



**CoRAY**

Covid-19 response: Mental Health  
Resources for and by Young People



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# **Evidence Synthesis: What does research tell us about the mental health and wellbeing of young people during the COVID-19 pandemic?**

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## **Introduction**

**Young people's mental health and wellbeing has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in different ways.** According to a report by NHS Digital, one in six children and young people were experiencing a mental health disorder in July 2020 [54]. In this sample, weighted to be representative of the population, more young people were experiencing a probable mental health disorder at this time when compared to similar data collected in 2017. In a range of studies, young people have said their mental health has got worse during the pandemic, but some young people have said their mental health has improved [i.e. 37- survey of young people aged 13-24 across the UK]. Furthermore, it is predicted that around 1.5 million young people will need mental health support over the coming months due to the pandemic [55].

**This is a summary of what the research evidence tells us about the impact of the pandemic on the mental health and wellbeing of young people aged 11 – 16 across the UK.** It focuses on: 1) key mental health and wellbeing outcomes; 2) changes to daily life that may affect mental health; 3) groups of young people that may have been affected differently by the pandemic. Where information is not available, details have been included for a slightly older population or data has been included from other Western countries. Most studies included in this synthesis report on questionnaire or survey data, with a few studies using interview or qualitative methods to capture more in-depth responses. It is also important to note that the majority of studies are cross-sectional, meaning they are only looking at people's responses at one point in time, or they compare young people's responses to other young people's responses captured at a different point in time. The majority of studies also use 'convenience' or 'non-representative' samples, meaning the data from these studies may not reflect the experiences of young people in the general population.

## **Part 1. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on key mental health and wellbeing outcomes**

### *Feeling anxious, worried or stressed*

**Lots of studies have asked young people to say how worried, anxious or stressed they have felt during the COVID-19 pandemic.** Feeling anxious was quite common for a lot of young people. Around half of young people have been feeling worried at least some of the time during the pandemic [i.e. 6 - young people in Wales aged 7-18 surveyed in May 2020, 47- survey of 11-17 year olds in Scotland, April-July 2020, 46- young people aged 13-18 surveyed from April-May 2020]. Feeling anxious was one of the top 3 emotions experienced by young people in the first UK lockdown [14- survey of young people aged 8-24 across the UK from April to June 2020 (sample weighted to be nationally representative)]. For example, some young people aged 13-25 interviewed during May and June 2020 felt like they had too much time to think & worry [21].

**Although lots of young people say they are worrying, it is unclear whether they are feeling more stressed or anxious than they were before the pandemic.** For example, in one study of young people aged 13 -14 in the South West of England, anxiety levels were lower when their responses were compared to their own self-reported anxiety before the pandemic [41]. In another study run in Scotland during the first few months of the first UK lockdown, no change was reported in young people's stress or anxiety levels when compared to a similar group of 12-17 year olds asked before the pandemic [47]. However, in a number of other reports, young people reported higher levels anxiety when their responses were compared to similar young people before the pandemic, or when young people/parents reflected on how stressed, anxious or fearful they felt before the pandemic [2 & 3 - survey of young people in the UK aged 13–24 in April 2020, 8- survey conducted by YoungMinds from April-May 2020, 14- survey of young people aged 8-24 across the UK from April to June 2020 (sample weighted to be nationally representative)].

**Young people have experienced a range of different worries or concerns, both about 'daily life' and worries the 'virus itself'.** Young people have expressed worries and concerns around the effect of the pandemic on a number of different areas of their lives, for example, school, exams, education, the future, work, relationships with family and friends, and hobbies, as well as the economy, money, having food and essential items [33- parent/carer report on young people's worries during May 2020, 47- survey of 11-17 year olds in Scotland, April-July 2020]. Young people have also described worrying about catching the virus, or their friends/family catching it [33- parent/carer reports of young people in the UK's worries during May 2020, 41- study in the South-West of England of young people aged 13-14 during April-May 2020].

