



# NEXT STEPS

LEARNING FROM YOUR GENERATION

A STUDY FOLLOWING

**16,000**

PEOPLE IN ENGLAND

UPDATE 2017

TRACKING THE  
GENERATION BORN IN


**1989-90**

IT'S BEEN  
QUITE A YEAR



[NEXTSTEPSSTUDY.ORG.UK](http://NEXTSTEPSSTUDY.ORG.UK)

# THERE'S NO 'RIGHT' PATH TO ADULT LIFE



Findings from Next Steps have shown that 20-somethings who chose an apprenticeship over university end up just as happy with their lives.

Researchers from the UCL Institute of Education found that there was no 'right way' to transition into adulthood. Instead, your generation followed a range of worthwhile paths after completing compulsory schooling at age 16.

## WHAT WE ASKED YOU

Each time we've visited you, we've asked whether you are studying, working or in training. When you were 14, you told us how you thought you were doing at school, and about your plans for the future. At age 20, we asked you how satisfied you were with how your lives had turned out so far.

## THE RIGHT ROUTE FOR YOU

When you finished school, 45 per cent of you went into higher education, and just over a third moved straight into work. Roughly 1 in 16 of you pursued vocational training, such as an apprenticeship, before looking for a job.



At age 20, those of you who had gone on to university reported being just as satisfied with your lives as those in apprenticeships or work.

More than 1 in 10 of you spent prolonged periods of time not in education, employment or training (NEET) after finishing school. This group was least satisfied with their lives at age 20.

**45%**  
OF YOU WENT  
TO UNIVERSITY

**42%**  
OF YOU WENT INTO WORK  
OR VOCATIONAL TRAINING

**13%**  
OF YOU WERE  
'NEET' AFTER  
LEAVING SCHOOL



# SOCIAL BACKGROUND STILL MATTERS



At age 14, those of you who grew up in poorer homes had slightly lower expectations of going to university, and less confidence in your academic ability than those from wealthier backgrounds.

By the time you finished school, less advantaged young people were more likely than their better-off peers to go straight into work, or to end up NEET. Growing up in a deprived neighbourhood increased the likelihood of going into vocational training instead of higher education.

Prof Ingrid Schoon, who led the research, said: “We must make sure that there are equal opportunities for young people who do not pursue higher education. This includes good quality vocational training and local labour market opportunities, particularly in the most deprived neighbourhoods.”

## NEXT STEPS IN THE NEWS

Next Steps research on your generation's journey into adult life was featured in *The Times*, *The Daily Mail* and *City A.M.*, as well as some regional newspapers. You may have even seen the Government's Department for Education tweeting about it!




**FIND OUT MORE AT...**  
[nextstepsstudy.org.uk](http://nextstepsstudy.org.uk)

# EXERCISE CAN LEAD TO A SATISFIED LIFE



Next Steps has found a connection between taking part in physical activity and life satisfaction at age 20.

Researchers from the UCL Institute of Education found that those of you who took part in sports or other exercise regularly were more likely to report being satisfied with your lives.



## WHAT WE ASKED YOU

Every time we've visited you, you've told us how often you take part in physical activity, such as sports or other forms of exercise. When you were aged 20, we also asked you how satisfied you were with how your lives had turned out so far.

## KEEPING FIT KEEPS YOU SATISFIED

Those of you who exercised regularly at age 20 – that is, at least once a week – had an 81 per cent chance of feeling satisfied with your lives, compared to a 76 per cent chance for those of you who exercised less often.

Your adolescent exercise habits mattered too. The more years you had spent exercising regularly as a teenager, the more satisfied you were with your lives at age 20.



81%

OF YOU WHO EXERCISED REGULARLY FELT SATISFIED



76%

OF YOU WHO EXERCISED LESS OFTEN FELT SATISFIED



# THE GENDER GAP

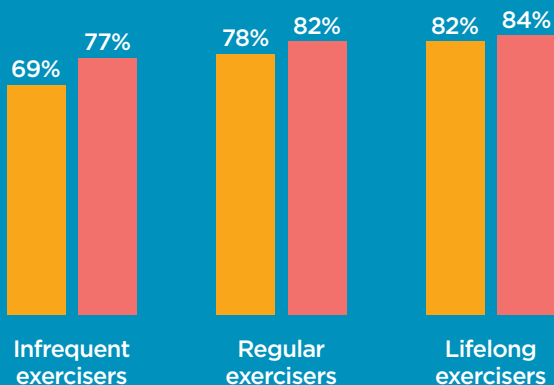


Men were less likely to report being satisfied with their lives than women – but exercise helped close this gender gap. Exercising at least once a week at age 20 had a more

positive impact on men's life satisfaction than women's. Having maintained good exercise habits throughout adolescence and into adulthood was even more beneficial for men.

## WHO'S GOT THE BEST LIFE SATISFACTION?

Men  
Women



## MAKE IT FUN!

The researchers noted that there are several reasons why exercise might make you feel better about your lives: "Physical activity releases endorphins, which make people feel happy and positive. But there's also a social side to exercise in some cases – for example, many people build lasting friendships and social networks through sport."

However, the researchers also warned that young people shouldn't be pressured into playing sports. Other research has shown that feeling forced into sports as a teenager can actually lower a person's chances of taking part as an adult.

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# HELPING TO RAISE AWARENESS OF BULLYING

Findings from Next Steps have shown that lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) young people were more likely than their heterosexual classmates to be bullied throughout secondary school and into adulthood.

## WHAT WE ASKED YOU

We have asked you about your experiences with bullying since we started visiting you. When you were age 20, we asked you for the first time about your sexual identity.

## BULLYING DOESN'T STOP IN THE PLAYGROUND

When you were teenagers, LGB young people had a 56 per cent chance of having been bullied in the past year, compared to a 45 per cent chance for heterosexual people. LGB young people were also significantly more likely than their heterosexual peers to be bullied frequently – once or more every fortnight.

While fewer people experienced bullying by the time you reached your 20s, LGB men and women still faced a much greater risk than their straight peers. Young LGB adults had a 52 per cent chance of being bullied, compared to a 38 per cent chance for heterosexual 20-year-olds.

LGB TEENS HAD A  
**56%**  
CHANCE OF  
BEING BULLIED

STRAIGHT  
TEENS HAD A  
**45%**  
CHANCE



## NOT JUST A PART OF GROWING UP

By the age of 20, young LGB adults were less likely than heterosexuals to report being 'very satisfied' with their lives. However, all those of you who had been bullied were less likely to be very satisfied with your lives, regardless of your sexual identity.

Studies following older generations have shown that the scarring effects of bullying on physical and mental health can last well into middle age.



## HELPING THE NEXT GENERATION

Findings from this research have been used in anti-bullying campaigns across the country. The research was launched during Anti-Bullying Week, and has been used by teacher training programmes, local councils, charities and university student unions.

The research was also featured in the Huffington Post, the London Evening Standard and several LGBT news outlets.

**FIND OUT MORE AT...**  
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