



Northern Ireland Young Life and Times Survey

Launch of the 2008 results

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Sample

- **Invited: all young people living in Northern Ireland who receive Child Benefit and celebrated their 16th birthday in February and March 2008**
- **Postal questionnaire sent out in December 2008**
- **941 responded by returning the paper questionnaire or by completing the survey online**
- **Photo competition run alongside the survey**

Subject areas covered

- **Two main areas:**
 - Attitudes to minority ethnic groups (with NCB, funded by OFMDFM)
 - Mental and emotional health and self-harm (funded by Nuffield Foundation)
- **Other areas:**
 - Community relations,
 - Social pressures and health/risk-taking behaviour
 - School bullying
 - Background questions



2008 Young Life and Times Survey Background

Background

		%
Gender	Male	39
	Female	61
Religion	Catholic	43
	Protestant	40
	Other/no religion	16
Education	Planned integrated	5
	Grammar	49
	Secondary	41
	Other	4

Background

Sexual attraction	Opposite sex attracted	87
	Same/both sex attracted	9
Respondents living with	Both their parents	78
	Mother only	17
	Father only	2
	Mother at some time and father at some time	2
Family financial background	Well off	25
	Average	58
	Not well off	17



2008 Young Life and Times Survey

Mental and emotional health and self-harm

Have you recently:

- been able to concentrate on whatever you're doing?
- lost much sleep over worry?
- felt that you were playing a useful part in things?
- felt capable of making decisions about things?
- felt constantly under strain?
- felt you couldn't overcome your difficulties?

Two methods of coding GHQ-12:

A: 12 items recoded 0,1,2,3 and the values summed to give score ranging from 0 to 36. Higher scores reflect poorer mental health

B: 12 items recoded 1,2=0; 3,4=1 and the values summed to give score ranging from 0 to 12

Threshold of 4 or more - a 'case'

Respondents being 'cases' (4 or more items)

	%				
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
All	23.8	21.4	19.6	21.0	28.6
Males	15.6	11.5	14.9	15.0	18.3
Females	29.9	28.0	22.9	25.2	35.3

Stress

Respondents saying they get stressed often or very often

		%
Family financial background	Well off	35
	Average	38
	Not well off	47
Gender	Males	20
	Females	51
School type attended	Grammar school	40
	Secondary school	40
	Planned integrated school	29

Mental and emotional health

Have you in the past year had any serious personal, emotional, behavioural or mental health problem for which you felt you needed professional help?

	%		
	Male	Female	All
Yes, but I did not try to get professional help	7	12	10
Yes, and I did ask for professional help	8	10	9
No, I have had few or no problems	80	71	75
I have had, or now have, serious problems, but have never felt the need for professional help	5	7	6



‘I find that there is a lot of stress on young people of my age for example at school, there are deadlines to be met for coursework, homework, and at this age there are many important exams which will probably affect the rest of our lives. [...] Depression can occur very easily and in some cases may lead to self-harm, which should not be the answer to all of our problems.’

Self-harm Ideation

Have you during the past month or past year seriously thought about taking an overdose or trying to harm yourself, but not actually done so?

