**Video Transcript: Interview with Taiwo**

**What has lockdown meant for you?**

For me, I know it was a challenge for me at the time, because I was wondering, how am I gonna overcome this hurdle. But I thought I'm just gonna go with the flow.

In terms of family, I would say it's been really, really great. It's been a positive actually, corona. It's been a positive for me because I've managed to spend more time with my family because of the restrictions. Now, I have managed to have all of my family indoors. So we had to get to know each other a bit more, spend more time with each other, do shopping with each other, we had to just, you know, be around each other a bit more. I mean, of course, there was times where it becomes frustrating when you've been around someone for so long. Yeah, I’ll just get some fresh air. And however, I did really enjoy the fact that, I don't really feel like I've ever spent this much time with my family. Or maybe for a long while. Another thing in terms of my family what was great for me, a positive, was I spent quite a long time with my little daughter, so I have a young daughter and I spent quite a long time with her.

I have quite, really sort of close contacts, and my connections. And of course, I was in touch with people like Troy as well trying to do different sort of research and surveys with him. And I'd say that was really, it was a really, really great thing for me at the time. Because if I didn't have all these little things going on and all these people to keep in touch with, I would have felt like I was on my own. In terms of finances, I've been very fortunate that I've had some savings that I could sort of dig into, you know, emergency savings. And without that, I think it would have been really, really challenging to sort of, you know, provide shopping because we had to pay like, extra utility bills at home, which was great because it could split between, you know, me and my brothers amongst other family members. But if I didn't have that sort of savings there, I'm not really one to sort of go on any sort of benefits in the first place. So I had to just sort of manage with what I had.

I started losing a bit of routine, I would say. My sleeping pattern, you know, really got destroyed. I mean, in terms of, my sleeping pattern must've got destroyed, because I was going bed later, really late mornings watching programmes, and then I'll get up really late as well. And that’s something I wasn't really having any control over. So I thought what would be a really good thing to help me would be to exercise because I know the sort of physical benefits I have from doing exercise.

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

I did have periods of times where, you know, my mentals might have been down here, and I physically was drained as well. And you know, sometimes that’s alright, I just needed a break to sort of reset, and just go again, but one thing I kept was my faith, and I just said, you know what, hopefully this will be over at some point, and I'll be able to get back to reality. And you know, just before my sort of support network I have, I was really, really keen that they would help me out. So I just had to face that. This might be a bit difficult right now might be hard times and whatnot. But I just really believe that I'm going to survive it and because I had really, really good people around me, even just people making simple phone calls or people having the Zooms with me that I haven't spoken to in ages and just giving me guidance, and telling me how good my life is gonna be, and how much potential I've got, just having just getting that sort of encouragement from other people. I mean, that was really, really helpful. And I believe if I didn't have those sorts of people, alongside with me, alongside me and my mentality as well, I would have found it really, really challenging to get through, you know, this sort of period.

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

There’s certain things that we need to sort of put at the top of our list. When all of, you know, as I know restrictions have been lifted and whatnot. But as we sort of move along, along the lines of, I feel like something like education is really, really key for the government to, you know, sort of look out for. Sort of, make sort of protocols. I think that's a really, really key thing. About whatever restrictions are gonna put in place for if there is a second wave, for example, what are we going to do to make education easier for people right now? I wasn't really pleased with my daughter to have taken so much time off school. Like it's not, we don't have no, we don't have no option about this, I have no choice by it, but at the same time I wasn't, I wasn't happy to see that my daughter had to miss out on so much school, and her school life. Because when I was her age, I never missed out on anything like this for so long, either.

So it wasn't really great knowing that my daughter had to miss out on time. And just like, for example, people at universities or colleges, they might have found it even more harder, they might have struggled a little bit to, you know, get in their assignments. I've spoken to a few of my sort of young peers. So a few of the young people that I work and I've seen how they've been getting on, and some of them still have some outstanding assignments. And I just feel that if they were in term, and they were in education or in the buildings of universities or colleges, maybe it would have been a lot more easier for them to sort of get the work out the way. So one of the main things I would say is education.

I would say employment is another thing the government need to look at, especially employment for young people because a lot of them—this has been really, really challenging times, just like for anyone else. But we need to get people back to the norm, again. So I feel like in terms of getting them back to the norm, it would be, you know, employment. Getting them into work and into good positions. And giving them great opportunities as well is another key point for the government. And I feel like another thing that the government needs to sort of prioritise is keeping active, keeping fit. Just even like, the physical side of things. I would like to see them putting in certain protocols to keep us safe at the same time. We just need to be very mindful and careful about how people can get really really excited when they get out there. And I really want to get out there to have a good time and have fun and enjoy, you know, the season that we’re in.

But I feel like the government need to prioritise that, and allow it to be a safe sort of space for us at the same time, when we do go back out there. Just feel like they need to make us more aware about the services we have, that are out there for the people that need the support.