



Bothered? Of course we are, mum

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

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Britain's teenagers have delivered the best possible Mother's Day gift – as a new study shows they appreciate their parents and want the best for them in the future.

The findings, from the Timescapes research team, contradict the "am I bothered?" stereotype of self-obsessed and ungrateful teenagers.

Timescapes, funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, is tracking 400 ordinary people for five years, building up an archive of in-depth interviews, observations, photographs and video and audio diaries - which will document changes to people's lives as they occur.

The archive, which is housed at the University of Leeds, will form a living time capsule of life in the early 21st century and be of valuable use to policy makers, sociologists and future historians.

The latest findings, released by Timescapes colleagues at London South Bank University, shows that children want their parents to enjoy a better lifestyle and a good relationship with everyone in their family.

The key findings are:

Young people hope that their parents will have a pleasurable and relaxing life in the future.

Mum when she gets to fifty, she wants to become a mad artist in the country with pink hair. I hope she can do that," Nikki, aged 14

Young people want their parents to be healthier in the future or have bigger and better houses, cars and income.

They want to settle down in a nice country village in Devon, and just while away their days doing nothing," said Steven, aged 19.

As they grow older, children and young people become more aware of their parents' hopes and dreams - and feel a strong sense of responsibility to their parents. Some hope to repay them in the future by making life easier for

them.

"If I ever got rich I would always want to buy them a nice car or house or whatever to repay them for what they've done," said Ashley, aged 14.

The report's main author, Sarah Baker, a research fellow at London South Bank said that many of the children who took part clearly had the best interests of their parents in mind: "They hope that their mum and dad will have an enjoyable and relaxing life, perhaps moving to the countryside or overseas," she said. "They also want their parents to work less and to have a healthy old age - and they can see themselves contributing to support their parents in the future.

"In contrast to the idea that young people just aren't bothered about their parents or anything else, these young people think a lot about their mum and dad being happy in the future. Even where not everyone in the family was getting on with each other, and there were difficult relationships with their parents, they wanted these to improve in the future."

For more information

A copy of the full report 'Are they bothered? Children and young people's hopes for their parents' futures' is available [here \(http://www1.lsbu.ac.uk/families/yourspace/Parents%27_Futures.pdf\)](http://www1.lsbu.ac.uk/families/yourspace/Parents%27_Futures.pdf).

For further information, or requests to interview the authors of the study please contact Simon Jenkins, senior press officer at the University of Leeds on 07791 333229, email: s.jenkins@leeds.ac.uk (<mailto:s.jenkins@leeds.ac.uk>); or Sarah Finney, information officer for Timescapes on 0113 343 8489 email: S.J.finney@leeds.ac.uk (<mailto:S.J.finney@leeds.ac.uk>).

Notes to editors

The '[Your Space](#)' siblings and friends project is based at London South Bank University and is part of the Economic and Social Research Council funded Timescapes programme, a major UK longitudinal study that tracks changing family and personal relationships over time.

Timescapes is directed by Bren Neale, Professor of Life Course and Family Research, in the [School of Sociology and Social Policy](#) at the University of Leeds.

Timescapes' co-director is Professor [Janet Holland](#)

[\(<https://phonebook.lsbu.ac.uk/php4/person.php?name=holland.j>\)](https://phonebook.lsbu.ac.uk/php4/person.php?name=holland.j) of London South Bank University:

Timescapes is documenting people's experiences of growing up, relationships, having children, living in families and growing older through carrying out seven different research projects based at five different University institutions across the UK - Leeds, London South Bank, Cardiff, Edinburgh and the Open University.

The **Economic and Social Research Council** (ESRC) is the UK's largest organisation for funding research on economic and social issues. It supports independent, high quality research which has an impact on business, the public sector and the third sector. The ESRC's planned total expenditure in 2009/10 is £204 million. At any one time the ESRC supports over 4,000 researchers and postgraduate students in academic institutions and independent research institutes.

The 2008 Research Assessment Exercise showed the **University of Leeds** (<http://www.leeds.ac.uk%20>) to be the UK's eighth biggest research powerhouse. The University is one of the largest higher education institutions in the UK and a member of the Russell Group of research-intensive universities. The University's vision is to secure a place among the world's top 50 by 2015.

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