

WHY FAMILY MATTERS

A comprehensive analysis of the
consequences of family breakdown

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Why Family Matters: A Comprehensive Analysis
of the Consequences of Family Breakdown
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About the Centre for Social Justice

Established in 2004, the Centre for Social Justice (CSJ) is an independent think tank that studies the root causes of Britain's social problems and seeks to address these through innovative policy recommendations to government. The CSJ has changed the landscape of our political conversation by putting social justice at the heart of British politics. This has led to some of the biggest welfare reforms in a generation. The majority of the CSJ's work is organised around five 'pathways to poverty', first identified in our ground-breaking 2007 report, Breakthrough Britain. These are: family breakdown; educational failure; economic dependency and worklessness; addiction to drugs and alcohol; and severe personal debt. Our research is informed by experts and, just as importantly, our CSJ Alliance – a unique group of charities, social enterprises and other grass-roots organisations that work with individuals facing some of the most challenging and complex social problems. Their work is fundamental to our understanding of the issues faced by our poorest communities. The CSJ will continue to make the case to government and those developing policy for an ambitious approach to tackling the root causes of poverty.

The CSJ Family Policy Unit

The CSJ was one of the first think tanks to set out the extent of family breakdown and its impact on poverty. When we first published Breakdown Britain in 2006 we discovered a country where family breakdown was widespread in our poorest areas. We have continued to look carefully at how family breakdown entrenches poverty and limits the life chances of children growing up in our poorest communities. The Family Policy Unit has been established within the CSJ to make the case for a more ambitious approach to strengthening families as part of a wider government poverty strategy.

About ComRes

ComRes is an established and trusted provider of opinion research. ComRes was established in 2003 and built its reputation on political opinion research, including as a founding member of the British Polling Council. ComRes has since expanded its offer to include expertise in wider opinion research for central government, NGOs, charities, and blue-chip corporates. All of our researchers are members of the Market Research Society (MRS), and we comply with MRS research and ethics standards.

This programme of research was designed and executed using both descriptive and logistic regression analysis to provide a statistically-robust view of the impact of family breakdown on the likelihood of experiencing a number of social issues.



Introduction

In modern Britain, politicians have become very nervous about talking about family breakdown. They are almost immediately accused of being ideological for even having a view as to whether it is a bad thing.

Yet as a result of this, the effect of family breakdown has often gone under reported. However, beyond this sterile debate, the stark fact is that the break-up of family relationships is one of the quickest routes into poverty. Government figures have long shown that children in families that break apart are more than twice as likely to experience poverty as those whose families stay together.

This paper makes the case, in crystal clear terms, as to why this happens. Among the many problems it causes, an experience of family breakdown as a child doubles your chances of failing at school, doubles your chances of getting into trouble with the police, and more than doubles your chances of becoming homeless. In fact, in the case of homelessness, experience of family breakdown is a greater risk factor than mental health problems or even drug addiction.

This is why, for 15 years, the CSJ has presented evidence that family breakdown must never be dismissed as a question of ideology. It is a question of social justice. A child's future should not be determined by their family circumstance, but this is all too often the case.

What is worse, family breakdown is most prevalent, and the effects most damaging, among our poorest and most vulnerable communities. A teenager growing up in the poorest 20% of households is two thirds more likely to experience family breakdown than a teenager in the top 20% of households.

It is a social ill that entrenches poverty and locks individuals into cycles of instability that are near impossible to escape. If this is not motivation enough to act, family breakdown is conservatively estimated to cost the government £51 billion a year, undoing the good work and hard-won gains that are being made in so many other areas of social policy.

Family breakdown is not simply an inevitable consequence of modern society either. In other OECD countries the picture is much better – on average, 84% of children under 15 are still living with both their parents, while in Finland over 95% of children under 15 are still living with both their parents. In the UK, only around two thirds of all our children are in intact families by the age of 15 – meaning Britain is fast becoming a world leader in family breakdown. If figures showed such causal links on this scale in any other area of government, there would be a clamour for something to be done.'

It is for this reason that leadership is required at the very highest level of government to ensure that our best intentions for solving poverty are not undermined by our inability to get to grips with the scourge of family breakdown.

**Rt Hon Iain Duncan Smith MP,
Chairman, the Centre for Social Justice**

Executive summary

This survey challenges policy makers to consider the role of the family in its response to some of the most serious social problems facing Britain today. We present some of the most comprehensive evidence yet to suggest that our failure to address family breakdown is having a substantial impact on the lived experience of poverty in individuals' lives.

We need to address our reluctance to talk about the role of family in policy making and government spending if we are to address 'the root causes of poverty'. This report should help reluctant politicians to talk openly about the importance of family by demonstrating the consequences of family breakdown.

The CSJ commissioned ComRes, a leading market research agency, to conduct a logistic regression to demonstrate the impact that experiencing family breakdown in childhood has on the likelihood of experiencing a number of social issues. The model is a robust design in which the influence of demographic attributes as well as experience of the other social issues are controlled for, arriving at a true reflection of the impact that family breakdown has on the lives of individuals. They reveal the significant relationship between family breakdown and some of the most complex and challenging social issues facing Britain today.

Those who experience family breakdown¹ when aged 18 or younger, are:

- Over twice as likely (2.3 times) to experience **homelessness**
- Twice as likely (2.0 times) to be in **trouble with the police** or **spend time in prison**
- Almost twice as likely (1.9 times) to experience **educational underachievement**
- Almost twice as likely (1.9 times) to experience **not being with the other parent of their child/ren**²
- Approaching twice as likely (1.8 times) to experience **alcoholism**
- Approaching twice as likely (1.7 times) to experience **teen pregnancy**
- Approaching twice as likely (1.7 times) to experience **mental health issues**
- More likely (1.6 times) to experience **debt**
- More likely (1.4 times) to experience **being on benefits**

¹ Family breakdown is self-defined for this analysis, based on a respondent reporting that they have experienced family breakdown themselves (as opposed to applying a definition to the data later).

² This is based on a net of all those who say that they were separated from their child/ren's mother/father when one or more of their children were less than 18, they are a single parent, their current partner is not the biological parent of all/any of their children or their children have different biological fathers/mothers.

The attitudes of Westminster vs the attitudes of the British public

Despite the devastating impact of family breakdown, there is silence from politicians, policy makers and commentators on matters concerning the family. A recent polling exercise carried out by ComRes revealed that one fifth (21%) of MPs disagreed with the notion that ‘the life chances of children with married parents are significantly better than those of children whose parents are not married’.³ This is despite the fact that two thirds (67%) of British adults agree with the notion that ‘marriage tends to be the most stable environment in which to raise children’.

The political paralysis surrounding matters concerning the family often stems from a fear of sounding judgemental or moralising, while others may be concerned that interfering in something so personal to individuals is not the role of government. For many, family policy may simply be dismissed as a matter of ideology, lacking evidential basis.

However, the results from the survey make it clear that the reticence in Westminster to engage in matters concerning the family is not shared across the country; indeed, it is quite the opposite. Attitudinal polling in this report reveals that the British public are aware of both the prevalence and impact of family breakdown. They also believe that the government has an active role to play in supporting families to be stable environments where both adults and children can flourish.

- Five in six (83%) British adults say that stronger families are **important** in addressing Britain’s social problems.
- Three in five (60%) single parents say it is **important** for children to grow up with both parents.
- Over half (56%) of British adults who say that one or more of their children were born out of marriage **agree** that marriage is the most stable environment in which to raise children.
- Two thirds (67%) of those who are divorced **agree** that family breakdown is a serious problem in Britain today and more should be done to prevent families from breaking up.
- Nine in ten (89%) British adults who are in their second marriage or more **agree** that the government is right to say the stability of a family matters for children.
- Nearly two thirds (63%) of British adults who are in their second marriage or more **agree** it is too easy to get a divorce today.

Matters concerning the family are personal and indeed sensitive, but it is for this reason that the effects are often so severe. It is not enough for family breakdown and its effects to simply be a matter for statutory agencies and social services. The evidence is clear: family breakdown sits as the backdrop to so many broken lives, entrenching individuals in intergenerational cycles of poverty and instability. It can no longer be disregarded as mere ideology. Family breakdown is a root cause of poverty and a social injustice that demands the attention and actions of those who walk the corridors of power.

³ ComRes interviewed 150 MPs online or by self-completion paper survey between 4th November and 13th December 2018. Data were weighted by party and region to be representative of the House of Commons.

Poverty as an indicator of family breakdown

- Two in five (42%) British adults who say they can pay bills and save state that they are married (1st marriage), while only one quarter (24%) of adults who say they struggle to pay bills and are often in arrears are married (1st marriage).
- Two in five (42%) adults who struggle to pay bills and often end up in arrears have experienced family breakdown themselves, significantly more than those who can pay their bills and save (19%).
- Significantly more adults in social grade DE, more than one quarter (27%), say they have experienced family breakdown themselves; this figure is higher than for all other social grades (AB (20%), C1 (22%) and C2 (20%)).
- More than half (52%) of British adults who say they can pay bills and save say they regularly saw their father during their childhood; a similar proportion of those who can pay bills but have nothing left over (49%), and those who can pay bills but have to go without certain things (49%). This is significantly higher than for those who say they struggle to pay bills and often end up in arrears (38%).
- More than half (54%) of British adults who say they can pay bills and save say they regularly saw their mother during their childhood; a similar proportion of those who can pay bills but have nothing left over (52%), and those who can pay bills but have to go without certain things (54%). This is significantly higher than those who say they struggle to pay bills and often end up in arrears (41%).
- Half (50%) of British adults who were brought up by one biological parent report having any experience of serious personal debt, while one third (33%) of British adults who were brought up by both biological parents say the same.
- Half (50%) of British adults whose parents were never married report having any experience of serious personal debt, while one third (35%) of British adults whose parents were married report the same.
- Over half (52%) of British adults in social grade AB say they were regularly (3+ times per week) read a bedtime (or other time) story as a child, significantly more than those in social grades C1 (46%), C2 (42%) and DE (39%).
- Almost half (48%) of parents who say they can pay bills and save disagree with the notion that they started to argue more with the baby's mother/father when their children were born, compared to three in ten (31%) of those parents who struggle to pay bills and often end up in arrears and who disagree with the same notion.

What we can do about it ...

1. **Create a government focused on supporting families:** Family cuts across every area of government policy and does not fit neatly into a single department. The Prime Minister should create a Government Office for Family Policy, with a cabinet-level ministerial brief to mirror the responsibility for 'Women and Equalities' currently held by the Secretary of State for International Development. The new Government Office for Family Policy would have a dedicated budget and civil service team to co-ordinate family policies across government.
2. **Reduce incentives to separate and remove the 'couple penalty':** The government should target the almost £1 billion spent on the Marriage Allowance at low-income married couples or civil partners with children under three where the separation risk is highest. Moreover, the government should enable those on Universal Credit and entitled to Marriage Allowance to receive the tax break automatically as part of their claim, and ensure it is not tapered away. Over successive budgets the government should work towards reducing remaining 'couple penalties'.
3. **Transform Birth Registration into a gateway to family support:** Almost all couples present to register the birth of their child/ren. This is a largely procedural and legal process. It is an opportunity to engage with couples in the same way Job Coaches engage with Universal Credit claimants signposting to support and mentor couples in need. All couples should be offered relationship support and counselling after the birth of their first child.
4. **Create a reformed Child Benefit which strengthens families as part of the next big welfare shake up:** We spend approximately £16 billion on Child Benefit which is poorly targeted and does little to strengthen families. This money should be spent on a reformed Child Benefit targeted at low-income couples and with relationship support conditionality built into a new benefit. This would incentivise uptake of relationship support and ensure it is targeted where the family breakdown risk is greatest and has the biggest social justice impact.
5. **Encourage every Local Authority to deliver Family Hubs:** Family Hubs are local 'one stop shops' offering families with children and young people, aged 0–19, early help to overcome difficulties and build stronger relationships. Such provision is typically co-located with superb early years health care and support – such as in transformed Children's Centres – supplementing and not supplanting these vital services. These Family Hubs should provide services to reduce relationship conflict and support couples at risk of separation and those struggling post-separation. The Government should put in place a transformation fund and national task force to encourage Local Authorities to move towards this Family Hub model. These should build on the experience of Councils who have already adopted Family Hubs. Alongside physical Family Hubs, the Government should work with the Family Hub movement to develop a virtual Family Hub offering online support and guidance that mirrors the depth and quality of NHS.gov and links families to local provision.

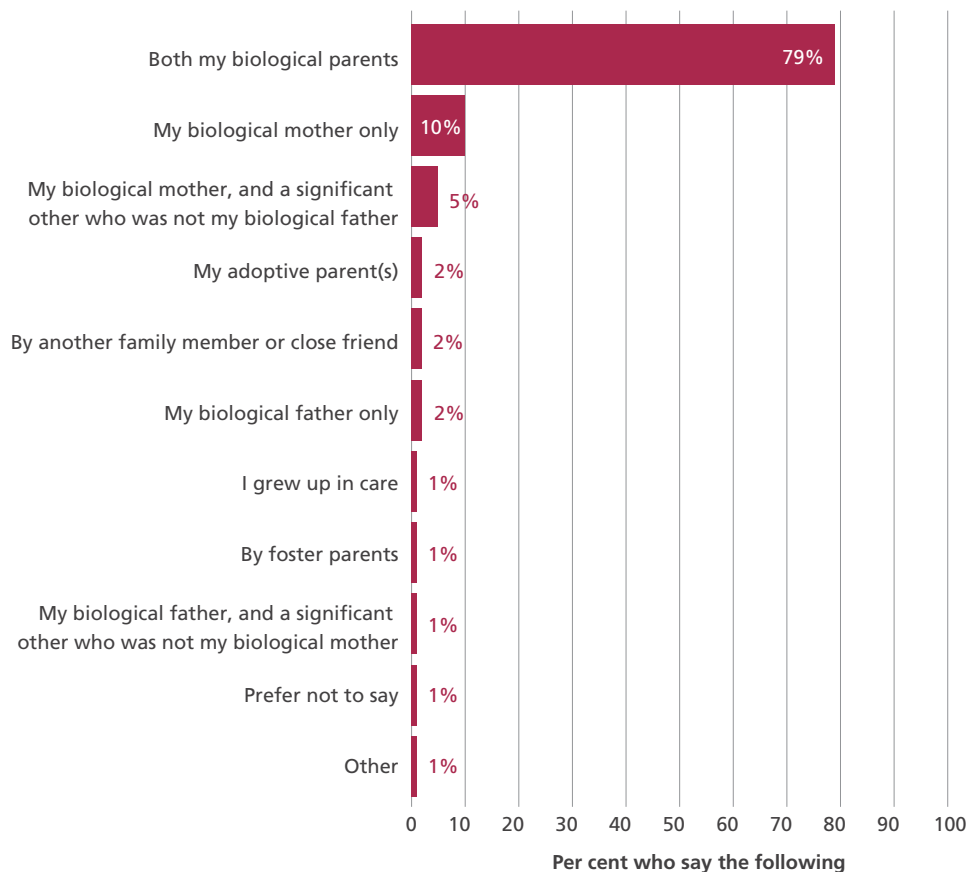
chapter one

Family life in Britain

1.1 Who were you brought up by?

One in ten (10%) British adults were brought up by their biological mother only.

Q. Who were you brought up by? Base: all respondents (n=5,000)



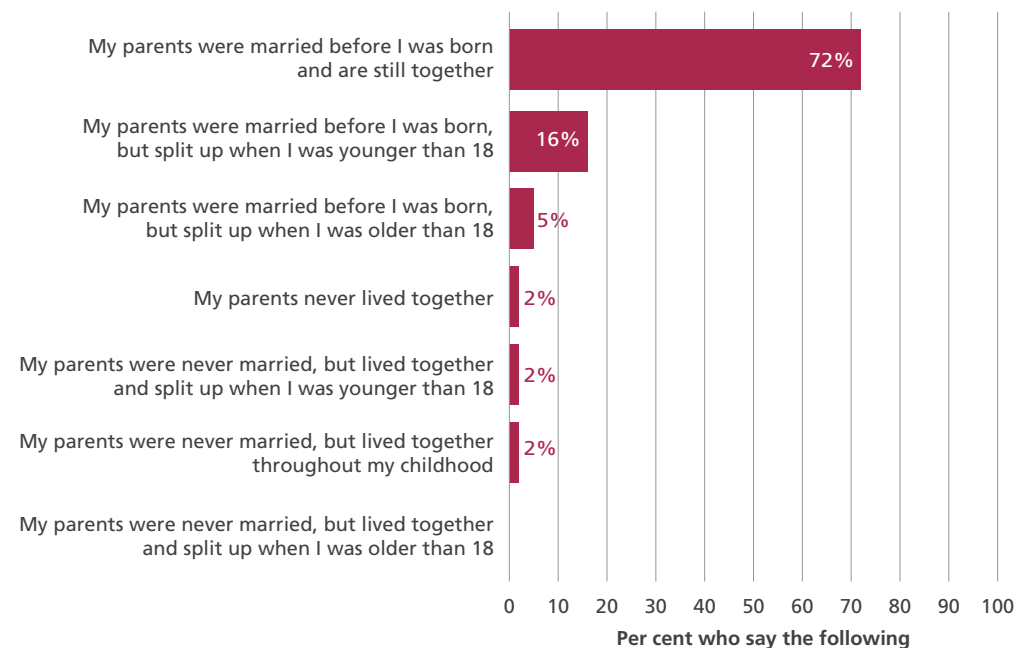
- One in ten (10%) British adults were raised by their biological mother only, five times more than the figure for adults who were raised by their biological father only (2%).
- Five in six (84%) adults who say they can pay their bills and save were raised by both their biological parents, significantly more than the proportion of those who say they struggle to pay bills and often end up in arrears (68%).
- Close to nine in ten (87%) adults whose parents were married were also brought up by both biological parents, significantly more than those whose parents were never married (50%).

- One in six (16%) British adults aged 18–24 and 25–34 (16%) were raised by their biological mother only, compared to only one in twenty-five of those aged 55–64 (4%) and just over one in twenty of those aged 65+ (6%).
- Nine in ten (88%) 55–64 year-olds were brought up by both their biological parents, while seven in ten (69%) of 25–34 year-olds were brought up in the same way.

1.2 Experience growing up

Seven in ten (72%) British adults who were brought up by one or both biological parents say that their parents were married before they were born and are still together.

Q. You said you were brought up by one or both of your biological parents. Which of the following best describes your experience growing up?
Base: if brought up by one or both biological parents (n=4,760)



- Seven in ten (68%) British adults in social grade DE who were brought up by one or both biological parents say that their parents were married before they were born and are still together, significantly less than those in social grades AB (79%), C1 (72%) and C2 (73%).
- Approaching nine in ten (87%) British adults aged 65+ who were brought up by one or both biological parents say that their parents were married before they were born and are still together, compared to just three in five (58%) of 18–24 year-olds and over half (55%) of 25–34 year-olds.

