

RCPCH &Us COVID-19 Book Club

The impact of the pandemic on children & young people

Authors: RCPCH &Us with the CYP Engagement Team. and_us@rcpch.ac.uk

Children, young people and families have been impacted by COVID-19 in many ways. Young volunteers from RCPCH &Us have worked together to find out more.

Who are RCPCH &Us?

RCPCH &Us are children and young people who volunteer to make a difference to child health, through projects, events, activities and consultations.

Over 70,000 children & young people have shared the impact of COVID-19 on them

What is COVID-19 Book Club

Children and young people from across the UK have been sharing how the pandemic has impacted their lives, from not seeing friends and family, to the effect on their mental health, to being confused about how to access health services. Young volunteers from RCPCH &Us joined a weekly book club looking at studies and results about children and young people's experiences, and wanted to support services to understand their views. They created book club summaries on eight key themes, hosted a Q&A session and created recovery plan priorities.

Where can you find out more?

www.rcpch.ac.uk/covid-book-club

What can you do to help?

Create a recovery plan that prioritises children and young people's needs.

RCPCH &Us young people have volunteered over 100 hours to support recovery planning

What did we find out?

There have been positive and negative experiences associated with the pandemic. For some children and young people they have enjoyed being home with family and home schooling, others have felt being online for school, social and health appointments overwhelming. From the studies reviewed, there were three priority areas for the NHS;

1. Improve pandemic information for children and young people
2. Increase access to mental health services to support children and young people impacted by the pandemic
3. Improve virtual health services for children and young people.

There were eight themes for further consideration by the NHS and MDTs where COVID-19 has had an effect on children and young people:

education	employment
family	friends
mental health	health needs
information	virtual living

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The voice of children,
young people and families

RCPCH &Us Recovery Priority 1

Pandemic information for children & young people

Authors: RCPCH &Us with the CYP Engagement Team. and_us@rcpch.ac.uk

Children and young people from across the UK have shared what will help them through the pandemic and Winter 2020. RCPCH &Us young volunteers have created this reminder for you and your colleagues:

Problem

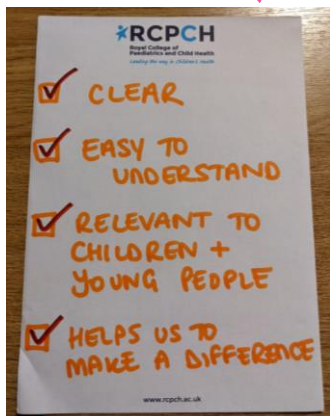
- ✗ Information about the pandemic and accessing health services is unclear and confusing
- ✗ Information has not been aimed at children and young people so doesn't feel relevant
- ✗ Children and young people weren't sure if they could get NHS help for non-COVID-19 concerns.

Solution

- ✓ Work with a local youth group to create youth focused messaging
- ✓ Do virtual visits to local schools/groups to explain local guidance and service access information
- ✓ Share the [guidance for young people by young people about staying safe](#) during COVID-19.

Impact

- 😊 Children and young people will feel listened to, valued and part of the solution if they can understand the information
- 😊 Children and young people can help you to make a difference in your area by following local guidance and accessing health services in the right way.



“Young people feel like they are an afterthought. I think health messages coming from young people in a 30 second video, so there is no long waffle, with some text on the video so they can read it too will help”

To find out more go to
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RCPCH &Us Recovery Priority 2

Mental health services to support children & young people impacted by the pandemic

Authors: RCPCH &Us with the CYP Engagement Team. and_us@rcpch.ac.uk

Children and young people from across the UK have shared what will help them through the pandemic and Winter 2020. RCPCH &Us young volunteers have created this reminder for you and your colleagues:

Problem

- ✗ Children and young people's mental health has been impacted by the pandemic
- ✗ They have lost friends, family, a sense of feeling safe, having people to talk to, or experiences like end of school
- ✗ They have been confused about how to get help with mental health as they don't want to bother any one during the pandemic.

Solution

- ✓ Do some online training about mental health e.g. psychological first aid, mental health first aid or look up the [MindEd](#) resources
- ✓ Provide space for children and young people to talk about their pandemic experiences in appointments
- ✓ Create online drop-ins and share local opportunities to do something positive.

Impact

- 😊 Children and young people will feel safe and supported
- 😊 Children and young people will feel that their pandemic experiences matter
- 😊 Children and young people will be able to access help and support, thanks to your signposting.



By Bethany, 16

*"It's a pandemic so I can't talk about my mental health when all that is going on"
83% of young people said that their mental health had worsened during COVID-19*

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RCPCH &Us Recovery Priority 3

Creating the best virtual health service experience

Authors: RCPCH &Us with the CYP Engagement Team. and_us@rcpch.ac.uk

Children and young people from across the UK have shared what will help them through the pandemic and Winter 2020. RCPCH &Us young volunteers have created this reminder for you and your colleagues:

Problem

- ✗ Everything has gone virtual and it can feel overwhelming and like no one wants to see children and young people face to face
- ✗ It can be really hard to open up online or on the phone especially if your family are listening in
- ✗ Not everyone has good WiFi, data or up to date devices that can run online appointments.

Solution

- ✓ Ensure children and young people know how to ask for a face to face appointment if they need one
- ✓ Create a video or graphic that explains how virtual appointments work, aimed at younger patients
- ✓ Support patients to create a safe, confidential and private space to have health appointments virtually.

Impact

- 😊 Children and young people will know that there is an NHS that they can access to help with their health needs
- 😊 Children and young people will feel supported to stay healthy, happy and well
- 😊 Children and young people will feel more comfortable telling professionals what is going on for them.



"It's personal, you have to talk about it in front of your family now on the phone like: how are you on a scale of 1-10 and how you are feeling? People can hear you or hear through the walls, so it's not private"

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