

## Autism

While 80% of respondents knew what autism is, 29% had never met or were unaware if they had met anyone with autism.

For those who did know someone with autism this was most likely to be through school/college (31%). However, nearly one quarter had a friend who was autistic, 17% knew someone in their neighbourhood and 16% had a relative who was autistic. 3% of respondents said they were autistic themselves.

Around 80% of respondents would be comfortable living next door to a family who had an autistic child, with 77% indicating they would be comfortable sharing a classroom with someone with autism.

**Table 6 : If you had someone in your class who got extra help from a teacher or classroom assistant, how would you feel?**

	%
<b>That's not fair, we should all be treated the same</b>	2
<b>A bit jealous because I might need help too</b>	4
<b>That's ok, because they need extra help</b>	91
<b>Other/Don't know</b>	3

When asked to identify the difficulties and strengths that someone with autism might face respondents noted more difficulties.

Common difficulties identified were: communicating, socialising, making friends, bullying and discrimination.

*'They can have difficulty forming relationships, difficulty in communicating as socially awkward'*

Common strengths noted were: creative, intelligent, good memory, focused.

*'Some autistic people tend to be extremely smart and they don't seem to care what other people think about them'*

## Community Relations Equality and Diversity (CRED) Education

Respondents were asked a series of questions on CRED education received by them in school and/or youth projects, for example, on attitudes to people with different political opinions, religious belonging or sexual orientation.

73% of respondents had participated in CRED activities in either/both school or youth projects.

**Table 7 : Percentage of respondents who had covered specific CRED topics in their school or youth club/project:**

CRED TOPICS	%	
	School	Youth Project/Club
People with different political opinions	65	53
People with different religious beliefs	88	79
People from different ethnic groups	79	65
People of different ages (older and younger people/children)	59	55
People who are single, cohabiting, married or divorced	37	28
People with different sexual orientations	48	41
Men and women	58	54
People with a disability and those without a disability	66	54
People with dependents (e.g. children) and those without	35	34
People with caring responsibilities and those without caring responsibilities	34	31

At least 7 out of 10 respondents reported a positive change in attitudes across all ten groups as a result of the CRED education received.

## 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 2014 1939 young people responded.

This leaflet provides a summary of some key findings from the 2014 YLT survey. For YLT 2014 two questionnaires were produced; in the paper versions these were orange and purple. While the majority of questions were the same on both questionnaires, some questions were only included in one survey version.

More detailed results on specific issues, as well as Research Updates, are freely available on the YLT website at [www.ark.ac.uk/ylt](http://www.ark.ac.uk/ylt).

Many of the participants of the survey suggested a range of subjects that could be asked in future and questions on some of these will be included in the 2015 YLT survey.

Comments on the YLT survey are welcome at any time and can be submitted via the YLT website or via our Facebook page.

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

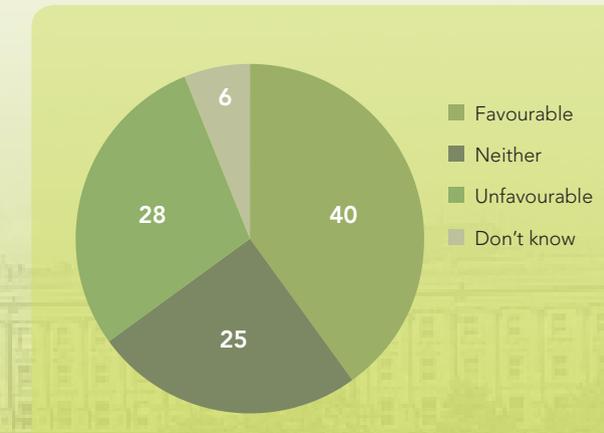
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## School and Education

**Figure 4 : The government is currently working on plans to change schooling in Northern Ireland. All schools will be expected to think about sharing classes, teachers or facilities with other schools. How favourable or unfavourable do you feel about these changes? (%)**



In response to these planned changes Catholic respondents were most positive with 47% indicating they would be favourable to them compared to 34% of Protestant respondents and 38% of those not affiliated to either religion.

51% of respondents had already done projects with other schools; 25% had shared facilities; 43% had shared classes while 19% had not done any of these things.

80% of respondents felt that joint school projects were a good idea and 62% supported sharing classes, facilities and teachers. However, in both instances, Protestant respondents were less positive (73% and 53%) than either Catholic respondents (85% and 65%) or those with no religious affiliation (81% and 67%).

