



Youth Health + Wellbeing Survey 2025 Findings

Before 1999, there was very little nationally representative data about the health, mental health, and wellbeing of young people in New Zealand. This led to the development of the Youth2000 survey series by a group of academics, the Adolescent Health Research Group, whose work has since established a foundational evidence base on youth wellbeing. The Ministry of Social Development (MSD) undertook the What About Me? survey in 2021, the findings from which built on those from the Youth2000 series.

We would like to express our sincere thanks to all the young people who participated in the Youth Health and Wellbeing Survey (YHWS) 2025. Ensuring the safety and wellbeing of these young people was paramount throughout the survey.

Reported percentages are based on the proportion of young people who answered the question but did not select “not sure” or “prefer not to say”.

What is the Youth Health and Wellbeing Survey 2025?

The YHWS 2025 represents the merging and continuation of the What About Me? and the Youth2000 surveys. Taken together the surveys track youth health and wellbeing trends from the past 25-years onward. The plan is to conduct this survey every three to five years.

The YHWS is the biggest survey capturing youth voices (that is, young people answer it, not a caregiver or teacher on their behalf) in the country. Because of this, YHWS results are widely used by people working in government, in universities, and in non-government organisations to understand how things might be changing for young people, including things that are positively or negatively impacting them.

The YHWS is a digital survey that young people aged 13 to 19 years completed on tablets at their education provider (e.g., secondary school, kura) from March to September 2025. To see the YHWS 2025 Questionnaire in English or Te Reo Māori, go to www.msd.govt.nz/YHWS.

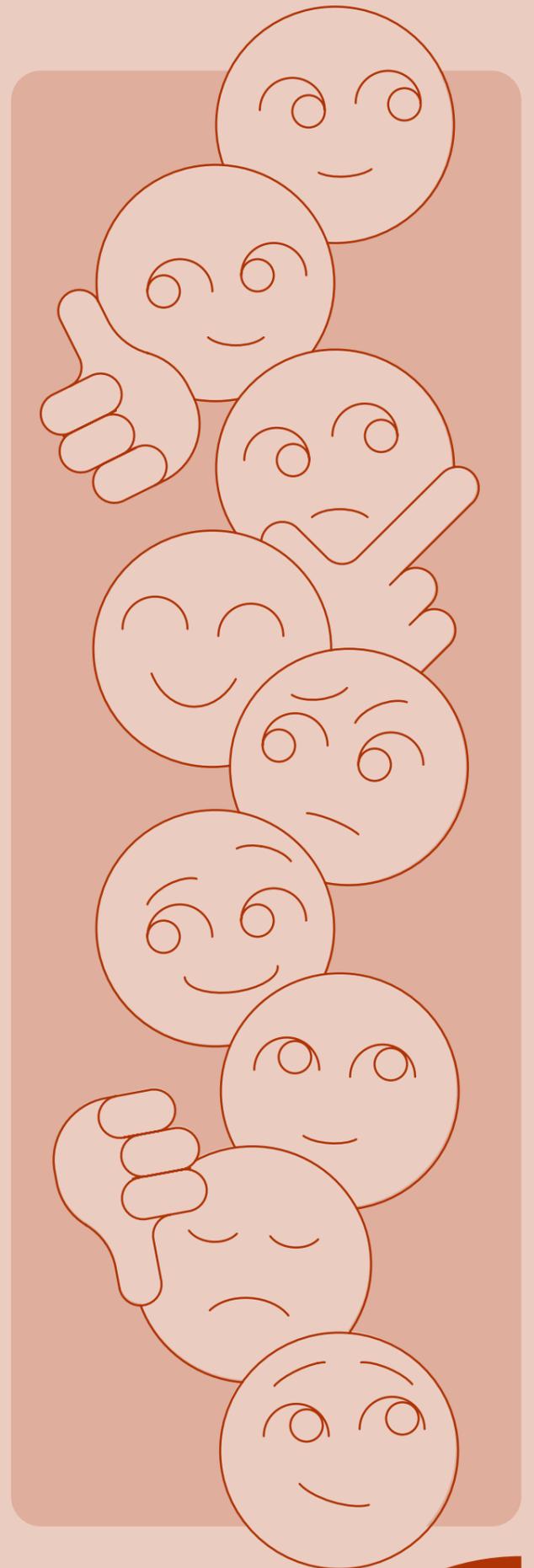
MSD worked with an experienced international research company called Ipsos to get its plans approved by the Health and Disability Ethics Committee, and took the YHWS to young people to complete, and collected all their responses.

Thanks to the efforts of the Ipsos team and school administrators, around 9,400 young people completed the survey, from all over the country (North Island, South Island, those living in cities, and those living in the country/rurally).

Are there limits to these findings and results?

The results that we share in this infographic have some limitations. These results only reflect young people at secondary school. We trialled surveying outside of schools, but only found a very small number of people willing to participate. While we have done some calculations to represent young peoples’ experiences as a percentage of New Zealand’s secondary school population, these numbers might not perfectly reflect all young people.

For more information about how we and Ipsos undertook the YHWS, you can read the YHWS 2025 Technical Report at www.msd.govt.nz/YHWS.

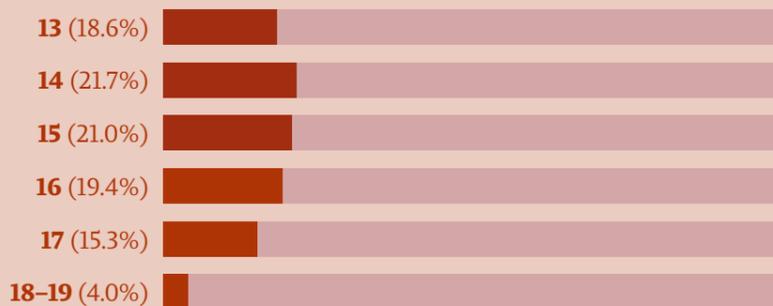


About you

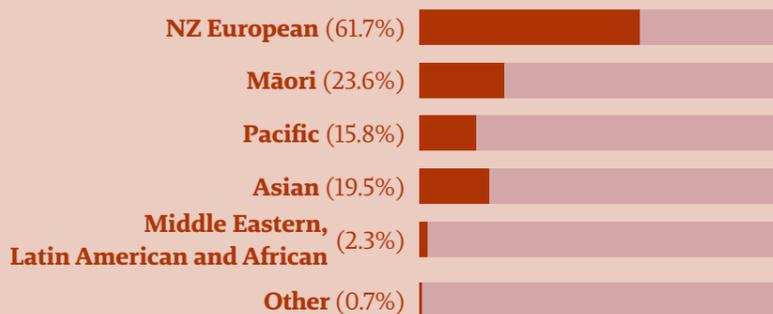
This section presents a summary of demographic features of the 9,400 young New Zealanders aged 13 to 19, who completed the YHWS in 2025. Further demographic breakdowns can be found in the YHWS 2025 Data Table at www.msd.govt.nz/YHWS.

Demographic features of the YHWS respondents

2025 Respondents Age Distribution



YHWS 2025 Respondents Total Ethnicity distribution



As per Stats NZ Guidelines

Gender — 48.1% female; 50.5% male; 1.4% another gender or gender identity. When asked about sex at birth 0.2% of young people identified as intersex.

Disability — 10.5% self-identified having a long-term disability lasting six months or more; 19.9% were identified as disabled using the Washington Group Short Set measure as used by Whaikaha – Ministry of Disabled People.

Rainbow — 15.2%¹ of young people were identified as Rainbow (this result should be regarded as an estimate, based on StatsNZ and academic guidance, it counts young people who identify as attracted to the same sex, more than one sex, who do not experience sexual attraction (or were not sure), and who identify as a gender different to their sex at birth). The survey did not ask young people if they self-identify as belonging to the Rainbow community.

Region — 35.6% of participants were located in the wider Auckland Region; 42.3% were from the rest of the North Island; 22.1% were from the South Island.

Rural/Urban — 68.6% came from large or major urban areas; 26.2% from a small-medium urban area; and 5.1% from rural areas.

Birth status — 76.3% were born in New Zealand. Of people who were not born in New Zealand 6.0% identified as refugees.

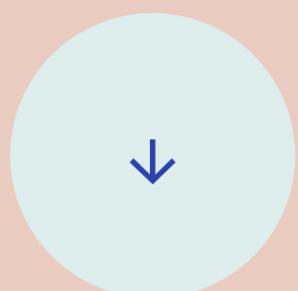
Language — 98.2% speak English; 5.6% speak Te Reo Māori; 0.6% speak NZSL; 23.5% speak other languages (not including Te Reo Māori and NZSL).

Te Reo Māori — 8.8% speak Te Reo Māori fairly well, well, or very well; 49.9% speak a few words or phrases of Te Reo Māori; and 27.7% are not at all able to speak Te Reo Māori.

Life satisfaction is a measure commonly applied across surveys of wellbeing in the OECD² reporting, where people rank life satisfaction from 0-10, where high scores reflect higher life satisfaction. About 71.3% of young people reported higher life satisfaction (scores 7 to 10), and 28.7% of YHWS 2025 participants reported lower life satisfaction scores between 0-6.

