

# Voices

The creative writing competition for children in care and care leavers

## Voices 2020

### Special Category; Experiences of COVID-19

An anthology exploring children in care and care leavers' individual and shared experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic and its effect on their lives.



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#Voices2020

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# On the 23rd March 2020 the UK went into Lockdown...

Events got cancelled, visits with friends and family stopped and we entered a period of great uncertainty.

During this time we at Coram Voice looked for ways that we could connect with young people and continue to hear and champion their voices...

The following collection of writing was submitted to the Coram Voice **Voices** Competition throughout May and June 2020 under the theme **“Experiences of Covid-19”**

We hope you enjoy reading these pieces as much as we have.

# Thankyou NHS For Saving Our Lives

by *Ruby, aged 10*

It makes me feel very sad.  
It makes people feel bad.  
Lots of people are getting it.  
But not to worry its going away bit by bit.

We cant go out  
Its making people hopping mad.  
We can not see our friends at school.  
Because of the new rule.

Its getting worse,  
But hopefully soon it will get better.  
10 Downing street has sent us all a letter.  
To tell people to stay at home to keep us safe.  
As this is something that is not funny  
We should all do it if we want to go out in the summer.

Looking on the bright side  
We dont have to hide  
Just stay away from large groups,  
Because if you dont things,  
Will just go round like a hoola hoop.

But we are still alive  
And we can thank the nhs for this.



**3rd Place**  
***Primary***  
***Category***

**Untitled**  
by *Tyler, aged 12*

People are dying because of this,  
And that makes me sad.  
Kids are giving their parents their last kiss  
And this is bad.  
This virus means we cant have freedom,  
We might as well just call it boredom.  
The NHS are really trying and its not their fault.  
Because this is the unknown  
And is very difficult.

But there are some positives.  
WE ARE LOOKED AFTER  
WE HAVE LEARNT ALOT THROUGH HOME SCHOOLING  
WE HAVE FULL BELLIES  
WE ARE SAFE  
WE ARE ALIVE  
WE ARE ALL HAPPY.  
WHAT MORE COULD I ASK FOR.

# **My Story**

**by Bonnie, aged 13**

It's been 1 year since the great 2020 pandemic, none of us really remember how it started. We think that we were lucky enough that we were able to stay alive or lucky that our family and our world didn't fall apart at the very seams, the trees were still standing tall and the world still seemed sane, the same cars rushing past rushing to get to get into the daylight. People rush around turning into the day like bulls rushing to the brega rid of the movement and freeze the world in front of them. That was me, I was the bull here. I wanted to stop the rushing, stop the noise so people could remember how much the family means. How much life means. We escaped the brink of extinction and people don't seem to care

I guess you're wondering who I am.

I guess you're wondering why it's such a big deal, well those of you who didn't experience the 2020 pandemic you wouldn't understand why it's such a big thing, those of you who know, you know.

My name is Beth, Beth Williams. I stayed with my best friend Kitty black. We met a few years before Covid-19 , we were both in year 8 when it started, we are now in year nine and no one is really the same, they are the same but too much the same.

The sun was shining the day that we were put on red alert well if you could call it that. We were told we couldn't go out except for essentials , the whole world was panicking. The whole world was screaming inside their heads trying to find a way out, trying to wrap their heads around how the world came to this.

As the sun shone down on the empty earth it was all silent, the bird needn't dare squawk there was not a single soul walking on the pavement, not a car driving on the road, planet earth has been shut down. Silent was the word. I sit and think about how this year will be remembered, for the quarantine or just for 'the year the world stopped'. As the sycamore tree swayed standing tall I breathed a breath of borrowed air I stepped outside, remembering when I couldn't.

Meeting with my friends and hugging them, it felt so good for them to be so close, not inside a phone screen or from what seemed like miles away and one of the many things that had kept me sane was the thought that it would be all over. Now what can we all say we've learned through it all, we have learnt family. The world has finally returned to a loud noisy blur that it was before but a tiny bit different this time. We aren't rushing to get to meaningless places or spending time on useless things to do.

## **Untitled**

**by Sarafina, aged 22**

Feel Like I'm Finally Cracking Corona got me locked in,

Anxiety, depression just roll on by, these post on social media making me think I'm finally gonna die, my mental health ain't to good, I'm fragile, not to sane, but this lockdown got me separated and its playing on my Brain... how long is this hell gonna last?

All this stock piling makes you look crazy not mad, got all these regulations all these rules, but there their for a reason, stop acting so silly and stay in doors

But 2020 gonna go down in history, but I wish to be noticed cuz this lock downs been killing me, but gonna hold it down and ride through cuz soon this all will be a dream to me hope everyone stays safe

And Mental health free.

# The floating island of Endore

by Alfie, aged 18

There was once a city that floated it was the most amazing place ever then one day it crashed into the mountain that overlooked the town.

There is a girl called Alice who has a crush on her best friend Alex, Alice was kicked out because she was lesbian, she only had her friend and crush Alex. It's nearly valentine's day I'm going to ask her out, then I put one of those secret lover cards in her locker.

At break Alex came running over to me to tell me she got a valentine's card, I then told her how I felt about her and asked her out, she said yes. She kissed me and grabbed my hand and dragged me into the corridor and started kissing me, my hands were on her waste. We were so into it we didn't see people standing there, watching us they started to clap, we were so embarrassed we walked off holding each other's hands I'm so happy.

She invited me to her house for dinner, I told her I was kicked out of my house she said I could stay over, after dinner we talked a lot and then she kissed me.

I got a phone call from my mum saying she wanted me to come back home and she kicked my stepdad out she's also got information about my dad's death I told her that I'll come home tomorrow and I've got some news too so I left Alex's place with her.

hand in hand when we got to my place my mum was waiting for us, she told me my dad died creating a science experiment a bio weapon for the military called covid 19 apparently the lab crashed in to the mountains and destroyed everything and he died the aftermath was like a nuclear warhead blowing up.

I told her about me and Alex she started to cry she said she was proud to have a daughter like me. she told me not to go to the mountains wear the accident happened I took Alex to my room to show her it, she saw my mirror that was covered in pictures of me and her she thought it was cute.

no one can visit the mountains now because of covid 19 it completely melted the mining equipment up there, it was late afternoon when Alex left then an alarm was going off.

