



What's the Current Situation?

It's heart breaking to hear that our children are increasingly unhappy. The Children's Society's *Good Childhood Report*, published this month, shows that children's happiness has been in decline for most of the last decade and this year is no exception.

Even before the pandemic, 15-year-olds in the UK were less satisfied with their lives than many of their peers across Europe.

Worries about relationships with friends, appearance and school are all key factors. With exam stress, bullying, and school culture, more and more young people are becoming unhappy with school. The report highlights the high levels of 'fear of failure' among 15 year olds in the UK compared to other countries.

But many felt their life didn't have a sense of purpose. One of the most concerning trends is the decline in children's happiness with friends. There are an estimated 132,000 children aged 10-15 in this country who say they have no close friends.

Social media is often seen as a contributing factor, but the evidence supporting this is mixed. The situation is much more complicated.

We already know that 50 per cent of all mental health disorders start by the time a young person reaches 14 years of age.

Early intervention is essential, however parents of young people displaying symptoms of depression are finding it increasingly difficult to get help.

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[The Children's Society's Good Childhood Report](#)

**IF YOU'D LIKE TO LISTEN TO OUR FULL WEBINAR VISIT
[CINNAMONNETWORK.CO.UK/CHILDRENS-WELLBEING/](https://cinnamonnetwork.co.uk/childrens-wellbeing/)**

1. Take the issue seriously

Evidence tells us that individuals experiencing depression are four times more likely to be out of employment, education or training. They are also more likely to be in receipt of disability benefits, and – tragically – die prematurely.

Bearing in mind that the majority of mental health disorders start by the time a child reaches the age of 14, we need to take the mental health of children seriously.



2. Talk to young people

The first step to solving an issue is to recognise it. Mental health is a challenging issue to approach but we need to work harder as churches to talk about it openly.

By making an effort to listen to young people and involve them in the process, we can find solutions that are genuinely helpful.

3. Recognise the context

It's important that we don't compartmentalise children's wellbeing. Their health and happiness is linked to so many things and family is an important component.

Over the last few months, we know that the most vulnerable families have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. As we seek to support young people, we also need to support their families too.

4. Make connections

One thing churches are great at is building relationships. Even though it's more challenging to maintain connections in light of social distancing and regional lockdowns, we need to try.

We need to continue to make the effort to really get to know the children, young people and families within our congregation and communities. You don't always need to have an agenda to call for a chat or meet for a coffee.

Good Childhood Report

Take a look at the Good Childhood Report 2020 in full at childrenssociety.org.uk/good-childhood-report-2020

RESOURCES

Emotional First Aid Course - TLG

The Emotional First Aid course is a 90 minute webinar exploring the impact of stress on our emotions and how to support someone, of any age, who is feeling overwhelmed or emotionally distressed.

tlg.org.uk/your-church/emotional-first-aid

The Emotional Rollercoaster Course - TLG

The Emotional Rollercoaster is a 2-hour webinar training course to explore emotional health with 8-14-year olds. We will unpack how our brains and bodies react to overwhelming situations and how to cope with the spectrum of emotions that can, at times, feel like a rollercoaster ride.

tlg.org.uk/your-church/emotional-rollercoaster



Exploring Mental Health and Wellbeing - The Children's Society

This resources provides seven sessions for church youth groups aged 11 to 16. The themes are drawn from what children and young people have told us really matters to them.

Each session is designed to be between an hour and an hour and a half long, depending on which activities you choose, the size of your group and how talkative they are.

Over the course of the programme, you'll cover key issues such as: Identity; The Importance of Good Relationships; and Fear and the Future.

childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/church-gcr-youth-group-resources.pdf



TLG

tlg.org.uk

TLG help the church to engage with young people who are at risk of exclusion or may have already been excluded from school.

They provide resources and help churches to set up alternative provision schools and provide mentoring to help children reintegrate into the education system.

The Children's Society

Children's Society
childrenssociety.org.uk

The Children's Society is passionate about advocating for the best childhood for children and young people in our communities.

They have a team of 12 Relationship Managers covering all the regions of England who would be more than happy to support churches engaging with children and young people.

To contact any of them email: church@childrenssociety.org.uk

Guides on Friendship - The Children's Society



These handy guides provide great wisdom and advice for young people and the adults who are supporting them.

Youth Guide: childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/friendship-guide-for-young-people.pdf

Adults Guide: childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/friendship-guide-for-adults.pdf

Resource Library - The Children's Society

Children's Society Resources and Publications Library
childrenssociety.org.uk/what-we-do/resources-publications

Theological Resources
childrenssociety.org.uk/what-you-can-do/your-church/study

TAKE ACTION

Modern life has been chipping away at children's happiness over time. The Good Childhood Report 2020, published by The Children's Society, finds this toxic trend continues.

They are calling on the Government to put children's well-being at the heart of the national recovery from coronavirus. You can ask your MP to help us make children's well-being a priority, using the form on The Children's Society website.

act.childrenssociety.org.uk/page/66146/action/1?utm_source=website&utm_medium=Parallax&utm_campaign=well-being%20petition

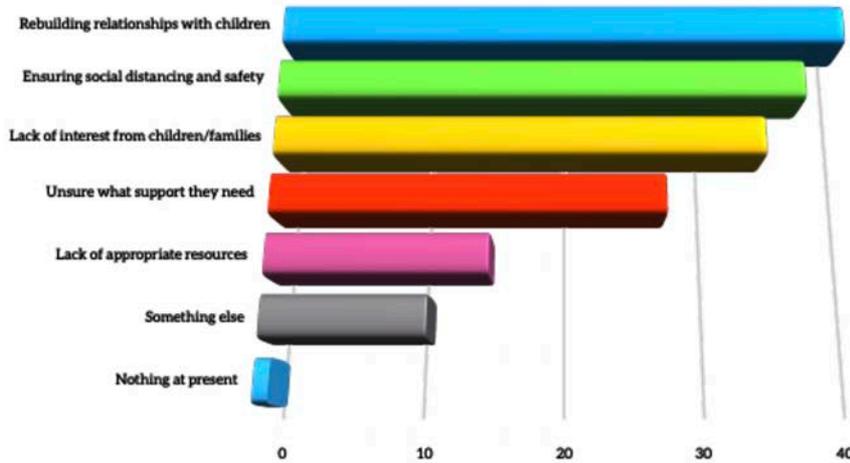
"As we emerge from the coronavirus crisis, we can hit the restart button. We need to kick-start a decade of renewal for young people."

The Children's Society

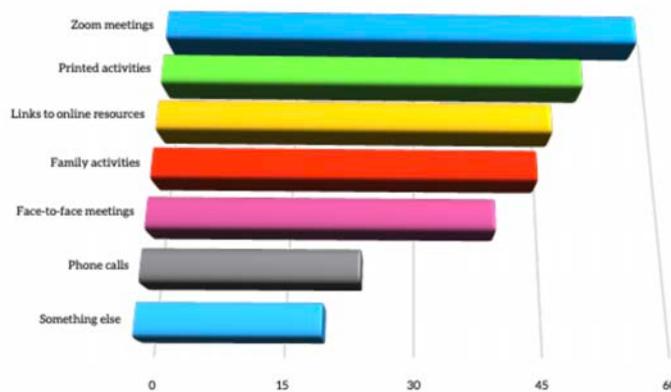
Good Childhood Report

Here are the results from this weeks poll questions.

1. What challenges do you face right now when trying to support the children in your church?



2. What support has your church provided to school-aged children over the past few months?



3. What support are you currently providing to schools?