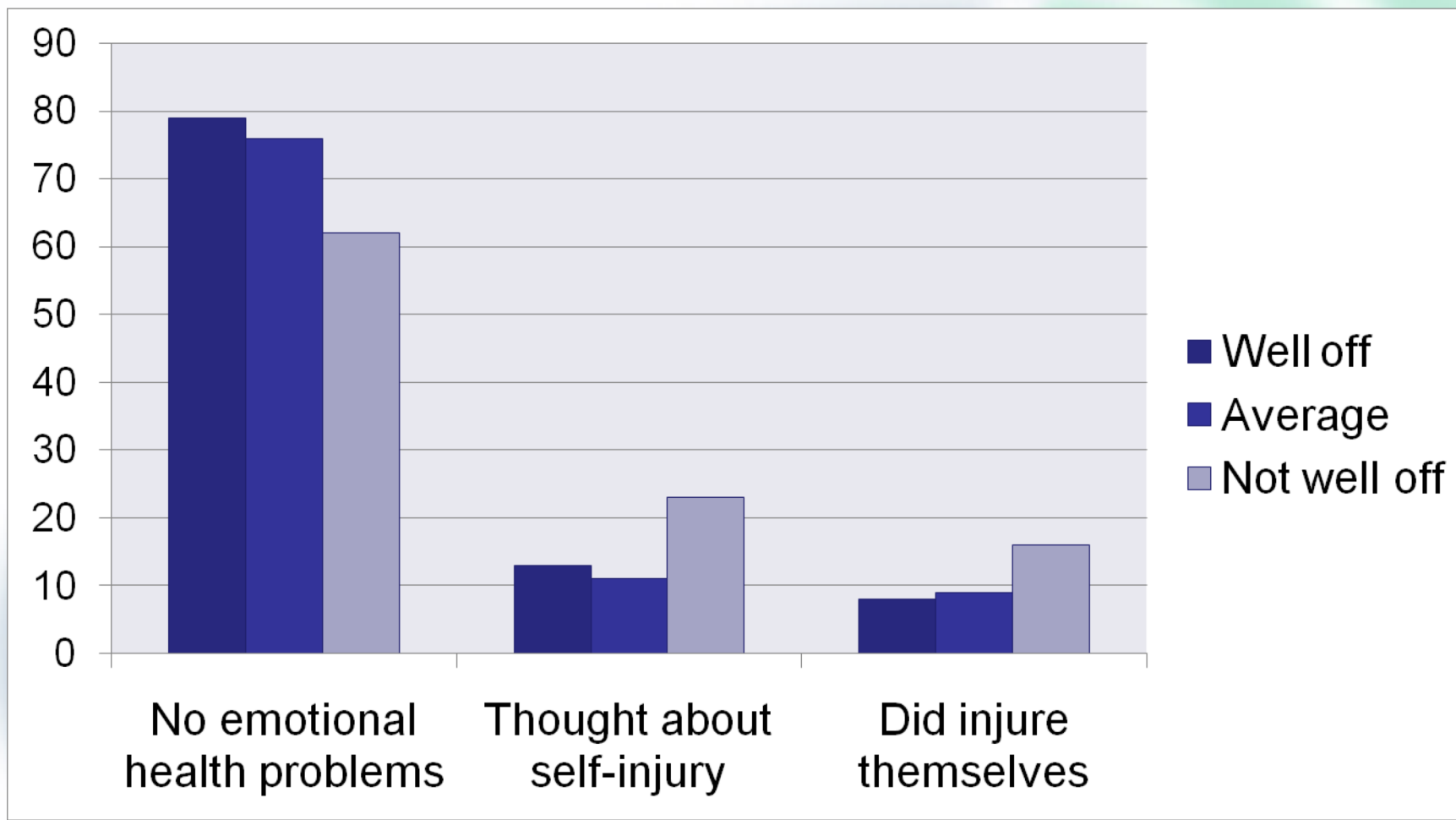
	% Male Female All		
No	93	82	86
Yes, the last time was in the past month	3	5	4
Yes, the last time was over a month ago, but less than a year ago.	4	13	10

Experience of self-harm

Have you ever deliberately taken an overdose? (For example of pills or other medication, or tried to harm yourself in some other way, such as cut yourself)

	% Male Female All		
No	95	87	90
Yes, once	3	6	5
Yes, more than once	2	7	5

Family financial background



Family financial background

Reported serious emotional or mental health problems:

- 42% of females from financially not well-off families
- 23% of females in well-off families
- 19% of well-off males

Self-injury

- 18% of females from financially not well-off families
- 11% of well-off females
- 3% of well-off males

A period of turmoil

*‘Whilst cleaning my room I was drinking a large Blackcurrant juice and put 3 500mg Paracetamol into it. This was because my parents were going through **a period of turmoil** and I did not want to talk to them about my problems in fear of making things worse. Since though my parents have sorted out their problems and have included me. A family death has also occurred, not suicide, resulting in me valuing my life & feeling strongly against suicide.’*

The only thing I could control

*'I used scissors to cut the inside of my leg near the top because **I didn't want anyone to see it.** I've done it before in a number of places.'*

*'I used to cut myself regularly. I saw professional help and am happier now and don't do it anymore. I used razorblades to cut my legs where no-one could see. It wasn't about attention or anything, it was because it was **the only thing I could control.**'*

A secret rebellion

*‘Scratched my hand with a blade but so that it would look like an accidental abrasion, when I was 13/14. None since, and I am now 16. I was annoyed of being expected at school to be perfect all the time, and it was **like a very secret rebellion.**’*

*‘Tried to cut myself with a knife. People talked about it in school. They said it takes your mind off your problems, but it doesn't. **It makes you even more depressed and worthless.** It's pathetic and I was confused when I did it.’*

Can't talk to these people

	Emotional and mental health problems		Ever thought about self-injury		Ever did harm themselves	
	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
Father	54	34	34	65	36	66
Mother	35	16	17	42	18	40
Brother or sister	47	32	34	51	34	52
Another relative	51	41	42	56	43	51
A friend	13	8	9	16	9	17
A teacher	65	61	60	70	61	67
Someone else	56	65	63	60	63	59

Attitudes to self-harm

Most young people who harm themselves...

