



March/April 2021

PROGRAMME UPDATE

Keeping stakeholders, parents and carers informed about Dudley's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Improvement Programme

6. Listening to the SEND Pupils Voice: A local perspective- views of young people with disabilities during the pandemic

Following the first National Lockdown, the Dudley's Youth Service, carried out a survey to enable young people to voice their experiences during the pandemic which received responses from young people who identified as having disabilities (4.5% of total responses). Of these young people, 87% understood what coronavirus was, with over 60% utilising friends and family, the news and also social media for their information.

From their responses, themes which express local young people's experiences have been identified:

The most difficult things young people expressed were not being able to see friends, girlfriends/boyfriends and extended family members, the change in routine and also the lack of activities as a result of staying in. Some young people also expressed that not understanding what the rules were was difficult.

Positive things young people reported included connections with friends and family whether online, over the phone or within people's gardens.

Significant decisions were also articulated by some young people as making their week good. Examples include the ending of unhealthy relationships and moving to a different place to live. 10% of young people felt that nothing good had happened within their week.

Some responses from young people expressed that the world being a quieter place, having time to do other activities such as play the piano or do more gaming, and to make more friendships online were all positive aspects as a result of the pandemic.

Interestingly, a very small number of young people felt their communication abilities had improved.

Whilst the survey did not ask specifically about educational experiences, responses included school or college as important in terms of relationships. Some young people had been reading more books as a result of lockdown.

Their independence skills was an area that some young people felt had improved

A higher proportion of young people with disabilities who responded to the survey felt worried and angry during the pandemic (41% and 37% respectively, compared to 24% and 10% of total responses).

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