## My experiences of COVID-19

by Sapphire, aged 12

Coming close to family and friends cancelled,  
Organisational events on hold,  
It's really boring staying inside,

But that gives us a chance to confide,

Nothing can break my bond,  
Except for coronavirus,  
Which is not putting my events on hold,  
Unless it is very cold,

Homeschooling can be a struggle,  
And sometimes get us into muddles,  
But we have to learn,  
Otherwise our education could take a wrong turn,

One thing this pandemic has taught us is to,  
Celebrate and thank the true heroes,  
The NHS and the keyworkers,

But one true thing this pandemic has really done,  
Is taught the world,  
To care for one another,  
And look out for each other,  
During coronavirus and black lives matter.



# **My life in lockdown**

## **by Megan, aged 17**

What life in lock down has been like for me?

Life during the covid 19 lockdown has been intersting but also a bit of a challenge because i have had to settle into a new routine. I have had to get use to doing online classes and being in all the time . We have aslo been going out for walks with my carers as well as doing home work outs by myself.

How i have coped with lockdown?

I have coped by talking to carers as well as camhs . I have also been listening to my music and doing art work.

What am i grateful for during lockdown?

- Having people to talk to and to listen to me.
- The nice weather.
- Being able to access camhs during lockdown.
- Being able to have time to myself.
- Being able to go for a walk.

What are my two good benefits during lock down?

1. Being able to have somebody talk to and somebody to listen to me.
2. Being able to spend time with carers and other young people

# **Every Day**

## **by Poppie, aged 10**

Everyday I look out the window  
My fear starts to show

I see masks on peoples faces  
it disturbs me

I see rainbows in the windows  
which makes me feel really jolly

On Thursday nights  
we clapped out loud for key workers

My friends and family go to shops  
which are rammed with people

We get bored of washing our hands  
but we all know that's its for our own safety

We can all stick together  
to beat this coronavirus

# **Life in Lockdown**

## **By Bobby-Joe aged 11**

Lockdown has started  
And we all have parted  
We're missing our friends  
School has come to an end  
We've had crazy Corona haircuts  
And we've been reading lots of books  
I'm drawing all the time  
After we all dine  
Shopping is hard  
When you have to use your card  
I've been playing football  
So listen to my call  
Meeting people has gone online  
To see that we're all fine  
Our families have missed us  
But that's what a family does  
We can't wait to go outside  
And that's the end of my rhyme.

# My Lockdown experience

by Hayleigh, aged 15



During lockdown it has been a mixture of emotions such as happy and confused

I think the lockdown has been a challenge for me as I have struggled to do schoolwork on my own, but I have been working on being independent and I have been persevering, so I understand it.

The positive side of lockdown is that I have been doing lots of activities in the garden such as growing my own fruit and veg with grandma and granddad and water fights with my brother and sister.

L-ooking for frogs and other creatures in our garden.

O-utgoing the lockdown has been tough as I am normally an outgoing person and I like to climb trees and I like to explore

C-ooking dinners for the family with the fruit and vegetables that I have been growing in the garden.

K-eeep calm we are all in this together.

D-ancing with grandma and my sister my favourite time we danced was on VE day when we did the swing dancing in the garden, they did this dance when the war finished.

O-ne to one time with grandma is the best.

W-riting I have been writing cards for my family and making cards and send them so that we can stay in contact and have fun making them.

N-hs The NHS have been a massive support during the pandemic.

## Untitled by Arya, aged 16

What you know about this virus,  
here is some advice for you?

Bro – Bro these Virus ain't a joke,  
I hear a lot people are in hospital,  
so, you must stay at home,  
and wash your hands.

Corona virus is spreading all around the world,  
the world is so quiet.  
It's hard to stay at home,  
But that's alright.

Hush – Shush stay at home,  
And wash your hand.  
If you love your family then  
you must stay at home.

Yo-yo, are you goanna back your world,  
If Corona see you nobody can save you.

Don't be a trump, think twice,  
This virus can kill you,  
At any time.

# **A Lonely Journey**

**by Chavika, aged 20**



I was born for this world, but was I born for this pain, for the suffering for all of this shame.

I was only 4 when I went into care, too young to understand but happy to be there, my foster carers loved me as if I were there own, 9 years went by that's when I struggled the most, I couldn't accept the love I was given the love I was shown.

I was 12 when my life tore apart, went from having a family and friends to life all by myself, I walked home from school and opened the door, the meeting commenced to decide where to move me after all these disruptive events, I begged and I cried "please don't take me away" but to no odds, the decision was made, I ran out the house as fast as I could go I was so afraid of unknown.

To summarize, my life from age 12 to 20 I will tell you how I have been and tell you the struggles of Covid19, I have moved around for quite some time I'm no longer afraid of time flying bye, I was abused several times whilst being in homes, I won't go into detail as this pain is my own, just know that the horror and shame will forever torment my brain.

Dont get me wrong it hasnt been all sad I have met some great people including some great staff, I've been in Secures Units at first they were the worst, I then became institutionalized, never having that feeling of wanting to be freed.

This is my 20th placement in the last 6 years, I'm 18 now I am leaving care, I genuinely never thought I would make it there, I am thankful that I am still me, still alive and above all survived.

I am 20 now I have a flat, I have a home even a doormat. I'm starting to build friendship in a place so unknown, at times I still do feel alone, but that's okay I have Anne my PA she is wonderful woman with a wonderful plan, she really cares about me and wants me to succeed.

During Covid19 everyone has felt so trapped and alone being stuck at home, it's a long time to be away from normality and away from family, this is not forever this will improve soon, hopefully everybody will be back on the move, well done NHS for all you have done and i am sorry for the loved ones that have passed on.

I have written about my past and have written about about the present, who knows what the future will hold for me I'll just have to wait and see, for now I say goodbye and say a few things, be thankful for your family and friends and all the nice things, because out there somewhere there are people like me that would love nothing more than a family.

## **Untitled**

**by Mohammed, aged 18**

It's called Coronavirus  
You'll need to be cautious  
You'll end up feeling nauseous (sick)  
It's all a mess  
Why can't people take a test and hope for the best  
People such as the NHS  
Are under stress  
Just stick to the lockdown  
Cos the keyworkers and NHS deserve a crown  
For god's sake stay home and don't cause another outbreak.  
Stay safe and have faith.



