

Wellbeing in Northern Ireland, 2020/21

27 October 2021

This report uses data from the 2020/21 Continuous Household Survey and presents findings on Loneliness, Self-Efficacy, Personal Wellbeing and Locus of Control.

Key findings

Key finding

Self-efficacy and locus of control scores have increased in Northern Ireland (NI) since 2014/15.

Life satisfaction, happiness, anxiety and loneliness measures have shown a significant decline in wellbeing over the past year.

Females reported significantly worse levels of wellbeing across a range of measures.

1 in 4 people aged 16-24 felt lonely at least some of the time.

People married/in civil partnerships reported higher levels of personal wellbeing.

People in employment reported significantly better wellbeing across all metrics.

People living in urban areas had lower levels of personal wellbeing than rural areas...

...but report higher self-efficacy.

Detail

The mean self-efficacy score for people in NI has increased significantly from 19.2 in 2014/15 to 19.8 in 2020/21. At 17.4, people reported a significantly higher (more internal) locus of control than in all previous years.

Life satisfaction (7.6) and happiness (7.5) scores were significantly lower in 2020/21 compared with 2019/20 (7.8 and 7.6 respectively). In the same period, levels of anxiety increased significantly (3.0 to 3.2) and a significantly higher proportion of respondents reported feeling lonely “at least some of the time” (19.8% compared with 17.4%).

Females reported significantly lower self-efficacy (19.4), life satisfaction (7.6) and locus of control (17.2) scores compared with males (20.2, 7.7 and 17.6 respectively) and significantly higher levels of anxiety (3.5) compared with males (2.8). Females were also significantly more likely to feel lonely (22.8% compared with 16.2% of males).

More than one quarter of 16-24 year olds (26.8%) reported feeling lonely “at least some of the time”. This was significantly higher than those aged 25-34 (17.3%), 35-44 (17.7%), 45-54 (18.3%) and 65-74 (14.3%).

People who were married/in a civil partnership reported significantly higher levels of life satisfaction (7.9), worthwhile (8.2) and happiness (7.8) than people who were single (7.4, 7.6 and 7.3 respectively) or divorced (6.9, 7.5 and 7.0 respectively).

Those in paid employment reported significantly higher self-efficacy (20.3), life satisfaction (7.8), worthwhile (8.1), happiness (7.6) and locus of control (17.7) than those not in paid employment (19.1, 7.4, 7.8, 7.4 and 16.9 respectively). They also reported significantly lower levels of anxiety (3.0 compared with 3.3) and feelings of loneliness (14.5% compared with 27.9%).

People living in urban areas reported significantly lower levels of life satisfaction (7.5), worthwhile (7.9) and happiness (7.4) than those living in rural areas (7.8, 8.1 and 7.7 respectively). They also reported significantly higher levels of anxiety (3.3 compared with 2.9).

People living in urban areas reported significantly higher levels of self-efficacy (19.9) than people living in rural areas (19.6).

*Scales for self-efficacy and locus of control range from 5 to 25 and scales for personal wellbeing measures range from 0 to 10.

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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 2020/21 estimates for 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 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](#)

Following user feedback and to make data more accessible and comparable for each of these Wellbeing metrics, statistical teams in The Executive Office and the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) have produced this first “Wellbeing Report in Northern Ireland” report.

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.

There are a number of factors which users should take into consideration when interpreting the 2020/21 results and care should be taken when comparing these to previously published findings. 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.

Personal wellbeing measures were previously sourced from the NI Labour Force Survey. Data in this report are derived from the CHS. To allow comparability over time, a back series of personal wellbeing data from the CHS was produced for additional analysis and is published in this report.

The coronavirus pandemic impacted data collection of wellbeing metrics in 2020/21, resulting in a change in data collection mode, reduced sample size and a subsequent reduced number of breakdowns available. Any changes within the 2020/21 data compared to previous years should be considered in the context of all of the above. Further details on these changes can be found in [Annex A: Technical Notes](#).

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 2020/21 Tables](#).

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.

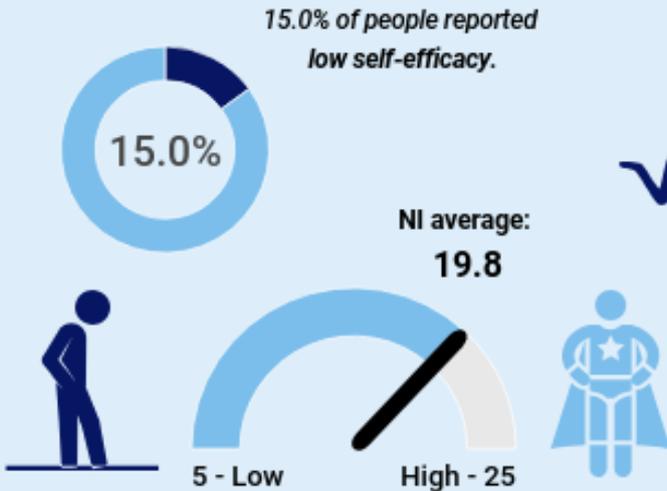
Wellbeing in Northern Ireland

2020/21

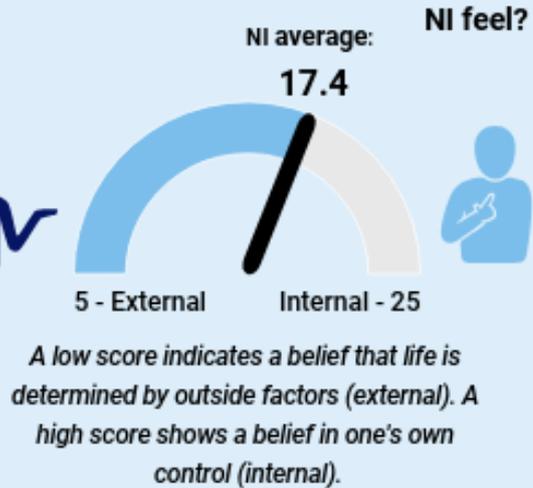
Source: Continuous Household Survey



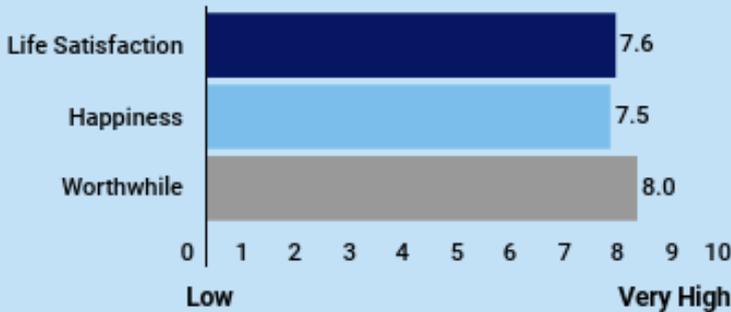
How **confident** are people in NI about their abilities?



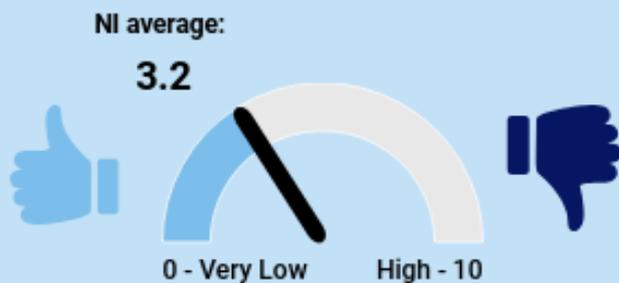
How in **control** of their lives do people in NI feel?



