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Overview

The Covid 19 Young People's Survey ran from 15 May 2020 to 18 June 2020. It was designed by members of the Redbridge Youth Council (RYC) and Child Friendly Redbridge (CFR) Ambassadors in partnership with Barking and Dagenham, Havering and Redbridge Clinical Commissioning Groups.

The first part of the survey (to question 12) was in line with what the CCG were seeking views on. The second part were Redbridge specific questions members of the RYC and CFR Ambassadors designed and thought would help the Council understand and gauge what young people consider to be important as we ease out of lockdown and they begin return to some state of normality. Barking & Dagenham and Havering launched their surveys after ours and are different stages of collecting and analyzing their responses, after which information on emerging priorities and themes can be shared.

As well as helping to draft the survey, young people also helped play a huge part in ensuring the response rate was high. The CFR Ambassadors helped promote the survey with their classmates and other young people across the borough.

There was a total of 915 responses (although not every respondent answered every question). The key findings and messages from the survey are:

Negative Messages

- Lockdown has had a significant impact on the mental health of young people. A quarter of young people stated that they are feeling down and a slightly higher number said that mental health is something that they have been worried about during lockdown. Those suffering with anxiety, depression and stress commented that lockdown has compounded their issues further, particularly young people who have been unable to speak to or see their therapists and counsellors
- More and more young people are beginning to experience mental health issues for the first time, as a result of being in lockdown. Being unable to see their friends and family, do things they enjoy, worrying about becoming infected and struggling to study on their own are all having an effect and contributing to issues around stress, feeling depressed and unmotivated.
- The long-term impact of this prolonged period outside of a school setting is a huge concern for young people, in particular those in Year 10 and above. There is a worry that there will be too much to catch up on in too little time. Education was one of the biggest concerns for young people both during and after lockdown
- Too much schoolwork was also a factor causing young people to have a difficult time during lockdown. Many young people felt that their schools were giving them too much schoolwork and that the support was not always in place to help them understand and complete the work assigned to them. Furthermore, many young people did not have the resources to do schoolwork, with textbooks and other learning material left at school with no way to access them



Positive Messages

There have, however, been some positives that young people have taken from lockdown including:

- Time they have been able to spend with their families, appreciating the fact that they may not be able to spend as much time with their families once things return to normal. They have found themselves becoming closer with their parents and, in particular, their siblings
- They are also appreciative that lockdown has allowed them to work at their own pace, which many feel has been conducive to helping them undertake the schoolwork, and spend time on bettering themselves, including developing new skills, meditation and reconnecting with their faith

Priorities

Responses that came in towards the latter stages of the consultation highlighted issues around racial inequality, in light of the tragic events that took place in America, and suicide prevention. This was in response to a young student who sadly took his own life in early June. Since then, a petition has been started by the young people of Redbridge to ensure that there are adequate services in place to help all young people experiencing mental health issues. A separate petition has also been started by a group of young people in Redbridge, which calls for the curriculum to teach more about black history and the role of the British Empire during slavery.

Within the survey young people were asked whether the priorities identified as part of the Make Your Mark Campaign were still the right ones in light of the pandemic. From this work the majority felt that the priorities of hate crime, knife crime and climate change were still correct.

However, it was clear in the responses that the message being relayed by young people was that there needs to be support in place to help them cope as they begin to transition back into attending school. Young people also said that schools should be safe to return to and that young people should not be rushed back without the necessary safety precautions in place

Finally, a number of sensitive issues were identified by young people. Where contact details were provided, officers are currently in the process of contacting young people with help and information on the areas where they have requested it, prioritising those who declared that they are struggling and need help.



Demographic Information

1: What is your age?

Option	Total	Percent
Under 10	5	1%
10	7	1%
11	38	4%
12	121	13%
13	149	17%
14	119	13%
15	273	30%
16	56	6%
17	95	11%
18	30	3%
Over 18	5	1%

2: Which borough are you from?

Option	Total	Percent
Barking & Dagenham	73	7.98%
Havering	11	1.20%
Redbridge	810	88.52%
Not Answered	21	2.30%

Whilst all respondents attend school in Redbridge, there were some who live outside of the borough, which is reflected in the figures above.

3: What is your gender?

