



Young People: Changing times



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This booklet has been produced to accompany the BBC One series **Child of Our Time**. The programmes were made in partnership with **The Open University**.

The latest programmes in the long running **Child of our Time** series catch up with the families now the children have reached the age of 16. This booklet includes many features about the lives of young people and the world in which they live.

OpenLearn – the home of **free** learning from **The Open University**

In addition to the information in this booklet, you can also find a wealth of fascinating and valuable information about supporting and helping young people on **OpenLearn** – the home of free learning from The Open University. To find out more go to

open.edu/openlearn/childofourtime16

The history of youth

The history of youth

All through history, babies have been born; their bodies have grown larger, and over a number of years they have become full-grown bodies. These bodies have gone through a series of physical changes that result in sexual maturity and, at the end of this, they usually become able to bear children of their own. But have these stages always been the same? Have there always been teenagers?

We have an idea that there is a very particular biological stage between childhood and adulthood: a time of surging hormones, rebellion, and risk-taking. We have a word to describe this too: adolescence. Adolescence is now regarded as a biological stage that all humans go through, but the idea of adolescence was only invented about one hundred years ago. An American psychologist, G. Stanley Hall, made the argument that adolescence was a time of 'storm and stress', and this has shaped our ideas of youth ever since. The idea of the 'teenager' came even later, as you will see.

Although it's true that there are many biological changes going on in young people's bodies, society influences how we understand these changes. The hormones that eventually shape adult bodies start flowing around age seven or eight – long before becoming a teen – and, especially for girls, puberty often starts around this time too. The emotional changes of the teenage years are influenced by society's expectations and educational demands, as well as physical changes. These experiences shape the brain, just as the brain shapes experience.

What we can say for certain is that no two young people are the same. Their experiences are shaped by their family, friends, where they live, and when they live. In the fifteenth century, for instance, life for a rich girl in England would have been very different from life for a poor boy.

This section offers some snapshots of young people's lives through the recent history of the western world.



James Dean
Icon of rebellious youth

Industrial work

From 1760, the Industrial Revolution changed the landscape of the country. New mechanical manufacturing processes and technological advances meant a shift away from hand production of goods, and the development of mass production. Factories and mines needed workers; there was a huge increase in the need for work and many of those workers were young, as children were paid much less than adults. There was limited education, and children in this era started work at an average of 10 years old, in textile factories and mines.

Conditions in most of these locations were very difficult. Mining meant the risk of death from explosions, and a high likelihood of developing serious diseases. Factory work was equally dangerous. Parents of children were often aware of bad conditions, but unable to take action as they needed the money from their labour to survive.

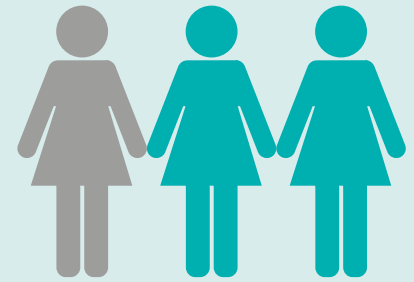
There was a backlash against child labour in the Victorian era. Popular journalists and writers, such as Charles Dickens, raised awareness of the poor conditions children were working under, shocking middle-class readers. New laws were brought in to restrict children's employment in 1833 and 1842, particularly in dangerous situations such as mines and factories. But these laws applied only to young

children, banning work for children under 9, and restricting hours for those aged 9–13. Boys and girls older than that were seen to be adults, not in need of any protection.

By the end of the nineteenth century, education was compulsory until the age of 12, marking a change from earlier practice and introducing the idea that childhood was a time for education and protection from the world of work. But young people over the age of 12 were not included in this. Although wealthier young people (especially boys) might be educated for much longer, preparing them for work in professions such as law, or factory management, poorer young people were still expected to work. And they remained subject to widespread abuse and poor treatment in the workplace.



Hard work in a textile mill



Young servants

In 1891, one in three young women aged 15–20 in the UK were estimated to be working as domestic servants. These working-class girls might go into service from the age of 12, often moving out of their family home to live in the servants' quarters of wealthier homes.

They would carry out all sorts of household duties: cleaning, washing, cooking and serving meals. They might look after children. In large houses, there might be a whole range of servants, with their own hierarchies and opportunities for young women to progress, but many less wealthy families might hire one young woman as a maid of all work.

For these young women, there was no sense that youth was a time of freedom from care and responsibility: it was a time when they left the space of childhood, and the care of their family, and made their own way. They did have friends and relationships, of course.

Some young women were saving up money for marriage and setting up a house of their own, and some were contributing money to their family.

Life for the young women these maids were serving was very different. They were generally preparing for marriage, children, and running their own household. But this also involved receiving education, often from tutors or governesses. Inequalities between rich and poor were extremely acute at this point in time.



Young Victorian maidservants in England

Young life in wartime

The twentieth century brought with it global conflict and, as a result, sweeping changes in young people's lives.

Vast numbers of young men died in the First World War, between 1914 and 1918. The official minimum age to sign up for the armed services was 18, but 250,000 underage soldiers fought in the British armed services in World War I. Recruitment officers generally did not check young people's ages, and the minimum height requirement was only 5'3". There was a very strong social drive to enlist to fight: the army was advertising for volunteers and, of course, it offered the prospect of employment. They were sometimes sent home when they admitted their real age, but many fought and died in hard conditions in the trenches.

In the 1940s, at the outbreak of World War II, working-class boys would leave school by the age of 14 and go into manual work. Again, some young men were keen to join up with the armed services, and lied about their age to do so. On the other side in the war, in Nazi Germany, 8.8 million young people were members of the Hitler Youth, training for war and other physical activity. Towards the end of the war, tens of thousands of 16 and 17-year-olds were sent to the front lines and suffered extremely high casualty rates.