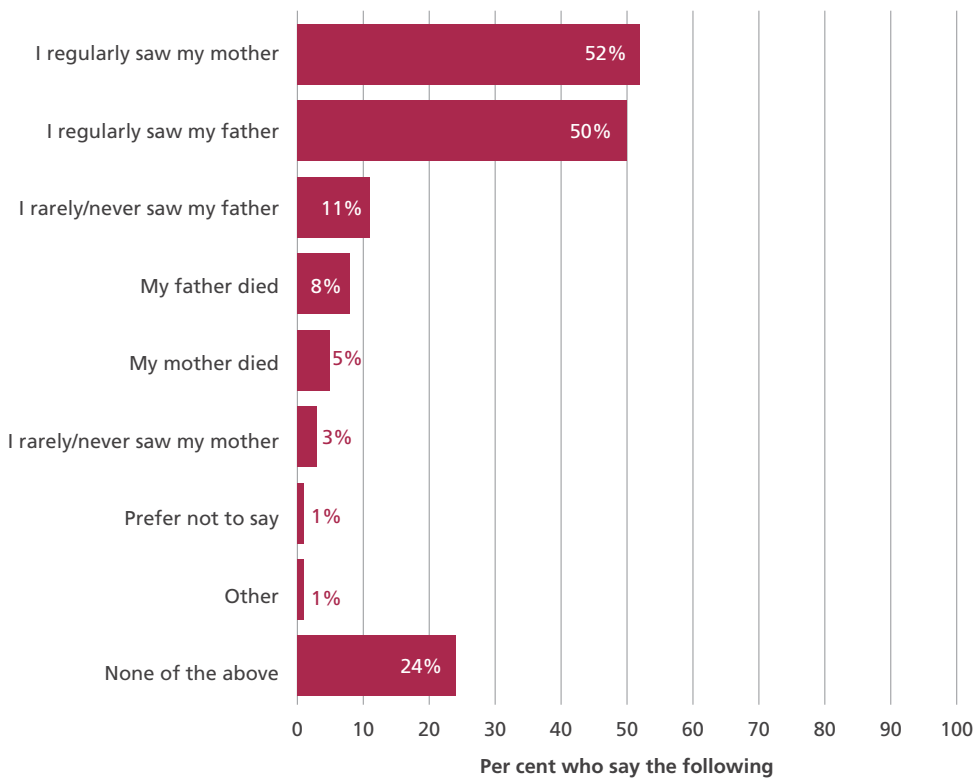
- 'More than four in five (83%) Asian British adults who were brought up by one or both biological parents say that their parents were married before they were born and are still together. This is significantly higher than both the three quarters (73%) of white British adults who were brought up by one or both biological parents who say the same, and the less than half (47%) of black British adults who were brought up by one or both biological parents and who say the same.

1.3 Mother and father

Only half of British adults say they regularly saw either their mother (52%) or father (50%) during their childhood.

Q. Which of the following, if any, did you experience during your childhood?

Base: all respondents (n=5,000)



- Nearly half (45%) of British adults who experienced family breakdown while at preschool (age 0–4) say they rarely/never saw their father, significantly more than the one in ten (13%) who experienced the same, and who say they rarely/never saw their mother.
- Three quarters (74%) of British adults whose parents never lived together when they were growing up say they rarely/never saw their father during their childhood, compared to just 1% of the same group who say they rarely/never saw their mother.

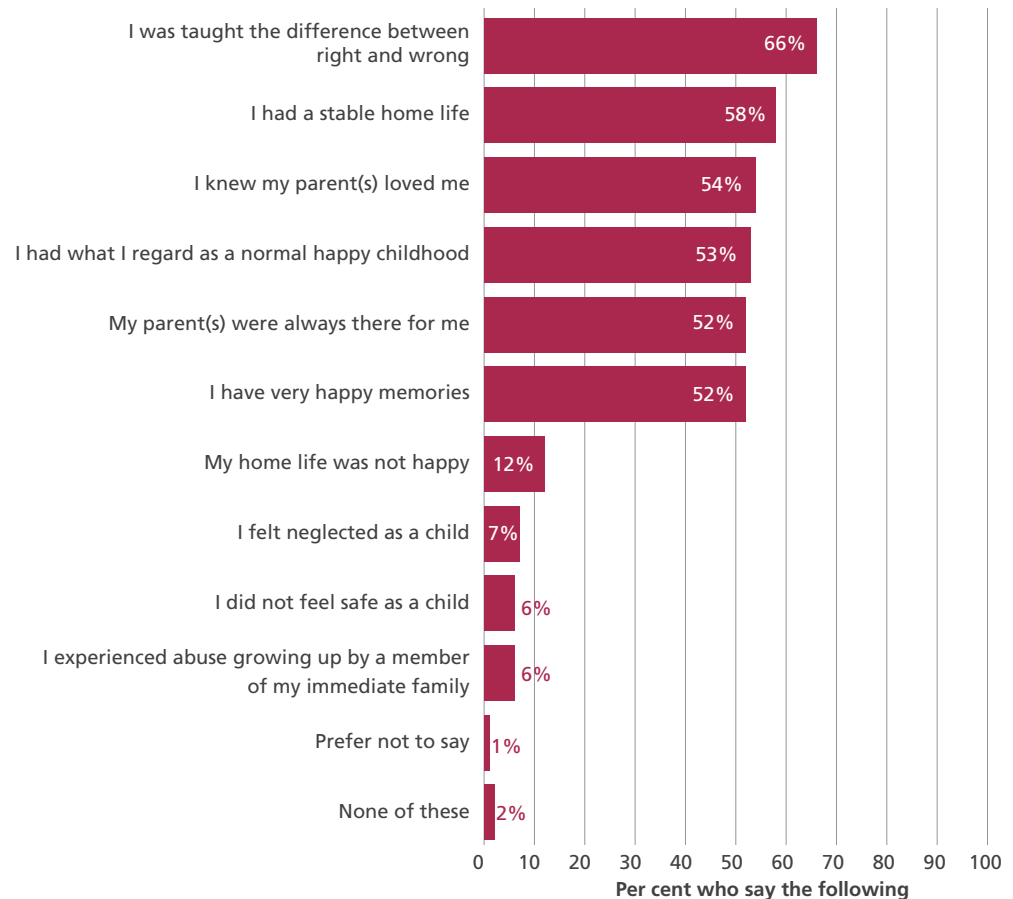
- More than half (52%) of British adults who say they can pay bills and save say they regularly saw their father during their childhood; a similar proportion of those who can pay bills but have nothing left over (49%), and those who can pay bills but have to go without certain things (49%). This is significantly higher than for those who say they struggle to pay bills and often end up in arrears (38%).
- More than half (54%) of British adults who say they can pay bills and save say they regularly saw their mother during their childhood; a similar proportion of those who can pay bills but have nothing left over (52%), and those who can pay bills but have to go without certain things (54%). This is significantly higher than those who say they struggle to pay bills and often end up in arrears (41%).
- One in six 18–24 and 25–34 year-olds (17% for both) say they rarely/never saw their father during their childhood, compared to just 5% of those aged 55–64 and 7% of those aged 65+.

1.4 Describe your childhood

Half (53%) of British adults say they had what they regard as a 'normal happy childhood'.

Q. Which of the following describes your childhood?

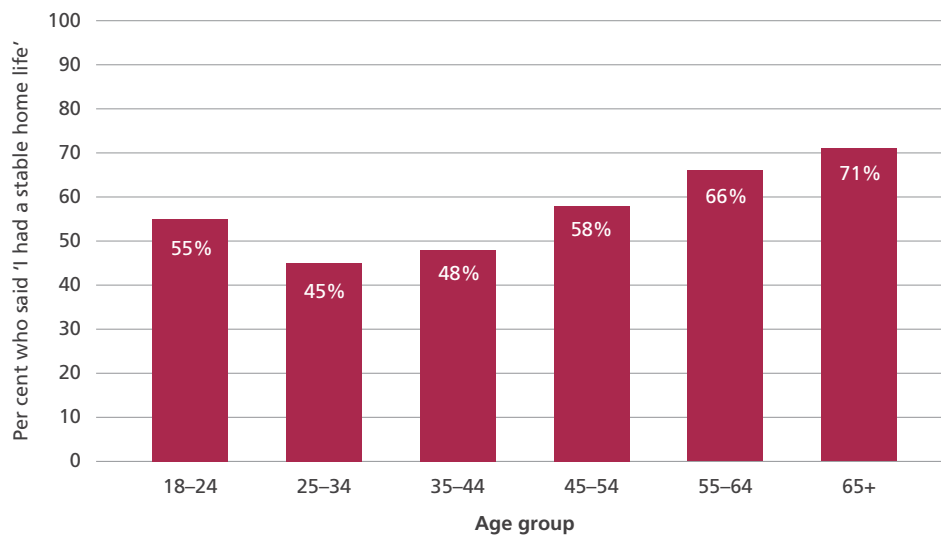
Base: all respondents (n=5,000)



- Two thirds (65%) of British adults who were brought up by both biological parents describe having a “stable home life” during their childhood, significantly higher than those who were brought up by one biological parent (31%) or one biological parent and a significant other (33%).
- Three in five (61%) British adults whose parents were married growing up say they had a stable home life, while two in five (39%) British adults whose parents were never married say the same.
- Two in five (38%) British adults who say they have been unemployed for most of their adult life describe having “very happy memories” from their childhood, significantly lower than for those who say they have been in full-time (53%) or part time (54%) employment for most of their adult life.
- Seven in ten (71%) British adults aged 65+ and two thirds (66%) of those aged 55–64 describe having a “stable home life” during their childhood, significantly higher than younger age groups (45–58% of 18–54 year-olds).
- Eight in ten (79%) adults aged 65+ say they were taught the difference between right and wrong, while approximately half (53%) of 25–34 year-olds say the same.
- While over three in five (64%) adults aged 65+ say their parents were always there for them, this figure drops to below half for those aged 25–54 (43–48%).
- Women are significantly more likely than men to say that they knew their parents loved them (57% vs 52%) and that they were taught the difference between right and wrong (70% vs 63%) during their childhood.

Q. Which of the following best describes your childhood?

Base: all respondents (n=5,000)

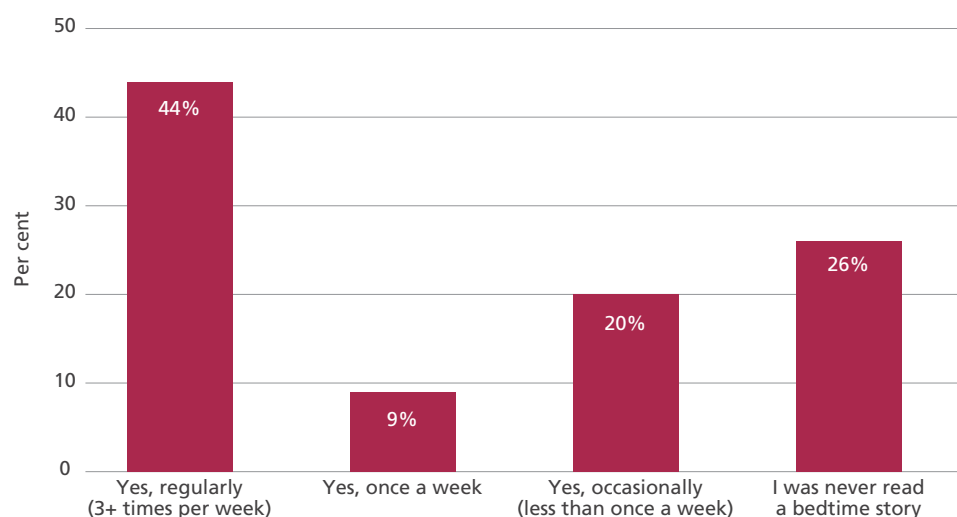


1.5 Were you read a bedtime story?

One quarter (26%) of British adults say that they were never read a bedtime (or other time) story as a child.

Q. As a child, were you ever read a bedtime (or other time) story?

Base: all respondents (n=5,000)



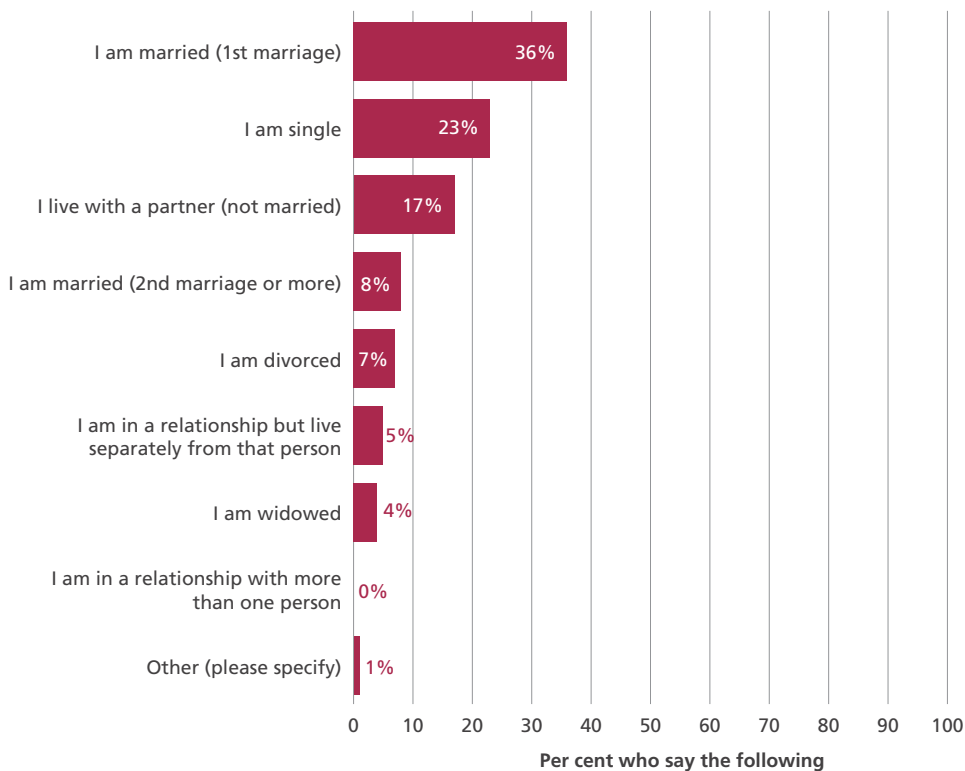
- Over half (52%) of British adults in social grade AB say they were regularly (3+ times per week) read a bedtime (or other time) story as a child, significantly more than those in social grades C1 (46%), C2 (42%) and DE (39%).
- Half (50%) of British adults whose parents were married before they were born and are still together say they were regularly (3+ times per week) read a bedtime (or other time) story as a child. In comparison, only three in ten (31%) adults whose parents were also married before they were born but split up when they were younger than 18 say the same.
- Of those who were read a bedtime (or other time) story, half (51%) say their mother regularly read their bedtime (or other time) story, compared to only one in five (20%) who say their father regularly read their bedtime (or other time) story.
- Three in ten (29–30%) British adults over the age of 45 say they were never read a bedtime (or other time) story as a child.

1.6 Current relationship situation

Just over a third (36%) of British adults describe their current relationship situation as married (in their 1st marriage).

Q. Which of the following best describes your current relationship situation?

Base: all respondents (n=5,000)



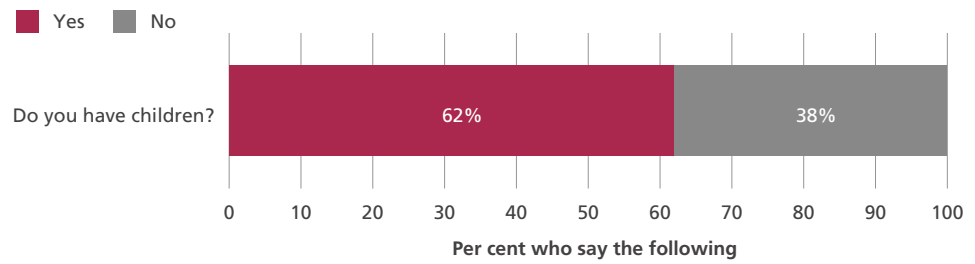
- Two in five (42%) British adults who say they can pay bills and save state that they are married (1st marriage), while only one quarter (24%) of adults who say they struggle to pay bills and are often in arrears are married (1st marriage).
- One third (33%) of British adults who say they struggle to pay their bills and are often in arrears say they are single, compared with one in five (19%) adults who say they can pay their bills and save and who say they are single.
- Approaching three in ten (28%) people in social grade DE are single, more than any other social grade (AB (17%), C1 (25%) and C2 (13%)).
- Two in five (39%) adults who were brought up by both biological parents are currently married (1st marriage), while this is the case for a quarter (26%) of adults brought up by one biological parent.
- Two in five (41%) adults whose parents were married before they were born and are still together are currently married (1st marriage) themselves. This is significantly higher than the three in ten adults who experienced their parents marrying before they were born but splitting up (27% of those whose parents split when younger than 18, and 30% of those whose parents split when older than 18) whom are currently married (1st marriage) themselves.

1.7 How many children do you have?

Three in five (62%) British adults have children. Of those, two in five (41%) parents have no children living in the same house as them.

Q. Do you have children?

Base: all respondents (n=5,000)



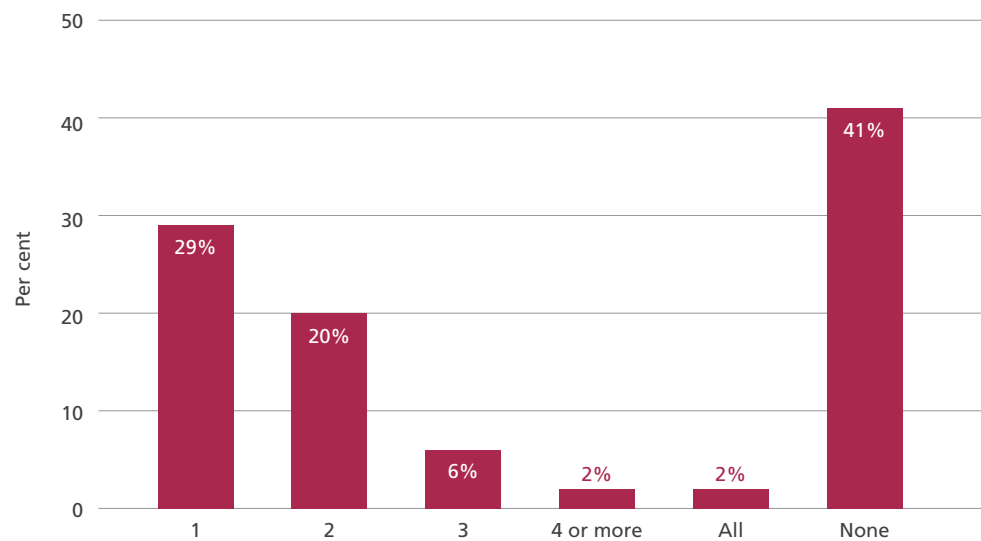
Q. How many children do you have...?

