for their age groups, although this was not as large a difference as may have been expected. For example 17% of 7-11 year olds without siblings report feeling lonely 'most of the time', compared to an average of 14% for this age group. Amongst young people aged 12-18, those with four or more children in the home report similar levels of feeling lonely most of the time (32%) to those without siblings (31%).

"Dydw i ddim yn teimlo'n hapus ar ben fy hun" (8 year old north-west Wales)

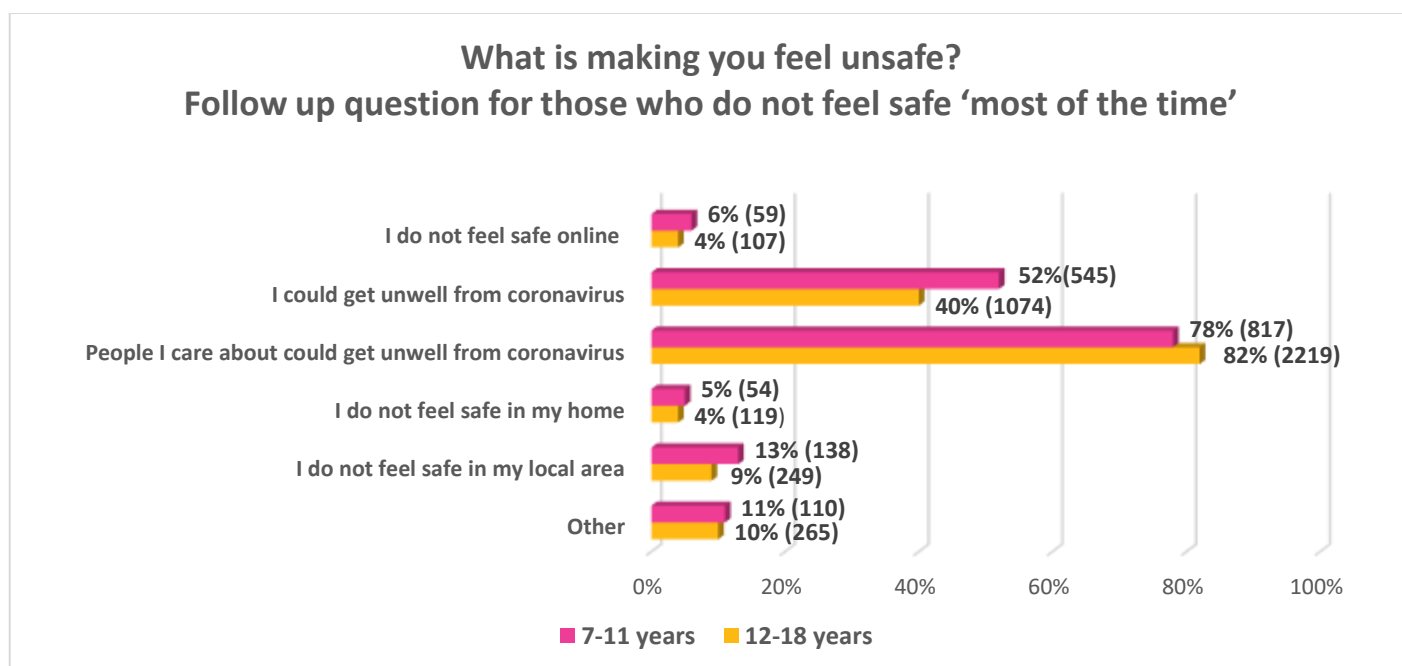
"I have nobody to talk to" (14 year old, central south Wales)

Safety

All children and young people who stated that they feel safe only 'some of the time' or 'not very often' were asked a follow-up question about why they feel unsafe, with a drop-down menu of options to choose from. The most common reason by far for feeling unsafe across all groups is 'People I care about could get unwell from coronavirus'. The least common reason for feeling unsafe is 'I do not feel safe in my home', although it is concerning that 173 survey respondents stated that they do not feel safe at home. It is also to be expected that some of the children who are least likely to feel safe may not have been supported to respond to this survey.

Figure 6: What is making you feel unsafe?

NB: Follow up question for those who do not feel safe 'most of the time'



Free-text comments could be added to this follow-up question. For all age groups, the reasons for feeling unsafe are very varied. Of the 12-18 year olds who added comments on safety, 20% (33) mention concerns

about their mental health. Ten young people raise concerns about their own safety and six younger children mentioned problems at home. A further 64 children and young people mention safeguarding concerns in the free-text section at the end of the survey. As mentioned in the methods section, we were able to follow two of these up with local safeguarding services as they added their names to their comment.

Except for some fears common in childhood (spiders, monsters under the bed) concerns expressed by children generally reflect the debates we see in wider society: worries about those they love catching covid-19, fears about being in situations where others are not abiding by the rules, and concerns about the secondary impact on their mental health and education. Small numbers also mentioned feeling not safe at home.

Several are concerned about safety in shops, their community and in school:

"People are not taking coronavirus as seriously due to the vaccine so they aren't being as cautious as they were during the first lockdown." (15 year old, central south Wales)

"If I leave the house I might catch it" (9 year old, west Wales)

"Newyddion mae lot o pobol yn marw. Gweld pobl ddim yn gwisgo mask." (11 year old, south west Wales)

"I worry about the corona virus and I have nightmares that I can't escape" (age 10 north-east Wales)

Several express concerns about others close to them, including vulnerable relatives and parents who work in services including public transport and the NHS (critical workers):

"My little sister is poorly and I'm scared we can give her covid." (9 year old, south-east Wales)

"I'm a young carer and cannot afford to have COVID come into the house with my extremely vulnerable grandparents." (17 year old, south-east Wales)

"I don't feel safe when My Parents go to work because I want them to be safe even though they are key workers." (11 year old west Wales)

Children and young people also describe feelings of sadness and worry about their current lives, including changes at home and loneliness.

"I have to say (I'm) fine because all my friends are listening on teams meetings but I just want someone to listen to me. My dad shouts all the time coz he lost his job, I know my mum isn't eating properly coz she gives me her portion. My dad doesn't notice coz he's too cross but I notice it... I am being brave and doing all my school work so I hope Mrs xx will speak to me. But she never talks to me. I am lonely but nobody cares about me except my mum. I love my mum and sister but my dad upsets me sooo much that I could cry." (10 year old north Wales)

"My mum losing her job." (13 year old west Wales.)

A number of 12-18s mentioned their mental health as a reason they don't feel safe.

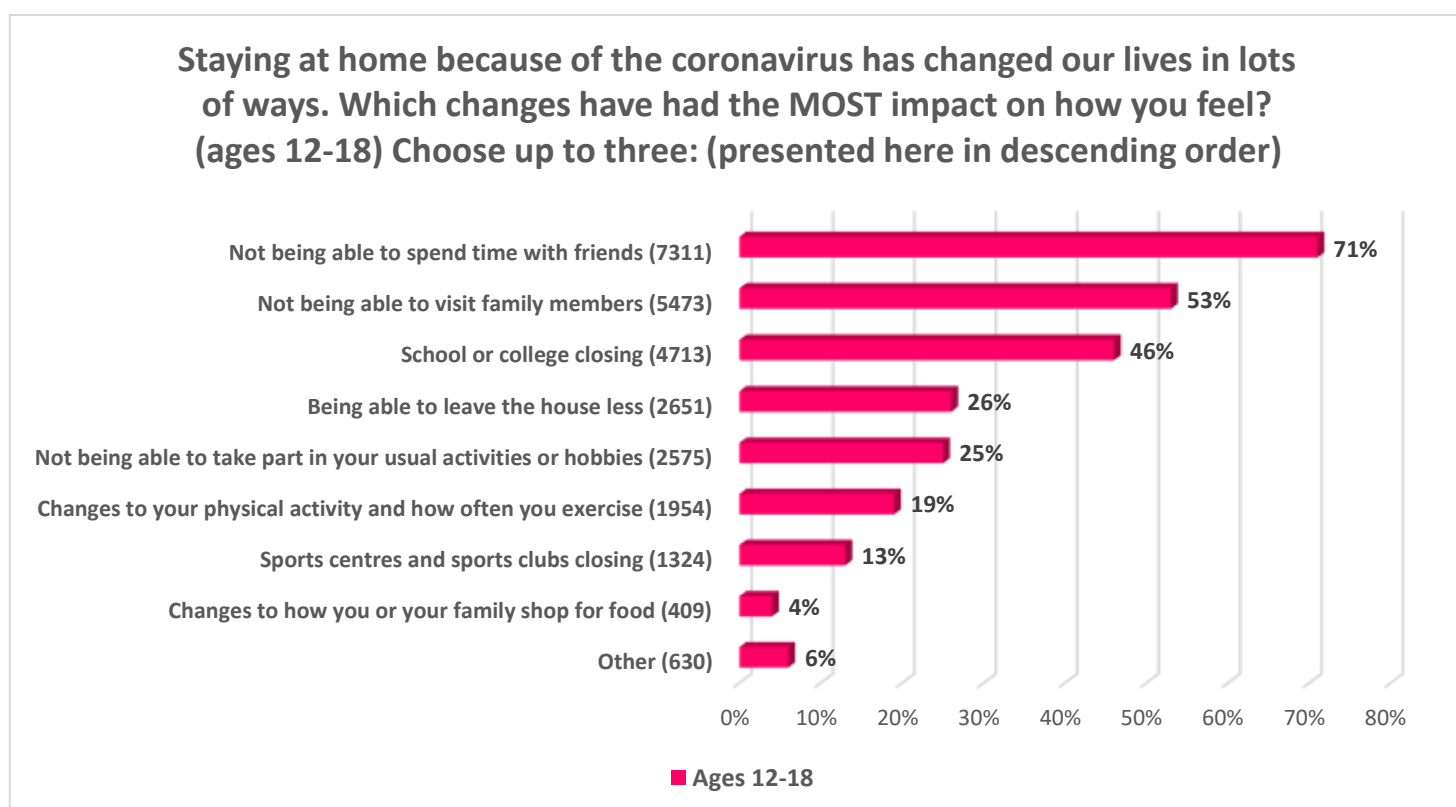
"Coronavirus and not going to school and just my mental health is going downhill." (14 year central south Wales)

"I don't think my mental health can cope for much longer." (14 year old central south Wales)

What changes have had the most impact on how you feel?

12-18 year olds were asked which aspects of the current restrictions are having the most impact on the way they feel. The results are very similar to May 2020 with missing friends, family and school/college being the top three issues. As in May 2020, not being able to see friends is by far the most commonly selected reason. This could be linked to the loneliness findings above.

Figure 7:



3,792 children aged 7-11 chose to add a comment at the end of the survey. The two most common observations from those comments relate to missing friends (985 comments), missing school or teachers (628) and enjoying being at home with family (283). Children and young people completing the accessible survey raise similar issues with top issues being missing friends, followed by wanting to go back to school and missing going out/activities.

12-18s similarly raise a very varied range issues in their comments at the end of the survey. 3711 chose to add a comment. While very many relate to education as discussed below, 575 mention the negative impact of the current period on their health and wellbeing and 327 note that they are missing friends or feeling lonely.

What extra help do you need?

We asked children and young people taking all surveys what extra help they need during this time. Respondents could tick as many suggestions they wanted from a list.

Just over one third of respondents answering the 7-11 and 12-18 surveys say they don't need any extra help. But only a quarter of the respondents answering the accessible survey say this.

Respondents to all surveys identify the following as the **top three priorities**:

1. Support to make you feel happy and well
2. Support to do school work
3. More information on things to do when you are staying at home

However, these were prioritized in a different order by the different survey respondents. 7-11 year olds most commonly chose 'more information on things to do at home' (24% of 7-11 year olds chose this), whereas 12-18 year olds most commonly chose the other two support needs (21% of 12-18 year olds chose each of these categories). Respondents to the accessible survey most commonly chose 'support to do school work' (51% chose this).

In addition, across all three surveys a percentage of children and young people identify they would like help to 'make sure my family has the food we need'. This is reported by 14% of accessible survey respondents, 11% of children answering the 7-11 survey and 4% of young people answering the 12-18 survey.

Emotional and Mental Health Support

Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child:
Your right to good food and water and to see a doctor if you are ill.

This section reports on children and young people's confidence in getting support for their mental health and wellbeing. All questions are the same as those we asked in May 2020, and the results from each iteration are compared below.

The results indicate that children answering in January 2021 are slightly less likely to say they know how to get help if they need support to feel happy and well now than those who responded in May 2020. However, the differences are relatively small in most cases.

Do you know how to get help if you need support to feel happy and well?

We asked those responding to the 7-11 year old survey and the accessible version of the survey whether they knew how to get help if they needed support to feel happy and well.

74% (n=6356) of children answering the 7-11 survey say they know how to get help if they need support to feel happy and well. Children appear to be more confident to say they know how to get help as they get older, within the 7-11 year old range. 65% (n=899) of 7 year olds say they know how to get help, compared to 82% (n=1468) of 11 year olds. The May 2020 survey results revealed a similar pattern.

