



The
Children's
Society

Isle of Wight survey of children and young people, 2012

Final report

Produced in partnership with the Isle of Wight Council



Photograph modelled for The Children's Society | © Laurence Dutton

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Acknowledgements

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1. Introduction and summary of key findings

The Isle of Wight Survey of Children and Young People 2012 provides a unique insight into the lives of children and young people aged eight to 17 living on the Island. Almost 5000 children and young people in 38 primary schools and six secondary schools participated in the survey.

The survey questionnaire covered all the key areas of young people's lives from family relationships to feelings about the local area. The survey questions were taken from a larger set of questions on children's well-being that have been developed and validated by The Children's Society and the University of York. This means that it is possible to compare many of the answers given by children on the Island with the national picture for England.

The aim of undertaking the survey is to identify the aspects of life where children on the Island are doing well, and those where they are not doing so well, in order to identify potential local priorities for improving well-being.

Key findings

This report presents the main findings from the survey. A summary of key points is as follows:

- Most children on the Island (around 90%) aged nine to 15 are relatively happy with their lives while around 8% to 10% of children have low overall well-being. These proportions are very similar to the national average.
- Children's well-being declines with age, and children who are from minority ethnic backgrounds and those not living with their family are more likely to have low well-being.
- Children's satisfaction with different aspects of their lives such as the home that they live in and their health is very similar on the Isle of Wight to the national average. Children on the Island are a little happier than average with their family life and a little less happy than average with their school and their appearance.
- In terms of school and learning, children on the Island have high aspirations to do well and to go on to further education, very much in line with the national average. There were some aspects of school life with which they were less happy, including feeling safe at school.
- Many children nationally are unhappy with their appearance, particularly in the secondary school age group. However, on the Isle of Wight, teenage girls had lower levels of happiness with their appearance than their peers nationally.
- Children on the Island generally expressed positive views about their local area, on or above the national average. They were more likely than average to say that nothing about their area needed to be improved and, in particular, they were happier than average with local facilities.
- Around a third of the children surveyed said that they had been bullied in the last year. This included bullying in school and going to and from school, but also bullying online and through texting, particularly amongst

the older age range. Experiences of being bullied were linked with much lower than average overall well-being. However, because these bullying questions were devised locally for this survey, there is no national data with which to compare the findings.

- Finally older children (aged 13 and over) were asked about whether they thought that it was OK for someone of their age to engage in a range of health-related behaviours. Most young people disagreed that smoking and taking drugs were OK but having sex and drinking alcohol were seen as more acceptable behaviours, particularly among 15- and 16-year-olds. As these health-related behaviour questions were devised locally for this survey, there is no national data with which to compare the findings.

2. Details about the survey and consultation work

About the survey

Design and content

The survey questionnaire was developed by The Children's Society in consultation with local authority staff. It covers the following aspects of children's lives:

- Feelings about life overall
- Self (appearance)
- Health
- Family relationships
- Friendships
- Home
- School
- Local area
- Money and possessions
- Time use
- Choice and autonomy
- The future

All these topics have been found to be important aspects of how children view, and feel about, their lives¹. Questions on these topics were taken from the research programme on well-being developed by The Children's Society and University of York².

In addition, the survey asked about two topics identified as of specific interest to the local authority and partner agencies on the Isle of Wight:

- Bullying
- Views about health-related behaviours.

Questions on these two topics were designed specifically for this survey.

The questionnaire also asked children for information about their age, gender, ethnicity, abilities and living situation.

There were different versions of the questionnaire depending on children's age. So, for example, the questions about health-related behaviours were only asked for children in school years 9 and above (13 years old and over). One of the most important differences was that the format of many of the questions was

¹ Rees G, Goswami H & Bradshaw J (2010) *Developing an Index of Children's Subjective Well-being in England*. London: The Children's Society.

² See, for example, Rees G, Bradshaw J, Goswami H, Keung A, Main G & Pople L (2012) *The Good Childhood Report 2012: A review of our children's well-being*. London: The Children's Society and www.childrensociety.org.uk/well-being for more information

different for children in Year 4 (eight and nine years old). So the findings for this age group are presented separately in this report.

Recruitment and administration

Schools were initially recruited to participate in the survey by the local authority. This recruitment was highly successful and almost all mainstream primary and secondary schools on the Island agreed to participate. In total, 38 primary school and six secondary schools took part in the survey, covering every part of the Island.

In addition, The Children's Society carried out face-to-face consultations with children and young people in two special schools, two youth centres and with a group of looked after children, as well as in many of the schools that took part in the survey and on school bus journeys at the end of the school day (for more details of the consultation, see the next section).

The survey was administered online by The Children's Society. Children and young people were able to access and respond to a secure online questionnaire which varied according to school year to ensure that the content of the questions was age-appropriate.

The survey was conducted in accordance with an ethical protocol approved by The Children's Society's research ethics panel, consisting of internal and external experts.

Analysis

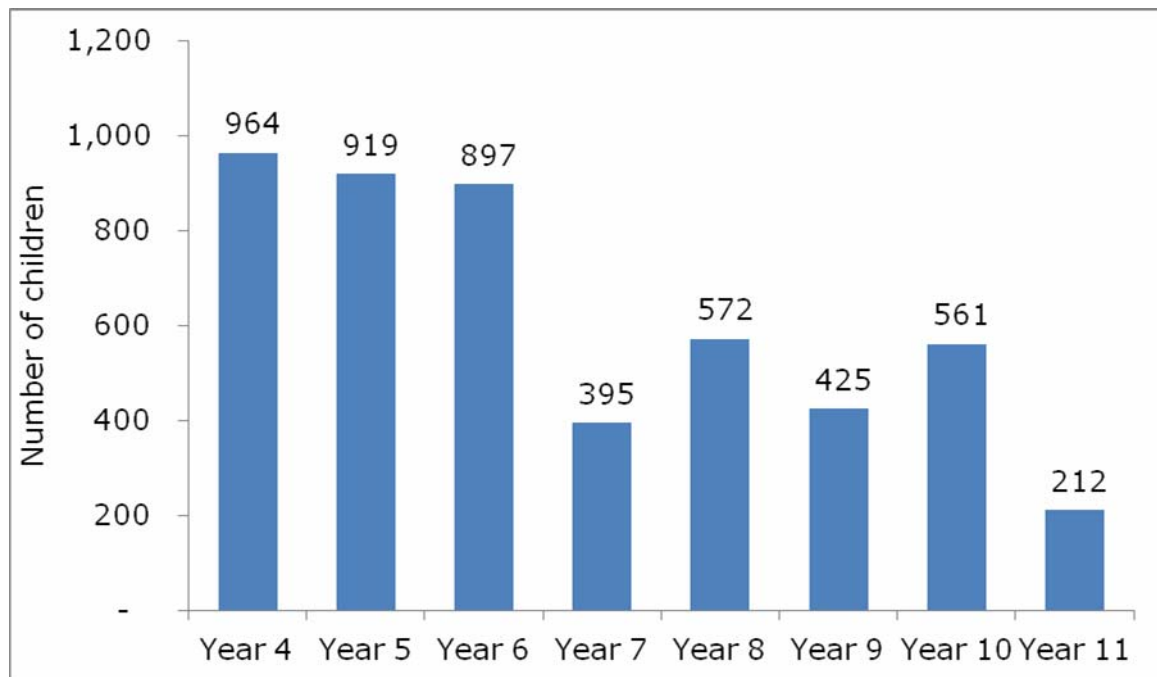
Data cleaning and statistical analysis of the questionnaire has been conducted by staff in The Children's Society's in-house research team.

Profile of the young people taking part in the survey

The sample was equally balanced between females (50%) and males (50%).

The numbers participating in each school year are shown in Figure 1. There were also a very small number (11) of young people in Years 12 and 13 who completed the survey. These young people have not been included in the analysis.

Figure 1: Numbers of children by school year



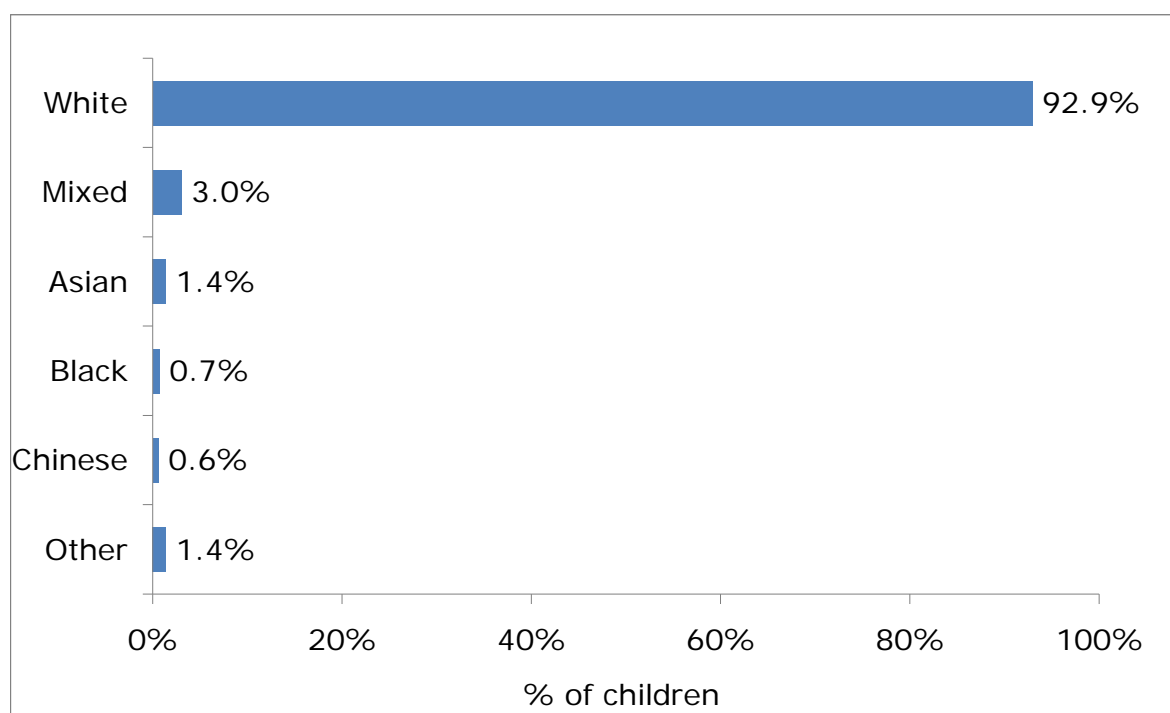
Data: Years 4 to 11, unweighted

Because there are variations in the numbers of children in each year group who participated in the survey, all findings presented in this paper have been weighted by age and gender so that they are broadly representative of young people across the entire age range covered. This also facilitates comparisons with the national picture.

Some other information on the profile of young people participating in the survey is as follows:

- Over 97% of children lived with their family. The remainder lived in foster homes, children's home or other types of arrangements.
- Around 20% said that they lived in two homes for some of the time. This may include, for example, children who split their time living with two separated parents. This proportion is fairly typical of the national picture.
- Around 3% of the sample described themselves as disabled.
- Around 14% of the children described themselves as having difficulties with learning. However, substantial numbers of children (around 20%) did not answer this question.
- The large majority of children (93%) described their ethnicity as White. Of the remainder the largest proportion (3%) described their ethnicity as Mixed.

Figure 2: Ethnic origin of children in the survey



Data: Years 5 to 11, unweighted

Presentation of findings

This report presents an overview of findings from the survey as follows. First, we look at children's feelings about their lives as a whole. Then we provide key findings on the different aspects of children's lives covered in the survey. Finally, we summarise key findings on the additional topics of bullying and health-related behaviours.

In each section we make some comparisons within the sample (mainly on the basis of age and gender) and where possible make comparisons with data from nationally representative samples of children and young people in the same age group in England as a whole.

We have used statistical tests to check whether differences between groups within survey (e.g. females and males) are statistically significant. Where we have said that a difference is statistically significant this means that there is less than a 1% likelihood of the difference happening purely by chance. This is a standard threshold used by researchers for surveys of this type.

About the consultation

Design and content

Following the completion of the survey by almost 5000 children, The Children's Society spent a week on the Isle of Wight consulting face-to-face with children and young people on the key issues that emerged from initial analysis of the survey. The aim was to explore and illustrate with children's own words some of the issues raised by the survey, and specifically three main topics:

- Safety, both in school and in the community

- Local facilities and local adults
- Physical appearance.

