

## WHO TOOK PART IN THE 2019 YLT SURVEY?

All young people living in Northern Ireland (N.I.) who celebrated their 16th birthday in January, February and March 2019 were invited to take part in the survey. Of the 1,132 respondents:

- 54% completed a paper survey and 46% completed online.
- 59% were female, 40% were male and 1% had another gender identity.
- 14% of males and 19% of females had been sexually attracted to a person of the same sex at least once.
- 21% said they lived in a big city or its outskirts, 40% a small city or town and 38% in a village or in the countryside.
- 52% attended a grammar school, 28% a secondary school, 7% a formally integrated school, 11% a Further Education College and 2% another type of school.
- 15% attended an all-girl schools/college, 7% an all-boys school/college and 78% attended a mixed boys and girls school/college.
- 77% 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.
- 15% of respondents said they had a long-standing physical, mental or developmental/sensory health condition.
- 69% regarded themselves as belonging to a particular religion - 38% were Catholic, 29% Protestant, while 2% belonged to another religion. 31% of respondents indicated that they belonged to no religion.
- 30% said their families were financially either very well-off or well-off, 15% said their families were not at all well-off or not well-off, half of respondents described their family's financial situation as average.

## SOME OF THE THINGS YOUNG PEOPLE SAID...

I feel as though they have improved throughout the years, however slowly that may be, and I hope that this continues.

With Brexit tension increasing, it is resurrecting the religious and political divide between our communities that we thought had gone away.

Mixed schools must be introduced if Northern Ireland is to become an accepting environment for all divisions of people.

I personally think everyone should just treat people with respect.

I believe that in terms of our politics that when people go out to vote, they really need to look into a party's policies and views on certain issues rather than voting based on tribal politics

The younger generation care less about whether you are Protestant or Catholic however some teens are still opposed to the other religion due their parents.

The community needs to come together and do something about mental health. It's an absolute disgrace the many suicides that have been ... and they are all so young like they still have their own life ahead but they feel like they have no one to talk to!

I think that sports and youth groups are a big part of improving relations with different religions and ethnic groups.

Just don't see why people are fighting over religion when there are more important things in life to worry about. I wish politicians would just get on and get parliament back up and running again.

I hope that in future we improve, it would be a nice sight to see. We need to remember the past is the past, growth is possible and in some cases growth is needed.

**YLT**  
Young Life & Times Survey

**YOUNG  
LIFE AND  
TIMES  
SURVEY**

**2019**

**YES!**

**MAYBE?**

## COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Almost three quarters (**72%**) of respondents said they had a sense of belonging to the neighbourhood in which they lived, and **70%** expressed a sense of belonging to Northern Ireland.

However, only **9%** of 16 year olds felt they had any influence when decisions were being made in their local areas, and only **7%** felt they had any say about decisions in Northern Ireland.

**20%** of 16 year olds agreed that Northern Ireland is a place where people respect each other, **38%** disagreed, and **29%** neither agreed nor disagreed.

*Table 1: Respondents who in the preceding year felt personally intimidated by Republican and Loyalist kerb paintings, murals or flags. By religion (%)*

	Catholic	Protestant	No religion
Republican	6	19	12
Loyalist	46	6	23

Over one half of respondents (**54%**) felt their national identity was important to them. National identity was more important to Catholic (**71%**) than Protestant 16 year olds (**53%**); **34%** of those aligned with no religion felt national identity was important.

