

Impacts of Covid-19 on Children and Young People in the United Kingdom

Findings from analysis of Fourth Strategic Roundtable with Strategic Leaders 2020

C19 National Foresight Group

Commissioned by Shaun West, Chairperson of the C19 National Foresight Group

Stacey Stewart

Adam Potter

Rowena Hill

Rich Pickford

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This review is an independent commission by Shaun West and completed by the C19 National Foresight Group. In the spirit of continuous learning and reflection, this document is to be shared widely with Local Resilience Forums, partners and government departments.

Author	C19 National Foresight Group (Dr Rowena Hill, Dr Stacey Stewart, Adam Potter, Rich Pickford and Kelly Smith)
Organisation	C19 National Foresight Group & Nottingham Trent University
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Corresponding author: Dr Rowena Hill - rowena.hill@ntu.ac.uk

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Executive Summary

Commissioned by Shaun West, Chair of C19 National Foresight Group. Prepared by Dr Rowena Hill on behalf of the C19 National Foresight Group.

Findings and Suggested Actions

One: The aggregating impacts from in and out of education establishments causes difficulty for CYP

Children and young people have experienced both positive and negative impacts of the pause and restart approach to schooling. Positives include SEND CYP seeking to be home schooled in future as anxiety has lessened during this time, whilst the negatives link to impacts on emotional health, mental health, lack of socialisation, disruption to education, anxiety around qualifications and inconsistent learning methods, lack of access to training programs, those already behind falling further behind, disruptive behaviour, and lack of ability to monitor safeguarding concerns. A full data picture must be gathered to understand the level of impact on each individual CYP and the scale of CYP affected. The response requires both national co-ordination and local nuance to meet CYPs educational needs, and the Education Endowment Fund's report into ranges of interventions could provide an example model for a targeted approach.

Two: Vulnerability of individual children, young people and families has increased through the impacts of Covid-19

Many children, young people and their families have faced difficulties during the Covid-19 pandemic, but these impacts have not been experienced equally. There are clear disparities for CYPF's across different regions, and who are in lower socio-economic groups, including insecure tenancy, increased poverty, reduced income, employment insecurity, lack of access to food, domestic abuse, and mental health concerns. Vulnerable and vulnerability needs to be clearly defined to ensure all services are working within the same bounds and the CYPF who need support are identified. Simply having vulnerabilities does not mean poor outcomes are inevitable; this identification needs to encourage services to consider what can be implemented and developed into positive, protective factors to prevent poor outcomes transpiring. Having an awareness of the potentially longer term but unknown impacts of Covid-19 will prepare services for future service demand, and utilising routinely collected data would potentially provide evidence of the need to increase funding for service provision.

Three: Vulnerability in service provision has increased and exacerbated through the impacts of Covid-19

Services that support children, young people and their families were struggling prior to the pandemic, and this has only been exacerbated by Covid-19. This is experienced as a lack of volunteers, a lack of resources and a lack of capacity and is due to funding cuts and reduced priority. Utilising routinely collected data would provide insight into the services lost, the issues they face, and CYPF's access to them, in order to improve provision. Additionally, this analysis should be undertaken using multi-agency scope to prevent issues being viewed in silo and to ensure resolutions are identified throughout the network of services.

Four: Children and Young Persons Voices Heard

Children and young people are not passive recipients of support, and throughout the pandemic they have demonstrated how motivated and enthused they are to make a difference to people and their communities. Opportunities that enable and facilitate young people to find solutions to be offered, and a change in people's perceptions to the belief that young people can make a positive difference to society is needed.

Five: Solutions should focus on local

Covid-19 affects different areas, different services, and different families in different ways. For a comprehensive and suitable response, resolutions need to respond to the local area and local people's needs. Utilising already collected data can help identify families in need, where there are a lack of services/funding, and access options.

Methods and Analysis

The roundtable followed a series of questions facilitated by a chairperson. The data was recorded with permission from delegates and analysed by academics from Nottingham Trent University. The audio recording will be destroyed once the report is finalised, in accordance with GDPR and data protection regulations. The analytical method used was thematic analysis, which involved reviewing the audio recording several times, coding the content and then clustering that coding into the thematic areas.