	%		
	I agree	I don't know	I disagree
...are lonely and depressed.	63	20	16
...do it on the spur of the moment.	31	37	32
...are feeling suicidal.	34	32	34
...are trying to get attention.	39	31	30
...could have been prevented from doing so.	64	26	10
...are mentally ill.	19	29	52
...feel hurt inside.	83	14	3



‘For many young people, we feel that no one would want us to stay here, and not many of our friends have experience on what to do in these cases. There are so many pressures on young adults, girls especially, that many of us feel that there is no way out, no escape other than to end the hurt... I feel that depression is something that is quite common and it's the people who keep it a secret that need the most help although not many people offer them a helping hand.’



‘For me, I find self harm to be a way of fair punishment for everything I do wrong. Blaming myself is the easiest way and it stops arguments coming from it. Depression is now a part of everyone's life. Some don't understand what it really is and slag people off for showing their emotions through a blade, knife, rope etc. What happens in my life is my fault. I cause the events to occur therefore I take responsibility. Without help I would not be here today, dying was my only way out but someone, my counsellor, my friends, my family, gave me a reason to live!’



‘Families of people who self-harm or suffer from depression need help also. In some cases, the reluctance of the family to tell professionals, perhaps at the request of the sufferer, means they are left unaided.’



'I feel more should be done in recognising the signs of depression or stress in schools. Some children cannot cope with the stress in school combined with home problems. This could lead to depression or self-harm. If schools took more of an interest in this problem by providing a counsellor for example, children and young adults will potentially find school less stressful.'



2008

Young Life and Times Survey

Attitudes to, and experience of contact with, minority ethnic groups

Ethnic Identity

To which ethnic group do you consider you belong?

Skin Colour	Religion/Nationality
White/Caucasian: 63%	Catholic/Irish Catholic: 6%
White+: 18%	Protestant/NI Protestant: 5%
Non-white: n<1%	British:3% Irish: 4%

No response/none: 13%

Ethnic Identity

Below is a list of some minority ethnic groups. Please tell us if you belong to any of these groups.

- **Yes:** 4% (38 respondents)
- **Main groups:** Polish, Chinese, other Eastern European
- **No:** 88%
- **Don't know:** 3% (25 respondents)
- **No response:** 5% (49 respondents)

Respondents' contact with MEG

	%
Chinese	41
Polish	38
Black African or Caribbean	38
South Asian (Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi)	23
Irish Traveller	12
Portuguese	12
Mixed ethnic group	12
Filipino	9
Romanian	8
Other Eastern European	8
Bulgarian	4
<i>Other Group</i>	<i>10</i>
Don't know	6
None of these groups	19