At the same time, young Jewish people (and young people from other targeted groups) in Nazi Germany and across Eastern Europe were being persecuted and murdered. One of the most famous accounts is that of Anne Frank, who hid with her family in a small set of rooms for two years, and died at the age of 15 in a concentration camp. Her diary details her frustration with life under confinement, her stormy relationships with her family, her hopes for her future as a writer, and her growing romance with a young man confined with her.



A young recruit is measured up

The invention of the teenager

The first use of the word 'teenager' came in the 1940s; in 1944, the American magazine LIFE ran a feature introducing 'the teen-ager' as a peculiar new species of human. But it was in the 1950s, after the Second World War, that teenagers became seen as a widespread, recognisable phenomenon – with their own fashions and language, and their desire to break away from their parents' restrictive values.

At this point, the economy was booming in most western countries. After the deprivation of the war years, consumer goods and markers of prosperity were available to more people than ever before. Young people had more money to spend on their own style and leisure. Television became widespread, adding to the impact of the cinema in creating a culture that could be shared across the world. In popular culture, figures like the actor James Dean became icons for teenage disillusionment and rebellion.



The popularisation of the motorcar had a huge impact on young people's lives and relationships. It was a symbol of freedom, and took many young people places they could never before have gone. The car could also be a place of socialising in itself. It allowed young people to

explore romance and sexual activity away from the restrictions of their parents; and, in a time before hormonal contraception, rates of pregnancy among teenagers went up. At the same time, marriage rates for young people shot up: abortion was illegal, and it was still seen as unacceptable to be pregnant and unmarried. So this freedom, perhaps, was still an illusion.

It wasn't just culture and style that was changing. The Education Act of 1944 made education compulsory up until the age of 15 (and soon to be 16) in the UK, meaning that the period before this left young people primarily dependent on their parents. This was a clear indication that youth was seen as a time for education, not for independent living and working.



The car as a social hub

Counterculture

The 1960s are widely seen as a decade of social and political upheaval, and young people were at the centre of this change: a wave of anti-authoritarianism.

The invention of the contraceptive pill meant that sexual activity no longer carried such risk of pregnancy, and this was a time before the risk of AIDS. This 'sexual revolution' had a huge effect on young women in particular, and contributed to their changing roles in society. Many young people rejected traditional ideas of marriage and domesticity. Some young people sought pleasure through recreational drug use.

Young people were also fighting against political and social institutions they saw as oppressive. In an age when nuclear war seemed a constant threat, young people were

agitating for peace. In the USA, many African and Caribbean American young people joined the Civil Rights movement for racial equality. Women's liberation movements began to fight for women's equality, in pay and in relationships, raising awareness of domestic and sexual violence. Established ideas, and the organisations that upheld them, became suspicious.

But, of course, although this is the headline picture of the 1960s, in reality, many young people led less spectacular lives. Many established social norms remained strong; traditional gender roles were still influential,



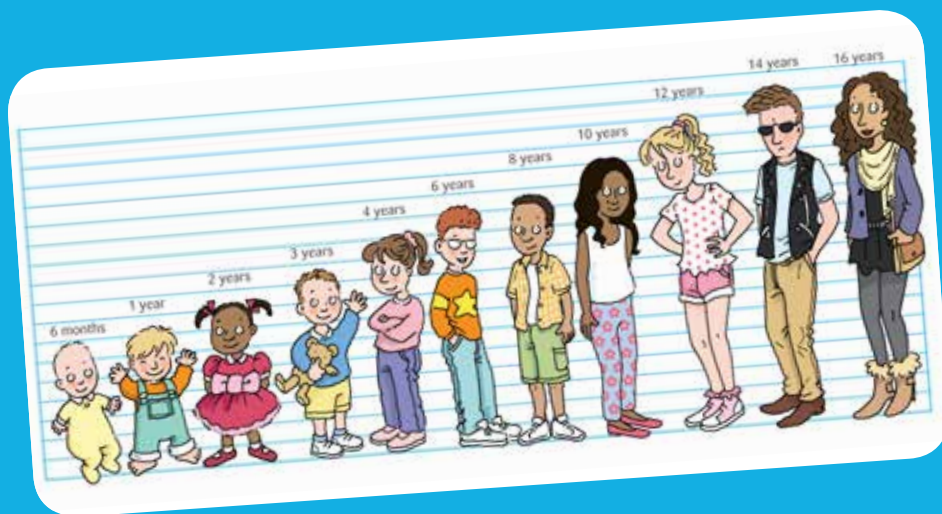
1968 protest march in London

and young women who did become pregnant were still viewed with hostility. School, work and making relationships carried on for many – with all the drama these everyday experiences bring.

