

Written Evidence submitted by Transforming Lives for Good (TLG)

**Written Evidence submitted by Transforming Lives for Good (TLG)  
to the Education Select Committee inquiry into the impact of  
COVID-19 on education and children's services**

**Date of submission: Tuesday 21 July**

**Bullet point summary**

- Transforming Lives for Good (TLG) is a children's charity, with over 20 years' experience supporting struggling children and families.
- As TLG has had continued frontline contact with children and families throughout COVID-19, offering a variety of support services, we are submitting evidence of notable patterns witnessed throughout the current global pandemic to assist with the Education Committee's enquiries.
- There is no doubt that all children will have been severely impacted by lockdown, to varying degrees. Children's education, health and wellbeing needs to be at the centre of our recovery from the current crisis, both in the short term and long term.
- We cannot allow COVID-19 to further widen an already unfairly wide educational disadvantage gap. We should be doing our utmost to close that gap. There needs to be a full investigation about how COVID-19 will impact children's education in the long term and a system set in place to counteract this.
- COVID-19 will have triggered traumatic circumstances and anxiety for many children and families. There needs to be a cross-organisation and cross-community effort to ensure those who are in critical need of emotional, mental and trauma support receive it – both children and their families. Such support structures are in place, suitably funded and well-resourced to deal with a potential influx – with official structures, communities and charities all having their role to play. The government will also need to give schools the backing in this, rather than just holding them to academic standards
- COVID-19 has had a huge impact on the financial and food insecurity of many households. The holiday provision required for families during COVID-19 has highlighted the urgent need for a permanent and expansive policy for holiday provision beyond COVID-19. Families who have recently fallen into hardship also need to be made aware of their new eligibility for Free School Meals (FSM) and the process to apply should also be streamlined so that claims can be processed as speedily as possible.
- While there have been some positives, lockdown and COVID-19 will overall have had a negative impact on children across the UK. It is critical we all work together to ensure that children recover from that impact and any future decisions made have children's best interests at the centre.
- Our report is broken into three main sections: poverty and food insecurity, health and wellbeing, education and resources. These sections each are broken down into topics.

## Introduction to Transforming Lives for Good (TLG)

1. Transforming Lives for Good (TLG) is a children's charity, with over 20 years' experience supporting struggling children and families.
2. This may be through intensive support for those that have been excluded from school through TLG Education Centres, a volunteer coach offering one to one help as a mentor in local schools through TLG Early Intervention, or providing food to children on Free School Meals who would otherwise go hungry during the holidays through TLG Make Lunch. We run all our services through local churches across the UK.
3. We adapted all our programmes to ensure that children still receive vital support at a time where they need it more than ever – balancing the challenge of social distancing while also protecting the most vulnerable children. For our Early Intervention we set up virtual coaching, for our Make Lunch clubs we encouraged our partner churches to provide emergency care packages and for our Education Centres – a form of Alternative Provision – we continued one-to-one contact and teaching via video link.
4. As TLG has had continued frontline contact with children and families throughout COVID-19, offering a variety of support services, we are submitting evidence of notable patterns witnessed throughout the current global pandemic to assist with the Education Committee's enquiries.

## Poverty and food insecurity

### Free School Meal vouchers

5. As soon as schools were facing the prospect of lockdown, the provision of Free School Meals (FSM) to children who rely on them for a hot and healthy meal each day was instantly a concern for many. How to replicate that in light of school closures was one of the first big questions that needed to be urgently tackled.
6. TLG welcomed the government's plans for a system to continue the provision of FSM under lockdown. TLG acknowledges and appreciates the efforts of the Department for Education who worked hard to get the voucher system up and running, while balancing many other aspects of school closures.
7. The system was not without its complications. TLG Make Lunch Coordinators have had first-hand experience of the vouchers failing to work with families they are supporting. Technical issues with the voucher scheme led to children going hungry as embarrassed families had to leave shopping at the checkouts when the vouchers failed to scan.
8. Not all mainstream supermarkets were involved in the scheme, including some budget supermarkets where families will have been able to get more for their money. For some families, their local supermarket may not have been a participating supermarket, therefore they faced the challenge of how to travel to a supermarket further afield safely, when they may not have a car or be able to afford the bus fare.

