

Self-efficacy, Locus of Control & Life Satisfaction among Young People, 2019

Findings from the Young Persons' Behaviour and Attitudes Survey

Available population characteristics: Gender, Religion, Deprivation, Free School Meals, Urban/Rural, Year Group, Disability, Health, Ethnicity, School Type

Key findings

Among Year 8 pupils in 2019, the estimates for:

- average (mean) self-efficacy (17.3) and proportion of pupils with low self-efficacy (38.3%) are not significantly different to the 2016 figures (17.2 and 37.6%, respectively)
- average (mean) locus of control is 16.7 which is significantly lower than the 2016 figure (17.0)
- average (mean) life satisfaction is 5.6 which is significantly lower than the 2016 figure (5.8)

There were significant differences in some Year 8 group breakdowns across self-efficacy, locus of control and life satisfaction. For example:

- pupils entitled to free school meals, those with a disability and those whose health was fair had lower averages (means) for all three measures than their respective counterparts – those not entitled to free school meals, without a disability or with very good/good health

Among pupils in Year 9-12 in 2019, the estimate for:

- average (mean) self-efficacy is 17.1 which is significantly lower than the 2016 figure (17.4)
- proportion of pupils with low self-efficacy is 49.8% which is significantly larger than the 2016 figure (42.9%)
- average (mean) locus of control is 16.6 which is significantly higher (more internal) than the 2016 figure (16.2)
- average (mean) life satisfaction is 7.1 which is significantly lower than the 2016 figure (7.6)

There were significant differences in some Year 9-12 group breakdowns across self-efficacy, locus of control and life satisfaction. For example:

- females, pupils in secondary schools, those with a disability and those whose health was very bad/bad or fair had lower averages (means) for all three measures than their respective counterparts – males, those in grammar schools, those without a disability and those with very good/good health

Separate scales are used for Year 8 pupils and pupils in Year 9-12. As a result, direct comparisons between the two age groups cannot be made.

For detail on the measuring instruments, Young Persons' Behaviour and Attitudes Survey, and analysis for this report, refer to [Annex A: Technical notes](#).

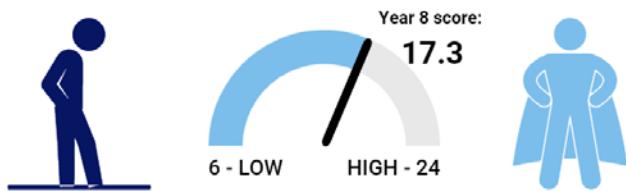
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Year 8 pupils

Overview

Self-efficacy - a person's beliefs about their capability to produce results or effects, to complete tasks and achieve goals.



The Year 8 **average (mean) self-efficacy score** was **17.3**.

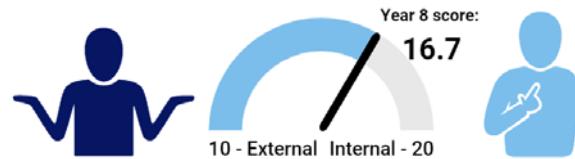
Self-efficacy is used as a way of measuring the confidence of people in Northern Ireland. This report considers two estimates for self-efficacy – average (mean) and proportion.

The self-efficacy scores range from 6 to 24. To discuss low self-efficacy, this report has classed scores from 6 to 16 as low and scores from 17 to 24 as high.



38.3% of Year 8 pupils had **low self-efficacy**.

Locus of control – the degree to which a person feels they have control over their life.



The Year 8 **average (mean) locus of control score** was **16.7**.

The locus of control scores range from 10 to 20. 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).

Life satisfaction – a person's sense of contentment with their life overall.



The Year 8 **average (mean) life satisfaction score** was **5.6**.

Life satisfaction is scored from 1 to 7, with 7 being the highest achievable score.

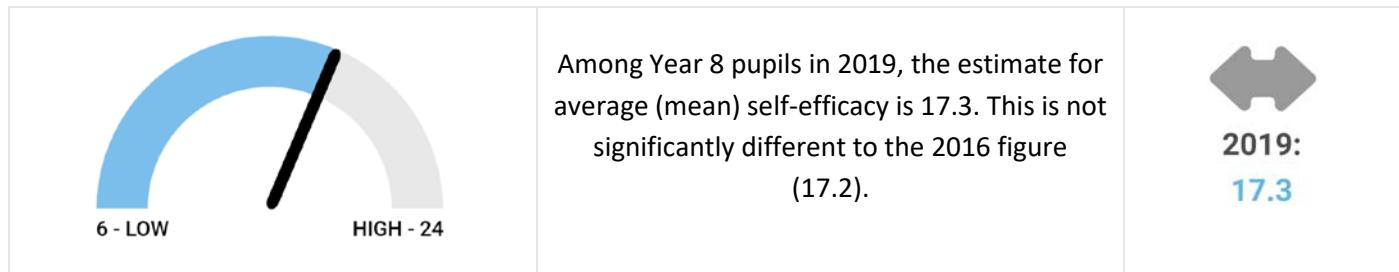
The following pages compare the above estimates for Year 8 pupils to previous data (2016). Breakdowns by Gender, Religion, Deprivation, Free School Meals, Urban/Rural, Disability, Health, Ethnicity and School Type are also considered.

