



THE PRINCE'S TRUST MACQUARIE

YOUTH INDEX 2017



Prince's Trust



MACQUARIE

FOREWORD



Our eighth Youth Index shows that the overall wellbeing of young people in the UK has dropped to its lowest level since the study was launched in 2009.

This report reveals that more than a quarter of young people do not feel in control of their lives, and that a crisis of confidence in their own abilities and future prospects is preventing them from realising their true potential.

Equally shocking is that many young people feel trapped by their situation, with almost a fifth saying they do not have the ability to change their circumstances if they want to. Things are even worse for young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEET), who are more likely to be unhappy and lacking in self-belief than those who are.

The potential consequences of failing to help these young people who are so clearly in need of support have huge implications for our nation's future. We simply cannot allow them to be paralysed by their circumstances and self-doubt.

The most effective thing we can do to empower young people is to help them develop the skills and coping mechanisms they need to move into work, education or training. Now more than ever, we must work together across the public, private and charity sectors to ensure provisions are in place to give them the support they so urgently need.

I regularly meet young people who tell me securing a job after receiving support from The Prince's Trust was a pivotal moment in their lives, and who often credit the experience with transforming their outlook on life. The programmes we run at The Trust are designed to propel young people towards this same outcome, offering practical experience that will improve their job prospects while at the same time increasing their confidence and self-worth.

In the year ahead, we aim to help 60,000 vulnerable young people to believe in themselves again and take steps towards a brighter future, but we will need support from every quarter in order to reach our target. By working with us, you can be a part of the solution to the issues raised in this report and help young people to regain control of their lives.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Martina'.

Dame Martina Milburn DCVO CBE
Chief Executive
The Prince's Trust

INTRODUCTION



This is the third time we have supported The Prince's Trust Macquarie Youth Index, which assesses the wellbeing of young people across the UK, and it is alarming to see the latest results show young people are becoming less happy.

Young people from all walks of life are feeling increasingly uneasy about their future and this is eroding the happiness and confidence they feel in many aspects of their lives.

Concerns about job prospects, how to cope with challenges at work and school, and the potential impact of recent political events are all weighing on young minds.

Some young people feel so disillusioned that they think their lives will amount to nothing, no matter how hard they try. Without the right support, they may never know what it's like to reach their full potential and reap the benefits this can bring.

Organisations like The Prince's Trust can help these young people to develop the confidence and skills they so desperately need to build the future they want.

By providing practical and financial support, vocational training and mentoring, The Trust helps tens of thousands of young people to transform their lives every year.

At Macquarie, we are proud to be supporting The Trust so that it can continue to help vulnerable young people to improve their life chances – a task which is more important than ever before given the findings of this report.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "David".

David Fass

CEO

Macquarie Group, EMEA





GIVEN THE PROFOUND UNCERTAINTY SURROUNDING RECENT POLITICAL EVENTS AND THE FACT THAT YOUNG PEOPLE FACE THE WORST JOB PROSPECTS IN DECADES, IT'S NOT SURPRISING TO READ THAT ONE IN FOUR YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 16 TO 25 DON'T FEEL IN CONTROL OF THEIR LIVES. ALTHOUGH IT'S OBVIOUSLY ALARMING THAT THESE CONCERNS PLAY ON YOUNG MINDS, IT'S ENCOURAGING TO SEE THAT YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE AN INTEREST IN ACTIVELY SHAPING THEIR OWN FUTURE.

**PROFESSOR LOUISE ARSENEAULT
ESRC MENTAL HEALTH LEADERSHIP FELLOW
AT THE INSTITUTE OF PSYCHIATRY
PSYCHOLOGY & NEUROSCIENCE (IOPPN)
KING'S COLLEGE LONDON**

BACKGROUND

This is the eighth annual Prince's Trust Youth Index. It takes an in-depth look into the views and outlooks of young people aged 16 to 25. The Index gauges young people's feelings about their lives today and their feelings about the future.

The survey results are displayed in a happiness index and a confidence index.

A sample of 2,215 16 to 25 year-olds took part in an online survey, conducted by YouGov on behalf of The Prince's Trust between 3rd and 28th November 2016. The figures have been weighted and are representative of 16 to 25 year-olds in the UK.

Of the sample:

- 10 per cent of respondents are not currently in education, employment or training (NEET). 16 per cent of these have been unemployed for six to 12 months and 12 per cent for 12 months or more
- 8 per cent of respondents achieved fewer than five A*-C GCSEs or Scottish Standards levels 1 and 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 how confident they are in different areas of their lives. The responses are converted into a numerical scale, resulting in a number between 0 and 100. A score of 100 denotes participants being entirely happy or confident and zero being not at all happy or confident.

