

THE MIX'S HELPLINE: KEY TRENDS AND INSIGHTS FROM 2018 TO 2023



CONTENTS

SUMMARY	P3
INTRODUCTION	P4
THE SUPPORT PROVIDED BY THE HELPLINE	P5
Our support channels	P5
Signposting	P5
Who are the people accessing the helpline?	P6
What support do young people seek?	P7
What mood do young people access the helpline in?	P8
HISTORICAL TRENDS	P9
Theme 1: Mental health	P9
Theme 2: Relationships	P12
Theme 3: Self, body and identity	P15
Theme 4: Education, employment and training	P17
Theme 5: Money and housing	P19
Theme 6: Health, sex, pregnancy and addiction	P20
Theme 7: Safety	P22
DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS	P25
Age	P25
Gender	P29
Ethnicity	P33
Sexuality	P35
Disability status	P38
APPENDICES	P40
Methodology	P40
Signposts	P41
Footnotes and sources	P42

TRIGGER WARNING: This report discusses sensitive topics, including self-harm, abuse, suicide, substance use, bereavement, and other potentially distressing subjects. If you need support for any of these issues, resources are provided at the end of the report.

SUMMARY

The Mix's helpline has been a vital resource for over 43,000 young people over the past 6 years, offering essential support during challenging times.

MENTAL HEALTH TRENDS

Depression and anxiety have dominated helpline discussions, with conversations peaking during the pandemic in 2020 and 2021. Although there was a steep drop in 2023, levels remain substantially higher than before the pandemic.

While discussions around **thoughts of suicide without intent** and **thoughts of self-harm** declined sharply in 2023, we have seen a troubling **rise in disclosures of previous suicide attempts** and **thoughts of suicide with intent to act**. Moreover, conversations about **incidents of self-harm** remain high, signalling an elevated need for crisis intervention services.

EVOLVING NEEDS

Our report shows a **decline in discussions about anxiety, depression and suicidal thinking in 2023**, suggesting a potential decline in these feelings among young people. Following years of overwhelming demand that left mental health services overstretched, this decline could provide a much-needed relief, allowing services to better meet the needs of young people.

DEMOGRAPHIC INSIGHTS

Our analysis reveals **critical differences in the challenges raised by young people based on age, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and disability**. As young people age, discussions about suicide increase, with more than one in ten young users in the oldest age group expressing suicidal intentions. Conversely, discussions about self-harm tend to decrease with age.

KEY ISSUES

Loneliness and **self-esteem** have grown from marginal topics to key concerns, quadrupling over the last few years, with each now being raised in one out of ten conversations. These issues are more common among disabled young people. Discussions around **relationships and family issues** remain significantly elevated compared to pre-pandemic levels, reflecting ongoing challenges in young people's social and family dynamics.

OTHER CONCERNS

Bullying continues to be a significant concern, with greater proportions seeking support in recent years. There has been a significant uptick in demand for support related to **neurodivergence**, particularly **autism** and **ADHD**, with discussions quadrupling in recent years. **Education** has become a major concern, with discussions more than tripling between 2019 and 2022. **Anger, stress, domestic abuse, LGBTQIA+ issues, work/employment, and money worries** have also seen an increase in recent years, indicating a broadening range of challenges faced by young people.

INTRODUCTION

After eight years of The Mix's helpline supporting thousands of young people each year, the service has closed to allow us to reshape it into a peer support service in line with our new strategy, with young people co-leading its development.

Our helpline has been providing support to young people since 2016 when The Mix was created through a merger of two charities. In this report, we've focused on analysing data collected over the past 6 years (2018 – 2023) as this was when The Mix started collecting detailed service data systematically, allowing for robust analysis of the trends. Analysing our helpline data enables us to reveal changes in the challenges experienced by young people over the years and share other learnings around support seeking behaviour and the needs of young people.

After a brief overview of the helpline support provided, the report delves into the evolving needs of young people and gives insights into their experiences, preferences and the issues that they experience. Understanding the issues and challenges faced by young people is crucial for delivering safe, effective, non-judgmental support.

For this report, we have analysed helpline data focusing on key topics discussed by young people seeking support. With over 100 topics monitored on the helpline, this report highlights significant shifts in challenges experienced by young people over the past six years, providing insights into the changing landscape of young people's support needs. We have also focused on topics such as the initial mood young people come to our service in, the feelings they are experiencing when first reaching our helpline, their demographic information and signposting to further support.

“Our helpline report provides an extraordinary picture of young people's lives over the past six years. It has been a period marked by significant turbulence, characterised by the impact of a global pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis as well as war, climate change and the rise of racial justice movements.

While this environment is not unique to young people, our report shows this has created additional anxiety in this pivotal phase in life, and placed often unbearable pressure on young people, especially those from already marginalised groups.

Most importantly, it is clear that if we are to ensure our young people are resilient in the face of these challenges, we must invest more in services like The Mix that seek to provide the just-in-time support they need to cope.”

Chris Martin, CEO at The Mix

THE SUPPORT PROVIDED BY THE HELPLINE

OUR SUPPORT CHANNELS

Over the past six years, The Mix's helpline has supported over **43,000 people** and responded to over **70,700 requests for support**; with 94% of contacts being made by young people between 12 and 25 years old, our target age range.

Users had a choice of channels they could choose from to access helpline support, with **the webchat being the most popular**:

Phone:
15,942 (22.5%)

Email or contact form:
21,710 (30.7%)

Webchat:
33,048 (46.7%)

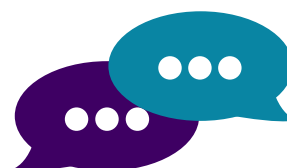
SIGNPOSTING

The **Mix's helpline** has provided over **11,200 signposts** to young people since 2018. There were several key trends:



The Mix support services were the most frequently signposted services: Crisis Messenger, The Mix Counselling, and The Mix Community collectively accounted for approximately 17% of all signposts.

Crisis and suicide prevention services were the main destinations outside of The Mix. Organisations such as PAPYRUS, Mind, and SANE Services collectively received around 11% of signposts highlighting The Mix's vital role in providing and directing young people to crisis support.

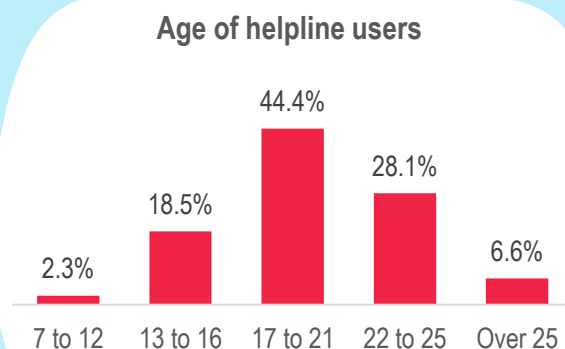


The Mix signposts to a diverse support landscape highlighting the importance of offering a comprehensive support network for a wide variety of needs. A diverse array of support services was accessed by young people, including helplines, online platforms, counselling services, and advocacy groups among others. While **mental health organisations were the key destinations**, many other organisations such as services providing support for specific forms of trauma, identity-based issues, or lifestyle-related concerns received a smaller yet significant number of signposts.

WHO ARE THE PEOPLE ACESING THE HELPLINE?

The Mix's helpline has provided one-to-one support to young people from diverse demographic backgrounds and with varied needs¹.

Age: The Mix provides support services for young people 12 to 25 years old. Almost half (44.4%) of the helpline users were 17 to 21 years old, with the second largest group being 22 to 25 years old (28.1%). In addition, a small proportion (6.6%) were over 25s. Of this group, around one quarter were looking for information or support on behalf of a young person; these were typically parents and guardians or professionals working with young people. Users over 25 years old have not been included in the analysis in this report as they fall outside of The Mix's target age range.



Gender: In line with other The Mix services, females were vastly overrepresented (73.6%) among users, with males (23.1%), non-binary (0.4%), transgender (1.2%) and young people who prefer to self-define in another way (1.7%) being far smaller groups.

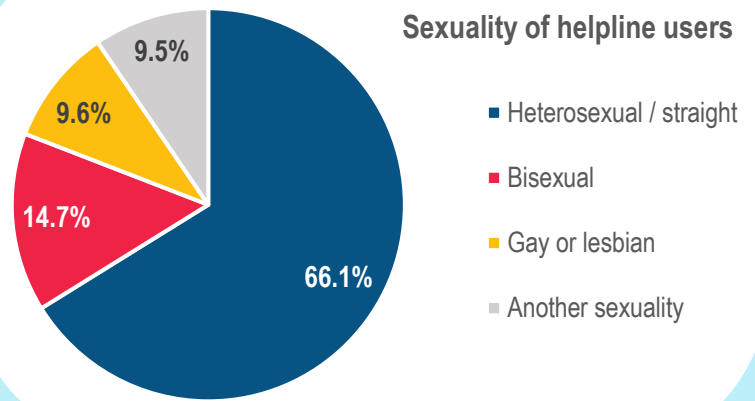
Compared to census findings where approximately 1% of 16- to 24 year olds identify with a gender different to that registered at birth, marginalised genders are overrepresented on our helpline¹. Our inclusive approach aims to ensure that individuals of all gender identities feel welcome and appropriately supported when seeking assistance.

Ethnicity: The Mix supported young people with diverse socio-cultural needs and from diverse ethnic backgrounds: Asian (8.0%), Black (3.4%), Mixed (4.7%), Other (1.7%), and White (82.2%). This is broadly in line with the national breakdown¹.

Disability status: Over one fifth of those accessing The Mix's helpline state they themselves have a disability (22.3%). This is far higher compared to the national census data where 88% of young people have no long-term physical or mental health conditions¹. The Mix strives to ensure that its services are accessible and inclusive to all young people, regardless of their abilities.



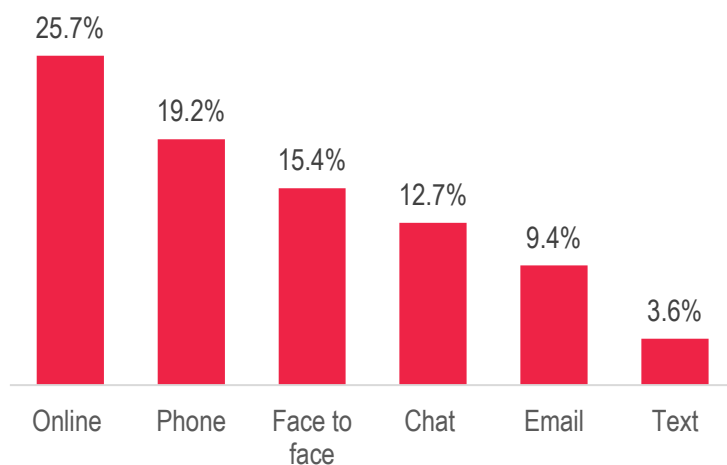
Sexual orientation: Young people from marginalised sexualities are over-represented on our helpline (33.9%) compared to the UK population (7.6%)¹. Our inclusive approach recognises the importance of providing support that is affirming and understanding of individuals' sexual orientations and identities.



WHAT SUPPORT DO YOUNG PEOPLE SEEK?

Each young person has unique needs and preferences for support, with each being in a different stage of their support-seeking journey. This highlights the need for a multi-channel approach to achieve a truly inclusive support service. As part of the helpline signposting process, young people were asked about their preferred method for support. **While young people selected a wide range of channels, the online and phone channels were clearly dominant.**

Young people's preferred method of support



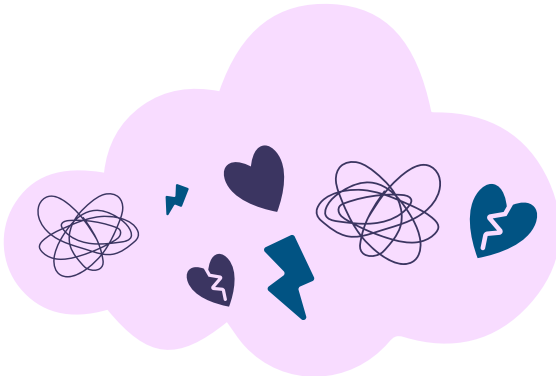
Online support was by far the most popular option, with 25.7% of young people opting for it. This preference for online support underscores the significance of digital platforms and services in providing accessible routes for help-seeking, particularly among young populations accustomed to online communication channels.

Phone support was the second most popular choice, with 19.2% of users preferring this more traditional mode of communication. The demand for phone-based support highlights the continued desire among young people for verbal interaction during their support-seeking journey.

Face-to-face support ranked third (15.4%); it was sought by about one in seven young people. Chat (12.7%), email (9.4%), and text support (3.6%) options, while less popular, were still notable and highlight the importance of offering a diverse range of options to satisfy a range of preferences and accessibility needs.

WHAT MOOD DO YOUNG PEOPLE ACCESS THE HELPLINE IN?

To better understand young people’s wellbeing and mood when accessing the helpline, before their conversation, they were asked to rank their mood from 1 (low) to 6 (high)¹ via an online form.



Overall, the average mood score stands at 2.5, indicating a low to moderate mood among helpline users upon their initial contact. However, certain topics show distinct variations in these scores.

For instance, individuals seeking support related to suicide express a notably lower average mood score of 1.8, suggesting a heightened level of distress. Similarly, those grappling with self-harm present an average mood score of 2.1.

On the other hand, themes such as relationships/friendships, online issues, and gender and sexuality produce higher average mood scores, ranging from 2.7 to 2.9. These slightly elevated scores may signify a somewhat more positive outlook.

These nuanced variations in mood scores across different thematic areas offer valuable insights into the diverse emotional states of young individuals seeking support. By understanding these trends, support services can tailor their interventions and resources to better address the specific needs and experiences of their users, enhancing the effectiveness of their support.



Mood ranking of the young people accessing our helpline



HISTORICAL TRENDS

THEME 1: MENTAL HEALTH



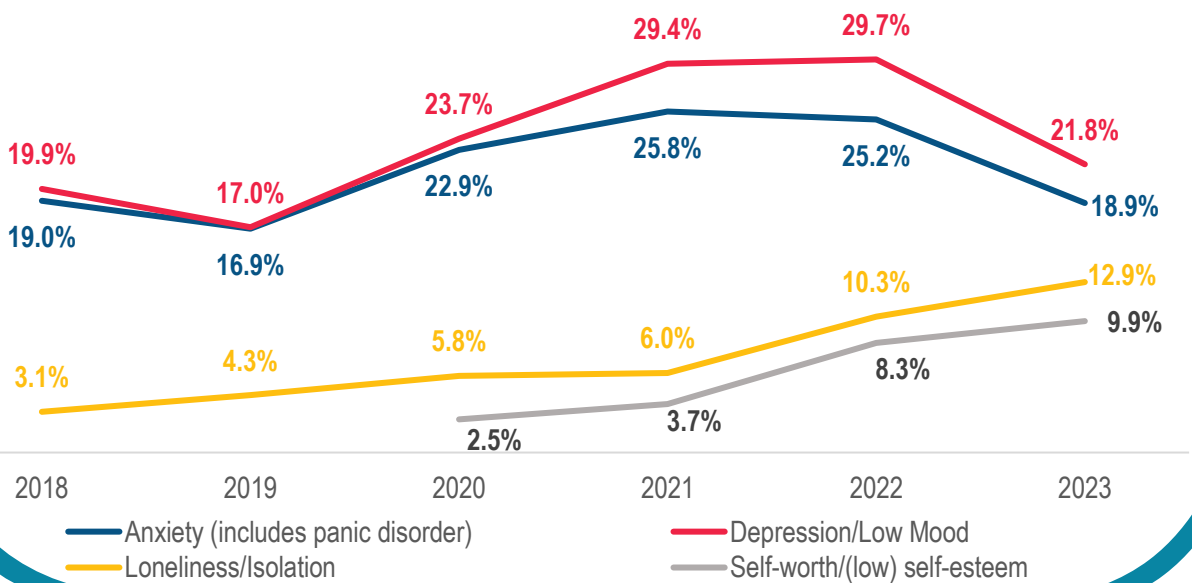
Depression, Anxiety and Low Mood

Depression and anxiety dominated discussions on the helpline, with each being raised in around one in five conversations in 2023.

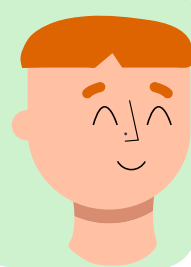
Our data indicates that support needs regarding depression and anxiety had been increasing year on year up to 2022, with the most dramatic increases occurring in 2020 and 2021 as the pandemic hit. They show a steep drop in 2023, yet the levels were still significantly elevated compared to 2019 – before the pandemic hit. Although it is encouraging to see this sharp fall in conversations about depression and anxiety, their persistent prevalence suggests that depression and anxiety continue to greatly affect young people, even as the nature of their concerns might be evolving.

Loneliness and self-esteem grew from marginal topics to key issues for young people, with both quadrupling over the last six and four years respectively. Loneliness/isolation and self-worth/low self-esteem have been on the rise each year, peaking in 2023, with each now being raised in one in ten conversations.

Depression, anxiety, self-worth and loneliness



“It was good to know that I was not alone with my challenge. After your helpline replied, I felt reassured and empowered to help my child deal with his anxiety.” - Parent seeking help on behalf of a young person



“I was feeling really bad with loneliness and the agent talked with me about my feelings and then recommended me some sites to try.” - Helpline user

Looking at conversations from 2023, loneliness was often discussed alongside low self-esteem or self-worth. Most commonly loneliness was raised alongside topics including depression, relationships, friendships or family, stress and suicidal ideation. This trend suggests a lack of meaningful social connections among young people and a growth in concerns about one's personal value, with a possible link between the two issues. Studies also support these findings, suggesting that this trend may in part be due to the long-term impacts of Covid-19².

Unsurprisingly, when initially contacting the helpline, young people are more likely to say they feel³:

- Anxious (48%) when seeking support for issues related to anxiety (compared to 18% across all topics).
- Depressed (39%) when seeking support for issues related to depression (compared to 18% across all topics).
- Alone (31%), lonely (19%) and isolated (8%) when seeking support for issues related to loneliness (compared to 10%, 3% and 2% respectively across other topics).
- Depressed (22%) or alone (18%) when seeking support for issues related to self-worth (18% and 10% respectively across other topics).

