



Economic  
and Social  
Research Council



# Tracking the mental health of children and young people over the course of the Covid-19 pandemic in the UK: findings from the Co-SPACE study

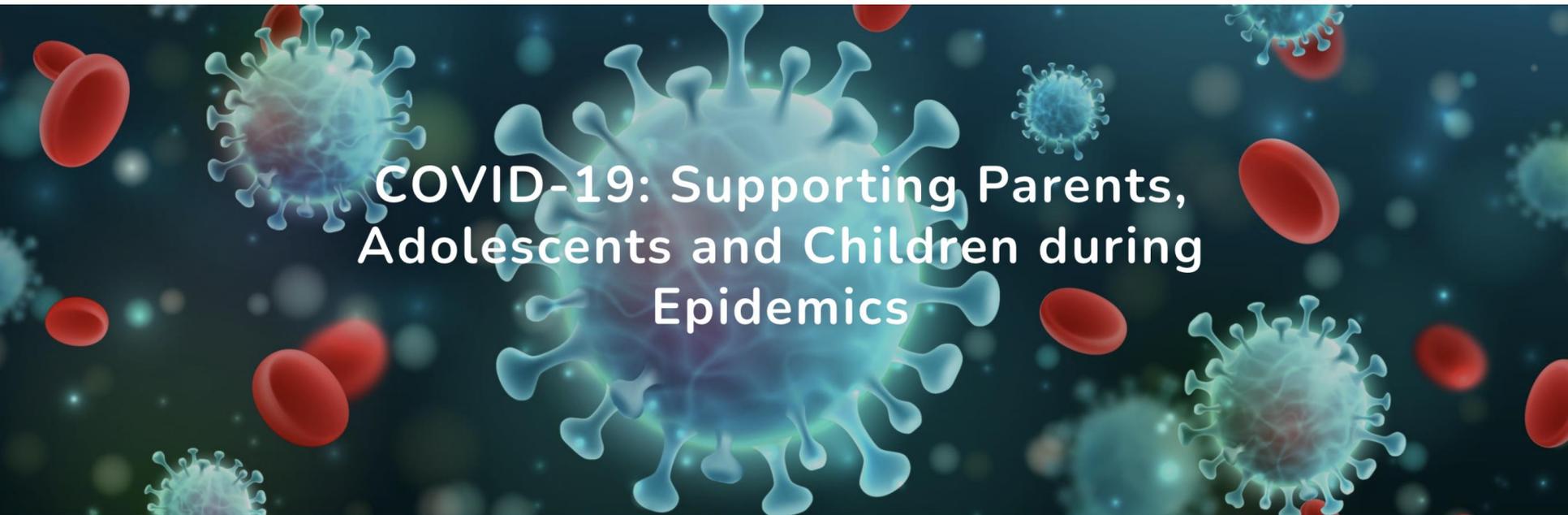
Dr Polly Waite

University of Oxford

*Polly.waite@psych.ox.ac.uk*

*@pollywaite*





# COVID-19: Supporting Parents, Adolescents and Children during Epidemics

## WHAT IS THE STUDY ABOUT?

The Co-SPACE study and its partner studies were set up to help us understand how families have coped throughout the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, and what parents can do to support their children's mental health.



# C-SPACE study

COVID-19: Supporting Parents, Adolescents  
and Children during Epidemics



Parents & carers of children aged 4-16 years



Young people aged 11-16 years self-report

30<sup>th</sup> March  
Start of  
Co-SPACE

Monthly  
survey

23<sup>rd</sup> March  
Lockdown  
in UK

More than 12,000 parents/carers have taken part...



A close-up photograph of a person's hands typing on a laptop keyboard. The person is wearing a light-colored, textured sweater. The background is softly blurred, showing a white coffee cup with a wooden stirrer on a wooden desk. A dark blue rectangular box is overlaid on the center of the image, containing white text.

