

**COVID-19 Early Years
Resilience and Impact
Survey (CEYRIS)**

Background report

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Introduction

Coronavirus (COVID-19) and the associated pandemic response have changed the lives of every family in Scotland. Children have, with little warning, been removed from nurseries, childminders and schools. They have been restricted to staying in their own house for the majority of the day, every day, for a prolonged period and have been unable to meet with friends and loved ones outside their household. In addition, as well as the general increased stress and anxiety of living through a global health emergency, many parents and carers have had to tackle home-schooling, working at home, the removal of key children's services and potentially loss of income or employment.

Within this context, Public Health Scotland developed the COVID-19 Early Years Resilience and Impact Survey (CEYRIS) to address an important gap in knowledge about the experience and impact of COVID-19, and the associated restrictions, on our young children (2–7-year-olds) in Scotland. Owing to the crucial developmental stages during this age range, as well as challenges to accessing key children's services since the COVID-19 lockdown, it is vital that we capture how this experience may have impacted young children and their families in the short and longer terms. The first round of CEYRIS was conducted between 22 June and 6 July 2020. We plan to run additional rounds of this survey in the coming months to help us understand how the experiences and impacts of COVID-19 and associated measures are changing for our young children and families.

We aim to publish a series of reports to present our findings from the first round of CEYRIS. These planned reports will cover:

- 1** Short report 1 – Key behaviours in children in Scotland during COVID-19.
- 2** Short report 2 – Children's play and learning, use of outdoor spaces and social interactions during COVID-19 in Scotland.
- 3** Short report 3 – The experience of parents and carers during COVID-19 in Scotland.

- 4 Main report 4 – Overarching report providing an in-depth analysis and interpretation of the findings from the first three reports.

This document provides a background report describing common issues for the reports above to aid understanding and interpretation of the findings. Topics in this document include:

- 1 national COVID-19 context during the survey period
- 2 survey methodology
- 3 representativeness of the data
- 4 demographic characteristics of participants.

National COVID-19 context during the first round of CEYRIS

The first round of CEYRIS ran for two weeks from Monday 22 June to Monday 6 July. To provide context to the survey questions and findings, we outline below an overview of the national context in relation to COVID-19 at this time.

In Scotland, schools closed on 20 March 2020, and full lockdown measures were implemented from 23 March 2020. Under these conditions, children and families had to remain in their homes except for going outside for essential purposes (for example, grocery shopping and collecting medicines) and for one form of daily exercise.

On 21 May 2020, the Scottish Government published a strategic framework for the reopening of schools and early learning and childcare provision, which set out plans for a blended model of learning where children would learn part time in schools and part time at home.¹ On 29 May, after 10 weeks of strict lockdown, Scotland moved to Phase 1 of recovery. The key changes in Phase 1 included allowing individuals to meet up with other households under certain conditions: in small numbers, outdoors and under strict physical distancing. Further to this, childminders and fully outdoor childcare settings were allowed to reopen.

Since the move to Phase 1, Scotland has been a rapidly changing environment, with new announcements and different measures being lifted, or reintroduced, regularly. Some key milestones with greatest relevance to young children and families are detailed below.

- 20 March 2020 – Schools close.
- 23 March 2020 – Lockdown entered.
- 21 May 2020 – Scottish Government announces plans for blended learning.

¹ Available from www.gov.scot/publications/excellent-equity-during-covid-19-pandemic-strategic-framework-reopening-schools-early-learning-childcare-provision-scotland/ [Accessed 30 July 2020]

- 29 May 2020 – Scotland moves to Phase 1. Households can meet outdoors with strict physical distancing.²
- **22 June 2020 – First round of CEYRIS opens.**
- 23 June 2020 – Scottish Government announces plans to reopen schools full time after the summer. Blended learning remains a contingency plan.
- 2 July 2020 – Scottish Government announces that children under 12 years old are not required to physically distance from others in outdoor settings from 3 July onwards.³
- **6 July 2020 – First round of CEYRIS closes.**

