

Wellbeing in Northern Ireland, 2021/22

9 November 2022

This report uses data from the 2021/22 Continuous Household Survey and presents findings on Loneliness, Self-Efficacy, Personal Wellbeing (Life Satisfaction, Worthwhile, Happiness and Anxiety) and Locus of Control.

Key findings

Key finding

Life satisfaction, happiness and anxiety measures improved over the year, while low self-efficacy and locus of control measures have shown a decline in wellbeing.

People who reported their health as very good reported better levels of wellbeing...

...meanwhile people with a disability reported lower levels of wellbeing.

People in employment reported better levels of wellbeing.

Those with a Degree or Higher Qualification reported better levels of wellbeing.

Those who owned their house reported better levels of wellbeing.

People with access to a car reported better levels of wellbeing.

Detail *(note: All changes listed are statistically significant)*

Life satisfaction (7.7) and happiness (7.8) scores were higher in 2021/22 compared with 2020/21 (7.6 and 7.5 respectively). In the same period, levels of anxiety decreased (3.2 to 2.8). The proportion of people reporting low self-efficacy increased from 15.0% in 2020/21 to 17.6% in 2021/22. In the same period, locus of control scores decreased from 17.4 to 17.1.

Those who reported their health as very good reported higher self-efficacy (20.4), life satisfaction (8.3), worthwhile (8.5), happiness (8.1) and locus of control (17.6) than those who reported their health as bad/very bad (15.7, 6.0, 6.4, 6.1 and 15.7 respectively). They also reported lower levels of anxiety (2.0 compared with 4.9) and feelings of loneliness (11.8% compared with 51.6%).

People with a disability reported lower self-efficacy (17.9), life satisfaction (7.0), worthwhile (7.2), happiness (7.0) and locus of control (16.5) than people without a disability (20.1, 8.0, 8.2, 7.9 and 17.4 respectively). They also reported higher levels of anxiety (3.8 compared with 2.4) and feelings of loneliness (34.8% compared with 14.2%).

Those in paid employment reported higher self-efficacy (20.1), life satisfaction (7.9), worthwhile (8.1), happiness (7.8) and locus of control (17.5) than those not in paid employment (19.8, 7.5, 7.7, 7.5 and 16.6 respectively). They also reported lower levels of anxiety (2.7 compared with 3.0) and feelings of loneliness (16.2% compared with 26.0%).

Those with a degree or higher qualification reported higher self-efficacy (20.2), life satisfaction (7.9), worthwhile (8.0), happiness (7.7) and locus of control (17.8) than those with no qualifications (18.0, 7.4, 7.6, 7.4 and 16.2 respectively). They also reported lower levels of anxiety (2.8 compared with 3.0) and feelings of loneliness (15.8% compared with 29.9%).

Those who owned their house (outright or with a mortgage) reported higher self-efficacy (19.8), life satisfaction (7.9), worthwhile (8.1), happiness (7.8) and locus of control (17.2) than those in social rented accommodation (17.6, 7.1, 7.4, 7.2 and 16.4 respectively). They also reported lower levels of anxiety (2.6 compared with 3.4) and feelings of loneliness (17.3% compared with 34.3%).

People with access to a car reported higher self-efficacy (19.8), life satisfaction (7.8), worthwhile (8.1), happiness (7.7) and locus of control (17.2) than those without access to a car (17.8, 7.0, 7.1, 7.0 and 16.6 respectively). They also reported lower levels of anxiety (2.7 compared with 3.5) and feelings of loneliness (18.0% compared with 40.4%).

*Self-efficacy and locus of control scales range from 5 to 25 and personal wellbeing scales range from 0 to 10. Loneliness and Low Self-efficacy are proportions

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Introduction

Wellbeing is personal and subjective – it encompasses the environmental factors that affect us, and the experiences we have throughout our lives. Improving wellbeing can be the responsibility of traditional policy areas such as economy, health and education. However, wellbeing also crucially recognises the aspects of our lives that we determine ourselves: through our own capabilities as individuals; how we feel about ourselves; the quality of the relationships that we have with other people; and our sense of purpose.¹

This report provides 2021/22 estimates for people aged 16 and over in Northern Ireland (NI) across four areas which reflect wellbeing:

- **Loneliness** – the frequency with which people report feeling lonely
- **Self-Efficacy** – a person’s belief about their capabilities to exercise influence over events that affect their lives
- **Personal Wellbeing** – how satisfied people are with their lives, their levels of happiness and anxiety, and whether or not they think the things they do are worthwhile
- **Locus of Control** – the degree to which a person feels in control of their life. Individuals with an internal locus of control believe in their own influence and control while those with an external locus of control believe control over their lives is determined by outside factors

The publication reports on seven metrics in total and further details on each can be found in [Annex A: Technical Notes](#).

This report, first published in October 2021, replaces the following three previously published reports:

- [Loneliness in Northern Ireland](#)
- [Self-efficacy, Locus of Control & Life Satisfaction in Northern Ireland](#)
- [Personal Wellbeing in Northern Ireland](#)

As an official statistics publication, this report complies with all aspects of the [UK Statistics Authority Code of Practice](#).

The data in this report are derived from the Continuous Household Survey (CHS). The CHS is a continuous, representative survey of individuals aged 16 and over, which is designed and conducted by the Central Survey Unit, part of NISRA.

The coronavirus pandemic impacted data collection of wellbeing metrics in 2020/21 and 2021/22, resulting in a change in data collection mode and reduced sample size for 2020/21. Users should take this into consideration when interpreting the 2021/22 results and care should be taken when comparing these to findings published prior to 2020/21. For this reason, a dotted line has been added to all time series graphs to highlight the change in methodology between the 2019/20 and 2020/21 reporting years.

In this publication differences between groups are only reported on where they are found to be statistically significant², unless stated otherwise. A full breakdown of all significant differences can be found in the comparative tables located in the [Wellbeing in NI 2021/22 Tables](#).

To enable users to easily access data by sub population breakdowns, the statistical team have worked with the NISRA Tech Lab to create the [Wellbeing in NI Dashboard](#). The dashboard contains time series data for all subpopulation breakdowns and can be exported for use in your own reports and research publications.

Although this publication is the official source for Wellbeing data in NI, Personal Wellbeing data for NI, collected in the Labour Force Survey, is also published in the Office for National Statistics (ONS) [‘Personal Well-being in the UK’](#) publication. The figures reported for NI in the ONS publication (Life Satisfaction: 7.7, Worthwhile: 8.0, Happiness: 7.6 and Anxiety: 2.8) were not found to be significantly different than those reported in this publication (7.7, 7.9, 7.7 and 2.8 respectively).

¹ [What is Wellbeing?](#)

² **Statistically significant (using 95% confidence intervals)** means that we can be 95% confident that the differences seen in our sampled respondents reflect the population of Northern Ireland.

Wellbeing in Northern Ireland

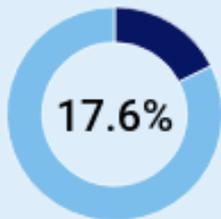
2021/22

Source: Continuous Household Survey



How **confident** are people in NI about their abilities?

17.6% of people reported low self-efficacy.

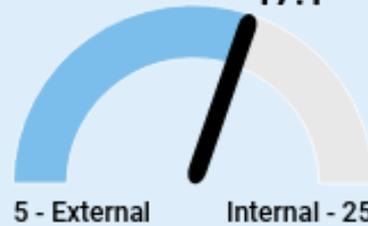


NI average: 19.4



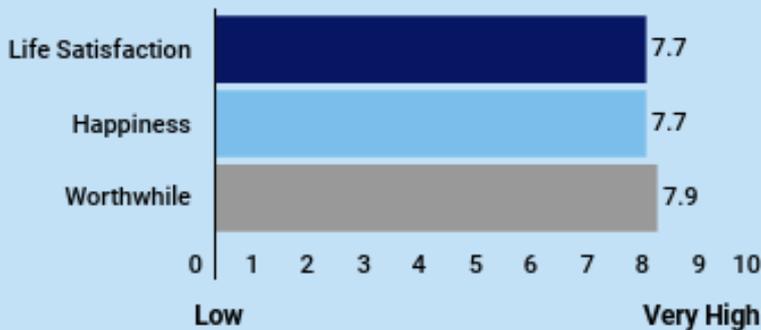
How in **control** of their lives do people in NI feel?

NI average: 17.1



A low score indicates a belief that life is determined by outside factors (external). A high score shows a belief in one's own control (internal).

Personal Wellbeing

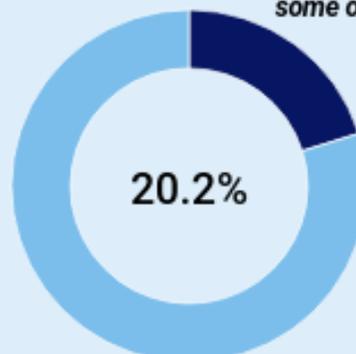


How often do people in NI feel **Lonely**?

6.1% of respondents reported feeling lonely "often/always".



Just over one-fifth (20.2%) of respondents reported feeling lonely "at least some of the time".



How **anxious** do people in NI feel?

NI average: 2.8



Loneliness

What is loneliness?

Everyone is likely to experience feelings of loneliness at some point in their lifetime and the effects of feeling lonely will differ from person to person. However, feelings of loneliness can negatively impact a person's health, wellbeing and overall quality of life and so it is important to understand what factors are associated with feeling lonely.

This measure asks people the question, 'How often do you feel lonely?' with the following 5 response options: 'often/always', 'some of the time', 'occasionally', 'hardly ever' and 'never'. This question therefore measures the frequency with which people report feeling lonely, but not the level of loneliness they experience.

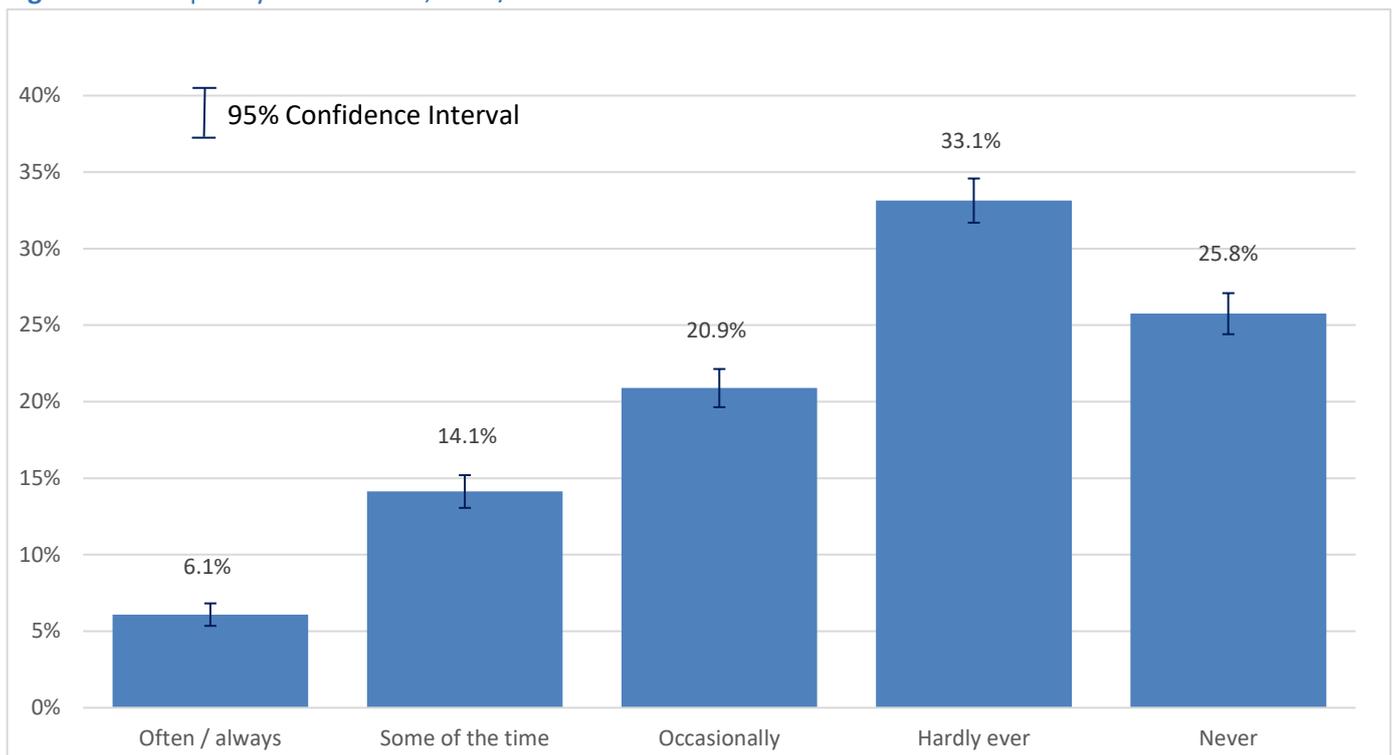
Following user consultation and for the ease of understanding and interpreting results, the responses 'often/always' and 'some of the time' have been grouped into a single category 'Lonely at least some of the time'. This is a change from how these data were previously reported and further details can be found in the Technical notes.