Of those children answering the accessible version of the survey, 65% (n=213) report they know how to get help if they need support to feel happy and well. This is down slightly from 72% (n=476) of those who answered the May 2020 survey. 12% (n=38) said they did not know where to go for help; and 27% (n=88) aren't sure. These are similar percentages to the May 2020 findings.

"Mae'n well gen i weithio o adref achos mae'n galluogi i fi ymlacio a gwneud y pethau rwy'n caru llawer mwy. Mae yna hefyd llai o bwysau arnom ni a felly teimlaf fod fy iechyd meddwl wedi gwella llawer dros y cyfnod 'lockdown'." (14 year old, south central Wales)

"I feel worried and a bit anxious and a bit confident. School work is ok. I feel really safe at home. I want to go back to school when this whole thing ends." (7 year old, North Wales)

"I know life can be hard sometime but ever since COVID and lockdown I have been feeling a bit down and I don't feel safe telling anyone." (9 year old, Mid Wales)

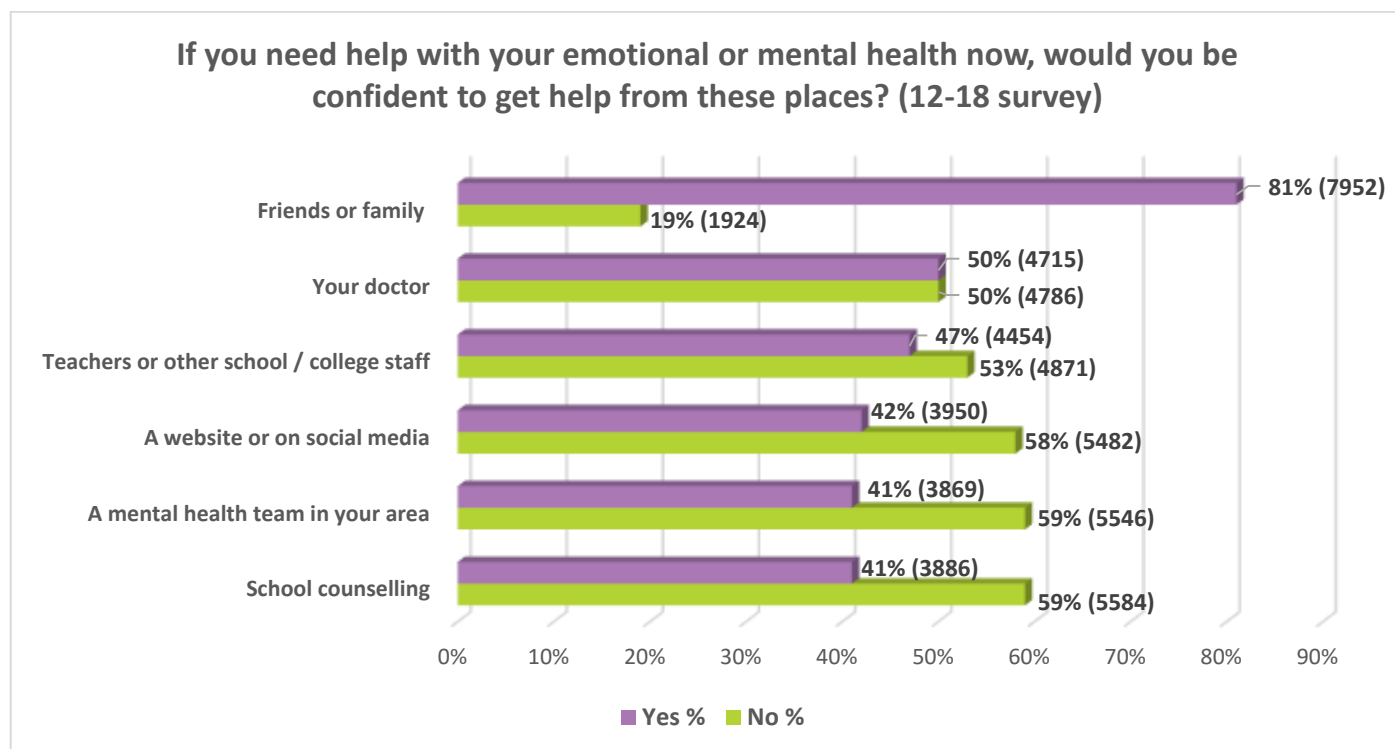
If you need help with your emotional or mental health now, would you be confident to get help from these places?

We asked 12-18 year olds whether they felt confident getting help with their emotional or mental health from a list of options. A large majority of 81% (n=7952) felt confident getting help from friends or family. This is consistent with results from May 2020. However, no other option on the list was selected by a majority of respondents meaning that most of the 12-18 year olds responding say they do not know where to go for help beyond their friends and family.

The number of respondents selecting each option is slightly lower than amongst those who responded to the May 2020 survey, other than school counselling, which was similar, being 40% (n=3907) in May 2020 and 41% (n=3886) in January 2021.

The biggest difference since the May 2020 survey is confidence in getting help from a website or social media, with 53% (n=5237) in May 2020 saying they would be confident compared to 42% (n=3950) in January 2021. It is interesting to note that confidence in accessing online support appears to have decreased in this way despite the increase in online emotional and mental health support available for children and young people.

Figure 8: If you need help with your emotional or mental health now, would you be confident to get help from these places? (12-18 survey)



Younger respondents to our 12-18 survey are more likely to be confident than older respondents in getting help from most of the options given. 12 year olds are most likely to say they are confident getting help from school counselling (47%, n=853) and from friends or family (87%, n=1687). 17 year olds were least likely to say they were confident getting help from school counselling (34%, n=809). 43% (n= 784) of 12 year olds and 43% (n=735) of 13 year olds say they are confident getting help from a mental health team in their area, making them the most likely to say this. 17 year olds are again least likely (36%, n=290).

When it comes to help from a website or on social media, the general pattern is an increase in confidence with age. 34% (n=614) of 12 year olds say yes to this option, while 50% (n=406) of 17 year olds and 53% (n=174) of 18 year olds say this. It is positive to note that younger respondents expressed confidence in some other areas however, as noted above.

There were no obvious patterns related to age regarding getting help from school or college staff, or from your doctor.

At the end of the survey we asked if there was anything else respondents wanted to tell us. Of those 3711 12-18 year olds who chose to respond, comments relating to the negative effects of the pandemic and related restrictions on their mental health, wellbeing and stress accounted for, by some way, the most responses (15%, n=575). The next most popular comments related to struggling with learning (10%, n=358).

"I suffer with mental health issues and have been unable to see my doctors all my appointments have been through calls this have effected me a lot also I don't go to normal school I have tutoring and even when the schools open the leisure centre is shut and that's where I go." (14 year old, South East Wales)

"My mood has improved, as the level of interaction with my new teachers is on a different scale to last spring/summer, which was very challenging and made me feel very anxious about my future chances in progressing to university." (17 year old, South East Wales)

"Mae angen cymorth iechydd meddwl ar arddegwyr. Efallai sesiynau un ar un gyda athrawon â hyfforddiant cywir." (17 year old, south central Wales)

"I am unable to tell my school about my mental health illnesses even though I really need to as I am unable to do phone calls. I would be able to tell them in physical school as it would be less overwhelming for me. I have told my parents but they don't believe me so I really wish I had the extra help from school. I think a system needs to be set up to be able to message a teacher rather than call or something like that." (17 year old, North Wales)

What have you been doing to keep a healthy body and mind?

We asked children and young people what they are doing to keep a healthy body and mind, with respondents able to select as many options as applicable from a list of activities. Most children and young people say they are exercising outdoors.

7-11 year olds are most likely to say that they are doing outdoor exercise (75%, n=6,603), followed by speaking with family (68%, n=5,954) and doing activities from school (66%, n=5,804).

12-18 year olds are most likely to say that they are speaking with friends (63%, n=3,453), followed by using social media to stay in touch (60%, n=6,190) and doing schoolwork (59%, n=6,032).

"Oherwydd fi personoliaeth, roeddwn i yn iawn am flwyddyn dwethaf a blwyddyn hyn (hyd at hyn), felly roeddwn i wedi ymlacio mwy a ffeindio sut i ymlacio yn fwy." (12 year old, south west Wales.)

"I have been doing more cooking and sewing with my nanny and papa and i have been doing more lego with my mum and i have been playing with my dad and sister and brother." (10 year old, South West Wales.)

Children who live in only child households are most likely to say they are speaking with friends to keep a healthy body and mind. Children in households with four or more children are least likely. 61% (n=1,071) of 7-11 year old children who live in only child households say they are speaking with friends, while 44% (n=285) of children in four or more children households say this. 65% (n=1928) of 12-18 year old children who live in one child households say this compared to 54% (n=411) of children in households with four or more children.

Children in households with four or more children are also less likely to say they are speaking with family. Among 7-11 year olds, 61% (n=401) of these children say this compared to 70% (n=1,222) of children in only child houses.

"I really enjoy home schooling because it's nice to spend more time with my family, I also enjoy video calling and chatting with my friends." (10 year old, South East Wales)

Children and young people are less likely to say they are doing outdoor exercise as they get older. 82% (n=1,385) of 7 year olds say they are exercising outdoors, while only 52% (n=736) of 16 year olds say this. However, 17 and 18 year olds are more likely than 15 and 16 year olds, with 56% (n=464) of 17 year olds and 58% (n=200) of 18 year olds saying they exercise outdoors.

"I have been exercising more often because I do 2 daily walks and my mother and fathers gym because they do a online gym on zoom." (10 year old, South East Wales)

"Exercising from home is very limiting due to where we live." (9 year old, South West Wales)

Those answering the accessible version of the survey were asked what they were doing to keep healthy. 71% (n=237) say they are exercising, followed by 70% (n=233) saying they are playing and 68% (n=226) saying school work.

Education

Article 28 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child:

Your right to learn and go to school.

Contact from place of education

We asked children and young people how their school or college contact them. The vast majority of respondents say that their teachers have been in contact, with only 1% of respondents to all three surveys saying they have not had contact.

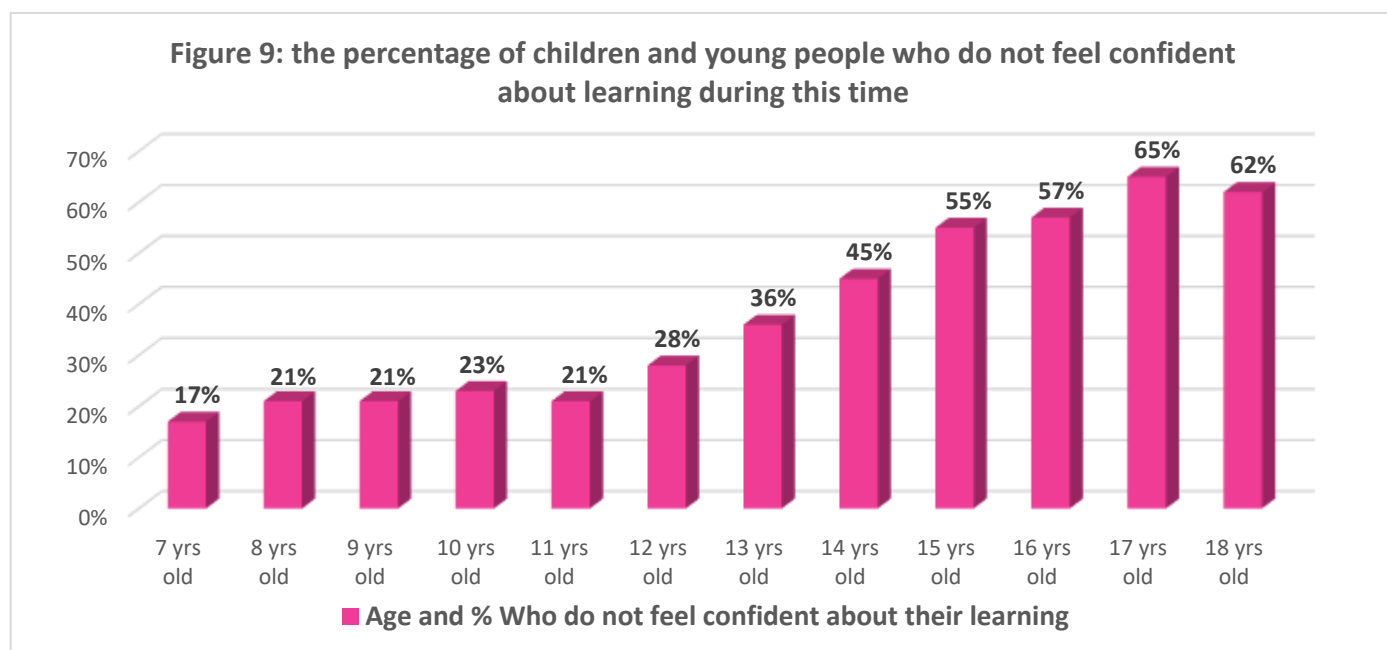
7-11 year olds are most frequently contacted through Hwb: this was selected by 58% of respondents to the 7-11 survey and 54% of respondents to the accessible survey. Email was the communication method most selected by 12-18 year olds, with 78% (7,780) young people contacted by e mail compared to the 28% (2,804) of young people contacted through Hwb.

