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# COVID Impact on SEND Families

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Report in to the  
impact COVID has  
had between April  
and December 2020

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Family Voice Peterborough

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# COVID 19 Impact on Parent Carers Across Peterborough

## INTRODUCTION

Since the pandemic known as COVID-19 (C-19) has affected all areas of life across the country and the subsequent lockdown that began in March 2020, Family Voice Peterborough (FVP) has been working to keep listening to parent carers and enable Peterborough City Council (PCC) to understand what they are experiencing. A series of surveys have been conducted and three Topics of Importance (ToI) have been developed partly related to the first seven of these. There have been common themes coming through the voices we have heard via the surveys and various discussions via Facebook and calls the Parent Representatives have been taking. The themes fall into four main areas; Education, Support and Services, Finance and Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health. All are interconnected regardless of whether parent carers report positively or negatively across different areas when sharing their experiences and views during the past seven months.

What has been notable is that not all parent carers report negatively across all areas, especially Education with in the most recent survey conducted, which will be detailed in full in this report, there were 40.1% parent carers who answered a specific question in which they rated the return to school as a positive impact on the household. The closure of schools during the lock down and the subsequent return to school has led to mixed experiences which seem to relate to how the child/ young person (CYP) with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) engages with education more generally.

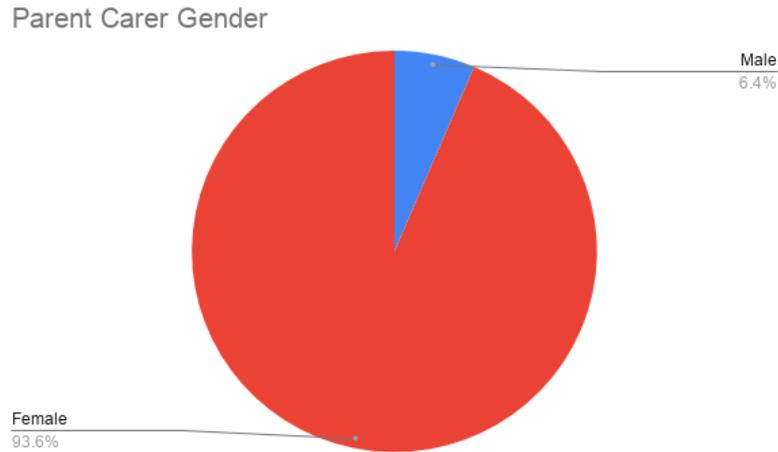
The numbers of parent carers responding to calls for survey completion and contact via social media has also been higher then witnessed in previous years; following on from this the diversity of SEND represented has also seen an increase, but as with previous years there is still more of a tendency to hear from parent carers whose CYP are reported as having a primary need of ASD and/ or ADHD.

## OVERALL PARTICIPATION

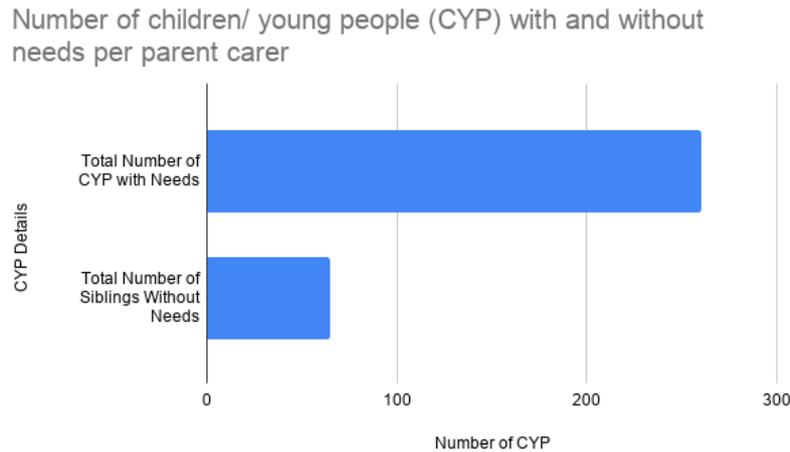
Over the pandemic period from 1<sup>st</sup> April onwards participation has increased, especially in topics relating to the pandemic.

- Across 9 surveys, FVP have heard from 243 parent carers.
- Through 35 Facebook Polls FVP have heard from 446 parents with some parents taking more than one Poll.
- 232 identified individual Parent carers have participated on some level

Parent carers are self-reported as being White British, Asian, Asian British, Lithuanian, African, White European, Scottish, Polish, Gambian, Indian and South African. The majority are female who have participated.



**Fig.1 Gender of CYP**



**Fig.2 Percentage of CYP with needs**

COVID SURVEY #3

Back to school - covid-19 and its impact on parent carers

This report will primarily focus on the most recent COVID-19 survey, as the rest of the surveys have either been reported on independently or mentioned in other reports relating to more specific topics. There will also be a brief comparison where possible of some data relating to anxiety, wellbeing and financial stresses across the surveys. The analysis of this survey will also be structured along the main themes as mentioned in the introduction to this whole report; Education, Support and Services, Finance and Emotional Health and Wellbeing.

The survey was completed by 103 parent carers from across Peterborough who are from a range of backgrounds and are both fathers and mothers. Their children's needs range from ASD to Complex Needs. Many children have multiple needs and diagnoses as identified by the parents completing the survey.

### Children and Young Person Data

Gender and Age of CYP

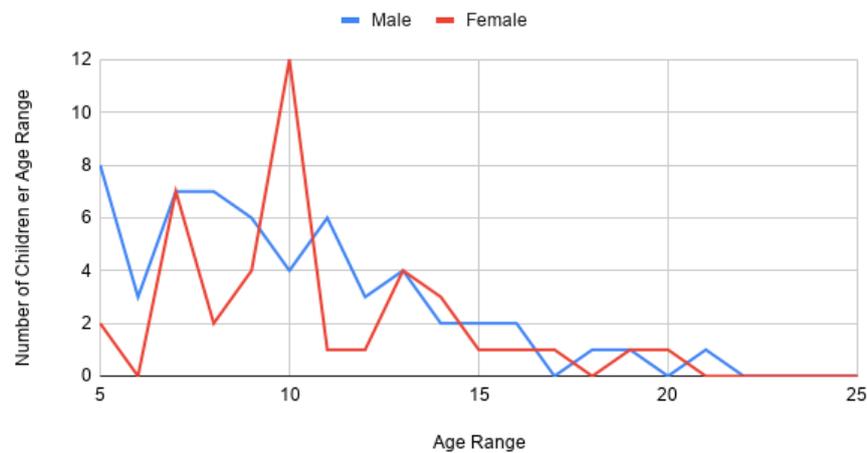


Fig.3 Age and gender distribution of CYP

Overall more boys are reported as having needs compared to girls with a difference of 32.65%. Interesting there are more girls than boys in the age range 8 to 12. Boys were also more likely to be reported as having ASD and girls more complex and physical health needs.

