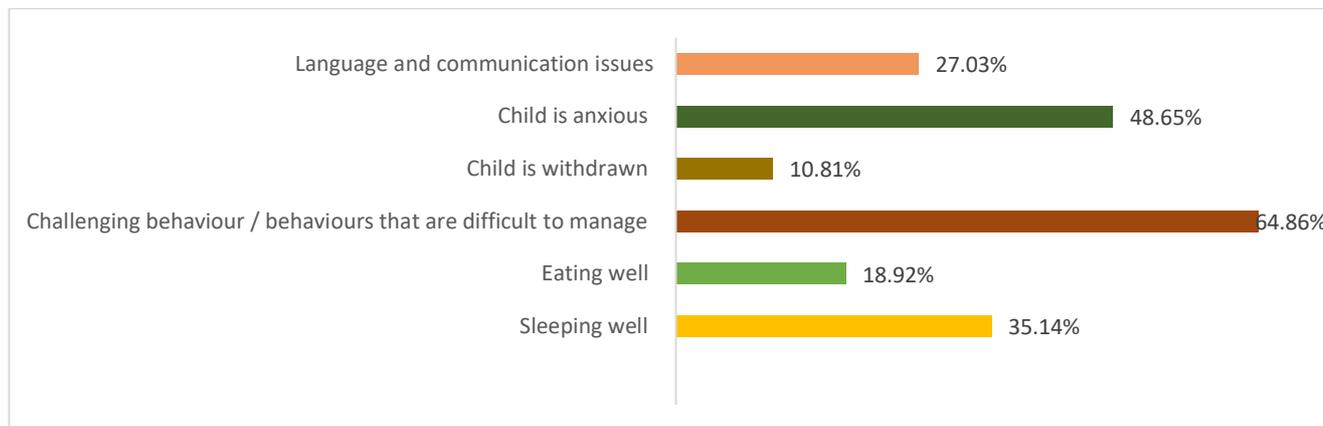




Our Voice Biggest worries survey

Q1. What are your biggest current concerns regarding your child/children at the moment (whilst lockdown continues)? Please tick all that are serious concerns for you at the moment?



Other:

Education: Children are struggling without the structured learning environment and social interaction of school, and many parents feel that they are not being supported in a meaningful way to continue learning at home. There are also concerns about how difficult it will be for some children to return after such a long break.

Mental health

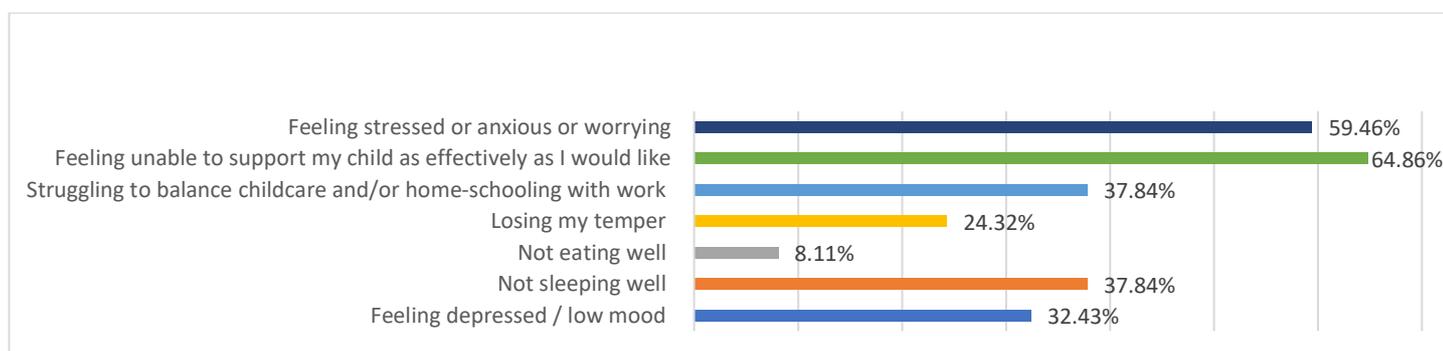
Both isolation and disruption to routine are having a severe impact on some children for example:

- Extreme anxiety difficult to manage...son is very isolated and not able to concentrate.
- Crying a lot and wanting to be in bed.
- Sensory issues.

Positive

Child is really thriving

Q2 – What are your biggest concerns regarding yourself at the moment, whilst lock-down continues?

