



Children's Worlds National Report

England

Gwyther Rees¹, Gill Main², Jonathan Bradshaw³

Social Policy Research Unit, University of York, UK

¹ Honorary Research Fellow, Social Policy Research Unit, University of York.

² Research Fellow, Social Policy Research Unit, University of York.

³ Professor of Social Policy, Social Policy Research Unit, University of York.

1. Introduction

This is the final report of the results from the Children's Worlds survey conducted in England in late 2013 and early 2014. The aim of the report is to give a brief descriptive overview of the conduct and content of the survey and of key findings. It will be followed by more detailed analysis of particular aspects of the survey in England, and analysis comparing the results in England with those from other countries participating in the international project. We begin with a section summarising the context of children's lives in England.

1.1 The context of children's lives in England

External influences

England has a population of 53.9 million, 84% of the population of the UK (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland). England is the main part of the island of Britain with Wales on the west and Scotland to the north. It is comparatively densely populated and urbanised. For administrative purposes it is divided into nine regions.

Children and young people aged 0 to 19 years old number 12.8 million which is 23.6% of the population of England. Children aged 8 to 12 years old number about 3.2 million.

The established church is the Church of England (Christian protestant). In the 2011 census 59.4% of adults described themselves as Christian, 5.0% Muslim, 1.5% Hindu, 24.7% had no religious affiliation and 7.2% did not reply. The main ethnic groups in England are white British (79.8%), white Irish (1.0%), white other (4.1%), Indian (2.6%), Pakistani/Bangladeshi (2.9%), black British (3.4%).

UK GDP per capita was \$37,955 in 2014 having fallen from \$40,231 in 2008. After the start of the economic crisis the UK economy had two dips in GDP in 2009 and 2013. When the survey was done the economy was just beginning to grow. But unemployment was still over two million (7.9%) and youth unemployment was 20%. Real incomes had been falling for six years. The Coalition Government was still rolling out austerity measures, mainly consisting of cuts in expenditure on cash benefits and services, with the largest impact on poor families with children⁴.

Family and child policies

According to OECD data the UK was spending the second highest proportion of GDP on family benefits and services in 2011⁵. There are child benefits paid in respect of all children except the rich and income tested child tax credits, free school meals, housing benefits and reductions in charges for childcare. Statutory maternity and paternity leave are available, though compared with some other EU countries the latter is short and the level of payments are low. Since 2010 there have been cuts in the real level of child and family benefits as part of the Coalition Governments' austerity measures.

⁴ Reed, H. and Portes, J. (2014) 'Cumulative Impact Assessment'. A research report by Landman Economics and the National Institute of Economic and Social Research for the Equality and Human Rights Commission. Research report 94.

⁵ OECD Family data base <http://www.oecd.org/els/soc/database.htm>

Education system

Free part-time nursery education is available from three years old (and some two-year olds). Free full-time compulsory education starts at five years in primary school. Most children move to secondary school at 11 though some local authorities have middle school systems (aged 9 to 13). Compulsory education ends at 16 but is being extended to 18. The staying on rate after the age of 16 in 2013 was 85.6%, with 6.8% in employment and 7.6% NEET (not in education, employment or training). Education is free of charges but parents need to provide school uniforms and pay for school meals and may be expected to pay for extras such as school outings. Educational attainment and participation has been improving over the last 15 years.

Family environment

The most typical family structure is 'nuclear' - i.e. parent(s) and children with no other extended family (e.g. grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins) living in the same house. However there are cultural differences and this does not always apply within ethnic minority groups who have recently migrated to the UK, where extended family forms are more common.

Because of geographical mobility, parents often live some distance from their own parents and extended families, so this has reduced the extent of broader family involvement in children's daily lives. Many children may only see their wider family sporadically (e.g. weekend visits). However this is a generalisation and does not apply across all geographical and economic contexts.

Changes in family structure are quite common as parents' relationships end. Thus children live in a diverse range of family forms including lone parent, or parent and step-parent. It is also becoming increasingly common for children to spend some of their time living in two different homes when their two birth parents separate. About half of all children can expect to live in a lone parent family during their childhoods and at any one time about a quarter do.

Many children are looked after by professional child-minders for some of the time either before and/or after school if both parents (or a lone parent) are in paid work, although being cared for by grandparents in these circumstances is still quite common.

Living away from family is uncommon and mostly occurs where there are serious concerns about children's welfare (e.g. child protection concerns). In this case children may be placed in foster care or (less commonly) in a children's home or in 'kinship care' (i.e. with other family members).

Everyday life

The school day last from 9 am to 15.30 for primary children and later for older children. In the evening a child will normally have home-work and spend the evening at home with family or out with friends and there may be clubs, activities or sporting events. A good deal of leisure time is spent watching television or engaged with social media or the internet, often in the child's own bedroom. There have been a series of annual 'Good Childhood' reports produced by the Children's Society with further information about children's lives in England⁶. Generally children are happy and their levels of life satisfaction improved between 1994 and 2010 but may have stopped improving recently.

⁶ The Children's Society (2014) *The Good Childhood Report 2014*. London: The Children's Society http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/the_good_childhood_report_2014_-_final.pdf

Unequal childhoods

UNICEF⁷ ranked the well-being of children in the UK at the bottom of the OECD league table in 2007. However over the period 1999-2010 there was a substantial investment in improved cash benefits and services including education, health and childcare and the UNICEF well-being index in 2013⁸ ranked the UK in the middle of the league table and a report on child well-being in the UK⁹ found that on almost all indicators child well-being had improved 1999-2010. Child poverty rates fell over that period but since the start of the recession and the introduction of austerity measures real living standards have been falling and anchored child poverty rates have begun to rise. The Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission¹⁰ say that there is no hope of the 2020 child poverty targets being met and on present policies. Child poverty rates are higher in lone parent, workless and large families and in some ethnic groups. However two-thirds of poor children have a parent in employment.

Children's Rights

The UK is of course a signatory of the UN Charter on the Rights of the Child. There is a Child Commissioner for England with responsibility for monitoring performance.

<http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/>.

1.2 Sampling strategy and outcomes

The England sample was designed to achieve a nationally representative sample of children in school years 6 (aged 8 to 9 years old), 8 (aged 10 to 11 years old) and 10 (aged 12 to 13 years old) with at least 1,000 children in each group¹¹. The primary sampling unit was schools. Separate samples were drawn for Years 4 and 6 (primary school education) and Year 8 (secondary school education). Both samples followed the same methodology. First, a complete list of schools in England was stratified into five groups by the proportion of children receiving free school meals (a very rough indicator of economic prosperity). These groups were approximate quintiles (based on numbers of pupils in each stratum). The approximation was because of a lack of precision in the data available on free school meal entitlement. Within each stratum schools were selected randomly with probabilities proportional to size (number of pupils), with the aim of achieving a target of at least eight schools per stratum. Within each selected school, one class group (not grouped on pupil ability) was randomly selected. Participating schools were paid £5 per completed questionnaire. The survey began in late 2013 and was completed by April 2014.

Table 1 summarises the resulting sample. After data cleaning, the survey data set contained questionnaires from a sample of 3430 children. Children in schools with higher proportions of school meals recipients were underrepresented in the achieved sample, though the proportion in Year 8 is not the same as the proportions in Years 4 and 6. Also there were more children in Year 4 and 8 than in Year 6.

⁷ UNICEF (2007) *Child poverty in perspective: an overview of child well-being in rich countries*, Innocenti Research Centre Report Card 7: Florence

⁸ UNICEF (2013) *Child well-being in rich countries: a comparative overview*. Innocenti Report Card 11: Florence.

⁹ Bradshaw, J. (ed) (2011) *The well-being of children in the United Kingdom*, Third Edition, Bristol: Policy Press.

¹⁰ Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission (2014) *The State of the Nation 2014*, 20 October 2014 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/state-of-the-nation-2014-report>

¹¹ There was also a sample of 1000 children in year 12 funded by the Children's Society and interviewed using a different questionnaire. The results of this are not included here.

Table 1: Achieved sample (Numbers)

	Stratum					
	All	1	2	3	4	5
Year 4	1134	381	256	218	128	151
Year 6	979	198	231	210	178	162
Year 8	1317	501	215	212	214	175
Total	3430	1080	702	640	520	488

Weights have been applied to the sample used in the analysis so that the proportion of children in the data set in each stratum is equivalent to the proportion of children in that stratum in the population. In addition, for the purposes of pooling data across the three age groups, each sample has been further weighted so that there is a weighted sample size of 1,000 children in each age group. The resulting numbers are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Weighted sample (Numbers)

	Stratum					
	Total	1	2	3	4	5
Year 4	1000	229	175	204	203	189
Year 6	1000	229	175	204	203	189
Year 8	1000	225	208	180	186	201
Total	3000	683	558	588	592	579

1.3 Note on statistical analysis

All differences referred to in the document have been subject to statistical testing. Where differences are noted as significant they relate to a p-value below 0.01. Differences described as marginally significant refer to p-values between 0.01 and 0.049.

However at this stage, although the data has been weighted, the analysis does not take into account the design effect of clustering in the sample due to children being surveyed in class groups in schools. Taking this factor into account will not affect the descriptive statistics but is likely to affect the significance levels for statistical tests.