¹ The Rainbow definition has been discussed with Stats NZ and a key academic working in the field. From the questions asked, it has been determined that rainbow would be defined by the following: Gender is different from sex at birth; Gender is “Another gender / gender identity”; Sex at birth is “Intersex”; If the responses to “Who are you attracted to (how do you experience attraction)?” are any of the following: “I am attracted to people of the same gender (e.g. female attracted to females, male attracted to males)”, “I am attracted to two or more genders (e.g. both males and females, or, pansexual, bisexual etc.)”, “I am not sexually attracted to any gender”, “Not sure”.

² Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development



Health

This section presents a summary of health outcomes as reported by a group of around 9,400 young New Zealanders aged 13 to 19 from secondary schools in 2025. More detailed information on health and health-related topics (general, menstrual, sexual health, health care access, and substance use) including demographic breakdowns by Māori, Pacific Peoples, Asian, European, Rainbow indicator, Years grouping, gender, disability (based on Washington Group Short Set), and region can be found in the full YHWS 2025 Data Table at www.msd.govt.nz/YHWS.

General health

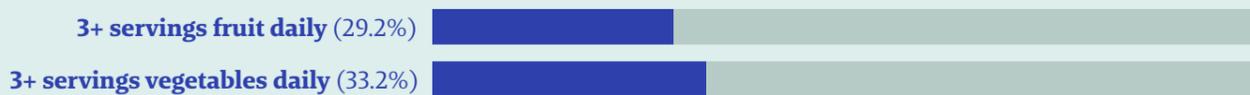
Overall health



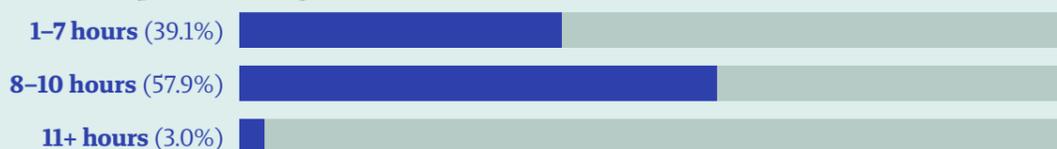
Exercise in the past week



Nutrition



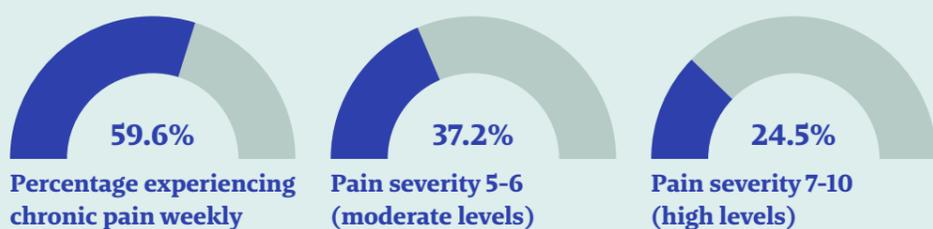
Usual hours of sleep each day (24 hours)



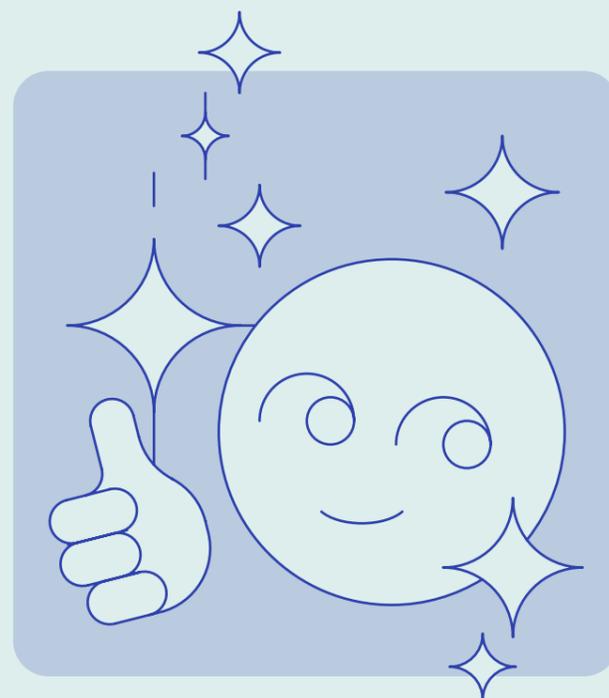
The New Zealand Health Survey is an annual publication about the health and wellbeing of adults and children in New Zealand. The Ministry of Health's sleep recommendations are adapted from the National Sleep Foundation recommendations. The recommended hours of sleep for people aged 15 to 17 years is 8 to 10 hours.

Chronic pain

16.0% self-identified as having **chronic pain**, of these:



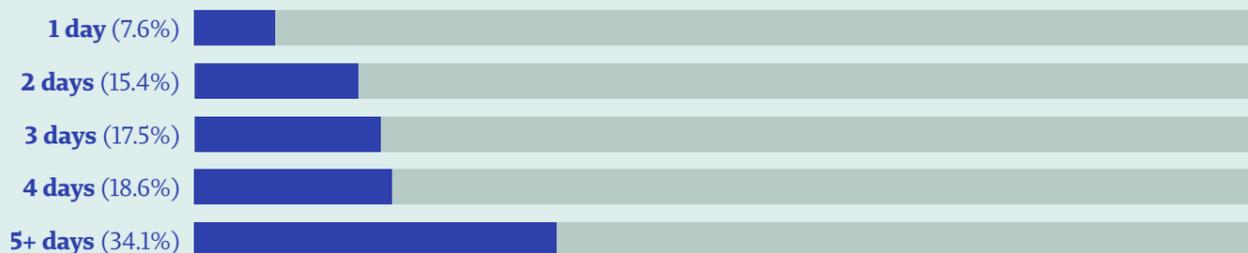
Pain severity was reported on the Faces Pain Scale, commonly used to assess paediatric pain in acute medical settings



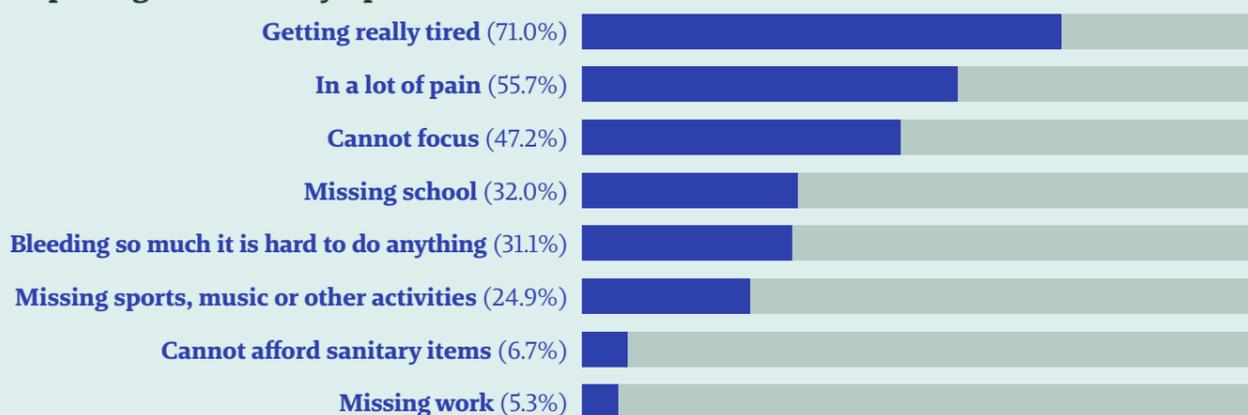
Menstrual health

93.0% of all young people who identified they were female at birth menstruate. 93.3% of young people who said they menstruate reported being significantly affected by it for at least a day when they do menstruate.

