



BHR Integrated Care Partnership

Better care, better lives, together

Barking and Dagenham, Havering and Redbridge

Survey of young people's experiences during the pandemic

July 2020



Introduction

After receiving feedback from our community and voluntary sector colleagues that there was a lack of focus towards our children and young people during the pandemic we initiated a project spanning all three of our boroughs.

We involved our local authority partners via the Youth Councils and worked with them on developing a survey to gather feedback to understand how young people had found the lockdown and find out what they are most concerned about now and in the future.

Young volunteers from all three boroughs developed five common questions to ask local young people and considered the types of questions, how they would make people feel and the language used. These were:

1. How are you feeling?
2. How have you been spending your time?
3. What have you worried about now and in the future?
4. Has the lockdown been a positive or negative experience?
5. Has there been anything that you, your family or community have done that has been positive or helped other people?

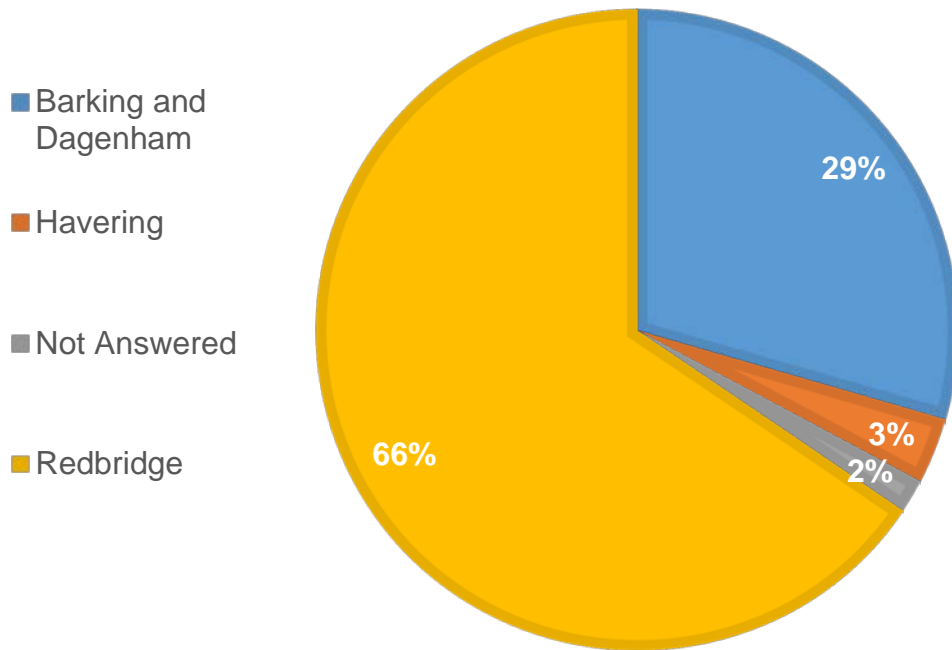
The three Councils then published the surveys on their websites, adding a few questions that were pertinent to their boroughs, and promoted these through their channels.

As a safeguarding measure, each survey gave an option of being sent additional information on a variety of topics. On receiving the surveys each local authority worked through these requests, responding to those who had highlighted feeling 'really bad' first.

Executive summary – Key headlines from the survey

- The survey captures the views of 1,239 young people in living in BHR.
- Lockdown has had a significant impact on the mental health of young people. Nearly one quarter of respondents said that they we feeling 'not great' or 'really bad'.
- There was a clear divide of young people who have enjoyed their time during the lockdown and people who have found it really difficult.
- There was no significant difference between those who identify as being from a white background, and those who identify as being from a BAME background, in terms of reporting to feel good or bad.
- The biggest worry for young people is their education. Young people are worried that they have fallen behind and are stressed about their exams and returning to school.
- Nearly one in five young people have also said they are concerned about money post-lockdown.

Which borough are you from?



Borough	Number
Barking and Dagenham	365
Havering	41
Not Answered	21
Redbridge	812
Grand Total	1239



Observations

Each Youth Council circulated the data according to their preferred method of engagement with their peers. The Havering response was proportionately smaller than B&D and Redbridge, however, it may be that they decided to communicate with a smaller sample of peers for this survey.

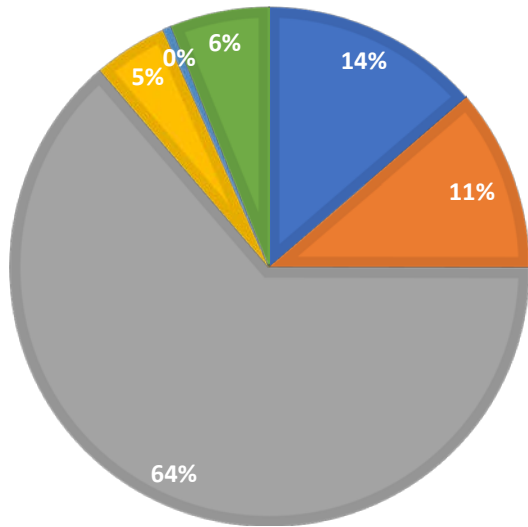
Which ethnicity are you?



Observations

BHR

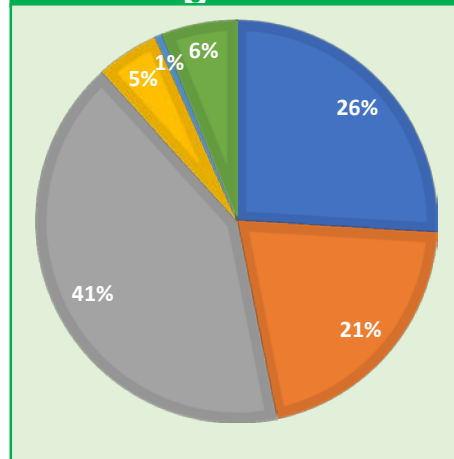
■ White ■ Black ■ Asian ■ Mixed ■ Chinese ■ Other



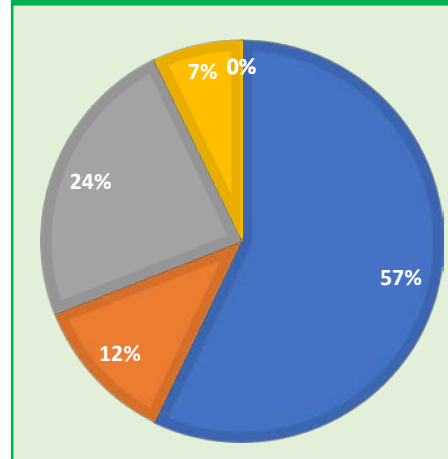
Based upon comparison with the known ethnic mix of children in each borough, it should be noted that the Havering and Redbridge data may be underrepresented in responses from those who identify as white. The Barking and Dagenham data may also be underrepresented in responses from those who identify as being from a black background.

