

# Adolescent Lifestyle Survey

2021



# What is the Adolescent Lifestyle Survey (ALS)?

- A survey of secondary school pupils in school years 7 to 11 (ages 11-16) in North East Lincolnshire.
- The survey has been carried out every 3-4 years since 2004.
- It is an online survey completed in classrooms in exam style conditions.
- The 2021 survey was completed in October and each school received their own results in November.
- This report highlights the main findings from the survey.

# Who took part in the ALS 2021?

7,988

young people took part in the survey, resulting in:

7,146

complete responses, once the data had been cleaned.

Representing

80%

of secondary age pupils attending school in North East Lincolnshire\*. By far the biggest response since 2004.

100%

of secondary schools  
took part

100%

of PRUs took part

- 51% were male and 49% were female.
- 48% identified as male, 42% as female, 4% another way and 5% preferred not to say. Of those who identified other than male or female, most said they were **genderfluid** or **non-binary**.
- 93% said their main language is **English**
- 115 young people speak **Polish** at home.
- 87% described their ethnicity as **White British**.

*8.2% said they have a special educational need and 6.4% said they had a disability. Just over half said they get support for this.*

*1,180 young people (16.8%) said they care for someone at home that has a serious illness or health condition. Over half said they spent time doing this everyday. 14% spent over 2 hours a day caring for someone.*

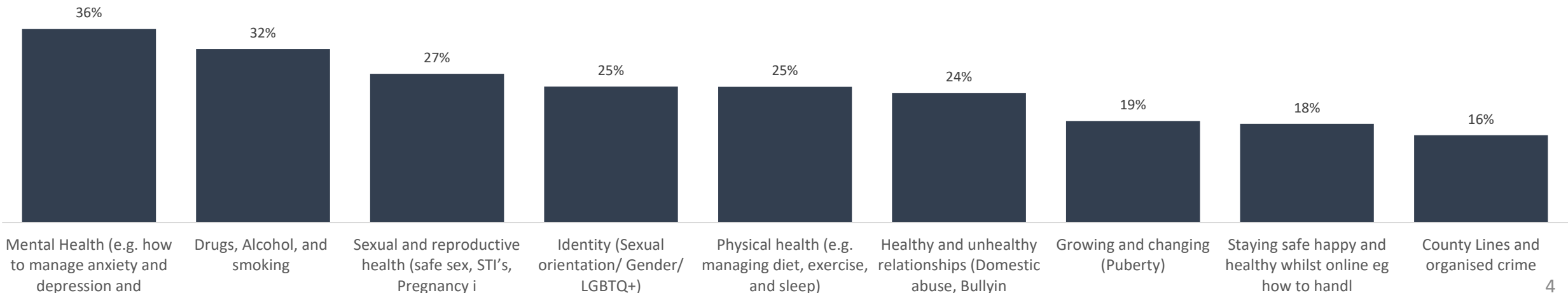
\*Of all mainstream secondary schools and pupil referral units for children in school years 7-11

# PSHE

- The topic respondents were most interested to cover in their PSHE lessons were **mental health (36%)**, **drugs, alcohol and smoking (32%)** and **sexual and reproductive health (27%)**. Respondents stated they would most like to learn about these topics through **weekly/biweekly PSHE lessons (50%)**.

- Year 7's were more interested in learning about **gender identity/sexuality topics (31%)** than older years. Interest in learning about topics relating to **staying safe online** and **puberty** decreased as respondents got older. There was a 19% increase in respondents interested in **sexual and reproductive health** from year 7 to year 11 and a similar 11% increase in interest across these year groups for learning about **mental health**.
- Female respondents were more interested in learning about topics relating to **gender identity/sexual orientation, healthy and unhealthy relationships** and mental health, whilst male respondents were more interested in learning about puberty, drugs, alcohol and smoking, their physical health and county lines.

Which of these topics would you most like to learn more about in your PSHE lessons?



# Healthy Eating

## Breakfast

**27.1%** of young people **never eat breakfast.**

Girls and older pupils are even less likely to eat breakfast. Half of those who never eat breakfast say it's because they are **not hungry**. 2.8% said it's because there is no food at home.

## Lunch

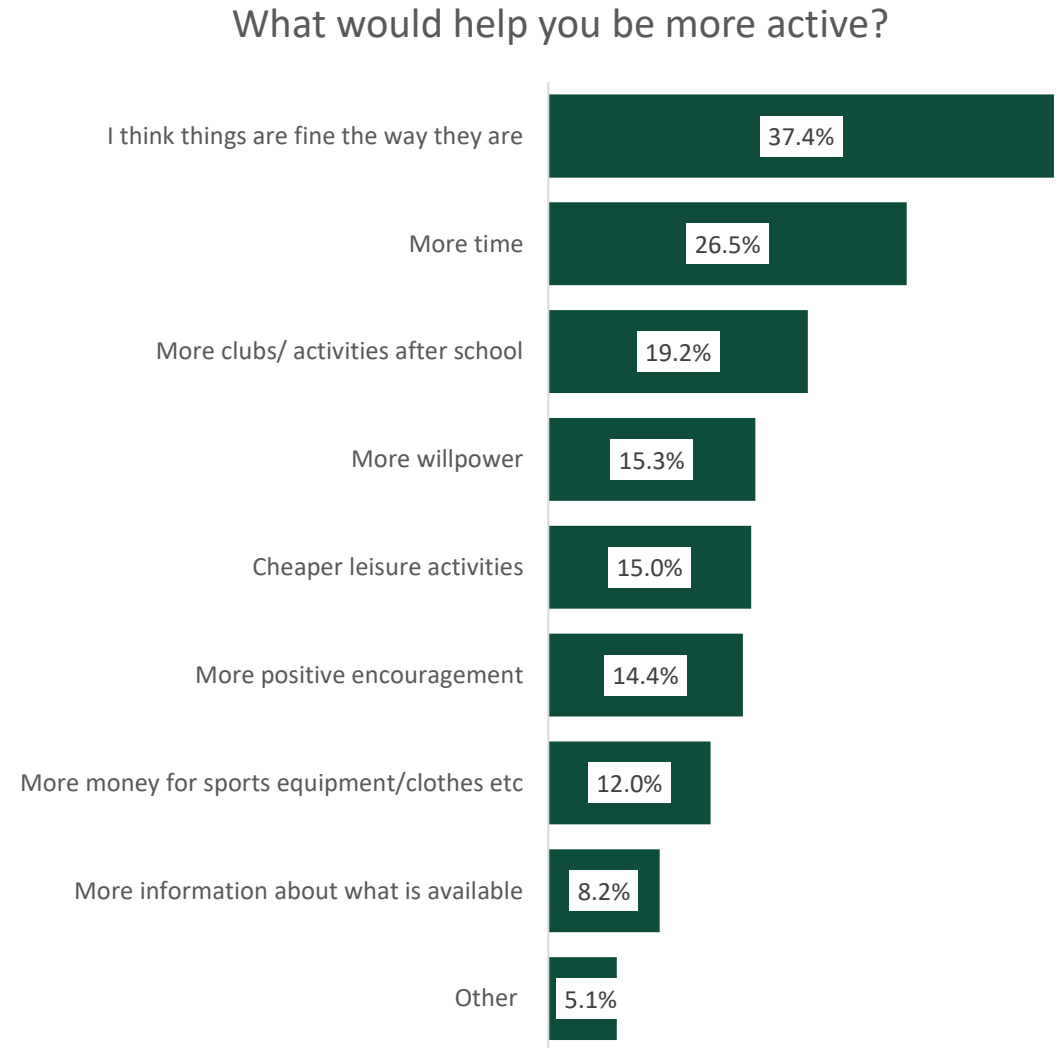
38.3% of pupils have a school meal and 42.3% have a packed lunch. 10.6% don't eat anything for lunch and this is more common for girls and older pupils.

Of those who don't usually eat lunch **only 10.5% eat breakfast every day** (30.4% sometimes and 59.1% never eat breakfast). The main reasons for not eating lunch are **not being hungry, not wanting to eat in front of people and being unhappy with their weight.**

- 10% eat 5 portions of fruit and veg a day.
- **43.6% never drink energy drinks.** Of those who do drink them, most only drink them sometimes and the most common reason for drinking them is for their taste, because they feel tired or thirsty.
- **Half** of young people would like to eat **more healthily** and 40.1% say they already do eat healthily.

