

The educational experience of dyspraxic children and young people living in the UK during the pandemic

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On behalf of Dyspraxia Foundation



Educational experience of dyspraxic children living in the UK during the pandemic

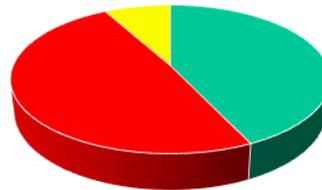
- Online survey promoted to Dyspraxia Foundation members and via social media
- Open from 11th – 20th March 2021
- 236 respondents (222 valid)
 - Parents/carers of young people with dyspraxia
 - 46% primary and 52% secondary age (2% 18+ excluded)
 - 85% living in England
 - 78% children were male and 22% female
- 90% attended mainstream school
- 22% had an EHC Plan



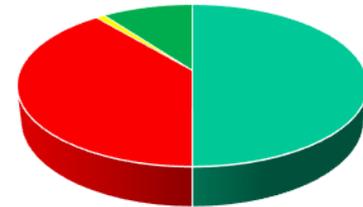
Did parents/carers have access to support or resources for their child's learning?

Was work provided by school appropriate or differentiated for your child's needs?

First lockdown



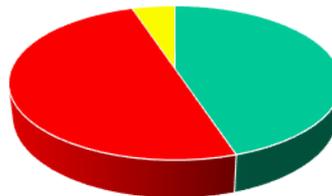
Third lockdown



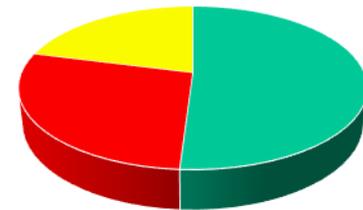
■ Yes ■ No ■ No work provided by school ■ Child in school

Were you provided with resources (books, printed materials) necessary to support your child's home learning?