The 2017 results have been mapped against the data from the past seven years to give a top-level view of how the wellbeing and mindsets of young people have changed over time.

This year's study also explores the theme of young people not feeling in control of their lives, intersected with other demographic differences, including:

- Those not in education, employment or training (NEETs)
- Those who are experiencing or have experienced mental health problems
- Those who experienced problems during their school or college years that distracted them from their studies

EXECUTIVE

The Prince's Trust Macquarie Youth Index reveals that young people's wellbeing is at its lowest ever level.

The Index, which measures levels of happiness and confidence, has decreased by one point – down from 71 to 70.

Overall happiness with emotional health has dropped to its lowest level to date compared to findings in previous years, and there has also been a decline in how happy young people are about relationships with their family and their physical health. None of the areas attributed to wellbeing have increased Index scores this year. Employment status also has a significant impact on the Index. Young people who are in education, training or work have a score of 71. This compares to a score of 61 compared to those who are NEET.

A generation that feels out of control

The report shows that many young people feel that they have no control over their lives, are full of self-doubt and feel trapped by their circumstances.

→ More than one in ten (16 per cent) think their life will amount to nothing, no matter how hard they try

→ A fifth of young people (18 per cent) do not think they have the ability to change their circumstances if they want to

→ The situation is even worse for NEET young people, who are more likely to feel worried about their circumstances and the future

Mounting pressures of turbulent times

The Index shows that many young people are worried about the current political climate and feel anxious about how recent events may affect their future.

Key findings

→ 58 per cent of young people said recent political events have made them anxious about their future

→ 34 per cent of young people think they will have a worse standard of living than their parents

→ 42 per cent of young people feel traditional goals like owning a house or getting a steady job are unrealistic

SUMMARY

School years

According to the research, an alarming number of young people hid their problems and lacked self-confidence while they were at school or college.

Key findings

→ Half of young people (48 per cent) experienced problems during their school or college years that prevented them from focusing on their studies

→ Of those who experienced a problem, almost half (46 per cent) did not talk to anyone about their situation

→ 45 per cent of young people did not believe in themselves when they were at school

→ Those who received free school meals throughout school or achieved fewer than five A*-C grade GCSEs are more likely to have experienced challenges during their school years and are more inclined to self-doubt

Gender divide

The research shows significant differences between the genders, with young women more likely to feel they have no control over their lives than young men.

Key findings:

→ 31 per cent of young women do not feel in control of their lives, compared to 26 per cent of young men

→ 69 per cent of young women who do not feel in control of their lives said a lack of self-confidence holds them back, compared to 53 per cent of young men

→ 55 per cent of young women who do not feel in control of their lives said mental health issues make it hard for them to progress in life

Mental health

The report demonstrates that young people are concerned that the stigma they feel exists around mental health issues could hold them back in life.

Key findings:

→ 78 per cent of young people think there is a lot or some stigma attached to mental health issues

→ A quarter (24 per cent) of young people would not confide in someone if they thought they were experiencing a mental health problem

→ 32 per cent of young people who would not talk to anyone if they thought they were experiencing a mental health problem think admitting to having a mental health problem could affect their future job prospects



Youth Index Findings

Young people were asked various questions to determine how happy or unhappy they felt about different aspects of their life, including: work, education, social standing, mental health, physical health and relationships.

On these themes, the young people were asked how confident they felt about their current circumstances and how confident they felt about their future. Figure 1 shows that the overall Index score this year is 70.

Figure 1: Youth Index scores for the past seven years (both happiness and confidence Indexes combined)

