

Results of the Staffordshire FA Survey

YOUNG PEOPLE'S VIEWS ON LOCKDOWN

Conducted in January & February 2021



OVERVIEW

Staffordshire FA conducted a survey in January & February 2021 to establish some of the thoughts young people may have on the Covid-19 lockdown.

The survey was **aimed at young people aged 13-17** and was made available via various Staffordshire FA communication channels, such as the website, social media platforms and newsletters.

The survey was also shared with some of the larger youth football clubs across Staffordshire, who in turn communicated the survey to the young players within their club encouraging them to share their views. We would very much like to thank the clubs that shared this information and supported the process.

To keep the survey as simple as possible for young people to complete, the questions asked had multiple-choice answers and the young people were asked to select the answer which they felt was the most prominent feeling to be expressed in the answer given.

A total of **232 young people completed the survey.**

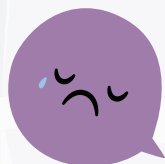


SURVEY QUESTIONS & RESULTS:

1. How have you been feeling during lockdown? 232 responses

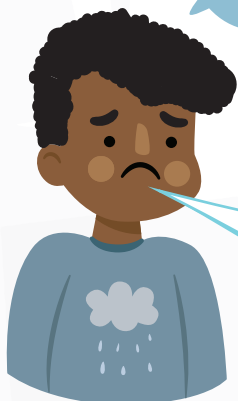
20.7%

*Worried about the pandemic
and effects it could have
on me or family*



25.4%

*Feeling no different to
how I normally feel*

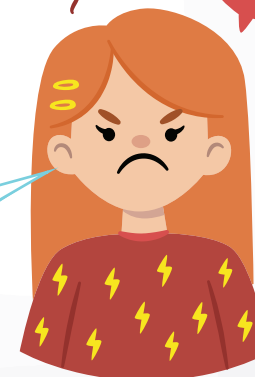
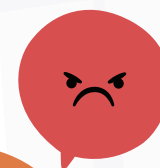


21.1%

*Have felt lonely and isolated
during this period*

32.8%

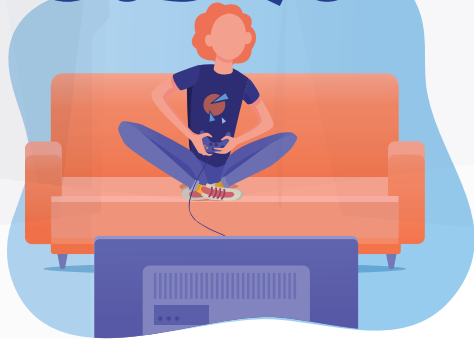
*Frustrated about not being
able to attend school and
worried about education*



SURVEY QUESTIONS & RESULTS:

2. Have you missed playing football and if so what have you missed most? 232 responses

0.9%



Have not really missed football during this period

29.3%



Socialising and meeting up with my friends

8.6%



Just doing some form of physical exercise

61.2%



Playing the games

SURVEY QUESTIONS & RESULTS:

3. When Lockdown ends and football can return will you have any worries about playing again during the pandemic? 232 responses



79.3%

I have no worries about returning to play football at this time



16.4%

I am slightly concerned about returning to play football at this time



4.3%

I am very worried about returning to play football at this time and may not wish to return yet

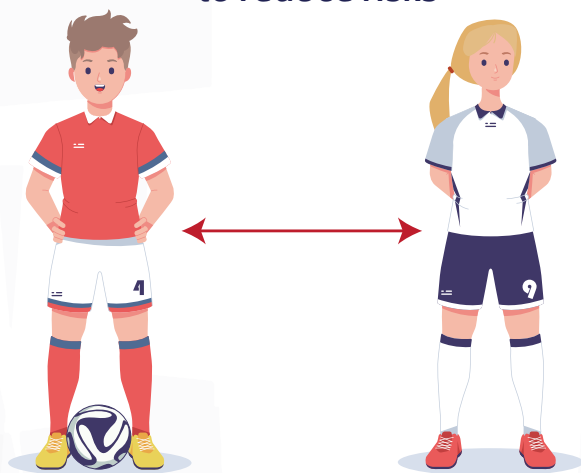
SURVEY QUESTIONS & RESULTS:

4. What Changes would you like to see when football returns to make you feel safer? 232 responses



12.9%

Less spectators in attendance to reduce risks



17.7%

More social distancing at game and venues



13.4%

More sanitizers for hands and the ball



56%

I don't think anything needs changing from what we were doing

SURVEY QUESTIONS & RESULTS:

5. Which age group are you from? 232 responses



67.7%

13 to 15 years old

32.3%

16 to 18 years old

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

In addition to the five questions asked, we also invited young people to add any additional comments they may have via the following question:

Any additional comments you wish to add around your experience of Lockdown?

RESPONSES RECEIVED:

Need football back to keep you fit, mentally stable and healthy.

Take extra precautions like closing changing rooms, change into football kit at home, etc. We need to play football matches or risk having depressed young people.

Elite football can play, why can't we? We are only young once!!

PLEASE GET YOUTH FOOTBALL GOING AGAIN THIS SEASON AND START NEXT SEASON EARLY IN AUGUST.

