Department for Education

State of the nation 2020: children and young people's wellbeing

Research report

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Executive Summary

Children and Young People's wellbeing

The wellbeing of children and young people is central to Government policy and is central to achieving the aims of the Department for Education. Recent reports have shown that the wellbeing of children in England and the UK remains relatively low compared with other countries and with decreasing trends over time (The Children's Society, 2020b, Sizmur et al., 2019, UNICEF, 2020). In recent months, the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has resulted in fundamental changes to the lives of children and young people. That is why this year's report collates publicly available data on children and young people's wellbeing, and experiences associated with it, collected during the first months of the pandemic. The report draws on published information from a range of government, academic, voluntary, and private sector organisations. The report is intended to help government, children and young people's services, schools, parents, and anyone interested in children and young people's wellbeing to understand their experiences of the pandemic, the measures put in place to reduce the impact of the pandemic, and the broader effects on society. Much of the evidence presented here has already informed the department's approach to supporting children, young people and their families and teachers and schools. It will, alongside other evidence, continue to be used in developing this further.

The report presents a collection of indicators of children and young people's wellbeing following the structure of the Office for National Statistics' seven domains of wellbeing for children and young people[1]. The report is about children and young people aged 5 to 24 years in England, though many of the indicators, for pragmatic reasons, relate to children and young people across Great Britain and the United Kingdom. In general, data is limited to the March to August period, though some indicators have been extended to September to improve the evidence available. As a result, evidence on any effects of the return to full education is not captured in this report.

This is not an exhaustive review of all available information about children and young people's wellbeing during this period. Findings are based only on the indicators selected to represent the different areas of children and young people's lives. Much of the available data is about children and young people on average and as a whole. This can tend to overlook the experiences of subgroups and those outside the average. There are further quantitative data sources and qualitative evidence which can also provide very

[1]See: Children's Well-being measures and Young people's well-being measures

useful insights into the experiences of children and young people in 2020, and many of which have been drawn on in other evidence reviews[2].

Throughout this report 'children' will be used to refer to any age group within the 5 to 13 years range and 'young people' will be used to refer to any age group within the 14 to 24 years range. The term 'older young people' will be used to refer to any age group within the 16 to 24 years range.

Personal Wellbeing

There is evidence to suggest that children and young people's subjective wellbeing may have decreased slightly compared to previous years, particularly in relation to their life satisfaction. Levels of feeling anxious among older young people appear to have increased during this time. Some measures of children and young people's psychological wellbeing have also been reduced during this period. Although this evidence on change in personal wellbeing is less robust than the average measures which follow.

Overall and on average, and in the context of pre-pandemic reducing trends, children and young people have had quite stable personal wellbeing during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Levels of happiness are similar to previous years. While other indicators of personal wellbeing have decreased slightly, the overall averages for these measures are still generally in line with previous years where data is available.

There are indications that some groups of children and young people have had lower personal wellbeing than others. Children with special educational needs or a disability, disabled young people, children and young people with disadvantaged family backgrounds and some children from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds reported (or were reported by their parents as) being more anxious than children and young people without these characteristics.

While disabled young people reported lower happiness and life satisfaction than non-disabled young people in April to early May, by July to early September there was no significant difference in either measure between these two groups. Similarly, young people who were economically disadvantaged reported lower life satisfaction in April to early May than young people who were financially better off, but by July to early September there was no significant difference in life satisfaction between these two groups. On the other hand, feeling anxious was relatively high for disabled young people and the reported level of anxiousness continued to increase over the course of April to early September.

[2] For example, but not limited to, The Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families, the What Works Centre for Wellbeing, Public Health England COVID-19: mental health and wellbeing surveillance report;

Sources: The Children's Society, 2020b; Office for National Statistics, 2020o; Department for Education, 2020; ImpactEd, 2020; UK Household Longitudinal Study: Banks, J. & Xu, X., 2020.

Health

Children and young people have been worried about the coronavirus (COVID-19), particularly the potential that friends or family could catch the virus. Other relatively common worries about the disease and its consequences are of catching the disease themselves and missing school.

On the whole children are happy with their own health, though about one in every fifteen children have low happiness with their health.

There are indications that, during the lockdown, some children have had increased difficulty with behaviour and restlessness or attention. Evidence on increased symptoms of anxiety during this time is mixed with different studies finding that anxiety was at normal levels or that it was elevated.

Access to NHS mental health services has been maintained for many children and young people, and although referrals to mental health services were low in April and May 2020, an increase was seen in June in line with the easing of restrictions.

Sources: Co-SPACE Study: Pearcey, S. et al., 2020b, 2020c, 2020d, McElroy, E. et al, 2020; The Children's Society, 2020b; NHS Digital, 2020; ImpactEd, 2020; C19PRC Study: Levita, L. et al., 2020; Millennium Cohort Study: Henderson, M. et al., 2020

Education and Skills

From the end of March to June, most children and young people were not able to attend school. Instead, children and young people stayed at home and in most cases continued learning through home schooling from parents and remote education from schools, and other organisations.

Through June and July, increasing numbers of children and young people, in specific year groups, were able to return to school and given both the challenges of home schooling during April to May and the finding that children are, on the whole, happy with the school they go to, this is likely to be a positive outcome for their wellbeing.

In June to July, most parents reported that schools were providing online learning resources or non-digital learning resources to support children and young people learning while at home. However, the majority of children and young people still at home struggled to learn while at home. Parents consistently reported a mixture of reasons for

this, most commonly a lack of motivation in children and young people, but also a lack of their own time to support home learning and a lack of guidance or support from elsewhere.

While children and young people of a broad range of ages are generally as happy as usual with their view of the future, there is evidence that the majority of older young people are worried about the future. These worries have eased slightly from April to September in young people aged 16 to 19 years.

Sources: The Children's Society, 2020a, 2020b, Department for Education, 2020a, Office for National Statistics, 2020 (several references).

Relationships

Even given the challenges of this period, most children and young people up to 17 years of age remain happy with their relationships with friends, although average levels of happiness appear to have reduced slightly on previous years.

Levels of children's and younger young people's contact with friends varies by age, with around a half to two thirds of primary age children having little to no contact with friends over the period from late March to August (varying over time), with only a third to a half having regular contact. Whereas most secondary age children and young people had regular contact with their friends over this time.

A wide range of means of communication were used by children and young people to stay in contact with friends, including video, texting, gaming, social media, and phone.

Children's happiness with their family has also remained high, on average, over this period, and the majority of parents reported that their relationship with their children had remined the same, with over a quarter saying it had improved.

Between a quarter and just under a half of older young people (those aged 16 and over) reported the pandemic affecting their relationships over this time, peaking in May, and seeming to be driven more by the experiences of females and the older (20 to 24 years) age group. Data also indicates that for this age group loneliness may also be a greater concern than for older adults.

Sources: The Children's Society, 2020a, 2020b, Co-SPACE study (Pearcey, S. et al. 2020a, Office for National Statistics, 2020o, 2020g.

Personal finance

Just under one in six children in Great Britain lived in low-income households in 2018/19. Though most children in 2020, as in 2019, are generally happy with the things that they have.

Estimates of the proportion of children's households in Great Britain which have had a reduced household income during the pandemic have varied between 20% and 35%. Over 400,000 additional households with dependent children claimed Universal Credit in April and May 2020. There are indications that more parents have been cutting meal sizes or skipping meals due to not having enough money.

Young people themselves have also seen big impacts on their own employment, both through paid leave from work, for example furlough, or through unpaid leave and unemployment. April and May 2020 also saw a large increase in new Universal Credit claims in the 16 to 24 age group. There is also evidence to suggest that those young people who were already struggling financially have been more likely to see worse financial impacts of the pandemic.

Sources: Department for Work and Pensions, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c; The Children's Society, 2020b; Office for National Statistics, 2020m; Millennium Cohort Study: Wielgoszewska, B., Green, F., and Goodman, A., 2020; Food Standards Agency, 2020.

'What we do' – Activities and time use

Children and young people's average happiness with how they get to use their time remains high and in line with previous years, although the proportion unhappy with their time use has increased.

The majority of children and young people have been fairly physically active during April to July 2020. While similar proportions of parents reported that their children had done either more or less physical activity than usual (before the pandemic and associated restrictions), comparison with previous benchmarks from different data sources does suggest that activity levels have reduced overall.

There is some evidence of increased use of social media by young people, particularly girls.

Sources: The Children's Society, 2020b; Sport England, 2020; Young People's Mental Health during the COVID-19 Pandemic Study (Widnall, E. et al., 2020).

‘Where we live’ – Home and the environment

Most children and young people are happy with their home and live in ‘decent’ homes with adequate safety, facilities, and heating.

Some children and young people’s homes are not ‘decent’, (that is without either adequate safety, facilities or heating) and some children will have spent more time in their ‘non-decent’ home during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

The majority of children spent some time outside in green and natural places at least a couple of times per week.

Sources: The Children’s Society, 2020b; The English Housing Survey (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2020); Natural England, 2020b.

Discussion

Overall, the data collated here gives a surprisingly positive picture of the wellbeing and experiences of the majority of children and young people at this time. However, as stated above, much of the available data is about children and young people on average and as a whole, which can overlook the experiences of subgroups and those outside the average. There are indications that children and young people with particular characteristics may have experienced lower subjective wellbeing. Some of these characteristics have already been linked with increased difficulties in the pandemic (Public Health England, 2020, Bourquin, P et al. 2020, Officer for National Statistics, 2020l), although we do not know if this, or other reasons, are the driver of the apparent differences in wellbeing in these groups at this time. It is too early to know how temporary the observed signs of difficulties or psychological distress in children and young people will be. However, the return to school has the potential to reverse some declines in children’s wellbeing, addressing their worries about missing school and being isolated from their friends and enabling schools to offer both education and pastoral support. There are important gaps in the evidence either through the availability of data at the time of writing this report, or through the necessary boundaries placed on the report in order to ensure it remains accessible and could be produced in a timely manner. It is hoped that, as new data and research is released and analysis of existing sources increases in robustness and nuance, a clearer understanding will emerge.

Data Sources, methods, and limitations

This report draws on published information from a range of government, academic, voluntary, and private sector organisations. Key sources of data in this report include:

- The Children’s Society’s annual household survey of children and young people

- The Office for National Statistics' Opinions and Lifestyle survey
- The Co-SPACE study, University of Oxford with University College London and University of Leicester
- ImpactEd's Lockdown lessons: pupil learning and wellbeing during the Covid-19 pandemic
- The Centre for Longitudinal Studies' Millennium Cohort Study
- COVID-19 Psychological Research Consortium study
- The UK Household Longitudinal Study
- DfE COVID-19 Pupils, Parents and Carers Panel survey

The methodologies underpinning these findings are varied including robust randomly sampled cohorts, weighted representative online panels and non-representative opportunity samples of children and young people and their parents. While sources have been selected to provide the most robust assessment available, there are clear limitations in what can be concluded about children and young people's experiences and wellbeing during spring and summer 2020. Future analysis on data collected in this time and following the progress of children and young people in years to come will provide stronger evidence of this.

See the 'Introduction and methods' section for more information on how the indicators and measures included in this report were selected and Annexe A:'Data sources and methods' for more information on the methods used in the individual data sources drawn from.

Introduction and methods

Children and young people's wellbeing

It is important that children and young people have good wellbeing as the hallmark of a caring and just society and it is through children and young people's wellbeing that the conditions are created for their development into their full potential. These values are central to the Department for Education's (DfE) vision to provide world-class education, training, and care for everyone, whatever their background.

Drawing on evidence from multiple sources is the cornerstone of understanding children and young people's wellbeing, and particularly identifying the drivers of low wellbeing and the children and young people most in need of support. In October 2018 the Prime Minister Theresa May committed to publishing a 'State of the Nation' report annually on World Mental Health Day to integrate available evidence on the state of children and young people's wellbeing, and to provide an accessible narrative on current evidence to guide discourse and action. The first State of the Nation report was published in 2019[3], and found that the majority of children and young people reported being happy or satisfied with their lives. It also concluded that while reported wellbeing can vary for different groups and for different measures, patterns are not always consistent, suggesting that children and young people's individual experiences and characteristics may be more important than broad sub group classifications in their wellbeing, and that a broad range of measures should be considered to understand wellbeing.

Recent reports from both PISA and UNICEF have shown that the wellbeing of children in England and the UK remains relatively low compared with other countries, and trends from the UK Household Longitudinal Study, reported in the 2020 Good Childhood Report indicate downward trends in wellbeing over time (Sizmur et al., 2019, UNICEF, 2020, The Children's Society, 2020b). PISA data also shows the UK having the largest reduction in life satisfaction between 2015 and 2018 of all participating countries. Office for National Statistics (ONS) qualitative research updates our understanding of the aspects of children's lives that matter most for their wellbeing – key points being feeling loved, having positive supportive relationships, feeling safe, a good school environment and culture and having a say in decisions that affect them (Office for National Statistics, 2020p). The continued publication of this report underlines the department's commitment to understanding and supporting the wellbeing of children and young people.

The State of the Nation annual report series is intended to provide an accessible presentation of available data on the current status and changes in children and young people's wellbeing in England, drawing and expanding on the data included in the Office for National Statistics (ONS) indicator sets. This year finds the people and organisations

[3] DfE (2019) State of the nation 2019: children and young people's wellbeing

of this country experiencing the effects of the global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic including periods substantial restrictions on freedom of activities, school closures and ongoing uncertainty (see Context section below for more details).

In this light, a simple update of official data sources, in most cases collected before the pandemic, did not seem appropriate to capture the true state of the nation. Instead, this report focuses on collating publicly available data on children and young people's wellbeing and experiences associated with it collected during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. This, it is hoped, will help government and anyone interested in children and young people's wellbeing, to understand children and young people's experiences of the pandemic, the measures put in place to reduce the impact of the pandemic, and the broader effects of the pandemic on society.

The active development of personal resilience, of self-care, and reciprocal networks of support can also take place even in such times if given the motivation and favourable conditions. Children's wellbeing and their mental health can have a real impact on their development into their full potential both now and as a tool in their futures.

Content and structure of the report

This report presents a collection of indicators of children and young people's wellbeing following the structure of the ONS' seven domains of wellbeing for children and young people[4]. Recent, pre-pandemic, qualitative work with children has informed a review of the children's indicator set published for stakeholder review and feedback. The proposed new indicators include wider range of individual measures, and a new domain of 'future and voice' (Office for National Statistics, 2020q). While this report remains structured around the existing indicator set, children and young people's views of their future have been considered in the 'education and skills' domain.

The report considers the wellbeing of children and young people aged 5 to 24 years old. Within the report, 'children' will be used to refer to any age group within the 5 to 13 years range and 'young people' will be used to refer to any age group within the 14 to 24 years range. The term 'older young people' will be used to refer to any age group within the 16 to 24 years range. Where possible, the report will highlight the experiences of children and young people with different characteristics, noting any differences in experiences between them. The characteristics of children and young people included here are sex, ethnicity, disability, and disadvantage (measured variously by household income, ability to meet an unexpected necessary expense, eligibility for free school meals, eligibility for the pupil premium and socio-demographic group). Data for these groups are only presented for those measures in which analysis was available. We were not able to include any evidence on the wellbeing of young people with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and

[4]See: Children's Well-being measures and Young people's well-being in the UK: 2020

Transgender (LGBT) identities, as none of the data sources meeting our criteria for inclusion (see below) had included these identities in their research. Data on the experiences of children in need or looked after children is also limited to school attendance data owing to the limited information gathered on this small group in wider research.

The report is about children and young people aged 5 to 24 years in England, though many of the indicators, for pragmatic reasons, relate to children and young people across Great Britain and the United Kingdom. In general, data is limited to the March to August period, though some indicators have been extended to September to improve the evidence available. As a result, evidence on any effects of the return to full education is not captured in this report.

The report has been timed to fit to the annual publication cycle. As such, data collected and analysed at this early stage since the start of the pandemic can only provide an early indication of the experiences of children and young people. It cannot draw any conclusions on the longer-term impacts on children and young people's wellbeing but does provide insight into both the difficulties and the resilience of children and young people at this time. Finally, the report also highlights areas in which there are gaps in current data and understanding of children and young people's experiences during this time. While these may in time be filled by future releases of data collected during this period, retrospective studies of specific groups of children and young people may be necessary for a full picture of wellbeing during this time.

Choice of indicators

Indicators of children and young people's wellbeing have been selected to provide pragmatic coverage of the various aspects of wellbeing and domains of children and young people's lives that influence it. Priority has been given to sources covering representative samples of children and young people and with validated, harmonised, or standardised measures.

There is a wide range of further evidence using different methods and collected from groups of interest which we have not included here. To present an accessible collection of the best currently available data across a broad range of aspects of children and young people's lives, we have necessarily had to limit the sources of evidence included, and have done so by focussing on quantitative data that meets at least one of the two quality criteria outlined above (sample and measures). Others are already producing

evidence reviews that capture this broader range of types of evidence[5] and we are not seeking to duplicate this.

While the department's remit only extends to children and young people in England, for pragmatic reasons, this report mainly draws on data from across Great Britain or the whole of the UK.

The domains and indicators included in the report are summarised in the figure below:

Personal Wellbeing (subjective wellbeing, psychological wellbeing and functioning) ONS4, WEMWBS, GHQ12					
Health	**Education and Skills**	**Relationships**	**Personal finance**	**What we do**	**Where we live**
Pandemic anxiety	Happiness with school	Friends	Material deprivation	Time use	Happiness with home
General health	Attendance	Family	Household income/finances	Physical activity	Time spent outdoors
Access to mental health services	Home schooling and remote education	Loneliness	Universal Credit	Social media use	
Mental ill-health	The future		Food security		
			Employment		

Data sources and methods

This report draws on published information from a range of government, academic, voluntary, and private sector organisations as follows:

- The Children's Society's annual survey of children and young people
- The Office for National Statistics' Opinions and Lifestyle survey

[5] For example, but not limited to, The Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families, the What Works Centre for Wellbeing, Public Health England COVID-19: mental health and wellbeing surveillance report;

- The Co-SPACE study, University of Oxford with University College London and University of Leicester
- ImpactEd's Lockdown lessons: pupil learning and wellbeing during the Covid-19 pandemic
- The Centre for Longitudinal Studies' Millennium Cohort Study
- COVID-19 Psychological Research Consortium study
- The UK Household Longitudinal Study
- University of Bristol's Young People's Mental Health during the COVID-19 Pandemic study
- Sport England's Survey into adult physical activity attitudes and behaviour
- DfE COVID-19 Pupils, Parents and Carers Panel survey
- MHCLG's English Housing Survey
- Natural England's People and Nature Survey
- Administrative data from DfE, DWP and NHS Digital

The methodologies underpinning these findings are varied including robust randomly sampled cohorts, weighted representative online panels and non-representative opportunity samples of children and young people and their parents. While sources have been selected to provide the most robust assessment available, and every effort has been made to include a wide variety of sources, some studies or data may have been omitted. Given the limitations in analysis available at this time, there are clear limitations in what can be concluded about children and young people's experiences and wellbeing during Spring and Summer 2020. Future analysis on data collected in this time and following the progress of children and young people in years to come will likely provide stronger evidence of this.

Reporting difference

Some of the studies included are built on random sampling methods to which inferential statistics can be applied. Where 'significant differences' are mentioned between groups in the text of this report, the sourced analysis concludes a statistically significant difference between groups. Other studies do not have sufficiently large or randomly selected samples with which to make inferences about the population of children and young people. In these cases, differences may be shown within the surveyed group of parents, children or young people but might not be a completely accurate representation of people in the wider population. Nevertheless, the characteristics of these samples are sufficiently similar to the general characteristics of the population to offer useful insights about the experiences of children and young people. Where differences are reported in the text of the report, but not indicated as 'significant differences' this means there has

not been statistical testing of the data, and the reporting of differences is based on what is observed in the data, for the surveyed individuals.

Full details of methods are included in Annexe A.

Context: the coronavirus pandemic and related restrictions

This year has seen the world affected by the global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. From 23 March restrictions curtailed the majority of activities. While schools remained open to support those vulnerable children and the children of key workers who were able to attend, most pupils remained at home and were in receipt of remote learning and support. Early May saw initial easing of restrictions, with those who could not work from home returning to socially distanced workplaces, and an easing of some restrictions on outside exercise. Further easing followed during the summer, albeit with local restrictions being put in place in some areas to respond to local circumstances, with schools starting to increase opening for specific year groups in June. September saw the widespread reopening of schools to all year groups and combined physical and remote attendance for students at FE colleges and universities.

The pandemic and these associated measures to control its spread have brought many changes to many areas of children and young people's lives which we know to be important for their wellbeing (Office for National Statistics. 2020p), and these changes, restrictions and uncertainty seem likely to continue for some time.

Future Research

This State of the Nation report is an initial review of children and young people's wellbeing during this time. Further analysis of information collected about children and young people's wellbeing in 2020, for example in the Mental Health of Children and Young People survey[6], the UK Household Longitudinal Study[7] and Longitudinal cohort studies[8], will provide greater insight into the variety of experiences of children and young people. In the longer term, there will also be more evidence both on significant longer-term impacts for specific groups of children, for example those parentally bereaved, and on children and young people's resilience to lasting effects from this time.

[6] Mental Health of Children and Young People in England, 2020: Wave 1 follow up to the 2017 survey
[7] UK Household Longitudinal Study, COVID-19 Survey
[8] For example: Centre for Longitudinal Studies COVID-19 Survey and CLOSER COVID-19 Longitudinal Research Hub

Domain 1: Personal Wellbeing

Summary

Children and young people's own sense of their wellbeing is important, it can indicate broader difficulties in their lives and can, over the longer term, be an indication of their mental health (The Children's Society, 2016). Children and young people's personal wellbeing can be divided into two categories: 'subjective', which includes how well they think their life is going and how they feel on a day to day basis; and 'psychological', which is more objective and longer term validated self-reported measures of feelings and ways of thinking.

Key findings:

- There is evidence to suggest that children and young people's subjective wellbeing may have decreased slightly compared to previous years, particularly in relation to their life satisfaction. Levels of feeling anxious among older young appear to have increased during this time. Some measures of children and young people's psychological wellbeing may have also been reduced during this period. Although this evidence on change in personal wellbeing is less robust than the average measures which follow.
- Overall and on average, and in the context of pre-pandemic reducing trends, children and young people have had quite stable personal wellbeing during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Levels of happiness are similar to previous years.
- There are indications that some groups of children and young people may have had lower personal wellbeing than others. Anxiousness in particular may have been higher in children with special educational needs or a disability, disabled young people, children and young people with disadvantaged family backgrounds and children from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds.
- While disabled young people reported lower happiness and life satisfaction than non-disabled young people in April to early May, by July to early September there was no significant difference in either measure between these two groups. Similarly, young people who were economically disadvantaged reported lower life satisfaction in April to early May than young people who were financially better off, but by July to early September there was no significant difference in life satisfaction between these two groups. On the other hand, compared to non-disabled young people, a higher proportion of disabled young people felt anxious and their reported level of anxiousness continued to increase over the course of April to early September.

Indicator: Subjective Wellbeing

This section reports data related to children and young people's subjective wellbeing including measures of their overall satisfaction with their life[9] and feelings of happiness and anxiousness on a day to day basis.

Life satisfaction

For this measure we present:

- Summary for children and young people aged 10 to 17
- Summary for young people aged 16 to 24
    - Differences according to sex, disability and disadvantage

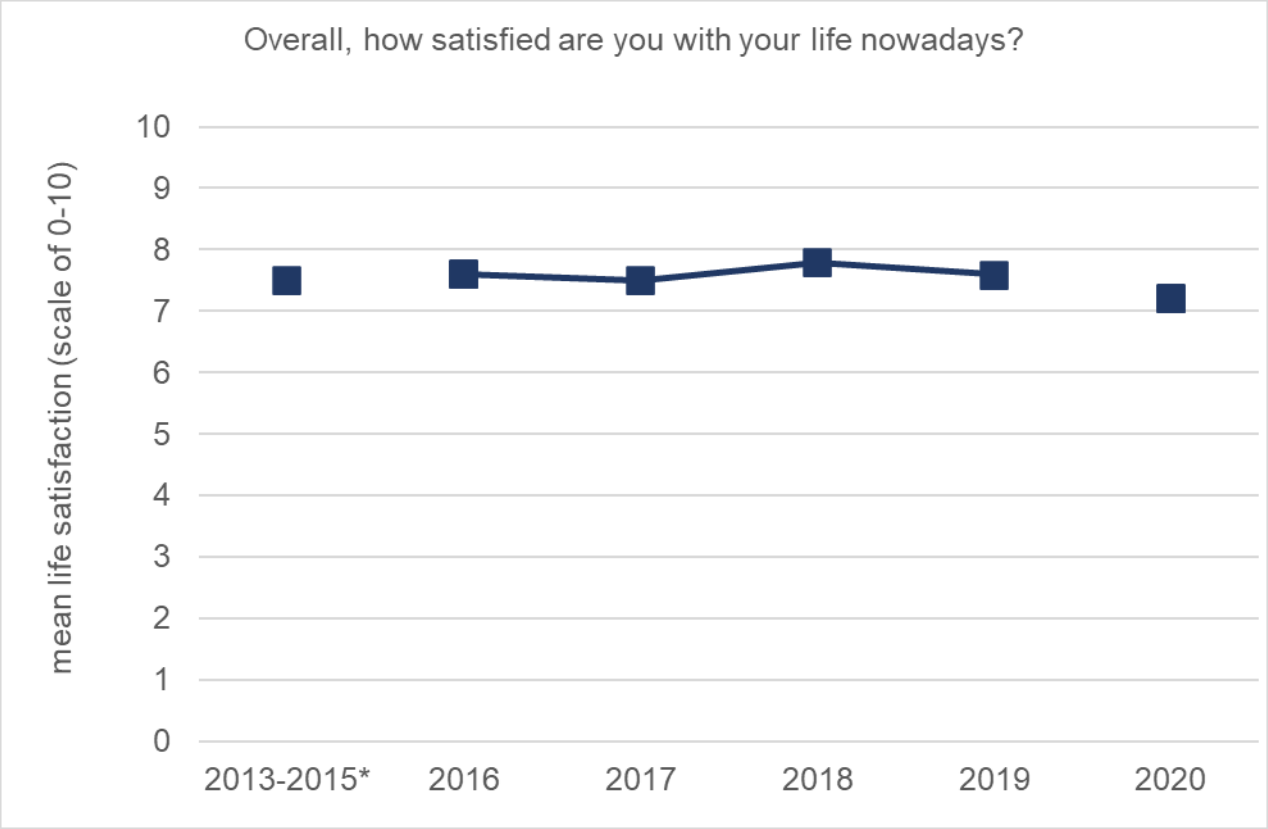
Secondary school aged children and young people

There is evidence to suggest that children and young people's life satisfaction has decreased slightly during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The Children's Society surveyed children and young people aged 10 to 17[10] in the UK from April to June 2020, the peak of restrictions during the initial stages of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in the UK. On average, they found that children and young people's self-assessed life satisfaction (at 7.2 out of 10), was slightly lower during this time than at the same time in recent years in Great Britain (ranging from 7.5 to 7.8 out of 10 from 2016[11]) (See Figure 1) (The Children's Society, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 & 2020b) .

Although this average does indicate that a large majority maintained a fairly positive view of life satisfaction, individually, children and young people report a variety of levels of satisfaction with life. The survey found that that 8.8% of children and young people reported low life satisfaction[12], a proportion that does not appear to have changed more than might have been expected due to normal fluctuations year on year. (The Children's Society, 2020b)

[9] Measured by the question 'Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?' on a scale of 1-10, with 10 being most satisfied. This is the Office for National Statistics' harmonised life satisfaction measure.
[10] Children aged 10 and 11 may be in primary school. However, as the data as a whole is more representative of secondary school aged children and young people, data from this survey has been used under a header of 'secondary school aged children and young people' throughout this report.
[11] Please note, we cannot directly compare this year's data to previous years' due to a change in the geography covered and other changes in methodology. These comparisons are based on the descriptive data alone and not any statistical testing.
[12] Low life satisfaction is defined as scoring below the midpoint of the scale.

Figure 1: Life satisfaction of children and young people aged 10 to 17.



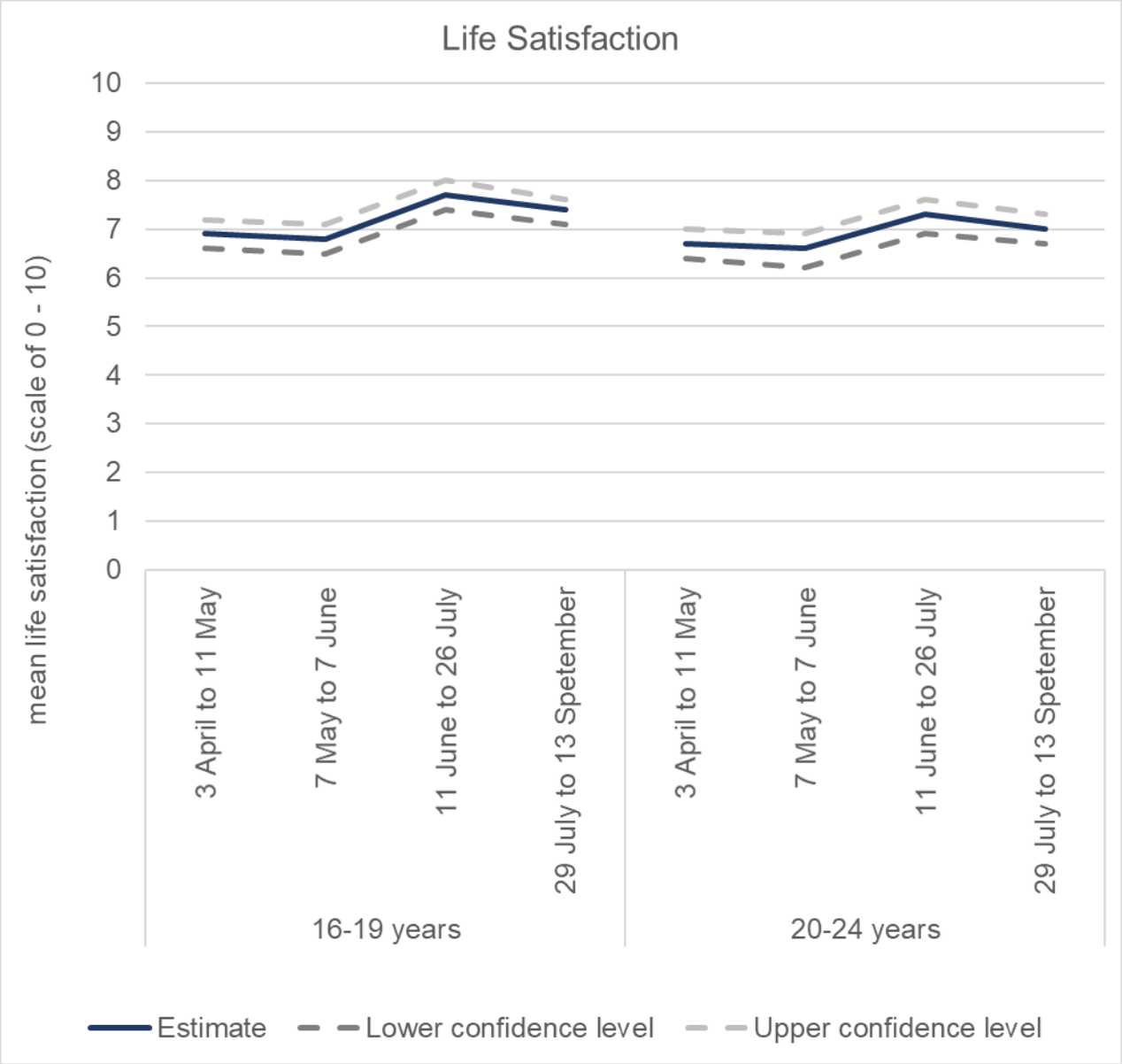
Coverage: 2020 UK, 2013 – 2019 Great Britain, Note: discontinuity in time series, see 'Data sources and methods' annexe for further information. N=2,000. Source: Children's Society

Young people over 16

Overall, young people's life satisfaction appears to be subdued compared to levels seen up to 2017 (Office for National Statistics, 2018)[13]. In the Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle survey in April to early May 2020, 16 to 19 year olds rated their life satisfaction as an average of 6.9 (out of 10) and 20 to 24 year olds rated it as 6.7. Repeated surveys find that life satisfaction has fluctuated very slightly between April and September 2020, but in late July to September life satisfaction is not significantly different to the start of the period, 7.4 (out of 10) for 16 to 19 year olds and 7 for 20 to 24 year olds (see Figure 2). (Office for National Statistics, 2020o)

[13] The Office for National Statistic's latest assessment of young people's subjective wellbeing doesn't suggest a significant difference in life satisfaction overall in either the short or long term up to March 2020. However, a direct comparison between life satisfaction reported since April 2020 and the most recent year's historic data (October 2017 to March 2020) hasn't been possible for this report due to differences in analysis and reporting.

Figure 2: Life satisfaction of young people aged 16 to 24



April to September 2020. Coverage: Great Britain. Source: ONS

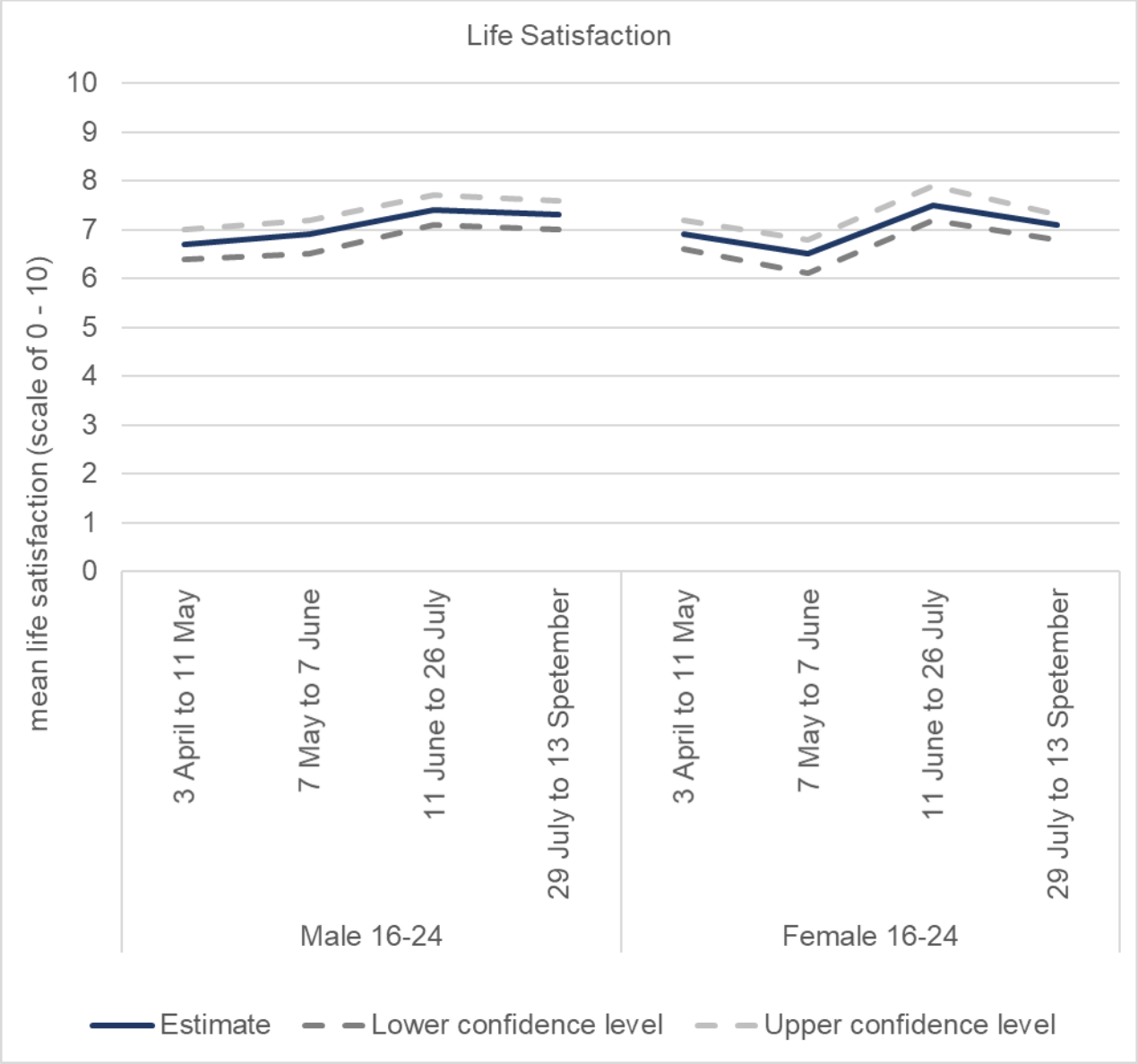
Sex

There are no indications that sex is associated with differences in young people's life satisfaction at the current time. The Centre for Longitudinal Studies surveyed the 19 year old members of the Millennium Cohort in May 2020, 21% (+/-5%) of young men and 23% (+/- 3%) of young women reported low life satisfaction[14]. The repeated Office for National Statistics survey of adults also does not find any

[14] Measured by the question 'Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?' on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being most satisfied, and low life satisfaction being indicated by any score under 5. The Office for National Statistics' harmonised life satisfaction measure.

significant differences between average life satisfaction for males and females of 16 to 24 years old (See Figure 3).

Figure 3: Life satisfaction young people aged 16 to 24 by sex



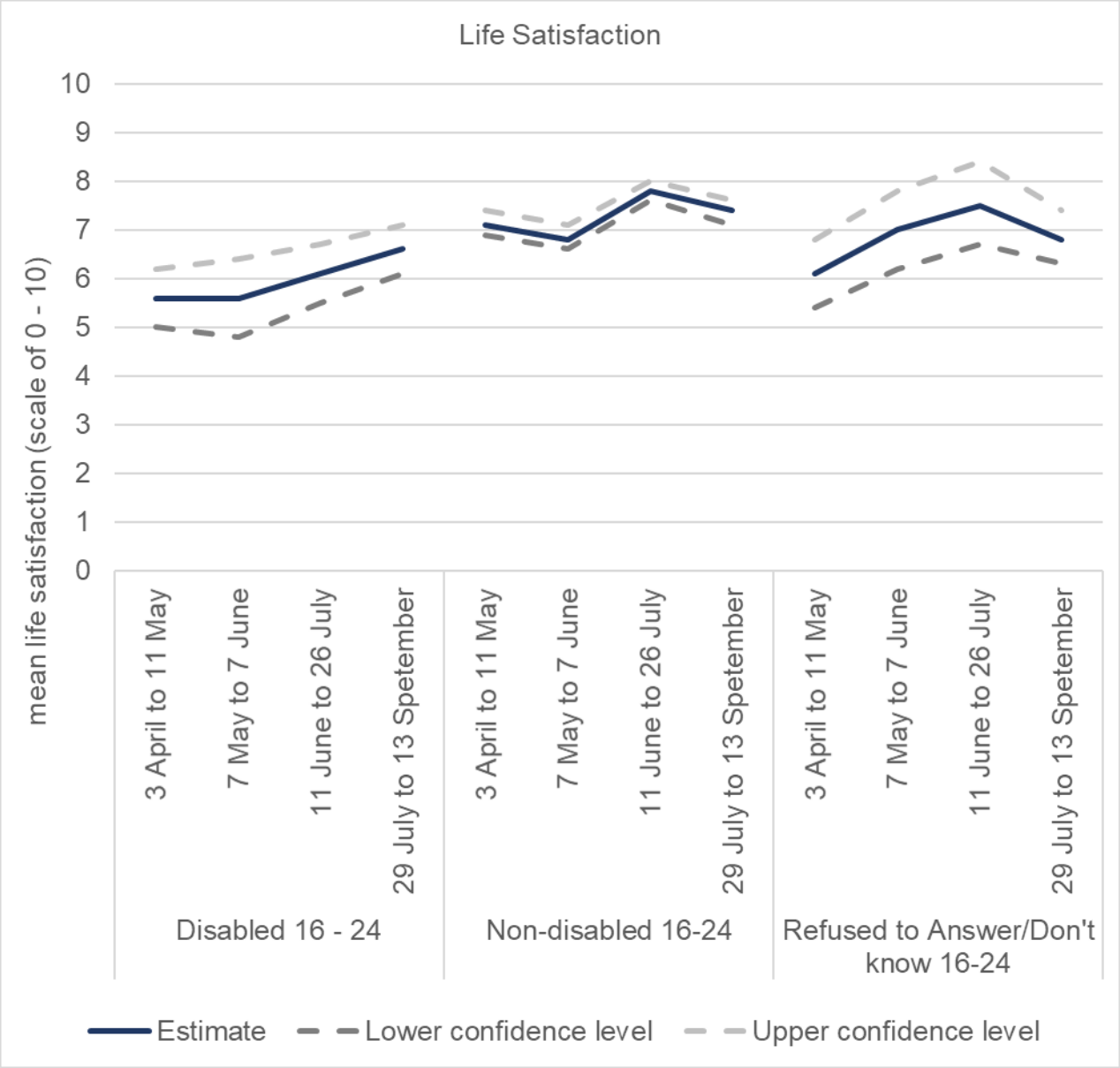
April to September 2020. Coverage: Great Britain. Source: ONS

Disability

The Office for National Statistics found that at the beginning of the restrictions relating to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, young people aged 16 to 24 who are disabled rated their life satisfaction as 5.6 on a scale of 0-10, lower than non-disabled young people of the same age. While indicating an improving trend, the change in life satisfaction for disabled young people between April and September is not significant. However, by September there is no longer a

significant difference between the life satisfaction of disabled young people (6.6 out of 10) and non-disabled young people (7.6 out of 10) (See Figure 4).

Figure 4: Life satisfaction young people aged 16 to 24 by disability



April to September 2020. Coverage: Great Britain. Source: ONS

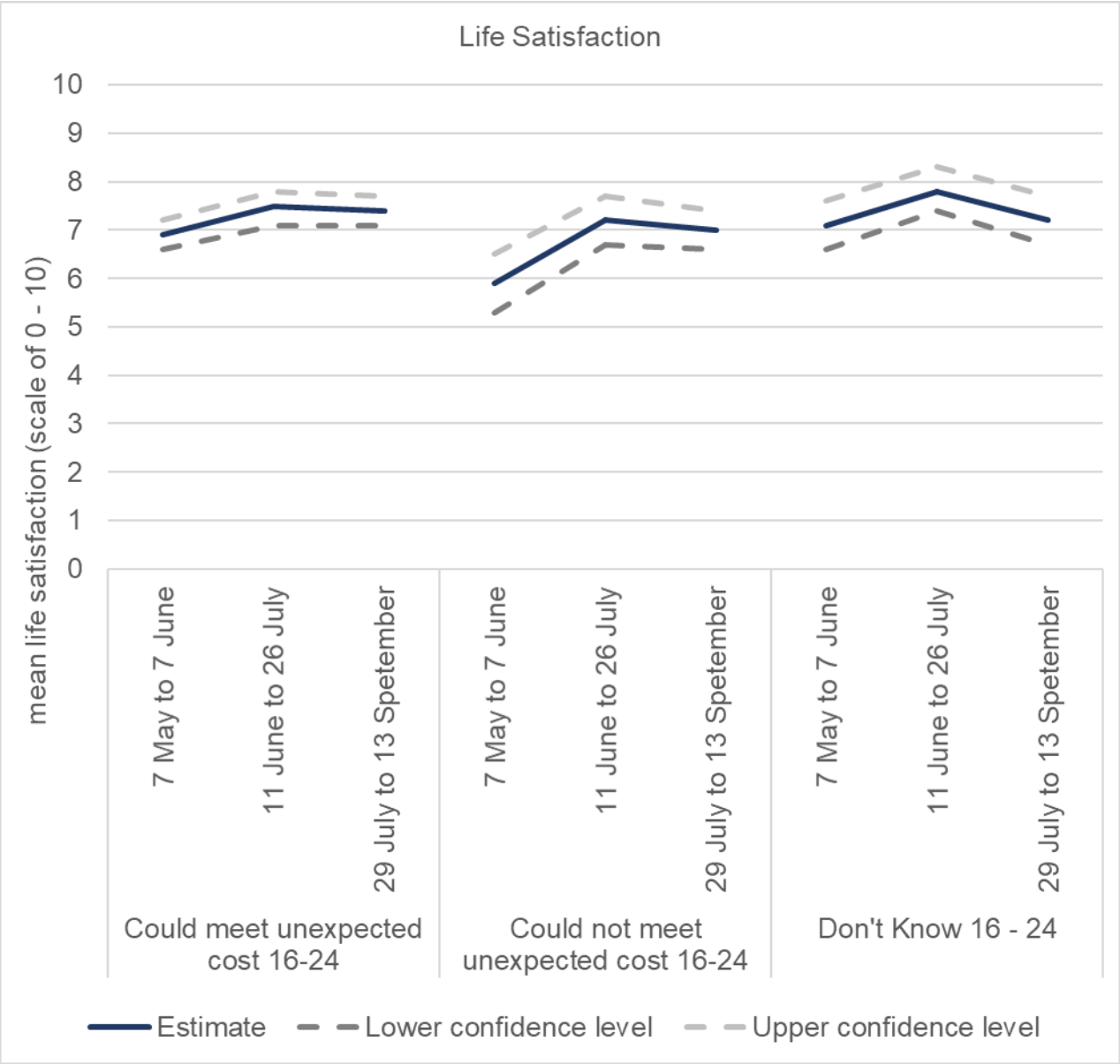
Disadvantaged

Similarly, in May to June 2020[15], economically disadvantaged young people aged 16 to 24 (defined here as being unable to meet and unexpected necessary expense of £850) rated their life satisfaction as 5.9 (out of 10), lower than young people of the same age who were economically better off. Although the change in

[15] The variable used to identify economically disadvantaged young people is not available for the full range of ONS surveys prior to 7 May.

life satisfaction for economically disadvantaged young people between May and September is not significant, by September there is no longer a significant difference between the life satisfaction of economically disadvantaged young people (7 out of 10) and young people who were economically better off (7.4 out of 10) (See Figure 5).

