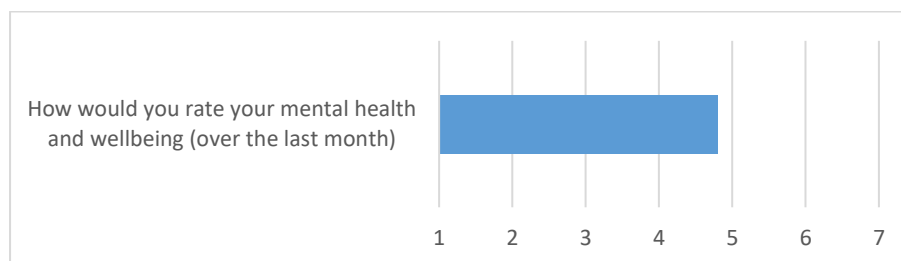


Mental Health Survey

In seeking to develop the support available to young people, their families/carers and communities, it was important to centre their voices, so a survey of mental health and wellbeing was co-produced in collaboration with the South Ayrshire Youth Forum. This was distributed to all schools in South Ayrshire and Ayrshire College to reach as many parents, carers, children (from P7 up, to ensure the content was appropriate) and young people as possible. We received input from 496 individuals, who provided information in closed and open-ended items. The results are as follows.

Parents

464 individuals reported that they were completing this survey as a parent or carer. When asked to rate their mental health over the last month, parents/carers stated that their average wellbeing was 4.8 out of 7, with 7 being the highest.



In response to the question “**How do you feel mental health and wellbeing supports for your child or young person should be accessed?**”, 429 individuals gave further information. Their responses were read and analysed according to the six stages of thematic analysis, as per Braun & Clarke (2006). The major themes identified by this process were:

Ease of access

- Should be easy, age-appropriate & accessible.

Support through trusted sources

- Info & access should come via a trusted individual (GP, CAMHS, other mental health professional)

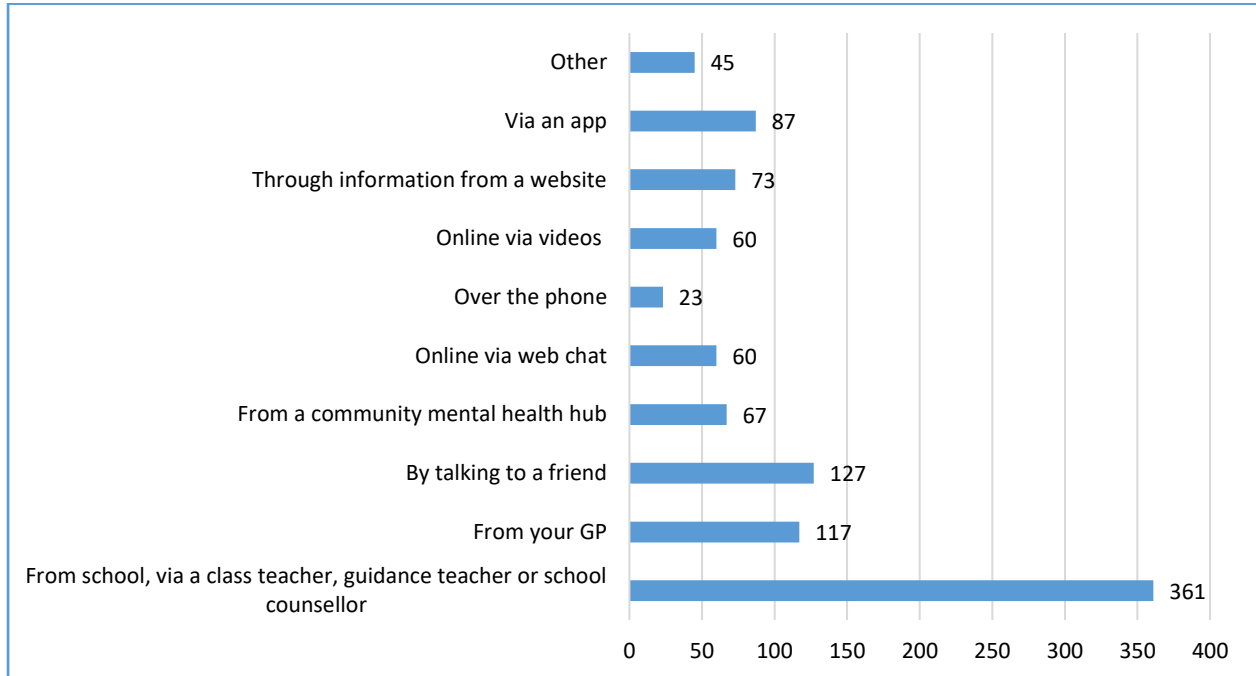
School as a point of access

- School was the most common suggestion as an access point for mental health support