Frustrating when you see Premier League players playing football in the pandemic. Also, when you see them celebrating and not adhering to social distancing. Also why don't the Premier League pass more money down to the grassroots

IT HAS BEEN VERY HARD; FOOTBALL WAS BASICALLY THE ONLY THING I DID AND NOW I CAN'T PLAY FOOTBALL IT'S STARTING TO AFFECT ME MORE AND MORE, FOOTBALL BEING BACK IS THE ONLY WAY I'LL BE HAPPY AGAIN.

I also miss my team mates and managers as well as the games.

I turned 14 in lockdown and would like to go into refereeing and thought that maybe there could be someway of online training, as when lockdown is over, I would love to go and referee games.

I think my dad misses football more than I do, I only miss mates.

Have felt lonely and stressed, miss both the social aspect and the physical activity. Thanks. Bring back football for kids.

WHEN PARENTS WERE ASKED TO COME AND WATCH ALONE, THEY STOOD MORE TOGETHER WITH OTHER PARENTS, THAN WHEN TWO PEOPLE FROM SAME HOUSE CAME TO WATCH. I THINK HAVING NO PARENTS AT GAMES WOULD HELP TO KEEP TRANSMISSIONS DOWN AND STILL THE KIDS GET TO PLAY FOOTBALL. THIS IS BECAUSE WHEN WE STARTED BACK AFTER LAST LOCKDOWN SOME TEAMS WAS POOR AT DOING SOCIAL DISTANCING.

If people abided by the rules, then people's lives wouldn't be at risk and we could get back to doing the things we liked.

I don't have any brothers or sisters and the weather has been bad, so I have not been getting the same exercise I am used to. I can't wait for football to start again and get back to school.

Cones should be used to show social distancing for spectators.

I'VE BEEN FINE WITH THE LOCKDOWN; I JUST MISS PLAYING FOOTBALL AND SEEING MY MATES.

KEY FINDINGS & MESSAGES:

Whilst **25.4% OF YOUNG PEOPLE** said they did not feel different during the lockdown period, **21.1%** said they had felt isolated, while a further **32.8%** were primarily worried about their education and missing school.

20.7% OF RESPONSES WERE WORRIED about the effects of the pandemic on family or themselves.

AROUND 2 OUT OF 10 RESPONSES said they will have worries about returning to the game or may not return whilst the pandemic is with us.

AROUND 6 OUT OF 10 RESPONSES said they just missed playing the game, with **AROUND 4 OUT OF 10 STATING** they missed interaction with team mates or physical exercise.

KEY MESSAGE TO CLUBS is to recognise that young people may need time to adapt to socialising and feeling safe participating in football again. Please give young people time, some may need more reassurance than others.

ANOTHER KEY MESSAGE is that grassroots football clubs offer so much more to young people than just playing football.

FINAL THOUGHTS

With the restart of football moving closer there are some clear messages for those who administer the game, as well as for club officials, team managers, coaches and parents, around the return of youth football following lockdown restrictions. The survey was completed by young people across the county and a response of 232 is a good response for a survey of this nature in a relatively small period.

It is clear from question 1 that whilst a quarter of young people identified they felt no different during the lockdown, three quarters of the responses stated that they had some concerns about their education, the health of family or themselves, or were feeling lonely and isolated. This is also reflected in question 3 where nearly 80% of responses were happy to return to football, just over 20% of young people had some reservations about returning to the game. In theory this may mean that

“

TWO IN EVERY 10 PLAYERS BETWEEN THE AGE OF 13-18, MAY HAVE SOME RESERVATIONS ABOUT RETURNING TO THE GAME.

”


When the game resumes, we need to be mindful that some players may be more unsettled on returning than others and may need time to adjust or for reassurances. Young people may have experienced first-hand the loss of family or someone seriously ill from Covid-19, which may affect how they interact in a social setting.

“

WE NEED TO BE AWARE THAT PEOPLE MAY NEED TIME TO ADJUST AND FEEL COMFORTABLE IN RETURNING TO THE GAME.

”

It is evident that most young people have missed football and want to return as soon as possible.



Question 2 indicates that just over 61% have just missed playing the game. However, 29% have said that the main thing they have missed is socialising and missing friends. Again, if this is linked to Question 1 where 21% of young people said they feel lonely and nearly 33% are worried about their education,

“
THE SOCIAL IMPACT OF GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL CLUBS SHOULD NOT BE UNDERESTIMATED.”

Grassroots football leagues & clubs provide young people with the opportunity to play the game but also the ability to socialise, be with friends and participate in a physical activity that is enjoyable; the impact of which should not be underestimated.

The part that football can play in the physical and mental wellbeing of young people should

not be forgotten. This should also be remembered when we take forward the respect agenda and a reminder to everyone that football is much more than just a game. The young people also expressed in general that they felt that football had taken significant precautions to make the game safe. In question 4 the indication is that 56% felt that there were adequate measures in place. Over 31% however felt that social distancing and spectators remained an issue. This is also reflected in some of the comments received in the survey where young people have mentioned spectators being the biggest risk factor. This is a challenging area for the County FA, Leagues & Clubs to manage, but again should be something that we all need to collectively think about managing on the game's safe return.

JAN SCOTT

*Staffordshire FA Designated
Safeguarding Officer*



Staffordshire FA,
Staffordshire Technology Park,
Beaconside,
Stafford,
ST18 0LQ

Telephone: 01785 256994

E-mail: support@StaffordshireFA.com