# Exercise

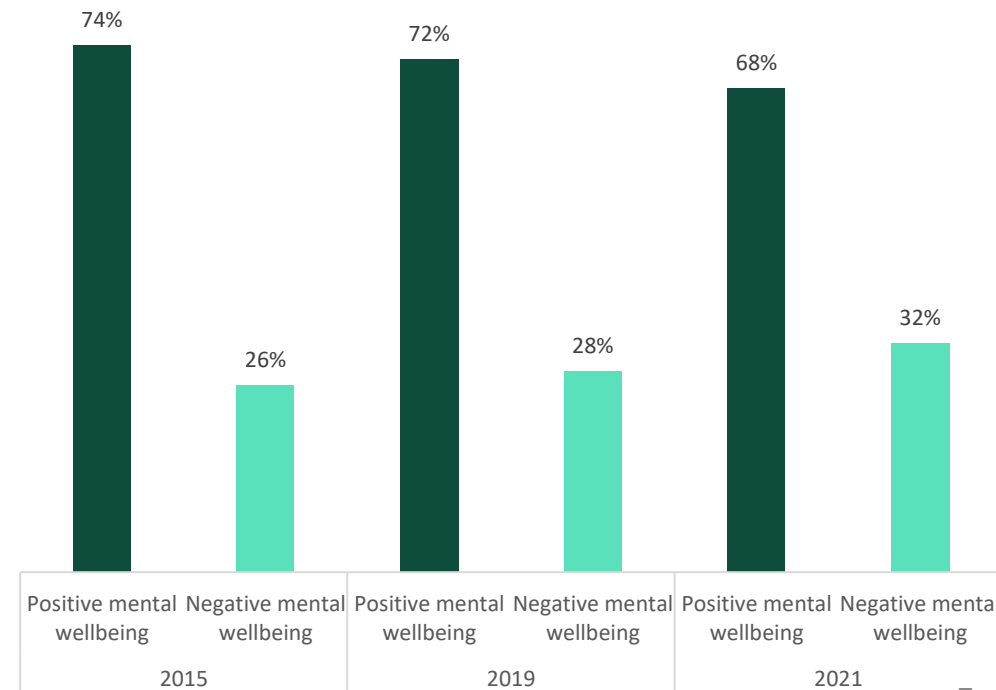
- 82.9% of young people said they have exercised for at least one hour in the last week, however only 18.2% said they have done this every day, meeting the recommended amount of exercise for children and young people.
- Boys (22.9%) are far more likely to achieve 7 days of exercise for at least an hour than girls (12.8%).
- 37.4% don't think they need to be more active, over a quarter would like more time to be more active and 19.2% would like more clubs after school.



# Happiness and Home life (1/3)

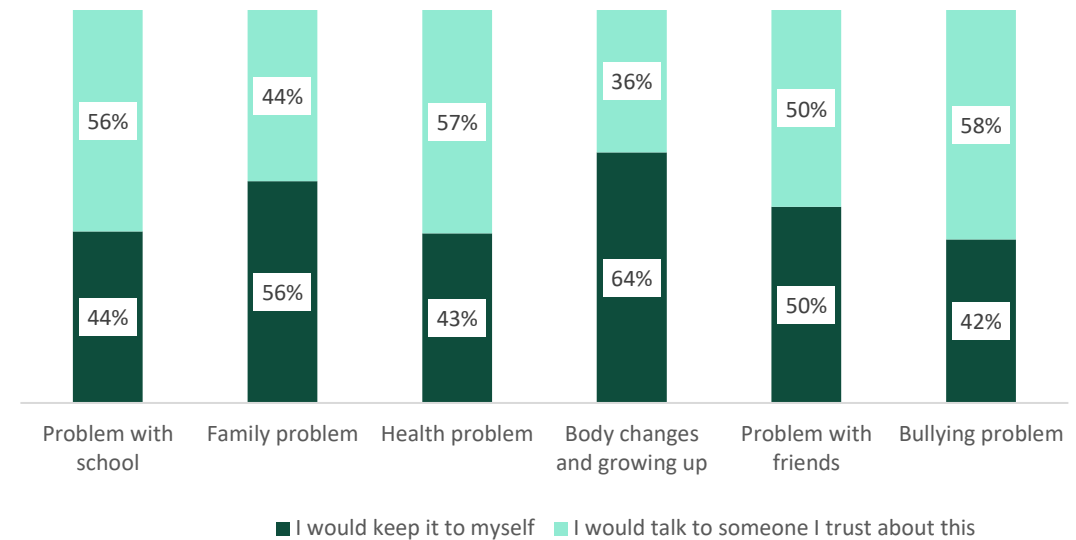
- The primary wellbeing question “**Please read the following statements and tell us whether they are true for you right now**” found boys answered more positively to the wellbeing questions whilst girls answered more negatively.
- The percentage of total responses to the positive mental wellbeing questions has decreased over the years and the percentage of responses to the negative mental wellbeing questions has increased.
- The young peoples self-reported wellbeing gets worse as they get older and responses to the negative wellbeing questions have increased steadily each year across the majority of questions from the 2007 ALS to the most recent 2021 ALS.
- Over half of the young people stated they “**Worry a lot of the time**” and just under half felt that they are “**Often bad tempered/angry**” and feel like they “**Don’t have a lot to be proud of**”. There has also been a steep increase in the number of young people stating that they are “**often anxious/depressed**” or “**Often sad or tearful**”.
- Additionally, those with a disability reported higher levels of negative mental wellbeing than those with no disability and those who identified as gay/lesbian, bisexual or ‘other’ sexuality were found to have an increase in negative mental wellbeing.

Answered 'yes'	Male	Female	Total
I usually feel happy about life	81%	66%	74%
I have one or more good friends	95%	94%	94%
My parent(s) and family look out for me	96%	94%	95%
I feel I have a lot to be proud of	66%	51%	59%
I like trying new things	72%	61%	67%
I often feel sad or tearful	24%	52%	38%
I am often bad tempered or get angry	44%	52%	48%
I often feel anxious or depressed	27%	50%	38%
I seem to worry a lot of the time	43%	70%	56%
I wish I had a different kind of life	20%	36%	28%



# Happiness and Home life (2/3)

- When asked “If you had a problem, would you talk to someone about this?” young people were more likely to talk to a trusted person about “Problems with school”, “bullying” and any “health problems” and were less likely to talk about “Family problems” and “Issues with their body changing”. Young people also felt less comfortable talking about issues as they became older. This is especially clear when looking at “Family problems” and “Issues with their body”.
- Boys were more likely to keep issues related to their body changing, their friends, and their school to themselves. Girls were more likely to keep issues related to their families, bullying and health problems to themselves.



- When asked “When you have a problem that worries you or you are feeling stressed, what do you do about it?”, the main ways young people dealt with stress included listening to music, watching more tv/playing computer games or keeping busy socialising.
- Boys were more likely to do physical activity and watch tv/play computer games to relieve stress, whilst girls were more likely to eat/drink more, cut or hurt themselves or listen to music.
- Additionally 2021 young people (compared to 2019 young people) were more likely to self-harm, but only by a small margin.

	Never	Sometimes	Usually	Always
Listen to music	11%	24%	26%	38%
Watch more TV/play computer games	16%	34%	28%	23%
Keep busy socialising e.g. go out with friends	21%	34%	26%	19%
Think carefully about the problem by yourself	19%	35%	29%	18%
Do physical activity	32%	35%	19%	14%
Rest or sleep more	28%	33%	25%	14%
Eat or drink more (e.g. sweets, chocolates)	35%	38%	16%	11%
I do something else (please tell us)	69%	15%	7%	9%
Talk to someone about it	28%	44%	20%	8%
Cut or hurt myself	80%	13%	4%	3%
Smoke cigarettes	92%	4%	2%	3%
Have a drink of something alcoholic	85%	11%	2%	2%
Seek help with the problem online	79%	15%	4%	2%

Figure 7



# Happiness and Home life (3/3)

- Overall, the issues that young people worried the most about were the way they looked, their weight and their school work, exams and future. Girls worried a lot more about the way they looked, their weight and school work/exams than boys. Girls also used the “worry a lot,” option considerably more than boys.
- Young people who responded to the most recent 2021 ALS stated they “worried a lot,” more than respondents to the 2019 ALS
- Older pupils were more likely to respond that they worried a lot about issues than younger pupils. For example, year 10 and 11 students were considerably more likely to worry a lot about issues relating to their weight, the way they looked and school work than respondents in years 7 – 9.
- Overall, older pupils were more concerned about their future, how they look and issues relating to their social lives. Younger pupils were more concerned about issues relating to their current circumstances.

“Since the start of the covid-19 pandemic, how much have you worried about the following?”