2. Results

2.1 The participants

Age and gender

The children’s ages ranged from 8 to 14 years old. Year 4 was mainly 8 and 9 years old although two children were aged 10. Year 6 was mainly 10 and 11 years old although three children were aged 12. Year 8 was mainly 12 and 13 years old though four children were aged 14. The sample is not representative by age group so will be analysed by year group from here on. To maintain consistency across the countries reports we will name '8-year-olds' group the Year 4, '10-year-olds' group the Year 6, and '12-year-olds' group the Year 8.

51.5% of the sample were boys and 48.5% were girls

Table 3: Age by gender (Numbers)

	8 year old	9 year old	10 year old	11 year old	12 year old	13 year old	14 year old	Total
Boy	251	239	243	250	261	245	3	1492
Girl	270	189	263	204	257	216	1	1400
Total	521	428	506	454	518	461	4	2892

Country of birth

8.1% of children in the sample¹² were not born in England. This figure will include children born in other countries of the UK (Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland) as well as children born outside the UK.

2.2 Your home and the people you live with

Questions about which people children lived with were only asked of children in years 6 and 8.

All but 11.8% of children said that they always (49.6%) or usually (38.6%) sleep in the same homes.

98.9% lived with their family. The remainder lived in foster care, a children’s home or in another type of home, which might include living with non-related adults in the community.

Just under two-thirds of children (66.2%) lived with their mother and father. 18.9% were living with a lone mother in the first home and of these 20.6% stayed with a father in another home and 7.7% stayed with a father and partner in another home. 9.8% lived with a mother and a partner in the first home and 40.1% of these stayed with a father or father and partner in another home. 1.6% lived with a lone father and 1.5% with a father and partner and 17.7% visited their mother or mother and partner in another home. Of the ‘Other’ group a third were children in foster care or a children’s

¹² This question was only asked of children aged 10 and 12.

home and a half were living with a grandparent, with the remainder living in other arrangements without a birth parent.

Table 4: Family type in first and second home (10 and 12 year-olds) (%)

First home %		Another home %	
Mother and father	66.2	First home only	89.4
Mother and partner	9.8	Mother and father	.2
Father and partner	1.5	Mother and partner	.3
Lone mother	18.9	Father and partner	4.1
Lone father	1.6	Mother	.7
Other	1.9	Father	5.4
Total	100.0	Total	100.0

14.3% of the sample were not living with siblings or other children. 73.1% lived with only siblings in their first household, 2.9% had siblings and non-sibling children in the first household.

5.3% of children live in a first home with three adults or more.

There were five questions about children’s views on the home and the people they live with. The results are summarised in Table 5. Children were most in agreement with the statement ‘I feel safe at home’ and least in agreement with ‘I have a quiet place to study at home’.

Table 5: Home and family (All age groups) (%)

	I do not agree	Agree a little bit	Agree somewhat	Agree a lot	Totally agree
I feel safe at home	1.2	2.5	4.0	17.7	74.7
I have a quiet place to study at home	9.8	16.8	11.8	24.4	37.2
My parents/carers listen to me and take what I say into account	2.7	8.2	9.5	23.2	56.4
My parents/carers treat me fairly	2.4	4.7	6.3	18.7	68.0
We have a good time together in my family	2.2	4.8	7.7	21.0	64.4

Table 6 summarises variations in responses to these five questions. There were no variations in responses by gender. Children’s level of agreement with all five statements decreased for older age groups, although only marginally so for the question about having a good time together. There were also significant variations by family type, with children living with both birth parents having the highest levels of agreement.

Table 6: Variations in questions about home and the people you live with (All age groups) (Means)

	Feel safe	Place to study	Parents listen	Parents fair	Good time together
Gender					
Boy	3.61	2.58	3.22	3.40	3.44
Girl	3.64	2.66	3.22	3.41	3.47
Age group					
8 year-olds	3.48	2.24	3.08	3.37	3.32
10 year-olds	3.68	2.63	3.32	3.48	3.55
12 year-olds	3.70	2.97	3.26	3.37	3.48
Family type					
Mother and father	3.74	2.87	3.36	3.48	3.56
Parent and stepparent	3.57	2.63	3.04	3.28	3.31
Lone parent	3.62	2.68	3.21	3.34	3.48
Other	3.55	2.61	3.16	3.09	3.25
Total	3.62	2.62	3.22	3.40	3.45

Table 7 summarises the results of three questions about time spent with family in the past week. Talking together is much more common than learning together.

Table 7: Time spent with family (All age groups) (%)

	Not at all	Once or twice	Most days	Every day
How often do family: Talk together	1.5	7.5	26.3	64.7
How often do family: Have fun together	3.1	13.5	42.0	41.4
How often do family: Learn together	11.3	26.5	36.7	25.5

Table 8 compares the mean scores of the above questions about time spent with family. Girls are significantly more likely to talk together with family but the gender differences on the other two questions are not significant. The year group differences are all significant but not linear in the case of ‘talking together’. Younger children are more likely to have fun together and learn together. There are also significant differences in all the mean scores by family type – children living with both birth parents tended to spend more time on each of these family activities than children living in other family forms

Table 8: Variations in time spent with family (All age groups) (Means)

	Talk together	How often do family: Have fun together	Learn together
Gender			
Boy	2.49	2.21	1.72
Girl	2.59	2.21	1.80
Year group			
8 year-olds	2.44	2.31	1.91
10 year-olds	2.61	2.24	1.78
12 year-olds	2.57	2.10	1.61
Family type			
Mother and father	2.63	2.20	1.74
Parent and stepparent	2.47	1.99	1.52
Lone parent	2.52	2.13	1.58
Other	2.44	2.08	1.67
Total	2.54	2.21	1.76

The next set of questions covered satisfaction with family life. Children in the 8 year-old group were asked the same questions but using a five point emoticons scale. Table 9 summarises the results using a score from zero to four where zero represents the most unhappy face and four represents the happiest face. There were very high levels of satisfaction higher for ‘The people you live with’ than ‘All the other people in your family’. There was no significant difference in satisfaction by gender for any of these questions.

Table 9: Satisfaction with home and the people you live with (8 year-olds) (%)

	0	1	2	3	4
The house or flat where you live	2.8	1.0	6.6	19.2	70.4
The people you live with	.9	.8	7.0	17.5	73.9
All the other people in your family	5.7	2.7	8.8	20.9	62.0
Your family life	2.2	1.2	8.0	18.5	70.2

A very similar pattern is observed for 10 and 12 year olds – very high levels of satisfaction, higher for ‘The people you live with’ than for ‘All other people in your family’. This is shown in Table 10 which shows responses on the 11-point scale used in the questionnaire where zero represents ‘Not at all satisfied’ and ten represents ‘Totally satisfied’.

Table 10: Satisfaction with home and the people you live with (10 and 12 year-olds) (%)

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
The house or flat where you live	.7	.5	1.0	.7	1.5	3.1	2.7	5.9	9.7	14.6	59.6
The people you live with	.4	.2	.9	.9	1.2	2.9	2.5	4.4	6.4	13.4	66.7
All the other people in your family	1.3	.4	.4	1.1	.7	2.8	2.6	5.9	8.4	16.5	59.8
Your family life	.6	.5	.6	1.0	1.1	3.2	2.1	5.3	8.1	15.8	61.7

There were no variations in satisfaction with these aspects of family life by gender or year group but some significant differences by family type. In general, children living with both parents had higher levels of satisfaction than children living in a stepfamily, with a lone parent or in another type of family. Figure 1 shows the variations in mean scores for the three main family types.

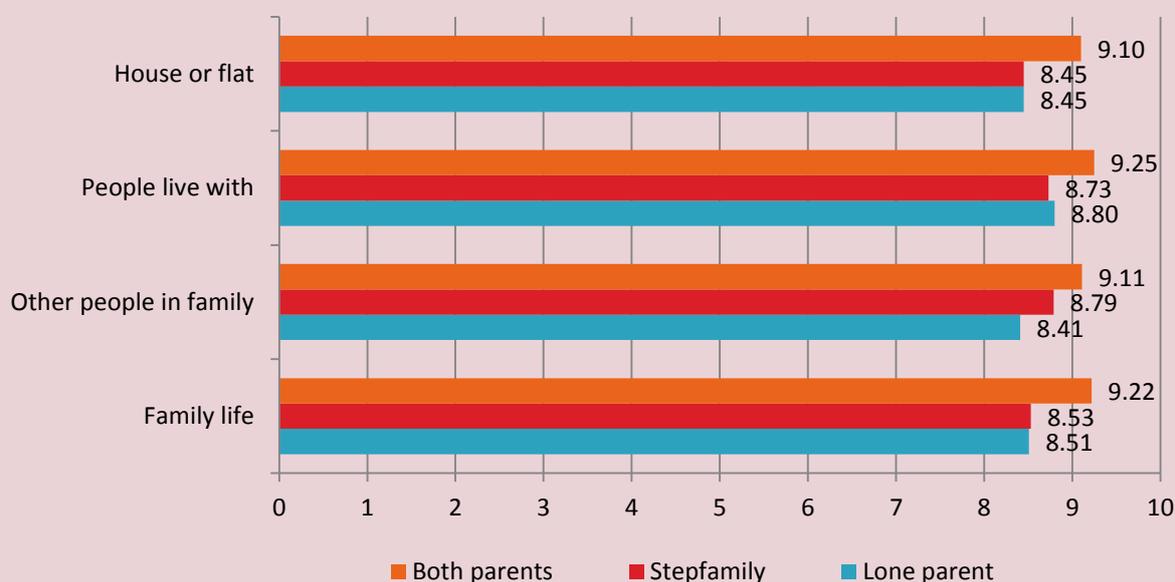


Figure 1: Satisfaction with aspects of family and home by family type (Means). 10 and 12 year-olds

2.3 Money and things you have

Children were asked a set of questions about things they have – a shorter list was used for 8 year olds. Over 80% had each of the items. 16% of 8 year olds did not have a family car and 17% of 10- and 12 year olds did not have a mobile phone.