Around half of all respondents are contacted through video calls: 53% (4419) of 7-11 year olds; 43% (4390) of 12-18 year olds; and 43% (123) of those answering the accessible survey.

Confidence about learning

We asked children and young people how confident they were about learning during this time, asking them to choose one option on a scale from 'very confident' to 'not confident at all'. What was most striking about the answers is that they show that **confidence levels decrease with age**.

This is shown in the graph below, which shows a the percentage of children from each age group who feel 'not confident' or 'not confident at all' about their learning during this time.



Across all three surveys combined, **35% of children and young people responding to the consultation do not feel confident about their learning during January 2021.**

We asked this exact question in May 2020, and at that time, combined data from the three surveys showed that **25% of children and young people who responded did not feel confident about their learning in May 2020.**

"Not being able to have face to face learning has really impacted upon my confidence in what I am learning." (18 year old, south central Wales)

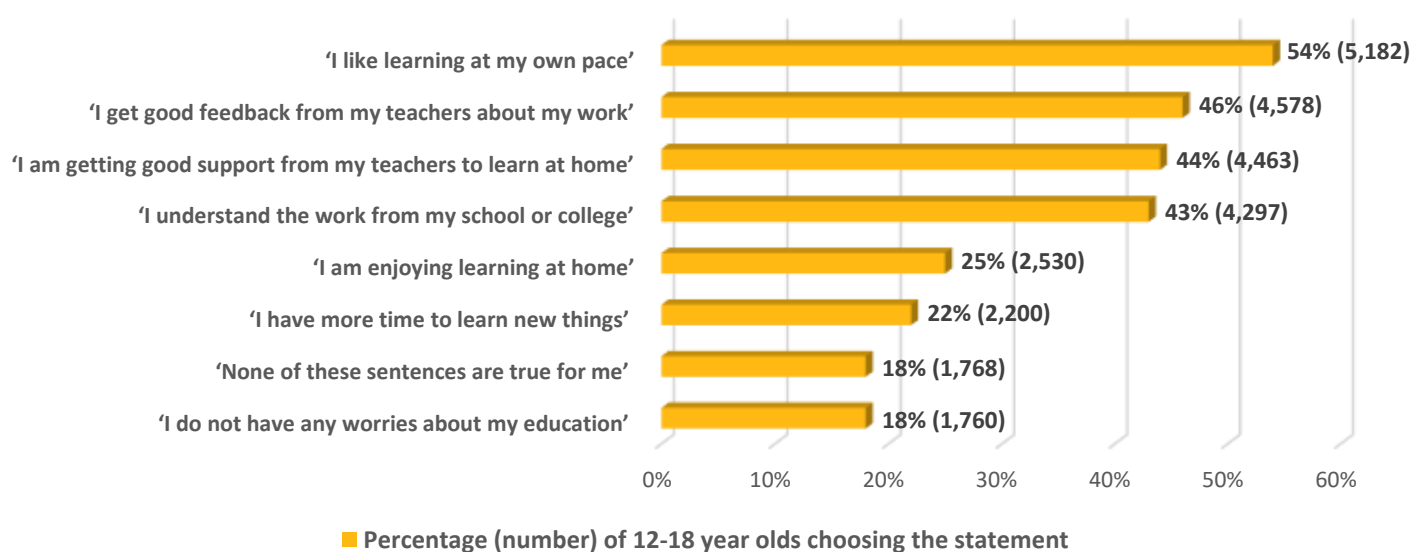
"Dwi ddim yn hoffi gweithio o adra. Dwi ddim yn hyderys gyda rhoid y camera ymlaen. Dwi Wedi rhoid pwysau ar ers bod adra. Dwi ddim yn hyderys gofyn am help ir Athro. Dwi yn poini am fynd I Ysgol uwchradd. Mae anodd siarad i ffrindiau am bod nhw ddim ateb. Mae hyn yn anodd peidio gweld ffrindiau." (11 year old, north west Wales)

Positives about learning

We asked young people responding to the 12-18 survey to select from a list of positive sentences about their learning during this time, they could choose as many as are true for them. The percentage of young people choosing each statement is shown below, with the most frequently chosen at the top.

Figure 10: Percentage of 12-18 year old agreeing positive statements regarding learning

Percentage of 12-18 year olds agreeing with positive statements about their learning



It is notable that over half of young people are enjoying learning at their own pace, and just under half are positive about the support and feedback they are receiving from their teachers. These positive themes were reinforced in the free text comments. This general question did not ask specifically about education, but 136 (4%) young people wrote positive comments about learning at home and its benefits. An additional 13 (<1%) young people chose to write positive comments about support from their teachers, and another 7 (<1%) are positive about support from school generally or other education services, including youth work.

"Although times are tough, I think the local Youth Service in my area... are doing an amazing job... the youth workers are doing workshops and activities online to look after our mental health and wellbeing. The... Youth Service is definitely doing all they can to support me, and I'm sure other young people, at this time." (18 Year old, south west Wales)

"Mae'r dysgu ar lein wedi gweithio'n dda iawn y tymor hwn. Dwi'm yn teimlo fel rwyf wedi colli unrhywbeth gan fod athrawon yn postio unedau ac ati i'r tŷ. Hapus iawn â'r hyn mae'r ysgol yn darparu." (16 year old, south central Wales)

"I prefer learning online in some respects but I do still miss school to see my friends and my favourite teachers :D" (13 year old, north east Wales)

"I feel as if I am achieving the best in my education that I have ever before. I'm really enjoying the online learning and see it as a incentive that could possibly continue when things go back to normal as it is saving myself and my family money, in regards to travel, and allowing me to spend more time with family which is great!" (18 year old, south west Wales)

7-11 year olds were not asked to choose statements about their learning, but 148 (4%) 7-11 year olds chose to write about positive experiences of home learning in the free-text section.

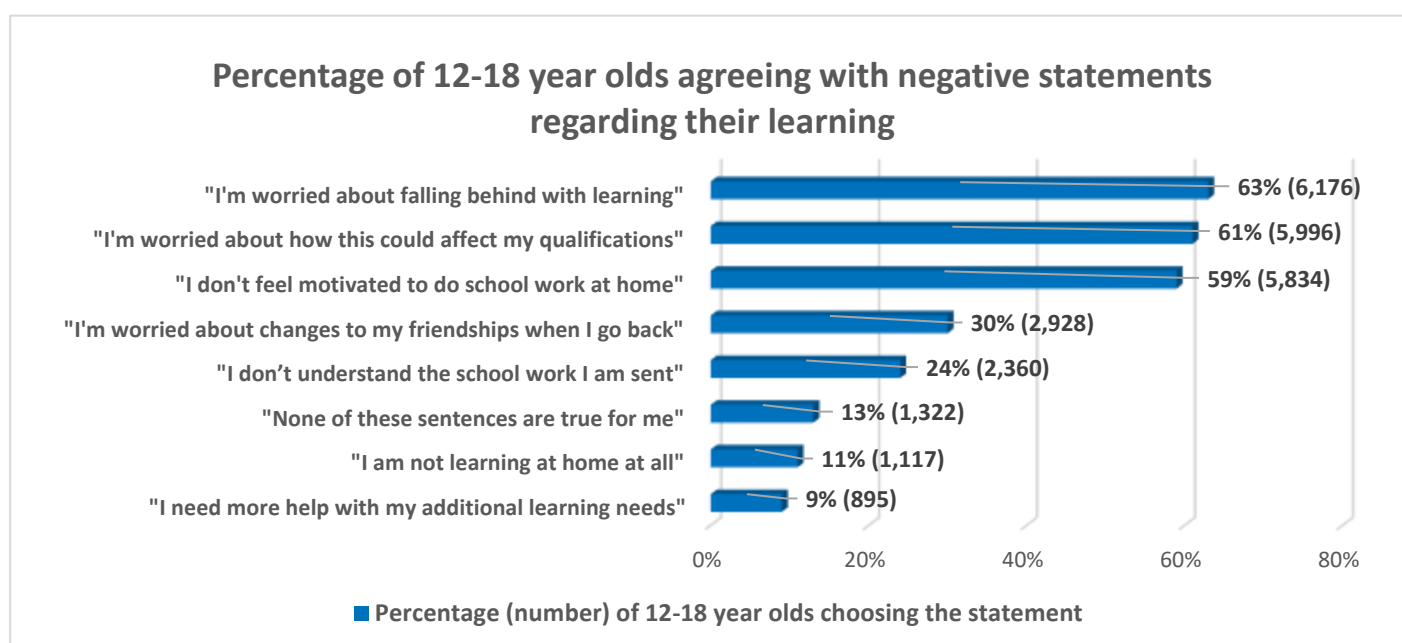
"I've enjoyed homelearning school has been good at helping me. We use teams for lessons every day." (10 year old, north east Wales)

"Rwyf eisiau dwll diolch enfawr i'r ysgol ar athrawon am yr holl waith a help mae nhw wedi danfon i in dros yr adeg." (19 year old, south west Wales)

Negatives about learning

We also asked young people responding to the 12-18 survey to select from a list of negative sentences about their learning during this time; again they could choose as many as are true for them. The percentage of young people choosing each statement is shown below, with the most frequently chosen at the top.

Figure 11: Percentage of 12-18 year olds agreeing with negative statements regarding their learning



It is concerning that high numbers of young people are worried about falling behind, worried about qualifications, and not feeling motivated to work at home. All of these statements were selected by well over half of respondents. They also all emerge as significant themes in the free text comments from young people, given in response to an open question which was not specifically about education. 616 (17%) of young people answering this question comment about **their difficulties with home learning**, and this is the most common theme included in comments about education. Another 254 (7%) include **worries about exams and qualifications**, and an additional 252 (7%) commented about their **lack of motivation**.

"I was clever and highly motivated, with schools shut for so long last year and no end in sight of returning, I am demotivated. I feel my whole future has been ruined." (12 year old, south central Wales)

"Mae ansawdd fy ngwersi a nifer y gwersi dwi'n ei gael yn achosi pryder i mi. Dwi ddim yn gwybod beth yw fy ngraddau TGAU ar hyn o bryd a beth fyddant ar ddiwedd y flwyddyn. Dwi ddim yn gwybod beth fydd fy addysg yn edrych fel flwyddyn nesaf. Dwi'n poeni bydd y 2 diwethaf yn effeithio ar fy addysg am

byth! Athrawin rhy brysur gyda plant eu hunain i'n dysgu- neb yn monitro ansawdd gwersi. Pob ysgol yn wahanol!!!" (15 year old, north west Wales)

"This experience has been one of the hardest experiences I have ever endured and I am worried my qualifications are at risk as I am struggling with the work and the work load." (16 year old, south central Wales)

"I am missing my friends and school. I feel like I'm falling behind and not learning enough and there isn't enough support. The teachers are slow to reply to any problems then mark me down for not completing the work. I feel like my mental health is struggling, I feel sad and I worry that I need to make my gcse choices very soon but I have no idea what to choose as I have hardly been in school for the last year. I want my life back. I feel like I'm missing out on a lot." (12 year old, west Wales)

In free text comments, 5 young people also express they need more support with **additional learning needs**, giving more detail to the 9% of 12-18 year olds that are concerned about this:

"Covid has affected my education so badly. I am in year 9 and supposed to be doing GCSE's I have dyslexia so really struggle with work most of the time. I am so far behind now I doubt I will ever catch up. My future is ruined. I will never be able to get a job." (13 year old, north west Wales)

Additionally, many young people feel they are being set **too much work**, and that this is affecting their wellbeing. 347 or 9% of free text comments on the 12-18 survey were about having too much work, for example:

"Rwyn teimlo bod yna gormod a waith ysgol yn cael i rhoi i ni, ac mae'n anodd iawn i amdopi." (14 year old, west Wales)

"When teachers give me too much work I barely have time to eat let alone have some time to relax." (14 year old, south central Wales)

"Its been terrible. The work load for us yr 11 have increased 10x since we moved online. With some work taking longer than one lesson causing us to work through break, lunches and after school." (15 year old, south west Wales)

Our [firebreak lockdown report](#) November 2020 and [digital devices report](#) January 2021 reflected perceived improvements in the remote learning offer for pupils across Wales. It is interesting to note however that a proportion of young people are now feeling the burden and impact on their wellbeing of having too much work.

7-11 year olds were not asked to choose statements about their learning, but 340 (9%) of 7-11 year olds also chose to write about negative experiences of home learning, and an additional 107 (3%) specify difficulties with online learning. 27 children (1%) comment that they needed more support with additional learning needs.

