

Girls' Attitudes Survey
2013

What girls say about...

Equality for girls



WE DISCOVER, WE GROW

Girlguiding

About Girlguiding

Girlguiding is the leading charity for girls and young women in the UK. Thanks to the dedication and support of 100,000 amazing volunteers, we are active in every part of the UK, giving girls and young women a space where they can be themselves, have fun, build brilliant friendships, gain valuable life skills and make a positive difference to their lives and their communities. We build girls' confidence and raise their aspirations. We give them the chance to discover their full potential and encourage them to be a powerful force for good.

We are for all girls

We are for all girls and young women, whatever their background and circumstances. We offer them fun, exciting activities and the chance to make lifelong friends. You'll find us in every community, helping to give girls a head start in life and encouraging them to be happy, self-confident and curious about the world they live in and the difference they can make.

We give girls their own space

We give girls a place where they can really be themselves with other girls and share the experience of growing up as a girl in today's world. We provide a safe, non-judgemental environment where girls can explore the issues they care about while having lots of fun, enjoying new experiences and learning vital skills.

We give girls a voice

We give girls the confidence, skills and information to make informed decisions. We offer a supportive, inclusive and exciting environment where they can reach their own conclusions about the world. We show them how they can speak out and take positive action to improve their lives and the lives of others. We passionately believe that girls and young women can be a powerful force for good.

We change as the lives of girls change

We are relevant to today's girls because we listen to them and constantly evolve and adapt what we offer them without losing what makes us uniquely us. We provide support, comfort and friendship in what can often seem a complex world for girls as they grow up.

Contents

<i>Foreword: Julie Bentley, Girlguiding's Chief Executive</i>	4
<i>Foreword: Girlguiding Advocates</i>	5
<i>Executive summary</i>	6
<i>Inequality today</i>	8
<i>Everyday sexism</i>	8
<i>Relationships and sex</i>	11
<i>Body image and appearance</i>	12
<i>Equality tomorrow?</i>	17
<i>Careers and leadership</i>	17
<i>Work-life balance</i>	19
<i>Girls' resilience</i>	20
<i>Feminism</i>	21
<i>Girls' visions for an equal future</i>	22
<i>About the Girls' Attitudes Survey</i>	24
<i>Methodology</i>	24

Foreword: Julie Bentley, Girlguiding's Chief Executive

Girlguiding is the leading charity for girls and young women in the UK and we passionately believe that girls have the potential to be leaders in all walks of life, to be a powerful force for good and to be inspiring advocates for change. But to do this they need to live in an equal society that treats them fairly and supports their aspirations.

This year our landmark fifth Girls' Attitudes Survey focuses on equality. We feel strongly that we have a responsibility to understand the society girls are living in today - the challenges they face as well as the opportunities they can pursue - so we can support them in all they choose to do. The survey gives a unique insight into this from girls' perspectives - and gives them a voice about how they see the world.

The findings show that girls feel that they experience high levels of sexism in their everyday lives - at school, online and in the media - and that this has a negative impact on girls' confidence, well-being and, too often, their aspirations. Girls recognise that these inequalities are likely to have an impact on their future opportunities and curtail their choices.

However, the findings also show that girls themselves are resilient and positive, find a lot of happiness in their lives and are full of hope for a rewarding, equal future. The research paints a picture of a highly ambitious generation of girls and young women who can't wait to take up their positions in the world.

The thousands of girls we work with every day constantly inspire us with their passion, energy and sense of adventure. We hope you will join us in listening to girls' voices - and in working towards a society where girls can truly be everything they want to be.



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Foreword: Girlguiding Advocates

Body image, self-esteem, relationships, everyday sexism - these are just some of the issues girls like us face on a daily basis.

As members of Advocate, Girlguiding's youth advocacy panel, we share the concerns of girls today, the problems they struggle with and their hopes for the future.

2013 has been an amazing and busy year for the Advocate panel. We have supported the No More Page 3 campaign and the Campaign for Better Sex Education, spoken at a conference in front of MPs, taken part in Malala Day and talked about Girlguiding in the press, on the TV and radio - and to anyone who will listen! We hope to do even more of this next year.

The fifth Girls' Attitudes Survey is another reminder of why it is so important that we have a chance to speak out and tell people what it feels like to be a girl growing up in the UK today. Because even though we discussed the survey right at the start, and helped shape the questions, we were surprised and troubled by the findings. There are certainly responses in this year's survey that are upsetting. The results made us understand the real extent of the problems and unfairness girls face today. We worry that issues that should only be read about in our history books are still commonplace. There is a danger that the freedoms and protections women have gained are being abandoned.

Girlguiding is all about encouraging girls and young women to realise their potential by nurturing their skills and allowing them to flourish in an environment where they can be themselves. It teaches girls to have confidence in themselves, to have adventures and to get out and try new things.

This is why we think it is important that this year the survey focuses on equality. We feel strongly that a woman should be judged on her ability not her appearance, and that sexual harassment should not still be such a common occurrence that it is dismissed as just something to deal with. Seeing the positivity with which girls and young women hope to overcome these inequalities is very enlightening and empowering.

Becoming advocates has allowed us to discuss the issues girls care about and seek change. We explore important issues, find out more about advocacy and discover our own voices to speak out on the things that matter to us. It is inspiring to see how many other girls feel more determined than ever to change the world around them in the future. There is a lot that needs to change - but we hope that together we can make that happen.

'Advocate' is Girlguiding's youth panel of 16 members aged 14 to 25 who lead the direction of our advocacy and campaigning. The panel discusses the issues girls care about and seeks change UK-wide to improve the lives of girls and young women.



Executive summary



think sexism
affects most
areas of their
lives
(11 to 21)



think women
are judged
more for
their looks
than ability
(11 to 21)



say girls are
judged
harshly for
sexual
behaviour
seen as
acceptable in
boys
(11 to 21)

Girlguiding's fifth Girls' Attitudes Survey provides a unique overview of the state of equality for girls in the UK today. It finds that girls live in a society in which sexual harassment is commonplace, girls' appearance is intensely scrutinised and their abilities are undermined. It's a society in which girls and young women feel they are judged by different standards to their male counterparts and in which they worry about gender discrimination affecting their future.

Despite the impact of these challenges that we see on girls' well-being, confidence and sometimes their aspirations, the report also finds a generation of girls and young women who are resilient, positive and highly ambitious, with hopes and aspirations for an equal, happy and rewarding future.

Inequality today

The findings reveal that girls and young women experience shocking levels of everyday sexism and discrimination at school, on the street, and in their interactions online and with the media. Three in four girls and young women feel that sexism is so widespread in our society today that it affects most areas of their lives (75%). Of girls aged 11 to 21, 87% think that women are judged more on their appearance than on their ability. More than a third of girls aged 7 to 21 have felt patronised or been made to feel stupid because of their gender (36%), rising sharply to 60% of 16- to 21-year-olds.

Sexual harassment

The majority of girls and young women report experiencing sexual harassment, starting when they are at school. Girls aged 11 to 21 are as likely to have been harassed at school as on the street. Six in ten girls have had comments shouted at them about their appearance at school (60%), and 62% have been shouted or whistled at in the street about their appearance (rising to 76% of 16- to 21-year-olds). Seven out of ten girls aged 13 and over report further experiences of sexual harassment at school or college. These include sexual jokes or taunts (51%), seeing images of girls or women that made them uncomfortable (39%), seeing rude or obscene graffiti about girls and women (33%), and unwanted sexual attention (28%) and touching (28%).

Online abuse

Harassment and discrimination follow girls online, with experience of online bullying and abuse widespread. More than half of all those aged 11 to 21 say they have had negative experiences online (54%). For older girls, aged 16 to 21, this includes having had sexist comments (26%) and threatening things (25%) said about or to them.

Too little support

The report finds that too often girls are being left to negotiate this everyday sexism with little support. Half of all girls think that too much responsibility is placed on girls for their sexual safety (53%). Most girls deal with online abuse on their own and informally rather than reporting it. At school, many girls and young women - more than a third of girls aged 16 to 21 (38%) - feel that sex education has not prepared them well. The majority say that sex education at school does not focus enough on relationships, with 64% of 16- to 21-year-olds saying this.

Appearance pressures

Girls' experience today encompasses unprecedented levels of personal and public/media scrutiny over women's body shape, size and overall looks - and it influences girls at a young age. Among 11- to 21-year-olds, 80% think there is too much discussion about women's weight in the media and 71% say they would like to lose weight. One in five girls of primary school age (7- to 11-year-olds) say they have been on a diet. Girls also feel that their behaviour is judged by different standards to boys - 76% say that girls are judged harshly for sexual behaviour that is seen as acceptable in boys.