Profile of the young people taking part in the consultation

With the support of the local authority, The Children's Society arranged consultations with seven primary schools, four secondary schools, two youth centres and a group of looked after children, as well as on two school buses at the end of the school day. Overall we spoke to around 450 children and young people during the week.

The school consultations involved two year groups, usually Years 5 and 6 in primary, and Years 8 and 10 in secondary. Although classroom consultation is an environment in which children's choice to participate is limited, children were encouraged to contribute as much or as little as they wished in each setting.

Presentation of findings

In this report, we present comments from children and young people from the consultation alongside the main themes of the survey to which they relate.

Our intention is to provide an insight into the types of issues that children and young people raised when we asked them about the key themes emerging from the survey. The comments included here are therefore illustrative rather than representative, and they offer a summary rather than a full discussion of the consultation exercise.

Although we have a record of where the comments were made, we do not identify children any further than their gender or year group to protect their anonymity.

3. Life as a whole

The questionnaire asked children a number of questions about how they felt about their lives as a whole. International research with adult populations indicates that there are different components of ‘well-being’:

- Levels of happiness, which can vary from day to day or hour to hour
- Feelings of satisfaction with life, which are much more stable
- Feelings of personal development or ‘flourishing’.

Our research with children in the UK suggests that children and young people from the age of 10 upwards also distinguish between these different kinds of assessments and feelings about their lives.

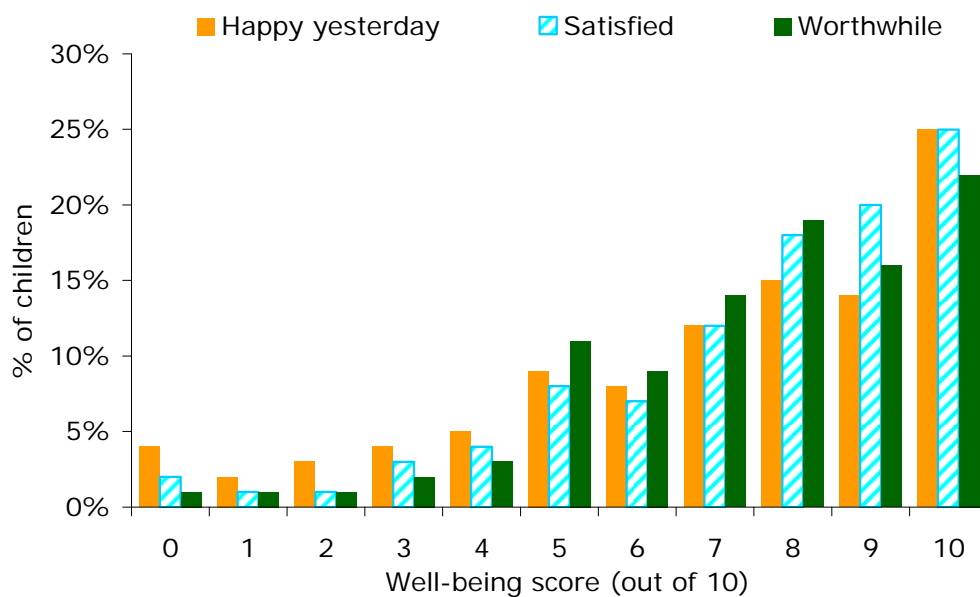
So, in the Isle of Wight survey, we asked about all three components, using questions from our previous research and from work done by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

First, we asked children three questions (also used by the ONS) about:

- How **happy** they felt yesterday
- How **satisfied** they were they with their lives as a whole
- How much they thought their lives were **worthwhile**

For each of these questions children could respond on a scale from zero to 10 where zero = ‘not at all’ and 10 = ‘completely’.

Figure 3: Happiness, life satisfaction and finding life worthwhile



Data: Years 5 to 10, weighted by age and gender

A summary of children's answers to these questions is shown in Figure 3. Key points are:

- A quarter of children across the age group felt 'completely happy' yesterday. At the other end of the scale, 17% scored below the mid-point on this scale indicating relatively low degrees of happiness. The mean score on the scale was around 7.1 out of 10.
- Around a quarter of children also felt 'completely satisfied' with their lives as a whole while around one in 10 (10%) scored less than five out of 10 for this question indicating dissatisfaction with their lives. The mean score for this question was around 7.6 out of 10.
- More than a fifth of children (22%) felt that the things they did in life were 'completely worthwhile'. Just under 8% of children scored less than five out of 10 for this question and the mean score was around 7.5 out of 10.

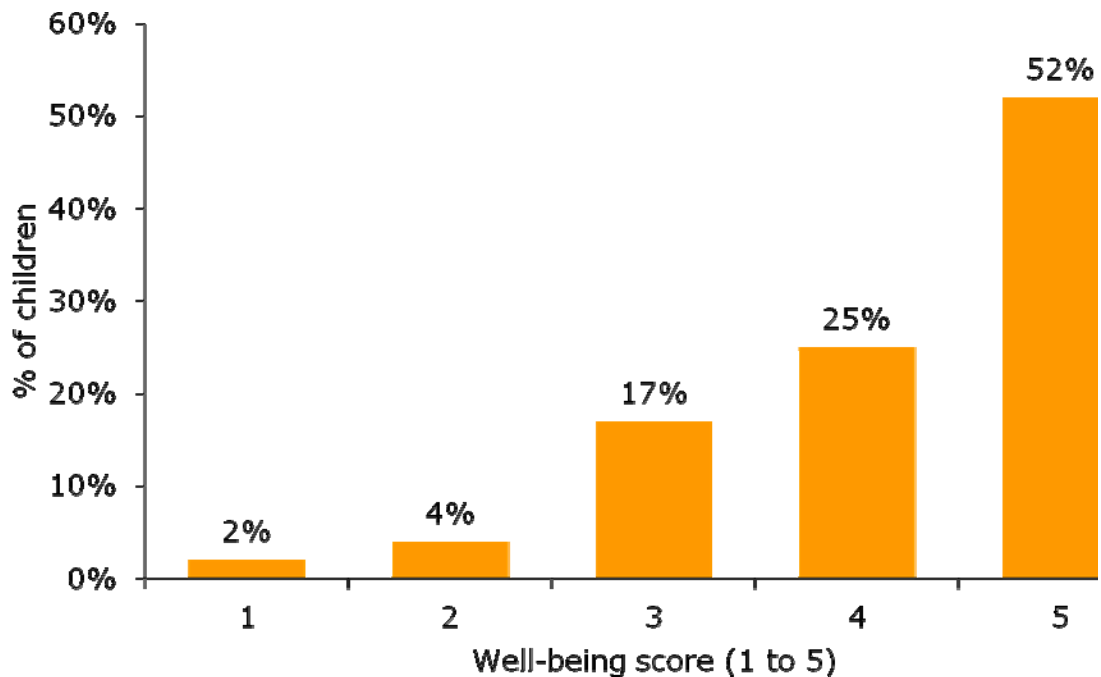
These findings on life satisfaction and feeling life is worthwhile are broadly in line with our national estimates. Most children on the Isle of Wight are relatively happy and satisfied with their lives as a whole. On the other hand, in line with the national picture, the findings also suggest that between 8% and 10% of children in this age group have 'low' well-being. This amounts to somewhere in the region of 1000³ children aged nine to 15 on the Island.

The finding on 'happiness yesterday' suggests that a higher proportion of children (around one in six) were relatively unhappy yesterday. However this kind of time-specific happiness question is more likely to vary according to things that are happening on a particular day.

We also asked children in Year 4 a question about how happy they were with their lives, using a five-point scale with smiley faces. The results are shown in Figure 4. Over half (52%) of children in this year group were very happy with their lives and around 6% were relatively unhappy - scoring less than three out of five.

³ Based on recent estimates of the population of the Isle of Wight from Census statistics

Figure 4: How happy are you with your life as a whole (Year 4 children)



Data: Year 4, weighted by gender

The type of questions above are useful for getting a basic picture of how children feel about their lives, but we also included two additional sets of questions about life as a whole. These sets of questions can be used to create overall scores of children’s well-being – life satisfaction and flourishing – that are more statistically robust and can be used to compare well-being between different groups of children. These questions are in the form of statements that children are asked how much they agree or disagree with. The statements, and children’s responses to them, are shown in Table 1.

The first five statements measure children’s life satisfaction and the second five statements measure children’s sense of flourishing. It can be seen that most children agree or strongly agree with the statements (except for the third statement which is phrased negatively). Between 6% and 17% respond negatively depending on the question asked.

Table 1: Additional questions on life satisfaction and flourishing

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly agree
Life satisfaction					
My life is going well	2%	5%	14%	51%	28%
My life is just right	3%	11%	20%	42%	24%
I wish I had a different kind of life	37%	30%	17%	11%	6%
I have a good life	2%	4%	12%	45%	37%
I have what I want in life	5%	10%	23%	37%	24%
Flourishing					
I feel positive about the future	3%	5%	17%	50%	25%
I feel that I am learning a lot at the moment	4%	10%	19%	50%	17%
I feel that I am achieving things in my daily life	3%	8%	19%	53%	17%
I feel that I have a sense of direction in life	3%	6%	21%	51%	18%
I feel that I do things that are useful in my daily life	3%	7%	22%	50%	17%

Data: Years 6 to 10 (life satisfaction), Years 7 to 10 (flourishing), weighted by school year and gender

These questions can be used to calculate two scores of well-being – one for life satisfaction and one for flourishing. The scores are calculated by adding together children’s answers to each question (scores for statement three are reversed). This gives two totals ranging from zero to 20.

For simplicity, in this report we will look particularly at the differences between children who scored ‘high’ and ‘low’ for these two sets of questions. We will count all children who scored below 10 out of 20 as having ‘low’ well-being, since these children were more likely to disagree with the sentences than agree with them. We will count all children who scored 10 and above as having ‘high’ well-being. We will use these two measures as key indicators to explore variations in well-being amongst children on the Isle of Wight and to compare children on the Isle of Wight with national averages.

Using this scoring system:

- 87% of children on the Isle of Wight survey had high life satisfaction and 13% had low life satisfaction.
- 88% of children on the Island had a high sense of flourishing and 12% of children had a low sense of flourishing.
- Around 6% of children had both low life satisfaction and a low sense of flourishing.

Research shows that answers to these kinds of questions do not reflect a temporary state. For example, our research suggests that around half of children who have low life satisfaction now will still do so in six months time.

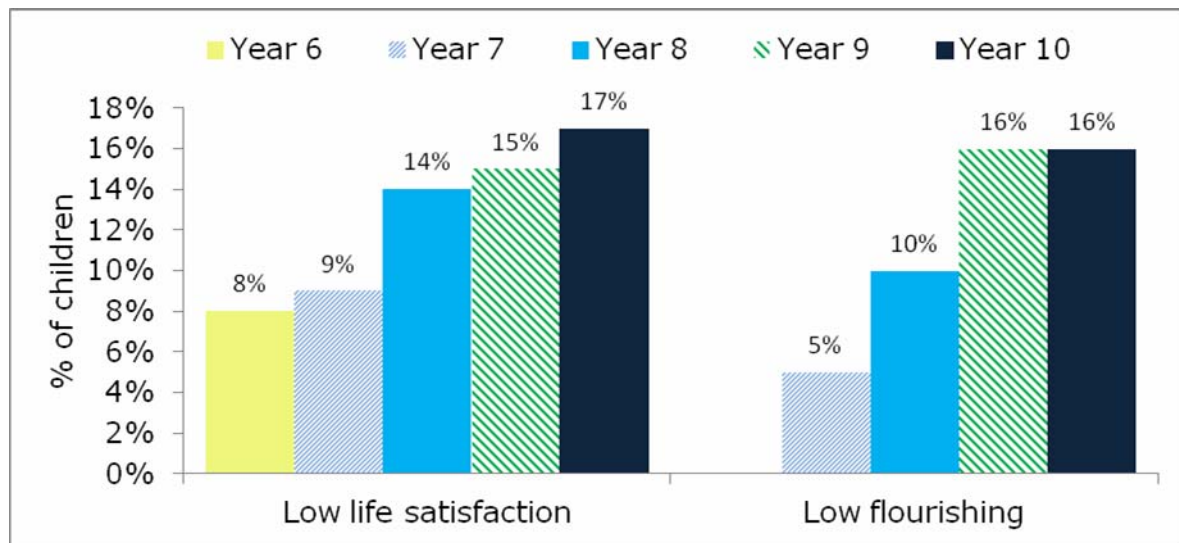
International research also suggests that low well-being is linked with a range of other longer-term problems and issues in children's lives. It is therefore important to understand the factors that cause low well-being in order to consider what measures might be taken to provide support to children who are in this situation.

