

THE PRINCE'S TRUST MACQUARIE

YOUTH INDEX 2018



YOUTH
CAN
DO IT



FOREWORD

Our ninth Youth Index shows that the overall wellbeing of young people in the UK has continued to fall over the last twelve months and is at its lowest level since the study was first commissioned in 2009.

This report reveals that young people's happiness across every single area of their lives has never been lower, particularly in how they feel about their employment situation, their health and the amount of money they have.

Concerns about the job market are piling up on this generation, with one in four working young people feeling trapped in jobs they don't want. Even though most think they are capable of getting a better job, many struggle with a lack of opportunities to develop their skills and low self-confidence.

It is clear that this generation has a lot to give and we simply cannot allow their potential go to waste. If we turn a blind eye to the challenges young people face, there is a very real risk that their aspirations will stagnate as their hopes for the future fade – to the detriment of their careers and our nation's economy.

It is therefore imperative that we empower them with the skills, confidence and coping mechanisms they need to realise their ambitions, so that they can live, learn and earn. With our help, young people from all walks of life can go on to succeed in education, secure a job or train for a qualification in their chosen field.

Since joining The Trust in October, I have been very fortunate to meet a number of young people who have transformed their job prospects after receiving support from our incredible colleagues, volunteers or delivery partners.

Many tell me that the turning point in their journey with us was realising that someone believed in them, and being convinced to believe in themselves.

We continue to extend that same opportunity to young people in various different guises, from the range of enterprise and employability programmes we run at venues across the UK, to the growing number of services we deliver remotely through Prince's Trust Online.

Looking to the year ahead, our goal is to help 60,000 young people to find the confidence and courage to take the next step towards the future they deserve. It is only with your support, and with help from all corners of the public, private and charity sectors, that we will be able to reach our target. Join us now, and together we can work towards making the issues raised in this report a thing of the past.

Nick

Nick Stace
UK Chief Executive
The Prince's Trust



INTRODUCTION



This edition marks the fifth time we have supported The Prince's Trust Youth Index, which assesses the wellbeing of young people across the UK, and it is deeply concerning to see that a growing number of young people don't feel in control of their lives.

Ambitious and hard-working young people are feeling trapped and under pressure. While they are clearly prepared to work hard to achieve success, many feel stuck in a cycle of jobs they don't want, and constrained to take whatever job they can rather than focus on developing their career.

To add to this, many young people are worried about how much money they have, and how the current political and economic climate will impact their lives. For some, these factors may have contributed to their decision to take on more than one job. A number of young people are working more hours out of necessity rather than choice, in order to cover their outgoings, or in some cases, to support their family. Ultimately, many feel they aren't getting any closer to achieving their career goals, or reaching their full potential.

Organisations like The Prince's Trust can support young people to develop the skills and experience they need to excel at work and progress their careers. By providing financial support, training opportunities and mentoring, The Trust empowers young people from all walks of life to gain the self-belief and resilience they need to take steps towards a brighter future.

At Macquarie, we are proud to support The Trust to reach and empower thousands of young people to transform their lives every year. Considering the findings of this report, it is more important than ever that we stand together to help young people make the most of their talent, drive and ambition.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'David', with a stylized flourish underneath.

David Fass
CEO

Macquarie Group EMEA

Dr Morag Henderson, Senior Lecturer in Sociology at the Centre for Longitudinal Studies, UCL Institute of Education, said:

“Young people are dealing with more challenges than ever before, such as a highly competitive labour market, the rising costs of housing and the rising costs of higher education. This research is critical as it is raising awareness of the issues young people face.

“Much needs to be done to ensure that young people have the same opportunities as previous generations. The government should try to seek a better balance between the economy’s needs and the needs of young people as the benefits to society would be even greater if we had a healthy, happy generation of adolescents and young adults.”



BACKGROUND

The Youth Index is a national survey that gauges young people’s happiness and confidence across a range of areas, from working life to mental and physical health. It measures how young people are feeling about their lives today as well as their aspirations and fears for the future.

The findings are derived from the results of an online survey in which a sample of 2,194 16 to 25 year olds participated between 9th and 26th November 2017. The survey was conducted by YouGov on behalf of The Prince’s Trust and the figures have been weighted and are representative of 16 to 25 year olds in the UK.

