



# THE GOOD CHILDHOOD REPORT



Youth Summary  
2019



The  
Children's  
Society

## WHAT IS WELL-BEING?

---

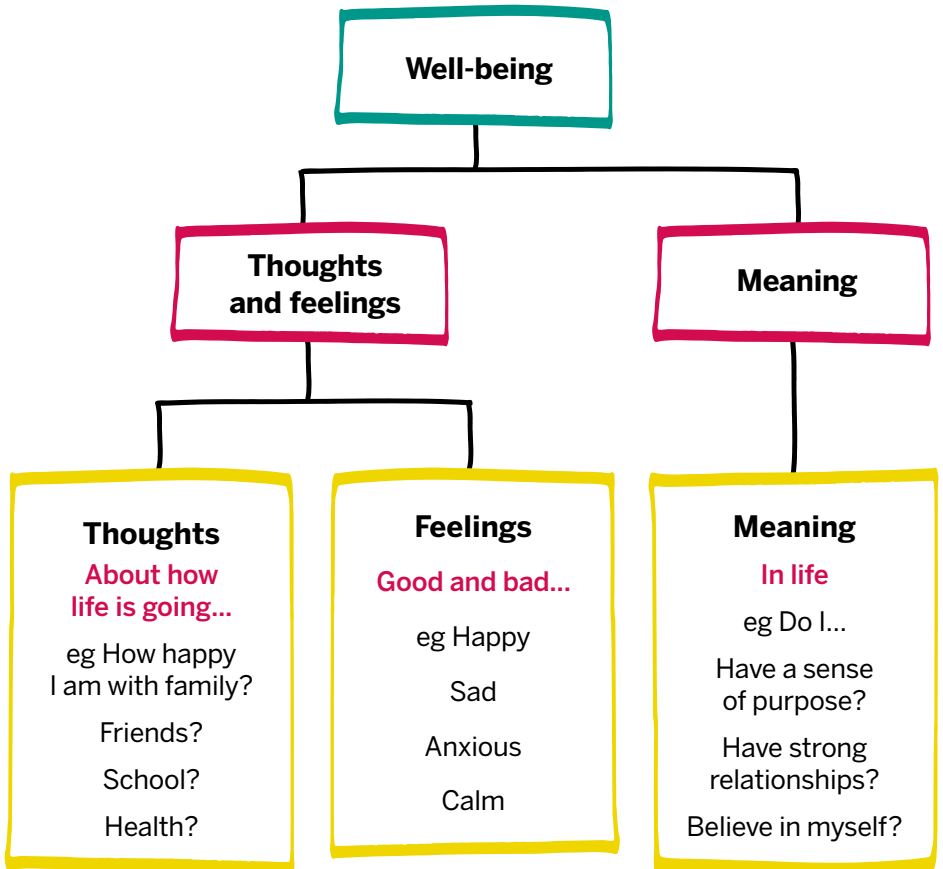
**The Children's Society has been researching young people's well-being for more than 10 years, and we have surveyed over 67,000 young people about how they feel about their lives. It's only by hearing directly from young people like you that we can actually know what's going on, and work out how best to support those of you who might be struggling.**

**Well-being means different things to different people. Happiness, relaxation, health, having enough money, doing well at school, getting on well with friends and family, or getting a good job are some examples of what well-being might mean.**

We talk to young people about many different aspects of their well-being, including their emotions (eg how happy or sad they are feeling), how they feel about different areas of their lives, and whether they feel they have a purpose.

We measure young people's well-being by **ASKING THEM**.

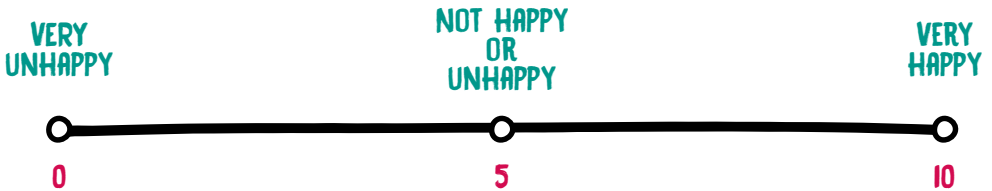
# WHAT IS WELL-BEING MADE UP OF?



