

KCETB Young People's Survey 2026

kcetb
Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna Chill Chainnigh agus Cheatha
Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board





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Overview of KCETB

Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board (KCETB) is a leading provider of education and training across the south-east of Ireland, supporting more than 25,000 learners each year to reach their full potential. KCETB provides a diverse range of educational pathways across schools, further education and training centres, and community-based settings.

The remit of KCETB encompasses the management and operation of 13 post-primary schools and two colleges of further education and training, alongside a broad range of adult and community education services delivered across 30 locations in Kilkenny and Carlow. KCETB also co-ordinates the delivery of youth services and manages music education through the Music Generation Programme.

KCETB employs over 1,400 people and operates an annual budget of over €100 million. **Flourish through learning** is KCETB's core belief, recognising that learning has the power to transform lives, unlock potential, and build stronger, more connected communities.

Background

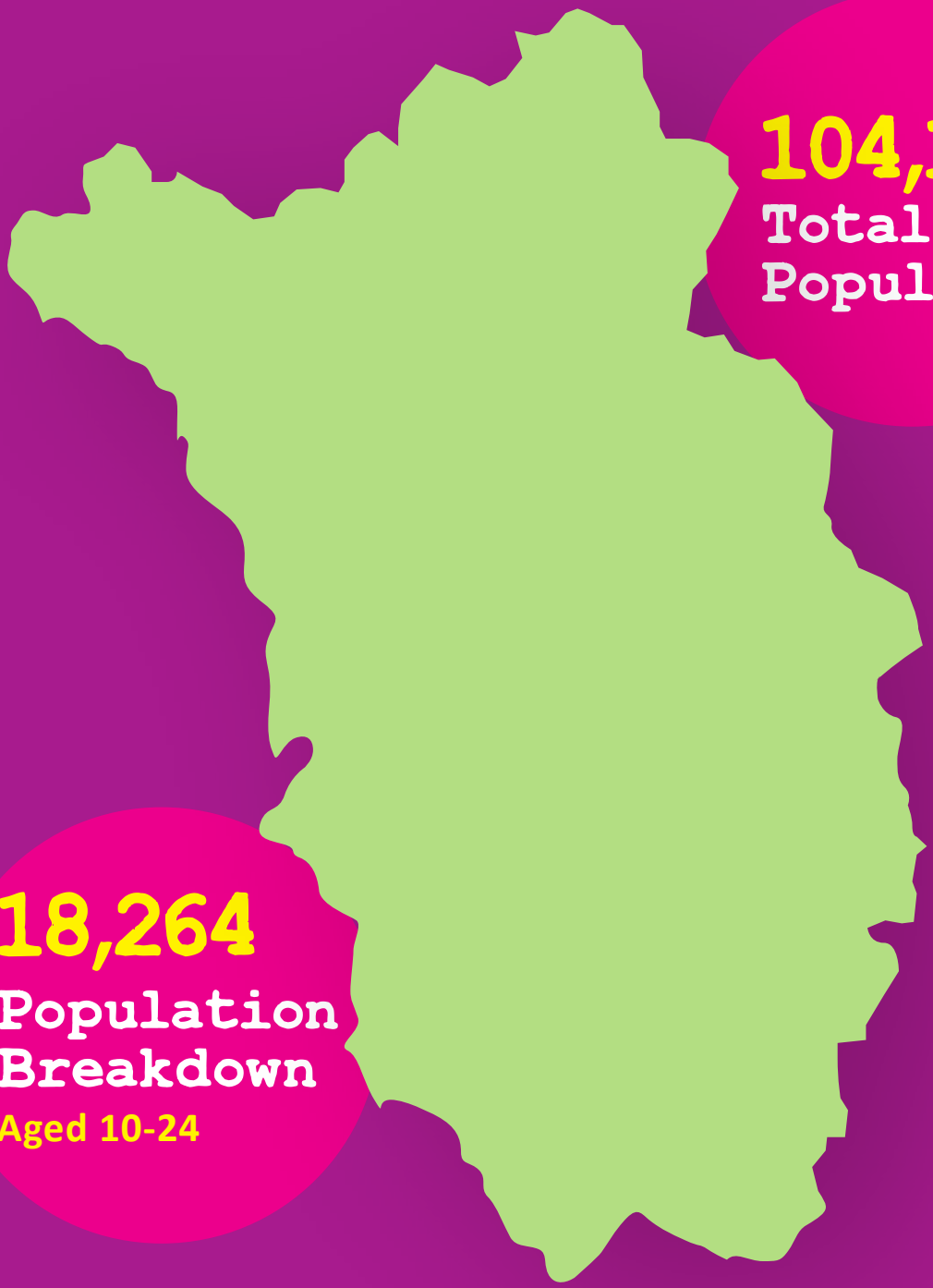
Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board (KCETB) receive annual funding from the Department of Education and Youth (DEY) to support innovative, responsive and inclusive UBU youth work programmes, supports and services for young people in Kilkenny and Carlow.

In preparation of Cycle 3 of the UBU Scheme Your Place Your Space (2027-2029), KCETB completed Area Profile Templates inclusive of Service Requirements for each of the UBU Project areas. As part of this process, KCETB developed a survey to capture the voice of young people, the results of which are included in this publication.

Young people's input to the survey was very important in helping KCETB to identify the issues and challenges that young people currently face, to ensure funding is directed in specific targeted areas with specific target groups.



