

## **2014 YLT and KLT survey findings published**

Today the results of the 2014 Young Life and Times (YLT) and Kids' Life and Times (KLT) surveys were published at an event at Queen's University Belfast. The two annual surveys are undertaken by ARK, a joint initiative by Queen's University and Ulster University. The surveys aim to give insights into the lives of children and young people across Northern Ireland at important life stages, namely when they have reached the end of their primary school education (KLT) and when they are 16 years old (YLT).

4,757 primary school Year 7 (P7) children took part in the 2014 KLT survey, whilst 1,939 16-year olds completed the 2014 YLT survey. A wide range of topics was covered in both surveys and includes:

- Autism,
- Rights and participation,
- School and education,
- Community relations,
- Play and nature,
- Older people.

The launch event focused on autism and rights and was addressed by Koualla Yiasouma, the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People.

The key findings noted at the launch included:

### **Rights**

- 72% of P7 children and 58% of 16-year-olds said they had learned about children's rights at school while 59% of the former compared with 41% of the latter said this had helped them speak up for their rights in school;
- 62% of P7 children and 56% of 16-year olds said that they felt important in their school;
- In both surveys, nine in ten respondents said their school encourages pupils to be respectful to each other, whilst 83% felt they were encouraged to understand and respect pupils from different cultures;

### **Autism**

- Half of the 11-year-olds (KLT) and 80% of the 16-year-olds (YLT) said they knew what autism was;
- The number of 16-year-olds (3.1%) and 11-year-olds (2.7%) who self-reported autism in the surveys slightly exceeds official prevalence figures (2%);
- Both KLT and YLT respondents were aware of the challenges posed by an autism diagnosis;
- Most P7 children (87%) and 16-year olds (94%) approved of peers with autism receiving additional educational support where needed;

- One in six KLT and YLT respondents had witnessed bullying of someone in their school who had autism, and only one in ten respondents said they had done nothing in response to this;

A Research Update '*Children and young people's awareness, knowledge, and attitudes towards autism in Northern Ireland*' is now available on the ARK website.

Prof Karola Dillenburger lead author of the Update, and Director of Centre for Behaviour Analysis at the School of Education, Queen's University Belfast commented:

'This research provides evidence that children and young people are aware of autism and are happy to be educated inclusively with their peers. They were also in favour of educational supports, where needed. These findings bode well for the use of peer-mediated interventions that involve developing peers as facilitators in the classroom. The practice of not disclosing to peers the autism diagnosis of their classmates should be reviewed in light of these findings.'

More information and results tables on the 2014 YLT and KLT surveys are available from the respective survey websites: [www.ark.ac.uk/ylt](http://www.ark.ac.uk/ylt) and [www.ark.ac.uk/klt](http://www.ark.ac.uk/klt).

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#### **Notes to Editors:**

1. A Research Update authored by Prof. Karola Dillenburger, Dr Lynne McKerr and Dr Julie-Ann Jordan titled *Children and young people's awareness, knowledge, and attitudes towards autism in Northern Ireland* has been published. Interview bids to Claire O'Callaghan.
2. Dirk Schubotz (YLT Director, QUB) and Dr Katrina Lloyd (KLT Director) are available for interview. Interview bids to Claire O'Callaghan.
3. ARK is a joint resource between Queen's University and Ulster University. It was established in 2000 and its goal is to make social science information on Northern Ireland available to the widest possible audience.
4. The 2014 KLT and YLT surveys were part-funded by the following organisations: The Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM), the Department of Education (DE), The Office of the Commissioner for Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (NICCY),

The Integrated Education Fund (IEF), the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB); PlayBoard; Improving Children's Lives (ICL); and the Centre for Behaviour Analysis at the School of Education at Queen's University Belfast.