

## The views and experiences of young people in Northern Ireland: Exploring participation, knowledge and respect for rights, community life and leisure, and mental health

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Supporting the Northern Ireland Young People's Report to the Committee on the Rights of  
the Child

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**Commissioned by youth@clc, Children's Law Centre and Save the Children NI**

June 2015



*This report was written with support from youth@clc and Emma Campbell, Children's Law Centre*

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## Executive summary

The Children's Law Centre (CLC) and Save the Children, supported by the Centre for Children's Rights at Queen's University Belfast (QUB), commissioned this research with the specific purpose of informing both an adult and young persons', Northern Ireland specific, NGO Alternative Report to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. The report presents the results of a survey, developed alongside youth@clc (youth advisory panel to CLC), which was administered to young people from across Northern Ireland and received 752 usable responses.

### What did the survey assess?

This survey assessed young people's enjoyment of rights across 4 key domains – participation, knowledge of rights, enjoyment of community life and mental health. Within each domain several outcomes were assessed, these included:

- Young people's reported participation in home, education, community and government decision making processes. Within this section young people's recommendations for improving participation were also assessed.
- Self-reported knowledge and ability to exercise rights and perceived adult respect for children's rights. Young people were also asked about how government could improve young people's knowledge of rights.
- Enjoyment of community life and leisure facilities. Young people were also asked about different experiences within their community, e.g., being 'moved on' and frequency with which they socialise etc.
- Mental health awareness, comfort in seeking mental health support and perceived suitability of mental health services. Finally, the young people were also asked to describe the 'ideal mental health service'.

### What do the results tell us?

The results from this survey highlight the complexity of young people's views and experiences of rights in Northern Ireland. A summary of the key findings are presented below:

#### The effect of demographic factors

The results explored the effect of demographic factors, such as age, gender, socio-economic status, religion etc., on the outcomes. Some statistical group differences did emerge, where for example, girls reported significantly higher mental health awareness compared to boys. However, further analysis which explores the role of multiple variables together highlighted that the demographics of the young people were not the strongest predictors of their participation, enjoyment of community life and leisure facilities, knowledge and perceived adult respect of rights, and mental health awareness/support seeking. Rather it was each of

these outcomes that related most strongly and predicted each other. The meaningfulness of this is discussed in the following sections.

### Inter-dependence of rights

Each of the outcomes related with some/many of the other outcomes. So for example, the strongest predictor of participation in government decision making was participation in community decision making. This suggests that a young person who feels like they participate strongly in their community will also feel that way about their participation in government.

There are many of these inter-relationships presented throughout the report which together support the notion that rights are inter-dependent and indivisible. This finding supports advocacy and policy agendas which aim to promote rights holistically, as by targeting one you can target many.

### Participation

Despite young people's demonstrable capacity and willingness evidenced throughout this survey to contribute meaningfully to discussions on matters affecting them, the opportunities facing young people to enjoy their participation rights are not always afforded to them in every aspect of their lives.

The survey results highlight that young people's enjoyment of their participation rights steadily decreases from home, where they feel most positive about their participation in decision making, to education and community life, where they are less positive, and finally to government where they are negative about their enjoyment of participation rights.

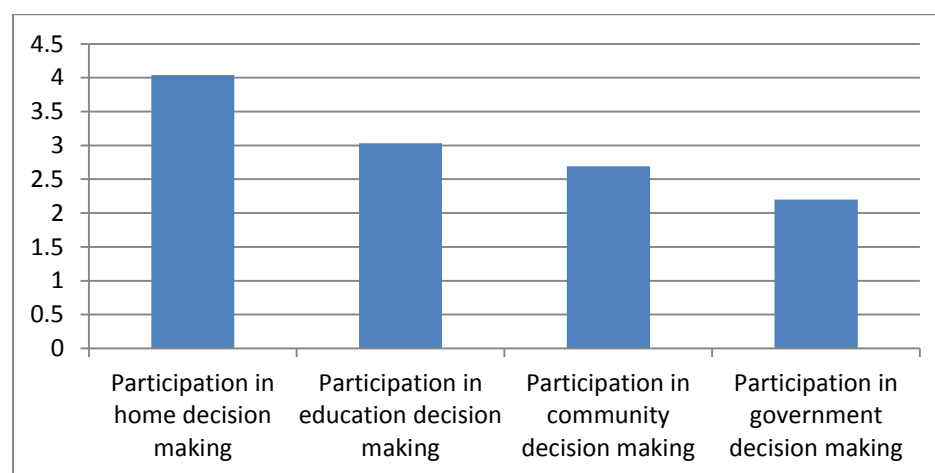


Figure 1: Overall participation mean values across each domain

As suggested by the YPAG (young persons' advisory group), levels of enjoyment of participation may be dependent on the level of opportunity to participate made available to them by adults in each area of their lives. That is, there is more opportunity to participate in decision making at home (where there are few adults with whom young people have a close relationship) compared to the opportunities the YPAG perceived as being available to young people to participate in government decision making processes.

Additionally, young people expressed concern regarding their participation in general, in that although they are regularly consulted, they feel these views are less frequently acted upon. They suggested potential improvements in the democratic processes available to them, particularly in school and in government.

Finally, the results demonstrate that participation in home, community, education and government decision making all relate with each other, that is, a young person who feels positive about their participation in one area, will do so also in the others. This highlights the benefits of viewing young people holistically as social agents. By encouraging young peoples' capacity to participate in general, will encourage their ability to participate in all aspects of their lives.

**Recommendation**

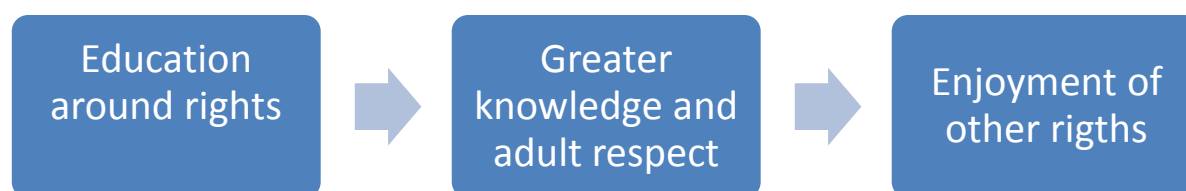
In order to fulfil their obligations under Article 12 of the UNCRC, duty bearers should actively support young people's participation by resourcing awareness raising campaigns to encourage parents, educationalists, civic leaders, and adults in communities to value and respect the contributions children and young people can make in society as a whole, to enable young people to fully claim their participation rights across all domains.

**Knowledge of rights (Article 42)**

The survey results highlight both the scope and willingness for young people to learn more about their rights, as well as the scope to improve their perception of adult respect for rights.

Additionally, the statistical relationships between knowledge of and perceived adult support for rights and a range of other rights highlight the value of educating young people for broader rights enjoyment. For example, a young person with greater knowledge of rights is also likely to report high levels of participation in government decision making processes and a young person who perceives high levels of adult respect is also likely to enjoy their community life more. Therefore, by educating young people around their rights they will be more empowered to realise their rights in other areas of their lives. Additionally, by

educating adults they can be encouraged to value young people as rights holders, leading them to have, and young people to perceive, greater respect for children's rights.



**Figure 2: Rights education facilitating enjoyment of other rights**

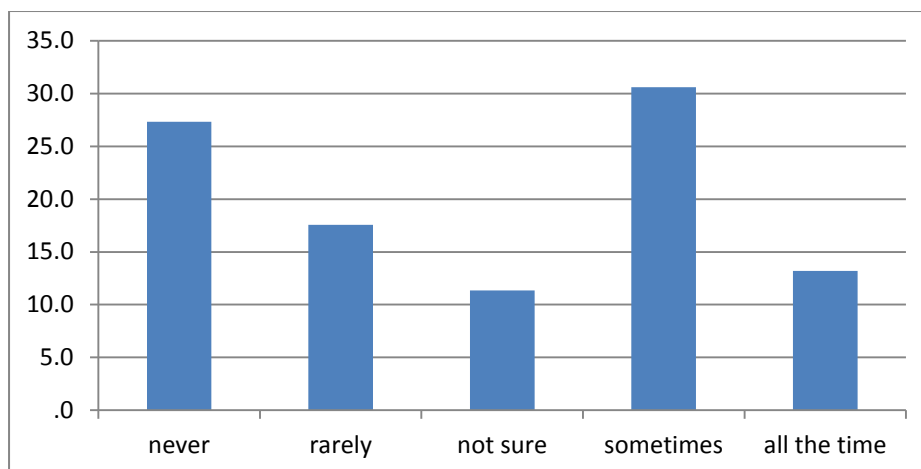
### **Recommendation**

In order to meet obligations under Article 42 of the UNCRC, awareness raising and educational initiatives around rights should be introduced both in school and in the community and targeted at children, young people and adults/ duty bearers.

### **Enjoyment of community life (without discrimination, Article 2)**

In general, the young people in this survey reported active social lives, with 87% going out socially sometimes/ all the time to a range of venues, such as shops, restaurants, and the cinema etc. However, the results also reveal areas for improvement in order to encourage greater enjoyment of community lives and leisure facilities, particularly amongst older teens and those with mental health concerns.

Firstly, young people's views highlight that adult treatment of young people in the community could be improved. For many young people they felt adult's treatment of them was unfair and discriminatory based on their age and social stigma around young people in general. For example, 61% of respondents (more so older teens) had experienced being 'moved on' by adults in their communities. Additionally, facility availability was also recognised by the young people as requiring improvement. The young people highlighted the need for more facilities that are affordable, close to where children and young people live, and staffed by rights respecting adults, the realisation of this too would improve overall enjoyment of community life and leisure facilities.



**Figure 3: % of young people reporting being 'moved on'**

### **Recommendation**

In order to meet obligations under Articles 2, 15 and 31 of the UNCRC, and to ultimately improve young people's enjoyment of community life, the discriminatory treatment young people feel they receive from adults must be addressed, for example, in legislation around age discrimination laws.

### **Mental health/ life, survival and development (Article 6)**

The survey results highlight that 27% of respondents consider themselves to have/ had a mental health concern (37% of whom sought help, with which 66% were satisfied). However, overall awareness of mental health issues, comfort in seeking and accessing mental health support and perceived suitability of mental health services is comparably low, potentially a result of existing social stigma.

The survey results demonstrate the necessity to address key issues with the mental health services available to young people. For example, only 25% of all respondents and 29% of those with mental health concerns reported that they would go to a doctor with such concerns. The results also highlight that young peoples' perceived suitability of such services is strongly related to their comfort in seeking support. This therefore further highlights the value in addressing not only the actual suitability of mental health services, but the perception of these services also, as someone who sees these services as being suitable will feel more comfortable seeking support and will likely be more inclined to get professional help if and when required.



The young people provided excellent insight into how these services could be improved and made more suitable when they were asked what the 'ideal mental health service' would be like for young people. For example, the young people suggested that the mental health services for young people should be more accessible (open 24 hours and more availability in rural areas), be more readily available (reduced waiting times), discreet, friendly, and effective.

*'They should be made available on weekends during the day and evening, and after school times during the week'*

#### **Recommendation**

In order to meet their obligations under Article 24 of the UNCRC, duty bearers should promote mental health awareness and encourage young people's uptake of mental health service provision by working to improve the services available and reducing social stigma attached with mental health concerns. CAMHS should be assessed as a matter of priority, both for suitability and sufficiency of provision. Young people are asking for a quality assured, specialised service for children and young people, their views on how this service should look, feel, and operate must be considered.

#### **Improving adult and young people relationships in communities**

Across all results a theme around adult/ young people relationships emerges, where often this is hindered by young people's negative experiences with adults in the community, for example, their reports of discriminatory behaviour. These poor relationships are also likely to impact on other elements of young people's lives, such as their enjoyment of community life, leisure facilities, and participation rights.

#### **Recommendation**

Initiatives to improve adult/ young people relationships in communities would be beneficial. Education and awareness raising around rights is one way to improve these relationships.

## **All young people enjoying their rights equally**

Finally, the results of the survey demonstrate that not all young people are enjoying their rights equally. For example, older teens enjoy their community lives less, as do those suffering mental health concerns. Additionally, those more marginalised young people (LGBT, those with disabilities, those in detention, NEET etc.) report lower enjoyment of the majority of rights, but, for the most part, report higher mental health awareness. These findings point to the inequality in terms of Northern Ireland's young people and their enjoyment and realisation of a range of rights.

### **Recommendation**

In order to meet their obligations under Article 2 of the UNCRC, duty bearers should address this inequality in enjoyment of rights. They would benefit from consulting directly with specific vulnerable groups to encourage fuller rights enjoyment where necessary and to help ensure that all groups of young people enjoy their rights equally.

## **Conclusions**

Young people are enjoying some of their rights more than others, and some young people are enjoying their rights more than other groups of more vulnerable young people. Young people's greatest enjoyment is in their participation rights, particularly in relation to home life decisions. Areas of particular concern relate to their enjoyment of community life, limited due to their relationships with adults and perceived discrimination, and their enjoyment of suitable mental health services, which is hindered by young people's perceived inaccessibility and unsuitability of the services available. The value of awareness raising and educating both adults and young people around rights is recognised, as a means to improve relationships between adult/ young people and to empower young people to realise their rights across every aspect of their lives. Finally, the results of this survey also point to the value and importance of engaging directly with young people and highlights their willingness to engage with duty bearers on matters affecting their lives, as well as their requests to ensure the information they provide is given due weight and, where possible, realised in policy and practice.

## 1.0 Context

The Children's Law Centre (CLC) and Save the Children, supported by the Centre for Children's Rights at Queen's University Belfast (QUB), commissioned this research with the specific purpose of informing both an adult and young persons', Northern Ireland specific, NGO Alternative Report to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. Both Reports are being submitted to the UN Committee, on behalf of all children and young people in Northern Ireland. The adult and young persons' Northern Ireland NGO Alternative Reports, along with the UK State Parties Report, will inform the fifth periodic examination of the UK Government's compliance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), since ratification of the Convention by the UK in 1991, and consequently the Committee's concluding observations and recommendations to the UK, which follow on from the examination process. The UN Committee's examination of the UK State Parties is scheduled to take place in 2016.

In particular, this research will mainly support and inform the Young Persons' Report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. The compilation of the Young Persons' Report is the result of a collaborative partnership between youth@clc, CLC, Save the Children, children and young people who participated in an online survey (between November 2014 – February 2015): *"Young People's Views on Children's Rights in Northern Ireland"* and children and young people who participated in a series of theme-based research workshops (between December 2014 – April 2015). The UNCRC reporting process has been supported by QUB's Centre for Children's Rights, as well as a representative range of NGOs across Northern Ireland who share concerns about children's rights and seek to improve outcomes for all children and young people in this jurisdiction, by advocating for the development of more rights-based law and policy.

## 2.0 Methods

### 2.1 Survey scope and development

A research advisory team was formed in March 2014, consisting of members of youth@CLC (who acted as a young persons' advisory group, i.e., YPAG), staff from CLC and Save the Children, and researchers from the Centre for Children's Rights at Queen's University Belfast. Over the course of a three day residential in June 2014, youth@clc was supported by other members of the research advisory team to select and design survey themes and items. Drawing on both the UN Committee's 2008 concluding observations to the UK Government on its progress in complying with the General Principles of the UNCRC, as well as their own views and experiences, youth@CLC prioritised a number of key areas of focus for this research, linked to particular UNCRC rights which they felt were of generic importance to the lives of all children and young people in Northern Ireland:

#### **Participation**

- Article 12, UNCRC – the right of the child to express their opinion and have their opinion taken into account in any matter affecting them. Youth@CLC chose to focus on young people's enjoyment of their right to participate in decision-making in their home life, in education, in the community and in policymaking by government at both local and national level.

#### **Knowledge of rights**

- Article 42, UNCRC - knowledge of rights (children and adults), as a prerequisite to enjoyment of all children's rights by all children and young people. Knowledge and ability to exercise rights is assessed, as well as perceived adult respect for children's rights.

#### **Discrimination**

- Article 2, UNCRC – the right of the child not to be discriminated against and to have their rights respected within the context of the child's right to, leisure, play and culture (Article 31), and freedom of association within communities (Article 15).

#### **Life Survival and Development**

- Article 6 UNCRC– Right to Life, Survival and Development within the context of mental health (Article 24, health and access to health services). Youth@CLC prioritised mental health issues, based on their own awareness and concerns about

the high proportion of young people in Northern Ireland who are currently experiencing significant mental health problems.

With regard to the survey items/ questions, items relating to participation in education and in the community were adapted by youth@CLC from Emerson and Lloyd<sup>1</sup> who reliably measured younger children's enjoyment of participation rights. No additional existing measures were used; the remaining items were developed by the research team, including youth@CLC.

Staff from the Centre for Children's Rights worked with youth@CLC, using a rights-based approach to research methods (developed by Lundy and Emerson from the Centre for Children's Rights),<sup>2</sup> to further develop youth@clc's ideas and concepts into usable items for a survey. This took place over a series of three workshops with youth@clc between June and October 2014. The initial phase of this development, which took place during a three day residential with youth@clc in June 2014, was focussed around capacity building, whereby youth@clc were introduced to the idea of research methods, and in particular survey methods. This session focused primarily on building capacity around the methodology, as opposed to the themes to be addressed in the survey, as youth@clc were considered to be experts in identifying key themes affecting all children and young people based on their own experience of being young. After this initial meeting, a further workshop was held in August 2014 whereby the research team supported youth@clc to lift the issues they wanted to explore in the survey into usable survey items. After this workshop, the research team further developed some of the items created and in a final meeting with youth@clc in October 2014, the items developed were finalised and agreed upon. The online survey was available online and in paper form from the 3 November 2014 – 7 February 2015.

After the survey was administered, youth@CLC met with the team in April 2015 to discuss the results of initial reliability analysis, where the final measures (collection of survey items/questions), their corresponding items, and names were agreed upon. Furthermore, after analysis was completed, youth@CLC also contributed to the interpretation and explanation of key findings. Their interpretation of findings is incorporated into the discussion of results throughout the report.

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<sup>1</sup> Emerson, L., & Lloyd, K., (2014) 'Are children's views being sought, listened to and taken seriously?' ARK research update, number 94. Retrieved from: <http://www.ark.ac.uk/publications/updates/update94.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Lundy, L. and McEvoy (Emerson), L. (2012) 'Childhood, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and Research: what constitutes a rights-based approach?' in M. Freeman (ed.) *Law and Childhood*. Oxford: Oxford University Press pp75-91; Lundy, L. and McEvoy (Emerson), L. (2012) Children's rights and research processes: assisting children to (in)formed views. *Childhood*. 19 (1) pp.116-129.

## 2.2 Survey – what did it ask?

### 2.2.1 Demographics

Section one of the survey established a profile of the respondents. Youth@CLC were very keen to ensure inclusivity, i.e., that the demographic section provided the widest range of response options possible to minimise the frequency of a young person having to select 'other' because the option that best suited their particular circumstances was not stipulated. Therefore, this section offered a very thorough and comprehensive range of options, from which the respondent could select that which they most identified with/ best suited them. Information was collected on gender, age, religious background, political views, ethnicity, nationality, sexuality, postcode (which was used to establish their multiple deprivation rank score), marital status, disability, and the area in which they live (urban or rural). As well as this, this section also established if the respondent was in full time/ part time employment, in education, not in education or training (NEET), in care, a young carer, in detention or in hospital, or had a disability.

### 2.2.2 Views and experiences: Participation, knowledge of rights, community life and mental health

Sections 2-5 of the survey consisted of a range of measures (also referred to as outcomes, and made up of the survey items developed with youth@CLC). These measures are reflective of a range of rights (as highlighted in section 2.1). They were aimed at assessing a range of life domains, that is, young people's enjoyment of participation rights, their knowledge of and perceived adult respect for rights, their experience and enjoyment of community life and leisure facilities, and awareness/experience of mental health issues. Each domain consisted of a number of key outcomes/ measures, which were made up of a range of items which young people responded to on a five point Likert scale, i.e the extent to which they agreed with an item/ statement, or the frequency with which the statement is true for them. All of the measures used had strong reliability (see Table 1).

#### **Domain: Participation**

Four different participation measures/ outcomes were employed to reflect young people's enjoyment of their participation rights in different aspects of young people's lives, that is:

*'Participation in education decision making'* - This 9 item scale measures participation in decision making in their place of education, defined strongly by adult support for participation, in terms of supporting young people to share their views on matters related to education, and taking these views seriously.

