



not seeing friends:c



## **VOICES.** Young peoples' lives in and through Covid-19. **Short report 2022.**

Newcastle University and Children North East

Funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), as part of UK Research and Innovation's rapid response to Covid-19<sup>1</sup>

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By Lucy Tiplady, Liz Todd, Lydia Wysocki from Newcastle University  
Luke Bramhall, Suzanne Butler, Gwen Dalziel, Cathryn Gathercole  
from Children North East



**VOICES** addresses a serious knowledge gap in the understanding of the needs of children and young people aged 5-18 living in poverty in the context of Covid-19. It is co-produced by researchers from Children North East and Newcastle University.

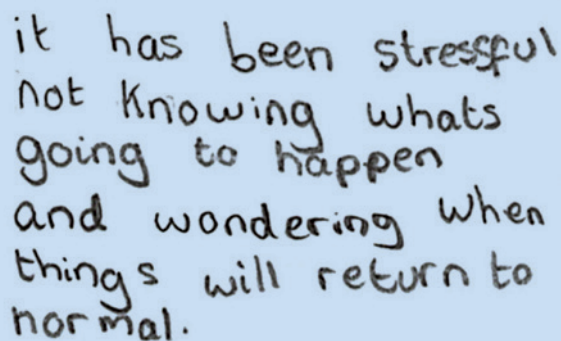
**Children and young people have been demonstrably affected by the negative impacts of the pandemic, and this is particularly the case for those living in poverty. Society owes it to them to step up.**

**We spoke to almost 2,000 children who told us in detail how their lives had changed as a result of Covid-19. They talked to us about issues that included family life, school, friendship and transport. Their responses are funny, heart breaking, eye opening and essential reading.**

**Our main research took place whilst many restrictions on social contact were in place during the pandemic. The fact that by the time we finished most restrictions were lifting by no means lessens the validity of our recommendations. Covid-19 outbreaks have continued and are forecast to recur for the foreseeable future with a real possibility of such restrictions being imposed again. The experiences of children and young people as described in this report mean there can be no return to a pre-pandemic "normal".**

We engaged with 1780 children and young people aged 5-18 coming from each local authority in North East England. This encompasses Darlington, Durham, Gateshead, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Newcastle, North Tyneside, Northumberland, Redcar & Cleveland, South Tyneside, Stockton-on-Tees and Sunderland.

The majority came from some of the most deprived UK neighbourhoods<sup>2</sup> and from schools in which free school meals' eligibility varied from 35% to 65%, which is considerably above the national average (17.3% in 2020, 20.8% in 2021, 22.5% in 2022). We sought to reach children from diverse backgrounds. We spoke to some affluent groups, young people who were care experienced, those attending a pupil referral unit, young people from a religious school, a council youth cabinet, many youth groups run by local authorities or charities to cater for children with a range of needs and interests, a housing association group in which young people range from seven to 16 years' old, and those from Black and global majority backgrounds. All images and quotes in this report are from children and young people in the project.



it has been stressful  
not knowing whats  
going to happen  
and wondering when  
things will return to  
normal.

<sup>1</sup> See project website for other reports, videos and comics: <https://www.voicesproject.co.uk/>

<sup>2</sup> The majority came from the 20% most deprived of neighbourhoods in England, referred to as the lower layer super output (LSOA) areas, calculated by combining data on income, employment, health, education, crime, housing and living environment.

**Co-production.** Co-production is working together with mutual respect for each other's contribution to design, create and deliver research or services. Children North East and Newcastle University co-produced this research from the start, designing the project together and discussing every research decision. We co-produced action cycles about transport, employment and health with children and young people and engaged them in decisions about some of the research methods. Our co-produced methods and findings provide exemplary insight for other regions across the UK and for co-produced research internationally.

**Methods.** We carried out focus groups and particularly invited creative expression in the form of drawings, writing, comics and short videos. As findings emerged, we carried out action cycles. To do so, we worked with children and young people to meet stakeholders in targeted areas in order to seek changes in practice and policy. Our fieldwork started in October 2020 and ended in July 2022. Some children took part in more than one activity. The quotations, drawings and comics in this report are from children and young people aged five to 18 who took part in this project.

