

Sexual Experiences

Lessons at school were identified as the most helpful source of information about sexual matters (42% of respondents saying this), followed by friends (18%) and respondents' mother (12%).

However, the vast majority (81%) said that talking about sexual matters was easy when talking to a close friend. Twice as many respondents said it was difficult to talk about sexual matters to their boy- or girlfriend (41%) as said it was easy (20%).

Over six in ten respondents (61%) said they would find it easy to get contraceptives if they needed any.

26% of respondents reported that they had had sex. 46% of these respondents were 16 years of age when they first had sex, 31% were 15 years old whilst the remaining 22% were younger.

31% of respondents said that they were still in the relationship with their first partner, whilst 20% said the relationship with their partner did not continue at all after they first had sex. 54% of respondents said they had had one sexual partner, followed by 18% saying they had had two. 28% had had three or more sexual partners.

81% of respondents who had ever had sex said they or their partners had used a condom when they first had sex.

YLT asked respondents to reflect on the timing of the first time they had sex. 30% said that this had happened on the spur of the moment, whilst 29% said they had planned this together with their partners. Looking back, 62% of respondents felt that the first time they had sex came at the right time; however, 34% felt it happened too early.

Asked for the reason why respondents had sex, the largest proportion (54%) responded that they were curious about what it would be like. This was followed by 46% saying that it seemed like a natural follow on to the relationship they were in and 37% saying they were in love.

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 16-year olds from all parts of Northern Ireland to tell us about their experiences of school, and their views on politics, community relations and other social issues. In 2011, 1,435 young people responded.

This leaflet provides a summary of key findings of the 2011 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 2012 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.

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2011 Young Life
 and Times Survey



Summary of Results

Figure 1: Thinking about the future, do you think that you will stay in Northern Ireland or do you think you will leave at some point?

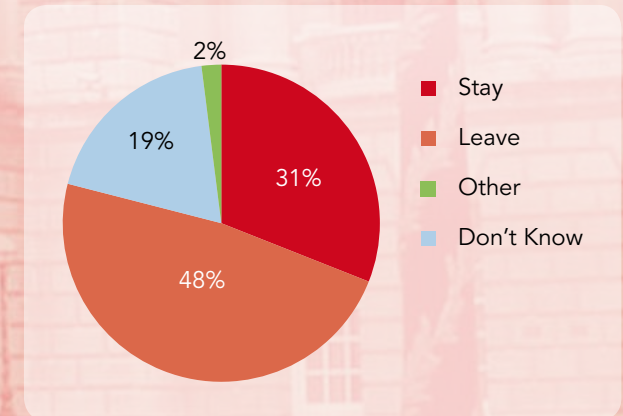
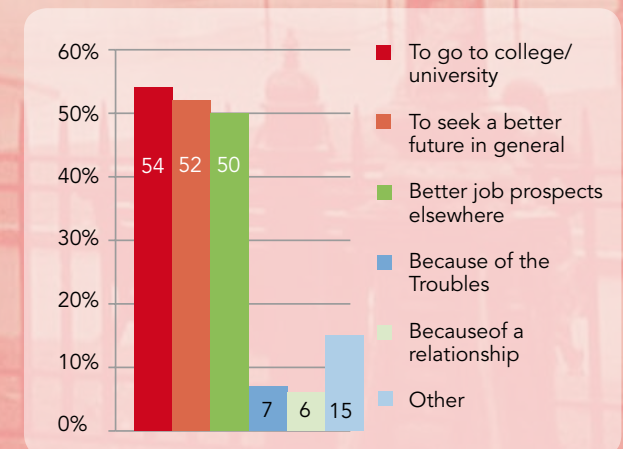


Figure 2: Why do you think you will leave?



Who took part in the 2011 YLT survey?