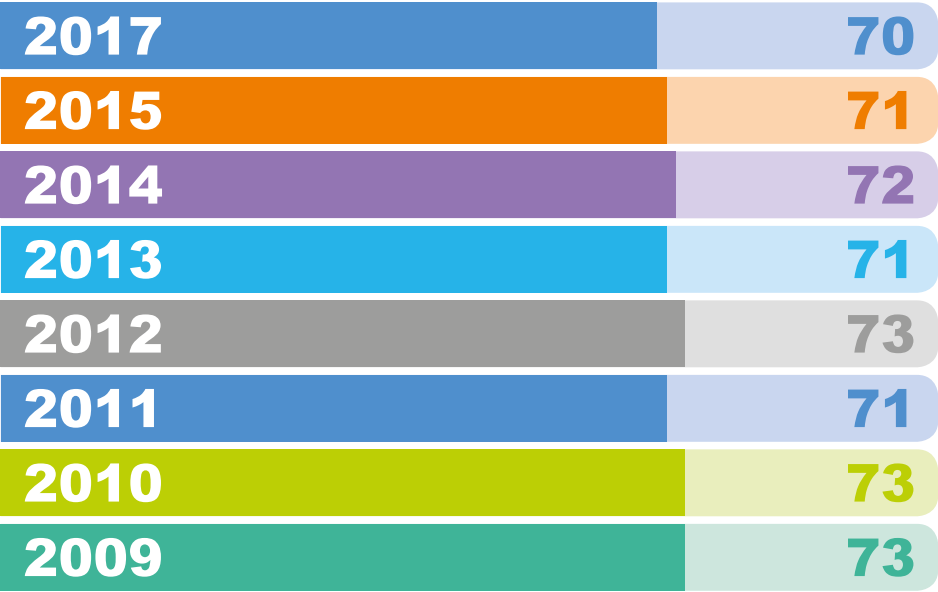
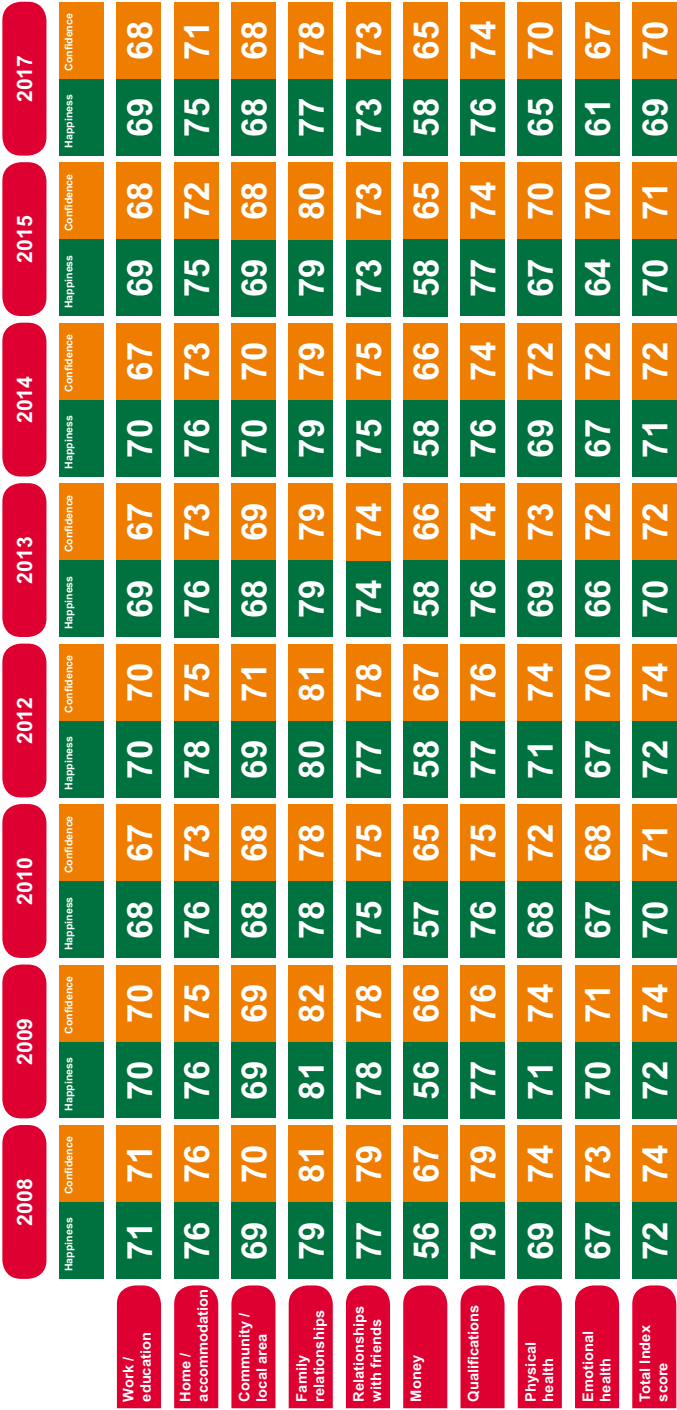


Figure 2: The Prince’s Trust Macquarie Youth Index year-on-year breakdown



YOUNG PEOPLE'S WELLBEING

Happiness

Overall, the happiness young people feel in their lives is at its lowest ever level.

