

HM GOVERNMENT HORIZON SCANNING PROGRAMME

SOCIAL ATTITUDES OF YOUNG PEOPLE

A HORIZON SCANNING RESEARCH PAPER
BY THE
SOCIAL ATTITUDES OF YOUNG PEOPLE COMMUNITY OF
INTEREST

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NOTE TO THE READER: THIS ANALYSIS WAS COMPLETED IN 2013 AND HAS NOT BEEN
UPDATED WITH MORE RECENT DATA BUT SENSITIVE INFORMATION, SUCH AS POLICY
IMPLICATIONS HAVE BEEN REMOVED

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Executive Summary

Introduction

The aim of this report is to assess if and how social attitudes of young people in the UK today differ from previous generations, and how they might evolve in the future.

In order to do this, it seeks to differentiate between ‘age/life course effects’, where an individual’s views change as they grow older or go through different life stages, and ‘cohort/generational effects’ where there are sustained differences in the attitudes of people in different generations that lead to long-term, aggregate shifts in societal attitudes. It does this by drawing on large scale longitudinal cohort studies and attitudinal surveys to identify whether there are differences in the attitudes of today’s young people and the attitudes of older generations when they were young.

Whilst the emphasis is on attitudes, the report also considers young people’s changing behaviours and experiences, where possible, in order to develop a broader understanding of their circumstances.

The report examines how the context in which young people find themselves may change over the next 10 years. It brings together the attitudinal trends and the changing context of young people’s lives to assess how young people’s attitudes, behaviours and experiences may evolve over time.

The report was commissioned by the Cabinet Secretary’s Advisory Group in January 2013. It was carried out between February 2013 and March 2014 by the Horizon Scanning Programme Team in the Cabinet Office’s Analysis & Insight, with a ‘Community of Interest’ made up of officials from a number of relevant government departments, and external consultation including academic experts.

The structure of this report is as follows:

Section 1 sets out the background, methodology and aims of the report.

Section 2 explores how social attitudes, behaviours and experiences have evolved over the last 30 years.

Section 3 looks at a set of drivers that may affect how young people’s attitudes, behaviours and experiences may evolve in the next 10 years. It thus explores how the context in which young people find themselves might change over time.

Section 4 combines the attitudinal trends and changing context of young people’s lives set out in the previous sections to assess how young people’s attitudes, behaviours and experiences might change by 2024.

The remainder of this executive summary sets out the key findings in each of these sections.

SECTION 2: How social attitudes, behaviours and experiences have evolved over time

This section sets out the key findings on how social attitudes have evolved over the last 30 years and focuses on four key areas: values and personal autonomy, attitudes to society and government, aspirations and wellbeing. Whilst the focus is on attitudes, the section also considers behaviours and experiences of young people in order to provide a more complete picture of social changes over time.

This report adopts the same generational definitions as Ipsos MORI's 'Generations' work: 'Pre-War'(born before 1945), 'Baby Boomers' (born 1945-65), 'Generation X' (born 1966-1979) and 'Generation Y' (born after 1980 onwards). It then focuses on identifying differences between Generation Y and previous generations.

Where possible we have attempted to identify where there are differences in attitudes between those currently aged under 25 compared to older members of Generation Y but few significant differences were found.

For a large number of topics long running repeated surveys do not exist. Where this is the case we have used one-off surveys to compare the responses of young people (usually defined as those aged under 25) to older people. This means that age and generational effects cannot be separated out.

Values and personal autonomy

A key theme running through the social attitudes of young people is the **importance of personal autonomy**, with power and achievement (social prestige and personal success), stimulation (excitement and challenge in life) and hedonism (pleasure/gratification for oneself) identified as important values for younger generations.

This does not mean that young people have become more selfish. **Young people attach as much value to the welfare of others as older generations.** 'Benevolence' (improving the welfare of those close to you) remains the most important value for all generations and young people in Generation Y are equally likely as older generations to report concern for the living conditions of their immediate family, people in their neighbourhood and humanity in general.

There has been a gradual shift in society towards **increasingly liberal social attitudes towards ethnicity, gender roles and sexuality**. Younger generations are more ethnically diverse than older generations and increasingly mix regularly with people from other ethnic backgrounds. We also see a pattern of slow decline in religious identification between generations.

Aspirations

When we ask people of different ages what is important in life, we find remarkably little difference between generations. **Having good friends, health, being independent and having good partnerships are the most important things for under 25s and older groups.** People aged under 25 are more likely than older groups to view money and a fulfilling job as more important and having children, health and good partnerships as less important. However, it might be that this is explained by life course effects, rather than generational shifts.

When we look at the attributes that young people aged 16-19 consider important for their future occupations, we find that the things that they view as most important are having an interesting and secure job. These job characteristics are viewed as very important by the majority of young people. Getting a high income, helping others and contributing to society are only regarded as very important by a minority of young people. **There is significant variation in what job characteristics are seen as important by different groups of young people. Claims that young people want to 'do well and do good' and to have interesting work apply more to women and those from more advantaged**

backgrounds. For men and less advantaged young people, income, job security and leisure time are more important.

Young people on average have higher levels of optimism than older people about their own futures but have broadly pessimistic views about the future of society. **There is little evidence of a culture of low aspirations amongst young people.** There are differences between socio-economic groups, but even amongst disadvantaged young people a large majority have high aspirations concerning employment and education, and expect to be successful.

Young people today may be responding to the economic downturn with greater entrepreneurialism. There is some evidence of an increase in the numbers of young people that aim to start or are in the process of starting a business. It is not possible at this stage to state whether this is the beginning of a sustained shift towards more entrepreneurial attitudes among young people, or whether this is a short-term response to the economic climate.

Attitudes to society and government

Young people continue to place significant value on belonging to their local community. The majority of people aged 16-24 feel that they belong to Britain (87%) and to their neighbourhood (77%). These figures have risen significantly over the last 10 years and are now around average for all age groups. The proportion of 16-24 year olds that have formally volunteered in the last 12 months has remained roughly stable over the last ten years at around 40%, which is around average for the population.

However, young people are a lot less trusting of others and are far more likely to believe that they are treated unfairly. Only one third of those born after 1990 believe that many people in their neighbourhood can be trusted, compared to two thirds of those born before 1945. Young people in the UK have the lowest levels of 'trust and belonging' in Europe. This is based on questions about trusting other people, being treated fairly and respectfully by them and feeling a sense of belonging with and support from people where you live. 68% of people aged under 25 feel that they have been discriminated against because of their age, compared to 20% of 65-79 year olds. Young people in their 20s are regarded by all age groups as having lower status than older people and are viewed by all groups to be less competent, friendly and moral than those in their 70s. We are unable to tell whether this is a new trend or whether young people have always been regarded as having lower status.

There is **little evidence of resentment of older people by younger generations.** This suggests that narratives about a 'clash of generations' are, as yet, misplaced. Young people on the whole have a positive view of older generations. Also, all generations think that young people today face more challenging labour and housing markets than previous generations, and many people in older generations sympathise with the challenges that young people face.

Participation in mainstream politics is far lower amongst today's young people than for previous generations but trust in traditional institutions and authority figures does not vary significantly between generations. There is no evidence of lower trust in 'authority' figures and institutions such as the police, doctors, teachers, judges, clergymen, politicians, business leaders, and journalists amongst young people compared to older people. There does not appear to be a widespread view amongst young people that society needs to be radically changed or a rejection of the values and institutions of democratic society.

There is a clear generational shift towards **young people being less supportive of the welfare state than older generations**. This appears to be partly due to a view that the system is abused by many people and partly due to an emphasis on personal autonomy. Generation Y is more likely than other cohorts to believe the role of state should be more focused on providing opportunities and less on managing the risks individuals face. This suggests that Generation Y is a more 'individualist' generation than the others, more concerned with personal independence and opportunity than compulsory systems of risk pooling and redistribution. However, younger people are no less likely to think that specific groups, such as the elderly, the disabled and low-income working families need to be supported.

Younger people are less likely than older people to see immigration as an important issue and appear to be less likely to view immigration as a cause for concern. However, these attitudes vary significantly between different groups of young people and a majority of all generations favour strict limits on immigration. Younger generations are also less negative about the EU than older generations.

Wellbeing

In the UK, wellbeing follows a 'U-shape' over the life course. **Wellbeing is relatively high in the late teens before declining through the early 20s until late middle age, when it rises again.** This relationship holds for all domains of wellbeing: life satisfaction, viewing things in life as worthwhile, happiness and self-declared anxiety.

Whilst **most children and young people have high levels of wellbeing, there are significant levels of variation between groups** and overall the UK performs slightly below average compared to other developed countries. However, according to some measures, the wellbeing of children and young people has improved in the last few years.

There are a range of negative outcomes related with being a young person not in education employment or training (NEET), such as depression, stress, anxiety and other health issues.

A minority of children and young people are affected by mental health issues. Estimates suggest that around 10% have a clinically-recognised disorder. **Anxiety, depression, emotional and conduct problems amongst young people rose between the 1980s and the millennium. Since then, there are indications that these upward trends have levelled off or begun to reverse.**

Since the turn of the millennium, there has been a **decline in risk behaviours and some negative outcomes, such as drug taking, teenage pregnancies, drinking, smoking and crime, amongst young people.** However, many of these are still high by international standards and prevalence varies significantly amongst young people.

There are a wide range of ways in which technology use could impact on attitudes, behaviours and wellbeing of young people. **There is clear evidence that moderate use of technology is likely to have significant positive impacts on wellbeing but that for the small minority of young people who use technology heavily, there could be a range of negative impacts,** related to, for instance, 'sexualisation', the influence of violent video games and cyber-bullying. However, there is considerable uncertainty about the scale of these effects. It is too simplistic to conclude that the effects of a particular technology are 'good' or 'bad'. The impacts of technologies will depend on how children and young people use them and this will depend on a range of wider social and psychological factors.

SECTION 3: Key drivers that may impact on how young people's attitudes, behaviours and experiences may evolve over the next 10 years

A number of drivers are likely to shape the context of young people's lives over next 10 years and thus affect how young people's attitudes and behaviours might change by 2024. The key drivers and underlying evidence were developed through a combination of desk research about ongoing trends and cross-government workshops.

It is important to note that we can be less confident about our assessments about potential future trends compared to the evidence on the current trends in social attitudes set out in section 2 above. Drivers of young people's attitudes, behaviours and experiences may include:

- Young people are **spending more time in education** than in the past. However, it is uncertain whether the numbers of young people staying in education will continue to grow.
- **Young people are part of a society experiencing significant demographic change.** The UK population is growing, becoming older and more ethnically diverse. It is also likely that young people will increasingly live in densely-populated cities and will be more likely than older people to move regularly to study and to find work.
- Young people may increasingly experience **a wide range of more flexible, and potentially more rapidly changing, living arrangements.** Single occupancy, non-familial cohabitation and multi-generational households could all become more commonplace.
- **The increasing prevalence of information technology in everyday life.** It seems highly likely that this trend will continue and intensify in the future, and could have significant impacts on the social and economic lives of young people.
- **The changing nature of the youth labour market:** There is a large amount of uncertainty about the economic conditions that will affect young people in 2024. This is partly because it is difficult to disentangle long term labour market trends from the temporary impacts of the recession and partly because of uncertainty around the nature of those long term trends. It is likely that young people's labour market opportunities will improve as the macroeconomic environment becomes more favourable. However, some commentators argue that we are seeing a change in the nature of the youth labour market towards fewer, less-secure jobs.

SECTION 4: How young people's attitudes, behaviours and experiences might evolve in the next 10 years.

This section explores both what the attitudes, behaviours and experiences of today's children and young people may be like when they are 10 years older in 2024, but also what the next cohort of children and young people's attitudes and experiences will be like. It brings together the trends in attitudes and changing context in which young people find themselves in order to assess how young people's attitudes, behaviours and experiences might change in the future.

There is significant uncertainty about how young people's attitudes will evolve over time, due to both uncertainty around the circumstances in which young people will find themselves and how different groups of young people will interpret and respond to them. Two key sources of uncertainty are what economic circumstances the UK will find itself in and how digital technologies will be used by young people in 2024. Given these uncertainties, the findings of this section should be viewed as more tentative.

The following key trends are identified:

Contact with an increasingly diverse peer group and high levels of participation in higher education is likely to mean that younger generations **continue the gradual shift towards increasingly liberal/permissive social attitudes about gender equality, sexuality, race and ethnicity**. However, shifts in attitudes to 2024 are likely to be small and it is unlikely that future generations of young people will have uniformly liberal social attitudes.

It is likely that this generation of young people will continue to be interested in helping those around them and that many will remain committed to community engagement. However, lack of trust in others in their communities, coupled with a perception that young people are not valued or treated fairly, could impact negatively on social cohesion.

It is likely, but by no means certain, that low levels of engagement in mainstream politics, particularly amongst disadvantaged young people, will persist. However, it is unlikely that radical social movements will gain broad based support in the UK and it is possible that innovative forms of community and political engagement could emerge by 2024.

It is unlikely that intergenerational tensions will become a major issue. Whilst it is possible that intergenerational inequalities in wealth and income could increase, there is currently little evidence of widespread resentment amongst young people towards older generations.

High levels of optimism, emphasis on personal autonomy and high levels of education are likely to enable many young people to flourish over the next ten years. They will maintain high levels of wellbeing and could compete successfully in a global knowledge economy. However, it is likely that some young people will struggle to achieve the outcomes they were expecting and will struggle to cope with these disappointments.

Young people that are in insecure work or are unemployed may be more likely to suffer negative impacts on their health and wellbeing; for some these will have long term effects. The ability of young people to be resilient to the challenges they face will vary depending on their personal circumstances, and the extent of the supportive relationships available to them. Clearly, how this trend evolves over time will depend on the strength of the macroeconomic environment and the labour market conditions that young people face.

‘Emerging adulthood’ is likely to continue to be a stage in the life course of many young people. Rising housing costs, longer time spent in education and entering the labour market at an older age are likely to lead to extended paths to full adulthood and independence for a large proportion of young people. For those young people whose families are willing and able to support them, this could include longer time spent living with their parents and increased dependence on inter-generational transfers.

Digital technology is very likely to continue to develop and remain a key driver of change. It will continue to shape today’s young people’s lives as they grow older and will also affect future generations of young people. **However, uncertainties about how technologies will evolve and how young people will use them mean that we cannot predict exactly how they will impact on young people.** For many young people it will boost opportunities for social interaction; for some, digital skills may provide a comparative

advantage in the labour market and for a minority of young people, it may have negative implications.

Recent declines across a range of risk behaviours and negative outcomes for young people indicate that there are some common underlying causes. These may include a combination of better relationships with parents, reductions in unstructured leisure time, improved public policy and displacement by other behaviours, such as increased social media and video game use. **Given the many complex explanatory factors that are associated with participating in risk behaviours, we cannot be certain that the trends towards declining risk behaviours will continue to 2024.**

SECTION 5: Conclusion

In conclusion, the social attitudes, behaviours and experiences of young people paint a complex picture of gradual change and continuity over the next 10 years. However, in some spheres, such as those affected by technological change, there is a lot more uncertainty and the potential for more rapid change.

There are a number of positive stories to tell about this generation of young people. For example, a range of risk behaviours and negative outcomes are declining amongst young people, such as drug taking, teenage pregnancies, drinking, smoking and crime. Also, the high levels of aspirations amongst young people, emphasis on personal responsibility and community engagement provide good reasons for optimism about social change over the next 10 years. However, there are also potential concerns, for instance around declining mainstream political engagement, low levels of social trust and the potential negative impacts of digital technologies.

Section 1: Introduction

This report is structured as follows:

- **Section 1** sets out the background to the project, the methodology for the research and outlines the age/period/cohort model.
- **Section 2** explores how social attitudes have evolved over the last 30 years. It focuses on four key areas: values and personal autonomy, attitudes to society and government, aspirations and wellbeing.
- **Section 3** looks at a set of drivers that may affect how young people's attitudes, behaviours and experiences may evolve in the next 10 years. It thus explores how the context in which young people find themselves might change over time.
- **Section 4** combines the attitudinal trends and changing context of young people's lives set out in the previous sections to assess how young people's attitudes, behaviours and experiences might change by 2024.

Background

This report was commissioned by the Cabinet Secretary's Advisory Group in January 2013 as one of five key horizon scanning themes identified as having importance across a range of policy areas. It was carried out between February 2013 and March 2014 by the Horizon Scanning Programme Team in the Cabinet Office's Analysis & Insight, drawing on invaluable contributions from a 'Community of Interest' made up of officials from a number of relevant government departments, and external consultation with academic experts.

Methodology

1. A cross-government 'Community of Interest' was formed of officials from relevant government departments. This group met throughout the project to discuss and advise on content, and suggest directions for research, as well as helping to develop potential policy implications. An Academic Advisory Group was formed and provided useful comments to ensure the findings are robust and reflect current evidence. The project's Academic Advisory Group comprised of:
 - Professor Dominic Abrams, University of Kent
 - Professor Martyn Barrett, University of Surrey
 - Professor Fiona Brooks, University of Hertfordshire
 - Professor Andy Furlong, University of Glasgow
 - Professor Anthony Heath, Oxford University
 - Professor Sonia Livingstone, London School of Economics
 - Professor Bren Neale, Leeds University
 - Professor Peter J. Scott, Open University
 - Professor David Voas, University of Essex
 - Dr Christina Scharff, King's College London
2. Desk-based research was undertaken by the Cabinet Office team to undertake a literature review and identify key evidence including published survey reports, marketing literature, academic publications and to do additional quantitative analysis of survey data. Dr Siobhan McAndrew and her colleagues at the University of Manchester Institute for Social Change provided valuable contributions to the paper.

3. Two workshops were held on 25th April 2013 and 31st July 2013 with the Community of Interest, to identify potential future drivers of change affecting young people. The purpose of these workshops was to take on views across government about what the key drivers of young people's attitudes might be, and assess which were the most high impact and how certain we are about how they might evolve over the next 10 years.
4. Four focus groups were conducted by the Cabinet Office team with groups of young people around the country to supplement the findings of desk research. This methodology provided detailed insight into young peoples' views and helped to create a better understanding of data emerging from the desk-based research. The groups were held in the week commencing 25th November. In total, 41 young people took part from a range of socio-economic backgrounds and geographical areas. Due to limitations in time and resource, we did not adopt a rigorous sampling approach. Therefore, the results should be regarded as indicative, rather than representative of all young people.

The Age/Period/Cohort Model

This report seeks primarily to identify whether large scale, structural shifts are occurring between the attitudes of today's young people and the attitudes of older generations when they were young. Therefore, it is largely based on available quantitative evidence including data from large scale longitudinal cohort studies and attitudinal surveys. Where possible it seeks to differentiate between the attitudes of different groups within generations and to include more qualitative evidence. However, the limits of space, time and resources means that this can only ever be a slice across the published literature and our focus has been on quantitative analysis.

This report seeks to identify whether social attitudes of young people can be explained by:

1. *Age/Life course effects*: where an individual's views change as they grow older or go through different life stages, such as moving from education to employment or becoming parents.
2. *Period effects*: where everyone changes because of external events or a general cultural shift related to the time period under observation.
3. *Cohort/Generational effects*: where opinions are set by the formative experiences of a generation, and aggregate opinion changes over time because the composition of the population changes (sometimes called generational replacement).

The age-period-cohort (APC) model is used widely to separate each of these influences¹. However, as there is a perfect linear relationship between these effects (period equals year of birth plus age), it is impossible to observe independent variation, so standard statistical techniques cannot be used to isolate one of these effects from the others. There is a considerable body of literature going back to the 1970s about how to resolve this and to draw meaningful conclusions².

¹ Browning, Martin, Ian Crawford, and Marike Knoef (2012). *The age-period cohort problem: set identification and point identification*. No. CWP02/12. Cemmap working paper, 2012. Online at: <http://users.ox.ac.uk/~econ0237/papers/apc.pdf>

² Glenn, Norval D. (2003) "Distinguishing age, period, and cohort effects. *Handbook of the life course*: 465-476.

The APC approach requires surveys that have been asking the same questions for a long time. This enables us to see how people in different generations respond to the same questions over time. This means we can see, for instance, if young people today have different views from those of young people 10 years ago, and whether the attitudes of people who were young 10 years ago are similar now.

Clearly, the nature of these effects will determine whether current social attitudes of young people will stay with them as they get older and lead to aggregate opinion changes. If a particular social attitude is determined by a life course effect, then it will fade out as people get older but if it is determined by a new generation having fundamentally different views that remain different to older generations, then it is likely to have significant impacts on the attitudes of society as a whole.

Key data sources include:

1. The **British Social Attitudes Survey** (BSAS) was established in 1983 to chart changes, or lack of change, in public attitudes, values and beliefs over time³. This provides a valuable basis for this report. In the Ipsos Mori 'Generations' analysis of the BSAS, surveys have been used to compare how people in different generations respond to the same questions over time⁴. Similarly, NatCen have produced generational analyses using all 30 years of BSAS data⁵.
2. The **European Values Survey** has data available from 1981-2009, and colleagues from the Institute for Social Change at the University of Manchester have kindly contributed to this paper by producing generational analysis of this data source.
3. The Cabinet Office Analysis & Insight Team have provided analysis of the **British Household Panel Survey** (BHPS) and **Understanding Society**. The BHPS began in 1991 and some questions were continued into the larger scale Understanding Society.
4. Other data sources with shorter time series have also been used where there is a gap in the long time series data sets. For example, the **Community Life/Citizenship Surveys** are used to provide more granular evidence on the community engagement of young people.
5. For a large number of topics long running repeated surveys do not exist. Where this is the case we have used one-off surveys to compare the responses of young people to older people. This means that age and generational effects cannot be separated out.

Adopting a 'generational' perspective does not mean that differences between people in the same generation are being ignored. It is important to note that 'young people' are very far from being a homogenous group, and there is a risk of over-generalisation about the distinctive attributes of today's young people as different from previous generations. The value of generational analysis is primarily in identifying large scale attitudinal shifts within society. For this reason it is not particularly suitable for attempting to identify attitudes held by a minority that may be particularly impactful. One key criticism of popular generational studies is that they generalise about all young people from studies of US university students that are unrepresentative of the generally populace. A further one is that generational approaches 'stereotype' generations and tries to give them coherent 'characters', which are

³ Park, A. et al. Eds. (2013) *British Social Attitudes 30* NatCen Social Research [online]. Available from: http://www.bsa-30.natcen.ac.uk/media/37580/bsa30_full_report_final.pdf

⁴ Ipsos MORI (2013) *Generations* [online] available from: <http://www.ipsos-mori-generations.com/>

⁵ Park, A. et al. Eds. (2013) *British Social Attitudes 30* NatCen Social Research [online]. Available from: http://www.bsa-30.natcen.ac.uk/media/37580/bsa30_full_report_final.pdf

ascribed a misleading amount of certainty⁶. This can lead to contradictory conclusions that characterise today's young people positively (confident, optimistic, team-orientated)⁷ or negatively (narcissistic, materialist, entitled)⁸.

This study attempts to avoid these criticisms. Instead of stereotyping particular generations it seeks to explore where there are trends in how attitudes are evolving over time. There are many differences in attitudes by age, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, socioeconomic status, and so on, which cannot be ignored. Wherever possible, this report reflects the (often significant) differences within, as well as between generations. However, sample sizes of the available survey data place a limit on the extent to which the data can be broken down to look at specific groups/ characteristics within this analysis.

A further challenge has been the varying geographical coverage of these surveys. The geographical scope of this paper is social attitudes in the United Kingdom. However, not all surveys cover this entire area. For instance, LSYPE covers only England, Community Life and the Citizenship Survey cover England and Wales and the BSAS covers England, Scotland and Wales. Due to the scarcity of data sources, those surveys that do not cover the entire UK have not been excluded but their geographical coverage is explicitly stated.

Defining 'Young people'

This generation of 'young people' are defined here as those born in 1990 or after (so, in 2014, aged under 25). One aim of this report was to test the hypothesis that this 'generation' of young people has attitudes that differentiate it markedly from previous generations when they were the same age. This hypothesis is based on two possible drivers: this generation came of age during the economic downturn with its consequently higher levels of youth unemployment and also they grew up as 'digital natives', immersed in technology from a young age and using it differently from previous generations.

In practice, a shortage of up-to-date survey data with sufficiently large sample sizes has meant that we have struggled to fully test this hypothesis. The evidence that is available does not indicate that there are significant differences between young people born after 1990 and those born in the 1980s.

The quantitative analysis in this report uses the definitions of 'generations' adopted by Ipsos MORI in their Generations research⁹:

Generations	Age
'Generation Y'	Born 1980 onwards, now aged in mid 30s and younger
'Generation X'	Born 1966 – 1979, now aged mid 30s to late 40s

⁶ Hoover, E. (2009) *'The Millennial Muddle: How stereotyping students became a thriving industry and a bundle of contradictions'* [online] available from: <http://chronicle.com/article/The-Millennial-Muddle-How/48772/>

⁷ Howe, N. And Strauss, W. (2008) *'Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation'*

⁸ Twenge, J. (2007) *'Generation Me: Why today's young Americans are more confident, assertive, entitled- and more miserable than ever before.'*

⁹ Ipsos MORI (2013) *Generations* [online] available from: <http://www.ipsos-mori-generations.com/>

'Baby-boomers'	Born 1945-1965, now late 40s – late 60s.
'Pre-war'	Born before 1945, now aged late 60s and upwards.

Where sample sizes allow, those born in 1990 and later are explored as a separate group and are labelled 'Generation Z'.

The specific breakpoints between these 'generations' are, of course, to some extent arbitrary but they are based on those commonly used elsewhere in academic and 'grey' literature, marketing research and in popular discourse. In a number of cases, the available data does not correspond to the 'generations' set out above. Where data sets are used that do not use these definitions, this is made clear when discussing findings.

Section 2: Current trends in the social attitudes of young people

Section 2 of this report sets out the key findings on how social attitudes have evolved over the last 30 years and focuses on four key areas: values and personal autonomy, attitudes to society and government, aspirations and wellbeing.

Whilst the focus is on attitudes, the section also considers behaviours and experiences of young people in order to provide a more complete picture of social changes over time.

It adopts the same generational definitions as Ipsos MORI's 'Generations' work: 'Pre-War' (born before 1945), 'Baby Boomers' (born 1945-65), 'Generation X' (born 1966-1979) and 'Generation Y' (born after 1980 onwards).

Where possible we have attempted to identify where there are differences in attitudes between those currently in their early twenties and younger compared to older members of Generation Y but few significant differences were found.

Where there is no time series data available, we compare the attitudes of young people (usually defined as those aged under 25) to older groups. When this is the only data available, we cannot explain whether differences between people of different ages are explained by age effects or generational effects.

Values and personal autonomy

This section explores how 'core' values have evolved over time, examining the shift towards more emphasis on personal autonomy, increasingly liberal social values in a range of spheres including attitudes to ethnic diversity and changing attitudes to religion.

Young people's core values

More than previous generations, younger people attach high importance to a wider range of values. They appear to want status and achievement, but also to have fun, independence and novelty.