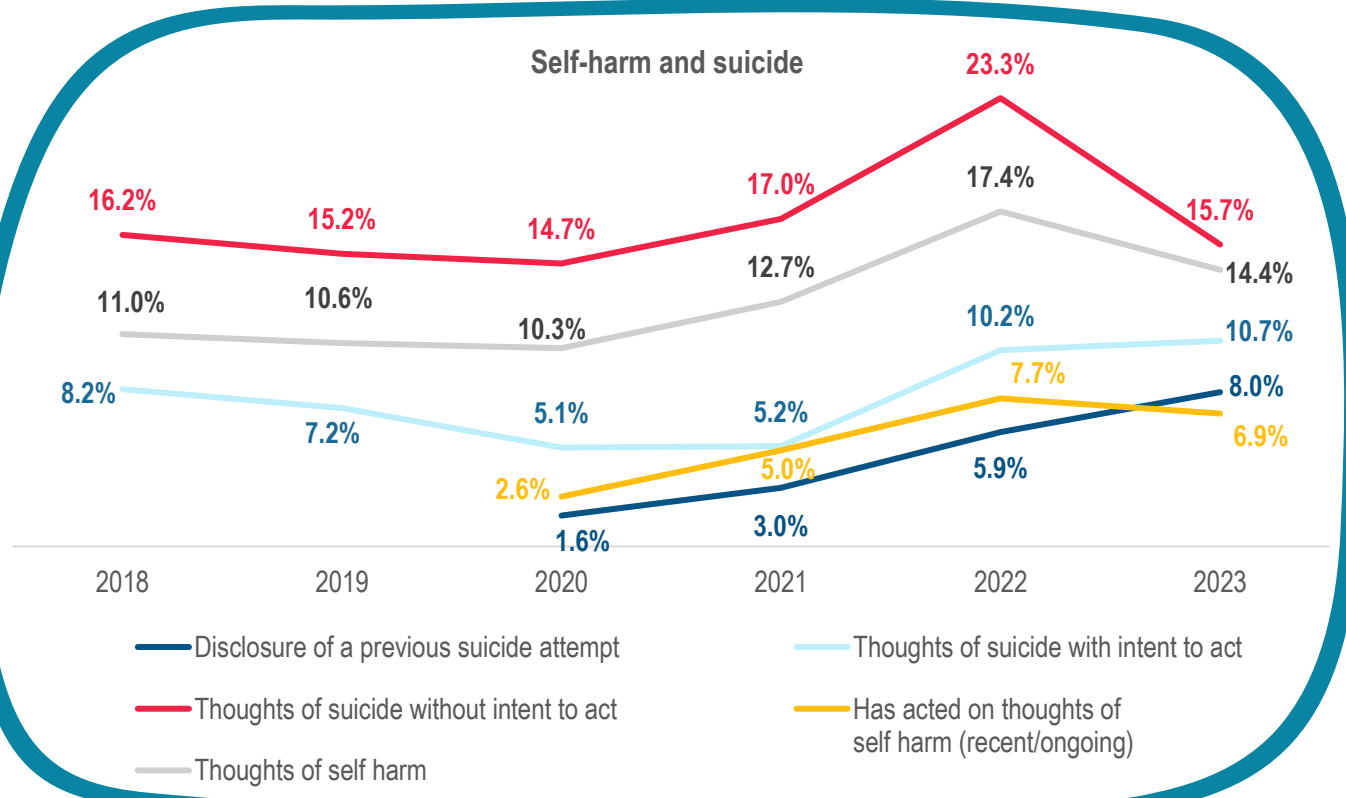
"[The helpline] prevented me from taking my life, I felt listened to. My agent helped me dissolve the plan I had made in my head."
- Helpline user

"Thank you so much, I have never been able to overcome an urge to self-harm before and with your help I hope this is the first of many."
- Helpline user



Suicide and Self-Harm

Our data shows a worrying trend among young people discussing suicide. Encouragingly conversations discussing thoughts of suicide without intent to act and thoughts of self-harm have fallen sharply in 2023. However, disclosures of previous suicide attempts and thoughts of suicide with intent to act have been on the rise. Also, conversations discussing incidence of self-harm stayed high in 2023, accounting for 6.9% of all the cases. This indicates a continued need for an increased provision of crisis intervention services to enable the system to respond to these more severe expressions of distress among young people.



On the other hand, following the dramatic increase in discussions around suicidal thoughts without intent to act on the helpline around the pandemic time in 2021 (17.0%) and 2022 (23.3%), the proportion have returned to pre-pandemic levels in 2023 (15.7%).

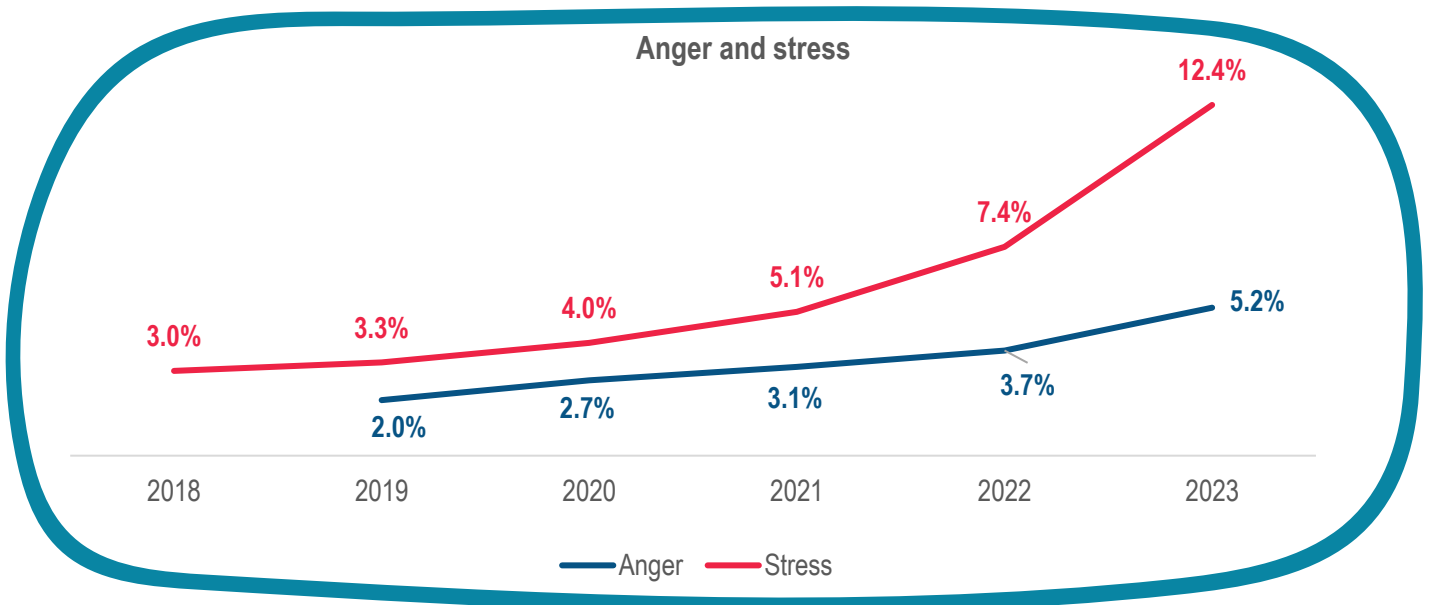
Interestingly, when young people seek support for both topics they are no more likely to say they are in need of help, with this actually falling around the average across all topics at just over one in ten.



Anger and Stress

Young people have increasingly sought support for anger and stress each year. By 2023, conversations discussing stress have quadrupled to 12.4% from 3% in 2018, and conversations discussing anger have almost tripled to 5.2% from 2% in 2019, when the topic was first tracked.

In 2023, young people seeking support for **stress** most often discussed alongside this topic anxiety and depression, closely followed by family, relationships/friendships issues, challenges at school or university and loneliness. Those discussing **anger** when seeking support most often also discussed family issues. Depression, relationships/friendships and loneliness were also frequently mentioned during these conversations.



Unsurprisingly, when first contacting the helpline, young people seeking support for anger are more likely to say they feel angry (41%), compared to just 4% across all the topics combined. Alongside this, these individuals are more likely to say they feel frustrated (8% cf. 3%).

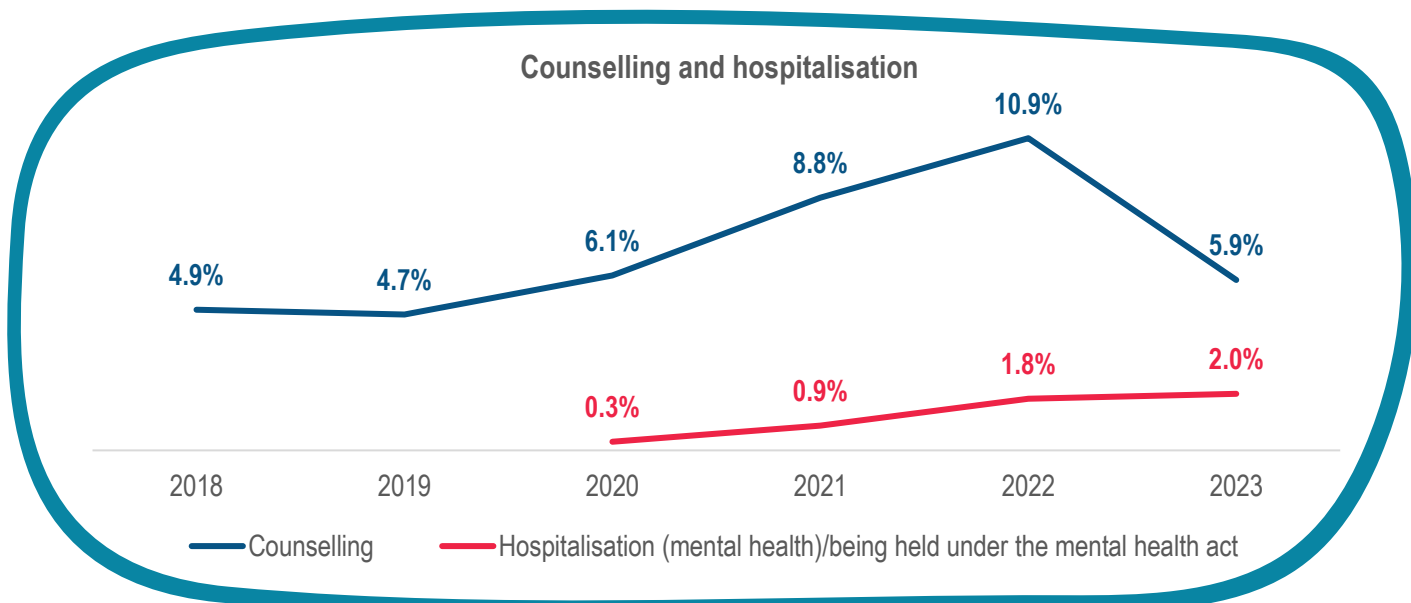
Those seeking support for stress are much more likely to feel anxious (27%), stressed (21%), down (11%), low (10%) or angry (13%) compared to those seeking support for other topics.

Other Mental Health Topics

Counselling related conversations have halved in 2023. Up until 2022, counselling had been a growing topic on The Mix's helpline, mentioned more frequently each year. However, last year, the proportion has almost halved, from 10.9% in 2022 to 5.9% in 2023. This sharp decline could reflect various factors such as changes in access to counselling services.

As our 2023 helpline trends show **a fall in conversations discussing anxiety, depression and suicidal thinking, which may explain the sudden decline in conversations about counselling, indicating a decline in demand and need.** Following years of extremely high demand for counselling services that left services overstretched, long waiting lists, and young people often getting worse due to a lack of support, this would be a very welcome relief that could enable the services to better respond to demand that has for years been vastly outstripping the supply. And yet, **even with this sharp fall in 2023, the proportion of conversations discussing counselling is still notably higher than before the pandemic started.**

The proportion of **conversations discussing hospitalisation under the Mental Health Act due to severe mental health issues has been growing since 2020** when we first started collecting this data. The proportion has peaked at 2% in 2023. As discussed above, this trend is perhaps associated with a lack of suitable mental health provision over the recent years.



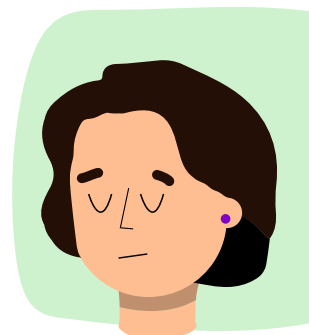
When first reaching out for support, young people discussing counselling or hospitalisation under the Mental Health Act were most likely to feel depressed (22% for both) or in need of help (17% and 22% respectively), both above the average for other issues raised (18% and 10%). However, those who raised hospitalisation under the Mental Health Act were also more likely to feel alone (17%), again much higher than the average of around one in ten across other support needs.

THEME 2: RELATIONSHIPS

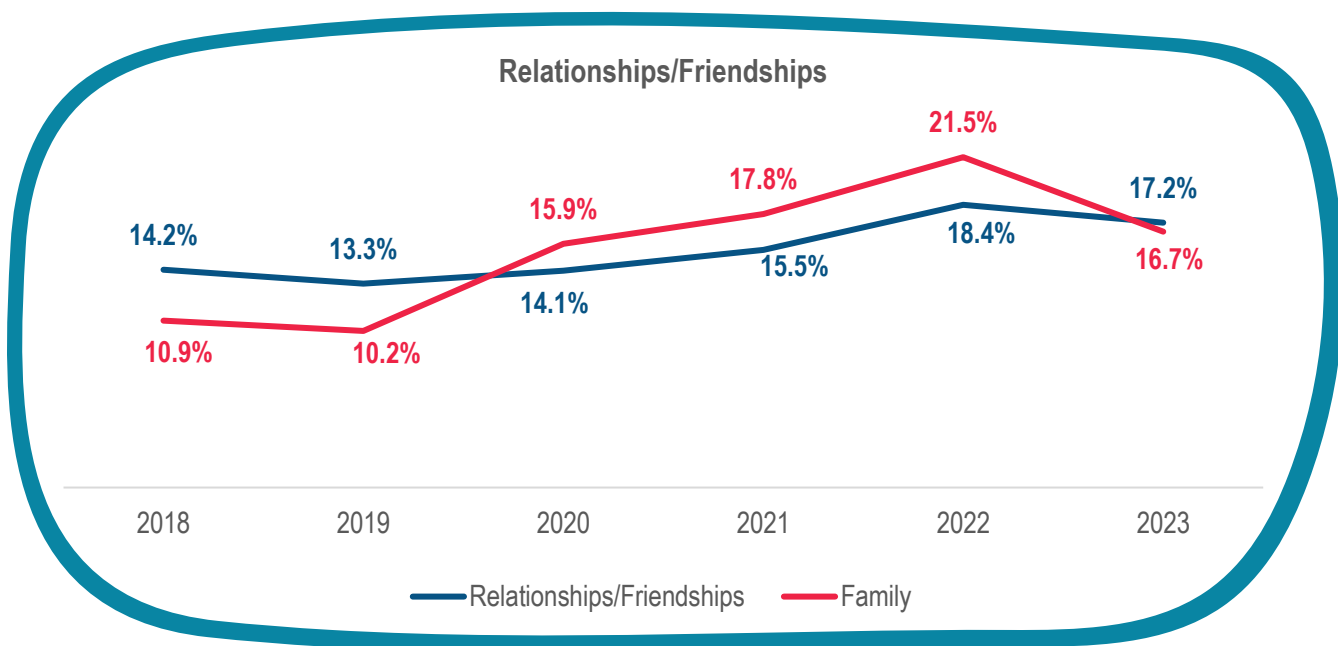
Relationships and Family

Both relationships and family issues had been increasing between 2019 and 2022, with discussions about relationships and friendships peaking at 18.5% and family issues peaking at 21.6% in 2022. In 2023, there was a drop in the proportion of young people seeking support for these issues, with family issues falling significantly to 16.7% and relationships/

*"It stopped me from doing something extremely stupid and [encouraged me] to sort my family life out."
- Helpline user*



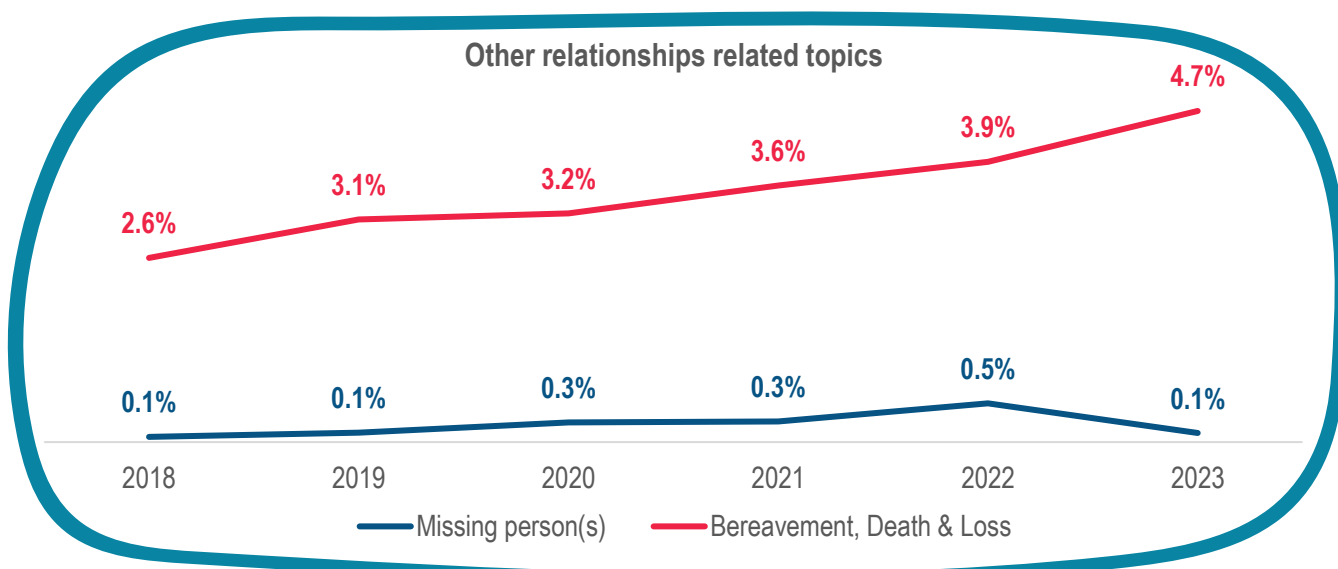
friendships issues falling to 17.2%. Despite the decrease, these topics remain more prominent compared to the pre-pandemic levels, reflecting ongoing challenges in young people's social and family dynamics.



Other Relationships Related Topics

Bereavement issues are becoming more prominent. The Mix's helpline provides support for various family and relationship-related issues, including missing people, bereavement, death and loss. While conversations about missing people are infrequent, discussions surrounding bereavement, death or loss have seen a concerning upward trajectory. Over the past six years, the proportion of these conversations has almost doubled from 2.6% in 2018 to 4.7% in 2023.

This increase may perhaps be connected to the pandemic and its long-lasting impact on the NHS, with recent studies indicating that the increased NHS waiting times due to the Covid-19 pandemic led to more avoidable deaths across the UK. The Office for National statistics estimates that avoidable deaths in England and Wales peaked following the pandemic and that, despite improving, the avoidable mortality rates have remained higher compared to pre-pandemic levels⁴.