In this year's survey young people report less happiness with their emotional health and physical health.

Overall happiness with emotional health appears to have dropped significantly in relation to previous years. There has also been a decline in how happy young people are about their relationships with family. In this eighth year of the Youth Index, scores across the aforementioned themes are at their lowest to date.

None of the areas attributed to overall wellbeing have seen an increase. Young people are particularly concerned about the amount of money they have, with this being the lowest ranking aspect for their happiness. The happiness score relating to the amount of money respondents have is the same as in the 2015 and 2014 findings.

Confidence

The confidence young people have about the future is also at its lowest ever level.

The confidence young people have in their emotional health is at its lowest point in the Index, as is their confidence in their home / accommodation.

There has been a decrease in the confidence young people have in their family relationships, whilst relationships with friends remain in-line with the 2015 findings. Whilst young people's confidence in their emotional health has also decreased, physical health remains consistent with the 2015 findings.

Confidence in the amount of money young people have has remained at its lowest point for the third year running.

COMPARISONS BETWEEN PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

It comes as no surprise that the level of young people's confidence and happiness varies depending on their personal circumstances.

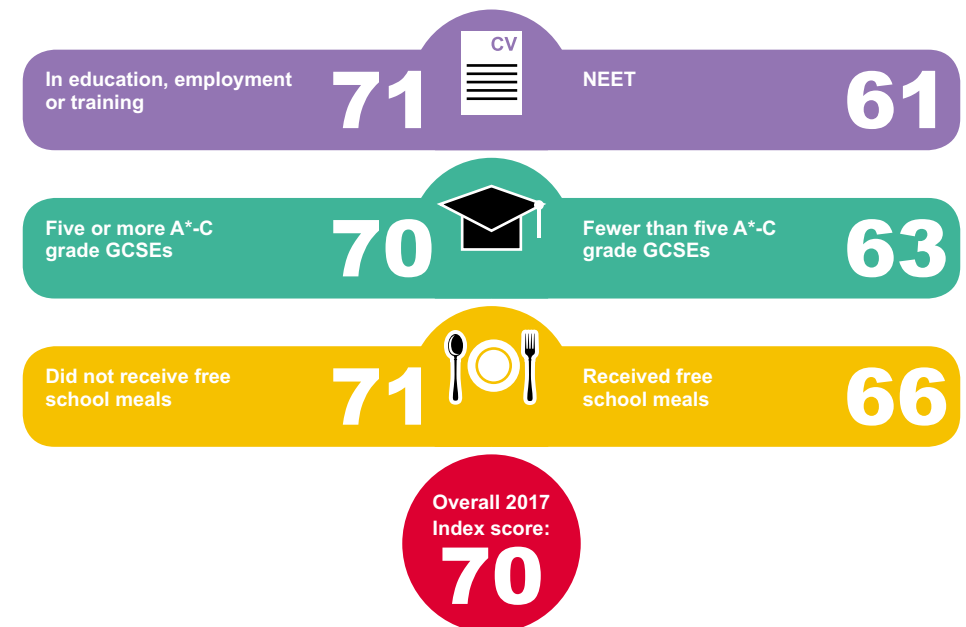
Poverty, unemployment or underachievement at school are all factors that contribute to a negative impact on overall wellbeing.

Unemployment has the most detrimental impact on the scores, with young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) proving to be the least happy or confident in their lives. The Index is also impacted by how well young people did at school. Young people who have fewer than five A*-C grade GCSEs rate their happiness

and confidence at just 63, which is seven points lower than those who achieved five grades or more.

Figure 3 shows the difference in Index scores according to whether young people are NEET, whether or not they achieved five or more A*-C grade GCSEs or whether they received free school meals during their time at school (which is used as an indicator of poverty).

Figure 3: 2017 Index scores split by specific demographic factors



A GENERATION THAT FEELS OUT OF CONTROL

An alarming number of young people feel paralysed by their circumstances and crippling self-doubt.

