



Lessons Learnt from Lockdown:

Covid-19 and its impact on children, young people,
their families and professionals

Easy Read Report

Some of the organisations mentioned in this report



Council for Disabled Children (CDC) – brings people together to help young people with a disability and or **SEND**.



KIDS – helps young people with a disability and or **SEND** and their families.



Making Participation Work (MPW) – a project run by **CDC** and **KIDS** that ensures young people are heard.

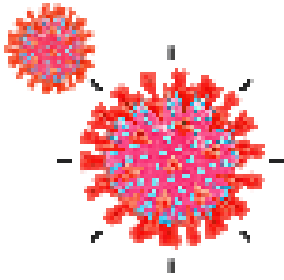


MPW is funded by the UK government's Department for Education.

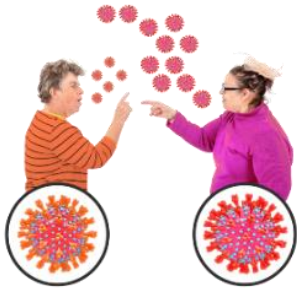


FLARE – a group of young people with a disability and or **SEND** within the **MPW** project.

Some of the words used in this report



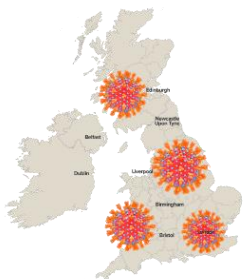
Covid-19 is a virus that spread across the world in 2020.



It is very easy to give **Covid-19** to other people.



People can get very sick from **Covid-19**.



Pandemic means a virus that is caught by nearly everyone.



Lockdown was when we had to stay at home to be safe from the **Covid-19 pandemic**.



A **vaccine** is an injection that can stop a virus from making us sick.



Consultations are when you ask people what they think about something.



There are many different ways to ask like interviews, questionnaires and surveys.



Diverse backgrounds mean a mixture of people from different groups.



This could mean different genders, beliefs, races and or sexualities.



Mental Health is about how we think and feel about our lives.



Socialising is when we chat and do activities with friends, family or new people.



SEND means 'special educational needs and disabilities'.



A young person with **SEND** can get extra help to learn at school or college.

Why did this report happen?



MPW supports children and young people with disabilities and SEND to be listened to.



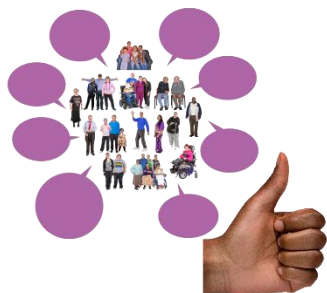
This is so young people's views are always heard by the UK government.



MPW knew the Covid-19 pandemic had a big effect on young people with disabilities.



However, MPW had not heard about young people's experiences of the pandemic.



MPW decided a consultation would be a good way of finding out what young people thought.

How did MPW design the consultation?



MPW's young people led group FLARE designed the consultation alongside SEND professionals.

They chose to do the consultation through:



- a survey online



- a face to face focus group



- individual interviews



MPW's FLARE group also worked on choosing the questions that would be asked in the interviews, focus group and in the survey.



Young people led groups from KIDS had their say on the questions too.

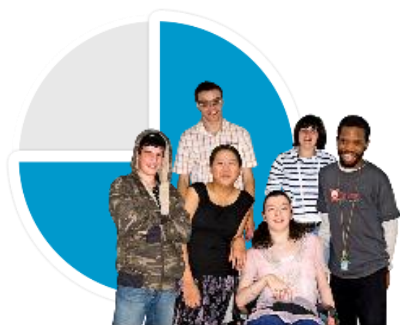


Parents, carers and professionals would be asked their views too.

Who was asked about their views?



The consultation involved nearly 900 young people, their families and carers.



Almost all of the people asked were young people with a disability or SEND.



The young people had lots of different disabilities or SEND.



The rest of the people asked were parents, carers or professionals.



The researchers made sure they heard from people:



- From all over the country

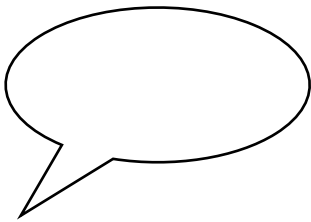


- From a set of diverse backgrounds

What did children and young people say?



Some of the children and young people did not like the lockdown.



They said that:



- They had missed family and friends



- Many had felt lonely, stressed and sad



- Some worried they had forgotten how to socialise



- It had been hard to keep in touch with friends



Others said there were good parts of lockdown.



They said they had enjoyed:



- More time with their family



- Less time spent at busy, difficult or noisy places



- Less time with difficult, mean or noisy people



Some said it was easier to make friends online than in the real world.



Others said the time they spent with family pets was important.

Was there enough support for young people?



Some of those asked were worried that young people did not get enough support.



A lot of the activities for young people had stopped.



Some parents said that they didn't know whether to send young people to school.



Many appointments and meetings were cancelled.



Or they were delayed or moved online.



Some professionals worried that they couldn't communicate well online.



However, some young people and their parents thought online meetings were better.



They thought this because:



- Online meetings cost less money



- They took less time

What did people think about going to school and college during the pandemic?



Young people were asked what it was like when colleges and schools closed.



Some said that lessons online were:



- Hard to understand



- Boring



Others said that their equipment didn't work well.



Some thought school or college at home was better because:



- College or school was too busy and noisy



- It was easier to find somewhere calm and to take a break when they were at home



The people who could go to school in lockdown said it was better than usual:



Why?

