

# LIVING WITH RESTRICTIONS: CHILDREN'S WORRIES IN LOCKDOWN



Children report during the January lockdown how Covid has left them feeling lonely with worries about money, illness, school work and food access.

In January 2021, the Food Foundation included two open response questions to their survey<sup>1</sup>, asking children:

1. Can you tell us three things that you worry about at the moment?
2. Can you tell us three things that make you feel happy / that you enjoy doing at the moment?

We analysed the responses from 1,308 children using a coding framework adapted from a recent [Born in Bradford](#) children's survey which asked similar questions. This was completed independently by three researchers.

Only 255 children reported they had no worries at all at the moment and 170 children said that there was nothing they were happy about or enjoyed doing at the moment. The rest of the responses offered an insight into what was on children's minds during the third UK Covid-19 lockdown.

Children were also very concerned by being unable to attend **school** during lockdown. Many were worried about the effects of missing school, not seeing their friends and teachers, not feeling like they were able to keep up with their schoolwork online and falling behind. Some of the older respondents were worried about their exams, particularly their GCSEs and A-Levels, whether they would be taking place and how lockdown would affect their whole educational and employment future.

"When we can go to school"

"I am in Year 11 and take my GCSEs this summer"

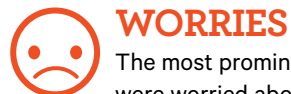
"My future"

"Missing out on my education and GCSEs"

"I miss my school"

"If I'm learning well enough at home"

"What's happening with exams"



## WORRIES

The most prominent worry was around **catching Covid-19**. Children of all ages were worried about themselves and those they loved becoming ill or dying from Covid-19. They were concerned about their grandparents and their parents, especially if they were in key worker roles or were perceived to be more at risk due to existing conditions.

"I don't want my Nanna to die"

"Mummy catching Corona"

"People I know getting Covid"

"My Mummy going to work"

"If my family is safe"

"my granny getting covid"

"My mum getting sick as she has MS"

"Covid -19 killing my friends or parents"

"I miss my friends"

"Not seeing my granny"

"Missing my family and friends"

"I'm lonely, need to see friends"

"Will not be able to play with my friends"

"Seeing my grandparents again"

"Not seeing my grandad and grandma for so long"

Not being able to see **friends and extended family members** was also a common worry reported the children in this survey. Many said that they missed seeing their friends at school and at their usual extracurricular activities and were worried about when they were going to be able to see them again. Grandparents in particular were missed.

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Many children were also worried about their **parents' jobs** and household incomes. From the responses, children were aware that their families' finances had been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and restrictions, and that this was weighing heavily on children's minds.

**"Mummy and Daddy not having enough money"**  
**"My parents losing their house"**  
**"Mum's job"**  
**"Seeing my mother being worried about money"**  
**"My dad not having any work"**  
**"Not enough money for bills"**  
**"My parents working too hard and not have enough to show for it"**  
**"Dad being made redundant"**

Some children were particularly worried about their family not having enough money to buy **food**.

**"Hunger"**  
**"Mums job and she only eats a little"**  
**"Going hungry"**  
**"Not have money for food"**  
**"Not having enough food"**  
**"Not having enough food to feed the whole family"**  
**"Worried about not having enough food in the house"**  
**"Not having enough food as a family"**  
**"Not having enough food in at home"**  
**"Nothing now mum is receiving those school meal vouchers because she tends not to eat so she has enough for me otherwise."**



## WHAT MADE THEM FEEL HAPPY AND THINGS THEY ENJOYED DOING

Most of the children responding to this survey identified things that made them feel happy or that they were enjoying during this time. The most frequent response was that they were getting to spend and enjoy more time with their parents, siblings and pets, doing activities like going for walks, doing home tasks or watching television and films. Children also enjoyed having more time for hobbies (e.g. drawing, music, baking), playing and computer gaming. They seemed to have benefited from being able to contact and speak to their friends through online games, social media and on the phone. Many children reported that they had found it more relaxing being at home, not having to stick to such a strict schedule and had enjoyed time on their own. Some had also enjoyed being able to stay up later and sleep in longer.

**"All of the family have time for each other"**  
**"Being able to sleep more has made me feel happy"**  
**"Relaxing at home"**  
**"Going for walks with my mam dad brother and dog"**  
**"Playing with my brothers"**  
**"Playing games with my mates online"**  
**"Chatting online with my friends"**

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### WITH THANKS TO:



**FOR OTHER FINDINGS FROM OUR CHILDWISE SURVEY, READ THE FULL REPORT**  
 **Crisis within a Crisis: The Impact of Covid-19 on Food Security**