2015 Young Life and Times Survey

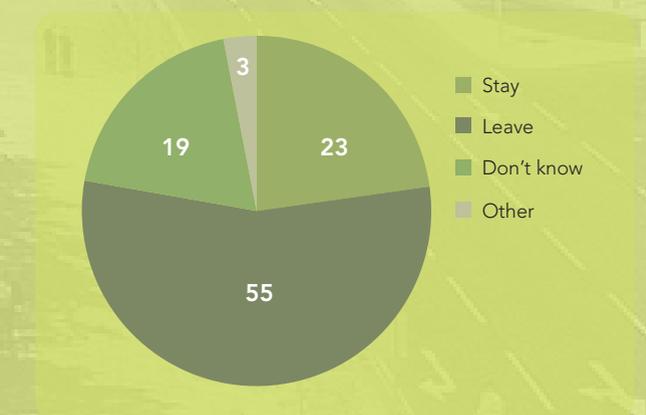


## Summary of Results

**Table 1: Respondents' perceptions of young people's current and potential contribution to community cohesion; and their personal influence in decision making. (%)**

Young people <b>are</b> making a contribution to bringing the two main communities together	52%
Young people <b>can</b> make a big contribution to bringing the two main communities together	84%
I feel I can influence local decisions in my neighbourhood	19%
I feel I can influence decisions made about what happens in Northern Ireland	10%

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



## Who took part in the 2014 YLT survey?

All young people living in Northern Ireland (N.I.) who celebrated their 16th birthday in January, February and March 2014 were invited to take part in the survey. Of the 1,939 16 year olds who responded:

- 85% completed a paper survey and 15% completed online
- 41% were male and 59% were female.
- 21% said they lived in a big city or its outskirts, 42% a small city or town and 37% in a village or in the countryside.
- 52% attended a grammar school, 35% a secondary school, 7% a planned integrated school and 6% another type of school.
- 76% lived with both parents, 16% lived only with their mother, 2% lived only with their father and 4% lived with their mother some time and father some time.
- 10% of respondents said they had a long-standing physical or mental health condition.
- 72% regarded themselves as belonging to a particular religion - 39% were Catholic, 32% Protestant, while 2% belonged to another religion. 28% of respondents indicated that they belonged to no religion.
- 11% of males and 12% of females had been sexually attracted to a person of the same sex at least once.
- 30% 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 (52%) described their family's financial situation as average.

## Community Relations

Over three quarters (76%) of 16 year olds said they had a sense of belonging to the neighbourhood in which they lived, and over two thirds (67%) of 16 year olds expressed a sense of belonging to Northern Ireland.

16 year olds in rural areas had a greater sense of belonging to their local neighbourhoods than those in urban areas. Those with the lowest sense of belonging lived in the suburbs (70%) and with the highest lived in villages (83%).

Respondents not aligned with any religion had the lowest sense of belonging across both categories. While there was little difference in Protestant respondents' sense of belonging in each category, Catholic respondents indicated much stronger neighbourhood belonging than belonging to Northern Ireland.

**Table 2 : Respondents' sense of belonging to their neighbourhood and to Northern Ireland by religion (%)**

	Protestant	Catholic	None
<b>Neighbourhood</b> Sense of belonging	79	83	64
<b>Northern Ireland</b> Sense of belonging	78	65	56

56% of Catholic and Protestant respondents felt their religious identity was important to them. National identity was more important to Catholic respondents (67%) than Protestant respondents (60%), while only 35% of those aligned with no religion felt it was important.

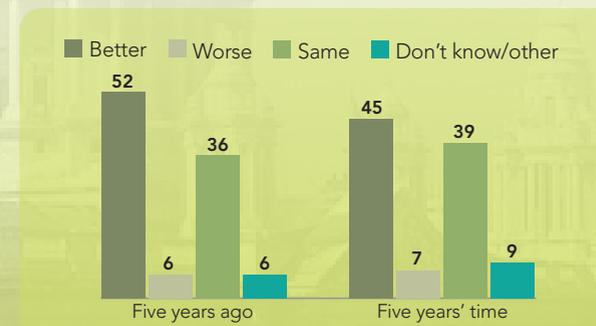
**Table 3 : Respondents' describing their national identity by religion (%)**