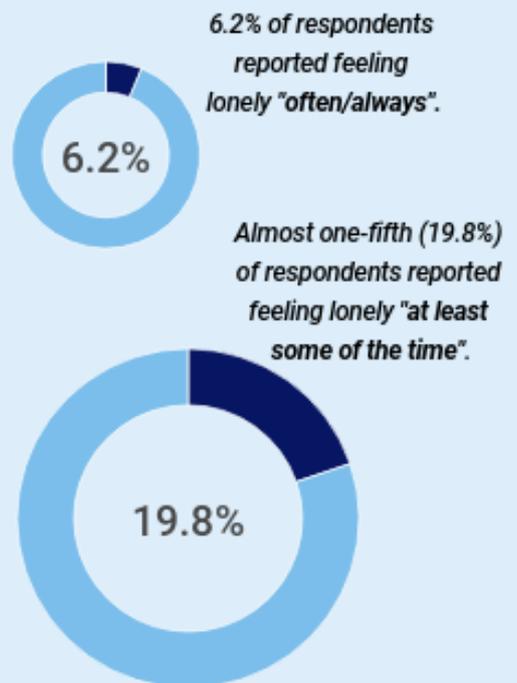
Personal Wellbeing



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



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



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.

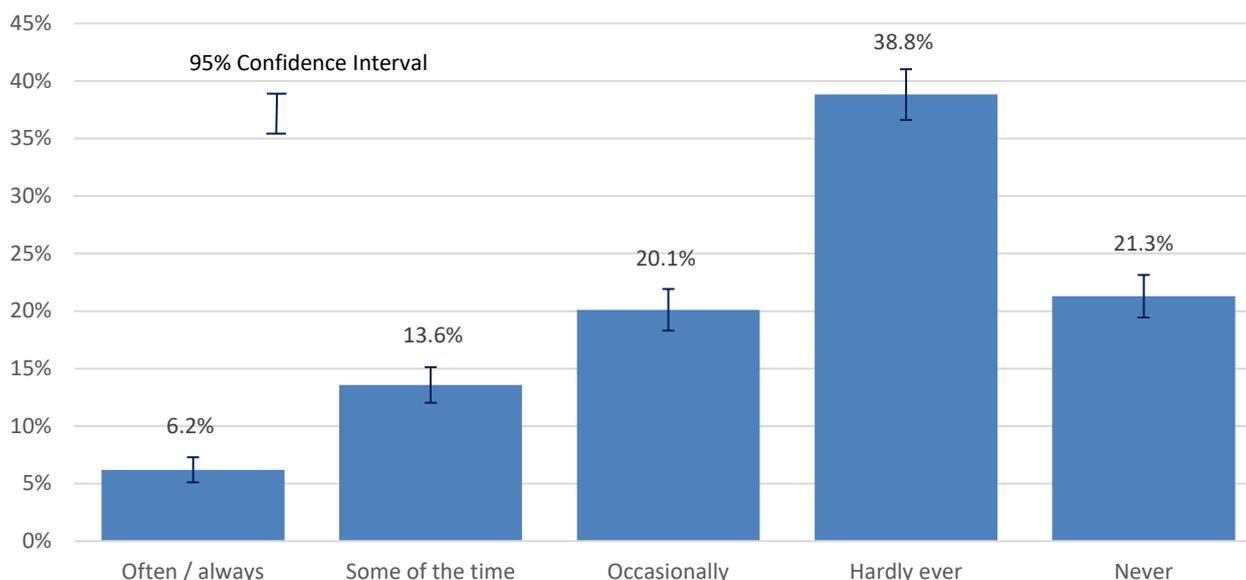
Following user consultation and for the ease of understanding and interpreting results, the responses 'often/always' and 'some of the time' have been grouped into a single category 'Lonely at least some of the time'. This is a change from how these data were previously reported and further details can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

Frequency of loneliness – 5 category split

Loneliness in 2020/21

In 2020/21, 6.2% of respondents (individuals aged 16 and over) reported feeling lonely "often/always". There is no statistically significant change from the previous year (5.4%) for this category. However, the proportion of people reporting 'never' feeling lonely (21.3%) was significantly lower than the figure reported in 2019/20 ³(30.2%).

Figure 1.1: Frequency of loneliness, 2020/21



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.

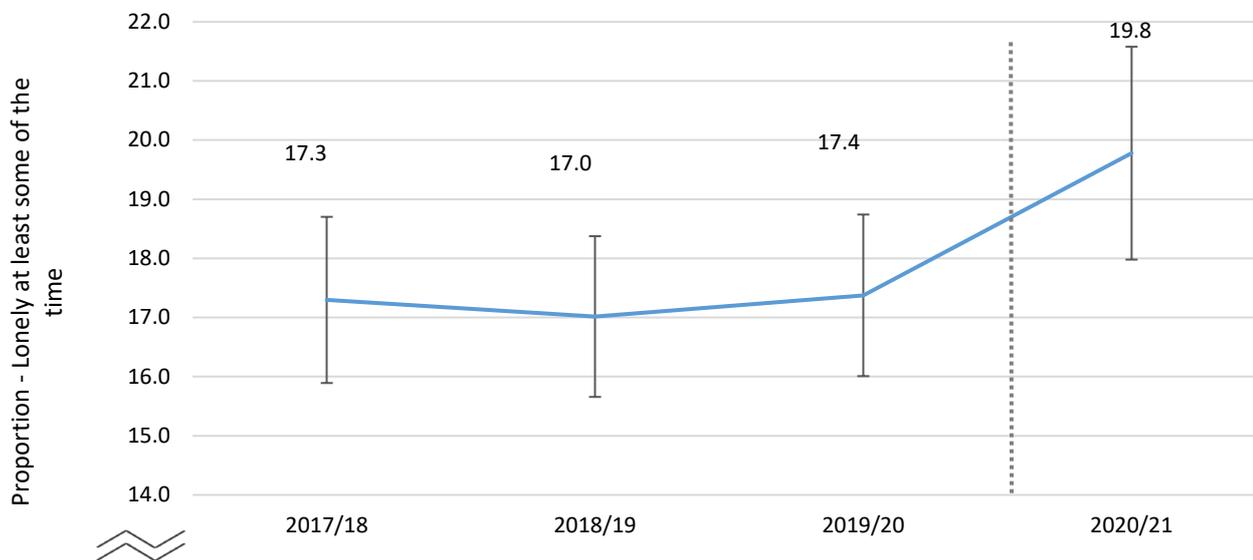
³ NISRA report on [Loneliness in Northern Ireland 2019/20](#)

Lonely at least some of the time

Time series

In 2020/21, 19.8% of respondents reported feeling lonely “Often/Always” or “Some of the time”, categorised as “Lonely at least some of the time”. This is significantly higher than the 2019/20, figure (17.4%).

Figure 1.2: Proportion who reported feeling lonely ‘often/always’ or ‘some of the time’, 2017/18 to 2020/21



Note: Due to changes in the survey methodology, please exercise caution when comparing to previous years. 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 eleven group breakdowns. Significant differences⁴ were found in six groups. There were no statistically significant differences in breakdowns for Religion, Urban/Rural, Dependants or LGD. Comparisons were not analysed for Tenure as only one category was large enough to report on.

