

ANXIETY AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE IN SCOTLAND

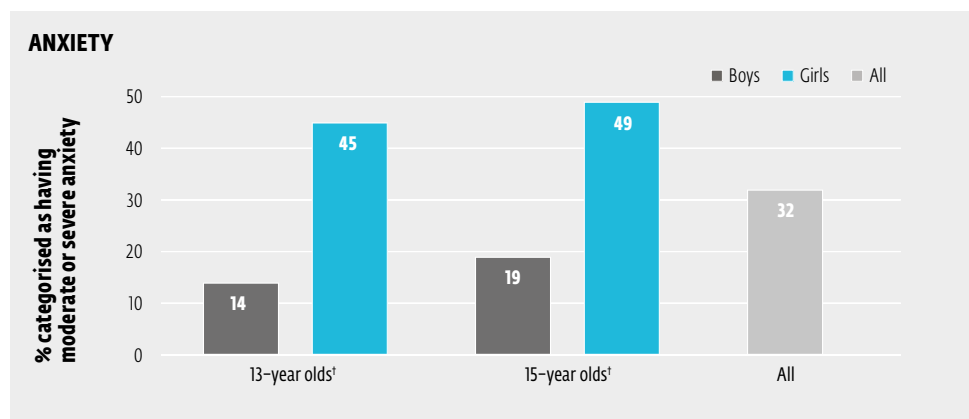
HEALTH BEHAVIOUR IN SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN 2022 SURVEY



What is anxiety? It is normal to worry or feel anxious from time to time, for example if you have an exam coming up or you are trying something new. Feeling anxious can sometimes have a positive effect as it may motivate us to take action. However, if someone feels anxious about a wide range of situations and issues, over a long time, this is called generalised anxiety. Sometimes anxiety can feel overwhelming and interfere with everyday life, such as school, activities and relationships.

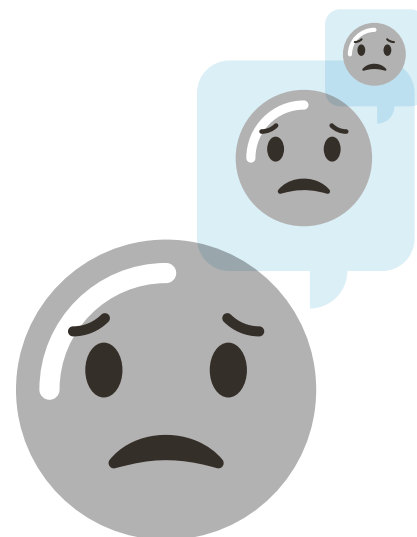
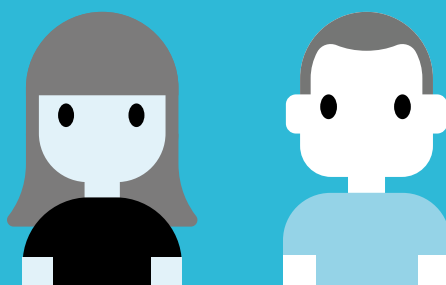
How anxious are young people in Scotland?

In 2022, we asked young people aged 13 and 15 years in Scotland seven questions to find out how anxious or worried they had been feeling over the past two weeks.



At both ages, **girls were more likely than boys** to say they felt anxious. There were no age differences between 13-and 15-year-olds.

Young people who said they felt anxious a lot were **more likely** to report low mood and low happiness with life when compared with young people who did not feel anxious.



32%

Around a third of young people reported feeling either moderately or severely anxious

What do you think can help people to manage their anxiety?

What does the HBSC survey say about what helps with anxiety?

There are many things that influence how anxious a person may feel. We looked at various factors and how they related to whether a young person felt anxious or not.

	DOES NOT FEEL ANXIOUS	FEELS ANXIOUS
Always has a trusted adult to talk to about problems	65%	37%
Reports high family support	59%	32%
Reports high teacher support	20%	12%
Reports high classmate support	14%	6%
Reports high friend support	50%	41%
Does exercise at least 4 times per week outside of school	43%	29%
Eats breakfast everyday	54%	34%
Has energy drink every day	6%	15%
Problematic social media use	8%	28%



This means that 65% of young people **who did not** feel anxious said they always have an adult they could talk to about their problems compared with only 37% of those who felt anxious.



HBSC and other research studies suggest that there are several things that **can help** people when they feel anxious:



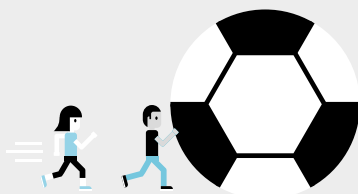
Have a healthy diet

Speak to someone you trust e.g. a friend, family member or teacher

Exercise regularly

Write worries down

Breathing exercises
Do something you enjoy
Avoid caffeine (tea, coffee, energy drinks) and alcohol
Go for a short walk



For further help:

For more information on anxiety – what it feels like and how to manage it:

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/young-person/mental-health-conditions/anxiety/>

The Childline website has some activities to help you feel calm:

<https://www.childline.org.uk/toolbox/calm-zone/>

Remember, it's normal to feel anxious from time-to-time,

but if you have been feeling anxious for a while and it is affecting your life negatively, then it may be better to get help from a doctor.

Please speak to an adult you trust such as someone at home or school about this.

About the Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children (HBSC study)

HBSC is an international school-based survey that is conducted every four years. It asks young people aged 11-, 13- and 15-years old questions about their health and health behaviours. Scotland has taken part since 1990. In 2022, 4,388 young people from 137 schools across Scotland took part in the survey. For more information, visit: gla.ac.uk/hbsscotland.

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