

The Prince's Trust  
YouGov Youth Index



**hold your head up**



Prince's Trust



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The Prince's Trust YouGov Youth Index is the first large-scale study of its kind, investigating how young people feel about the state of their lives today and how confident they are about their future.

The findings suggest that, while the majority of young people are relatively content, there is a significant core of young people for whom life has little or no purpose – with those not in education, employment or training (NEET) most likely to feel this way.

Our report also shows how support from family is key to a young person's overall wellbeing, yet we come across many young people who simply don't have this support.

At The Prince's Trust we help vulnerable young people, steering them away from false support systems such as drugs, alcohol and dangerous gangs and providing them with a sense of purpose again. This vital work can only continue if we receive the funding we need. Your continuing support and donations offer a lifeline to a generation of vulnerable youth.

**Martina Milburn**

Chief Executive, The Prince's Trust

**YouGov**<sup>®</sup>

YouGov is proud to partner The Prince's Trust on this innovative study. Our index provides a genuine insight into the emotional wellbeing of young people aged between 16 and 25, the issues they face, and how organisations such as The Prince's Trust can help support them.

We are also looking forward to seeing some fascinating comparisons in the future, as our annual index monitors young people's fluctuating happiness levels year on year.

**Peter Kellner**

President, YouGov

## Youth Index respondents

A sample of 2,004 16- to-25-year-olds took part in the online poll conducted by YouGov on behalf of The Prince's Trust, in October 2008.

- Of the sample, **1,105** were male and **899** female
- There were **393** young people living in an inner city, **592** in an urban area not inner city, **413** in a suburban area, **468** in a village or small town and **87** from a rural area
- **152** were not in education, employment or training (NEET)
- **929** were 16- to-20-year-olds and **1075** were between 21 and 25

The data has been weighted according to age, gender and region, to be representative of all British 16- to-25-year-olds.

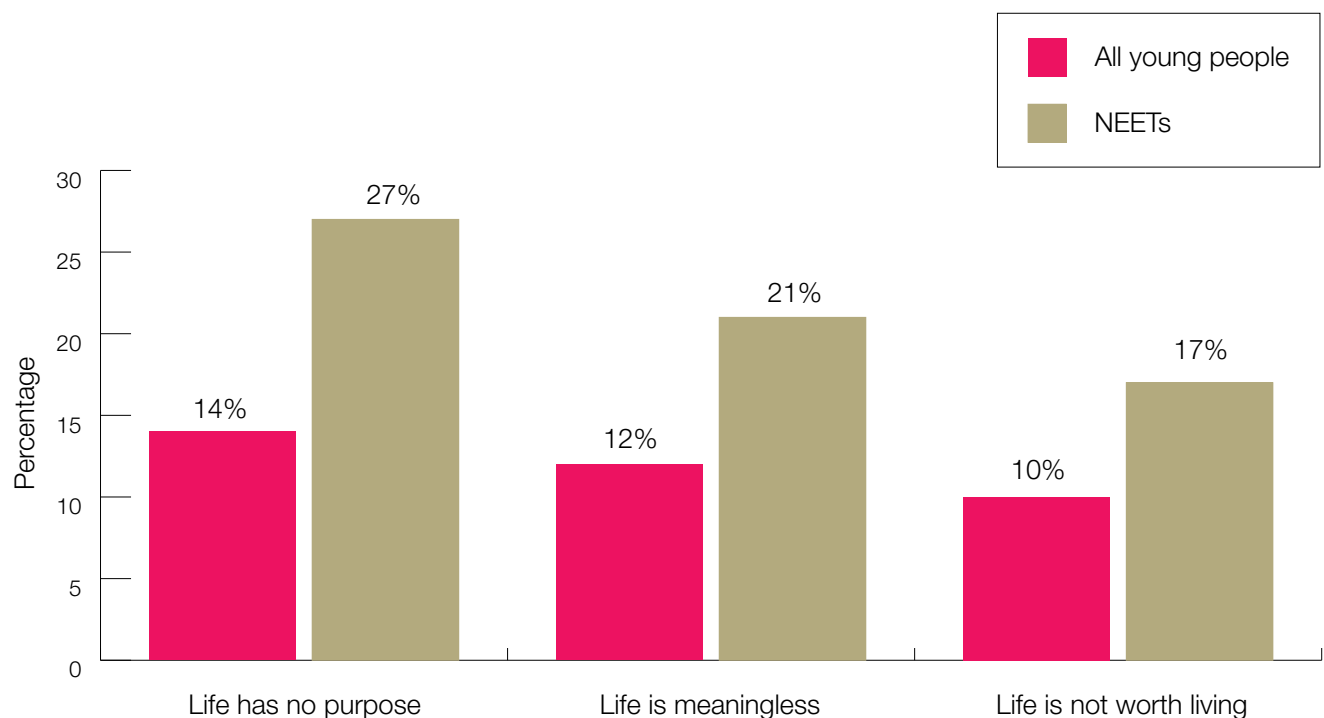
### A life worth living?