The largest proportions of loneliness were found among those who are widowed and the lowest proportions were found among those who are married/in a civil partnership.

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: | |
|---|---|------------------------------------|--------------|
|  Gender | Females were significantly more likely to feel lonely than males. | Males: | 16.2% |
| | | Females: | 22.8% |

⁴ Significance refers to statistical significance with a 95% confidence that the difference is not by chance.

| Breakdown | Significant differences | Estimate for: Northern Ireland: | 19.8% |
|---|--|---|--|
|  | Age Those aged 16-24 were significantly more likely to feel lonely than those in the 25-34, 35-44, 45-54 and 65-74 age categories. Those aged 65-74 were significantly less likely to feel lonely than those in the 16-24, 55-64 and 75 and over age groups. | Aged 16-24: Aged 25-34: Aged 35-44: Aged 45-54: Aged 55-64: Aged 65-74: Aged 75 and over: | 26.8% 17.3% 17.7% 18.3% 23.3% 14.3% 21.4% |
|  | Marital status People who are married or in a civil partnership were significantly less likely to feel lonely than those in all other categories. People who are widowed were significantly more likely to feel lonely than those who are single. | Single: Married/in civil partnership: Separated: Divorced: Widowed: | 25.8% 11.3% * 30.7% 40.7% |
|  | Employment status People in paid employment were significantly less likely to feel lonely than those not in paid employment | In paid employment: Not in paid employment: | 14.5% 27.9% |
|  | Household Count Those living alone were significantly more likely to feel lonely at least some of the time than those living in households of 2 or more. | 1 person: 2 people: 3 or more people | 34.2% 16.3% 15.7% |
|  | Deprivation Those living in the most deprived areas (Q1) were significantly more likely to feel lonely than those living in the least deprived areas (Q4 or Q5). Those living in the least deprived areas (Q5) were also significantly less likely to feel lonely than those living in quintiles 2 and 3. | Q1 (most deprived): Q2: Q3: Q4: Q5 (least deprived): | 25.3% 21.0% 20.4% 17.6% 13.5% |

*denotes that the sample size is too small (less than 100) to allow sufficient analysis of this category.

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.

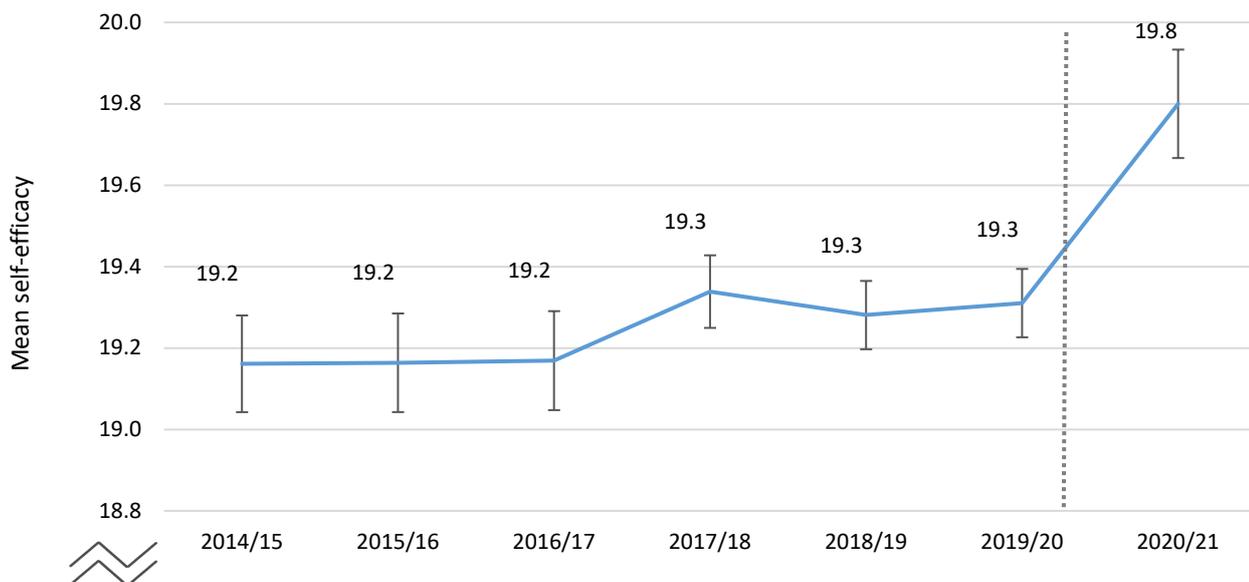
Self-efficacy affects the decisions a person makes and what they see as achievable. It has been shown to influence physical and mental health, learning and achievement, career and job satisfaction and family relations. Interventions to increase self-efficacy in specific groups can improve collective resilience and capacity. This can lead to positive social change in communities, and can improve social cohesion and inter-group relations⁵.

Average self-efficacy score in Northern

Overall score

In 2020/21, the average (mean) score for self-efficacy in Northern Ireland was 19.8 which is significantly higher than in all previous years. 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 2020/21



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.

⁵ Academic references 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 eleven group breakdowns. Significant differences were found in eight⁶. There were no statistically significant differences in the breakdown for Age or Marital Status. Comparisons were not analysed for Tenure as only one category was large enough to report on.

The lowest self-efficacy estimate was found among those not in paid employment and the highest score was found among those living in Lisburn & Castlereagh, and those in the least deprived areas.

| | Breakdown | Significant differences | Estimate for: |
|---|--|---|--|
| | | | Northern Ireland: 19.8 |
|  | Gender | Females reported a significantly lower score than males. | Males: 20.2 Females: 19.4 |
|  | Religion | Catholics reported a significantly lower score than those with an Other/No Religion. | Catholics: 19.5 Protestants: 19.9 Other/No Religion: 20.2 |
|  | Dependants | Those responsible for dependants reported a significantly higher score than those without dependants. | With dependants: 20.0 Without dependants: 19.7 |
|  | Employment status | People in paid employment reported a significantly higher score than those not in paid employment | In paid employment: 20.3 Not in paid employment: 19.1 |
|  | Household Count | People living on their own reported a significantly lower score than those living with others. | 1 person: 19.2 2 people: 20.1 3 or more people: 19.9 |
|  | Deprivation | People living in the least deprived quintile (Q5) reported a significantly higher score than those living in the second (Q2) and third (Q3) quintiles. | Q1 (most deprived): 19.6 Q2: 19.5 Q3: 19.6 Q4: 20.0 Q5 (least deprived): 20.3 |
|  | Urban / Rural | People living in urban areas reported a significantly higher score than those living in rural areas. | Urban: 19.9 Rural: 19.6 |
|  | Local Government District (LGD) | In comparison with the Northern Ireland average, Lisburn & Castlereagh and Antrim & Newtownabbey reported a significantly higher score, meanwhile Newry, Mourne & Down reported a significantly lower score. Between the LGDs Lisburn & Castlereagh also reported a significantly higher score than Newry, Mourne & Down. | Antrim & Newtownabbey: 20.1 Ards & North Down: 20.0 Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon: 19.8 Belfast City: 20.1 Causeway Coast & Glens: 19.5 Derry City & Strabane: 19.4 Fermanagh & Omagh: * Lisburn & Castlereagh: 20.3 Mid & East Antrim: 19.6 Mid Ulster: 19.8 Newry, Mourne & Down: 19.2 |

*denotes that the sample size is too small (less than 100) to allow sufficient analysis of this category.