**Focus groups.** Discussions took the form of semi-structured conversations, centred around a number of open questions and led, as far as possible, by the children and young people. The conversations were based around the following themes: health and wellbeing, social issues, culture and leisure, the digital world, home and housing, relationships, school, and transport. Groups could include up to 17 people. The smallest group consisted of only two people, and most were of six to eight. All groups had a teacher, teaching assistant or youth worker present. We returned to a small number of organisations for follow-up focus groups. Approximately a third of the focus groups took place online and two thirds in person. Most online groups involved speaking and a small number involved interaction by writing in the chat function of the online system.

**Drawing, writing and comics.** We sent out research packs to schools and youth organisations for children and young people. These included three prompts: to draw or write about something (a) they had found good about life recently, (b) they had found difficult about life recently, or (c) was important to them now. Three different comic artists produced comics from our findings and worked with children and young people in some of our focus groups to facilitate further responses to Covid-19 in comic and video form.

**Who we engaged with.** We received 2231 drawings and pieces of writing from 745 children from 15 organisations. Most children responded to each of our three prompts. We carried out online

and face-to-face focus groups with 1177 children and young people from 71 organisations. The organisations included primary schools, secondary schools, colleges, youth groups, community organisations and regional groups run by local authorities. Comic artists worked in six of the focus group organisations with 70 children and young people from two primary schools, a secondary school, a college and two youth clubs, to produce comics and videos that expressed experiences and views in response to Covid-19.

**Action cycles.** VOICES provided practitioners and policy makers with information about the lived experiences of children and young people during Covid-19. We worked with more than 30 young people on the key themes from the research: employment, transport, health and digital activities to take actions to practitioners and policy makers. We first had conversations with young people in their schools, colleges and youth groups to agree priorities, and then some researchers and young people had a number of meetings with relevant stakeholders. Many organisations engaged with us and with the young people, including regional bus and Metro companies, the CBI, North East LEP, the National Citizens Service, the NE Chamber of Commerce, the TUC, Sunderland Software City and a number of local employers. Some of our project recommendations in these areas were therefore produced by the particular young people involved in the action cycles. On the other key themes of mental health, social interaction and education we held and attended webinars with stakeholders and academics.

**Timing of VOICES.** Our engagement with children and young people began with focus groups in October 2020 and ended in July 2022 with our final discussions with the TUC and CBI about employment. Through this period, the context of the pandemic was always changing. Our first phase of focus groups and drawings from October 2020 happened when schools had opened up after the first lockdown. Schools were open to all, but the restrictions were changing. Our second phase took place from January 2021 as the third lockdown happened, and schools were closed to all but those classed as vulnerable or from key worker families. Almost all our phase 2 focus groups took place online. Our third phase took place from April 2021 as many social restrictions were lifting, children returned to school and our focus groups took place in person. Phase 4 from September 2021 to July 2022 was characterised by the further easing of restrictions. In addition to some return focus groups, this was the time when comic artists worked with children and young people to produce further visual expressions of their experience of Covid-19. This included comics, word clouds, posters and TikTok videos.

# Main findings

Covid-19 has had a reach into every aspect of the lives of children and young people. One of the most striking of our findings was the range of things children wanted to talk about. In their experience, Covid-19 had changed everything for them. We heard about extremes of experience, and it was most notable how different children's lives had been throughout the pandemic. There were many poignant conversations. A young person whom we spoke to in a youth club said:

*'I miss memories.'*

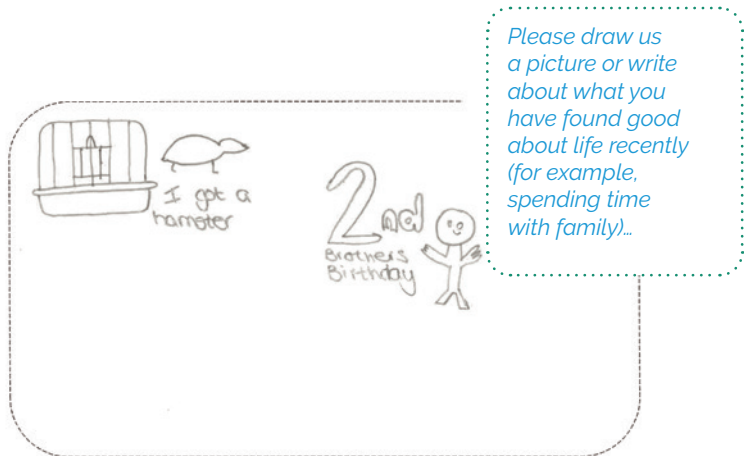
## Relationships

Contact with friends and family was overwhelmingly what was most important to children and young people. Being reunited with friends was what was best about going back to school. Missing friends and family was what children and young people found most difficult about the times in lockdown. Seeing friends and family made life good again. Relationships were the subject of very many of the pictures drawn by children and young people.

- 'I felt lonely and depressed because I couldn't see friends from my old class.'*
- '(I'm sad we) can't touch people when they are sad.'*
- 'I've made friends during lockdown and I've lost a lot of friends during lockdown.'*
- 'It's been a year of instability without seeing people. I worry I've forgot how to talk to them.'*
- 'You don't realise how much you miss doing things, like seeing family, going to the shops or baking with my grandpa.'*
- 'it was not like normal calls' (about phone calls with grandparents)*

**Positive and negative time with family.** Many commented positively on more time with close family, and often this was associated with having time at home and with activities they were now doing.

*'I got [a] better understanding of those around me – my mam and dad – we were forced to communicate – the family flows better now.'*



By contrast, for many the pandemic has strained family relationships, which has been very difficult for children and young people.

*'... difficult – a lot of people in my house. My parents split up over it.'*

Loss was a common theme. It was a very common experience to miss those members of their family whom they could not see, and a great number drew and wrote that they missed grandparents. They worried about close family members catching Covid-19. In one focus group, several children had family members in other countries affected by ill health and death from Covid-19.

*'... worried about grandma's sister who is ill in India and has nobody to care for her.'*  
*'I cried worrying about if people I love were going to die.'*

Please draw us a picture or write about what you have found difficult about life recently (for example, not seeing friends)...

Not being able to travel to see relatives





Please draw us a picture or write about what you have found difficult about life recently (for example, not seeing friends)...

In the car and my Dad is testing me for the virus.



### Education at home and at school

Consistently throughout all periods of lockdown children and young people missed school. Education throughout Covid-19 was reported as a confusing and interrupted experience.

**Home learning.** Children talked of the many challenges of engaging in schoolwork at home (missing teachers and friends, finding work boring or confusing, lacking technology or space, having no one to help, there being too many distractions).

- 'Online lessons were horrible, the sound quality was terrible, and I didn't understand it.'
- 'Very hard – there was nothing to do – five of us in the house trying to get online, all sitting round the table. It was noisy.'
- 'When you're just staying at home you have no motivation.'
- 'When there are people in the house you can't hear the teacher.'
- 'I had eight to nine hours of school a day in the first lockdown.'
- 'Barely any work was sent to me by school.'

A few enjoyed more relaxed learning or the chance to get up late.

- 'it was fun coz we could use different colours for our drawing'
- 'home school was better they were on mute so it was quieter'

I hated online School

Being in school as part of the small group of vulnerable children or those of key workers was a great experience for some but strange for most.

- 'Wasn't the same.'
- 'Strange, hard and different, bad and happy at the same time.'

**Return to school.** What children and young people overwhelmingly valued when they returned to school in April 2021 was contact with their friends, the support of their teachers and the structure of the school day.

- 'You're in an environment where you can learn.'
- 'It's better being back at school where you can see people, and I'm glad I'm back at school as I can see my friends.'

Although the response was largely positive, the social restrictions in place at schools and colleges, the continued changes in the rules they had to respond to, and the frequent requirement to socially isolate brought many stresses. The usual school day structure and rituals of school life, such as assemblies and end of school trips, were noticeable in the extent to which they were missed. Children found the transition from primary to secondary school very difficult and said that the whole year felt like a transition year because of Covid-19.

