

Child Poverty in Northern Ireland

Respondents who came from not well-off families were much more likely to say that there is quite a lot of child poverty in Northern Ireland than those from well-off or average well-off families. (Figure 3).

Figure 3: How much child poverty is there in NI?

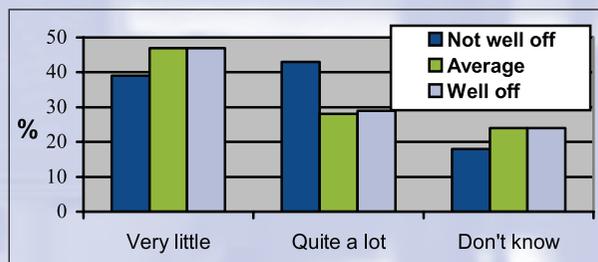
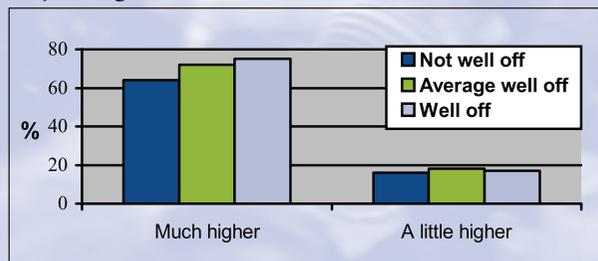


Figure 4 shows that 16-year olds from well-off families were also most likely to think that the actual figure of children in Northern Ireland who live in poverty was much higher than they thought.

Figure 4: Respondents, by family financial background, saying that the number of children who live in poverty in Northern Ireland is higher than they thought



However, regardless of their families' financial background, most respondents (85%) felt that child poverty should be a high priority for the NI Assembly. Nearly three quarters of respondents (74%) felt that equality legislation should also prevent people from being discriminated against because they are poor.

Background of the YLT Survey

All too often the opinions of young people are ignored when decisions are made about many of the issues involving them.

Every year the Young Life and Times (YLT) Survey invites around 2,000 16 year olds from all parts in Northern Ireland to tell us about their experiences of school, and their views on politics, sectarianism and other social issues. In 2007, 627 young people responded.

This leaflet provides a summary of key findings of the 2007 YLT survey.

More detailed results on specific issues as well as research updates are freely available on the YLT website at www.ark.ac.uk/ylt

Many participants of the survey suggested a range of subjects that could be asked in future. Some of these questions will be included in the 2008 YLT survey.

Comments on the YLT survey are welcome any time and can be submitted via the YLT website.

ARK is a joint resource between Queen's University Belfast and the University of Ulster.

For further information contact:

Dirk Schubotz

ARK, School of Sociology, Social Policy and Social Work

Queen's University

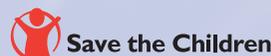
Belfast BT7 1NN

Tel: 028 90 973 947

d.schubotz@qub.ac.uk

www.ark.ac.uk/ylt

The 2007 Survey was part funded by:



2007 Young Life and Times Survey

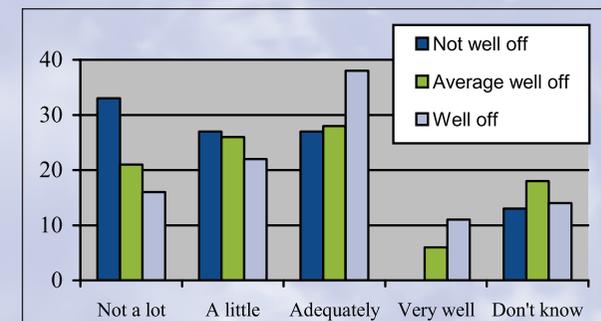


Summary of Results

'I feel NI should be a tolerant, multi-cultural, cosmopolitan society, combating racism and discrimination with emphasis on education for all, regardless of race or religious background. This should include a just legal system and policing system.'

'I feel that no amount of proposals or so called "promises" from the NI government will have an effect on the state NI is currently in. In the future there may be minor changes but I can't visualise a much better NI.'

