



CANDID COVID SURVEY 2.0

Candid

'kandid (adjective)

1. truthful and straightforward; frank

Our findings

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Context and purpose

As a youth-led organisation, the experiences of young people are at the core of all we do. In addition to embedding the voice of young people in our organisation through the work of the Youth Trust Mental Health Taskforce, the Isle of Wight Youth Trust proactively seeks opportunities to engage with our wider community. Over the past year, community consultation has been a critical step towards ensuring that the adaptations to our services, brought about by Covid-19, are meeting the needs of all young Islanders.

As we emerged from the first lockdown, we surveyed young Islanders on the impact that Covid-19 had had on their mental health and wellbeing. 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. The results of this survey can be [found here](#) and are briefly examined at the end of this report.

As 2021 started, with the country in a national lockdown, we decided to repeat our Candid Covid Survey and check in once again with the needs of our young people. Thus, Candid Covid 2.0 was launched with respondents completing the survey between 28th January and 28th of February 2021.

Candid Covid 2.0 was a community effort with schools, the Isle of Wight Council, the Head Teachers Forum and many community groups encouraging young people to take part, we almost tripled our response rate compared to our previous Covid survey. The survey was promoted by local media outlets and through the Youth Trust social media. We are grateful for the support our survey received across our community, which allowed us to reach young Islanders who may not have otherwise had the opportunity to be heard.

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 and the previous 2020 Covid-19 Survey which was conducted between the July and August 2020. These comparisons are offered later in this report and provide an interesting point of contrast over time.

We hope that our findings will provide not only our service, but all services and organisations who support young Islanders with some insights into the experiences of our young people through the pandemic.

It is also our hope that our findings will prompt our community to think about how we can collectively better engage with young people and ensure their voices are at the forefront of our future development.

“Feeling overwhelmed and helpless towards my thoughts was more common before I had counselling last year and the year before. I used to not exactly self harm but scratch at my arms and legs to make scars and stuff, and I haven't done that in a while. I don't know what has changed but when I'm in a bad place I usually just take myself to somewhere I can be alone and cry, or write about it, but most the time when this happens I don't have much motivation to do anything. I use art and music to relax me all the time as they are things I enjoy anyway and when I feel vulnerable I usually get quite irritated or angry so being alone helps. I don't think much of this has changed due to lockdown specifically.”

– Survey respondent

Demography

We received 917 responses to our Candid Covid 2.0 Survey of which, seven were excluded for being over 25. The following analysis is based on those 910 responses.

We received the most responses from 15-year-olds (14%) and the least responses from 25-year-olds (1%) With a number of schools and colleges promoting the survey, we had strong representation of 11 -17-year-olds however, fewer responses from 18 -25 years olds, reflecting an ongoing challenge of engaging this age group.

Respondents identified as female (57%), male (36%), non-binary (3%). 3% of respondents selected the prefer not say category and 1% identified as other.

Respondents lived in the following places:

- Newport (31%)
- Ryde (26%)
- Cowes (13%)
- East Cowes (10%)
- Sandown (4%)
- Ventnor (4%)
- Shanklin (3%)
- Other towns (9%)

These response rates are shaped by the schools and colleges who promoted the survey with 73% of respondents coming from Newport, Ryde or Cowes, where large schools or colleges are based.

Work and Education

- **54 % of respondents said they had attended school, university, or college all of the time since September**, 26% said that they had attended school some of the time since September, 15% said they had not attended school, university or college since September but were accessing online learning and 5% said that they had not attended school university or college and had not accessed online learning through any of the education providers as listed previously.
- **For those identified as engaged in education, 86% felt that the outbreak of Covid-19 had made their education either much worse or a bit worse**, 8% felt it had made no difference, 1% felt it had made their education a bit better and 4% felt the outbreak of Covid-19 had made their education much better. 1% of respondents gave no response to this question.

Of the respondents who were identified as being of working age:

- 73% did not have a paid job at the time of completing the survey and 27% did have a paid job at the time of completing the survey.
- 70% felt that Covid-19 had either made their employment opportunities much worse (39%) or a bit worse (31%). 26% felt that the outbreak of Covid-19 had made no difference to their employment opportunities. 3% felt it had made things a bit better.

Mental Health, Emotional Wellbeing and Quality of Life

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.

