

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 195
Ymateb gan: Adborth gan ofalwyr maeth
Cyngor Dinas Casnewydd

COV 195
Response from: Feedback from Newport City
Council foster carers

Feedback from Newport City Council foster carers regarding feelings about Covid 19 lockdown, the 'good the bad and the ugly'

Fc A G 12 05 20

Since lockdown as foster carer been much easier, no clock watching appointments and least of all phone calls whenever boys go to school it's hassles down to buses, pinching stealing fighting cheeky rude to teachers bunking off to go stealing Asda etc

We have had amazing time together at horses making obstacle courses, bonfires, bbq', bike rides, spending time together singing, dancing, (and) weathers been fabulous.

We arranged for schoolwork to be dropped home and picked up, it's been great 👍

Weathers been fabulous been like holiday found it much easier having boys home giving them 100 percent one to one 👍

We have missed seeing our family and having party's birthdays etc celebrations but we managed to have street distance party on v e day.

Having good time but very scared today coming into Newport to hospital appointment.

We have witnessed a few deaths of people we have known, (so) feel scared of the virus 🦠 we did keep boys home a few days before lockdown as was scared.

Fc AH 02 06 20

Hi. Here is how Corona virus pandemic has affected our fostering experience: we were in the process of organising respite with two girls and while we were in the process of getting to know each other the lockdown happened and we had to stop the visits. Now their main carer has asked for

some support as she is struggling with the lockdown with her 3 girls so we are in touch again and are organising to have the girls for one night soon.

Fc AP 05 08 20

Hello my name is A, I am XX year old single carer for Newport council . Lockdown for me has been frustrating at times and upsetting that you cannot see your loved ones it hasn't just been emotional but mentally draining to with being put on furlough and all my holidays and plans cancelled but I feel everyone is in the same boat and we all need to pull together after a while all the above seems so normal now in life and we should be happy that we have our health.

Fc AS and two yp'

I spoke to the girls, T (14):
29.04.20

1. I love staying at home as I don't need to make excuses for not going with my friends anymore - I know I sound anti-social but I really like my own company!
2. I enjoy online shopping
3. I love wearing baggy clothes instead of a school uniform
4. Not having to get up so early I find I'm not so tired in the day now
5. Like playing online games after schoolwork is finished and I've made about 5 new friends from around the UK, we share similar interests.
6. Don't have to suffer poor behaviour in a classroom anymore
7. I feel I'm working really hard to keep up though and have to work a lot of stuff out myself (I do help when she needs it honest!)
8. I enjoy working by myself
9. I can apply eyeliner properly!
10. I've done quite a bit of gardening and it's my responsibility to make sure they're watered
11. I've done lots of artwork for school
12. I've enjoyed speaking to my teacher from school once a week.
13. I have reorganised my room
14. I've spent more time with the pets and built a bond with them
15. Nice not having a timetable to follow and I like having snacks between lessons!
16. Please can I be home-schooled in future? (No!)

From H: (17)

1. It's horrible, I want to get back to normal
2. It's boring-get me out of here!

3. Broke up with boyfriend
4. My iphone got put in the washing machine and didn't recover
5. Caught up on 10 overdue assignments and sent them in
6. Got a new iPhone
7. Got a job on a local farm milking cows
8. Learnt to drive a quad bike on the farm
9. Have stopped cheating on my online game (!)
10. learnt so much about cows in my job, mastitis and treatment
11. That they are very sociable, curious animals
12. That usually one cow minds all the calves in the field.
13. That cows have a strong bond with the farmhands that milk them.

T's artwork (pop art) in the style of Michael Craig Martin and a random girl pic.



Fc AT 12 08 20

During lockdown C handled it quite well he's not the sort of person who goes out a lot anyway, he communicated with his mates through Xbox also his brothers the same way. He also found a new hobby mountain biking he would go out with my son about three times a week to a special track and that seemed to do him okay. C likes his home comforts so lockdown suited him quite well also the added bonus of no school, but saying that he did do all his work that was set for him without moaning, mornings were school work evenings were for his Xbox or mountain biking. As for J and myself lockdown was a quiet time quite nice really no pressures of having to keep calling C for school, which he wasn't a fan of, but towards the end of lockdown we found, he was getting up really early without needing to be called. C is very comfortable living here he feels part of the family which was a big part of coping with lockdown.

Fc BH 30.05.20

Young persons views.

Likes about lockdown-

Enjoying no school

Not getting up early for school

Likes being at home all the time

Dislike-

Home school

Miss the harvester

Miss seeing Nan

I'm not missing my friends I speak to them online. I'm much happier at home because I don't like seeing lots of people.

