



#BeeWell

Overview Briefing

#BeeWell Survey 2021
Headline Findings



#BeeWell surveyed nearly 40,000 Year 8 and Year 10 pupils in Greater Manchester on their wellbeing in Autumn 2021. This briefing outlines some key findings of the survey and provides an overview of next steps.

Introduction

#BeeWell is a £2mn collaboration between the University of Manchester, the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and the Anna Freud Centre. The programme measures young people's wellbeing on an annual basis and aims to bring about positive change in Greater Manchester's communities as a result.

The programme builds on the Greater Manchester Life Readiness survey, and the Headstart programme funded by the National Lottery. It is funded for three years by a range of ten national and local funders, with a full list available [here](#).

The #BeeWell survey, available [here](#), was co-created by 150 young people, across 14 pathfinder schools in Greater Manchester. Questions range from psychological wellbeing, self-esteem and autonomy to participation in culture/physical activity, safety in local neighbourhood and relationships with peers, parents/carers and teachers. See Appendix 1 for more details.

The #BeeWell team signed up 93% of mainstream secondary schools in Summer 2021, as well as special schools, PRUs, independent schools and Alternative Provision. At least 3 in 4 schools were signed up in every local authority in GM.

The first wave of the survey was completed by Year 8 and Year 10 pupils in Autumn 2021, with almost 40,000 young people taking part. This represents 60% of all young people in that age bracket in the city region and represents the biggest survey of its kind in the country.

Schools across Greater Manchester received their bespoke data dashboards on January 31st 2022. These dashboards provide schools with insights into the strengths and needs of their pupils, with the ability to explore trends by sex, FSM eligibility, age, and SEND status. The Anna Freud Centre are providing support in interpreting the results, with a series of webinars and one-on-one sessions with interested schools.

A neighbourhood-level dashboard will be published at the end of March 2022. This will show variation in wellbeing across different communities, as well as insights into the key drivers of young people's wellbeing. Young people will be central to shaping the key messages that emerge from the neighbourhood analysis.

Emerging key findings

Overall wellbeing

National comparisons are limited, but key wellbeing scores at a GM-level (see Appendix 2 for more information) seem consistent with what we know from other large studies that have used one or more of the measures included in the #BeeWell Survey.

The average psychological wellbeing score of young people across GM was 23.1 for the SWEMWBS measure (possible scores range from 7-35). An NHS Digital report, published in 2020 (available [here](#)), found that the mean wellbeing score for 11 to 16 years olds was 24.6. Young people responding to the ONS4 Life Satisfaction item gave an average score of 6.6 out of 10. The Children's Society weighted average for 10–17 year-olds in April – June 2021 (report available [here](#)) was 7.6.

16% of young people responding to the Me and My Feelings measure reported a high level of emotional difficulties. These thresholds do not represent a clinical diagnosis but indicate young people scoring in this range are likely to need significant additional support.

Wellbeing inequalities

Inequalities persist in wellbeing scores, particularly across gender identity¹ and sexual orientation.

There are noteworthy gaps in wellbeing scores between males and females which are statistically significant:

- The life satisfaction average score is 6.2 out of 10 for girls but 7.2 for boys.
- 7% of boys report a high level of difficulties for the Negative Affect measure, compared with 22% of girls.
- Non-binary young people also report lower levels of wellbeing than boys, with even more pronounced differences – for example, 50% of non-binary young people report a high level of difficulties for the Negative Affect measure.

There are sizeable inequalities for young people who identify as LGBTQ+, with significant differences between young people who identify as heterosexual and young people who identify as gay, lesbian, bi, or pansexual, as well as transgender and cisgender young people.

There are smaller wellbeing inequalities across ethnicity, SEND status, carer status, FSM eligibility, caregiving responsibilities, and age. However, these are not of a sufficient magnitude to warrant significant concern. More details are available in the #BeeWell Inequalities Evidence Briefing (available [here](#); see Appendix 3 for a breakdown of the inequalities dimensions included in the briefing).

¹ This report uses self-identified gender wherever those data are available.

Health and routines: mixed picture for physical activity

Across Greater Manchester, 1 in 3 young people (34%) are reaching the recommended levels of physical activity set by the Government's Chief Medical Officer of at least one hour per day. This falls to 27% of girls, 27% of Asian pupils, and 18% of Chinese pupils.