Demographics of Young people in Kilkenny



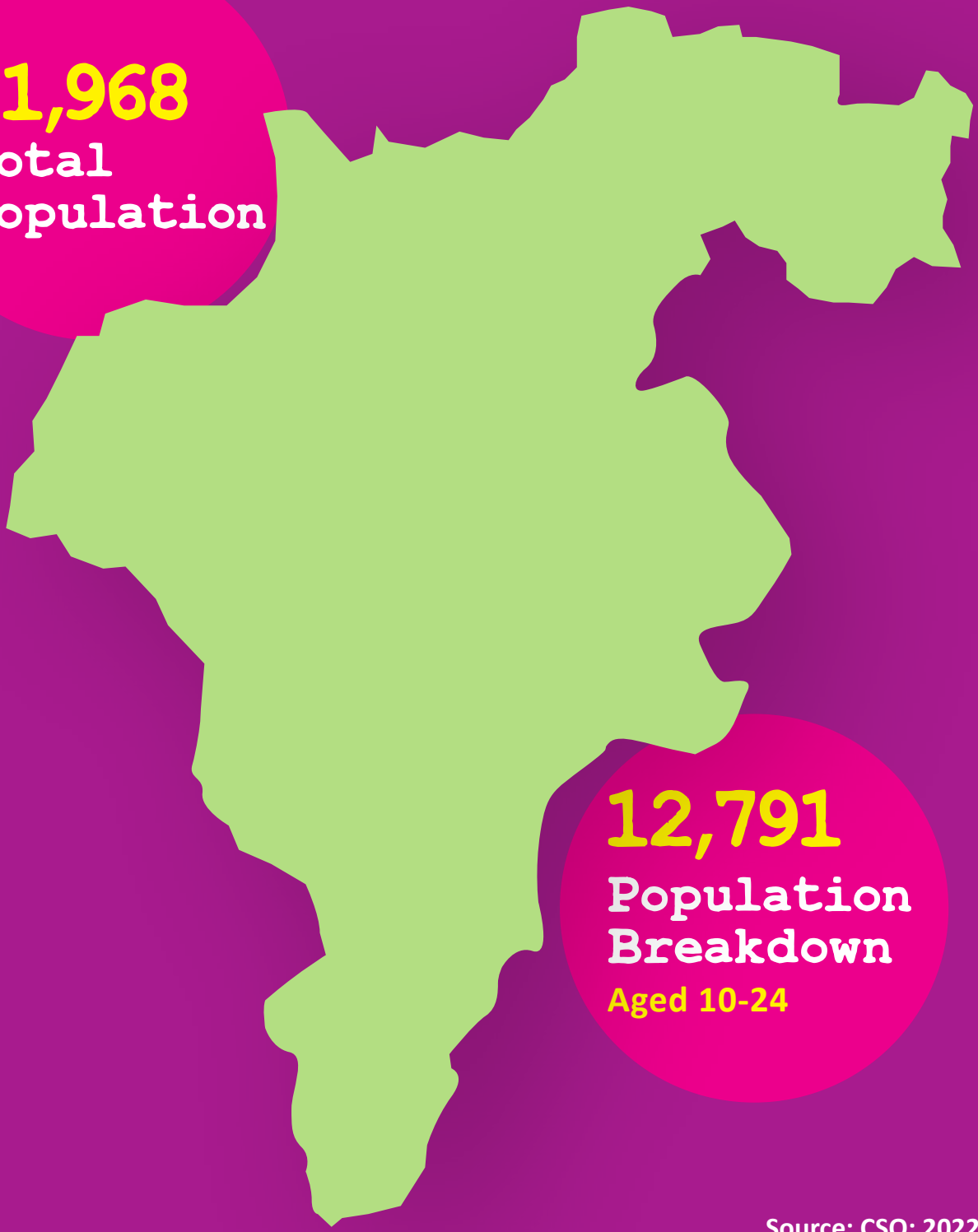
104,160
Total Population

18,264
Population Breakdown
Aged 10-24

Source: CSO: 2022

Demographics of Young people in Carlow

61,968
Total Population



12,791
Population Breakdown
Aged 10-24

Source: CSO: 2022

ETBs and Youth Work

Since 2026, responsibility of youth work lies with the Department of Education and Youth (DEY) with Minister Hildegarde Naughton having responsibility for the area.

Education and Training Boards have a legislative responsibility in relation to youth work in Ireland. This is set out in the Education and Training Boards Act 2013, which states that the function of ETBs, in relation to youth work, is to:

"Support the provision, coordination, administration and assessment of youth work services in its functional area and provide such information as may be requested by the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs in relation to such support, and to assess whether the manner in which it performs its functions is economical, efficient and effective."

KCETB have the statutory responsibility in relation to youth work in Carlow and Kilkenny. KCETB works in partnership with a range of youth work providers, including Ossory Youth, Carlow Regional Youth Services and Foróige. KCETB also works in cooperation and collaboration with a range of statutory, voluntary and community organisations and agencies. The Youth Office encourages partnership in the youth work sector and promotes the common goal and purpose of youth work for the benefit of young people.

The Education and Training Boards Act (Section 10(6) states that "youth work" is as defined in the Youth Work Act 2001:

"Youth work" means a planned programme of education designed for the purpose of aiding and enhancing the personal and social development of young persons through their voluntary participation, and which is – (a) complementary to their formal, academic or vocational education and training; and (b) provided primarily by voluntary youth work organisations. (Youth Work Act, 2001, Section 3).

In the Youth Work Act (Section 2(1)), a "young person" is interpreted as a person who has not attained the age of 25 years.



Priority KCETB Goals in relation to Youth Work

1. To support youth work organisations to deliver quality youth work practice and provision that responds to the needs of young people, especially our most vulnerable young people.

2. To promote the value and importance of youth work.

3. To develop a culture of good governance and oversight.



UBU - Your Place, Your Space Scheme

The UBU scheme provides funding to youth services that support young people to develop the personal and social skills required to improve their life chances. This includes services covering health and wellbeing, education, employment and social connectedness. The scheme targets young people aged between 10 to 24 years who are experiencing economic, social and cultural disadvantage.

The scheme was designed in collaboration with young people, the youth sector and Education and Training Boards over the last five years and streamlines and strengthens previous targeted youth funding arrangements.

Mission

To provide out-of-school supports to young people in their local communities to enable them to overcome adverse circumstances and achieve their full potential by improving their personal and social development outcomes.

Vision

All young people are enabled to realise their maximum potential, by respecting their rights and hearing their voices, while protecting and supporting them as they transition from childhood to adulthood.

Values

- Young people are free to participate in a wide range of quality activities
- Provision is rights based and young person-centred
- Empowering young people to reach their potential
- Relationship building
- There is a clarity of purpose
- Projects are maximised by promoting efficiency and effectiveness

KCETB are the funding intermediaries for UBU Your Place Your Space and have a statutory role as outlined on page 5.

KCETB works in partnership with local youth organisations, which manage and deliver UBU funded projects in their communities. These organisations employ youth workers, engage directly with young people, and provide programmes and supports that respond to local needs, while KCETB provides funding, oversight, and governance.

