

Survey data on young people and education

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The UK Data Service

Who we are

- Five partner universities
 - UK Data Archive, University of Essex (lead partner)
 - Cathie Marsh Institute, University of Manchester
 - Jisc, University of Manchester
 - EDINA, University of Edinburgh
 - University College London
- 100+ staff
- Exists as UKDS since 2012 (as UKDA 1967)
- National data since 2003

What we do

- The main single point of access for UK social science data
- Secondary data collection, curation and access
- Training and user support
- Communication and user engagement
- Impact
- ... Key part of the UK social science research infrastructure, funded by the UKRI/ESRC

Our data...

- UK social survey microdata:
 - Cross-sectional: large government and academic surveys
 - Longitudinal: major studies following people over time
- International data: survey data, aggregate databases
- Census tables and individual data – current and historical
- Business microdata and administrative data
- Qualitative data: multimedia files and interview transcripts

Our training

1. [Webinars and online workshops](#)
2. User Conferences: Four main user conferences each year
3. Drop-in sessions: Survey, Computational Social Science and SecureLab
4. Online learning materials: find key resources on our [Learning Hub](#)
5. [Helpdesk](#) for individual data queries
6. Check out our [YouTube channel](#)

Key datasets for analysing young people and education

What do we mean by 'data' (1)

- Individual vs aggregated
- Nature of data: survey vs other source: devices, administrative records, etc.
- *About* organisations (ie schools) vs people
- *From* organisations and young people
- One off studies vs series
- Photography (ie cross-sectional) vs video (longitudinal)
- Our focus today: **individual survey microdata**

What do we mean by 'data' (2)

- Questions asked to people
 - About objective characteristics ie height, weight, age
 - About views and attitude:
 - Attitudes and opinions on crime, gender change
 - Validated instruments (ie mental health)
- External measurement (biosample, genetic, cortisol levels)
- Smart data (from devices ex accelerometer, energy meter)
- Linked administrative records - more on this later

Education-related questions (MCS)

- Qualifications (academic/vocational):
 - Type; level; grade, subject
- Current education:
 - where studying; year; school moves; whether fees-paying
 - qualifications studying for: type; number; subjects
- Are studies/training choices informed by job wishes to do
- From whom obtained post-16 educational advice
- The [Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire](#)

Major studies

At a glance ...

- (Birth) cohort studies
- Understanding Society
- Census
- Linked data
- A few repeated cross-sectional studies

Birth cohort studies

- Follow a sample of individuals from birth until death
- People born during the same specific period of time in 1958(NCDS), 1970(BCS), 2000 (MCS), 2026 (Generation New Area)
- Wide range of measurements, including education and health
- Within and between cohort analysis
- Managed by the Centre for Longitudinal Studies (UCL)

The Cohort Studies at the CLS

CENTRE FOR LONGITUDINAL STUDIES 

Our studies ▾ Our research Publications and resources ▾ Data access and training ▾

Home

Our studies

These follow multiple generations of people across the whole of their lives.

We survey cohort members at regular intervals, each time collecting information on the different aspects of their lives. The studies are rich resources, offering researchers a breadth and depth of data that can be used to answer a wide range of questions.

The data are free to access from the UK Data Service and some other trusted research environments.

In addition to our core studies, we work with partner organisations on the scientific leadership and management of several associate cohort studies

Core studies

1958 National Child Development Study
The 1958 National Child Development Study (NCDS) is following the lives of more than 17,000 people born in England, Scotland and Wales in a single week of 1958.



1970 British Cohort Study
The 1970 British Cohort Study (BCS70) is following the lives of around 17,000 people born in England, Scotland and Wales in a single week of 1970.



Next Steps
Next Steps follows the lives of around 16,000 people in England born in 1989-90.



Millennium Cohort Study
The Millennium Cohort Study (MCS) is following the lives of around 19,000 young people born across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland in 2000-02.



Early Life Cohort Feasibility Study
The Early Life Cohort Feasibility Study tested the feasibility of sampling and recruitment for a new UK-wide birth cohort study. It is known to participants as Generation New Era.



Generation New Era
Generation New Era is a new UK-wide birth cohort study aiming to follow the lives of 30,000 children born in 2026, and their families.