Frequency of loneliness – 5 category split

Loneliness in 2021/22

In 2021/22, 6.1% of respondents (individuals aged 16 and over) reported feeling lonely "often/always". There is no statistically significant change from the previous year (6.2%) for this category. However, the proportion of people reporting 'never' feeling lonely (25.8%) was significantly higher than the figure reported in 2020/21 (21.3%).

Figure 1.1: Frequency of loneliness, 2021/22



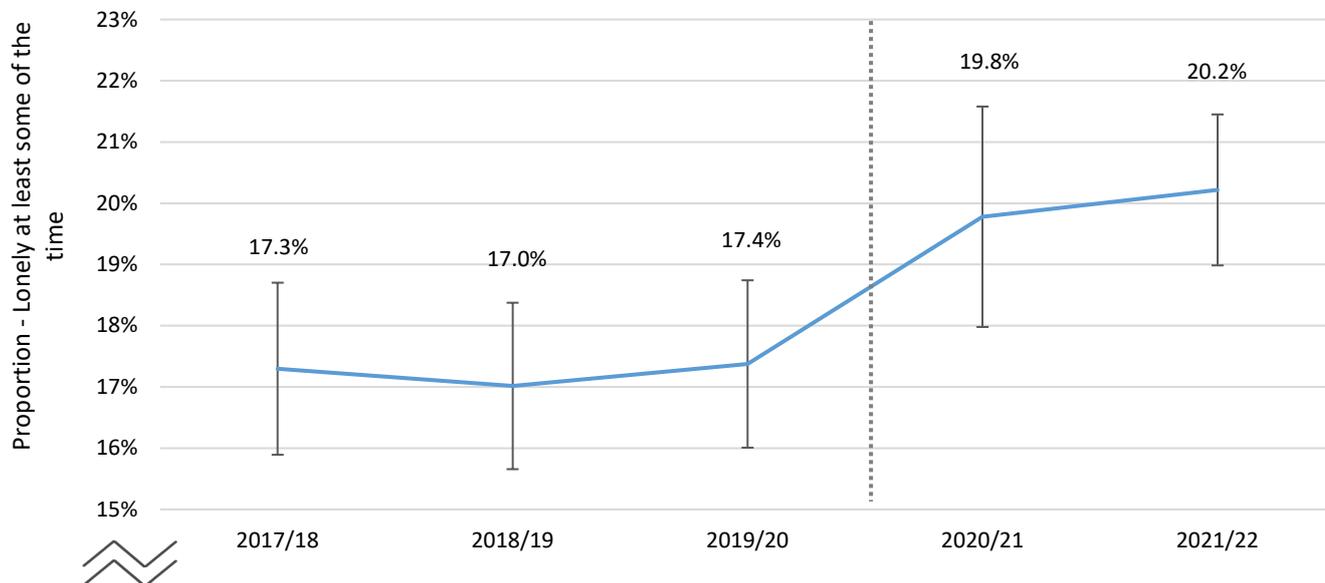
Note: Figure 1.1 includes 95% confidence intervals to represent the ranges either side of each estimate which are 95% certain to include the true value for the population.

Lonely at least some of the time

Time series

In 2021/22, 20.2% of respondents reported feeling lonely “often/always” or “some of the time”, categorised as “lonely at least some of the time”. There is no statistically significant change from the previous year (19.8%).

Figure 1.2: Proportion who reported feeling lonely ‘often/always’ or ‘some of the time’, 2017/18 to 2021/22



Note: Due to changes in the survey methodology, please exercise caution when comparing current data to that collected prior to 2020/21. Figure 1.2 includes 95% confidence intervals to represent the ranges either side of each estimate which are 95% certain to include the true value for the population. All labels have been rounded to one decimal place.

Group differences

Proportions of those who felt lonely at least some of the time (i.e. reported feeling lonely ‘often/always’ or ‘some of the time’) were estimated for sixteen group breakdowns. Significant differences³ were found in fifteen groups. There were no statistically significant differences in breakdowns for Religion.

The largest proportions of loneliness were found among those who reported their general health as bad/very bad (51.6%) and the lowest proportions were found among those who are married/in a civil partnership (10.5%).

For the purposes of the commentary below those more likely to be lonely refers to those who reported feeling lonely ‘at least some of the time’ i.e. those who reported feeling lonely ‘often/always’ or ‘some of the time’

Breakdown	Significant differences	Estimate for: Northern Ireland:	20.2%
 Sex	Females reported significantly higher proportions of loneliness than males.	Males:	17.5%
		Females:	22.6%
 Age	Those aged 55-64 and 75 and over reported significantly higher proportions of loneliness than those in the 35-44 and 45-54 age categories.	Aged 16-24:	22.4%
		Aged 25-34:	21.1%
		Aged 35-44:	16.8%
		Aged 45-54:	17.4%
		Aged 55-64:	22.6%
		Aged 65-74:	19.9%
		Aged 75 and over:	22.6%

³ Significance refers to statistical significance with a 95% confidence that the difference is not by chance.

Breakdown	Significant differences	Estimate for: Northern Ireland: 20.2%
 Marital status	<p>People who are married or in a civil partnership reported significantly lower levels of loneliness than those in all other categories.</p> <p>People who are widowed reported significantly higher proportions of loneliness than those who are single or divorced.</p> <p>People who are separated reported significantly higher proportions of loneliness than those who are single.</p>	<p>Single: 25.7%</p> <p>Married/in civil partnership: 10.5%</p> <p>Separated: 36.2%</p> <p>Divorced: 30.7%</p> <p>Widowed: 45.2%</p>
 Dependants	<p>Those responsible for a dependant with a disability reported significantly higher proportions of loneliness than those with dependants who are elderly or children.</p> <p>Those responsible for child dependants reported significantly lower proportions of loneliness than those without a dependant.</p>	<p>With Dependants (type)</p> <p>Child: 15.5%</p> <p>Person with disability: 24.8%</p> <p>Elderly person: 18.1%</p> <hr/> <p>Without Dependants: 22.2%</p>
 Health	<p>Significant differences were found across all health categories, with significantly lower proportions of loneliness among those reporting better health.</p>	<p>Very good: 11.8%</p> <p>Good: 16.7%</p> <p>Fair: 28.4%</p> <p>Bad / very bad: 51.6%</p>
 Disability	<p>People with a disability reported significantly higher proportions of loneliness than those without a disability.</p>	<p>People with disability: 34.8%</p> <p>People without disability: 14.2%</p>
 Employment status	<p>People not in paid employment reported significantly higher proportions of loneliness than those in paid employment.</p>	<p>In paid employment: 16.2%</p> <p>Not in paid employment: 26.0%</p>
 Qualifications	<p>Significant differences were found across all qualifications categories, with significantly lower proportions of loneliness among those with qualifications.</p>	<p>Degree and higher: 15.8%</p> <p>Any other qualifications: 20.1%</p> <p>No qualifications: 29.9%</p>
 Household Count	<p>Those living alone reported significantly higher proportions of loneliness than those living in households of 2 or more.</p>	<p>1 person: 37.7%</p> <p>2 people: 14.9%</p> <p>3 or more people: 15.8%</p>
 Tenure	<p>Significant differences were found across all tenure categories, with significantly lower proportions of loneliness among those who own their house.</p>	<p>Owner occupied: 17.3%</p> <p>Social rented: 34.3%</p> <p>Private rented: 27.8%</p>
 Household internet access	<p>People without household internet access reported significantly higher proportions of loneliness than those with household internet access.</p>	<p>Household internet access: 20.0%</p> <p>No household internet access: 37.0%</p>

Breakdown	Significant differences	Estimate for: Northern Ireland: 20.2%
	Access to car People without access to a car reported significantly higher proportions of loneliness than those with access to a car.	Access to a car: 18.0% No access to a car: 40.4%
	Deprivation Those living in the most deprived areas (Q1) reported significantly higher proportions of loneliness than those in all other quintiles Those living in quintile 4 reported significantly lower proportions of loneliness than those in quintiles 2 and 3. Those living in quintile 5 reported significantly lower proportions of loneliness than those in quintile 3.	Q1 (most deprived): 27.6% Q2: 20.3% Q3: 22.7% Q4: 14.3% Q5 (least deprived): 17.2%
	Urban/Rural People living in urban areas reported significantly higher proportions of loneliness than those living in rural areas.	Urban: 22.2% Rural: 17.0%
	Local Government District (LGD) In comparison with the Northern Ireland average, those living in Antrim and Newtownabbey reported significantly lower proportions of loneliness meanwhile, those living in Belfast reported significantly higher levels of loneliness. People living in Belfast reported higher proportions of loneliness than Antrim & Newtownabbey, Mid & East Antrim, Mid Ulster, Newry Mourne & Down and Ards & North Down. People living in Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon reported higher proportions of loneliness than Antrim & Newtownabbey, Mid & East Antrim, Mid Ulster and Ards & North Down. People living in Causeway Coast and Glens reported higher proportions of loneliness than Antrim & Newtownabbey and Nards & North Down.	Antrim & Newtownabbey: 15.1% Ards & North Down: 16.1% Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon: 23.5% Belfast City: 25.0% Causeway Coast & Glens: 22.8% Derry City & Strabane: 20.7% Fermanagh & Omagh: 20.9% Lisburn & Castlereagh: 20.7% Mid & East Antrim: 17.6% Mid Ulster: 16.6% Newry, Mourne & Down: 18.2%

Self-efficacy

What is self-efficacy?

Self-efficacy is a concept describing a person's beliefs about their capability to produce results or effects, and their ability to exercise influence over events that affect their lives.

- Those with **high** self-efficacy have confidence in their abilities and make sustained efforts to achieve goals.
- Those with **low** self-efficacy often doubt their capabilities, are less ambitious and give up on aims when challenged. This can limit the choices a person makes and how much effort they are willing to invest.

