

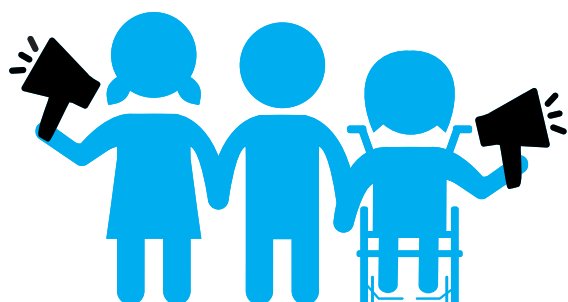


**Dear Prime Minister,**

Young people and adults from around the UK have sent you a card with messages about why you should join other world leaders and talk to our nation's children and young people.

**They've also let you know some of the questions they have about the effects of coronavirus on their lives.**

We hope you're inspired to act.



It is important to address young people during this time, because it is vital to acknowledge that the young people of the UK are affected as deeply as adults. Addressing young people is essential to ensure that young people feel safe, protected, and valued.

**Niamh, 17**

Would you consider creating a Covid-19 youth board to ensure that our views about the pandemic response are heard?

**Lauren, 19**

It would mean that he can hear our views and realise that we have our own unique view and questions. It is irresponsible to miss out a whole section of community.

**Archie, 13**

It would make me happy and feel like he is listening to young people's voices.

**Demi, 15**

As free school meals are so important to around 1.3 million children in England – are you going to carry them on to be available in the summer holidays and term breaks as hunger happens all year round for most of these children?

**Saffron, 16**

How do you plan to ensure that children with long-term illnesses stay safe while going back to school?

**Sashank, 14**

Young people's opinions and rights have been ignored and brushed aside during this period, but if the Prime Minister were to address us it would show he values and respects the future voices of this nation.

**Magali, 16**

How will the Government support young people with mental health problems during Covid-19?

**Dmitrijs, 14**

To me, a press conference for children and young people would demonstrate equal rights across the ages – we should not be discriminating or limiting the voice of any person.

**Nadia, 19**

Post pandemic, children and young people who are from disadvantaged backgrounds are going to be further behind than those who are from privileged backgrounds – how does the government plan to close the divide?

**Anonymous**

A children's address is important to me because we deserve to be acknowledged by the government about all the recent changes in our lives. I want to have access to key information in simple terms so that it is easy for young people to understand.

**Maham, 17**

Children deserve the right to know what is going on, how it will affect them and what this means for society, the economy and the country.

**Laura, 24**

We know that on the 1st of June some schools were to start reopening, starting with the youngest kids who use things like touch and taste to learn. How can we send them to school during a still very delicate time whilst maintaining social distancing for those who use their senses and interactions with the world to discover it? Furthermore, how do we expect their teachers to be able to enforce the rules to these curious minds when they themselves have to abide by them too?

**Amal, 16**

Dear Prime Minister, during Coronavirus, are you going to make sure that food is available to all children meaning poor children will be able to get food as easy as rich children?

**Malachai, 10**

What's planned for us leaving in Year 13? How are we going to take up the university places we were hoping to?

**Ethan, 18**

I think it would be important to have a press conference because there hasn't been any information from the government in a way suitable for children.

**Joseph, 13**

How close are you to developing a vaccine?

**Emily, 13**

What is going to happen to shielded young people to make them feel safe?

**Anonymous**

The coronavirus crisis is affecting our lives just as much as adults. It's important that we can ask the questions that matter to us, and get the answers that speak to our experience, in language that we understand.

**Ronni, 25**

It would mean a lot to me if the PM addressed children and young people about the impact of coronavirus with thought-through measures he planned to put in place to support and minimise the impact on children and young people – society's most vulnerable group – now in these unprecedented times and into the future.

**Lauren, 17**

I would ask the PM what he plans on doing in the future to help students' education that has been affected by coronavirus e.g. extra support, budget for school revision clubs etc?

**Valentina, 13**

What are we doing to ensure children from disadvantaged backgrounds aren't being left behind in our new, virtual, education system?