"Dwi ddim yn hoffi dysgu ar lein a dwi eishiau dod nol i'r ysgol a gweld fy ffrindiau!" (11 year old, south central Wales)

"I really learn better when I am in school. My teachers help me, I have a Statement and I haven't made any effort to do my work when at home." (9 year old, north east Wales)

Equipment for learning at home

We asked children answering the 7-11 survey if they have the equipment they need to learn at home. 93% of children say they have what they need. It should be acknowledged that the survey was run as an online exercise so this might be expected from the respondents who could access such a survey.

We asked the remaining 7% of children what they are missing. The most commonly chosen answer was, 'I don't have a printer' (261 children), followed by 'I share a digital device so I can't always use it' (243 children). In addition, 157 children answering our survey don't have a quiet space, 97 don't have a table/desk or chair and 62 don't have paper or stationery.

We asked the same question to young people answering the 12-18 survey. 95% of young people say they have the equipment they need.

We asked the remaining 5% of young people what they are missing. Again, the most commonly chosen answer was, 'I don't have a printer' (202 young people). This was followed by, 'I don't have the books I need' (182 young people). In addition, 171 young people answering our survey don't have a quiet space, 88 don't have table/desk or chair, and 78 don't have paper or stationary.

We also asked about digital devices and internet access. Responses to these questions are shown in the Article 17 Section on page 25.

Home educated children and young people

We asked children who are usually home educated if they have experienced changes to their learning in the last month. Home educated young people aged 12-18 are more likely to say their learning has changed when compared with home educated children aged 7-11. 61% (20) of home-educated 12-18 year olds report a change to their learning, compared to 48% (45) of home-educated children aged 7-11. Across both age ranges, the change most frequently selected as having the biggest impact on learning was not being able to meet friends or groups; this was followed by not being able to go outside as much.

"I haven't really been able to meet with my friends since March, all my groups have been closed and if I do go to meet friends and the police stop us we have to lie incase they don't think it is essential travel. I miss museums especially St Fagans and I miss being free, a lot of my learning is outside and I love doing maths at the beach even if it's cold but now I can't do that without worry my mam will get in trouble."
(Home educated young person, 9 years old, south west Wales)

15-18 year olds

As well as the questions about education included for all children, we asked 15-18 year olds specific questions about their education. Information about young people taking apprenticeships, traineeships, and those not in education is included in our section on 15-18 year olds on page 36.

How are children getting information about the virus?

Article 17 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Your right to honest information from newspapers and television that you can understand.

7-11

Children aged 7-11 say they mostly have information about Coronavirus from their parents or family (82%), followed by TV (58%).

Only 4% say they are not getting any information.

12-18

Similarly, young people aged 12-18 say parents or family (73%) and TV (61%) are their main sources of information.

Online news and social media sources, whilst not as popular as the top two answers, are also common sources of information:

- 42% say they have information about the virus from news websites or apps
- 39% say from posts from news accounts on social media
- 21% say from friends or people they follow on social media

Accessible survey

Children and young people answering the accessible survey say they mostly receive information from family (74%) and TV (58%).

Staying in contact with family and friends

We asked children and young people if they were staying in touch with family and friends. The vast majority of children are keeping contact using a variety of communication tools, with video calling most commonly used by 7-11 year olds and texts most commonly used by 12-18 year olds. However, 5% of 5-11 year olds and 4% of 12-18 year olds are not staying in touch with family and friends.

Internet connection - is it fast enough?

We asked all children and young people if their internet connection stops them from doing any learning-related activities.

Responses are similar across all three surveys.

Most children and young people (87%) say their internet connection is good enough to do anything they need to do online.

But 13% say it is not good enough for video calls (e.g. Teams, Skype, Zoom).

A small amount of children say their internet connection is not good enough to watch videos (6%), use Hwb (3%), or browse websites (4%).

Children and young people who live with more siblings are less likely to say that their internet connection is good enough to do everything they need, and more likely to say that it is not good enough for particular tasks like video calls.

Welsh language

Article 30 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child:

Your right to use your own language.

We asked children and young people if they normally learn in Welsh, or if they are currently learning Welsh, and what opportunities they have to use Welsh at the moment.

7-11

78% of children said one of the ways they use Welsh is by doing activities and work from their school.

19% use Welsh with their family, and 16% read Welsh books.

15% said they are not getting opportunities to use Welsh and 8% said they wanted more support.

11-18

70% said one of the ways they use Welsh is by doing activities and work from their school.

Compared to children 7-11, more young people aged 11-18 said they are not getting opportunities to use Welsh (21%), and fewer (5%) said they are reading Welsh books.

"I am loosing confidence in my speaking and reading and understanding off the welsh language." 12-year-old, south west Wales)

Despite this slightly fewer young people aged 11-18 said they wanted more support (6%) compared to children aged 7-11.

Play and Leisure

Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child:

Your right to relax and play.

All participants were asked about their play opportunities; they were asked to state if they had been playing less or more often since staying at home, or about the same. The word 'playing' was substituted for 'relaxing' in the 12-18 survey.

There are some differences between the January 2021 respondents and the May 2020 respondents.

In May 2020 53% of 7-11s reported they were playing more often. This reduced to 39% of respondents in January 2021.

Both the 12-18 and accessible survey responses show a reduction in those reporting that they are playing/relaxing more often, as Figure 12 below shows.

35% of young people answering the 12-18 survey report they have less time to relax compared to 16% of respondents to the May 2020 survey. 45% of the children and young people answering the accessible survey report that they have less time to play compared to 22% of respondents last time. This could be linked to the findings about workload in the Education section.

Figure 12

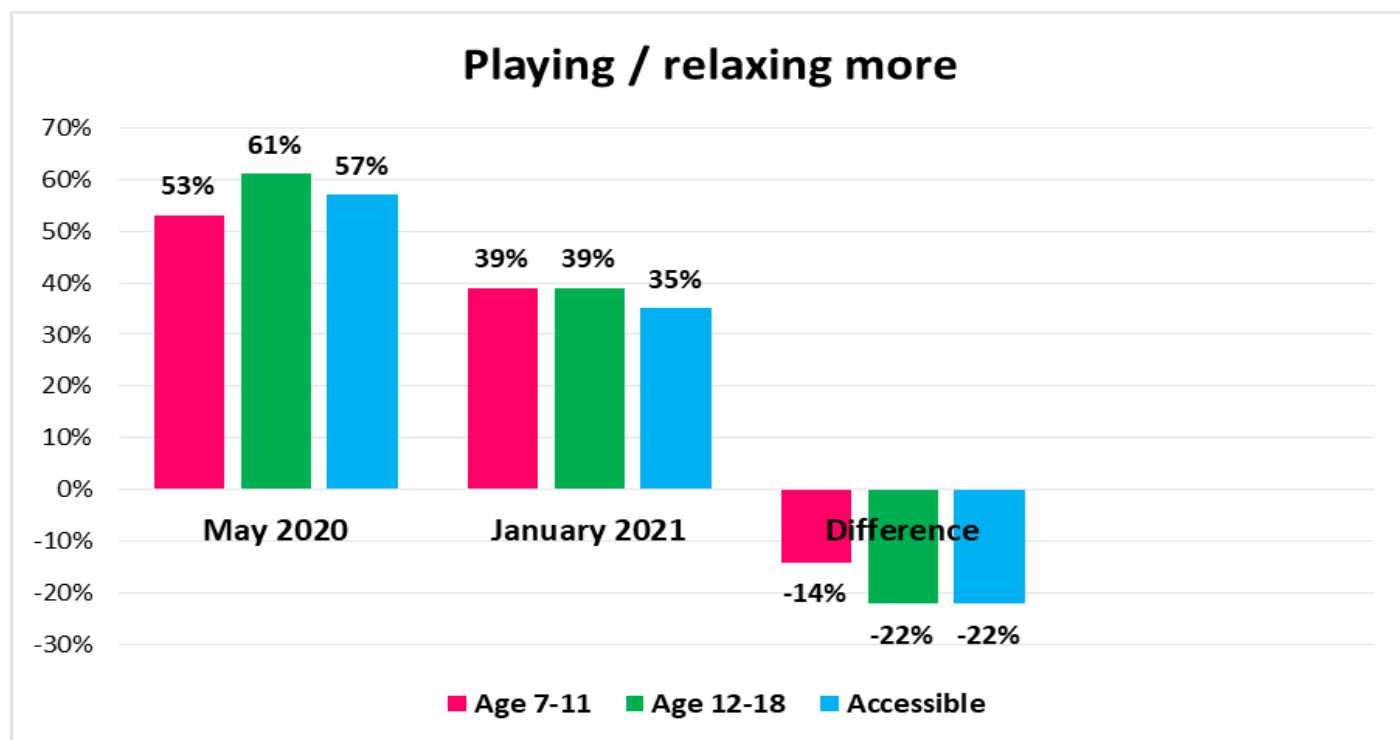
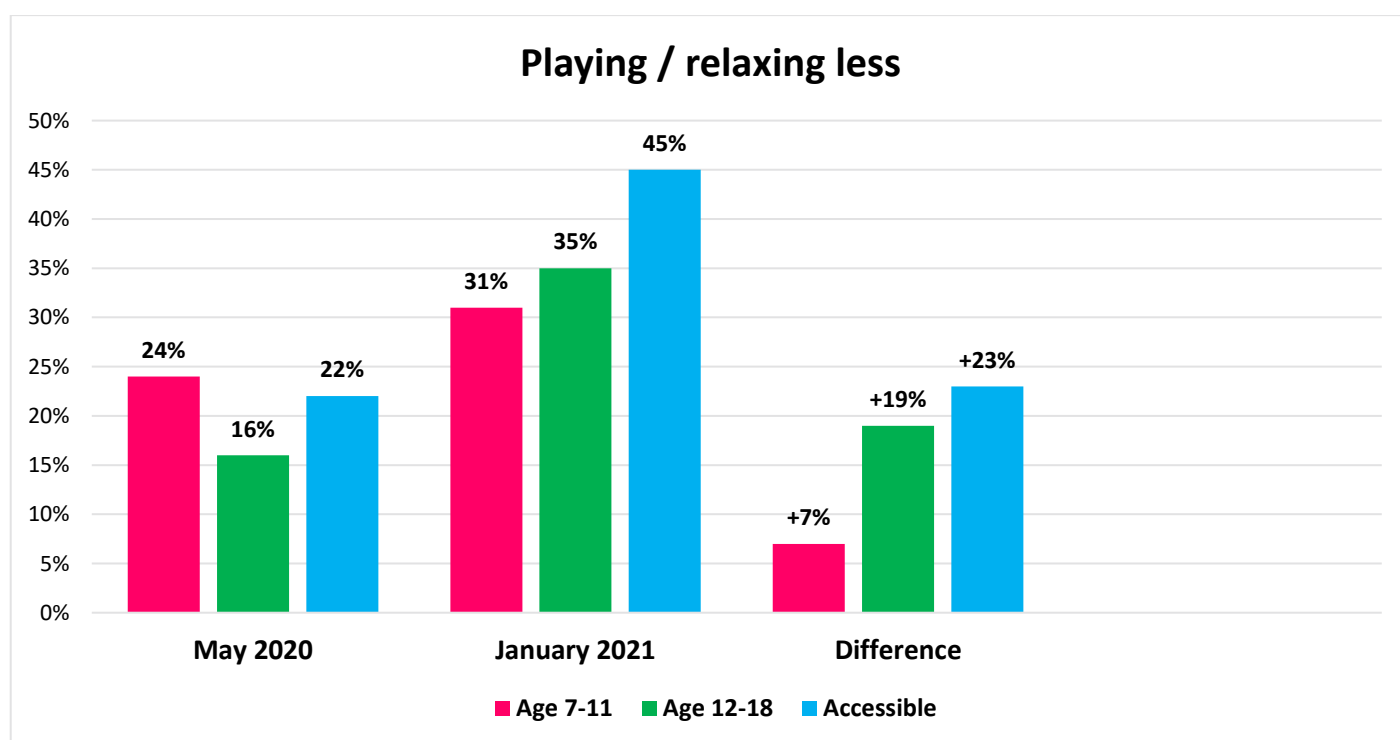


Figure 13



Young people completing the 12-18 survey had a multi-choice question. They were asked 'What ways are you relaxing during social distancing?' The top four answers were talking to friends, online gaming, exercise or other physical activity and playing games with other members of your household.

Children completing the 7-11 survey were asked an open ended question at the end of the survey. While this question didn't relate directly to play, three parts of our coding were related to play. These were "digital play" "outside play" and "family play".

Children report that they are missing outdoor play especially when talking about parks, playgrounds and beaches. Some children answering the open-ended question report that they are missing outdoor play with friends, with many stating they now play online more. The previous survey was undertaken during warm and settled weather in May 2020 whereas the January 2021 survey took place during a period of floods and snowfall and a number of children mentioned the poorer weather in their responses.

"I just want to be able to see my family and friends and go to school. Its hard doing school work at home and it easy to just walk away from it then in school and its hard on mum to do all time as we have a 2 year old in the flat we don't have a out(door) area to go play we have to go out and some times i would just like to play in a back garden."(10 year old, south west Wales.)

