



CANDID COVID SURVEY

Candid

'kandid (adjective)

1. truthful and straightforward; frank

Our findings

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Context and purpose

The outbreak of COVID-19 has affected us all in different ways. It has transformed the way we socialise, live, work and learn. Like many of us, here at the Youth Trust, we wanted to know more about how these changes were being felt across our community.

As a youth-led organisation, the experiences of young people are central to our services. In addition to embedding the voice of young people in our organisation through the work of the Youth Trust Mental Health Taskforce, we wanted to engage with our wider community and ensure that the adaptations to our services, brought about by Covid, are meeting the needs of all young Islanders.

While the pandemic has spurred a flurry of research to understand its impacts, these have largely taken place at a national level. Local research efforts have initially engaged with adults only. Through conversations within our local community and organisations with an interest in the wellbeing of young people (including with HealthWatch and Public Health) we realised that we were not alone in our appetite for local data, and were uniquely positioned to capture young people's voices in a rapidly evolving situation through a pulse-check survey. This survey was completed online between 22nd July and 9th August 2020. It was promoted with the help of the Isle of Wight Council (through social media and promotion to secondary schools), through local media and through Youth Trust social media. We are grateful for the support our survey received across our community, which allowed us to reach young Islanders in creative ways.

This survey provides valuable insights which can be drawn upon by all services engaging with young Islanders. Where possible, we have analysed these findings against those of our 2019 Island Youth Mental Health Census. These comparisons are offered later in this report and provide an interesting point of contrast over time. We hope to further build upon this research in coming months, to monitor levels of mental health and emotional wellbeing within our community and hope our findings will be a starting point for identifying how we, as an Island community, can best support our young people in the transition towards our new 'normal'.

Demography

We received 314 responses to our Candid Covid Survey of which, three responses were excluded for being over 25. The following analysis is based on the remaining 311 responses.

We received the most responses from 15-year olds (16%) and the least responses from 12-year olds (3%). Most other ages were evenly represented at between 5-7% of respondents.

Most respondents identified as female (74%), male (24%), non-binary (1%). One respondent identified as questioning and two respondents chose not to disclose their gender identity.

Respondents lived in the following places:

- Newport (31%)
- Ryde (21%)
- Cowes (12%)
- Sandown (9%)
- Ventnor (9%)
- East Cowes (6%)
- Shanklin (2%)
- Other towns (10%)

This roughly aligns with our understating of youth population distribution on the Isle of Wight.

Work and Education

- 11% of respondents said they had attended school, university or college all of the time since March, 17% said they had attended school some of the time since March, 34% said they had not attended school, university or college since March but were accessing online learning and 38% said they had not attended school university or college and had not accessed online learning through any of the aforementioned education providers.
- For those identified as engaged in education, 82% felt that the outbreak of COVID-19 had made their education either much worse or a bit worse, 13% felt it had made no difference, 3% felt it had made their education a bit better and 2% felt the outbreak of COVID-19 had made their education much better.
- Of the respondents who were of working age:
 - 44% did not have a paid job at the start of lockdown and 56% did have a paid job at the start of lockdown.
 - 45% did not have a paid job at the time of completing the survey and 55% did have a paid job.
 - 64% felt that COVID 19 had negatively impacted on their employment opportunities. 32% felt that the outbreak of COVID-19 had made no change to their employment opportunities. 3% felt it had made things a bit better and 1% felt it had made their employment opportunities much better.

Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing

Young people responded to seven questions on their feelings. by indicating if given statements were true, sometimes true or untrue, in describing their feelings over the past two weeks.

- 88% of young people said it was true (44%) or sometimes true (44%), that they had been worrying a lot.
- 73% of young people said it was true (40%) or sometimes true (33%), that it had been hard to go to sleep or stay asleep.
- 57% of young people said it was true (24%) or sometimes true (43%), that they get very angry and often lose their temper.
- 79% of young people said it was true (37%) or sometimes true (42%), that they are often unhappy, down or tearful.
- 65% of young people said it was true (26%) or sometimes true (39%), that they have many fears and are easily scared.
- 82% of young people said it was true (45%) or sometimes true (37%), that they had felt totally lacking in energy and enthusiasm.
- 64% of young people said it was true (27%) or sometimes true (37%), that they had felt terribly alone and isolated.