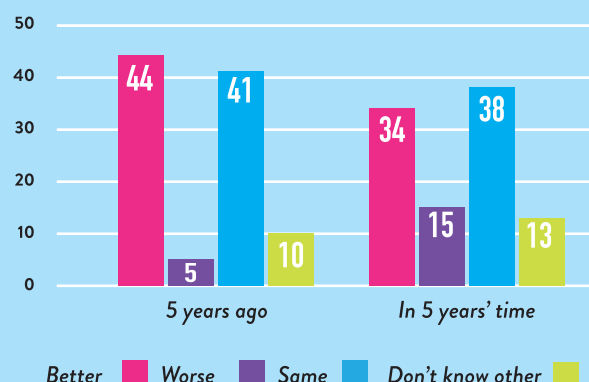
*Table 2 : Respondents' choice of the national identity that best describes them (%)*

	Catholic	Protestant	No religion
British	1	35	21
Irish	79	4	22
Ulster	0	3	2
Northern Irish	15	57	48
Other	3	1	6
I don't know	1	1	2

## COMMUNITY RELATIONS

**76%** of respondents felt that religion would always make a difference to how people in Northern Ireland feel about each other.

*Figure 1: Perceptions of community relations over time (%)*



**47%** of Protestant respondents felt 'very favourable' or 'quite favourable' about people from the Catholic community, **53%** of Catholic respondents felt similarly about people from the Protestant community.

*Table 3: Respondents who 'strongly agree' or 'agree' that the culture and traditions of the Catholic and Protestant communities add to the richness and diversity of NI society. By religion (%)*

	Catholic	Protestant	No religion
Catholic community	71	45	44
Protestant community	45	58	39

## 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. 1,132 young people responded to the 2019 YLT survey.

This leaflet provides a summary of some key findings from the 2019 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](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 2020 YLT survey.

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

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

## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

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## ATTITUDES TO RELIGIOUS MIXING

Figure 2: Respondents who would prefer to live in a mixed-religion neighbourhood, work in a mixed-religion workplace and if they had children send them to a mixed-religion school. By religion (%)

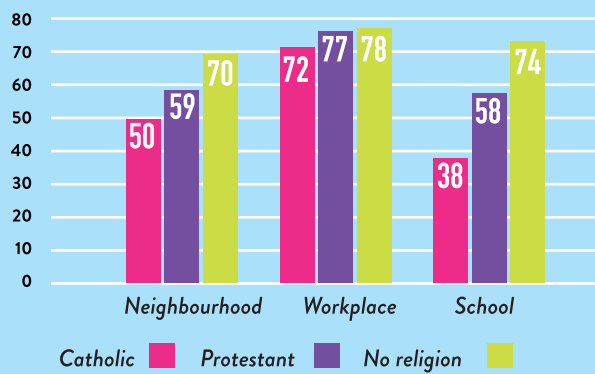


Table 4: Do you think the following facilities are ‘shared and open’ to both Protestants and Catholics? (%)

	Yes	No	None in this area	Don't know
Leisure Centres	89	4	4	4
Parks	84	11	2	4
Libraries	91	3	2	4
Shops	93	5	1	2

66% of respondents said they ‘very often’ or ‘sometimes’ socialised or played sports with people from a different religious community to themselves, 28% said they ‘rarely’ or ‘never’ did so.

Table 5: 16 year olds saying that they would feel ‘very safe’ or ‘quite safe’ in the following premises. By religion (%)

	Catholic	Protestant	No religion
GAA Club	93	38	54
Orange Hall	19	74	40
Catholic School	95	54	68
Protestant School	47	91	72

## POLITICS

Overall, **72%** of respondents felt that the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement had made Northern Ireland a better place to live.

Table 6: Has the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement made Northern Ireland a better place to live? By religion (%)

	Catholic	Protestant	No religion
Yes	78	69	69
No	7	8	8
I don't know	15	23	23

Nearly one quarter of respondents (**23%**) felt that The Agreement was a good deal that needed no change, around one half (**48%**) felt it was a good deal but needed some changes to work better, **7%** felt it was not now or had never been a good deal and around one-fifth said they didn't know.

When asked how they felt Northern Ireland should be governed, respondents were most supportive of devolved government (**50%**) and least in favour of Northern Ireland as an independent state (**13%**).