Every year we ask questions about young people's thoughts on how things are going, including life overall and 10 different aspects of life they tell us are important. Some years we also ask young people about aspects of well-being related to feelings and meaning.

# HERE IS WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE TOLD US!

We ask young people to score how happy they are with these 10 different aspects of their life using the scale below:



FAMILY



FRIENDS



HOME



HEALTH



TIME USE



MONEY & THINGS



FUTURE



CHOICE

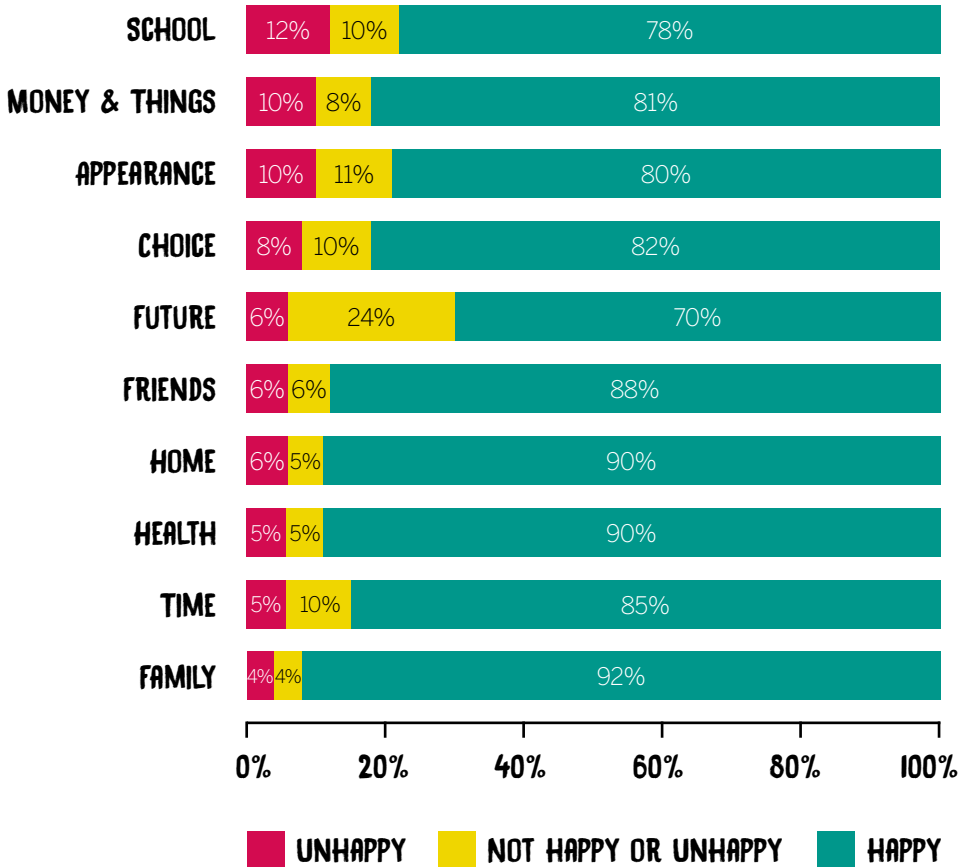


APPEARANCE



SCHOOL

**GRAPH 1: CHILDREN'S HAPPINESS WITH THE 10 ITEMS IN THE GOOD CHILDHOOD INDEX\***









This year young people were most unhappy with school, the things that they owned and their appearance. They were most happy with their family, health and the home that they live in.

It's important to know which young people are unhappy with their lives – and why – as it helps us to think about ways we might be able to support them.



