ADOLESCENTS' NEIGHBOURHOOD BELONGING

HBSC England 2022 data: Snapshot series CHSS, University of Kent.
https://hbscengland.org/ @HBSCEngland

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Belonging and connectedness to the local place and community are protective health assets for young people.

HBSC ENGLAND 2022 DATA SHOWED

- **falling levels of neighbourhood belonging overall**
- **stronger belonging among adolescents from high income families**
- **poorer mental health and risk behaviour outcomes with low levels of belonging**
- a big drop in other factors that protect adolescent health at all levels
- falling mental and physical health compared with previous years

THIS SHOWS THE URGENT NEED FOR

- local & policy level action and resourcing to boost neighbourhood belonging
  - *as part of a wider plan to build and strengthen adolescent health and wellbeing and protective health assets*

Young people associated levels of neighbourhood belonging with feeling safe, resourcing/funding and digital connectivity.

*If you don't have your own space or even **headspace at home** and **there's no space in the community that you can connect** with then maybe that's making young people feel **less safe**.*

*It seems that **funding is being pulled away** from the least affluent places so less open space, gardens, activities, places to be safely.*

*Lower neighbourhood belonging may possibly be an effect of young people being **more connected to the world via the internet and social media**. I only know my very close neighbours and **my friends all live quite far away**.*

KEY MESSAGES

**Family affluence level (high, medium, low) was assessed through the Family Affluence Scale (FAS)*

Between 2014 and 2022…

NEIGHBOURHOOD BELONGING FELL ↓

- adolescents felt LESS connected, safe and supported locally in 2022 than previously

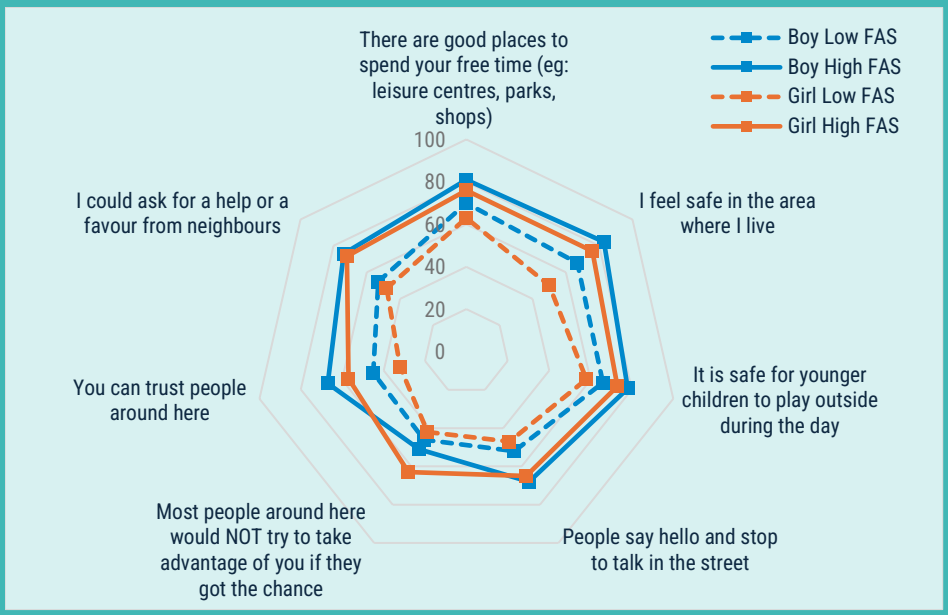
BOYS and THE YOUNGEST (11 year old) adolescents…

- reported somewhat **HIGHER** levels of neighbourhood belonging overall: **41% boys vs 35% girls**

Adolescents from HIGH AFFLUENCE (high FAS*) families…

were **TWICE AS LIKELY** TO REPORT HIGH NEIGHBOURHOOD BELONGING than those from low affluence (low FAS*) families

- **Neighbourhood safety and trust** showed the greatest differences by family affluence level, particularly for girls
  - *1/2 of low FAS girls felt safe locally vs. 3/4 of high FAS girls and less than 1/3 could trust people locally*



Those who reported HIGH NEIGHBOURHOOD BELONGING had an EXTRA LAYER OF PROTECTION. They were…

MORE LIKELY TO REPORT

- better **mental health**
- feeling **safe at school**
- feeling as if they **belonged at school**
- feeling as if they could **trust their teachers**

LESS LIKELY TO REPORT

- having ever been **drunk or ever used alcohol, vapes, cigarettes or cannabis**
- having ever **deliberately harmed** themselves
- having been recently **cyber/bullied or cyber/bullying others**