

The Big Ask – underpinning quantitative data by chapter

Family

- 94% of 9-17 year olds said they feel either happy or OK with their family life, while 6% said they were unhappy. Among younger children (aged 6-8), 97% said they feel happy or OK with this, while only 3% said they are unhappy. Overall, family life was one of the things that children were most likely say they are happy with.
- Among 9-17 year olds, 94% said they were happy or OK with their family's health while 6% said they were unhappy. 97% said they were happy or OK with their family's ability to buy the things they need, while only 3% said they were unhappy with this.
- Unhappiness with life at home is therefore quite rare, but where it does arise it is significant. Children (aged 9-17) who were unhappy with their family life were 9 times more likely to be unhappy with their life overall. 70% of them were unhappy with their mental health.
- That most children are happy with life at home remains the case even after splitting the data by age, gender, ethnicity, deprivation, or vulnerable groups.
- However, children from vulnerable groups are notably more likely to be unhappy than other children with life at home (even though the majority are still happy or OK):
 - Children in care or with a social worker (aged 9-17) are twice as likely to say they are unhappy with family life, compared to other children. But 87% of this group are still happy or OK with their family life.
 - Young carers (aged 9-17) are 70% more likely than other children to say they are unhappy with family life, and more than twice as likely to say they are unhappy with their family's health. However 89% of this group are happy or OK with their family life, and 85% are happy or OK with their family's health.
- 37% of 6-8 year olds and 26% of 9-17 year olds said that starting a family of their own was one their most important aspirations when they grow up. There was little variation by demographics, deprivation and vulnerability.
- 49% of 6-8 year olds and 37% of 9-17 year olds said that having a nice home to live in was one their most important aspirations when they grow up. There was little variation by demographics, deprivation and vulnerability.

Community

- Four in five children aged 9-17 (81%) are happy or OK with the choice of things to do in their local area, while 1 in 5 (19%) are unhappy. 90% are happy or OK with their access to somewhere outside to have fun, while 10% are unhappy with this.
- Among 6-8 year olds, 94% said they were happy or OK with the places they can go to have fun, while 6% were unhappy with this.
- While most children appear to be happy with their local area, this was one of the more common issues that children raised. Among 9-17 year olds, the choice of things to do in their

local area was the second highest source of unhappiness (after their mental health).

- This remains one of the most common answers even after splitting the data by age, gender, ethnicity, deprivation level – and even when looking at vulnerable groups such as children in care and young carers.
- Children living in the deprived areas were more likely to be unhappy with their local area than children living in more affluent areas. 22% of children in the most deprived neighbourhoods were unhappy with the choice of things to do in their local area, compared to 15% of children in the least deprived neighbourhoods.
- Safety in the community appears to be less of an issue than having things to do. 96% of 9-17 year olds said they are happy or OK with their personal safety, while only 4% said they were unhappy.
 - Children living in neighbourhoods with the highest crime rates or the highest levels of deprivation were more likely to be unhappy with their personal safety, compared to children in areas with the lowest crime rates or levels of deprivation.
- Happiness with online communities also seems to be higher: 95% of 9-17 year olds said they are happy with their experiences online, while only 5% said they were unhappy with these.

Wellbeing

- The majority of children aged 9-17 (80%) said they were happy or OK with their mental health. But 20% were unhappy with this, making it the top issue that they were unhappy with.
- Girls were nearly twice as likely as boys to say they were unhappy with their mental health (25% vs 13%), while older children were also more likely (32% of 16-17 year olds, compared to 9% of 9-11 year olds). 40% of girls aged 16-17 said they were unhappy with their mental health.
- Some ethnic groups were less likely to say they were unhappy with their mental health (e.g. 16% of Asian children compared to 21% of White children).
- There was little variation by deprivation, but children from a vulnerable background were more likely to be unhappy with their mental health – e.g. around a quarter of children with a social worker and a quarter of young carers said this.
- The majority of children aged 9-17 (89%) said they were happy or OK with their physical health, while 11% said they were unhappy with it. Older children, girls and children in more deprived areas were all more likely to be unhappy with their mental health, along with some vulnerable groups (e.g. children with a social worker or young carers).
- There is a clear correlation between mental and physical health: children (aged 9-17) who said they were unhappy with their mental health were 7 times more likely to say they were unhappy with their physical health.
- Children want to have good wellbeing in the future, not just now. Among 9-17 year olds, just over half (52%) said that having good mental health was one of their most important future aspirations, while 31% said that good physical health was one of their most important future

aspirations.

- Again there is a correlation here: children (aged 9-17) who chose mental health as one of their future aspirations were twice likely to choose good physical health as well.
- As children get older, they are more likely to emphasise the importance of good mental health: 63% of 16-17 year olds said this was important for their future, compared with 43% of 9-11 year olds.
- Among 9-17 year olds, children living in the most affluent areas were slightly more likely to say that good mental health and good physical health were important future priorities for them, compared to children in the most deprived areas. Vulnerable groups were generally less likely to say this.

Schools

- Most children want to leave school with a good education. Just over half of 9-17 year olds (52%) said that a good education was one of their most important future priorities.
- This was even higher among children from the most deprived areas (57%, compared 49% of children in the most affluent areas) or from an ethnic minority background (60%, compared to 49% of White children).
- Many vulnerable groups were also slightly more likely to say this – for example, 58% of children with SEND, 57% of children in care or with a social worker, and 58% of young carers.
- Among 9-17 year olds, 84% said they were happy or OK with at life at school or college, while 16% said they were unhappy with this. 90% said they were happy or OK with their progress in education, while 10% said they were unhappy with this.
- Among 6-8 year olds, 96% said they were happy with their education while 4% said they were unhappy with it.
- Among 9-17 year olds, older children and girls were more likely to say that they were unhappy with school, although the majority of them were still happy. There was little variation by ethnicity, except that Asian children were slightly less likely to be unhappy with life at school or college (13%, compared to 16% of White children).
- Children in schools rated Inadequate by Ofsted were slightly more likely to be unhappy with school. For example, 18% said they were unhappy with life at school or college, compared with 15% of children in schools rated Good or Outstanding.
- Similarly, children living the deprived areas were slightly more likely to be unhappy with this. 17% of children in the most deprived tenth of neighbourhoods said they were unhappy with life at school or college, compared with 13% of children in the least deprived neighbourhoods.