Days impacted by menstrual symptoms



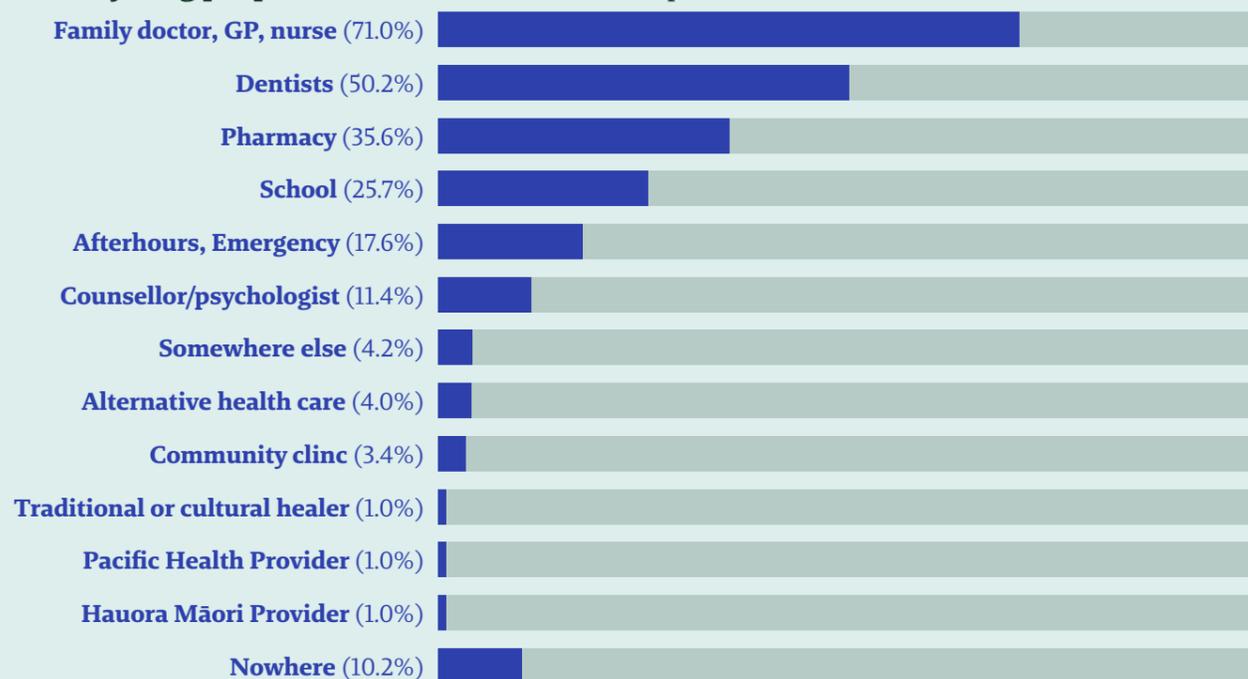
Impairing menstrual symptoms



Health care

17.2% of young people were not able to see a doctor, nurse, or other health care worker when they have wanted or needed to in the last 12 months. 5.2% of young people reported being treated unfairly by a health professional. Young people who reported as being treated unfairly by a health professional said it was because of their age (47.5%), disability (15.0%), ethnicity (13.5%), gender (29.8%), sexuality (10.0%), and other reasons (29.4%).

Where young people went for health care in the past 12 months



Results are based on the main survey where young people were asked "in the last 12 months, which of the following places have you used for health care?". This is a multi-choice question, more than one option could be chosen.

Sexual health

15.7% of young people shared that they are sexually active (that is they have had consensual sex).

The majority of young people get advice about sex and relationships from adults (35.0%) and their friends (36.5%). About one in ten get advice from a health professional (9.4%) and about one in six get advice online (16.8%). A third (35.3%) of young people reported not seeking advice from anyone/anywhere.

Where young people identified as being sexually active, safe sex practices were being used by 53.5% of young people to protect against sexually transmitted infection the last time they had sex. Of people who said they were having consensual sex about eight in ten (78.0%) said that sex is a positive or enjoyable experience, that is, reported sex positive attitudes.

17.7% of all young people reported looking at porn weekly, with 5.0% of young people feeling pressured to do things they or someone else saw in porn.

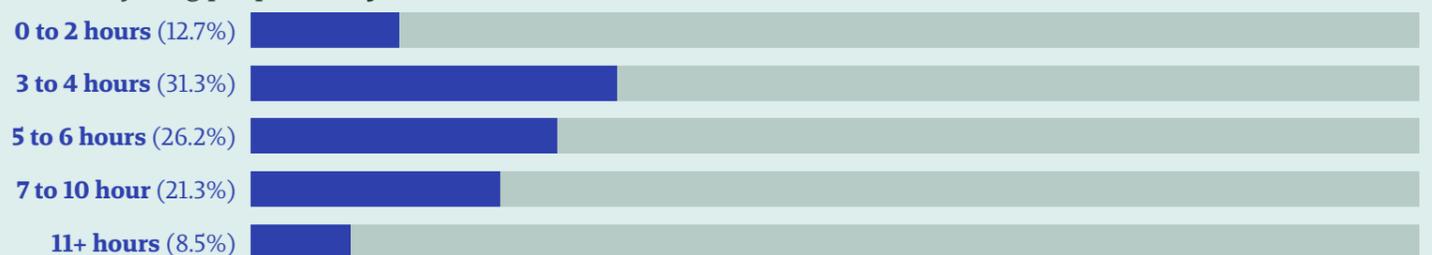
Substance use

About two fifths (40.9%) of young people have drunk alcohol, 23.7% of those reported drinking alcohol at least once a week. About 33.0% of young people have vaped nicotine, with 36.8% of those vaping nicotine at least once a week. About 11.8% have smoked cigarettes, and of those, 11.5% smoked at least once a week. About 15.4% have used cannabis/marijuana, and of those, 21.0% reported using it at least once a week.

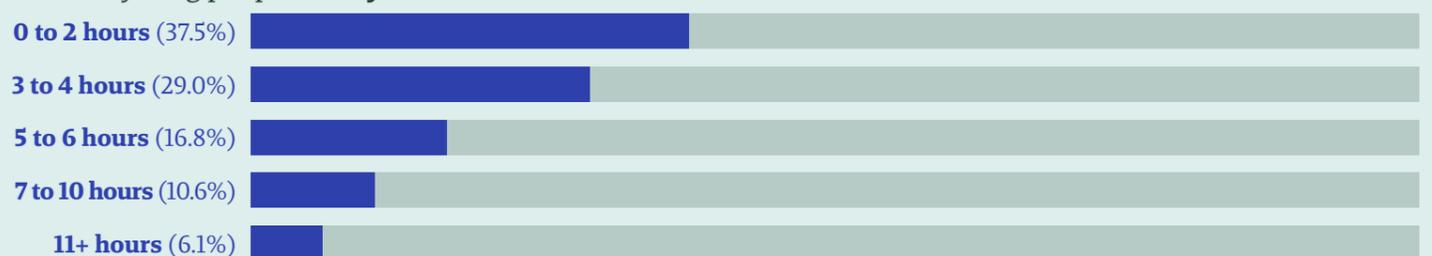
Where young people indicated they had not already stopped or quit use of a substance: 34.4% have tried to cut down or give up and 7.0% want to quit alcohol; 64.3% have tried and 17.3% want to quit vaping; 60.7% have tried and 8.1% want to quit cigarettes; and 46.9% have tried and 13.9% want to quit using marijuana.

Screen and social media use

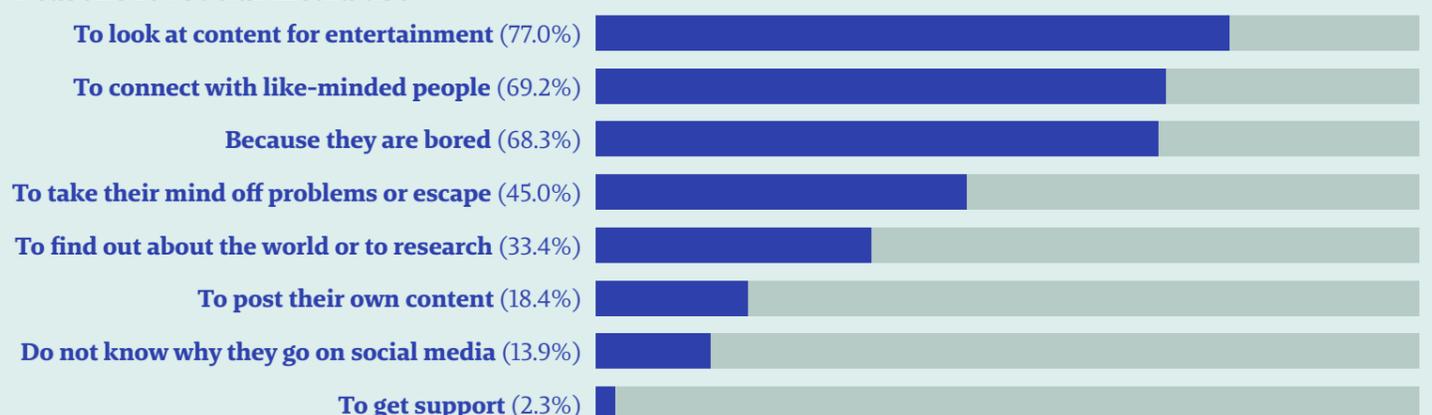
Rates of young peoples **daily screen use**



Rates of young peoples **daily social media use**



Reasons for social media use



This is a multi-choice question, more than one option could be chosen



Mental health and wellbeing

This section presents a summary of mental health and wellbeing outcomes as reported by a group of around 9,400 young New Zealanders aged 13 to 19 in 2025. More detailed information on mental health and related topics (experiences of distress, mental health symptom prevalence, mental health care access, and self-injury and suicide behaviours) including demographic breakdowns by Māori, Pacific Peoples, Asian, European, Rainbow indicator, Years grouping, gender, disability (based on Washington Group Short Set), and region can be found in the full YHWS 2025 Data Table at www.msd.govt.nz/YHWS.