9. The vouchers operated on the provision that families would have digital and broadband access, something which is not necessarily the case. This left some families relying on others to help them access the vouchers. Families who did not have someone with digital access to rely on may have been left without and children will have gone hungry as a result.
- 10. The provision of FSM during the school closures is very welcome, however the system needs urgent improvement to prevent children from going hungry.**

### Holiday provision

11. TLG welcomed the government announcement that the vouchers would continue over the course of the Easter holidays and the decision to again continue this over the May half-term and over summer.
12. However, the announcement for the May half-term came during the half-term, leaving families and schools no time to prepare for this. Families who rely on the vouchers will have spent time in the build up to the holidays worrying about how they were going to feed their children, not knowing that the vouchers were going to be continued.
13. This is an issue that is not just specific to COVID-19, but we urgently need a permanent policy response that provides for children on Free School Meals over every school holiday. This could be in the form of vouchers but the response to our Boxes of Hope is indicative of the reality that money alone does not mean that children get enough food or the right food. Direct poverty relief is essential (for example a holiday food and activities programme) and should be considered as a permanent alternative for holiday food provision when COVID-19 is no longer a threat to public health.
- 14. Holiday provision for children on FSM should be made a permanent policy and any announcement relating to holiday provision should be made in plenty of time before the holiday arrives.**

### Eligibility

15. As a charity, we have seen a significant increase in the number of families helped by TLG Make Lunch clubs at this time showing the rapid raise of families in need of support. Most TLG Make Lunch clubs have been supporting many more families than the families they previously had on their register (who have attended TLG Make Lunch in the past). One TLG employee, supporting volunteers on the frontline, noted the rapid rise in the number of families attending food banks too. This shows that families are struggling to afford food and essential supplies, leaving children at risk of hunger.
16. Many schools have also noticed the increase in families who are financially struggling, so have been working with TLG Make Lunch clubs to pass on names of families who may need the support, so essential supplies can be provided for this family. With people losing jobs, having their wages cut and facing financial uncertainty many more families are finding themselves on the breadline or even further into financial difficulty than they were before COVID-19 hit. Some schools have been leaning on organisations and charities, such as TLG, to make sure their students are looked after as they only have limited resources available themselves to support their students.
17. There is a significant difference between the number of children eligible for/claiming FSM and the number of children living in poverty. In January 2019, 15.4% of children were eligible for and claiming FSM ([Department for Education 2019](#)) with an estimated 20% children living in relative poverty, rising to 30% after house costs ([House of Commons Library, 2020](#)). Many of

the families living in relative poverty, even if not eligible for FSM, will also have come across food insecurity due to COVID-19 and without the added assistance of the vouchers.

18. TLG Make Lunch clubs are already encouraged to use a blurry line approach for who is eligible when considering which families need their support. For example, younger siblings not in school yet will not receive any assistance in the form of the vouchers, as it is just their older sibling who is eligible for FSM. There have been issues with families with no recourse to public funds accessing support, with some changes introduced in May 2020 in response to this. There are also families who may not be aware they are eligible for FSM, including families who have recently hit financial hardship. These families will be struggling financially during COVID-19, without access to the hot and healthy meal that FSM provides potentially resulting in children going hungry.
19. Many families from across the income spectrum have been impacted by COVID-19. We have seen evidence of schools referring families to the local TLG Make Lunch club who would otherwise not have needed that support, due to the impact of COVID-19 on household income and employment. With the number of redundancies caused by COVID-19 and the dramatic increase in Universal Credit claimants, there is no question that there will have been an increase of children eligible for FSM. This will have presented its own challenges. What has been done to make parents aware they can claim for FSM in their current financial situation? How long is the time taken to process FSM claims, especially understanding the parent will have already had a wait for their Universal Credit claim to be processed? To a family who have no income, even a seemingly small delay could make the difference between whether they and their children go hungry or not.
20. During the COVID-19 crisis the government introduced the important and necessary furlough scheme, with their currently being eight million furloughed employees at the time of writing ([HMRC, 2020](#)). For some of these families, that 20% income change will have made the difference between them previously managing but now falling into financial struggles. With the eligibility criteria for FSM dependant on benefit claiming, there is no allowance for families who are temporarily struggling to afford food because of furlough to claim free school meal vouchers for their children. Some families may have also sacrificed income as they were unable to work their full hours due to childcare.
- 21. The current eligibility for FSM should be temporarily extended to allow for families in the above situations to benefit and any family whose income now falls below a set threshold. The process should be streamlined so that claims can be processed as speedily as possible.**

#### Access to essentials

22. For families on low-incomes, access to food is just one of the many challenges they will have been balancing during COVID-19. While the vouchers have gone some way in providing food itself for the families, other obstacles still remain. FSM provide the child with a daily hot meal, which a voucher cannot fully replicate for those families who do not have access to the means to heat their food – for example if they are unable to fund their electricity or gas meter or afford an oven.
23. TLG welcomed the announcement that the amount given in vouchers was higher than what otherwise would have been spent on providing a child's FSM for a week, to take into account other meals in the day and an inability to bulk buy. However there have been questions raised about whether it still was enough. The difference in cost will have been more significant as the economies of scale expected by government in school meals provision are substantial. A family simply cannot replicate this. In addition, families had to manage without other support

networks, such as breakfast clubs, and provide additional meals they would not normally have had to budget for.