Base: all respondents who have children (n=3,093)

	1	2	3	4	None
0–11 years old	21%	14%	4%	2%	58%
12–18 years old	17%	6%	1%	0%	76%
19+ years old	17%	27%	11%	6%	39%

Q. And how many of your children currently live in the same home as you?

Base: all who have children (n=3,068)

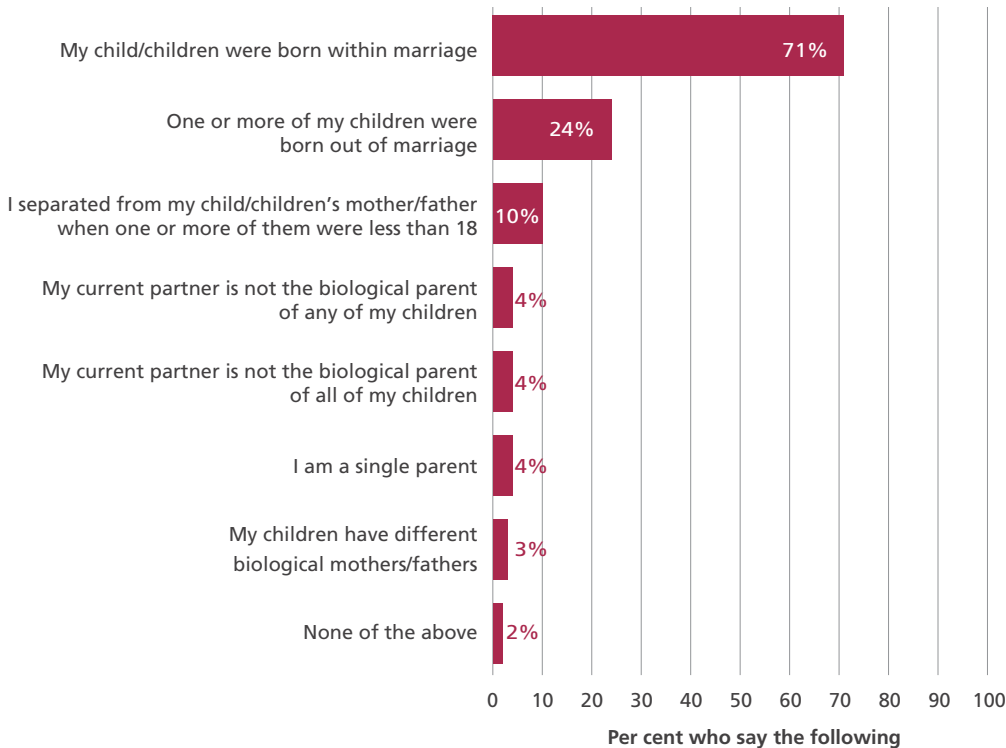


1.8 Children born within marriage

Seven in ten (71%) British parents say their child/children were born within marriage.

Q. Which of the following applies to you?

Base: all who have children (n=3,068)

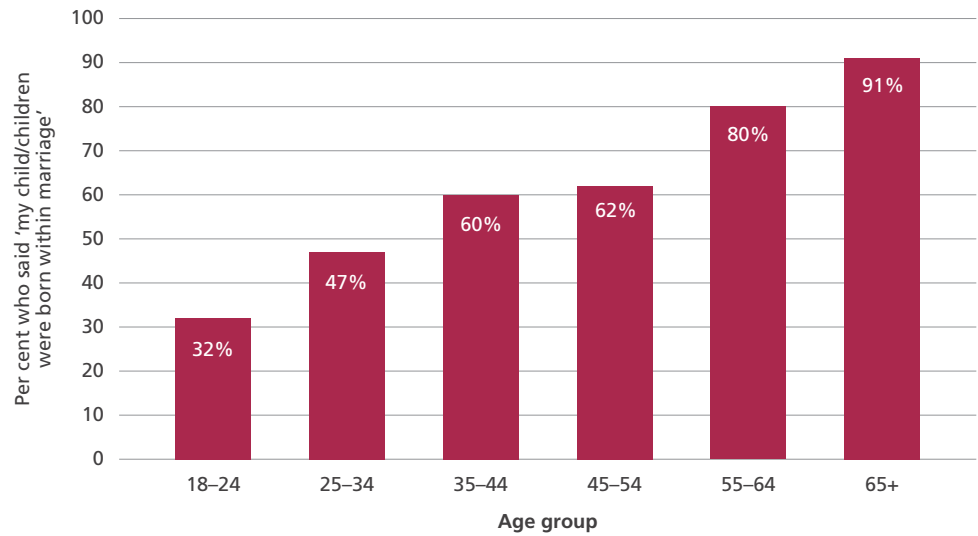


- More than three quarters (78%) of British parents whose own parents were married before they were born and are still together say their child/children were born within marriage. In comparison, over half (54%) of British parents whose parents were married before they were born but split up when they were younger than 18 say the same.
- Approaching half (48%)* of British parents aged 18–24 say one or more of their children were born out of marriage, significantly higher than the figure for older parents (35–44 (34%), 45–54 (30%), 55–64 (16%) and 65+ (7%)).

* Should be regarded as indicative, rather than representative, due to small sample size.

Q: Which of the following applies to you?

Base: all who have children (n=3,068)



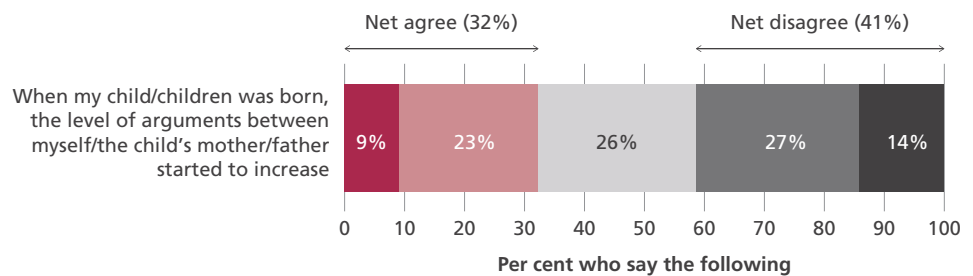
1.9 Parental relationship following the birth of a child

One third (32%) of British parents agree that when their child was born, they started to argue more with the baby's mother/father.

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

Base: parents (n=2,805)

■ Strongly agree
 ■ Agree
 ■ Neither agree nor disagree
■ Disagree
 ■ Strongly disagree



- Almost half (48%) of parents who say they can pay bills and save disagree with the notion that they started to argue more with the baby's mother/father when their children were born, compared to three in ten (31%) of those parents who struggle to pay bills and often end up in arrears and who disagree with the same notion.

chapter two

The social impact of family breakdown

A logistic regression analysis has been employed to provide a statistically-robust view of the impact of family breakdown on the likelihood of experiencing a number of social issues. For the purposes of this analysis, we have focused specifically on those who reported experiencing family breakdown when under the age of 18.

Family breakdown is self-defined for this analysis, based on a respondent reporting that they have experienced family breakdown themselves (as opposed to applying a definition to the data later).

To develop a model which controls for demographic factors which may have an influence on the likelihood of experiencing the social issues tested we have included age, gender, socio-economic grade and ethnicity in the models; this means that the odds ratios reported have controlled for the influence that an individual's demographic profile might have on the likelihood of experiencing the social issues tested. Each model also incorporates each of the other social issues tested in order to control for the effects of those issues and thus arrive at a true measure of the impact of family breakdown on the likelihood of experiencing each individual issue.

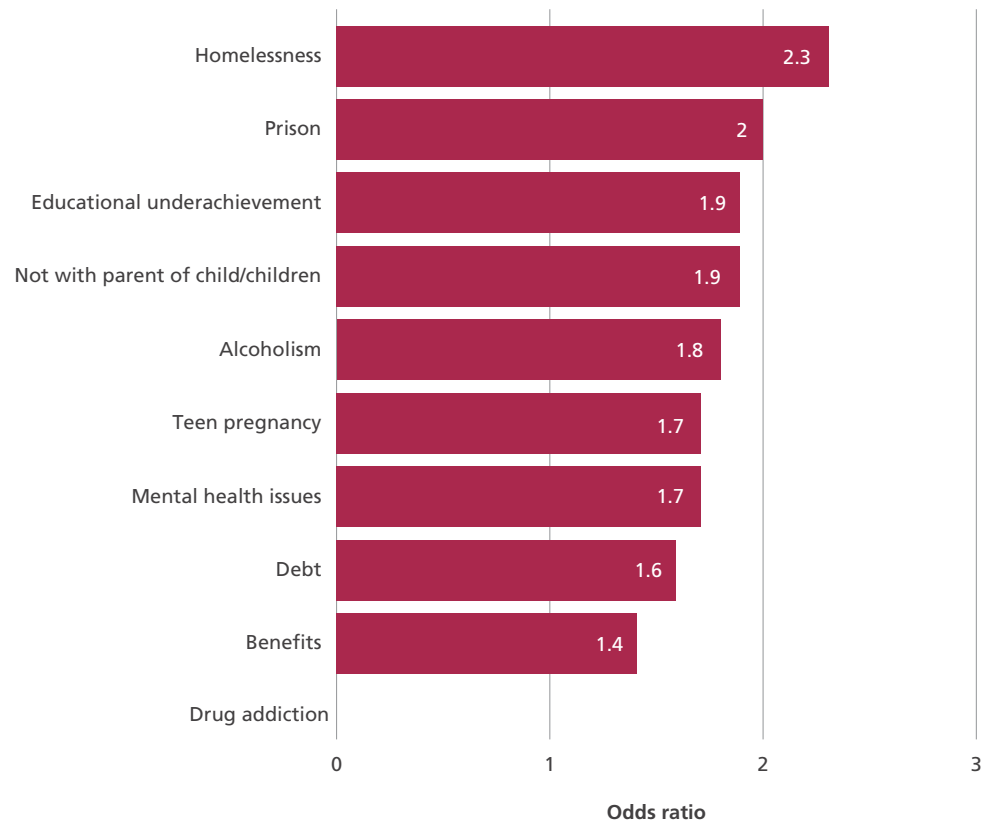
The analysis has demonstrated that an individual who has experienced family breakdown before the age of 18 years old (while controlling for age, gender, socio-economic grade and ethnicity, as well as all other social issues tested) is:

- Over twice as likely (2.3 times) to experience **homelessness**
- Twice as likely (2.0 times) to be in **trouble with the police** or **spend time in prison**
- Almost twice as likely (1.9 times) to experience **educational underachievement**
- Almost twice as likely (1.9 times) to experience **not being with the other parent of their child/ren**⁴
- Approaching twice as likely (1.8 times) to experience **alcoholism**
- Approaching twice as likely (1.7 times) to experience **teen pregnancy**
- Approaching twice as likely (1.7 times) to experience **mental health issues**
- More likely (1.6 times) to experience **debt**
- More likely (1.4 times) to experience being on **benefits**

⁴ This is based on a net of all those who say that they separated from their child/ren's mother/father when one or more of their children were less than 18, they are a single parent, their current partner is not the biological parent of all/any of their children or their children have different biological fathers/mothers.

Only drug addiction did not emerge as having a statistically significant relationship with experiencing family breakdown when under the age of 18, when controlling for the demographics and social issues listed.

Odds ratios from the logistic regression models run to determine impact of family breakdown on likelihood of experiencing the social issues tested⁵



⁵ Please see the appendix for the full set of results, including the Pseudo R squares and odds ratios for all variables included in each of the ten models.

chapter three

Experience of social issues

Q. Have you, or someone close to you, ever experienced any of the following?

Base: all respondents (n=5,000)

	Myself	Immediate family members	Close friends	NET: Any	None
Family breakdown	23%	24%	21%	51%	49%
Mental health issues	25%	25%	15%	46%	54%
Reliance on benefits	18%	18%	13%	38%	62%
Serious personal debt	17%	16%	10%	36%	64%
Educational underachievement	15%	14%	11%	33%	67%
Alcoholism	5%	15%	9%	26%	74%
Teenage pregnancy	6%	10%	9%	23%	77%
In trouble with the police or spent time in prison	7%	11%	8%	21%	79%
Drug addiction	4%	7%	7%	16%	84%
Homelessness	6%	5%	5%	14%	86%

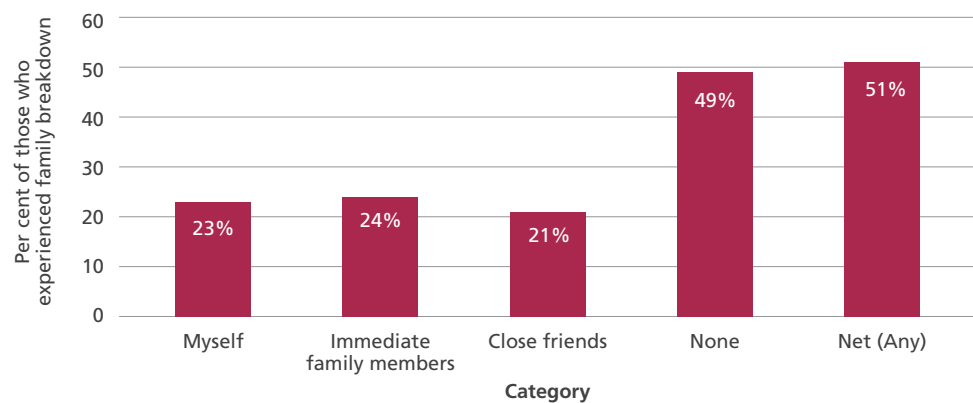
3.1 Family breakdown

Experience of family breakdown

One quarter (23%) of British adults say they have experienced family breakdown themselves, a quarter (24%) have immediate family members who have experienced family breakdown, and one in five (21%) have close friends.

Two in five (42%) adults who struggle to pay bills and often end up in arrears have experienced family breakdown themselves, significantly more than those who can pay their bills and save (19%).

Q. Family breakdown: Have you, or someone close to you, ever experienced any of the following? Base: All respondents (n=5,000)



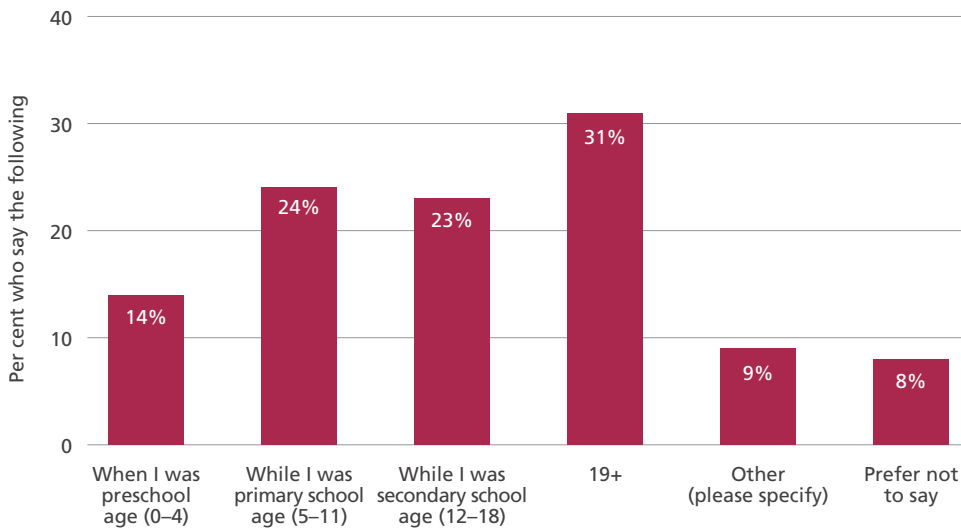
- Around two in five (38%) British adults brought up by one biological parent or one biological parent and a significant other (42%) have experienced family breakdown themselves, significantly higher than just the one in five (19%) adults brought up by both biological parents who have experienced family breakdown themselves.
- Significantly more adults in social grade DE, more than one quarter (27%), say they have experienced family breakdown themselves; this figure is higher than for all other social grades (AB (20%), C1 (22%) and C2 (20%)).
- Three in ten (31%) British adults who have been in and out of employment say they have experienced family breakdown themselves, significantly higher than the just two in ten (22%) adults who have been in full-time employment for most of their adult life.

Life stage of family breakdown

Six in ten (61%) adults who experienced family breakdown themselves say this occurred when they were aged 18 or younger.

Q. At what life stage did the issue of family breakdown occur?

Base: if experienced family breakdown 'myself' (n=1,153)

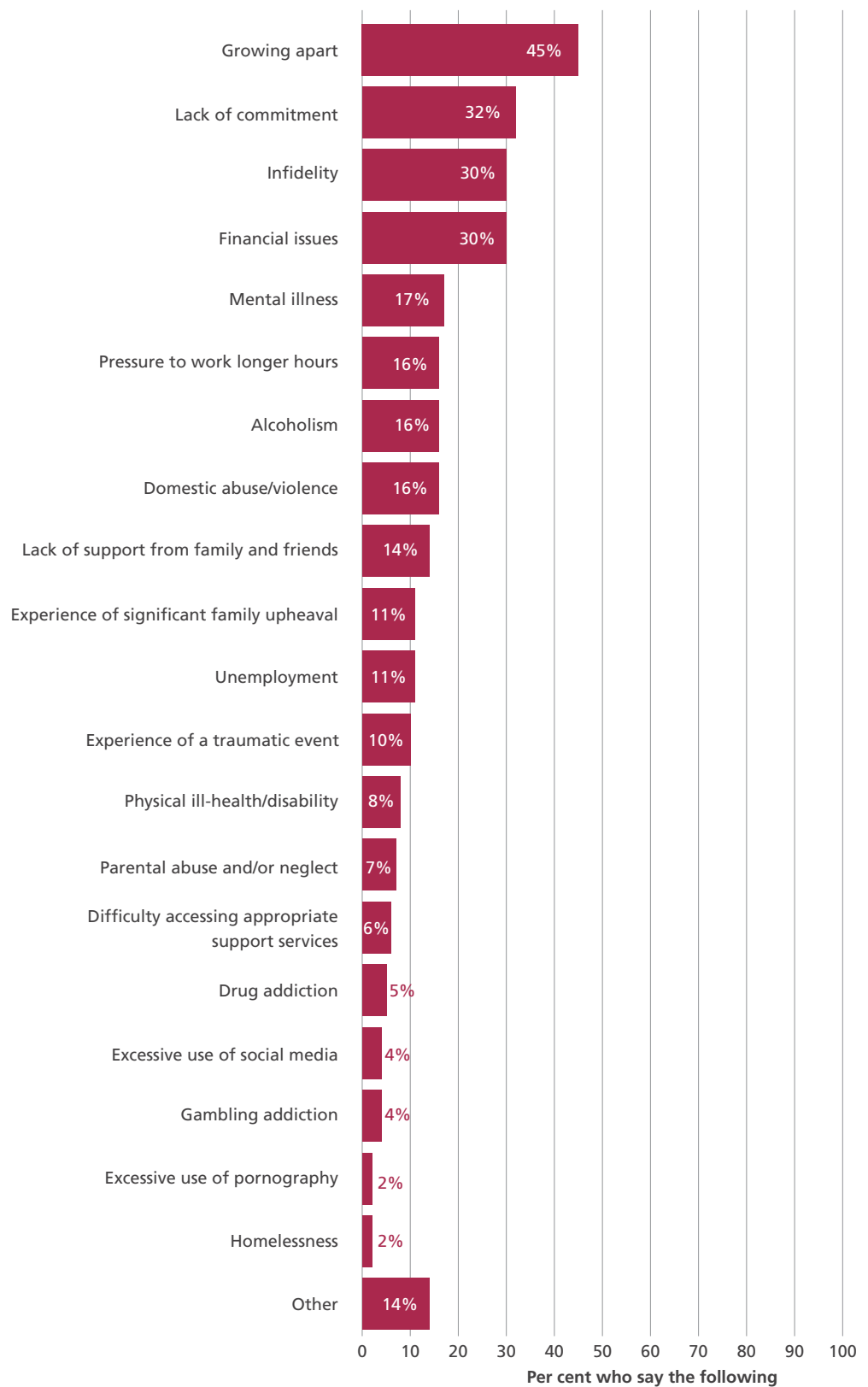


- Of those who experienced family breakdown and alcoholism themselves, over two in five (45%) say they experienced their family breakdown while they were at primary school (age 5-11).
- Of those who experienced family breakdown and drug addiction themselves, over two in five (44%) say they experienced their family breakdown while they were at primary school (age 5-11), significantly higher than the three in ten (28%) who were at preschool (age 0-4). A third (36%) were at secondary school (age 12-18).

