



# The lives of 17/18-year-olds – preliminary findings from the third wave of the Child Cohort

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# *Growing Up in Ireland -* **Introduction**

- ❖ Recruited almost 20,000 children, young people, their families, teachers, school principals and other caregivers in 2007/2008
- ❖ Funded by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) in conjunction with the CSO, with contribution from The Atlantic Philanthropies
- ❖ Overseen and managed by the DCYA, in conjunction with the CSO and an inter-departmental Project Team and Steering Group
- ❖ Implemented by a consortium of researchers led by the ESRI and Trinity College



# *Growing Up in Ireland -* **Introduction**

- ❖ Preliminary findings from the 17/18-year-olds in the older '**Child Cohort**' being launched today
- ❖ Cohort recruited in 2007, at 9 years of age, re-interviewed at 13 years and at 17/18 years of age
- ❖ Four **Key Findings** being launched in critical areas of Young People's lives
  1. **Education and Early Work Experiences**
  2. **Health, Weight, Physical Activity and Diet**
  3. **Life Satisfaction, Relationships and Mental health**
  4. **Risky Health Behaviours and Sexual Activity**

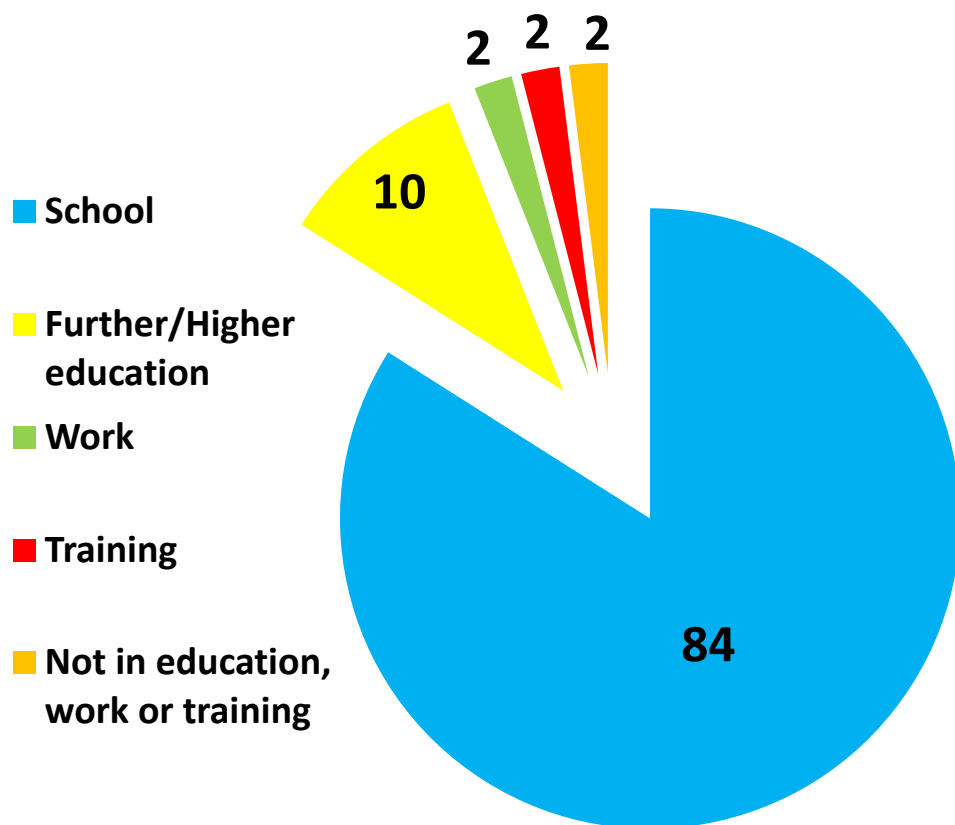


# Key Finding No. 1

## Education and Early Work Experiences



# Education and work status

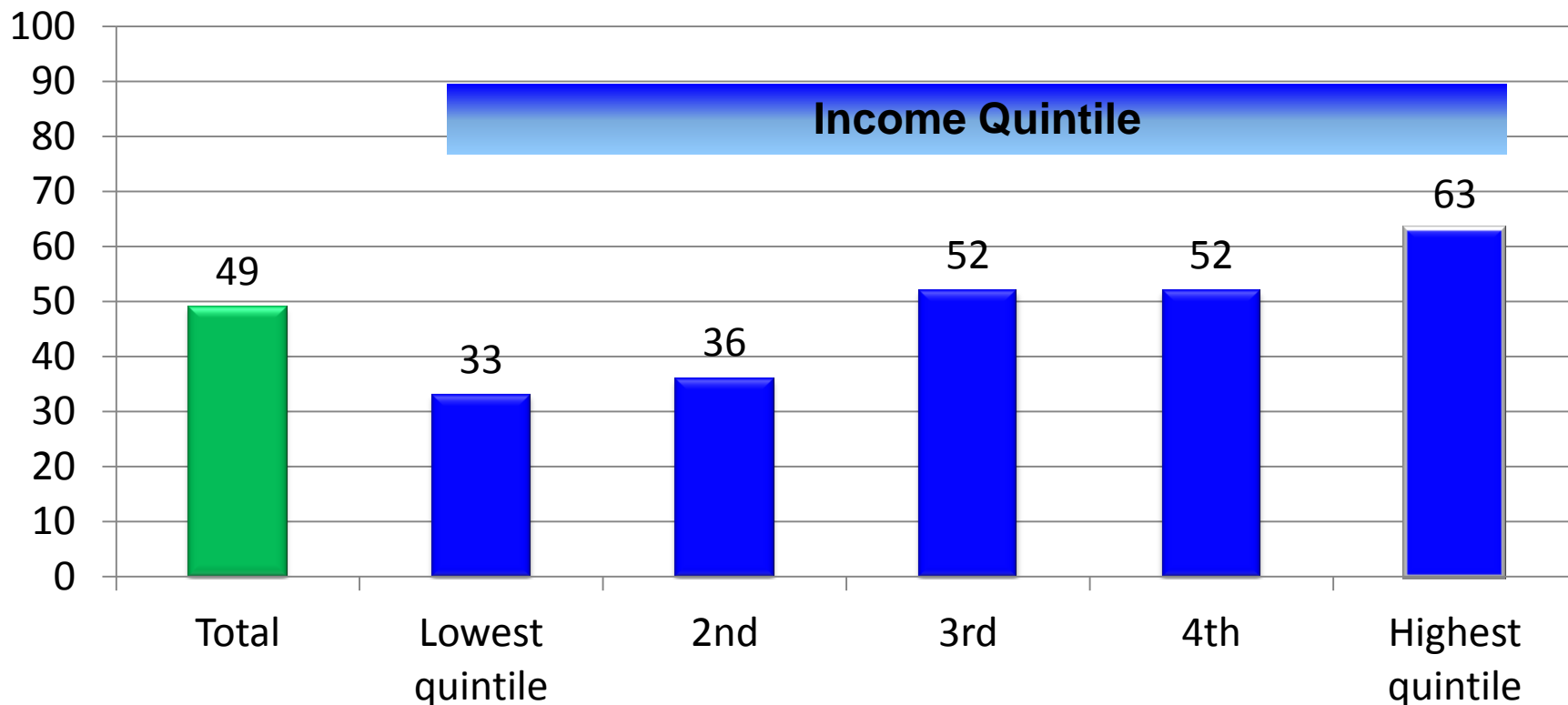


- ❖ Most young people who were still in school intended to continue their education – but aspirations related to parental education
  - 80% (where mother had Junior Cert) versus 93% (where she had degree or higher)



# Grinds/Private tuition

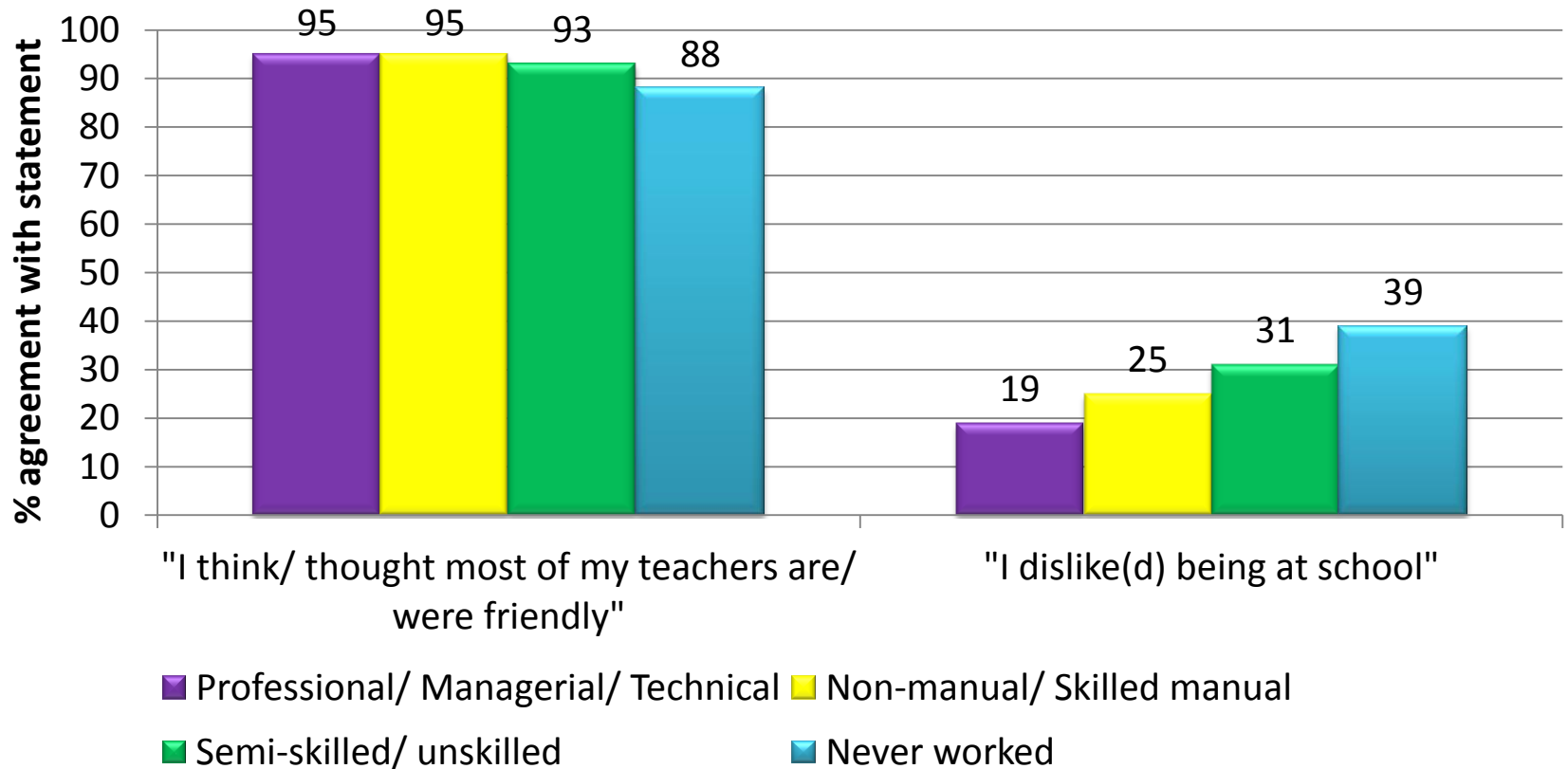
Percentage 17/18-year-olds in final year in school taking grinds/private tuition, by family income





