



UNIVERSITY OF
OXFORD

Supporting young people's agency in the context of COVID-19

Results from consultation with NeurOX YPAG and McPin Youth Network



Project aims

1. Consultation Phase:

- Identify young people's perceptions of control and concerns around physical and mental health, relationships, educational attainment and career aspirations during this time

2. Digital Solution Phase

- Co-producing and iterating a digital solution with groups of young people to support young people's agency and wellbeing during the COVID-19 outbreak

Consultation Phase

- Consultation and survey preparation:
 - 6 NeurOX YPAG members (NeurOX Committee; aged 17-18), NEUROSEC team and McPin Foundation
- Survey distributed to NeurOX YPAG group (14–17 years) and McPin Foundation's Network (aged 14–26 years) (N=30)
 - N: 14 years (3); 15 years (6); 16 years (6); 17 years (3); 20-24 years (12)
 - N: Male (6); Female (22); Other (2)
 - N: School (18); University (8); Work/other (4)
- On-line meeting: NeurOX Committee, McPin and NEUROSEC members
 - Evaluate and discussed quantitative and qualitative survey data on-line
 - Brainstorm potential outputs and next steps
- CONTEXT: Survey completed 25–27 March
 - First week after schools closed
 - 1 week after Government announced GCSE and A-level exam cancellation
 - First week of strict isolation measures

What has been the biggest impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on your life?

<p>Exams Impact on own learning/progression Home schooling difficult Not used to on-line learning No on-line learning set up Concern about qualifications – GCSEs</p>	<p>Miss friends and family Coping with isolation Miss social gatherings Lack of physical social contact</p>	<p>Feeling unsupported Anxiety Anxiety about isolation Uncertainty/fear Low mood Family MH</p>	<p>University placements Graduation Future career</p>
<p>Educational/learning</p>	<p>Social life</p>	<p>Mental health</p>	<p>Work-career progression</p>
		<p>Their work Vulnerable members</p>	<p>Loss of job Pay bills</p>
		<p>Concern for family</p>	<p>Financial worries</p>
			<p>Exercise</p>

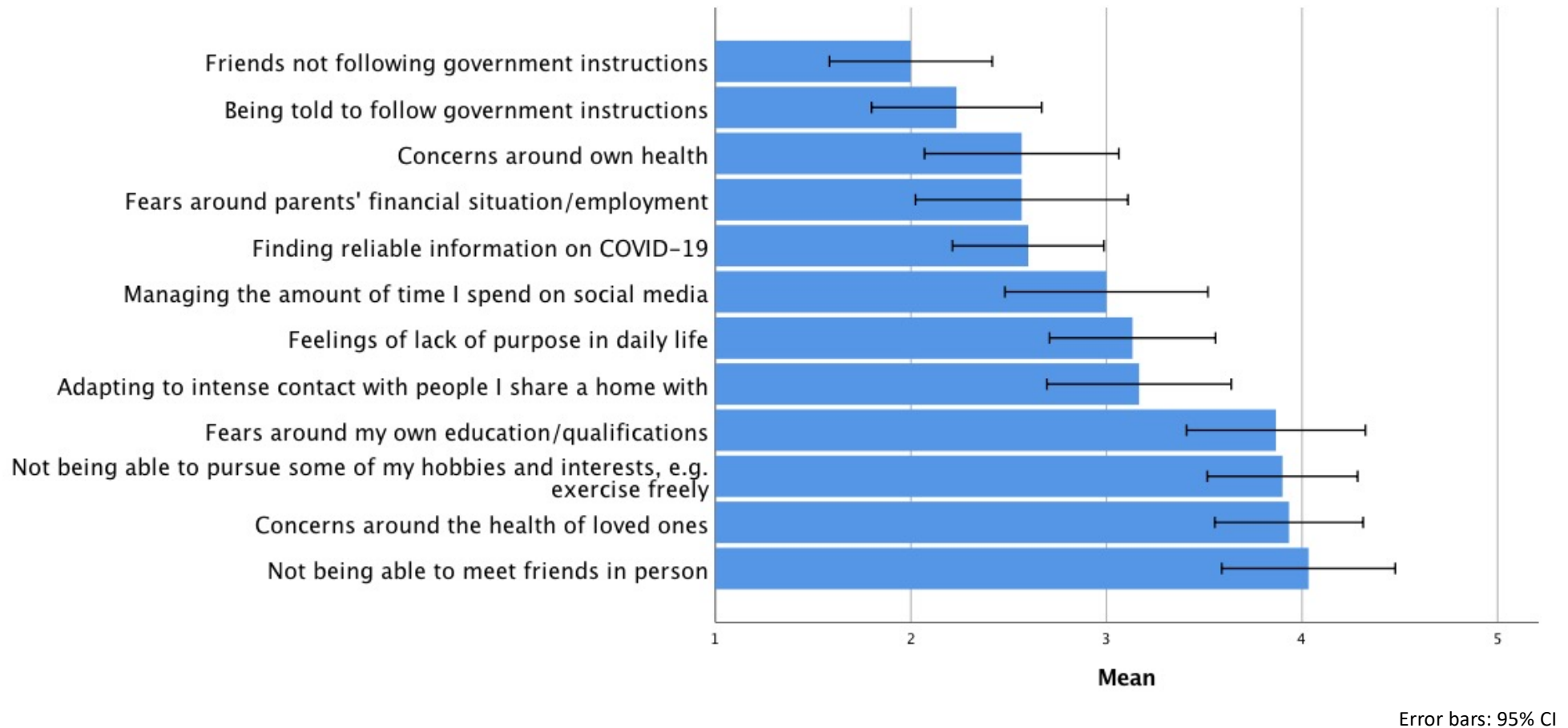
What do you envision the impact on your life to be in two weeks' time?