Questions clustered in to five main areas;

- Scoping the Experience of Children and Young People,
- Assessing the Threat and Impact to our Children and Young Persons,
- Establishing our Capacity, Capability and Sustainability to Support,
- Maximising Foresight and
- Best Practice and Reviewing our Opportunities and Actions.

Definition of Children and Young People (CYP)

The general medical council suggests that children and young people are those aged from birth until their 18th birthday. We use the term 'children' to refer to younger children who do not have the maturity and understanding to make important decisions for themselves. We use the term 'young people' to refer to older or more experienced children who are more likely to be able to make these decisions for themselves.

In this guidance, references to 'parents' mean people with parental responsibility and other people who care for or look after children or young people. This might include other family members or adults who live in the same household. A 'person with parental responsibility' means someone with the rights and responsibilities that parents have in law for their child, including the right to consent to medical treatment for them, up to the age of 18 years in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and up to 16 years in Scotland.

Definition of Children, Young People and their Families (CYPF)

The above definition, but also including the CYP's family; whether this is one parent, two parents, siblings or care givers, it is the people that provide care for the CYP and impact on their life.

Nuances within the Definition

Both CYP and CYPF will be used throughout this report. During the roundtable, delegates conveyed the importance of considering the child or young person as part of their family, a person who is cared for by their parents or care giver and who is affected by them. Delegates recognised that once professionals are not present, it is parents/care givers that care for the CYP. Children and young people were seen as individuals and also as part of a unit, and the approaches, thoughts and resolutions were mostly suggested in relation to supporting the whole family. Whilst this is true, the report does not use CYPF as the blanket term as in some situations it is the CYP that was the focus of discussions.

Summary of Findings

The findings are summarised in to five key areas: the aggregating impacts from children going in and out of education establishments which cause difficulties for CYP, that vulnerability of individual children, young people and families has increased through the impacts of Covid-19, vulnerability of service provision has increased and exacerbated through the impacts of Covid-19, children and young persons voices need to be heard, and solutions should focus on the local context. This section will summarise the findings of the roundtable discussions.

Finding One: The Aggregating Impacts from In and Out of Education Establishments Causes Difficulty for CYP

The pause and restart of schooling and attendance at school through national and local health protection measures and the test, trace and isolate system has been significantly disruptive for children and also for young people in training. This has caused significant consequences at an individual level on their emotional health, mental health and socialisation as well as their progression through education and personal development. Young people have also seen disruption to their apprenticeship schemes, which often require work placements that have been difficult to find during the Covid-19 crisis. This has meant that it has been difficult to get young people back into training, and difficult to prevent a loss of both motivation and skills.

Delegates spoke of the 'revolving door' nature of schooling, with inconsistency and uncertainty caused by constantly and unpredictably swapping between face-to-face and remote learning causing a great amount of anxiety within CYP. This anxiety has presented itself largely as behavioural difficulties, especially within already vulnerable CYP with additional needs, but also amongst students within the mainstream population that would not ordinarily be expected to manifest these challenging behaviours. In addition to the anxiety caused by inconsistent learning methods, CYP are also very worried about their academic achievement (this includes their general academic progression at all stages, as well as more specific achievements such as GCSE preparation and grades) and the effect of any disruption on their futures. For CYP who were already struggling with their education prior to Covid-19, this has been exacerbated and they are disproportionately negatively impacted. Such inconsistency has also been a point of tension and creativity within the system where solutions and ways forward have been found quickly and with agility by those managing the establishments.

Further concerns were raised about inconsistent school attendance related to a lack of opportunity to observe and safeguard CYP. Schools are normally a key point at which safeguarding issues are identified and monitored, and delegates were concerned that the lack of contact with CYP during the Covid-19 crisis may mean that some at risk children are missed.