Millennium Cohort Study (MCS)

- ~ 19K children (born between June 2001 and Jan 2003)
- 8 sweeps: age 9 months then 3, 5, 7, 11, 14, 17, 23
- Parent and child interviews
- Education, skills, health, truancy, cognitive ability..
- Biological measurements
- ... Socio-economic and demographic characteristics
- Data available at the UK Data Service [here](#)

Example: Kandola et al (2022)

- Screen-based sedentary behaviour and depression
 - Is a sedentary lifestyle alongside screen and device usage, associated with depression?
 - Does physical activity make a difference?
- 11,341 teenagers from the Millennium Cohort Study
- The main outcome was depressive symptoms at age 14
 - A measured by the Moods and Feelings questionnaire
- Against frequency of video game, social media, and internet use (age 11).
- Impact of self-reported physical activity

Results

Exposure	Variable	Depression scores (sMFQ)					
		Male (n = 3710)			Female (n = 3991)		
		IRR	95% CI	p	IRR	95% CI	p
Video gaming	Most days	0.768	0.645–0.913	0.003	1.001	0.909–1.120	0.816
	At least once a week	0.749	0.624–0.898	0.002	0.928	0.833–1.033	0.171
	At least once a month	0.688	0.569–0.833	<0.001	0.923	0.820–1.040	0.189
	Less than once a month/never Reference						
Social media	Most days	1.071	0.976–1.174	0.148	1.130	1.050–1.217	0.001
	At least once a week	1.024	0.903–1.162	0.705	0.964	0.883–1.052	0.416
	At least once a month	1.012	0.869–1.178	0.877	0.966	0.853–1.094	0.588
	Less than once a month/never Reference						
Internet	Most days	0.864	0.746–1.000	0.051	1.100	0.955–1.267	0.181
	At least once a week	0.872	0.751–1.014	0.076	0.973	0.843–1.122	0.703
	At least once a month	0.969	0.807–1.166	0.744	0.944	0.803–1.11	0.486
	Less than once a month/never Reference						
IRR, incident rate ratios; 95% CI = 95% confidence intervals.							
All models are adjusted for BMI, bullying, emotional symptoms at baseline, socioeconomic position, maternal depression or anxiety diagnoses, and physical activity.							

- IRR: likelihood of depression < 1 =less likely, > 1 =more likely)

Conclusions

- More frequent gaming at age 11 associated with a lower risk of depressive symptoms at age 14 for boys but not girls.
- More frequent social media use at 11 associated with a higher risk of depressive symptoms in girls but not boys.
- More frequent video game use was consistently associated with fewer depressive symptoms for boys with low physical activity, but not those with high physical activity

Next Steps

- 16,000 people born in 1989-90 followed from age 13-14
- Annual sweeps between ages 14-20, then 25 and 32
- Oversampling of ethnic minorities and deprived schools
- Covers educational attainment and aspirations, health and well-being, and social attitudes
- Linked administrative data available
- Transitions from secondary to post-16 and higher education, family formation, housing, and early labour market entry
- Available at the [UK Data Service](#)

Next Steps on the CLS website



On this page:

- Sweeps
- Latest from Next Steps
- About Next Steps
- Explore and access the data
- Training webinars
- Special data
- Substudy

Next Steps is a national cohort study following the lives of around 16,000 people in England, born in 1989-90, since they were in secondary school.

The study collects information about education and employment, economic circumstances, family life, physical and emotional health and wellbeing, social participation and attitudes.

Next Steps began in 2004 when the participants were aged 13-14, with an original sample of 15,770 recruited through schools. It was originally managed by the UK Department for Education and known as the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England (LSYPE).

Since 2015, Next Steps has been managed by the UCL Centre for Longitudinal Studies and funded by the Economic and Social Research Council.

Growing Up in Scotland

- Large-scale, Scottish cohort study [Website](#)
- Cohort 1:
 - A sample of children born in 2005-6
 - 11 yearly sweeps. Most recent is Sweep 11 (Age 17-18)
 - 5,217 children at Sweep 1 → 2,469 at sweep 11
- Cohort 2
 - a sample of children aged around 10 months in 2011.
 - 3 sweeps, most recent is Sweep 3 (Age 5)
 - 6,127 at Sweep 1 → 4,434 at Sweep 5
- Growing up in Scotland Series [at the UK Data Service](#)

GuS Data and variables

- Mental health: depression, Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire)
- Diet and sleep; Alcohol consumption, smoking, drug use
- Anti-social behaviour and offending
- Parent physical and mental health
- Linked data
 - Sweep 11 school attainment records - using Scottish Candidate Numbers
 - Sweep 8 Recorded physical activity data

Understanding Society



- Largest longitudinal study of the UK population
- 40K households, 100K individuals initially (2009)
- 17 waves so far: 2009-23. Includes BHPS data 1991-2009
- Ethnic minority boost samples, innovation panel
- Very wide range of topics covered:
 - Employment, income, benefits, savings, debt, and assets
 - Health, well-being, and health behaviour
 - Housing, housing costs, and dwelling characteristics

 **Understanding Society**
THE UK HOUSEHOLD LONGITUDINAL STUDY

[Home](#) [Explore](#) [About](#) [Why take part?](#) [Contact](#)

Understanding children and teenagers in the UK

Find out what life is like for young people now and what's changed over time



The illustration features a city skyline silhouette in the background. In the foreground, there are five buildings with labels: 'School', 'Screen time', 'Mental health', 'Money', and 'Sports and fitness'. Below the buildings is a green landscape with hills. In the foreground, there is a road with a red bus and a red airplane flying in the sky.