"Its kind of hard because i usual play outside, but i cant do that as much and i am worried because my Nan is really sick and she has been in the hospital for a few weeks and the doctors said she could die ,so my family and I are hoping that she will be ok."(11 year old, south central Wales.)

"I want to go outside with my friends and go fun places with my family not stuck to my Xbox 😊" (10 year old, south east Wales)

Section II: Groups of children and young people

We undertook an extensive analysis of our May 2020 consultation data over the summer of 2020. This showed significant patterns of experience related to some of the personal characteristics of children who took the survey. As a result we published a series of briefings to highlight how the pandemic has had particular impacts on some groups of children and young people, and called for specific actions in relation to some of these groups. These reports focused on:

- [Children under 7;](#)
- [The experiences of older young people aged 15-18;](#)
- [The experiences of disabled children and young people;](#)
- [The experiences of children and young people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups.](#)

Analysis of the January 2021 consultation shows that there are again particular experiences related to these personal characteristics. Therefore, we are again reporting findings in relation to these specific groups.

We acknowledge that by focusing on the impact of age, disability and ethnicity we have chosen only a limited number of personal characteristics by which to analyse the data. This is partly because these factors proved to be significant in May 2020, but this also reflects our decision only to ask children and young people a few monitoring questions at the start of the survey. This was so that the survey was quick to complete and easy to understand. We therefore cannot report on experiences in relation to all protected characteristics because our survey didn't ask for all of this information. Neither can we report on the impact of socio-economic factors because, again, we chose not to ask for this information in order to keep the survey accessible and short. However, in addition to this report, we are providing information to each local authority area of Wales, so that each local authority has a detailed set of data relating to the children and young people in their area.

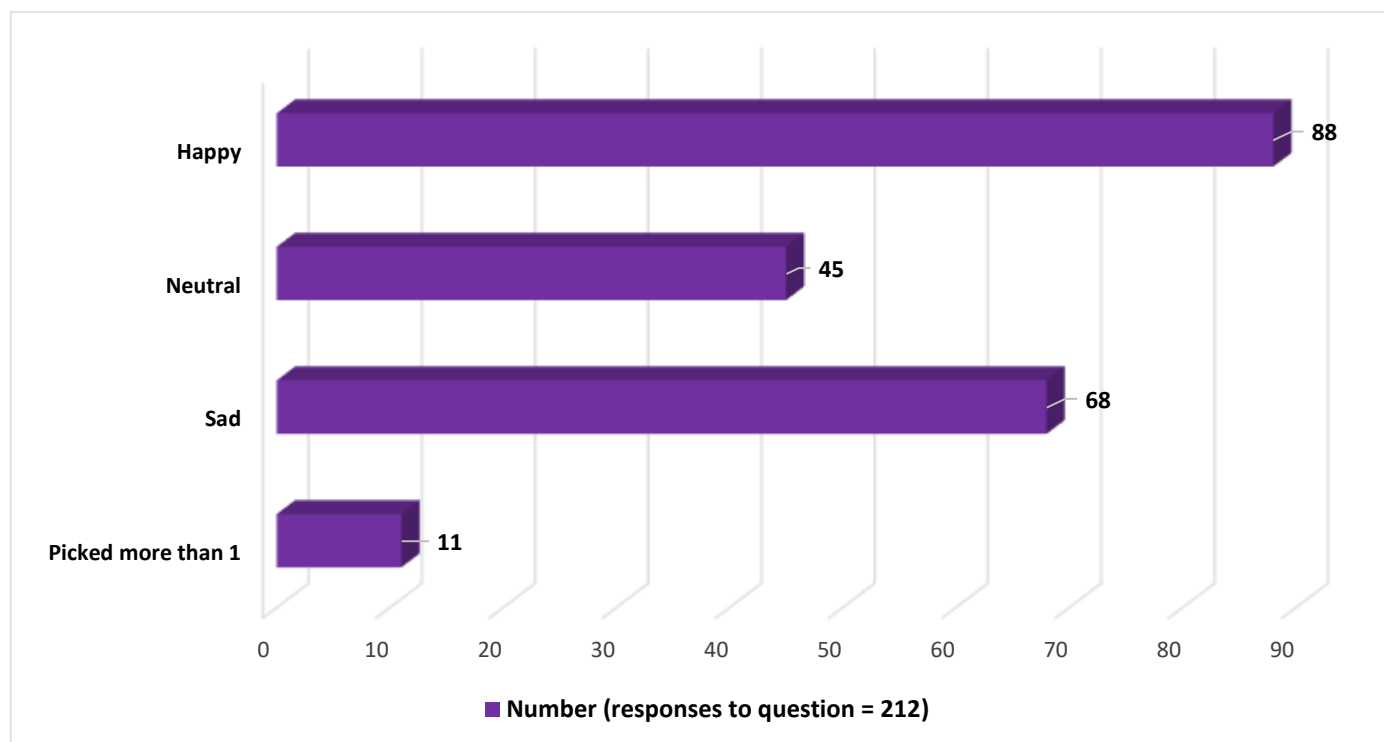
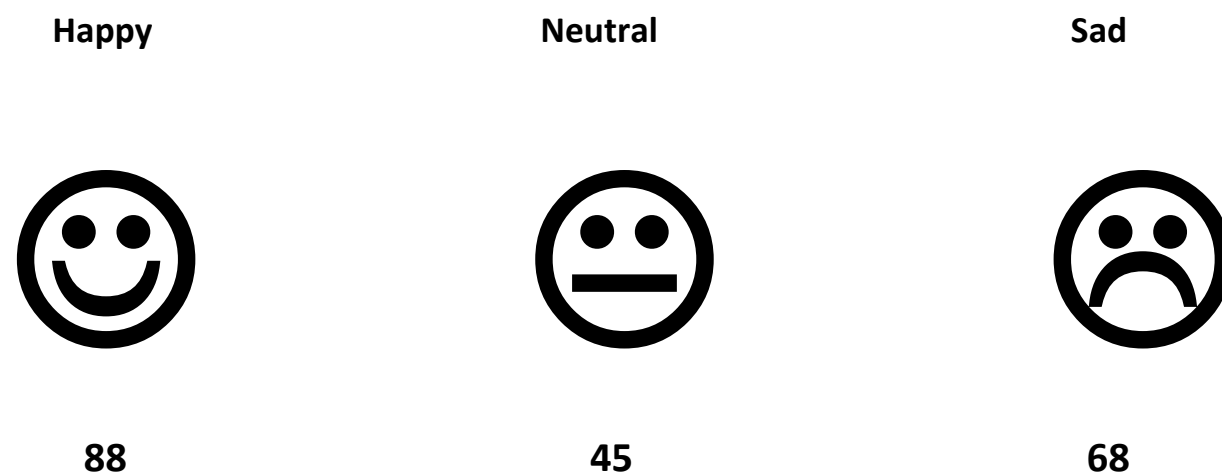
Experiences of 3-7s

A picture activity, with a template, was available for children under 7 and any other young people who would benefit from submitting a response in this way. 221 responses were submitted.

We asked children to choose a face (happy, neutral or sad) to show how they feel about staying at home, alongside an open box to tell us more about their experience. The only change made to the picture activity, since it was issued in May 2020, was to the language used. The language was changed to explicitly reference Coronavirus to reduce any ambiguity in the questions.

The majority of those who answered Q1 chose the 'neutral' or 'sad' face to describe how they felt, while around 41% chose the 'happy' face. A handful chose a mixture, often giving reasons why, such as being happy to spend time with family but also missing friends.

Figure 13: selection of a face to describe how they feel



"A little bit sad and a little bit happy." (age 4, south west Wales)

One of the prompts for the open-ended section asked children how they currently spend their time. Around half of the respondents told us they are doing schoolwork. This was followed by playing games or with toys, which was the second most frequent response. Over a quarter of the responses told us that children are also enjoying playing with siblings and/or parents.

As well as outdoor play in the garden and snow, children told us that they have been on lots of walks with their families and exercising on their bikes, scooters and trampolines. Some of the other ways children are spending their time are:

- Watching TV or films
- Playing video games (like Roblox)
- Cooking and baking (and eating!)
- Doing arts and crafts
- Playing with pets
- Reading
- Video calls (with family, friends or a club)
- Other sensory/imaginative play (putting on shows, making dens, water play)

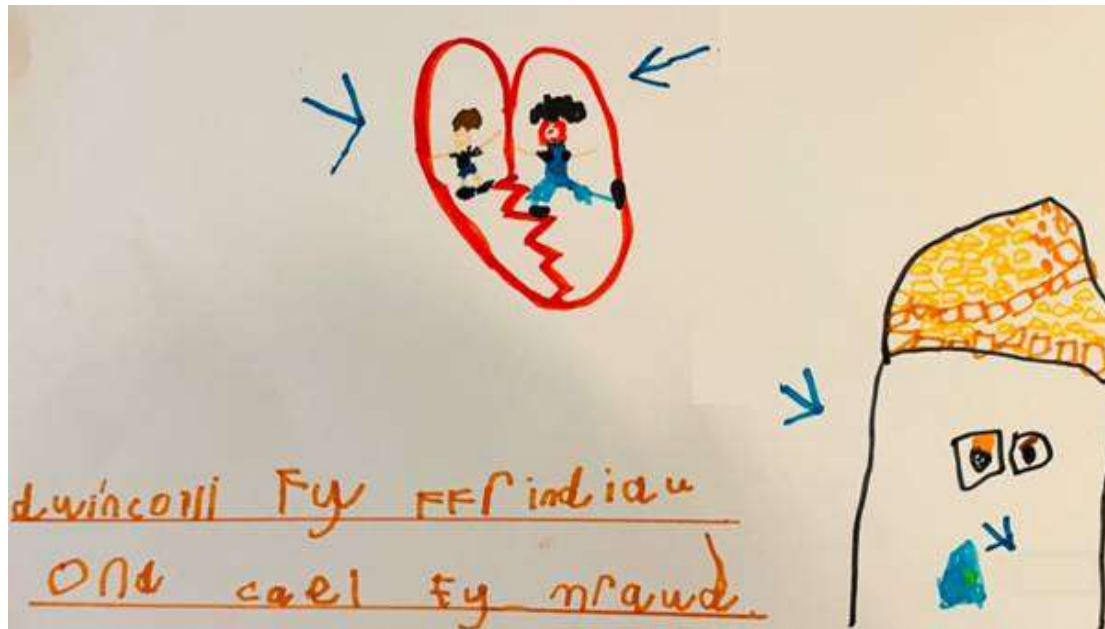
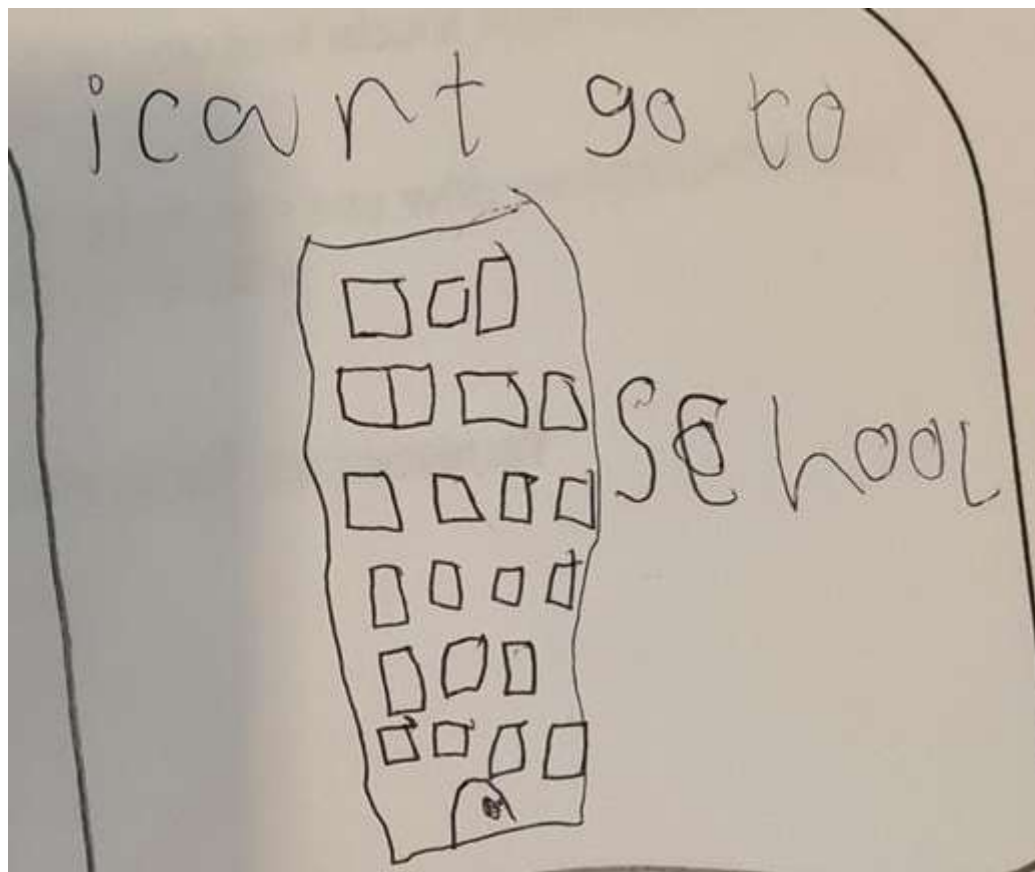
Children were also prompted to share who was keeping them safe during this time. As expected, over three quarters of those who responded stated a parent. The remaining responses mostly mentioned grandparents, siblings, pets and aunts/uncles. Only one response mentioned a keyworker was keeping them safe.