The impact of Covid-19 has also had positive impacts on some aspects of working with CYP and families. For instance, for some CYP, such as those with SEND, attending school is in itself a source of great anxiety and difficulty. By not having to attend school, and being given the opportunity to try learning from home, many families have requested for CYP with statutory plans to be home schooled as they have seen significant benefits of these CYP not having to attend school.

Additionally, some individuals have formed a new way of living which has facilitated and empowered their resilience, which has aligned with ways of working that enable the young person to flourish. Delegates highlighted that it is often CYP whose wider family are able to cope with the Covid-19 crisis that demonstrate the most resilience. Changes in aspects of working has also been a catalyst for CYP and services to explore online and technology solutions to challenges, making access to services, communication and aspects of education more resilient by increasing the modes of communication and training/ personal development more than pre-Covid-19.

One further benefit is the impact on multi-agency working which has increased in effectiveness and integration in the context of Covid-19. Strategies should be developed to retain this post Covid-19.

Suggested Solutions: Develop inclusive, well thought out and differential processes, informed by foresight and anticipation to address the educational needs that have transpired throughout the pandemic. CYP experienced education differently prior to the pandemic, and these disparities have been exacerbated by the pandemic; they must be at the forefront of this resolution. A full data picture needs to be collected in relation to the impact not having consistent education provision has had on each individual child, what each child needs in order to recover the learning they have missed, and the nuances of their experience, as this will differ for CYP all around the UK and even CYP within the same academic classes.

Furthermore, what is needed is not quick resolutions or schemes that just provide items or just equipment to individuals or classes, but a commitment to maintaining an awareness that longer term impacts that have not been anticipated will arise and a commitment to providing the funding, resources and support to CYP whenever these impacts become known and necessary. The level of impact on CYP and the scale of CYP affected is not currently known. An adequate response requires both national co-ordination and local nuance to provide children with the best outcomes. It also must be a priority and agreement between all current and future governments, so that CYPs educational needs are not forgotten or ignored.

Once impacts start to transpire, provision to meet the need must be provided and tracked to determine its efficiency and effectiveness. This will ensure that individual children's needs are met in the immediate, mid and longer term, rather than considering the situation resolved as an immediate resolution has been provided. The Education Endowment Fund has produced a report that shares evidence-based information about identifying the needs of low achieving pupils and also evaluating CYP's responses to a range of interventions such as mentors and after school clubs. This report could provide an example model for a targeted approach.

Finding Two: Vulnerability of Individual Children, Young People and Families has Increased Through the Impacts of Covid-19

The subthemes discussed within this section are both ways in which Covid-19 has been described by delegates as increasing vulnerability that was pre-existing Covid-19 (exacerbating existing vulnerabilities), as well as the possibility that Covid-19 has caused these issues for some (creating vulnerabilities for CYP and families). Whilst these subthemes describe the impact on services, it does not differentiate what proportion is new (unknown families) need or added complexity to already existing known need (known families).

Delegates recognised Covid-19 has not impacted all of society equally. Children in general have been disproportionately affected by the crisis, and within this group certain CYPF more than others. There is a significant discrepancy in impact between different local areas, such as those with more or less outdoor space for CYPF to utilise. Delegates discussed how Covid-19 will enhance already existing regional level disparities. Additionally, CYPF with fewer resources were identified as being particularly disproportionately impacted by Covid-19. The effects of poverty: having less space or a place to complete schoolwork, having to share a laptop, or having caring responsibilities, have a direct impact and also reduce the CYPF's capacity for resilience. There has also been a dramatic decrease in the number of CYPF accessing support services such as for their mental health. Delegates also raised a particular concern about the earliest years, with a reduction in the number of families taking up early years provision, and the potential effect of this on child development in terms of socialisation and language development as children spend the whole time within a single environment.

CYP are not only being affected directly by Covid-19, but also indirectly through the effects on their family system. Delegates reported that the degree to which CYP can display resilience is related to the degree to which their family system (and parents in particular) are coping. Factors that threatened this coping were; parental conflict, particularly during delayed family court proceedings; domestic abuse between parents; parental isolation; and an insecure parental financial situation, including deprivation, insecure tenancy and insecure employment or unemployment.