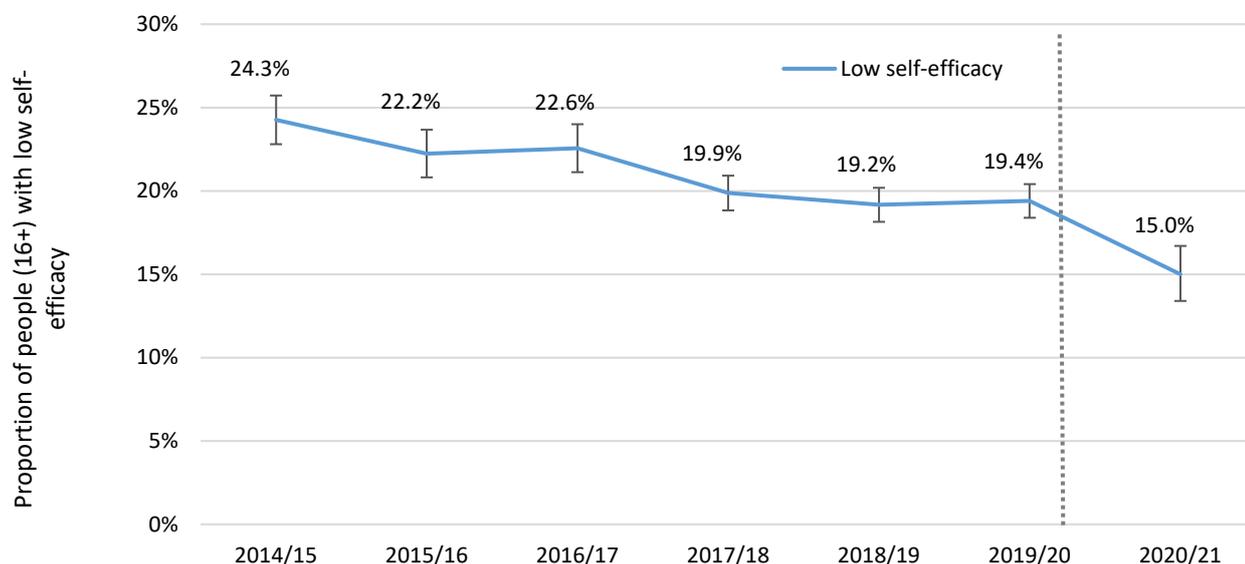
⁶ Significance refers to statistical significance with a 95% confidence that the difference is not by chance.

Proportion with low self-efficacy

Overall

At 15%, the 2020/21 estimate for proportion of the population in Northern Ireland with low self-efficacy is not significantly different to the average in 2019/20 but is significantly smaller than all other previous years.

Figure 2.2: Proportion with low self-efficacy, 2014/15 to 2020/21



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 with low self-efficacy (5-17 on a scale from 5 to 25) were estimated for eleven group breakdowns. Significant differences were found in seven⁷. There were no statistically significant differences in the Religion, Urban/Rural or Dependents breakdown. Comparisons were not analysed for Tenure as only one category was large enough to report on.

The largest proportions of low self-efficacy were found among those who are widowed and the lowest proportions were found among those living in Lisburn & Castlereagh.

| Breakdown | Significant differences | Estimate for: |
|---|---|--|
| | | Northern Ireland: 15.0% |
|  Gender | The proportion of females with low self-efficacy was significantly larger than that for males. | Males: 11.1% Females: 18.8% |
|  Age | Low self-efficacy was significantly more prevalent among people aged 55-64 than those aged 25-34 and 65-74. | Aged 16-24: 12.6% Aged 25-34: 12.8% Aged 35-44: 13.6% Aged 45-54: 17.4% Aged 55-64: 19.3% Aged 65-74: 13.3% Aged 75 and over: 18.4% |

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

| Breakdown | Significant differences | Estimate for: Northern Ireland: | 15.0% |
|---|---|---|---|
|  | Marital status The proportion of people with low self-efficacy was significantly larger among people who are widowed compared with those who are single or married/in civil partnership. | Single: Married/in civil partnership: Separated: Divorced: Widowed: | 14.5% 13.9% * 17.6% 22.7% |
|  | Employment status The proportion of people not in paid employment with low self-efficacy was significantly larger than that of people in paid employment. | In paid employment: Not in paid employment: | 10.7% 20.8% |
|  | Household Count The proportion of people with low self-efficacy was significantly larger among people living on their own. | 1 person: 2 people: 3 or more people: | 22.5% 11.2% 14.4% |
|  | Deprivation The proportion of people in the most deprived areas (Q1 and Q2) who had low self-efficacy was significantly larger than among those in the least deprived areas (Q4 and Q5). Q3 also had a significantly larger proportion of people with low self-efficacy than those living in Q5. | Q1 (most deprived): Q2: Q3: Q4: Q5 (least deprived): | 18.1% 19.2% 15.7% 11.9% 11.1% |
|  | Local Government District (LGD) The proportion of people with low self-efficacy in Newry, Mourne & Down was significantly larger than in Northern Ireland as a whole and significantly larger than in Antrim & Newtownabbey, Ards & North Down and Lisburn & Castlereagh. The proportion of people with low self-efficacy was also significantly lower in Lisburn & Castlereagh compared with Antrim & Newtownabbey and Ards & North Down. | Antrim & Newtownabbey: Ards & North Down: Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon: Belfast City: Causeway Coast & Glens: Derry City & Strabane: Fermanagh & Omagh: Lisburn & Castlereagh: Mid & East Antrim: Mid Ulster: Newry, Mourne & Down: | 10.9% 11.5% 14.8% 15.9% 16.4% 16.4% * 10.6% 15.1% 14.0% 21.8% |

*denotes that the sample size is too small (less than 100) to allow sufficient analysis of this category.

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:

- 7.6 out of 10 for 'life satisfaction'
- 8.0 out of 10 for feeling that what you do in life is 'worthwhile'
- 7.5 out of 10 for 'happiness' yesterday
- 3.2 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 wellbeing⁸ (indicating better personal wellbeing) were:

- 30% for 'life satisfaction'
- 37% for feeling that what you do in life is 'worthwhile'
- 33% for 'happiness'.

In terms of 'anxiety', where a lower score indicates better personal wellbeing, 36% of people reported a 'Very low' score (0 or 1).

