

For immediate release

## Major Stressors for Parents during COVID-19

- *Work most frequent source of stress for parents*
- *80% of families previously receiving support from services say it's stopped/postponed*
- *Parents of children with special education needs and neurodevelopmental disorders report higher levels of stress across all areas*

The [interim report](#) from 5,000 responses to the Co-SPACE (COVID-19 Supporting Parents, Adolescents, and Children in Epidemics) survey led by experts at the University of Oxford, indicates some important concerns for parents, employers and health professionals.

**Professor Cathy Creswell, Departments of Psychiatry and Experimental Psychology, University of Oxford**, said, "This study is so important to understand the experiences of families currently and how this crisis is impacting on them, but also so we can know how best to support families going forward. Our results are showing some hotspots of concern, particularly for parents of children with special education needs and neurodevelopmental disorders. These parents report increased stress across all areas, including managing their children's behaviour, they also express a desire for personalised support from professionals."

The [Co-SPACE survey](#) aims to track children and young people's mental health throughout the COVID-19 crisis. Survey results will help researchers identify what protects children and young people from deteriorating mental health, over time, and at particular stress points, and how this may vary according to child and family characteristics. It also aims to identify what advice, support and help parents would find most useful.

Other highlights from the [interim report](#):

- Parents particularly want support around their child's emotional wellbeing, education and coming out of social isolation
- Nearly half the parents/carers thought that their child was concerned about family and friends catching the virus
- A third of parents/carers reported that their child was worried about missing school

Parents/carers are invited to complete an online longitudinal questionnaire monthly until social distancing measures end. The first survey takes about 15-20 minutes, and subsequent surveys about 10 minutes. Parents/carers will be asked to answer questions

Press Release

about family life and relationships, overall health and well-being, parenting, psychological symptoms and how they and their child are coping during the Covid-19 pandemic.

In collaboration with colleagues at University College London, parents of 11-16 year olds are also invited to give permission for their adolescent to take part and give their own perspective on how they are getting on.

Regular summaries of key findings are made available via the UKRI

[www.emergingminds.org.uk](http://www.emergingminds.org.uk) research network website throughout the study and will be shared directly with partner organisations in health and education services and the community and voluntary sector, to inform the development of effective support for children, young people and families.

This research is supported by the NIHR Oxford Health Biomedical Research Centre, the Oxford and Thames Valley NIHR Applied Research Consortium and the UKRI Emerging Minds Network Plus.

**Ends**

**Notes to editor:**

- The interim report following 5,000 participants can be found [here](#).
- More information on the Co-SPACE study and parallel surveys can be found here: <https://www.psy.ox.ac.uk/research/topic-research-group/supporting-parents-adolescents-and-children-during-epidemics>
- The Co-SPACE (COVID-19 Supporting Parents, Adolescents, and Children in Epidemics) survey is online at <http://cospaceoxford.com/survey>.
- The University Department of Psychiatry's mission is to conduct world-class research, teach psychiatry to medical students, develop future researchers in a graduate programme, teach doctors in training, promote excellence in clinical practice, and develop and provide innovative clinical services. It supports research in four key areas: neurobiology, psychological treatments, developmental psychiatry and social psychiatry. The Department is committed to the translation of scientific discovery into benefits for patients. [www.psych.ox.ac.uk](http://www.psych.ox.ac.uk)
- The University of Oxford's Experimental Psychology Department's mission is to conduct world-leading experimental research to understand the psychological and neural mechanisms relevant to human behaviour. Wherever appropriate, we translate

Press Release

our findings into evidence-based public benefits in mental health and well-being, education, industry, and policy. Key areas of research include Behavioural Neuroscience, Developmental Psychology, Social Psychology, and Psychological and Brain Health.

- Funding for the University of Oxford's coronavirus research is crucial to the development of a vaccine and the subsequent delivery of effective drugs to combat this new virus. Unprecedented speed, scope and ambition is required.

Please [make a gift](#). Any gift made will help contribute to the fight against coronavirus.

- The NIHR Oxford Health Biomedical Research Centre is a partnership between the Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust and the University of Oxford. We aim to bring the best science to the complex problems of mental health and dementia. [www.oxfordhealthbrc.nihr.ac.uk](http://www.oxfordhealthbrc.nihr.ac.uk)
- **For further information, please contact: Genevieve Juillet**, Media Relations Manager (Research and Innovation), University of Oxford, [gen.juillet@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:gen.juillet@admin.ox.ac.uk)