<p>Poorer MH Low Mood Scared/anxious Mild stress/confusion Feeling trapped</p> <p>Mental health</p>	<p>Miss external activities Miss going outside Boredom Loneliness Feeling trapped Lack exercise No change in environment affect MH</p> <p>Isolation</p>	<p>Not (physically) seeing friends and family Not socialising</p> <p>Social life</p>	<p>Focus on study Home school progress Impact on school grades Lack motivation</p> <p>Education/learning</p>	<p>Risk for family – virus Risk vulnerable family member Risk family MH</p> <p>Concern/family</p>	
			<p>Isolation more routine More digital contact</p> <p>Positive impact</p>	<p>Work/pay</p> <p>Financial worries</p>	<p>Uncertainty</p> <p>Career progression</p>

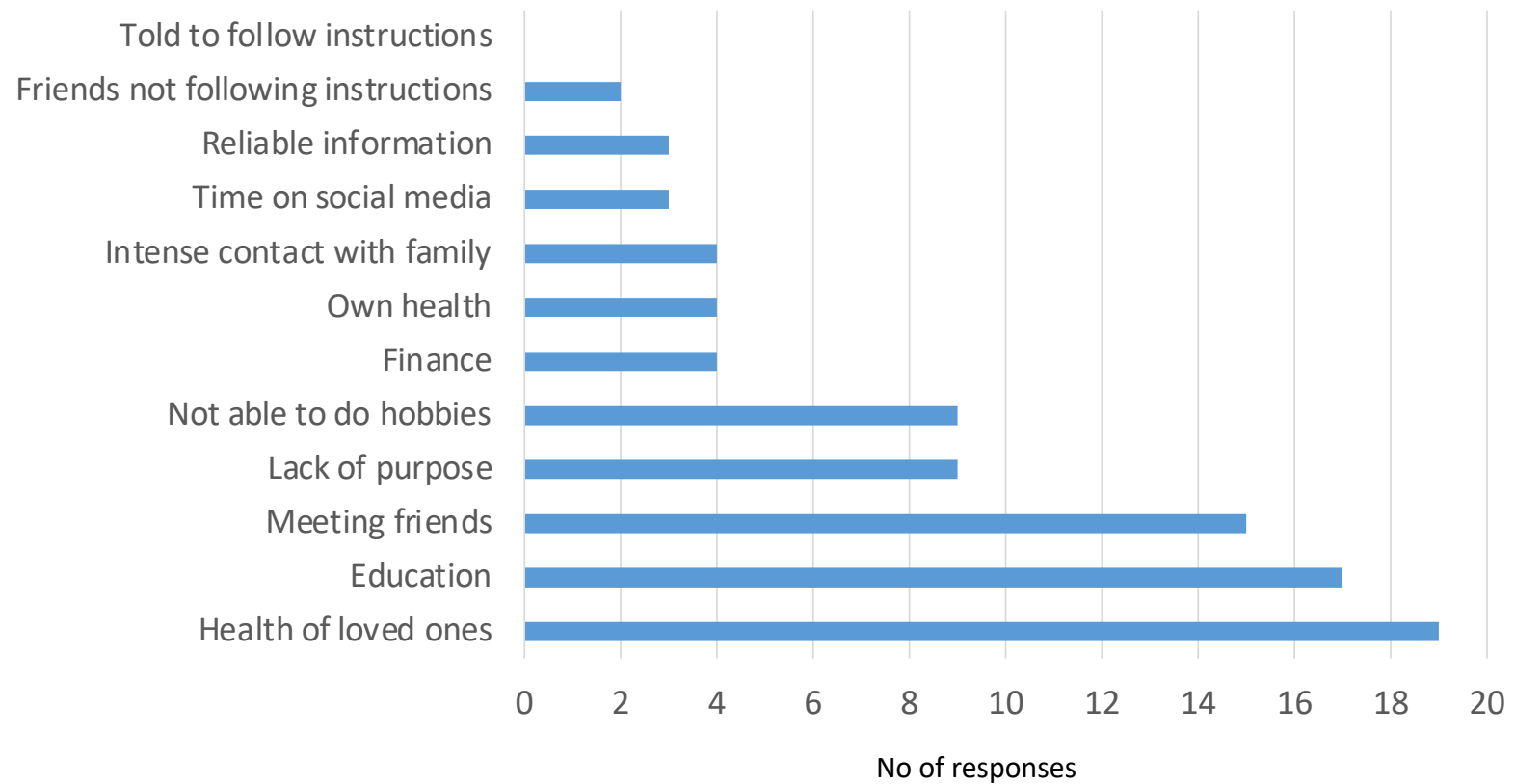
What do you envision the impact on your life to be in one year's time?

- Different pattern and mix of themes, with the following standing out:
 - Feeling things will get back to 'normal' – no impact/less salient
 - Uncertainty
 - Fear of some adverse outcomes: death family/friends families
 - Many mentions of gratitude/appreciation – particularly relating to learnings from social isolation
- Few mentions:
 - Worries about economy
 - Negative impact – career
 - Fewer positive outlooks on career
 - Worries about MH (1 mention anxiety)

To what extent do you feel the following are challenges for you during this time?