Parents were asked how they felt their child would be most likely to access additional support for their mental health and wellbeing. As indicated above, the place from which parents felt their child would be most likely to access additional support with their mental

Mental Health Survey

health was school, endorsed by 77.8% of parents/carers. Alternative sources such as videos, apps, and support over the phone were also endorsed by some.



In response to the question “**How do you feel coronavirus has impacted the mental health and wellbeing of your child or young person?**”, 458 parents/carers made further comments. Their responses were also read and analysed, and the major themes identified by this process were:

Loneliness & Isolation

- Separation from friends & family having a significant impact on HWB

Impact of Protective Factors

- Protective factors buffered health & wellbeing, supported resilience.

Negative Effects on HWB

- Mental health & wellbeing negatively affected by COVID-19, higher levels or worry & anxiety.

Parents were also asked “**What extra mental health and wellbeing supports do you feel would be helpful to make available for children, young people, and families during/after coronavirus?**” 420 parents/carers made additional comments, and the key themes of their comments are as follows:

Mental Health Survey

Someone to Talk to

- Parents emphasized the importance of their child/young person having "someone to talk to".

Education around Mental Health

- Important to have education & understanding around mental health, could be embedded in curriculum.

Return to Normality

- Some suggestions would require lifting of restrictions, e.g. returning to school & normal activities.

In order to ensure that the results of this survey can be used to inform holistic support, parents & carers were asked **“As a parent/carer, how do you care for your mental health and wellbeing?”** 446 individuals gave additional input on this topic, and the key themes were:

It is worth noting that many parents stated explicitly that they did not or did not need to care for their own mental health and wellbeing, and that they instead focused on their children or “powered through for the kids”.

Support System

- Talking to friends, family, or a partner as a key protective factor for parental mental health.

Practical Care of Self

- Engaging in activities to ensure their own needs were met, e.g. eating/sleeping well, exercising, being outdoors etc.

Nurturing the Self

- Engaging in self-care and allowing time to relax, enjoy hobbies & practice meditation or gratitude.

Parents were asked, in conclusion, **“How could South Ayrshire support you to promote and care for your mental health and wellbeing?”** 368 parents/carers responded to this item, and for those who felt they needed further help or input, the key areas discussed were:

Mental Health Survey

Support for Children

- Support parents/carers' HWB by supporting children - when children/young people aren't coping it affects families.

Community, Family Support

- Support via holistic, community approaches or outdoor activities. Include family support sessions & financial support.

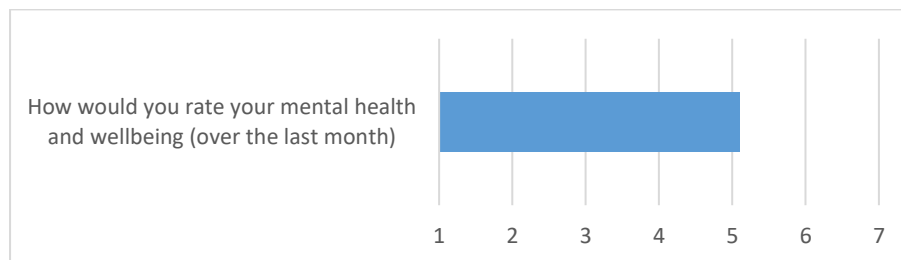
Improve Accessibility

- Whether support is for parents/carers or children, it should be readily available, allowing self-referral & quick access.

Children & Young People

This survey was, as previously mentioned, sent to a wide range of education establishments in an attempt to gain the views of as many children and young people as possible. We received input from 26 young people, and the average age of those who shared their age was 12.8 years.

When asked to rate their mental health and wellbeing over the last month, with 7 being the best it could possibly be, young people rated their wellbeing as an average 5.1.



