**Wellbeing in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon**

**2023/24**

The ‘Individual Wellbeing in Northern Ireland Report 2023/24’ was published on 6 March 2025. The report uses data from the Continuous Household Survey (CHS) and provides estimates for people aged 16 and over in Northern Ireland across four areas which reflect wellbeing: Loneliness, Self-Efficacy, Personal Wellbeing (Life Satisfaction, Worthwhile, Happiness and Anxiety) and Locus of Control.

Data is broken down by a number of different categories including Local Government District (LGD). This summary report will present the data at this level only and focus on the findings for the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough.

**Loneliness**

Feelings of loneliness can negatively impact a person’s health, wellbeing and overall quality of life[[1]](#footnote-1). The measure reported in this study is based on the question ‘How often do you feel lonely?’ so it will measure the frequency with which people report feeling lonely but not the level of loneliness they experience.

There are five response options to the question - ‘often/always’, ‘some of the time’, ‘occasionally’, ‘hardly ever’ and ‘never’ and results are reported based on this five category split. Figure 1 presents the proportion of respondents who reported feeling lonely often / always or some of the time by LGD. As we can see, in 2023/24, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon had the highest percentage of respondents feeling lonely at least some of the time when compared with the other LGD’s in Northern Ireland. At 22.3% this is 4.5 percentage points above the Northern Ireland average. Mid Ulster had the lowest percentage of people aged 16+ who reported feeling lonely at least some of the time at 11.7%.

 Figure 2: Percentage of people aged 16+ who reported feeling lonely at least some of the time by LGD, 2023/24. Source: Continuous Household Survey (CHS), NISRA.

The Wellbeing in Northern Ireland report was produced for the first time in 2020/21 and Table 1 below presents the percentage of people aged 16+ who reported feeling lonely at least some of the time each year and the difference between 2022/23 and 2023/24 in each of the LGD’s and Northern Ireland overall.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2020/21** | **2021/22** | **2022/23** | **2023/24** | **Difference 2022/23 - 2023-24** |
| Antrim & Newtownabbey | 20.1% | 15.1% | 18.9% | 19.3% | 0.4% |
| Ards & North Down | 15.8% | 16.1% | 15.1% | 16.0% | 0.9% |
| Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon  | 21.6% | 23.5% | 22.0% | 22.3% | 0.3% |
| Belfast City | 21.9% | 25.0% | 24.9% | 19.3% | -5.6% |
| Causeway Coast & Glens  | 20.1% | 22.8% | 22.6% | 19.7% | -2.9% |
| Derry City & Strabane | 21.8% | 20.7% | 22.8% | 19.0% | -3.8% |
| Fermanagh & Omagh  | \* | 20.9% | 8.7% | 21.2% | 12.5% |
| Lisburn & Castlereagh  | 15.4% | 20.7% | 19.2% | 12.8% | -6.4% |
| Mid & East Antrim | 17.3% | 17.6% | 22.0% | 18.2% | -3.8% |
| Mid Ulster  | 21.4% | 16.6% | 16.0% | 11.7% | -4.3% |
| Newry, Mourne & Down  | 19.1% | 18.2% | 14.7% | 14.1% | -0.6% |
| Northern Ireland  | 19.8% | 20.2% | 19.4% | 17.8% | -1.6% |

Table 1: Percentage of people aged 16+ who reported feeling lonely at least some of the time by LGD, 2020/21 - 2023/24. Source: Continuous Household Survey (CHS), NISRA. Note: (\*) denotes that the sample size is too small (less than 100) to allow sufficient analysis of this category.

Reports of feelings of loneliness increased in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon between 2020/21 and 2021/22 but fell again in 2022/23 before increasing again in 2023/24. Only four LGD’s reported an increase in feelings of loneliness in 2023/24 with the greatest increase recorded in Fermanagh and Omagh at 12.5 percentage points. After reporting the largest decrease at 12.2 percentage points between 2021/22 and 2022/23, Fermanagh and Omagh has gone from having the lowest percentage of people aged 16+ who reported feeling lonely at least some of the time to the second highest.

**Self-Efficacy**

Self-efficacy describes a person’s beliefs / confidence in their capabilities to influence events that affect their lives. Generally, people with high self-efficacy have more confidence in their capabilities and will make sustained efforts to achieve their goals while people with low self-efficacy often doubt their capabilities, are less ambitious and give up on their aims when challenged. Self-efficacy is a key part of modern public policy and it is believed increasing self-efficacy in specific groups can lead to positive social change in communities[[2]](#footnote-2).

A statement-based survey tool is used to measure self-efficacy. Respondents are presented with five statement questions with each requiring a numerical score from one to five. The overall self-efficacy score is presented as a total of the five statement questions with an overall score between 5 (the lowest score) and 25 (the highest score). Scores between 5 and 17 are considered low while a score of 18 and over is considered high. The five self-efficacy statement questions are as follows:

1. I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough.
2. I am confident that I could deal efficiently with unexpected events.
3. I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities.
4. When I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions.
5. No matter what comes my way, I’m usually able to handle it.