Together, they help ensure that young people have access to high quality youth services and opportunities to learn, develop, participate, and have their voices heard.

UBU Projects in Kilkenny and Carlow

In 2026, the following UBU projects were funded by DEY through KCETB and delivered locally by Carlow Regional Youth Services (CRYS) and Ossory Youth Services:

1. Kilkenny Gateway UBU Project *(Ossory Youth)*
2. Kilkenny Rural UBU Project *(Ossory Youth)*
3. Johnstown/Urlingford UBU Project *(Ossory Youth)*
4. Carlow Town and Environs UBU Project *(CRYS)*
5. Carlow Traveller UBU Project *(CRYS)*
6. Tullow and Environs UBU Project *(CRYS)*
7. Bagenalstown and Environs UBU Project *(CRYS)*

Total UBU allocation in 2026:

€1,447,939



Purpose of the Survey:

At the beginning of each UBU funding cycle, ETBs are required to complete an Area Profile Template to understand the needs, experiences, and challenges facing young people in their communities. This information is used to identify areas, needs and priorities in relation to young people. Along with other qualitative and quantitative research, this supports the development of Service Requirements, which outline the types of youth services and supports that are most needed in a particular geographical area.

In preparation for Cycle 3 of the UBU Your Place Your Space Scheme (2027–2029), KCETB developed a survey to capture the voice of young people to help inform the research process.

In February 2026, the survey was issued to schools, youth organisations and youth clubs throughout Kilkenny and Carlow whereby young people were invited to complete the survey. A total of 393 responses were received.

Young people's input was invaluable in helping KCETB better understand needs and issues that young people face and the range of supports and services that best supports them in their local communities.

The findings from this survey are presented in this publication with the full survey questions available as an appendix.



Policy Context

Young Ireland: National Policy Framework for Children and Young People (2023 – 2028)

Young Ireland is the current national plan for children and young people in Ireland. It focuses on improving wellbeing, learning, safety, inclusion, and participation for all children and young people.

The framework is based on five national outcomes for children and young people:
- Being active and healthy, physically and mentally
- Achieving in learning and development
- Being safe from harm
- Having economic security and opportunity
- Being connected, respected, and contributing to their world

The survey was developed in line with these five national outcomes, helping to guide questions and ensure feedback reflected their experiences and needs.

Opportunities for Youth

National Strategy for Youth Work and Related Services (2024 – 2028)

Opportunities for Youth is Ireland's new national strategy for youth work, aiming to ensure that all young people can reach their full potential and shape their own futures. The strategy provides a framework for improving youth services for young people aged 10–24 through enhanced accessibility, quality, coordination, and evidence-based practice. Opportunities for Youth delivers on a commitment in Young Ireland, which recognises the important role of youth work services in improving outcomes for young people and the need for a more strategic direction for the delivery of such services.

Survey Results



393

YOUNG PEOPLE SURVEYED



14%
aged
10-12 years

36%
aged
13-15 years

44%
aged
16-18 years

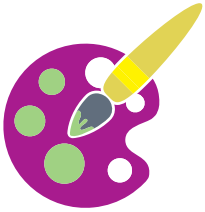
6%
aged
19-24 years

Outcome 1:
Active and healthy with physical and mental well-being

Engagement



35% of young people take part in **sports/physical activity.**



12% of young people are involved in **creative activities.**



34% of young people are part of a **youth organisation/club.**



9% of young people do not engage in any activity: **Lack of interest** is the main barrier to participation, while **time constraints** with school/study, **transport**-related issues and **cost** also playing a role as to why young people do not engage.

Wellbeing

Most young people reported a positive outlook on life.



62% describing life as **great** or **mostly good.**



61% felt that improvements could be made to their **physical health.**



38% indicated a less positive experience, reporting that they were **unsure about life**, found it sometimes hard, or considered it very **tough**.



60% reported that their **mental** and **emotional health** could be better.