Survey methodology

The first round of CEYRIS was an anonymous, online, cross-sectional survey administered using the open-source survey tool LimeSurvey.⁴ Participation in the survey was completely voluntary. Participants were recruited through key third sector, Scottish Government and local authority parent networks, and social media announcements on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

To be eligible, participants needed to be a parent or carer of a child aged 2 to 7 years and living in Scotland. Participants were asked to focus on just one child in their care when completing the survey; however, they were able to complete more than one survey if they had more than one child in the eligible age range. As the survey was completed anonymously, instances where a participant filled out multiple surveys cannot be identified.

² Available from www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-framework-decision-making-scotlands-route-map-through-out-crisis-phase-1-update/ [Accessed 30 July 2020]

³ Available from www.gov.scot/publications/covid-19-scotlands-route-map-through-out-crisis-update-approach-physical-distancing-light-advice-scottish-government-covid-19-advisory-group/pages/3/ [Accessed 30 July 2020]

⁴ For details, see www.limesurvey.org/en/ [Accessed on 30 July 2020]

Information governance, data protection and confidentiality

The survey methodology was subject to completion of a COVID-19 rapid Data Protection Impact Assessment. Survey data were treated as confidential, and reporting of the findings followed Public Health Scotland's Statistical Disclosure protocol to ensure participant confidentiality.

Representativeness of the data and guidance for its interpretation and use

Representativeness of a survey informs whether or not the findings from the survey can be generalised to a wider population of interest.

As with most online surveys conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, the generalisability of CEYRIS is restricted. The first round of CEYRIS was an unweighted, online-only survey using an open recruitment and purposive sampling approach. Hence, the participants were not representative of the wider population in Scotland. The findings, therefore, need to be interpreted with care as they are only representative of the views of those parents and carers who completed the survey. We provide a breakdown of demographic characteristics to help guide the interpretation of the findings.

Demographic characteristics

A total of 11,234 people responded to the survey. Of these, six were removed as they did not reside in Scotland, leaving a total of 11,228 participants. In the tables below, **base** refers to the total number of participants who responded to the relevant question in the survey. Note that this number differs across characteristics reported in this table since participants were free to skip questions they did not wish to answer.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of children

Characteristic	Number	Percentage (%) of sample	SSELC phase 2* (%)	SSELC phase 3** (%)	National benchmark (%)
Sex (base: 10,613)					NRS# (base: 345,638)
Male	5,252	49.5			51.5
Female	5,310	50.0			48.5
Prefer not to say	51	0.5			
Age in years (base: 10,607)					NRS# (base: 345,638)
2	1,439	13.6			15.7
3	1,824	17.2			16.4
4	2,129	20.1			16.6
5	1,934	18.2			16.7
6	1,823	17.2			17.1
7	1,425	13.4			17.5
Prefer not to say	33	0.3			
Ethnicity (base: 10,591)			Ethnicity of parent (base: 1,377)	Ethnicity of parent (base: 563)	Annual pupil and teacher census## (base: 697,989)
White	10,183	96.1	95.3	94.8	95.5
White Scottish	9,270	87.5	83.2	82.8	78.0
White British	549	5.2	6.7	6.2	5.9
White non-British	364	3.4	5.4	5.9	5.8

Characteristic	Number	Percentage (%) of sample	SSELC phase 2* (%)	SSELC phase 3** (%)	National benchmark (%)
Any mixed or multiple ethnic group	202	1.9			1.4
Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British	87	0.8			4.4
Caribbean/Black	14	0.1			0.2
Other	33	0.3			2.3
Prefer not to say	72	0.7			
Does child have long-term physical or mental health condition or illness (base: 10,539)			(base: 1,375)	(base: 565)	
Yes	850	8.1	10.0	7.0	
No	9,616	91.2	90.0	93.0	
Prefer not to say	73	0.7			
Effect of long-term condition/illness on child's activity (base: 814)			(base: 138)	(base: 40)	
Yes, a lot	252	31.0	15.0	14.7	
Yes, a little	344	42.3	44.0	45.8	
No	211	25.9	41.0	37.8	
Prefer not to say	7	0.9			
Type of illness (base: 835)*			(base: 123)	(base: 565)	
Vision	71	8.5	12.9	17.5	
Hearing	61	7.3	11.5	0.0	
Mobility	114	13.7	10.0	14.0	
Learning or concentrating or remembering	286	34.3	22.2	16.8	
Stamina or breathing difficulty	176	21.1	24.8	25.0	
Mental health, social, emotional or behavioural issues	338	40.5	29.7	19.5	
Other long-term illness or condition	255	30.5	30.5	22.5	
Prefer not to say	9	1.1			

