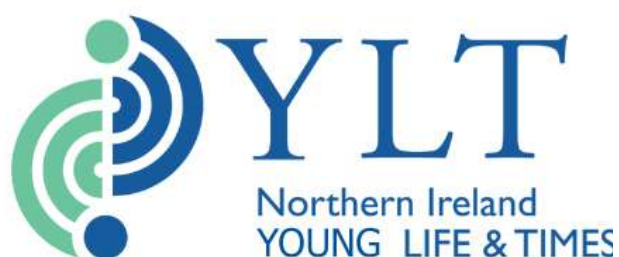# Community Relations, Equality and Diversity in Education (CRED):
Findings from the 2012
Young Life and Times Survey

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YLT
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Contents

Key findings

1208 16 year olds took part in the 2012 Young Life and Times Survey. The survey included a suite of questions to record the experiences of young people in relation to Community Relations, Equality and Diversity in Education (CRED).

70% of respondents had taken part in CRED activities, either at school or in a youth project or club. Of those who had taken part, 57 per cent had done so only in school, 14 per cent had done so in a youth setting only, and 29 per cent had done so in both.

Most respondents had undertaken activities focusing on people of different religious beliefs. However, other topics such as having dependents, marital status or caring responsibilities were covered by less than one third of respondents. School-based CRED activities covered more of the Section 75 groups that youth settings did.

For each of the identified groups, at least two thirds of respondents felt that CRED activities resulted in more positive feelings among participants. This applied to activities within school and within youth settings. However, the perceived level of changing attitudes among participants in youth settings was generally higher than participants in school.

For each of the identified groups, at least two thirds of respondents felt that CRED activities resulted in them feeling more positive about these groups. There was little difference depending on whether respondents undertook these activities at school or in youth settings.

Overall, the data indicate that the majority of young people are experiencing CRED activities in some shape or form, and these seem effective in changing attitudes. The fact that the breadth and range, as well as perceive effectiveness, may vary across settings is evident. However, this may be expected, given the different roles that schools and youth projects/clubs play within young people's lives.

Introduction

This project feeds into a wider programme of the Department of Education for Northern Ireland (DENI) to measure the success of the Community Relations, Equality and Diversity in Education (CRED) policy. The aim of this policy is to contribute to improving relations between communities by educating children and young people to develop self-respect and respect for others, promote equality and work to eliminate discrimination, and by providing formal and non-formal education opportunities for them to build relationships with those of different backgrounds and traditions within the resources available.

As part of this programme, DENI wished to assess effectiveness of schools and other youth settings in encouraging understanding of groups covered in Section 75 of the 1998 Northern Ireland Act. By developing a suite of indicators, the baseline level of success and effectiveness can be measured, and repeated over time. Whilst existing surveys provide some useful indicators (for example the Young Persons Behaviour and Attitude Survey, and previous Young Life and Times surveys), these do not adequately capture the extent of the policy. In particular, there is a need to develop indicators that reflect the wider scope of the CRED policy, and do not focus solely on community relations.

In order to achieve this, DENI commissioned a suite of questions within the 2012 Young Life and Times (YLT) Survey, which recorded the experiences of young people in relation to Community Relations, Equality and Diversity in Education.

YLT is one of three annual public attitudes surveys undertaken by ARK (Access, Research, Knowledge), which record the views of people living in Northern Ireland to key social policy issues that affect their lives. In particular, the opinions of young people are often ignored when decisions are made about many of the issues involving them. Thus, the aim of the Young Life and Times survey is to record the views of 16 year olds in Northern Ireland on a range of issues such as community relations, health, politics, sectarianism and education.

Aims and objectives of the research

The aim of this research is to assess the effectiveness of the CRED policy amongst young people living in Northern Ireland.

The objectives are:
- to develop a suite of survey questions that will act as indicators of the effectiveness of the CRED policy;
- to include these questions within the 2012 Young Life and Times Survey.

