

Wellbeing in Northern Ireland, 2022/23

15 November 2023

This report uses data from the 2022/23 Continuous Household Survey and presents findings on Loneliness, Self-Efficacy, Personal Wellbeing (Life Satisfaction, Worthwhile, Happiness and Anxiety) and Locus of Control.

Key findings

**Please note all differences listed are statistically significant.*

Key findings include:

- Overall, lower life satisfaction and happiness scores and higher levels of anxiety indicate a decline in wellbeing compared with 2021/22.
- 30% of people reported very high levels of life satisfaction, 35% reported very high levels of happiness and 37% reported very high levels of feeling that the things they do are worthwhile.
- 40% of people reported very low levels of anxiety.
- 19.4% of people reported feeling lonely “at least some of the time”.
- People who reported their health as very good reported better levels of wellbeing than those who reported their health as bad/very bad, and people with a disability reported lower levels of wellbeing than those without a disability.
- People in paid employment reported better levels of wellbeing than those who were not in paid employment, and those who owned their house reported better levels of wellbeing than those in social rented accommodation.
- Those who are married/in a civil partnership reported better levels of wellbeing than those who are separated or divorced.
- People living in the most deprived areas (quintile 1) reported lower levels of wellbeing than those living in the least deprived areas (quintiles 3, 4 and 5).

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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 2022/23 estimates for people aged 16 and over in Northern Ireland (NI) across four areas which reflect wellbeing:

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

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

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

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

The coronavirus pandemic impacted data collection of wellbeing metrics in 2020/21 and 2021/22, resulting in a change in data collection mode and reduced sample size for 2020/21. Users should take this into consideration when interpreting the 2022/23 results and care should be taken when comparing these to findings published prior to 2020/21. For this reason, a dotted line has been added to all time series graphs to highlight the change in methodology following the 2019/20 reporting year.

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 accompanying tables located in the [Wellbeing in NI 2022/23 Tables](#).

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

Although this publication is the official source for wellbeing data in NI, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) also publish personal wellbeing data for NI, collected in the Labour Force Survey, and reported in the '[Personal Well-being in the UK](#)' publication. The figures reported for NI in the latest ONS publication for 2022/23 (Life Satisfaction: 7.6, Worthwhile: 7.9, Happiness: 7.6 and Anxiety: 2.9) were not found to be significantly different than those reported in this publication (7.6, 7.9, 7.6 and 2.9 respectively).

¹ [What is Wellbeing?](#)

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

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.

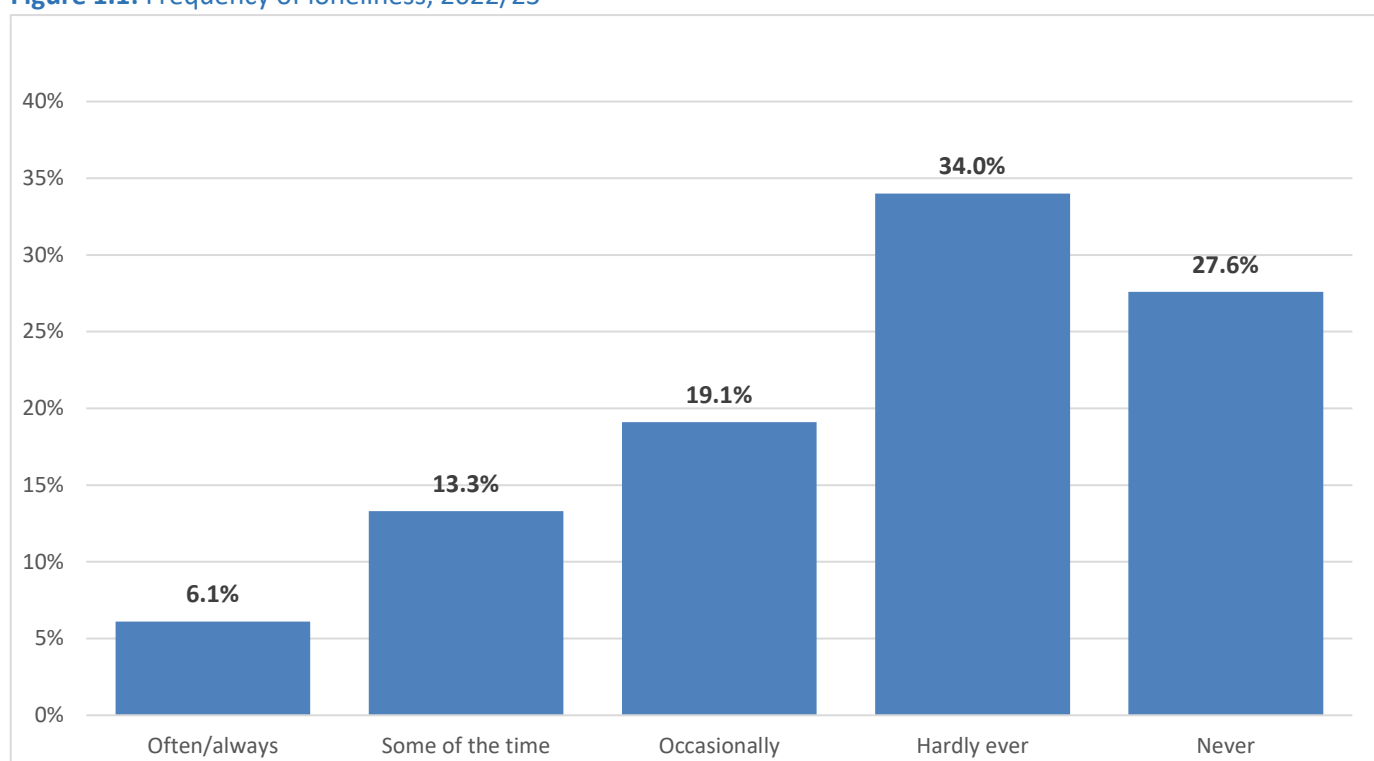
Following user consultation and for the ease of understanding and interpreting results, the responses 'often/always' and 'some of the time' have been grouped into a single category 'Lonely at least some of the time'. This is a change from how these data were previously reported and further details can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

Frequency of loneliness – 5 category split

Loneliness in 2022/23

In 2022/23, 6.1% of respondents (individuals aged 16 and over) reported feeling lonely "often/always". There is no statistically significant change from the previous year (6.1%) for this category. There was also no statistically significant change from 2021/22 in the proportion of people reporting 'never' feeling lonely (27.6%) in 2022/23.

Figure 1.1: Frequency of loneliness, 2022/23



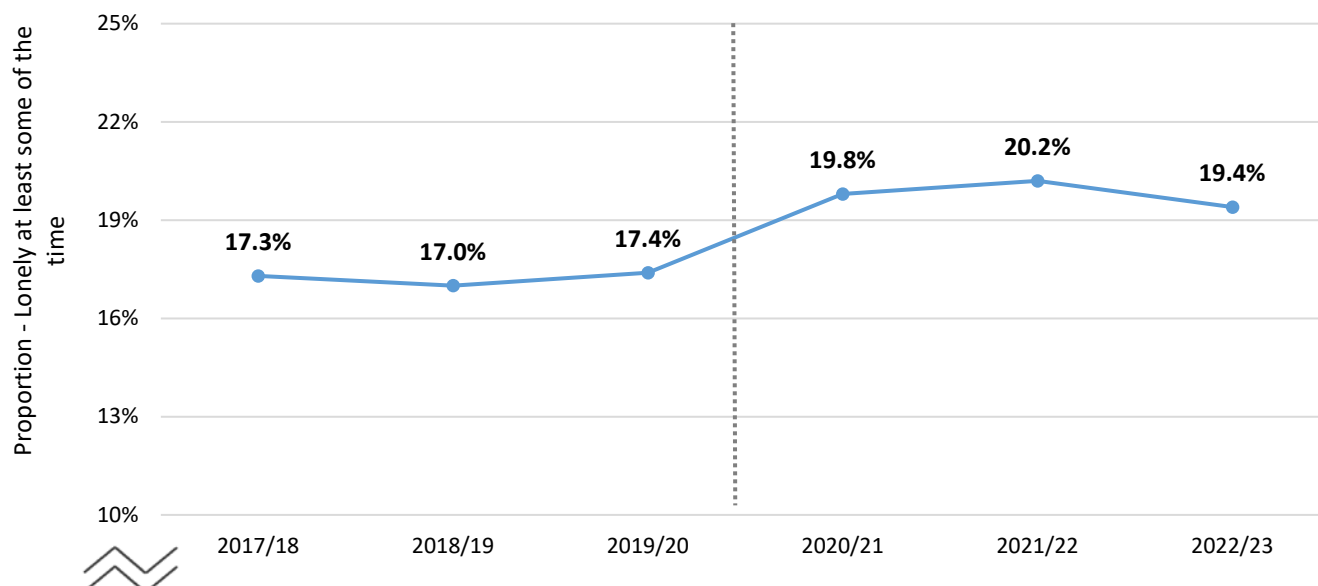
Note: All values have been rounded to one decimal place.

Lonely at least some of the time

Time series

In 2022/23, 19.4% of respondents reported feeling lonely “often/always” or “some of the time”, categorised as “lonely at least some of the time”. There is no statistically significant change from the previous year (20.2%).