# TRENDS IN WELL-BEING

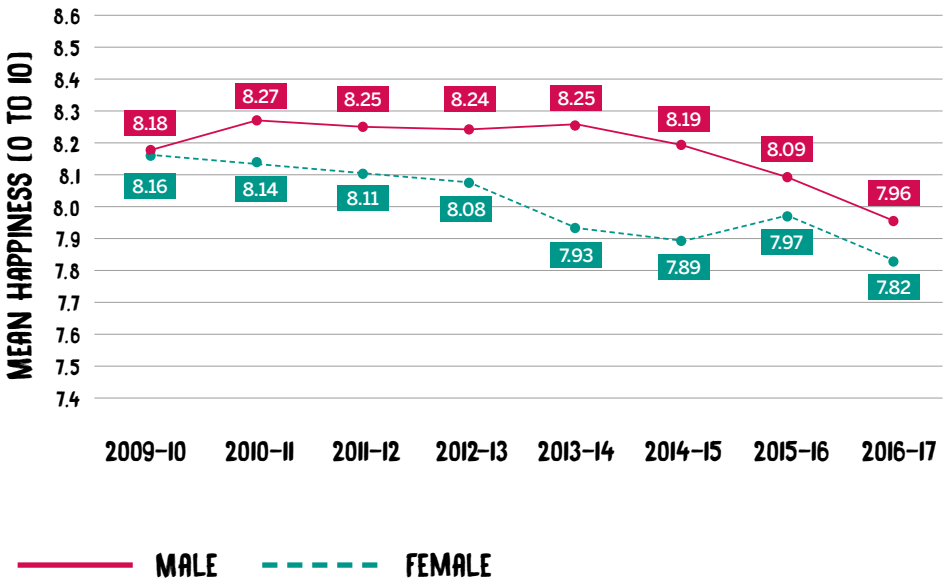
Alongside asking about how young people feel about different areas of their life today, we report on changes over time for the following six aspects.

HAPPINESS WITH...	SINCE THE FIRST SURVEY IN 2009	
LIFE AS A WHOLE		<b>DECREASED</b>
FAMILY		<b>NO CHANGE</b>
FRIENDS		<b>DECREASED</b>
APPEARANCE		<b>NO CHANGE</b>
SCHOOL		<b>DECREASED</b>
SCHOOLWORK		<b>NO CHANGE</b>

# IS IT DIFFERENT FOR BOYS AND GIRLS?

**Yes and no**, for some of the areas (eg life as a whole) there are no differences in what boys and girls are scoring, but for others (eg appearance and school work) we find big gaps. Graphs 2, 3 and 4 show the average score out of 10 for both boys and girls.

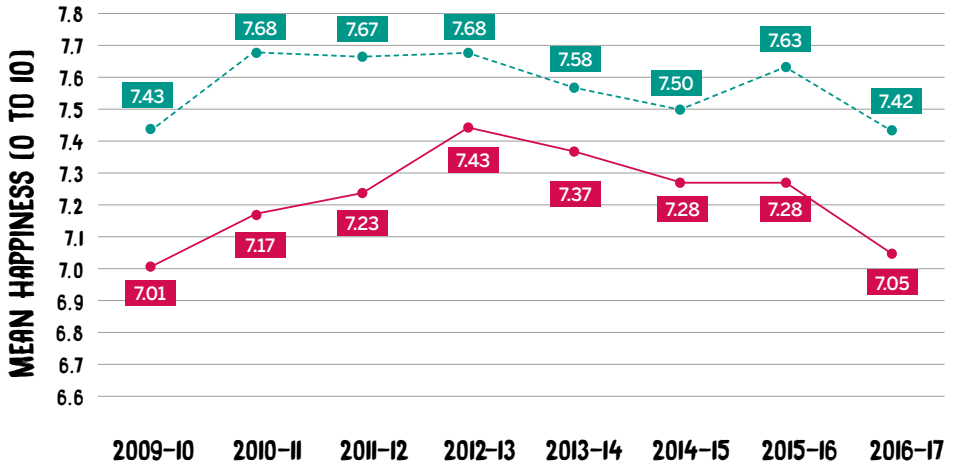
**GRAPH 2: HAPPINESS WITH LIFE AS A WHOLE**