It is positive to see a proportionately higher response from those who identify as BAME in this survey, particularly given the evidence that the pandemic has disproportionately affected this group.

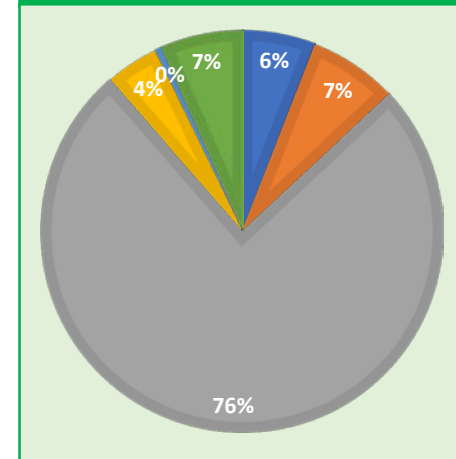
Barking and Dagenham



Havering



Redbridge

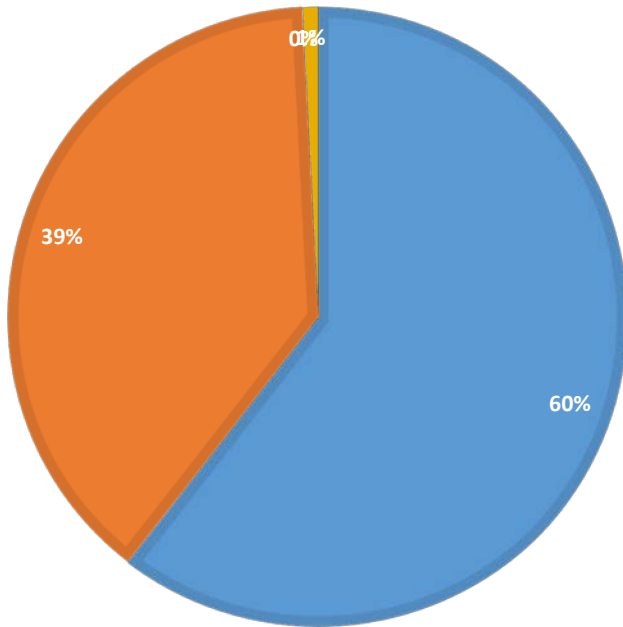


■ White ■ Black ■ Asian
■ Mixed ■ Chinese ■ Other

What is your gender?

GENDER - BHR

■ Female ■ Male ■ Non-binary ■ Other

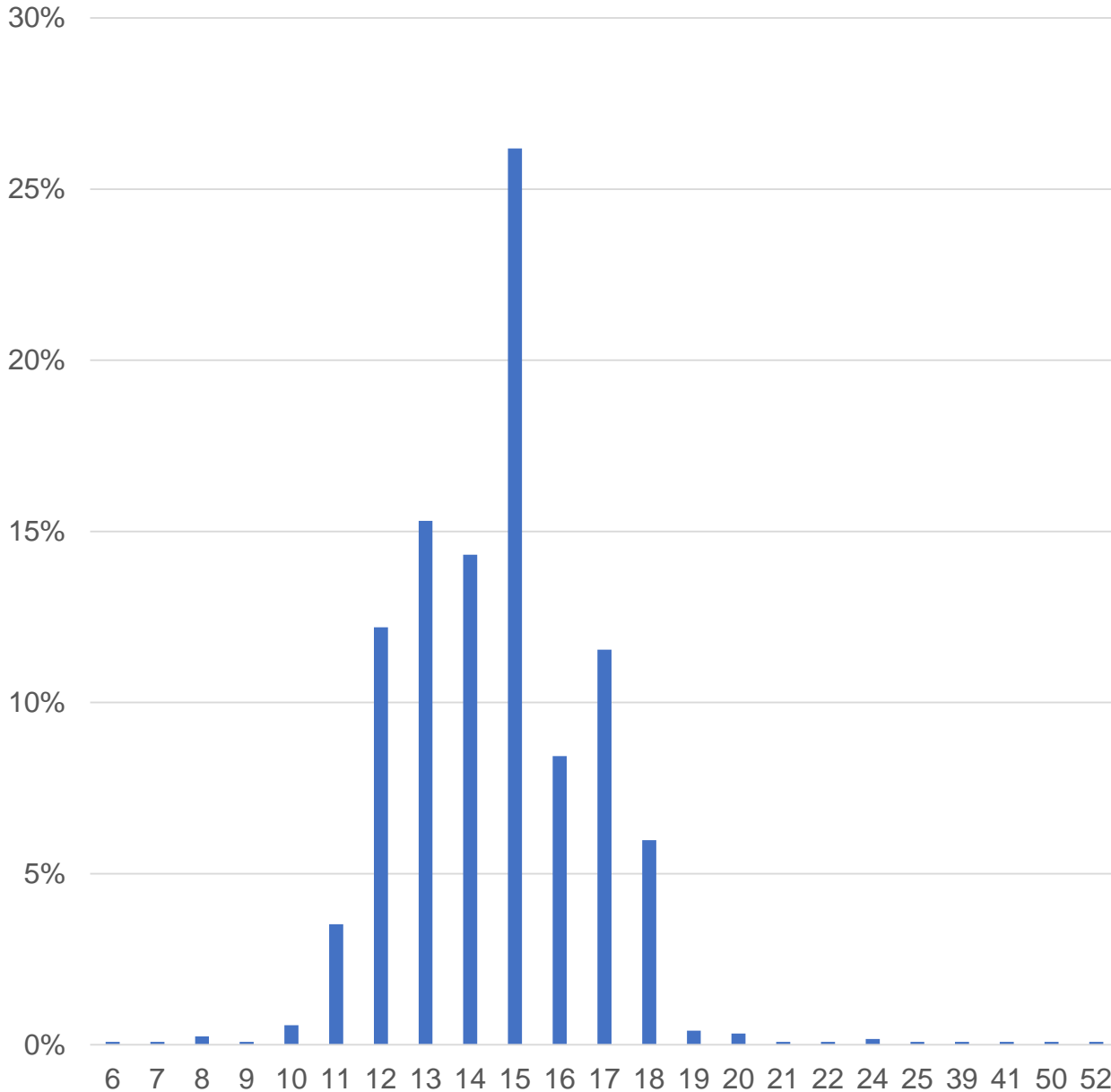


Borough	Female	Male	Non-binary	Other	Total
Barking and Dagenham	246	115		5	366
Havering	27	12	1		40
Redbridge	459	341		4	804
Grand Total	732	468	1	9	1210

Observations

Over 60% of responses were by those who identify as female, with 39% male, and 1% non-binary or 'other'.