**Although the evidence is varied, it is possible that the types of things young people have been worrying, stressed or concerned about may have changed over the course of the pandemic.** A study conducted before lockdown found that young people aged 8 – 17 were experiencing a diverse range of stressors such as school, big crowds, appearance, bullying, gaming, allergies, negative interactions with friends [34]. However, during lockdown (March to June 2020) most of young people’s worries and stresses related to the coronavirus in some way, for example the ways it had affected their daily life [34]. During the first UK lockdown, young people (aged 11-24) expressed concerns about catching coronavirus [37- YoungMinds UK-wide survey], their health/health of their family and friends [27- survey of 7,000 girls across the UK in May 2020]; as well as food shortages/ money worries [45- parents reporting on their child’s worries between March to June 2020].

**A lot of worries and concerns centred around changes to education.** Young people expressed concern around school closures [17- survey data from young people aged 11-24 in Scotland during April 2020], school work, learning from home [25- data collected from April-June 2020 from Scottish young people aged 8-14], exams [47- survey of 11-17 year olds in Scotland, April-July 2020], changes in educational opportunities [27- survey of 7,000 girls across the UK in May 2020], and not seeing their friends [34- data from young people aged 8-17]. As the first lockdown continued and then began to ease young people also expressed concerns around the longer-term impact of the pandemic on the economy, jobs and their personal futures [27- survey of 7,000 girls across the UK in May 2020; 32- parent and young people’s reports of young people’s concerns in September 2020; 34- data from young people aged 8-17].

**Over the spring and summer of 2020, most young people said they were comfortable or looking forward to going back to school, but some were concerned about going back to school** [35- young people aged 11-18 across the UK surveyed during April-May 2020 , 42- survey conducted during July 2020 of the experiences of 11-16 year olds during lockdown, sample weighted to be nationally representative, 57- parent and child reports of school-aged young people’s concerns in September 2020]. Young people expressed particular concerns around school work/pressure, uncertainty, transitions, changes to friendships [43- survey data from 8-18 year olds in the south of England collected during May- July 2020, 57- parent and child reports of school-aged young people’s concerns in September 2020].

**Overall, it is still unclear whether young people are feeling more or less stressed or anxious as the pandemic continues.** A survey of young people aged 8-17 found that a third of young people felt stressed most/every day in March (pre lockdown), but this reduced to a quarter of young people in June (lockdown) [34]. A few ongoing studies, such as Co-SPACE are tracking changes in feelings throughout the pandemic. This longitudinal data has found that emotional difficulties (which includes worries) went down slightly / or stayed the same at the beginning of lockdown. Overall, girls had higher levels of emotional difficulties than boys, & this increased slightly at the end of the summer before schools reopened [5, 44, 58-

Co-SPACE study findings- parent and young person report of young people's mental health symptoms from March-October 2020]. Furthermore, the proportion of young people with probable emotional difficulty did not change [44].

### ***Feeling sad, depressed or bored***

**A number of studies asked young people about feeling sad, depressed or bored during the COVID-19 pandemic.** Over half of young people aged 7-18 in Wales, who were surveyed in May 2020 reported feeling sad at least *some* of the time, but the other half reported not feeling sad very often [6]. Being bored and unable to do things that are normally enjoyable was one of the worst things about lockdown, as reported by young people aged 4-18 across the UK in May 2020 [27] and aged 9-25 in the East of England from April-June 2020 [30]. For many young people this made their mental health worse e.g. findings from Mind's June 2020 survey of young people aged 13-24 [37]. In a survey conducted by YoungMinds from April-May 2020, parents reported that their children had experienced increased mood swings, heightened emotions or an increased sense of loss [8].