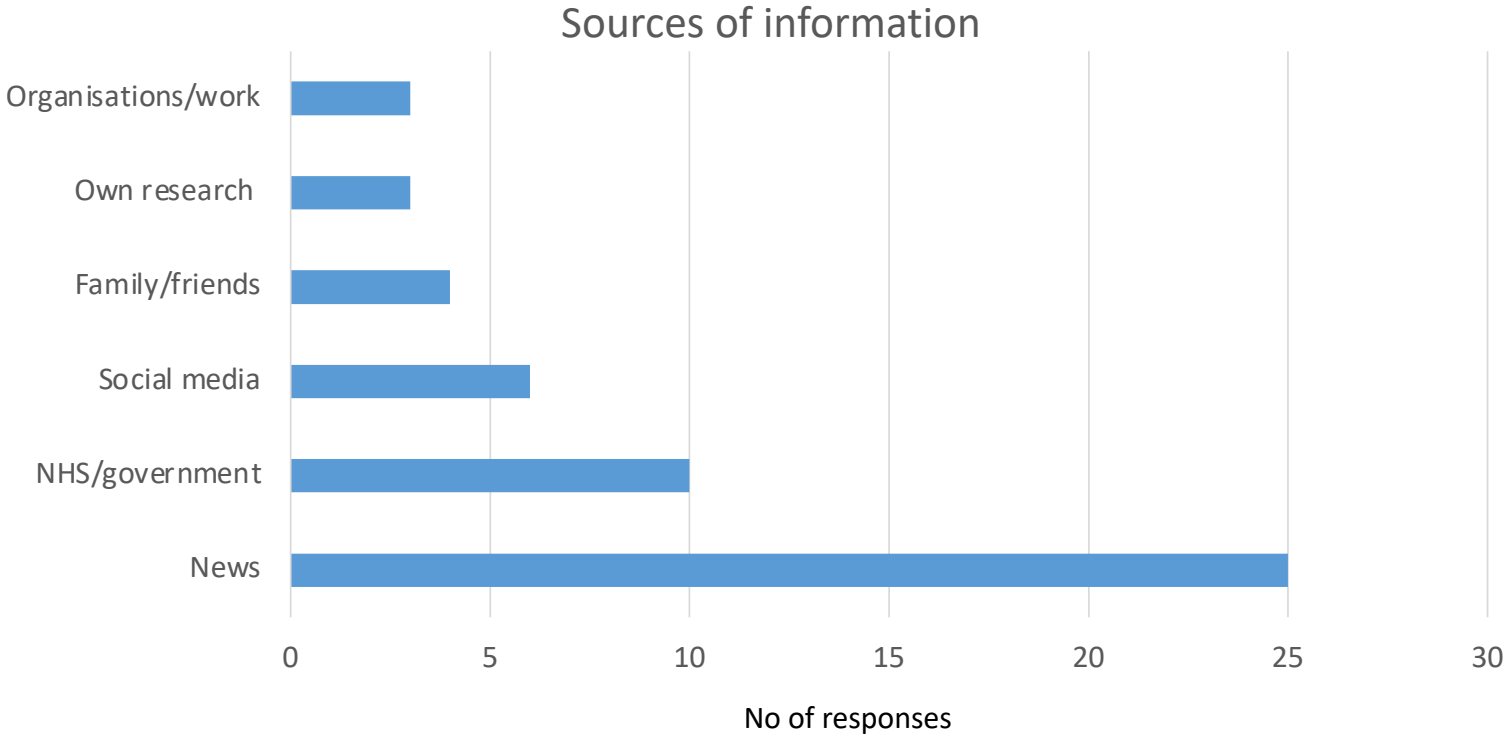


What are your top three concerns?



How well informed do you feel at this time?