**Joana, 18**

The children and young people of the UK have been overlooked in this crisis. We should be included in the decisions that affect us and our futures.

**Isabelle, 19**

It would mean that young people were not invisible and that the government is listening to an entire generation who are going to be hit hard from the effects of Covid-19. It would mean changing the nation's perception of young people and highlighting their resilience and acts of bravery and kindness during this pandemic. It would mean answers to burning questions that affect our everyday lives.

**Anonymous**

How will the government make GCSE & A level exams in 2021 fair for all?

**Sophie, 17**

Will anything be done to help reduce the increase during isolation in mental health issues among young people?

**Magali, 16**

How would schools accommodate students with additional needs post-lockdown, especially those taking exams in 2021?

**George, 15**

What is being done to support young carers during this time?

**Alex, 16**

It's really clear that people who are a healthy weight cope better with Covid-19. What will the Prime Minister do to fix the food system that makes it hard for young people to be healthy so that every child has equal opportunity to grow up strong in the face of whatever life throws at them?

**Freya, 18**

How do you think the coronavirus pandemic has changed young people?

**Sebastian, 15**

To help you get ideas to improve this country from those who will grow up in this country.

**Jada, 15**

It would mean a lot to me if the PM directly addressed children and young people because I believe that it's our views that should be taken into consideration more than anyone else's – because it's our future.

**Anonymous**

If the PM held a conference for children and young people, it would mean that our voices are being heard rather than lost and overlooked in this time of crisis. It would show that the government values the insights of a range of age groups, not just those who can vote.

**Lauren, 18**

Has the Prime Minister used BBC bitesize? Its really good and I'm enjoying the activities!

**Nathaniel, 9**

A Children's Address is important to me because I have seen children and young people struggle and worry during the coronavirus crisis, and I can only imagine the pain felt by many others across the country. We need reassurance, we need clarity, we need action. It is a shocking and disappointing failure of the government to not consider young people beyond schools in this terrifying pandemic, but it is never too late to remember the forgotten youth and address us directly.

**Eddie, 15**

It would show that he would like to ensure that children and young people feel safe amid this crisis. It would also represent how he wishes to understand this pandemic from the perspective of children and how he wishes to ensure that the children feel listened to.

**Sashank, 14**

What is the government doing to ensure that children in difficult circumstances are receiving and will continue to receive sufficient support and education?

**Anonymous**

How are you planning on ensuring shielding young people have equal access to university materials if they are unable to return due to risk of infection?

**Emma, 19**

Do you think its right to send people back into schools when there are still people dying every day from Covid-19?

**Lucie, 11**

Young people make up 1/5 of our population. If the Prime Minister addressed young people directly, it would mean so much to me and other young people as a lot would be clarified.

**Dev, 15**

It would mean a lot because right now all children know about is isolation and toilet paper. We need an explanation on what's actually happening.

**Malachai, 10**

So we know what's going on – it's not just people over 18 who should know what's happening.

**Phoebe, 18**

Are the 2021 summer exams going to stay the same despite the pandemic?

**Anonymous**

It would be great to have a press conference for young people so that our questions can be answered.

**Emily, 13**

What is the government doing to support young people struggling with being separated from parents or guardians during this time?

**Rowan, 17**

Carving out a future for ourselves is tough enough on its own. Coronavirus has put our futures on hold. We need all the help we can get to ensure we can progress in our lives as quickly as possible.

**Ruth**

When do you expect lockdown to have been lifted completely?

**Niamh, 17**

I'm still studying for Highers this year – when will school go back to normal? Will we do exams differently next year?

**Verity, 15**

If most children are symptomatic but healthy, how does the government plan to test for Covid-19? Will this be done in schools or by contact tracing?

**Sashank, 14**

I am worried, my friends are worried, my family is worried. Most, if not all, people around my age are worried about how coronavirus will affect our future; our exam results, our ability to get into university, our financial stability etc. We need reassurance and we need to know exactly how this will affect our future. For me, the fear of the unknown is the worst thing right now.