Surprisingly, the research on well-being indicates that factors that might be expected to explain variations in children's (and adults') well-being such as gender, ethnicity, family structure and economic status are not as important as might be anticipated. There are variations in well-being according to these factors (for example, children in poorer families do tend to have lower well-being than children in richer families). However, these types of factors can only explain a small part of the variations in well-being. Amongst children in England our research suggests that all of these types of factors put together explain less than 10% of the variation in life satisfaction.

These results are confirmed by analysis of the Isle of Wight survey. For example, females were a little more likely to have low life satisfaction (14%) and flourishing (13%) than males (12% and 11% respectively) but these differences were not statistically significant.

On the other hand, in line with our national research, there are significant age differences in well-being. As shown in Figure 5, children are more likely to experience low well-being with age. For example, children in Year 10 are more than twice as likely to have low life satisfaction than children in Year 6. This pattern is consistent with our national research.

Figure 5: Low well-being by school year

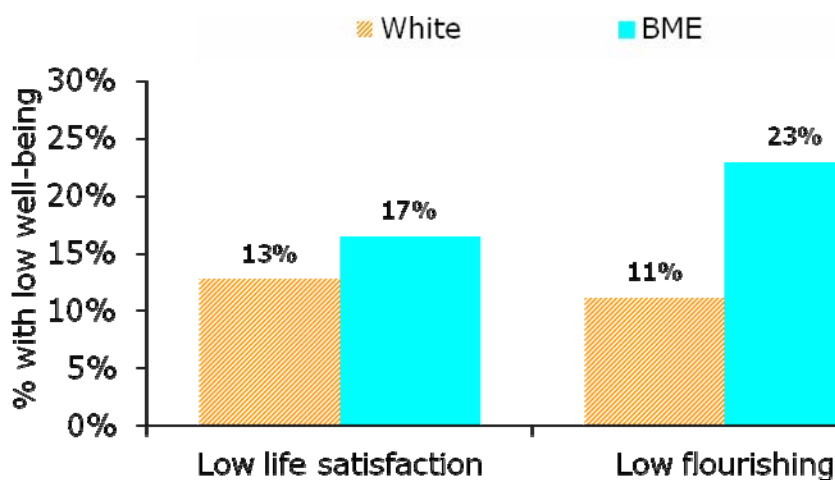


Data: Years 6 to 10 (life satisfaction), Years 7 to 10 (flourishing), weighted by school year and gender

We also looked at differences in rates of well-being on the Isle of Wight according to other factors covered in the survey:

- Children from Black and minority ethnic (BME) backgrounds tended to have lower well-being scores than White young people. Although the number of children in this sub-group was small, some of these differences were statistically significant. In particular, BME children were more likely to have low life satisfaction (this is roughly in line with the national picture) and around twice as likely to have low flourishing scores as White young people (no national comparison data available).

Figure 6: Ethnic group differences in low well-being



Data: Years 5/6 to 10, weighted by school year and gender.

- Children who received free school meals and/or living in a household where no adult had a paid job were more likely to be experiencing low

well-being than other children. Again some of the differences here were statistically significant. For example 23% of children living in a household where no adult was in paid work had low flourishing compared to around 11% of other children.

- The small number of children not living with family were more likely to experience low life satisfaction (42%) and low flourishing (38%) than other children.

We also looked in more depth at the 6% of young people that scored below the midpoint on both life satisfaction and flourishing to explore the factors that are associated with being in this group. We found that these young people were significantly more likely to report:

- Not living with their family
- Being disabled
- Having difficulties with learning
- Living in a household with no adults in a paid job
- Receiving free school meals.

Despite these differences according to individual characteristics and economic factors, research indicates that other conditions in children's lives, such as the quality of family relationships and experiences of bullying, are far more important determinants of their well-being.

So in the remainder of this report we look at findings from the Isle of Wight survey regarding how children feel about different aspects of their lives, which have been shown to be important influences on their overall well-being.

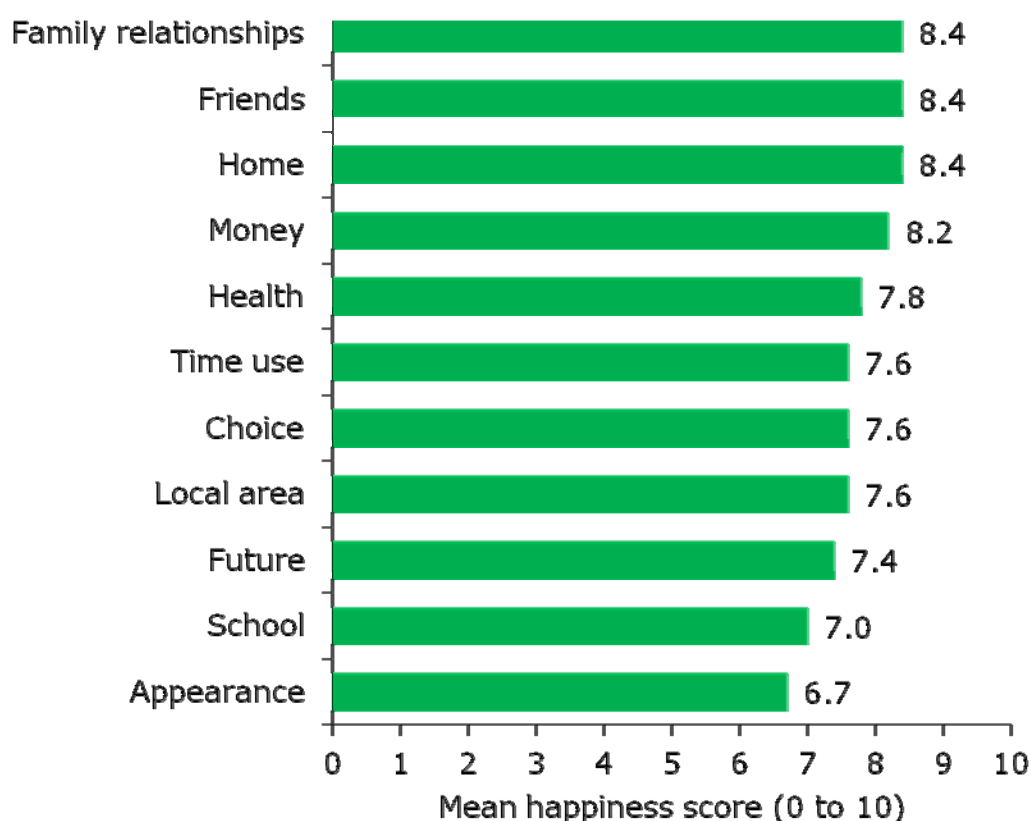
4. Feelings about different aspects of life

In the survey we used questions from our Good Childhood Index which ask children how happy they feel with different aspects of their lives. Children are asked to rate each aspect from zero to 10 where zero = 'very unhappy', five = 'neither happy or unhappy' and 10 = 'very happy'.

The mean scores for all children in school years 5 to 10 participating in the survey are shown in Figure 7.

As can be seen there are some quite wide variations in how children evaluate different aspects of their lives. They tend to be most positive about their relationships with family and friends, the homes that they live in and the amount of money and possessions they have. They tend to be less positive about other aspects such as appearance, school and the future.

Figure 7: Happiness with different aspects of life



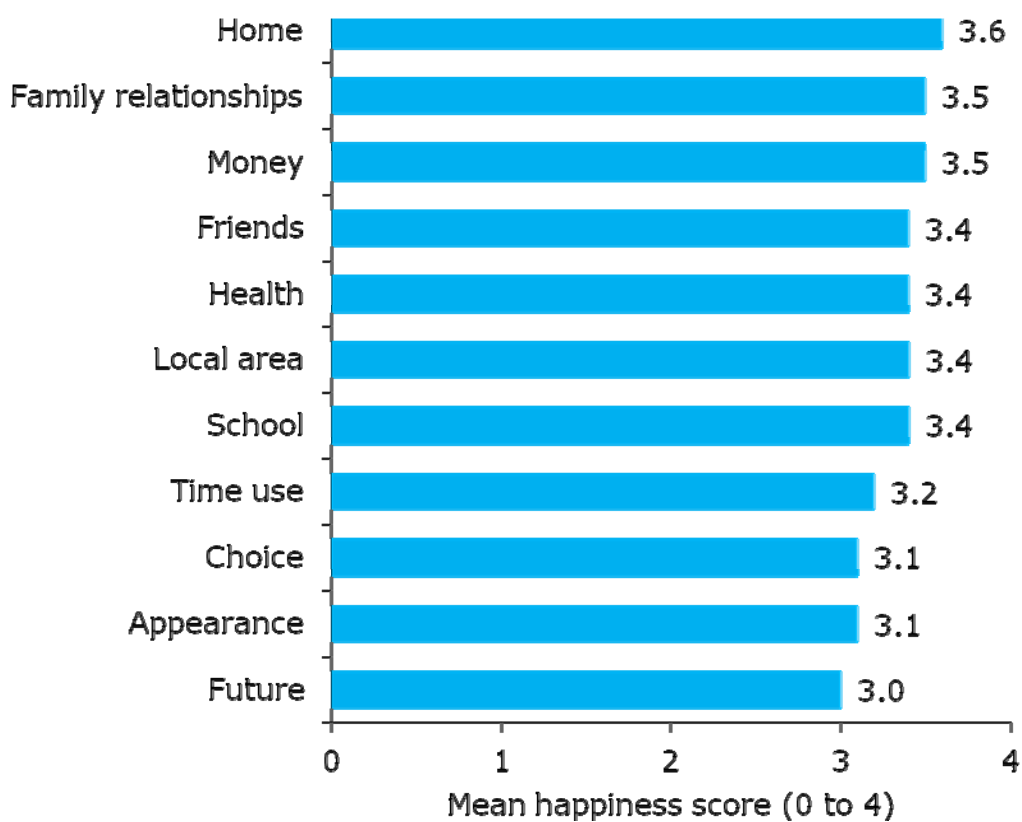
Data: Years 5 to 10, weighted by school year and gender

These patterns are relatively similar to the picture we have built up from our national research with children. For most of the above aspects, the mean scores for children on the Isle of Wight were close to the national average for children in a similar age range. However for family relationships, children on the Isle of Wight scored a little above the national average and for two aspects – school and appearance - the mean scores on the Isle of Wight were a little lower than the national average. These are not major differences but they do provide insights into some aspects of life for further discussion with children.

We also asked similar questions to children in Year 4. However here we used a simpler version of the question, with five smiley faces. So the findings for this age group are not directly comparable with those for older children. The chart below shows the mean scores for each aspect of life, which are on a scale from zero to four.

As can be seen the ordering of different aspects of life is relatively similar for Year 4 children and older children with home, family relationships, money and possessions and friends being at the top of the list. However for this younger age group happiness with school and local area are higher up the list, and happiness with choice and the future are lower.