Source of contact with MEG

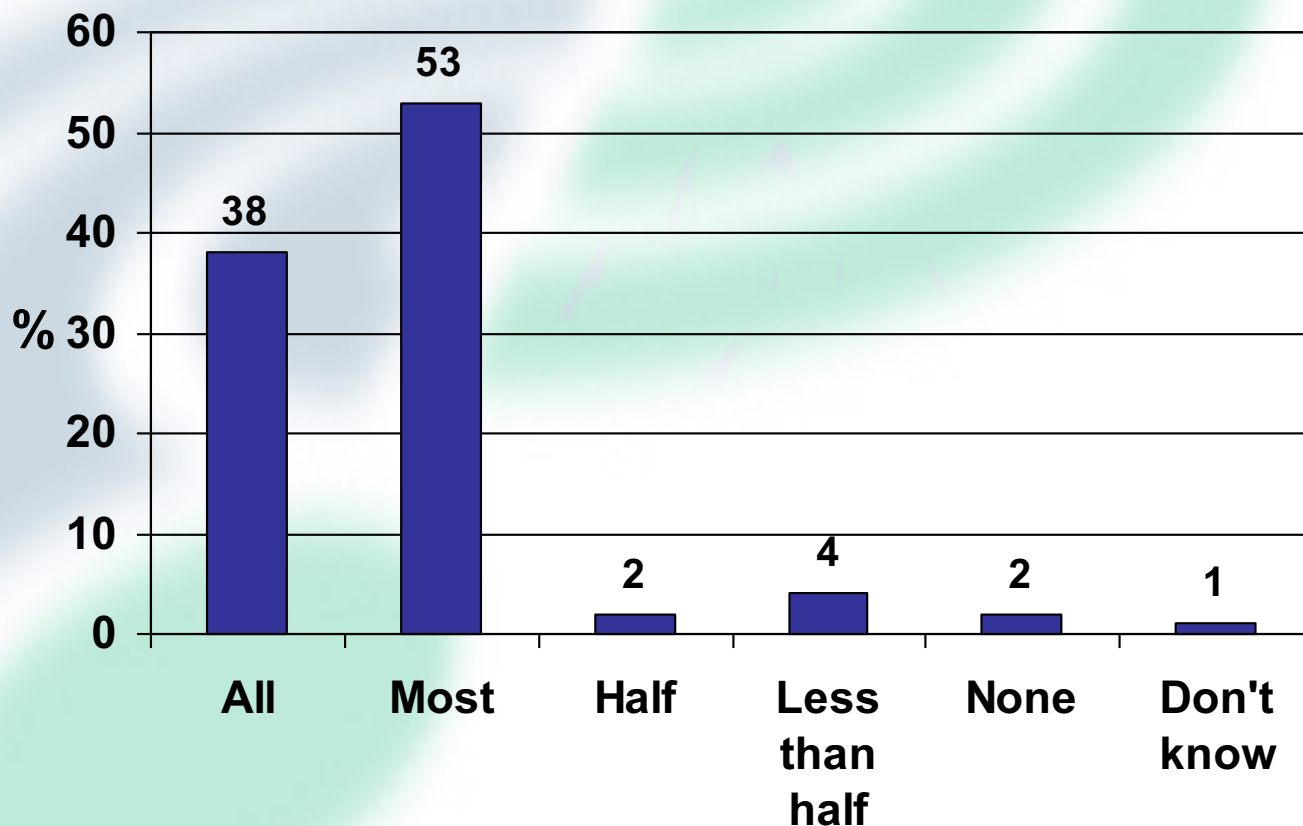
	%
Other students at school	80
When going out, (for example to a cinema or club)	27
Through my part-time job	25
In my neighbourhood	18
Through a sports club I attend	16
In a shop or restaurant	14
Staff at school	13
Through a youth or community project	13
Through my parents' work or social life	11
As part of my family	9
As part of inter-school projects	8
Travelling to school	5
<i>Other</i>	9

