

## Survey of Sunderland Parent Carers on their experiences during the Covid-19 lockdown.

### Context

Sunderland Parent Carer Forum is the DfE recognised forum for Sunderland, and is part of a wider regional and National Network of Parent Carer Forums (NNPCF). We promote parent voice through participation and co-production. We sit on working groups with statutory organisations. We also run coffee mornings and events to allow opportunities for families to get together, see what help and support is out there, and feedback their experiences. The forum also provides information and training for families.

During the Covid-19 crisis and lockdown, the opportunities to connect with parent carers, and our partners has been understandably limited to phone calls, Facebook or emails. Through this, we recognised that SEND families were facing added stress and pressure on top of their everyday caring; the forum decided to run a survey to try and capture some of the issues and experiences of Parent Carers of CYP with SEND in Sunderland.

The survey ran on SurveyMonkey for 7 days (03/05/20 to 10/05/20); we received responses from 90 parent carers but some families don't have online access, while others are too stressed/stretched to be able to complete the survey at this time, so please bear that in mind when looking at the results below.

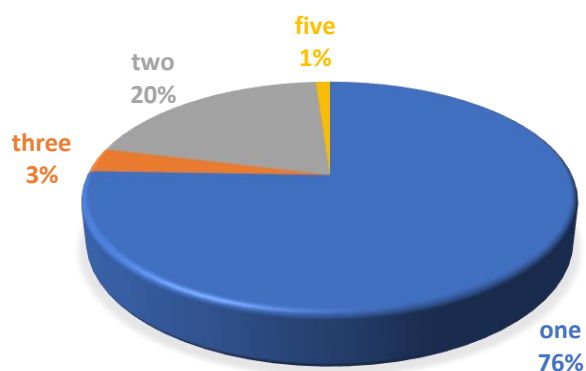
### Key Findings

- **General Wellbeing/Mental Health** - Some families have adapted really well to the change in routine and home schooling, others initially coped well, but as the lockdown continues, are now starting to struggle. Lack of sleep, frustration at being home constantly and stress levels are increasing. Some CYP behaviour is worsening (as indicated in the respondents comments), and parents are seeing some increase in the child hitting out at others. Parent Carers are now having to deal with being a teacher on top of their everyday caring and parenting responsibilities, without having access to respite, PA's, therapies, etc. Families are anxious and worried going forward, the risks of contracting the virus and financial pressures are now adding to the stress and worries.
- **Shopping/Finances** – From the start of lockdown, families have found it extremely difficult to get an online delivery slot, as their families are not considered vulnerable according to government guidance during the Covid-19 pandemic. Increased queuing times can make supermarket visits extremely stressful for single parent families who have no choice but to the children with them. Item limits have sometimes meant larger families have had to make increased visits to supermarkets. Many own brand items have disappeared (not just out of stock)

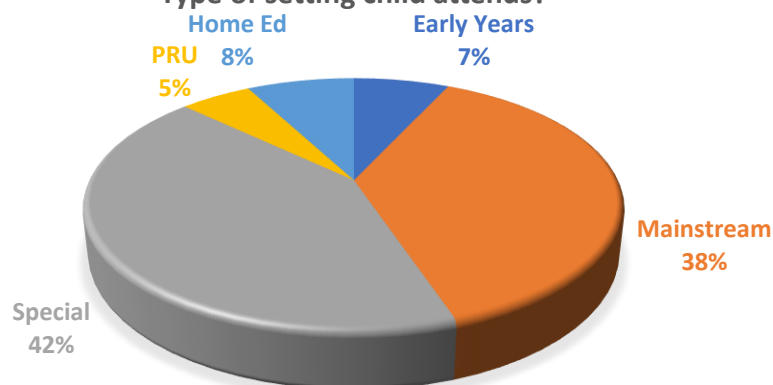
**The following pages detail the survey results; The last 3 questions in the survey required text based responses, and we have shown these exactly as written by the survey respondents so as not to change the context or meaning of any responses, and most importantly, to show that this is about real people and their experiences, not just data or numbers.**

## Survey Results

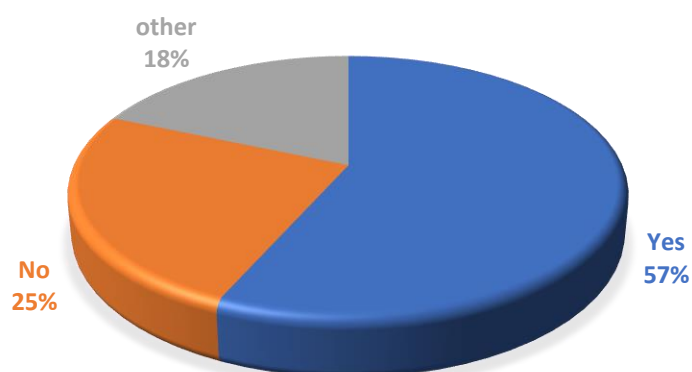
Number of CYP with SEND in the household?



Type of setting child attends?



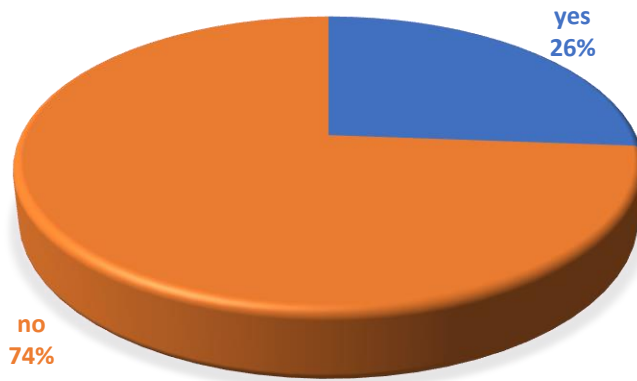
Do they have an EHCP?