*‘Participation in home life decision making’* - This 6 item scale measures participation in decision making in their home life, and is again strongly defined by adult support, in terms of supporting young people to share their views on matters related to home life, and taking these views seriously.

*‘Participation in community decision making’* - This 9 item scale relates to community participation, with a focus on the extent to which adults support young people to express their views on all matters related to community life and activities, and take those views into account when making decisions which impact on their lives.

*‘Participation in government decision making’* – This 6 item scale focuses on young people’s perceived ability to participate in democratic processes and government decision making. The scale is defined by the role and obligations of adults (politicians) to engage meaningfully with young people as civic agents, as is their right i.e., by supporting them to fully participate in democratic processes. Again, in particular this scale seeks to gauge the extent to which politicians not only listen to young people, but also act on their views and ideas.

Each of these measures was answered on a 5 point Likert scale. For education, home and community participation, the measure was a frequency scale, ranging from never to always, to gauge how often young people experience participation in each of these domains. Government participation was measured using an agreement scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree (in response to a range of statements items). Across each, a higher score represents more positive participation.

As well as these specific measures, additional questions were also asked, to present a broader picture of participation, and in particular, how young people felt their enjoyment of their right to participate could be improved. Young people were asked, in a free response format (i.e., an open ended question whereby the participant was free to type in their response), to suggest what they thought could be done at home, in education, and at a governmental level, to ensure their views are taken seriously.

#### **Domain: Knowledge of and perceived adult respect for rights**

Moving beyond participation, young people’s knowledge and perceived adult respect for their rights was also assessed using two separate measures:

*‘Knowledge and ability to exercise rights’* – This 5 item scale is defined by young people’s sense of being informed around rights (knowing where to go to get information/ advice in circumstances when they feel their rights are being denied) and their self-reported knowledge and understanding of rights.

*‘Perceived adult respect for children’s rights’* - This 3 item scale is defined by young people’s perceptions of how adults treat young people, i.e., the extent to which they feel they are treated equally and with respect.

Each of these were measured on a 5 point Likert agreement scale (strongly disagree to strongly agree) where a higher score represents greater self-reported knowledge of rights and confidence in using them and greater perceived adult respect. Additionally, in a free response format, they were asked what could be done by government to make sure that young people know more about their rights and how to use them to improve their lives.

### **Domain: Community life**

Young people’s experiences of their community and leisure facilities were assessed using two different measures:

*‘Young people’s enjoyment of community life’* – This 13 item scale is defined by young people’s perception of their relationships with the adults in their community and the extent to which they feel trusted by adults, as well as their perceived ability to socialise and associate with friends in their area.

*‘Enjoyment of leisure facilities’*- This 6 item scale is defined by young people’s feelings of belonging in facilities available to them within their local communities i.e., to what extent they feel welcome and treated equally and with respect; their perceived ease of access to these facilities; and the perceived suitability of these facilities in terms of meeting the needs of young people.

These domains were also measured on a 5 point Likert agreement scale (strongly disagree to strongly agree) where a higher score represents greater enjoyment of community life and leisure facilities. Additionally, in order to assess their lived experiences, the young people were asked how often they go out socially, where they go, if they have ever been ‘moved on’ when ‘hanging out’ in an area, which leisure facilities they have access to, and finally this section also included an open space for young people to note any additional comments on their experience of social spaces, if necessary.

### **Domain: Mental health**

Finally, mental health was addressed using three different measures; assessing awareness of mental health issues, comfort in seeking support and the suitability of mental health services available to children and young people. All of these measures point to both young people’s potential capacity to address their mental health concerns and the extent to which duty bearers are meeting their obligations under Article 6 and 24 of the UNCRC to provide a Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) which is fit for purpose.



*‘Mental health awareness’*- This 3 item scale is defined by young people’s own knowledge of mental health issues and their perception of this problem as an issue for young people in general.

*‘Comfort in seeking mental health support’* – This 6 item scale is defined by how comfortable young people feel in discussing mental health concerns and seeking mental health support if necessary, i.e., their perceived access, knowing where to go to get help, and self-perceived comfort in doing so.

*‘Suitability of mental health services’* – This 13 item scale is defined by young people’s perception of the suitability of mental health services for young people in particular. For example, in terms of the appropriateness of information provided, the suitability of treatment, and the ability of the doctors at these services to talk to young people. This measure also encompasses issues around access (knowing how to get an appointment), sufficiency of service provision (quantity and opening hours), quality (believing the services are helpful and non-discriminatory towards children and young people), and trust of the services in general.

Each of the mental health domains were also measured using a 5 point Likert agreement scale (strongly disagree to strongly agree) where a higher score represents greater mental health awareness, greater comfort in seeking mental health support, and a more positive view on the suitability of mental health services.

In addition to these three measures, the young people were also asked who they would go to if they had a mental health concern, if they had experience of poor mental health, if they received help and if they were satisfied with this help. Additionally, in a free response format the respondents were asked what the ideal mental health service for children and young people would be like. Finally, it is important to note that this section also directed young people to potential sources of help and support, if they felt it necessary (helpline and the CLC advice line, Chalky).

**Table 1: Scale reliability**

Scale	Reliability (Cronbach’s alpha, $\alpha$ )
<b>Participation</b>	
Participation in education decision making	.9
Participation in home life decision making	.9
Participation in community decision making	.9
Participation in government decision making	.9
<b>Knowledge/ perceived adult respect for rights</b>	
Knowledge and ability to exercise rights	.8

Perceived adult respect for children's rights	.8
<b>Enjoyment of community life/ facilities</b>	
Young people's enjoyment of community life	.9
Enjoyment of leisure facilities	.9
<b>Mental health</b>	
Mental health awareness	.7
Comfort in seeking mental health support	.8
Suitability of mental health services	.9

Note, that further statistical information regarding measure development (results of Principal Components Analysis etc.) can be found in Appendix 1 and a full copy of the survey is presented in Appendix 2.

### 2.3 Survey administration

The finalised survey was hosted online, using 'SurveyMonkey'. The online survey was created by the staff at CLC. CLC and Save the Children promoted participation in the survey by using social media to ensure the survey was accessible to a diverse range of young people. The survey link was distributed through youth fora networks, NGOs across the Children's sector working with marginalised and vulnerable young people, and by letter and email to all post primary schools in Northern Ireland. As well as the online version, paper-based versions were also created and used where necessary, for example, in schools where computer resources are limited or restricted and for young people detained in the Juvenile Justice Centre.

### 3.0 Survey respondents: An overview

This section of the report provides a detailed overview of the demographic characteristics of the survey respondents. Where possible this is compared to the NI population as a whole (as presented in the NI Census, 2011)<sup>3</sup>. As previously highlighted, the young people involved in the survey development were keen to provide a demographic section that would be as inclusive as possible to all types of young people living in Northern Ireland. However, for statistical reasons, in most cases these demographic categories have been collapsed to allow for more meaningful comparisons.

In total 864 responses were received from the survey (77% were submitted online and 23% were completed in paper-based format). Initially the survey was targeted to the 14-17 year old age bracket. However, CLC were approached by a number of schools wishing to do the survey with younger children, from age 11. Additionally, although the survey was targeted at those under the age of 18 years, 13% of respondents did not meet this age criteria. Using the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child's definition of a child being anyone under the age of 18<sup>4</sup>, those respondents 18 and over (and those for whom no age was disclosed) have been excluded from all further analysis. Therefore, the total sample is 752 respondents (see Table 2).

**Table 2: Participant age breakdown**

Age bracket	Number	%	Age bracket	Number	%	Area	Number	%
<b>All respondents</b>			<b>Under 18s only</b>			<b>Urban</b>	<b>483</b>	<b>70</b>
11-14	337	39	11-14	337	44.8	City	232	33.7
15-17	415	48	15-17	415	55.2	Town	251	36.5
18	14	2	Total	752	100	<b>Rural</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>30</b>
19 and over	20	2				Village	75	10.9
Not disclosed	78	9				Countryside	130	18.9
Total	864	100				Total	688	100
						Not disclosed	64	9

<sup>3</sup> Ni Census, 2011, available at: [http://www.nisra.gov.uk/Census/key\\_report\\_2011.pdf](http://www.nisra.gov.uk/Census/key_report_2011.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Unicef, Convention on the Rights of the Child Guiding Principles. Retrieved from: [http://www.unicef.org/crc/files/Guiding\\_Principles.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/crc/files/Guiding_Principles.pdf)

The gender breakdown was 44% male and 56% female, including those who identified as trans-male and trans-female (see Table 3). This is close to the overall gender breakdown evident in the NI population as a whole (49% male and 51 % male<sup>5</sup>). The majority of respondents were from an urban area, categorised as a city or town (see Table 2). With regard to sexuality, the majority of respondents classified themselves as heterosexual (see Table 3). However, 10% of the sample represents young people who identified as homosexual or other. Often people, and in particular young people, are not asked to identify their sexuality. However, these data demonstrate that when given the choice in a survey, a significant proportion of young people will identify with the sexual orientation of their choice (see Table 3).

**Table 3: Gender and sexuality breakdown**

Gender	Number	%	Sexuality	Number	%
<b>Male</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>44</b>	Heterosexual	610	81.1
Male	308	41	Lesbian	7	.9
Trans (male)	11	2	Gay (Male)	7	.9
<b>Female</b>	<b>413</b>	<b>56</b>	Gay (Female)	2	.3
Female	410	55	Bisexual	30	4.0
Trans (female)	3	.4	Transgender (Male)	4	.5
Total	732	100	Transgender (Female)	4	.5
Not disclosed	20	3	Other, Non Binary/Gender Neutral	18	2.4
			Total	682	100
			Not disclosed	70	9.3

The majority of the respondents (95%) identified as White British, Irish, or Northern Irish, which is again in line with the NI population as a whole where 98%<sup>6</sup> are categorised as white (see Table 4). Religious breakdown was used to assess both religious and community backgrounds. There were more respondents from a Protestant background (53%), than those from a Catholic background (36%, see Table 4), which is also in line with the population as a whole, although the difference is smaller (Catholic 45%, Protestant 48%)<sup>7</sup>. However, the way in which this question is asked differs to the phrasing of the Census question, as it allows young people to identify with a religious or community background, whilst also highlighting their lack of religious faith. Similarly, there was a greater proportion

<sup>5</sup> Ni Census, 2011, available at: [http://www.nisra.gov.uk/Census/key\\_report\\_2011.pdf](http://www.nisra.gov.uk/Census/key_report_2011.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Ibid

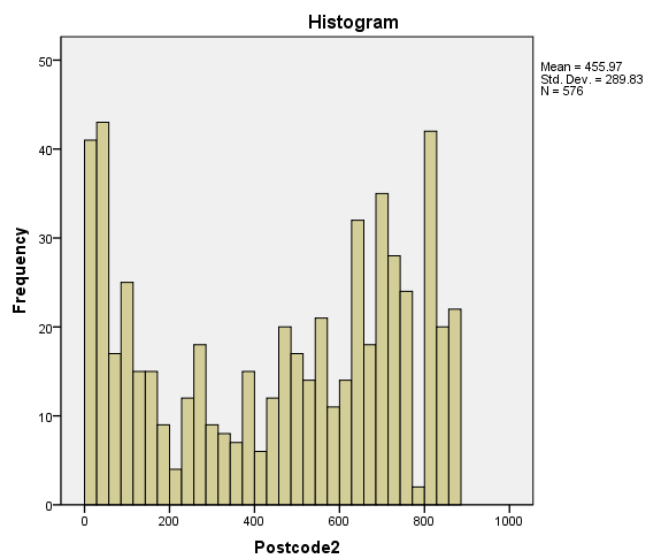
<sup>7</sup> Ibid

of young people aligning themselves with traditionally Protestant political identities (see Table 4).

**Table 4: Ethnicity, religion and political views breakdown**

Ethnicity	N	%	Religion/ Community	N	%	Political views	N	%
White British	143	19	<b>Catholic</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>Rep/Nat</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>21.5</b>
White Irish	196	26	I'm a Catholic	216	29	Republican	72	9.7
White - Northern Irish	378	50	I'm not religious, but I come from a Catholic background	52	7	Nationalist	88	11.8
White other European	9	1	<b>Protestant</b>	<b>401</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>Un/Loy</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>27.6</b>
Asian or Asian British/Irish Indian	1	.1	I'm a Protestant	303	40	Unionist	98	13.1
Black or Black British/Irish - African	6	.8	I'm not religious, but I come from a Protestant background	98	13	Loyalist	108	14.5
Chinese	2	.3				Other	17	2.3
Irish Traveller	5	.7	<b>Other</b>	83	11	Not sure	221	29.6
Other Asian background	2	.3	I am a Hindu	1	.1	None	142	19.0
Other Ethnic background	2	.3	I am Jewish	2	.3	Total	746	100
Other Mixed background	2	.3	I am an atheist	48	6	Not disclosed	6	.8
Prefer not to say	4	.5	Other	20	3			
Not disclosed	2	.3	Prefer not to say	12	2			
Total	752	100	Total	752	100			

Socio-economic status (SES) or deprivation levels were measured using the Northern Ireland multiple deprivation measure (MDM)<sup>8</sup>. Each postcode offered was assigned an MDM rank score ranging from 1 (most deprived) to 890 (least deprived). Figure 1 below demonstrates the spread of respondents according to MDM ranks, highlighting large numbers of young people from the extremes, with fewer in the mid regions.



**Figure 1: MDM ranks**

Finally, this survey captured the views of young people from a broad range of circumstances and backgrounds. It includes the views of young carers, those both in and out of education, in employment, NEET (not in employment, education or training), in detention in hospital, 'in care', and those reporting experience of poor mental health concerns etc. (see Table 5).

<sup>8</sup> Each postcode was assigned a multiple deprivation score, as published by Nisra (see <http://www.ninis2.nisra.gov.uk/public/Home.aspx>). The multiple deprivation measure rank provides areas with an overall score based on a variety of indicators, such as employment, crime and education.

**Table 5: Additional characteristics of the sample**

Additional characteristics	Number	%
Young carer	59	8
Non single (married, co-habiting, civil partnership)	17	2
In education	721	96
In full time employment	3	.4
In part-time employment	56	7
In training	16	2.1
NEET	4	.5
In detention (juvenile justice centre)	5	.7
In care (past or present)	5	.7
In hospital	2	.3
Has disability	46	6
Has experienced a mental health concern	165	27

Although, the survey only attracted responses from small numbers of marginalised young people, nonetheless, this report has included their particular views and experiences, which are likely to be indicative of the experiences of other young people subject to similar circumstances in their lives.

## 4.0 Survey findings

### 4.1 Young people's views and experiences overall

This section of the report will present overall findings for the full sample as a whole. It will look at how the full sample responded across each of the life domains, i.e., participation, knowledge of and perceived adult respect for rights, community life and mental health. In order to gain a global picture of how young people in Northern Ireland responded across each of the measures (also referred to as outcomes) an overall score across each measure/outcome was calculated<sup>9</sup>. These scores were then used to calculate an overall mean across each measure for the sample as a whole; these are presented in Table 6 (and demonstrated graphically in Figure 2). The score presented in the 'Mean' column is considered within a 5 point Likert scale, where 1 represents the most negative score, e.g., poor participation, little knowledge etc., and 5 represents the most positive score, i.e., strong enjoyment of community life and mental health awareness.

As Table 6 highlights, across each of the 9 measures/ outcomes, the young people were most positive about their participation at home (M=4.04, on a 5 point Likert scale, where 4 highlights that they experience positive participation very often) and least positive about their participation in government (M=2.2, this was measured on an agreement scale, where 2=disagree, i.e., not positive towards their participation in government). With regard to knowledge of rights, whilst this survey did not measure or test young people's or adults' accurate knowledge of the Convention, it did measure the extent to which young people feel informed around rights and their self-reported knowledge and understanding of rights. Additionally, perceived adult respect for rights was also assessed. The results can point to the extent to which adults accept that children are rights holders, by offering insight into adult treatment of children (from the young persons' perspective). Overall, young people were verging on positivity in terms of their self-reported knowledge of rights (M=3.25, where 3 is neither agree or disagree and 4 is agree), but were more positive in terms of their perceived adult respect for children's rights (M=3.72, see Table 6). Young people's enjoyment of community life and leisure facilities were both verging on positive (M=3.31 and 3.64 respectively), suggesting that to a certain extent young people in general do feel welcome in their community, trusted by adults, and treated equally, for example when using leisure facilities. And finally, with regard to mental health, both awareness and the perceived suitability of mental health services were verging on positive (M= 3.47 and 3.29

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<sup>9</sup> In order to calculate an individual's overall score on a measure, their responses to each question within that measure was combined, and a mean value calculated. In some instances young people had omitted some questions, these missing data were considered to be at random. To maximise the data set, and to incorporate the views of as many young people as possible, a scale total score was calculated for anyone who had completed approximately ¾ of all relevant items relevant to each particular measure.



respectively). However, young peoples' comfort in seeking mental health support was low (M=2.92).

These overall findings demonstrate to what extent young people in Northern Ireland are realizing a range of key rights, highlighting how some are realized more than others (further interpretation of these findings is presented, alongside additional results, in Section 5). It does not however distinguish between groups or highlight any particular groups of young people who are more vulnerable to having their rights denied. The next section of the report will establish if there are differences in how rights are being experienced between particular groups of young people.

**Table 6: Young people's views and experiences**

Measure	N	Mean	SD
<b>Participation</b>			
Participation in education decision making	701	<b>3.03</b>	.88
Participation in home decision making	695	<b>4.04</b>	.93
Participation in community decision making	673	<b>2.69</b>	.97
Participation in government decision making	667	<b>2.20</b>	.86
<b>Knowledge of and perceived adult respect for rights</b>			
Knowledge and ability to exercise rights	666	<b>3.25</b>	.883
Perceived adult respect for children's rights	667	<b>3.72</b>	.85
<b>Community life</b>			
Young people's enjoyment of community life	646	<b>3.31</b>	.76
Enjoyment of leisure facilities	635	<b>3.64</b>	.81
<b>Mental health</b>			
Mental health awareness	627	<b>3.47</b>	.82
Comfort in seeking mental health support	622	<b>2.92</b>	.82
Suitability of mental health services	602	<b>3.29</b>	.70

N= Number of young people

Mean = Overall average score across each measure

SD= Standard deviation

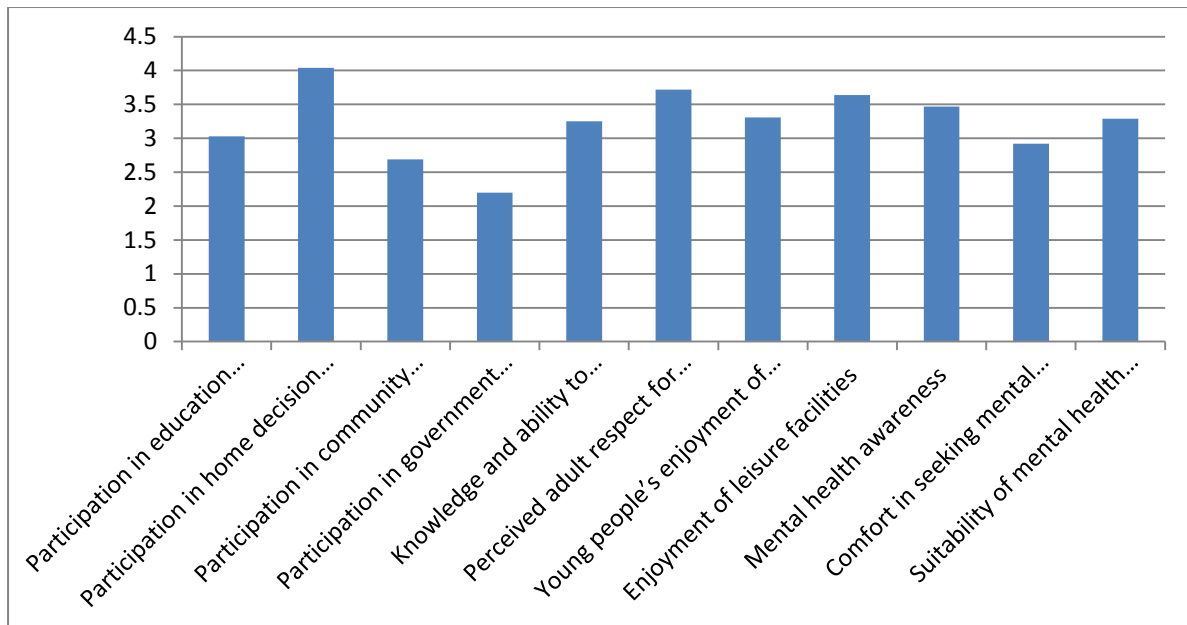


Figure 4: Overall mean scores across each outcome (all respondents)

#### 4.2. Exploring the findings further: Differences across groups

This section of the report will explore any differences emerging between certain groups of young people. In particular, analysis will focus on differences across key demographic detail:

- Gender – although Trans-male and female young people were identified within this question, because numbers were low, the data were collapsed to assess differences between male and female only (the Trans-male were collated within the male group and Trans-female within the female group).
- Age – differences assessed between younger teens (11-14 years) and older teens (15-17 years)
- Religion – again although numerous options were included within this question, initial analysis assessed differences between those who considered themselves Protestant (including those who said they were not religious but come from a protestant background)/ catholic (including those who said they were not religious but come from a catholic background )/ other/ and those who chose 'prefer not to say'. Mostly differences emerged between protestants and catholics; it is these results that are presented.
- Nationality – This information was extracted from the ethnicity question in order to assess any differences between those classifying themselves as Irish, British or Northern Irish. There was overlap between nationality and political identity (i.e., with those classifying themselves as catholic predominantly selecting nationalist and

republican identities<sup>10</sup>). The results presented also highlight the similarities between the differences emerging across nationalities and those emerging across political identities.