The key change in the dominant value structure in developed countries has been identified as a movement from materialist values, emphasizing economic and physical security, to a new set of post-materialist values, which include emphasized autonomy and self-expression¹⁰. Indeed, analysis of the Eurobarometer and the World Values Survey from 1970-2006 indicates that a significant generational shift in values did occur in six wealthy western European countries between people born before, during and after World War Two. However, there is little difference in the 'post-materialism' of those born 1956-65 and younger generations. Inglehart hypothesises that the shift towards post-materialism was explained by increased economic security during people's formative years. Conversely, he argues that the end of this shift is because 'perceived security' has ceased to increase over the last twenty years due to higher inequality and youth unemployment. The slowdown of this generational shift means that the gap between the values of the oldest and youngest cohorts in 2006 was less than half the size that it had at the start of the time series in 1970.¹¹

¹⁰ Inglehart, R. And Welzel, C. (2005) *Modernization, Cultural Change and Democracy: the human development sequence* Cambridge University Press

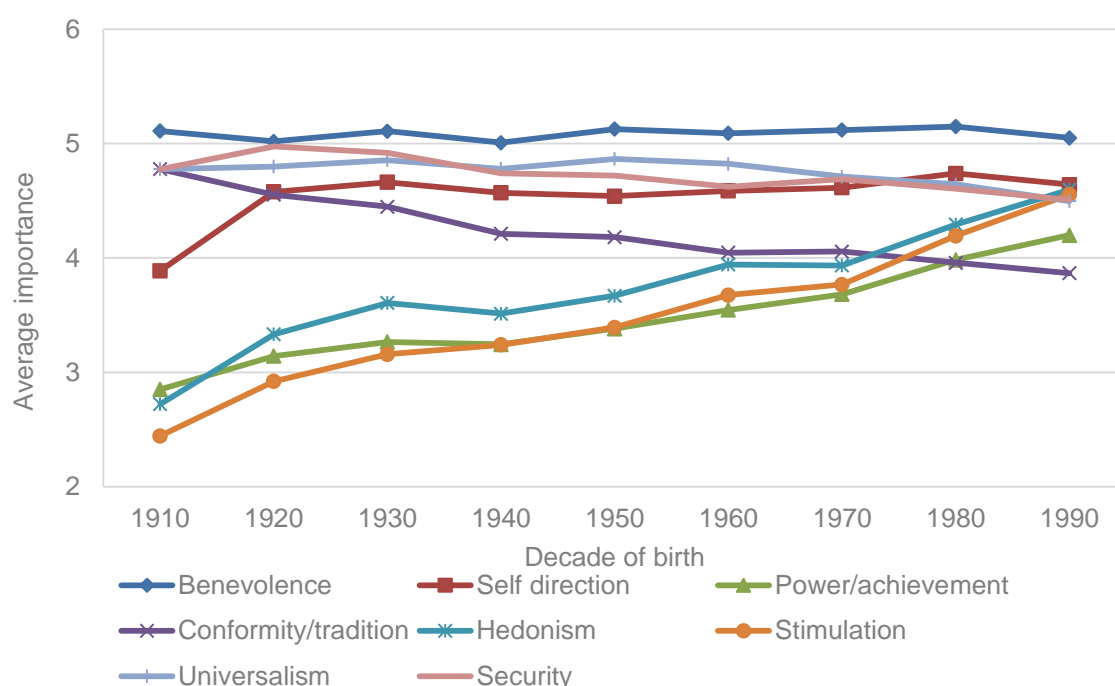
¹¹ Inglehart, R. (2008) 'Changing Values among Western Publics from 1970 to 2006'. *West European Politics* 31:1-2 130-46 [online]. Available from:

However, there is evidence that there has been an increase in the importance of power and achievement (social prestige and personal success), stimulation (excitement and challenge in life) and hedonism (pleasure/gratification for oneself) for younger generations. There has been a decline in the importance of conformity and tradition (upholding social norms and respect for traditional customs) and, to a lesser extent, security (maintaining safety and stability of society) and universalism (understanding and protecting the welfare of all people and nature)¹².

Interestingly, benevolence (improving the welfare of those close to you) remains the most important value for all generations¹³. This suggests that young people attach high value to the welfare of other people, particularly those that they know personally. Indeed, young people in Generation Y (born in 1980 and onwards) are equally likely as older generations to report concern for the living conditions of their immediate family, people in their neighbourhood and humanity in general¹⁴.

The emphasis on such a wide range of values has led to the attitudes of younger generations being characterised as wanting to ‘do well and do good’.

Figure 1: Generational change in values priorities in the UK



Source: *European Social Survey 2010* Pers. Comm. A. Austin, University of Manchester, May 2013.

http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs/articles/folder_published/publication_559/files/values_1970-2006.pdf n.b. Sample sizes are too small to look at the value change in the UK alone.

¹²Austin, A. (2013) *Unpublished analysis of European Social Survey 2009* University of Manchester, May 2013. Pers. Comm.

¹³Austin, A. (2013) *Unpublished analysis of European Social Survey 2009* University of Manchester, May 2013. Pers. Comm.

¹⁴McAndrew, S. (2013) *Unpublished analysis of European Values Survey 1990, 1999 and 2009*. University of Manchester Institute for Social Change

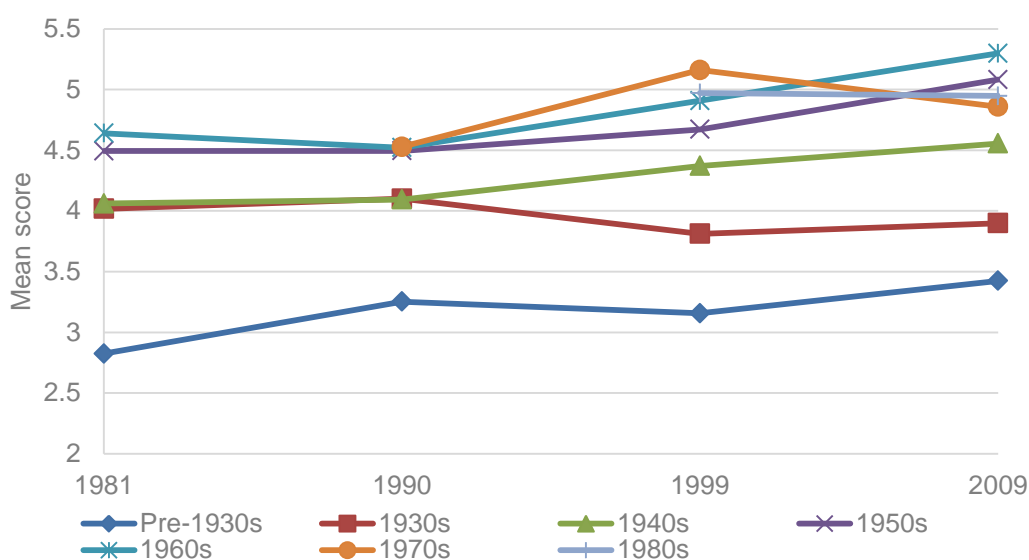
Researchers at the University of Manchester have explored value change over time in the UK by looking at responses in the European Values Survey in 1981, 1990, 1999 and 2009 to a number of questions on:

1. *Autonomy*: based on responses to questions about willingness to justify homosexuality, prostitution, abortion, divorce, euthanasia and suicide
2. *Self-interest*: based on responses to questions about willingness to justify joyriding, lying, benefit fraud, avoiding a fare on public transport, tax fraud and accepting a bribe.

The graphs below show responses by age group and birth cohort for each of these measures. The first graph shows that emphasis on personal autonomy has increased, and values of purity and sanctity have decreased. This appears to be a generational or cohort effect. Younger generations are more likely to have permissive attitudes to personal morality than older generations. However, this trend disappears for generations born after the 1950s. This fits with Inglehart's hypothesis above that generational shifts in values have slowed down.

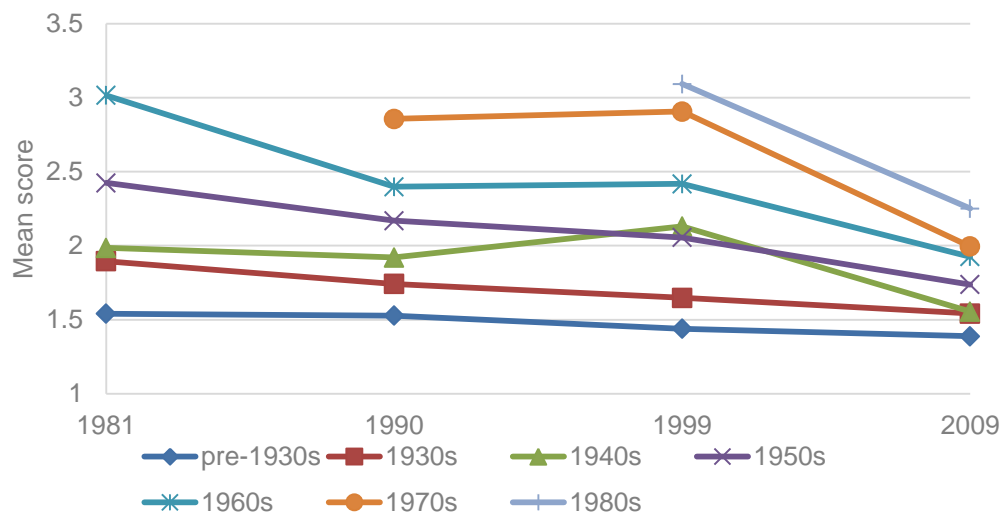
The second graph shows that attitudes to crime and cheating have been constant over the four waves of the EVS. Younger people are more likely to justify crimes than older people, but this seems to be an age or lifecycle effect. As people get older they become less likely to justify self-interest. Young people today are no more likely to justify self-interest than previous generations were when they were younger.

Figure 2: Generational Change in Willingness to Justify Personal Autonomy



Source: University of Manchester analysis of the European Values Survey 1981, 1990, 1999 and 2009

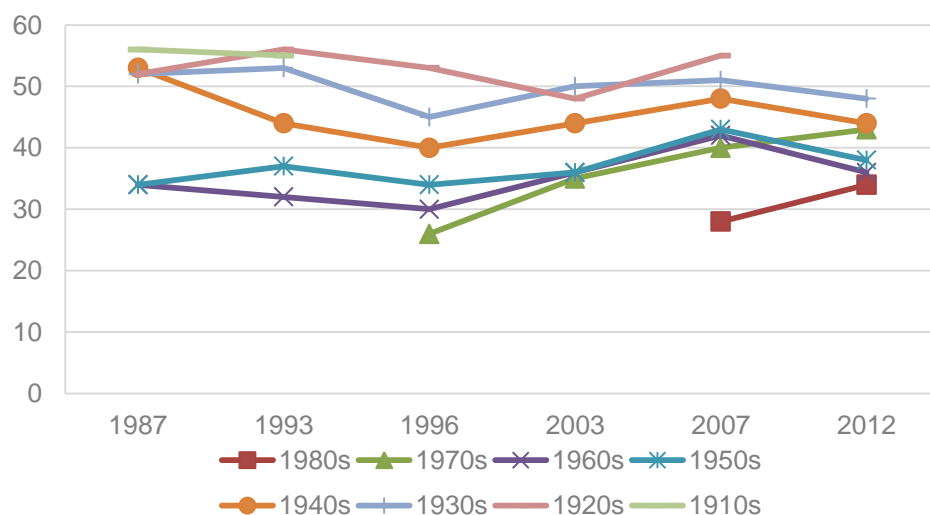
Figure 3: Generational Change in Willingness to Justify Self-Interested Behaviour



Source: University of Manchester analysis of the European Values Survey 1981, 1990, 1999 and 2009

There does not appear to be a strong generational shift against belief in the rule of law. Whilst only a minority of those born in the 1980s agree that, “The law should always be obeyed, even if a particular law is wrong”, the proportion of those born in the 1980s that agree with the statement (34%) in 2012 is not significantly lower than the proportion of those born in the 1960s (38%) or 1950s (38%). It is also, little different from the views of those born in the 1960s and 1970s when they were a similar age¹⁵.

Figure 4: Percentage agreeing “The law should always be obeyed, even if a particular law is wrong”



¹⁵Taylor, E., Park, A. and Clery, L.(2013) *Internal Analysis of British Social Attitudes*, 2012 NatCen Social Research

Liberal social values

It appears that there has been a general shift towards more 'liberal' social attitudes in society as a whole¹⁶. It is likely that this is associated with the emphasis on personal autonomy set out above. Younger people are generally more likely than older people to be more liberal and tolerant of difference, and are more relaxed than the population overall about drugs, sex and sexuality, alcohol, euthanasia and non-traditional family structures¹⁷. On average, young people aged 18-24 would vote against reinstating the death penalty, whereas the general public would vote for it. Younger people are divided over the legalisation of soft drugs, whereas the public in general is against it¹⁸. Two thirds of 18-24 year olds are in favour of allowing same sex marriage, compared to just over half of the population as a whole¹⁹.

There has been growing acceptance of homosexuality since the 1980s. In 1983 17% thought homosexuality was "not wrong at all", falling to 11% by 1987 (a time of great concern about HIV AIDS). Now nearly half (47%) take this view, while 22% think it is "always wrong" (compared with 50% in 1983). This change is explained by a clear generational shift in attitudes, as can be seen in the chart below²⁰. Young people are more likely to be liberal in their attitudes when they personally know a lesbian or gay person, for example²¹. There are, however, some religious and cultural variations in these attitudes¹⁶.

¹⁶ Government Equalities Office (2010) *Changing Attitudes to Equality: Headline Findings*. [online]. Available from: <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20120816224600/http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/equalities/research/changing-attitudes?view=Binary>

¹⁷ The Economist (2013) *Generation Boris* [online]. Available from: <http://www.economist.com/news/britain/21578666-britains-youth-are-not-just-more-liberal-their-elders-they-are-also-more-liberal-any>

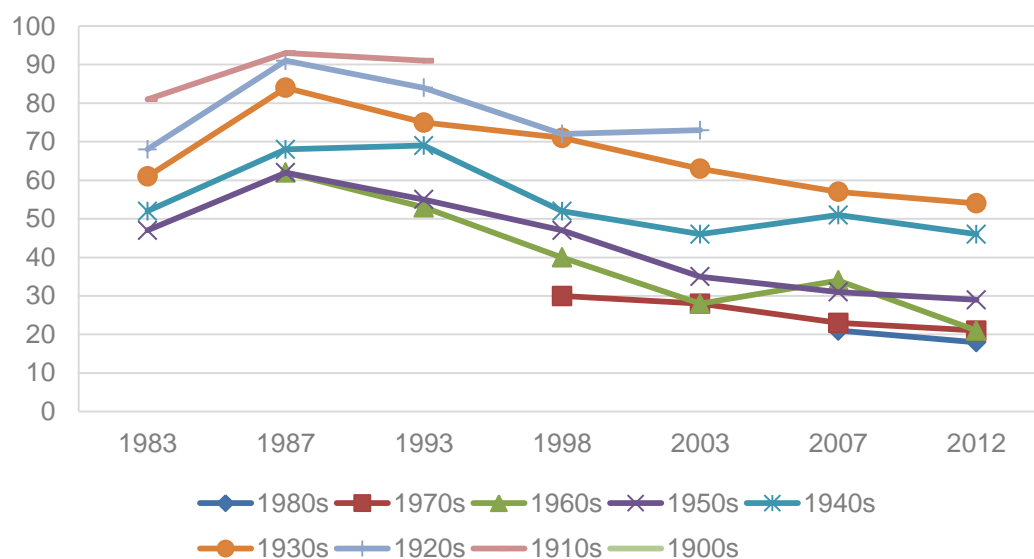
¹⁸ YouGov (2012) *British Future Survey Results* [online]. Available from: http://cdn.yougov.com/cumulus_uploads/document/5nfv7cj25l/YG-Archives-BritishFuture-YoungPeople-270712.pdf

¹⁹ YouGov (2013) *University of Lancaster Survey Results* [online]. Available from: http://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/tt2h8vr1uk/YG-Archive-University-of-Lancaster-results-300113-faith-matters-same-sex-marriage-debate.pdf

²⁰ Park, A. et al. Eds. (2013) *British Social Attitudes 30* NatCen Social Research [online]. Available from: http://www.bsa-30.natcen.ac.uk/media/37580/bsa30_full_report_final.pdf

²¹ Collier, K. L., Bos, H. M., & Sandfort, T. G. (2012). Intergroup contact, attitudes toward homosexuality, and the role of acceptance of gender non-conformity in young adolescents. *Journal of adolescence*, 35(4), 899-907.

Figure 5: Percentage agreeing that “Homosexuality is wrong” by generation



Source: NatCen Social Research, *British Social Attitudes 30*

Attitudes towards the role in society of men and women have changed considerably too. In the 1980s there was still considerable support for ‘traditional’ gender roles. In 1984, for instance, 43% agreed with the view that “a man’s job is to earn money; a woman’s job is to look after the home and family”, but now only 13% take this view. This is largely explained by a generational shift in attitudes, with each generation less likely to support traditional gender roles than the last. The gap is narrowing between the differences of the most recent cohorts. This implies that, while we might expect to see further reductions in support for a traditional division of labour in coming decades, the speed of change in attitudes may slow down²².

Despite social change in a range of spheres, girls and young women continue to face gendered inequalities²³. For example, women still report undertaking a disproportionate amount of housework and caring activities, spending an average of 13 hours on housework and 23 hours caring for family members each week, compared with eight and 10 hours respectively for men²⁴. Also, there are concerns related to the sexualisation of young people, often related to the use of digital technology, which are discussed in the section on ‘wellbeing and technology’ below.

Despite espousing more liberal social attitudes, young people do not appear to be less prejudiced against gay men and lesbians, black people, Muslims or women than older people. They are no less likely than older groups to say that either they did not mind coming across as prejudiced or that they sometimes feel prejudice but try not to let it

²² Park, A. et al. Eds. (2013) *British Social Attitudes 30* NatCen Social Research [online]. Available from: http://www.bsa-30.natcen.ac.uk/media/37580/bsa30_full_report_final.pdf

²³ Attwood, F. Bale, C. and Barker, M. (2013) ‘*The Sexualisation Report*’ [online]. Available from: <http://senseaboutsex.files.wordpress.com/2012/08/theseexualizationreport.pdf>

²⁴ Park, A. et al. Eds. (2013) *British Social Attitudes 30* NatCen Social Research [online]. Available from: http://www.bsa-30.natcen.ac.uk/media/37580/bsa30_full_report_final.pdf

show²⁵. Therefore, whilst liberal social values are becoming the norm it is not the case that they are homogenous or that they are always acted upon.

Attitudes towards ethnic diversity

Young people are more ethnically diverse than the population as a whole. This is likely to have shaped their attitudes towards race and diversity, with a generational shift towards declining racial prejudice²⁶. In the 2007/8 Citizenship Survey, younger people were more likely than older people to say respect for people from different ethnic groups was an important value for living in Britain today. Those aged 16 to 24 (42%) were the more likely to say this than those aged 35 to 49 (37%), 50 to 64 (32%), 65 to 74 (25%) and 75 or over (25%). Younger people were less likely than older people to say that everyone should speak English. Younger people attach less importance to where their family came from originally in their sense of identity than older people²⁷.

Young people are increasingly interacting with people from a wider range of ethnic backgrounds, as society becomes more diverse, particularly more rural and suburban areas where the ethnic minority population has increased. Younger people in Britain are more likely than older generations to socialise with people from ethnic minority backgrounds and it is perhaps this proximity that is contributing towards their more accepting attitudes. Far more young people regularly mix with people from different ethnic or religious backgrounds. 92% of 16-24 year olds compared to 80% of 50-64 year olds. This attitudinal shift may also be explained by younger generations being more educated and, in particular, being more likely to have gone to university, which is associated with more liberal social values. However, younger people are also more likely than older people to think racial or religious harassment is a problem in their local area²⁸. There is likely to be significant variation in attitudes to ethnic diversity in different regions. Whilst overall the majority of 17 year olds in all regions of England felt that their local area is a place where people from different racial, ethnic and religious backgrounds mix well together, this was higher in London (over 80% agreed with this statement), than in Yorkshire and the Humber²⁹ (70%).

²⁵ Abrams, D. And Houston, D. (2006) *Equality, Diversity and prejudice in Britain: Results from the 2005 National Survey* University of Kent [online]. Available from: http://kar.kent.ac.uk/4106/1/Abrams_KentEquality_Oct_2006.pdf

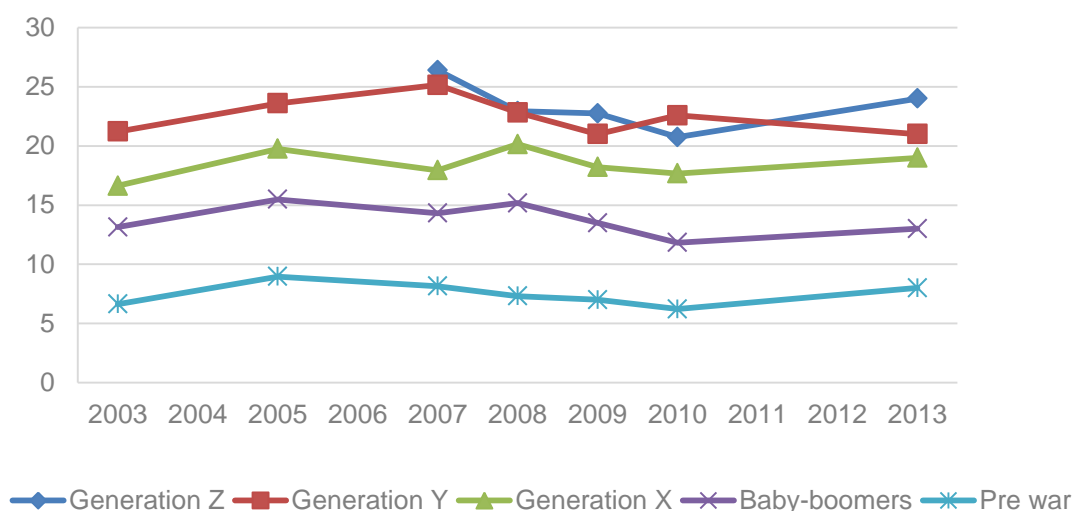
²⁶ Ford, R. (2008), Is racial prejudice declining in Britain? *The British Journal of Sociology*, 59: 609–636. Online at: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1468-4446.2008.00212.x/full>

²⁷ Lloyd, C. (2009) *2007/08 Citizenship Survey: Identity and Values Topic Report* Department for Communities and Local Government

²⁸ Department for Communities and Local Government (2011) *Citizenship Survey: April 2010-March 2011, England* [online]. Available from: <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20120919132719/http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/corporate/statistics/citizenshipsurveyq4201011>

²⁹ Department for Children, Schools and Families (2008) *Youth Cohort Study & Longitudinal Study of Young People in England: the Activities and Experiences of 17 year olds* [online]. Available from: http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110206154043/http://education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SBU/b000850/Bull01_2009textvfinal.pdf

Figure 6: Percentage of people that have "half or more" of their friends from a different race as their own



Source: Cabinet Office Internal Analysis of Citizenship Survey 2001 to 2010/11 and Community Life 2013

Young people's attitudes to religion

There is strong evidence for a generational effect in declining religious identification among the UK's population. Each successive generation has less attachment to religion but the differences between generations are decreasing. Whereas 72% of those born before 1945 would regard themselves as belonging to a religion, the figure is 51% for Baby Boomers, 40% for Generation X and 38% for Generation Y³⁰. 27% of the Pre-War generation regard religion as very important in their lives, twice as many as for all younger generations³¹. It appears that this trend has been driven by a reduction in affiliation with the Church of England, which has halved, whilst affiliation with other Christian denominations has stayed constant and the numbers of people affiliating with non-Christian religions has increased³².

This slow down in the trend towards secularisation may be explained by younger generations being more ethnically diverse than older generations as the immigrant minority ethnic population in the UK are more religious on average than the White British population, with Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, and Black Africans significantly more likely to assert the importance of their religion to their identity. However, it may be that these groups are showing similar patterns of intergenerational decline between generations³³, with the 'second generation' (born in the UK to immigrant parents) being generally less religious than their

³⁰ Ipsos MORI (2013) *Generations* [online] available from: <http://www.ipsos-mori-generations.com/>

³¹ McAndrew, S. (2013) *Unpublished analysis of European Values Survey 1990, 1999 and 2009*. University of Manchester Institute for Social Change

³² Park, A. et al. Eds. (2013) *British Social Attitudes 30* NatCen Social Research [online]. Available from: http://www.bsa-30.natcen.ac.uk/media/37580/bsa30_full_report_final.pdf

³³ Güveli, A. and Platt, L. (2011) Understanding the religious behaviour of Muslims in the Netherlands and the UK. *Sociology*, 45(6), 1008–1027.

parents – although Islam shows a higher level of intergenerational transmission compared to other religions³⁴.

Aspirations

This section looks at young people's goals in life, how optimistic they are about the future, and their aspirations and expectations about education and employment. Finally, it looks at evolving attitudes to entrepreneurialism amongst young people.

What is important in life for young people?

When we ask people of different ages what things are most important to them, the answers are similar, which conforms to Inglehart's hypothesis that the slowdown of generational shifts in values have meant that the difference between attitudes of people in different generations has reduced³⁵. The key differences between young people aged under 25 and older groups identified in the chart below are: young people are more likely to view money and a fulfilling job as more important and having children, health and good partnerships as less important. It may be that these are explained by generational shifts towards values emphasising personal autonomy and self-expression as outlined above. Indeed, we do see fairly clear patterns for the importance of money and a fulfilling job, which become less important with age. It could also be that some of these differences are explained by 'life course' effects. For instance, 16-24 year olds are less likely to have children or long term partners so they are less likely to value these things. They may also be less likely to view health as important because they are less likely to have health problems than older people. The BHPS data on this question only runs from 1998-2008 and there are only three data points so we are unable to ascertain whether these differences are generational effects³⁶.

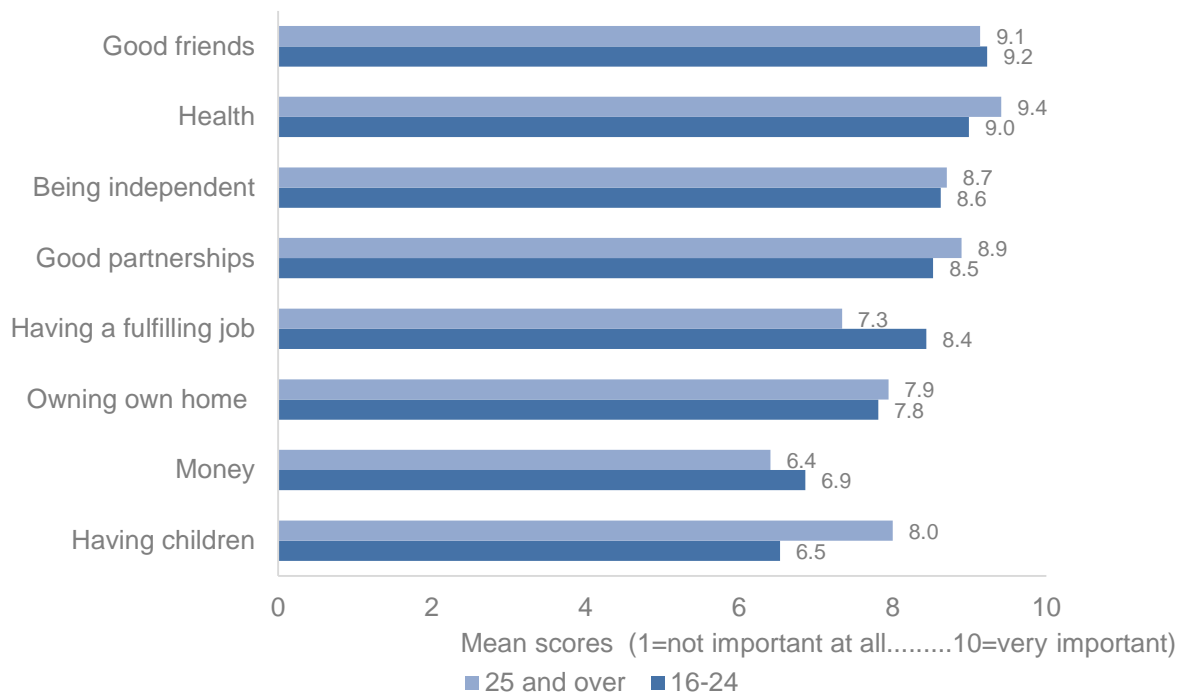
Figure 7: Comparison of the Importance of various issues to 16-24's vs. all other age groups

³⁴ Scourfield, J., Taylor, C., Moore, G., and Gilliat-Ray, S. (2012). The intergenerational transmission of Islam in England and Wales: Evidence from the Citizenship Survey. *Sociology*, 46(1), 91-108.

³⁵ McAndrew, S. (2013) *Unpublished analysis of European Values Survey 1990, 1999 and 2009*.