Figure 1.2: Proportion who reported feeling lonely ‘often/always’ or ‘some of the time’, 2017/18 to 2022/23





Note: Due to changes in the survey methodology, please exercise caution when comparing current data to that collected prior to 2020/21. All values 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 seventeen group breakdowns. Significant differences³ were found in all seventeen groups.







The largest proportions of loneliness were found among those who reported their general health as bad/very bad (47.5%), and the lowest proportions were found among those living in Fermanagh & Omagh (8.7%).

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:	19.4%
	Sex	Females reported significantly higher proportions of loneliness than males.	Males:	18.0%
			Females:	20.5%
	Age	Those aged 75 and over reported significantly higher proportions of loneliness than those in the 35-44 and 45-54 age categories. People aged 55-64 also reported significantly higher proportions of loneliness than those aged 35-44.	Aged 16-24:	18.4%
			Aged 25-34:	20.7%
			Aged 35-44:	17.0%
			Aged 45-54:	17.8%
			Aged 55-64:	20.9%
			Aged 65-74:	18.7%
			Aged 75 and over:	22.6%

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

Breakdown		Significant differences		Estimate for: Northern Ireland: 19.4%	
	Marital status	<p>People who are married or in a civil partnership reported significantly lower levels of loneliness than those in all other categories.</p> <p>Those who are single reported significantly lower proportions of loneliness than those who are separated, divorced or widowed.</p> <p>People who are widowed reported significantly higher proportions of loneliness than those who are divorced.</p>		Single: 23.9% Married/in civil partnership: 9.2% Separated: 37.7% Divorced: 33.8% Widowed: 42.2%	
	Religion	Those with other/ no religion reported significantly higher levels of loneliness than Catholics and Protestants.		Catholics: 18.1% Protestants: 18.9% Other/no religion: 24.2%	
	Dependants	Those responsible for a dependant with a disability reported significantly higher proportions of loneliness than those with dependants who are children. Those responsible for child dependants reported significantly lower proportions of loneliness than those without a dependant.	With Dependants (type) Child: 15.1% Person with disability: 21.9% Elderly person: 18.3%		Without Dependants: 21.2%
	Health	Significant differences were found across all health categories, with significantly lower proportions of loneliness among those reporting better health.		Very good: 9.3% Good: 15.5% Fair: 31.0% Bad / very bad: 47.5%	
	Disability	People with a disability reported significantly higher proportions of loneliness than those without a disability.	People with disability: 35.1% People without disability: 12.9%		
	Ethnicity	Those with a white ethnicity reported significantly lower proportions of loneliness than those with any other ethnicity.		White: 19.0% Other: 34.1%	
	Employment status	People not in paid employment reported significantly higher proportions of loneliness than those in paid employment.	In paid employment: 14.0% Not in paid employment: 27.3%		
	Qualifications	Significant differences were found across all qualifications categories, with significantly lower proportions of loneliness among those with qualifications.	Degree and higher: 14.3% Any other qualifications: 19.8% No qualifications: 28.8%		
	Household Count	Those living alone reported significantly higher proportions of loneliness than those living in households of 2 or more.	1 person: 37.5% 2 people: 14.7% 3 or more people: 13.9%		

	Breakdown	Significant differences	Estimate for:	
			Northern Ireland:	19.4%
	Tenure	Significant differences were found across all tenure categories, with significantly lower proportions of loneliness among those who own their house.	Owner occupied:	14.3%
			Social rented:	41.1%
			Private rented:	24.5%
	Household internet access	People without household internet access reported significantly higher proportions of loneliness than those with household internet access.	Household internet access:	18.4%
			No household internet access:	31.0%
	Access to car	People without access to a car reported significantly higher proportions of loneliness than those with access to a car.	Access to a car:	15.8%
			No access to a car:	39.3%
	Deprivation	Those living in the most deprived areas (Q1) reported significantly higher proportions of loneliness than those in all other quintiles. People living quintile 2 reported significantly higher proportions of loneliness than people living in quintiles 3, 4 and 5.	Q1 (most deprived):	27.7%
			Q2:	23.0%
			Q3:	17.4%
			Q4:	16.0%
			Q5 (least deprived):	14.4%
	Urban/Rural	People living in urban areas reported significantly higher proportions of loneliness than those living in rural areas.	Urban:	22.7%
			Rural:	14.1%
	Local Government District (LGD)	In comparison with the Northern Ireland average, those living in Fermanagh & Omagh, Newry, Mourne & Down and Ards & North Down reported significantly lower proportions of loneliness meanwhile, those living in Belfast reported significantly higher levels of loneliness. People living in Belfast reported significantly higher proportions of loneliness than Antrim & Newtownabbey, Fermanagh & Omagh, Lisburn & Castlereagh, Mid Ulster, Newry Mourne & Down and Ards & North Down. People living in Fermanagh & Omagh reported significantly lower proportions of loneliness than all other Local Government Districts. People living in Derry City & Strabane, Mid & East Antrim, and Causeway Coast & Glens reported significantly higher proportions of loneliness than Mid Ulster, Newry Mourne & Down and Ards & North Down.	Antrim & Newtownabbey:	18.9%
			Ards & North Down:	15.1%
			Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon:	22.0%
			Belfast City:	24.9%
			Causeway Coast & Glens:	22.6%
			Derry City & Strabane:	22.8%
			Fermanagh & Omagh:	8.7%
			Lisburn & Castlereagh:	19.2%
			Mid & East Antrim:	22.0%
			Mid Ulster:	16.0%
			Newry, Mourne & Down:	14.7%

Self-efficacy

What is self-efficacy?

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

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

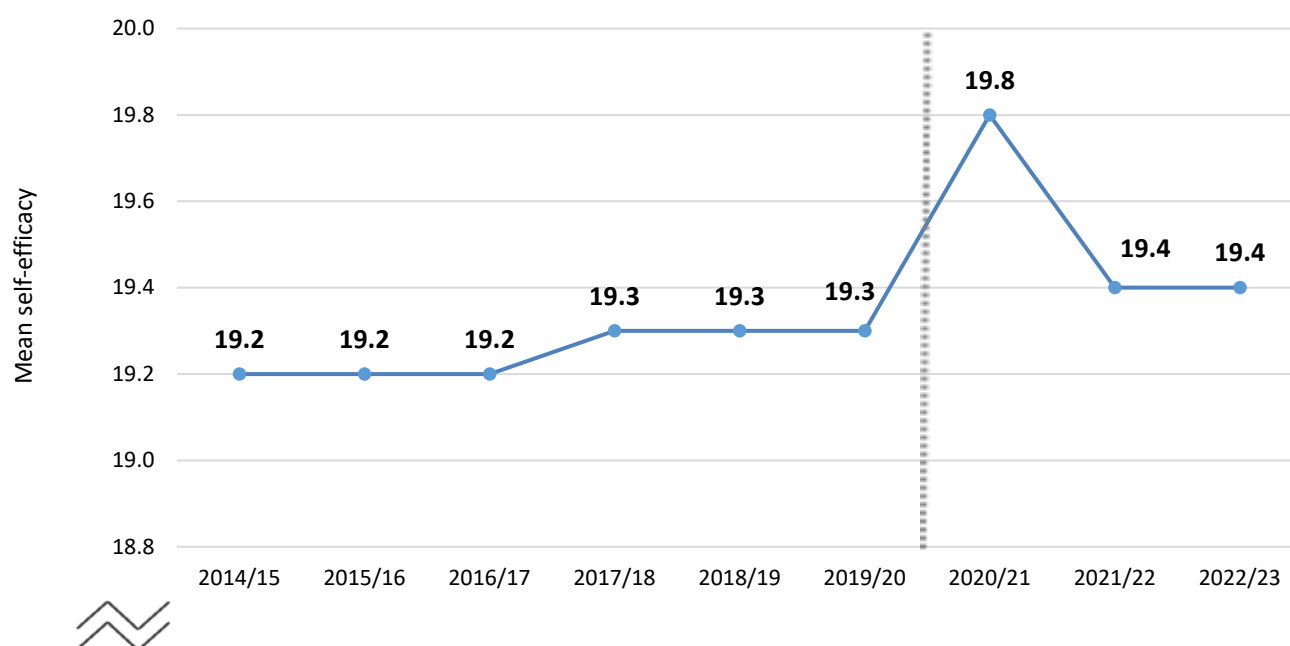
Self-efficacy affects the decisions a person makes and what they see as achievable. It has been shown to influence physical and mental health, learning and achievement, career and job satisfaction and family relations. Interventions to increase self-efficacy in specific groups can improve collective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

Average self-efficacy score

Overall score

In 2022/23, the average (mean) score for self-efficacy in Northern Ireland was 19.4, no change from the average in 2021/22 (19.4). 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 2022/23












Note: Due to changes in the survey methodology, please exercise caution when comparing to previous years. All values have been rounded to one decimal place.







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

Group differences

Average (mean) scores were estimated (on a scale from 5 to 25) for seventeen group breakdowns. Significant differences were found in fifteen groups. There were no significant differences found in religion or ethnicity.

The lowest self-efficacy estimate was found among those who reported bad/very bad health (15.7) and the highest score was found among those who reported very good health (20.6).