Figure 5: Life satisfaction young people aged 16 to 24 by economic disadvantage



April to September 2020. Coverage: Great Britain. Source: ONS

Happiness

For this measure we present:

- Summary for children and young people aged 10 to 17 and in Year 7 to Year 11.

    - Differences according to sex, ethnicity and disadvantage
- Summary for young people aged 16 to 24
    - Differences according to sex, disability and disadvantage

Secondary school aged children and young people

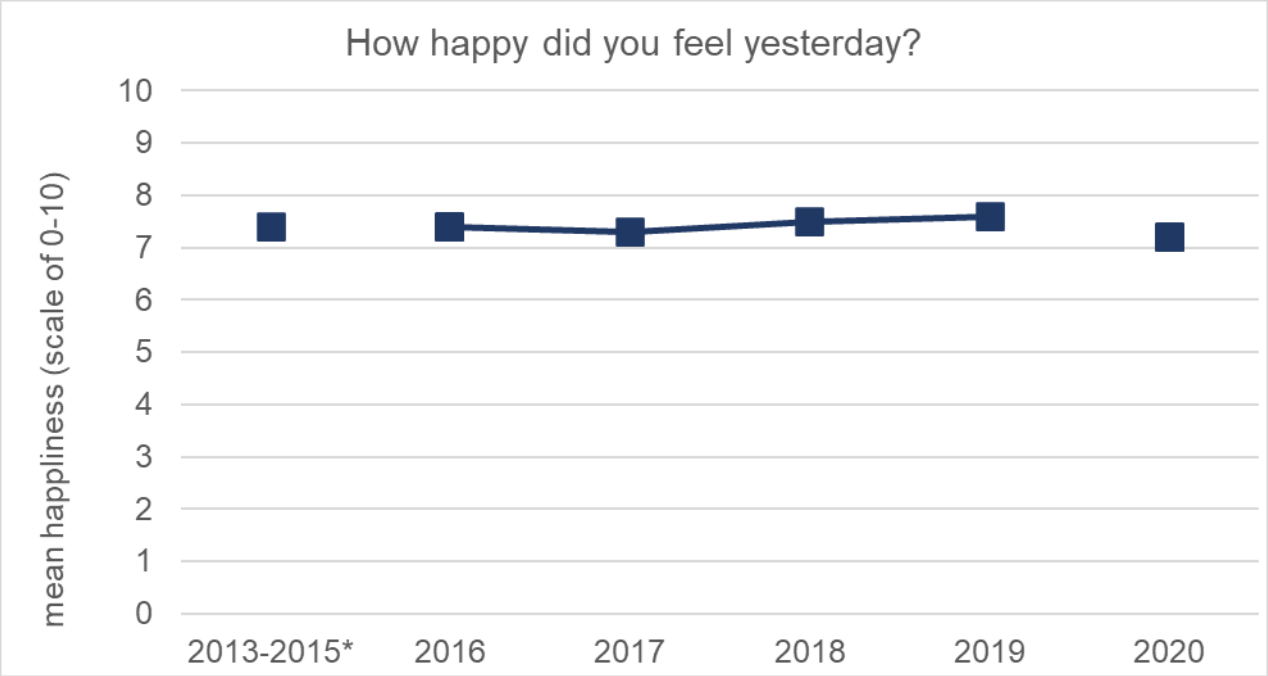
Evidence suggests that, on the whole, happiness amongst older children and young people is similar to previous years. The Children's Society and the Department for Education separately surveyed older children and young people in late spring in the UK and England, respectively. The Children's Society found that children and young people's self-assessed happiness[16] (at 7.2 out of 10), was only very slightly lower during this time than at the same time in recent years in Great Britain (ranging from 7.3 to 7.6 out of 10 from 2016[17]) (children and young people aged 10 to 17, see Figure 6) (The Children's Society, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 & 2020b).

Although this average does indicate that a large majority had been quite happy, the survey also finds that, individually, children and young people report a variety of levels happiness, with 9.2% of children and young people scoring below the midpoint of the 0 to 10 scale. This did not appear to have changed more compared to previous years than might have been expected due to normal fluctuations. (The Children's Society, 2020b)

The Department for Education's survey of a panel of children and young people (in years 7 to 11) in England in late May to June 2020, found a very similar average happiness, 6.9 out of 10, and recorded 12% of children as having low happiness (see Figure 7). [18,19]

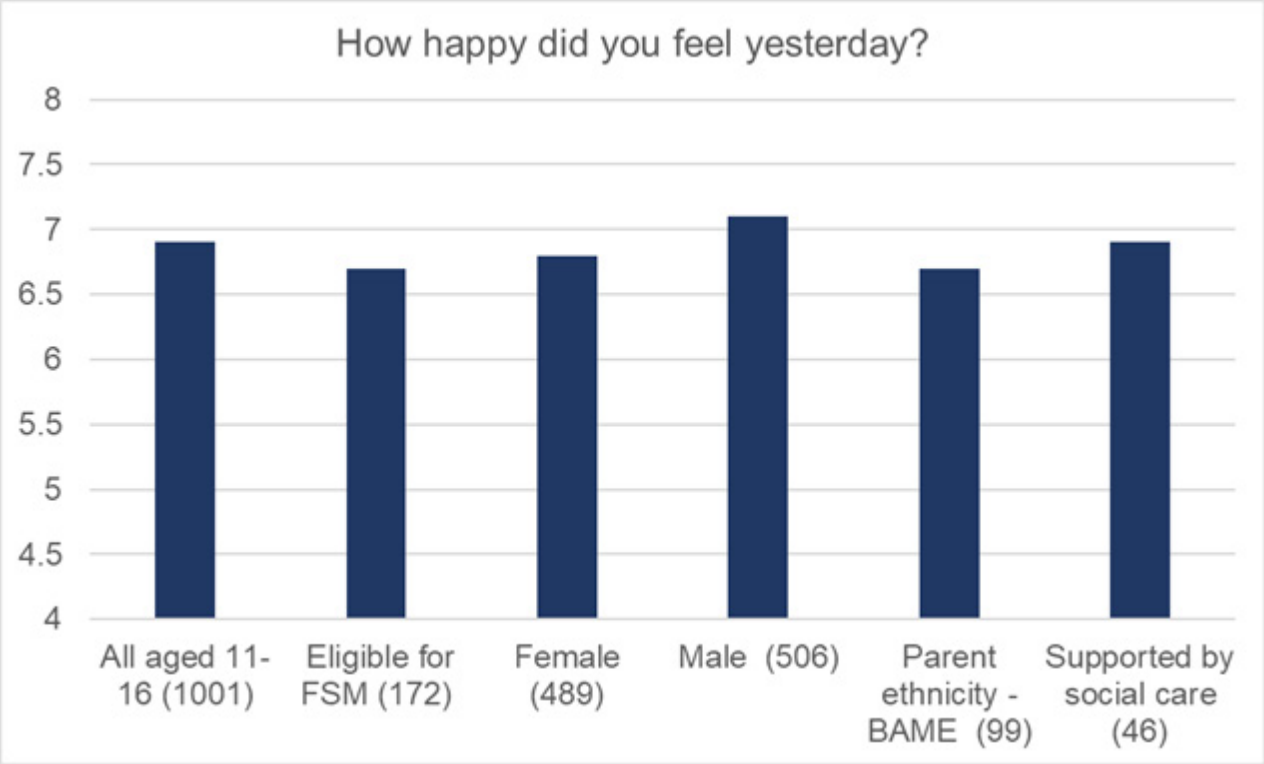
[16] Measured by the question 'On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is 'not at all' and 10 is 'completely', overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?'
[17] Please note, we cannot directly compare this year's data to previous years' due to a change in the geography covered and other changes in methodology. These comparisons are based on the descriptive data alone and not any statistical testing.
[18] Although the data from this panel of children and young people has been adjusted to have similar proportions of children and young people with particular characteristics as the general population, it cannot be said to be truly representative. As a result, findings are not presented as estimates of the whole population. Comparisons between groups are also only indications of possible differences. There are particularly low samples of children and young people with some characteristics and these responses should be treated with more caution.
[19] Happiness score of 0 to 4 on a scale of 0 to 10. Tables can be found in Annexe B, 'Department for Education – COVID-19 panel survey of Pupils, Parents and Carers'

Figure 6: Happiness of children and young people aged 10 to 17.



Coverage: 2020 UK, 2013 – 2019 Great Britain, Note: discontinuity in time series, see 'Data sources and methods' annexe for further information. N=2,000. Source: Children's Society

Figure 7: Happiness of children and young people in Year 7 to Year 11 by demographics.[20]



Fieldwork 28 May to 10 June 2020. Coverage: England. Source: DfE. (Sample sizes in brackets).

Sex

In the Department for Education's survey of children and young people in England in May to June 2020, there are indications that girls (in Years 7 to Year 11) may have been slightly less happy than boys of the same age group during this time, rating their happiness at an average of 6.8 compared to 7.1. A slightly greater proportion of girls had low happiness, 14%, compared to boys 9%.

Ethnicity

The same survey does not suggest a difference in happiness between the overall average happiness of children whose parents or carers are from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds and those whose parents or carers are from White ethnic backgrounds[21]. A higher proportion of children and young people whose parents or carers are from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds reported low happiness (18%), compared to children and young people whose parents or carers are from White ethnic backgrounds (11%). However, this finding should be

[20] Eligibility for free school meals is self-reported by the children and young people.
[21] In this survey children and young people were not asked directly about their own ethnicity. Findings are reported by the ethnicity of their parent or carer, though we acknowledge that a child's own ethnicity may vary from that.

treated with caution owing to the small numbers of survey respondents from any ethnic minority background.

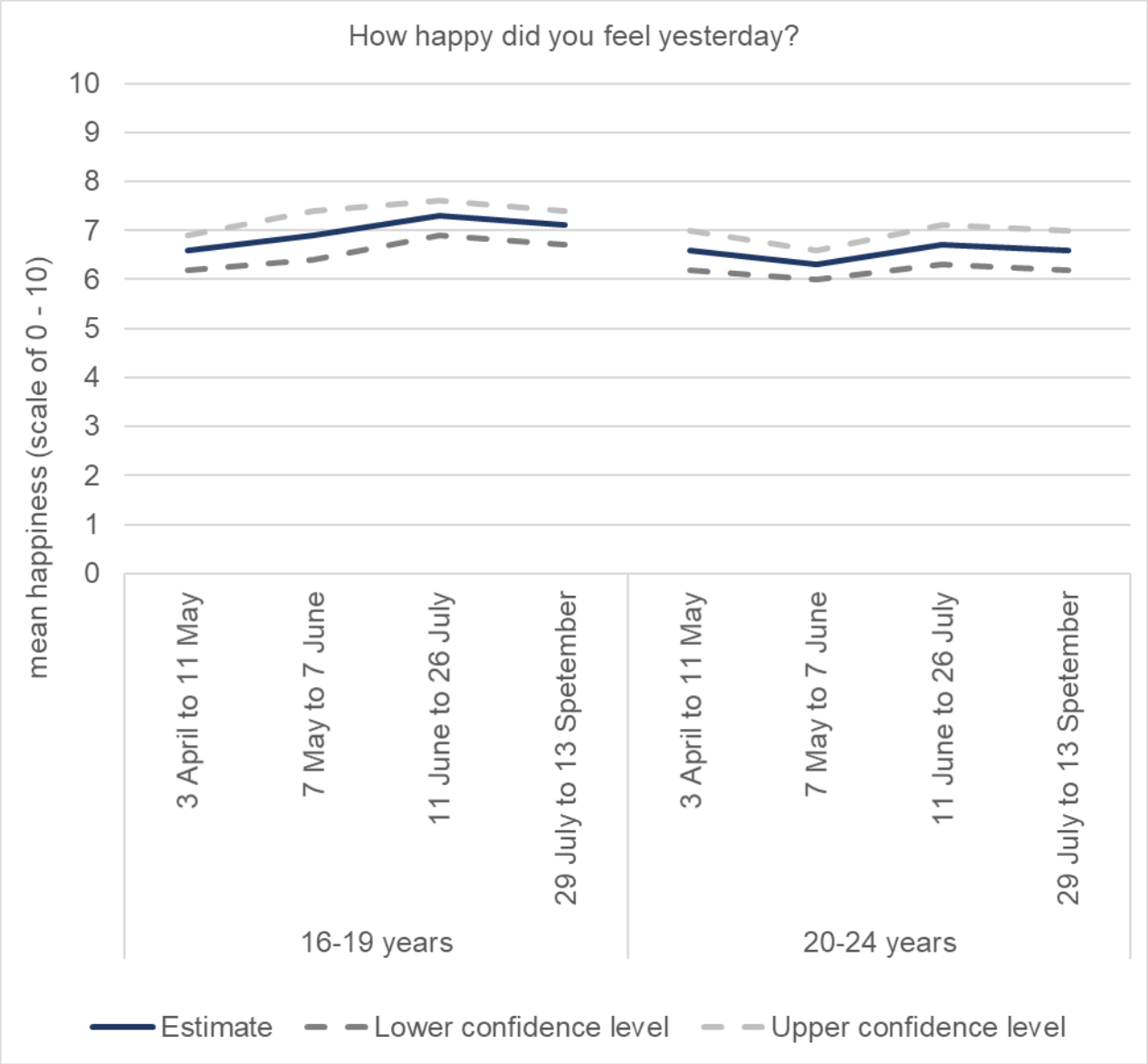
Disadvantaged

The same DfE survey data shows no difference in happiness between the overall average happiness of children who say they get free school meals, 6.7 out of 10, and those who say they do not, 7 out of 10. The relatively small sample size of those eligible for free school meals may reduce the accuracy of the comparison. Similarly, an apparent difference in the proportion of surveyed children who say they get free school meals with low happiness (16%), compared to those who say they do not (11%) may not reflect the wider population because of this small sample size.

Young people over 16

The Office for National Statistics surveyed adults (over the age of 16) in the UK from early April 2020, finding that both 16 to 19 year olds and 20 to 24 year olds rated their happiness at an average of 6.6 (out of 10) in April to early May. (Office for National Statistics, 2020o) While the estimate for happiness appears higher for 16 to 19 year olds in June to July, this was not statistically different to earlier ratings, or to the 20 to 24 years old age group (See Figure 8). There were no significant differences in levels of happiness seen between males and females in the 16 to 24 years age group, nor between those economically disadvantaged or those better off.

Figure 8: Happiness of young people aged 16 to 24

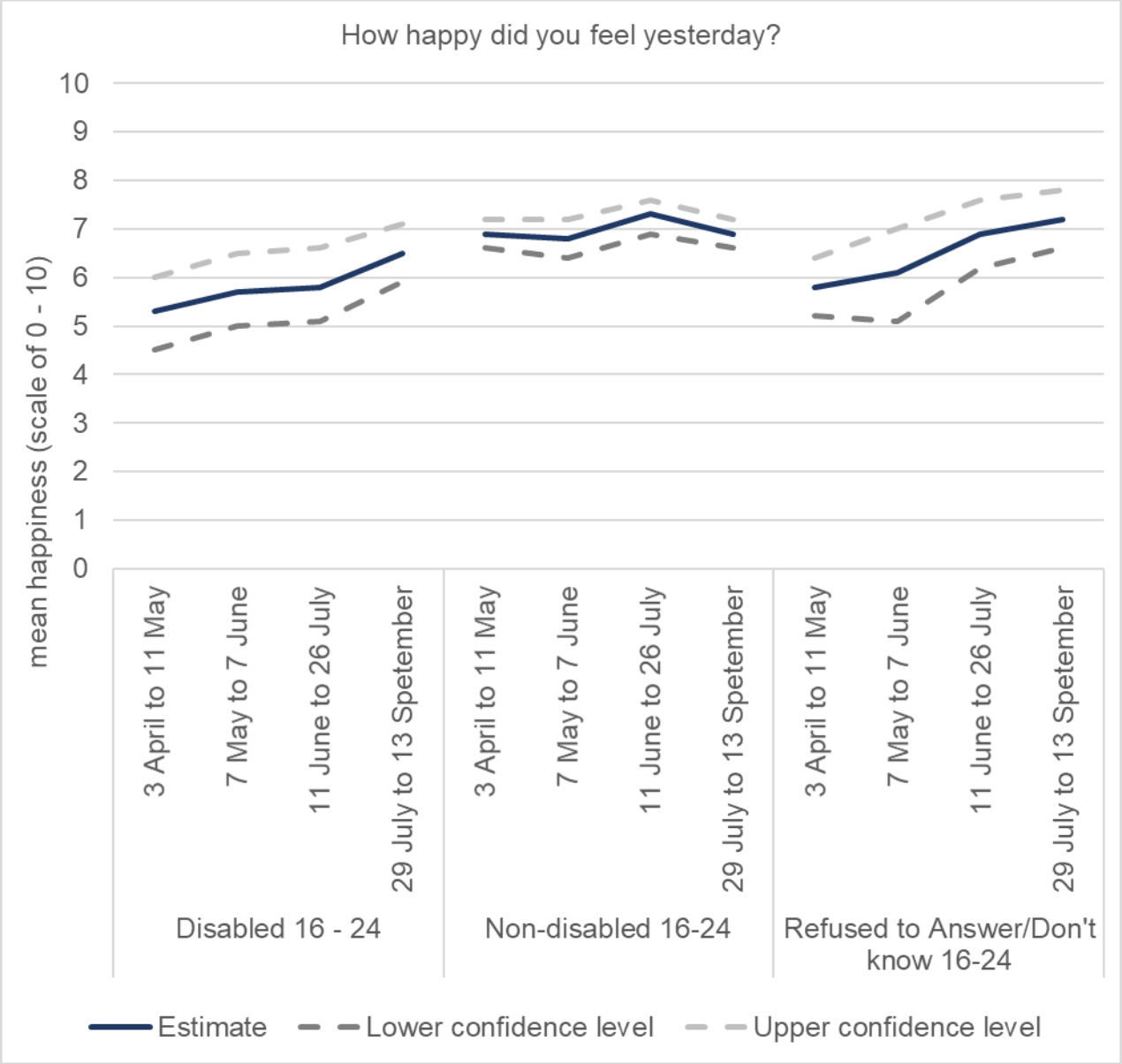


April to September 2020. Coverage: Great Britain. Source: ONS

Disability

At the beginning of the restrictions relating to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, young people aged 16 to 24 who are disabled rated their happiness as 5.3 on a scale of 0 to 10, lower than non-disabled young people of the same age. Although the change in happiness for disabled young people between April and September is not significant, by September there is no longer a significant difference between the happiness of disabled young people (6.5 out of 10) and non-disabled young people (6.9 out of 10) (See Figure 9). (Office for National Statistics, 2020o)

Figure 9: Happiness of young people aged 16 to 24 by disability



April to September 2020. Coverage: Great Britain. Source: ONS

Anxiousness

For this measure we present:

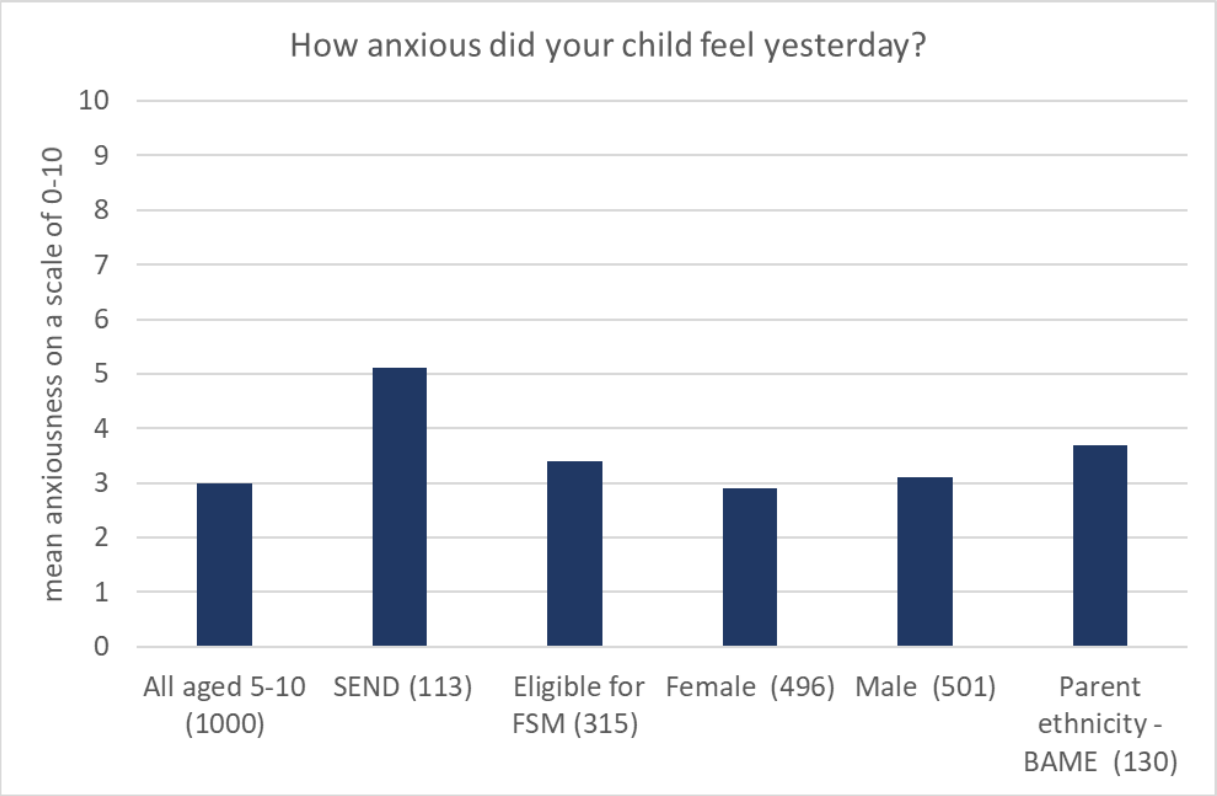
- Summary for children and young people in Reception to Year 6
    - Differences according to Special Educational Needs and disabilities, sex, ethnicity, and disadvantage
- Summary for children and young people in Year 7 to Year 11
    - Differences according to sex, ethnicity, and disadvantage

- Summary for young people aged 16 to 24
    - Differences according to sex, disability, and disadvantage

Primary school age

The Department of Education surveyed a panel of parents and carers of children of a primary school age in England in late May to early June 2020.[22] When asked to rate how anxious their child had appeared the day before on a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is 'not at all' and 10 is 'completely', parents and carers on average reported a low score of 3 out of 10 (see Figure 10). As with the other measures of personal wellbeing, despite the overall positive assessment by parents, there were a wide variety of responses and 24% of parents surveyed rated their child as having had high anxiousness on the previous day[23][24].

Figure 10: Anxiousness of children in Reception to Year 6



Fieldwork: 28 May to 10 June 2020. Coverage: England. Source: DfE. (Sample sizes in brackets).

[22] Although the data from this panel of parents and carers has been adjusted to have similar proportions of children with particular characteristics as the general population, it cannot be said to be truly representative. As a result, findings are not presented as estimates of the whole population. Comparisons between groups are also only indications of possible differences. There are particularly low samples of children with some characteristics and these responses should be treated with more caution.
[23] A score of 6 or more out of 10 on a scale of 0 (not at all) to 10 (completely).
[24] See Annexe B 'Department for Education – COVID-19 panel survey of Pupils, Parents and Carers'.

Ethnicity

There was an indication in the Department for Education COVID-19 Survey findings that parents and carers from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds may perceive their children to have been more anxious on the previous day than parents and carers from White ethnic backgrounds, 3.7 and 2.9, respectively. Although both averages are relatively low overall. The same pattern can also be seen in the proportion of parents and carers from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds who felt their child had high anxiety (36%), compared to children whose parents or carers are from White ethnic backgrounds (22%). These finding should be treated with some caution owing to the small numbers of survey respondents from any ethnic minority background.

Special Educational Needs and disabilities

Similarly, the survey findings suggest that parents and carers of primary aged children with Special Educational Needs and disabilities perceived their children to have had higher levels of anxiousness on the previous day, an average of 5.1, compared to 2.7 amongst parents and carers of primary aged children without Special Educational Needs and disabilities. Almost half (48%) of parents and carers of primary aged children with Special Educational Needs and disabilities perceived their children to have had high levels of anxiousness (6 or more out of 10) on the previous day. However, caution is needed in interpreting these findings, as only a small number of parents and carers of primary aged children with Special Educational Needs and disabilities were surveyed and therefore these responses may not be representative of the wider population.

Disadvantaged

Parents and carers of primary aged children said their child receives free school meals, surveyed by the Department for Education, also perceived their children to have had higher levels of anxiousness on the previous day, an average of 3.4, compared to 2.8 amongst surveyed parents and carers of primary aged children not eligible for free school meals. Over a quarter (28%) of surveyed parents and carers of primary aged children who receive free school meals perceived their children to have had high levels of anxiousness (6 or more out of 10) on the previous day.

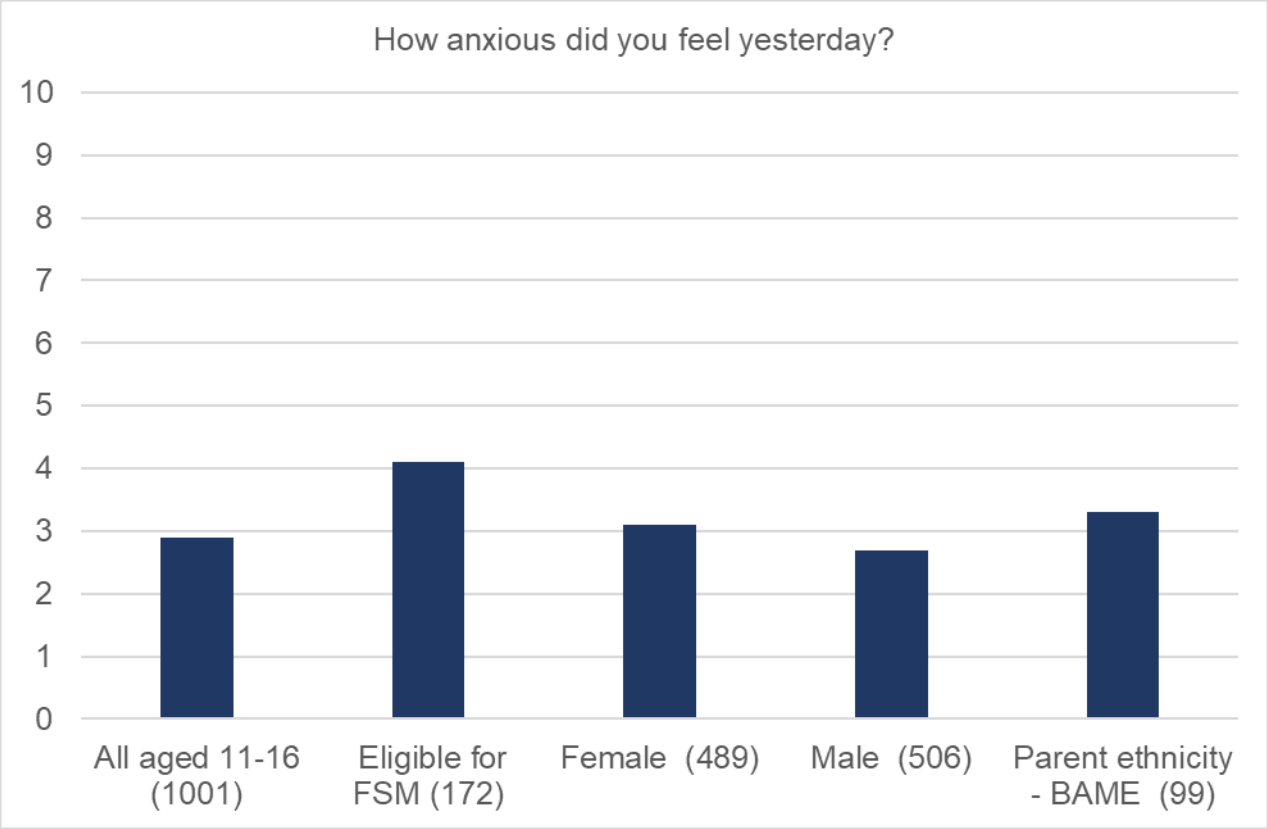
Secondary school aged children and young people

The Department for Education surveyed 1,001 secondary school aged children and young people in May to June 2020.[25] They were asked to report their own level of feeling

[25] Although the data from this panel of children and young people has been adjusted to have similar proportions of children and young people with particular characteristics as the general population, it cannot be said to be truly representative. As a result, findings are not presented as estimates of the whole population. Comparisons between groups are also only indications of possible differences. There are

anxious on the previous day. On average secondary school aged children and young people had a low anxiety score, 2.9 out of 10 (see Figure 11). Almost a quarter of the secondary school aged children reported having high anxiousness on the day before their survey (23%).

Figure 11: Anxiousness of children and young people in Year 7 to 11[26].



Fieldwork: 28 May to 10 June 2020. Coverage England. Source: DfE

Sex

There are indications that girls (in Year 7 to 11) may have felt slightly more anxious than boys of the same year groups during this time, rating their anxiousness at an average of 3.1 compared to 2.7. Although, the proportions with high anxiousness scores were similar, 25% of girls, compared to 21% of boys. With no prior measure of anxiousness before the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the indicator cannot indicate if there is a widening gap.

Ethnicity

Considering the smaller number of parents from ethnic minority backgrounds surveyed, the Department for Education survey does not suggest a difference in average anxiousness between secondary aged children whose parents or carers

particularly low samples of children and young people with some characteristics and these responses should be treated with more caution.

[26] Eligibility for free school meals is self-reported by the children and young people.

are from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds (3.3 out of 10) and those whose parents or carers are from White ethnic backgrounds (2.9 out of 10). Nor do the responses suggest a difference in the proportion of children with high anxiousness between children whose parents or carers are from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds (28%), compared to children whose parents or carers are from White ethnic backgrounds (23%). Although there is an apparent difference between the two groups of surveyed children, the small numbers of survey respondents from any ethnic minority background along with the panel sampling method means we cannot draw any conclusions on whether this reflects any difference among children and young people in England as a whole.

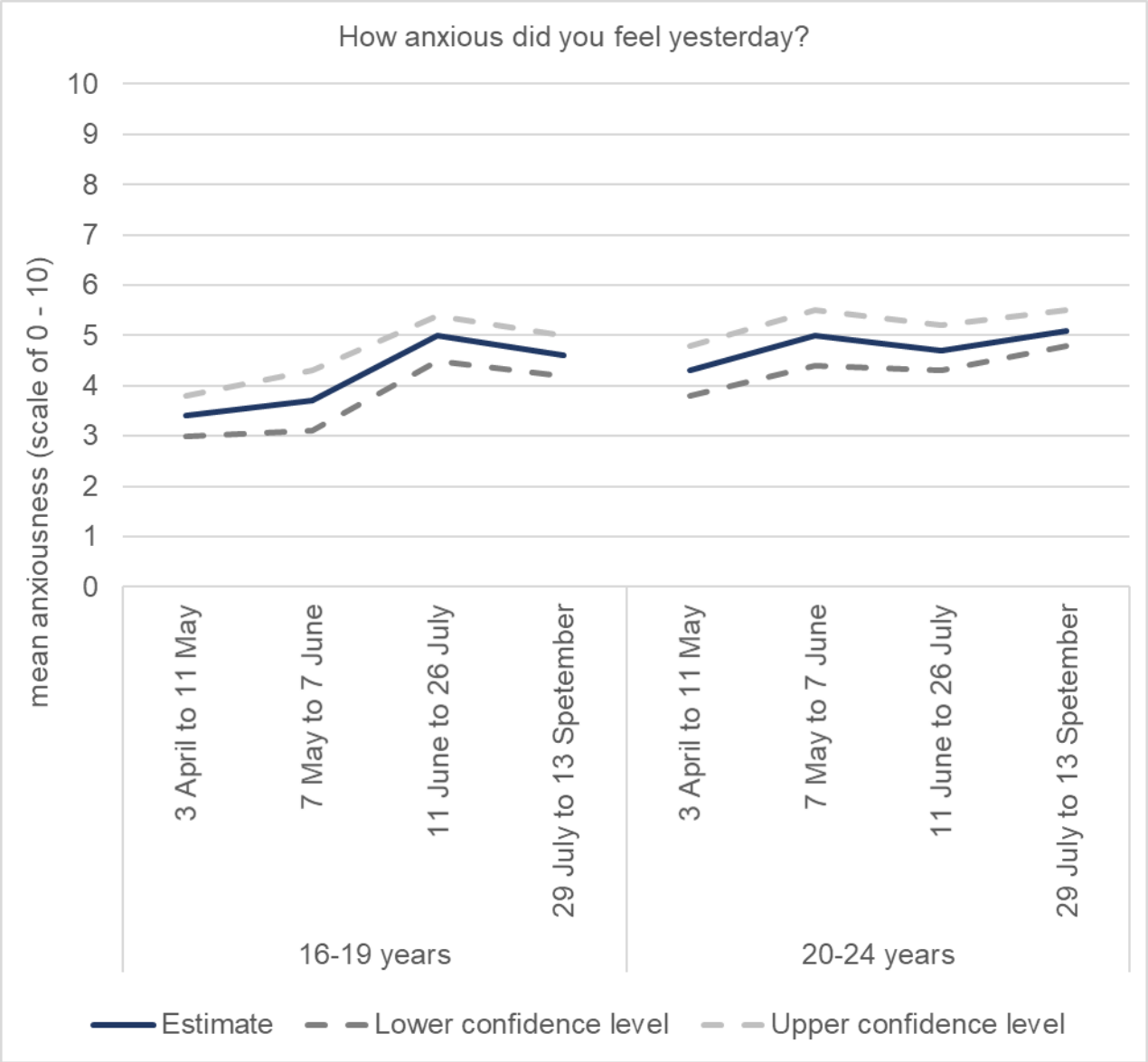
Disadvantaged

Secondary aged children who say they get free school meals, surveyed by the Department for Education, reported higher levels of anxiousness on the previous day, an average of 4.1, compared to 2.7 amongst secondary aged children who say they do not get free school meals. Two in five (40%) surveyed secondary aged children who say they get free school meals reported high levels of anxiousness (6 or more out of 10) on the previous day.

Young people over 16

The Office for National Statistics surveyed adults (over the age of 16) in the UK from early April 2020, finding that 16 to 19 year olds rated their anxiousness as 3.4 (out of 10) on average and 20 to 24 year olds rated their anxiousness as 4.3 (out of 10) on average. In June to July, young people aged 16 to 19 years old rated their anxiousness as 5 out of 10 on average, and in late July to September, as 4.6 out of 10. And, unlike adults as a whole, (Office for National Statistics, 2020n) reported anxiousness by young people age 16 to 19 years old rose between April and September 2020. There were no significant differences in levels of anxiousness seen between young people who were economically disadvantaged or those better off.

Figure 12: Anxiousness of young people aged 16 to 24

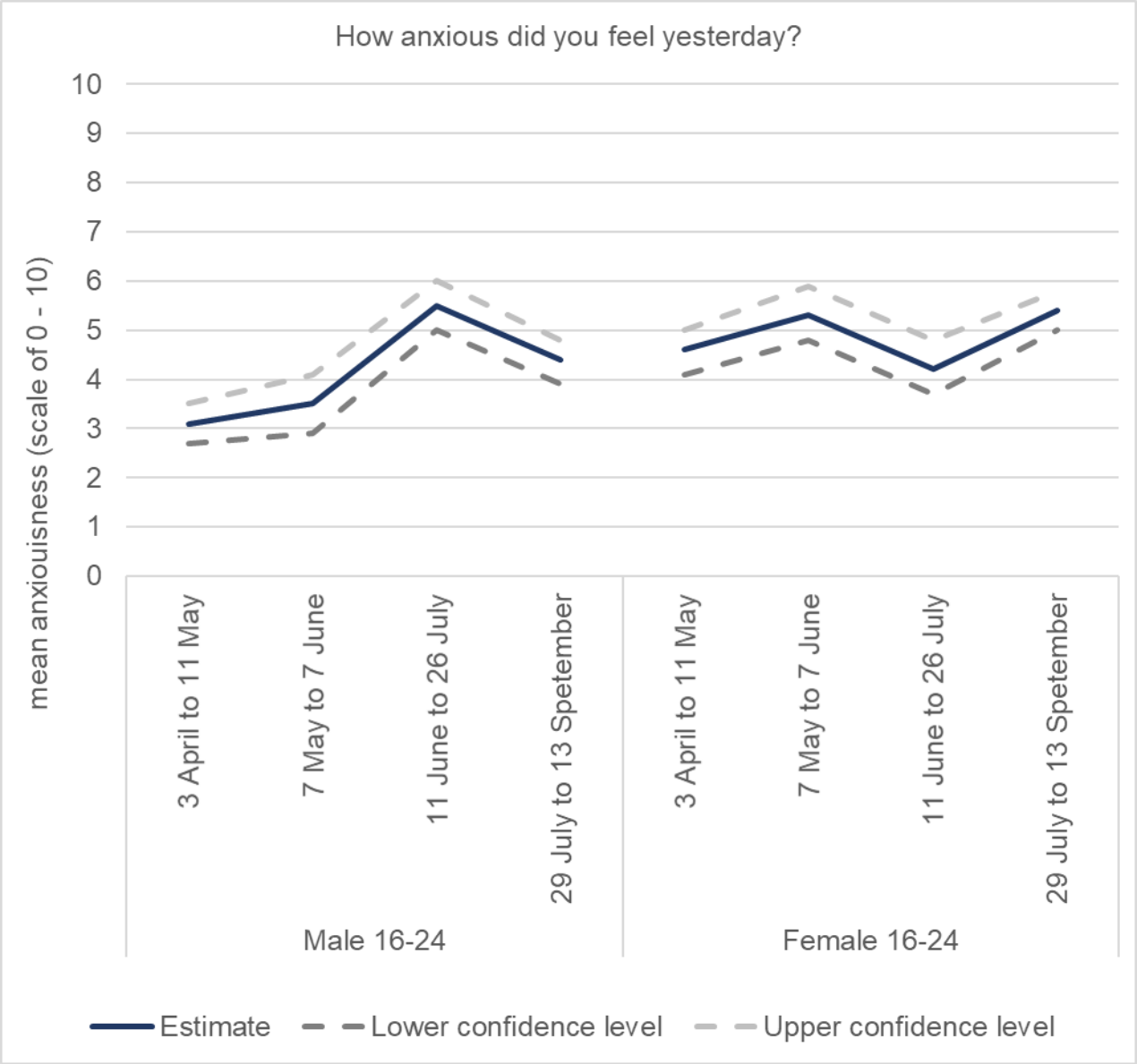


April to September 2020. Coverage: Great Britain. Source: ONS

Sex

In April to May, young women aged 16 to 24 rated their anxiousness higher than young men (4.6 and 3.1 respectively) though this difference has not been consistent during the summer months, with young men reporting more anxiousness than young women in June to July (see Figure 13).

Figure 13: Anxiousness of young people aged 16 to 24 by sex

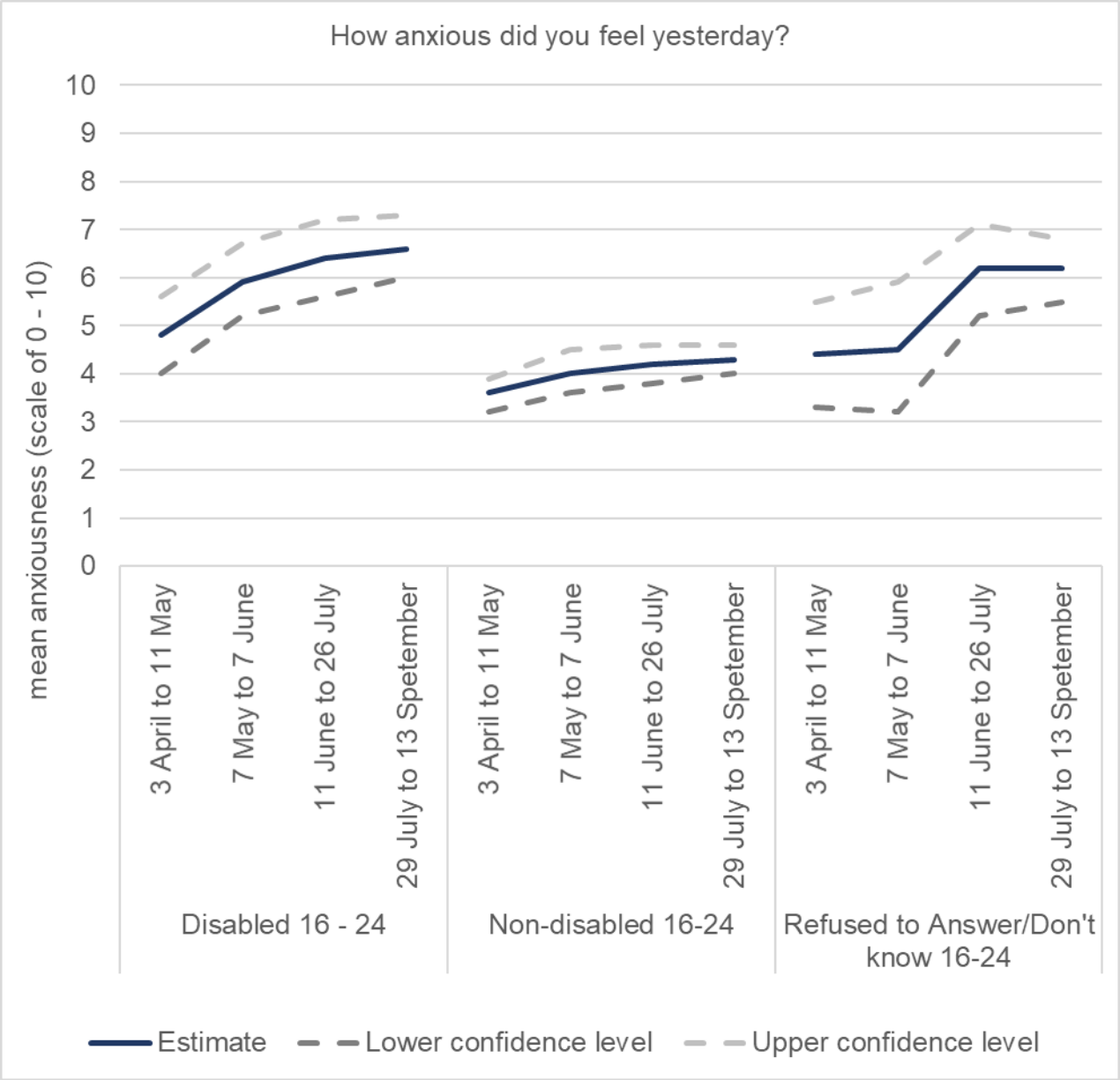


April to September 2020. Coverage: Great Britain. Source: ONS

Disability

Whereas reported life satisfaction and happiness for young disabled people has converged with non-disabled young people over the April to September period, anxiousness ratings have diverged. In April to May, disabled young people aged 16 to 24 rated their anxiousness as 4.8 out of 10 on average, compared to 3.6 amongst non-disabled young people. Reported anxiousness by disabled young people has risen month on month and in late July to September was 6.6 out of 10, a sizable difference to anxiousness amongst non-disabled young people (4.3 out of 10).

Figure 14: Anxiousness of young people aged 16 to 24 by disability



April to September 2020. Coverage: Great Britain. Source: ONS

Indicator: Psychological Wellbeing and functioning

This section reports data related to measures of children and young people's psychological wellbeing and functioning, including their own reports of whether they feel life is worthwhile, data from the Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (SWEMWBS) and the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ12), a measure of psychological distress.

Is life worthwhile?