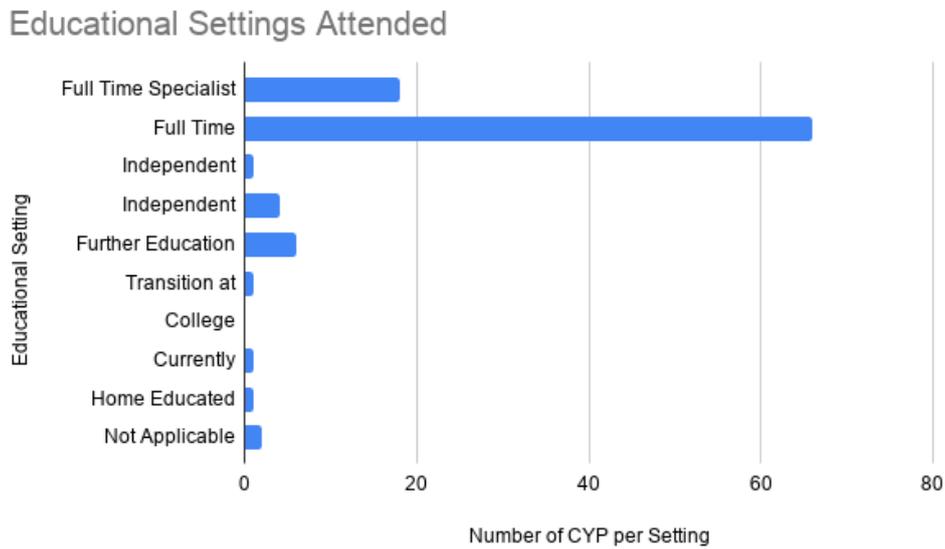
### Education

The survey focused on attendance during and after lock down, the use of a form called section M designed to gather parent carer views on EHCP provision during lock down and involvement in discussions relating to risk around attendance. Some of the questions followed on from questions asked in two COVID and Education surveys conducted during the 1<sup>st</sup> lockdown period; Communication and Support from Schools during COVID-19 and COVID-19 and Education. The surveys ran between April and June with 38 responses between them. The surveys informed the Topic of Importance (ToI) Education and Communication

<https://www.familyvoice.org/sites/default/files/Topic%20of%20Importance%20-%20Education%20and%20Communication.pdf#overlay-context=Participation>

Both the COVID-19 and Education Survey and the Back to School survey being discussed in this report asked respondents if their child/ young person (CYP) had, had a risk assessment to determine school attendance and whether they were involved in the assessment.

Parent carers in the Back to School survey were asked some general questions one of which related to type of setting attended and then they were asked the questions relating to lock down attendance, risk assessments and participation in decision making.



**Fig.4 Educational settings attended by CYP**

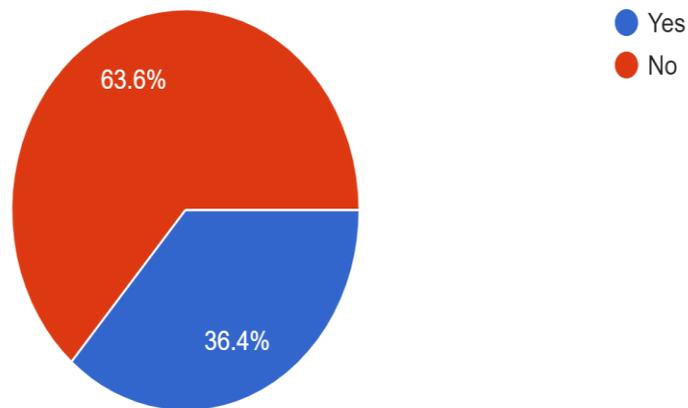
From fig.1 above it can be seen that the majority of CYP are in full time education in mainstream settings. Whether this is relevant to engagement during the lock down period or attendance in school is difficult to determine from the data at hand.



**Fig.5 Parental involvement in decision making about school attendance during lock down**

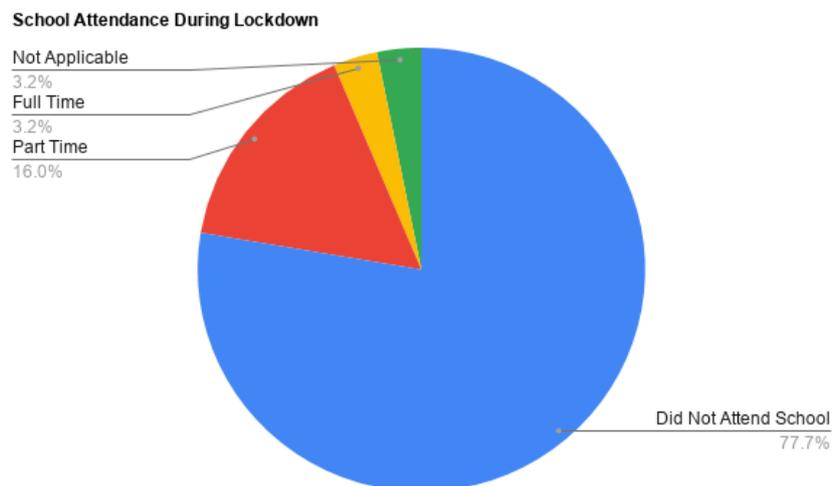
If yes, were you involved in the completion of the risk assessment?

11 responses

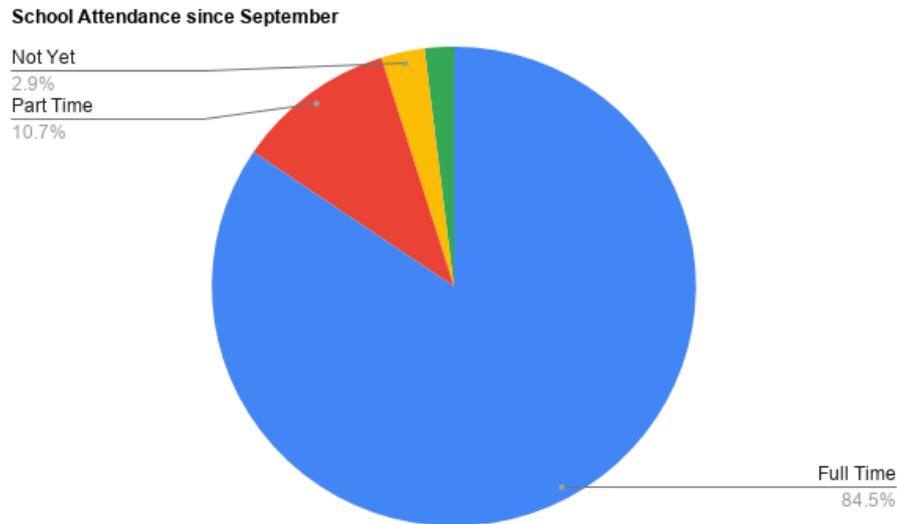


**Fig.6 Parental involvement in risk assessments**

Fig. 5 is from the Back to School survey with fig.6 being taken from the COVID-19 and Education survey conducted back in July just as the first lock down was coming to an end. The numbers who responded to answered the questions in the survey from July were a lot lower however what is interesting is that in the second more recent Back to School survey just over 50% stated they had been involved and just under 50% that they had not whereas in the first survey only approximately 35% stated they had been involved. So it would appear that a shift had occurred to involving parent carers more in decision making.



**Fig.8 Level of CYP school attendance during lock down**



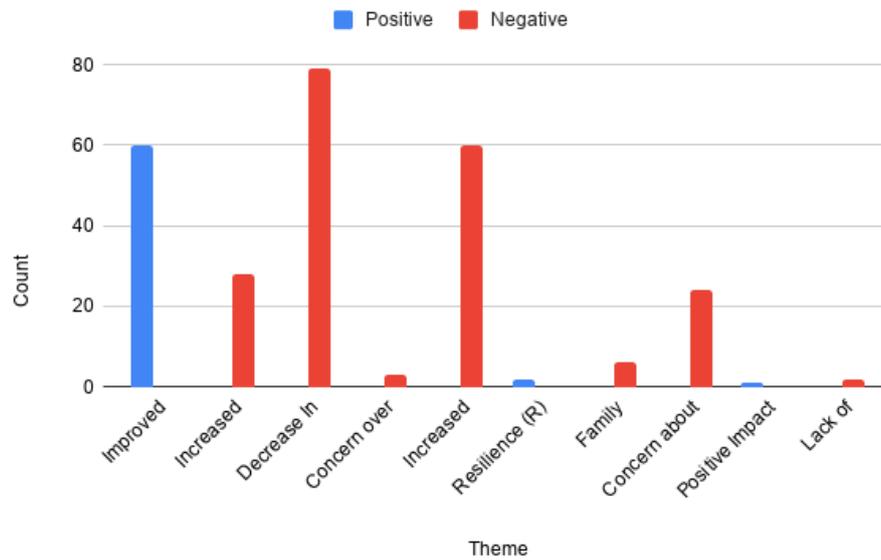
**Fig.9 Level of school attendance since lock down restrictions lifted**

Fig. 8 and 9 look at attendance during lock down and attendance since schools have re-opened (September 2020). There is a large increase in CYP attending full time from 3.2% during lock down to 85.4% since lock down lifted in the full time category and a decrease from 16% during lockdown to 10.7% since lock down lifted in the part time category. An area of concern was that 2.9% stated not yet for returning to school since lock down ended. Further responses in the survey showed that those who had not returned to school were more likely to have complex health needs.