Equality tomorrow?

Girls today worry that some of the challenges faced by previous generations, such as overcoming stereotypes and constraints in work and family life, will soon be issues that affect them too. Girls believe that motherhood still disadvantages women in the workplace, and almost half of those aged 11 to 21 worry that having children will negatively affect their career (46%). A similar number think that employers at least to some extent prefer to employ men over women (43%). Half worry about the pay gap between men and women (50%), rising to 60% among 16- to 21-year-olds.

High aspirations

Nonetheless, girls and young women report being career focused as well as clearly aspiring to a balanced family life. A good job comes top of the list of what girls say they need in life to do well and be happy in the future, and seven out of ten want to combine having children and maintaining a career. The vast majority expect their future family life to be equal, with 88% saying that both parents should be able to share time off after their baby is born, rising to 93% of 11- to 21-year-olds. However, girls worry about gender stereotypes in parenting and the cost of childcare - 65% of girls aged 11 to 21 are concerned about the cost of childcare.

Role models deficit

This year's survey confirms that there is a serious 'role model deficit' for girls and young women (a finding previously reported on by Girlguiding) and that this negatively affects some girls' aspirations. Two in three girls aged 11 to 21 think that there are not enough women in leadership positions in the UK (66%). Just over half are to some extent deterred by this deficit, feeling that they have less chance of succeeding themselves (54%), with almost one in three feeling this quite strongly (29%). However, there is also strong resilience among girls and young women, with almost as many saying that the lack of women in leadership roles makes them feel more rather than less determined to succeed themselves (46% feel this, 29% feel this quite strongly).

Girls' resilience

This resilience is evident across the findings. Although appearance pressure has a serious impact on girls' and young women's confidence with the way they look, when they are asked to think about what they need in life to do well and be happy, good looks and beauty come far below friends, family, health, education, hard work and commitment, money and ambition. The data reveals high levels of ambition: of 16- to 21-year-olds, 67% say ambition is important to them and 58% say they would like to become a leader in their chosen profession.

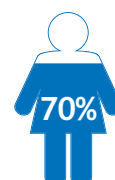
An equal future

It is clear that today's generation of girls and young women are positive, resilient and ambitious, and have the potential to be a powerful force for change in society. The findings in this report on how girls and young women are affected by, and worry about, everyday sexism and discrimination should be a wake-up call for decision-makers. The report presents clear evidence that we are too often failing to provide safe and equal environments in which girls can flourish and grow up to reach their full potential.

We must all take responsibility to ensure that the visions for an equal future set out by girls at the end of this report have every chance of becoming reality.



have felt patronised or been made to feel stupid because of their sex (16 to 21)



report experiences of sexual harassment at school or college (13 to 21)

Inequality today



75%
think sexism
affects most
areas of their
lives
(11 to 21)

The fifth Girls' Attitudes Survey offers unique insight into how girls and young women experience life in today's society. It describes a society in which sexual harassment is commonplace, girls' appearance is intensely scrutinised and their abilities are undermined. Girls are deeply affected by the gendered pressures they experience, and too many are insecure and unhappy with their looks. They are increasingly influenced by the media and gender norms as they get older, and older girls report higher awareness of inequalities and higher levels of anxiety. Those already unhappy with their looks tend to be more vulnerable to appearance pressures.

Everyday sexism

The survey finds that girls and young women experience daily sexism and discrimination at school, on the street, in their interactions with the media and on social media.

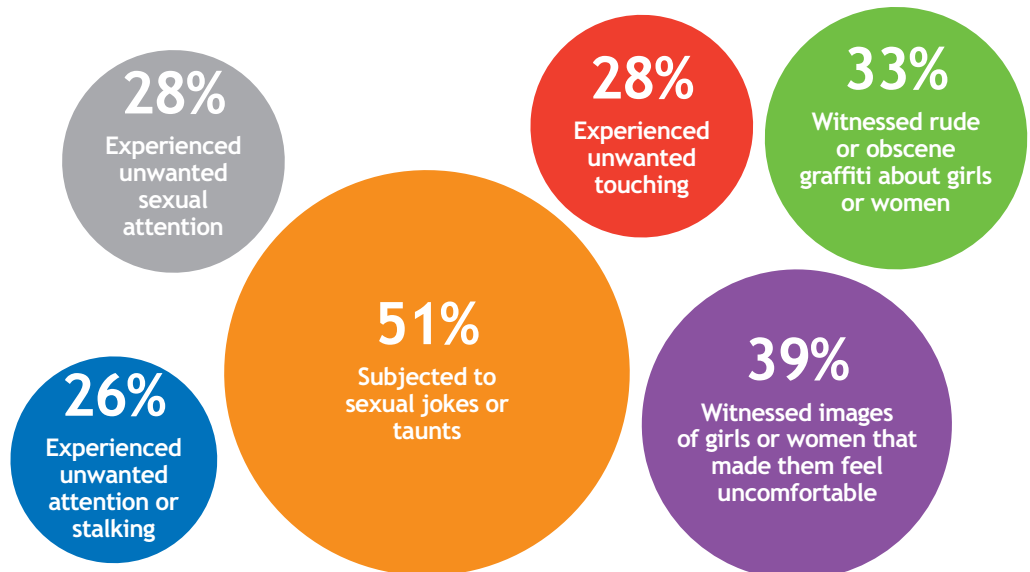
Three quarters of girls and young women feel that sexism is so widespread in our society today that it affects most areas of their lives (75%). Of girls aged 11 to 21, 87% think that women are judged more on their appearance than on their ability. Of those aged 16 to 21, 60% have felt patronised or been made to feel stupid because of their gender. This is true for a third of all girls aged 7 to 21 (36%).

'This is an urgent wake-up call. The results closely reflect the huge numbers of entries to the Everyday Sexism Project from girls and young women experiencing sexism and harassment on a regular basis. That three quarters of girls feel sexism affects every area of their lives is a devastatingly sad reality in a modern world where we want our children to grow up believing they can be anything they want to be. Clearly, for girls, sexism is still a major hurdle to that sense of freedom.'

Laura Bates, founder of the Everyday Sexism Project



Sexual
harassment at
school or
college
(13 to 21)



Harassment

The majority of girls and young women experience gender-based harassment, starting when they are at school.

Girls aged 11 to 21 are as likely to be exposed to harassment at school as on the street: 60% have had comments shouted at them about their appearance at school and 62% have been shouted or whistled at on the street (rising to 76% of 16- to 21-year-olds). This behaviour has a clear impact on girls' sense of safety - 78% aged 11 to 21 find it threatening to be shouted or whistled at if they are on their own. It also affects younger girls, with a third aged 7 to 11 having experienced such harassment at school (31%).

Among girls aged 13 and over, seven out of ten have experienced more intrusive forms of sexual harassment at school or college. Half have experienced sexual jokes or taunts (51%), four in ten have seen images of girls or women that made them feel uncomfortable (39%), a third report seeing rude or obscene graffiti about girls or women (33%), and over a quarter say they have experienced unwanted sexual attention (28%), unwanted touching (28%) or unwanted attention or stalking (26%). Exposure to sexual harassment increases sharply with age - just over half of 13-year-olds report experiencing such behaviour (54%), rising to 80% of 19- to 21-year-olds.



think women are judged more for their looks than ability (11 to 21)



have felt patronised or been made to feel stupid because of their sex (16 to 21)



Online abuse (11 to 21)