PEACE
& LOVE



Changing bodies



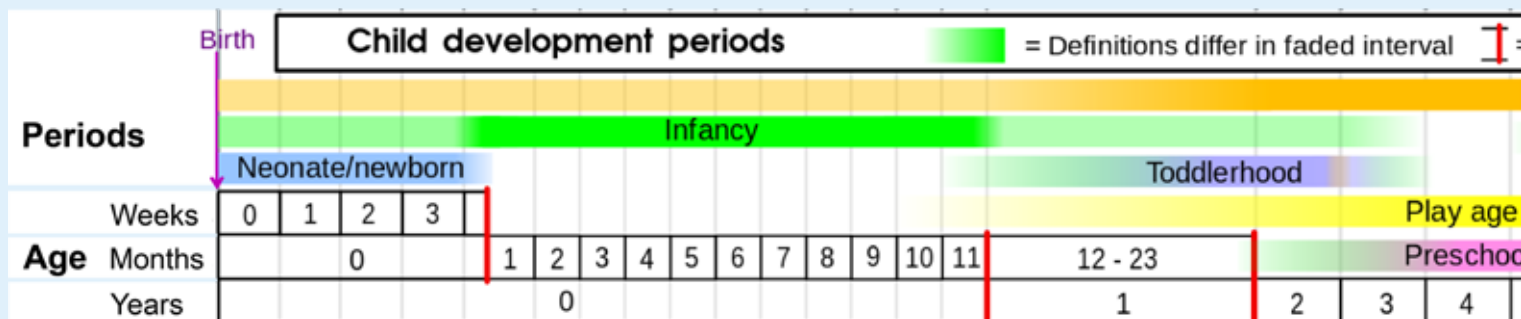
The **biological construction of childhood** refers to the period during which children grow and develop until they reach biological maturity. It is limited to a specific age range, usually 0–18 years. To many of us, this appears to be a ‘common sense’ approach to individuals’ progress from birth to adulthood.

However, it is important to question whether childhood is a universal process or whether childhood experiences are influenced by different social and cultural environments. Not every culture across the globe has the same ideas: for example, some cultures don’t recognise a stage called ‘youth’ (see the section ‘The history of youth’ in this booklet). The **social construction of childhood** reasons that, rather than strictly determined by biology, ‘childhood’ is an idea that is created within each society. Cultural ideas about childhood affect how adults treat children and what children are allowed to do.

How do children ‘become’ adults?

It is generally agreed that there are **some** basic differences between adults and children. Firstly, that children are both physically and mentally less mature than adults. Secondly, that children are dependent upon adults to meet their basic needs, such as providing food, shelter and emotional support. Finally,

that, unlike adults, children are not able to run their own lives yet and cannot be held responsible for their own actions. Various theories have been developed regarding childhood and how children and young people grow into adults. Two main approaches are the biological and the social constructions of childhood.



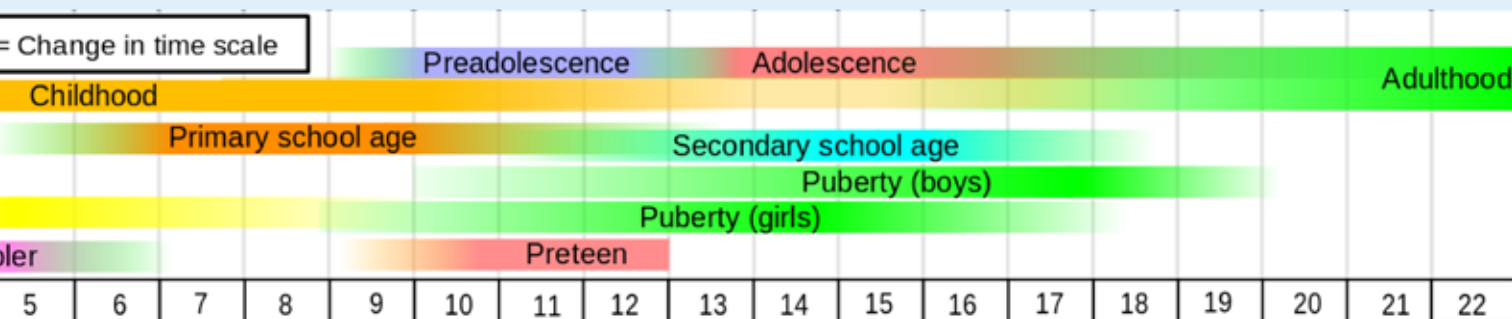
Normalising stages

There are issues associated with stating that all young people will go through all stages at the same time. You can probably remember people from your time growing up who did not 'develop' at the same stage as everyone else. The issue with creating stages is that it normalises certain things and, as a result, if a young person doesn't conform to those stages then they are, by definition, 'abnormal'. Children and young people are becoming ever more aware of how they measure up to other people. Whether it is their clothes, weight or the grades that they get, young people – and now, seemingly, young children – are feeling the pressure to conform.

This sets challenges for services that aim to meet the needs of children and young people. They must take into account the very varied levels of physical

and mental maturity of children and young people, as well as the needs of those from different cultural backgrounds and those with complex issues, such as a physical disability.

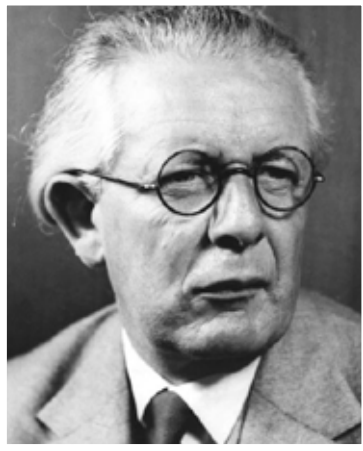
As they grow, young people are establishing their identity and finding out where they belong in the world. At this stage in their lives their identity is forming, and so too is their resilience. While it is important that we ensure that young people meet certain milestones in their development at roughly the right time, it is also important that we support them to be confident that they have the rest of their lives to move through these stages of development.