- Area – Comparing those from urban and rural areas. For this analysis those from a ‘city’ or ‘town’ were classified as living in an urban area and those from a ‘village’ or ‘countryside’ were categorised as living in a rural area.
- Socio economic status – for the purposes of this analysis, differences were assessed according to different groupings of MDM ranks. Differences tended to emerge between those from the lower ranks compared to the upper. The results presented here are comparing two groups, i.e., those from more deprived areas (ranks 1-449) and those from more affluent areas (450-890). It is recognised that this is a crude indicator; however, the role of SES is also assessed in Section 4.3.
- Mental health concern (MHC) – those who answered yes to having experienced a mental health concern were compared to those who answered no.
- Additionally, those more marginalised young people are compared to the sample on the whole.

#### 4.2.1 Differences across demographics

Descriptively, differences between groups are evident by comparing the mean values presented in the tables in Appendix 3. Statistical differences have also been assessed using a series of T-tests and ANOVAs. Additionally, statistically significant results ( $p < .05$ ) were tested for effect sizes, this indicates the extent to which the results have practical, as well as statistical significance.

Across each of the demographics assessed, several statistically significant differences have emerged. However, the magnitude of these effects tend to be small, as is evident in the small effect sizes (see Appendix 3)<sup>11</sup>. Therefore these results should be interpreted with caution. Nonetheless, Table 7 below demonstrates where the significant differences have been revealed (details of each can be found in Appendix 3). The key statistically significant findings are:

- Younger teens are enjoying their participation rights more than older teens. Younger teens also enjoy their community lives more, report knowing more about their rights and report higher perceived adult respect for rights. They feel more comfortable seeking mental health support and think mental health services are

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<sup>10</sup> Note, this also overlapped with religion

<sup>11</sup> Statistically significant differences may be a result of the large sample size.

more suitable. The only measure older teens scored higher on was mental health awareness.

- Compared to those who did not report mental health concerns, those with mental health concerns score less across each measure, again with the exception of mental health awareness. That is, compared to those who have not reported having a mental health concern young people who report having a mental health concern: experience less enjoyment of their right to participate in decision making across all key life domains; do not feel they know as much about their rights or that adults respect their rights as much; they are not as comfortable receiving mental health support, and they do not perceive that the support which is currently available to them to be as suitable. These findings are concerning given that it is young people who are experiencing poor mental health who are likely to be most in need of this support.
- Those affiliating themselves with Protestant/ British/Northern Irish identities enjoy their community lives more compared to those from Catholic/ Irish identities. However, Catholics and Irish young people are more aware of mental health issues. It is important however to note that more Catholic young people were also amongst those more socially disadvantaged young people in this sample (67% of the more disadvantaged group were Catholic, whereas more protestants in this sample were more affluent (65% of this group was Protestant<sup>12</sup>). Considering those from more deprived backgrounds also reported significantly higher mental health awareness, it is therefore unclear if it is religion or deprivation that is having the effect, rather it is likely related to the wider social context.
- The outcome distinguishing the most between groups is mental health awareness and often it is those who are less positive across each of the other measures who are more aware, for example, older teens and those with mental health concerns.
- The outcome revealing the strongest differences (effect sizes) was enjoyment of community life (the largest effect sizes across all differences are both related to this domain), highlighting the large extent to which younger teens and those without mental health concerns are enjoying their community lives compared to older teens and those with mental health concerns.

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<sup>12</sup>  $\chi^2$  (3, n = 581)=64.8, P=<.0001, phi=.3

**Table 7: Significant differences found across each of the outcomes**

Group	Participation				Know/respect		Enjoy		Mental health		
	Edu.	Home	Comm.	Gov.	Know	AdultResp	Comm.life	Leis.Fac.	Aware	Comf.Supp	Suit.Supp
<b>The reference groups below refer to those who reported being MORE positive across each of the outcomes:</b>											
<b>Gender</b>									Girls more aware	Boys more comfortable	
<b>Age</b>	11-14 more positive		11-14 more positive	11-14 more positive	11-14 more knowledge	11-14 more positive	<b>11-14 more enjoyment</b>	11-14 more enjoyment	15-17 more aware	11-14 more comfortable	11-14 more suitable
<b>Religion</b>							Prot. More enjoyment		Cath. More aware		
<b>Nationality.<sup>13</sup></b>			NI*more positive				British/N.Irish more enjoyment*	N.Irish more enjoyment*	Irish more aware*		
<b>Area</b>		Rural more positive					Rural more enjoyment		Urban more aware		
<b>SES</b>		Affluent more positive							Disadvantaged more aware		
<b>The reference group below (i.e., those having reported mental health concerns), for the majority of outcomes are LESS positive</b>											
<b>M/Health Concern (MHC)</b>	Yes MHC less	Yes MHC less	Yes MHC less	Yes MHC less	Yes MHC less knowledge	Yes MHC less positive	<b>Yes MHC less enjoyment</b>	Yes MHC less enjoyment	Yes MHC more aware	Yes MHC less comfortable	No MHC less suitable

<sup>13</sup> Similar patterns were also found across the different political identities recognized in the survey. Those who considered themselves Republican/ Nationalist were significantly less (p<.05) positive in terms of their community participation and enjoyment of community life and leisure facilities. However, they were significantly (p<.05) more aware of mental health issues.

	positiv e	positive	positive	positiv e	e					e	
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\*Compared to Irish; \*Compared to Irish;\* Compared to Irish \*Compared to British/ Northern Irish

#### 4.2.2 How do the other marginalised groups of young people compare?

As explained in Section 3, these results incorporate the views of Northern Ireland society's most marginalised young people. Additional analyses were conducted in order to assess how those from more marginalised groups felt across each of the outcomes, compared to the sample as a whole. Descriptively, differences can be seen. However, these differences cannot be confirmed statistically due to the small numbers of each marginalised group.

Nonetheless, these results highlight that, for the most part, more marginalised groups of young people score less across each measure (see Table 8), except for mental health awareness, where for some groups (disability, detention, in care, LGB), they score higher. This highlights how marginalised these groups are, as they do not feel like they are participating as much, know as much, or enjoy their communities as much as other young people. However, often they know more about mental health concerns, possible because they have experienced or are experiencing mental health problems themselves.

One anomaly in these findings are those young people in care or carers, who, unlike the other marginalised groups, score better across a range of outcomes, including participation in the community and government, enjoyment of leisure and community life, mental health awareness, comfort in seeking mental health support and perceived suitability of the mental health services. This finding suggests that this group feels less marginalised and more involved in their communities. However, due to the small numbers, the generalisability of this finding is limited.

#### 4.2.3 Summation

Overall, this section of the report demonstrates the heterogeneity of young people, as different young people have responded differently throughout the survey. These data highlight that there are particular subsets of young people for whom the realization of their rights is more challenging, for example, those young people with mental health concerns, older teens and more 'marginalized groups'.

The next section of the report will further explore how these demographic details relate to the outcomes, when other factors are taken into consideration. For example, is age explaining the differences in participation in home, or is it mental health concern or participation in education which is predicting this outcome more strongly?

**Table 8: Marginalised group means and full sample group means**

	All N= 602- 701	Disability N=37-41	Detention N=4-5	NEET N=3- 4	In care N=4	Young carer N=47- 56	LGB N=48- 65	Trans N=9- 11
Participation in education decision making	<b>3.03</b>	2.97	2.22	2.19	3.08	2.93	2.81	2.55
Participation in home decision making	<b>4.04</b>	3.50	2.33	2.89	4	3.95	3.59	3.52
Participation in community decision making	<b>2.69</b>	2.63	1.67	1.72	3.25	2.73	2.24	1.53
Participation in government decision making	<b>2.20</b>	2.08	1.23	1.75	3.00	2.26	2.02	1.53
Knowledge and ability to exercise rights	<b>3.25</b>	3.21	1.72	2.55	3.00	3.33	3.08	2.67
Perceived adult respect for children's rights	<b>3.72</b>	3.38	2.53	2.75	3.75	3.51	3.48	2.94
Enjoyment of community life	<b>3.31</b>	2.99	1.69	2.15	3.19	3.32	2.96	2.01
Enjoyment of leisure facilities	<b>3.64</b>	3.26	1.33	2.89	3.75	3.47	3.09	2.32
Mental health awareness	<b>3.47</b>	3.55	3.58	2.75	3.50	3.55	3.68	3.30
Comfort in seeking mental health support	<b>2.92</b>	2.95	2.92	2.17	3.54	3.19	2.66	2.35
Suitability of mental health services	<b>3.29</b>	3.00	1.94	2.46	3.88	3.37	3.13	2.61



### 4.3 Exploring the findings further: What relates to what?

The previous section assessed differences between groups in terms of their responses to each of the outcomes measured, revealing some statistically significant, however, with predominantly weak effects. In order to further explore the data and the patterns emerging additional analysis was conducted, specifically linear regression analyses. Regression analyses were conducted to assess how the demographics and each of these outcomes relate to each other. Regression analyses demonstrates which variables explain unique variance, i.e., which variable is predicting the outcomes most strongly, even when other variables are considered. For example is participation in the community predicting enjoyment of community life, or does enjoyment of leisure facilities relate more strongly?

The regression model therefore included each of the outcome measures:

- Participation in home, education, community, and government decision making processes
- Knowledge and ability to exercise rights and perceived adult respect for rights
- Enjoyment of community life and leisure facilities
- Mental health awareness, comfort seeking mental health support; and suitability of mental health services.

Also, as section 4.2 highlights there are some groups of young people who are not realizing their rights as much as others, demographic details were also included. This analyses will highlight which demographic factors, if any, relate strongly to the outcomes measured. Demographic details included in the analyses were:<sup>14</sup>

- Gender – Being male compared to being female (including trans-males and females)
- Age – Being younger (11-14) compared to being older (15-17)
- Religion – Being catholic compared to being protestant (including those not religious but coming from catholic/ protestant backgrounds)
- Area – Living in an urban area (including city or town) compared to a rural (including village or countryside) area
- Political identity – Being Republican, compared to other political identities (unionist/loyalist/ other)
- Nationality – Being Irish compared to British or Northern Irish
- Postcode – deciphered by postcode and according to all levels of the MDM
- Mental health concern (MHC) – Having reported experiencing a mental health concern compared to not.

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<sup>14</sup> Whilst other characteristics were assessed via the survey, e.g., if the young person was in care or if they were NEET, these were omitted due to the small numbers within each of these groups.

#### 4.3.1 Relationships emerging

The results revealed numerous statistically significant relationships across each of the outcomes. Table 9 portrays where statistically significant relationships emerged, each is marked with an 'X'. These relationships demonstrate which variables can predict an outcome. So for example, participation in education is significantly predicted by participation in home, community, government and perceived adult respect for rights, as well as enjoyment of leisure facilities. However, some are stronger predictors than others<sup>15</sup>. For each outcome, the strongest relationship/ predictor variable is highlighted with a 'XX' (full versions of each of the regression models can be found in Appendix 4). Additionally, where an 'X' alone is presented this signifies a positive relationship, where as one goes up so too does the other (e.g., if someone is enjoying their right to participate in government decision making, they are also enjoying this right in the community). Where an 'X' is presented alongside a minus sign 'X-', this denotes a negative relationship, where as one goes up the other goes down (e.g. a child who feels more participatory at home feels less so in government).

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<sup>15</sup> Note these results do not infer causality

**Table 9: Relationships emerging**

Outcome	Demo	Edu	Home	Comm.	Go.	Know.	Ad.Resp.	Enj.Comm.	Enj. Leis.Fac	Aware	Comf.Supp	Suit.Serv.
Participation: Education		/	X	<b>XX</b>	X		X		X			
Participation: Home	Older teens*	X	/	X	X-		<b>XX</b>		X			
Participation: Community		X	X	/	<b>XX</b>			X			X	
Participation: Government		X	X-	<b>XX</b>	/	X						
Knowledge and ability to exercise rights	Irish*				X	/	<b>XX</b>		X-	X	X	
Perceived adult respect		X	X			<b>XX</b>	/	X			X-	X
Enjoyment of community life	No MHC Younger teens Union/loyal*			X			X	/	<b>XX</b>			
Enjoyment of leisure facilities		X	X			X-		<b>XX</b>	/	X		X
Mental health awareness	Female, older MHC*					<b>XX</b>			X	/	X	X
Comfort seeking MH support	Male, British/N.Irish, No MHC*			X		X	X-			X	/	<b>XX</b>
Suitability of							X		X	X	<b>XX</b>	/

mental health services												
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\*Being older relates to feeling more participatory at home; \*Being Irish (as opposed to British/ Northern Irish) related to knowing more; \* Not having a mental health concern, being younger and being unionist/ loyalist are related to enjoying community life more; \*Being female, being an older teen, and having a mental health concern are related to more awareness; \* Being male, being British/Northern Irish and not having mental health concerns are related to greater comfort<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Each of the regression models were statistically significant,  $p < .0001$  and explained a significant proportion of the variance (adjusted  $r$  squared values ranging from .33-.53). Appendix 4 presents the full models including the standardised beta coefficients for each variable.

As Table 9 demonstrates some demographic details are related to some outcomes, (note however, demographics are not the strongest predictor for any of the outcomes) for example:

- Age – where being younger is related to more enjoyment of community life (this aligns with the findings presented in section 4.2) and being older is related to greater home participation.
- Nationality/ Politics – where being Irish is related to knowing more about rights and being Unionist/ Loyalist is related to enjoying community life more (also aligns to the findings presented in section 4.2).
- Gender – being female is related to having a higher mental health awareness and being male is related to greater comfort in seeking mental health support (both of which align with the findings presented in section 4.2).
- Not having a mental health concern – which is related to more community enjoyment and more comfort in seeking mental health support (which also aligns with findings presented in section 4.2).

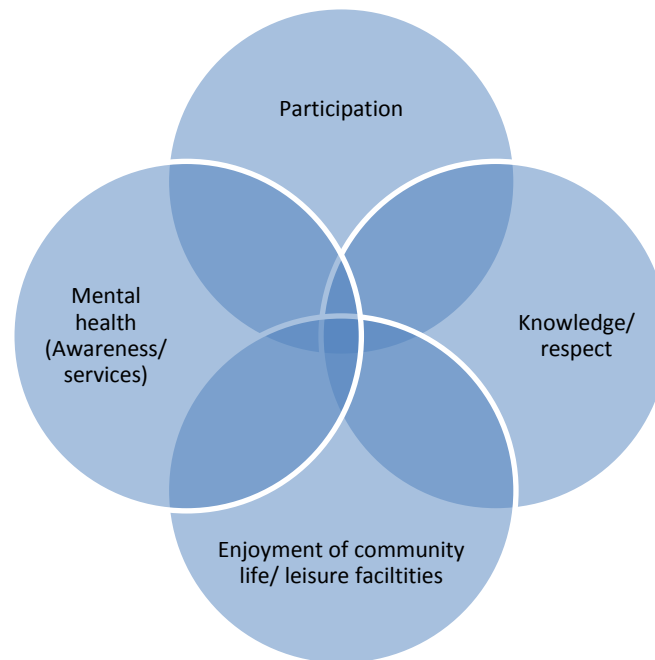
Despite these findings, however, the analyses revealed that the strongest relationships emerged between the outcomes themselves. The key relationships emerging are:

- The participation measures are predicted most strongly either to each other or to perceived adult respect for rights. That is, for example, someone who feels like they have strong participation in community decision making processes will also feel the same way in government. Similarly, those who feel strong participation at home are also those who have a high level of perceived adult respect for rights.
- Knowledge and ability to exercise rights was predicted most strongly by perceived adult respect for rights, and vice versa. That is, a young person who feels adults respect their rights will also report more knowledge and ability to exercise their rights. Both of which are also related to participation, enjoyment of community life and the mental health outcomes.
- Enjoyment of community life and leisure facilities were the strongest predictors of each other, where if one is enjoyed so too is the other (as well as being related to other outcomes, such as perceived adult respect and participation).
- The strongest predictor of mental health awareness is knowledge and ability to exercise rights. Both comfort seeking mental health support and perceived suitability of mental health services strongly predicted each other, meaning if a young person thinks the mental health services are suitable they will feel more comfortable seeking support.

#### 4.3.2 Summation

Overall, the results reveal that demographic details were not the strongest factors predicting young people's reported participation, knowledge and perceived adult respect for rights, experiences in the community and leisure facilities, and their views on mental health issues. This is supported by the predominantly weak effects revealed earlier in the report, Nonetheless, some interesting findings emerged around age, gender, nationality and mental health, demonstrating again some more vulnerable members of young people within society.

The results reveal that the strongest predictors of the outcomes are the other outcomes. The data reveals the inter-connectedness between the outcomes, highlighting how each relate to another. As recognised by the wider research team, the interconnectedness of the outcomes speaks to the indivisibility of rights<sup>17</sup>, highlighting how each are connected and dependent on each other, as presented in Figure 3.



**Figure 5: Inter-relationship between each of the domains measured**

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<sup>17</sup> United Nations, 1993

## 5.0 Interpreting the results: Making sense of all the data

This section will interpret the findings across each of the outcomes, drawing on the analysis and results presented from sections 4.1 (where overall results for the full sample were reported), 4.2 (which assessed differences across groups) and section 4.3 (which assessed relationships in the data). Note that in relation to the information presented in section 4.3, due to the large number of statistically significant relationships emerging, the strongest or most meaningful relationships are drawn upon in this section. Additional data collected during the survey will also be presented, e.g., open ended response questions etc. Where possible, interpretations offered are guided by the YPAG's understanding of the results presented.

### 5.1 Participation

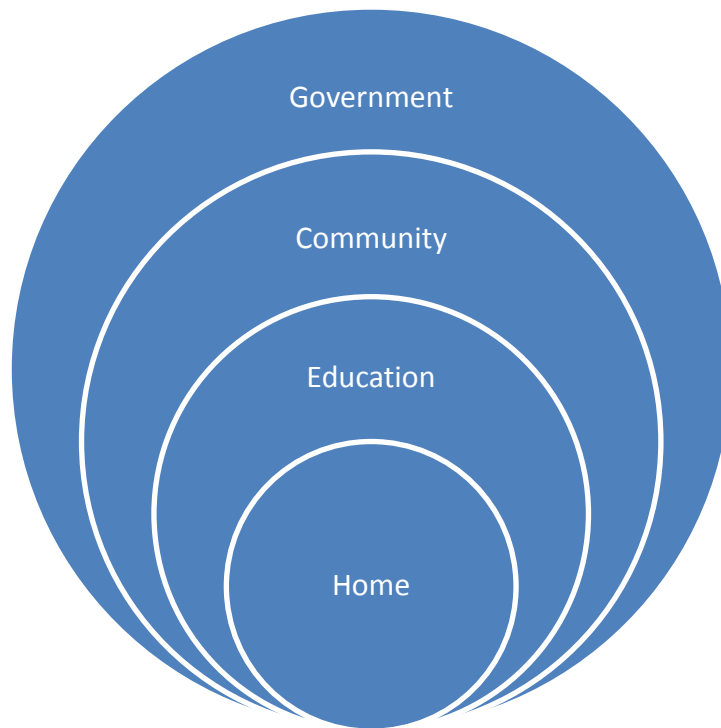
Article 12 of the UNCRC stipulates that all children and young people have the right to have a say in matters affecting them, and to have their views taken seriously<sup>18</sup>. Furthermore, the Committee on the Rights of the Child has emphasized that this right should be upheld in all aspects of the child's life, at home, in the community, and in policy and service development<sup>19</sup>. This survey assessed to what extent young people feel this right is being realized across each of these domains.