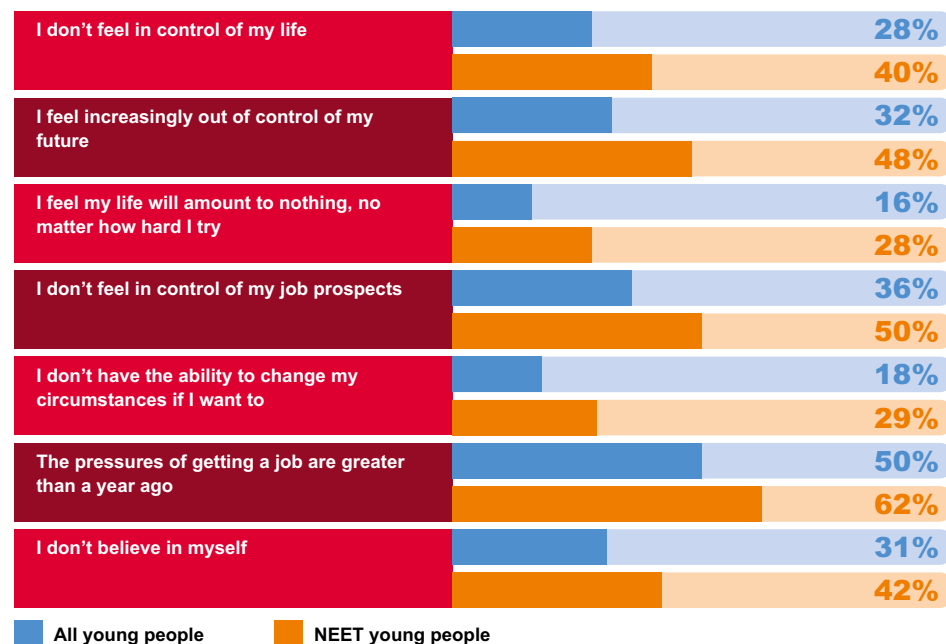
More than a quarter (28 per cent) do not feel in control of their lives and 16 per cent go as far as to say they think their life will amount to nothing, no matter how hard they try. Many young people feel trapped by their circumstances, with almost a fifth (18 per cent) stating that they do not have the ability to change their circumstances if they want to.

Job prospects are a major concern for young people. Half (50 per cent) feel that the pressures of getting a job are greater than a year ago. A third (36 per cent) do not feel in control of their job prospects.

These worrying levels of despair are underpinned by low levels of self-belief, with 61 per cent of young people who do not feel in control of their lives stating that a lack of self-confidence holds them back.

The situation is even worse for NEET young people, who are consistently more likely to feel worried about their current circumstances and future.

Figure 4: Sentiments held by all young people compared to NEET young people



SHANNON
YEARSLEY

“

BEFORE THE PRINCE'S TRUST, I COULDN'T DO ANYTHING BY MYSELF. I FELT LIKE I WAS IN A HOLE AND I COULDN'T CLIMB OUT. I SUFFERED FROM A TROUBLED HOME LIFE WHICH LED TO ANXIETY AND OCD. AFTER DEVELOPING AN EATING DISORDER I BEGAN STARVING MYSELF CAUSING MY WEIGHT TO PLUMMET.

I was constantly struggling with my self-image, my confidence, everything. Quiet and under confident, I withdrew from the world feeling totally helpless.

My mum became my protector, talking for me and accompanying me if I had to leave the house. It was her suggestion that we contact The Prince's Trust to get my life back on track.

Initially the thought of mixing with other young people was daunting but it was one of the best things I've ever done. It let me find my voice and take control of my life again.

By the end of the programme I'd completed a work placement at a local counselling service and spoken to an audience of more than 100 people.

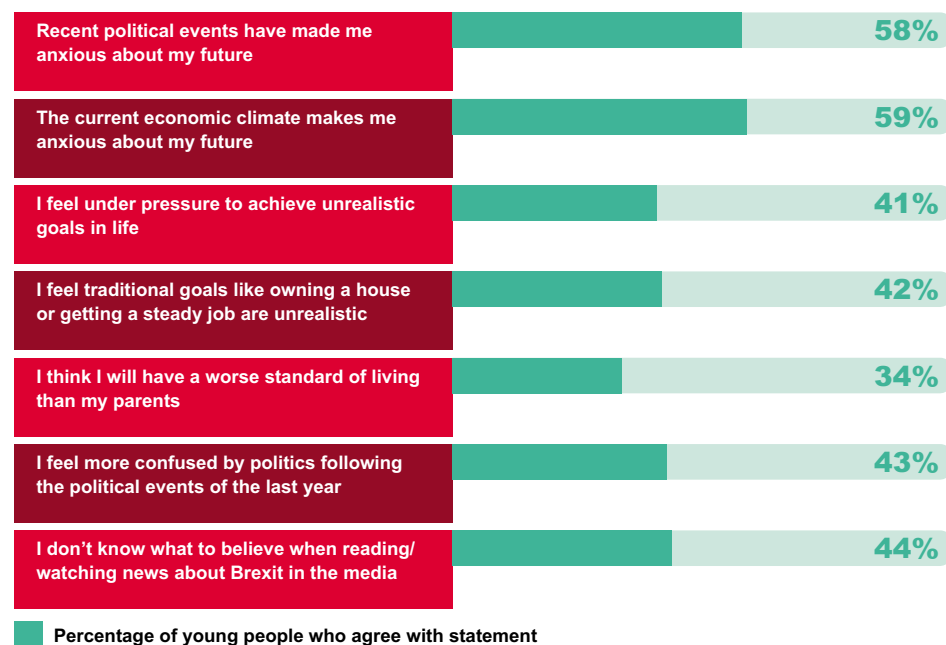
I'm so grateful to The Prince's Trust. The work they do gives people like me the chance to better ourselves, overcome the fears and challenges we face and take control of our lives for good.