The findings for Year 8 pupils cannot be directly compared with the findings for pupils in Year 9-12 due to differences in the survey questions and scales. Details including the exact questions can be found in [Annex A: Technical notes](#) at the end of this report while all available estimates and confidence intervals can be compared in the tables accompanying the report.

Self-efficacy (Year 8)

A person's beliefs about their capability to produce results or effects, to complete tasks and achieve goals

Average (mean) self-efficacy – overall score



Average (mean) self-efficacy - group differences

Average (mean) scores were estimated (on a scale from 6 to 24) for nine group breakdowns. Significant differences were found in four¹.

The lowest self-efficacy estimate was found among pupils with a disability. The highest scores were found among pupils with very/good health and grammar school pupils.

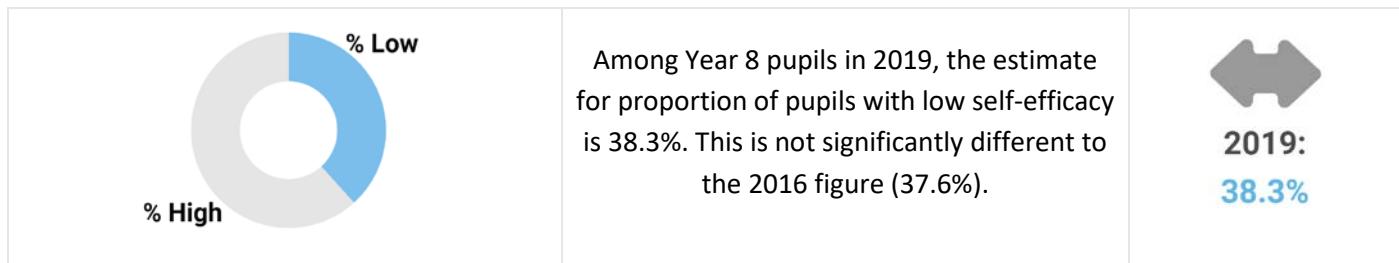
There were no statistically significant differences in average (mean) self-efficacy breakdowns for Gender, Religion, Deprivation or Urban/Rural. For Ethnicity, comparisons are not drawn as only one category (white) is large enough to report upon.

Breakdown	Significant differences	Estimate for: Year 8 pupils: 17.3
	Free School Meals Pupils entitled to free school meals had a significantly lower score than those not entitled to free school meals.	FSM: 16.7 Non-FSM: 17.6
	Disability Pupils with a disability had a significantly lower score than those without a disability.	With disability: 15.9 Without disability: 17.6
	Health Those reporting very good/good health, had a significantly higher score than those reporting fair health.	Very good/good: 17.7 Fair: 16.0 Very bad/bad: *
	School Type Pupils in secondary schools had a significantly lower score than those in grammar schools.	Secondary schools: 17.0 Grammar schools: 17.7

¹ Significance refers to statistical significance with a 95% confidence that the difference is not by chance.

*Estimates are suppressed where fewer than 100 people were sampled.

Proportion with low self-efficacy – overall figure



Proportion with low self-efficacy – group differences

Proportions with low self-efficacy scores (6-16 on a scale from 6 to 24) were estimated for nine group breakdowns. Significant differences were found in four¹.

The group with the largest proportion reporting low self-efficacy was those with a disability and the group with the smallest proportion was those whose health was very good/good. More than 60% of those with a disability had low self-efficacy, as did more than half of those with fair health. Large differences, of more than ten percentage points, were also seen within the Free School Meals and School Type breakdowns.

There were no statistically significant differences in breakdowns for Gender, Religion, Deprivation or Urban/Rural. For Ethnicity, comparisons are not drawn as only one category (white) is large enough to report upon.