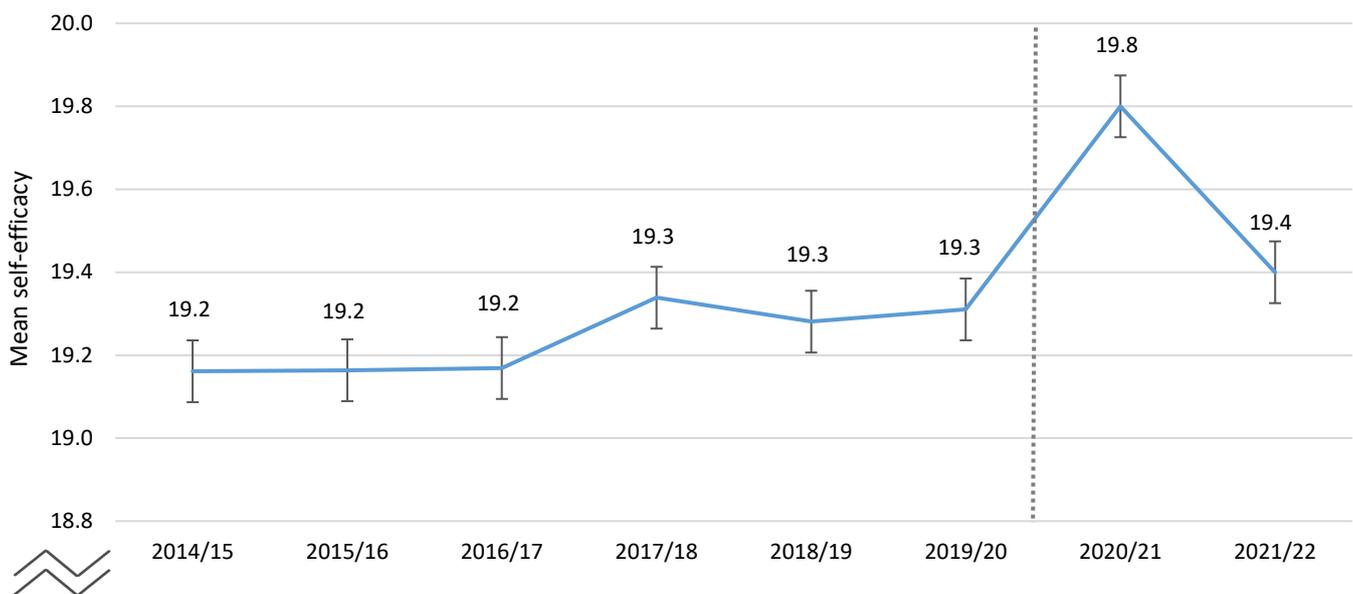
Self-efficacy affects the decisions a person makes and what they see as achievable. It has been shown to influence physical and mental health, learning and achievement, career and job satisfaction and family relations. Interventions to increase self-efficacy in specific groups can improve collective resilience and capacity. This can lead to positive social change in communities, and can improve social cohesion and inter-group relations⁴.

Average self-efficacy score

Overall score

In 2021/22, the average (mean) score for self-efficacy in Northern Ireland was 19.4 which is not significantly different to the average in 2020/21 (19.8). This means Northern Ireland on average has high self-efficacy (scores of 5-17 are classed as low self-efficacy, while scores of 18-25 are considered high).

Figure 2.1: Average self-efficacy scores, 2014/15 to 2021/22



Note: Due to changes in the survey methodology, please exercise caution when comparing to previous years. Figure 2.1 includes 95% confidence intervals to represent the ranges either side of each estimate which are 95% certain to include the true value for the population. All labels have been rounded to one decimal place.

⁴ Further information can be found in [Annex A: Technical notes](#) at the end of this report.

Group differences

Average (mean) scores were estimated (on a scale from 5 to 25) for sixteen group breakdowns. Significant differences were found in all sixteen⁵.

The lowest self-efficacy estimate was found among those who reported bad/very bad health (15.7) and the highest score was found among those who reported very good health (20.4).

	Breakdown	Significant differences	Estimate for: Northern Ireland: 19.4
	Sex	Males reported significantly higher self-efficacy than females.	Males: 19.8 Females: 19.1
	Age	Those aged 55-64 and 75 and over reported significantly lower self-efficacy than those aged 25-34, 35-44 and 45-54. Those aged 75 and over also reported a significantly lower score than those aged 65-74.	Aged 16-24: 19.2 Aged 25-34: 19.8 Aged 35-44: 19.6 Aged 45-54: 19.6 Aged 55-64: 19.0 Aged 65-74: 19.5 Aged 75 and over: 19.0
	Marital status	People who are married or in a civil partnership reported a significantly higher score than those in all other categories.	Single: 19.1 Married/in civil partnership: 19.9 Separated: 18.7 Divorced: 18.8 Widowed: 18.6
	Religion	Catholics and Protestants reported a significantly lower score than those with an Other/No Religion.	Catholics: 19.4 Protestants: 19.3 Other/No Religion: 19.8
	Dependants	Those responsible for child dependants reported a significantly higher score than those in all other categories.	With Dependants (type) Child: 20.0 Person with disability: 19.2 Elderly person: 19.4 Without Dependants: 19.2
	Health	Significant differences were found across all health categories, with higher self-efficacy among those reporting better health.	Very good: 20.4 Good: 19.8 Fair: 18.5 Bad / very bad: 15.7
	Disability	People with a disability reported a significantly lower score than those without disability.	People with disability: 17.9 People without disability: 20.1
	Employment status	People in paid employment reported significantly higher self-efficacy than those not in paid employment.	In paid employment: 20.1 Not in paid employment: 18.4
	Qualifications	Significant differences were found across all categories, with higher self-efficacy among people with qualifications.	Degree and higher: 20.2 Any other qualifications: 19.4 No qualifications: 18.0
	Household count	People living on their own reported a significantly lower score than those living with others.	1 person: 18.6 2 people: 19.5 3 or more people: 19.8

⁵Significance refers to statistical significance with a 95% confidence that the difference is not by chance.

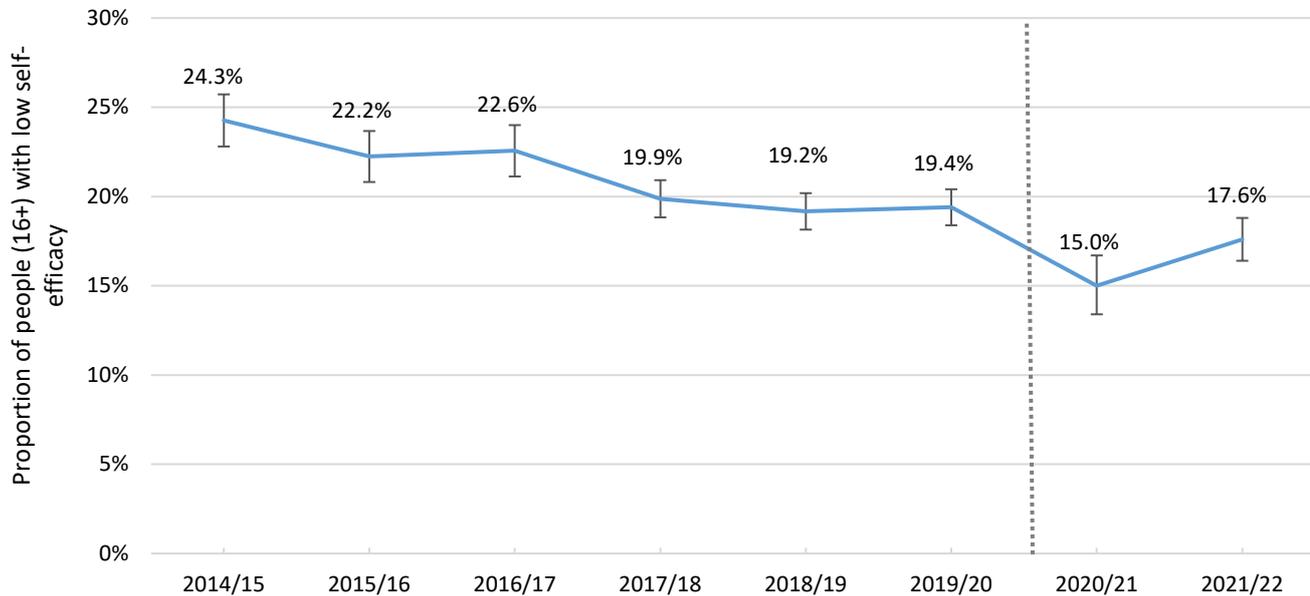
Breakdown	Significant differences	Estimate for: Northern Ireland: 19.4
 Tenure	Significant differences were found across all categories, with lower self-efficacy among social renters.	Owner occupied: 19.8 Social rented: 17.6 Private rented: 19.4
 Household internet access	Those with no household internet access reported a significantly lower score than those with internet access.	Household internet access: 19.6 No household internet access: 17.8
 Access to car	People with access to a car reported a significantly higher score than those without access to a car.	Access to a car: 19.8 No access to a car: 17.8
 Deprivation	People living in the least deprived quintile (Q5) reported a significantly higher score than those living in any other quintile. People living in the most deprived quintile (Q1) reported a significantly lower score than those living in the third (Q3), fourth (Q4) and fifth (Q5) quintiles.	Q1 (most deprived): 18.9 Q2: 19.2 Q3: 19.5 Q4: 19.5 Q5 (least deprived): 19.9
 Urban / Rural	People living in urban areas reported a significantly lower score than those living in rural areas.	Urban: 19.3 Rural: 19.6
 Local Government District (LGD)	In comparison with the Northern Ireland average, Lisburn & Castlereagh and Mid Ulster reported a significantly higher score, meanwhile Derry City & Strabane reported a significantly lower score. Between the LGDs Derry City & Strabane reported a significantly lower score than Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon, Lisburn & Castlereagh and Mid Ulster. Lisburn & Castlereagh reported a significantly higher score than Derry & Strabane and Fermanagh & Omagh. Mid Ulster reported a significantly higher score than Derry City & Strabane.	Antrim & Newtownabbey: 19.3 Ards & North Down: 19.5 Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon: 19.6 Belfast City: 19.3 Causeway Coast & Glens: 19.5 Derry City & Strabane: 18.7 Fermanagh & Omagh: 19.1 Lisburn & Castlereagh: 19.9 Mid & East Antrim: 19.2 Mid Ulster: 19.8 Newry, Mourne & Down: 19.4

Proportion with low self-efficacy

Overall

In 2021/22, the proportion of the population in Northern Ireland with low self-efficacy significantly increased to 17.6% compared with 15.0% in the previous year, signifying worse wellbeing for this measure.

Figure 2.2: Proportion with low self-efficacy, 2014/15 to 2021/22



Note: Due to changes in the survey methodology, please exercise caution when comparing to previous years. Figure 2.2 includes 95% confidence intervals to represent the ranges either side of each estimate which are 95% certain to include the true value for the population. All labels have been rounded to one decimal place.

Group differences

Proportions of people with low self-efficacy (with a score of 5-17 on a scale from 5 to 25) were estimated for sixteen group breakdowns. Significant differences were found in fifteen⁶. There were no statistically significant differences in the Religion breakdown.

The largest proportions of low self-efficacy were found among those who reported bad / very bad health (55.5%) and the lowest proportions were found among those who reported very good health (8.0%).

Breakdown	Significant differences	Estimate for: Northern Ireland:	17.6%
 Sex	The proportion of females with low self-efficacy was significantly larger than for males.	Males:	14.2%
		Females:	20.8%
 Age	Low self-efficacy was significantly higher among people aged 55-64 than those aged 25-34, 35-44 and 45-54 and 65-74. Those aged 75 and over reported a significant higher proportion of low self-efficacy than those aged 25-34 and 35-44.	Aged 16-24:	18.1%
		Aged 25-34:	14.4%
		Aged 35-44:	15.1%
		Aged 45-54:	16.6%
		Aged 55-64:	23.3%
		Aged 65-74:	16.8%
		Aged 75 and over:	20.4%

⁶ Significance refers to statistical significance with a 95% confidence that the difference is not by chance.