Table 11: Things you have (All age groups) (Means)

	8 year-olds	10 and 12 year-olds
Mobile phone		84.1
Own room		82.7
Books to read for fun		90.3
Own stuff to listen to music		94.9
Clothes in good condition to go to school in	98.3	99.6
Access to a computer at home	88.9	94.4
Access to the Internet	88.2	96.5
Family car for transportation	84.2	88.8
Television that can use	98	98.9

Table 12 shows the proportion lacking items. Among the 8 year-old age group children 29.1% lacked at least one out of the five items and among 10 and 12 year-old children 42.4% lacked at least one of the nine items.

Table 12: Number of items lacked by children (All age groups) (%)

	8 year-olds % lacking out of four items	10 and 12 year-olds % lacking out of nine items
None	70.9	57.6
One	18.8	26.5
Two	7.3	10.2
Three	2.9	4.0
Four	0.1	1.3
Five or more	-	0.4
Total	100	100.0

Table 13 shows the variation in the mean number of items lacking. There were small but significant variations by gender with boys tending to lack more items than girls. More detailed analysis indicates that boys are slightly less likely than girls to have a music player, a mobile phone, access to the internet, a bedroom to themselves and books to read for fun. These differences are interesting and may indicate differential parental practices for boys and girls. 8 year olds lacked more items than 10 year olds and there were also some significant variations by family type with children in the 'Lone mother' and 'Other' categories lacking more items.

Table 13: Variations in number of items lacking (All age groups) (Mean)

	8 year-olds	10 and 12 year-olds
Gender		
Boy	.28	.71
Girl	.27	.61
Year group		
10 year-olds		.83
12 year-olds		.51
Family type		
Mother and father		.60
Parent and stepparent		.70
Lone parent		.85
Other		.94
All	.28	.67

The majority of children were happy with the things they had – 75.5% of 8 year-old age group scored the maximum, and 63.3% of 10 and 12 year-olds scored the maximum.

Table 14: How happy do you feel with the things you have (8 year-olds) (%)

	0	1	2	3	4
8 year-olds	1.7	.6	5.5	16.7	75.5

Table 15: How happy do you feel with the things you have (10 and 12 year-olds) (%)

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
10 and 12 year-olds	.3	.2	.2	.6	.7	2.3	2.1	4.4	9.6	16.4	63.3

There was no variation by gender in the mean level of happiness with things you have. However children in 12 year-old age group were less happy than 10 year-old group despite the fact that they lacked fewer items and children living with mother and father were happier with the things they have than other children (Table 16).

Table 16: Variations in satisfaction with the things you have (Means)

	8 year-olds	10 and 12 year-olds
Gender		
Boy	3.60	9.19
Girl	3.67	9.14
Year group		
10 year-olds		9.25
12 year-olds		9.08
Family type		
Mother and father		9.27
Parent and stepparent		8.93
Lone parent		8.97
Other		8.97
All		9.17

Just over a quarter of children aged 10 and 12 said that they did not get pocket money but 39.2% got pocket money every week.

Table 17: Pocket money (10 and 12 year-olds) (%)

	%
I don't get pocket money	26.3
I get pocket money, but not regularly	22.1
I get pocket money every week	39.2
I get pocket money every month	12.4
Total	100.0

Children in the 12 year-old group only were asked a set of questions about their household's current economic status. 4.2% of children had no adult in employment and 16.4% had more than two adults in employment.

Table 18: How many adults that you live with have a paid job? (12 year-old)

	%
None	4.2
One	25.2
Two	54.2
More than two	16.4
Total	100.0

16.1% thought that they had less money than a year ago but 46% thought they had more money than a year ago.

Table 19: Compared to a year ago, how much money does your family have now? (12 year-olds)

	%
We have more money than a year ago	46.0
We have about the same as a year ago	38.0
We have less money than a year ago	16.1
Total	100.00

10.6% thought that they were spending less than they did a year ago but 37% thought they were spending more.

Table 20: How much money do your parents spend on things for you (like pocket money, clothes, presents or treats) (12 year-olds)?

	%
They spend more than they did a year ago	37.0
They spend about the same as they did a year ago	52.4
They spend less than they did a year ago	10.6
Total	100.0

31.5% said that they heard adults talking more about money problems than they did a year ago but 34.3% felt that they heard less talk about money problems than they did a year ago.

Table 21: How often do you hear adults in your family talking about money problems? (12 year-olds)

	%
This happens more than it did a year ago	31.5
This happens about the same as it did a year ago	34.3
This happens less than it did a year ago	34.3
Total	100.0

2.4 Your friends and other people

Views about friends were very positive. Over half (52.1%) totally agreed that their friends were usually nice to them and 64.1% totally agreed that they had enough friends. There was no significant variation in answers to the above questions by age group or gender.

Table 22: Friends (All age groups) (%)

	I do not agree	Agree a little bit	Agree somewhat	Agree a lot	Totally agree
My friends are usually nice to me	1.8	7.5	10.9	27.8	52.0
I have enough friends	4.5	6.5	6.0	18.9	64.1

Satisfaction with friends was also high with 67.1% scoring the maximum in the 8 year-old age group. Satisfaction with people in the area was not as high - 51.5% scored the maximum, and 56.7% scored the maximum on your relationships with people in general. There was no difference in the satisfaction with friends between girls and boys in the 8 year-old group.

Table 23: Satisfied with friendships and other relationships (8 year-old) (Means)

	0	1	2	3	4
Satisfaction with: Your friends	1.7	.8	7.9	22.4	67.1
Satisfaction with: The people in your area	4.4	2.4	15.4	26.3	51.5
Satisfaction with: Your relationships with people in general	2.1	1.8	11.2	28.3	56.7

Among year the 10 and 12 year-old the pattern of the results was similar, and there was no variation in the mean satisfaction scores by gender or between age groups 10 and 12.

Table 24: Satisfied with friendships and other relationships (10 and 12 year-olds)

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Your friends	.4	.8	.8	.8	1.2	3.1	3.0	6.5	10.0	18.7	54.7
The people in your area	2.5	1.5	1.8	2.3	3.2	5.4	5.8	9.4	11.2	17.9	38.9
Your relationships with people in general	1.6	.5	.4	1.5	1.9	3.8	3.9	7.9	11.6	21.6	45.4

The majority of children talked together with their friends every day and nearly half had fun together every day. But more than half never met to study together.

Table 26: How often do you spend time with friends (All age groups) (%)

	Not at all	Once or twice	Most days	Every day
How often do friends: Talk together	5.9	14.7	28.0	51.4
How often do friends: Have fun together	7.9	15.9	28.9	47.3
How often do friends: Meet to study together	55.4	23.1	12.1	9.4

There were some gender and age differences in response to the above questions. Children in Year 8 tended to talk together with friends outside school more frequently (62% did so every day) than children in Year 6 (48% every day) or Year 4 (44%) – see Figure 2.

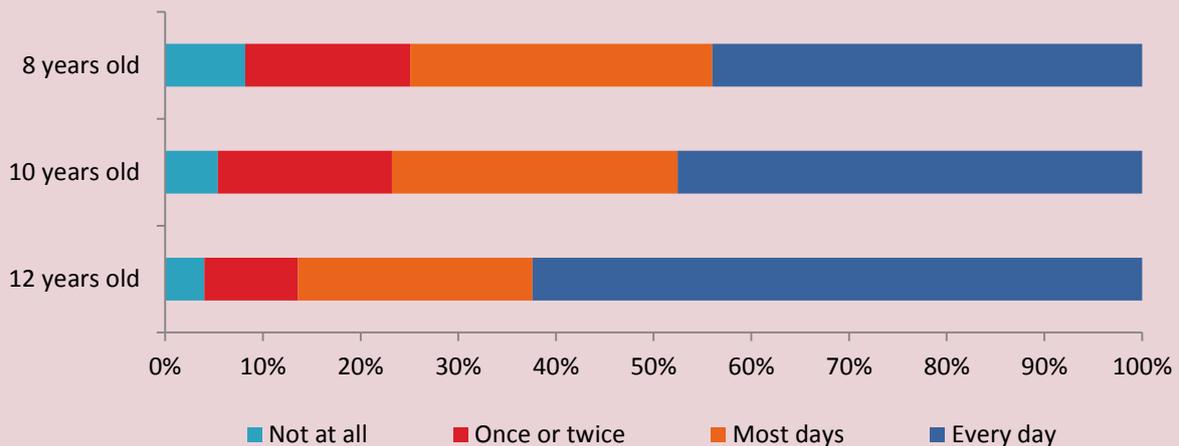


Figure 2: Frequency of talking with friends outside school by age group (All age groups) (%)

Boys tended a little more frequently to have fun with friends than girls; while girls tended a little more frequently to study together with friends.