Option	Total	Percent
Male	368	40.22%
Female	525	57.38%
Other	6	0.66%
Not Answered	16	1.75%

For information, questions 4 and 5 of the survey asked for the names and a contact telephone number for young people who wished to be included as part of the prize draw.



6: What is your ethnicity?

Option	Total	Percent
White British	49	5.36%
White Irish	5	0.55%
Other White background	29	3.17%
Indian or Indian British	178	19.45%
Pakistani or Pakistani British	203	22.19%
Bangladeshi or Bangladeshi British	175	19.13%
Chinese or Chinese British	4	0.44%
Other Asian background	48	5.25%
Black Caribbean	15	1.64%
Black African	47	5.14%
Other Black background	3	0.33%
White and Black Caribbean	13	1.42%
White and Black African	5	0.55%
White and Asian	16	1.75%
Other mixed background	24	2.62%
Arab	9	0.98%
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0	0%
Other	29	3.17%
Not Answered	63	6.89%

If other, please specify

- There were 94 responses to this part of the question. As Redbridge is the third most diverse borough in the country it is not surprising that nearly 10% of respondents do not fit in to these standard demographic questions.



Lockdown Experience

7: How are you feeling?

Option	Total	Percent
I'm feeling down and I need help	46	5.03%
I'm feeling down but I am managing	182	19.89%
I'm OK	350	38.25%
I feel good	224	24.48%
I'm feeling great/hopeful	106	11.58%
Not Answered	7	0.77%

8: Why do you think you feel like this?

This was an open question so that the young people were not guided in their response. There were 468 responses to this question.

There were a number of consistent themes that emerged from the responses to this question. These have been broken down for each of the options below.

- **I'm feeling great/hopeful**

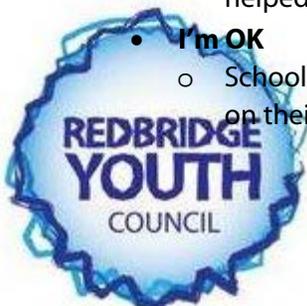
- Spending more time with family – this is by far the biggest factor as to why young people are feeling great and hopeful. They appreciate that they are able to reconnect with their family, especially their parents who work, and are enjoying spending time with their siblings.
- Get to stay at home – linked to the above, there is seems to be acknowledgement that spending time at home during times like these is a good thing and they are able to do things that they enjoy (gaming, playing with siblings etc) in the safety of their own home
- Time away from school – many young people are also feeling positive due to not having to deal with the pressures of school. Some mentioned that they are able to sleep in and feel more energetic throughout the day.
- Being able to do schoolwork at their own pace – young people are happy that they can do their schoolwork at their own pace, without feeling rushed or under pressure to complete it within a short space of time.
- Despite being in lockdown, many young people have a positive outlook are of the belief that things can only get better and have trust and faith in doctors, scientists and the health system to help people in need and to find a vaccine.

- **I feel good**

- Similar themes as above also emerged for young people that feel good. Other themes that came through included being active and exercising at home, not being infected with the virus as well as slight sense of boredom from being home all day.
- With many of the responses coming in after lockdown began to ease, some young people mentioned that they were able to meet up with some of their friends and extended family, which has helped them stay positive despite not being able to see them as often as they would like.

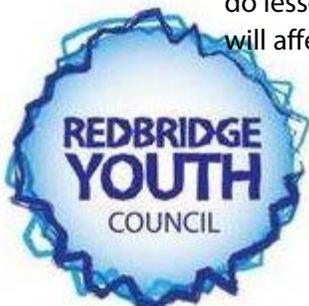
- **I'm OK**

- Schoolwork and education – young people realise that being away from school is having an impact on their education and are concerned about falling behind, especially those who are going into



exams next year. Comments regarding a lack of support from teachers started emerging amongst this group of young people