What is your age?



Observations

Nearly one in four respondents were aged 15

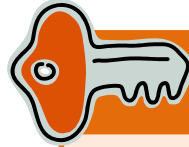
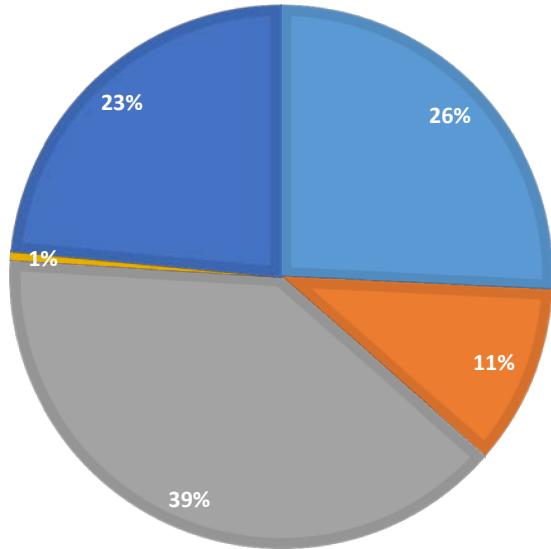
One in four respondents were aged 16+

One half of respondents were aged under 14

How are you feeling?

BHR

- I feel good
- I feel great
- I'm OK
- I'm feeling really bad
- I'm not feeling too great



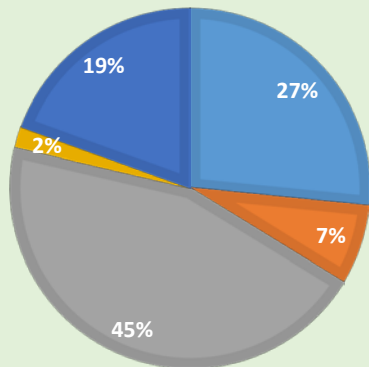
Observations

Overall, the majority of respondents reported feeling 'good' or 'ok' (62%), with 11% reporting feeling 'great'. However, nearly one quarter, or one in four, of those asked reported feeling 'not great' or 'really bad'.

Respondents from Redbridge were more likely to report feeling great overall, with those in B&D less nearly half as likely to report feeling 'great' as those in Redbridge. Nearly one third of respondents from Havering reported feeling 'not too great', a higher proportion than their peers in B&D and Redbridge.

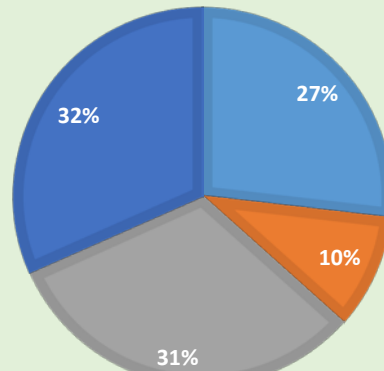
Barking and Dagenham

- I feel good
- I feel great
- I'm OK
- I'm feeling really bad
- I'm not feeling too great



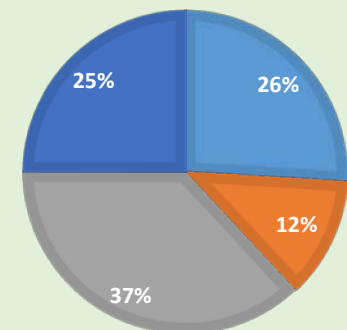
Havering

- I feel good
- I feel great
- I'm OK
- I'm feeling really bad
- I'm not feeling too great