Delegates highlighted concerns about increasing levels of domestic abuse, both in terms of the number of incidents, and the severity of those incidents (suggested by one delegate). This increase was reported alongside a reduction in opportunity to identify potential domestic abuse. This reduction has been caused by a reduction in the physical meeting with CYPF due to the use of virtual or telephone contact in schooling, GP surgeries and other services. Delegates concerns focused on the home potentially not being a safe environment for some CYP.

Additionally, there has been an increase in insecure tenancy and parental mental health concerns which links closely to financial difficulties and an increase in poverty, with reduced income and employment insecurity due to zero-hour contracts. This is known to have a negative impact upon CYP both directly and as a knock-on effect via the impact on their parents.

Suggested Solution: The need to define vulnerable/vulnerability and at risk. Delegates explained that each service uses different approaches and their focus is on different areas, meaning the definition of vulnerable can differ, with consequences for shared understandings across multi-agency working. Delegates recognised that what each person or service understands as

vulnerable and vulnerability is varied so the starting point must be to have a consensual framework to work from. This is needed to avoid confusion and provide clarity. Delegates were clear that the focus should not be on Covid-19 vulnerabilities alone, but that wider vulnerabilities, such as domestic abuse, those included within the ACEs framework, children in care and children with SEND, should also be considered/included.

Suggested Solution: Challenge inevitability of poor outcomes. Whilst there was agreement that all vulnerabilities should be included in the new definition, there was extensive discussion about the ACEs framework; that there is no standardised approach across the country and that it suggests an inevitability of poor outcomes, experiences and harm. Delegates did not agree with this inevitability, challenging the use of ACEs and instead introducing PACEs – protective adverse childhood experiences. It was recognised that schools, churches, friendship groups and teachers can be protective factors for children, and that sometimes adversity can be a spur for success. Delegates did not want vulnerabilities to be identified through a tick box exercise, the child to be labelled and then nothing to happen; they wanted to take proactive steps to identify where vulnerabilities may occur, using data that is known and has already been collected to implement primary interventions that address these vulnerabilities, in order to protect children and resolve problems before they actively arose. The context of adversity must be understood to overcome it. It was also raised that in order to support children, their care givers must be supported, as they are the ones who care for the children and improve their resilience. This is likely to be with poverty and deprivation, with employment and with housing.

Suggested Solution: Use, synthesise and share integrated routinely collected data. Many delegates shared that a wealth of data is already collected across numerous sectors about CYPF lives and delegates call for this to be methodically reviewed and analysed in order to be of benefit to policy and practice. This will be raised at different points throughout the report, but for this section should cover CYPF access to services, service provision and integration. Once CYPF's experiences are understood through the different lenses of each of the services, the holistic view will mean recommendations can be made and implemented. It is likely that provision will need increasing once areas of need are identified.

Once such information is gathered and need is identified, implementing the changes through a multi-agency and partnership working approach will ensure the multi-faceted impacts are addressed.

Suggested Solution: The need was identified to develop an awareness of potential long-term impacts. Delegates raised that they believe some latent impacts of Covid-19 have not yet transpired and, rather than wait for this issue to arise to then resolve it, active steps should be taken to model numbers in order to consider solutions. In this sense, services could implement protective factors and safety nets prior to reaching potential crisis and this enables the opportunity to use intelligence to inform planning and prioritising need based on likely impact and outcomes.

Finding Three: Vulnerability in Service Provision has Increased and Exacerbated Through the Impacts of Covid-19

This finding highlights where the pressure points are in the system that services have faced, not directly CYP or families themselves. This is where the vulnerabilities are loading from Covid-19. Further evidenced is a lack of resources in addition to the pressure and complexity on services. This is resource loss in the context of Covid-19 as well as the need for these to increase in light of Covid-19. In other words, they have depleted pre-Covid-19 at a time when they now need to be increased.