MOUNTING PRESSURES OF TURBULENT TIMES

The research shows that the current political climate is taking a toll on young people, who feel more anxious about their future in the wake of recent world events.

Concerns about these and the possible effect on the economy appear to have had a detrimental impact on the hopes and aspirations of young people – with traditional life goals such as owning a house feeling out of reach – and many are now expecting to be worse off than their parents.

Figure 5: Concerns expressed by young people about the current political and economic climate



SCHOOL YEARS

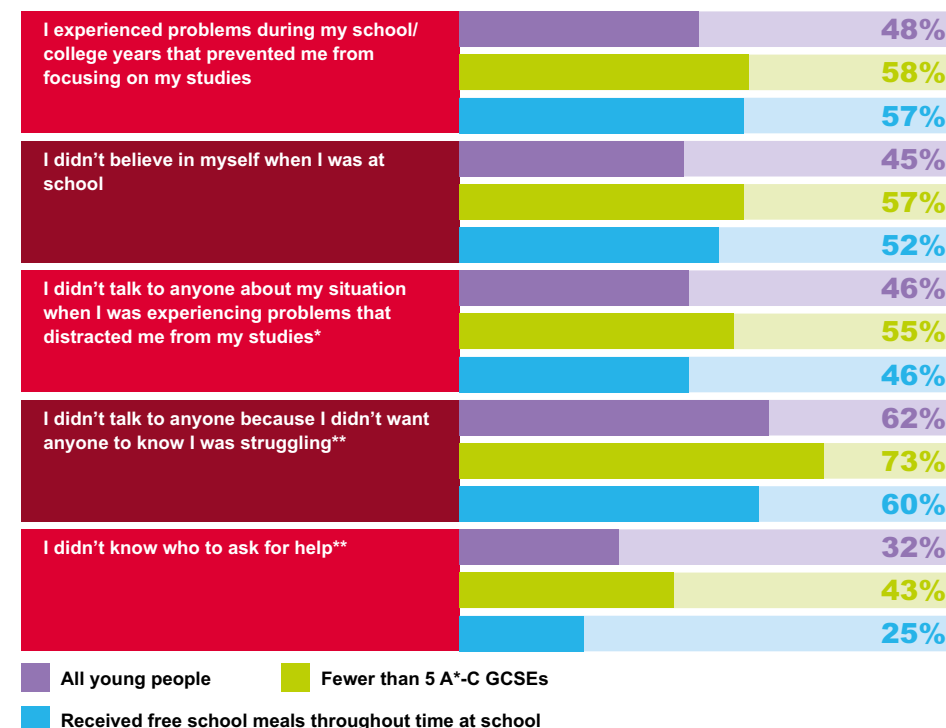
The research examines young people's perceptions of how well they coped with problems while they were at school or college. Half (48 per cent) experienced problems during their school or college years that prevented them from focusing on their studies.

Worryingly, of those who experienced a problem, almost half (46 per cent) did not talk to anyone about their situation. This was largely because they did not want anyone to know they were struggling or did not think

talking to someone would solve the problem. A staggering 45 per cent of young people also said they did not believe in themselves when they were at school.

The findings also show that those who received free school meals throughout school or achieved fewer than five A*-C grade GCSEs are more likely to have experienced significant challenges during their school years, are more inclined to self-doubt and less likely to seek help when faced with a problem that distracts them from their studies.