Carers Views.

Home school is very hard because we don't have the correct resources, and the cause of most of the disagreement in the house. I'm enjoying that A is a much happier less anxious child. Dreading when it's time to go back to school because this is going to cause lots of problems. Andy like route and has completely got used to being at home. Lockdown is much easier for us as a family because going around doing every day things like shopping, visiting family and friends made Andy unhappy and anxious. So for us we are living the dream.

Fc BJ 06 06 20

Lockdown for us has actually been ok. At the beginning, it was just myself my husband and two children. My husband was the designated shopper whilst myself & kids stayed in. I became a teacher overnight (which I found I am not good at) but we are getting through. Considering we have been stuck in staring at the same four walls moral has been good with the odd

bad day (which is obviously to be expected). Gradually we took government advice and started doing daily exercise. At the beginning of lockdown, we received a call about taking a baby due the end of May; he arrived with us 2 weeks ago. Support all around has been amazing but equally hard as there have been so many calls from the team and already looking after 2 kids being home-schooled and a new-born demand feeding every 2 hours it's felt a little overwhelming at times. I am assured it will calm down soon (not a criticism as like I said knowing support is there is great just wasn't quite expecting calls daily from people. (strange times for carers and foster team as I'm sure it's a case of learning each day as we all work through these strange times) This is our first placement and all going well so far.

Fc CB 7.05.20

We have been able and lucky to devote all our time with our little one as our placement came at beginning of lockdown. It has been lovely to have this special time to bond with baby and nothing getting in way to distract from the routine.

On downside baby don't get to have contact with his family members.

Also he is not interacting with our family members.

Also not getting used to every normal day life shopping etc weekends at seaside and our usual walks we would do normally.

Fc CH 30 05 20

Hello, my lockdown experience hasn't been too bad as I am a key worker so still able to go out. Luckily, the children have been quite good and are doing some homework every day.

Fc CM 1.07.2020

The lockdown for us as a family has been a pleasant experience as all my children are older we spent a lot of quality time together, meals we ate together and tv was watched together, Im sure my children struggled more than we did but they didn't complain. My older son was working from home so he was busy with that my other older 2 children helped their dad with painting and building a fence, while A my youngest was happy playing in the pool, it was helpful that we had such beautiful weather, I'm sure it would have been miserable for us all should it have be raining

When C came to us at 10 hours old she was like a breath of fresh air and she uplifted all our spirits and the house hold was extraordinarily happy with everyone queuing up for their turn with a cwtch. She slotted right into our family life and now 1 month in it feels like she always been here.

Fc EP 05 08 20

Had I an existing placement during lockdown, I feel the restrictions would have had minimal impact on my family . However, I am relieved that we were not called on to provide respite during this time. I would have been concerned for the wellbeing of the child and my family, knowing the amount of people who are in regular contact with a looked after child.

Fc GD 12 05 20

J and I are fine we sit in the garden if it's nice and J has his walker and stander to go in , he's his happy usual self but he does miss other children as he's a very sociable little boy.

Fc GJ 02 06 20

The children have been really good through the lockdown, I must add she finds it strange when she walks past her nursery thinking she is going in, to find out she's not... everyday we have taken a walk around a local castle. She loves her stories, painting and general pay in the garden. Going shopping she copes well standing on the lines to even putting her feet on the circle with feet on it. She has never, though this is strange time, attempted to run to people or cuddle... Before all this happened she had routine and has been very good with do's and don'ts, stay in place etc, she has copped extremely well.

Fc IP 14 08 20

We currently have a boisterous 2 yr old whose adoption has been delayed due to the pandemic and who requires a great deal of attention or she can get up to all sorts of mischief. (flooded the kitchen & downstairs toilet twice, opened the locked front door and let herself and the dog out, tried out Julia's makeup, climbed on top of CW's bunk bed, put all the towels in the bath - with water, turns on /off the washing machine, tumble dryer, dishwasher, microwave, cooker, DVD, TV etc etc.

We also still have CW, now almost 11 who has a One to One teaching assistant in school. The school have provided a great deal of on line work for his class but without someone sat next to him he won't do much work. I have continued to work throughout this period so I could only help with his

school work on my days off. J is fully occupied with the 2 yr old so can't help him much. He decided one day that he didn't want to do any work so he copied a series of DOS instructions which he found on You Tube to our PC which when you tried to open a web browser initiated opening hundreds of DOS windows. This made it look like the PC had crashed / had a virus..