Work

- Most children want a good job when they grow up. In fact, this was the top future priority

among 9-17 year olds, chosen by 69%. Just over half of 6-8 year olds (56%) also said that this was one of their top future priorities.

- This is even higher among ethnic minority children and those from a deprived background.
 - 75% of Asian children and 76% of Black children said this was one of their top future priorities, compared with 68% of White children.
 - 72% of children in the most deprived neighbourhoods said this, compared with 68% of children in the most affluent neighbourhoods.
- However, it is quite consistent across vulnerable groups. Among every vulnerable group in our data, roughly 65-68% of children said that having a good job was one of their top future priorities.
- Many children worry about whether they will end up in a good job when they grow up. 37% of children aged 9-17 said that this was one of their most important worries about the future – the third most common worry (after money and the environment).
- Again girls and older children were slightly more likely to be worried about this.
 - 40% of girls said this was one of their top future worries, compared to 35% of boys.
 - 44% of 16-17 year olds said this was one of their top future worries, compared to 33% of 9-11 year olds.
- But elsewhere this was remarkably consistent across deprivation and vulnerability. There was very little notable variation by ethnicity – in fact, children from Asian and black backgrounds were actually very slightly less likely to say that this was one of their most important future worries.

Children in care

- The majority of children in care who responded to The Big Ask are generally happy or OK. Among those aged 9-17, the majority (87%) said they are happy or OK with their life overall, and 88% said they are happy or OK with their family life.
- They were less likely to be happy with life at school or college, their mental health and the choice of things to do in their local area – but still just over half said they were happy with each of these.
- The top three issues that children in care (aged 9-17) were most likely to say they were unhappy with were:
 - Their mental health (20%)
 - The choice of things to do in their local area (18%)
 - Life at school at college (17%)
- This is remarkably similar to the top three issues that other children aged 9-17 – not in care – are unhappy with.

- However there are also some issues where children in care (aged 9-17) are significantly more likely than other children to be unhappy:
 - Their family life (12%, compared to 6% of other children)
 - Their family's ability to buy the things they need (6%, compared to 3% of other children)
 - Their friendships (9%, compared to 5% of other children)
- Children in care generally have similar future aspirations to other children, namely to get on in life. The top three aspirations among children in care (aged 9-17) were a good job (68%), enough money to buy the things they need (61%), and a good education (57%).
- However children in care (aged 9-17) were more likely than other children to say that having a nice home is an important future aspiration (44% vs. 36.5%). Conversely, they were less likely than other children to say that a healthy environment and planet is important for their future (15% vs. 22%).
- Children in care's worries about the future are more likely to be closer to home, compared to other children (aged 9-17). Their top five future worries are around having enough money (43%), having a good job (36%), having good mental health (31%), having good friends (28%) and having a nice home to live in (28%). They were considerably less likely than other children to say that the environment was one their main worries about the future (25% vs. 39%), and the same is true for fairness in society (23% vs. 31%).

A better world

- 22% of children (aged 9-17) said that a healthy environment and planet was one of their most important future priorities in order for them to have a good life when they grow up. 20% said that everyone in society being treated fairly was one of their top future priorities. These two things were highly correlated: children who mentioned one were nearly twice as likely to mention the other as well.
- Among 9-17 year olds, girls were more likely than boys to say that the environment (25% vs. 19%) and fairness (25% vs. 15%) were important future priorities for them.
- Children (aged 9-17) from some ethnic minority backgrounds were very slightly less likely to say that the environment was important for their future (e.g. 16% of black children and 21% of Asian children, vs. 23% of white children). Conversely they were very slightly more likely to say fairness was important (22% of Asian children and 21% of black children, vs. 20% of White children).
- Children (aged 9-17) from more affluent backgrounds were more likely to say that fairness and the environment were important.
 - 27% of those in the most affluent neighbourhoods said that the environment was one of their main future priorities (compared to 17% of those in the poorest neighbourhoods).
 - 22% of those in the most affluent neighbourhoods said that the environment was one

of their main future priorities (compared to 19% of those in the poorest neighbourhoods).

- Most vulnerable groups (aged 9-17) were generally less likely to say that these issues were important for their future. For example:
 - 15% of children in care or with a social worker said the environment was a future priority, while 19% said fairness was a priority.
 - 16% of children supported by youth offending teams (YOTs) said the environment was a priority, and the same percentage said fairness was a future priority.
- 39% of children (aged 9-17) mentioned the environment as one of their main worries about the future, making it the second most common response. 31% mentioned fairness as one of their main worries about the future.
- Older children and girls were more likely to say they were worried about these issues, compared to younger children and boys:
 - 44% of 16-17 year olds and 42% of girls said they were worried about the environment in future
 - 35% of 16-17 year olds and 34% of girls said they were worried about fairness in future
- Children from more affluent neighbourhoods were also more likely to say that they were worried about these issues:
 - 45% of children in the most affluent areas mentioned the environment as one of their future worries (compared to 34% of children in most deprived areas)
 - 34% of children in the most affluent areas mentioned fairness as one of their future worries (compared to 29% of children in most deprived areas)