

YOUTH NEEDS ANALYSIS 2020



one richmond



**ROCKET
SCIENCE**

INTRODUCTION

In Autumn 2019, Rocket Science was commissioned by oneRichmond to conduct a youth needs analysis in Richmond. This work explored the **needs of young people and provision of youth services in Richmond** through an initial evidence review; a workshop with 43 Richmond-based youth practitioners and policymakers and 222 one-to-one interviews with Richmond youth, conducted by 14 peer researchers.

The conclusion of the peer research project coincided with the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic and therefore a subsequent phase of research has focused on the **impacts of Covid-19 on Richmond youth**.

This second phase involved a desk review looking at the impact of Covid-19; follow-up interviews with peer researchers from the initial youth needs analysis; focus groups with 27 youth practitioners and school staff; and direct consultation with 26 young people.

Research Participants

PHASE 1

43

Youth practitioners and policymakers

14

Trained peer researchers

222

Under 25s interviewed

PHASE 2

27

Youth workers and school staff

26

Young people aged 10 to 23

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Challenges faced by young Londoners

Prior to Covid-19, there were several pressing social and economic issues for young people including:

- **Mental health:** Young people can feel that service provision is inadequate and that schools do little to raise awareness and provide support
- **Crime:** Young people in London are concerned about rising levels of crime in the city, in particular youth crime and youth knife crime
- **Education:** Young Londoners often feel that school curricula do not cover important issues, such as money management, environmental issues, democracy and active citizenship
- **Poverty and inequality:** Young Londoners are concerned about poverty and inequality and these issues impact on other areas including mental health, crime and community cohesion
- **Housing:** Young people in London worry about the lack of affordable housing across all areas of the city

The Richmond context

Richmond faces challenges impacting youth including:

- **Income inequality:** Richmond displays the fifth highest rate for income inequality amongst all London boroughs. There are wide variations in affluence between areas, with e.g. only 2% of children living in low income families in Teddington and 29% in the adjacent area of Hampton
- **Educational inequality:** Richmond displays the highest GCSE attainment gap of all London boroughs between disadvantaged school children and those not facing disadvantage (31% point gap)
- **Health and Wellbeing:** Richmond displays the fourth worst average mental wellbeing score for 15 year-olds in London. Richmond has the highest proportion amongst London boroughs, of young people engaging in three or more risky behaviours (including smoking, drinking, and drugs) (21.5%)
- **Crime and safety:** Despite the overall low levels of crime in Richmond, youth crime has become an increasing concern in recent years

LIFE IN RICHMOND AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

Young people most frequently access local parks, gyms and libraries in their community

Prior to Covid-19, a local park was the most commonly cited community activity or service used by young people with 83% (184) of respondents having accessed these. This was followed by a gym (52%, 116) and a library (36%, 80).

There was a noteworthy gender gap (larger than 10% difference) for only two activities: 12% more females selected a library than males, and 23% more males chose sports grounds when compared to females.



of young people accessed a local park

IMPROVING LOCAL ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES

- ✓ **More affordable activities**
- ✓ **A wider range of activities on offer**
- ✓ **Sharing what's on and where**

Young people sought improved access to affordable activities including sports facilities and gyms

23% (51) of respondents reported that there was something they wanted to **do in their community in the last 12 months but could not**.

When respondents were asked what they would change about the community activities/services available in the borough of Richmond, key themes included increasing the **availability and affordability of youth services and activities**, and **improving the advertising of existing services** including information about what's on and where.

