

Isle of Man Schools Wellbeing Survey 2022

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A project of



EBPU
Evidence Based
Practice Unit

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Executive summary

In February to April 2022, 2,762 young people in Isle of Man secondary schools completed an online survey about their wellbeing. All schools engaged effectively with the survey processes despite the logistical challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic. Participation rates ranged from 81% of pupils in year 7 to 47% of pupils in year 11.

The survey was undertaken by the Anna Freud Centre on the request of the Department of Education, Sport and Culture of the Isle of Man Government. The set of questions varied between year groups. For example, questions measuring life satisfaction were included for years 7 to 9 and questions measuring mental wellbeing were included for years 10 to 11.

The results suggest that community participation and support outside of school settings are areas of strength for pupils across year groups.

The biggest challenges for pupils are in relation to emotional difficulties (all year groups), life satisfaction (years 7-9), mental wellbeing (years 10-11), self-esteem (years 7-9) and problem solving (all year groups). In this context, problem solving relates to talking about problems and knowing where to go for help. These results are based on a comparison of responses from pupils in the Isle of Man with responses from pupils in other schools in the UK, prior to the pandemic.

To complement the self-reported wellbeing data collected in the survey, schools provided information on pupil year group, gender, free school meals eligibility and special educational needs provision. Schools did not collect data on pupil ethnicity and language group was not collected for 41% of pupils.

Analysis of relationships between the provided characteristics and five measures from the survey was conducted using a method that allows the unique contribution of each characteristic to be assessed.

The results suggest that gender had the strongest association with scores for these measures, apart from behavioural difficulties. Female pupils in comparison to male pupils were more likely to experience emotional difficulties (years 7-9), mood and feelings difficulties (years 10-11), lower life satisfaction (years 7-9) and lower mental wellbeing (years 10-11).

Pupils recorded with special educational needs provision, compared to those without, were more likely to experience behavioural difficulties (years 7-9). This was the only characteristic indicated as having a relationship with behavioural difficulties. Special educational needs provision was also found to be associated with emotional difficulties (years 7-9), lower life satisfaction (years 7-9), mood and feelings difficulties (years 10-11) and lower mental wellbeing (years 10-11), but to a lesser extent than gender.

Pupils eligible for free school meals, compared to those not eligible, were more likely to experience emotional difficulties (years 7-9), lower life satisfaction (years 7-9) and lower mental wellbeing (years 10-11). These associations were weaker than those found for gender.

Whilst this survey provides a significant resource of information on the wellbeing of year 7 to 11 pupils in the Isle of Man, care should be taken in interpreting the results. There are inherent flaws in self-reported information, as different groups may read and respond to the questions in different ways. As part of the suggested next steps for using the findings, the results should be considered alongside other sources of information (e.g. data on pupil engagement or attainment) and discussed with key stakeholders, including pupils, parents, carers, schools' staff members, other providers and government departments.

Introduction

The Anna Freud Centre (AFC) was commissioned by the Department of Education, Sport and Culture of the Isle of Man Government to provide a pupil wellbeing survey and associated support and analysis. The aim of the survey was to establish a better understanding of the needs of young people in secondary schools to inform future support for mental health and wellbeing.

This report describes the survey approach and presents the findings in two sections:

- Pupil wellbeing across year groups
- Relationships between pupil characteristics and reported wellbeing

Survey approach

Wellbeing Measurement for Schools is an approach offered by the Child Outcomes Research Consortium and Evidence Based Practice Unit that allows schools to understand areas of strength and challenge for their pupils and staff.¹ Using this approach, 2,762 pupils in year groups 7 to 11 in the five secondary schools on the Isle of Man participated in an online survey about their wellbeing between February and April 2022.²

The final participant numbers and participation rates were as follows:

Year group	Number of pupils who participated ³	Number of pupils enrolled	Participation rate
7	769	950	81%
8	638	1003	64%
9	573	908	63%
10	519	903	57%
11	263	556	47%

The survey took around 15 minutes to complete and included questions from validated questionnaires that have been extensively used in previous studies. For example, the Me and My Feelings Questionnaire, the Students' Life Satisfaction Scale and the Short Mood and Feelings Questionnaire.

The set of questions in the survey varied depending on whether the pupils were in year groups 7 to 9 or year groups 10 and 11. For example, questions relating to life satisfaction were included for years 7 to 9 and questions relating to mental wellbeing were included for years 10 and 11.⁴

¹ The Child Outcomes Research Consortium (CORC) is a project of the Anna Freud Centre. The Evidence Based Practice Unit (EBPU) is a child and youth mental health research and innovation unit based at UCL Faculty of Brain Sciences and the Anna Freud Centre.