For this measure we present:

- Summary for children and young people aged 10 to 17
- Summary for young people aged 16 to 24
    - Differences according to sex, disability and disadvantage

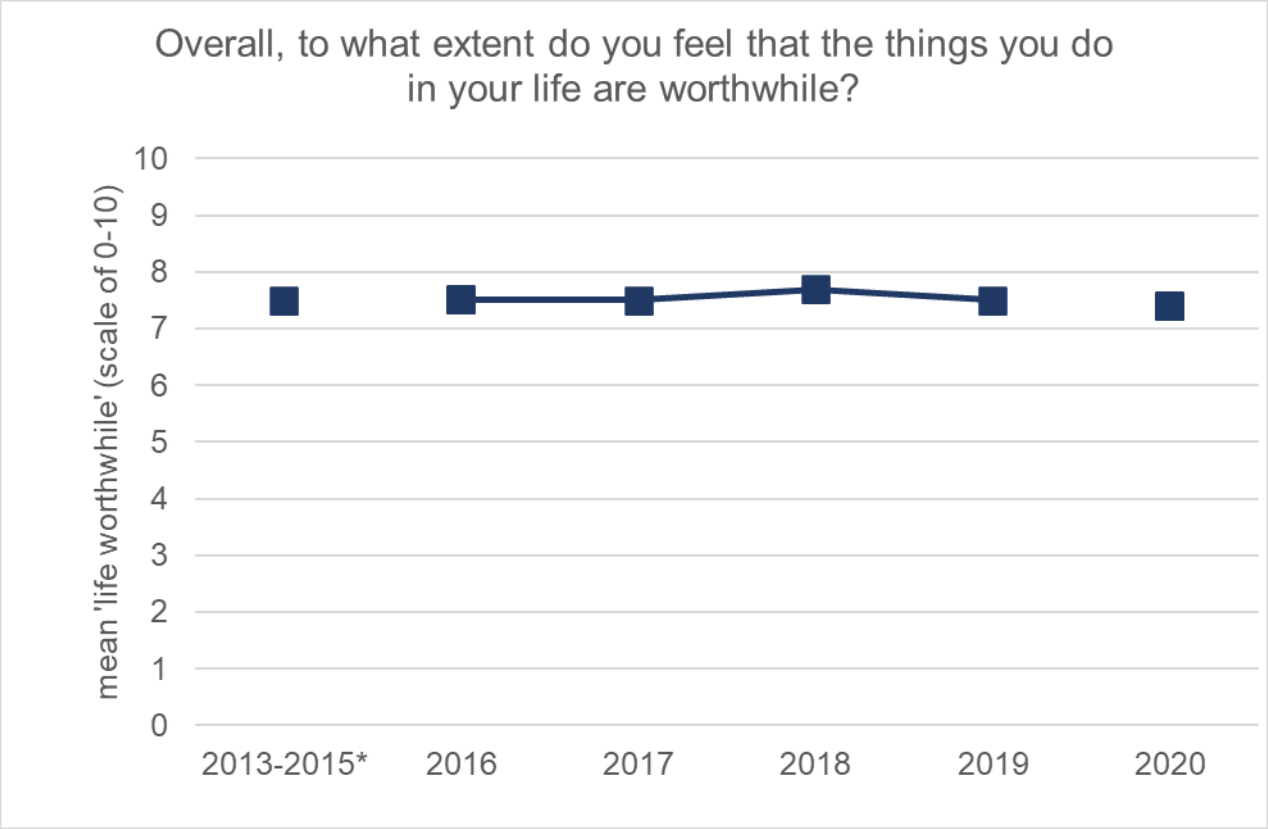
Secondary school aged children and young people

These indicators suggest that children and young people felt life was worthwhile, on the whole, during the early months of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The Children's Society found that, on average, children and young people rated the extent to which things they do in their life as worthwhile as 7.4 (out of 10). This is only very slightly lower than at the same time in recent years in Great Britain (ranging from 7.5 to 7.7 out of 10 from 2016[27]) (See Figure 15). (The Children's Society, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 & 2020b)

Again, while this average indicates that a large majority felt things in their life were worthwhile, individually, children and young people report a variety of views on this question, with 8.5% of children and young people scoring this below the midpoint of the 0-10 scale. This did not appear to have changed from previous years more than might have been expected due to normal fluctuations. (The Children's Society, 2020b)

[27] Please note, we cannot directly compare this year's data to previous years' due to a change in the geography covered and other changes in methodology. These comparisons are based on the descriptive data alone and not any statistical testing.

Figure 15: Things in life are worthwhile, children and young people aged 10 to 17.



Coverage: 2020 UK, 2013 – 2019 Great Britain, Note: discontinuity in time series, see 'Data sources and methods' annexe for further information. N=2,000. Source: Children's Society

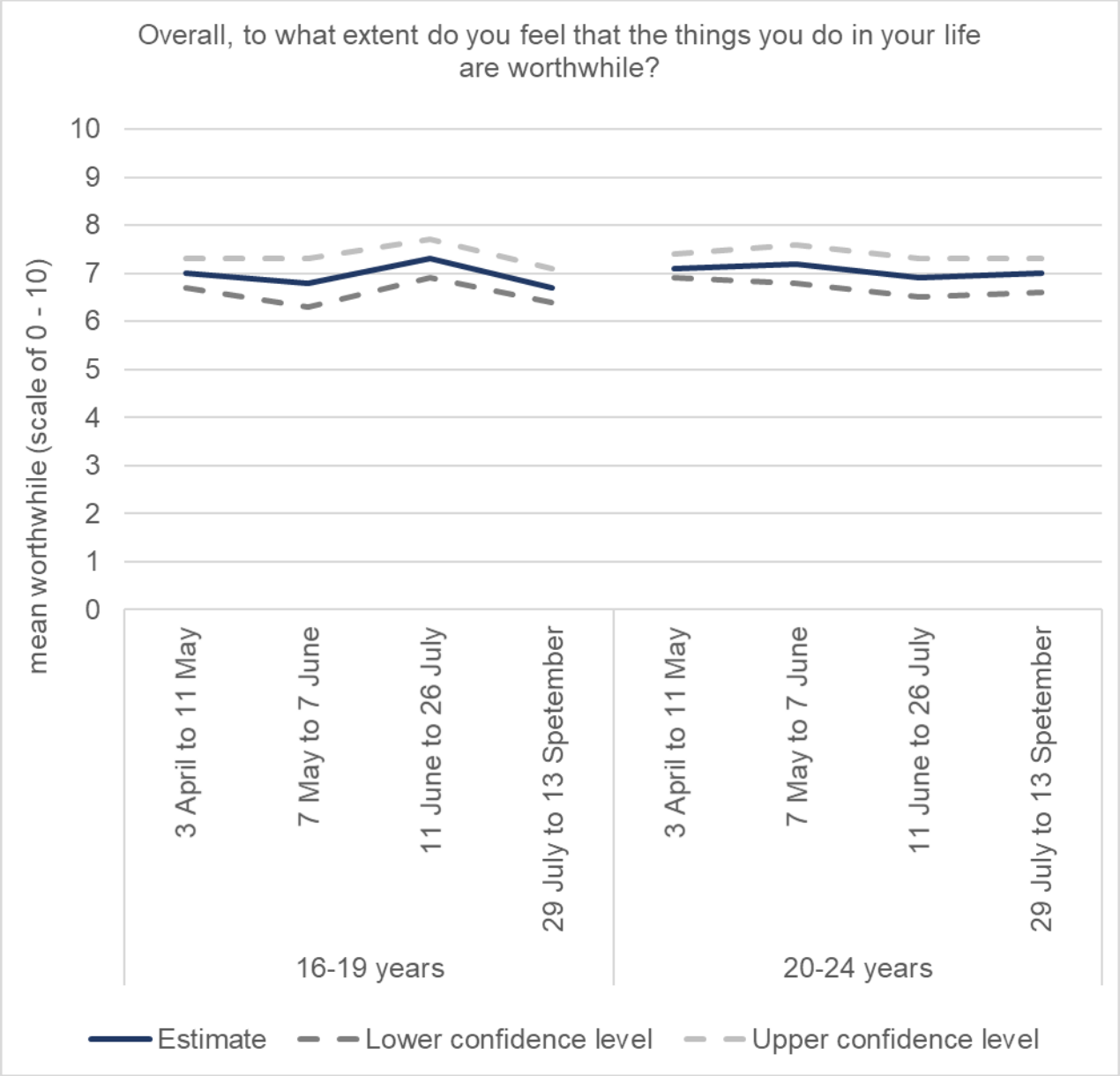
Young people over 16

The Office for National Statistics surveyed adults (over the age of 16) in the UK from early April 2020, finding that in April to early May 16 to 19 year olds rated how worthwhile things in life were as 7 (out of 10) on average and 20 to 24 year olds rated this as 7.1 (out of 10) on average. In late July to September, 16 to 19 year olds rated how worthwhile things in life were as 6.7 (out of 10) on average, and 20 to 24 year olds rated this as 7 (out of 10) on average (see Figure 16). (Office for National Statistics, 2020o) Evidence suggests that feelings about life are subdued compared to historic measures to 2017 (Office for National Statistics, 2018)[28], and that this has not changed between April and September 2020. There were no significant differences in levels of happiness seen

[28] The Office for National Statistic's latest assessment of young people's subjective wellbeing doesn't suggest a significant difference in feelings about how worthwhile things are in life in either the short or long term up to March 2020. However, a direct comparison between this measure reported since April 2020 and the most recent year's historic data (October 2017 to March 2020) hasn't been possible for this report due to differences in analysis and reporting.

between males and females in the 16 to 24 years age group, nor between those economically disadvantaged or those better off.

Figure 16: Things in life are worthwhile, young people aged 16 to 24

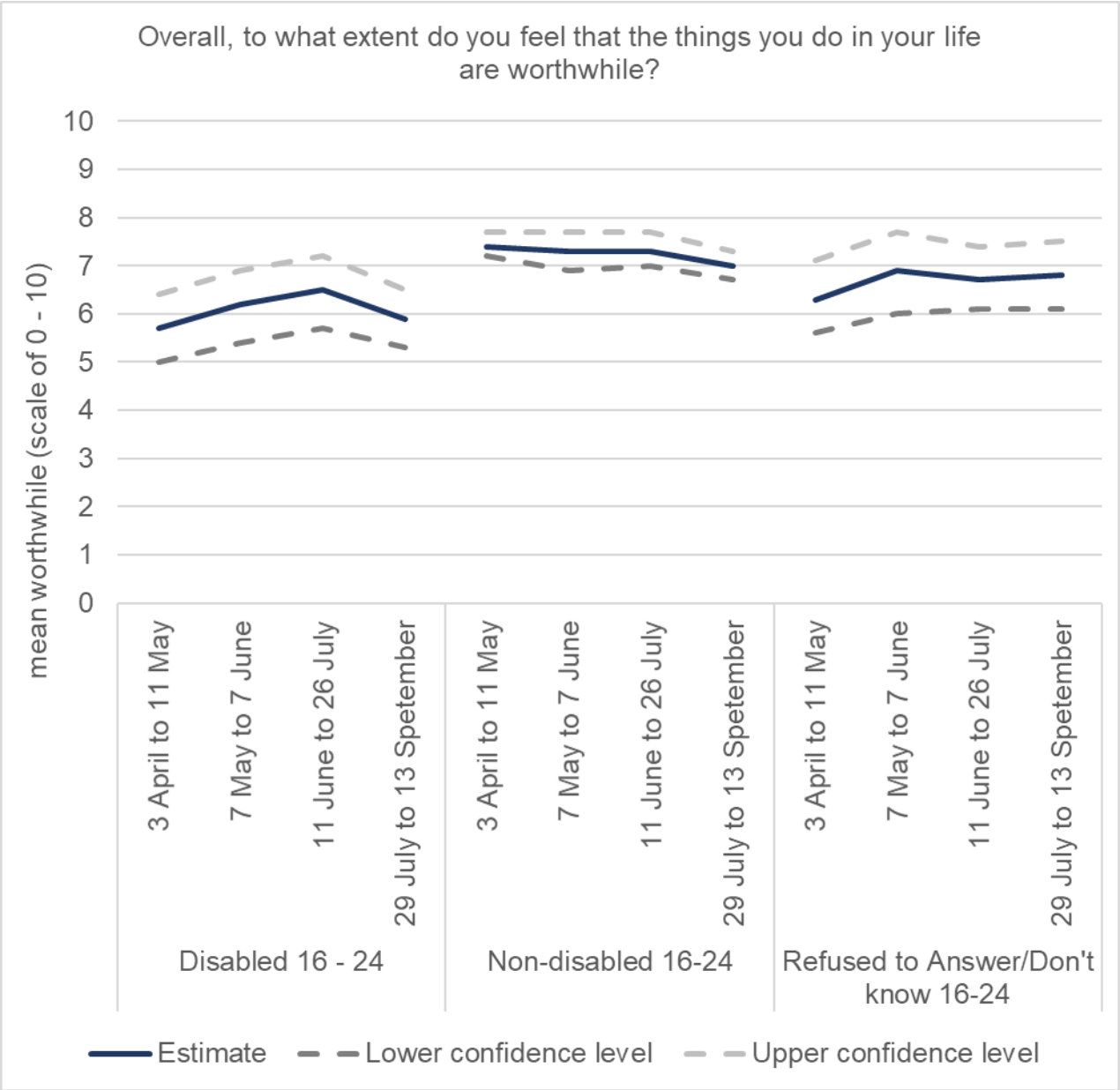


April to September 2020. Coverage: Great Britain. Source: ONS

Disability

On the whole, disabled young people rated how worthwhile the things they do in their life lower than non-disabled young people during this period. Young disabled people's ratings of how worthwhile the things they do in their life varied between 5.7 and 6.5, with no significant differences between earlier and later ratings. Non-disabled young people rated how worthwhile the things they do in their life between 7 and 7.5 out of 10.

Figure 17: Things in life are worthwhile, young people aged 16 to 24 by disability



April to September 2020. Coverage: Great Britain. Source: ONS

Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale

For this measure we present:

- Summary for school aged children
    - Differences according to sex, special educational needs and disadvantage

School aged children and young people

ImpactEd's regular survey of school aged children (age 6 to 18) found that overall, pupils surveyed had an average psychological wellbeing score of between 3.1 and 3.4 (out of 5) throughout the May to July 2020 period of data collection[29]. Comparisons of data from this group with benchmarks from before the pandemic show similar levels of wellbeing. (ImpactEd, 2020) While this survey was not of a randomly selected sample of children and young people, and therefore should be treated with some caution, the survey did reach a large and broadly representative sample through schools, with over 11,000 pupils including over 1,700 pupils eligible for the pupil premium taking part.[30]

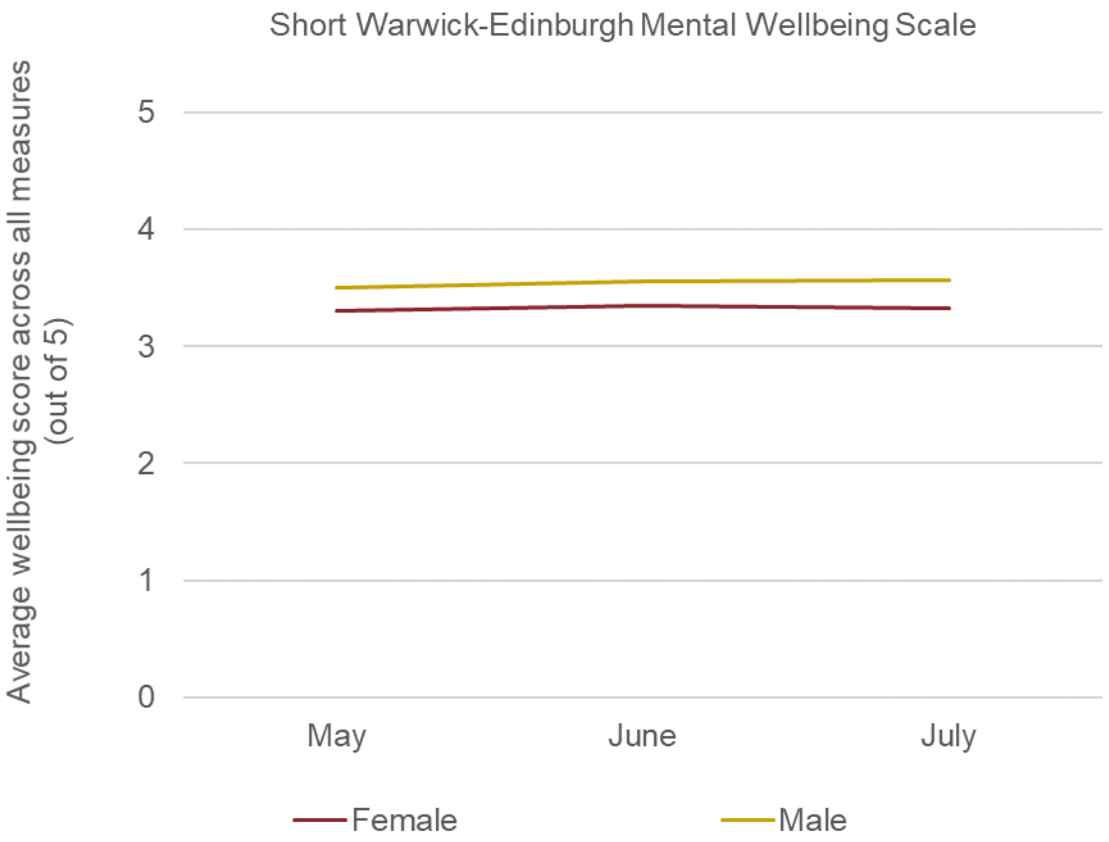
[29] SWEMWBS scores from the ImpactEd research are reported as an average across the 7 measures of wellbeing. Scores are on a scale of 0 to 5 with 0 demonstrating the lowest possible reported wellbeing and 5 the highest.

[30] Although not directly comparable with the 'Mental Health of Children and Young People in England' survey, when analysed according to the method used in that survey, SWEMWBS scores for the ImpactEd sample (aged 8 to 18) were very similar to the national survey (aged 11 to 16), with average scores of 24.1 in July 2020. (ImpactEd, 2020)

Sex

ImpactEd found that male children surveyed reported better psychological wellbeing than female children surveyed – male monthly average wellbeing score varied between 3.50 and 3.57 (out of 5) during May to July 2020, whilst females varied between 3.30 and 3.34.

Figure 18: Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale, non-representative sample of children and young people aged 8 to 18. Sex breakdown.



Disadvantage

ImpactEd's survey found that surveyed children eligible for the Pupil Premium[31] reported slightly lower psychological wellbeing than other surveyed children, with their monthly average wellbeing score varying between 3.29 and 3.36 (out of 5) during May to July 2020, compared to average scores for all pupils which varied between 3.41 and 3.44 (out of 5) over the same time period.

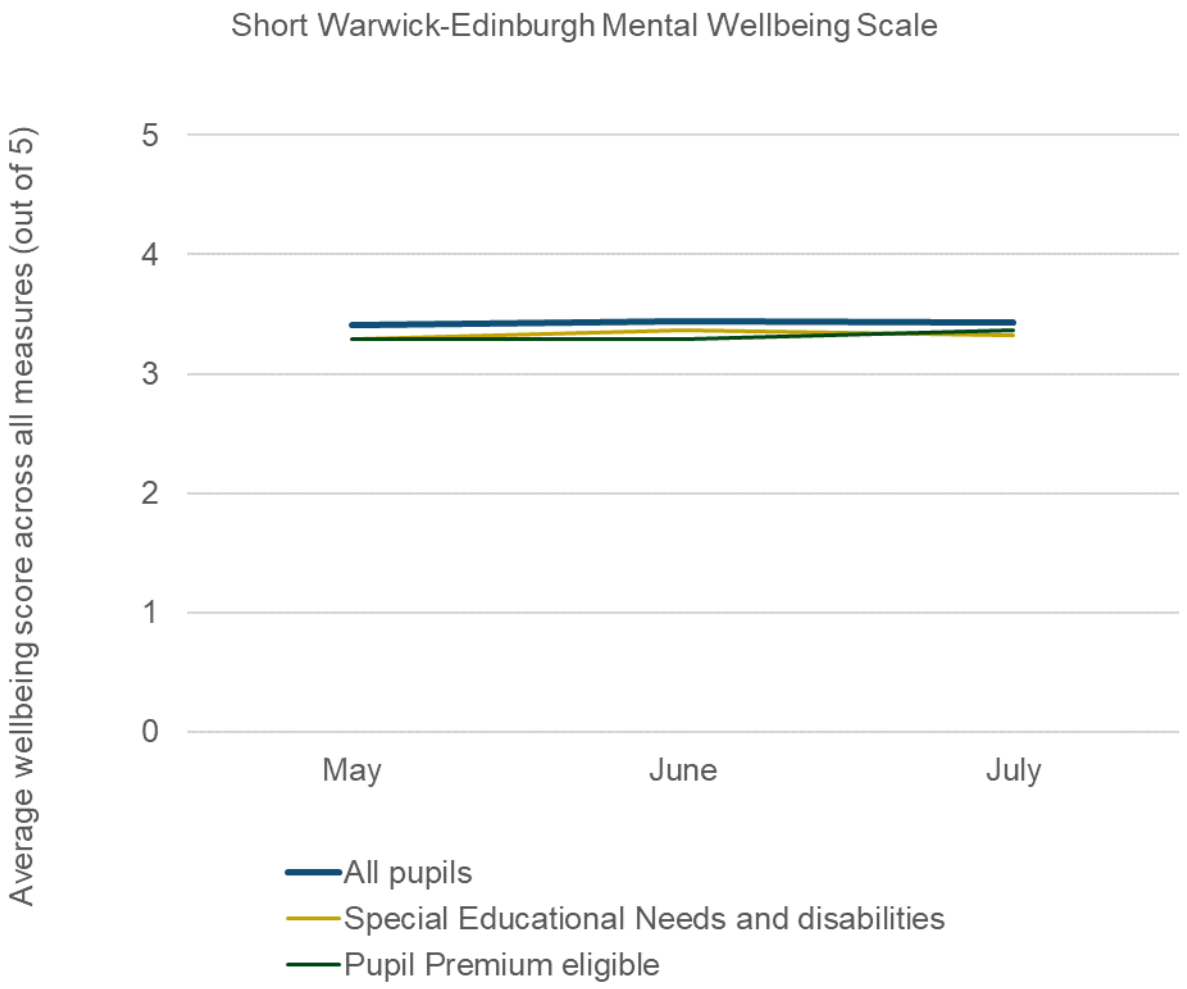
Special Educational Needs and disabilities

ImpactEd also found that surveyed children with Special Educational Needs and disabilities reported slightly lower psychological wellbeing than other surveyed

[31] Children who were eligible for Free School Meals at any point in the last 6 years or who were Looked After Children at any time.

children, with their monthly average wellbeing score varying between 3.29 and 3.37 (out of 5) during May to July 2020, compared to average scores for all pupils which varied between 3.41 and 3.44 (out of 5) over the same time period.

Figure 19: Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale, non-representative sample of children and young people aged 8 to 18. SEN and PP breakdown.



May to July 2020. Coverage, UK. Source: ImpactEd

General Health Questionnaire

For this measure we present:

- Summary for young people aged 16 to 24
    - Differences according to sex

Young people over 16

Analysis by the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) of psychological distress[32] measures collected prior to and during the coronavirus (COVID-19) lockdown by the UK Household Longitudinal Study shows that for young adults' (aged 16 to 24) psychological wellbeing had deteriorated more than any other adult age group. In April 2020, young females aged 16 to 24 had an average psychological distress score of 16, compared to an average score of 13 for this group in the most recent baseline for this age group[33]. Young males aged 16 to 24 also show increased psychological distress measuring 14 on average compared to the most recent average baseline for this group of 11. There are also indications that the deterioration for young adults may be spread across a wider range of dimensions of psychological distress than for older adults. (Banks, J. & Xu, X., 2020)

Notes on evidence gaps

At this time, there are some clear evidence gaps on the subjective wellbeing of different groups of children, and children living in particular circumstances.

More detailed evidence is anticipated on children and young people's psychological wellbeing through sources such as the Mental Health of Children and Young People survey from NHS Digital and the UK Household Longitudinal Study.

We were not able to include any evidence on the wellbeing of young people with LGBT identities, as none of the more robust data sources had included these identities in their research. Evidence on children and young people from ethnic minorities and vulnerable or Looked After Children and young people is also limited or not included, as possible sources of data had not reached sufficient numbers of young people with these characteristics.

While there is a shortage of evidence about children's subjective wellbeing under the age of ten. This is not unusual, as direct surveys of children of this age about their wellbeing are rare owing to difficulties in creating methodologies which are adapted to young children and the balance to be struck between avoiding the risk harm though posing difficult questions to them with the benefits of understanding children's experiences. (Morrow, V. & Richards, M., 1996)

[32] General Health Questionnaire-12 items
[33] In this measure a higher score denotes higher levels of psychological distress, on a scale of 0-36

Domain 2: Mental and Physical Health

Summary

Children and young people's health, both physical and mental, is an important dimension of their wellbeing. In general, children are not individually at high risk from coronavirus (COVID-19) directly (Swann, O.V. et al., 2020). However, as the most prominent social issue of this time, the pandemic is an important issue in children and young people's lives. Research demonstrates a link between physical health and wellbeing and/or mental health (Eime, R.M. et al., 2013, Riddoch, C.J. et al., 2007). Literature on previous pandemics and major events (for example, Sprang, G. & Silman, M., 2013) suggests that there may be some mental health impacts from the indirect effects of coronavirus (COVID-19), for example, parental illness or bereavement, and any longer term disruption to life, but conclusive data on these experiences and impacts are not yet available.

Key findings:

- Children and young people have been worried about the coronavirus (COVID-19), particularly the potential that friends or family could catch the virus. Other relatively common worries about the disease and its consequences are of catching the disease themselves and missing school.
- On the whole children are happy with their own health, though about one in every fifteen children have low happiness with their health.
- Access to NHS mental health services has been maintained for many children and young people, and although referrals to mental health services were low in April and May 2020, an increase was seen in June in line with the easing of restrictions.
- There are indications that, during the lockdown, some children have had increased difficulty with behaviour and restlessness or attention. Evidence on increased anxiety during this time is mixed with different studies finding that anxiety was at normal levels or that it was elevated.

Indicator: Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic Anxiety Scale

This indicator reports data from a newly created and validated scale of pandemic related anxiety (McElroy, E. et al., 2020) – it provides a measure of how worried a person is about the pandemic, both in relation to the disease itself and in relation to the consequences of the disease. Results are also presented as responses to the individual questions included in the scale, where this allows us to provide information about children for whom a full validated scale is not published. The Pandemic Anxiety Score (PAS) is a combination of seven self-report items, each of which was rated on a 5-point

Likert scale ranging from 0 (‘Strongly disagree’) to 4 (‘Strongly agree’), total scores range between 0 and 28.

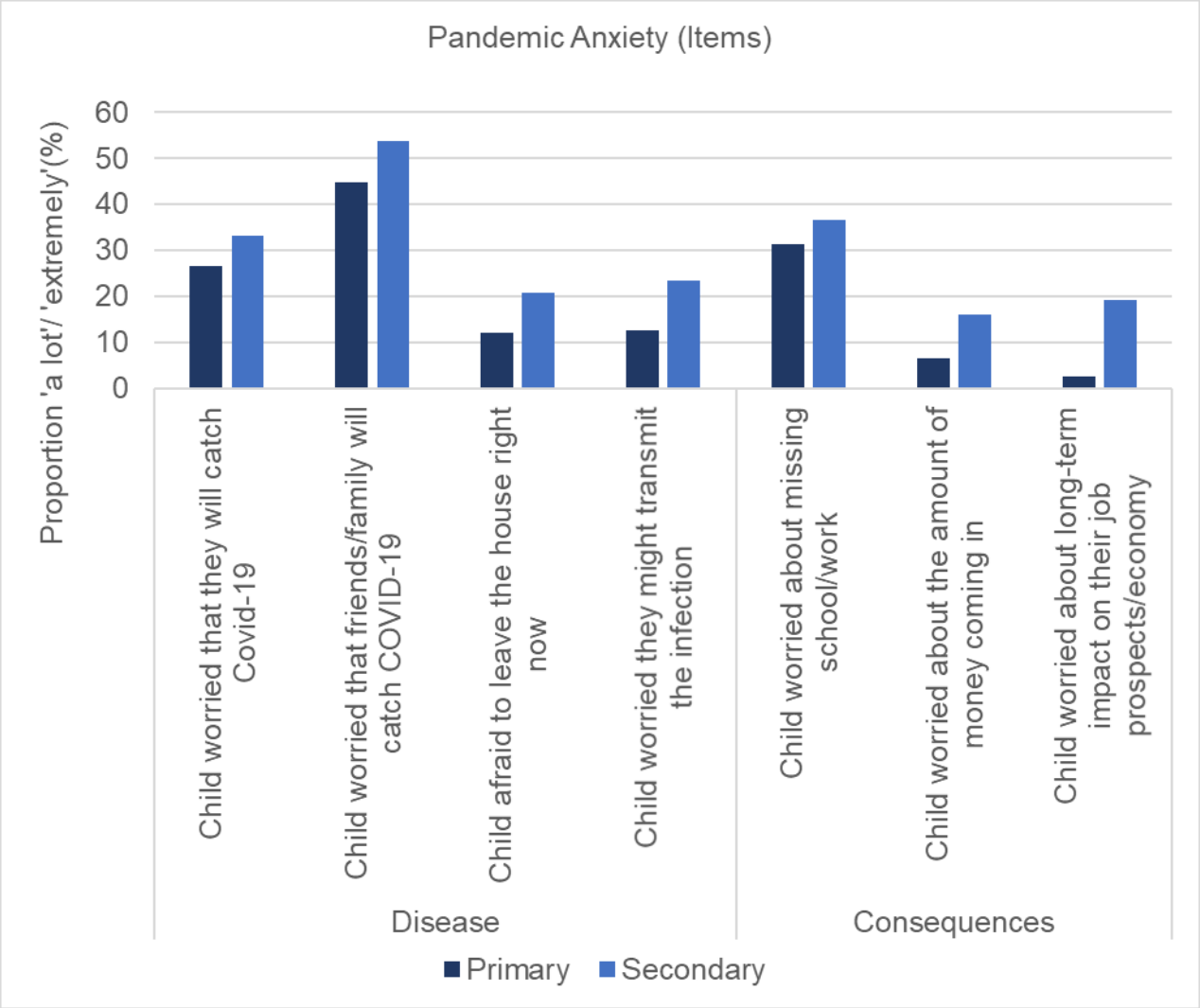
For this measure we present:

- Summary for school aged children and young people
- Summary for secondary school aged children and young people

All school aged children and young people

Evidence from the Co-SPACE study suggests that, in March to May 2020, children were most worried about the possibility that their friends or family would catch coronavirus (COVID-19) followed by worries about missing school. Over half of the surveyed parents of secondary school aged children (54%), and almost half of the surveyed parents of primary school aged children (45%), reported that their children were worried about friends/family catching COVID-19 ‘a lot’ or ‘extremely’. Around a third of surveyed parents of secondary school aged children (37%) and primary school aged children (31%) reported that their children were worried about missing school. Surveyed parents reported that their children were slightly less worried about catching the virus themselves, (33% of secondary school aged children and 27% of primary school aged children) and other recorded worries also affect a smaller proportion of children. Across all recorded pandemic worries, primary school aged children were reported to be less worried than secondary school aged children. (Pearcey, S. et al. 2020c)

Figure 20: Pandemic anxiety, primary and secondary school aged children

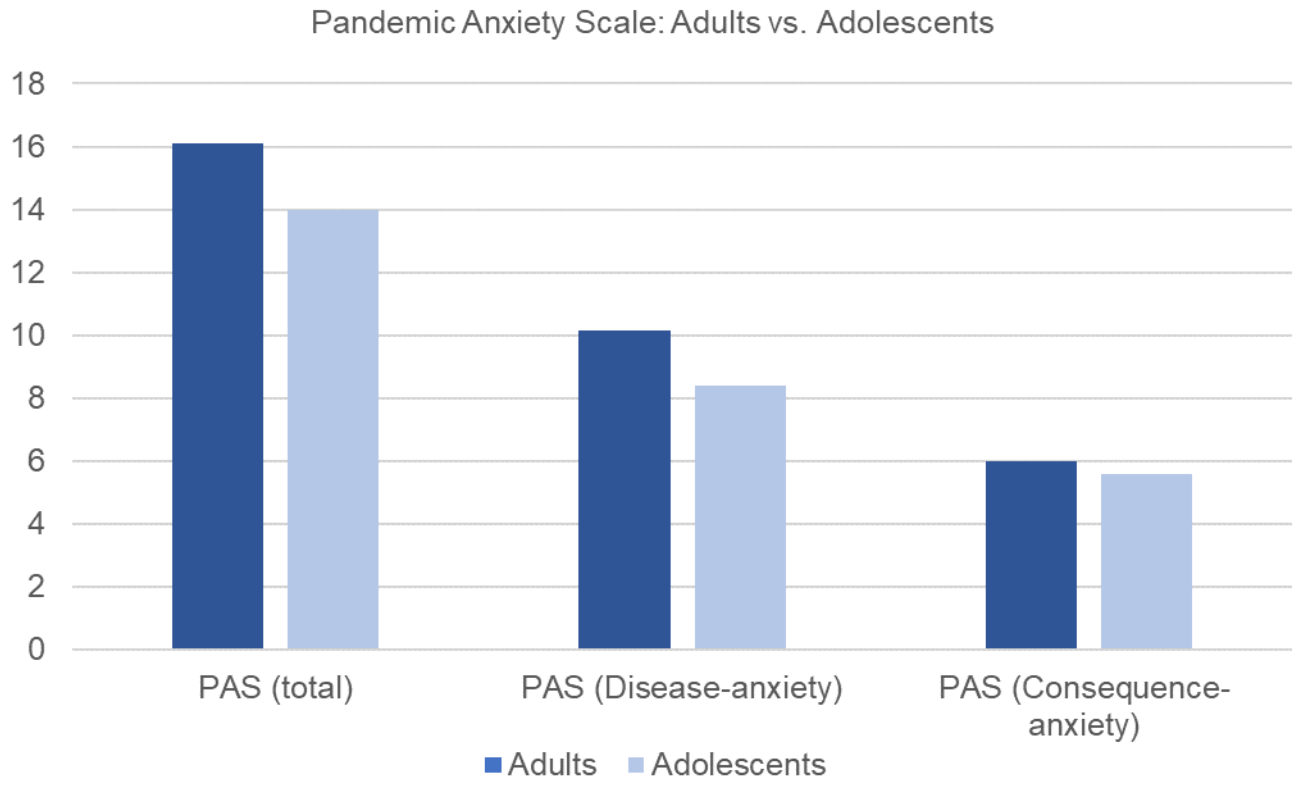


End March to end May 2020. Coverage: UK. Source: Co-SPACE.

Secondary school aged children and young people

Adolescents, aged 11 to 17, surveyed were lower on the pandemic anxiety scale (PAS) compared to adults. This difference was driven more by disease anxiety (e.g., catching transmitting the virus) rather than consequence anxiety (e.g., impact on economic prospects). (McElroy, E. et al., 2020)

Figure 21: Pandemic anxiety in Adults and Adolescents



End March to end April 2020. Coverage: UK. Source: McElroy, E. et al., 2020

Indicator: General health

For this measure we present:

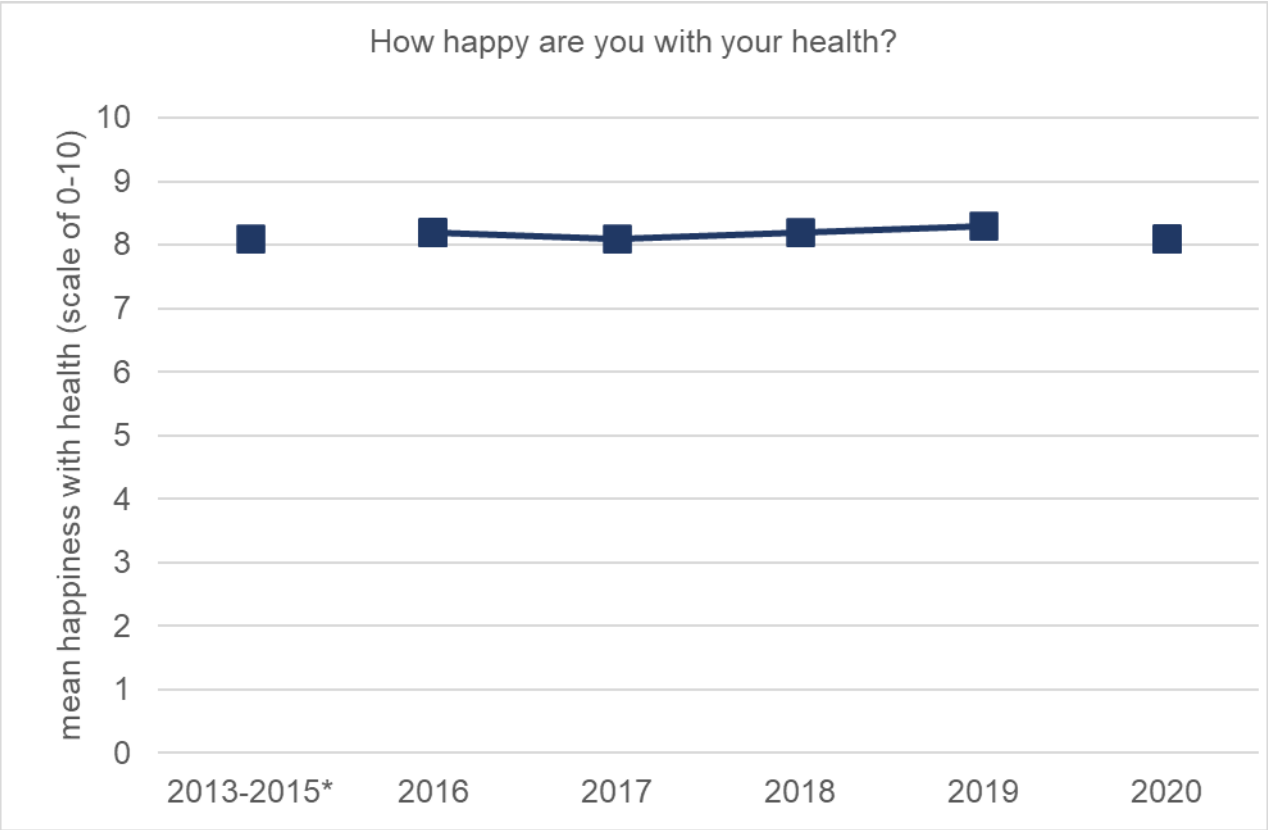
- Summary for secondary school aged children and young people

Secondary school aged children and young people

Despite the ongoing pandemic, children and young people have reported that their health is, on average, very good. The Children's Society surveyed children and young people in the UK from April to June 2020, the peak of restrictions during the initial stages of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in the UK. On average, they found that children and young people's self-assessed happiness with their health (at 8.1 out of 10), was within

the same range as at the same time in recent years in Great Britain (ranging from 8.1 to 8.3 out of 10 from 2016[34]) (See Figure 22). Overall, health is one of the areas of life which children and young people are happiest with. However, poor health is a problem for some children and 6.8% of children reported low happiness with their health. (The Children's Society, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 & 2020b)

Figure 22: Happiness with health in children aged 10 to 17.



Coverage: 2020 UK, 2013 – 2019 Great Britain, Note: discontinuity in time series, see 'Data sources and methods' annexe for further information. N=2,000. Source: Children's Society

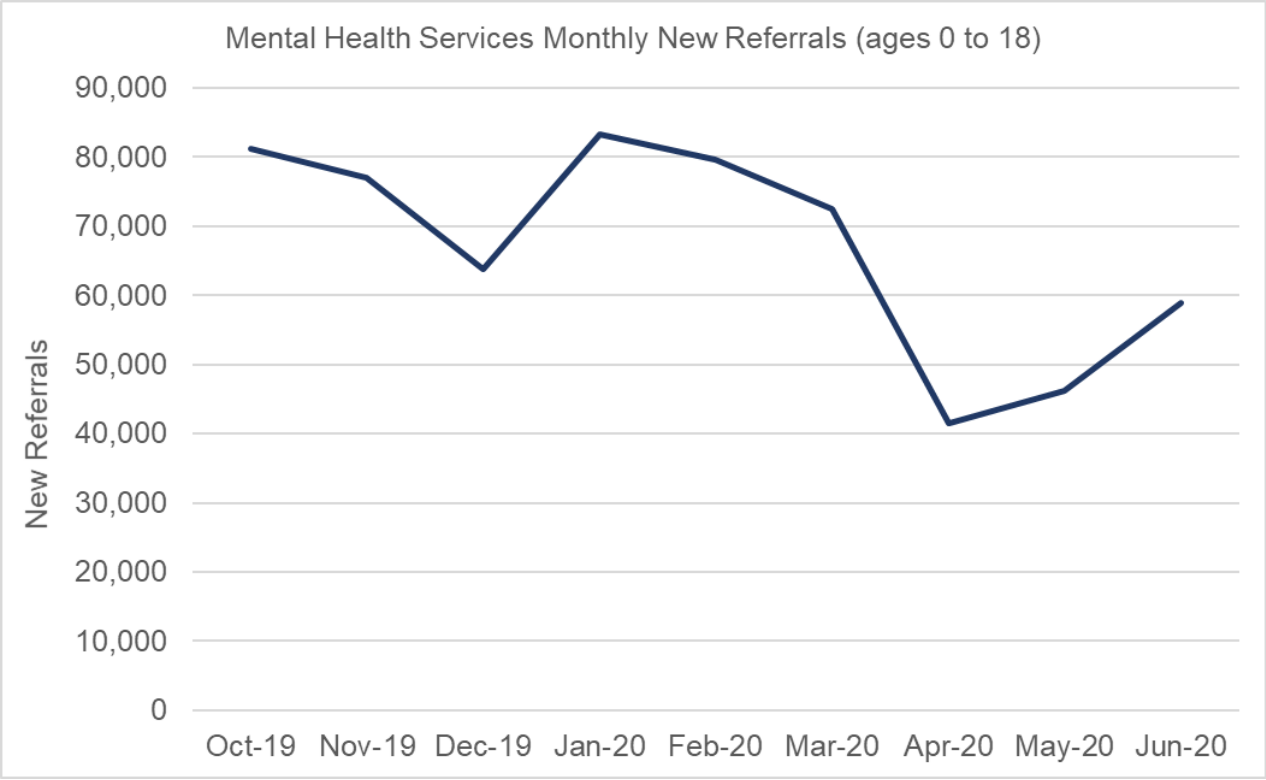
Indicator: Access to Mental Health Services

Data on new referrals to NHS mental health, learning disability and autism services for young people aged 0 to 18 (Figure 23), shows a large reduction in referrals in April and May 2020, with referrals at just over half the typical level in recent months. A similar, though smaller, reduction in referrals can be seen in December, reflecting lower referrals over the Christmas holiday period. An increase in the number of referrals is seen in June,

[34] Please note, we cannot directly compare this year's data to previous years' due to a change in the geography covered and other changes in methodology. These comparisons are based on the descriptive data alone and not any statistical testing.

in line with the easing of the restrictions in movement owing to the pandemic. (NHS Digital, 2020)

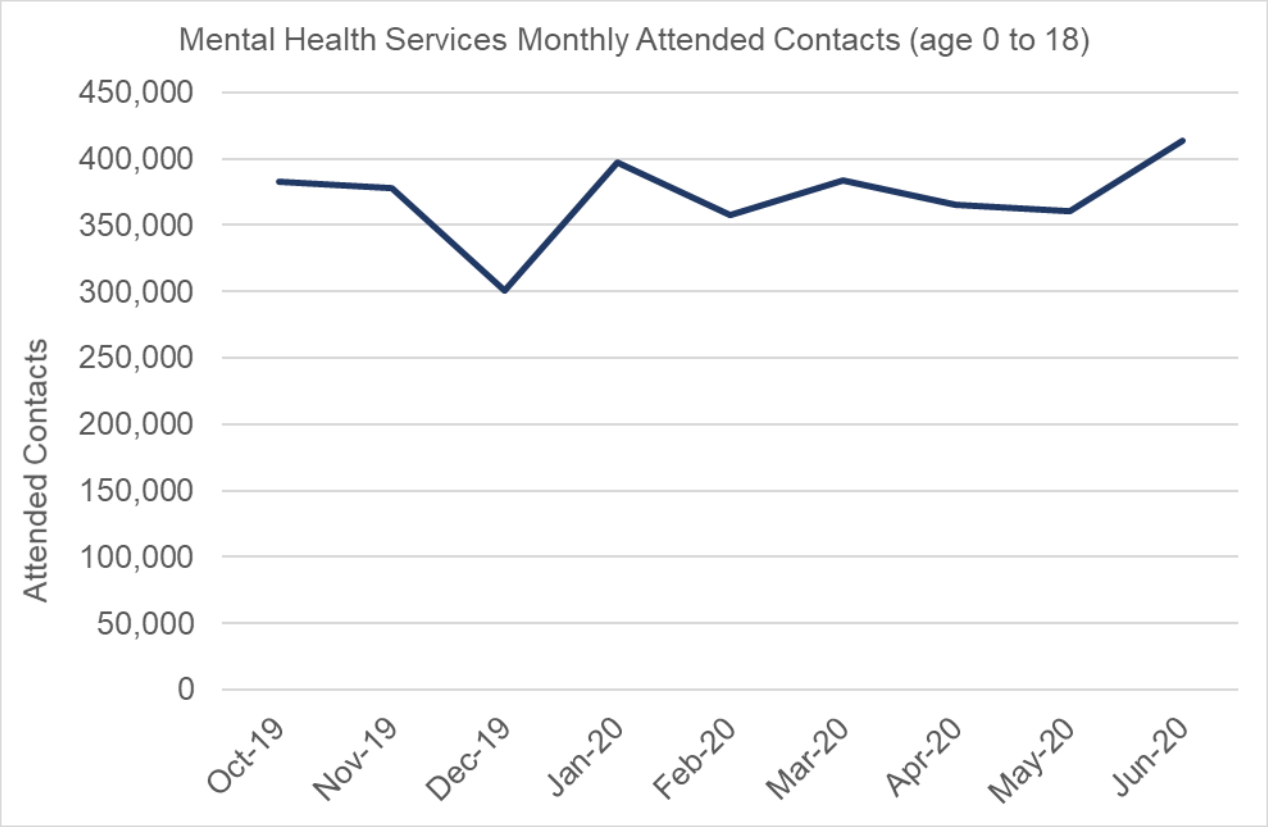
Figure 23: Mental Health Services monthly data - referrals, children and young people aged 0 to 18 years



October 2019 to June 2020. Coverage: England. Source: Monthly Mental Health Services Dataset publication, NHS Digital

Compared to new referrals, the number of 'attended contacts' with mental health, learning disability and autism services (See Figure 24) shows a proportionately much smaller decrease in April and May. By June, the number of attended contacts had increased to above levels seen prior to the pandemic. The smaller reduction in attended contacts indicates that while there were significant reductions in new referrals and face to face contacts, services increased contacts with children and young people that were already referred and were newly referred.

Figure 24: Mental Health Services monthly performance data - contacts, children and young people aged 0 to 18 years



October 2019 to June 2020. Coverage: England. Source: Monthly Mental Health Services Dataset publication, NHS Digital

Indicator: Mental ill-health

This section reports on a range of measures of children and young people's mental ill-health, as measured by validated scales: Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire, and measures of anxiety: HADS, GAD-2 and GAD-7. These scales cannot diagnose mental health disorders but can be used to indicate potential difficulties.