The results of the survey are displayed in a happiness and confidence Index.

Of the sample:

- Ten per cent of respondents are not currently in education, employment or training (NEET). 14 per cent of these have been unemployed for six to twelve months and 44 per cent for 12 months or more
- Six per cent of respondents achieved fewer than five GCSEs graded A* to C, or the new grading of 4 to 9, or Scottish Standards, levels 1 or 2
- 21 per cent received free school meals either throughout their time at school or some of the time

Methodology

Survey participants are asked how happy and confident they are in different areas of their lives. The responses are then converted into a numerical scale, resulting in a number between 0 and 100, where 100 denotes participants being entirely happy or confident and zero being not at all happy or confident.

The results for 2018 have been mapped against the data from the previous eight reports to give a high-level view of how the wellbeing and outlooks of young people have changed over time.

This year’s study also takes a closer look at how young people feel about their employment situation, their career plans and aspirations, and the current economic and political climate.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Prince's Trust Macquarie Youth Index shows that young people's wellbeing, which dropped last year to its lowest level since the study was first commissioned, has fallen even further in 2018.

The Index, which measures young people's happiness and confidence across different aspects of their lives, has decreased by one point – from 70 to 69. Index scores for all areas attributed to wellbeing are at their lowest to date and not a single area saw an increase this year.

Young people are particularly worried about their emotional health, which was the area that saw the biggest drop in happiness. Other key concerns include work and education and the amount of money young people have; areas for which the study measured a decrease in happiness in the last twelve months.

Disillusion with the jobs market

The report reveals that many young people are resigned to working in jobs that will not enable them to reach their full potential, despite believing they are capable of achieving more.

- One in four (28 per cent) working young people feel trapped in a cycle of jobs they don't want

- Almost a third (29 per cent) of working young people have to take whatever jobs they can get rather than focus on developing their career
- 73 per cent of working young people think they are capable of getting a better job, but;
- 59 per cent of working young people feel they need opportunities to develop their skills before they can think about getting a better job
- More than half (54 per cent) of all young people believe a lack of self-confidence holds them back

Ambitions on hold

Young people are ambitious and have career plans in mind, however many are feeling pessimistic about their future success, and the opportunities available to help them develop skills and qualifications.

- The vast majority (72 per cent) of young people describe themselves as ambitious
- Two thirds of those who are working (67 per cent) think they could do more with their career than they are currently doing
- Almost a third (29 per cent) of young people think that one of the biggest challenges in pursuing a career is getting the right work experience

- Two in ten young people (21 per cent) think that their life will amount to nothing, no matter how hard they try

Fading hopes for a brighter future

Due to political and economic uncertainty, worries about the future are playing on young minds and many are feeling a lack of control over their lives, future careers and finances.

- Many young people (44 per cent) think there will be fewer job opportunities for their generation in the next three years
- More than half (59 per cent) say the unpredictable political climate makes them anxious about the future
- The number of young people who don't feel in control of their lives has increased by more than one third, from 28 per cent in our 2017 report to 39 per cent in this report

Wellbeing and resilience

Young people clearly equate having a job with a number of potential benefits to their overall wellbeing, but can find it hard to stay positive under the pressures of the turbulent job market.

- Half (49 per cent) of young people think that having a job is (or would be) good for their mental wellbeing, and 61 per cent agree that having a job does (or would) give them a sense of purpose

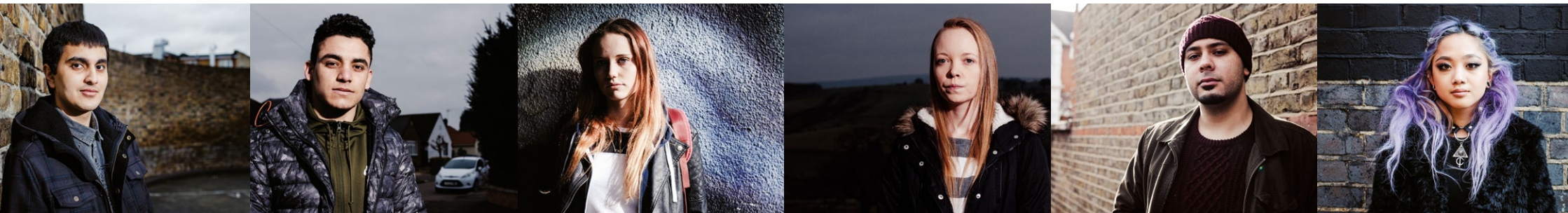
- Of those young people who are working, 44 per cent think they would struggle to stay positive if they lost their job, and 34 per cent say losing their job could put their mental health at risk

- More than one in four (28 per cent) young people would not ask for help if they were feeling overwhelmed by something

Gender divide

The report highlights significant differences between the views held by young men and those held by young women, particularly when it comes to how they feel about their future prospects.

