



Department  
for Work &  
Pensions

# Social Justice Outcomes Framework: Family Stability Indicator

Update

---

March 2014

# Contents

Background ..... 3

Methodology ..... 4

Results ..... 6

Contact ..... 8

# Background

In April 2013 the Department for Work and Pensions published [Social Justice: transforming lives – one year on](#). The report, and supporting documentation, set out the seven key indicators, and their baselines, against which progress in delivering social justice will be measured.

This followed the publication of [Social Justice: Transforming Lives](#) in March 2012 which set out the Government's vision for providing the support needed to turn around the lives of those experiencing multiple disadvantages.

The figures presented here set out the latest results for the Family Stability indicator and compare them to the baseline set out in *Social Justice: transforming lives – one year on*.

The Family Stability indicator measures:

- a) The percentage of all children who are not living with both their birth parents, by age of child.
- b) The percentage of children in low income households not living with both parents compared to the percentage of children in middle to higher income households.
- c) The percentage of children living with both birth parents where the parents report happiness or unhappiness in their relationship.

It is expected that the next update to the Family Stability indicator will be published in early 2015<sup>1</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> The measure of parental relationship happiness will be next updated in 2016 due to data collection for this question occurring on a biannual cycle.

# Methodology

The analysis uses data from Understanding Society (USoc). Results for 2011-12 use wave 3 of USoc, while those relating to 2010-2011 use wave 2.

More details on USoc can be found at the following link:

<https://www.understandingsociety.ac.uk/>

The analysis is presented as follows:

## **Table 1: Percentage of children living with both birth parents, by age of child**

1. Shows the percentage of children at each age between 0-16 that live with both of their birth parents and the percentage that do not live with both birth parents, and makes a comparison between 2011-12 and 2010-11.
2. Children have been identified as living with both birth parents where an adult within the household has reported the child's natural mother and father as being resident.
3. Children not living with both birth parents include those born into or living: with a step-parent; or in lone parent families, adoptive families, foster families or those who are in the care of relatives.

## **Table 2: The percentage of children in low-income households living with both birth parents compared to the percentage of children in middle to high-income households, by child age group**

1. Children are categorised into low and middle to high income groups to show, by age group, the proportion in each that live with both of their birth parents and the proportion that do not. Results are compared between 2011-12 and 2010-11.
2. Children in low income are defined as the 20% of children living in households with the lowest income, and children in the middle to high income group are the 80% of children living in households with an income above this; based on relative gross household income, before housing costs.
3. To ensure figures presented are robust ages have been grouped when split by income group.
4. This type of analysis only shows association and is unable to show if there is a causal relationship between children living with both birth parents and income.

## **Table 3: The percentage of children living with both birth parents where the parents report happiness or unhappiness in their relationship**

1. Results presented are based on parents' self-reported level of happiness with their relationship, all things considered. A relationship is classified as unhappy based on it being reported as 'extremely unhappy', 'fairly unhappy' or 'a little unhappy'. Where each parent within a couple responded but gave different

answers, we use the answer of the least happy parent. Where only one parent within the couple responded, the happiness of the relationship has been classified according to that reply. It is recognised that this has the potential to introduce some degree of bias where relationships classified as happy would have been classified differently if the non-responding partner was unhappy. An analysis of cases where both partners answered suggests that in 78 per cent of cases they would have been classified in the same way irrespective of which partner's response we relied upon. Our overall judgment is that the potential bias introduced by our choice of treatment of such cases is likely to be small.

2. In *Social Justice: transforming lives – one year on* it was estimated that of children living with both birth parents between 11-28 per cent reported an unhappy relationship, and 72-89 per cent of parents reported a happy relationship. This was reported as a range to account for uncertainty caused by a high proportion of missing data for this question in USoc wave 1, 2009-10. The same question in 2011-12 is now subject to lower missing response, following a change in survey methodology, and can therefore be benchmarked as a point estimate for comparative purposes in future. Due to the change in survey methodology results for 2011-12 are not comparable to those for 2009-10.

**Notes applying to all tables:**

1. All figures are based on survey data and are therefore subject to a degree of uncertainty. Small differences should be treated with caution as these will be affected by sampling error and variability in non-response.
2. Differences between annual figures reported in tables 1 and 2 may be affected, in particular, by unequal attrition between survey waves of children living, or not, with both birth parents.
3. Caution is advised in drawing conclusions on trends in the data based on differences between the two years reported on.
4. The binomial proportion confidence intervals presented in the table notes relate to 2011-12 only and have been calculated for overall figures using the normal approximation interval.

# Results

**Table 1: Percentage of children living with both birth parents, by age of child**

Age	2010-11		2011-12		Unweighted base
	Living with both birth parents	Not living with both birth parents	Living with both birth parents	Not living with both birth parents	
<1	85	15	79	21	809
1	78	22	82	18	808
2	77	23	74	26	898
3	75	25	76	24	929
4	72	28	76	24	931
5	76	24	73	27	926
6	73	27	76	24	880
7	72	28	71	29	883
8	67	33	72	28	867
9	64	36	67	33	827
10	62	38	65	35	935
11	61	39	65	35	846
12	60	40	61	39	949
13	56	44	62	38	917
14	59	41	58	42	941
15	54	46	57	43	935
16	53	47	56	44	913
Total	67	33	69	31	15194

Source: *Understanding Society, 2010-2012*

Note:

1. The percentage of all children living and not living with both birth parents in 2011-12 each have a 95% confidence interval of +/- 0.7%.

**Table 2: The percentage of children in low-income households living with both birth parents compared to the percentage of children in middle to high-income households, by child age group**

Year	Age group	Children in low income households		Children in middle/high income households		All		Unweighted base
		Living with both birth parents	Not living with both birth parents	Living with both birth parents	Not living with both birth parents	Living with both birth parents	Not living with both birth parents	
2010-11	0-5	52	48	84	16	77	23	-
	6-11	45	55	72	28	66	34	-
	12-16	35	65	61	39	56	44	-
	All	45	55	73	27	67	33	-
2011-12	0-5	52	48	84	16	77	23	5301
	6-11	48	52	75	25	69	31	5238
	12-16	43	57	63	37	59	41	4655
	All	48	52	74	26	69	31	15194

Source: *Understanding Society, 2010-2012*

Notes:

1. The percentage of all children in low income households living and not living with both birth parents in 2011-12 each have a 95% confidence interval of +/- 1.6% .
2. The percentage of all children in middle/high income households living and not living with both birth parents in 2011-12 each have a 95% confidence interval of +/- 0.8% .

**Table 3: The percentage of children living with both birth parents where the parents report happiness or unhappiness in their relationship**

	Happy parental relationship	Unhappy parental relationship	Unweighted base
2011-12	76	24	9403

Source: *Understanding Society, 2011-2012*

Notes:

1. The percentage of all children living with both birth parents where parents report happiness or unhappiness in 2011-12 each have a 95% confidence interval of +/- 0.8%.

Table notes (all):

1. Unweighted base shown for 2011-12 only.
2. Figures are rounded to the nearest percent.
3. Percentages have been weighted in accordance with the survey guidance issued.
4. Children's ages are at the time of survey.
5. Data is for the United Kingdom

# Contact

**Issued by:**

Social Justice Directorate  
Department for Work and Pensions

Press Office: 0203 267 5117

Website:

[www.dwp.gov.uk](http://www.dwp.gov.uk)

**Produced by:**

Andrew Stocks  
[andrew.stocks@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:andrew.stocks@dwp.gsi.gov.uk)

Adam James  
[adam.james@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:adam.james@dwp.gsi.gov.uk)