



Brighton and Hove Parent Carers' Experiences of COVID-19




Executive Summary for social media



Thank you to all the parent carers who managed to complete our latest survey. This ran from 17-24th April and aimed to get a snapshot of some of the key challenges facing families with children and young people with SEND during this CV-19 crisis, and what support you most need.

We have shared these findings with our partners at both Brighton and Hove City Council and East Sussex County Council and will be working closely with the PaCC and ESPCF to follow up their responses locally. We shall also be using this in our national lobbying work and will let you know how we get on.

The key findings and our recommendations are summarised here but you can find the full reports here: [B&H] <https://amazesussex.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Amaze-PaCC-BH-COVID-Survey-Report-260420-v3.pdf> and [ESx] <https://amazesussex.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Amaze-E-Sx-COVID-Survey-Report-260420-v4.pdf>

Key findings

	<p>High levels of stress and anxiety: COVID19 is clearly causing a high degree of anxiety and worry to both children and young people with SEND and their parent carers. Almost all of our survey respondents said they were experiencing higher levels of anxiety about a wide range of issues such as: contracting the virus, keeping their family safe, not being able to support their child with learning, coping without PAs/respice, child's worsening mental health or behaviour, worrying about loss of income/employment, impact on siblings/other children, worrying about the future</p>
	<p>Children with SEND not attending school/college: While children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) are entitled to be individually considered for a school/college place, only 27% parent carers in Brighton and Hove (B&H) and 8% in East Sussex (ESx) who responded to the Amaze surveys have taken up this offer so far.</p>
	<p>Parents need more help to support home learning: There are many examples of good support and situations where parents are adjusting to home-learning but many parents said they are not always getting the support they need from their child's school. Some parents said they don't</p>

	have the capacity or skills to support their child's learning, or that the work the school is sending home is not differentiated or appropriate to their child's needs.
	<p>Worsening of child and family mental health and wellbeing for most: Having children with SEND at home 24/7 is incredibly exhausting and challenging, especially without the ability to access all other support services, respite or activities. This is impacting negatively on many children's, and their parent carers', wellbeing.</p> <p>It is important to note that many parent carers reflected their child(ren) was benefitting from a more relaxed routine, with reduced anxiety in not needing to attend school and having a more informal approach to learning at home. However, this is coupled with worry as to how child(ren) will re-integrate back in school after lockdown.</p>
	<p>Concerns about their child's progress or plans for the future: Several families said they are lacking access to (Speech and Language, Physiotherapy, CAMHS and Occupational) therapies or contact with other health services. There are concerns about the impact of delays to their child's diagnosis or assessments and therefore referrals into services. Some families are concerned that their child(ren) with SEND will be falling (even further) behind in school which may make re-integration back into class harder. Parents are also concerned about preparations for their child's transition to a new setting in September 2020</p>

Key recommendations

- In consultation with parents and carers ensure all children with SEND (and their families) have the differentiated learning resources and equipment they need to support their learning (which will also benefit their mental health and well-being)
- Consider the inequality of learning experiences that children with SEND (and their siblings) in the school population will have had during lockdown and how some of this could be tackled
- Plan how to reduce anxiety for children who have been out of school for long periods of time e.g. develop videos to (re)acquaint pupils with a school setting, in particular for those at key stage transition points
- Provide more virtual learning, social and respite options so young people can meet up safely with other young people online
- Clarify what support is available for managing increasing challenging behaviour at home
- Provide more therapy interventions online – either as 1:1 sessions, small groups, Q&A sessions with therapists or learning webinars for parents to use
- Consider what additional mental health/CAMHS interventions/support could be provided virtually for children and young people with SEND and what mental health support or counselling could be made available for parent carers reporting high levels of anxiety
- Amaze to continue to develop high quality information, advice and support and share the parent-to-parent tips about what helps/what's working well for others that came out of this survey