# Attitudes towards school

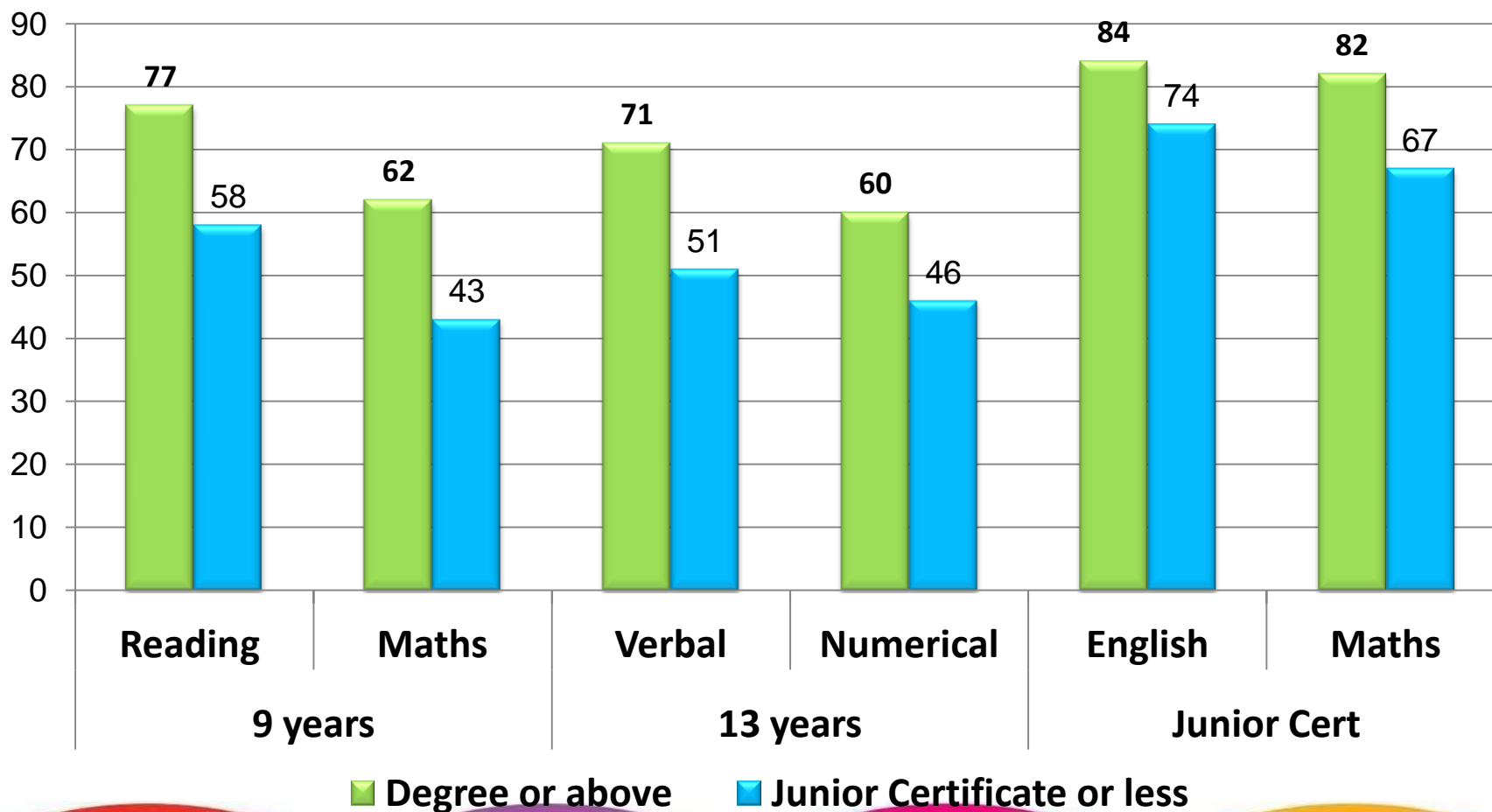
## Social class differences in 17/18-year-olds' opinions on school