The questionnaire includes standardised screening tools used internationally in clinical and survey settings to assess mental wellbeing against set criteria and estimate mental health/psychological distress. Screening tools are not diagnostic and do not report the prevalence of mental health diagnoses in the population. Because some of these tools have been newly applied in the YHWS 2025 the following findings are not currently comparable to previous survey data and offer a refreshed snapshot of youth psychological distress at this point in time.

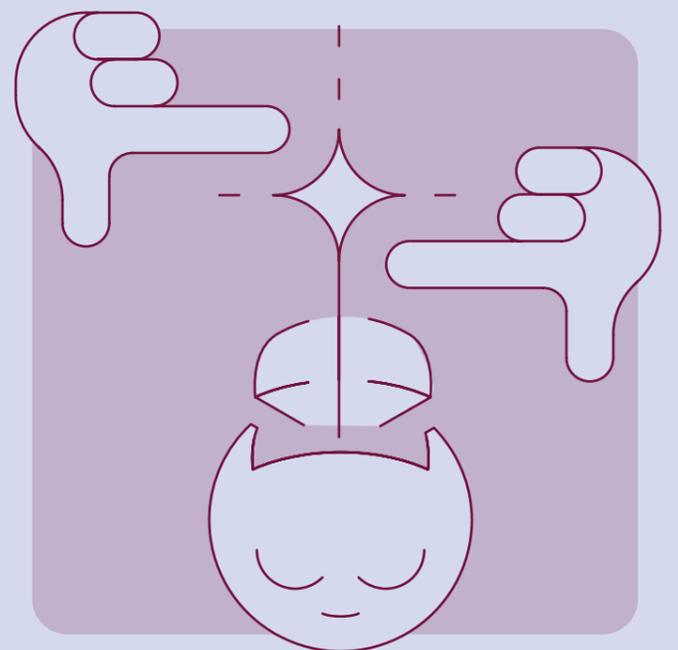
Just a little note to pause and consider your wellbeing

Some of the following topics and results can be upsetting to know about.

If you have been thinking about your mental health or wellbeing recently, or been thinking about getting some support, we have pulled together some resources here that you might find helpful [here-to-help-yhws.pdf](#)

Overall wellbeing

Overall, scores on the WHO-5 measure of wellbeing (feeling good in yourself), were high overall with 65.6% reporting good to excellent wellbeing. In addition, 69.0% are proud of who they are, and 66.6% feel they are accepted by others. These are similar to results from the What About Me? survey in 2021. However, scores on clinical screening tools for mental distress were also high. Findings may reflect the complex nature of mental health and that it may be possible for someone to be experiencing mental health symptoms while also experiencing a sense of wellbeing. That is, the experiences of mental distress and mental wellbeing are not mutually exclusive.



Psychological distress and symptoms

Ensuring the safety and wellbeing of these young people was paramount throughout the survey. This included processes for students whose responses indicated that they may be at immediate risk of self-harm or suicide.

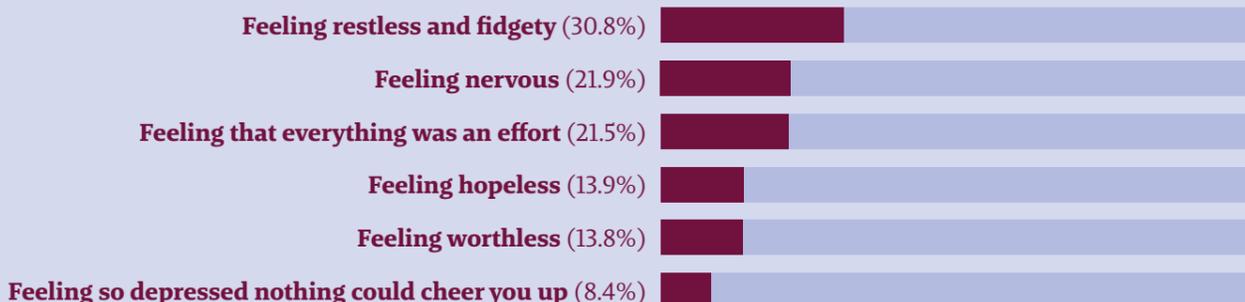
Where young people answered all questions required to determine a score based on the Kessler-6 screening tool, about a fifth (21.2%) reported symptoms levels that meet the threshold for probable psychological distress. Conversely, 78.8% reported symptoms that met thresholds for no-to-low levels of psychological distress.³

One in eight (13.2%) reported high levels of depressive symptoms on the CES-DC-10 tool, indicating that they would benefit from assessment by mental health professionals.⁴ About 44.4% reported moderate levels of depressive symptoms and may benefit from further assessment.

Where young people answered at least one question that could be scored on the DAWBA screening tool, a third (31.6%) reported levels of symptoms indicating they may be at high risk of eating problems and may benefit from further assessment.⁵

One in five (19.0%) self-identified as currently experiencing a mental health condition, and a further 17.3% were not sure if they were currently experiencing a mental health condition. Of these, 28.8% of young people reported receiving a mental health diagnosis from a mental health professional.

Proportions of young people experiencing **psychological distress symptoms** "all of the time" or "most of the time" screened by the Kessler 6 in the past 30 days

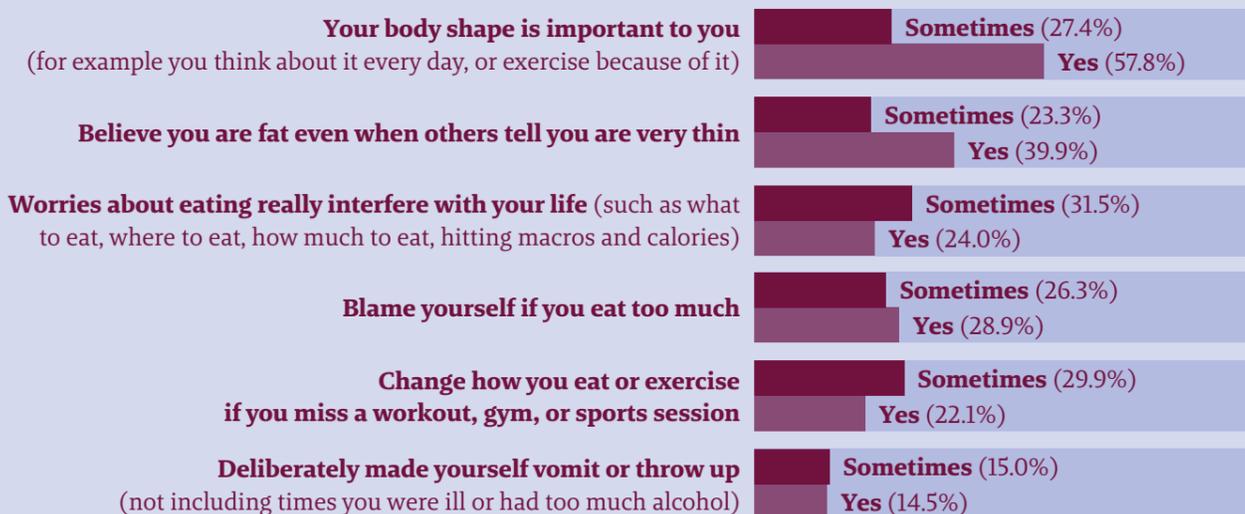


Proportions of young people experiencing **depression symptoms** "a lot" or "some" as screened by the CES-DC-10 in the past 2 weeks



Responses to CES-DC-10 questions "feeling happy" and "feeling like something good was going to happen" are "reverse coded" and treated as positive factors rather than symptoms.

Proportions of young people experiencing **disordered eating symptoms** screened by the modified DAWBA (no time specification)



³ Note these scores have been based on approaches from Australia and set a cut-off threshold for severe distress by counting numbers of people scoring 19 or higher out of a possible 30. The numbers reported here represent high levels of psychological distress. [Scoring the K6 - Harvard](#); [Use of the K6 in Australia](#); [K6 Validation with Distressed Australian Populations](#)

⁴ [Validity of the CES-D-10, screening for depression with New Zealand children](#)

⁵ [Validity of the DAWBA identifying disordered eating in UK adolescents](#)