Delegates contextualised that childhood services were in a poor position prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, due to budget cuts, the loss of services and a lack of priority. It was shared that this has only been exacerbated by the crisis. The result is that enacting any policy to support CYPF will be difficult as the network of services may not be adequately resourced to implement the policies. This was further evidenced by delegates who worked within voluntary organisations, as they shared difficulties such as a lack of volunteers, a lack of finances and a lack of capacity.

Additionally, it was discussed how schools that were struggling pre-Covid-19 are now having even more difficulties. In particular, some schools have struggled with managing the demands of inspections, OFSTED and evaluation regulatory frameworks whilst managing outbreaks within their schools. As not all schools were facing challenges, those who were already in difficulty are likely to evidence further increased disparities across the country. Delegates raised that children in

care and care leavers, as well as SEND CYP were also inadequately supported by the system prior to the Covid-19 pandemic and it is likely that this has become worse.

Suggested solutions: The solution discussed within the second theme, utilising routinely collected data, could provide further insight into the available services, CYPF's access to services and the improvements needed to ensure CYPF needs are met. This would provide evidence and rationale for the need for funding and policy development in these areas.

Suggested solutions: Many delegates raised that services often work in silo and are informed by one approach or view, but that there is benefit in using different lenses to see the same issue. A multi-agency scope of the impacts of Covid-19 on CYPF and services would provide further evidence of the need for funding and resource provision, and also provide a comprehensive space to plan a network approach to meet the CYPF's needs.

Finding Four: Children and Young Persons Voices Heard

Delegates raised that it is crucial to include the voice and perspective of children and young people in policy development and decisions, particularly around service development and delivery. Different services shared the numerous creative mechanisms and approaches they have taken while attempting to achieve this throughout the Covid-19 pandemic; these are discussed below. The challenge that remains is how this continues post Covid-19.

Delegates emphasised very clearly that CYP themselves are a vital source of information and solutions, and that it is crucial that solutions should be created in partnership with CYP, informed by, and staying as close to, their lived experiences as possible. Whilst an approach motivated by engagement and partnership will require stepping outside of current development frameworks, some services started to follow such an approach during the pandemic. For example, it was reported that one service wanted to learn directly from CYP involved with the family courts as to the best ways to communicate and engage with them remotely and creatively. Other delegates explained they had utilised technology and digital approaches to find integrated ways of working with young people; this was both in terms of accessing service support, for example, with a single integrated digital point of entry into mental health services, and in terms of community outreach and support, for example the use of TikTok for engagement, and the sharing by young people of 'video snapshots' of how they are coping with and supporting each other during Covid-19. Many delegates felt positive about the changes such advances had made to their services, sharing that they have been powerful and successful. It could be argued that technology may not need to play such a vital and prominent role in communication post Covid-19, however such innovation will be beneficial, and services should continue to use it so long as it is effective and well supported.

Delegates believed involving CYP in service development meant that a heightened understanding of what CYP people need is gained, which results in tailored services and mechanisms in place to ensure those needs are met. Delegates challenged the view that CYP are passive recipients of support and conveyed the enthusiasm and desire young people have to be active and take a lead in direct social action to help others. This would not only benefit the community but benefit the CYP by giving them a sense of agency and control.

Suggested solution: To facilitate and enable young people to inform solutions as they are the experts and curators of their own lives. Delegates recognised that Covid-19 is something that is happening to all CYP, and one way for CYP to have and retain agency over this is to help others. By finding solutions to problems the CYP, their families and their communities face, the CYP can see and feel that they are making a difference and having an impact at a time when they may otherwise feel passive. The challenge for agencies/services is to facilitate this direct action safely, mainly occurring through structured youth groups. Although such volunteering primarily relates to older CYP, it was also mentioned that younger children can be given volunteering opportunities such as writing postcards to residents of care homes. Delegates discussed the importance of ensuring young people feel that they are part of the solution.

Suggested solution: Shift people's perceptions that young people can actively and positively contribute to society. Delegates were clear that the CYP they have worked with are keen to be involved and make a difference, they are not passive and they do not lack motivation. What is needed is to show CYP's enthusiasm and ability to help by demonstrating what they can and have done already. Delegates explained this was a plethora of things, including engagement with at risk groups through safe contact (such as young children sending letters to care homes) and active contributions (such as teenagers undertaking community work) and peer support and inspiration for each other (the previously mentioned peer support videos).