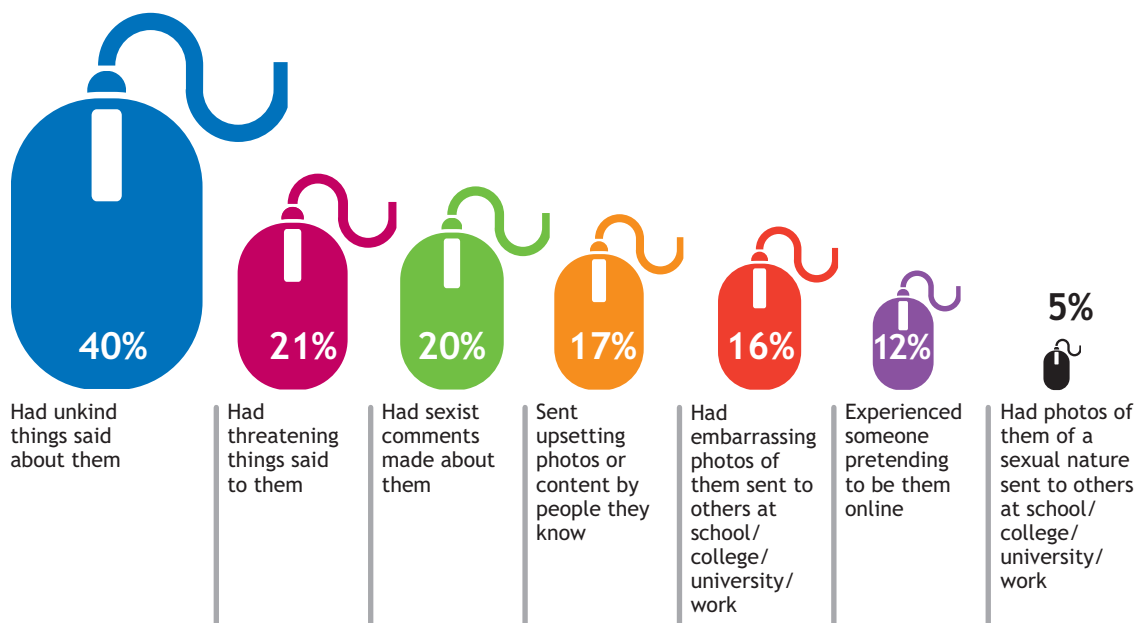
'This essential research from Girlguiding shows just how routine young women's experiences of sexism and harassment are. Sadly, it confirms our own findings that, for many girls, school is not a safe place. It screams out the need for ALL schools to teach young people about consensual and sexual relationships in Sex and Relationships Education and for girls' safety to be addressed properly in school policies. Well done the Girl Guides for tackling this head on!'

Holly Dustin, Director, End Violence Against Women Coalition

Online abuse

Harassment and discrimination follow girls online, with experience of online bullying and abuse being widespread. Most girls deal with this on their own rather than reporting it.

More than half of girls aged 11 to 21 say they have had negative experiences online (54%). The most frequent experiences relate to written messages - 40% have had unkind things said about them on social media, 21% have had threatening things said to them and 20% have had sexist comments made about them.





For some, experiences relate to images - 17% have been sent photos by people they know that they found upsetting, and 16% have had embarrassing photos of themselves sent to others at school, college or work. A few have had photos of themselves of a sexual nature circulated among others at school, college or work (5%).

Experience of online abuse is higher among older girls, with 64% aged 16 to 21 subjected to it, but it is nevertheless widespread among those in secondary school (57% of 11- to 16-year-olds).

Girls have a range of tactics for dealing with online abuse but the majority deal with it alone. For those aged 11 upwards, their reaction to rude or abusive messages is generally to deal with it informally - to delete the message or block the sender (56%), to ignore it (39%), or to tell their friend or sibling (30%). They are less likely to approach someone of authority, for example their parents (22%) or a moderator (22%). Younger girls are more likely to talk to parents (69% of 7- to 11-year-olds, falling sharply to 31% of 11- to 16-year-olds), while older girls are more likely to report comments to a moderator (29% of 16- to 21-year-olds).

'Girls today need to learn how to put the daily barrage of social media updates into context. Just because somebody looks like they are having the "perfect" life, it doesn't mean they are. They also mustn't succumb to the pressure of oversharing their personal life online. A healthy balance between the real and virtual must be struck so girls can thrive.'

Emma Barnett, Women's Editor, *The Telegraph*

Social media habits

Nearly three quarters of girls and young women use at least one of the main social networking sites (73% of 7- to 21-year-olds), with almost all doing so from the age of 11 upwards (96%).

For girls of primary school age (7 to 11), one in four claims to use Facebook (25%) despite the fact that these girls are clearly below the minimum age limit of 13. One in ten uses Twitter (11%) and 9% use Instagram.

Among those aged 11 to 21, 90% use Facebook, 57% use Twitter and 38% are now on Instagram, which is especially popular among those of secondary school age (46% of 11- to 16-year-olds, 31% of 16- to 21-year-olds).

Personal safety

The majority of respondents aged 16 to 21 feel clear that a woman is never responsible if she is raped or sexually assaulted. However, depending on circumstances, a significant minority of young women say they are uncertain.

More than half of girls aged 16 to 21 (53%) think that too much responsibility is placed on girls and women for their sexual safety, but 18% disagree, with the remainder unsure or preferring not to say. The majority of young women agree that girls and women are never to blame for rape or sexual assault - almost two thirds of young women aged 16 to 21 agree with this (63%). However, over one in seven (15%) disagree that a woman is never responsible, more say they are unsure (18%) and 4% prefer not to say.

The circumstances in which rape or sexual assault takes place shift attitudes towards responsibility. When asked if a woman wearing sexy or revealing clothes is responsible for being raped or sexually assaulted, the same proportion of 16- to 21-year-olds maintain that she is not (63%), but those saying she may be partly responsible increases to one in five (19%), with a smaller proportion unsure (14%).

When asked if a woman who was drunk may be partly to blame for rape or sexual assault, a smaller proportion, just over half (53%), say that she is never responsible. The proportion who say that a woman could be held responsible increases further, to a quarter (24%), and more are unsure (19%).

The data also shows one in five (19%) of respondents agree that the high incidence of rape and sexual assault in society 'almost makes it seem like a normal occurrence'.

Relationships and sex

Understanding what a healthy, equal relationship is like is crucial to ensuring young people's personal safety, as well as their happiness in adult life. However, girls report that sex education at school fails to focus enough on relationships, and they experience double standards for girls and boys relating to sexual behaviour.

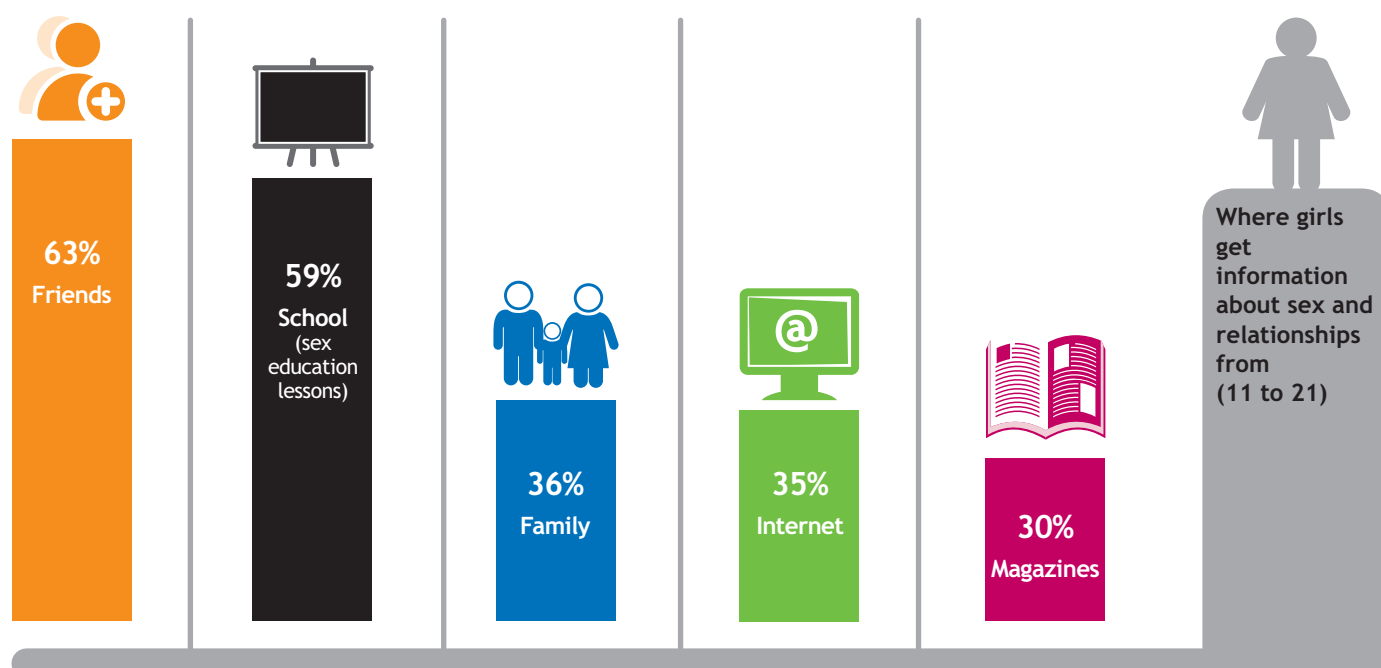
The majority of girls and young women aged 11 to 21 get information about relationships and sex from talking to friends (63%) and from sex education lessons at school (59%). The internet has overtaken magazines, a popular source of guidance in the past, with 35% going online for advice and information, compared with 30% who turn to print. Both media are far more important among older girls - 49% of 16- to 21-year-olds get information about sex and relationships online and 38% get it from magazines, compared with 21% and 22% for those aged 11 to 16.



say girls are judged harshly for sexual behaviour seen as acceptable in boys
(11 to 21)

'Teenage girls are bombarded at every waking moment with images telling them how they should look and behave. What gives me hope is how sensibly so many of them critique the culture which surrounds them. But it is in fact dangerous that images borrowed from pornography are presented as empowering, when in reality they are part of a sexist culture that objectifies and trivialises women and girls, feeds violence against women, and justifies society's minimisation and normalisation of it.'