Methodology

Sample

The survey sample was taken from the Child Benefit Register. Child Benefit is a benefit for people bringing up children and is paid for each child. Therefore, the Register contains information on all children for whom Child Benefit is claimed. This Register had previously been the responsibility of the Social Security Agency (SSA) of the Department for Social Development in Northern Ireland (DSD). However, while DSD still maintained the database, the responsibility for the payment of Child Benefit transferred to Inland Revenue. Thus, it was necessary to negotiate access to this Register from Inland Revenue, which involved an explanatory memorandum being prepared relating to the Tax Credits (Provision of Information (Evaluation and Statistical Studies) (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2004).

Due to revised data security procedures in 2007, ARK had to re-apply to access the Child Benefit dataset for further YLT surveys, and permission was granted by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) in 2008. The sample for the 2012 survey was provided to ARK directly by HMRC. In October 2012 a Service Level Agreement was signed between ARK and HMRC about the sample provision. Within this agreement ARK had to lay out arrangements for the safety and security of the personal data of respondents. This included arrangements for a safe transport and storage of the files as well as destruction of the address file after completion of the data collection.

The sample drawn from the Child Benefit Register contained the names and addresses of all young people resident in Northern Ireland who celebrated their 16th birthday during February and March 2011.

Advance letter

Fieldwork was conducted in November and December 2012. All administration of the mailout for the survey was undertaken by an independent mailing company. An initial letter was sent out in October 2012 to all eligible 16-year olds and provided an introduction to the survey, after the wording of this letter had been agreed with HMRC. Recipients of the letter were given the opportunity to say that they did not want to participate in the survey.

A second letter was then posted out to all those 16-year olds who had not opted out of the survey. This consisted of a letter from the project team, a paper questionnaire and a return envelope with a FREEPOST address. This letter contained a unique identifier (with a check letter) under the address, which was highlighted as "Your identification number". The provided more information about the survey, the three possible methods of completing the questionnaire, and details of a draw for five prizes of £100 for which all respondents completing the questionnaire were eligible.

In total, 34 young people opted out of completing the survey at different stages.

Survey content
The 2012 survey entailed the questions on the following subject areas:

- Community relations - funded by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM);
- Shared Education- funded by the Office of the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY);
- Experiences of Community Relations, Equality and Diversity Education (CRED) – funded by the Department of Education (DENI);
- Attitudes to sexual orientation;
- Family;
- Background information.

At the end of the 2011 survey, respondents were given the opportunity to identify questions they felt should be included in the next Young Life and Times survey. Some of these suggested topics were incorporated in the 2012 survey, namely the questions on attitudes to sexual orientation.

In conjunction with DENI staff, the YLT team developed a suite of questions that asked respondents about their experiences of the CRED activities – see Appendix 1.

Completing the questionnaire
The fieldwork period lasted from 15 November – 31 December 2012.

Respondents were able to choose one of three methods for completing the questionnaire.

1. They could take part by phone, having quoted their identification number and check letter.
2. They could complete the questionnaire online, quoting their personal identifier to enter that part of the YLT website.
3. They could complete the paper questionnaire that was sent to them and post it back in the pre-stamped envelope.

After approximately ten days, a reminder letter with a second questionnaire was sent out to addressees who had not made contact of any kind.

Multiple responses from respondents (for example, one online and one postal response) were prevented by daily recording of the receipt of completed questionnaires. Once a respondent had submitted an online questionnaire, his or her unique identifier was automatically disabled.

Response rate
3,749 names of eligible respondents were on the database of Child Benefit recipients received from HMRC/DSDNI. 31 questionnaires were returned because the addressee had moved or was unknown at the address. This leaves a sample of 3,718 eligible respondents.

1,208 completed questionnaires were received by the end of the fieldwork period. The overall response rate of the 2012 YLT survey is therefore 32 per cent. Table 1 shows that the most popular mode of completing the survey was paper (1,036 questionnaires or 86 per cent). The rest of respondents completed the survey online. To encourage online completion, the first 100 online respondents received a £10 shopping voucher.

Table 1: Mode of survey completion

	n	%
Paper	1,036	86
Online	172	14
Telephone	0	0
Total	1,208	100

Characteristics of the respondents

The following tables show some key characteristics of the respondents to the 2012 survey. These tables exclude missing responses (that is, where the respondent does not answer). Column totals do not always sum to 100 per cent, due to rounding.