University of Manchester Institute for Social Change

³⁶ Cabinet Office (2013) *Internal analysis of the British Household Panel Survey 1998-2008*

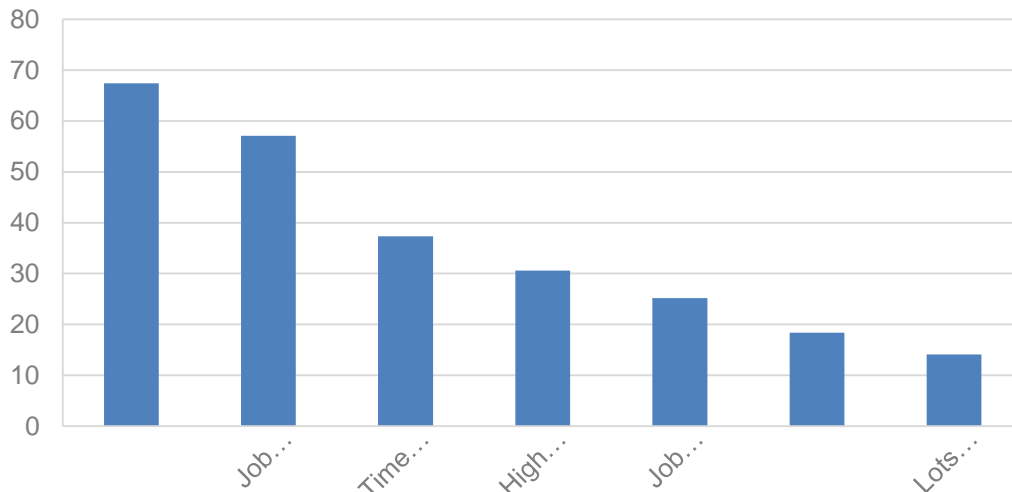


Source: Cabinet Office Internal Analysis of British Household Panel Study 2008

When we look at the attributes that young people consider important for their future occupations, we find that overall the things that they view as most important are the job being interesting and job security, which the majority view as very important. Getting a high income, helping others and contributing to society are very important to only a minority of young people. The importance given to job security indicates that claims that young people are more comfortable with flexible working arrangements may be over-stated. Evidence from the European Values Survey suggests that there has been no significant change in attaching importance to job security since the mid 1980s³⁷.

Figure 8: Attributes considered very important to future occupations by young people aged 16-19

³⁷ McAndrew, S. (2013) *Unpublished analysis of European Values Survey 1981, 1990, 1999 and 2009*. University of Manchester Institute for Social Change



Source: Cabinet Office Internal Analysis of Understanding Society (Wave 2: 2009 to 2011)

What is important for a job varies between different groups of young people. BME young people were more likely than white young people to regard all of the attributes as very important, apart from having an interesting job, which was equally important for both groups. However, the ordering of attributes was similar for BME and white young people. Women were more likely to view time for family, job security, interesting job, contributing to society and helping others as very important. They were less likely to view high income and leisure time as important. Young people whose fathers worked in routine and manual jobs are more likely to view high income, lots of leisure time and job security as very important and less likely to view an interesting job as very important compared to those with fathers from 'managerial and professional' occupational backgrounds.

Therefore, it appears likely that claims that young people want to 'do well and do good' and to have interesting work apply more to young women and those from more advantaged backgrounds. For other groups income and leisure time are relatively more important. That young people from more disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to attach value to income fits with Inglehart's hypothesis that economic insecurity and low status during formative years is associated with materialism. This finding was supported by Cabinet Office focus groups, which found that young people from more advantaged backgrounds set out a very wide range of criteria for what they wanted from their future job, such as 'enjoyability', helping others and a personal sense of achievement. Less advantaged young people focused more on high income as the most important thing from their future job³⁸.

According to the Natcen report into the August 2011 riots, many young people who were involved identified poverty and materialism as key drivers of their participation in the riots. Young people talked about the difficulty of managing on the money they received when out of work or in training. Some young people felt that their prospects were limited and so they had little to lose by their involvement in the riots³⁹. At the same time, a materialistic culture was cited as having contributed to looting by both young people and community stakeholders. Participants from the unaffected area in Sheffield suggested that the starker

³⁸ Cabinet Office (2013) *Internal report on focus groups with young people* Unpublished

³⁹ Morrell, G. And Webster, S. (2011) *The August riots in England study* NatCen [online]. Available from: <http://www.natcen.ac.uk/our-research/research/the-august-riots-in-england-study/>

contrast between rich and poor in London might mean that the disparity between young people's material desires and what they could afford might be more pronounced⁴⁰.

High levels of optimism

Young people in the UK are more likely to report being optimistic than older people. 85% of those aged 16-19 and 80% of those aged 20-24 report medium to high levels of optimism about the next 12 months, this declines with age to less than 60% for 50-54 year olds⁴¹. Those aged 18 to 24 are the only age group in society who think that, compared to today, they are more likely to be better off in 2015 than they are to be worse off. This is likely to be, in part, explained by lifecycle effects, as young people may be expecting to move from education into employment⁴². Nevertheless, they are also more likely than older people to think that living standards generally will take some years before they return to the levels they were before the economic downturn. In 2013, 50% of 18-24 year olds thought that it would take more than five years for living standards, employment and growth to recover to pre-crisis levels compared to 44% of people of all ages⁴³.

Today's young people are the only current generation where the majority do not believe that their generation will have had a better life than their parent's generation^{44, 45}. A large majority of young people think it'll be harder for them to get a good job than it was for their parents' generation (77%) and also that it will be harder to buy a home (83%). However, young people feel they have got it better than their parents did when it comes to going to university, travelling abroad and living longer and, while they concede that it will be harder for them than their parents to enjoy a reasonably standard of living, they are less pessimistic about this issue than the public as a whole⁴⁶.

Given that young people are in some ways very pessimistic about the challenges their generation faces, for instance in finding a good job and owning their own home, this optimism about their own futures may suggest self-confidence that they themselves have what it takes to overcome these challenges. Amongst people aged under 30 in the USA who say they don't earn enough money, 88% think they will be able to earn enough in the future to live the life they want⁴⁷. In focus groups, there was a very clear message from young

⁴⁰ Morrell, G. And Webster, S. (2011) *The August riots in England study* NatCen [online]. Available from: <http://www.natcen.ac.uk/our-research/research/the-august-riots-in-england-study/>

⁴¹ ONS (2012) *Measuring national wellbeing- Measuring Young People's Wellbeing, 2012* [online]. Available from: http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171766_282241.pdf

⁴² YouGov (2013) *Resolution Foundation Survey Results* [online]. Available from: http://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/lqa4egpfl4/Resolution_results_130228.pdf

⁴³ YouGov (2013) *Resolution Foundation Survey Results* [online]. Available from: http://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/lqa4egpfl4/Resolution_results_130228.pdf

⁴⁴ Ipsos MORI Social Research Institute *Intergenerational Justice* Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust June 2013 http://www.jrrt.org.uk/sites/jrrt.org.uk/files/documents/Intergenerational_Justice_050613_IpsosMORI_JRRT.pdf

⁴⁵ Duffy, B. et al. (2013) *Generation Strains: a Demos and Ipsos MORI report on changing attitudes to welfare* [online]. Available from: http://www.demos.co.uk/files/Demos_Ipsos_Generation_Strains_web.pdf?1378677272

⁴⁶ YouGov (2012) *British Future Survey Results* [online]. Available from: http://cdn.yougov.com/cumulus_uploads/document/5nfv7cj25l/YG-Archives-BritishFuture-YoungPeople-270712.pdf

⁴⁷ <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/files/2010/10/millennials-confident-connected-open-to-change.pdf>

people from a range of backgrounds that they felt that they would be the main determining factor about whether they reached their goals. One participant said, 'Nothing stops you but yourself. What mindset you're in', another said, 'Only, [you] yourself can stop you getting what you want.'⁴⁸

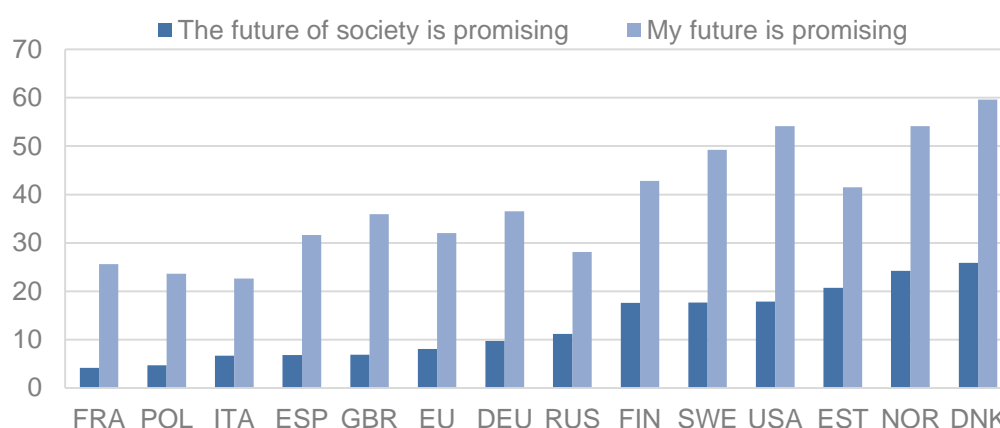
Young people in different groups are not equally likely to be optimistic. Those with lower education levels, those who are not in education or working and ethnic minorities are less likely to be optimistic about their future. However, even these groups are slightly more likely to be optimistic than pessimistic about their future.⁴⁹ It is likely that levels of optimism between different groups of young people can be explained by their different transitions to full adulthood. We would expect that young people in full time education would find that this time would be characterised by high levels of optimism, those young people who are experiencing negative labour market outcomes would be less likely to experience this.

OECD research into the views of young people showed that, internationally, young people are consistently more optimistic about their own futures than the future of society as a whole. Young people in Great Britain (GBR) are fairly pessimistic about society's future compared with the other countries but about average in agreeing that their own future is promising.

Figure 9: Young people's views of the future: percentage agreeing with each statement

⁴⁸ Cabinet Office (2013) *Internal report on focus groups with young people* Unpublished

⁴⁹ YouGov (2012) *British Future Survey Results* [online]. Available from: http://cdn.yougov.com/cumulus_uploads/document/5nfv7cj25l/YG-Archives-BritishFuture-YoungPeople-270712.pdf



Source: OECD 'Young People's Views of the Future, 2013'⁵⁰

High aspirations and expectations for the future

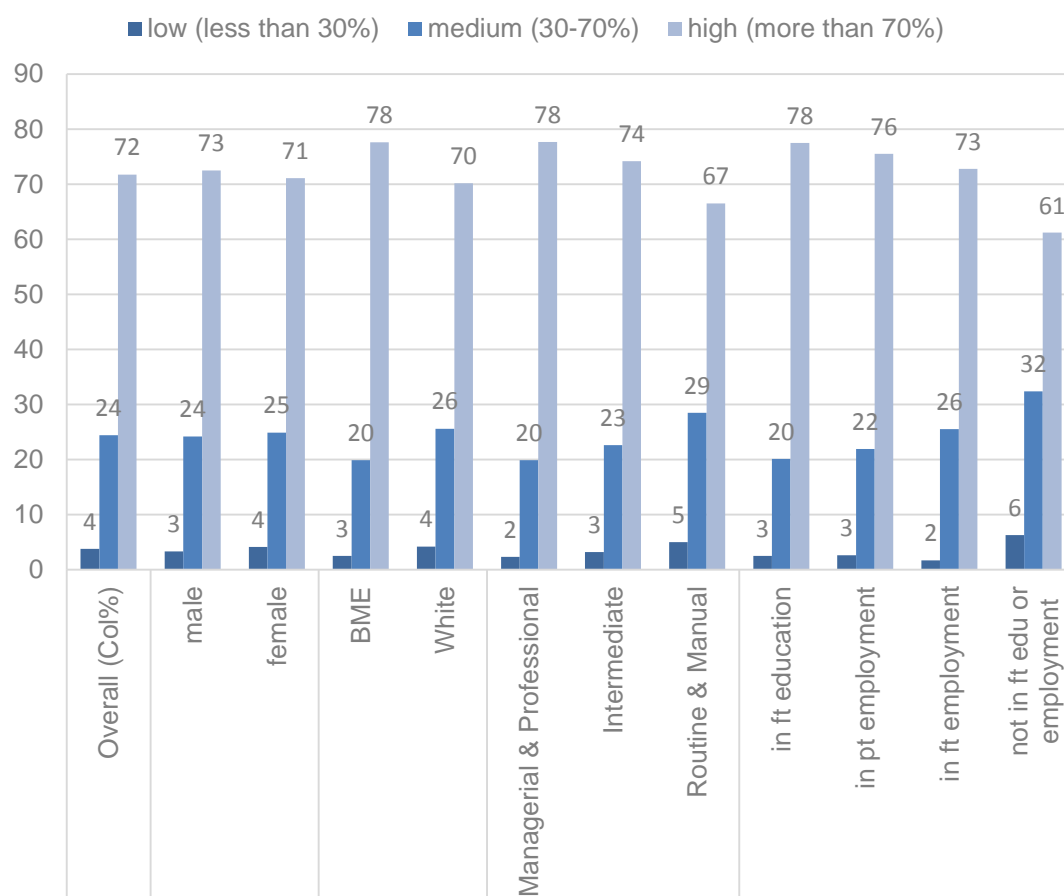
This section looks at aspirations for the future in terms of educational and labour market outcomes. It challenges the notion of a culture of low aspirations but does nonetheless find differences between groups of young people.

On average, more than 70% of young people aged 16-19 think that they are likely to be successful. However, this varies considerably with different characteristics of young people. BME young people have higher expectations of self-defined success than white young people. Those from more advantaged socio-economic backgrounds are more likely to think they will be successful and young people not in full time education or employment are less likely to think that they will be successful. Very small proportions of all groups think that they are unlikely to be successful. Similar patterns are observed for the likelihood of more specific outcomes, such as likelihood of gaining a place in university or training, likelihood of successfully finishing studies and likelihood of finding a suitable job. Very small proportions of young people think that it is likely that they will become long term unemployed and even amongst those currently not in full time education or employment more than 70% expect to find a suitable job⁵¹.

Figure 10: Young people aged 16-19's views on their likelihood of being successful

⁵⁰ OECD (2013), 'Young people's views of the future', in *OECD Economic Surveys: France 2013*, OECD Publishing.

⁵¹ Cabinet Office (2013) *Internal analysis of Understanding Society Wave 2: 2009-2011* unpublished



Source: Cabinet Office Internal Analysis of Understanding Society (Wave 2: 2009 to 2011)

A 2011 Joseph Rowntree Foundation report found that disadvantaged young people had high aspirations; they wanted to go to university and attain professional and managerial jobs in greater numbers than the labour market could fulfil. There was little evidence of fatalism about labour market outcomes or of a belief that not working was acceptable. Therefore, they rejected the conclusion that low aspirations were the main problem for disadvantaged young people. Rather, among young people and their families with high aspirations, knowledge of the pathways through education and employment to realise these ambitions was limited. Young people's aspirations are influenced by multiple mutually reinforcing factors, such as the attitudes of their parents, peers, schools and their local community⁵². Certainly, focus group findings indicate that the information sources that young people had primarily drawn on parents and other role models. These were heavily dependent on their social networks and on the presence of trusted and informed teachers. Those who were unable to draw on these sources broadly felt they had not received helpful careers advice⁵³.

Other research has shown that only around a quarter of young people from the most disadvantaged socio-economic group (who expected to attend higher education at the age of 14) actually ended up attending by the time they were 18/19, compared to a majority in

⁵² Kintrea, K. et al. (2011) *The influence of parents, places and poverty on educational attitudes and aspirations* Joseph Rowntree Foundation [online]. Available from: <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/young-people-education-attitudes-full.pdf>

⁵³ Cabinet Office (2013) *Internal report on focus groups with young people* Unpublished

more advantaged groups⁵⁴. In relation to role models, 41% of young people from poor families did not have anyone in their family whose career they could look up to, compared to 16% of those from affluent backgrounds⁵⁵. More than one in four young people growing up in poverty believe that “few” or “none” of their career goals are achievable, compared to just 7% of those from wealthy families. This indicates that the challenge is not a lack of stretching goals.

Whilst aspirations are high on average even amongst disadvantaged young people, there are still differences between socio-economic groups. According to research by the Prince's Trust, one in four young people aged 16-24 from poor homes (26%) felt that “people like them don't succeed in life”. Almost a quarter from deprived homes (24%) believed they will “end up on benefits for at least part of their life” and more than one in five feel they'll end up in a “dead-end job”⁵⁶. At age 13 in England, 90% of pupils whose parents are in “Higher Managerial and Professional Occupations” plan to stay on in full-time education after age 16 compared with only 67% of pupils whose parents are in the “Routine Occupations” category⁵⁷. Research into the determinants of differences in educational attainment between different socio-economic groups finds that a significant proportion of the difference in attainment appears to be explained by differences in parental and individual attitudes to education. However, it is unclear how much of this relationship is causal⁵⁸⁵⁹.

Pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds are more likely than White pupils to say they would ever apply to university to do a degree. Over 90% of Indian and Black African pupils at age 13 said it is likely or very likely they will apply to university. Ethnic minority pupils are also more confident than White pupils that they will get a university place if they apply⁶⁰.

There are also substantial differences in the aspirations of young people by socio-economic grouping. More than 80% of those whose households are classified by higher managerial and professional occupations said that it is likely that they will go to university, and the majority of these said it is ‘very likely’. At the other extreme, just under half of those from routine backgrounds said it is likely that they will apply.⁶¹

⁵⁴ Chowdry, Crawford & Goodman (2011), ‘The role of attitudes and behaviours in explaining socio-economic differences in attainment at age 16’, *Longitudinal and Life Course Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 59-76 [online]. Available from: <http://www.llcsjournal.org/index.php/llcs/article/viewFile/141/119>

⁵⁵ Princes Trust (2011) *Broke, not broken: tackling youth poverty and the aspiration gap* [online]. Available from: http://www.princes-trust.org.uk/pdf/PovertyReport_170511.pdf

⁵⁶ Princes Trust (2011) *Broke, not broken: tackling youth poverty and the aspiration gap* [online]. Available from: http://www.princes-trust.org.uk/pdf/PovertyReport_170511.pdf

⁵⁷ Department for Education *Longitudinal Study of Young People in England Wave 1 internal summary report*

⁵⁸ Chowdry, Crawford & Goodman (2011), The role of attitudes and behaviours in explaining socio-economic differences in attainment at age 16, *Longitudinal and Life Course Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 59-76 [online]. Available from: <http://www.llcsjournal.org/index.php/llcs/article/viewFile/141/119>

⁵⁹ Gorard, S. et al. (2012) *The impact of attitudes and aspirations on educational attainment and participation* Joseph Rowntree Foundation [online]. Available from: <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/education-young-people-parents-full.pdf>

⁶⁰ Department for Education *Longitudinal Study of Young People in England Wave 1 internal summary report*

⁶¹ Department for Education *Longitudinal Study of Young People in England Wave 1 internal summary report*

Ipsos MORI's *Youth in Transition* 2011 survey, a week before the riots, interviewed 120 young people in London and the South East about their aspirations⁶². The survey identified four groups:

Realists: 'What's the point of joining in?' – rooted in their real life experiences of work and hanging out with friends. These include some of the angriest and most disconnected from society, many aged 16 – 18, from less advantaged backgrounds with little disposable income. They tend not to see themselves as part of a wider adult world, and feel society is against them, saying the police bother them without cause. Although they often live in very urban areas, their sphere of travel and influence is limited. They worry that they might fail at school and fail to find a job, but are worried about the costs of continuing education. Realists appreciate face-to-face, real-time support delivered at a very local level.

Apprentices: Will my hard work pay off eventually? – having just left education, they are trying to get a job or in their first job. Aged 21 – 24, they are grateful to have work at all. They are ambitious and money-orientated, but they are disheartened by what they see as a long slog and feel they could easily get stuck in dead-end occupations. They want to be reassured that their work is worthwhile and will lead to something good in the end.

Aspirers: So many ambitions, but what do I do next? – aged 16 – 18, in full-time study and with a reasonable amount of disposable income. They have a wider and more cosmopolitan outlook, take inspiration from traditional and social media and are constantly online. The internet shapes their view about society. They are engaged consumers, but feel pressure to spend money on luxury brands and media, and are influenced by celebrity culture, giving them very optimistic goals and high pressure to achieve. They are more confident of success, and would like more information about the opportunities open to them.

Professionals: How do I network and develop my own professional identity? – aged 22 – 24, they are more highly educated and more entrepreneurial. They have a well-developed online identity and are clear about the skills they need: formal education, work experience, online presence, and networking. They are struggling to get the right contacts and experience to grow their careers.

These groupings illustrate how, among today's young people, there are multiple perspectives and experiences, with different needs and attitudes, who will need to be treated and communicated with in different ways. This view was supported by the findings of Cabinet Office focus groups. Whilst, in general, career aspirations identified by young people aged 15-20 were high but realistic based on their current circumstances, career aspirations and views on what services and support would be most helpful varied considerably, particularly between those who intended to go to universities and those who did not⁶³.

Attitudes to entrepreneurialism

Young people today may be responding to the economic downturn with greater entrepreneurialism, enabled by new technologies which reduce start-up costs and facilitate communication and collaboration, and attracted by the idea of merging their work and home lives for greater convenience, control, and flexibility, as well as taking advantage of a

⁶² Ipsos MORI (December 2011) *Understanding Society*. [online]. Available from: <http://www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/publications/1452/Understanding-Society-December-2011.aspx>

⁶³ Cabinet Office (2013) *Internal report on focus groups with young people* Unpublished

commercial opportunity⁶⁴. There has been a rapid increase in the numbers of people in the early stages of setting up businesses in the UK since the onset of the recession⁶⁵. The desire to start your own business has risen considerably amongst all age groups over the last decade but especially for those aged under 30⁶⁶. According to the RBS Youth Enterprise Tracker, 55% of 18-30 year olds aim to start a business, compared to 35% of the total adult population. 14% of this age group said they are actually in the process of starting a business⁶⁷.

Around one in eight young people aged 16-19 think that they are likely to become self-employed. Men, young people from an ethnic minority background and those from more advantaged socio-economic backgrounds are more likely to think that they will become self-employed⁶⁸. Another study found that Young Black people were more positive about self-employment and displayed greater enterprise potential than either White or Asian pupils and a family background of self-employment had a positive influence on pupils' intentions to become self-employed⁶⁹.

It is not possible at this stage to state whether this is the beginning of a sustainable shift towards more entrepreneurial attitudes among young people, or whether this is a short-term response to the economic climate and less stable opportunities for employment.

Attitudes to society and government

This section sets out how young people's attitudes to society and government have evolved over time. It focuses on the following areas: attitudes to other generations, social trust and perceptions of discrimination towards young people, young people's community engagement, mainstream political engagement and views on the role of the government in society, including the welfare state. Finally it looks at attitudes to the EU, immigration and to privacy.

Intergenerational attitudes

Given increased intergenerational disparity in terms of income and wealth, we might expect that relationships between generations would be coming under strain due to perceptions of unfairness by younger generations. However, there does appear to be high levels of intergenerational solidarity. There appears to be a strong consensus between generations that today's young people may be more affected by current economic circumstances but also a widespread concern about the quality of life of older people⁷⁰. Generation Y attach a

⁶⁴ Lent, A. (2012) *Generation enterprise: the hope for a brighter economic future* RSA [online]. Available from: http://www.thersa.org/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/724546/Enterprise-Generation-Enterprise_RSA.pdf

⁶⁵ GEM Consortium (2012) *Global Entrepreneurship Monitor United Kingdom 2011 Monitoring Report*. [online]. Available from: <http://www.gemconsortium.org/docs/download/2425>

⁶⁶ Lent, A. (2012) *Generation enterprise: the hope for a brighter economic future* RSA [online]. Available from: http://www.thersa.org/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/724546/Enterprise-Generation-Enterprise_RSA.pdf

⁶⁷ Populus (2013) *RBS Youth Enterprise Tracker Q3 2013*. [online]. Available from: <http://www.inspiringenterprise.rbs.com/sites/default/files/resources/populusrbsenterprisetracker3rdquarter2013report-final.pdf>

⁶⁸ Cabinet Office (2013) *internal analysis of Understanding Society Wave 2: 2009 to 2011* unpublished

⁶⁹ Athayde, R. (2009). Measuring enterprise potential in young people. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 33(2), 481-500.

⁷⁰ Ipsos MORI Social Research Institute *Intergenerational Justice* Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust June 2013

higher priority to spending more on pensions than they do to unemployment benefits⁷¹. Young people aged 18-24 are more likely to believe that Baby Boomers earned their good fortune than that Baby Boomers 'rigged the system' in their favour⁷².

It is likely that these shared opinions are in part explained by empathy with those in other generations. Indeed, those older people with closer relationships with younger people are more likely to have a positive view towards the younger generation and vice versa⁷³. Also, it appears likely that that young people have not formulated a position in which they see themselves, firstly, as a collective and, secondly, as a group that is being treated unfairly. This may be in part due to the influence of older generations and partly due to an emphasis amongst younger people on personal autonomy over group values.

However, it may be that though these views are not widespread yet, pressures in the future could polarise the debate on intergenerational fairness. For example, Generation Y (born after 1979) are slightly more likely to see it as an individual and their family's responsibility (30%) and less likely to think that mainly the government should pay (66%) for residential care for the elderly compared to older generations⁷⁴. Also, over 60% of young people are in favour of means testing pensioners' benefits⁷⁵. People not in work and from lower socio-economic classes were more likely to say that government spending reductions as a result of Spending Review 2010 would disproportionately impact on their generation⁷⁶. This may indicate that the potential for intergenerational discord may be larger amongst disadvantaged groups.

People aged over 70 are viewed by all generations (including young people) as more friendly, more competent and, most of all, as having higher moral standards than those in their 20s. These views varied little with age, gender and socio-economic group. This indicates that these perceptions are held consistently across society. People in their 20s and those in their 70s are on average regarded as making a 'neutral' economic contribution to society, 'neither taking more out than they put in' or 'taking more out than they put in'. There is a slight tendency for older age groups to rate those in their 20s as making a lower economic contribution than younger age groups. Only people aged under 25 think that people in their 20s contribute more economically than those in their 70s. Those in their 20s are regarded as having lower status (an indirect measure of prejudice) by all generations and a higher proportion of people of all ages stated directly that they have positive perceptions of those aged over 70 than towards those in their 20s. Older people are more

[http://www.jrrt.org.uk/sites/jrrt.org.uk/files/documents/Intergenerational Justice 050613 IpsosMORI JRRT.pdf](http://www.jrrt.org.uk/sites/jrrt.org.uk/files/documents/Intergenerational%20Justice%20050613%20IpsosMORI%20JRRT.pdf)

⁷¹ Duffy, B. et al. *Generation Strains: a Demos and Ipsos MORI report on changing attitudes to welfare* 2013 http://www.demos.co.uk/files/Demos_Ipsos_Generation_Strains_web.pdf?1378677272

⁷² YouGov (2012) *British Future Survey Results* [online]. Available from: http://cdn.yougov.com/cumulus_uploads/document/5nfv7cj25l/YG-Archives-BritishFuture-YoungPeople-270712.pdf

⁷³ Vauclair, C-M. Et al. *Measuring attitudes to age in Britain: Reliability and validity of the indicators* Department for Work and Pensions Working Paper No.90 2010 [online]. Available from: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/214388/WP90.pdf

⁷⁴ Ipsos MORI (2013) *Generations* [online] available from: <http://www.ipsos-mori-generations.com/>

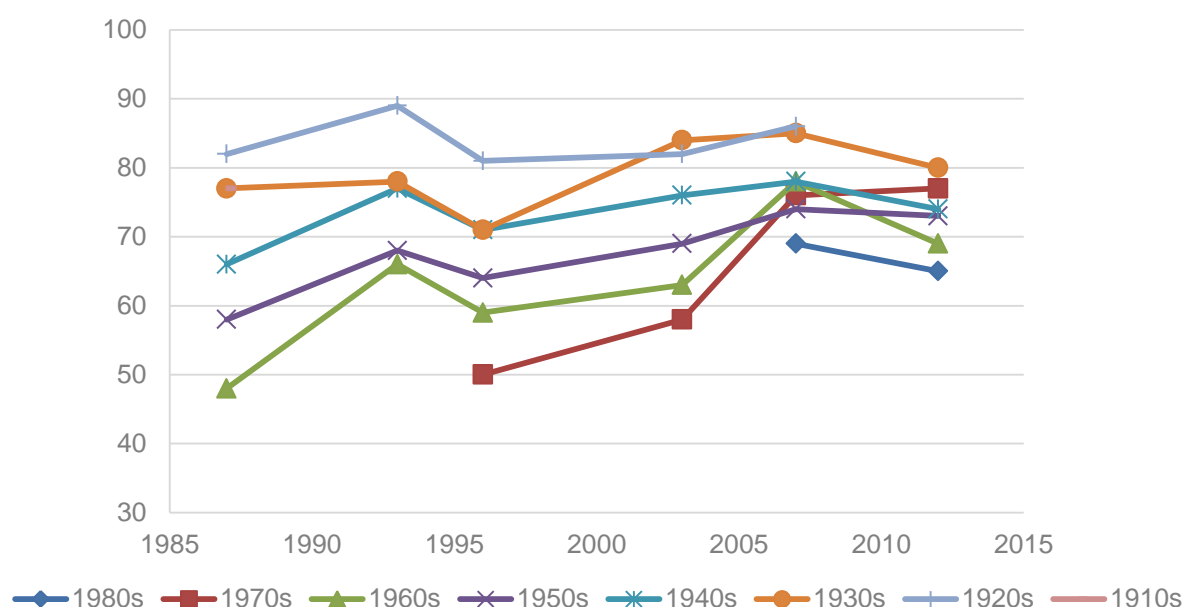
⁷⁵ YouGov (2013) *The Sun survey Results* [online] available from: http://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/wx73df9itw/YouGov-Survey-Sun-on-Sunday-Welfare-and-benefits-130404.pdf

⁷⁶ Kneale, D. Et al. *The spending review 2010: intergenerational perceptions of fairness, cuts and economic recovery* [online] available from: http://www.ilcuk.org.uk/images/uploads/publication-pdfs/pdf_pdf_149.pdf

likely than the population as a whole to say that they have negative perceptions of younger people⁷⁷. We would expect that this is, to a large extent, an age/life course effect rather than a generational shift in attitudes but the lack of time series data means that we can't verify this.