	True		Sometimes True		Never True	
	Figure	%	Figure	%	Figure	%
I have been worrying a lot	137	44	138	44	36	12
It's been hard to go to sleep or stay asleep	124	40	103	33	84	27
I get very angry and often lose my temper	74	24	133	43	104	33
I am often unhappy, down or tearful	115	37	132	42	64	21
I have many fears, I am easily scared	81	26	121	39	109	35
I have felt totally lacking in energy and enthusiasm	139	45	114	37	58	19
I felt terribly alone and isolated	83	27	115	37	113	36

In seeking to understand more about where the areas of concern are for young Islanders, respondents were asked to indicate whether they worried about a given issue never, sometimes, quite a lot or all or most of the time.

How much do you worry about the issues listed below?	Never	Sometimes	Quite a lot	All or most of the time
School work problems	23%	35%	24%	18%
Bullying	60%	27%	10%	3%
Your physical health	21%	38%	30%	11%
Physical health of someone in your family	20%	40%	26%	14%
Your mental health	18%	29%	28%	25%
Mental health of someone in your family	26%	32%	25%	16%
Money problems/family finances	24%	31%	22%	22%
How I am getting on with my boyfriend/girlfriend/partner (e.g. shouting, arguing, hitting)	70%	12%	10%	8%
How others at home are getting on with me or my brothers/sisters (e.g. shouting, arguing, hitting)	45%	31%	14%	10%
How others at home are getting on with each other (e.g. shouting, arguing, hitting)	35%	34%	23%	7%
Social distancing	19%	44%	22%	15%
Covid-19	11%	45%	29%	16%
Racial inequality	35%	33%	24%	8%
Life returning to 'normal'	16%	34%	29%	21%

Young people were asked to indicate how much they agreed with a series of statements by whether they strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed, or strongly disagreed. Some of these statements are repeated from our 2019 Island Youth Mental Health census, with additional questions added based on feedback from our Taskforce and community partners.

How much do you agree with the following statements?	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I take a positive attitude towards myself	11%	40%	34%	15%
I feel safe at home	59%	37%	3%	1%
I feel positive about my future	13%	53%	25%	9%
I feel safe when I go out in public	8%	54%	31%	7%
I want things to go back to 'normal'	53%	39%	7%	1%

When asked about who they would turn to for support if facing difficulties with their mental health or emotional wellbeing, the 5 most commonly identified responses were:

- 62% Mum
- 51% friend
- 28% boyfriend/girlfriend/partner
- 28% Dad
- 17% Sister
- 14% of young people said they would talk to no one which was the sixth most popular response, ahead of teachers, counsellors and all other family members.

When asked to identify aspects of their lives that had changed for the better since the outbreak of COVID-19 popular responses were:

- spending more time with my family (49%)
- having more time to relax (45%),
- using technology more to keep in touch more with family or friends (37%)
- less school pressures (25%).

30% of respondents did not feel that anything had changed for the better. This was the fourth most popular answer.

The most popular coping mechanism for when times are tough included:

- spending time with friends (43%)
- music (42%)
- crying (33%)
- spending time with family (33%)
- sleeping (28%)
- eating too much (25%)
- playing video games (24%).

30% of young people said their coping mechanisms had changed since the outbreak of COVID-19. When asked to elaborate on how responses included¹:

I think my coping mechanisms have gotten better, and I am less likely to self-harm.

Talking to mum more and exercising less

Since lockdown I've had more time to spend with family and with friends as well as having time for myself to do other activities like art and listening to more music.

Spending more time with family

I used to be home alone a lot so I could sleep for ages and listen to my music etc. but I live in a bungalow and now that my entire family has been in my house with me, they can all hear my music and I'm always getting told off for playing my music too loud and sleeping too often.

Not being able to meet friends

I've spent more time with my mum as she normally working in an office.

¹ Answers have been edited for spelling errors.

The gyms haven't been open so I haven't been able to manage stress through exercise like I was before lockdown. I can't spend time with my family. I need close contact with family for support and this distancing and lockdown has meant that I have felt more suicidal.