The picture activity prompted children to consider whether they were missing anything due to coronavirus. It told us how important social relationships are to children and that **being unable to spend time with people outside of their households is having an impact on their feelings**. The most common response was that children miss their friends, with many specifying missing friends from school. This was followed by missing members of the family, particularly grandparents and cousins. As with the May 2020 survey, many of the responses spoke about missing school and teachers.

"I feel lonely because I can't see my friends or my teacher. I miss them and having play dates. I miss their kindness and sharing." (age 5, south west Wales)

"I miss my friends and teachers. I miss my grandad. I just miss everything." (age and local authority n/a)

"I miss Nana + Bampi and going to school. Neverending time." (age 5, Swansea)



Some children used the opportunity to tell us they are missing out on different experiences and activities. Organised clubs and activities such as swimming, rugby and drama are being missed by children, as well as more leisurely and informal activities such as going to the beach or the park. A handful of children spoke about missing holidays and other special occasions, such as birthday parties. This tells us that

some children both need and value opportunities to take part in activities, outside of their usual time playing.

"We can't do anything fun except lots of walks It feels like it's never going to get better." (age 5, south west Wales)

"I'm a bit sad that I'm not at school with my friends but I'm happy to be with my brother." (age 4, south west Wales)

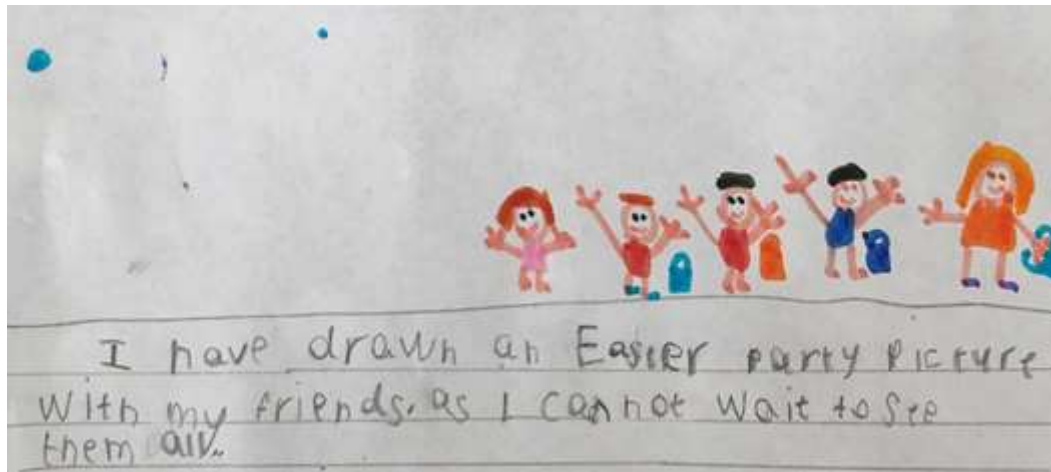
"Dw i'n colli gweld Nain a Taid. Dwi'n colli gweld fy ffrindiau. Dw i'n colli chwarae yn yr ysgol." (age 4, North west Wales)

Comment from parent: *"X has drawn himself with all his friends visiting at home, which is what he misses the most." (age 3, North east Wales)*

"I miss sports clubs — football and gymnastics." (age 5, South east Wales)



Only 5 children explicitly stated that they are not missing anything.



Experiences of 15-18 year olds

In our January 2021 survey, we received responses from 4,413 young people aged 15-18. 1,824 were aged 15, 1,394 were aged 16, 844 were aged 17 and 351 aged 18.

Impact of the pandemic on young people's lives

In both the May 2020 and January 2021 surveys we asked young people which changes had had the most impact on how they felt. Of those aged 15-18, 71% said not being able to spend time with friends in both the May 2020 and January 2021 respondents.

The next most frequently selected areas in both surveys were 'not being able to visit family members', and 'school or college closing'. In January 2021, 63% of 17 year olds and 61% of 18 year olds, said that school or college closing is having the biggest impact on how they feel. In May 2020 that figure was 50% for 15-18 year olds.

Older young people told us they would like more support to feel happy and well, with 44% of those aged 18 telling us this, compared to 28% of 15 year olds. One in three of all young people aged 15-18 who responded in January 2021 said they would like more support to do school or college work.

"I'm lonely and bored. I miss my friends at school the work is hard I'm worried about my exams next year and passing my GCSEs." (15, South east Wales)

"It's been truly awful - my mental health has deteriorated and I've found it extremely difficult. It's hard being in a relationship when you're not even allowed to see each other outside. Friendships are hard too... Why did we not have to social distance in sixth form yet we were not allowed to see each other outside of school? I've never wanted to be back in sixth form so badly. It's not possible to learn at home. Distractions are everywhere and it's hard for us who struggle to stay completely focused. (I don't) have the motivation to get out of bed let alone do a day of work. I can't wait for it to be over." (18, South west Wales)

Happy, healthy, safe

Graphs on page 10 show how those aged 15-18 were more likely to report negative emotions than those who are younger.

In their free text responses, many young people aged 15-18 described their emotional wellbeing and shared concerns about how Coronavirus and the public health distancing measures were impacting their mental health. They shared how they felt stressed, uncertain, overwhelmed and anxious, or were concerned about friends and family.

"Rydw i a llawer o ddisgyblion eraill yn ffeindio hi'n anodd delio gyda'r pwysau gwaith, gan fod athrawon yn gyrru mwy o waith iddym ni i gymharu a be basen yn ei wneud yn yr ysgol. Mae hyn yn arwain i ein iechyd meddwl gael yn waeth." (16 year old, North east Wales)

"I have been struggling with suspected anxiety but I don't feel confident asking anyone for help with a diagnosis I know coronavirus is really bad right now and I'm fully aware that it is detrimental to those people we love the most- it can even be detrimental to us... but staying at home is really isolating and difficult and it's affecting the mental health of many people I know plus myself.... it is really overwhelming... I would highly recommend opening schools- even if it's for a couple of weeks and then lockdown. Going to school is a very important part of living and lockdown for weeks on end makes you feel a bit like a zombie if I'm honest." (16 year old, South east Wales)

What next for education and work for 15-18 year olds?

Many young people aged 15-18 told us that the uncertainty about the future was a source of stress for them. They are having mixed experiences of online learning and some remain concerned about the impact of exam cancellations. Despite this, 21% of 15-18s who responded said they liked learning from home, with 45% saying they liked learning at their own pace, and 43% saying they had good support from their teachers to learn at home.

However, of the 15-18 year olds who responded, 69% said they were worried about falling behind, 79% were worried about how home learning would affect their qualifications and 69% don't feel motivated to work at home.

"My a levels were gained last year. I am now in University. I have not been able to actually go to the university, and teaching is poor. As an 18 year old I have significant debt already and very little to show for it. I feel I am still a child but treated like an adult. People don't appear to understand. Media is all about school children and I understand that, as I went through it last year, but there appears to me little care compassion or understanding for first year students in college or university." (18 year old, south central Wales)

"Home schooling is working well for me I just miss seeing my friends." (18 year old, south west Wales)

"Wedi poeni am graddau ac arholiadau Lefel A. Wedi peoni am cais UCAS, dim profiad gwaith, dim ymweliadau a diwrnodiau agored." (18 year old, north west Wales)

"I really do not want to go back. I have had to self isolate several times in school and am very very concerned about bringing covid home and hurting my parents... We need to know if there are going to be extra assessments for our exams, the uncertainty has really taken a toll on a lot of people my age, and it was really avoidable- we've known for months this was going to be a problem. Just having clear rules and plans ahead would be really helpful." (17 year old, south central Wales)

"Dwi yn ofni ar sut byddai dysgu ar-lein yn effeithio fy canlyniadau arholiadau." (15 year old, south east Wales)

Young people aged 15-18 are more likely to lack confidence in their learning than feel confident; 31% of those who responded told us that they were not confident with their learning, compared to 17% who said they were. Lack of confidence was highest amongst those in college or university (36%).

"I am studying a BTEC qualification (Ext Dip L3 IT) on the 2nd and final year of the course and doing this course in lockdown has been extremely difficult as we physically need to be in college in order to do a fair bit of the qualification and to actually learn the practical skills needed in the real world, all we've learnt is basic information which we already know and alot of people on the course are really struggling to see the point in any of it as we don't know how our grading systems will work this year as A Level and GCSE are having predicted grades and yet again Pearsons/BTEC still haven't made up their mind leaving us students even more anxious on top of a never ending lockdown. thank you for the opportunity to express my opinions on the lockdown and education system from a young adults perspective." (18 year old, south east Wales)

"I do BTEC health and social care, and also applied science both of which I complete assignments nearly every week to achieve my grades. I think that those doing a levels have got off easily and those doing BTEC have been totally forgotten about." (18, South East Wales)

Those in year 11 ($n=1836$) were asked about what they plan to do next. 72% have decided what and where they wanted to study in September 2021.

The same question was asked of those in year 13 ($n=706$). 88% of those respondents who are in Year 13 had decided they wanted to continue study or training. However, of those who had not decided, 39% would like more advice to help them understand their options and 31% wanted support to apply for a place at university.

We asked young people who were not in education what support they would like to consider staying in education. Of the 81 young people who responded, 28 want more advice about options, 18 want support to apply to university and 13 want support to apply for an apprenticeship.

67 young people aged 15-18 who responded are doing an apprenticeship or traineeship. 47 of these told us they had not been given on-line training, resources or support to keep learning for their apprenticeship or traineeship programme during the last month.

"Im sad, miss my friends, miss my family, miss working. Its screwed me over. please think about us youngsters, everything about being young has been taken away from us and nobody cares. I hate hate hate the scaremongering, terrible for anxiety and mental health issues, if only the media would stop reporting covid 24/hrs a day. Theres more to life and other issues in the world that are not being accounted for. I cant even remember what the news used to be like pre-covid, as it stands right now theyd have nothing to report on, very sad." (18 year old, north west Wales)

Disabled Children and Young People

510 disabled children and young people took part in the survey, representing 3% of the total respondents. The most recent UK statistics indicate that 8% of children in the UK are disabled, so this is a lower rate of representation than in the population as a whole.

This survey was a broad, population-wide survey and as explained in the methodology there were significant constraints to the methodology due to the coronavirus restrictions. Usually, the Commissioner's office would also include face-to-face engagement as part of a consultation, and involve a variety of participation methods. This is particularly valuable for some disabled children, as some health conditions and impairments can make it difficult or even impossible for children to engage through a survey.

We therefore recognise that this data will not be fully representative of the experiences of all disabled children and young people. However, the sample size is large and there are clearly significant differences in the experiences of disabled and non-disabled children who responded to our survey. We believe it is important to be accountable to the children and young people that took part by speaking out about the experiences they have shared so that we can set out priorities to address the inequalities these experiences reveal.

It is also important to note that during this period we have had contact with a number of parents of disabled children, who have shared the experiences of their children, some of whom were unable to take part in the survey. Although these data are not included as evidence sources in this report they are informing the wider policy and influencing work of the Commissioner and her team.

In May 2020 disabled children and young people reported more negative outcomes to nearly all survey questions. Some key findings in May 2020 were that disabled children and young people were more likely than non-disabled children and young people to say:

- They needed more help with additional learning needs;
- They needed more help to get the food they need;
- They were worried about coronavirus;
- They didn't know where to get help for mental health;
- They were sad;
- They didn't feel safe;
- They didn't feel confident about learning.

In January 2021, how are disabled children feeling?