Figure 6: Sentiments expressed by young people about their school years



*These findings represent the views of young people who experienced a problem that distracted them from their studies while they were at school, not the whole sample

**These findings represent the views of young people who experienced a problem that distracted them from their studies but did not talk to anyone about it, not the whole sample

CONNOR BURGESS



I WAS ONLY EIGHT YEARS OLD WHEN I GOT EXPELLED FROM MAINSTREAM SCHOOL.

At the time I hated everything about education. I was always messing about or playing up. I was sent to a new school but my behaviour and attitude were so negative that I was at risk of being expelled from there too.

I think my family saw it as my last hope when I began attending a programme at my school run by The Prince's Trust. Immediately they saw my attitude change as I went from a pessimistic and uncertain student who hated school to a confident young person with an appetite for learning. As my attendance steadily improved, I felt something change; I realised that I wanted to make something of myself.

My confidence and self-esteem sky rocketed and I began mentoring younger students. I was so happy to be helping less able students realise their potential, just like The Prince's Trust did for me. My friends and family were bowled over when I went on to sit a total of eight GCSEs. The Trust was with me every step of the way and helped me prepare for my next step with mock interviews and completing college application forms. They were the stepping stone I needed to help me achieve my goals. I don't like to think about where I'd be without them.

I hope I've shown that with the right help you can overcome anything to be the person you want to be. Now I'm going to college and training to be a childcare assistant. I've been given a second chance with a solid foundation for my future. I'll always be thankful for that.



GENDER DIVIDE



Young women are significantly more likely than young men to feel they have no control over their lives or their future and to struggle with feelings of self-doubt.

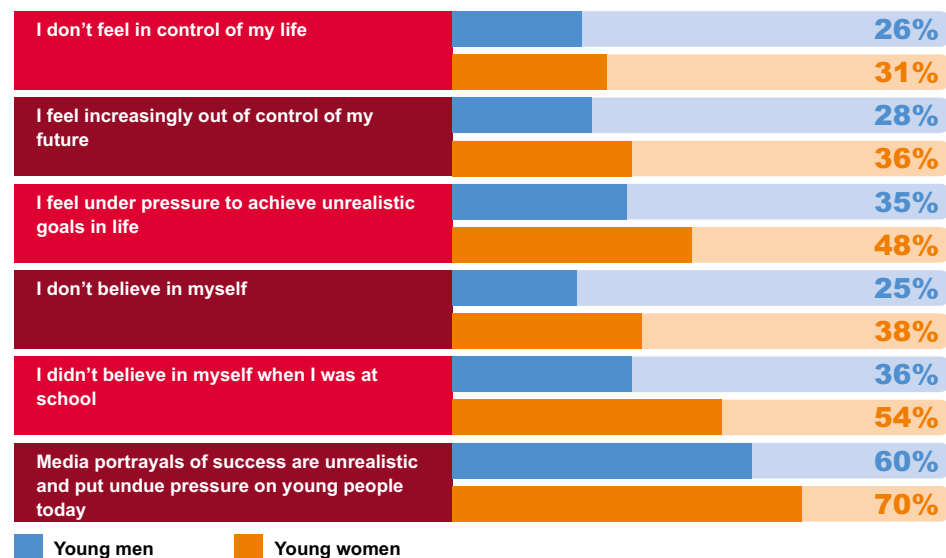


Young women also rank lower on the overall happiness and confidence Index than young men, as they are more likely to feel less happy and confident about their employment prospects, the amount of money they have and their physical and emotional health.



Of the 31 per cent of young women who do not feel in control of their lives, 69 per cent said a lack of self-confidence is one of the things that holds them back. More than half of young women said they did not believe in themselves when they were at school.

Figure 7: Sentiments expressed by young women compared to those of young men



MENTAL HEALTH

Dialogue around mental health and its impact on wellbeing has increased significantly in the past year. However, our research shows that 78 per cent of young people think there is a lot or some stigma attached to mental health issues. This figure increases to 86 per cent among those who have personally experienced a mental health problem.

Concern about this perceived stigma is profound – a third of young people (32 per cent) who would not talk to anyone if they thought they were experiencing a mental health problem, think admitting to having a mental health problem could affect their future job prospects.