It has changed the ways because it makes me think about how fragile life can be and how important personal hygiene can be.

For the worse, getting more violent reactions to my anger.

They have only slightly changed. Since lockdown I have used alcohol as a coping mechanism more than I did before, because I was lonely and had nobody or nothing else to go to. It takes away the pain and relaxes me in a way that nothing else can. It has become addicting. I sleep more because I only work three days a week, and have no Uni to attend to which has made me lack motivation massively and sleeping provides another way out of all the worries in the world. Recently I have preferred sleeping to being awake because I don't have to worry or feel alone.

Self-harming

School has taken up most my time meaning I can't do these coping methods some days.

Because of the lockdown it made me bored and made it easier for me to get drowned in my thoughts. My partner helps me every day and he's the only person that has kept me strong.

Because of lockdown I feel more isolated and found it harder to confide in friends as can't see them. I have smoked more as I have more free time. However, I feel less stressed because other pressures (schoolwork) has decreased.

If anything worsened due to increased time playing x box games and getting angry and frustrated at team games.

I have been listening to music a lot more as it helps me to block out the negativity. I have been playing video games a lot more as it helps me to escape into a reality where I don't have to worry about what's around the corner and I use it to calm me down when I am anxious or worried. Finally, speaking to my counsellor really helps as sometimes all the negativity gets to me so it's nice to know I can talk to someone to get my feelings off my chest.

Not as healthy coping mechanisms.

Accessing services

The below questions focus on all mental health services, not only Youth Trust services.

- 49% of respondents said they had not ever seen a mental health professional and 51% said they had.
- 17% of respondents had accessed mental health services since March and 83% had not.
- 77% of respondents had heard of the Youth trust before and 23% had not.

When asked the reasons for not accessing mental health services:

- 59% indicated that they had not needed to.
- 17% indicated they had needed to access services but were worried about what would happen if they did.
- 6% indicated they had needed to access services but, didn't know how to.
- 5% indicated they had needed to access services but couldn't get an appointment.
- 5% indicated they had tried to access services, but don't have a private space at home to talk about what I need to.

One respondent indicated they had tried to access services, but did not have the technology (phone, computer, tablet) at home, however as this survey was conducted online, the low selection of this answer is not necessarily reflective of the wider community.

For this question, we also provided an option for young people to give their own responses some of these responses included:

I have previously had mental health help so have been able to use what I learnt then during this time

I haven't wanted to waste other people's time. I am also unsure of whether I would need to use a service.

I don't feel comfortable talking on the phone, I need to see people face to face in a different environment than the home to be able to open up.

I got discharged from CCAMHS before lockdown because I turned 18.

I haven't gotten on with services in the past.

I don't trust other people and not interested into speaking to strangers

I want to access services but am registered in my university city not here.

I have refused for my mum to call Youth Trust.

I just don't really feel comfortable of doing it due to being in a world full of judgemental people.

Comparison with 2019 Island Youth Mental Health Census

When comparing the wellbeing questions for the 2019 Island Youth Mental Health Census we can see that levels of worry, unhappiness, fear and loneliness are significantly higher in the Covid survey, compared with the Census of the previous year.

	True		Sometimes True		Never True	
	2019 Census	2020 Covid	2019 Census	2020 Covid	2019 Census	2020 Covid
I have been worrying a lot	30%	44%	42%	44%	28%	12%
It's been hard to go to sleep or stay asleep	27%	40%	35%	33%	37%	27%
I get very angry and often lose my temper	26%	24%	39%	43%	36%	33%
I am often unhappy, down or tearful	22%	37%	38%	42%	40%	21%
I have many fears, I am easily scared	17%	26%	31%	39%	52%	35%
I have felt totally lacking in energy and enthusiasm	23%	45%	34%	37%	43%	19%
I felt terribly alone and isolated	16%	27%	25%	37%	60%	36%

