Growing Up in Ireland
Research Needs for Cohort ‘98 at Wave 5:
Age 25

Emer Smyth¹, Aisling Murray¹, Eoin McNamara¹, Desmond O’Mahony¹, Adam Nolan¹, Brendan Duggan¹ and James Shaw²

¹ ESRI, ² DCEDIY
• Report aims to inform the survey for the next wave of Growing Up in Ireland Cohort ’98 at age 25

• History of GUI Cohort ’98
  – Previously interviewed at age 9, 13, 17/18 and 20 (in 2018)
  – Now substantial dataset on development from middle childhood to early adulthood
  – Main domains of health, socio-emotional well-being, education, and (latterly) civic and economic participation

• Special short COVID online survey Dec 2020 (then age 22 years)

• Next wave will be carried out directly by DCEDIY and CSO in 2023
Age 25 vs Age 20

• A majority will have **transitioned to the labour market**
  – Starting on a career pathway versus stop-gap job
• Expect more to be in a long-term **relationship** and to have become parents themselves
• **Greater independence** from parents (economic and otherwise)
  – But some may now in turn be providing financial support to their family of origin
  – More may be still living at home compared to earlier cohorts
• **Friends** will remain important but dynamics/individuals affected by geographical and career moves
• But how will the **COVID-19 pandemic** have affected these transitions and aspirations?
Consultation Process

- Online survey of academic and policy stakeholders
- Roundtable workshop with stakeholders
- Focus groups with young adults
- Overview of content from comparable studies
- Literature review
- Overview of policy landscape
Topics for Age 25

Key Topic Areas

- Labour market & income
- Education & training
- Physical health
- Mental & emotional health
- Housing & demographics
- Relationships
- Civic & cultural engagement
- Concerns & aspirations
Criteria for Inclusion

• ‘Topic’ drivers and ‘structural’ considerations
• Captures a key domain of interest at age 25?
• Policy relevant?
• Age/stage appropriate?
• Longitudinal consistency / comparability with other studies?
• Captures diversity of experience?
• Realistic to measure as part of GUI?

• Balanced against the need to avoid overburdening participant
Policy Landscape

• **Health and well-being**
  – *Healthy Ireland 2013-2025*
  – *Sharing the Vision: A Mental Health Policy for Everyone*
  – *National Strategy for Women and Girls 2017-2020*

• **Post-school education**
  – *The National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030*
  – *Action Plan for Apprenticeship 2021-2025*

• **Economic participation**
  – *National Development Plan 2018-2027*
  – *Pathways to Work 2016-2020*
  – *Roadmap for Social Inclusion*

• **Housing for All – A New Housing Plan for Ireland**

• **The Climate Action Plan 2019 to Tackle Climate Breakdown**
Spotlight for Today on...

- Pathways from education to labour market
- Housing & demographics
- Mental/emotional health
- Relationships
- COVID-19

Report also covers:
- Concerns & aspirations
- Civic/cultural engagement
- Physical health
- Methodological issues
Pathways from Education to Labour Market

Context:
- Employment levels: 69% for 20-24YOs, 84% for 25-34YOs (CSO, 2021)

Items on employment/event history:
- Retain many questions from age 20
- New questions on remote working, reflections on career pathway, unemployment (reasons for, efforts to find employment)

Items on education:
- Detail on course completed/ongoing
- Satisfaction with choices

“You might end up leaving university with a PhD degree but... because you don’t know people you might end up not getting it [a job].”
Context:
- During the COVID-19 survey (Dec 2020), 72% of 22YOs lived at home

Items:
- Longitudinal consistency in SES measures from previous waves (e.g. financial strain)
- New questions on shared living arrangements (e.g. having space/privacy, sharing chores, expenses), cost (e.g. availing of HAP), time/distance from family home

“... you will find us... doing three or four jobs to try to pay rent.”

“In my age group, moving out is just impossible.”
Context:
- 48% of 22-year-olds were in the ‘low mood’ category in the GUI COVID survey (up from 27% at age 20)

Items:
- Longitudinal consistency in several measures such as CES-D, life satisfaction, self-esteem
- New items on changes in outlook post-pandemic
  - Scientific and policy advisors keen to capture growth from the experience
- Ubiquity of social media

“When do you get to disconnect? Like it can be work and stuff, but even your friends, when do you find time for yourself?”
Relationships

Context:
- Pregnancy/parenthood asked about at 20, but fewer than 5% had a child or were pregnant

Items:
- ‘Being a parent’ module consistent with items asked of Cohort ’08 at 9 months
  - Other studies such as ALSPAC follow children of original cohort
- More information on ‘significant other’
- Continue items on relationship with parents although parent’s own interview discontinued

“I know that at 25 people are looking at settling down with their long-term partners, and wedding bells are ringing – it’s about that age.”
Context:
- 1.5 million infections to date in Ireland
- In the GUI COVID survey, nearly half of 22-year-olds employed pre-pandemic had experienced job loss/temporary lay-off

Items on physical health:
- Prevalence/diagnosis, effect, support, vaccine

Items on concerns & aspirations:
- How do you think the pandemic affected your physical health, mental health, relationships, career path, general outlook in life
- Optimism about the future; social isolation scale

“Your hopes changed, your aspirations changed, your priorities – suddenly it was ‘stay home, stay safe’.”
Potential Innovations for Age 25

- Data linkage possibilities
- Short emigrant follow-up survey
- Options for cognitive testing
- Enhanced accessibility and relevance for participants with an intellectual disability
- Booster samples
- Bio-markers
Next Steps

- DCEDIY and CSO have agreed a questionnaire
- CSO to commence piloting shortly
- Interviews with 25-year-olds only (no parent or spouse)
- Main data collection in 2023
Acknowledgments

- Academic and policy-maker stakeholders from around Ireland
- Young adult focus group participants; kindly organised by the National Youth Council
- Colleagues in the ESRI and TCD especially Helen Russell, Barra Roantree and Seamus McGuinness
- Colleagues in DCEDlY
- Growing Up in Ireland participants