The survey also allowed for parent carers to provide further information, and examples of what was happening for them and CYP. Some of open questions and comments fields related to education. A brief thematic analysis was conducted on the survey data, with codes being applied afterwards based on information presented. These codes can generally be grouped in to positive of negative experiences.

Fig.10 and 11 below show that generally parent carers reported negatively around education with the two most frequent negative themes being Impact on Learning and Poor School Support mostly through the lock down period and if this is related the COVID and Education survey and Communication and Education survey detailed in the Education and Communication ToI mentioned previously the negativity would correspond with the lack of engagement reported.

## Educational Experience



**Fig.10 Count of themes relating to educational experience**

Education		
	Positive	Negative
School Refusal (SR)		1
Part Time Schooling (PTS)		4
School Transition (STran)		2
School Closure (SC)		3
Impact on Learning (IL)		10
EHCP Delivery (EHCP)		2
Home Schooling (HS)	3	
Difficulty Home Schooling (DHS)		3
Poor School Support (PSS)		19
School Transport (ST)		2
Good School Support (GSS)	29	

**Fig.11 Educational experience code count**

Parents had the following to say when prompted:

- *His behaviour has deteriorated at home he seems more angry and is more violent towards me and other family members i did keep him off school for few days as he seemed a different boy he due to return this Monday 5.10.20 still no support from sendco or anyone left to deal with him on my own*

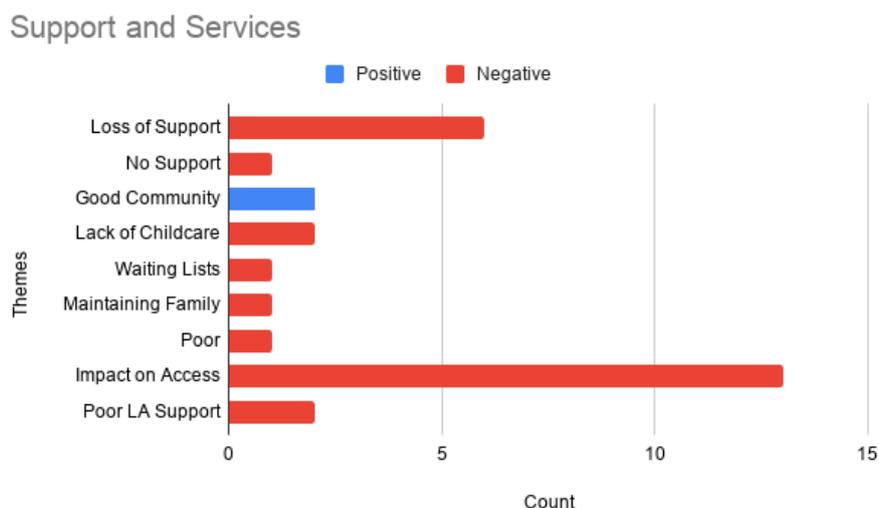
- *I just feel the LA left us to it no contact from them its was always me making decisions and school agreeing luckily we have really struggled and school is the only normality my son has.*
- *Struggled with the transition from home to school. Became more reliant on me (mummy) being at home for that long period of time. Due to sleep difficulties adding school back into the mix has been hard on all the family*

Not all parent carers reported negatively however and for some the return to school has seen an increase in positive impact on the CYP and wider family. Over all from Fig. 11 it can be seen that 29 statements could be defined as positive.

- *The return to education helps with the sense of worth for him and a return to routine. As he is at college was only due to go one day a week , but they have added and extra half day*
- *My son has been quite happy to go back to school. The school has all the safety measures in place to protect those who enter the school building as much as possible. With COVID restrictions in place, the school is doing it's best to continue to run as near to normal as it can for the children in order to get routines and EHCP in place.*
- *He is much happier now he has settled back in to the school routine and seeing his friends. Home schooling was impossible, due to his behaviour, so his learning is much better at school. We also welcome the respite that school brings.*

## Support and Services

Support and services relate to wider community support, health and social care services and general LA support and services. Two data sets can be used to explain this area further. A basic thematic analysis of comments relating to general comments around support and services and quantitative analysis of two specific closed questions relating to access to health and short breaks.



**Fig.12 Count of themes relating to support and services**

Support and Services		
	Positive	Negative
Loss of Support Network		6
No Support Network		1
Good Community Support (GCS)	2	
Lack of Childcare		2
Waiting Lists Extended		1
Maintaining Family Safety		1
Poor Communication		1
Impact on Access to Services		13
Poor LA Support		2

**Fig.13 Support and services code count**

Fig 12 and 13 show that overall peoples experiences in relation to support and services can be viewed as negative, especially in terms of the impact of COVID on access to services. The lock down led to inability to access formal support and informal support networks. This had a corresponding impact on emotional health and wellbeing, which will be covered later in this report. Two questions in the survey related to access to health services and respite; the questions relied on parent carers choosing one of a range of options:

Support from health services during lock down						
Support continued via phone and/ or video with my child/ person	Face to face appointments continued with my child/ young person	My child/ young person is unable to use the phone and / or video due to their needs but no alternative offered	As the parent carer I had phone and/ or video calls with health services	Contact received initially but no alternative ways of providing support offered	No contact received from health services	Not applicable

**Fig. 14 statements relating to health engagement during lock down**

Health Service Access - During Lockdown

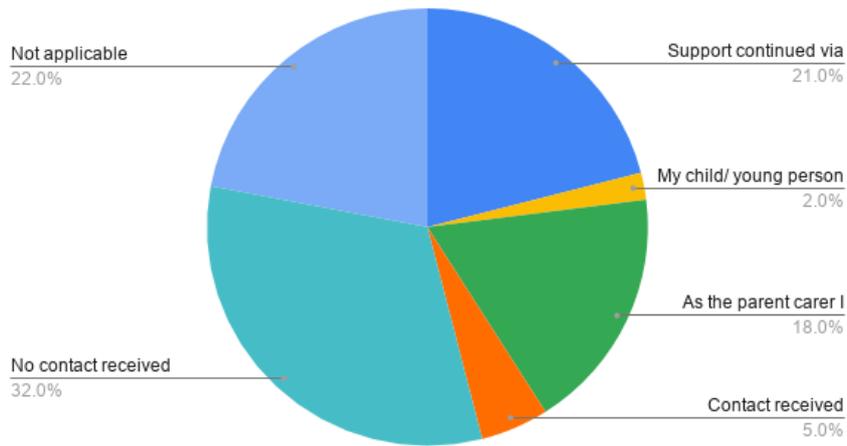


Fig. 15 Access to health services during lock down

From Fig 14 to 15 it can be seen that the majority of parent carers did not receive support from health services. When all answers that relate to lack of access to services are added together over 39% did not receive support.

Respite and Short Breaks During Lock Down - We have heard from parent carers that if they usually have respite/ short breaks for their child/ young person this has been impacted especially during the lock down. Please select any statements that apply.