Polly Neate, Chief Executive, Women's Aid





are unhappy
with their
looks
(11 to 16)

'We see stereotypical and sexualised images of both genders all the time online and in the mainstream media, where young women are shown as sex objects. Both boys and girls are getting distorted images and ideas about both genders - and about sex itself - and this can make for unhealthy and unhappy relationships. We need much better sex education in schools that includes online bullying and pornography in sex education lessons. It is ridiculous that in the 21st century there is no mention of the internet in any of the laws or guidelines surrounding sex education.'

Katie Wormald, Girlguiding Advocate

The survey finds that schools are currently failing to provide adequate sex and relationships education for all girls. Overall, 55% of girls and young women feel that sex education at school does not focus enough on relationships, with 64% of 16- to 21-year-olds feeling this. In the same age group, more than a third disagree that sex education at school has prepared them well (38%), while a third agree (34%). Younger girls, aged 11 to 16, are more positive, but fewer than half agree that sex education at school has prepared them well (46%), and a quarter disagree (24%).

Girls report that there are clear double standards for girls and boys when it comes to relationships and sex. Most girls aged 11 to 21 feel that girls are judged harshly for sexual behaviour that is seen as acceptable in boys (76%, with just 3% feeling the opposite).

'The challenge for girls and young women in the early 21st century is to grow up confident about who they are, and who they want to be, free from limiting expectations based on their gender and sexuality. We must have high expectations for them, so they have high expectations for themselves, and it is imperative we create a culture in which they are limited by nothing, confident to demand relationships in which they can fly. Sex and relationships education at home, at school and in the community is fundamental to achieving this.'

Simon Blake, Chief Executive, Brook

Body image and appearance

Girls' experiences today encompass unprecedented levels of personal and public scrutiny over women's body shape and size and overall looks. The biased way in which women are often portrayed in the media is a major force driving this culture. We found that media images and gendered appearance norms have a substantial impact on many girls' body confidence, self-esteem, aspirations and ultimately their physical health.

Overall, girls are less positive this year than in previous years about the way they look and numbers who are not happy with their looks have increased. Unhappiness also tends to increase as girls get older.

The overall proportion saying they are not happy with their looks has increased this year to 33%, up from 29% last year and 26% two years ago. Of girls and young women across the ages, 63% are happy with the way they look (including 23% who are very happy) but this has fallen from 68% last year, and 73% two years ago.

Age plays a key role in how girls feel about the way they look. At ages 11 to 16 as many girls are unhappy with their looks (47%) as are happy (46%). Specifically, at ages 14 to 16 more than half are unhappy with the way they look (51%). Girls' outlook improves a little once they reach 16, with a small majority (54%) being happy with their looks, but a large minority are still unhappy (42%). Younger girls, up to age 11, are widely positive - 89% are happy with their looks, and just 9% are not.



say
criticism of
women on TV
puts them off
wanting to be
on TV
(16 to 21)



'In our society in 2013 women are still being presented in the media as being there for decoration. Women are held up to an impossible airbrushed beauty ideal where how they look becomes more important than what they do, think or say. One gender is allowed to be fully clothed, look old and be overweight while the other isn't. The impact this has on girls and young women is sad and unfair. It's far more difficult to be brave change makers in the world, when the world repeatedly tells you that you're only here to look pretty! The media needs to be far more responsible and respectful in how it represents women.'

Lucy-Anne Holmes, founder of the No More Page 3 campaign

'Low body confidence can have serious consequences for the health and well-being of young people. These results show the real and steadily increasing impact that negative cultural pressures around appearance are having on girls and women in the UK. What worries me is that the number of girls who are unhappy about the way they look is increasing. The trend is going in the wrong direction and should give us all cause for concern. That's why the government's Body Confidence Campaign has been working with the media, advertising, retail and fashion industries to encourage diversity and reduce the harmful effects of gender stereotyping and objectification. It's really important that we all work together to drive forward the cultural change needed to tackle this growing issue.'

Jo Swinson MP, Minister for Women and Equalities

Women in the media

Today's media exert enormous pressure on girls and young women to conform to limited beauty ideals. This underlies a concerning trend of girls applying idealised standards to themselves, resulting in insecurity and unhappiness about the way they look, especially as they get older.

The high levels of criticism and judgement of celebrities in the media has a direct impact on how girls and young women feel about their own bodies. Eighty per cent think that there is too much discussion about women's weight in the media. Of 11- to 21-year-olds, 72% feel to some extent that pictures that 'shame' celebrities make them anxious about their own appearance, compared with just 27% who find that this makes them feel better.

Media content is directly shaping girls' aspirations in terms of behaviour and appearance. Derogatory commentary about women in the public eye negatively affects girls' aspirations to put themselves in that position - 43% say that the way that women are sometimes criticised for their looks on TV puts





say
shaming of
celebrities
makes them
anxious about
their own
appearance
(11 to 21)

them off wanting to be on TV themselves. This view is most prevalent among older girls, with two thirds of 16- to 21-year-olds saying this (65%).

Girls are applying the ideals portrayed in the media to themselves. Half of girls aged 7 to 21 say they would like to look more like the pictures of girls and women they see in the media (49%). Older girls are more likely to say this, with 56% of 11- to 21-year-olds agreeing. There is a robust minority who reject this, however: 34% of 11- to 21-year-olds and 47% of 7- to 11-year-olds.

The impact of media images is greater on those who are already unhappy with their looks. Across all age groups, 76% of girls who report being unhappy with the way they look say that they would like to look more like the pictures of girls and women they see in the media, compared to 40% of those who say they are happy with the way they look who feel this way.

The extent of media influence also appears greater when girls are asked about boys' opinions - 75% of girls aged 11 to 21 feel that boys expect girls to look like the images of girls and women they see in the media, while just 16% say the opposite.

'I worry about a society that takes little responsibility for the relationship between its media and the people consuming it. A shift in the norms around media content is instrumental in achieving and maintaining an equal society. I look forward to a time when I don't have to scour the media for something which does not contain problematic stereotyping about any aspect of our identities. Perhaps with the growth of social media, and platforms which exist to tackle inequality, we will see meaningful change across the board.'

Ikamara Larasi, Rewind&Reframe Project, Imkaan

Media literacy

Girls are savvy to how media images are manipulated. However, as the data shows, they are nonetheless deeply affected by them.

Many of the younger girls have been taught about the need for alertness when reading or watching media items. Half of those aged 7 to 11 understand that magazine pictures of celebrities are often altered to make them look thinner or to remove wrinkles (51%), compared with 32% who believe that magazine pictures of celebrities are usually true to what they really look like. By ages 9 to 11, 60% are aware that images are altered, and just 29% think that most images are true to life.

It is clear that girls don't like the constant idealisation and objectification of women in the media. They are widely supportive of efforts to ensure that magazine images are more honest. Three quarters of those aged 11 to 21 agree that magazines should label images that have been airbrushed (73%), while just 16% disagree.

