

# HeadStart Community Well-Being Service

## Return to school feedback July 2020



### Summary

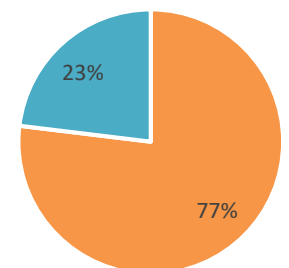
This report provides a snapshot of how young people currently supported by Youth Facilitators are feeling about returning to school. The information below has been collated from feedback gathered by Youth Facilitators from the young people they are supporting. It includes those who were being supported through face-to-face contact prior to lockdown, and those who have been referred into the temporary online / telephone Well-Being Service.

### Engagement during the COVID-19 Lockdown

Overall, there was a positive response to the change in service offered during the COVID lockdown restrictions. Out of the 78 young people on facilitator caseloads during this time, 60 have continued to engage throughout. Phone calls and text have been the preferred method of contact for the majority of young people, although online video calls, emails and letters have also been used.

Most year groups saw a reduction in engagement with the exception of Years 9 and 12, where all young people continued to engage. There has been a trend that the younger the age, the more the likelihood they would cease participating in the intervention. Reasons given include a lack of technology (e.g. personal phones) to make private calls, and lack of confidence in talking on the phone or online.

Overall % Engagement



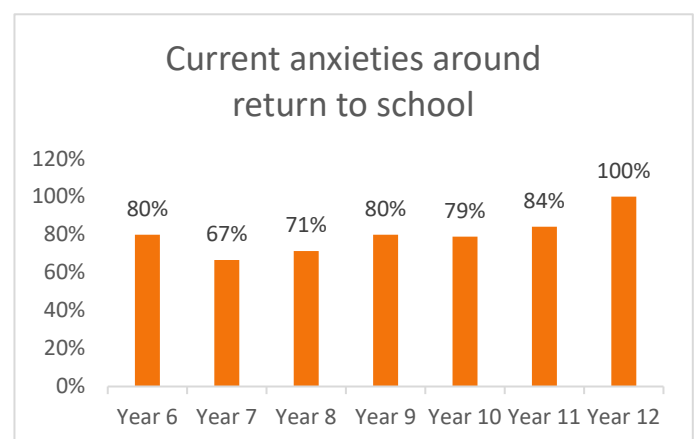
- Engaging through COVID
- Disengaged through COVID

### Anxieties around returning to school

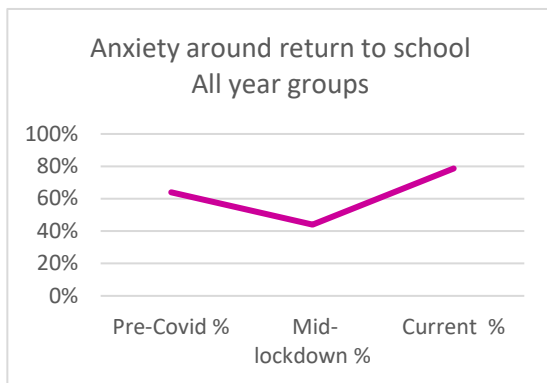
For the young people supported by HeadStart, anxiety around school is a common issue. 64% of young people supported by Youth Facilitators prior to the COVID-19 lockdown reported having feelings of anxiety around school.

This has increased significantly - 79% of all young people being supported currently report having worries, concerns or stress around the return to school.

Anxiety is present across school year groups. The majority of HeadStart referrals are for young people in years 10 and 11, 79% and 84% of these respective year groups report feelings of anxiety and stress about the return to school.



For all year groups, anxiety around school has either stayed the same or increased since before lockdown.



Young people were asked how they felt about school during the strict lockdown period, when most young were at home. Responses at this time showed that anxieties around school reduced for the majority.

The exception to this was young people in year 9 and 12, whose anxiety levels remained the same throughout.

Taking into account the high levels of anxiety about the transition back to school for all year groups, and continued social distancing

restrictions, Youth Facilitators will focus the majority of their transition programme on one-to-one support this summer.

## Return to School - Key themes

Feedback regarding 59 young people being supported by Youth Facilitators during the COVID 19 lockdown highlighted a variety of reasons for feeling anxious or stressed around the return to school.

### Uncertainty around results and plans

- 17 young people from Years 11 and 12 expressed concerns about their results, starting college, 6th form or apprenticeships, the uncertainty and what it will mean for their future. Worries include being behind and not being able to catch up and get good marks. The transition to somewhere new is also a big concern, with worries around not having enough information and how they will cope with the daily college routine. One young person reported having low mood due to missing out of end of school rituals.

### Returning after a long absence

- 15 young people felt anxiety around returning to school after a long absence. 4 of these were students who were returning to mainstream school after a period of home schooling, absence or illness.

### Keeping up with school work

- 12 young people were concerned around keeping up with school work. The majority were Year 10's worrying about their upcoming GCSE year. In some cases, there have been issues around a lack of equipment making home learning difficult, whilst others were unable to focus. (The HeadStart Intervention Fund has been able to assist some learners to access equipment to help their studying).

### Feeling unsafe

- 4 young people were worried about leaving the house and catching the coronavirus. One has a mother with a low immune system so is strictly isolating, whilst another currently plans to return to school in December when it is hoped to be safer.

### Positivity around returning

- For the 6 young people who fed back as not experiencing anxiety around the return to school, most are missing friends and the daily routine it provides. One who recently returned for one morning a week reports that it has helped with motivation and mood level. Some have found that home learning has suited them and the home environment has eased emotional issues.

## Returning to School - Feedback from young people

Young people supported by Youth Facilitators were asked what they felt would make returning to school easier for them. The poster below, produced by the HSK Engagement Officer, highlights their feedback, and was shared at a PSHE workshop in July 2020.

# HEADSTART KERNOW

Hand sanitising stations around the school so I can clean my hands more often.



More sheltered areas outside so I can sit with my friends more easily, even if it raining

More outside activities to help break the day up so I can get used to being in a classroom again more slowly.



More time to be able to go to wash my hands in between lessons.  
ist:Ignore

Staggered break/lunch times so its not as busy in the canteens.

Shorter day so I don't feel so scared all the time

## What might make going back to school easier for you?



More fun days to help build back up again and get me used to the school week again. Like Activities Week or something similar.

Keeping the school quieter so I don't have to deal with too many people. Maybe less year groups in at once until I can feel safe again



Shorter week to start with, with smaller groups so I feel safe.

Some time with my teacher individually to help make a plan that I am happy with and help me answer my questions.