Leading theorists in child development

Three leading theorists in child development are:

Jean Piaget
(1896–1980)



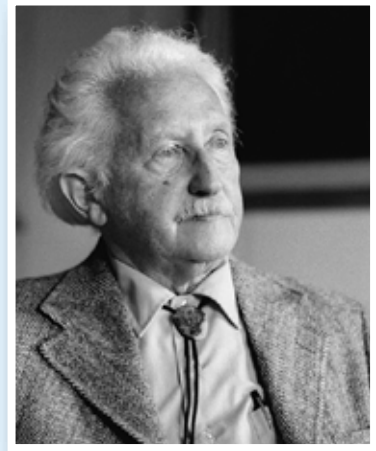
Jean Piaget was a Swiss clinical psychologist known for his ground-breaking work in child development. He described his work as ‘genetic epistemology’ or the origins of thinking. He is known as a ‘constructivist’ as he proposed that children are born equipped to construct their own knowledge about the world whereas ‘behaviourists’, the dominant approach at the time, argued that people have no free will and that a person’s environment determines their behaviour. Piaget’s research in this area was specifically concerned with children and he is probably most well-known for his theory of 4 universal stages of cognitive development, or how children construct their mental model of the world.

Lev Vygotsky
(1896–1934)



Lev Vygotsky was a Soviet psychologist. Vygotsky’s theories stress the vital role of social interaction in the development of cognition, and he believed strongly that community plays a central role in the process of “making meaning”. This is known as a sociocultural approach to cognitive development. Vygotsky’s work has formed the foundation of what has become known as Social Development Theory which contends that social learning tends to precede development, unlike Piaget’s theory that children’s development must precede their learning. Both Vygotsky and Piaget were working on their theories at around the same time (1920s and 30s) though with Vygotsky dying in 1934 at the age of 38 his work is incomplete.

Erik Erikson
(1902–1994)



Erik Erikson was a German-born American developmental psychologist and psychoanalyst probably best known for his theory of psychosocial development. His theory was a lifespan model of development, taking in five stages up to the age of 18 years and three further stages in adulthood. Though Erikson emphasised the adolescent period he believed that there was room for growth and development throughout life. Erikson placed such a great emphasis on the period of adolescence as he believed it was a crucial stage for developing a person’s identity. This is because it is usually at this time that young people enter into puberty, become more independent from their families and make choices for their future.

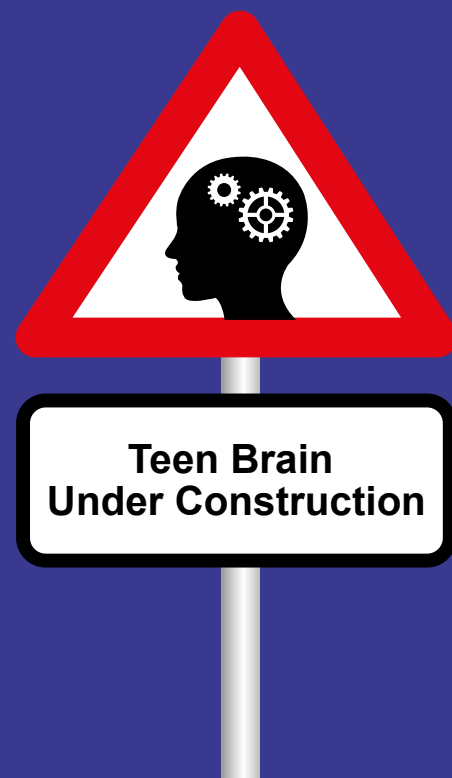
New Theories

Theories in child development have been tested and revised by generations of academics. With innovations in science, we are developing our understanding of how our bodies work. Advances in research in the area of neuroscience mean that we are able to understand much more about how our brains work. This has allowed researchers to explore the idea of 'the teenage brain'. This approach asserts that there are some differences between the structure and function of the brains of teenagers and adults.

One criticism of this idea is that one common procedure used to look at the human brain, Functional MRI, is still highly experimental. Also, it is not the only way we can explore and try to understand human behaviour;

for example, it cannot explain why all young people do not behave in the same way. In some ways, this is not a new debate. Academics have been arguing over the extent to which human behaviour is determined by our genes or by our experiences and environment for many years. This is known as the 'nature–nurture debate'.

As the tools that are used to explore the human brain are developing all the time, as is the science that underpins these ideas, the evidence base is growing. It is important to take this into consideration and to think about young people's lives from a range of different perspectives, being careful not to use these theories to support negative stereotyping of young people.



Young people: what's the problem?

Young people: what's the problem?

The lives of young people are often portrayed in the media and discussed in government policy in terms of 'problems' or 'crises'. Sometimes, this is about problems young people are believed to be experiencing; more frequently, it is about young people actually being the problem. Society is inevitably concerned about its young people, and what kind of adults they will become. Young people are seen as our future and any sign that there might be a problem generates anxiety.

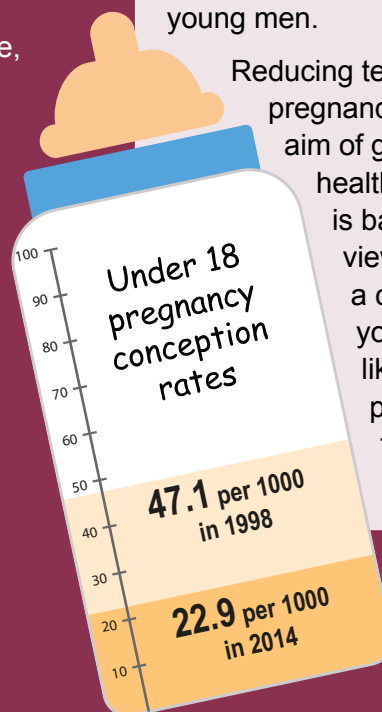
But anxiety about, and disapproval of, young people is hardly new. There is evidence that each generation has looked disapprovingly upon the next generation of young people coming up behind them. Are today's young people any worse? Are they in a state of crisis? Are we right to see them in terms of problems?