The survey was introduced with some preliminary questions about emotional wellbeing.

More than one in ten felt life was meaningless (12 per cent) or did not feel their life had a sense of purpose (14 per cent). One in ten (10 per cent) did not find life really worth living.

These figures all increased significantly for those young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) – see Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Young people's attitudes to life**



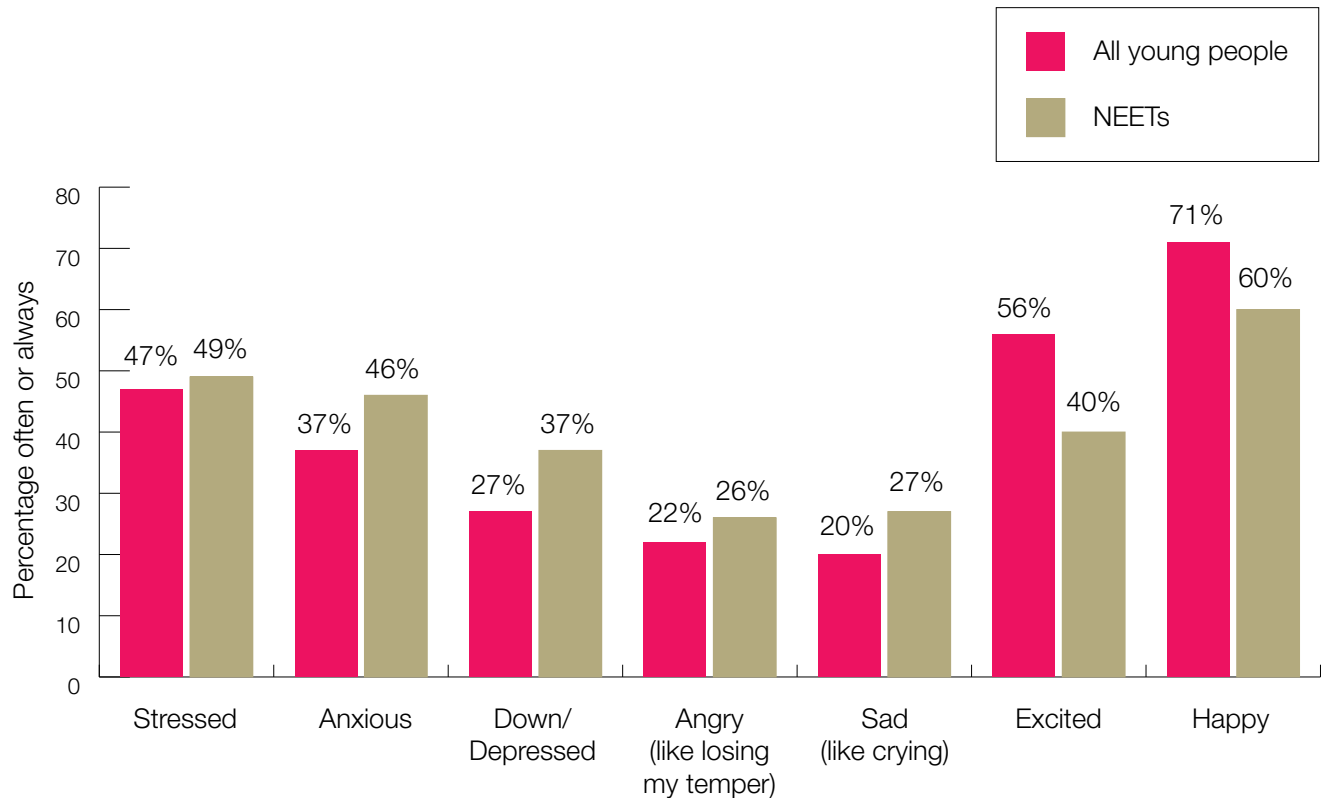
## Happy and excited or stressed and depressed?

The survey asked young people specifically about their emotions. A clear majority of more than two-thirds (71 per cent) were often or always happy. However, a significant group appear to be regularly stressed, depressed and/or anxious.