This was because:



- There were less people



- There was more space to move around safely

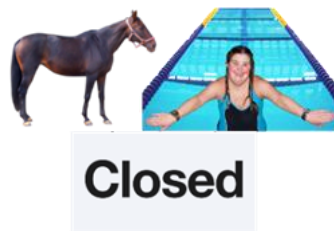


- They had more time with teachers

Activities and hobbies



MPW asked people about what the pandemic meant for their activities.



Some activities like swimming, horse riding or volunteering stopped.



Many young people felt cross or sad about this.



However, young people did activities with their families at home. They said it was good to do these with their family.



The activities young people did included crafts, cooking or going for walks.

How healthy were young people during the pandemic?



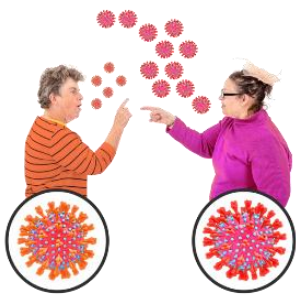
Some young people felt their mental health got worse.



They felt more worried because:



- There was a lack of routine and places closed again



- They thought they might pass on Covid-19 to other people



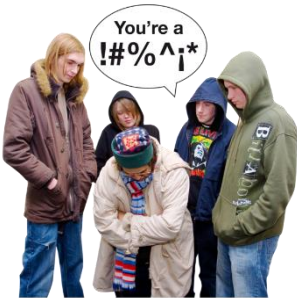
- They thought they might not cope when everything re-opened



However other young people thought their mental health had got better.



They said that lockdown meant:



- That they didn't get bullied



- They didn't have to cope with busy, or loud places



Young people also thought lockdown meant they got less:



- Exercise



- Sleep



- Chances to see doctors and other health professionals face to face



Lots of appointments during lockdown went online.



Some young people found online appointments difficult.



However, some young people said they liked to have their appointments online.



Most young people said in future that they would want to choose whether:



- They have an appointment online



- They have an appointment face to face

What did young people say about school or college re-opening?



Young people had some worries about going back to school. They said:



- They might not understand the new Covid-19 rules



- Other people might not follow the rules



- They might pass Covid-19 onto others



- They might not be able to remember how to socialise

How did parents and professionals feel during the pandemic?



Most carers, parents and professionals said their mental health had been much worse.



Some parents and carers said:



- They and those they cared for didn't get the usual holidays or time off



- Home schooling was very difficult to do



- Some young people had behaved much worse than usual



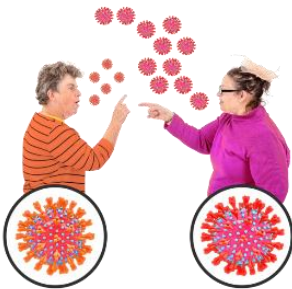
Some professionals said that they were worried that:



- They could not cope with the extra work they got



- They would pass on stress to the families they worked with



- They might pass Covid-19 onto to families and young people



- They had felt more anxious, lonely and stressed

What should happen next?



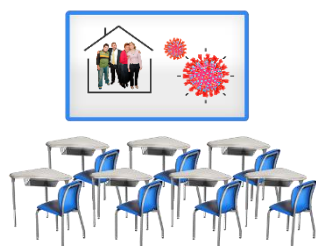
Most people agreed that young people's health should be a priority. They said:



- They needed to get back to some of their routine



- As many activities as possible should reopen, especially healthy ones



- Schools and colleges should have classes about how the pandemic made people feel



- People who lost family or friends to Covid-19 should get extra help



- People needed time to get used to school and their friends again



- People needed to keep the family time they enjoyed in lockdown



- There should be more chance to have animal or pet therapy

Getting it right for young people



To learn from this pandemic, we need to remember that:



- Young people are all different



- Sometimes they need to know exactly what will happen



- It is important young people make their own choices and can change their minds



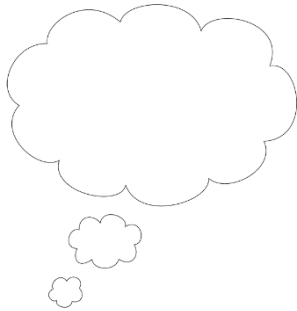
- Some people like things to happen face to face, especially with 1 to 1 support



- Others like support to do things online like help with activities or learning



- Young people must make their own decisions about what is best for them



People also had ideas such as:



- Some meetings for young people, parents or carers about school or college could happen online



- Schools should support parents and teachers to learn how to better understand young people



- Parents and teachers being given the right technology to help young people

What support do parents, carers and young people need?



Some families and young people need support right now to keep them safe.



Professionals will need more help to make sure this happens.



Families and young people should also get more:



- Help to have breaks and holidays



- Support with their mental health



- Help to pay for school lunches



There should be money just for young people with a disability to do this.

How can young people return to college or school safely?



To go back to college and school safely, young people need:



- Easy to understand information about Covid-19



- To know if staff have had their vaccines



- Professionals who help young people to be able to visit school again



- The government not to change the rules on Covid-19 anymore.

How will we pay for this?



Many people said the government should spend more money on all young people's education.



A few people said this should just go towards young people with a disability.

What did the report say overall?



This has been a very hard time for young people, carers and professionals.



However, it has also told us that young people want a future with:



- A less rushed routine



- More help with activities and at school



- More time with their families

Thank yous



MPW would like to thank the young people, parents and carers who took part.



Also the FLARE and KIDS group for their work on the consultation.



CDC would also like to thank Kaizen.



CDC asked Kaizen to help them design and deliver the focus groups and the survey.



Kaizen are a company who have delivered lots of research projects and focus groups.