**Video Transcript: Interview with Kate**

**What has lockdown meant for you?**

God. Well in terms of my family, because I'm not from London I've got family back home in Latvia. So for me it's been quite, I found it quite difficult to not come to terms with the fact that I'm not going to see them this summer, because I was supposed to go there. Obviously with everything happening, you can't do it and I think this year was especially important for me to go back there, because we had some family issues.

And obviously, I can talk to them via WhatsApp, we do phone calls and everything, but it's obviously not the same thing. Especially if my younger brother, he's been the one having issues if he's not much of a talker himself so it's just, it's been quite difficult in that sense. But I've also been lucky enough to live here, where I've got another sort of host family so it's not like I'm completely isolated, I do have a sense of family with them as well. So it hasn't been as challenging as it perhaps could be to some other people. So in that sense I've been very lucky.

In regards to employment slash unemployment. So obviously I was furloughed because I work in a nursery and as schools they were all shut for quite a while.

But now I've been back to work for God, I think it is going to be a month from now?

In regards to my studies, well, I'm already a graduate, but I was thinking of doing Master’s as of September. Obviously most unis, they're now going to do online-only, so I think well there's not much point for me to pay 14-something thousand to do an online course only.

So that's also been like, “What I'm going to do now?” And I was supposed to have my BBC Trainee Scheme as of September, as well. But all of that's been cancelled, or postponed until September of 2021. So that means I've literally got a year of, “What I'm going to do?” You know, it's just a year but then again it's a year wasted. So, I mean it's very frustrating especially to know that there might be another lockdown and you know, not that we might not be able to get out of this though. It is pretty damn stressful, to be honest. I was also thinking of moving to Australia, that's been cancelled for the time being as well.

So during lockdown, I've been able to do things that I've never really had the time to do before. I was always into blogging, a few years back, but then I started working, doing full-time, doing internships here and there and it just sort of stopped. But now I've been getting back into it, which has been great. But what I meant by ‘being wasted’ is in terms of my professional life. So, work-wise. Because I don't want to do childcare for the rest of my life. I want to focus on journalism.

**How has lockdown impacted your mental health?**

I think it could have been a lot worse.

Initially I thought, what I'm going to struggle big time is not being able to go to the gym. Because gym for me is a big thing. I mean, I would go five to six times a week.

So I thought, that's gonna be a big struggle but I realised I've got weights home so that's been great for me. I found it quite difficult to get used to the fact that I'm not able to see my friends as much as I would like. Because being on a Zoom call is one thing but seeing them in person is different. You know, even the mere fact of being on a train!

I just realised, oh my god, I actually took all these things for granted.

And I thought initially that I was one of the people that are at higher risk cos I've got arthritis, so that means my immune system is pretty crap. So I wasn't allowed to go shopping or anything. So essentially, I had to spend my days indoors and I thought: this is awful. I miss going to ASDA! But I started doing it anyway because I was like sorry I can't just sit home. So, even a trip to ASDA for me was a big thing.

It also gave me the sort of opportunity to address all the mental issues that I had suppressed so far. Being in lockdown and starting to write about it sort of made me address these things and figure out how they affected me, and work on myself in that sense. So…

**What priorities should the government set for young people moving forward?**

I think where the government here went wrong is that they realised and sort of woke up far too late. Because I know back home, they went in a lockdown before there were any cases recorded. So altogether, as of now, within these, what has it been? What, three months now? They've only got less than 20 deaths.

Now I think they've only got like five cases now all together.

So I think that's where we went wrong. We woke up far too late.

In regards to where to go from now. I think they need to figure out what to do with finances because I think that's what's giving young people like myself the most stress and anxiety and sort of sense of uncertainty, what's going to happen. There needs to be some, I don’t even know what. Something with unis because a lot of my friends who are still in uni over here, they got very upset because they thought that they should get a refund for everything, because obviously they paid a good amount of money. But you know, the last few months that were completely wasted. And one of my friends she sort of analysed how much she's paying now and it turned out to be—obviously you started getting less and less classes as it is and what it was, was online so for one class it turned out to be like three or 600 pounds. That's a hideous amount. So they feel like they should get a refund. So that's something that definitely needs to be addressed. Because I know there was something on the news the other day that they wouldn't really get a refund, because you know, it's not the government's fault(!) but then again, you know, you’re a student, you're paying 27, god knows how many thousand, you're not getting anything for it.