Young people were asked “**How do you access support for your mental health and wellbeing?**”. 23 individuals responded, and the themes of their input were:

Through a Trusted Individual

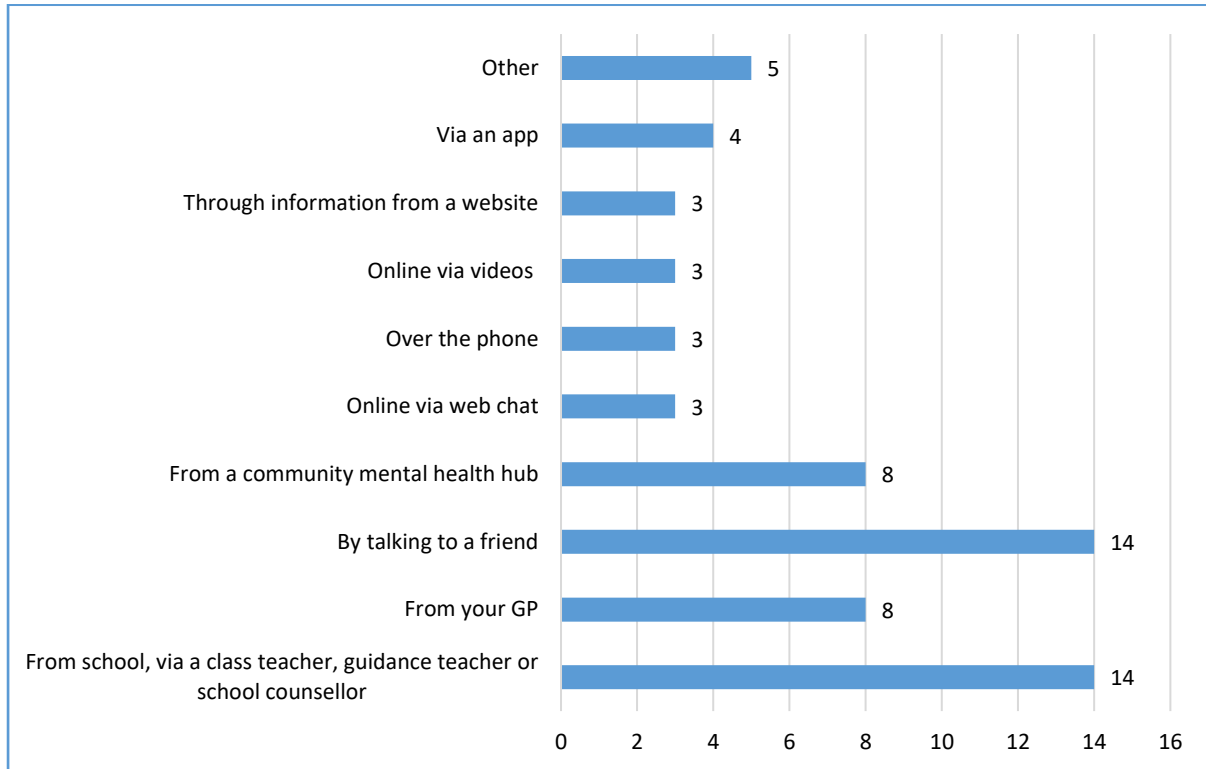
- Could be parents, friends or someone at school.

By Engaging in Activities & Strategies

- Having fun, doing things they enjoy
- Through support from agencies such as CAMHS or Barnardo's

Mental Health Survey

As with parents, young people were asked how they would like to access support for their mental health and wellbeing. These responses followed a similar pattern as the previous item, with school, friends, and GPs being the most popular options.



Children and young people were asked “**How do you feel Coronavirus has impacted on your mental health and wellbeing?**”. All 26 individuals gave input, and the key areas discussed were:

Mental Health Negatively Impacted

- Anxiety, worry & uncertainty
- Young people felt their mental health was poorer, & they had no control

Isolation

- Missed seeing loved ones & struggled to make/maintain friendships.

Adjusted Well

- Some felt that had adapted well to the "new normal"
- A few felt their HWB was positively affected by lockdown

Mental Health Survey

Next, young people were asked “**What do you feel South Ayrshire Council could do to better support your mental health and wellbeing?**” The 21 comments under this item mentioned:

Activities

- Restart activities or reopen leisure centres - give YP something to do.

Someone to Talk to

- E.g. support groups

Young people were asked how they felt existing mental health supports can be improved, and while again many stated that they were unsure as they had no experience, many suggested that support needed to be more available, with shorter waitlists, accessible through school & with confidentiality.

Lastly, children and young people were asked “**What extra mental health and wellbeing supports do you feel would be helpful to have during/after COVID?**”. Their comments were varied, but the most common request was again “someone to talk to”, some young people also wished for more activities & a return to normal.