- Missing friends – whilst many young people enjoy being with their families and feel safe, they are missing their friends and say that keeping in touch via social media, video calls etc is not the same as being with them in person
- Boredom – again, young people are enjoying being with their families but are beginning to run out of things to do
- **I'm feeling down but I am managing**
 - Unable to go out – the inability to go out and socialise with friends or visit extended family has taken its toll. Again, young people are enjoying time at home with their families but recognise the importance of being around friends
 - Loneliness – young people are feeling lonely without their friends, which is having an impact on their mental health
 - Schoolwork – many young people are struggling with the amount of schoolwork that they have to do with minimal supervision from teachers. They feel as though it is getting too much for them to manage and this in turn is affecting their motivation to study. They can feel themselves falling behind and are not getting the help they need
 - Mental health – this group of young people highlighted struggles that they are having with their mental health, as a direct result of all of the factors listed above as well as worries about the coronavirus and how it has affected the health of family members and simply not being able to live their normal lives. There were also a number of young people who had pre-existing issues with depression and anxiety, which has been compounded during lockdown; some young people mentioned that they have been unable to see their therapist during this time
 - The later responses highlighted that they have been disheartened by the events taking place in America around racial prejudices and inequality and police brutality, making them feel even more down about the entire situation
- **I'm feeling down and I need help**
 - Mental health – this is one of the biggest reasons why young people are feeling down and need help. As with the young people who are feeling down but managing, this group of young people are feeling the strain of not being outdoors, missing their friends, the instability of the pandemic and not being able to speak with their counsellors/therapists about pre-existing mental health issues are all having an adverse effect on mental health. This is reflected in the fact that a third of respondents are feeling worried about mental health during lockdown and a fifth of young people worried about their mental health in the future.
 - There has been a petition started by young people in Redbridge calling for better mental health support services for young people, following the death of a student at a Redbridge school last week.
 - Schoolwork – alongside mental health, many young people are struggling during lockdown because of their schoolwork. They feel that there is simply too much work and the teachers are not on hand to help and assist as they normally would be. They are finding it difficult to teach themselves topics that they are unfamiliar with and feel overwhelmed by it all. Some young people are also unable to do lessons online. Students due to sit exams next year are especially worried about how this period will affect them going into their final year



9: How have you been spending your time? You can give positive or negative examples. Please include examples of websites/apps/resources that you may have used.

There were 571 responses to this part of the question.

With government restrictions and guidelines limiting the things people are able to do and the places they are able to go, many young people have found themselves spending their time doing the same things. This includes:

- Doing schoolwork – despite many struggling with the workload, motivation and with reduced access to help from teachers, young people are spending much of their time doing schoolwork
- Social media – apps such as Instagram, TikTok and Snapchat are being used more frequently by young people, primarily as a way of keeping touch with their friends
- Netflix/TV – with more time on their hands, and with a lack of motivation to do as much schoolwork as they would like, young people are increasingly spending more time watching Netflix and television, as well watching videos on YouTube
- Exercising – young people have started to use this time to get healthier and begin working out at home and exercising, including jogging outdoors. Many young people are mindful that a healthy body can lead to a healthy mind and are doing exercise to ensure this is the case. This is particularly the case in absence of team sports (football, basketball, netball etc)

A number of young people also mentioned that they are using this time to learn new hobbies (cooking, reading, arts and crafts) a new skill (learning a new language) and also becoming more spiritual and connecting with their faith (such as praying more often and meditating).

Those with siblings, particularly younger siblings, expressed how happy they were to be spending their time playing with them, something they don't often get to do when they are at school or college.

10: Have you worried about anything during the lockdown? Please tick all that apply.

Option	Total	Percent
School/College/University	647	70.71%
Friendships	329	35.96%
Family	328	35.85%
Physical health	302	33.01%
Staying safe	282	30.82%
Mental health	254	27.76%
Communication	205	22.40%
Money	172	18.80%
Home life	133	14.54%
Not Answered	58	6.34%
Crime	54	5.90%
Other	32	3.50%
Bullying	25	2.73%



If other, please specify

There were 56 responses to this part of the question. The most common concerns amongst young people during lockdown were around the following:

- Maintaining social distance – young people are concerned that some people are not observing social distancing protocols, making it unsafe for them or their families to be out safely.
- Exams – this is reflected in the figure above, which shows 70% of young people being concerned about school and their education more generally. There is a stark acknowledgement that more than three months out of school will have a long-term effect on their final GCSE results next year.
 - Young people are also worried that they will be considered a failure by teachers for being unable to complete the assignments that have been set during lockdown, and the impact this will have on the exams that they are invited to sit
- Travelling – with one eye on the future, young people expressed concerns about travelling, both abroad and on public transport. Issues around the cleanliness of public transport was a concern for young people.
- Debt - some young people were particularly conscious of the impact the virus has had on their parents/carers employment status and the longer-term effect on their ability to find jobs.
- Other concerns included general fear of catching the virus as well as their friends and family, as well as weight gain

11: Are you worried about anything in the future? Please tick all that apply.