Short break provision stopped during the lock down	Short break provision stopped during the lock down, but has now restarted	Short break provision stopped during the lock down and is still not happening	Short break provision changed during the lock down and this has worked better
2	2	3	3
20.00%	20.00%	30.00%	30.00%

Fig. 16 statements relating to short breaks during lock down

Respite Access - During Lockdown

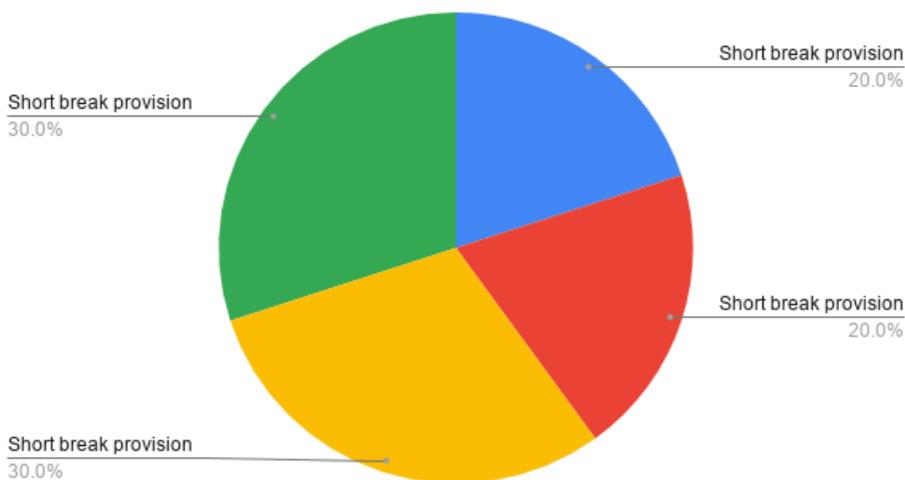


Fig. 17 Access to short breaks during lockdown

Fig 16 and 17 also show that for those families who it is applicable to there were changes to respite and in the majority of cases it was suspended altogether during lock down. This again where individual responses to the survey are examined can be seen to have had an impact on emotional health and wellbeing.

Some of the statements provided by parent carers demonstrate what lack of support and services meant:

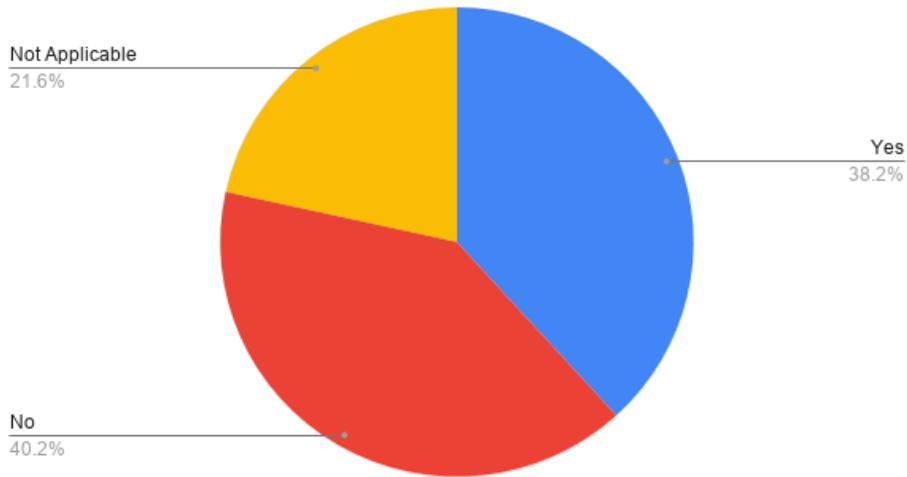
- *No work was adjusting to child's ability. When I ran the school In Tears it took the senco to email a response with zero help or support in improving the issue I was having. No well being check ups on my child were made by senco. No attempt to get him back into school sooner and no back to school provisions offered when these were sorted for other SEN autistic children.*
- *During the lockdown, life has totally changed not only for us for everyone. Keep thinking about the virus and terrifying. Just think we don't catch a virus on any cost. We didn't go anywhere in lockdown just went to a walk in the park. My husband just goes to work now and during the lockdown. Even we are not having any takeaway food yet. We clean every stuff when we bought something even Grocery either. So it's so many things we are going through during this terrible time.*
- *The unknown, the worry we will go back into covid. The lack of support due to not being able to see friends and family*
- *Before COVID we were able to ask friends to babysit for us, to be able to get some respite as a parents. This is currently not possible due to restrictions and behavioural issues having worsened with our child. I am concerned that my husband is planning on working abroad as this is the only work he has been offered since lockdown started; which will mean him being away for a week then quarantining when he returns and the burden of childcare will solely be with me for 3 weeks. This is likely to be a very stressful time, without having access to the usual support network from friends dropping round to help out etc (my child is more violent when dad is away) as well as having to do all the school runs and get to work at the hospital.*

## **Finances**

The survey being discussed in this report and other sources of data have been used to demonstrate the impact COVID-19 has had on familial finances particularly in the SEND community. In this survey parent carers were asked two specific finance questions and these followed on from questions asked in previous COVID-19 survey questions, which are detailed in the COVID-19 ToI available to view via the FVP website

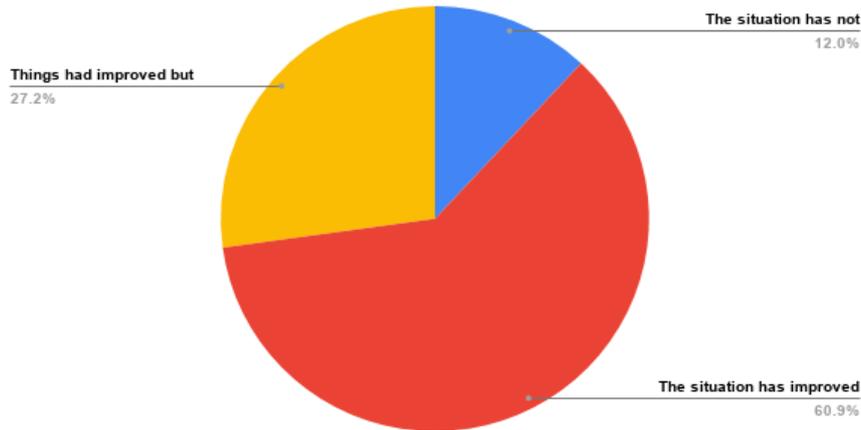
<https://www.familyvoice.org/sites/default/files/Topic%20of%20Importance%20-%20COVID-19.pdf>

### Are finance still impacted since lockdown lifted



**Fig. 18 Impact on finances after lock down**

During the lock down period, parent carers reported experiencing difficulties in accessing food and shopping more generally. Has this changed if at all?



**Fig. 19 Accessing food after lock down**

From Figures 18 and 19 it appears that generally the situation improved financially once lockdown ended. This is not a static situation however and more recently FVP have seen increases in requests for help with particularly food support from parent carers. This is linked to periods of self-isolation especially for families with school aged CYP. If a child is self-isolating due to a COVID-19 exposure then the parent carer has to also stay at home and the ability to work for example is impacted.

For food support purposes FVP have assisted 25 households who have a mix of SEND children and disabled adults. It has also become apparent that for many of the families so called 'Sandwich Caring' is occurring whereby the parent is caring for not only a child but in some cases an adult relative as well. From data gathered more recently in the 'Christmas in

a Box' campaign FVP have been running many parent carers have also declared their own disabilities and/ or mental health needs.