2.5 The area where you live

Children generally had a high degree of satisfaction with their local area. 70% agreed a lot or totally with the statement ‘I feel safe when I walk around the area I live in’ and 69% agreed a lot or totally with the statement ‘In my area there are enough places to play or to have a good time’.

Table 27: Views about local area (All age groups) (%)

	I do not agree	Agree a little bit	Agree somewhat	Agree a lot	Totally agree
In my area there are enough places to play or to have a good time	6.7	11.8	12.3	22.6	46.7
I feel safe when I walk in the area I live in	5.4	11.9	13.2	25.0	44.5

There is some variation by gender and age. The proportion agreeing with both questions declines with age, and girls are likely to agree less strongly than boys. There are also variations according to material deprivation. Children who lacked more basic items were also less likely to agree with these questions. This possibly suggests a link between poverty and local area well-being.

Table 28: Variation in views about area (All age groups except Material deprivation – 10 and 12 year-olds only) (Means)

	Enough places to play or to have a good time	I feel safe when I walk in the area I live in
Gender		
Boy	2.97	2.97
Girl	2.83	2.84
Age group		
8 year-olds	3.06	2.96
10 year-olds	2.95	2.91
12 year-olds	2.73	2.88
Material deprivation (Items lacked)		
None	3.06	3.08
One	2.82	2.79
Two or more	2.45	2.61
Total	2.91	2.91

62.3% of 8 year-olds are completely satisfied with the area they live in, 53.6% by how they are dealt with by doctors and 50% by the outdoor areas they can use. There is no difference in these responses between boys and girls.

Table 29: Satisfaction with local area (8 year-olds) (%)

	0	1	2	3	4
How you are dealt with at the doctors	5.4	1.5	13.8	25.7	53.6
The outdoor areas children can use in your area	6.8	2.8	16.7	23.7	50.0
The area you live in general	2.6	1.5	9.8	23.8	62.3

10 and 12 year-olds are more satisfied with their treatment by doctors than the area they live in in general and they are least satisfied by the outdoor areas.

Table 30: Satisfaction with local area (10 and 12 year-olds) (%)

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
How you are dealt with at the doctors	1.0	.5	1.1	1.2	1.9	4.9	3.9	6.6	12.3	17.1	49.5
The outdoor areas children can use in your area	3.8	2.0	1.8	2.2	3.4	7.6	5.6	8.6	10.7	18.0	36.4
The area you live in general	1.2	.9	.8	1.6	2.3	5.3	4.6	6.9	10.7	18.7	47.1

There is no difference in satisfaction by gender. 10 year-olds children are less satisfied with the area they live in in general. There are some notable variations according to material deprivation. Children experiencing higher levels of material deprivation had significantly lower levels of satisfaction with their local area.

Table 31: Variations in satisfaction with local area (10 and 12 year-olds) (Means)

	How you are dealt with at the doctors	Satisfaction with: The outdoor areas children can use in your area	The area you live in general
Gender			
Boy	8.57	7.74	8.47
Girl	8.54	7.62	8.38
Age group			
10 year-olds	8.59	7.85	8.60
12 year-olds	8.52	7.53	8.26
Material deprivation (Items lacked)			
None	8.82	8.14	8.79
One	8.53	7.66	8.33
Two or more	8.21	6.82	7.68
Total	8.56	7.69	8.43

2.6 School

The majority of children are positive about their teachers and their school. The least positive response was to the statement ‘I like going to school’ but still 57% agreed a lot or totally agreed with this statement.

Table 32: Views about school (All age groups) (%)

	I do not agree	Agree a little bit	Agree somewhat	Agree a lot	Totally agree
My teachers listen to me and take what I say into account	3.7	7.8	13.4	26.7	48.5
I like going to school	11.4	15.1	15.7	24.9	32.9
My teachers treat me fairly	4.0	8.2	11.4	26.1	50.3
I feel safe at school	3.3	6.0	6.8	21.2	62.7

There were differences in the views about school. Girls were happier than boys. Views were less positive as the age groups progressed and there were some significant variations by family type.

Table 33: Variations in views about school by gender and age group (All age groups) (Means)

	My teachers listen to me and take what I say into account	I like going to school	My teachers treat me fairly	I feel safe at school
Gender				
Boy	3.02	2.34	3.02	3.28
Girl	3.15	2.70	3.19	3.40
Age group				
8 year-olds	3.28	2.82	3.37	3.46
10 year-olds	3.25	2.61	3.33	3.43
12 year-olds	2.72	2.16	2.61	3.12
Total	3.09	2.53	3.11	3.34

There were also a set of eleven point scales concerned with school asked of 10 and 12 year-old groups. The responses to these is summarised below. Satisfaction was again high with some variation between items. Satisfaction with ‘things you have learned’ was higher than satisfaction with ‘other children in your class’, ‘your school marks’ or ‘your relationship with your teachers’.

Table 34: Satisfaction with school (10 and 12 year-olds) (%)

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Other children in your class	1.1	1.3	.8	1.5	3.2	7.0	6.6	10.9	16.1	17.5	34.0
Your school marks	1.0	.7	1.4	1.8	3.0	5.2	6.1	10.2	16.4	20.6	33.7
Your school experience	1.1	1.2	1.0	1.5	1.9	4.6	5.8	8.6	15.4	17.5	41.5
Things you have learned	1.1	.5	.5	1.0	1.5	3.5	4.0	8.3	11.9	19.6	48.1
Your life as a student	1.7	.8	1.0	1.7	2.2	4.9	5.6	8.3	13.9	14.7	38.4
Your relationship with teachers	3.7	1.2	1.7	2.4	3.6	5.6	5.6	9.9	13.3	14.7	38.4

The 8 year-old children were asked the same set of questions but on a five point scale. Their level of satisfaction is also very high and they do not seem to be as dissatisfied with school marks as the 10 and 12 year-old students.

Table 35: Satisfaction with school (8 year-olds) (%)

	0	1	2	3	4
Other children in your class	2.3	1.2	10.7	31.9	53.9
Your school marks	2.2	1.3	13.6	28.8	54.0
Your school experience	2.1	1.8	11.6	21.9	62.6
Things you have learned	1.9	1.1	6.1	19.1	71.8
Your relationship with teachers	3.5	3.0	9.6	22.5	61.4

Girls are more satisfied than boys with school marks and their relationships with their teachers. Boys are more satisfied with other children in the class. Satisfaction with school declines between 10 and 12 year-old groups. There were also clear variations according to the number of basic items which a child lacked as described earlier, which may serve as an indicator of material deprivation. Children who lacked no items had the highest mean satisfaction scores for all aspects of school, and children who lack two or more items had the lowest. Most of the differences here are quite marked.

Table 36: Variation in satisfaction with school (10 and 12 year-olds) (Means)

	Other children in your class	Your school marks	Your school experience	Your life as a student	Things you have learned	Your relationship with teachers
Gender						
Boy	8.13	7.97	8.28	8.18	8.61	7.62
Girl	7.79	8.20	8.28	8.30	8.64	8.00
Year group						
10 year-olds	8.29	8.15	8.57	8.57	8.96	8.36
12 year-olds	7.66	8.01	8.00	7.92	8.30	7.23
Material deprivation (Items lacked)						
None	8.20	8.41	8.57	8.59	8.86	8.20
One	8.01	7.92	8.22	8.17	8.71	7.75
More than one	7.53	7.66	7.89	7.69	8.14	7.32
Total	7.97	8.08	8.29	8.25	8.63	7.80

8 year-old girls are more satisfied than boys with most aspects of school. The exception is satisfaction with other children in the class where there was no gender difference.

Table 37: Variations in satisfaction with school (8 year-olds) (Means)

	Other children in your class	Your school marks	Your school experience	Things you have learned	Your relationship with teachers
Boy	3.35	3.22	3.33	3.50	3.16
Girl	3.32	3.41	3.51	3.64	3.57
Total	3.34	3.31	3.41	3.57	3.36

Being bullied (hit and being left out by other children)

44% of children had experienced being hit by other children at school and 54% had experienced being left out by other children in the class.

Table 38: Bullying (All age groups) (%)

	Never	Once	Two or 3 times	More than three times
Hit by other children in your school	55.7	18.7	13.1	12.5
Left out by other children in your class	46.1	21.6	17.1	15.1

Boys are much more likely to have experienced being hit by other children at school but girls were more likely to feel left out. Being hit and being left out is much more common for 8 year-old children than 12 year-old children.

Table 39: Variations in bullying (All age groups) (Means)

	Hit by other children in your school	Left out by other children in your class
<i>Gender</i>		
Boy	.97	.85
Girl	.65	1.18
<i>Age group</i>		
8 year-olds	1.16	1.17
10 year-olds	.82	1.03
12 year-olds	.49	.84
Total	.82	1.01

There are also some significant variations in frequency of being bullied according to family type and material deprivation (Table 40). Children living with both parents were less likely to be excluded by other children than children living in other family forms, although there was no significant difference in the frequency of being hit for children in different family forms. There were stronger differences according to material deprivation. Children who had higher levels of material deprivation were also likely to experience more bullying both in terms of being hit and being left out by other children.