Factors contributing to family breakdown

Approaching half (45%) of British adults say growing apart contributed to their experience of family breakdown.

Q. Top 3 summary: Which, if any, of the following factors do you think contributed to your/their experience of family breakdown?
 Base: if experienced family breakdown (n=2,568)



- Approaching half (48%) of those who experienced family breakdown and who can pay bills and save report growing apart as a top three contributing factor to family breakdown, significantly higher than the third (35%) of those who experienced family breakdown and struggle to pay bills and are often in arrears that say the same.
- A third (32%) of those who experienced family breakdown and who also experienced serious personal debt themselves say that financial issues was a top three contributing factor to their experience of family breakdown. This is significantly more than all other options, apart from reliance on benefits.
- Around half (49%) of 45–54 year-olds who experienced family breakdown say growing apart was a top three contributing factor, compared to 53% for 55–64 year-olds and 58% for those aged 65 and over. Growing apart as a top three factor is significantly higher for older age groups compared to younger age groups (32–41% for those aged 44 or younger).

3.2 Educational underachievement

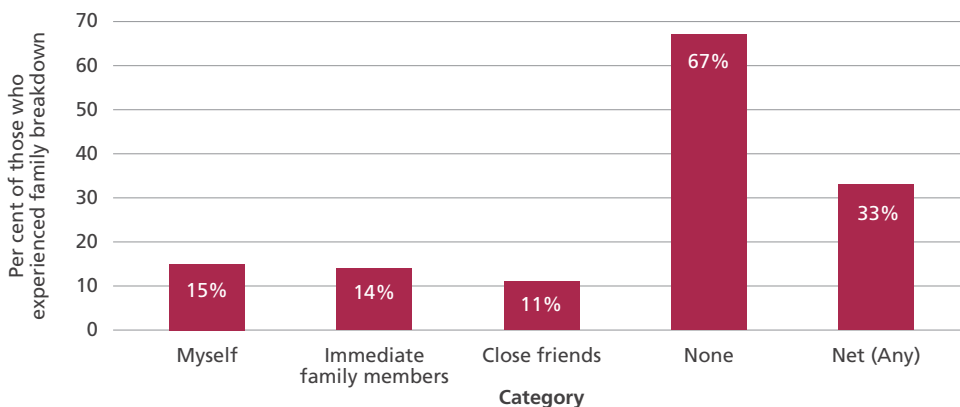
Experience of educational underachievement

One in seven (15%) British adults report having experienced educational underachievement themselves.

Half (50%) of British adults whose parents were never married say they have ‘any’⁶ experience of educational underachievement. This is a significantly higher proportion than amongst those British adults whose parents were married, of whom just a third (32%) say the same.

Significantly more British adults who struggle to pay bills and often end up in arrears say they experienced educational underachievement themselves (a third – 33%) compared to British adults who can pay their bills and save who say the same; of these, just one in ten (12%) say they experienced educational underachievement themselves.

Q. Educational underachievement: Have you, or someone close to you, ever experienced any of the following? Base: All respondents (n=5,000)



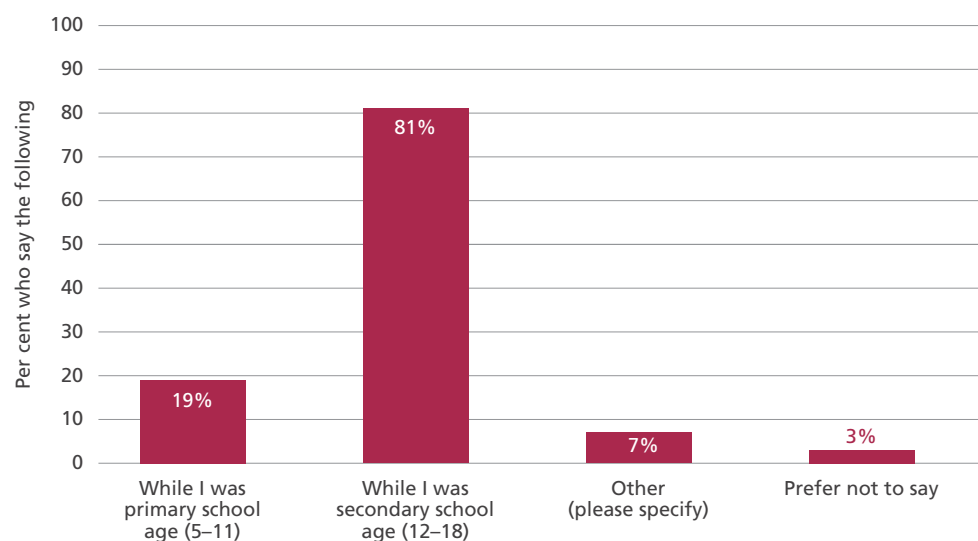
6 'Any' is defined as educational underachievement experienced by immediate family members, close friends or myself.

- Approaching half (46%) of British adults who reported having been unemployed for most of their adult life state that they have any experience of educational underachievement; this is significantly higher compared to one third (32%) of adults who have been in full-time employment for most of their adult life who report the same experience of educational underachievement.
- Approaching half (46%) of British adults aged 18–24 say they have any experience of educational underachievement, compared to a third (32%) of those aged 45–54, and one in five (22%) adults aged 65+.
- Over one third (36%) of males report having any experience of educational underachievement, while three in ten females (30%) say the same.
- Around a quarter (23%) of British adults who currently rent local authority or housing association accommodation say they have experienced educational underachievement themselves, significantly higher than the one in ten (12%) British adults who own their own home with or without a mortgage who say they have experienced educational underachievement themselves.
- A third (34%) of British adults who acted as a carer growing up report having experienced educational underachievement themselves, and seven in ten (68%) British adults who acted as a carer growing up report having any experience of educational underachievement.

Life stage of educational underachievement

Eight in ten (81%) British adults who say they have experienced educational underachievement themselves state that their experience occurred while they were in secondary school (age 12–18).

Q. At what life stage did the issue of educational underachievement occur?
Base: if experienced educational underachievement 'myself' (n=766)

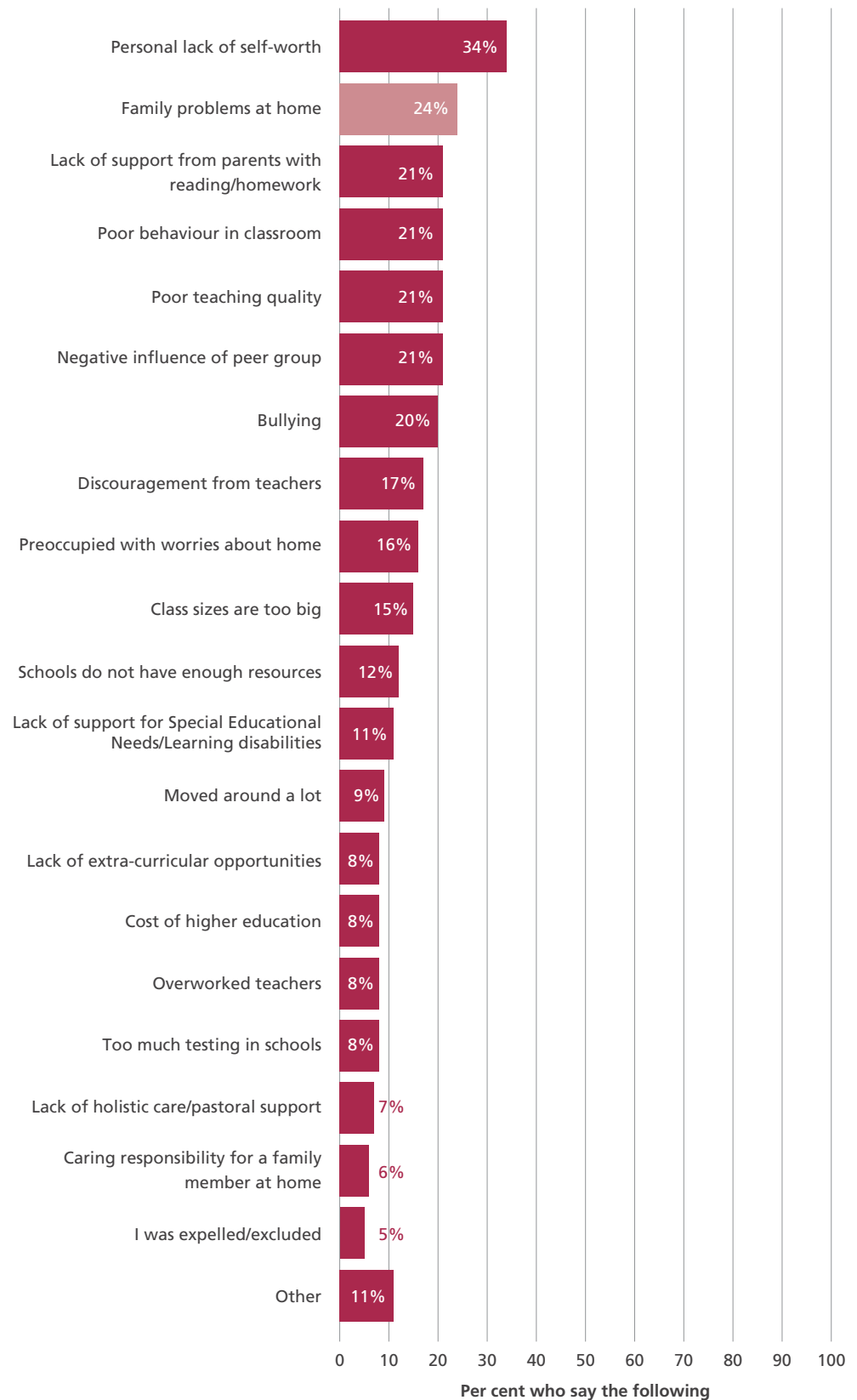


- One in five (19%) British adults who say they have experienced educational underachievement state that their experience occurred while they were at primary school (age 5–11).
- Four in five (82%) British adults who experienced educational underachievement and experienced mental health issues in their home say that their own experience of educational underachievement occurred while at secondary school (age 12–18).
- Six in seven (84%) adults who experienced educational underachievement and completed statutory formal education state that they experienced educational underachievement while at secondary school (age 12–18), compared with seven in ten (71%) of those who completed higher education whose experience of educational underachievement occurred at the same time.

Factors contributing to educational underachievement

A quarter (24%) of British adults who say they have experienced educational underachievement state that family problems at home was a top three contributing factor.

Q. Top 3 summary: Which, if any, of the following factors do you think contributed to your/ their experience of educational underachievement?
 Base: if experienced educational underachievement (n=1,659)



- One quarter (26%) of adults in social class DE say family problems at home contributed to their experience of educational underachievement, significantly more than for those in social grade C1 (20%).
- A third (34%) of British adults who say they have experienced educational underachievement state that personal lack of self-worth was a top three contributing factor.
- Half (49%) of adults who experienced educational underachievement and who also say they struggle to pay bills and are often in arrears state that personal lack of self-worth contributed to their underachievement. This is significantly more than for adults who can pay bills and save (30%), for adults who can pay bills but have nothing left over (32%), and for adults who can pay bills but have to go without certain things (37%).
- Two in five (40%) women who experienced educational underachievement say personal lack of self-worth contributed to their underachievement, significantly more than for men (28%).
- One third (34%) of adults who experienced mental health issues at home say personal lack of self-worth contributed to their experience of educational underachievement.

3.3 Drug addiction

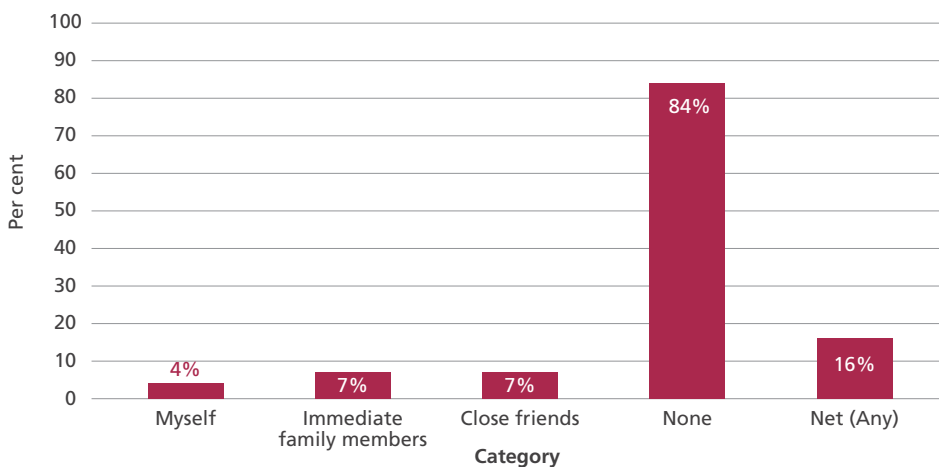
Experience of drug addiction

One in six (16%) British adults have 'any'⁷ experience of drug addiction.

One in twenty (3%) British adults who can pay bills and save report having experienced drug addiction themselves, significantly fewer than the one in seven (14%) British adults who struggle to pay bills and often end up in arrears who report the same.

Q. Drug addiction: Have you, or someone close to you, ever experienced any of the following?

Base: All respondents (n=5,000)



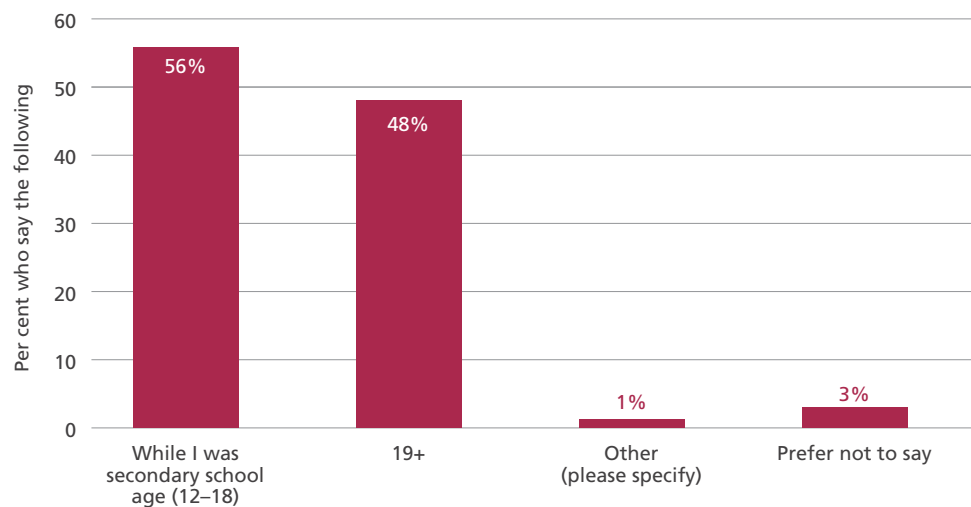
⁷ 'Any' is defined as drug addiction experienced by immediate family members, close friends or myself.

- Approaching three in five (56%) British adults who report having experienced family breakdown themselves while at preschool (age 0–4) also report having any experience of drug addiction. This figure drops to two in five (41%) British adults who experienced family breakdown themselves while at primary school (age 5–11) and who report having any experience of drug addiction, while one third (35%) of British adults who experienced family breakdown themselves while at secondary school (age 12–18) report having any experience of drug addiction.
- One third (34%) of British adults whose parents were never married report having any experience of drug addiction, while one in seven (14%) British adults whose parents were married report the same.

Life stage of drug addiction

More than half (56%) of British adults who experienced drug addiction say this occurred while they were at secondary school (age 12–18).

Q. At what life stage did the issue of drug addiction occur? Base: if experienced drug addiction 'myself' (n=182)



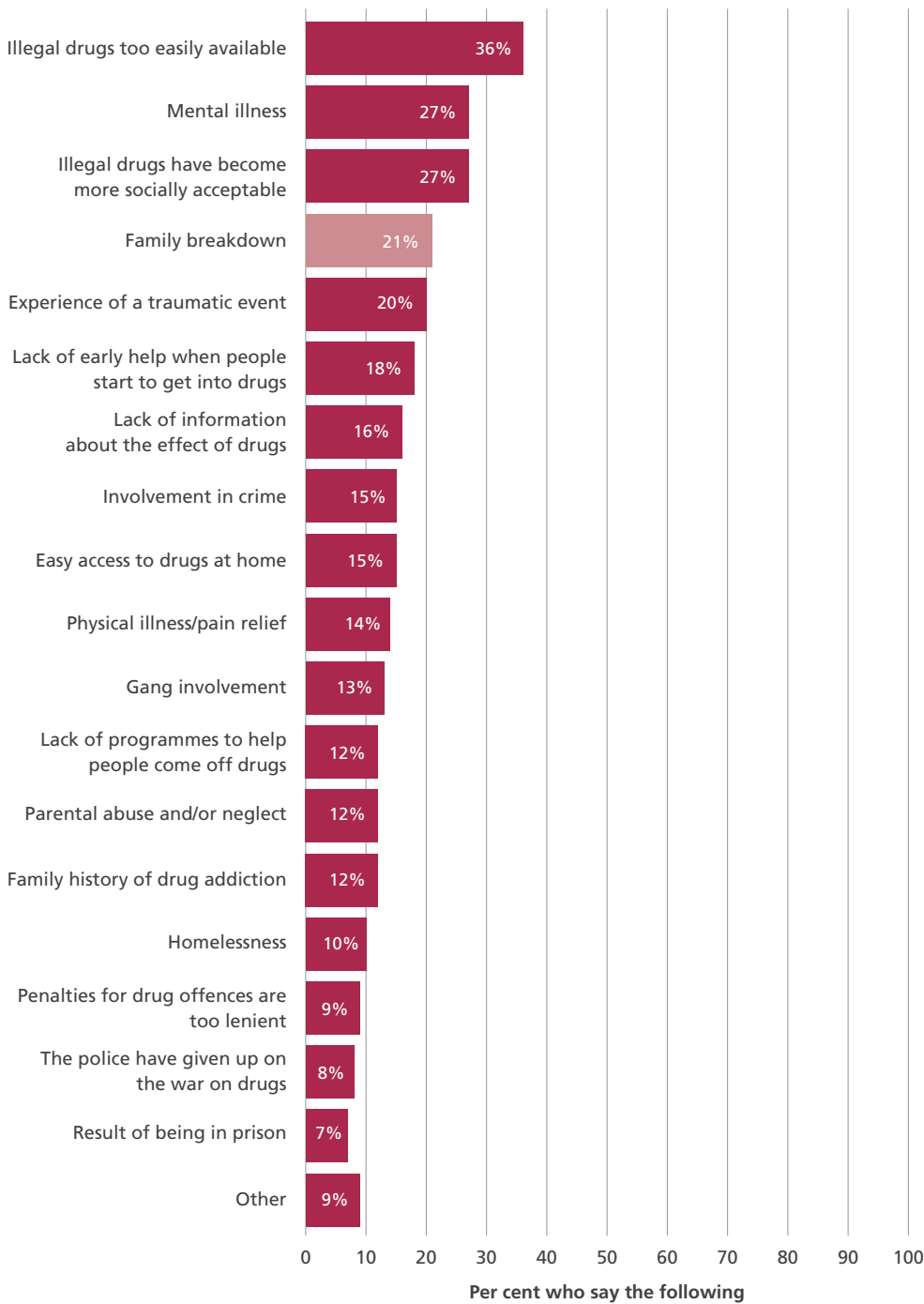
- More women than men experienced drug addiction themselves while at secondary school (age 12–18) (68% vs 49% respectively).