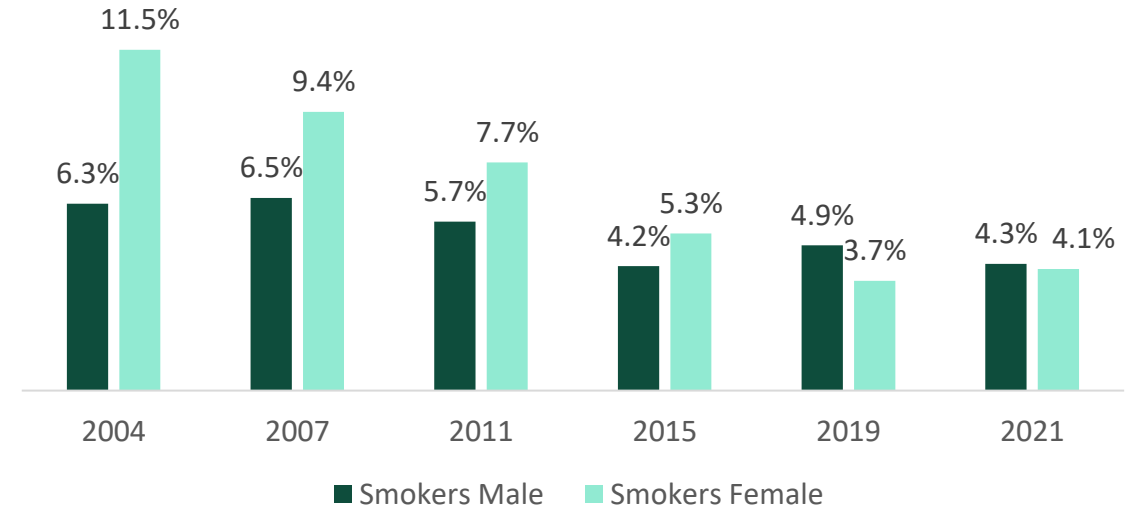
Answered ‘worry a lot’ about...	Male	Female	Total
The way you look	22%	52%	37%
Your weight	23%	48%	35%
School work / exams	25%	45%	35%
Your future / getting a job	26%	35%	31%
Friendships	17%	36%	27%
The risk of COVID-19 /Future Lockdowns	15%	21%	18%
Girlfriends / boyfriends	13%	19%	16%
Problems at home / family	9%	20%	14%
The amount of time I spend online	11%	16%	13%
Being bullied	9%	16%	12%
Sexuality	5%	14%	9%
Gender identity	4%	10%	7%
Sexual health	4%	5%	5%

# Smoking

## Tobacco

- Just 3% of young people smoke every day (4.1% smoke at least once a week).
- Older pupils are more likely to smoke than younger pupils.
- Smoking prevalence has reduced since the first survey in 2004 and the gap between boys and girls has closed, there is now very little difference.
- Children who are eligible for free school meals are almost twice as likely to smoke than those not eligible for free school meals.
- Over half of young people eligible for free school meals said someone at home smokes (56.8%) compared to a third (33.4%) of those not eligible for free school meals.

Current Smokers\* by year and sex



\*Current smokers = smoke at least once a week

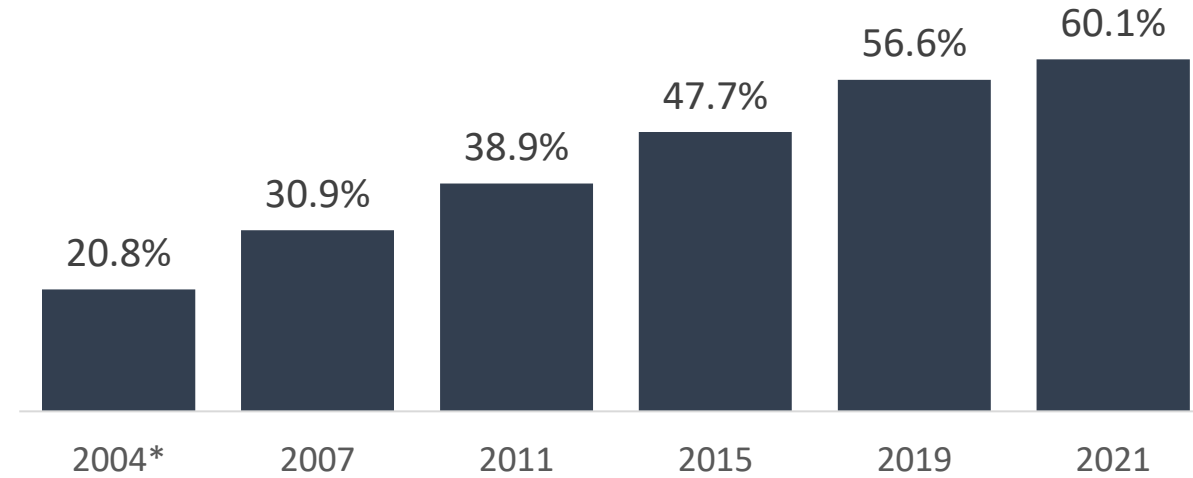
## E-cigarettes

- **4% of young people smoke e-cigarettes every day (7.7% smoke them at least once a week). Girls are slightly more likely so smoke them than boys and older pupils are significantly more likely to smoke e-cigarettes than younger pupils.**
- **Over half of those who smoke e-cigarettes everyday also smoke tobacco.**

# Alcohol

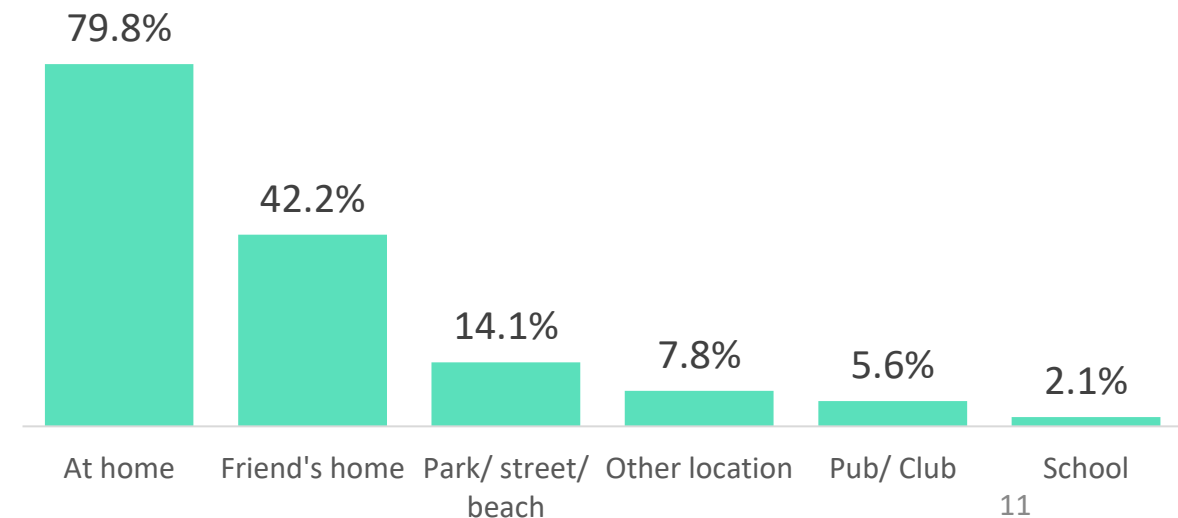
- Most young people have **never** had a whole drink of alcohol.
- Since the first ALS in 2004 the proportion of children who said they have **never** had a whole alcohol drink has increased significantly **from 20.8% to 60.1%**.
- Older pupils are more likely to drink alcohol than younger pupils but there is little difference between boys and girls.
- Of those who do drink alcohol, **over half** (56.7%) said they only drink on **special occasions**. 15.3% of those who have tried alcohol drink at least once a week.
- Parents usually know that they are drinking alcohol. **Only 8.4%** of those who drink alcohol said their parents **don't know** they drink alcohol.
- Of those who have tried alcohol 30.6% have been really drunk at least once in the last four weeks. **Girls are more likely to say they have been really drunk** than boys.
- Of those who drink alcohol, most drink at home or at a friends home.