Pros of life in Richmond

- | | |
|--|--|
| "Lots of open spaces and parks e.g. Richmond Park and the river" | "Being 'outside' of London but still being able to easily access central London" |
| "Close proximity to different opportunities, shops, entertainment, lots of services" | "Relatively safe compared to other London boroughs" |

Improving life in Richmond

- Increased affordability of places to eat, shops, accommodation and gyms
- More events and activities which are targeted at young people
- More local spaces for young people to hang out

MENTAL HEALTH

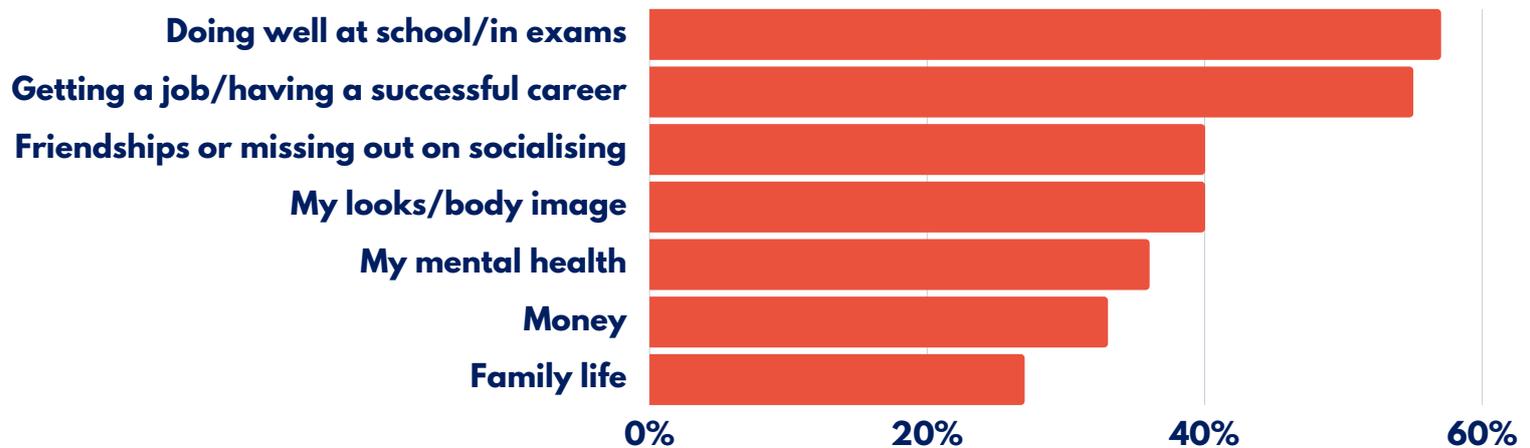
PRE-COVID

Mental health issues were perceived as common and a majority were worried about their peers' mental health

- 81%** described themselves as either 'somewhat satisfied' (51%) or 'mostly satisfied' (30%) with their lives
- 85%** felt that mental health issues were either 'somewhat common' (43%) or 'very common' (42%) amongst their peers
- 70%** were worried about the level of mental health issues amongst their peers



Young people were most frequently concerned about doing well in school and their career



- In addition to the categories above, 15% of young people were concerned about their physical health and 12% were concerned about experiencing or witnessing crime
- A larger proportion of female respondents selected 'doing well in school' and 'my looks/body image' as concerns, while a larger proportion of male respondents selected 'money' and 'my physical health'

Young people felt that finding out about mental health support was easier than accessing it

- Richmond youth were asked about how easy they felt it would be to **find out about and access professional mental health support** should they need to
- While 70% felt it would be either 'very easy' or 'somewhat easy' to **find out about** support, 66% felt that it would be 'somewhat difficult' or 'very difficult' to **access support**.

MENTAL HEALTH DURING THE PANDEMIC

“Lockdown has had a positive impact on many people - they have more time to reflect and relax, those who were meant to have exams seemed to have relaxed. However, more time is more time to think, catastrophise or worry about the future. More time with families that they aren’t happy with. More time thinking about body image, on social media.”

Youth health practitioner

Youth practitioners reported varying impacts of Covid-19 on mental health. Some young people experienced an increase in anxiety and isolation and a reduction in independence, while mental health improved for others due to a reduction in pre-pandemic stressors.

Mental health varied depending on factors such as **home life, school, friendships and accessible support.**

IMPACTS OF COVID-19 ON MENTAL HEALTH



Stress and anxiety

Uncertainty during Covid-19 has led to heightened levels of anxiety; young people did not know when they would be returning back to school, college or university; when they would be able to see their friends; or if they would be able to get a job in the near future.