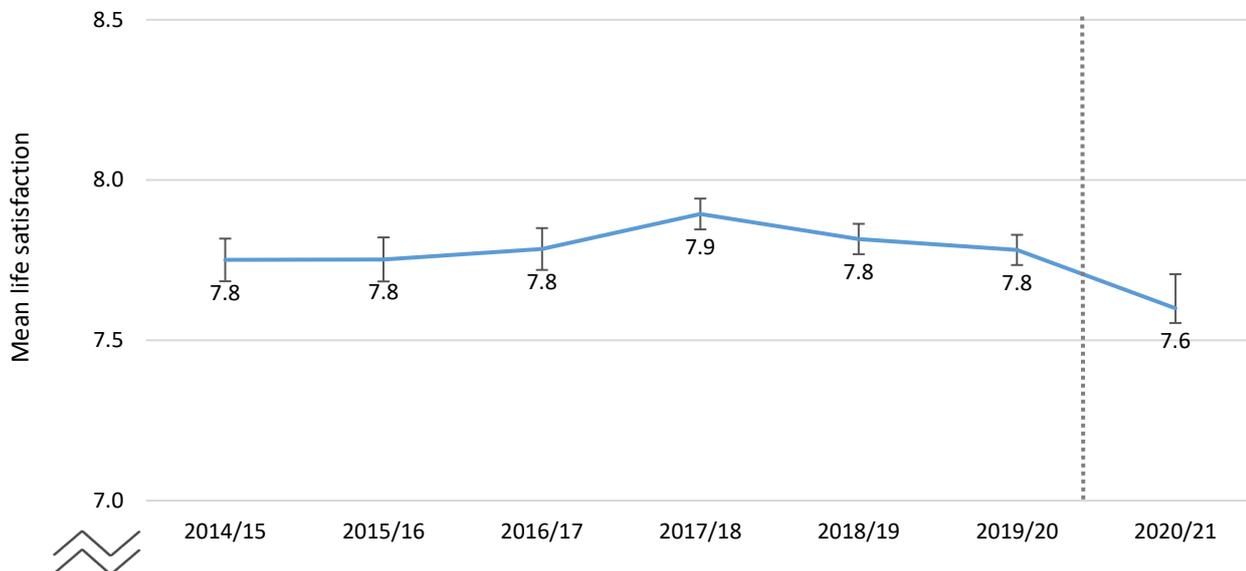
⁸ Note: The proportions for life satisfaction, worthwhile and happiness were revised on 5 November 2021. The revision is a result of a typing error and does not affect any other figures in the publication or accompanying tables.

Average life satisfaction score in Northern Ireland

Overall score

In 2020/21, the average (mean) life satisfaction score for Northern Ireland was 7.6, which is considered 'high'. However, this represents a significant decrease from all previous years.

Figure 3.1: Average life satisfaction scores, 2014/15 to 2020/21



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 eleven group breakdowns. Significant differences were found in seven⁹. There were no statistically significant differences in breakdowns for Dependents, Deprivation or LGD. Comparisons were not analysed for Tenure as only one category was large enough to report on.

The highest average (mean) signifying better wellbeing was among those who are married/in a civil partnership, and those aged 75 and over. The lowest average (mean) was among those who are divorced.

| Breakdown | Significant differences | Estimate for: Northern Ireland: | 7.6 |
|---|---|------------------------------------|------------|
|  Gender | Males reported a significantly higher life satisfaction score than females. | Males: | 7.7 |
| | | Females: | 7.6 |
|  Age | Those aged 65-74 reported a significantly higher score than those aged 55-64. | Aged 16-24: | 7.7 |
| | | Aged 25-34: | 7.7 |
| | | Aged 35-44: | 7.6 |
| | | Aged 45-54: | 7.5 |
| | | Aged 55-64: | 7.4 |
| | | Aged 65-74: | 7.8 |
| | | Aged 75 and over: | 7.9 |

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

| Breakdown | Significant differences | Estimate for: | Northern Ireland: 7.6 |
|---|---|--|------------------------------|
|  | Marital status People who are married/in civil partnership reported a significantly higher score than those who are single or divorced. | Single: 7.4 Married/in civil partnership: 7.9 Separated: * Divorced: 6.9 Widowed: 7.5 | |
|  | Religion Protestants reported significantly higher levels of life satisfaction than Catholics or those with an Other/No Religion. | Catholics: 7.6 Protestants: 7.8 Other/No Religion: 7.3 | |
|  | 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: 7.4 | |
|  | Household Count People living on their own reported a significantly lower score than those living with others. | 1 person: 7.1 2 people: 7.8 3 or more people: 7.8 | |
|  | Urban / Rural People living in urban areas reported a significantly lower score than those living in rural areas. | Urban: 7.5 Rural: 7.8 | |

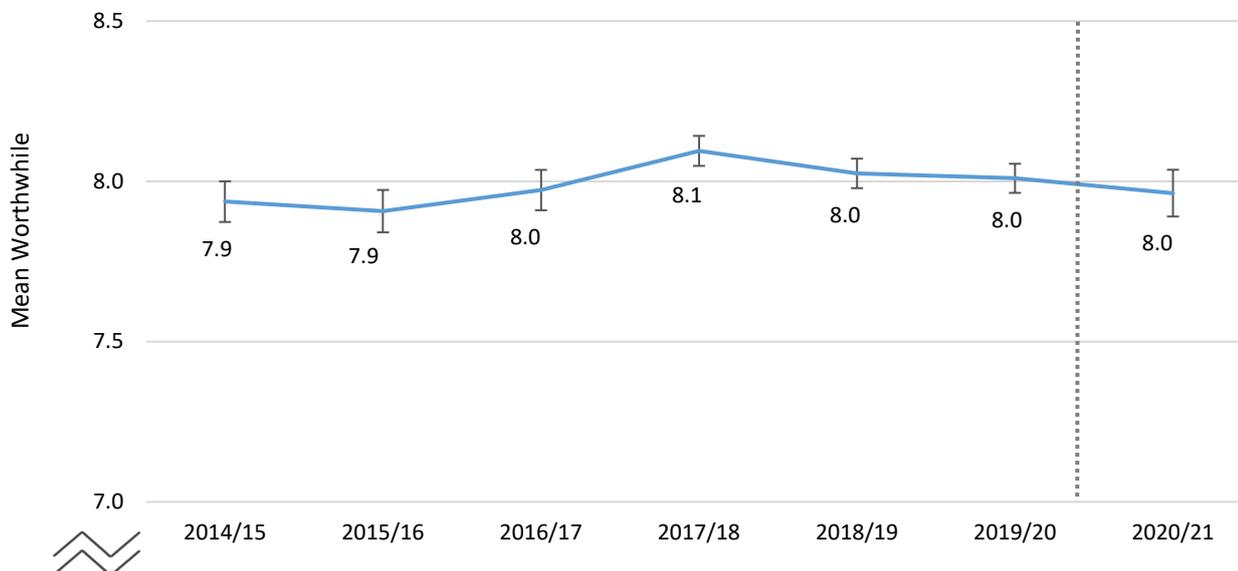
*denotes that the sample size is too small (less than 100) to allow sufficient analysis of this category.

Average worthwhile score in Northern Ireland

Overall score

In 2020/21, the average (mean) score for feeling the things we do in life are worthwhile for Northern Ireland was 8.0, which is considered 'high'. This figure is similar to the 2019/20 figure.

Figure 3.2: Average worthwhile scores, 2014/15 to 2020/21



Note: Due to changes in the survey methodology, please exercise caution when comparing to previous years. 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 eleven group breakdowns. Significant differences¹⁰ were found in seven groups. There were no statistically significant differences in breakdowns for Gender, Deprivation or LGD. Comparisons were not analysed for Tenure as only one category was large enough to report on.