Understanding Society
THE UK HOUSEHOLD LONGITUDINAL STUDY

X    Search

Topics ▾ Documentation ▾ Research ▾ Participants About Us ▾ Help & Support ▾

Young people

Home life, school work, friends, family, plans for the future. Children under 10 are included in their parent's survey. Young people aged 10-15 have their own survey about their life experiences, health and wellbeing



[Home](#) > [Topic Page](#)

Understanding Society covers everyone in a household, so we ask questions about children and young people, as well as the adults. All young people aged 10 – 15 complete their own questionnaire and adults are asked about the children in their care.

Exploring what young people think and do helps us understand life choices and the challenges of growing up in the UK in the 21st century.

Young people in Understanding Society

- Youth (ie 10-15yo) self-completion questionnaire
- Usage of smartphone and devices
- Online vs in person socialising
- Usage of apps
- Family support, atmosphere and trust
- Strength and Difficulties questionnaire; self-image
- View about education; schoolwork and bullying

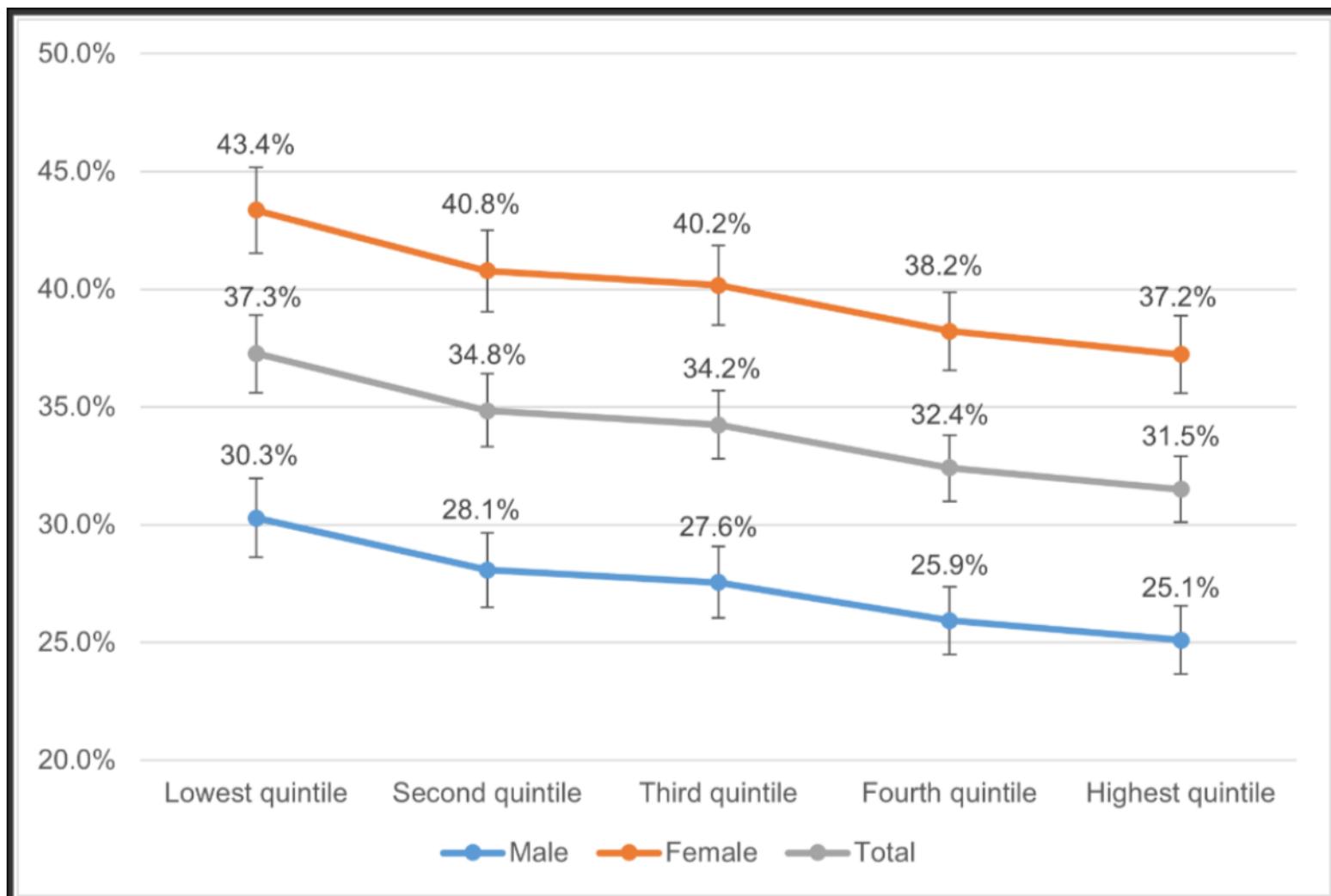
Young people and mental health (1)