Breakdown	Significant differences	Estimate for: Northern Ireland:	17.6%
 Marital status	The proportion of people reporting low self-efficacy was significantly lower among people who are married/in a civil partnership than those in any other category. People who are separated also reported a significantly higher proportion of low self-efficacy than those who are single.	Single: Married/in civil partnership: Separated: Divorced: Widowed:	20.7% 12.8% 30.6% 22.7% 24.6%
 Dependants	Those with a child dependant reported significantly lower rates of low self-efficacy than any other category.	With Dependants (type) Child: Person with disability: Elderly person: Without Dependants:	12.0% 21.4% 18.1% 19.6%
 Health	Significant differences were found across all health categories, with smaller proportions of low self-efficacy among those with better health.	Very good: Good: Fair: Bad / very bad:	8.0% 12.8% 27.4% 55.5%
 Disability	People with a disability reported a significantly higher proportion of low self-efficacy than people without a disability.	People with disability: People without disability:	34.7% 10.4%
 Employment status	People not in paid employment reported a significantly higher proportion of low self-efficacy than those not in paid employment.	In paid employment: Not in paid employment:	10.6% 27.7%
 Qualifications	Significant differences were found across all categories, with smaller proportions of low self-efficacy reported among people with qualifications.	Degree and higher: Any other qualifications: No qualifications:	10.3% 17.9% 31.4%
 Household Count	Significant differences were found across all categories, with a greater proportion of low self-efficacy reported among people living alone.	1 person: 2 people: 3 or more people:	25.8% 17.4% 13.7%
 Tenure	Significant differences were found across all tenure categories, with a greater proportion of low self-efficacy reported among social renters.	Owner occupied: Social rented: Private rented:	12.6% 38.2% 19.0%
 Household internet access	Those with no household internet access reported significantly higher proportions of low self-efficacy than those with internet access.	Household internet access: No household internet access:	15.5% 33.7%
 Access to car	People with no access to a car reported significantly higher proportions of low self-efficacy than those with access to a car.	Access to a car: No access to a car:	13.8% 34.8%

Breakdown	Significant differences	Estimate for: Northern Ireland: 17.6%
 Deprivation	<p>The proportion of people reporting low self-efficacy was significantly lower among those living in the least deprived quintile (Q5) than in any other quintile. Those living in the most deprived quintiles (Q1 and Q2) reported significantly higher proportions of low self-efficacy than those in Q3, Q4 and Q5.</p>	<p>Q1 (most deprived): 21.3% Q2: 21.6% Q3: 17.0% Q4: 16.4% Q5 (least deprived): 12.4%</p>
 Urban / Rural	<p>People living in urban areas reported significantly higher proportions of low self-efficacy than those living in rural areas.</p>	<p>Urban: 18.9% Rural: 15.4%</p>
 Local Government District (LGD)	<p>In comparison with NI, the proportion of people with low self-efficacy was significantly lower in Antrim & Newtownabbey, Ards & North Down and Lisburn & Castlereagh. Between the LGDs Lisburn & Castlereagh reported significantly lower proportions of low self-efficacy than Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon, Belfast, Causeway Coast & Glens, Derry City & Strabane, Fermanagh & Omagh and Mid & East Antrim. Newry, Mourne & down also reported significantly lower proportions of low self-efficacy than Fermanagh & Omagh, Causeway Coast & Glens, Derry City & Strabane, Belfast and Mid & East Antrim. Mid & East Antrim reported significantly higher proportions than Antrim & Newtownabbey, Mid Ulster and Ards & North Down. Derry City & Strabane reported significantly higher proportions of low self-efficacy than Mid Ulster and Ards & North Down. Ards & North Down also reported significantly lower proportions of low self-efficacy than Belfast and Causeway Coast & Glens. Belfast also reported significantly higher proportions of low self-efficacy than Mid Ulster.</p>	<p>Antrim & Newtownabbey: 16.1% Ards & North Down: 14.6% Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon: 17.2% Belfast City: 20.6% Causeway Coast & Glens: 20.3% Derry City & Strabane: 21.9% Fermanagh & Omagh: 19.5% Lisburn & Castlereagh: 11.2% Mid & East Antrim: 22.6% Mid Ulster: 15.0% Newry, Mourne & Down: 13.5%</p>

Personal Wellbeing

What is Personal Wellbeing?

An individual's thoughts and feelings about their quality of life is an important aspect of their personal wellbeing. How satisfied people are with their lives, their levels of happiness and anxiety, and whether or not they think the things they do are worthwhile, all have strong links with many elements of wellbeing.

This section contains estimates of reported 'life satisfaction', feeling that things done in life are 'worthwhile', 'happiness' and 'anxiety' for those people interviewed in the reporting period.

Personal wellbeing statistics are reported in two different ways; (i) the average (mean) rating and (ii) the proportion of respondents scoring within each of the thresholds.

People are asked to respond to each question on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is "not at all" and 10 is "completely". This means that a **higher score** indicates **better wellbeing** in relation to 'life satisfaction', 'worthwhile' and 'happiness', and a **lower score** indicates **better wellbeing** for 'anxiety'.

Overall Personal Wellbeing ratings

Average (mean) Wellbeing ratings

The average (mean) wellbeing ratings across the four measures of personal wellbeing were:

- 7.7 out of 10 for 'life satisfaction'
- 7.9 out of 10 for feeling that what you do in life is 'worthwhile'
- 7.7 out of 10 for 'happiness' yesterday
- 2.8 out of 10 for 'anxiety' yesterday

The proportion of respondents scoring within each of the Personal Wellbeing thresholds

Table 1: Labelling of Thresholds

Life satisfaction, Worthwhile and Happiness scores

Anxiety scores*

Response on an 11 point Scale	Label	Response on an 11 point Scale	Label
0 to 4	Low	0 to 1	Very low
5 to 6	Medium	2 to 3	Low
7 to 8	High	4 to 5	Medium
9 to 10	Very high	6 to 10	High

* A lower score indicates better wellbeing for anxiety.

The proportions of people reporting 'Very high' (score of 9 or 10) levels of personal wellbeing (indicating better personal wellbeing) were:

- 32% for 'life satisfaction'
- 37% for feeling that what you do in life is 'worthwhile'
- 35% for 'happiness'.

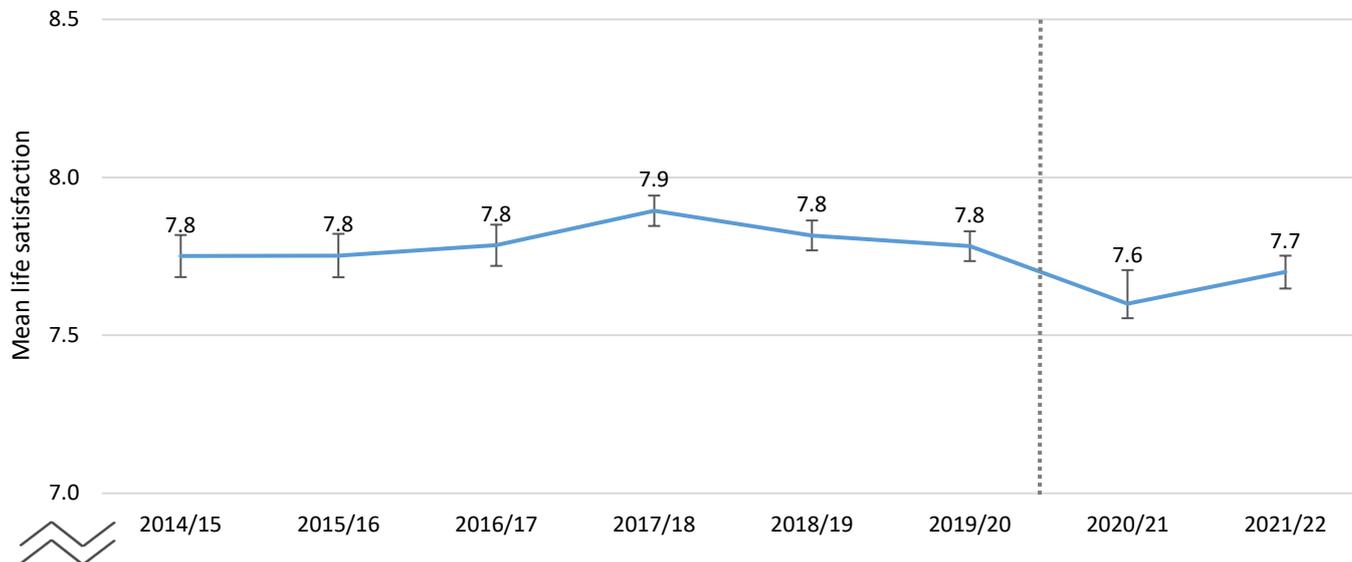
In terms of 'anxiety', where a lower score indicates better personal wellbeing, 42% of people reported a 'Very low' score (0 or 1).

Average life satisfaction score

Overall score

In 2021/22, the average (mean) life satisfaction score for the population of Northern Ireland increased significantly to 7.7 compared with 7.6 in 2020/21. This is considered 'high' and indicates better wellbeing for this measure.

Figure 3.1: Average life satisfaction scores, 2014/15 to 2021/22



Note: Due to changes in the survey methodology, please exercise caution when comparing to previous years. Figure 3.1 includes 95% confidence intervals to represent the ranges either side of each estimate which are 95% certain to include the true value for the population. All labels have been rounded to one decimal place.

Group differences

Average (mean) scores for life satisfaction were estimated (on a scale from 0 to 10) for sixteen group breakdowns. Significant differences were found in fifteen⁷. There were no statistically significant differences in breakdowns for Sex.

The highest average (mean) signifying higher life satisfaction was found among those reporting very good health (8.3). The lowest average (mean) was among those who reported bad/ very bad health (6.0).

Breakdown	Significant differences	Estimate for: Northern Ireland:	
 Age	People aged 45-54 and 55-64 reported significantly lower life satisfaction than those aged 16-24 and 75 and over.	7.7	
		Aged 16-24:	8.0
		Aged 25-34:	7.8
		Aged 35-44:	7.8
		Aged 45-54:	7.5
		Aged 55-64:	7.5
		Aged 65-74:	7.8
		Aged 75 and over:	7.9
 Marital status	People who are married/in civil partnership reported significantly higher life satisfaction than any other category. Those who are single reported significantly higher life satisfaction than those who are divorced.	Single:	7.6
		Married/in civil partnership:	8.0
		Separated:	7.1
		Divorced:	7.2
		Widowed:	7.4

⁷ Significance refers to statistical significance with a 95% confidence that the difference is not by chance.

	Breakdown	Significant differences	Estimate for:
			Northern Ireland: 7.7
	Religion	Protestants reported significantly higher levels of life satisfaction than Catholics or those with an Other/No Religion.	Catholics: 7.7 Protestants: 7.9 Other/No Religion: 7.6
	Dependants	People responsible for child dependant(s) reported significantly higher rates of life satisfaction than those in all other categories.	With Dependants (type) Child: 7.9 Person with disability: 7.5 Elderly person: 7.5 Without Dependants: 7.7
	Health	Significant differences were found across all health categories, with higher levels of life satisfaction among those with better health.	Very good: 8.3 Good: 7.9 Fair: 7.2 Bad / very bad: 6.0
	Disability	People with a disability reported significantly lower life satisfaction scores than those without disability.	People with disability: 7.0 People without disability: 8.0
	Employment status	People in paid employment reported a significantly higher score than those not in paid employment.	In paid employment: 7.9 Not in paid employment: 7.5
	Qualifications	People with no qualifications reported significantly lower life satisfaction than any other category.	Degree and higher: 7.9 Any other qualifications: 7.8 No qualifications: 7.4
	Household Count	People living on their own reported significantly lower life satisfaction than those living with others.	1 person: 7.2 2 people: 7.9 3 or more people: 7.9
	Tenure	Significant differences were found across all tenure categories, with lower levels of life satisfaction among social renters.	Owner occupied: 7.9 Social rented: 7.1 Private rented: 7.5
	Household internet access	Those without household internet access reported significantly lower rates of life satisfaction than those with internet access.	Household internet access: 7.7 No household internet access: 7.3
	Access to car	People with access to a car reported significantly higher levels of life satisfaction than those without access to a car.	Access to a car: 7.8 No access to a car: 7.0
	Deprivation	People in the most deprived areas (Q1) reported significantly lower life satisfaction than those in all other quintiles. People living in the second most deprived areas (Q2) reported significantly lower life satisfaction than those in the third quintile (Q3). People living in the least deprived areas (Q5) reported significantly higher life satisfaction than those in quintiles two and four (Q2 and Q4).	Q1 (most deprived): 7.3 Q2: 7.6 Q3: 7.9 Q4: 7.8 Q5 (least deprived): 8.0
	Urban / Rural	People living in rural areas reported significantly higher levels of life satisfaction than those living in urban areas.	Urban: 7.6 Rural: 7.9