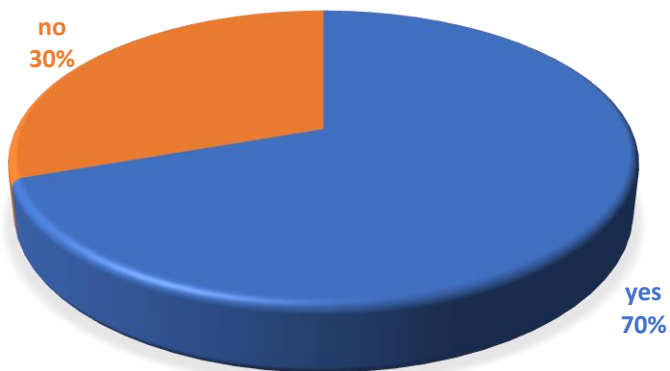
### Other support received prior to school closures :

- Carers am & evening. Respite. 1 to 1 in school
- 1 to 1 in mainstream
- EHCP in progress x 3
- Private SALT and private OT
- Short breaks, home respite from hospital (both on hold during Covid-19)
- Speech & language /ed psych
- CYPS, Early Help
- Autism outreach
- EHCP drafted
- Learning support assistant in lessons
- draft issued - difficulty with school placement so no current support
- Full time 1-1 at school and 2-1 when out in the community
- PA support in holidays, respite
- Respite and direct payment

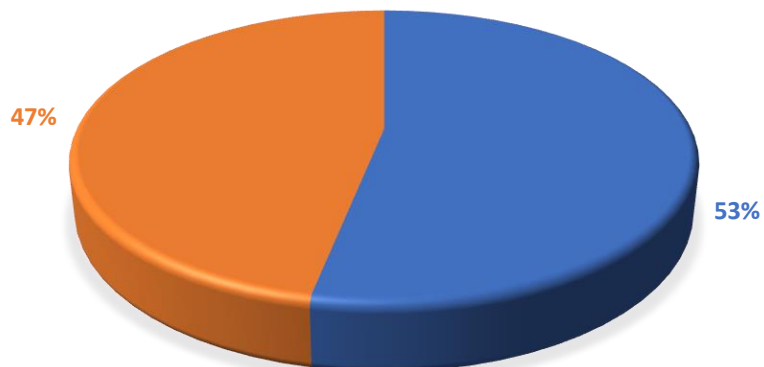
Do you have a social worker?



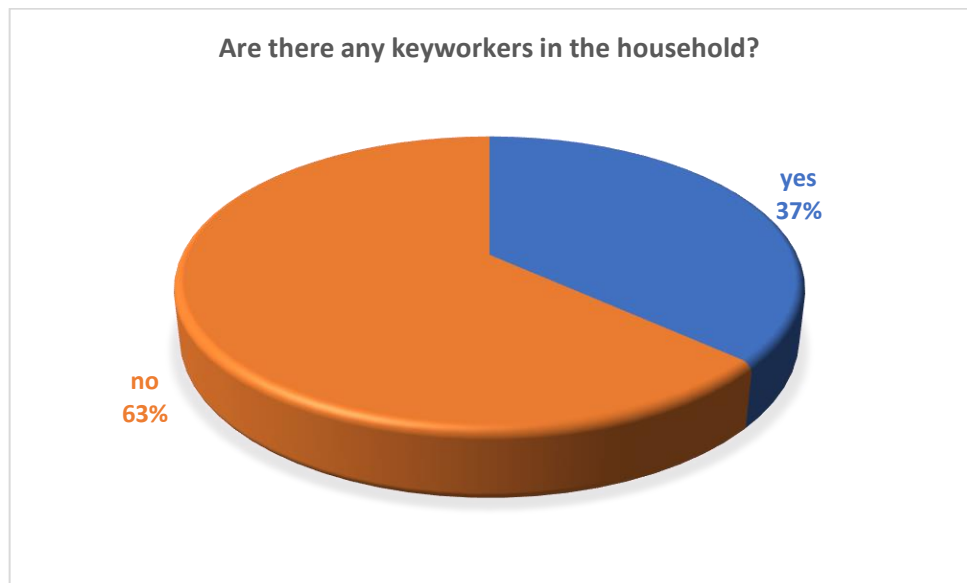
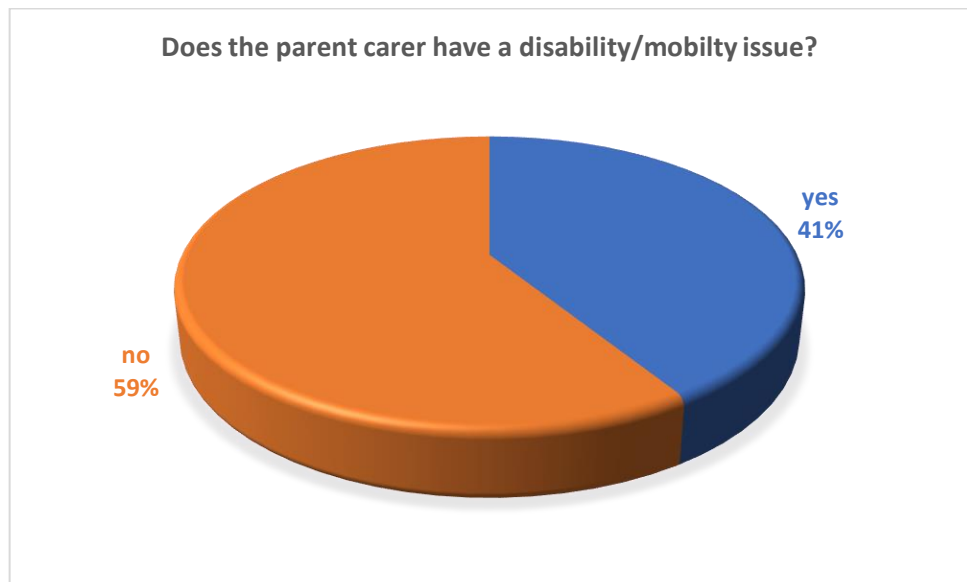
Is there another adult in the household to support you?