Young people were most positive about their participation in home, this steadily decreases and is followed by education, then community, then government. In interpreting these findings, the YPAG suggested, as they stated it, a 'hierarchy of participation' that offers insight into this finding. They suggested that young people's perceived participation levels may vary according to the closeness to the adults in each arena. That is, young people spend most time with the adults at home (of whom there are fewer to engage with), followed by those in education, and less so with those represented in the community and in government (of whom there are many). However, presenting this as a hierarchy may infer priorities. The young people, in their interpretation, were not suggesting that participation in the home is more important than in government; rather, there is more opportunity for young people to participate in home life decision making processes. What the YPAG described can be portrayed as a 'circle of opportunity', whereby participation levels can vary depending upon opportunity, which is mediated potentially by the closeness of their relationships with adults in each area, see Figure 4.

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<sup>18</sup> UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989

<sup>19</sup> UN General Comment, Committee on the Rights of the child, 2005, para.14.



**Figure 6: Participation: Circle of opportunity**

The low levels of overall participation in government decision making highlights the need for government and community leaders to allow for and facilitate greater opportunity amongst young people to engage with democratic processes. In particular, these results suggest that the government need to embed effective participatory methods into their policy and practice development, to ensure they fulfill their obligations under Article 12 of the UNCRC, as well as section 75 of the NI Act which requires all public bodies to consult fully with children and young people.

With regard to group differences and relationships emerging, although section 4.2 highlights several differences across groups, only age emerges in section 4.3 as a significant predictor of participation in home life decision making (however, it is not the strongest predicting factor), where being older is related to feeling more participatory at home. The YPAG suggested that this may be because parents respect and listen more to their children as they get older. The analysis presented in section 4.3 demonstrates that rather than the demographics, it is young peoples' participation in each domain, as well as perceived adult respect which most strongly predicts the participation outcomes. These inter-relationships suggest that in order to promote participation, it is worth encouraging adult respect and appreciation of young people as rights holders. They also support the notion of encouraging



participation on a holistic basis, as by targeting one area of participation, it is likely to impact upon the others.

#### 5.1.1 How to ensure participation?

The young people themselves recognized that there is scope for improving participation across each of these areas. When asked the question on what the young people thought could be done in education, at home, and in government to ensure young people's views are taken seriously, the majority of young people used this opportunity to provide reasonable and thoughtful suggestions. A minority provided no suggestions, or highlighted that no further action was required, e.g., 'nothing, because all our views are taken into consideration'.

However, for the most part, suggestions on how to improve participation were provided. Often these suggestions focused around issues of democracy, whereby young people felt their opinions should be actively sought and, importantly, valued, i.e., adults should not only listen but act on the views sought.

Firstly, in terms of *participation in education decision making*, the young people felt that their opinions should be considered in (and for the benefit of) all school matters.

*'Listen to young people's views and opinions in order to make better decisions for the school, its staff and its pupils. Do not listen to their views just to hear what they have to say'.*

*'Make sure pupils have a say in absolutely every single aspect of school life. From the canteens to the cleaners.'*

Some specific issues, pertinent to young people in school were highlighted, for example, freedom to choose their own food/ drink and clothes (as opposed to a uniform)

*'(we should be) allowed to drink juice'*

*'let us wear hoodies and other clothing that isn't apart of uniform'*

The respondents highlighted the value they place on their own expertise on issues which young people have direct experience of, particularly those issues experienced outside of the classroom.

*'Adults should listen to the views of the children who are actually in the experience, because*

*they don't know what is really going on, outside of the classroom'*

Several suggestions were put forward as a means to create a more democratic environment in schools, for example, improving the function and role of school councils.

*'Allow Student Council's more power, not only can concerns be voiced but real action to then be taken.'*

Others commented on the need for more mutual respect between teachers and pupils, arguing that young people are more likely to show respect for teachers if they feel that teachers respect them. In particular some young people perceived or held the view that they were being denied their right to express their own political views in the classroom when this view differs from the teacher's views.

*'Make sure the teachers show respect. It takes respect to earn respect'.*

*'Some teachers blatantly and admittedly disregard what we have to say and any political views if they do not agree with the teacher's own are discouraged and ridiculed'.*

Furthermore, the young people's comments provided insight into the preferred forums in which they would like to share their views regarding educational matters. Firstly, it was clear that the young people would prefer greater opportunity to share their views in general, and be afforded the opportunity to do so in a variety of different confidential ways. For some this included the suggestions of anonymous forums, such as suggestion boxes, voting mechanisms, and school surveys.

*'Surveys could be taken regularly to help the young give their opinions as they may not want to talk face to face with a member of staff'*

Whereas, others preferred the opportunity to engage with the issues face-to-face, for example, class debates and one-on-one meetings with relevant school staff and pupils, where there is opportunity to avail of individual guidance tailored to specific needs and circumstances.

*'I believe that the school staff should spend time with pupils, one-to-one, to discuss their personal views on education and what needs to be done to increase their education to the best standard it could be to better their future.'*

Secondly, with regard to *participation in home life decision making*, similar suggestions were provided when asked what could be done in the home to ensure their views and the views

of the other children they lived with are taken seriously. The young people felt that the adults at home should consider and value the views of children more

*'Make the adults listen more to ideas that we have because sometimes the children can be right'*

*'My parents could explain the reason behind some of their decisions before they make them'*

Again, the young people offered a range of suggested ways in which families could provide more opportunities for the children in the home to share their views, for example, *'a family could do a family vote'* or hold a *'family meeting'*. One child recognized the need for parental support, in order to help them be more participatory in the home.

*'Provide my parents with training or additional information regarding how to take my views into consideration and not feel like they are always right when sometimes they aren't.'*

Others felt this was not necessary, as their opinions were already valued in their home life.

*'I feel that our views are taken seriously and are taken into account; there is nothing that can be done to improve this'*

Additionally, some more marginalized children, who have trouble at home, or who do not live with their parents, gave specific suggestions, relevant to their particular circumstances.

*'I live in supported accommodation within the inner city trust, and I believe that as a resident the staff members don't listen to our views and opinions clearly, nor do they take them into account. I feel that the staff should view us as adults, not children or young adults whom are homeless under bad circumstances'*

Finally, in terms of *participation in governmental decision making*, as with home and school participation, young people felt that adults in government needed to listen to them more and value their opinions.

*'Value our opinions more as we know what we want'*

From these responses there was a strong sense that young people feel detached from government (as is also evident in the respondents' low level of participation in government decision making processes, see Table 6). They felt politicians were not *'approachable'* and that their agendas did not match young people's concerns. They felt that their views were

not important and that the government was not interested in the views and concerns of young people.

*'I feel as though the government does not care about what the younger generation have to say about Northern Ireland'.*

This perception appears to be exacerbated by young people's inability to vote. It was recognized that the voting age excluded them from important matters affecting their daily lives.

*'It's not fair that we can marry are (our) MLA and have children are (with our) MLA but not vote for them'*

*'We also can pay or receive tax money, but cannot decide how much we think we should be taxed and how it should be spend.'*

Also recognized was the need for the government to directly approach and target young people. The respondents demonstrated an interest in availing of opportunities to engage with government representative on matters affecting them. They felt that politicians should visit their schools and communities in order to listen to their views.

*'They could even come into schools to make it more accessible'*

*'Work with Youth Clubs and Youth Councils. This could mean having meetings with young people and asking them what change they want to see in their community and throughout Northern Ireland. After these views have been recorded visit the Youth Club or Youth Council again after a few months to report on what real action has been taken since.'*

Aligned with this is some young people's recognized need to better understand politics, in order to maximize their participation. They felt that schools could do more to prepare them and educate them on political matters

*'Educate young people about the government in school'*

*'Give young people the tools, freedom and education to form and present their opinions'*

These data demonstrate a willingness and interest amongst young people to engage with education, home life and governmental decision making processes, providing they are accessible, participatory, and respectful of young people's views and concerns.

## 5.2 Knowledge and perceived adult respect for rights

Article 42 of the UNCRC stipulates that governments must make the Convention known to children and adults. Whilst this survey did not measure or test young people's or adults' accurate knowledge of the Convention, it did measure the extent to which young people feel knowledgeable about and comfortable around their rights, as well as this perceived adult respect for rights was also assessed, i.e., young people's perception of the extent to which adults treat them with respect. The overall results on these measures, although not negative, highlight further scope for increasing both young people's knowledge and confidence around rights, as well as adult awareness and acceptance of the legitimacy of children's rights, which in turn will enhance young people's experience of living in a rights respecting society. In particular, regression analyses results point to the benefits of engaging Protestant/ British young people in particular around rights. The results revealed that being Irish was related to knowing more and feeling more able to exercise rights, which the YPAG suggested may be due to the rights discourse being more associated with an Irish/ civil rights agenda.

The inter-relationships demonstrated in section 4.3 highlight the value in educating and empowering people around rights. The results highlight numerous interesting relations (see Table 9). However, the strongest relationships are between self-reported knowledge and ability to exercise rights and perceived adult respect for rights. This suggests that a young person who feels adults respect their rights will have more knowledge and confidence to exercise these rights. This finding highlights the importance of wider spread rights education, focusing on young people and adults, as a means to encourage adult respect for rights and young people as rights holders, which will potentially then encourage greater knowledge and confidence amongst young people.

### 5.2.1 What can the government do to improve knowledge of rights?

Again, the young people recognised the capacity for their rights knowledge to be further improved and offered suggestions as to what they thought the government could do to make sure that young people know more about their rights and how to use them to improve their lives. These data support the quantitative data in that they highlight the existing lack of knowledge and confidence around rights amongst young people, as well as demonstrating, in some instances, the subsequent inability to address any potential violations of their rights.

*'tell us about our rights or no one knows what to do'*

*'The Government could set up information sessions for young people or give leaflets to improve our lives by making us more aware and making us more confident to make a complaint if our rights have been breached'*

These data also highlight clearly that young people think more should be done in terms of educating them around their rights. For the majority, they recommended school as the potential forum for this education.

*‘Make it mandatory for schools to provide this information to students not through pamphlets but through workshops and presentations’*

Other potential avenues highlighted include community groups and the youth sector, as well as using popular media, particularly internet and social media outlets.

*‘I think the government should ... start funding youth workers to go into an area and show the children/teens/young adults what they can achieve using their human rights’*

*‘Websites, apps on social media such as Facebook. Instagram pages’*

*‘Have children's rights easily available on relevant websites such as Save The Children’*

These findings demonstrate an appetite amongst young people to learn more about their rights, and in particular how to use them to challenge potential violations of their rights. The findings also indicate a preference for information on rights to be communicated in an engaging and accessible way, whether in school, in the community or via social media.

### **5.3 Enjoyment of community life and leisure facilities**

Enjoyment of community life assesses young people's perceived relationships and level of trust experienced with the adults in their community, as well as their perceived ability to socialise and associate with friends in their area. Enjoyment of leisure facilities focuses on young people's sense of belonging in these facilities, which also speaks to their perceived level of adult respect in these areas, as well as their perceived access and suitability of these facilities for young people in particular. Therefore these outcomes speak to several Articles under the CRC, such as Article 15 (the right to meet with other children), Article 31 (the right to relax, play and take part in cultural and artistic activities) and Article 2 (without discrimination).

Young people's overall enjoyment of community life and leisure facilities, which were verging on positive, suggest that to a certain extent young people do feel welcome in their community, trusted by adults, and treated equally, for example in leisure facilities. However, this result (as well as additional results presented throughout this section) also highlights scope for enhancing young people's enjoyment of community life and social spaces, i.e., in terms of feeling welcome, respected (by adults), their ability to socialize with friends and to avail of the leisure facilities available to them.

Enjoyment of community life and leisure facilities each predicted each other most strongly. That is, a young person who enjoys their leisure facilities enjoys their community life, and

vice versa. Besides this, several additional interesting relationships emerged. For example, enjoyment of community life was also predicted by participation in the community and perceived adult respect. These results highlight the potential benefits to be gained from improving adults perceptions of rights and their subsequent interactions and relationships with young people in the community. By improving adult perceptions it is likely to influence their views and treatment of young people and their likelihood to involve young people more in community life practices and decision making processes.

Both the findings in section 4.2 and 4.3 highlight that some groups of young people are enjoying their communities and leisure facilities more than others, specifically, those without mental health concerns (understandably, their diminished health will impact on their enjoyment), younger teens and those from Unionist/Loyalist backgrounds. With regard to the finding around age, the YPAG explained this (they had no explanation for the political identity finding) in terms of how teenagers are viewed in society, i.e., as 'trouble makers' and 'hoodies', and it was suggested this is more problematic with older, rather than younger teens.

This is also supported by further data collected in the survey which assessed the extent to which young people are 'moved on' in their communities. The results reveal that 61% of young people have experienced being 'moved on', with 13% experiencing it all the time. Moreover, results highlight that older teens (15-17 years) experience this significantly more frequently (53% reporting sometimes/ all the time) compared to younger teens (11-14 years, 33% reporting the same)<sup>20</sup>, which aligns with the YPAG's above interpretation of the difference in community life enjoyment. Additionally, further analysis also revealed that young people living in urban areas experience being 'moved on' more frequently (16% of urban young people reporting all the time compared to 8% of rural young people<sup>21</sup>). It is the adults in their communities who are telling the young people to move on, particularly, the Police, local business employees and local residents. Young people reported that often they were asked to 'move on' while socializing in their area, e.g., playing football, in food outlets, in the park and in shopping centers.

### 5.3.1 Socializing (barriers)

Additional information was collected in the survey which also speaks to young peoples' enjoyment of their community life, that is, questions around socializing. The majority of respondents surveyed reported that they go out socially sometimes/ all the time (87%), the most popular places to go include a friend's house, the cinema and shops (see Table 10). Further analyses was conducted to see if the frequency with which young people go out

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<sup>20</sup>  $\chi^2 (4, n = 644) = 36.3, P < .0001, \phi = .24$

<sup>21</sup>  $\chi^2 (4, n = 602) = 23.9, P < .0001, \phi = .2$

socially differed across some key demographics, i.e., area (urban/rural), gender, age, postcode, and religion. The only statistically significant finding was that girls reported going out more frequently than boys (44% of girls going out all the time, compared to 36% of boys)<sup>22</sup>.

**Table 10: young people's social habits**

Freq. go out socially	%	Where do you go?	% who selected this	% who have access to this
Never	1.0	<b>Shops</b>	69	80
Rarely	9.3	<b>Cinema</b>	71	75
Not sure	2.4	<b>Parks</b>	39	74
Sometimes	46.3	<b>Leisure facilities</b>	35	71
All the time	41.0	<b>Around the area</b>	52	NA
Total		<b>Clubs</b>	31	51
Missing		<b>Music venues</b>	22	33
		<b>Theatres</b>	10	28
		<b>Friends house</b>	75	NA
		<b>Restaurants</b>	50	67
		<b>Community centre</b>	NA <sup>23</sup>	56
		<b>Libraries</b>	NA	65
		<b>City Centre/ town</b>	58	

Additionally, the young people were asked about the types of places they go out to socially, and the types of places they have access to. These data were also further explored; in this instance, of particular interest were any differences that might be evident across those young people living in urban areas, compared to those living in rural areas. The results revealed that a greater proportion of young people living in rural areas selected shops, leisure centers and clubs, compared to those young people in urban areas. And a greater proportion of young people from urban areas selected parks and around their local area (see Table 11)<sup>24</sup>. Perhaps this is due to young people in rural areas living further from their friends, and so they require specific locations to meet up, whereas children in urban areas

<sup>22</sup>  $\chi^2 (4, n = 581)=14.7, P=.005, \phi = .2$

<sup>23</sup> Not included in this list of options.

<sup>24</sup> Shops –  $\chi^2 (1, n = 688)=4.7, p=.02$ ; Parks –  $\chi^2 (1, n = 688)=5.5, p=.01$ ; Leisure centre –  $\chi^2 (1, n = 688)=5.7, P=.01$ ; Around the area –  $\chi^2 (1, n = 688)=3.4, p=.04$ ; Clubs –  $\chi^2 (1, n = 688)=4.5, p=.02, \phi = .1$  for all.



stay close to the area they and their friends are from. Additionally, two significant findings emerged around the types of social spaces/ facilities to which young people have access. A greater proportion of young people from rural areas selected community centers and arts venues, compared to those from urban areas<sup>25</sup>.

**Table 11: Where young people socialize: urban/ rural**

Where you go?	% selecting this option			Access to facilities	% selecting this option
	Urban	Rural		Urban	Rural
Shops	67%	<b>76%</b>	Community Centre	55%	<b>62%</b>
Leisure Centre	33%	<b>42%</b>	Arts/ theatre venues	24%	<b>36%</b>
Clubs	30%	<b>38%</b>			
Parks	<b>43%</b>	34%			
Around the local area	<b>56%</b>	48%			

Finally, the young people were given further open space in the survey to add any additional comments on their experience of using social spaces/leisure facilities. Many young people took this opportunity to voice their concerns, and concerns for young people in general. Often this focussed around issues of accessibility and discrimination.

With regard to accessibility, there was recognised lack of appropriate leisure facilities for many young people in the areas in which they live, partly, as one young person explained, because young people are not consulted on what facilities are required or would be suitable for them.

*‘There isn’t a lot of things to do for young people in my area’*

*‘In my area there are not many leisure facilities, there are actually none at all. The community has left the young people with nothing and then wonder why we hang around the area with are (our) so called ""anti-social"" behaviour. I think the area should have a centre for young people to go to free of charge and just hang about with mates.....there has never been meetings or groups for the young people to decide what happens with our funding and this results in it being spent on irrelevant features to the area’*

<sup>25</sup> Community center –  $\chi^2 (1, n = 688) = 3.3, P = .04$ ; Arts –  $\chi^2 (1, n = 688) = 10.1, P = .001, \phi = -.1$  for both.

For others, the cost of such facilities appears to be prohibitive and a key barrier to their enjoyment of available facilities in or near their area.

*'Some are very expensive especially at this age when you don't work'*

*'Make them cheaper!!!!!!! £5.90 for a cinema ticket, flipping rip off!'*

Additional restrictions were also highlighted in terms of age, particularly prominent was gym restrictions.

*'Some facilities are age restricted i.e. the gym. Anyone under the age 16 has to either be accompanied by an adult or turned away'*

Although this may be necessary for health and safety reasons, there were additional restrictions and concerns voiced by the young people, which were more reflective of discrimination. Some young people commented on how they are treated differently in leisure facilities, based on their age.

*'Staff members do not treat my friends and I with the same respect as they do with older people, Just because we are teenagers does not mean we are ""bad"".*

*'(We) get kicked out for no reason'*

This differential treatment received by young people appears to be having a negative effect on their enjoyment of leisure facilities, and might explain why the overall enjoyment (M=3.64) of these facilities, as demonstrated in Table 6, is not higher.

*'Attending leisure facilities in my area can cause a lot of controversy when attending in groups..... security guards often follow us around the shops and as a result in this it aggravates us and I tend to find this is the cause of the trouble in the areas'*

*'We are not welcome in the local leisure facilities, I think because the workers think of us as ""street scum"" who have no money and wish to use these facilities for free'.*

Young people's sense of belonging and enjoyment of their community and leisure facilities appears to be defined by how the adults in these areas/ facilities treat them, and as the data suggests, it is dependent on the adults treating them equally and with respect. The findings therefore suggest (although cannot confirm as they are reliant upon the young people's perceptions only) that for many young people they are not enjoying their right to play, non-discrimination, and freedom of association, as articulated under the UNCRC, because of their perceptions of adult mistreatment.