- Almost half (47 per cent) are often or always stressed
- More than one in three (37 per cent) are often or always anxious
- Over a quarter (26 per cent) said they are often or always down or depressed

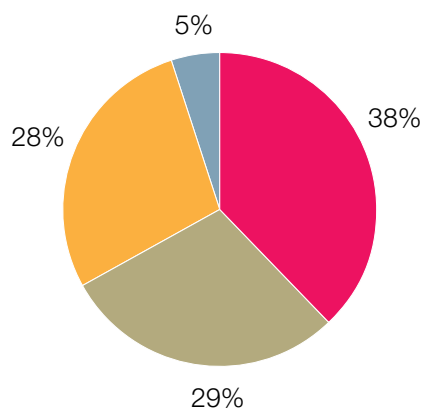
Again, those young people who are NEET are more likely to feel this way more of the time – see Figure 2.

**Figure 2: Young people's emotions**

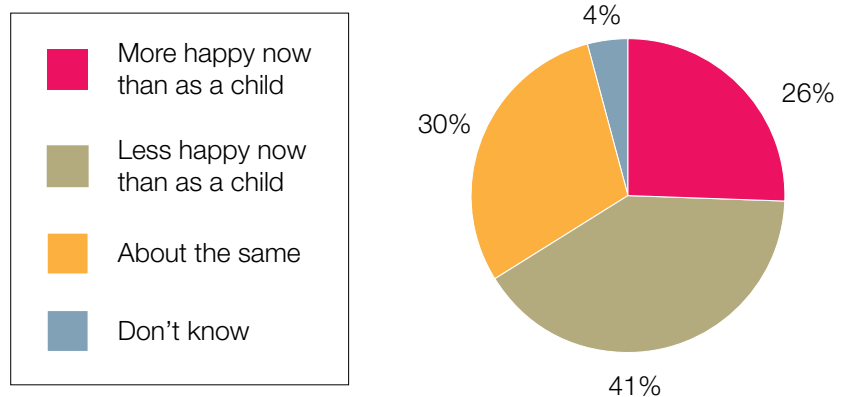


The young people were asked whether they felt more or less happy now than they had been as a child. 41 per cent of NEETs said they were less happy now than as a child compared with 29 per cent of the overall sample. See Figures 3.1 and 3.2.

**Figure 3.1: All young people**



**Figure 3.2: NEETs**



## The Prince's Trust YouGov Youth Index

The Youth Index measures how young people feel about the state of their lives today and how confident they are about their future.

Survey respondents were asked to indicate how happy or unhappy they felt about the following aspects of life: their work (education or training), home or accommodation, community, family relations, relationships with friends, money, qualifications, and physical and emotional health.

They were also asked how confident or unconfident they were about their future in the same areas.

The responses have been converted to a numerical scale (1-7) from which a percentage has been calculated to present a young person's happiness and confidence as a number out of 100, where 100 is entirely happy or confident and zero is not at all happy or confident.

The overall index number for young people's happiness is 71. The index number for young people's confidence about the future is 74. The overall Youth Index average is therefore 73.

See the individual figures for the different areas in the table below – Figure 4.

**Figure 4: The Prince's Trust YouGov Youth Index**

	Happiness Index	Confidence Index
Work	71	71
Home or accommodation	76	76
Community/local area	69	70
Family relations	79	81
Relationships with friends	77	79
Money	56	67
Qualifications	79	79
Physical health	69	74
Emotional health	67	73
<b>OVERALL NUMBER:</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>74</b>
<b>YOUTH INDEX:</b>	<b>73</b>	

## Those not in education, employment or training

The respective index calculation for those young people who are NEET is 64. As well as having a lower index figure overall, the young people who are NEET are consistently more unhappy and less confident in every aspect of the survey than those who are in employment, education or training.

## Why are young people unhappy?

Respondents could tick more than one box for the following questions, hence the percentages do not add to 100.

We asked those who said they were unhappy in their current work why this was the case. Some of the main responses were:

- 44 per cent are bored with what they do
- 39 per cent would rather do something else
- 36 per cent don't know what they want to do
- 22 per cent said they were in a dead end job
- 19 per cent are unemployed and want to find work

We asked those who said they were unhappy in their local communities why this was the case. Some of the main responses were:

- 62 per cent said there is no sense of community
- 54 per cent don't feel safe walking around at night
- 51 per cent said there is nothing to do in the area