“The not knowing is what’s stressful. Mental health took a hit, lots [of young people] are anxious because of all this.”

Youth practitioner working in arts and culture

Independence

During Covid-19 young people were less able to go out alone or with their peers. This affected older teenagers who would typically be gaining greater independence at this age. Practitioners spoke of stress for young people associated with constantly being in the same room as their parents or carers.

Isolation

Being required to stay at home and not being able to engage in regular day to day activities left many young people feeling isolated. While there was momentum at the beginning of the pandemic to keep in touch with people online, enthusiasm for this type of communication declined over time.

Positive impacts

Some young people thrived during online learning. This appeared to be the case for young people who struggle with socialising in school, who do not like the physical school environment or who experience significant pressure at school.

“I massively preferred online schooling to actual school, there is more time to do other things, there isn’t a teacher nagging you, I’m not a big fan of school.”

Young person, aged 13

Access to mental health support

- Although some mental health services offered support online, many young people did not access this for fear of the people they live with overhearing their conversations
- Practitioners sought changes to the short-term nature of mental health support (e.g. six-eight week counselling)
- There was a low rate of referrals to mental health services over lockdown while schools were closed as a large proportion of referrals to both statutory and community and voluntary run mental health services are made through schools.

PHYSICAL HEALTH PRE-COVID

Young people were positive about their physical health, however had ideas for how this could be improved

73%

described themselves as 'somewhat healthy' (55%) or 'very healthy' (18%)

27%

felt that they were either 'somewhat unhealthy' (22%) or 'very unhealthy' (5%)

38%

wanted access to services to improve health such as free and affordable gyms or sports facilities, and age-specific exercise classes.

A majority of young people were worried about drug use amongst their peers

Young people in Richmond were most frequently worried about drug use, in comparison to alcohol use, vaping or smoking cigarettes.

During training sessions, peer researchers expressed that drug use was common amongst their peers. It was felt that taking drugs, drinking alcohol and smoking was normalised and that drugs were easily accessible as they were sold on social media platforms such as Snapchat. As put by one peer researcher, drugs are "one text away".



61% were either 'somewhat worried' (45%) or 'very worried' (16%) about drug use amongst their peers, 18% were 'not at all worried'

Youth experience of information and guidance around drugs, alcohol, smoking and vaping was mixed

68% had never received any information or advice about vaping

52% had received 'somewhat helpful' or 'very helpful' advice about drugs

58% had received 'somewhat helpful' or 'very helpful' advice about smoking cigarettes

"Don't condemn certain activities because young adults will always drink underage or take drugs, the best is to educate about safely using them and educate about the risks."

"Have a more open conversation about taboo subjects in schools from a young age."

"More personal conversations rather than lessons in class."



PHYSICAL HEALTH DURING THE PANDEMIC

MANY YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE BEEN PUSHED TO EXTREMES IN RELATION TO EATING AND EXERCISE DURING COVID-19



During the pandemic, some young people were **over-eating and not exercising** while others were **under-eating and exercising frequently**.

Many innovative methods for indoor exercise emerged since March - this was particularly important for children and young people who lacked access to outdoor spaces. Looking ahead, youth practitioners felt it was important to encourage young people and children to exercise outside. This would be beneficial because it exposes young people to fresh air, keeps them active and reduces time spent online.

“Joe Wicks hit it off big time during lockdown but now things are opening up it’s about transferring these things to also allow young people to get fresh air and go outside to do some form of exercise, whatever it is! And then having time to chat afterwards.”

Community Engagement Practitioner

Access to health services

While young people were generally able to access necessary physical health services (e.g. GP appointments) during the pandemic, some young people with disabilities faced challenges around appointments being postponed or cancelled:

“A young disabled person explained that all her appointments were cancelled. They might seem ok to be postponed, but the young person’s body is changing quickly. If they are using a harness, this needs to be changed, they look forward to appointments, if they miss one it can create anxiety, for example around being able to walk because their harness is not working.”