Table 2: Sex of respondents

	n	%
Male	506	42
Female	704	58

Table 3: Where respondents live

	n	%	
a big city	81	7	
the suburbs or outskirts of a big city	152	13	58
a small city or town	460	38	
a country village	216	18	41
or a farm or home in the country	280	23	
Don't know	12	1	-

Table 4: Physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last for 12 months or more

	n	%
Yes	121	10
No	1077	90

Table 5:Membership of a minority ethnic community

	n	%
Yes	111	10
No	1023	90

Table 6: Ethnic group (recoded open responses)

	n	%
White/Caucasian	672	64
White European/European/Continental European	15	1
White Catholic	8	1
White Protestant	8	1
White Irish	44	4
White British	58	6
Northern Irish/White Northern Irish	11	1
Protestant	31	3
Catholic/Irish Catholic/Roman Catholic	61	6
Christian	16	2
British/English	39	4
Irish	46	4
Don't know/none	11	1
Mixed origin/other	25	2

Table 7: Religious affiliation

	n	%
Does not belong to a religion	266	22
Church of Ireland (Anglican)	119	10
Catholic	480	40
Presbyterian	205	17
Methodist	29	2
Baptist	22	2
Free Presbyterian	10	1
Brethren	13	1
Other (Please write in)	57	5

Table 8: Community affiliation

	n	%
Part of the Protestant community	470	39
Part of the Catholic community	487	41
Neither	245	20

Table 9: National identity

	n	%
British	360	31
Irish	404	34
Ulster	16	1
Northern Irish	326	28
Other (Please write in)	51	4
Don't know	19	2

Table 10: Sexual orientation

	%		
	Males	**Females**	**All**
only to females and never to males	91	1	38
more often to females and at least once to a male	3	<0.5	1
about equally often to females and males	1	2	2
more often to males and at least once to a female	1	4	3
only to males and never to females	1	88	52
I have never felt sexually attracted to anyone	4	5	4

Table 11: Activity since October 2012

	n	**%**
At school or college full time	985	82
Working full time	4	<0.5
Working part time	3	<0.5
At school or college and working part time	156	13
On a training scheme	43	4
Unemployed	7	1
Other (Please write in)	2	<0.5

Table 12: Type of school most recently attended

	n	**%**
Planned integrated	81	7
Grammar	577	48
Secondary	457	38
Irish language	6	1
Special school	13	1
Other (Please write in)	56	5

Table 13: Description of school most recently attended

	n	**%**
all or nearly all Protestant	243	20
all or nearly all Catholic	413	34
mostly Protestant	210	17
mostly Catholic	87	7
about half Protestant and half Catholic	185	15
Don't know	66	6

Main findings

Experience of CRED
The questionnaire provided an introduction to the topic, using the following text:

'Education and youth work are supposed to encourage understanding of particular groups in society and promote the equal treatment of different groups. This can be done through exchange programmes, discussions, workshops, lessons or videos.'

When asked if they had ever done any of this, seven out of ten of respondents indicated that they had done so. Most of these respondents had done so in school (86 per cent), with half this proportion (43 per cent) doing so within a youth project. Three out of ten had done so both in school and within a youth setting (a youth project or youth club.

Table 14: Participation in CRED activities

	%	
	All respondents	**Of those who had undertaken activity**
School only	40	57
Youth project/club only	10	14
School and youth project/club	20	29
Not at all	30	-

Tables 15 and 16 focus on those undertaking these activities in school. YLT respondents were asked two questions relating to the type of school that they had most recently attended: type of school, and its religious makeup. This allows us to break down figures relating to school-based CRED activities by these school characteristics. Table 15 shows that respondents attending planned integrated schools were more likely to undertake these activities that those in grammar or secondary schools. (Other school types were omitted from this table due to small numbers). Table 16 indicates that those in mostly Catholic schools, or in schools that are mixed were most likely to undertake CRED activities, whilst those attending mostly Protestant schools were least likely to do so.