- Young women are more likely to think they put too much pressure on themselves to achieve success (50 per cent of young women, compared to 34 per cent of young men)
- Young women are more likely to think a lack of self-confidence holds them back (46 per cent men, 62 per cent women)
- 57 per cent of young women worry about 'not being good enough in general', compared to 41 per cent of men

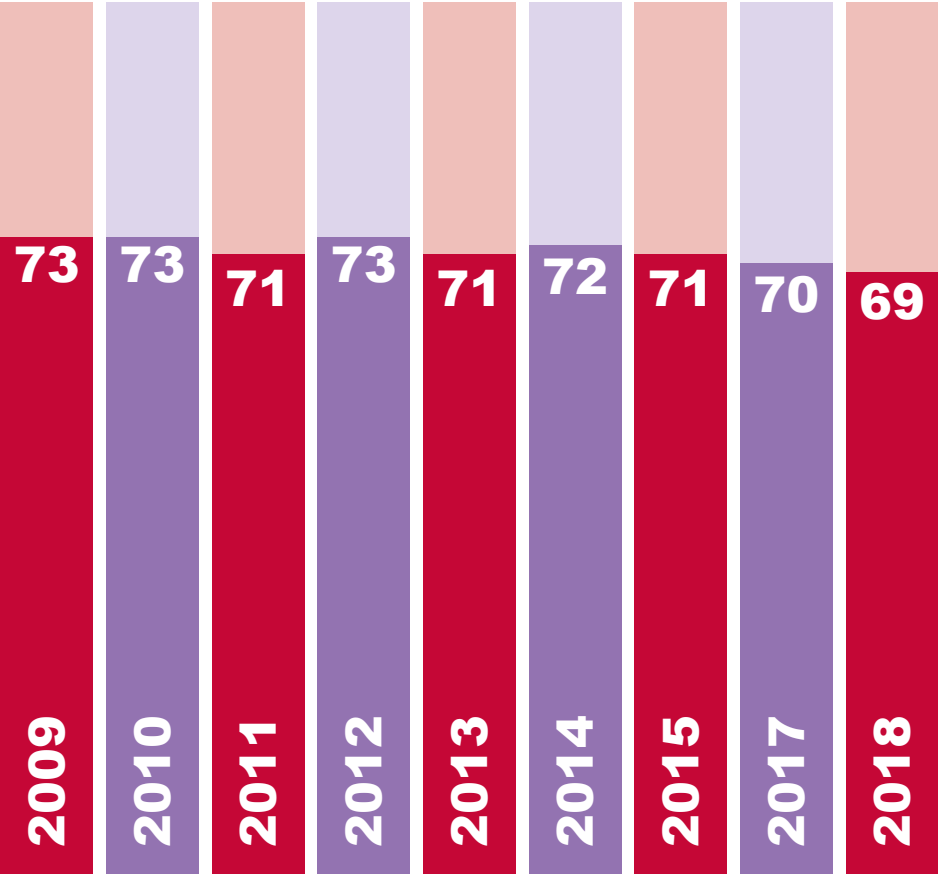


Youth Index Findings

The YouGov survey asked young people how happy or unhappy they felt about various aspects of their life, including their employment situation, education, social standing, mental and physical health, relationships and family life.

On each of these themes, the young people were asked to consider how confident they felt about their current circumstances and how confident they felt about their future. Worryingly, the overall Index score has dropped to its lowest ever level since the study was first commissioned.

Overall Youth Index scores for 2018 and previous years (both happiness and confidence Indexes combined)



N.B. There is no data for 2016 as The Trust published a different report that year for its 40th anniversary. Search '40 Life-Changing Years report'.