Parra-Mujica, Johnson et al (2023)

- Positive association between health for the 16 to 24 and:
 - differences in household income
 - short-term income changes are significant,
- Microsimulation shows that respondents on lower income would benefit the most from increases in their income,
- Focusing on the poorest risks neglecting other vulnerable subgroups, ie young workers and single youth

Young people and mental health (2)

Probability of scoring SF-12 MCS ≤ 45.6 indicating clinical depressive disorder by net equivalised household income quintiles.



Linked administrative datasets

- Records produced when a survey respondent interacts a government organisation
 - hospitalisation, sitting an exam, becoming an employee
- Can be merged with survey data...
 - Where prior consent was obtained from respondents
- Entails more stringent conditions of access (Secure access)
- Early days, especially for everyday users but expanding area

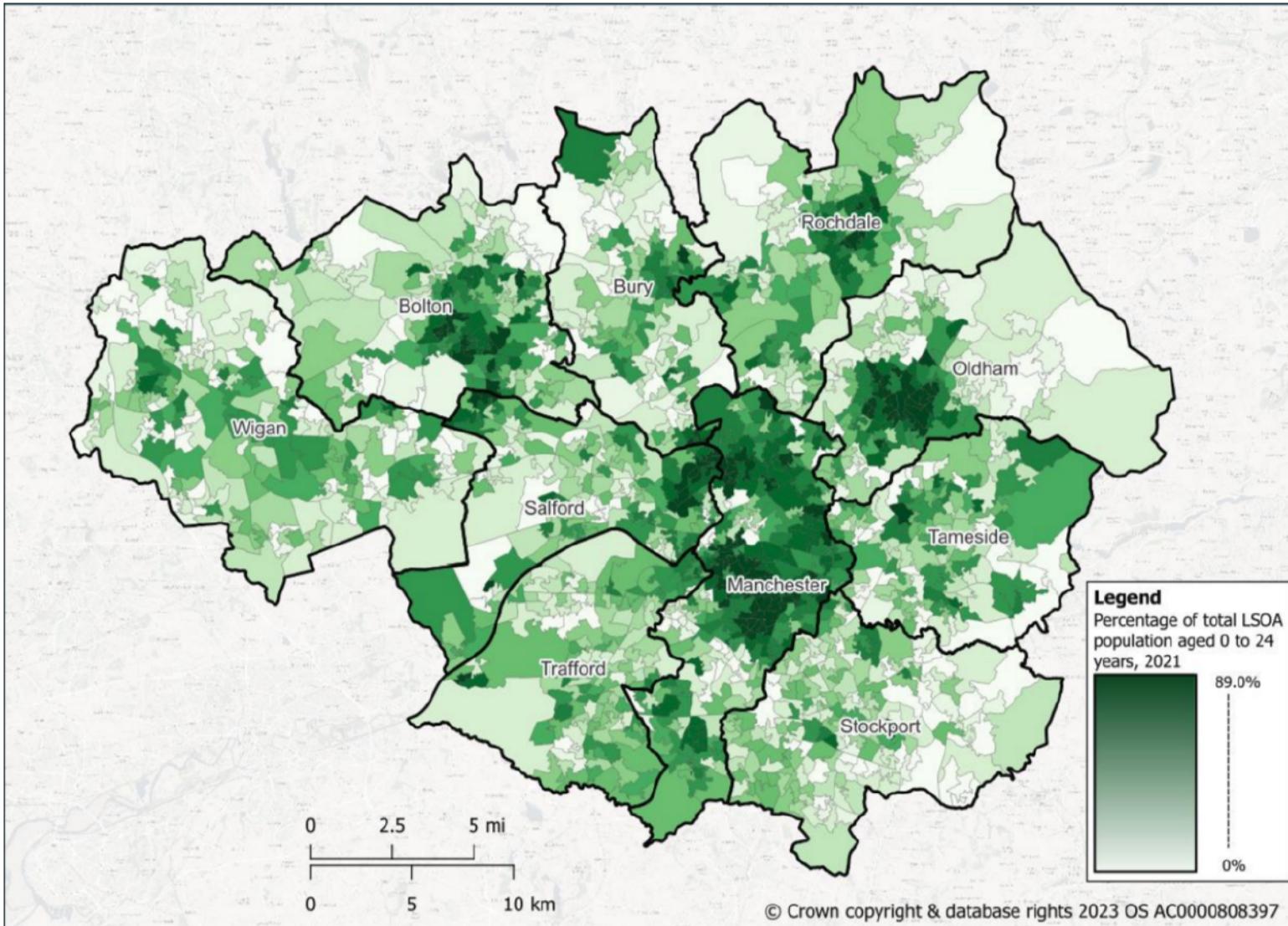
Linked data examples

- Understanding Society:
 - Scottish Education Data 2007-2018
 - National Pupil Database (England)
- Millennium Cohort Study
 - Distances to English Grammar Schools, 2012
 - Distances to Current, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Choice Schools
- Next Steps:
 - Student Loans Company Records 2007-202
 - Individualised Learner Records

Census records

- Fine grained socio-demographic population estimates
- By age group:
 - Deprivation