Option	Total	Percent
School/College/University	691	75.52%
Friendships	242	26.45%
Money	237	25.90%
Family	233	25.46%
Staying safe	229	25.03%
Physical health	217	23.72%
Mental health	198	21.64%
Communication	125	13.66%
Home life	114	12.46%
Not Answered	105	11.48%
Crime	62	6.78%
Bullying	42	4.59%
Other	30	3.28%

If other, please specify

There were 47 responses to this part of the question.



The responses to this question were largely along the same themes as the previous question, with concerns around social distancing, catching the virus, and the impact lockdown has had on their education, which seemed to be the biggest concern.

Young people are worried about the amount of schoolwork that they will have to do when they go back, expressing concerns that it will be too much to do in a relatively short space of time. The concern is that this will in turn affect their final exam results and, longer term, affect their careers and their ability to achieve the goals they have set themselves.

There was concern amongst a minority of young people on the availability of a vaccine, and whether everyone will be able to get vaccinated.

12: Has the lockdown period been positive or negative for you?

Option	Total	Percent
Positive	222	24.26%
Negative	123	13.44%
Neither	167	18.25%
Both	396	43.28%
Not Answered	7	0.77%

Please expand on your answer

There were 669 responses to this part of the question.

The results of the survey show that lockdown has largely been a mixed experience for young people, with more than two-fifths of young people finding it both a positive and a negative period. The reasons behind each feeling are outlined below and reflect comments made in relation to questions 7 and 8 question.

- **Positive**

- Reflecting – young people who have found lockdown to be a positive experience have put this down to connecting with their faith, taking care of themselves and learning more about themselves as a person (their resilience, ability to cope with stress and worries etc)
- Spending time with their families – for many young people lockdown has been a positive experience, largely owing to the time they have been spending with their families, taking part in quizzes, playing fun games with younger siblings and watching movies together
- Health – many young people have taken time during lockdown to take steps to improve their health as they have a new found appreciation
- Other factors that helped make lockdown a positive experience for young people include not being, sleeping in, picking up new hobbies and doing schoolwork in their own time

- **Negative**

- Mental health – the strain of not being able to go out, being unable to see their friends, the sheer amount of schoolwork and the threat of the virus has resulted in mental health being adversely affected. This is especially the case for young people who were suffering with mental health issues



pre-lockdown. The deterioration of their mental health has resulted in young people becoming demotivated, focusing less on their schoolwork. Some young people revealed that they have, unfortunately, suffered breakdowns during lockdown

- Lack of structure – without school, after school clubs, sports clubs etc, young people are struggling with the lack of structure in their lives. This is making their experience of lockdown negative and they are finding themselves getting increasingly bored
- Falling behind – the lack of structure around their education/schoolwork has meant that many young people have fallen behind and are worried about the long term this will have on their grades and will add to the usual stress of exams
- Young people commented on the lack of motivation to do anything, be it schoolwork, exercise or anything productive. They stated that there is no purpose to their day or in anything they do.
- With increased use of the internet and more time on their hands, some young people have also experienced cyber bullying during lockdown

13: Has there been anything that you, your family or community have done that has been positive or helped other people?

There were 310 responses to this part of the question.

Young people, alongside their families, are playing their part in ensuring that their neighbours and other people within their communities stay safe during lockdown. They have taken part in food deliveries, including for those that fell ill with the coronavirus, and called people they know to help them feel less lonely.

They have also contributed to the NHS in many ways, ranging from taking part in 'Clap for Carers', fundraising and even helping to make PPE for NHS staff and other key workers. Many young people also mentioned that they helped by staying at home and self-isolating thus reducing the pressures on hospitals, highlighting their awareness of how important it is to follow government guidelines.

There were a number of young people who have family members that work for the NHS and have acknowledged the role they have played in helping to look after people during this time.

Many young people mentioned that they have taken part in peaceful protests as part of the Black Lives Matter movement, which is something that young people expressed as being especially important in educating society about black history and highlighting racial inequalities.

Some young people have also been tutoring younger children, including their neighbours, during lockdown, which has allowed parents to get some respite.



Schools

14: Do you think schools are...