- 'I came back and I didn't have a clue about anything as I was so used to the lockdown routine. I feel like I'm too tired to learn.'
- 'When we went out to play, no one wanted to play. We weren't able to touch, and all we were able to do was sit on the same bench.'

Please draw us a picture or write about what you have found good about life recently (for example, spending time with family)...

What I have found good about life is going back to school when we were just doing work online or doing zoom call meetings.



**Planning for future lives.** There was great uncertainty about what the exam arrangements would be, great concern about the need to catch up, increased work and school tests, worry about not being able to complete practical or vocational aspects of courses and concern about whether they would manage the next level of education.

*'To be fair, not doing GCSEs is a blessing and a curse.'  
'We've not sat proper exams since Year 6 SATS.'  
'How on earth are you meant to do a practical course without the resources?'*

Covid-19 brought more insecurities about the future. Many were leaning towards taking safe options for their post-16 destinations and it seems likely that, for some, this would mean limiting their career aspirations.

*'... feeling as though my future is very undetermined. I want to be a doctor but is it worth going to uni? I'm nervous about university. I couldn't go to visit so that's been hard. I've only seen one and put that down as a choice. Another I put down because my cousin went there. I will be living in halls but I haven't been able to see that.'*

When planning for their futures in vocational and academic courses, young people did not have access to the level of support they had been anticipating, such as visit days and careers education.

*'Me and my friends have just had to work it out.'*

**Work opportunities.** Most young people have had difficulties finding part-time work necessary for their present and future lives. They had concerns about jobs being hard to get, employers wanting experience or – conversely – taking on people with dangerously little experience, their lack of experience because placements had been cancelled, and the consequent lack of disposable income.

*'We don't have the experience to get a job, but we need experience!'*

## Health and wellbeing

**The pandemic has had a profound and often negative impact on physical and mental health.** Many have taken steps to do what they can to reduce the impact. There was a predominant experience of boredom, anxiety about the future, and concern about when or whether things would change. Sleeping, eating and physical exercise have all

been impacted. Some spoke of staying physically active, but many had been far less active than usual.

*'... losing confidence and feeling scared all the time. I don't know how to feel or how to deal with it.'  
'Just staying in my bedroom made me scared of tight spaces.'*

*'Doesn't feel like a life.'*

*'I know that a couple of months ago I was going through a bad time in my life and wanted to end it, but now I feel good.'*

*Please draw us a picture or write about what you have found difficult about life recently (for example, not seeing friends)...*

*bored really bored  
really really really bored  
and I am just sitting  
in the house all day*

By contrast, for some it was a welcome time to slow down and learn to enjoy their own company. Many children were aware of the connection between different areas of health and other parts of their lives. They were finding ways to cope.

*'It changed my personality. It helped me see who I am.' (secondary)*

*'... learned how to take care of myself now.'*

*'I like being at home – less pressure for socialising.'*

*'I turn the music on and dance with my cats.'*

The importance of the support that schools and community organisations can offer children's health was apparent from children's responses.

*'It's like a family.'*

*'[It] means a lot to us.'*

Some felt a sense of wellbeing from having survived the pandemic. There was a sense both of challenge, of self-knowledge, of surviving and of what this told them about themselves that could be of use to them in the future.

*'I've been forced to mature over lockdown.'  
 'Good that you're getting to know yourself better.'  
 'It's good that some of these things have been brought up now because I would have only had to have dealt with them in the future. Now I have, it's out of the way.'*

## Activities

Not being able to do preferred activities, including religious observances, brought boredom and some negative feelings. There was a sense of frustration at trying online versions of activities but finding that online dancing, drama or gymnastics lessons, for example, were not possible. They worried about whether they would be physically able to resume the same activities in the future and about the possible impact on future opportunities. Some children and young people, however, had not previously participated in activities that they might now miss.