 - Economic activity
 - Educational status
 - Ethnicity
 - Disability
- Typical application: population estimates for small areas

Residents aged 0-24 as a % of the population by LSOAs, 2021



Is this everything?

Young People and Gambling Survey

- Attitudes towards and participation in different types of gambling activities
 - Legal and age restricted gambling
- Data controller: Gambling Commission.
- 3,666 pupils aged 11 to 17 yo (school years 7 to 12 (S1 to S6 in Scotland
- You can find it [here](#)

Children's People and Nature Survey

- Population: young people aged 8-15 yo
- Experience of and views about the natural environment
- Two waves: one in term time, one in holiday time.
- Sample size: about 4,000 per year, 2,000 per wave
- Time spent outside
- Quality of outdoor spaces
- Opportunities and barriers to spending time outside
- Environmental concerns and action
- Connection with nature
- Countryside code
- Commissioned by [Natural England](#).
- Study page on the [UK Data Service website](#)

Smoking, Drinking and Drug Use among Young People

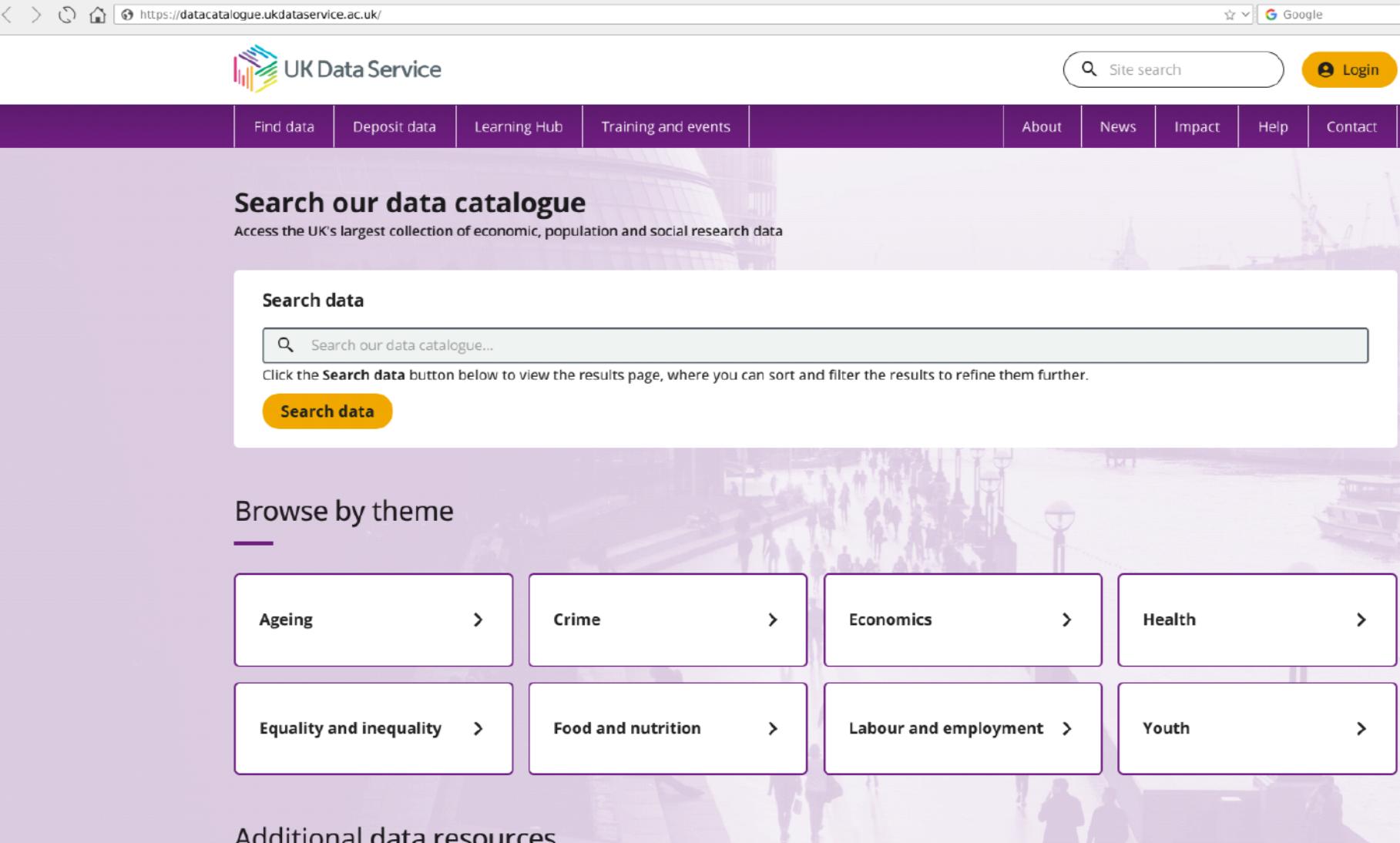
- About 17,000 young people aged 11 to 15 (2023) in England
- Focus on prevalence of smoking, drinking and drug taking
 - types of substance taken;
 - how often pupils smoke, drink and take drugs
 - where substance are obtained
 - pupils' attitudes to these behaviours
- Produced by [NHS England](#)
- Study page on the [UK Data Service website](#)