## 5.4 Mental health

### 5.4.1 Mental health outcomes

The results of these outcomes highlight the extent to which the mental health services are fulfilling their obligations under Article 24 of the UNCRC which stipulates that governments must provide good quality health care.

Mental health awareness and the perceived suitability of mental health services (for young people in particular, in terms of information provided, treatment, ability of doctors etc.) were both verging on positive. Nonetheless, considering the extent of the mental health concerns for young people in NI in general, as was recognized in the Committee's 2008 concluding observations<sup>26</sup>, it is arguable that perhaps this level of awareness is not as high as might be expected. Furthermore, young people's reported comfort in seeking mental health support (i.e., their perceived access, knowing where to go to get help, and self-perceived comfort in doing so) was low. The YPAG felt that this result could be explained by existing social stigma around mental health problems in NI society.

Additionally, the relationships evident in Table 9 highlight that knowledge and ability to exercise rights is the strongest predictor of mental health awareness. This link is potentially a result of empowerment, participation and or activism, where young people with high levels of knowledge and confidence around rights are also attuned to key issues for young people. Nonetheless, this highlights the potential benefits of improving rights knowledge in general as a mean to improve mental health awareness.

Finally, the strong relationships between comfort in seeking mental health support and perceived suitability of the mental health services highlights that if a young person feels the services available to them are suitable they will be comfortable, and arguably more likely, to seek help. This finding therefore further highlights the need to improve the mental health services available to young people in NI, as well as highlighting the need to address young people's perceptions of these services, in order to make them more accessible and suitable for young people and their specific needs and requirements.

Sections 4.2 and 4.3 both highlighted particular group differences/ relationships. For example, although girls reported a stronger mental health awareness, boys report greater comfort in seeking support. The YPAG suggested that the gender finding may be a result of mental health stigma and potentially male bravado around recognizing mental health awareness. Additionally, the results also highlight that having reported a mental health concern is related to a stronger awareness, however, it is also related to less comfort in

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<sup>26</sup> United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. (2008). *Concluding Observations: United Kingdom*, para 56. Retrieved from: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/docs/AdvanceVersions/CRC.C.GBR.CO.4.pdf>

seeking mental health support, a concerning finding as it is this group of young people who are in more immediate need of such support.

#### 5.4.2 Mental health experiences and sources of support for mental health concerns

The results reveal that 27% of the young people surveyed reported having experienced a mental health concern, of which 37% had received help, but only 66% of those were satisfied with the help they received. Further analysis explored the type of young person who was more likely to have reported having experienced a mental health concern. This analysis revealed larger proportions of: females compared to males (31%/23%)<sup>27</sup>; older teens compared to younger teens (38%/ 14%)<sup>28</sup>; young people who live in urban versus rural areas (30%/ 21%)<sup>29</sup>; and young people reporting a disability compared to those not (63%/ 25%)<sup>30</sup>. Additionally, the results also revealed that, with regard to those young people who reported being moved on all the time, a larger proportion are those with experience of mental health concerns (23% of those reporting a mental health concern reported being moved on all the time, compared to 10% of those not reporting a mental health concern)<sup>31</sup>

When asked (of all respondents) who they would go to for support (across a range of options), the most common source for help were family and friends (for both those with and without previous mental health concerns, see Table 12, note, multiple options could be selected). Looking at those young people who reported having experienced a mental health concern, compared to the full sample, revealed that these two groups of young people selected potential sources of help quite similarly. The most striking difference is that 9% of all respondents selected that they 'wouldn't get help', compared to 21% of those reporting mental health concerns.

**Table 12: Sources of support– Full sample compared to those with mental health concern**

	% of all respondents	% of those with mental health problem
School counselor	20	24
School teacher	20	24
Doctor	25	29
Community/ youth club	11	9
Religious leader	6	4

<sup>27</sup>  $\chi^2 (1, n=606) = 5.2, p = .02, \phi = -.1$

<sup>28</sup>  $\chi^2 (1, n=608) = 42.7, p = <.0001, \phi = -.27$

<sup>29</sup>  $\chi^2 (1, n=569) = 5.1, p = .01, \phi = .1$

<sup>30</sup>  $\chi^2 (1, n=601) = 26.7, p = <.0001, \phi = -.21$

<sup>31</sup>  $\chi^2 (4, n=593) = 26.2, p = <.0001, \phi = .21$  (however, note also sample size differences between the two groups).

Family	60	52
Friends	54	66
Helpline	10	15
Online	19	30
Local support service	4	6
Wouldn't get help	9	21
Don't know	9	13

Furthermore, comparisons were made between those young people who answered yes to having experienced a mental health concern, compared to those who answered no. Several statistically significant findings emerged<sup>32</sup> revealing that a greater proportion of young people who have had a mental health concern selected online or nowhere at all, while a greater proportion of those without a mental health concern selected family (see Table 13). This finding is concerning, as it highlights that those most vulnerable to experiencing poor mental health are less likely to seek face-to-face support from family or health professionals, but more inclined to go online or nowhere at all. Again, this would suggest a need to re-examine existing systems and methods for accessing all levels of CAMHS in Northern Ireland, in consultation with both young service users and a representative forum of children and young people, with a view to addressing the barriers to seeking appropriate support services (real or perceived) that NI young people are experiencing.

**Table 13: Sources of support: Those reporting mental concerns, compared to those not**

Selecting	Yes (MH concern)	No (MH concern)
<b>Family</b>	52%	<b>78%</b>
<b>Online</b>	<b>30%</b>	21%
<b>Nowhere</b>	<b>21%</b>	7%

#### 5.4.3 Ideal mental health service

Young people were asked in an open question (where they could type in their answers), in their opinion, what the ideal mental health service for children and young people would look like? As a prompt, they were asked to consider several different factors such as when these services are available, where they are available and the kind of services available to

<sup>32</sup> Family:  $\chi^2 (1, n=608) = 37.8, p = <.0001, \phi = .25$ ; Online:  $\chi^2 (1, n= 608), = 5.7, p = .01, \phi = .1$ ; Nowhere, I wouldn't get help:  $\chi^2 (1, n=608) = 27.5, p = <.001, \phi = .2$

children and young people. The young people had plenty to say on this matter, with many writing full paragraphs of thoughts and suggestions (to give an idea, 5213 words were written).

Firstly, a key theme emerging from these data is that mental health services must be accessible. This spanned issues regarding opening times (beyond school hours), waiting lists, and locality.

*'They should be made available on weekends during the day and evening, and after school times during the week*

*'I think there should be more facilities available because if you need to be seen by (by) CAMHS, you have to get referred by a doctor. The waiting list are very long up to a year! I think there should be more facilities so young people wouldn't have to wait so long to be seen when they are desperate for help'*

With regard to locality, some young people recognised a lack of mental health support in their area, as well as logistical problems in accessing such services that are not nearby.

*'I think there should be more mental health services available to young people who live in rural areas'.*

*'There would also need to be a chance for some children to get a lift to and from the services because they might not have anyone to bring them and they could be afraid to ask'*

Additionally, young people provided several suggestions about how the physical space should look and feel. For example, confidentiality and discretion were key considerations, noting that such facilities should be housed in *'inconspicuous buildings'*.

*'(So that it is) not obvious that you were going to see a doctor at a mental health unit'.*

*'Normal house or building to go to, available all the time ....make more young people aware and feel comfortable to talk to someone'*

*'Try to make it something young people wouldn't be embarrassed to go to'*

Furthermore, they felt it should be *'a kind welcoming place'*, *'bright'*, and *'friendly'* potentially with *'separate facilities for minors'*. Aside from the look and feel of the ideal facility, young people also commented on the type of treatment that should be available, e.g., *'Emotional support, therapy and advice on how to cope with your mental health disorder'*. Others suggested group counselling/ therapy and support from other (young) people who have similar experiences and problems, by way of peer support and group counselling.

*'I feel from past experiences that there should be more group work with other young people to help show that young people are not alone and they can relate to others their own age and can discuss situations in a safe, controlled environment'*

*'Opportunities to talk to people with similar experience peer mentoring'*

In terms of the staff, the young people felt that they should both be qualified and trained (in working with young people particularly), as well as approachable, friendly, and welcoming,

*'as long as qualified doctors work there and the right type of treatment is provided'.*

*'with workers trained in working with young people'*

*'Understanding doctors not people that are strict or boring people that are easy to talk to and can give actual practical help'*

In addition to services provided in the community, some young people also highlighted how mental health support should also be available in schools

*'Mental health services should be available in school throughout the day'*

*'There should be more assessments in schools to ensure all individuals understand and are given appropriate attention about the topic!'*

And finally, as well as physical, face-to-face support, online, virtual support was also suggested, particularly for those less inclined to visit a physical building.

*'I feel like services such as Skype would be good for this as some people don't want to make it obvious that they are struggling with mental health issues'*

*'Online help, ...If there was a service available w(h)ere a young person could voice their health concerns through a private online chat room ... then more people would come forward about their concerns'*

These data highlight that the young people surveyed have clear expectations and very specific and comprehensive suggestions for an 'ideal mental health service', which if implemented could improve young people's perceptions of the suitability of mental health services, increase the likelihood of them seeking and receiving the support they need and thereby enhance their chances of leading happier, healthier lives.

## 6.0 Conclusions and key points

The results from this survey highlight the varying degrees to which young people in Northern Ireland are enjoying their rights. The key points emerging from the survey will be detailed below.

### 6.1 Inter-dependence of rights

The multiple relationships between each of the outcomes, as presented in Table 9, highlights how each of these outcomes relate with and predict each other. This finding supports the notion that rights are inter-dependent and indivisible. For example, a young person enjoying their right to participate in education decision making is also enjoying their right to participate in community life decision making. Likewise, a young person who is not enjoying rights in one domain is likely to not enjoy their rights in another, for example, a young person not enjoying equal treatment in leisure facilities, will not enjoy their community life. This finding supports advocacy and policy agendas which aim to promote rights holistically, as by targeting one you can target many. For example, knowledge and confidence of using rights and perceived adult respect for rights inter-relate with every other outcome, therefore highlighting the benefits of targeting knowledge and respect as a means to promote enjoyment of rights across all other domains.

### 6.2 Participation (Article 12)

Young people appear to experience participation differently in each area of their lives, their enjoyment steadily decreases from home, where they feel most positive about their participation in decision making, to education and community life, where they are less positive, and finally to government where they are negative about the extent to which government either listens to or values their views on policy matters impacting on their lives. As suggested by the YPAG their levels of enjoyment of participation may be dependent on the level of opportunity to participate, made available to them by adults in each area of their lives.

Whilst the findings suggest young people are quite positive about participation in schools and community life, the suggestions they provided on how to improve participation highlight that although they feel included and consulted on matters affecting them, often they do not feel that they are truly listened to or that their opinions are acted upon. Their suggestions, for example, in terms of improving participation in school, highlighted the need for more active participation. For example, many young people highlighted the need for improved democratic processes in schools, where young people strongly advised that it would be mutually beneficial to both teachers and pupils to include their views in a more meaningful and respectful way, in decisions impacting on their own education as well as school matters in general. Additionally, many young people clearly feel frustrated that they are excluded from government decision making and feel disconnected from the democratic process. Young people have expressed their desire to be directly consulted on all



government matters affecting their lives and have provided numerous, valuable and articulate ideas on ways in which government could listen to their views, take their views into account, and most importantly take these views seriously and act upon them where possible.

Additionally, the inter-dependence of participation rights highlights the importance of viewing young people holistically as social agents, as opposed to viewing them as passive subjects of separate, unconnected adult roles e.g., pupil, son, youth group member etc. That is, by encouraging young peoples' capacity to participate in general, will encourage their ability to participate in all aspects of their lives. It is therefore incumbent on duty bearers to actively support young people's participation by resourcing awareness raising campaigns to encourage parents, educationalists, civic leaders, and adults in communities to value and respect the contributions children and young people can make in society as a whole, to enable young people to fully claim their participation rights.

Furthermore, this study in its entirety, highlights young people's willingness and genuine desire to engage with adults on matters impacting on their lives, as over 750 young people willingly and voluntarily took time out to share their views on these issues. This is clearly evident in young people's written responses in the survey, which were, in general, both thoughtful and powerful in their messages to both schools and to Government. The respondents demonstrated that they have strongly held views on why adults should consult with them and support their participation, and their preferred mechanisms for doing so. The findings of this report clearly demonstrate that young people wish to be regarded as experts in their own lives and as such, have a valuable and important role to play in informing decisions on all matters impacting on every aspect of their lives.

### 6.3 Knowledge of rights (Article 42)

Whilst there may be a variety of interpretations to be placed on these findings, adopting a holistic children's rights approach, offers insight into the importance of empowering young people to know and use their rights and how claiming their rights can improve long term outcomes for children and young people.

Overall, young peoples' self-reported knowledge of and ability to exercise rights highlights (see Table 6 where scores were verging on positive) highlights scope for young people's knowledge and confidence to be improved, as well as scope for improving perceived adult respect for rights. Many of the young people surveyed demonstrated a keen interest in learning more about their rights and offered numerous suggestions as to how the government could go about increasing this knowledge amongst young people, for example via both the school and youth work curricula.

Additionally, the connection (evidenced by survey findings), between knowledge of and perceived adult support for rights and a range of factors associated with participation, enjoyment of community/ leisure facilities, and mental health awareness indicates the importance of ensuring that both adults and young people have knowledge and confidence around children's rights. For example, by improving young people's knowledge and confidence in using rights will help empower them to exercise their rights and to challenge discriminatory behaviour by others towards them. Also by supporting and educating adults and duty bearers to recognise children as "rights holders" with an equal right to be respected, adults are more likely to have that respect reciprocated and to enjoy improved relationships with young people in communities.

#### **6. 4 Without discrimination (Article 2)/ enjoyment of community life**

Although in general the young people in this survey reported active social lives, with 87% going out socially sometimes/ all the time to a range of venues, such as shops, restaurants, cinema etc., the results also reveal areas for improvement in order to encourage greater enjoyment of community lives and leisure facilities, particularly amongst older teens and those with mental health concerns.

This enjoyment could be improved by better adult and young people relationships, facilitated by adult respect for children's rights and inclusivity in the community (both of which predicted enjoyment of community life). The information collected highlights that young people feel they are being treated differently and unfairly because they are young. Clear evidence of this can be found in the results of the 'moved on' question, where 61% of respondents (more so older teens) had experienced being 'moved on' by adults in their communities. The young people highlighted how they felt unfairly treated by adults who they thought were judging them unfairly based on their age. As recognised earlier these relationships could be enhanced via education and empowerment. Additionally, the research highlights the need for more facilities that are accessible to young people, i.e., facilities that are affordable, close to where children and young people live, and staffed by rights respecting adults, the realisation of this too would improve overall enjoyment of community life and leisure facilities.

#### **6.5 Survival and development (Article 6)/ mental health**

The findings reveal that 27% of survey respondents consider themselves to have a mental health concern, 37% of whom sought help and 66% of whom were satisfied with the help received. Additional research in Northern Ireland substantiates a growing concern regarding

the mental health of young people in Northern Ireland<sup>33</sup>. Despite this growing concern, and attempts by Government to improve the mental health and wellbeing of young people through various recent initiatives<sup>34</sup>, awareness of mental health issues, young people's comfort in seeking and accessing mental health support and their confidence in using existing service provisions is evidently still low in NI, perhaps due to existing social stigma associated with mental health.

There are several key findings from this survey which highlight the necessity to improve the mental health services available to young people. For example, only 25% of respondents (29% of those with a mental health concern) reported that they would go to a doctor if they had a mental health concern. Further information highlights that the most common source of support for young people with potential mental health concerns is family and friends, and whilst this may lead to future specialist referral, young people's reluctance to engage with the health service directly is a point of considerable concern. This finding is supported by additional research in Northern Ireland which reveals a reduction (between 2008-2013) in the number of young people seeking help before self-harming<sup>35</sup>, further emphasising the need to address potential barriers experienced by young people in terms of accessing mental health support, as a matter of some urgency.

Additionally, the strong relationship between comfort in seeking mental health support and the perceived suitability of mental health services reported by young people highlights that the more suitable young people perceive these services to be, the more likely they are to use them. Therefore, this also emphasises need to improve, not only young people's perceptions of the suitability of these services, but ultimately their suitability in general. Recommendations for the 'ideal mental health' service were offered by the young people who took part in this survey, for example, they should be more accessible (open 24 hours and more availability in rural areas), discreet, friendly, and effective. The wealth of useful ideas put forward willingly and voluntarily by 541 respondents not only highlights how concerned young people in Northern Ireland are about mental health issues affecting both themselves and their peers, but also underlines the importance of ensuring that these and other like-minded young people are fully included in any policy review exercise which seeks to create a better child and adolescent mental health services in Northern Ireland

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<sup>33</sup> McCann (2015). Who can I talk to? Self harm and seeking help among 16 year olds: Changes between 2008 and 2013 (Research Update 96). Available online at: <http://www.ark.ac.uk/publications/updates/update96.pdf>

<sup>34</sup> Northern Ireland Executive (2010), *NI Programme for Government (2011-2015)*. Belfast: OFMDFM. Available online at: <http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/pfg-2011-2015-final-report.pdf>.

<sup>35</sup> McCann (2015) as above

## 6.6 Conclusion

Young people are enjoying some of their rights more than others; their greatest enjoyment is in their participation rights, particularly in relation to home life decisions. Areas of particular concern relate to their enjoyment of community life, limited due to their relationships with adults and perceived discrimination, and their enjoyment of suitable health services for mental health concerns.

Whilst none of the demographic factors were a strong predictor of any of the outcomes, nonetheless, the results highlight particular vulnerable groups of children and young people who are not enjoying their rights as much. For example, older teens and those with mental health concerns. Additionally, groups of other marginalised young people are also included amongst those not enjoying their rights as much as other young people, such as LGBT young people and those with disabilities. These results highlight some of the inequalities faced by marginalised young people in society and emphasise the need for specific research, policies, and agendas focusing on the specific needs of particular vulnerable groups, to work towards the equal realisation of rights across all groups of children and young people.

Finally, looking at all of the results from this survey holistically suggests the value in improving adult/ young people relationships in the community, which from the young people's perspectives is weak, lacking mutual respect, and at times hindered by adults' discriminatory views and actions. Education around rights for adults (to improve their respect for young people as rights holders) and young people (to empower them around exercising rights) is one way of encouraging these relationships, via a range of other mediating factors (and potential outcomes), such as potential improvement of participation, enjoyment of community life and mental health awareness/ support seeking. In order to address any of these issues, the value of duty bearers engaging directly with young people is emphasised, not only in terms of their seeking young peoples' views, but in giving these views due weight, and where possible ensuring young peoples' opinions and suggestions are realised in policy and practice.

## 7.0 Recommendations

There are numerous key recommendations that can be derived from the findings of this survey, each are presented below:

1. Duty bearers should actively support young people's participation by resourcing awareness raising campaigns to encourage parents, educationalists, civic leaders, and adults in communities to value and respect the contributions children and young people can make in society as a whole, to enable young people to fully claim their participation rights across all domains.
2. In order to encourage enjoyment of community life, the discriminatory treatment young people feel they receive from adults must be addressed, for example, in legislation around age discrimination.
3. Awareness raising and educational initiatives around rights should be introduced both in school and in the community. Young people need educated to encourage their confidence and empowerment around rights, and adults need educated on the role of young people as rights holders.
4. Initiatives to improve adult/ young people relationships in communities would be beneficial. Current relationships are strained, due to, in part, the point made in recommendation 2. Again, education and awareness raising around rights is one way to improve these relationships.
5. Particular attention should be paid to those more vulnerable groups in society (for example, those young people with mental health concerns, those that identity as LGBT, those with disabilities etc.) to ensure that they have the opportunities to realise their rights to their full potential.
6. Awareness around mental health, perceived suitability of mental health services, and comfort in seeking such support must be increased. There is a clear disconnect between young people and the mental health services available to them, therefore CAMHS should be assessed as a matter of priority, both for suitability and sufficiency of provision. Young people are asking for a quality assured, specialised service for children and young people, their views on how this service should look, feel, and operate must be considered.