- **Disabled children and young people are more likely to be worrying about coronavirus.** Using the combined total from all three surveys, only 26% (n=133) of disabled respondents say they 'are not worried' about coronavirus, compared with 33% (n=6212) of non-disabled children and young people. Reinforcing this, a greater percentage of disabled respondents answering the 7-11 and 12-18 surveys say they are worried 'most of the time', with 30% (n=125) of disabled respondents saying this compared to 15% (n=2542) of non-disabled respondents.
- **Disabled children and young people are more likely to feel sad.** Using the combined total of the 7-11 and 12-18 surveys, 23% (n=96) of disabled respondents say they feel 'sad most of the time' compared with 15% (n=2510) of non-disabled respondents. The accessible survey asked a slightly different question but shows consistent results in that 54% (n=25) of disabled respondents feel 'sad' compared with 45% (n=119) of non-disabled respondents.
- **Disabled children and young people are more likely to feel unsafe.** Using the combined total of the 7-11 and 12-18 surveys, 9% (n=33) of disabled respondents say they feel safe 'not very often' compared with 4% (n=683) of non-disabled respondents. The accessible survey asked a slightly different question but shows consistent results as only 22% (n=12) of disabled respondents feel 'safe' compared with 44% (n=115) of non-disabled respondents. Disabled children and young people, similarly to non-disabled children and young people, were most likely to select that the reason they feel unsafe is, 'people I care about could get unwell from coronavirus'. The second most commonly selected reason for disabled children and young people feel unsafe is, 'I could get unwell from coronavirus'. Disabled children and young people were somewhat more likely to feel this than non-disabled children and young people (50%/n=55 compared to 42%/n=1,503).
- **Disabled children and young people are more likely to feel lonely.** Using the combined total of the 7-11 and 12-18 surveys, 41% (n=114) of disabled respondents say they feel lonely 'most of the time' compared with 21% (n=3575) of non-disabled respondents. The accessible survey asked a slightly different question but shows consistent results in that 48% (n=22) of disabled respondents feel 'lonely' compared with 38% (n=98) of non-disabled respondents.
- In response to open ended questions, there were no large observable differences between the responses of disabled 7-11 year olds and their non-disabled peers, with the exception of **comments about needing support with additional learning needs**. 18% (n=16) of disabled children who provided free-text comments mentioned this compared to <1% (9) of non-disabled children. Although numbers are small, the 12-18 survey also only showed one large observable difference to the open-ended question, which was that 7% (8) of disabled young people commented about **lack of access to services** compared with <1% (13) of non-disabled young people.

"I don't have access to specialist physio, speech and language and visual impairment team." (11 year old disabled child, south central Wales)

"I am not sleeping properly i live in a flat and cant go out often i need my routine from school back." (7 year old disabled child, south central Wales)

"I feel unsafe at home as my dad...is currently looking for a job so my Mum has to earn the money... as my dad is on the shielding list..." (14 year old disabled young person, north east Wales.)

In January 2021, how are disabled children and young people experiencing their rights?

Article 3: adults should do what is best for you

- **Disabled children and young people are more likely to say they need extra help.** Using the combined total from all three surveys, only 23% (n=117) of disabled respondents say they 'don't need extra help', compared with 36% (n=6593) of non-disabled children and young people. The majority of respondents to the 7-11 and 12-18 surveys say that the help they need most is 'support to feel happy and well', followed by 'support with school work'. The majority of respondents to the accessible survey selected 'support with school work' as the top priority, followed by 'support to feel happy and well.'
- **Disabled children and young people are more likely to say they want support to help them feel happy and well.** Using the combined total from all three surveys, 37% (n=189) of disabled respondents say they want 'support to feel happy and well', compared with 24% (n=4328) of non-disabled children and young people.

Article 6: you have the right to life, to grow up, and to reach your full potential

- **Disabled children and young people are more likely to say they need help to 'make sure we get the food we need'.** Using the combined total from all three surveys, 13% (n=66) of disabled respondents say they want help to 'make sure my family has the food we need', compared with 7% (n=1297) of non-disabled children and young people.
- **Disabled children aged 7-11 are less likely to know where to get help if they need support to feel happy and well.** 12% (n=27) of disabled respondents answering the 7-11 and accessible surveys say they don't know where to get help compared with 8% (n=723) of non-disabled respondents. We asked young people answering the 12-18 survey a slightly different question, asking them if they feel confident to seek help from a list of services. Disabled young people's answers here were broadly similar to the responses of non-disabled young people, with a slightly greater percentage of disabled young people confident to get support from a mental health team in their area, and a slightly smaller percentage confident to get support from a doctor or a website.

"Mental health is underfunded and hard to access." (18 year old disabled young person, south east Wales)

"Worried I will not get into university because of this. No support from schools during this time and I'm really struggling both mentally (disability is anxiety) and with schoolwork. Government should set rules for online learning and should've decided long ago about grades, instead of changing their mind 3 times. Students are already struggling and I can guarantee this will have made mental issues much worse." (17 year old disabled young person, north West Wales)

Article 28: you have the right to an education

- **Disabled children and young people have slightly less confidence with learning than non-disabled children and young people but the gap is smaller than in May 2020.** Across all three surveys only a slightly smaller percentage of disabled children and young people say they feel 'confident' or 'very confident' about their learning compared to non-disabled children and young people: with 37% of disabled respondents choosing these options compared to 41% of non-disabled. This represents a change from May 2020, when disabled children and young people responding to the survey were much less likely to feel confident about their learning than their non-disabled peers. But, unfortunately, respondents from both groups (disabled and non-disabled) feel less confident now than the respondents from these groups did in May. The narrowing of the difference is because non-disabled respondents feel *much* less confident about their learning now than those answering the survey did in May, with 52% feeling confident in May compared to 41% now. Disabled respondents only feel *slightly* less confident about their learning now than those answering the survey did in May: 39% felt confident in May compared to 37% now.
- **Disabled young people are significantly more likely to say support is needed for additional learning needs.** 36% (n=95) of disabled young people say this compared to 8% (n=745) of non-disabled young people.
- **A slightly larger percentage of disabled young people say they are not learning at all**, with 15% (n=39) saying this, compared to 11% (n=1040) of non-disabled young people.
- Disabled young people feel similarly to non-disabled young people about how well their teachers are supporting them, with 46% and 45% respectively selecting 'I am getting good support from my teachers to learn at home' as a positive statement that is true for them. But **disabled young people are less likely to say they understand the work from school or college**, with 35% (n=96) selecting 'I understand the work from school or college' as a statement that is true for them, compared to 43% (n=4123) of non-disabled young people.

"Finding it really hard to do school work online with no laptop and need extra support because of autism and ADHD school work gets me stressed coz I'm so far behind I don't like it... We don't like going shopping as people are mean to us... We feel safe at home but not so much outside because people are very mean in the shopping centres and speak to us horrible." (15 year old disabled young person, north west Wales)

"I would like for the class lessons to be though on zoom in that way i will be able to see my teacher and understand more of my school work." (10 year old disabled child, west Wales)

"Due to being autistic I like being home as it's my favourite place. I feel happy and safe here. I enjoy my own space and like being on my own. I dont like school it's to loude and noisy." 9 year old disabled child, south west Wales.

"I miss my teachers and my friends. I miss going out - the only day I go out is to the hospital for my treatment. I am lucky that my teachers set me work and I can message them if I need help. My mum and dad help too." (12 year old disabled child, mid Wales)

"fi moen dod nol i ysgol" (8 year old disabled child, west Wales)

Children and young people from Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority Groups

1,524 children and young people who self-identified as Asian Welsh or British, Asian from Another Country, Black Welsh or British, Black from Another Country, Mixed Heritage or Any Other Ethnic Group took part in this survey. This represents 7.8% of total respondents. The most recent school census data¹ indicated that 8.4% of the school population identified as an ethnic group other than white.

Throughout this report, when we refer to Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) children and young people, we are referring to those participations who self-identified using the above categories. As the numbers of BAME children and young people responding to the accessible version of the survey are low and so not likely to be statistically significant, they have not been included here.

The results from our May 2020 survey showed that children and young people who self-identified their ethnicity as BAME were more likely than those self-identifying as White Welsh or British to report negative experiences across a range of factors. Some of these were that they were:

- More likely to say they needed more information on Coronavirus and on rules to keep them safe
- Less likely to say they felt safe 'most of the time'
- More likely to say the closure of libraries had affected their learning
- Less likely to say they were exercising outdoors, and more likely to say they wanted help with healthy eating and staying active
- More likely to say they were worried about food security for their family

The findings from January 2021 show a similar picture across many of these issues. However, it is important to say that this is not true for all of the results, and children identifying as BAME have very varied experiences, as do all children and young people.

In January 2021, how are BAME children feeling?

- **BAME children and young people are more likely to feel lonely.** 19% (n=100) of 7-11 year old BAME children say they feel lonely 'most of the time' compared to 13% (n=819) White Welsh or British children. Among 12-18 year olds, the difference is 34% (n=255) compared to 28% (n=2,355).
- **BAME children and young people are less likely to say they feel safe.** 78% (n=445) of 7-11 year old BAME children say they feel safe 'most of the time' compared to 88% (n=5,780) of White Welsh or British children and young people. Among 12-18 year olds, the difference is 63% (n=462) compared to 71% (n=5,906).

¹ Welsh Government (2020) Schools' census results: as at January 2020. Available at: <https://gov.wales/schools-census-results-january-2020>

- **7-11 year old BAME children are more likely to be worried about Coronavirus.** When asked in our survey, 32% (n=217) of 7-11 year old BAME children say they are not worried, compared to 37% (n=2670) of White Welsh or British children.
- **7-11 year old BAME children are less likely to say they are happy.** 55% (n=323) of 7-11 year old BAME children say they are happy 'most of the time' compared to 60% (n=4,010) of White Welsh or British children.
- **7-11 year old BAME children are more likely to say they feel worried.** 15% (n=81) of BAME children say they are worried 'most of the time' compared to 11% (n=682) of White Welsh or British children.

"Don't want to go back to school in February because the situation of the coronavirus is still quite bad." (18 year old, identifying as Asian from Another Country, South East Wales)

In January 2021, what changes have had the most impact on how BAME children feel?

We asked 12-18 year olds which changes have the most impact on how they feel. These results are similar to our May 2020 survey.

- **BAME 12-18 year olds are more likely to say school or college closing, changes to physical activity and how often we can exercise, leaving the house less, and changes to how they or their family shop have the most impact on how they feel.** 50% (n=412) say school or college closing has had the most impact on how they feel compared to 46% (n=4,064) of White Welsh or British 12-18 year olds. 23% (n=191) say changes to physical activity or exercise has had most impact compared to 19% (n=1,645) of White Welsh or British 12-18 year olds. 32% (n=263) say leaving the house less has had the most impact compared to 25% (n=2,228) of White Welsh or British 12-18 year olds. 9% (n=71) say changes to how they or their family shop for food have had the most impact compared to 3% (n=307) of White Welsh or British 12-18 year olds.

In January 2021, how are BAME children experiencing their rights?

Article 3: adults should do what is best for you

We asked all children what extra help they feel they need at this time. BAME children and young people are more likely to say they need extra help across a range of options.

- **BAME children and young people are more likely to need extra help.** Only 28% (n=186) of 7-11 year old BAME children say they don't need any extra help at this time compared to 36% (n=2,570) of White Welsh or British children. 31% (n=252) of BAME 12-18 year olds say they don't need extra compared to 37% (n=3,283) of White Welsh or British children and young people.
- **BAME children and young people are more likely to need more information on Coronavirus, and on rules to keep them safe.** 21% (n=141) of 7-11 year old BAME children say they need more information on Coronavirus, compared to 13% (n=953) of White Welsh or British children. 15% (n=122) of BAME 12-18 year olds say this compared to 11% (n=939) of White Welsh or British children and young people. 22% (n=148) of 7-11 year old BAME children say they need more information on rules to keep them safe compared to 12% (n=872) of White Welsh or British children. Among 12-18

year olds, 11% (n=91) of BAME children and young people say they need more information on rules compared to 8% (n=674) of White Welsh or British children and young people.

- **BAME children and young people are more likely to need more help to make sure they feel safe at home, and to make sure their family has the food they need.** 18% (n=120) of BAME 7-11 year olds say they need more help to make sure they feel safe at home compared to 10% (n=688) of White Welsh or British children. 7% (n=54) of BAME 12-18 year olds say this, compared to 5% (n=428) of White Welsh or British children and young people. 14% (n=96) of BAME 7-11 year old children say they need help to make sure their family has the food they need compared to 10% (n=718) of White Welsh or British children. 6% (n=48) of BAME 12-18 year olds say this compared to 4% (n=351) of White Welsh or British 12-18 year olds.

In January 2021, how are BAME children keeping a healthy body and a healthy mind?