Breakdown		Significant differences	Estimate for: Northern Ireland:	
	Sex	Males reported significantly higher self-efficacy than females.	Males:	19.9
			Females:	19.0
	Age	Those aged 75 and over reported significantly lower self-efficacy than those aged 25-34, 35-44 and 65-74. Those aged 35-44 reported significantly higher self-efficacy than those aged 55-64.	Aged 16-24:	19.4
			Aged 25-34:	19.6
			Aged 35-44:	19.8
			Aged 45-54:	19.5
			Aged 55-64:	19.1
			Aged 65-74:	19.5
			Aged 75 and over:	19.0
	Marital status	People who are married or in a civil partnership reported a significantly higher score than those in all other categories. Those who are widowed reported significantly lower self-efficacy than those who are single.	Single:	19.1
			Married/in civil partnership:	20.0
			Separated:	18.3
			Divorced:	18.7
			Widowed:	18.6
	Dependants	Those responsible for child dependants and elderly dependants reported a significantly higher score than those without dependants and those responsible for a person with a disability.	With Dependants (type)	
			Child:	19.8
			Person with disability:	18.7
			Elderly person:	19.8
			Without Dependants:	19.3
	Health	Significant differences were found across all health categories, with higher self-efficacy scores among those reporting better health.	Very good:	20.6
			Good:	19.7
			Fair:	18.6
			Bad / very bad:	15.7
	Disability	People with a disability reported a significantly lower score than those without disability.	People with disability:	17.7
			People without disability:	20.1
	Employment status	People in paid employment reported significantly higher self-efficacy than those not in paid employment.	In paid employment:	20.1
			Not in paid employment:	18.5
	Qualifications	Significant differences were found across all categories, with higher self-efficacy among people with qualifications.	Degree and higher:	20.3
			Any other qualifications:	19.3
			No qualifications:	17.9
	Household count	People living on their own reported a significantly lower score than those living with others.	1 person:	18.5
			2 people:	19.6
			3 or more people:	19.7

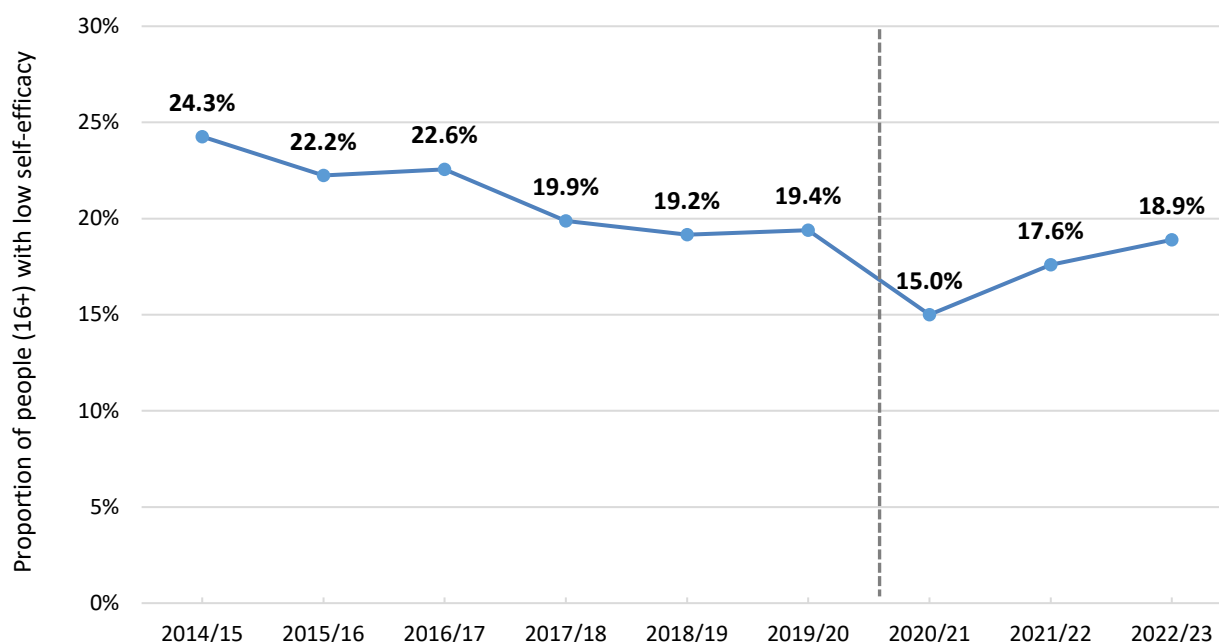
Breakdown		Significant differences	Estimate for:	
			Northern Ireland:	19.4
	Tenure	Significant differences were found across all categories, with lower self-efficacy reported among social renters.	Owner occupied:	19.8
			Social rented:	17.5
			Private rented:	19.1
	Household internet access	Those with no household internet access reported a significantly lower score than those with internet access.	Household internet access:	19.5
			No household internet access:	18.1
	Access to car	People with access to a car reported a significantly higher score than those without access to a car.	Access to a car:	19.7
			No access to a car:	17.8
	Deprivation	People living in the least deprived quintile (Q5) reported a significantly higher score than those living in quintiles 1, 2 and 4. People living in the most deprived quintile (Q1) reported a significantly lower score than those living in quintiles 3, 4 and 5. Those living in quintile 2 reported a significantly lower score than those in quintile 3.	Q1 (most deprived):	18.7
			Q2:	19.1
			Q3:	19.8
			Q4:	19.5
			Q5 (least deprived):	20.0
	Urban / Rural	People living in urban areas reported a significantly lower score than those living in rural areas.	Urban:	19.2
			Rural:	19.7
	Local Government District (LGD)	In comparison with the Northern Ireland average, Ards & North Down and Fermanagh & Omagh reported a significantly higher score, meanwhile Belfast and Derry City & Strabane reported a significantly lower score.	Antrim & Newtownabbey:	19.5
			Ards & North Down:	19.9
			Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon:	19.3
			Belfast City:	19.1
			Causeway Coast & Glens:	19.3
			Derry City & Strabane:	19.0
			Fermanagh & Omagh:	19.8
			Lisburn & Castlereagh:	19.6
			Mid & East Antrim:	19.1
			Mid Ulster:	19.6
			Newry, Mourne & Down:	19.6

Proportion with low self-efficacy

Overall

In 2022/23, the proportion of the population in Northern Ireland with low self-efficacy was 18.9%, no significant change from the previous year (17.6%).

Figure 2.2: Proportion with low self-efficacy, 2014/15 to 2022/23





Note: Due to changes in the survey methodology, please exercise caution when comparing to previous years. All values have been rounded to one decimal place.











Group differences






Proportions of people with low self-efficacy (with a score of 5-17 on a scale from 5 to 25) were estimated for seventeen group breakdowns. Significant differences were found in all seventeen⁵.

The largest proportions of low self-efficacy were found among those who reported bad / very bad health (59.2%) and the lowest proportions were found among those who reported very good health (9.0%).

Breakdown		Significant differences	Estimate for: Northern Ireland:	
	Sex	There was a significantly higher proportion of low self-efficacy reported amongst females compared to males.	Northern Ireland: 18.9%	
			Males:	14.4%
	Age	Low self-efficacy was significantly higher among people aged 55-64 than those aged 25-34, 35-44 and 45-54 and 65-74. Those aged 75 and over also reported a significantly higher proportion of low self-efficacy than those aged 65-74.	Aged 16-24:	18.3%
			Aged 25-34:	17.5%
			Aged 35-44:	17.3%
			Aged 45-54:	18.4%
			Aged 55-64:	23.0%
			Aged 65-74:	16.4%
			Aged 75 and over:	21.3%

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

Breakdown		Significant differences	Estimate for: Northern Ireland:	
	Marital status	The proportion of people reporting low self-efficacy was significantly lower among people who are married/in a civil partnership than those in any other category. People who are either separated or divorced reported a significantly higher proportion of low self-efficacy than those who are single.		18.9%
			Single:	22.4%
			Married/in civil partnership:	13.2%
			Separated:	29.7%
			Divorced:	28.0%
			Widowed:	25.8%
	Religion	Catholics reported a significantly higher proportion of low self-efficacy than Protestants and those with other/ no religion.	Catholics:	20.7%
			Protestants:	17.9%
	Dependants	Those who are responsible for dependants with a disability reported a significantly higher proportion of low self-efficacy than all other categories. Those with a child dependant reported significantly lower rates of low self-efficacy than those responsible for dependants with a disability and those with no dependants.	Other/no religion:	16.8%
			With Dependants (type)	
			Child:	15.3%
			Person with disability:	26.2%
			Elderly person:	16.6%
			Without Dependants:	20.1%
	Health	Significant differences were found across all health categories, with higher proportions of low self-efficacy among those reporting bad or very bad health.	Very good:	9.0%
			Good:	13.3%
			Fair:	28.3%
			Bad / very bad:	59.2%
	Disability	People with a disability reported a significantly higher proportion of low self-efficacy than people without a disability.	People with disability:	36.7%
			People without disability:	11.6%
	Ethnicity	Those with a white ethnicity reported significantly higher proportions of low self-efficacy than those with any other ethnicity.	White:	19.1%
			Other:	10.4%
	Employment status	People not in paid employment reported a significantly higher proportion of low self-efficacy than those in paid employment.	In paid employment:	12.7%
			Not in paid employment:	28.1%
	Qualifications	Significant differences were found across all categories, with smaller proportions of low self-efficacy reported among people with qualifications.	Degree and higher:	10.9%
			Any other qualifications:	19.7%
			No qualifications:	33.9%
	Household Count	Those who live alone reported significantly higher proportions of low self-efficacy than those living with others.	1 person:	28.0%
			2 people:	16.7%
			3 or more people:	16.1%
	Tenure	Significant differences were found across all tenure categories, with a greater proportion of low self-efficacy reported among private or social renters.	Owner occupied:	14.8%
			Social rented:	38.7%
			Private rented:	21.6%