The highest average (mean), signifying better wellbeing, was among those aged 65 and over, and people who are married/in a civil partnership. The lowest average (mean), signifying poorer wellbeing, was among those living alone and those who are divorced.

| Breakdown | Significant differences | Estimate for: |
|--|---|------------------------------|
| | | Northern Ireland: 8.0 |
|  Age | Those aged 65-74 reported a significantly higher score for 'feeling the things they do in life are worthwhile' than those aged 55-64. | Aged 16-24: 7.9 |
| | | Aged 25-34: 8.1 |
| | | Aged 35-44: 8.1 |
| | | Aged 45-54: 7.7 |
| | | Aged 55-64: 7.8 |
| | | Aged 65-74: 8.2 |
| | Those aged 45-54 reported a significantly lower worthwhile score than those aged 65 – 74 and 75 and over. | Aged 75 and over: 8.2 |

¹⁰ Significance refers to statistical significance with a 95% confidence that the difference is not by chance.

| Breakdown | Significant differences | Estimate for: Northern Ireland: | 8.0 |
|--|---|---|--|
|  | Marital status Those who are married or in a civil partnership reported a significantly higher score than those who are single or divorced. | Single: Married/in civil partnership: Separated: Divorced: Widowed: | 7.6 8.2 * 7.5 8.1 |
|  | Religion Protestants reported a significantly higher score than those whose religion was Other/No Religion. | Catholics: Protestants: Other: | 7.9 8.0 7.8 |
|  | Dependants People with dependants reported a significantly higher score than those without dependants. | With dependants: Without dependants: | 8.1 7.8 |
|  | Employment status People in paid employment reported a significantly higher score than those not in paid employment. | In paid employment: Not in paid employment: | 8.1 7.8 |
|  | 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: | 7.5 8.1 8.1 |
|  | Urban / Rural Those living in urban areas reported significantly a lower score than those living in rural areas. | Urban: Rural: | 7.9 8.1 |

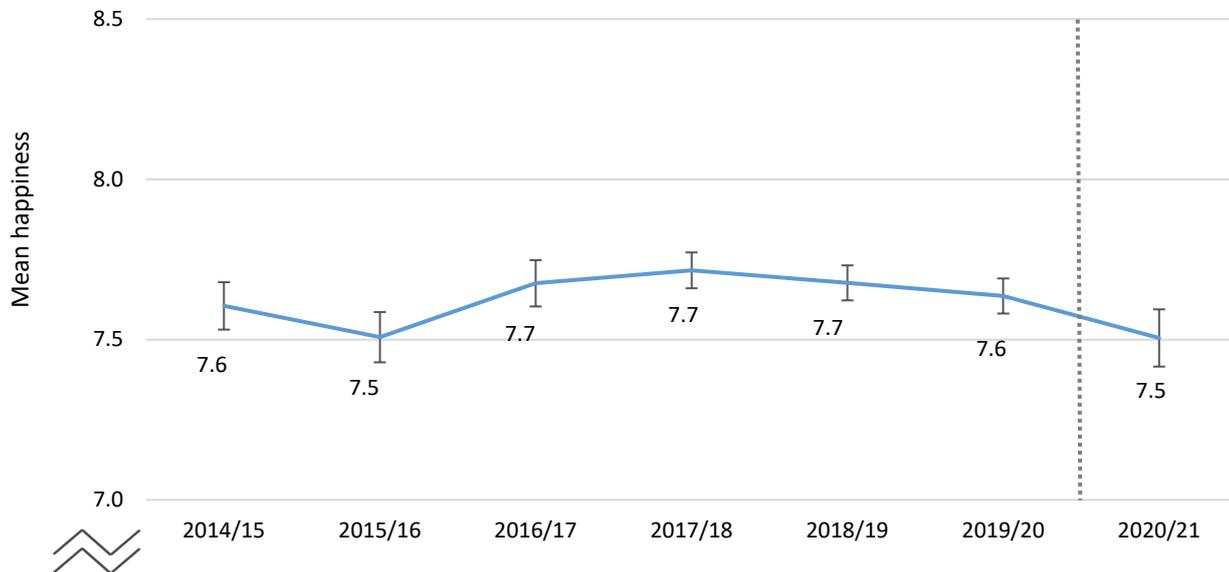
*denotes that the sample size is too small (less than 100) to allow sufficient analysis of this category.

Average happiness score in Northern Ireland

Overall score

In 2020/21, the average (mean) score for happiness for Northern Ireland was 7.5, which is considered 'high'. However, this figure is significantly lower than in all previous years, signifying poorer wellbeing this year.

Figure 3.3: Average happiness scores, 2014/15 to 2020/21



Note: Due to changes in the survey methodology, please exercise caution when comparing to previous years. 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 eleven group breakdowns. Significant differences were found in five¹¹. There were no statistically significant differences in breakdowns for Gender, Age, Religion, Deprivation and Dependents. Comparisons were not analysed for Tenure as only one category was large enough to report on.

The highest average (mean), signifying better wellbeing, was among those living in Mid Ulster. The lowest average (mean), signifying poorer wellbeing, was among people who are divorced.

| Breakdown | Significant differences | Estimate for: Northern Ireland: | 7.5 |
|--|--|---|--|
|  Marital status | People who are married or in a civil partnership reported a significantly higher score than those people who are Single or Divorced. | Married/in civil partnership: Single: Separated: Divorced: Widowed: | 7.8 7.3 * 7.0 7.2 |
|  Employment status | People in paid employment reported a significantly higher score than those not in paid employment. | In paid employment: Not in paid employment: | 7.6 7.4 |
|  Household Count | People living with others reported a significantly higher score for happiness than those who were living alone. | 1 person: 2 people: 3 or more people: | 7.1 7.6 7.6 |

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

| Breakdown | Significant differences | Estimate for: | |
|--|---|-------------------------------------|------------|
| | | Northern Ireland: | 7.5 |
|  Urban / Rural | Those living in rural areas reported a significantly higher score than those living in urban areas. | Urban: | 7.4 |
| | | Rural: | 7.7 |
|  Local Government District (LGD) | Those living in Mid Ulster reported significantly higher scores of happiness than Northern Ireland as a whole. In contrast, those living in Mid & East Antrim reported significantly lower scores than the Northern Ireland average. When comparing across LGD's, those living in Mid Ulster reported significantly higher scores than those living in Belfast City or Mid & East Antrim. | Antrim & Newtownabbey: | 7.3 |
| | | Ards & North Down: | 7.6 |
| | | Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon: | 7.6 |
| | | Belfast City: | 7.3 |
| | | Causeway Coast & Glens: | 7.6 |
| | | Derry City & Strabane: | 7.4 |
| | | Fermanagh & Omagh: | * |
| | | Lisburn & Castlereagh: | 7.6 |
| | | Mid & East Antrim: | 7.2 |
| | | Mid Ulster: | 8.1 |
| | | Newry, Mourne & Down: | 7.6 |