Article 24: you have the right to enjoy the highest attainable standard of health

- **BAME 12-18 year olds are more likely to be doing indoor exercise, music, reading or writing, art, and learning a new skill.** 45% (n=369) say they are doing indoor exercise compared to 40% (n=3,579) of White Welsh or British 12-18 year olds. 55% (n=446) say they are playing an instrument or listening to music compared to 51% (n=4,487) of White Welsh or British 12-18 year olds. 38% (n=321) say they are reading or writing compared to 32% (n=2824) of White Welsh or British 12-18 year olds. 33% (n=268) say they are doing art (drawing, painting colouring etc.) compared to 30% (n=2,627) of White Welsh or British 12-18 year olds. 22% (n=180) say they are learning a new skill compared to 15% (n=1,374) of White Welsh or British 12-18 year olds.
- **BAME children and young people are less likely to be exercising outdoors.** 57% (n=387) of BAME 7-11 year olds say they have been exercising outdoors compared to 78% (n=5,692) of White Welsh or British 7-11 year olds. 43% (n=346) of BAME 12-18 year olds say this compared to 60% (n=5309) of White Welsh or British 12-18 year olds.
- **7-11 year old BAME children are more likely to need extra help to feel happy and well.** 27% (n=179) of BAME 7-11 year olds said they need extra help to feel happy and well compared to 21% (n=1,500) of White Welsh or British children.
- **7-11 year old BAME children are less likely to say they are speaking with friends and family to keep a healthy body and mind.** 47% (n=322) of BAME 7-11 year olds say they are speaking to friends compared to 60% (n=4,360) of White Welsh or British 7-11 year olds. 61% (n=416) of BAME 7-11 year olds say they are speaking with family compared to 70% (n=,5099) of White Welsh or British 7-11 year olds.
- **12-18 year old BAME children and young people are more likely to need extra help to eat healthy food and stay active.** 39% (n=318) of BAME 12-18 year olds say this compared to 34% (n=3,035) of White Welsh or British 12-18 year olds. 53% (n=164) of BAME respondents say they need help with ideas to stay physically active compared to 46% (n=1,316) to White Welsh or British respondents. 22% (n=67) say they would like to receive healthy food boxes at home compared to 17% (n=488) of White Welsh or British respondents.
- **7-11 year olds BAME children and young people are more likely to say they are playing less and less likely to say they are playing more at this time.** 36% (n=240) say they are playing less at this time compared to 31% (n=2,231) of White Welsh or British 7-11 year olds. 36% (n=241) say they are playing

more compared to 40% (n=2896) of White Welsh or British 7-11 year olds. This was also evident in the May 2020 survey where 27%, (n=213) said they were playing less compared to 23% (n=2387) of White Welsh or British children. 45% (n=360) said they were playing more compared to 54% (n=5,493) of White Welsh or British children in the May 2020 survey results. However, there is no significant difference between 12-18 year old BAME and White Welsh or British responses when it comes to whether they are relaxing more or less at this time.

"I am attending a number of activities like after school club, arts and crafts, drawing, exercising, dance, fitness and many more through a charity called women connect first." 12 year old, identifying as Asian Welsh or British, South East Wales)

In January 2021, how are BAME children staying in touch with family and friends?

- BAME children and young people are less likely to say they are staying in touch with family and friends through video calling. 70% (n=468) of BAME 7-11 year olds say this compared to 80% (n=5,771) of White Welsh or British 7-11 year olds. 55% (n=445) of BAME 12-18 year olds say this compared to 61% (n=5,371) of White Welsh or British 12-18 year olds.

"I miss my friends my school and my family is especially my grandmother." 10 year old, identifying as Black Welsh or British, South East Wales)

In January 2021, do BAME children know where to get help if you need support to feel happy and well?

We asked this question to all 7-11 year olds in both surveys. In the May 2020 survey, BAME children were less likely than White Welsh or British children to say they knew where to get help (73%, n=574, compared to 78%, n=7,909). In the January 2021 survey, all children are less likely when compared to May 2020 to say they knew where to get help, but there is no statistically significant difference between BAME and White Welsh or British children.

From a list of options given for 12-18 year olds, BAME and White Welsh or British children and young people are similarly confident in getting support from a doctor, a mental health team in their area or from a website / social media. However, BAME children and young people are less likely to say they are confident getting help for their emotional and mental health from three places:

- BAME 12-18 year olds are less confident getting help for their emotional and mental health from friends or family. 75% (n=589) say they are confident getting help from friends or family compared to 81% (n=6,937) of White Welsh or British 12-18 year olds.
- BAME 12-18 year olds are less confident getting help for their emotional and mental health from school or college counselling. 38% (n=275) say they are confident getting help from school or college counselling compared to 42% (n=3,416) of White Welsh or British 12-18 year olds.

- **BAME 12-18 year olds are less confident getting help for their emotional and mental health from teachers or other school or college staff.** 44% (n=317) say they are confident getting help from teachers or other school or college staff compared to 48% (n=3,908) of White Welsh or British 12-18 year olds.

"It can be a bit stressful but I'm able to cope and I'm looking forward to going back to school and see family and friends again. I'm feeling positive about the future." (12 year old, identifying as mixed heritage, South West Wales)

In January 2021, what is affecting BAME children's learning?

Article 28: you have the right to an education

There is no significant difference in how confident BAME and White Welsh or British children and young people feel about their learning at this time. This was also the case in the May 2020 survey results. However, there are several significant differences in responses to this survey when it comes to changes affecting learning.

- **BAME children and young people are more likely to feel libraries being closed, not being able to go outside as much, and not being able to meet with religious or faith groups has affected their learning outside school or college.** 26% (n=165) of BAME 7-11 year olds say libraries being closed has affected their learning most compared to 16% (n=1,100) of White Welsh or British 7-11 year olds. 17% (n=127) of BAME 12-18 year olds say this compared to 7% (n=573) of White Welsh or British 12-18 year olds. 71% (n=447) of BAME 7-11 year olds say not being able to go outside as much has affected their learning most compared to 62% (n=4,276) of White Welsh or British 7-11 year olds. 67% (n= 505) of BAME 12-18 year olds say this compared to 64% (n=5,241) of White Welsh or British 12-18 year olds. 22% (n=139) of BAME 7-11 year olds say not being able to meet with religious or faith groups has affected their learning compared to 5% (n=363) of White Welsh or British 7-11 year olds. 12% (n=91) of BAME 12-18 year olds say this compared to 3% (n=228) of White Welsh or British 12-18 year olds.
- **BAME children are less likely to feel not being able to meet friends or groups is affecting their learning outside school or college.** 83% (n=524) of BAME 7-11 year olds say this compared to 90% (n=6,350) of White Welsh or British 7-11 year olds. 82% (n=616) of BAME 12-18 year olds say this compared to 88% (n=7,258) of White Welsh or British 12-18 year olds.
- **12-18 year old BAME children and young people are more likely to say that not being able to see a tutor or join a class outside school or college, and parks and community centres being closed has affected them the most.** 25% (n=190) say not being able to see a tutor or join a class outside school or college has affected them the most compared to 20% (n=1,659) of White Welsh or British 12-18 year olds. 22% (n=169) say parks being closed has affected them the most compared to 19% (n=1534) of White Welsh or British 12-18 year olds. 9% (n=71) say community centres being closed has affected them the most compared to 6% (n=486) of White Welsh or British 12-18 year olds.

The large difference between BAME and White Welsh or British responses around libraries being closed affecting learning was also reflected in the May 2020 survey. 35% (n=230) of BAME 7-11 year olds said this in May compared to 18% (n=1,445) of White Welsh or British 7-11 year olds. 22% (n=87) of BAME 12-18 year olds said this compared to 8% (n=411) of White Welsh or British 12-18 year olds.

"I need a kindle to read because library is close and mum said I spent too much time on laptop is bad for my eyes I often cannot sleep at night." 9 year old, identifying as Chinese, South West Wales)

Home learning

There is little difference among responses to questions around the quality of internet at home, or having the right equipment to do work. However, there are some important disparities in relation to home learning.

- **BAME children and young people are less likely to say they are using laptops or home computer for learning at home.** 74% (n=494) of BAME 7-11 year olds say this compared to 78% (n=5,657) of White Welsh or British 7-11 year olds. 84% (n=684) of BAME 12-18 year olds say this compared to 90% (n=7,941) of White Welsh or British 12-18 year olds.
- **BAME 12-18 year olds are more likely to use a tablet for home working.** 33% (n=271) say this compared to 25% (n=2,204) of White Welsh or British 12-18 year olds.

We asked 12-18 year olds if they agreed with a series of positive and negative sentences about home learning.

- **12-18 year old BAME children and young people are more likely to say they are not learning at home at all.** 14% (n=108) say this compared to 11% (n=945) of White Welsh or British 12-18 year olds.
- **12-18 year old BAME children and young people are less likely to say they are worried about changes to friendships when they go back to school.** 26% (n=205) say this compared to 30% (n=2,528) of White Welsh or British 12-18 year olds.
- **BAME 12-18 year olds are more likely to say they have more time to learn new things.** 25% (n=196) say this compared to 22% (n=1,872) of White Welsh or British 12-18 year olds.
- **There is little difference between 12-18 year old BAME and White Welsh or British responses around enjoying learning at their own pace, getting good support and feedback from teachers about work, or feeling worried about falling behind, qualifications or not feeling motivated.**

At the end of the survey, we asked children and young people if there is anything else they want to tell us about their experiences during this time. 12-18 year old BAME children and young people are **less likely to make comments relating to struggling with learning in general** compared to White Welsh or British children and young people. 6% (n=22) say this compared to 10% (n=320) of White Welsh or British 12-18 year olds. However, **BAME children and young people are more likely to make comments relating to struggling specifically with online study.** 10% (n=36) say this compared to 7% (n=212) of White Welsh or British children and young people.

"Physically going to school is much better than online learning. I often feel stressed and unhappy as the work is quite repetitive and boring to do. My mental health has also degraded severely from this." (12 year old, identifying as Asian from Another Country, South West Wales)

Article 30: you have the right to use the language you want to

We asked children and young people if they normally learn in Welsh, or if they are currently learning Welsh, and what opportunities they have to use Welsh at the moment.

- **BAME children and young people are more likely to say they would like more support with their Welsh.** 12% (n=61) of 7-11 year old children say this compared to 8% (n=488) of White Welsh or British 7-11 year olds. Although numbers are very small, we note that 19% (n=11) of Black Welsh or British children say this, and are the most likely to report this of any ethnicity selected. 8% (n=39) of BAME 12-18 year old say this compared to 6% (n=360) of White Welsh or British 12-18 year olds.
- **12-18 year old BAME children and young people were also more likely to say they are not getting opportunities to use their Welsh.** 25% (n=122) of BAME 12-18 year olds say this compared to 20% (n=1,308) of White Welsh or British 12-18 year olds.

Next steps

This second iteration of our Coronavirus and Me survey has been delivered at pace, during a time of ongoing uncertainty for all of the population of Wales. But particularly for our children and young people, who are unsure when they will return to face to face schooling, and in the meantime are missing their friends and the services that they usually interact with. A few months is a long time in the life of a child, and it is important to appreciate the impact that the ongoing restrictions, with no known end date, will have in that context.

I recognise and understand the need to be cautious around lifting restrictions and to monitor carefully the impact of doing so; this is to ensure that we are all kept safe and protected from Coronavirus. Many of those responding to this survey remain worried about their loved ones getting ill, and will be reassured to hear that measures around the virus is still being handled carefully.

But I cannot fail to be moved by the feelings expressed so clearly by many of our respondents, that things feel more difficult for them across many areas of their lives when compared to last summer, and that they are strongly affected by not seeing friends and family, and by schools and colleges being closed to the majority.

Almost 20,000 children and young people have taken the time to share their in-depth views with me and my team; views that they wanted the Welsh Government to hear and to act upon.

Mindful of the ongoing discussions about children's education and school attendance, we shared this report as soon as it was ready with the Welsh Government. We asked them to respond to those children and young people who participated in the survey to show that they've seen and heard their views and to tell children and their families what they have listened to, and how they have acted upon these views in making their decisions. We also asked them to ensure that they shared all of the data and this overview report with members of the Technical Advisory Cell (TAC) who give advice to them on how to manage the virus and restrictions.

I am pleased to note from our initial discussions that the report has already been shared with TAC and Welsh Government policy leads. I'm encouraged by the Welsh Government's response that these findings are important social evidence from a large sample of children across Wales, and they recognise their duty to listen, and to respect children's rights in all that they do.

As Children's Commissioner for Wales, I will continue to remind the Government of the importance of acting upon this large body of evidence from children and young people. If I don't think they have done this enough then I will encourage them to go back to the data, to go back to the voices of the children and young people responding to both of the surveys, and to look at what more could be possible to achieve. The importance of this work will be seen in the coming weeks, for children and young people to know that they have not been forgotten and that their experiences have been understood and acted upon by all of the key decision makers in Wales.

Initial response from Welsh Government

The Welsh Government is extremely grateful for this invaluable insight into the lives of children and young people. The First Minister and the Cabinet would like to thank all the children and young people for taking the time to contribute.

This overview report has already been shared across Welsh Government and with the children and schools Technical Advisory Cell.

As far as possible these findings will be considered as a key source of evidence when future decisions are made. If we are unable to address the specific needs of children and young people raised through the survey, we will outline the range of evidence that we have used to ensure we control the virus and protect lives.

11 February 2021

Contact details

Children's Commissioner for Wales

T: 01792 765600

W: www.childrenscommissioner.wales

E: post@childcomwales.org.uk

Children's Commissioner for Wales' independent investigations and advice service

T: 01792 765600

E: advice@childcomwales.org.uk

W: www.childrenscommissioner.wales

This work was undertaken in partnership with the following organisations