**Although many young people have been feeling sad or bored, it is unclear whether they are feeling more sad or depressed than they were before the pandemic.** In one study in the South-West of England, young people in aged 13-14 showed little change in depression symptoms from pre-pandemic (October 2019) to lockdown (data collected April-May 2020) [41]. Furthermore, young people in this study who were at higher risk of depression before the pandemic showed a reduction in depression symptoms, compared to those with no pre-pandemic symptoms who showed a small increase [41]. In another study of 13-24-year-olds in April 2020, 23-35% were categorised as having 'abnormally' high levels of depressive symptoms [3]. When this information was compared to levels of depression reported in previous studies pre-pandemic, rates of depression were significantly higher during the pandemic [3]. This was also the case when young people aged 8-24 across the UK (sample weighted to be nationally representative) retrospectively compared how they felt before and during lockdown (April-June 2020), with young people reporting that they felt more sad, trapped and/or bored during lockdown [14].

**It is also unclear whether young people are feeling more or less sad, depressed or bored as the pandemic continues.** Data collected from April-June 2020 from Scottish young people aged 8-14 suggests that levels of boredom may have increased, with young people reporting having less fun things to do, with girls reportedly feeling less cheerful, less happy, and feeling less good about themselves [25]. However, from March to October 2020, parent-reported emotional difficulties (which included feeling unhappy) went down slightly / or stayed the same for young people aged 4-16 over the course of pandemic [58]. Overall, girls had higher levels of emotional difficulties than boys, and this increased slightly at the end of

the summer before schools reopened [Co-SPACE study findings- parent and young person report of young people's mental health symptoms from March-October 2020 5, 44, 58].

### ***Happiness and wellbeing***

**A number of studies have assessed young people's happiness and wellbeing during the pandemic.** Around half of young people aged 7-18 said they felt happy most of the time in May 2020 [6] and most aged 10-17 reported at least moderate levels of wellbeing as of April-June 2020 [38]. On the other hand, around a quarter to a fifth of young people had low levels of wellbeing or were extremely concerned about their wellbeing [survey data from 8-18 year olds in the south of England during May- July 2020 [43] and survey data from young people aged 11-24 in Scotland during April 2020 [17]. Around a tenth of young people aged 7-18 in Wales said they were not happy very often, when surveyed in May 2020 [6]. More specifically, when surveyed between April-July 2020, around a fifth of young people aged 11-17 in Scotland reported low happiness regarding the future, and less than a tenth said they had low levels of happiness in their home life [47].

**For some young people the pandemic brought relief.** For example, some young people aged 3-18, surveyed in May 2020 experienced relief from previous school and health pressures, such as caring responsibilities, mental health difficulties and bullying [6]. But for some, remote schooling took a toll on young people's wellbeing [23- work by Barnardo's with young people across the UK aged 8-24], with three quarters of young people aged 8-25 surveyed in May 2020 saying they miss school/college [39]. In addition, young people aged 13-18 reported lower positive wellbeing than their parents from April-May 2020 [46].

**It is unclear whether levels of wellbeing have changed throughout the pandemic.** In one study, a small increase was reported in wellbeing during lockdown compared to levels of wellbeing before the pandemic [41- study in the South-West of England of young people aged 13-14 during April-May 2020]. Furthermore, when asked about the effect of lockdown on general happiness, around a third to half of young people aged 8-18 said it made them feel worse, around a quarter to a third said they felt better, with a quarter experiencing no change [43- 8-18 year olds in the south of England who took part in the OxWell School Survey from May- July 2020].

### ***Feeling lonely, disconnected or isolated***

**Feelings of loneliness and isolation have been common for young people during the pandemic, despite young people reportedly staying in touch with friends and socialising online** [46- young people aged 13-18 surveyed from April-May 2020, 19- young people aged 13-25 surveyed from March-July 2020, 27- young people aged 4-18 across the UK, who took part in surveys in May 2020]. In one survey, around three quarters of young people aged 13-



24 across the UK said loneliness made their mental health worse [37]. Missing seeing/ being with friends and feeling socially isolated were top priorities of young people aged 9-25 in the East of England during April-June 2020 [30], and a main challenge of lockdown [30]. This had a big impact on how young people felt [6- young people in Wales aged 7-18 surveyed in May 2020].