**Efanna**

It is a very difficult time for young people to get their head around. They may be struggling more if their parents or carers cannot adequately put the situation into perspective for them, especially if they are struggling themselves. Less advantaged children with less supportive parents may feel forgotten and lonely during these times.

**Shelly, 23**

How will the government make sure that 2021 exams acknowledge the fact that we've missed half a year's worth of schooling? Will they be easier, will we get more time?

**Emily, 15**

Children are often the ones in society left without a viewpoint, but it is them who dictate what and how the future will be like. Children are crucial.

**Sebastian, 15**

What is the government doing to provide year 10s and 12s support as their results will be impacted next year too due to inconsistent levels of education across schools due to funding/availability of technology?

**Anonymous**

I think it's important for the Prime Minister to address young people as we have voices too and they deserve to be heard – this is affecting us greatly too. Covid-19 has had enormous impacts on our education, social lives, and our mental health. It would bring a bit more security if we heard from those that know most about this situation. But they need to not just hear our questions and issues but to really listen and help.

**Saffron, 16**

How does the government plan to support recent graduates with employment opportunities as we move into an economic crisis?

**Sonia, 20**

During the Covid-19 crisis, there has been millions of vulnerable children and young people finding it difficult to access food. One way for the government to help at this stressful time is by offering food vouchers to children who are entitled to Free School Meals when they aren't at school. Will the Prime Minister offer these vouchers during the summer holiday? Given that young people will continue to find it difficult to access and afford food, no matter if in or out of term time?

**Beth, 14**

Will you put more funding into the mental health services now, like CAMHS?

**Anonymous**

Education is often presented as the number one priority for young people with attendance increasingly coming under scrutiny. Why is it that during this crisis the government has not enabled quality interactive online learning, when private schools and businesses alike have successfully transitioned into offering services?

**Lauren, 17**

It would be reassuring to know that the government has been thinking about the impact of Covid-19 on young people.

**Anonymous**

What policies and procedures will you put in place to protect vulnerable young people from a second wave or future pandemics (eg meds, school support)?

**Demi, 15**

With the summer exams being cancelled this year, there are a lot of young people feeling defeated, coupled with isolation from lockdown, emotions are running high. What mental health support will be in place for young people following this pandemic?

**Alyssa, 15**

Young people need to understand what is happening.

**Kian, 19**

The most effective way to find out what children actually think, feel, want and need is to ask them directly. Children's voices are important and should be taken into account when making decisions, especially when those decisions directly impact them.

**Ellen, 24**

Many of us have reconnected with home cooked food and enjoying meals with our families during this crisis. What will the PM do to ensure such positive change is embraced and facilitated as we come look to the future?

**Tasha, 18**

Some of us are of working age – we're key workers during the pandemic, working with vulnerable people in care homes and left in the unknown. There's use of mature language and things are not simplified for young people to understand!

**Gemma, 23**

What would happen if another spike came along?

**Anonymous**

How do you think the coronavirus pandemic will affect students' abilities to get a job at university (excluding on campus jobs)?

**Lauren, 18**

How is the government going to support young people who faced hardship and inequality obtaining work prior to Covid-19 (e.g. young carers, people living with disabilities or mental health issues) during recovery?

**Anonymous**

Why is there not much help finding under 18's jobs so they can start saving for university?

**Phoebe, 18**

When do you think I can see my friends properly, by going for a sleepover?

**Jess, 17**

In the long-term, this pandemic will disproportionately affect young people – including education being disrupted at all stages, young workers being some of the first to lose their jobs in times of economic hardship, and the mental health implications of isolation on developing brains. How will your government listen to young people and give us the specific support we need?

**Martha, 17**

Young people often don't get the platform to do so but it's critical to hear their stories and experiences.

**Sara, 25**

How will the government support and protect youth mental health after the crisis when young people return to normal – in schools and NHS care?

**Charli, 19**

Do you consider the NHS to be suitably resourced and equipped to ensure the safety of all UK citizens?

**Nadia, 19**

After months of lockdown, young people are craving spaces to socialise, eat and move. How will the PM ensure that when we rebuild our high streets and local areas, that health is put right at the centre?