Qualitative & deposited research data

- No qualitative equivalent to the major quantitative studies but...
- ESRC grantholders are required to deposit their data
- A growing treasure trove of qualitative (and quantitative) research data on various topics, including young people
- Often freely accessible via ReShare on the UKDS website, data owner authorisation is sometimes required

Finding data

The main UKDS data catalogue page



https://datacatalogue.ukdataservice.ac.uk/ 

UK Data Service  Site search  Login

Find data Deposit data Learning Hub Training and events About News Impact Help Contact

Search our data catalogue

Access the UK's largest collection of economic, population and social research data

Search data  Search our data catalogue...

Click the **Search data** button below to view the results page, where you can sort and filter the results to refine them further.

Search data

Browse by theme

Ageing > Crime > Economics > Health >

Equality and inequality > Food and nutrition > Labour and employment > Youth >

Additional data resources

Catalogue search results for 'young people- Studies tab

Home > Search results > Studies

Search our data catalogue

Studies (353) ? ReShare studies (233) ? Series (9) ? Variables (102155) ?

Refine filters

Time period ?
From 440 To 2026

Refine range >

Data access level ?
 Open (15)
 Safeguarded (324)
 Controlled (14)

Geographical location ? ▾

Data type ? ▾

Search ? Search tips ?
young people

Search data

Per page 50 ▾ Sort by Date of collection (new... ▾)

Displaying 1 - 50 of 353 results for 'young people'

Page 1 of 8

Study number: 9473
[Young Life and Times Survey, 2025](#)
Data creators: Schubotz, D., Queen's University Belfast
Released/Updated: 2025-10-30

Study number: 9499
[Young People and Gambling Survey, 2025](#)
Data creators: Gambling Commission
Released/Updated: 2025-12-15

Study number: 9176
[Children's People and Nature Survey for England, 2021-2025: Secure Access](#)
Data creators: Natural England
Released/Updated: 2026-01-26

Catalogue search results for 'young people- ReShare tab

Home > Search results > ReShare

Search our data catalogue

Studies (353) ? ReShare studies (233) ? Series (9) ? Variables (102155) ?

Refine filters

Time period ?
From 440 To 2026

Refine range >

Data access level ?
 Open (57) Safeguarded (158) Catalogue record only (18)

Geographical location ?
▼

Data type ?
▼

Search ? Search tips
young people

Exact phrase search

Displaying 1 - 50 of 233 results for 'young people'

Page 1 of 5

Study number: 851484
[The role of celebrity in young people's classed and gendered aspirations](#)
Data creators: Mendick, H, Brunel University, Kim, A, Manchester Metropolitan University
Released/Updated: 2017-06-05

Study number: 850995
[New urbanisms, new citizens: Children and young people's everyday life and participation in sustainable communities](#)
Data creators: Christensen, P, University of Warwick
Released/Updated: 2017-07-13

Study number: 854031
[Young people and Brexit 2017](#)

Per page 50 Sort by Relevance

The Youth Theme page of the UK Data Service catalogue

Youth

Youth encompasses a dynamic period of life marked by rapid physical, emotional and social development, typically spanning adolescence through early adulthood. This stage is shaped by key transitions such as education, entry into the workforce, identity formation and evolving relationships. In recent years, growing attention has been paid to the challenges faced by young people, including access to education and employment, mental health, housing and the impact of digital technologies on social interaction and wellbeing.