At different points in time, different issues become the focus of public and media debate; this section highlights just a few of these issues and asks 'what's the problem?'

Teenage pregnancy

From time to time, there is public concern about 'too many' teenage girls getting pregnant, even though surveys show that the general population consistently overestimates the numbers of teenagers having babies. This, in turn, gives rise to worries about the responsibility – or lack of responsibility – of young men.

Reducing teenage pregnancy is an important aim of government health policy. This is based on the view that having a child when young is more likely to result in poorer outcomes for both the teenage parent



and the child, in terms of health, well-being and the likelihood of both the parent and child living in long-term poverty. Government strategies have primarily focussed on the provision of information and improved access to services.

Rates of teenage pregnancy in the UK are amongst the highest in Western Europe. Under 18 conception rates in England and Wales, however, have been falling for many years: from 47.1 per 1000 in 1998 to 22.9 per 1000 in 2014, which is the lowest level since 1969. Rates are higher in Scotland, but these are also falling.

For some young people, having a baby can be positive, a turning point in their lives.

Historically, teenage pregnancy has not always been seen in the same way: changing social structures and family forms have changed our perception of the 'right' time. It might be that the focus of attention is shifting to the increasing numbers of women in their forties now having children.

Equally, it is a source of debate as to whether the 'problem' is the age at which women have children, or whether the social policies are in place to support them. Economic disadvantage can be a contributory factor as well as a consequence of early pregnancy.

Mental health

Concerns have been raised about the state of the mental health of today's young people: depression, anorexia, self-harm and drug-related psychosis have all been cited as being on the increase. These concerns are shared by many mental health charities and the professionals who work with young people.

It is likely that 10 per cent of children and young people (aged 5–16 years) have a clinically diagnosable mental problem. The late teenage years are a peak time for the emergence of mental health problems: half of all lifetime mental health problems start in the teenage years. Rates of mental health diagnosis are particularly high for young offenders and young people in care.

But is the situation getting worse? Accurate statistics are hard to get. Many of the figures currently quoted have been taken from a large-scale survey conducted in 2005, and mental health organisations argue that addressing this lack of information should be a priority.

Another complication is the way definitions can change or expand to include states that are undoubtedly unpleasant but were not previously

diagnosed as mental illness. Children and young people are also more likely than adults to have behavioural issues or problems with conduct categorised as a mental illness. The rate of prescribing drugs for these issues has steadily increased.

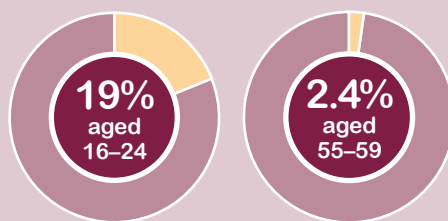
Are the pressures of modern life uniquely difficult for young people today? There are indications that there might be rising levels of psychological distress: rates of admission to hospital as a result of self-harm have increased significantly and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services report more and more complex referrals – at a time of diminishing resources.



Drink and drugs

Young people are far more likely to take drugs that are categorised as illegal than older people. Roughly 19 per cent of 16 to 24-year-olds reported taking illegal drugs in the last year, compared to 2.4 per cent of 55 to 59-year-olds. Rates are more than twice as high for young men as for young women, and higher in urban, rather than rural, areas. Drug use carries health risks and their illegality also creates the risk of coming into conflict with the law. Perhaps, surprisingly, the evidence suggests drug use by young people has been going down steadily since 1996.

Cannabis is by far the most frequently used drug. The problematic use of cannabis and its legal status continue to be controversial topics: it is both



reported taking illegal drugs (2014/15)

highlighted as a cause of mental health problems in young people, and the subject of campaigns for legalisation and use in pain management.

Drinking by young people, and the associated behaviour on the streets of cities at weekends, is a frequent source of media attention and public concern. Young people actually drink less regularly than those aged 45–64 but are more likely

than any other age group to consume more than the weekly recommended limit in one day. This suggests that 'binge drinking' remains an issue but, as with drugs, rates of binge drinking appear to be falling amongst young people.

Rates of alcohol consumption have been rising for older people and increasingly this is being recognised as a problem, particularly in terms of costs to the health service. This is not to downplay the health and social consequences of alcohol use for the young, but issues linked to young people can be more visible, less private, and are, therefore, easier to point to as being a problem.

Education

Every year the education system is presented as being in crisis and subject to continuous government reform. Are young people completing their education with sufficient qualifications? Do they have the right sort of qualifications? Should they be doing better?

It is widely accepted that there is an 'attainment gap': children growing up in deprived areas perform overall significantly worse than their classmates. The underperforming spotlight has been on black boys, and, more recently, on working class white boys. These differences in achievement are a serious problem, leaving children not fulfilling their potential and more likely to end up in low-paid, insecure employment.



This is, of course, a major issue of concern for schools, although many of the contributory factors are not within their control and can only be addressed by a change in social policies.

Seemingly successful stories of young people and education can also be portrayed as problematic.



Since 2000, the percentage of pupils getting five 'good' GCSEs, and the grades pupils have achieved, has significantly increased. Rather than seeing this as a sign that young people are 'better' at these subjects than they were in the past, other measures are quoted that indicate that this is 'grade inflation'. This is not the fault of the young people taking the exams, yet, it has the effect of potentially devaluing their qualifications.

Increasing numbers of young people going to university is also viewed in both positive and negative ways. Too few students was a problem, as society needed more highly qualified and skilled people; 'too many' students, as in recent years, is also portrayed as a problem, as many end up doing jobs that do not require graduate levels of knowledge and skills.