Finding Five: Solutions Should Focus on Local

Delegates recognised that different areas, different services and different families experienced the Covid-19 pandemic differently and unequally. This developed in to the consensus that any resolutions to be implemented would likely need to be responding to areas of prioritised identified need, which would be reflective of the CYPF's needs. Delegates wanted to focus on the local; local concerns, local difficulties and local resolutions. Through responding directly to the needs of the people, the biggest impact can be made.

Most delegates within the group agreed that the focus needed to be on lessening the impact on children, young people and their families. Through having an awareness of, and identifying, the CYPF who were considered to be vulnerable and experiencing unequal impacts of Covid-19 due to pre-existing socio-economic issues, delegates felt more support needed to be given to these families, especially if there is another lockdown. Delegates identified that more could be done for these CYPF, and earlier. Delegates also explained that parental experiences have a direct impact on their CYP, so whether parents and families are resilient and managing, or parents are living in poor socio-economic circumstances, in isolation or in insecure tenancies that affect their mental health, this influences the CYP. It was therefore considered vital that parents and care givers are supported financially, socially, with services and employment so that they can support their CYP. It was discussed that by ensuring parents and care givers are supported, the parents and care givers can support their CYP; this is how resilience is built.

Having an awareness of CYPF's needs and being informed by an approach that is motivated to lessen the impact on CYPF would encourage issues to be addressed before they arose, which would remove the adversity and prevent a negative outcome. Through increasing protective factors and challenging such inequalities, delegates believed greater outcomes could be achieved.

Having existing integrated, multi-agency partnerships encompassing support pathways end-to-end was identified as being a major asset allowing for effective support of CYP. This included having good working relationships with schools and other support partners, through to more specialised and intensive community CAMHS services, allowing the CYP to be supported through the whole pathway. Reduced contact with CYP by any one agency has meant that a collaborative approach to safeguarding is essential, with all partners needing to be the 'eyes and ears' in order to identify those at risk. Working in partnerships also allows for multiple perspectives of the CYP; seeing the CYP through multiple 'lenses' enables a more holistic understanding, for example preventing inappropriate or unhelpful criminalisation of the CYP. Partnerships may also allow work to be spread across agencies, compensating for reduced capacity. For example, one delegate reported that the fire and rescue services had taken on the running of some third sector programs when those voluntary services had reduced capacity. However, complex, differing and sometimes conflicting policy frameworks across different agencies was identified as an impediment to effective multi-agency working.

Suggested solution: A simplified and aligned policy framework should be created, to allow for effective and efficient partnerships that can identify need and work out solutions collaboratively moving forward.

Suggested solution: As discussed initially within finding two, then again in finding three, delegates believed that utilising routinely collected data would benefit CYPF the most. Specifically, for this theme, delegates felt that using the data to understand need would mean that services could be implemented before they were needed and so problems could be prevented rather than managed once they had arisen and potentially reached crisis point. The outcome then is an increase in, and emphasis on, the positive, protective factors children have in their lives.

Solutions Summary

This report has highlighted a number of solutions to common challenges laid out by delegates during the strategic roundtable. These are set out below.

Finding One

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Finding Two

Suggested Solution: The need to define vulnerable/vulnerability and at risk. Delegates explained that each service uses different approaches and their focus is on different areas, meaning the definition of vulnerable can differ, with consequences for shared understandings across multi-agency working. Delegates recognised that what each person or service understands as vulnerable and vulnerability is varied so the starting point must be to have a consensual framework to work from. This is needed to avoid confusion and provide clarity. Delegates were clear that the focus should not be on Covid-19 vulnerabilities alone, but that wider vulnerabilities, such as domestic abuse, those included within the ACEs framework, children in care and children with SEND, should also be considered/included.