Figure 8: Happiness with different aspects of life (Year 4)



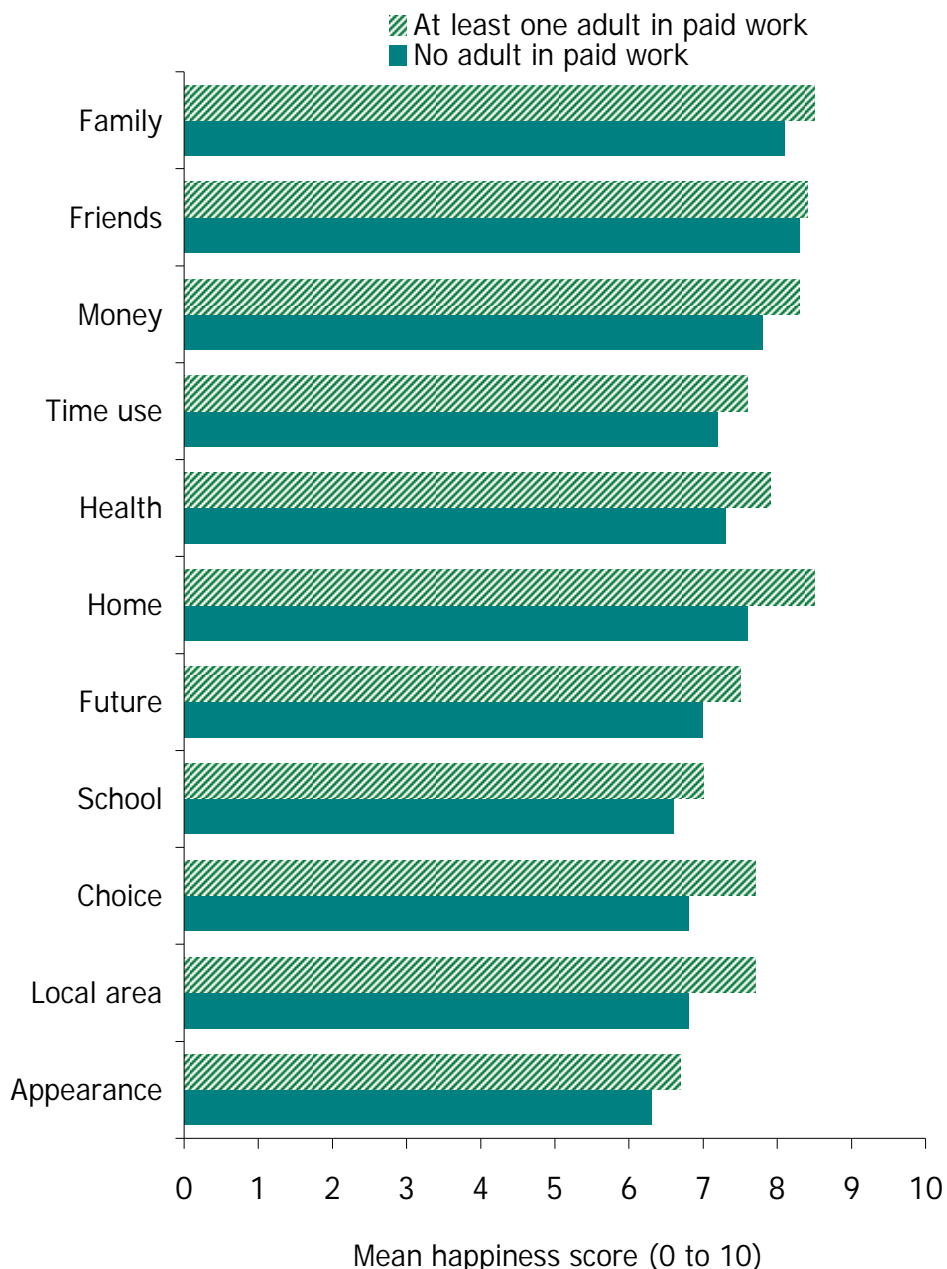
Data: Year 4, weighted by gender

In the remainder of this report we look in a little more detail at the findings on children's feelings about different aspects of their lives and about two other topics identified as of particular local interest – bullying and health-related behaviours.

Before doing so, we look briefly at some differences between sub-groups of children in happiness with different aspects of life.

Figure 9 shows the mean happiness scores with each aspect of life for children living in a household where at least one adult was in paid work and children living in a household where no adults were in paid work. Generally speaking children living in jobless households had lower levels across all aspects of life. Most of these differences were statistically significant, with the largest differences relating to home, choice and the local area.

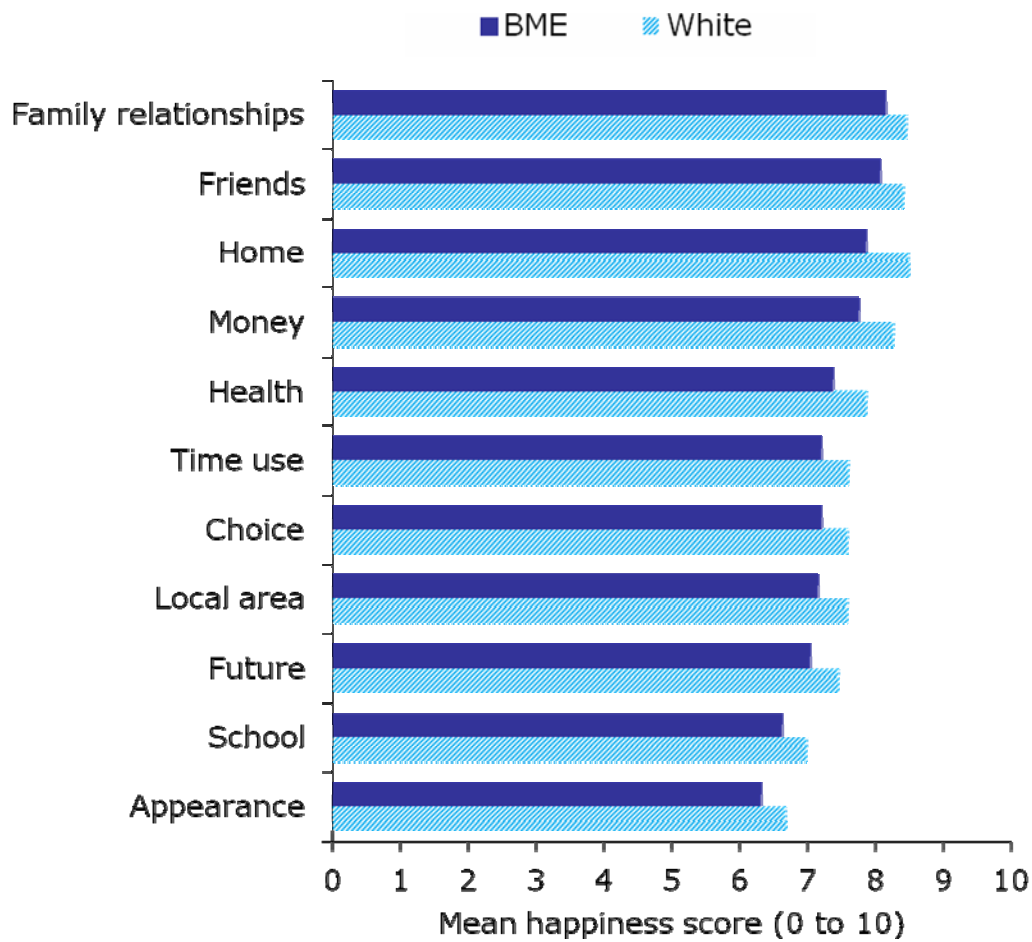
Figure 9: Adults in paid work and The Good Childhood Index



Data: Years 5 to 10, weighted by school year and gender

We also found ethnic group differences for The Good Childhood Index. These differences were not large and only four were statistically significant. These related to local area, home, friends and money/possessions.

Figure 10: Ethnic group differences for The Good Childhood Index



Data: Years 5 to 10, weighted by school year and gender

Children not living with family also had lower scores on all aspects of The Good Childhood Index, with the biggest difference being happiness with home.

5. School and learning

We asked children how important they thought it was that they achieved good marks for school work, tests and exams. The responses indicated a high degree of commitment to school achievement. Overall, three-quarters (75%) of children thought that it was 'very important' to achieve good marks and a further 22% thought it was 'quite important'. Less than 3% thought it was 'not very' or 'not at all' important.

Table 2: Importance of doing well at school

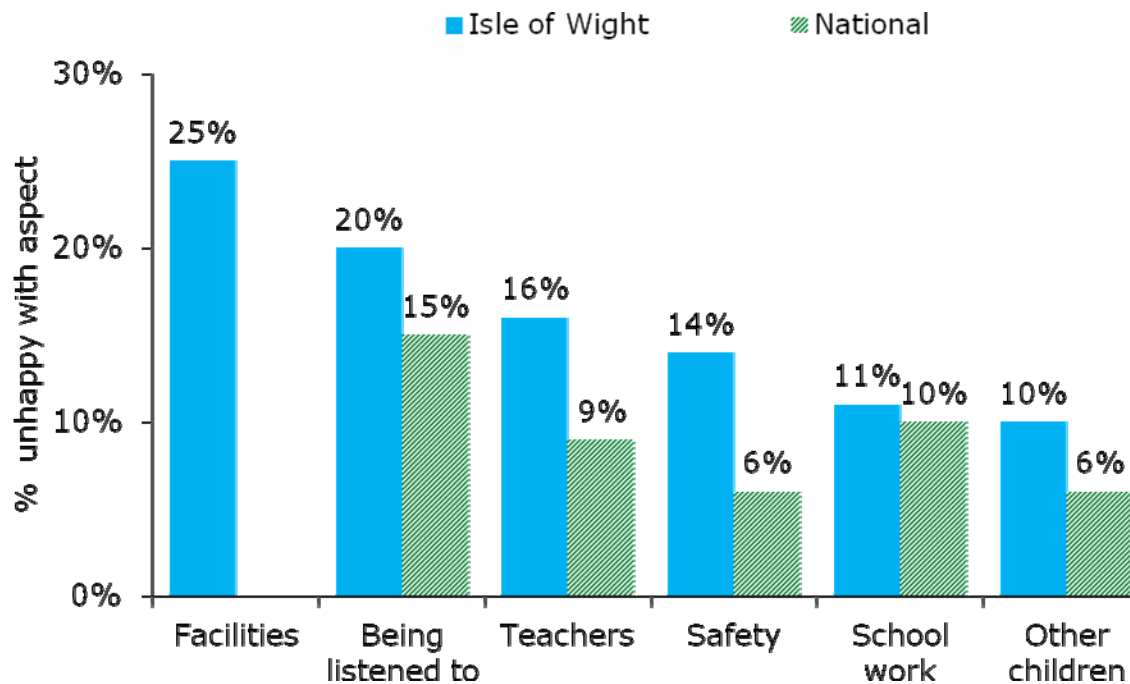
<i>How important is it for you to get good marks in your school work, exams or tests?</i>	
Not at all important	1%
Not very important	2%
Quite important	22%
Very important	75%

Data: Years 5 to 10, weighted by school year and gender

These findings are similar to our national research on this issue. And, in keeping with the national picture, commitment to school achievement increases with age. The proportion of children thinking that this was 'very important' rose from 71% in Year 5 to 81% in Year 10.

We also asked children to rate different aspects of their school experience on a scale from zero to 10. The proportion of children that scored below the midpoint on the scale and could be said to be 'unhappy' with this aspect of school are shown in Figure 11. Children were most satisfied with their relationships with other children in their class and least satisfied with the facilities (like classrooms, toilets and sports facilities) in the school. These responses are similar to those found in our national research (except for facilities where unfortunately we do not have national figures to compare). However a few of the ratings are a little lower than the national average, most notably safety at school.

Figure 11: Proportion of children that are unhappy with different aspects of school



Data: Years 5 to 10, weighted by school year and gender

As mentioned earlier, these survey findings regarding safety at school prompted us to talk to children and young people about this topic in the consultation. Here we include a selection of comments to illustrate the types of things that young people said about safety at school.

'I've got my friends at the school but a lot of children don't behave well and the teachers don't sort it out', Year 8 boy

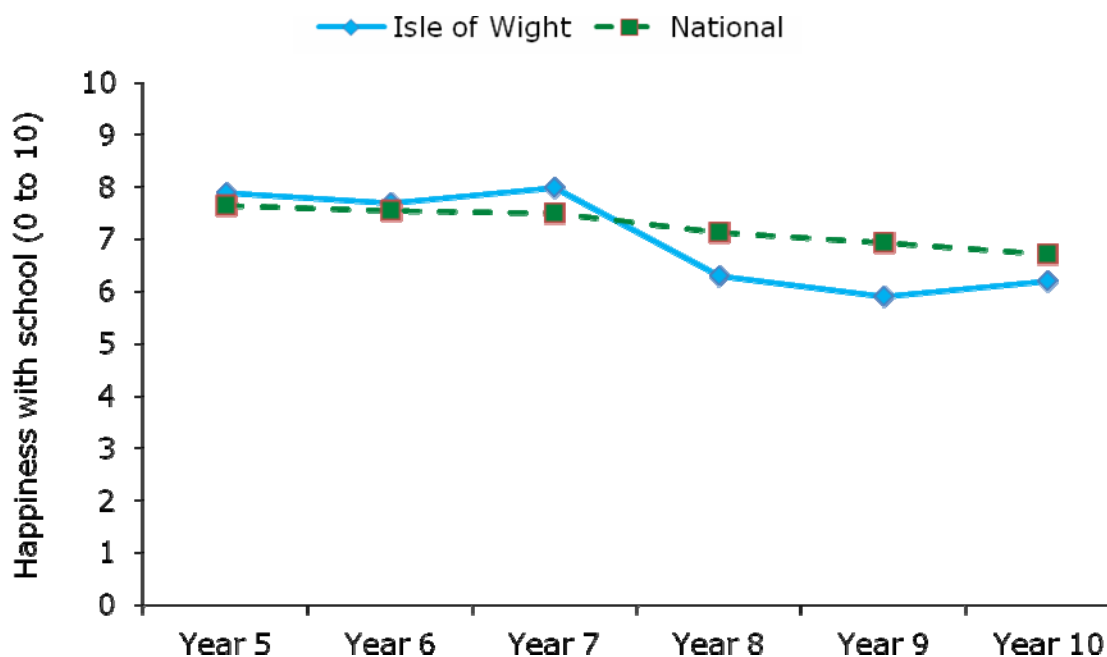
'Nothing makes me feel safe, 2,000 people anything can HAPPEN', Year 8 boy

'I feel safe most of the time but some year 11 can be scary', Year 7 boy

'Teachers say we are a family, but they can't know all of us', Year 9 girl

School is one of the aspects of life that children tend to feel less happy with the older they are, as can be seen in the figure below. This pattern is similar to what we normally see in our national research, however, the drop appears to be a little more pronounced in the Isle of Wight for secondary school children in Years 8 and 9.