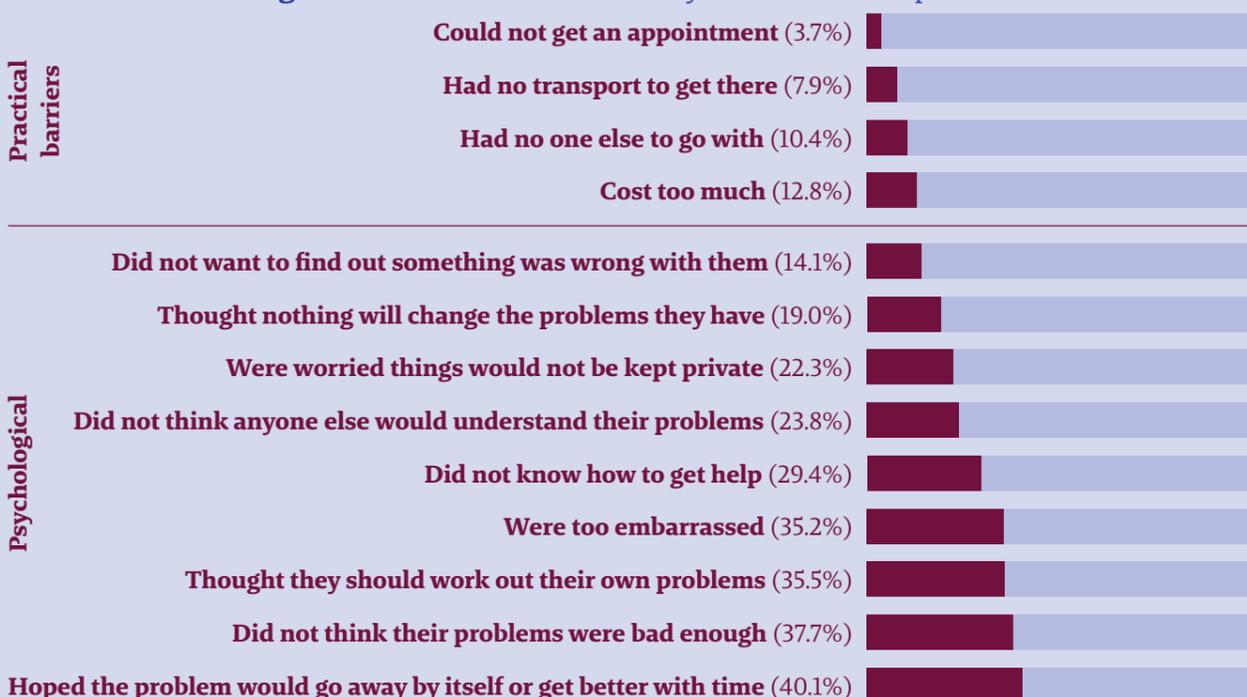
Access and barriers to mental health care

For the first time, we asked young people about possible barriers to accessing mental health support when they need it. Young people reported that psychological barriers (often symptoms of mental distress themselves) more commonly prevented a young person seeking care, compared to practical barriers.

While screening tools shows that 21.2% of young people may benefit from further mental health assessment from the Kessler-6, only 6.1% accessed professional mental health support (e.g., counsellor, psychologist) for help or advice when they were feeling down or having a hard time in the past year. It was more common for young people to seek support from non-professional sources like friends (63.6%) or a known adult or parent (55.3%) than other health professionals like a school nurse (10.5%), or GP (3.4%).

Results are based on the main survey where young people were asked “In the last 12 months, have you gone to or used any of the following for help or advice about feeling bad or having a hard time?”.

Barriers to accessing mental health care when they needed it in the past 12 months



This is a multiple-choice question, more than one option could be chosen.

Self-harm

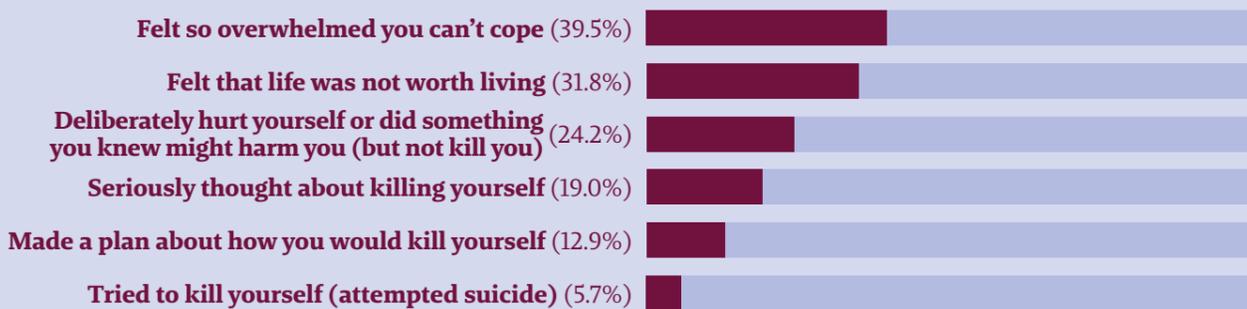
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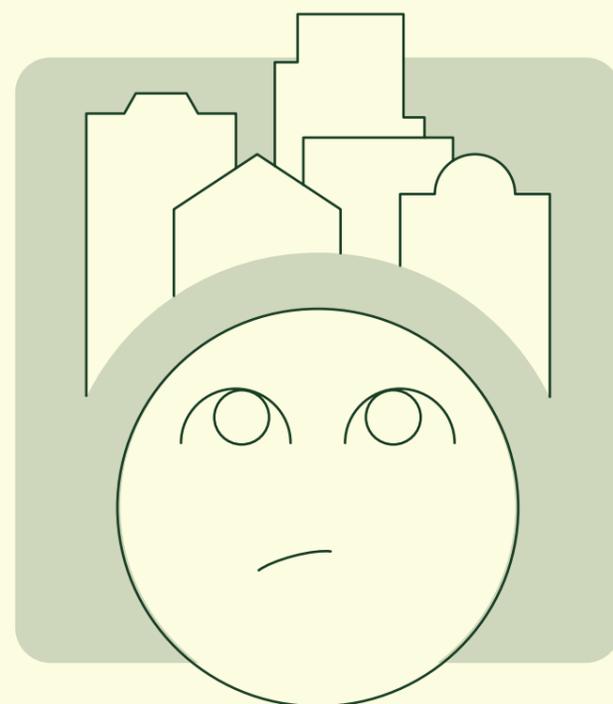
The YHWS 2025 asks a series of questions to screen for suicidality in the previous 12 months. Questions ask about intentional self-harm or injury, suicidal thoughts, suicide plans, and suicide attempts.

Percentage who experienced self-harm in the past 12 months



Contextual factors

Family, Home, Community, Learning, Aspirations, Working and Contributing



This section presents a summary of life factors reported by a group of 9,400 young New Zealanders aged 13 to 19 in 2025. More detailed information on topics including demographic breakdowns by Māori, Pacific Peoples, Asian, European, Rainbow indicator, Years grouping, gender, disability (based on Washington Group Short Set), and region can be found in the full YHWS 2025 Data Table at www.msd.govt.nz/YHWS

While we have looked at Health and Wellbeing first in this Infographic, we know that young people's health, mental health, and wellbeing are tied to the experiences they are having out in the world. Culture, community, beliefs, school life, home life, interpersonal relationships, working, volunteering, and extra-curricular activities are all essential to a young person's sense of self and wellbeing.

Family, whānau and friends

Family closeness — 83.4% feel comfortable in their family's cultural and social surroundings. 90.0% of young people are looked after by someone who loves or cares for them and 68.9% of young people feel like they get enough quality time with family or whānau.

Family or cultural values are important to 65.8% of young people (counts of agree and strongly agree).

Family wellbeing — 76.0% of young people's whānau or family are doing well (in general) (counts of well and extremely well).

Belonging in New Zealand — 66.2% feel a sense of belonging to New Zealand (counts of agree and strongly agree).

Whakapapa or lineage — 81.5% have someone they can ask about culture, whakapapa, whānau/family tree, or ethnic group (counts of agree and strongly agree). 57.6% know their whakapapa, heritage, or family tree (counts of agree and strongly agree).

Belonging in Te Ao Māori — 31.6% are confident or comfortable participating (e.g., at hui, sports etc.) in Te Ao Māori (the Māori world) (counts of agree and strongly agree). 83.0% of young people who identified as being Māori know their iwi (counts of yes).

Friends — The YHWS 2025 used a Whanaungatanga tool⁶ to identify positive relationships in young people's lives. 91.0% of young people have a friend who they can talk to face-to-face most days and 82.0% of young people have a friend they can trust and share feelings with.

Whanaungatanga: Percentage who have a friend...



⁶ These questions are intellectual property of Professor Terryann Clark and are administered with the specific intent to build a strengths-based evidence base for young people in New Zealand. These questions must be used as a complete set (not distinct items), and are to be interpreted as a whole scale, with differences in items to be reported in the context of the remaining items in the scale. The set of questions have not been designed to capture the lack of relational connections (e.g., do not report that one group has less whanaungatanga present than another group).