# How I Coped with Covid

by *Tychique, aged 25*



I'll tell you about 2020. How a virus spread like a wild forest fire and shut the whole world down.

The busiest centres and the largest cities had a well-deserved rest.

A pin drop could be heard through numerous towns.

Fear makes companions of us all; I was incredibly frightened.

Sorrow waters flooded from my eyes, I couldn't find any mental insurance and there was nothing for me to be cushioned by.

This was the time where I really needed my closest friends and they all came through.

As I ran the Covid marathon my lungs seized, I couldn't breath, but they all pointed out the finish line to me.

I can't explain how thankful I am for them.

'Keep On Running' kept playing through my head.

I could not escape the writing.

I came back to the spoken word pieces, the novels and books that I still needed to read.

I started to realise that C19 may have shut the world down temporarily, but time was now a close friend to me.

I went to the theatre through YouTube, attended church through Facebook and recalled great memories through retro football matches.

We all thought Covid-19 was the worlds biggest nuisance but in fact we needed it.

We had forgotten ourselves amongst the technology and fast foods. We needed to go back to simplicity.

Racism was still in full throttle, the demon on George Floyds neck.

We still battled, charged, boomed and screeched 'NO MORE.'

We bashed down racism's door.

Black people were summoned, anti-racists were summoned and all of the mother's love was summoned.

In a time where the world was separated, we came together.

For the first time in my career, I missed my job and along with that joy I missed John Bercow.

Suddenly Theresa May didn't seem so bad now.

I can't wait to tell people I came through it.

I can't wait to tell people how God guided me through it.

I can't wait to tell my nieces not to think about it and just do it.

And to tell my nephew to appreciate the world a little bit more because in 2020, we nearly lost it.

# Lockown Song

## by Baron, aged 13

When we first got into lockdown we didn't know what to do.  
We thought it wasn't bad we just thought it was a flue  
The sky's turned grey instead of baby blue,  
Turns out we don't know what to do

You better Zoom call  
You own it, you better never let it go  
You only get one shot, if you stay at home,  
You get a free drone  
You better Zoom call  
You own it, you better never let it go  
You only get one shot, do not miss your chance to Stay at Home

Yeah cause his Arms are Rough, legs Lazy, Torso all Wrinkled  
There's food in his hair but it is all sprinkled, he can't even comb it  
Cause if you stay at home, you own it

This opportunity comes once in a lifetime bro

And I am, a nice person  
If I wasn't, then why would I say I am?  
In the paper, the news everyday I am  
Radio won't even play my jam  
They say it blam  
I don't know why it's just the way I am

You better Zoom call  
You won it, you better never let it go  
You only get one shot, do not miss your chance to Stay at Home  
This opportunity comes once in a lifetime bro

Yeah cause his Arms are Rough, Legs Lazy, Torso all Wrinkled  
There's food in his hair but it is all sprinkled, he can't even comb it  
Cause if you stay at home, you own it

You get on with life as a Student,  
You're a Hard working kinda person  
You like TV and Eating  
You like to be Zoom calls  
But when you start to daydream,  
Your mind turns straight to ice scream.

But you would think it's Zoom calls making your life worthwhile  
But actually it's just burning ur style

So let's go back  
Follow the governments guidelines as we go on another episode  
You hate Corona and COVID-19  
But you think back to Self isolating  
And you're happy once again  
You're ending it's reign

# Quarantine Depression

by *Favour, aged 10*

I remember the time when it was just fun and games  
Now all I do is sit back , depressed of these days  
My life shouldn't have turned out this way

But I see people who are suffering worser  
Coronavirus isn't just vice versa

2020 yeah you're the new 2012  
Cause you succeeded in ending the world

Thanks to you I'll never finish Year 6  
So in Year 7 I'll be up to lots of tricks

No party  
No production

Covid 19 has caused a ruction

This is the time that I'll remember throughout my life  
The time I felt so much strife.

*To 11 year old Favour from 10 year old Favour*



**2nd Place  
Primary  
Category**

**Untitled**

***From Rebecca, aged 16***

Peaceful, I am able to use this time to heal reflect and relax.  
I love the current situation because a giant weight has been lifted off my shoulders.  
I have more free time to spend alone, doing things I love and want to do.  
No more pressure of exams or awkward social interactions.  
No commitments, just lots of freedom.  
Some people may feel trapped but for me this is the most free I have ever been or felt. I  
feel better than I had done before lockdown.

# The coronavirus lockdown

by *Manny*

The corona virus lockdown has affected us a lot  
I can't go out swimming or to the library, no I cannot  
Before this all started I would do whatever I wanted to do  
I felt very happy then, but now I feel very blue  
I use to have contact, I was able to see my mom  
But I can only facetime her, it feels like my mind has gone numb  
I hope the rules will not get restricted again and we can go back to having fun  
So we can hug and kiss our relatives and so that we can play sports in the sun!

# My thoughts and feelings about being in lockdown

by Toyah, aged 15

Due to this corona virus outbreak I haven't been able to do the things I wanted to do this year. I honestly thought that this year was going to be the best year so far...but no it appears not. I feel like this year has been the worst, I've not been able to do the things I had planned or do the things that I wanted to do this year.

During this lockdown I have lost my uncle due to his medical problems and that got me down a lot because I was close to my uncle and it hurt to here the news that he had passed away and I not being able to go to the funeral to say my goodbyes or anything due to this corona virus.

I was also hoping that I would get to do is go to prom with my mates which I was looking forward to and everything that goes with it such as; the dress and shoe shopping and getting my hair done and my nails and it was going to be great I was really looking forward to it but it can't happen like most things. One thing that I was ecstatic about was going to Italy with my school, not only was it going to be my first holiday aboard my best friend was going and we were talking about it a lot and hyping each other up about it as It came closer to the time and then we wasn't able to go and we had a cry about it at school we were both really upset about it. However, I do try and look on the bright side to things and how I will be able to go traveling aboard in the future.