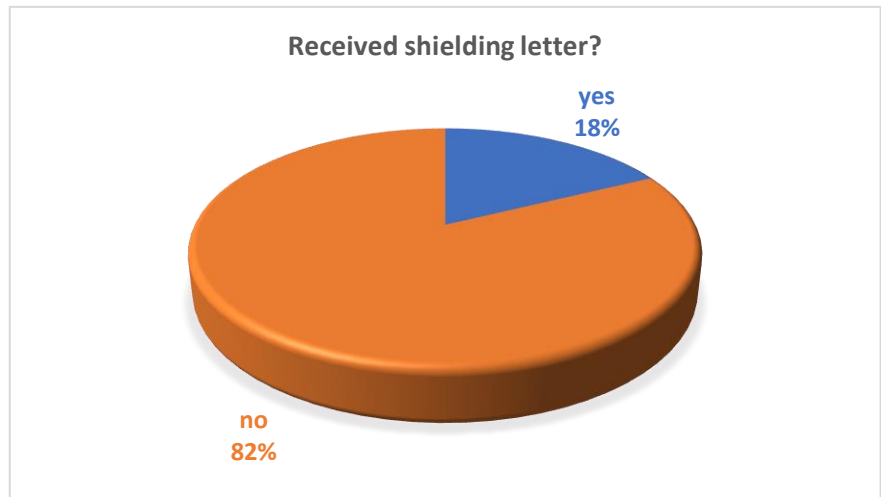
Do you have other CYP **without** SEND?



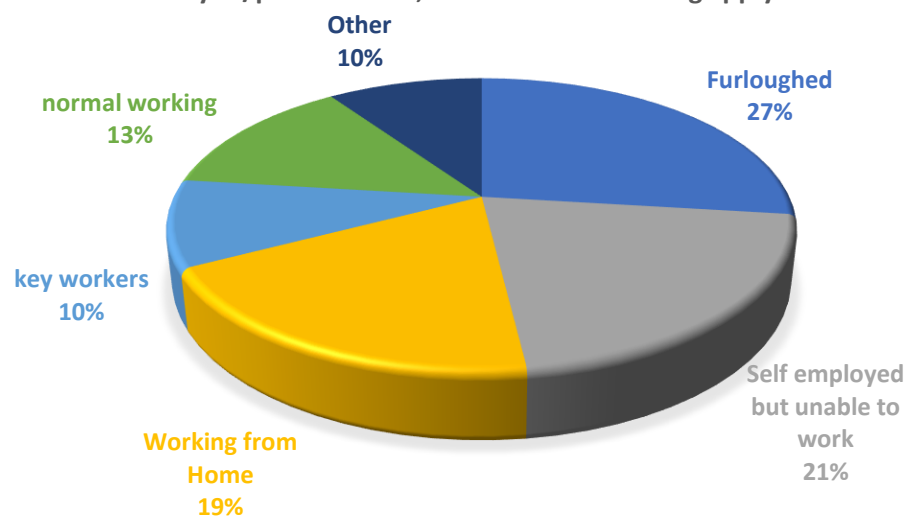
**Do you have mobility, disability or other health issues yourself (but not on the government's vulnerable list)?**



**Have you, or any member of your household received a shielding letter from the government, or classed as vulnerable according to government guidelines?**