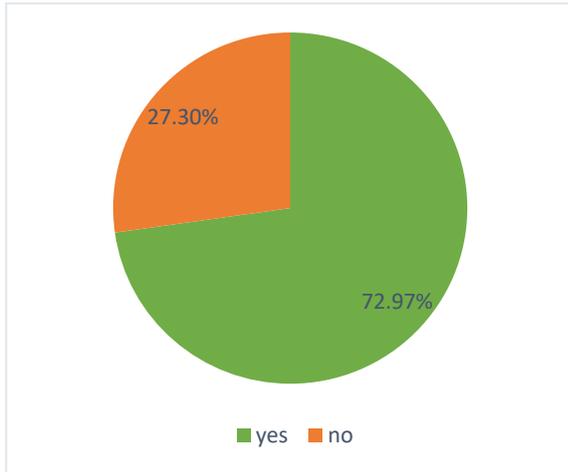


Other:

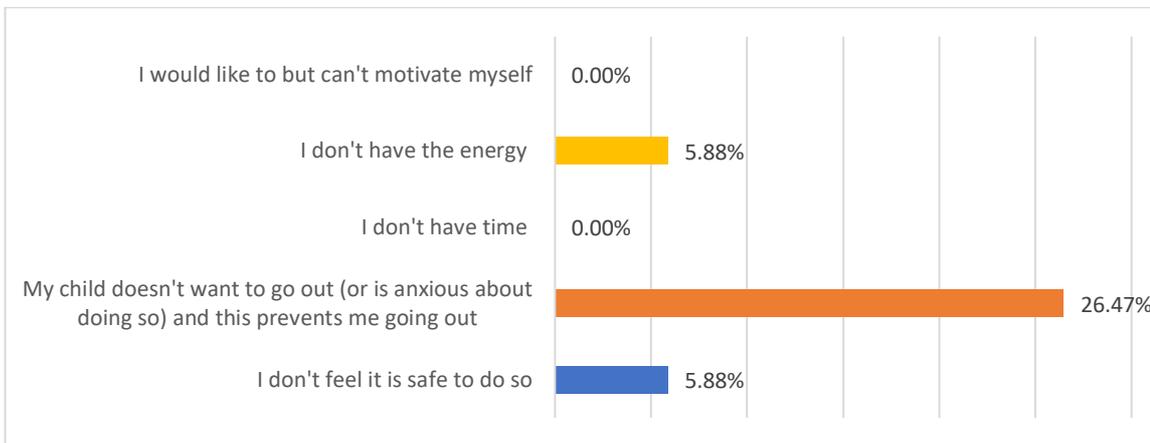
- Dealing with each change as it occurred, but I found that I managed well once I knew what the new normal was. Full time working parent and home-schooling SEN child who is also at severe risk of infection (shielding) is extremely exhausting and not sustainable any longer.
- Frustration as my children are squabbling
- No support from my son's school. He has an EHCP not followed by the school.



Q3 Are you managing to get out of your home on a regular basis?



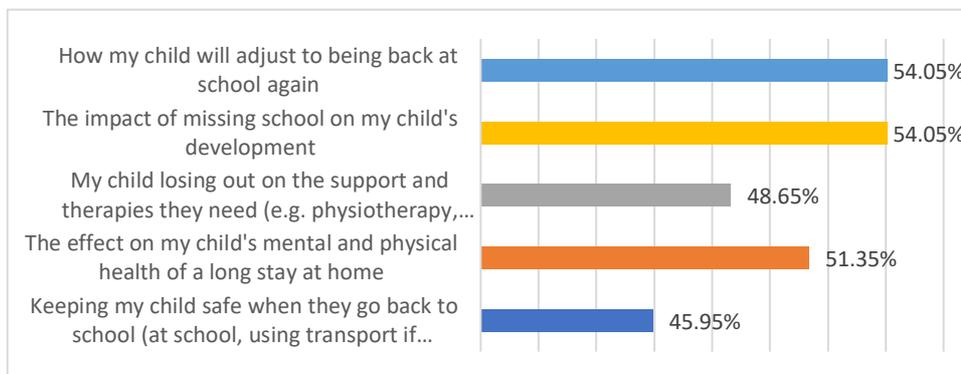
Q4 – What is stopping you going out regularly?



Other

I'm concerned about my son not understanding social distancing and also others coming into his space.
 Worry about other people safe distancing.
 All of the above.

Q5 What are your biggest concerns about the longer term?



Other

Leisure centres not open, we really miss swimming, playgrounds, trampolining etc.
 If they contract the virus or if we as parents do and pass away.
 My child is thriving and really improved during lockdown.



Q6. What things do you feel are going well for you and your family at the moment?

Nothing

It is concerning to note that three individuals responded 'nothing' or 'none' to this question, and a further three skipped the question, suggesting they had nothing positive to report. Others reported a mixed picture and it was clear that although they were trying hard to remain positive, the strain was starting to tell.

Family time and reduced pressure.

