



NEXT STEPS

LEARNING FROM YOUR GENERATION

LIFE AT
32

UPDATE 2024

THANK YOU SO MUCH!

WHAT HAVE WE
LEARNED?

[NEXTSTEPSSTUDY.ORG.UK](https://nextstepsstudy.org.uk)

YOUR LIVES AT 32

A HUGE THANK YOU!

The Age 32 Survey is now complete!

A huge thank you to the more than 7,000 of you who took part. This was the first big Next Steps survey in seven years, and we were really pleased to hear from so many of you about how you've been getting on.

The information you've shared gives us a picture of how things are for your generation now, and how different parts of your lives all fit together. By joining up this new information with your responses to our previous surveys, we can also see how past experiences make a difference to your present and, in part, shape your future.

All of this is vital evidence for government policymakers and others in charge of delivering public services and systems.



MEET THE NEW DIRECTOR

Morag Henderson is the new director of Next Steps. Morag is a professor of sociology who has worked at UCL, the study's home, since 2014.

"I'm honoured to be leading this incredible study. I first discovered Next Steps as a student at the University of Oxford in 2009. It allowed me to explore the relationship between parenting style and educational attainment.

Since then, across all my research, I've used Next Steps above all other data. I am so grateful to you, and to your parents, for all your contributions over these past 20 years. Sharing information about your own lives helps to bring about positive change to improve everyone's lives. Thank you for all your help so far and for allowing us to continue following along as you take your next steps."

Read an interview with Morag on our website:

nextstepsstudy.org.uk/meet-morag



FIRST FINDINGS

We've had a first look at your responses to the Age 32 Survey and here's a small snapshot of what you told us. We'll be taking a deeper dive into the data soon, so please check the Next Steps website and socials, and your inbox, for future updates.

7,000+
SURVEY RESPONSES

These will be made available securely to analysts in the UK and around the world for research on a range of important issues.

1,700+
SALIVA SAMPLES

These will be used by experts to investigate the links between our genes and different health conditions, which can help with disease prevention.



WORK LIFE

Our jobs are a big part of our lives. How we feel about our work can have a significant impact on us, including on our health. We asked those of you in work about your current roles.

Four in 10 of you said you were very satisfied with your job, and about the same number were fairly satisfied. Nearly three quarters of you said you felt your job offered you good career prospects.

Most of you said you felt secure in your work — almost two thirds of you said it was very unlikely you'd lose your job in the next year, and only around one in 20 of you thought this was very or fairly likely. But more than four in 10 of you reported being often or always stressed at work.

86%

OF YOU SAID YOU'RE DOING USEFUL WORK

69%

SAID YOU'RE MOTIVATED TO GIVE YOUR BEST AT WORK

4%

OF YOU HAVE A SECOND JOB





RELATIONSHIPS AND FAMILY

Six in 10 of you were living with a partner or spouse, and four in 10 were married or in a civil partnership. A small proportion of study members (2%) had divorced, legally separated or ended a civil partnership.

Half of you have children of your own or are living with stepchildren. Among those without kids, six in 10 said they would definitely like to become parents, either now or in the future. Those who felt sure about this gave a range of reasons for not having done so yet. Not feeling ready or not having a suitable partner were the most common reasons people gave. However, over a quarter of those hoping to be parents in the future said they weren't currently trying for kids because of financial concerns.

Around one in 10 non-parents felt certain parenthood was not for them, and the remaining three in 10 were undecided.

62%

OF YOU WERE LIVING WITH A PARTNER OR SPOUSE

44%

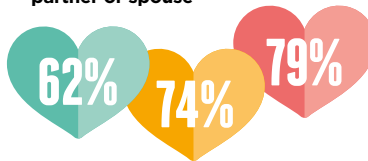
OF THOSE WHO WOULD LIKE KIDS, DON'T FEEL READY YET



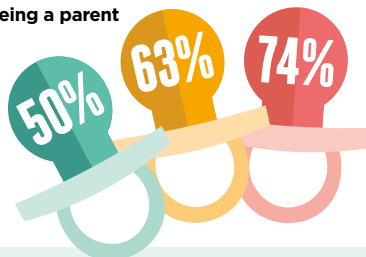
WHAT WERE PREVIOUS GENERATIONS DOING AT YOUR AGE?

You might know that Next Steps belongs to a family of studies in this country which each follow a different generation of people. Researchers often use Next Steps in combination with one or more of these other studies to see how our lives are changing.

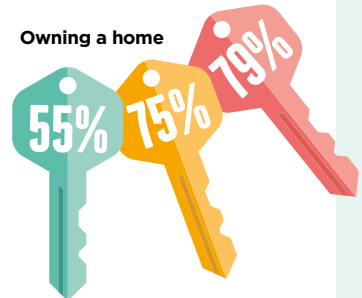
Living with a partner or spouse



Being a parent



Owning a home



- Your generation at age 32
- Study members born in 1970 at age 34
- Study members born in 1958 at age 33



HEALTH AND WELLBEING

We asked you about your overall health. Around 70% of you said you were in good or very good health, and 15% of you rated your health as excellent.