Table 40: Variations in bullying (10 and 12 year-olds) (Means)

	Hit by other children in your school	Left out by other children in your class
Family structure		
Mother and father	.62	.89
Parent and stepparent	.74	1.00
Lone parent	.73	1.00
Other	.76	1.47
Material deprivation (Items lacked)		
None	.55	.82
One	.62	.96
Two or more	.91	1.10
Total	.66	.93

2.7 Time use

The most common use of time is watching TV followed by taking exercise. Taking classes outside school time is relatively uncommon (Table 41). Girls are more likely to read for fun, help with housework and do homework. Boys are more likely to play sports. All activities vary with age group except playing sports (Table 42).

Table 41: Time use (All age groups, except items marked with *) (%)

	Rarely or never	Less than once a week	Once or twice a week	Every day or almost
Taking classes outside school time	45.1	10.5	27.7	16.7
Taking part in organized leisure time activities (like clubs and groups)	26.7	10.7	39.6	22.9
Reading for fun	20.2	12.1	24.6	43.1
Helping with housework	9.5	10.2	32.0	48.2
Doing homework	6.3	8.3	40.9	44.5
Watching TV	2.5	5.0	14.5	77.9
Playing sports or doing exercise	6.3	7.5	31.8	54.4
Using a computer	8.2	10.1	30.7	51.0
Just being by myself *	7.9	10.4	27.3	54.4
Taking care of brothers, sisters, other family members or people you live with*	17.3	11.7	26.2	44.9

*indicates questions only asked of 12-year-olds

Table 42: Variation in time use (All age groups) (Means)

	Classes outside school	Organized leisure activities	Reading for fun	Helping with housework	Doing homework	Watching TV	Sports or exercise	Using a computer
Gender								
Boy	1.16	1.65	1.74	2.07	2.15	2.65	2.42	2.30
Girl	1.16	1.53	2.08	2.31	2.34	2.71	2.26	2.19
Age group								
8 year-olds	1.32	1.71	2.19	2.10	2.15	2.56	2.29	2.07
10 year-olds	1.18	1.57	2.12	2.24	2.22	2.71	2.40	2.21
12 year-olds	.99	1.49	1.41	2.23	2.33	2.76	2.33	2.44
Total	1.16	1.59	1.91	2.19	2.24	2.68	2.34	2.24

Children age 10 and 12 are more satisfied with what they do in their free time than with how they use their time (Table 43).

Table 43: Satisfaction with time use (10 and 12 year-olds) (%)

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
How you use your time	1.0	.6	.6	1.1	2.0	5.5	4.8	10.0	13.3	15.0	46.1
What you do in your free time	1.1	.4	.6	1.2	1.6	3.7	3.8	6.0	10.1	14.2	57.3

Nearly two-thirds of 8 year-olds score the maximum on satisfaction with their use of time (Table 44).

Table 44: Satisfaction with time use (8 year-olds) (%)

	0	1	2	3	4
How you use your time	2.4	1.2	8.4	22.8	65.2

There is no difference in satisfaction by gender expect that boys are more satisfied by what they do in their free time. Satisfaction declines with age group.

Table 45: Variations in satisfaction with time use (Age groups as indicated) (Means)

	How you use your time (10 and 12 year-olds)	Satisfaction with: What you do in your free time (10 and 12 year-olds)	How you use your time (8 year-olds)
Gender			
Boy	8.54	8.99	3.43
Girl	8.28	8.54	3.51
Age group			
10 year-olds	8.57	9.00	
12 year-olds	8.27	8.54	
Total	8.42	8.77	3.47

2.8 Your life and your future

There were eleven questions asked of children age 10 and 12 about their life and future. The highest levels of satisfaction were in health and freedom. The lowest were with appearance, self-confidence, things that might happen later in life and your own body.

Table 46: Satisfaction with life and future (10 and 12 year-olds) (%)

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
The freedom you have	2.1	.8	1.3	2.0	1.9	3.9	4.2	6.6	11.3	15.0	50.9
The amount of opportunities you have*	1.6	.4	.9	1.5	2.0	3.7	4.0	7.3	11.7	19.1	47.8
Your health	1.0	.8	.8	1.2	1.5	2.8	3.1	5.3	10.0	17.9	55.5
The way that you look	4.1	1.7	1.7	2.5	3.1	5.5	5.7	7.9	10.7	15.9	41.3
Your own body	3.7	1.5	2.2	2.1	3.3	6.0	4.5	9.5	10.5	14.1	42.6
How you are listened to by adults in general	1.5	1.0	1.0	1.9	2.3	4.7	5.0	7.0	11.4	16.7	47.5
Your self-confidence	2.7	2.1	2.3	2.4	3.2	6.2	5.3	9.1	12.2	16.1	38.4
The things you want to be good at	.7	.5	.8	1.0	1.8	4.2	3.0	8.3	12.8	18.8	48.2
Doing things away from your home	1.8	.6	1.2	1.1	2.2	4.7	3.9	7.3	11.8	19.1	46.3
What may happen to you later in your life	1.9	.6	1.0	2.0	2.2	5.7	4.7	8.5	12.8	18.8	41.7
The amount of choice you have in life	1.6	.7	.8	1.7	1.9	3.7	4.1	6.9	12.3	17.4	49.0

*12 year-olds only

Children aged 8 were also asked some of this set of questions. They were most satisfied by their health, what they do in their free time and how safe they feel and least satisfied with how you were listened to by adults, the freedom you have and the way you look. There was no variation by gender in the responses to these questions.

Table 47: Satisfaction with life and future (8 year-olds) (Means)

	0	1	2	3	4
The freedom you have	4.1	4.1	11.1	19.1	61.6
Your health	.9	1.0	7.4	18.7	72.0
The way that you look	4.9	3.3	9.3	20.1	62.4
Your own body	3.4	1.4	8.7	18.4	68.0
What you do in your free time	2.6	1.5	5.7	18.3	71.9
How you are listened to by adults in general	3.1	2.9	11.6	24.8	57.7
How safe you feel	2.0	.6	7.7	18.1	71.6

Boys were generally more satisfied than girls but the differences were only significant in respect of opportunities, the way you look, your own body, self-confidence, the things you want to be good at and what may happen later in life. children aged 10 were more satisfied with health, the way you look, your own body, being listened to, self-confidence and feeling safe than children aged 12.

Table 48: Variation in satisfaction with life and future (10 and 12 year-olds) (Means)

	Freedom	Opportunities	Health	Appearance	Body	Listened to by adults	Self-confidence	Safety	The things you want to be good at	Doing things away from your home	Later in life	Choice
Gender												
Boy	8.55	8.76	8.88	8.23	8.37	8.42	8.23	8.72	8.78	8.53	8.39	8.61
Girl	8.27	8.24	8.67	7.40	7.32	8.33	7.38	8.70	8.45	8.30	8.06	8.43
Age group												
10 year-olds	8.50		8.93	8.34	8.51	8.58	8.20	8.87	8.80	8.53	8.29	8.57
12 year-olds	8.34	8.52	8.63	7.33	7.23	8.17	7.39	8.56	8.45	8.33	8.17	8.45
Total	8.42	8.52	8.78	7.83	7.86	8.37	7.79	8.71	8.62	8.43	8.23	8.51

Just over a third (33.5%) of children said ‘yes’ to the question ‘I know what rights children have’. Just over a quarter (26.8%) said that they knew about the children’s rights convention, and 58% said that they think in my country adults in general respect children’s rights. There was no variation in responses to these questions by gender. Older children were more likely to say that they knew about the convention and what rights children have. Older children were less likely to think that adults respected children. There was significant variation by family type in knowing what rights children have and about the convention but no variation in relation to whether adults respected children’s rights.

Table 49: Children’s rights (All age groups) (%)

	No	Not sure	Yes
I know what rights children have	20.8	45.7	33.5
I know about the children's rights convention	23.1	50.1	26.8
I think in my country adults in general respect children's rights	8.6	33.4	58.0

Children aged 10 and 12 were also asked a set of questions about changes that may have happened to them in the past year. As shown in Table 50, 30% of children had moved house in the last year, 22% had changed their local area and 16% changed their local school. 12% had lived abroad for more than a month in the last year. 6.5% were not living with the same parents or carers that they lived with a year ago.

Table 50: Changes in children’s lives (10 and 12 year-olds) (%)

	No	Yes
In the past year have you moved house?	69.7	30.3
In the past year have you changed local area?	78.1	21.9
In the past year have you changed schools?	84.5	15.5
In the past year have you lived in another country for more than a month?	88.0	12.0
Are you living with the same parents or carers you used to live with one year ago?	93.5	6.5

There were no differences in these experiences by gender. 10 year-olds were more likely to have moved house and changed area but not schools, country or parents. However some of the differences in recent experiences of change according to family structure are notable. Children not living with both parents were much more likely to have experienced a change in family structure (as would be expected) and also to have moved homes and changed local area (Figure 3).

