COVID-19 Book Club - children and young people's views

Children & Young People Engagement team
Children and young people have been experiencing the impact of COVID-19, in many ways, from education, to their health, discussions and decisions about the vaccine and in living in a virtual world. We worked with young people (16-25 years old) throughout 2020 and 2021 to make sure their voices were heard and could inform and influence decision makers.

Last modified
7 December 2021

Post date
26 May 2020

Table of contents

- Life in lockdown
- COVID-19 vaccine
- Thank you
- Keeping you safe
- Downloads

Life in lockdown

In June 2020, RCPCH began working with young people and clinicians to look at the voice and views of children and young people about being in lockdown. We set inclusion and exclusion criteria to identify a list of published studies.

Six young people aged 16-25 with a trainee paediatrician and RCPCH staff formed the COVID-19 Book Club. The club met for an hour each week to review the
studies and identify key themes. They had training on how to read the studies, use collaboration software and understand the NHS recovery plan approach. And, one club member, even built some AI to scan the studies for key stats and help theme into different categories.

The Book Club wanted to make sure that children and young people’s wishes, experiences and views around the impact of the pandemic were highlighted and understood, supporting the NHS to include their needs in recovery plans and winter planning in 2020.

Here's what they've produced:

- A live Q&A event where young people could ask questions of paediatricians in July 2020 about COVID-19, with a [blog by a trainee paediatrician](#)
- **Three recovery priorities (see below)** - to share with NHS managers, boards and decision makers to support recovery planning
- **Eight research summaries (see downloads)** - drawing from the studies reviewed
- Worked with others to create a leaflet to help young people with their digital health appointments (coming soon!)

You can also read more from other RCPCH &Us projects completed during lockdown about their views of [mental health in a national crisis, virtual appointments](#) and views of [specialist experience groups](#).

**NHS Recovery priorities**

The Book Club's young volunteers spoke with paediatricians, medical directors, policy leads and national programme leads for child health to understand more about how to help Trusts and planning for the following six months.

They have three recovery priorities for urgent action by NHS Trusts and health boards:

1. Have child- and youth-accessible, friendly and relevant information about accessing health services and staying safe through the pandemic
2. Increase access to mental health services to support children and young people impacted by the pandemic
3. Create the best virtual health experience possible thinking about access, confidentiality, rapport and holistic care
The Book Club created a **poster on these three recovery plan priorities**, explaining the problem, solutions and the impact on children and young people if resolved. They also wrote up their thoughts on eight core themes as **research summaries**, which relate to housing, family, friends, education and more.

**Download RCPCH &Us recovery plan priorities poster and research summaries below**

**COVID-19 vaccine**

The Book Club re-formed in May 2021 to look ahead to a potential vaccination programme for young adults and subsequently young people. They created new inclusion and exclusion criteria to identify a list of published insights from young people and young adults on the COVID-19 vaccine and reviewed these sources each week in their hourly meeting. As before, they invited external speakers to meet with them to discuss different issues such as consent, the scope of JCVI (Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation) and more.

Through their reviews of the published comments, concerns and hopes of others, the Book Club identify recurring themes for any decision makers to take into account for a vaccination programme. Their insight was shared with the Chief Medical Officers, Department of Health and Social Care, NHS England, Public Health England and other decision makers to help influence thinking.

**Creating an accessible vaccine programme**

Through reviewing 13 source of feedback from young people and young adults, the COVID-19 Book Club identified the following concerns that need to be taken into account when creating a vaccine programme for a pandemic like COVID-19 or others.

- Lack of information in accessible and relevant formats for young people
- Language being unclear about the benefits, concerns and process for the vaccine
- Long-term health impacts not being explored in a way that is relevant to young people
- Young people/young adults with specific conditions having concerns or questions that are not being addressed
- Mixed messaging about the role of young people in the pandemic and the
impact of COVID-19 on them
• Concerns around the consent process for the vaccine and the need to support and empower young people in making an informed decision
• Vaccine hesitancy including a lack of youth friendly vaccination centres or processes
• Vaccination passports and the implication this could have on young people and young adults

The Book Club identified solutions to support these concerns:

• Develop a young people- and young adult-focused public health campaign that makes full use of social media channels, school curriculum sessions and targeted adverts online/TV/radio to explain:
  ◦ that young people and young adults are a valued part of the effort to tackle COVID-19
  ◦ the science behind creating a vaccine, supporting understanding around the rigorous nature of development, testing and review
  ◦ the process of booking, attending, and having the vaccine in a step by step youth guide
• Create youth friendly vaccination centres making use of buildings, settings, and times where they feel comfortable such as youth centres, schools, universities
• Create youth-focused vaccine information that explains what happens, when and how, booking information, consent conversation starters, where to go for advice and what to expect after your vaccine
• Enlist the support of youth role models in a similar way that celebrities took part in Department of Health / UK Government campaigns alongside campaigns that feature diverse health workers who are seen as providing information that can be trusted by young people and young adults
• Actively and proactively change the belief that children and young people have been forgotten during the broader pandemic, so that they feel they are able to contribute to the solutions over the coming months

In November 2021 the Book Club worked with Movin, Sarah, Lizzie and Penny from the Royal College of Pathologists to create an incredible vaccines video, sharing some of their questions about the vaccine programme as well as getting creative with art work and origami. You can download the colour-in sheet below plus keep an eye out for our video coming soon!
Thank you

We want to pass on our thanks to all the children, young people, young adults, clinicians and RCPCH Staff who have supported the COVID-19 Book Club, especially the book clubbers for giving up hours of their time to support RCPCH and the wider sector.

Keeping you safe

We understand that you might have worries or concerns, or watch or read new things in the above that you want to talk about.

As well as local support, you can use these national services:

- **The Mix**, a charity supporting young people/young adults online or by phoning 0808 808 4994
- **Childline** for support for children and young people online or by phoning 0800 1111
- **BOLOH** helpline for Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups of young people
- **Papyrus Hopeline** for those experiencing thoughts of suicide
- **Kooth** - an app for young people with an online mental health community
- **NHS Every mind matters** - lots of different resources for all ages
- **Give us a Shout online** or text SHOUT to 85258 for all age support
- **Student Space** with support for students during the Coronavirus pandemic
- **Young Minds** with detailed support for young people, parents and professionals
- **Wellbeing for RCPCH members as health professionals** - resources and articles curated by other members
- **Blue Light Programme** which supports emergency workers

Downloads

- RCPCH and Us recovery plan priorities poster for NHS Trusts (October 2020) 221.41 KB
- Incredible vaccines colouring in sheet 2021 454.4 KB
- COVID-19 Book Club research summaries 2020 244.57 KB