Similarly, the majority of people believe that young people don't have enough respect for 'British values', including younger generations; 65% of those born in the 1980s agree with this statement. Differences between generations have declined over time; for example people born in the 1980s are more likely to think that young people don't have respect for traditional British values compared to those born in the 1960s and 1970s when they were of a similar age, see graph below⁷⁸. This seems to suggest that whilst older generations have always seen a decline in respect for traditional British values amongst younger generations, it is now the case that younger people agree with them.

Figure 11: Percentage that agree “Young people today don't have enough respect for traditional British values”, by generation cohort, 1987–2012



Source: NatCen Social Research, *British Social Attitudes*, 2012

In 2005, people under the age of 30 were more likely than older people to express prejudice against older people. 19% said that either they did not mind coming across as prejudiced against the over 70s or that they sometimes feel prejudice but try not to let it show, compared to 13% of the population as a whole⁷⁹. However, this is still a minority view and as discussed above young people generally have positive views about people aged over 70.

⁷⁷ DWP (2012) *Attitudes to age in Britain 2010/11* [online] available from: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/214361/ihr7.pdf

⁷⁸ Park, A. et al. Eds. (2013) *British Social Attitudes 30* NatCen Social Research [online]. Available from: http://www.bsa-30.natcen.ac.uk/media/37580/bsa30_full_report_final.pdf

⁷⁹ Abrams, D. And Houston, D. (2006) *Equality, Diversity and prejudice in Britain: Results from the 2005 National Survey* University of Kent [online]. Available from: http://kar.kent.ac.uk/4106/1/Abrams_KentEquality_Oct_2006.pdf

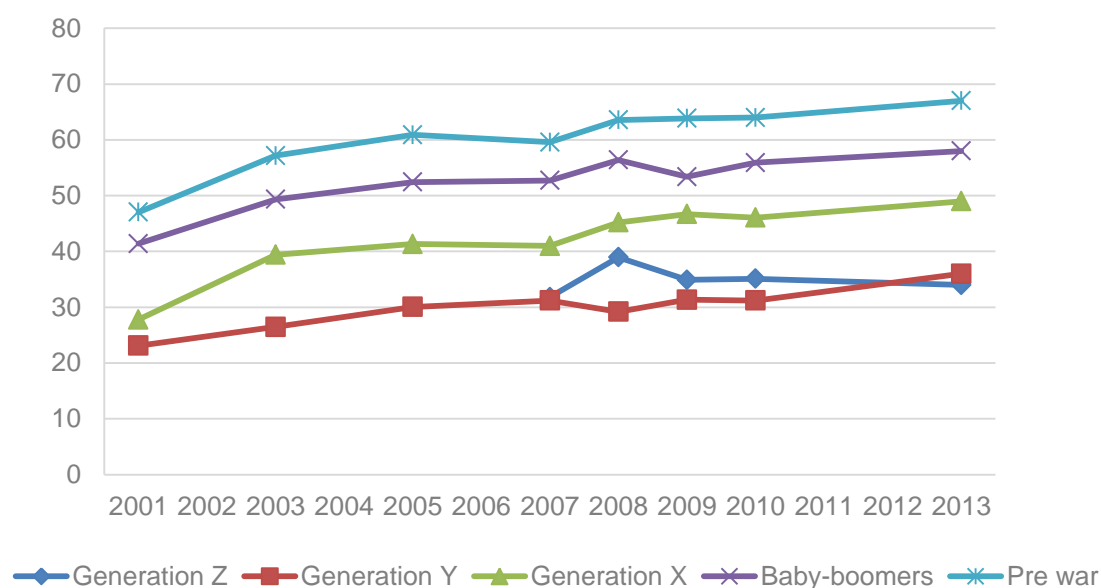
In conclusion, it appears that there is little evidence to support the view that there is strong intergenerational conflict in the UK today.

Social trust

Younger people appear to have lower levels of social trust in other people than older age groups and are more likely to think that people mostly look after themselves rather than helping others. The short time series of available data means that we cannot be certain but it appears likely that this is a generational effect that sets Generation Y apart from previous cohorts.

Evidence from the Community Life/Citizenship Survey indicates that younger generations have lower levels of social trust, with only one third of those born after 1990 thinking that many people in their neighbourhood can be trusted, compared to two thirds of the 'Pre-War' generation. This corresponds with the low levels of social trust amongst young people identified in the European Social Survey (see Wellbeing section below) and lower trust that the man/woman in the street would tell the truth amongst Generation Y found by Ipsos MORI⁸⁰. However, for all generations, levels of trust appear to have increased over the last twelve years.

Figure 12: Percentage thinking that many people in their neighbourhood can be trusted by generation



Source: Cabinet Office Internal Analysis of Citizenship Survey 2001 to 2010/11; Community Life for 2013 data

Focus groups with young people in their late teens found that their perceptions of community were perhaps surprisingly contained. They included those people that they went to school or college with, and in some cases they included neighbours and people that they knew from groups outside school, such as churches or sports clubs. Aside from that, many young people did not view themselves as being part of a community and did not think that their areas had a strong sense of community. The majority of young people in the focus groups

⁸⁰ Ipsos MORI (2013) *Generations* [online] available from: <http://www.ipsos-mori-generations.com/>

felt that whilst they could trust people that they knew well or had grown up with, they could not trust people who they did not know. Some felt that they had been brought up not to trust people they didn't know and not to 'talk to strangers'. However, there was significant variation and some young people did feel that people could be trusted. This view was more often held by those who were involved in community or social groups outside school⁸¹.

Levels of trust in a range of institutions do not exhibit the same pattern of generational shift. There is no evidence of lower trust in 'authority' figures and institutions such as the police, doctors, teachers, judges, clergymen, politicians, business leaders, and journalists amongst young people compared to older people. Indeed, levels of trust in civil servants are higher amongst Generation Y than older generations⁸². Also, according to the Community Life survey, young people born after 1990 have higher levels of trust in parliament than older generations⁸³. However, the main pattern for trust in institutions is one of remarkable continuity rather than change. More than three-quarters of Generation Y agree that more respect for authority would be a good thing, a similar proportion to Generation X and Baby-boomers⁸⁴.

Perceptions of prejudice and discrimination towards young people

Large numbers of young people feel that they are being treated unfairly. We do not have the data available to tell us whether this is a new phenomenon that is specific to the current generation of young people. Therefore, we cannot disentangle whether this is an age/ life cycle effect or a generational shift.

According to the European Social Survey 2008-9, young people are far more likely to feel that they have experienced age based prejudice than older people. The UK has some of the lowest levels of prejudice against older people in Europe with less than 20% of people aged over 70 reporting prejudice. However, more than 60% of under 25s say that they have experienced age based prejudice, some of the highest rates in Europe⁸⁵. Younger people are more likely to report experiencing more prejudice of all types, including prejudice based on gender, sexuality, religion, ethnicity as well as age, than older people do. There may be many reasons for this, including the possibility that older people are less likely to find themselves in situations in which they may be a target of prejudice whilst younger people are more likely to occupy a role or status (e.g. as a junior member of an organisation) in which they may be a target of prejudice⁸⁶.

The majority (58%) of young people aged 17 in England in 2008 thought that young people are often stopped by the police for no good reason. There is wide variation in responses to

⁸¹ Cabinet Office (2013) *Internal report on focus groups with young people* Unpublished

⁸² Ipsos MORI (2013) *Generations* [online] available from: <http://www.ipsos-mori-generations.com/>

⁸³ Cabinet Office (2013) *internal analysis of the Community Life Survey* Unpublished

⁸⁴ McAndrew, S. (2013) *Unpublished analysis of European Values Survey 1981, 1990, 1999 and 2009*. University of Manchester Institute for Social Change

⁸⁵ Abrams, D., & Swift, H.J. (2012) *Experiences and Expressions of Ageism: Topline Results (UK) from Round 4 of the European Social Survey*. ESS Country Specific Topline Results Series (2). London: Centre for Comparative Social Surveys (16pp). ISBN 978-0-955043-2-7.

http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/docs/findings/ESS4_gb_toplines_experiences_and_expressions_of_ageism.pdf

⁸⁶ Abrams, D. And Houston, D. (2006) *Equality, Diversity and prejudice in Britain: Results from the 2005 National Survey* University of Kent [online]. Available from: http://kar.kent.ac.uk/4106/1/Abrams_KentEquality_Oct_2006.pdf

this question by ethnicity. Notably, over 80% of Black Caribbean young people agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, which was far more than for any other ethnic group⁸⁷.

The portrayal of young people in the media can be important in helping to form social attitudes towards young people, and contribute to the social attitudes of young people themselves⁸⁸. Young people may have a stronger sense of age identity than older groups, and be more sensitive to whether and how they are represented, for example, on television⁸⁹, while concerns over personal appearance and body image are important aspects of many young peoples' lives, and, arguably, especially for young women⁹⁰.

The media can create a polarised view of young people, often portraying young people as 'deviant' or troubling, and representing gender stereotypes⁹¹ and sexual behaviours which do not necessarily represent reality⁹². Negative portrayals of young people include overemphasising extremes, such as involvement in antisocial, criminal or risky behaviour (such as drug or alcohol abuse, violence, or gangs) and promiscuity⁹³. Young people are themselves concerned about the portrayal of their age group, with 43% of 16-24 year olds stating they are dissatisfied with how people in their age group are portrayed on television, which they felt failed to reflect the reality of their lives⁸⁹. Around three-quarters (78%) of 16 and 17 year olds agree that newspapers usually make young people out to be worse than they really are⁹⁴.

Many of these views were strongly reinforced by discussions in focus groups of young people. Many participants felt strongly that young people were unfairly stereotyped by older people and provided a number of specific examples of times they felt that they had been treated unfairly, such as being stopped by the police when they were doing nothing wrong. Many felt that young people were assumed to be involved with drugs, alcohol and crime, and it was assumed that they would not be interested in their community⁹⁵.

It also appears that a significant minority of young people do not think that Britain is a free and fair country. Only 60% of 17 year olds in England in 2008 felt that 'Britain is a free country where everyone's rights are respected no matter what their background' and only 55% agreed that 'Britain today is a place where people are usually treated fairly no matter what background they come from'. Young people of Asian origin were much more likely to

⁸⁷ Department for Children, Schools and Families (2009) *Youth Cohort Study & Longitudinal Study of Young People in England: the Activities and Experiences of 17 year olds* [online]. Available from: http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110206154043/http://education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SBU/b000850/Bull01_2009textvfinal.pdf

⁸⁸ Milestone, K. and Meyer, A. (2012) *Gender and popular culture*. Malden, MA. Polity

⁸⁹ White, C., Morrell, G., Luke, C. and Young, P. (2012). *Serving all ages: The views of the audience and experts*. NatCen Social Research. [online]. Available from: http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/diversity/pdf/serving_all_ages01022012.pdf#zoom=100

⁹⁰ Carey, R. N., Donaghue, N., and Broderick, P. (2011). 'What you look like is such a big factor': Girls' own reflections about the appearance culture in an all-girls' school. *Feminism & Psychology*, 21(3), 299-316.

⁹¹ Kehily, M. J., and Nayak, A. (2008). Global femininities: Consumption, culture and the significance of place. *Discourse: Studies in the cultural politics of education*, 29(3), 325-342.

⁹² Tolman, D. L., and McClelland, S. I. (2011). Normative sexuality development in adolescence: A decade in review, 2000–2009. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 21(1), 242-255.

⁹³ Forrest, S. (2010). *'Big and tough': boys learning about sexuality and manhood*.

⁹⁴ The Jack Petchey Foundation (2010) *Listen Up Report* [online]. Available from: http://www.jackpetcheyfoundation.org.uk/?about_us/10-years-of-achievement/listen-up.html

⁹⁵ Cabinet Office (2013) *Internal report on focus groups with young people* Unpublished

think that Britain is a fair society, with over 70% agreeing or strongly agreeing compared with 53% of White and 47% of Black Caribbean young people⁹⁶.

Perceptions of fairness may offer an explanation of other attitudes. Those young people who think that people like themselves are treated 'very unfairly' by the government are more than twice as likely to say they are certain they will not vote in the next general election compared to people who think that the government treats them 'quite fairly' or 'very fairly'.⁹⁷

Young People's sense of belonging to their community and community engagement

There is little evidence that young people are more marginalised from their communities than older groups. In England and Wales, the majority of young people feel that they belong to Britain (87%) and to their neighbourhood (77%); these figures have risen significantly over the last 10 years and are now around average for all age groups. The proportion of 16-24 year olds in England and Wales that have formally volunteered in the last 12 months has remained stable over the last ten years at around 40%, similar to the average for the population⁹⁸. However, this is likely to vary between different groups of young people. In England in 2010, 31% of young people aged 19 had provided unpaid help in the past 12 months. Females were slightly more likely to have done so than males (33% compared with 29%). Young people whose parents had a degree were more likely to have provided unpaid help at age 19 than those whose parents had achieved below A Level (37% compared with 29%). There was little difference by ethnic group⁹⁹.

There is little evidence to suggest that increased ethnic diversity amongst younger generations is linked to weaker identification with Britain. More diverse communities in England and Wales show higher proportions identifying as British only, rather than English or Welsh¹⁰⁰. UK-born people in England and Wales from ethnic minority groups have high levels of belonging to their local area and to Britain. However, White British people are significantly less likely to feel strong belonging to Britain or their local area in more ethnically diverse areas¹⁰¹. In England, the groups of 17 year olds that were most likely to report being British as important to them were Pakistani and Indian young people followed by White

⁹⁶ Department for Children, Schools and Families (2009) *Youth Cohort Study & Longitudinal Study of Young People in England: the Activities and Experiences of 17 year olds* [online]. Available from: http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110206154043/http://education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SBU/b000850/Bull01_2009textvfinal.pdf

⁹⁷ Department for Children, Schools and Families (2009) *Youth Cohort Study & Longitudinal Study of Young People in England: the Activities and Experiences of 17 year olds* [online]. Available from: http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110206154043/http://education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SBU/b000850/Bull01_2009textvfinal.pdf

⁹⁸ Cabinet Office (2013) *Internal analysis of Citizenship Survey 2001-11 and Community Life 2013* unpublished

⁹⁹ Department for Children, Schools and Families (2010) *Youth Cohort Study & Longitudinal Study of Young People in England: the Activities and Experiences of 19 year olds* [online]. Available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/youth-cohort-study-and-longitudinal-study-of-young-people-in-england-the-activities-and-experiences-of-19-year-olds-2010>

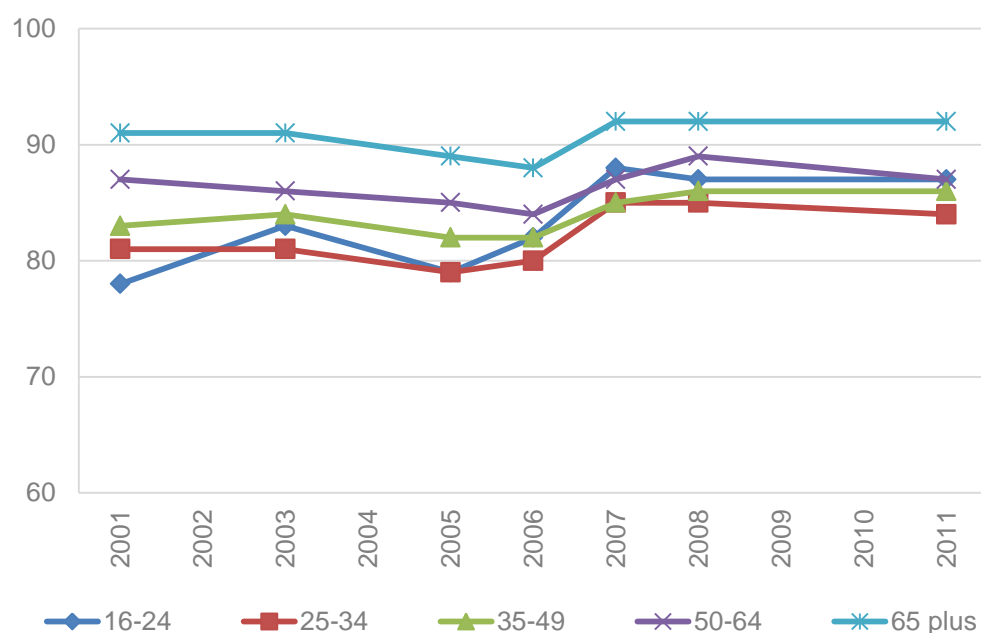
¹⁰⁰ Easton, M. (2013) *How British is Britain?* [online]. Available from: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-24302914>

¹⁰¹ Manning, A. (2011) *The evidence shows that multiculturalism in the UK has succeeded in fostering a sense of belonging amongst minorities* [online]. Available from: <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/archives/9606>

young people. Mixed Race, Black African and especially Black Caribbean young people were the least likely to report that being British as important to them¹⁰².

Whilst a large majority of young people in England and Wales feel that they belong to Britain, this relationship does not hold in Scotland. Young people in Scotland born after 1980 are more likely than older generations to support Scottish independence and to identify as Scottish only. There is some evidence to cautiously indicate that this might be a generational shift, rather than an age effect¹⁰³.

Figure 13: Percentage of people who feel they "very" or "fairly" strongly belong to Britain; by age

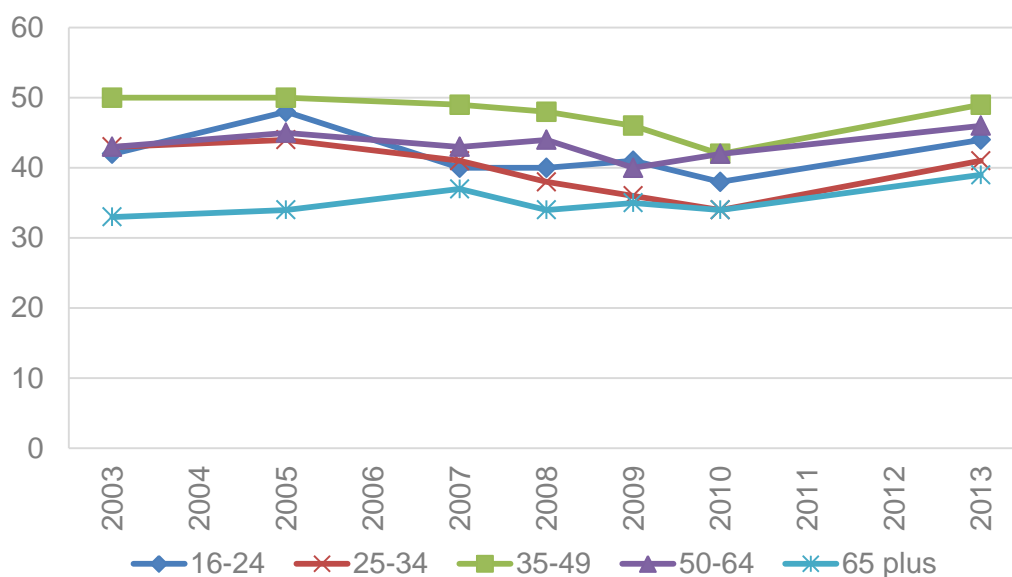


Source: Cabinet Office Internal Analysis of Citizenship Survey 2001 to 2011

Figure 14: Percentage of people who participated in formal volunteering, over the last 12 months, by age

¹⁰² Department for Children, Schools and Families (2008) *Youth Cohort Study & Longitudinal Study of Young People in England: the Activities and Experiences of 17 year olds* [online]. Available from: http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110206154043/http://education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SBU/b000850/Bull01_2009textvfinal.pdf

¹⁰³ McLean, C. (October 2013) 'Generation Y: the independence generation?' in *Understanding Society: Generations* Ipsos MORI

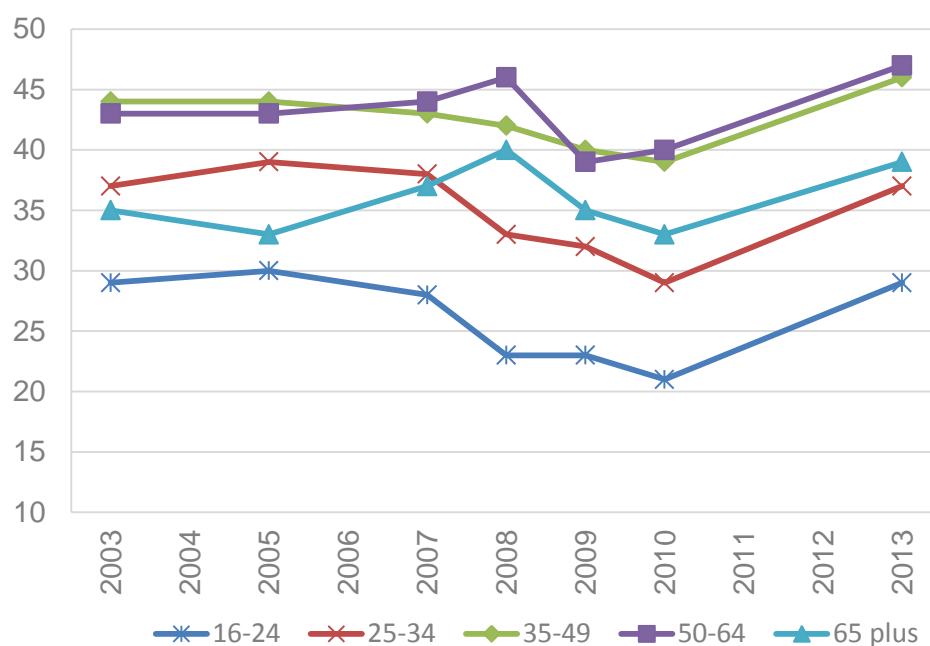


Source: Cabinet Office Internal Analysis of Citizenship Survey 2003 to 2010/11; Community Life Survey for 2013 data

However, there are some measures that show young people to be less engaged with their communities. Civic engagement (in democratic processes, consultations and decision making about local services) amongst young people has been consistently lower than for the population as a whole. Younger people are also less likely to speak to their neighbours regularly or agree that people pull together to improve their neighbourhood¹⁰⁴. A minority of young people think that they can influence decisions affecting their local area (42%) and Britain (24%), but these figures are slightly above average for the population as a whole. It may be that these views are related to lower levels of social trust. We are unable to ascertain whether these are generational effects or age effects as the ten years of data available do not allow us to differentiate between these two effects.

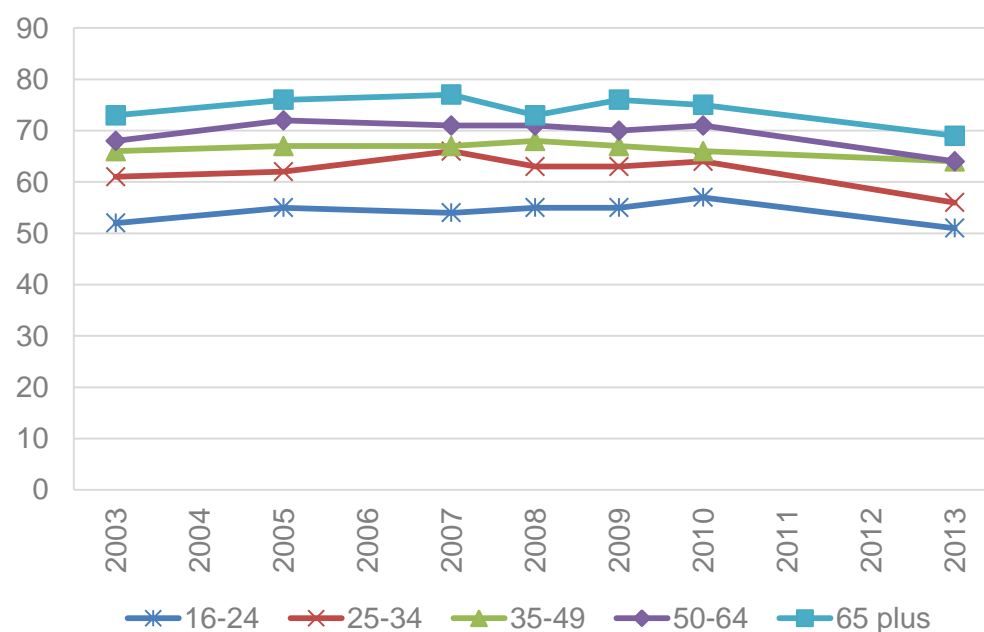
Figure 15: Percentage of people who participated in civic activities over the preceding 12 months, by age

¹⁰⁴ Cabinet Office (2013) *internal analysis of Citizenship Survey 2001-11 and Community Life 2013* unpublished



Source: Cabinet Office Internal Analysis of Citizenship Survey 2003 to 2010/11; Community Life Survey for 2013 data

Figure 16: Percentage of people who agree that people pull together to improve their neighbourhood, by age



Source: Cabinet Office Internal Analysis of Citizenship Survey 2003 to 2010/11; Community Life Survey for 2013 data

The majority of young people report giving to charity but charitable giving in the past 4 weeks by 16-25 year olds has declined from three-quarters in 2005 to two-thirds in 2012-13.

However, it has recovered from 61% in 2009-10 and 2010-11 at the height of the economic downturn¹⁰⁵. Lower real terms income, and perceived job security, might be factors in this recent decline among young people¹⁰⁶.

The decline in charitable giving amongst young people is part of a long term trend since the late 1970s. Being older still has an impact when other factors, such as employment, household budgets and education are taken into account and this age impact has increased over time. This implies that the difference in charitable giving in young people and older people is not driven by income and wealth differences, and the increasing age effect implies that the differential between giving by young and old has increased over time. This suggests that there may have been a generational shift in charitable giving. As a result, charities have become increasingly dependent on the older generation for their funds. Those aged over 65 contributed 24% to total donations between 1978 and 1982 compared to 34.5% in between 2003 and 2008¹⁰⁷.