Weight and dieting

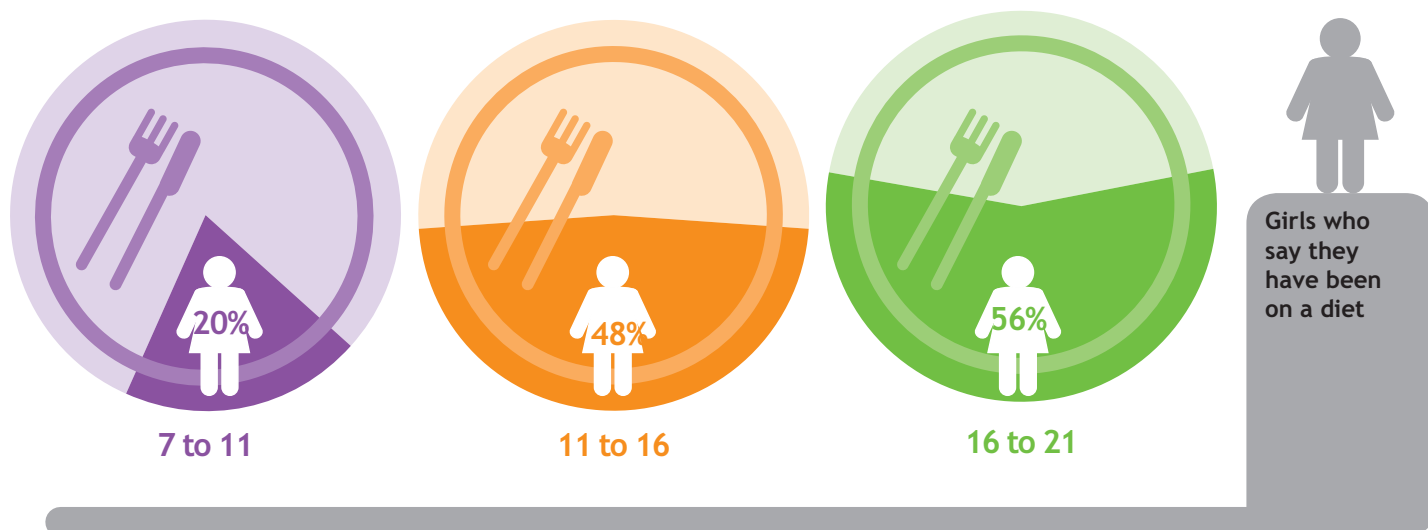
Weight is a major source of anxiety for girls and young women. The focus on women's weight in the media and within girls' social circles has a direct impact on how girls see their own bodies and on their eating habits. The majority say they want to lose weight.

Pressure to conform to an idealised body size starts early in girls' lives and increases as they progress through their teens. Overall, seven in ten 11- to 21-year-olds say that they would like to lose weight (71%). Within this overall picture, an already high 66% of those aged 11 to 16 say this, rising to 75% of those aged 16 to 21.

Girls' everyday eating habits are shaped by this pressure. Over half of older girls, aged 16 to 21, say that they have been on a diet (56%); almost half of those of secondary school age, 11 to 16, say this (48%); and one in five girls of primary school age (7- to 11-year-olds) say this (20%). Over a third of 11- to 21-year-olds say they sometimes skip meals to help lose weight (38%) and a third say they



say
embarrassment
about wearing
school sports
kit puts them
off playing
sport
(11 to 21)



count the calories in what they eat (33%). Almost half of younger girls, aged 7 to 11, say that lots of people they know are always thinking about their weight (47%).

'I have never been confident with my weight and lack confidence with how I look. I have spent half my life on diets or trying to lose weight. The media creates an unhealthy and unrealistic body figure that we should attain. In reality, we are all different and we should celebrate our differences, not shy away from them.'

Girlguiding Advocate

Some girls' behaviour is directly influenced by media reporting on celebrity lifestyles. One in five of those aged 11 to 21 has tried a diet after hearing about a celebrity using it (21%). This celebrity influence and dieting are both more prevalent among those girls who report being unhappy with their looks than those who report being happy.

'Through fashion, the normalisation of unachievable body ideals broadcast at a prolific rate, without anyone recognising they are accountable, is increasingly worrying. Our young women are grossly underserved by current media portrayals of dysfunctional or hyper-sexualised femininity. When the fashion industry's limiting body and beauty standards are added, we know it leaves those who are looking for cultural leads on being female vulnerable to destabilisation. It's why All Walks is campaigning for more empathic practice and a diverse offer from within fashion by educating the next generation of creatives to recognise their important contribution to self-esteem.'

Caryn Franklin Hon. DA, MBE, fashion commentator

Gender norms

Clearly influenced by the media and advertising, by the time girls reach secondary school nine in ten are taking conscious steps to make their appearance conform to accepted gender norms, and in some cases spending substantial sums of money on beauty products.

Some gendered appearance expectations are completely normalised among school-aged girls, with the majority of 11- to 16-year-olds saying they shave or wax their legs (77%) and wear make-up to school (64%). More than four in ten say they shave or wax their bikini line (44%) and/or wear a



would like to lose weight (11 to 21)



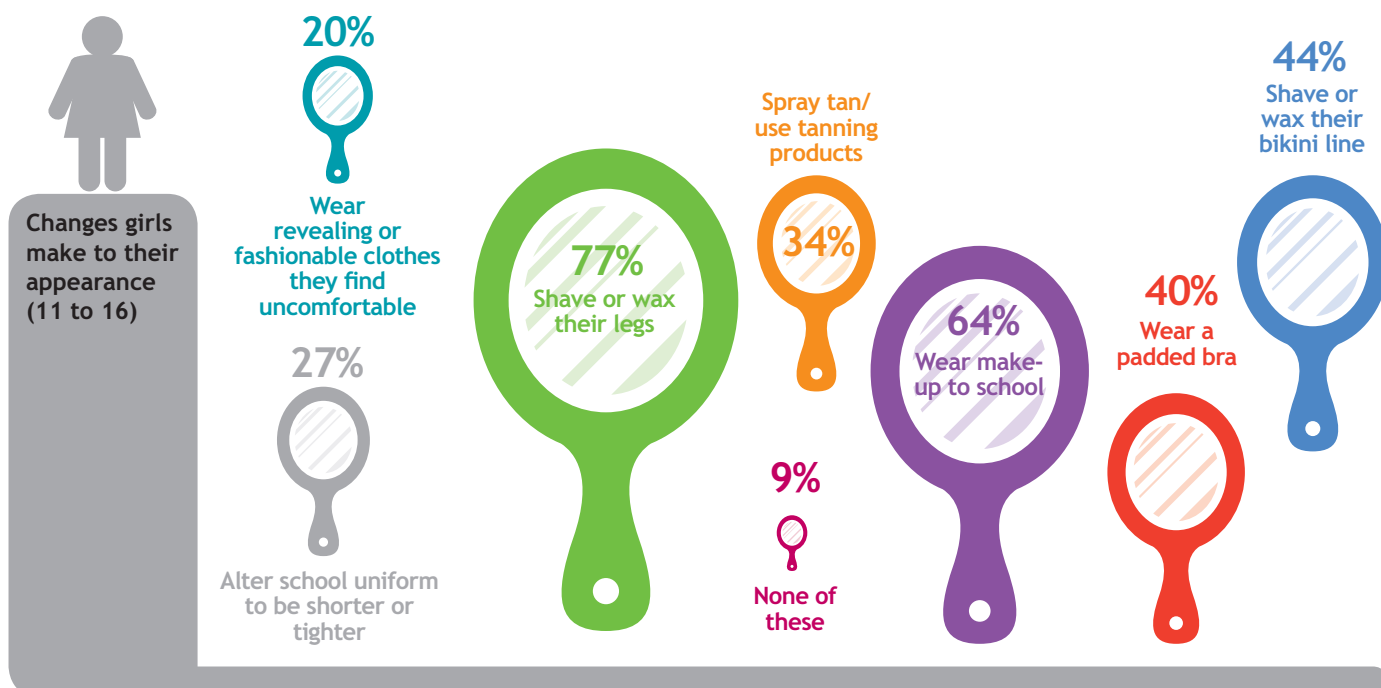
padded bra (40%), and one in three have a spray tan or use tanning products (34%). Just 9% take none of these actions.

Among younger girls, almost two thirds of 7- to 11-year-olds use nail polish (63%), half wear make-up (49%), and one in three wears high heels (33%). Most do not see this as an attempt to appear more grown up. Only one in four feels that they try to make themselves look older or more grown up than they really are (24%). This suggests they see these actions as just a normal part of being a girl.

One in four girls aged 11 to 21 say they would consider cosmetic surgery (27%), rising to almost a third of those aged 16 to 21 (31%).

Clothes play an important role in girls' body confidence. One in four girls aged 11 to 16 alters her school uniform to make it shorter or tighter (27%), and one in five wears revealing or fashionable clothes that she finds uncomfortable (20%). Of girls aged 11 to 21, 41% say that feeling embarrassed about wearing school sports kit puts them off playing sport. This is highest amongst 16- to 18-year-olds, at 48%.