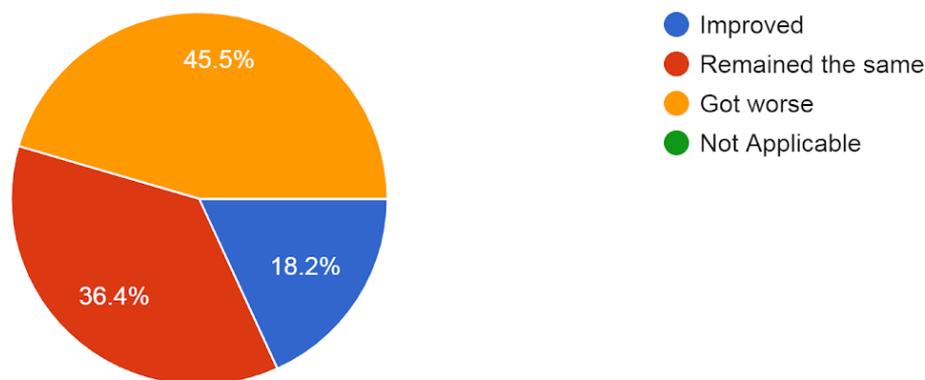
Number of adults	Number Children without SEND	Number SEND 0-25
34	59	27

**Fig. 20 numbers requiring food support**

Parent carers who have received food support from FVP were sent a short questionnaire to see what the probably causes of requiring support were, which elicited the following responses:

- *Live on my own ,have 6 children and the situation with Covid 19 just made everything harder.*
- *Had to isolate during Covid 19 crisis due to health problems, struggling financially too.*
- *We have two older children that has to live with us during Covid 19 situation so at the moment we have five people living on two people benefits. My wife is not well too.*
- *Had to isolate during Covid 19 crisis because of her health issues.Had to change benefits to universal credit and because of that gets less money.*
- *I am self employed and because of the Covid19 wasn't able to work. Daughter is profoundly disable so been shielded and not been able to go anywhere.*
- *Has two disabled daughters and could not get out of the house during Covid 19 crisis.*
- *Been struggling with online shopping because there are not many slots for deliveries and can not go to the shops because has a son with goldenhar syndrome.*
- *I suffer from anxiety , depression, have 4 children , single parent with mum living faraway so have no family support to rely on. When somebody told me about FVP and all the help you provide, I decided to contact you.*
- *Shielding due to COVID-19*
- *Being a single parent and also a carer had a huge impact on how much I am able to go out for shopping (it was not safe for me to take my daughter with me due to her complex health needs). It also changed the way I shop - instead of shopping around and buying cheaper products I had to buy what was available which meant that my groceries bill increased dramatically.*
- *Isolating, 3 children single parent one of which is adhd so shopping is a struggle*

Parents were also asked to choose from a series of answers based on the question “*One of the reasons provided in previous survey responses for requiring support related to the financial impact of COVID-19 and an increase in the cost of shopping. Has this?*”



**Fig. 21 Financial impact during and after lock down**

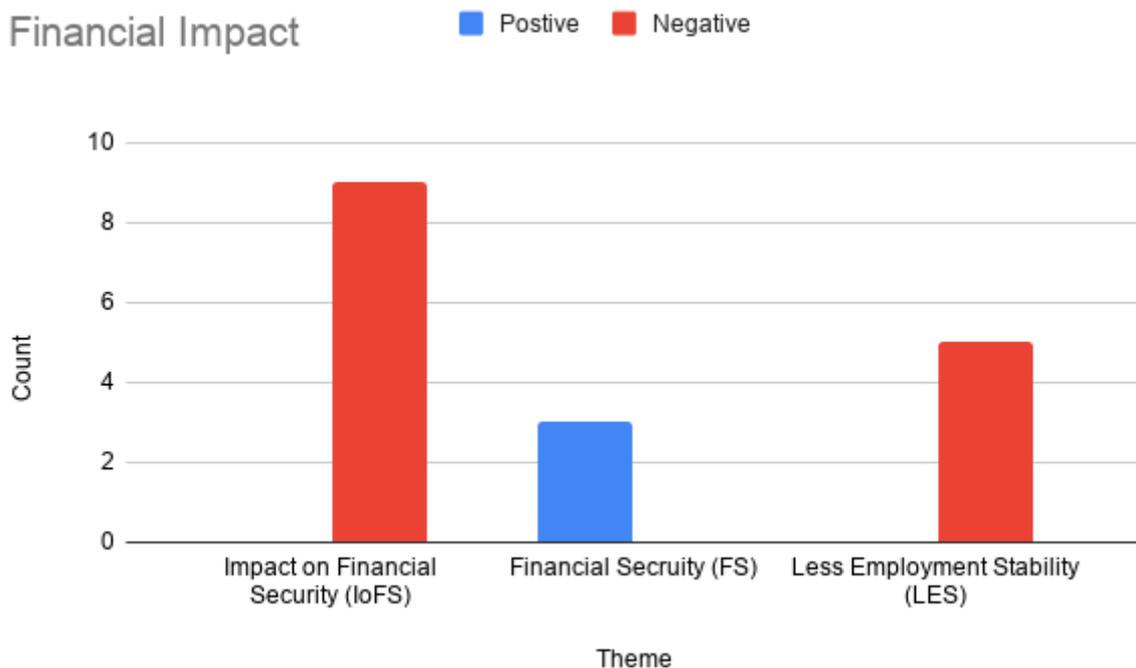
The financial concerns are also wider than food provision as demonstrated by responses to the statement “*Please describe how Covid-19 has impacted your household. For example: have you seen a reduction in your household income, have you struggled with having your children at home during lockdown, has your family benefited from having this time together, are you struggling to pay increased bills such as gas, electricity.*”

- *I has been hard because you can not get any family support , children staying at home all the time and can not go anywhere ,just constant battle.*
- *Mine and my son's mental health has taken a tumble . Electricity and gas bills have gone up too, because everyone is staying at home.*
- *Bills for electricity, gas and food has increased a lot.*
- *It has been nice to spend time together during this time but at the same time it is much harder to provide all the extra meals . Daughter used to get packed lunches at her nursery but since kids stopped going to school everything needs to be done at home.*
- *On the plus side I liked spending time with daughters, but it has been stressful making sure that there is enough money for groceries and a lot of pressure in keeping my disable daughter well .*
- *I has been hard with girls having to stay at home all the time. Gas and electricity bills has gone up and its hard to plan how much need to put in the meter because you not sure when will be the next time you can get out of the house .*
- *Big impact on the kids and their routine , them not being able to go to the school. Hasn't got much of a help from outside or the family.*
- *Money we spend for the food has gone up, bills for gas and electricity too .*
- *Bills for utilities are higher, but I can't always afford it.*
- *Lockdown has had an impact not only on our financial situation but also our mental health. It is hard being a carer as it is but at least with my daughter being at school I had some respite. Now I am a carer 24/7 with no time to myself.*

- *Increased bills. Trying to find activities to do with children from home.*

The lock down impacted households' finances initially and there continues to be an impact as a result of periods of further lock down, self-isolation, school bubble closures. An inability to get to work, furlough, job redundancies and increased living costs all create financial pressures. Below are some of the comments provided by parents that relate to the financial impact of COVID-19:

- *having to provide extra travel not being able to afford things , affecting my mental health condition. And disability. Schools attitude was not great.*
- *My husband and I have our own training business, we do have a concern that if lockdown was reintroduced then we would be affected financially, and we also have a commitment to our employees. Children being sent home from school to isolate is also a concern as we have 4 children and we would struggle with childcare due to work commitments.*
- *I currently in a situation with my job and worried may lose it as a result of my son's school closing at 2pm. I am on a temp contract that is due to end in the half term. After that I will have to go back to finishing at 3pm. I'm worried as if I'm not working I can't pay rent, bills and just provide all the things my child may need. It's a very worrying, stressful time.*



