

Senedd Cymru
Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg

Welsh Parliament
Children, Young People and Education Committee

Ymchwiliad i effaith argyfwng Covid-19 ar
blant a phobl ifanc yng Nghymru

Inquiry into the impact of the Covid-19 outbreak on
children and young people in Wales

COV – 23a
Ymateb gan: NSPCC Cymru

COV – 23a
Response from: NSPCC Wales

Update from NSPCC Helpline

Contacts responded to by the Helpline increased week-on-week during the first 4 weeks after lockdown and have levelled off up to the week ending 3 May. With the NSPCC helpline campaign that started on 4th May (with both press, TV and social media promotion of the service) it is expected calls/ contacts will increase. Plans have been underway to ensure the service is ready for any increases in demand across both voice and non-voice channels. Additional staff resources have been prepared to support callbacks for lower risk contacts. Levels will be closely monitored over the coming weeks to establish the impact of the campaign.

The key trends are:

- The proportion of **contacts resulting in a referral** remains higher since lockdown, compared with pre-lockdown
- The proportion of contacts about some of the top 5 main concerns have increased since lockdown, when compared with pre-lockdown:
 - **emotional abuse** has increased from 10% to 15% since lockdown
 - **parent/adult health/behaviour** has increased from 19% to 24% since lockdown
 - **physical abuse** has increased from 12% to 14% since lockdown
 - **family relationships** has increased from 6% (not in the top 5) to 7% (now in the top 5)

Top 5 main concerns of adults who contacted the Helpline

	Pre-lockdown 6 Jan – 22 March	Since lockdown 23 March – 3 May
Parent/Adult Health/Behaviour	19%	24%
Emotional Abuse	10%	15%
Neglect	14%	14%
Physical Abuse	12%	14%
Family Relationships	6% (not in top 5)	7%
Sexual Abuse (contact)	11%	7% (not in top 5)

Contacts from people worried about parent/adult health/behaviour:

Domestic abuse, adult substance misuse and adult mental health are 3 of the sub-concerns that sit under other main concerns.

Update from Childline

For the week 27th April – 3rd May 2020, the service received a slight increase in voice calls compared to the previous week and a slight decrease in chat/ e mails, but contacts remain largely in line with post lockdown levels which have seen some fluctuation week on week.

Between the 10 January and 3 May 2020, Childline delivered **6,185 counselling sessions** to children and young people who **specifically mentioned Coronavirus** or associated terms. The key trends are:

- There was a weekly increase in the number of counselling sessions for the first 5 weeks after lockdown.
- The proportions of counselling about **mental health, suicidal thoughts and feelings**, and **family relationships** (the top 3 main concerns) have all increased since lockdown.
- This week (27 April- 3 May) counselling sessions about **school or education problems** reappeared in the top 10 for the first time since lockdown.

Counselling sessions about school or education problems

Nearly half of young people's concerns were about workloads. Young people talked about feeling stressed because they were:

- getting behind with school work / not performing as well as have done previously
- finding it hard to concentrate because of too many distractions at home
- finding it difficult to motivate themselves

Some young people talked about their workload being more than they are used to or more difficult. Some talked about not getting the right support from their parents with some parents being too critical and adding to the pressure, whilst others provided no support at all.

Counselling sessions about abuse

In the week ending 3rd May, the number of abuse counselling sessions slightly decreased compared to the previous week. However the trends remained similar to last week with emotional and physical abuse increased and sexual abuse decreased compared to pre-lockdown levels.

Childline Online

Children and young people are also visiting the Childline website which offers a wide range of information, advice and resources including the art box, games, mood journal, calm zone and message boards. The website is an important part of the overall Childline service, with increasing importance since the change to the operating hours.

It is clear from the website statistics that children and young people are increasingly turning to the site for information, tools and resources to help them with their questions, concerns and anxieties and the service are increasingly promoting the tools and information as additional support to be accessed following a contact through one of the channels.

The online team have been maintaining the corona virus content which went live on 18th March. Demand to this section saw an initial peak around 24th March at approximately 2,000 pageviews per day this then gradually dropped levelling out to between 500 and 700 pageviews per day. Spikes in demand correlate to Instagram stories referring directly to updates to the content.

Our self-help tools such as Message Board, Ask Sam and the Calm Zone are also key areas at the moment and so monitoring and management of these moderated areas has been extended. Our Message Boards are a popular way for children and young people to support each other and share their own situations, this area of the site has seen significant growth since the start of the pandemic restrictions. Levels in February were around 700 posts and replies published each week. Week on week through March and April the number of Message Boards submissions approved (posts and replies) has grown incrementally reaching 1,288 submissions for the current week. Similarly, the views of the Message Board pages have also seen increases with a particularly

notable 30% increase in the week following the closure of schools. Weekly levels are now exceeding 38,000 pageviews.

Our Calm Zone, which is promoted on the website home page has seen dramatic increases in views of its pages. The tool which was a new addition to the site in December provides children and young people with a range of activities and tools that they can use 'to help them feel better when they are anxious, scared or sad'. These include breathing exercises, yoga and games. Levels in early March were at around 2,400 pageviews and this increased to over 8,000 for week commencing 23rd March and over 9,000 in the week up to the 4th April, these settled around 6,000 pageviews per week. This then saw further increase and the last two weeks have recorded around 10,000 pageviews per week.