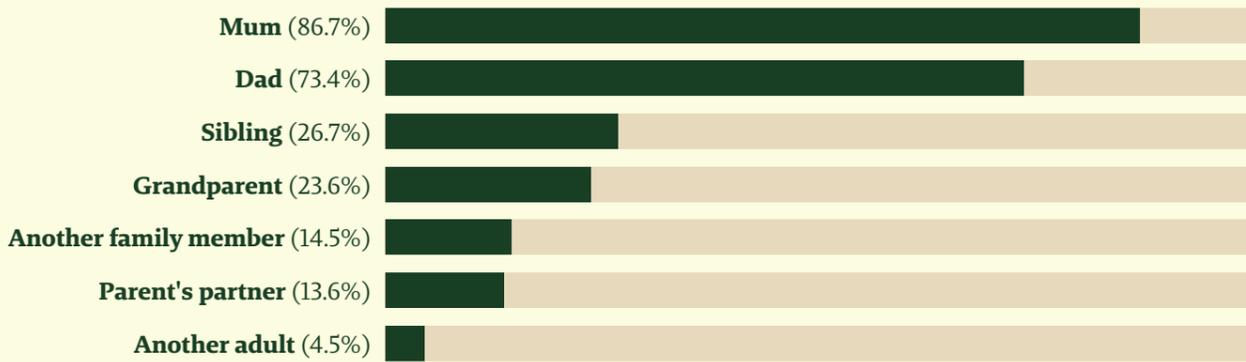
Home life

Safe homes — Most young people live with someone who cares for them and loves them (90.0%). A majority of young people report their homes are warm (96.1%), safe (88.9%), and damp-free (78.7%).

Who young people live with — 84.7% had three to six people in their household; 10.9% had seven-plus people in their household; 10.9% lived in a household with grandparents; 0.3% of young people lived alone.

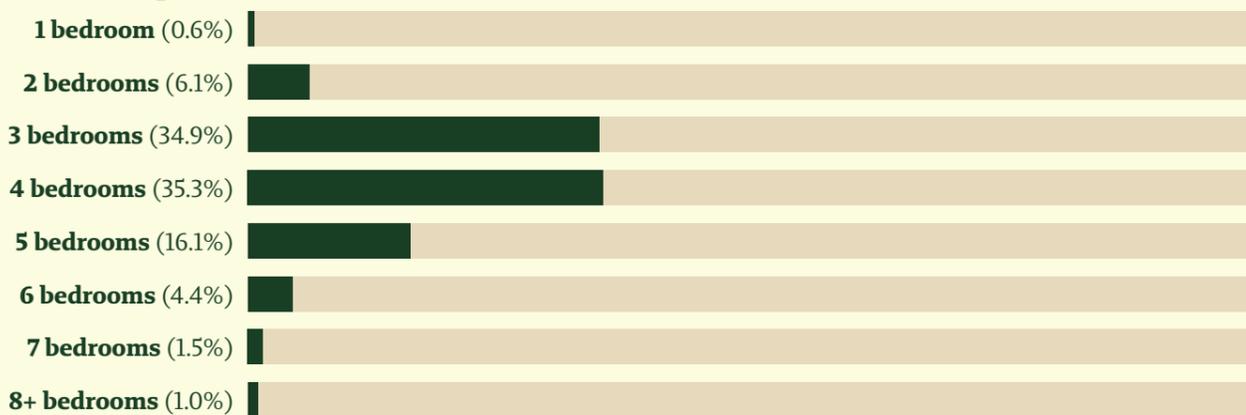
Oranga Tamariki engagement — 13.9% of young people or their whānau or family had been involved with Oranga Tamariki or Child, Youth and Family.

Who usually cares for or looks after a young person

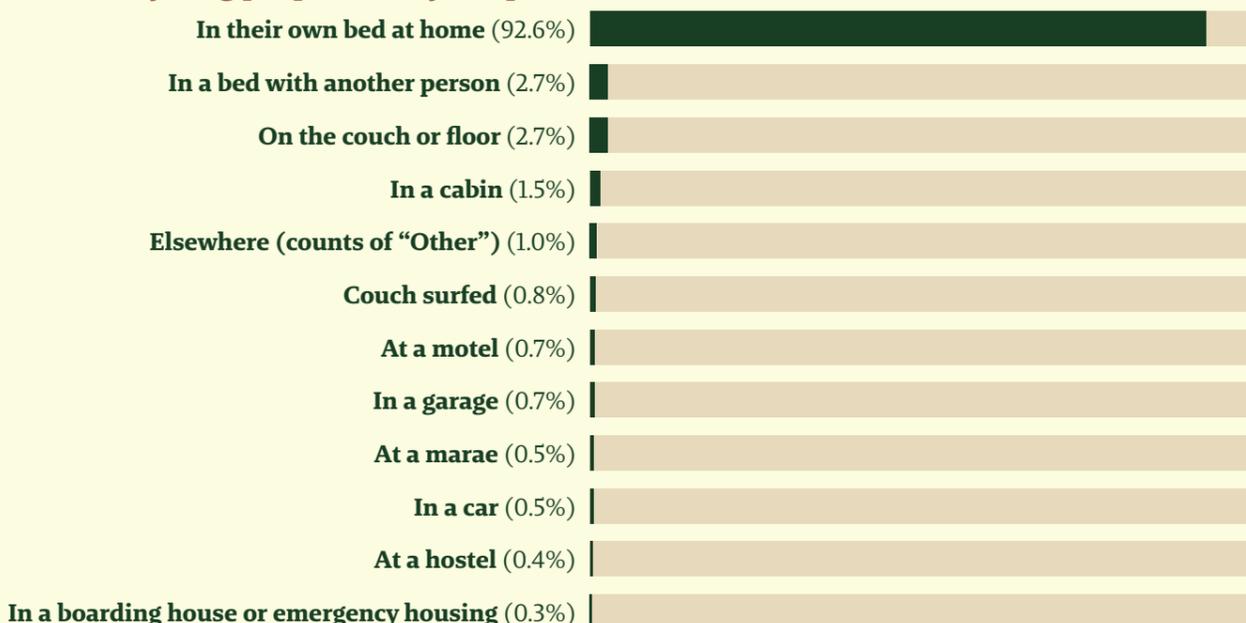


This is a multiple-choice question, more than one option could be chosen.

Bedrooms per home

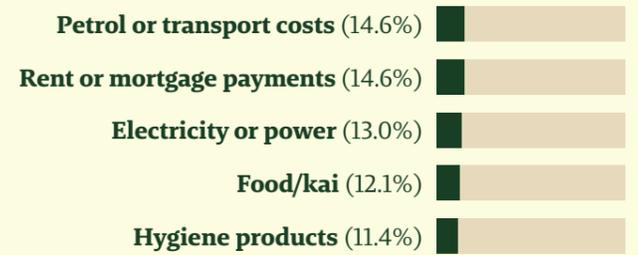


Where do young people usually sleep?

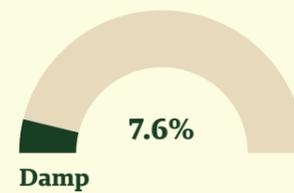
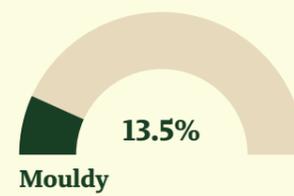
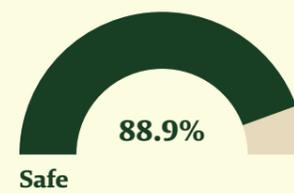
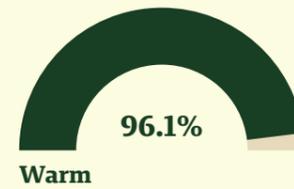


This is a multiple-choice question, more than one option could be chosen.

Proportion of families who **worry about having enough money** for (counts of 'often' and 'all the time')

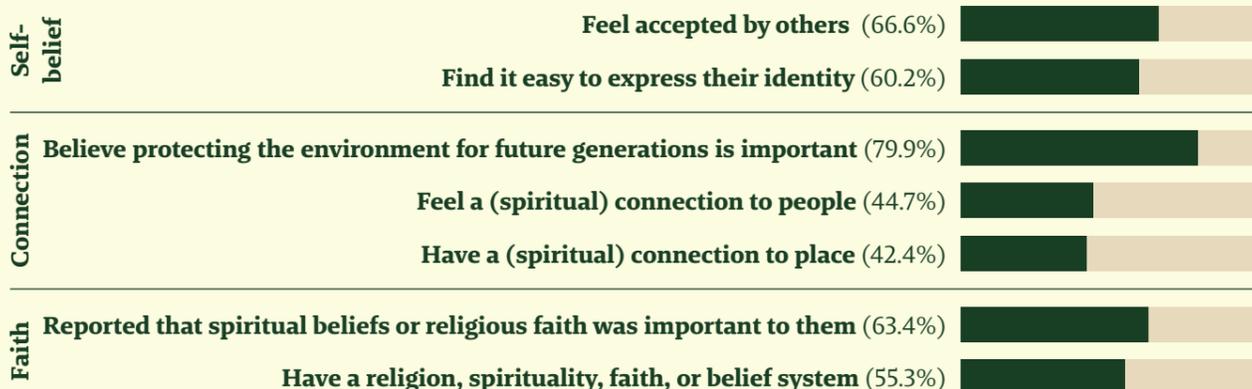


What are young peoples homes like?