24. Low budget staple foods – such as bread, flour, rice and pasta – ran out at the beginning of the crisis, especially the more affordable brands. This left many low-income families, who simply could not afford to stockpile or pay for alternatives, unable to access what they needed. This is also the case for affordable brands of household essentials (such as handwash and cleaning products) which some families will have had to go without at a time where they were more critical than ever. TLG Make Lunch clubs provided some of these basic essentials in their Boxes of Hope to ensure that no family went without.
25. Some families even struggled to get to the supermarket. One TLG Make Lunch Coordinator noted how families, especially single parent families, were grateful for the parcels because they did not feel they could go stand in the long queues at the supermarket with young children. Essential tasks like this are a huge ask for parents when there is no school and no break from childcare, again especially for single parents. These parcels enabled them to get vital supplies easily.
26. **Future provision of FSM during COVID-19 should be sensitive that a family may not have access to a means to cook the food, nor be able to go to the supermarket. Likewise, the amount received should further consider that families cannot cook to the same economic scale as a school and many will also be doing without other support networks, such as breakfast clubs.**

## Health and wellbeing

### School based anxiety

27. Some children's anxieties are school based, so lockdown had some initial positive impact for them as they spent time away from the environment that triggers their anxiety. When some children become so anxious, their frustration can burst out at school, leading to reprimand because of the way they respond to stress and express their anxieties. This then results in a negative spiral of further anxiety leading to further outbreaks of emotion and further reprimanding which can dramatically affect their education. For such children, being at home has given them space from this spiral and their school-based anxieties. This does however raise the questions about what more can be done to support children who suffer from school-based anxiety going forward. In addition, while these children are thriving in the home environment, they are likely to need a lot of support and understanding when returning to school.
28. Children who struggle with socialising and making friends are at risk of further exacerbation of this. Even a child who has a network of good friends may find that their social skills are being impacted by lockdown. As a result of being unable to spend time in person with friends they have withdrawn and are spending their days alone, rather than speaking to friends on the phone or even engaging with parents and siblings – leading to depression and anxiety as well as a potentially long-term impact on their friendships and social skills. A child who was previously very social, will not necessarily instantly adapt back into this once they can see their friends again and may need support.
29. In contrast, some children are at risk of separation anxiety due to the time they have spent with their immediate parent or guardian and without others. This is especially worrying for early years children, who are about to start school for the very first time having spent the last

few months alone with their immediate family and without learning those key social skills. These children will find it even harder than others to adapt back into school and will require comprehensive pastoral care when schools do re-open.

- 30. Children whose anxieties are school based or who are at risk of separation anxiety from their household will need support and understanding to adapt back into a school environment when schools return in September. Lockdown and school closures will also have impacted all children's social skills to varying degrees and children, particularly in the early years, will need help continuing to develop these skills and adjust back into social situations.**

### Home based anxiety

31. The time at home will have added to some children's anxieties and further embedded adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). For children where there is instability at home, which could be for a variety of reasons, school is their safe place where they appreciate the structure and routine. Instead, lockdown has intensified their home-related anxieties. An Early Intervention Coach in the South West described this as 'putting a lid on a pressure cooker, turning up the dial and hoping the lid does not blow off...which of course it would'.
32. Supporting a child virtually while they are at home, while beneficial, is still not the same as face-to-face time spent listening to the child. There is something to be said for being in the same space, able to interact with each other's body language and appropriate physical touch. This all brings added emotional, calming and grounding benefits. We are not alone in feeling these limitations - there are many counsellors and therapists moving to online support but experiencing the same. As schools return and coaches may be able to start coaching in person but from a safe distance, there are still potential limitations to the coaching. There is an anxiety that comes from sharing physical space but still being distant which can lead to an overcompensating in the verbal communication to try and make up for the inhibited non-verbal communications. This prolonged 'middle place' that will have an impact on emotional wellbeing of any child receiving any form of virtual coaching, counselling or therapy.
- 33. Children whose anxieties are home based and for who school is a safe haven will have been at risk of these anxieties being exacerbated during lockdown. They will need support and understanding upon returning to school. Even children who were able to have access to virtual counselling and support will not have had the full benefit as if they were in the same room – these children need to resume receiving face-to-face support as soon as it is safe to do so.**

