

Meeting with 'X', 27/08/20

'X' is my friend who was year 11 in 2019-2020, and we had a chat after he received his GCSE results about the experience

1. How did you feel the evening before results day?
 - Really nervous.
 - Knows he will do well because of his good mocks and he has good relationships with his teachers
 - Many of his friends were very nervous
 - He sat a GCSE in year 10 so already had a results day, this one felt weird because there was no way of knowing how you did-normally you come out of an exam having some idea of the mark you'll get

2. Were you anxious about the grading system?
 - He assumed as soon as the exams were cancelled that there would be an algorithm in place/would be based on statistics, but he didn't realise how wide scale and unfair it would be.
 - Felt that the government should have announced their plan earlier - there wasn't enough time given, BTEC results weren't ready given the notice given, therefore many students didn't get all their results

3. How did you receive your results and what was it like?
 - Went into school, was given an envelope to open outside.
 - It was very empty, very socially distant, felt anti-climatic

4. Do you feel that your results day reflected your work?
 - He worked extremely hard at English but in his mocks received a grade 4 (low C). On results day he was given a grade 7(A). Happy that his work was recognised but thought it was too generous - he wouldn't have got that in the exam.
 - Worked very hard in DT and only received a 5 - felt like he was downgraded. He had DT coursework which he put a lot of hours into but he was only halfway through so he thinks it may have not been used for assessment (wasn't told).
 - Thinks this because a lot of fully completed A-Level coursework wasn't considered - finds this very unfair.

5. How do you feel the government handled results this year?
 - Poorly
 - Not enough information was given, what was given was given far too late (shown by BTEC grades not being ready from the announcement a few days before)

6. How has your mental well-being been throughout this time?
 - Himself and all his friends haven't been thinking about it for months - knew that it was coming but results day always felt so far off
 - Felt like there wasn't much talk of results day among friends and family until A-level results day - suddenly became the main focus.
 - It was always in the back of his head

7. Any other comments?
 - The dramatic effect from GCSEs being cancelled shows how set in place the exam-centric system is - shown how we really need to reconsider the 'one size fits all' education system and make it more accessible and flexible.
 - Government haven't been nice to teachers - the algorithm showed that they don't trust the teacher's grades
 - We need to praise teachers more, generally as soon as teachers enter this field of work they are unhappy and want to leave again
 - There was pressure when giving grades from the senior leadership teams at schools because they had a say and wanted to make their school look better - intimidating for teachers.