**Most studies reported increased levels of loneliness during the pandemic, but this was not the case for everyone.** Increased levels of loneliness were reported for some when young people were asked to compare how they felt during lockdown with how they felt before lockdown [14- survey of young people aged 8-24 across the UK from April to June 2020 (sample weighted to be nationally representative), 47- survey of 11-17 year olds in Scotland, April-July 2020, 43-OxWell School Survey of 8-18 year olds during May-July 2020, 42- survey conducted during July 2020 of the experiences of 11-16 year olds during lockdown, sample weighted to be nationally representative ]. However other young people felt the same levels of loneliness or felt less lonely than before lockdown [43-OxWell School Survey of 8-18 year olds during April-July 2020], and valued having extra family time at home, even if it was 'forced' [30- young people aged 9-25 in the East of England during April-June 2020].

**Some studies reported that young people feel more isolated, but others suggested that young people felt the same levels of connectedness as pre pandemic.** Parents reported that young people became more introverted as a consequence of feeling isolated at home, and became more attached to their parents [8- survey conducted by YoungMinds from April-May 2020, ]. However, in one study, students aged 13-14 school connectedness reportedly improved during lockdown (April-May 2020), and there was no change in peer or family connectedness [41]. In fact, in a survey of young people aged 14-25 in April 2020, many young people spent time reaching out and supporting others by sharing positive wishes and encouraging messages with friends, family and their community [26].

### ***Feeling angry, frustrated, restless or hyperactive***

**Few studies have asked young people about changes in their behaviour or other emotions like feeling angry or annoyed.** However, in one study conducted in summer 2020, parents across the UK reported that almost a third were often frustrated or getting angry more easily [40]. In a longitudinal study conducted during the first month of the first UK lockdown, young people aged 12 – 16 reported no changes in behavioural issues or hyperactivity over a one-month period [5]. According to parents, there was no change in behavioural difficulties over the first month of lockdown, but they reported a slight increase in hyperactivity, restlessness and inattention [5].

## **Part 2. Changes to daily life during the pandemic**

### *Coping with change*

**Young people have experienced a lot of changes to their daily life which may have had an impact on their mental health and wellbeing.** During April to June 2020, most young people aged 10-17 surveyed said they coped well overall with the changes that the government put in place due to the pandemic [38]. The majority of young people were reportedly coping fine or quite well with loss of their usual routine [3- survey of young people aged 13–24 in April 2020, 26- survey of young people aged 14-25 in April 2020], but parents surveyed during the first few months of the UK lockdown reported a lack of structure and routine had a negative impact for some [8]. Young people surveyed April-June 2020 said they were coping the least well with not seeing friends or family (a third), touching their face less often (a fifth), and school closing / working at home (a fifth) [38].

### *Sleep*

**Studies have asked young people about changes to their sleep which can have an impact on their mental health & wellbeing.** A third of young people said they had more trouble sleeping during lockdown [14- survey of young people aged 8-24 across the UK from April to June 2020 (sample weighted to be nationally representative)], and a similar amount said they were often too worried to sleep [43- survey of young people aged 8–18-year-olds in the south of England, with data collected from May- July 2020]. Compared to before the pandemic, around a third of young people aged 11-17 year olds in Scotland who completed survey measures during April-July 2020 reported poorer sleep quality [47]. During the summer of 2020, study findings suggest that a fifth of young people were sleeping less since March [40]. In a survey by NHS Digital in July 2020 of 5-22 year olds, of those with a probable mental health disorder, around half reported sleep problems [54].