Respondents' friendship with MEG

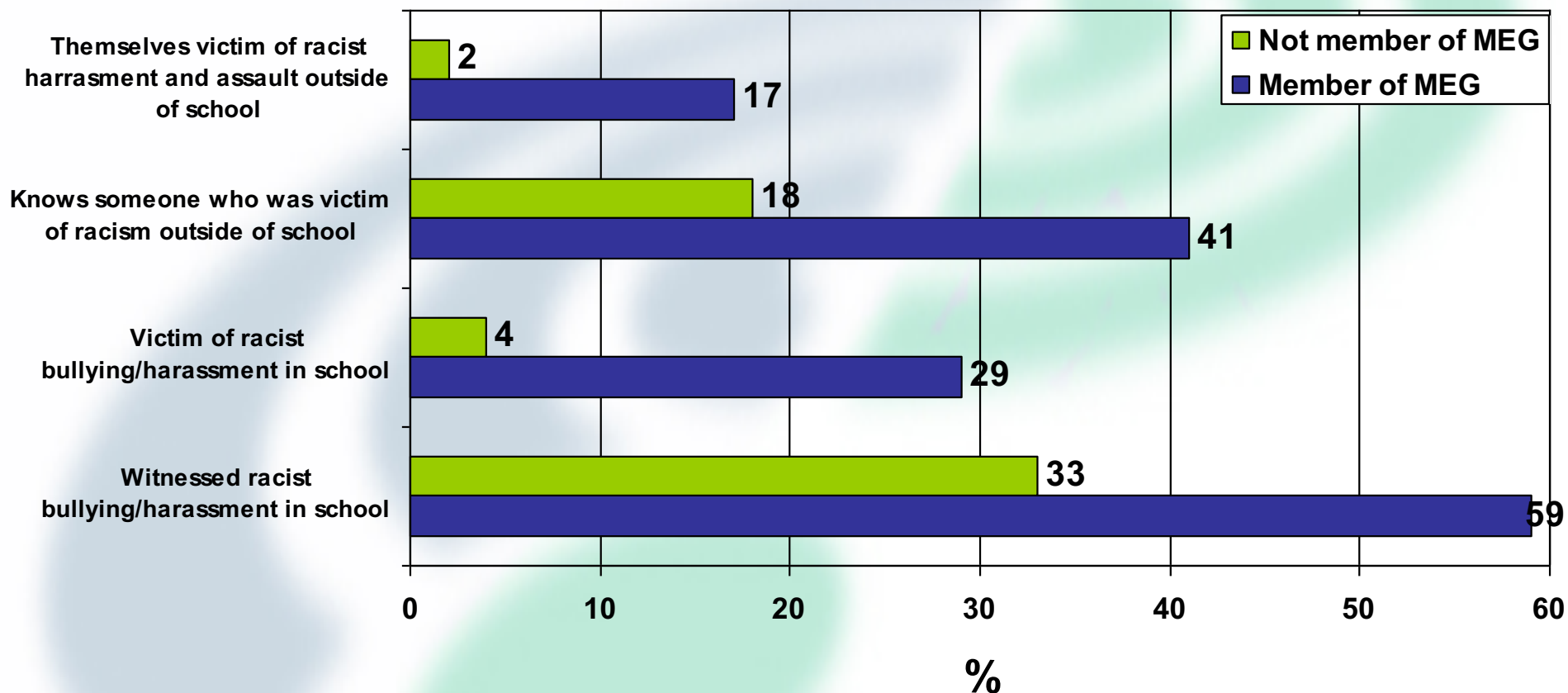
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Chinese	23
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Black African or Caribbean	20
South Asian (Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi)	14
Irish Traveller	3
Portuguese	4
Mixed ethnic group	10
Filipino	5
Romanian	2
Other Eastern European	4
Bulgarian	1
<i>Other Group</i>	6
Don't know	5
None of these groups	37