- 81% of young people said it was true (39%) or sometimes true (42%), that they had been worrying a lot.
- 75% of young people said it was true (42%) or sometimes true (33%), that it had been hard to go to sleep or stay asleep.
- 65% of young people said it was true (26%) or sometimes true (39%), that they get very angry and often lose their temper.
- 75% of young people said it was true (32%) or sometimes true (43%), that they are often unhappy, down, or tearful.
- 56% of young people said it was true (18%) or sometimes true (38%), that they have many fears and are easily scared.
- 82% of young people said it was true (46%) or sometimes true (36%), that they had felt totally lacking in energy and enthusiasm.
- 58% of young people said it was true (23%) or sometimes true (35%), that they had felt terribly alone and isolated.

	True		Sometimes True		Never True	
	Figure	%	Figure	%	Figure	%
I have been worrying a lot	357	39	386	42	167	19
It's been hard to go to sleep or stay asleep	378	42	304	33	228	25
I get very angry and often lose my temper	241	26	355	39	314	35
I am often unhappy, down or tearful	115	32	132	43	64	25
I have many fears, I am easily scared	162	18	344	38	404	44
I have felt totally lacking in energy and enthusiasm	387	46	329	36	165	18
I felt terribly alone and isolated	207	23	316	35	387	42

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, all or most of the time or this question does not apply to me. For those for whom the question was applicable, the responses are as follows:

How much do you worry about the issues listed below?	Never	Sometimes	Quite a lot	All or most of the time
School work problems	13%	32%	27%	28%
Bullying	68%	22%	6%	4%
Your physical health	27%	41%	22%	10%
Physical health of someone in your family	24%	30%	24%	22%
Your mental health	24%	30%	24%	22%
Mental health of someone in your family	30%	38%	20%	12%
Money problems/family finances	46%	31%	13%	10%
How I am getting on with my boyfriend/girlfriend/partner (e.g., shouting, arguing, hitting)	70%	16%	9%	5%
How others at home are getting on with me or my brothers/sisters (e.g., shouting, arguing, hitting)	52%	29%	11%	8%
How others at home are getting on with each other (e.g., shouting, arguing, hitting)	49%	30%	12%	9%
Social distancing	30%	40%	21%	9%
Covid-19	16%	40%	26%	18%
Racial inequality	45%	29%	18%	8%
Life returning to 'normal'.	22%	35%	23%	20%

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. All of these statements are repeated from our first Candid Covid survey and 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.	14%	41%	31%	14%
I feel safe at home.	61%	35%	3%	1%
I feel positive about my future.	8%	51%	27%	14%
I feel safe when I go out in public.	13%	50%	31%	6%
I want things to go back to 'normal'.	61%	32%	6%	1%

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

- Mum 63%
- friend 54%
- Dad 40%
- Teacher 22%
- Boyfriend/girlfriend/partner 21%
- Grandmother 19%
- Sister 18%
- No one 16%
- Brother 13%
- Grandfather 12%

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

- Spending more time with my family (45%)
- Having more time to relax (39%)
- Using technology more to keep in touch more with family or friends (32%)
- (22%) of respondents stated that they were doing more exercise than before.
- (20%) stated that they spent less time travelling.
- Less school pressures (16%).
- (13%) of respondents stated that it was easier to join in with activities because they were now online.
- Less work pressures (8%)

33% of respondents did not feel that anything had changed for the better. This was the third most popular answer.

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

- Music (48%)
- Playing video games (38%).
- Spending time with friends (35%)
- Spending time with family (33%)
- Sleeping (29%)
- Crying (29%)
- Pets (28%)
- Exercise/sport (20%)
- Eating too much (18%)
- Art (16%)

36% of young people said their coping mechanisms had changed since before the post-Christmas lockdown. When asked to elaborate on how, responses included:

“more crying and self-harm”

“I can't spend time with friends or family to cope.”

“Would speak to friends but lost a lot of friends since lockdown”

“Trying to keep my self as busy As humanly possible”

“Adapted to life and restrictions it's so hard”

“I have got into work/education more and played less videos games”

“I drink more alcohol and eat more as I'm at home more”

“Can't see friends/ boyfriend. Due to being key worker too tired or little time to spend time with family I live with.”