Youth Health Practitioner



Sexual health

Some youth practitioners were worried about increased rates of STIs and pregnancies among young people because of the closure of sexual health services during the pandemic.

Practitioners working in this area predicted that we would see the impacts of this over the next six months or so.

Access to food

Food insecurity has been a concern for young people during the pandemic, including in relation to access to free school meals over the half term and winter holidays of 2020.

“There are kids who can’t afford food at home... their only decent meal is at school and because of Covid they’re not getting it.”

Young person, aged 12



EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

PRE-COVID

EDUCATIONAL INEQUALITY

Richmond is one of the London boroughs with the **highest educational inequality** amongst its young people. In early years education the rate of children eligible for free school meals achieving a good level of development (57%) is below the London average and there is a 31% GCSE attainment gap between disadvantaged children and those not facing disadvantage, the highest of all London boroughs.

Most Richmond youth felt pressure to achieve education, employment or training success

71%



described the level of pressure to achieve education, employment or training success prior to Covid-19 as 'somewhat high' (38%) or 'very high' (33%).

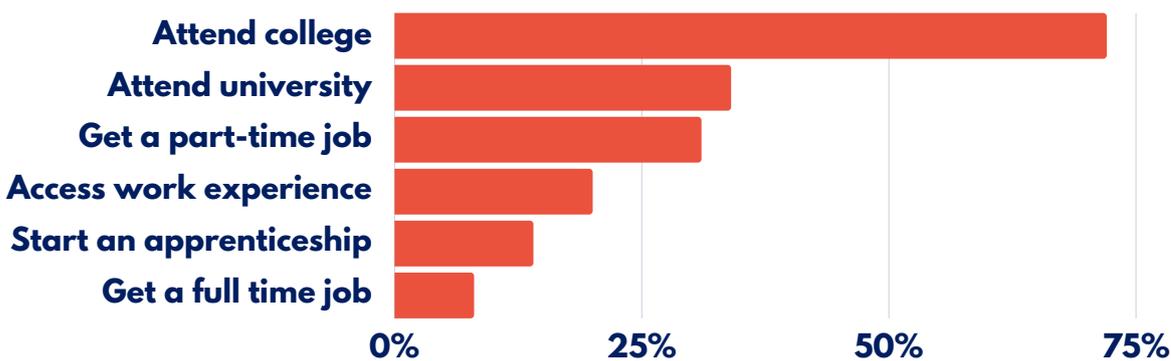
REDUCING AND MANAGING PRESSURE

- ✓ Improved advice on coping with exam-related stress and help to achieve a good work-life balance
- ✓ More support with exam revision
- ✓ Information provided about a wider variety of post-school job, training and work experience options

ACCESSING OPPORTUNITIES

64% of young people felt either 'somewhat supported' (44%) or 'very supported' (20%) by their school or college in making decisions about education, training or employment

Prior to Covid-19, only 8% of young people felt that it would be 'somewhat' or 'very easy' to gain a full-time job. In contrast, 72% felt that it would be either 'somewhat' or 'very easy' to gain a place at college:



Percentage of interviewed young people who said it would be either 'very easy' or 'somewhat easy' to access each opportunity



Most young people felt 'somewhat positive' about their career prospects

Despite a low proportion feeling that it would be easy to access a full time job, 78% described feeling either 'somewhat positive' (64%) or 'very positive' (14%) about their career prospects.

Young people sought more opportunities for those who had not yet gained work experience:

"People [should] be more accepting and understanding that if you're so young, you're not gonna have any experience"

"I think maybe having jobs for people with no experience or having some sort of a law to say you must at least take 50 people in per year without experience"

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT DURING THE PANDEMIC

EDUCATION

During lockdown, the quality and quantity of work provided by schools **varied significantly**. Young people explained that they were struggling because they could not ask teachers for help:

"There was less work than normal, but it was much harder to do it. It was harder to do it because in school you get help, not just a video of 20 minutes of someone talking at you."

Young person, aged 11

Young people experienced **anxiety** around missing exams and not knowing what this would mean for their lives and progression.