First lockdown



Third lockdown



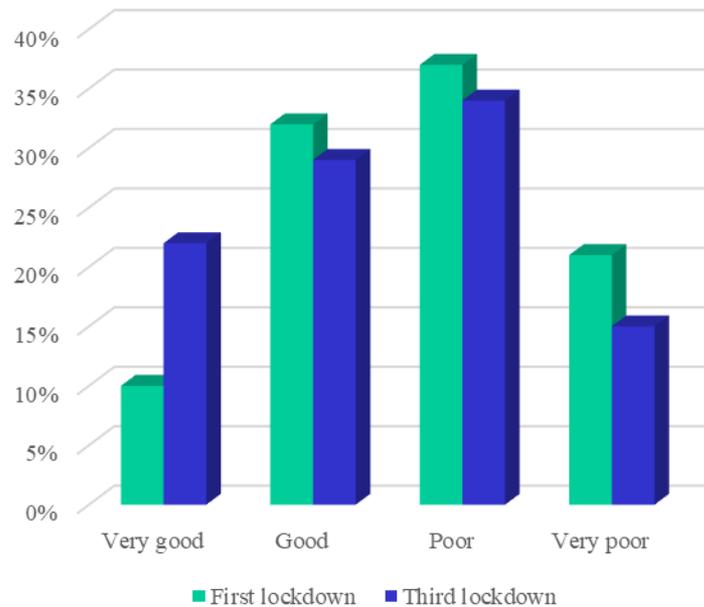
■ Yes ■ No ■ N/A

■ Yes ■ No ■ N/A

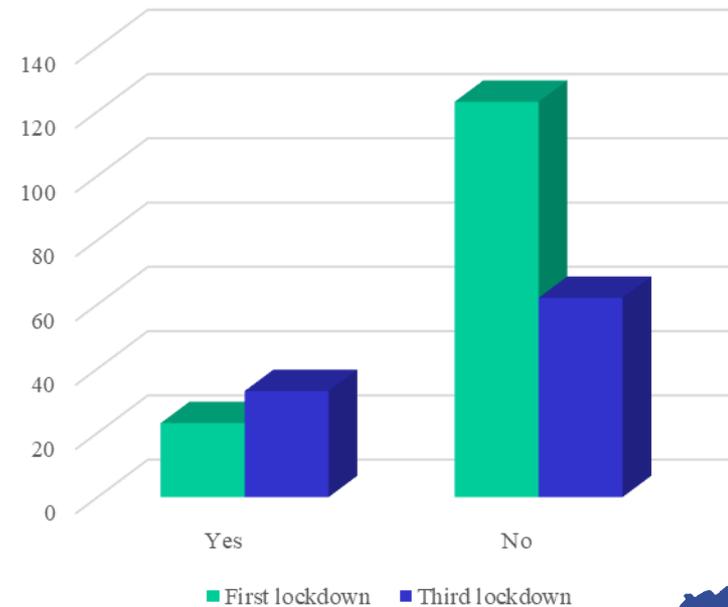


Parents' views on communication from school & support for their child's learning needs

Satisfaction with school communication re learning/support needs



Did children continue to receive additional support when home-learning?



Were dyspraxic children able to access to therapy during lockdown?

	Able to access therapy	Partially	Not able to access therapy
First lockdown	6	9	52
Third lockdown	14	10	25

“Only towards the end after I had contacted the school repeatedly”

“Only speech therapy continued. Occupational therapists were moved to adult services.”

“Everything stopped. He suffered with his hypermobility more and went to toe walking.”



Parents' views re the impact of lockdowns on dyspraxic children's learning and development

- 1 • Confidence
- 2 • Social skills
- 3 • Mental health
- 4 • Academic progress
- 5 • Physical development
- 6 • Independence skills
- 7 • Behaviour
- 8 • Relationship with siblings