# Performance on Maths and English exams

## Maths and English scores at 9-years, 13-years and Junior Certificate by mother's education







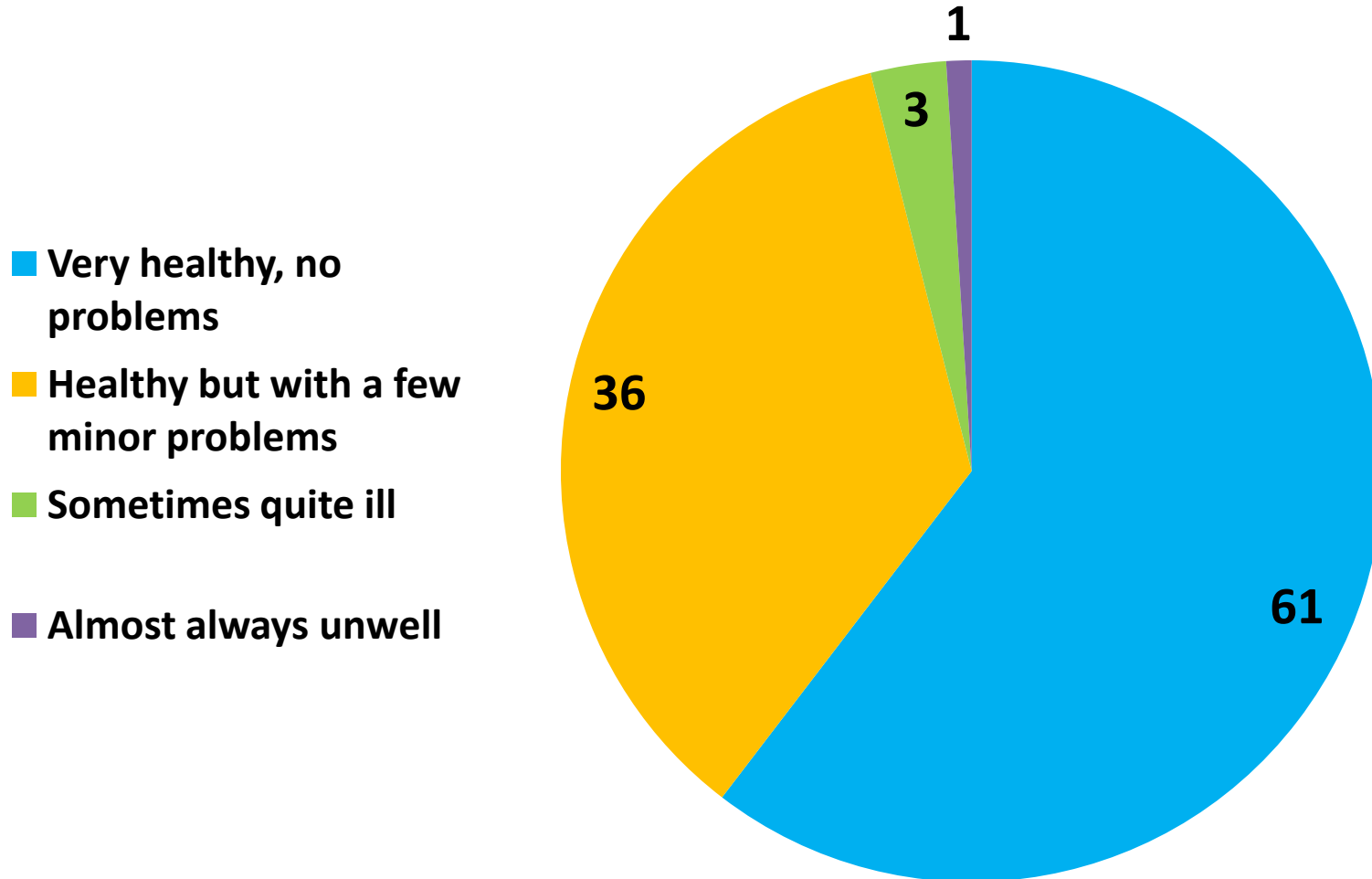
# Key Finding No. 2

## Health, Weight, Physical Activity and Diet



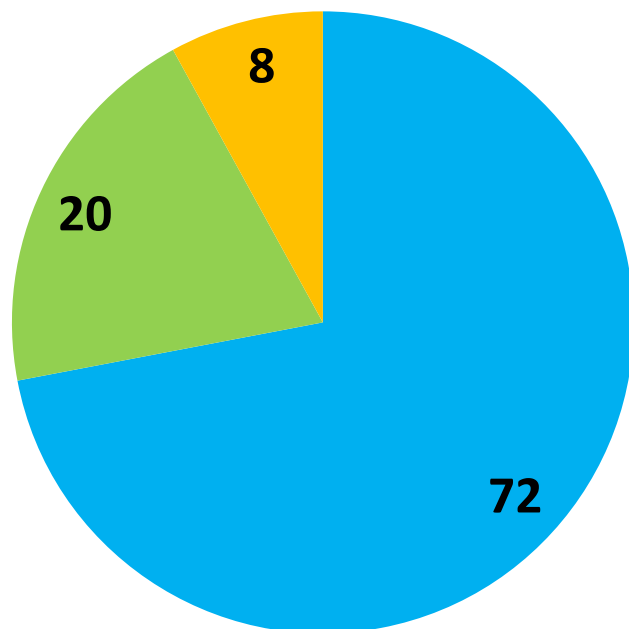
# Health Status

## Health status of 17/18-yr-olds (parent-report)



# Weight status

## Weight status of 17/18-year-olds

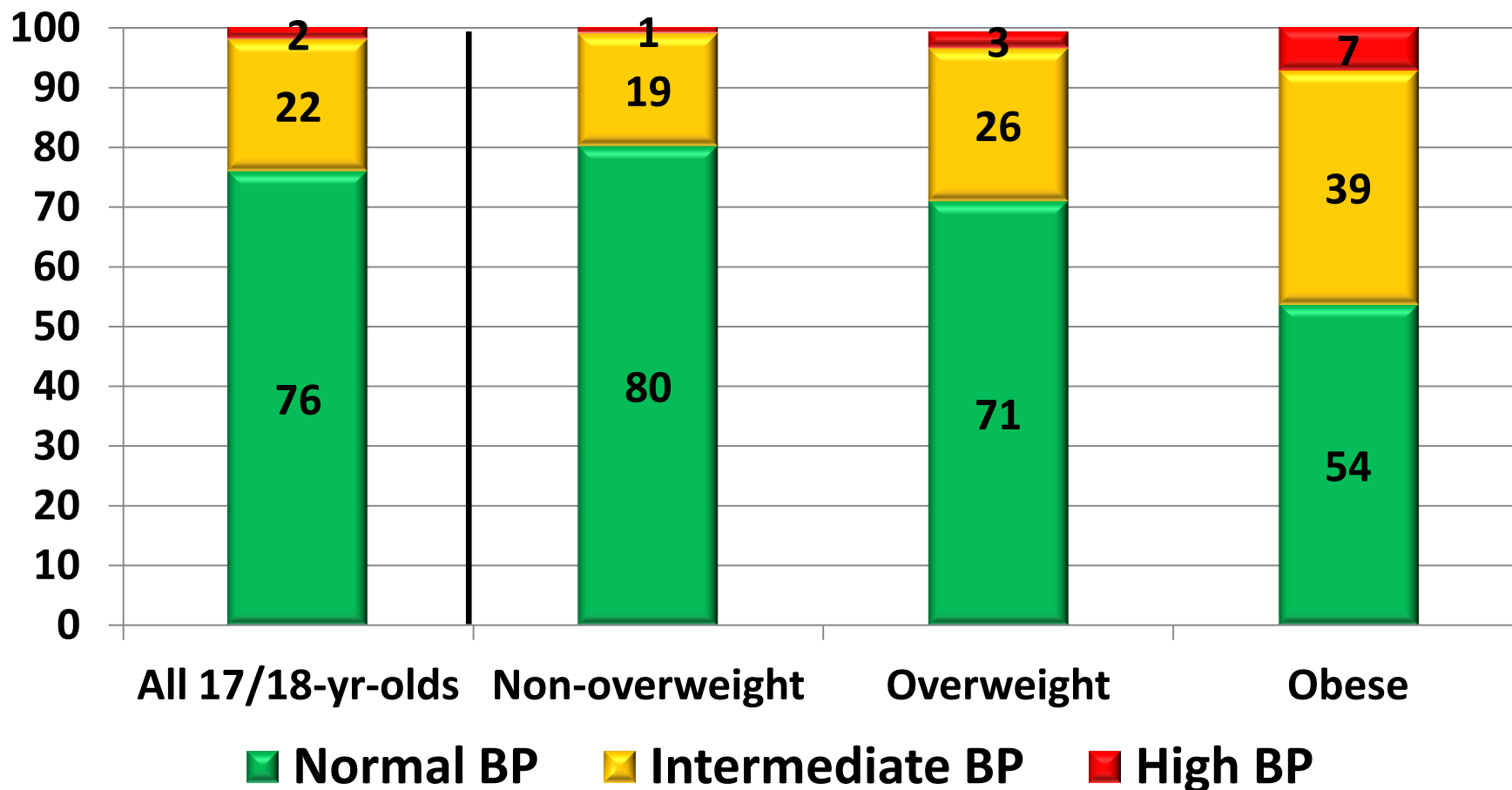


■ Non-overweight ■ Overweight ■ Obese

- ❖ Similar percentages to previous waves
- ❖ Youth in disadvantaged households more likely to be obese
  - 14% (parent J.C. or less) versus 4% (parent degree or higher)
- ❖ Persistence of weight status over time
  - 65% of obese 13-year-olds still obese at 17/18
  - 88% of non-overweight 13-year-olds remain not overweight