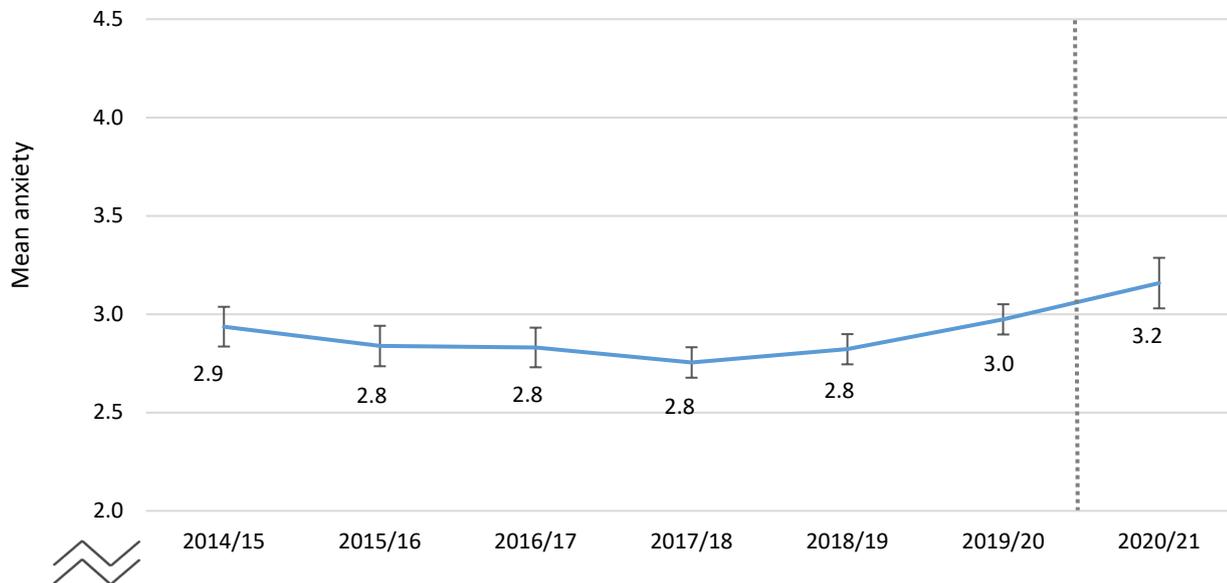
*denotes that the sample size is too small (less than 100) to allow sufficient analysis of this category.

Average (mean) anxiety

Overall score

In 2020/21, the average (mean) score for anxiety¹² for Northern Ireland was 3.2, which is considered 'low'. This figure is significantly higher than all previous years, signifying poorer wellbeing this year.

Figure 3.4: Average anxiety scores, 2014/15 to 2020/21



Note: Due to changes in the survey methodology, please exercise caution when comparing to previous years. 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 eleven group breakdowns. Significant differences were found in six¹³. There were no statistically significant differences in breakdowns for Age, Religion, Martial Status and Deprivation. Comparisons were not analysed for Tenure as only one category was large enough to report on.

The lowest average (mean), signifying better wellbeing, was among those living in Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon. The highest average (mean), signifying poorer wellbeing, was among those living in Mid & East Antrim.

| Breakdown | Significant differences | Estimate for: |
|--|---|--|
| | | Northern Ireland: 3.2 |
|  Gender | Females reported a significantly higher score for anxiety than males. | Males: 2.8 Females: 3.5 |
|  Dependants | Those with dependants reported a significantly higher score than those without dependants. | With dependants: 3.3 Without dependants: 3.0 |
|  Employment status | People in paid employment reported a significantly lower score than those not in paid employment. | In paid employment: 3.0 Not in paid employment: 3.3 |

¹² A lower score indicates better wellbeing for anxiety.

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

| Breakdown | Significant differences | Estimate for: | |
|---|---|-------------------------------------|------------|
| | | Northern Ireland: | 3.2 |
|  | Household Count People living alone reported a significantly higher score than those living with others. | 1 person: | 3.4 |
| | | 2 people: | 3.1 |
| | | 3 or more people: | 3.1 |
|  | Urban / Rural Those living in urban areas reported a significantly higher score than those living in rural areas. | Urban: | 3.3 |
| | | Rural: | 2.9 |
|  | Local Government District (LGD) Those living in Mid & East Antrim reported significantly higher scores for anxiety than the Northern Ireland average. In contrast, those living in Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon reported significantly lower scores than the Northern Ireland average. When comparing across LGD's those living in Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon reported significantly lower scores than those living in Antrim & Newtownabbey, Belfast City, Lisburn & Castlereagh and Mid & East Antrim. | Antrim & Newtownabbey: | 3.4 |
| | | Ards & North Down: | 2.9 |
| | | Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon: | 2.4 |
| | | Belfast City: | 3.4 |
| | | Causeway Coast & Glens: | 3.1 |
| | | Derry City & Strabane: | 2.8 |
| | | Fermanagh & Omagh: | * |
| | | Lisburn & Castlereagh: | 3.4 |
| | | Mid & East Antrim: | 3.6 |
| | | Mid Ulster: | 2.9 |
| | | Newry, Mourne & Down: | 3.4 |

*denotes that the sample size is too small (less than 100) to allow sufficient analysis of this category.

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 life¹⁴. It refers to where someone believes control is located and ranges from 'external' to 'internal'.

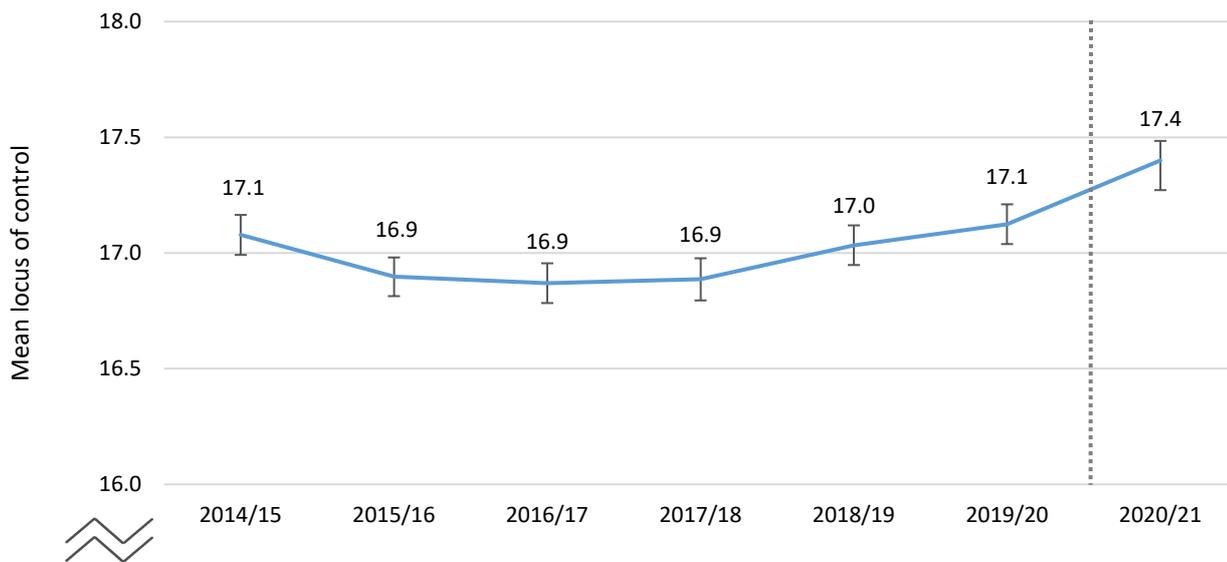
- Those with **external** locus of control feel events are influenced by outside factors, making it beyond an individual's control to shape the events of their life.
- Those with **internal** locus of control believe in their own influence over life events and are confident that their actions can have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

Average locus of control in Northern Ireland

Overall score

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). In 2020/21, the average (mean) locus of control score for Northern Ireland was 17.4, which is considered more internal than external, and represents a significantly higher score compared to all previous years.