Table 15: CRED activities by type of school

	% of respondents undertaking CRED
Planned integrated	68
Grammar	61
Secondary	57

Table 16: Description of school most recently attended

	% of respondents undertaking CRED
all or nearly all Protestant	56
all or nearly all Catholic	61
mostly Protestant	55
mostly Catholic	66
about half Protestant and half Catholic	65
Don't know	52

CRED topics

The 70 per cent of young people who had experienced CRED activities were then asked if these activities had covered a range of 10 groups, reflecting the Section 75 categories. This was explored separately for school and for youth project/youth club – see Table 17. The findings in relation to school represent only those respondents who indicated that they had undertaken CRED activities in school, and a similar approach is taken in relation to a youth project or youth club.

Overall, schools appear to have covered issues relating to all groups more than youth projects or youth clubs. For example, 74 per cent of respondents who had experienced school-based activities said that this covered different ethnic groups, compared with 58 per cent of those responding in relation to youth projects or youth clubs, and there are three other groups where the differential is at least 14 percentage points (religious beliefs, sexual orientation and disability). Age is the only topic where coverage in youth settings is higher than in schools, although the difference is very slight (2 percentage points).

In general, the pattern of which groups for youth settings is similar to that in schools. Thus, the most frequently covered topic in either setting relates to different religious beliefs, followed by different ethnic groups, whilst the least covered groups related to caring responsibilities, dependents and marital status.

Table 17: Coverage of CRED groups, by setting

	%	
	School	**Youth project or youth club**
People with different political opinions	59	48
People with different religious beliefs	84	70
People from different ethnic groups	74	58
People of different ages (older and younger people/children)	53	55
People who are single, cohabiting, married or divorced	30	30
People with different sexual orientations	45	31
Men and women	55	46
People with a disability and those without a disability	63	46
People with dependents (e.g. children) and those without	31	26
People with caring responsibilities and those without caring responsibilities	34	29

School-based CRED activities appear to be covering a broader range of topics: only 3 per cent of respondents undertaking CRED at school did not identify any of the topics, whilst the relevant figure for young settings was 11 per cent. In contrast, the proportion covering at least eight topics is 25 per cent for schools, and 19 per cent for youth settings – see Table 18. The mean number of topics identified by respondents undertaking CRED activities in school is 5.3, whilst for youth settings, it is 4.4.

Table 18: Number of topics covered, by setting

	%	
	School	**Youth project or youth club**
0	3	11
1	7	6
2	9	10
3	11	15
4	16	17
5	11	9
6	11	7
7	8	7
8	7	7
9	6	5
10	12	7

Due to the small number of particular types of schools, figures can only be broken down for grammar and secondary schools. Figure 1 indicates that for six topics, a higher proportion of respondents attending grammar schools had covered these, compared with those attending secondary schools. However, these differentials were generally small. The exceptions are political opinion and ethnic groups, where there was at least a 10 percentage point difference. The number of topics does not vary significantly between grammar schools and secondary schools.