# Blood pressure

Blood pressure for 17/18-year-olds by weight status





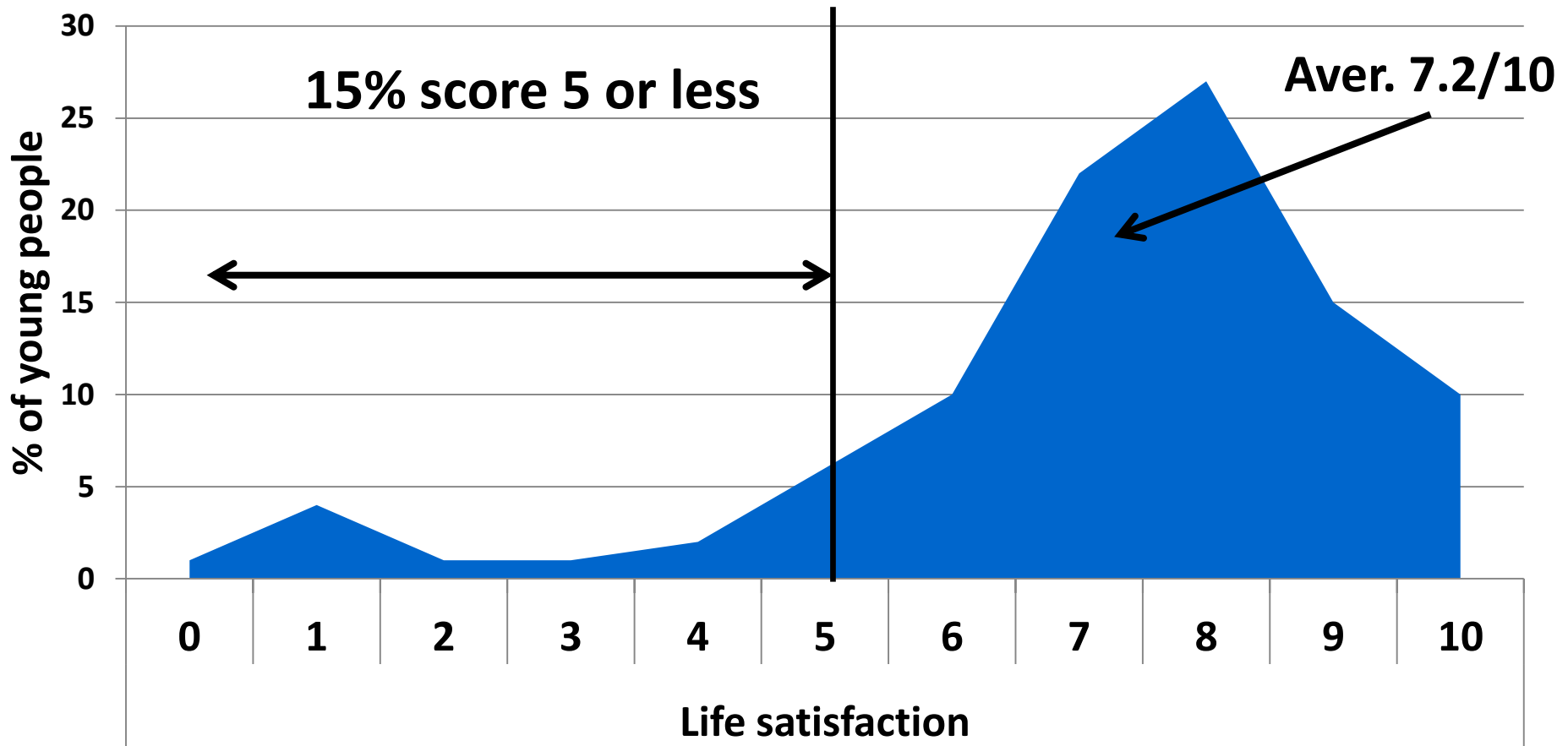
# Key Finding No. 3

**Life satisfaction, relationships  
and mental health**



# Satisfaction with life

Distribution of 17/18-yr-olds by to life satisfaction:10=extremely satisfied



# Satisfaction with life

The 15% with lowest satisfaction, by family social class





# Relationship with parents/adults

In broad terms, most young people had a positive view of their relationship with parents

Around half of 17/18-year-olds felt it was *mostly or entirely true* that others treated them like adults