**Dave, 17**

Millions of young people in the UK have been affected by food insecurity and poor food quality in this crisis. What will the Prime Minister do to ensure young people – especially those with lived experience – are involved in finding long-term solutions to these problems?

**Dev, 15**

It is vital for the Prime Minister to address young people directly, as it gives young people a platform to discuss issues that adults may not. During this stressful time, it is important to hear from young people and our first-hand experience. To empower young people and to get answers for their questions is an amazing thing. I believe you have to understand the issues from the people they are impacting, and unfortunately lots of the modern-day issues are affecting us directly.

**Beth, 14**

Young people will be one of the most financially affected groups in the aftermath of the pandemic. How will the government increase and fund the financial education and mental health support which are so crucial to supporting the young people of the country, even after lockdown ends?

**Anonymous**

Do you feel you should have given people the opportunity to realise lockdown was imminent so that extended families could have moved together to help with disabled care needs or those who felt unsafe in their situation the opportunity to leave?

**Archie, 13**

If this year we have no GCSE exams, and we get results then why can't this happen forever?

**Anonymous**

It would mean a lot if the PM were to talk to children and young adults because often as people in society who don't get a big say in massive decisions that will affect us. It would be an incredible thing to hear the Prime Minister address our issues specifically.

**Valentina, 13**

The government is spending so much time and money to protect businesses, which is the right thing to do – but surely, we need to protect the health of children and young people too? What are you doing to support families that are having to decide between putting food on the table or keeping the lights on? Not just during a global crisis, but always.

**Sara, 25**

What is the government doing to create a post-Covid UK which addresses the rights of children and young people so they can thrive in their lives and futures and become meaningful contributors to society?

**Eddie, 15**

Why can't we use other spaces (like local cinemas or libraries and leisure centres) instead of school if they aren't being used to have some lessons if we won't be able to see the teacher or have proper lessons anyway? Then we would still see friends and be able to do some things.

**Nathaniel, 9**

Will access to school from home become normal for young people like me who can't afford to put themselves at risk but also want to learn and become productive members of society? Will this be put in place for us so when we don't go back to school straight away or have missed lessons due to appointments that we can still access our lessons?

**Demi, 15**

It will help us to develop a better understanding of the situation and ready to deal with the repercussions.

**Kirsty, 22**

How is it going to affect children and young people's educational life, due to missing school for a long time?

**Anonymous**

We are worried about our education, our exams, our university and living fees, our mental health, and the long-term economic and employment challenges we will bear the worst of in a post-Covid world. Even if solutions and answers are not available, we would like to be addressed.

**Natalie**

What strategies and schemes will you put into place to support children and young people's mental health as they start to enter school and the workplace?

**Laura, 24**

Our opportunities for job security, buying a home, going abroad and basically securing a stable future look so bleak right now – many of us feel scared and hopeless, so addressing our generation that will sustain your economy, become key workers, be sitting alongside you in the cabinet in the next few years is so, so vital, in order to repair the trust that's been fractured between politicians and young people; otherwise what are we fighting this pandemic for?

**Anonymous**

It means that the government is listening to us and that provides a lot of safety in itself.

**Emily, 15**

**This card has also been signed by Nathan (15), Malachi (9), Lewis (16), Connor (17), Aiysha (under 18) and Molly (16).**



**Here are also just some of the hundreds of messages we received from adults across the UK who co-signed [this open letter](#) to you from Unicef UK's Youth Advisory Board, which has over 16,000 signatures.**

Children will remember this period for the rest of their lives. The more they are treated with respect, the better they will be able to understand the situation. We have an obligation to ensure that these events do not make them anxious for the future and instead they remember that they were listened to and helped through this difficult time.

**Thomas, Newport**

[It's their futures and they deserve to be addressed.](#)

**Rachel, Newbury**

The voices of children and the young must be heard to fully understand the impact of Covid-19 and its aftermath.