### COVID-19 triggered mental health

34. On top of the impact of lockdown on existing mental health, COVID-19 will have impacted children's mental health and wellbeing in new ways. Local schools are already contacting TLG Early Intervention coaches about children who will need coaching and support as a result of COVID-19 and lockdown, who likely would not have otherwise needed coaching. Children who would not have been on their radar now will be due to the emotional toll of lockdown.
35. In addition, while the widespread campaign about hand hygiene has been so important and critical to stopping the spread of the virus, children have the potential to develop obsessive compulsive disorder and extreme anxiety over hygiene and health long into the future. It is important the signs of this in any child are spotted early and responded to.

36. As mentioned above, schools with coaches are already speaking to the coordinator about children who will need coaching because of lockdown, who likely would not have otherwise needed coaching. This will no doubt be the same for children being referred to other support networks including social services. If there is not a quick response to solve this, then there is a ticking time bomb of vulnerable children and families in need of varying levels of support. As well as official structures, community and charity – just as Early Intervention coaching from TLG – has a valuable role to play in supporting the many families and schools at this time and going forward.
- 37. COVID-19 will have triggered traumatic circumstances and anxiety for many children. There will be an increase in the number of vulnerable children and families needing varying levels of support. It is critical these support structures are in place, suitably funded and well-resourced to deal with a potential influx – with official structures, communities and charities all having a role to play.**

### Wider family support

38. A TLG Early Intervention Coach noted how many families struggled through the first six weeks of lockdown, knowing at each point there was an end date to look for (the review of lockdown every three weeks). This changed after the announcement of an indefinite end date, with the realisation that some form of lockdown is likely to endure for an unforeseen period of time. At this point the coach saw an increase in the anxiety of the children and the parents and since then remote coaching has become as much about supporting the parent as the child. Parents are tired and weary, sometimes dealing with children with complex physical and emotional care needs, and therefore at times unable to always manage their own emotional responses.
39. One parent of a child who had been referred to coaching had initially not been responding to communication about the coaching. Since lockdown and the start of remote coaching, the parent has now been not just engaging with the coach about the child, but joining in with the sessions themselves. This particular coach has been able to facilitate parent-child conversations about coping strategies. If it weren't for lockdown, the time the parent and child are spending together and the virtual coaching, they wouldn't have had those important conversations about how to cope with difficult situations together. The number of parents joining in with the coaching as they too need support will be replicated nationwide with parents who may not have access to such a support network and urgently need such a network. .
40. One TLG headteacher in West Yorkshire spoke of how the time spent liaising with families has increased as lockdown has progressed. Each week he takes round new work to the student's houses and picks up completed work (in a safe and socially distant way). In the first week of lockdown, this took him two hours. Over the course of lockdown the time it took him quickly increased to around six to eight hours because of the increased anxiety of families and their appreciation of a trusted individual to express these concerns to.
41. With the children constantly at home, without the usual time that school offers which a parent can use to complete other tasks and with no access to childcare or supportive family members, parents are struggling. One TLG Early Intervention coach explained how one parent called social services themselves to admit they did not feel they could cope any longer. In order to provide support, social services encouraged the parent to phone the school to ask if the child could re-start attending, to give the parent some breathing space, and the school said yes. This household is now instantly now coping much better. Schools and social services should have been granted more discretion to work with the parents about who can be in school, to ensure the most struggling families, even those not necessarily known to social services, are supported.

42. Many TLG Make Lunch clubs, as well as including food and essential supplies, also included activity packs, information about wider support and message of encouragement for the families. They have had so many families grateful for these additional items, with lots of children really excited to receive their activity packs. The seemingly small but thoughtful items in the packs, such as sticker books, have made a big difference and show the need there is for nationwide emotional support for families at this time.
43. COVID-19 will be triggering traumatic circumstances for so many. TLG Early Intervention coaches have been vital in supporting families where there has been a bereavement, family breakdown, job losses or other traumatic incident during lockdown – especially where the family were unable to access wider support networks that would normally be available. So many other children and families will be navigating the same traumatic events without support, despite being desperately in need of it. There needs to be a cross-organisation and cross-community effort to ensure those who are in critical need of emotional, mental and trauma support receive it.
- 44. As a children's charity, we have seen first-hand that COVID-19 has had an emotional impact not just on children, but on their families too. There needs to be a cross-organisation and cross-community effort to ensure those who are in critical need of emotional, mental and trauma support receive it – both children and their families.**