CAUTION – not representative sample

Behavioural

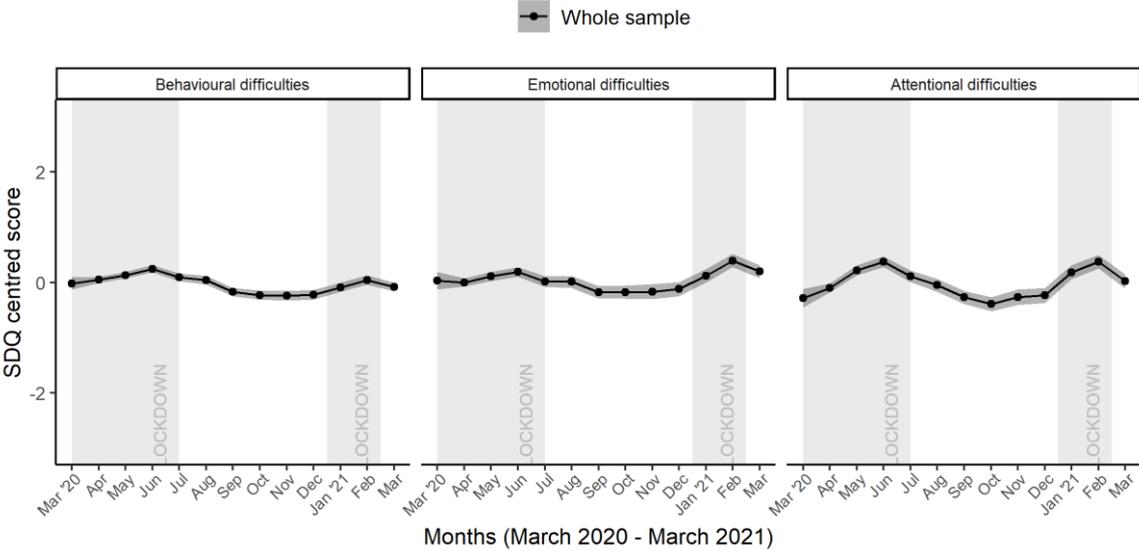
Emotional

Restlessness  
Inattention

Findings based on parent report across 3 areas  
Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)

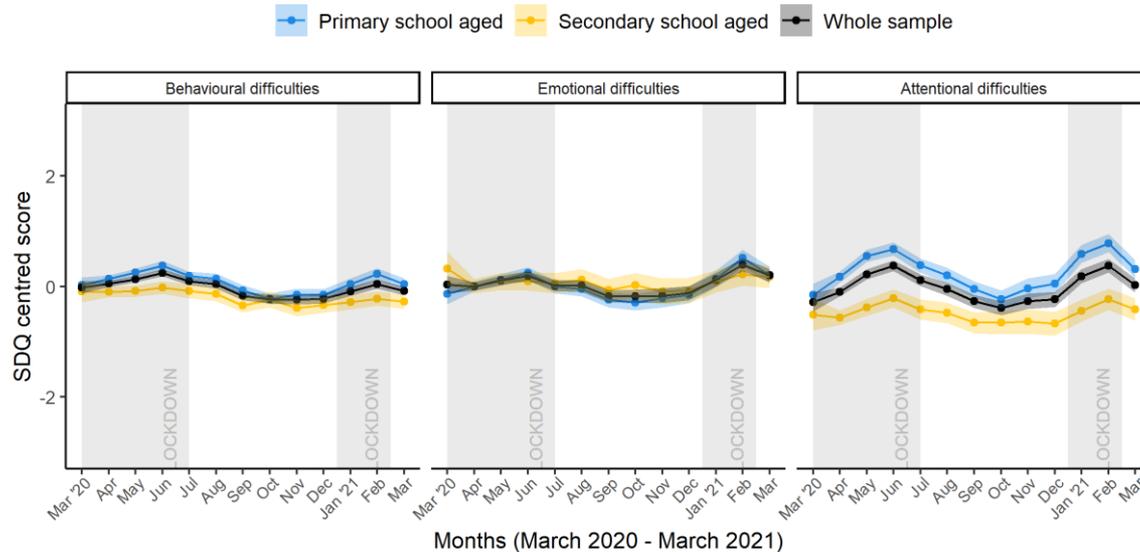
# Changes in mental health symptoms over a year

## Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)