Breakdown		Significant differences	Estimate for: Northern Ireland:	
	Household internet access	Those with no household internet access reported significantly higher proportions of low self-efficacy than those with internet access.	Household internet access:	17.9%
			No household internet access:	31.2%
	Access to car	People with no access to a car reported significantly higher proportions of low self-efficacy than those with access to a car.	Access to a car:	15.9%
			No access to a car:	35.6%
	Deprivation	The proportion of people reporting low self-efficacy was significantly lower among those living in the least deprived quintile (Q5) than in any other quintile. Those living in the most deprived quintiles (Q1 and Q2) reported significantly higher proportions of low self-efficacy than those in Q3, Q4 and Q5.	Q1 (most deprived):	27.0%
			Q2:	24.4%
			Q3:	16.2%
			Q4:	16.8%
			Q5 (least deprived):	11.7%
	Urban / Rural	People living in urban areas reported significantly higher proportions of low self-efficacy than those living in rural areas.	Urban:	20.7%
			Rural:	16.0%
	Local Government District (LGD)	<p>In comparison with NI, the proportion of people with low self-efficacy was significantly lower in Ards & North Down and Fermanagh & Omagh. Meanwhile, the proportion of people with low self-efficacy was significantly higher in Belfast compared with NI.</p> <p>Between the LGDs, Belfast and Derry City & Strabane both reported significantly higher proportions of low self-efficacy than Fermanagh & Omagh, Lisburn & Castlereagh, Newry Mourne & Down, Ards & North Down and Antrim & Newtownabbey.</p> <p>Fermanagh & Omagh reported significantly lower proportions of low self-efficacy than Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon, Causeway Coast & Glens, Lisburn & Castlereagh, Mid Ulster and Mid & East Antrim.</p> <p>Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon, Mid Ulster and Mid & East Antrim reported significantly higher proportions of low self-efficacy than Newry, Mourne & Down.</p> <p>Ards & North Down reported significantly lower proportions of low self-efficacy than Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon, Causeway Coast & Glens, Mid Ulster and Mid & East Antrim.</p> <p>Lisburn & Castlereagh reported significantly lower scores than Mid & East Antrim and Mid Ulster.</p>	Antrim & Newtownabbey:	16.6%
			Ards & North Down:	12.7%
			Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon:	20.7%
			Belfast City:	22.4%
			Causeway Coast & Glens:	20.6%
			Derry City & Strabane:	22.6%
			Fermanagh & Omagh:	12.7%
			Lisburn & Castlereagh:	15.8%
			Mid & East Antrim:	21.8%
			Mid Ulster:	21.7%
			Newry, Mourne & Down:	15.6%

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'
- 7.9 out of 10 for feeling that what you do in life is 'worthwhile'
- 7.6 out of 10 for 'happiness' yesterday
- 2.9 out of 10 for 'anxiety' yesterday

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

Table 1: Labelling of Thresholds

Life satisfaction, Worthwhile and Happiness scores

Anxiety scores*

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

* A lower score indicates better wellbeing for anxiety.

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

- 30% for 'life satisfaction'
- 37% for feeling that what you do in life is 'worthwhile'
- 35% for 'happiness'.

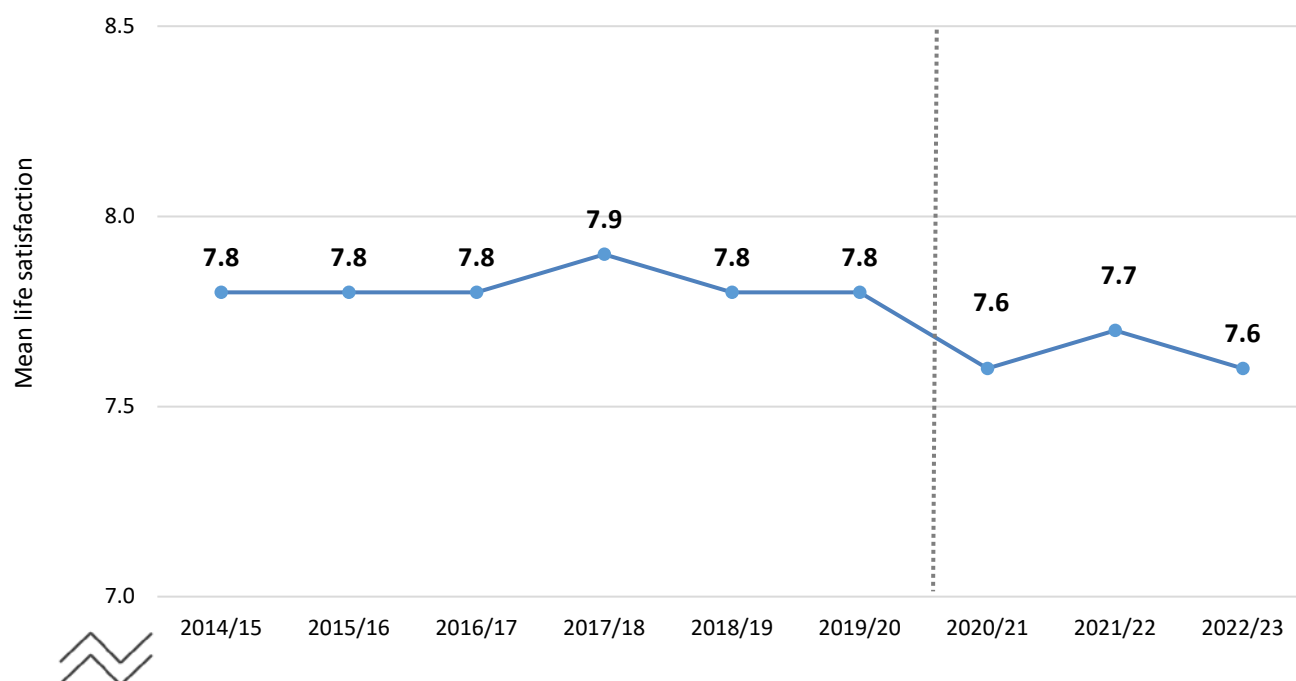
In terms of 'anxiety', where a lower score indicates better personal wellbeing, 40% of people reported a 'Very low' score (0 or 1).

Average life satisfaction score

Overall score

In 2022/23, the average (mean) life satisfaction score for the population of Northern Ireland decreased significantly to 7.6 compared with 7.7 in 2021/22. Although this indicates worse wellbeing for this measure, the score is still considered 'high'.

Figure 3.1: Average life satisfaction scores, 2014/15 to 2022/23




Note: Due to changes in the survey methodology, please exercise caution when comparing to previous years. All values 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 seventeen group breakdowns. Significant differences were found in fifteen⁶. There were no statistically significant differences in breakdowns for Sex and Age.

The highest average (mean) signifying higher life satisfaction was found among those reporting very good health (8.3). The lowest average (mean) was among those who reported bad/ very bad health (5.5).

Breakdown	Significant differences	Estimate for: Northern Ireland: 7.6
 Marital status	Those who are married or in a civil partnership reported a significantly higher score than all other categories. Those who are single reported a significantly higher score than those either separated or divorced. Those separated reported a significantly lower life satisfaction than those widowed.	Single: 7.4
		Married/in civil partnership: 7.9
		Separated: 6.7
		Divorced: 7.1
		Widowed: 7.4

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

Breakdown		Significant differences	Estimate for: Northern Ireland:	
	Religion	Those with Other/no religion reported significantly lower levels of life satisfaction than Catholics and Protestants.	Catholics:	7.6
			Protestants:	7.7
			Other/No Religion:	7.5
	Dependants	Those who have a child dependant reported a significantly higher score than all other categories. Meanwhile people who have a dependant with a disability reported significantly lower levels of life satisfaction than all other categories.	With Dependants (type)	
			Child:	7.8
			Person with disability:	7.0
			Elderly person:	7.5
			Without Dependants:	7.6
	Health	Significant differences were found across all health categories, with higher levels of life satisfaction among those with better health.	Very good:	8.3
			Good:	7.8
			Fair:	7.1
			Bad / very bad:	5.5
	Disability	People with a disability reported significantly lower life satisfaction scores than those without disability.	People with disability:	6.7
			People without disability:	8.0
	Ethnicity	Those with a white ethnicity reported significantly higher life satisfaction scores than any other ethnicity.	White:	7.6
			Other:	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:	7.3
	Qualifications	Significant differences were found across all categories, with lower levels of life satisfaction among those with no qualifications.	Degree and higher:	7.9
			Any other qualifications:	7.6
			No qualifications:	7.3
	Household Count	People living on their own reported significantly lower life satisfaction than those living with others.	1 person:	7.1
			2 people:	7.7
			3 or more people:	7.8
	Tenure	Significant differences were found across all tenure categories, with lower levels of life satisfaction among social renters.	Owner occupied:	7.8
			Social rented:	6.7
			Private rented:	7.4
	Household internet access	Those without household internet access reported significantly lower rates of life satisfaction than those with internet access.	Household internet access:	7.7
			No household internet access:	7.2
	Access to car	People with access to a car reported significantly higher levels of life satisfaction than those without access to a car.	Access to a car:	7.8
			No access to a car:	6.8
	Deprivation	People in the most deprived areas (Q1) reported significantly lower life satisfaction than those in all other quintiles. People living in the least deprived areas (Q5) reported significantly higher life satisfaction than those in quintile 2.	Q1 (most deprived):	7.1
			Q2:	7.6
			Q3:	7.8
			Q4:	7.7
			Q5 (least deprived):	7.9