I was also due to be a bridesmaid for my foster sister at her wedding which was supposed to be in June but due to these unfortunate circumstances I couldn't. It was heart breaking to find out that my sister couldn't have her wedding that we were all looking forward to. However the wedding is happening next year and we are all looking forward to it.

There are many other things I'm not able to do, I was really looking forward to doing NCS which I was going to do with my friends after my GCSEs and it was going to be great and so much fun.

One thing that is worrying is the fact that I couldn't do my exams which gives me uncertainty about my grades and how I'm going to do as I'm not that academic but I tried really hard to pull my grades up, I worked so hard to achieve. I stress due to this as I don't know if I'll get on the course that I wanted to do at college, but there is always another way. I feel like my hard work has gone to waste.

Also not being able to see my friends has really got me down, one of these reasons is that before schools had closed, I was unwell, and I had a

cough so I couldn't go to school which really made me upset as I didn't know that, that would be the last time I would be the last time I would see my friends for months on end. It gets me down at times, but I keep in touch with them through social media. I can't wait until lockdown is over because then I can meet up with my friends again.

One thing that really worries me is my mum. This is because she has special needs and I was worried that's she wouldn't understand the restrictions resulting to the corona virus, and that she would go out and socialize and ending up catching the virus and then due to this she would end up catching the virus and then the worst might happen and that scared me. My mum is easily influenced by other people so if someone was come around her house, I'm scared that she would let them in and then put herself in danger and for the worse to happen. However, I did go and see her because I was worried as she is on her own in her house and my uncle had just died so I didn't want her to be upset so I went around there to go and cheer her up but I kept within the guidelines of keeping within 2 meters.

However, I have been trying to keep positive and looking at the Brightside of things and keeping myself busy. I have learnt to bake scones and make a curry and I've been helping around the house, doing cleaning jobs and doing my washing and learning the importance of a clean house which is life lessons I can take with me in the future when I get my own place etc.

I have also been doing some art which has been helping me get though the lockdown and sometimes I do art and get so in my own zone I forget what the time is, alternatively, sometimes I can't be bothered to do anything.

Surprisingly, I miss school. I miss my lessons where people would make jokes, I miss learning with my friends. I miss not being able to hang out and have jokes with them at break and lunch.

I will never get the secondary school experience again, but I have amazing memories and I'm sure I would make even more at college.

# Life in Lockdown

*by Olivia, aged 12*

Life in Lockdown has been exciting,  
Inviting? No not really!  
Home schooling, skype and Zoom  
A technology boom.  
From latch hook to puzzles,  
Diamond painting and cooking,  
To Joe Wicks and running,  
2k every-day,  
To keep my mind healthy!  
Watching re-runs of Dr Who and building a Tardis,  
Covid 19 has taken over.  
But I am a fighter, the NHS army has humbly helped us,  
Every day, every night,  
They fight!  
I felt worried but I learnt its ok to worry though,  
In that moment I slowed down,  
And all at once I was not in a hurry.  
Lockdown has been interesting,  
Not the best thing, but I look at nature now,  
The birds, the trees, the cows  
With more respect as they adapt,  
To our ever-changing man-made world.  
Lessons to learn and adapt we will,  
Hopefully united together under the sun,  
Before this glorious, multi-coloured world becomes undone.



**2nd Place**  
***Lower***  
***Secondary***

## **COVID-19**

***By Zuzana, aged 17***

On day 95 of quarantine I haven't seen my friends, my brothers and sisters since quarantine started. It started on the 16th March 2020 on this day I have finished college because we were going into lockdown. When I heard about it I was alright with it because I know that I won't go to college and that I won't have to wake up earlier, but then 1 week past and I was already bored of being in the house all the time, but we couldn't do anything about it so I had to stay at home . More weeks passed, I was getting so bored of being in the house I missed everything like going dancing, Looked After Children's Council, rehearsals and also meeting my friends going with them to the cinema and other places . It was getting a little bit better because I was having online classes from college and I had some work to do from college so that was keeping me busy. It felt so long being in the house it was getting worse. I was arguing with my sister and people were just getting on my nerves. I felt so angry, but then I realized that if we were going to be in lockdown together for so long I might as well build my relationship with my family and also spend more time with my little sister so I was trying so hard to build a better relationship with my sister. I started working out, going for a long walk so the day could pass.

# Lockdown Poem

by Gemma, aged 16

Lockdown is so difficult no-one is here.

We are missing hugs from family and anyone dear.

We are home and safe and secure as can be.

Playing games, baking cakes and watching TV.

The heroes stand among us, rainbows everywhere.

Showing NHS and Keyworkers that we do care.

Shopping is very different now, we have to stay 2 metres.

Making it safe to collect our food with kind staff there to greet us.

Our hands are safe, we wash them more to the 'HAPPY BIRTHDAY' song.

This lockdown is so difficult let's hope it's not too long.

## What happened to 2020?

by Chloe, aged 19

*Commended  
Entry*

Covid-19. 2020. Lockdown. All words that we will remember in years and decades to come. "The Global Pandemic" as it is called, has effected most people's lives and left them without family members. No one can understand what went on this year or can explain why everything happened so quickly. There will never be another year like it.

Facemasks became the fashion. Panic buyers were about. Hand sanitizers- out of stock. Life spent behind closed doors-depression at its finest. Not for everyone though. Family time became a tradition again, parents worked from home, children and students were home schooled, Zoom Zoom went the meetings. Famous tours (Glastonbury) getting cancelled, our local pubs and clubs- shut forever.

Disney + and Netflix saved peoples boredom (well at least my life) and so did Glee- 'and that's what you missed' and all that jazz. Music and my boyfriend- the only reasons to get up and smile each day. Yes, I said the B word but I don't care because I'm just lucky to have got to know someone during lockdown who has been my rock and prince at the same time, insane..... I think so, but that's my personality for you.

Corona made people come together: BBQs, garden parties, lockdown hair salons and birthdays that felt pointless were celebrated. New, creative ideas were brought to the table like, Zoom music at home groups and meetings, Zoom Disney quizzes and talks (because parks weren't open) made them realise that they could still have fun and do all those crazy things but indoors so that the virus could be contained and protected people from getting the disease.