While some schools were able to distribute devices amongst pupils, a **digital divide** emerged in the extent to which young people could engage with online learning. Often more disadvantaged youth would either have no device or a shared device - youth practitioners described families of six sharing one or two devices. This caused issues such as young people having to work late at night because this is when they had their allocated time slot on the shared device.



Returning to school

Returning to school with **new rules in place** including year group bubbles, mask wearing in corridors and one-way systems has been confusing for young people while different rules are in place elsewhere e.g. at youth clubs.

School staff spoke of the excitement that young people felt around returning to school and the expectations they had of it feeling 'like it did before', but for some **their return lead to disappointment** e.g. if they did not get on well with those in their bubble. The **risk of getting Covid-19** and having to self-isolate was also raised as a concern in relation to returning to school.



Despite challenges, for many young people the **return to school has been very positive** as school provides an important social environment, daily routine and sense of normality.

"Headteachers were saying that lots of children were absolutely delighted to be back in terms of being able to be together. For lots of them, it's a positive thing to happen, it means they're not living in an artificial online world all the time."

VCS Youth Practitioner

YOUNG CARERS

Young carers experienced specific challenges and positive impacts as a result of the return to school

Challenges

- For some young carers the return to school has meant having to spend time away from the people they are providing care for
- Limitations to the following of Covid-19 regulations in schools caused extra stress for young carers who were often worried about taking Covid-19 home which had an impact on their mental health

Positive impacts

- School provides an important break or respite from caring duties for some young carers. According to the Carers Trust, 24% of young carers and 23% of young adult carers reported that studying is a coping mechanism for them
- School provides an important social environment for young carers who in some cases had hardly seen anyone during the first lockdown due to extra care taken to avoid Covid-19
- Some young carers were not able to access educational support from their families when working from home so to be able to go back into school meant a welcome reintroduction of support for schoolwork.

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT DURING THE PANDEMIC

YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Young people with special educational needs also experienced specific challenges and positive impacts as a result of the return to school

Challenges

- Some young people with special educational needs were relieved to not be going to school throughout lockdown and the return to school led to increased stress levels.
- Although young people with SEND are always less likely to be attending school than peers without SEND, this was exacerbated by Covid with attendance at 77% for young people with EHCPs compared to 83% for all pupils in November 2020
- The first lockdown rules were felt to be clearer and therefore easier to follow in comparison to subsequent Covid-19 distancing requirements (during Autumn 2020)
- Some young people had been advised not to go back to school because of under-resourced staff teams. Without staff that can be there to offer one-to-one support, young people with special educational needs can be left without appropriate support.

Positive impacts

- The return to school provided a reinstatement of routine and structure that many of the young people found to be valuable prior to the pandemic
- Some young people with special educational needs struggled with virtual learning, especially video calls meaning they were more engaged when face to face teaching restarted.

EMPLOYMENT

Covid-19 has had an impact on youth employment and training in the following ways:

- Employment and training programmes were ended prematurely during the pandemic
- Unemployment impacts have been sectoral with hospitality and the arts suffering greatly - young people are more likely to work in these sectors when compared with other age groups
- Job opportunities that young people would have typically taken up part time while at school or college, during the holidays, or after leaving an education (such as bar and restaurant jobs) are no longer available
- Reduced job opportunities has meant many young people have had to access benefits for the first time.



"I graduated earlier this year... obviously that was a bit messed up by Covid, I don't have a job , I'm unemployed, I moved back in with my parents, it's probably the same story for a lot of young people."

Young person, aged 23

Some young people will be more impacted by these changes to the labour market than others, including:

- **Young people who are not linked into a careers service:** Young people who left school in the summer of 2020 or before may have no contact with school careers services and young people who lost their jobs prior to the introduction of the furlough scheme were left without this financial support
- **Young people who have recently graduated or completed training programmes:** Some young people worried they would have to compete with future cohorts for the same jobs when the labour market recovers
- **Young people who face barriers to online engagement:** Youth practitioners expressed that online engagement is particularly difficult for young people who do not feel comfortable engaging virtually and young people who do not have access to the digital equipment or skills required to access the internet

CRIME AND SAFETY

YOUNG PEOPLE FELT SAFER WHEN IN RICHMOND COMPARED TO OTHER PARTS OF LONDON



When broken down by gender identity, **female respondents less frequently stated that they 'mostly feel safe'** in Richmond when compared to male respondents, both during the day and night. The borough of Richmond is one of the safest boroughs in London, displaying the third lowest crime rate (122 per 10,000 population), with the top three crimes being theft, violence against the person, and vehicle offences.