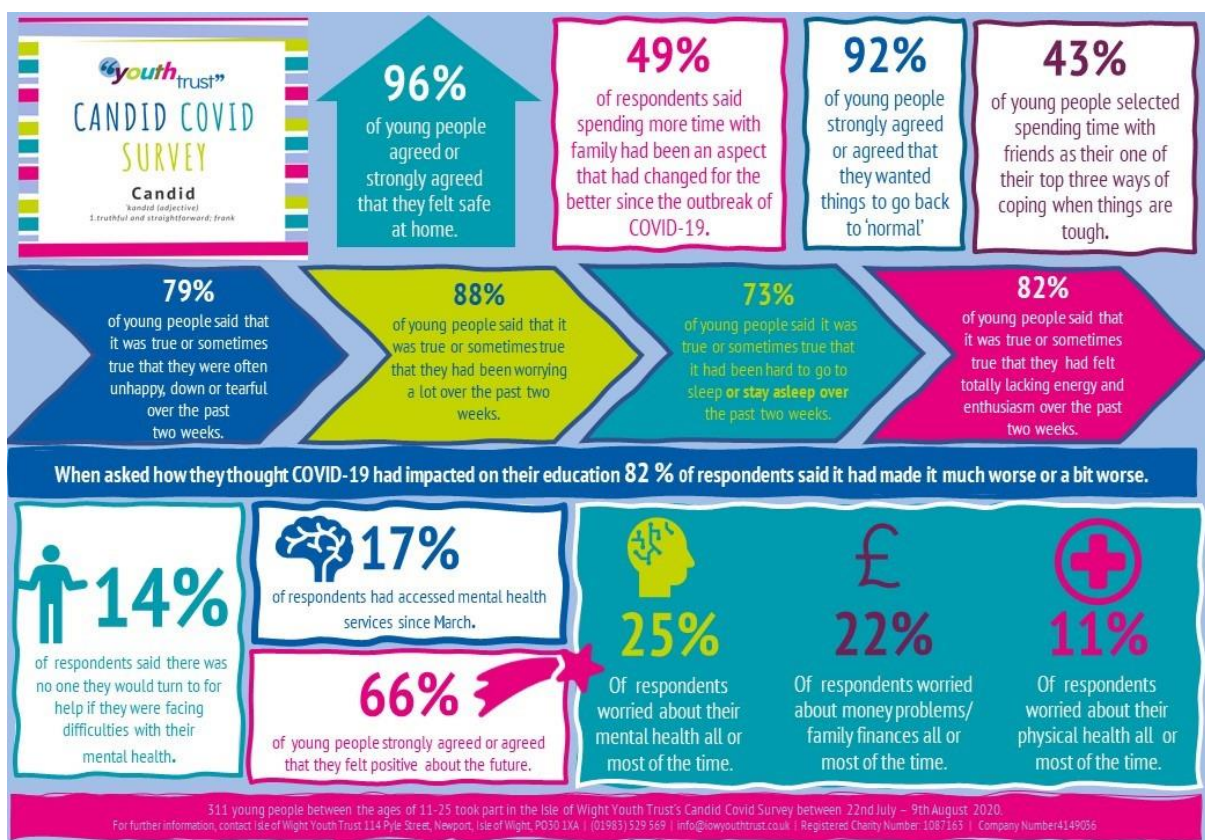
In terms of coping strategies, options were added to the Covid survey which had not been listed as options in the Census but had been frequently specified as an 'other' option. This included, crying and sleeping. Other coping strategies were slightly reworded, for example, "Friends" was reworded to "spending time with friends."

	2019 Census	2020 Covid
Friends/ spending times with friends	48%	43%
Music	49%	42%
Family/ spending time with family	35%	33%
Crying	N/A	33%
Sleeping	N/A	28%
Eating too much	23%	45%
Video games/ Playing video games	34%	24%
Pets	19%	30%

We repeated the below questions from our 2019 Island Youth Mental Health Census,

How much do you agree with the following statements?	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020
	Census	Covid	Census	Covid	Census	Covid	Census	Covid
I take a positive attitude towards myself	22%	11%	45%	40%	22%	34%	11%	15%
I feel positive about my future	27%	13%	47%	53%	17%	25%	9%	9%

When considering the above observations, it should be noted that the sample size of the Covid survey is roughly 10 percent of the Census for this age group. Additionally, there are significant differences in gender representation and the fact that the survey was completed online, predominantly over the school holidays may have shaped the results.



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