



#BeeWell

**Headline Findings:
Autumn 2023 Survey Results**

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Introduction

This report summarises the headline findings from the #BeeWell surveys completed by over 38,000 pupils in 250 schools across Greater Manchester, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth, and Southampton in autumn 2023. Without the dedicated support of all the schools and young people who have participated to date, #BeeWell wouldn't be possible.

With around 70% of the survey questions consistent across both Greater Manchester (GM) and Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth, and Southampton (HIPS), we have a clear picture of the commonalities in young people's experience in two areas, as well as insights into specific domains and drivers of wellbeing at the regional level.

This highlight report provides an initial summary of the emerging headlines from the 2023/24 #BeeWell survey. The headline findings in this report will be followed in due course by thematic briefings breaking down our analysis of the domains and drivers influencing young people's wellbeing.

Further detail on the headline findings specific to GM and HIPS can be found in our [regional headline finding reports](#) on our website alongside more information about the #BeeWell programme: www.beewellprogramme.org

Headline Findings

Analysing the survey data from over 38,000 young people across all 14 Local Authorities in Greater Manchester and Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth, and Southampton, the following findings have emerged:

- Overall, life satisfaction and mental wellbeing scores of young people surveyed are in line with expected scores based on comparable studies. However, there are **persistent inequalities in wellbeing scores**, particularly across gender and sexual orientation.
- **Gay and lesbian young people reported experiencing the lowest wellbeing** and reported that they are least satisfied with their lives, followed closely by bisexual and pansexual young people, and those who identify as transgender and gender-diverse.
- **83% of young people in Greater Manchester have hope and optimism for the future, returning to pre-pandemic levels** (83% in 2019, 72% in 2020, 80% in

2021 and 81% in 2022.)¹ However, **inequalities persist** across gender, sexual orientation and other demographics.

- **Eight in ten** young people in Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton report that they feel they have **good, very good or excellent physical health**.
- **37% of young people** across all 14 local authorities are meeting or exceeding the Chief Medical Officers' (CMO) recommended **1 hour a day of physical activity**. Girls are less likely to participate in this level of physical activity with **47% of cisgender boys²** meeting the CMO guideline compared to only **28% of cisgender girls**.
- **Almost half (48%)** of young people have **sweets, chocolate, crisps, or fizzy drinks** on at least **5-6 days a week**.

Persistent Inequalities In Wellbeing

Survey data from across all 14 local authorities in Greater Manchester, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth, and Southampton shows persistent wellbeing inequalities across gender and sexual orientation. These findings are similar to patterns observed in the first two years of the #BeeWell programme in Greater Manchester:

- **Gay and lesbian young people experience the lowest wellbeing** and report that they are least satisfied with their lives, followed closely by bisexual and pansexual young people, and those who identify as transgender and gender-diverse.
- **41% of young people who identify as lesbian or gay reported a high level of emotional difficulties** (e.g. worrying a lot, feeling unhappy, having problems sleeping) **compared to just 12% of heterosexual young people**. This figure rose to 45% for young people who identify as bisexual or pansexual.
- There are also inequalities in gender with **22% of cisgender girls reporting a high level of emotional difficulties compared with 6% of cisgender boys**. The proportion reporting high levels of emotional difficulties rose to 34% for transgender and gender diverse young people and 21% for those questioning their gender.

¹ Prior to #BeeWell, the Greater Manchester Combined Authority delivered a Life Readiness Survey (LRS) to Year 10s in the city-region. #BeeWell included these questions when it launched in 2021. The sample size was much smaller in the original LRS, and resulting trends should be treated with caution. However, the year-on-year analysis of Year 10 data below presents a unique opportunity to understand the impact of the pandemic on young people's readiness for life over time.

² Cisgender is a term that describes a person whose gender is the same or mostly the same as they were assigned at birth.