Of the quarter (24 per cent) who would not confide in someone if they thought they were experiencing a mental health problem,

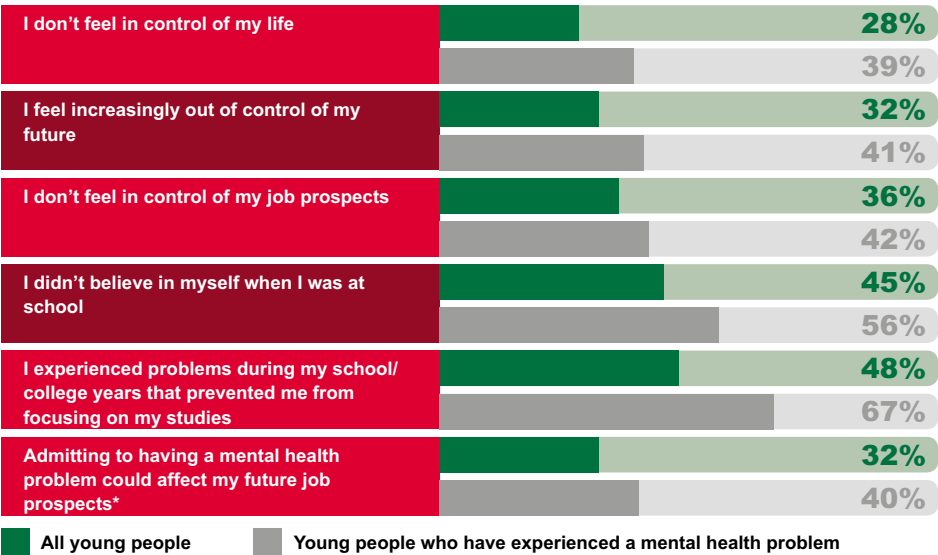
57 per cent said the reason for not opening up is that they would not want anyone to know they were struggling.

Thirty per cent of young people who thought they might be experiencing a mental health problem did not seek support. Among those who did ask for help, 35 per cent did not receive any support from others for over six months.

Mental health and feeling in control

Feeling in control with the power to shape their own lives impacts positively on a young person's mental health and overall outlook. However, the research finds that young people today are feeling increasingly unable to control their futures, and those who have experienced a mental health problem are even more likely to feel anxious about their circumstances.

Figure 8: Concerns expressed by all young people compared to those expressed by young people who have experienced a mental health issue



*These findings represent the views of young people who would not talk to anyone if they thought they were experiencing a mental health problem, not the whole sample



LEWIS HOUGHTON



I WAS HOME SCHOOLED UNTIL I WAS 16 AND LIVED A SOMEWHAT SHELTERED CHILDHOOD. I'D SEEN DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY FIRST HAND AFTER SOMEONE CLOSE TO ME SUFFERED WITH IT FOR YEARS AND EXPERIENCED IT MYSELF FROM THE AGE OF 14. I NEVER KNEW HOW TO COPE.

My enrolment at college might have been my chance to finally lead a normal teenage life but sadly the reality was quite different. When I got there I felt even more alienated and alone. My life quickly went from bad to worse; I was swamped by depression and attempted suicide.

The turning point came when a friend pointed me towards The Prince's Trust for support setting up my own business as a professional illustrator. I'd always had a passion for art and design but it was The Trust who helped me make those dreams a reality. With their help I established my business and went on to achieve things I never thought were possible.

The Prince's Trust were the first ones to see me in a positive light. My confidence has gone from zero to a hundred in such a short space of time and now I'm really excited about the future.

ABOUT THE PRINCE'S TRUST

The Prince's Trust believes that every young person should have the chance to succeed. The charity helps young people who are unemployed or struggling at school to transform their lives.

Since 1976 The Prince's Trust has helped 825,000 young people. In the last ten years alone, The Trust has generated £1.4bn in value to society through its support for disadvantaged young people.

The Trust's programmes give vulnerable young people the practical and financial support needed to stabilise their lives, helping develop key skills for work whilst boosting their confidence and motivation.

With more support, The Trust can help even more young people move into a positive outcome.

As part of its ongoing commitment to help young people overcome any emotional well-being challenges that may be holding them back in life, The Prince's Trust has launched a new mental health strategy, supported by Royal Mail, to give its staff, volunteers and delivery partners the confidence and ability to respond to young people's mental health needs.

Mental health support will be embedded in all The Trust's employability and personal development courses to help vulnerable young people access the most appropriate care at the earliest opportunity.

The Trust will partner with mental health organisations and specialist services to build a suite of training resources and work with them to co-locate mental health related services at Prince's Trust Centres.

For more information about The Prince's Trust visit: princes-trust.org.uk

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.

TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE PRINCE'S TRUST:



Visit: princes-trust.org.uk

Email: info@princes-trust.org.uk

Call: 0800 842 842

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Prince's Trust House
9 Eldon Street
London EC2M 7LS