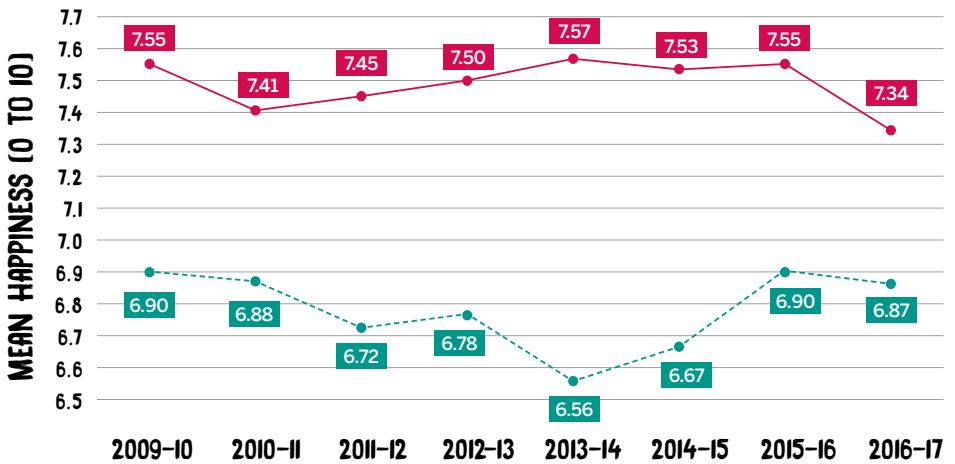
And while these trends are important, we don't know yet what the reasons for them are or whether they will be the same next year.



**GRAPH 3: HAPPINESS WITH SCHOOLWORK**



**GRAPH 4: HAPPINESS WITH APPEARANCE**



# THINKING ABOUT THE FUTURE!

Every year in the Good Childhood Report, we look at a different topic in more detail. This year we asked young people to tell us how they feel about the future.

We asked about what young people thought was important for their own future and what they were worried about.

**Getting good marks**

**Going to university**

**Getting a job**

**Having enough money**

**Having somewhere to live**

**Mental health**

**Physical health**

We also asked how young people felt about issues in wider society.

**The Environment**

**The Economy**  
(how money is made and used in this country)

**Leaving the European Union**  
(BREXIT)

**Crime**

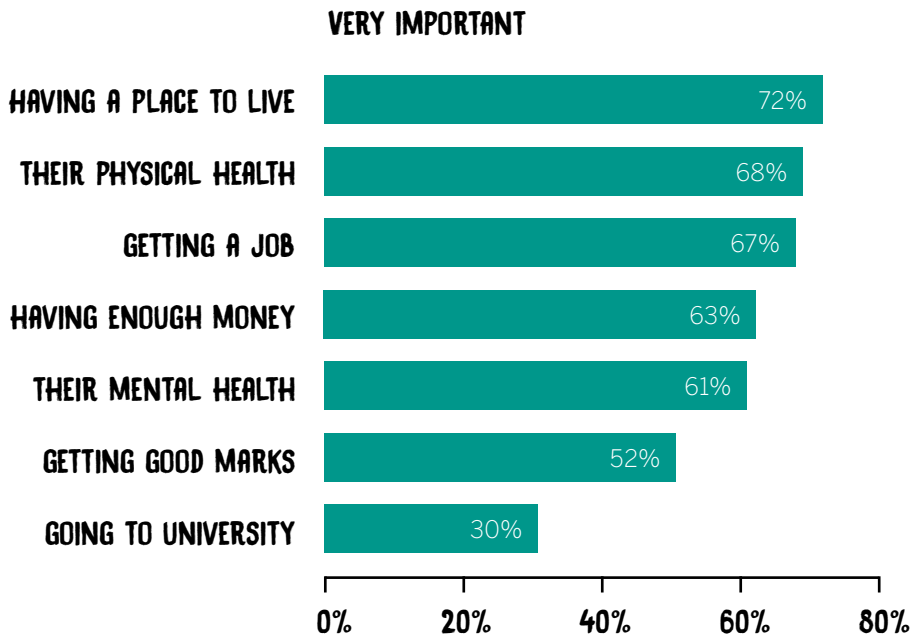
**Homelessness**

**Online safety**  
(people's information being shared online)

# WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE THINK IS IMPORTANT

We asked young people to think about their own future and rate each option on how important they were to them.

**GRAPH 5: THINKING ABOUT YOUR FUTURE WHAT DO YOU THINK IS VERY IMPORTANT?**



Having somewhere to live was thought to be very important by 7 out of 10 of the young people we surveyed, while just under a third thought going to university was very important.

