



Young Life and Times (YLT) Survey

Summary of Results

2022



Background

Every year, ARK - a joint initiative between Queen's University and Ulster University - invites 16 year olds from all parts of Northern Ireland to take part in the Young Life and Times (YLT) survey to share their experiences of school, their views on politics, community relations and other social issues. Due to the large number of questions the 2022 survey was a 'split survey'. This means that there were two versions of the survey with some questions being asked in both versions and some only being asked in one or the other.

This document provides a summary of some key findings from the 2022 survey. In total 2,073 young people responded. Detailed results for all YLT surveys (2003 – 2022), as well as Research Updates, are freely available on the YLT website at www.ark.ac.uk/ylt.

The 2022 YLT survey was part-funded by the Executive Office, the Departments of Education and of Justice, The National Deaf Children's Society and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).

Who took part in the 2022 YLT survey?

A random sample of 5,000 young people living in Northern Ireland (NI) who celebrated their 16th birthday between December 2021 and February 2022 were invited to take part in the survey.

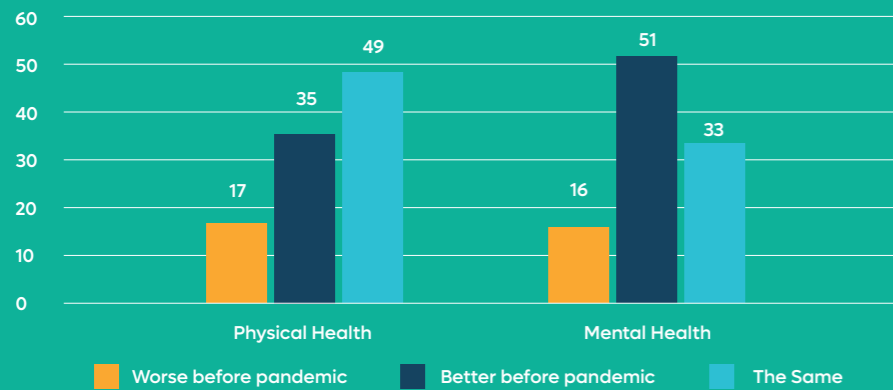
Of the 2,073 respondents:

- **56%** were female, **42%** were male and **2%** had another gender identity.
- The majority of males (**83%**) and females (**66%**) had only been sexually attracted to someone of the opposite sex, but **13%** of males and **29%** of females had been sexually attracted to a person of the same sex at least once.
- **22%** said they lived in a big city or its outskirts, **43%** a small city or town and **33%** in a village or in the countryside.
- **47%** attended a grammar school, **43%** a secondary school, **7%** a formally integrated school, and **3%** another type of school.
- **73%** lived with both parents, **18%** lived only with their mother, **2%** lived only with their father and **6%** lived with their mother some time and father some time.

- **17%** of respondents said they had a long-standing physical, mental or developmental/sensory health condition. For **20%** of these respondents this health condition limited their ability to carry out day-to-day activities a lot.
- **32%** said their families were financially either very well-off or well-off, **12%** said their families were not at all well-off or not well-off, and **49%** of respondents described their family's financial situation as average.
- **62%** regarded themselves as belonging to a specific religion - **36%** were Catholic, **23%** Protestant, while **2%** belonged to another religion. **38%** of respondents indicated that they belonged to no religion. The question on religion was only asked in one version of the survey (1054 respondents).

Young People's Experience of Coronavirus Lockdown

Figure 1: How did Coronavirus affect physical and mental health... (%)



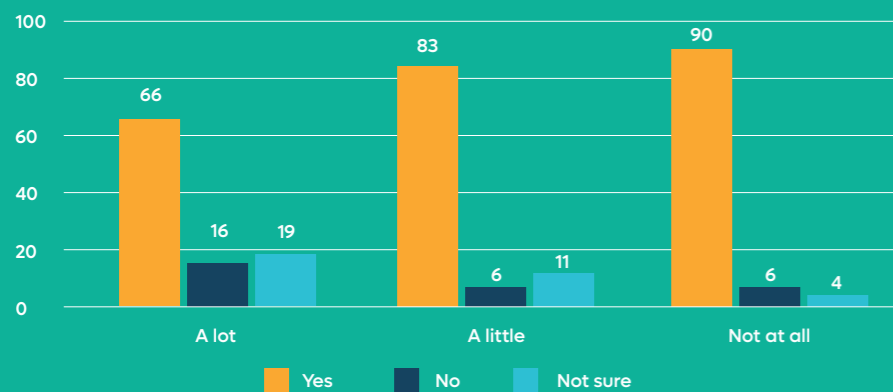
86% of respondents strongly agreed/agreed that overall their education had been negatively affected by Coronavirus.