*'I was nearly at academy level. I couldn't do football in the house. I might be a bit rusty now and it's going to take a while to get back into it.'  
 'I'm a bit nervous. What if I don't have the energy to swim anymore?'  
 'Where I got to see my friends and it's hard not to see them. It's not the same on Zoom.'  
 'Before lockdown, I had interests, but they've all been cancelled so I spend a lot of time not doing anything.'  
 'It is nice to pray together with lots of people, and it had been hard not to go to the mosque during lockdown.'  
 'We missed celebrating during Ramadam.'  
 'Fasting was easier when you could just lie in bed during the day.'*

In contrast, many children and young people reported taking up new enjoyable activities during lockdown and/or having more time for existing interests. These included: doing art and craft, learning to cook, walking more, running, going on bike rides, drawing, reading to a sibling, being more into clothes and fashion, having new pets, doing DIY and gardening, playing computer games, playing football, reading, climbing, eating more pancakes and making videos.

*'knitting a scarf with Mam'  
 'building things and decorating with my mam'  
 'doing arts and crafts'  
 'making a book'  
 'drawing at home'  
 'I found out I like abstract art during the first lockdown'  
 'cooking with mum....she teaches me how to make cookies'*



All children and young people from one community group mentioned how important the activities organised within the community were in terms of culture and leisure.

*'The Community Centre means a lot to us.'*

## Inequalities

*Material circumstances had an impact on how children and young people experienced Covid-19.* There were problems in access to digital devices and space at home. The digital divide is still gaping, and it was left to schools to give out many resources from their own funds. Activities children and young people engaged in had financial costs that were a problem for some and not others. Some children were taken places by car to avoid being close to people on public transport. But this was not an option for others

Comments from many groups suggested material changes in household circumstances. There was mention of eating less and walking more because of reduced household income.

We heard from several groups in disadvantaged areas about the positive impact on them during Covid-19 of services, activities and resources that they and their families were able to access at times during the pandemic. This included play activities during the summer, help with food, and access to digital resources. They received this help from a variety of sources, including community centres, schools and youth organisations.

*'Mam's job only covers bills and dad is self-employed.'  
'I buy shopping for my mam if she's short.'  
'Things are definitely loads harder for us 'cos of Covid. My dad was off for ages with Covid. My dad's not going to work now 'cos he's not happy about some stuff. Him being on the sick affects how much money we've got – just my mam going to work.'  
'We used to go to school on the bus before lockdown, but mam doesn't have as much money now so we walk to school.'  
'My mum's a teacher and had to give our computer to a pupil. At school we didn't receive computers. The government should have carried through.'*

**Digital lives**

Throughout the pandemic and particularly during lockdowns, children and young people reported a large increase in their time spent using digital devices for leisure purposes. They commonly enjoyed this increase. They used a variety of games, social platforms and ways of connecting with friends and family.

*'The phone, how you contact people is really important. I had my phone taken off me during lockdown.'  
'Enjoyed it as I have more free time to play on the computer.'  
'I used to go and see my grandma in a care home every fortnight. Now my dad speaks to her on the phone and passes information on.'  
'I have been buying gifts online for friends and am looking forward to giving them to them in real life.'*

There were mixed opinions about whether their time spent on digital activities was too much, about the benefits and about what was unhelpful for their lives. 'I used to use technology for socialising, but I don't really want to socialise now – it isn't the same.'

*'I spend 18+ hours a day online.'  
'[I use it] as much as possible.'  
'It affected me – I got addicted to it – [it's] now become part of my life.'  
'It's easier now we can see each other, and you can have a one-to-one conversation. It's hard when all you can see is a face on a screen.'*

Some young people recognised the skills benefit to them of using digital devices and online platforms.

*Please draw us a picture or write about what you have found good about life recently (for example, spending time with family)...*

*I have been playing ps4 and seeing/talking to family on zoom so I dont feel sad.*

Some young people were aware of the safety aspects of online platforms, which included bullying, the risks in talking to people they did not know, seeing disturbing images or hearing swear words.

*'You see some disturbing stuff.'  
'I had nightmares about it.'*

Some spoke of a lack of understanding from adults about what digital activities mean for young people.