Young people who have **NEVER** had a whole drink of alcohol, trend



\*2004 survey Y7-10 only

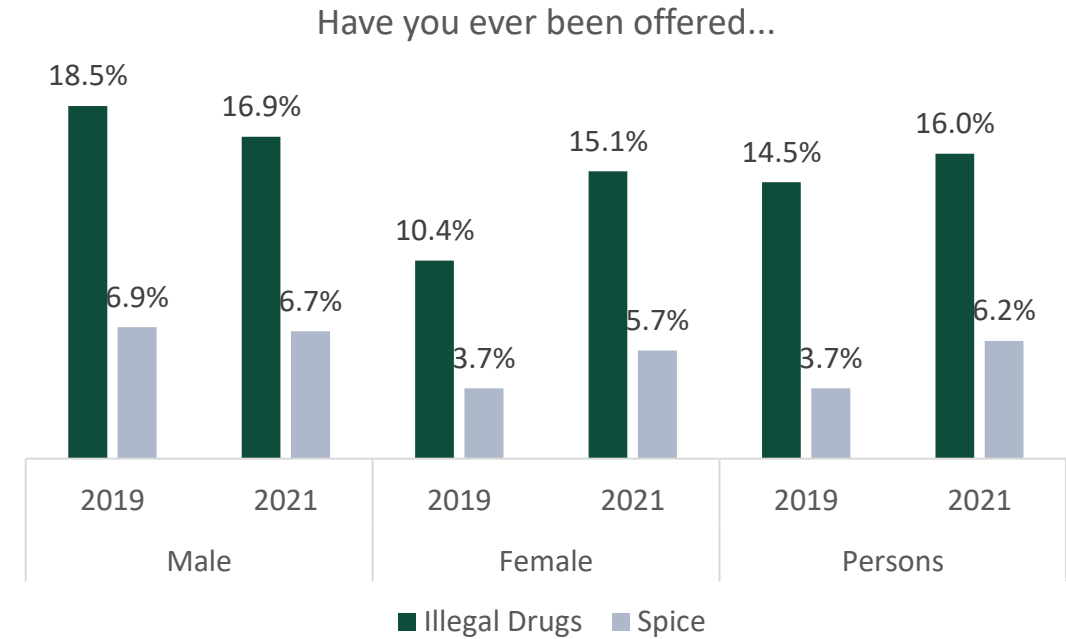
Where do you usually drink alcohol?



Total exceeds 100% as respondents could give more than one answer

# Drugs

- **Most** young people **do not take illegal drugs** and have **not been offered** them.
- **16%** of young people said they have been offered illegal drugs and **6.2%** have been offered spice or similar (formally known as legal highs). The overall proportion of young people being offered drugs **hasn't changed** much over the **last ten years**. The proportion of girls who have been offered illegal drugs and/ or spice is lower than for males, however there has been a larger increase in females being offered drugs.
- Over half of Y11's have seen someone using cannabis.
- **Cannabis** remains the most commonly tried drug and the proportion of young people who have tried cannabis has remained at **about 10% of Year 9-11's for the last ten years**.
- Of those who have tried drugs, most got them from a dealer or a friend.
- Over a **third** of young people **don't know** where to go for **advice** if they or someone they know have concerns about drugs or alcohol.

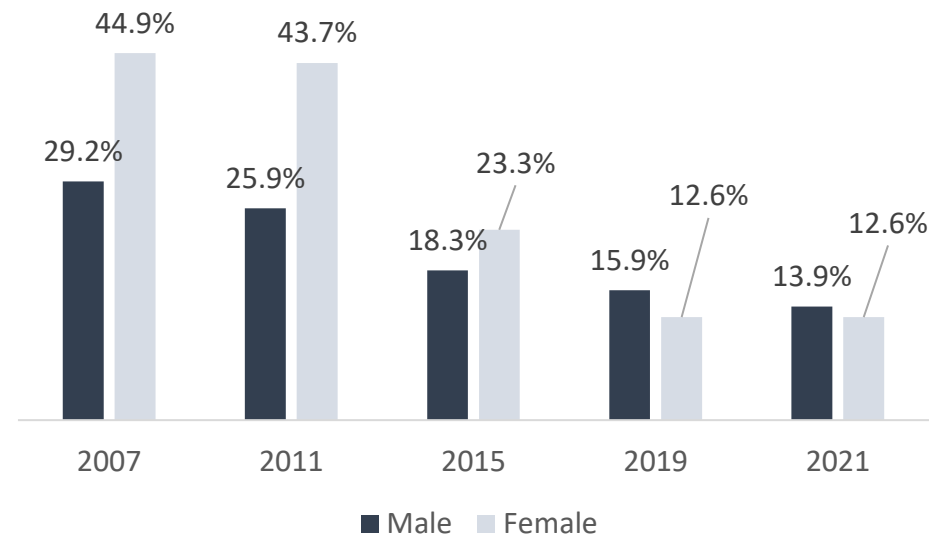


	Seen people use...	Have tried/used...	Know where to get...
<b>Cannabis</b>	33.8%	6.8%	17.8%
<b>Cannabis Edibles</b>	23.1%	4.7%	15.1%
<b>Spice or similar</b>	13.1%	1.9%	8.3%
<b>Ecstasy</b>	9.7%	1.5%	8.0%
<b>Cocaine</b>	18.4%	1.9%	10.9%

# Sexual Health – Years 9-11 only

- **Most** young people have **not had sex**, 13.2% of young people in school years 9-11 said they have had sex. Older pupils are far more likely to have had sex than younger pupils (**25.2% of Y11s** compared to **4% of Y9s**).
- In 2007, 44.9% of girls and 29.2% of boys in Y9-11 said they had had sex, this has reduced significantly over the years and there is now little difference between boys and girls (13.9% males, 12.6% females in 2021).
- The most commonly used contraception is the condom, followed by nothing.
- 73.1% said they would know where to go if they/ their partner were pregnant and wanted an abortion (*excludes those who have never had sex, and those who said they were gay/lesbian*).
- 45.3% know where to get free condoms, this was higher for those who have had sex (70.2%).

Percentage of Y9-11s who have had sex, trend



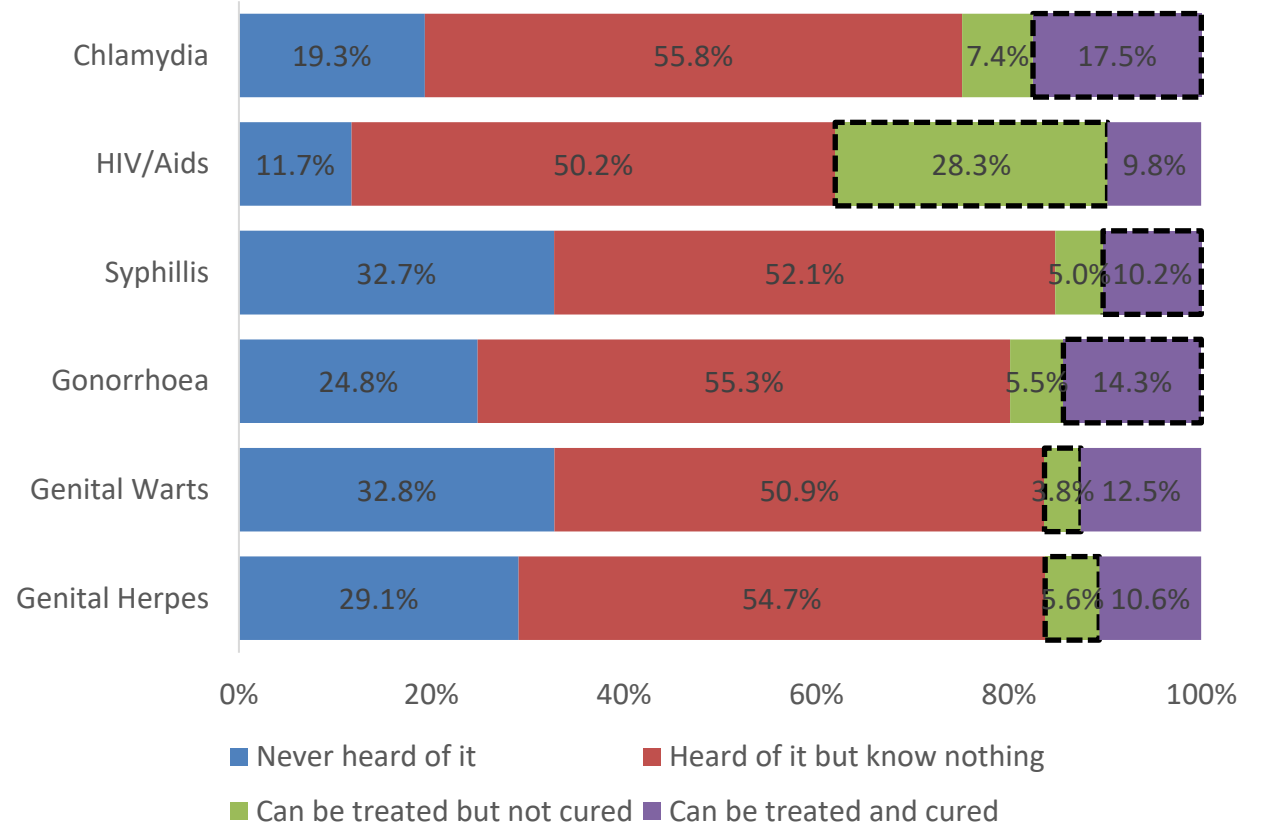
Most recent method of contraception	%
A condom	45.5%
Nothing	39.0%
The pill	22.7%
Some other method	10.6%
Implant	6.4%
Emergency contraception (morning after pill)	5.5%
Injection	2.5%

Knowledge around STIs has got worse in the last 6 years, fewer young people have heard of STIs, know anything about them and know if they can be treated and cured.