Figure 1: Coverage of CRED topics, by type of school
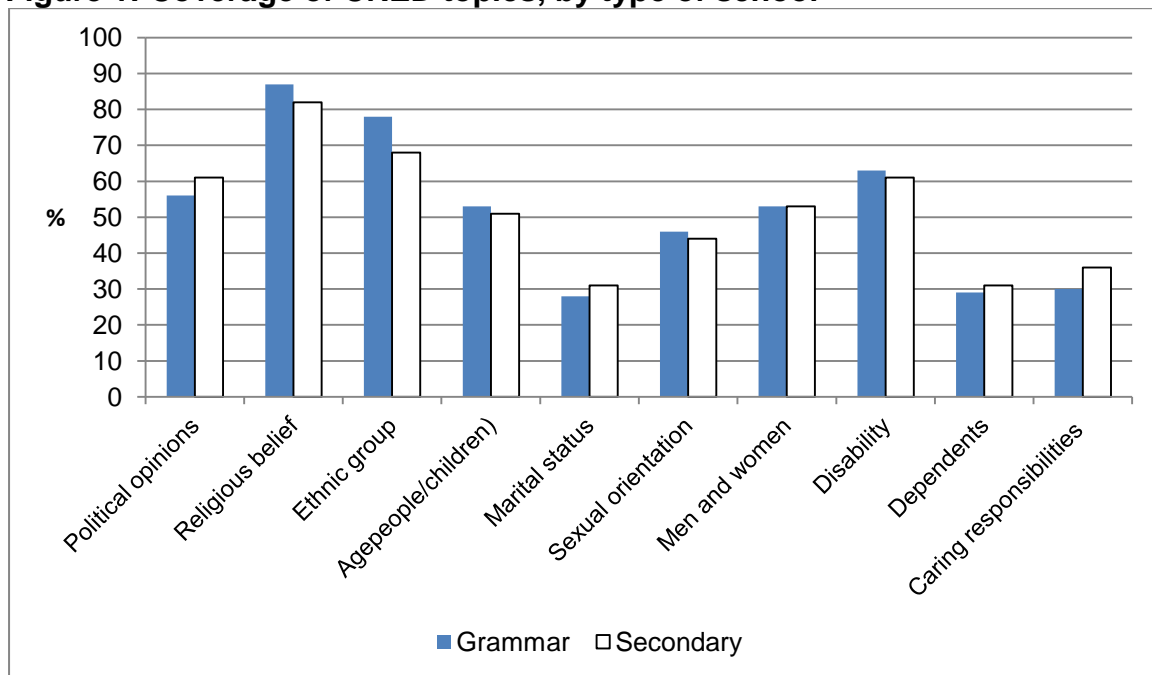
Changing attitudes among participants
Having identified which groups were covered within the CRED activities, the next step was to explore if this resulted in changing attitudes. Thus, respondents were asked if they thought that members of their class or youth project or youth club felt more positive towards any of the groups as a result of what was taught or discussed. (Figures are only presented for those respondents who identified that particular group in q34. YLT is primarily a paper questionnaire, and so respondents sometimes do not follow the appropriate routing of questions).

Two patterns are evident from Table 19. Firstly, for each of the ten groups, at least two thirds of respondents felt that CRED activities resulted in more positive feelings among participants, and this applied for both school and youth settings. Secondly, undertaking these activities within youth settings is more likely to result in more positive attitudes than those undergoing these activities in school. This was the case for eight out of the ten groups, and for the remaining two groups, there was no differential between the two settings.

Table 19: More positive attitudes of participants about CRED groups

	%	
	School	**Youth project or youth club**
People with different political opinions	74	81
People with different religious beliefs	78	78
People from different ethnic groups	78	78
People of different ages (older and younger people/children)	69	77
People who are single, cohabiting, married or divorced	71	74
People with different sexual orientations	71	81
Men and women	72	75
People with a disability and those without a disability	80	82
People with dependents (e.g. children) and those without	75	83
People with caring responsibilities and those without caring responsibilities	67	77

Table 20 suggests that one quarter of respondents attending CRED activities within a youth project or youth club thought that there was no group for which they perceived that CRED activities resulted in more positive feelings among participants. The respective figure for schools was 14 per cent, suggesting that CRED activities are more effective among schools than youth settings. On the other hand, it could be argued that those attending a youth project or youth club had positive feelings to begin with.

Table 20: Number of topics participants more positive about, by setting

	%	
	School	**Youth project or youth club**
0	14	24
1	10	9
2	13	12
3	15	13
4	12	11
5	9	6
6	6	6
7	7	5
8	3	6
9	5	4
10	7	5

In general, the perceived level of changing attitudes among grammar and secondary school respondents are fairly similar, with the largest differential (five percentage points) being in relation to disability – see Figure 2.

