

What is the impact of shielding on children and young people in IMAGINE-ID?

Hannah Aissa, Harriet Housby, IMAGINE ID Consortium, David Skuse & Jeanne Wolstencroft



Background

- **IMAGINE-ID** is a UK cohort study of children and young people aged between 6-26 with **intellectual disability (ID) of identified genetic aetiology**.
- Due to their complex physical and health presentations, they were **more likely to have been shielding than the general population** during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Methods

- **1063** caregivers completed a survey between May and December 2021 about their child's adjustment and the impact of the pandemic on their child.
- Assessments were administered either online or over the phone:

Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)

Child emotional and behavioural adjustment (parent report)

Coronavirus Health and Impact Survey (CRISIS)

Family circumstances, distress and resilience during the pandemic (parent report)

Results



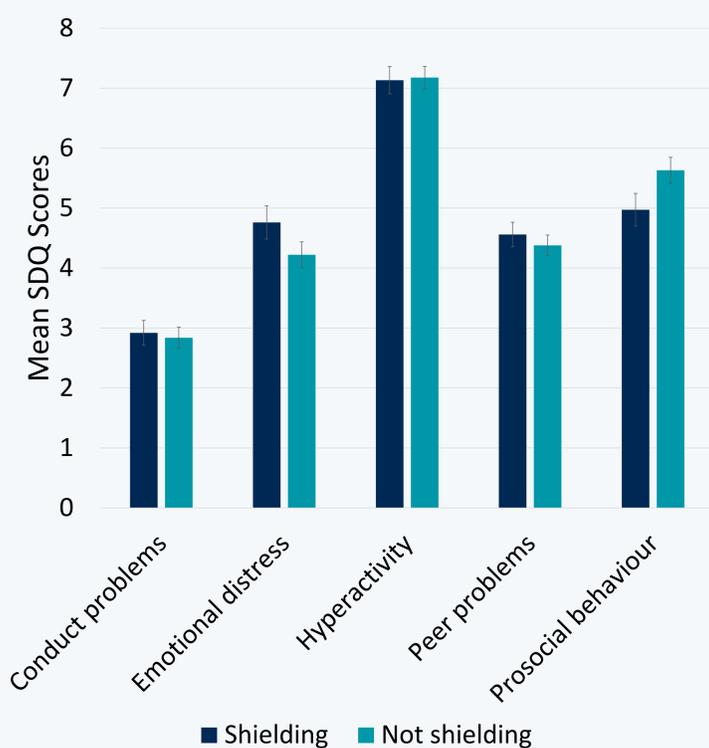
On the CRISIS questionnaire, 40.5% (n=431) of caregivers reported that their child had been shielding during the pandemic.



Mean total SDQ scores across the cohort fell in the **'high'** category, indicating a high level of overall emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Aim 1: Was shielding behaviour associated with differences in behavioural adjustment?

We compared SDQ scores for children and young people who were (n=431) and were not shielding (n=632) during the pandemic:



Those who shielded had **significantly higher scores** on the SDQ **emotional problems subscale** ($p=.002$).

Those who shielded also had **significantly lower prosocial behaviour subscale scores** ($p<.001$), indicating worse prosocial skills.

There were **no significant group differences** between scores on the other SDQ subscales: **conduct problems, hyperactivity or peer problems**.

Figure 1. Mean SDQ scores by child shielding status

Aim 2: What challenges did IMAGINE children face during the pandemic?

- 84.5% (n=898) of children and young people faced challenges due to the pandemic.
- The most commonly reported challenges were social distancing (n=256, 24.1%), anxiety (n=229, 21.5%), loneliness (n=146, 13.7%) and low mood (n=71, 6.7%).

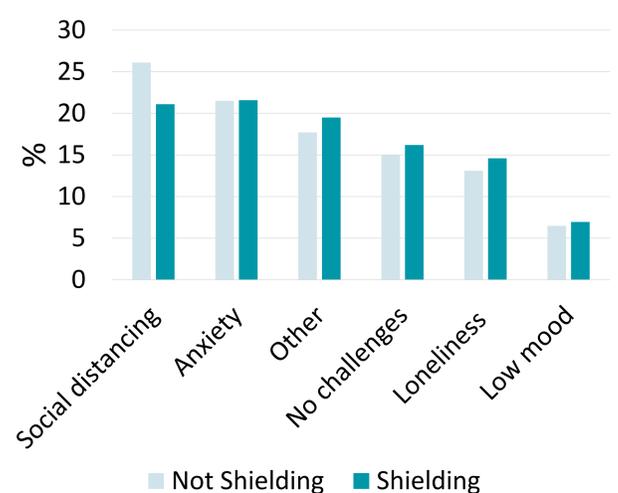


Figure 2. Reported biggest challenge by shielding status

- There was **no association** between reported biggest challenge and shielding status ($p=.5$).

Conclusions

Children with ID and a rare genetic disorder experienced a **range of challenges** during the pandemic.

Those who were shielding were reported to have **greater emotional difficulties** and **worse prosocial skills** than those who were not shielding.

Our analysis did not control for pre-pandemic SDQ scores. Further analyses are needed to establish whether emotional and pro-social difficulties were associated with shielding behaviour or associated with the characteristics of those children and/or parents that choose to shield their children.