In 2007, 35.9% of young people knew that Chlamydia can be treated and cured, in 2021 only 17.5% of young people knew this. Similarly, for HIV/Aids, far fewer younger people in 2021 (28.3%) knew that HIV/Aids can be treated but not cured than in 2007 (63.4%).

Most young people had heard of a condom but only **13.5%** had heard of the **c-card** scheme and only **2.5%** of young people in years 9-11 have a c-card.

Three quarters of young people in Y9-11 said they are straight, 4% said they are gay/ lesbian, 10.3% bisexual, 5.5% don't know their sexuality and 5.3% said some other way including pansexual and trans.



Correct answers are highlighted with a black border

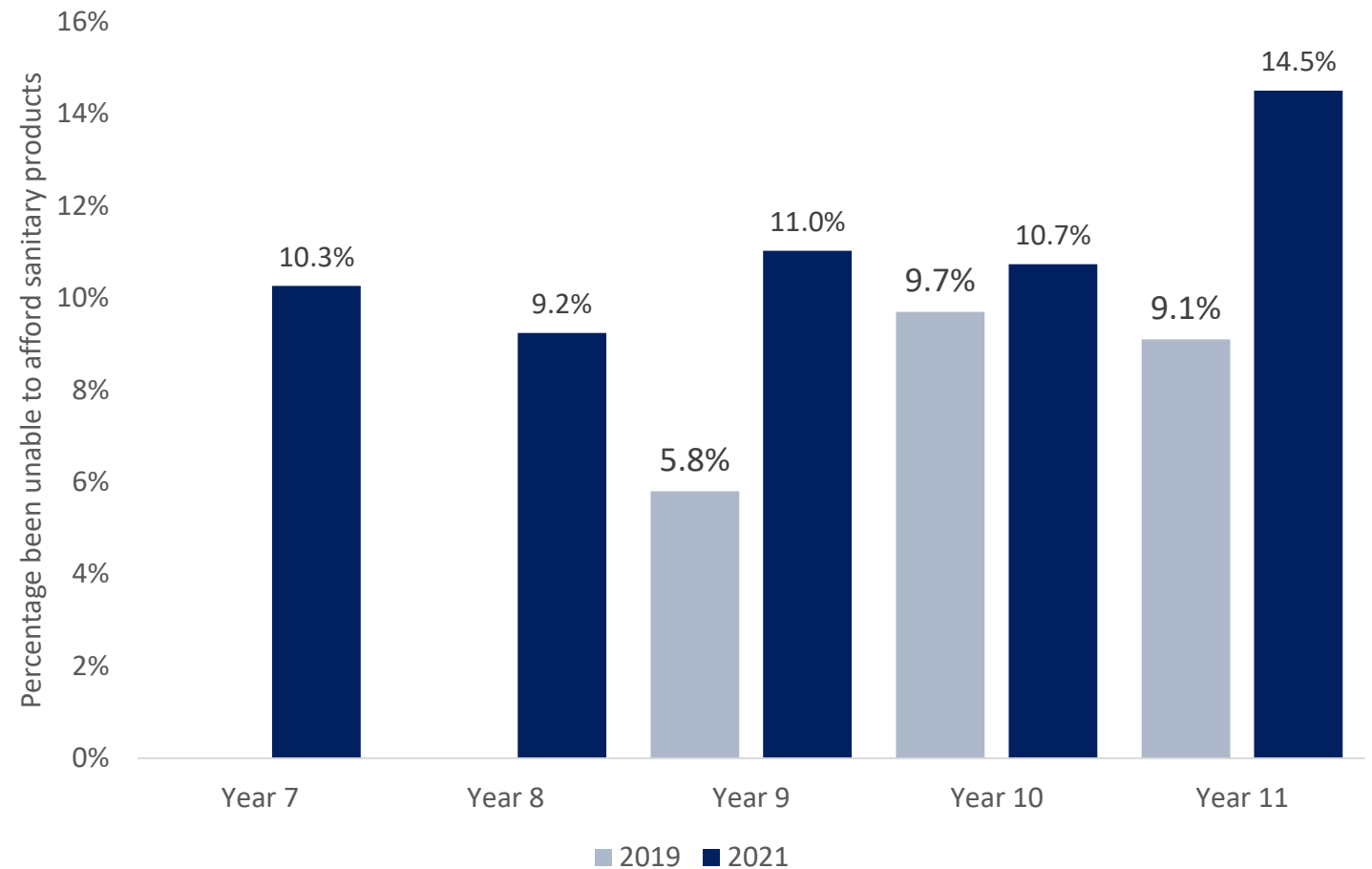
Correct answer (treated/ cured)					
STIs	2007	2011	2015	2019	2021
Genital herpes	8.4%	12.4%	8.1%	11.6%	5.6%
Genital warts	7.5%	9.2%	5.8%	6.3%	3.8%
Gonorrhoea	20.4%	21.3%	15.7%	18.9%	14.3%
Syphilis	14.9%	16.0%	13.8%	12.7%	10.2%
HIV/Aids	63.4%	50.0%	39.8%	39.2%	28.3%
Chlamydia	35.9%	37.7%	25.1%	15.1%	17.5%

# Period Poverty

Girls were given the following statement ‘You may have seen in the media that some girls say they or their families don’t have enough money to get sanitary products, such as sanitary towels, tampons or panty liners, to use during their periods.’ They were then asked ‘At any time in the last year has this been a problem for you?’

- Of those who said they have periods, **11.2%** said that this had been a problem for them, this is **an increase** from 7.7% in the 2019 survey.
- Those eligible for **free school meals** were more likely to have experienced period poverty with **15.2%** saying they had been unable to afford period products in the last year compared to 10.1% not on free school meals.
- **Year 11’s** were more likely to have been unable to afford period products in the last year than other year groups.

Percentage of girls who have been unable to afford sanitary products in the last year by school year and year of survey



*\*Only includes those who have periods*

**In 2021, over 300 girls in North East Lincolnshire secondary schools experienced period poverty.**

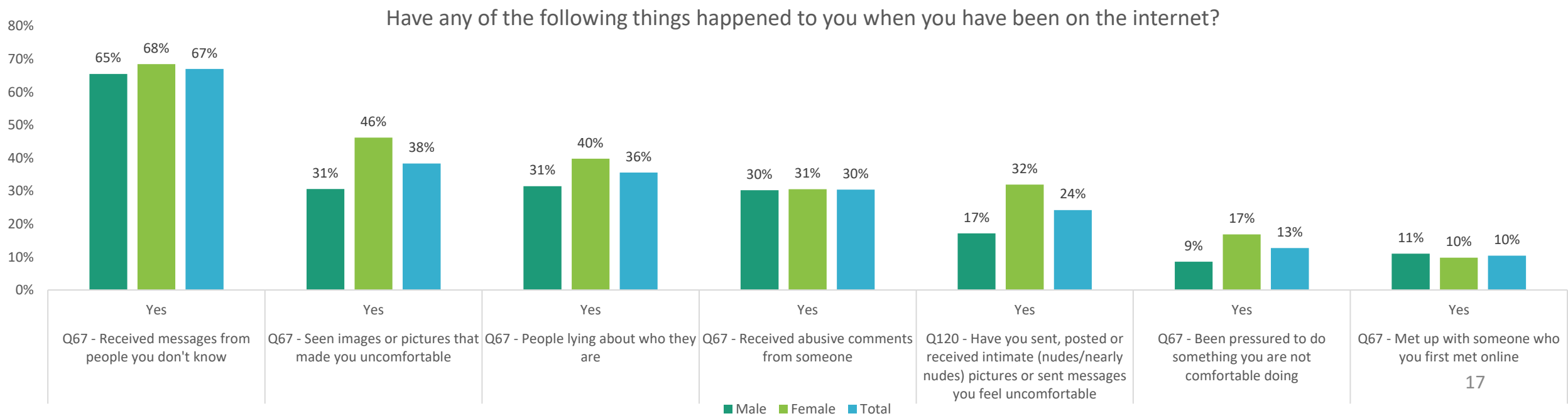
# Internet use (1/3)