Factors contributing to drug addiction

Over a third (36%) of adults who say they have experienced drug addiction state that illegal drugs being too easily available was a top three contributing factor to their experience of drug addiction.

Q. Top 3 summary: Which, if any, of the following factors do you think contributed to your/ their experience of drug addiction?

Base: if experienced drug addiction (n=799)



- Three in ten (30%) adults with experience of drug addiction and whose parents were married before they were born but split up when younger than 18 say family breakdown was a top three contributing factor to their experience of drug addiction, significantly higher than for those with parents who married before they were born and are still together (18%).
- Three in ten (28%) adults with experience of drug addiction and who are in and out of employment say family breakdown contributed to their experience of drug addiction, significantly more than for those in full-time employment for most of their adult life (18%).
- More than two in five (44%*) adults with experience of drug addiction who say they struggle to pay bills and often end up in arrears state that illegal drugs being too easily available was a top three contributing factor to their experience of drug addiction, compared to one third (34%) who can pay their bills and save and who say the same.
- One third (33%*) of adults with experience of drug addiction and who say they struggle to pay bills and are often in arrears state that mental illness was a factor in their experience of drug addiction, compared with one in five (22%) of those who say they can pay their bills and save.

3.4 Alcoholism

Experience of alcoholism

One in twenty (5%) British adults report having experienced alcoholism themselves, while one quarter (26%) of British adults have 'any'⁸ experience of alcoholism.

Three in five (58%) British adults who experienced family breakdown themselves while at pre-school (age 0–4) report having any experience of alcoholism.

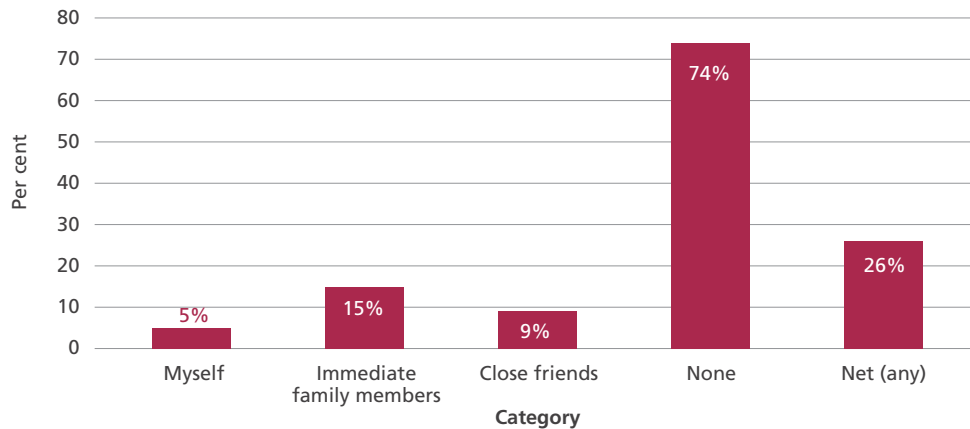
Two in five (40%) British adults who struggle to pay bills and often end up in arrears say they have had any experience of alcoholism. This is in contrast with one quarter (23%) of British adults who can pay bills and save and who also report having any experience of alcoholism.

⁸ 'Any' is defined as alcoholism experienced by immediate family members, close friends or myself.

* Should be regarded as indicative, rather than representative, due to small sample size.

Q. Alcoholism: Have you, or someone close to you, ever experienced any of the following?

Base: All respondents (n=5,000)



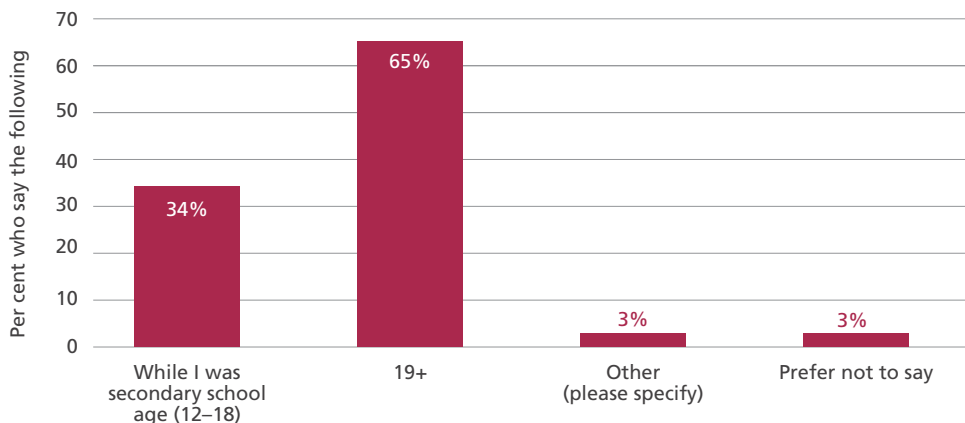
- Over one third (36%) of British adults who are single parents report having any experience of alcoholism.
- A third (33%) of British adults who have experienced homelessness themselves also say they have experienced alcoholism themselves.
- Half (48%) of British adults who have experienced drug addiction themselves also say they have experienced alcoholism themselves.
- One in five (22%) British adults who have experienced teenage pregnancy themselves also say they have experienced alcoholism themselves.

Life stage of alcoholism

One third (34%) of British adults who say they experienced alcoholism themselves state that the experience occurred while they were secondary school age (12–18).

Q. At what life stage did the issue of alcoholism occur?

Base: if experienced alcoholism 'myself' (n=271)



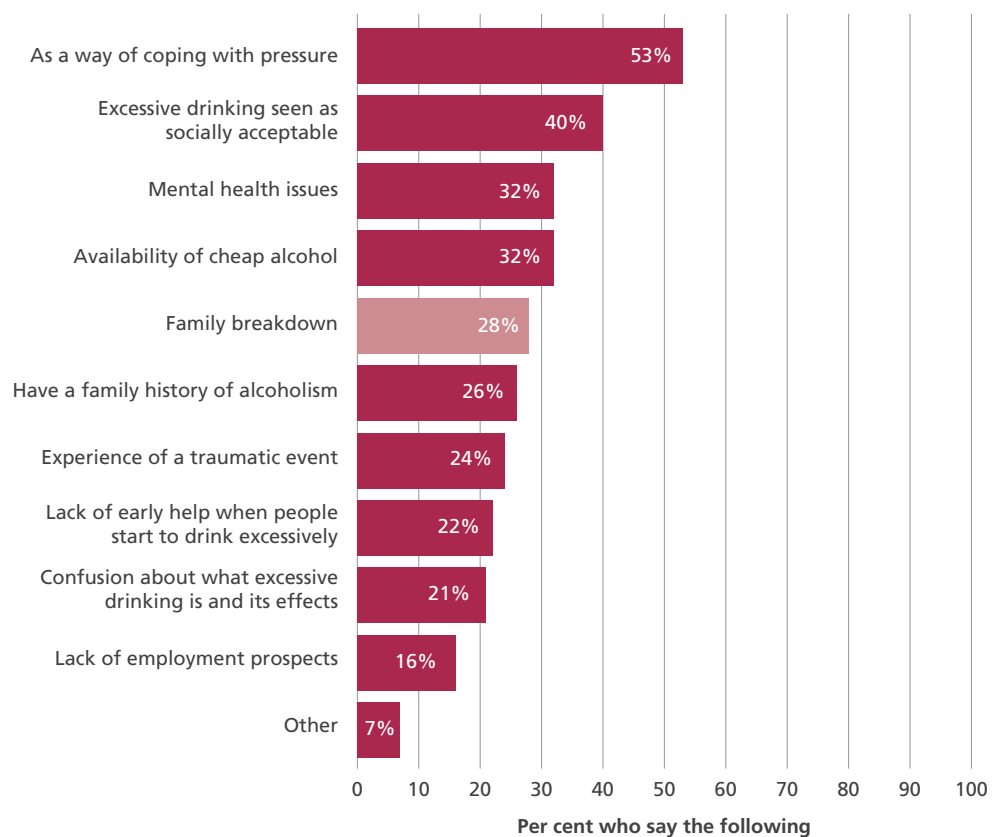
- Nearly half (46%*) of adults who have experienced alcoholism themselves and who were brought up by one biological parent say they experienced alcoholism while they were at secondary school (age 12–18), compared to three in ten (30%) who were brought up by both biological parents.
- More than two in five (43%*) adults who have experienced alcoholism themselves and are aged 25–34 say they experienced alcoholism while they were at secondary school (age 12–18), compared to less than one in five (19%*) of those aged 45–54 who say their alcoholism occurred at secondary school age.
- Three quarters (76%*) of adults who have experienced alcoholism themselves and are aged 45–54 say their alcoholism occurred when aged 19 or older, compared to half (51%*) of those aged 25–34 who say the same.

Factors contributing to alcoholism

Over half (53%) of adults who have experienced alcoholism say a top three contributing factor was that it was a way of coping with pressure.

Q. Top 3 summary: Which, if any, of the following factors do you think contributed to your/their experience of alcoholism?

Base: if experienced alcoholism (n=1,313)



* Should be regarded as indicative, rather than representative, due to small sample size.

- Two in five (38%) adults who have experienced alcoholism and were brought up by one biological parent say family breakdown contributed to their experience of alcoholism, significantly higher than for those brought up by both biological parents (25%).
- Nearly half (44%) of adults who have experienced alcoholism and who say they have been unemployed for most of their adult life state that mental health issues were a contributing factor to their experience of alcoholism, while less than three in ten (28%) adults in full-time employment for most of their adult life say the same.
- Two in five (39%) adults who have experienced alcoholism and were brought up by one biological parent say mental health issues contributed to their experience of alcoholism, significantly more than those brought up by both biological parents (31%) who say the same.
- Two in five (38%) adults who have experienced alcoholism and are aged 18–24 say family breakdown was a contributing factor to their experience of alcoholism, more than for those aged 25–34 (27%), 45–54 (27%), 55–64 (20%) and 65+ (17%).

3.5 Serious personal debt

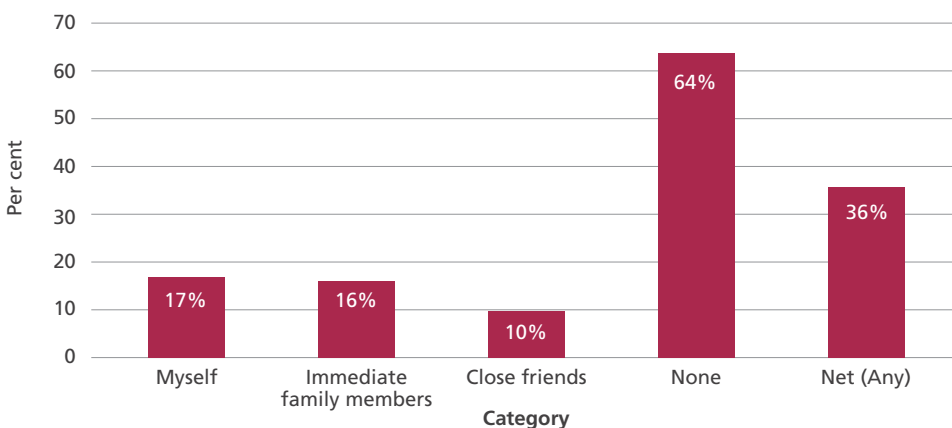
Experience of serious personal debt

Over a third (36%) of British adults have 'any'⁹ experience of serious personal debt, while approaching two in five (17%) British adults have experienced serious personal debt themselves.

Half (50%) of British adults who were brought up by one biological parent report having any experience of serious personal debt, while one third (33%) of British adults who were brought up by both biological parents say the same.

Half (50%) of British adults whose parents were never married report having any experience of serious personal debt, while one third (35%) of British adults whose parents were married report the same.

Q. Serious personal debt: Have you, or someone close to you, ever experienced any of the following? Base: All respondents (n=5,000)



⁹ 'Any' is defined as serious personal debt experienced by immediate family members, close friends or myself.

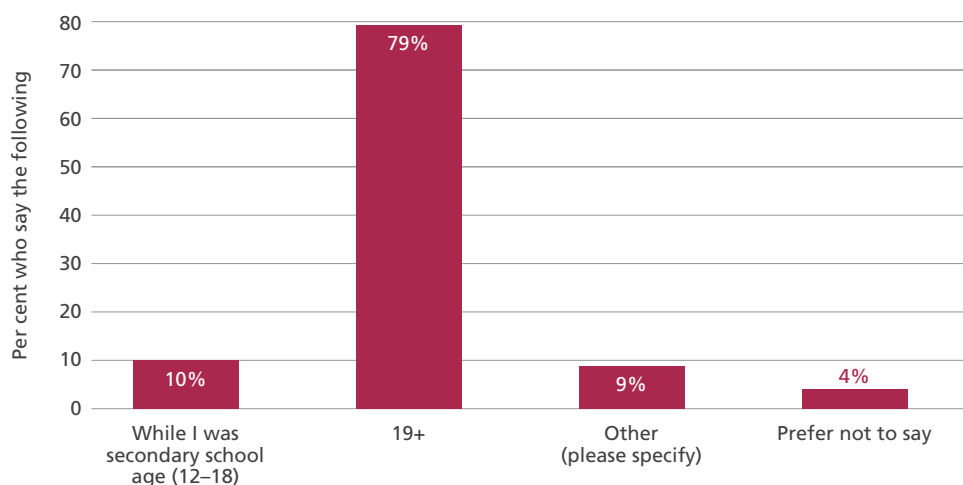
- Three in ten (31%) British adults who say that one or more of their children were born out of marriage state that they have experienced serious personal debt themselves, while one in seven (14%) British adults whose child/ren were born within marriage say the same.
- Two in five (39%) British adults who report having experienced educational underachievement themselves state that they have also experienced serious personal debt themselves.
- Half (48%) of British adults who report having been in trouble with the police or having spent time in prison themselves also say they have experienced serious personal debt themselves.
- Three in ten (30%) British adults who rent local authority or housing association accommodation report having experienced serious personal debt themselves, while one in ten (11%) British adults who own their own home with or without a mortgage say the same.

Life stage of serious personal debt

Four in five (79%) British adults who say they have experienced serious personal debt themselves state that it occurred while they were over the age of 19.

Q. At what life stage did the issue of serious personal debt occur?

Base: if experienced serious personal debt 'myself' (n=870)



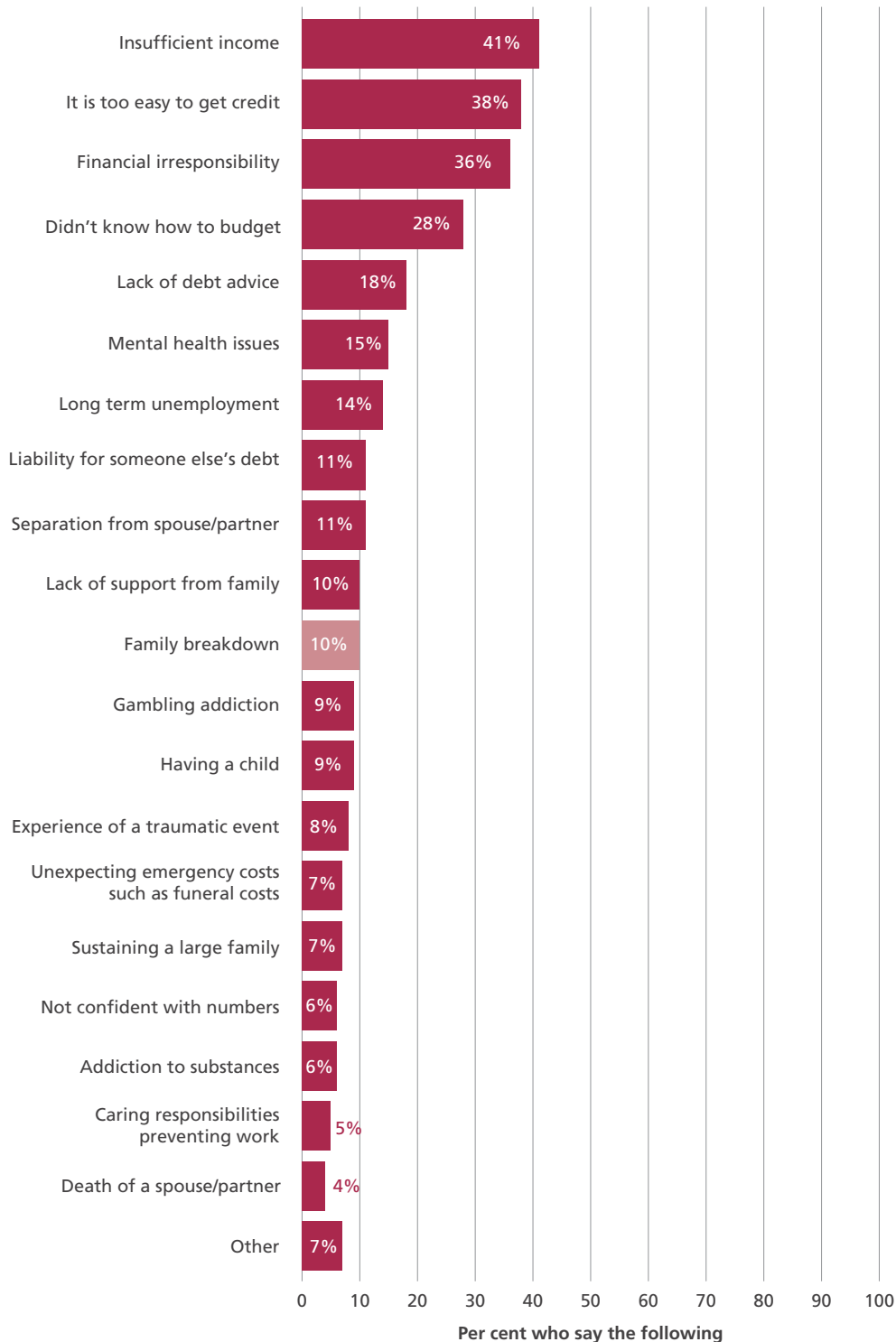
- Nearly three quarters (73%) of adults in receipt of benefits state that their experience of serious personal debt occurred when 19 or older, compared with three in five (62%) adults not in receipt of benefits whose experience of serious personal debt occurred when aged 19 or older.
- One quarter (24%) of adults who have experienced serious personal debt themselves and were brought up by one biological parent say it occurred while at secondary school age. Conversely, less than one in ten (7%) adults who have experienced serious personal debt themselves and were brought up by both biological parents experienced it while at secondary school age.

Factors contributing to serious personal debt

One in ten (10%) British adults who have any experience of serious personal debt say family breakdown was a top three contributing factor.

Q. Top 3 summary: Which, if any, of the following factors do you think contributed to your/their experience of serious personal debt?

Base: if experienced serious personal debt (n=1,807)



- Two in five (41%) British adults who say they have experienced serious personal debt state that insufficient income was a top three contributing factor to this experience.
- One in seven (14%) adults who were brought up by one biological parent say family breakdown contributed to their experience of serious personal debt. This was significantly more than for adults brought up by both biological parents (9%).
- Half (48%) of adults aged 65+ say insufficient income was a top three contributing factor to their experience of serious personal debt; a similar proportion of those aged 55–64 and 45–54 (47% for both) say the same. This is significantly more than for the younger age groups (18–24 (36%), 25–34 (35%) and 35–44 (36%)).