Alongside asking questions in our survey, we also held focus groups with young people across England and Wales on what they were most looking forward to about the future.



Here are some young people's thoughts about the future:

I'M EXCITED ABOUT BEING AN ADULT BECAUSE I CAN MAKE MY OWN CHOICES.

I WOULD LIKE TO START A FAMILY BECAUSE I LIKE HELPING PEOPLE.

I FEEL LIKE EVERYONE WANTS TO MOVE OUT WHEN THEY ARE YOUNGER BUT WHEN THEY ARE OLDER IT'S HARD TO KEEP THE RENT.

TRAVELLING TO NEW COUNTRIES THAT I HAVEN'T BEEN TO.

BEING ABLE TO STUDY WHAT I'M PASSIONATE ABOUT.

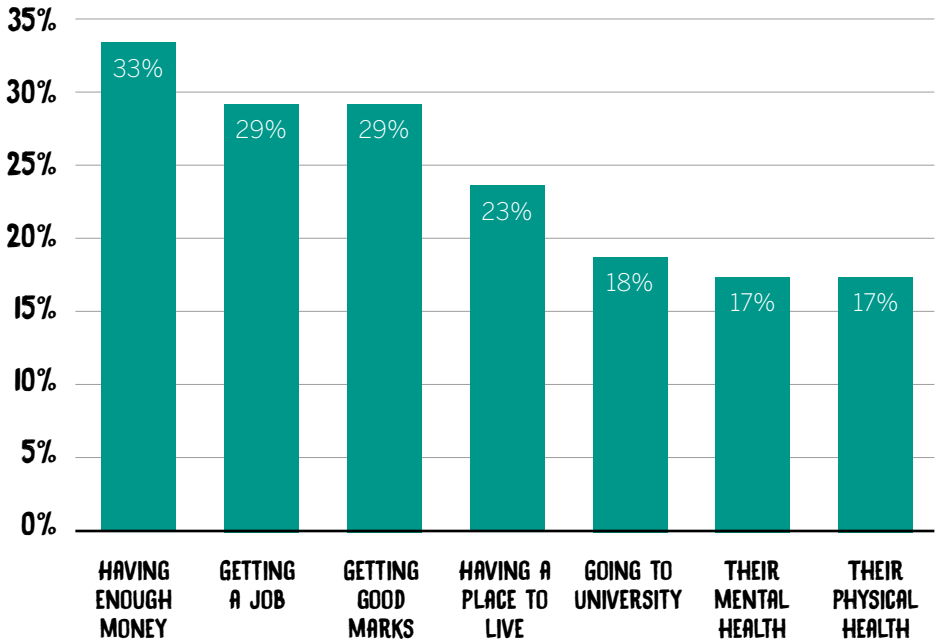
I'M EXCITED ABOUT BEING ABLE TO LOOK AROUND TO FIND A JOB. I'M ALSO QUITE EXCITED ABOUT BEING IN CONTROL ABOUT WHAT I SPEND MY MONEY ON.

# WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE ARE WORRIED ABOUT

As well as asking young people what they thought was important for their future, we also wanted to know what young people are worried about in relation to their own future and wider issues in society.

**GRAPH 6: WHAT CHILDREN ARE VERY AND QUITE WORRIED ABOUT FOR THEIR FUTURE**

## VERY/QUITE WORRIED



I'M WORRIED ABOUT MY EXAMS AND THE RESULTS, ALONG WITH THE STRESS AND ANXIETY THEY COME WITH.

WORRIED ABOUT NOT BEING ABLE TO PROVIDE FOR YOUR FAMILY SINCE YOU MIGHT NOT EARN ENOUGH MONEY TO HELP THEM.

YOUNG PEOPLE ARE WORRIED ABOUT PAYING THEIR RENT OR MORTGAGE OR GETTING A JOB THAT PAYS WELL.

I THINK THAT THE COMPETITION WILL GET A LOT HARDER DUE TO THE ROBOTS BEING ABLE TO DO THE MANUALLY DEMANDING JOBS.

