

Survey for People with Learning disabilities for the Mobility and Access Committee of the Scottish Government. The aim of the survey help us to advise Ministers during the pandemic.

MACS were keen to understand the lockdown issues of people who are learning disabled. The decision was made to do a focused survey. Joanne Fairweather interviewed 10 members of her ACE group (Activity Community Empowered).

The results are embedded within the survey as follows:

1. Are you shielding. 2 Yes/No 8. Only two people were officially shielding and others were adhering to lockdown.

2. How has lockdown been for you? 2 Good/ 5 OK/ 3 Not so good

Only two people found lockdown good. Five people were fine but three weren't.

Can you say a bit more about that?

One person said they had anxiety and so it had not been easy. ACE Connect and Zoom have been helpful and they got coping strategies and learned new techniques. Two more people mentioned zoom as being helpful.

3. How do you feel about going out again? 7 Happy/ 3 a bit worried/ really worried

Seven people were happy about going out again. However three were a bit worried.

What could help?

Seeing my family more would help.
Being able to take my cat to the vet.
Spacing properly would help.

4. Are you able to/will you want to wear a face mask? 5 Yes/No 5

Face masks have divided the group. Five felt able to wear one and five had reservations.

Can you say more about this

One person mentioned feeling worried people won't know what they are saying.

5. Do you normally use public transport? 10 Yes/No

All the group use public transport.

6. Does anything worry you about using public transport now? 5 Yes/No 5

What could help you?

One person mentioned that a bus they had gone for had a broken ramp and they had to be taken out of their chair.

7. How do you feel about physical distancing? 4 Happy/2 a bit worried/4 really worried?

Physical distancing is an issue that was fine for some but but caused others a significant concern.

What could help you?

We need clearer signs of the rules of distancing.
It affects lots of things you don't think of.

8. Have you been socially isolated or lonely since the lockdown? 10 Yes/Sometimes/No 0

What could help you?

If I didn't have zoom I'd be bored and frustrated. And I wouldn't know about any updates.
There are no personal assistants so I can't go anywhere.

9. Any other things you want to say about going out again?

Get some normality back at leisure centres and clubs.

The survey did identify that social isolation and loneliness are the biggest issues for the group from ACE who were interviewed. Lockdown hasn't been too difficult for most people but they are looking forward to getting out again. Public transport is relied upon and the importance of their needs being properly met was illustrated by the bus with the broken ramp. Face masks were considered fine for some but others felt less comfortable.

Communication was the issue for one person at least. Physical distancing seems to be ok for half the group but the others felt the rules needed to be better illustrated and that the distancing actually had more of an impact than was expected.

Groups like ACE were very important and several people mentioned the value of using zoom to connect.

To relieve social isolation, getting personal assistants back was very important. Also supporting groups like ACE to provide the links they do clearly makes a huge difference. In addition as things opened up more it wasn't the shops they were looking forward to, it was the leisure facilities and clubs opening again that were mentioned. This is important feedback as lockdown eases. People's needs vary and decisions need to respond to that.