3.6 Reliance on benefits

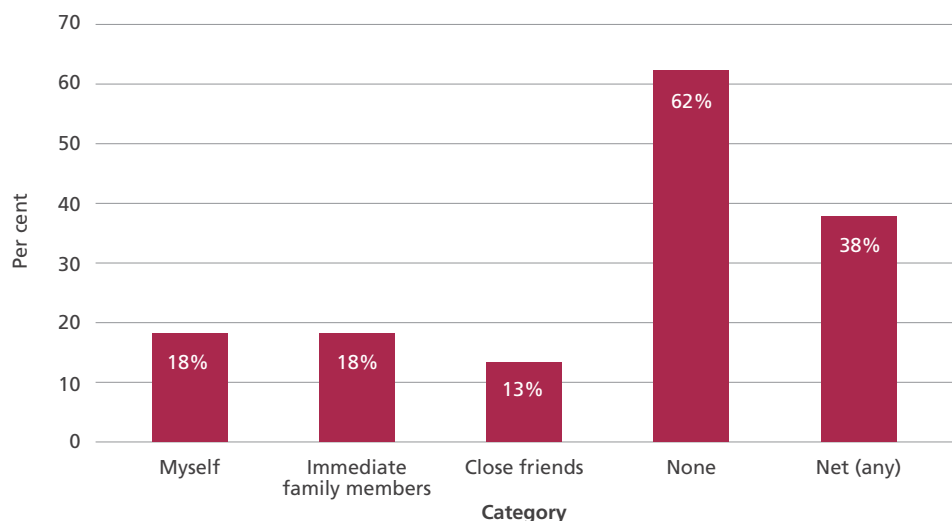
Experience of reliance on benefits

Two in five (42%) British adults who report being a single parent say they have experienced reliance on benefits themselves.

Over one third (36%) of British adults who separated from their child/ren’s father/mother when one or more of them were less than 18 state that they have experienced reliance on benefits themselves.

Three in ten (29%) British adults who are divorced say they have experienced reliance on benefits themselves.

Q. Reliance on benefits: Have you, or someone close to you, ever experienced any of the following? Base: All respondents (n=5,000)



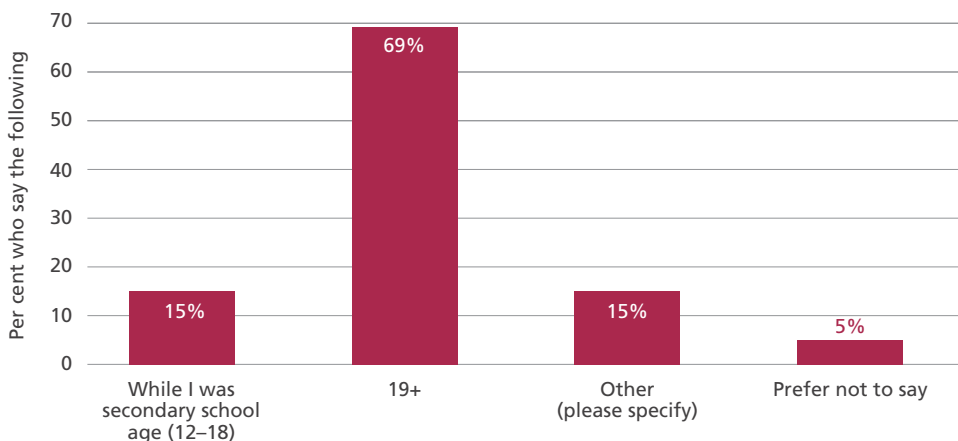
- One quarter of British adults who were brought up by one biological parent or one biological parent and a significant other (26% for both) state that they have experienced reliance on benefits themselves, while only one in six (16%) British adults who were brought up by both biological parents say they have experienced reliance on benefits themselves.
- Three in ten (29%) adults in social grade DE say that they have experienced reliance on benefits themselves, significantly more than for any other social grade (AB (10%), C1 (11%) and C2 (10%)).
- One in five (20%) British adults who completed statutory formal education say that they have experienced reliance on benefits themselves, while one in seven (15%) British adults who completed higher education have experienced reliance on benefits themselves.

Life stage of reliance benefits

Seven in ten (69%) adults who have experienced reliance on benefits themselves say this occurred when they were over the age of 19.

Q. At what life stage did the issue of reliance on benefits occur?

Base: if experienced reliance on benefits 'myself' (n=879)



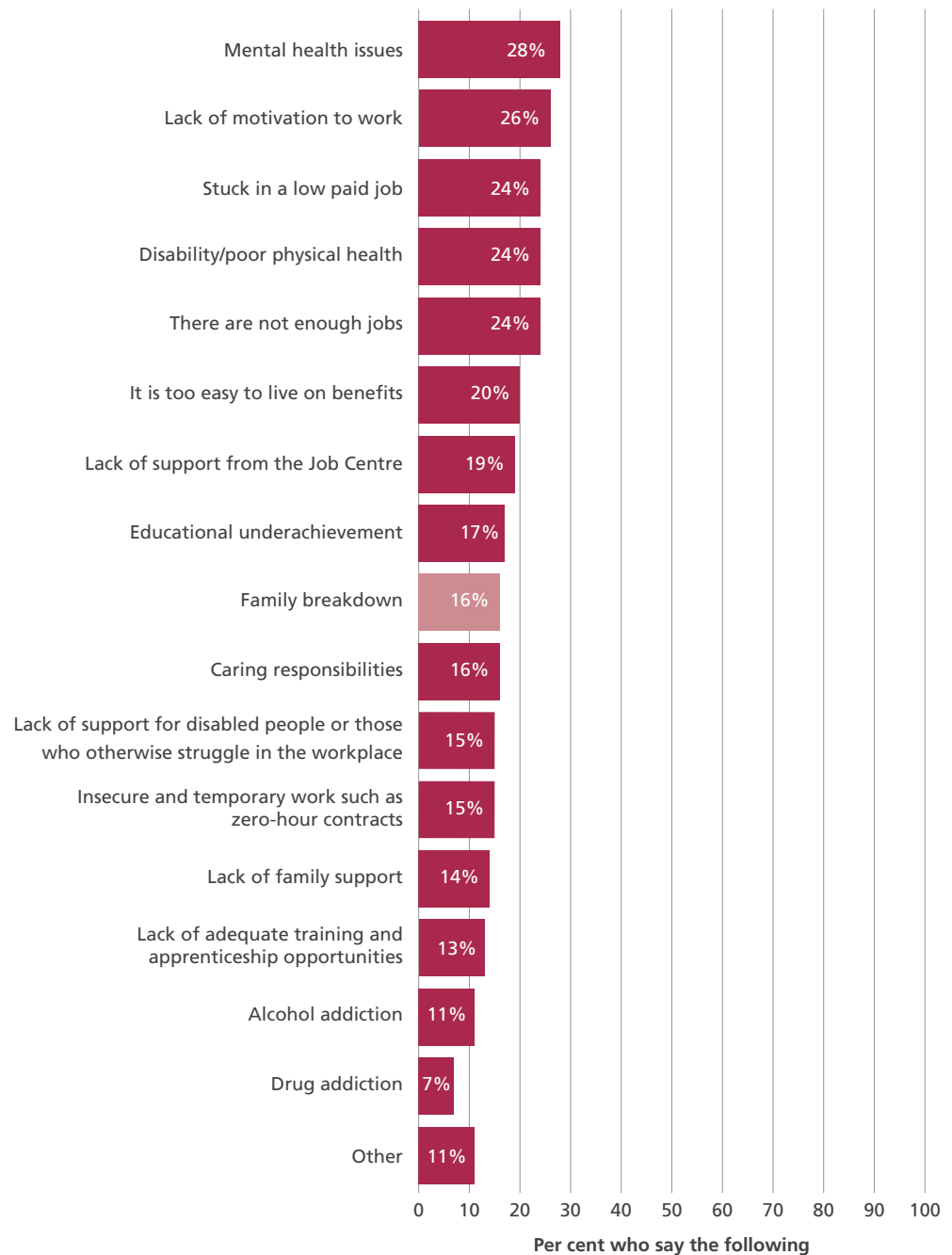
- One quarter (25%) of adults who have experienced reliance on benefits and who were brought up by one biological parent say this occurred while at secondary school, compared to one in eight (13%) adults brought up by both biological parents who say their experience of reliance on benefits occurred while secondary school age.

Contributing factors to welfare dependency

One in six (16%) adults say family breakdown was a top three contributing factor to their experience of unemployment/welfare dependency.

Q. Top 3 summary: Which, if any, of the following factors do you think contributed to your/ their experience of unemployment and/or welfare dependency?

Base: if experienced reliance on benefits (n=1,905)



- Three in ten (28%) British adults who have experienced unemployment or welfare dependency say mental health issues was a top three contributing factor to this experience.
- One third (33%) of adults who have experienced unemployment or welfare dependency in social grade DE say that mental health issues was a top three contributing factor in their experience of unemployment/welfare dependency, significantly higher than for the other social grades (AB (21%), C1 (25%) and C2 (21%)).
- One third (32%) of adults who can pay bills and save say lack of motivation to work was a top three contributing factor to their experience of reliance on benefits – significantly more than for adults who can pay bills but have nothing left over (25%), for adults who can pay bills but have to go without certain things (18%), and for adults who struggle to pay bills and often end up in arrears (23%).
- Significantly more women than men say family breakdown contributed to their experience of unemployment/welfare dependency (19% vs 13% respectively).

3.7 Mental health issues

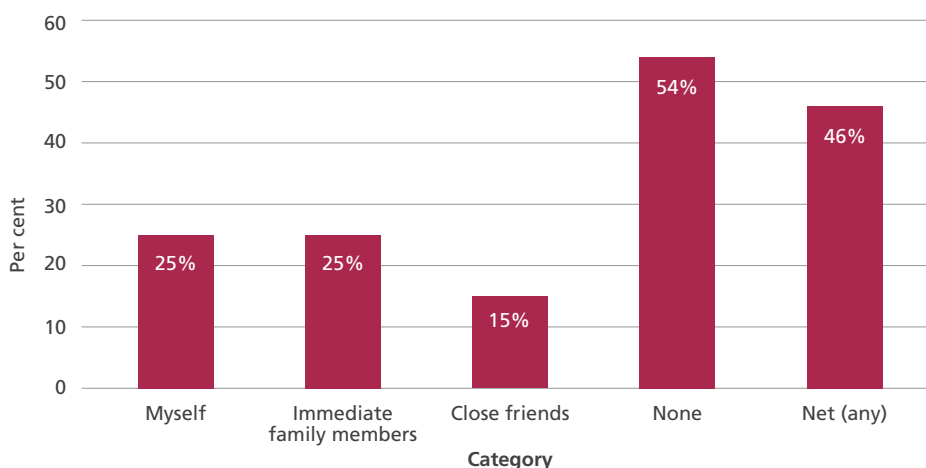
Experience of mental health issues

Approaching half (45%) of British adults who say they struggle to pay bills and often end up in arrears state that they have experienced mental health issues themselves, significantly more than one in six (17%) adults who say they can pay their bills and save who say the same.

One third (34%) of British adults who were brought up by one biological parent say they have experienced mental health issues themselves, while one quarter (23%) of adults who were brought up by both biological parents say the same.

Over one third (36%) of British adults who are single parents say they have experienced mental health issues themselves.

Q. Mental health issues: Have you, or someone close to you, ever experienced any of the following? Base: All respondents (n=5,000)



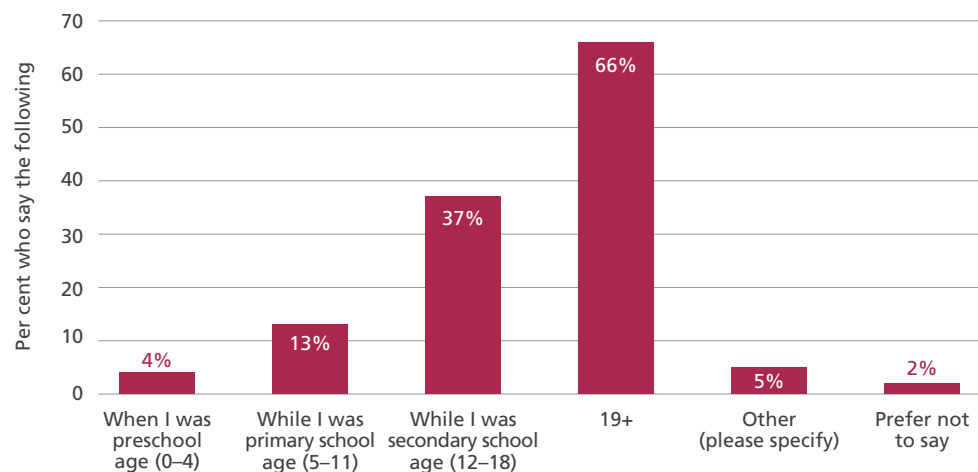
- Two thirds of British adults who report having experienced drug addiction (68%) and alcoholism (66%) themselves also report having experienced mental health issues themselves.
- Nearly half (47%) of British adults who say they have been in and out of employment state that they have experienced mental health issues themselves, compared with one in five (21%) adults who have been in full-time employment for most of their adult life who say the same.
- Two thirds (65%) of British adults who have experienced homelessness themselves also report having experienced mental health issues themselves.
- Two in five (38%) British adults aged 18–24 say they have experienced mental health issues themselves, significantly higher than for the older age groups who say they have experienced mental health themselves (35–44 (28%), 45–54 (31%), 55–64 (19%), 65+ (9%).

Life stage at which mental health issues were experienced

Over one third (37%) of British adults say their experience of mental health issues occurred while they were at secondary school (age 12–18).

Q. At what life stage did the issue of mental health issues occur?

Base: if experienced mental health issues 'myself' (n=1,238)



- Nearly half (43%) of adults who have experienced mental health issues themselves and who were brought up by one biological parent say they experienced mental health issues themselves while at secondary school (age 12–18), compared to one third (35%) of adults who were brought up by both biological parents and say the same.

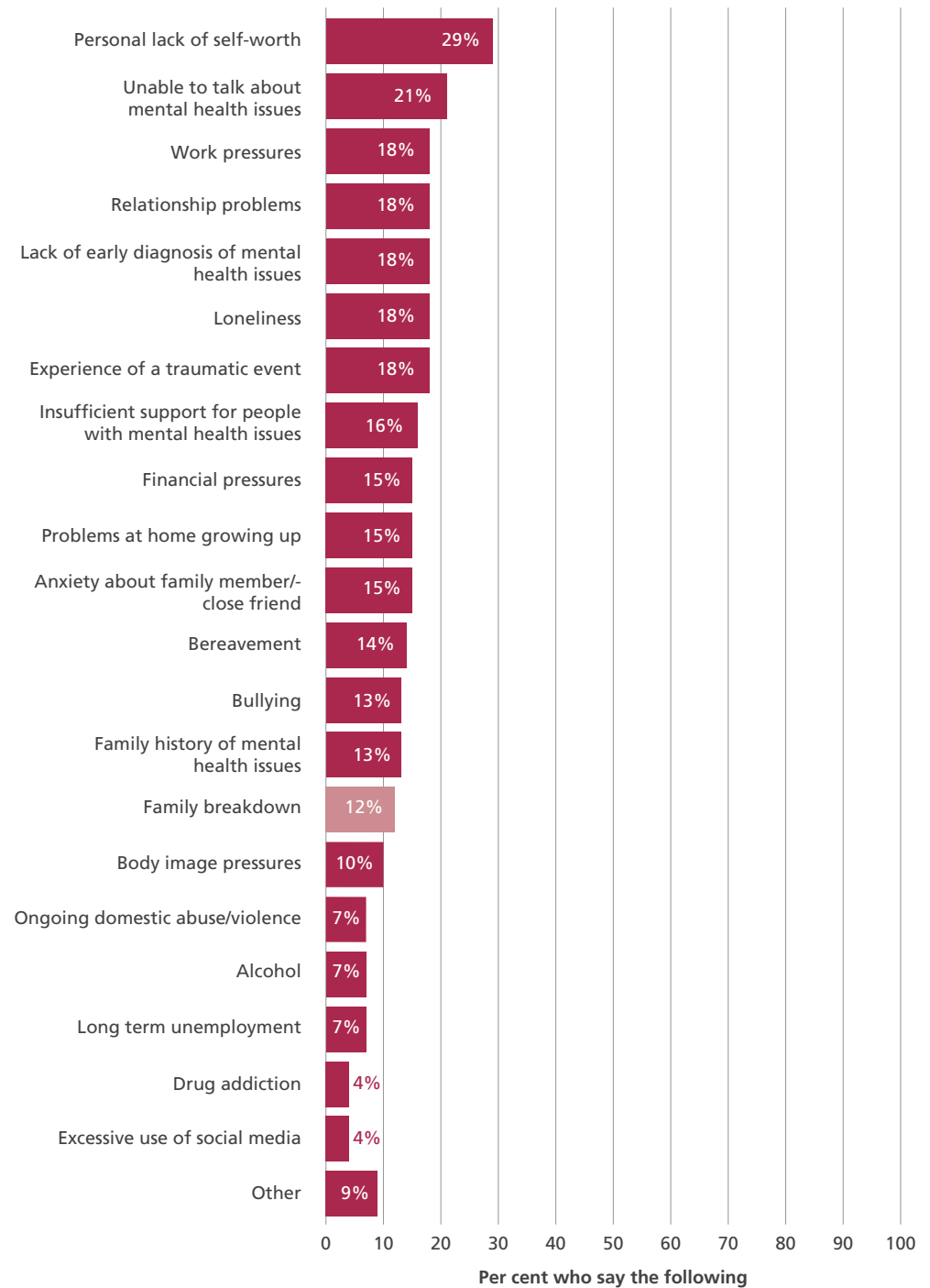
- Seven in ten (71%) 18–24 year-olds who have experienced mental health issues themselves say their experience of mental health issues occurred while they were secondary school age (age 12–18), compared with one third (32%) of adults aged 35–44 who say the same.
- Four in five (82%) adults aged 55–64 say that their own experience of mental health issues occurred when they were aged 19 or older, compared with two in five (42%) 18–24 year-olds who say the same.
- Of those who have experienced mental health issues themselves, more women than men say their own experience of mental health issues occurred while they were at secondary school (age 12–18) (47% vs 23% respectively).

Contributing factors to mental health issues

Three in ten (29%) adults say personal lack of self-worth was a top three contributing factor to their experience of mental health issues.

Q. Top 3 summary: Which, if any, of the following factors do you think contributed to your/ their experience of mental health issues?

Base: if experienced mental health (n=2,316)



- One in ten (12%) adults who have experienced mental health issues say that family breakdown was a contributing factor.
- Three in ten (31%) adults who have experienced mental health issues and are in social grade DE say a personal lack of self-worth contributed to their mental health issues, significantly more than for adults in social grade AB (26%).
- British adults who have experienced mental health issues and who were brought up by one biological parent (16%) or by one biological parent and a significant other (18%) are significantly more likely to say that family breakdown contributed to their experience of mental health issues compared to those brought up by both biological parents (10%).
- One quarter (26%) of adults who have experienced mental health issues and are aged 65 or older say that an inability to talk about mental health issues contributed to their experience.