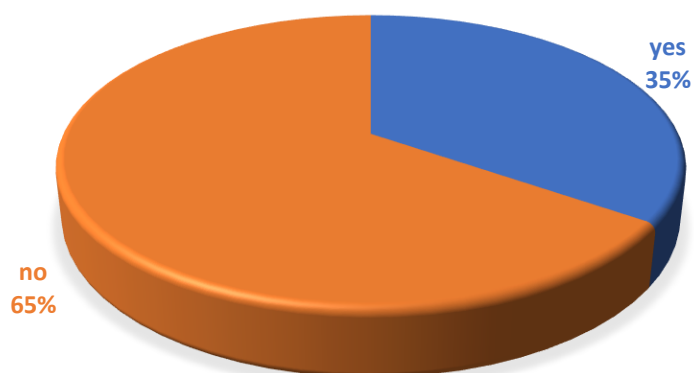


**If you/partner work, which of the following apply?**

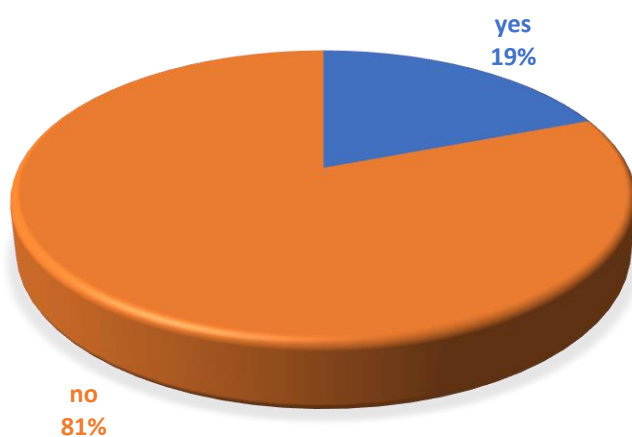


Work ( other ) = kinship carers and student

**Were you offered a school place?**



**Did you accept the place?**

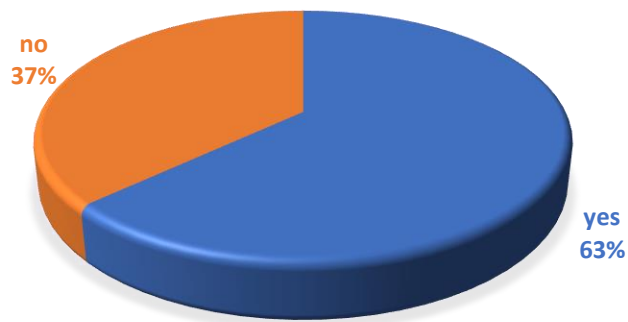


**If you refused the offer, please state the reason why?**

*(The comments below are exactly as entered into the survey by parent carers)*

- Worried
- Had no offer and as shielding I wouldn't send child to risk bringing home virus
- Did not refuse child's own school offer place only on days we work
- All family are vulnerable with health and underlying health conditions
- We didn't refuse but it was put to us we should only send our son to school if it was absolutely necessary and no one was at home to take care of him.
- Didn't need it once furloughed
- Husband has MND and is shielding
- We can look after our daughter between us
- Child was on vulnerable list
- To ensure my child is appropriately shielded.
- Safety although we were absolutely refused a place initially. During a courtesy call from school with the Headteacher during week 5 we were casually offered a place if it was needed. By this point we declined this place due to significant concerns then around child's safety regarding transmission of Covid 19 and increasing fatalities etc.
- I am off work so thought it safe to keep her at home
- Was told cause my husband works from home he can look after the boys while he's working even though we are both key workers
- Other siblings able to care for him
- Shielded
- I never refused offer but we are finalising EHCP- originally offered ASD unit but this has changed to special school however no places available.
- Doctors advice
- Felt obliged to refuse as it was made clear it was a last resort and it was for keyworker children. My child has regressed massively since lockdown and I now wish they could attend without me feeling guilty for wanting them in school
- Lack of social distancing for a child with very poor hand hygiene already.
- As am a cleaner and don't start working until 3.30pm
- My husband has a shielding letter so is at home. Felt my children would be safer at home
- Less risk at home, school Cohort mixed ages and more like childcare than education and would be more stressful and risky for children.
- It was school based and my child accesses an off-site provision. He is also in the high risk category
- Decided to socially isolate all the family (4)
- Place was initially offered then withdrawn due to my child being in a high risk category for COVID 19
- Partner was furloughed and at home
- Transport issues
- Scared

Have you received regular phone calls (welfare checks) from the setting?



#### Comments

- Only 2 since lockdown
- No
- Our SENCO and our son's teacher is in regular contact his teacher Mrs Etherington has been very supportive.
- One phone call during Easter holidays
- We have had 1 call
- 1 child has
- Only for one child
- Have had a phone call from my youngest son's school only

Following on from the previous question about welfare checks, we asked parents to comment on the name of the school so we could highlight good practice, and perhaps identify areas for improvement.

Barbara Priestman

- gone above and beyond, total praise for them
- communication & help freely available; teacher rings and checks up often
- 2 phone calls per week – form tutor and designated person

Barnes Juniors

Biddick Academy

Blackfell Primary

Burnside Academy

Columbia Grange

East Herrington Primary

Espa College South Hill

Farringdon School

Fatfield Academy

Gillas Lane Primary Academy

Hetton Lyons Primary

- Fantastic support, daily messaging available Mon-Fri
- SENCo & school have been amazing. Provided spaghetti for her evening meal (only thing she eats) when I couldn't get it in the shops; no pressure but supporting the learning that is happening.

Highfield Academy

Hillview Infant Academy

Hillview Junior Academy

Hylton Castle Primary

Keelmans Way

MillHill

Monkwearmouth Academy

New Silksworth Academy

Newbridge Academy

North View Academy

Northern Saints

Our Lady Queen of Peace – Only one phone calls so far, no offers of help; work sent home is unsuitable for needs of child, no alternate work issued or offered.

Oxclose Primary Academy and the medical provision

Percy Hedley

Portland Academy

RC school, Houghton

Springboard Futures

St Roberts of Newminster

St Roberts of Newminster – no phone calls, no emails, no offers of help or support at all

St John Bosco

St Paul's CE Primary

Sunderland College

Sunningdale School

Thornhill Academy

Thornhill Park

Usworth Colliery

Venerable Bede Academy

Wessington Primary School

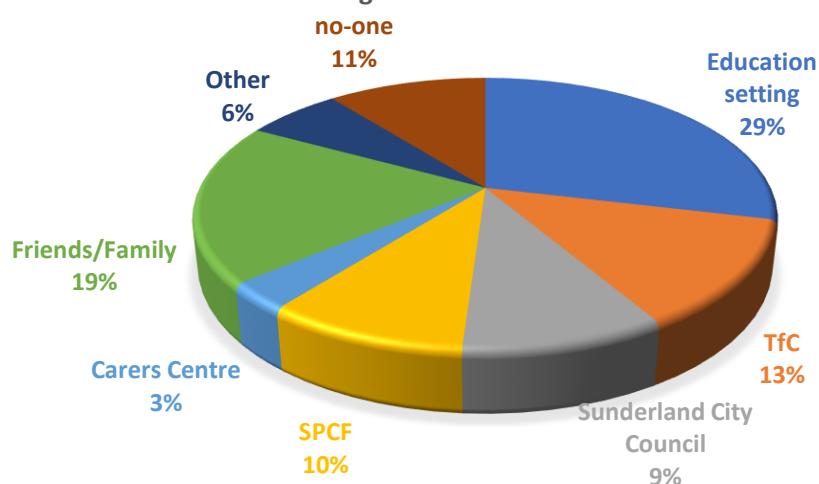
Willow Fields Primary

Other

- School provides home learning
- No requirement to call non EHCP children.



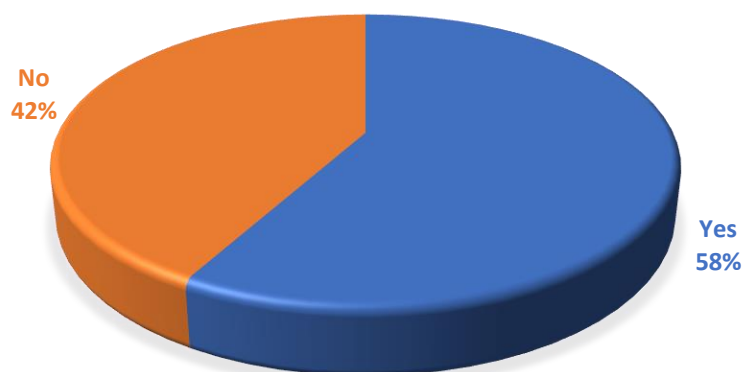
Which of the following have you received information from during the lockdown?



#### Other

- CYPs
- Early Help
- Gentoo
- Include In Autism, thankfully because no-one else seems interested.
- Internet
- Mental Health Nurse

Do you know where to find support/help if needed?