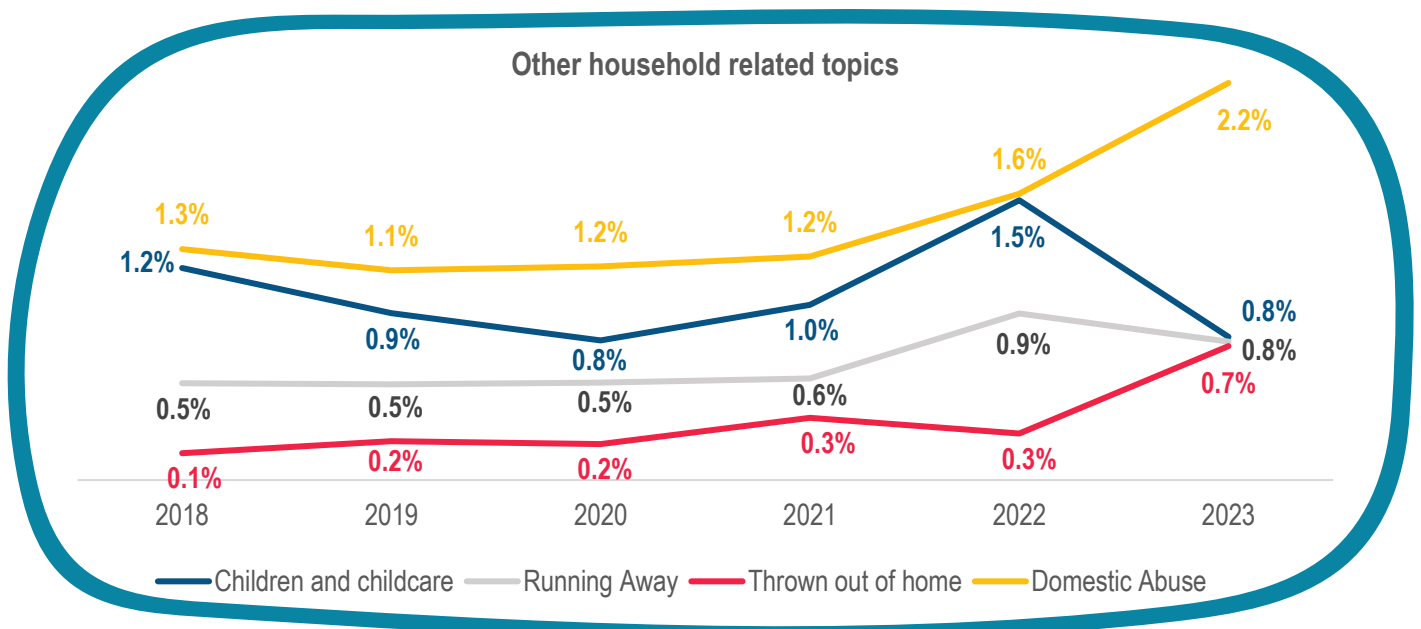


When accessing the helpline for support with bereavement issues, individuals are more likely to report feelings of depression (23% cf. 18%), sadness (9% cf. 4%) and sense of loss (6% cf. 1%) compared to people seeking support for other topics, reflecting the profound emotional impact of bereavement.

Other Household Related Issues

The Mix's helpline monitors various topics related to household dynamics, shedding light on the challenges young people face within their homes. **Domestic abuse has seen a troubling increase in recent years.** Since 2021, the proportion of cases discussing domestic abuse has almost doubled from 1.2% to 2.2% in 2023, indicating a heightened need for support in navigating abusive environments. This trend might be attributed in part to the strain caused by pandemic-related lockdowns, exacerbating tensions within households and often confining people with their abusers. Refuge, a major UK charity supporting survivors of domestic violence, reported a 50% surge in calls received during the pandemic⁵. Studies also found that lockdowns not only increased the incidence of domestic abuse but also intensified the severity of abuse⁶. However, even post-pandemic, domestic abuse support needs continued to grow, with organisations supporting survivors such as Women's Aid reporting increased demand for support services⁷.

Conversely, discussions concerning children and childcare experienced fluctuations, peaking in 2022 at 1.5% before declining to 0.8% in 2023 – its lowest level. Similarly, instances of young people discussing running away and being thrown out of their homes have seen slight fluctuations over the years, with concerning spikes observed in 2022 and 2023.



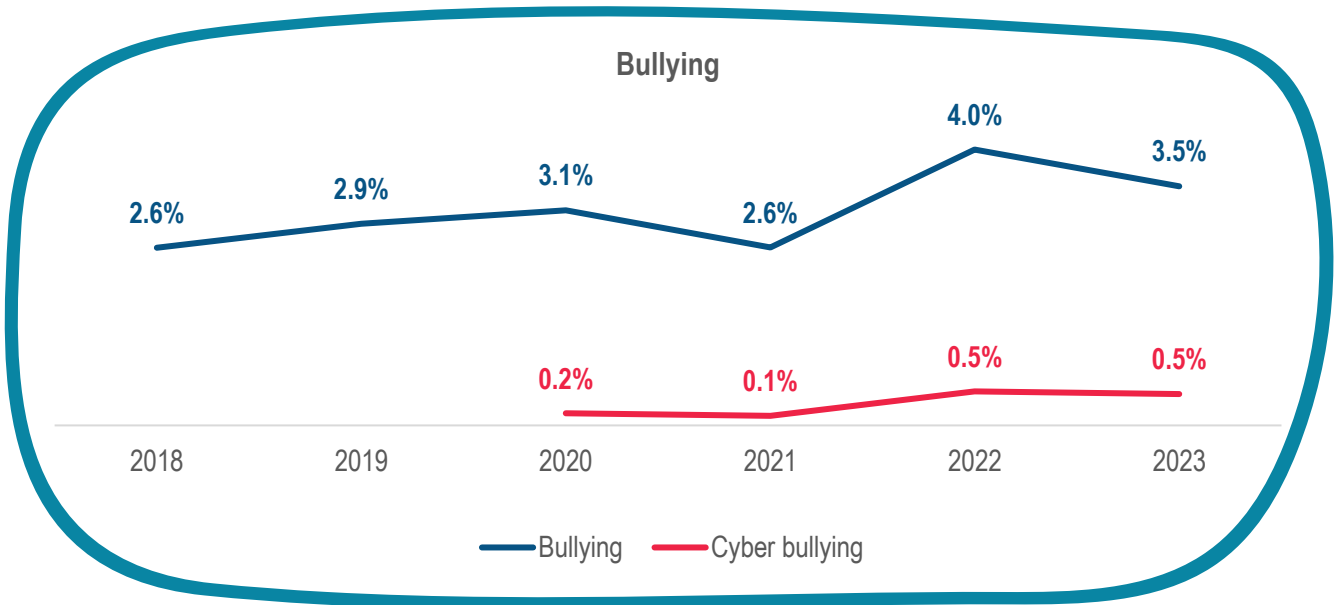
Young people contacting The Mix's helpline for these issues are much more likely to say they need help (18%), feel worried (10%) or feel scared (8%) than those discussing other topics on the helpline (10%, 4% and 2%, respectively). These young people also rank their mood as one of the lowest across all the topics at just 2.2 out of 6.

Bullying

Bullying or cyberbullying represent significant concerns among young people, with higher proportions seeking support in recent years. Between 2018 and 2021, bullying conversations were relatively stable, ranging from 2.6% to 3.1%, however, in 2022, the proportion rose to 4% before dropping to 3.5% in 2023. This aligns with broader trends, with a 2023 review having found that cyber-bullying rates have been increasing, particularly during the pandemic and in the immediate aftermath of the pandemic⁸.



"I was feeling really depressed and suicidal, the reason was because I was getting bullied so I came here and ever since I've been stronger."
- Helpline user

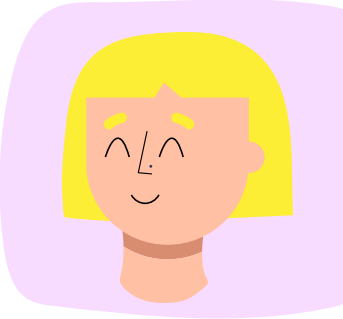


THEME 3: SELF, BODY AND IDENTITY

Neurodivergence

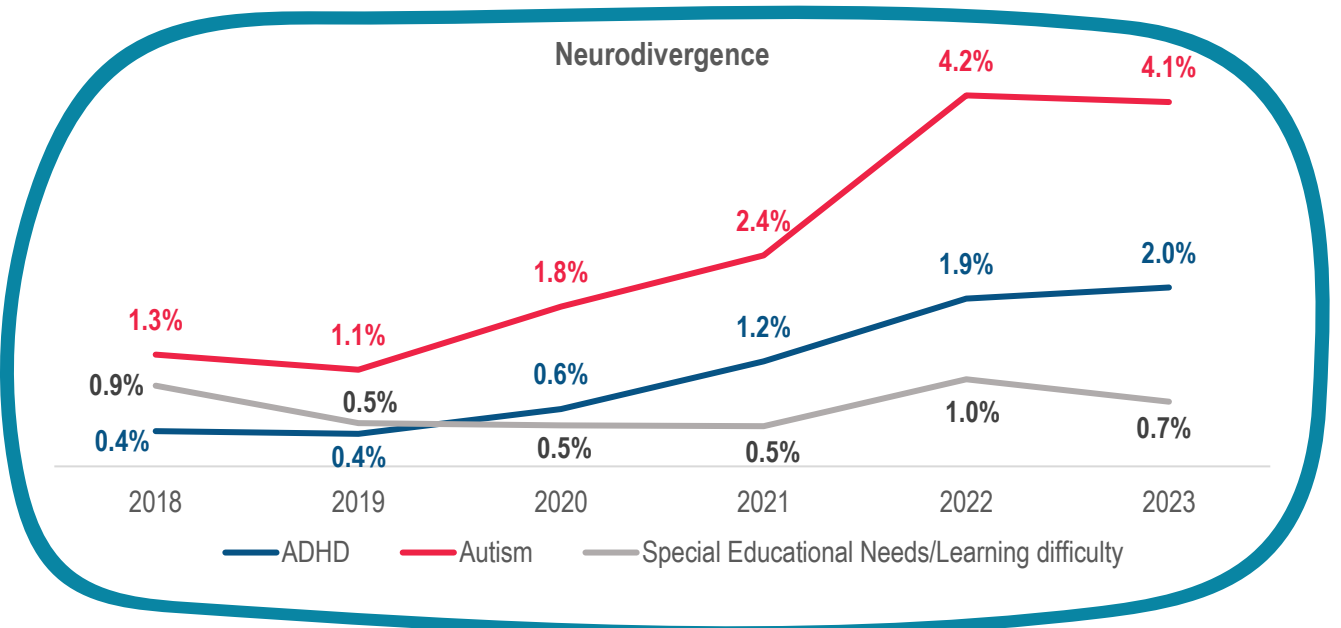
The demand for support related to neurodivergence, particularly autism and ADHD, has shown a significant uptick in recent years.

"I am struggling with neurodivergence and identity and The Mix not only helped, but referred me to other websites where I could get more in depth help on each issue." - Helpline user



Discussions concerning **autism** have surged from just over 1% of cases in 2018 and 2019 to over 4% in 2022 and 2023, marking a quadruple increase. Similarly, discussions surrounding **ADHD** have mirrored this upward trajectory, experiencing a fourfold increase from 0.4% in 2018/19 to 2% in 2023.

This notable rise underscores a growing awareness, demand and need for support services for young people with neurodevelopmental differences. NHS data analysed by the Nuffield Trust⁹ highlights the substantial increase in demand for diagnosis and support for ADHD and autism, with a big increase in waiting times for autism diagnosis. It also shows a similar pattern for ADHD, where between 2019/20 and 2022/23 there was a 51% increase in the number of patients prescribed medication for ADHD.



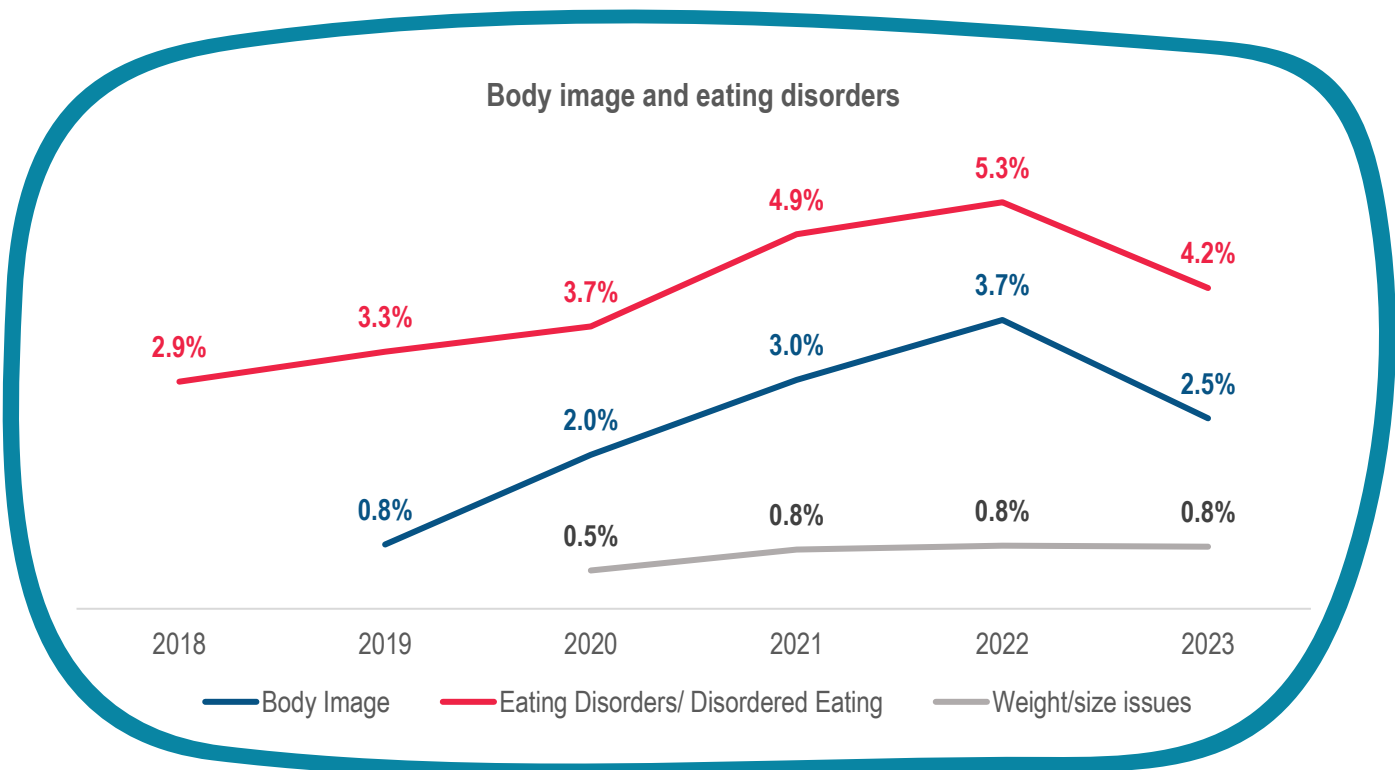


“The response was really quick and the advice is really practical which really, really helped me. I’m autistic and having practical advice really, really helps me. It was broken down really well.”
- Helpline user

Awareness and advocacy around neurodiversity has been growing in recent years leading to better understanding and improved diagnosis – both early and later in life. When discussing neurodivergence on our helpline, young people are often also raising issues linked to their mental health (most commonly anxiety, depression or stress) or relationships (most commonly family, relationships or friendships).

Body Image and Eating Disorders

Contacts about body image and eating disorders rose steadily until 2022; this was followed by a sharp decline in 2023. Despite this, research has shown that eating disorders remain a prevalent and serious issue among young people today. The Children's Commissioner for England reports that by mid-2023 the number of young people starting treatment for eating disorders had more than doubled since 2016¹⁰. Contacts discussing issues related to weight and size have remained stable at below 1% since tracking began.



“[The helpline] really brought me down when my body image was so bad I was considering self-harm. [The helpline] helped me to talk through my emotions and regulate in a much more healthy manner. I was recommended some services who could help me further also. The team stayed later to search for them and talk to me, which I am so grateful for.” - Helpline user



Gender and Sexuality

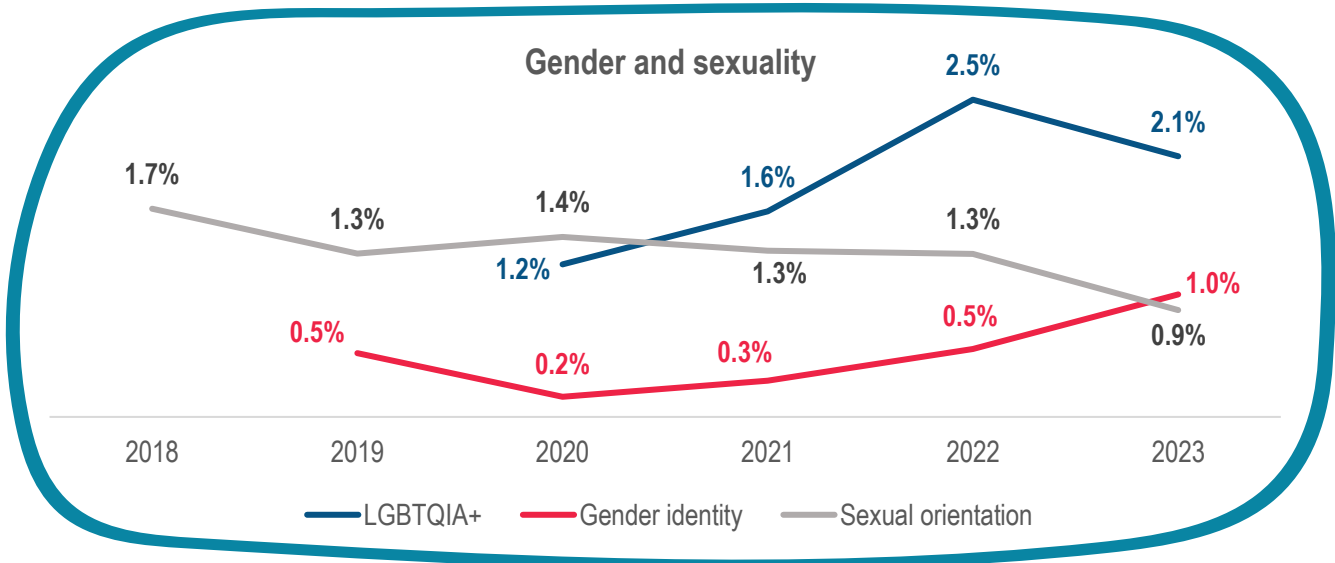
Since 2018, UK society has seen significant changes regarding gender and sexuality driven by evolving social attitudes, legal reforms, and increased visibility and advocacy for LGBTQIA+ rights and gender diversity. For instance, the British Social Attitudes survey shows a pronounced decline in opposition to same-sex relationships and increased support for the rights of transgender individuals attributed in part to the increasing advocacy and visibility, to better understanding and acceptance of LGBTQIA+ rights and gender diversity¹¹.

“It helped me out by giving me the resources to understand and learn about my sexuality and with that help I was able to understand my sexuality.” - Helpline user



On The Mix’s helpline, **contacts discussing LGBTQIA+ topics doubled between 2020 and 2022** when they peaked at 2.5%, remaining high into 2023. Contacts discussing sexual orientation have stayed relatively stable but show a slight downward trend overall. Conversations discussing gender identity have been growing since 2020, peaking at 1% of conversations in 2023.

During helpline conversations, young people most commonly discuss gender and sexuality, along with issues related to their relationships, friendships, or family. Additionally, topics such as anxiety, depression, loneliness, and low self-esteem are frequently discussed in connection with gender and sexuality.