'Generation Me'

Social commentators often classify groups of people and ascribe them particular characteristics. 'Millennials' or 'Generation Y', are labels that usually refer to young people born between the mid 1980s and 2000. They are seen as following on from 'Generation X' and the 'baby boomers'. Lumped together in this way, does this generation of young people display problem characteristics?

Social surveys have suggested that 'Millennials' are more self-centred and self-obsessed than previous generations, leading to other labels being applied to them, such as 'Generation Me'. This is because young people in these surveys tend to place a higher value on personal material wealth than previous generations, and because they are less likely to be interested in current news and politics.

Lack of interest in politics is reinforced by the fact that 18 to 24-year-olds are the least likely to vote in elections, giving rise to concerns about future engagement in the democratic process. However, the much

higher turnout of young people in the Scottish referendum suggests that they can be engaged in politics, and it was in this referendum that, for the first time, 16 and 17-year-olds were given the opportunity to vote. Also, disengagement with voting does not mean young people are not involved in other forms of political activity.

What has received less attention is the tendency of Millennials to have more positive attitudes, more liberal social views, and higher levels of volunteering than previous generations.

But these broad generational generalisations fail to take into account key differences among young people – views and experiences differ vastly between different socioeconomic and ethnic groups.



ME

Thinking about social media

Social media is now a part of many young people's everyday lives. So what is 'Social Media' and what are its benefits and challenges?

What is social media?

Social media is a way for people to communicate and interact online. The term 'social media' refers to the full range of online communication tools that have been developed in order to support community collaboration, content sharing and interaction.

There are a range of websites and 'apps' – small, specialised computer applications that are downloaded onto mobile devices – dedicated to forums, microblogging, social networking, social bookmarking and social curation. Wikis, which are collaboratively developed and run websites or databases, are also a type of social media.



Here is an overview of the main social media tools that are currently available:

Facebook makes it easy for you to connect and share updates, photos and videos with your family and friends.

Twitter gives you 140 characters to write updates for others to see. This number of characters is just enough for a single idea, headline or observation. You can add photos, videos, web addresses or GIFs to support your point or direct users to more information. You post your updates on twitter.com or by using their app.

Pinterest is a visual bookmarking tool that helps you discover and save creative ideas. You can ‘pin’ ideas from across the internet on boards, collecting similar ideas together in one space.

Google+ (pronounced ‘google plus’) allows users to post updates, links and photos. Users can follow one another and ‘+1’ (the equivalent to a Facebook ‘like’) or share other users’ posts.

Instagram is a photo and video sharing service. Content can only be uploaded using a mobile device, but it can be seen by others on a phone, tablet or computer.

Snapchat is mainly used to create and send multimedia messages called “snaps”. Snaps can be a photo or short video which, if messaged privately, last for up to ten seconds before being inaccessible. They can also be altered to include filters and effects, text captions, and drawings.



The value of social media

Social media has many benefits for individuals, groups, communities and businesses. Each social media platform has different strengths and benefits. It is worth exploring them by looking at what other people use them for.

The main use of – and, therefore, value of – social media is **social networking**. Social networking is the use of dedicated websites and apps to interact with other users or find people with similar interests to your own. They are often free to use – even those that offer a premium, paid-for service – so they are a great way to keep you in touch with family and friends around the world.

Social media should ideally be used to enhance everyday life, rather than replace it. So while using social media to connect to people outside of the spaces that you usually meet can be positive, using it all the time and ignoring those around you is not a positive thing. For those who find face-to-face contact difficult or for people with mobility issues, it can be a lifeline to the outside world.

Social media can be used for both personal and professional use and it is worth giving some thought to *how* you want to use it when you set it up. The section on professional networking further on in this section talks about this in more detail.

The challenges of social media

Using social media is not without its challenges. They are 'social' spaces where people come together to share their lives. As such, online groups and communities will face the same challenges as any group or community that come together: how to include everyone and how to ensure that everyone is safe?

On the internet, there are particular challenges in doing this. This is because people can set up their online identity, or profile, however they want. This can be a positive thing, as it enables some users to present themselves more confidently

than they could face-to-face. Obviously, it can also be a drawback: users can lie about their identity or keep their real identity hidden in order to manipulate, bully or attack others online.

One of the ways that users can help to protect themselves on social networking sites is to talk to family and friends. Not all young people are experts on social media and not all adults are completely naïve to the challenges of being online; together you have a better chance of keeping up-to-date with the different networking sites,



working out how best to use them and how to stay safe. One of the most effective ways that people groom other people, both online and off, is through isolating the person that they are targeting. If you are discussing your online activity with others, it will make you less vulnerable to this.

Keeping safe online

There is a lot of misunderstanding about using the internet, and social media in particular. Firstly, there is a myth that social network sites such as Facebook and Twitter are only for young people. In fact, Ofcom has discovered that over 50 per cent of the people who use these sites are actually 35 years or older. Secondly, you may have read warnings about identity theft and how people can steal your personal details. Although you should always be aware of online safety, some of these warnings may be unfounded: urban myths or rumours, or stories that have been deliberately posted to scare people. Thirdly,

and finally, that using social networking sites is difficult. If you haven't used one before, they can certainly appear to be overly difficult and technical. However, most sites have been very carefully set up to get you started in just a few steps and, just like gaining any other new skill, you can slowly build up your knowledge by using these sites.

However, you do need to be aware of online safety. There are a few basic steps that you can take to help protect yourself and stay safe:

- Check your settings on social networking sites to ensure that only the people that you want to see your posts actually can;
- Make sure you have anti-virus software installed on your computer, ensure that it is updated regularly and be careful what you download or install on your computer;
- Look out for new guidance on the best ways to use social media safely.