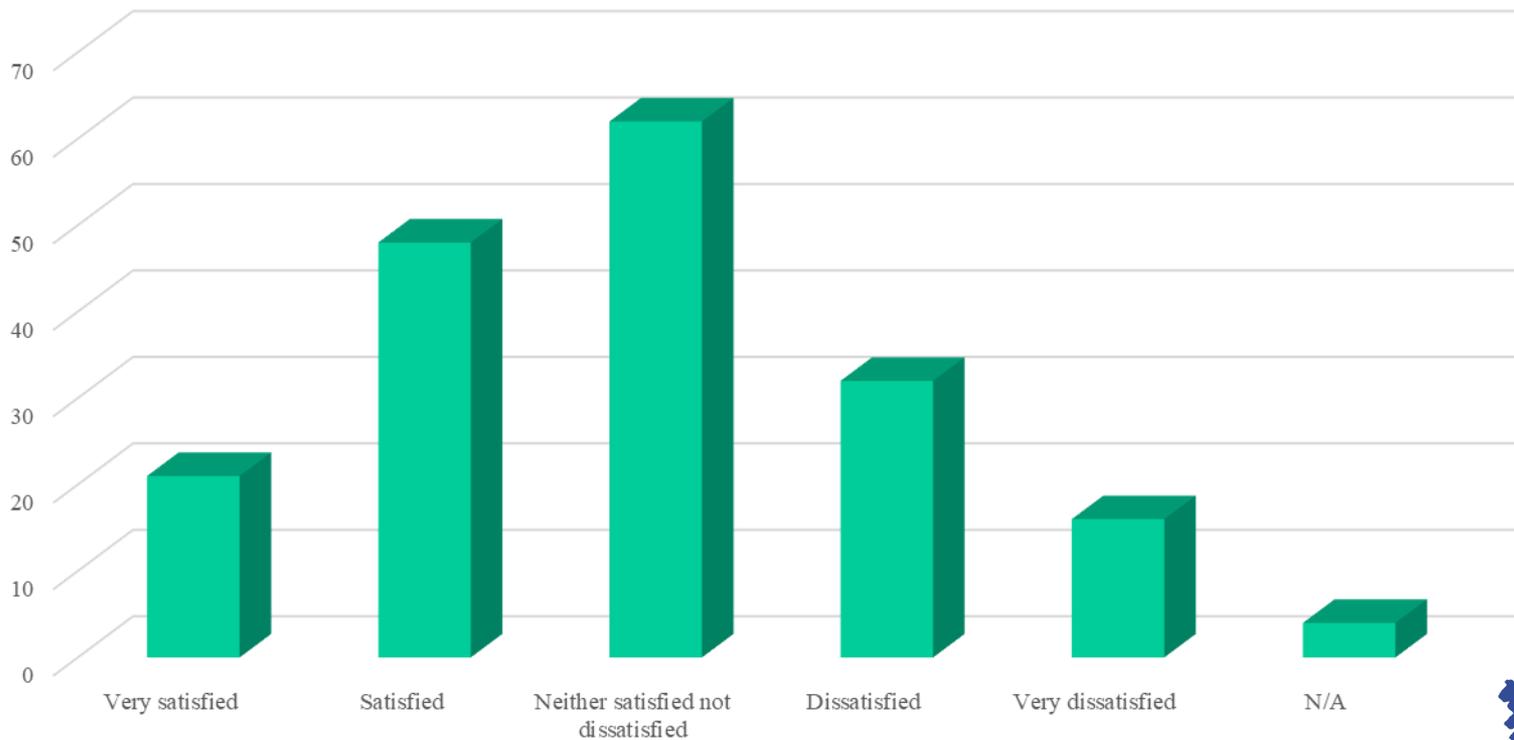
Specialist mental health support

- **First lockdown:** 32 parents sought specialist help for their child's mental health
 - 22 were able to access support
- **Third lockdown:** 30 parents sought specialist help for their child's mental health
 - 20 were able to access support
- Mental health support accessed: Privately, via charities, online, signposting, via CAMHS



Support for transition back to school

Satisfaction with support re return to school



Impact of changes at school

Social Distancing

My son has a very small group of friends spread out across different classes, he has been unable to be with his friends at break time and is now feeling increasingly isolated. We had worked hard on this previously, so this is a large backwards step.

Routines

The biggest negative for my son is lack of usual movement around the school - he has found it stressful being confined to one classroom the entire day with his bubble.

Bubbles did not move around so much for timetabled lessons which he found much less stressful & tiring.

He gets less distracted sitting in traditional rows, he is at the front, facing the teacher.



Impact of changes at school

Restricted access to spaces e.g. library, small rooms

When she became overwhelmed she used to be able to go to the year team office to calm down. That facility was and is still not available.

Changes to break/lunch time arrangements

He has no opportunity for quiet time. The youngsters have no access to outside space to get away from other people.

At lunch times he stays in his classroom to eat which he says is better than going to the hall as it is quieter.

The school have taken away the morning break, meaning my son gets very tired and hungry.



Impact of changes at school

Access to extra-curricular activities

This has had huge impact on him socially. He is rapidly losing his social skills and will not cope when he goes to secondary school.

Changes to PE/Games lessons

He now wears his PE kit to school so doesn't have to change or go to the cloakroom to swap items. Everything he needs is in one place now.

My son was thrilled that sports fixtures had been cancelled - as his coordination issues mean he hates sports.



Impact of changes at school

School closures/isolation

I'm a key worker working from home. In the end I took sick pay while his bubble closed. He then spent two weeks worrying that I wouldn't be paid if I didn't work.

My child's 'bubble' burst twice so they were sent home to isolate for four weeks in total, which had a really detrimental impact on their learning, confidence and friendships.

Changes to learning support

My son's 1:1 support seemed reduced due to bubbles, and there was very little communication from the school on what was being offered or how things had changed.

School had just sorted a laptop for my son before Xmas before going into lockdown again. Since returning to school this hasn't been used and it's like there are no interventions once again.



What have we learned?

- **Experience of lockdown has varied** - some dyspraxic children thrived during lockdown, others struggled
- **Personalised approach** necessary to optimize children's learning, development and well-being
- **Greater awareness of dyspraxia in schools** is needed – physical and non-motor challenges
- **Home/school communication** is critical to prevent problems escalating & learn what's working well
- **Health services** need to be more accessible



What have parents/carers learned?

Dyspraxic children benefit from:

- Structure and routine – lists and diaries
- Shorter lessons with more movement breaks
- More time to process information and instructions
- Getting outside in nature & taking time to de-stress
- Learning to touch-type
- Being able to do things such as making a snack, tying shoelaces which boosts confidence & self-esteem
- Importance of social connection in person and/or virtually
- Child's voice is important



A few final words

“I have learned that I’m more resilient than I think and I’ve maybe become more determined to do my best. Online lectures have positively challenged me and allowed me to become more confident on camera. I perhaps wouldn’t have had the chance to develop my self confidence in this way in normal times!”