 Figure 3: Average self-efficacy scores by LGD, 2023/24. Source: Continuous Household Survey (CHS), NISRA.

In 2023/24, the average (mean) score for self-efficacy in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon was 18.8 which is below the NI average of 19.5. Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon reported the lowest score of the LGD’s however, overall, all LGD’s in Northern Ireland scored over 18 which is considered high and implies that Northern Ireland, on average, has high self-efficacy.

Between 2022/23 and 2024/25, six of the eleven LGD’s including Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon borough reported a decrease in their self-efficacy score. In Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon, this is the third consecutive year the self-efficacy score has fallen.

**Low self-efficacy**

As noted previously, a total score between 5 and 17 is categorised as low self-efficacy. In 2023/24, the proportion of people (aged 16 and over) with low self-efficacy in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon was 28.2% which is well above the NI average of 19%. Having increased from 14.8% in 2020/21 to 28.2% in 2023/24, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough has experienced the biggest increase in low self-efficacy and is currently ranked the highest of all the LGD’s in Northern Ireland. Ards & North Down and Lisburn & Castlereagh reported the lowest proportion of people with low self-efficacy at just 10% and 10.5% respectively. Just 4 LGD’s reported a reduction in the proportion of the population with low self-efficacy, signifying better wellbeing for this measure.

Figure 4: Proportion of the population with low self-efficacy by LGD, 2020/21, 2021/22, 2022/23 & 2023/24. Source: Continuous Household Survey (CHS), NISRA. Note: There is no estimate for Fermanagh & Omagh for 2020/21 as the sample size was too small (less than 100) to allow sufficient analysis of this category.

**Personal Wellbeing**

**Wellbeing is one of the strongest determinants of an individual’s health**[[3]](#footnote-3)**. Personal**wellbeing is a measure of how satisfied people are with their lives, their sense that what they do in life is worthwhile, and their levels of happiness and anxiety. NISRA has participated in the Measuring National Wellbeing Programme since it was established in 2010 and incorporate the following questions in the CHS:

* overall, how **satisfied** are you with your life nowadays?
* overall, to what extent do you feel the things you do in your life are **worthwhile**?
* overall, how **happy** did you feel yesterday?
* overall, how **anxious** did you feel yesterday?

Respondents are asked to score each question on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is “not at all” and 10 is “completely” which means that a higher score indicates better wellbeing in relation to ‘life satisfaction’, ‘worthwhile’ and ‘happiness’, and a lower score indicates better wellbeing for ‘anxiety’. The thresholds for personal wellbeing under each of the measures are as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Life Satisfaction, Worthwhile and Happiness Scores | Anxiety Scores |
| Response | **Label** | **Response** | **Label** |
| 0-4 | Low | 0-1 | Very low |
| 5-6 | Medium | 2-3 | Low |
| 7-8 | High | 4-5 | Medium |
| 9-10 | Very High | 6-10 | High |

Table 2: Threshold labels within each of the Personal wellbeing questions.

The estimates of reported ‘life satisfaction’, feeling that things done in life are ‘worthwhile’. ‘happiness’ and ‘anxiety’ are included in the following sections.

**Life Satisfaction**

In 2023/24, the average (mean) life satisfaction score for residents of Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon borough was 7.7 which is unchanged from the previous year. As per Table 2, a score of 7-8 is considered a high score and so the slight drop in the score since 2021/22 would indicate a decrease in wellbeing for this measure within the Borough. In 2023/24, the average (mean) life satisfaction score either stayed the same or increased slightly in all LGD’s except Antrim & Newtownabbey which fell slightly. The average (mean) life satisfaction score also increased in Northern Ireland overall between 2022/23 and 2023/24.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 |
| Antrim & Newtownabbey | 7.3 | 7.7 | 7.6 | 7.5 |
| Ards & North Down | 7.7 | 8.0 | 7.8 | 7.9 |
| Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon | 7.8 | 8.0 | 7.7 | 7.7 |
| Belfast City | 7.5 | 7.3 | 7.2 | 7.5 |
| Causeway Coast & Glens  | 7.6 | 7.8 | 7.7 | 7.8 |
| Derry City & Strabane | 7.5 | 7.5 | 7.5 | 7.5 |
| Fermanagh & Omagh  | \* | 7.7 | 8.0 | 8.0 |
| Lisburn & Castlereagh  | 7.8 | 7.9 | 7.7 | 7.9 |
| Mid & East Antrim | 7.7 | 7.7 | 7.4 | 7.9 |
| Mid Ulster | 7.9 | 7.9 | 7.8 | 8.0 |
| Newry, Mourne & Down | 7.5 | 7.9 | 7.8 | 8.3 |
| Northern Ireland  | 7.6 | 7.7 | 7.6 | 7.8 |

Table 3: Average life satisfaction scores by LGD, 2020/21, 2021/22, 2022/23 & 2023/24. Source: Continuous Household Survey (CHS), NISRA. Note: (\*) denotes that the sample size is too small (less than 100) to allow sufficient analysis of this category.