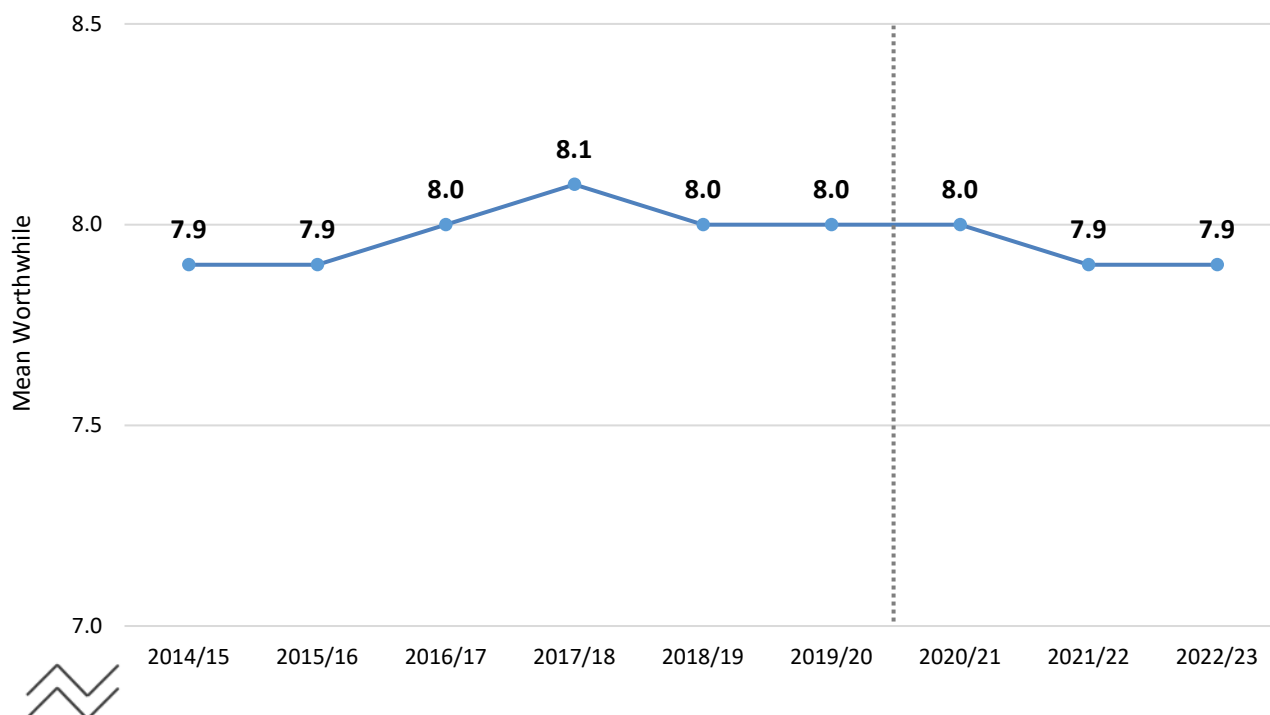
Breakdown		Significant differences	Estimate for:	
			Northern Ireland:	7.6
	Urban / Rural	People living in rural areas reported significantly higher levels of life satisfaction than those living in urban areas.	Urban:	7.5
			Rural:	7.8
	Local Government District (LGD)	<p>In comparison with Northern Ireland, Belfast and Mid & East Antrim reported significantly lower life satisfaction scores. Meanwhile Fermanagh & Omagh and Mid Ulster reported significantly higher life satisfaction compared with NI.</p> <p>Between the LGDs, Belfast reported a significantly lower score compared with all other LGDs except Derry City & Strabane and Mid and East Antrim. Fermanagh & Omagh reported a significantly higher score compared with Antrim & Newtownabbey, Derry City & Strabane and Mid & East Antrim. Mid & East Antrim reported a significantly lower score than Mid Ulster.</p>	Antrim & Newtownabbey:	7.6
			Ards & North Down:	7.8
			Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon:	7.7
			Belfast City:	7.2
			Causeway Coast & Glens:	7.7
			Derry City & Strabane:	7.5
			Fermanagh & Omagh:	8.0
			Lisburn & Castlereagh:	7.7
			Mid & East Antrim:	7.4
			Mid Ulster:	7.8
			Newry, Mourne & Down:	7.8

Average worthwhile score

Overall score

In 2022/23, the average (mean) score for feeling the things we do in life are worthwhile for Northern Ireland was 7.9, which is considered 'high'. This figure has not changed from 2021/22.

Figure 3.2: Average worthwhile scores, 2014/15 to 2022/23





Note: Due to changes in the survey methodology, please exercise caution when comparing current data to that collected prior to 2020/21. All values 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 seventeen group breakdowns. Significant differences⁷ were found in fifteen groups. There were no statistically significant differences in breakdowns for Age or Ethnicity.

The highest average (mean), signifying better wellbeing was among those reporting very good health (8.4). The lowest average (mean), signifying poorer wellbeing, was among those reporting bad/very bad health (6.1).

Breakdown		Significant differences	Estimate for: Northern Ireland: 7.9	
	Sex	Females reported a significantly higher score than males.	Males:	7.8
			Females:	8.0
	Marital status	Those who are married or in a civil partnership reported a significantly higher score than all other categories.	Single:	7.7
			Married/in civil partnership:	8.2
			Separated:	7.3
			Divorced:	7.5
			Widowed:	7.5

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

Breakdown		Significant differences	Estimate for: Northern Ireland:	
	Religion	Those with other/no religion reported a significantly lower score than all other categories.	Catholic:	7.9
			Protestant:	7.9
			Other /No religion:	7.7
	Dependants	Those with a child dependant(s) reported a significantly higher score than those with a dependant with a disability or those without dependants. Those with an elderly dependant reported a significantly higher score than those without dependants.	With Dependants (type)	
			Child:	8.1
			Person with disability:	7.8
			Elderly person:	8.0
			Without Dependants:	7.8
	Health	Significant differences were found across all health categories, with lower scores reported among those with bad/very bad health.	Very good:	8.4
			Good:	8.1
			Fair:	7.5
			Bad / very bad:	6.1
	Disability	People with a disability reported a significantly lower score than those without disability.	People with disability:	7.2
			People without disability:	8.2
	Employment Status	People in paid employment reported a significantly higher score than those not in paid employment.	In paid employment:	8.1
			Not in paid employment:	7.6
	Qualifications	Significant differences were found across all qualification categories, with significantly lower scores reported by those with no qualifications.	Degree and higher:	8.1
			Any other qualifications:	7.9
			No qualifications:	7.5
	Household Count	Significant differences were found across all household count categories, with significantly lower scores reported among those living alone.	1 person:	7.3
			2 people:	8.0
			3 or more people:	8.1
	Tenure	Significant differences were found across all tenure categories, with significantly lower scores reported among those living in social rented accommodation.	Owner occupied:	8.0
			Social rented:	7.1
			Private rented:	7.8
	Household internet access	Those without household internet access reported a significantly lower score than those with internet access.	Household internet access:	7.9
			No household internet access:	7.3
	Access to Car	Those without access to a car reported a significantly lower score than those with access to a car.	Access to a car:	8.0
			No access to a car:	7.2
	Deprivation	People in the most deprived areas (Q1) reported a significantly lower score than those living in all other quintiles.	Q1 (most deprived):	7.5
			Q2:	7.9
			Q3:	8.0
			Q4:	7.9
			Q5 (least deprived):	8.0