*'Adults don't understand how much we rely on it [Wi-Fi/internet]. They don't understand why we need it so much, but we do.'  
'[Technology] feels good – reminds me of all the things I can do.'  
'Free – I can chill and do whatever I want to do. Mum is not nagging me about tidying my room.'  
'[On my games I] just sit back and relax.'*

*Please draw us a picture or write about what you have found good about life recently (for example, spending time with family)...*

*Spending time with my brothers and sisters*





## Transport

Travelling on public transport was stressful and challenging. Public transport had previously been a source of enjoyment and of independence. In the early stages of the pandemic, children and young people were concerned about mixing with others on public transport. However, they were also concerned about too few people being permitted to take a bus, and whether, as a consequence, they would be made to wait for the next bus.

*'For me the bus was [the] best part of the day. [Before Covid-19 you could] chat to other year groups.'*

*'[If] the bus is fuller than it should be, you're weighing up in your mind, "Do I want to get home or catch the virus?"'*

*'If you forget your mask, there's no way you're getting to school. It's like your ticket to get home too. You can't drop it or lose it during the day.'*

## Covid-19 and the wider world

Children and young people's lives have become more politicised in the pandemic than ever before. By this, we mean that they have seen themselves (as a group) the subject of news broadcasts far more than before. And they have been aware of announcements and debates about Covid-19 rules. They have had questions and opinions.

*'I hate Covid. We're being blamed for it and we're not being treated fairly. Most of us are following the rules. Feel ignored.'*

*'Makes us feel guilty for having an education, in the media.'*

*'They call us the Covid generation, and this has negative effects on your thoughts and ... the government is saying we will be limited with the things we can do. We're being put in a box.'*

They thought a lot about what they were hearing or reading about the efforts to stop the pandemic. They heard about what was being said about the wider societal impact of the pandemic.

*'I feel like we're going to have to hit rock bottom before anyone will take this seriously.'*

*'I need to know what's going on now there's a pandemic. Before it never really occurred to me to watch the News.'*

They observed the actions of adults and other young people around them, who were either following or breaking the rules and they had views about this.

Hypocrisy of those in power was something that was mentioned frequently by children and young people, who felt that rules should apply to all. Legal changes to the rules about social interaction were taken extremely seriously by children and young people whom we spoke with.

*'They have to stick to the rules.'*

*'They should be demoted.'*

*'The government haven't learned from the first lockdown, and things are just going in circles.'*

Please draw us a picture or write about what you have found difficult about life recently (for example, not seeing friends)...



Being trapped in the house

Many young people felt that they were being unfairly blamed for the spread of the pandemic. Children and young people were also confused by the rules. Some had strong views on the actions the authorities should be taking.

The Black Lives Matter movement found new urgency in the pandemic and was mentioned by some groups, as was children's own experience of racism.

*'All lives matter – you shouldn't judge by the colour of someone's skin.'*

Varied views were expressed about the Covid-19 vaccine, and many were worried about it, but for very different reasons, such as whether it would work, whether it was safe and how soon they could have it. Many had great uncertainties about the future and whether the pandemic would ever end.

*'I don't trust what is being said.'*

*'I'm worried that the vaccine isn't going to work.'*

Being kind because it is a tough time for everyone.

Children and young people saw the positive impact on society of people's responses to the pandemic. They liked the mutual aid activity and other community supports, such as provided by local charities and community centres.

*'People pulling together and helping each other, like neighbours were all helping each other in the beginning, but people aren't doing that now.'*

### Taking stock

We spoke to a few groups in 2022 when things were easing a lot, life was starting again, and everything was opening up. There was such a variety of possibilities and concerns on their minds, from wanting to preserve the time they had found with families to taking their lives forward. They wanted everyone to have access to the vaccine and for lockdown to be a thing of the past. They thought about tackling racism and giving to people who have less.