Being mugged and sexual harassment or assault were the most frequent concerns of young people when out and about in Richmond

69% identified **being mugged** as a concern when out and about in Richmond

53% identified **sexual harassment or assault** as a concern when out and about in Richmond

When broken down by gender there was a difference between male and female concern regarding sexual harassment or assault:

- 74% of female respondents identified that they were concerned about sexual harassment or assault, whereas 11% of male respondents expressed this concern.

EXPERIENCE OF CRIME

65% of young people knew someone who had been a **victim of crime** in the last 12 months while **26%** identified that they had personally been a victim in the same timeframe.

DURING THE PANDEMIC

Youth practitioners described being less able to provide mentoring and outreach work to support young people and make local areas where young people gather safer for them

Crime dropped considerably during lockdown, however there were complaints about anti-social behaviour as young people gathered in local parks



HOME LIFE AND FRIENDSHIPS DURING THE PANDEMIC

THE IMPACT OF HOME LIFE ON YOUTH WELLBEING

Young people's lives are shaped by the people around them, in particular their families or the people they live with. As a result of this some families benefited from the lockdown, however elsewhere the worries of parents and carers directly impacted young people.

Covid-19 and lockdown caused a range of challenges for families, including:

- Increased unemployment
- Higher levels of debt
- Increased need to access food banks
- Worry about Covid-19, particularly for those with vulnerable family members.

"Parents' fear of schools going back resulted in a 300% increase in requests to home educate children. In some cases, it is because children are afraid, in some cases the parents are afraid."

VCS Youth Practitioner

FAMILY BREAKDOWN DURING THE PANDEMIC

For some, the levels of distress at home had serious consequences, with family breakdown leading some **young people to move out of home**. Homelessness amongst young people has increased throughout the pandemic, partly because young people who may have been staying with friends or family members were no longer able to do so during lockdown.

"[There were] kids experiencing parental breakdown and family relationship strain. Quite a few of them moved to their grandparents because it was too unbearable at home."

Community Engagement Practitioner



Youth practitioners voiced concern about **domestic abuse** during the pandemic. It was felt that rates of domestic abuse impacting Richmond youth had not yet been fully realised due to low rates of disclosure during periods of school closures.

Covid-19 regulations have impacted how young people are able to socialise

Regardless of home environments, young people have missed being able to socialise with peers. Outdoor spaces in Richmond (e.g. parks) were highlighted as important while Covid-19 restrictions have been in place. Young people expressed concern that lockdown had impacted their social life, for example:

"I started becoming a little bit non-social, I stopped trying to talk to people for a while and then started again. I was just alone for most of the time, I didn't think it was worth trying to build on any of my friendships."

Young person, aged 11

While many young people continued their friendships online, for those without access to devices this contact was limited. One young person reported that their phone and tablet both crashed in lockdown and therefore they had been unable to keep in touch with friends and extended family:

"It's really difficult not talking to them (my extended family) and I still haven't seen them in a really long time, it's very frustrating... Talking to the mirror gets lonely."