### The importance of routine

45. Routine is important for all children, but for some it is critical and they find themselves unable to cope without it. One TLG headteacher spoke about a child at their school who has needed support with the changes in their routine.
46. 'L does not like change and this has really unsettled L but the face to face contact time and things we have done are helping L, who she has shown real maturity and is working through all things set for them as well as looking after their well-being. We have regular contact with L's parent who also feels supported. L has ADHD and routine is important for her. Having a clear structure has enabled L to keep continuity and consistency in this changing environment.'
47. There will be so many children across the UK who are in the same position of urgently needing structure and support to adapt to the changes. If, for whatever reason, a child was unable to access this support and structure then it will have impacted their health and wellbeing, meaning they will need even higher levels of support going forward.
48. On top of our headteachers doing their best to deliver a routine and structure for our students, our Early Intervention coaching has provided another form of routine for the children and families during lockdown. Coaching is weekly, consistent and families know it is a point every week where they will be supported.
49. A parent of a child who is being supported by TLG Early Intervention noted her child has been really supported by the weekly calls: 'B has been doing video calls for the last 8 weeks and really enjoys the video calls with P. I believe it gives B a confidence boost. B enjoys talking to P too. B likes the games and tasks that P does. P is very helpful - sends ideas for us too.'
50. While TLG Early Intervention coaches are able to support the families that they come across, for families without such support in place, there will be children who are struggling in lockdown and in desperate need of the routine and structure that school brings.

51. Despite struggling without the routine and structure of school, children will not instantly adapt back into such structures upon returning to school in September. Going back to school will bring other huge changes – children will have to adapt back while also dealing with the changes of a new school year (new teacher, new class, for some a new school). Children will need patience and time to acclimatise to the changes. For some, their frustration at the changes may overflow as they respond to the stress and be mistaken as ‘behaviour’, when actually it is a sign they are struggling to cope. Such incidences must be met with understanding and handled sensitively.
- 52. Children will have struggled without the routine that school brings and spent a prolonged period without it. As they return to school in September, they will not instantly adjust back into the routine but will need time and understanding to do so.**

### Change on top of change

53. Many children are desperate to get back into school, to socialise with their friends and learn the life skills that comes with it. But, even for the children who are keen and especially for the children who are more hesitant, there will need to be understanding in the return to school. Returning to school will not feel like returning for normal, but like another big change in a relatively short space of time. This could impact a child in very similar ways that adapting to lockdown has done, in particular for children who need routine and find change overwhelming.
54. When children go back to school in September, they are likely to not go back to the same teacher or the same class. Some children will even not go back to their former school. This will all add to the feeling of uncontrollable and unpredictable change and children will need support to navigate this.
55. Children will need time, understanding and continued emotional and pastoral care during the transition and for the foreseeable future afterwards, rather than an assumption that they will simply fit back in. While there will be important questions asked about how children can catch up academically and ensuring every child is at the same level, it is so important that pastoral care is made a priority. Just like children will have had different educational experiences during lockdown, children will have had different emotional experiences. As well as ensuring there is not a gaping disadvantage educational gap, work needs to go into making sure there is not an increasing wellbeing gap. The government will need to give schools the backing in this, rather than just holding them to academic standards.
56. A lot of children will have potentially found it easier if they knew what were needing to face and when. The uncertainty around exams, when they were going to return to education, when they could see their friends and whether or not they were going to be able to start their new school/college/university was particularly stressful as children are unable to prepare themselves.
- 57. As children go back into school, it won't feel like 'normal' for them but will feel like even more change. They'll need understanding and time to adjust – such support is as critical as help catching up academically. This is especially the case as many children will be facing new teachers, new classes and even new schools at the start of the school year. All children will need comprehensive pastoral care to readjust back into school and to recover from the impact COVID-19 has had on their emotional health and wellbeing. The government will need to give schools the backing in this, rather than just holding them to academic standards**