Figure 12: Happiness with school by year group/age⁴



Data: Years 5 to 10, weighted by gender

We asked young people in secondary schools what their education or employment plans were after the age of 16. Their responses are shown in the table below.

Table 3: Post-16 plans

<i>At the moment, young people can leave school at 16. What would you most like to do when you are 16?</i>	
Get a job full-time	19%
Study full-time	14%
Get a job and study	47%
Do something else	8%
Don't know	12%

Data: Years 7 to 10, weighted by school year and gender

Excluding young people who had indicated in their answer to the question above that they planned to leave school at 16 and get a full-time job, young people

⁴ Note: The national comparison data is by age rather than year group such that Year 5 corresponds to age 9, Year 6 to age 10 etc. However, given that the Isle of Wight survey took place at the start of the school year in September and October, this should not pose a problem for comparison.

were also asked whether they would like to go on to further full-time education after leaving school. The responses are shown below:

Table 4: Further education plans

Would you like to go on to do further full-time education at a college or University after you finish school?	
Yes	55%
No	4%
Don't know	22%
Not asked (planned to get full-time job)	19%

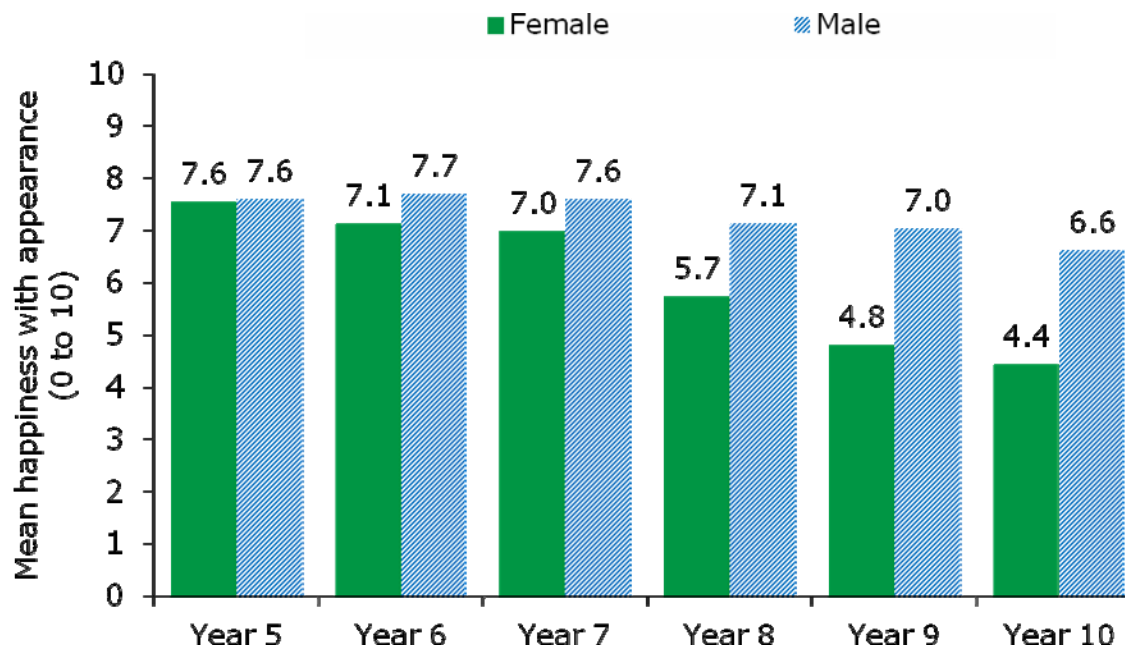
Data: Years 7 to 10, weighted by school year and gender

When we looked at whether young people's further education plans were linked to their life satisfaction and flourishing, we found that the small group of children (4%) who said that they did not plan to get a job or to go on to further full-time education and had much lower than average levels of well-being (life satisfaction and 'flourishing') than the other three groups shown in the table above.

6. Appearance

In our Good Childhood Index, appearance tends to be the aspect of life that children are least happy with. As shown earlier in Figures 7 and 8, this is true on the Isle of Wight also. There are some important age and gender differences in respect of appearance. Figure 13 shows the mean scores for happiness with appearance by year group and gender. As can be seen, girls' happiness with their appearance drops much more substantially than boys' from Year 5 to Year 10.

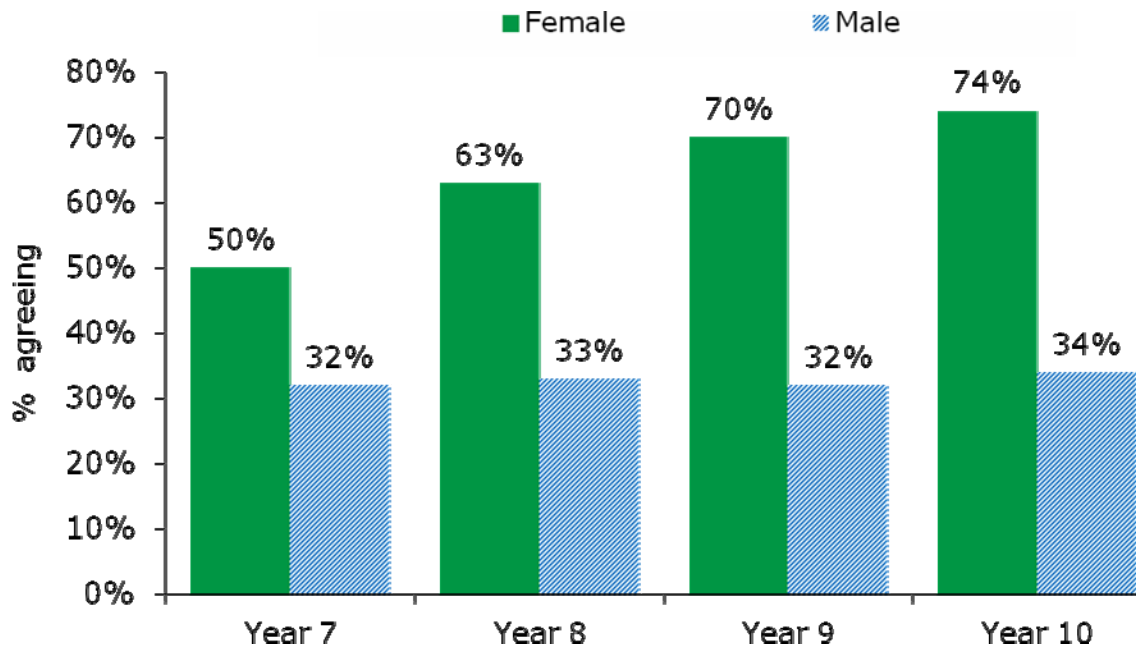
Figure 13: Happiness with appearance by school year and gender



Data: Years 5 to 10

We also asked young people in Years 7 upwards whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement: '*I often worry about the way I look*'. Here, the proportion of boys worrying about the way they look was similar across the age range (about a third agreed with the statement), while for girls this proportion increased from half of Year 7 girls to almost three quarters (74%) of Year 10 girls.

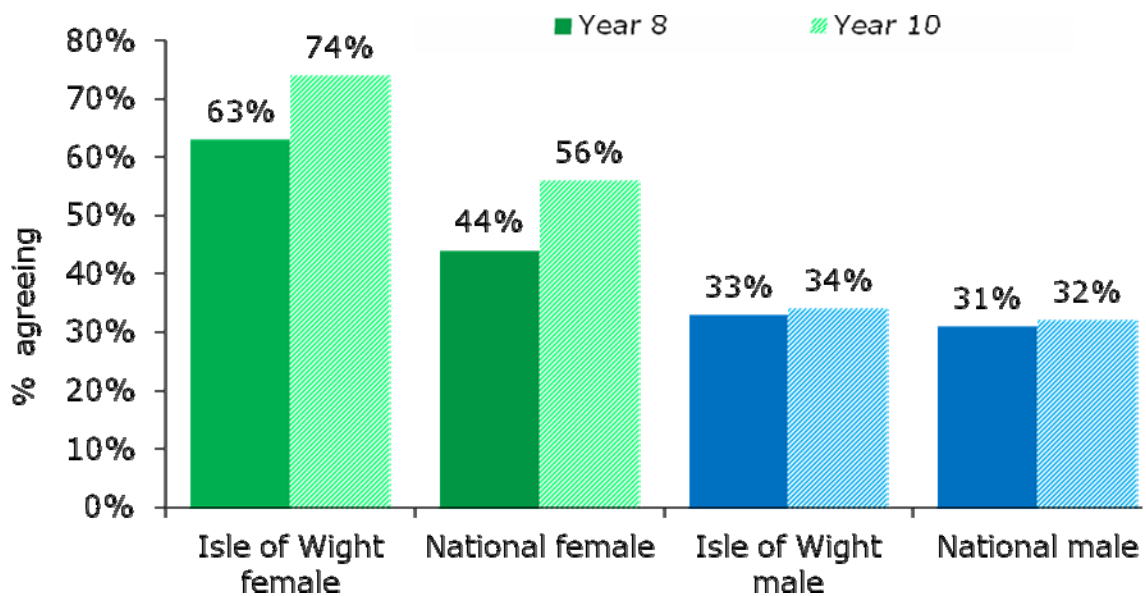
Figure 14 'I often worry about the way I look' by school year and gender



Data: Years 7 to 10

These age and gender differences in happiness with appearance are similar to the national picture, but they are more pronounced in the Isle of Wight, as can be seen in Figure 15. The percentage of girls in the Isle of Wight worrying about the way they look is almost twenty points higher than the national averages in both Years 8 and 10. Interestingly, though, the figures for boys do not vary in the same way in comparison with the national picture.

Figure 15: 'I often worry about the way I look' by school year and gender, national comparisons



Physical appearance is another topic that we focused on when we talked to young people in our consultation. We include below a selection of comments from girls to illustrate the types of things that they said about appearance.

'Some girls wear make up to fit in, if you don't wear it you get insulted. If you do, you get called a slag and get told off by teachers' Year 9 girl

'If you don't fit in you are lonely without friends' Year 10 girl

'Teachers will hand out baby wipes to make you take off make up' Year 9 girl

'I hate the way I look', Year 6 girl

7. Local area

'There are parks for children, its quiet so you can't lose your kids' Year 6

'Shop keeper is really nice' Year 5

In addition to a general question on feelings about the local area, we asked young people to respond to a number of more specific statements about their area using an 'agree-disagree' format. Three statements were about facilities in the area, three about safety and freedom, three about local adults and two about gangs and crime. Responses to these statements for children in Years 5 to 10 are shown in Table below.