Year-on-year breakdown of Youth Index scores

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2017	2018
Work / education	71	70	68	70	69	70	69	68	67
Home / accommodation	76	76	76	78	76	76	75	71	75
Community / local area	69	69	68	69	68	70	69	68	68
Family relationships	79	81	78	80	79	79	79	78	77
Relationships with friends	77	78	75	77	74	75	73	73	72
Money	56	56	57	58	58	58	58	65	56
Qualifications	79	77	76	77	76	76	77	74	76
Physical health	69	71	68	71	69	69	67	65	63
Emotional health	67	70	67	67	66	67	64	61	57

HappinessConfidence

WELLBEING ANALYSIS

Happiness

This year, the overall level of happiness young people feel in their lives has sunk to its lowest ever level, down by one point to a score of 68.

This exceeds last year's drop to a score of 69, which was in itself the lowest score recorded since the Youth Index was first commissioned in 2009. This year, the biggest declines in happiness relate to young people's work or education, their emotional health and money. Of these, happiness with emotional health saw the most significant decrease, falling four points since last year to a score of just 57.

None of the areas attributed to overall wellbeing have seen an increase this year and all related scores are at their lowest to date. Money remains the lowest ranking aspect of young people's happiness, although the dramatic drop in happiness with emotional wellbeing puts this area almost on a par with money for the first time.



Confidence

The confidence young people have about the future is at the lowest level we have seen in our research.

This year's confidence score has dropped to 69, from a score of 70 last year.

Worries about money, qualifications and emotional health have contributed to the lowest confidence score on the Youth Index since we started our research, with the score for emotional health dropping two points to 65 – the lowest level so far.

In addition to concerns about their emotional health, this year young people have also said they are more worried about their physical health than last year, and their relationships with friends.

PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCE COMPARISONS

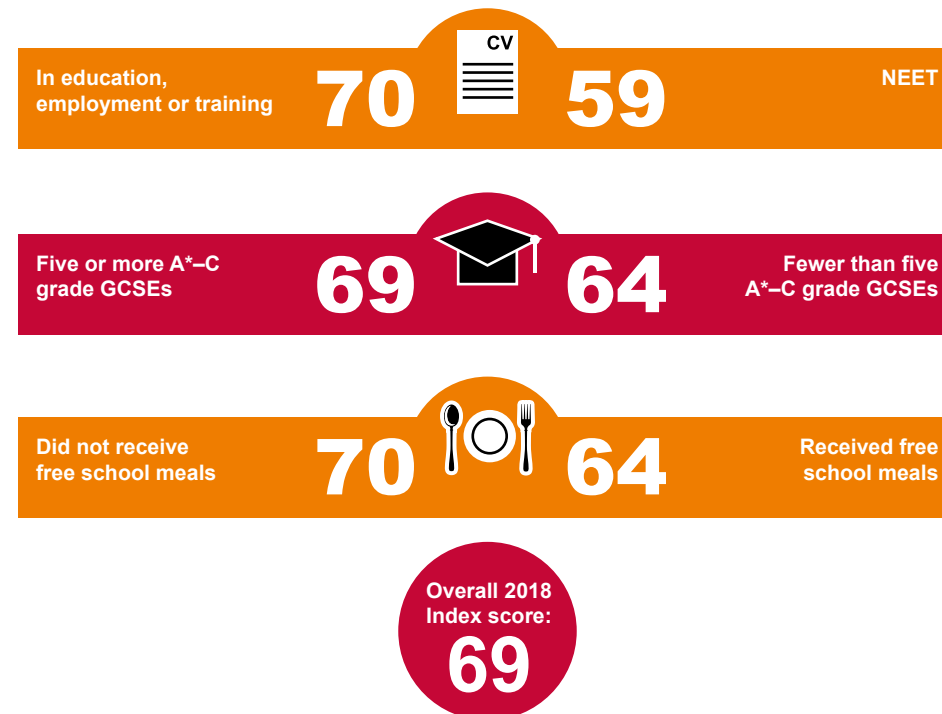
The confidence and happiness of young people varies according to their different personal circumstances.

Disadvantage, unemployment and underachievement at school are all factors that contribute to a lower Index score, with young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) expressing the lowest overall score for their wellbeing and confidence.

The Index also reveals that how young people did at school has an impact on their outlook, as young people with fewer than five A*-C grade GCSEs* have a score of 64, which is five points lower than the score for young people who have five or more A*-C grade GCSEs*.