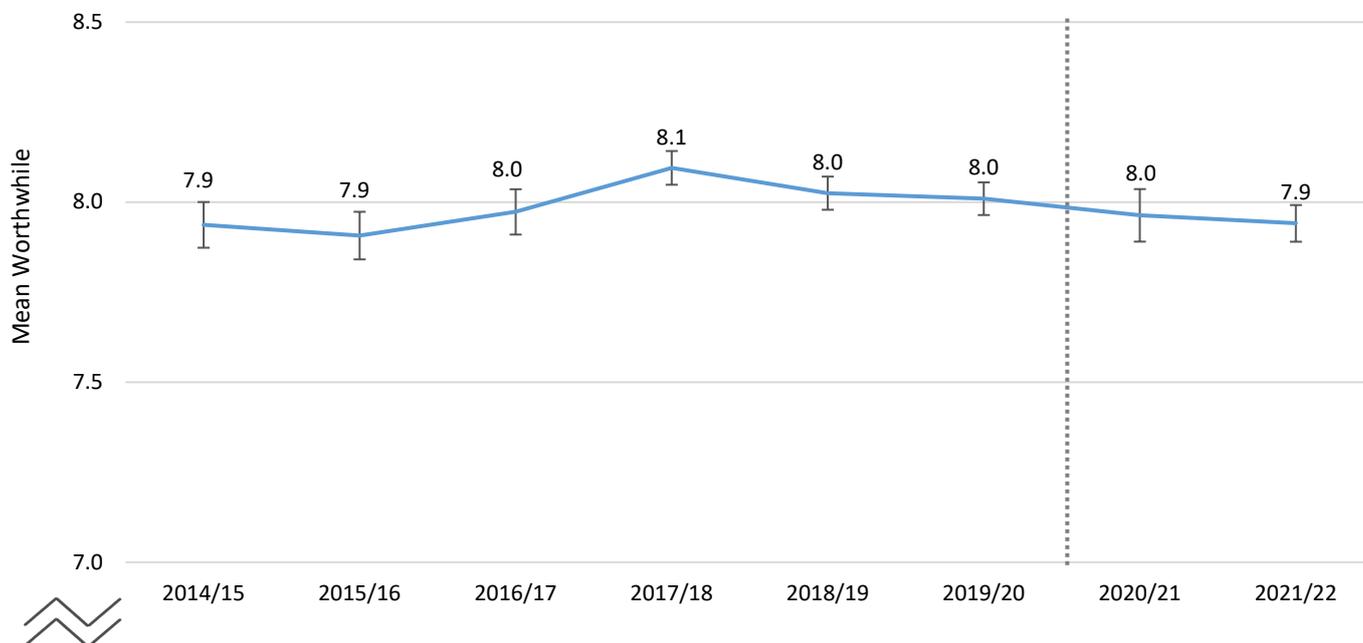
Breakdown	Significant differences	Estimate for: Northern Ireland: 7.7
	<p>Local Government District (LGD)</p>	<p>In comparison with Northern Ireland, Ards & North Down and Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon reported significantly higher life satisfaction. However, Belfast reported significantly lower rates of life satisfaction. Between the LGDs, Belfast reported a significantly lower score compared with all other LGDs except Derry & Strabane. Derry & Strabane reported a significantly lower score compared with Ards & North Down and Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon.</p>
		<p>Antrim & Newtownabbey: 7.7 Ards & North Down: 8.0 Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon: 8.0 Belfast City: 7.3 Causeway Coast & Glens: 7.8 Derry City & Strabane: 7.5 Fermanagh & Omagh: 7.7 Lisburn & Castlereagh: 7.9 Mid & East Antrim: 7.7 Mid Ulster: 7.9 Newry, Mourne & Down: 7.9</p>

Average worthwhile score

Overall score

In 2021/22, the average (mean) score for feeling the things we do in life are worthwhile for Northern Ireland was 7.9, which is considered 'high'. This figure is similar to the 2020/21 figure (8.0).

Figure 3.2: Average worthwhile scores, 2014/15 to 2021/22



Note: Due to changes in the survey methodology, please exercise caution when comparing current data to that collected prior to 2020/21. Figure 3.2 includes 95% confidence intervals to represent the ranges either side of each estimate which are 95% certain to include the true value for the population. All labels have been rounded to one decimal place.

Group differences

Average (mean) scores for feeling the things we do in life are worthwhile were estimated (on a scale from 0 to 10) for sixteen group breakdowns. Significant differences⁸ were found in fifteen groups. There were no statistically significant differences in breakdowns for Age.

The highest average (mean), signifying better wellbeing was among those reporting very good health (8.5). The lowest average (mean), signifying poorer wellbeing, was among those reporting bad/very bad health (6.4).

Breakdown	Significant differences	Estimate for: Northern Ireland: 7.9
 Sex	Females reported a significantly higher score than males.	Males: 7.9 Females: 8.0
 Marital status	Those who are married or in a civil partnership reported a significantly higher score than all other categories.	Single: 7.7 Married/in civil partnership: 8.2 Separated: 7.6 Divorced: 7.6 Widowed: 7.5

⁸ Significance refers to statistical significance with a 95% confidence that the difference is not by chance.

	Breakdown	Significant differences	Estimate for: Northern Ireland: 7.9
	Religion	Those whose religion was Other/No Religion reported a significantly lower score than all other categories.	Catholics: 8.0 Protestants: 8.0 Other /No religion: 7.7
	Dependants	People without a dependant reported a significantly lower score than those with dependants (child, disability and elderly).	With Dependants (type) Child: 8.3 Person with disability: 8.0 Elderly person: 8.1 Without Dependants: 7.8
	Health	Significant differences were found across all health categories, with significantly lower scores reported among those with bad/very bad health.	Very good: 8.5 Good: 8.0 Fair: 7.5 Bad / very bad: 6.4
	Disability	People with a disability reported a significantly lower score than those without disability.	People with disability: 7.2 People without disability: 8.2
	Employment Status	People in paid employment reported a significantly higher score than those not in paid employment.	In paid employment: 8.1 Not in paid employment: 7.7
	Qualifications	People with no qualifications reported a significantly lower score than those with qualifications.	Degree and higher: 8.0 Any other qualifications: 8.0 No qualifications: 7.6
	Household Count	Significant differences were found across all household count categories, with significantly lower scores reported among those living alone.	1 person: 7.3 2 people: 8.0 3 or more people: 8.2
	Tenure	Significant differences were found across tenure categories, with significantly lower scores reported among those living in social or privately rented accommodation.	Owner occupied: 8.1 Social rented: 7.4 Private rented: 7.7
	Household internet access	Those without household internet access reported a significantly lower score than those with internet access.	Household internet access: 8.0 No household internet access: 7.3
	Access to Car	Those without access to a car reported a significantly lower score than those with access to a car.	Access to a car: 8.1 No access to a car: 7.1
	Deprivation	People in the most deprived areas (Q1) reported a significantly lower score than those in all other quintiles.	Q1 (most deprived): 7.6 Q2: 7.9 Q3: 8.1 Q4: 7.9 Q5 (least deprived): 8.1
	Urban/Rural	Those living in urban areas reported a significantly lower score than those living in rural areas.	Urban: 7.8 Rural: 8.2

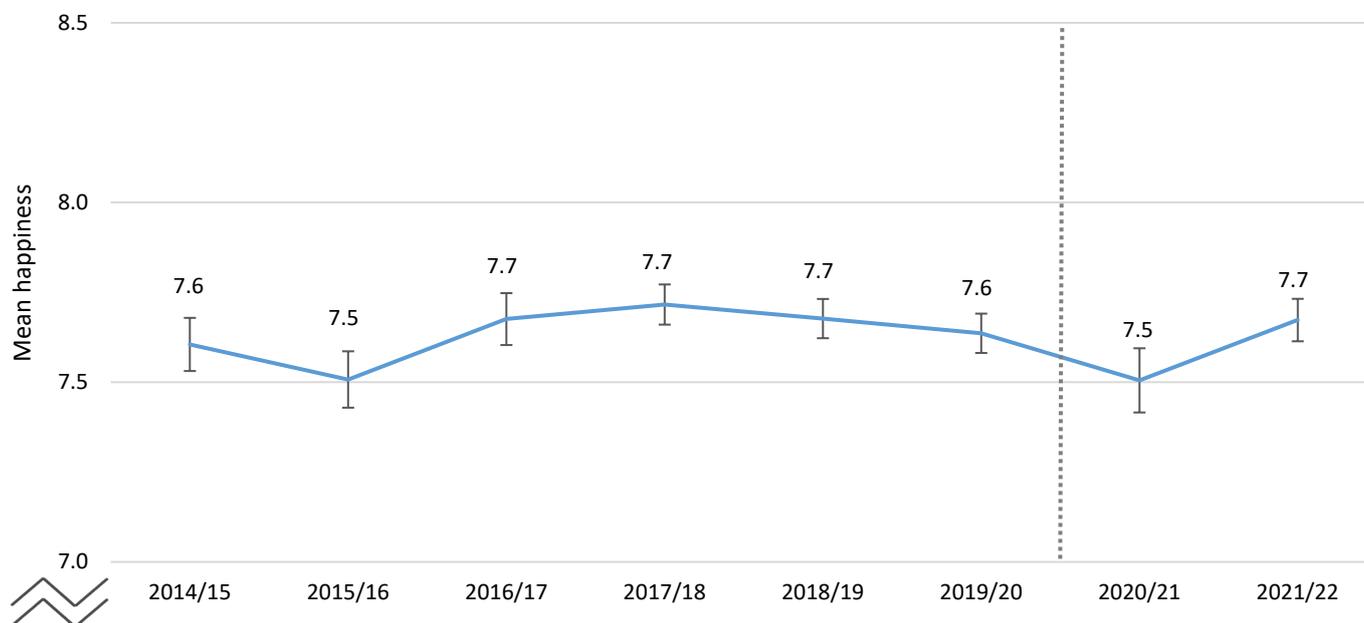
Breakdown	Significant differences	Estimate for: Northern Ireland: 7.9
 <p data-bbox="284 353 448 456">Local Government District (LGD)</p>	<p data-bbox="501 230 991 398">In comparison with the Northern Ireland average, Mid Ulster and Newry, Mourne and Down reported a significantly higher score, meanwhile Belfast reported a significantly lower score.</p> <p data-bbox="501 409 991 580">People living in Belfast reported a significantly lower score than those living in Armagh Banbridge & Craigavon, Lisburn & Castlereagh, Mid Ulster and Newry Mourne & Down.</p>	<p data-bbox="1086 192 1477 224">Antrim & Newtownabbey: 7.9</p> <p data-bbox="1161 230 1477 262">Ards & North Down: 7.9</p> <p data-bbox="1086 268 1477 300">Armagh City, Banbridge &</p> <p data-bbox="1273 306 1477 338">Craigavon: 8.1</p> <p data-bbox="1262 344 1477 376">Belfast City: 7.6</p> <p data-bbox="1086 383 1477 414">Causeway Coast & Glens: 7.9</p> <p data-bbox="1134 421 1477 452">Derry City & Strabane: 7.8</p> <p data-bbox="1139 459 1477 490">Fermanagh & Omagh: 7.9</p> <p data-bbox="1134 497 1477 528">Lisburn & Castlereagh: 8.1</p> <p data-bbox="1177 535 1477 566">Mid & East Antrim: 7.9</p> <p data-bbox="1273 573 1477 604">Mid Ulster: 8.1</p> <p data-bbox="1086 611 1477 642">Newry, Mourne & Down: 8.2</p>

Average happiness score

Overall score

In 2021/22, the average (mean) score for happiness for Northern Ireland was 7.7, which is considered 'high'. This figure is significantly higher than that reported for 2020/21 (7.5), signifying better wellbeing for this measure.

