

ncds

**National Child
Development Study**



What's new in NCDS

UPDATE 2017

Does being a scout or guide benefit mental health?

Image © The Scout Association



Findings from NCDS have shown that joining scouts or guides as a child may protect against mental illness in adulthood.

Researchers from the University of Edinburgh and the University of Glasgow have suggested that there could be life-long benefits to programmes that teach children self-reliance and teamwork skills.

What we asked you

When you were 50, we asked you several questions to assess your mental health. We also asked if you had been a member of scouts or guides. Just over a quarter of you said that you had.

Positive effect on mental health

The researchers found that those of you who took part in

scouts or guides as children were 20 per cent less likely to suffer from anxiety or mood disorders at age 50 than other adults.

This remained the case even when other factors that might affect an individual's mental health, such as social background and family history of mental illness, were taken into account.

The researchers explained that the structured nature of scouts and guides activity, and the lessons they teach in resilience and resolve, may account for the long-term benefits. Other activities, such as church or



FORMER SCOUTS AND GUIDES ARE NEARLY 20 PER CENT LESS LIKELY TO SUFFER ANXIETY OR MOOD DISORDERS AT AGE 50

voluntary groups, did not appear to offer the same protection for adult mental health.

Wider impact

Children from poorer backgrounds, who are at greater risk of developing mental illness, seemed to benefit most from joining scouts or guides.

One of the study's authors, Richard Mitchell, said: "Governments and health services around the world struggle to do something about the health gap between richer and poorer people, so this new evidence that being a scout or guide can help is very important."

NCDS IN THE NEWS

The NCDS research on the benefits of scouts and guides was widely reported by the UK media. Stories appeared in the Guardian, Daily Telegraph, Daily Mail, Express and Times as well as on the BBC News website. Many local news outlets also covered the research.



Entering the job market

Findings from NCDS have shown that those of you who grew up in England transitioned from school into work more quickly and smoothly than young people today.

What we asked you

When we visited you at age 23, we asked you to think back to your late teens to let us know if you had gone into work after your 16th birthday, or continued your studies.

The same question was asked of participants in three other cohort studies, following people born in 1970, 1980 and 1990. By comparing your experiences, we can begin to see how things have changed across generations.

More work, less instability

Researchers from the National Institute of Economic and Social Research found that among those of you living in England, the vast majority (9 in 10) went into work between the ages of 16 and 19. Only 1 in 20 of you were unemployed for a significant period after leaving school. By the time the 1990s generation reached age 16, just 4 in 10 went into work before they turned 19, but the proportion of those out of work nearly tripled.

Staying on at school is much more common today than when you were teenagers. Fewer than 1 in 20 of you remained in education without a break between ages 16 and 19, compared to more than half of the younger generations.

Women and ethnic minorities

Young women in your generation were more likely than men to experience

unemployment and job instability when leaving school. Women born in 1990 tended to fare better than men when looking for a job at age 16.

Similarly, teenagers from ethnic minority backgrounds were more likely to experience job instability and unemployment than their white peers when you left school, but this has steadily improved over time.

HOW YOU'VE HELPED MAKE A DIFFERENCE

NCDS has helped the UK government prevent youth unemployment.

Researchers at the University of Bath used information from NCDS to show that being unemployed when you are young can have an effect on wages up to 20 years later. They found that men and women who were out of work for several months between the ages of 16 and 23 earned, on average, 12 to 15 per cent less at age 42 than those who

were not unemployed in their youth.

The findings have encouraged Jobcentre Plus to offer more time with advisers and opportunities for training for those who have been out of work for some time.

They also influenced the Coalition Government's Work Programme, which provides personalised support to those looking for work.

Preparing for retirement



Researchers from the Centre for Longitudinal Studies (funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation) have used NCDS to show how our expectations for retirement are influenced by our lifetime experiences of work and poverty.

What we asked you

At every survey, we've asked you about any jobs you've had since the last time we spoke to you, how much you earned, and your other sources of family income. When you were age 50 and 55, we asked you questions about your plans for retirement.

Expectations for retirement

At age 55, 8 in 10 men and 7 in 10 women said they thought it was more likely than not that they would be working past age 60. Half of men and 2 in 5 women thought it likely that they would be still be working past age 66.

The poorest people of your generation were the least likely to think they would be working past retirement age, followed by the most well-off. It was the people who earned somewhere in the middle who had the strongest expectations of working past age 66.

Among people living in poverty, those who were both poor and out of work were least likely to think they would still be working past age 60 or 66. The working poor – those with jobs but living in poverty – had the strongest expectation of working longer.

Poverty and attitudes to retirement

At age 50, people who had experienced poverty during their lives were much more likely to worry about how much they'll have to live on in retirement, and to feel they couldn't afford to put money away. They were also more likely to think that, at this age, retirement was too far off to worry about.

When we visited you at age 55, 2 in 5 of you said you were currently paying into a pension scheme. More than a third said they had never contributed to a pension, but among those who had lived in persistent poverty the number was even higher – 3 in 5.

At age 50, what did you think about retirement?

I worry about how much I'll have to live on



I can't afford to put money aside



Retirement is too far off to worry about



Agree
 Somewhat agree
 Somewhat disagree
 Disagree

Keep in touch

If you change your address, phone number or email address, please let us know so that we can contact you in the future.

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