The graphic below demonstrates the difference in Index scores according to whether young people are NEET, achieved five or more A*-C grade GCSEs* or whether they received free school meals (which is used as an indicator of low income background).

2018 Youth Index scores split by specific demographic factors



*Or the new grading of 4 to 9, or Scottish Standards, levels 1 or 2.

DISILLUSION WITH THE JOBS MARKET

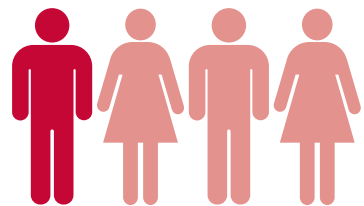
An alarming number of young people feel confined by their circumstances and are at risk of stagnating in jobs that do not enable them to reach their full potential.

When it comes to their working life, apprehension about the jobs market and a perceived lack of development opportunities is causing many young people to put their career aspirations to one side.

While 73 per cent of working young people think they are capable of getting a better job, many are finding it difficult to progress. 59 per cent of working young people feel they need opportunities to develop their skills before they can think about getting a better job, and more than half (54 per cent) of all young people believe a lack of self-confidence holds them back.

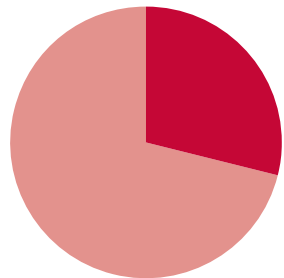
The Index scores show that money remains the biggest area of concern for young people when it comes to their wellbeing, which may explain why 41 per cent of young people who are in employment are compromising when it comes to the hours they work, either wanting to take on more hours or working more hours than they would like.

One in ten (12 per cent) working young people currently work more than one job, and 58 per cent of them have to do so out of necessity. A quarter (25 per cent) have to work more than one job just to cover their living expenses, while almost one in ten (7 per cent) are working to pay off debts and 18 per cent need the money so that they can support their family.



*** 1 in 4**

(28 per cent) of working young people **feel trapped in a cycle of jobs they don't want.**



*** Almost 1/3**

(29 per cent) of working young people say they **have to take whatever jobs they can get** rather than focus on developing their career.

DANIEL BALL

“Being made redundant for the third time put me in a really low place. I didn’t have anyone to turn to and just had to make ends meet by taking a temporary job and signing on to receive benefits. Having a job with an expiry date meant that the worry was hanging over my head.

“I decided to look into starting my own business after hearing about The Prince’s Trust Enterprise programme through my job centre coach. I had an idea for it but, with a really negative credit history, I didn’t think anyone would give me the loan I needed to get started.

“To have The Trust provide me with training and the chance to pitch my idea to experts, as well as start-up funds, was amazing. With their support I was able to get my business, Chocolate Treasures, up and running in January 2017. We now employ 30 sales reps and have big plans to expand the company.

“Without the Enterprise programme, there would be no Chocolate Treasures and I would either be working a job that wouldn’t stretch me or be back on Universal Credit.

“To go from being unemployed and feeling like a nobody to being self-employed and employing other people is everything I’ve ever dreamed of. It was only possible because of The Prince’s Trust.”