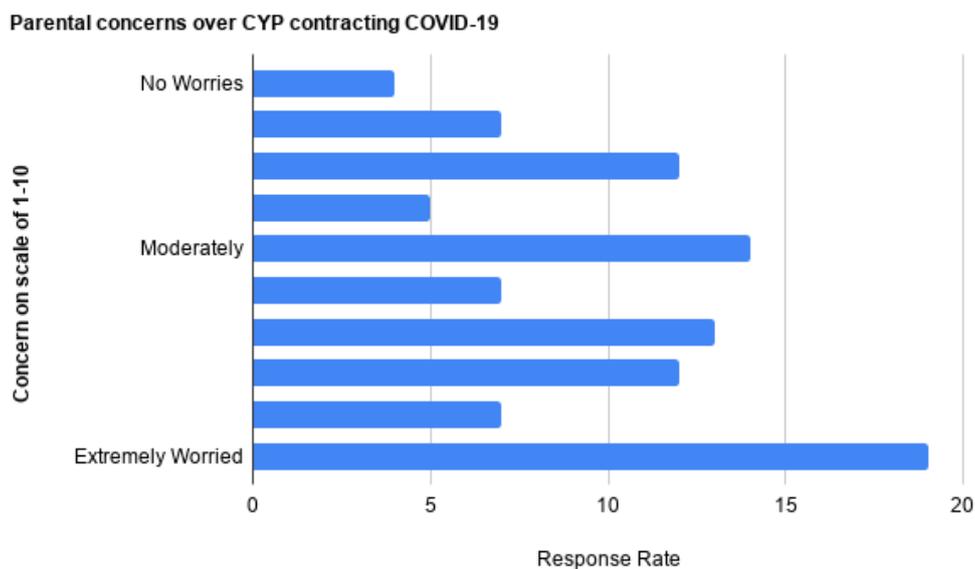
**Fig. 22 Count of finance based themes**

Figure 22 also shows that there was more of a negative impact on familial finances due to COVID-19.

## Emotional Wellbeing and Mental health

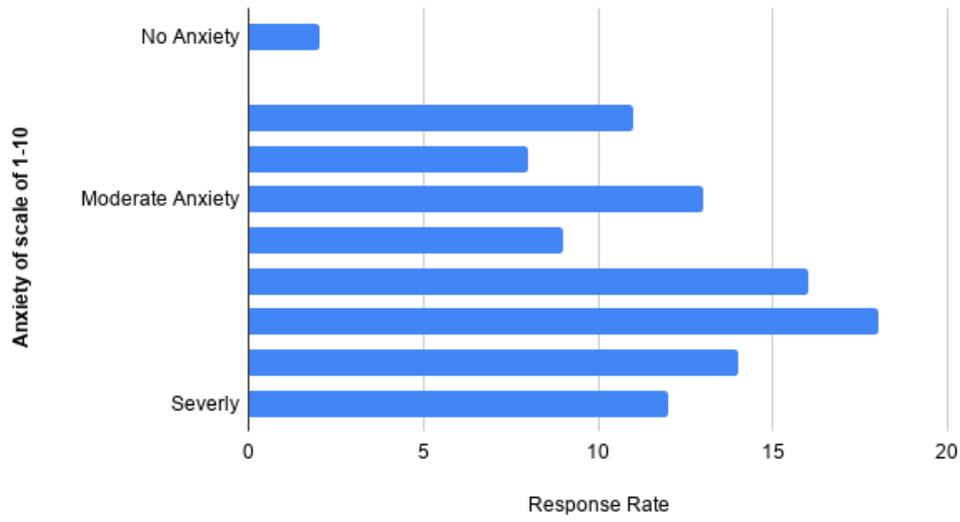
The final theme highlighted in this report is emotional wellbeing and mental health which is interlinked with the themes already mentioned. As part of the focus on this area FVP asked parent carer's rate their own levels of anxiety, that of their CYP across the following areas:

1. If your child/ young person has returned to school how worried on a scale of 1-10 are you about the risk of them catching the virus?
2. How would you currently rate your child's anxiety in relation to COVID-19 on a scale of 1-10?
3. How would you currently rate your anxiety in relation to COVID-19 on a scale of 1-10?
4. Are you, as a parent carer, worried about the impact of COVID-19 on your child with SEND?
5. Is the current situation in relation to the COVID-19 having an impact on your physical, emotional and mental well-being as a parent carer?
6. How would you rate the impact on your well-being?



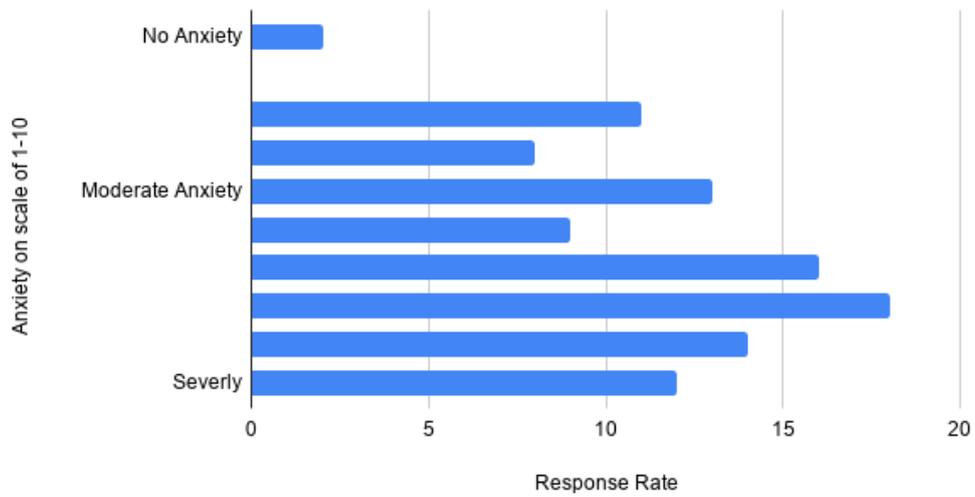
**Fig. 23 Parental concerns relating to COVID-19 contagion**

How would you currently rate CYP anxiety in relation to COVID-19 on a scale of 1-10?

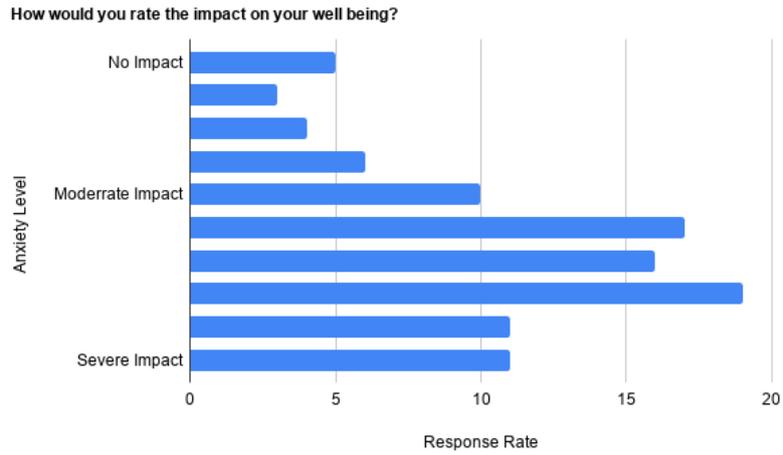


**Fig. 24 Anxiety levels amongst CYP**

How would you currently rate your anxiety in relation to COVID-19 on a scale of 1-10?

