

# Mental Health and Wellbeing



# About the Inquiry

## The Covid Inquiry is

- Finding out what happened during the Covid-19 pandemic in the UK
- Learning how to prepare for pandemics in the future

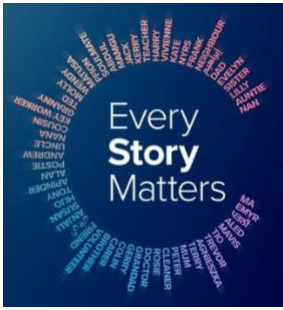


The Inquiry is divided up into **modules**. Each module is about a different subject. Each module has:

- Public hearings: events where people talk about their experiences
- A report



# Every Story Matters



**Every Story Matters** is one way that the Inquiry learnt about people's experiences of the pandemic.



Anyone in the UK could share their stories with us, at events and by using our website.



The stories helped us to learn about what happened, then recommend how to do things differently in future.



You might feel upset when you read people's stories. Here is a link to information about getting support:

<https://covid19.public-inquiry.uk/support-whilest-engaging-with-the-inquiry/>

# Records



Every module uses evidence from **Every Story Matters** records.



Each **record** is a summary of the things people told us.



This document is the Easy Read version of one of the records for **Module 10**.



All the Every Story Matters records are on our website:

<https://www.covid19.public-inquiry.uk/every-story-matters/records/>

# Mental Health



**Mental health** means how we think and feel.



We all have times when we feel sad, anxious or angry. This is normal.



But sometimes difficult feelings and thoughts are too much to cope with. For example, when people have:

- Depression
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Eating Disorders, like anorexia



# Wellbeing



**Wellbeing** means how good you feel about your life.

This includes things like:

- Having good relationships
- Feeling hopeful about the future
- Doing things that feel worthwhile

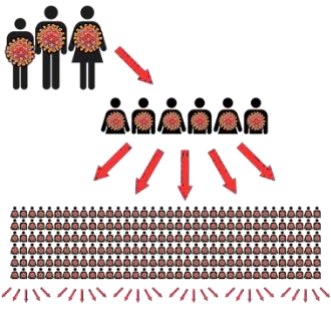


Wellbeing can be affected by your physical and mental health.

It also affects how well you recover from physical and mental health problems.



Source: [NHS England](https://www.nhs.uk)



# Life in the pandemic

Many things affected people's mental health and wellbeing. For example:



- Being scared of catching or spreading the virus



- Lockdowns and being alone



- Losing jobs and not having enough money
- Living with someone who is abusive



# Effects on mental health

Things people told us:



- Some people's mental health got worse during the pandemic



- Some people started self-harming. This means hurting yourself on purpose



- Some people used more drugs or alcohol. Others started having problems with eating



- Some people felt sad, angry or hopeless. This sometimes led to more serious mental health problems



# Parents and families

People told us:



- Pregnant women felt lonely and scared. Partners were not allowed to go to appointments with them



- Some parents became depressed after their baby was born



- Families felt stressed and worried: many parents had to keep working, care for their children, and help with school work
- It was even harder for parents of disabled children

# People who were already unwell

People told us:



- They had to swap to online or telephone appointments. This made their mental health worse



- They found uncertainty and change hard to cope with

- They felt they had lost control. This led to things like self-harm and eating problems



- Some therapy and support groups stopped

**Therapy** is a way to talk about your feelings with a professional person to help you feel better.

- People could not get support from friends and family

# Mental health services



**Services** means things like therapy, support at home or psychiatry.

People who work in services told us:

- Lots more people needed help
- It was hard to help everyone



- Most appointments were online.  
These appointments were not accessible to everyone.  
For example, Deaf people



**Deaf**



- Many people who work in mental health services felt overwhelmed and anxious.

# Things that helped



Some people said their wellbeing got better in the pandemic. Here are some examples of how this happened:



- Meditation and mindfulness

This means learning to be aware of your thoughts and how to stay calm.



- Doing hobbies and activities

- Meeting friends for walks



- Online support groups

# Ideas for the future



People who shared their stories with us told us how governments can make things better during future pandemics:



- Make lockdown rules that let people see each other more

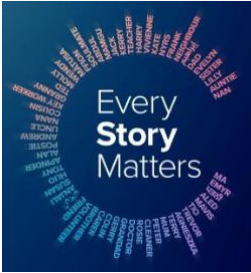


- Give mental health services more money, so they can help more people
- Give more help to parents



- Be careful how you communicate with the public, so you do not scare people

# More information



Download a full version of this record here:

<https://covid19.public-inquiry.uk/every-story-matters/records/>



You can ask for a short version of the record in other formats:



- English

- Welsh



- British Sign Language (video)