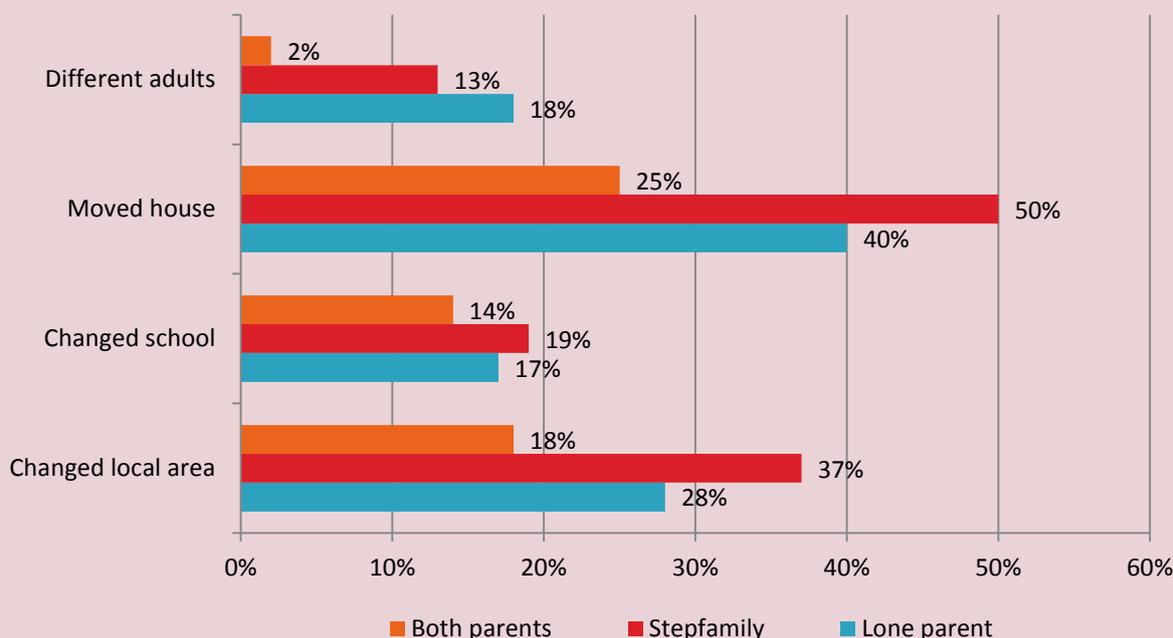


Figure 3: Recent experiences of change by family structure (10 and 12 year-olds) (%)

2.9 Overall subjective well-being

The Children’s Worlds survey included a variety of different measures asking about overall subjective well-being. More information about these scales can be found in the General Introduction on page 2.

Overall life satisfaction (OLS)

We start with the simplest a single-item measure where children rank how satisfied there are with their life as a whole on an 11-point scale in the case of 10 and 12 year-olds and on a five-point scale with the 8 year-olds.

On life as a whole 53.4% of 10 and 12 year-olds were totally satisfied with their life and 67.9% of 8 year-olds scored the maximum.

Table 51: Overall life satisfaction (10 and 12 year-olds) (%)

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Your life as a whole	1.7	.3	.7	1.1	1.7	4.4	3.0	6.3	10.8	16.6	53.4

Table 52: Overall life satisfaction (8 year-olds) (%)

	0	1	2	3	4
Your life as a whole	3.2	1.9	8.2	18.9	67.9

The Student’s Life Satisfaction Scale

The SLSS scale is a reduced version of Huebner’s Student’s Life Satisfaction Scale. This scale is based on five statements about children’s overall life satisfaction, and children are asked to indicate how far they agree with each statement. In the Children’s Worlds survey, children aged 10 and 12 were asked to respond using an 11-point scale ranging from ‘do not agree’ to ‘totally agree’. The questions used in this analysis comprised:

- My life is going well
- My life is just right
- The things in my life are excellent¹³
- I have a good life
- I have what I want in life

¹³ This item is the only one which varies from those used in previous Good Childhood Reports; it replaced ‘I wish I had a different kind of life’.

Table 53: SLSS items (10 and 12 year-olds) (%)

	0	1	2	4	3	5	6	7	8	9	10
My life is going well	1.2	.5	1.0	1.5	2.2	3.3	3.5	6.7	10.4	17.2	52.6
My life is just right	1.5	1.2	1.2	1.9	2.2	4.6	4.3	6.7	9.8	16.4	50.1
I have a good life	1.1	.5	1.1	1.5	1.3	4.2	3.3	4.7	9.3	14.5	58.6
I have what I want in life	1.7	.8	1.3	1.6	2.8	4.5	4.1	6.8	10.7	16.8	49.0
The things in my life are excellent	2.2	.9	1.1	1.6	1.9	4.5	3.7	6.3	8.9	17.5	51.4

The set of five questions were found to form a good indicator of a single underlying factor – termed subjective well-being¹⁴. We formed a scale by summing all of the items and transforming the scale from 0-100. The distribution of responses on this scale are shown in Figure 4. We can see that over a third of children (36%) indicated that they had the highest possible levels of satisfaction with all of the indicators used. In general, few children reported low levels of satisfaction, and most reported levels of satisfaction towards the top of the scale. This is reflected in the proportion of children – 8.2% - in the tail (scoring the mid-point or below) of the SLSS.

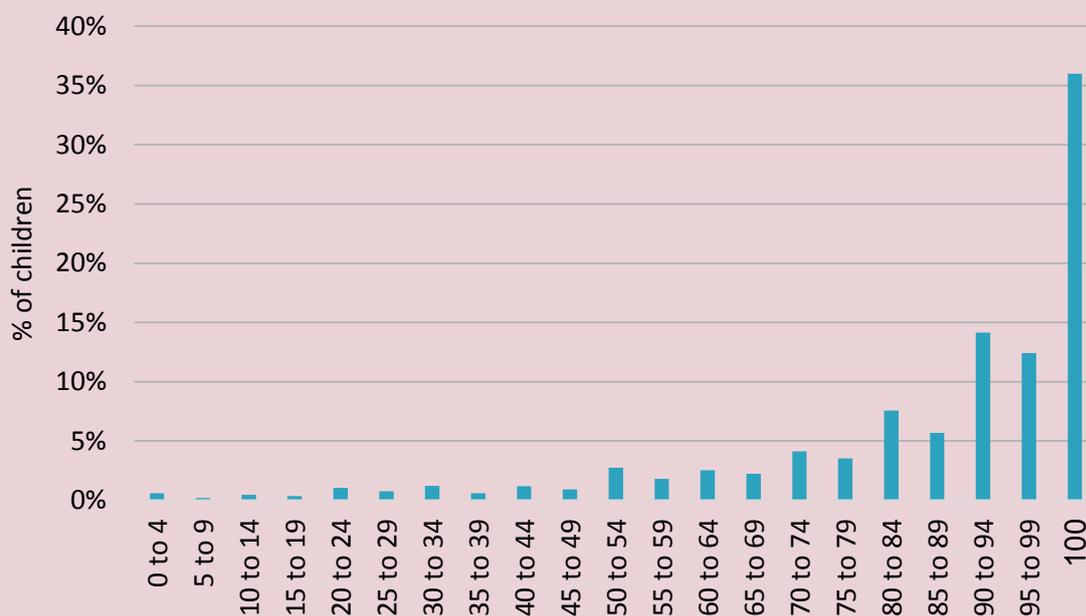


Figure 4: Distribution of scores on the SLSS (10 and 12 year-olds) (%)

¹⁴ This was tested using two methods: firstly the structure of the measure was examined using exploratory factor analysis: all variables were found to load onto a single factor; secondly we tested the reliability of the scale using Cronbach’s Alpha: together, the scale had a score of 0.95, with one variable – I have what I want in my life – not making a substantial contribution, but neither would its removal enhance the scale substantially (Cronbach’s Alpha without=0.96, a real difference of 0.001 when rounding is taken into account).

The same questions were asked of 8 year-old children but using a five point scale. Again the responses were very positively distributed.

Table 54: SLSS items (8 year-olds) (%)

	I do not agree	Agree a little bit	Agree somewhat	Agree a lot	Totally agree
My life is going well	2.9	5.7	6.1	20.5	64.8
My life is just right	3.7	5.1	7.2	19.0	65.0
I have a good life	3.4	4.7	5.4	15.6	70.9
I have what I want in life	6.4	8.8	10.1	20.9	53.8
The things in my life are excellent	4.6	4.8	6.2	18.3	66.1

A scale was also created for this age group. Over 40% of children scored the maximum on all elements of the scale. We found no variation in mean scores or in the proportion in the tail by gender.

Brief Multidimensional Student Life Satisfaction Scale

The Brief Multidimensional Student Life Satisfaction Scale, originally proposed by Huebner, consists of five domains – family, friends, school, living environment and self. We are able to calculate an adapted version of this scale using the questions about satisfaction with family life, friends, school experience, local area and body. The scale is a sum of these five scores transformed so that it is from zero to 100. The distribution of scores is shown in Figure 5.