*'Started a new placement, and they offered me a job within two weeks, so now I just come into college one day a week. I love it. I've got my uniform now and my job to get in too.'*

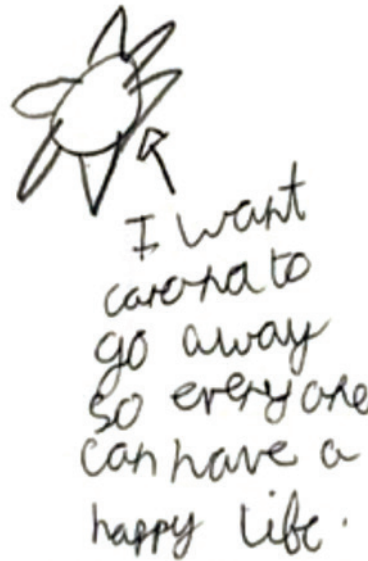
*'We can buy vaccines for the people who need it. I think we need to give more toys or food to everyone. Or we can respect or help those people.'*

*'I think to make people feel better is to take five minute a day and breath and feel calm. I also think that we should also be kinder to people so that they don't always feel bad.'*

*'European people to be more respected – too much racism.'*

*'Want family movie nights (that we did in lockdown) to start again.'*

*'Don't want to do lockdown again.'*



### Resilience

For many children and young people, the lockdowns had given them a different outlook.

*'Lockdown was a challenge, and with every challenge there comes an opportunity. It's an opportunity to do things you've never done before.'*

*'I've been screaming because of how I felt, but now it's over and I survived a global [pandemic].'*

*'It proves that you will be able to adapt. Through the pandemic everything changed. There were lots of changes in a short time, and it shows you can cope with all of it.'*

*If vaccine is ok for people who are pregnant coz my mam is*

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These are comics designed by children and young people with the comic artists Sara Qaed and Lily Daniels and the research team.

## Recommendations

Children and young people have been noticeably affected by the adverse impacts of the pandemic. Addressing the concerns raised in VOICES is the responsibility of everyone - the government, communities, educational institutions, local authorities, companies, unions, the voluntary and private sectors. There is no return to a pre-pandemic normal.

Our recommendations for investment in specific provisions, services and in research should be co-produced and co-designed with all stakeholders including children and young people. Our project and its findings has demonstrated the value of this way of working. Children and young people are well able to co-produce appropriate services and research as long as they are doing this with skilled practitioners.

### Research

1. The long term impact of Covid-19 on all aspects of the lives of children and young people should be investigated through research over the coming months and years.
2. The online learning experience has intensified the move to digital education and working. Research is needed into what worked well in home learning, what are good online learning practices, and what to avoid doing.
3. Children and young people's use of digital devices for leisure, communication and learning since the start of Covid-19 should be investigated through research. This should include looking at what children do, enjoy and learn and ways they approach online safety.

### Services for children and young people including schools and colleges

4. Staff in organisations working with children and young people should be mindful of the long term impact of Covid-19 on everyone. Staff should consult with children and young people to consider in what ways they need to 'catch-up' looking holistically at children's lives, not just curriculum and learning.
5. Children and young people need help with well-being including aspects of social and mental health. A range of different kinds of non-stigmatising support should be available to them including enabling access to good quality information.
6. A new digital curriculum for schools and colleges should be developed that builds on what children and young people enjoy about the digital world, develops skills, teaches enhanced digital safety and opens up the digital world further in terms of its potential in employment, wellbeing and leisure.



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## Policy and funding

- 7.** It is clear that the pandemic has exacerbated longstanding inequalities for children and young people in the North East and further reduced opportunities for those with low and inadequate family incomes. This makes decisive action to end child poverty at all levels of government more pressing than ever.
- 8.** Schools and colleges need adequate funding to address the varied, complex and multiple social, learning and attainment needs of children and young people. Cut-backs in school budgets should be fixed.
- 9.** Inadequacies in the current government catch-up programme for lost learning should be remedied.
- 10.** The central role that schools and colleges play in all aspects of children's lives should be recognised by providing transformative investment in comprehensive school-community initiatives such as children's communities and extended schools.
- 11.** Activities, clubs and experiences need to be made accessible for all children, with a specific focus on targeting children without financial resource to currently access these opportunities.
- 12.** National action including investment is needed to address the digital divide based on differential economic resources. All children and young people need free access to digital devices and WIFI/broadband.
- 13.** An employment youth charter is needed. It should attract young employees by: giving them full on-the-job training; providing open communication about expectations; opening up the job market to young people who do not have appropriate devices/broadband and resources for home working; and treating young people with kindness in supporting them into the workplace.
- 14.** Transport providers need to ensure fair access to public transport for all children and young people. Specific requirements are discounted tickets for young people across all transport providers and clear communication with them about ticketing.



