

I am a practitioner or policy maker: How can I use what children are telling us about their experience of Coronavirus and lockdown?



Children's Parliament is publishing two sources of information about children's experience of Coronavirus and the lockdown. One is the **How are you doing? wellbeing survey**, the other is the **Corona Times Journal**. Both provide immediate and in-depth intelligence on children's lived experience. This short note explains how you might use it in practice or policy development.

How are you doing? wellbeing survey

The survey has had a huge response: 3,968 children responded in April and 3,698 in May. The survey gives a national picture on a range of areas from home life, to learning in lockdown, to mental and physical health, family and peer relationships. Reporting provides detail on 31 statements and questions that allow children to comment on what worries them and what helps them feel good.

The survey is developed from work previously conducted by Children's Parliament to create a tool that gave us *a subjective measure of children's wellbeing*. It is subjective because we want to capture children's lived experience, we don't want to simply count things, we want to know about *their* feelings and opinions on what we were told matters *to them*.

The current survey uses items that were tested and validated with children. Because of this we know the survey tools works with children from 8 years old. An important element is that children can complete the survey autonomously. We know that many parents and carers are helping – that is much appreciated – but we need the tool to work for the child who is taking part without support.

The survey gives us a national picture, made stronger because of the numbers of children taking part. Be assured that we have made every effort at Children's Parliament to reach across Scotland to connect children with the survey. It does not give us a local picture because we do not ask for any information that might identify the child. This is reassuring to both children and parents/carers, but there are practical reasons for not asking for postcode or Local Authority. When we built and tested our original wellbeing measure, we found that children often did not know the start of their postcode or answered other 'location' questions inaccurately. Also, if the child did not know the answer to the 'location' question the survey began to feel like a test, and they simply stopped responding. We tested this extensively and as a result we have decided to reach for a national, accurate and full picture.

So, how does a practitioner or policy maker use the data locally or regionally? We suggest you take time to read and understand the national picture and sit this insight in the context of your local knowledge. Will it be very different? How so? Would local circumstances normally exacerbate or mitigate against something you are reading? What would happen if you shared the results with colleagues and with children and families – would they say yes, no or maybe that this picture reflects local experiences? In other words, the survey provides a strong evidence base from which to start.

Corona Times Journal

Sitting alongside our national survey we are publishing a Journal, the content of which is written by children aged 8 to 14 years old. They are reflecting on aspects of like in and coming out of lockdown. The children provide clarity and insight that extends what we can understand from the data from the survey.

The survey and Journal should inform considerations being given to how we mitigate immediate concerns there are for children during the experience of lockdown, and also inform the medium to longer term road out of lockdown, what we might consider as recovery. All our work on this topic is published here: bit.ly/Coronavirus_Kids

We would very much appreciate feedback about how the children's insight has informed or influenced your work or policy development: info@childrensparliament.org.uk