	Catholic	Protestant	None
<b>British</b>	3	54	30
<b>Irish</b>	74	3	20
<b>Ulster</b>	-	3	1
<b>Northern Irish</b>	19	38	40
<b>Other</b>	3	3	7

## Community Relations

78% of respondents felt that religion would always make a difference to how people in N.I. feel about each other. While only 7% felt that relations between the two communities would be worse in 5 years' time, less than half (45%) felt they would be better. Catholic respondents were more optimistic than Protestants (50% and 40% respectively)

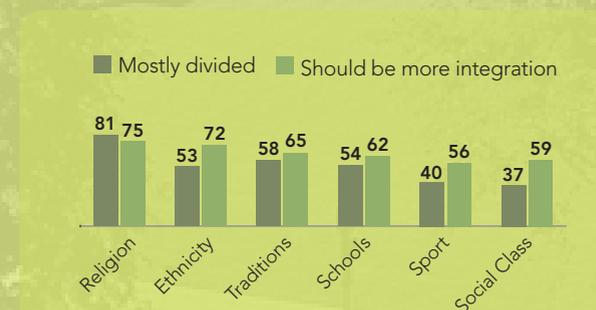
**Figure 2: Perceptions of community relations over time (%)**



75% of respondents felt they were not at all prejudiced against people of minority ethnic communities. While 48% were favourable towards them, 44% were neither favourable nor unfavourable. However, 84% of respondents' friends were either completely or mostly of the same race or ethnic origin.

When asked about the 6 areas detailed below respondents identified religion and cultural traditions as the two where residents of N.I. were currently most divided, and religion and ethnicity the two where there should be more integration.

**Figure 3 : Respondents' perceptions of current divisions and where there should be more integration (%)**



## Children's Rights

**Table 4 : Proportion of respondents who agree that what they learn in school helps them to...**

	Agreed %
<b>Develop their talents and abilities</b>	80
<b>Make decisions</b>	79
<b>Resolve conflicts without violence</b>	54
<b>Develop a healthy lifestyle</b>	60
<b>Maintain healthy relationships</b>	63
<b>Develop critical thinking skills</b>	82
<b>Encourage their creative talents</b>	67

33% felt that what they learnt at school had helped them to deal with challenges they had faced:

*'They have taught me to communicate more and use my own initiative more. Also what to do in difficult situations e.g. drink driving and drugs awareness talks'*

*'Team work skills made me speak out more'*

Over half (56%) of respondents felt valued in their school, and were very positive that their school encouraged both respect between pupils (91%) and understanding and acceptance of different cultures (82%).

While nearly half had heard of the UNCRC (49%) only 16% had heard of the Children's Commissioner

58% had learnt about their rights in school and of those 41% felt it had helped them to speak up for their rights in school:

When asked about the equal treatment of females and males in school respondents were very positive with 84% indicating that this happened always or most of the time.

In relation to the teaching of Religious Education just over half of respondents (52%) felt it was taught in a way that was relevant to their lives, although 60% felt it helped them to think about issues that affect them or other young people and two-thirds felt it helped them to understand other world religions.

## Relationships and sexuality Education

79% of respondents said they knew that their school had to have a Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) policy, and 86% of YLT respondents said they had received RSE in schools.

Six in ten respondents described the information they had received during RSE as useful, while 17% felt that it was not.

When asked about receiving information on organisations that offer confidential support and advice on relationships and sexuality 55% of respondents could not remember whether or not they had received this information. While just over one quarter of respondents (26%) said they had been offered this information, most could not remember the organisations' names.

**Table 5 : Did you discuss the following topics in RSE?**

Topics	Yes (%)	No (%)	Don't Know (%)
<b>Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Relationships</b>	39	49	12
<b>Transgender Relationships</b>	17	71	13
<b>Different Family Models</b>	50	40	10
<b>Prevention of Sexually Transmitted Diseases</b>	91	5	3

In relation to name calling in school using words such as 'gay', 'fruit', 'queer', 'lesbian' etc. respondents felt this happened more to classmates than to themselves. 46% reported that they had never personally faced this, but only 15% said this never happened to their classmates. 21% said they experienced homophobic name calling sometimes or often compared to 44% who said this happened sometimes or often to their classmates. Transphobic name calling happened much less, with 90% saying they had never personally experienced this.

Respondents felt strongly that homophobic bullying and transphobic bullying were serious issues that should be addressed in school (88% and 83% of respondents respectively).