Friendship with MEG

Proportion of friends who share ethnic background with respondents



Experience of Xenophobia



‘Prejudice is due to the minority of narrow minded people who are reluctant to allow change within society. With regards to immigrants and ethnic minorities, I feel that they have as much right to be here as anyone else, if not more so. Many migrants have come from poverty stricken war zones and have come to Northern Ireland in a bid to seek shelter, solitude and even a decent wage. It is morally wrong and unjust to deprive these people of their necessities.’

‘Because migrant workers move to NI, they often bring family with them. If this includes children then they have to be educated. In my experience most migrants don't speak very good English so when the migrant children go to school they struggle a lot because they don't know enough English. This can be very hard and annoying for teachers and pupils.’

‘Generally jobs taken by migrants are ones other don't want, and there are enough jobs. people just use migrant worker as an excuse. ’

‘Get paid less, therefore we lose jobs to them as businesses hire them instead, meaning we have less jobs to employ Northern Irish people.’

‘I am 16 years old, I'm nearly 17 and I have been trying for the past year for a part time weekend job and still can't get one.’



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Social pressures and health-adverse behaviour

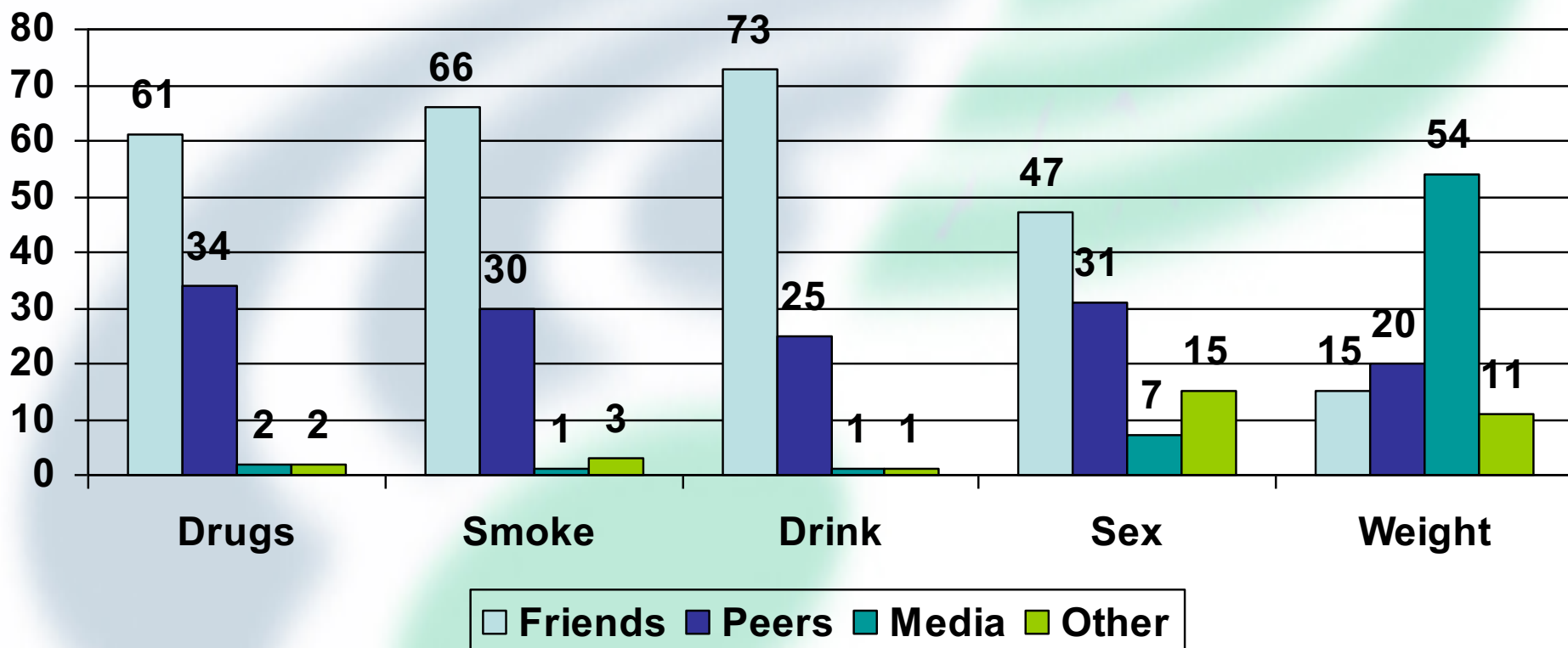
Social pressures

Have you ever felt pressurised to do any of the following things (Percentage saying 'yes')

	2008	2007	2005
Join a paramilitary organisation	<1	2	<1
Take illegal drugs	10	10	9
Smoke cigarettes	24	24	22
Drink alcohol	33	33	29
Have sexual intercourse	11	11	6
Lose weight	28	27	21

Social pressures

Source of pressure (%)