Career Support and Confidence

86% of respondents, irrespective of gender, felt that their school/college provided support to help them think about future career choices, 6% said they had not received such advice, whilst 8% said they were not sure if they had. School type had little impact on the provision of career advice.

As detailed in Figure 2, respondents who had a disability/long term health condition that impacted 'a lot' on their ability to carry out day to day activities were least likely to say they received this career support and guidance (66%) compared to those who felt their day to day activities were impacted 'a little' or 'not at all' (83% and 90% respectively).

Figure 2: Career choices guidance by extent of impact of disability/long term health condition (%)

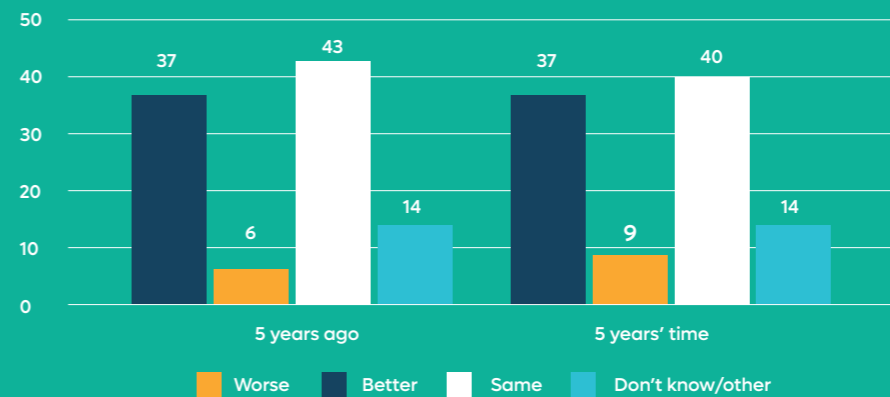


Good Relations and Attitudes to Minority Ethnic Groups

21% of respondents agreed that Northern Ireland is a place where people respect each other, 41% disagreed, and 36% neither agreed nor disagreed.

75% of respondents felt that religion would always make a difference to how people in Northern Ireland feel about each other.

Figure 3: Are community relations better or worse now than 5 years ago and in 5 years' time (%)



45% of respondents felt their national identity was important to them. National identity was more important to Catholic (62%) than Protestant 16 year olds (49%), while 26% of those with no religious background felt that national identity was important.

38% of respondents agreed that Northern Ireland is a society that welcomes refugees escaping persecution; and 66% agreed it is our duty to provide protection to refugees escaping persecution.

40% of Protestant respondents felt favourable towards people from the Catholic community, 39% felt neither favourable nor unfavourable, and 13% felt unfavourable. 35% of Catholic respondents felt favourable towards people from the Protestant community, 43% neither favourable nor unfavourable, and 15% felt unfavourable. 51% of respondents felt favourable towards people from minority communities, 36% neither favourable nor unfavourable, and 3% felt unfavourable.

Table 1: Respondents who 'agree' or 'strongly agree' that the culture and traditions of Catholic, Protestant and minority ethnic communities add to the richness and diversity of NI society, by religion. (%)

	%		
	Catholic	Protestant	No religion
Catholic community	62	27	45
Protestant community	36	46	39
Minority ethnic community	55	42	57

In a world without COVID19, 58% of respondents said they 'very often' or 'sometimes' socialised or played sports with people from a different religious background. 59% said they 'very often' or 'sometimes' socialised or played sports with people from a different ethnic background.

Gender-based Violence

Table 2: Respondents who had 'sometimes' or 'often' experienced the following, by gender. (%)

	Male	Female
Been shown sexually explicit photos/videos in person	15	34
Been sent sexually explicit photos/videos online	14	38
Being requested/pressured to share intimate photo/video	4	24
Unwanted touching, kissing or hugging	8	23

Over 90% of respondents, irrespective of gender, agreed that it was never acceptable 'to share intimate photos/videos without agreement'; 'pressure someone into sharing an intimate photo';

or 'touch, hug or kiss someone if not wanted'. 85% felt that it was never acceptable to 'post 'jokes' or make nasty comments of a sexual nature on social media' – 73% males and 94% females.