Strengths and difficulties

The 'Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire'[35] includes 25 questions on different aspects of behaviour, related to emotional problems, conduct problems, hyperactivity/ inattention (restlessness), peer relationship problems and positive prosocial behaviour. The responses can be viewed together to assess a person's total difficulties, or separately to look at particular problems.

[35] Information on the Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire can be found at https://www.sdqinfo.org/

For this measure we present:

- Summary for school aged children
    - Differences according to school phase, sex, special educational needs, pre-existing mental health conditions and disadvantage

All school aged children and young people

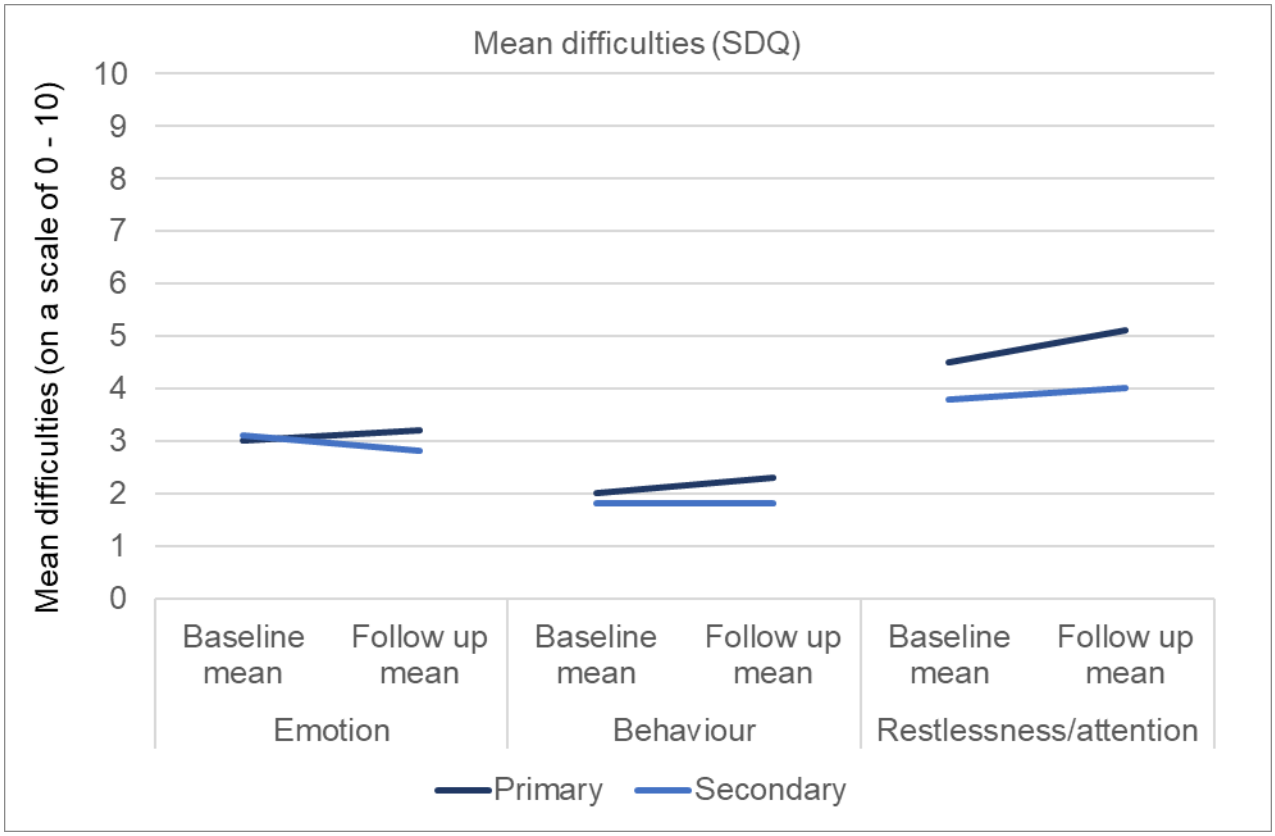
The Co-SPACE study surveyed a large, if un-representative, sample of 2,890 parents twice in March to June 2020[36]. Parents were asked to complete the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire in relation to their child and Co-SPACE have reported back on differences in SDQ scores between particular groups across the course of the month between baseline and follow-up.

Age - Primary and Secondary aged children and young people

After taking into account the effects of sex, ethnicity, household income (above/below £16,000 p.a.), and parental employment status, surveyed parents of primary school aged children generally reported more difficulties with emotion (though only in the follow up mean), behaviour, and restlessness/attention than surveyed parents of secondary school pupils. Mean levels of difficulties in all categories increased between the baseline mean and the follow up mean, except emotion for secondary school pupils which decreased and behaviour for secondary school pupils which remained the same. (see Figure 25). (Pearcey S et al, 2020d)

[36] An individual baseline date when the parent first completed the survey any time between the end of March and end of May 2020, with follow-up one month later.

Figure 25: Emotion, behaviour and restlessness/attention difficulties by Age (Primary vs. Secondary), children from 5 to 16 (non-representative).

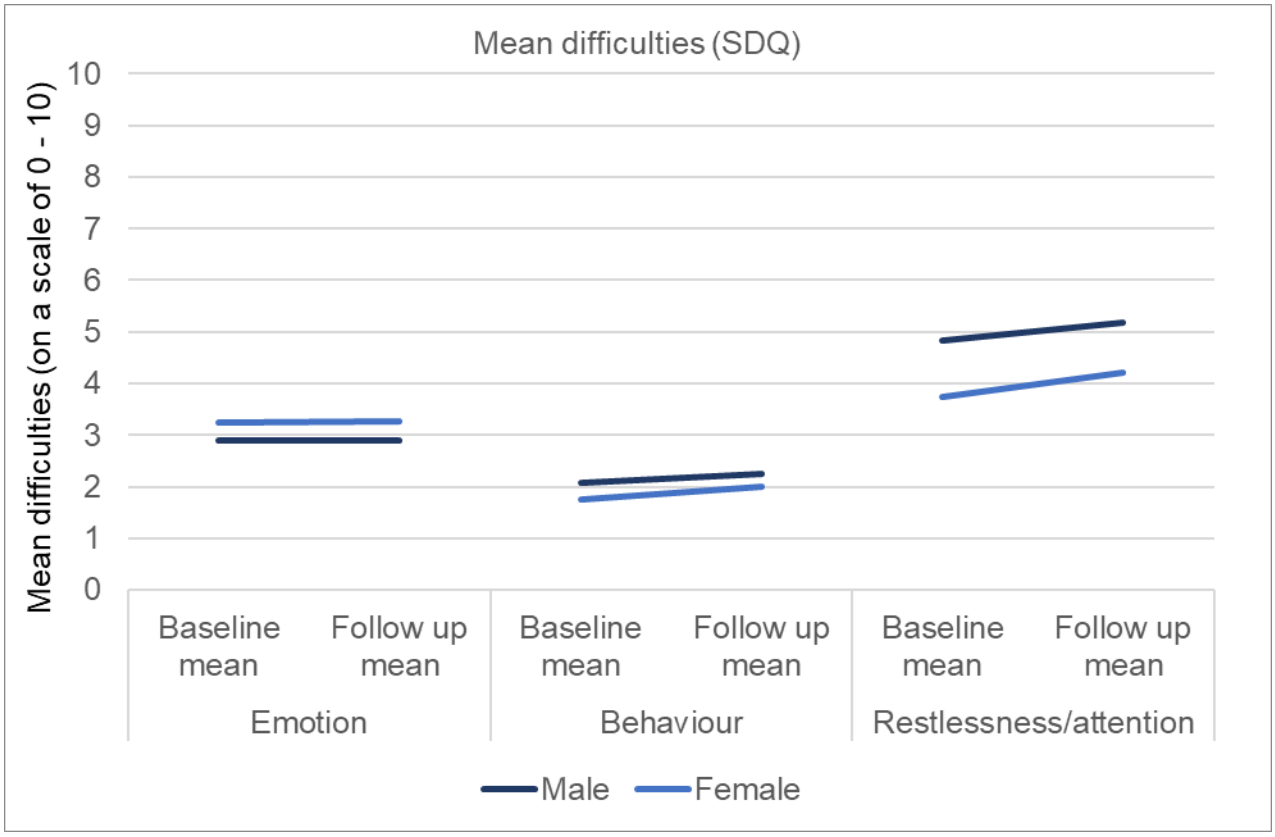


March to June 2020. Coverage: UK. Source: Co-SPACE

Sex

Surveyed parents generally reported more difficulties with emotion for their female children and young people (though by a very small margin), than surveyed parents of male children and young people. Surveyed parents of male children and young people reported more restlessness and attention difficulties than parents of female children and young people. Parents of children and young people from both sexes reported similar slight increases in behaviour and restlessness/attention difficulties between baseline and follow up, though emotional difficulties remained fairly stable across both sexes. (see Figure 26). (Pearcey S et al, 2020b)

Figure 26: Emotion, behaviour and restlessness/attention difficulties by sex, children from 5 to 16 (non-representative)



March to June 2020. Coverage: UK. Source: Co-SPACE

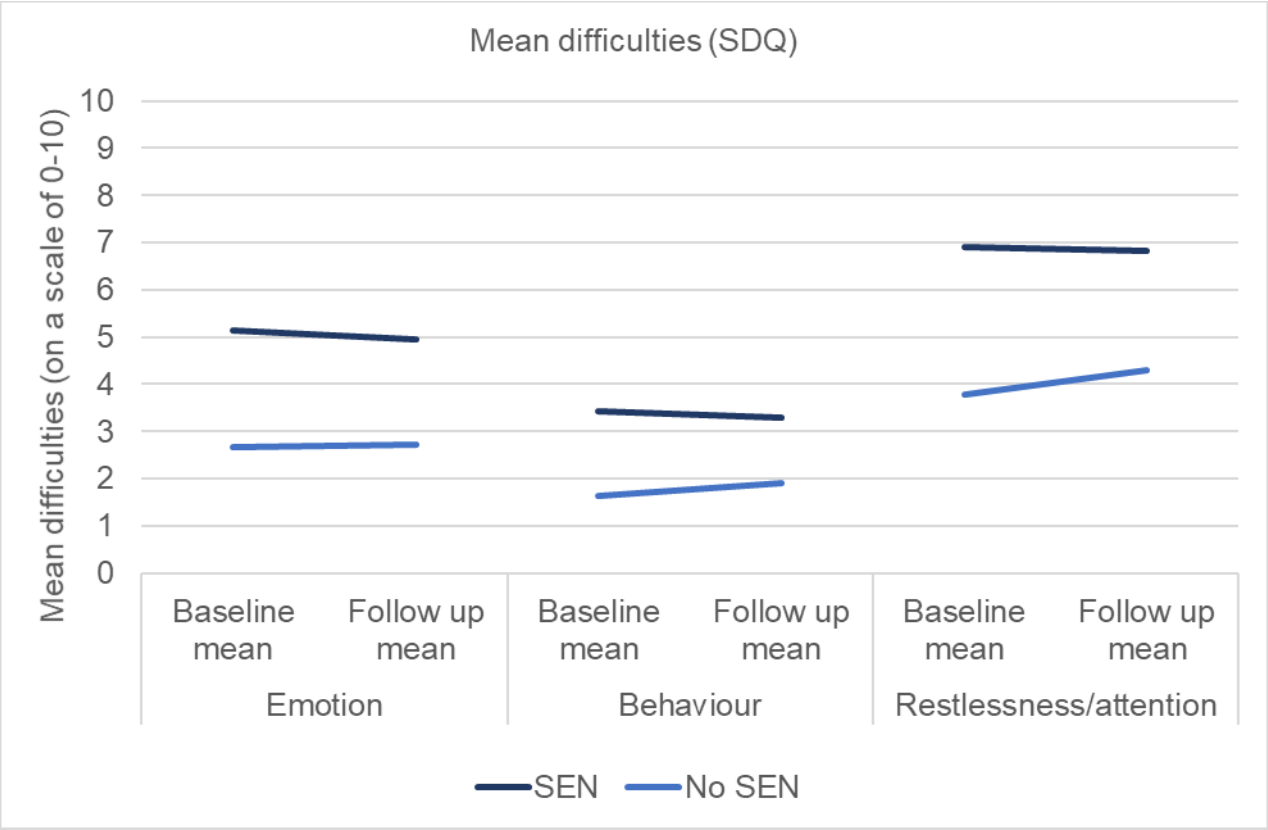
Special Educational Needs

Surveyed parents of children and young people with Special Educational Needs (SEN) (parent report) generally reported that their children had more difficulties with emotion, behaviour and restlessness/attention than surveyed parents of children and young people without SEN[37]. Surveyed parents of children and young people with SEN reported, on average, that their children's emotional problems

[37] Because we do not have pre-pandemic data we do not know if this is a new difference, or a continuation of an existing one.

had eased somewhat between baseline and the one month follow up. While children with SEN's reported difficulties in behaviour and restlessness/attention were stable, children without SEN were, on average, reported to have increased difficulties in behaviour and restlessness/attention (see Figure 27). (Pearcey S et al, 2020b).

Figure 27: Emotion, behaviour and restlessness/attention difficulties by Special Educational Needs (SEN), children from 5 to 16 (non-representative)

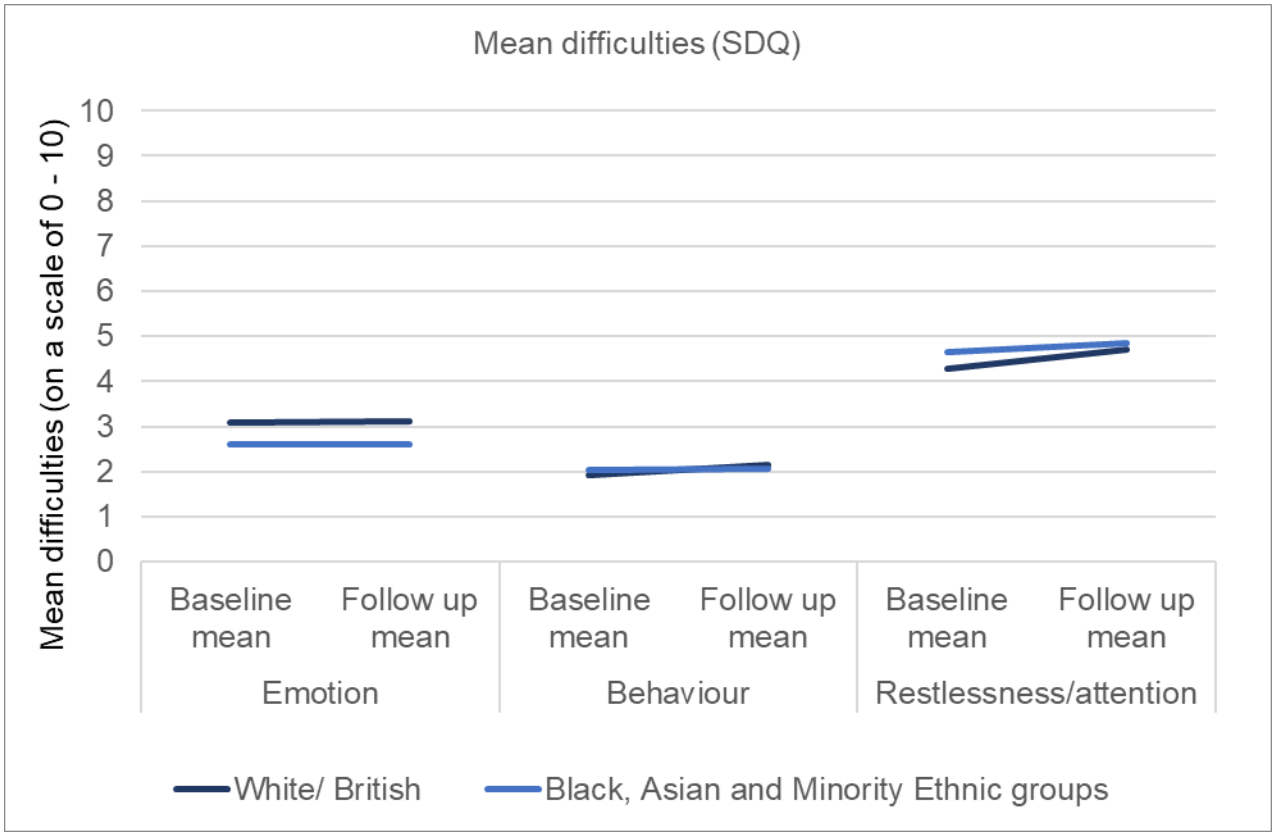


March to June 2020. Coverage: UK. Source: Co-SPACE

Ethnicity

Surveyed parents of White/British pupils generally reported more difficulties with emotions than surveyed people who are of another ethnicity, though this finding should be treated with some caution because of the relatively small proportion of families from ethnic minority backgrounds participating in the research. On average, children saw similar increases between the baseline mean and the follow up mean for behaviour and restlessness/attention regardless of ethnic group[38]. (see Figure 28). (Pearcey S et al, 2020b).

Figure 28: Emotion, behaviour and restlessness/attention difficulties by broad ethnic group, children from 5 to 16 (non-representative)



March to June 2020. Coverage: UK. Source: Co-SPACE

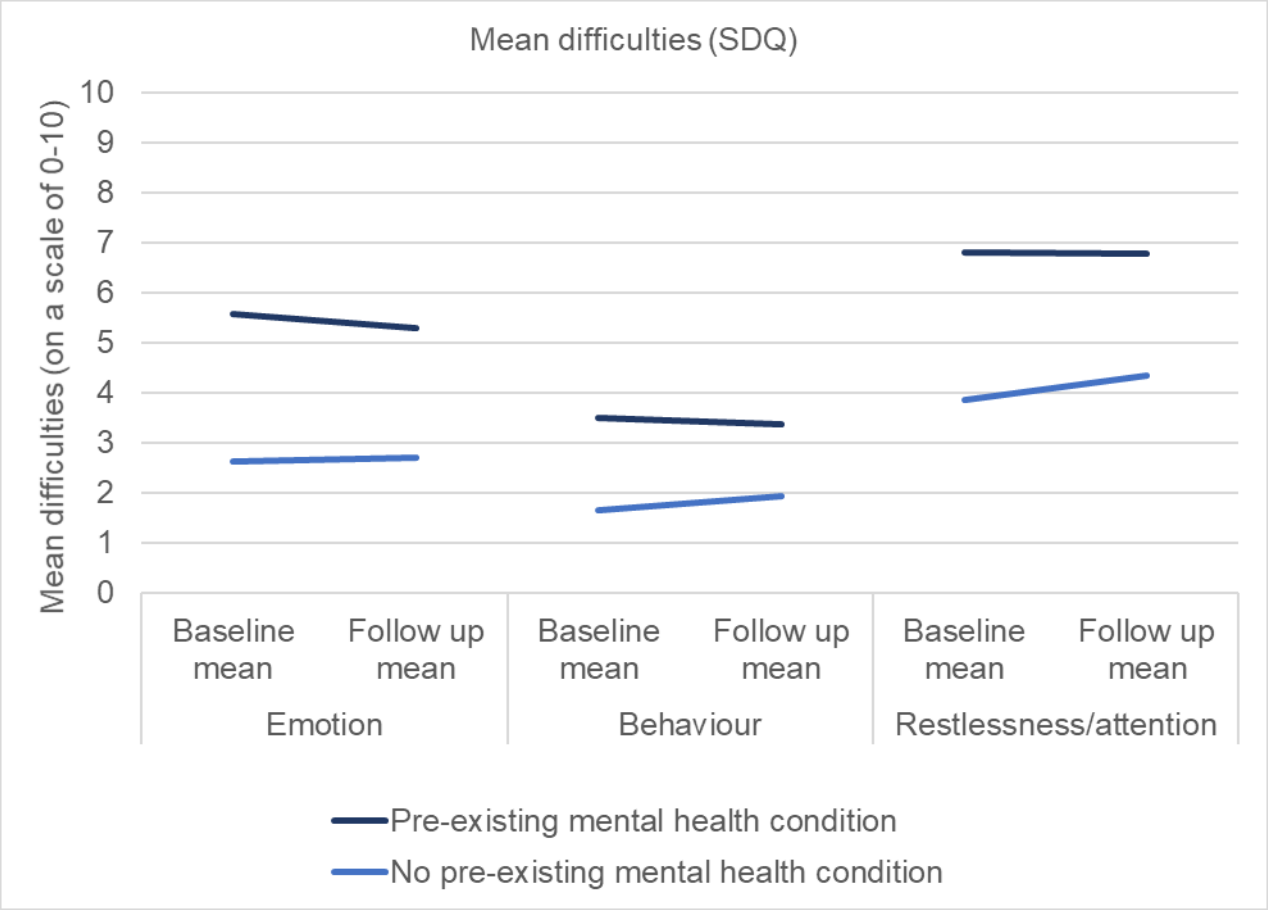
Pre-existing Mental Health condition

Surveyed parents of children and young people with pre-existing mental health conditions generally reported that their children had more difficulties with emotion, behaviour, and restlessness/attention than surveyed parents of children and

[38] Owing to the relatively small sample of children and young people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds, all children and young people from any Black, Asian and minority ethnic group are analysed as a single group

young people with no pre-existing mental health conditions[39]. Between the baseline score and a follow up survey one month later, surveyed parents of children and young people with pre-existing mental health conditions reported, on average, that their children's emotional problems had eased somewhat. Between baseline and the one month follow up, while children with pre-existing mental health conditions reported difficulties in behaviour and restlessness/attention were stable, children with no pre-existing mental health conditions were, on average, reported to have increased difficulties in behaviour and restlessness/attention (see Figure 29). (Pearcey S et al, 2020b)

Figure 29: Emotion, behaviour and restlessness/attention difficulties by pre-existing mental health condition, children from 5 to 16 (non-representative)



March to June 2020. Coverage: UK. Source: Co-SPACE

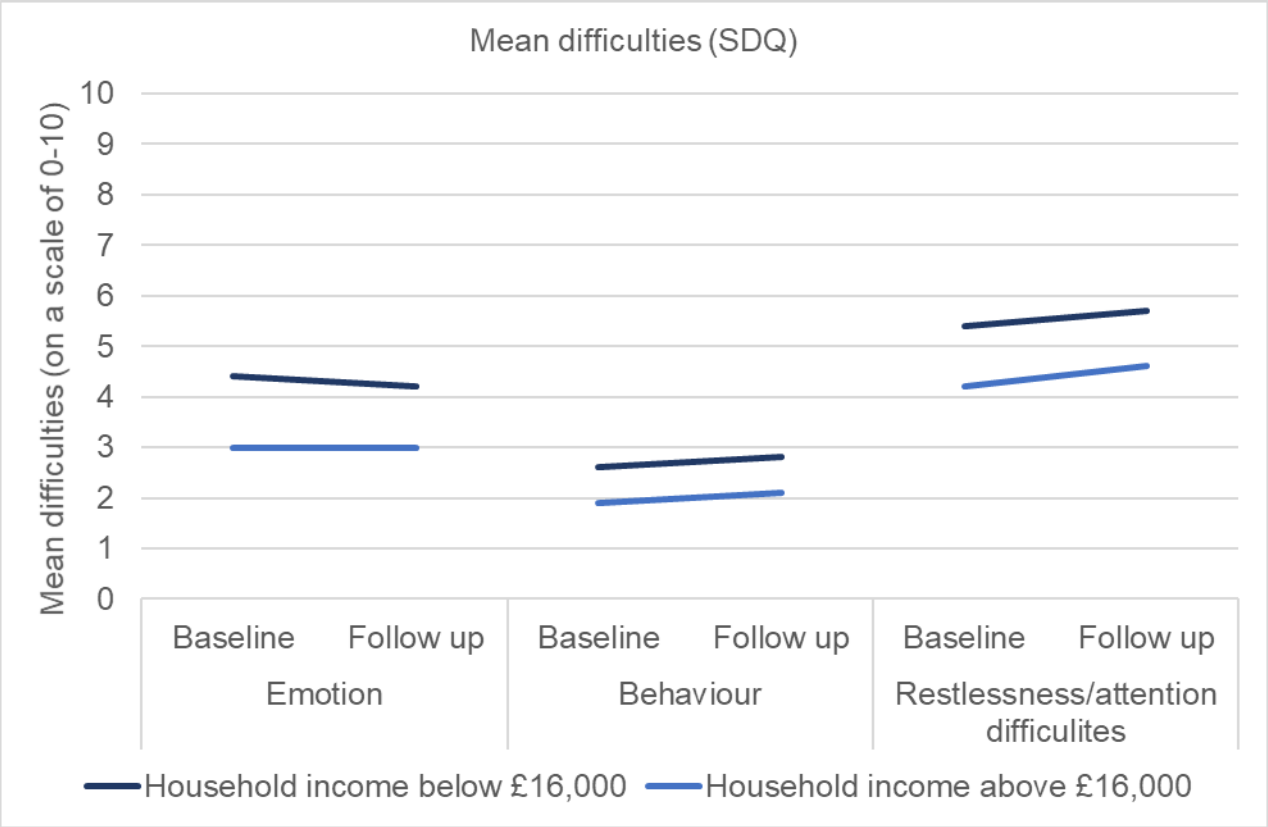
Economic disadvantage (low income)

After taking into account the effects of age group, sex, ethnicity and parental employment status, surveyed parents of children and young people living in households with low income (below £16,000 per annum) generally reported that

[39] Because we do not have pre-pandemic data we do not know if this is a new difference, or a continuation of an existing one, although given the use of SDQ to screen for potential mental health difficulties it is not surprising that children and young people with identified mental health conditions scored more highly.

their children had more difficulties with emotion, behaviour and restlessness/attention than surveyed parents of children and young people in higher income households (over £16,000). Although there were changes in the reporting of behaviour and restlessness/attention difficulties between baseline and follow up, change in difficulties between baseline and follow up did not appear to vary by household income. (see Figure 30). (Pearcey S et al, 2020d)

Figure 30: Emotion, behaviour and restlessness/attention difficulties by low income household, children from 5 to 16 (non-representative)



March to June 2020. Coverage: UK. Source: Co-SPACE

Anxiety

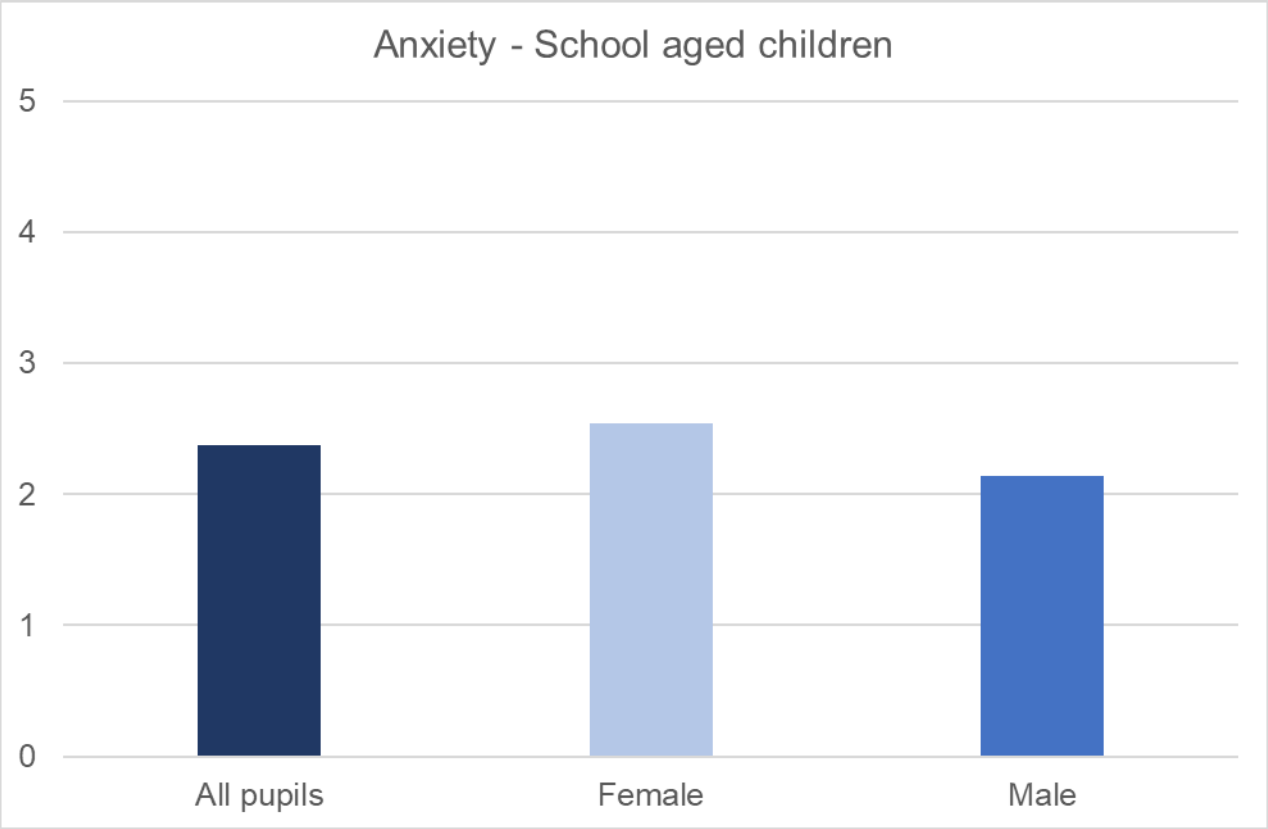
For this measure we present:

- Summary for school aged children and young people aged 8 to 18
    - Differences according to sex
- Summary for young people aged 19 to 24
    - Differences according to sex

School aged children

There is mixed evidence on the experience of (non-pandemic related) anxiety in children and young people. On the one hand, ImpactEd's sample of children of school-age scored their symptoms of anxiety[40] as very mild in July 2020, at an average 2.4 out of a maximum score of 5. There was some apparent difference between the scores of girls and boys, with girls' average anxiety score slightly higher (at 2.5) than boys (at 2.1). (ImpactEd, 2020)

Figure 31: Anxiety- Non-representative sample of children aged 8 to 18.



July 2020. Coverage: UK. Source: ImpactEd

On the other hand, the COVID-19 Psychological Research Consortium (C19PRC) study reported very high levels of anxiety amongst the respondents to its non-representative survey of adolescents in April 2020. Well over half of the respondents to the C19PRC survey were scored as having abnormal levels of anxiety on the Hospital Anxiety and Depression scale (HADs) (See Table 1). (Levita L. et al., 2020).

Differences between the two measures could be caused by the different methodologies, or the different age groups in the two studies. As a result, it is not possible to make a

[40] Generalised Anxiety Disorder – 7 item scale

conclusion about the scale of change in anxiety on the basis of this data and the difference between the two estimates remains unexplained.

Table 1: Hospital Anxiety and Depression scale (HADs) in young people aged 13 to 18

Anxiety	Proportion
Normal	10%
Border-line	26%
Abnormal	64%

April 2020. Coverage: UK. Source: Levita, L. et al (2020) C19PRC

Young people over 16

Evidence from the Millennium Cohort Study suggests that young women have experienced more anxiety[41] than young men during the initial phase of the pandemic. The Millennium Cohort Study surveyed a sample of 19 year olds in May 2020. Cohort members were asked about anxiety symptoms and 35% of young women and 19% of young men reported anxiety. (Henderson, M. et al., 2020)

The COVID-19 Psychological Research Consortium (C19PRC) study reported very high levels of anxiety amongst the respondents to its survey of young adults in April 2020. Just under half of the respondents to the C19PRC survey were scored as having abnormal levels of anxiety on the Hospital Anxiety and Depression scale (HADs) (see Table 2).

Table 2: Hospital Anxiety and Depression scale (HADs) in young people aged 19 to 24

Anxiety	Proportion
Normal	18%
Border-line	35.1%
Abnormal	46.9%

April 2020. Coverage: UK. Source: Levita, L. et al (2020) C19PRC

Notes on evidence gaps

Currently available evidence on children's physical health at this time is fairly sparse. In time, administrative data on children's access to physical health services will be

[41] As measured by the GAD-2 scale. 'Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by the following problems? Feeling nervous, anxious or on edge. Not being able to stop or control worrying.'

published. Data has also been collected, for example through the ONS infection survey pilot, which would enable future analysis of children's exposure to coronavirus (COVID-19) either within their household or in the wider community.

Evidence on the experiences of subgroups of young people is also currently incomplete. More detailed evidence is anticipated on children and young people's mental health through the Mental Health of Children and Young People survey by NHS Digital.

We were not able to include any evidence on the wellbeing of young people with LGBT identities, as none of the robust data sources had included these identities in their research.

Much of the data presented here does not have a comparable baseline from before the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, future publications such as the Mental Health of Children and Young People survey by NHS Digital and the UK Household Longitudinal Study Youth sample may be analysed in time to provide a clearer comparison to historic evidence.

Domain 3: Education and Skills

Summary

Education and the development of skills is a fundamental part of childhood. Children and young people spend a large part of their time in the school or college environment. School and college are important sources of pastoral support for children and young people through the work of teachers and school leaders and a wide variety of school support staff. The education and skills developed in schools and colleges influences children and young people's future life, their future wellbeing and economic circumstances.

Key findings:

- From the end of March to June, the vast majority of children and young people were not able to attend school. Instead, children and young people stayed at home and in most cases continued learning through home schooling from parents and remote education from schools, and other organisations.
- Through June and July, increasing numbers of children and young people were able to return to school and given both the challenges of home schooling during April to May and the finding that children are, on the whole, happy with the school they go to, this is an overall positive outcome for their wellbeing.
- In June to July, most parents reported that schools were providing online learning resources or non-digital learning resources to support children and young people learning while at home. However, the majority of children and young people still at home struggled to learn while at home, parents consistently reported a mixture of reasons for this, most commonly a lack of motivation in children and young people, but also a lack of their own time to support home learning and a lack of guidance or support from elsewhere.
- While children and young people of a broad range of ages are generally as happy as usual with their view of the future, there is evidence that the majority of older young people are worried about the future. These worries have eased slightly from April to September in young people aged 16 to 19 years.

Indicator: School and College experiences

This section includes a range of data about CYP's access to and experiences of education. During the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, education was disrupted for all pupils and students. In some schools, it was necessary to fully close as early as February, where individual cases of the virus occurred in the school population. Schools, colleges and early years settings in England were asked to close for most pupils from 20

March, with the exception of children of keyworkers and vulnerable children[42], in order to support the effort to reduce the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19).

Happiness with School

For this measure we present:

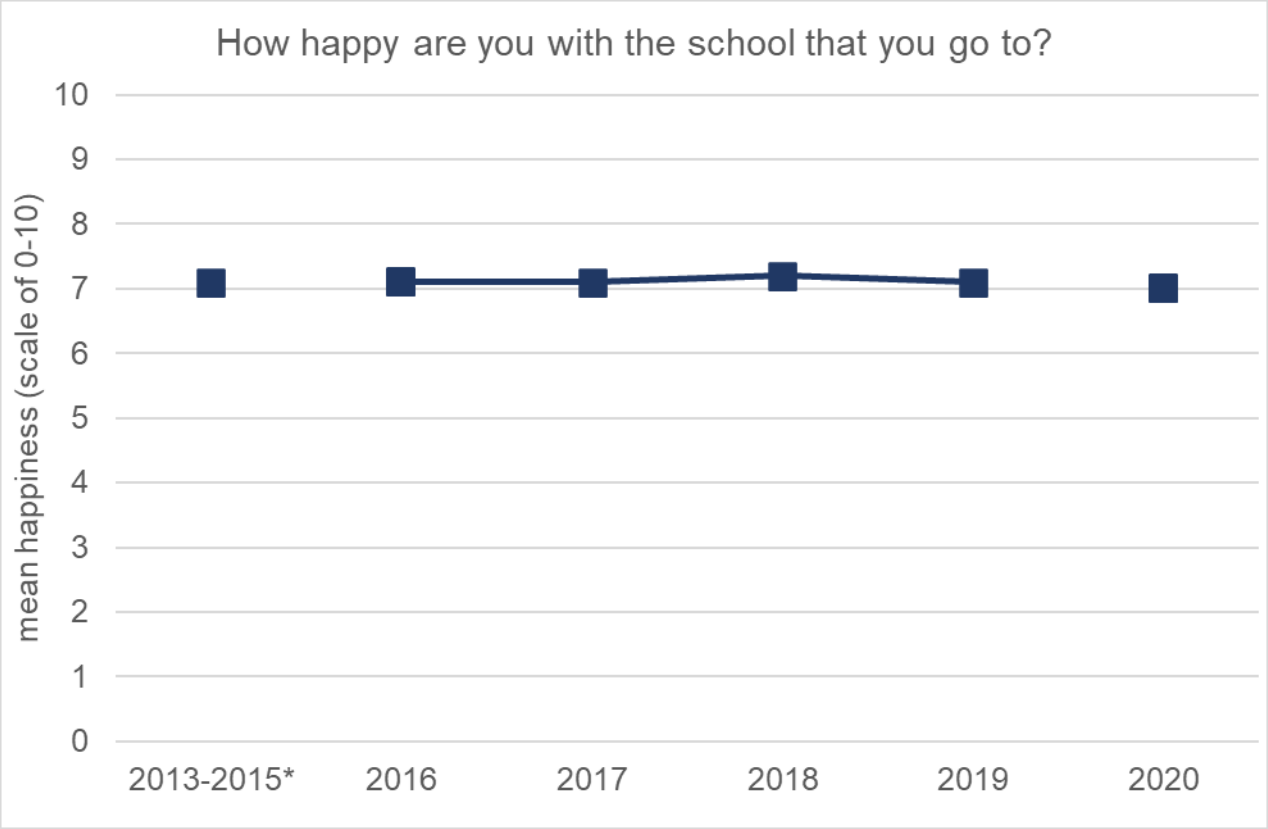
- Summary for secondary school aged children and young people
    - Differences according to sex

Secondary school aged children and young people

When thinking about their school as a whole, and not specifically in relation to the pandemic, children and young people have reported a fairly typical level of happiness with their school. On average, the Children's Society found that children and young people's (aged 10 to 17) self-assessed happiness with their school (at 7 out of 10), was very similar to recent years in Great Britain (ranging from 7.1 to 7.2 out of 10 from 2016[43]) (See Figure 32). Overall, at this time, school is one of the areas of life with which children and young people are less happy, 12.5% of children reported low happiness with their school, in line with the proportion reported for children and young people in Great Britain last year. (The Children's Society, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 & 2020b)

[42] Vulnerable children included children with an Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP), children with a social worker and children otherwise considered vulnerable by schools themselves.
[43] Please note, we cannot directly compare this year's data to previous years' due to a change in the geography covered and other changes in methodology. These comparisons are based on the descriptive data alone and not any statistical testing.

Figure 32: Happiness with school in children aged 10 to 17.



Coverage: 2020 UK, 2013 – 2019 Great Britain. Note: discontinuity in time series, see 'Data sources and methods' annexe for further information. N=2,000. Source: Children's Society

When asked, in the same survey, about how they were coping with school closing and doing school work from home, the majority of children and young people (70%) indicated that they were coping to some extent, scoring this above midpoint of the 0 to 10 scale (where 0 indicated that they had not coped very well and 10 that they had coped very well). Some children and young people (12%) scored their level of coping with school closing and working from home on the midpoint and 18% scored their level of coping below the midpoint. Girls were more likely to score their level of coping with school closure below the midpoint compared to boys (22% and 15%, respectively). (Children's Society, 2020a).

Attendance

For this measure we present:

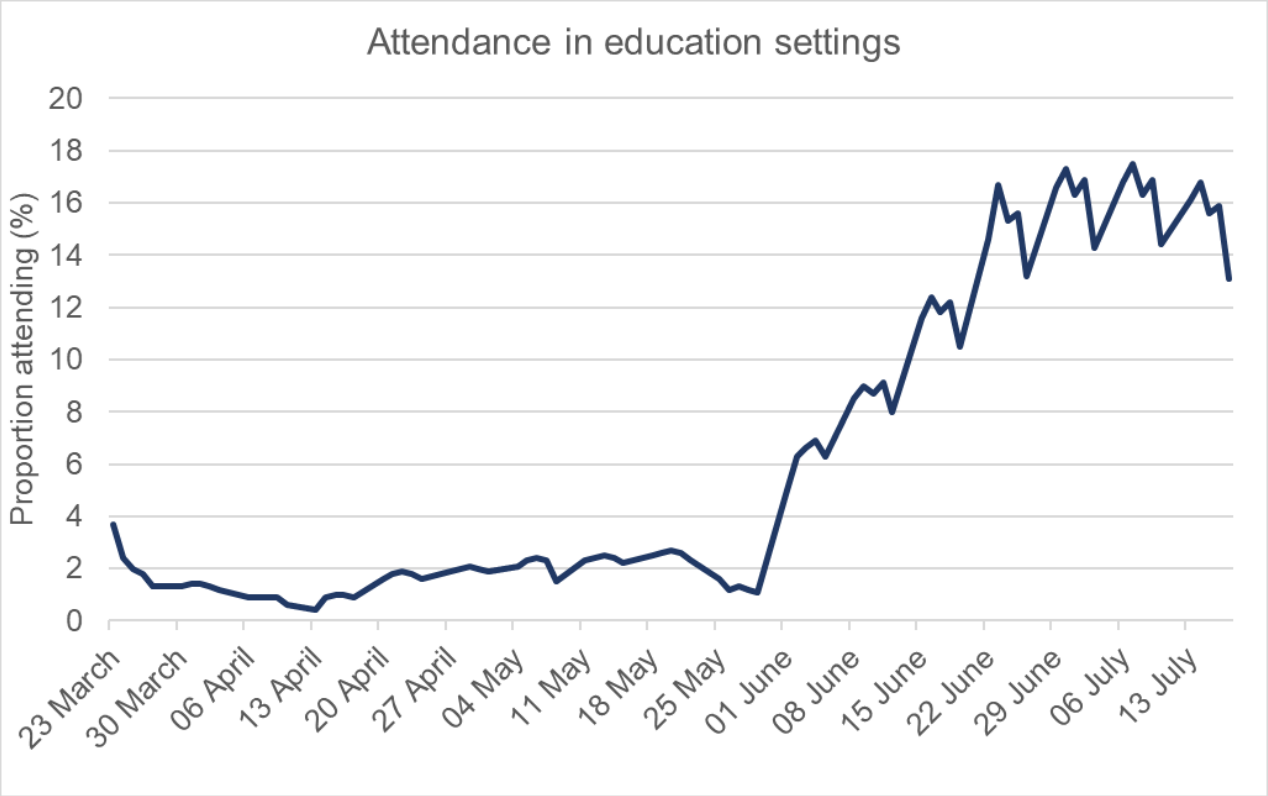
- Summary for all education settings
    - Differences according to school phase and for vulnerable pupils
- Summary for young people aged 16 to 24 years.

The attendance data gathered by schools for the Department of Education between March and July clearly demonstrates the impact of the pandemic and associated interventions, on attendance in school, with a very small proportion of children attending between the 23 March and 31 May 2020. Attendance increased markedly when schools were asked to open for Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 from 1 June, and again after they were asked to open for Year 10 and Year 12 students (with appropriate safeguards in place) (See Figure 33). These data show the day by day attendance, it is probable that a greater proportion of children attended school at some time during 20 March to 17 July as the Department's guidance stated that schools and colleges were only able to have up to a quarter of their year 10 and year 12 cohort in attendance at any one time to reduce the risk of transmission.(Department for Education, 2020a)

The attendance data also shows that many schools did not close for the normal school holidays (above half remained open in Easter holidays and about a third in the May half-term holiday). As a result, vulnerable children (those with an education, health and care plane, or with a social worker) and those whose parents were keyworkers were given the opportunity to be cared for in a safe space for the duration of this period of the pandemic.

During the June and July period, the regular variation in attendance according to the day of the week probably reflects modified timetables put in place by schools to be able to safely open in challenging conditions.