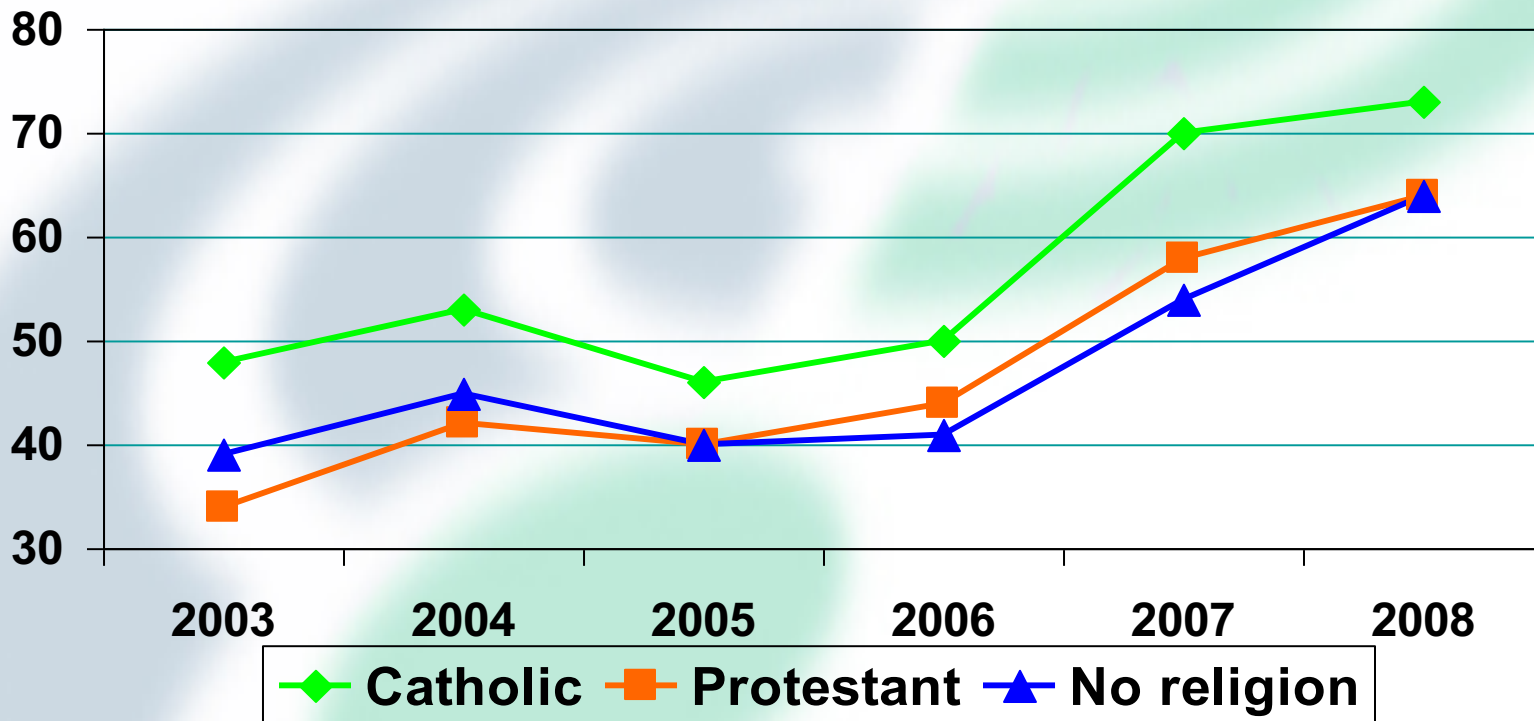
Social pressures and health

Respondents who had never done the following (%)

	2008	
	Males	Females
Smoked tobacco	67	57
Drunk alcohol	28	21
Used illegal Drugs	83	87
Taken solvents	95	96
Had sexual intercourse	80	76
Stopped eating to lose weight	90	54

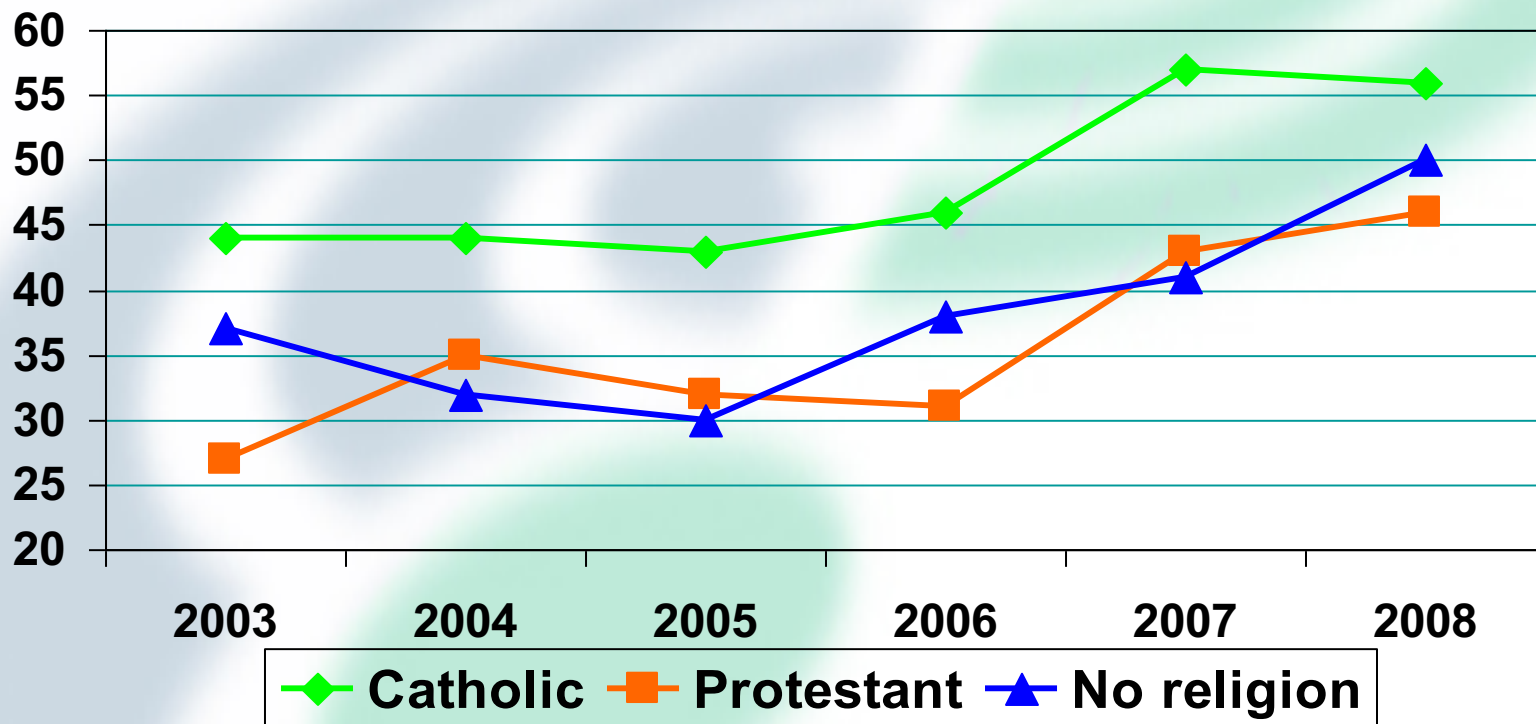
Cross-community relations

Respondents saying relations between Catholics and Protestants are better now than 5 years ago (%)