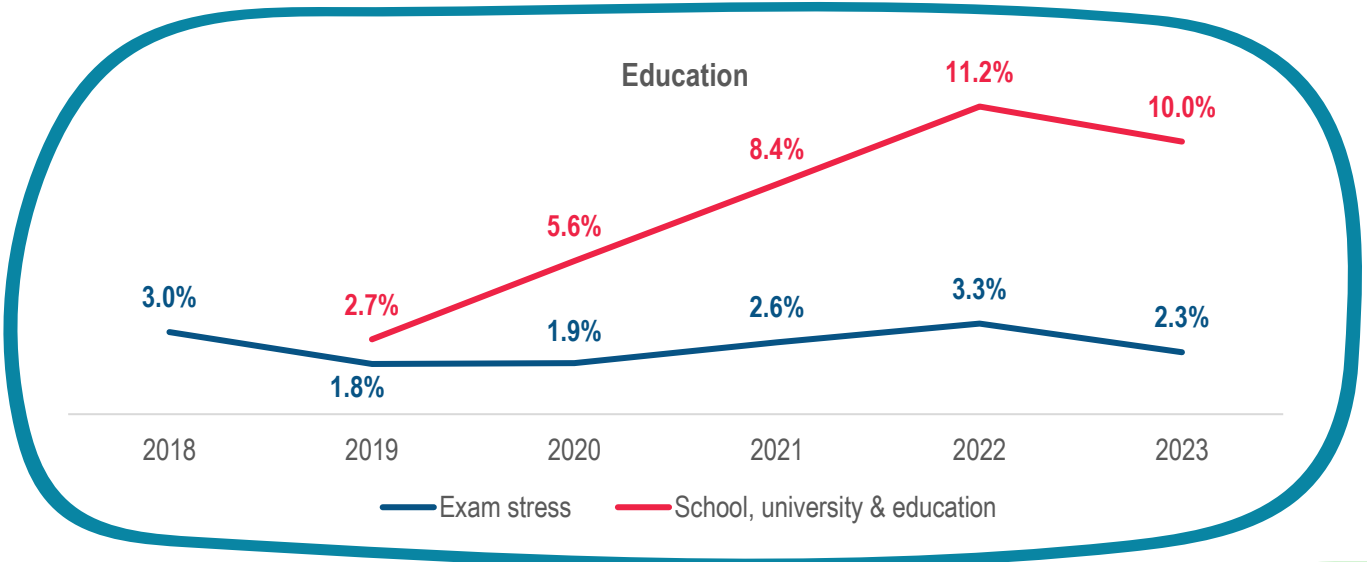


THEME 4: EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

Education

Education has become a major concern for young people over the past few years. Conversations about school, university or education have more than tripled between 2019 and 2022 from 2.7% to 11.2%. In 2023, this figure dropped slightly. Yet, one in ten conversations (10%) on the helpline touch on the topic of school or education.

By contrast, **the topic of exam stress has remained relatively consistent throughout the years,** fluctuating between 1.9% to 3.3% of conversations. As expected, discussions around exam stress tend to peak between April and June each year in line with the timing of school and university exams.

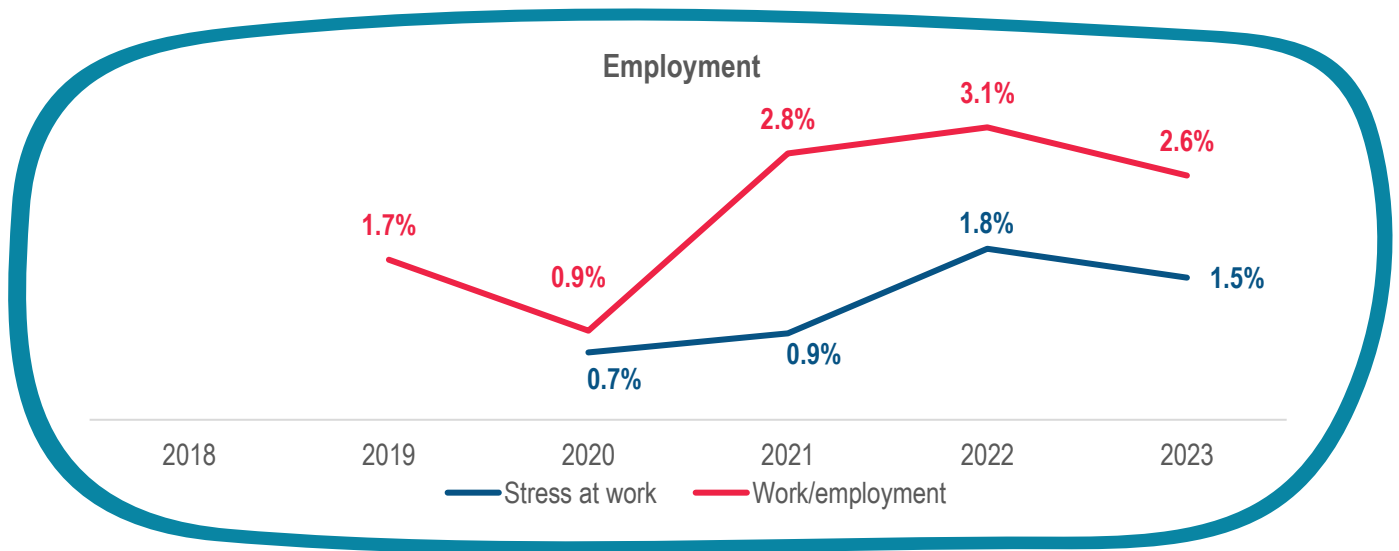


Employment

Work/employment has grown into a more prominent issue for young people over the past three years. Since 2021, around 3% of conversations discussed this topic. By comparison, before the pandemic only 1.7% of conversations mentioned this topic; this fell to 0.9% in 2020 when the pandemic hit. Young people discussing work and employment mentioned also a range of related issues including losing a job, fear about the future, health issues interfering with their ability to continue working, managing neurodivergence in the workplace and anxieties about starting a new job.



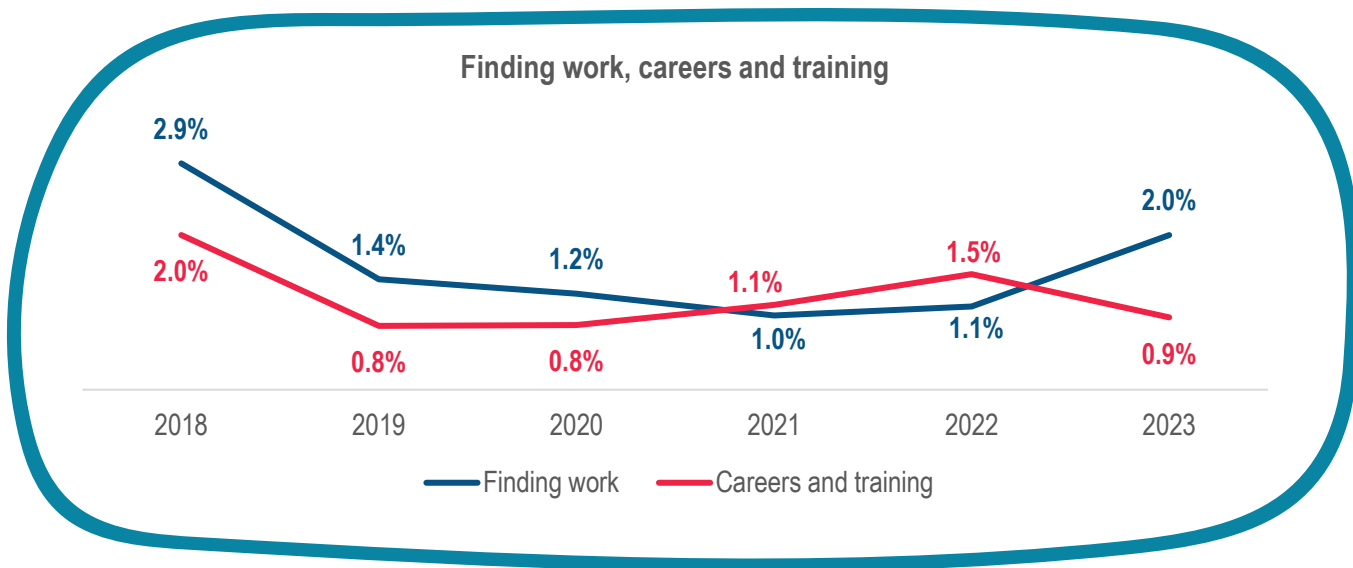
Stress at work rose year on year from 0.7% in 2020, peaking at 1.8% in 2022. In 2023, this dropped slightly to 1.5%. The increase in discussions around work-related stress could indicate heightened pressures in the workplace, with a recent Office for National Statistics report finding that stress has been exacerbated by economic uncertainty and shifting job expectations post-pandemic¹².



Finding Work, Careers and Training

Interestingly, 2018 was the year when the highest proportion of young people sought support for **careers and training** on the helpline, making up 2% of all conversations. This then fell dramatically to its lowest proportion in 2019 (0.8%) before gradually rising year on year to 2022 when it reached 1.5%. Young people with career and training support needs are more likely to contact the helpline feeling confused (14%) compared to those seeking help with other support needs (8%).

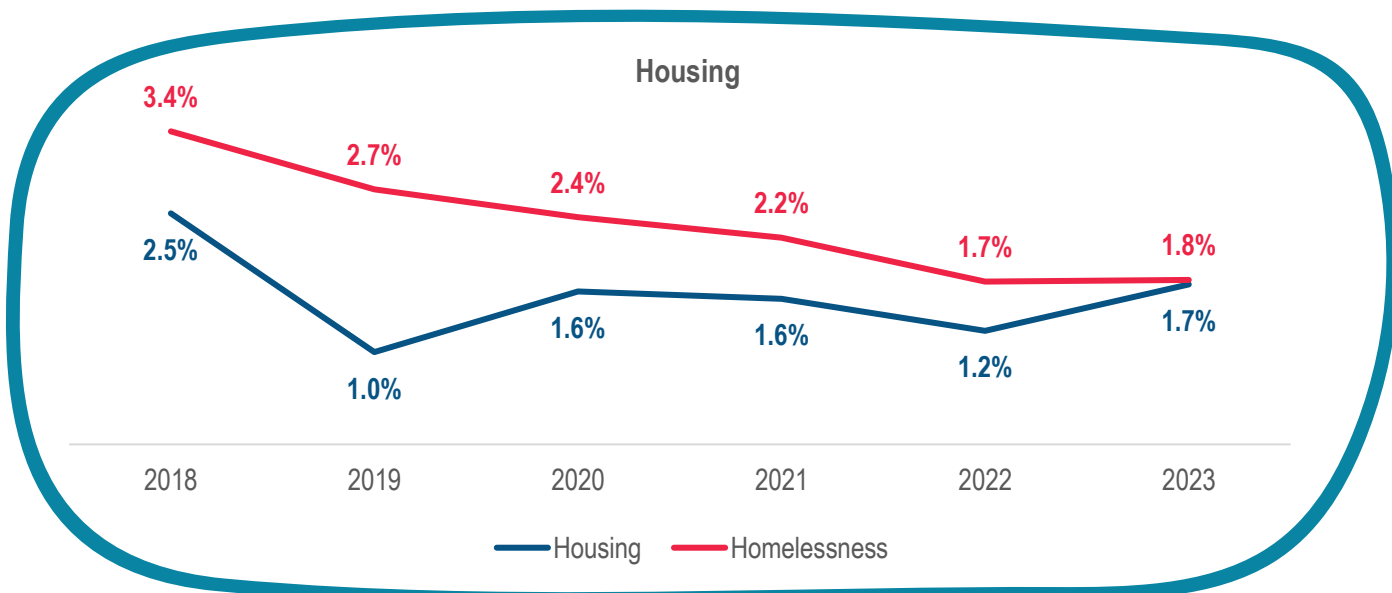
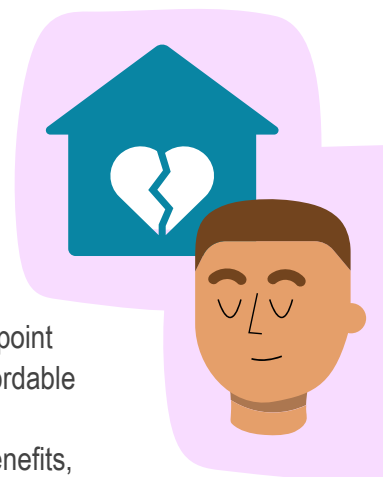
In 2018, 2.9% of conversations discussed **finding work** on the helpline, which was the highest proportion recorded in the past 6 years. This figure then dropped consistently until 2022. In 2023, there was a sharp rise again, with 2% of conversations discussing finding work. This increase may reflect ongoing challenges in the job market, particularly for young people entering the workforce post-pandemic with the labour market offering fewer entry-level positions with higher competition¹³.



THEME 5: MONEY AND HOUSING

Housing

On The Mix’s helpline, discussions about **homelessness and housing have declined substantially over the past six years**. Despite this, external research shows that homelessness represents a growing challenge for young people in the UK, with research from Centrepoin¹⁴ estimating that between April 2022 and March 2023 there was a 5% increase in the number of 16 to 25 year olds who presented to their local authority as homeless or at risk of homelessness, compared to the previous year. Centrepoin^t found this worrying trend was driven by factors such as economic downturn, a lack of affordable housing and family breakdowns. Despite being low in numbers, conversations discussing homelessness are often serious and overlap with other serious topics including money/benefits, issues with renting, being kicked out of home, volatile family situations and relationship breakdowns.

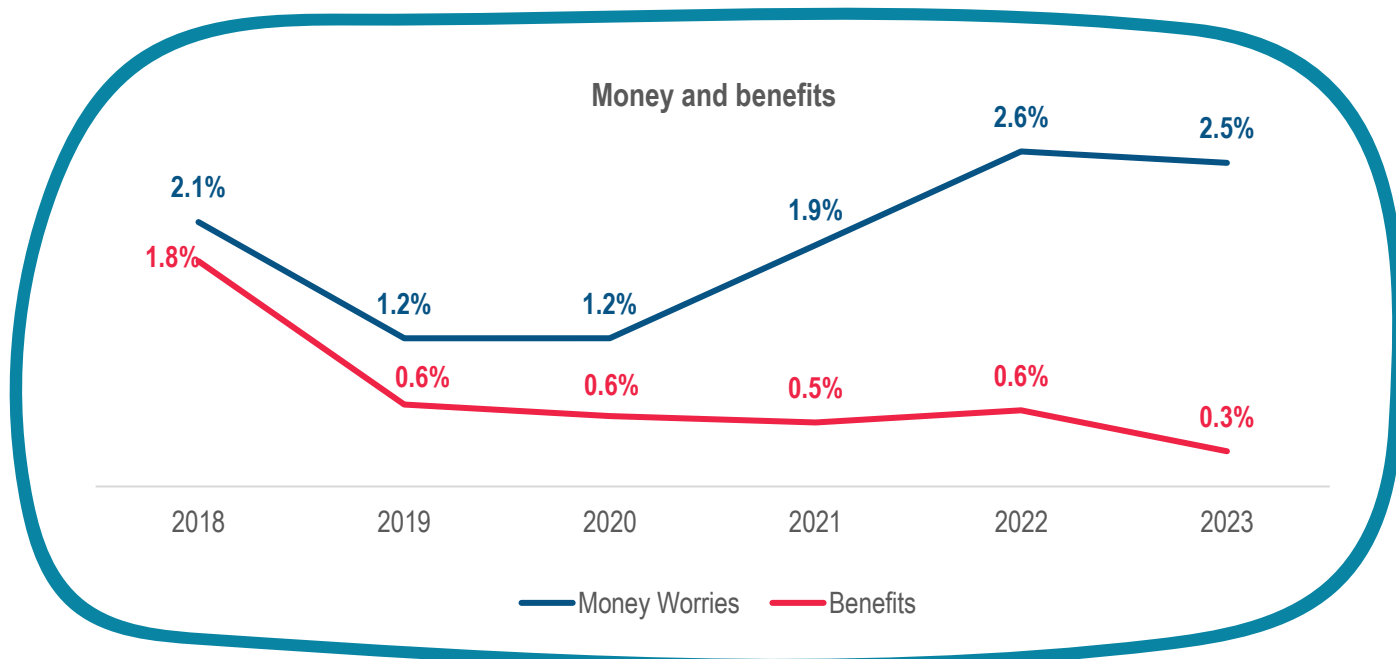


Young people seeking housing support for these issues are almost twice as likely to say they need help (21%), feel worried (11%) or feel vulnerable (5%) compared to the average across other topics (10%, 4% and 2%, respectively).



Money and Benefits

Demand for support with money worries has more than doubled on our helpline, rising from 1.2% in 2019 and 2020 to 2.5% in 2023, reflecting the ongoing impact of the cost of living crisis on young people. Despite this increase in financial concerns, discussions about benefits have remained relatively stable, hovering around 0.5% between 2019 and 2022, with a slight dip to 0.3% in 2023.



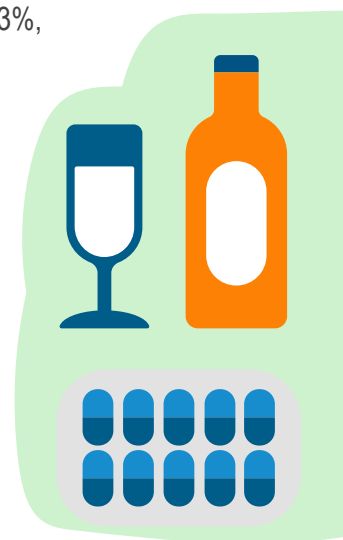
The impact of money worries is also reflected in the emotional states of those seeking support. Young people discussing money worries or benefits are much more likely to say they need help (17%) or feel worried (12%) and frustrated (8%) than young people discussing other topics (10%, 4% and 3%, respectively).

THEME 6: HEALTH, SEX, PREGNANCY AND ADDICTION

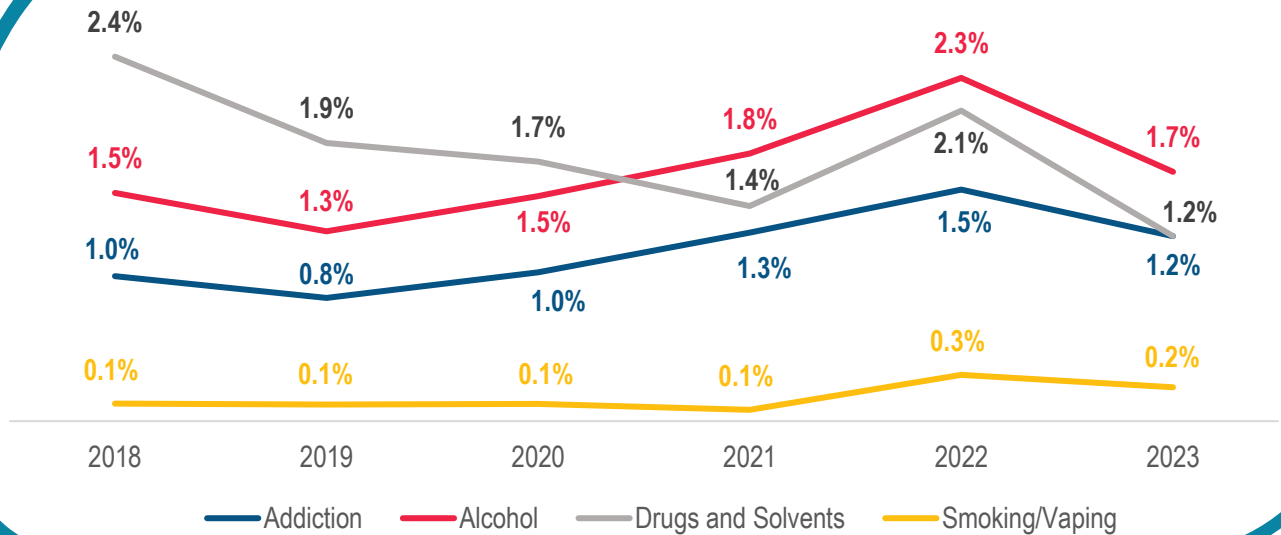
Smoking, Substances and Addiction

Support requests related to **drugs and solvents have generally decreased over the past six years**. In 2018, 2.4% of conversations addressed these issues, but the next three years saw a marked decline, likely due to decrease in social gatherings and interactions caused by coronavirus-related restrictions. After the pandemic, drug-related requests for support rose again to 2.1% in 2022, before experiencing a sharp drop to 1.2% in 2023.