Table 5: Views about the local area

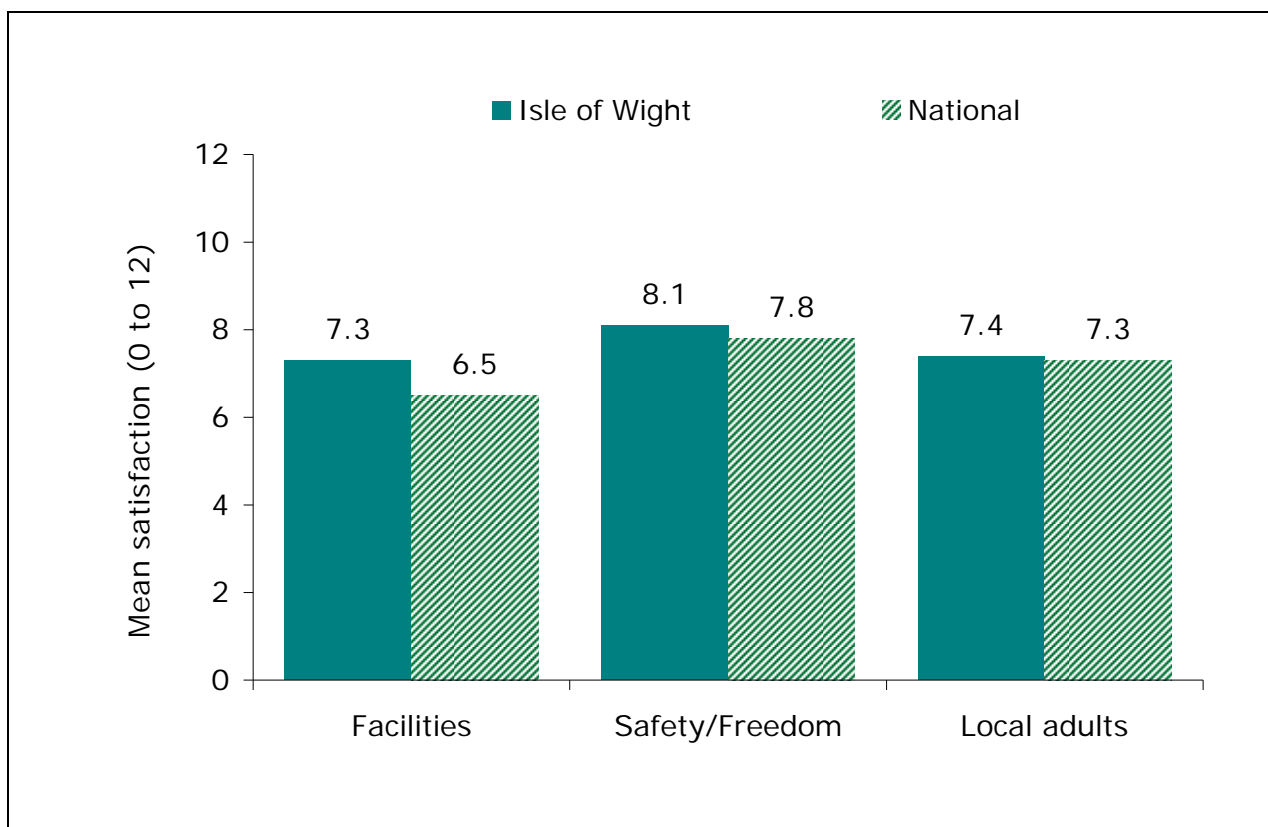
	Disagree	Neither	Agree
There is nothing to do in my area	56%	18%	26%
There are lots of fun things to do where I live	29%	21%	50%
There are places for me to go in my area	21%	13%	67%
I have plenty of freedom in the area where I live	13%	15%	73%
I feel safe .. out in my local area during the day	9%	13%	78%
I feel safe .. out in my local area at night	32%	22%	46%
I like my neighbours	16%	18%	65%
Adults in my area listen to young people's views	28%	29%	44%
Adults in my area treat young people fairly	15%	25%	60%
Gangs are a problem in my area	64%	19%	17%
Crime is a problem in my area	69%	17%	13%
My area is a nice place to live	7%	14%	75%

Data: Years 5 to 10, weighted by school year and gender

As can be seen from Figure 16, in comparison with data from our national research on this topic⁵, children on the Isle of Wight:

- Gave fairly typical responses regarding their views about local adults and safety/freedom,
- Were more satisfied than average with local facilities than the national average.

Figure 16: Views about local area, national comparisons

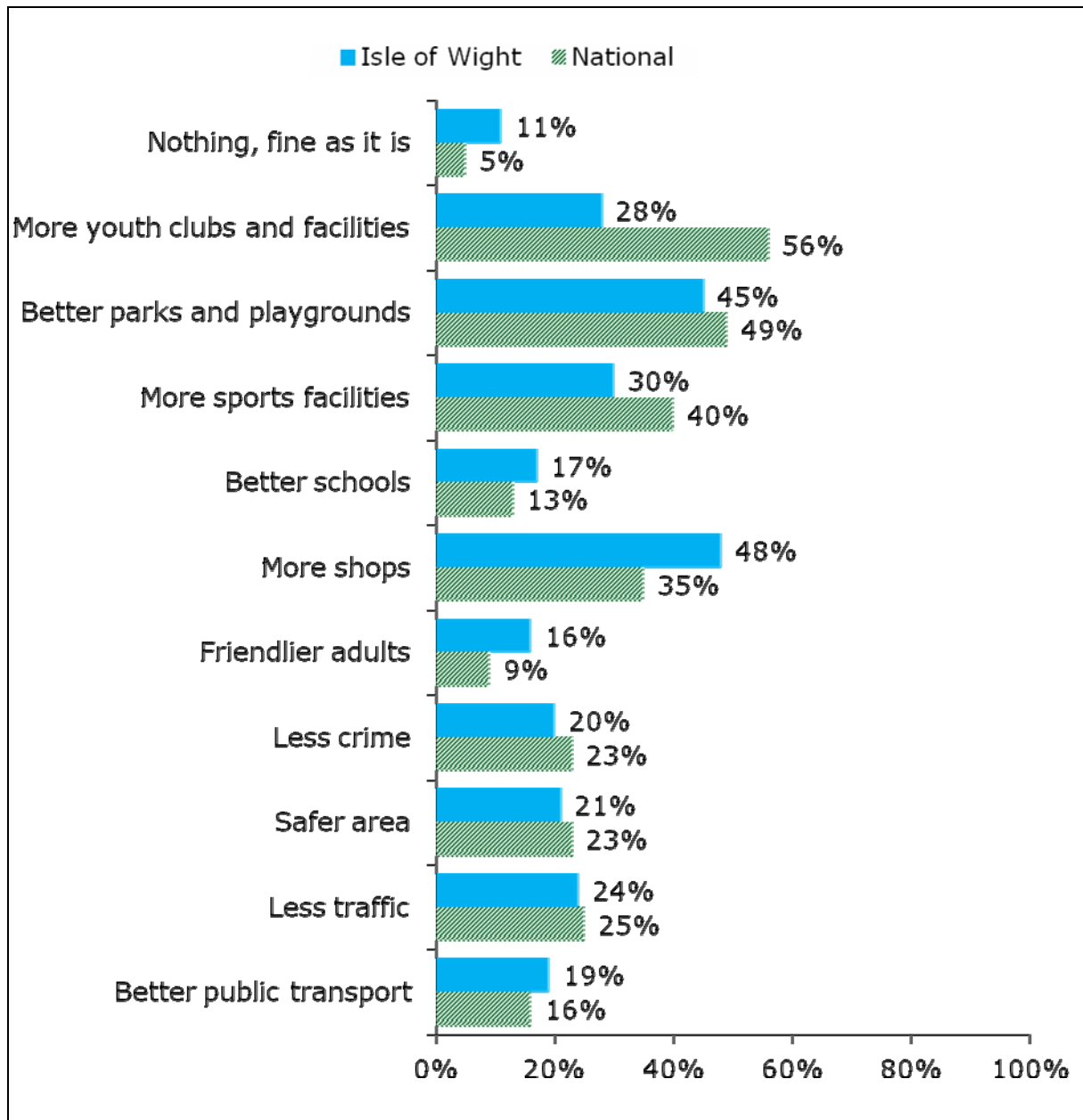


Data: Years 5 to 10, weighted by school year and gender

Finally, we gave children a list of possible options for improvement in their local area. In comparison with the national picture, children in the Isle of Wight were generally more positive about their local area – being more likely to say that nothing needs to be improved, and more satisfied with most aspects of their local area, particularly facilities. The aspects that children on the Isle of Wight appear more likely to prioritise than the national average were ‘more shops’ and ‘friendlier adults’.

⁵ We do not have national comparison data for the two statements about gangs and crime being a problem, or about the area being a nice place to live.

Figure 17: Improving the local area, national comparisons



Data: Years 5 to 10, weighted by school year and gender

8. Friends

'It doesn't really matter what you look like, you can still be friends if you're different'

In addition to a general question about happiness with their relationships with their friends, we also asked young people in Years 5 and 6 to respond to three statements about friends using an 'agree-disagree' format. One statement was about having enough friends, one was about spending enough time with friends, and one was about the quality of friendships. Responses to these statements are shown in the table below. Generally, most children in this age group appear to be relatively happy with their friendships.

Table 6: Views on friendships

	Disagree	Neither	Agree
I have enough friends	14%	11%	74%
I spend enough time with my friends	14%	12%	74%
My friends are mean to me	71%	20%	9%

Data: Years 5 and 6, weighted by school year and gender

Answers to all three of these questions were linked with children's overall well-being. Children who expressed more positive feelings about their friendships had significantly higher levels of well-being.

9. Spending money

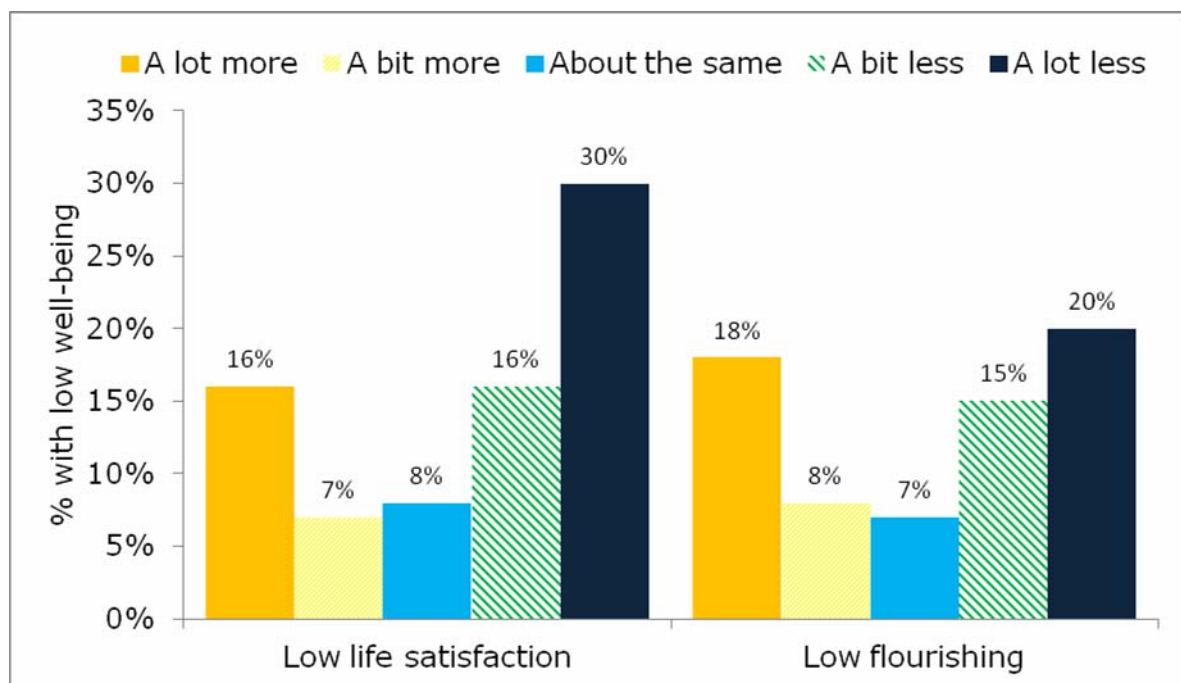
We also asked young people about the amount of spending money that they have in comparison to their friends, as we know from our own research that financial resources tend to be more important to young people in relative terms than they are in absolute terms.

Table 7: Amount of spending money relative to others

	A lot more	A bit more	About the same	A bit less	A lot less
Compared to your friends, how much money (on average) do you have to spend on yourself?	9%	18%	36%	20%	17%

When we looked at young people’s responses to this question alongside their overall life satisfaction and flourishing, we discovered an interesting picture. As might be expected, young people who had ‘a lot less’ spending money than their friends were most likely to have low well-being on both measures. But having ‘a lot more’ spending money than friends was also linked to low well-being. In both cases, it was young people that had ‘about the same’ as or ‘a bit more’ than their friends that had the highest well-being.