*Scottish Study of Early Learning and Childcare (SSELC) data for 4–5-year-olds – this was a bespoke study that acted as a baseline for the evaluation of the expansion

of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC). It assessed a nationally representative group of 4–5-year-olds against a variety of measures in 2019.

**SSELC data for 3-year-olds – this was also a bespoke study that acted as a baseline for the evaluation of ELC. It assessed a nationally representative group of 3-year-olds against a variety of measures in 2019.

Both SSELC studies are the nearest Scottish data that are available for comparison with the sample in this CEYRIS study. However, it should be noted that the SSELC study does not cover all the ages in the CEYRIS study and, in particular, does not include children above the age of 5 years.

[NRS Mid 2019 Population Estimates](#): base refers to the total number of children aged 2–7 years old.

[Annual Pupil and Teacher Census 2019](#): base refers to children from all ELC, primary and secondary schools in Scotland.

Table 2: Characteristics of the parents and carers who filled out the survey

Characteristic	Number	Percentage (%) of sample	SSELC phase 2* (%)	SSELC phase 3** (%)	National benchmark (%)
Relationship to the child (base: 10,593)					
Mother	9,919	93.6			
Father	430	4.1			
Stepparent	17	0.2			
Grandparent	107	1.0			
Foster carer/guardian	36	0.3			
Other (for example, kinship carer)	57	0.5			
Prefer not to say	27	0.3			
Age bands in years (base: 8,370)			(base: 1,364)	(base: 560)	
20–24	96	1.2	3.0	4.5	
25–34	2,570	30.7	41.9	48.9	
35–44	5,066	60.5	50.1	43.6	
45–54	559	6.7	4.1	2.9	
55–64	51	0.6			

Characteristic	Number	Percentage (%) of sample	SSELc phase 2* (%)	SSELc phase 3** (%)	National benchmark (%)
65–74	8	0.1			
Prefer not to say	20	0.2			
Long-term illness or condition (base: 8,906)			(base: 1,374)	(base: 564)	Scottish Core Questions***
Yes	1,558	17.5	17.9	19.9	15
No	7,204	80.9	82.1	80.1	
Prefer not to say	144	1.6			

*SSELc data for 4–5-year-olds.

**SSELc data for 3-year-olds.

*** Data from [SG Scottish Core Questions dataset](#). Percentage of adults in households with children present.

Table 3: Household characteristics

Characteristic	Number	Percentage (%) of sample	SSELc phase 2* (%)	SSELc phase 3** (%)	National benchmark (%)
Number of children (< 16 years of age) in the household (base: 8,734)					
1	2,700	30.9	21.7	24.6	
2	4,687	53.7	53.3	55.5	
3	1,100	12.6	19.8	15.3	
4 or more	224	2.6	5.2	4.6	
Prefer not to say	23	0.3			
Number of adults (16 years or older) in the household (base: 8,728)					
1	919	10.5	17.7	13.5	
2	7,207	82.6	76.4	79.4	
3	381	4.4	4.9	4.6	
4 or more	203	2.3	1.1	2.6	
Prefer not to say	18	0.2			