Figure 3.3: Average happiness scores, 2014/15 to 2021/22



Note: Due to changes in the survey methodology, please exercise caution when comparing current data to that collected prior to 2020/21. Figure 3.3 includes 95% confidence intervals to represent the ranges either side of each estimate which are 95% certain to include the true value for the population. All labels have been rounded to one decimal place.

Group differences

Average (mean) scores for happiness were estimated (on a scale from 0 to 10) for sixteen group breakdowns. Significant differences were found in fourteen⁹. There were no statistically significant differences in breakdowns for Sex or Dependants.

The highest average (mean), signifying better wellbeing was among those reporting very good health (8.1). The lowest average (mean), signifying poorer wellbeing, was among those reporting bad/very bad health (6.1).

Breakdown	Significant differences	Estimate for:
		Northern Ireland: 7.7
		Aged 16-24: 7.7
		Aged 25-34: 7.5
		Aged 35-44: 7.7
		Aged 45-54: 7.6
		Aged 55-64: 7.5
		Aged 65-74: 7.8
		Aged 75 and over: 7.9
 Age	Those aged 75 and over reported a significantly higher score than those in the 25-34 and 55-64 age categories.	

⁹ Significance refers to statistical significance with a 95% confidence that the difference is not by chance.

Breakdown	Significant differences	Estimate for: Northern Ireland:
 Marital status	Those who are married or in a civil partnership reported a significantly higher score than those in all other categories.	Northern Ireland: 7.7 Single: 7.4 Married/in civil partnership: 8.0 Separated: 7.2 Divorced: 7.3 Widowed: 7.5
 Religion	Protestants reported a significantly higher score than those in all other categories	Catholics: 7.6 Protestants: 7.8 Other/No Religion: 7.4
 Health	Significant differences were found across all health categories, with significantly lower scores reported among those with bad/very bad health.	Very good: 8.1 Good: 7.8 Fair: 7.2 Bad / very bad: 6.1
 Disability	People with a disability reported a significantly lower score than those without disability.	People with disability: 7.0 People without disability: 7.9
 Employment Status	People in paid employment reported a significantly higher score than those not in paid employment.	In paid employment: 7.8 Not in paid employment: 7.5
 Qualifications	People with no qualifications reported a significantly lower score than those with qualifications.	Degree and higher: 7.7 Any other qualifications: 7.7 No qualifications: 7.4
 Household Count	People living on their own reported a significantly lower score than those living with others.	1 person: 7.2 2 people: 7.8 3 or more people: 7.8
 Tenure	Those who own their house (outright or with mortgage) reported a significantly higher score than those who live in rented accommodation (social and private rented).	Owner occupied: 7.8 Social rented: 7.2 Private rented: 7.4
 Household internet access	Those without household internet access reported significantly lower happiness than those with internet access.	Household internet access: 7.7 No household internet access: 7.3
 Access to Car	People with access to a car reported significantly higher levels of happiness than those without access to a car.	Access to a car: 7.7 No access to a car: 7.0
 Deprivation	People in the most deprived areas (Q1) reported a significantly lower score than those in all other quintiles.	Q1 (most deprived): 7.3 Q2: 7.7 Q3: 7.8 Q4: 7.7 Q5 (least deprived): 7.9
 Urban / Rural	People living in rural areas reported significantly higher levels of happiness than those living in urban areas.	Urban: 7.5 Rural: 7.9

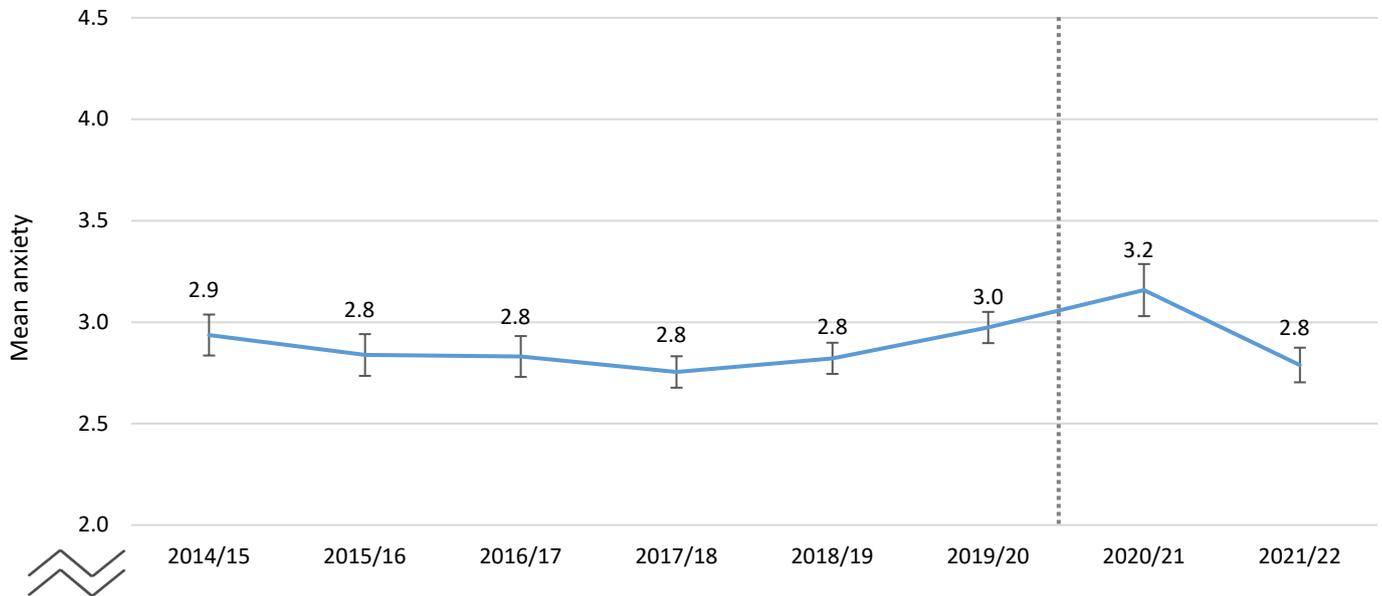
Breakdown	Significant differences	Estimate for: Northern Ireland: 7.7	
	<p>Local Government District (LGD)</p>	<p>In comparison with the Northern Ireland average, Mid Ulster and Ards & North Down reported a significantly higher score, meanwhile Belfast reported a significantly lower score.</p> <p>People living in Belfast reported a significantly lower score than those living in Antrim & Newtownabbey, Armagh Banbridge & Craigavon, Causeway, Fermanagh & Omagh, Lisburn & Castlereagh, Mid & East Antrim, Mid Ulster, Newry Mourne & Down and Ards & North Down.</p>	<p>Antrim & Newtownabbey: 7.6</p> <p>Ards & North Down: 7.9</p> <p>Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon: 7.9</p> <p>Belfast City: 7.1</p> <p>Causeway Coast & Glens: 7.8</p> <p>Derry City & Strabane: 7.6</p> <p>Fermanagh & Omagh: 7.8</p> <p>Lisburn & Castlereagh: 7.8</p> <p>Mid & East Antrim: 7.6</p> <p>Mid Ulster: 7.9</p> <p>Newry, Mourne & Down: 7.9</p>

Average (mean) anxiety

Overall score

In 2021/22, the average (mean) score for anxiety¹⁰ for Northern Ireland was 2.8, which is considered 'low'. This figure is significantly lower than that reported for 2020/21 (3.2), signifying better wellbeing for this measure.

Figure 3.4: Average anxiety scores, 2014/15 to 2021/22



Note: Due to changes in the survey methodology, please exercise caution when comparing current data to that collected prior to 2020/21. Figure 3.4 includes 95% confidence intervals to represent the ranges either side of each estimate which are 95% certain to include the true value for the population. All labels have been rounded to one decimal place.

Group differences

Average (mean) scores for anxiety were estimated (on a scale from 0 to 10) for sixteen group breakdowns. Significant differences were found in fourteen¹¹. There were no statistically significant differences in breakdowns for Qualifications and Internet Access.

The lowest average (mean), signifying better wellbeing, was among those living in Mid Ulster (1.9). The highest average (mean), signifying poorer wellbeing, was among those reporting bad/very bad health (4.9).

Breakdown	Significant differences	Estimate for: Northern Ireland:
 Sex	Females reported a significantly higher score than males.	Northern Ireland: 2.8 Males: 2.5 Females: 3.1

¹⁰ A lower score indicates better wellbeing for anxiety.

¹¹ Significance refers to statistical significance with a 95% confidence that the difference is not by chance.

Breakdown	Significant differences	Estimate for: Northern Ireland:	2.8
	Age Those aged 75 and over reported a significantly lower score than those in the 25-34, 35-44, 45-54 and 55-64 age categories. Those aged 25-34 reported a significantly higher score than those in the 16-24, 45-54, 65-74 and 75+ age categories. Those aged 55-64 reported a significantly higher score than those aged 65 and over.	Aged 16-24: Aged 25-34: Aged 35-44: Aged 45-54: Aged 55-64: Aged 65-74: Aged 75 and over:	2.4 3.3 2.8 2.8 3.0 2.5 2.3
	Marital status Those who are married or in a civil partnership reported a significantly lower score than those who are single, separated or divorced.	Single: Married/in civil partnership: Separated: Divorced: Widowed:	3.0 2.5 3.4 3.4 2.7
	Religion Protestants reported a significantly lower score than those whose religion Other/No Religion.	Catholics: Protestants: Other/No Religion:	2.8 2.7 3.1
	Dependants Those with responsibility for an elderly dependant reported a significantly higher score than those with responsibility for a child and those without dependants	With Dependants (type) Child: Person with disability: Elderly person: Without Dependants:	2.7 3.0 3.3 2.8
	Health Significant differences were found across all health categories, with significantly lower scores reported among those with very good health.	Very good: Good: Fair: Bad / very bad:	2.0 2.7 3.4 4.9
	Disability People with a disability reported a significantly higher score than those without disability.	People with disability: People without disability:	3.8 2.4
	Employment Status People in paid employment reported a significantly lower score than those not in paid employment.	In paid employment: Not in paid employment:	2.7 3.0
	Household Count People living on their own reported a significantly lower score than those living with others.	1 person: 2 people: 3 or more people:	3.1 2.8 2.6
	Tenure Those who own their house (outright or with mortgage) reported a significantly lower score than those who live in rented accommodation (social and private rented).	Owner occupied: Social rented: Private rented:	2.6 3.4 3.2
	Access to Car People without access to a car reported a significantly higher score than those with access to a car.	Access to a car: No access to a car:	2.7 3.5

Breakdown	Significant differences	Estimate for:
		Northern Ireland: 2.8
	Deprivation People in the most deprived areas (Q1) reported a significantly higher score than those living in quintile 3.	Q1 (most deprived): 3.1 Q2: 2.8 Q3: 2.6 Q4: 2.7 Q5 (least deprived): 2.7
	Urban / Rural People living in rural areas reported a significantly lower score than those living in urban areas.	Urban: 3.0 Rural: 2.5
	Local Government District (LGD) In comparison with the Northern Ireland average, Mid Ulster reported a significantly lower score, meanwhile Belfast and Derry and Strabane reported a significantly higher score. People in Mid Ulster reported a significantly lower score than those living in Antrim & Newtownabbey, Armagh Banbridge & Craigavon, Belfast, Derry & Strabane, Lisburn & Castlereagh and Mid & East Antrim. People living in Belfast reported a significantly higher score than those living in Armagh Banbridge & Craigavon, Causeway Coast & Glens, Fermanagh & Omagh, Lisburn & Castlereagh, Mid & East Antrim, Mid Ulster, Newry Mourne & Down and Ards & North Down.	Antrim & Newtownabbey: 2.9 Ards & North Down: 2.6 Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon: 2.6 Belfast City: 3.5 Causeway Coast & Glens: 2.8 Derry City & Strabane: 3.1 Fermanagh & Omagh: 2.6 Lisburn & Castlereagh: 2.8 Mid & East Antrim: 2.8 Mid Ulster: 1.9 Newry, Mourne & Down: 2.6

Locus of Control

What is locus of control?