**Clive, Nuneaton**

[Children and young people deserve respect and for their particular struggles to be acknowledged at the highest level of government.](#)

**Nicola, London**

Children look to leaders for reassurance, guidance and support whenever any kind of crisis threatens their health lives.

**Mahmood, Preston**

[Children and young people will have to live with the consequences of our actions to manage the pandemic now and in their future lives. They deserve no less than to have their concerns addressed directly.](#)

**Sarah, Kettering**

It is sad to see children quietly suffering from fear and anxiety during this pandemic. Their feelings should be adequately recognised and addressed, with a proper platform to air their concerns. After all, their well-being is crucial for our society's future.

**Anthony**

[Young people are just as worried, as many adults are, about things that directly concern them. Their fears should be addressed.](#)

**Jenny, Bedford**

Children deserved to be adequately addressed. They are experiencing the same emotions as adults and their opinions are vital. Ultimately their lives may be more impacted by pandemic – especially for young people embarking on higher education, these are exceptionally uncertain times. Children and young adults deserve what clarity can be provided.

**Bronagh, Ballymena**

[Children and young people are not only our future – they are our present. Many are deeply affected by the epidemic, in many ways. Their questions must be welcomed, listened to and answered.](#)

**Martin, Hathersage**

I've worked with young people all my life. Their patterns of life have been broken, their schooling interrupted, their exams abandoned. They see the future as being so different and so insecure compared with their expectations and hopes. Many will not have the support and understanding that they need. They must be addressed directly.

**Dinah, Nottingham**

[Young people are innovative and enthusiastic and should be shown the respect that their opinions and future deserve. They can influence their peers, siblings and parents. Talk to them, listen to them and support them in their attempts to become productive citizens. Please don't dismiss them simply because of their age.](#)

**Hazel, Sheffield**

We need the Prime Minister to address young people in the UK. They are the future and need acknowledgement of the impact of coronavirus on them from our Government. The evidence is clear from recent research – they're suffering just like adults and can't be ignored any longer. Their futures and mental health are in the balance. Please address them.

**Suki, Leeds**

We must show young people that their views matter.

**Ruth, Gloucester**

Coronavirus is having a great impact on children's lives. It causes anxiety, fear and can fundamentally affect their future. Please address this situation and help them towards a better future.

**John, Grantham**

Children and young people are the future of this nation. As the leader of the UK you owe it to those who will be going forward after this pandemic as the future business leaders, doctors, teachers, lawyers and even government. They have a right to know how the coronavirus is going to impact their education, their hopes and dreams for the future, because their future is the history of this nation.

**Sheila, Peterborough**

The Prime Minister should address children about coronavirus for the simple reason that children want to hear from him, and children matter.

**Jonathan, Thornbury**

I think that the Prime Minister should address children and young people about the impact of Covid-19 so that they can feel included and part of the huge crusade to defeat it. Every day Ministers talk to adults – surely the PM can spare a session to talk to those who in 20, 40, 60 years will still remember these times.

**Richard, Redditch**

We are fully responsible for the health and wellbeing of the nation's children. They need reassurance and belief in the fact that everything is being carried out to protect them and ensure they aren't being left behind or out. Their mental health depends on it.

**Marjory, Dundee**

There is no substitute to talking to young people directly and so I urge you to do it. It's the right thing to do.

**Mushtaq, Carmarthen**

They are our future and should have a chance to enjoy their childhood but are having to bear a heavy load of anxiety.

**Jane, Penzance**

The future belongs to young people so their needs and well-being should be the government's prime responsibility.

**David, Swansea**

Children's lives have been hugely disrupted. They need to be both heard and spoken to directly by members of the government.

**Roger, St Asaph**

Young people are the generation that will have to deal with the aftermath of what we do now – we owe it to them to involve them.

**Victoria, Dunfermline**

Show our children that they matter too! They are important and need to have validation for the sacrifices they have made.

**Kelsey, Bradford**

The anxiety children and young people are feeling about the new world we're living in is not to be underestimated. They need to be heard, and their questions need to be answered. It's not just the right thing to do, but it can help us as a nation start to rebuild and reimagine a brighter future for all.

**Becky, London**



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