AMBITIONS ON HOLD

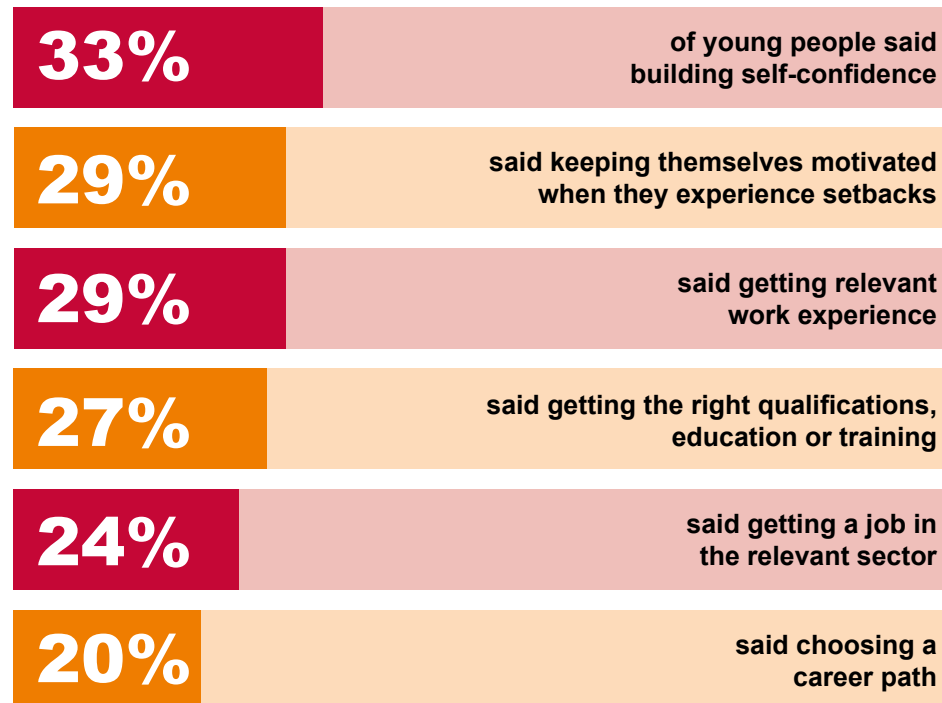
Young people feel ambitious about their career, but a lack of confidence and skills are still significant barriers to overcome.

The vast majority (72 per cent) of young people describe themselves as ambitious, and two thirds of those who are working (67 per cent) think they could do more with their career than they are currently doing. More than one in three young people (36 per cent) have a career path in mind and know what steps they need to take to achieve it, and a quarter (25 per cent) have a few ideas for a career path, but just need to narrow down their options.

Despite this focus and ambition, more than half of young people (54 per cent) feel a lack of self-confidence holds them back. In addition, the majority (59 per cent) of young people who are working feel that they need opportunities to develop their skills before they can think about getting a better job.

Worryingly, two in ten young people (21 per cent) think that their life will amount to nothing, no matter how hard they try, and for those out of employment, education or training, more than a quarter (29 per cent) are now feeling less optimistic about their career aspirations.

What will be the biggest challenge when it comes to pursuing a career?



FADING HOPES FOR A BRIGHTER FUTURE

The research this year shines a light on the impact political and economic uncertainty is having on young people and their perceptions about their future careers and finances.

Worries about the future are playing on young minds. Many young people (44 per cent) think there will be fewer job opportunities in the next three years, and more than half (59 per cent) say the unpredictable political climate makes them anxious about the future.

Young people are feeling a lack of control over their lives, and are pessimistic about their chances to achieve success. The number of young people who don't feel in control of their lives has increased by more than one third, from 28 per cent in our 2017 report to 39 per cent in this report.

Despite half (52 per cent) of young people agreeing that hard work will determine their levels of success, one in four (25 per cent) feel their family background is going to have the most impact on how well they do in life.

Money worries are also front of mind. A third of young people (35 per cent) are worried about the current economic climate, and one in four young people (26 per cent) say they think they will have a worse standard of living than their parents or guardians.