Locus of control is a construct which explains the degree to which a person feels they have control over their life¹². It refers to where someone believes control is located and ranges from 'external' to 'internal'.

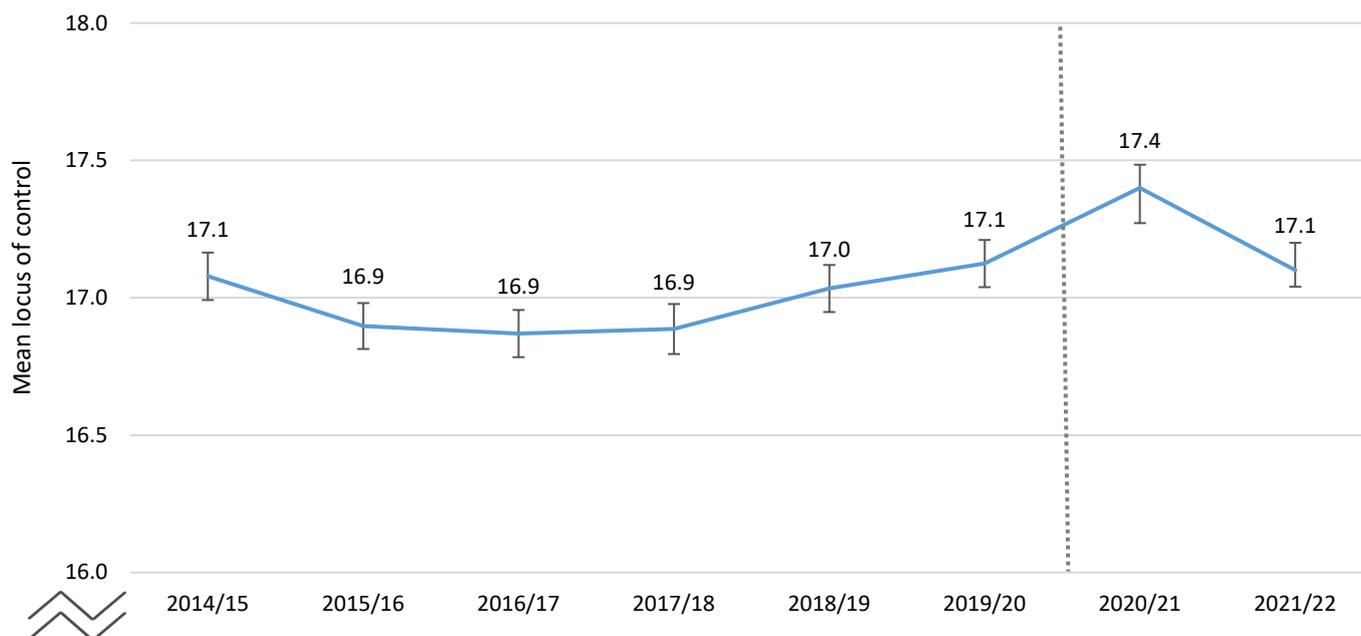
- Those with **external** locus of control feel events are influenced by outside factors, making it beyond an individual's control to shape the events of their life.
- Those with **internal** locus of control believe in their own influence over life events and are confident that their actions can have direct effects on their life outcomes. They tend to tackle problems confidently, persevere and improve on their tasks.

Average locus of control

Overall score

The locus of control scores range from 5 to 25. A lower score indicates a belief that life is determined by outside factors (external). A higher score shows a belief in one's own control (internal). In 2021/22, the average (mean) locus of control score for Northern Ireland was 17.1, which is considered more internal than external. This represents a significantly lower score compared to the previous year (17.4).

Figure 4.1: Average locus of control scores, 2014/15 to 2021/22



Note: Due to changes in the survey methodology, please exercise caution when comparing to previous years. Figure 4.1 includes 95% confidence intervals to represent the ranges either side of each estimate which are 95% certain to include the true value for the population. All labels have been rounded to one decimal place.

¹² Further information can be found in [Annex A: Technical notes](#) at the end of this report.

Group differences

Average (mean) scores were estimated on a scale from 5 to 25 (external-internal) for sixteen group breakdowns. Significant differences were found in fifteen¹³. There were no statistically significant differences in locus of control breakdowns for Urban/Rural.

The lowest (most external) average (mean) was found amongst those reporting bad / very bad health (15.7). The highest (most internal) average (mean) was found amongst those with a degree or higher (17.8).

	Breakdown	Significant differences	Estimate for:
	Sex	Females had a significantly lower (more external) score than males.	Northern Ireland: 17.1 Males: 17.3 Females: 17.0
	Age	People aged 55-64, 65-74 and 75 and over had significantly lower (more external) scores than those aged 25-34 and 35-44. People aged 45-54 had significantly higher scores than those aged 75 and over but had significantly lower scores compared with those aged 25-34.	Aged 16-24: 17.2 Aged 25-34: 17.6 Aged 35-44: 17.3 Aged 45-54: 17.1 Aged 55-64: 16.9 Aged 65-74: 16.8 Aged 75 and over: 16.6
	Marital status	Those who are single or married / in a civil partnership had a significantly higher (more internal) score than those in all other groups.	Single: 17.2 Married/in civil partnership: 17.2 Separated: 16.5 Divorced: 16.7 Widowed: 16.6
	Religion	Both Catholics and Protestants had a significantly lower (more external) score than those with an Other/No religion.	Catholics: 17.0 Protestants: 17.0 Other/no religion: 17.7
	Dependants	Those with a child dependant had a significantly higher score (more internal) than those with another type of dependant or those without any dependants.	With Dependants (type) Child: 17.4 Person with disability: 16.7 Elderly person: 16.9 Without Dependants: 17.1
	Health	Significant differences were found across all health categories, with more internal locus of control among people reporting better health.	Very good: 17.6 Good: 17.2 Fair: 16.6 Bad / very bad: 15.7
	Disability	People with a disability had a significantly lower score (more external) than those without disability.	People with disability: 16.5 People without disability: 17.4
	Employment status	People not in paid employment reported a significantly lower (more external) score than those in paid employment.	In paid employment: 17.5 Not in paid employment: 16.6
	Qualifications	Significant differences were found across all qualification categories, with more internal locus of control among people with qualifications.	Degree and higher: 17.8 Any other qualifications: 17.0 No qualifications: 16.2

¹³ Significance refers to statistical significance with a 95% confidence that the difference is not by chance.

	Breakdown	Significant differences	Estimate for: Northern Ireland: 17.1
	Household Count	People living in households of 3 or more people had a significantly higher score (more internal) than those living alone or in a two person household.	1 person: 16.9 2 people: 17.0 3 or more people: 17.3
	Tenure	People living in social rented accommodation had a significantly lower (more external) score than those in living in private rented or owner occupied accommodation.	Owner occupied: 17.2 Social rented: 16.4 Private rented: 17.1
	Household internet access	Those with no household internet access had a significantly lower score (more external) than those with internet access.	Household internet access: 17.2 No household internet access: 16.3
	Access to car	People with access to a car had a significantly higher score (more internal) than those without access to a car.	Access to a car: 17.2 No access to a car: 16.6
	Deprivation	Those in the least deprived areas (Q4 and Q5) had significantly higher (more internal) scores than those living in the most deprived areas (Q1 and Q2). Those living in the third quintile (Q3) had significantly higher scores (more internal) than those living in the second quintile (Q2).	Q1 (most deprived): 16.9 Q2: 16.8 Q3: 17.1 Q4: 17.2 Q5 (least deprived): 17.5
	Local Government District (LGD)	Those living in Mid Ulster had a significantly higher (more internal) score than Northern Ireland as a whole. In contrast, Derry City & Strabane had a significantly lower (more external) score than the Northern Ireland average. Between the LGDs, both Lisburn & Castlereagh and Mid Ulster had a significantly higher (more internal) score than Derry City & Strabane, Mid & East Antrim and Newry, Mourne & Down.	Antrim & Newtownabbey: 17.1 Ards & North Down: 17.0 Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon: 17.1 Belfast City: 17.3 Causeway Coast & Glens: 17.1 Derry City & Strabane: 16.8 Fermanagh & Omagh: 17.1 Lisburn & Castlereagh: 17.4 Mid & East Antrim: 16.8 Mid Ulster: 17.4 Newry, Mourne & Down: 16.8

Strengths and limitations

While self-efficacy and the four personal wellbeing measures are scored from low to high, the construct of locus of control is scored on a continuum from external to internal where neither extreme is ideal.

All reported averages (means) and proportions are estimates. The accompanying data tables include confidence intervals. These represent the range on either side of the estimate which we can be 95% certain contains the true population value.

Where a significant difference is reported it does not necessarily mean one group's score is low and another's is high. A small difference may still be significant. For example, females may have a significantly higher score than males for worthwhile but both scores may still be at the higher end of the scale.

Related links

This report uses data collected from individual respondents (aged 16 or over) via the Continuous Household Survey, 2021/22.

Questions on self-efficacy, personal wellbeing and locus of control were included for the first time in 2014/15 and have been included in this annual survey every year since. Previous reports relating to self-efficacy, locus of control and life satisfaction from this source can be found on The Executive Office [Statistics and Research](#) webpages. Findings for young people (aged 11-16, from a separate survey) are also presented every three years, and these reports can be found on The Executive Office [Statistics and Research](#) webpages.

Questions on the four personal wellbeing measures (life satisfaction, anxiety, worthwhile and happiness) are also included in the Labour Force Survey, and previous publications by NISRA have used this source to report findings. These reports can be found on the [NISRA website](#).

Questions on loneliness were included in the CHS for the first time in 2017/18 and have been included in this annual survey every year since. Previous reports can be found on the [NISRA website](#).

The data discussed in this report are available in the [accompanying tables](#).

More information on the methodology used can be found in an accompanying [Quality report](#).

Feedback and contact details

We are interested in understanding more about the quality of this publication and how it is used. This will help us provide a high quality service which meets users' needs. We would be grateful if you could spend a couple of minutes answering our [User Feedback Survey questions](#).

Further information and copies in alternative formats can be obtained by contacting:

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Annex A: Technical notes

Instruments for measuring wellbeing

Definitions

Loneliness

Loneliness measures the frequency with which people report feeling lonely but not the level of loneliness they experience.

Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is a person's belief about their capabilities to exercise influence over events that affect their lives. People with high self-efficacy are often seen as confident in their capabilities and produce sustained efforts to achieve their goals. In contrast, people with low self-efficacy often doubt their capabilities, are less ambitious and give up on their aims when challenged.

Low self-efficacy

The tool for measuring self-efficacy is a simple statement based survey tool. It takes the form of five simple statements to which the individual indicates to what extent they agree or disagree on a five point Likert scale. Self-efficacy is then presented as an overall score, minimum 5 and maximum 25, taken from the summed total of the five statement questions. Self-efficacy scores of 70% or more of the total possible score (i.e. 18 to 25) are categorised as high self-efficacy; low self-efficacy is therefore anything under 70% of the total possible score (i.e. 5 to 17).

Life Satisfaction

Life satisfaction relates to an individual's satisfaction with their life overall.

Happiness

Happiness relates to how happy the respondent felt on the day prior to being interviewed.

Worthwhile

Worthwhile relates to the extent to which a person feels the things they do in life are worthwhile.

Anxiety

Anxiety relates to how anxious the respondent felt on the day prior to being interviewed.

Locus of Control

Locus of control is a personality construct which explains the degree to which a person feels they have control over their life.

Survey tools

Loneliness

The analyses in this report are based on the direct measure of loneliness to which the available responses are "Often/always", "Some of the time", "Occasionally", "Hardly ever" and "Never". The question below therefore measures the frequency with which people report feeling lonely, but not the level of loneliness they experience:

Loneliness question:

- How often do you feel lonely?