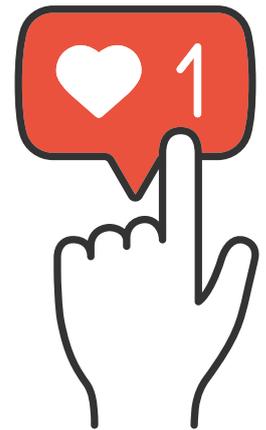
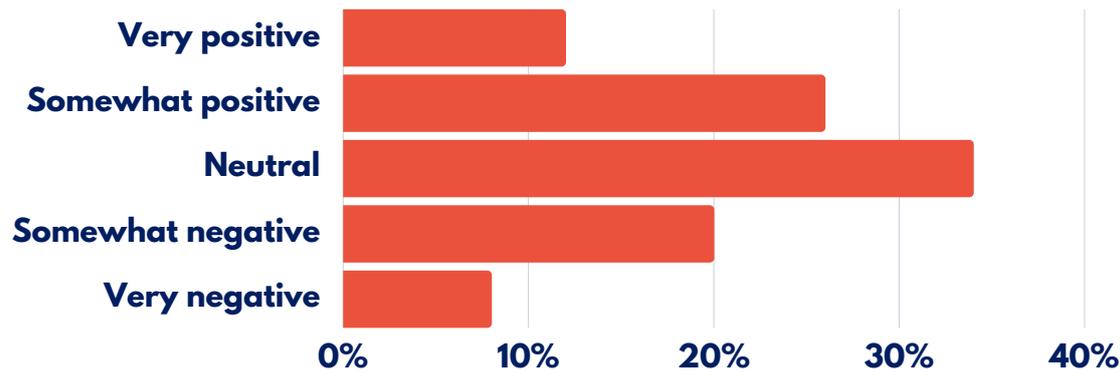
Young person, aged 10



INTERNET AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Prior to Covid-19 young people were more positive than negative about the impact of social media on their lives

When asked about the impact of social media on their lives, around a third of young people saw this as 'neutral' (34%),



Despite this, 56% stated that they “want to spend less time on social media”

CONCERNS ASSOCIATED WITH THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

- Fear of missing out (64%)
- Body image pressures (57%)
- Having enough followers or likes (21%)
- Online bullying (19%)
- Seeing explicit, offensive or inappropriate content (15%)

Young people felt confident that if they had a **negative experience when using social media** they would know what to do about it (82%). It was expressed that young people are used to social media and are “smart with it” despite its use being often seen as somewhat problematic by adults.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND INTERNET USE DURING THE PANDEMIC

Throughout the pandemic many activities moved online: schoolwork, socialising, support and services. This had both positive and negative impacts for young people:

POSITIVES

- Youth services described using social media to increase their reach
- Online sessions were more accessible for many young people e.g. those with caring responsibilities or young people with disabilities
- Practitioners could use the internet to connect with young people on their own terms



NEGATIVES

- Young people lost structure and boundaries around time online
- Some young people did not want to engage online or experienced video call fatigue
- It could be difficult for young people to speak freely online if sharing spaces with siblings or other family members

AT RISK GROUPS

YOUNG PEOPLE EXPERIENCING OR AT RISK OF HOMELESSNESS

Young people experiencing homelessness have been particularly negatively impacted by the pandemic. In Richmond, 12% of rough sleepers were 18-25 (2016/17) compared to a 9% average for outer London boroughs.

Centrepoint, an organisation supporting homeless young people recorded that *78% of local councils had seen increases in homelessness* due to Covid-19 and 74% felt that this increase in homelessness amongst young people would be long term. Within this group, some young people are at greater risk, for example young LGBT people who are overrepresented amongst those experiencing homelessness.

YOUNG PEOPLE WHO HAVE HAD CONTACT WITH THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Outreach work with young people who have had contact with the criminal justice system has been put on hold due to the pandemic. Youth organisations are concerned about crime and safety risks being increased during Covid-19; the UK Youth Movement found that *higher risk for engaging in gangs, substance misuse, carrying weapons, or other harmful practices* and *higher risk of sexual exploitation or grooming* were in the top ten most frequently mentioned worries raised in a study on Covid-19.

A 2020 Youth Violence Commission report found that there are a number of significant factors that lead to serious violence between young people including witnessing domestic violence as children, being excluded from mainstream education and the lack of accessible well-paid and secure work and growing up in unsafe housing. This range of factors suggests that to support young people who have had contact with the criminal justice system it is important to have a holistic approach. Local youth clubs are also considered to be important services for young people who are at risk of becoming involved in crime.