Similarly, alcohol-related conversations peaked in 2022, with 2.3% of discussions focused on this topic, with addiction-related contacts mirroring similar pattern. The proportion of young people contacting the helpline to talk about smoking or vaping has remained relatively stable over the past few years, despite the research showing that the proportion of young people vaping has almost trebled to 44% in 2022 from 15% in 2021.¹⁵



Substances and addiction

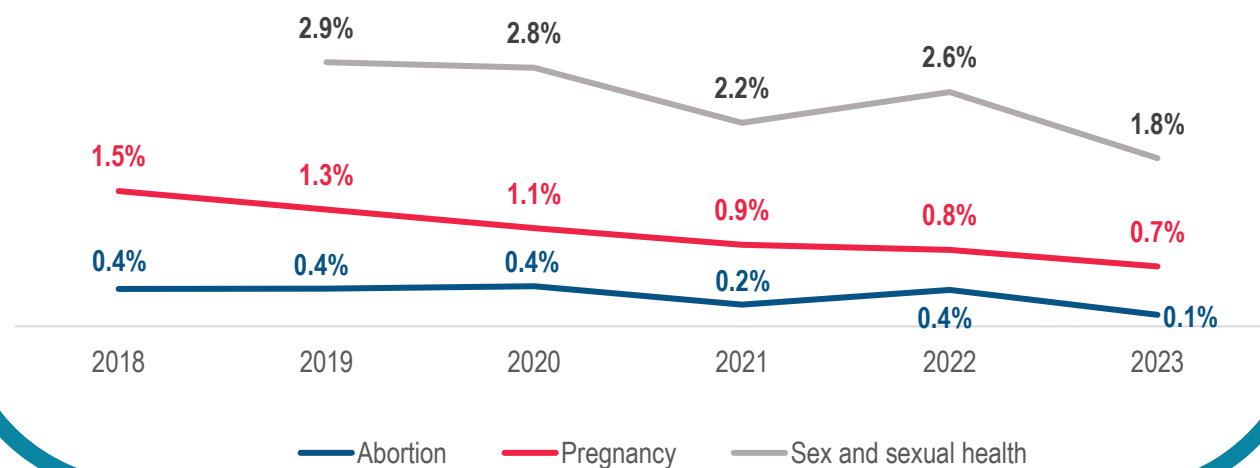


Young people seeking support for substance use and addiction often also seek help for mental health challenges, such as depression, thoughts of self-harm, suicidal ideation and previous attempts of both self-harm and suicide. Additionally, they frequently discuss issues related to relationships, friendships, family, and feelings of loneliness.

Sex, Pregnancy and Abortion

Conversations related to **sex, pregnancy, and abortion have seen a steady decline since 2018**. This trend could indicate overall changing attitudes, more liberal attitudes to sexual relationships and increased support for abortion¹⁶.

Sex, pregnancy and abortion

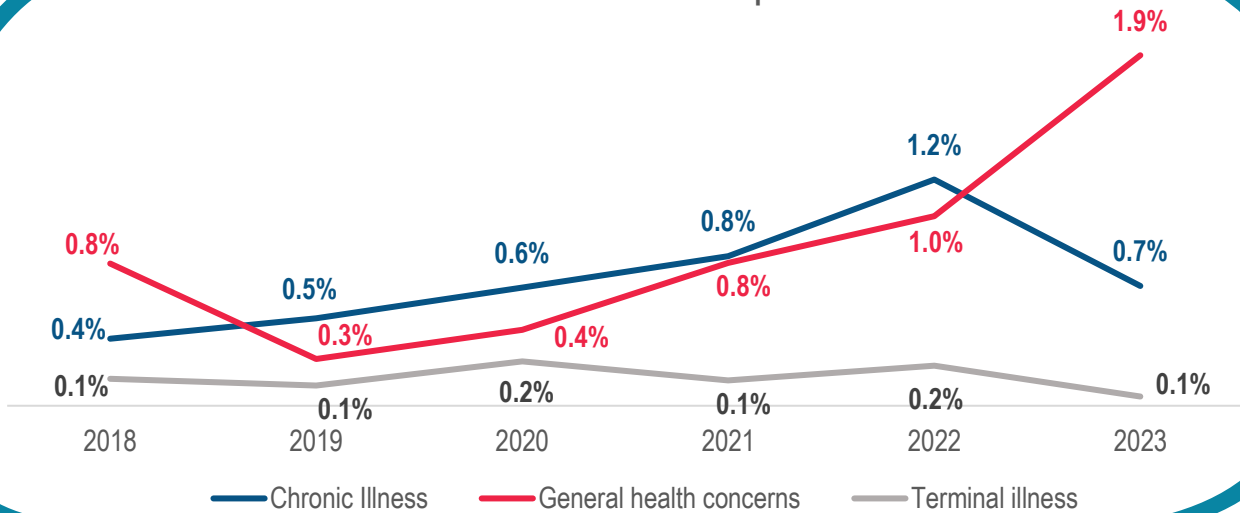


Surprisingly, when initially contacting the helpline, these young people are less likely to say they need help – just 8% compared to the average across other topics which was 13%. This suggests that young people seeking support for sex-related topics may not be looking for 'help' in the traditional sense but are potentially seeking emotional support. These topics are commonly discussed along with relationship issues more broadly.

General Health Related Topics

General health questions have risen on the helpline since 2020 and continue to increase; interestingly they peaked in 2023 at 2%, covering a range of different topics. Some common themes included general physical health issues, health anxiety, issues with sleep or insomnia and experiences of withdrawal or substance misuse. Contacts about chronic illness also rose steadily until mid-2022, when they began to decline. Issues related to terminal illness have remained relatively stable.

General health related topics

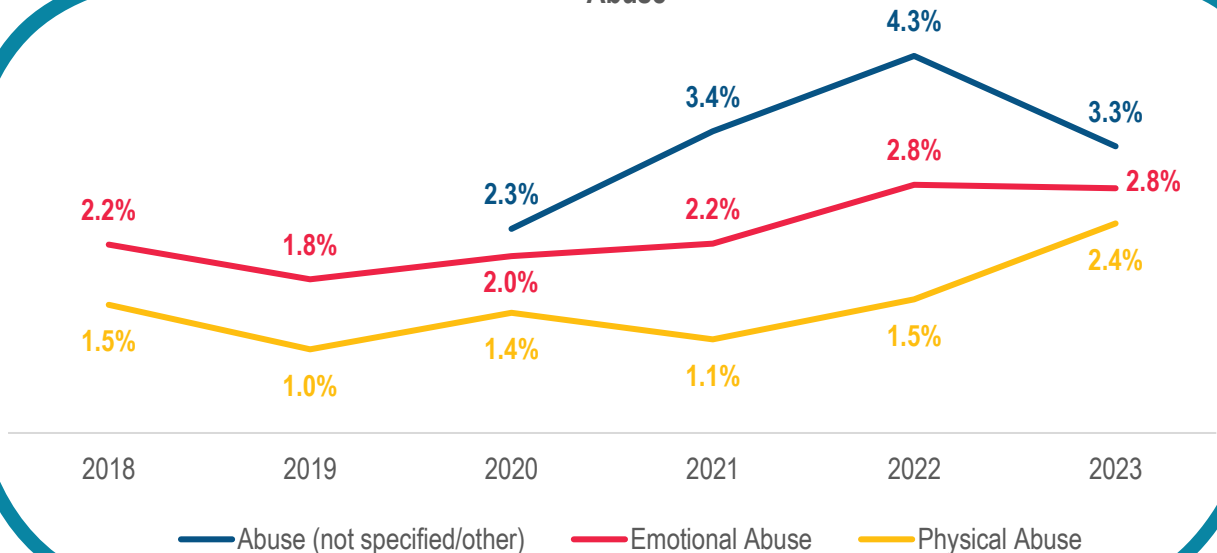


THEME 7: SAFETY

Abuse

The issue of abuse has gained more prominence over the past three years, reflecting a troubling trend among young people. The proportion of contacts discussing abuse in general had been growing from 2020 to 2022, peaking at 4.3% before falling back to levels seen the previous year (3.3%). However, the data reveals a more concerning pattern among young people discussing emotional and physical abuse which have both continued to rise, reaching their highest levels in 2023 at 2.8% and 2.4%, respectively.

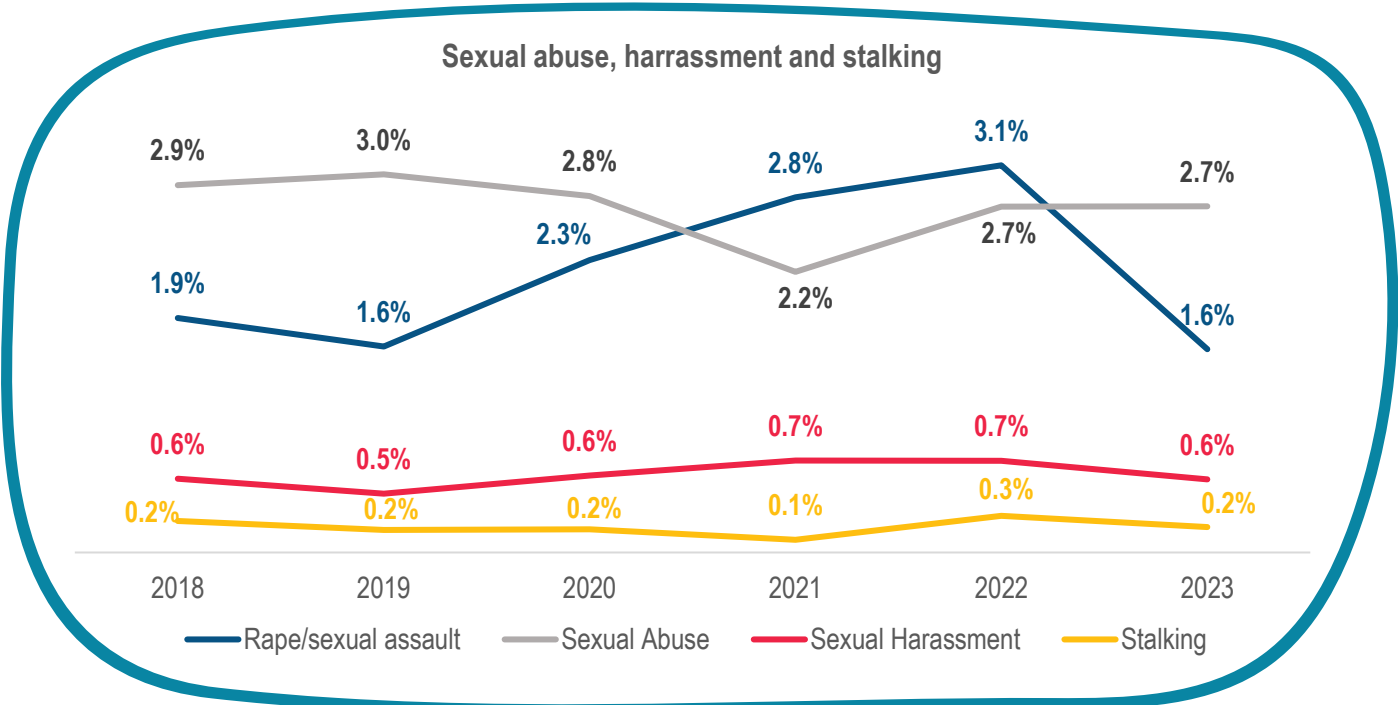
Abuse



Those reaching out for support in abuse-related situations are more likely to say they need help (17%) or feel alone (14%) – substantially higher than the 10% of individuals who report these feelings when seeking help for other issues.

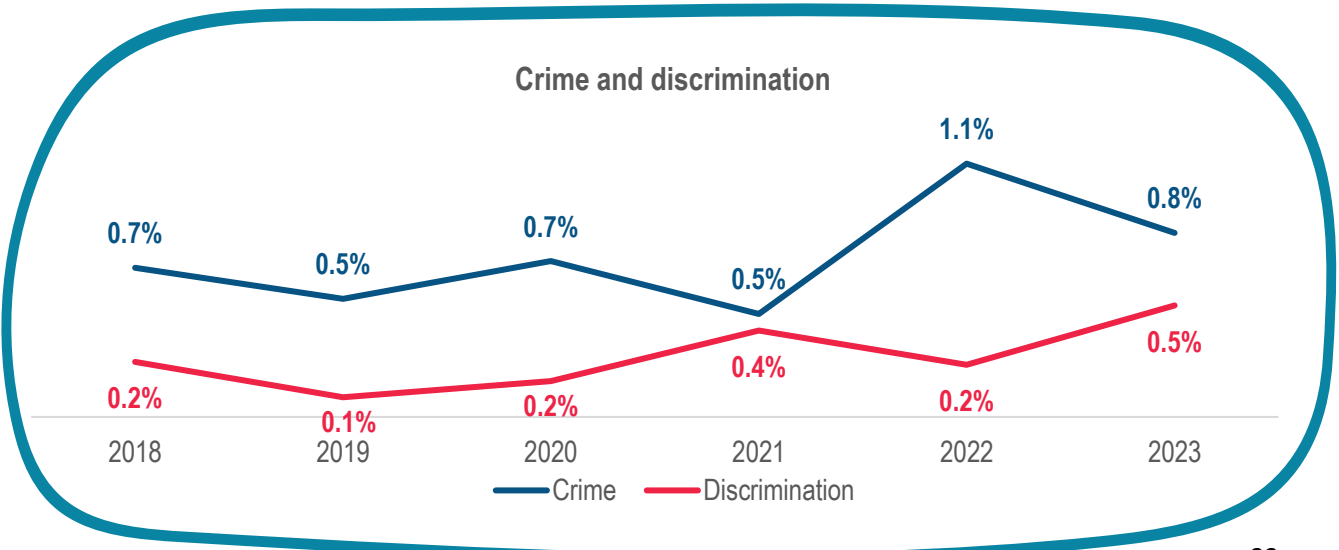
Rape, sexual assault and harassment

Support needs related to **rape or sexual assault increased significantly between 2020 and 2022**, peaking at 3.1% of contacts before halving to 1.6% in 2023. By contrast, discussions about sexual abuse have shown less variation, remaining relatively steady at around 2.5% to 3%, with only a slight dip in 2021. Additionally, issues like stalking and sexual harassment are consistently mentioned by a small minority of young people, accounting for less than 1% of conversations.



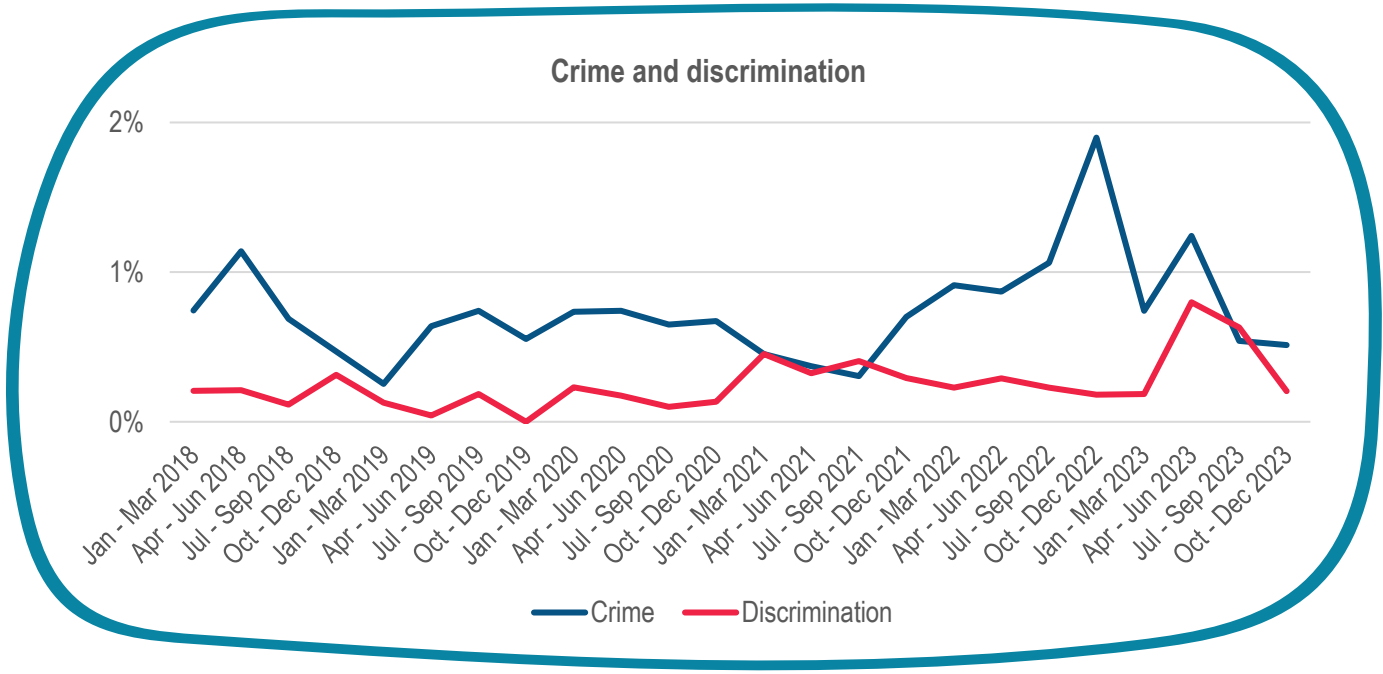
Crime and Discrimination

While conversations concerning **crime and discrimination are relatively rare on the helpline, both have seen spikes over the past two years**. Although only a small proportion of young people seek support for these issues, the recent peaks are notable – crime reached 1.1% in 2022, and discrimination rose to 0.5% of conversations in 2023.



Quarterly trends reveal even sharper spikes. The proportion of contacts discussing **crime surged to 1.9%** between October and December 2022. Crime was often discussed in combination with mental health concerns (such as anxiety and depression), relationship issues (especially family or bullying), rape/sexual assault, or suicidal ideation.

Similarly, **discrimination peaked at just under 1%** between April and September 2023, with these conversations most commonly also touching on racial discrimination or harassment, bullying, loneliness, gender or sexuality, stress, or anger.



When first contacting the helpline, young people discussing these topics are more than twice as likely to feel angry (11%) or scared (9%) compared to those looking for support for different topics (4% and 2%, respectively).

DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

The Mix gathers demographic data about our users to better understand patterns related to age, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, and disability status so that we can further improve our support. While we collect demographic data routinely, this data is not fully complete as it is not always relevant or appropriate to ask and some young people prefer not to disclose their demographic information¹⁷. The insights are based on the demographic data collected between 2018-2023.

TRENDS BY AGE GROUP

The Mix's helpline data reveals how young people's challenges shift with age.

	13 to 16 years old	17 to 21 years old	22 to 25 years old
1.	Depression/Low Mood (23.6%)	Depression/Low Mood (25.9%)	Depression/Low Mood (25.2%)
2.	Anxiety (20.7%)	Anxiety (23.4%)	Anxiety (22.3%)
3.	Thoughts of self-harm (19.6%)	Suicidal ideation (17.4%)	Suicidal ideation (20.2%)
4.	Family (18.7%)	Relationships/Friendships (16.6%)	Relationships/Friendships (17.3%)
5.	Suicidal ideation (17.7%)	Family (15.5%)	Family (13.1%)
6.	Relationships/Friendships (11.9%)	Thoughts of self-harm (13.2%)	Thoughts of suicide with intent (11.3%)
7.	School, university & education (9%)	Thoughts of suicide with intent (7.7%)	Thoughts of self-harm (10.8%)
8.	Stress (7.6%)	Stress (7.6%)	Counselling (7.2%)
9.	Bullying (5.9%)	Counselling (7.3%)	Loneliness/Isolation (6.7%)
10.	Loneliness/Isolation (5.7%)	Loneliness/Isolation (7.1%)	Stress (5.9%)

While the top ten topics for 17 to 21 year olds and 22 to 25 year olds are the same, there is a slight difference in their prevalence. By contrast, 13 to 16 year olds show some differences, with education and bullying being more prominent.