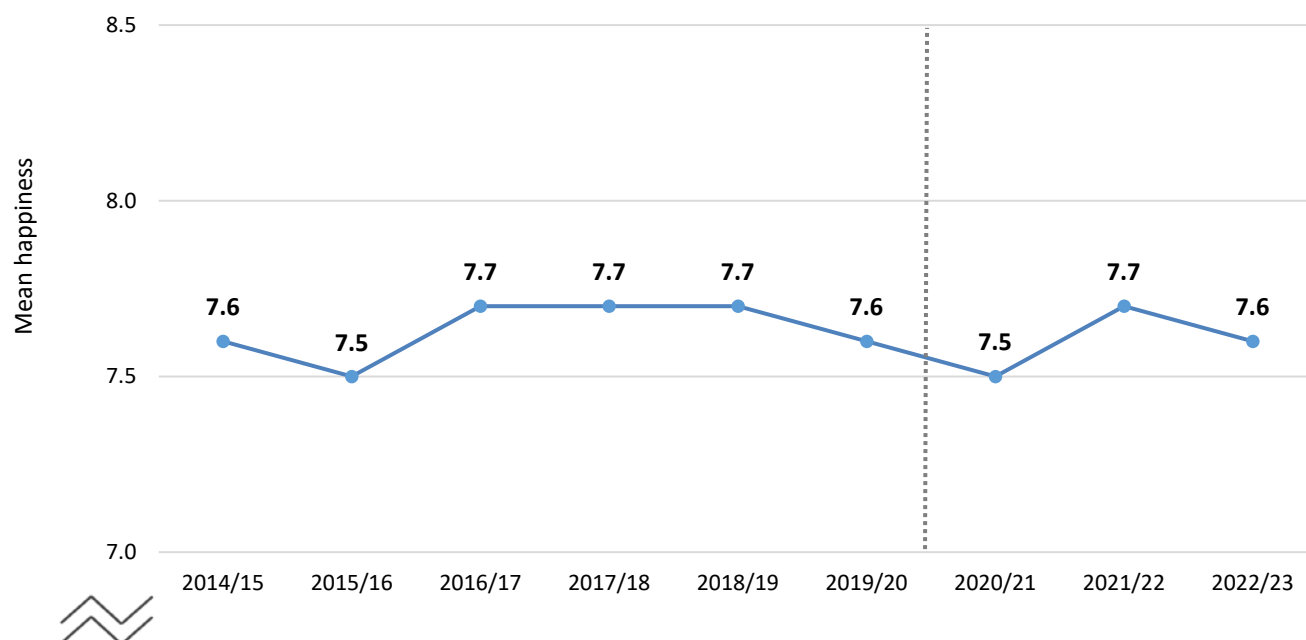
Breakdown		Significant differences	Estimate for: Northern Ireland: 7.9	
	Urban/Rural	Those living in urban areas reported a significantly lower score than those living in rural areas.	Urban: 7.8	Rural: 8.1
		In comparison with the Northern Ireland average, Fermanagh & Omagh, Mid Ulster and Newry, Mourne and Down reported a significantly higher score, meanwhile Belfast and Derry City & Strabane reported a significantly lower score.		
	Local Government District (LGD)	People living in Belfast reported a significantly lower score than those living in Ards & North Down, Armagh Banbridge & Craigavon, Causeway Coast & Glens, Fermanagh & Omagh, Lisburn & Castlereagh, Mid Ulster and Newry Mourne & Down.	Antrim & Newtownabbey: 7.7	
		Those living in Derry City & Strabane reported significantly lower scores than those living in Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon, Fermanagh & Omagh, Mid Ulster and Newry, Mourne & Down.	Ards & North Down: 7.9	
		Those living in Newry, Mourne & Down, Fermanagh & Omagh and Mid Ulster reported significantly higher scores than those living in Antrim & Newtownabbey.	Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon: 8.0	
			Belfast City: 7.6	
			Causeway Coast & Glens: 7.9	
			Derry City & Strabane: 7.6	
			Fermanagh & Omagh: 8.2	
			Lisburn & Castlereagh: 7.9	
			Mid & East Antrim: 7.9	
			Mid Ulster: 8.1	
			Newry, Mourne & Down: 8.1	

Average happiness score

Overall score

In 2022/23, the average (mean) score for happiness for Northern Ireland was 7.6, which is significantly lower than that reported for 2021/22 (7.7), signifying worse wellbeing for this measure. However, this year's figure is still considered 'high'.

Figure 3.3: Average happiness scores, 2014/15 to 2022/23




Note: Due to changes in the survey methodology, please exercise caution when comparing current data to that collected prior to 2020/21. All values have been rounded to one decimal place.












Group differences




Average (mean) scores for happiness were estimated (on a scale from 0 to 10) for seventeen group breakdowns. Significant differences were found in fifteen⁸. There were no statistically significant differences in breakdowns for Sex or Ethnicity.

The highest average (mean), signifying better wellbeing was among those reporting very good health (8.2). The lowest average (mean), signifying poorer wellbeing, was among those reporting bad/very bad health (5.7).

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

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

Breakdown		Significant differences	Estimate for: Northern Ireland: 7.6	
	Marital status	Those who are married or in a civil partnership reported a significantly higher score than those in all other categories. Those who are separated reported a significantly lower score than those who are single and those who are widowed.	Single: 7.4 Married/in civil partnership: 7.9 Separated: 6.7 Divorced: 7.3 Widowed: 7.3	
	Religion	Those with other/no religion reported a significantly lower score than those in all other categories.	Catholics: 7.6 Protestants: 7.7 Other/No Religion: 7.3	
	Dependants	Those with a dependant with a disability reported a significantly lower score than those in all other categories.	With Dependants (type) Child: 7.7 Person with disability: 7.0 Elderly person: 7.5 Without Dependants: 7.6	
	Health	Significant differences were found across all health categories, with significantly lower scores reported among those with bad/very bad health.	Very good: 8.2 Good: 7.8 Fair: 7.1 Bad / very bad: 5.7	
	Disability	People with a disability reported a significantly lower score than those without disability.	People with disability: 6.8 People without disability: 7.9	
	Employment Status	People in paid employment reported a significantly higher score than those not in paid employment.	In paid employment: 7.8 Not in paid employment: 7.3	
	Qualifications	Significant differences were found across all qualification categories, with significantly lower scores reported among those with no qualifications.	Degree and higher: 7.8 Any other qualifications: 7.6 No qualifications: 7.2	
	Household Count	People living on their own reported a significantly lower score than those living with others.	1 person: 7.1 2 people: 7.7 3 or more people: 7.7	
	Tenure	Significant differences were found across all categories, with those who own their house (outright or with mortgage) reporting a significantly higher score than those who live in rented accommodation (social and private rented).	Owner occupied: 7.8 Social rented: 6.7 Private rented: 7.5	
	Household internet access	Those without household internet access reported significantly lower happiness than those with internet access.	Household internet access: 7.6 No household internet access: 7.2	
	Access to Car	People with access to a car reported significantly higher levels of happiness than those without access to a car.	Access to a car: 7.7 No access to a car: 6.8	

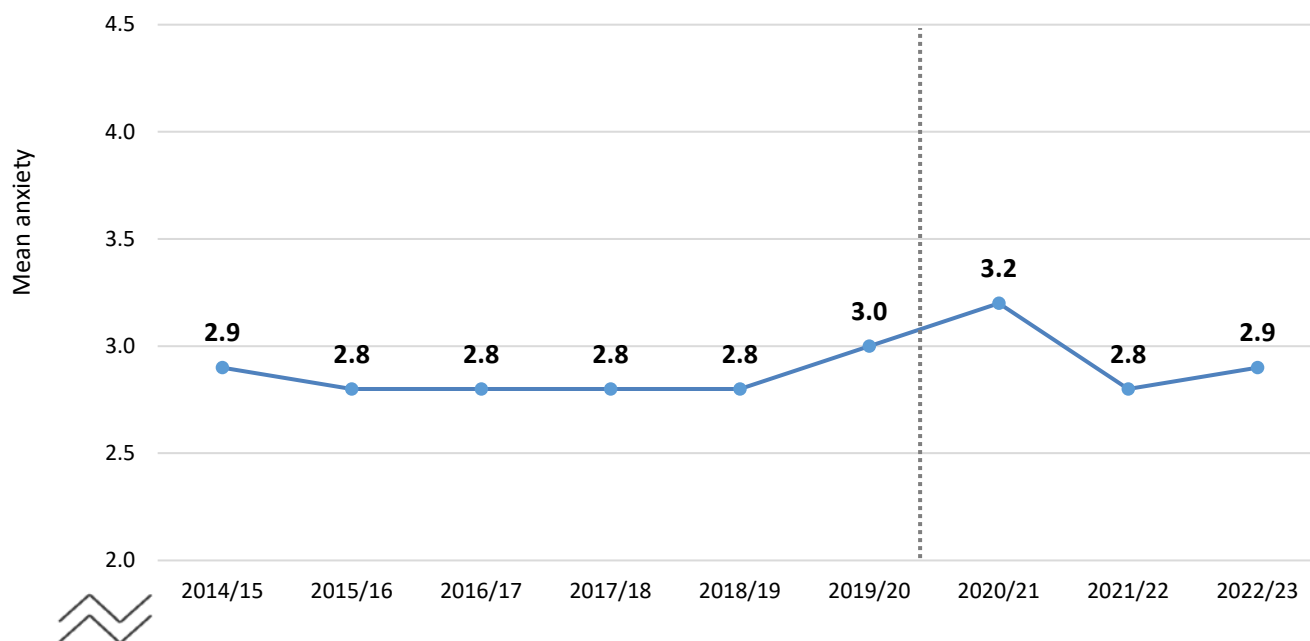
Breakdown		Significant differences	Estimate for:	
			Northern Ireland:	7.6
	Deprivation	People in the most deprived areas (Q1) reported a significantly lower score than those in all other quintiles.	Q1 (most deprived):	7.0
			Q2:	7.6
			Q3:	7.8
			Q4:	7.7
			Q5 (least deprived):	7.7
	Urban / Rural	People living in rural areas reported significantly higher levels of happiness than those living in urban areas.	Urban:	7.4
			Rural:	7.9
	Local Government District (LGD)	In comparison with the Northern Ireland average, Fermanagh & Omagh, Mid Ulster and Newry, Mourne & Down reported a significantly higher score, meanwhile Belfast and Derry City & Strabane reported a significantly lower score.		
		People living in Belfast reported significantly lower scores than all other LGDs except for Antrim & Newtownabbey and Derry City & Strabane.	Antrim & Newtownabbey:	7.5
		Those living in Fermanagh & Omagh reported a significantly higher score than those living in Antrim & Newtownabbey and Derry City & Strabane.	Ards & North Down:	7.7
			Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon:	7.7
		People living in Derry City & Strabane reported significantly lower scores than in Fermanagh & Omagh, Mid Ulster and Newry, Mourne & Down.	Belfast City:	7.1
			Causeway Coast & Glens:	7.6
		People living in Mid Ulster and Fermanagh & Omagh reported significantly higher scores than those in Antrim & Newtownabbey.	Derry City & Strabane:	7.2
			Fermanagh & Omagh:	8.0
			Lisburn & Castlereagh:	7.7
			Mid & East Antrim:	7.6
			Mid Ulster:	7.9
			Newry, Mourne & Down:	7.8