Black Lives Matter became a movement that has inspired our generation to think before they say or do anything racist. Equality is a massive thing in our world and the fact to this day we still treat each other like dirt, like a piece of nothingness, a piece of life that has no purpose, its despicable and unacceptable to hear. Our ancestors fought for a lot of our human rights and so therefore we must respect and deliver an attitude and gratitude for each and every human but sadly the way in which our modern world sees this does not agree and our brothers and sisters of this world suffer when all they want is to be treated as equals.

The future seems a lot brighter when you can imagine the happy times and dreams being fulfilled. Applying for college course for the next academic year seems to be the happiest thing I can focus on to date, knowing I'll be back in my home town, my own flat, my own path in life sorted out..... kind of.

This pandemic has taught me to be more human and less robot because showing love, being the best version of yourself, and sharing passions with others are the only ways this society will accept all humans, we need to educate ourselves on certain subjects and come together a lot stronger.

# **Imprisoned but not Unhappy**

*by Jay, aged 14*

Another day in lockdown, another weekly toll  
A few more saddening stories  
Of the middle-aged the young, and the old

The streets are quiet and the shopkeepers all alone  
The once busy parks, and beaches  
Are silent and empty, everyone is stuck at home

Yet as we stay in our households together  
we grow closer, have fun as a family  
and learn more, about each other

The theme parks, cinemas and swimming pools might be closed  
But we try new things as a family  
Gardening, baking, football in the garden, with jumpers as goalposts.

And one day we will look back at the time when the world lost hope  
And remember what fun we had  
As a crisis swept the nation, we learned new ways to cope.



**2nd Place**  
***Upper Secondary***  
***Category***

# **Hi, I'm Maddie. This is how lockdown has affected me.**

*by Maddie, aged 14*

Being in lockdown has made me realise a lot of things. Its made me believe in myself more and its made me become a better person.

Before I went into lockdown I was really struggling at school. I was refusing to go in most of my lessons and I was behind on all my exams. But from this day on I've realised life's to short to throw my reputation away.

You only get one shot at life at the end of the day. Its not worth throwing away.

When I first went into lockdown I had to isolate for 14 days with my foster carer Brenda after I got sent home from school with signs of covid. Half way through Lockdown I found myself in a very dark place and I felt trapped. I couldn't see my mum or my friends and it felt like everything was falling apart. Waking up every morning looking at the dull grey walls of my room was the only thing I ever saw throughout the weeks.

Me and my Foster carers relationship was breaking apart, we started to get at each others necks. It felt like my depression was taking over me and I couldn't reach out for support. I was alone!

I started playing the guitar to keep my mind of things. In this period of time I managed to decorate my room and emptied my bank account on a new wardrobe.

**Chaotic**  
by Robert, aged 22



From the second they said they were doing it,  
I was down in a dark place, suicidal for a bit,  
Still am, but family help keep it at ease,  
So the I'm not caught hanging with slits in my knees,  
It's an awful time for all of us during this pandemic,  
If you get sick or unwell, it's hard to get a paramedic,  
NHS are having it tight, staff are up all night,  
Needing someone to tell them it's gonna be alright,  
They don't get to see their families, their in lockdown,  
Don't want to spread anything that could cause a breakdown,  
A lot of people have died and it's been depressing,  
So excuse me if during this to, you read some cursing,  
It's a brutal reality we are all living in,  
God is above working on forgiving each sin,  
Helping people has been my passion, keeping in contact,  
And I do the 'care' thing for free, on an unpaid now contract,  
Extended family are amazing and I love them all,  
Always on the end for each other, if we need a phone call,  
Or if we need the media to keep in touch, no worries,  
Hopefully this will be forced soon, mark the diaries,  
But yeah, for me and everyone one this has been hard,  
2020 is the year we were dealt a rotten card,  
Perhaps next year it'll be more peaceful and exotic,  
And less damaging, depressing, suicidal and chaotic.

It's just a bit chaotic, for us right now,  
If we all stick together, we will grow,  
Grow stronger, and come together,  
Things will get better, this is not forever,

I've went live on Facebook to cheer people up,  
We all get down at times, it's easier when yours cub,  
Let's not spread hate and brutality,  
Let's spread love, care and equality,  
I've felt anger, I've felt pain, but haven't we all?  
Can we help each other up when we fall?  
I think so, stuff to keep us sane and alive,  
Each other on the other side to survive,  
I've been out for walks for fresh air,  
I've been in touch with family to show I care,  
We're honest with each other when we say we can't always be there,  
Which is fair,  
It's tough when we all get too clingy to each other,  
It's important that we look after one another,  
Take care of our own health and stay safe inside,  
We are happy to share, we have nothing to hide.

It's just a bit chaotic, for us right now,  
If we all stick together, we will grow,  
Grow stronger, and come together,  
Things will get better, this is not forever,  
Come on everybody, let's do this together,  
It's not forever.



# Stay Home

by Charde, aged 19

They tell me to stay home.  
Never before has my comfort made me feel like I'm in a dome  
Now the only way to commute is via phone  
I don't think they know the dangers of being left alone  
If I felt I had no one before how am I meant to cope on my own  
I think I've broken more ties being in this zone  
Where friendships that thrive in person have been blown  
Away and paranoia has wormed it's way in now it's sewn  
Into the roots of all my relationships and given them all a new tone  
I don't think the person who said sticks and stones  
Will break your bones but words will never hurt knew how close  
Physical and emotional trauma are on the spectrum see both host  
Scars only mental scars pose  
Like memories only to haunt you and no matter how many throws  
You never seem to throw away those  
feelings like a smell hovering over your nose  
You breathe it in until it grows  
Thoughts have given life a new meaning  
Like before a walk through the park was piece evoking  
Now hay fever is too close to Covid-19  
These allergies to pollen are anxiety's way of thriving  
Don't sneeze, don't sneeze, don't sneeze  
One wrong move and they'll assume you're coughing  
No longer accepting  
early phone calls because you don't know how they'll take the sound of you clearing  
your throat in the morning  
Sometimes social distancing  
Causes a distance in  
understanding  
They tell me to stay home unless I must leave  
For work, or exercise or groceries  
And I couldn't help but think of all the opportunities  
Now cancelled and delayed it's like poetry  
Pathetic fallacy, when the sun came out I laughed at the irony  
Working from home stopped working for me  
Now my minds affecting my money  
Can't solve it as I can't go to therapy  
Therapy sessions on the phone only seem to anger me  
Key workers go to work but why do you get to decide who is key  
Because our lives have been locked up and I can't see  
A solution all I see is a pause that lasts an eternity  
Sometimes I think the way I feel is selfish and I feel guilty  
I'm trying not to let the guilt consume me  
So many people have died and it's scary  
Saying goodbye to family when you shouldn't be  
Sometimes I fear each phone call may be my last, how do I preserve the memory  
How do I say goodbye discretely  
When black lives matter came around life really hit me  
People sickened me  
Everyone has a right to opinions but I've seen stupidity  
Now I'm tired and I wonder if there truly is hope for humanity  
I almost feel like an endangered species  
Did my hope die when this virus came overseas?  
Covid-19 seems soo far from reality  
I no longer know what to believe  
No longer believe what I see