Characteristic	Number	Percentage (%) of sample	SSEL phase 2* (%)	SSEL phase 3** (%)	National benchmark (%)
Total income of the household from all sources before tax (pre-COVID; base 8,791)			(base: 1,253)	(base: 554)	SHS *** (base: 2,253)
Low-income households (< £26,000)	1,400	15.8	34.0	29.4	30.6
Medium-income households (£26,000 – £51,999)	2,868	32.6	35.8	36.5	47.3
High-income households (> £52,000)	3,714	42.3	30.2	34.2	22.1
Language spoken at home (base: 8,918)			(base: 1,354)	(base: 554)	Annual pupil and teacher census ## (base: 697,989)
English only	8,293	93.0	90.2	89.0	
English and other language(s)	587	6.6	8.4	9.2	6.7
Other language(s) only	31	0.4	1.4	1.8	
Prefer not to say	7	0.1			
Employment status of the main earner before lockdown* (base: 8,853)					
Employed (including full-time/part-time, self-employed and casual)	8,410	95.0			
Looking after children/home	285	3.2			
In training	8	0.1			
In education	137	1.5			
Retired	20	0.2			
Unemployed	130	1.5			
Local authority (base: 8,069)					NRS ## (base: 345, 638)
Aberdeenshire	871	10.8			4.1
Aberdeen City	145	1.8			5.2
Argyll and Bute	177	2.2			3.1
Angus	216	2.7			2.1
Clackmannanshire	60	0.7			1.0

Characteristic	Number	Percentage (%) of sample	SSELC phase 2* (%)	SSELC phase 3** (%)	National benchmark (%)
Dumfries and Galloway	119	1.5			2.4
Dundee City	107	1.3			2.7
East Ayrshire	209	2.6			2.3
Edinburgh	787	9.8			8.9
East Dunbartonshire	327	4.1			2.1
East Lothian	252	3.1			2.1
Na h-Eileanan an Iar	72	0.9			0.4
East Renfrewshire	370	4.6			2.1
Falkirk	316	3.9			3.0
Fife	346	4.3			6.9
Glasgow City	503	6.2			11.7
Highland	490	6.1			4.1
Inverclyde	61	0.8			1.3
Midlothian	193	2.4			2.1
Moray	96	1.2			1.7
North Ayrshire	157	2.0			2.3
North Lanarkshire	286	3.5			6.6
Orkney Islands	41	0.5			0.4
Perth and Kinross	213	2.6			2.6
Renfrewshire	179	2.2			3.3
South Ayrshire	260	3.2			1.8
Scottish Borders	98	1.2			2.1
South Lanarkshire	309	3.8			6.1
Stirling	180	2.2			1.6
West Dunbartonshire	288	3.6			1.7
West Lothian	332	4.1			3.8
Shetland Islands	9	0.1			0.4

*SSELC data for 4–5-year-olds.

**SSELC data for 3-year-olds.

***[Scottish Household Survey 2018](#) percentage of all households with children.

[Annual Pupil and Teacher Census \(2019\)](#).

[NRS Mid 2019 Population Estimates](#) – Shows each LAs percentage share of 2–7-year-olds in Scotland.

As can be seen from the above table, the sample achieved in the first round of CEYRIS shared many similarities with both the samples from routine national data/surveys and the SSELC study, which surveyed children between 3 and 5 in 2019. However, there were some crucial differences. Firstly, there was a larger proportion of children whose parents said that they had a long-term health condition. This condition tended to limit their everyday activities a lot. The biggest groupings were those children who had learning difficulties or behavioural issues. Secondly, the income of the household in the CEYRIS survey was higher than that in the nationally representative SSELC. In fact, although the proportion of middle-income households was roughly the same, there were far fewer households in the low-income bracket in CEYRIS and a far bigger proportion in the higher-income bracket. This may have been due to the mode of delivery of the survey, which required access to digital technology and knowledge that the survey was open and available. Importantly, CEYRIS is not representative in terms of ethnicity, with several minority ethnic groups being under-represented. The discrepancies between the CEYRIS demographic characteristics and nationally representative data will be dealt with in more detail in Report 4.

Other formats of this publication are available on request at:



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