Average anxiety score

Overall score

In 2022/23, the average (mean) score for anxiety⁹ for Northern Ireland was 2.9, which is considered 'low'. This figure is significantly higher than that reported for 2021/22 (2.8), signifying worse wellbeing for this measure.

Figure 3.4: Average anxiety scores, 2014/15 to 2022/23





Note: Due to changes in the survey methodology, please exercise caution when comparing current data to that collected prior to 2020/21. All values have been rounded to one decimal place.

Group differences












Average (mean) scores for anxiety were estimated (on a scale from 0 to 10) for seventeen group breakdowns. Significant differences were found in sixteen¹⁰. There were no statistically significant differences in breakdowns for Internet Access.




The lowest average (mean), signifying better wellbeing, was among those living in Mid Ulster (1.9). The highest average (mean), signifying poorer wellbeing, was among those reporting bad/very bad health (5.0).

Breakdown		Significant differences	Estimate for:	
			Northern Ireland:	2.9
	Sex	Females reported a significantly higher score than males.	Males:	2.6
			Females:	3.3
	Age	Those aged 75 and over reported a significantly lower score than those in the 25-34, 35-44 and 45-54 age categories. Those aged 65-74 reported a significantly lower score than those in the 25-34 and 45-54 age groups.	Aged 16-24:	3.1
			Aged 25-34:	3.2
			Aged 35-44:	3.0
			Aged 45-54:	3.1
			Aged 55-64:	2.8
			Aged 65-74:	2.7
			Aged 75 and over:	2.4

⁹ A lower score indicates better wellbeing for anxiety.

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

Breakdown		Significant differences	Estimate for: Northern Ireland: 2.9	
	Marital status	Those who are separated reported a significantly higher score than all other categories. People who are married or in a civil partnership reported a significantly lower score than those who are single or divorced. Those who are widowed reported a significantly lower score than those who are single.	Single: 3.2 Married/in civil partnership: 2.6 Separated: 4.1 Divorced: 3.2 Widowed: 2.7	
	Religion	Those with Other/No Religion reported a significantly higher score than Protestants and Catholics.	Catholic: 3.0 Protestant: 2.8 Other/No Religion: 3.3	
	Dependants	Those with responsibility for a person with a disability reported significantly higher scores than all other categories.	With Dependants (type) Child: 2.9 Person with disability: 3.9 Elderly person: 3.1 Without Dependants: 2.8	
	Health	Significant differences were found across all health categories, with significantly lower scores among those reporting very good health.	Very good: 2.2 Good: 2.8 Fair: 3.6 Bad / very bad: 5.0	
	Disability	People with a disability reported a significantly higher score than those without disability.	People with disability: 4.0 People without disability: 2.5	
	Ethnicity	People with a white ethnicity reported a significantly higher score than those with any other ethnicity.	White: 2.9 Other: 2.4	
	Employment Status	People in paid employment reported a significantly lower score than those not in paid employment.	In paid employment: 2.7 Not in paid employment: 3.3	
	Qualifications	People with a degree and higher reported a significantly lower score than those with any other qualification and those with no qualifications.	Degree and higher: 2.8 Any other qualifications: 3.0 No qualifications: 3.1	
	Household Count	People living on their own reported a significantly higher score than those living with others.	1 person: 3.2 2 people: 2.9 3 or more people: 2.8	
	Tenure	Significant differences were found across all categories, with those who own their house (outright or with mortgage) reporting a significantly lower score than those who live in rented accommodation (social and private rented).	Owner occupied: 2.6 Social rented: 4.1 Private rented: 3.3	
	Access to Car	People without access to a car reported a significantly higher score than those with access to a car.	Access to a car: 2.8 No access to a car: 3.8	

Breakdown		Significant differences	Estimate for:	
			Northern Ireland:	2.9
	Deprivation	People in the most deprived areas (Q1) reported a significantly higher score than those living in all other quintiles. Those living in quintile 2 reported a significantly higher score than those living in quintile 4.	Q1 (most deprived):	3.7
			Q2:	3.0
			Q3:	2.7
			Q4:	2.6
			Q5 (least deprived):	2.9
	Urban / Rural	People living in rural areas reported a significantly lower score than those living in urban areas.	Urban:	3.1
			Rural:	2.6
	Local Government District (LGD)	In comparison with the Northern Ireland average, Mid Ulster reported a significantly lower score, meanwhile Belfast and Derry and Strabane reported a significantly higher score. People in Mid Ulster reported a significantly lower score than those living in all other LGD's. Those living in Derry City & Strabane and Belfast reported a significantly higher scores than those living in Antrim & Newtownabbey, Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon, Causeway Coast & Glens, Fermanagh & Omagh and Newry, Mourne & Down.	Antrim & Newtownabbey:	2.7
			Ards & North Down:	2.9
			Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon:	2.8
			Belfast City:	3.5
			Causeway Coast & Glens:	2.7
			Derry City & Strabane:	3.6
			Fermanagh & Omagh:	2.9
			Lisburn & Castlereagh:	3.1
			Mid & East Antrim:	3.1
			Mid Ulster:	1.9
			Newry, Mourne & Down:	2.7

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 life¹¹. It refers to where someone believes control is located and ranges from 'external' to 'internal'.

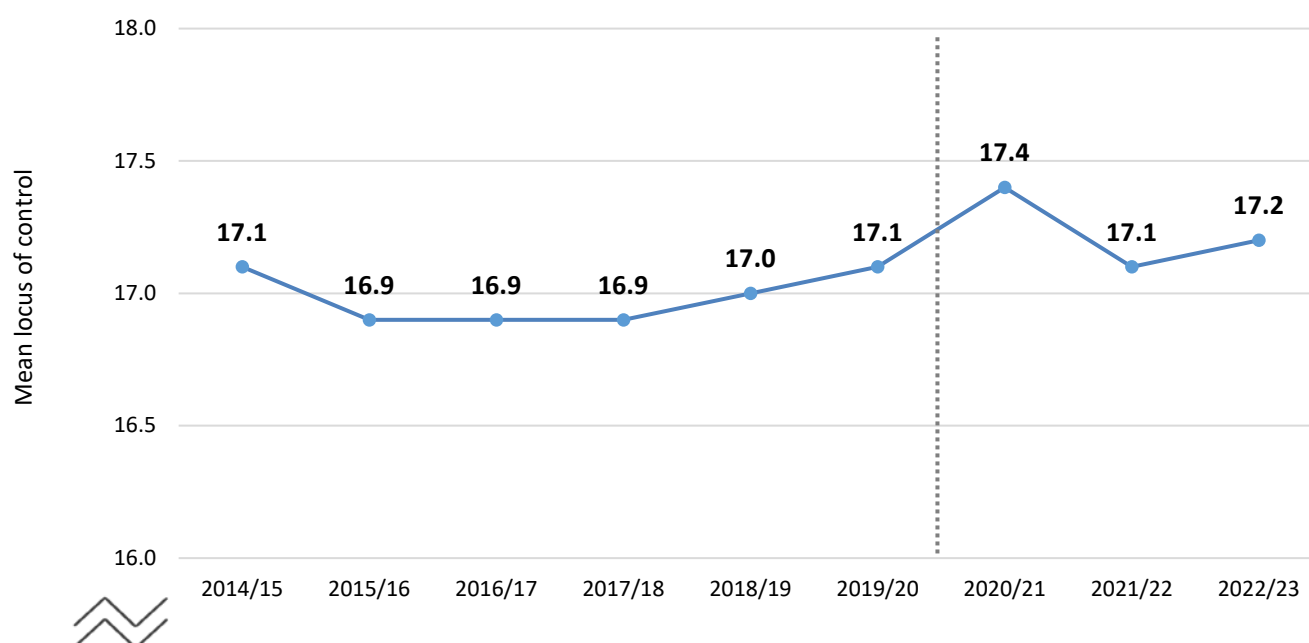
- Those with **external** locus of control feel events are influenced by outside factors, making it beyond an individual's control to shape the events of their life.
- Those with **internal** locus of control believe in their own influence over life events and are confident that their actions can have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

Average locus of control score

Overall score

The locus of control scores range from 5 to 25. A lower score indicates a belief that life is determined by outside factors (external). A higher score shows a belief in one's own control (internal). In 2022/23, the average (mean) locus of control score for Northern Ireland was 17.2, which is considered more internal than external. There was no significant change from 2021/22 (17.1).