Depression is the most commonly mentioned topic across all age groups, appearing in around one-quarter of conversations. **Anxiety follows closely**, discussed in more than one in five conversations across all ages.

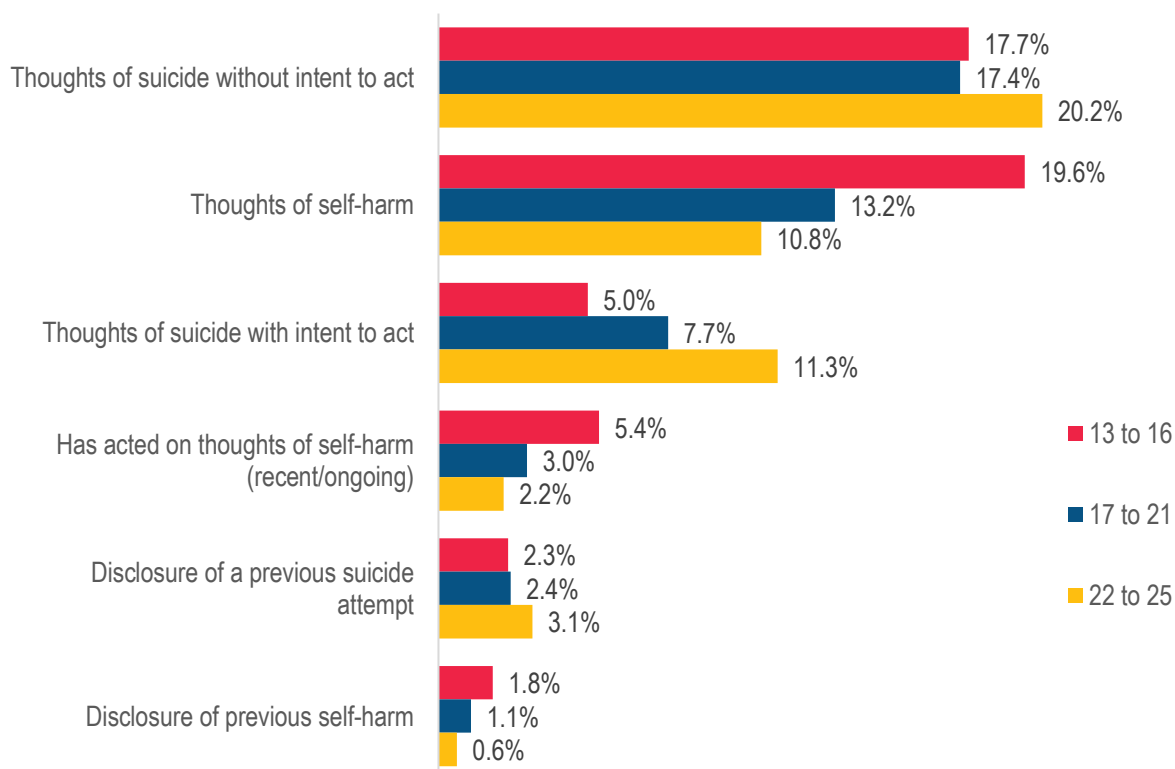
Relationship challenges, including family and friendships, are faced by all age groups, though their nature shifts with age. Family issues are most prominent among 13 to 16 year olds (18.7%) but become less frequently discussed as individuals get older, falling to 13.1% of conversations among 22 to 25 year olds. Conversely, discussions about relationships and friendships increase with age, from 11.9% among the youngest group to 17.3% among the oldest.

Age-related patterns in suicide and self-harm

As young people age, discussions about suicide increases across all related topics including suicidal ideation, thoughts of suicide with intent to act and disclosures of previous suicide attempts. Alarmingly, **one in ten young people in the oldest age group express suicidal intentions** (11.3%), more than double the rate among 13 to 16 year olds (5%). While suicidal ideation is again most frequently discussed by the oldest age group, the variation across age groups is relatively small, with these conversations comprising approximately one in five discussions in each age group.

Discussions about self-harm tend to decrease with age, demonstrating the opposite trend. Conversations about self-harm are twice as likely among 13 to 16 year olds compared to those aged 22 to 25. Specifically, thoughts of self-harm drop from one in five conversations among the youngest group (19.6%) to one in ten among the oldest (10.8%). Similarly, acts of self-harm halve from 5.4% to 2.2% between these age groups, and disclosures of previous self-harm drop from 1.8% to 0.6%.

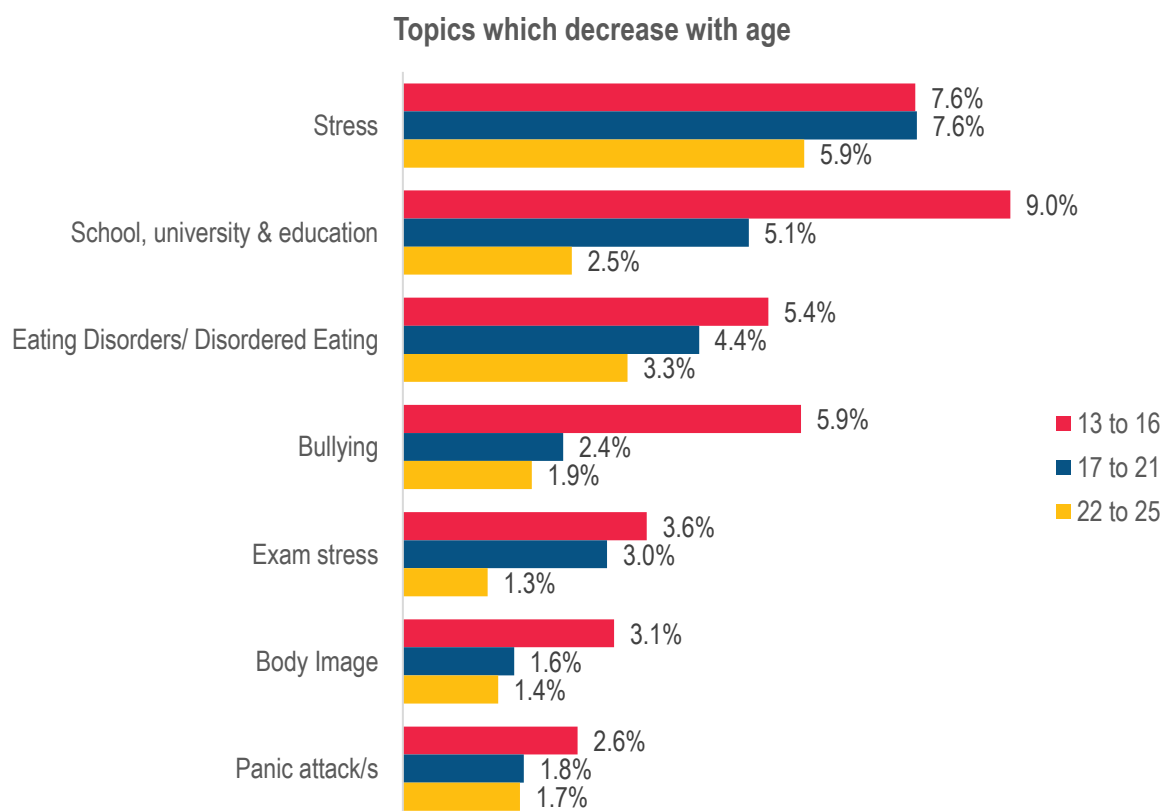
Suicide and self-harm by age



How do other topics differ by age?

A number of other topics are far **more likely to be discussed by younger teenagers:**

- Conversations about **education** decrease as young people transition from school to university, training or work. Among 13 to 16 year olds, nearly one in ten conversations focus on education (9%), almost halving to 5.1% among 17 to 21 year olds and further dropping to 2.5% among 22 to 25 year olds. Exam stress is most prevalent among 13 to 21 year olds (3-3.6%) but declines to 1.3% among the oldest group.
- Discussions about **eating disorders** decrease steadily with age, from 5.4% among 13 to 16 year olds to 3.3% among 22 to 25 year olds. **Body image** discussion show a sharper decline, halving from 3.1% among 13 to 16 year olds to 1.6% among 17 to 21 year olds, where they remain consistent into people's mid-twenties.
- More than one in twenty conversations with 13 to 16 year olds discuss **bullying** (5.9%), with this group being three times more likely to discuss this compared to older age groups. This aligns with studies showing that school-aged youth are more prone to bullying¹⁸.

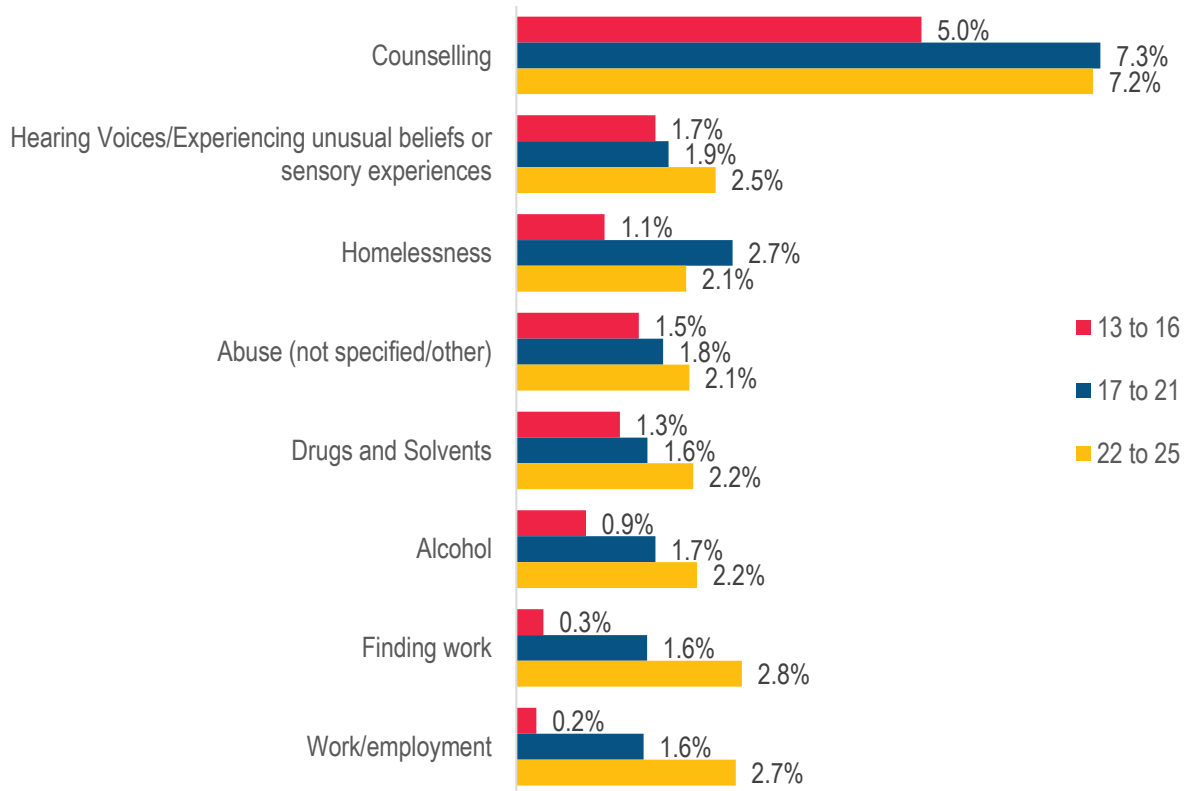


Certain issues become **more prominent as young people age:**

- Young people are more likely to discuss **counselling** as they age, rising from 5% of conversations among 13 to 16 year olds to over 7% among older groups.
- **Substance-related issues, including drugs, solvents, alcohol, and addiction**, show an upward trend with age. These patterns are consistent with broader societal observations that older individuals and men are more prone to substance-related challenges¹⁹.
- Conversations about **work and careers** grow significantly in the older age groups.

- **Financial concerns** become more prominent with age, quadrupling from 0.4% among 13 to 16 year olds to 1.9% among 22 to 25 year olds.
- Discussions about **homelessness** increase from 1.1% among 13 to 16 year olds to 2.7% among 17 to 21 year olds, before slightly declining to 2.1% in the oldest age group.
- Discussions about **PTSD and trauma disorders** become more frequent with older age, increasing from 0.3% among 13 to 16 year olds to 1.1% among 22 to 25 year olds.
- **Hearing voices** gradually increases with age, peaking at 2.5% among 22 to 25 year olds.

Topics which increase with age



TRENDS BY GENDER

The Mix's helpline data also reveals how the issues experienced by young people differ by gender.

	Women and girls	Men and boys	Other genders
1.	Depression/Low Mood (25.1%)	Depression/Low Mood (21.4%)	Thoughts of self-harm (25.9%)
2.	Anxiety (22.9%)	Anxiety (18.9%)	Suicidal ideation (25.5%)
3.	Suicidal ideation (18.9%)	Relationships/Friendships (18.8%)	Depression/Low Mood (24.9%)
4.	Family (15.2%)	Family (12.8%)	Family (19.1%)
5.	Thoughts of self-harm (15%)	Suicidal ideation (12.5%)	Anxiety (16.2%)
6.	Relationships/Friendships (14.6%)	Sex & sexual health (7.8%)	Relationships/Friendships (13.2%)
7.	Thoughts of suicide with intent (9.2%)	Loneliness/Isolation (6.4%)	Thoughts of suicide with intent (9.7%)
8.	Stress (7.2%)	Counselling (5.9%)	Acted on thoughts of self-harm (9.4%)
9.	Counselling (6.8%)	Stress (5.8%)	LGBTQIA+ (8.5%)
10.	Loneliness/Isolation (6.3%)	Thoughts of self-harm (5.2%)	Loneliness/Isolation (7.6%)

Depression and anxiety are commonly discussed among all genders, though the frequency varies.

- Among women and girls, these issues dominate the conversations, with 25.1% of discussions focused on depression and 22.9% on anxiety.
- Men and boys also frequently discuss depression (21.4%) and anxiety (18.9%), though at slightly lower rates.
- Among individuals from other marginalised genders, depression is mentioned almost as often as among females (24.9%), while anxiety is far less prevalent (16.2%).

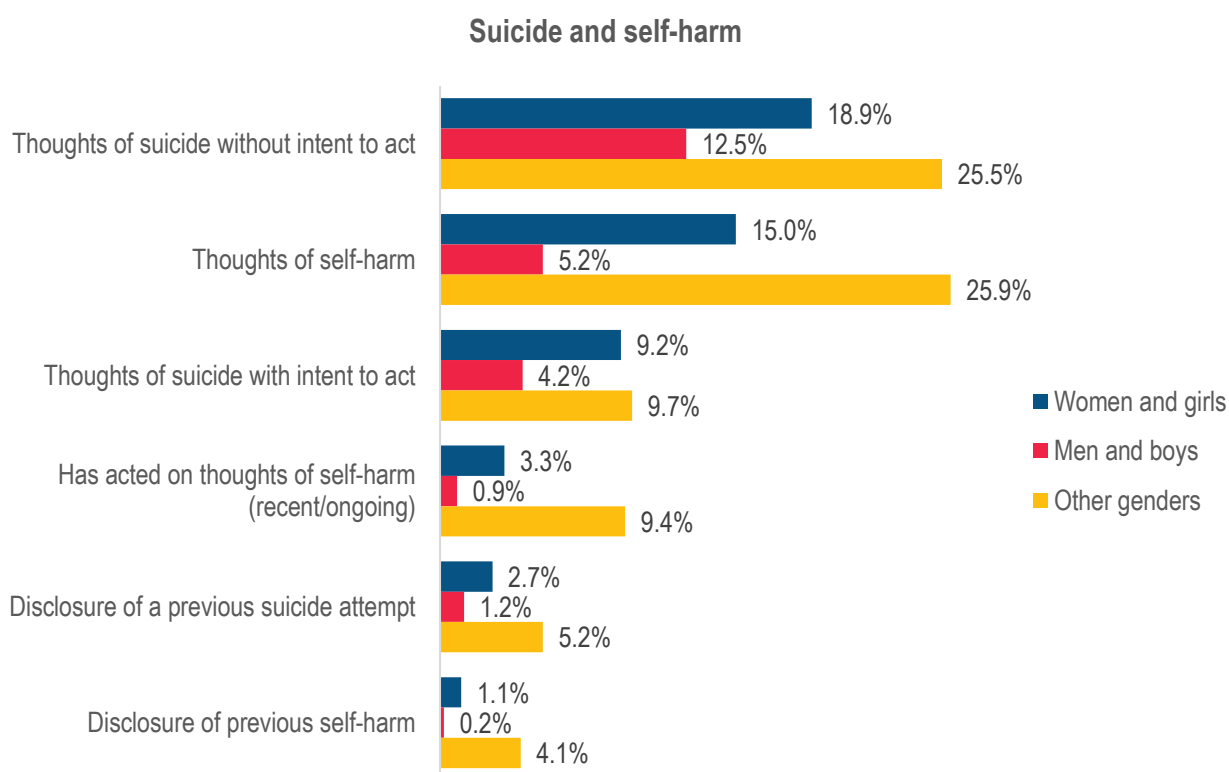
Relationships and family issues are also commonly discussed by all genders, but the emphasis differs slightly. Women and girls discuss family (15.2%) and relationships or friendships (14.6%) at similar levels, while **men and boys are more likely to discuss relationships/friendships (18.8%) over family**

(12.8%). Young people identifying with other gender show the opposite trend. Family concerns are more frequently discussed, making up one fifth of conversations (19.1%), while relationships and friendships are mentioned in 13.2% of conversations.

Loneliness/isolation are relatively consistent concerns across genders. Women/girls (6.3%) and men/boys (6.4%) discuss this topic at similar rates, while marginalised genders discuss it at higher rates (7.6%).

Gender-related patterns in suicide and self-harm

Discussions around suicide and self-harm related topics reveal significant differences across gender groups. Young people identifying with marginalised genders are far more likely to initiate both suicide and self-harm related discussions, followed by women and girls.



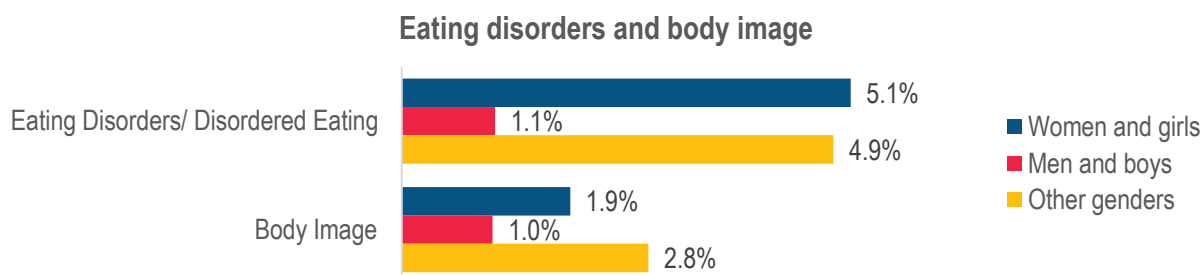
Thoughts of suicide without the intent to act are discussed in over a quarter of conversations with individuals from marginalised genders (25.5%). Women and girls also discuss these thoughts frequently, with suicidal ideation present in nearly one in five conversations (18.9%). By contrast, a somewhat smaller proportion (12.5%) of conversations with men and boys cover this topic.