Outcome 1:
Active and healthy with physical and mental well-being

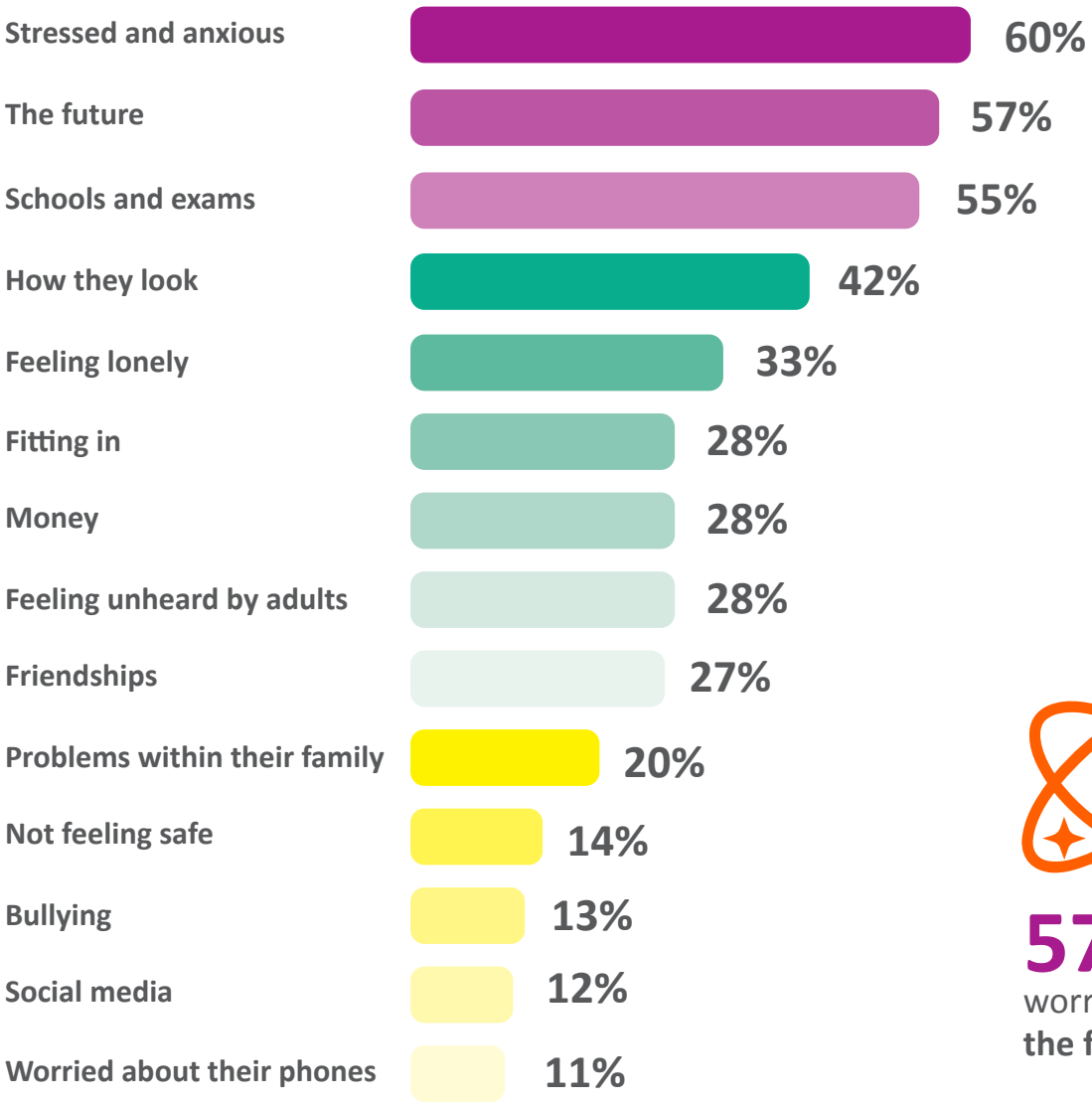
Worries

When asked about main concerns young people identified that they were most worried about stress and anxiety, the future and school and exams. Concerns relating to appearance, loneliness, fitting in, money and feeling unheard by adults were also commonly reported. Other areas of concern highlighted were around family problems, safety, bullying.

60% of young people surveyed were worried about **stress** and **anxiety.**

What young people worry about

Precentage of young people who are often or sometimes worried about...



57% worried about **the future.**

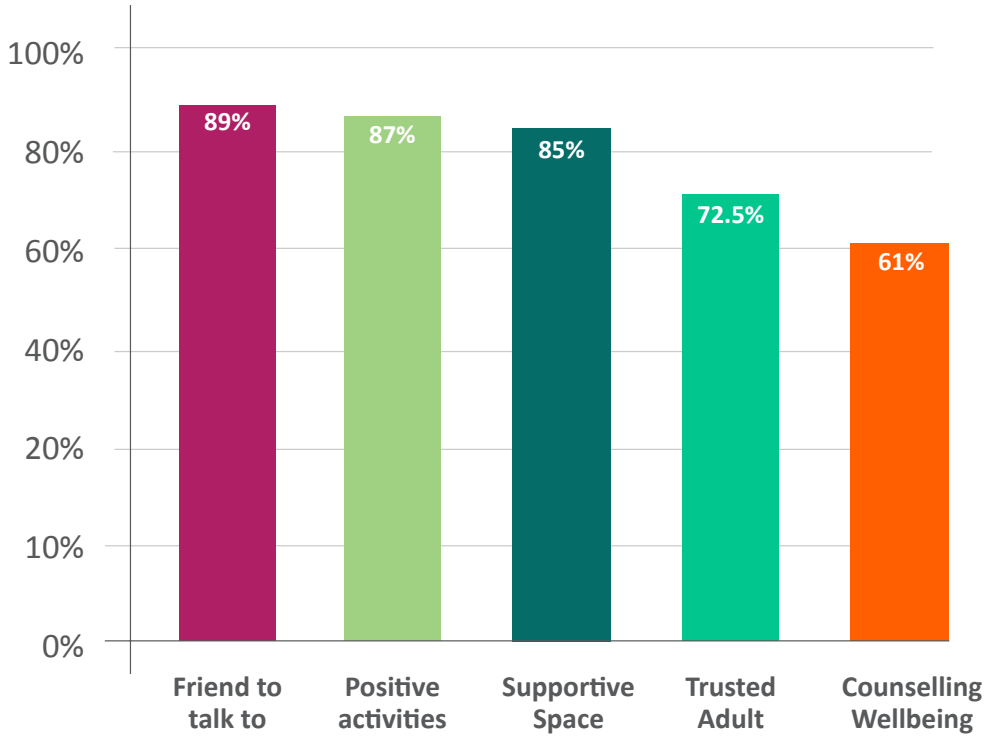
Outcome 1:
Active and healthy with physical and mental well-being

Support

76% of young people reported that they have, or mostly have, **enough support** when they are **worried** or **upset**.

89% of young people reported to have felt **having a friend to talk to** was helpful when they are feeling worried or upset.

The supports most frequently identified as helpful when young people are feeling worried or upset were having a friend to talk to, having something positive to do outside of school hours, and having a supportive space to go to. Other important supports included having a trusted adult outside the family to talk to and access to counselling and wellbeing support services.



Outcome 2:
Achieving full potential in all areas of learning and wellbeing

Opportunities

76% of young people **agree** or **strongly agree** that they have **opportunities** to complete their Leaving Certificate and **progress** to further education, employment, or training.

21% are **unsure.**

3% **disagree** or **strongly disagree**, indicating that while most feel supported, a notable minority **lack clarity** or **confidence** about their future opportunities.



Outcome 3:
Safe and Protected from Harm

Safety

Most young people reported feeling safe in their daily environments



94% agreeing that they feel **safe** at **home.**



78% agreeing that they feel **safe** in their **school** or **community.**



6% were **unsure** whether they felt safe at **home.**



22% were either **unsure** or **disagreed** that they felt safe in their **school** or **community**.

A notable proportion of young people experience feelings of exclusion, isolation, or discrimination.



39% **agreed** or **strongly agreed** that they had **felt left out**, **isolated**, or **discriminated** against.



25% of young people were **unsure** if they had felt **left out, isolated** or **discriminated** against.

Outcome 4:
Have economic security and opportunity

The Future

59% of young people feel **positive** about the **future.**

41% of young people are either **unsure** or **don't feel optimistic,** showing that many young people still have **concerns** about what lies ahead for them.