Community Safety and Attitudes to Paramilitaries

85% of YLT respondents said they felt safe or very safe in the area where they lived. Males were more likely than females to state that they felt 'very safe' (51% compared to 32%). However, just over one in five (22%) respondents who identified as non-binary said they felt very safe in their area. Those who said they had been sexually attracted to someone of the same sex were much less likely to say they felt 'very safe' in the area where they lived than those who had only been attracted to someone of the opposite sex (28% and 45%)

Respondents who lived in rural areas were more likely to say that they felt very safe in the area where they lived than respondents from urban areas or those who said they lived in small towns

(55%, 34% and 31% respectively). Those who lived in rural areas were also most likely to agree or strongly agree that there was a strong sense of community in the area where they lived (65% agreeing compared to 51% of those in small towns and 47% of those living in cities or suburbs of cities).

19% of those living in urban areas agreed or strongly agreed that paramilitaries had a controlling influence on their neighbourhood compared to just 5% of those living in villages or in the countryside. Only 6% of all respondents agreed or strongly agreed that paramilitary groups helped to keep their areas safe.

Shared Education

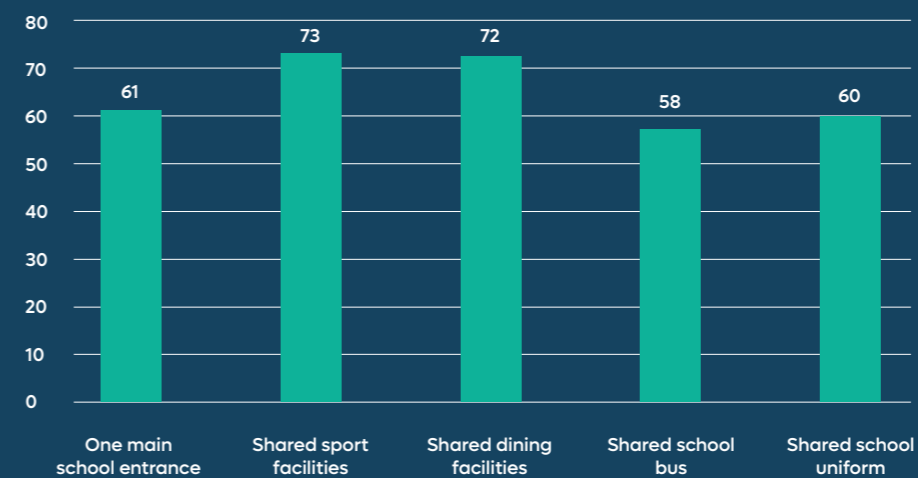
51% of respondents said they were involved in Shared Education. Of those who were not, 43% said they would like to be involved, 20% said they would not like to be involved and 38% said they did not know if they would like to be involved or not.

The most likely Shared Education activity respondents were involved in was joint projects (67%). What respondents liked most about Shared Education was that it gave them an opportunity to meet other young people with different ethnic or religious backgrounds. 64% of those who had taken part in Shared Education agreed or strongly agreed that, since then, they were able to better respect the views of others.

40% wanted their own school to be part of a Shared Education Campus. Around one quarter (25%) of respondents did not want this, whilst 35% were not sure.

61% of respondents said they generally felt favourable or very favourable about Shared Education. 9% felt unfavourable or very unfavourable whilst the remaining respondents felt either neutral or said they did not know how they felt.

Figure 4: Respondents saying they would like the following to be shared if their school was part of a Shared Education Campus. (%)