Figure 33: Attendance in education settings, all ages

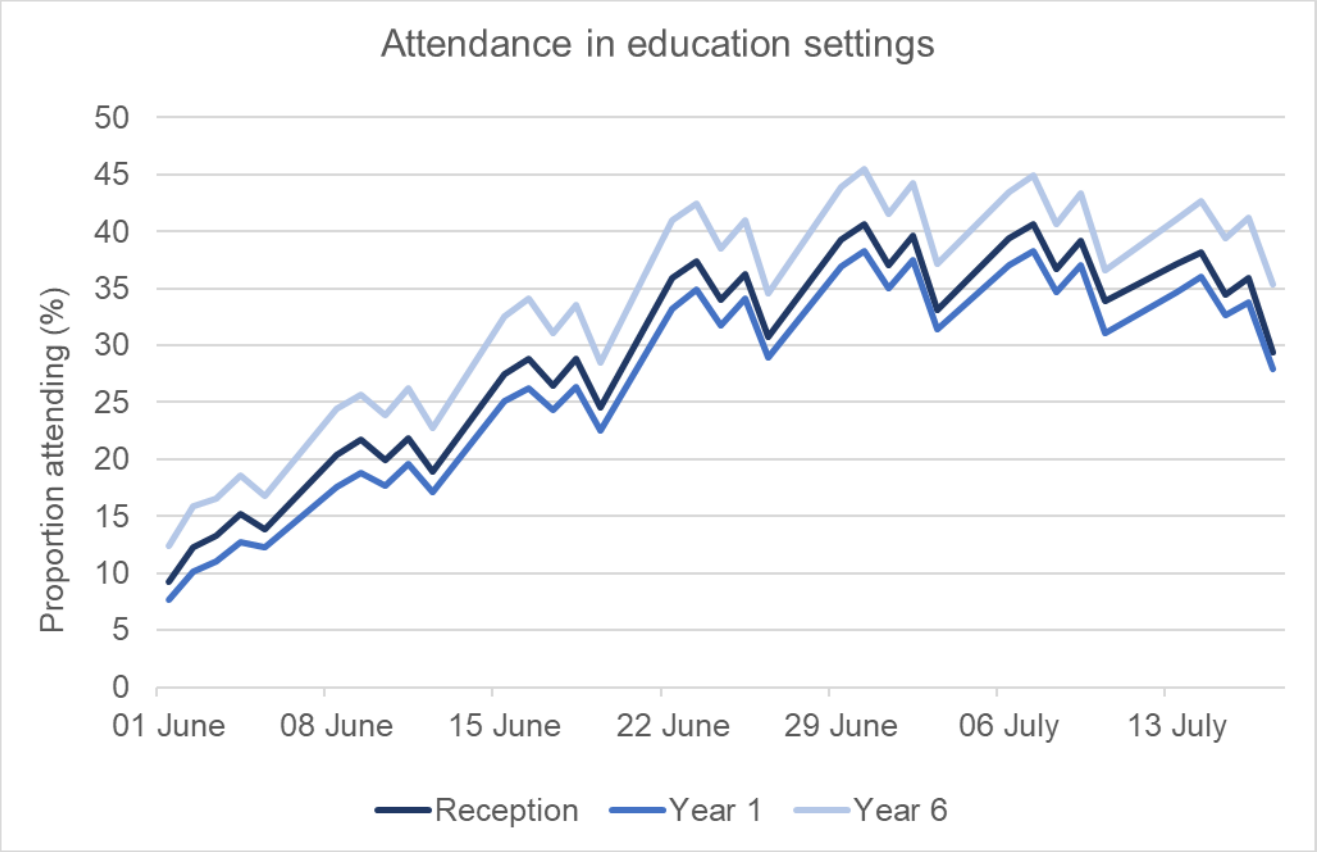


March to July 2020. Coverage: England. Source: DfE

Primary school aged children

When schools initially reopened for their Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 cohorts, the return to schools was quite limited at first with maximum attendance of 15% of Reception pupils, 13% of Year 1 pupils and 19% of Year 6 pupils in the first week of opening. In part this reflects some schools postponing opening for these year groups in order to prepare to safely welcome back more children into the school environment, and in part this reflects hesitance among parents and/or pupils to return to school in the context of the pandemic (Department for Education, 2020a, Office for National Statistics, 2020h). Over the first 5 weeks of reopening to these year groups, attendance increased week on week for each age group, with Year 6 continuing to return in greater numbers than younger children (see Figure 34).

Figure 34: Attendance in education settings in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6



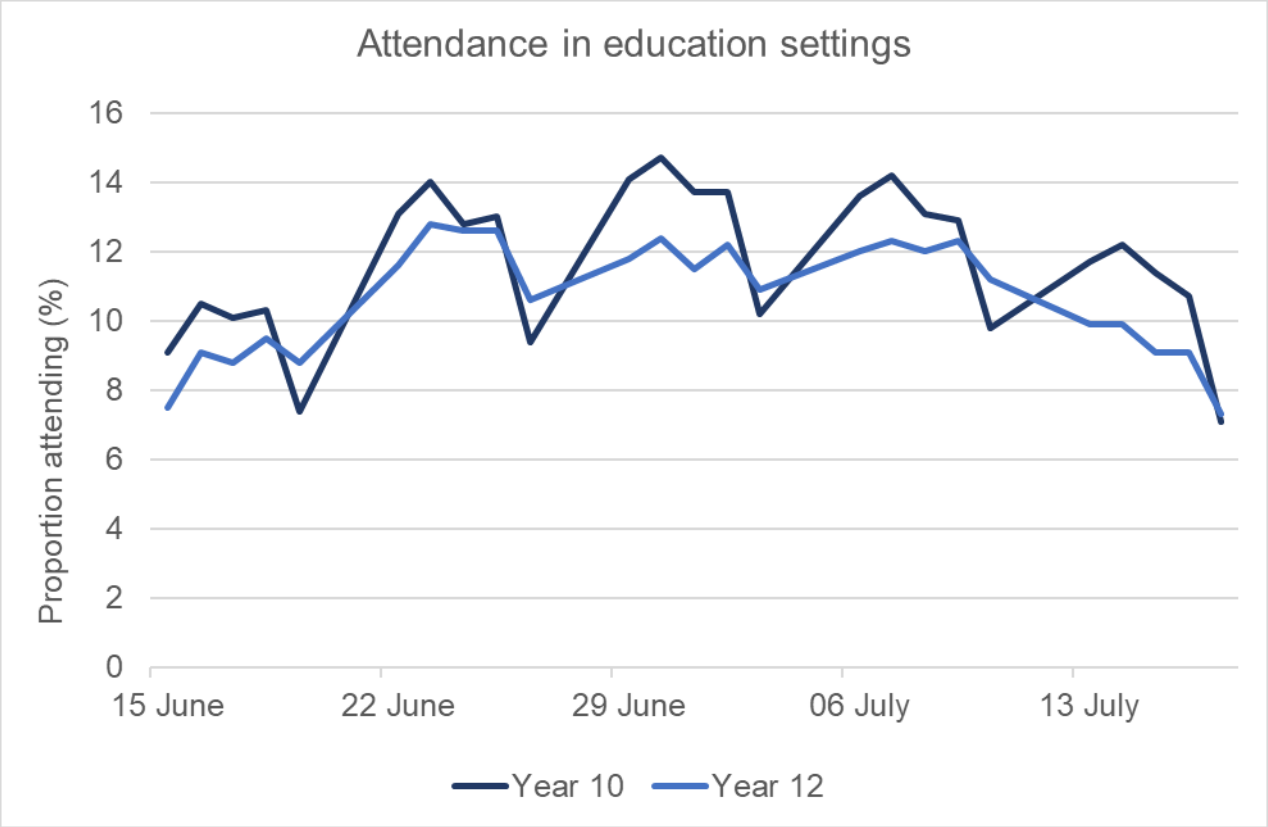
June to July 2020. Coverage: England. Source: DfE

Secondary school aged children and young people

As with primary schools, when schools initially reopened for their Year 10 and Year 12 cohorts, the return to schools was quite limited at first with maximum attendance of 11% of Year 10 pupils, and 10% of Year 12 pupils in the first week of opening. Again, this may

in part reflect some schools postponing opening for these year groups in order to prepare to safely welcome back more children into the school environment, and in part may reflect hesitance among parents and/or pupils to return to school in the context of the pandemic (Department for Education, 2020a, Office for National Statistics, 2020h). Over the first 3 weeks of reopening to these year groups, attendance increased week on week for Year 10, with this year group continuing to return in greater numbers than Year 12. Attendance did not reach as high a level in these secondary school age groups as the primary school age group, this is in part due to rota systems which secondary schools had to put in place to ensure that no more than 25% of each cohort were in attendance at any one time (see Figure 35)

Figure 35: Attendance in education settings in Year 10 and Year 12



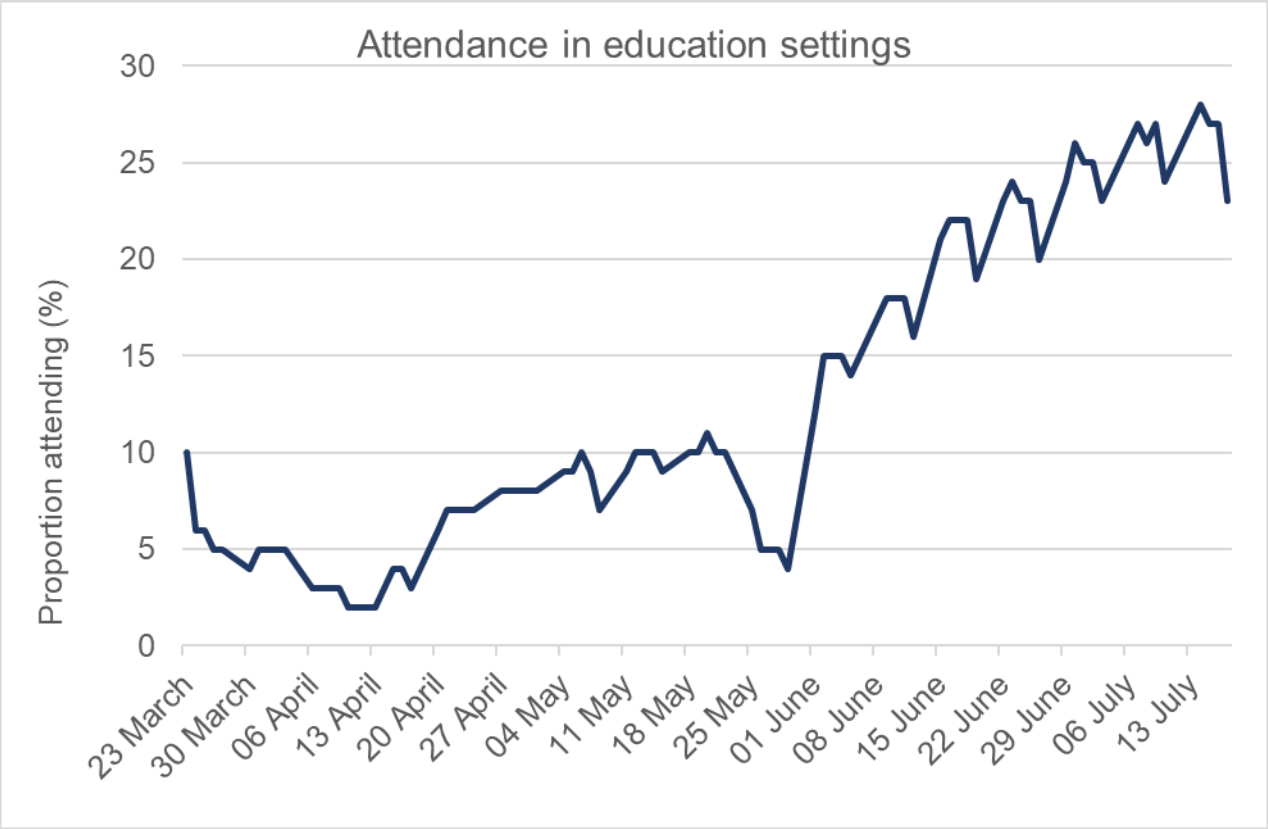
June to July 2020. Coverage: England. Source: DfE

Vulnerable children

The proportion of children with Education, Health and Care plans (EHCPs) or with a social worker attending school was also quite low in the period from the end of March to the end of May, with generally fewer than 10 per cent of these pupils attending school. Once specific year groups were able to return to school on a more routine basis, from June 2020, and concurrent to the reduction in the coronavirus (COVID-19) case rate, a greater proportion of children with EHCPs or social workers returned to school reaching a

maximum of 28% in any one day by the end of the school year (See Figure 36). (Department for Education, 2020a)

Figure 36: Attendance in education settings, Children with EHCP or social worker, all ages

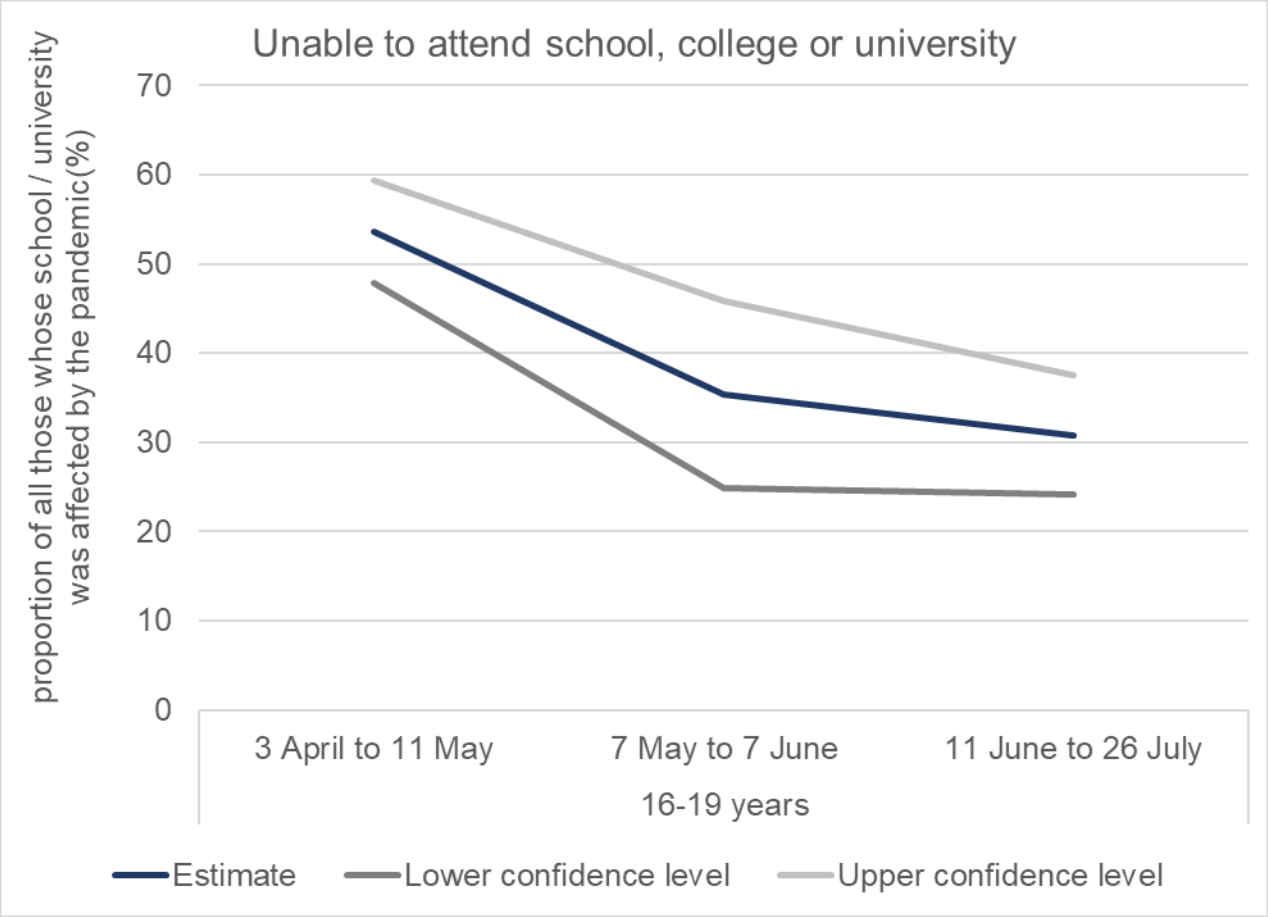


March to July 2020. Coverage: England. Source: DfE

Young People over 16

Between ages 16 and 19 young people are expected to participate in some form of education or training, either as a main activity or directly in connection with their job. In April to July 2020, the Office for National Statistics asked young people in what ways the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic was affecting their lives, around half of young people who said that 'schools and universities' were affected, or they were personally unable to attend school, college or university, though this proportion fell to around a third by June to July. (Office for National Statistics, 2020o)

Figure 37: Young people aged 16 to 19 unable to attend school, college or university out of all young people whose school or university was affected.



April to July 2020. Coverage: Great Britain. Source: ONS

Home schooling and remote education

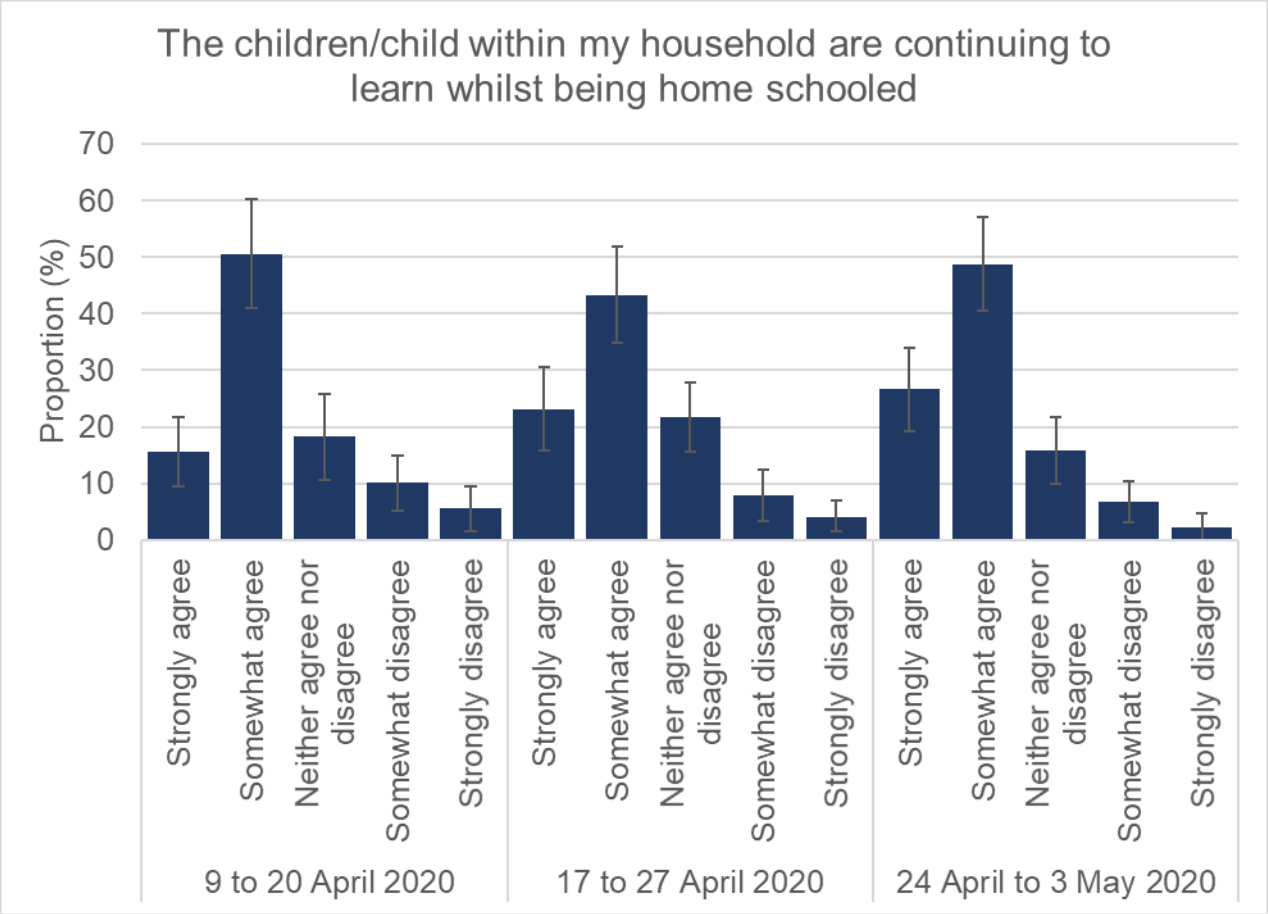
For this measure we present:

- Summary for all dependent children and young people

Within a couple of weeks of the closure of school to most pupils, Office for National Statistics (ONS) data suggests that the majority of parents agreed that their children were continuing to learn whilst being home schooled. The ONS collected information on the views of a small sample of parents about home schooling each week. Responses remained fairly consistent throughout April and into May, with between two thirds and three quarters of parents agreeing or strongly agreeing that their children were continuing to learn whilst at home (see Figure 38). Further evidence from the survey indicates a mixture of resources from schools, from parents and carers themselves and other organisations were used to support home learning. Although the overall picture is positive, between one in ten to one in six parents disagreed or strongly disagreed that their children were continuing to learn.

During this period from 9 April 2020 to 3 May 2020, between 69% and 75% of parents involved in home schooling their children agreed that they had access to the resources they needed to help them to home school their children well. (Office for National Statistics, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c)

Figure 38: Continuing to learn whilst being home schooled

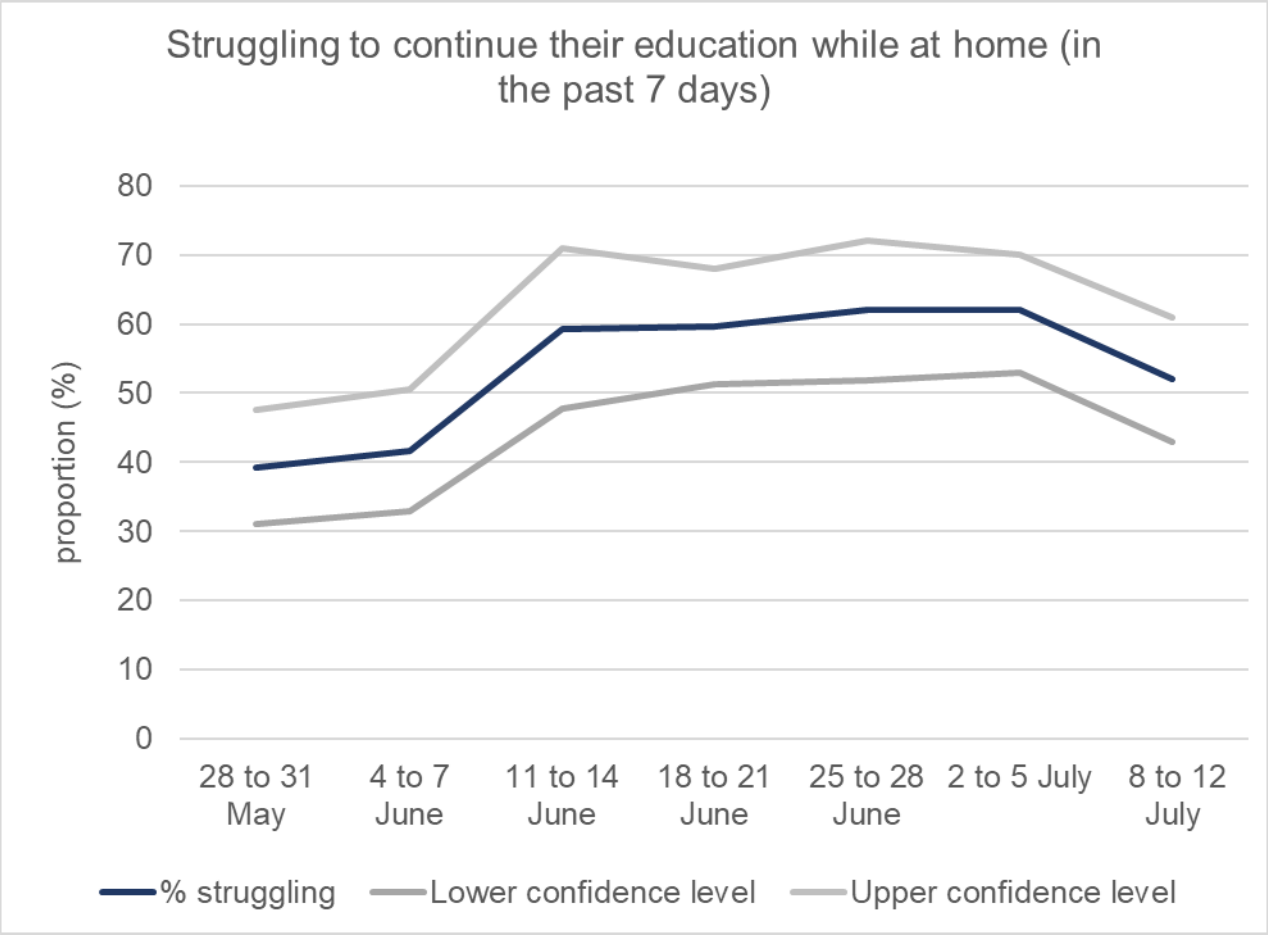


April to May 2020. Coverage: Great Britain. Source: Office for National Statistics. N=c.200

As seen in the attendance data above, after the initial phase of restrictions relating to the coronavirus (COVID-19), some children were able to return to the classroom, but many children continued to stay at home. The ONS estimated that between 50% and 70% of children were struggling to continue their education while at home in June to July. Lower estimates in late May and early June are likely to be influenced by the half-term holiday during this period, in which children may not have been trying to continue any formal education (see Figure 39). The most common and consistent reason given by parents through June to July as to why their children were struggling with education was a lack of motivation in the child, less common answers which were nevertheless consistently in the top three concerns were limitations in the parent or carers time to support home education and a lack of guidance or support from elsewhere. Other reasons for struggling, less commonly experienced but important for a minority, included a lack of a

quiet space for studying, a lack of devices or appropriate resources and limitations in parent or carers subject knowledge to support their child's learning. (Office for National Statistics, 2020d, 2020e, 2020f, 2020h, 2020i, 2020j, 2020k)

Figure 39: Children struggling to continue their education while at home



May to July 2020. Coverage: Great Britain. Source: Office for National Statistics. N=c.200

Indicator: The Future

This indicator looks to how children and young people are feeling about their future.

For this measure we present:

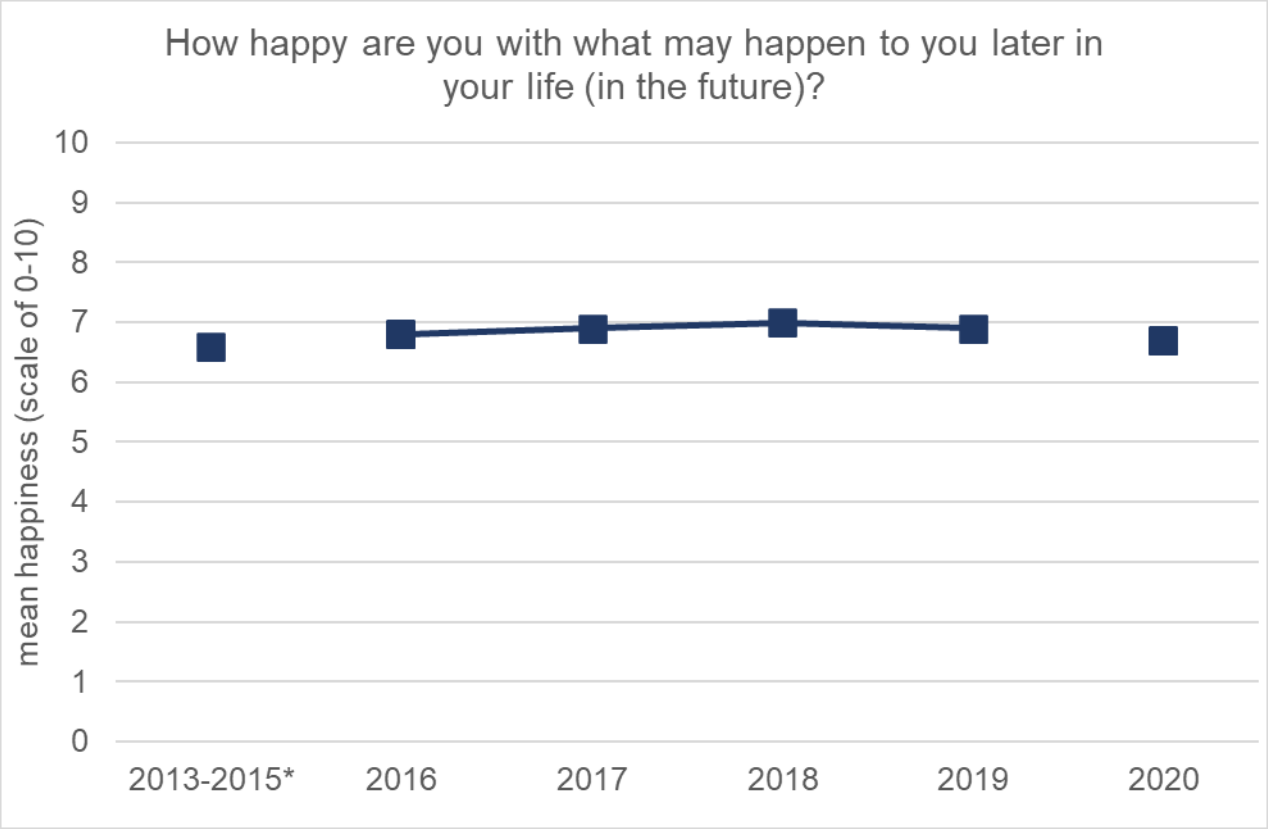
- Summary for children and young people aged 10 to 17 years
- Summary for young people aged 16 to 24 years

Secondary School aged children and young people

Children and young people have reported a fairly typical level of happiness with what may happen to them in the future. On average, the Children's Society found that children

and young people's self-assessed happiness with the future (at 6.7 out of 10), was similar to recent years (ranging from 6.8 to 7 out of 10 from 2016 in Great Britain[44]) (See Figure 40). (The Children's Society, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 & 2020b)

Figure 40: Happiness with the future, children and young people aged 10 to 17 years



Coverage: 2020 UK, 2013 – 2019 Great Britain, Note: discontinuity in time series, see 'Data sources and methods' annexe for further information. N=2,000. Source: Children's Society

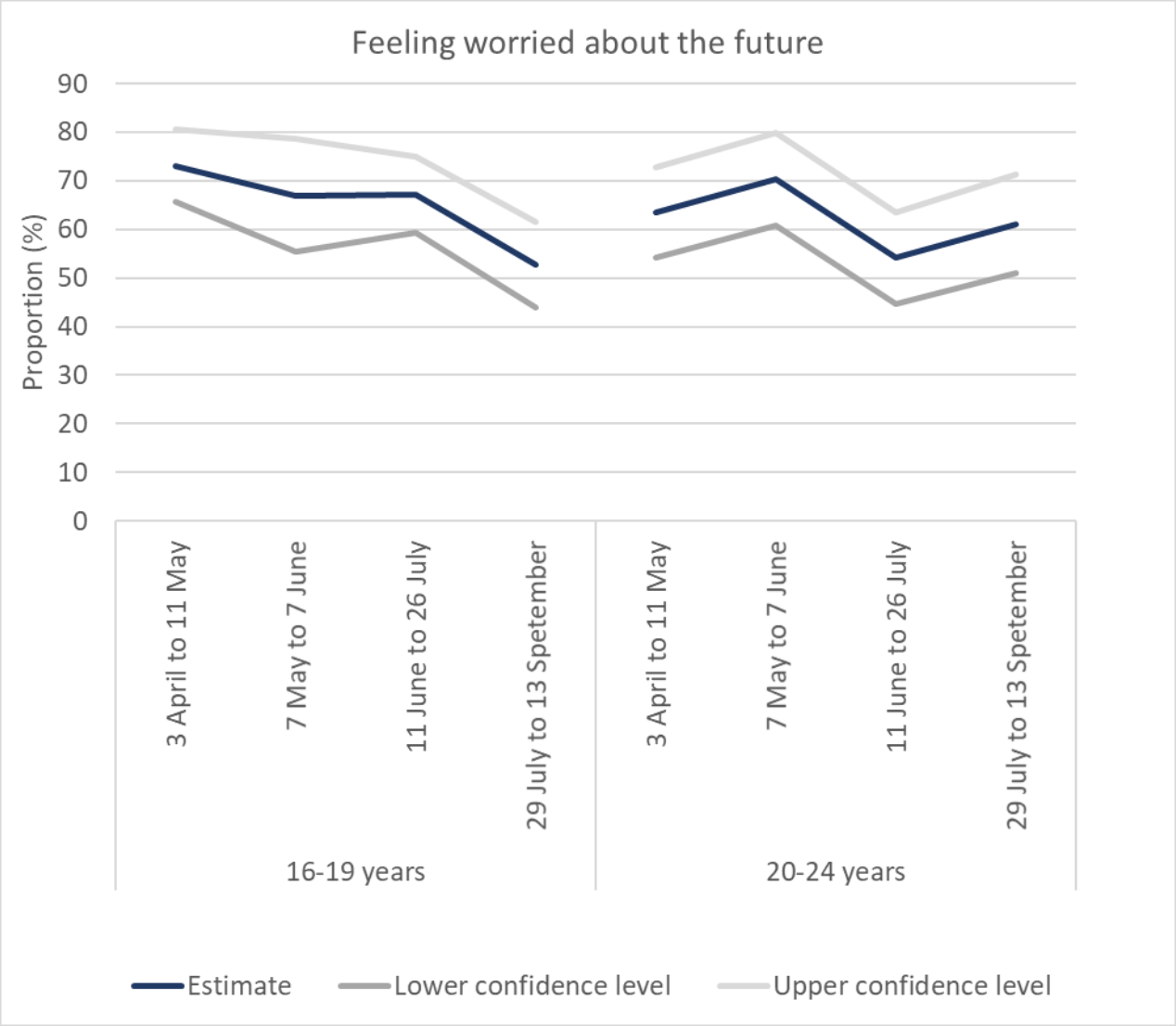
Young people over 16

The Office for National Statistics found that a large proportion of young people report that they are feeling worried about the future. In April to May 2020, 73% of 16 to 19 year olds and 74% of 20 to 24 year olds reported that they felt worried about the future. In the months since the initial restrictions due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, feelings of worry about the future appear to have reduced somewhat for the 16 to 19 year old group, though about half of this age group still feel worried about the future. Feelings of worry about the future haven't reduced significantly among young people aged 20 to

[44] Please note, we cannot directly compare this year's data to previous years' due to a change in the geography covered and other changes in methodology. These comparisons are based on the descriptive data alone and not any statistical testing.

24, about 61% of this age group felt worried about the future in the period from late July to September (See Figure 41). (Office for National Statistics, 2020o)

Figure 41: Feeling worried about the future, young people aged 16 to 24 years



April to September 2020. Coverage: Great Britain. Source: ONS

Notes on evidence gaps

This review of educational indicators relating to wellbeing is only an early overview of evidence gathered about learning during the first phase of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. There is other data on education and home learning at this time, however not specifically relevant to the wellbeing scope of this report. There are also gaps in evidence in relation to how children and young people's own experiences of remote education and home schooling may have varied for children and young people with particular characteristics, for example sex, ethnicity, LGBT and economic or social disadvantage.

More complete analyses of children and young people's experiences of education at this time will likely follow in future DfE and academic research.

Domain 4: Relationships

Summary

Relationships are a key area in the lives of children and young people, and a key factor in their wellbeing. Loneliness and social isolation can have longer-term impacts on children's mental health[45], and relationships with trusted adults and supportive friends can help children cope with challenging life events[46]. The ability to form and maintain relationships has likely been challenged by the measures taken to try and prevent spread of the virus. Children and young people were asked to stay at home and not meet up with anyone outside their household for several weeks. Families were, in many cases, spending every day together to adhere to lockdown rules. After this, they were asked to follow necessary restrictions on numbers and locations of meeting with people outside their household and the need to maintain social distancing. These measures may have been particularly challenging for those children and young people without the access to devices, internet connectivity or private space at home to maintain contact with friends and family.

Key findings:

- Even given the challenges of this period, most children and young people up to 17 years of age remain happy with their relationships with friends, although average levels of happiness may have reduced slightly on previous years.
- Children's happiness with their family has also remained high over this period, and the majority of parents reported that their relationship with their children had remined the same, with over a quarter saying it had improved.
- Levels of children's and younger young people's contact with friends varies by age, with around a half to two-thirds of primary age children having little to no contact with friends over the period from late March to August (varying over time), with only a third to a half having regular contact. Whereas most secondary age children and young people had regular contact with friends during this time.
- A wide range of means of communication were used by children and young people to stay in contact with friends, including video, texting, gaming, social media and phone.
- Between a quarter and just under a half of older young people (those aged 16 and over) reported the pandemic affecting their relationships over this time, peaking in

[45] Loades et al (2020) Rapid Systematic Review: The Impact of Social Isolation and Loneliness on the Mental Health of Children and Adolescents in the Context of COVID-19
[46] Hughes et al (2018) Sources of resilience and their moderating relationships with harms from adverse childhood experiences

May, and seeming to be driven more by the experiences of females and the older (20 to 24 years) age group. Data also indicates that, for this age group, loneliness may also be a greater concern than for older adults.

Indicator: Relationships with friends

This section reports different measures of children and young people's contact with friends and reporting of their current friendships – reported happiness with friends, coping with not being able to see friends, frequency of contact and means of communication.

Happiness with friends

For this measure we present:

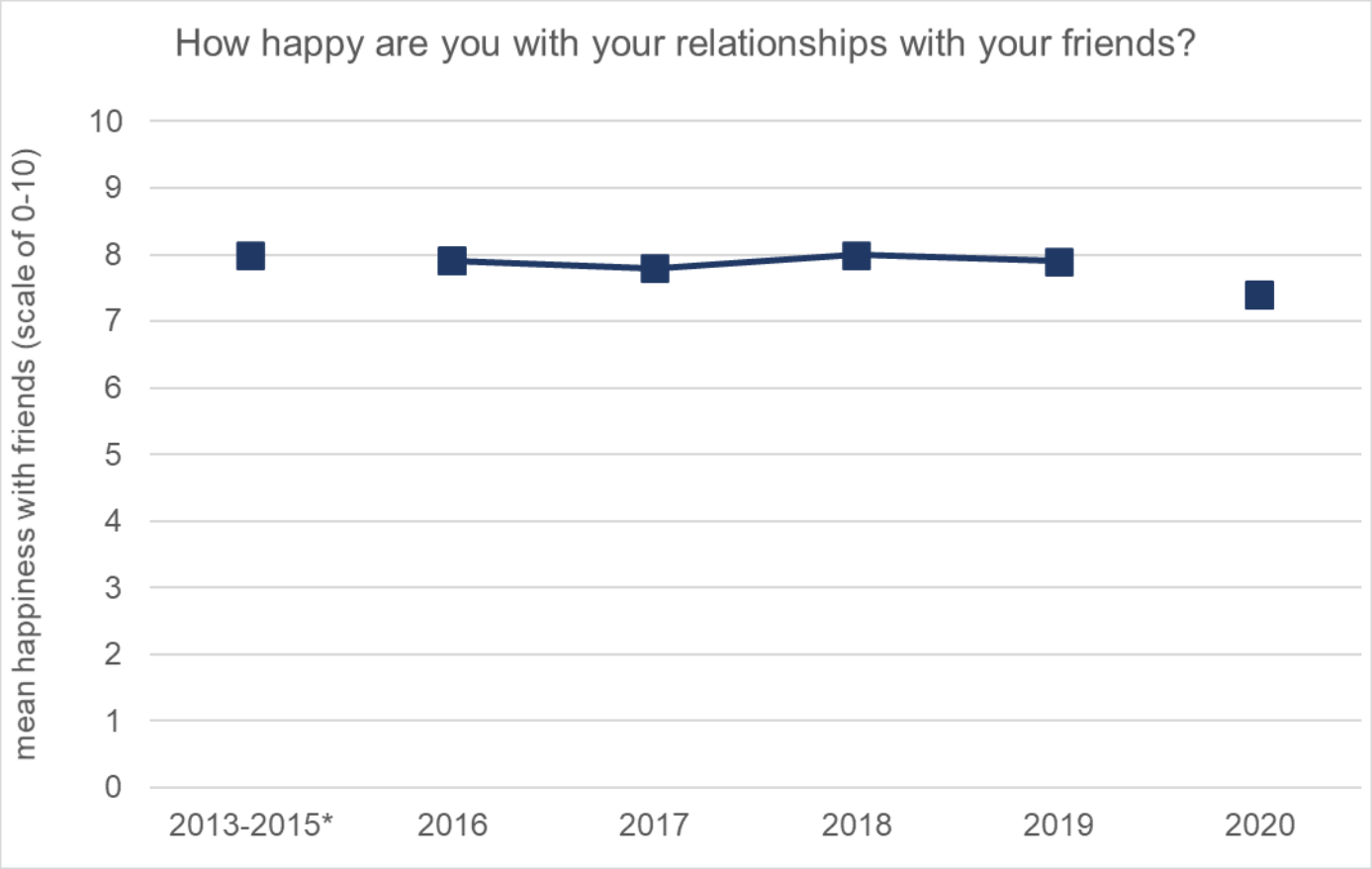
- Summary for children and young people aged 10 to 17

Secondary school aged children and young people

Evidence suggests that children and young people may not be as happy with their relationships with their friends as they have been in previous years. The Children's Society surveyed children and young people in the UK from April to June 2020, the peak of restrictions during the initial stages of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in the UK. The responses showed that children and young people's happiness with friends has decreased slightly (7.4 out of 10) compared to the past years' survey responses in Great Britain (between 7.8 and 8 out of 10 from 2016[47]) (see Figure 42). Regardless of the decrease, 'friends' remains one of the areas of life where children and young people are the happiest. Even so, 11.5% of the sample had low scores in this area. Last year, the Children's Society found that 5.7% of children and young people (in Great Britain) reported low happiness with friends. (The Children's Society, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 & 2020b).

[47] Please note, we cannot directly compare this year's data to previous years' due to a change in the geography covered and other changes in methodology. These comparisons are based on the descriptive data alone and not any statistical testing.

Figure 42: Happiness with friendships, children and young people aged 10 to 17



Coverage: 2020 UK, 2013 – 2019 Great Britain, note: discontinuity in time series, see 'Data sources and methods' annexe for further information. N=2,000. Source: Children's Society

Communication and contact with friends

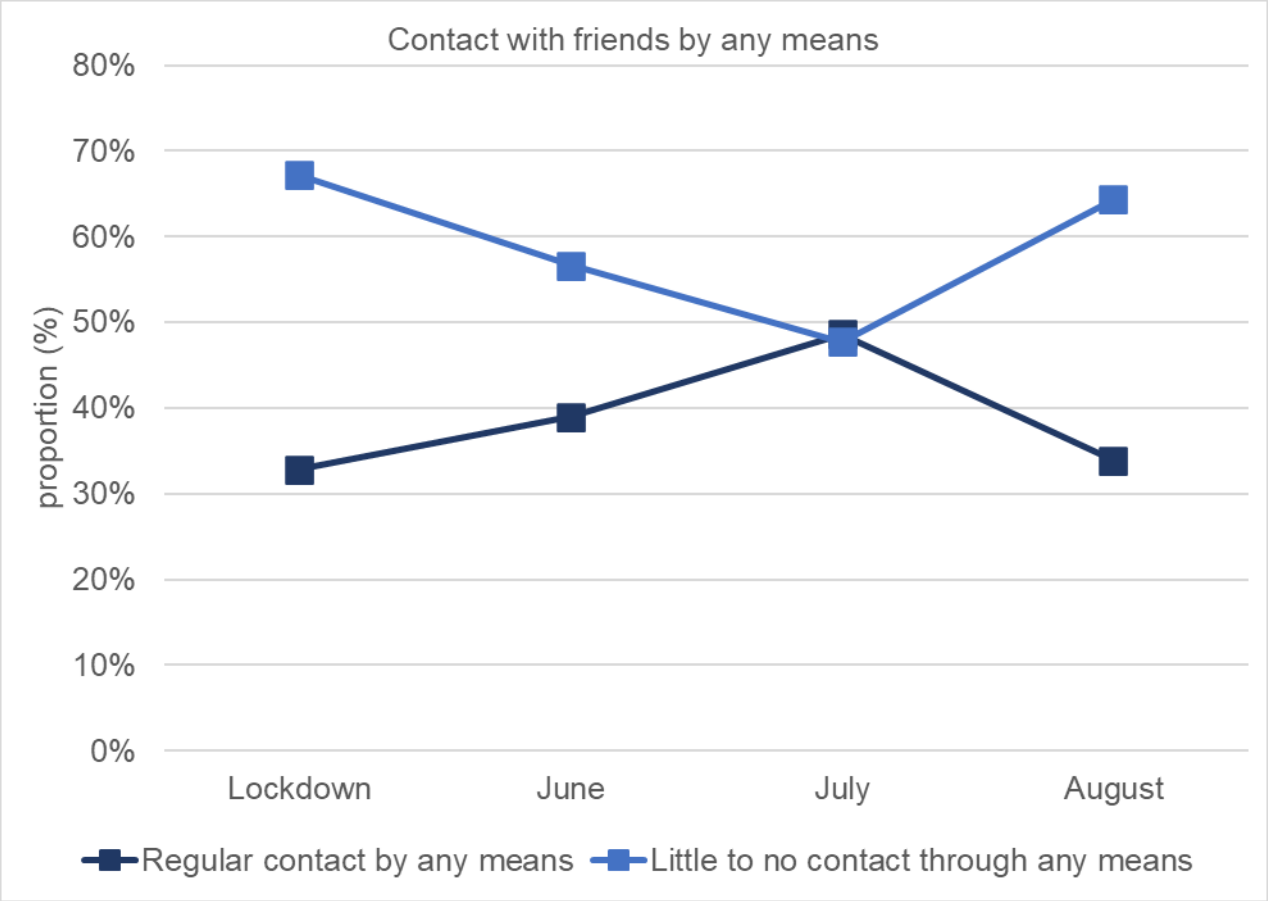
For this measure we present:

- Summary for primary school aged children
    - Differences according to sex, disadvantage and special educational needs
- Summary for secondary aged children and young people

Primary school age

Research from the Co-SPACE study found that from late March to August, primary school pupils included in the survey were more likely to have little to no contact with friends (48 to 67%), rather than regular contact (33 to 49%) (based on parent report of contact). Over time, the proportion of surveyed parents reporting that their primary school aged children had some form of regular contact with friends peaked in July (see Figure 43). (Pearcey, S. et al. 2020a)

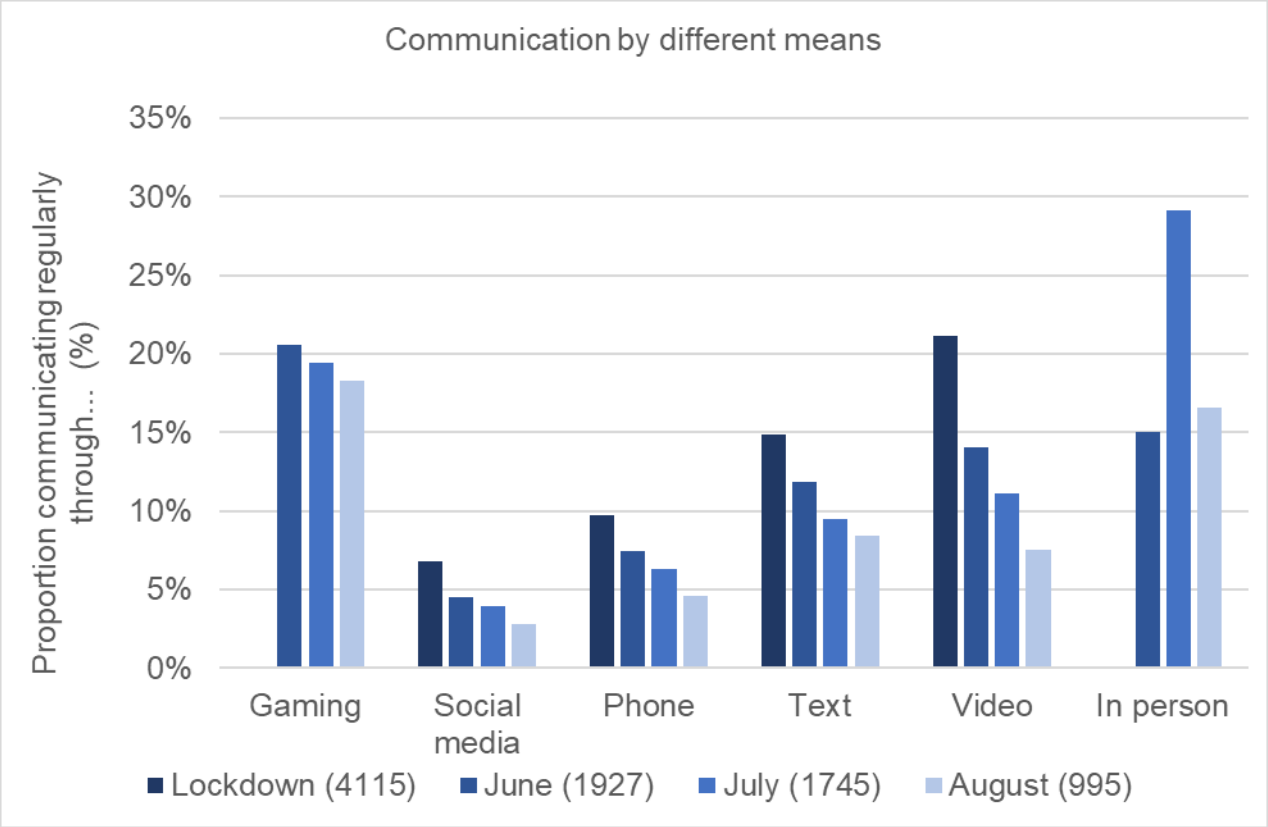
Figure 43: Contact with friends by any means, primary school aged children



March to August 2020. Coverage: UK. Source: Co-SPACE

Regular contact with friends through 'video' was the most common means of communication for primary school aged children during lockdown, reported by 21% of surveyed parents. Gaming, added as a response option in June, was also a relatively common means of communication for this age group, at between 18 to 21% communicating regularly with friends through this means from June to August. In July, as more children returned to school and coronavirus (COVID-19) related restrictions were relaxed, meeting in person was briefly reported by surveyed parents as the most common means of communicating with friends for the children in this age group (See Figure 44). (Pearcey, S. et al. 2020a)

Figure 44: Communication with friends by different means, primary school aged children



March to August 2020. Coverage: UK. Source: Co-SPACE

Sex

Co-SPACE data shows that among those surveyed there was not a large difference between male and female primary school aged children and their parents' reported amount of contact with friends between late March and August 2020. Both male and female children were more likely to have little to no contact by any means with friends (between 47 to 64% of females and 48 to 70% of males respectively) than regular contact by at least on mean of communication (36 to 49% of females and 30 to 47% of males) over the period.