The following questions all required text based responses, we have included them exactly as written by the survey respondents.

Please tell us how you and your family are coping.

- We are starting to struggle now. Having to order everything online food etc. Running out of money. MY son is struggling with boredom . Obsessed with needing a bike. And can t afford one
- We are coping with the help of my older daughter and granddaughter . All caring services and respite were stopped
- Not good parent newly diagnosed with Cancer during lockdown
- As parents we are managing however our child is struggling behaviour and sleep greatly impacted.
- We have to get on with it its tough having 3 sons with send
- Managing but worried have not been out of home except one adult to shop and collect medication
- We're doing well, keeping Routine and structure Of education on school days has helped but little work has been provided by either school so it's all on me to create and develop work for all three kids.
- It has been very difficult, I am working from Home full time and partner is at work as normal. Trying to work and home school and try to meet my child's additional need has been stressful and hard to achieve.
- Varies day to day

- *We are adapting well to being home. Only concern is we haven't yet been offered priority online food shopping, and found it difficult to obtain information and guidance on this for household who are shielding.*
- *We are getting frustrated with being stuck in constantly, soft play/woods/family are regular features in our normal routine*
- *It has been very difficult to be in the house all of the time, only going out for exercise. My young adult with ASD constantly asks when lockdown is going to be over. We are all used to normally going out every day for work, college and leisure reasons.*
- *I'm highly anxious, my son is coping but just,. My husband is not on the shielding list but has several medical conditions that put him at risk and therefore have had to shield my son to protect my husband. This has been incredibly hard for my son and myself.*
- *We are coping really well just missing family*
- *As best we can but it is very stressful for our son to concentrate being home schooled. He usually separates home and school in his head but now they are mixed he's very confused.*
- *Reasonably well. Each day is different so take one step at a time. I find supporting my child's needs has been manageable although some progress made in cooperation, routine and behaviour has fallen back again even though we've tried to be consistent. Sometimes it is harder to keep the adults entertained. It is too easy to revert back to gadgets for entertainment and it can be a big distraction, even when child 1 is not active on a gadget. This has made home schooling prove difficult. If other adults could support more cooperatively then that would help but due to the situation they are struggling and need that release too.*
- *Quite hard as my 8 year old doesn't like to do his school work as he finds it hard to concentrate and gets easily frustrated with it.*
- *Not sleeping, anxious about future, few tensions*
- *First 3-4 weeks were good, not so good now*
- *Wouldn't know were to start*
- *We are fine*
- *We are coping well*
- *Schooling is going better than expected. Husband is working shifts and I am working from home. We are both key workers. At times it is difficult as I need to be in meetings and my son can be loud. We aren't receiving help financially. I think this would be beneficial, even just a little to go towards the extra gas/electric/food that is needed.*
- *Taking it day by day, trying to maintain a routine to help our daughter worry about how we will get her back into school*
- *Some good days, some stressful and not so good days.*
- *It has been difficult to explain why the routines have changed and we have had many more meltdowns from both of them. 21 year old has been struggling with his relationship with his girlfriend. 6 year old has had lots of trouble with not being able to visit family members. It's not been easy to try to keep everything as normal as possible. Going shopping has been a nightmare due to the time in queues. 6 year old won't stay at home while one of us shops so we have had to all go and one parent stay in the car with her while the other shops and then try to cope with lengthy waits in a confined space. It has been extremely stressful and tiring.*
- *Difficulties in home schooling due to lack of school routine Does not want to leave the house for exercise due to being out of practice with socialising*
- *Day to day best way we can! This is very difficult at times. My partner is working full time and I'm unable to work currently due to issues around Covid 19 and then nowhere safe for my child to be educated /looked after therefore additional pressures at home. Usual structure and routines all diminished and my child socially isolated from his peers etc. Child is really difficult to motivate and school work is now untouched as won't engage with this and was far too stressful in trying to.*
- *Ok in general*
- *It has been very stressful, my son does not cope with me asking him to do things, he has started hitting me and kicking the doors and throwing things. He will not do any school work and is struggling with the new situations. I am a single parent and also have a toddler who has epilepsy too. I have to go shopping because we are not on the government list to get any priority help, which trying to get a hyper autistic child to accept the changes and social distance is a complete nightmare. I feel completely let down by everyone*
- *Difficult at times*
- *were ok*
- *My daughter is very anxious and not coping well which has an impact on everyone else in the home*
- *We have just be accepting what needs to be done*

- *Very hard both being key workers, lots of change to little ones routine causing lots of issues and upset.*
- *The kids will not engage in any school work and having a 1 year old baby I'm finding it hard to spread my time between the 3 of them making sure the boys do some school work. My husband works from home but is in the office for 8 hours per day so I don't have his help during the day. I work in a supermarket and feel anxious going to work in case I bring the virus home. I am finding things extremely difficult at the minute*
- *My son is taking out his frustrations on me and is getting down missing his friends from school, he is. It wanting to go out and would rather stay at home*
- *Not very well*
- *Ok*
- *Not at all struggling*
- *My daughter started medication for her anxiety which helps. My husband is struggling with his mental health but does not want to admit it. I have increased my self care efforts but I have good days and bad days.*
- *Were managing*
- *Personally struggling having children at home, but children coping ok.*
- *YP with disability is now starting to struggle with understanding and lack of routine, his father has offered support as he has been off work however this has come to an expense to the family budget as father demanding extra money for food / utilities (YP is not staying at fathers house only going during day) younger sibling has enjoyed time off but is not slowly starting to be sick of lockdown. YP with send not used to spending so much time with sibling. I am venturing out for shopping when children are with other parent so we have not done without and have been ok At times as a parent/carer it has been overwhelming*
- *Not the best but nothing we can do. My child isn't sleeping Regressing massively Emotional Crying constantly*
- *Just about coping. New to the area so not sure what help is available.*
- *We are worn out and depressed.*
- *No school working being done by 5 year old also behaviour has become worse*
- *I think we are managing quite well send child 1 is having a few difficulties he thrives on routine and misses his school but overall he's doing quite well Send child 2 hmm well she is mostly coping better she finds school difficult as it is, she likes being home we are learning but within her capabilities instead of trying to push her to do work she can't do or understand. Child 3 NT is fine she works well at school tasks but states she doesn't miss school much.*
- *We are doing ok, I struggle with homework on computer and struggling to get my child to do it*
- *Ok*
- *We are struggling due to our daughters routine being disrupted, having daily meltdowns and because we can't go to parks etc*
- *Youngest son is coping well as he is happier at home. Oldest son doesn't like the change in his routine and is struggling with that. Neither want to engage in home learning although the oldest has done some*
- *Managing*
- *Ok*
- *Just getting on with it, it's financially difficult due to low income and we're finding more need for self regulation equipment, and activity equipment. Also food prices have rocketed and availability of cheaper brands dwindled.*
- *16 year old anxious to get back to school with his class for his usual routine. Some days are good. Some days are hard. We haven't left the house since march 20th*
- *Financial difficulties. Lack of information regarding self employed*
- *Plodding on ok. School work is a no go as home is home not school.*
- *We are coping well at the minute bed times can be challenging as she's not as tired with being off school*
- *Fairly well considering - we are used to living closely together as a family unit. Missing friends and wider family.*
- *One day at a time! Some days are exhausting as I have no support. My son is unable to visit his dad due to his wife working in health care.*
- *Some days better than others but ok as we are all helping look after young person couldn't have done it if my partner wasn't self employed although as off yet we have had no income.*
- *We were initially heading into crisis but have now got some extra respite for child 2 as child 1 does not have access to any respite*
- *As best we can with the daily meltdowns and loss of routine*
- *good days and bad days*
- *as a carer, I've never felt more insignificant.*