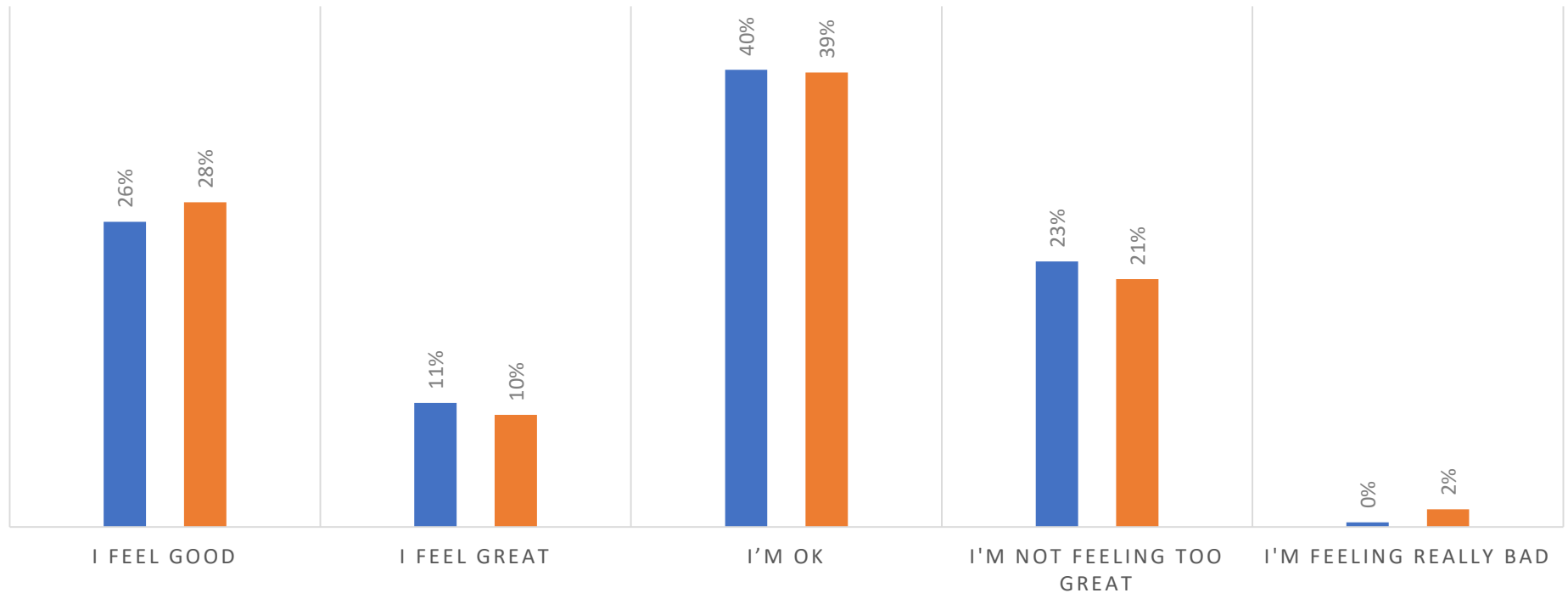
Redbridge

- I feel good
- I feel great
- I'm OK
- I'm feeling really bad
- I'm not feeling too great



How are you feeling? Proportion of responses by ethnicity

■ BAME ■ White

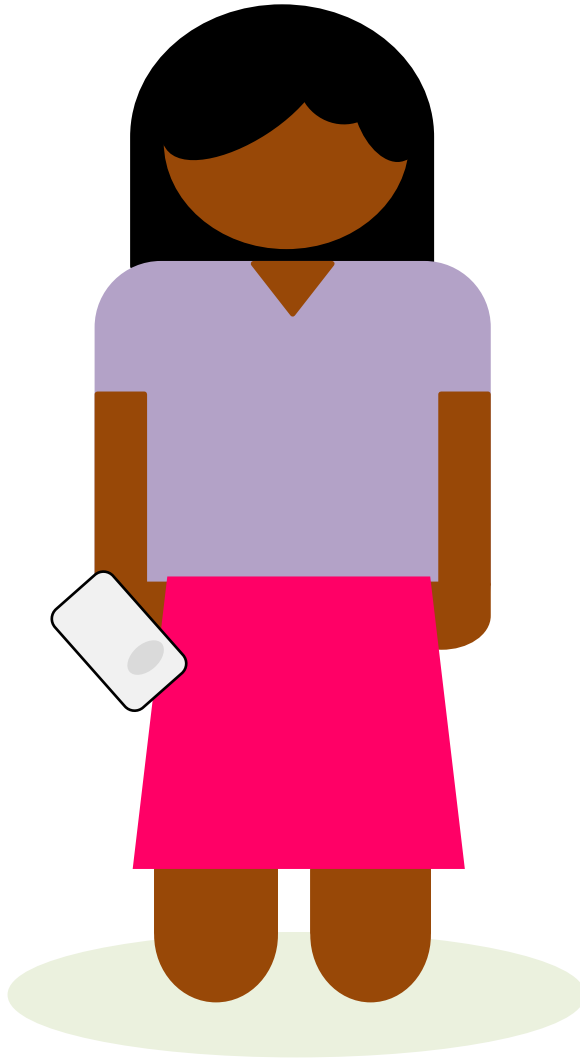


Observations

There does not seem to be a significant difference between those who identify as being from a white background, and those who identify as being from a BAME background, in terms of reporting to feel good or bad. Those who were white were more likely to report feeling really bad.

Why do you feel like this?

For those who felt ok, really bad or not great, themes for this included:



High amount of school work, and worrying about their education

Not seeing friends and loss of the stability of going to school

**Being stuck indoors and not able to go out;
“I’m stuck in my room 90% of the time”**

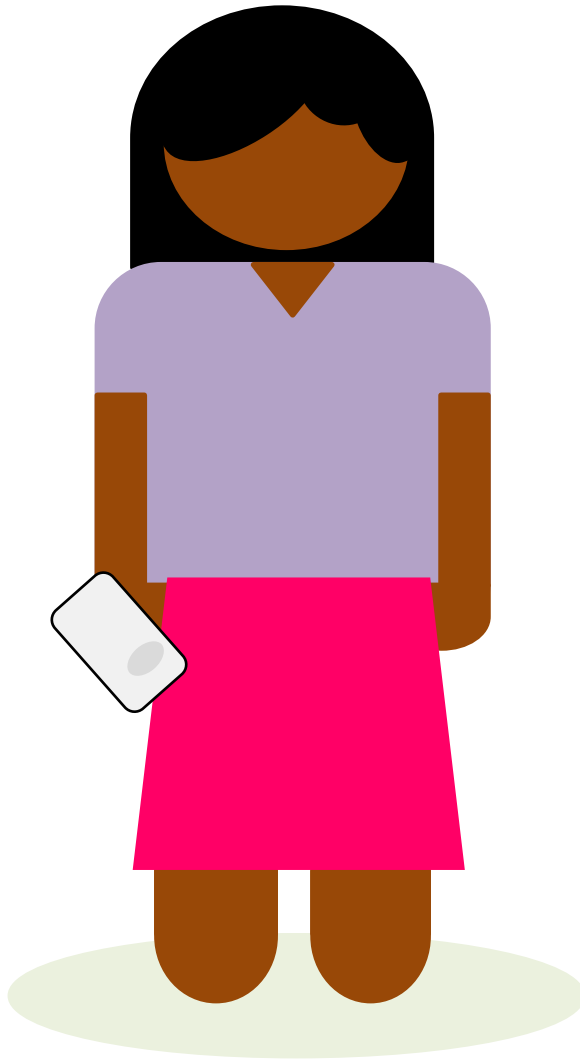
“Everything feels optional and pointless”

Feeling like they’re having to teach themselves

Boredom

Why do you feel like this?