This question adheres to the [Government Statistical Service \(GSS\) harmonised principals](#) and will be comparable with data published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

Self-efficacy

The instruments for measuring self-efficacy are each a simple statement-based survey tool. It takes the form of five statements to which the individual indicates to what extent they agree or disagree on a five point Likert scale. Self-efficacy is presented as an overall score (minimum 5 and maximum 25), taken from the summed total of the five statement questions. Self-efficacy scores were categorised as low if they fell between 5 and 17, i.e. in the bottom 70% of the scale.

Self-efficacy statement questions:

1. I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough.
2. I am confident that I could deal efficiently with unexpected events.
3. I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities.
4. When I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions.
5. No matter what comes my way, I'm usually able to handle it.

Personal Wellbeing

Each of the personal wellbeing statements are presented as single questions to which the individual is asked to respond to each question on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is "not at all" and 10 is "completely". This means that a higher score indicates better wellbeing in relation to life satisfaction, worthwhile and happiness, and a lower score indicates better wellbeing for anxiety.

Personal wellbeing questions:

1. Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?
2. Overall, to what extent do you feel the things you do in your life are worthwhile?
3. Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?
4. Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?

These questions adhere to the [Government Statistical Service \(GSS\) harmonised principals](#) and will be comparable with data published by the [Office for National Statistics \(ONS\)](#).

Personal wellbeing statistics are reported in two ways:

1. The average (mean) rating, and
2. The proportion scoring within each of the rating thresholds outlined in [Labelling Thresholds table](#).

Locus of Control

Similar to self-efficacy, the instrument for measuring locus of control is a simple statement-based survey tool. It takes the form of five statements to which the individual indicates to what extent they agree or disagree on a five point Likert scale. Locus of control is presented as an overall score, minimum 5 and maximum 25, taken from the summed total of the five statement questions.

Locus of control statement questions:

1. I am in control of my life.
2. If I take the right steps, I can avoid problems.
3. Most things that affect my life happen by accident.
4. If it's meant to be, I will be successful.
5. I can only do what people in my life want me to do.

Further information on self-efficacy, locus of control and life satisfaction can be found under 'Background Research' on The Executive Office [Statistics and Research](#) webpages.

Continuous Household Survey

This report presents findings from the 2021/22 Continuous Household Survey (CHS) on the perceived wellbeing of the Northern Ireland population. The CHS is carried out by the Central Survey Unit (CSU) within the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA). The CHS has been in existence since 1983 and is designed to provide a regular source of information on a wide range of social and economic issues relevant to Northern Ireland.

More information on CHS can be found here on the [CHS survey page](#).

Sample

The 2021/22 CHS is based on a systematic random sample of 9,000 addresses drawn each year from the Pointer list of domestic addresses. Pointer is the address database for Northern Ireland and is maintained by Land & Property Services, with input from Local Councils and Royal Mail.

With the lifting of some restrictions, from the month of July 2021, CSU implemented the knock to nudge method. This meant that Interviewers could once again call at sampled addresses to encourage people to participate in the survey while adhering to the COVID health and safety advise/restrictions. Interviewers were not permitted to enter the property, only to collect contact information to complete the survey using CATI (Computer assisted Telephone Interviewing) at an agreed time. The achieved response rate was 41% (4,103 individuals), which is a lower response compared with the normal achieved response rate of approximately 55% in face-to-face mode but much higher than the achieved response rate in 2020/21 (16%).

In any survey, there is a possibility of non-response bias. Non-response bias arises if the characteristics of non-respondents differ from those of respondents in such a way that they are reflected in the responses given in the survey. Weighting has been applied where necessary to minimise this bias and this is discussed in more detail below.

Further information on the CHS sample and questionnaire can be found in the [Continuous Household Survey 2021/22 Technical Report](#).

Sampling error and weights

As the CHS is a sample survey there is a certain level of sampling error, i.e. the characteristics of the group sampled may differ slightly from the population as a whole. To account for this sampling error, the data has been weighted in order to produce estimates that better represent the population. The adjustment may be less than or greater than 1, but is generally close to 1. A range of different weights have been applied to account for how the various sample groups differ from the population they represent. Cases have been weighted to adjust for Sex, age and deprivation. This reduces (but does not completely eliminate) error. All reported means and percentages have been weighted. The accompanying data tables include the 95% confidence intervals for each estimate. These confidence intervals represent the ranges either side of the CHS estimates which are 95% certain to include the true values for the population.

Publication threshold

It is the nature of sampling variability that the smaller the group whose size is being estimated, the less precise (proportionately) that estimate is. Estimates for groups where the sample base is less than 100 have been omitted from the report, as they are likely to be unreliable. These instances have been denoted with an asterisk (*) in the accompanying data tables.

Statistical significance

Statistically significant differences between groups (at the 95% level) have been highlighted throughout the report, for example between males and females. Differences between estimates are considered to be statistically significant where we can be 95% confident that they represent actual differences at population level and have not just arisen by chance. The base numbers, average (mean) scores and percentages have an effect on statistical significance. Therefore on occasion, a difference between two groups may be statistically significant while the same difference in average (mean) score or percentage points between two other groups may not be statistically significant. The reason for this is because the larger the base numbers or the closer the percentages are to 0 or 100, the smaller the standard errors. This leads to increased precision of the estimates which increases the likelihood that the difference is actually significant and did not just arise by chance.

User engagement and enhancements to publication

Over the past year, the statistical teams have taken part in a number of user engagement events with those from within relevant NICS policy areas as well as external users, such as charity groups, and academia. The teams also took part in Systemic reviews run by the Office for Statistics regulation (OSR) for Loneliness and Mental Health. Following this engagement, a number of changes have been made to the publication of Wellbeing data in 2021/22. Users requested a breakdown of data at lower geography levels. Data is now published by Parliamentary constituency and this can be accessed in the [Wellbeing in NI 2021/22 Tables](#). To enable users to easily access data by sub population breakdowns, the statistical team have worked with the NISRA Tech Lab to create the [Wellbeing in NI Dashboard](#). The dashboard contains time series data for all breakdowns in charts and graphs, which can be exported and used in your own reports and research publications.

Available breakdowns

Due to insufficient sample sizes, the following categories could not be included or reported on – Ethnicity and Sexual Orientation. We will continue to monitor the sample sizes for these questions on an annual basis and publish data when the publication threshold (100) is met.

Sex

The CHS outlines two Sex categories for respondents: Male and Female

Age

The CHS asks respondents for their age at their last birthday. For the purposes of this report, the ages were coded into the following groups: 16-24 years, 25-34 years, 35-44 years, 45-54 years, 55-64 years, 65-74 years and 75 years and over.

Marital status

The CHS outlines nine distinct marital status categories for respondents. For the purposes of this report, the responses were coded into five categories, as follows:

- 1) Single
- 2) Married/in a civil partnership
- 3) Separated
- 4) Divorced
- 5) Widowed

Religion

Interviewers for the CHS collected information on the religion of residents aged 16 and over in each household, the religious categories represented within the questionnaire were as follows: Catholic, Presbyterian, Church of Ireland, Methodist, Baptist, Free Presbyterian, Brethren, Protestant – not specified, Christian – not specified, Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, Any other religion, No religion. For the purposes of this report, the aforementioned religious groups were coded into three distinct categories, as follows:

- 1) Catholic
- 2) Protestant – to include Presbyterian, Church of Ireland, Methodist, Baptist, Free Presbyterian, Brethren, Protestant – not specified and Christian – not specified.
- 3) Other/no religion – to include Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, any other religion, respondents that did not specify a religion, and for those for whom religion could not be determined.

Dependants

An individual is defined as having dependants if they have responsibility for the care of: a child(ren); a person with a disability; and/or a dependant elderly person.

General Health

The CHS outlines five distinct health categories by which respondents report on their general health. For the purposes of this report, responses were recoded into four groups; 1) Very good 2) Good, 3) Fair, 4) Very bad/bad.

Disability

An individual has been included as having a disability where they have reported that they have a physical or mental health condition(s) or illness(es) lasting or expected to last for 12 months or more, which reduces their ability to carry out day to day activities.

Employment status

The following definitions for employment status are used for the data presented in this report:

In paid employment: Comprises all individuals aged 16 or over who are in paid employment (both employees and self-employed), those on government training or work schemes, those who had a formal attachment to their job but were temporarily not at work during the reference period, performed some work for profit or family gain in cash or kind, were with an enterprise such as a business, farm or service but who were temporarily not at work during the reference period for any reason.

Not in paid employment: The not in paid employment comprises all individuals aged 16 or over who are without work, that is, not in paid employment or self-employment, currently available for both paid employment or self-employment and seeking work with specific steps taken to seek either employment or self-employment, or are inactive.

Household Count

The CHS collected information on the number of people living in the house. Respondents were asked how many people live in your household, that is, whose main residence this is and who share cooking facilities, and share either a living room, sitting room or dining area with you. For the purposes of this report, the household count was coded into the following groups: 1 person, 2 people and 3 or more people.

Tenure

Interviews for the CHS collected information on the tenure of the accommodation in which the respondent lives in. This was coded for the purposes of this report into the following groups:

Owner occupied: This comprises of owns it outright, buying with the help of a mortgage of loan or pay part rent and part mortgage (co-ownership).

Social rented: This includes rented from Housing Executive or rented from a housing association.

Private rented: This includes rented privately or lives here rent free.

Deprivation

Deprivation figures presented in this report are based on the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2017, which is a measure of deprivation at the small area level. Quintiles of deprivation categorise an area of deprivation; Quintile 1 (Q1) represents the 20% most deprived areas, and Quintile 5 (Q5) represents the 20% least deprived.

Urban/Rural

Data presented in this report have been analysed by whether respondents are living in areas that have been categorised as either Urban or Rural using the Settlement 15 geography classification. Classification by SOA is available, but due to the small sample sizes for the 'Mixed' category, Settlement 15 is presented here. More information on the definitions for urban/rural classifications can be found on the [NISRA website](#).

Local Government District

Data presented in this report have also been analysed by which of the 11 Local Government Districts (LGD2014) respondents are living in: Antrim and Newtownabbey, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon, Belfast City, Causeway Coast and Glens, Derry City and Strabane, Fermanagh and Omagh, Lisburn and Castlereagh, Mid and East Antrim, Mid Ulster, Newry, Mourne and Down, Ards and North Down.

Parliamentary Constituency

Northern Ireland is divided into 18 Assembly Areas – the latest set were created in 2008 but came into effect following the NI Assembly Elections on 5th May 2011. They were realigned to the current Parliamentary Constituency Boundaries which were in effect from the 2008 Westminster Parliamentary Elections. NI Assembly Areas are the areas used to elect MLAs to the NI Assembly. Westminster parliamentary constituencies are the areas used to elect Members of Parliament (MPs) to the House of Commons in Westminster.

Other relevant statistical releases

Although this report is the official source for Wellbeing data in Northern Ireland, Personal Wellbeing data collected in the [Labour Force survey](#) for Northern Ireland is also published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) in their [Personal well-being in the UK bulletin](#), which was released on 31st October 2022. The ONS publication reports Personal Wellbeing data at NI level and by LGD. This has been compared with the findings in this report and none of the differences scores were found to be significantly different.

The NISRA Coronavirus Opinion Survey collected data on Personal Wellbeing and Loneliness throughout the Pandemic from April 2020 to March 22. This data can be found on the [NISRA Coronavirus Opinion Survey page](#).

The Department for communities recently conducted analysis on the relationship between engagement in culture, arts and sport and the wellbeing metrics - life satisfaction, self-efficacy, locus on control and loneliness. The findings of this analysis can be found in the [Wellbeing and engagement in culture, arts and sport by adults in Northern Ireland 2020/21](#) report.

Data on Mental Health and those showing signs of loneliness are published by the Department of Health in the [Health Survey First results report](#).