Social media use

Over recent years, the number of social media sites has grown. There are several reasons for this: the increase in personal technology globally, developments in mobile technology (especially smartphones), the kind of money which can be made from these sites, and the different social networking 'needs' of different groups. While some of these sites, such as 'Friends Reunited', may have come and gone it is safe to say that social networking is here to stay.

Here are some interesting statistics about social media:

Twitter

317 million
monthly active users

500 million
tweets sent per day

13 million
Twitter users in the UK

37% of Twitter users
are aged 18–29.

25% are aged 30–49

Twitter can handle
18 quintillion user
accounts

83% of world leaders
use Twitter

Snapchat

300 million+
monthly active users

1 million snaps
created everyday

25–30 minutes average
time spent per user per day

10 billion+
daily video views

10 years to view all photos
shared in the last hour

Pinterest

150 million
monthly active users

50 billion+
total Pinterest pins

81% of Pinterest users
are female

Millennials use Pinterest
as much as Instagram

75 billion+
ideas on Pinterest

67% of Pinner are
under 40 years old

Instagram

600 million
monthly active users

40 billion photos shared

17% of teenagers say
Instagram is the most
important social
media site

Most popular hashtags are
#Love, #Instagood, #Me,
#Cute and **#Follow**

28% of online users aged
18–29 use Instagram.
4% are aged 30–49

Facebook

1.79 billion
monthly active users

Average facebook user
has **155** "friends"

87% of online users
aged 18–29 are on
Facebook

The Facebook 'like'
button has been pressed
1.13 trillion times

48% of 18–34 year olds
check Facebook when
they wake up

350 million
photos are uploaded
every day

83% of parents are friends
with their teenagers

Average time spent on
Facebook per visit is
20 minutes

Professional networking

One of the great values of social media is in how it can help you to develop a professional network that can support you to find new jobs, share your skills and connect to other people within your field of work. Online networking is also a great way to keep up to date with changes in policy or practice relevant to your job.

One of the main professional networking sites is **LinkedIn**. It aims to connect the world's professionals in order to make them more productive and successful. You can connect with people you already know, as well as join groups to connect to new people.

Currently, there are more than 400 million users in 200 countries connecting with each other and sharing ideas.

Protecting your professional reputation online

Many employers admit to doing an online search on potential employees as part of the recruitment process. It is therefore very important that you think about how you maintain your reputation online. Experts in the field say that you need to proactively manage your online persona if you're serious about your career. If someone you wanted to make a good impression on – a potential

employer or recruiter, for example – were to research you online, what would they find?

You should also think about what your email address says about you: `kinkykitten@hotmail.com` may not give the right impression to employers, whereas `j.smith@hotmail.com` is easier to link to you and is less likely to cause embarrassment or confusion.



Summary

In this section, we have tried to share some of the basic information about social media. There are many positive reasons to start using social media. However, like any activity in life, the use or overuse of social media can be problematic.

There are many online sites that provide much more information than we have been able to do here and that can help you develop your understanding of social media further. At The Open University we have a range of free online courses to help you develop your online

skills and learn new ways to use social media safely, so you can make the most of all the fabulous things it can help you to do. Visit open.edu/openlearn/childofourtime16 to find out more about these **free** online courses.

Most of the social media sites that we have mentioned here are available for free. We would recommend that you explore these free sites before signing up to any premium, paid-for services. And don't forget to be careful if you are giving your bank details online.

This area of our lives is changing rapidly and social media is not likely to disappear. In fact, for some people social media has become an intrinsic part of their personal and working lives; for example, some employers only ever advertise their jobs online. So this is a good time to explore the online world, whatever your age and whatever you might like to use it for.

Social Media Landscape 2016



Futures

Uncertain futures

The future is impossible to predict but here is a snapshot of five areas that look at the world today's 16-year-olds are finding themselves in, and ask how it might change throughout their 20s and 30s?

A changing population

Human migration, both to and from the UK, makes predicting the future population difficult. Current projections are that the total population will increase from 65 million to 70 million by 2027, and 75 million by the time today's 16-year-olds are 40.

While the number of young people is projected to continue to grow slowly, it is the ageing population that will grow significantly as the number of people over 70 will expand from 7.8 million to 10.7 million by 2027. The care of older people will become an increasing issue for each, successive generation.



Today's young people will of course live longer themselves: according to the latest statistical data available in England, the average life expectancy of a baby born in 2014 is 83.2 for girls and 79.5 for boys. Medical advances achieved in their lifetime may substantially increase that average. However, this overall upward trend disguises a considerable – and growing – disparity between localities, particularly between north and south. In some areas of London, life expectancy is already nearly 90. The UK is, and seems likely to continue to be, an unequal society.

Today's cohort of 16-year-olds already consists of a much more varied mix of people – ethnically, religiously and culturally – than previous generations. The 2011 census recorded over 600,000 under 18-year-olds as being in a mixed or multiple ethnic group. Today's young people will grow up to form an increasingly diverse society.

600,000

under 18 yr olds
recorded as
mixed/multiple
ethnic groups
in 2011

**ZERO HOUR
CONTRACTS**

The world of work

The days of lifetime jobs seem long gone. Less than 10 per cent of jobs in the UK are in manufacturing, over 80 per cent are in the service sector. Work has become more uncertain with the growth of part-time work and contracts that guarantee no hours at all (so called 'zero hour contracts'). Governments of all political persuasions have promoted the idea that a 'flexible' workforce (that is, a workforce that can change jobs, be trained and retrained) is essential for economic growth, which suggest these trends are likely to continue.