Figure 2: More positive attitudes of participants about CRED groups, by type of school
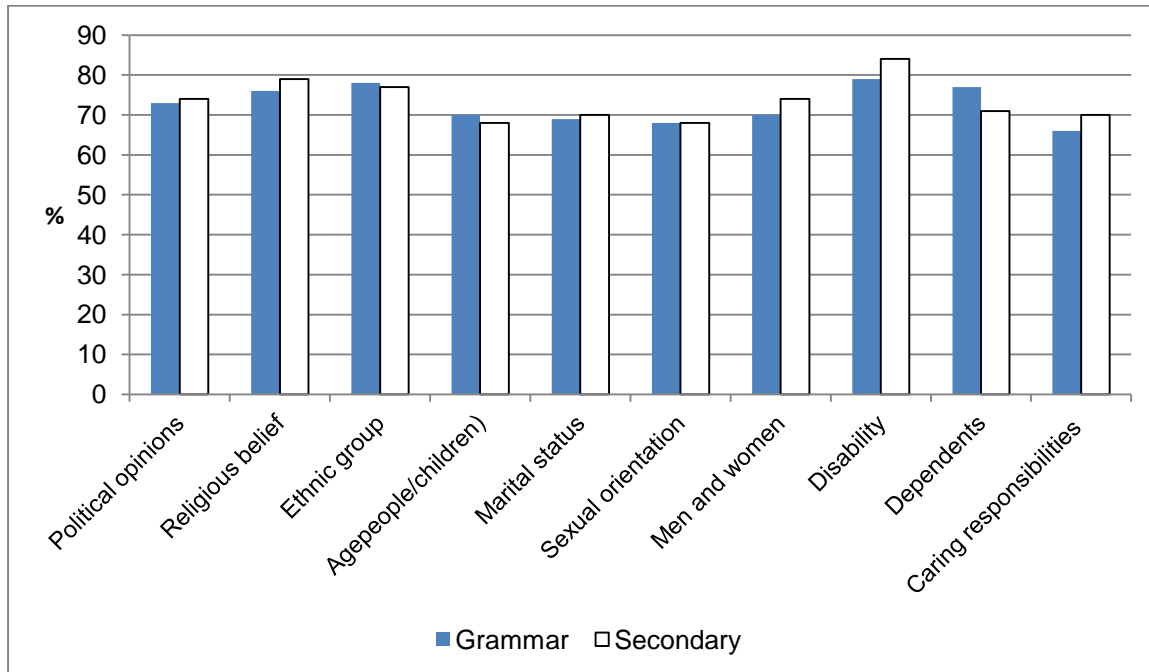
Changing attitudes of respondents
The final question in this section asked YLT respondents if they themselves felt more positive towards any of the groups as a result of what was taught or discussed during CRED activities.

For each of the ten groups, at least seven out of ten respondents felt that their attitudes were more positive as a result of the CRED activities – see Table 21. The results for school were fairly similar to those for a youth project or youth club. Where there was a difference, these were small – the largest differential is seven percentage points, and relates to sex. Comparing Tables 19 and 21, the data suggest that a slightly higher level of respondents felt that their own attitudes had become more positive, than their perception for participants as a whole.

Table 21: More positive attitudes of respondent about CRED groups, by setting

	%	
	School	**Youth project or youth club**
People with different political opinions	77	75
People with different religious beliefs	83	83
People from different ethnic groups	82	82
People of different ages (older and younger people/children)	71	74
People who are single, cohabiting, married or divorced	75	74
People with different sexual orientations	77	80
Men and women	71	78
People with a disability and those without a disability	80	81
People with dependents (e.g. children) and those without	79	79
People with caring responsibilities and those without caring responsibilities	73	72

Figure 3 shows that the figures for grammar and secondary school pupils are similar for most of the CRED topics. Where differentials do exist, these are fairly low (maximum of eight percentage points); for age and sex, a higher proportion of grammar school pupils feel their attitudes have become more positive, whilst in relation to caring responsibilities, this pattern is reversed.