In terms of means of communication, gaming and social video remained highest among both sexes (at 19 to 23% for boys and 16 to 17% for girls of gaming and 6 to 17% for boys and 8 to 25% for girls of video, respectively). In July, 'in person' contact was the highest form of regular contact for both sexes (29% for girls and 28% for boys) (Pearcey, S. et al. 2020a).

Disadvantage

Co-SPACE data shows that communication and contact with friends, for those included in the survey, remained the same across different household incomes through the period of late March to August where primary school pupils in

households with both lower and higher incomes (less than £16,000 and more than £16,000) were more likely to have had little to no contact with friends than regular contact (little to no contact at 52 to 63% for lower income, 47 to 67% for higher income, and regular contact 37 to 45% and 33 to 49%). The only exception to this was in August, when surveyed parents of primary school aged children in a lower income household were more likely to say that their child had regular contact with friends than those in a higher income household (45% and 33% respectively).

In terms of means of communication, there was no major difference between surveyed children of primary school age with low household incomes and higher household incomes, in that gaming, video and 'in person' contact were all relatively common means of communication. Surveyed parents of primary school aged children with lower incomes were slightly more likely to report that their child was communicating with their friends through 'gaming' (23 to 30% of children in lower income households, 17 to 20% of children in higher income households). For primary school aged children from lower income households, gaming came up twice as the most common means of communication (June and August). In August primary school aged children were more likely to have had regular communication with friends of any kind, this is particularly clear for 'in person' communication (20% of children in lower income households and 16% of children in higher income households). (Pearcey, S. et al. 2020a).

Special Educational Needs

Co-SPACE data shows that regular communication and contact with friends, for those included in the survey, was reported by surveyed parents as being consistently lower for primary school aged children with Special Educational Needs (SEN). The reported differences were larger in June to August (when regular contact ranged between 27% to 42% of primary school aged children with SEN and 35% to 50% of primary school aged children without SEN) than during late March to May (when regular contact was reported for 31% of primary school aged children with SEN and 33% of primary school aged children without SEN).

Most differences between primary school aged children with and without special educational needs in terms of the means of regular communication with friends were slight. One exception to this was that surveyed parents of children with special educational needs were less likely to report their child meeting friends 'in person' in July, compared with children without special educational needs. (Pearcey, S. et al. 2020a)

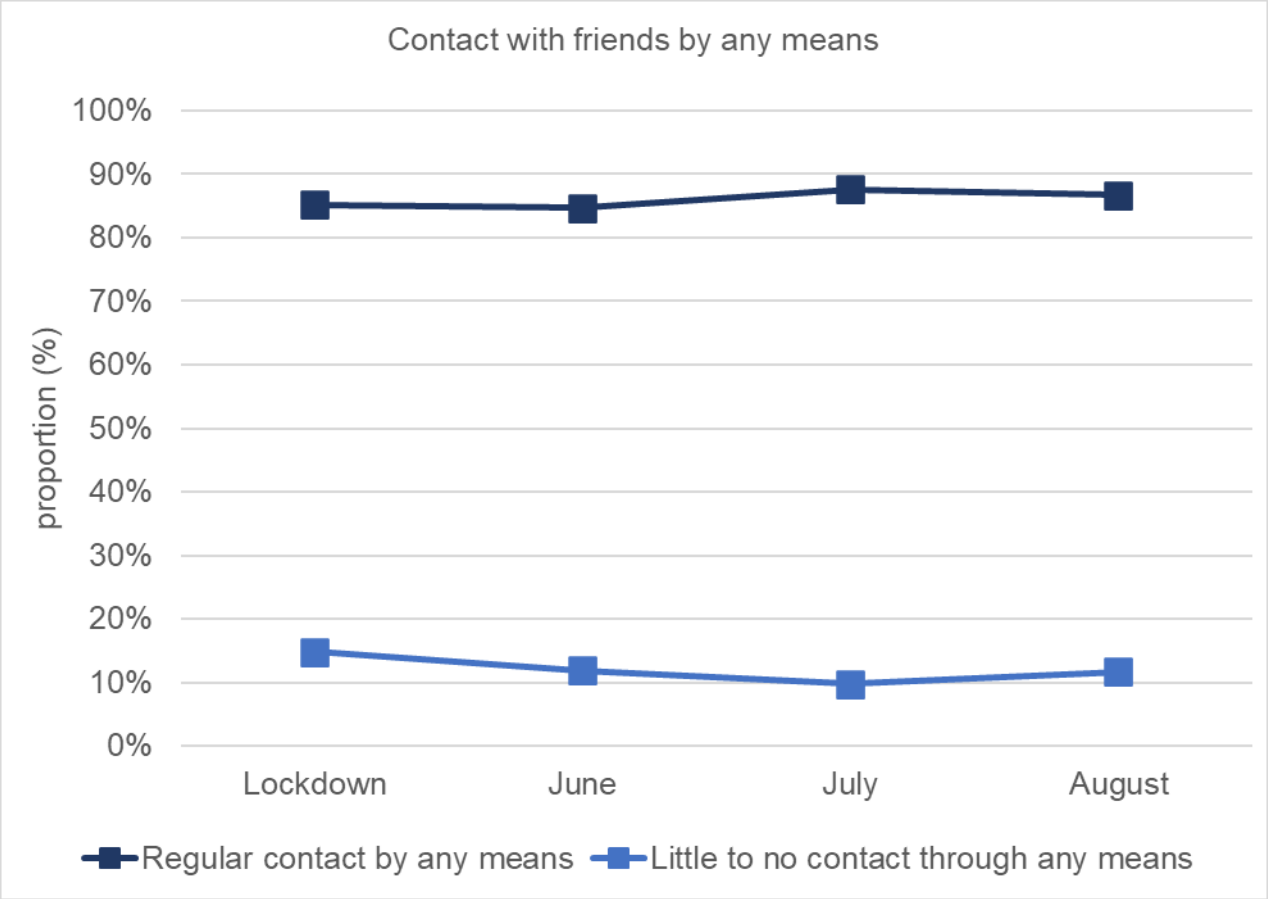
Secondary school aged children and young people

Further evidence from The Children's Society shows that almost half (49%) of children and young people said they were coping to some extent with not being able to see friends, scoring above the midpoint on the 0 to 10 scale (where 0 indicated that they had

not coped very well and 10 that they had coped very well). However, 37% scored below the midpoint indicating they were coping less well. This is the area of life where the greatest proportion of children and young people reported not coping so well. (The Children's Society, 2020a)

Evidence from Co-SPACE shows that secondary age children, whose parents were surveyed, were more likely to be keeping regular contact with friends with between 85% to 88% of surveyed parents reporting regular contact and only 10% to 15% reporting little to none over the period of surveying (late March to August). Compared to primary school aged children, the reported levels of contact with friends were relatively high for secondary school aged children. (Pearcey, S. et al. 2020a)

Figure 45: Contact with friends by any means, secondary school aged children and young people

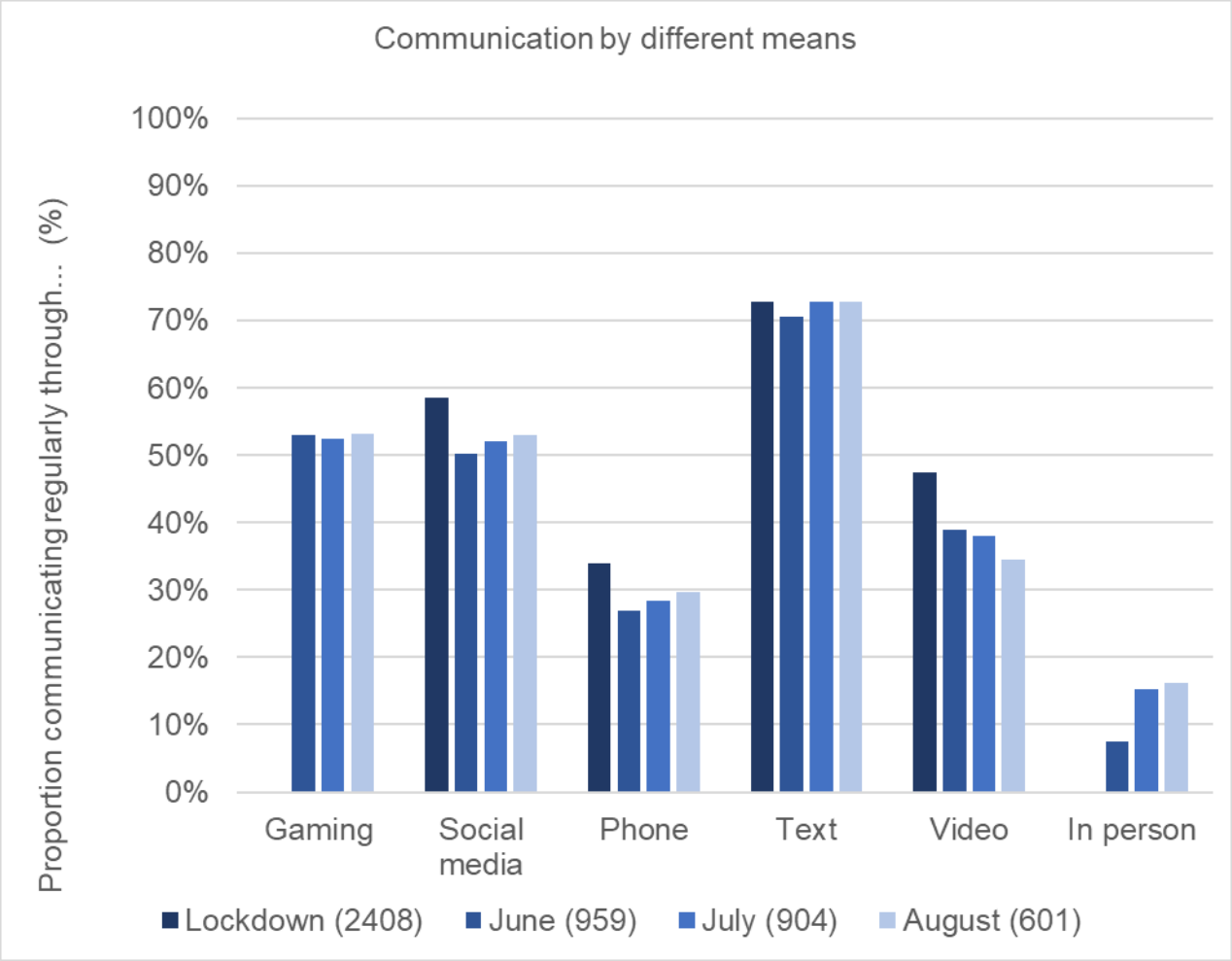


March to August 2020. Coverage: UK. Source: Co-SPACE

The most common means of communication for this age group from late March to August was 'texting' (between 70% and 73% reporting this as a regular means of contact, across the surveying period) followed by gaming, social media, video call, and phone which were each slightly lower than the last. In June, a response option about 'in person' contact was added, 'in person' contact was reported by the lowest proportion of surveyed

parents about their children's contact with friends (7-16%), though this increased between June and August (see Figure 46). Across most means of communication, compared to primary school aged children, the reported levels of contact with friends were relatively high for secondary school aged children. The exception to this was for 'in person' contact, which was slightly lower for secondary aged children in June and July compared to the reports from surveyed parents of primary school aged children. (Pearcey, S. et al. 2020a)

Figure 46: Communication with friends by different means, secondary school aged children



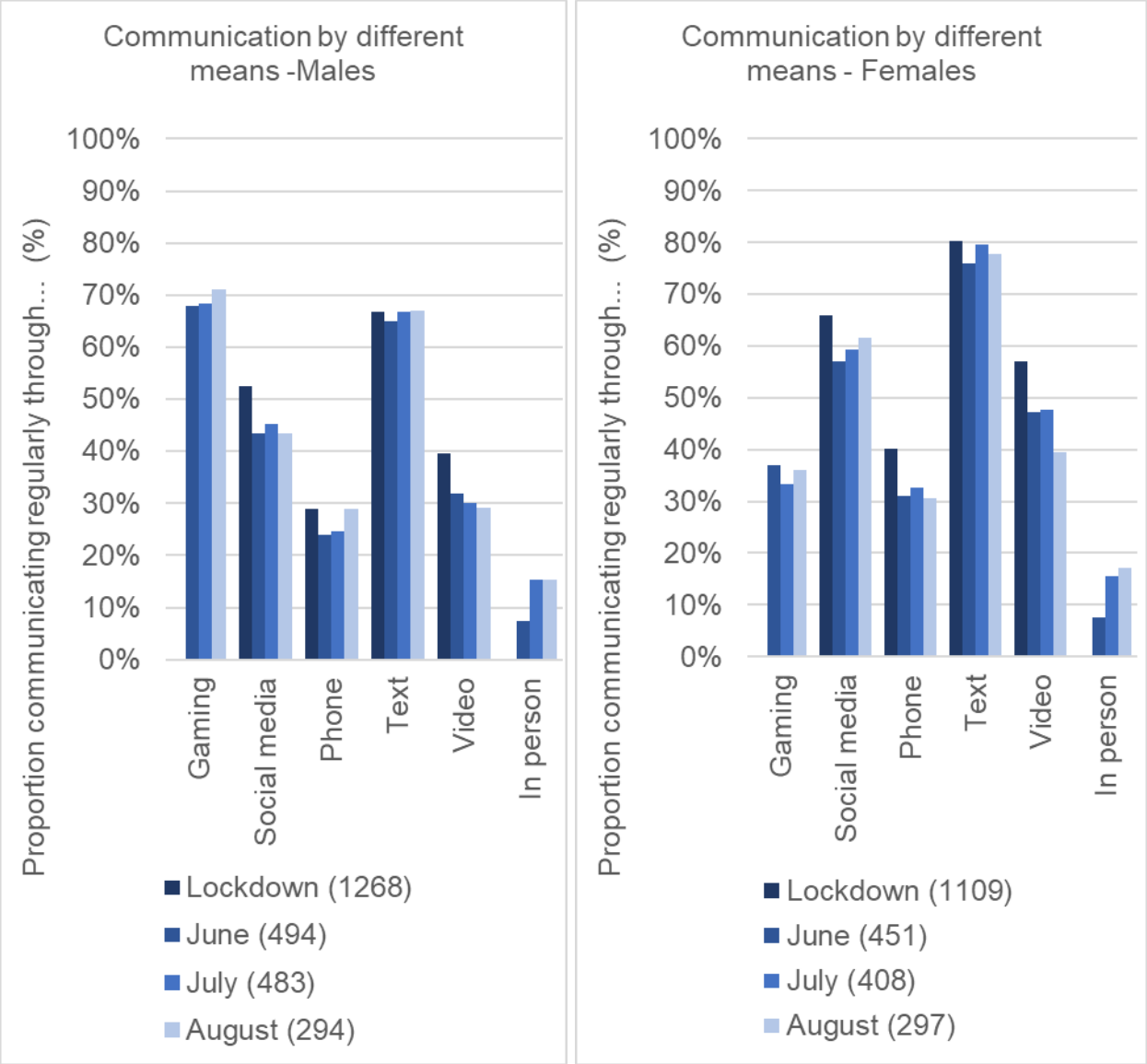
March to August 2020. Coverage: UK. Source: Co-SPACE (Sample size in brackets)

Sex

Data from Co-SPACE shows little difference between the sexes, for those parents surveyed, in terms of extent of contact with friends with parents of both sexes being more likely to report regular contact through at least one means (females 86% to 90%, males 81% to 86%) than little to no contact through any means (females 8% to 10%, males 11% to 19%) between late March and August.

There was also limited difference between sexes in the means they used for regular communication in late March to May, with the main reported means being texting, though this was reported for a higher proportion of female children and young people (females: 80%, males 67%). Between June and August, once gaming was added as a possible response option, the main means of regular communication for males was gaming, reported by 67% to 71% of surveyed parents. For females, the main means of communication reported by surveyed parents remained texting (76 to 80%). Surveyed parents of secondary school aged children and young people were also more likely to report regular contact by social media, phone and video if their child was female. In June, a response option about ‘in person’ contact was added, and from June to August most secondary school aged children and young people had ‘little or no’ contact with friends in this way (see). (Pearcey, S. et al., 2020a).

Figure 47: Communication with friends by different means, secondary school aged children by sex



March to August 2020. Coverage: UK. Source: Co-SPACE

The Children's Society found that among secondary school aged children and young people (aged 10 to 17), girls were coping significantly less well than boys with not being able to see their friends by a 10 percentage point difference (42% of girls compared to 32% of boys being below the mid-point on the 0 to 10 scale, where 0 indicated that they had not coped very well and 10 that they had coped very well). (The Children's Society, 2020a).

Disadvantage

Co-SPACE data shows that across different levels of household income (less than £16,000 and more than £16,000), surveyed parents of secondary school aged children were more likely to report their children as having 'regular contact' than

'little to no contact' with friends throughout the entire period surveyed (late March to August). On the whole, secondary school aged children and young people from lower income households were less likely to be reported, by surveyed parents, as having been in regular contact with friends by any means of communication throughout the period of late March to August[48].

In terms of means of communication, in late March to May surveyed parents of children and young people reported the same means as being more common or less common regardless of their household income. Surveyed parents of secondary school aged children and young people with lower incomes were slightly more likely to report that their child was communicating with their friends through 'gaming' (53 to 60% of children and young people in lower income households, 53 to 54% of children and young people in higher income households, varying by month). (Pearcey, S. et al., 2020a).

Special Educational Needs

Co-SPACE data shows that regular communication and contact with friends, for those included in the survey, was reported by surveyed parents as being consistently lower for secondary school aged children and young people with Special Educational Needs (SEN). The reported differences were similar throughout late March to August, with the proportion of secondary school aged children and young people with SEN having regular contact ranging between 68% to 76% and the proportion of secondary school aged children and young people without SEN having regular contact ranging between 89% to 91%).

The means of communication which surveyed parents reported were used by secondary school aged children and young people with Special Educational needs to contact their friends, did not vary substantially from the means used by those without SEN. (Pearcey, S. et al., 2020a).

Indicator: Family relationships

This section includes different data items on CYP's relationships with their family, including self-reported happiness with family, coping with not being able to see family, and parent reports of family relationships.

Happiness with family

For this measure we present:

- Summaries for secondary aged children and young people

[48] (household income of less than £16,000 in regular contact: 73 to 83%;household income of more than £16,000 in regular contact: 85 to 88%).

- Parent report of strength of their relationship with their children

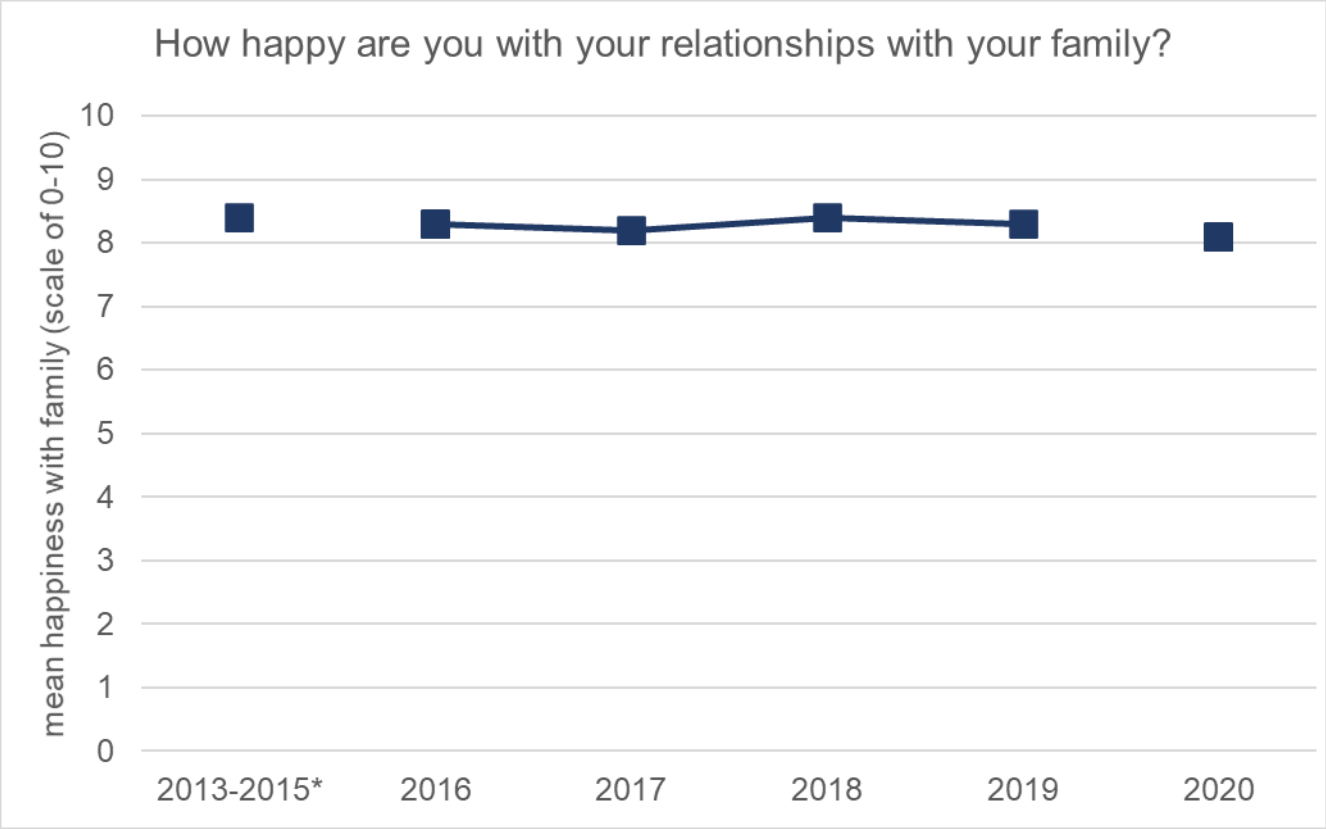
Secondary School aged children and young people

Evidence suggests that children and young people are happy with their family. The Children's Society surveyed children and young people in the UK from April to June 2020, the peak of restrictions during the initial stages of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in the UK. The responses found that on average children and young people's happiness with family has remained high at 8.1 out of 10 and is similar to previous years in Great Britain (between 8.2 and 8.4 out of 10 from 2016[49]) (see Figure 48). Family is one of the areas of life where children and young people are the happiest, with 6.7% of children reporting being unhappy with family (scoring below the midpoint). Last year, the Children's Society reported that 3.7% of children and young people in Great Britain scored their happiness with family below the midpoint. (The Children's Society, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 & 2020b)

The Life on Hold report from The Children's Society also found that over half of children were coping to some extent with not being able to see their family, with 54% scoring above the midpoint on the 0 to 10 scale (where 0 indicated that they had not coped very well and 10 that they had coped very well) . However, 30% did score below midpoint showing that a large minority were not coping so well. (The Children's Society, 2020a).

[49] Please note, we cannot directly compare this year's data to previous years' due to a change in the geography covered and other changes in methodology. These comparisons are based on the descriptive data alone and not any statistical testing.

Figure 48: Happiness with family, children and young people aged 10 to 17



Coverage: 2020 UK, 2013 – 2019 Great Britain, Note: discontinuity in time series, see 'Data sources and methods' annexe for further information. N=2,000. Source: Children's Society

Data from the UK Household Longitudinal study (collected at the end of May 2020) also provides information on parents' reported the strength of their relationships with their children, finding that 26% of parents stated that their relationship with their children was better than before since the "stay at home" policy and only 4% had reported it had become worse. 70% reported it had stayed about the same (Benzeval, M. et al., 2020).

Indicator: Young People - Effects on relationships

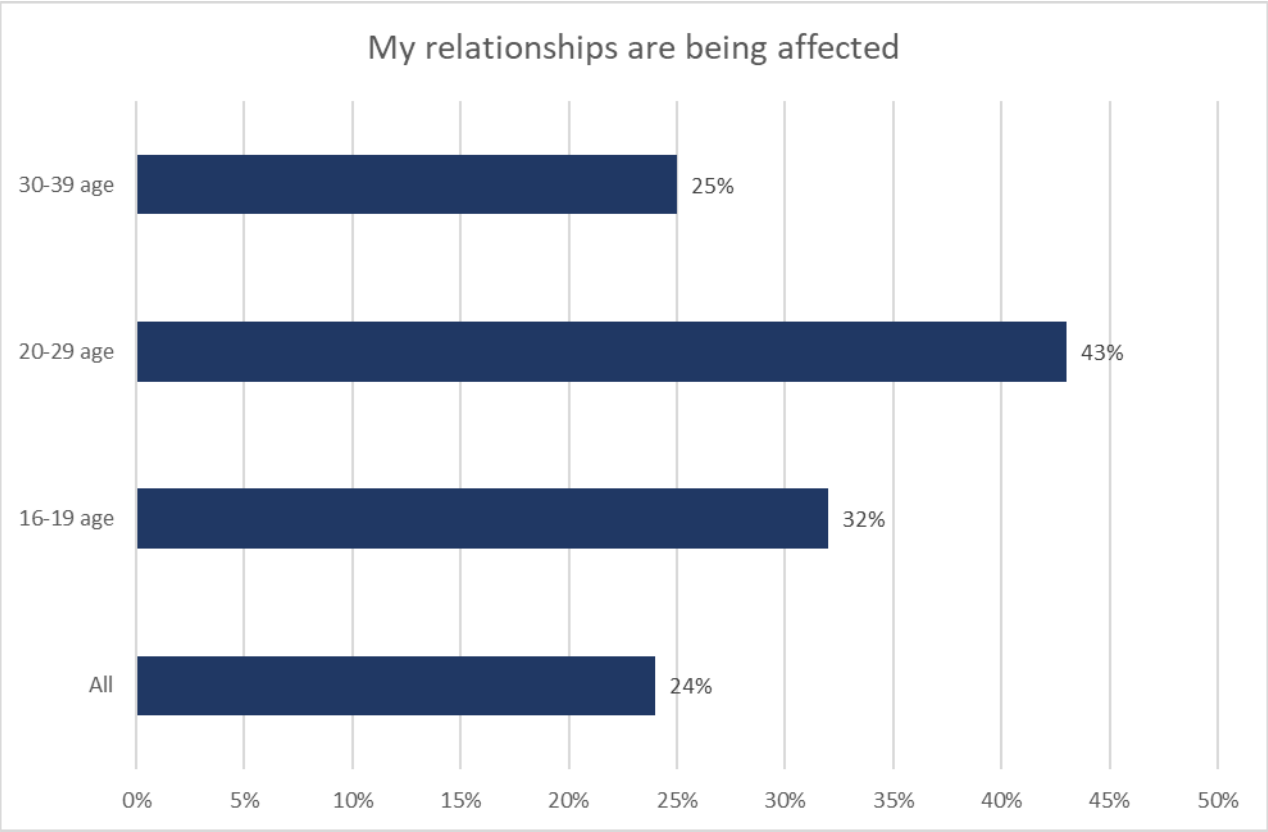
For this measure we present:

- Summary for young people aged 16 to 24
    - Differences according to sex
- Summary for young people aged 19
    - Differences according to sex

Young people over 16

ONS found that of their sample, 32% of 16 to 19 year olds reported their relationships being affected due to the pandemic. This falls between two older groups of 20 to 29 (43% reporting relationships being affected) and 30 to 39 (25%) and is higher in comparison to the whole sample (24%) (Figure 49) (Office for National Statistics, 2020o).

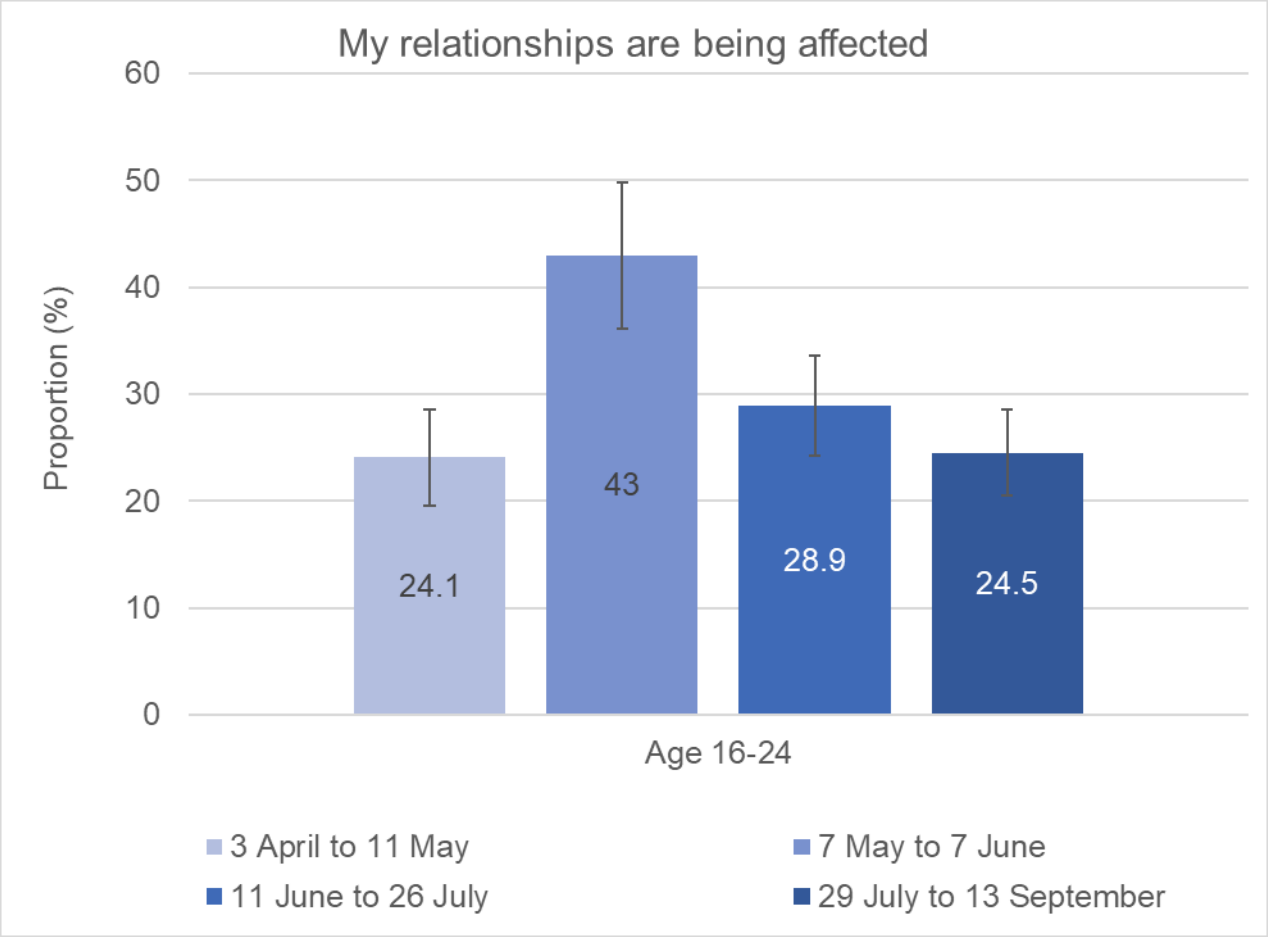
Figure 49: Relationships affected by the pandemic, young people compared with adults



Duration: April to May 2020. Coverage: Great Britain. Source: Office for National Statistics.

The Opinions and Lifestyles survey (ONS) found that older young people's relationships were being affected throughout the pandemic restrictions. Between the period of April 2020 and September 2020, between 24.1% and 43% of 16 to 24 year olds reported their relationships had been affected by the pandemic with a large peak in the data collected (between 7th of May and 7th of June) (Figure 50) (Office for National Statistics, 2020o).

Figure 50: Relationships affected by the pandemic, young people aged 16 to 24

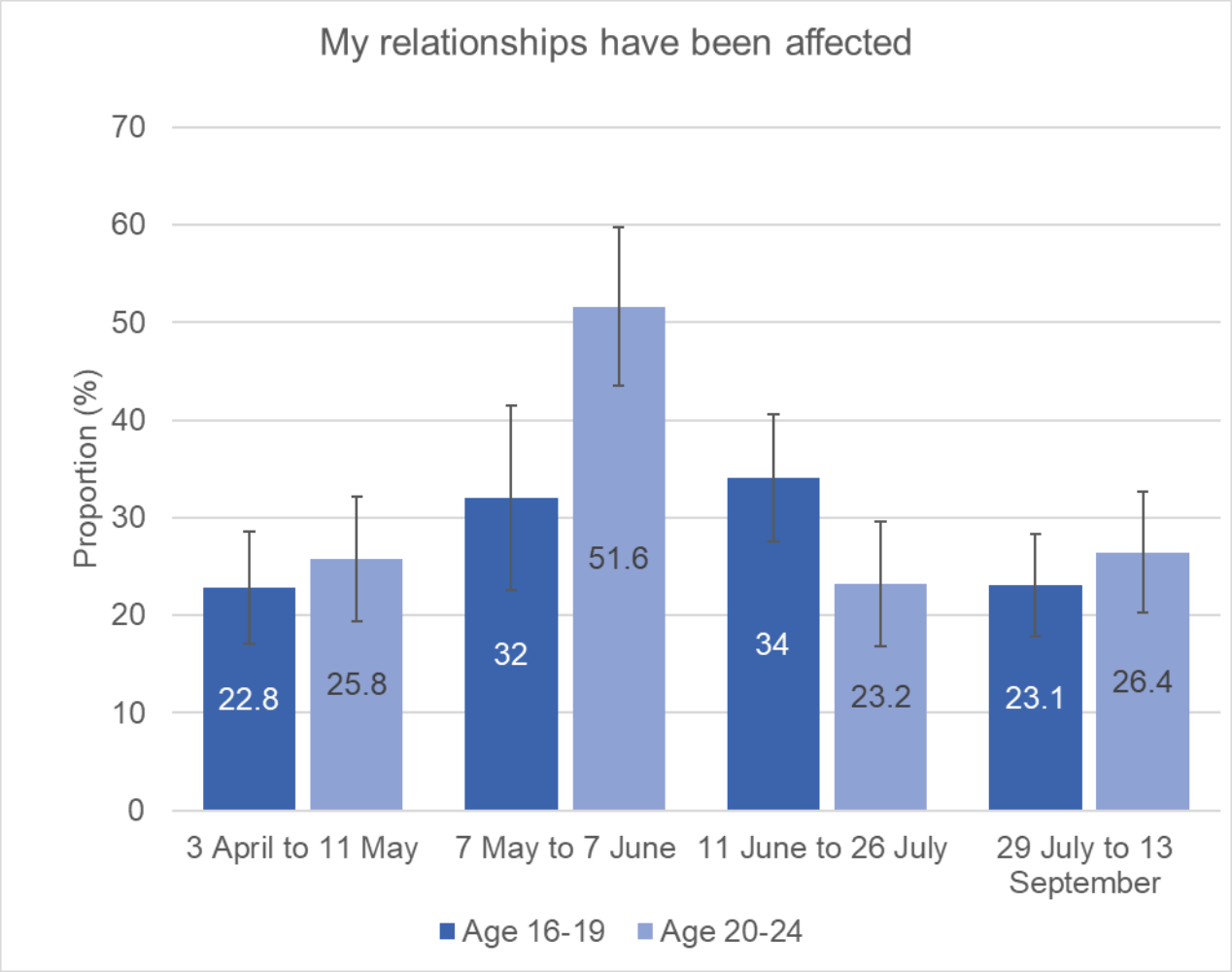


April to September 2020. Coverage: Great Britain. Source: Office for National Statistics. (error bars, 95% confidence intervals)

Age

Evidence from ONS also shows that the age group of 20 to 24 years were significantly more likely to report their relationships being affected, at the peak of this impact, than the 16 to 19 age group. While both age groups showed a peak in their relationships being affected (in that the proportion reporting was significantly higher than the first period of surveying), this is significantly higher at 51.6% of 20 to 24 year olds reported their relationships being affected in the period 7 May – 7 June 2020, compared to 32% of 16 to 19 year olds during this date range (see Figure 51). (Office for National Statistics, 2020o).

Figure 51: Effects on relationships, young people over time



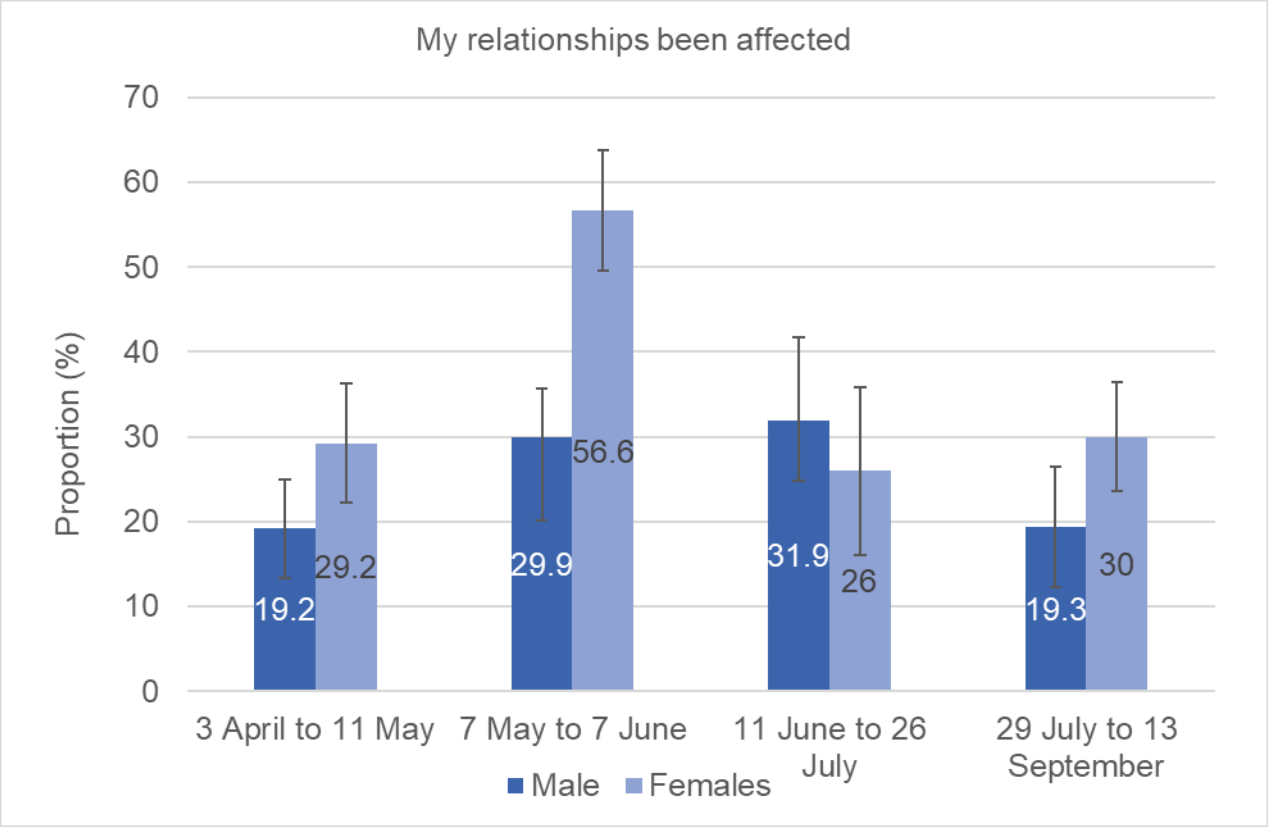
April to September 2020. Coverage: Great Britain. Source: Office for National Statistics. (error bars, 95% confidence intervals)

Sex

ONS found that for the 16 to 24 age group females were significantly more likely to report their relationships being affected, at the peak of this impact, than males. While the proportion of males reporting relationships affected is relatively stable over the surveying periods[50], a peak of 56.6% of females reported their relationships being affected in the period 7 May to 7 June 2020, compared to 29.9% for males in this same date range (Figure 52), (Office for National Statistics, 2020o).

[50] Small sample sizes mean that we cannot conclude that the apparent changes between time periods are real, and statistically significant, differences

Figure 52: Relationships affected by the pandemic, young people aged 16 to 24 by sex



Duration: April to September 2020. Coverage: Great Britain. Source: Office for National Statistics

Indicator: loneliness

For this measure we present:

- Summary for young people

The Centre for Longitudinal Studies surveyed the 19 year old members of the Millennium Cohort in May 2020, and found that 42% (+/-6%) of young men and 45% (+/- 4%) of young women reported high levels of loneliness[51]. (Henderson, M. et al, 2020)

ONS analysis[52] of survey data of adults aged 16 and over between 3 April and 10 May found that young people (aged 16 to 29 years) were more likely than older age groups to report feeling lonely some of the time (23% of 16 to 29 year olds compared to 17% 30 to 59 years and 13% of age 60+) or occasionally (31%, compared to 25% and 23% of 30 to

[51] Based on UCLA Loneliness Scale, 4 items: How often do you feel that you lack companionship? How often do you feel left out? How often do you feel isolated from others? How often do you feel lonely? 3 measurements: Hardly ever, Some of the time, Often

[52] ONS, 2020, Coronavirus and the social impacts on young people in Great Britain: 3 April to 10 May 2020

59 and 60+ year olds respectively). There was no difference in proportion saying they often or always felt lonely. (Office for National Statistics, 2020g)

Notes on evidence gaps

While we were able to include evidence on children and young people's relationships with friends, there was limited evidence available from a children and young person's own perspective about their relationships with families, for example were they having or hearing arguments at home. Evidence covering this gap is anticipated through the Mental Health of Children and Young People survey by NHS Digital.

Within the evidence we have presented, coverage of differences in children and young people's relationships at this time between young people with different characteristics is limited.

Domain 5: Personal Finance

Summary

Although household finances are not generally directly associated with children's mental health or subjective wellbeing, subjective views of relative material deprivation can be, as can experience of financial worry or strain[53]. As experiences during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic could be influenced by families' pre-existing material and financial resources, contextual measures on poverty are also included in this section.

- Just under one in six children in Great Britain lived in low-income households in 2018/19, and most children are generally happy with the things that they have at this time.
- Estimates of the proportion of children's households in Great Britain which have had a reduced household income during the pandemic have varied between 20% and 35%. Over 400,000 additional households with dependent children claimed Universal Credit in April and May 2020. There are indications that more parents have been cutting meal sizes or skipping meals due to not having enough money.
- Young people themselves have also seen big impacts on their own employment, both through paid leave from work, for example furlough, or through unpaid leave and unemployment. April and May 2020 also saw a large increase in new Universal Credit claims in the 16 to 24 age group. There is also evidence to suggest that those young people who were already struggling financially have been more likely to see worse financial impacts of the pandemic.