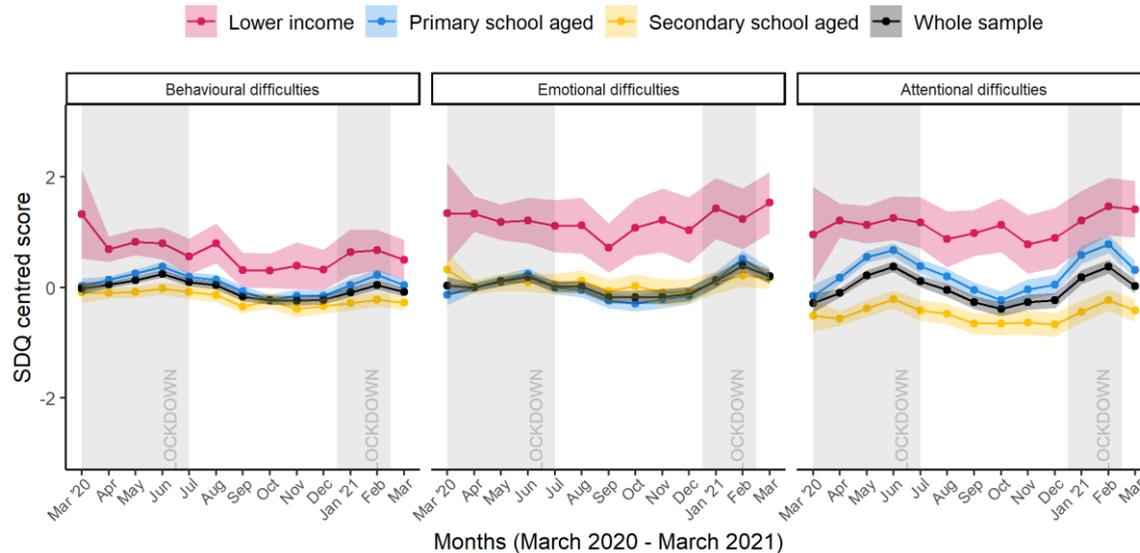
# Changes in mental health symptoms over a year

## Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)



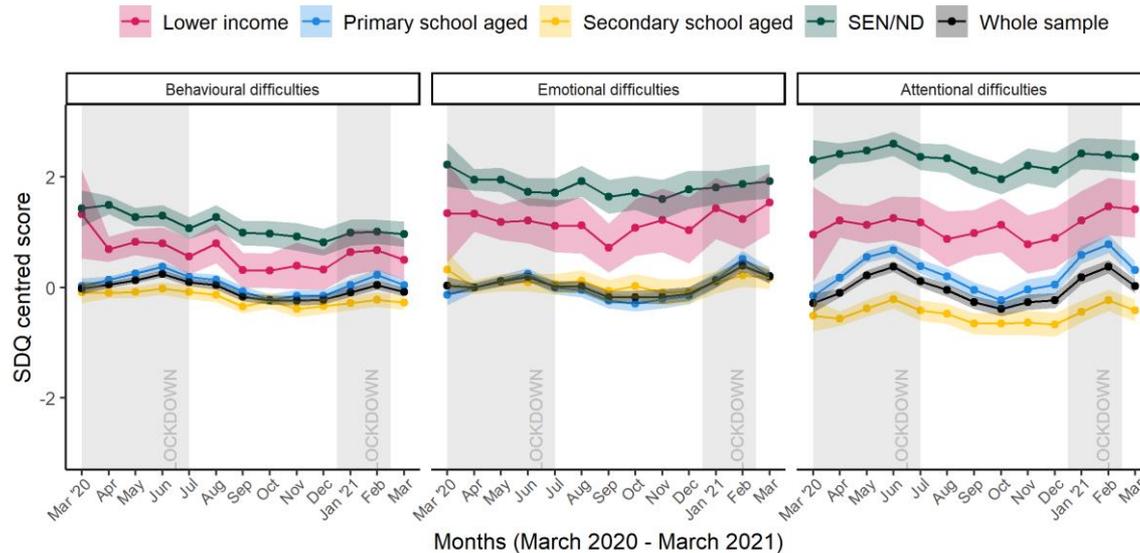
# Changes in mental health symptoms over a year

## Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)