The lack of physical activity compared to our "normal" life has also had an impact , particularly on CW. He would frequently walk to and from school, had swimming lessons, kayaking, bike rides etc which all stopped. We go for a walk for around an hour a day , weather permitting and just recently he has started meeting school friends for bike rides to the park so hopefully he will lose the excess weight he gained.

Problems with our internet connection have brought tantrums and shouting but I'm aware this is pretty commonplace. These kids couldn't have lived with a dial - up connection.....

One other factor which has put additional pressure on the situation is J's decision to initiate divorce proceedings and put the house up for sale. CW and K will be living with me after we sell the house, possibly with the assistance of other carers - this has undoubtedly had an effect on CW.

Fc JJ 02 06 20

Good thing about lockdown, quality time with the children, interacting and helping them learn new skills, which they enjoyed, like backing, knitting and nature walks.

Bad things about lockdown, not being able to participate in the children's swimming club and missing out on their dance troop, missing their friends and leisure days out at parks and activities.

Not being able to go on holiday and not being able to have sibling contact and being so restricted in every day normality.

F/c JG 12 05 20

The younger children in our care are seeming to thrive from the fact that we are not rushing here and there every day and if we go out it's for a walk and not a car journey. They are seeing the same faces every day and get excited when family living in other households who they would ordinarily see every day come to the end of our path (normally to collect a cake Iv cooked haha).

The weather has been a big help because they have been able to play outside in the garden almost every day. Most home routines for them have remained the same ie bedtimes and mealtimes but there is no rushing

around in the mornings which is a positive. Nursery was initially asked about every day.

Our teenager is missing going to school he was making good progress with making friends who he misses. He is struggling a bit with his school work but is making a real effort to do what he can. His English is improving and he has regular contact with friends via Skype who share his cultural background. He is staying up later in the night-time which means he sleeps later in the morning (normal teenage behaviour). He is missing going to the centre where he used to meet his friends but understands why that is not possible at the moment. He has asked twice to go out when friends have asked him but fully accepted that he couldn't.

Fc JP 05 08 20

Had 2 year old C, should've been for 1 week, but due to illnesses in the Carer's home I ended up having them for 4 weeks. Not too much of a problem, just lots of playing in the garden and the odd walk locally. When carer picked him up, she waited outside for him. Had 16 year old Ca in May for 5 days as carer needed a break, we just kept our distance. I've been having Ca 3 days a week since last year, so after having her the 5 days I agreed to have her the 3 days a week again. Also had C a few times again, wasn't too much of a problem.

Fc JT 12 08 20

We have had very few problems or issues with k since lockdown. We work mainly from home anyway and to be honest k has been excellent. He didn't really mind the not going out as long as he could talk to his friends by mobile and keep in contact with them through his X box.

He also didn't have the stress of exams. I suppose a down side is that he hasn't participated in any of the online schooling as he "didn't see any point as he was not going back to school".

Fc LG 12 05 20

We have 3 foster children age 7,6 and 4yrs of age. While we have been on lockdown, the children are a bit young to understand the severity of the virus but they do understand that it is important to stay away from people that do not live with us. Also they have been very good, the only thing i have found difficult is the education side as the children development is very low in education so that has been a struggle. The children do tend to entertain each other, which is good when you have a few children. Contact has been phone contact, which has gone fine. We have even dealt with meetings via

zoom video app so we feel that the lockdowns only issue is that you cannot take the children to parks or anywhere like that.

Fc LP 06 08 20

- In some respects it worked out better and in our favour, as we had time at home to settle the little one in. Where as under normal circumstances we would have taken annual leave but it wouldn't have been for long. However, as I am working from home and business was closed it gave us ample time to help him settle and adjust but also for the rest of the immediate family within the household.
- It was very hard going in the first few weeks as restrictions at the time meant travelling within a 5 mile radius and no further and a lot of places were still closed, and for safety reasons we remained home. But thankful for the good weather and the outdoor space we have.
- Very difficult to stop little one from wanting to hug new family members as he was slowly introduced to them as the restrictions were lifted and adhering to the strict social distancing was hard to manage at times.

YP MA 10 08 20

Over the lockdown period M did considerably well. He realised and understood the impact of COVID and why he wasn't in school, this I feel helped M accept the situation. I also lost my dad which brought home the gravity of the situation.