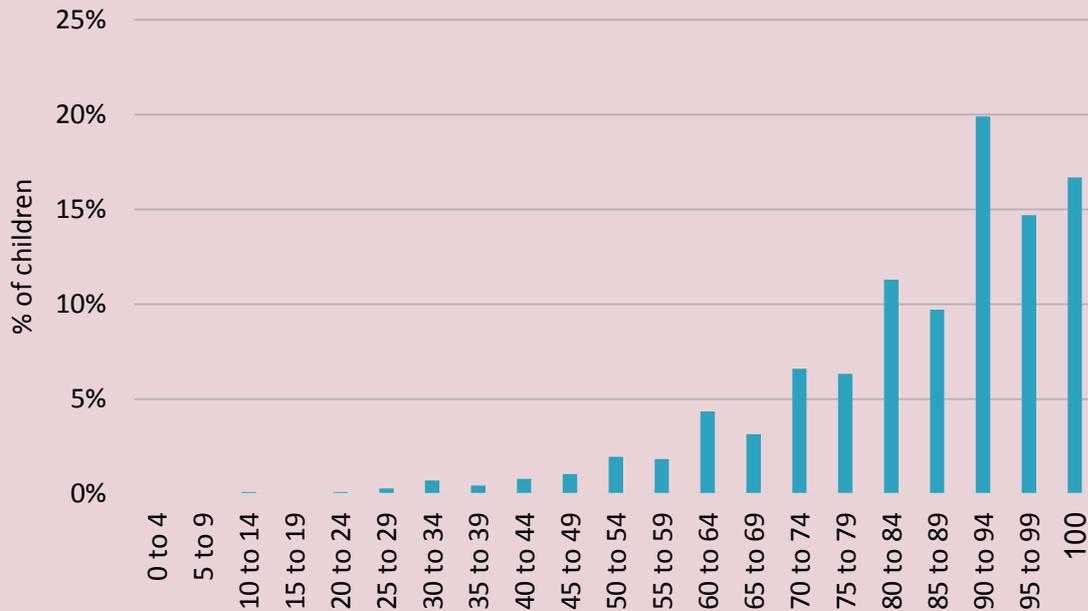
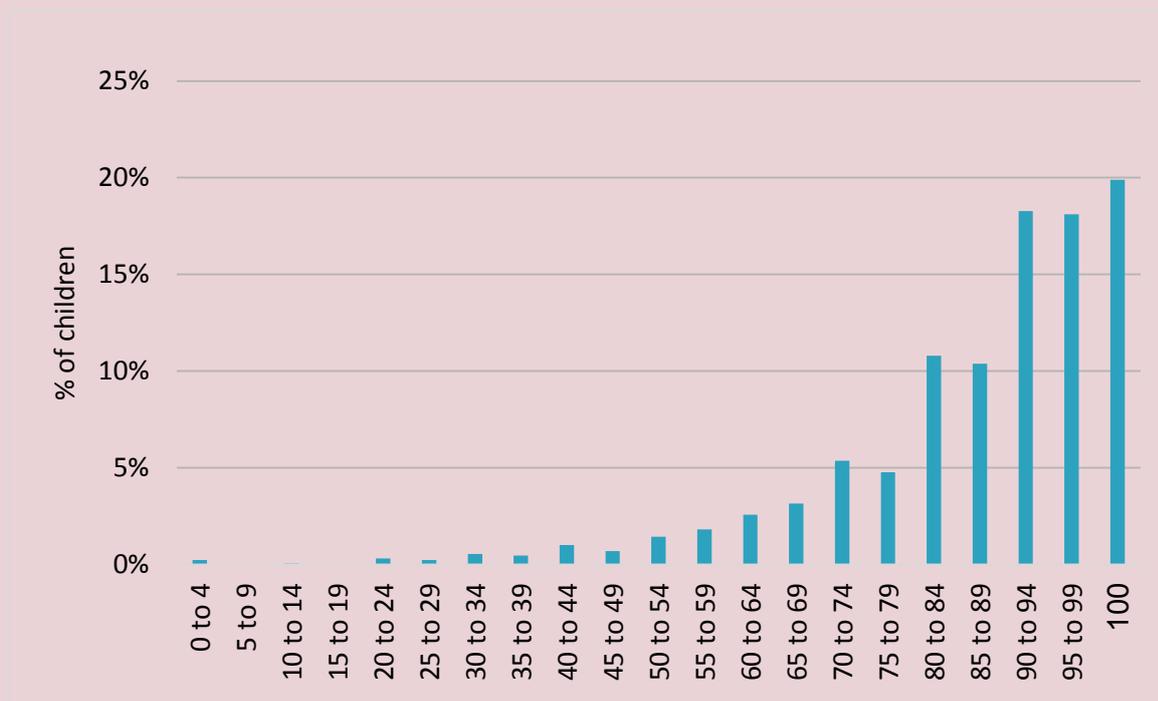


Figure 5: Distribution of scores on the BMSLSS (10 and 12 year-olds) (%)

Personal Well-being Index – School Children (PWI-SC)

The seven items making up the Personal Well-being Index – School Children (Cummins & Lau) were included in the 10 and 12 year-olds surveys. Similar to the previous measures discussed we have created a score by summing the seven item scores and then transforming into a score ranging from zero to 100. The distribution of scores is shown in Figure 6. There is slightly more variation in the distribution here than for the previous measures presented with only around one-fifth of children scoring the maximum.

Figure 6: Distribution of scores on the PWI-SC (10 and 12 year-olds) (%)



Adapted PWI-SC9

We have also calculated an adapted version of the PWI-SC which includes two additional items relating to time use and life as a student which have been found to be important components of children’s subjective well-being. The distribution for this nine item scale is shown in Figure 7.

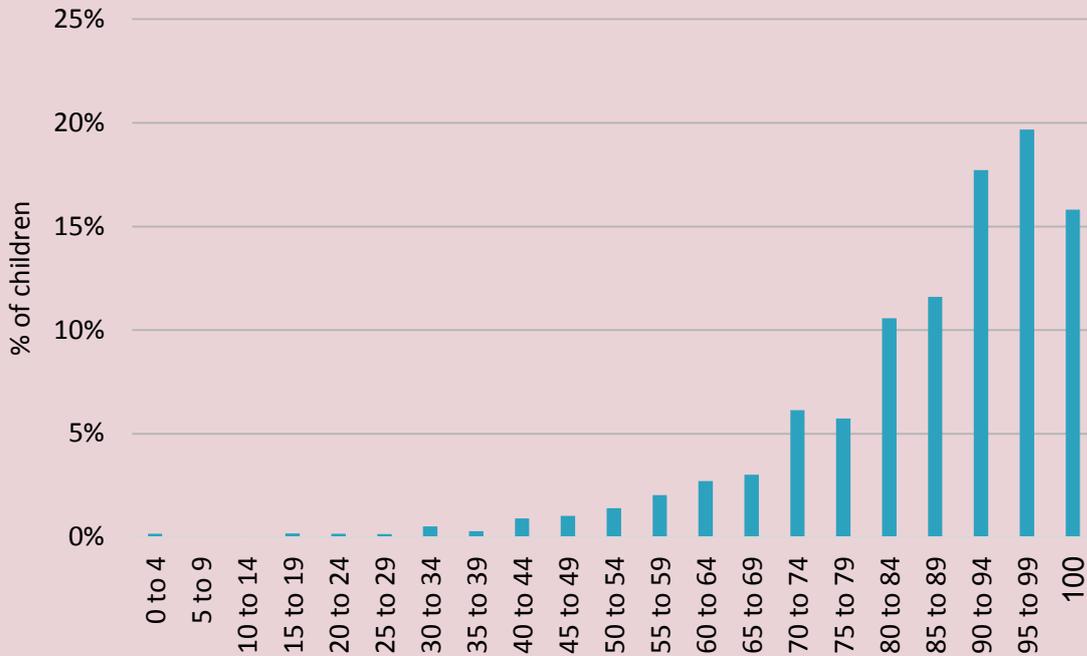


Figure 7: Distribution of scores on the adapted PWI-SC9 (10 and 12 year-olds) (%)

Positive Affect

Finally the 10 and 12 year-olds surveys included six questions on positive affect (derived from Russell’s measures of Core Affect). Children were asked how often in the last two weeks they had felt:

- Satisfied
- Happy
- Relaxed
- Active
- Calm
- Full of energy

Each item is scored 0-10 and the overall scale is created by summing the item scores and then transforming the scale so that it ranges from 0 to 100. The overall distribution is shown in Figure 8 with 27.6% scoring the maximum.

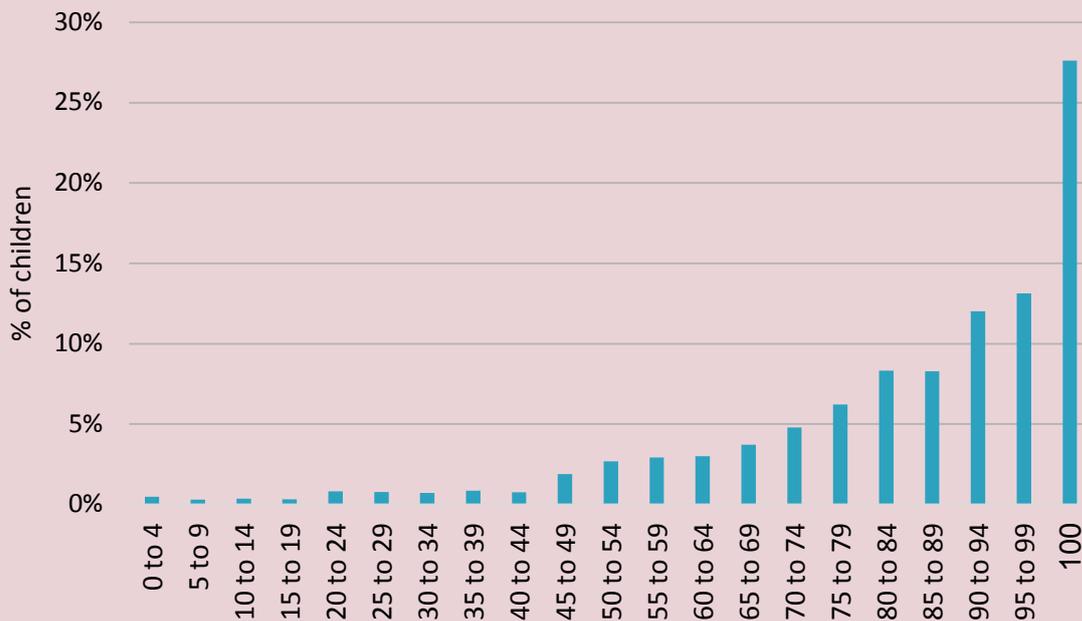


Figure 8: Distribution of scores on the Positive Affect (10 and 12 year-olds) (%)

Variations in overall subjective well-being

Table 55 below presents variations in overall subjective well-being for 10 and 12 year-old children, according to age group, gender, family structure and material deprivation.

