



MEDIA RELEASE

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‘Invisible people’ – policy makers urged to consider the needs of 20-somethings who moved back home during the pandemic

A new report by the Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) reveals the extent of social isolation and loneliness experienced by those in their early twenties during the national lockdown. With one in four young Australians moving home during this period, the landmark report also highlights the possible long-term health, social and economic implications of such severe disruptions.

The difference of experience between young women and men is also shown in the research, with young women consistently reporting higher levels of loneliness and social isolation and difficulty with their studies. A total of 44% of women reported that they had ‘often’ or ‘always’ felt isolated from others, compared to 27% of men.

Program lead for the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children, Dr Lisa Mundy, says that although society is moving on from the pandemic, it’s important that policy and decision makers don’t ignore a key group of the population in the years to come, who may still be experiencing difficulties as a result.

‘The early 20s age group is a vulnerable and often overlooked cohort in the social research space, yet is a critical age for formative development and sociological transition points,’ said Dr Mundy.

‘We must monitor the long-term implications of lockdowns on these young adults, including the impact on future employment and family dynamics, so that they can be appropriately supported as they move into the next phase of their adult lives.’

For AIFS Director Dr Sharman Stone the report’s findings about the gendered experiences of young Australians returning home during the pandemic are significant. ‘The more negative experiences of young women is particularly concerning, as many may live for longer periods at home as housing becomes less affordable,’ said Dr Stone.

A minority of all returning young adults found returning to live with parents again ‘difficult’ or ‘not beneficial’, with one in five (20%) saying that spending more time with family during the restriction period was difficult. One in 10 respondents (11%) reported that they did not have their need for support met by their parents and family during this time.

Researchers say the report provides important insight into assessing how we can better support families as they navigate changes in living arrangements; particularly as data continue to suggest that young adults are staying at home for longer for a myriad of reasons, including increasing cost of living pressures.

The report draws on datasets from both AIFS Longitudinal Study of Australian Children and the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth.

The report *Young adults returning to live with parents during COVID-19* is available at:
<https://static.aifs.gov.au/files/zz2415/lisac-snapshot-8-coronavirus.pdf>

About Longitudinal Study of Australian Children

Growing Up in Australia: The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC) is a major study following the development of 10,000 children and families from all parts of Australia.

Growing Up in Australia snapshots are brief and accessible summaries of policy-relevant research findings from *Growing Up in Australia*: The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC). For other *Growing Up in Australia* snapshots in this series see growingupinaustralia.gov.au/research-findings/snapshots

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