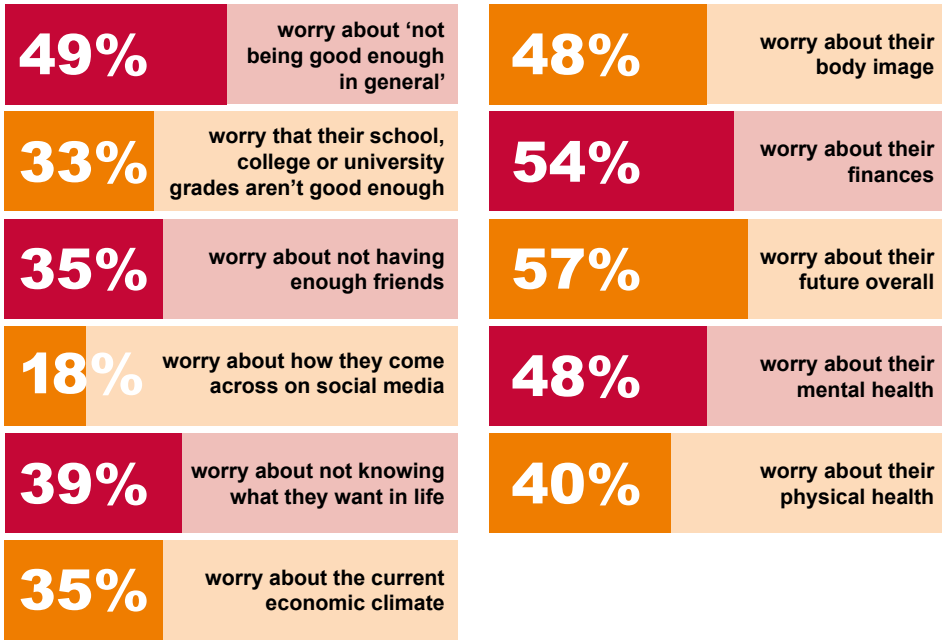


WELLBEING AND RESILIENCE

According to this year's Index scores, the happiness young people experience in relation to their emotional health has plummeted by four points, from 61 to 57. This is the most dramatic drop in any area attributed to wellbeing since records were first made in 2009.

The graphic below shows how self-doubt, fears for the future and concern about money are among the biggest factors weighing on young minds. Worryingly, more than one in four young people (28 per cent) would not ask for help if they were feeling overwhelmed by something.

Concerns expressed by young people in response to being asked what they worry about



Work and wellbeing

Almost two thirds of young people (61 per cent) agree that having a job gives (or would give) them a sense of purpose, and half (49 per cent) think that having a job is (or would be) good for their mental wellbeing.

While young people clearly value the impact a job can have on their wellbeing, it can be difficult for many to stay resilient in a challenging job market. Given that 47 per cent of young people think they don't cope well with setbacks in general, it is little surprise that 44 per cent of working young people say they would struggle to stay positive if they lost their job, and 34 per cent say losing their job could put their mental health at risk.

BILLY HARPER

"My ADHD medication made me hungry at night which meant I couldn't sleep. Sometimes, I'd lie there crying because I was so exhausted.

"I was bullied at college and was so desperate to fit in, I got involved with this group who'd bunk off in the afternoon to take drugs. College got fed up with my absences and told me not to come back for my second year.

"Before I knew it, I was addicted. I stole, got into fights, and got so depressed I started self-harming. It was the only way I could cope.

"I did Get into Construction with The Prince's Trust first, and then Make Your Mark with

Marks & Spencer. I was so nervous about interacting with customers, I physically shook if they asked me anything. The person I was buddied with was brilliant though, and helped me get used to store life.

"Getting a job at M&S meant everything to me. Yes, the job was tiring, but I enjoyed the routine much more than sitting around smoking. And that made me get the help I needed.

"I also was given a grant from The Prince's Trust, called a Development Award, so I could hire a moped and commute more easily from my home to the store. I'd never have been able to accept my job otherwise. The Prince's Trust has helped me to change my life."



GENDER DIVIDE

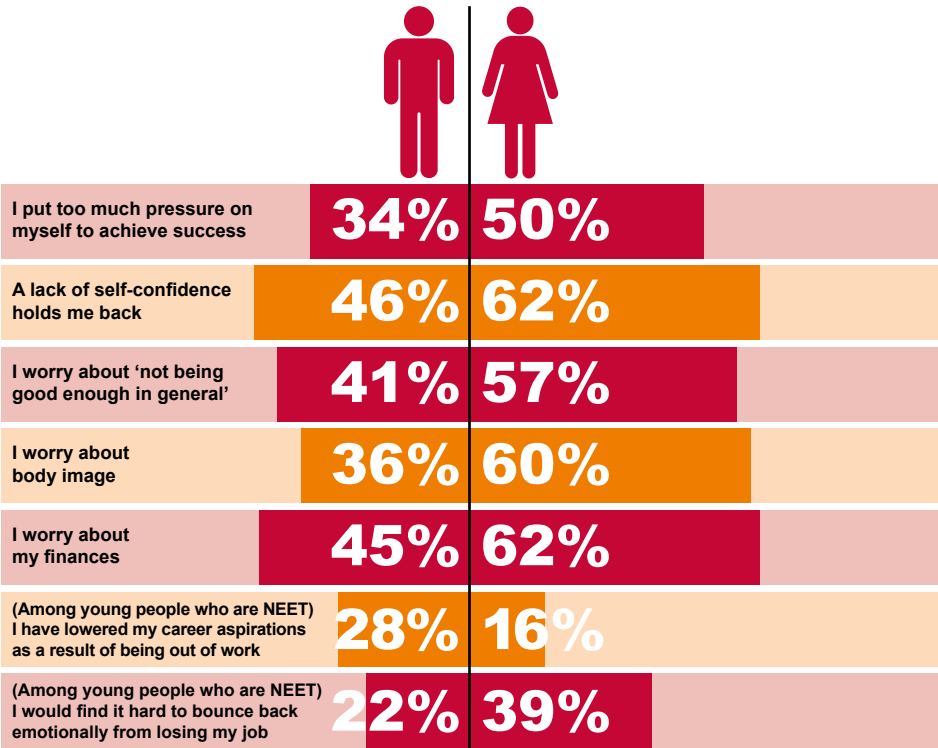
Young women are more likely than young men to put too much pressure on themselves to achieve success, as well as feel that their self-confidence holds them back.