Having a stake in the local area and attachment to a community were key factors in young people not getting involved in the 2011 riots. Young people who were involved in voluntary and community work alongside older people were clear that this meant they had not wanted 'to trash their own backyard'. Other young people and community stakeholders identified a feeling that they were written off in their communities and 'a lost cause'. In contrast, young people also talked about the importance of belonging to a community (or a group or family within it) that opposed criminal behaviour. In particular, religion was mentioned as protecting them from getting involved¹⁰⁸.

Attitudes to mainstream political engagement

Whilst there is no clear trend in community engagement amongst young people, there is strong evidence of a generational shift in engagement with mainstream politics.

Since 1983, there has been a slow decline in the numbers of people who think of themselves as supporting a political party from more than half to 37%. This is almost entirely driven by younger generations being less likely to identify with any one political party. In 2010, less than a quarter of Generation Y (born 1980-2000) thought of themselves as supporters of one political party compared to 29% of Generation X (born 1966-1979), 38% of Baby Boomers (born 1945-65) and more than half of those born before 1945¹⁰⁹.

Figure 17: Percentage that think of themselves as a supporter of any one political party by generation

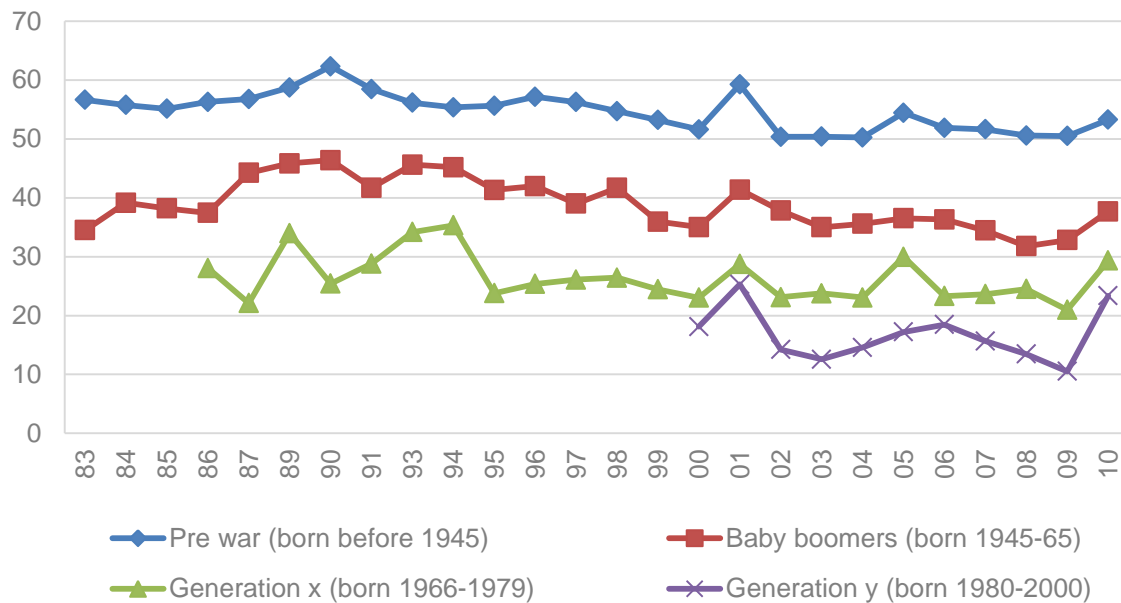
¹⁰⁵ Cabinet Office (2013) *Community Life Survey 2012/13* [online]. Available from: <http://communitylife.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/explore-the-data.html>

¹⁰⁶ Wiepking, P. (2009) *Feeling poor, acting stingy: the effect of money perceptions on charitable giving* [online]. Available from: <http://www.kent.ac.uk/sspsr/cphsj/documents/Feeling%20Poor%20Acting%20Stingy%20-%20Wiepking%20and%20Breeze%202008.pdf>

¹⁰⁷ Cowley, E. et al. (2011) *The new state of donation: three decades of household giving to charity 1978-2008* [online]. Available from: <http://www.cgap.org.uk/uploads/reports/The%20new%20state%20of%20donation.pdf>

¹⁰⁸ Morrell, G. And Webster, S. (2011) *The August riots in England study* NatCen [online]. Available from: <http://www.natcen.ac.uk/our-research/research/the-august-riots-in-england-study/>

¹⁰⁹ Ipsos MORI (2013) *Generations* [online] available from: <http://www.ipsos-mori-generations.com/>



Source: Ipsos MORI Generations

Declining voting rates suggest that young people are feeling increasingly disconnected from mainstream party politics¹¹⁰. While 44% of 18-24-year-olds voted in the 2010 UK general elections, showing a slight improvement to the 37% voting rate of the 2005 elections, this number is still lower than the national average. It is also a significant decline from 1964 when 89% of 18-24 year olds voted¹¹¹. Young people who are not in education or training or have lower education levels are more likely to say that they would not vote¹¹². This gap between political engagement of young people compared to the national average is a common trend across Europe. According to Ipsos MORI analysis of the European Social Survey 2002-2010, Generation Y (born after 1979) are significantly less likely to identify with a political party than older generations. However, in the UK the gap between the engagement of young people and the national average is far larger than it is elsewhere in Europe¹¹³. There is evidence that voting is 'habituated' in early adulthood, which suggests that low voting rates amongst young people could mean that they are less likely to vote throughout their adult lives¹¹⁴. This suggests that disengagement of young people in the UK is relatively higher than elsewhere and this could have long-lasting effects.

Recent research by Hansard identifies significant declines between 2012 and 2013 across a range of measures political engagement of young people. The number of young people (18-24 year olds) certain to vote has declined 10 percentage points in a year (22% to 12%). Only 30% said they would be willing to undertake some form of political action even if they felt

¹¹⁰ Henn, M. and Foard, N. (2012) Young People, Political Participation and Trust in Britain. *Parliamentary Affairs* 65, 47-67.

¹¹¹ Sanders, D. Et al. (2005) *The 2005 General Election in Great Britain: report for the Electoral Commission* [online] available from: <http://www.essex.ac.uk/bes/Papers/ec%20report%20final.pdf>

¹¹² YouGov (2012) *British Future Survey Results* [online]. Available from: http://cdn.yougov.com/cumulus_uploads/document/5nfv7cj25l/YG-Archives-BritishFuture-YoungPeople-270712.pdf

¹¹³ Ipsos MORI (2013) *Generations* [online] available from: <http://www.ipsos-mori-generations.com/>

¹¹⁴ Plutzer, E. (2002) 'Becoming a Habitual Voter: Inertia, Resources, and Growth in Young Adulthood', *American Political Science Review*, 96 (1), 41-56.

strongly about an issue. Levels of interest in politics among this age group have declined to 24%, a decline of 12 percentage points in a year, and a decline from 42% just two years ago. Only 23% of 18-24 year olds claim to be knowledgeable about politics, down 11 percentage points in a year. There has also been an 11 percentage point drop (to 20%) in the number who claim to be knowledgeable about Parliament. The interest of 18-24 year olds in current affairs (62%) is also considerably below average. Only 9% of this age group can correctly name their MP, compared to the national average of 22% and the 34% of those aged over 55 who can do so¹¹⁵.

However, it should be noted that it has always been a minority of young people that are interested in politics. The proportion of the adult population that says politics is very important in their life and the proportion that frequently talk about politics with their friends has tended to be under 15% for the last 20 years¹¹⁶. According to NatCen analysis of the British Social Attitudes Survey, 23% of those born in the 1980s expressed interest in politics in 2012, which was similar to the proportion of young people who expressed an interest in 1986, 1994 or 2003. However, the gap between young people and older people being interested in politics has increased over time¹¹⁷. This supports the claim that young people are no less interested in political issues than previous generations but that they are less interested in voting and mainstream politics.

We should not assume that this downturn in voting rates is certain to continue, partly because it may not appear to be driven by indifference. In focus groups, young people identify lack of trust in politicians and feeling that they are not being listened to as key reasons for not engaging in mainstream politics^{118, 119}, however, it is possible that these views are also held by older people. Also, other countries have seen the decline in young people voting reverse when young people have been effectively engaged. For example, after years of declining engagement, voting rates for 18-21 year olds in the USA jumped by over 10 percentage points between 2000 and 2008¹²⁰. It might be that we are seeing an example of this effect occurring in Scotland amongst young people who are being engaged in debates about the independence referendum. More than two thirds of 14-17 year olds say that they are likely to vote and the majority have spoken to parents, friends and people in their class about the referendum. Interestingly, nearly 60% of the sample say that they are interested in politics generally but, when asked which political party they feel closest to, a similar proportion say "none". So it might be that the political interest of young people is not being captured by party affiliation¹²¹.

¹¹⁵ www.hansardsociety.org.uk/files/folders/3849/download.aspx

¹¹⁶ McAndrew, S. (2013) *Unpublished analysis of European Values Survey 1990, 1999 and 2009*. University of Manchester Institute for Social Change

¹¹⁷ Park, A. et al. Eds. (2013) *British Social Attitudes 30* NatCen Social Research [online]. Available from: http://www.bsa-30.natcen.ac.uk/media/37580/bsa30_full_report_final.pdf

¹¹⁸ British Youth Council (2013), '*Democratic Engagement Consultation: Findings from the British Youth Council's focus groups for the Cabinet Office*' October 2013 unpublished

¹¹⁹ Pachi, D., Garbin, D. & Barrett, M. (2011). *Focus groups with young British Bangladeshi, Congolese and English people living in London*. Unpublished report, Work Package 6, The PIDOP Project.

¹²⁰ CIRCLE (2013) *Youth Voting* [online]. Available from: <http://www.civicyouth.org/quick-facts/youth-voting/>

¹²¹ Eichhorn, J. Et al. (2013) *Results from a survey on 14-17 year old persons living in Scotland on the Scottish independence referendum* [online]. Available from: http://www.aqmen.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Results_Report_Young_Persons_Survey_May2013_0.pdf

It has been argued that declining voting rates do not imply indifference to politics, but rather that the political engagement of young people has moved into other arenas, such as volunteering, communal projects, and especially digital media, which tend to offer wider and more creative possibilities for the expression of political views and affiliations¹²². Indeed, research into the attitudes of young people in London found that they were interested in local community issues, such as litter and recycling, but also in global and transnational issues such as global warming and the Iraq war. Specifically, Congolese participants were engaged with issues about ongoing violence in the Congo. This may indicate that as young people become a more diverse group, they will be more interested in global issues related to the regions with high levels of migration to the UK. There was less engagement with politics at the national level of engagement¹²³. Political engagement and civic participation online are increasing but are still at low levels¹²⁴ and there is little evidence of an increase in other forms of social participation amongst young people^{125, 126}. Young people in London are more likely to be involved in volunteering than social or political engagement on the internet¹²⁷. This indicates that claims that young people have shifted their focus from local communities to 'virtual communities' on the internet may, as yet, be over-stated but this could change in the future.

The Citizenship Education Longitudinal Study cohort, who were followed from 2001 to 2010 when they turned 18, tended to associate 'good' citizenship with being law-abiding, with rights and responsibilities, issues of identity and equality and with taking an interest in or taking part in their communities. They associated it much less with political literacy and active participation in formal political processes. However, when asked why they take part, the cohort tended to be motivated by the prospect of personal benefits than by a sense of duty¹²⁸.

The NatCen research into the August 2011 riots reported that young people involved in the riots identified negative attitudes towards those with power and authority as a motivation for participating in the riots. Some expressed anger and resentment about authority figures, particularly politicians. Engagement in formal politics was seen as irrelevant to many young people involved. However, there was awareness of political issues among young people who

¹²²Boston Consulting Group (2012) *The Millennial Consumer: debunking stereotypes* [online]. Available from: https://www.bcgperspectives.com/content/articles/consumer_insight_marketing_millennial_consumer/?chapter=4

¹²³ Pachi, D., Garbin, D. & Barrett, M. (2011). Focus groups with young British Bangladeshi, Congolese and English people living in London. Unpublished report, Work Package 6, The PIDOP Project.'

¹²⁴ Dutton, W. And Blank, G. (2013) *Cultures of the internet: the internet in Britain* [online]. Available from: http://oxis.oii.ox.ac.uk/sites/oxis.oii.ox.ac.uk/files/content/files/publications/OxIS_2013.pdf

¹²⁵ Department for Communities and Local Government (2011) *Citizenship Survey: April 2010-March 2011, England* [online]. Available from: <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20120919132719/http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/corporate/statistics/citizenshipsurveyq4201011>

¹²⁶ Korris, M. (2013) *Hansard Society Audit of Political Engagement 10* [online]. Available from: <http://www.hansardsociety.org.uk/audit-of-political-engagement-10/>

¹²⁷ Pachi, D. & Barrett, M. (2012). *Survey of young British Bangladeshi, Congolese and English people living in London*. Unpublished report, Work Package 6, The PIDOP Project. School of Psychology, University of Surrey.

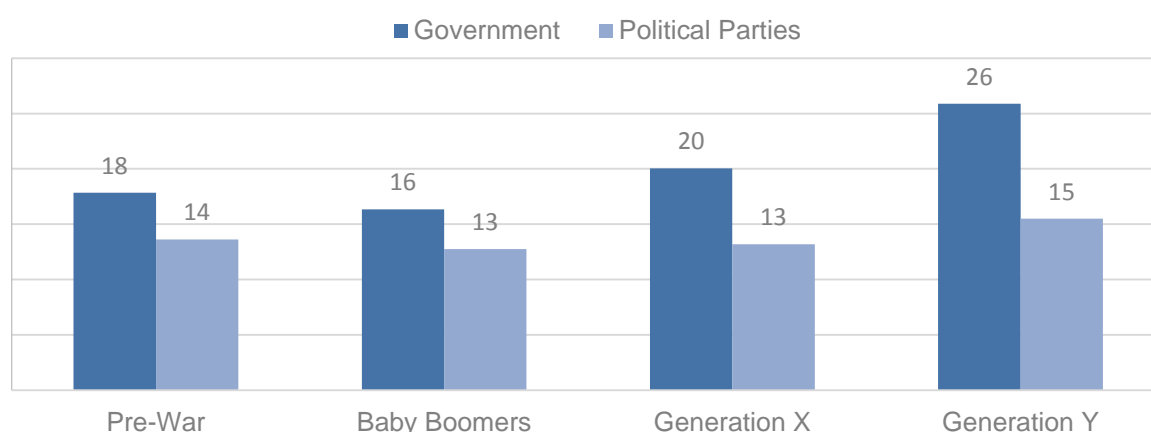
¹²⁸ Keating, A. et al. (2010) *Citizenship education in England 2001-2010* Research Report DFE RR059 [online]. Available from: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/181797/DFE-RR059.pdf

participated in the riots and particular anger about the MP's expenses and the perceived greed of bankers¹²⁹.

Attitudes to government and its role in society

Young people's disengagement with mainstream politics does not necessarily imply a lack of belief in the efficacy of government or support for democratic principles. According to the European Values Survey, younger people have higher levels of trust in government than in political parties, and higher levels of trust in government than older generations. Generation Y (born after the late 1970s) have a similar overall appraisal of the political system to older generations and the attitudes of all generations have become significantly more negative between 1999 and 2009. In the most recent data more than 50% of people from all generations have an overall negative view of the political system¹³⁰.

Figure 18: Percentage of cohort reporting 'a great deal' or 'quite a lot' of confidence in (a) the Government; (b) political parties, 2009



Source: University of Manchester analysis of the European Values Survey, 2009

It appears that there might be strong support amongst young people for the basic principles of a democratic society: that people should be able to express their opinions freely, that political rights should be respected and that there should be free elections. Findings from the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study, a survey of Year 9 pupils, show that: 97% agreed that 'people should be able to express opinions freely' (60% strongly agree), 94% agreed that 'political rights should be respected' (47% strongly agree), 94% agreed that 'Leaders should be freely elected' (51% strongly agree)¹³¹. However, it may be that this is explained by the way the questions are framed. If adherence to these values were framed in terms of concrete examples, then support may be weaker. The 2007/08 Citizenship Survey found that freedom of speech or expression was more commonly cited by younger people than older people as an important value for living in Britain. For example, 43 % of 16 to 24 year olds mentioned this, whilst 31 % of people aged 75 or over did so. Like other age groups, young people put high value on respect for the law, tolerance and politeness

¹²⁹ Morrell, G. And Webster, S. (2011) *The August riots in England study* NatCen [online]. Available from: <http://www.natcen.ac.uk/our-research/research/the-august-riots-in-england-study/>

¹³⁰ McAndrew, S. (2013) *Unpublished analysis of European Values Survey 2009*. University of Manchester Institute for Social Change

¹³¹ Nelson, J., Wade, P. and Kerr, D. (2010) *Young people's civic attitudes and practices: England's outcomes from the IEA International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS)*, DfE Research Report DFE-RR060 <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/RSG/publicationDetail/Page1/DFE-RR060>

towards others¹³². This overall support for democratic values suggests there may be potential for them to be involved in other forms of social organisation.

However, whilst overall support for democracy is still high there are some signs of declining support. Though three quarters of Generation Y (born after 1979) think it is good to have a democratic system, a quarter think that it is bad. This is a far higher proportion than for other generations. Whereas other generations' attitudes to democracy stayed broadly the same between 1999 and 2009, the proportion of Generation Y with a negative view about democracy more than doubled. Half of Generation Y believes that democracy is bad for the economy and two thirds believe that democracies are indecisive. Conversely, a higher proportion of Generation X and Generation Y than older generations favour experts making official decisions and a higher proportion of Generation Y have confidence in the Civil Service. There does not appear to be broad-based support for the view that society must be radically changed. Only 15% of Generation Y support this view, whilst this is a higher proportion than for older groups, the vast majority of young people are in favour of gradual reform¹³³.

A complex picture emerges when we consider young people's views concerning the role of the state. Young people are more in favour of privatisation of utilities and less likely to view full employment as the government's top economic priority than older people. 18-24 year olds are less likely to think that the government is responsible for solving social problems than older people. However, they are still more likely to put the responsibility on government than on individuals, families and volunteer organisations. In other areas, such as belief that uncompetitive firms should be allowed to go bust, support for business regulation and belief that company profits are driven by exploitation, there is little difference between young people and the rest of the population. Across a number of these areas, large numbers of young people are ambivalent. This may imply that they do not relate to terms of the debate or that the issues identified are not salient for them¹³⁴.

Young people aged 18-24 are less likely to identify tax reductions, such as petrol duty, VAT and direct taxes paid by those on low and middle pay, as the measures that would be most likely to help them and their family. Also, they are not significantly more likely than older age groups to identify an increase in the minimum wage as helpful. Rather, they are far more likely to identify a reduction in housing costs, a general increase in wages and more jobs and hours as the things that would help them the most. Like other age groups, a majority of young people think that government has the power to influence these things directly or has quite a lot of influence over them¹³⁵.

Overall, there does not appear to be a marked difference between young people's views about government's ability to act as a positive force in society compared to the population as a whole. 49% of young people believe that a government with the right policies could bring about improved living standards, a similar proportion to people of other ages. There is significantly more uncertainty about the power and influence of government amongst young

¹³² Lloyd, C. (2009) *2007/08 Citizenship Survey: Identity and Values Topic Report* Department for Communities and Local Government

¹³³ McAndrew, S. (2013) *Unpublished analysis of European Values Survey 2009*. University of Manchester Institute for Social Change

¹³⁴ YouGov (2013) *Thatcher's policies survey* [online]. Available from: http://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/crc4mgmase/YouGov-Survey-Thatcher-Policies-Results-130416.pdf

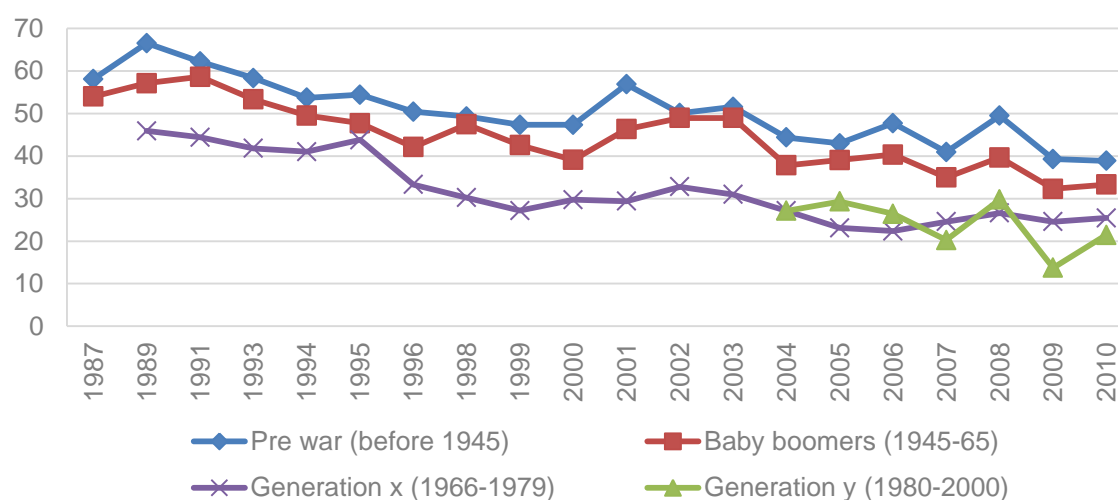
¹³⁵ YouGov (2013) *Resolution Foundation Survey Results* [online]. Available from: http://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/lqa4egpfl4/Resolution_results_130228.pdf

people in a number of areas. Large proportions indicate that they do not know how much power and influence government has over a range of outcomes, such as reducing the costs of fuel, food and childcare and reducing taxes. In some areas, such as reducing the cost of fuel, food and housing costs, young people are more likely to think that the government doesn't have much, if any, influence and power¹³⁶.

Attitudes towards the welfare state

Since 1987, the numbers of people agreeing with the statement that the government should spend more money on welfare benefits for the poor, even if it leads to higher taxes has been in decline, see graph below. Since 2007, more people have disagreed with this statement than agreed with it¹³⁷.

Figure 19: Percentage agreeing that "the government should spend more money on welfare benefits for the poor, even if it leads to higher taxes"



Source: Ipsos MORI Generations

In part, this has been explained by a 'period effect'; the attitudes of all generations to redistribution through the welfare state have become more negative. However, younger generations seem to have a different view of welfare, even after allowing for the general shift in attitudes across society. In 2010, only 23% of Generation Y (born 1980-2000) and 26% Generation X (born 1966-1979) agreed that the government should spend more money on welfare benefits for the poor, even if it leads to higher taxes, compared to 31% of Baby Boomers (born 1945-65) and 37% of those in the Pre-War Generation (born before 1945)¹³⁸.

Across the population, the numbers of people that believe that unemployment benefits are too low has significantly decreased. Around half believed this up until the mid-1990s, but now just 19% do. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, there was a very clear generational split, with Generation X approaching 70% agreement and the Pre-War generation averaging around 40%. Now there is little difference between generations. This is interesting given

¹³⁶YouGov (2013) *Resolution Foundation Survey Results* [online]. Available from: http://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/lqa4egpfl4/Resolution_results_130228.pdf

¹³⁷Ipsos MORI (2013) *Generations* [online] available from: <http://www.ipsos-mori-generations.com/>

¹³⁸Ipsos MORI (2013) *Generations* [online] available from: <http://www.ipsos-mori-generations.com/>

that young people are more likely to be unemployed, particularly during this recession¹³⁹. Young people are also less likely to agree that the welfare state is one of Britain's greatest achievements. However, a number of young people neither agree nor disagree, which may indicate ambivalent attitudes or a lack of understanding towards the welfare state¹⁴⁰. Indeed, other research suggests that popular perceptions of welfare expenditure often differ significantly from the actual figures¹⁴¹, that some young people do not have a clear definition of what 'welfare state' means and some have a narrower interpretation of it, which includes benefits for the unemployed but not state-provided healthcare and education or pensions¹⁴².

Part of the reason for more negative views of the welfare state amongst young people is that they are more likely than most other generations to think that large numbers of people on benefits are committing fraud. The Pre War Generation and Generation Y are the most likely to believe that 'most people on the dole are fiddling one way or another'; a large majority of both groups agree with this statement. Whilst the Pre War Generation is most likely to be proud and supportive of the welfare state in principle, Generation Y are the least likely generation to view it as fair or effective¹⁴³.

Further qualitative work by Ipsos MORI and Demos has found that Generation Y felt that the welfare system should be built around enabling people to become contributors through the right incentive structure. Generation Y is more likely than other cohorts to believe the role of the state should be more focused on providing opportunities and less on managing the risks individuals face. This suggests that Generation Y is a more individualist generation than the others, more concerned with personal independence and opportunity than compulsory systems of risk pooling and redistribution¹⁴⁴.

However, Generation Y appear to be in favour of supporting those most in need. Generation Y are equally as likely as older generations to prioritise welfare spending on the disabled and to want more money spent on parents who work on very low incomes. As discussed above, they are also more likely to prioritise spending on pensions over spending on unemployment benefit¹⁴⁵. Similarly, the proportion of people agreeing that the government should be mainly responsible for paying for care needs of elderly people in residential homes has remained broadly stable over time and shows little significant difference between generations¹⁴⁶.

There does appear to be a tension between Generation Y's opposition to risk pooling and redistribution but support for welfare spending on those most in need. It may be that this is

¹³⁹ Ipsos MORI (2013) *Generations* [online] available from: <http://www.ipsos-mori-generations.com/>

¹⁴⁰ Ipsos MORI (2013) *Generations* [online] available from: <http://www.ipsos-mori-generations.com/>

¹⁴¹ Ipsos MORI (2013) *Perils of Perception* [online] available from: <http://www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/researcharchive/3188/Perceptions-are-not-reality.aspx>

¹⁴² Duffy, B. et al. (2013) *Generation Strains: a Demos and Ipsos MORI report on changing attitudes to welfare* [online]. Available from:

http://www.demos.co.uk/files/Demos_Ipsos_Generation_Strains_web.pdf?1378677272

¹⁴³ Duffy, B. et al. (2013) *Generation Strains: a Demos and Ipsos MORI report on changing attitudes to welfare* [online]. Available from:

http://www.demos.co.uk/files/Demos_Ipsos_Generation_Strains_web.pdf?1378677272

¹⁴⁴ Duffy, B. et al. (2013) *Generation Strains: a Demos and Ipsos MORI report on changing attitudes to welfare* [online]. Available from:

http://www.demos.co.uk/files/Demos_Ipsos_Generation_Strains_web.pdf?1378677272

¹⁴⁵ Duffy, B. et al. (2013) *Generation Strains: a Demos and Ipsos MORI report on changing attitudes to welfare* [online]. Available from:

http://www.demos.co.uk/files/Demos_Ipsos_Generation_Strains_web.pdf?1378677272

¹⁴⁶ Ipsos MORI (2013) *Generations* [online] available from: <http://www.ipsos-mori-generations.com/>

because young people are more suspicious of people ‘gaming the system’, but are still concerned that support should go to the groups that need it the most¹⁴⁷. There is little evidence that younger people are more likely to have harder views about people in need. People in Generation Y are no more likely to say that the main reason people are living in need is because of laziness and they are more likely than older groups to say that it is explained by bad luck¹⁴⁸.

Attitudes to immigration and the EU

Compared to the views of Britons as a whole, young people see immigration as a much less important issue and less of a cause for concern. However, views of immigration vary between different groups of young people. Those who aren’t in education or training are more than twice as likely to view immigration as a major issue¹⁴⁹. Young people who don’t have any friends from minorities are more likely to view immigration and asylum as an issue. Young people are less likely to think that the numbers of immigrants coming to Britain should be reduced a lot compared to older people¹⁵⁰ and would be far less likely to support capping immigration than the population as a whole¹⁵¹. Older people are more likely to be concerned about the impact of immigrants abusing the welfare state¹⁵² and are more likely to say immigration is the main explanation for unemployment, whilst younger generations are more likely to blame the recession¹⁵³.

However, the more relaxed views towards immigration amongst younger generations should not be overstated. The majority of people in all generations are in favour of strict limits on immigration and say employers should prioritise British people over immigrants when jobs are scarce¹⁵⁴. The belief that immigrants are a key cause of unemployment appears to be held across all generations, especially in disadvantaged groups¹⁵⁵. For instance, 11% of

¹⁴⁷ Stuckler, D. And Reeves, A. (2013) ‘We are told that Generation Y is hard-hearted but it’s a lie’ *The Guardian* 30.7.13. [online] available from:

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/jul/30/generation-y-halfhearted-its-a-lie>

¹⁴⁸ McAndrew, S. (2013) *Unpublished analysis of European Values Survey 1990, 1999 and 2009*.

