

INFORMATION SUMMARY FOR FAMILIES (17 YEARS)

Why are we visiting you now?

We visited participating families when the young person at the centre of the study was 9 years old and, subsequently, when they were 13 years of age. Nearly 8,000 families took part in **Growing Up in Ireland** at the last visit. Even if your family was unable to participate in the 13-year visit, you can still rejoin the study now that the young person is 17 years old. As before, participation is entirely voluntary.

We also plan to return to the young person and their family when they are 20 years old to see how they are getting on with additional adult roles and responsibilities. This will give us a picture of what it has been like to grow up in Ireland from primary school right through to early adulthood.

Who is running the study?

Growing Up in Ireland is a Government study which is almost wholly funded by the Department of Children & Youth Affairs, in association with Department of Social Protection, the Central Statistics Office and the Department of Education & Skills. A part funding contribution in support of Phase 2 of **Growing Up in Ireland** (2015-19) has been generously provided by The Atlantic Philanthropies¹, a limited life foundation. The Department of Children & Youth Affairs is overseeing and managing the study, which is being carried out by a group of independent researchers led by the Economic & Social Research Institute (ESRI) and Trinity College Dublin.

What will taking part involve?

We would like to interview the 17-year-old in the study and his/her parent(s) / guardian(s). The visit will last about 2.5 hours. The interview will cover a range of topics including: **health, education, family relationships, friends and lifestyle**. There is a particular emphasis on planning for the future at this important transition point for young people. There will also be some self-complete questions to the young person on **potentially sensitive topics such as: sexual health and behaviour; self-harm; substance use; and illegal activities**. Parents may view a blank copy of the questionnaire in advance of the interview, but never the completed survey. Parents will be asked questions on a variety of topics including the household, their own health and the health of the young person, and family relationships.

We would also like to measure the height and weight of parents and the young person, and the blood pressure of the young person only. The young person will be asked to complete some short tests of their vocabulary and maths ability. Anyone can decline to answer individual questions or any of the measurements (e.g. a young person can still do the interview even if they don't want to have their height and weight measured). The blood pressure measurement is a new aspect to **Growing Up in Ireland**. It involves the interviewer wrapping a piece of material around the upper arm, then a small machine will automatically tighten and relax the material. It only takes a few minutes and does not involve any needles or other medical equipment.

Participation in the study at this wave is entirely voluntary. If you decide not to take part, this will have no negative effect on any future health or social care that you receive from the State.

Confidentiality

As with the previous interviews, **all the information given to a Growing Up in Ireland interviewer in the course of the survey is treated in the strictest confidence**. It will be used exclusively for research purposes. Under no circumstances could anyone in Government or any government agency or department be able to identify information given by the family. The study is being carried out under the Statistics Act (1993) which is the same legislation used to carry out the Census of Population and ensures complete confidentiality of all information collected.

However, if an interviewer observes something or is told something outside the answers given to the survey questions which causes him/her or the people running the study to have serious concerns for the welfare of the young person at the centre of the study or any other person, they may have to tell someone who can help.

We will use an ID number on your questionnaire. This will help to ensure that your information is kept anonymous. The information your family will provide will have your name, address and other identifying information removed. It will then be stored on a computer so that it will be available to researchers. A selection of anonymised data is maintained by the Irish Social Science Data Archive at UCD and access to other anonymised data files is controlled by the Central Statistics Office.

¹ The Atlantic Philanthropies are dedicated to bringing about lasting changes in the lives of disadvantaged and vulnerable people. Atlantic is a limited life foundation that will complete grantmaking in 2016. To learn more, please visit: www.atlanticphilanthropies.org.

Feedback

No-one will receive any feedback or information on the answers given in the surveys to the questions which an interviewer asks directly in the course of the interview, or any measurements/assessments regardless of what those answers might be. This includes the blood pressure measurement, although you will be provided with a *general* information leaflet on how to interpret blood pressure. **It is important to remember that the absence of feedback should not be taken to mean there is nothing of concern in either the assessments or the answers to survey questions.**

If, after the interview, you or other family members have concerns about issues that were discussed or measured in the course of the visit you should contact a GP, social care team or other professional for expert information or advice. Remember that the interviewer is not medically trained and cannot provide you with advice on any concerns you may have.

Why should my family take part in the follow-up interview?

Your family's continued participation in the study is crucial in helping to get the most benefit from this research. The real value of this study will come from having follow-up information on the *same* children and young people, and this will help us to better understand the changes that take place in their lives as they grow. Very importantly, it will help us to better understand why children and young people grow and develop at different rates – this will help the Government to put the right supports in place at the most effective time for Irish children and adolescents.

The information collected during the earlier rounds of interviews in the main study was included in a series of reports. Information from the study has informed discussion on topics such as child health, including overweight and obesity; the role of families in a child's development and the supports necessary for families; school performance and factors which assist in a positive experience for children and young people in school; and lots more.

You can get more information on the study and how ***Growing Up in Ireland*** data are being used from our website www.growingup.ie. Your interviewer will also have information on reports using ***Growing Up in Ireland*** data when they call to your house.

Other points to note

- All interviewers are vetted by An Garda Síochána and appointed Officers of Statistics by the Central Statistics Office. They are employed by the ESRI and will carry a photo ID card. If you would like to verify the identity of an interviewer please contact us at the number below.
- Remember that you can also choose not to answer any questions that you are not comfortable with, and still do the rest of the interview.
- Almost all of the young people being interviewed in this phase of the study are 17 years old. It is a legal requirement that we ask their parent/guardian to sign a consent form before they participate in the study.
- For this round of the ***Growing Up in Ireland*** study the interviewer who administers the surveys may interview the young person in a room alone, provided someone aged 18 years or over is also in the accommodation. The door of the room in which the interview takes place should be left open during the interview.
- Compared to previous visits, the interviews completed by the young person will be longer than those completed by their parents/guardians.

Sources of further information and/or to verify interviewer identity

Phone: Freephone 1800 200 434 or call Ms Elizabeth Burke on 01-863 2199.

Visit our website: www.growingup.ie
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