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## Appendix 1: Measure development

### Measure assessment

Each of the items on the survey were subjected to exploratory factor analysis (Principal Components Analysis) and reliability analysis. The factorability of the items was assessed against a range of criteria: there were numerous correlations above .3; the Kaiser Meyer Olkin<sup>36</sup> value for each analysis exceeded the minimum cut off of .6; and for each of the analyses, the Bartlett's test of sphericity<sup>37</sup> reached statistical significance ( $p < .05$ ). With regard to deciding on the number of factors to extract, the eigenvalue rule (i.e., retaining values over 1 only) and Cattell's scree test<sup>38</sup> were both assessed in order to determine the best fit. With regard to factor rotation, direct oblimin was used for all. Additionally, reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha<sup>39</sup>, a measure of internal consistency. Each of the measures is considered reliable, with alpha values meeting or exceeding .7. Details regarding each measure (including % variance explained, scree test results (where, the number of factors to retain is informed by the break in the line graph), factor loadings, and reliability analysis results is presented below). Note that the structure and names of each scale was agreed with the YPAG.

### Measuring participation

Items related to young people's participation in a variety of settings were included in the survey, these loaded according to young people's participation in education, home life, the community and in politics.

#### *Participation in education decision making*

All items pertaining to participation in education loaded on to one factor (explaining 60% of the variance), resulting in one scale measuring young people's perceived participation in education decision making. This 9 item scale (with strong reliability,  $\alpha = .9$ ) measures participation in education decision making, defined strongly by adult support for participation, in terms of supporting young people to share their views on matters related to education, and taking these views seriously.

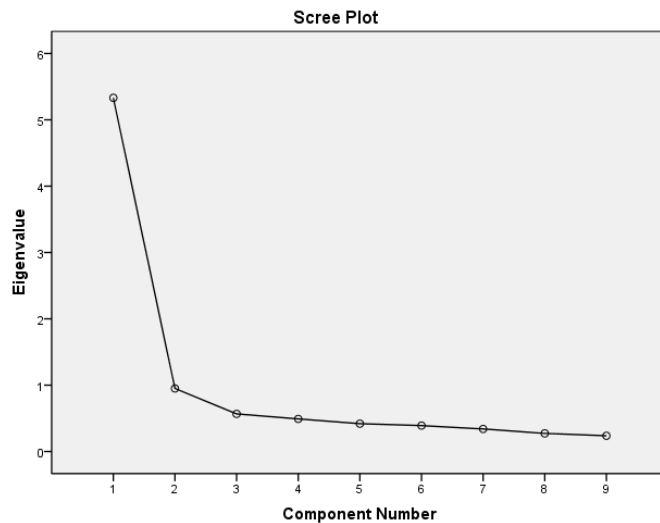
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<sup>36</sup> Kaiser, H.F. (1974). An index of factorial simplicity. *Psychometrika*, 39, 31-36.

<sup>37</sup> M.S. Bartlett (1954): "A note on multiplying factors for various chi-squared approximations.", *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society, Series B* 16: 296–298

<sup>38</sup> Cattell, R. B. (1966). The scree test for the number of factors, *Multivariate behavioural Research*, 1, 2, p.245-276

<sup>39</sup> Cronbach LJ (1951). "Coefficient alpha and the internal structure of tests". *Psychometrika* 16 (3): 297–334



**Figure 1: Screeplot - participation education decision making**

**Table 1: Education participation factor loadings**

Item	Loadinga
What we do in class	.709
What I have to say about the rules	.714
How to make our school/FE college/training centre better	.745
I can give my opinions freely	.736
The adults make it easy for me to give my views	.845
The adults take my views seriously	.824
The adults take my views into account when they make decisions	.842
The adults talk to me about how decisions are made	.778
The adults make sure I can easily get the information I need about what is going on in the school/FE college/training centre	.749

#### *Participation in home life decision making*

All items pertaining to participation in home life loaded on to one factor (explaining 72% of the variance), resulting in one scale measuring young people's perceived participation in their home. This 6 item scale (with strong reliability,  $\alpha = .92$ ) measures participation in home life decision making, and is again strongly defined by adult support, in terms of supporting



young people to share their views on matters related to the home life, and taking these views seriously.



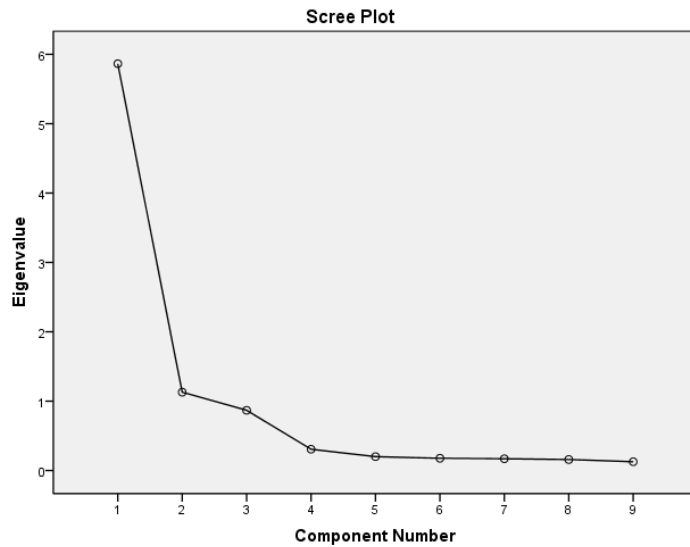
**Figure2: Screeplot - participation home life decision making**

**Table 2: Home participation factor loadings**

Item	Loading
I can give my views freely	.831
The adults make it easy for me to give my views	.901
The adults take my views seriously	.877
The adults take my views into account when they make decisions	.887
The adults talk to me about how decisions are made in my home life	.814
When I need help, support or information I can easily talk to someone in my home life	.791

#### *Participation in community decision making*

Although potentially a two factor solution, the items relating to participation in community decision making all loaded stronger on to the one factor, and so for consistency a one factor solution was decided upon (explaining 65% of the variance). This 9 item scale (with strong reliability, with strong reliability  $\alpha = .9$ ) relates to community participation, with a focus on adult support in terms of asking for young people's views on matters related to community life and activities, and taking those views seriously



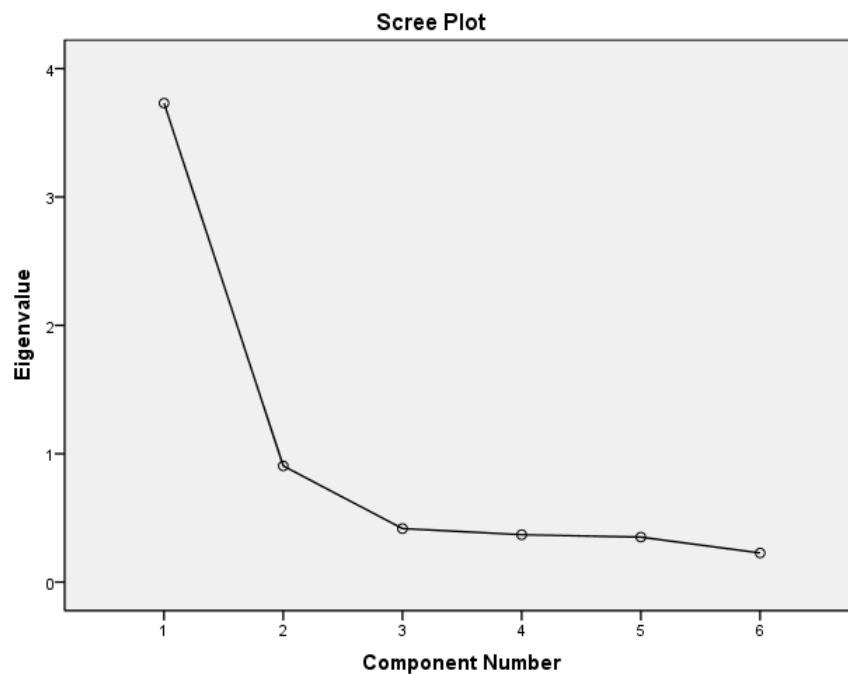
**Figure 3: Screeplot - Participation in community decision making**

**Table 3: Community participation factor loadings**

Item	Loading	
	Component 1	Component 2
The adults ask me for my views	.797	<del>-.471</del>
The adults take my views seriously	.817	<del>-.431</del>
The adults take my views into account when they make decisions	.830	<del>-.423</del>
I can easily find out about activities (like youth clubs, sports activities, church clubs) for young people my age	.711	<del>.502</del>
I can easily find out about what's going on for young people in places like youth clubs, parks, community centres etc	.718	<del>.504</del>
I am asked for my views on what types of new activities or services should go in to my community to make it a better place to live	.836	
I am asked for my views on how to make my community a safer place to live for everyone	.841	
I am asked for my views on how happy I am with the activities and services available in my community	.848	
The adults make it easy for me to give my views on the activities and services available in my community	.855	

#### *Participation in government decision making*

This too resulted in a one factor solution (explaining 62% of the variance). This 6 item scale (with strong reliability, with strong reliability,  $\alpha = .92$ ) focuses on young people's perceived ability to participate in democratic processes and government decision making. The scale is defined by the role of adults (politicians) in their meaningful engagement with young people as civic agents, i.e., by supporting them to participate in democratic processes, and by not only listening to, but also acting on the views of young people.



**Figure 4: Screeplot - Participation in government decision making**

**Table 4: Government participation factor loadings**

Item	Loading
I know how to get in touch with my local MLA when I need to with an issue that affects me or other young people	.725
I feel confident enough to present my views to my local MLA	.710
Politicians in Government ask for my views on important issues	.819
I think politicians take young people's views seriously	.821
I think politicians make changes based on young people's views	.826

Politicians make information easy to find and understand for young people	.825
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### Measuring knowledge and perceived adult respect for rights

Items pertaining to young people's appreciation of their rights loaded on to two separate factors (explaining 63% of the variance). The first, labelled, *Knowledge and ability to exercise rights* ( $\alpha = .8$ ) is a 5 item scale, which is defined by young people's feelings of being informed around rights (knowing where to go to get information) and their self-reported knowledge and understanding of rights. The second, labelled '*Perceived adult respect for children's rights*' is a 3 item scale, which is defined by young people's perceptions of how adults treat young people, i.e., equally and with respect.

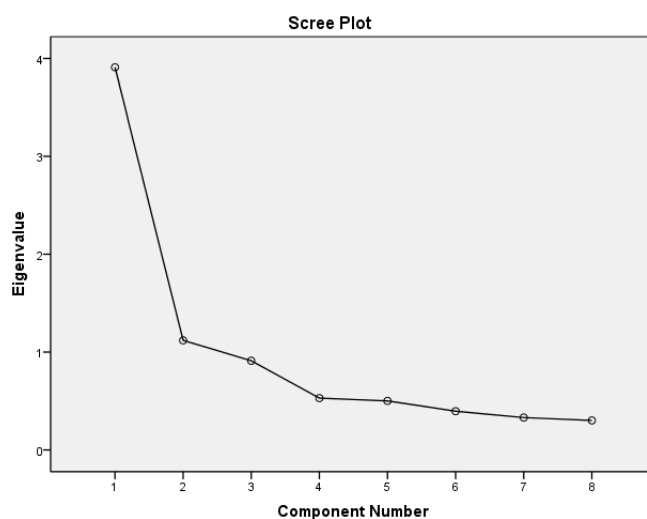


Figure 5: Screeplot - knowledge and perceived adult respect for rights

Table 5: Knowledge/ adult support for rights factor loadings

Item	Loadings	
	Component 1	Component 2
I know a lot about my rights	.807	
I understand what children's rights means to me and my life	.683	

I know where to go to get information on my rights	.875	
If I felt my rights were being abused, I would know how to make a complaint	.796	
If I felt my rights were being abused, I would feel confident enough to make a complaint	.535	
I am treated equally		.751
The adults around me to treat me with respect		.937
I feel confident to share my views with adults on important issues		.759

### Enjoyment of community life and leisure facilities

Items pertaining to community life (i.e., excluding leisure facilities) loaded on to two separate factors, however, the reliability of the second factor (3 items, displayed in the component 2 column of Table 6) was extremely poor ( $\alpha = .23$ ). Therefore a one factor solution (explaining 42% of the variance,  $\alpha = .9$ ) was retained and labelled '*Young people's enjoyment of community life*' (note that the item 'I am often told to move on from a place when hanging out with my friends' was excluded as it was reducing reliability, this issue is covered elsewhere in the survey). This 13 item scale is defined by young people's perceived relationships and trust with the adults in their community, as well as their perceived ability to socialise and associate with friends in their area.

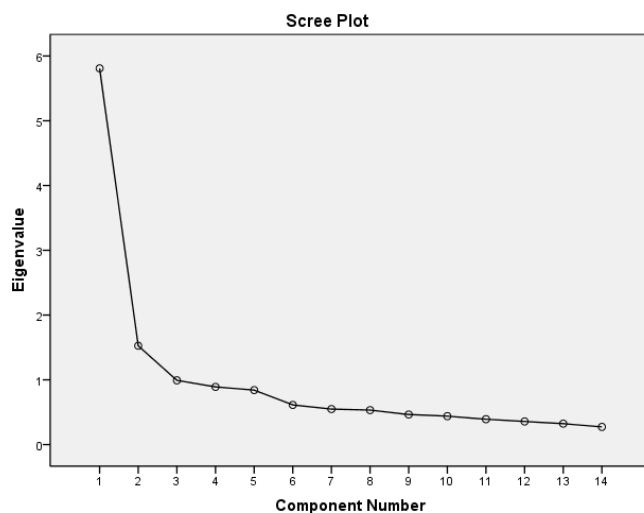
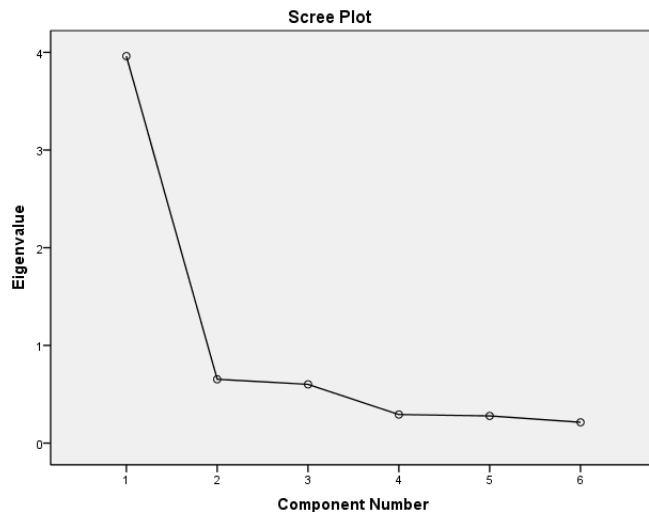


Figure 6: Screeplot - enjoyment of community life

**Table 6: Community life factor loadings**

Item	Loadings	
	Component 1	Component 2
I feel comfortable hanging out with my friends in the street		-.719
I feel like I am welcome in my area by other residents	.523	<del>-.410</del>
It's easy for me to go out socially	<del>.338</del>	-.668
There are places to hang out for as long as you want	.582	
The places available to me to hang out are safe	.671	
We get along well with the adults and feel respected in our community	.758	
I feel respected in my area by the police	.783	
I am often told to move on from a place when hanging out with my friends		.528
I feel trusted by the adults in my community (e.g. neighbours/police/parents etc)	.787	
I trust the adults in my community (e.g. police/neighbours/parents etc)	.774	
There is plenty for young people to do in my area	.597	
I feel like I am welcome in my area by shopkeepers	.646	
I don't feel like I'm treated any differently because I am a young person	.653	
Young people in my area have a good relationship with the police	.734	

All items pertaining to young people's enjoyment of leisure facilities loaded on to one factor (explaining 66% of the variance). This 6 item scale ( $\alpha = .9$ ) is defined by: young people's feelings of belonging in these facilities i.e., to what extent they feel welcome and treated equally and with respect; their perceived access to these facilities; and the perceived suitability of these facilities in terms of their capacity to meet the needs of young people.



**Figure7: Screeplot - enjoyment of leisure facilities**

**Table 7: Leisure facilities factor loadings**

Item	Loadings
I have easy access to a range of leisure facilities	.774
These facilities suit me and my needs	.853
I feel welcome in the leisure facilities available to me	.887
Other users in these facilities treat me with respect	.845
At these facilities, the staff treat me with the same respect as they treat other users	.823
I can afford to use leisure facilities whenever I want to	.669

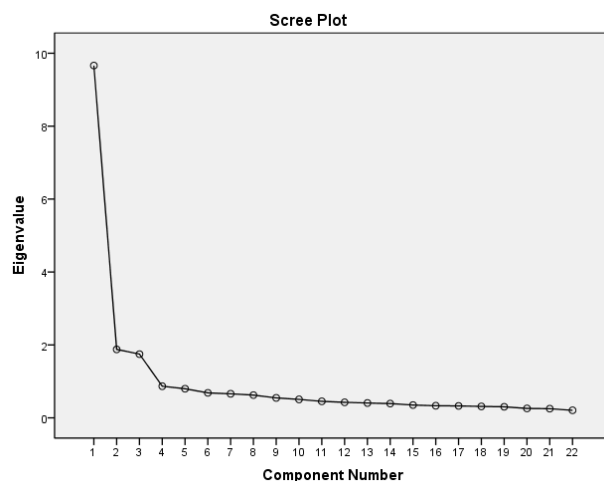
### Measuring mental health awareness and support

All items pertaining to mental health problems loaded on to three separate factors (explaining 60% of the variance).

The first, labelled, '*Mental health awareness*' ( $\alpha = .7$ ) is a 3 items scale defined by young people's own knowledge of mental health issues and their perception of this problem as an issue for young people in general.

The second, labelled '*Comfort in seeking mental health support*' ( $\alpha = .8$ ) is a 6 item scale, defined by how comfortable young people feel in discussing mental health concerns and seeking mental health support if necessary, i.e., their perceived access, knowing where to go to get help, and self-perceived comfort in doing so.

And the third, labelled '*Suitability of mental health services*' ( $\alpha = .9$ ) is a 13 item scale, defined by young people's perception of the suitability of mental health services for young people in particular. For example, in terms of the appropriateness of information provided, the suitability of treatment, and the ability of the doctors at these services to talk to young people. This measure also encompasses issues around access (knowing how to get an appointment), sufficient services (quantity and opening hours), value (believing the services are good and non-discriminatory), and trust of the services in general.



**Figure 8: Screeplot - Mental health**

**Table 8: Mental health factor loadings**

Item	Loadings		
	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3
Poor mental health is a big issue for children and young people in Northern Ireland		.764	
I know a lot about the mental health issues affecting young people today		.853	
I have been given information about mental health services that I understand		.631	<del>.383</del>
I think young people are comfortable discussing mental health concerns			.794



In my community young people's mental health is given priority			.740
I would know where to go to get mental health support, if I needed help			.609
I would be comfortable trying to get help if I had mental health issues			.765
I could get to mental health services easily if I needed them			.692
I think the mental health services available to me are good	.614		
I would know how to get an appointment at these services if I needed one	.427		<del>.439</del>
I trust the mental health services available to me	.674		
There are enough mental health services to help all young people who need them	.537		<del>.324</del>
The doctors/staff at these services are supportive of young people	.829		
I would be comfortable using these services	.525		<del>.368</del>
I would be comfortable to ask for a different doctor if i didn't like the one given to me	<del>.315</del>		.354
Doctors at mental health services are good at talking to young people	.845		
Doctors understand the mental health issues specific to young people	.887		
The opening hours at mental health services suit young people	.628		
The information provided at these services is appropriate for young people	.874		
The treatment is suitable for young people	.870		
The treatment is equal, regardless of what type of young person went there	.808		
The services help any type of young person with any type of mental health concern	.823		

## Appendix 2: Survey

We are youth@clc youth advisory panel to the Children's Law Centre. We have designed this survey with the Centre for Children's Rights at Queen's University Belfast and Save the Children. We would like as many 14-17 year olds as possible, to take part in our anonymous survey on Children's Rights in Northern Ireland.

**All the questions in the survey are optional.**

**Everything you tell us is anonymous and held in strictest confidence.**

**We hope you feel free to answer the questions as fully and as honestly as you can.**

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child says that all children and young people have:

*A Right to participate in all decisions which affect your life*

*A Right to have your rights respected without discrimination*

*A Right to live in a society which supports you to achieve your full potential*

By completing this survey you can tell us if, in your experience, you think this happens in reality.