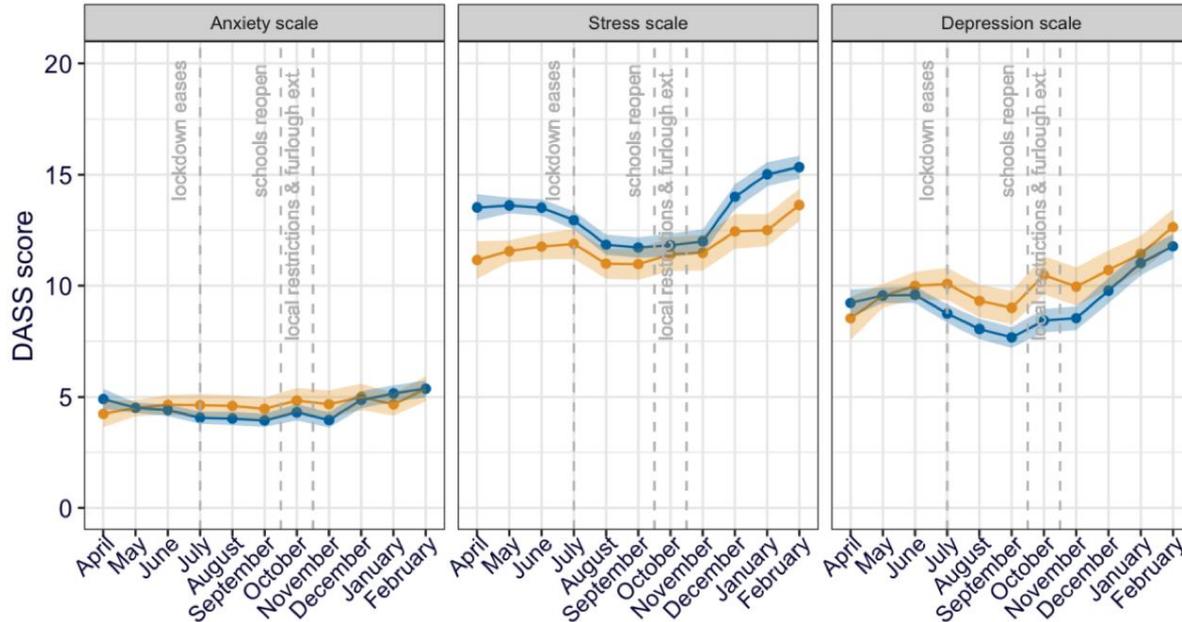
# Changes in mental health symptoms over a year

## Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)



# Parent/carer depression, anxiety, stress (DASS)

— No younger children — Any younger children (aged 10 or less)



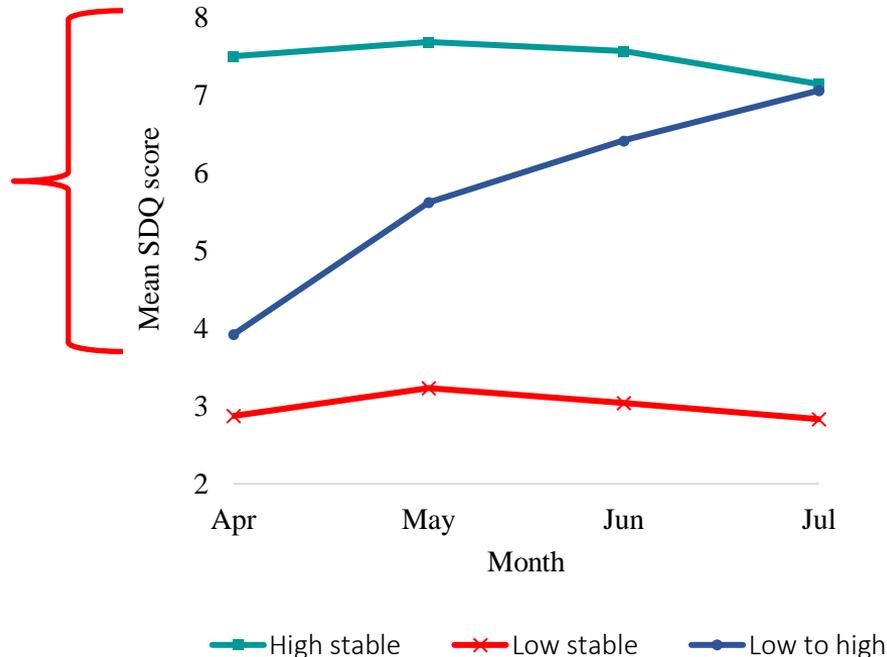
+ Consistently higher scores for:

- Single adult households
- Low-income families
- Parents of children with Special Educational Needs/Neurodevelopmental Disorders (SEN/ND)

# Trajectories over the first 4 months

## Hyperactivity/ inattention

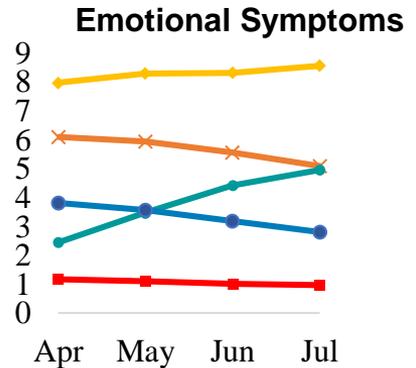
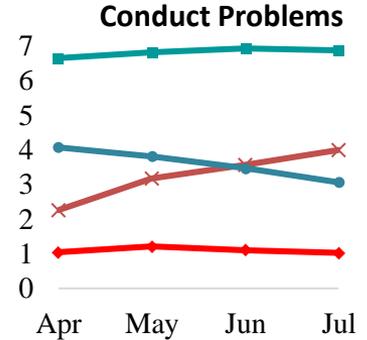
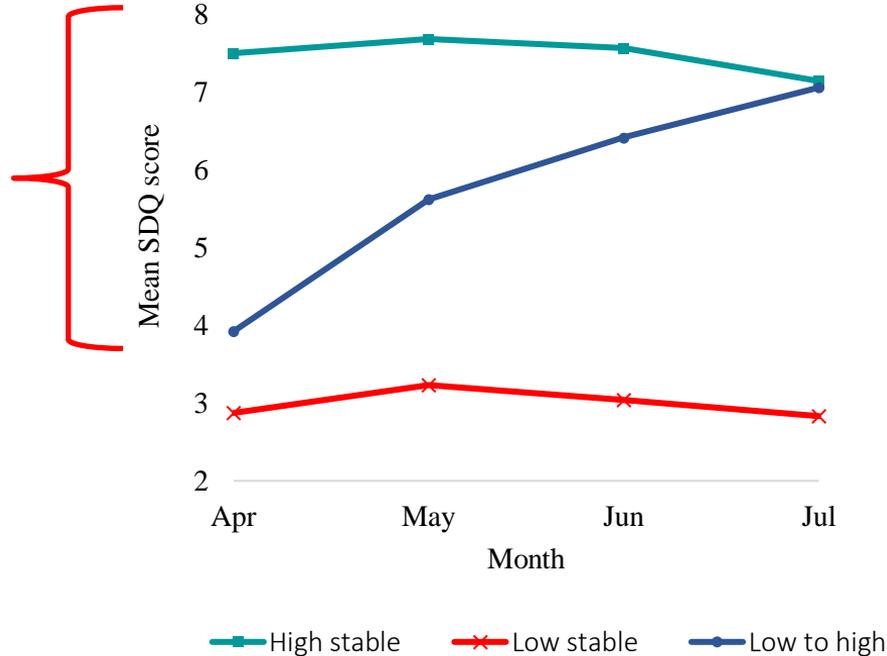
- Male
- <£16k per year
- Younger age
- Special Educational Needs/  
Neurodevelopmental Disorders
- **Higher baseline parent psychological distress (DASS)**
- **Higher baseline parent-child conflict**
- **Lower baseline family warmth**



# Trajectories over the first 4 months

## Hyperactivity/ inattention

- Male
- <£16k per year
- Younger age
- Special Educational Needs/  
Neurodevelopmental Disorders
- **Higher baseline parent psychological distress (DASS)**
- **Higher baseline parent-child conflict**
- **Lower baseline family warmth**





**Themes and subthemes from interviews with 17 adolescents (11- 16 years)** sampled for variation in age, location (across UK), gender, ethnicity, family income, special educational needs