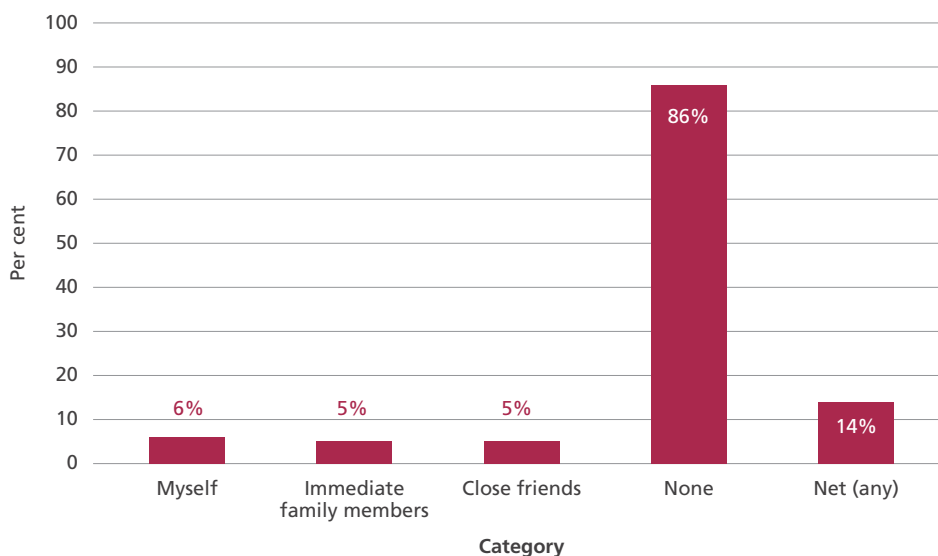
3.8 Homelessness

Experience of homelessness

One in twenty (6%) British adults have experienced homelessness themselves, while one in seven (14%) British adults report having ‘any’¹⁰ experience of homelessness.

One in five (22%) British adults who have experienced homelessness themselves have also experienced family breakdown themselves between the ages of 0 and 18.

Q. Homelessness: Have you, or someone close to you, ever experienced any of the following? Base: All respondents (n=5,000)

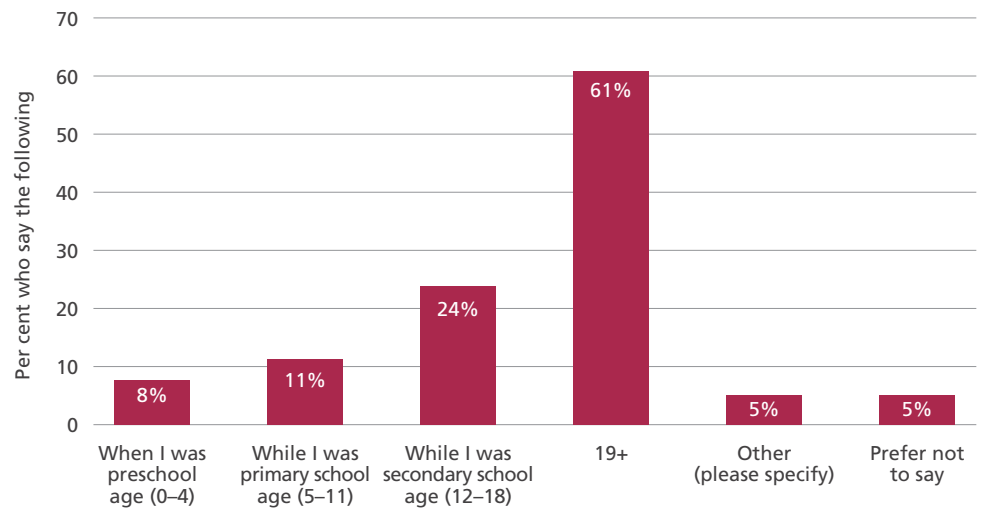


Life stage at which homelessness was experienced

One quarter (24%) of adults who have experienced homelessness themselves say that this occurred while they were at secondary school (age 12–18).

Q. At what life stage did the issue of homelessness occur?

Base: if experienced homelessness 'myself' (n=310)



- Three in five (61%) adults who have experienced homelessness themselves say that this occurred when they were aged 19 or older.
- One in ten (11%) adults who have experienced homelessness themselves say that this occurred while at primary school (age 5–11).

3.9 In trouble with the police

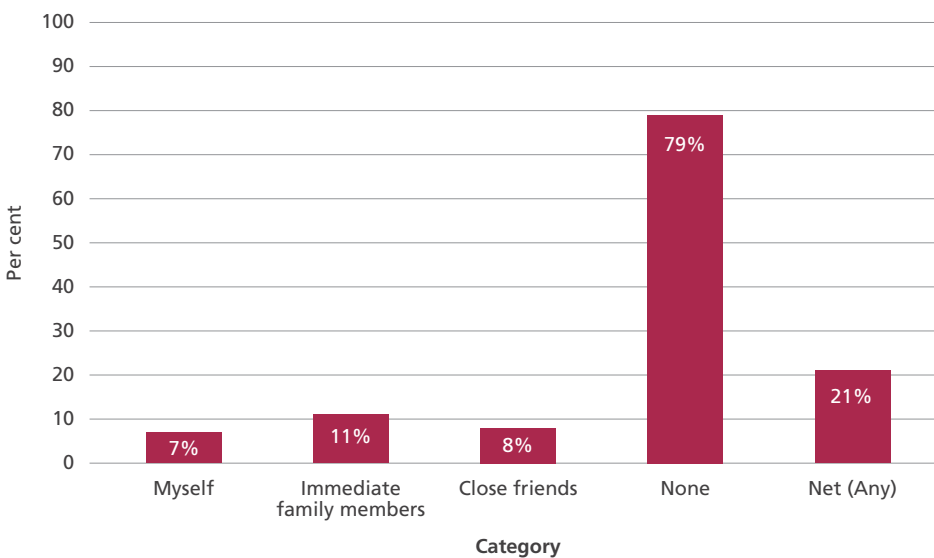
Experience of being in trouble with the police or spending time in prison

One in ten (13%) British adults who were brought up by one biological parent report experience of being in trouble with the police or spending time in prison themselves, while one in twenty (5%) British adults who were brought up by both biological parents report the same.

One in six (17%) British adults who can pay bills and save report 'any'¹¹ experience of being in trouble with the police or spending time in prison, while more than one third (35%) of British adults who struggle to pay bills and often end up in arrears report the same.

Q. In trouble with the police: Have you, or someone close to you, ever experienced any of the following?

Base: All respondents (n=5,000)



- One in ten (10%) British males report being in trouble with the police or spending time in prison themselves, while only 3% of females report the same.
- Half (51%) of British adults who have experienced drug addiction themselves also report being in trouble with the police or spending time in prison themselves.
- Two in five (39%) British adults who have experienced alcoholism themselves also report having experience of being in trouble with the police or spending time in prison themselves.

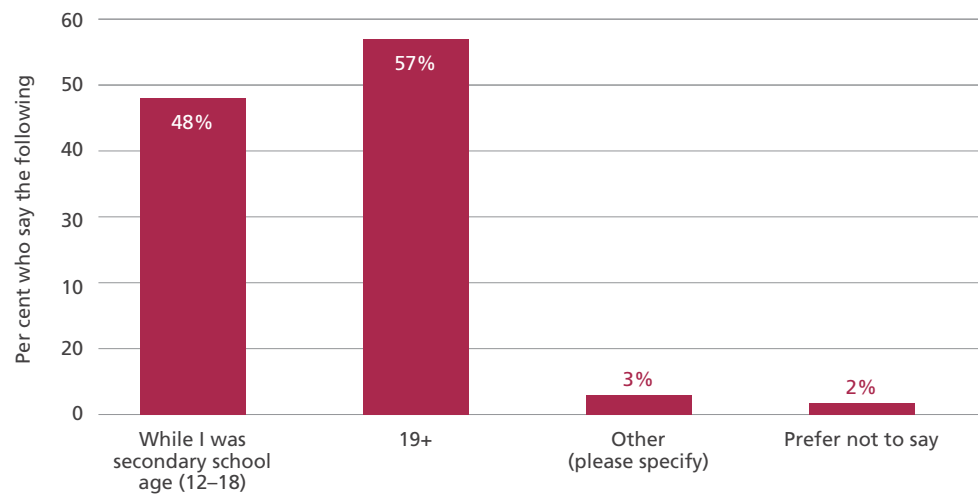
¹¹ 'Any' is defined as being in trouble with the police or spending time in prison experienced by immediate family members, close friends or myself.

Life stage at which person was in trouble with the police or spent time in prison

Approaching half (48%) of British adults who have been in trouble with the police or spent time in prison themselves say this occurred while they were at secondary school (age 12–18).

Q. At what life stage did the issue of being in trouble with the police or spending time in prison occur?

Base: if experienced being in trouble with the police or spent time in prison 'myself' (n=336)



- Approaching three in five (57%) adults who have been in trouble with the police themselves say this occurred when they were aged 19 or older.
- Of those who have been in trouble with the police or spent time in prison and are in receipt of benefits, half (52%) say that their experience of being in trouble with the police or spending time in prison happened when older than 19.

3.10 Teenage pregnancy

Experience of teenage pregnancy

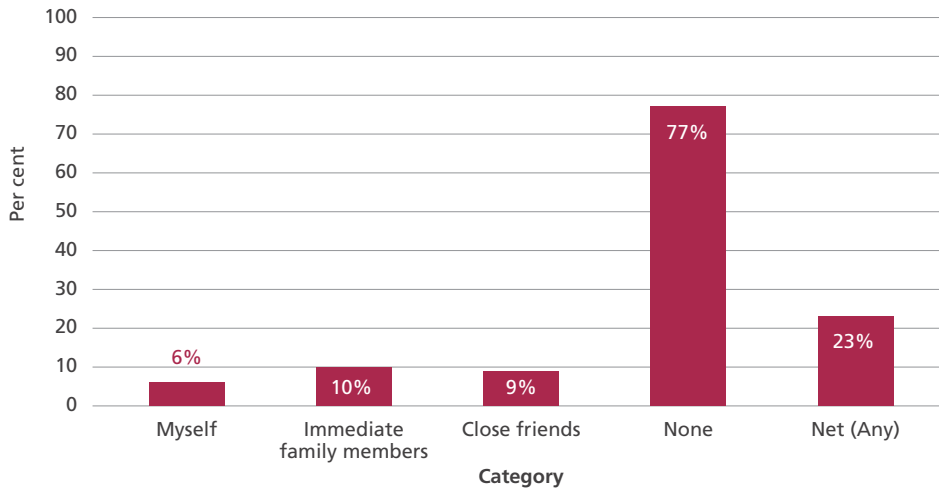
Three in ten (28%) British adults who experienced family breakdown while at preschool (age 0–4) say they have experienced teenage pregnancy themselves.

Two in five (40%) British adults who are single parents report having 'any'¹² experience of teenage pregnancy.

¹² 'Any' is defined as teenage pregnancy experienced by immediate family members, close friends or myself.

Q. Teenage pregnancy: Have you, or someone close to you, ever experienced any of the following?

Base: All respondents (n=5,000)



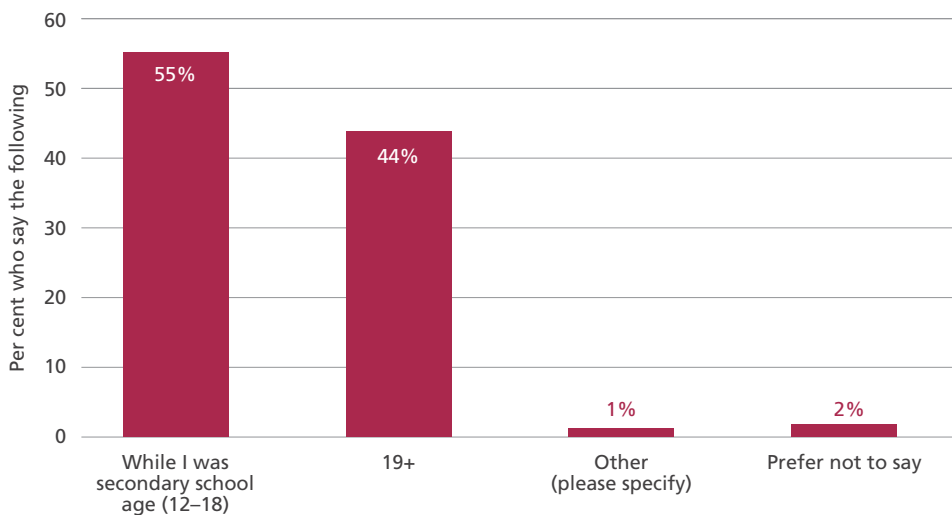
- A quarter (25%) of British adults who experienced homelessness themselves also report having experienced teenage pregnancy themselves.

Life stage at which teenage pregnancy was experienced

Over half (55%) of adults who experienced teenage pregnancy themselves say this occurred while in secondary school (age 12–18).

Q. At what life stage did the issue of teenage pregnancy occur?

Base: if experienced teenage pregnancy 'myself' (n=311)



- Approaching half (44%) of adults who have experienced teenage pregnancy themselves say this occurred when they were aged 19 or older.¹³

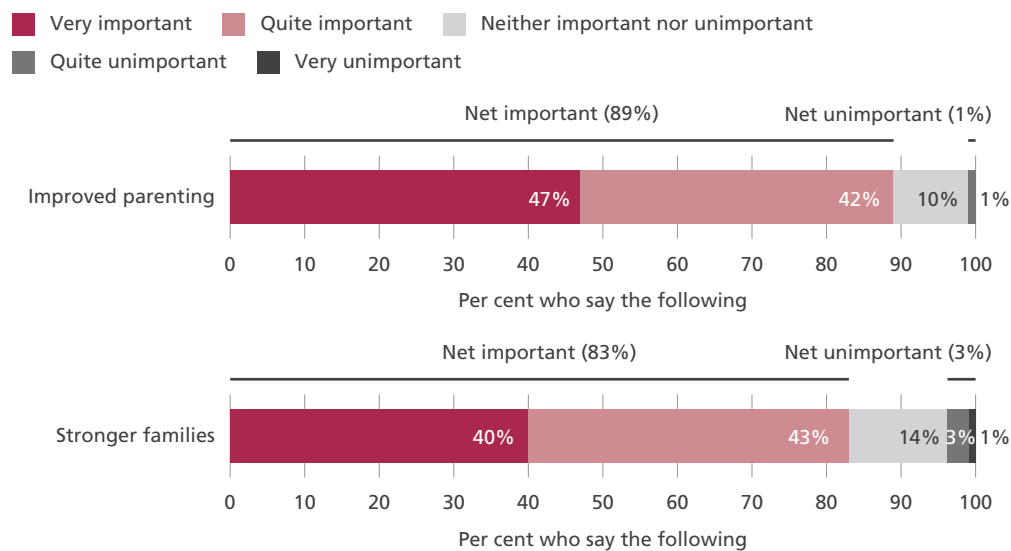
¹³ Which we can only assume would have taken place when they/partner were at the very start of this age bracket.

chapter four

Attitudes towards family breakdown

Q. How important, if at all, do you think these ideas are to addressing Britain's social problems?

Base: all respondents (n=5,000)



4.1 Improved parenting

Nine in ten (89%) British adults say improved parenting is important to addressing Britain's social problems.

- Nearly half (47%) of British adults say improved parenting is **very important** to addressing Britain's social problems.
- Half (50%) of British adults who have experienced educational underachievement themselves say improved parenting is **very important** to addressing Britain's social problems.

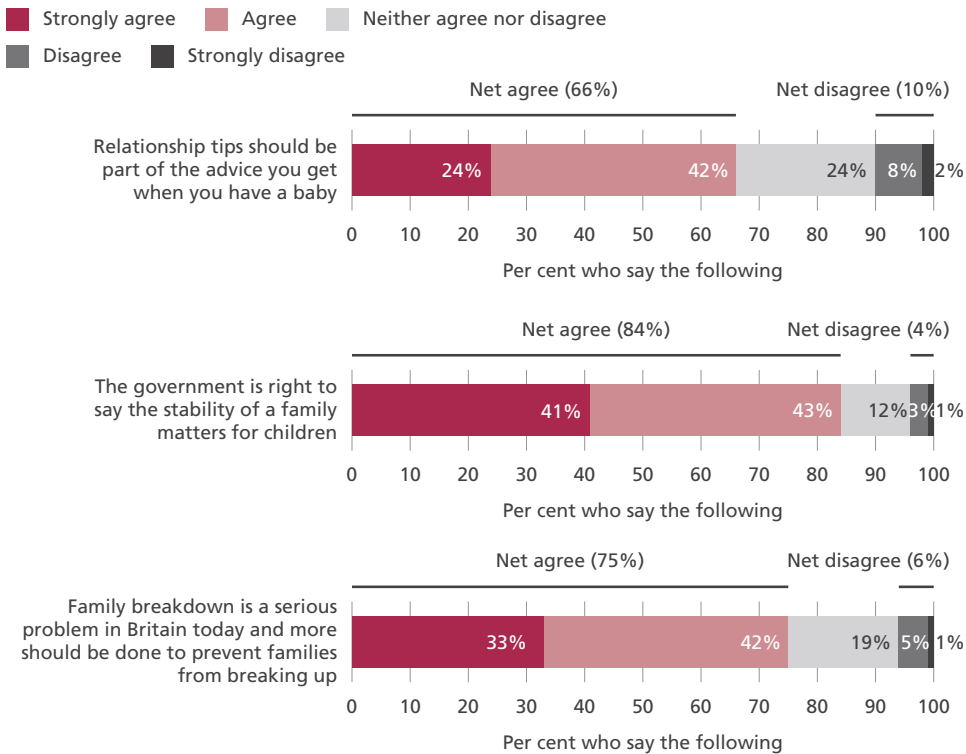
- Nine in ten (91%) British adults who have experienced teenage pregnancy themselves say improved parenting is **important** to addressing Britain's social problems.
- Age is a significant factor in how British adults see the role of improved parenting, with almost all (94%) British adults aged 65+ saying it is **important** to addressing Britain's social problems, while six in seven (85%) 18–24 year-olds say the same.

4.2 Stronger families

Five in six (83%) British adults say stronger families are important to addressing Britain's social problems.

- Men are more likely than women to say that stronger families are **important** to addressing Britain's social problems (86% vs 80%).
- Age is also a factor, as nine in ten British adults (91%) aged 65+ say that stronger families are **important** to addressing Britain's social problems, while only around seven in ten (73%) of 18–24 year-olds say the same.
- Four in five (82%) British adults who are divorced say stronger families are **important** to addressing Britain's social problems.
- Five in six (83%) British adults who have experienced educational underachievement themselves say stronger families are **important** to addressing Britain's social problems.
- Five in six (85%) adults who were brought up by **both** their biological parents say stronger families are **important** to addressing Britain's social problems, compared to three quarters who were brought up by one biological parent (77%) and one biological parent and a significant other (78%) who say the same.
- For nine in ten (91%) of British adults who experienced drug problems in their home, stronger families are considered **important** to addressing Britain's social problems, more so than for others who experienced problems in their home, mental health issues (84%), alcohol problems (85%) or those who acted as a carer growing up (81%).

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? Base: all respondents (n=5,000)



4.3 Relationship tips should be part of the advice you get when you have a baby

Seven in ten (70%) British adults, who are in their second marriage or more, agree that relationship tips should be part of the advice you get when you have a baby.

- Seven in ten men **agree** relationship tips should be part of the advice you get when you have a baby, compared to just over three in five women who agree (69% vs 63%).
- Around seven in ten adults in social grades AB (69%), C1 (67%) and C2 (71%) **agree** relationship tips should be part of the advice you get when you have a baby, significantly more than those in social grade DE (61%).
- Two thirds (66%) of British adults, who have experienced family breakdown themselves, **agree** that relationship tips should be part of the advice you get when you have a baby.
- More than seven in ten (72%) adults aged 18–24 **agree** relationship tips should be part of the advice you get when you have a baby, compared to around three in five 45–54 year-olds (63%) and 55–64 year-olds (58%).