Figure 3: More positive attitudes of respondent, by type of school
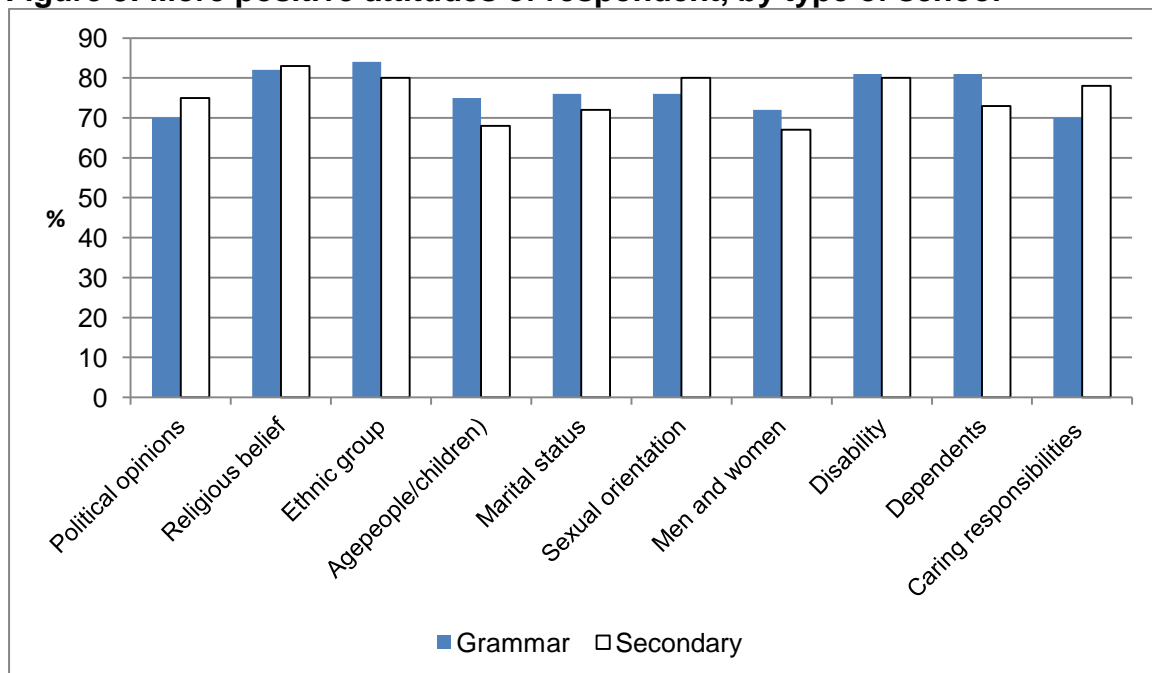
Of all respondents who undertook CRED activities at school, around one in six (14 per cent) said that they did not have more positive feelings about any groups – see Table 22. At the same time, half that proportion (8 per cent) said they felt more positive about all ten groups. However, respondents who had undertaken CRED activities within a youth project or youth club were less likely to say that these activities made them feel more positive – one quarter did not feel more positive about any group. The pattern evident in Table 22 is very similar to that in Table 20, which focuses on the perceived change in attitudes among all respondents.

Of course, Table 22 does not take into account the number of topics that the respondent covered within their CRED activities. When this is considered, just over one half (53 per cent) of respondents felt more positive about all the groups that they discussed.

Table 22: Number of topics participants more positive about, by setting

	%	
	School	**Youth project or youth club**
0	14	24
1	9	9
2	11	11
3	14	14
4	14	10
5	9	7
6	7	7
7	6	5
8	5	6
9	5	4
10	8	4

Discussion

This suite of questions provides an insight into the experiences of 16 year olds to Community Relations, Equality and Diversity in Education (CRED) activities, and their perception of its effectiveness. Just over two thirds of young people (70 per cent) said that they had participated in these activities, the vast majority of whom had done so at school (84 per cent), with half that proportion undertaking these within a youth setting (43 per cent). Around three in ten of those participating in CRED had done so in both arenas.

The range and breadth of topic coverage varies both within, and across, settings. Thus, most respondents had undertaken activities focusing on people of different religious beliefs, although this varied from 84 per cent for school-based activities to 70 per cent among youth settings. For ethnic groups, a similar pattern is evident: 74 per cent in schools and 58 per cent in youth projects/clubs. Other topics, such as having dependents, marital status and caring responsibilities were covered by less than one third of respondents, regardless of the setting. These patterns will obviously have implications for the effectiveness of the programmes, and so may require further investigation as to why some topics are being poorly covered. It may be that facilitators feel that they are less important generally, or that other issues take priority within their particular location.

The survey results suggest that perceived effectiveness of the CRED programme is high: for each of the identified groups, at least two thirds of respondents felt that CRED activities resulted in more positive feelings among participants. This applied to activities within school and within youth settings. However, the perceived level of changing attitudes among participants in youth settings was generally higher than for those in school. This was especially evident in relation to sexual orientation and caring responsibilities, where there was a ten percentage point difference. However, these topics were among those least frequently covered by facilitators. The issue of better perceived effectiveness of CRED activities among youth settings is strategically important. It may be that facilitators and/or participants within youth settings feel more comfortable discussing topics such as sexual orientation than those involved within a school setting are. In addition, the type of activities that participants engage in may also vary across settings, which may affect perceived effectiveness.