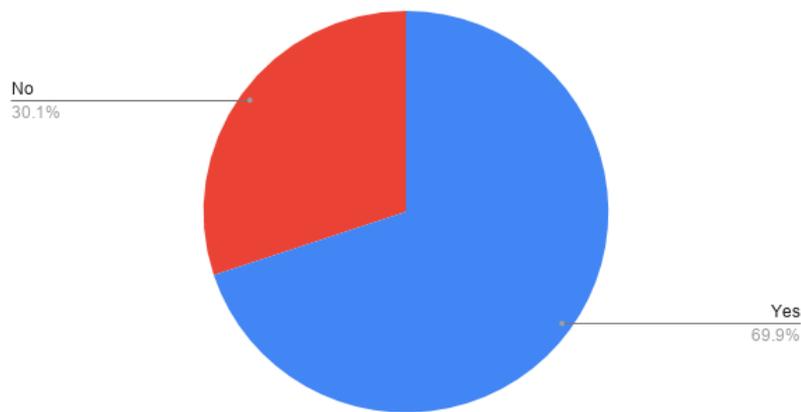


**Fig. 25 Anxiety levels amongst parent carers**



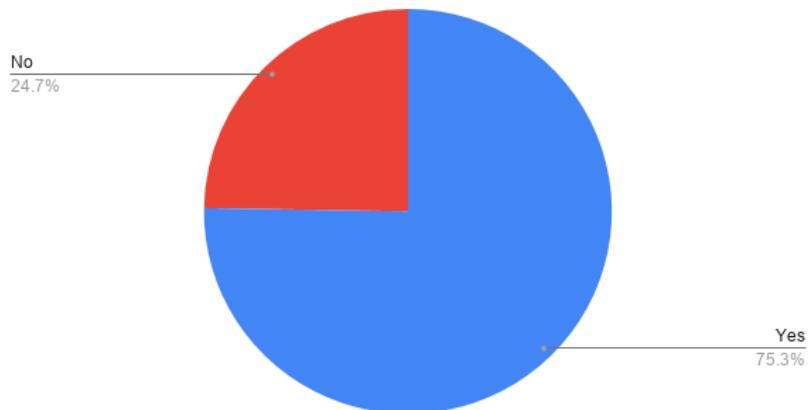
**Fig. 26 Impact on wellbeing**

**Are you, as a parent carer, worried about the impact of COVID-19 on your child with SEND?**



**Fig. 27 Parent concern over impact on CYP**

**Is the current situation in relation to the COVID-19 having an impact on your physical, emotional and mental well being as a parent carer?**



**Fig. 28 Parent concern over impact on own wellbeing**

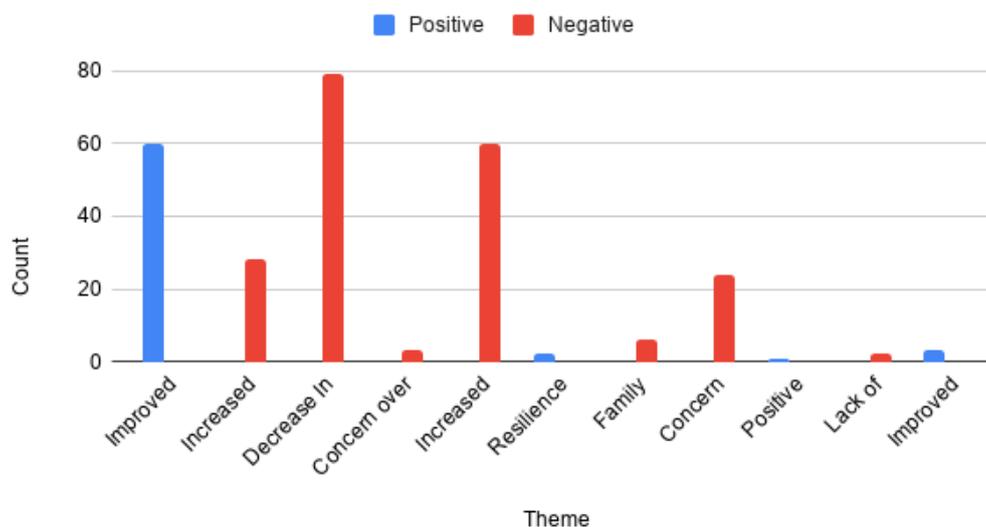
Fig. 23 to 26 all demonstrate that parent carers are more likely to rate their anxiety and that of their CYP as high as well as their feeling that COVID-19 has impacted their lives detrimentally. Fig. 27 and 28 also show that a large majority of parent carers feel that COVID-19 has impacted their own emotional wellbeing and that of their CYP.

The impact on emotional wellbeing and mental health is further demonstrated when a brief analysis was conducted of all the comments gathered through the survey.

Emotional Health and Wellbeing		
	Positive	Negative
Improved Emotional Health and Wellbeing (IEHWB)	60	
Increased Challenging Behaviour (ICB)		28
Decrease In Emotional Wellbeing (DEW)		79
Concern over Restrictions (CR)		3
Increased Anxiety (IR)		60
Resilience (R)	2	
Family Breakdown (FB)		6
Concern about C19 Spread (C19)		24
Positive Impact on Family Relationships (PIFR)	1	
Lack of understanding about C19 (LUC19)		2
Improved Behaviour (IB)	3	

**Fig. 29 Emotional wellbeing Code Count**

### Emotional Wellbeing & Mental Health



**Fig. 30 Emotional wellbeing Themes**

The vast majority of comments pointed towards a negative impact as shown in Fig. 29 and 30. This is further supported by comments such as:

- *I am a single parent and work full time, I rely on family for childcare but my parents are in the high risk category for Covid-19 so myself and my adult daughter are having to try and arrange opposite shift patterns when we can, she mainly had to work midweek so I will be working mostly nights and weekends. I am therefore not at home a lot of the time my son has free time so cannot provide the level of emotional support he needs from me at the moment or generally spend time with him. Everyone in the household is currently struggling with mental health issues and this time of year is always a struggle but will be even more so this year. I take medication has been getting increasingly difficult to obtain as supplies are low and without it there is a high chance I will end up needing to have time off work and to be treated as an inpatient whilst I trial replacement medication, this would have a massive impact on my children and if lockdown restrictions are put back in place they will be isolated and without support.*
- *I have anxiety and this has definitely made it worse as things I worry about come true I can't keep them safe in our bubble he has to go to school the government say children are not really affected but that doesn't help my anxiety*
- *It's stressful every day sending my two girls to school, are at different schools so this increases the chance of the virus getting in. My husband is vulnerable and I'm the main carer for him and my son. I am worried about keeping them safe from the virus. Just have to be very careful.*
- *A lot of scared. fears. I was 24 h with child. I have no time for myself. The needed visit in hospital was stressful. I haven't care. Im scared used bus or taxi.*
- *During the lockdown, life has totally changed not only for us for everyone. Keep thinking about the virus and terrifying. Just think we don't catch a virus on any cost. We didn't go anywhere in lockdown just went to a walk in the park. My husband just goes to work now and during the lockdown. Even we are not having any takeaway food yet. We clean every stuff when we bought something even Grocery either. So it's so many things we are going through during this terrible time.*
- *Lock down had been very difficult being so isolated and dependent on others for essentials . Anxiety and fear has been very high as that was all that was being shown on tv or talked about . Not having my normal network of support and help has been very hard*

Further to this one part of the survey asked parent carers to share their concerns more generally with the following responses being elicited:

- *Worrying more*
- *If my child develops Covid , I won't be able to isolate from him as he needs parent to be close. I'm extremely vulnerable also which makes things more difficult*
- *He needs to learn and play with friends and have all therapies.*
- *As my child routine has change and now he back at school he doesn't want to do any school work.*
- *He doesn't understand why things are different and is finding it all difficult and a huge struggle*
- *How this will effect him not being able to see his family and friends*
- *Taxi drivers and PA really need to wear masks for the whole journey and not just when they arrive at school for presentation purposes*