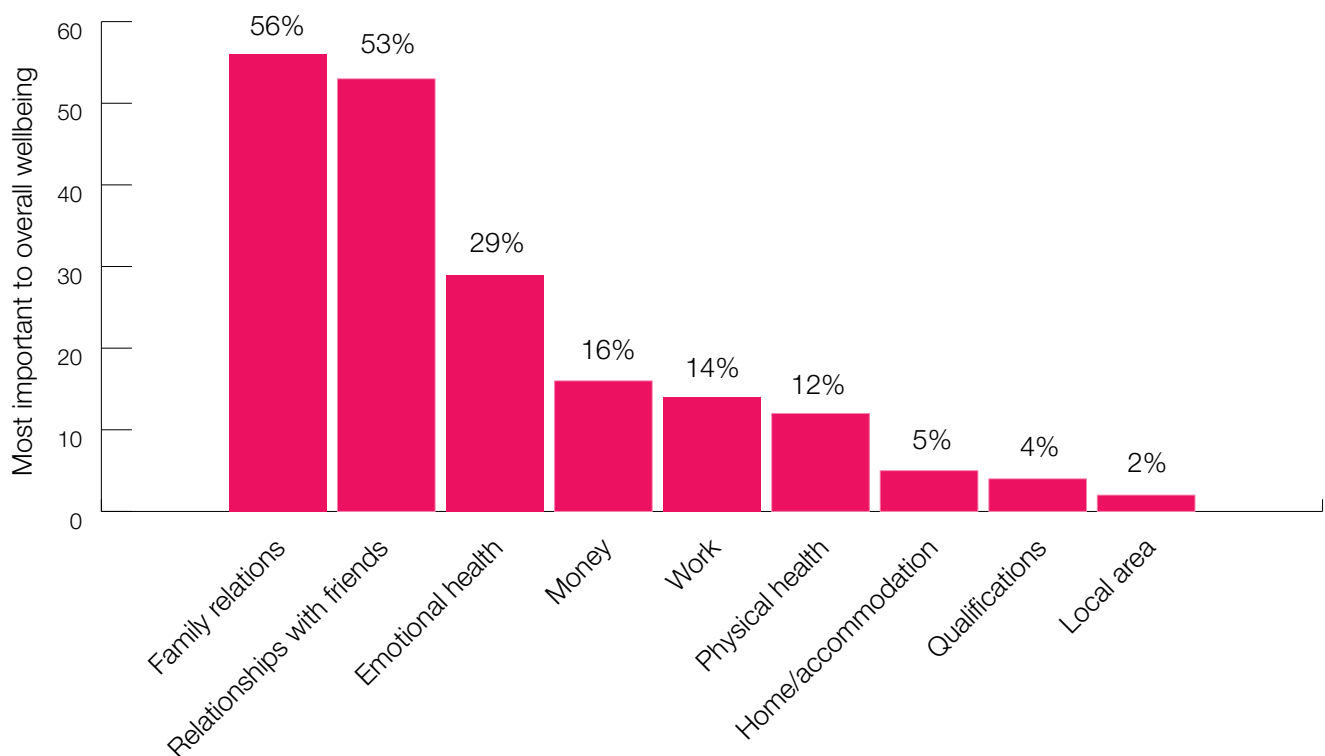
We asked those who said they were unhappy with their emotional health why this was the case. Some of the main responses were:

- 73 per cent feel stressed, anxious, depressed or in a bad mood
- 64 per cent feel low from time to time for no particular reason
- 43 per cent don't feel like they've got anything to look forward to
- 40 per cent don't have anyone to talk to about their problems
- 28 per cent said they don't have enough support in life in general

Young people were also asked which two areas of life they considered to be most important to their overall wellbeing (Figure 5).

Relationships with family (56 per cent) and friends (53 per cent) were considered key. Emotional health (29 per cent), money (16 per cent) and work (14 per cent) were also high priorities.

**Figure 5: What young people think is most important to their overall wellbeing**



A close-up portrait of a young woman with blonde hair and blue eyes, looking slightly to the right. She has two small piercings on her left eyebrow. She is wearing a black t-shirt with a yellow graphic of a lion and pink and blue text that is partially visible at the bottom. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

## Lisa Daly, 25

Before joining The Prince's Trust Team programme, I was finding it difficult to cope with life having grown up with many family problems. I was unemployed, depressed, drinking and self-harming.

On the Team programme I felt accepted and like I belonged to something for the first time in years. Team helped me develop my self-esteem and motivation, giving my life direction and purpose again and giving me a more positive outlook.

My life was on a downward spiral less than a year ago and I felt like I had no future. The Trust helped me transform my life, and I'm determined now not to be beaten by the traumatic events of my past.

Now everything's changed for me, I'm using what I've learned to help other young people turn their lives around too as a Prince's Trust Team Leader.

Throughout 2009, The Prince's Trust is rolling out new support for thousands of young people on its flagship Team programme, a 12-week course developing skills, confidence and emotional resilience.

New mental health awareness training will help Team Leaders identify signs and types of emotional health issues and develop new ways to support young people.

For more information about The Prince's Trust see [princes-trust.org.uk/wellbeing](http://princes-trust.org.uk/wellbeing) or freephone 0800 842 842 for more information about our programmes and support for young people.



**Prince's Trust**

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