Breakdown	Significant differences	Estimate for: Year 8 pupils: 38.3%
	Free School Meals There was a significantly larger proportion of pupils with low self-efficacy amongst those entitled to free school meals than those not entitled to free school meals.	FSM: 46.0% Non-FSM: 35.0%
	Disability There was a significantly larger proportion of pupils with low self-efficacy amongst those with a disability than those without a disability.	With disability: 61.7% Without disability: 33.3%
	Health There was a significantly larger proportion of pupils with low self-efficacy amongst those reporting fair health than among those reporting very good/good health.	Very good/good: 33.1% Fair: 56.2% Very bad/bad: *
	School Type There was a significantly larger proportion of pupils with low self-efficacy amongst those in secondary schools than those in grammar schools.	Secondary schools: 43.0% Grammar schools: 32.7%

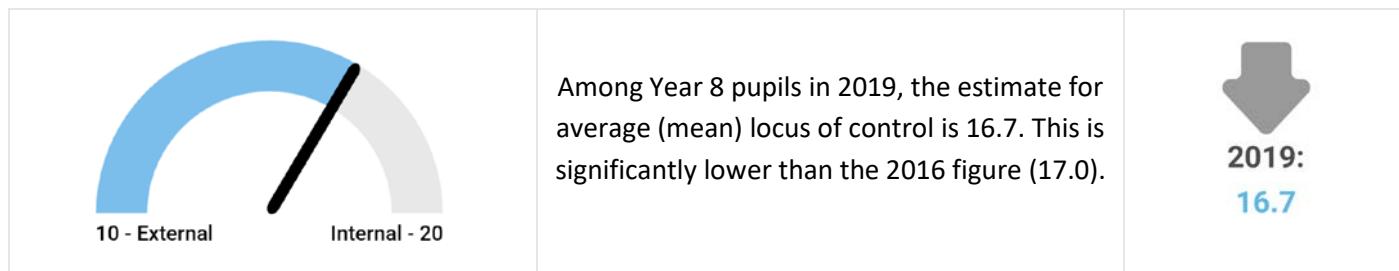
¹ Significance refers to statistical significance with a 95% confidence that the difference is not by chance.

*Estimates are suppressed where fewer than 100 people were sampled.

Locus of control (Year 8)

The degree to which a person feels they have control over their life

Average (mean) locus of control – overall score



Average (mean) locus of control – group differences

Averages (means) were estimated on a scale from 10 (external i.e. feeling that outside factors shape life) to 20 (internal i.e. feeling life is shaped by own influence) for nine group breakdowns. There were significant differences in seven¹.

The lowest (i.e. most external) locus of control score was found among those with a disability. The highest (i.e. most internal) was among pupils from the least deprived quintile, and those in grammar schools. Unlike self-efficacy and life satisfaction, where differences in the Religion and Deprivation breakdowns were not significant, locus of control averages show Catholics had a significantly higher (more internal) score than Protestants and there were significant differences in the average (mean) scores of pupils living in different deprivation quintiles.

There were no significant differences in the Urban/Rural breakdown. For Ethnicity, comparisons are not drawn as only one category (white) is large enough to report upon.

Breakdown	Significant differences	Estimate for: Year 8 pupils: 16.7
	Gender Female pupils had a significantly lower (more external) score than male pupils.	Males: 16.9 Females: 16.5
	Religion Protestant pupils had a significantly lower (more external) score than Catholic pupils.	Catholics: 17.0 Protestants: 16.5 Other: *
	Deprivation Pupils living in the least deprived quintile (Q5) had a significantly higher (more internal) score than those living in quintiles 1 (most deprived) and 2.	Q1 (most deprived): 16.3 Q2: 16.6 Q3: 16.7 Q4: 16.7 Q5 (least deprived): 17.3
	Free School Meals Pupils entitled to free school meals had a significantly lower (more external) score than those not entitled to free school meals.	FSM: 16.1 Non-FSM: 16.9
	Disability Pupils with a disability had a significantly lower (more external) score than those without a disability.	With disability: 15.5 Without disability: 16.9
	Health Pupils reporting very good/good health, had a significantly higher (more internal) score than those with fair health.	Very good/good: 16.9 Fair: 15.8 Very bad/bad: *
	School Type Pupils in secondary schools had a significantly lower (more external) score than those in grammar schools.	Secondary schools: 16.2 Grammar schools: 17.3

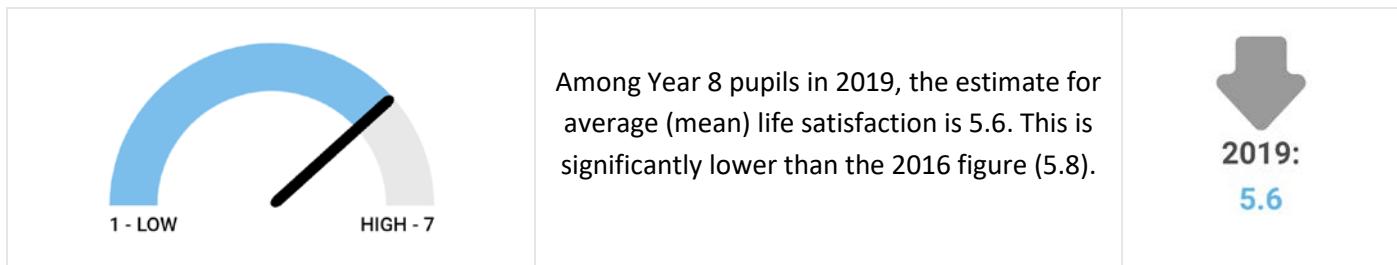
¹ Significance refers to statistical significance with a 95% confidence that the difference is not by chance.