YOUNG CARERS

In Richmond there were 970 young carers in 2018. Covid-19 impacted the lives of young carers and young adult carers - the Carers Trust have found that 11% of young carers and 20% of young adult carers said *the amount of time they spent caring each week increased by more than 30 hours* and 8% of young carers and 15% of young adult carers *cared for over 90 hours per week during the pandemic*. This has had immediate impacts in that 50% of young adult carers *are spending more money* due to Covid-19, 19% of young adult carers *are drinking more alcohol to help them cope* and 40% of young carers and 59% of young adult carers *say their mental health is worse*.

Looking ahead, 67% of young carers and 78% of young adult carers *are more worried about their future* as a result of Covid-19. Consulted young carers have expressed a need for support for their emotional wellbeing and mental health; having breaks and respite from their caring roles; and getting help from specialist young carer and young adult carer services.

YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SEND

12% of pupils in Richmond have special educational needs or a disability, totalling 3442 young people. The wards with the highest proportion of pupils with special educational needs are Hampton North (17.3%) and Heathfield (16%). Due to Covid-19 *young people with SEND were less likely to be attending their schools and colleges* than young people without SEND due to a heightened level of anxiety about the pandemic felt by young people, parents and carers, shielding requirements and problems accessing transport.

Ofsted have reported that children and young people who experienced prolonged absence from education were at risk of increased levels of abuse and neglect.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for oneRichmond and providers of youth services in Richmond

The effects of Covid-19 on young people are expected to be long-lasting. Unemployment, mental health issues and educational disruption are likely to impact young people across ages and parts of the borough throughout 2021 and beyond. Young people face a range of concerns that were present prior to Covid-19; cumulative impacts of disruptions to their lives during 2020; and uncertainty about the future. Despite these challenges, Richmond benefits from having a strong and diverse youth sector, with practitioners who are passionate about supporting, connecting and encouraging young people.

Within this wider context, it will be important for oneRichmond to work closely with youth sector partners to develop connected services which support youth resilience, confidence, social connection and mental wellbeing. **Young people should expect to have a bright future and aspire to achieve their individual goals.** Funders, schools, youth clubs, mental health providers and other partners can collaborate to make this a reality in Richmond.

Recommendations

1. Collaborate with the existing panel of peer researchers and reach out to new young people through local schools and youth organisations. Gather and share youth insights and enable Richmond youth to have a continued voice in shaping local support and services.
2. Support local initiatives which strengthen youth mental health and wellbeing. Identifying and addressing gaps in service provision and providing training for youth practitioners on how best to support young people to manage stress and build resilience.
3. Support initiatives which improve guidance in schools and youth organisations on risky behaviours and address the lack of sexual health advice and concerns around drug use.
4. Support youth worker forums where youth focused organisations can come together to share learning; better understand one another's service offer; and develop programmes.
5. Encourage and support youth organisations which provide affordable opportunities for young people to connect, feel safe and develop confidence.
6. Encourage and support local provision of affordable, youth focused activities and where appropriate raise awareness about available spaces. Identify a partner to develop, maintain and update a 'what's on and where website' so that young people know what services and activities area available in Richmond and have access to information on key topics.
7. Prioritise practical support and activities for the following groups of young people:
 - Young carers - through developing respite and educational support.
 - Young people involved or at risk of becoming involved with the criminal justice system - through developing long-term 1-1 support and mentoring.

RECOMMENDATIONS

8. Encourage sports organisations and businesses that have access to or run sports facilities to offer free spaces and taster sessions to youth organisations/young people.
9. Encourage schools to proactively address educational inequalities through tailored learning support and the provision of 'catch up'.
10. Encourage partnerships to develop programmes of work between employers and schools to provide work experience and opportunities and develop Careers Advice services which emphasise the range of post-school options for young people.
11. Publicise and engage local companies in the provision of apprenticeship and Kickstart programme opportunities for young people.
12. Support organisations to build on the learning from the pandemic around the ways in which they can extend their reach and provide inclusive online activities (e.g., for young people with disabilities or young carers).



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