There was a mixed pattern of gender differences. Some measures (BMSLSS, OLS and Positive Affect) showed significant gender differences with boys tending to have higher well-being than girls. For the two versions of the PWI these differences were only marginally significant. Finally, for the SLSS there was no significant gender difference.

The findings for age are clearer. For all six measures there was a significant decrease in subjective well-being between 12 year-old and 10 year-old children. This decrease was strongest for Positive Affect and OLS and weakest for the two PWI measures.

Children living with both parents had the highest levels of subjective well-being whichever measure was used. The strongest difference was for the BMSLSS but it should be borne in mind that this contains a specific item on satisfaction with family, which may make it more sensitive to family structural issues.

Finally, there were significant associations between all of the measures of subjective well-being and material deprivation. As can be seen from Table 52, children with higher levels of material deprivation tended to have substantially lower levels of subjective well-being.

Table 55: Variations in different measures of subjective well-being (10 and 12 year-olds) (Means)

	OLS	SLSS	BMSLSS	PWI7	PWI9	Positive affect
<i>Gender</i>						
Boy	8.82	86.0	86.3	87.4	86.7	84.6
Girl	8.48	84.8	83.5	85.7	85.2	81.6
<i>Age group</i>						
10 year-olds	8.92	87.6	87.4	87.8	87.3	85.7
12 year-olds	8.41	83.2	82.5	85.4	84.6	80.5
<i>Family structure</i>						
Mother and father	8.85	87.4	86.9	87.9	87.3	84.6
Parent and stepparent	8.14	80.5	78.9	82.5	82.1	79.9
Lone parent	8.32	81.9	81.4	84.7	84.1	80.1
Other	8.18	77.7	82.2	80.9	80.5	78.7
<i>Material deprivation (Items lacked)</i>						
None	8.98	88.6	87.3	89.3	88.9	86.0
One	8.69	85.8	84.9	86.7	86.1	83.6
Two or more	8.09	79.1	80.3	80.5	80.0	76.8
Total	8.66	85.4	84.9	86.6	86.0	83.1

3. Conclusions

Key points

Most children in England in the 8 to 12 year old age group are relatively satisfied and happy with their lives. However there is a minority (around 5% to 10%) who are relatively unhappy. While this is a small proportion it still amounts to a substantial number of children – 5% of the child population aged 8 to 12 years old in England amounts to a total of 160,000 children who can be said to have low subjective well-being at any point in time. We know from other research we have conducted with children in England¹⁵ that low well-being is not just a temporary state and that many of these children will be unhappy with their lives for extended periods of time.

The findings presented on children’s feelings about different aspects of their lives show some important variations, which are not immediately apparent when discussing each aspect of life separately. This variability in satisfaction demonstrates the value of asking children about different aspects of their lives.

Table 56 below shows mean life satisfactions scores, standard deviations, and percentages below the mid-point for all questions asked about satisfaction with different aspects of life in the 12 year-olds survey. It can be seen that, while most children in this age group in England are relatively positive about all aspects of their life, there are some interesting and important variations in levels of satisfaction. As would be expected, the mean scores and percentages below the mid-point show a reasonably similar pattern. The aspects of life that children are most satisfied with tend to relate to their close environments and relationships - home, family and friends. Satisfaction with the local area and school are notably lower. However the most striking pattern is for questions about children’s feelings about themselves. Satisfaction with self-confidence, appearance and one’s body are three of the lowest four mean scores and are the three aspects of life with the highest proportion of children below the mid-point. Around one in six children in this age group in England are relatively unhappy with these aspects of their lives. The standard deviation statistics also show a relatively high level of variation in responses to these three questions. Of course what we do not know, solely from the findings in England, is whether this type of pattern of relatively low satisfaction with aspects of oneself is common amongst children in different national and cultural contexts, or whether it is specific to England. The cross-national comparative analysis will therefore be very important in helping us to understand this issue further and informing debate about children’s subjective well-being in England.

¹⁵ Over the last decade, The University of York and The Children’s Society have produced a series of reports on the subjective well-being of children in the UK. The latest of these reports is accessible at <http://www.childrensociety.org.uk/what-we-do/research/well-being-1>.

Table 56: Satisfaction with different aspects of life (12 year-olds) (Mean and SD)

	Mean	Std. Deviation	% below mid-point
All the things you have	9.08	1.508	2.3%
The people you live with	9.08	1.784	3.5%
Your family life	8.91	1.858	4.2%
All the other people in your family	8.88	1.890	4.1%
The house or flat where you live	8.83	1.877	3.9%
Your friends	8.79	1.857	4.5%
Your health	8.63	2.105	6.1%
How safe you feel	8.56	1.987	5.0%
What you do in your free time	8.54	2.153	6.5%
How you are dealt with at the doctors	8.52	2.054	5.6%
Your relationships with people in general	8.52	2.026	5.8%
The amount of choice you have in life	8.45	2.126	6.2%
The things you want to be good at	8.45	1.974	5.3%
The freedom you have	8.34	2.403	8.7%
Doing things away from your home	8.33	2.212	7.3%
Things you have learned	8.30	2.047	5.6%
How you use your time	8.27	2.079	5.7%
The area you live in general	8.26	2.258	7.4%
How you are listened to by adults in general	8.17	2.342	8.7%
What may happen to you later in your life	8.17	2.187	6.5%
Your school marks	8.01	2.085	7.0%
Your school experience	8.00	2.174	7.4%
Your life as a student	7.92	2.278	8.4%
The people in your area	7.82	2.595	12.0%
Other children in your class	7.66	2.340	9.5%
The outdoor areas children can use in your area	7.53	2.785	14.4%
Your self-confidence	7.39	2.851	16.0%
The way that you look	7.33	2.992	17.2%
Your own body	7.23	2.954	17.7%
Your relationship with teachers	7.23	2.741	15.6%

For many of the measures of children's subjective well-being we have presented in this report there are small but significant variations by gender and age group.

Comparing the 10 and the 12 year-old children, the most substantial and significant variations by age relate to school – including relationships with teachers and other children and the quality of learning; and aspects of the self – such as feelings about one's body, appearance and self-confidence. For all these aspects older children feel significantly less satisfied than younger children. On the other hand there is little or no difference between the two age groups in terms of satisfaction with many other aspects of life such as relationships with family and friends, home and money, choice and expectations of the future.

Turning to gender differences, for most aspects of life the differences in satisfaction between girls and boys aged 10 and 12 are negligible. The domains where there are the largest gender differences relate to feelings about one's body, appearance and self-confidence. For these aspects girls tend to be significantly less satisfied than boys. On the other hand, for several aspects of school including school marks and relationships with teachers and other children, girls tend to be more satisfied than boys.

It is interesting that the same aspects of life – school and self – show the most important variations both by age and gender. This suggests that there may be diverging levels of satisfaction with these aspects of life amongst girls and boys as they get older. The interaction between age and gender is potentially an important topic for further investigation both within England and in cross-national analysis.

We have also presented some analysis of variations in children's feelings and experiences according to family structure and material deprivation.

Dealing first with the findings on family structure, there were a number of significant differences. Children living with both parents tended to have higher levels of satisfaction with family life and higher levels of overall subjective well-being. However, they were less likely to experience material deprivation and we have also shown that children living in stepfamilies, with lone parents and in other family forms had experienced a greater level of recent change in their lives. So it is possible that these two factors – material deprivation and levels of change – are underlying issues that can explain some of the variation in well-being according to current family structure.

Turning to material deprivation, we constructed an indicator of this for the 10 and 12 age groups based on children's answers to questions about possession of or access to nine basic items. Children who reported higher levels of material deprivation were more likely not to be living with both parents, were less satisfied with their local area and with all aspects of their school life, were more likely to have been bullied and had lower levels of overall subjective well-being across all six measures. Thus, when using a child-centred measure, there are clear associations between material deprivation and poorer quality of life for children in England.

Concluding comments

This report has been intentionally brief and descriptive. The data we have gathered has many potential uses. There are two particular areas that we hope to explore in more depth and using multivariate analysis.

First, in the last section of the report we presented a range of measures of overall subjective well-being, most of which appear to have worked well from a statistical point of view. We will make use of these measures to undertake detailed analysis to understand the factors in children's lives in England which make the most significant contribution to their overall sense of well-being.

The second area for further work is to tap the huge and unique potential of the international data set for the Children's Worlds survey. As part of this international collaboration, we will be undertaking cross-national analysis which will help us to compare and understand the lives of children in England with those of children in a diverse range of countries around the world.