



## Press Release

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### Loneliness in young people increased during lockdown, poll finds

The number of young people feeling lonely was three times higher during lockdown compared to pre-lockdown levels, a survey suggests.

The findings from more than 5,000 young people across Scotland aged from 12 to 17 years who were polled from May to July this year will be used by schools to inform health and wellbeing support plans.

When asked to reflect on how they felt before lockdown, nine per cent of young people who completed the loneliness section of the survey said they felt lonely all or most of the time. This figure increased to 28 per cent reporting feeling lonely most or all of the time during lockdown.

The results are part of early findings of the TeenCovidLife survey carried out by teams at the Universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow, which seeks to gauge how young people have been affected by changes brought about due to lockdown.

So far, 5,548 young people have participated in the survey – 98 per cent of whom were high school pupils – from 283 schools across Scotland.

Home-based schooling was a challenge for a large proportion of participants, with 46 per cent saying they found it difficult, in comparison 23 per cent found it easy.

Schoolwork added to increased stress levels with 62 per cent of respondents saying they felt some or a lot of stress about this, compared with 38 per cent who said they felt little or no stress at all.

Lockdown was also found to have had an impact on the sleep of young people as 69 per cent of them said they were going to bed later during lockdown.

The quality of sleep differed widely across the group with 39 per cent saying their sleep was worse during lockdown, while 20 per cent said it was better and 35 per cent said it was the same.

These preliminary findings, including data on social media use and stress about Covid-19, will be made available online to all schools and shared with policy makers.

In addition, participating schools from the University of Glasgow's Schools Health and Wellbeing Improvement Research Network (SHINE) with a large number of survey responses will receive a school-level report, which can be used to tailor specific plans to address the impact of lockdown on their pupils.

Later this month a second survey will be launched to investigate young people's views about how their academic performance was assessed this year and how they are adjusting to new teaching environments.

TeenCovidLife is part of the wider CovidLife research study, which is funded by Wellcome and is part of the long-running Generation Scotland project.



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Professor David Porteous, Lead Investigator for TeenCovidLife and Generation Scotland at the University of Edinburgh, said: “Over 5,500 young people grabbed the opportunity to share their thoughts and concerns about life under lockdown. Government, teachers and parents will all want to hear what they had to say. It has been a time they will never forget. We hope these findings will help inform decisions as they readjust to the new school year and, for the leavers, to life after school.”

Dawn Haughton, Schools Research Network Manager for University of Glasgow’s SHINE, said: “Teachers and schools across Scotland have done an incredible job to keep their communities connected through these difficult times. The SHINE team was delighted to collaborate with Generation Scotland to facilitate the collection of health and wellbeing data so that young people’s voices can be heard in this pandemic. The young people have identified their concerns, enabling the schools to address these areas in a more targeted way.”

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