- The majority of young people accessed the internet using **mobile phones, laptops/notebooks** or **other mobile devices** such as **game consoles, e-books etc.** Girls were more likely to use **laptops** or **notebooks** and boys were more likely to use **other mobile devices (especially gaming devices)** and **desktop computers**. Young people were more likely to use **mobile phones, laptop or notebooks** and **desktop computers** as they got older and less likely to use **tablets** and **other mobile devices**.
- The majority of young people stated that **social media had no effect on how they felt about themselves (66.3%)**. Boys were more likely to say social media makes them feel **better about themselves** and girls were more likely to say it makes them feel **worse about themselves**. Young people were less likely to report that social media makes them feel **better about themselves**, and more likely to say it makes them feel **worse about themselves**, as they got older.
- Just under half of young people (46%) **stay up late most nights using the internet, chatting online or gaming on a school night**. Gender did not influence this, but it was found that young people were more likely to stay up late most nights on the internet as they got older.
- The most popular sites used by young people In the past week were **YouTube (92%), Tiktok (79%)** and **Snapchat** and **Instagram** (both 71%). Boys were more likely to use **Reddit, Discord** and **Twitter**, whilst Girls were more likely to use **Snapchat, Instagram** and **Tiktok**. Young people were also more likely to use online sites and apps as they got older.



# Internet Use (2/3)

- The percentage of young people who had **received messages from strangers** was high (over 65%) regardless of their gender.
- Girls were more likely to have **seen images of pictures that made them uncomfortable, experienced people lying about who they were online, have sent/posted/received intimate pictures** and were more likely to have been **pressured into doing something they are uncomfortable doing**. This indicates that girls were exposed to more negative behaviour online, which is supported by earlier reported findings that girls experience more cyberbullying online.
- **“Yes”** responses to the options within the **"Have any of the following things happened to you?"** question increased as pupils got older, indicating that as young people had more time on (and exposure to) the internet, the more likely they were to encounter or engage in negative/dangerous behaviour

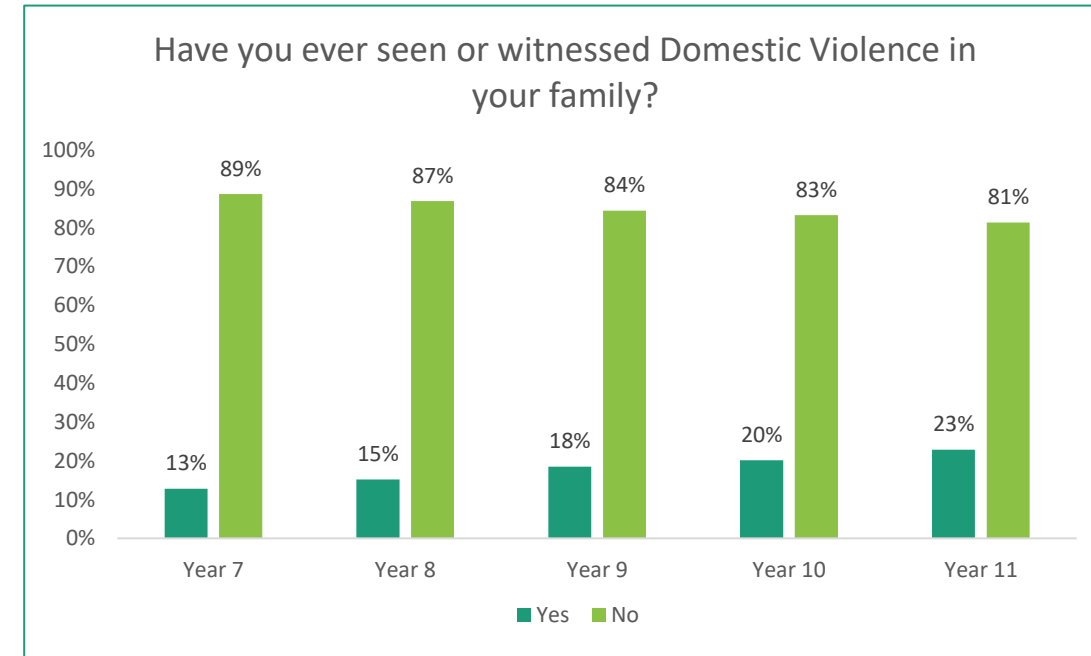


# Internet Use (3/3)

When asked **“The last time you had problems with something or someone online that bothered or upset you in some way, what did you do?”** the majority of young people stated they were able to do something about it on their computer, (i.e. blocking others or changing account details) or got help from family and/or friends. Girls were more likely to do something on their computer to resolve the issue or get help from friends and/or family. Boys were more likely to not do anything, not know what to do or report that they had not had any issues online that had bothered or upset them.

# Feeling safe at home

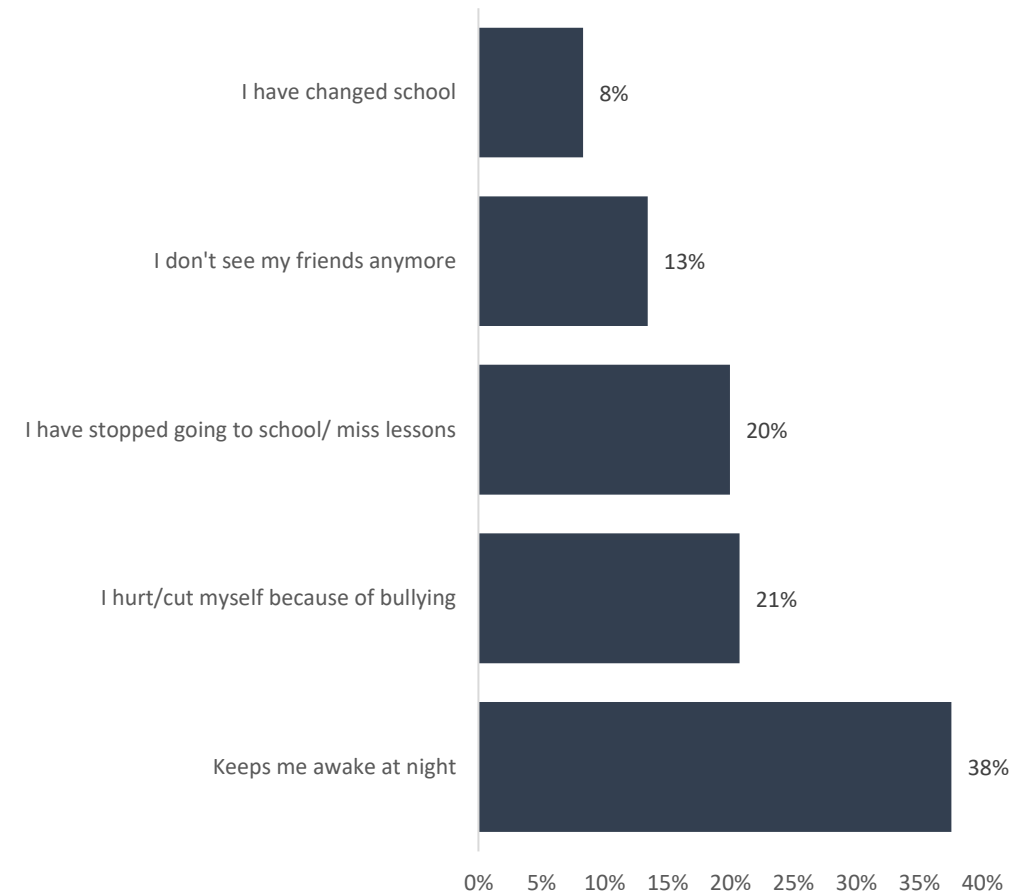
- 84.8% of young people reported they had not seen/witnessed domestic violence in their family and 95.7% felt safe in their home. Over half (55.6%) of young people stated they would call the police if someone in their family was hitting/physically abusing another family member, however, a large percentage stated that they didn't know what they would do (28.3%). There was little difference in these percentages between 2019 and 2021 ALS results.
- More girls felt unsafe at home, had witnessed domestic violence and were more likely to call the police if a family member was being physically hurt. However, the difference in responses between girls and boys was small (below 6%).
- School year did not influence how safe young people felt at home or how likely they were to call the police if a family member was being physically abused. However, The percentage of young people who had seen domestic violence increased from year 7 to year 11, indicating young people were more likely to have witnessed domestic violence as they got older.