Outcome 5:
Connected, respected and contributing to their world

Peers



64% of young people **agreed** or **strongly agreed** that they feel **valued**, **respected**, and **listened** to by their **peers.**



36% of young people feel **unsure** or **disagree** that they feel valued, respected, and listened to by their peers.

Adults



69% of young people **agreed** or **strongly agreed** that they feel **valued**, **respected**, and listened to by the **adults** in their lives.

31% of young people felt **unsure** that they feel valued, respected, and listened to by the adults in their lives.

Community



64% of young people **agreed** or **strongly agreed** that they feel **valued, respected**, and **listened** to within their **community.**



36% of young people **disagree** or are **unsure** that they feel valued, respected, and listened to within their community.



Summary



The findings from this survey provide a valuable insight into the experiences, wellbeing, and aspirations of young people. Overall, the results present a largely positive picture, with most young people reporting that they feel safe, supported, optimistic about life, and connected to the people around them. Participation in sports, youth organisations, and other activities demonstrates strong engagement among many young people, while positive relationships with peers, adults, and communities contribute to their sense of belonging.

However, the findings also highlight several important challenges. Many young people reported concerns about their mental and emotional wellbeing, stress and anxiety, their future, and pressures associated with school and examinations. A significant proportion also reported feelings of exclusion, isolation, or discrimination, while others expressed uncertainty about their future opportunities and access to support when facing difficulties.

The results emphasise the importance of continuing to invest in youth work targeted initiatives that promote positive mental health, social connection, participation, and access to opportunities. Young people clearly value supportive relationships, trusted adults, safe spaces, and meaningful activities outside of school. Strengthening these protective factors, while addressing barriers to participation and responding to the concerns identified, will be essential in supporting young people to thrive and achieve their full potential.

Conclusion

KCETB submitted the Area Profile Templates and Service Requirement Documents to the Department of Education and Youth in May 2026. The feedback received through the survey was instrumental in ensuring that the voices of the young people who will benefit from UBU services in Kilkenny and Carlow were captured and reflected in the submission documents, therefore service delivery.

Area Profiles were subsequently approved by the DEY and the services are now completing applications for cycle 3 of the UBU Scheme.

KCETB would like to thank all the young people who took the time to participate in the survey, alongside their youth workers and teachers for their support. We look forward to continuing our partnership with Carlow Regional Youth Services, Ossory Youth and related services during the next cycle of the UBU Your Place Your Space Scheme.



Appendix 1

A Young Person's Perspective



what is great about being young today?




No worries
School holidays
Freedom
No responsibility
Lots of time ahead
Activities
Sports
Opportunities
Technology
Access to information
Lots of options

Appendix 2

Responses Overview

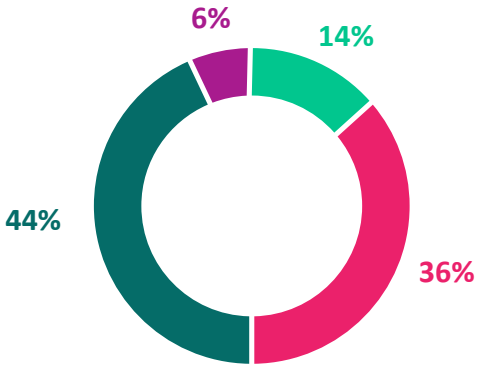
Responses: 393

Average time: 07:29

Duration: 127 Days

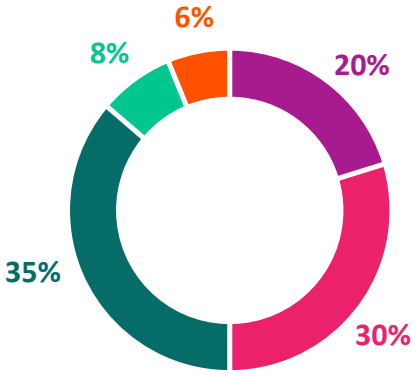
1. How old are you?

