

Bullying: Evidence from the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England, wave 3

Introduction and background

In 2015, 10,010 young people in year 11 were interviewed as part of the second Longitudinal Study of Young People in England (LSYPE2, wave 3). This number represents a high response rate of 90 per cent. LSYPE2 began in 2013 and tracks young people from the age of 13-14 to 19-20. In this research brief, young people's responses to questions about bullying are compared with the answers they gave the previous year when they were in year 10 (wave 2). The responses are also compared with those from an earlier cohort who were in year 11 in 2006 and who were interviewed for LSYPE1. Results are presented for different types of bullying and by selected subgroups.

Key findings

Year 11 in 2015

- Respondents were asked about their experience of 6 forms of bullying over the previous 12 months, namely: being called hurtful names, including by text or email; being excluded from a group of friends or from joining in activities; being made to give away money or personal possessions; being threatened with violence; being hit, kicked or experiencing any other form of physical violence; and being harassed or having hurtful words, pictures or videos spread about them, using the internet or a mobile phone. They were able to respond 'yes' to all types of bullying which applied to them.
- Overall, 30 per cent of young people reported having experienced one of the above forms of bullying in 2015. The figure is slightly lower (28%) if cyberbullying is excluded.
- The most common form of bullying reported was name calling (15.3%), followed by social exclusion (13.9%) and threats of violence (10.3%). Cyberbullying was reported by 9.6 per cent of respondents and actual violence was reported by 6.4 per cent. The percentage reporting robbery was very small (0.8%).

Trends in bullying: Year 10 in 2014 to Year 11 in 2015

- The analysis looks at the rates of various forms of bullying reported by young people in year 11 and compares this with bullying rates for this same cohort in year 10.
- There was a decrease in overall reported bullying rates. Thirty per cent of young people in year 11 said that they had experienced one or more types of bullying (including cyberbullying) compared with 37 per cent in year 10.
- Although name calling remained the most common form of bullying, there was a significant reduction (22% in year 10 compared to 15% in year 11).

- Threats of violence decreased from 14 per cent to 10 per cent and experiences of actual violence decreased from 10 per cent to 6 per cent. There were smaller decreases in social exclusion (16% to 14%) and cyberbullying (11% to 10%).

Trends in bullying: Year 11 in 2006 and Year 11 in 2015

- The analysis explores how bullying in year 11 has changed over the decade since LSYPE1.
- The proportion of young people reporting at least one form of bullying (excluding cyberbullying, to allow for a direct comparison to LSYPE1) in the previous 12 months has declined slightly, from 29.1 per cent in 2006 to 28.6 per cent in 2015. Although small, this is a statistically significant change. It is driven by significant decreases in threats of violence and actual violence which decreased by 3.2 and 3.5 percentage points, respectively.
- In contrast to an overall downward trend, more year 11 pupils are now reporting social exclusion (14% in 2015 vs 11% in 2011).
- The 15 per cent decrease in overall rates of bullying for young men has been driven by declines in threats of violence and actual violence. Young women, however, seen overall bullying rates increase by a similar amount, driven by rises in name calling and social exclusion, which are more commonly experienced by females. The rise in social exclusion and name calling has occurred entirely for females.

Bullying and GCSE results

- The LSYPE2 data was linked to the national pupils database so that links between bullying and GCSE attainment could be explored.

- No direct causal link between these 2 factors can be proved by the analysis, as many other factors need to be taken into account. However, the analysis did reveal that the mean capped points score achieved by bullied young people was 318, 12 points lower than that of their non-bullied peers. Furthermore, a smaller proportion of bullied students reach each GCSE point score threshold, compared to their non-bullied peers. For example, the proportion of bullied students achieving at least 300 points is 67 percent, compared to 72 percent for non-bullied students.

Location of bullying

- The majority of year 11 pupils that experienced bullying in 2015 reported that it took place at least partly in school.
- The most common forms of bullying reported as taking place entirely in school were: actual violence (55% of respondents saying that it all took place in school; and threats of violence (47% reporting that it all took place in school).
- Unsurprisingly, the most common form of out of school bullying was cyber-bullying with 58 per cent reporting that none of it took place in school.
- For young people that are bullied, the truancy rate has seen a significant reduction, dropping 14 points from 38 per cent in 2006 to 24 per cent in 2015. However, bullied individuals were still twice as likely to truant as their non-bullied peers in 2015.
- Pupils who had reported being bullied and who had also truanted were asked about their reasons for truancy. Only 4 per cent of this sub-group gave the reason as bullying. The main reasons given were 'don't like particular subject' (22%) and 'something else' (29%).

Bullying by different characteristics (year 11, 2015)

- Overall, significantly more females report bullying (35% vs 26% for boys). More than twice as many females report experiencing name calling, cyberbullying and social exclusion. However, more males report threats of violence (12% vs 9% for females) and actual violence (9% vs 4%). Cyberbullying is reported by 13 per cent of females compared to 6 per cent of males.
- Thirty-six per cent of disabled young people reported experiencing some form of bullying, compared to 29 per cent of all young people. Nine per cent of these young people reported that their disability was the reason they were bullied.
- Thirty-six per cent of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) reported some form of bullying, compared to 29 per cent of all pupils.
- The Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) is a measure of deprivation, with the first quartile being the least deprived and the fourth quartile being the most deprived.
- There was no difference in overall reported bullying between the first, second and third quartiles (all 31%). However, for the fourth quartile there was less reported bullying (28%). There was a small but significant difference in level of reported bullying when comparing pupils who had received free school meals (33%) and those who had

not (30%).

- Rates of reported bullying were higher amongst pupils who said that they did not have a religion. For example, 23 per cent of those who said they had no religion reported some form of bullying, compared to just 18 per cent of those who identified as Muslim. However, the reported bullying rate was higher for those who identified as Christian (30%).
- As in previous waves of the survey, when the 2015 year 11 cohort were in year 9 or 10, young people from African, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Indian and other Asian backgrounds were significantly less likely to report being bullied than white and mixed ethnicity students. There are a number of possible reasons for this. Different ethnicities may classify bullying differently or be more or less likely to report it.

Why young people think that bullying is happening

- Young people who had reported being bullied were asked why they thought the bullying had occurred. By far the most common reason cited was looks; this was more prevalent amongst females. Males were more likely to cite ethnicity as a reason for being bullied.
- Thirteen per cent of bullied young people identifying with non-Christian religions report that their religion was the reason they were bullied, compared to just 3 per cent of Christians. Among bullied young people who have a disability, 9 per cent reported their disability as the reason for being bullied.

Parental awareness

- Of young people who reported being bullied in 2015, parents were unaware of the bullying in 45 per cent of cases. This ratio has not changed over the past decade.
- Of young people that reported no bullying themselves, more than 1 in 10 parents believed that their child had suffered bullying. These differences may reflect differences in what parents and young people consider to be bullying.

The full document can be downloaded from:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/longitudinal-study-of-young-people-in-england-cohort-2-wave-3>