M spent his school days doing class work his teachers sent him via Show My Homework app. He set himself goals every day and got into the swing of it fairly quickly. The use of the laptop and the maths tutor (both funded by Social Services) were both a great asset. M was able to study in peace and quiet over lockdown. He did moan initially that the work was hard and there was more than what he would do in school but quickly adapted to the workload.

M would have to go for a walk every day and took breaks much like he would do in school. He would do approx. 4 hrs of school work per day, even more if he wanted. TV and phone were restricted much like school. His behaviour actually improved on lock down. He did have a few meltdowns (no more than 2) but that was to be expected in the circumstances. After work M was given his phone and access to the TV. He has managed his files for all his subjects on his laptop, another skill of organisation.

Data from school has shown M been top pupil in visiting Maths Watch and engaging with the school regards to handing in work, completing projects.

I believe lockdown has actually been beneficial for M and it has allowed M to learn at a steady pace with few distractions.

Fc M and LE 12 05 20

- We are presently fostering a lively, 4 year old Boy who is always looking for our attention, he needs to be entertained every waking hour, so since his nursery closed in mid March shortly followed by lockdown due to covid-19, we have had to adjust to meet his needs, which to our surprise has not been as bad as we thought it would, obviously the key is to keep him busy, a regular routine, and as we always do, keep boundary's clear and stick to them
- Good points, we don't have to go anywhere, no contact centre, no shopping, we have it delivered, not having to get him ready and take him to nursery, his social worker sends video messages from his Mum and we send videos back, so he looks forward to that, his social worker has ask us to install Microsoft teams on our laptop so he can talk directly with his Mum, his school puts stories on facebook and we have phone calls from his head teacher, his health visitor, his social worker, and our link worker have all been in touch asking how we are and if we need anything, our health centre have called too, we walk the dog around the field near our home, we have a garden which has had a face lift recently so he has been helping with that, he has plenty of toys indoor and garden toys, and we have got him plenty of activity and leaning books
- Not so good points, no matter how much you try to entertain a 4 year old when you can't go out, it is a long day and he can get frustrated and you have to think of something new but that don't always work and things can get a bit strained and his behaviour has been quite difficult at times, screaming and crying, being very cheeky, throwing his toys, even kicking the poor dog,

F/c MF 12 05 20

As a family we are quite enjoying the time together with no interruptions. Its lovely to live at a slower pace and not to live so much by the "clock". We have enjoyed more talk time, we have done quizzes, baked loads more than before (pastys, cakes, biscuits and bread) I check in with everyone asking how they are feeling, I am worried that they miss their friends and routine but they all assure me they are fine, xbox live is keeping them all talking to friends and playing games together. Home schooling was a big worry for me at the beginning I felt lots of pressure for the foster child, more than for my

own children, just because I felt it would reflect on me but as time has gone on those worries have reduced and I am more relaxed about it, home schooling is done Monday to Friday 9-2.00 just to keep some kind of routine we follow the school timetable and add exercise, at least a 40 minute walk every day! I was very worried about how our foster son would adapt to the changes but he has coped remarkably well, I am actually very proud of him he has been amazing and shown some real maturity throughout. I have tried not to bombard the children with the Covid-19 information I have kept it all quite basic, explaining the rules and reasons for everything and made it very black and white, they have all coped with it that way and it's worked for us. Reduced contact hasn't been a problem as contact was minimal anyway and a video call filled that gap.

As time goes on I am becoming more concerned about the long term economic issue and how people will cope financially and the impact this will have on everyone and how we will ever get back to some sort of normality. But for now my family and I are all safe and well and we are all very grateful for that.....

Fc MJ 03 06 20

B seems to have coped quite well with lockdown. Her online education work has kept her busy through the day. Early evening we have been going for a walk, and a longer walk on the weekends. In the evening B sits with me and watches TV. In between all this she is on her phone for social media. B like all teenagers is attached to her phone. Its permanently in hand.

Fc MM 1.07.2020

The good.

What good came out of lock down was time to reflect on life and to understand what is important in your life and knowing who you're true friends are. Just taking time to take a step back and may look at things from a different perspective.

The bad

The if you can say bad thing about lock down was the uncertainty of it all, the fact to be told not to see family, not to see friends, not to go out unless necessary food ext.

Not being able to help respite or even see own family.

The ugly

The ugly part of lock down for me was being separated from family not knowing how long for. The ups and downs of emotions I think everyone was feeling. The knowing that during lock down how many children were not seen, or missed as they were locked behind closed doors, and had no escape from what was happening to them as there were no schools open so no teaching staff to notice anything no playing with friends so no other mums to notice, or no going to family for them to notice. I feel may the coming months when social services get back to some sort of normal there may a great influx of children. Hopefully I can be able to help with all the other valuable members of the Foster team.

