

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 147
Ymateb gan: Unigolyn

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Response from: Individual

I am a mother to 3 children aged 10,8 and 6. The children broke up a week earlier than most for lockdown in March because my eldest was sent home as she has asthma (although she was not ill when sent home).

My husband and I are separated and he lives in London (We're in Wales) so the children have been very cut off from him and any other family. We have been totally isolated and I've gone to bed each night hoping nothing happens because I'd have nobody to help. We've not seen any of the family or even chatted to anyone over the fence.

I quickly had to change my work schedule as I work from home as an ESL tutor to overseas students. I am lucky to have been able to keep working but I have a minimum number of hours I have to do before my contract is terminated.

The children adapted quite well at first and were doing their work every day but as the weeks went on and they started to get very disillusioned. Work was being sent via email and google classroom but there has been no contact (online or by phone) from their teachers (apart from on Dojo). Work was also not marked so I had to do this myself.

My kids have always had good reports from school and they work hard at school but this seems to have not been the case with homeschooling. They have no interest in doing their work and I have to constantly nag them to get a few bits done. Looking at it from a child's point of view, I can't blame them. Suddenly the people they spent 6 hours a day looking up to and working for have disappeared out of their lives with 'good old mum' stepping in. To them, it must feel like they have been abandoned suddenly by everyone who meant anything to them. They don't understand.

I feel constantly guilty about not living up to the expectations of a good parent who has home schooling sorted. Education for my children is one of the greatest things I could give them but I can't give it properly. I've worked in schools but I'm not a qualified mainstream teacher. It takes time to familiarise myself with the curriculum, to explain things to them and mark it.

I often get up at 4am to work before they wake up and finish at 10pm so I can work either side of them being up and about. I'm exhausted and feel pretty depressed and anxious. I don't have the energy to play or do much else with them.

I feel that this situation has impacted my eldest the most. She is not sleeping well and struggles to come out of her room sometimes. She is just about to enter her tweens and I can feel her stress. She gets angry easily now and shouts at her siblings. There are always arguments between them.

The kids have 'coped' until now, but for how much longer will they cope with this situation, I don't know.

I know we are luckier than many (and I do tell them this) as we have a garden and internet access and I really do feel for those kids and parents who are worse off in this regard.

I strongly feel that children everywhere are being let down. There is a gross discrepancy in home learning between schools. I hear stories about Zoom lessons and live classes (which I do myself in my work with adults and children) and then those who have had barely any contact from school.

How is this fair for our children? Is it a postcode lottery?

How is this fair on working parents when some have respite and others do not?

It is not normal for school age children to be with their parents 24 hours a day and it creates a lot of tension, just as it would in other relationships.

My sister's children have benefitted from being in school throughout the outbreak as she is a nurse. But even she can't understand why we are still in this position. Again, a discrepancy depending on what line of work you are in as a parent.

I had some abuse in my childhood too. I come from a middle class background and it was very hidden. I can only imagine how some children are coping right now. To not be able to escape to the safety of someone or somewhere else, even for a few hours.

I have also been a TA and worked with kids who came from neglectful homes.

I like writing poetry and this one is one I wrote several weeks ago.

You may wish to read it or not.

A reflection on Covid response -

*As she crept past the door and into the rain
Left the menacing monster behind
The curtains twitched but the neighbours next door
Didn't know she feared for her life
She walked down the road with nowhere to go
blank faced , distraught yet composed
She saw people stare and as they unaware
Didn't know she'd been stabbed with a knife*

*The son looked forlorn as he approached his dad
And he knew the answer by rote
There was no food left and the father depressed
Didn't know if he'd take his own life
He walked outside whilst his young son cried
And wondered what next he could do
He walked a while whilst still in denial
About how to preserve his son's life*

She's eight years old and lives with her mum

*But her mum is so sick, she can't move
She wakes at four to start her chores
Her care is what gives her mum life
At three every day, she goes for her walk
Alone with no adult in sight
It's her hour of freedom to be a child
And the one that's for her own life*

*He'd suffered for long with an incurable pain
Which was invisible to the world outside
He didn't have long to see earthly things
He'd be given a limit on life
Sometimes he'd walk or shuffle his way
Through a park where he'd sit for a while
But the people who passed, just looked and grassed
Oblivion to the pain in his life*

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