*Estimates are suppressed where fewer than 100 people were sampled.

Life satisfaction (Year 8)

A person's sense of contentment with their life overall

Average (mean) life satisfaction – overall score



Average (mean) life satisfaction – group differences

Average (mean) scores were estimated (on a scale from 1 to 7) for nine group breakdowns. Significant differences were found in five¹.

Pupils reporting very good/good health were found to have the highest average (mean) life satisfaction score whilst pupils with a disability and those reporting fair health were found to have the lowest average (mean) life satisfaction scores. Unlike self-efficacy and locus of control, where differences in the Urban/Rural breakdown were not significant, there was a significant difference between life satisfaction averages for pupils living in urban and rural areas.

There were no statistically significant differences in breakdowns for Religion, Deprivation and School Type. For Ethnicity, comparisons are not drawn as only one category (white) is large enough to report upon.

Breakdown	Significant differences	Estimate for: Year 8 pupils: 5.6
	Gender Female pupils had a significantly lower score than male pupils.	Males: 5.7 Females: 5.5
	Free School Meals Pupils entitled to free school meals had a significantly lower score than those not entitled to free meals.	FSM: 5.4 Non-FSM: 5.7
	Urban / Rural Pupils living in urban areas had a significantly lower score than those living in rural areas.	Urban: 5.5 Rural: 5.7
	Disability Pupils with a disability had a significantly lower score than those without a disability.	With disability: 4.8 Without disability: 5.8
	Health Pupils reporting very good/good health had a significantly higher score than those reporting fair health.	Very good/good: 5.9 Fair: 4.8 Very bad/bad: *

¹ Significance refers to statistical significance with a 95% confidence that the difference is not by chance.

*Estimates are suppressed where fewer than 100 people were sampled.

Year 9-12 pupils

Overview

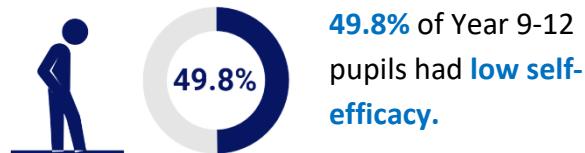
Self-efficacy - a person's beliefs about their capability to produce results or effects, to complete tasks and achieve goals.



The Year 9-12 **average (mean) self-efficacy score** was **17.1**.

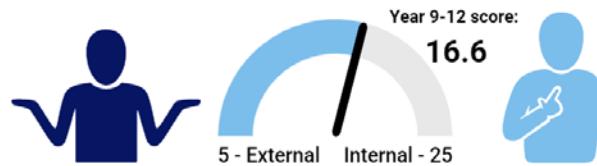
Self-efficacy is used as a way of measuring the confidence of people in Northern Ireland. This report considers two estimates for self-efficacy – average (mean) and proportion.

The self-efficacy scores range from 5 to 25. To discuss low self-efficacy, this report has classed scores from 5 to 17 as low and scores from 18 to 25 as high.



49.8% of Year 9-12 pupils had **low self-efficacy**.

Locus of control – the degree to which a person feels they have control over their life.



The Year 9-12 **average (mean) locus of control score** was **16.6**.

The locus of control scores range from 5 to 25. 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).

Life satisfaction - a person's sense of contentment with their life overall.



The Year 9-12 **average (mean) life satisfaction score** was **7.1**.

Life satisfaction is scored from 0 to 10, with 10 being the highest achievable score.

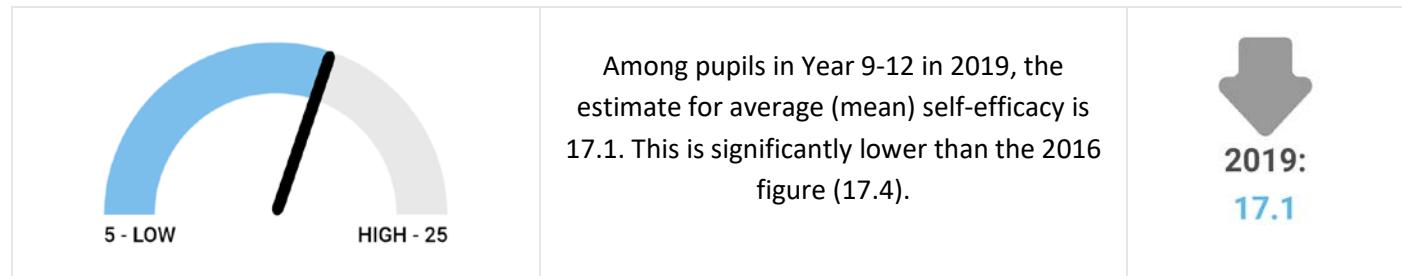
The following pages compare the above estimates for pupils in Year 9-12 to previous data (2016). Breakdowns by Gender, Religion, Deprivation, Free School Meals, Urban/Rural, Year Group, Disability, Health, Ethnicity and School Type are also considered.