University of Manchester Institute for Social Change

¹⁴⁹ YouGov (2012) *British Future Survey Results* [online]. Available from:

http://cdn.yougov.com/cumulus_uploads/document/5nfv7cj25l/YG-Archives-BritishFuture-YoungPeople-270712.pdf

¹⁵⁰ Lloyd, C. (2009) *2007/08 Citizenship Survey: Identity and Values Topic Report* Department for Communities and Local Government

¹⁵¹ YouGov (2012) *British Future Survey Results* [online]. Available from:

http://cdn.yougov.com/cumulus_uploads/document/5nfv7cj25l/YG-Archives-BritishFuture-YoungPeople-270712.pdf

¹⁵² Duffy, B. et al. (2013) *Generation Strains: a Demos and Ipsos MORI report on changing attitudes to welfare* [online]. Available from:

http://www.demos.co.uk/files/Demos_Ipsos_Generation_Strains_web.pdf?1378677272

¹⁵³ Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust (2013) *Intergenerational Justice Research Report* [online].

Available from:

http://www.jrrt.org.uk/sites/jrrt.org.uk/files/documents/Intergenerational_Justice_050613_IpsosMORI_JRRT.pdf

¹⁵⁴ McAndrew, S. (2013) *Unpublished analysis of European Values Survey 1990, 1999 and 2009*.

University of Manchester Institute for Social Change

¹⁵⁵ Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust (2013) *Intergenerational Justice Research Report* [online].

Available from:

http://www.jrrt.org.uk/sites/jrrt.org.uk/files/documents/Intergenerational_Justice_050613_IpsosMORI_JRRT.pdf

male young people NEET aged 17 in England blamed immigrants taking jobs as the reason why they couldn't find work, this was the third most common explanation¹⁵⁶. We cannot be certain that different attitudes to immigration amongst young people are explained by a generational effect.

Only a quarter of young people would withdraw from the EU, compared to half of the population as a whole¹⁵⁷. Young people are also less likely to support reducing the EU's powers. These views are steady over time, with younger generations consistently less likely than older people to be in favour of leaving the EU or staying in and reducing its power the EU, potentially indicating a generational shift¹⁵⁸.

Attitudes to privacy

Young people do not seem to have different attitudes to privacy compared to older generations but a shortage of quantitative evidence in the UK means that it is difficult to be certain about this. The Foresight *Future Identities* report suggested that there has been, and will continue to be, a blurring between public and private identities, as younger people are more willing to share personal information about themselves, post photographs, and engage in the creation of social media content¹⁵⁹. Some researchers have noted an apparent contradiction in attitudes to privacy, noting that people claim to understand potential privacy issues but nevertheless continue to upload large amounts of personal information.

However, sharing personal content does not necessarily imply different attitudes to privacy. It may be that young people's use of social media to experiment with identity formation requires them to project personal information, albeit selectively, to present a particular image. Therefore, young people still think that it is important to have control over what information they choose to reveal but they may make different decisions about what to reveal and to whom. For example, one 2010 study of 1000 US adults found that young adults (aged 18 to 24 years) shared the concerns of the older generation about online privacy and norms, but that they participate in a commercial online reality that is designed to optimise their disclosure of personal data and so they are willing to share their information to receive, for instance, more personalised services¹⁶⁰. This is distinct from concern about privacy for things like bank details and passwords, which young people continue to be concerned about¹⁶¹.

Part of the reason for young people's willingness to share information may be that they are unaware of how their information may be used. The apparent lack of awareness of potential dangers of disclosure has been ascribed to combination of a lax attitude and established usage patterns, taking the easier path, and a 'third person' effect, whereby users estimate

¹⁵⁶ Department for Children, Schools and Families (2008) *Youth Cohort Study & Longitudinal Study of Young People in England: the Activities and Experiences of 17 year olds* [online]. Available from: http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110206154043/http://education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SB/U/b000850/Bull01_2009textvfinal.pdf

¹⁵⁷ YouGov (2012) *British Future Survey Results* [online]. Available from: http://cdn.yougov.com/cumulus_uploads/document/5nfv7cj25l/YG-Archives-BritishFuture-YoungPeople-270712.pdf

¹⁵⁸ Ipsos MORI (2013) *Generations* [online] available from: <http://www.ipsos-mori-generations.com/>

¹⁵⁹ Foresight (2013) *The Future of Identity* [online]. Available from: <http://www.bis.gov.uk/foresight/our-work/policy-futures/identity>

¹⁶⁰ Hoofnagle, C., King, J., Li, S., and Turow, J. (2010). *How different are young adults from older adults when it comes to information privacy attitudes and policies?*. Available at SSRN 1589864.

¹⁶¹ Marwick, A. et al. (2010) *Youth, Privacy and Reputation* [online]. Available from: http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1588163

higher risks to others than they attribute to themselves¹⁶². Increasing awareness of privacy issues may account for the apparent rise in the number of social media users in the US – especially women – becoming more active in ‘pruning’ their network, removing unwanted content and altering privacy settings¹⁶³. Most US teens use privacy settings on Facebook and are confident that they can manage their privacy settings.¹⁶⁴ Other ethnographic research has suggested that young people sometimes take a more subversive approach to mitigate their privacy concerns, such as using aliases to some degree to make it difficult for people to find them in a search¹⁶⁵. However, it is likely that some young people, like older people, may not be fully aware of the wider consequences of sharing personal information and how to control access to their private information. It should not be assumed that all today’s young people will have the digital skills to take informed decisions about privacy.

Children and Young People’s Wellbeing

This section explores themes around children and young people’s wellbeing and how they have evolved over time. It first looks at trends in subjective wellbeing before moving on to mental health, risk behaviours and the impacts of technological change on wellbeing. Finally, it examines the trends in the quality of children and young people’s relationships, particularly with their parents – which is a key predictor of wellbeing.

Subjective wellbeing

This section explores the subjective and objective wellbeing of children and young people in the UK. It identifies that whilst most children and young people have high levels of wellbeing, there are significant inequalities and, on some measures, the UK does not compare well to other developed countries. However, there is some evidence that wellbeing of children and young people has improved in the last few years.

In the UK, subjective wellbeing follows a ‘U-shape’ over the life course. It is relatively high in the late teens before declining through the early 20s until late middle age. This relationship holds for all domains of subjective wellbeing: life satisfaction, viewing things in life as worthwhile, happiness and self-declared anxiety¹⁶⁶. This result is consistent across 40 years of data collection and holds after other variables have been taken into account; it has been argued that these relationships indicate a pure ‘age effect’, which may be explained by a movement from high levels of optimism, through dissatisfaction in middle age, followed by acceptance¹⁶⁷. However, we do not have sufficient evidence to say with certainty whether

¹⁶² Debatin, B., Lovejoy, J. P., Horn, A. K., and Hughes, B. N. (2009). Facebook and online privacy: Attitudes, behaviors, and unintended consequences. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 15(1), 83-108. [online]. Available from: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1083-6101.2009.01494.x/full>

¹⁶³ Madden, M. (2012). Privacy management on social media sites. *Pew Internet & American Life Project*, 24.

¹⁶⁴ Madden, M. Et al. (2013) *Teens, Social Media and Privacy* [online]. Available from: http://www.pewinternet.org/~media/Files/Reports/2013/PIP_TeensSocialMediaandPrivacy.pdf

¹⁶⁵ Raynes-Goldie (2010) ‘Aliases, creeping and wall-cleaning: understanding privacy in the age of Facebook’ *First Monday* 15:1 [online]. Available from: <http://firstmonday.org/article/view/2775/2432>

¹⁶⁶ ONS (2012) *Measuring national wellbeing- measuring young people’s wellbeing 2012* [online]. Available from: http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171766_282241.pdf

¹⁶⁷ Dolan, P., Peasgood, T. and White, M. (2008). ‘Do we really know what makes us happy/? A review of the economic literature on the factors associated with subjective well-being’, *Journal of Economic Psychology*, 29, 94-122

the observed relationships between wellbeing and age constitute a life course or a generational effect¹⁶⁸.

Wellbeing follows a similar relationship with age in other high income, English-speaking countries. However, in other regions, such as Africa, Southern, Central and Eastern Europe, wellbeing simply declines with age¹⁶⁹. This indicates that the relationship between wellbeing and age is not fixed but varies within different contexts, so we should not assume that this relationship between age and wellbeing will persist over time.

It is important to emphasise that most children have high wellbeing. Four-fifths of children aged 8 to 15 are flourishing; they are satisfied with their lives as a whole and find their lives worthwhile¹⁷⁰. Similarly, ONS research in 2010/11 showed that nearly nine out of ten UK children aged 10 to 15 were relatively happy with their lives overall, and only 4% reported being relatively unhappy. Just over a third of children were completely happy with their lives overall (34%). However, well over half of respondents were completely happy with their friends (56%) and family (62%). Less than one in five respondents were completely happy with their school work or appearance (both 19%)¹⁷¹. Using time series data from the BHPS Youth Survey and Understanding Society, the Children's Society has identified significant increases in the overall happiness of children aged 11 to 15 from 1994 to 2008. However, since then the trend has begun to reverse slightly, possibly due to the onset of the economic downturn¹⁷². The Princes Trust has tracked young people's happiness and confidence each year since 2009 in a Youth Index. Interestingly, the Index has showed little variation over this time. This indicates that, despite the economic downturn, there appears not to have been an overall decline in young people's wellbeing¹⁷³.

As one would expect, there is significant variation in levels of subjective wellbeing between different groups of children and young people. In relation to gender, for children aged 10 to 15, a higher percentage of boys than girls reported being 'relatively happy' with life as a whole, their friends and their appearance, but a higher percentage of girls than boys said they were relatively happy with their school and school work¹⁷⁴. High levels of family harmony, parental support and autonomy-granting are all important to children's wellbeing.

¹⁶⁸ ONS (2013) *Personal Wellbeing in the UK, 2012/13* [online]. Available from: http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171778_319478.pdf

¹⁶⁹ Deaton, A. (2008) 'Income, health and wellbeing around the world: evidence from the Gallup world poll' *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 22:2, pp53-72 [online]. Available from: http://www.princeton.edu/~deaton/downloads/deaton_income_health_and_wellbeing_around_the_world_evidence_%20from_gallup_world_poll_jep_spring2008.pdf and New Economics Foundation (2009) *National Accounts of Wellbeing* [online]. Available from: <http://www.nationalaccountsowellbeing.org/public-data/files/national-accounts-of-well-being-report.pdf>

¹⁷⁰ Children's Society (2013) *The Good Childhood Report 2013* [online]. Available from: <http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/good-childhood-report-2013-online/trends-and-outcomes.html>

¹⁷¹ Office for National Statistics (2013) Children's wellbeing release. Online at: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/wellbeing/measuring-national-well-being/children-s-well-being/sty-children-s-well-being.html>

¹⁷² Children's Society (2013) *The Good Childhood Report 2013* [online]. Available from: <http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/good-childhood-report-2013-online/trends-and-outcomes.html>

¹⁷³ Prince's Trust (2013) *Youth Index 2013* [online]. Available from: <http://www.princes-trust.org.uk/pdf/youth-index-2013.pdf>

¹⁷⁴ Office for National Statistics (2013) *Children's wellbeing release*. [online]. Available from: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/wellbeing/measuring-national-well-being/children-s-well-being/sty-children-s-well-being.html>

Also, material deprivation has a significant effect on children's wellbeing and is also very strongly associated with feeling unsafe at home, not feeling that they have a lot to be proud of and not feeling positive about the future¹⁷⁵.

Having lower levels of educational attainment and having received free school meals is associated with lower levels of confidence and happiness¹⁷⁶. Young people from poor families are six times more likely to feel that "everyone puts them down" and more than three times as likely to feel depressed "all" or "most" of the time than those growing up in wealthy families. These young people are also more than twice as likely to feel they "don't have anything to get up for in the morning"¹⁷⁷.

When we look at broader definitions of wellbeing we see a complex picture in terms of the UK's position compared to other European countries. Analysis of the 2006/7 European Social Survey has enabled countries to be ranked according to their 'personal wellbeing' (which measures people's experiences of their positive and negative emotions, satisfaction, vitality, resilience and self-esteem and sense of positive functioning in the world) and 'social wellbeing' (which measures people's experiences of supportive relationships and sense of trust and belonging with others). The UK and Ireland has the lowest results for social wellbeing of young people of any region in Europe. Levels of personal wellbeing are also relatively low but there is little variation between regions. This is despite having results for social and personal wellbeing that are just slightly under the European average over the whole age range.¹⁷⁸

Relatively low levels of social wellbeing amongst young people are driven by very low results for 'trust and belonging'. 'Trust and belonging' is based on questions about trusting other people, being treated fairly and respectfully by them, and feeling a sense of belonging with and support from people where you live. The difference between the 'trust and belonging' results of the youngest and the oldest in the UK is the largest in Europe¹⁷⁹. We are unable to ascertain whether these low levels of social trust are a life course or generational effect. However, the comparisons across countries suggest that there is something particular about the context for young people in the UK that is associated with low social trust. This fits with the evidence set out in the section on social trust above.

Despite improvements since 2007, the UK also does not perform well relative to other developed countries in international comparisons for a broad range of objective and subjective indicators of children and young people's wellbeing. UNICEF ranks the UK 16th out of 29 developed countries for children and young people's wellbeing. The UK's least

¹⁷⁵ Children's Society (2013) *The Good Childhood Report 2013* [online]. Available from: <http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/good-childhood-report-2013-online/trends-and-outcomes.html>

¹⁷⁶ Prince's Trust (2013) *Youth Index 2013* [online]. Available from: <http://www.princes-trust.org.uk/pdf/youth-index-2013.pdf>

¹⁷⁷ Princes Trust (2011) *Broke, not broken: tackling youth poverty and the aspiration gap* [online]. Available from: http://www.princes-trust.org.uk/pdf/PovertyReport_170511.pdf

¹⁷⁸ New Economics Foundation (2009) *National Accounts of Wellbeing* [online]. Available from: <http://www.nationalaccountsofwellbeing.org/public-data/files/national-accounts-of-well-being-report.pdf>

¹⁷⁹ New Economics Foundation (2009) *National Accounts of Wellbeing* [online]. Available from: <http://www.nationalaccountsofwellbeing.org/public-data/files/national-accounts-of-well-being-report.pdf>

positive results are on objective indicators related to the wellbeing of young people aged 15 to 19, such as teenage pregnancy and numbers of young people NEET¹⁸⁰.

Wellbeing and young people's labour market outcomes

There is a strong link between labour market outcomes and poor health and wellbeing. However, it is difficult to be certain how much of this link is causal. Therefore, there is significant uncertainty about the extent to which changes in labour market conditions will lead to changes in health and wellbeing outcomes. Whilst in some cases, negative labour market outcomes cause lower wellbeing, in other cases susceptibility to poor health or other personal attributes may cause people to be unemployed or economically inactive. According to research by the Prince's Trust, young people aged 16-24 who are NEET are significantly less happy with all areas of their lives than those in education, employment and training¹⁸¹. Young people in education or government sponsored training at age 19 were more likely to state being very or fairly satisfied with their life so far than young people who were NEET¹⁸² (85% and 83% compared with 58%). One in 10 young people feel they cannot cope with day-to-day life but this rises to 22% of young people who are NEET. While 28% of young people in work feel down or depressed "always" or "often", this increases to almost half (48%) amongst young NEET people. Stress and anxiety (39%) is the most commonly mentioned negative consequence on well-being as a result of not being in work, education or training¹⁸³.

There also appear to be negative impacts on people's health related to unemployment, particularly for prolonged periods. Research suggests that insecure work can make it harder to combine work and home lives, especially for women¹⁸⁴. Feelings of unfair pay in organizations with high levels of wage disparity contribute to physical and mental ill health¹⁸⁵. Being unemployed has immediate health consequences, including an increased risk of depression and suicide and being out of work in the longer term increases the risk of chronic diseases such as cancer, heart disease and stroke. Long-term unemployment can be linked to excessive drinking¹⁸⁶.

Some of these wider impacts associated with negative labour market outcomes appear to be long-lasting. This suggests that there could be a long term 'scarring effect' on some young

¹⁸⁰ UNICEF (2013) *Report Card 11* [online]. Available from: <http://www.unicef.org.uk/Latest/News/report-card-11-child-wellbeing-uk-teens-ignored-by-government/>

¹⁸¹ Prince's Trust (2013) *Youth Index 2013* [online]. Available from: <http://www.princes-trust.org.uk/pdf/youth-index-2013.pdf>

¹⁸² Department for Education (2011) *Longitudinal Study of Young People in England: the activities and experiences of 19 year olds, England 2010* [online]. Available from: <http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SBU/b001014/b01-2011v2.pdf>

¹⁸³ Prince's Trust (2013) *Youth Index 2013* [online]. Available from: <http://www.princes-trust.org.uk/pdf/youth-index-2013.pdf>

¹⁸⁴ Heijstra, T. and Rafnsdottir, G. (2011) 'Balancing work-family life in Academia: The Power of Time' [online]. Available from: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1468-0432.2011.00571.x/abstract>

¹⁸⁵ Siegrist J, Roskam E, Leka S. (2012) *Report of task group 2: employment and working conditions including occupation, unemployment and migrant workers*. Copenhagen, WHO Regional Office for Europe [online]. Available from: http://www.euro.who.int/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/215196/Review-of-social-determinants-and-the-health-divide-in-the-WHO-European-Region-final-report-Eng.pdf

¹⁸⁶ Siegrist J, Roskam E, Leka S. (2012) *Report of task group 2: employment and working conditions including occupation, unemployment and migrant workers*. Copenhagen, WHO Regional Office for Europe [online]. Available from: http://www.euro.who.int/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/215196/Review-of-social-determinants-and-the-health-divide-in-the-WHO-European-Region-final-report-Eng.pdf

people who became unemployed during the recent recession as they grow older, particularly those who were long term unemployed. Evidence shows that people who have had a long period of unemployment can suffer long term effects even when they are back in work: such as wage depression¹⁸⁷, lack of confidence, increased stress, and worse outcomes for wellbeing and mental health¹⁸⁸. These problems could be particularly acute for those people who already face disadvantages, such as young people coming out of care, long-term unemployed, and those with criminal records. Young people aged 18-24 growing up during recessions in the US¹⁸⁹ tended to develop lasting beliefs that success in life depends more on luck than on effort and are more mistrustful of government¹⁹⁰. This effect was also apparent among those who graduated during a recession¹⁹¹. Those who experienced economic downturns are less willing to take financial risks, less likely to participate in the stock-market, and are more pessimistic about future returns on investment¹⁹². If so, this could be a cohort effect with longer-term consequences for some members of the current generation of young people.

Mental Health, behaviour problems and risk behaviours

Like for wellbeing, there are likely to be significant life course effects in the emergence of mental health issues as they are more likely to emerge during adolescence than in later life. Half of all lifetime cases of diagnosable mental illness begin by age 14 and three-quarters of lifetime mental illness arise by mid-twenties. In England, approximately 10% of children and young people have a clinically recognised mental disorder: 6 % of 5 – 16 year olds have conduct disorder, 18% a sub-threshold conduct disorder, and 4% an emotional disorder¹⁹³. Adolescents have heightened stress-induced hormonal responses, which alongside the maturing adolescent brain may increase vulnerability to anxiety, depression, and drug abuse¹⁹⁴. Mental health issues associated with adolescents, in addition to anxiety and depression, include behavioural problems, eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa and bulimia, addictive disorders, autism, learning disorders and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (AD/HD)¹⁹⁵. There tends to be strong continuities between adolescent and adult mental health, more than half of all early adult psychiatric disease is preceded by mental illness before the age of 18¹⁹⁶. However, mental health problems only affect a minority of adolescents and as discussed above, the majority continue to flourish.

¹⁸⁷ Gregg, P. And Tominey, E. (2005) The wage scar from male youth unemployment. *Labour Economics* 12 (2005) 487–509. [online]. Available from: http://www.stat.oek.wiso.uni-goettingen.de/veranstaltungen/statistical%20consulting/Gregg_Tominey.pdf

¹⁸⁸ <http://www.apa.org/about/gr/issues/socioeconomic/unemployment.aspx>

¹⁸⁹ Bell, D.N.F and Blanchflower, D.G. (2010). *UK unemployment in the Great Recession*. National Institute Economic Review 214, R3-R25.

¹⁹⁰ Giuliano, P. and Spilimbergo, A. (2009). *Growing up in a recession: beliefs and the macroeconomy*. IZA Discussion Paper No. 4365.

¹⁹¹ Kahn, L.B. 2010. The long-term labor market consequences of graduating from college in a bad economy. *Labour Economics* 17, p303–16.

¹⁹² Malmendier, U., and Nagel, S. (2011). Depression Babies: Do Macroeconomic Experiences Affect Risk Taking? *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 126(1), 373-416.

¹⁹³ Royal College of Psychiatrists (2010) *No Health without Public Mental Health*. Online at: <http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/pdf/Position%20Statement%204%20website.pdf>

¹⁹⁴ Romeo, Russell D. "The Teenage Brain The Stress Response and the Adolescent Brain." *Current directions in psychological science* 22.2 (2013): 140-145.

¹⁹⁵ National Adolescent Health Information Center (2008), *The Mental Health of Adolescents: A National Profile*. [online]. Available from: <http://nahic.ucsf.edu/downloads/MentalHealthBrief.pdf>

¹⁹⁶ Collishaw, S. (2012) 'Time trends in young people's emotional and behavioural problems, 1975-2005' in Hagell A. ed. *Changing Adolescence*. Bristol

In addition to these life course effects, there do appear to be generational shifts in the patterns of prevalence of mental health problems amongst young people. However, it is important to note that these patterns are difficult to identify due to, for example, changing social norms and diagnostic practices over time. The evidence presented here is based on survey data of symptoms of mental health problems as reported by young people and their parents. It is not based on the numbers of young people being diagnosed with or being treated for mental health problems. There appears to have been a significant increase in the symptoms of anxiety and depression and emotional problems amongst young people between the mid 1980s and the millennium, and this result holds in a number of high income countries. Increases were more marked for those with high levels of emotional problems. For example, the numbers of Scottish boys above the clinical threshold for emotional problems nearly doubled between 1987 and 2006, for Scottish girls it more than doubled. Since then the upward trends have levelled off or begun to reverse, however, they remain at historically high levels¹⁹⁷. 17.1% of 16-24 year olds had some symptoms of anxiety or depression in 2011/12 compared to 19.3% in 2003¹⁹⁸.

Similarly, levels of parent-assessed conduct problems amongst adolescents in the UK increased considerably between the mid 1970s and 1999, before declining slightly to 2004. There were similar increases for boys and girls and young people from socially advantaged and disadvantaged homes. This is highly important as adolescents with conduct problems are far more likely to be involved in crime and anti-social behaviour, both as adolescents and throughout adulthood¹⁹⁹.

One study in the US over longer timescales indicates that there has been a generational increase in psychological issues along a number of clinical scales, including psychopathic deviation, paranoia, hypomania and depression among high school students in the US between 1951 and 2002. The authors attribute this change to cultural shifts towards extrinsic goals in society, such as materialism and status²⁰⁰. It is important to note that it is difficult to attribute specific causes to these changes and to generalise between countries.

Again, corresponding patterns can be found when looking at outcomes that are related to mental health and behavioural problems. However, it is important to note that causal relationships here are complex and we are not able to identify what are the most important factors in explaining these trends.

Suicide rates amongst young men aged 15-29 rose from a rate of 13.2 per 100,000 in 1981 to a peak of 22.4 in 1998. They then declined rapidly to 2005 and since then have stabilised at around 13 per 100,000, a similar rate to 30 years ago. Suicide rates amongst young women of the same age are significantly lower at 4.2 per 100,000 of population in 2011. This is a similar rate to that of 30 years ago and has varied less over time than for men²⁰¹.

¹⁹⁷ Collishaw. S. (2012) 'Time trends in young people's emotional and behavioural problems, 1975-2005' in Hagell A. ed. *Changing Adolescence*. Bristol

¹⁹⁸ ONS (2013) *Internal analysis of Understanding Society Wave 2* unpublished

¹⁹⁹ Collishaw. S. (2012) 'Time trends in young people's emotional and behavioural problems, 1975-2005' in Hagell A. ed. *Changing Adolescence*. Bristol

²⁰⁰ Twenge, J. M., Gentile, B., DeWall, C. N., Ma, D., Laceyfield, K., and Schurtz, D. R. (2010). Birth cohort increases in psychopathology among young Americans, 1938–2007: A cross-temporal meta-analysis of the MMPI. *Clinical psychology review*, 30(2), 145-154.

²⁰¹ ONS (2013) *Suicides in the United Kingdom, 2011*[online]. Available from:

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/publications/re-reference-tables.html?edition=tcn%3A77-288089>

There has been a slow and steady decline in the numbers of young people participating in a number of risk behaviours. The percentage of 16-19 year olds that smoke has declined from 31% in 1998 to 18% in 2011²⁰². The numbers of 16-24 year olds in Great Britain that drink more than the government daily benchmarks has also declined. Among men in this age group, the proportion drinking more than 4 units on their heaviest drinking day fell from 46% in 2005 to 32% in 2011 and the proportion drinking more than 8 units decreased from 32% to 22% over the same period. There have also been marked falls for women in this age group with the proportion drinking more than 3 units on their heaviest drinking day falling from 41% in 2005 to 31% in 2011 and the proportion drinking more than 6 units falling from 27% to 18%²⁰³. The proportion of 16-24 year olds in England and Wales who have taken any illicit drug in the last year has roughly halved from over 30% in 1998 to 16.3% in 2012/13. The proportion using Class A drugs has declined at a similar rate and the proportion of 16-24 year olds who are frequent drug users has halved in the last ten years²⁰⁴. Following a downward trend since the late 1990s, teenage conception rates in England and Wales are now at their lowest since records began in 1969²⁰⁵.

There were 137,335 proven offences by young people in 2011/12, down 22% from 2010/11 and down 47% since 2001/02²⁰⁶. Also, the numbers of young people as first time entrants to the criminal justice system in England and Wales is on a downward trend. Since 2007, the number of juvenile first time entrants has declined by 74%²⁰⁷.

The large numbers of potential causes for these trends mean that we are unable to infer that they are explained by a change of attitudes towards risk behaviours. The declines in different risk behaviours may be explained by specific factors, such as policy interventions. However, risk behaviours do cluster and the similar trends for a number of risk behaviours may imply that there are some common underlying causes, such as changing attitudes and norms and wider socio-economic factors.

Wellbeing and technology

There has been a large amount of media discussion about the impacts of a range of technologies, particularly social media and computer games, on people's wellbeing. This is

²⁰² ONS (2013) *2011 General Lifestyle Survey* [online]. Available from: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/ghs/general-lifestyle-survey/2011/rpt-chapter-1.html#tab-The-prevalence-of-cigarette-smoking>

²⁰³ ONS (2013) *2011 General Lifestyle Survey* [online]. Available from: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/ghs/general-lifestyle-survey/2011/rpt-chapter-2.html#tab-Trends-in-alcohol-consumption-over-time>

²⁰⁴ Home Office (2013) *Drug Misuse: Findings from the 2012 to 2013 Crime Survey for England and Wales*. [online]. Available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/drug-misuse-findings-from-the-2012-to-2013-csew/drug-misuse-findings-from-the-2012-to-2013-crime-survey-for-england-and-wales>

²⁰⁵ ONS (2013) *Teenage pregnancies at lowest level since records began* [online]. Available from: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/vsob1/conception-statistics--england-and-wales/2011/sty-conception-estimates-2011.html>

²⁰⁶ Youth Justice Board (2013) *Youth Justice Statistics 2011/12: England and Wales* [online]. Available from: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/218552/yjb-stats-2011-12.pdf

²⁰⁷ Ministry of Justice (2013) *Criminal Justice Statistics in England and Wales 2011*, Ministry of Justice Statistics Bulletin [online]. Available from: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/231011/criminal-justice-stats-march-2013.pdf

particularly the case for adolescents who are on average more likely to be immersed in digital technology and are going through a life stage associated with increase 'neuro-plasticity', which leads to suggestions that technology could lead to their brains becoming 're-wired'.