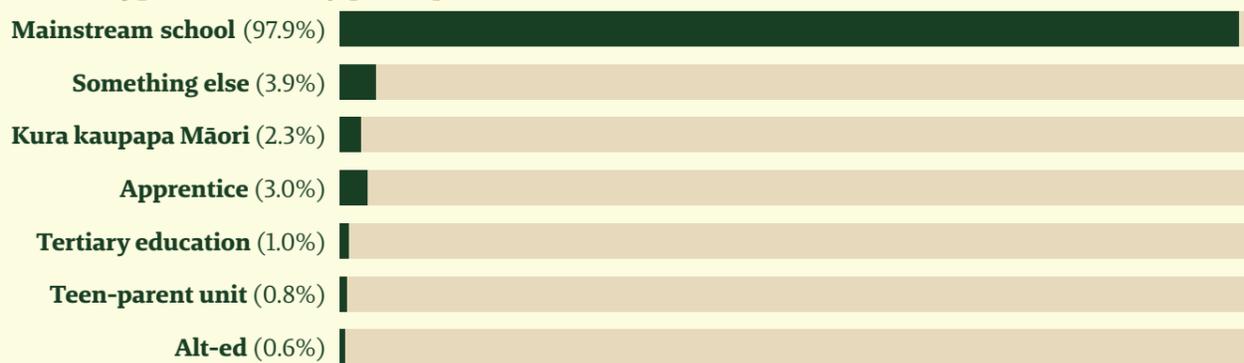
Spirituality and beliefs

Young people's belief systems



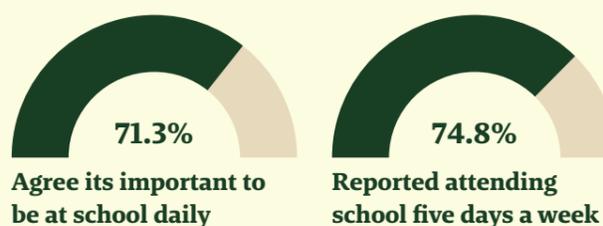
Learning

School types attended by participants



This is a multiple-choice question, more than one option could be chosen.

Attendance behaviours and the proportion of young people who...

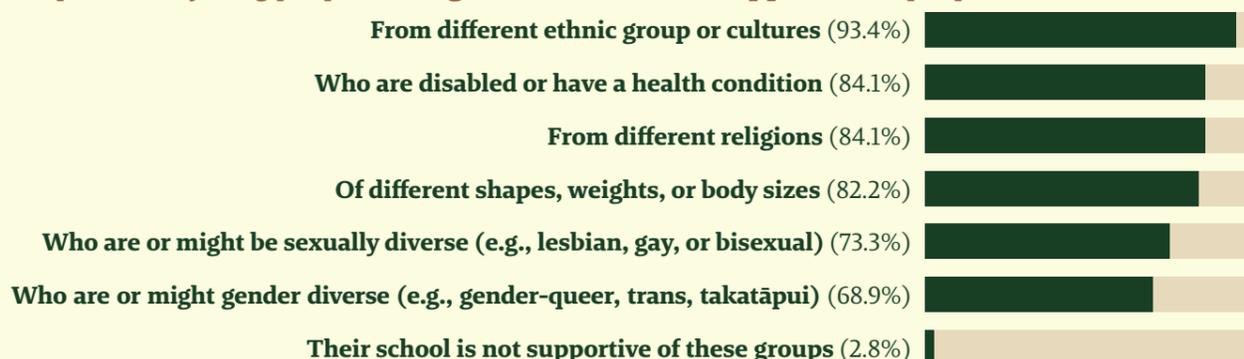


Of young people who were bullied in the past 12 months — 29.4% did not attend school in the past month because they were afraid someone might hurt, tease, or bully them.

Expectation to do well — 82.9% of young people feel that people expect them to do well at school or kura kaupapa Māori (counts of agree and strongly agree). 67.0% of young people feel pressured by the schoolwork they have to do (counts of some and a lot).

Safety and fair treatment at school — 67.7% of young people feel safe at school or kura kaupapa Māori (counts of agree or strongly agree). In the past 12 months, 11.9% felt they had been treated unfairly or differently by a teacher because of ethnicity; 6.4% because of their gender or sexuality; 1.3% because of their disability; and 2.4% because they had a health condition.

Proportion of young people who agree their school is supportive of people...



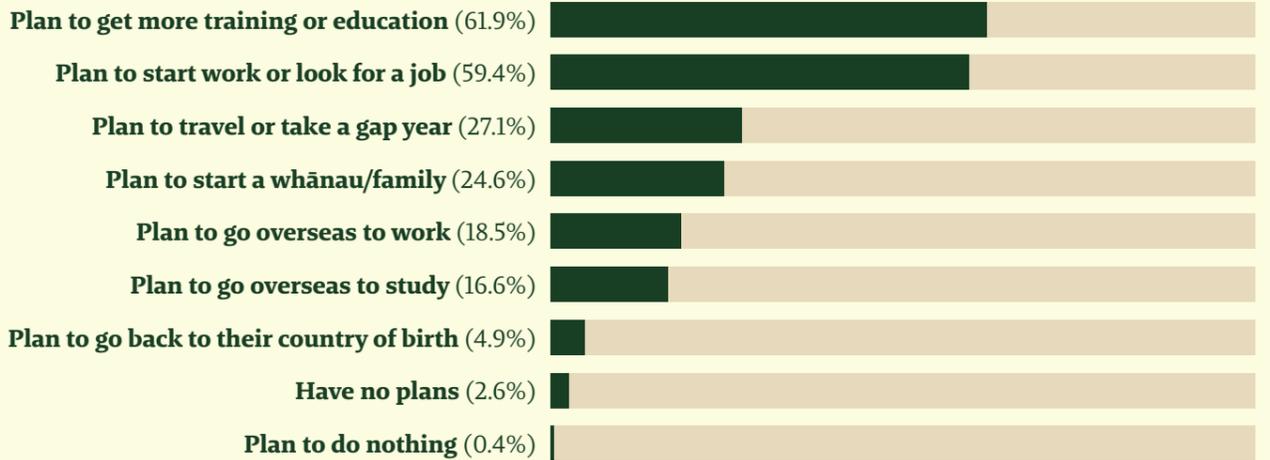
This is a multiple-choice question, more than one option could be chosen.

Aspirations

Regarding **future-readiness**, young people...



In the future, **once they've finished secondary school** young people...



This is a multiple-choice question, more than one option could be chosen.

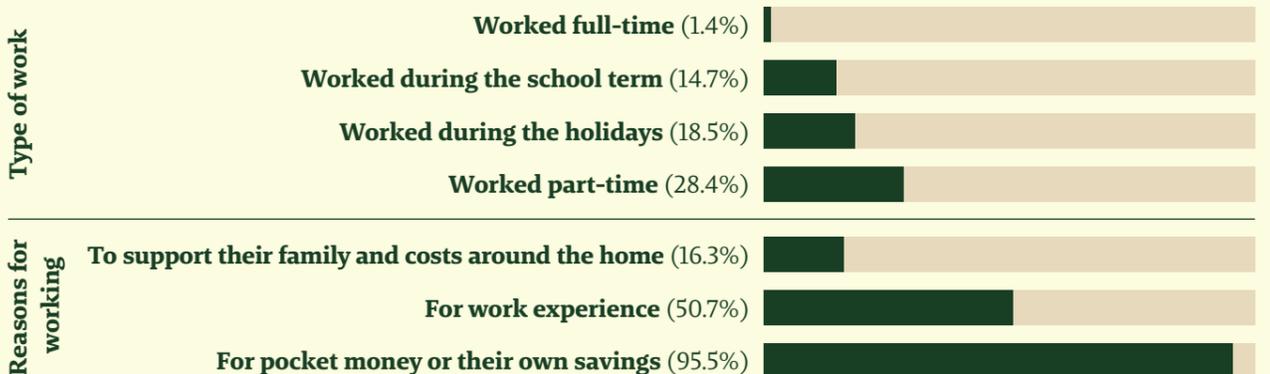
Doing and contributing

Extracurricular involvement — Over two thirds of young people (70.0%) are part of a group, club, or team (e.g., cultural group, sport, dance or music group, choir, environment organisation).

Volunteering — Over half of young people (51.1%) help others in their neighbourhood or community regularly or occasionally (e.g., help on the marae or place of worship, belong to a volunteer organisation, mow lawns, collect for charity, give people food).

Caring for others — More than a third of young people (36.8%) have a responsibility to care for others at home. Caring for others meant 18.2% of young people stayed home from school, started late, or came home from school early at least once a month.

Although 49.8% of young people indicated they were not in paid employment, many young people were in **paid employment** in the past 12 months...