# **Sick Society Part 1**

## **by Georgina, aged 24**

Welcome to a sick society  
A sick society  
One thrives off of my psychological, spiritual agony.  
A sick society barely surviving another summer.  
Feeding from the fog of an anti-lover.  
Humiliating my brother.  
A sick society is my shadow monster  
He just wants to integrate with me  
Pitty, love and sympathy.  
Sick society  
Turns his cheek  
There's a hole in me  
Sick society doesn't desire the whole of me  
He's scared of himself  
Defences up he jeopardises his health.  
Sick society I'm crying for thee  
My asthmatic lungs can barely breath  
4 times your greenhouse gasses have nearly killed me  
24 years old and 9 times I've tried to leave my own body.  
This sick society has poisoned Mother Earth  
I point my finger but with meaningless words  
So poisonous I'll likely never give birth.  
So poisonous societies lost his self worth.  
But Mother Earth says find your purpose  
She screams, I repeat, 'YOU ARE NOT WORTHLESS, YOU ARE NOT WORTHLESS, YOU DESERVE A SPIRITUAL LIFE, YOU ARE ENOUGH AND YOU DO HAVE PURPOSE, PULL YOUR SELF UP AND YOU WILL BE STRONGER, SICK SOCIETY YOUR MOTHER WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU EVEN THOUGH YOU HAVE WRONGED HER.'  
Sick society  
Turn the page over.



## **Coronavirus**

### **by Sharday**

We can't go on holiday or play out in the sun  
We can't go anywhere and that is not very fun  
We're sitting inside with nothing to do  
And that does is make me feel blue  
No more seeing my family  
And that hurts very deeply  
All we can do is facetime, it's just not the same  
What I'm feeling inside me, is like a little flame  
This corona virus is driving me around the bend  
When will it end?

# Life in Lockdown

*by Chloe, aged 17*

At first I thought it would be easy, relaxing at home and that with your family. But it's been hard too not being able to go out and see friends and family. Stuck inside of the house.

We started lockdown on the 24th of march

At first, I thought it was going to be really easy, I mean chilling at home relaxing what's bad about that? I thought that it was going to be great. Well at least that's what I thought at the start of lockdown. First week in lockdown was good we were keeping ourselves occupied, by playing football, darts and just messing in the garden. But further in lockdown became boring, we did all the things we thought of and all that was left is our work.

It was hard not being able to see your friends and family, it's gone from having fun and going on adventures to minimum phone calls. Also, it was hard to keep up with our work. And now I managed to be on top of my work there is nothing to do much other than binge watch on Netflix or just sitting in the kitchen with a cup of tea.

Previously I have cooked dinner and baked cookies. I had cooked chicken fried rice and baked chocolate chip cookies.

Lock down is not all that bad. we are spending most of our time indoors, which then gives me and my family time to bond and to strengthen our relationship as a family. It has helped a lot as I came to my foster family on valentine's day. Lockdown has gotten me to appreciate the little things in life. I have also opened up about my feelings more. Which creates that stronger bond with the family. Know I just appreciate what I have and get on with my day. No matter what life throws at us we give back, by staying inside and also keeping others safe.

## My Ordeal of COVID-19

*by Mosammat, aged 13*

Poets, authors, musicians, and different intellectuals have narrated us about experiences. It is undoubtedly highly accurate, about the lines preceding said by a renowned poet and playwright. Good and bad experiences make up our life, because our life is not a destination to reach but rather a journey to experience.

From the day we are born, till our death, we will continue to have experiences, some humorous, some full of tremors, some poignant and full of dread of not possessing prestige over something.  
We all agree today, that COVID'19 is something that we have no control over.

I woke up one morning, and walk to get a newspaper and get the headline of the dreadful virus spreading all over China. I felt inexplicably contrite for all the people who were on the cusp of the appalling disease known as Coronavirus. Today, every time I get the hold of the newspaper I encounter the news of deaths of people all over the world. Some say that this is the end of the world.

After all this thing, I had only one option left to do, and that warns everyone about staying safe and healthy. I started making videos for warning everyone to stay at home, because that is the best we all can do, sitting at home. We are today in quarantine, like it or not, we have to stay at home, not only for ourselves but also everyone in our society, country, world. The world is certainly going through a shift in this pandemic.

Today, we can see the countries battling just like the olden days fronting each other. But, to be epistolizing this disease, what we have to do, is stay together, it's not that I mean we have to be together corporally, it means that if all of the experts together try to find out the cure to the infection, then instead of accomplishing as a country we would have to work as a team of the whole world, because we love all the people in this world, black or white, Asian or European, or Australian we love all the people in this world.  
If we work together, we might just survive.

Today, in quarantine, everyone is trying to find fascinating recreational fun, while thousands of people are dying and are getting infected by coronavirus. Recessions and all unpredictable circumstances ultimately lead to a tackle into collective memory, and the pathogen of Covid-19 couldn't be an aberration. The next most (in)famous pandemic to sweep the world was undoubtedly the bubonic plague, or black plague, that decimated populations across continents in the 14th century.

I must've told very little about my experience of sitting at home and about the fun I had, in fact, I wanted more of people to get to tackle the issue of corona and fight together against this virus instead of fighting among ourselves.

Thank you.