Thoughts of suicide with the intent to act to act show a similar pattern. Again, both marginalised genders and women/girls are most likely to raise this issue (9.7% and 9.2% respectively). In comparison, this is raised in only 4.2% of conversations among men/boys. **Disclosures of previous suicide attempts** are also more common among marginalised genders (5.2%) compared to women/girls (2.7%) and men/boys (1.2%).

Over a quarter of conversations among marginalised genders involve **thoughts of self-harm** (25.9%), far exceeding the 15% among women and girls, which in turn is significantly higher than the 5.2% among men and boys. Furthermore, one in ten of conversations with marginalised genders discuss ongoing or recent **incidents of self-harm** (9.4%), compared to just 3.3% for women and girls and 0.9% for men and boys. **Disclosures of previous self-harm** are also more frequent among marginalised genders, with 4.1% of conversations discussing this, compared to 1.1% among women and girls and 0.2% among men and boys.

How do other topics differ by gender?

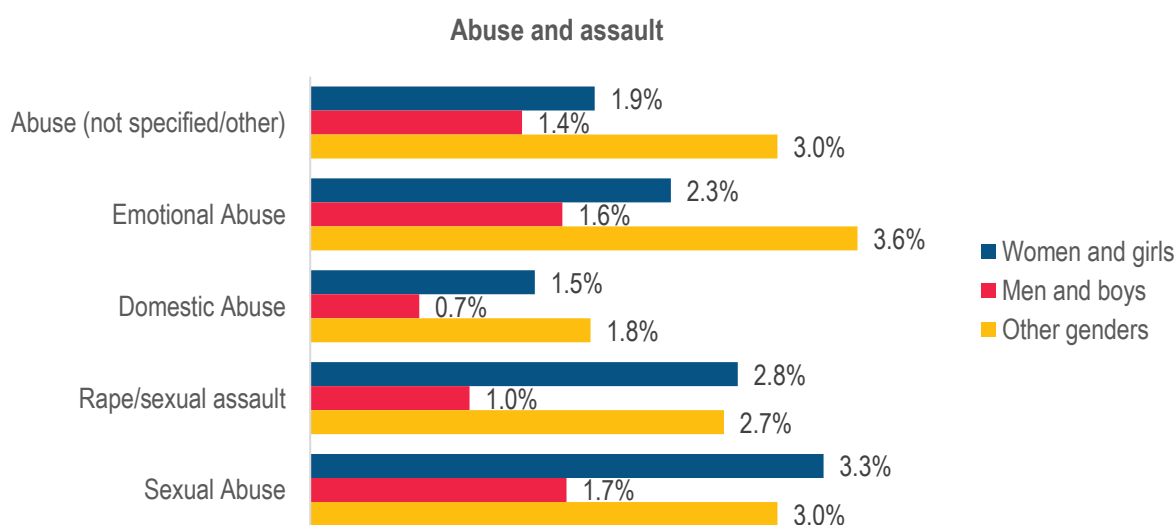
Concerns about **eating disorders and body image are more pronounced among women and girls and young people from other marginalised genders**, compared to men and boys.



These findings reflect broader societal trends, with The National Eating Disorders Association²⁰ reporting that 69-84% of women experience body dissatisfaction, while only 10-30% of men report similar concerns. Studies also suggest that the stigma surrounding masculinity may also discourage men from seeking help for body image issues, so instances may be underreported²¹.

There are clear differences between genders when looking at various **forms of abuse and assault, with women/girls and other marginalised genders most likely to raise these topics**. The higher incidence of abuse reported by women/girls and marginalised genders aligns with broader societal patterns, where these groups are face greater risks of abuse but may also feel more empowered to seek help²².

- Women/ girls (3.3%) and marginalised genders (3.0%) are more likely to discuss sexual abuse, with men and boys (1.7%) discussing it less frequently.
- Rape/sexual assault is similarly discussed more by women and girls (2.8%) and other genders (2.7%) compared to men and boys (1.0%).
- Domestic abuse follows the same pattern, with higher mentions among women and girls (1.5%) and marginalised genders (1.8%) than among men and boys (0.7%).
- Young people identifying with other genders are more likely to discuss emotional abuse (3.6%) than women and girls (2.3%) and men and boys (1.6%).
- Discussions about unspecified or other forms of abuse are also higher among marginalised genders (3.0%) compared to women and girls (1.9%) and men and boys (1.4%).

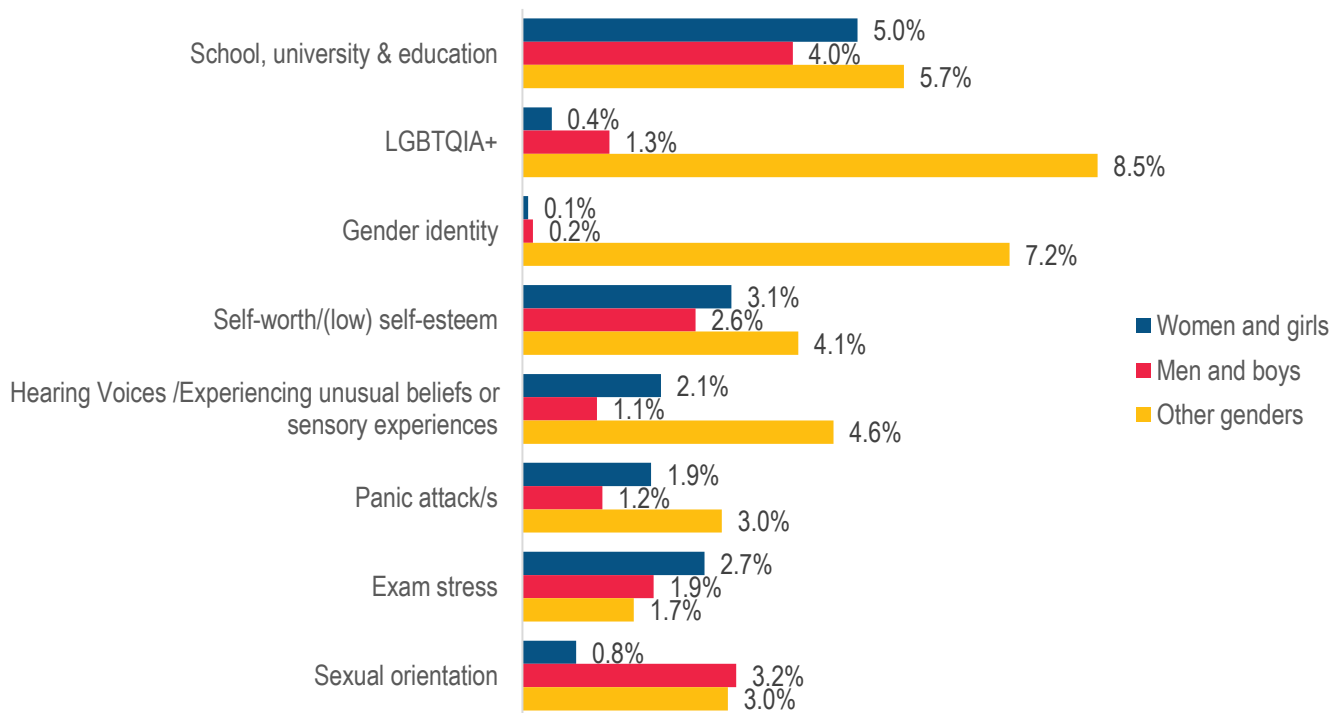


Other topics raised more by women/girls and marginalised genders include issues related to **self-worth and low self-esteem, education-related concerns** and **panic attacks and hearing voices**.

LGBTQIA+ topics are more often discussed by marginalised genders (8.5%) compared to just 1.3% of men and boys, and 0.4% of women and girls. Similarly, gender identity is a key issue for marginalised genders (7.2%), whereas it is mentioned far less by men and boys (0.2%) and women and girls (0.1%).

Sexual orientation shows a slightly different pattern. While it is frequently discussed by young people identifying with other genders (3.0%), it is raised at a similar level by men and boys (3.2%), while women and girls raise sexual orientation much less frequently (0.8%).

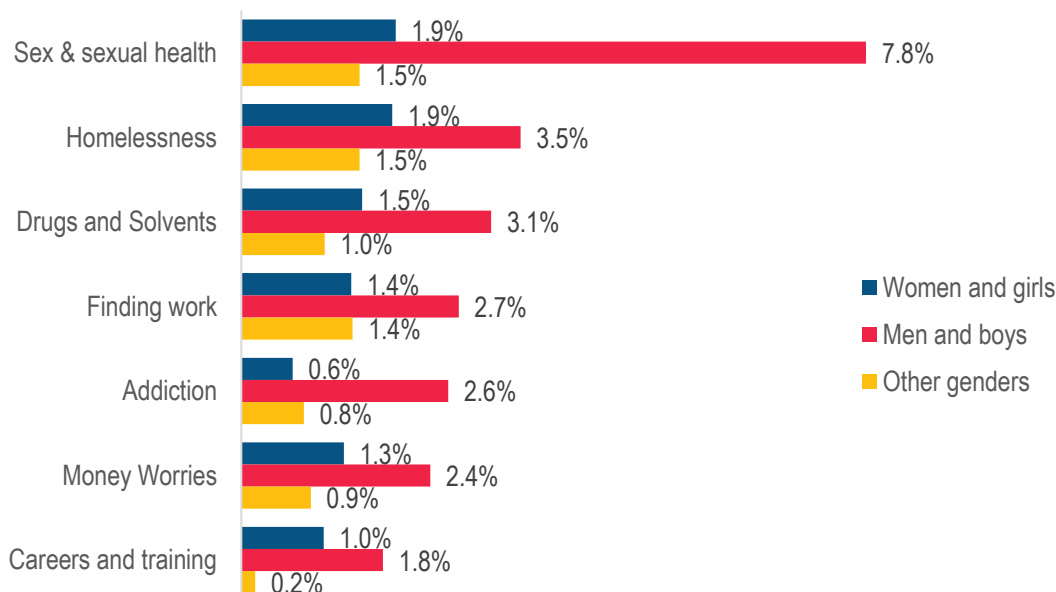
Topics discussed more by women/girls or marginalised genders



There were several topics **more likely to be discussed by men/boys:**

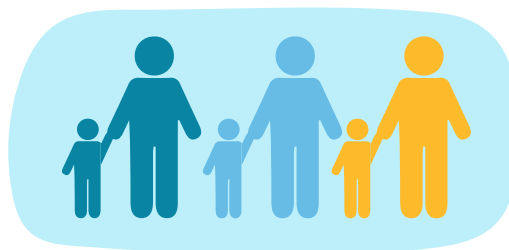
- Financial related issues, such as **money worries and homelessness**
- **Finding work and careers and training**
- Substance use, including **addiction and drugs and solvents**
- Discussions about **sex and sexual health** are also far more common among men and boys.

Topics discussed more by men and boys



TRENDS BY ETHNICITY

There are also notable difference in the top ten topics raised by different ethnic groups.



	White British	Ethnic Minority
1.	Depression/Low Mood (26.2%)	Depression/Low Mood (24.7%)
2.	Anxiety (23.1%)	Anxiety (20.8%)
3.	Suicidal ideation (20.1%)	Family (17.9%)
4.	Thoughts of self-harm (15.9%)	Relationships/Friendships (17.2%)
5.	Relationships/Friendships (15.1%)	Suicidal ideation (15.2%)
6.	Family (14.3%)	Thoughts of self-harm (9.7%)
7.	Thoughts of suicide with intent (9.9%)	Stress (9.0%)
8.	Stress (6.4%)	Loneliness/Isolation (8.1%)
9.	Loneliness/Isolation (6.3%)	School, university & education (6.6%)
10.	Counselling (5.8%)	Thoughts of suicide with intent (4.9%)

Depression and anxiety are again the most frequently discussed issues among both White British and ethnic minority young people. Among White British youth, depression is discussed in 26.2% of conversations and anxiety in 23.1%. Ethnic minority youth also frequently discuss these issues, with 24.7% mentioning depression and 20.8% discussing anxiety.

Relationships and family are key issues for both groups, though **young people from ethnic minority backgrounds discuss both of these topics more regularly**. Family is discussed in 17.9% of conversations among those from an ethnic minority background, compared to 14.3% among White British young people. Relationships and friendships are mentioned in 17.2% of conversations among ethnic minority young people, slightly higher than the 15.1% among their White British peers.

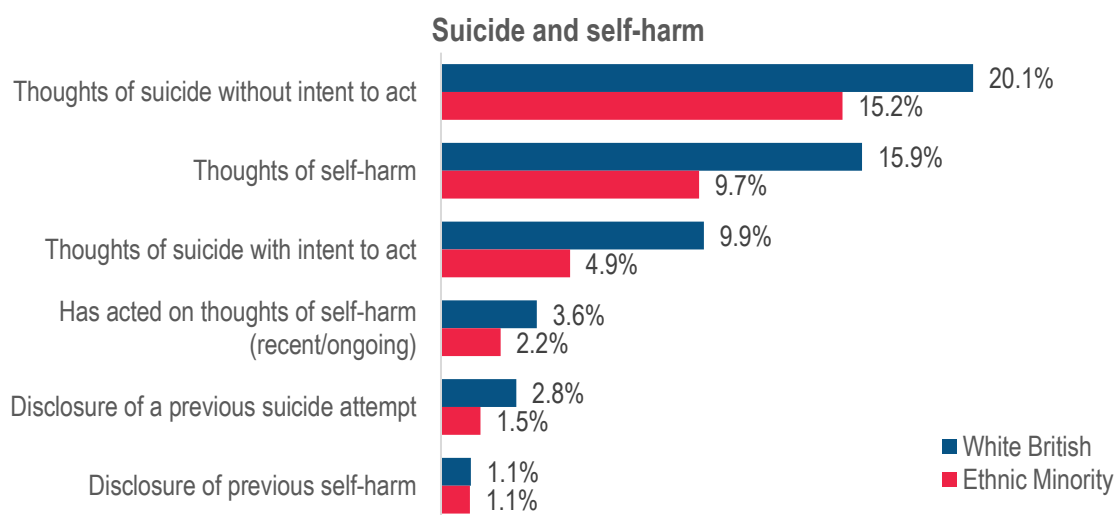
Loneliness is slightly more prevalent among young people from ethnic minorities (8.1%) compared to people from White British backgrounds (6.3%). **Stress** is also a more significant concern for ethnic minority young people (9%) compared to their White British peers (6.4%).

Ethnicity-related patterns in suicide and self-harm

Our data shows that White British young people are far more likely to seek support for suicide and self-harm related issues compared to young people from ethnic minority backgrounds.

Over one in five conversations among users from White British backgrounds involve discussions about **thoughts of suicide without intent to act** (20.1%), compared to 15.2% among ethnic minority young people. When it comes to **thoughts of suicide with intention to act**, White British young people again are more likely to seek support for this, with one in ten (9.9%) conversations discussing this issue. By contrast, ethnic minority young people are half as likely to discuss suicide with intent to act (4.9%). We see the same pattern again for discussions mentioning suicide attempts.

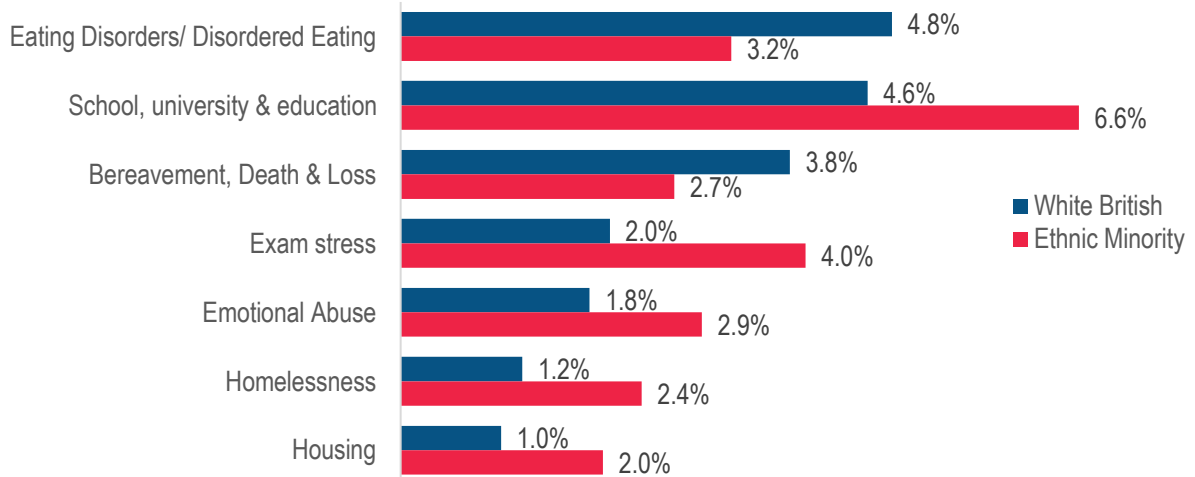
Thoughts of self-harm are discussed in 15.9% of conversations with White British young people, far higher than the 9.7% observed among ethnic minority groups. **Acting on thoughts of self-harm** is also more frequently discussed by White British individuals (3.6%) compared to ethnic minorities (2.2%). However, the one topic where no difference can be seen is **disclosures of previous self-harm**. For the topic the trend shifts, with identical rates across both groups at 1.1%.



How do other topics differ by ethnicity?

- **Eating disorders are more frequently discussed by White British young people**, with 4.8% of conversations addressing this issue compared to 3.2% among ethnic minority young people.
- **School, university, and education were discussed more in conversations with ethnic minorities** (6.6%), compared to 4.6% among White British individuals. Additionally, young people from ethnic minorities were twice as likely to discuss exam stress (4%) compared to their White British counterparts (2%).
- **White British young people are more likely to seek support for bereavement** (3.8%) compared to ethnic minority groups (2.7%).
- **Emotional abuse was more frequently discussed among ethnic minority young people** (2.9%) compared to White British young people (1.8%).
- **Homelessness and housing were twice as likely to be discussed in conversations with ethnic minority young people** (2.4% and 2% respectively) compared to those with White British young people (1.2% and 2% respectively).

Topics with the biggest % difference by ethnicity



TRENDS BY SEXUALITY

A number of differences can be seen between straight young people seeking support on The Mix's helpline and their LGBTQIA+ peers.

	Straight/heterosexual	LGBTQIA+
1.	Depression/Low Mood (27.9%)	Anxiety (23.1%)
2.	Anxiety (25.3%)	Depression/Low Mood (22.5%)
3.	Suicidal ideation (18.8%)	Thoughts of self-harm (17.9%)
4.	Thoughts of self-harm (15.4%)	Suicidal ideation (16.6%)
5.	Counselling (14.2%)	Relationships/Friendships (14.3%)
6.	Family (14.2%)	Family (13.8%)
7.	Relationships/Friendships (13.2%)	Counselling (12.8%)
8.	Thoughts of suicide with intent (9.4%)	Loneliness/Isolation (6.8%)
9.	Loneliness/Isolation (6.8%)	Stress (6.3%)
10.	Stress (6.6%)	Thoughts of suicide with intent (6.1%)

Depression and anxiety are the top concerns for both straight and LGBTQIA+ young people.

Straight young people most frequently discuss depression (27.9%) followed by anxiety (25.3%), while for LGBTQIA+ young people anxiety is their top concern (23.1%), followed by depression (22.5%).

Relationships and friendships are slightly more prominent among LGBTQIA+ young people (14.3%) compared to straight users (13.2%). **Family issues are important for both groups**, with 14.2% of straight young people and 13.8% of LGBTQIA+ users discussing this topic. A previous study by The Mix uncovered that 40% of young people who identified as gay or lesbian did not feel comfortable being themselves around their families²³.

