

# Social impacts of COVID-19 on families living in hardship

## Snapshot



100 Families WA

**“ It’s increased my cost of living. The day to day functioning costs more at home, and time off from kids to home school ”**

This snapshot highlights how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted Western Australian families living in hardship, including what restrictions and economic and social impacts were experienced by the 158 families who took part in the survey.

For more details on these and other related COVID-19 findings, please refer to **100 Families WA COVID-19 Report**.

Overall, family members report greatly varying experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic, which have been influenced by several factors, including whether or not they receiving the Coronavirus Supplement.

### What impact has COVID-19 had on families living in hardship?

#### Financial stress and income support

The majority of families (89%) received income support payments in the year prior to the survey, but only 51% reported received the \$550 Coronavirus Supplement.

#### How families plan to spend the Coronavirus Supplement?

46%



Pay overdue bills

24%



Get ahead on rent or mortgage

46%



Repay debt (financial institutions, family or friends)

**\*Note:** Percentages do not add up to 100.0 as family members could select multiple options

#### What are the ways in which the Coronavirus Supplement has affected family member’s lives?

Issue	%	Example
Bills	43	“Helped me get up to date with rent, bills, gave me a breather from everything else that’s happening”
Savings	10	“It has been really helpful, as I was [able] to pay rent and save up for a car”
Food	28	“Well it’s made it a lot easier, I can feed the girls a lot better, I have been able to supply more balanced meals”
Others essentials	20	“It has been amazing. It has been a liveable income. It has enabled me to pay for the things that I need that I usually can’t. It has taken a load of stress off and I’m terrified of what is going to happen when this is all over”
Improved quality of life	52	“Not under the poverty line anymore, able to go out. Lasts two weeks.”
No/minimal impact	5	“It has made it a little bit better but not by much. I have money for about 3 days”

**\*Note:** Percentages do not add up to 100.0 as family members responses may have been coded to multiple categories

## Service access and service quality

Many families experienced complete interruptions to the services previously accessed. They also reported widespread changes to the ways they accessed other services. Opinion on these changes were divided, with 46% of family members perceiving the changes to be “positive” or “more positive than negative”, and 54% perceiving the changes to be “negative” or “more negative than positive”.

### Has COVID-19 stopped you from being able to access this service altogether?

#### Essential items - food



**50%**  
said yes

#### Health services



**48%**  
said yes

#### Mental health services



**61%**  
said yes

Services that could not be delivered as easily without in-person contact were most affected.

### Health and health services access:



**38%** of family members reported feeling anxious and depressed “all of the time” or “most of the time” (compared with the general public 17%)



**41%** of family members had health-related appointments or procedures cancelled or rescheduled due to COVID-19

### Employment:



**29%** of family members reported their ability to look for jobs was affected



**34%** of family members reported their motivation to look for jobs was affected

### Education:



**74%** of family members with school-aged children in their care felt that they had enough resources to continue their children’s schooling



**26%** felt they needed additional resources to home school their children (internet, computer, resources on what to teach)

Family members reported varying experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic. The variations in experience reflect the different situations of families – some are caring for children, some are not; some received the Coronavirus Supplement, others did not; some family members have severe physical health and/or mental health issues, and others do not.

Families who received the Coronavirus Supplement reported an increase in quality of life, allowing them to pay bills and repay debt, ultimately supporting them to live with more freedom, more choice and a greater level of dignity. However, the findings confirm that many families were significantly impacted by the pandemic, especially those who were not seen as eligible to receive the supplement.

While many positives can be taken from the responses of organisations and government, there is still an essential need for all to learn from this experience and these findings, so we can ensure that all families living in hardship are appropriately supported, everyone has the opportunity to thrive, and no one falls through the cracks.

To learn more about the project visit [www.100familieswa.org.au](http://www.100familieswa.org.au)