Fc MS 12 08 20

Went into lockdown with supported lodgings placement who was classed as a keyworker so his routine didn't change a great deal as he was still able to work. I am also a carer for my elderly mother who has dementia so I continued to care for her on a daily basis to administer her medication .I suppose the hardest part was not being able to go out unless it was essential which was fine at first but got harder as weeks went on so found myself looking for things to keep me busy. Also had concerns as to when I would be able to take a new placement if at all. But as restrictions were lifted it became easier.

Fc NG 12 05 20

During this time of lockdown the following is how it has affected/helped us.

No contact for child, which has reduced our travelling to and from centre. We have noticed that children are more settled with no contact. 15 minute FaceTime contact was introduced two weeks ago, this is not the easiest for an 11 month old.

They do miss going to park and to toddler groups but have been enjoying walks in the pushchair every few days. We have found this very different too, as we are always out and about and seeing family and friends. We are grateful we have a garden.

We have noticed they are getting very attached to us and each other as they are not seeing anyone else at the moment.

We have not been able to see the Health visitor to get them weighed, but have had a telephone conversation and there are no concerns.

We have regularly updated the SW with any information we felt they needed to know, and them likewise.

Fc PW 18 08 20

Support from social worker and education was invaluable and took away the difficult task of home educating a young person with additional needs. Meetings with family were replaced with phone calls and this went very well offering reassurance to family and the y.p.

What's app was a good means of communication with s.w and L.A.C review was held via conference call. We spent all our exercise time exploring the area we live in and found many lovely places we did not know about. We missed normal life but found lots of positives too.

Fc RR 05 08 20

Having been allocated lac people not only at the beginning but also at release of lockdown

First young person arrived one week before and so a period of settling calm process was ensured until virus hit as I was on priority list we had to put isolation procedures in place with complete assistance from young person whereby I was required to protect with ppe equipment also did the young person who adapted to this new regime with vigour as family bond was strengthened in first week prior to lockdown

All went very well with his assistance

At end of lockdown a new lac child was allocated and so although lockdown was relaxed we placed into high security as a new member was introduced into family unit thus preventing any state of normality resuming for two week incubation period we are halfway through in isolation but can only be achieved with complete assistance of both young individuals

YP- DS 05 08 20

it's DS i'm under the care of RR.

I've been dealing fine with the pandemic and everything's been put in place to keep us safe and been able to see family at a social distance in the garden also K has been well and also his family has been given the same opportunity as my family to see him in the garden and also we both have had hand sanitizer given for when we went to school and to go out when we were allowed. she also bought father's day gifts and when my nephew was born also K was given the same for father's day and for his niece. she also has done the same for birthdays. she did give us a consequence for 9

days because we strayed from the rules we both weren't happy with that but didn't make a fuss as we knew she was being fair and we were in the wrong. she's made it as normal as possible for the situation at hand. we are currently on a 4 1/5 break to get us away from game systems and to be able to get exercise. we were allowed out for a short walks as the government stated at the start of all this but we are both coping well.
sincerely, DS

05 05 20 Fc SD and YP LS

This is our experience of lockdown

YP- L

I like lockdown it is fun.

I love home baking especially making cakes. I like playing in the garden in the paddling pool. I also like doing craftwork painting and making dens. I like it in the night when we watch a film eating popcorn and crisps. I have not been able to go out to places like trampoline parks swimming and ice skating but I don't mind because I have done lots of fun things at home. I do not miss school. I miss my form teacher Miss B because she was always kind to me. I do not like doing the school work at home. I miss seeing my foster family but it is nice to text and FaceTime them.

Fc- S

I was anxious when lockdown commenced. Mainly concerned L who constantly loved to be out doing activities would not be able to cope with the situation. However, L has adjusted well and appears to enjoy being home. L especially enjoys baking - sometimes I think she is baking for the whole of Wales - the local wildlife enjoy the leftovers but I think even the birds have put on weight! L still likes to keep herself busy. I have had the weirdest hairstyles and makeovers! Although I have told her what an amazing job she has done I am sometimes relieved I am in lockdown!

I am concerned about L's education. My biggest struggle has been the home schooling. L finds it hard to concentrate and is easily distracted- we try at least to do one subject a day. Usually she will choose what she considers to be the easiest- Art, PE or Technology - which normally involves more baking! I try to encourage Maths or English.