# Bullying (1/2)

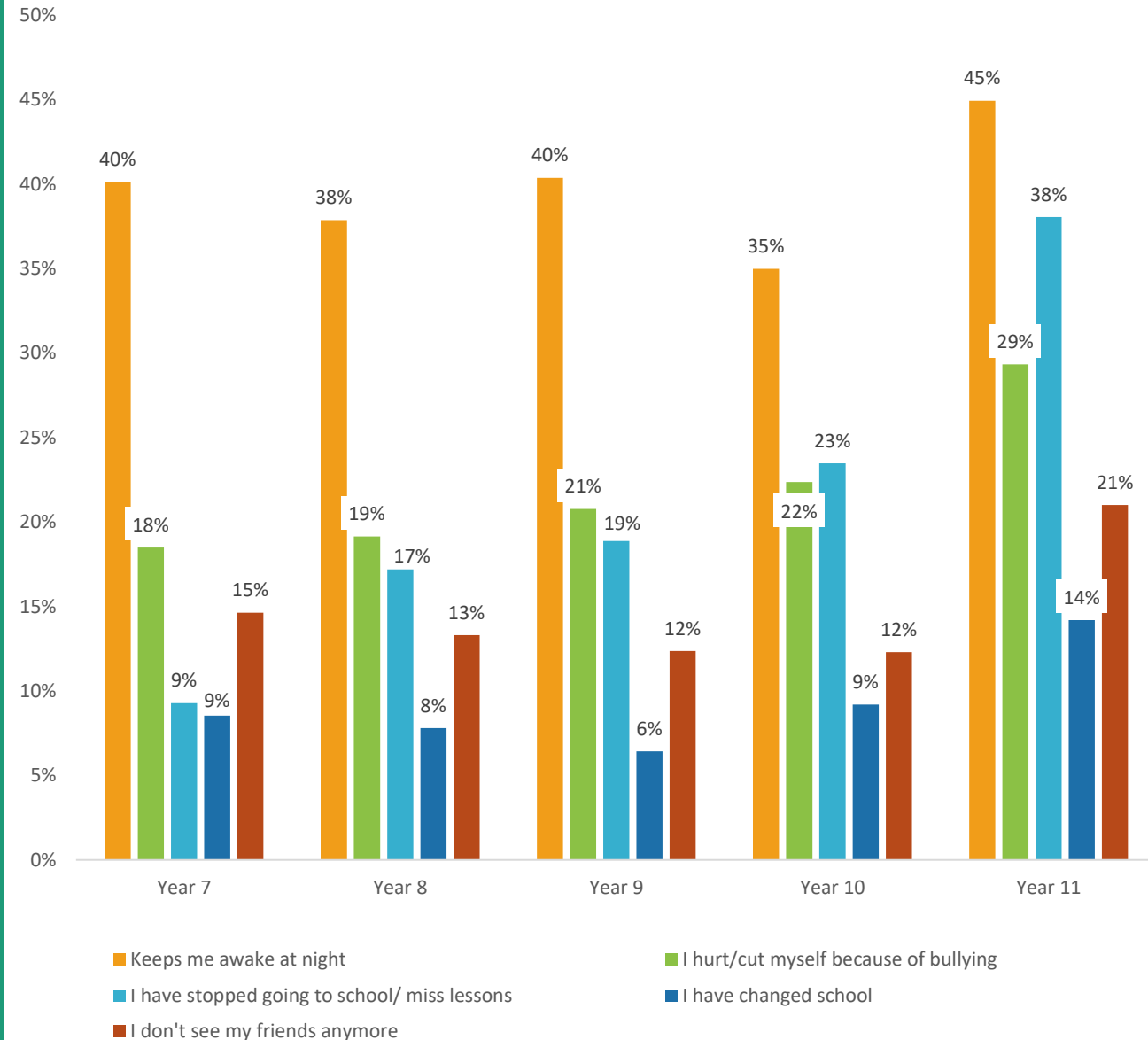
- Bullying rates within North East Lincolnshire have dropped slightly since 2019 to 2021. 43.1% of young people reported some form of bullying in 2019 compared to 39% reporting some form of bullying in 2021.
- Verbal/ mental (e.g. name calling, being left out) was the most prominent form of bullying reported (84% of responses) and the majority of bullying was reported to happen in school (88%).
- 55% of young people who reported being bullied answered “yes,” When asked “Do you ever feel afraid of going to school because of bullying?”. similar figures were found consistently across year groups.

**The main effect of bullying was a loss of sleep.**



# Bullying (2/2)

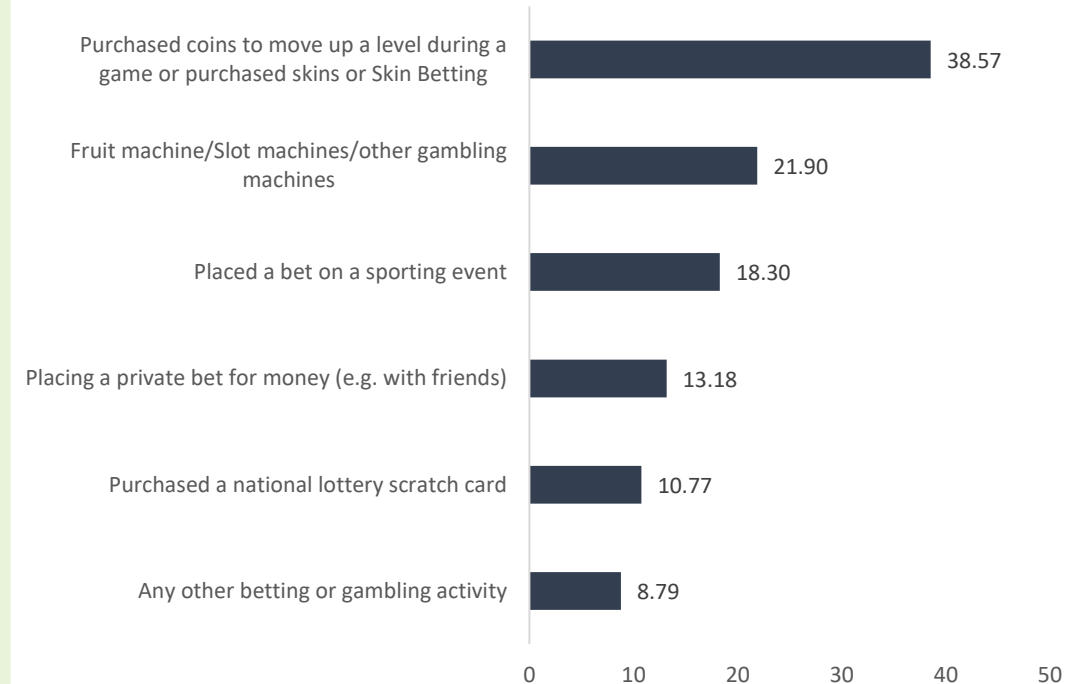
- Girls (44%) reported being bullied more than boys (34%).
- boys and girls both reported **verbal/mental bullying** as the most common form of bullying. Boys reported **being physically bullied** more than girls and girls reported being **cyberbullied** more than boys.
- Reported bullying rates were higher in Year 7 than older years.
- The number of young people **cutting or hurting themselves** and **stopping going to school/missing lessons** in response to bullying increases as they got older.
- Other bullying responses (**keeping awake at night, changing school** and **not seeing friends**) are highest in Year 7 and Year 11.
- Young people stating they felt their school didn't take bullying seriously increases consistently from 11% in Year 7 to 51% in Year 11.



# Gambling

- Of those who said they had engaged in betting behaviour, the most prominent betting activity amongst young people was “**purchasing coins to move up a level during a game or purchased skins or skin betting**” (38.6%). Over half (55%) of those who said they had engaged in gambling behaviour answered “**I don’t know,**” when asked why they had spent money on gambling in the last 12 months.
- Interestingly, young people were less likely to spend money on gambling because it’s something their friends (5%) or family (4%) did and were more likely to spend money on gambling to **try to win money (19%)** or **to get a buzz (13%)**.
- The majority of young people said they had **not been affected by someone in their family gambling (88.5%)**. This was consistent across age and gender comparisons.

In the last 12 months, have you ever taken part in any of the following activities, either online or at a venue?



- Responses to “**In the last 12 months, have you ever taken part in any of the following activities, either online or at a venue?**” were fairly consistent across year groups (from year 7 to year 11). However, there is a consistent increase in the percentage of **students gambling to win money** from year 7 (13%) to year 11 (26%).
- A higher percentage of boys reported gambling than girls. 53.7% of boys ,compared to 23.3% of girls, purchased coins/skins in games and 22.9% of boys ,compared to 13.8% of girls, placed bets on sporting events.