# ISSUES IN WIDER SOCIETY

The biggest issues young people were concerned about in wider society were crime, the environment and the safety of information online. This was also reflected in our conversations with young people.

## Crime



CRIME'S LIKE GETTING MORE COMMON THAN IT WAS IN LIKE THE PAST FIVE YEARS MAYBE. AND PEOPLE ARE LIKE DYING MORE AND I DON'T WANT IT TO GET WORSE. NOT ONLY WILL THE POPULATION DROP BUT THERE WILL BE LESS PEOPLE TO TRY AND HELP SAVE THE WORLD.

## Environment



I THINK THE WORST PART ABOUT IT IS NOT KNOWING. BECAUSE MAYBE NOTHING WILL HAPPEN BUT MAYBE SOMETHING REALLY BIG DOES HAPPEN BUT WE DON'T KNOW WHEN IT'S GOING TO HAPPEN SO IT MIGHT BE REALLY SOON OR IT MIGHT BE IN LIKE A THOUSAND YEARS. IT'S JUST NOT KNOWING WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN NEXT WITH IT.

## Online Safety



SOCIAL MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY HAVE BENEFITS, HOWEVER THEY ARE TAKING OVER OUR EVERYDAY LIVES AND WILL CHANGE THE WORLD AROUND US.



# WHY HAVING A SAY IS IMPORTANT!

Another aspect that the young people we talked to thought was very important was making sure they had a say in their future.

WE RARELY GET A CHOICE TO SAY WHAT WE HAVE TO SAY OR WE ARE NEVER HEARD.

YOU ARE DOING EXAMS THAT AFFECT YOUR WHOLE LIFE, SO IF YOU ARE DOING SOMETHING THAT'S AFFECTING YOUR LIFE THEN WHY CAN'T YOU VOTE?

PEOPLE SAY THAT WE SHOULDN'T TAKE RESPONSIBILITY BECAUSE WE DON'T KNOW ENOUGH YET, BUT THEN THEY COULD ALWAYS TEACH US HOW TO DO THINGS LIKE THAT EARLY ON.

WE ARE THE NEXT GENERATION SO WE SHOULD BE THE ONES CHOOSING HOW WE WANT OUR LIVES TO BE.

# TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

## True or false?

1. Children are most happy with their **family, health** and **home** they live in.

TRUE

FALSE

2. Children's happiness with their **life as a whole** has increased since last year.

TRUE

FALSE

3. Girls are less happy than boys with their **appearance**.

TRUE

FALSE

4. **Having a place to live** is the most important part of the future for children.

TRUE

FALSE

5. Children are most worried about **crime, the environment** and **online safety** in the future.

TRUE

FALSE

1. True, 2. False, 3. True, 4. False, 5. True

# WHERE YOU CAN GO TO FIND MORE INFORMATION OR SUPPORT ABOUT WELL-BEING

---

## Improving well-being

There are five key things we can all do to improve our well-being. These are known as the Five Ways to Well-Being:

1. **Be active.**
2. **Keep on learning.**
3. **Connect and talk with friends and family.**
4. **Be creative and play.**
5. **Take notice of what is going on around us.**

## Advice and support for children and young people

If there's a mental or emotional issue you're worried about, you can find information and advice here for yourself or someone you know: [childrenssociety.org.uk/mental-health-advice-for-children-and-young-people/the-advice-resource-vault](https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/mental-health-advice-for-children-and-young-people/the-advice-resource-vault)

You can also contact Childline for free by calling **0800 1111** or by visiting their website [childline.org.uk](https://www.childline.org.uk)

## Advice and support for parents

If you are a parent or carer looking for advice and support with your child's mental and emotional health, you can contact the YoungMinds parent helpline:

[youngminds.org.uk/find-help/for-parents/parents-helpline/](https://www.youngminds.org.uk/find-help/for-parents/parents-helpline/)

You can call the helpline for free on **0808 802 5544**

# **WANT TO HELP MAKE THINGS CHANGE?**

---

If you're a school or youth group who is interested in campaigning on the issues raised in this summary, then we would love to work with you.

To find out more, please email  
**[campaigns@childrenssociety.org.uk](mailto:campaigns@childrenssociety.org.uk)**