## Poem about Lockdown

*By Leah, aged 16*

I look out my window and there is nothing to be seen,  
Everybody is stuck in quarantine,  
Stay two meters, wash your hands,  
And make sure your following Boris's commands,  
I know some people have got to work but others indoors that won't hurt,  
It's sad that the kids can't see their friends,  
But that is just what the government recommends,  
At the start everything was closed,  
But that's because too many were diagnosed,  
Protect the people you love,  
And do all of the above,  
Together we will beat this beast,  
But if we stay inside and follow the guide,  
The world can finally unite



*Commended  
Entry*

**Untitled**  
*by Chloe*

Since covid 19 began it was so daunting, horrible because stay in your houses and wear mask and hand gel when going out . To stop the virus spreading, Then schools started to closes. Students who were in the middle of my GCSE I did not think this would happen to them because GCSE are so important for everyone who are taking there GCSE because those grades what they get are so important because when they get a job there boss will look at those grades and if they are not good then they won't take on that person. That why I am so sad that we have not done our GCSE. Also being in Lockdown Is like being in a prison because you are stuck in your houses can't go and see you family or friends it is so difficult for everyone who are missing there family because families are so important to everyone.

Also been in Lockdown is not good for people who have depression or anxiety because been stuck in the house can't see your family or friends will make those people suffer so much and we don't want to see people suffering we need to make sure that this does not happen we need to keep occupied by doing the garden, cooking, baking etc. Please help each other in these hard times with kindness and happiness and look out for each other even if you don't know them still be kind each other in these tuff times.

## Coronavirus

*by Holly*

The whole world has gone mad  
Who would have thought it would have gotten this bad?  
Everyone is sick inside  
Not many people who get it will survive  
The worry of going out  
Spins in your head like a round about  
We can't even see our family  
And that hurts very badly  
All there is left is a text message to send  
We all wonder when will corona virus end

# **Staying Put**

## **by Amy, aged 21**

I'm staying put.

Although this term was imposed upon reaching 18 it still stands now.

I am staying put.

I'm 21 years old with all the hopes and dreams that my accompanying youth entails yet I still feel stagnant

Life is on pause and that is poignant.

Returning from uni to the home that once knew me

Nevermind poignant, it is hard for anything to be poignant when the world is no longer coherent

As a care leaver living with those just entering this domain I worry.

I worry about how they are learning

How they are coping

I am less concerned with my once hopeful future, disregarded to the wayside for now

I am concerned with my every interaction with the young minds that sit within these four walls

Whose future is being written now

These uncertain minds anchor every word I utter

I hope that they get the opportunities that I once had

That they can learn to swim

That they can make friends

That they can fall out with friends

I worry that this is another wall that they have to climb in the wall that was already the length of the chinese wall

But no, it's a Berlin wall that will be broken because the people have spoken

There time is now and my purpose is now

Helping the fellow 'kids in care' with their history

listening to them stress about their grades in geography

These young minds

All that I can do is remind and reassure that they are doing enough.

That they are enough.

That we are enough.

# Home Sweet Home

*by Lexi, aged 6*

**1st Place**  
**Primary**  
**Category**

Home sweet home sweet home  
Playing, dancing, scooter rides, school work, walking  
Home sweet home sweet home  
Paddling pools, craft, bike rides, painting, chalking  
Home sweet home sweet home

# A Sparrow Told Me

*by Adam, aged 13*

Sat here near the window, feeling all alone,  
There's a sparrow looking at me and he's sat there on his own.  
He wonders why I'm sat here and I'm thinking the same thing too,  
But I can't go out to tell him, I don't know what to do.

I would tell him that I'm not at school and have to do my work,  
Of Maths, English and History and it really, really hurts.  
I got up one morning and stumbled out of bed,  
Then sat and watched the news, it said lots of people were dead.  
I sat close to the window looking at my feathered friend,  
I ask if he knows about it and asked if it will ever end.

This is what he said:

"Rainbow, Rainbow in the sky,  
I look at you and wonder why,  
Such lovely colours for us to see  
Yet lots of pain and misery.  
I know one day when it's all gone,  
You will laugh and play  
And have some fun."

**1st Place**  
**Lower**  
**Secondary**

My friend the Sparrow made me realise,  
Things aren't too bad for me.  
I'll do my school work in my house  
And live there happily.



# The Coronavirus

by *Samanta*

Coronavirus is the first pandemic experienced by our generation,  
Everything has been put on hold around the world, including our education.  
We have no prior experience but there are a few things we can do to stop the  
spread,  
Wash your hands more often, and where possible, stay at home, perhaps in bed.  
As many details are unclear, you may feel sheer panic and fear.  
There isn't any need for it, eventually things will become clear.  
The world will soon be hoping for the invention of a vaccine.  
You'll be able to see your beloved ones soon, and not just behind a screen.  
As time goes on, more people are expected to gain their herd immunity.  
This will allow all of us to return to our daily routines and be a community.  
Despite what happens in the next year, social distancing won't leave too soon.  
We can take this opportunity, in case of a relapse of the virus, to become immune.

## Daily

By *Charlotte*

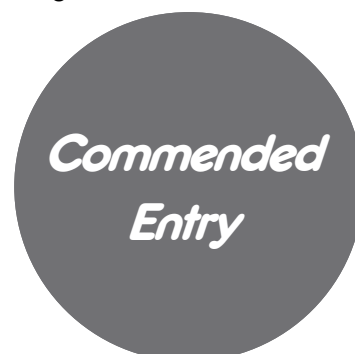
The birds and I are well acquainted  
The daylight untainted  
It is easy to remain calm  
When at 7 am, there is no risk of harm

I fill a coffee cup  
Then look to the news to observe all the corrupt  
It appears our world is suffering from man made damage  
And people on social media disguising their hatred as being savage

Now it's time to work  
The birds are starting to silence their chirp  
It's time for the second hit of caffeine  
It is the perfect companion as the radio plays out jolene

It's not long before the mind is plagued by procrastination  
The lack of work serves nothing but fueling the frustration  
A generation demanding themselves to be productive  
Placing far too much pressure on themselves appears counterproductive

It's easy to see why people follow routines of similarities  
They offer a sense of familiarity  
And in this time of uncertainty  
Daily similarity appears to be a necessity



Verse 1: This is the year the world stood still  
We took a step back, it helped us to heal  
Started to care for others more  
Missing the ones who truly build our core

