

Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual People

YLT respondents in previous years suggested we should ask how young people felt about people who are lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB). In 2012 the YLT survey contained some questions on this topic.

73% of respondents said they knew somebody who attended their school and was gay, lesbian or bisexual. 27% said they had a close LGB friend. 20% had a relative who was lesbian, gay or bisexual. The same proportion knew a LGB person in their neighbourhood. 5% had a LGB work colleague and 10% knew a LGB person elsewhere.

51% of females, but only 36% of males said that none of their friends had ever called someone names because this person was seen as lesbian, gay or bisexual. Furthermore, 75% of male YLT respondents, but 93% of their female counterparts, said they themselves had never called someone names because they were seen as a LGB person.

Respondents were asked how comfortable they felt themselves around LGB people, and Table 1 shows that this varied significantly depending on respondents' gender, where they lived and their religious belonging.

Table 1: How comfortable do you feel around people who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual?

	%		
	Comfortable	Neither	Uncomfortable
Gender			
Males	44	28	25
Females	73	16	8
Any religious belonging			
Yes	58	22	17
No	71	18	9
Community belonging			
Catholic	66	21	10
Protestant	51	22	24
Neither	68	20	8
Place where respondents live			
Urban	74	16	9
Small town	62	20	14
Rural	54	24	18

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 2012, 1,210 young people responded.

This leaflet provides a summary of key findings of the 2012 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 2013 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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2012 Young Life and Times Survey



Summary of Results

Figure 1: In your opinion, what is the main reason that some people in Northern Ireland get involved in rioting or sectarian trouble?

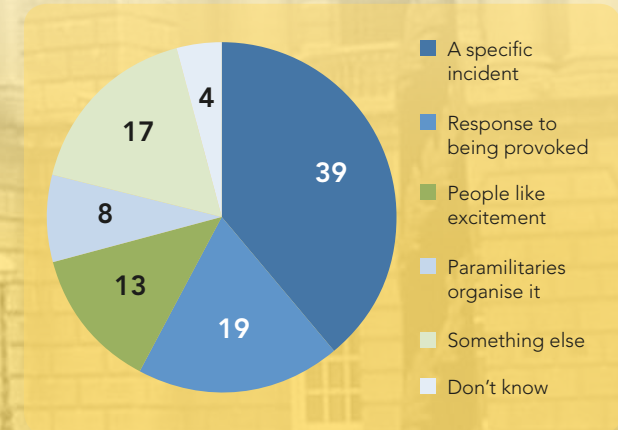
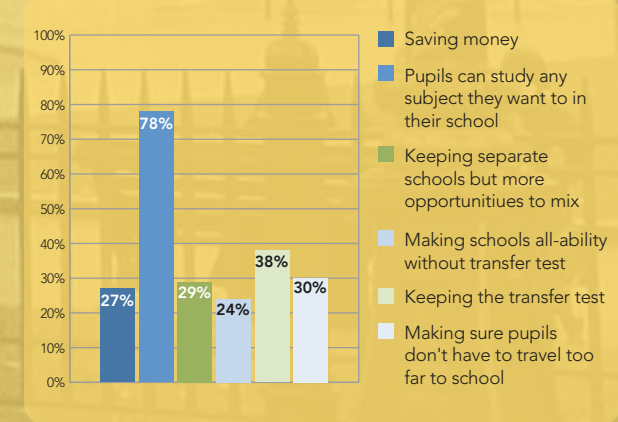


Figure 2: What should the government think about when they work on their plans on changing schools?



Who took part in the 2012 YLT survey?

All young people living in Northern Ireland who celebrated their 16th birthday in February and March 2012 were invited to take part in the survey. Of the 1,210 16-year olds that responded:

- 42% were male and 58% were female.
- 19% said they lived in a big city or its outskirts, 38% lived in a small town and 41% 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.
- 76% lived with both their parents, 19% lived only with their mother and 2% lived only with their father. 3% lived with their mother some time and their father some time.
- 10% of respondents said they had a long-standing physical or mental health condition.
- 78% regarded themselves as belonging to a particular religion, 22% said they did not.
- 40% said they were part of the Catholic community, 39% part of the Protestant community and 20% part of neither.
- 6% of males and 7% of females had been sexually attracted to a person of the same sex at least once.
- 23% 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 (55%) of respondents described their family's financial situation as average.
- Only 5% of respondents said the recent financial crisis had not affected them and their families. 42% of respondents had been affected 'a little', 34% 'quite a bit', and 11% had been affected 'a lot'.

Education

70% of respondents had received some Community Relations, Equality and Diversity Education (CRED): 57% of respondents in school, 14% in a youth setting only, and 29% 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.

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 attitude changing among participants in youth settings was generally higher than among participants in school.

Figure 3: Respondents' feelings towards greater sharing in education (%)

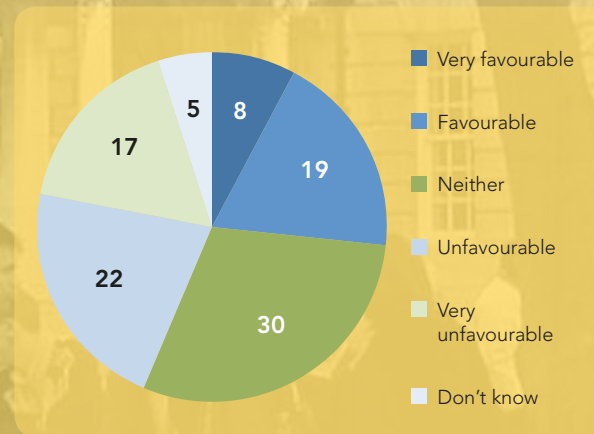


Figure 3 shows that YLT respondents had very mixed feelings towards greater sharing in education, with 39% feeling either unfavourable or very unfavourable towards such changes. However, over 80% of respondents who had experienced shared classes or projects with other schools said that they had enjoyed these.

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.

Community Relations

Family was the greatest influence factor for the majority of respondents (57%) in terms of their views on community relations. However over one in four YLT respondents also felt that their own views had changed the views of their parents either 'a little' or 'a lot'.

YLT asked to what extent respondents felt public facilities in their areas were shared. The majority (86%) felt that libraries were shared, 83% felt leisure centres were shared, 80% felt that parks were shared, but just under one half (47%) felt that pubs were shared.

Only 8% of Protestants said they felt unfavourable towards Catholics, whilst 4% of Catholics felt unfavourable towards Protestants. Less than one quarter (24%) of YLT respondents who identified as either Catholic or Protestant said they had no friends from the other main religious community.

The 2012 YLT survey took place at a time of tension when daily protests were held against the decision to fly the Union flag on the Belfast City Hall only on certain days. One respondent commented:

The community is probably more divided than last year this time as the union flag was taken down from the City Hall

Despite of the flag protest tensions, 53% of respondents believed relations between Catholics and Protestants were better now than 5 years ago, and 45% thought relations would be better in 5 years time.

Over three in four YLT respondents believed that religion will always make a difference to how people in NI feel about each other.

75% of respondents said they would prefer mixed workplaces, 56% said they would live in mixed neighbourhoods if they had the choice, and half said they would prefer to send their children to mixed religion schools.