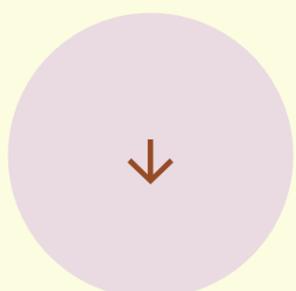
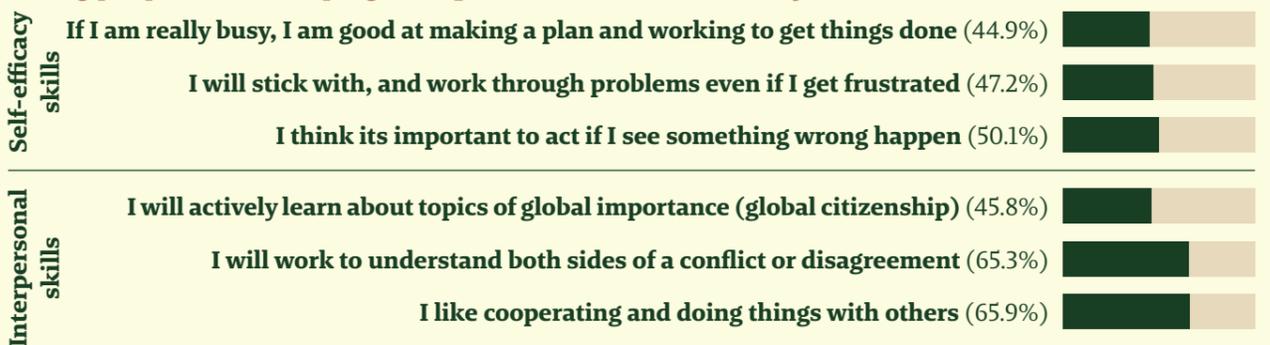


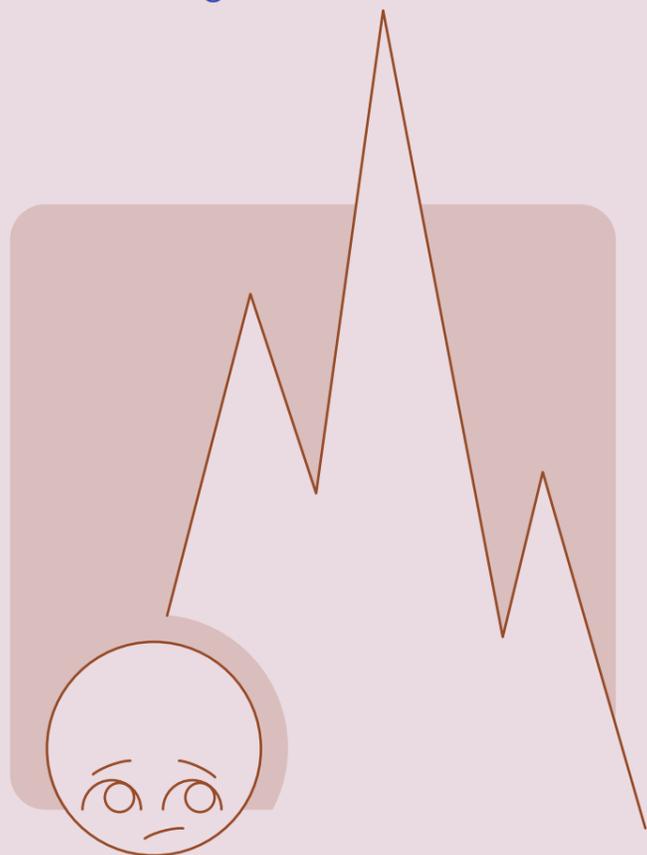
Questions relating to the type of work young people are engaged in and reasons for working are multi-choice questions, more than one option could be chosen.

Interpersonal and self-efficacy skills

Overall, most young people report high levels of interpersonal and self-efficacy skills, which can be predictive for later life educational, employment, and social success.

Young people are developing **interpersonal and self-efficacy skills**, and...





Harms and safety

This section presents a summary of experiences of harm and safety reported by a group of around 9,400 young New Zealanders aged 13 to 19 in 2025. More detailed information on these topics including demographic breakdowns by Māori, Pacific Peoples, Asian, European, Rainbow indicator, Years grouping, gender, disability (based on Washington Group Short Set), and region can be found in the full YHWS 2025 Data Table at www.msd.govt.nz/YHWS.

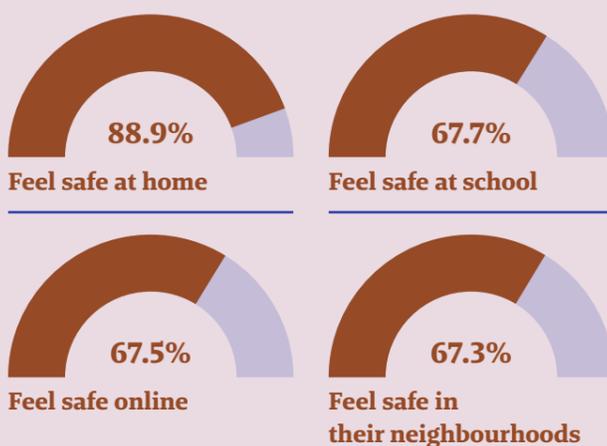
Just a little note to pause and consider your wellbeing

Some of the following topics and results can be upsetting to know about.

If you have been thinking about your mental health or wellbeing recently, or, been thinking about getting some support, we have pulled together some resources here that you might find helpful [here-to-help-yhws.pdf](#)

Safety

Young people reported **feelings of safety** in a variety of contexts, and...



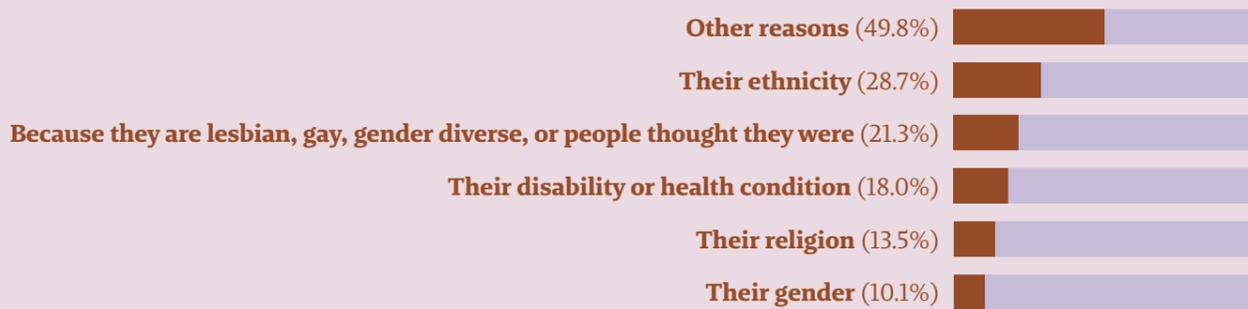
Police engagement

7.3% of young people have been in trouble with the police in the last 12 months. 2.3% of all young people reported being treated unfairly or picked on, hassled etc. by the police because of their ethnicity in the last 12 months.

Bullying

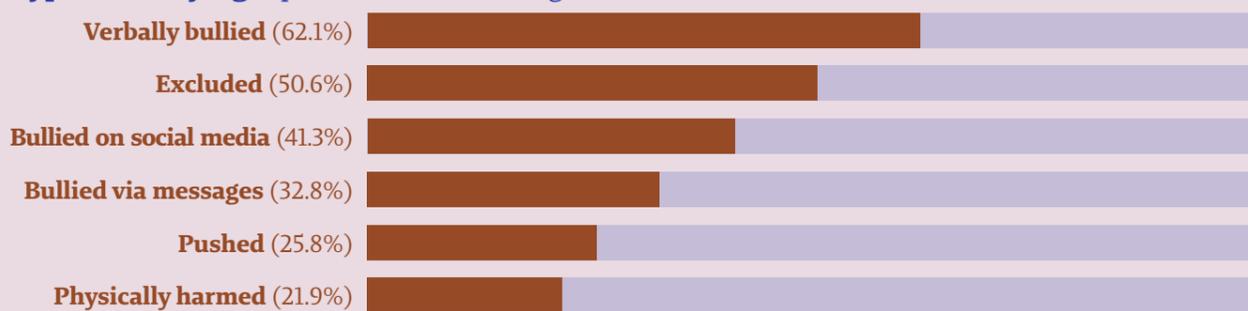
About one in four (26.3%) young people were bullied in the past 12 months.

Reasons for being bullied included...



This is a multi-choice question, more than one option could be chosen.

Types of bullying reported included being...



This is a multi-choice question, more than one option could be chosen. Results are based on the main survey only.

Gambling

Two fifths (43.7%) of young people reported having ever gambled. **Types of gambling** included...



This is a multi-choice question, more than one option could be chosen.

Victimisation and harmful behaviour

In the past 12 months, 49.9% of young people reported being yelled or sworn at by an adult in the place they live, while 7.1% were hit or physically hurt by an adult in the place they usually live.

In the past 12 months, 5.9% reported being hit or physically harmed on purpose by an intimate partner; 41.1% by a sibling; 22.7% by another young person; 11.4% by a parent or caregiver; 3.9% by another adult.

7.4% of young people reported having a harmful experience of sexting. One in eight (12.5%) young people reported being touched in a sexual way or made to do sexual things they did not want to (including sexual abuse or rape).

Fair treatment

In the past 12 months, 16.0% of young people were treated unfairly or differently because of their ethnicity; 11.0% because of their gender; 29.2% for another reason.