Contextual Indicator: Proportion of children living in low income households

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) estimates that, in 2018/19, 1.9 million children aged under 16 (15% of children aged under 16) in Great Britain lived in households with absolute low-income before housing costs (the household income was below 60% of (an inflation adjusted) median income in 2010/11). This has been stable over the last few years. (Department for Work and Pensions, 2020a)

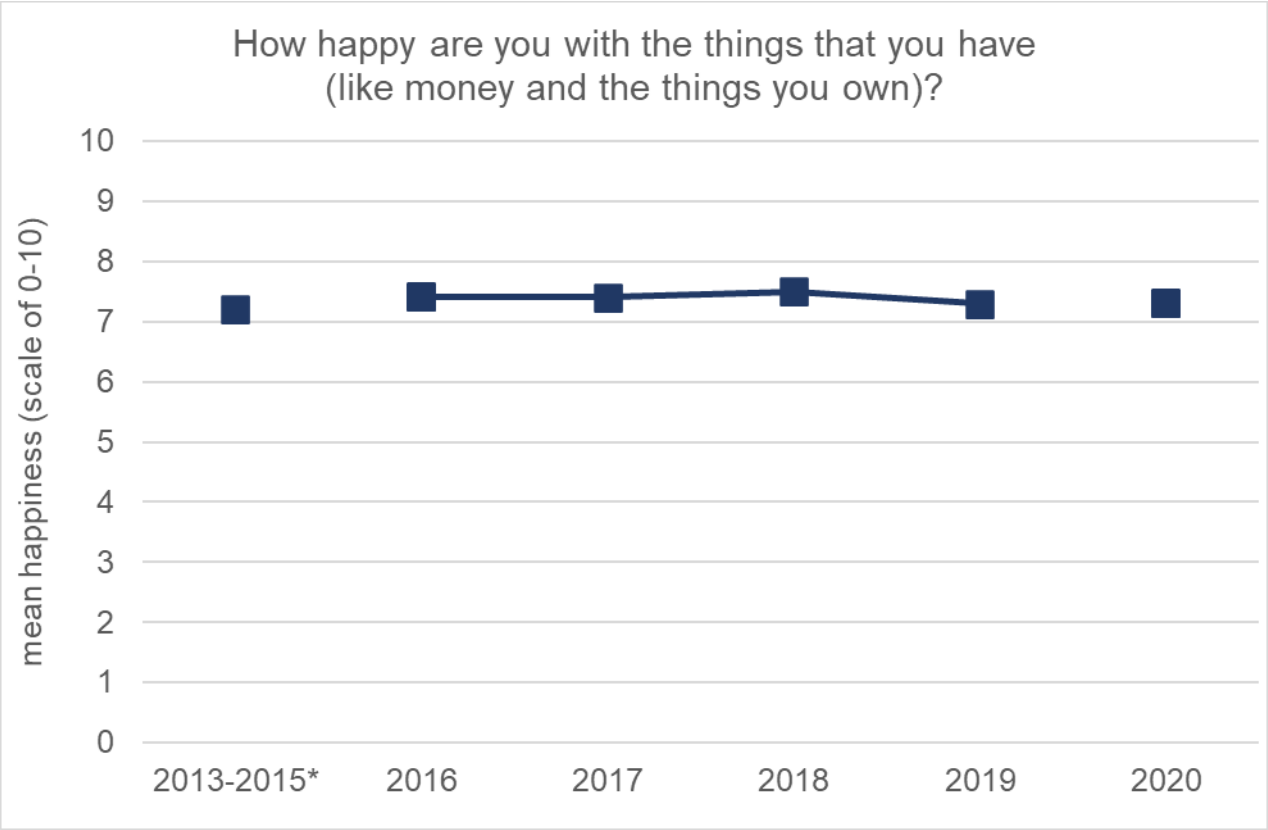
Indicator: Happiness with possessions

Children and young people were asked by the Children's Society, in April to June 2020, to rate their level of happiness with the things that they have. On average, children and

[53] What Works Centre for Wellbeing blog: Understanding the links between children's mental health and socio-economic status; Patalay and Fitzsimons (2016) Correlates of Mental Illness and Wellbeing in Children: Are They the Same? Results From the UK Millennium Cohort Study

young people in the UK rated this as 7.3 out of 10, which is within the range of scores given to this question as at the same time in recent years in Great Britain (ranging from 7.3 to 7.5 out of 10 from 2016 [54]) (See Figure 53). 11.1% of children and young people scored their happiness with this part of their life below the midpoint of the scale, which is in line with last year's findings on children and young people in Great Britain. (The Children's Society, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 & 2020b)

Figure 53: Happiness with possessions, children and young people aged 10 to 17



Coverage: 2020 UK, 2013 – 2019 Great Britain, Note: discontinuity in time series, see 'Data sources and methods' annexe for further information. N=2,000. Source: Children's Society

Indicator: Impact on household income and finances

This section reports how parents say their household finances have been affected by the pandemic and what young people say about the impact on their own financial situation.

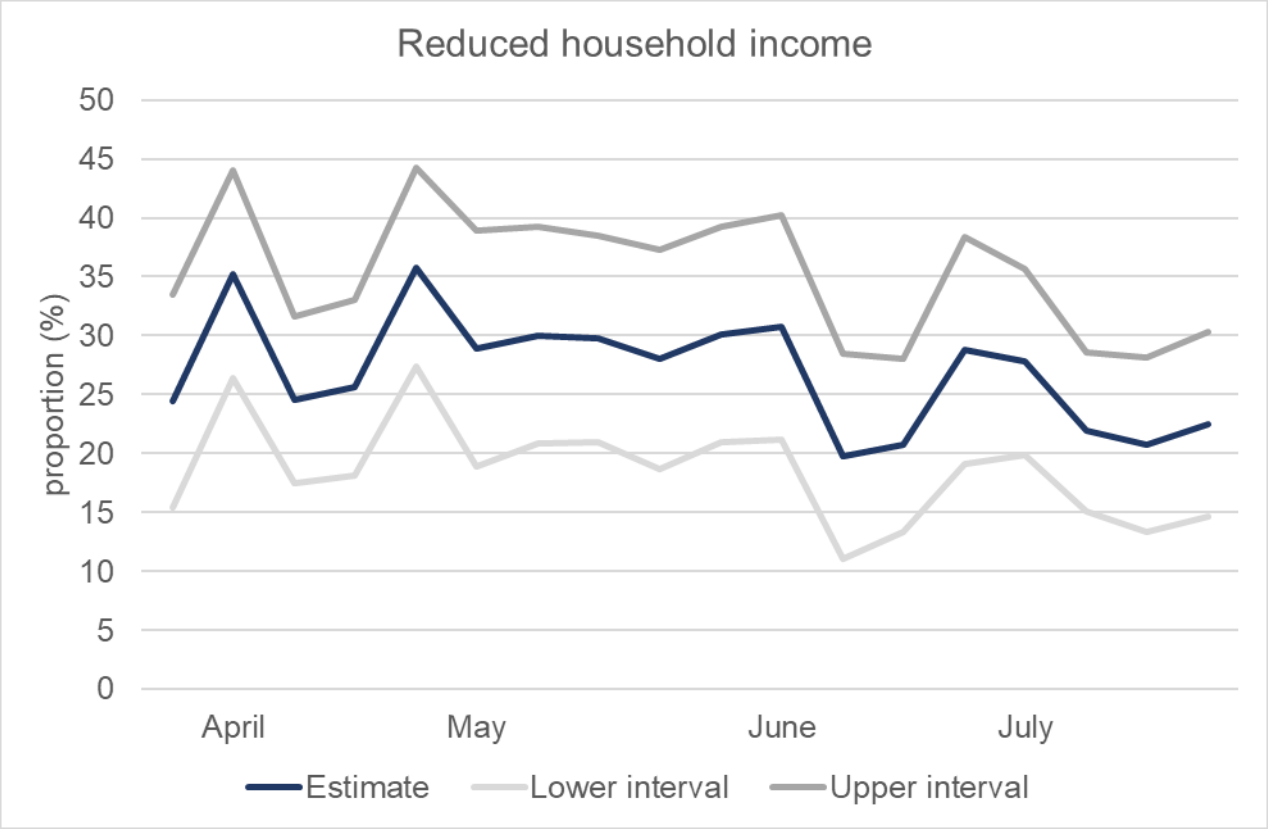
The Office for National Statistics' Opinions and Lifestyle survey finds that between 20% and 30% of parents report that the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic had affected their

[54] Please note, we cannot directly compare this year's data to previous years' due to a change in the geography covered and other changes in methodology. These comparisons are based on the descriptive data alone and not any statistical testing.

finances by reducing their household income (see Figure 54). This has varied during the pandemic and there is not enough evidence to suggest a trend between April and July. There is also not enough data to conclude whether parents have been more or less likely to have reduced household income than non-parents (Office for National Statistics, 2020m).

In a separate repeated survey of parents in England by the Department of Education between 27% and 30% of parents reported a major cut in household income. This did not vary noticeably with the age of children in the household (whether they were in primary or secondary school). Experiencing a major cut in household income also did not appear to vary by disadvantage (as measured either by eligibility for free school meals or socio-demographic group), or by ethnicity[55].[56]

Figure 54: Parents with reduced household income



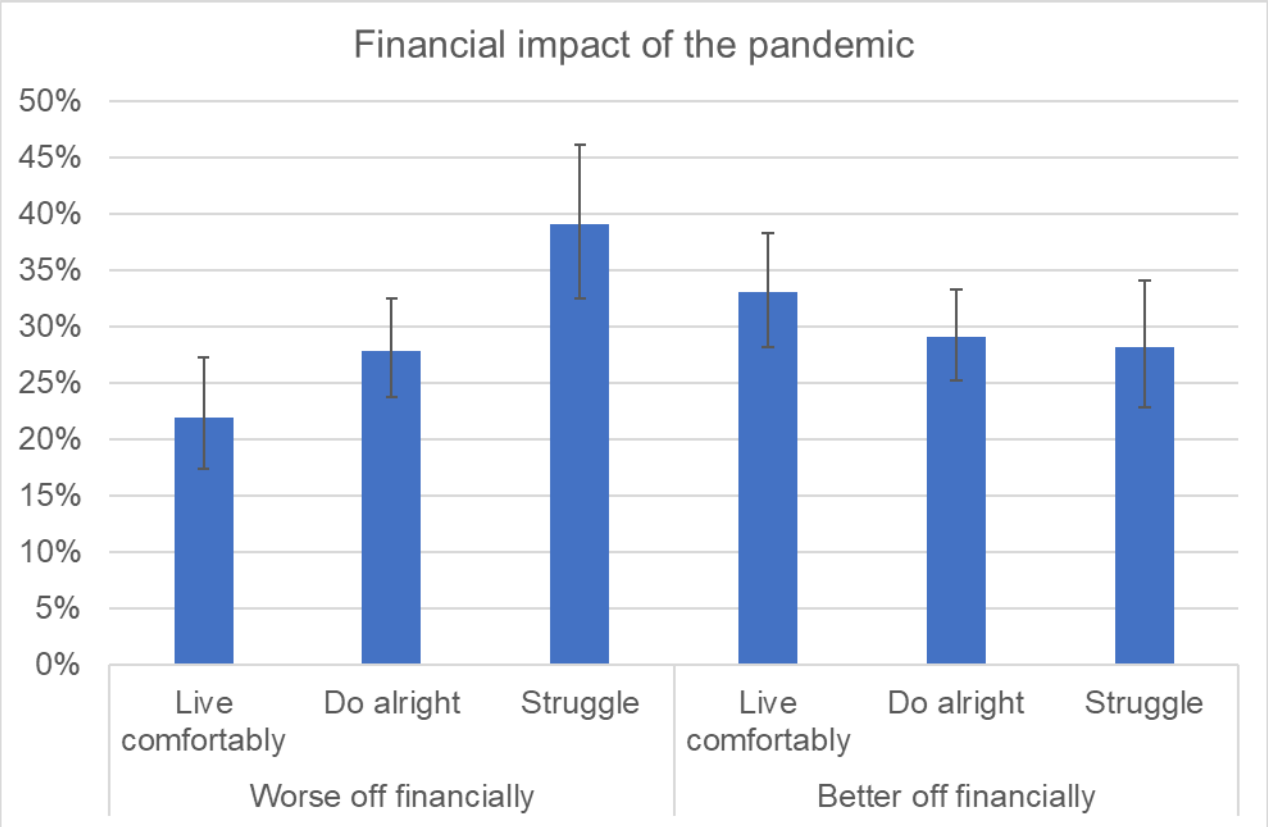
March to July 2020. Coverage: Great Britain. Source: ONS

In their May 2020 COVID survey, the Centre for Longitudinal Studies asked members of the Millennium Cohort, aged 19 years old from across the UK, whether they were financially better off or worse off during the pandemic. Responses show that many

[55] Comparing all parents from White ethnic backgrounds to all parents from Black, Asian or minority ethnic backgrounds, sample numbers would have been too small to observe differences for specific ethnic groups.
[56] See Annexe B 'Department for Education – COVID-19 panel survey of Pupils, Parents and Carers'.

young people (47%) had no change in their financial position, a third reported being worse off than before the pandemic and one in five reported being better off financially. When viewed in light of young people's financial position before the pandemic it was found that those who were struggling financially before the pandemic were more likely to say that the pandemic had resulted in them being worse off than those young people who had been living comfortably. (Wielgoszewska, B., Green, F., and Goodman, A., 2020)

Figure 55: Self-reported financial impact of the pandemic for 19 year olds by pre-pandemic financial situation



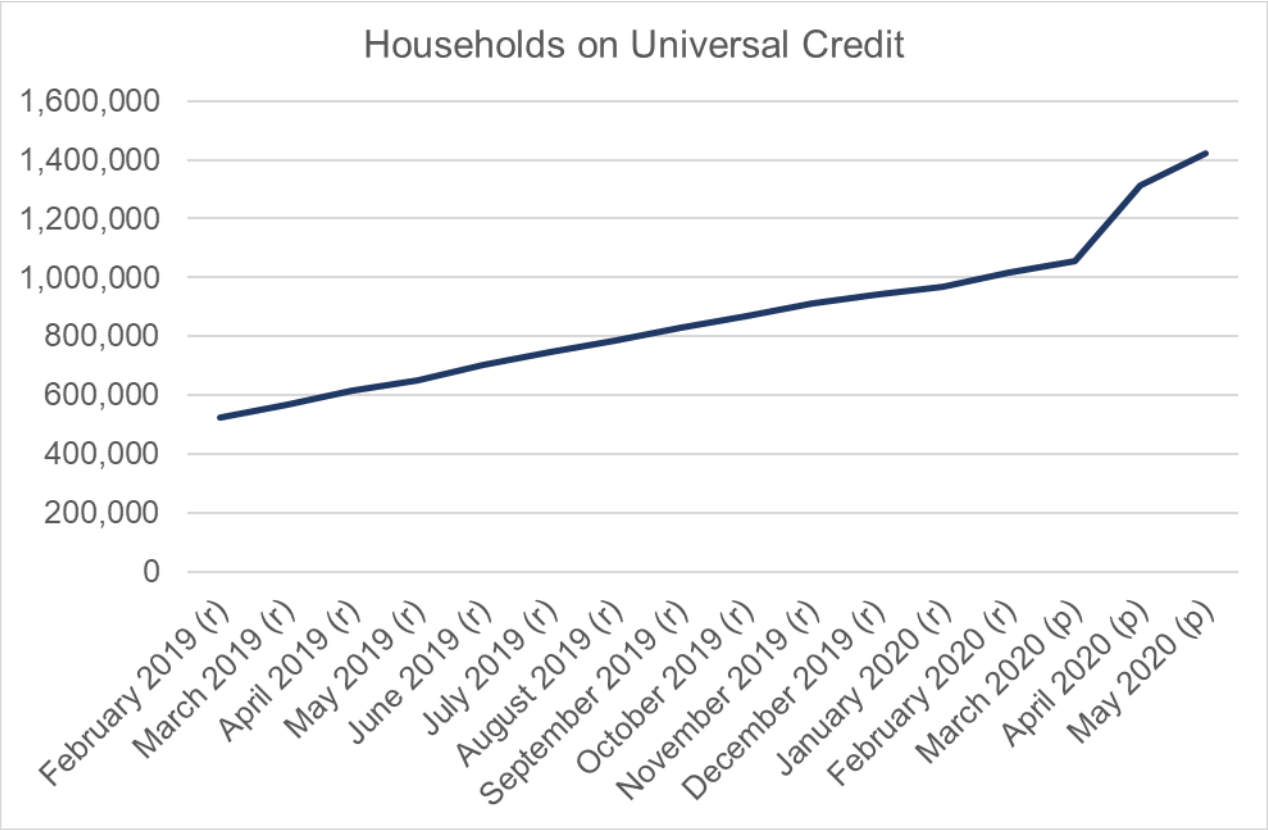
May 2020. Coverage: UK. Source: Centre for Longitudinal Studies

Indicator: Universal Credit

Universal Credit is a social security benefit, paid to households on low incomes, out of work, or who cannot work. It was introduced to replace a number of other benefits such as housing benefit, income support and job seekers allowance. As Universal Credit has been rolled out to new claimants and to areas across the country, the numbers of households with dependent children claiming this benefit has risen steadily. In February 2019, just over 500,000 households with dependent children in England were claiming this benefit and by February 2020 the number was just over a million. Provisional data on claims for April and May 2020 shows a large increase in the number of families who were claiming Universal Credit in England. Almost 300,000 more families with dependent

children in England were claiming Universal Credit in April 2020 compared to March 2020, and a further 100,000 were claiming Universal Credit in May 2020. Part of this increase reflects the long-term change from other benefits to Universal Credit, but some of the increase is likely to reflect significant changes in the circumstances of families with dependent children during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. (Department for Work and Pensions, 2020b)

Figure 56: Households with dependent children on Universal Credit



February 2019 to February 2020 - revised statistics. March 2020 to May 2020 – provisional statistics. Coverage: England. Source: DWP

Indicator: Food Security

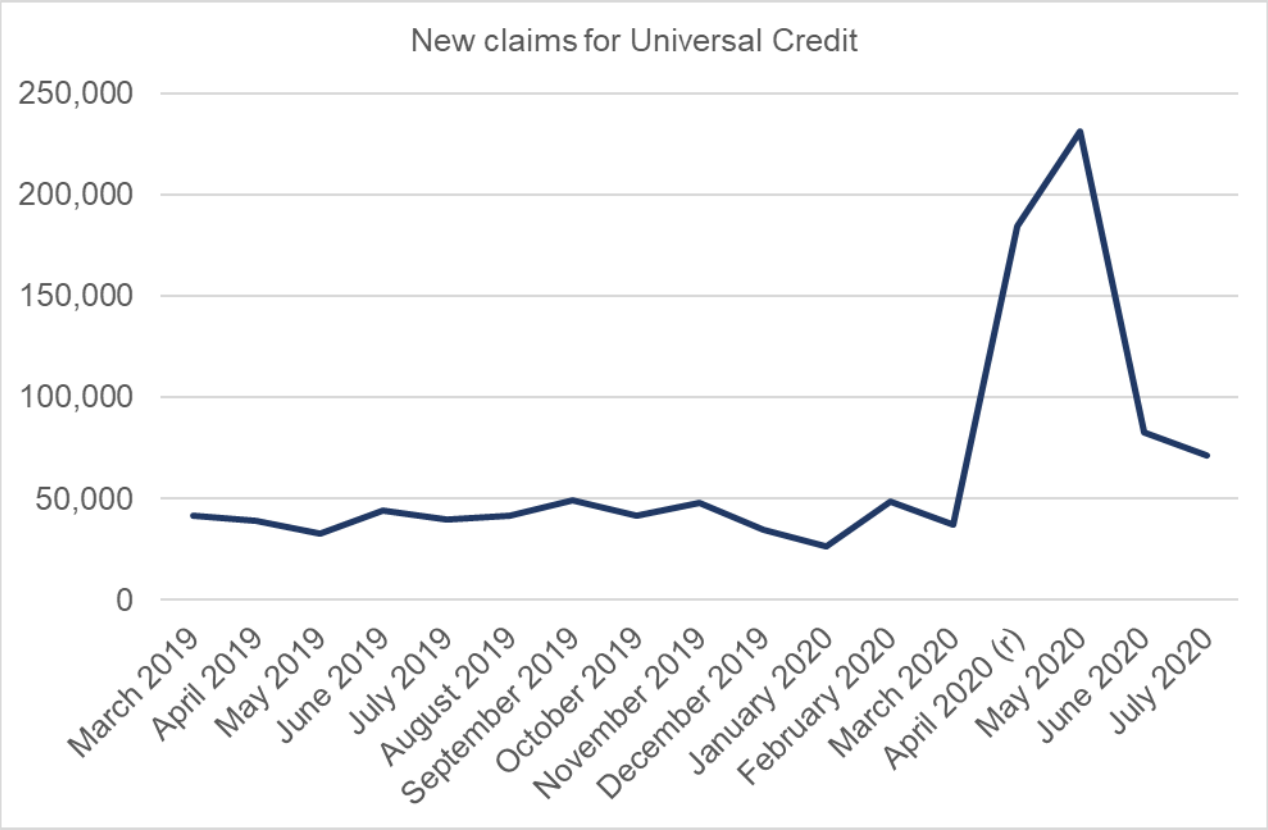
The Food Standards Agency surveyed a sample of families in England, Wales and Northern Ireland monthly from April to July 2020. Across all months, they found that: *"households with a child were more likely to report cutting meal sizes or skipping meals due to not having enough money (26% in July, 28% in April) compared to those without a child (12% in July, 14% in April)."* (Food Standards Agendy, 2020) These levels may be slightly higher than recent historic benchmarks showing that 19% of children under 16 years old in the United Kingdom lived in households with moderate or severe food insecurity (compromising on the quality and variety of food, reducing quantities and

skipping meals or experiencing hunger).(Pereira, A., Handa, and S., Holmqvist, G., 2017).)

Indicator: Young people's employment

In April and May 2020, new claims for Universal Credits by young people aged 16 to 24 were up to three times as high as the typical number of claims in the previous year from March 2019. Over 184,000 new claims were made by 16 to 24 year olds in April and over 230,000 were made in May. (Department for Work and Pensions, 2020c)

Figure 57: New claims for Universal Credit, young people aged 16 to 24 years



March 2019 to July 2020. Coverage: Great Britain. Source: DWP

The Centre for Longitudinal Studies reports that 64% of 19 year olds who were employed before the pandemic had stopped working in May 2020. In 71% of these cases, this was a temporary break from working supported through furlough or paid leave. (Wielgoszewska, B., Green, F., and Goodman, A., 2020))

Notes on evidence gaps

This review of personal finance relating to wellbeing is only an early overview of some of the evidence gathered about children and young people's households' finances during

the first phase of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. More complete analyses of children and young people's financial situation at this time will follow in the future as researchers make use of sources like the UK Household Longitudinal Study, Birth Cohort Studies, national surveys such as the Labour Force survey and Family resources survey and administrative data to examine the current economic situation as it relates to children.

Within the evidence we have presented, there is little on any differences in finances at this time between different groups of children, for example those in ethnic minorities, disabled young people, comparisons between employment for young men and young women, and economically disadvantaged families.

Domain 6: 'What we do' – Activities and time use

Summary

How young people spend their time is a key factor in their wellbeing and having opportunity to take part in positive activities, such as in physical exercise, arts and cultural activities or volunteering and feeling happy with how they spend their time are supportive of positive wellbeing[57]. As with other aspects of life, access to many activities and the freedom to choose how to spend time has been curtailed by the interventions taken to reduce the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19).

Key findings:

- Children and young people's average happiness with how they get to use their time remains high and in line with previous years, although the proportion unhappy with their time appears to have increased.
- The majority of children and young people have been fairly physically active during April to July 2020. While similar proportions of parents reported that their children had done either more or less physical activity than usual (before the pandemic and associated restrictions), comparison with previous benchmarks does suggest that activity levels had reduced overall, with between 12% and 22% reported as being active (more than an hour's physical activity daily on average) compared to 47% reported in a different survey of children and young people the previous year.
- There is some evidence of increased use of social media by young people, particularly girls.

Indicator: Happiness with time use

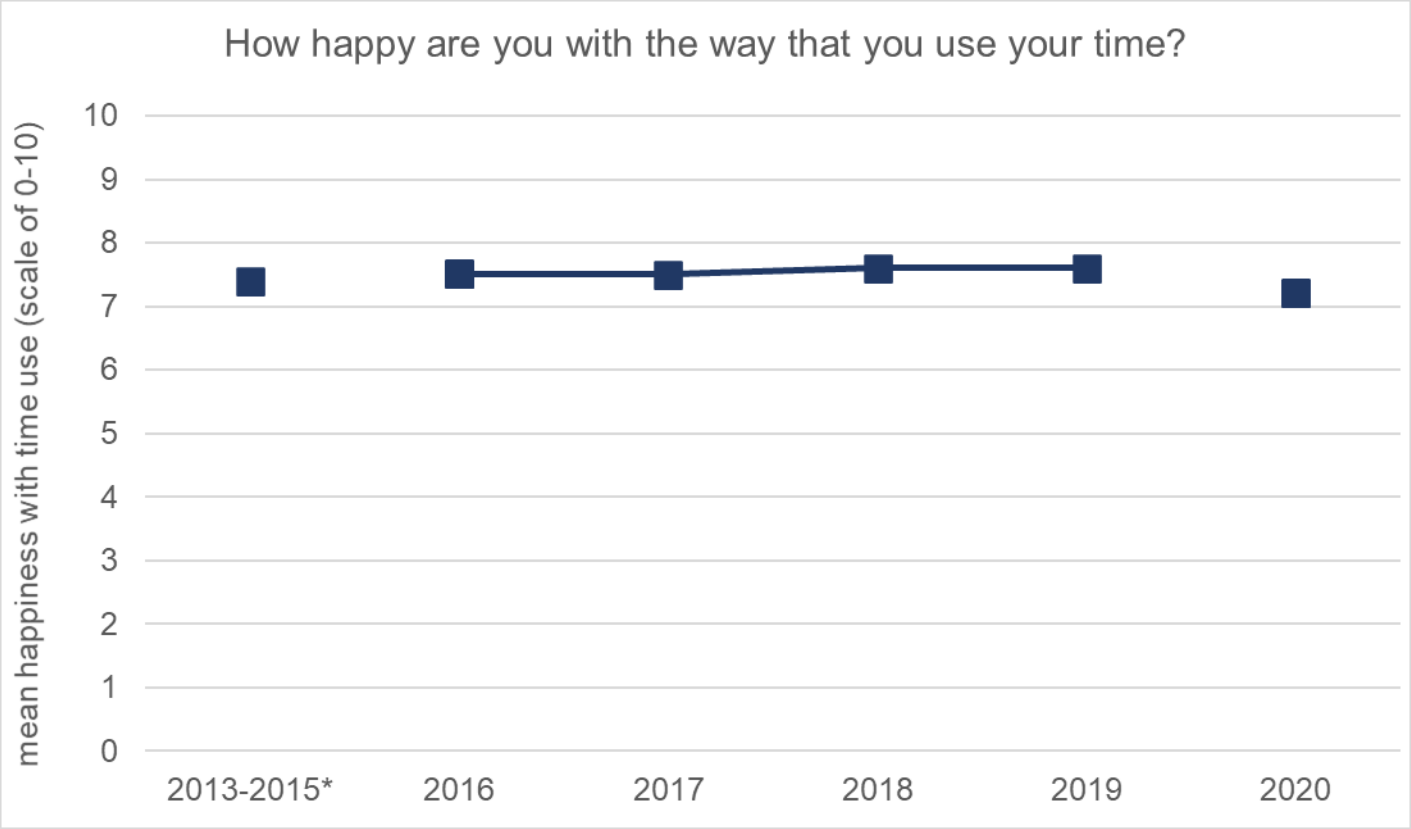
The Children's Society surveyed children and young people in the UK from April to June 2020, the peak of restrictions during the initial stages of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in the UK. Children's happiness with their use of time appears to have reduced slightly, rated 7.2 on average out of 10, compared to previous years, which varied between 7.5 and 7.6 from 2016 in Great Britain[58]. (Figure 58). While the proportion reporting low happiness with time use at 9.1% has also increased compared previous

[57] The Children's Society. Promoting positive well-being for children and Ways to Wellbeing; Hughes et al (2018) Sources of resilience and their moderating relationships with harms from adverse childhood experiences

[58] Please note, we cannot directly compare this year's data to previous years' due to a change in the geography covered and other changes in methodology. These comparisons are based on the descriptive data alone and not any statistical testing.

years where it varied between 4.7% to 6.1%. (The Children's Society, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 & 2020b)

Figure 58: Happiness with time use, children aged 10 to 17 years



Coverage: 2020 UK, 2013 – 2019 Great Britain, Note: discontinuity in time series, see 'Data sources and methods' annexe for further information. N=2,000. Source: Children's Society

Indicator: Physical activity

Sports England carried out a regular poll of 2,000 adults in England including over 500 parents on a weekly basis through April and May with monthly follow up surveys in June and July.

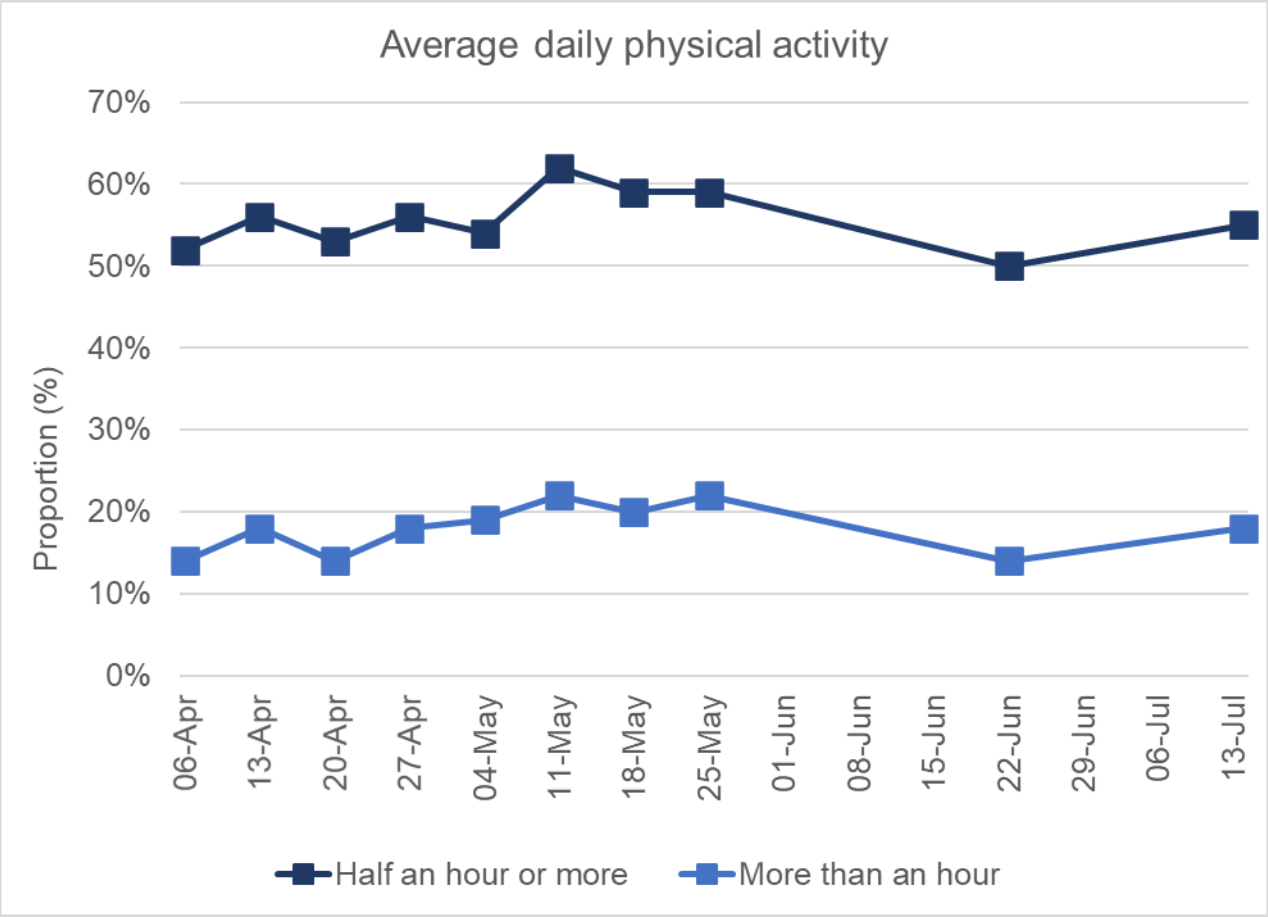
Surveyed parents reported that over half of children were fairly active (they had half an hour or more of daily physical activity on average) throughout April to July and between 12% and 22% were active (they had an hour or more of daily physical activity on average) during the same period[59]. This has not varied significantly throughout the whole period of the research. Between April and mid-May, parents were split fairly evenly between saying that their children were exercising the same as usual, more than usual or

[59] An average of 60 minutes a day is the amount of physical activity recommended for children by the Chief Medical Officer.

less than usual. Despite parents views that overall levels of activity were not on the whole much different at this time, it should be noted that the Active Lives Children and Young people survey 2018/19 (Sport England, 2019) suggests a higher level of activity prior to the pandemic than reported by parents in their coronavirus (COVID-19) survey. The earlier benchmark suggests that 71% of children and young people were fairly active and 47% were active[60].

The Sport England coronavirus (COVID-19) survey found that adults with no access to a private space outside were less likely to have undertaken an average of half an hour of daily activity or more. This relationship has not been tested for children's activity levels. (Sport England, 2020)

Figure 59: Physical activity, children and young people under 16 years of age



April to July 2020. Coverage: England. Source: Sport England

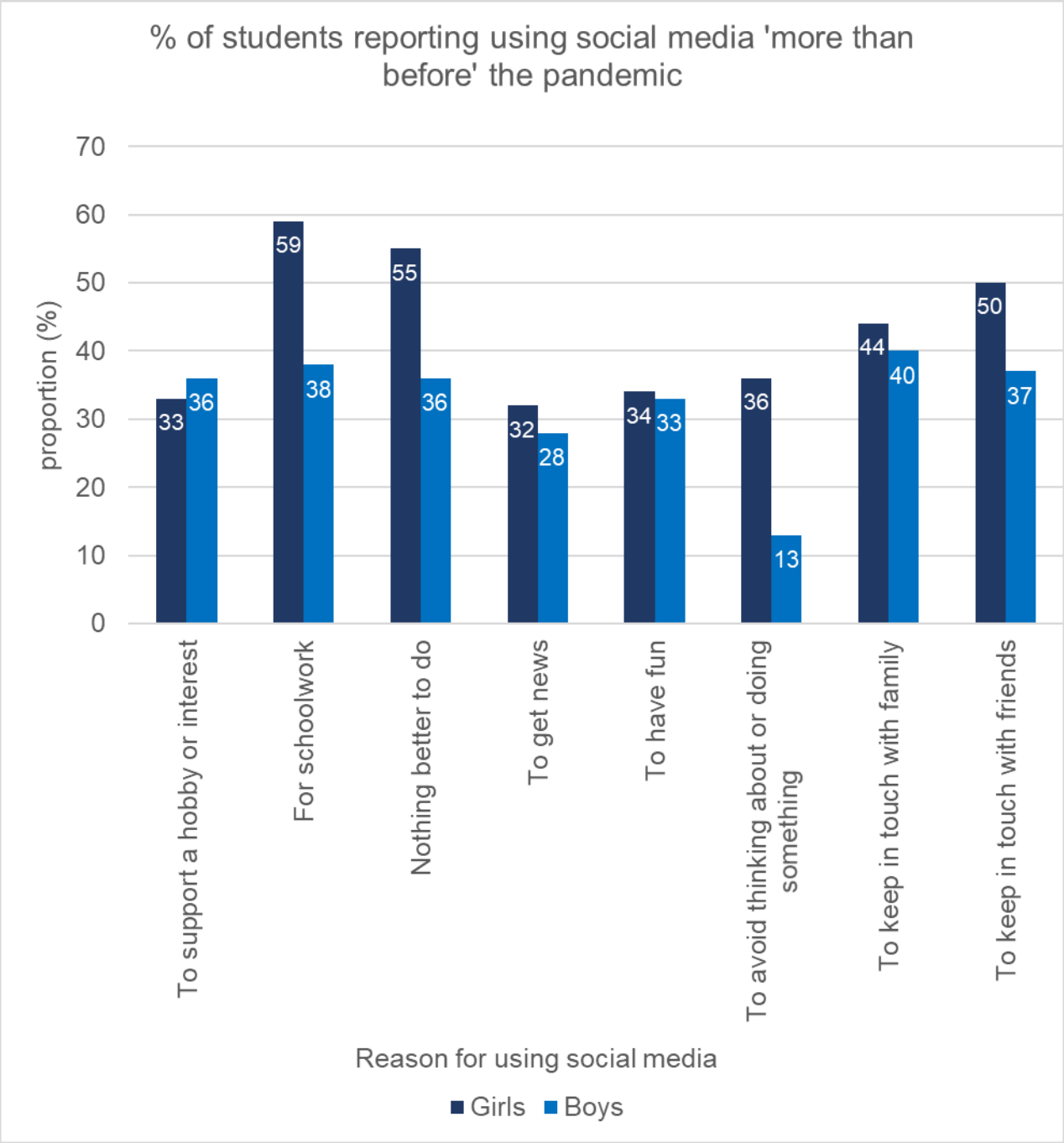
Indicator: Social media use

An ongoing study in South West England, which collected data from a sample of Year 9 students in October 2019 and again in April/May 2019 on their mental health, wellbeing

[60] Please note the two surveys cannot be directly compared so this difference is just indicative

and social media use reported that girls were more likely to report high social media use of 3 or more hours a day during lockdown (55%) than pre-pandemic (42%), whereas there was little change for boys (30% in lockdown compared to 29% before). Boys lower reporting of social media use may be due to gaming not being included in the definition of social media for this study. Of young people reporting an increase in their social media use this was for a variety of reasons, most commonly school work, keeping in touch with friends or family, having nothing better to do (See Figure 60). (Widnall, E. et al., 2020)

Figure 60: Social media use young people aged 13 and 14 years old



April to May 2020. Coverage: Bristol. Source: University of Bristol. Widnall, E. et al (2020)

Notes on evidence gaps

Given the interaction between children and young people's activities in their spare time, social contact, formation of relationships and development of skills and traits important for resilience, we found limited publicly available data that met quality criteria on the activities that children and young people were doing at this time. Understanding the extent to which the pandemic and associated restrictions has impacted on children and young people's access to and participation in activities and control over how they use their time and especially whether and how this varies for different sub groups is a key evidence gap at this time.

Data from the Mental Health of Children and Young People survey carried out by NHS Digital in summer 2020 may provide good evidence on experiences within this domain.

Domain 7: 'Where we live' – Home and the environment

Summary

Finally, the environment in which children and young people live affects the activities and choices available to them, as well as their basic needs for shelter, comfort and feeling safe. Natural England's Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment 2019 finds that: *"adults and children living in the most deprived areas were less likely to spend time outside frequently than those living in more affluent areas"*. (Natural England, 2020a)

Key findings:

- Most children and young people are happy with their home and live in 'decent' homes with adequate safety, facilities, and heating.
- Some children and young people's homes are not 'decent', and some children will have spent more time in their non-decent home, (that is without either adequate safety, facilities or heating) during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.
- The majority of children are able to spend some time outside in green and natural places at least a couple of times per week.

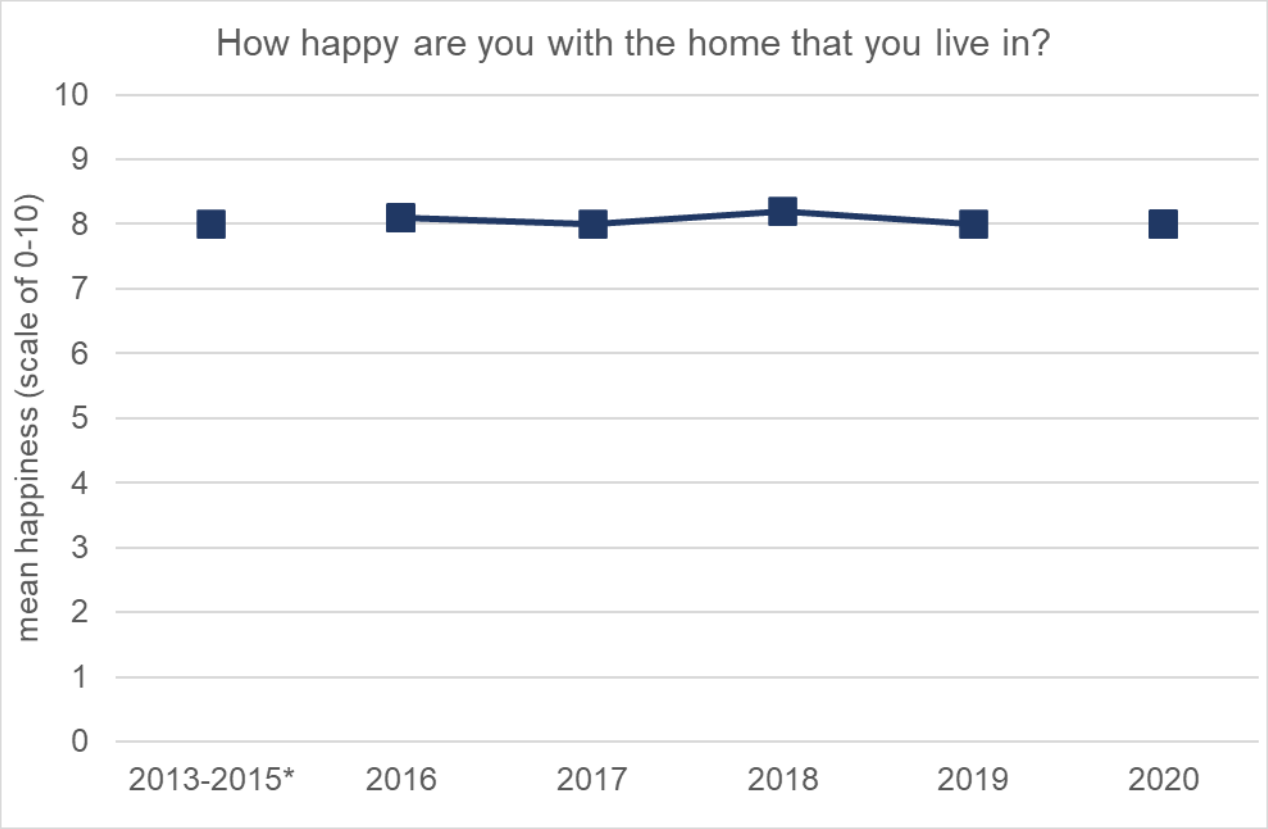
Indicator: Home

Happiness with home

The Children's Society found that, in April to June 2020 in the UK, children and young people's self-assessed happiness with their home (at 8 out of 10), was very similar to recent years in Great Britain (ranging from 8 to 8.2 out of 10 from 2016[61]) (See Figure 61). Overall, home is one of the areas of life which children and young people are happiest. However, not all children are happy with the home they live in, 6.9% of children reported low happiness with their home, which is broadly in line last year's survey of children and young people in Great Britain. (The Children's Society, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 & 2020b)

[61] Please note, we cannot directly compare this year's data to previous years' due to a change in the geography covered and other changes in methodology. These comparisons are based on the descriptive data alone and not any statistical testing.