There is a risk of overstating the change and underplaying continuity between generations. For instance, in spite of a significant increase in online communication, there is some evidence that young people are primarily using these new tools to achieve the same functions as older ones, such as to engage in social interactions and to experiment with identity formation²⁰⁸. Many of the concerns that are commonly voiced about today's technologies were also raised about emerging technologies in past. For example, this article from 1978 (which is primarily focusing on the impact of television) suggests that some concerns over young people have remained remarkably consistent over time:

*"Modern technology has made a wealth of shared experience undreamed of even 50 years ago...It is difficult or even impossible to shield young people from experiences reflecting the adult world when communication systems infiltrate our homes and become so much a key part of everyday living. ..There are fears as to the content of media: violence, lawlessness, breakdown in moral values, and tawdry and explicit sex, for example. There are other fears as to the general effect of [technology on]...a society in which...young people have little time for other experiences"*²⁰⁹.

It has been argued that online communication can contribute to three aspects of young people's psycho-social development: identity, intimacy and sexuality²¹⁰.

There is fairly clear evidence that digital technologies provide a way for young people to experiment with developing their identity²¹¹, to boost their status and 'show off'²¹², with consequent potential benefits to self-esteem and sense of self²¹³.

Social media use is associated with improved wellbeing and social connectedness. However, the relationship with wellbeing is non-linear. Whilst some social media use is positively associated with wellbeing, no social media use is associated with negative outcomes, as is heavy social media use (more than three hours a day)²¹⁴. 6% of young people aged 10-15 spend four hours or more and 30% spend one to three hours chatting

²⁰⁸ Hagell, A. et al. (2012) 'Trends in adolescent time use in the United Kingdom' in Hagell, A. ed. *Changing Adolescence: social trends and mental health* Bristol

²⁰⁹ Srygley, S. (1978) Influence of Mass media on Today's Young People. *Educational Leadership*, pp. 526 – 529 [online]. Available from: http://www.ascd.org/ASCD/pdf/journals/ed_lead/el_197804_srygley.pdf

²¹⁰ Howard-Jones, P. (2011) *The impact of digital technologies on human wellbeing* Nominet Trust [online]. Available from: <http://www.nominettrust.org.uk/sites/default/files/NT%20SoA%20-%20The%20impact%20of%20digital%20technologies%20on%20human%20wellbeing.pdf>

²¹¹ Foresight (2013) The Future of Identity [online]. Available from: <http://www.bis.gov.uk/foresight/our-work/policy-futures/identity>

²¹² Radiator (2013) *UK Youth Trend Report 2013*, and Ben Hammersley (2012) *'64 Things you need to know now for then'* Hodder & Stoughton Ltd

²¹³ Howard-Jones, P. (2011) *The impact of digital technologies on human wellbeing* Nominet Trust [online]. Available from: <http://www.nominettrust.org.uk/sites/default/files/NT%20SoA%20-%20The%20impact%20of%20digital%20technologies%20on%20human%20wellbeing.pdf>

²¹⁴ Booker CL, Skew AJ, Sacker A, Kelly YJ. Screen-based media use, sports participation and well-being in adolescence: cross-sectional findings from the UK Household Longitudinal Study. *American Journal of Public Health* 2013, forthcoming

online. The figures for the amount of time spent on games consoles are similar²¹⁵. Also, the positive relationship with social connectedness only holds for using the internet to maintain existing relationships. Using the internet to make new friends has been linked to lower levels of wellbeing²¹⁶. This may be because people who feel isolated in their everyday lives are attempting to use the internet to counteract this. Though social isolation and loneliness are usually associated with older age groups, young people aged 18-34 are equally likely to feel lonely often (12%) as older age groups and are more likely to have felt depressed because they felt alone (53%). More people in the 18-34 age range also worry about feeling lonely (36%)²¹⁷. Social media can connect people who otherwise would not be, bring people closer to family and friends²¹⁸, and enrich lives²¹⁹ (for example, by helping disabled or housebound people to be part of an online community).

There is some evidence that young people are more at ease communicating online than offline. More than two thirds of young people aged 8 to 17 in the UK and US find it easier and more convenient to communicate with their friends online or by text than in person²²⁰. However, more than a third of 20 – 25 year olds also see technology as isolating²²¹ and making them less satisfied with their own lives²²². It has been argued that communication through technology doesn't include the physical contact that benefits our well-being.²²³ The Mental Health Foundation argue that, 'It is too early to say whether technology is changing our core ability to relate to others, but soon enough to conclude that while it facilitates relationships, real and virtual, technology is no substitute for the human interaction that is a buffer against loneliness'²²⁴. In short, social media use may boost the strength of existing relationships but it is less likely to help with those for whom those relationships are lacking.

Whilst moderate internet use has clear beneficial effects, it may become problematic when it becomes compulsive, interferes with the normal activities of daily living, and when the

²¹⁵ ONS (2012) *Measuring National Wellbeing- Children's Wellbeing 2012* [online]. Available from: http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171766_283988.pdf

²¹⁶ Howard-Jones, P. (2011) *The impact of digital technologies on human wellbeing* Nominet Trust [online]. Available from: <http://www.nominettrust.org.uk/sites/default/files/NT%20SoA%20-%20The%20impact%20of%20digital%20technologies%20on%20human%20wellbeing.pdf>

²¹⁷ Griffin, Jo. (2010) *The Lonely Society?* Mental Health Foundation [online]. Available from: http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/content/assets/PDF/publications/the_lonely_society_report.pdf?view=Standard

²¹⁸ Pew Research Centre (2010) *Millennials: a portrait of generation next* [online]. Available from: <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/files/2010/10/millennials-confident-connected-open-to-change.pdf>

²¹⁹ Boston Consulting Group (2012) *The Millennial Consumer: debunking stereotypes* [online]. Available from: https://www.bcgperspectives.com/content/articles/consumer_insight_marketing_millennial_consumer/?chapter=4

²²⁰ JWT (2012) *Gen Z: Digital in their DNA*. [online]. Available from: http://www.jwtintelligence.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/F_INTERNAL_Gen_Z_0418122.pdf

²²¹ Pew Research Centre (2010) *Millennials: a portrait of generation next* [online]. Available from: <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/files/2010/10/millennials-confident-connected-open-to-change.pdf>

²²² Havas (2012) *Prosumer Report- This Digital Life* [online]. Available from: http://mashable.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/NEWEuro_RSCG_Prosumer_Report_This_Digital_Life_Infographic.jpg

²²³ Sigman, A. (February 2009) *The Biological Implications of Social Networking*. *The Biologist* Vol. 56, No. 1. http://www.aricsigman.com/IMAGES/Sigman_lo.pdf

²²⁴ http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/content/assets/PDF/publications/the_lonely_society_report.pdf?view=Standard

person can no longer control it. This can lead to withdrawal, isolation and depression²²⁵. The significant predictors of problematic usage appear to be offline issues, such as low self-esteem, anxiety and the use of the internet for sensation-seeking activities. However, it is important to note that the problematic internet use is fairly uncommon; it affects at most one in twelve people in the US and Europe²²⁶.

It is likely that heavy technology use may displace time spent doing other things. Though there is mixed evidence about whether technology usage reduces exercise, it does appear likely that it reduces time spent on school work and consequently attainment. Similarly, there is evidence that many students attempt to multitask when working, which has a detrimental impact on their studies. Also, it has been suggested that excessive use of television and computer games may interfere with the development of such attentional capacities, since they displace opportunities to practice paying attention to less exciting tasks that do not involve rapid changes in focus²²⁷.

A further issue is cyber bullying, which is estimated to impact on 10-35% of children, though this, of course, depends on how it is defined²²⁸. It appears that both cyber bullies and their victims also adopt these roles offline as well, which suggest that both online and offline bullying have similar underlying social or psychological causes²²⁹. There is no evidence available to suggest that cyber bullying has larger impacts than offline bullying or if technology use has increased the prevalence of bullying. The prevalence of bullying is decreasing in most countries, possibly owing to continuing reduction efforts or changed attitudes and tolerance levels²³⁰. Being bullied is associated with a range of negative outcomes, such as lower wellbeing²³¹, long term mental health problems and suicide²³².

There is widespread concern over the online sexualisation of young adolescents, including deliberate or inadvertent access of inappropriate online content^{233, 234}. Research by the

²²⁵ Howard-Jones, P. (2011) *The impact of digital technologies on human wellbeing* Nominet Trust [online]. Available from: <http://www.nominettrust.org.uk/sites/default/files/NT%20SoA%20-%20The%20impact%20of%20digital%20technologies%20on%20human%20wellbeing.pdf>

²²⁶ Howard-Jones, P. (2011) *The impact of digital technologies on human wellbeing* Nominet Trust [online]. Available from: <http://www.nominettrust.org.uk/sites/default/files/NT%20SoA%20-%20The%20impact%20of%20digital%20technologies%20on%20human%20wellbeing.pdf>

²²⁷ Howard-Jones, P. (2011) *The impact of digital technologies on human wellbeing* Nominet Trust [online]. Available from: <http://www.nominettrust.org.uk/sites/default/files/NT%20SoA%20-%20The%20impact%20of%20digital%20technologies%20on%20human%20wellbeing.pdf>

²²⁸ Howard-Jones, P. (2011) *The impact of digital technologies on human wellbeing* Nominet Trust [online]. Available from: <http://www.nominettrust.org.uk/sites/default/files/NT%20SoA%20-%20The%20impact%20of%20digital%20technologies%20on%20human%20wellbeing.pdf>

²²⁹ Howard-Jones, P. (2011) *The impact of digital technologies on human wellbeing* Nominet Trust [online]. Available from: <http://www.nominettrust.org.uk/sites/default/files/NT%20SoA%20-%20The%20impact%20of%20digital%20technologies%20on%20human%20wellbeing.pdf>

²³⁰ Currie, C. Et al. (2012) *Social determinants of health and well-being among young people*. Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) study: international report from the 2009/2010 survey World Health Organisation (WHO) [online]. Available from: <http://www.euro.who.int/en/countries/armenia/publications/social-determinants-of-health-and-well-being-among-young-people.-health-behaviour-in-school-aged-children-hbsc-study>

²³¹ The Children's Society (2013) *The Good Childhood Report 2013*. [online]. Available from: <http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/good-childhood-report-2013-online/index.html>

²³² Copeland W.E. 2013 *JAMA Psychiatry*. 2013;70(4):419-426

²³³ Flood, M. (2009). The harms of pornography exposure among children and young people. *Child Abuse Review*, 18(6), 384-400.

Office of the Children's Commissioner has found that many children are exposed to, and intentionally access pornography and sexualised imagery via the internet. In 2010, 11% of 9 to 16 year olds in the UK had seen sexual images online²³⁵. Pornography has been linked to unrealistic attitudes about sex; maladaptive attitudes about relationships; more sexually permissive attitudes; greater acceptance of casual sex; beliefs that women are sex objects; more frequent thoughts about sex; sexual uncertainty (e.g. the extent to which children and young people are unclear about their sexual beliefs and values); and less progressive gender role attitudes (e.g. male dominance and female submission). However, establishing causal links to changed behaviour and attitudes is highly problematic, which makes assessing the potential impacts of this issue very difficult²³⁶.

There also major concerns that children are more exposed to sexual predators online but there is little evidence that internet use puts young people at particular risk. Significant proportions of children have engaged in online communications that may be risky, such as contacting people online that they haven't met offline and levels of digital safety skills are not high for many children²³⁷. Whilst there is significant uncertainty about the scale of the issue, UK children experience rather fewer online risks than might be expected given their high degree of access and use²³⁸. In the USA, compared to other sex crimes, internet-related sex crimes against children are rare. For example, in the US in 2006, about 2% of sex crimes against teenagers were internet-related and a recent survey of US law enforcement agencies concluded that young people are not at particular risk when interacting on social network sites²³⁹.

Playing violent computer games is associated with reduced empathy and increased aggression. Given that a range of studies have found computer games use fits the criteria for pathological addiction in a large minority of adolescents, these findings have potentially serious implications²⁴⁰. It is difficult to identify a causal link with increased violence in the

²³⁴ Bailey, R. (2011) *Bailey review of the commercialisation and sexualisation of childhood* [online]. Available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/bailey-review-of-the-commercialisation-and-sexualisation-of-childhood-final-report-published>

²³⁵ Livingstone, S. et al. (2010) *Risks and safety for children on the internet: the UK report* EU Kids Online [online]. Available from: <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/43731/1/Risks%20and%20safety%20for%20children%20on%20the%20internet%28lsero%29.pdf>

²³⁶ Horwarth, M. Et al. (2013) *Basically porn is everywhere: a rapid evidence assessment on the effect that access and exposure to pornography has on children and young people* [online]. Available from: http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/content/publications/content_667

²³⁷ Livingstone, S. et al. (2010) *Risks and safety for children on the internet: the UK report* EU Kids Online [online]. Available from: <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/43731/1/Risks%20and%20safety%20for%20children%20on%20the%20internet%28lsero%29.pdf>

²³⁸ Livingstone, S. et al. (2010) *Risks and safety for children on the internet: the UK report* EU Kids Online [online]. Available from: <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/43731/1/Risks%20and%20safety%20for%20children%20on%20the%20internet%28lsero%29.pdf>

²³⁹ Howard-Jones, P. (2011) *The impact of digital technologies on human wellbeing* Nominet Trust [online]. Available from: <http://www.nominettrust.org.uk/sites/default/files/NT%20SoA%20-%20The%20impact%20of%20digital%20technologies%20on%20human%20wellbeing.pdf>

²⁴⁰ Howard-Jones, P. (2011) *The impact of digital technologies on human wellbeing* Nominet Trust [online]. Available from: <http://www.nominettrust.org.uk/sites/default/files/NT%20SoA%20-%20The%20impact%20of%20digital%20technologies%20on%20human%20wellbeing.pdf>

real world and it has even been argued that computer games could reduce crime, simply because adolescents are too busy playing them to be involved in crime²⁴¹. Whilst this conclusion is contentious, it does emphasise the difficulties in predicting the societal impacts of technology use. Certainly, the increased popularity of computer games has not coincided with an increase in violent crime amongst young people.

In conclusion, there are a wide range of ways in which technology use could impact on attitudes, behaviours and wellbeing of young people. There is clear evidence that moderate use of technology is likely to have significant positive impacts but that for the small minority of young people who use technology heavily, there could be a range of negative impacts. However, there is considerable uncertainty about the scale of these effects. In many areas there is a shortage of good quality evidence of causal impact and often it is too early to tell what the impacts might be. It is too simplistic to conclude that the impacts of technologies are 'good' or 'bad'. The impacts of technologies will depend on how children and young people use them and this will depend on a range of wider social and psychological factors. Assessing how these issues will evolve over time is therefore problematic due to uncertainties about how young people will use the internet and how technologies themselves will evolve.

Young people's relationships

This section looks at the extent to which the strength of relationships with peers and families have changed over time. This is important as these relationships are a key aspect of children and young people's resilience and will help to ascertain how they will cope with future stresses and challenges. Clearly, there is significant variation in the strength of relationships (and other determinants of resilience) within each cohort of children and young people, based on the strength of relationships with parents, family structures, local areas, and religious and cultural practices, which cannot be covered in detail here.

The majority of children aged in 11-15 in the UK find their mothers (83%) and their fathers (69%) easy to talk to. The Good Childhood Report published by the Children's Society found family to be one of most powerful predictors of wellbeing for children, with family harmony the strongest predictor of life satisfaction, followed by parental support and then parental autonomy-granting²⁴². However, the Department of Health estimated in 2003 that over a quarter of children in England were failing to meet their developmental needs due to stress in the family caused by mental illness, domestic violence, substance abuse, or living conditions causing stress and chaos²⁴³.

There is limited evidence as to how strength of family relationships has evolved over time. Clearly there have been a move to more diverse and fluid family structures with more single parent families, increased maternal employment and increased instances of unmarried parents and divorce. However, this does not appear to have led to weaker family relationships across the population. Between 1986 and 2006, there has been an increase in parental supervision and monitoring of their 16 year old children. This increase has been

²⁴¹ Cunningham, S. et al. (2011) *Understanding the effects of violent video games on violent crime* [online]. Available from: http://ocw.metu.edu.tr/pluginfile.php/5587/mod_resource/content/2/Cunningham_Engelstaetter_2011.pdf

²⁴² The Children's Society (2013) *The Good Childhood Report 2013*. [online]. Available from: <http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/good-childhood-report-2013-online/index.html>

²⁴³ Desforges, C. and Abouchar, A. (2003). *The Impact of Parental Involvement, Parental Support and Family Achievements and Adjustment: A Literature Review, Research Report No. 433*. London: DfES

largest amongst single parents and poorer families. There has also been a significant increase in the amount of time parents spend caring for children from the 1960s to the 1990s. Between 1986 and 2000, the amount of time adolescents reported choosing to spend with their parents increased slightly. However, there has been an overall decline in family meals since the 1970s, though this has begun to decline in the last ten years²⁴⁴. Between 2002 and 2009-11, the proportion of 10-15 year olds reporting quarrelling with their mother more than once a week has declined slightly and the proportion talking to mother about things that matter more than once a week has increased by more than 11 percentage points²⁴⁵.

A key gap in the evidence is the relationships of older adolescents with their parents, which may have become increasingly important due to the extension of adolescence and the surfacing of 'emerging adulthood' as a new life stage for some young people. Also, lower levels of labour market participation amongst young people may have led to a loss of adult structured activities and 'socialisation' to adult norms which starting work earlier on provided²⁴⁶. For 16-25 year olds, having a positive role model of the same gender has a significant impact on happiness and confidence. Those with a positive role model report reported significantly above average levels, whereas those without came out a long way below average²⁴⁷. Evidence from Germany indicates that having a positive relationship with parents is crucial for the wellbeing of young people making the transition from university to work life²⁴⁸. Young people aged 17 are more likely to say that they can confide in their parents than anyone else, including their friends, about things that matter to them²⁴⁹.

From the available evidence, it appears that most young people do feel that they have supportive relationships that they can draw on. According to the BHPS in 2007 (when these questions were last asked), less than one in twenty 16-24 year olds agreed that there was no one to listen to them, no one to help in a crisis or no one to count on to offer support. This proportion has been fairly stable since 1991, see chart below. Similarly, whilst young people in the UK report very low levels of 'trust and belonging' compared to older people and young people in other European countries (see above), they report fairly strong supportive relationships with family, friends and others who provide support²⁵⁰. There is no evidence that there has been a generational shift in attitudes to family and friends. Generation Y are

²⁴⁴ Gardner et al. (2012) 'Trends in Parenting' in Ann Hagell Ed. *Changing Adolescence* Bristol, Policy Press

²⁴⁵ ONS (2013) *internal analysis of Understanding Society wave 2 and British Household Panel Survey* unpublished

²⁴⁶ Gardner et al. (2012) 'Trends in Parenting' in Ann Hagell Ed. *Changing Adolescence* Bristol, Policy Press

²⁴⁷ Prince's Trust (2013) *Youth Index 2013* [online]. Available from: <http://www.princes-trust.org.uk/pdf/youth-index-2013.pdf>

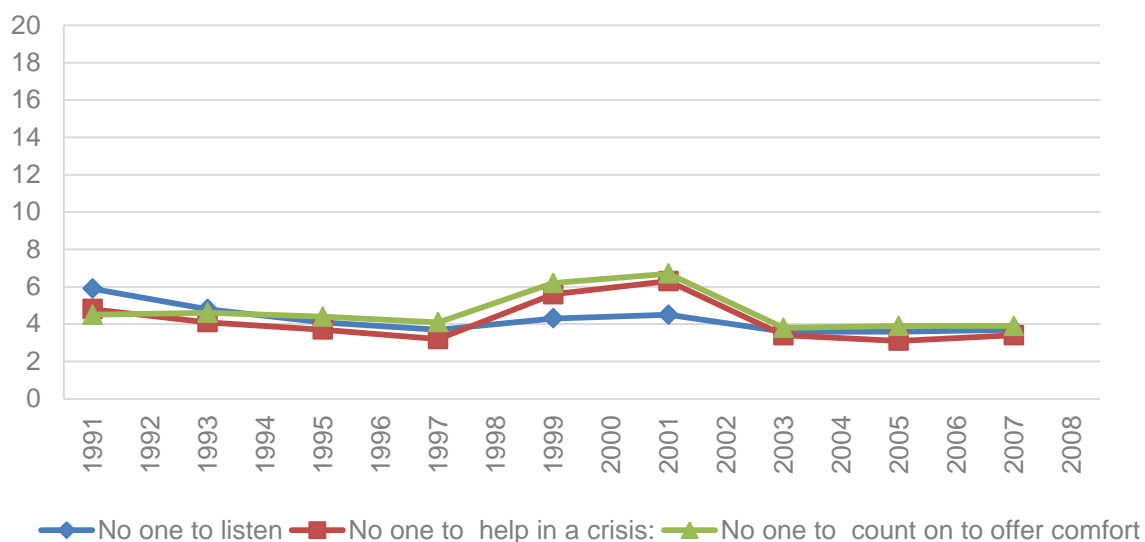
²⁴⁸ Buhl, H. (2007) 'Wellbeing and the child-parent relationship at the transition from university to work life' *Journal of Adolescent Research* September 2007 22:5 pp550-571

²⁴⁹ Department for Children, Schools and Families (2008) *Youth Cohort Study & Longitudinal Study of Young People in England: the Activities and Experiences of 17 year olds* [online]. Available from: http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110206154043/http://education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SB/U/b000850/Bull01_2009textvfinal.pdf

²⁵⁰ New Economics Foundation (2009) *National Accounts of Wellbeing* [online]. Available from: <http://www.nationalaccountsofwellbeing.org/public-data/files/national-accounts-of-well-being-report.pdf>

no less likely to regard these things as very important in life as previous generations. They are also no less likely to agree that 'one must love and respect one's parents regardless'²⁵¹.

Figure 20: Lack of supportive relationships over time, percentage agreeing with the following statements (16-24 year olds)



Source: Cabinet Office Internal Analysis of British Household Panel Survey (1991 to 2007)

²⁵¹ McAndrew, S. (2013) *Unpublished analysis of European Values Survey 1981, 1990, 1999 and 2009*. University of Manchester Institute for Social Change

Section 3: Changing drivers of the social attitudes of young people

This section sets out a range of drivers that may influence how young people's attitudes, behaviours and experiences may evolve in the next 10 years. It therefore explores changes in the context in which young people find themselves.

The key drivers and underlying evidence were developed through a combination of desk research about ongoing trends and cross-government workshops. The workshops were used to identify the most high impact drivers and assess how certain we can be about their trajectories out to 2024.

It is important to note that we can be less confident about our assessments about future trends compared to the evidence on the current trends in social attitudes set out in section 2 above.

Increased educational participation

Young people are spending more time in education than in the past. However, there is considerable uncertainty about whether this trajectory will continue in the next 10 years. We would not expect to see a dramatic reduction in the length of time young people spend in education and the numbers of young people attending higher education. However, it seems likely that the rate of growth could slow down or stop, meaning that the length of time young people spend in education may be similar in 2024 to what it is today.

The number of people aged 16-24 in full time education in the UK has more than doubled in the past 30 years. In 2013, there were more 16-24 year olds in full time education than there were 16-24 years olds employed and not in full time education. The proportion of young people aged 16-17 in the UK in full time education increased from 50% in 1984 to 83% by 2013. Similarly, the proportion of 18-24 year olds in full time education in UK has increased from 8% in 1984 to 32% in 2013²⁵². The numbers of students in higher education in the UK has increased from 1.9m in 2000/01 to 2.5m in 2011/12²⁵³. Consequently, qualification levels amongst young people have increased. In 2012, 58% of young people in England had achieved qualifications up to level 3 by age 19, compared to 42% in 2002²⁵⁴.

There is some evidence that the long term trend towards increased participation in higher education may have reversed. Between 2010 and 2012 UCAS applications declined by 7.4%, coinciding with increases in tuition fees²⁵⁵. There has been a slight decline in the percentage of young people aged 10-15 who say they would like to go to university from 78% in 2002 to 74% in 2011/12²⁵⁶. However, it does not seem likely that this decline will continue given the potential returns to education in a knowledge economy. Fairly stable participation rates of higher education participation appear to be more plausible.

²⁵² ONS (2014) Young People in the Labour Market 2014 [online] Available from: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/lmac/young-people-in-the-labour-market/2014/sty-education.html>

²⁵³ HESA (2013) *HE Statistics for the UK 2011/12* PR196 [online] Available from: http://www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2993&Itemid=161

²⁵⁴ Department for Education (2013) *Attainment by age 19 in 2012* SFR 13/2013 [online] Available from: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/221793/sfr13-2013.pdf N.B. Level 3 equates to achievement of 2 or more A-levels or equivalent qualifications

²⁵⁵ Independent Commission on Fees (2012) *Analysis of UCAS applications for 2012/13 admissions* [online]. Available from <http://www.suttontrust.com/public/documents/icof-report-ucas-analysis-final.pdf>

²⁵⁶ ONS (2013) *Internal analysis of the British Household Panel Study and Understanding Society wave 2* unpublished

Also, it is important to note that the figures showing increased participation in education conceal a large amount of variation in terms of potential returns and experiences gained. A significant proportion of young people in education are on loosely structured vocational courses of varying quality, which may not offer clear routes into employment²⁵⁷.

Research suggests that the recession may have a large negative impact on the aspirations of young people from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds. During periods of high unemployment, children with parents who have few qualifications are less likely to want to take A-levels and go to university or take vocational courses, possibly because they do not think they will get work afterwards. Those from highly educated families are more likely to want to gain further qualifications in order to boost their long-term employability and to avoid participating in a weak labour market²⁵⁸. This suggests that the recession could have had a negative impact on social mobility through education.

Demographic change: larger population, increased urbanisation, ethnic diversity of society and ageing

Young people today are growing up in a far more ethnically diverse society than previous generations and this shift is expected to continue^{259, 260}. The majority of people of Pakistani, Bangladeshi and mixed ethnicity in Great Britain are under 25²⁶¹. This is still very uneven between regions and urban and rural areas but more people who are ethnic minorities are living in rural and suburban areas than before and, again, this trend is expected to continue^{262, 263}. Young people are also more likely to have mixed with people from a different religious or ethnic background in the past month. Nearly all 16-19 year olds (93%) had done so, compared with 80% of all adults aged over 16²⁶⁴. There has been a marked increase in the numbers of mixed race children and mixed ethnicity households^{265, 266}.

²⁵⁷ Lawton, K. (2013) *The Condition of Britain Briefing 2: Growing up and becoming an adult* Institute for Public Policy Research [online] Available from: http://www.ippr.org/images/media/files/publication/2013/11/Condition-of-Britain-brief02-Growing-up_Nov2013_11487.pdf

²⁵⁸ Rampino, T. And Taylor, M. *Educational aspirations and attitudes over the business cycle* ISER working paper 2012-26 [online]. Available from: <https://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/publications/working-papers/iser/2012-26>

²⁵⁹ Coleman, D. (2010). Projections of the ethnic minority populations of the United Kingdom 2006–2056. *Population and Development Review*, 36(3), 441-486.

²⁶⁰ Rees, P., Wohland, P., Norman, P., and Boden, P. (2012). Ethnic population projections for the UK, 2001–2051. *Journal of Population Research*, 29(1), 45-89. [online] available from: <http://rd.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12546-011-9076-z#page-2>

²⁶¹ AYPH (2013) *Key data on adolescence 2013* [online] available from: http://www.ayph.org.uk/publications/480_KeyData2013_WebVersion.pdf

²⁶² ONS (2012) *Ethnicity and National Identity in England and Wales 2011* [online] available from: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/census/2011-census/key-statistics-for-local-authorities-in-england-and-wales/rpt-ethnicity.html#tab-Differences-in-ethnicity-across-local-authorities->

²⁶³ Wohland, P., Rees, P., Norman, P., Boden, P. and Janinska, M. (2010) *Ethnic Population Projections for the UK and Local Areas 2001–2051*, Working Paper 10/02, Department of Geography, University of Leeds. [online] available from: http://www.ethpop.org/Publications/wp_eth_pop_projections.pdf

²⁶⁴ DfE (2013) *Internal analysis of DCLG Citizenship Survey 2009/10*

²⁶⁵ Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2013). *What makes ethnic group populations grow?* [online] available from: <http://www.ethnicity.ac.uk/census/>

It is likely that young people will increasingly live in densely-populated cities and younger populations will continue to move around the country more regularly than older people to study and to find work²⁶⁷.