Your views will be included in a Report to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child in 2015. In 2016

the Committee will tell our Government what changes are needed to make Northern Ireland a better place for all children and young people.

**This is your chance to have a real say in improving children's lives in Northern Ireland.**

Thank you for your time.

To begin we would like to know a little bit more about you. This will help us see if different types of young people answer differently to some questions, for example, boys compared to girls.

**1. What age are you?**

**2. How would you describe yourself?**

**3. How would you describe your religious background?**

**4. Which word best describes your political views?**

**5. Are you a young carer? (Is anyone depending on you to look after them, for example a child or an older relative who is unwell or a disabled person).**

**5. What is your marital status?**

**6. Which word best describes where you live?**

**8. Please tick all that apply to you.**

I am in education

I am in fulltime employment

I am in parttime employment

I am currently in training

I am not in education, training or employment

I am in detention (juvenile justice centre)

I am currently "in care" or have been "in care" in the past

I am currently in a hospital

**9. Do you consider yourself to have a disability?**

Yes, No

**10. If you answered yes, please tick which option best describes your disability**

Physical disability

Learning disability

Sensory disability

**11. How would you describe yourself?**

Male

Female

Trans (male)

Trans (female)

**12. How would you describe yourself?**

**13. What is your postcode? (e.g. BT15 1AB)**

**14. If there is anything else you would like to add about who you are, you can do so here.**

We would like to know how much you feel the adults around you listen to you and take your views seriously. We will ask you a series of questions, some of which are specific to your place of education e.g. school, FE college, training centre, juvenile justice centre or within a hospital setting . If you are not in education or training at the moment, please answer based on your experience of your last place of education or training. Other questions relate to your family, your community and the Government.

In your experience, how often do these things happen?

**15. My place of education listens to what I have to say about...(never, rarely, quite often, very often, always)**

What we do in class

What I have to say about the rules

How to make our school/FE college/training centre better

**16. In my place of education... ...(never, rarely, quite often, very often, always)**

I can give my opinions

freely

The adults make it easy for  
me to give my views

The adults take my views  
seriously

The adults take my views  
into account when they  
make decisions

The adults talk to me about  
how decisions are made

The adults make sure I can  
easily get the information I  
need about what is going  
on in the school/FE  
college/training centre

**17. What do you think could be done in your place of education to make sure that young people's views are taken seriously?**

Now we want to know if you think the adults in your "home life" take your views seriously. When we say "home life" we mean the adults that you live with e.g. parent(s), guardians, foster parents, your social worker in a children's home or others with responsibility for you in the juvenile justice centre, hospital or other settings.

**18. Firstly we would like to know a little bit about the other people who you live with. You can do this by selecting one of the following options...**

**19. If you selected "other" in Q18, you can tell us a bit more about this person(s) in the space below, if you would like to.**

---

**20. In my home life... ...(never, rarely, quite often, very often, always)**

I can give my views freely

The adults make it easy for  
me to give my views

The adults take my views  
seriously

The adults take my views  
into account when they  
make decisions

The adults talk to me about  
how decisions are made in  
my home life

When I need help, support  
or information I can easily  
talk to someone in my  
home life

**21. What do you think could be done in your "home life" to make sure that your views & the views of other children and young people that you live with are taken seriously?**

Now we want to know if you think the adults in your community take your views seriously. When we say "community" we mean your neighbourhood or the area/place where you are living. It includes things like the leisure centres or activity centres you go to, libraries, shops, parks, youth clubs, churches or community centres etc.

**22. In my community... ...(never, rarely, quite often, very often, always)**

The adults ask me for my  
views

The adults take my views  
seriously

The adults take my views  
into account when they  
make decisions

I can easily find out about  
activities (like youth clubs,  
sports activities, church  
clubs) for young people my  
age

I can easily find out about  
what's going on for young  
people in places like youth

clubs, parks, community  
centres etc

I am asked for my views on  
what types of new activities  
or services should go in to  
my community to make it a  
better place to live

I am asked for my views on  
how to make my community  
a safer place to live for  
everyone

I am asked for my views on  
how happy I am with the  
activities and services  
available in my community

The adults make it easy for  
me to give my views on the  
activities and services  
available in my community

**23. Now we would like to know how much you agree that politicians in the NI Government**

**(MLAs) listen to young people or ask for your/their opinion. How much do you agree with the following statements...(Strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree,**



**strongly agree)**

I know how to get in touch with my local MLA when I need to with an issue that affects me or other young people

I feel confident enough

to present my views to my local MLA

Politicians in Government

ask for my views on

important issues

I think politicians take

young people's views

seriously

I think politicians make

changes based on young

people's views

Politicians make

information easy to find

and understand for young

people

**24. What do you think could be done by the NI Government to make sure that young people's views are taken seriously?**

We would also like to know how much you know about your rights. Examples of your

rights include:

- the right to have your views heard on all matters affecting you**
- the right to have your views taken into account when adults are making decisions about you**
- the right to be treated fairly and with respect**
- the right to get the kind of support you need to be happy and achieve your goals in life.**

**25. Please read the following statements and indicate how much you agree with each...  
...(Strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree)**

I know a lot about my rights

I am treated equally

I understand what children's rights means to me and my life

I know where to go to get information on my rights

If I felt my rights were being abused, I would know how to make a complaint

If I felt my rights were being abused, I would feel confident enough to make a complaint

The adults around me to treat me with respect

I feel confident to share my views with adults on important issues

**26. What do you think could be done by Government to make sure that young people know more about their rights and how to use them to improve their lives?**

Now we would like to ask you some questions about your social life...

**27. How often would you go out socially? (never, rarely, not sure, sometimes, all the time)**

**28. Where do you go out socially? (please tick all that apply to you)**

Shops

Cinema

Restaurants

Parks

Leisure facilities

Just around your area

City centre/town centre/public spaces

Clubs

Music venues

Theatres

Friends' houses

**29. Please read the following statements and indicate how much you agree with each...  
...(Strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree)**

I feel comfortable hanging out with my friends in the street

I feel like I am welcome in my area by other residents

It's easy for me to go out socially

There are places to hang out for as long as you want

The places available to me to hang out are safe

We get along well with the adults and feel respected in our community

I feel respected in my area by the police

I am often told to move on from a place when hanging out with my friends

I feel trusted by the adults in my community (e.g. neighbours/police/parents etc)

I trust the adults in my community (e.g. police/neighbours/parents etc)

There is plenty for young people to do in my area

I feel like I am welcome in my area by shopkeepers  
I don't feel like I'm treated any differently because I am a young person  
Young people in my area have a good relationship with the police

**30. Have you ever been asked to move on from a place when hanging out in your area?  
(never, rarely, not sure, sometimes, all the time)**

**31. If you have ever been told to move on from a place when hanging out with friends,  
can you tell us who you were asked to move on by and how often this has happened to you.**

Now we would like to ask you some questions about your access to leisure facilities. By "access" we mean that these facilities are available to you for your use.

**32. Which leisure facilities have you got access to? (please tick all that apply)**

Shops

Cinema

Leisure centre

Restaurants

Parks

Community centres

Clubs

Music venues

Arts/theatre venues

Libraries

**33. Please read the following statements and indicate how much you agree with each...**

...(Strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree)

I have easy access to a range of leisure facilities  
These facilities suit me and my needs  
I feel welcome in the leisure facilities available to me  
Other users in these facilities treat me with respect  
At these facilities, the  
staff treat me with the same respect as they treat other users  
I can afford to use  
leisure facilities whenever I  
want to

**34. Please fill in this box if you would like to add additional comments on your experience of using social spaces/leisure facilities where you live.**

Now we would like to ask you some questions about your views on mental health.

**35. If you were concerned about your mental and emotional health, where/who would you be most likely to go to for support or help? You can select more than one option.**

School counsellor  
School teacher  
Doctor  
Community/youth club  
Religious leader  
Family  
Friends  
Helpline  
Online  
A special support service in my local area  
Nowhere, I wouldn't get help  
Don't know

**36. Please read the following statements and indicate how much you agree with each...**  
...(Strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree)

Poor mental health is a big issue for children and young people in Northern Ireland

I know a lot about the mental health issues affecting young people today  
I have been given information about mental health services that I understand  
I think young people are comfortable discussing mental health concerns  
In my community young people's mental health is given priority  
I would know where to go to get mental health support, if I needed help  
I would be comfortable trying to get help if I had mental health issues  
I could get to mental health services easily if I needed them

Some young people get help because of poor mental health. Help is available from a range of different places. We would like you to think about the mental health services available to you. Even if you don't know much about mental health services, or haven't used them, please tell us how much you agree with each statement just based on your opinion of what they **might** be like...

**37. Please read the following statements and indicate how much you agree with each...  
...(Strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree)**

I think the mental health services available to me are good  
I would know how to get an appointment at these services if I needed one  
I trust the mental health services available to me  
There are enough mental health services to help all young people who need them

The doctors/staff at these services are supportive of young people

I would be comfortable using these services  
I would be comfortable to ask for a different doctor if i didn't like the one given to me  
Doctors at mental health services are good at talking to young people  
Doctors understand the mental health issues specific to young people  
The opening hours at mental health services suit young people  
The information provided at these services is appropriate for young people  
The treatment is suitable for young people

The treatment is equal, regardless of what type of young person went there  
The services help any type of young person with any type of mental health concern

**38. Have you ever experienced poor mental health or had a concern about your mental health?**

Yes, No

**39. If you answered yes above, did you receive help for this?**

Yes, No

If you answered yes to Q39 and you feel comfortable telling us more about your experience of receiving help, you can add some comments in the box below.

**40. Were you satisfied with the help you received?**

Yes, No

Other (please specify)

**41. Can you explain your answer to Q40 in the box below.**

**42. And finally, in your opinion, what would the ideal mental health service for children and young people look like? You might consider... Where should these services be based? When should they be available? What kind of services would children and young people be most likely to use? You can type your suggestions in the box below.**

If you would like to talk to someone about feeling down, there are lots of people who can help you. You could talk to a member of your family or a close friend. You could contact your school counsellor or a youth worker, or you could phone a helpline. We have listed a helpline number below, where you can talk to a counsellor in complete confidence:

If you would like advice about your rights, phone:

**The Children's Law Centre CHALKY freephone advice line 0 808 808 5678; Lifeline 0 808 808 8000**

**If you would like to tell us a bit more about your views on children's rights, you might like to come along to one of our young people's workshops.**



**For further information contact Deirdre McMahon at the Children's Law Centre.**

[Email deirdremcmahon@childrenslawcentre.org](mailto:deirdremcmahon@childrenslawcentre.org) or text her at 07713084724 or phone CHALKY on 0 808 808 5678.

Thank you for completing our survey.

### Appendix 3: Group differences

**Table 1: Gender differences**

	Gender	N	Mean	SD
<b>Participation in education decision making</b>	Male	305	3.05	.87
	Female	394	3.01	.89
<b>Participation in home decision making</b>	Male	302	4.04	.94
	Female	391	4.04	.92
<b>Participation in community decision making</b>	Male	295	2.77	.99
	Female	377	2.63	.94
<b>Participation in government decision making</b>	Male	293	2.27	.89
	Female	372	2.14	.83
<b>Knowledge and ability to exercise rights</b>	Male	291	3.28	.88
	Female	373	3.22	.89
<b>Perceived adult respect for children's rights</b>	Male	291	3.70	.85
	Female	374	3.73	.85
<b>Enjoyment of community life</b>	Male	290	3.37	.76
	Female	354	3.26	.76
<b>Enjoyment of leisure facilities</b>	Male	284	3.65	.81
	Female	349	3.63	.81
<b>Mental health awareness*</b>	Male	283	3.32	.80
	Female	342	3.60	.81
<b>Comfort in seeking mental health support*</b>	Male	280	3.00	.83
	Female	340	2.84	.80
<b>Suitability of mental health services</b>	Male	270	3.32	.70
	Female	330	3.26	.69

\*Denotes statistically significant result

\*Mental health awareness -  $t(623) = -4.4$ ,  $p < .0001$ , effect size = .03; \*Comfort in seeking mental health support -  $t(618) = 2.5$ ,  $p = .012$ , effect size = .01

**Table 2 : Age differences**

	Age	N	Mean	SD
<b>Participation in education decision making*</b>	11-14	317	3.1454	.82435
	15-17	384	2.9359	.92219
<b>Participation in home decision making</b>	11-14	312	4.0799	.93577
	15-17	383	4.0044	.92191
<b>Participation in community decision making*</b>	11-14	306	2.8806	.85602
	15-17	367	2.5312	1.02172
<b>Participation in government decision making*</b>	11-14	302	2.3667	.86014
	15-17	365	2.0616	.83824
<b>Knowledge and ability to exercise rights*</b>	11-14	301	3.3653	.87049
	15-17	365	3.1545	.88252
<b>Perceived adult respect for children's rights*</b>	11-14	301	3.8427	.80301
	15-17	366	3.6129	.87516
<b>Enjoyment of community life*</b>	11-14	292	3.5856	.67305
	15-17	354	3.0805	.75445
<b>Enjoyment of leisure facilities*</b>	11-14	285	3.8390	.73675
	15-17	350	3.4800	.82674
<b>Mental health awareness*</b>	11-14	282	3.2725	.81537
	15-17	345	3.6314	.78737
<b>Comfort in seeking mental health support*</b>	11-14	280	3.0896	.78872
	15-17	342	2.7724	.81207
<b>Suitability of mental health services*</b>	11-14	271	3.4206	.68428
	15-17	331	3.1826	.68868

\*Participation education -  $t(699) = 3.1$ ,  $p=.002$ , effect size = .01; Participation community -  $t(670) = 4.83$ ,  $p<.0001$ , effect size = .03; Participation government -  $t(665) = 4.62$ ,  $p<.0001$ , effect size = .03; Knowledge -  $t(664) = 3.09$ ,  $p=.002$ , effect size = .01; Adult respect -  $t(665) = 3.5$ ,  $p<.0001$ , effect size = .02; Enjoy community life -  $t(644) = 8.9$ ,  $p<.0001$ , effect size = .11; Enjoy leisure facilities -  $t(628) = 5.8$ ,  $p<.0001$ , effect size = .05; Mental health awareness -  $t(625) = 5.6$ ,  $p<.0001$ , effect size = .05; Comfort seeking mental health support -  $t(620) = 4.9$ ,  $p<.0001$ , effect size = .04; Suitability of mental health services -  $t(600) = 4.2$ ,  $p<.0001$ , effect size = .03.

**Table 3: Religion differences**

	Religion	N	Mean	SD
<b>Participation in education decision making</b>	Prot.	384	3.0464	.88195
	Cath.	241	3.0228	.90704
<b>Participation in home decision making</b>	Prot.	383	4.0397	.91189
	Cath.	237	4.0473	.92537
<b>Participation in community decision making</b>	Prot.	376	2.7641	.93413
	Cath.	225	2.6023	1.00613
<b>Participation in government decision making</b>	Prot.	373	2.2193	.84456
	Cath.	224	2.1927	.88695
<b>Knowledge and ability to exercise rights</b>	Prot.	369	3.2306	.84537
	Cath.	224	3.2886	.89749
<b>Perceived adult respect for children's rights</b>	.00	370	3.7045	.84097
	1.00	224	3.7842	.82805
<b>Enjoyment of community life*</b>	Prot.	369	3.4036	.69844
	Cath.	204	3.1730	.82859
<b>Enjoyment of leisure facilities</b>	Prot.	366	3.7197	.75100
	Cath.	196	3.5775	.87225
<b>Mental health awareness*</b>	Prot.	360	3.3213	.79050
	Cath.	194	3.6959	.81650
<b>Comfort in seeking mental health support</b>	Prot.	358	2.9561	.76801
	Cath.	192	2.9010	.87851
<b>Suitability of mental health services</b>	Prot.	349	3.2974	.66405
	Cath.	182	3.3408	.74839

\*Enjoy community life -  $t(363) = 3.37$ ,  $p = .001$ , effect size = .02; \*Mental health awareness -  $t(552) = -5.3$ ,  $p < .0001$ , effect size = .05

**Table 4: Nationality differences**

		<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>Participation in education decision making</b>	British	134	3.0100	.88222
	Irish	177	2.9825	.88935
	Northern Irish	359	3.0663	.87246
	Total	670	3.0329	.87836
<b>Participation in home decision making</b>	British	134	4.1419	.80296
	Irish	173	3.9994	.92739
	Northern Irish	358	4.0331	.95350
	Total	665	4.0463	.91829
<b>Participation in community decision making*</b>	British	128	2.7346	.98489
	Irish	164	2.4986	.98882
	Northern Irish	351	2.7564	.92593
	Total	643	2.6863	.95900
<b>Participation in government decision making</b>	British	126	2.2667	.89457
	Irish	162	2.1265	.87835
	Northern Irish	350	2.2087	.82660
	Total	638	2.1993	.85362
<b>Knowledge and ability to exercise rights</b>	British	125	3.2964	.93196
	Irish	162	3.3355	.92918
	Northern Irish	350	3.2003	.81606
	Total	637	3.2535	.87004
<b>Perceived adult respect for children's rights</b>	British	124	3.7231	.84768
	Irish	162	3.7747	.84034
	Northern Irish	352	3.7079	.83506
	Total	638	3.7278	.83801
<b>Enjoyment of community life*</b>	British	124	3.4299	.67687
	Irish	147	3.1014	.83826
	Northern Irish	347	3.3600	.71374
	Total	618	3.3125	.74695
<b>Enjoyment of leisure facilities</b>	British	123	3.6539	.73369
	Irish	145	3.4813	.92369
	Northern Irish	339	3.7318	.72809
	Total	607	3.6562	.78569
<b>Mental health awareness*</b>	British	118	3.3644	.78596
	Irish	142	3.6901	.84742
	Northern Irish	339	3.4105	.79136

	Total	599	3.4677	.81232
<b>Comfort in seeking mental health support</b>	British	115	3.0139	.78095
	Irish	141	2.7934	.94162
	Northern Irish	338	2.9243	.74904
	Total	594	2.9105	.80676
<b>Suitability of mental health services</b>	British	115	3.3056	.67457
	Irish	133	3.2850	.75398
	Northern Irish	326	3.3000	.65564
	Total	574	3.2976	.68218

\*Participation community - Northern Irish significantly more positive than Irish,  $F(2,640)=4.3$ ,  $p=.01$ , effect size = .01; \* Enjoy community life - Irish significantly less positive than British and Northern Irish,  $F(2,615)=8.3$ ,  $p<.0001$ , effect size=.03; \* Mental health awareness - Irish significantly more aware than British and Northern Irish,  $F(2,596)=7.3$ ,  $p=.001$ , effect size = .02<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Similar patterns were also found across the different political identities recognized in the survey. Those who considered themselves Republican/ Nationalist were significantly less ( $p<.05$ ) positive in terms of their community participation and enjoyment of community life and leisure facilities. However, they were significantly ( $p<.05$ ) more aware of mental health issues.

**Table 5: Area differences**

	Area2	N	Mean	SD
<b>Participation in education decision making</b>	Urban	457	3.0049	.89392
	Rural	199	3.0544	.88196
<b>Participation in home decision making*</b>	Urban	455	3.9890	.94366
	Rural	195	4.1597	.88170
<b>Participation in community decision making</b>	Urban	440	2.6427	.99583
	Rural	190	2.7920	.89571
<b>Participation in government decision making</b>	Urban	442	2.1641	.86433
	Rural	181	2.2744	.85749
<b>Knowledge and ability to exercise rights</b>	Urban	440	3.2491	.88766
	Rural	181	3.2052	.85632
<b>Perceived adult respect for children's rights</b>	Urban	441	3.6625	.85888
	Rural	181	3.7901	.83563
<b>Enjoyment of community life*</b>	Urban	425	3.2503	.75813
	Rural	179	3.4173	.76524
<b>Enjoyment of leisure facilities</b>	Urban	420	3.6155	.79005
	Rural	173	3.7072	.86523
<b>Mental health awareness*</b>	Urban	410	3.5508	.79196
	Rural	174	3.3352	.85923
<b>Comfort in seeking mental health support</b>	Urban	406	2.9287	.80976
	Rural	173	2.9216	.83600
<b>Suitability of mental health services</b>	Urban	394	3.2873	.70917
	Rural	169	3.3009	.68846

\*Participation in home -  $t(648)=-2.2$ ,  $P=.032$ , effect size = .01; \* Enjoyment of community life -  $t(602)=-2.47$ ,  $p=.014$ , effect size = .01; \* Mental health awareness -  $t(582) = 2.9$ ,  $p = .003$ , effect size = .01.