This uncertainty affects young people entering the world of work most of all. Rates of unemployment fluctuate but are higher for young people aged 16–24 than for other age groups. Zero hour contracts are a rapidly growing feature across the whole workforce, but 38 per cent of people on zero hour contracts are in the 16–24 age group. The gender pay gap also seems likely to persist into the future.

A significant change in the twenty-first century has been the growth of full-time education, resulting in the entry of young people into the labour market starting much later. More recent changes in how education is funded mean most university graduates will be carrying a substantial debt as they start work. It is anticipated that some of today's students will be repaying loans well into their 40s.

Even greater uncertainty surrounds what young people today will face at the end of their working lives – or even *when* that will be. The compulsory retirement age has been removed and the state pension age of 68 is widely predicted to be raised to 70 or beyond. Even so, the viability of funding the existing pension scheme in the long term has been questioned.



Future health

There are contradictory messages about the likely future health of the nation. Although average life expectancy is growing, and medical advances might accelerate this, there are also concerns about the population of the UK having poorer health in other respects.

Individualised medical treatment and gene therapy promise treatments in future for conditions and diseases that currently have no cure: new genetic material can be inserted, or current malfunctioning genes rendered inactive. Amazing advances in medical science are promised in every era; the significance of current developments is that this is opening up a new field with many possibilities: brain imaging methods are becoming increasingly sophisticated, enabling the development of brain-computer interfaces that might enhance recovery from strokes and spinal cord injuries.



At the same time, growing health risks have been identified: for example, we are becoming a more obese population as a result of rising consumption of high calorie food and falling levels of physical activity. Whether there is an 'obesity epidemic' amongst children – as it is often portrayed – or not, there are clearly concerns about the increasing proportion of the population (already over one quarter) who are obese by current definitions. This is because obesity is linked to high blood pressure, diabetes and more frequent hospital admissions. Our longer life expectancy has also given rise to concerns about another 'epidemic': that of dementia and the problems of long-term care.

As highlighted earlier in this section, the average life expectancy varies according to where you live. Our health, in the UK, is influenced by socio-economic factors. The health of today's young people will not be the same for everyone in the future.



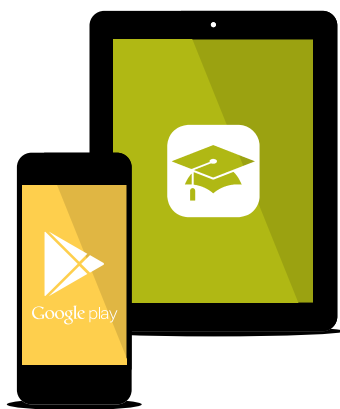
Beyond social media

The section on social media in this booklet emphasises our interconnectedness through Facebook, Twitter and their future replacements. These means of communication are likely to continue to evolve at a fast pace. Technology is also being integrated into our lives in a variety of ways of which the consequences are as yet unknown.

While many people, young and old, constantly use their tablets and smartphones to access information on the internet, smart glass technology, which can stream this information directly to the eye and ear, is already available. This technology, known as augmented reality (AR), already has applications in medicine and the military. In the world of leisure, Pokémon GO is just the beginning.

In amongst the vast amount of internet data is a wealth of valuable information, but it also contains a mass of targeted consumerism, pornography and other more problematic content. It is not clear what the impact will be on consumers of such data, but concerns have grown about, for example, the influence that exposure to pornography is having on young people's sexual relationships.

It is impossible to predict how developments in virtual and augmented reality, robotics, nanotechnology, cybernetics and scientific advances in numerous other fields will affect the lives of the next generation. However, the impact will not just be in terms of what they are able to do, but also in changing their social relations.



Living with global warming

Many things about the future young people face are hard to predict, but it seems certain that they will live in a changing and warming global environment. Average temperatures in the earth's climate have been gradually increasing for the last century and are predicted to continue to rise in the next. There is a scientific consensus that the burning of fossil fuels is a major contributory factor, but international agreements to tackle the human contribution to global warming have been hard to achieve.

Warmer land and sea temperatures are already having effects and are expected to continue to cause rising sea levels, expansion of deserts and more extreme weather events. These changes may seem very slow but it is inevitable that the impact of

climate change will contribute to movements of populations and shortages of food. While the rise in temperature is predictable, some of the consequences are not: for example, how more extreme events will affect the UK as weather patterns change. However, in our increasingly interconnected world, changes have implications that reach far beyond the area of their immediate impact.

Although we are seeking technological solutions and alternative sources of energy, global warming has been portrayed as an issue of the older generation not taking responsibility for, and action on, climate change quickly enough, thereby storing up problems for the next generation to deal with.

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The Open University offers a range of qualifications for those interested in childhood and youth studies:

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practice, and the skills you need for effective practice in a diverse, multidisciplinary environment.

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An introduction to childhood and child psychology (E102)

This introductory module offers a fascinating insight into topics central to the lives of children and young people, exploring their emotional, physical, intellectual, social and cultural development.

Working with young people: an introduction (E108)

This key introductory module is aimed at those who are working with, or interested in working with, young people – particularly those aged 13 to 19 – in areas of practice

where their participation is voluntary, and the aims of the work are broadly educational.

Childhood (E212)

What does it mean to be a child in today's world? Do popular images of childhood match the reality of young people's lives? How is childhood affected by poverty, ill-health and adversity? Do children have different rights from adults, and if so why? How are modern lifestyles and technologies changing children's relationships and identities? What part do children play in shaping their childhood?

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In addition to the information in this booklet, you can also find a wealth of fascinating and valuable information about child development and issues with children and young people on **OpenLearn** – the home of **free** learning from The Open University. To find out more go to open.edu/openlearn/childofourtime16

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