² One school did not survey year 11 pupils, given that exams were about to start for them and the school management team decided that it would be better not to take them out of subject lessons. Therefore, the numbers of participants and pupils enrolled for year 11 are lower than for the other year groups.

³ Participation is defined here as agreeing to take part in the survey and answering at least the first survey question.

⁴ For the full set of measures included in the survey, please see Appendix 1 of the year group reports for year 7 and year 10 attached in Appendix 1 of this report.

Before data collection commenced, research ethics committees at UCL and University College Isle of Man reviewed and approved the survey questions, as well as the processes of seeking parental consent (through an opt-out approach) and administering the survey in schools, under the supervision of appropriate staff.

Pupils' responses to the online survey were linked to routinely collected information on their characteristics (e.g. gender, free school meals eligibility). This information was extracted from school IT systems using a School Information Management System (SIMS) report definition produced by a consultant at OSMIS Education. School staff copied-and-pasted the extracted information into a data validation template developed by the AFC team. Schools uploaded their data templates to a secure environment, in which they were merged with the online survey responses and analysed by the AFC team. All data were collected and processed in accordance with data protection regulations.

Pupil wellbeing across year groups

Wellbeing Measurement for Schools reports were produced at an area (i.e. island) level for each year group and are attached in Appendix 1. These reports provide an indication of strengths and challenges for pupils, by comparing the survey responses in the Isle of Man with those of pupils from other schools in the UK. Full details of the sources of data from other schools are provided in the reports.

Self-reported data on wellbeing is a rich source of information about how children are thinking and feeling. However, the comparisons in the reports are not intended to be precise, and there are potential skews due to differences in the demographic characteristics of the samples of pupils surveyed. Therefore, the findings should be considered in the context of other information, such as data on pupil engagement or attainment, and the perspectives of pupils, parents, carers, teachers and other professionals who work with the pupils concerned.

When interpreting the reports, it is also important to be mindful that the survey responses from other schools were collected prior to the COVID-19 pandemic,⁵ and the pandemic is likely to have affected some aspects of pupil wellbeing more than others. For example, a study in England reported negative effects of the pandemic on emotional difficulties and life satisfaction, and no overall effect on behavioural difficulties (although there may have been a relatively small negative effect on behavioural difficulties in female pupils).⁶

Furthermore, the green indicators (suggesting an area of strength) and red indicators (suggesting an area of challenge) are assigned when there is a discernible difference from a statistical perspective. The size of the difference between the percentage of Isle of Man pupils in the expected range and the percentage of pupils from other schools in the expected range can vary between measures that have been flagged with a particular indicator colour. It is therefore useful to consider the amount of difference for each measure, which is illustrated by the bar chart on the page for the measure in the report.

⁵ The Wellbeing Measurement for Schools approach has kept the comparator data from other schools consistent during the pandemic to provide stability to the reports, and because pupil wellbeing survey participation since March 2020 has been adversely affected by pandemic restrictions and staff and pupil absences. The AFC team plans to review options for updating the comparator data in future Wellbeing Measurement for Schools reports during the summer of 2022.

⁶ Mansfield R, Santos J, Deighton J, et al. (2022) The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on adolescent mental health: a natural experiment. *Royal Society Open Science*; 9: 211114. <https://doi.org/10.1098/rsos.211114>

Summary of year group reports

Areas of strength

The reports suggest the following areas of strength for pupils in the Isle of Man:⁷

- Participation in community (green indicator for years 7 to 11)
- Wider support (green indicator for years 7, 9 and 11)

In the context of this survey, 'wider support' was measured by questions that asked young people whether there is an adult outside of school who really cares about them, tells them when they do a good job, believes that they will be a success, or who they trust.

Areas of challenge

The reports suggest that the following areas are the biggest challenges for pupils in the Isle of Man:⁸

- Emotional difficulties (red indicator and difference >10% for years 7 to 9)
- Mood and feelings (red indicator and difference >10% for years 10 and 11)
- Mental wellbeing (red indicator and difference >10% for years 10 and 11)
- Life satisfaction (red indicator and difference >10% for years 7 to 9)
- Self-esteem (red indicator and difference >10% for years 7 and 8; red indicator for year 9)
- Problem solving (red indicator and difference >10% for years 7, 8, 9 and 11; red indicator for year 10)

In the list above, 'difference >10%' refers to a difference of more than 10% in the percentages of pupils in the expected range between the Isle of Man and other schools. For example, for emotional difficulties in the year 9 report, 69% of Isle of Man pupils were in the expected range and 84% of pupils in other schools were in the expected range, giving a difference of 15%.