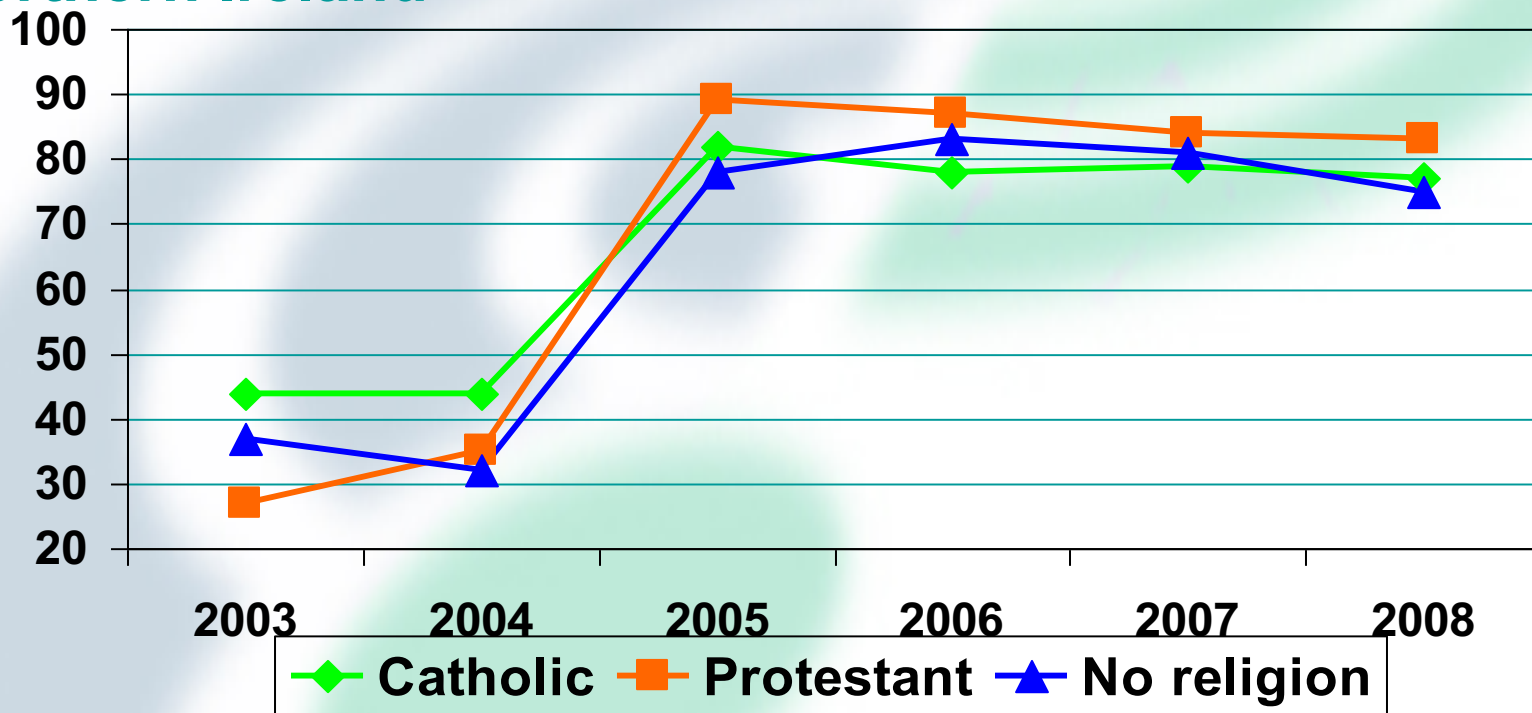
Cross-community relations

Respondents saying that relations between Catholics and Protestants will be better in 5 years than now (%)



Cross-community relations

Respondents saying that religion will always make a difference to the way people feel about each other in Northern Ireland





2008 Young Life and Times Survey

Forthcoming projects

Research Update Self-harm

Project report on *Attitudes to Difference* project with NCB

Update on ARK in Schools website with new material

2009 YLT survey