The findings for pupils in Year 9-12 cannot be directly compared with the findings for Year 8 pupils due to differences in the survey questions and scales. Details including the exact questions can be found in [Annex A: Technical notes](#) at the end of this report while all available estimates and confidence intervals can be compared in the tables accompanying the report.

Self-efficacy (Year 9-12)

A person's beliefs about their capability to produce results or effects, to complete tasks and achieve goals

Average (mean) self-efficacy – overall score



Average (mean) self-efficacy – group differences

Average (mean) scores were estimated (on a scale from 5 to 25) for ten group breakdowns. Significant differences were found in seven¹.

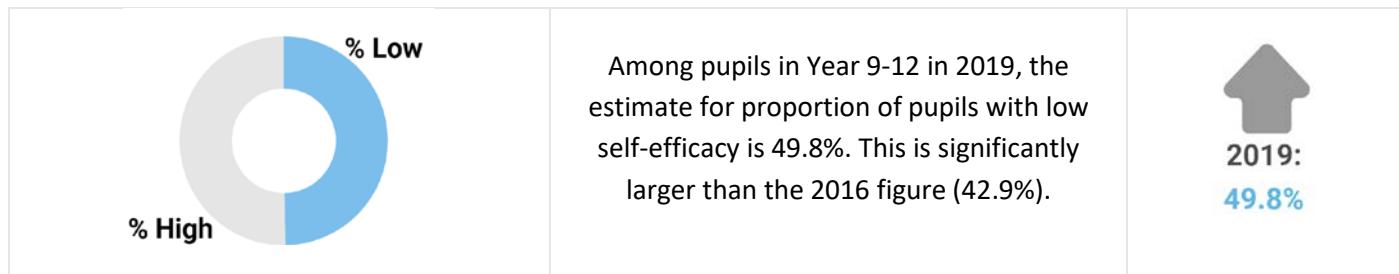
The lowest self-efficacy estimate was found among pupils with very bad/bad health. The highest score was found among pupils with very good/good health.

There were no statistically significant differences in breakdowns for Religion, Year Group or Ethnicity.

Breakdown	Significant differences	Estimate for: Pupils in Year 9-12: 17.1
	Gender Female pupils had a significantly lower score than male pupils.	Males: 17.7 Females: 16.6
	Deprivation Pupils living in the most deprived quintile (Q1) had a significantly lower score than those living in quintiles 5 (least deprived), 4 and 2.	Q1 (most deprived): 16.6 Q2: 17.2 Q3: 17.1 Q4: 17.5 Q5 (least deprived): 17.3
	Free School Meals Pupils entitled to free school meals had a significantly lower score than those not entitled to free meals.	FSM: 16.6 Non-FSM: 17.3
	Urban / Rural Pupils living in urban areas had a significantly lower score than those living in rural areas.	Urban: 17.0 Rural: 17.3
	Disability Pupils with a disability had a significantly lower score than those without a disability.	With disability: 15.5 Without disability: 17.6
	Health There were significant differences between all three health categories.	Very good/good: 17.8 Fair: 15.9 Very bad/bad: 14.2
	School Type Pupils in secondary schools had a significantly lower score than those in grammar schools.	Secondary schools: 16.7 Grammar schools: 17.6

¹ Significance refers to statistical significance with a 95% confidence that the difference is not by chance.

Proportion with low self-efficacy – overall figure



Proportion with low self-efficacy – group differences

Proportions with low self-efficacy scores (5-17 on a scale from 5 to 25) were estimated for ten group breakdowns. Significant differences were found in seven¹.

Similar to average (mean) scores, the largest and smallest proportions were found in the categories reporting the health of pupils.

There were no statistically significant differences in breakdowns for Urban/Rural, Year Group or Ethnicity.

