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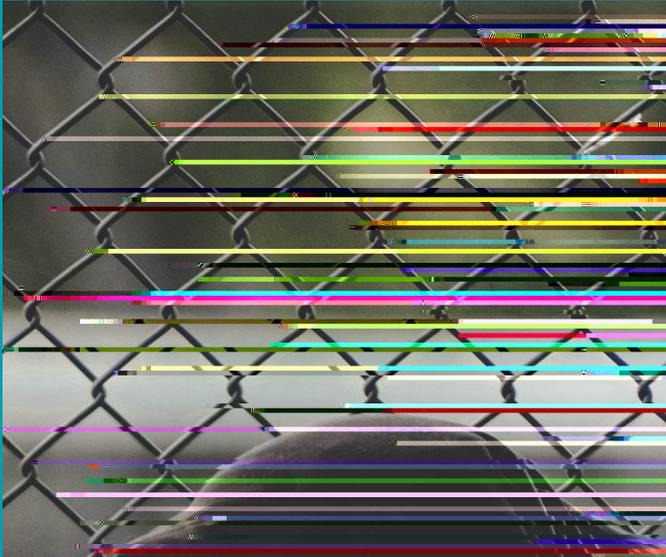
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Our analysis relates to the longitudinal sample of 10,888 young people who



Bolstering access to supportive relationships could help to support and improve mental wellbeing. These findings are particularly timely and relevant due to the social isolation experienced by many young people over the last 18 months because of coronavirus pandemic restrictions.

The reduction in perceived social support between Year 7 and Year 9 provides a rationale for holistic approaches (such as those adopted by the HeadStart partnerships) that aim to establish and reinforce connections for adolescents in multiple areas of their lives. The perceived reduction in school support between Year 7 and Year 9 points to the transition into secondary education and the first years of secondary school as an opportunity to enhance support for pupils who may feel less supported than they did in primary school.

Perceived social support refers to our beliefs about how much support (material, emotional, psychological) is available from our relationships with others when we need it, and the adequacy of this support. Adolescence is an important period of transition from childhood into adulthood during which young people may draw on social support from several sources, including their peers, parents and carers, relatives, and teachers. During this time, young people experience changes across multiple areas of life, including emotional, physical and social development, shifts in interpersonal relationships and increasing autonomy from their parents and carers.¹ Peers tend to become a greater source of support during adolescence, and friendships represent an important aspect of early adolescents' growing autonomy.^{1,2}

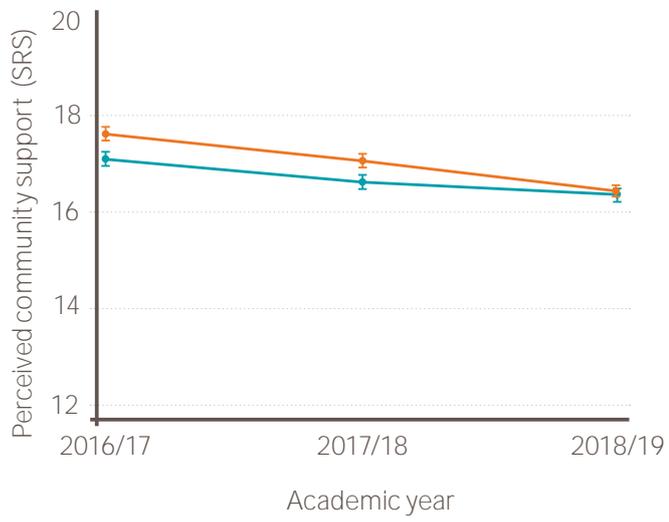
From the research literature, we know that there are meaningful associations between how adolescents perceive these support networks and important developmental outcomes, including psychological wellbeing, self-esteem and academic attainment and adjustment.^{4,11-14} Perceived social support is important as it acts as

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'yes' or 'no'. Our results suggest that when looking
at the sample as a whole, perceived levels of
school and community support reduce during
adolescence whereas perceived levels of peer
and home support remain somewhat more stable.
This is because when we look at the total sample,



Our study suggests that perceived social support and wellbeing are related. At both Year 7 and Year 9, home, school, peer and community support were

DOO VLJQLIFDQWO\ SRVLWLYHO\ FRUUHODWHG ZLWK VXEMHFWL wellbeing. Furthermore, all four sources of support were significantly correlated with each other,

With thanks to HeadStart Learning Team

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7. Ng Fat, L., Scholes, S., Boniface, S., Mindell, J., & Stewart-Brown, S. (2017). Evaluating and establishing national norms for mental wellbeing using the short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Index (SWEMWELL) in the Health Survey for England. *Quality of Life*