10 - 12	54
13 - 15	142
16 - 18	173
19 - 24	24

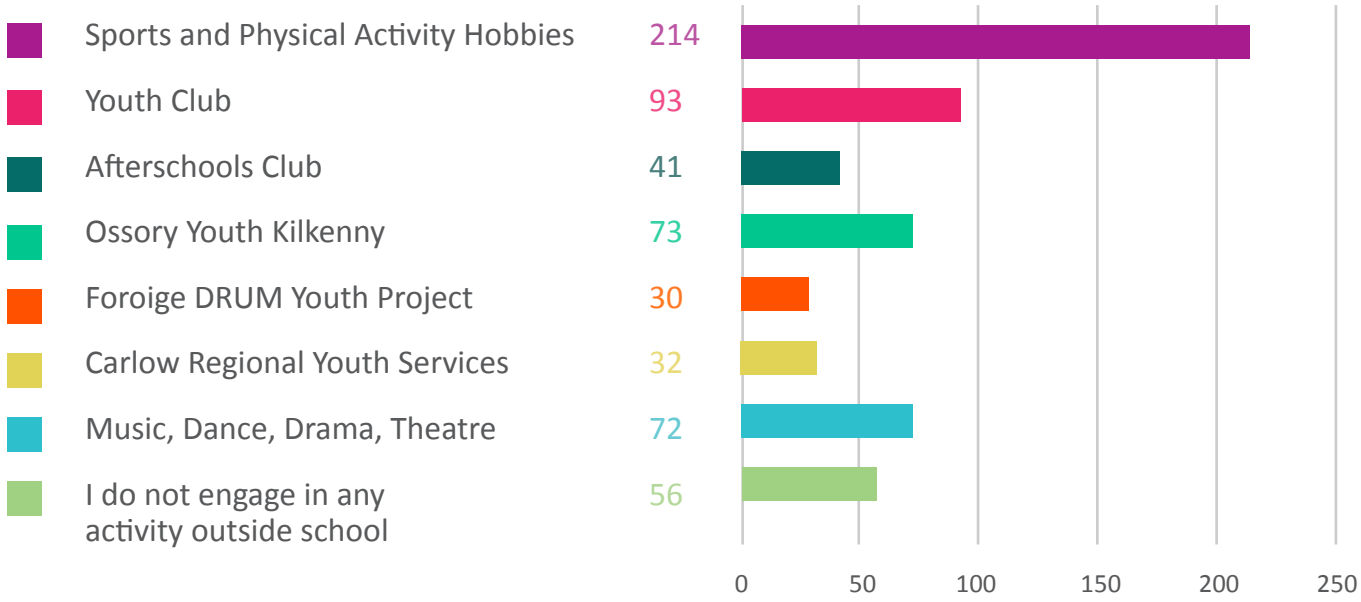


2. What area do you live in?

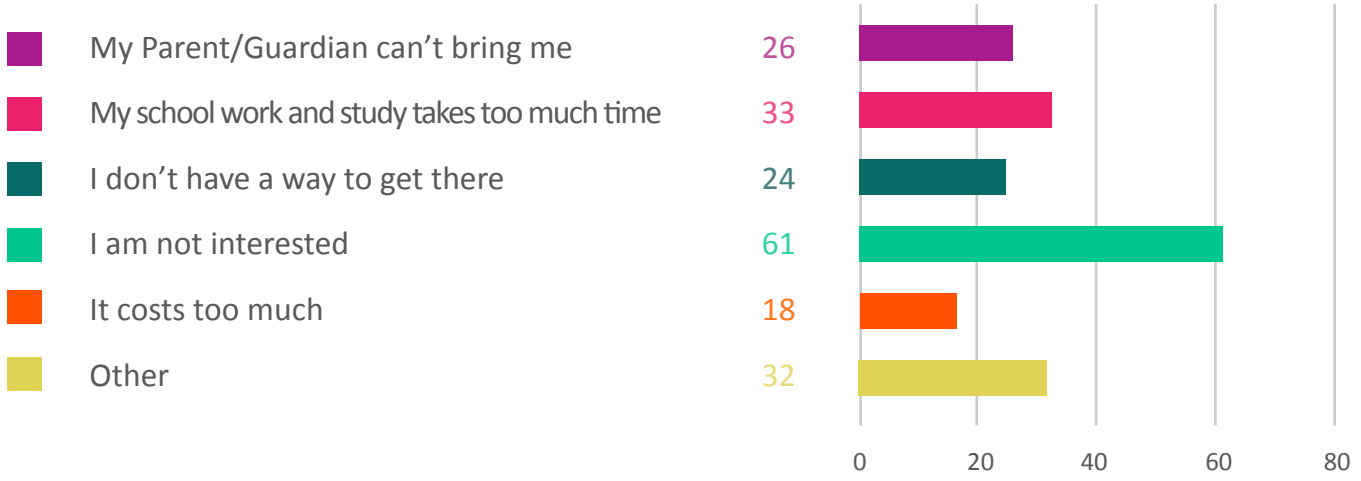
Kilkenny City and Environs	80
Kilkenny County (outside Kilkenny City)	119
Carlow Town and Environs	139
North Carlow (Tullow/Hacketstown and Environs)	32
South Carlow (Bagenalstown/Borris and Environs)	23



3. Please tick if you take part in any of the following

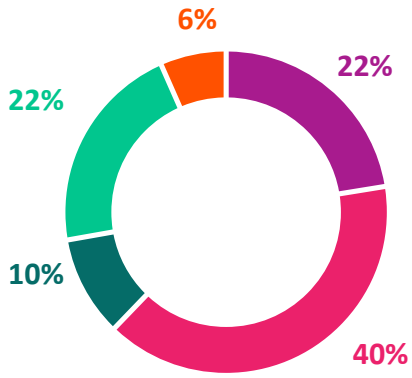


4. If you do not engage in any activities outside school, what are the reasons for this?



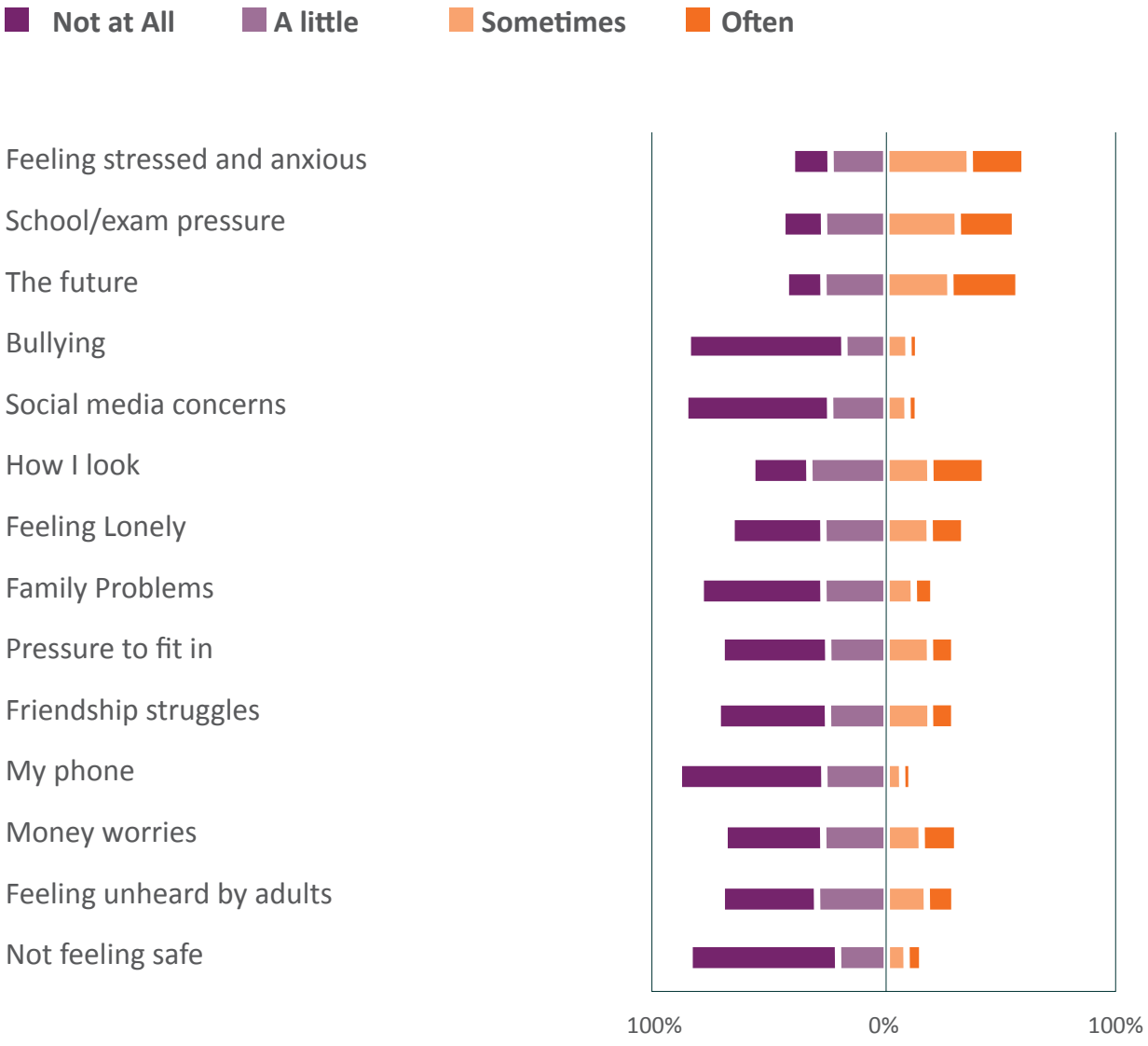
5. Overall, how do you feel about life as a young person right now?