Table 7: Respondents who ‘strongly agree’ or ‘agree’ with these statements about how NI be governed. By religion. (%)

	Catholic	Protestant	No religion
Devolved	53	51	49
As part of the UK	9	62	37
As part of ROI	53	5	19
Jointly UK and ROI	24	15	25
Independent state	16	13	10

**56%** of respondents thought the UK leaving the European Union (EU) would make a United Ireland, more likely, **8%** felt it would make it less likely and **17%** felt it would make no difference; **20%** didn't know.

In relation to personal preferences if the UK left the EU, **39%** said they would be more in favour of a United Ireland, **15%** less in favour, **33%** felt it would make no difference and **13%** did not know.

## POLITICS

When asked about the likelihood of a United Ireland within the next 20 years, **58%** felt it was likely or had a 50/50 chance, while **33%** thought it unlikely.

Figure 3: If there was a border poll and the majority of people in NI voted in FAVOUR of becoming part of a United Ireland how would you feel? By religion (%)

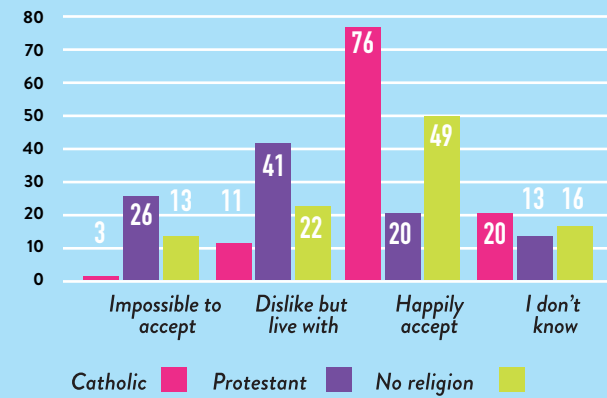
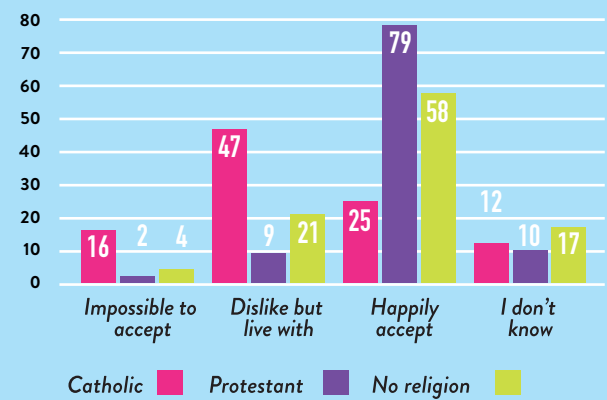


Figure 4: If there was a border poll and the majority of people in NI voted AGAINST becoming part of a United Ireland how would you feel? By religion (%)



## SAFETY IN THE COMMUNITY

**89%** of respondents felt 'very safe/fairly safe' in their neighbourhood. Of those saying they felt 'very safe' **64%** lived in areas they described as 'neither Loyalist nor Republican'; **56%** in 'Mainly Republican' and **39%** in 'Mainly Loyalist' areas.

Table 8: Respondents' perceptions of area safety. (%)

	Agree	Neither	Disagree
People in this area do not feel confident reporting crime and anti-social behaviour to the PSNI	25	22	44
The PSNI keep this area safe	47	31	16
People in this area generally abide by the law	65	17	15
People in this area feel that they are protected by the law and the justice system.	53	26	13

Respondents living in 'neither Loyalist nor Republican areas' were significantly more likely to say that people in their area abided by and felt protected by the law, and had confidence in the PSNI.

Over half of respondents (**52%**) agreed there was a strong sense of community in their neighbourhood. However, Catholic respondents (**63%**) were more likely to say this than Protestant respondents (**56%**) and those of no religion (**36%**).

While **53%** of 16 year olds agreed that there were low levels of crime and antisocial behaviour in the area where they lived, **30%** agreed that there was a lot of crime, drugs and antisocial behaviour among young people where they lived.