Doing enough to support you (equipment, education etc)

Option	Total	Percent
Yes, they are doing more than enough	300	32.79%
Yes, but could be better	360	39.34%
No, not as much as I would like	189	20.66%
No, they are not listening/helping at all	50	5.46%
Not Answered	16	1.75%

Listening to your needs (for example, giving you enough time for homework)

Option	Total	Percent
Yes, they are doing more than enough	242	26.45%
Yes, but could be better	277	30.27%
No, not as much as I would like	264	28.85%
No, they are not listening/helping at all	91	9.95%
Not Answered	41	4.48%

15: What's nice about being at home rather than at school?

There were 587 responses to this part of the question.

The responses to this question reflect and support the comments made previously, including being able to spend time with their family, work and concentrate on schoolwork at their own pace and being able to sleep in. Being able to manage their own time is something that young people are appreciative of and has been a constant theme throughout. A number of young people also like that they were able to call upon a family member to help them with their schoolwork instead of a teacher. They also mentioned that they enjoyed doing more of what they like (computer games, watching movies).

Some young people said they just simply preferred not being at school. They stated that school was a big reason behind their anxiety, stress and depression and they were grateful to be at home. Other young people said they are happy not to see some of their teachers, grateful that they do not have to sit any exams (alluding to a lack of studying that they had undertaken up until the lockdown measures came into force) and happy to not be having school dinners every day.

16: How easy is it to be motivated to do your work?

Option	Total	Percent
Easy	137	14.97%
Ok	453	49.51%
Difficult	315	34.43%
Not Answered	10	1.09%



Priorities

17: Do you think that hate crime, climate change and knife crime are still the most important issues for young people in Redbridge?

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	532	58.14%
No	123	13.44%
Only one or two are still important	135	14.75%
Not Answered	125	13.66%

If only one or two are still important please state which ones

There were 118 responses to this part of the question.

Young people generally felt that that these should remain the priorities and no one priority was deemed less important than another in response to this particular question.

18: What issues do you think Redbridge should focus on for young people?

There were 430 responses to this part of the question.

Mental health was the main issue young people wanted Redbridge to focus on. There was an acknowledgement that lockdown was having a huge impact on the mental health of young people. Being unable to see friends, play sports, talk to support staff/counsellors/therapists, amongst other things, were all having an impact. Later responses to the survey called for more help and support around suicide prevention in the wake of a student sadly taking his own life during lockdown.

The stress of exams and moving on to further/higher education without any proper education for 4 months were significant reasons as to why young people were already experiencing issues with their mental health. The message being relayed by young people was that there needs to be support in place to help them cope as they begin to transition back into attending school. Young people also said that schools should be safe to return to and that young people should not be rushed back without the necessary safety precautions in place.

Other issues that young people want Redbridge to focus on are around bullying, racism (in the wake of events in America and the protests that have taken place across the world as part of the Black Lives Matter movement), climate change and knife crime.

19: Do you have any other comments?

There were 336 responses to this part of the question.

Young people used this part of the survey to reiterate the need for mental health support and the measures that will need to be in place as and when they return to school, including reassuring both students and parents that it is safe to do so.



Young people were also adamant that inundating them with schoolwork will not be conducive to helping them catch up with all of the schooling they have missed out on, and will compound any existing mental health issues.

Young people alluded to having easy to understand information and guidance, as the information released by the government isn't easy to interpret.

Finally, a number of young people noted that they have been surveyed in the past and asked to share their views without any follow-up actions taking place. They urged that responses are taken on board and prove to be a catalyst for change.

Request for Information

20: Please tick the following if you need help with any of the following:

Option	Total	Percent
Not Answered	585	63.93%
Education/exams/careers	230	25.14%
Mental Health	89	9.73%
Physical Health	72	7.87%
Coronavirus and how to stay safe	62	6.78%
Finance/debt	32	3.50%
Other	27	2.95%
Young carers	24	2.62%
Getting access to food and medicine	17	1.86%
Housing	14	1.53%
Unhealthy relationships (including domestic abuse)	6	0.66%
Support for alcohol/substance misuse	4	0.44%
Bereavement support	3	0.33%

If other, please specify

There were 33 responses to this part of the question, where some young people highlighted the help they needed with access to resources such as laptops.

If you have requested any of the above help, please insert your email address

There were 110 responses to this part of the question.