As has been well-documented, the UK population is expected to grow and to get older. The proportion of young people aged 15-29 is expected to decline in the short term before rising again after 2020²⁶⁸.

Changing household structures

Over time there has been a trend towards more variation in household structures. More children grow up in, for instance, lone parent households, with step parents or across the households of their parents. They also move between different household structures more than they did in the past²⁶⁹.

It is likely that this trend will continue and that as young people move out of the family home, they will increasingly experience a wide range of living arrangements. Single occupancy, non-familial cohabitation and multi-generational households could all become more commonplace. The number of single person households is expected to increase by 9% to 7 million by 2021. At the same time the rise in young adults living with parents and an ageing society could drive the growth of multi-generational households²⁷⁰. However, these projections, like those for the population, are inherently uncertain, and the outcome will reflect complex patterns of socio-economic change.

Combined with the high levels of internal migration amongst young people, these trends suggest a complex picture of young people in the next ten years experiencing a wide range of more flexible, and often changing, living arrangements.

The increasing prevalence of information technology in everyday life

The internet is now ubiquitous in the everyday life of young people as a space for socialising and experimenting. It seems highly likely that this trend will continue and intensify in the future as technology evolves and becomes more accessible. This could have significant impacts on the social and economic lives of young people.

In 2012 Ofcom estimated that 91% of children in the UK between the ages of 5 – 15 live in a household with an internet connection. Teenagers between the ages of 12 – 15 spend over 17 hours a week online, with on average 286 friends on social networking sites²⁷¹. Young people use technology in different ways to older people, often ‘multi-screening’, (using a

²⁶⁶ Social Issues Research Centre (2008) *Childhood and Family Life*. Oxford. [online] available from: http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/7413/12/Appendix-G_SIRC-report.pdf

²⁶⁷ Dennett, A. and Stillwell, J. (2008) *Population Turnover and Churn: Enhancing Understanding of Internal Migration in Britain through Measures of Stability*. Population Trends, 134, 24–41.

²⁶⁸ Office for National Statistics (2011) *National Population Projections, 2010-based Projections Statistical Bulletin*. [online] available from: http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171778_235886.pdf

²⁶⁹ Gardner et al. (2012) ‘Trends in Parenting’ in Hagell, A. Ed. *Changing Adolescence* Policy Press

²⁷⁰ Office for National Statistics (2012) *Young Adults Living With Parents in the UK, 2011* [online]. Available from: http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171776_266357.pdf

²⁷¹ Ofcom (2012) *Children and Parents: Media Use and Attitudes Report* [online]. Available from: <http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/research/media-literacy/oct2012/main.pdf>

number of devices at the same time)²⁷². Over two thirds (69%) of 16-24 year olds in the UK has a smartphone and 80% of these access social media by mobile, most of them more than once a day²⁷³.

This has become normalised for young people more quickly than for older people, but increasingly older generations are also bringing these new technologies into their daily lives. Younger people are far more likely than some older groups to actively create and share content, rather than be passive consumers²⁷⁴. UK children participate and create online more than children in many other countries; for instance in 2010, one in twelve children in the UK had blogged²⁷⁵.

The Changing youth labour market

There is a large amount of uncertainty about the economic conditions that will affect young people in 2024. This is partly because it is difficult to disentangle long term labour market trends from the temporary impacts of the recession and partly because of uncertainty around the nature of those long term trends.

The economic downturn disproportionately impacted on young people, who have been particularly affected by higher unemployment rates²⁷⁶ and declines in real wages²⁷⁷. Around four-in-five (78 %) employees aged 20 and under were 'low paid' in April 2012, with nearly one-in-three (32 %) in 'extreme low pay'²⁷⁸. Whilst this is primarily an issue for young people with low levels of educational qualifications, it is also the case that during the economic downturn some graduates had to accept non-graduate jobs or be unemployed²⁷⁹.

We would expect that as the macroeconomic environment becomes more favourable, the labour market conditions of people who started work during the recession will improve as they progress through their careers and find more opportunities available. Similarly, we would expect the prospects of younger generations to improve when they join the labour market.

²⁷² Ofcom (2012) *Children and Parents: Media Use and Attitudes Report* [online]. Available from: <http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/research/media-literacy/oct2012/main.pdf>

²⁷³ Tyntec (2012) *Millenials driving demand for emerging cloud-based mobile services* [online]. Available from: http://www.tyntec.com/fileadmin/tyntec.com/images/market_insights/2012-06_tyntec_millenials_survey.pdf

²⁷⁴ Boston Consulting Group (2012) *The Millennial Consumer: debunking stereotypes* [online]. Available from:

https://www.bcgperspectives.com/content/articles/consumer_insight_marketing_millennial_consumer/?chapter=2#chapter2

²⁷⁵ Livingstone, Sonia and Haddon, Leslie and Görzig, A. and Ólafsson, Kjartan (2010) *Risks and safety for children on the internet: the UK report: summary of key findings*. EU Kids Online Network, London, UK. [online]. Available from: <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/43731/1/Risks%20and%20safety%20for%20children%20on%20the%20internet%28Isero%29.pdf>

²⁷⁶ ONS (2013) *Labour Market Statistics September 2013* [online] available from: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/lms/labour-market-statistics/september-2013/statistical-bulletin.html#tab-Young-people-in-the-labour-market>

²⁷⁷ Institute for Fiscal Studies *Living Standards, Poverty and Inequality in the UK: 2013 IFS Report R81* [online] available from: <http://www.ifs.org.uk/comms/r81.pdf>

²⁷⁸ Resolution Foundation *Low Pay Britain 2013* [online] available from: http://www.resolutionfoundation.org/media/media/downloads/Low_Pay_Britain_2013.pdf

²⁷⁹ Deputy Prime Minister's Office (2013) *Social Mobility Indicators* [online] available from: <http://www.dpm.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/content/high-attainment-age-19-school-or-college-type>

However, some commentators argue that we are seeing a change in the nature of the youth labour market towards fewer, less-secure jobs. We could also be moving towards a 'hollowing out' of the labour market as routine cognitive and manual jobs are substituted for technology and remaining jobs are polarised between 'lovely and lousy' jobs^{280, 281}. However, there is evidence that wages are not becoming more unequal. This suggests that as traditional middle-level jobs are disappearing, others are moving into the centre ground²⁸². If there are fewer opportunities in the labour market for young people and house prices rise, this could lead to increasing intergenerational inequalities in income and wealth.

²⁸⁰ Goos, M. and Manning, A. (2007). Lousy and lovely jobs: the rising polarization of work in Britain. *Rev Econ Stat* 89, p118–133.

²⁸¹ UK Commission for Employment and Skills (2012) *Working Futures: 2010 – 2020*. [online] available from: <http://www.ukces.org.uk/assets/ukces/docs/publications/evidence-report-41-working-futures-2010-2020.pdf>

²⁸² McIntosh, S. (2013) *Hollowing out and the future of the labour market* [online] available from: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/250206/bis-13-1213-hollowing-out-and-future-of-the-labour-market.pdf

Section 4: potential future trends in the attitudes, behaviours and experiences of young people

This section sets out a number of different trends for how attitudes, behaviours and experiences of young people might change from now to 2024. For each of these trends it provides an assessment of how likely and how impactful we expect these trends to be.

In order to do this, it considers the range of trends that might affect how young people's circumstances in the future change, as set out in Section 3. These are combined with what we know about current trends in young people's attitudes, as set out in Section 2, to give insight into what young people's attitudes, behaviours and experiences may be like in ten year's time. This analysis is based on the findings of the two cross-government futures workshops supplemented by desk research.

There is significant uncertainty about how young people's attitudes will evolve over time, due to both uncertainty around the circumstances in which young people will find themselves and how different groups of young people will interpret and respond to them. Two key sources of uncertainty are what economic circumstances the UK will find itself in and how digital technologies will be used by young people in 2024. Given these uncertainties, the findings of this section should be viewed as more tentative.

This section explores both what the attitudes, behaviours and experiences of today's children and young people may be like when they are 10 years older in 2024, but also what the next cohort of children and young people's attitudes and experiences will be like.

Increasingly liberal social attitudes

Contact with an increasingly diverse peer group and high levels of participation in higher education is likely to mean that younger generations continue the gradual shift towards increasingly liberal/permissive social attitudes about gender equality, sexuality, race and ethnicity. This may also lead to more relaxed attitudes to immigration. This trend may be reinforced by large numbers of young people living in cities and high levels of mobility amongst this group.

Higher educational standards are often associated with higher levels of social liberalism²⁸³, because of the 'socialisation' of different values²⁸⁴, suggesting that participation in higher education will be important in forming young people's social attitudes. We would not expect the proportion of young people attending higher education to increase over the next ten years at the same rate as it did in the last 20 years. This could slow down trends towards further liberalisation of attitudes.

It appears that the main shifts in attitudes between generations have already occurred, and future changes are thus expected to be small. Also, there are still significant differences in the prevalence of liberal attitudes between groups of young people. It is unlikely that future generations of young people will have uniformly liberal social attitudes.

²⁸³ Schoon, I., Cheng, H., Gale, C. R., Batty, G. D., and Deary, I. J. (2010). Social status, cognitive ability, and educational attainment as predictors of liberal social attitudes and political trust. *Intelligence*, 38(1), 144-150.

²⁸⁴ Stubager, R. (2008), Education effects on authoritarian-libertarian values: a question of socialization. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 59: 327-350. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-4446.2008.00196.x

Community engagement and cohesion

There appears to be little evidence of young people becoming disengaged from their communities. It is likely that young people will continue to be interested in helping those around them and that many will remain committed to community engagement, particularly those young people from more well-off backgrounds.

Whilst there is evidence of an emphasis on personal autonomy amongst young people, there is little evidence of a generational shift towards selfishness or a lack of interest in community engagement. Similarly, claims that immersion in online ‘virtual communities’ have replaced local communities do not appear to apply to most young people. It is possible that young people’s desire to engage could lead to the emergence of new forms of community that combine ‘virtual’ and ‘local’ communities, as well as new forms of community engagement.

However, there is a risk that lower levels of social trust amongst younger generations may persist. As young people move for education and work, often to large cities, this flexibility may mean that they become disconnected from local communities. It could be that this trend, coupled with immersion in digital technologies, could lead to an increase in social isolation for some young people. Young people’s low levels of trust in others in their communities, coupled with a perception amongst young people that they are not valued or treated fairly, could lead to a fall in social cohesion.

Declining mainstream political engagement

It is likely, but by no means certain, that low levels of engagement in mainstream politics, particularly amongst disadvantaged young people, will persist.

Low voting rates amongst the young, combined with the ageing population of the UK may lead to an under-representation of young people in traditional politics²⁸⁵ as the age of the median voter may rise from 47 years in 2021 to 49 in 2031 and 51 years in 2051. There is a risk that today’s low voting rates among young people may result in a reluctance to engage with, and becoming more alienated from, formal politics in the future^{286, 287}. There is evidence that voting is ‘habitual’. Therefore, if today’s young people do not get into the habit of voting when they are young, then they will be less likely to vote as they get older.

If young people do not engage in the political system then there is a risk that policies will not reflect their challenges and concerns. However, this risk may be balanced by concern within older generations for the challenges faced by young people.

Pressure groups may emerge to push for a better deal for younger people. If these interests can be accommodated within the political system, then they will be less likely to become radical and anti-establishment. Youth unemployment has been identified globally as a

²⁸⁵ Berry, C. (2012) Young People and the Ageing Electorate: Breaking the Unwritten Rule of Representative Democracy. *Parliamentary Affairs*.

²⁸⁶ Furlong, A., and Cartmel, F. (2012). Social change and political engagement among young people: generation and the 2009/2010 British Election Survey. *Parliamentary affairs*, 65(1), 13-28.

²⁸⁷ Marsh, S., O’Toole, T. and Jones, S. (2007). *Young People and Politics in the UK: Apathy or Alienation?* London: Palgrave.

potential cause of social unrest^{288, 289}. However, there is little evidence of growing political radicalism amongst young people in the UK. It appears that many young people attach strong emphasis to personal responsibility, rather than collective solutions. Therefore, the emergence of widespread support for radical social movements amongst young people is unlikely.

Also, new forms of political engagement have already emerged²⁹⁰ with some young people engaging in non-conventional forms of political participation such as online petitions and campaigns²⁹¹, and civic activities such as volunteering²⁹² or consumer activism²⁹³. It is likely that young people will continue to participate in arenas such as volunteering, communal projects, and digital media campaigns,²⁹⁴ which might become increasingly influential²⁹⁵.

The continued strength of support for democratic values amongst young people may mean that there is potential for young people to re-connect with mainstream politics, so we should not assume that current trends towards low engagement are certain to continue.

Intergenerational equity and tensions

If intergenerational disparities in income and wealth increase in the next 10 years, they could intensify resentment and perceptions of unfairness amongst disadvantaged groups of young people. On the other hand, many young people will rely on older family members for financial and other support and will be increasingly dependent on cross-generational transfers.

Many young people feel that they have been discriminated against because of their age and resent how young people are depicted in the media. There is also some evidence that young people as a group are regarded as having low status in society by older groups. However, it is likely that this is a continuation of a characteristic that has been prevalent in society for a long time and we are unable to say whether it is on the rise.

It is unlikely that intergenerational tensions will create a new 'fault line' in society. There is currently little evidence of widespread resentment amongst young people towards older generations; emotional ties between generations and the focus amongst young people on individual, rather than collective solutions, suggests that this will continue.

²⁸⁸ World Economic Forum (2012) *Global Risks 2012* [online]. Available from:

http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GlobalRisks_Report_2012.pdf

²⁸⁹ Wood, J. (2013) *The Young and the Restless* [online]. Available from:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-19997182>

²⁹⁰ Zukin, C., Keeter, S., Andolina, M., Jenkins, K. and Delli Carpini, M.X. (2006). *A New Engagement? Political Participation, Civic Life, and the Changing American Citizen*. New York: Oxford University Press.

²⁹¹ Banaji, S., and Buckingham, D. (2010). Young people, the internet, and civic participation: An overview of key findings from the CivicWeb project. *International Journal of Learning*, 2(1), 15-24.

²⁹² Barrett, M. (2012). *The PIDOP project: An overview*. Guildford: School of Psychology, University of Surrey. [online]. Available from: [http://epubs.surrey.ac.uk/775796/1/Barrett%20\(2012\).pdf](http://epubs.surrey.ac.uk/775796/1/Barrett%20(2012).pdf)

²⁹³ Forbrig, J. (Ed.) (2005). *Revisiting Youth Political Participation*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

²⁹⁴ Bakker, T. P., and de Vreese, C. H. (2011). Good news for the future? Young people, Internet use, and political participation. *Communication Research*, 38(4), 451-470.

²⁹⁵ Harris, A., Wyn, J., and Younes, S. (2010). Beyond apathetic or activist youth 'Ordinary' young people and contemporary forms of participation. *Young*, 18(1), 9-32.

Potential wellbeing impacts of uncertain economic circumstances

Young people on average have high wellbeing compared to older groups and the majority make successful transitions into the world of work. There are high levels of optimism, despite current economic challenges, and a strong emphasis on personal autonomy amongst young people. These personal attributes and high levels of education are likely to enable many young people to flourish over the next ten years; allowing high levels of wellbeing and competition in a global knowledge economy to be maintained.

As discussed above, there is significant uncertainty about the labour market conditions that young people will find themselves in by 2024 but it is possible that we are seeing a shift in the nature of the youth labour market towards fewer, less-secure jobs that may continue despite improved economic conditions.

Many young people have high aspirations for personal success and emphasise personal autonomy. It is likely that some young people will struggle to achieve the outcomes they were expecting, for instance graduates having to accept non-graduate jobs. It may be that some struggle to cope with these disappointments. In most cases, as young people move into work and the general prospects for the economy improve, we would expect these issues to weaken with time.

There are strong links between wellbeing, health and labour market outcomes. For some young people who are in insecure work or are unemployed, there could be associated negative impacts on their health and wellbeing. Therefore, if the labour market remained challenging, then some of these negative outcomes, such as depression, stress and anxiety, may become more prevalent amongst young people.

The ability of young people to be resilient to the challenges they face, especially the long-term effects of the economic downturn and changing labour markets, will vary depending on the personal characteristics, background, and levels of support available to the individual. They are also likely to vary with socio-economic circumstances.

Regardless of whether economic conditions improve, there could still be a long term 'scarring effect' on some of those young people who became unemployed during the recent recession as they grow older. These issues include worse long term labour market outcomes and poor mental health, although labour market policies are strongly focused on minimising these effects by providing more support the longer people are unemployed.

Longer and more complex routes to full adulthood and independence

'Emerging adulthood' has already emerged as a new stage in the life course of many young people, who are experiencing longer, more complex paths to full adulthood and independence. As young people struggle to become financially independent, they are taking longer to move out of their family home²⁹⁶, have children²⁹⁷, get married²⁹⁸ and buy their

²⁹⁶ Office for National Statistics (2012) *Young Adults Living with Parents in the UK, 2011*. [online].

Available from: http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171776_266357.pdf

²⁹⁷ Office for National Statistics (2011) *Live Births in England and Wales by characteristics of mother, 2010* [online]. Available from: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/vsob1/characteristics-of-Mother-1--england-and-wales/2010/stb-live-births-in-england-and-wales-by-characteristics-of-mother-2010.html#tab=Timing-of-Childbearing>

²⁹⁸ Office for National Statistics (2012) *Marriages in England and Wales (provisional), 2010* [online]. Available from: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/publications/re-reference-tables.html?edition=tcn%3A77-249125>

own home²⁹⁹. For more advantaged young people who can depend on parental support, this time is often spent in full time education and can be characterised as a time of opportunities and experimentation³⁰⁰. For young people who cannot depend on this support, it is likely to be a more precarious and less positive experience³⁰¹³⁰².

‘Emerging adulthood’ is likely to continue to be a stage in the life course of many young people in the next 10 years. Rising housing costs, longer time spent in education and possible changes to the youth labour market are likely to lead to extended paths to full adulthood and independence for a large proportion of young people.

For those young people whose families are willing and able to support them, this could include longer time spent living with their parents and increased dependence on inter-generational transfers. This may have detrimental impacts on social mobility and different forms of support may be needed to help young people who cannot depend on their parents to achieve positive outcomes.

Multi-generational households may become more common and intergenerational relationships could be reshaped by increasing mutual dependence. Older people may have a role in the informal care of younger family members as well as, increasingly, in the labour markets³⁰³. Also, some young people may have a role in supporting older relatives, particularly if they are struggling to find work themselves. However, the need to travel for work and education could continue to increase physical distances between generations as families become more geographically spread out, which could limit the contact and support available between family members³⁰⁴.

Wellbeing impact of digital technologies

Today’s young people are ‘digital natives’ who have grown up immersed in technology, with higher levels of digital know-how than previous generations. Digital and communications technology is very likely to continue to develop and remain a key driver of change. Though it is possible that there could be, among some sections of the population, a backlash against the pervasive presence of technology, it is hard to envision a world in which social media and technological immersion of young people recedes. Technology will continue to shape today’s young people’s lives as they grow older and will also affect future generations of young people. Indeed, it is likely that future devices, for instance internet-connected watches and glasses, could increase the impact of digital technology on young people, especially as prices fall and uptake rises.

²⁹⁹ Clapham, D., Mackie, P., Orford, S., Buckley, K., Thomas, I., Atherton, I. and McAnulty, U. (2012) *Housing Options and Solutions for Young People in 2020*. Joseph Rowntree Foundation [online]. Available from: http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/young-people-housing-options-full_0.pdf

³⁰⁰ Arnett, J. (2004) *Emerging Adulthood* Oxford University Press

³⁰¹ Hendry, L. And Kloep, M. (2010) ‘How universal is emerging adulthood? An empirical example’ *Journal of Youth Studies*

³⁰² Furlong, A. and Cartmel, F. (2007) *Young people and social change* Open University Press, Buckingham.

³⁰³ Mann, R. (2009) Evolving family structures, roles and relationships in light of ethnic and social change. *Beyond Current Horizons* [online]. Available from: http://www.beyondcurrenthorizons.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/final_mann_20090202.pdf

³⁰⁴ Chan, T. W., and Ermisch, J. (2013) *Family Geography and Family Demography in the UK: Cross-Sectional Perspective*. [online]. Available from: <http://users.ox.ac.uk/~sfos0006/papers/geo1.pdf>

Not all young people conform to the dominant image of being 'wired' and 'always on'. The adoption of online and emerging technologies is highly varied within age groups as well as between them. Some young people don't see the Internet as important for finding out or learning new things. This subset is often less confident about their skills to use the Internet³⁰⁵. There is a socio-economic and a gender differential in how much young people access the internet, with young women and more economically-disadvantaged young people being more likely to be 'digitally excluded'³⁰⁶. It is possible that those who are 'digitally excluded' will find it more difficult to participate positively in the economy and wider society.

There is clear evidence that moderate use of technology is likely to have significant positive impacts, such as improved wellbeing and social connectedness. It is also likely that digital skills will provide some young people with a strong 'comparative advantage' in the economy and will lead to innovative business ideas. However, for the small minority of young people who use technology heavily, there could be a range of negative impacts, such as cyber-bullying, 'sexualisation' related to social media use and pornography or increased aggression due to video games. Prevalence estimates of these issues vary according to definition and measurement, but do not appear to be rising substantially with increasing access to mobile and online technologies. This could be because these technologies pose no additional risk compared to offline behaviour, or because any risks are offset by a commensurate growth in safety awareness and initiatives.

However, there is considerable uncertainty about the scale of these effects. In many areas there is a shortage of good quality evidence of causal impact and often it is too early to tell what the impacts might be. It is possible that these trends could intensify as young people's social interactions become increasingly technologically mediated by new devices and applications.

Risk behaviours and associated negative outcomes

There has been a slow and steady decline in the numbers of children and young people participating in a number of behaviours that could be broadly termed as 'risky' or negative over time, such as drinking, drug use, smoking, youth crime. Similarly, some negative outcomes such as suicide and teenage pregnancy have also declined.

The declines in different risk behaviours may be explained by specific factors, such as policy interventions. However, risk behaviours do cluster and the similar trends for a number of risk behaviours may imply that there are some common underlying causes, such as changing social norms and wider socio-economic factors. It may be that better relationships with parents, and improved parental monitoring and supervision are part of the explanation for declining risk behaviours. It may simply be that risk behaviours are being displaced by other behaviours, such as increased social media and video game use. There has also been a drop in the amount of unstructured leisure time for young people, mainly because of an increase in time spent in educational activities, which could have reduced opportunities to participate in risky activities³⁰⁷.

³⁰⁵ Eynon, R. and Geniets, A. (2012) *On the Periphery? Understanding Low and Discontinued Internet Use Amongst Young People in Britain*. Report for the Nominet Trust. [online]. Available from: <http://www.oii.ox.ac.uk>

³⁰⁶ Livingstone, S. and Helsper, E.J. (2007) Gradations in digital inclusion: Children, young people and the digital divide. *New Media & Society* 9 (4) 671-696. [online]. Available from: <http://nms.sagepub.com/content/9/4/671.abstract>

³⁰⁷ Feinstein, L. Et al. (2012) *Time trends in the activity patterns and time use of adolescents* in Hagell A. ed. *Changing Adolescence*. Bristol

However, the trend towards 'emerging adulthood' could mean that people engage in risk behaviours for longer. Though risk behaviour (e.g. smoking and drug use) generally declines with age, becoming a parent and moving in with a partner are both associated with a reduction in risk behaviours over and above that associated with age³⁰⁸. If people continue to delay these life course events for longer, then this might lead to them continuing with risky behaviours until later in life.

Given the many complex explanatory factors that are associated with participating in risk behaviours, we cannot be certain that the trends towards declining risk behaviours will continue over the next 10 years. If they do, then we might expect that they will have a positive impact on the long run health outcomes of today's children and young people, as well as future cohorts.

³⁰⁸ Williams, B. et al. (2013) *Lifecourse tracker wave 1 spring 2012: interim summary report* [online]. Available from:
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/214896/lifecourse-final.pdf

Section 5: Conclusion

In conclusion, the social attitudes, behaviours and experiences of young people paint a complex picture of gradual change and continuity over the next 10 years. However, in some spheres, such as those affected by technological change, there is a lot more uncertainty and, as a result, the potential for dramatic change.

There are a range of drivers that could affect the context in which young people live by 2024. These include gradual changes in educational attainment, continuing and intensified immersion in digital technologies, demographic change towards an older, larger and more diverse population, more complex and rapidly changing living arrangements and, potentially, changing youth labour markets.

There is considerable uncertainty about these trends and how young people may respond to them. This means that we cannot be sure how young people's attitudes, behaviours and experiences will evolve in the next 10 years. Also, it is important to consider that these trends will have different impacts on various groups of young people and the differences between young people of the same generation are likely to remain significant.

This report has identified a number of gradual generational shifts in the attitudes, behaviours and experiences of young people, which have the potential to lead to social change in the next 10 years. Some of these are set out below.

A key theme running through the social attitudes of young people is an emphasis on the importance of personal autonomy, with an increase in the importance of the following values for younger generations: power and achievement (social prestige and personal success), stimulation (excitement and challenge in life) and hedonism (pleasure/gratification for oneself). It may be that this emphasis on personal autonomy in part explains the continuing decline in support for the welfare state amongst younger generations.

There has been a gradual shift in society towards increasingly liberal social attitudes towards ethnicity, gender roles and sexuality. Contact with an increasingly diverse peer group and a high level of participation in higher education are likely to mean that this gradual shift continues. However, it appears that the main shifts in attitudes between generations have already occurred, and future changes are thus expected to be small.

Levels of participation in mainstream politics are far lower amongst today's young people than for previous generations. It is likely, but by no means certain, that low levels of engagement, particularly amongst disadvantaged young people, will persist. However, the level of trust in traditional institutions and authority figures are very similar across generations. There does not appear to be a widespread view amongst young people that society needs to be radically changed or a rejection of the values and institutions of democratic society.

In some areas, we see little change in young people's attitudes, behaviours and experiences compared to older generations.

For instance, when we ask people of different ages what is important in life, we find remarkably little difference between generations. Similarly, we see little evidence of generational shifts in willingness to justify selfish behaviour, such as tax and benefit fraud, or appetite for being involved in community engagement. These areas where there are few, if any, changes between generations remind us that we should not overstate the possible changes over the next 10 years in young people's attitudes, behaviours and experiences.

As well as shaping evolving attitudes, we would expect to see continued changes in the behaviours and experiences of young people in the next 10 years. One way that this could occur would be through an intensification of the trend towards longer routes and more complex routes to full adulthood and independence, which could shape the lives of many young people.

Digital and communications technology is very likely to continue to develop and remain a key driver of change, shaping the lives of today's young people as they grow older - as well as future generations of young people. These trends could intensify as young people's social interactions become increasingly technologically mediated by new devices and applications.

It appears likely that continued digital immersion will lead to a wide range of social and economic benefits for young people. However, there could also be negative implications for some young people's wellbeing. There is considerable uncertainty about the scale of these effects. In many areas there is a shortage of good quality evidence of causal impact and often it is too early to tell what the impacts might be.

There are a number of positive stories to tell about this generation of young people. For example, a range of risk behaviours and negative outcomes are declining amongst young people, such as drug taking, teenage pregnancies, drinking, smoking and crime. Also, the high levels of aspirations amongst young people, emphasis on personal responsibility and community engagement provide good reasons for optimism about social change over the next 10 years. However, there are also potential concerns, for instance around declining mainstream political engagement, low levels of social trust and the potential negative impacts of digital technologies.