- *How we will cope long term with this pandemic and manage to keep everybody safe*
- *Health concerns if my son child contracts covid. The academic side of learning if has to self isolate or we go into lockdown*
- *Mainly that he doesn't want to mix socially*
- *Not knowing when my daughter will be in school full time*
- *college not understanding his needs and expecting him to go back to how he was before having 6 months off which is jeopardising his place at college.*
- *Ehcp review not done for this year and is well overdue*
- *I'm worried school might close again and she will get more unsettled*
- *regression from not having as much social contact. Already highly anxious so struggling to then process information*
- *Irritable*
- *Emotional well-being*
- *more tired obsessed with washing hands*
- *Separation anxiety heightened*
- *No change. Other than not knowing how the virus would affect him should he catch it my concerns are mostly around how he will cope with all the changes taking place and how much support we can access for mental health issues before reaching crisis point.*
- *Having the right support by the right people*
- *He was already significantly delayed in all aspects of learning, but has now fallen even further behind. We do not know how much longer he will be able to stay in mainstream for and will most likely require specialist provision to help catch up.*
- *My son is only accessing college on day a week, this is a full time course but due to covid they have reduced classroom time he is concerned that he will not pass his level 3 course -he is in his second year*
- *Missed schooling when he was younger and concerned about the impact of further periods of isolation. Also strained relationship through trying to combine parent role with that of teacher. Missing social development with peers.*
- *Concerns in respect of his SALT program being severely interrupted. And EHCP. And Education. SALT is now being reintroduced since returning to school, although this wasn't straightforward and took time to introduce due to COVID restrictions. EHCP review is being arranged.*
- *We need to look at where he will go in September and with no open days this is proving very difficult*
- *Loss of education an interaction with others*
- *Whether they will be able to get the support they need*
- *My child starts a special needs school soon an I want the transition to be smooth*
- *Dangerous*
- *Impact on his mental health*
- *My only concern is if they close schools again, being around her friends makes her happy, and she missed them during lockdown.*
- *I'm worried that the uncertainty and decisions such as sending children home at short notice would increase her anxiety. I am not worried about her education because she is actually accessing things better with restrictions placed on her.*

- *My daughter has been very anxious about her future and how missing school will impact her long term. As she was not able to see her friends she has become more comfortable to be alone in her room and maybe texting with her friends instead of meeting face to face.*
- *Lack of provisions within school. He can. Or afford anymore time away from school as he already has delays in his understanding and ability.*
- *I'm worried that the uncertainty and decisions such as sending children home at short notice would increase her anxiety. I am not worried about her education because she is actually accessing things better with restrictions placed on her.*
- *Still waiting to hear back after the EHC assessment, not sure I will be able to pick a senior school by the 31st October deadline*
- *Lack of provisions within school. He can. Or afford anymore time away from school as he already has delays in his understanding and ability.*
- *Feel that child is not getting full help he deserves and his funding may end up being used elsewhere in the school*
- *My concerns are more educational based and that my child has missed out on her education. I have continued the learning at home throughout the lockdown and am still doing so. However, she initially started school partly through year 1 due to ASD and then missed half of year 2 due to COVID 19. She is now in year 3 and her reading level is at the beginning of year 1. Had she not missed part of year 2 she may have moved up the reading ladder prior to stating year 3.*
- *Getting a test if I'll long waits*
- *My concern is that my child has lost out on critical learning and education with being off for 5 months. She did complete home schooling each week in lockdown but this wasn't the same and she found it really tough. My daughter was already behind with her English skills so I feel this has had a knock on effect with her going into year 6 and completing her SATS this year.*
- *This has impacted greatly on my child limiting activities & having a huge impact on mental health @ behaviour & I am really worried about thus all*
- *"My main concern is the delay in seeing the Paediatrician. We were on the list in March and have not heard anything since then. The letter states not to contact them. We are 7 months down the line and have no idea when this will even take place. I'm also concerned that virtual appointments might not allow a true picture of my daughter and her needs to be reflected.*
- *Another concern, is that when my daughter was making threats to end her life there were no agencies that could support. GP states CHUMS, CHUMS who are already working with us said GP. Told she is too young for CAMHS. If another lock down occurs and her mental health deteriorates again we are at a loss as to what to do to help her. "*
- *He's become alot more aggressive and emotional*
- *Health issues as she has underlying health problems*
- *He is scared to see people outside of the support bubble.*
- *Worried that schools will close again and there will be no routine for my son*
- *Home schooling was hard with her she is so behind*
- *I feel that any progress we had made regarding challenging behaviour has gone, he's gone backwards. I worry about my sons mental health*
- *Emotional well-being*
- *My son is severe dyslexic and he struggles with day to day learning and retaining what he has learnt. He is extremely difficult to teach so he must have fallen behind even further, he was 3*

*years behind his age at the time he was diagnosed. As a result, his self esteem has gone down. He also missed socialising with his friends and seeing teachers.*

- *Worried that he is going to hurt someone*
- *As she is unable to talk it difficult to find out how she feels*
- *Not able or time scales for needed operation*
- *I am concerned the continual uncertainty means that his continuation of care isn't allows maintained as the school have to keep changing to adapt to changing rules*
- *New changes and Abi being able to adapt*
- *I am not necessarily worried about him catching it, but the mental impacts of it.*
- *He needs constant targets and repetition i fear these will lack now*
- *My son is anxious all the time, now due to COVID-19, he is on high alert all the time.*

These concerns relate to services and support, finances, education and emotional wellbeing. They show how it is not possible to focus on one theme in isolation. What is also clear from the responses if looking at the data from an individual level is that if one area is working well invariable other areas work better and emotional wellbeing increases.

Parent 1:

Child male, 8 years old with ASD, Moderate Learning Disability, Hearing Impairment and challenging behaviour who attends a full time mainstream setting

### **Emotional Wellbeing**

*“At home, his anxiety and stress have caused him to be volatile and have violent outbursts. His behaviour was very challenging just before and when he first returned to school”*

### **Education**

Did not attend school in lock down, however returned full time in September *“He initially returned for one hour a day and gradually built up to full time, he was able to be back in full time much quicker than expected because the school put such fantastic provisions in place for him.”*

Transition plan was implemented to support return to school.

*The school have been fantastic and provided a lot of support for us, they arranged a telephone consultation with an autism specialist and she was very helpful and kept in touch with us. This sort of service was very helpful for me.*

### **Support and Services**

Support was available through health *“ As the parent carer I had phone and/ or video calls with health services ”*

### **Finances**

Not applicable was selected in relation to financial impact questions

Parent 2:

Child Male, aged 9 years old with Moderate Learning Disability who attends a Full Time Specialist setting

### **Emotional wellbeing**

*"I'm worried as if I'm not working I can't pay rent, bills and just provide all the things my child may need. It's a very worrying, stressful time."*

*"My son is alot more happier and alert he actually enjoys going to school and his behaviour all round has been much better."*

### **Education**

During the initial lock down a risk assessment was conducted and school was attended for a short time  
*"Only went school back to school mid June, for about 5weeks"*

Was involved in section M discussions and rated the involvement, provision and usefulness as good.

Son returned to school full time in September with no transition plan/ risk assessment.

### **Support and Services**

Not applicable was selected In relation to questions pertaining to support and services.

### **Finances**

When asked questions relating to finances

*"Its impacted my work life as my son's school is finishing at 2pm instead of 3pm I work until 3pm so am currently on a temp contract which will end after the half term in October. I am at risk of losing my job if the school do not go back to finishing at 3pm. This is a major worry for me as I am a single parent and have no other income."*

### Analysis

Overall across the work conducted between April and December looking at the impact of COVID-19 on the lives of parent carers and their families generally the impact is by and large negative. All aspects of people's lives have been affected and as already mentioned four themes can be identified; Education, Services and Support, Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health and Finances in no particular order. A brief thematic analysis was conducted of the main survey results presented in this report and this was also compared to other sources of data. Coding was conducted after the survey was completed and the codes were condensed in to the four main themes. Themes are interwoven and as demonstrated by the very brief case studies Parent 1 and Parent 2 if one area works well, other areas seem to follow suit and if an area is not working so well there is more of a negative impact on other areas.

It is not possible to draw conclusions based on the data presented in this report, rather to offer suggestions as to possible links between areas and provide a snapshot of how parent carers have reported on the impact COVID-19 has had on their lives. It is also possible to speculate that as the

pandemic continues and lives are continuously impacted things may get worse for families, especially in relation to emotional wellbeing, mental health and finances. It may be that the services look to investigate further the impact of COVID on the SEND community and plan accordingly.