My Health, Our Future

How does sleep affect young people's wellbeing?

My Health, Our Future is a long-standing programme of research about the health and wellbeing of young people in Suffolk. This graphic shows the results of the 2023/24 MHoF survey regarding our question about sleep.

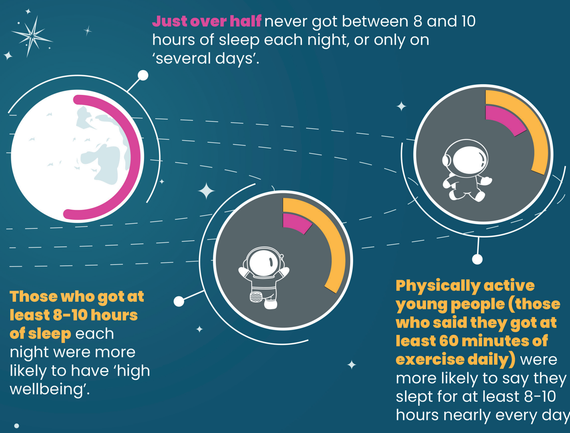


How much sleep should young people get?

Most advice suggests teenagers need between 8 and 10 hours of sleep each night (though they may need more than this).

More than 8,000 young people answered our question about sleep.

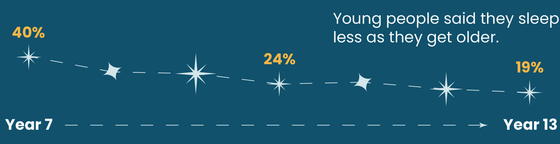
Just over half never got between 8 and 10 hours of sleep each night, or only on 'several days'.



Those who got at least 8-10 hours of sleep each night were more likely to have 'high wellbeing'.

Physically active young people (those who said they got at least 60 minutes of exercise daily) were more likely to say they slept for at least 8-10 hours nearly every day.

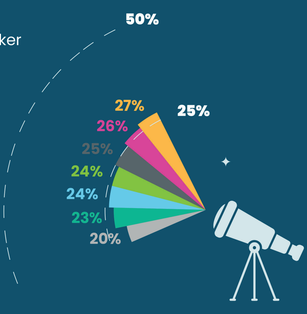
Who is more likely to sleep less?



Young people said they sleep less as they get older.

Young people who identified with any of the additional support needs listed in our survey were more likely to say they never got 8-10 hours of sleep. This included:

- I am a refugee or asylum seeker
- I have ADHD
- I have a physical disability
- I have a sensory disability
- I have been in care
- I have a diagnosed mental health difficulty
- I am a young carer



What is the impact of getting less sleep?

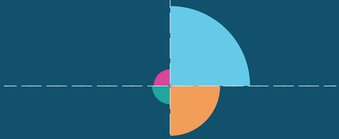
Our data shows an association between the amount of sleep young people say they get and their average wellbeing. We measure wellbeing using something called the Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale developed by the Universities of Warwick, Edinburgh and Leeds in conjunction with NHS Health Scotland (©University of Warwick, 2006, all rights reserved).



Wellbeing scores can range between 7 and 35. Those who said they never get 8-10 hours of sleep each night reported a lower average score **(19.6)** than those who get 8-10 hours of sleep nearly every day **(23.1)**.

10% said a poor nights sleep had affected their ability to complete homework.

48% said a poor nights sleep had affected their overall mood.



11% said a poor nights sleep had impacted their ability to get into school or college on time.

48% said a poor nights sleep had affected their ability to concentrate during lessons at school or college.

Learn more about My Health, Our Future

Our programme has recorded more than 64,000 responses from young people about their wellbeing. Visit our website to learn more, download our reports and explore the impact of the research.

www.healthwatchsuffolk.co.uk/mhof/

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