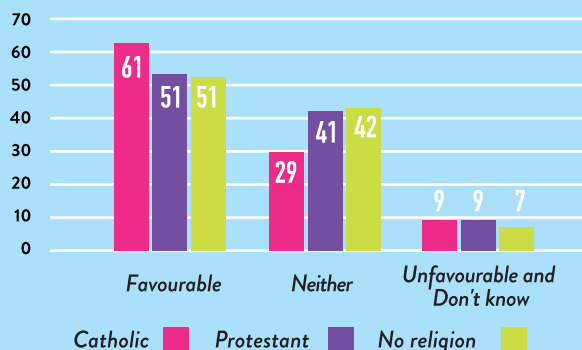
**13%** of respondents agreed that paramilitaries had a controlling influence in their area, and **11%** agreed that young people were influenced too much by paramilitaries.

**5%** agreed that paramilitaries kept the area where they lived safe, **18%** felt that paramilitaries created fear and intimidation, and **21%** agreed that paramilitary groups contributed to crime, drug-dealing and anti-social behaviour in their area.

## MINORITY ETHNIC COMMUNITIES

Overall **52%** of respondents felt favourable towards people from minority communities, 3% felt unfavourable and 36% were neither favourable nor unfavourable.

Figure 5: Do respondents feel favourable or unfavourable towards people from minority communities? By religion (%)



**62%** of respondents said they 'very often' or 'sometimes' socialised or played sports with people from a different ethnic backgrounds to themselves, **34%** said they 'rarely' or 'never' did so.

Table 9: Respondents' attitudes to refugees... (%)

	Agree	Neither	Disagree
NI is a society that welcomes refugees	28	29	30
It is our duty to provide protection to refugees	57	21	14
People from Syria should be allowed to come to NI	53	26	13

**52%** of respondents agreed that the culture and traditions of minority ethnic communities add to the richness and diversity of NI society, **24%** neither agreed or disagreed and **9%** disagreed.

**73%** of respondents felt they were not prejudiced at all against people of minority ethnic communities; **16%** described themselves as a little or very prejudiced.



## BREASTFEEDING

If respondents had a child in the future **21%** would prefer if it was breastfed only, **11%** bottle-fed only and **48%** both breast and bottle-fed. Females (**24%**) were more supportive of breastfeeding only than males (**16%**).

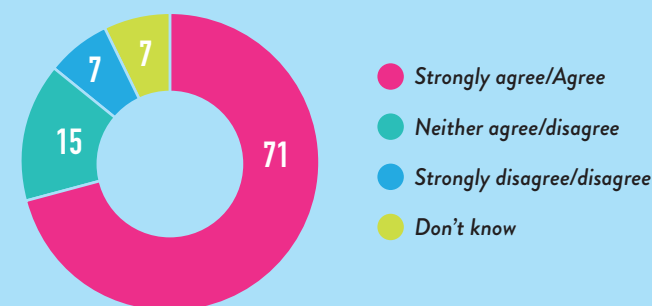
Table 10: Who would have the most influence on decisions about how to feed your baby? By Gender (%)

	Male	Female	Overall
My decision only	2	25	16
My partner	27	1	12
Joint decision	53	44	47
Family, friends and other	3	6	5
Health professionals	10	22	17
Don't know	6	2	4

Nearly all respondents agreed that breastfeeding was normal (**93%**), and that it was good for the baby (**87%**); **91%** disagreed that it was offensive, **81%** that it was distasteful and **71%** that it was embarrassing.

Nearly three quarters of respondents were not in favour of the government interfering in decisions around feeding.

Figure 6: The government should not interfere in whether a baby is breastfed or not? (%)



**72%** of respondents felt that boys and girls should learn about breastfeeding in secondary school, and **24%** felt this should be the case in primary school. **54%** of respondents had not discussed breastfeeding in any of their classes in school.