Problem solving can mean different things in different contexts. In the context of this survey, the questions that measure problem solving were as follows: "When I need help, I find someone to talk to", "I know where to go for help when I have a problem", and "I try to work out problems by talking about them".

The reports suggest that the following areas are also challenges for pupils in the Isle of Man (in addition to the biggest challenges listed above):⁹

- Behavioural difficulties (red indicator for years 7 and 8)
- Perceived stress (red indicator for years 10 and 11)
- Empathy (red indicator for years 8 and 10)
- Goal setting (red indicator for years 7 to 10)
- Participation in home and school (red indicator for years 7 to 11)
- Peer support (red indicator for years 7 to 10)
- School support (red indicator for years 7 to 10)
- Family support (red indicator for years 7 to 11)

⁷ The areas of strength listed are those assigned a green indicator in two or more year group reports.

⁸ The areas of biggest challenge listed are those assigned a red indicator in two or more year group reports, and where these red indicators were assigned, the percentage of pupils in the expected range in Isle of Man schools was more than 10% lower than in other schools.

⁹ The additional areas of challenge listed are those assigned a red indicator in two or more year group reports and not already listed as areas of biggest challenge.

Relationships between pupil characteristics and reported wellbeing

Schools provided data on the following pupil characteristics from their management information systems:

- Year group
- Gender – recorded as male or female¹⁰
- Free school meals eligibility – recorded as yes or no
- Special educational needs provision – categorised as ‘No Special Educational Need’, ‘Complex Learning Need or Complex Learning Need Unit’ or ‘School Action, School Action Plus, Additional Support or Additional Support Plus’

Due to relatively small numbers in the ‘Complex Learning Need or Complex Learning Need Unit’ category, this was merged with the ‘School Action, School Action Plus, Additional Support or Additional Support Plus’ category for the purpose of analysis.

Pupil ethnicity was not recorded in schools and language group was not obtained for 41% of pupils. Therefore, these characteristics were not included in the analysis.

Associations between the provided pupil characteristics and self-reported measures of wellbeing from the pupil survey were explored using binary logistic regression models. This method allows the unique contribution of each characteristic to be assessed, whilst controlling for the other characteristics in the model.

The measures selected for this analysis were emotional difficulties (from the Me and My Feelings Questionnaire), behavioural difficulties (from the Me and My Feelings Questionnaire), life satisfaction (Students’ Life Satisfaction Scale), mood and feelings (Short Mood and Feelings Questionnaire) and mental wellbeing (short version of the Warwick–Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale). Cut points were used to categorise pupils’ scores on the measure as falling into an ‘expected’ range, or an ‘elevated’ or ‘lower’ range. The selected measures were those with cut points reported in the scientific literature (emotional difficulties, behavioural difficulties, mood and feelings), suggested by their developers (life satisfaction), or derived from a large-scale survey (mental wellbeing).¹¹

The results of the analysis are summarised below.¹² All results in this section are based solely on the data from schools and survey responses from pupils on the Isle of Man (i.e. not compared with data and survey responses outside of the Isle of Man). Results are reported separately for year groups 7 to 9 and year groups 10 and 11 as they completed a different set of measures in the survey. When interpreting these results, care

¹⁰ The UK Department for Education (DfE) method for reporting on gender, upon which the Wellbeing Measurement for Schools data template is based, describes gender as male and female only. We recognise this is a limitation that does not adequately describe those who identify differently to these terms.

¹¹ For details of the cut points used, please see Appendix 2 of the year group reports for year 7 and year 10 attached in Appendix 1 of this report.

¹² Estimated associations in a logistic regression model take the form of log odds ratios, which can be converted to odds ratios by exponentiating them. An odds ratio (e.g. “the odds of experiencing difficulties in females are X times the odds of experiencing difficulties in males”) is a different way of measuring an association than a prevalence ratio (e.g. “females are X times more likely to experience difficulties than males”). Given that odds ratios are less intuitive than prevalence ratios, we have summarised the results by listing the characteristics with statistically significant log odds ratios (p value < 0.05), in descending order of size. For those with a background or interest in statistics, the details of each model are included in Appendix 2.

needs to be taken as different groups may read and respond to the questions that comprise the measures in different ways. Therefore, the findings should be considered in the context of other information and the views of key stakeholders.