Molly  
17yrs old



These are comics designed by children and young people with the comic artists Faye Stacey and Lily Daniels and the research team.

Our heartfelt thanks to the following schools, youth organisations, youth groups and community organisations that engaged with **VOICES**

#### **Darlington:**

Federation of Mowden Schools

#### **Durham:**

Annfield Plain Cricket Club  
Burnside Primary School  
Craghead Football Club  
Bishop Auckland College  
Durham Sixth Form  
East Durham College  
Esh Delves Taekwondo Club  
Greenfield Community College  
New College Durham  
Parkview School  
St Pius Xth Roman Catholic Primary School  
The Grove Primary  
Wingate Primary School

#### **Gateshead:**

Chopwell Primary School  
Blaydon West Primary School  
Neetzotz  
Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School

#### **Hartlepool:**

Hart Community Primary School  
Hartlepool Sixth Form College  
Kilmarnock Road Centre  
St Peter's Elwick Church of England Primary School  
St Teresa's Catholic Primary School  
Throston Primary School

#### **Middlesbrough:**

Linx - Coulby Newham Youth Club  
Linx – Hemlington Youth Club  
Linx – Newport Youth Club  
Middlesbrough Together  
North East Youth Alliance Youth Voices

#### **Newcastle:**

Bridgewater Primary School  
Broadwood Primary School  
Chillingham Road Primary School  
Cragside Primary School  
Excelsior Academy  
Foundation Futures  
Hawthorn Primary School  
In Harmony  
Kenton School  
Success4All  
Wingrove Primary School

#### **Northumberland:**

Bede Academy  
Collingwood Arts and Media College  
Duchess Community High School  
NCC Junior Youth Group  
New Delaval Primary School  
Northumberland Adolescent Service

#### **North Tyneside:**

Foundation Futures  
Burnside College  
Meadow Well Connected  
North Tyneside Children in Care Council  
Working Together Group

#### **Redcar and Cleveland:**

Redcar and Cleveland Children in Care Council  
Redcar and Cleveland Youth Club  
Redcar and Cleveland Youth Services

#### **South Tyneside:**

Central Jarrow Detached Youth Project  
Headliners

#### **Stockton:**

Bowesfield Primary School  
Mandale Mill Primary School  
Prior's Mill Church of England Primary School  
St Paul's Catholic Primary School

#### **Sunderland:**

Barnes Junior School  
Castle View Enterprise Academy  
Hetton Primary School  
Southmoor Academy  
Sunderland College  
Together for Children Change Council  
Venerable Bede Church of England Academy  
Willowfields Primary School (now Willow Wood Primary School)

#### **Regional :**

National Citizens Service  
North East Autism Society  
North East Youth Association

Many thanks to our advisory group, the transport and employment action groups and social interaction webinar group that met on several occasions with individuals who gave time from the following organisations:

Accenture  
Arriva  
Bowmer and Kirkland  
Durham County Council  
Centre for Young people and Education  
Child Poverty Action Group,  
National Citizens Service Trust  
Confederation of British Industry  
Culture Bridge North East  
Go North East  
HMRC  
Mortal Fools  
National Health Service Child Health and Wellbeing Network,  
NEXUS  
North East Chamber of Commerce  
North East Child Poverty Commission  
North East Local Enterprise Partnership  
North Tyneside Council  
Northern Consortium of Housing Associations  
Schools North East  
SMD Soil Machine Dynamic Ltd  
Stagecoach North East  
Sunderland Culture  
Sunderland Software City  
Together for Children  
Together Middlesbrough and Cleveland  
Trades Union Congress  
Transport North East  
Tyne and Wear Museums  
Voluntary Organisations Network  
North East  
West End Schools' Trust  
Youth Focus North East



# VOICES

for everyone

to be safe