On a positive note, I am relaxed knowing L is happy at home. I do not miss the phone calls from a very tearful L asking me to pick her up early from school because other children are being mean to her. Although school have been very supportive and maintained contact with L since lockdown began.

Fc SL 14 06 20

During lockdown I've spent lots of time reflecting
It's given me the oomph to carry out some DIY and self perfecting
Having spare time to gather my thoughts has been a blessing
My mind is focused and a big charity shop clear out has been refreshing
It's made me consider what really matters
Like tea with my family, a whole bunch of mad hatters
I've really missed that tight close knit bond
Nothing beats movie nights or picnics with loved ones of who I'm so fond
I'm sad when I think some people don't have what I do
So my pledge is to always support & provide for any young person that comes through
Forever grateful for the opportunity to be a foster carer.

Fc SR and Yp RG 18 08 20

During the beginning of lockdown, we ordered PPE and sanitiser and the boys got used to going out using PPE but they went out either to go to a local shop or a daily walk. Boys had to finish work online for their schooling, because we were lucky enough with the weather the boys did work around the garden; painting fences, cutting grass, etc. This seemed to pass the time, in the evening we watched movies, played board games and the boys also played on their consoles. We found the time went pretty quickly as I made sure the boys were well entertained. The boys learnt a lot of independence skills; cooking, painting, baking, etc.
Sandra Rumble

RG

I live with S as she is my foster carer. During the lockdown we got used to using hand sanitiser and face masks to go out. The time went pretty quick as I was doing odd jobs around the garden and house but most importantly I had to finish my AS assignments which I finished and completed. My experience was that it went fairly quick due to being busy. I missed going to the cinema and gym but I did manage to have our daily exercises and I watched some movies in the house. On the Thursdays me and my family clapped for the NHS to show our appreciation.

Fc T and TL 16 06 20

Having been a foster family for over 30 years we have faced and overcome many challenges.

The current challenge of Corona is very different, an unknown, unseen enemy that we have little control over, its relentless and sees no barriers.

Back in March we could not foresee what was going to happen.

The panic buying took us by surprise, and in common no doubt with lots of others we had to scramble around for supplies to keep the cupboards stocked.

Lockdown and self isolation came, making it even harder. We kept hearing advice to get online food deliveries, but slots were impossible to get, and only now are becoming available. We turned to the internet and after some searching were able to get deliveries of some foods from Somerset and Cornwall and direct from the Heinz factory, all delivered efficiently by couriers. The choices may have been limited but were a great help to us. Getting basics, milk, bread, fruit etc., along with nappies etc., for our toddler was difficult at first but got easier as shops put limits on number of items that could be bought.

During lockdown we have had birthdays, mothers day, V.E. day, and probably Fathers day which we have not been able to celebrate in the normal family ways. Our 9yr old and 14yr old have really missed having contact with their school friends over this period.

At the beginning of the lockdown, twins in our care left us after 2 years, for their forever family, which is always an emotional time for us our family and the twins themselves, and also for the 2yr old still with us who found it difficult to understand where the twins had gone.

Our coping strategy at this time would normally to take a short break away with the family, but the lockdown stopped this and also two further breaks we had planned were also cancelled as no holidays have been allowed. At the moment we are still unsure when we will be able to holiday again!

Not being able to go far from home for exercise has been a challenge in itself. Going for local walks gets a bit boring with same walks almost daily.

Keeping our foster child occupied along with home schooling of our 9 and 14 year old has been challenging, but luckily there has been some good weather so we have been able to be out in the garden.

Even the TV makes for depressing viewing, with all the constant facts, figures, briefings on the virus, at times seemingly conflicting and differing info being given out, further confused by this applies in one part of

UK, but not another. Then we had the “Cummings” affair, what more can I say !.

As I have said this has been a very different challenge and is ongoing, and will be so for the foreseeable future, we need to get back into a NEW NORMAL routine. We need to feel safe for our children to return to school, we need to feel safe to leave our area and travel.

Shopping is now much easier, albeit with queues, but we will keep some loyalty to those who were able to supply us from a distance, and will continue to order from them.

It has been very difficult not being able to see family and especially the grandchildren in person and not just on social media.

In summary we look back over the past weeks of lockdown, life has been so different, and will likely continue to be so for some time, but we have so far overcome the challenge, as foster carers we have had the support by phone and email from the authority, and we will continue to do our best for family and child in our care.

We try to keep smiling and look to the future, whatever that will look like, getting back into some sort of “normal” routine will be difficult.