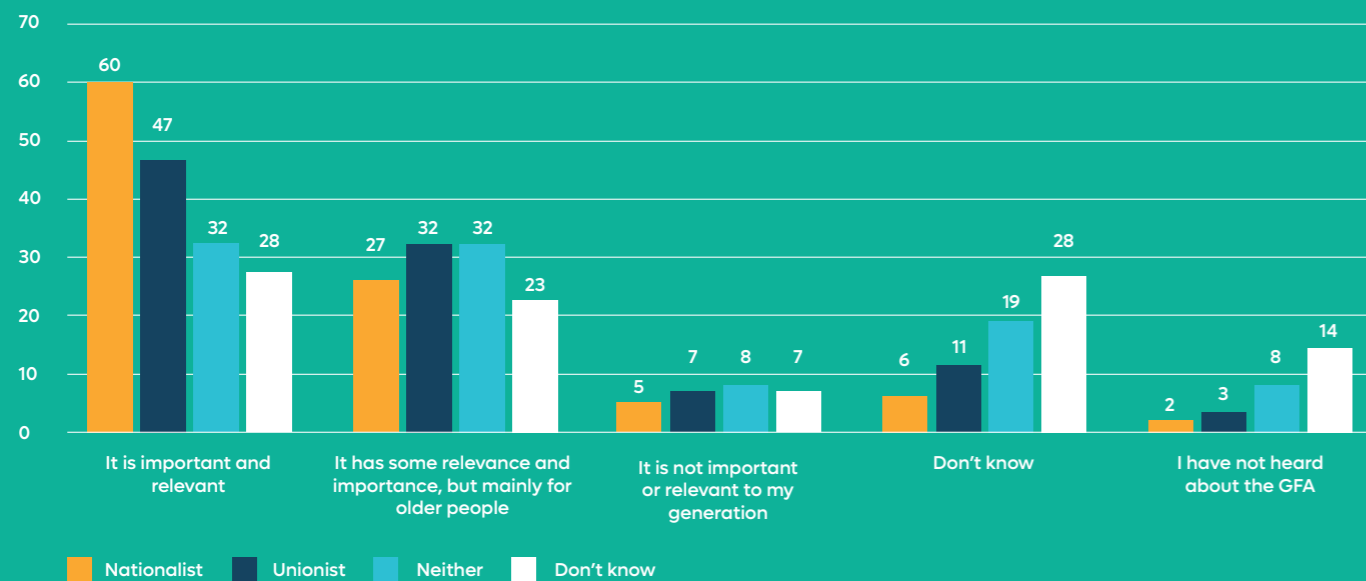
Attitudes to Politics

29% of YLT respondents identified as Nationalist, 26% as Unionist, and 24% as neither, whilst 21% said they did not know.

the Northern Ireland Protocol (ie, the UK-EU agreement that regulates NI's status after Brexit) and the constitutional future of Northern Ireland.

Respondents were asked about their views and knowledge of the Good Friday Agreement (GFA),

Figure 5: Do you think the Good Friday Agreement (GFA) is still important and relevant for your generation?, by community identity. (%)