Figure 1: How well do you think the government protects your rights as a young person? By family financial background



Who took part in the 2007 YLT survey?

All young people living in Northern Ireland who celebrated their 16th birthday in February 2007 were invited to take part in the survey. Of the 627 16-year olds that responded:

- ▶ 42% were male and 58% were female.
- ▶ 24% said they lived in a big city or its outskirts, 40% lived in a small town and 36% lived in a village or in the countryside.
- ▶ 48% attended a grammar school, 46% attended a secondary school, 3% attended a planned integrated school and 3% attended some other type of school.
- ▶ 79% regarded themselves as belonging to a particular religion, 21% said they did not.
- ▶ 51% of respondents who belonged to a religion were Catholics. 22% were Presbyterians, 13% belonged to the Church of Ireland and 3% were Methodist. 11% belonged to other religions. 44% of the respondents who belonged to a religion, attended church once a week or more, whereas 16% never went to church.
- ▶ 9% of males and 10% of females had been sexually attracted to a person of the same sex at least once.
- ▶ Over one quarter (26%) of respondents said their families were financially either very well-off or well-off. 14% said their families were not at all well-off or not well-off. The majority (57%) of respondents described their family's financial situation as average.
- ▶ 7% of respondents said they had a long-standing illness or a disability.
- ▶ 8% of respondents said they looked after someone who was living in the same home as they did, and 14% had caring responsibilities for someone not living with them.

Pressures and health

Respondents were asked if they had ever felt pressurised to smoke, drink alcohol, take drugs, have sexual

intercourse, lose weight and where this pressure come from. Table 1 shows the proportion of respondents that experienced such pressures.

Table 1: Respondents, by gender, saying they have felt pressure to do the following things even though they did not really want to

	%	
	Males	Females
Take illegal drugs	10	10
Smoke cigarettes	22	25
Drink alcohol	34	32
Have sexual intercourse	11	11
Lose weight	14	35

The main sources of the pressure to engage in any of the above activities came from friends and peers. However, the media was identified as the main source of pressure to lose weight.

Table 2 shows the proportion of respondents who said they had never smoked, used drugs, had sex or had lost weight on purpose.

Table 2: Respondents, by gender, saying they have NEVER done the following

	%	
	Males	Females
Used illegal drugs	81	84
Smoked tobacco	58	49
Drunk alcohol	25	24
Used solvents to get high	94	95
Had sexual intercourse	79	75
Stopped eating in order to lose weight	87	64

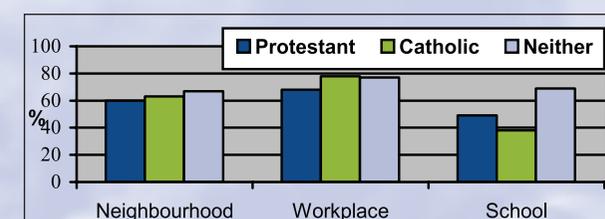
Statistically, males and females were equally likely to have done any of the above things, the exceptions being stopping to eat in order to lose weight and smoking tobacco, which females were significantly more likely to have done.

Community Relations

Over eight in ten 16 year olds (81%) felt that religion will always make a difference to how people in Northern Ireland feel about each other.

More than six in ten (63%) said they would prefer to live in mixed religion neighbourhoods, nearly three quarters (74%) of respondents preferred mixed-religion workplaces and about half (49%) of respondents would like to send their children to mixed-religion schools. Figure 2 shows the support for religious mixing by religion.

Figure 2: Support for religious mixing



19% of Protestants and 26% of Catholics said they had no friend from the other main religious community in Northern Ireland. Similarly, 18% of Protestants and 22% of Catholics said they never socialised or played sports with people from a different religious community. This compares with just 11% for those who said they were neither part of the Protestant nor Catholic community.

Four in ten (40%) of respondents had taken part in cross-community projects outside school and three in ten (30%) were currently involved in such a project.

For half all respondents family (50%) was the main influence factor on their views on community relations, for 19% it was their friends and for 12% it was school. Among respondents with no religion family had a much lesser influence, whilst friends and school had a much stronger influence.