Figure 18: Spending money relative to friends and low well-being



Data: Years 6 to 10 (life satisfaction), Years 7 to 10 (flourishing), weighted by school year and gender

10. Bullying

'Don't feel safe at school. The kids bully and the schools don't do anything about it. You have to fight your own battles.'

'People are bullied for what they look like at most schools'

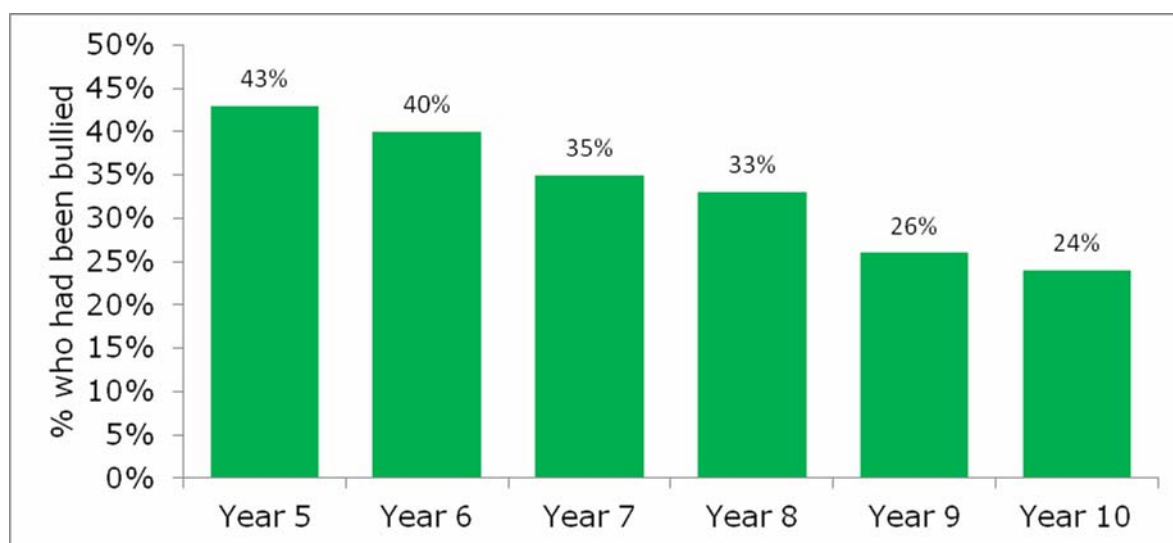
Children's experiences of bullying have been shown in our national research to have strong associations with levels of overall well-being. For example, we have found that experiences of bullying explain as much variation in children's well-being as all of the individual and family characteristics combined⁶.

In the Isle of Wight survey we asked some new questions about this topic which were adapted from previous studies.

First we asked children whether they had been bullied in the past year. Some explanation of what might be regarded as bullying was provided⁷. In response, around a third (34%) of children said that they had been bullied. A further 11% were unsure and 10% did not want to answer the question. Just under a half (46%) said that they had not been bullied.

As would be expected from other research on this issue, levels of bullying reduced with age.

Figure 19: Experience of bullying in past year, by school year



Data: Years 5 to 10, weighted by gender

There were also gender differences, with girls being more likely to have experienced bullying than boys.

There were no differences in likelihood of being bullied by ethnicity.

However, there were some differences according to family economic circumstances. Children in poorer families were more likely to experience bullying. For example 44% of children who received free school meals said that

⁶ Rees G, Bradshaw J, Goswami H & Keung A (2010) *Understanding Children's Well-being: A national survey of young people's well-being*. London: The Children's Society.

⁷ Children were told: *'This can include things like being hit, kicked or pushed, people taking your belongings, being called nasty names or being made fun of.'*

they had been bullied in the past year compared to 33% of other children. However, there was a link between being younger and receipt of free school meals, which may explain some or all of this difference.

For children who had been bullied we asked about the frequency of bullying in the past year.

- 18% of children had been bullied once
- 25% had been bullied two to three times
- 47% had been bullied more than three times
- 10% were unsure.

Children were also asked about the location and type of bullying. The responses are shown in the tables below. More than one response was possible for these questions so percentages add up to more than 100%.

Most bullying occurred at school and travelling to and from school. There was also evidence of bullying in the local area and through the use of electronic communication.

Table 8: Locations of bullying

In school	82%
Going to and from school	20%
Local area (e.g. park, beach)	17%
Online	13%
Through texting	7%
Somewhere else	10%

There were some significant differences in locations of bullying by gender and age:

- Females were more likely than males to be bullied online or through texting.
- Being bullied in school, going to and from school and online were all more likely among secondary school children who had been bullied than primary school children who had been bullied. However it is important to bear in mind that, because of the general decline of bullying with age, this does not mean that bullying was more common in secondary school than in primary school.

The most common forms of bullying were being called names and being made fun of. However, over a third of children who had been bullied had experienced being hit, kicked or pushed.

Table 9: Nature of bullying

I was called nasty names	67%
People made fun of me	61%
I was hit, kicked or pushed	36%
People took my belongings	19%
Something else	16%

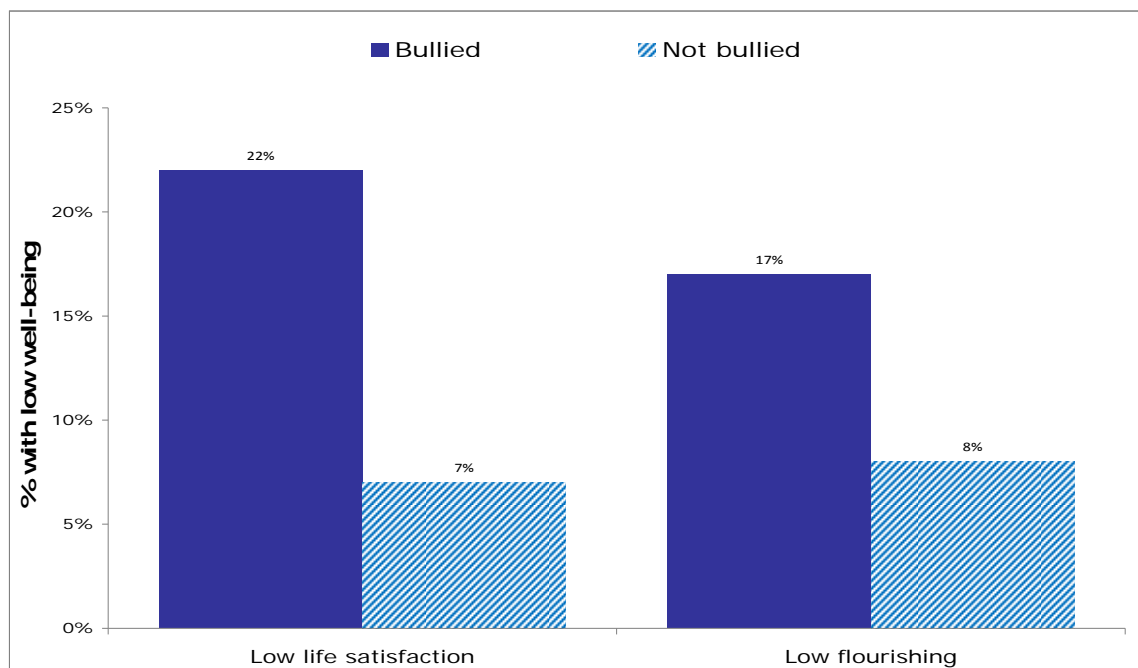
The incidence of being called names, being made fun of and having belongings taken were all more common among secondary school children who had been bullied than among primary school children who had been bullied.

Bullying is known to have an association with children’s overall well-being

Not surprisingly, there was an association between having been bullied in the past year and feeling unsafe at school. 22% of children who had been bullied in the past year, and 23% of those who had been bullied in school, were unhappy with safety at school compared to 8% of those who had not been bullied at all.

However, the links between bullying and children’s feelings about their lives go further than that. The associations between children’s experiences of being bullied and their overall well-being are shown in Figure 20. Children who had experienced bullying in the past year were three times as likely to have low life satisfaction and twice as likely to have a low sense of flourishing. These are significant differences.

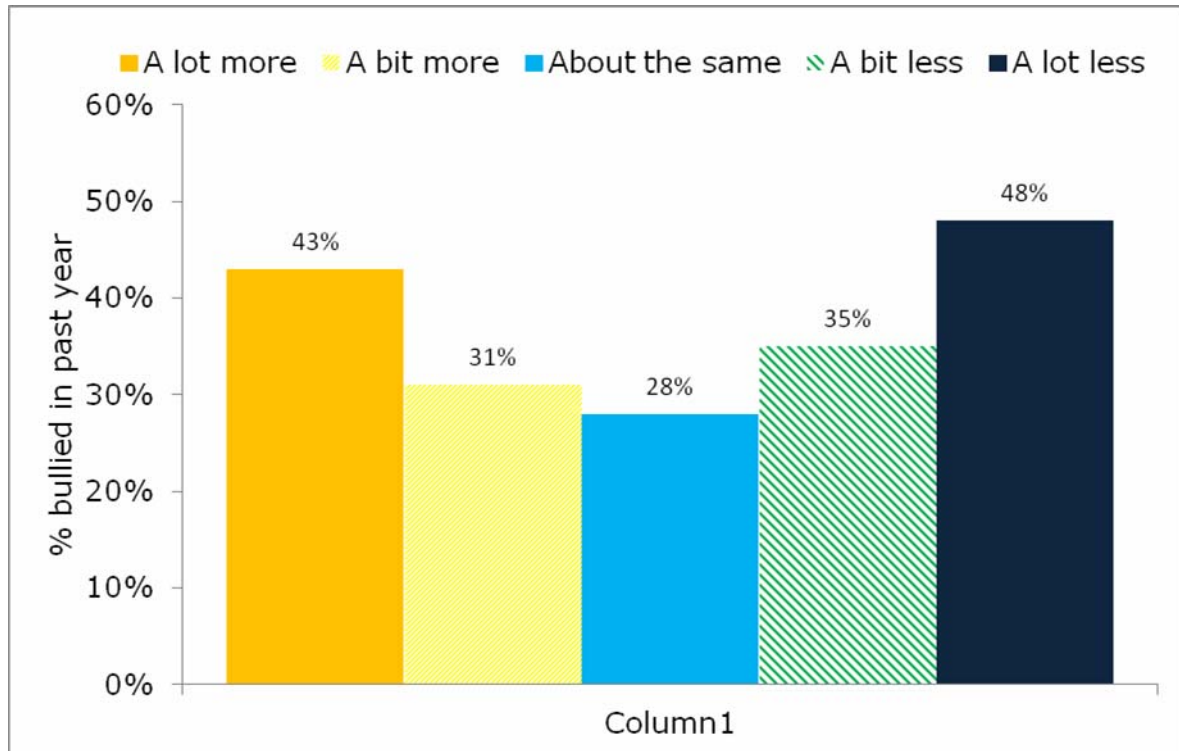
Figure 20: Experiences of bullying and low well-being



Data: Years 6 to 10 (life satisfaction), Years 7 to 10 (flourishing), weighted by school year and gender

There was also a relationship between the amount of spending money young people had in comparison to their friends and whether they had been bullied in the last year, as can be seen in the figure below.

Figure 21: Spending money relative to friends and experiences of bullying



Data: Years 5 to 10, weighted by school year and gender

These findings link to recent research that we have done with the University of York, which shows that child-centred measures of deprivation have a much greater association with well-being than household measures such as parental income⁸.

⁸ Main G & Pople L (2011) *Missing Out: A child-centred analysis of material deprivation and subjective wellbeing*. London: The Children's Society.