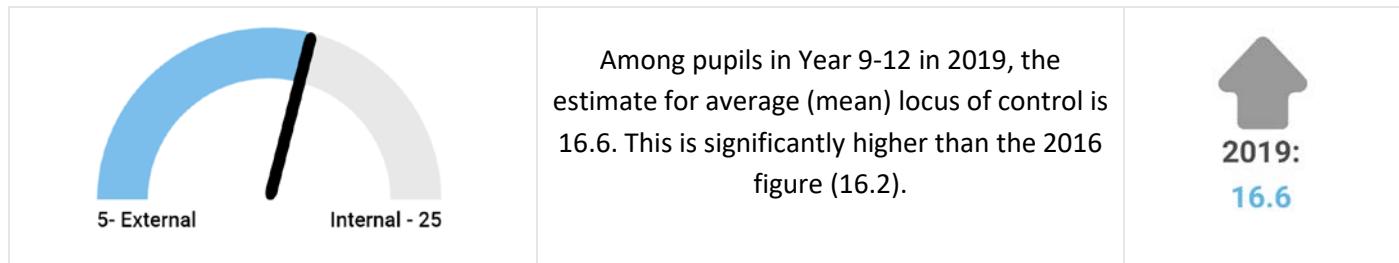
Breakdown	Significant differences	Estimate for: Pupils in Year 9-12: 49.8%
	Gender There was a significantly larger proportion of pupils with low self-efficacy amongst female pupils than male pupils.	Males: 43.7% Females: 56.4%
	Religion There was a significantly larger proportion of pupils with low self-efficacy amongst those pupils whose religion was other compared to pupils whose religion was Catholic	Catholics: 47.8% Protestants: 50.9% Other: 53.7%
	Deprivation There was a significantly larger proportion of pupils with low self-efficacy amongst those living in the most deprived quintile (Q1) than those living in all other quintiles.	Q1 (most deprived): 57.0% Q2: 49.1% Q3: 49.7% Q4: 46.4% Q5 (least deprived): 46.8%
	Free School Meals There was a significantly larger proportion of pupils with low self-efficacy amongst those entitled to free school meals than those not entitled to free school meals.	FSM: 54.6% Non-FSM: 48.5%
	Disability There was a significantly larger proportion of pupils with low self-efficacy amongst those with a disability than those without a disability.	With disability: 67.8% Without disability: 44.6%
	Health There was a significantly larger proportion of pupils with low self-efficacy amongst those reporting fair or very bad/bad health than among those with very good/good health.	Very good/good: 42.4% Fair: 66.4% Very bad/bad: 75.1%
	School Type There was a significantly larger proportion of pupils with low self-efficacy amongst those in secondary schools than those in grammar schools.	Secondary schools: 54.7% Grammar schools: 43.6%

¹ Significance refers to statistical significance with a 95% confidence that the difference is not by chance.

Locus of control (Year 9-12)

The degree to which a person feels they have control over their life

Average (mean) locus of control – overall score



Average (mean) locus of control – group differences

Average (mean) scores were estimated on a scale from 5 to 25 (external-internal) for ten group breakdowns. Significant differences were found in six¹.

The lowest (most external) average (mean) was found among pupils with very bad/bad health. The highest average (mean) was found amongst those living in the least deprived quintile.

There were no statistically significant differences in locus of control breakdowns for Deprivation, Free School Meals, Urban/Rural or Year Group.

Breakdown	Significant differences	Estimate for: Pupils in Year 9-12: 16.6
	Gender Female pupils had a significantly lower (more external) score than male pupils.	Males: 16.8 Females: 16.4
	Religion Protestant pupils had a significantly lower (more external) score than Catholic pupils.	Catholics: 16.7 Protestants: 16.5 Other: 16.5
	Disability Pupils with a disability had a significantly lower score than those without a disability.	With disability: 16.1 Without disability: 16.8
	Health There were significant differences between all three health categories.	Very good/good: 16.7 Fair: 16.5 Very bad/bad: 15.8
	Ethnicity Pupils from a white ethnic group had a significantly higher (more internal) score than combined other ethnic groups.	White: 16.6 Other: 16.1
	School Type Pupils in secondary schools had a significantly lower (more external) score than those in grammar schools.	Secondary schools: 16.4 Grammar schools: 16.8

¹ Significance refers to statistical significance with a 95% confidence that the difference is not by chance.

Life satisfaction (Year 9-12)

A person's sense of contentment with their life overall

Average (mean) life satisfaction – overall score



Among pupils in Year 9-12 in 2019, the estimate for average (mean) life satisfaction is 7.1. This is significantly lower than the 2016 figure (7.6).

2019:
7.1

Average (mean) life satisfaction – group differences

Average (mean) scores were estimated (on a scale from 0 to 10) for ten group breakdowns. Significant differences were found in all ten¹.

The highest score was found to be pupils in Year 9. The lowest score was among pupils with very bad/bad health. Life satisfaction was found to be higher among pupils in lower year groups.