Suggested Solution: Challenge inevitability of poor outcomes. Whilst there was agreement that all vulnerabilities should be included in the new definition, there was extensive discussion about the ACEs framework; that there is no standardised approach across the country and that it suggests an inevitability of poor outcomes, experiences and harm. Delegates did not agree with this inevitability, challenging the use of ACEs and instead introducing PACEs – protective adverse childhood experiences. It was recognised that schools, churches, friendship groups and teachers can be protective factors for children, and that sometimes adversity can be a spur for success. Delegates did not want vulnerabilities to be identified through a tick box exercise, the child to be labelled and then nothing to happen; they wanted to take proactive steps to identify where vulnerabilities may occur, using data that is known and has already been collected to implement primary interventions that address these vulnerabilities, in order to protect children and resolve problems before they actively arose. The context of adversity must be understood to overcome it. It was also raised that in order to support children, their care givers must be supported, as they are the ones who care for the children and improve their resilience. This is likely to be with poverty and deprivation, with employment and with housing.

Suggested Solution: Use, synthesise and share integrated routinely collected data. Many delegates shared that a wealth of data is already collected across numerous sectors about CYPF lives and delegates call for this to be methodically reviewed and analysed in order to be of benefit to policy and practice. This will be raised at different points throughout the report, but for this section should cover CYPF access to services, service provision and integration. Once CYPF's experiences are understood through the different lenses of each of the services, the holistic view will mean recommendations can be made and implemented. It is likely that provision will need increasing once areas of need are identified.

Once such information is gathered and need is identified, implementing the changes through a multi-agency and partnership working approach will ensure the multi-faceted impacts are addressed.

Suggested Solution: The need was identified to develop an awareness of potential long-term impacts. Delegates raised that they believe some latent impacts of Covid-19 have not yet transpired and, rather than wait for this issue to arise to then resolve it, active steps should be taken to model numbers in order to consider solutions. In this sense, services could implement protective factors and safety nets prior to reaching potential crisis and this enables the opportunity to use intelligence to inform planning and prioritising need based on likely impact and outcomes.

Finding Three

Suggested solutions: The solution discussed within the second theme, utilising routinely collected data, could provide further insight into the available services, CYPF's access to services and the improvements needed to ensure CYPF needs are met. This would provide evidence and rationale for the need for funding and policy development in these areas.

Suggested solutions: Many delegates raised that services often work in silo and are informed by one approach or view, but that there is benefit in using different lenses to see the same issue. A multi-agency scope of the impacts of Covid-19 on CYPF and services would provide further evidence of the need for funding and resource provision, and also provide a comprehensive space to plan a network approach to meet the CYPF's needs.

Finding Four

Suggested solution: To facilitate and enable young people to inform solutions as they are the experts and curators of their own lives. Delegates recognised that Covid-19 is something that is happening to all CYP, and one way for CYP to have and retain agency over this is to help others. By finding solutions to problems the CYP, their families and their communities face, the CYP can see and feel that they are making a difference and having an impact at a time when they may otherwise feel passive. The challenge for agencies/services is to facilitate this direct action safely, mainly occurring through structured youth groups. Although such volunteering primarily relates to older CYP, it was also mentioned that younger children can be given volunteering opportunities such as writing postcards to residents of care homes. Delegates discussed the importance of ensuring young people feel that they are part of the solution.

Suggested solution: Shift people's perceptions that young people can actively and positively contribute to society. Delegates were clear that the CYP they have worked with are keen to be involved and make a difference, they are not passive and they do not lack motivation. What is needed is to show CYP's enthusiasm and ability to help by demonstrating what they can and have done already. Delegates explained this was a plethora of things, including engagement with at risk groups through safe contact (such as young children sending letters to care homes) and active contributions (such as teenagers undertaking community work) and peer support and inspiration for each other (the previously mentioned peer support videos).

Finding Five

Suggested solution: A simplified and aligned policy framework should be created, to allow for effective and efficient partnerships that can identify need and work out solutions collaboratively moving forward.

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Contact Dr Rowena Hill for further information on this report:
rowena.hill@ntu.ac.uk

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