For those who felt good or great, themes for this included:



Very positive comments about the NHS and the inspiration and comfort this provides

Time to do things never had time for before

Spending time with family

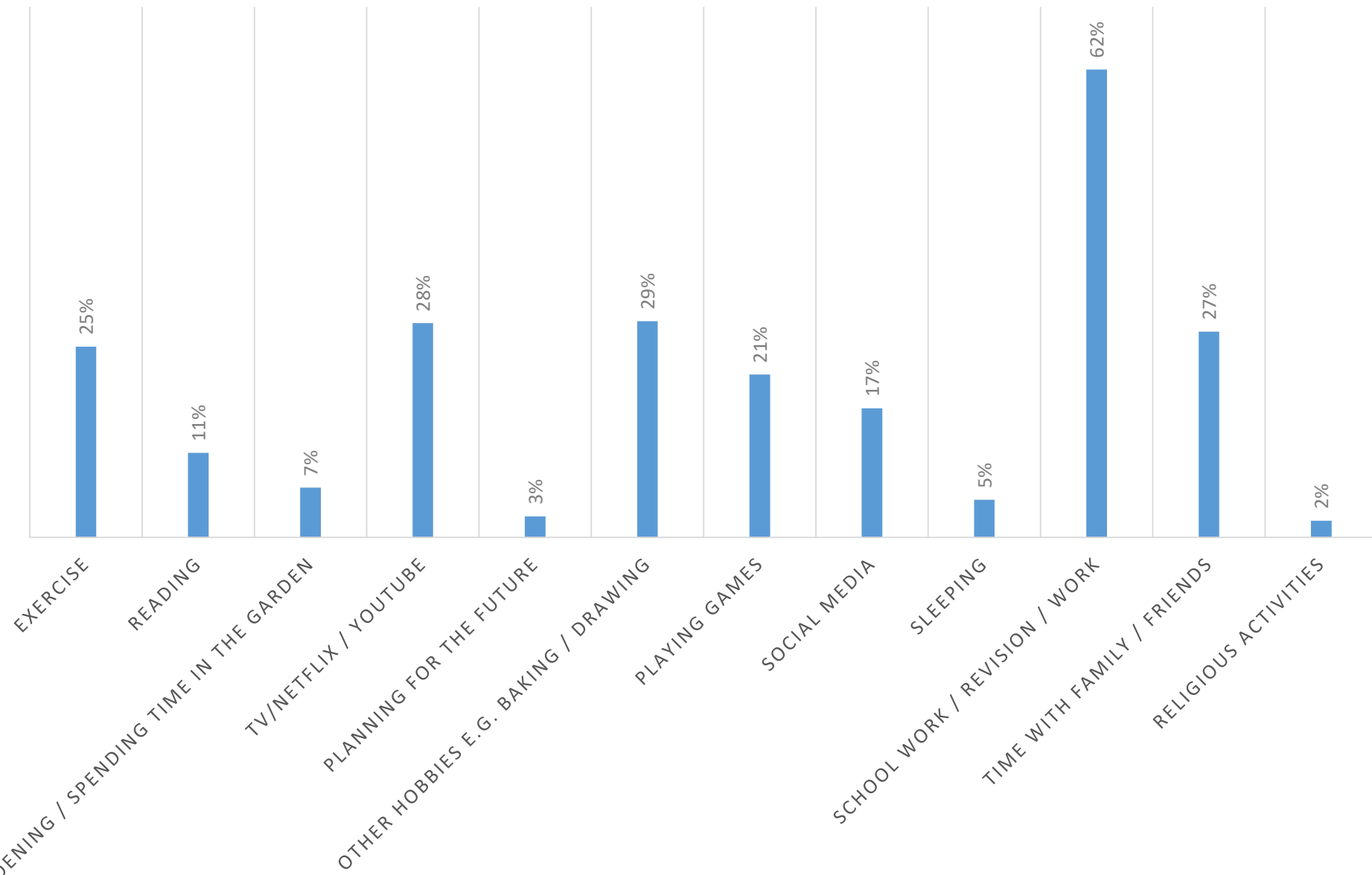
Feeling safe and comfortable at home

Can focus on work at own pace with no distractions

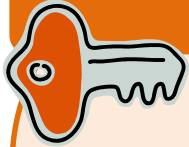
Feeling grateful about what they have, given what some people are experiencing with the virus

How have you been spending your time? You can give positive or negative examples.

70% of respondents provided a response to this question.



Observations



- Although Social Media is a good opportunity for some to keep up to date on what is happening in the world and with their friends, some are finding that they're spending too much time on this and note that it is negatively impacting on their mental wellbeing, particularly with constant news about the pandemic and related deaths.
- Some young people are taking the opportunity to set up small businesses.
- 5% identified that they spend more time than usual sleeping.
- A significant number of young people have taken up baking, either alone, or with family.
- 27% identified that they are spending more time with their families which is mostly positive, although some were finding that they were arguing with their siblings more.
- There are mixed reviews about doing school work at home; some relish this as an opportunity to study with no distractions and are able to use the apps and mediums that work best for them. Others report struggling with this approach, feeling overwhelmed and drowning in the quantity of work, and a third, smaller group feel apathetic about school work and get to it 'when they can'.
- Although there were many positives for some in the time that they have had to spend with their family and friends and learn new skills such as Baking and other new hobbies, there were a number of comments around the mental toll that lockdown has had on them, with some stating that they often cry, or have 'breakdowns'.

How have you been spending your time? Positive Examples

Many using this time to spend with family and are enjoying new hobbies such as baking and drawing

"I can learn at my own pace"

"One good thing that can out of lockdown and this current situation is that families get to spend a lot of time together for example for me my dad is a business owner so I wouldn't see him as he was always working and my siblings and I after school has other educational and leisure places that we would go to so we wouldn't all be at home at one all together but now that everywhere is closed we see each other all the time."

"I spend most of my time reading through work material emailed to me by my school, and trying new hobbies and crafts I would otherwise not have time for. Ever since lockdown began, I've taken up all sorts of activities to keep myself busy, such as painting and embroidery."

Several young people were working on developing their own businesses

"I spend most of my time reading through work material emailed to me by my school, and trying new hobbies and crafts I would otherwise not have time for.

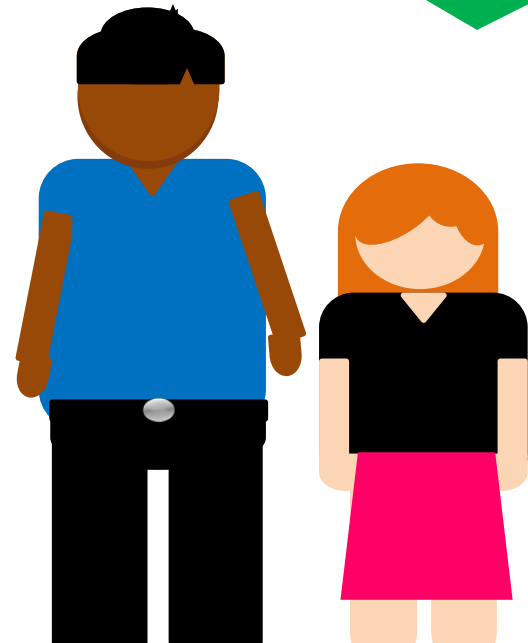
Ever since lockdown began, I've taken up all sorts of activities to keep myself busy, such as painting and embroidery.