One-in-ten felt they had no adult to turn to for advice or support





# Mental health concerns

**10% 17/18-year-olds reported having been diagnosed by a medical professional with depression, anxiety or both**

**17% 17/18-yr-olds reported having hurt themselves on purpose - 11% in the last year**

**Females tended to report more problems with emotional well-being than males**

**13-year-olds with emotional and behavioural problems at greater risk of problems again at 17/18 years**



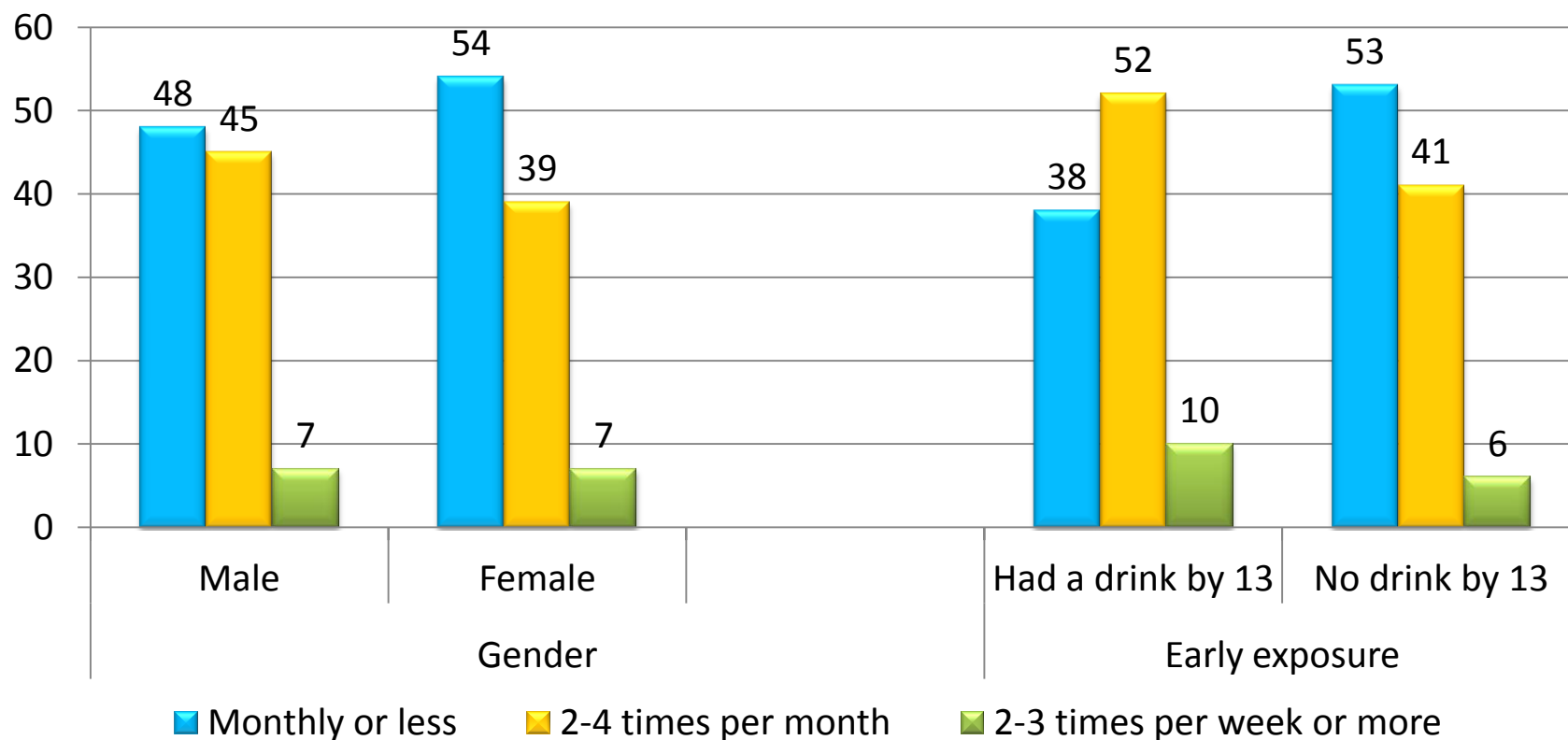
# Key Finding No. 4

## **Risky Health Behaviours and Sexual Activity**



# Alcohol use at 17/18

- ❖ 89% 17/18-year-olds said they drank alcohol
- ❖ Males somewhat more likely to drink more frequently than females
- ❖ Early exposure related to heavier & more frequent consumption

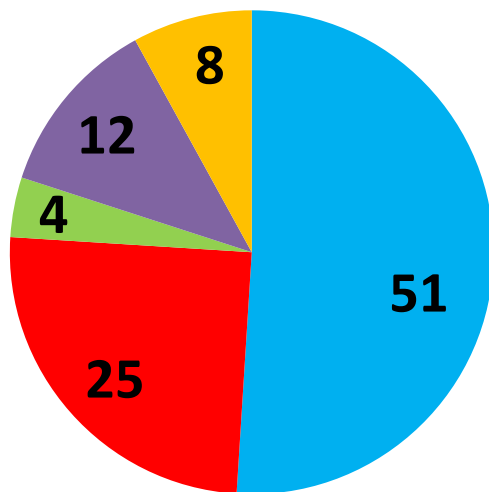




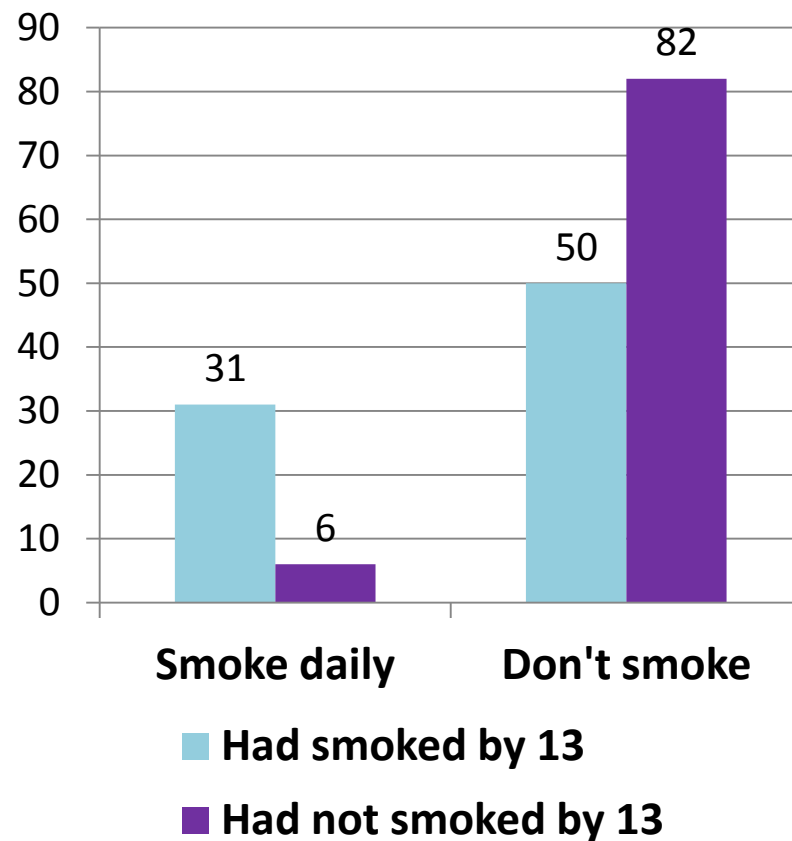
# Smoking among 17/18-year-olds

## Smoking patterns

- Never smoked
- Tried once or twice
- Used to, not now
- Smoke occasionally
- Smoke daily