# The Year the World Stood Still

by Tom, aged 17

Verse 2: I cried with tears of exploration  
Trying to figure out this weight of obligation  
This feeling of helplessness  
I'm not sure I know how to suppress

Pre-chorus: But maybe I could change  
Stop feeling so estranged  
Loving everybody is what makes me feel engaged

Chorus: Maybe we could change  
Change for the greater good  
The devil in the mask  
Is helping to chop down the rotting wood  
Leaving only the best  
Humanity is put to the test  
The change is filling up the till  
Overflowing in the year the world stood still

Verse 3: White noise is all I hear  
Just enough to fear  
I miss you oh so much  
Guilt appears with every touch

Bridge: But this is not about me  
Make the best of time  
There's so little around you  
Spend it being kind

Verse 4: Misunderstood teenage troubles  
Living in my own little bubble  
Selflessness is what I endeavour  
I know that no feeling lasts forever

Pre-chorus: So maybe I could change  
Stop feeling so estranged  
Loving everybody is what makes me feel engaged

Chorus: Maybe we could change  
Change for the greater good  
The devil in the mask  
Is helping to chop down the rotting wood  
Leaving only the best  
Humanity is put to the test  
The change is filling up the till  
Overflowing in the year the world stood still





# Missing Friends in Lockdown/Onwards and Upwards!

*by Angie, aged 18*



Every day is no longer normal. You feel lost without the advice from your friends. You always want to be there for them, but you can't. It's just not fair! You feel like everything is gone. Every time I look outside, it feels like a ghost town.

I miss hearing the laughter we have when we tell each other jokes. I know it's very hard for all of us. Others find that lockdown has caused us to feel lonely, but we will see each other in the end!

Our friendships have fallen apart. Everything will be strange when we all reunite, but I would love to learn from that. How and when we all are back together again, who knows?

But;

that is not going to stop us all!

Here goes nothing, onwards and upwards. Like a new objective waiting to be achieved.

Onwards and upwards, going into a new normal, something strange is going to happen to everyone.

Onwards and upwards, the future will be a new quest. Onwards and upwards who knows what the future holds for everyone as the virus finally goes?

Onwards and upwards, we will all hopefully be going back to education or work once more.

Onwards and upwards, life will change for the likes of you and me.

Onwards and upwards, our happy memories will come back to us all.

And that is why we will go... onwards and upwards!



## I watch everyone go home

*by Pip, aged 21*

They are packed into the biggest suitcase,  
enveloped in air hugs by their parents,  
and have fallen asleep on the car journey home.

They are making Tik-Tok stars out of their dogs,  
learning languages they left on the inter-rail.

They are baking banana bread and baking

their faces for big nights-in, unable to see  
over the cocktails they sip, in the garden  
that catches the sun like a bright green rash.

When I look up from my phone, I wonder  
if graduating in my childhood bedroom  
would be worth having time at home.

## **Isolation in Reality** *by Saphron, aged 21*

Days...weeks...pass  
Restless people  
Eager to go back outside.  
Not me though.  
My home, a safe place  
Somewhere I haven't always had.

I will never take my safe place for granted.

A space to read  
A space to bake  
Healing my soul.  
The person I have left, is me.  
No matter how bad it gets.

I will never take my own company for granted.

Tiny hands pressing on mine  
Into soft salt dough.  
We craft rainbows  
To hang in windows.  
How could they leave me?  
When I couldn't ever leave you.

I will never take my daughter for granted.

People struggling  
Hours...days...weeks.  
Alone, my institutionalised reality.  
A forever memory  
In my struggle to build  
Stable loving relationships.

I will never take relationships for granted.

I see the postman  
I feel anxious.  
He doesn't deliver much anymore.  
No one knocks at my door.  
This world grants me peace and quiet.

I will never take my peace and quiet for granted.

Days...weeks...pass.  
Although now I see some light.  
My future seems brighter.  
The end of my solitude is in sight.

I will never take my future for granted



## About Coram Voice

Coram Voice is a leading children's rights organisation. We champion the rights of children. We get young voices heard in decisions that matter to them and work to improve the lives of children in care, care leavers and others who depend upon the help of the state.

## About Voices

Voices is a platform for the creative writing of children in and around the care system.

It aims to promote a positive image by showcasing young people's stories and improving understanding of their experiences. Voices 2021 will be open for entries early 2021 .

## Always Heard

Always Heard is our advice service for children and young people in care, leaving care or needing help from Children's Services. We are independent and here just for you. We will give you advice about your rights and help you to get in touch with your local advocacy services. We will give you emergency advocacy support if your local advocacy service says it cannot help you.

Freephone: 0808 800 5792

Email: [help@coramvoice.org.uk](mailto:help@coramvoice.org.uk)

Text and WhatsApp: 07758670369

Website: [www.coramvoice.org.uk/alwaysheard](http://www.coramvoice.org.uk/alwaysheard)

## Bright Spots

Through our Bright Spots programme, a partnership with the University of Oxford, funded by the Hadley Trust, we have gained unprecedented insights into the views of care experienced children and young people. Over the last 5 years we have gathered over 10,000 voices through our online surveys –

**'Your Life, Your Care'** and **'Your Life Beyond Care'**. The surveys were co-produced with children and young people to capture how they feel about their lives and support local authorities to systematically listen to their children in care and care leavers about the things that are important to them.

To find out more or discuss how to run the surveys in your local authority contact [brightspots@coramvoice.org.uk](mailto:brightspots@coramvoice.org.uk)

## A National Voice

A National Voice is the 'National Children in Care Council' for children in care and care leavers aged 11-26, who are passionate about how the care system works and how it affects those within it.

We work to improve the care system through the voices of care experienced young people. Empowering children and young people by giving them the skills and support to make real change at both a local and national level.

ANV engages children and young people in co-production projects including our Ambassador Programme for individuals selected to represent young people's voice nationally. In addition, we train social workers in what it is like to be a child in and leaving care and we work with children in care councils across England to explore key issues and inform campaigns or projects around what is important to young people.

To find out how to get involved please email: [anv@coramvoice.org.uk](mailto:anv@coramvoice.org.uk).



**The creative writing competition for  
children in care and care leavers**



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