Following a personal study and work schedule leaves me with more time to spend with my family, and allows me to work more efficiently as it better suits my lifestyle. (e.g I work more efficiently later on in the day, and so I can shift my schedule back by an hour, leaving me to finish any obligations I have, early on.)

I have also begun to cook more often. I believe it is an important skill to exercise, and I enjoy being able to look after my family this way.

I also frequent the UCAS site (<https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate>) to keep myself updated with university virtual open days and how the COVID-19 situation may affect universities and applications.

I make sure to watch the news as often as I can to stay up to date with current events and any changes in guidance for lockdown."



How have you been spending your time? Negative Examples

"Well sometimes i have to do my work becuz i have my GCSES next year and im worried that i wont get the grades i want to.

I have only gone out twice in these 4 months during lockdown it got rllly boring when there was nothing to do at home i cant even contact any of my friends coz i dont have a phone n i neither have wifi"

"I have been riding my bike, playing football. I also have been bombarded with homework which I don't feel like all of it has been explained"

"Drawing, gaming or live streaming but mostly alone"

"I have been doing homework for school and revision but it's more difficult to work by yourself. Face to face teaching is better as you can ask questions and it's more easy to explain"

"I've been spending my days in my bedroom watching Netflix, Tiktok and other social media. My mental health is getting so bad that some days I cannot leave my bed."

"I've been learning new skills, however I want to find a job, and I can't"

"Shielding because of my step mum being vulnerable and helping her out when it's needed"

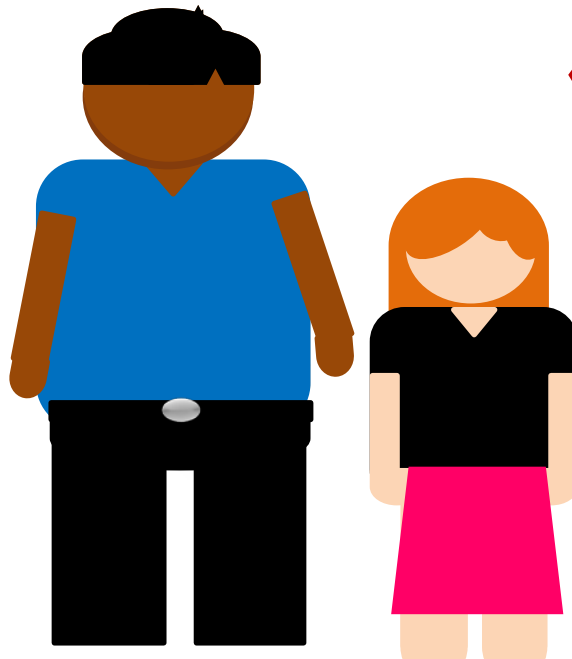
"Seeming as school gives so much stress on things. ive been spending everyday drawing and creating art, i hope my story will help people, its not about money.

most of my classmates have not done any work since lockdown and this should be addressed. most people don't enjoy education. thats where the problem lies.

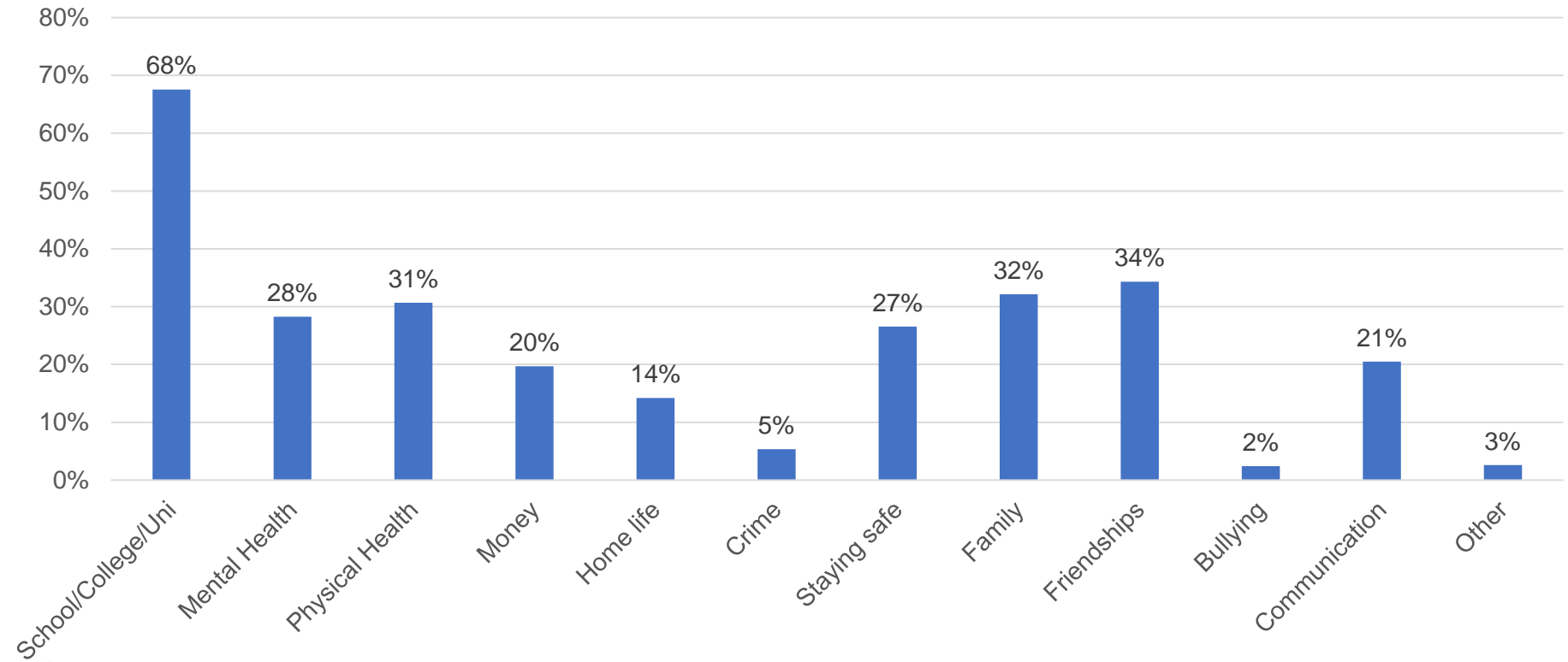
"Crying, sleeping, catching up on college assignments and eating"

"I haven't done any work as it's very hard to concentrate and not everyone has a stable household where they have the space to revise. But teachers don't understand that"

however due to the sheer amount of work i have piled up now i have to spend less time on something that makes me happy and finish all the work i have due. dont get me wrong lessons can be enjoyable but its a broken system. one time chance to do gcses which determine my future? makes me stressed"



What have you worried about during lockdown?