Social inequalities, shifting economic conditions, and policy reforms have further influenced the experiences of youth, raising important questions for researchers and policymakers. Understanding youth is essential for shaping inclusive policies that support opportunity, resilience and participation in society.

The UK Data Service holds a wide range of data collections related to youth, including longitudinal studies, government surveys and international datasets. Explore our [impact case studies](#) to see how our data have informed research and policy. Learn [how to search our catalogue](#) to discover relevant resources.

Some key datasets

Millenium Cohort Study



Next Steps (also known as the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England)



Next Generation: United Kingdom, 2024



Smoking, Drinking and Drug Use among Young People



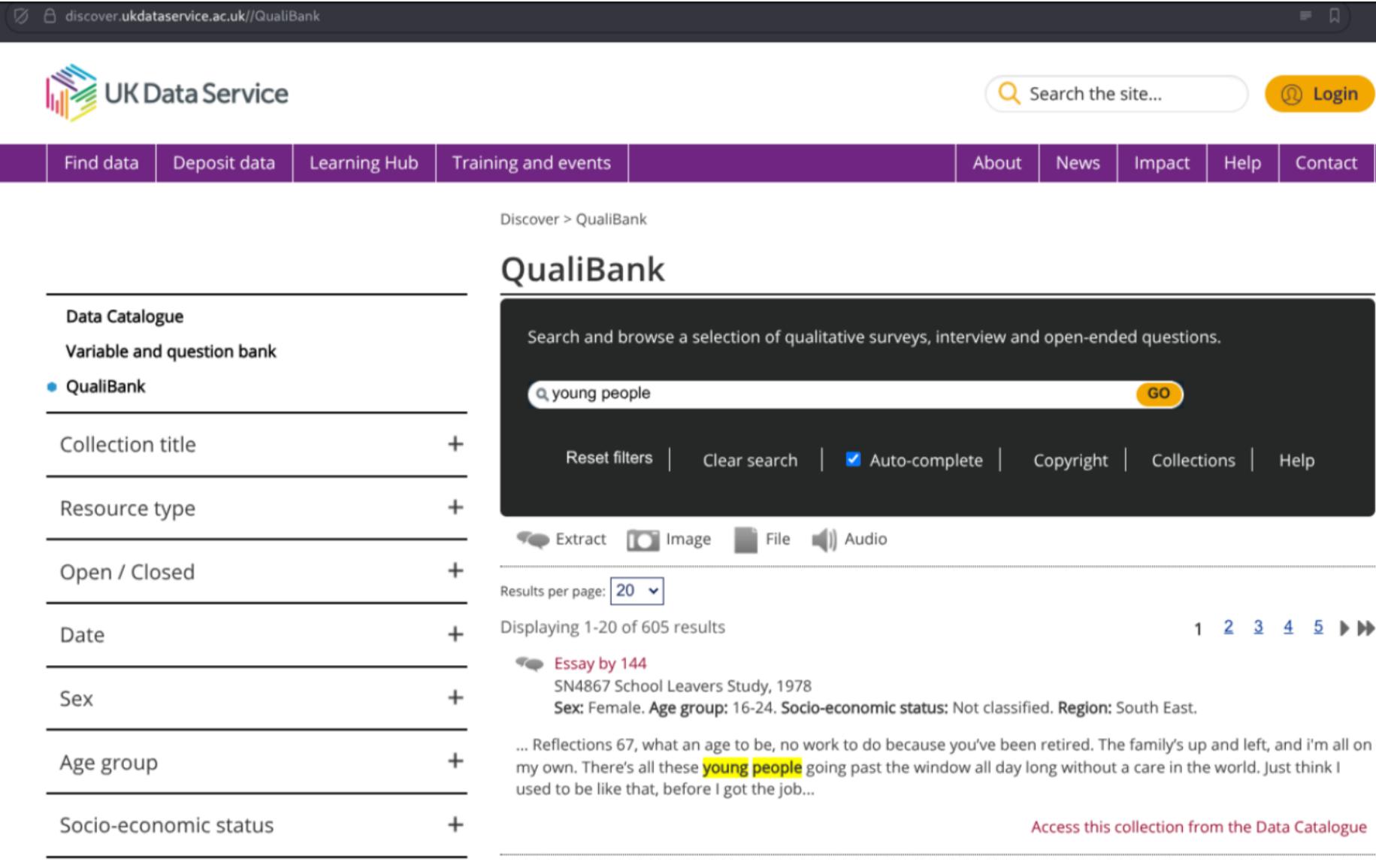
Growing up in Scotland



Active Lives Children and Young People Survey, 2022-2023



QualiBank catalogue search results for 'young people'



The screenshot shows the UK Data Service website interface, specifically the QualiBank catalogue search results for the term 'young people'.