“I used to spend time with friends when times were tough, or I'd talk to my partner about it. But now I feel like my partner and I struggle to help each other, and I've slowly gotten more distanced from my friends.”

“Feel more isolated, distanced from the world, less confident, more time thinking”

We asked young people which aspect of their life had been most affected by Covid-19 as an open-ended question.

We broadly grouped these answers into the bellow eight categories and found that most.

- Mental health (20%)
- Friends/social (35%)
- Education (29%)
- Work (3%)
- Romantic/intimate relationships (2%)
- Family (13%)
- Future (3%)
- Other (27%)

Other responses included lack of independence as not being able to leave the house, not being able to take sports/exercise and or enjoy hobbies, lack of routine/normality, motivation and confidence. Answers included:

“Health wellness can't switch off from anything”.

“I feel more cut off from my already limited social life due to my autism.”

“Not getting my qualifications which leads to not being very attractive to employers”.

“My future, as I am hoping to venture out into the arts when I'm older especially dance”

Accessing services

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

- 67% of respondents said they had not ever seen a mental health professional and 33% said they had.
- 14% of respondents had accessed mental health services since March and 86% had not.
- 67% of respondents had heard of the Youth trust before and 33% had not.

When asked the reasons for not accessing mental health services:

- 64% indicated that they had not needed to.
- 3% indicated that they needed to but worried about how safe it was with Covid-19.
- 8% indicated they had needed to access services but were worried about other people finding out.
- 4% indicated they had needed to access services but, did not know how to.
- 3% indicated they had needed to access services but could not get an appointment.
- 5% indicated they had tried to access services, but do not have a private space at home to talk about what I need to.
- 1% indicated that they tried to access services, but did not have the technology (phone, computer, tablet) at home to access these services.

For this question, we also provided an option for young people to give their own responses 12% of respondents selected this option some of these responses included:

“Get anxious talking to people as my anxiety gets worse”

“I’ve thought about it, and had mental health therapy before, but it takes so long to get any appointment”.

“I’m embarrassed and they won’t help”.

“I had school pastor before when we were at school but currently none and I’m trying to find the best way to get it”.

“Don’t know how to talk about it”.

“I feel like I need it but I don’t want to because I prefer figuring things out on my own with my friends and I cope well with that”.

“I am already getting help”.

“don’t want to get judged or anything like that plus I don’t know how to”.

Comparison with 2019 Island Youth Mental Health Census & Previous Covid Survey

When comparing the wellbeing questions for the 2019 Island Youth Mental Health Census we can see those levels of worry, ability to go to or stay asleep, unhappiness, fear and loneliness are significantly higher in the 2020 Covid survey, compared with the Census of the previous year. In this most recent Covid survey this remains true, with the exception of the presence of fears which appears to have slightly reduced.

	True			Sometimes True			Never True		
	2019 Census	2020 Covid	2021 Covid	2019 Census	2020 Covid	2021 Covid	2019 Census	2020 Covid	2021 Covid
I have been worrying a lot	30%	44%	39%	42%	44%	42%	28%	12%	19%
It's been hard to go to sleep or stay asleep	27%	40%	42%	35%	33%	33%	37%	27%	25%
I get very angry and often lose my temper	26%	24%	26%	39%	43%	39%	36%	33%	35%
I am often unhappy, down or tearful	22%	37%	32%	38%	42%	43%	40%	21%	25%
I have many fears, I am easily scared	17%	26%	18%	31%	39%	38%	52%	35%	44%
I have felt totally lacking in energy and enthusiasm	23%	45%	46%	34%	37%	36%	43%	19%	18%
I felt terribly alone and isolated	16%	27%	23%	25%	37%	35%	60%	36%	42%