11. Health-related behaviours

At the request of the local authority we included some questions on the survey regarding children's views about the acceptability of certain behaviours. Due to the subject matter, these questions were only asked from Year 9 upwards. We asked children in Year 9 and above:

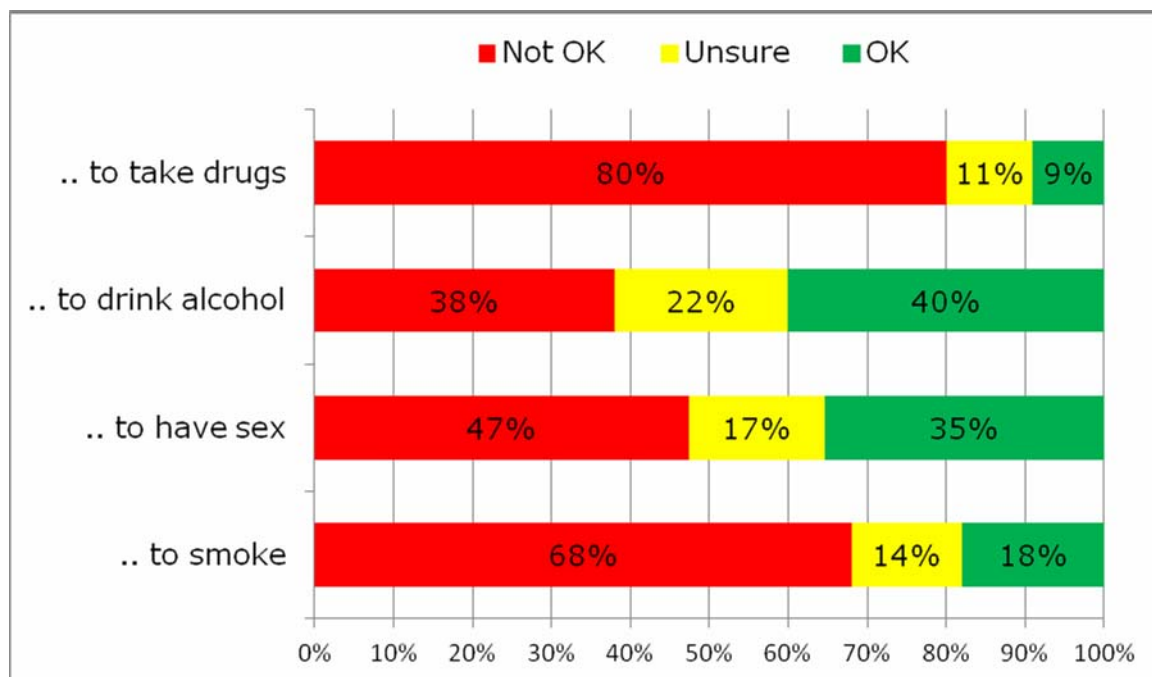
Do you think it is OK for someone your age:

- *To smoke*
- *To have sex*
- *To drink*
- *To take drugs*

The response options were 'Yes', 'Not sure', 'No' and 'I don't want to answer'.

Results for Years 9 to 11, excluding those (less than 5%) who did not want to answer each question, are shown below.

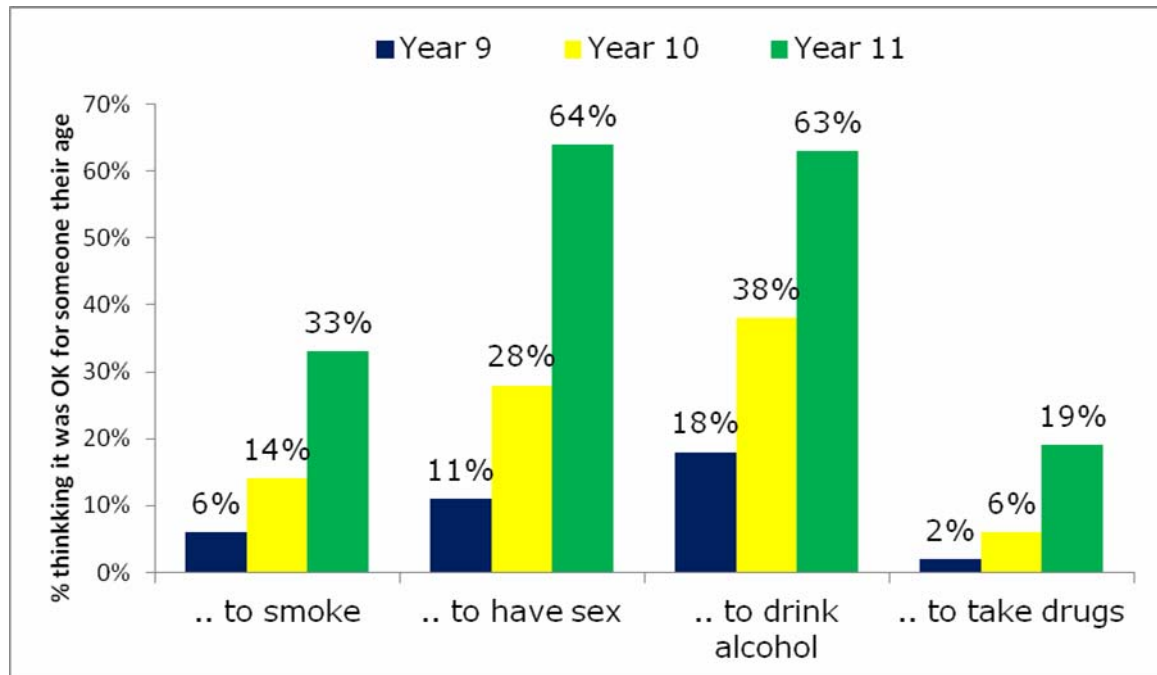
Figure 22: Views about acceptability of health-related behaviours



Data: Years 9 to 11, weighted by school year and gender

There were strong age patterns here as shown below, with young people being increasingly likely to think that each of the behaviours was acceptable for people their age, as they grew older. In Year 11 (age 15 to 16), the majority of young people felt that it was OK for someone their age to drink alcohol (63%) or to have sex (64%), but even at this age only a minority thought it was OK for someone their age to smoke (33%) or to take drugs (19%).

Figure 23: Views about acceptability of health-related behaviours by school year



Data: Years 9 to 11, weighted by gender

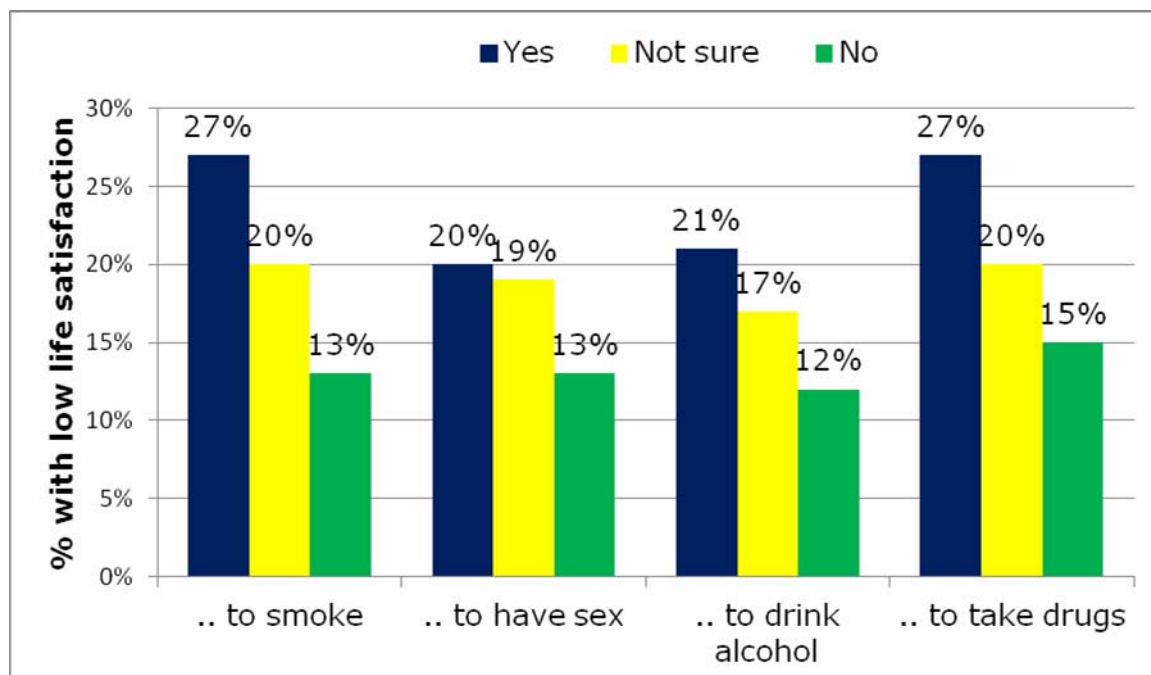
There were some significant gender differences too:

- Males (40%) were more likely than females (31%) to think it was OK for someone their age to have sex.
- Males (13%) were also more likely than females (6%) to think it was OK for someone their age to take drugs.

Here again, there was a significant association between children's answers to their questions and their overall well-being:

- Children who thought it was OK for those their age to engage in each of these behaviours were significantly more likely to have low life satisfaction than children who did not (Figure 24)
- There were similar patterns for a low sense of flourishing (not shown in chart) and most of these differences were statistically significant also.

Figure 24: Views about acceptability of health-related behaviours and low life satisfaction



Smoking is an issue that was raised a number of times during the consultation, not because we specifically asked about it, but because children themselves mentioned it. Interestingly, both primary and secondary children tended to talk about smoking more in respect of feelings of safety than as something affecting their health. Their comments suggest that they see smokers, particularly in groups, as people to be wary of or avoid.

For example, a number of primary school children mentioned smoking in the context of discussions about adults in their local area:

'people smoking in front of you'

'leaving cigarettes on the floor'

Similarly, young people at secondary school talked about smoking in relation to feeling unsafe.

'smoking encourages you to do the wrong things' Year 8

'people smoke, makes me feel unsafe' Year 8

'Like the older ones smoke and flick it on the floor, it makes me feel like I don't want to be in the school anymore.' Year 8 boy

'Smokers throw stuff at you' Year 10 girl

12. Conclusions

The Isle of Wight Survey of Children and Young People 2012 was highly successful in gaining the views of children and young people living on the Island. In total, almost 5000 children aged eight to 15 participated in the survey, representing more than a third of all children in this age group living on the Isle of Wight. Around 500 children also took part in consultations related to the findings from the survey. The survey questionnaire covered a wide range of aspects of children's lives and provides an important insight into the well-being and quality of life of the Island's children.

Overall, the large majority of children on the Isle of Wight are satisfied with their lives and are flourishing. Only a minority, in the region of one in 10, are not satisfied with their lives or do not have a sense of flourishing. These proportions are very similar to the picture for England as a whole, so on average children living on the Island have similar levels of well-being to the national picture.

The survey does, however, suggest that there are some ways in which the experiences of children on the Isle of Wight differ from the national picture.

With two aspects of life, the children on the Island were happier than the national average.

First, there were indications that they were happier with their family relationships. This is encouraging because this aspect of life is one of the most important determinants of overall well-being.

Second, children on the Island seemed to be more satisfied than average with their local area, and in particular with the facilities available to them in the locality.

On the other hand, there were also two aspects of life for which children on the Isle of Wight appeared to be a little less happy than the national average.

First, in terms of education, whilst there was encouraging evidence of educational aspirations among children on the Island, there were also indications in the survey of potential aspects for improvement in terms of school experiences - particularly in terms of feeling safe at school.

Second, while children in England in general seem to worry more about their appearance as they grow up, this survey suggest that teenage girls on the Island were more worried about the way they look than is typical nationally amongst this group.

It is helpful to consider these findings in the context of conclusions that we have drawn from The Children's Society's national research programme about the main factors affecting children's well-being. Our national research highlights, for example, the importance of children's relationships and their sense of autonomy: children's happiness with the amount of choice that they have in life and their family relationships are the two most important aspects of life affecting well-being in The Good Childhood Index⁹. Other key findings from The Children's

⁹ Rees G, Bradshaw J, Goswami H, Keung A, Main G & Pople L (2012) *The Good Childhood Report 2012: A review of our children's well-being*. London: The Children's Society

Society's national research programme include the importance of children's experiences of bullying and child-centred measures of deprivation.

Together, therefore, the Isle of Wight survey and The Children's Society's national research programme on children's well-being offer positive indications of the generally high quality of life experienced by children on the Isle of Wight and also suggest some potential priority issues for efforts to improve the well-being and lives of children on the Island.

About us

The most disadvantaged children rarely suffer on just one front. We work directly with these children, many of whom have nowhere else to turn, to ensure that they are loved, valued and listened to. With them we fight childhood poverty, harm and neglect.

Our network of programmes includes drop-in services for runaways, as well as children's centres and support for young carers. We support children who are refugees from violence, and we give those in care a voice. We transform the lives of many more children by pressurising government and local authorities to change policy and practice to protect them, and we challenge the negative attitudes that perpetuate harm and injustice.

In hard times, children are among the hardest hit.

We don't just help them survive - we support them to flourish.

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