**Table 6: SES differences**

	<b>MDM</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>Participation in education decision making</b>	1-449	234	3.0202	.92462
	450-890	322	3.1050	.86874
<b>Participation in home decision making*</b>	1-449	234	3.9713	.96740
	450-890	318	4.1343	.88341
<b>Participation in community decision making</b>	1-449	227	2.7291	1.05490
	450-890	312	2.7382	.90362
<b>Participation in government decision making</b>	1-449	226	2.3073	.93911
	450-890	308	2.2196	.82731
<b>Knowledge and ability to exercise rights</b>	1-449	228	3.3360	.93493
	450-890	310	3.2434	.82667
<b>Perceived adult respect for children's rights</b>	1-449	227	3.7761	.85956
	450-890	309	3.7762	.80266
<b>Enjoyment of community life</b>	1-449	217	3.2954	.83414
	450-890	304	3.3920	.71191
<b>Enjoyment of leisure facilities</b>	1-449	212	3.6332	.77220
	450-890	301	3.7622	.76079
<b>Mental health awareness*</b>	1-449	206	3.5712	.82692
	450-890	300	3.3944	.80236
<b>Comfort in seeking mental health support</b>	1-449	203	3.0034	.86519
	450-890	299	2.9015	.77357
<b>Suitability of mental health services</b>	1-449	197	3.3900	.75921
	450-890	292	3.2940	.62640

\*Participation in home –  $t(550)=-2.1$ ,  $p=.04$ , effect size = .008; \* Mental health awareness –  $t(504)=2.4$ ,  $p=.02$ , effect size = .01.



**Table 7: Mental health differences**

	Poor mental health/ concern	N	Mean	SD
<b>Participation in education decision making*</b>	Yes	163	2.7704	.84317
	No	438	3.1332	.89033
<b>Participation in home decision making*</b>	Yes	161	3.7704	1.00452
	No	441	4.1589	.84747
<b>Participation in community decision making*</b>	Yes	161	2.3433	.97910
	No	433	2.7849	.91976
<b>Participation in government decision making*</b>	Yes	162	1.9183	.80164
	No	432	2.2827	.85926
<b>Knowledge and ability to exercise rights*</b>	Yes	162	3.0201	.97330
	No	437	3.3177	.82746
<b>Perceived adult respect for children's rights*</b>	Yes	164	3.4167	.95368
	No	436	3.8330	.76401
<b>Enjoyment of community life*</b>	Yes	164	2.9212	.76244
	No	435	3.4538	.68225
<b>Enjoyment of leisure facilities*</b>	Yes	160	3.3296	.85716
	No	437	3.7542	.74021
<b>Mental health awareness*</b>	Yes	162	3.8323	.80254
	No	435	3.3395	.78880
<b>Comfort in seeking mental health support*</b>	Yes	161	2.5917	.93955
	No	434	3.0355	.73026
<b>Suitability of mental health services*</b>	Yes	158	3.0567	.81165
	No	431	3.3832	.62876

\*Participation in education –  $t(599) = -4.5$ ,  $p < .0001$ , effect size = .03; \* Participation in home –  $t(248) = -4.4$ ,  $p < .0001$ , effect size = .03; \* Participation in community –  $t(592) = -5.1$ ,  $p < .0001$ , effect size = .04; \* Participation in government –  $t(592) = -4.7$ ,  $p < .0001$ , effect size = .04; Knowledge -  $t(597) = -3.7$ ,  $p < .0001$ , effect size = .03; Adult respect -  $t(245) = -5$ ,  $p < .0001$ , effect size = .04; Enjoy community life -  $t(597) = -8.2$ ,  $p < .0001$ , effect size = .10; Enjoy leisure facilities -  $t(250) = -5.5$ ,  $p < .0001$ , effect size = .06; Mental health

awareness-  $t(595) = 6.8$ ,  $p < .0001$ , effect size = .07; Comfort seeking support -  $t(235) = -5.4$ ,  $p < .0001$ , effect size = .05; Suitability of mental health services -  $t(230) = -4.6$ ,  $p < .0001$ , effect size = .03.

## Appendix 4: Regression models

### Participation in education

Adjusted r squared = .37, p = <.0001

**Table 1: Participation in education**

Model		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		Beta		
1	(Constant)		-1.127	.260
	<b>Participation in home decision making</b>	<b>.146</b>	<b>3.203</b>	<b>.001</b>
	<b>Participation in community decision making</b>	<b>.207</b>	<b>4.226</b>	<b>.000</b>
	<b>Participation in government decision making</b>	<b>.188</b>	<b>3.997</b>	<b>.000</b>
	Knowledge and ability to exercise rights	.032	.623	.534
	<b>Perceived adult respect for children's rights</b>	<b>.222</b>	<b>4.192</b>	<b>.000</b>
	Enjoyment of community life	.002	.040	.968
	<b>Enjoyment of leisure facilities</b>	<b>.105</b>	<b>2.159</b>	<b>.031</b>
	Mental health awareness	.027	.565	.572
	Comfort in seeking mental health support	-.025	-.451	.652
	Suitability of mental health services	.020	.357	.722
	Male	-.012	-.268	.789
	Catholic	-.001	-.018	.986
	Young	.013	.278	.781
	Urban	.063	1.513	.131
	Irish2	.011	.183	.855
	Rep_Nat2	.011	.217	.828
	Postcode2	.069	1.627	.105
	MentalHealth	.005	.117	.907
a. Dependent Variable: Participation in education decision making				

## Participation in home decision making

Adjusted r squared = .299,  $p < .0001$

**Table 2: Participation in home**

<b>Coefficients<sup>a</sup></b>				
Model		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		Beta		
1	(Constant)		6.769	.000
	<b>Participation in community decision making</b>	<b>.120</b>	<b>2.278</b>	<b>.023</b>
	<b>Participation in government decision making</b>	<b>-.120</b>	<b>- 2.385</b>	<b>.018</b>
	Knowledge and ability to exercise rights	.056	1.033	.302
	<b>Perceived adult respect for children's rights</b>	<b>.338</b>	<b>6.162</b>	<b>.000</b>
	Enjoyment of community life	-.045	-.781	.435
	<b>Enjoyment of leisure facilities</b>	<b>.120</b>	<b>2.336</b>	<b>.020</b>
	Mental health awareness	-.056	- 1.126	.261
	Comfort in seeking mental health support	.017	.293	.769
	Suitability of mental health services	.000	.001	.999
	Male	.033	.718	.473
	Catholic	.038	.581	.561
	<b>Young</b>	<b>-.127</b>	<b>- 2.655</b>	<b>.008</b>
	Urban	-.082	- 1.845	.066
	Irish2	-.071	- 1.072	.284
	Rep_Nat2	.039	.713	.476
	Postcode2	.081	1.819	.070
	MentalHealth	-.082	- 1.837	.067
	<b>Participation in education decision making</b>	<b>.163</b>	<b>3.203</b>	<b>.001</b>
a. Dependent Variable: Participation in home decision making				

## Participation community decision making

Adjusted r squared=.41, p=<.0001

**Table 3: Participation in community**

<b>Coefficients<sup>a</sup></b>				
Model		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		Beta		
1	(Constant)		-.904	.367
	<b>Participation in government decision making</b>	<b>.276</b>	<b>6.162</b>	<b>.000</b>
	Knowledge and ability to exercise rights	.086	1.711	.088
	Perceived adult respect for children's rights	-.062	-1.179	.239
	<b>Enjoyment of community life</b>	<b>.173</b>	<b>3.304</b>	<b>.001</b>
	Enjoyment of leisure facilities	.015	.314	.754
	Mental health awareness	-.038	-.838	.402
	<b>Comfort in seeking mental health support</b>	<b>.110</b>	<b>2.056</b>	<b>.040</b>
	Suitability of mental health services	.019	.344	.731
	Male	.023	.539	.590
	Catholic	.025	.411	.681
	Young	.034	.779	.436
	Urban	-.048	-1.163	.246
	Irish2	-.030	-.490	.624
	Rep_Nat2	-.016	-.324	.746
	Postcode2	.017	.421	.674
	Mental Health	.003	.075	.940
	<b>Participation in education decision making</b>	<b>.196</b>	<b>4.226</b>	<b>.000</b>
	<b>Participation in home decision making</b>	<b>.101</b>	<b>2.278</b>	<b>.023</b>
a. Dependent Variable: Participation in community decision making				

## Participation in Government decision making

Adjusted r squared = .36, p<.0001

**Table 4: Participation in government**

<b>Coefficients<sup>a</sup></b>				
Model		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		Beta		
1	(Constant)		1.390	.165
	<b>Knowledge and ability to exercise rights</b>	<b>.225</b>	<b>4.411</b>	<b>.000</b>
	Perceived adult respect for children's rights	.015	.267	.790
	Enjoyment of community life	.049	.893	.372
	Enjoyment of leisure facilities	-.042	-.848	.397
	Mental health awareness	-.084	-1.777	.076
	Comfort in seeking mental health support	.046	.825	.410
	Suitability of mental health services	.103	1.816	.070
	Male	.018	.416	.678
	Catholic	.031	.489	.625
	Young	-.013	-.273	.785
	Urban	-.051	-1.190	.235
	Irish2	-.065	-1.035	.301
	Rep_Nat2	.011	.201	.841
	Postcode2	-.055	-1.276	.203
	Mental Health	.023	.541	.589
	<b>Participation in education decision making</b>	<b>.194</b>	<b>3.997</b>	<b>.000</b>
	<b>Participation in home decision making</b>	<b>-.111</b>	<b>-2.385</b>	<b>.018</b>
	<b>Participation in community decision making</b>	<b>.299</b>	<b>6.162</b>	<b>.000</b>
a. Dependent Variable: Participation in government decision making				

## Knowledge and ability to exercise rights

Adjusted r squared = .44, p = <.0001

**Table 5: Knowledge and ability to exercise rights**

<b>Coefficients<sup>a</sup></b>				
Model		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		Beta		
1	(Constant)		.236	.813
	<b>Perceived adult respect for children's rights</b>	<b>.271</b>	<b>5.494</b>	<b>.000</b>
	Enjoyment of community life	.072	1.399	.163
	<b>Enjoyment of leisure facilities</b>	<b>-.151</b>	<b>-3.307</b>	<b>.001</b>
	<b>Mental health awareness</b>	<b>.229</b>	<b>5.328</b>	<b>.000</b>
	<b>Comfort in seeking mental health support</b>	<b>.218</b>	<b>4.265</b>	<b>.000</b>
	Suitability of mental health services	-.004	-.077	.939
	Male	.064	1.581	.115
	Catholic	-.062	-1.056	.291
	Young	.019	.441	.660
	Urban	.062	1.557	.120
	<b>Irish2</b>	<b>.139</b>	<b>2.380</b>	<b>.018</b>
	Rep_Nat2	-.003	-.070	.944
	Postcode2	.002	.059	.953
	MentalHealth	-.053	-1.314	.189
	Participation in education decision making	.029	.623	.534
	Participation in home decision making	.045	1.033	.302
	Participation in community decision making	.080	1.711	.088
	<b>Participation in government decision making</b>	<b>.195</b>	<b>4.411</b>	<b>.000</b>
a. Dependent Variable: Knowledge and ability to exercise rights				

## Perceived adult respect for rights

Adjusted r squared = .49,  $p < .0001$

**Table 6: Perceived adult respect for rights**

<b>Coefficients<sup>a</sup></b>				
Model		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		Beta		
1	(Constant)		.480	.632
	<b>Enjoyment of community life</b>	<b>.201</b>	<b>4.182</b>	<b>.000</b>
	Enjoyment of leisure facilities	.069	1.562	.119
	Mental health awareness	.007	.162	.872
	<b>Comfort in seeking mental health support</b>	<b>-.101</b>	<b>-2.032</b>	<b>.043</b>
	<b>Suitability of mental health services</b>	<b>.203</b>	<b>4.114</b>	<b>.000</b>
	Male	-.023	-.580	.562
	Catholic	.059	1.053	.293
	Young	-.021	-.509	.611
	Urban	-.028	-.750	.454
	Irish2	-.020	-.363	.716
	Rep_Nat2	.056	1.185	.237
	Postcode2	.015	.393	.694
	MentalHealth	-.022	-.568	.570
	<b>Participation in education decision making</b>	<b>.180</b>	<b>4.192</b>	<b>.000</b>
	<b>Participation in home decision making</b>	<b>.244</b>	<b>6.162</b>	<b>.000</b>
	Participation in community decision making	-.053	-1.179	.239
	Participation in government decision making	.012	.267	.790
	<b>Knowledge and ability to exercise rights</b>	<b>.246</b>	<b>5.494</b>	<b>.000</b>
a. Dependent Variable: Perceived adult respect for children's rights				



## Enjoyment of community life

Adjusted r squared = .499, p<.001

**Table 7: Enjoyment of community life**

<b>Coefficients<sup>a</sup></b>				
Model		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		Beta		
1	(Constant)		4.935	.000
	<b>Enjoyment of leisure facilities</b>	<b>.314</b>	<b>7.660</b>	<b>.000</b>
	Mental health awareness	-.070	-1.665	.097
	Comfort in seeking mental health support	.093	1.890	.059
	Suitability of mental health services	.051	1.020	.308
	Male	-.029	-.740	.460
	Catholic	-.027	-.481	.631
	<b>Young</b>	<b>.115</b>	<b>2.845</b>	<b>.005</b>
	Urban	-.028	-.736	.462
	Irish2	.034	.617	.538
	<b>Rep_Nat2</b>	<b>-.161</b>	<b>-3.506</b>	<b>.001</b>
	Postcode2	-.051	-1.338	.182
	<b>MentalHealth</b>	<b>-.084</b>	<b>-2.232</b>	<b>.026</b>
	Participation in education decision making	.002	.040	.968
	Participation in home decision making	-.032	-.781	.435
	<b>Participation in community decision making</b>	<b>.146</b>	<b>3.304</b>	<b>.001</b>
	Participation in government decision making	.038	.893	.372
	Knowledge and ability to exercise rights	.064	1.399	.163
	<b>Perceived adult respect for children's rights</b>	<b>.198</b>	<b>4.182</b>	<b>.000</b>
a. Dependent Variable: Enjoyment of community life				

## Enjoyment of leisure facilities

Adjusted r squared = .38, p=<.0001

**Table 8: Enjoyment of leisure facilities**

<b>Coefficients<sup>a</sup></b>				
Model		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		Beta		
1	(Constant)		4.177	.000
	<b>Mental health awareness</b>	<b>.095</b>	<b>2.050</b>	<b>.041</b>
	Comfort in seeking mental health support	.038	.698	.485
	<b>Suitability of mental health services</b>	<b>.183</b>	<b>3.336</b>	<b>.001</b>
	Male	-.040	-.922	.357
	Catholic	-.008	-.126	.900
	Young	.043	.953	.341
	Urban	-.001	-.035	.972
	Irish2	-.022	-.349	.727
	Rep_Nat2	-.020	-.391	.696
	Postcode2	.037	.874	.383
	MentalHealth	.001	.015	.988
	<b>Participation in education decision making</b>	<b>.104</b>	<b>2.159</b>	<b>.031</b>
	<b>Participation in home decision making</b>	<b>.106</b>	<b>2.336</b>	<b>.020</b>
	Participation in community decision making	.016	.314	.754
	Participation in government decision making	-.040	-.848	.397
	<b>Knowledge and ability to exercise rights</b>	<b>-.167</b>	<b>- 3.307</b>	<b>.001</b>
	Perceived adult respect for children's rights	.084	1.562	.119
	<b>Enjoyment of community life</b>	<b>.388</b>	<b>7.660</b>	<b>.000</b>
a. Dependent Variable: Enjoyment of leisure facilities				

## Mental health awareness

Adjusted r square=.33, p<.0001

**Table 9: Mental health awareness**

Model		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		Beta		
1	(Constant)		6.894	.000
	<b>Comfort in seeking mental health support</b>	<b>.173</b>	<b>3.054</b>	<b>.002</b>
	<b>Suitability of mental health services</b>	<b>.146</b>	<b>2.536</b>	<b>.012</b>
	<b>Male</b>	<b>-.159</b>	<b>-3.610</b>	<b>.000</b>
	Catholic	.033	.504	.615
	<b>Young</b>	<b>-.163</b>	<b>-3.506</b>	<b>.001</b>
	Urban	.063	1.446	.149
	Irish2	.023	.364	.716
	Rep_Nat2	.080	1.490	.137
	Postcode2	.028	.637	.525
	<b>MentalHealth</b>	<b>.246</b>	<b>5.824</b>	<b>.000</b>
	Participation in education decision making	.028	.565	.572
	Participation in home decision making	-.054	-1.126	.261
	Participation in community decision making	-.043	-.838	.402
	Participation in government decision making	-.088	-1.777	.076
	<b>Knowledge and ability to exercise rights</b>	<b>.275</b>	<b>5.328</b>	<b>.000</b>
	Perceived adult respect for children's rights	.009	.162	.872
	Enjoyment of community life	-.093	-1.665	.097
	<b>Enjoyment of leisure facilities</b>	<b>.103</b>	<b>2.050</b>	<b>.041</b>
a. Dependent Variable: Mental health awareness				

### Comfort in seeking mental health support

Adjusted r squared = .511,  $p < .0001$

**Table 10: Comfort in seeking mental health support**

<b>Coefficients<sup>a</sup></b>				
Model		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		Beta		
1	(Constant)		-1.383	.167
	<b>Suitability of mental health services</b>	<b>.469</b>	<b>10.722</b>	<b>.000</b>
	<b>Male</b>	<b>.077</b>	<b>2.045</b>	<b>.042</b>
	Catholic	.067	1.219	.224
	Young	.062	1.543	.124
	Urban	.027	.731	.465
	<b>Irish2</b>	<b>-.120</b>	<b>-2.192</b>	<b>.029</b>
	Rep_Nat2	.033	.729	.466
	Postcode2	-.007	-.181	.856
	<b>MentalHealth</b>	<b>-.078</b>	<b>-2.092</b>	<b>.037</b>
	Participation in education decision making	-.019	-.451	.652
	Participation in home decision making	.012	.293	.769
	<b>Participation in community decision making</b>	<b>.090</b>	<b>2.056</b>	<b>.040</b>
	Participation in government decision making	.035	.825	.410
	<b>Knowledge and ability to exercise rights</b>	<b>.190</b>	<b>4.265</b>	<b>.000</b>
	<b>Perceived adult respect for children's rights</b>	<b>-.096</b>	<b>-2.032</b>	<b>.043</b>
	Enjoyment of community life	.090	1.890	.059
	Enjoyment of leisure facilities	.030	.698	.485
	<b>Mental health awareness</b>	<b>.125</b>	<b>3.054</b>	<b>.002</b>
a. Dependent Variable: Comfort in seeking mental health support				

### Suitability of mental health services

Adjusted r squared = .53, p=.0001

**Table 11: Suitability of mental health services**

<b>Coefficients<sup>a</sup></b>				
Model		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		Beta		
1	(Constant)		2.564	.011
	Male	.006	.163	.870
	Catholic	-.014	-.248	.804
	Young	.010	.259	.796
	Urban	-.002	-.054	.957
	Irish2	.059	1.097	.273
	Rep_Nat2	-.017	-.374	.709
	Postcode2	-.025	-.685	.494
	MentalHealth	-.017	-.463	.643
	Participation in education decision making	.015	.357	.722
	Participation in home decision making	.000	.001	.999
	Participation in community decision making	.015	.344	.731
	Participation in government decision making	.075	1.816	.070
	Knowledge and ability to exercise rights	-.003	-.077	.939
	<b>Perceived adult respect for children's rights</b>	<b>.190</b>	<b>4.114</b>	<b>.000</b>
	Enjoyment of community life	.048	1.020	.308
	<b>Enjoyment of leisure facilities</b>	<b>.140</b>	<b>3.336</b>	<b>.001</b>
	<b>Mental health awareness</b>	<b>.103</b>	<b>2.536</b>	<b>.012</b>
	<b>Comfort in seeking mental health support</b>	<b>.457</b>	<b>10.722</b>	<b>.000</b>
a. Dependent Variable: Suitability of mental health services				