In addition, young women are more likely to admit they worry about 'not being good enough in general', and that they think building their self-confidence will be the biggest challenge when pursuing a career. Young women who are working are also more likely to find it difficult to bounce back emotionally after losing their job.

Worries about body image affect significantly more young women than young men, as do concerns about their finances. Of the young women who have more than one job, almost a fifth (18 per cent) say they have to work an additional job in order to cover their living expenses.

When speaking to young people who are currently not in employment, education or training, young men were more likely to say they have lowered their career aspirations as a result of being unemployed.

Sentiments expressed by young women, compared to young men



CHLOE CAUSER

"I started taking out loans after I was made redundant, and my debt got out of control. At one point, I was on the brink of homelessness and to top it off, I was in an abusive relationship. My confidence was at rock bottom and I started taking drugs to cope."

"Things would have continued that way if I hadn't found help to put my life back together. I got financial, housing and domestic support from Wiser Wonga Devon and Cornwall Housing and a fresh start through The Trust's Get into Admin course."

"At first, I thought it was an opportunity to learn some skills, but it was much more than that. At a time when I didn't think I had anything to offer anyone, The Trust believed in me and helped me to identify skills I never knew I had."

"After the course, I secured an apprenticeship at Plymouth City Council. I loved working there and I wanted to use the skills I'd learned and really prove to myself what I could do."

"Looking back, I can't believe how far I've come. I've got a flat of my own, a full time job at the Council and I'm hoping to progress into a role where I can start supporting other people."



ABOUT THE PRINCE'S TRUST

The Prince's Trust has supported young people across the UK to move into work, training or education for more than 40 years.

The UK's leading youth charity offers a range of services which give 11 to 30 year-olds who are unemployed or struggling at school the practical and financial support they need to stabilise their lives, helping to raise aspirations, develop self-esteem and enhance skills for work, enabling them to live, learn and earn.

A number of the young people helped by the charity face significant challenges, such as those in or leaving care, those who have been in trouble with the law, or those dealing with issues such as homelessness or mental health problems.

Founded by His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales in 1976, The Trust has helped 870,000 young people to date, generating in excess of £1.4bn in value to society by enabling these young people to realise their full potential. Three in four young people supported by the charity move into work, education or training.

With more support, The Trust can help even more young people to access its services and transform their lives.

In response to the issues raised in the report, The Prince's Trust is refining its eligibility criteria to reflect the evolving needs of the young people it supports, for example those who are underemployed. These changes will enable even more young people to access the charity's services and with a greater degree of flexibility. Already, provision is available online for young people who are working or studying up to 35 hours per week and want to improve their employability skills or explore the idea of starting their own business, to access support in a flexible way that fits around any part-time work or studying they are doing.

Prince's Trust Online, launched in September 2017, is a new service which enables young people anywhere in the UK to access employability and enterprise programmes online via smartphones, tablets and computers. The service also allows users to benefit from Prince's Trust programmes even if they can't attend in person because of where they live, or their personal circumstances, meaning even more young people will be able to overcome barriers in their lives. More services will be added to Prince's Trust Online over the coming year.

For more information about the charity, search 'Prince's Trust'.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Prince's Trust would like to thank the young people who are featured as case studies in this report.

The Trust would also like to thank Macquarie for supporting this research and Dr Morag Henderson, from University College London's Institute of Education, who provided commentary which is featured in this report.





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