Observations

Nearly three quarters of young people worried about their education during lockdown. Over one in four worried about their mental health. A third worried about their physical health, family, and friendships, and a fifth were worried about communication. Significantly, over one quarter worried about keeping safe.

What have you worried about during lockdown? - OTHER

Maintaining social distancing outside

Travelling abroad

We go to visit our grandparents and elderly relatives in India every year during the summer holidays; it's the only time i can meet them all year and that's only for a few week too. But i'm worried i won't be able to go to India this year due to this pandemic. I'd be really upset if i won't be able to see my grandparents for another whole year



GCSE's - Worry if I am prepared because it is really important , I am quite stressed

Food

School education, because we have not been able to have proper lessons and online home work doesnt really give all the help we need.

Society

Exams

School life

GCSE

Weight gain

safety for when we return

"I miss having my teacher to talk to about the day"

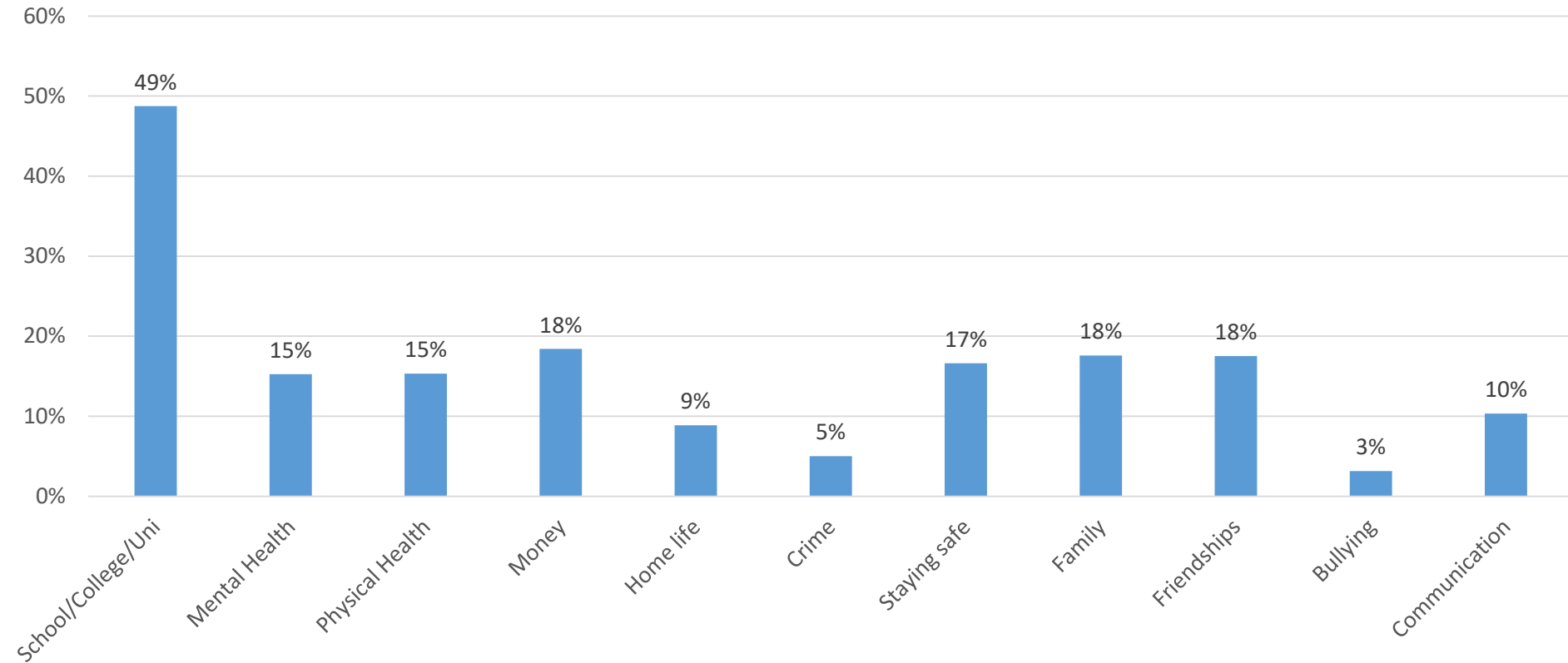
THE FUTURE

Teachers labelling me as a failure because i did not complete all those gruelling assignments. And they might make me resist this year.

BLACK LIVES MATTER

Worried about religious events being cancelled

What are you worried about in the future?



Observations

Nearly half were worried about the impact on their future education prospects. 18%, or nearly one in five, were also worried about money post lockdown.

The results show that young people are more worried about these areas during lockdown, rather than in the future, with the only area showing an increase in responses for the future (as opposed to now) being bullying.