### *Spending time at home*

**Young people have had to adjust to spending a lot more time at home during the pandemic, which can have an impact on their mental health and wellbeing.** Findings were mixed with almost a third of parents reporting less conflict in the home, and nearly a quarter experienced more conflict [3- survey of young people aged 13–24 in April 2020], with some indications of strains in family relationships [11- parent/carer reported stress and support needs during April 2020 , 12- data from Kooth in April 2020, 27- young people aged 4-18 across the UK, who took part in surveys in May 2020]. Most young people have felt safe during the pandemic, but a minority did not feel safe very often [6- young people in Wales aged 7-18 surveyed in May 2020, 43- survey of young people aged 8–18-year-olds in the south of

England, with data collected from May- July 2020]. Many young people enjoyed more time with family/caregivers [27- young people aged 4-18 across the UK, who took part in surveys in May 2020, 6- young people in Wales aged 7-18 surveyed in May 2020, 8- parents report during the first few months of the UK lockdown, 25- data collected from April-June 2020 from Scottish young people aged 8-14 ]. Over the course of lockdown, parents reported fewer arguments and disagreements [45- parents across the UK completing surveys between March to June 2020], but girls with a probable mental health disorder were more likely to have heard/seen arguments among adults in the home [54- NHS Digital survey in July 2020 of 5-22 year olds].

### ***Physical activity***

**Studies have asked young people about changes to their physical activity levels, which can have an impact on their mental health & wellbeing.** Most young people were able to spend time outside and/or in the natural environment, but for some access to outside spaces has been limited [1- survey data from 6–18-year-olds across England in May-June 2020, 15- parent/child reports from March-June 2020]. At the start of lockdown, around two thirds of young people aged 11-16 said they took part in more than 30 minutes of energetic physical activity per day & spent more than 30 minutes outside a day [13]. However, over half of young people said they were exercising less than before, with around a third exercising more [43- survey of young people aged 8-18 year olds in the south of England, with data collected from May- July 2020, 27- young people aged 4-18 across the UK, who took part in surveys in May 2020]. Nearly two thirds spent more time relaxing [6- young people in Wales aged 7-18 surveyed in May 2020].

### ***Education***

**Young people have experienced a lot of changes in education which can have an impact on their mental health & wellbeing.** Three quarters of young people said they were worried about how their education/future might be affected because of lockdown [30- young people aged 9-25 in the East of England during April-June 2020]. Almost half of young people found it harder to manage school work, but a quarter/third found it easier [43- survey of young people aged 8-18 year olds in the south of England, with data collected from May-July 2020]. Three quarters of young people said they would feel comfortable going to school - with less than a tenth not feeling comfortable [50- parent and child survey data from across the UK in July 2020 ]. Uncertainty around school & cancellation of exams also caused anxiety for many [27- young people aged 4-18 across the UK, who took part in surveys in May 2020], but young people with a probable mental health disorder were less likely to get regular support from school/college [54-NHS Digital survey data in July 2020 of 5-22 year olds].



## *Spending time online*

**Young people have had to adjust to communicating differently and to spending a lot more time online during the pandemic, which may have affected their mental health & wellbeing.** Almost all young people missed being face to face with people [42- survey findings from July 2020 of the experiences of 11–16-year-olds during lockdown, sample weighted to be nationally representative, 8- parent reporting on their children during the first few months of the UK lockdown]. In the first few weeks of the pandemic, most young people regularly communicated with friends and family via video chat. More than half the adolescents aged 11-16 were using a range of other means to communicate with friends: social media, Phone, WhatsApp/text messaging [13]. More young people than parents were using social media to keep in touch during the first few months of lockdown[36]. A third of young people aged 14-25 who took part in surveys in April 2020 said social media had a positive impact on their mental health and less than half found the impact neutral [26]. Three quarters of young people who took part in a survey conducted during July 2020 exploring the experiences of 11-16 year olds during lockdown (sample weighted to be nationally representative) said they were tired of being online all the time [42]. In one study of 4-18 year olds across the UK in May 2020, a quarter of girls said they were feeling more social pressure, including their appearance, and nearly half were more worried about fake news [27].