Figure 4.1: Average locus of control scores, 2014/15 to 2022/23












Note: Due to changes in the survey methodology, please exercise caution when comparing to previous years. All values have been rounded to one decimal place.

¹¹ Further information can be found in [Annex A: Technical notes](#) at the end of this report.






Group differences

Average (mean) scores were estimated on a scale from 5 to 25 (external-internal) for seventeen group breakdowns. Significant differences were found in fourteen¹². There were no statistically significant differences in group breakdowns for Religion, Ethnicity and Urban/Rural.

The lowest (most external) average (mean) was found amongst those reporting bad / very bad health (15.4). The highest (most internal) average (mean) was found amongst those with a degree or higher and those reporting very good health (17.9).

	Breakdown	Significant differences	Estimate for: Northern Ireland:	17.2
	Sex	Females had a significantly lower (more external) score than males.	Males:	17.4
			Females:	16.9
	Age	People aged 75 and over had significantly lower (more external) scores than all other age groups with the exception of those aged 65-74. People aged 25-34 had significantly higher (more internal) scores than those aged 55-64 and 65-74.	Aged 16-24:	17.5
			Aged 25-34:	17.6
			Aged 35-44:	17.2
			Aged 45-54:	17.2
			Aged 55-64:	17.0
			Aged 65-74:	16.9
			Aged 75 and over:	16.4
	Marital status	Those who are married or in a civil partnership had a significantly higher (more internal) score than those who are separated, divorced and widowed. Those who are single reported a significantly higher (more internal) score than those who are divorced and widowed.	Single:	17.2
			Married/in civil partnership:	17.3
			Separated:	16.6
			Divorced:	16.5
			Widowed:	16.3
	Dependants	Those with a child dependant had a significantly higher score (more internal) than those with any other dependant. Those who do not have a dependant had a significantly higher score (more internal) than those with an elderly dependant.	With Dependants (type)	
			Child:	17.4
			Person with disability:	16.8
			Elderly person:	16.7
			Without Dependants:	17.2
	Health	Significant differences were found across all health categories, with higher scores (more internal) among people reporting better health.	Very good:	17.9
			Good:	17.3
			Fair:	16.5
			Bad / very bad:	15.4
	Disability	People with a disability had a significantly lower score (more external) than those without a disability.	People with disability:	16.3
			People without disability:	17.5
	Employment status	People not in paid employment reported a significantly lower (more external) score than those in paid employment.	In paid employment:	17.6
			Not in paid employment:	16.4
	Qualifications	Significant differences were found across all qualification categories, with higher (more internal) locus of control among people with qualifications.	Degree and higher:	17.9
			Any other qualifications:	17.0
			No qualifications:	16.1
	Household Count	People living in households of 3 or more people had a significantly higher score (more internal) than those living alone.	1 person:	16.9
			2 people:	17.2
			3 or more people:	17.3

¹² Significance refers to statistical significance with a 95% confidence that the difference is not by chance.

Breakdown		Significant differences	Estimate for:	
			Northern Ireland:	17.2
	Tenure	Those living in social rented accommodation reported a significantly lower (more external) score than those living in any other category.	Owner occupied:	17.3
			Social rented:	16.1
			Private rented:	17.2
	Household internet access	Those with no household internet access had a significantly lower score (more external) than those with internet access.	Household internet access:	17.2
			No household internet access:	16.3
	Access to car	People with access to a car had a significantly higher score (more internal) than those without access to a car.	Access to a car:	17.3
			No access to a car:	16.5
	Deprivation	Those in the most deprived areas (Q1) had significantly lower (more external) scores than all other areas. People living in least deprived area (Q5) had significantly higher (more internal) scores than those living in quintile 2 and quintile 4.	Q1 (most deprived):	16.5
			Q2:	16.9
			Q3:	17.3
			Q4:	17.2
			Q5 (least deprived):	17.7
	Local Government District (LGD)	In comparison with the Northern Ireland average, Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon and Derry City & Strabane reported a significantly lower (more external) score, meanwhile Lisburn & Castlereagh reported a significantly higher (more internal) score. Between the LGDs, those living in Derry City & Strabane reported a significantly lower (more external) score than Belfast, Causeway Coast & Glens, Fermanagh & Omagh, Lisburn & Castlereagh, Mid Ulster and Newry, Mourne & Down. Those living in Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon also reported a significantly lower (more external) score than Belfast, Fermanagh & Omagh, Lisburn & Castlereagh and Newry, Mourne & Down.	Antrim & Newtownabbey:	17.0
			Ards & North Down:	17.0
			Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon:	16.7
			Belfast City:	17.4
			Causeway Coast & Glens:	17.3
			Derry City & Strabane:	16.5
			Fermanagh & Omagh:	17.4
			Lisburn & Castlereagh:	17.6
			Mid & East Antrim:	16.8
			Mid Ulster:	17.2
			Newry, Mourne & Down:	17.4

Strengths and limitations

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

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

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

Related links

This report uses data collected from individual respondents (aged 16 or over) via the Continuous Household Survey, 2022/23.

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

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

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

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

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

Feedback and contact details

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

Further information and copies in alternative formats can be obtained by contacting: Chelsea Chambers (Executive Office PfG Analytics Branch)

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.

Happiness

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

Worthwhile

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

Anxiety

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

Locus of Control

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

Survey tools

Loneliness

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

Loneliness question:

- How often do you feel lonely?

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

Self-efficacy

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

Self-efficacy statement questions:

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

Personal Wellbeing

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

Personal wellbeing questions:

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

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

Personal wellbeing statistics are reported in two ways:

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

Locus of Control

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

Locus of control statement questions:

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

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

Continuous Household Survey

This report presents findings from the 2022/23 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 2022/23 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, due to the coronavirus pandemic, NISRA suspended all face-to-face interviewing or CAPI (Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing). This was replaced by telephone interviewing, or CATI (Computer assisted Telephone Interviewing). With the lifting of some restrictions, from the month of April 2022, CSU implemented the knock to nudge method. This meant that Interviewers could once again call at sampled addresses to encourage people to participate in the survey while adhering to the COVID health and safety advice/restrictions. Interviewers were not permitted to enter the property, only to collect contact information to complete the survey using CATI (Computer assisted Telephone Interviewing) at an agreed time. From July 2022 onwards, CSU reinstated face-to-face interviewing, of CAPI (Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing). This meant that the CHS became dual-modality, allowing for both telephone and face-to-face interviewing.

The achieved response rate was 51% (4,960 individuals), which is a lower response compared with the normal achieved response rate of approximately 55% in face-to-face mode but still higher than the achieved response rate in 2021/22 (41%).

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

Further information on the CHS sample and questionnaire can be found in the [Continuous Household Survey 2022/23 Technical Report](#).

Sampling error and weights

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

Publication threshold

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

Statistical significance

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

User engagement and enhancements to publication

Over the past number of years, the statistical team has taken part in user engagement events with those from within relevant NICS policy areas as well as external users, such as charity groups, and academia. The team also took part in Systemic reviews run by the Office for Statistics regulation (OSR) for Loneliness and Mental Health. Following this engagement, a number of changes were made to the publication of Wellbeing data from 2021/22 onwards. Users requested a breakdown of data at lower geography levels. Data is now published by Parliamentary constituency and this can be accessed in the [Wellbeing in NI 2022/23 Tables](#). To enable users to easily access data by sub population breakdowns, the statistical team have worked with the NISRA Tech Lab to create the [Wellbeing in NI Dashboard](#). The dashboard contains time series data for all breakdowns in charts and graphs, which can be exported and used in your own reports and research publications.

Available breakdowns

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

Sex

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

Age

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

Marital status

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

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

Religion

Interviewers for the CHS collected information on the religion of residents aged 16 and over in each household, the religious categories represented within the questionnaire were as follows: Catholic, Presbyterian, Church of Ireland,

Methodist, Baptist, Free Presbyterian, Brethren, Protestant – not specified, Christian – not specified, Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, Any other religion, No religion. For the purposes of this report, the aforementioned religious groups were coded into three distinct categories, as follows:

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

Dependants

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

General Health

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

Disability

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

Ethnicity

The CHS 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.

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

Interviewers 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 or loan' or 'pay part rent and part mortgage (co-ownership)'.

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

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

Deprivation

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

Urban/Rural

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

Local Government District

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

Parliamentary Constituency

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

Other relevant statistical releases

Although this report is the official source for Wellbeing data in Northern Ireland, Personal Wellbeing data collected in the [Labour Force survey](#) for Northern Ireland is also published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) in their [Personal well-being in the UK bulletin](#), which was released on 7th November 2023. The ONS publication reports Personal Wellbeing data at NI level and by LGD. This has been compared with the findings in this report and none of the results were found to be significantly different.

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

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

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