# SPARKLE trial

Supporting Parents and Kids through  
Lockdown Experiences

- Parenting booster (animations, videos, graphics, text)
- Parenting exchange (peer support)
- Parent Information Hub (resources)
- Rapidly recruited 616 parents



SUPPORTED BY

**NIHR** | National Institute  
for Health Research



**Medical  
Research  
Council**

**Co-CAT**



Online Support  
and Intervention  
for Anxiety



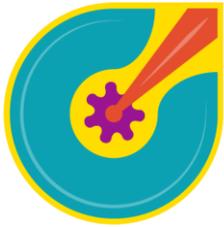
Randomised controlled trial  
comparing clinical and cost-  
effectiveness of:

- Online guided parent-led Cognitive-Behaviour Therapy (CBT) vs.
- CAMHS treatment as usual in the COVID-19 context

**> 60 NHS/Local Authority  
sites**

**> 500 clinicians trained**

**>320/560 participants  
recruited so far**



# CoRAY

Covid-19 response: Mental Health  
Resources for and by Young People

## Project Overview



Medical  
Research  
Council

Draw together evidence on the mental health and wellbeing impacts of the pandemic on young people aged 11-16

Identify priority areas where resources are needed to support 11-16 year olds

Work with young people to develop resources that translate evidence in ways that are engaging and accessible

Feeling bored, flat & unmotivated

Feeling lonely, isolated & disconnected

Managing change & uncertainty

Overcoming barriers to seeking help & support for mental health



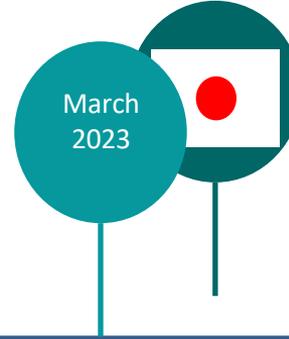
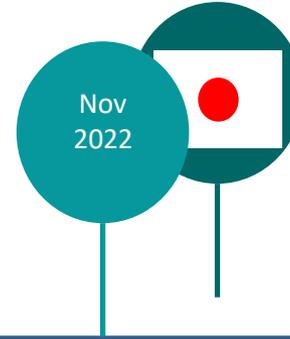
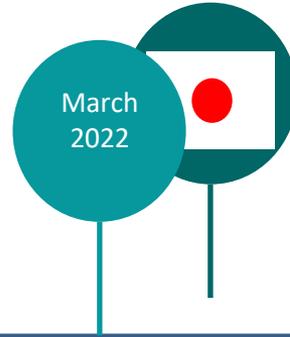
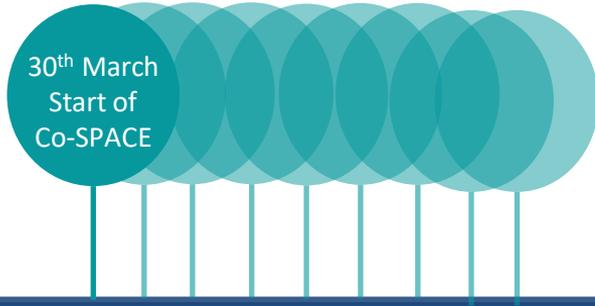
BBC  
Bitesize



<https://emergingminds.org.uk/resources-for-young-people/>



## March 2020 to July 2021 Monthly



Data in UK and Japan  
Led by Simona  
Skripkauskaitė (UK) and  
Naho Morisaki (Japan)



All reports can be accessed through the Co-SPACE website  
<https://cospaceoxford.org/findings/>



[Home](#) [About](#) [Findings](#) [Study Data](#) [News](#) [Contact](#)

[OUR PARTNERS](#)

# Co-Space Findings



## DOWNLOAD REPORTS

Results are regularly made available. Our reports include findings from families where children and young people are aged 2-4 years (Co-SPYCE) and 4-16 years (Co-SPACE). We also produce supplementary reports in response to specific requests from policy makers and other organisations.

### REPORT 11 LATEST

Changes in children's mental health symptoms



### COMMENTARY

Young people's mental health during the



### REPORT 10

Children's mental health: One year in the





Thank you