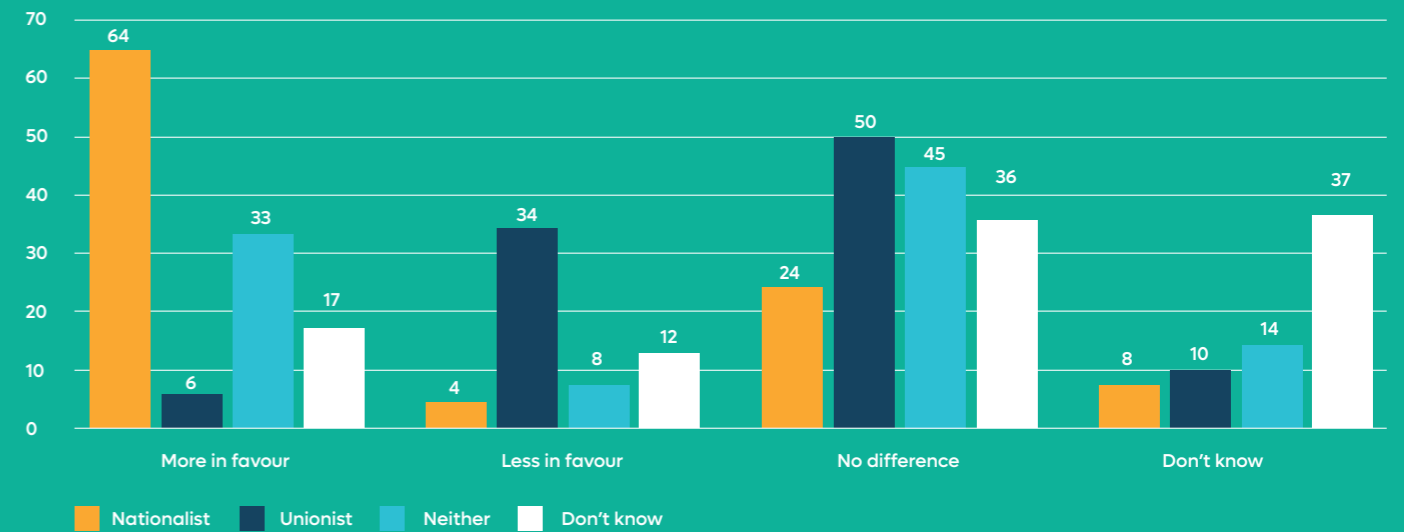


37% of YLT respondents said they had not enough information to have a view on whether the NI Protocol is on balance a good or bad thing for NI. 24% said they had never heard of the Protocol. 11% each thought it was on balance a good thing or a bad thing with 17% saying they did not know.

Overall 52% of respondents felt it was very likely or quite likely that Northern Ireland would still exist in 20 years' time, compared to 21% who felt that this was unlikely or very unlikely.



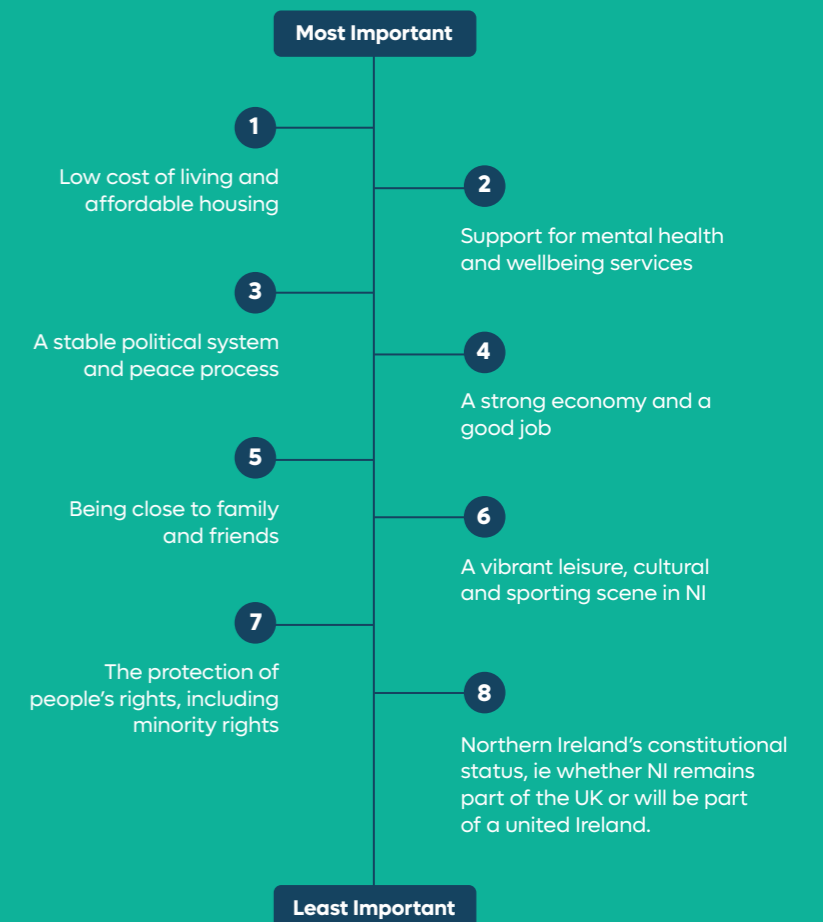
Figure 6: Now that the UK (including NI) has left the European Union, do you feel more in favour of a united Ireland, less in favour or does it make no difference?, by community identity. (%)



If 16 year olds could vote in a referendum, 35% would vote that Northern Ireland should unify with the Republic of Ireland, whilst 37% would vote against this, 12% said they would not vote and 16% said they did not know how they would vote.

Figure 7 shows how important certain aspects of society were regarded by respondents when determining whether NI is a good place to live, ranked from most important (1) to least important (8). As the Figure shows, affordable living was the top-ranked aspect, whilst NI's constitutional status was lowest ranked.

Figure 7: Relative importance given to aspects of society when determining whether NI is a good place to live.



**For further information
about YLT, please contact:**

Prof Dr Dirk Schubotz, YLT Director
ARK, School of Social Sciences,
Education and Social Work
Queen's University Belfast
Belfast BT7 1NN

t. 028 90 973947
e. d.schubotz@qub.ac.uk

www.ark.ac.uk/ylt