We long for a break at the seaside or somewhere in the country, anywhere we can be with the family with a change of scenery and to reflect back on these months with hope to enjoy the future, but the reality of this is probably a fair way off!

As someone said to me we might as well forget 2020 existed and hopefully look forward to 2021.

Fc TC yp-LA and KH

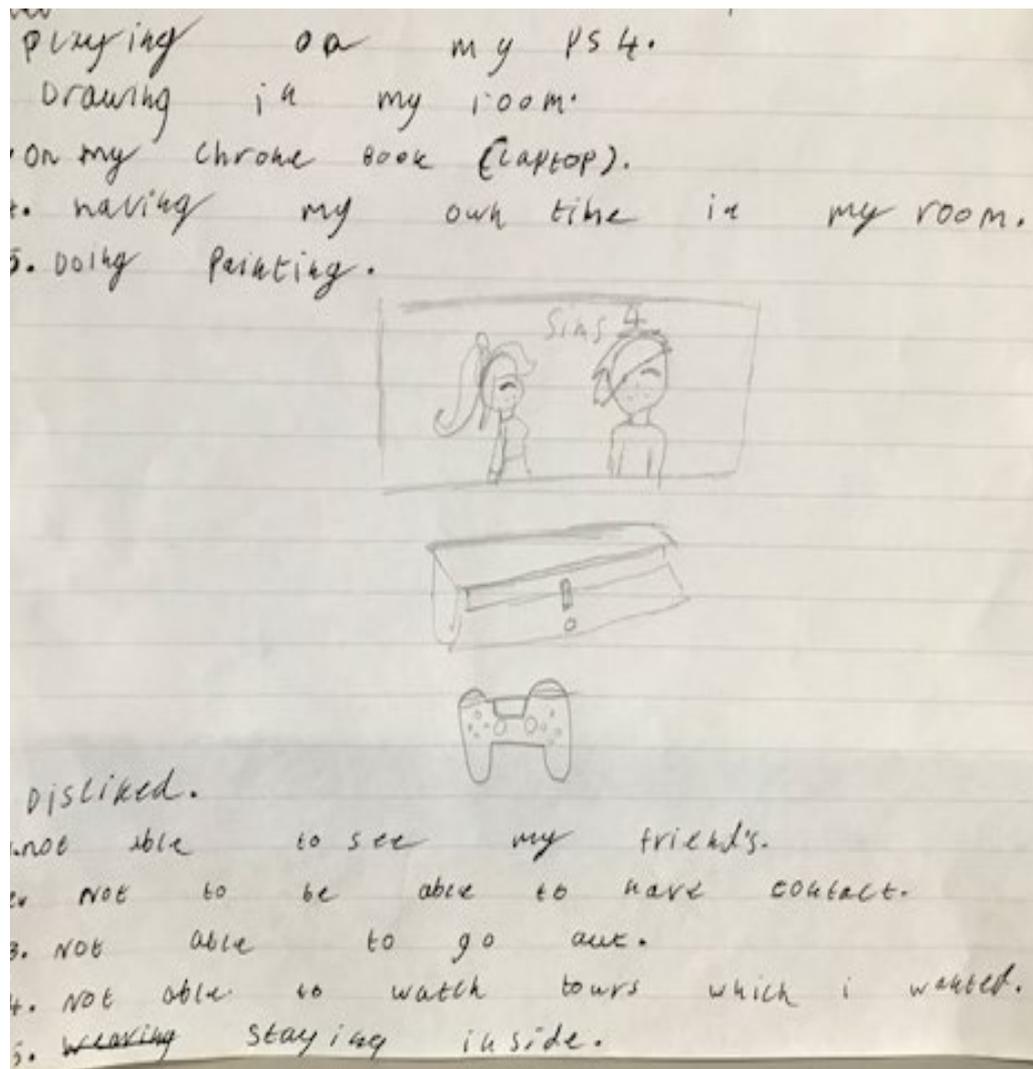
- 1 Taking the dogs for a walk.
- 2 Spending time with my foster sister
- 3 Spending time with family, what I like about during lockdown.

1 What I don't like about being in lock down.

- 1 ~~Not going out much.~~
- 2 ~~Not going~~

- 1 Not going out much
- 2 can't go town with friends.
- 3 can't play with your friends
- 4 Not seeing your family.