Girls aged 11 to 21 spend an average of £44.50 a month on their appearance (on clothes, nails, make-up and hair). The same proportion of girls aged 14 to 16 as aged 19 to 21 (21%) spend over £50 each month; 6% across the ages say they spend over £100 each month.



Equality tomorrow?

Today's girls and young women face challenges that previous generations did not. As documented in this report, these challenges include online abuse and profound changes in the media and in how young people interact with each other because of social media. Nonetheless, many of the challenges that previous generations faced remain the same, and the decades of struggle for gender equality continue today.

The survey finds that girls worry that some of these age-old problems, such as overcoming stereotypes and constraints in work and family life, will soon be issues that affect them personally. At the same time, it also finds a clear thirst for combining career success with a balanced family life, and a positive resilience among girls and young women who are looking forward to forging an equal and rewarding future.

'Women have come a long way in the last 100 years, but we still face a lot of challenges. There are still three times as many men as women in Parliament. We have to deal with a lot of negative images in the media. We're constantly being told that what matters is how much we weigh, or how pretty men think we are, instead of what we can achieve. It's a tough world, and we've got a lot of work to do, but there's a lot to be excited about. My advice to any young woman is to go for it - stand up for what you believe in no matter what anyone tells you.'

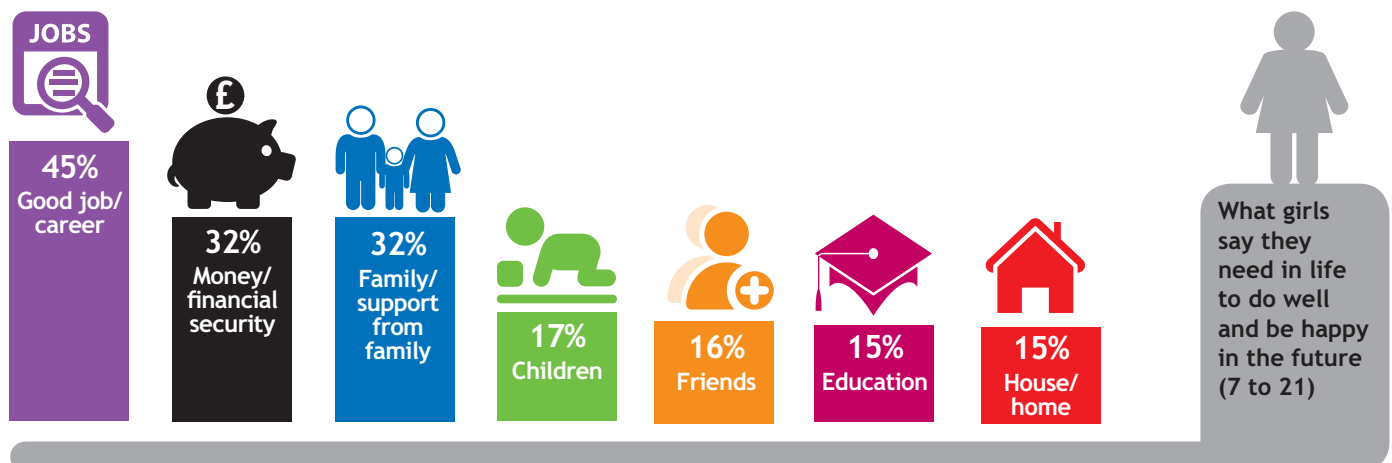
Caroline Lucas, MP for Brighton Pavilion



Careers and leadership

Girls and young women are ambitious and rate a good job and career as highly important to their future success and happiness. They want to see more women in leadership positions and many aspire to leadership themselves - they feel that a better gender balance at the top would benefit women. At the same time, gender inequality in the workplace worries them, especially as they get older.

Having a good job or career comes top of the list for girls and young women when thinking about what they personally need in life to help them do well and be happy in the future. Of 7- to 21-year-olds, 45% spontaneously mentioned a good job or career, while 32% referred to money or financial security. Two thirds of young women aged 16 to 21 agree that ambition is important to help them do well and be happy today (67%).





'Girls have got everything going for them - the chance to shatter glass ceilings in business, politics and industry. We've had the first woman prime minister in the UK, and a smattering of FTSE 100 bosses. Let's have the first female Bank of England governor, and further afield the first woman in the White House. It won't be easy. Equal pay and equal opportunity isn't going to come overnight but girls today have got a better chance of making it happen than ever before.'

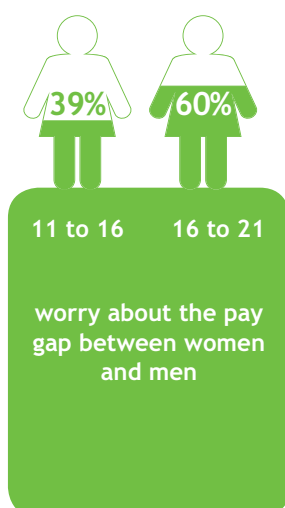
Cathy Newman, Presenter, Channel 4 News

Concern about inequality in employment increases as girls get older and have closer contact with the world of work. For those aged 16 to 21 the majority think that employers to some extent prefer to employ men over women (54%). Many among this age group have a part-time job and this experience may inform their concern - 22% of those aged 14 and up have a part-time job, while 18% of those aged 19 to 21 work full time.

Younger girls, aged 11 to 16, are less concerned, with the majority saying that women and men have equal chances of succeeding in their chosen careers (68%). This age-related difference is also evident in girls' concern about the pay gap between women and men. Of those aged 16 to 21, 60% say they worry about this, compared to 39% among 11- to 16-year-olds.

'We owe a lot to the previous generations of women and in turn we have a duty towards the next generations of girls. There are legions of female role models in the streets - we just need to make them visible for young girls. Those women role models might not appear every day on TV or be the CEO of a listed company, but they have succeeded in their own way, because success means different things for every woman. All women have a worthwhile experience to share and girls can learn from all of them.'

Miriam González Duránte, partner at Dechert LLP and founder of the Inspiring Women campaign



Leadership

Girls feel that more women in leadership positions would have a positive impact on gender equality. Some feel that the low number of female leaders means that their own opportunities will be limited, while others use this 'role model deficit' as a motivation.

Two in three girls aged 11 to 21 think that there are not enough women in leadership positions in the UK (66%), rising to 71% of 16- to 21-year-olds. Most think that a better gender balance would be beneficial - 63% say that more female leaders would mean a better deal for women in general.

The lack of women in leadership positions has a mixed effect on girls' ambitions. Just over half are to some extent put off, feeling that they have less chance of succeeding themselves (54%), with almost one in three feeling this quite strongly (29%). However, almost as many say that this lack of women in leadership positions makes them feel more determined to succeed themselves (46% feel this, 29% feel this quite strongly).

Over half of those aged 7 to 21 (55%) would like to be a leader in their chosen profession. This is true across the age range, but highest for those aged 16 to 21, with almost six in ten saying this (58%).

'The challenge facing us all is self-belief. Once you believe in yourself, you can change the world. Remember, no one can make you feel inferior without your consent.'

Pinky Lilani OBE, founder/Chair of Asian Women of Achievement Awards

'These results are encouraging in that they show that many girls and young women in the UK are highly ambitious and want to get ahead in life, we need to make sure their aspirations become reality. While there are more women in work than ever before, the Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) sector is still a male-dominated world. Not only are women missing out on what can be a rewarding career, UK companies are missing out on talent too. We are focused on addressing this and have announced a series of actions to help ensure girls and young women can have the careers they deserve.'

Rt Hon Maria Miller MP, Minister for Women and Equalities



think
employers
prefer to
employ men
over women
(16 to 21)

Work-life balance

Girls recognise that it continues to be a challenge for women to achieve a good balance in their lives and are aware that motherhood still disadvantages women in the workplace.

Seven out of ten girls and young women aged 7 to 21 want to combine having children and maintaining a career (70%). A significant minority, more than one in ten, say they would prefer to have a full-time career and not have children (11%).

However, many girls and young women are concerned that having children will have a negative effect on their career. As girls get older this concern increases - 46% of those aged 11 to 21, including 56% of those aged 16 to 21, worry about this.

Of girls aged 11 to 21, 61% agree to at least some extent that it is very hard to balance motherhood and a career, and 42% don't think there are enough examples of women who successfully combine motherhood and a career (rising to 51% of those aged 16 to 21). While many say they would like the option of working part-time, more than half feel that there are not enough opportunities to do so (58%). Of those aged 11 to 21, 43% want to have children and continue to work full-time, and 34% want to have children and work part-time.