It's great	87
It's mostly good	157
I'm not sure	41
It's sometimes hard	85
It's very tough	23



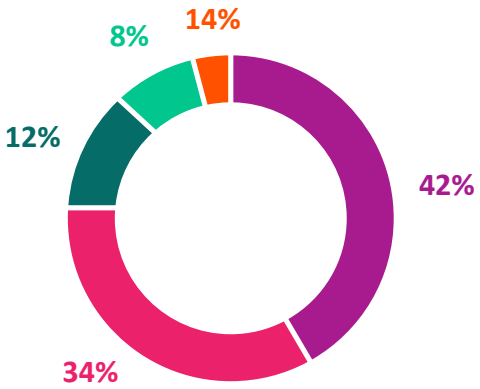
6. Which of the following areas are causing you to worry right now?

For each statement, select: 1 = Not at all, 2 = A little, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Often



7. Do you feel you have enough support if you're upset or worried about something?

Yes	165
Mostly	135
Not really	47
Not sure	32
No	14



8. Which of these would help you feel less upset and worried?

Please tick 1. Very Helpful 2. Helpful 3. Unsure 4. Not Helpful

Very Helpful **Helpful** **Unsure** **Not Helpful**

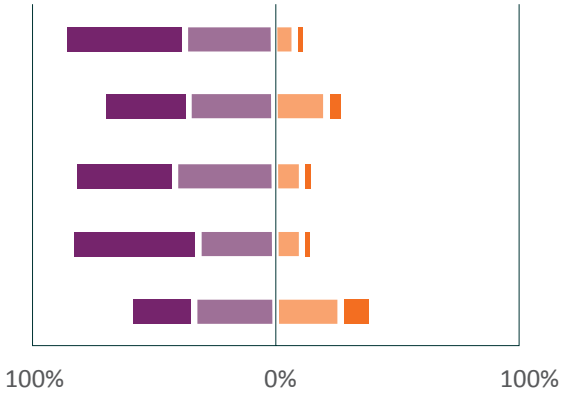
Having a friend to talk to

Having a trusted adult (outside family) to talk to

Having a supportive friendly safe space to go to

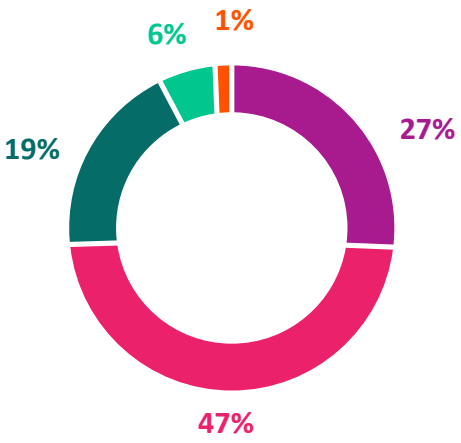
Having something positive to do outside school hours

Counselling and wellbeing support service



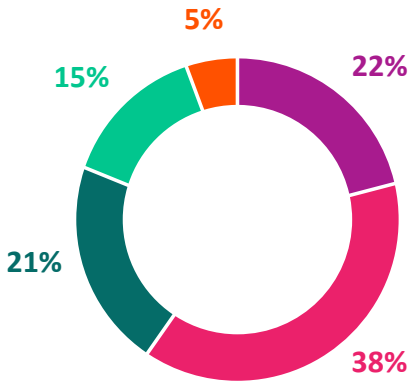
9. In general, I feel happy with my life

Strongly agree	106
Agree	183
Not sure	76
Disagree	22
Strongly disagree	6



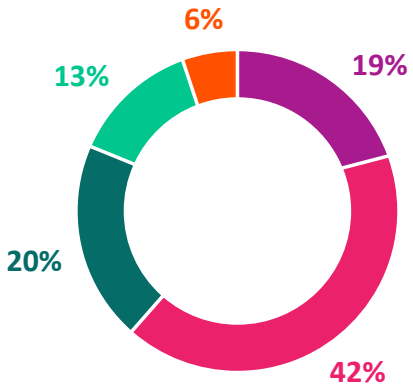
10. I feel that my mental and emotional health could be better

Strongly agree	85
Agree	149
Not sure	81
Disagree	58
Strongly disagree	20



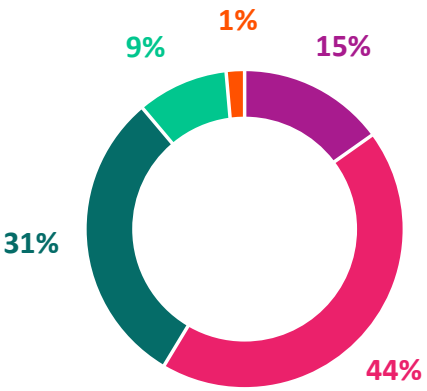
11. I feel that my physical health could be better