Despite this, 83% of young people report they feel they have good, very good or excellent physical health, including 81% of girls. We also know that 67% of YP do sports, exercise or other physical activities at least once a week outside of school.

Finally, 40% of young people said they don't normally get enough sleep to feel awake and concentrate on their schoolwork during the day; for girls, this figure was 45%.

Hobbies & entertainment: Young people are happy with what they can do

73% of young people can almost always/often do the things that they like in their free time. This figure was celebrated by the Youth Steering Group. It varies by gender (68% of girls, 60% of non-binary young people, up to 80% of boys), and socio-economic status (70% of pupils eligible for FSM).

There is also variation at a neighbourhood level, and by ethnicity and sexual orientation. The figure varies from 63% to 83% across GM neighbourhoods, as well as from 66% of Black pupils, and 62% of Chinese pupils, to 76% of White pupils. It also falls to 62% of gay/lesbian pupils and 61% of bi/pansexual pupils.

50% of Y8s spend time on other creative hobbies at least once a week, in contrast to 40% of Y10s. The average daily time spent on social media is 4.4 hours. This varies by school from 2.19 hours to over 5 hours per day.

Environment and society: Young people have good places to spend their free time

71% of young people agree or strongly agree that they have good places to spend free time, while 12% disagree or strongly disagree. However, the proportion agreeing varies from 61% to 80% across neighbourhoods. It also varies from 72% of heterosexual pupils to 60% of gay/lesbian pupils, 56% of bi/pansexual pupils and 61% of trans young people.

3 in 4 young people agree or strongly agree that their area is safe to live in; this drops to 69% of young people eligible for FSM.

58% of young people agree or strongly agree that people support each other's wellbeing in their area. 63% of Y8s agree with this statement, but this drops to 52% of Y10s.

Relationships: Discrimination is a feature of many communities

37% of Black pupils report experiencing discrimination because of race, skin colour, or where they were born (occasionally, some of the time, often or always). 42% of Chinese pupils report experiencing discrimination, 21% of Asian pupils, and 29% of pupils of mixed ethnicity.

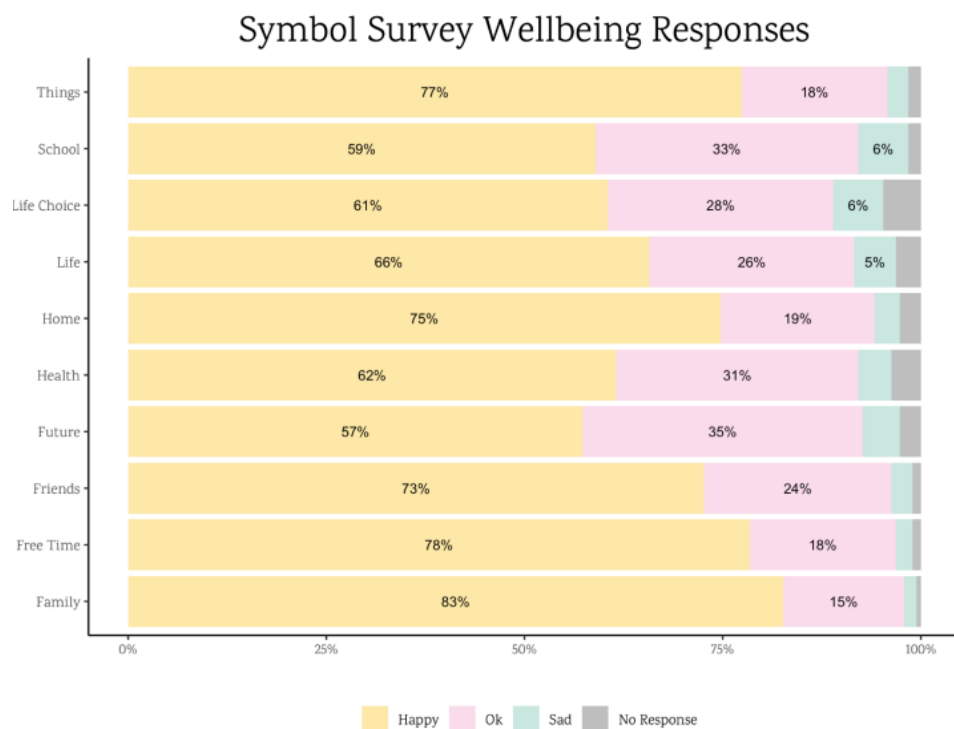
35% of young people who identify as gay or lesbian report at least occasionally experiencing discrimination because of their gender, which rises to 39% of young people who identify as bi or pansexual. 42% of transgender young people report experiencing discrimination because of their gender.