**Happiness**

The score for happiness relates to how happy the respondent felt on the day prior to being interviewed. In 2023/24, only three of the eleven LGD’s reported a lower score for happiness than Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon. With a score of 7.5 for the Borough, this was the fourth lowest score reported and just below the Northern Ireland average score of 7.6. Between 2022/23 and 2023/24, four LGD’s including Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon reported a decrease in the score for happiness which signifies worse wellbeing for this measure. In 2023/24, the score for happiness is lowest for people living in Antrim & Newtownabbey and highest for those living in Mid Ulster.

 Figure 5: Average happiness scores by LGD, 2023/24. Source: Continuous Household Survey (CHS), NISRA.

**Worthwhile**

In 2023/24, the average (mean) score for feeling the things we do in life are worthwhile for residents in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon was 7.9 which was the third consecutive year a decrease was recorded from the 8.2 score reported in 2020/21.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|   | 2023/24 |
| Antrim & Newtownabbey | 7.8 |
| Ards & North Down | 8.2 |
| Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon | 7.9 |
| Belfast City | 7.7 |
| Causeway Coast & Glens  | 8.1 |
| Derry City & Strabane | 7.7 |
| Fermanagh & Omagh  | 8.2 |
| Lisburn & Castlereagh  | 8.3 |
| Mid & East Antrim | 8.2 |
| Mid Ulster | 8.3 |
| Newry, Mourne & Down | 8.3 |
| Northern Ireland  | 8.0 |

Table 4: Average ‘worthwhile’ scores by LGD, 2023/24. Source: Continuous Household Survey (CHS), NISRA.

Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough is the only LGD to see a decrease in their score between 2022/23 and 2023/24 and Fermanagh & Omagh was the only LGD to see the score for feeling the things we do in life are worthwhile remain unchanged. All other LGD’s recorded an increase in the score for feeling the things we do in life are worthwhile between 2022/23 and 2023/24. Belfast City and Derry City & Strabane have the lowest score for worthwhile at 7.7.

**Anxiety**

In 2023/24, the average (mean) score for anxiety for Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon was 3.1 which is considered low for this measure. However, this is the third consecutive year that the Borough has recorded an increase in the score for anxiety so even though the score is still considered low, the anxiety score has been increasing which implies worse wellbeing for this measure. In 2023/24, Derry City & Strabane and Fermanagh & Omagh had the highest anxiety scores at 3.3 and 3.2 respectively.

In Northern Ireland overall, while the score increased slightly in the last year, since 2020/21, the anxiety score has fallen from 3.2 to 2.8 in 2023/24 which implies better wellbeing in Northern Ireland overall for this measure.

Figure 6: Average anxiety scores for 2022/23 and 2023/24 by LGD. Source: Continuous Household Survey (CHS), NISRA.

**Locus of Control**

Locus of control is a measure of the degree to which a person feels they have control over their life and is measured using a statement-based survey tool, in the same way as self-efficacy. Respondents are presented with five statements and they must indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree using a five point Likert scale. Locus of control is then presented as an overall score ranging from 5 to 25. A lower score suggests a belief that life is determined by outside factors (external) while a higher score suggests a belief in one’s own control (internal).

The five statement questions are as follows:

1. I am in control of my life.
2. If I take the right steps, I can avoid problems.
3. Most things that affect my life happen by accident.
4. If it’s meant to be, I will be successful.
5. I can only do what people in my life want me to do.

Figure 7: Average locus of control scores, 2023/24 by LGD. Source: Continuous Household Survey (CHS), NISRA.

Figure 7 presents the average locus of control scores by LGD in 2023/24. The average score for Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon was 16.8 which is considered to be more internal than external. This score is much lower than the 17.6 recorded for the Borough in 2020/21.

The locus of control scores fell in three and increased in six of the eleven LGD’s between 2022/23 and 2023/24. The lowest (most external) score was 16.2 which was recorded for Derry City and Strabane. Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon borough had the third lowest locus of control score at 16.8.

Further information on ‘Wellbeing in Northern Ireland’ can be found via the following links:

[Wellbeing in Northern Ireland Dashboard | The Executive Office (executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk)](https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/publications/wellbeing-northern-ireland-dashboard)

[Individual Wellbeing in Northern Ireland Report 2023/24 | The Executive Office](https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/publications/individual-wellbeing-northern-ireland-report-202324)

1. [wellbeing-ni-report-2021-22.pdf](file:///Z%3A%5C2.%20Community%20%26%20Strategic%20Planning%20JD%5CNISRA%20Statistician%5C1.%20Jessica%20Files%5CData%5C16.%20Wellbeing%20NI%202122%5Cwellbeing-ni-report-2021-22.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [wellbeing-ni-report-2021-22.pdf](file:///Z%3A%5C2.%20Community%20%26%20Strategic%20Planning%20JD%5CNISRA%20Statistician%5C1.%20Jessica%20Files%5CData%5C16.%20Wellbeing%20NI%202122%5Cwellbeing-ni-report-2021-22.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. [Personal wellbeing - Lancashire County Council](https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/lancashire-insight/health-and-care/health/mental-health-and-wellbeing/personal-wellbeing/) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)