'The findings of this report show that there is much progress still to be made in UK gender equality. These issues are often reflected in the forums on Mumsnet. That's why we started our campaign Let Girls be Girls against the premature sexualisation of young girls, and we support the Lose the Lads Mags campaign. That said, it's great to see that girls in 2013 are ambitious and resilient as ever.'

Justine Roberts, founder of Mumsnet



want to
have children
and maintain
a career
(7 to 21)

Childcare

The overwhelming view is that girls expect to enjoy equal parenting responsibilities with their partners, but they are worried that gender stereotypes and financial constraints perpetuate inequality.

Of girls and young women aged 7 to 21, 88% think that both parents should be able to share time off after their baby is born (rising to 93% of 11- to 21-year-olds), indicating very strong enthusiasm for involving fathers as well as mothers in childcare. Girls recognise how gender stereotypes might influence decision-making here though, with 41% saying that many people look down on stay-at-home dads.

Of girls aged 11 to 21, 65% are concerned about the cost of childcare. A significant proportion, especially among younger girls, say they would look to their own parents for support with childcare - 59% of those aged 7 to 21 say that they would expect their parents or carers to help them with childcare if they have children.



88%
think both
parents
should share
time off after
their baby is
born
(7 to 21)

'We need to work on universal childcare to help more women access leadership roles and work with organisations representing dads to build upon "dadvocacy" as an idea. Men can "lean in" to fatherhood.'

Richard Darlington, Head of News, IPPR

Girls' resilience

The findings show that overall girls and young women have strong resilience to the everyday sexism they experience and their worries about how inequality may affect them in years to come. They value highly their relationships with family and friends, and their health and education, and overall remain positive about their lives. However, the happiness of older girls this year has significantly declined.

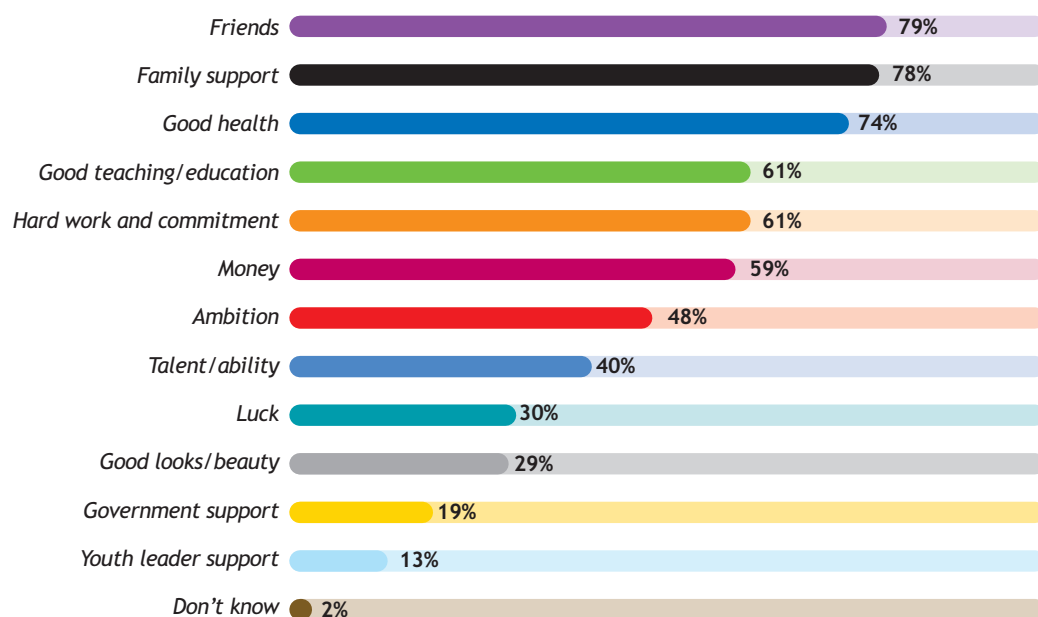
When girls and young women were asked what factors are important to help them do well and be happy, friends and support from family topped the list, followed by good health and education. Priorities at the top of the list vary slightly with age. For those aged 7 to 16 friends are the leading factor; for older girls, aged 16 to 21, good health is as important as support from family and more important than friends. Good looks and beauty come near the bottom of the list across the ages, suggesting strong resilience to the substantial appearance pressures girls face, as documented in this report.

'In some ways I feel sorry for the young girls of today because there are so many negative distractions - such as social media, reality TV shows (or should that be named very unreality TV shows!) plus series of soaps on TV that seem to show nothing but misery, torment and immorality! Very little in fact to inspire aspiration, opportunities or well-being! Girlguiding can and does change the perception of modern life for young girls to one of happiness, contribution to the community and well-being in health. Our challenge is to get that message across, loud and clear!'

Baroness Heyhoe Flint OBE, Queen's Guide 1956



What girls
say they
need in life
to do well
and be happy
today
(7 to 21)



Happiness and health

The majority of girls report being happy and feeling healthy, and this should be celebrated. However, older girls are the least positive, with data across the findings showing that they tend to be more affected by appearance pressures and sexism than younger girls.

Although the majority of girls and young women aged 7 to 21 feel they are happy most of the time (84%), the overall mood has fallen slightly this year with significant change among the older age group.

One in three girls aged 7 to 21 say they are very happy (32%, down slightly from 33% in 2012), and a further 52% are quite happy (down from 56% in 2012), but 13% are not happy, up from just 9% a year ago.

Those aged 16 to 18 are most likely to be unhappy, with almost one in four in this age group saying that they are not very, or not at all, happy (24%). This is significantly higher than the proportion saying this just last year (14%). This age group largely reports the greatest impact from external pressures documented in this report and is also facing economic challenges - increased fees for university and limited job prospects, with record levels of youth unemployment in the UK in 2013.

All girls and young women say that good health is highly important to them but girls' positivity about their overall health declines with age. Young women aged 16 to 21 say health is of the highest importance to them, alongside support from family, but this age group also reports feeling the least healthy. As highlighted earlier, 16- to 18-year-olds are most likely to say that the embarrassment they feel wearing school sports kit puts them off playing sport (48%).

At ages 7 to 11, 93% see themselves as healthy and just 3% unhealthy, but by ages 11 to 16, 28% see themselves as unhealthy, and at ages 16 to 21 this rises to over a third (36%). Overall, three quarters of girls aged 7 to 21 think that they are very healthy or quite healthy (30% and 45%), with just over one in five saying that they are unhealthy (22%).



worry about
the cost of
childcare
(11 to 21)

Feminism

Girls recognise that feminism has been a driving force behind increasing gender equality over the past decades, yet their views on being identified as a feminist are mixed.

The majority of girls believe that feminism has achieved a great deal for women (72%). They see feminism as being about equality (40% of 11- to 21-year-olds), to do with campaigning (25%) and linked to women's rights (19%).

Seventy-three per cent agree that feminism is about women and men having equal chances in life, yet fewer personally identify as feminist. Just over a third (35%) of girls and young women aged 11 to 21 would consider themselves a feminist. Older girls are more likely to reject the feminist label than younger girls (41% of 16- to 21-year-olds compared to 15% of 11- to 16-year-olds), while many 11- to 16-year-olds feel that they don't know what this means (31%). Nonetheless, only 21% say they don't think there is much need for feminism these days.



believe
feminism has
achieved a
great deal for
women
(11 to 21)

'Feminism is an unfinished revolution. It remains one of the most important social justice movements of our age. Yes, there are stereotypes surrounding what feminism is and who feminists are. But that's because creating a world where women and men are equal isn't easy - it means challenging privilege and profit. Together we can bust those stereotypes and reclaim feminism for a new generation.'

Kat Banyard, author of *The Equality Illusion*

Girls' visions for an equal future

This report has explored girls' views on the inequalities they face in their daily lives and anticipate having to negotiate in their future. Against this context of everyday sexism, it also presents a picture of clear ambition, purpose and resilience, and a strong thirst among girls and young women for equality.

To further this positive strand of the findings we asked girls and young women across Girlguiding's membership what an equal future means and looks like for them, about their place in it and how they think we can all make it happen. This is what they said...

'The main barriers to equality are the misconceptions that are deeply ingrained in our culture and the stereotypes that are portrayed by the media. Equality requires a change in perception and attitudes, not just laws, which is currently the case.'

Girlguiding Advocate, 22

'A step to a more equal society would be removing the double standards between men and women. Why should one action be seen as acceptable for men when the same behaviour is criticised if a woman does it?'

Girlguiding Advocate, 16

'Make boys respect us more.'

'[Girls should be able to] marry who they want to marry [and] not be abused.'