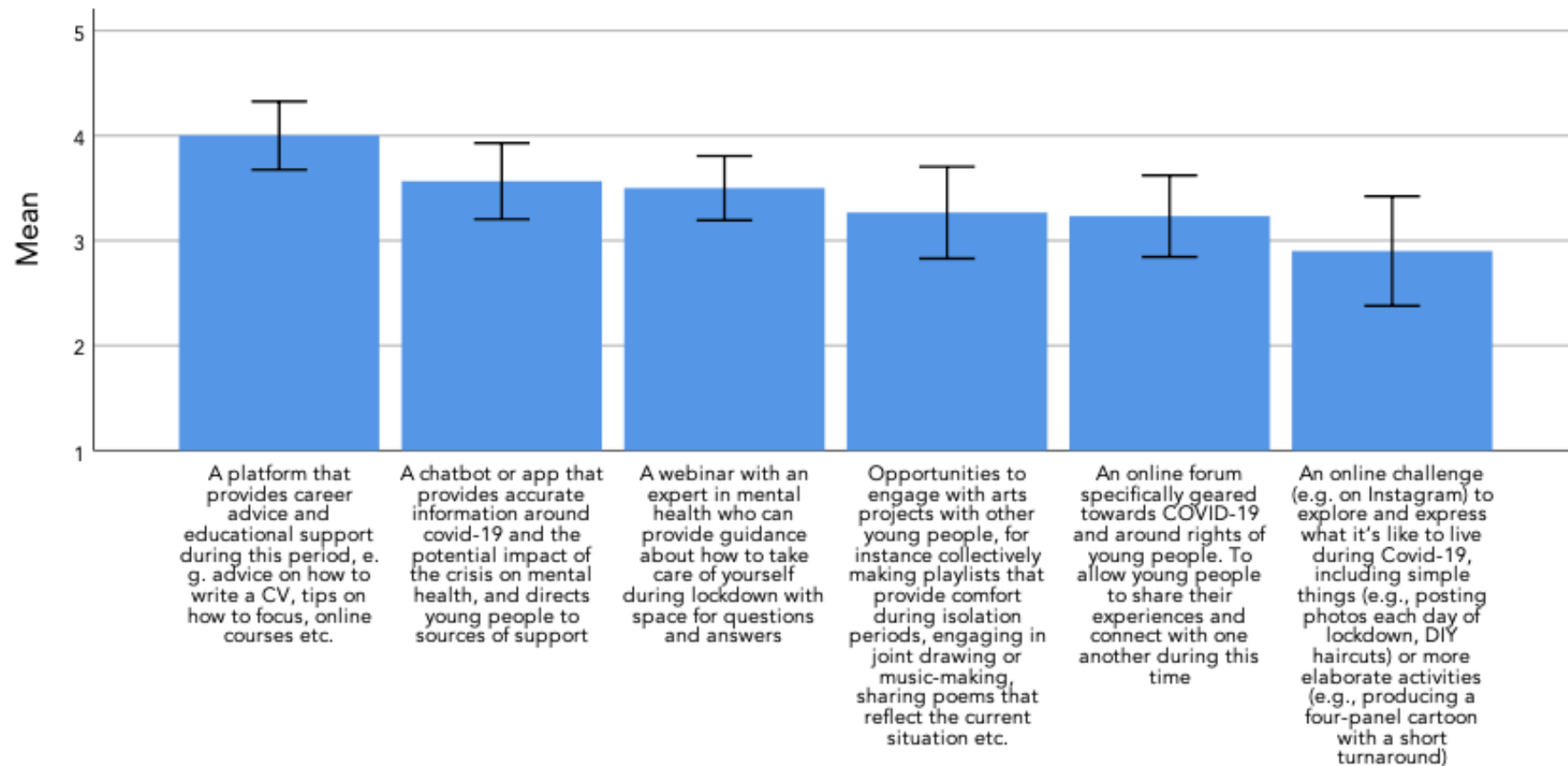
23/30 felt either well or very well informed



What new online resources could/should be developed to support young people's social participation and wellbeing during the COVID-19 outbreak?

<p>Peer-peer forum/ support group On-line school peer-peer forum Volunteer talking support for YP (struggling isolation) Global peer-peer chat room – chat wall Global community connections</p> <p>Community support group</p>	<p>New skills Study platforms Managing school work and related stress Preparation/guidance for starting A-levels Educational platform/forum for learning Guidance and feedback</p> <p>Educational support</p>	<p>Activities/exercise/ hobbies Real news Relieve boredom and loneliness Ideas for off screen</p> <p>Broad digital resource</p>	<p>Wellbeing/staying well Tailored info Support pages – anxiety</p> <p>Wellbeing/MH information</p>	<p>Extra help for MH Group YP education for MH /to support others On-line counselling MH Forum + YP</p> <p>Professional MH support</p>
			<p>Digital comms apps Face-time support – befriending (ie. SHOUT) Global chat room/wall</p> <p>Social media interaction</p>	<p>Positive/non- covid news</p>

To what extent would you be willing to engage with any of the following?



How can young people support each other?