## Education and resources

### Children still able to attend school

58. In the announcement of school closures, the government confirmed children with a child protection plan, a child in need plan, an EHCP or a looked after child were among those still allowed to attend school despite the closures. However it has been widely reported that only a small percentage of these children actually attended school, with one TLG headteacher commenting:
59. 'It is a concern that so many children are not able to make use of the many resources that are being provided for them in school, the public health message has been so strong and many parents are fearful of sending their children to school.'
60. Across TLG's schools, we are finding ourselves making hundreds of calls a week and carrying out home visits to ensure that we keep track of our 'most at risk' students. It's worrying that we have seen a significant increase in the amount of referrals that are being made by our teams to social services for domestic violence and mental health problems. It's a difficult time for all.'
61. The education system is reportedly the largest single source of referrals to social services for safeguarding and child protection concerns. When children are in schools, the schools are able to properly monitor their wellbeing and safety and raise any concerns in the appropriate way. While schools have worked incredibly hard to maintain distance learning, it is not the same as being able to offer in person support and the regular contact they usually have. TLG Education Centres have a high staff:pupil ratio to enable more one to one support, but even with that ratio it was still a challenge to ensure the wellbeing of our students, as well as supporting them to speak as openly as they otherwise would about the risks they face and/or behaviour they are involved in.
62. Most mainstream schools will have more pupils per staff, which would have meant this was even more challenging. Schools, while they are doing their best, largely do not have the capacity to phone every student each week for a potentially lengthy supportive call. Many schools struggled to give all their children the attention and support they would like to at this time, with children flying under the radar which in turn could lead to an influx of work for social services when children return to school.
63. While it was critically important that the most at-risk children were in school, it did cause an issue of labelling, according to a TLG head teacher who had spoken to affected families about this. Those children going into school while their peers did not created another label on them, leading to a greater sense of isolation and separation.
- 64. Even though important allowances were made for vulnerable children to attend school during lockdown, many did not with some schools struggling to maintain contact with potentially at-risk children. When schools return in September, there is likely to be an increase in referrals to social services and more vulnerable children in need of wider support after the impact of lockdown.**

### Missed education

65. Every child will be impacted by the time missed at school, but for some children the time missed at school will be even more critical than others. In early years education, will Reception children be ready for Year One by September and, if not, how will this impact the start of their schooling? For Year Ten children, will they be able to catch up the time before their critical GCSE exams and, if not, how will this impact their results? For Year Eleven students, will their college experience and initial settling in stage be done in person or virtually and how will this impact their higher education?
- 66. There needs to be a full investigation into how COVID-19 will impact children's education in the long term, a system set in place to counteract this and, if necessary, a temporary change to the markers by which we hold our schools and our children to account.**

### Lack of physical resources

67. Home schooling has generally been much harder for those with limited access physical resources. This could include less space, lack of digital access, no books or paper and much more. A lack of resources can make it incredibly hard to learn, causing an increasing sense of isolation and loneliness, which may trigger depression, anxiety or anger issues.
68. The problem of digital access has been covered and TLG welcomed the government's efforts to make laptops and broadband available to families. However, this has been slow to materialise and, in the meantime, families struggled to participate in online learning leaving the education disadvantage gap at great risk of widening during the COVID-19 struggle.
69. Families have a wide-ranging experience of this, ranging from those who have no computer or access to the internet or a family who had one laptop between them, therefore a young person at one of our Education Centres only had a small window in which to use it. With our staff:pupil ratio, our headteachers were able to go and deliver/collect work directly from the house (socially distant) where needed, however in a school where there are far more students to one teacher this would not necessarily be possible.
70. Resources are not just limited to technological. Lockdown has been particularly tough on children who have many siblings at home, especially if it is just one parent supporting all the siblings at home or there is not much space in the home. This can bring challenges for their school work – in finding a quiet area or the parent being able to support many children at once in their work. Every parent has found it a challenge to balance home-schooling with the pressures and demands of work, particularly those with multiple children of different education levels.
- 71. When children return to school in September they are going to have had significantly different experiences of home schooling. Schools need to be mindful of this and provisions need to be put in place to ensure that children who struggled with home schooling, which could be for a variety of reasons, have chance to catch up. We cannot allow COVID-19 to further widen an already unfairly wide educational disadvantage gap. We should be doing our utmost to close that gap.**

### Conclusion

72. There is no doubt that all children will have been severely impacted by lockdown, to varying degrees. Children's education, health and wellbeing needs to be at the centre of our recovery from the current crisis, both in the short term and long term.

**Submitted by Transforming Lives for Good (TLG) on Tuesday 21 July to the Education Select Committee inquiry into the impact of COVID-19 on education and children's services.**

July 2020