# Audio file

[Emma COVID memories.mp3](https://seessexcollegeac-my.sharepoint.com/personal/lou_cox_southessex_ac_uk/Documents/Transcribed%20Files/Emma%20COVID%20memories.mp3)

# **Emma Bowers - Audio Transcript**

00:00:01

Hi my name is Emma Bowers and I just want to tell you a little bit about my experience of the pandemic going back to the when it sort of first began.

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My first sort of, my earliest sort of memories of it is, it's starting to build upon the news. We were hearing more and more about it, and I remember there was a couple on the early morning.

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Breakfast telly, a couple on holiday that weren't able to come home because they tested positive and there was like this.

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Thing to try and get them back, and it was sort of interviewing the Son and what have you? And that was sort of my initial sort of memory of it, and then it sort of obviously built up and built up and more and more people contracted the virus and it was it wasn't abroad anymore. It was coming to England.

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And there was more and more people and more and more deaths happening over here.

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I remember, the you know we were having the talks from the Prime Minister, where we all sat and listened to him give the rules, and it was really, at the time, I felt that what was strange was that we were almost, we were being dictated to of how we were going to run our lives and.

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We weren't able to do this. We were able to do that. We would be able to go and visit friends and family and we weren't at one point, obviously not able to even go to work and it was really quite scary. It felt like we were in like a game and that we were being sort of.

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Handled by this authority above, I completely understand why it had to happen like that. We had to all sort of.

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Change the way we were living our lives in order to help others and to protect ourselves and others and completely understand that.

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The another memory of it was the Thursday evenings going outside and clapping for the NHS. Our street were really up for that and there was.

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It was just. It was really nice to do it and to feel like we were supporting them, but also just nice to see the neighbours cause.

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We're all sort of in our own little bubbles in our own little 4 walls and not able to sort of meet and, you know, communicate with others. It felt quite.

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Yeah, alone that you were in your own little family bubble and not able to sort of do what you would normally do.

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Going shopping was really strange. Queuing outside in, you know with the meters between you so that, all masked up, only so many allowed in the shop. Just found it all quite surreal. It, it wasn't it. It was really strange.

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I work at college and I travel on the train to and from college. That's my method of getting there and.

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You know the trains, everybody's you know, that people weren't sitting next to each other. You were people were touching the, the button to get on and off with their elbows and I just remember, people, sort of there was.

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But a bit more courteous to each other. People were, you know, letting people on and off.

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College, obviously we had to do big risk assessments and it got to the stage where as a teacher, teaching a practical subject.

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It was really difficult for my students to see because they couldn't get close enough to see what I was doing, so I had to start producing videos.

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So that they were able to watch them individually so they could be able to see the processes and able to move on with what they were doing. These actually proved to be quite useful.

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And I have continued to do to use them actually. It enabled the students to work at their own pace and we're able to rewind and fast forward.

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So not having to memorise the actual physical demonstration, it's actually become part of my, part of my teaching now.

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To use these videos, which is a good thing.

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I was really quite poorly at the beginning. It was, it was sort of.

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Christmas 2020, would it have been 2020?

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I got COVID just before the end of term. At that point we were working from home, for it was about we've been working from home for about a week, 2 weeks.

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And I had, had got it and we had to go for a test. I have two children and we were advised to go as a family to be tested and mine came back positive.

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The rest of the family were negative, but mine was positive and I think seeing that on my phone you know ‘you are positive’!

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Really scared me really threw me back and I was.

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Wasn't able to sort of.

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Function properly, it really hit my mental health and I am constantly having to do something. I'm quite an active person.

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I need to be doing something all the time, and just being sat in this room, bedroom with all this time on my hands. Really got to me.

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And I was able to think and overthink and keep thinking and started to.

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I just had this big guilt that I had given the virus to the people I've been in contact that previous week, and that I was passing it on through my children even though they were negative, to the schools and that there was a big outbreak in the schools.

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I just, I couldn't get the guilt out of my head and everybody gets in, but someone's giving it to you and you, you know, just look after yourself and keep get yourself well, but I just felt so awful.

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I thought I was going to lose my job. There was just so many stresses going on at the time that it just got.

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I wasn't sleeping properly and ended up having to go on medication for anxiety and depression because I just went into a real sort of mental breakdown.

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My work and

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Colleagues were really supportive, and I was able to have a little time out of work to sort of get myself back to normal. My family again, looking back on it.

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It must have been quite frightening for the children to see me in that way because I just wasn't myself at all.

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My husband was again, really, really supportive, but also was obviously scared because he didn't know how to handle and what to do.

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So, I feel really bad that I put them through that because it was just a really horrible time, since being on my medication, I've calmed down a lot and I put things into perspective. I think the pandemic in general has made me really prioritise what is important.

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You know your family and your friends and your, and more than anything that I need to start looking after myself and having time for myself, and not be stressing about things that I can't do anything about, not try not to worry about things that are out of my control.

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And I really have got a different head on. I do feel a lot calmer and a lot more in control.

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Which is great.

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I think at that time when I had it, it was at the beginning and it was a case of the everybody in the household.

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All had to stay in and we weren't allowed to go out, so we had to have shopping dropped off. It was just a really mad time.

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Since then, at a later date, my husband contracted it… oh, going back to me. I didn't actually have any symptoms. I had a bit of a fever. I think beforehand and I had.

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A funny taste in my mouth which, which lasted quite a long time actually.

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But other than that, and, and feeling very tired but not sleeping. My husband got it later, a lot later, and he was really, really poorly with it.

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He was off work and obviously off work for the duration. I think at that time we they had to be off for 10 days and the first couple of days he was in.

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You know in his.

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Bed he was really, really poorly.

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Just slept and was sweating and coughing and he.

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Was really quite poorly with it. My two sons have also tested positive, but haven't really had any symptoms at all, so it really shows how it affects people in different ways, how our immune system sort of deals with it.

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My mum is on, was on the vulnerable list.

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She's had breast cancer in the past and so she was on this list.

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Or had to have really restricted contact with people and she lives on her own. We lost my dad a couple of years ago so she, prior to the pandemic, she had learned to sort of look after herself and become independent and confident in, you know, just getting to and from the shops and things that my dad just did for her.

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And, and then the pandemic, sort of.

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She lost that confidence. She didn't. She was frightened of going out. She didn't want to, you know, have contact with people and I think it took a while for her to sort of get that back.

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The children. They've lost their, a bit of their school.

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And years, and it's my youngest was in his final year, and although they had contact and obviously had to work online, and what have you, they just lost that connection with the rest of the class.

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And I just feel for them. They you know this socially they need to, school children sort of need that interaction with everybody within their class, not just their class and their friends.

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And I think it's going to take time to sort of build that confidence up socially. He seems gone to secondary school.

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And I do feel that that transition was seen to be a lot harder for him.