4.4 The government is right to say the stability of a family matters for children

More than four in five (82%) British adults who have experienced family breakdown themselves agree that the government is right to say the stability of a family matters for children.

- Two in five (41%) British adults **strongly agree** that the government is right to say the stability of a family matters for children.
- Five in six (84%) British adults **agree** that the government is right to say the stability of a family matters for children.
- Nine in ten (88%) adults who say they can pay their bills and save **agree** that the government is right to say the stability of a family matters for children, compared to three quarters (77%) of adults who say they can pay bills but have to go without certain things and who say the same.
- More than four in five (81%) British adults whose parents were married before they were born but split up when they were younger than 18 **agree** that the government is right to say the stability of a family matters for children.
- Nine in ten (89%) British adults who are in their second marriage or more **agree** that the government is right to say the stability of a family matters for children.

4.5 Family breakdown is a serious problem in Britain today and more should be done to prevent families from breaking up

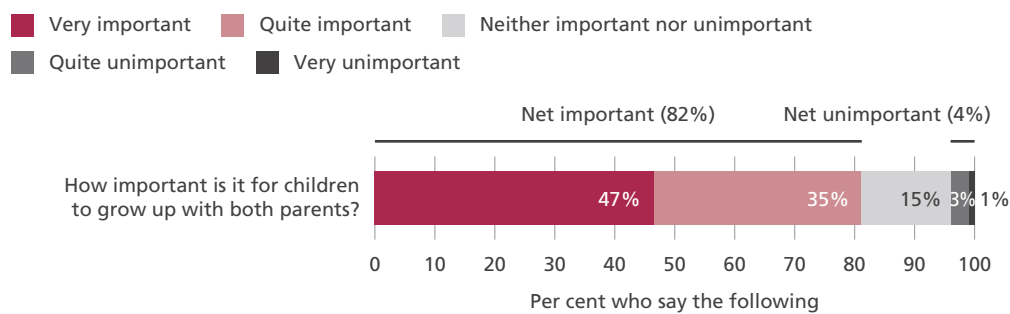
Three quarters (75%) of British adults agree family breakdown is a serious problem in Britain today and more should be done to prevent families from breaking up.

- Four in five (80%) British adults who experienced family breakdown themselves while at preschool (age 0–4) **agree** family breakdown is a serious problem in Britain today and more should be done to prevent families from breaking up.
- Three in four (74%) of those who experienced family breakdown as a child (between the ages of 0 and 18) **agree** that family breakdown is a serious problem in Britain today and more should be done to prevent families from breaking up.
- Two thirds (67%) of those who are divorced **agree** that family breakdown is a serious problem in Britain today and more should be done to prevent families from breaking up.

- Four in five (82%) British adults who have experienced teenage pregnancy themselves **agree** family breakdown is a serious problem in Britain today and more should be done to prevent families from breaking up.
- Over three quarters (77%) of British adults who are in their second marriage or more **agree** family breakdown is a serious problem in Britain today and more should be done to prevent families from breaking up.
- More men than women **agree** family breakdown is a serious problem in Britain today and more should be done to prevent families from breaking up (79% vs 72%).
- Four in five (80%) British adults aged 65 or older **agree** family breakdown is a serious problem in Britain today and more should be done to prevent families from breaking up, significantly more than for any other age group (72–76% for adults aged 18–64).

Q. How important is it for children to grow up with both parents?

Base: all respondents (n=5,000)



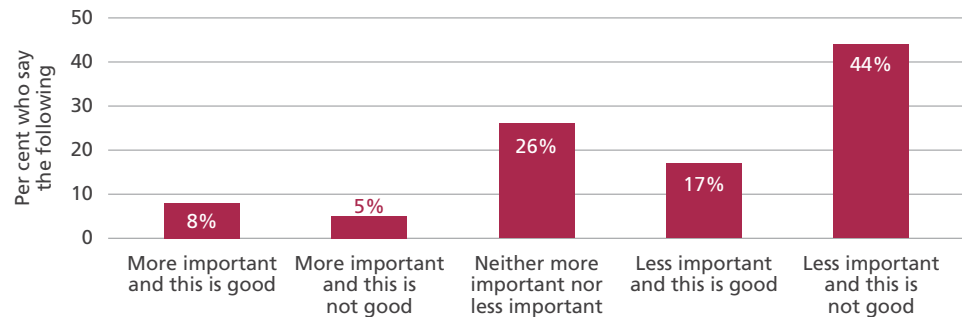
4.6 It is important for children to grow up with both parents

Four in five (82%) British adults say it is important for children to grow up with both parents.

- Three in five (60%) single parents say it is **important** for children to grow up with both parents.
- Three quarters (75%) of British adults who were brought up by one biological parent say it is important for children to grow up with both parents.
- Six in seven (86%) British adults who say they can pay their bills and save also say it is **important** for children to grow up with both parents, but less than three quarters (73%) of adults who say they struggle to pay bills and often end up in arrears, say the same.
- Six in seven (86%) British men say it is **important** for children to grow up with both parents, compared with four in five (78%) women who say the same.

- Five in six (84%) British adults aged 35–44 say it is **important** for children to grow up with both parents; a similar proportion of those aged 65+ (86%) say the same, compared to just over three quarters (77%) of adults aged 18–24.

Q. Over the last few decades, do you think marriage has become more or less important in society? Base: all respondents (n=5,000)



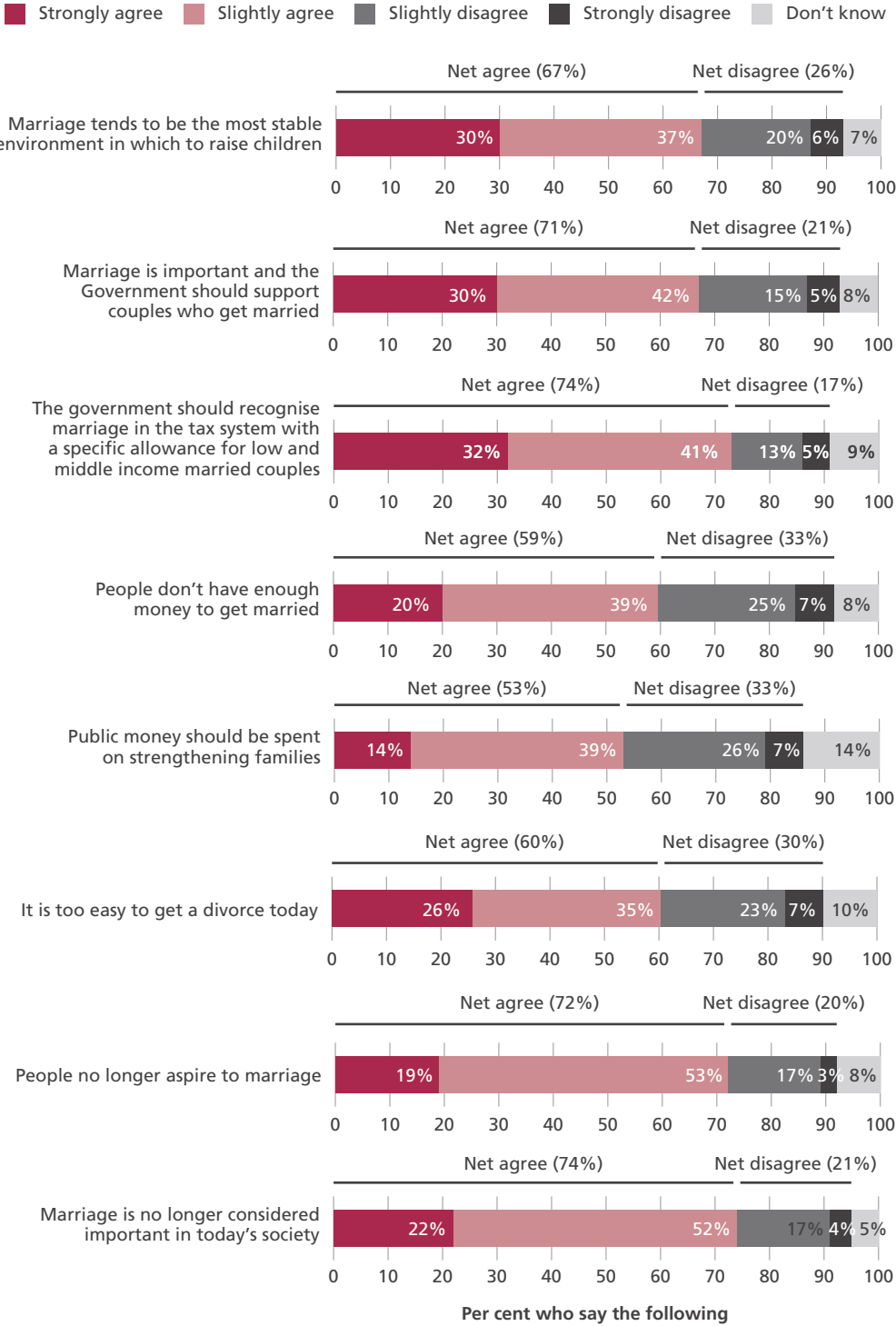
4.7 Has marriage become more or less important?

Two in five (41%) British adults who have experienced family breakdown themselves say marriage has become less important and this is not good.

- More than two in five (44%) British adults say that, over the last few decades, marriage has become less important and this is **not** good.
- Three in five (60%) adults aged 65+ say marriage has become less important and this is **not** good, as do half (50%) of 55–64 year-olds and a similar proportion (45%) of 45–54 year-olds.
- Meanwhile, one quarter (26%) of 18–24 year-olds say marriage has become less important over the last few decades, and that this is good.
- One in five (18%) women say marriage has become less important over the last few decades and this is good, compared to one in seven (15%) men who say the same.
- Approaching half (46%) of British adults who were brought up by both biological parents say marriage has become less important and this is **not** good, while nearly two in five (37%) adults who were brought up by one biological parent say the same.

Three quarters (74%) of British adults agree that marriage is no longer considered important in today's society. The same proportion of British adults (74%) also agree that the government should recognise marriage in the tax system with a specific allowance for low- and middle-income married couples.

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about marriage? Base: all respondents (n=5,000)



4.8 Marriage tends to be the most stable environment in which to raise children

Over half (56%) of British adults who say one or more of their children were born out of marriage agree that marriage is the most stable environment in which to raise children.

- Three quarters (74%) of British adults who say they can pay bills and save **agree** marriage tends to be the most stable environment in which to raise children, while nearly three in five (56%) adults who say they struggle to pay bills and often end up in arrears **agree** that marriage tends to be the most stable environment in which to raise children.
- Seven in ten (72%) adults whose parents married before they were born and are still together **agree** marriage is the most stable environment in which to raise children, more so than any other experience growing up (42–63%).
- Four in five (82%) adults aged 65+ **agree** that marriage is the most stable environment in which to raise children, compared with just over half (54%) of 18–24 year-olds.
- Nearly two in five (37%) adults aged 18–24 **disagree** that marriage is the most stable environment in which to raise children, compared with one in ten (12%) of those aged 65+.

4.9 Marriage is important and the government should support couples who get married

Seven in ten (69%) adults who experienced family breakdown as a child (between the ages of 0 and 18) agree marriage is important and the government should support couples who get married.

- Three quarters (74%) of adults whose parents were married before they were born and are still together **agree** marriage is important and the government should support couples who get married, while three in five (60%) adults whose parents married before they were born but split up when they were older than 18 say the same.
- Four in five (80%) adults aged 65+ **agree** marriage is important and the government should support couples who get married, while less than two thirds (63%) of 18–24 year-olds say the same.
- More men than women **agree** marriage is important and the government should support couples who get married (75% vs 68% respectively).

4.10 The government should recognise marriage in the tax system with a specific allowance for low- and middle-income married couples

- Five in six (84%) adults who **agree** marriage tends to be the most stable environment in which to raise children also agree that the government should recognise marriage in the tax system with a specific allowance for low – and middle-income married couples.

4.11 People do not have enough money to get married

Four in five (81%) adults who say they struggle to pay bills and often end up in arrears agree that people do not have enough money to get married, while only half (50%) of adults who say they can pay bills and save say the same.

- Two thirds (66%) of British adults who are single **agree** that people do not have enough money to get married.
- Over three quarters (76%) of adults aged 18–24 **agree** that people do not have enough money to get married, while only two in five (41%) of those aged 65+ and half (50%) of those aged 55–64 **agree**.

4.12 Public money should be spent on strengthening families

Around half (53%) of British adults agree public money should be spent on strengthening families, while a third (33%) disagree.

- Approaching three in five (57%) adults aged 25–34 **agree** public money should be spent on strengthening families, as do a similar proportion (63%) of 34–44 year-olds, while half of 18–24 year-olds (49%) and 55–64 year-olds (49%) agree.

4.13 It is too easy to get a divorce

- Nearly two thirds (63%) of British adults who are in their second marriage or more **agree** it is too easy to get a divorce today.

Methodology

ComRes interviewed 5,000 British adults online between 12th and 26th September 2018.

Representative sample

Quotas have been applied to the data to ensure that it is representative of the British population, based on age, gender, socio-economic grade, and region.

		Sample size	Proportion of total sample (%)
Total		5,000	100
Gender	Male	2,457	49
	Female	2,533	51
Age	18–24	553	11
	25–34	860	17
	35–44	785	16
	45–54	907	18
	55–64	757	15
	65 +	1,138	23
Region	Scotland	287	6
	North-West	397	8
	North-East	129	3
	Yorkshire & The Humber	340	7
	Wales	275	6
	West Midlands	517	10
	East Midlands	463	9
	South-West	569	11
	South-East	979	20
	Eastern	393	8
Social grade	London	651	13
	AB	1,436	29
	C1	1,110	22
	C2	499	10
	DE	1,914	38

When interpreting the figures in this report, please note that only statistically significant differences (at the 95% level) are reported and that the effect of weighting is taken into account when significance tests are conducted. Significant differences are highlighted in the analytical report and are relative to other directly relevant subgroups (e.g. men vs women). Findings marked with an asterisk (*) should be regarded as indicative, rather than representative, due to small sample size (50–100<).

Key drivers analysis: logistic regression models

To ascertain the impact of family breakdown on each of the ten dependent variables we performed ten logistic regressions. In each of these we initially controlled for four demographic variables: Gender, Age, Socio-economic grade, and Ethnicity. We then controlled for the nine other social issues (in Q22 and Q13). Following this, we evaluated whether “Experienced Family Breakdown under the age of 18” had a statistically significant effect over and above the demographics and other social issues experienced which were already in the model.

Under this approach, the four demographics mentioned above were controlled for in all models during the first step using Forced Entry, but different social issues experienced were entered during the second step using a backwards stepwise approach. For models where “Experienced Family Breakdown under the age of 18” was entered during the third step, a final “backwards elimination” was performed to determine if this made any of the other social issue predictors in the model redundant, and any redundant predictors were eliminated. The multivariate effects (odds ratios) were presented for the full and final model after all of these steps.

Definition of social Issues in the survey

The social issues discussed in this report have been self-defined by respondents in the survey. A reasonable level of variation should therefore be expected with regard to the definitions of the different social issues tested.

Appendix: Regression model results

Pseudo R-Square

	Absent Parent (%)	Educational underachievement (%)	Drug addiction (%)	Alcoholism (%)	Benefits (%)	Debt (%)	Homelessness (%)	Mental health issues (%)	Prison (%)	Teen pregnancy (%)
Cox and Snell	4.3	11.9	12.5	12.1	17.5	14.4	15.0	18.8	14.4	9.2
Nagelkerke	8.9	20.6	46.4	35.1	28.8	23.9	40.2	27.8	37.1	24.6
McFadden	6.6	14.8	42.6	30.5	20.6	16.9	34.9	18.6	31.6	20.6

Summary of odds ratios across all models

		Absent Parent	Educational underachievement	Drug addiction	Alcoholism	Benefits	Debt	Homelessness	Mental health issues	Prison	Teen pregnancy
Gender	Male	0.8	1.6	1.9	2.7	0.9	1.2	1.0	0.6	5.0	0.2
	Female										
Age	18-24	0.3	0.8	34.8	1.3	0.6	0.7	1.0	6.4	2.0	0.7
	25-34	0.8	0.7	28.0	1.1	0.8	1.3	2.2	4.5	2.1	0.8
	35-44	0.8	0.9	20.2	1.1	1.1	1.7	1.9	3.1	1.5	0.9
	45-54	1.4	0.7	4.5	1.0	1.4	1.8	1.7	3.7	1.7	0.5
	55-64	1.3	0.8	4.8	0.5	1.4	1.3	2.3	2.0	2.0	0.8
	65+										
SEG	A	0.9	0.5	1.8	1.0	0.6	1.0	1.0	0.9	1.2	2.1
	B	1.0	0.7	1.2	1.1	0.4	1.0	0.9	0.9	0.6	0.9
	C1	1.0	0.8	1.1	1.3	0.6	1.4	0.9	1.1	1.0	1.2
	C2	1.1	0.8	1.6	1.7	0.5	1.1	1.2	0.8	0.7	1.2
	D	1.1	1.2	1.1	1.7	0.9	1.3	1.2	0.8	0.8	1.7
	E										
Ethnicity	Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	0.8	1.8	1.1	0.6	0.8	1.3	3.5	0.3	0.5	2.1
	White Non-British	0.9	0.9	0.7	1.3	1.0	0.8	1.6	0.5	0.9	0.8
	Mixed/Arab/Other	1.3	1.1	0.7	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.5	0.4	0.9	0.7
	Asian/Asian British	0.8	1.6	1.4	0.7	1.0	0.6	1.9	0.4	0.5	0.4
	White British										
Does the following apply?	I am not with the parent of at least one of my children	N/A	N/S	1.6	N/S	1.6	1.5	N/S	N/S	1.4	2.9
Have you experienced	Educational underachievement	N/S	N/A	1.7	1.4	1.6	2.3	1.7	2.1	1.7	1.5
	Drug addiction	N/S	1.7	N/A	3.8	1.6	N/S	2.2	2.6	2.9	3.1
	Alcoholism	N/S	N/S	4.6	N/A	1.6	1.5	2.3	N/S	2.2	2.1
	Reliance on benefits	1.6	1.7	1.9	1.8	N/A	2.9	3.2	2.6	1.3	2.1
	Serious personal debt	1.5	2.2	1.5	1.5	2.9	N/A	1.9	1.5	1.7	N/S
	Homelessness	N/S	1.6	2.4	2.1	3.0	1.8	N/A	1.9	3.7	1.5
	Mental health issues	N/S	2.2	1.8	2.9	2.6	1.5	2.1	N/A	1.9	N/S
	In trouble with the police/ Spent time in prison	N/S	1.7	3.5	2.2	N/S	1.6	3.9	1.8	N/A	2.2
	Teenage pregnancy	2.7	1.4	2.7	2.0	2.0	1.3	1.7	N/S	2.1	N/A
Family Breakdown (Under 18)	1.9	1.9	N/S	1.8	1.4	1.6	2.3	1.7	2.0	1.7	

Key

- N/A Not applicable
- N/S Not selected in the model
- Not significant
- More than 2 times more likely
- Up to 2 times more likely
- Up to 2 times less likely
- More than 2 times less likely



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