- Many parents commented on the positive impact of having more quality family time together and talked about the simple pleasures of eating and watching films together, long walks, talking, communication, play, time in the garden etc, that they would normally have much less time for.
- Some parents had found the opportunity to spend more time together had been helpful and had strengthened family bonds and relationships:
 - More time to see how my child functions
 - we are communicating better. I am finding better ways of supporting his learning and development.
 - His ability to communicate is better as non-verbal
 - We've found new ways to help calm down after meltdowns. My children's relationship with each other has developed and improved.
 - I have more quality time with my ASD son which has been good for our relationship.
- Some parents mentioned home learning as a positive – google classroom was mentioned as a great help, and one parent commented on finally managing to get some sort of routine with home schooling.
- The reduction in some pressures was also positive for some, and some children who find everyday life challenging were thriving
 - The children appear to be thriving. We have enjoyed good family time together which wouldn't have happened in ordinary times.
 - Not rushing around doing activities after school.
 - My child is not so tired because of there being no school
 - Reduced face to face appointments have been good for my son.
 - Family time and cohesion. Time to catch up with neglected tasks. Virtual meetings allow me to stay productive, but also allows family time and home tasks to be managed in a sensible and less stressful manner.
- There were also general comments on managing to keep positive, staying healthy and eating well.

Negatives

- However, it is clear that the circumstances are very difficult for many parents.
- Many struggle with the intense ongoing pressure 'There are moments when it's very intense and I would welcome a break' and 'There are benefits in being around more but also more draining'.
- Parents were worried about the longer-term impact on their children 'Spending more time at home as a family although this can be a negative too as child is becoming more reliant on me all the time'.
- Ok, I have a nice house & garden & financially things are ok for our family. But lots of stress in terms of work & the future.

Q7 Do you have any other comments?

Parents were given a space for free form comments. These have been retained in full as they show an interesting range of issues.

- Closure of schools and other educational settings
 - I found his school to be the biggest challenge I don't feel supported due to the constant challenges to get support and staff attitude towards him accessing school.
 - Why is there no online schooling? With all the technology available that is so easily accessible teachers should be involved with children on a daily basis and in live interaction. I am working professional and continue doing my work using technology. Teachers could be using the same technology doing their work. Why this is not the case? The same question applies to therapists. Why are they not delivering their support



- via online sessions? This is not the time for paid holidays while parents are at a verge of burnout doing their jobs and teachers'/therapists' jobs.
- Despite the government's intention at the start of Covid, to ensure children with SEND would be prioritised, it is in fact my child without SEND who is accessing full time education (remotely during lockdown and 5 days/week when schools return on 1 June). My child with SEND and severe LD is unable to access education remotely and will only be allowed to return to school on 1 June for 2 days/wk. My child actually needs the full week much more than my child without SEND, as they would be able to access education remotely anyway. Seems the same inequality has increased during Covid as in normal times.
- I feel the school haven't been supportive. My daughter has been home since schools shut not through choice but because school have said they don't have capacity. The guidelines state that children of key workers and vulnerable children can still attend school. I would qualify for both. Clearly this is not the case and is very much up to interpretation by the school.
- My SEN child is blossoming in lockdown with less pressure. My other children are struggling far more with irregular sleeping habits, too much screen time, barely any home-schooling and lack of motivation.
- I found his school to be the biggest challenge I don't feel supported due to the constant challenges to get support and staff attitude towards him accessing school.
- It would have been impossible if my husband had not been at home as I am an essential worker but v full on
- **Return to school**
 - I hope the school put children's mental health, play and socialising with their friends first when they return to school, before academic work.
 - Worried about the impact of lack of social support of friends and transition from school to college in September. Would prefer if my son went back to his current towards the end of the summer before he starts his new college or 're takes the year or at least the autumn term.
 - My child (year 8) is refusing to go back to school when the time comes and this is causing a lot of friction and stress for him.
 - My son is at nursery not school environment and the only child with SEN. He is non-verbal how can he taught to socially distance
 - How to keep them safe at school
- **Behaviour**
 - How do we manage the challenging behaviour on our own at home?
 - Concerns as son has started spitting and doesn't stop he does it outside also and I'm worried.
- **Long term thinking**
 - I hope that all the positives are recognised as well as the stuff that was difficult. that measures are put in place to enable families to live without being constantly on the hamster wheel that is normal life.
- **Other**
 - I don't trust the government..... they don't know have our interests at heart.
 - Thanks for the support provided by Our Voice and EPS
 - I think someone to talk to each week, just to debrief and discuss the highs and lows and offer advice would have been a really helpful resource for our family.
 - What's the point?
 - SEN services are slow in getting back to me as I have been advised I can use the funds from my sons EHCP to continue the therapy he desperately needs for his well-being.