Year groups 7 to 9

Emotional difficulties

The following pupils were more likely to experience emotional difficulties in the elevated range:

- Female pupils in comparison to male pupils
- Pupils with special educational needs provision in comparison to those without
- Pupils eligible for free school meals in comparison to those not eligible
- Pupils in year group 9 in comparison to those in year group 7
- Pupils in year group 8 in comparison to those in year group 7

The findings above are listed in order of the strength of the association between the characteristic and emotional difficulties. I.e. the difference between female and male pupils was larger than the difference between pupils with and without special educational needs provision, and so on.

Behavioural difficulties

The following pupils were more likely to experience behavioural difficulties in the elevated range:

- Pupils with special educational needs provision in comparison to those without

Lower life satisfaction

The following pupils were more likely to experience life satisfaction in the lower range:

- Female pupils in comparison to male pupils
- Pupils eligible for free school meals in comparison to those not eligible
- Pupils with special educational needs provision in comparison to those without
- Pupils in year group 8 in comparison to those in year group 7
- Pupils in year group 9 in comparison to those in year group 7

The findings above are listed in order of the strength of the association between the characteristic and lower life satisfaction. I.e. the difference between female and male pupils was larger than the difference between pupils eligible and not eligible for free school meals, and so on.

Year groups 10 and 11

Mood and feelings difficulties

The following pupils were more likely to experience mood and feelings difficulties in the elevated range:

- Female pupils in comparison to male pupils
- Pupils with special educational needs provision in comparison to those without
- Pupils in year group 11 in comparison to those in year group 10

The findings above are listed in order of the strength of the association between the characteristic and mood and feelings difficulties. I.e. the difference between female and male pupils was larger than the difference between pupils with and without special educational needs provision, which was larger than the difference between pupils in years 11 and 10.

Lower mental wellbeing

The following pupils were more likely to experience mental wellbeing in the lower range:

- Female pupils in comparison to male pupils
- Pupils with special educational needs provision in comparison to those without
- Pupils eligible for free school meals in comparison to those not eligible

The findings above are listed in order of the strength of the association between the characteristic and lower mental wellbeing. I.e. the difference between female and male pupils was larger than the difference between pupils with and without special educational needs provision, which was larger than the difference between pupils eligible and not eligible for free school meals.

Conclusion

This was the first time that the Wellbeing Measurement for Schools pupil survey has been implemented in the Isle of Man. All secondary schools engaged effectively with the approach and participation rates were stronger among younger pupils. Analysis of the different measures of wellbeing identified some clear strengths and areas for development at an island-level. Analysis of the relationships between pupil characteristics and wellbeing indicated some specific groups who were more likely to experience particular difficulties. Suggested next steps for using the findings are outlined on the following page.

Using the findings

Explore the findings

What do we now know?

- Share the findings with key stakeholders
- Through discussion, deepen understanding of what the findings mean
- Consider alongside other data and sources of information to help build a comprehensive picture
- Ensuring this is a dialogue can help to deepen and refine understanding
- Audiences might benefit from different approaches – for instance, short videos might be effective for engaging pupils

Agreeing areas of focus/priorities

What is our shared vision?

- Develop a shared vision which reflects the views of stakeholders and the local context
- Identify a clear focus and set of priorities for moving towards the vision

Auditing provision

What happens, for who, and where?

- Mapping existing mental health and wellbeing support at school and community level (with age and purpose identified) can highlight gaps or duplication
- Opportunities for linking provision more effectively or improving the reach of support can be identified
- This audit, along with consultation, can then be compared with identified needs and priorities

Planning a response

How can we improve outcomes for children and young people?

- Information on needs and provision can inform school and island-level approaches to supporting pupil mental health and wellbeing
- This support might be universal, for priority groups or targeted
- Consider embedding a whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing across all schools
- Ensure clarity of roles and responsibilities across the system
- Improve communication and relationships between schools, VCS and services
- Develop an outcome framework

Continuing to monitor and evaluate

How can we make sure we keep improving?

- Establish a cycle of data collection, analysis, review, planning and action to continually monitor and evaluate outcomes
- There should be consideration of how to continue to capture the views and experiences of pupils- to monitor progress and facilitate improvement
- Ensure data collection enables analysis at appropriate levels and for all groups of young people – e.g., the collection of ethnicity data

Embedding in routine practice

How can we make it part of what we do?