How much do you worry about the issues listed below?	Never		Sometimes		Quite a lot		All or most of the time	
	2020 Covid	2021 Covid	2020 Covid	2021 Covid	2020 Covid	2021 Covid	2020 Covid	2021 Covid
School work problems	23%	13%	35%	32%	24%	27%	18%	28%
Bullying	60%	68%	27%	22%	10%	6%	3%	4%
Your physical health	21%	27%	38%	41%	30%	22%	11%	10%
Physical health of someone in your family	20%	24%	40%	30%	26%	24%	14%	22%
Your mental health	18%	24%	29%	30%	28%	24%	25%	22%
Mental health of someone in your family	26%	30%	32%	38%	25%	20%	16%	12%
Money problems/family finances	24%	46%	31%	31%	22%	13%	22%	10%
How I am getting on with my boyfriend/girlfriend/partner (e.g., shouting, arguing, hitting)	70%	70%	12%	16%	10%	9%	8%	5%
How others at home are getting on with me or my brothers/sisters (e.g., shouting, arguing, hitting)	45%	52%	31%	29%	14%	11%	10%	8%
How others at home are getting on with each other (e.g., shouting, arguing, hitting)	35%	49%	34%	30%	23%	12%	7%	9%
Social distancing	19%	30%	44%	40%	22%	21%	15%	9%
Covid-19	11%	16%	45%	40%	29%	26%	16%	18%
Racial inequality	35%	45%	33%	29%	24%	18%	8%	8%

Life returning to 'normal'.	16%	22%	34%	35%	29%	23%	21%	20%
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When comparing levels of worry between our 2019 and 2020 Covid surveys, we can see a general trend of decreasing worry or worry levels remaining the same. Some areas saw an increase in the percentage of young people worrying about them 'all or most of the time, as well as in increase in young people worrying about them never. The notable exception is school work problems which saw an increase in respondents worried about them 'quite a lot' or 'all or most of the time. Increases are shown in bold below.

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	Covid 2020	2021 Covid
Friends/ spending times with friends	48%	43%	35%
Music	49%	42%	48%
Family/ spending time with family	35%	33%	33%
Crying	N/A	33%	29%
Sleeping	N/A	28%	29%
Eating too much	23%	45%	18%
Video games/ Playing video games	34%	24%	38%
Pets	19%	30%	28%

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 Census	Covid 2020	Covid 2021	2019 Census	Covid 2020	Covid 2021	2019 Census	Covid 2020	Covid 2021	2019 Census	Covid 2020	Covid 2021
I take a positive attitude towards myself.	22%	11%	14%	45%	40%	41%	22%	34%	31%	11%	15%	14%
I feel positive about my future.	27%	13%	8%	47%	53%	51%	17%	25%	27%	9%	9%	14%

When considering the above observations, it should be noted that the sample size of this Covid survey is roughly a third of the 2019 Island Youth Mental Health Census for this age group and triple the first Candid Covid survey.

Additionally, there is slightly greater female representation and the fact that the survey was completed online, may have shaped some results.

It should also be noted that our 2020 survey was conducted largely through school holidays and our 2021 survey was conducted with involvement from schools.

youth trust
CANDID COVID
SURVEY 2.0
Candid
'candid' (adjective)
1. truthful and straightforward; frank

910

young Islanders between the ages of 11-25 responded to Candid COVID Survey 2.0

48%

of respondents selected music as their one of their top three ways of coping when things are tough.

93%

of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they wanted things to go back to 'normal'

33%

of respondents felt no aspect of their lives had changed for the better since the outbreak of COVID-19

75%

of respondents said that it was true or sometimes true that they were often unhappy, down or tearful over the past two weeks.

81%

of respondents said that it was true or sometimes true that they had been worrying a lot over the past two weeks.

75%

of respondents said it was true or sometimes true that it had been hard to go to sleep or stay asleep over the past two weeks.

82%

of respondents said that it was true or sometimes true that they had felt totally lacking energy and enthusiasm over the past two weeks.

58%

of respondents said th it was true or sometimes true that they had felt terribly alone and isolated over the past two weeks.

When asked how they thought COVID-19 had impacted on their education **86%** of respondents said it had made it much worse or a bit worse.

45%

of respondents said that spending more time with family had been an aspect that had changed for the better since the outbreak of COVID-19.



71%

of respondents who identified as being of working age felt that their employment opportunities had ben made much worse or a bit worse dues to COVID-19.

59%

of young people strongly agreed or agreed that they felt positive about the future.



22%

Of respondents worried about their mental health all or most of the time.

20%

Of respondents reported that their mental health was the aspect of their life that had most been impacted by COVID-19.



28%

Of respondents worried about school work problems all or most of the time.

Percentages are for responses to each question which may marginally vary from overall response rate.

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