What are you worried about in the future? - Other

Maintaining social distancing

My GCSE and what will happen because everything has changed now

Travelling

Career

Exams

Medication

Debt

Worried about chaos to come from vaccine

Bullying

Not reaching my life goals

How are going to go back to living our life normally

Weight

Not being prepared for my exams

Losing family members

the changes that will happen when lockdown is over

Climate change and global warming

Economy, Jobs, Austerity, Further spreading of the virus

second occurrence of the virus

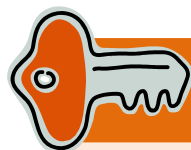
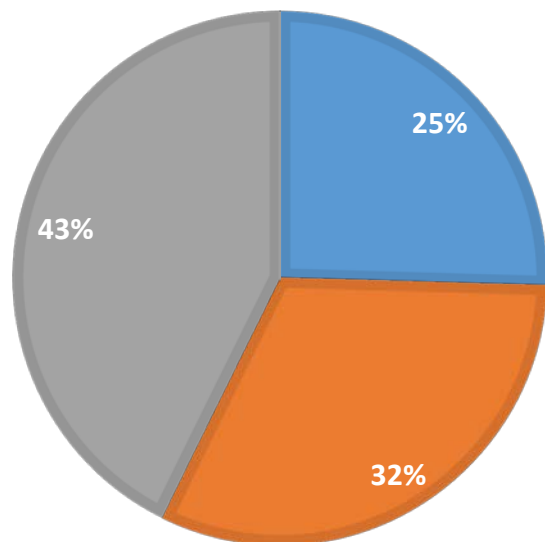
Black lives matter

cleanliness of public transport

Has the lockdown period been positive or negative for you?

BHR

■ Negative ■ Neither ■ Positive



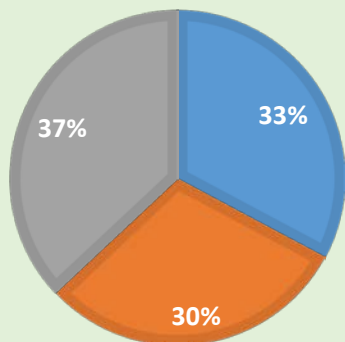
Observations

Overall, nearly one in four felt that lockdown had been a positive experience, with just under half recognising that it had both positive and negative elements. 14% stated that it had been a negative experience overall for them.

Those living in B&D were more likely to report that lockdown has been a negative experience for them. Those living in Redbridge were more likely to report that lockdown has been a positive experience for them (1 in 4)

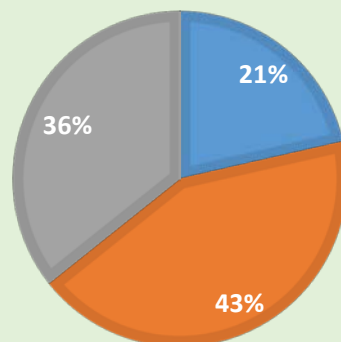
Barking and Dagenham

■ Negative ■ Neither ■ Positive



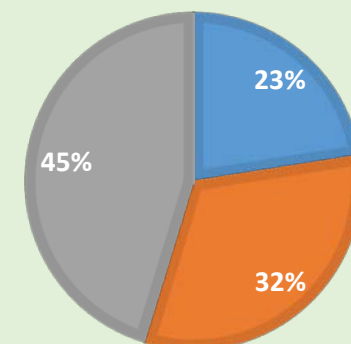
Havering

■ Negative ■ Neither ■ Positive



Redbridge

■ Negative ■ Neither ■ Positive



Has the lockdown period been positive or negative for you? Further comments

I have used this time to reflect on myself as a person and try to find out what things make me happy. I have definitely got in touch with my creative side by doing many different hobbies

It's brought family members closer together

I haven't been able to see friends but I enjoy being independent.

School work is a negative however you get more time to reflect and spend time with family

It was neutral...nothing great has happened and fortunately, nothing bad has happened either

I've learnt new skills, but I feel like I could be more productive with my time. However, I haven't felt motivated to do it

It hasn't been boring or exiting, just that grey area in the middle

I learn better at home at my own pace but miss social interaction

Its negative because everything has changed know and all my plans will have to be changed know to I wish they did something more better about GCSE or especially for year 10 cause we have GCSE in less than a year

I have been unable to keep up with work on numerous occasions for different subjects due to a lack of motivation.

School has kept me occupied but then i get stressed, and also there is nothing to do at home.

I feel my grades will have certainly gone down, however I have been much more productive in the home, having a more flexible school schedule is quite useful, though this can often lead to procrastination if the deadline are far ahead, for example a single lesson's work in a week. It is also a bit hindering if teachers are unclear, however most are not.

Mental health is really bad at the moment

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

The people responding to this question gave examples of keeping in touch with their loved ones and checking up on people who are older, supporting their local communities by making food and money donations to those that needed it and helping people with shopping. Young people also really appreciated clapping for carers on a Thursday and showing their support to the NHS.

We bought groceries for our neighbours as they are really old

“Volunteered for the NHS.”

“Donated food to our local hospital”

“We have social distanced and helped a few friends who did not have time to get resources. we have given them masks and gloves, anything to protect them from catching the virus.”

“my family and i raised money for those in need during the month of ramadan, those who are struggling due to Covid-19”

“My family has helped me in a positive way by encouraging me to stay active, eat healthy and are on my case to make sure I am getting things done. My parents have also volunteered to distribute medicine to the vulnerable”

“We asked the elderly neighbours if they needed any sort of help (help with getting shopping) and we call to check up on them.”

My dad's charity gave away eid presents to children due to their event being cancelled. They gave away at least 100 of these which include gift cards, a card as well as some toys and sweets.



“As a family we have phoned vulnerable people we know and made sure that they have everything they need during these times. We have also been a listening ear to the people that live alone and don't have the opportunity to socialise and communicate.”

Work that has already started as a result of this survey

- ✓ Creating a back to school leaflet (Redbridge)
- ✓ Developing an anti-bullying survey
- ✓ Mapping of mental health services in Redbridge
- ✓ Developing a Kooth ambassador scheme
- ✓ Creating a leaflet on what activities people have been doing to occupy themselves in case of another lockdown to build resilience.
- ✓ Creating some clear guidance specifically for young people on what you're allowed to do during the summer holidays
- ✓ Offering young people and their families the chance to speak in confidence to financial advisors (Barking and Dagenham)

Key opportunities for support young people across BHR

1. All schools should have a mentorship programme where older students are specially trained to support others
They feel that there is a particular need for this now as people have missed so much of their education.
2. All school-age children should have access to mental health awareness training
They feel that building resilience and awareness at this time is key to supporting each other.
3. As a system, we should produce a video to show young people the work that's going into schools reopening in September in terms of keeping them safe and acknowledging that students will all be at different stages when they come back
Young people are worried that there will be an expectation about where they should be in terms of their learning and think it will be helpful for leaders to reassure students that they will work with them to get them where they need to be.

Produced in collaboration with London Borough of Barking, London Borough of Redbridge and Havering Council and with special thanks to the Youth Council members and all the people that took part and shared their views.