## What have been your particular struggles and issues during lockdown?

- *Shopping boredom routine money*
- *We have managed ok. We are all physically and emotionally drained*
- *Childs sleep pattern as not in normal school pattern and both being key workers.*
- *Keeping the kids and out of routine*
- *Shopping . No work. Struggle with caring for family no carers allowed in home*
- *Shopping with the kids is difficult and other shoppers are less than understanding of how hard it is for the kids.*
- *The change in routine. Now we are further into the lockdown we have established a new routine which is helping*
- *None*
- *Getting 'time out' alone. Worried about going further afield/driving to provide wider outdoor space for child....comments of other people . Neurotypical sibling would have benefitted from attending school even part time...very difficult to get school work done due to parents having to see to demands from brother with ASD/LD. Also 1 parent key worker.*
- *Shopping*
- *Getting shopping slots, husband has had to go shopping multiple times due to item limits*
- *I have been unable to go shopping which I usually do because of not being able to take my ASD young adult with me. My partner has been doing all of the shopping. Home schooling has been difficult although we have had a lot of support from Springboard Futures. The worst problem has been not seeing close family members who take our young adult out and who we normally spend a lot of time with.*
- *Engaging my son in learning. Explaining to my son why his very established routine has gone. Anxiety in relation as to what would happen to my son if both him and his dad became unwell and unable to care for him. Mindful I haven't got a will in place . EHCP being cancelled, my son is in a transitional year (he's 24) so no clue what's happening in September and can't offer him any reassurances. Concerned social care are only reacting to emergency cases and all planning for the future of our young people on hold .*
- *Shopping, appointments been cancelled, medical supplies*
- *Self regulation and sensory breaks.*
- *Restricting gadgets to a reasonable limit. Keeping everyone entertained while supporting and guiding others in understanding child 1's needs and behaviour Shopping is taking much longer so child can get upset when I am out for longer than expected and this has sometimes affected routines*
- *Getting my 8 year old to sit down and do his school work*
- *Shopping, thinking about elderly relatives getting supplies. Encouraging children with school work Children not coping with being stuck in house*
- *Kids behaviour*
- *Shopping /exercise for the children who are extremely hyperactive not having anyone to talk to*
- *Shopping*
- *Shopping supporting my child's education as her educational and health needs very complex*
- *Shopping and getting a slot to either collect or get shopping delivered. The costs of shopping has also seemed to have doubled even though we aren't buying anymore than usual.*
- *Dealing with meltdowns about why we can't go to our regular places parks swimming etc.*
- *Shopping alone for 3 households.*
- *Shopping, staying in the house and garden, not being able to go to the park, lack of support from family who are having to stay in their own homes, not being able to buy tena pants for 6 year old without waiting in horrendous queues. Not being able to attend home educator social meets or trips to educational places.*
- *Home schooling Routine*
- *Initially accessing appropriate outdoor spaces that were quiet and familiar (such as the familiar beach etc) which is a drive away from home. This was eased when government relaxed rules for autistic people along with permissions for exercise outdoors more than once daily. This benefits our child and our whole family significantly. We also have a 17 year old with us at home unable to now to sit planned A levels which has been particularly stressful and raised her mental health issues which we've had to also manage. Shopping weekly has been very stressful too and I'm also shopping for additional 3 elderly /vulnerable family /neighbours do am heavily relied upon. Motivating and engaging my child has been very challenging. His lack of routine /structure has been difficult. His lack of socialisation has been difficult.*
- *Shopping*