Header: The header includes the UK Data Service logo, a search bar with the placeholder 'Search the site...', and a 'Login' button.

Breadcrumbs: The breadcrumb trail shows 'Discover > QualiBank'.

Section Headers: On the left, there is a sidebar with sections: 'Data Catalogue', 'Variable and question bank', and 'QualiBank' (which is selected, indicated by a blue dot). Below these are filter sections: 'Collection title', 'Resource type', 'Open / Closed', 'Date', 'Sex', 'Age group', and 'Socio-economic status', each with a '+' sign to expand.

Search Bar: The main search bar contains the query 'young people' and a 'GO' button.

Search Filters: Below the search bar are buttons for 'Reset filters', 'Clear search', 'Auto-complete' (which is checked), 'Copyright', 'Collections', and 'Help'.

Results: The results section shows '20' results per page, displaying 1-20 of 605 results. The first result is an 'Essay by 144' from the 'SN4867 School Leavers Study, 1978'. The text of the essay is: '... Reflections 67, what an age to be, no work to do because you've been retired. The family's up and left, and i'm all on my own. There's all these **young people** going past the window all day long without a care in the world. Just think I used to be like that, before I got the job...'. A link 'Access this collection from the Data Catalogue' is at the bottom of the result.

How to access the data

Levels of access

Controlled data

- Access via Safe Room [SecureLab](#) in the UK or the [SafePod](#) network

Safeguarded data

- Requires registration (special licence: requires a form)

ReShare data

- Access rights set by the data owner and can vary

Open data

- No registration required

- The lesser the conditions for accessing the data, the fewer the details included
- Open data includes fewer personal information; controlled data significantly more
- Safeguarded data strikes a compromise between accessibility and level of detail

How to access safeguarded data

- Register with the UK Data Service
 - Slightly differences for [UK academic users](#) and [other users](#)
- Create a project ('non commercial', 'commercial', 'teaching')
- Search, find and order the data
- Add it to your project
- Download it...
- Et voilà.
- The steps to follow are detailed [on our website](#)

Other levels of access

- *Open data*: can be downloaded without registration
- *ReShare data* (ie deposited) data: conditions will depend on the data owner; most of the time freely downloadable
- *Controlled data*:
 - Register
 - Provide a detailed description of your project
 - Apply for Safe Researcher certification
 - Follow the Safe Researcher training
 - Access the data via the SecureLab - ie secure VPN from an institutional computer

Essential questions to ask yourself

- Data quality
 - What was the phrasing of the question(s)?
 - What was the research question/funder of the research?
 - Is it representative, is the sample size large enough, what is the population of reference?
 - When was it collected?
 - Is the documentation – technical report available?
 - Are weights and survey design information provided?
- Is a special application required in order to access the data?

Conclusion

Take aways

- Wealth of data on young people and education
- From surveys and beyond
- Education and other relevant topics
- Different ways of searching
- Different levels of access

Thank you for your attention

Any questions: help@ukdataservice.ac.uk

Links & references

- [Administrative Data Research - ADR](#)
- Fang-Wei Wu, A., Henderson, M., Brown, M., Adali, T., Silverwood, R. J., Peycheva, D. an Calderwood, L. (2024). 'Cohort Profile: Next Steps—the longitudinal study of people in England born in 1989–90' *International Journal of Epidemiology*, 53(6) [doi: 10.1093/ije/dyae152](https://doi.org/10.1093/ije/dyae152)
- Greater Manchester Combined Authority (2023) Census 2021 briefing: Children and young people, [GMCA Research](#)
- Kandola A, Owen N, Dunstan DW, Hallgren M (2022). Prospective relationships of adolescents' screen-based sedentary behaviour with depressive symptoms: the Millennium Cohort Study. *Psychological Medicine* 52, 3531–3539 [doi: 10.1017/S0033291721000258](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0033291721000258)

Links & references

- Parra-Mujica F, Johnson E, Reed H, Cookson R, Johnson M (2023) Understanding the relationship between income and mental health among 16- to 24-year-olds: Analysis of 10 waves (2009–2020) of Understanding Society to enable modelling of income interventions. [PLOS ONE 18\(2\): e0279845](#).
- The [Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire](#)
- UK Data Service (2018): Webinar: research Using Youth and Young Adult Data in Understanding Society: [Recording](#); [Slides](#)
- [UK Longitudinal Linking Collaboration - UKLLC](#)
- Understanding Society series page at the [UK Data Service](#)
- [Understanding Society Young People page](#)