1 in 2 young people who identify as gay/lesbian report experiencing discrimination because of their sexual orientation, which rises to 2 in 3 young people who identify as bi or pansexual.

19% of pupils with SEND report experiencing discrimination because of their disability, compared with 5% of non-SEND pupils.

Non-mainstream school findings

Pupils in non-mainstream schools were able to complete a short version of the survey. In addition, a symbol-based version of the survey was also created for non-verbal young people or young people with profound and multiple learning disabilities. The following findings provide a summary of the data for the nearly 200 pupils who completed the #Beewell Symbol Survey.



Note: Percentage labels are only displayed for percentages greater than 5% and all percentages have been rounded to avoid disclosure.

Next steps

Neighbourhood results

The University of Manchester is producing a neighbourhood dashboard to provide insights into how wellbeing domains and drivers vary across GM's 66 neighbourhoods. It will also permit users to interpret context-adjusted scores for neighbourhoods, and scores highlighting elevated need.

Support for schools

All schools have been offered one-on-one follow up support sessions with the Anna Freud Centre to interpret their data.

In the summer term, schools will be invited to attend Targeted Learning Sets facilitated by the Anna Freud Centre, which will bring together school leaders to share ideas and best practice around specific wellbeing challenges that have been identified.

Whole system response

More than 100 partner organisations have joined the #BeeWell Coalition and committed to responding to the #BeeWell data. These include service delivery partners (e.g. 42nd Street, Place2Be), business partners (e.g. Northern Powerhouse Partnership, Timpson Group), funding partners, and research partners (e.g. Institute for Health Equity at UCL, Education Policy Institute). #BeeWell is working closely with Youth Alliance GM to support communities of practice and shared learning in the voluntary and community sector in response to the #BeeWell data.

Social prescribing pilot

#BeeWell has secured funding for a £250k pilot programme in partnership with Greater Manchester Mental Health in Education and BBC Children in Need. The pilot programme will operate in five Greater Manchester neighbourhoods, identified based on needs and strengths found in the #BeeWell survey data.

Pupils in participating schools will be trained as #BeeWell Champions and receive a Level 2 Royal Society for Public Health qualification. Young people will access a community implementation fund worth £20k per neighbourhood to commission activities in their local area that support mental health and wellbeing.

Quick wins

#BeeWell partners have started to announce their early responses to the data:

GreaterSport on behalf of **GM Moving** have announced that they will be launching a youth-led campaign on physical activity and mental health. The campaign is in response to the finding in the #BeeWell data that only 1 in 3 young people in GM are currently meeting the recommended daily physical activity recommendation set by the Government's Chief Medical Officer.

The campaign will draw in partners from across Greater Manchester to celebrate the benefits of physical activity and increase engagement across the city region. The campaign will be designed and led by young people, to ensure physical activity is advocated for in an inclusive, accessible and exciting way for young people. It will also give specific focus to girls, building on the #BeeWell findings uncovering the extent of the gender gap in physical activity coming out of the pandemic.

Reform Radio have announced a new monthly radio show that will support young people to respond creatively to the #BeeWell data and focus on the issues that matter to them.

Young Manchester will be launching a new youth-led commissioning pot for young people to spend on mental health and wellbeing activities in their local area in response to the findings.

The Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership are launching a youth-led commissioning pot for LGBTQ+ young people to spend on activities that will support and promote mental wellbeing of the LGBTQ+ community.

Continuing the conversation with young people

#BeeWell's ambition is to start the conversation with young people about how to support their mental health and wellbeing across Greater Manchester. The next phase will be focused on how to continue the conversation with young people and involve them in the response to the findings. A few projects are already underway (outlined below) but there is an aspiration that this data will spark further conversations in communities across Greater Manchester.

Politics Project: In July 2021, the GM Children's Board agreed to participate in digital surgeries to discuss the #BeeWell findings with young people across Greater Manchester. The Politics Project will facilitate 10 dialogue sessions between young people, schools and decision-makers across the ten Greater Manchester local authorities in the summer term 2022.

Youth-led commissioning: The #BeeWell Youth Steering Group, made up of young people across GM, will have access to £10,000 per year to commission activities in response to the #BeeWell findings.