- *Shopping has been a major issue, he doesn't understand why we can't just go and buy things and touch everything I, the change from collecting a daily packed lunch from school was hard and we had to walk 4 miles to use the vouchers from the school meals. It has also been massively hard to not have any support, help or a break at all in 6 weeks*
- *Violence from child, lack of routines, not seeing family, trying to educate while working at home*
- *trying to get an ASD child to understand and not worry about what's happening around her*
- *Challenging behaviour*
- *Trying to engage my child with work from school, getting him to do some exercise*
- *Not being able to go to familiar places where our child feels safe*
- *Getting the boys to do school work, they will not engage in anything apart from their x-boxes. I'm also anxious about going into work and bringing the virus home*
- *Getting out my son isn't wanting to go out*
- *Managing the autism*
- *Son missing his grandfather*
- *Keeping child entertained a*
- *I'm probably autistic so managing the shops is extremely challenging - it takes at least a day or 2 to recover. My husband is working from home but struggles to stay on task, manage his time effectively so I have to keep track of that. Also means when he is working I have to watch my daughter more closely so she doesn't interrupt him. Trying to support my daughter to adjust her behaviour to the lockdown without scaring her is ... tricky. We also need to shop for fresh fruit for her as she has limited diet and this adds to the challenge and stress.*
- *Initially shopping*
- *Loneliness, support gone..*
- *Lack of routine despite best efforts Hit to family budget (finances) Emotional well-being, Fear of unknown YP not engaging with school work Not having enough sleep*
- *Getting groceries Keeping children entertained. One isn't sleeping so no break whatsoever*
- *Keeping youngest entertained*
- *Lack of places to walk without other people getting too close. Other shoppers failing to keep their distance.*
- *Shopping is difficult as a surviving parent (widowed) with 2 send children at home. Finding online slots can be difficult and as government advice states not to take children shopping it can be difficult, NT child is 14 but I don't feel comfortable leaving her with Send children for an extended time. Up until now I've managed finding the odd slot here and there but that won't always be the case as mostly they are snapped up as they are released*
- *Homework*
- *Shopping can't get priority slots even though at risk therefore partner has to go out and add further risk*
- *Shopping as one of us has to stay home with our daughter, keeping our daughter busy and entertained, having trouble completing school work too*
- *Not being able to see other people*
- *Son has asthma so we have not bring able to leave house at all yet could not get deliveries*
- *Hard to get delivery slots. No shielding letter but we are shielding due to asthma high bp*
- *Shopping, availability of equipment, restriction on access to parks and play equipment eg- monkey bars for sensory seeker who loves feedback in her neck and shoulders!*
- *Trying to get online shopping deliveries has been difficult as we are not identified as vulnerable according to the government guidelines.*
- *Occupying child, money issues.*
- *We haven't been able to get a home delivery or click and collect slot for shopping so we've had to take it in turns to go shopping. One of us has been going to work mornings and the other afternoons so we have someone at home with children, luckily our employers have allowed us to do this.*
- *Until last week, getting shopping. Official Gov letter for CYP only came 2 weeks ago.*
- *Not being able to go outside for walks due to my son needing two adults to support him*
- *Getting on line delivery/shopping Needing space/timeout Missing friends*
- *Shopping has been a big problem and not being able to get any online delivery slots. Going out for exercise has been problematic due to my child having no understanding of social distancing.*
- *Massive changes in routine and not being able to go to familiar places as they are shut*
- *shopping - would need to get a taxi which would cost £15 return and almost impossible to get an online delivery slot. Shops own brands not available any more (not just out of stock) EG child prefers wraps, and we usually get Asda's mini wraps pack 8 for 59p, now the cheapest they have is Weightwatchers pack of 6 for £1.25!*
- *Shopping*



- *No break from caring for a young person with SEND, other than when we are sleeping.*

### **What are your concerns going forward and coming out of lockdown?**

- *Anxiety*
- *My daughter going back to school too soon before this is over*
- *Child settling into new school and keeping up with peers*
- *Length of time away of normal school routine and potential regression as a result.*
- *2 of them who suffer with anxiety I'm worried cos it will get worse the longer they are at home*
- *Less help from carers that previously we had four times daily and making sure we can keep safe at home as well as mixing with others e.g. work ,college socially*
- *Not really sure, the kids will find being at school but having to socially distance hard to understand if that is where we end up.*
- *The transition back to school setting and adjustment to routine. The stress on my child of the change is evident and in turn this hurts the household*
- *I'm worried the need to get back supersedes all safety requirements and protocols resulting in a second outbreak.*
- *That it will be done safely.*
- *That it will be too soon and there will be a second outbreak.*
- *A second wave*
- *My partner not sure if their job is secure and safe to socially distance. My ASD young adult going back to college and mixing with other people.*
- *I am really concerned my son infects my husband, as stated before my husband would be susceptible to a severe form of this disease if contracted. However my sons needs to re establish his routine in order to protect his mental well-being. I feel so conflicted having two people with conflicting needs in one household*
- *Nothing*
- *Our son is in Year 6 he was due many transition days and preparation for going to secondary school but now he this has been halted we worry about him being ready for September after his routines and development have been disrupted.*
- *Arranging childcare if our return to work differs from that of the child. Travelling on public transport Getting back into routine knowing that this is likely to cause some mood swings and anxieties Knowing if my child will get appropriate support on return to school. The teacher that has done so well to support my child will not be there due to shielding because of pregnancy. Who will be taking the class, will they get him, will he cope?*
- *How my two children are going to cope going back to school and nursery*
- *My main concern is if schools return how can I protect and shield my husband who has MND however my son is going into his final GCSE year and we are also concerned about his education and special needs he hasn't been doing to well at school prior to lockdown*
- *Kids struggling to get back to normality*
- *I just want things to go back to normal my girls are missing out on crucial education and speech and language support they are so far behind as it is I fear my 5 year old wont catch up my 3 year old was due to start school I have to defer her she will not cope*
- *Catching the virus*
- *My child's health needs, her social skills and how she will cope with how different life will be*
- *Financial struggles. Getting my son back into the school setting.*
- *Being able to get her back into school when she has had so much time off. Her being safe within a classroom when she has no idea about social distancing*
- *It should not be rushed.*
- *The safety of being in public places,*
- *Does not want to go back to school Does not want to transition into year 1 & highly anxious Re-Integrating with school peers & people outside immediate family*
- *Stresses around prolonged lock down although we feel this very necessary for all of our safety moving forward. We're very concerned what re-engagement with school may look like regarding safety around Covid 19 and then risks if bringing virus home to transmit further. Finances. Lack of child's education opportunities and socialisation opportunities with longevity of isolation. Further mental health issues with other young person her at home around so many uncertainties etc. Uncertainty around how possible relaxing of rules might look like balancing against our safety and that if wider society moving forward.*
- *Worried about schools opening*