Respondents were also asked if their own feelings become more positive after these activities. In attitudinal research, respondents quite often attribute themselves with more positive attitudes than they do for wider society, and this pattern is reflected here: the data suggest that effectiveness was higher for individuals that for general participants. For each of the identified groups, at least two thirds of respondents felt that CRED activities resulted in them feeling more positive about these groups. There was little difference depending on whether respondents undertook these activities at school or in youth settings.

One caveat relates to the wording of these questions, which ask about feeling more positive about particular groups. There are several scenarios where the respondent would not have ticked to say that they had become more positive, but this does not mean that their feelings had become more negative. A respondent may perceive that they had very positive feelings to start with, and this did not change.

Alternatively, they have may have very negative feelings, and this did not change. However, to disentangle these responses is beyond a self-completion questionnaire such as YLT.

In conclusion, the majority of young people are experiencing CRED activities in some shape or form, and these seem effective in changing attitudes. The fact that the breadth and range, as well as perceive effectiveness, may vary across settings is evident. However, this may be expected, and indeed, welcomed, given the different roles that schools and youth projects/clubs play within young people's lives.

Appendix 1: CRED questions within 2012 Young Life and Times Survey

33. Education and youth work are supposed to encourage understanding of particular groups in society and promote the equal treatment of different groups. This can be done through exchange programmes, discussions, workshops, lessons or videos. Have you ever done any of this...?

    (Please tick **ALL** that apply in each column)   ✓

... in your school	☐1	*(Please go to the next question)*
... in a youth project or youth club	☐1	*(Please go to the next question)*
... Neither	☐1	*(Please go to question 37)*

34. And do you think that <u>your</u> school or <u>your</u> youth project or youth club has done this for the following groups?   *(Please tick **ALL** that apply)*   ✓

	Your school	Your youth project or youth club
People with different political opinions	☐1	☐1
People with different religious beliefs	☐1	☐1
People from different ethnic groups	☐1	☐1
People of different ages (older and younger people/children)	☐1	☐1
People who are single, cohabiting, married or divorced	☐1	☐1
People with different sexual orientations	☐1	☐1
Men and women	☐1	☐1
People with a disability and those without a disability	☐1	☐1
People with dependents (e.g. children) and those without	☐1	☐1
People with caring responsibilities and those without caring responsibilities	☐1	☐1
I have never attended a youth project		☐1

35. Looking at the same list again, do you think that <u>members of your class **or** your youth project or youthclub</u> felt more positive towards any of these groups as a result of what was taught or discussed?   *(Please tick **ALL** that apply)*   ✓

	Yes, in my school	Yes, in my youth project or youth club
People with different political opinions	☐1	☐1
People with different religious beliefs	☐1	☐1
People from different ethnic groups	☐1	☐1
People of different ages (older and younger people/children)	☐1	☐1
People who are single, cohabiting, married or divorced	☐1	☐1
People with different sexual orientations	☐1	☐1
Men and women	☐1	☐1
People with a disability and those without a disability	☐1	☐1
People with dependents (e.g. children) and those without	☐1	☐1
People with caring responsibilities and those without caring responsibilities	☐1	☐1
People did not feel more positive towards any these groups		☐1

36. And how about you personally? Did <u>you</u> feel more positive towards any of these groups as a result of what was taught or discussed in school or in your youth project or youth club?

(Please tick **ALL** that apply in each column) ✓

	In my school	In my youth project or youth club
People with different political opinions	☐1	☐1
People with different religious beliefs	☐1	☐1
People from different ethnic groups	☐1	☐1
People of different ages (older and younger people/children)	☐1	☐1
People who are single, cohabiting, married or divorced	☐1	☐1
People with different sexual orientations	☐1	☐1
Men and women	☐1	☐1
People with a disability and those without a disability	☐1	☐1
People with dependents (e.g. children) and those without	☐1	☐1
People with caring responsibilities and those without caring responsibilities	☐1	☐1
I did not feel more positive towards any these groups		☐1