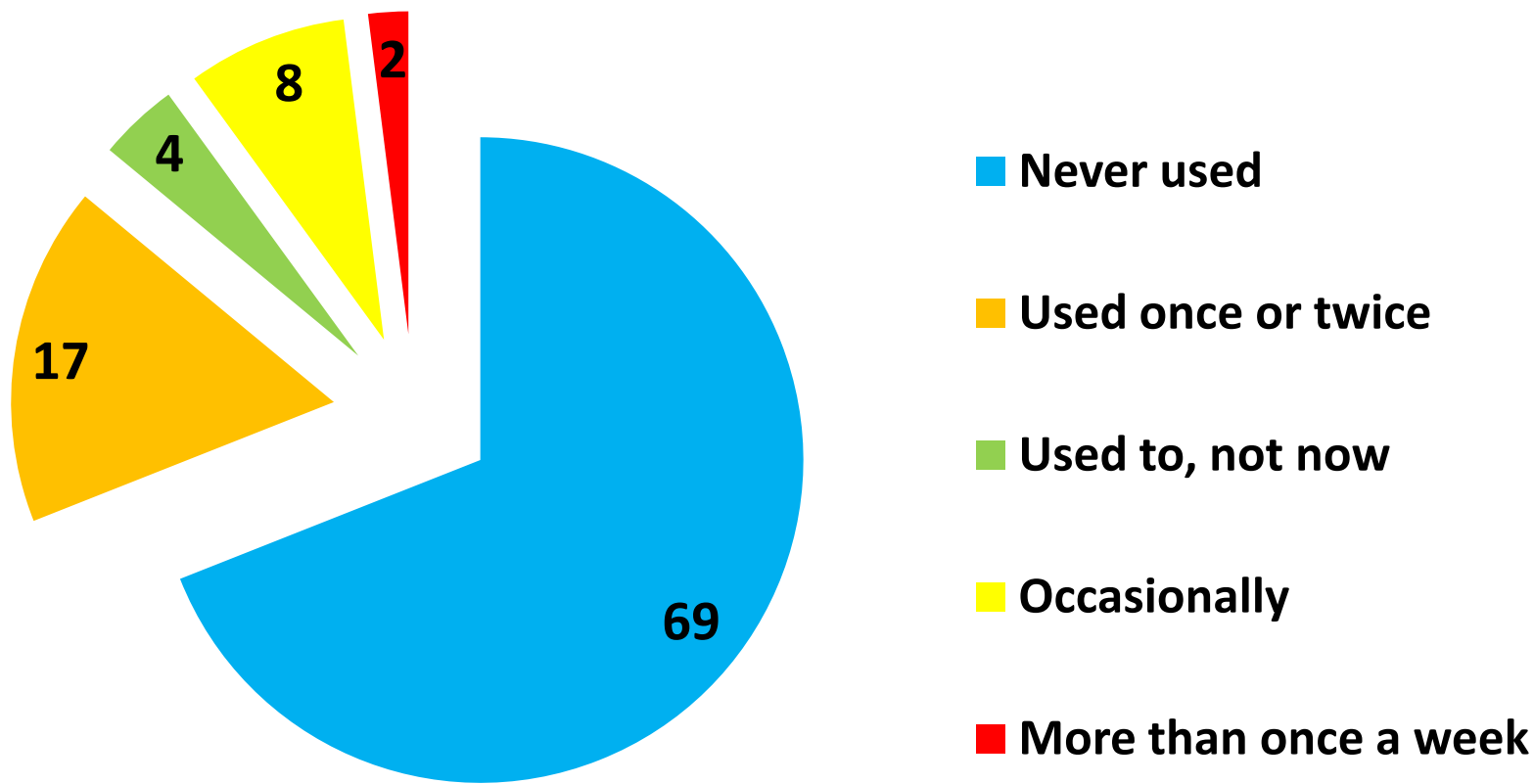
## Early exposure





# Cannabis use among 17/18-year-olds

Patterns of cannabis use



# Sexual activity

42% said they had experienced some form of sexual activity

- 40% oral sex and 33% sexual intercourse

Males were more likely to report being sexually active than females (45% to 39%)

56% of young people with experience of sexual intercourse said they 'always' used a condom and 79% 'always' used some form of contraceptive

17% of young people felt at least some pressure to have sex



# Summary (1 of 2)

- ❖ Majority of 17/18-year-olds still in school or education, with a large proportion planning to continue to further or higher education – though social gradients
- ❖ Half had taken grinds before their interview - strongly related to family income
- ❖ Reading and maths performance associated with mother's education from 9 years to Junior Certificate
- ❖ The vast majority of 17/18 year-olds are in good health – though obesity remains a problem
- ❖ Even at 17/18 years relationship between obesity and blood pressure emerging



## Summary (2 of 2)

- ❖ Most 17/18-year-olds have a good relationship with parents – though 1-in-10 say they don't have an adult to turn to for advice or support
- ❖ 10% 17/18-year-olds have had a medical professional diagnose them with depression, anxiety or both
- ❖ 17% have ever 'self-harmed', 11% in the last year
- ❖ A large majority drink. Early exposure to alcohol associated with heavier and more frequent drinking at 17/18 years of age
- ❖ 42% sexually active - males more likely than females.





# Thank you

## ❖ Sincere thanks to:

- Minister Zappone for launching **Key Findings** today
- Dr Fergal Lynch (Sec General, DCYA) and his staff – especially Dr Clare Finn, Dr Claire Farrell, Mr Tim Heneghan
- Members of the Project Team and Steering Group for the project
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- The Research Ethics Committee (REC)
- Scientific Advisory Group (SAG) and other stakeholder groups
- Professor Gordon Harold, University of Sussex for superb Keynote
- Chairs at today's conference
- Teachers, school Principals and other school staff
- Data users – come to a data workshop
- All **GUI** staff and field interviewers
- **Biggest thanks to all the children, young people and their families**