Young Researchers Programme: 20 Year 10 pupils across GM are being supported to develop their research knowledge and skills, to work with the #BeeWell team and the

University of Manchester to interpret the survey responses and identify future areas of research.

Reporting cycle




The #BeeWell report will go to the Greater Manchester Combined Authority on March 25th 2022, and a press release will be published on March 18th.

Appendix 1: Domains and drivers of wellbeing

The #BeeWell survey has two distinct sections that young people have told us matters most: the domains and drivers of wellbeing. Over the course of 5 months, more than 150 young people were engaged in a range of workshops to understand what wellbeing means to them, what factors influence their wellbeing, and what makes them thrive. These workshops, conducted in #BeeWell Pathfinder schools, were combined with inputs from a Questionnaire Advisory Group of academics, mental health professionals, healthcare representatives, education experts, teachers, and young people, amongst others, to inform our approach to understanding and measuring wellbeing (and what drives wellbeing) in the project.

The following domains and drivers were then adapted as #BeeWell’s definition of wellbeing:

Domains

-  1. Meaning, Purpose and Control
-  2. Understanding Yourself
-  3. Emotions

Drivers

-  1. Health and Routines
-  2. Hobbies and Entertainment
-  3. Relationships
-  4. School
-  5. Environment and Society
-  6. Future

In the coming months, #BeeWell will be releasing further in-depth research into domains and drivers of wellbeing not covered in this overview briefing.

Appendix 2: Key wellbeing domains.

Wellbeing domain	Measure	N of items	Sample item	Response format	Interpretation	Mean score	Standard deviation
Psychological wellbeing (feeling good and functioning well)	Short Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (SWEMWBS)	7	"I've been feeling useful"	Strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree	Higher score = higher wellbeing	23.08 (possible range 7 to 35)	5.82
Life satisfaction (overall quality of life as a whole)	Office for National Statistics (ONS) Life Satisfaction item	1	Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?	0-10 scale, with 0 = not at all, 10 = completely	Higher score = higher life satisfaction	6.63 (possible range 0 to 10)	2.50
Stress (feeling overwhelmed by the demands of daily life)	Perceived Stress Scale – 4 item version (PSS-4)	4	In the last month, how often have you felt that difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?	Never, almost never, sometimes, fairly often, very often	Higher score = higher stress	7.29 (possible range 0 to 16)	3.01
Negative affect (experience of negative emotions such as sadness and worry)	Me and My Feelings (M&MF), emotional problems subscale	10	I worry a lot	Never, sometimes, always	Higher score = higher negative affect	6.71 (possible range 0 to 20)	4.73

Appendix 3: Inequalities dimensions.

Inequalities dimension	Source	Categories	Notes
Gender identity	Survey	Male (inc trans boy) (41.71%) Female (inc trans girl) (40.03%) Non-binary (2.36%) Describe myself in another way (2.77%) Prefer not to say (5.27%) Missing (7.86%)	
Sexual orientation	Survey	Heterosexual/straight (67.50%) Gay/lesbian (2.66%) Bi/pansexual (7.65%) Describe myself in another way (3.73%) Prefer not to say (9.07%) Missing (9.39%)	
Transgender status	Survey and LA	Cisgender (79.73%) Transgender (7.08%) Missing (13.2%)	Correspondence between sex (LA data) ⁴ and gender identity (survey data). Missingness primarily driven by non-response on gender identity item
Ethnicity	LA	White (64.35%) Black (5.38%) Asian (17.74%) Chinese (0.78%) Any other ethnic group (2.26%) Mixed (5.76%) Unclassified (1.86%) Missing (1.89%)	
Age	LA	Year 8 (53.67%) Year 10 (46.33%)	
Socio-economic status	LA	Eligible (24.94%) for Free School Meals in the last six years Not eligible (73.16%) Missing (1.90%)	
Special educational needs	LA	Identified as having special educational needs and disabilities (SEND; in receipt of SEND Support or Education, Health and Care plan, 13.99%) No SEND (84.45%) Missing (1.56%)	
Caregiving responsibilities	Survey	Caregiving responsibilities (38.96%) No caregiving responsibilities (51.54%) Missing (9.59%)	Young people were asked if they care for a family member who has an illness, disability, mental health condition, or drug/alcohol dependency ⁵
Language	LA	English as an additional language (21.23%) English as first language (77.49%) Missing (1.28%)	