# Your Local Area

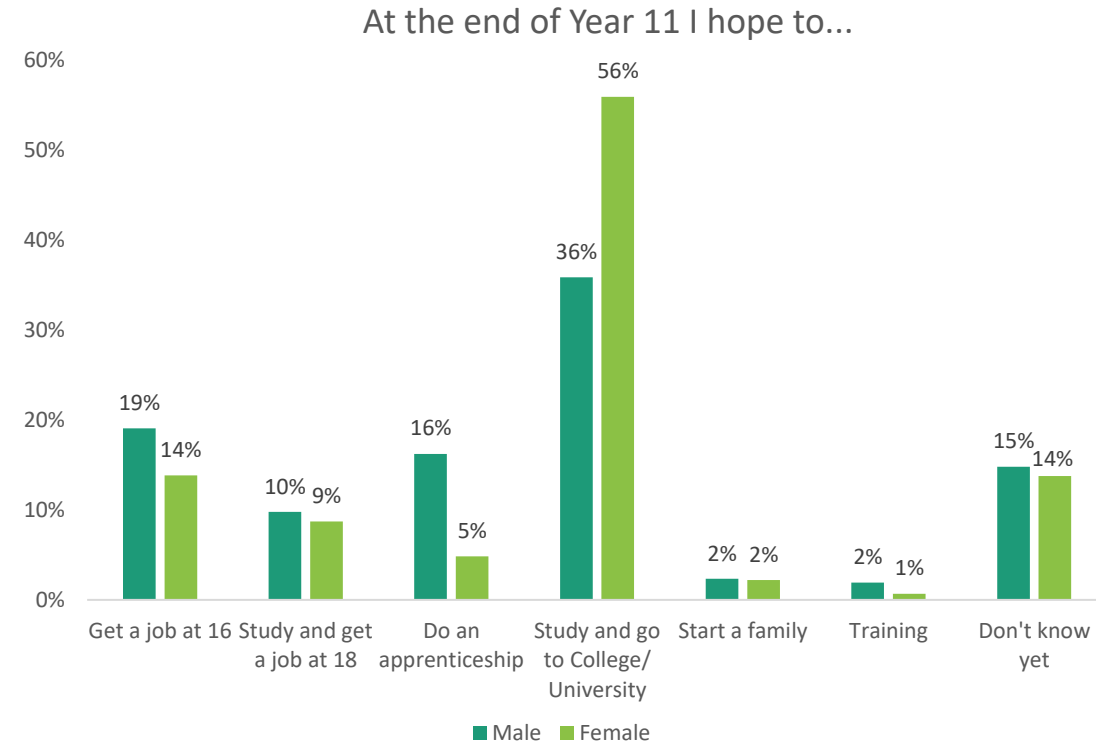
When asked “**what makes your local area a good place to live?**” young people reported that their favourite things about the local area was that there are: “**Lots of places to meet up with friends,**” (60%), “**Good parks/outdoor areas/green spaces,**” (52%), and “**Good shopping facilities,**” (34%).

More young people said they felt their local area was a good place to live in the 2021 ALS (53.1%) than the 2019 ALS (47.7%). Additionally, more boys (58%) thought the local area was a good place for young people than girl(49%).

Interestingly, as pupils got older they were less likely to say that there are lots of places to meet up with friends, good shopping facilities, good parks and outside spaces and that people are friendly and help each other. Additionally, they were less likely to say their local area is a good place to live for young people. This may indicate that young people slowly become less happy living in the area as they get older

# School and the Future

- The majority of young people either planned **to study and go to college/university (45.7%)** or **get a job (16.6%)** at the end of year 11. As they got older, young people were less likely to say **they planned to get a job at 16** and that **they didn't know what they wanted to do** after year 11. Young people in years 10 and 11 were more likely to say they were going to **do an apprenticeship** once they left school.
- More boys wanted to **get a job at 16** and **do an apprenticeship** after year 11, whilst more girls wanted **to study and go to university**.
- 52.6% of young people felt they would be in the area in 5 years and only 18.7% felt they would be in the area in 10 years. Young people were also less likely to say they were going to stay in the area in 5 to 10 years as they got older.
- Over half of young people (51.9%) stated that it was **“very important,”** for them to get good grades. The importance of grades also increases as young people got older (48% of year 7's compared to 62% of year 11's stated they thought grades were **“very important,”**).

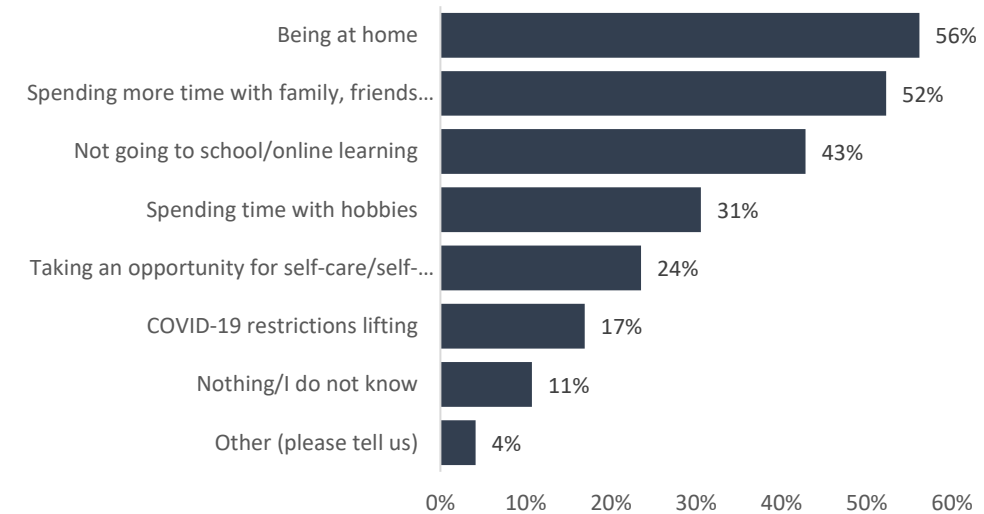




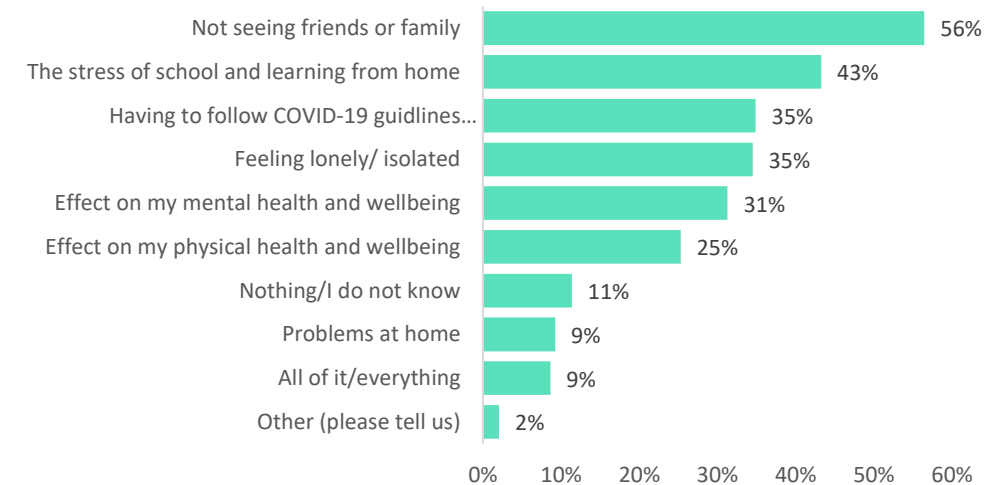
# COVID-19

- The main positives young people noted from covid-19 restrictions were being at home (56%), spending time with family, friends and loved ones (52%) and not going to school/online learning (43%). The main negatives were not seeing friends or family (56%), the stress of school and difficulties with online learning (43%) and having to follow COVID-19 guidelines.
- The best part of COVID-19 restrictions for years 8-11 was being at home, whilst year 7 students said the best part of COVID-19 restrictions was spending more time with family, friends and loved ones. Not seeing friends or family was the worst part of COVID-19 for all year groups.
- There was little difference between genders in the responses to “what has been the best part of the covid-19 restrictions?” but girls responded more to all questions when asked “what has been the worst part of the covid-19 restrictions?” indicating that girls had a harder time with the pandemic than boys.

What has been the best part of the Covid-19 restrictions?



What has been the worst part of the Covid-19 restrictions?



# Thank you

Thank you to all the young people who took part in the survey, including those in the Youth Action group who gave feedback on how to improve the survey further.

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