Figure 4.1: Average locus of control scores, 2014/15 to 2020/21



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.

¹⁴ Academic references 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 eleven group breakdowns. Significant differences were found in seven¹⁵. There were no statistically significant differences in locus of control breakdowns for Urban/Rural, Dependants and Marital Status. Comparisons were not analysed for Tenure as only one category was large enough to report on.

The lowest (most external) average (mean) was found among those aged 65 and over and those living in the Newry, Mourne & Down LGD. The highest (most internal) average (mean) was found in the Lisburn & Castlereagh LGD.

| | Breakdown | Significant differences | Estimate for: Northern Ireland: 17.4 |
|---|--|---|--|
|  | Gender | Females reported a significantly lower (more external) score than males. | Males: 17.6 Females: 17.2 |
|  | Age | Those aged 65-74 and 75 or over reported a significantly lower (more external) score than those aged 16-24, 25-34 and 35-44. | Aged 16-24: 17.6 Aged 25-34: 17.8 Aged 35-44: 17.7 Aged 45-54: 17.3 Aged 55-64: 17.1 Aged 65-74: 16.8 Aged 75 or over: 16.8 |
|  | Religion | Both Catholics and Protestants reported a significantly lower (more external) score than those with an Other/No religion. | Catholics: 17.2 Protestants: 17.3 Other/no religion: 17.8 |
|  | Employment status | People not in paid employment reported a significantly lower (more external) score than those in paid employment. | In paid employment: 17.7 Not in paid employment: 16.9 |
|  | Household Count | People living in single households reported a significantly lower (more external) score than those living in households with 3 or more people. | 1 person: 17.1 2 people: 17.3 3 or more people: 17.5 |
|  | Deprivation | Those in the least deprived areas (Q5) reported significantly higher (more internal) scores than those living in quintiles 1, 2 and 3. | Q1 (most deprived): 17.2 Q2: 17.2 Q3: 17.2 Q4: 17.5 Q5 (least deprived): 17.8 |
|  | Local Government District (LGD) | In comparison with the NI average Belfast City and Lisburn & Castlereagh reported a significantly higher (more internal) score while Derry City & Strabane, Newry, Mourne & Down and Ards & North Down reported a significantly lower (more external) score. Between the LGDs Belfast City also reported a significantly higher (more internal) score than people from Ards & North Down, Derry City & Strabane and Newry, Mourne & Down. Lisburn & Castlereagh also reported a significantly higher score than Ards & North Down, Derry City & Strabane and Newry, Mourne & Down. | Antrim & Newtownabbey: 17.5 Ards & North Down: 17.0 Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon: 17.6 Belfast City: 17.8 Causeway Coast & Glens: 17.3 Derry City & Strabane: 16.9 Fermanagh & Omagh: * Lisburn & Castlereagh: 17.9 Mid & East Antrim: 17.3 Mid Ulster: 17.7 Newry, Mourne & Down: 16.8 |

*denotes that the sample size is too small (less than 100) to allow sufficient analysis of this category.

¹⁵ Significance refers to statistical significance with a 95% confidence that the difference is not by chance.

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, 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.

Related links

This report uses data collected from individual respondents (aged 16 or over) via the Continuous Household Survey, 2020/21.

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 2018/19 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:

Adele McCauley / Kim Gillespie

E-mail: pfganalytics@executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk

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.

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 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.

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.

Research – keeping three separate constructs, and using a 5 item scale for self-efficacy

This report has been informed by research conducted by Queens University Belfast which was supported and contributed to by the ONS Methodological Advisory service funded through the Quality Improvement Fund (QIF). The research was titled 'Investigating Locus of Control, Self-efficacy and Wellbeing – The relationship between all items across 3 instruments for a single item scale'.

This report examined the key constructs of locus of control and self-efficacy and how they relate to individual wellbeing, through analysis of data from the Belfast City Council Resident Survey and the Continuous Household Survey. Previous research suggested that both internal locus of control and self-efficacy are important constructs which predict higher wellbeing and life satisfaction among individuals and the Queen's research supported this.

The aim of this research was to assess if self-efficacy, locus of control and life satisfaction were linked and whether they were significant predictors of one another and assess the feasibility of developing one overall scale of measurement which encompassed the three metrics. Despite finding that higher wellbeing is partially mediated by self-efficacy and internal locus of control, it was concluded that these three metrics could not be measured on the same scale and must be treated as the three separate constructs they are.

The research conducted by Queens University has also influenced the use of a five item scale to measure self-efficacy rather than an alternative number of items. For self-efficacy, an exploratory factor analysis revealed that on the five item scale all items loaded highly and consistently onto a single underlying latent factor. For example, the self-efficacy scale when utilising the data from the CHS and Belfast City Council recorded loadings of 0.66-0.81 and 0.81-0.86 respectively, on a scale of 0 to 1 with higher being stronger. The exploratory factor analysis suggests that the self-efficacy scale functioned as a coherent and strong scale with the five items, this is further reflected in the good internal consistency, highlighted by the scales high Cronbach's alpha score (0.84 or above in each dataset from 2014/15 to 2020/21).

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Continuous Household Survey

This report presents findings from the 2020/21 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 2020/21 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.

In March 2020 NISRA suspended all face-to-face interviews, or CAPI (Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing) due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, they were replaced by telephone interviewing, or CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing), with all interviews for the reporting period April 2020- March 2021 conducted by telephone. The achieved response rate was 16% (1,885 individuals), which is a lower response compared with the normal achieved response rate of approximately 55% in face-to-face mode.

There are a number of factors to consider when interpreting the 2020/21 results and care should be taken when comparing these to previous findings:

- While survey/methodology changed, the impact of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and the resultant introduction of new public health regulations, guidance and advice may have also fundamentally changed peoples' behaviour and attitudes. It is difficult to separate out change caused by the methodological adjustments and actual behavioural change at this point in time.
- The change in data collection mode from face-to-face to telephone may have altered how people responded to the survey.
- The change in data collection mode also necessitated some streamlining of the questionnaire and changes to how some questions were asked or presented as well as the response categories associated with them. This may also have implications for how people responded to the survey.
- The demographic profile of the achieved sample has changed in comparison with previous years:
 - There is more of an under-representation of people aged 16-44 compared to previous years.
 - There are fewer households from the most deprived areas and more households from the least deprived areas.

Weighting has been applied where necessary to minimise bias and this is discussed in more detail below.

More information on the changes to the 2020/21 CHS can be found on the [NISRA CHS webpage](#).

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 gender, 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.

Available breakdowns

Due to changes to the survey mode and questionnaire as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic (detailed above), a number of sub-population categories were either not included in this year's questionnaire or did not have a large enough sample to report on. As a result, the following categories could not be included or reported on - Health, Disability, Ethnicity, Sexual Orientation, Highest Qualification, Access to Car and Access to Internet.

Gender

The CHS outlines two gender 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.

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.

Comparisons were not analysed for tenure as only one category was large enough to report on. However, the overall averages/proportions for those in the 'Owner occupied' grouping have been included in the accompanying tables.

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:

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

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 .