- *The fear of the virus, I have no idea how I will get him back to school. I feel his social skills have massively dropped back and its going to be too much change going into a new year.*
  - *That getting back to normal might take a while and still be unsettling for my child*
  - *coming out too soon*
  - *Challenging behaviour*
  - *Getting my child back into his routine for going back to school, as its takes him a while to adjust getting back into his routine*
  - *Constant routine changes resulting in more upset and confusion for our child*
  - *When the kids will go back to school. When things will go back to normal*
  - *That my son will find it difficult to return to school and then have the summer off after not being back at school for a short period of time*
  - *Transition from year 6 to year 7, what support and help will be offered now?*
  - *Too many to list*
  - *My daughter can't maintain the necessary hygiene to protect us from Covid19. Neither my husband nor my daughter will cope if I am seriously ill with it. The possibility of a second wave is extremely concerning to me.*
  - *Length of shielding lockdown*
  - *When should my child ACTUALLY return to school. Older children fit and well but youngest is not deemed at high risk but she likes to surprise us. She also misses school and structure*
  - *Fearful of second wave if we go out too quickly. Concerned hospital would turn YP & carer away if presenting with symptoms due to lack of understanding*
  - *Schools not opening till September*
  - *School/education for both children*
  - *My son was due to move from mainstream school to a special school after Easter so his much needed transition has been put on hold. His behaviour has been extremely challenging as a result.*
  - *Getting them back to school and having to readjust back into a routine*
  - *My concern is currently send child 2 we are in the midst of awaiting a decision on her EHCP with send rules being relaxed I am concerned the La won't issue in time for schools returning. I worry that with the relaxation of send school will not support her appropriately and she will be left with little to no support before lockdown she was regularly refusing school because of unmet needs. I am concerned with send being relaxed it will further impact her mental health*
  - *Opening school to early then have second case of lockdown*
  - *Don't want it rushed*
  - *How things will return to normal and how our daughters EHCP application has been delayed due to this*
  - *How to settle the children back into school*
  - *NOne*
  - *No vaccine means it's not safe*
  - *Increased spread of virus and lack of control over safety of us all.*
  - *I/we need to try to get back to whatever the new normal will be, including reinstating the schools which will enable me to look after my elderly mother which I have been unable to do*
  - *Risks after lock down. Schooling.*
  - *I'm worried as my daughter is in her last year at school and has missed transition to college*
  - *Not safe until vaccine/ treatment. How can we shield until then???*
  - *How I will keep my son safe. How he could access healthcare if he became ill with Covid 19. How he will cope with social distancing or having to wear a mask.*
  - *Getting my young person back into a routine as she accesses different settings & pa's. Going out again & mixing with others.*
  - *I'm worried about my child going back to school as social distance would not be possible in his school.*
  - *Still not able to go to familiar places and on holiday*
  - *transition to a new setting*
  - *Schools open too soon*
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**Please comment below with any other comments or issues you may have.**

- *I think schools should stay closed until it is safe for children to go back. They are vulnerable as are the teachers*
- *Our child is only attending school for very limited periods which is having a negative impact on his wellbeing have asked about full time and told no.*
- *My son is in year 11 missing out on his GCSE*

- *Hope other people e.g. public keep observing safe practices*
- *I feel for some children with SEND needs they have fallen through the cracks. If a child has a EHCP they have been catered for but if you don't or are in the process it's difficult to access any resources or support. The most difficult part is trying to support my Child and work at the same time. People don't understand that he cannot be left alone or doesn't understand the need to be quiet etc.*
- *How my daughter will cope emotionally going back into school. She is unlikely to fully understand any protocols put in place around the school, concerned these are not managed effectively to ensure she moves around the school in a safe manner.*
- *We have been really pleased with the support we have had from Springboard Futures. We have been getting information from Facebook from other Sunderland sites e.g. Carer's centre, SPCF, and Together for Children.*
- *I'm worn out*
- *My oldest son is supposed to be starting university in September*
- *I think vulnerable children like mine have been pushed aside and forgotten to make way for keyworkers children without a thought as to how our SEN kids will cope with the massive changes i feel its been wholly mis-managed and the effects of this will be detrimental to their development .*
- *I feel children who were on the special needs register without an EHCP have been massively let down. Not even one single phone call or letter to let us know that there is any support for our families. I have thought lots about asking social services to put him on a child in need plan so that he can have some schooling and take some pressure off our household but this also seems really unfair as this would be a permanent thing and these are exceptional circumstances*
- *Not having support my son needs for at home learning and the equipment and resources the school has available.*
- *Increased funding had been pledged for UC, and other financial groups but nothing for those with disabilities. The government needs a plan for this.*
- *Keeping a young adult with SEN entertained is extremely difficult. We are heading for week 9 now*

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## Our recommendations

Overall communication to parents about how the changes to normal life directly affects them and their children and young people seems poor and not person centred. Those families who have a social worker were better served but even then parents felt left alone to cope and this produced feelings of anxiety and fear which we feel adds to the lack of desire to trust anyone to keep their children and young people safe other than themselves. This will have a direct effect on the education, health and mental wellbeing of these children and young people, and their families, for some time.

Schools know who is on the Disabled Children Register and who is receiving SEN support, who has been referred to services so these families are known to the LA and CCG as well as local voluntary sector partners. A simple postcard asking how they are and how they are coping, perhaps with contact details of where to find help and support, would have been welcomed by the families so that they do not feel alone and left behind. Some schools have been brilliant at keeping in touch, not just with homework but also with pastoral care, others have been less so. Welfare calls have been welcomed and as we move to the next phase the need to contain information about how children are to be returned to education and these need to be personalised. There is no point in sending an EY child details of what is going to happen to exams and vice versa. So letters sent to families can be in broad themes but relevant to the age of the child.

Families need to be made aware that when a education setting is open it is because all pupils will be safe and secure in that setting so short videos of new arrangements, a virtual tour etc could be made by each setting and posted on their website so families can see what has been done to keep the pupils and staff safe.

A message from the Director of Education and the ADCS/ADAS thanking families for their forbearance during this time would also be welcome along with the reassuring message that settings will be safe but families will not be punished for continuing to keep their children at home (a cut off point to this arrangement will obviously have to be decided)