## *Accessing mental health support*

**Young people may have experienced differences in trying to access mental health support during the pandemic.** There was an increase in demand for digital mental health support [12- data from Kooth in April 2020]. Nearly a fifth of young people with a probable mental health disorder said they did not receive the mental health support they needed [54- NHS Digital survey data in July 2020 of 5-22 year olds]. If young people felt they needed support, over half would speak to a parent/carer or friend, and less than a quarter would contact someone at school, another family member, trusted adult or look online [43- survey of young people aged 8–18-year-olds in the south of England, with data collected from May-July 2020]. In addition, around a quarter of parents said they would not know where to turn for advice/information & nearly a third said there was not enough support available [8 parents surveyed during the first few months of the UK lockdown].

## *Positive outcomes from changes to daily life*

**There were a range of things young people liked about the lockdown period** [i.e. 2 and 3- survey of young people aged 13–24 in April 2020, 27- young people aged 4-18 across the UK, who took part in surveys in May 2020, 30- young people aged 9-25 in the East of England during April-June 2020, 38]. Young people enjoyed having more time to spend with

others, for example many enjoyed being at home, spending time with family and pets, and being in touch with friends more online. Changes to school were seen by some as positive, for example, not having a strict routine, the ability to do school work at their own pace, having less or no school work or exams. Young people talked about appreciating what they had more. Some liked having more free time to relax, sleep in, to learn or pursue a hobby, or to do more exercise/ be more active. For some, the lockdown brought an escape from bullying they experienced at school.

## **PART 3: The impact of the pandemic on the mental health and wellbeing of specific groups of young people**

### ***Young people with pre-existing mental health difficulties***

**For some young people who already had mental health difficulties, the pandemic (and restrictions) has made their mental health worse, but for others their mental health has improved.** Young people with experience of mental health problems were more likely to say their mental health got worse during lockdown, compared to those without a mental health problem [37- survey of young people aged 13-24 across the UK, 54- NHS Digital survey data in July 2020 of 5-22 year olds]. Young people aged 13-14 with low wellbeing pre pandemic showed a meaningful increase in wellbeing during the pandemic (April-May 2020).[41]. More than three quarters agreed the pandemic had their mental health worse [19- young people aged 13-25 surveyed from March-July 2020, 20- young people aged 13-25 surveyed during the last week of March 2020], but over a tenth said their mental health had improved, often because they were away from normal pressures of life] [19]. More young people aged 11-18 with previous mental health difficulties described their mental health as poor now they are back at school (data collected during September 2020), this was a rise of over 10% from before returning to school [53].

### ***Young people from Black and Asian Minority Ethnic backgrounds***

**Young people from a BAME background were more likely to say they had negative experiences of the lockdown** [52]. Furthermore, young people were more likely to know to get help through doctor/ mental health team, but less likely to know how to get help through family & friends [52- survey data from 7-18 year olds living in Wales, collected during May 2020]. Young people were also more likely to want help with eating healthily & staying active, worry about having enough food, falling behind with learning, exam results being affected, and were less likely to feel safe exercise outdoors [52].

**Young people from BAME communities expressed concerns they were not being listened to** [22- Barnardo's report], and concerns about being more at risk of catching

**the virus [21- interviews with young people aged 13-25 from May- June 2020].** Young people from BAME communities also had significantly greater increases in suicidal thoughts, anxiety & depression compared to young people from a white background [60- data from Kooth, collected March-May 2020]. In one survey of young people in the UK aged 13–24 in April 2020, more young people from a black background felt less anxious than they did before lockdown compared to young people from a White, Asian and Mixed-Race background [3].