Fc TH 03.06.20

At first just before and at beginning of lock down it was hard to get supplies for baby milk nappies, Milton sterilising, baby calpol because of shortages in shops but we ask family and friends to let us know which supermarkets had stock and managed to shop around. Pass card you issued was such a great help for getting supplies and a big thank you. Baby has had lots of love and attention as my husband was furlough from work so he had the two of us wrapped around his little finger only a bit concern that we are not getting chance for baby to socialise. Lucky the weather been kind so he can see our neighbours in their gardens gives the biggest smiles cheers everyone up VE Day we had social distance afternoon tea on our road and garden so trying our best also going for walks, which he enjoys. Monday was amazing because our son came for visit with grandchildren baby had great time he loved children big smiles chattering in his own little way watched every move they made so we felt better they visited today too baby was so excited shouting and laughing for their attention it was lovely to see.

Fc TM 11 06 20

I think covid has had a positive impact on my family, having 2 children with special needs one who's needs are profound. Keeping isolated in my home and garden has had a positive impact on his health. They have been free from germs and has remained very healthy.

Fc VD 05 06 20

The lockdown brings many negatives such as being stuck in, less support as other professionals are not able to visit and as we don't have the correct equipment school work is difficult. But...there are many positives for my children, we are able to build relationships and work on a 'therapy' basis with children who need that extra support. It's also a gentle time where we don't need to rush to get up so early, there are no time constraints and generally a relaxed attitude.

T won't respond (to his thoughts)

L says he loves being at home with me.

T says she misses school.

M says it's sad people are dying but it's so much fun being home with mum.

Lv is happy being home and isn't that bothered about lockdown

Report sent to school with agreement to share:

Within the overall review we have discussed their education and have felt that L in particular has had some significant changes that school needed to be aware of and a plan needs to be put in place.

L is no longer 'flapping' or 'flicking himself throughout the day.

L has reduced his biting so much so that his nails and nail beds are starting to repair and are no longer looking infected and inflamed.

L has been more reflective and the aggressive behaviour shown has diminished. He has been calmer, sleeping better and has had less 'meltdowns' he also has been less challenging towards household rules. His overall mood and general well-being has improved no end.

I have concerns regarding L on his return to school as this time has demonstrated the level of anxiety he faces on a day to day basis and the behaviour this leads to at home.

T - there has been no major psychological changes. She struggles with her attention span and is unable to complete any work.

I hope that we can discuss a plan to help both children on their return. Just to add at this moment I am not considering their return until I am sure of their safety in school.

F/c WL 02.06.20

Since lockdown I have been in furlough from work which has been ok because as a casual worker I didn't think I would not get anything. We are lucky with the young man who is staying with us as he is doing a university course and he has spent most of the time in his room. I am finding it difficult through lack of contact with my social circle. My wife B has been working every day. I have been looking after the household needs shopping, cooking etc. The weather being as nice as it has been has helped me because I love being out in the sun. I have strangely got used to queuing wherever I have had to usually something I hate doing. I feel that I have kept myself and our supported lodger as safe as possible without too much trouble, however I have seen some cases of people who seem to think they are immune to this monster which I fear will keep it alive a lot longer than we can hope.

See attached poem by this carer.

My Life on Lock Down

by Wynne Lewis



I'm up at half past five
I went to bed at eight.
If I stay here much longer
I'll just put on more weight.

Its seven thirty now
and I'm 3 coffee's in.
I've done the washing up
the rubbish is in the bin.

I hear a noise above
I think she's getting up.
Here she comes my love
she asks me where's my cup.

Another coffee poured
she's had a cup of tea.
Poached eggs on toast for her,
Jam or marmalade for me.

We've blitzed the bedrooms and the lounge
the bathroom's on the list.
Is it time for drinkies yet
I feel like getting pissed.

I get the paper every day
an while I'm there I shop.
The fridge and freezer are both full
she say's you've got to stop.

She got me out the garden now
I've emptied all the pots.
We've got nothing to put in them
We can't go to the shops!

I've powerwashed the patio
the bottom and the top.
the conservatory's on the list
but then I'll have to stop.

I have to cook some dinner
she really loves to eat.
I spend hours in the kitchen
I'm always on my feet.

We settle down with the tele
the crossword's done. Yo Ho!
She's watching something I don't like
So it's off to bed I go.

Up again at five
it's daylight in a while.
I'm glad I'm still alive
I'm trying hard to smile.

I can't wait for this time next year
for me it can't come to soon.
The nightingale hospitals will still be busy
to deal with the baby boom.

It seems the news is always bad
people dying every day.
I don't like hearing news that's bad
but I don't know what to say.

Be safe and isolate at home
go out only when you must.
To work or shop or exercise

Protect the N.H.S