Greater Manchester (Third Year Delivering #BeeWell)

With three years of survey data in Greater Manchester, a preliminary longitudinal analysis shows that:

- There appears to have been a **slight improvement in the life satisfaction and psychological wellbeing scores** of pupils in **Year 10 in 2023** compared to those in **Year 10 in 2021**.
- **4 in 5 young people have hope and optimism for the future, returning to pre-pandemic levels** (83% in 2019, 72% in 2020, 80% in 2021, 81% in 2022, 83% in 2023.) However, **inequalities persist** across gender, sexual orientation, and other demographics.
- **Young people are less likely to agree they have good places to spend free time as they get older** with 75% of Year 8 pupils agreeing they had good places to spend free time in 2021 compared to only 60% of the same cohort of young people when they reached Year 10 in 2023.
- Just under **7 in the average class of 22** pupils reported experiencing **discrimination due to race, skin colour or where they were born**. Young people reporting experiencing discrimination has been found to increase as they get older.

Further breakdown of the headline findings from Greater Manchester can be found in a separate report on our website: <https://beewellprogramme.org/research/publications/>

Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth And Southampton (First Year Delivering #BeeWell)

Having delivered the survey to Year 8 and 10 pupils data in Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth, and Southampton for the first time, the key findings emerging are:

- **Use of e-cigarettes and alcohol is much more commonplace than other substances such as cannabis**. Current or previous users of e-cigarettes were significantly more likely to be older, eligible for free school meals, girls, trans and gender diverse, or questioning their gender identity. For alcohol, current or previous users were significantly more likely to be trans and gender diverse and older pupils.

- Young people experiencing **higher levels of peer pressure were more likely to be current or previous users of both e-cigarettes and alcohol.**
- On average, **nearly nine out of ten young people reported having visited the dentist in the last 12 months.** However, there is notable variation in this across the 46 HIPS neighbourhoods.
- **Around one in ten young people in HIPS reported that they often or always feel lonely.** This is almost double the national average where, in similar studies, 5.5% of 11–16-year-olds in England say they often or always feel lonely (NHS Digital, 2023).

Further breakdown of the headline findings from Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton can be found in a separate report on our website:

<https://beewellprogramme.org/research/publications/>

Next Steps

Neighbourhood dashboards for both regions will be updated at the end of March 2024 and available on the #BeeWell website.

Young people will be central to shaping the actions and key messages that emerge from the neighbourhood analysis. Sharing place-based data with young people and listening to their views will be used to develop narratives and co-design localised responses. #BeeWell utilises the [Lundy Model of Participation](#) to embed this approach in all our work with young people. Last year, as part of the #BeeWell Champions pilot, young people in Greater Manchester allocated a commission of £100,000, granted by Children in Need, to fund wellbeing activities in their local communities in response to the #BeeWell data. This year, young people are developing action plans in response to the first #BeeWell survey in Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth, and Southampton as part of a competition designed to increase wellbeing initiatives across the region.

Schools received bespoke reports on the survey responses of their pupils earlier this year and have access to free 1-1 sessions and group seminars provided by the Child Outcomes Research Consortium at Anna Freud to help understand their data and produce action plans in response.

Local government and health organisations will be supported to use the latest findings. The #BeeWell programme will continue to work closely with colleagues at local authorities to map survey data with local priorities. Our survey data has been cited in multiple local

government strategies and plans in GM to date, putting youth voice at the heart of decisions made across local government and health systems.

We will support our **coalition of partners** to drive action across society to improve young people's wellbeing. Since 2021, the #BeeWell programme has leveraged over £1 million of investment into coalition partners to improve young people's wellbeing. Exciting new partnerships have formed with national and local organisations as we've expanded into Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth, and Southampton.

About #BeeWell

Developed in response to a growing concern for the wellbeing of young people in the UK, highlighted by the [OECD PISA report](#), #BeeWell is a collaboration between The University of Manchester, The Gregson Family Foundation and Anna Freud, who, together with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA), founded the programme in 2019.

#BeeWell believes that young people's wellbeing is as important as their academic attainment. Using a co-designed survey, we listen to the voices of as many young people as possible; publish the results privately to schools and publicly by neighbourhood; and drive action across society to improve young people's wellbeing. #BeeWell's mission is to see this approach implemented nationally by 2030.