### *Young people in low-income families*

**People living in social housing were more likely to have poor mental health and to have seen it get worse during the pandemic.** Over half of young people receiving free school meals said their mental health was poor/ very poor, with nearly three quarters saying that it got worse during lockdown [37- young people aged 13-24 across the UK ]. Young people with a probable mental health disorder were more likely to live in a home that had fallen behind on payments [54- NHS Digital survey data in July 2020 of 5–22-year-olds]. In one study, conducted in May 2020, parents in Scotland on low income faced significantly more stress & worry around home learning, & finances, but had similar views about young people returning to school to those in high income households [28]. Young people in low-income families were also more likely to experience emotional and attention difficulties [44- Co-SPACE study findings- parent and young person report of young people’s mental health symptoms from March-October 2020], and had consistently high levels of emotional, behavioural & attentional difficulties over the pandemic [58- Co-SPACE study findings- parent and young person report of young people’s mental health symptoms from March-October 2020].

### *Care experienced young people*

**Half of young people in the care system in England and Wales, who were surveyed in April/May 2020 felt lonely more often during lockdown, and nearly a quarter had less contact (a tenth no contact) from their social worker [10].** For young people with experience in the care system (in this study, mainly adopted), half experienced emotional distress & anxiety [59- a week-long survey in April for parents and carers of care-experienced children who would normally be in school]. A third had an increase in violent and aggressive behaviour, with over half expected to need extra support transitioning back to school. But over half thought family relationships had improved from time spent together, and more than half of secondary school aged pupils were calmer without school [59- survey in April for parents and carers of care-experienced children who would normally be in school].

**In one study of care leavers, most described feeling lonelier and more anxious during lockdown.** Nearly half saw their personal advisors less, and a fifth did not have the

technology they need to stay in touch with friends & family [10]. In another study, young people leaving care said they had struggled due to the pandemic with communicating remotely with therapist, housing & future plans, space & arguments at home [22- Barnardo's report].

### ***Young people with special educational needs***

**Parents of young people with autism spectrum condition (ASC) reported that their child had more disease anxiety but no differences in anxieties about the consequences of COVID** compared to young people without ASC [9]. Children & young people with special educational needs (SEN)/ neurodevelopmental differences had consistently high levels of emotional, behavioural & attentional difficulties over the pandemic [58- CoSPACE study findings- parent and young person report of young people's mental health symptoms from March-October 2020]. Parents of young people aged 5-18 with SEN reported that their children experienced feelings of loss, worry, changes in mood & behaviour at the start of lockdown, but a minority felt COVID-19 had little impact on their child's mental health or led to improvements [7]. In the Co-SPACE study, in September 2020, parents reported that over half of young people aged 11-16 with SEN were concerned about things being different/uncertain and being put under pressure academically. Just under half worried about the enjoyable parts of school not happening, problems concentrating, and transitions [57].

### ***Young people in the LGBTQ+ community***

**There is not much research on the impact of the pandemic on young people (aged 11-16) in the LGBT community in the UK.** In adult samples, women & non-binary people were more likely to have poor mental health & around two thirds of non-binary people said their mental health got worse recently [37- survey of adults aged 25+ across the UK in April/May 2020]. In the USA, nearly two thirds of LGBT youth aged 18-25 experienced psychological distress, anxiety & depression in the spring of 2020 [48]. Some young people aged 13-19 expressed concerns about being "stuck at home with unsupportive parents" due to the pandemic [49].

## 4. Summary

So, what does the research evidence tells us about the impact of the pandemic on the mental health and wellbeing of young people aged 11 – 16 across the UK?

- **Lots of young people are struggling with their mental health & are feeling a range of different emotions (i.e. feeling worried or lonely), but some young people are feeling okay.**
- **Some young people feel like changes to their daily life that happened as a result of the pandemic (i.e. not going to school or social distancing) have had a negative impact on their mental health, but for others their mental health & wellbeing improved during lockdown.**
- **Some groups of young people may have been particularly affected by the pandemic (i.e. young people with previous mental health difficulties, or from low income households), but there is still a lot we don't know.**



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