<p>Staying in contact Maintaining relationships All going through same things Check in with each other regularly</p> <p>Contact/talking to friends and group chats</p>	<p>Combat isolation fears Avoiding loneliness Reaching out to friends/ those struggling Safety net Conversations Sharing thoughts and emotions 'Stick together - unified' Listening On-line support groups – MH and school Talking: how we feel</p> <p>Emotional support/ talking peers</p>	<p>Combat isolation – distractions Encouraging others to try new activities Supporting vulnerable people Sharing experiences broadly</p> <p>Social media interactions</p>	<p>Talk about other things Positive talking and thinking Non-covid focus</p> <p>Positive support/ thinking</p>		<p>Keeping each other safe/ following rules</p>
			<p>Exercise Hobbies Creativity</p> <p>Share coping strategies</p>	<p>Supporting vulnerable people</p> <p>Supporting community</p>	<p>Support learning</p>

What gives you hope and comfort during this time of crisis?

<p>Talking on-line Connecting via social media Knowing friends going through the same</p> <p>Friends</p>	<p>Looking forward to 'normal' life Thinking about future events Focus on happy thoughts Can still socialise via digital Nature outside continues Spring! Having extra time to try new things Solution focus Friends giving hope</p> <p>Positive future thinking</p>	<p>Communities Helping family Acts of kindness Helping each other 'In it together' On-line community</p> <p>Support each other</p>	<p>China – hope Measures working</p> <p>Positive experiences/ other countries</p> <p>Family support</p> <p>Reassurance</p>	<p>Globally united 'In it together'</p> <p>Not alone/ global</p> <p>Planning</p> <p>Relaxing exercise</p>
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Do you feel you have had sufficient/any support for mental health during this time?

- Support needed – 17
- Some support received – 12
- Professional support desired – 11 (also on next slide)

- Types of support received:
 - Friends – most frequent
 - Family
 - Standard resources available
 - From work
 - University
 - Mind – talking therapy/phone
 - School (email)
- Some cancellation/uncertainty around existing therapy/counselling

What MH support would you like to see offered?

<p> University support GP – worry getting medication GP/medical services Offer of psychological support – non-specific Access to community mental health team (discharged service user) Live chat with MH professional Resuming ‘normal’ counselling (cancelled) Virtual counselor </p> <p>Professional MH support</p>	<p> Tailored by age/ education/general type Help seeking direction Mental wellbeing MH education Wellbeing Coping strategies Reassurance from teachers </p> <p>Tailored MH resources/support</p>	<p> Anonymous chatbot On-line chat group for MH Platform for YP to talk about issues </p> <p>On-line resources</p>	<p> Friends offer support for MH </p> <p>Communication/MH support from friends</p> <p>Info/advice for parents</p>
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Thoughts from young people – data

- Talked about representation in this survey – important to take into account other research with larger samples (e.g. https://youngminds.org.uk/media/3708/coronavirus-report_march2020.pdf)
- Education major theme but likely to change, rapidly, frequently and not our area of expertise or responsibility (on-line educational resources)
- Mental health will be more concerning in 2 weeks (from survey)
- Isolation and impact on social life also becoming more impactful
- Community and peer-peer approaches seen as most helpful
- Much uncertainty about the longer-term but also some reflection on gratitude and positivity

Thoughts from young people – outputs

- Concern for project are the longevity, durability, production time and duplication
- Many existing digital approaches targeting isolation – on-line challenges, some creative and relaxation initiatives
- Chatbot of interest/very useful – could also tackle misinformation
 - May take too long to prepare, lose momentum and become misaligned with changing need
- Webinar (+ MH expert?)
 - Surprised fewer interested but possibly depends on approach taken with this; maybe less didactic MH professional talk as may have been interpreted
 - Easy to organise
- Peer-peer support
 - Fewer available resources offering this

Take-home messages

- Resources to support young people's mental health and wellbeing are much needed, particularly given the expected negative impact of isolation from peers and anxiety over educational outcomes
- Community and peer-to-peer approaches seen as most valid to explore
 - Important to respond to their need to connect, share experiences, and support each other
 - Possibly equipping young people with knowledge, capability and means to support each other in an on-line community