Figure 61: Happiness with home, children and young people aged 10 to 17

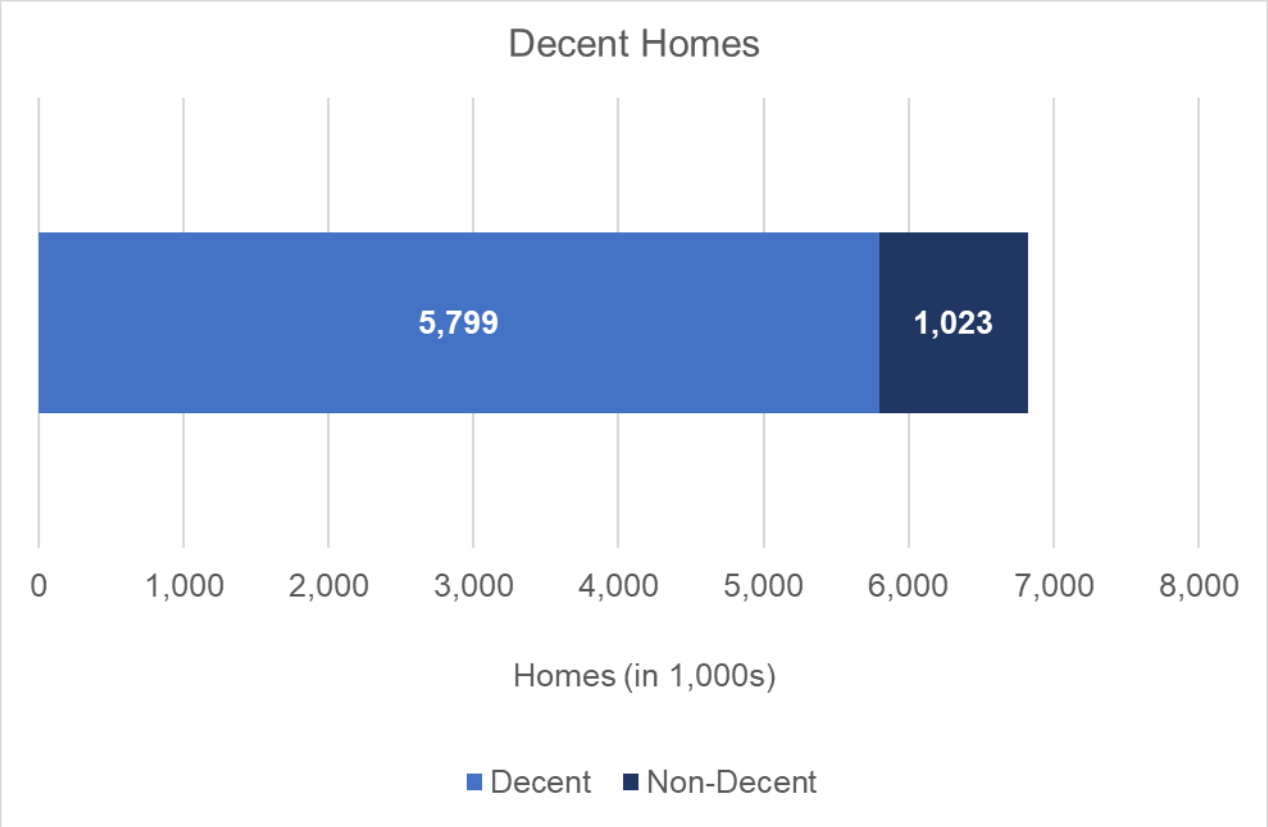


Coverage: 2020 UK, 2013 – 2019 Great Britain, Note: discontinuity in time series, see 'Data sources and methods' annexe for further information. N=2,000. Source: Children's Society

Quality of Housing

The English Housing Survey found that, in 2018, 85% of homes with a resident dependent child were decent, meaning they met health and safety guidance, were in good repair and had sufficiently modern facilities and heating. The other 15% of homes in which dependent children lived (an estimated 1,023,000 homes) did not meet this decency standard (See Figure 62). Although this data was not gathered during the pandemic, the decency of homes is unlikely to have been substantially changed in the pandemic and children have spent a greater portion of their time at home in recent months. (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2020)

Figure 62: Decent homes where dependent children live



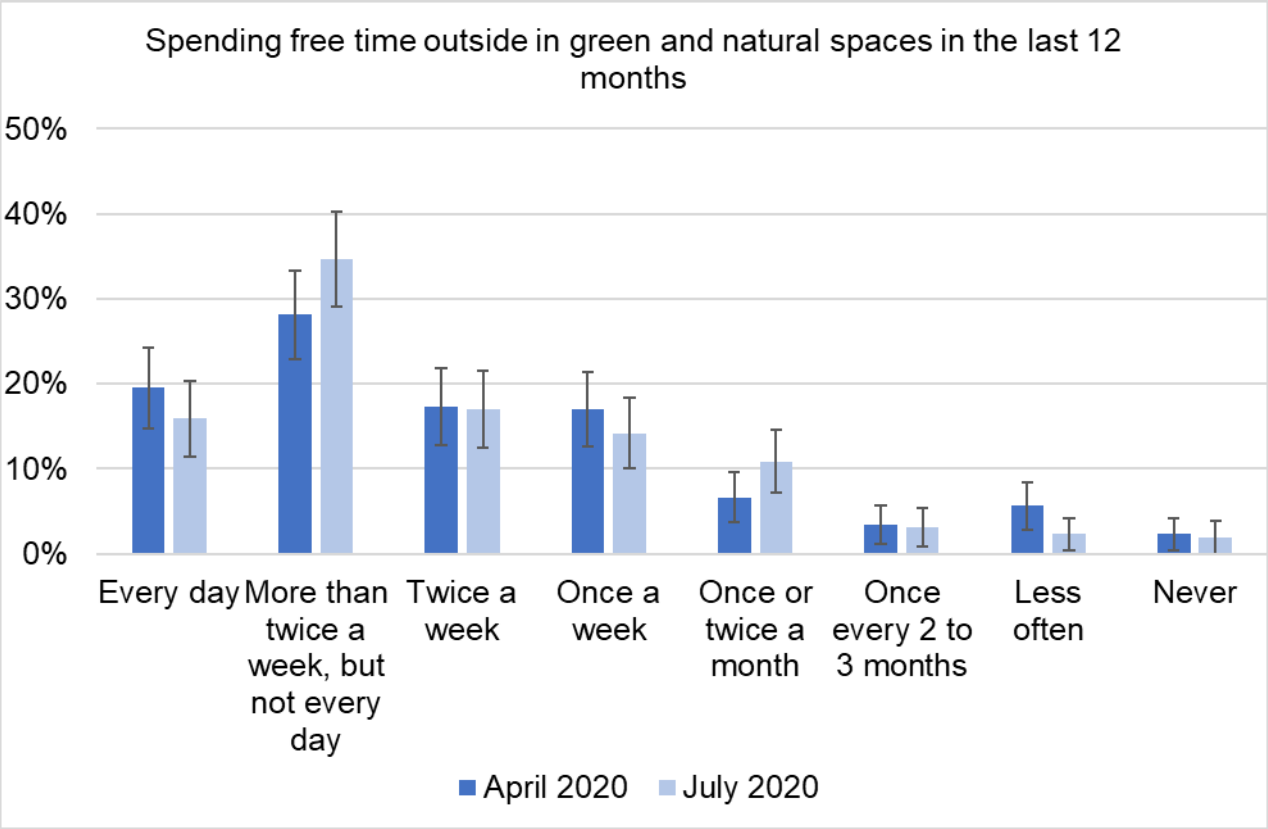
2018. Coverage: England. Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

Indicator: Time spent outdoors

In April, Natural England asked a small sample of parents how often their child spent free time outside in green and natural spaces on average over the last 12 months. The majority of these parents (65%) said that their child had spent free time outside in green and natural spaces twice a week or more. A small proportion of children, around 8% spent free time outside in green and natural spaces fewer than 4 times a year or not at all (see Figure 63). The survey was repeated monthly and though responses to the survey

changed slightly, the sample is not large enough to suggest that any real difference in the response over the course of the pandemic. (Natural England, 2020b)

Figure 63: How often children have spent outside in green and natural spaces in the last 12 months



April to July 2020. Coverage: England. Source: Natural England. (error bars: confidence intervals)

Notes on evidence gaps

Again, this review of children and young people's homes and environment relating to wellbeing is only an early overview of some evidence gathered about where children and young people have lived during the first phase of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Particular areas where we would have liked to present evidence but couldn't locate strong contemporary data within the timeframe include over-crowding of homes, and children and young people's happiness with the area that they live in, and feelings of safety in the place they live.

Analysis of any differences between groups of children and young people was not possible with the evidence available at this time. Some, more complete, analyses of

children and young people's housing situation at this time in relation to their coronavirus (COVID-19) experiences may follow in the future as researchers make use of sources like the UK Household Longitudinal Study, Birth Cohort Studies, and administrative data to examine the current economic situation as it relates to children.

Discussion

The state of the nation of children and young people's wellbeing

Overall, the data collated here gives a surprisingly positive picture of the wellbeing and experiences of the majority of children and young people at this time, especially in light of much media reporting about anticipated impacts, and anticipated impacts identified in reviews of previous literature[62]. Much of the available data is about children and young people on average and as a whole. This can tend to overlook the experiences of subgroups and those outside the average. The data we have gives indications of these negative outcomes, but more data is needed, especially about subgroups that are indicated here as having experienced greater challenges and poorer wellbeing. The lack of data that can be compared to a period prior to the pandemic also limits our understanding of the impact on children and young people's wellbeing. The data reported here is also from an early time in the pandemic, and it may be the case that developing impacts on wellbeing and mental health were not yet observable in validated scales and other harmonised measures. It may also be an early indication that many children and young people have the individual resilience and wider support structures to help them navigate this challenging time.

There are signs that children and young people's wellbeing, on the whole, has been quite resilient to the some of the challenges that 2020 has brought. The data presented here is, as noted already, incomplete, but several key measures uphold this early assessment. For example, children and young people's overall levels of happiness do not seem to have been greatly affected, average reductions in life satisfaction were small and there has been no change in some objective measures of psychological wellbeing. Some measures of children and young people's subjective wellbeing have worsened slightly on average compared with previous years, notably overall life satisfaction, while feelings of anxiousness among older young people may have increased. There are indications that children and young people with particular characteristics may have experienced lower subjective wellbeing, for example disabled children and young people, children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and some children from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds. There is already published research highlighting the links between some of these characteristics and increased likelihood of being directly affected by the pandemic (Public Health England, 2020, Bourquin, P et al. 2020, Officer for National Statistics, 2020l). We do not know if this, or other reasons, are the driver of the

[62] For example: Nobles et al (2020) The potential impact of COVID-19 on mental health outcomes and the implications for service solutions; Brooks et al (2020) The psychological impact of quarantine and how to reduce it: rapid review of the evidence; Golberstein, E. 2020, Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and mental health for children and adolescents. JAMA Pediatrics, https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanchi/article/PIIS2352-4642(20)30186-3/fulltext; https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(19)31013-X/fulltext;

apparent differences in wellbeing in these groups at this time. It is also clear that despite the social safety nets in place, both specific to the pandemic and from before this[63], some families have experienced additional economic change and hardship in this time, which may add to stresses within the home. Further, there were already pre-existing inequalities in children and young people's wellbeing, for example, differences between girls' and boys' mental health and wellbeing, particularly from adolescence into young adulthood. (for example, Patalay, P., and Fitzsimons, E., 2017, and NHS Digital, 2018)

That children were reportedly more worried about their friends and family catching coronavirus (COVID-19), than catching the disease themselves, does suggest that the message that the average risk to children from the virus is low has reached a wide group of people. However, with estimates of a quarter to a third worrying a lot or extremely about catching coronavirus (COVID-19) (see Figure 20), it still seems that concern by children outstrips their personal risk. (Swann, O.V. et al., 2020)

There are early indications that children's self-reported and parental reported mental health and wellbeing had declined during the spring and summer months. Behaviour and restlessness or attention difficulties were noted to have increased during these months for children and young people, while older young people have reported a general deterioration in their psychological wellbeing. It is too early to know how lasting these changes might be and it may be some time before any specific effect of the pandemic is understood in relation to longer term decreases in mental health and wellbeing amongst young people.

Although many parents have reported that their children were learning during the period of home schooling and remote learning, there are two themes in the evidence collected here which show the potential benefits of children and young people returning to school and college. Firstly, the evidence does show that children have had concerns about missing school, more so perhaps than their concerns about catching the coronavirus (COVID-19), and parents also report that children have struggled to learn effectively at home. Other evidence also suggests that while parents may have felt children were learning something at home, teachers and school leaders report pupils falling substantially behind where they would expect them to be (for example, Sharp, C. et al., 2020) . As education and skills is a core pillar of current and future wellbeing, returning to school where teachers can provide education in a classroom setting, and can provide pastoral support, should help restore this aspect of children and young people's wellbeing. Second, children and young people of all ages have described the negative effect of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and its associated interventions on their friendships and relationships. Despite mostly keeping in contact in some form with friends during the time they have been away from school, returning into the same

[63] for example, the job retention scheme, universal credits and the coronavirus (COVID-19) specific uplift to this, provision of paid leave for staff by some companies, free school meals and the delivery of free school meal replacement vouchers through the school holidays

environment with their friends should also bring back some of the normal benefits of friendship, of enjoyment and mutual support.

Information on the experiences of children and young people during the pandemic, as collated here, and beyond, have been used as they have emerged to inform the support measures put in place by the Department for Education, such as the fast-tracked training on mental health for the implementation of the new statutory guidance on Health Education, webinars, funding to Local Authorities for experts to provide training and ongoing support and guidance for schools and colleges, and guidance given to support physical activity while CYP were at home and as they return to school.

Limitations of this report

We have fewer indicators than we would have liked on children's activities and time use during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, in part due to the pace of production of this report, and quality of much of the publicly available data. There have been several published surveys, often using non-representative samples of children and young people which did not meet our inclusion criteria for this report, (Girlguiding, 2020, Prince's Trust, 2020, Duke of Edinburgh's Award, 2020) which have looked at this area of children's lives and have concluded that many children and young people were able to use their time at home to undertake physically active or creative activities, often with their families. This may help to partly explain why a greater proportion of parents reported an improvement of their relationship with their children during this time than those reporting that their relationships were getting worse. This may also play a role in minimising the negative impacts in children and young people's wellbeing overall.

Similarly, the evidence we have been able to gather on children and young people's home and neighbourhood environment is also limited. While this shows that most children are happy with their home, do live in 'decent' accommodation and have been able to access green and natural outside spaces, there are limitations in the evidence gathered here. For example, we have seen little about the specific experiences of children who lived in non-decent or overcrowded homes during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, nor have we been able to assess the impact of inequalities in access to decent homes or natural spaces. Feeling safe in the place you live is a key factor in wellbeing, and again an area where we did not find data.

There are other regrettable gaps in the information that we have been able to pull together into this overview. The experiences of young people from LGBT backgrounds are not represented here, though several sources have noted that there could have been some specific difficulties for these young people, for example in being restricted from leaving houses in which their personal identity is not accepted or valued (LGBT Foundation, 2020, Stonewall, 2020). Evidence on the most serious and difficult home experiences, such witnessing or experiencing domestic abuse are not included, as the

only contemporary measures available[64] focus on the experience of adults, or relate to indirect measures such as helpline use which while indicative did not meet the criteria for this report[65]. Data is also lacking for many measures in relation to children in contact with the social care system, and those with existing mental physical health difficulties. Again, groups where there may be specific risk factor associated with life during the pandemic that could increase the potential impact on their wellbeing. However, in time it can be hoped that retrospective studies of administrative and research data will bring these experiences to light and improve future responses to similar unexpected and challenging circumstances at future times of national emergency. Future research should also seek to be more inclusive of these groups.

The data and findings shown here are, as previously stated, only the headlines on children and young people's wellbeing at this time. The sources cited in this report could be analysed further in the future to gain a more nuanced understanding of how the different aspects of children and young people's lives have interacted with each other to bring influence their wellbeing and their mental health. Further studies, such as the Mental Health of Children and Young people survey 2020, the youth component of the UK Household Longitudinal study, the Study of Early Education and Development and the second Longitudinal Study of Young People in England will each, in time produce more information about the experiences of children and young people of different ages with rich historic information about the children and young people's characteristics, attitudes, development and family. Furthermore, more comprehensive and systematic reviews of the wider evidence base will be able to draw on more than the quantitative data to understand, in more qualitative detail, children and young people's experiences.

Looking to the future

This report has necessarily had to focus on the initial period of the pandemic, from the very first highly restrictive weeks of 'lockdown', across the summer months where restrictions began to ease for most. As we publish this report, many children and young people have returned to school, college and university and are continuing to navigate social and work lives alongside growing local lockdowns, changes to national restrictions[66], changes to furlough and government support[67], and ongoing uncertainty.

[64] From University College London's COVID-19 Social Study
[65] For example: Refuge reports further increase in demand for its National Domestic Abuse Helpline services during lockdown, 27 May 2020; NSPCC, Calls about domestic abuse highest on record following lockdown increase 10 June 2020
[66] Coronavirus (COVID-19): what has changed – 22 September
[67] Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak on the Winter Economy Plan

Return to education

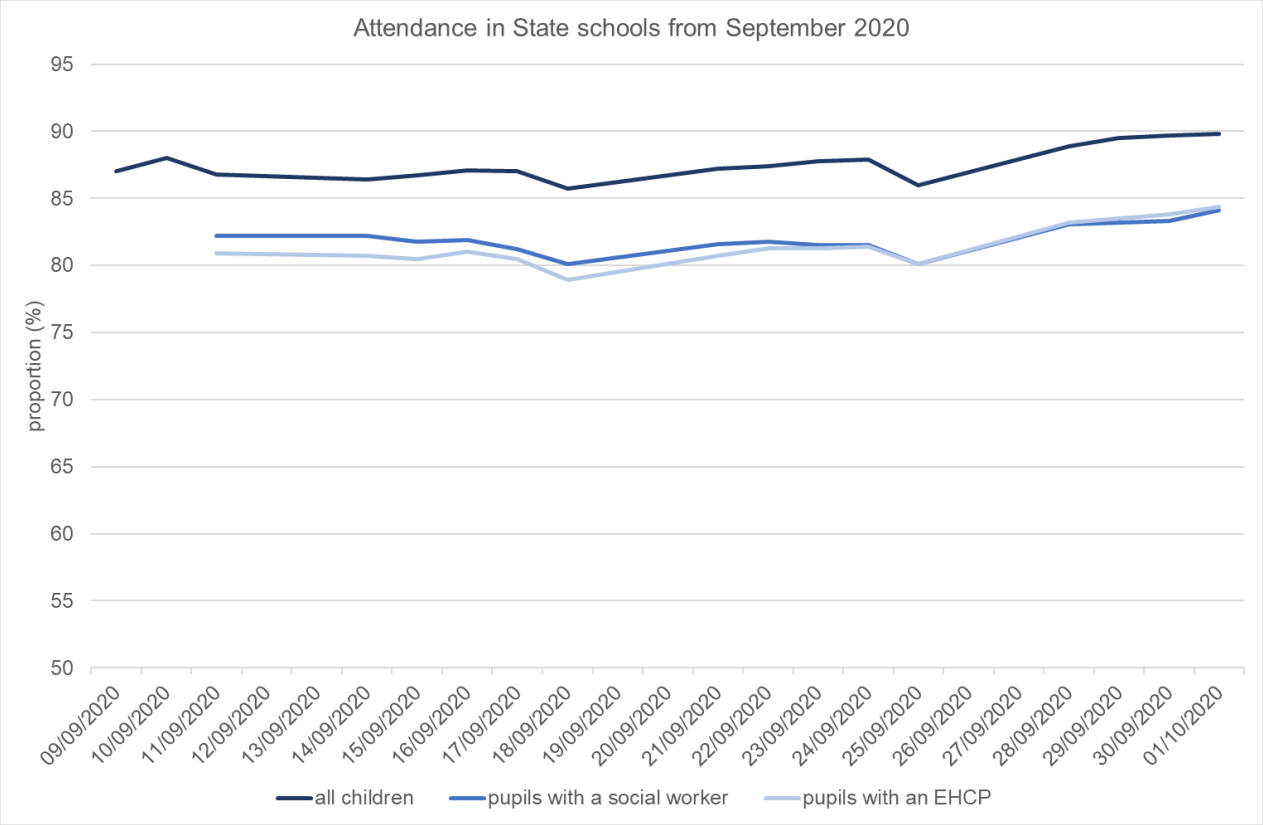
A range of data collected over the summer months show that most children were comfortable and positive about returning to school, and most parents were keen for their children to return and said it likely they would as schools re-open fully. Nevertheless, parents and children still expressed a range of worries about their children returning to school. Worries included concerns over workload and pressure to catch up, concerns about how school will be different from usual, concerns about catching or spreading the virus[68].

A survey of college leaders[69] in July highlights how different the college experience will be for students at this time with the majority reporting plans for online enrolment and induction.

Given these concerns, it is notable that almost all state-funded schools had re-opened by 10 September. On 1 October 90% of all children on roll in a state funded school attended, up from a relatively stable 86 to 88% since 10th September. This marks a clear difference in children and young people's lives from July, when a maximum of 17.5% were recorded as attending school on any one day.

[68] Shum et al, Co-SPACE Study: Supplementary Report 05: Parents/carers report on their own and their children's concerns about children attending school; Shum et al, Co-SPACE Study: Supplementary Report 06: Young people's concerns about the return to school (Parent and Self-report); ONS, Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain: 24 July 2020. Returning to school; Parentkind, Coronavirus: Third Parent Survey Results.; NIHR, Back to School Study Interim report 1; ONS, Coronavirus and the impacts of returning to education; ONS, Coronavirus and the impacts of returning to education 26 to 30 August 2020.
[69] Association of Colleges (2020) Colleges and COVID-19 Summer 2020

Figure 64: Attendance in education settings from September 2020, all ages



September 2020. Coverage: England. Source: DfE

At present attendance rates are not yet reported for FE colleges or special post-16 institutions. However, the data available shows that as of 1 October 99% of FE colleges reported being open and 94% reported being fully open[70].

We also do not have data around extent of attendance for universities, however recent UCAS data does indicate that full-time undergraduates across the UK do not appear to have been put off from accepting places in higher education this year, with UCAS reporting a 4% increase in the number of students with a confirmed place[71]. Recent ONS survey data from people with a student attending university in their household shows that key worries are about quality of education at this time, catching the virus and impacts on mental health and wellbeing due to changes at university because of the coronavirus[72].

Understanding the very early experiences of these students returning to education in some form will be important to improving our understanding of how this might be impacting wellbeing, positively or negatively, and for which subgroups.

[70] DfE (2020) Attendance in education and early years settings during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. Week 40 2020.
[71] UCAS. More students from the most disadvantaged backgrounds across the UK are set to start degrees this autumn
[72] ONS. Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain: 2 October 2020

Employment and the economy

There are many older young people who are part of the world of work. In July, the Institute for Fiscal studies reported that young people are nearly two and a half times as likely as other employees to work in a sector which was shut down due to social distancing measures[73]. Youth unemployment figures published in September show an increase in unemployment among 16 to 24 year olds between May and July this year.

The interaction between economic disadvantage and children and young people's wellbeing is complex and complicated further by use of different measures of disadvantage and wellbeing. It appears that children's experience of deprivation, such as experience of financial strain, or perceived differences between themselves and peers, may have a greater effect on wellbeing than objective measures of family or household economic status[74]. It may be that the Government's action to minimise economic impacts (such as the jobs retention scheme and changes to Universal Credit) has both supported family incomes and allowed parents more time to support their children at this time. As such it may be that the economic impacts only materialise as time goes on and children's experiences are more affected.

Next steps for children and young people's wellbeing

This summary of recent evidence is a start in building an overview of children and young people's wellbeing and stands alongside other evidence summaries produced in this time[75]. Given the ongoing uncertainty and changing landscape for the positive (such as returning to school and education) and potentially for the negative (such as increasing restrictions on social activities and local lockdowns and increasing restrictions potentially affecting household finances) a continued focus on data and evidence relevant to children and young people's wellbeing in these unprecedented times is critical to allow services, the wider children and young people's sectors, families and communities to maximise the positives and provide the support to children and families that need it. In particular it is of great importance that all who have an interest in the wellbeing of children and young people continue to seek to understand not just their wellbeing and experiences overall, but also how these change as the wider context changes, how they differ for different groups and especially the extent to which and for which groups of children and young people experiences at this time appear to be translating into longer term negative impacts. It is especially important that we do not miss impacts of the pandemic on the wellbeing of the most vulnerable children because of a lack of data.

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[73] IFS (2020) COVID-19 and the career prospects of young people

[74] What Works Centre for Wellbeing blog: Understanding the links between children's mental health and socio-economic status; Patalay and Fitzsimons (2016) Correlates of Mental Illness and Wellbeing in Children: Are They the Same? Results from the UK Millennium Cohort Study

[75] For example, but not limited to, The Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families, the What Works Centre for Wellbeing, Public Health England COVID-19: mental health and wellbeing surveillance report; Children's Commissioner, childhood in the time of COVID

Those working with children and young people in any capacity should consider this data as it emerges and how it can help them inform their activities to better support the longer-term outcomes of children and young people.

The Department for Education will, of course, continue to work with other government bodies, academics, voluntary sector and private organisations to gather and understand the emerging evidence on how children and young people's wellbeing develops as they return to schools, colleges and universities, or to work in apprenticeships and in jobs with training. This will inform the Department's focus in providing further support.

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Annexe A Data Sources and Methods

Centre for Longitudinal Studies: Millennium Cohort Study COVID Survey

The Millennium Cohort Study (MCS) follows the lives of around 19,000 young people born across the United Kingdom since 2000-02. The MCS provides multiple measures of the cohort members' physical, socio-emotional, cognitive and behavioural development over time, as well as detailed information on their daily life, behaviour and experiences.

The Centre for Longitudinal Studies runs five nationally representative longitudinal studies whose participants, currently aged between 19 and 74, have been providing information about their lives since childhood.

The five studies carried out an online survey during May 2020 of over 18,000 cohort members, including 2,645 participants of the Millennium Cohort Study. The aim of the survey was to collect insights into the lives of study participants including their physical and mental health and wellbeing, family and relationships, education, work, and finances during the lockdown. Responses were collected between the 2nd and the 31st May 2020. Results have been weighted to restore sample representativeness, accounting for differences between different characteristics in non-response to subsequent waves of data collection.

Children's Society: Annual survey of children and young people's wellbeing

The Children's Society has conducted a regular survey of children and young people's wellbeing since 2010. Amongst other questions, the survey has tracked two specific sets of questions which are drawn on in this report, the ONS Children and Young People's Wellbeing questions (life satisfaction, happiness yesterday, whether life is worthwhile) and their own Good Childhood Index (questions about happiness with a range of different aspects of life). This year, the Children's Society also asked children and young people about how well they felt they were coping with a range of specific experiences during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

The 2020 Children's Society Household survey reached just over 2,000 children and young people, aged 10 to 17 years old. The survey took place in April to June 2020.

Although findings from the survey are weighted, sampling for the survey was not random and therefore there are no confidence intervals or other significance testing to define the accuracy of the findings. There is a greater level of uncertainty in how well these findings represent the whole population than there would be for a randomly sampled survey.

Although the survey is regular and longstanding, there have been some methodological changes and differences in the presentation of the data over the years. Two of these changes have been noted by a discontinuity in the charts used to show the data in this report about children and young people's personal wellbeing and happiness in different areas of their life.

1) While previous surveys (up to and including 2019) have been of children and young people in Great Britain only, this year's survey covered children and young people across the whole of the UK. As part of the changes to this year's survey, a more comprehensive weighting strategy has been implemented to match the sample with the wider UK population on key demographic characteristics.
2) The reported responses for '2013 to 2015' are based on four half-annual surveys of children and young people, as reported in the 2015 Good Childhood Report. The results have been pooled, but the sample is unweighted and may be less comparable than the other years shown.

Comparisons with previous years are cautious to take account of these methodological changes, but nevertheless offer a helpful context to the results of this year's survey.

Department for Education: Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pupils, Parents and Carers panel survey

The data from this survey has not been previously published elsewhere. As such, full methodological details can be seen in Annexe B.

ImpactEd: Lockdown lessons: pupil learning and wellbeing during the Covid-19 pandemic

ImpactEd is a non-profit organisation that supports schools and education organisations to evaluate their impact, learn from it and prioritise what is working best to improve outcomes for young people. This study in particular has been conducted as a national research project in collaboration with the University of York, University of Bristol and schools to try to find what the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) has been on pupils across the UK. Specifically, they conducted a longitudinal research project which features analysis of responses from 11,400 young people from May to July 2020. The study was used to equip schools to understand how the current situation is influencing pupil wellbeing and learning, particularly for the most vulnerable groups, as well as providing insight for policy makers.

The research was not designed to be nationally representative, but it is relatively close to the national school population on key characteristics. In the focus of criteria such as school type, socio-economic context and so forth, the variation between their sample and

the national picture is less than 5% and in most cases is even lower (1%-2%). The main variation of their sample is that it has a slightly higher proportion of children and young people eligible for free school meals than the national average and a slightly lower number of children and young people who speak English as an additional language.

Their methodology was to capture data through a variety of related sources which included: a fortnightly pupil survey issued during the summer term and into Autumn to assess the impact, triangulating these results against a rich range of data, including by demographic characteristics drawn from school management information (Pupil Premium status, sex, EAL, geographical location and other factors) and linking results to academic achievement and school attendance data in future as this becomes available. This included a sample of over 11,000 pupils whose ages ranged from 6 to 18 years old.

ImpactEd's reports on children and young people's experiences during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic are available at the ImpactEd website.

Office for National Statistics: Opinions and lifestyles survey

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is the UK's largest independent producer of official statistics and is a recognised national statistical institute. They are responsible for collecting and publishing statistics related to the economy, population and society at national, regional and local levels.

ONS have adapted their Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) to become a weekly mixed mode (online or telephone) survey used to collect data on the impact of the coronavirus on day-to-day life in Great Britain. New indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey were used to understand the impacts of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on people, households and communities in Great Britain. Including breakdowns by at-risk age, sex, disability and underlying health condition.

All respondents of the OPN are individuals who have previously participated in an ONS social survey. The survey response rate is calculated as a proportion of the eligible addresses only. Given the sampling method used, they expect around 55% to 60% response for the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey. The Opinions and Lifestyle Survey collects information on a sample of the population. To make inferences for the entire sample to the entire eligible population, the data is weighted.

More information available in the survey quality and methodology information report

Data from the OPN is reported weekly in the ONS Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain Statistical bulletins, as well as being available in user requested ad hoc data publications.

The Co-SPACE study

The Co-SPACE (COVID-19 Supporting Parents, Adolescents, and Children in Epidemics) study, led researchers at the University of Oxford, is tracking the mental health of school-aged children and young people aged 4 to 16 years throughout the COVID-19 crisis. An online survey is sent out and completed on a monthly basis by parents/carers and young people (if aged 11 to 16 years) throughout the pandemic.

The study sample has been recruited through a variety of means, including social media, distribution through partner organisations, networks and charities, the media and targeted online advertising. The self-selecting nature of recruitment means that the sample is not nationally representative sample. It is also important to note that the study does not have comparative data from pre-COVID-19 so findings should be considered descriptive based on this particular, non-representative, sample and no conclusions can be drawn about how the findings might differ from any other year outside of the COVID-19 context.

Over 11,500 parents/carers and 1,300 adolescents have taken part in the Co-SPACE survey at some point, with a large number of respondents also replying to follow up questionnaires. Findings cited within this report have been published by the Co-SPACE study in several reports released through their website, each with its own specific information about the sample used.

- Pandemic anxiety findings are based on analysis of responses from 7,255 parents/carers who took part in the baseline questionnaire and 3,383 parents/carers who completed the first follow up questionnaire.
- Strengths and Difficulties findings are based on analysis of responses from 2,729 to 2,890 parents/carers who took part in both the baseline questionnaire and the first follow up questionnaire.
- Communications and contacts findings are based on analysis of responses from around 6,250 parents who completed a baseline survey during April or May and 1,500 to 2,800 parents who completed follow-up questionnaire(s) in the following months.

This research is supported by the NIHR Oxford Health Biomedical Research Centre, the Oxford and Thames Valley NIHR Applied Research Consortium and the UKRI Emerging Minds Network Plus.

Reports from the Co-SPACE study are available on the Co-SPACE study website.

COVID-19 Psychological Research Consortium study

The COVID-19 Psychological Research Consortium (C-19PRC) is formed of a group of clinical, developmental and health psychologists, as well as political scientists at the

Universities of Sheffield and Ulster, with additional collaborators from University College London, Liverpool and Royal Holloway and Bedford College.

Their study is looking at the impact of COVID-19 on the well-being of adults and young people in the UK. Young people aged 13 – 24, were recruited to the study through a research panel between 21 and 29 April 2020, resulting in a non-representative sample of 2002 individuals. Comparing to the national population the sample has a higher proportion of females and while quite representative for ethnic minority groups the sample for these groups is small.

The UK Household Longitudinal Study

Understanding Society is a longitudinal study that provides crucial information for researchers and policymakers on the changes and stability of people's lives in the UK. The survey is an integral part of Understanding Society: the UK Household Longitudinal Study. Due to COVID-19, from April 2020, participants from their main understanding society sample were asked to complete a short web-survey. The covid-19 survey was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council and the Health Foundation. Fieldwork for the online survey is carried out by Ipsos MORI and for the telephone survey by Kantar.

The survey covered the changing impact of the pandemic on the welfare of UK individuals, families, and wider communities. Participants complete a regular survey, which includes core content designed to track changes, alongside variable content adapted as the coronavirus situation develops. The telephone interviews were conducted late May to early June 2020 and sample numbers for the web survey each month were: 16,379 in April, 14,607 in May and 13,917 in June.

More information is available on the Understanding Society COVID-19 webpages

University of Bristol's Young People's Mental Health during the COVID-19 Pandemic study

This study is in partnership with the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). This project, led by the University of Bristol, built on existing longitudinal research to explore the impact of lockdown on adolescent mental health and wellbeing, social connections and social media activity.

The participants in this project consisted of Year 9 students (aged 13-14). Participants had completed a baseline survey in October 2019 and were contacted by their schools and invited to complete a survey online in April and May 2020. 1047 students in 17 schools in the South West of England completed the lockdown survey. The University of Bristol made comparisons between timepoints and used all matched data available for

the outcomes of interest for students that completed a pre-pandemic survey and the survey during lockdown (ranging from 721-770 participants).

Further details can be found in the initial report of findings.

Sports England's Survey into adult physical activity attitudes and behaviour

Sports England is an organisation which provides expertise, insight and funding that aims to improve the nation's long term physical and mental health. This survey was conducted on their behalf by Savanya ComRes. A sample of around 2,000 adults, including around 500 parents, were surveyed weekly in April and May and then with monthly follow-ups about their exercise habits before and after the COVID-19 restrictions including types and frequency of physical activity and changes in attitudes. They also asked parents how their children have changed their exercise habits since the restrictions.

Data was weighted to be demographically representative of English adults by gender, age, region, social grade and the estimated households of children under 16.

Further details and reports can be found on the ComRes Global website.

English Housing Survey

The English Housing Survey (EHS) is a national survey of people's housing circumstances and the condition and energy efficiency of housing in England, commissioned by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. The survey collects information about people housing circumstances and the condition and energy efficiency of housing in England. There are 2 component surveys: a household interview and a physical inspection of a sub sample of the properties. Each year, around 13,300 randomly selected households take part in the face-to-face interview survey. About 6,000 of the participating households also take part in the physical survey.

More information is available at the English Housing Survey website.

Natural England's People and Nature Survey

Natural England's People and Nature Survey is used in the Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment (MENE) survey which ran from 2009-2019. The data in The People and Nature Survey for England is used to find out people's enjoyment, access and attitudes to natural environments. It is also used monitor changes and to see the effect it has on wellbeing. This survey gathers information from adults aged 16+ across

England through an online survey. It asks adults about their children's experiences of nature as well.

The 2020 survey started data collection in April 2020. The survey uses an online panel method to survey up to 25,000 adults in England per year. All modules of the People and Nature survey are asked throughout the entire year. However, certain modules (i.e. those that do not require an overall sample size of 25,000) are only asked of a randomly selected sub-sample of individual.

The sample of households was selected from the England subset of Kantar's Lightspeed Panel. Samples are representative of the target populations as well as age, gender, region, education, ethnicity are in place to ensure key population groups are adequately represented. The data is weighted to be representative of the English adult population, according to the latest population estimate data available from the ONS.

More information available at the People and Nature Survey for England web page.

Annexe B. DfE COVID-19 Pupils, Parents and Carers Panel survey

Methodology

Background

Given the rapidly evolving situation around COVID-19, the Department for Education (DfE) wanted to extend the current contract for the Omnibus survey of pupils and parents/carers to include additional fast turnaround surveys among parents/carers and young people, to understand how the pandemic is influencing parents'/carers' and young people's activities, education, and wellbeing.

Research design

The research design was primarily determined by the need for a quick turnaround to get evidence to the department fast. The research was conducted using Ipsos MORI's iSay online panel. The panel consists of a large pool of members who have signed up to take part in research and who are pre-selected to answer certain surveys. The surveys are not "open access" and respondents do not know the survey content before they take part. Ipsos MORI profile panel members and use this to improve the representativeness of survey respondents.

This is a non-probability sample which will suffer from sample selection bias. The extent to which the results are likely to differ from the 'true' population values are unknown. It is therefore not appropriate to make inferences from the sample to the population.

Two waves of the survey were undertaken to meet the developing evidence needs. Both waves used the same approach, but each used a different sample.

Data was collected from the following three groups:

- Parents/guardians of children in Reception – year 6 (primary)
- Parents/guardians of young people in years 7-11 (secondary)
- Young people in years 7-11 (secondary)

For each group, respondents completed a 10-minute device-agnostic online survey. The fieldwork for the first wave took place between 28th May and 10th June 2020, with the target of achieving 1,000 interviews in each target group. The fieldwork for the second wave took place between 22nd June and 2nd July 2020, also with the target of achieving 1,000 interviews in each group of interest.

Sample

A screener was used to identify adults aged 18-65 who were a parent or guardian of a child in Reception to year 11. Where parents/guardians had more than one child in the

target year groups, they were allocated to the least filled year group.

To survey young people in years 7 to 11, members of the panel who were parents/guardians of a child in the relevant year group were asked to provide consent for their child to take part.

Respondents on the panel who took part at wave 1 were not invited to take part again at wave 2.

Quotas were set to ensure a geographical spread, a roughly even split by child year group and a spread by social grade group. For young people, quotas were also set to achieve an even gender split.

The final data was weighted based on child year group, child gender and region. Any bias in the sample inherent within non-probability surveys of existing online panel members (e.g. internet usage) could not be corrected for.

Interpreting the data

When interpreting the findings, it is important to remember that:

- The respondents to the questionnaire are only samples of the total population, so we cannot be certain that the figures obtained are exactly those we would have if the total population completed the survey.

- The survey data reported has been weighted to make the findings more representative of the target populations. Applying weights to the data, while tending to make the quoted figures more representative of the population of interest, also reduces the statistical reliability of the data.

- When results are compared between separate groups within a sample, different results may be obtained. The difference may be “real”, or it may occur by chance (because not everyone in the population has been interviewed).

- Where a survey question is repeated in waves 1 and 2, a comparison of the change in estimate over time can be made. However, the same statistical limitations apply as discussed above. Therefore, any apparent change over time should be considered as tentative and limited to the sample only.

- The sample size for some subgroups is small because such groups are less numerous in the population. Where the data indicates no difference between subgroups with a small sample size, this may be because there is no difference in the population, or because the precision of the estimates is low, due to the small sample size.

- Respondents were automatically routed to relevant questions in the survey according to their answers. For each question, respondents were required to give an answer so were given 'don't know' and/or 'don't want to answer' options where appropriate to ensure that we were not ‘forcing’ an answer.

Interpreting the data tables

- Small base sizes (under 100) are denoted by an asterisk (*) next to the total number of respondents. Differences between subgroups with a base size of less than 100 should not be reported on.

- Percentages below 0.5% but greater than 0 are replaced by an asterisk (*). A '-' means that no respondents selected the survey answer.

- Where percentages for a question do not add up to 100%, this is due to multiple answers, or due to computer rounding.

Data Tables

On a scale where 0 is ‘not at all anxious’ and 10 is 'completely anxious', overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?
Base: Children and young people in Year 7 to Year 11

Anxiousness	Total	Female	Male	Eligible for FSM	Not Eligible for FSM	White parent ethnicity	BAME parent ethnicity
Mean	2.93	3.1	2.71	4.11	2.67	2.91	3.29
0 - Not at all anxious	**359**	166	193	53	302	317	38
0 - Not at all anxious	**36%**	34%	38%	31%	37%	35%	38%
1	**90**	41	49	6	83	87	*
1	**9%**	8%	10%	3%	10%	10%	*
2	**79**	35	44	10	67	70	8
2	**8%**	7%	9%	6%	8%	8%	7%
3	**72**	39	33	9	63	68	4
3	**7%**	8%	7%	5%	8%	8%	4%
4	**66**	35	30	11	52	60	5
4	**7%**	7%	6%	6%	6%	7%	5%
5	**78**	42	36	11	64	67	12
5	**8%**	9%	7%	7%	8%	7%	11%
6	**67**	34	33	15	51	57	9
6	**7%**	7%	6%	9%	6%	6%	9%

Anxiousness	Total	Female	Male	Eligible for FSM	Not Eligible for FSM	White parent ethnicity	BAME parent ethnicity
7	67	33	34	15	50	60	6
7	7%	7%	7%	9%	6%	7%	6%
8	47	22	25	17	30	40	7
8	5%	5%	5%	10%	4%	4%	7%
9	19	12	6	6	13	18	*
9	2%	2%	1%	4%	2%	2%	*
10 - Completely anxious	33	18	12	15	16	28	*
10 - Completely anxious	3%	4%	2%	8%	2%	3%	*
Don't know	20	7	13	4	14	15	4
Don't know	2%	1%	3%	2%	2%	2%	4%
Don't want to answer	*	*	*	-	*	*	-
Don't want to answer	*	*	*	-	*	*	-
Unweighted total	1001	489	506	172	809	894	99
Weighted total	1001	486	509	173	807	892	101*
Effective base	971	473	492	167	786	868	95

* Actual number supressed where more than 0 but < 4 (or next highest figure where numbers totalled would reveal a supressed number)

On a scale where 0 is ‘not at all anxious’ and 10 is 'completely anxious', overall, how anxious did your child appear yesterday?
Base: Children in Reception to Year 6 (parent or carer reported)

Anxiousness	Total	Female	Male	Eligible for FSM	Not Eligible for FSM	White parent ethnicity	BAME parent ethnicity	SEND	No SEND
Mean	3.01	2.94	3.07	3.39	2.76	2.89	3.71	5.1	2.7
0 - Not at all anxious	328	162	165	101	221	277	46	14	312
0 - Not at all anxious	33%	33%	32%	32%	34%	33%	33%	13%	36%
1	100	56	44	28	71	92	7	*	94
1	10%	11%	9%	9%	11%	11%	5%	*	11%
2	92	41	51	22	69	85	7	6	86
2	9%	8%	10%	7%	11%	10%	5%	5%	10%
3	69	31	38	19	49	64	5	10	59
3	7%	6%	7%	6%	8%	7%	4%	9%	7%
4	59	27	32	23	35	49	9	12	47
4	6%	6%	6%	7%	5%	6%	7%	11%	5%
5	84	38	45	28	52	71	12	13	69
5	8%	8%	9%	9%	8%	8%	9%	12%	8%
6	77	44	32	21	52	63	13	13	64
6	8%	9%	6%	7%	8%	7%	9%	11%	7%
7	77	38	39	25	49	58	18	15	60
7	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%	7%	13%	14%	7%

Anxiousness	Total	Female	Male	Eligible for FSM	Not Eligible for FSM	White parent ethnicity	BAME parent ethnicity	SEND	No SEND
8	42	17	25	16	24	33	8	12	28
8	4%	3%	5%	5%	4%	4%	5%	11%	3%
9	20	10	9	7	10	16	*	*	16
9	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	*	*	2%
10 - Completely anxious	27	11	16	20	7	20	*	*	15
10 - Completely anxious	3%	2%	3%	6%	1%	2%	*	*	2%
Don't know	19	8	11	8	10	15	4	-	19
Don't know	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%	-	2%
Don't want to answer	7	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Don't want to answer	1%	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Unweighted total	1000	496	501	315	655	860	130	113	875
Weighted total	1000	487	510	318	651	848	141	112	876
Effective base	981	486	492	308	643	846	127	111	858

* Actual number supressed where more than 0 but < 4 (or next highest figure where numbers totalled would reveal a supressed number)

On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is ‘not at all’ and 10 is 'completely', overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?

Base: Children and young people in Year 7 to Year 11

Happiness	Total	Female	Male	Eligible for FSM	Not Eligible for FSM	White parent ethnicity	BAME parent ethnicity
Mean	6.91	6.77	7.06	6.69	6.96	6.93	6.71
0 - Not at all happy	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
0 - Not at all happy	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
1	*	*	-	*	*	*	-
1	*	*	-	*	*	*	-
2	**20**	13	6	*	*	20	-
2	**2%**	3%	1%	*	*	2%	-
3	**29**	17	12	5	24	21	8
3	**3%**	3%	2%	3%	3%	2%	8%
4	**49**	24	25	11	37	44	5
4	**5%**	5%	5%	7%	5%	5%	5%
5	**99**	43	55	16	82	90	10
5	**10%**	9%	11%	9%	10%	10%	10%
6	**125**	68	55	25	99	114	9
6	**13%**	14%	11%	14%	12%	13%	9%

Happiness	Total	Female	Male	Eligible for FSM	Not Eligible for FSM	White parent ethnicity	BAME parent ethnicity
7	**215**	98	114	34	177	193	21
7	**21%**	20%	22%	19%	22%	22%	21%
8	**219**	100	119	31	183	201	18
8	**22%**	20%	23%	18%	23%	23%	17%
9	**87**	44	42	12	74	78	8
9	**9%**	9%	8%	7%	9%	9%	8%
10 - Completely happy	**110**	51	59	23	85	96	13
10 - Completely happy	**11%**	11%	12%	14%	10%	11%	13%
Don't know	**23**	11	12	4	17	14	5
Don't know	**2%**	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	5%
Don't want to answer	**7**	*	*	*	*	7	-
Don't want to answer	**1%**	*	*	*	*	1%	-
Unweighted total	1001	489	506	172	809	894	99
Weighted total	1001	486	509	173	807	892	101*
Effective base	971	473	492	167	786	868	95

* Actual number supressed where more than 0 but < 4 (or next highest figure where numbers totalled would reveal a supressed number)

Have you experienced… a major cut in household income (e.g. due to you or your partner being furloughed/put on leave/not receiving sufficient work)... due to the coronavirus outbreak?

Base: Parents and carers of children and young people in Reception to Year 11

Response	Of..	Total	Eligible for FSM	Not Eligible for FSM	White parent ethnicity	BAME parent ethnicity
Yes, (a major cut in household income…)	Parents of secondary school aged pupils, 28 May to 10 June 2020	**30%**	33%	29%	31%	27%
Yes, (a major cut in household income…)	Parents of secondary school aged pupils, 22 June to 2 July 2020	**28%**	24%	29%	28%	30%
Yes, (a major cut in household income…)	Parents of primary school aged pupils, 28 May to 10 June 2020	**27%**	29%	26%	28%	26%
Yes, (a major cut in household income…)	Parents of primary school aged pupils, 22 June to 2 July 2020	**30%**	30%	30%	29%	31%
Effective base	Parents of secondary school aged pupils, 28 May to 10 June 2020	985	187	786	882	90
Effective base	Parents of secondary school aged pupils, 22 June to 2 July 2020	988	153	825	747	241
Effective base	Parents of primary school aged pupils, 28 May to 10 June 2020	981	308	643	675	306
Effective base	Parents of primary school aged pupils, 22 June to 2 July 2020	988	317	655	690	298

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