Breakdown	Significant differences	Estimate for: Pupils in Year 9-12: 7.1
	Gender Female pupils had a significantly lower score than male pupils.	Males: 7.5 Females: 6.6
	Religion There were significant differences between all three religion categories.	Catholics: 7.2 Protestants: 7.1 Other: 6.7
	Deprivation Pupils living in the most deprived quintile (Q1) had a significantly lower score than those living in the quintiles 2 and 4.	Q1 (most deprived): 6.8 Q2: 7.2 Q3: 7.1 Q4: 7.2 Q5 (least deprived): 7.2
	Free School Meals Pupils entitled to free school meals had a significantly lower score than those not entitled to free meals.	FSM: 6.9 Non-FSM: 7.2
	Urban / Rural Pupils living in urban areas had a significantly lower score than those living in rural areas.	Urban: 7.0 Rural: 7.2
	Year group There were significant differences between all year groups except for between Year 11 pupils and Year 12 pupils.	Year 9: 7.6 Year 10: 7.2 Year 11: 6.9 Year 12: 6.8
	Disability Pupils with a disability had a significantly lower score than those without a disability.	With disability: 5.8 Without disability: 7.5
	Health There were significant differences between all three health categories.	Very good/good: 7.5 Fair: 6.3 Very bad/bad: 4.7
	Ethnicity Pupils from a white ethnic group had a significantly higher score than those from combined other ethnic groups.	White: 7.1 Other: 6.7
	School Type Pupils in secondary schools had a significantly lower score than those in grammar schools.	Secondary schools: 7.0 Grammar schools: 7.2

¹ Significance refers to statistical significance with a 95% confidence that the difference is not by chance.

Strengths and limitations

While self-efficacy and life satisfaction 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 to 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, males may have a significantly higher score than females for life satisfaction but both scores may still be at the higher end of the scale.

Background and related reports

This report uses data collected from children aged 11 to 16 via the Young Persons' Behaviour and Attitudes Survey (YPBAS) 2019. The school-based survey is run every three years. In 2016 questions were included for the first time on self-efficacy, locus of control and life satisfaction. The 2016 report can be found here: <https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/publications/self-efficacy-locus-control-and-life-satisfaction-among-young-people-2016>

This report presents findings among young people in Northern Ireland. There is an annual report which considers the self-efficacy, locus of control and life satisfaction of *adults*. The 2018/19 adult report contains further detail on each of the three concepts and can be found here: <https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/publications/self-efficacy-locus-control-life-satisfaction-northern-ireland-201819>

The adult report informs two of the indicators in the draft Programme for Government. More information on the draft Programme for Government and the Outcomes framework can be found here: <https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/topics/making-government-work>.

Annex A: Technical notes

Instruments for measuring self-efficacy, locus of control and life satisfaction

The instruments for measuring self-efficacy and locus of control are each a simple statement based survey tool. In addition, life satisfaction is presented as a single statement question. However, the statement questions and responses used for the Year 8 pupils and individuals in Year 9 – 12 are different. As a result, direct comparisons cannot be made between Year 8 pupils and those in Year 9 – 12.

Year 8 instruments

Self-efficacy – the tool for Year 8 pupils takes the form of six simple statements;
(How difficult would you find it to...)

1. Get teachers to help me when I get stuck on schoolwork?
2. Get another pupil to help me when I get stuck on schoolwork?
3. Solve difficult maths problems?
4. Do schoolwork for English?
5. Get myself to concentrate in class?
6. Get myself to do homework?

Individuals respond on a four-point Likert scale (very hard to very easy). Self-efficacy is presented as an overall score between 6 and 24 taken from the summed total of the six statement questions. For the purposes of discussing low self-efficacy, this report has classified scores from 6 to 16 as low and scores from 17 to 24 as high.

Locus of Control – the tool for Year 8 pupils takes the form of 10 simple statements;

1. Do you believe that most problems will solve themselves if you just leave them alone?
2. Do you feel that most of the time it doesn't pay to try hard because things never turn out right anyway?
3. Do you feel that most of the time parents listen to what their children have to say?
4. Do you feel that when you do something wrong there's very little you can do to make it right?
5. Have you felt that when people were nasty to you it was usually for no reason at all?
6. Do you believe that when bad things are going to happen they just are going to happen no matter what you try to do to stop them?
7. Do you feel that when somebody your age wants to be your enemy there's nothing you can do to change matters?
8. Do you feel that when someone doesn't like you there's nothing you can do about it?
9. Do you usually feel that it's almost useless to try in school because most other children are just smarter than you?
10. Are you the kind of person who believes that planning ahead makes things turn out better?

Individuals respond yes or no. Locus of control is presented as an overall score between 10 and 20 taken from the summed total of the ten statement questions. The scores for questions 3 and 10 are reversed before being summed. A higher score represents a more internal locus of control.