All young people living in Northern Ireland who celebrated their 16th birthday in February and March 2011 were invited to take part in the survey. Of the 1,435 16-year olds that responded:

- 45% were male and 55% were female.
- 22% said they lived in a big city or its outskirts, 40% lived in a small town and 39% lived in a village or in the countryside.
- 48% attended a grammar school, 38% attended a secondary school, 7% attended a planned integrated school and 6% attended some other type of school.
- 73% lived with both their parents, 20% lived only with their mother and 2% lived only with their father. 3% lived with their mother some time and their father some time.
- 11% of respondents said they had a long-standing illness or a disability.
- 78% regarded themselves as belonging to a particular religion, 22% said they did not.
- 42% said they were part of the Catholic community, 36% part of the Protestant community and 22% part of neither.
- 7% of both males and females had been sexually attracted to a person of the same sex at least once.
- One quarter (22%) of respondents said their families were financially either very well-off or well-off. 19% said their families were not at all well-off or not well-off. The majority (56%) of respondents described their family's financial situation as average.
- Only 3% of respondents said the recent financial crisis had not affected them. 43% of respondents and their families had been affected 'a little', 35% had been affected 'quite a bit' and 7% had been affected 'a lot'.

Community Relations

17% of respondents were satisfied with the way the Northern Ireland government is doing their job, whilst 19% were dissatisfied. 40% said they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

YLT also asked what effect the Stormont government had had on young people in Northern Ireland. 31% felt that things had improved a little or a lot for young people, while 15% of respondents felt that things had got worse. 22% felt that things had not changed, with 32% of respondents saying they did not know whether things had improved or not.

Table 1 shows the different views of respondents with different religious backgrounds on the changes since the Good Friday Agreement.

Table 1: Who benefited most from the changes since the Good Friday Agreement?

	%		
	Catholics	Protestants	No religion
Protestants	18	4	8
Catholics	16	39	20
Catholics & Protestants equally	55	42	49
Other	3	3	4
Don't know	8	12	19

12% of respondents said they never socialised or played sports with somebody from a different religious background. However, 22% of respondents said they had no friend at all from the other main religious community.

64% of YLT respondents had taken part in cross-community projects, and 85% of these respondents thought that the contact with other young people at these projects was positive or very positive.

Over three quarters of respondents (78%) felt that religion is always going to make a difference to the way people feel about each other in Northern Ireland.

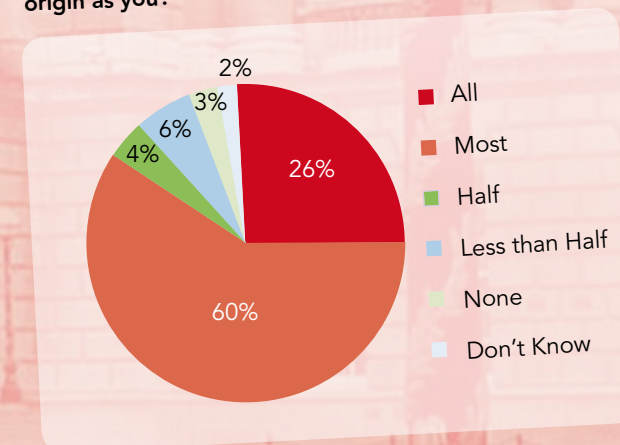
Minority Ethnic Groups

Around nine in ten YLT respondents (88%) said they had contact with people from minority ethnic groups. Of these, around seven in ten said that they also had friends from minority ethnic backgrounds.

19% of respondents said they socialised very often with people from different ethnic backgrounds. 36% said they sometimes did, 26% said they rarely did, whilst 16% said they never did.

Figure 3 shows that 86% of respondents said that all or most of their friends had the same ethnic origin as they had themselves.

Figure 3: How many of your friends are the same ethnic origin as you?



Overall, 6% of respondents said they felt unfavourable towards minority ethnic groups, whilst 42% felt favourable and 47% felt neither way.

37% of respondents reported that some of their friends had been called names because of their skin colour or ethnic origin. 42% of respondents had witnessed racist bullying or harassment in their school whilst 20% knew someone personally who had been racially harassed or assaulted outside of school.

7% of respondents had been a victim of racist bullying or harassment in their school and 6% had been racially harassed or assaulted outside of school.