Strongly agree	76
Agree	166
Not sure	79
Disagree	50
Strongly disagree	22



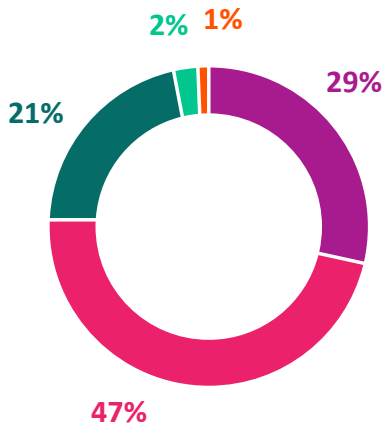
12. In general, I feel positive about my future

Strongly agree	58
Agree	172
Not sure	122
Disagree	35
Strongly disagree	6



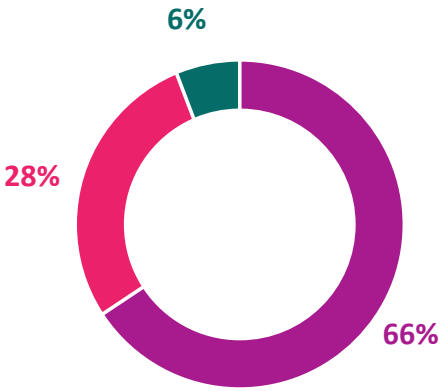
13. I feel I have opportunities to complete my Leaving Cert and progress onwards to further education, employment and training and/or higher education

Strongly agree	114
Agree	183
Not sure	82
Disagree	9
Strongly disagree	5



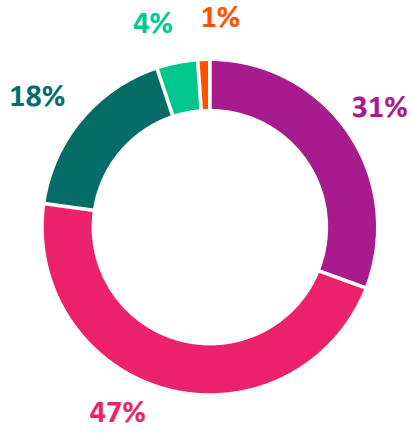
14. I feel safe in my home

Strongly agree	285
Agree	110
Not sure	24
Disagree	1
Strongly disagree	0



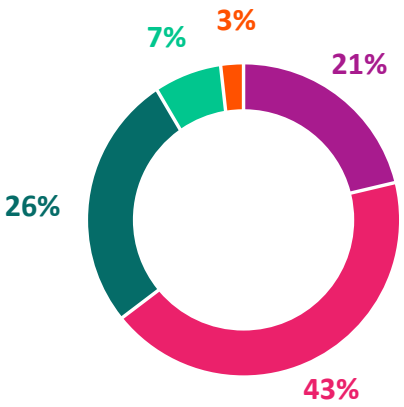
15. I feel safe in my school and community

Strongly agree	121
Agree	183
Not sure	69
Disagree	16
Strongly disagree	4



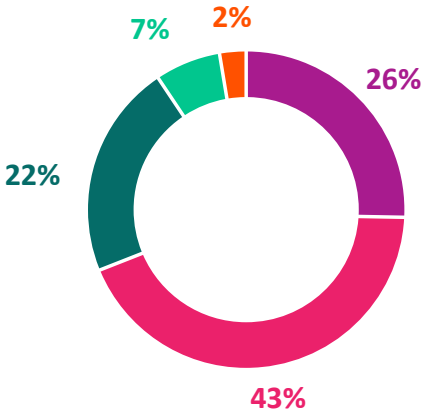
16. I feel I am valued, respected and listened to by people of my own age

Strongly agree	84
Agree	169
Not sure	103
Disagree	28
Strongly disagree	9



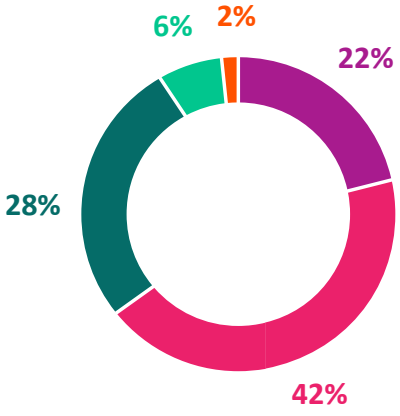
17. I feel I am valued, respected and listened to by the adults in my life

Strongly agree	102
Agree	168
Not sure	87
Disagree	26
Strongly disagree	10



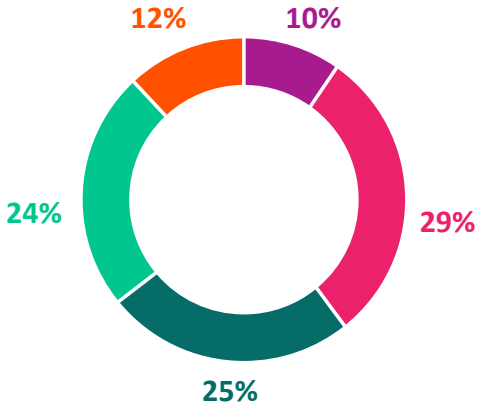
18. I feel I am valued, respected and listened to in my community

Strongly agree	85
Agree	167
Not sure	109
Disagree	24
Strongly disagree	8



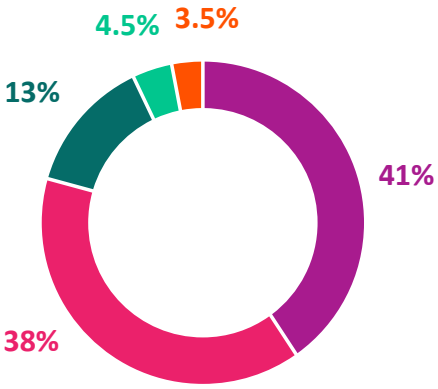
19. At times, I feel left out, isolated or discriminated against

Strongly agree	39
Agree	115
Not sure	98
Disagree	94
Strongly disagree	47



20. I have an adult in my life that I can talk to and get support when I need it

Strongly agree	160
Agree	151
Not sure	53
Disagree	16
Strongly disagree	13



21. What's something great about being a young person today?

Responses: **393**

Latest Responses



19 respondents (5%) answered things for this question.





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