'Stop saying to other girls you can't be best friends with a boy.'

'We should have some good books for girls.'

Brownies, 7 to 8

'I would like to live in a society where there is equality between men and women and there are more female leaders than there are at the moment.'

Guide, 14

'An equal society should mean that a female is not judged on looks or weight by men. They should be seen for their mind and not picked on if they do go against the "thin" and "pretty" expectation.'

Guide, 13

'Equality between men and women can only exist if women (and their bodies) are not nearly as sexualised by the media as they are now, because I feel that this is a major reason why women are treated differently - it promotes the view that women are sex objects and just for a man's pleasure.'

Girlguiding Advocate, 17

'Allow women not to be constantly sexually exploited for their bodies and to be able to be known for what they do and not what they look like.'

Guide, 13

'Barriers can be broken down by challenging stereotypes and questioning sexist practice, such as unequal pay or sexist comments. More female role models are required to help encourage girls that they can pursue their dreams, whatever they may be. Gender should not be a barrier to achieving their goals.'

Girlguiding Advocate, 22

'In future the main barrier that needs to be knocked down is our incessant need to pigeonhole people. This is the root of the marginalisation of women - and everyone else - and once society accepts that people can have multiple identities, equality will follow.' **Girlguiding Advocate, 16**

'An equal society is one where people are not judged for their appearance, everyone has an equal right to education, everyone has the ability to follow their chosen career path, everyone has a right to a voice and opinion, and men and women are treated equally.'
Guide, 14

'A lot of women's choices are governed or hindered by societal pressures (for example - a man keeping his body/facial hair is his choice but a woman keeping hers is considered taboo) and it takes a lot of bravery to stand up and go against the societal norm.'
Girlguiding Advocate, 17

'An equal society is where women and men do not feel conformed to fit a gender stereotype and are treated equally in all aspects of their life - they feel able to follow their own aspirations and are valued for their strengths rather than their gender.' **Girlguiding Advocate, 22**

'Make people more aware of sexism in our society and act on the awareness. Inform women that looks aren't everything - just because you are a woman doesn't mean you can't be smart and judged on your brightness. Be strong and comfortable in your sex and gender!' **Guide, 14**

'In the future I want to be either an MP or an astronaut - being a part-time scientist in my lab at home. In the future, the perfect society would be equal, caring and cooperative, where everyone is friendly to each other and equal. Where everyone's views are taken into account and they are used to mould the perfect society (or nearest to perfect) for everyone to live in.'
Guide, 14

'To me an equal society for men and women would be one where shampoo adverts also include men washing their hair provocatively while frolicking in the shower.' **Girlguiding Advocate, 16**

'To make a more equal society we could organise campaigns to publicise and get your points across. This could make people see what is wrong with society, getting people high up in society to see, and change things to make it more equal.' **Guide, 13**

'Girls should have some clear information on what a healthy teen should weigh so the next time they go on the scales they feel normal and not "fat".' **Guide, 13**

'The world that I want to see in the future is one where everybody is accepted for whoever and whatever they want to be. At the moment too much time is wasted oppressing other's rights which could otherwise be spent on important issues. We need governments that are proactive beyond pleasing the voter, who will champion equality for every individual and ensure that no voice is unfairly ignored. If everyone listened, actually listened, we could accomplish amazing things.' **Girlguiding Advocate, 16**

About the Girls' Attitudes Survey

Girlguiding's Girls' Attitudes Survey gives girls' voices a platform to be heard and taken into account at the highest levels of decision-making across the UK. It empowers girls to speak out on the issues that really matter to them and affect their lives today.

This major survey, now in its fifth year, canvasses the opinions of over 1,200 girls and young women aged 7 to 21, inside and outside guiding across the UK.

This year the survey focuses on equality and provides a unique insight into how girls feel about the specific and emerging pressures facing girls and young women today, and what these mean for their well-being and opportunities in life.

Girlguiding's youth panel, Advocate, leads the development of the survey each year and analyses the results. See what they say about this year's report in their foreword.

All the results from this and previous surveys can be found on Girlguiding's interactive Girls' Attitudes Survey website, www.girlguiding.org.uk/girlsattitudes. Visit the site to search the results by theme, region and age group, compare them with results from previous years, access spreadsheets of individual data sets and download pdf versions of the reports.

Methodology

1,288 girls and young women aged between 7 and 21 took part in the 2013 Girls' Attitudes Survey. They were asked about their attitudes to key social, political and economic issues, following on from Girls' Attitudes Surveys carried out each year since 2009.

This year's survey covers equality-themed topics that are of importance to today's girls and young women. Questions were designed to explore in depth a range of current issues that relate specifically to girls, and also to follow up on a number of measures from previous surveys.

A panel of young women from within the guiding movement works with the project team to develop the survey each year and to comment on the findings. The research itself represents girls and young women across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, and is not restricted to those involved with guiding.

The majority of interviews were completed online, with 7- to 16-year-olds doing this in school, while older age groups were interviewed via an online panel. Additional face-to-face interviews were carried out with young women who were not in education, employment or training, to ensure that this potentially marginalised group was fully represented.

The questionnaire was adapted to be suitable for different age groups: 7 to 11, 11 to 16 and 16 to 21 years. Core questions were asked across the full age range, so that changes in attitudes as girls get older can be tracked.

Fieldwork took place during March and April 2013. The research was conducted by ChildWise.

Ethnic background

987	White British/Irish/Other
40	Black British/Black African/Black Caribbean/Other Black
51	Indian/Pakistani/Bangladeshi/Other Asian
46	Mixed heritage
22	Other
142	Don't know/Don't want to say

Sample details

TOTAL	7-8 YRS	9-10 YRS	11-13 YRS	14-16 YRS	16-18 YRS	19-21 YRS
1,288	219	178	239	232	210	210
	ENGLAND	WALES	SCOTLAND	N.I.	URBAN	RURAL
	1,061	80	71	76	914	374
7-16 YRS	School performance:		Outstanding/Good		Satisfactory/Poor	
868			582		211	
16-21 YRS	ABC1	C2DE	At school/Uni/FE		Working	NEET
420	192	228	275 (130/145)		55	86

Girlguiding is the leading charity for girls and young women in the UK. We build girls' confidence and raise their aspirations. We give them the chance to discover their full potential and encourage them to be a powerful force for good. We give them a space to have fun.

www.girlguiding.org.uk

We are for all girls

We are for all girls and young women, whatever their background and circumstances. We offer them fun, exciting activities and the chance to make lifelong friends. You'll find us in many communities, helping to give girls a head start in life and encouraging them to be happy, self-confident and curious about the world they live in and the difference they can make.

We give girls a voice

We give girls the confidence, skills and information to make informed decisions. We offer a supportive, inclusive and exciting environment where they can reach their own conclusions about the world. We show them how they can speak out and take positive action to improve their lives and the lives of others.

We give girls their own space

We give girls a place where they can really be themselves with other girls and share the experience of growing up as a girl in today's world. We provide a safe, non-judgemental environment where girls can explore the issues they care about while having lots of fun, enjoying new experiences and learning vital skills.

We change as the lives of girls change

We are relevant to today's girls because we listen to them and constantly evolve and adapt what we offer them without losing what makes us uniquely us. We provide support, comfort and friendship in what can often seem a complex world for girls as they grow up.

More volunteers, more opportunities, more girls

Every week Girlguiding volunteers make amazing things happen for hundreds of thousands of girls and their communities all over the UK. Their enthusiasm, skill and dedication are truly inspirational - just ask Chief Guide Gill Slocombe. 'I meet hundreds of volunteers every month at events, activities, camps and training sessions and I'm always impressed by how dedicated they are,' she says. 'They are a wonderful group of women and men who give their time to ensure that we are active all over the UK, and beyond.'

'Without our 100,000 volunteers we couldn't do anything; thanks to them, incredible things are possible.'

To ensure that we can offer exciting opportunities to as many girls as possible, we need to engage even more volunteers. We have more than 50,000 girls on our lists ready and waiting to start their guiding adventure, and you could make that happen - just one new volunteer could mean 5 more Rainbows, 8 more Brownies or 12 more Guides will experience all the fantastic benefits guiding brings.

Volunteering with Girlguiding is flexible and can be fitted around any schedule. From leading a unit or delivering first aid training to supporting local fundraising or coordinating regional PR, you could choose from a range of roles that suit your skills and interests. Visit www.girlguiding.org.uk/volunteer to find out more about volunteering or to register your interest.



WE DISCOVER, WE GROW

Girlguiding

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