Counselling is also a key topic for both groups, with 14.2% of heterosexual young people and 12.8% of LGBTQIA+ individuals mentioning it in their conversations.

Sexuality-related patterns in suicide and self-harm

While both straight and LGBTQIA+ young people face significant challenges related to suicide and self-harm, the data highlights some important differences.

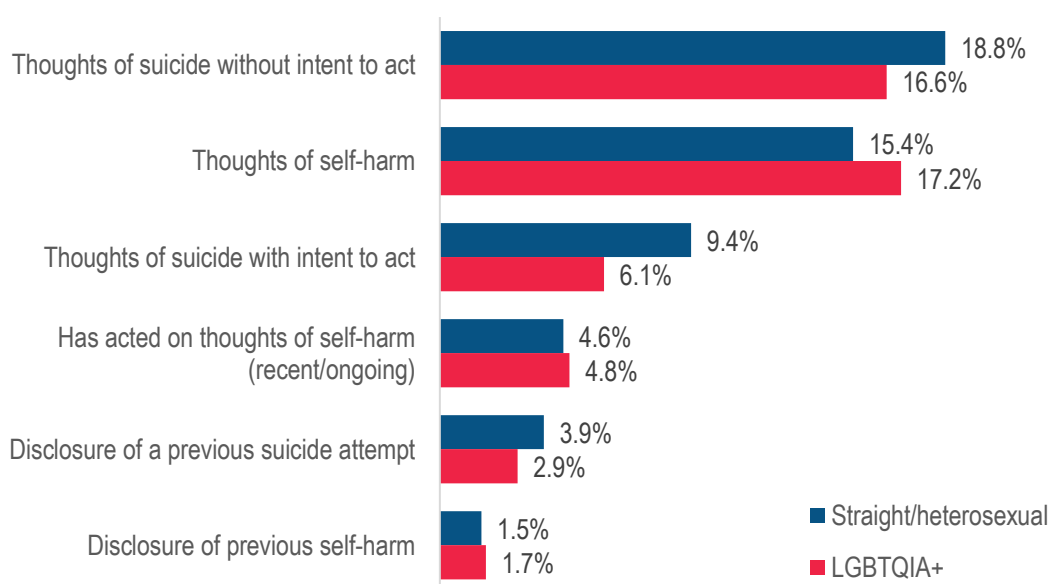
Straight youth are more likely to seek support for suicide-related issues:

- Thoughts of suicide without intent to act are more frequently discussed, with 18.8% of conversations mentioning this topic compared to 16.6% among LGBTQIA+ young people.
- Straight young people are also more likely to mention thoughts of suicide with intent to act (9.4%) compared to LGBTQIA+ young people (6.1%).
- Disclosures of previous suicide attempts are also more common among heterosexual young people (3.9%) compared to LGBTQIA+ users (2.9%).

By contrast, thoughts of self-harm are a more prominent among LGBTQIA+ young people:

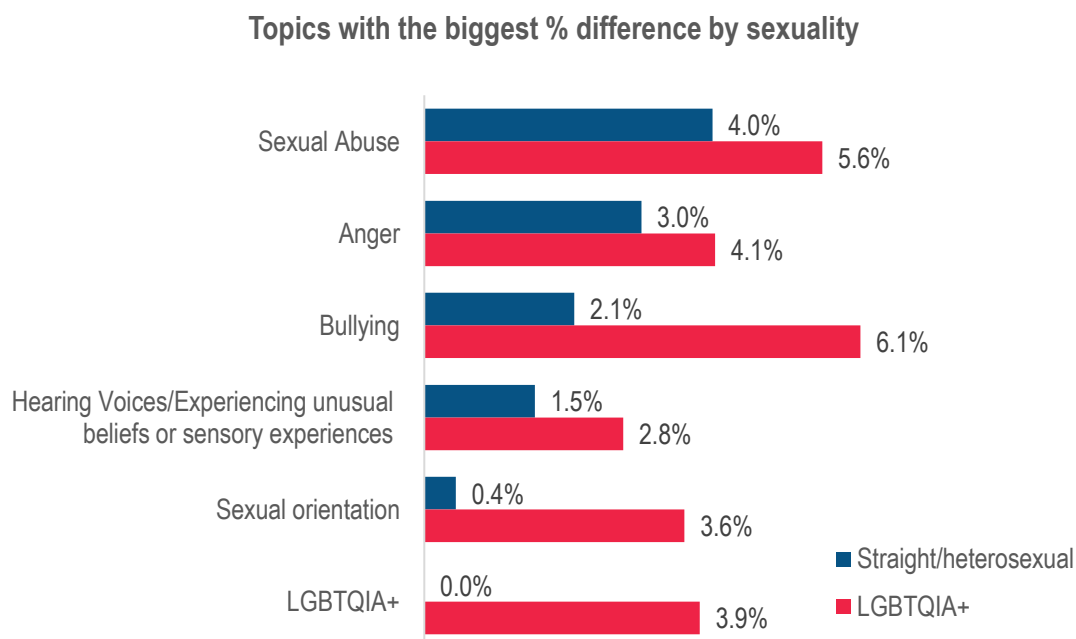
- Thoughts of self-harm are discussed in 17.2% of conversations with LGBTQIA+ young people, slightly higher than among straight young people (15.4%)
- Both are similarly likely to have acted on these thoughts or disclosed previous acts of self-harm

Suicide and self-harm



How do other topics differ by sexuality?

The chart below shows the topics with the most significant percentage differences in discussions between straight and LGBTQIA+ young people, highlighting how different issues are raised based on sexual orientation.



LGBTQIA+ young people were more likely to raise a number of issues:

- **Sexual abuse** is more frequently discussed by LGBTQIA+ individuals (5.6%) compared to straight young people (4.0%).
- **Anger** was also more frequently discussed by LGBTQIA+ young people (4.1%), compared to 3.0% among their straight peers.
- **Bullying** was three times more prevalent in conversations with LGBTQIA+ young people (6.1%) compared to straight young people (2.1%). Other studies have also found that LGBTQIA+ individuals are more likely to experience bullying. One study found that almost half of LGBTQIA+ pupils reported being bullied for their sexuality while at school²⁴.
- **Hearing voices or experiencing unusual beliefs/sensory experiences** was more frequently mentioned by LGBTQIA+ young people (2.8%) than their heterosexual peers (1.5%).
- 3.9% of LGBTQIA+ users discussed LGBTQIA+ topics and 3.6% discussed **sexual orientation** compared to just 0.4% and 0% among straight individuals, respectively.

TRENDS BY DISABILITY

Some distinct differences were also evident between young people with and without disability seeking support on The Mix's helpline.



	No disability stated	Self identified as having a disability
1.	Depression/Low Mood (26.4%)	Depression/Low Mood (24.4%)
2.	Anxiety (25.2%)	Suicidal ideation (22.2%)
3.	Suicidal ideation (17.4%)	Thoughts of self-harm (20.2%)
4.	Thoughts of self-harm (15.6%)	Anxiety (19.3%)
5.	Counselling (14.6%)	Counselling (12.8%)
6.	Relationships/Friendships (14%)	Family (12.3%)
7.	Family (13.7%)	Suicidal ideation (10.9%)
8.	Thoughts of suicide with intent (7.3%)	Relationships/Friendships (9.9%)
9.	Stress (6.4%)	Loneliness/Isolation (8.1%)
10.	Loneliness/Isolation (6.2%)	Thoughts of suicide with intent (4.9%)

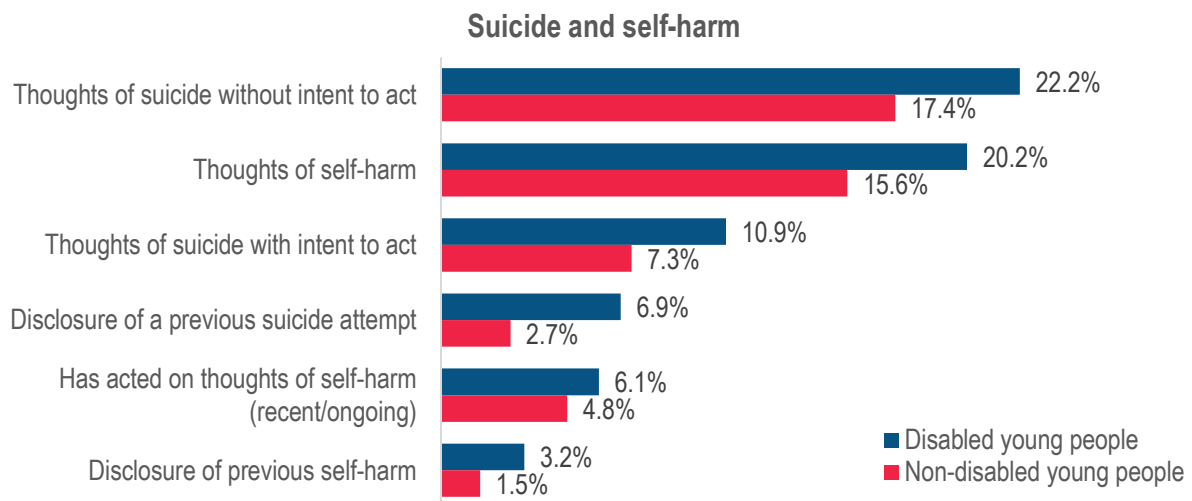
Depression and anxiety are the most frequently discussed issues for both young people with and without disability. Among non-disabled individuals, depression is discussed in 26.2% of conversations, while anxiety is mentioned in 23.1%. Disabled young people discuss these topics at slightly lower rates.

Loneliness is more common among disabled young people (8.1%) compared to non-disabled young people (6.2%).

Relationships and family are key issues for both groups, though slightly less prominent among disabled young people. Relationships and friendships were discussed in 9.9% of conversations with disabled individuals, compared to 14% among non-disabled individuals. Family concerns appeared in 12.3% of conversations with disabled young people, compared to 13.7% among non-disabled young people.

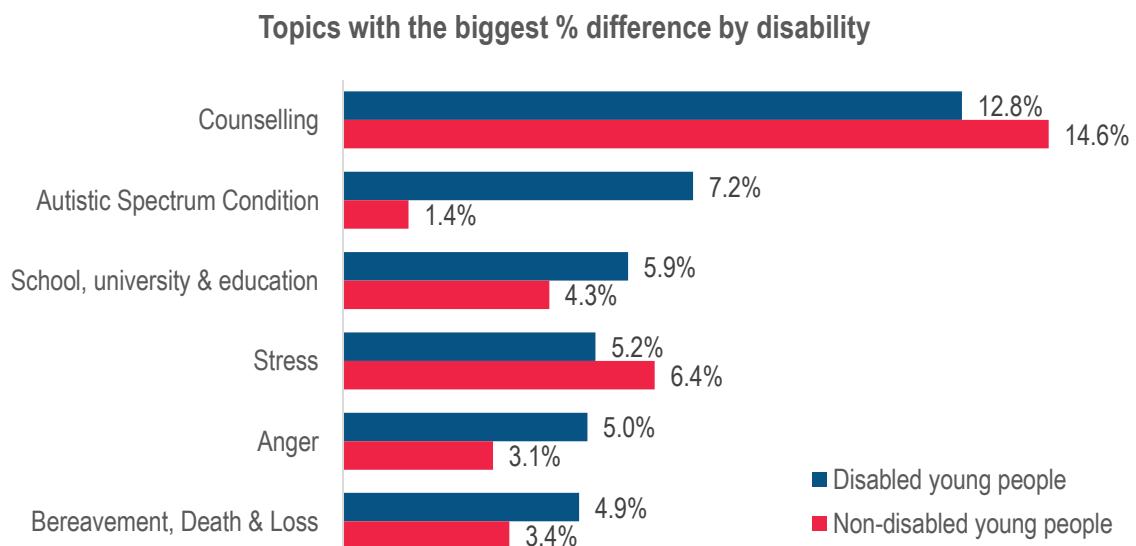
Disability-related patterns in suicide and self-harm

Disabled young people are more likely to discuss suicide and self-harm than their non-disabled peers. This pattern is clear across all of the related topics that we tracked on our helpline.



How do other topics differ by disability?

- **Autism** was discussed in 7.2% of conversations with disabled young people, compared to just 1.4% among non-disabled young people.
- **Anger** was almost twice as likely to be discussed by disabled young people (5%) compared to non-disabled young people (3.1%).
- **School, university or education** was discussed in 5.9% of conversations with disabled young people, compared to 4.3% among non-disabled young people.
- **Bereavement** was more frequently discussed by disabled young people (4.9%) compared to non-disabled young people (3.4%).
- By contrast, **counselling** was slightly more common topic among non-disabled young people (14.6%) compared to among disabled young people (12.8%).
- Issues related to **stress** were again more prevalent among non-disabled young people (6.4%) compared to disabled young people (5.2%).



APPENDICES

METHODOLOGY

Anonymous data on topics discussed during helpline conversations with young people from 2018-2023 was analysed. Topics discussed are recorded on The Mix's database by the agent supporting the young person. For the purposes of this paper, we define a young person as 25 years old or younger.

As this paper focuses on trends for young people only, data where the known user age was 26 years or above were excluded, alongside records where the topic of the conversation was not specified.

For the annual trends, each percentage is the proportion of all conversations where the given issue was discussed. Data is looking at cases rather than users, meaning that people who contacted The Mix more than once would appear in the data repeatedly. Typically, the repeat users tend to contact the helpline about a wide range of issues.

Volumes of cases in the analysis:

- 2018: 8,456 cases
- 2019: 8,998 cases
- 2020: 8,662 cases
- 2021: 7,948 cases
- 2022: 5,502 cases
- 2023: 3,973 cases

Demographic data: Demographic data looks at the difference between the proportion of the population who discussed the given topic versus those who did not discuss the topic. As The Mix repeatedly see a far higher number of women and girls using our helpline, this means where men and boys are more likely to discuss some topics than women or other genders this does not necessarily equate to a greater number than women and girls discussing the topic.

Demographic data is not always collected on the helpline, particularly sexuality and disability. Where base numbers are small, some topics within the trend chapters have been combined for more robust analysis.

Volumes of demographic data in the analysis:

- Age: 34,581 (79.4% complete)
- Gender: 35,215 (80.9% complete)
- Ethnicity: 29,389 (67.5% complete)
- Sexuality: 2,739 (6.3% complete)
- Disability: 2,662 (6.1%)

CONSIDERATIONS: There are several factors to consider when interpreting these insights:

- Young people seeking support are overrepresented in this data as it is only young people who seek support who access our helpline.
- Data on mental health conditions reflect how young people describe their feelings. While some users might have a diagnosed mental health disorder, others might be describing their feelings.
- Although most cases have topics/issues mentioned recorded on the database, there is a small proportion of cases where this is missing – these were excluded.

SIGNPOSTS

The Mix

For essential support for under 25s on any issue access counselling, a moderated community and online resources via themix.org.uk.

Shout

For crisis support, text "SHOUT" to 85258 to contact the Shout Crisis Text Line.

Papyrus UK

A charity for the prevention of young suicide (under 35) in the UK. Call the Papyrus Hopeline on 0800 068 4141. You can also text them on 077862 09697, email pat@papyrus-uk.org or go to papyrus-uk.org.

Switchboard LGBTQ+ Helpline

For specialist support for LGBTQ+ communities, call 0300 330 0630 (open 10am-10pm every day). Find out more information or webchat with someone via switchboard.lgbt.

Childline

If you're under 19, you can call 0800 1111 to talk to Childline (the number will not appear on your phone bill). Go to childline.org.uk for webchat service or message board.

Black Minds Matter

A service for Black communities, offering signposting to support and advice for mental health. Go to blackmindsmatteruk.com.

Samaritans

Call 116 123 to talk to Samaritans, or email: jo@samaritans.org for a reply within 24 hours. Samaritans offer a listening ear on any issue. Or access samaritans.org for more information.

Amy Winehouse Foundation

Access information and support for drug and alcohol-related issues via amywinehousefoundation.org.

Drinkline

Get in touch for support on alcohol-related issues. The number for England is 0300 123 1110 and 0808 808 2234 for Wales. Access via alcoholchange.org.uk.

Relate

For support with relationships you can access relationship counselling for young people, individuals and families over the phone, by email, webchat and face-to-face. There is a charge for some services. Visit relate.org.uk for more information.

Young Minds Parents Helpline

If you're supporting a young person, call 0808 802 5544 (9.30am to 4pm on weekdays). Or visit youngminds.org.uk or send them an email via the website.

Winston's Wish

Call the free helpline on 08088 020 021 (Monday to Friday 8am - 8pm) for expert advice and guidance on bereavement support for a grieving child or young person. Or visit winstonswish.org.uk and send them a message from there.

FOOTNOTES AND SOURCES

¹ In some instances where young people did not provide this information, volunteers did retrospectively assess this and added the ranking on the database.

² Borkowska, M., and Laurence, J. (2020), 'Coming together or coming apart? Changes in social cohesion during the Covid-19 pandemic in England', *European Societies*, 23, pp. 1–19. This study found that people from younger age groups, people living in high levels of deprivation, and people from certain ethnic minority backgrounds (Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Black and 'Other') experienced larger declines in feelings of social unity and cohesion during the pandemic which they felt may be in part the result of these groups being more likely to be economically and socially vulnerable.

³ When accessing the helpline, users were asked to select how they are feeling/what emotions they are experiencing.

⁴ [Office for National Statistics \(2022\) Avoidable mortality in Great Britain: 2020](#)

⁵ [Refuge \(2020\) Refuge reports further increase in demand for its National Domestic Abuse Helpline services during lockdown.](#)

⁶ [UK Research and Innovation \(2022\) How the COVID-19 lockdowns affected the domestic abuse crisis](#)

⁷ [Women's Aid \(2023\) The Domestic Abuse Report 2023: The Annual Audit](#)

⁸ [CompariTech \(2024\) Cyberbullying data, facts and statistics for 2018 – 2024](#)

⁹ [Nuffield Trust \(2024\) The rapidly growing waiting lists for autism and ADHD assessments](#) . In December 2023 almost four in five patients with a suspected autism who had been waiting over 13 weeks had not yet had their first appointment, compared to just 44% in December 2019.

¹⁰ [Children's Commissioner for England \(2023\) Young people with eating disorders on the rise in England](#)

¹¹ [National Centre for Social Research \(2019\) British Social Attitudes 36 Britain's shifting identities and attitudes](#)

¹² [Office for National Statistics \(2023\) Employment in the UK: February 2023](#)

¹³ [ONS \(2023\) Labour market overview, UK: April 2023](#)

¹⁴ [Centrepont \(2023\) Stats and Facts: Gathering data to understand young people homelessness](#)

¹⁵ [The Mix \(2022\): A post-pandemic spike in substance use amongst young people & barriers to accessing support](#)

¹⁶ [National Centre for Social Research \(2023\) Britain's attitudes towards moral issues have become much more liberal](#)

¹⁷ Full breakdown on completeness can be seen in the appendix.

¹⁸ [Ditch the Label \(2017\), Annual Bullying Survey](#)

¹⁹ [ONS \(2020\) Report on Alcohol-Specific Deaths in the UK](#)
[ONS \(2020\) Report on Drug Misuse Deaths in England and Wales](#)

²⁰ [National Eating Disorders \(2023\) Association Body image and Eating Disorders](#)

²¹ [Healthline: Eating Disorders in Men](#)

²² [SafeLives \(2022\) Spotlight on young people experiencing domestic abuse](#)

²³ [The Mix: Young People and Relationships \(2022\)](#)

²⁴ [Stonewall \(2017\) School Report](#)

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Any questions?

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