It's well known that exercise and sleep, among other things, are important for health. It's great to learn that just over eight in 10 of you exercise at least once a week for 30 minutes or more. More than half exercise at least three times a week. On the other hand, nearly one in five of your generation said they don't do any regular exercise.

Six out of 10 of you said you slept on average the NHS-recommended seven to nine hours per night.

We asked about your support networks as these can make a difference to wellbeing. Most of you (around 85%) said you definitely have someone you could turn to for advice. Over two thirds of you said the people around you would be very willing to listen if you needed to talk about your problems or feelings. But around one in 10 of you said you often feel lonely.



Information you've shared with us previously has already made a big difference. In the last 10 years, Next Steps data has been used in:

Nearly **300** published research papers

Over **1,500** different research projects

Nearly **300** different institutions & organisations

32 countries

Find out about some of the research that's been possible because of you on the next pages.



RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

REGIONAL INEQUALITIES

Research based on Next Steps has shown which parts of the country offer more opportunities than others when it comes to climbing the social ladder.

Our prospects in life are profoundly influenced not only by our parents, and what they do or did for a living, but also by where we live. These regional inequalities have been well documented in previous research, and the government has aimed to tackle this in its 'levelling up' plans, launched in 2022.

Now, with the help of Next Steps, research undertaken at Durham University has cast some new light on the issue. The researcher analysed information about your parents' occupations and where you grew up, along with information about the jobs you did and where you lived at age 25. From this, they could see which regions in England had the highest levels of upward social mobility — in other words, in which regions the largest proportion of the population had moved up the social ladder compared to their parents.

Maybe surprisingly, the research showed that the East Midlands was the best performing region, followed closely by London. Interestingly, southern England performed worse than northern regions. In particular, both the South East and South West had lower levels of upward social mobility than the national average.

The research also looked at how moving from one part of the country to another can influence people's prospects. London was found to have had an 'escalator' effect for your generation, providing more opportunities for those who moved there from elsewhere.

These findings represent a much more nuanced picture of regional inequalities than the simple North-South divide.

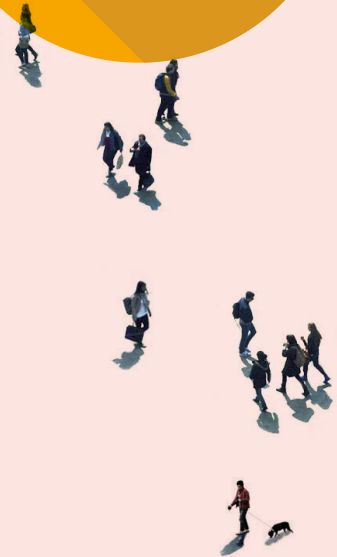
THE SOUTH EAST
AND SOUTH WEST HAD
LOWER LEVELS
OF UPWARD SOCIAL MOBILITY
THAN THE NATIONAL
AVERAGE



FIND OUT MORE

You can read about these and other Next Steps discoveries on our website:

nextstepsstudy.org.uk



LIFE SATISFACTION

Young people's wellbeing has declined in the last 20 years, according to findings from Next Steps and another study of people born in 1970.

A team of researchers at UCL compared information from you at age 25 and from participants in the other study when they were 26. They looked at the connections between big life milestones, like moving out of the family home and moving in with a partner, to see whether these things were as important for your generation's wellbeing as they had been for the older generation.

Levels of life satisfaction had taken a dip for people in their mid-twenties. Among men, 79% of those born in 1970 were satisfied with their lives at this age

compared to 68% of men of your generation. The proportion of women satisfied with their lives had dropped from 81% to 75%.

The researchers found that for both groups, life satisfaction was strongly linked to home ownership, full time work, living with a partner and marriage. However, some things had changed for women. Not being in full-time work now had a bigger impact on women's life satisfaction than it had for the older generation. In addition, motherhood appeared to give more of a boost to wellbeing than previously.

STUDENT LOAN DEBT

Next Steps has shown that changes to student loans will likely hit lower earners and marginalised groups hardest.

The changes include lowering the amount a borrower needs to be earning before they must make repayments, from £29,860 to £25,000. They apply to new borrowers and so won't affect existing Next Steps graduates, but a research team at UCL were able to use your information to predict which groups of people would be most impacted.

Many of you had previously given permission for records held by the Student Loans Company to be linked to your Next Steps survey records. Analysing this, the researchers found that those who will now have to make repayments will be more likely to be from an ethnic minority background, be the first in their family to have gone to university, and work part-time. In general, they warned, the changes could pile more financial pressure on young people.

68%
OF MEN

AND
75%
OF WOMEN OF YOUR
GENERATION

**WERE
SATISFIED WITH
THEIR LIVES
AT 25**





KEEP IN TOUCH



0800 977 4566



nextsteps@ucl.ac.uk
nextstepsstudy.org.uk



Next Steps
Centre for Longitudinal Studies
UCL Social Research Institute
20 Bedford Way
London, WC1H 0AL



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