- Ensure mechanisms are built into the fabric of services – e.g., specific roles, operational and strategic planning processes
- Consider how you engage and gain commitment to improving outcomes – for example, identifying champions within organisations

Throughout all steps, consider how you will:

- **engage and empower stakeholders** – children and young people, parents and carers, schools' staff members, other providers, government departments
- **work at different levels** – school level to island level. As well as working on stages **concurrently**, take an **iterative approach** to improvement
- consider the needs of **specific individuals and groups**
- deliver **responsively** and **preventatively** - providing targeted and universal interventions and support

Appendix 1: Pupil wellbeing reports for each year group

Year 7

Year 8

Year 9

Year 10

Year 11

Appendix 2: Technical details of logistic regression models

This is a technical appendix intended for those with a background or particular interest in statistics.

Analysis was performed in the R programming language using the 'glm' function. A binary logistic regression model was fitted for each of the five measures in scope of the analysis. Standard errors were adjusted for clustering of observations by school using the 'vcovCL' function from the 'sandwich' package and the 'coefest' function from the 'lmtest' package.

The results of each model are provided below. N.B. Estimates are given in terms of log-odds ratios, and the standard errors relate to the log-odds ratios.

Year groups 7 to 9

Emotional difficulties

Number of observations fitted: 1982

	Estimate	Std. Error	z value	Pr(> z)	
(Intercept)	-2.030728	0.137210	-14.8002	< 2.2e-16	***
YearGroup8	0.217055	0.094317	2.3013	0.0213723	*
YearGroup9	0.219793	0.044863	4.8992	9.624e-07	***
FemaleTRUE	1.531721	0.089485	17.1171	< 2.2e-16	***
FreeSchoolMealsTRUE	0.421683	0.111541	3.7805	0.0001565	***
SpecialEduNeedsTRUE	0.567656	0.153110	3.7075	0.0002093	***

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Behavioural difficulties

Number of observations fitted: 1979

	Estimate	Std. Error	z value	Pr(> z)	
(Intercept)	-1.92121	0.18557	-10.3528	< 2.2e-16	***
YearGroup8	0.19884	0.13628	1.4591	0.14453	
YearGroup9	0.14278	0.21735	0.6569	0.51125	
FemaleTRUE	0.21600	0.13650	1.5824	0.11357	
FreeSchoolMealsTRUE	0.39557	0.21640	1.8279	0.06756	.
SpecialEduNeedsTRUE	0.69557	0.12709	5.4729	4.426e-08	***

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Lower life satisfaction

Number of observations fitted: 1891

	Estimate	Std. Error	z value	Pr(> z)	
(Intercept)	-1.209399	0.124834	-9.6881	< 2.2e-16	***
YearGroup8	0.225759	0.062631	3.6046	0.0003126	***
YearGroup9	0.197180	0.072573	2.7170	0.0065880	**

FemaleTRUE	0.856765	0.130085	6.5862	4.513e-11	***
FreeSchoolMealsTRUE	0.440719	0.061821	7.1290	1.011e-12	***
SpecialEduNeedsTRUE	0.369594	0.108894	3.3941	0.0006886	***

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Year groups 10 and 11

Mood and feelings difficulties

Number of observations fitted: 776

	Estimate	Std. Error	z value	Pr(> z)	
(Intercept)	-1.755873	0.122293	-14.3579	<2e-16	***
YearGroup11	0.289774	0.129016	2.2460	0.0247	*
FemaleTRUE	1.654093	0.089248	18.5337	<2e-16	***
FreeSchoolMealsTRUE	0.368469	0.321635	1.1456	0.2520	
SpecialEduNeedsTRUE	0.611200	0.294112	2.0781	0.0377	*

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Lower mental wellbeing

Number of observations fitted: 701

	Estimate	Std. Error	z value	Pr(> z)	
(Intercept)	-1.584616	0.073098	-21.6779	< 2.2e-16	***
YearGroup11	-0.030888	0.138878	-0.2224	0.8239927	
FemaleTRUE	1.264130	0.116664	10.8357	< 2.2e-16	***
FreeSchoolMealsTRUE	0.520307	0.262785	1.9800	0.0477069	*
SpecialEduNeedsTRUE	0.630350	0.185627	3.3958	0.0006843	***

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1