Life Satisfaction – Year 8 pupils are asked a single statement question;

1. How do you feel about your life as a whole?

Individuals respond on a seven-point Likert scale where 1 is 'not happy at all' and 7 is 'completely happy'. Life satisfaction is scored from 1 to 7, with 7 being the highest achievable score.

Year 9-12 instruments

Self-efficacy – the tool for pupils in Year 9-12 takes the form of five simple statements;

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.

Individuals indicate to what extent they agree or disagree on a five point Likert scale. Self-efficacy is presented as an overall score between 5 and 25 taken from the summed total of the five statement questions. For the purposes of discussing low self-efficacy, this report has classified scores from 5 to 17 as low and scores from 18 to 25 as high.

Locus of Control – the tool for pupils in Year 9-12 takes the form of five simple statements;

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.

Individuals indicate to what extent they agree or disagree on a five point Likert scale. Locus of control is presented as an overall score between 5 and 25 taken from the summed total of the five statement questions. The scores for statements 3, 4 and 5 are reversed before being summed. A higher score represents a more internal locus of control.

Life Satisfaction – pupils in Year 9-12 are asked a single statement question;

1. Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?

Individual responds on an 11 point Likert scale (0-10). Life satisfaction is scored from 0-10, with 10 being the highest achievable score.

Data collection and analysis

Young Persons' Behaviour & Attitudes Survey

This report presents findings from the 2019 Young Persons' Behaviour & Attitudes Survey (YPBAS). The YPBAS is carried out by the Central Survey Unit (CSU) within the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA). Seven rounds of the survey have taken place: in autumn 2000, 2003, 2007, 2010, 2013, 2016, and most recently in autumn 2019.

More information on YPBAS can be found here: <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/find-your-survey/young-persons-behaviour-attitudes-survey>

Sample

The target population for the YPBAS is young people at different stages in post-primary education. A stratified random sample of post-primary schools in Northern Ireland is drawn from a list held by the Department of Education (DoE). The sample is representative of school size, selection type (i.e. Secondary, Grammar), management group (i.e. Controlled, Voluntary, Roman Catholic Maintained, and Grant Maintained Integrated etc.) and Education Authority region. Participating schools provide details of the number of classes in Years 8-12, together with class names. A class in each of the five Year groups is then randomly selected to take part. Only pupils from the selected classes are included in the survey.

In 2019, a total of 3,892 pupils were surveyed on the questions related to self-efficacy, locus of control and life satisfaction. The achieved samples for the Year 8 analyses were 791 for self-efficacy, 781 for locus of control and 787 for life satisfaction. For the Year 9-12 analyses the achieved samples were 3,049, 3,061 and 3,056 respectively.

Sampling error and weights

As the YPBAS 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 gender, religion and year group. This reduces (but does not completely eliminate) error. **All reported averages (means) / 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 YPBAS estimates which are 95% certain to include the true values for the population.

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.

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.

Available breakdowns

Gender

The YPBAS outlines two sex categories for respondents: Male and Female. Figures are reported based on school records for the pupil.

Religion

Figures are reported based on school records for the pupil. The religious categories represented within the report are:

- 1) Catholic
- 2) Protestant
- 3) Other
- 4) None/Missing/Refusal

The classifications 'Other' and No Religion/Missing/Refusal have been combined to form the 'Other' group within this report.

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.

Free School Meals

Figures are reported based on school records for the pupil. The question used to collect the information is: "Does this child receive free school meals (according to school records)?" to which data can be recorded as 'Yes', 'No' or 'unknown'. Due to small numbers, population characteristic breakdowns for 'unknown' are not available.

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: <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/support/geography/urban-rural-classification>

Year Group

This is the year group that the responding students belonged to – Year 8, Year 9, Year 10, Year 11 and Year 12 results are included in this report.

Disability (limiting long-standing illness)

Respondents are defined as having a limiting long-standing illness if they have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expecting to last for 12 months or more, and these condition(s) or illness(es) reduce their ability to carry out day to day activities.

Health

The YPBAS outlines 5 distinct health categories by which respondents report on their general health. For the purposes of this report, responses were recoded into three groups; 1) Very good/good, 2) Fair, 3) Very bad/bad.

Ethnicity

The YPBAS outlines 16 distinct ethnic groups for respondents. For the purposes of this report, the aforementioned groups were coded into two distinct categories, as follows: 1) White 2) Other – to include Irish Traveller, White and Black Caribbean, White and Black African, White and Asian, Any other mixed / multiple ethnic background, Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese, Any other Asian background, African, Caribbean, Any other Black / African / Caribbean background, Arab, and Any other ethnic group

School Type

Figures are reported based on school records for the pupil. There are two categories; Secondary and Grammar.

Feedback

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<https://consultations.nidirect.gov.uk/nisra-pfg-analytics/cb06eea2>