

# Mapping Young London

A view into young  
Londoners after a year of  
lockdown



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# Foreword



I welcome this report which brings together data from Partnership for Young London with a wide range of partners to illustrate very powerfully how London's youth sector collaborates to drive up outcomes for young people.

The data give a stark overview of the inequalities across our City for young people, capturing as they do many insights from young Londoners. The report highlights the disproportional impact that Covid19 has had on young people and provides compelling reference for all policy makers and practitioners when they are planning London's Recovery from the pandemic.

We must put young people's voices at the core of future planning to make sure we create a fairer and more equal London.

**Keith Bottomley** Chair of Trustees  
Partnership for Young London

## Partnership for Young London



Trust for London

Tackling poverty and inequality

Partnership for Young London believes in a future where every young person's right to wellbeing is recognised and fulfilled.

With young people making up a quarter of London's population, we have to respect that they are crucial to its future.

Generously funded by Trust for London.

# Key findings

- **Priorities** - Housing, employment, and mental health are the most important issues for young Londoners now, with Covid-19 and lockdown having a huge impact on these issues.
- **Covid-19 and lockdown** - Young people are overwhelming unhappy with the Government's response to the pandemic, with three in four (76.2%) believing the response was bad or very bad.
- **Housing** - Young Londoners are worried about not having a stable or safe space to stay (40.3%), with one in three having their housing situation impacted by Covid-19 and lockdown (31%).
- **Employment** - Two thirds (66.6%) said that Covid-19 and lockdown has impacted their, or someone in their household's employment, and half (51.4%) had said that their future employment plans had changed.
- **Mental and physical health** - Young Londoners are facing a mental health crisis, with a third (34.4%) reporting wellbeing scores indicating depression, and a majority (75.5%) indicating poor wellbeing.
- **Education** - Half (52.4%) of university students were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their University's transition to digital learning, with many talking about feeling isolated, or trapped paying rent.
- **Safety and the police** - A majority (83.8%) of those surveyed said that they believed that there is systematic racism in the police, with even more (88%) saying that they supported Black Lives Matter.
- **Discrimination** - Just less than half (45.2%) of those surveyed said that they had experienced discrimination in London, while two thirds (74.4%) said they thought discrimination was common in London.
- **Fairness and finance** - One in five (20.2%) of those surveyed said that their financial situation meant that they have to go without essentials.
- **Politics and the media** - A third (32.3%) of those surveyed said they were at least satisfied with the job Sadiq Khan was doing as London.
- **Youth services** - Nine out of ten (88%) of those surveyed said that they do not feel that they have a say in how youth services are set up and run.

April 2021

# Introduction

**MAPPING YOUNG LONDON looks at a range of issues, the impact that Covid-19 has had, and the support or change that young Londoners want to see.**

Young Londoners have faced one of the hardest years in recent memory, with the pandemic and lockdown impacting their education, their employment, their housing, and their mental health that could last a lifetime. This will exacerbate existing challenges, like the cost-of-living crisis, or serious youth violence. Far from a fresh start, the start of this new decade will see young people further behind, with their lives put on hold.

**MAPPING YOUNG LONDON has been co-designed with young people, with a survey and focus groups that spoke to over 1,600 young Londoners aged 16-25, from a range of lived experiences.**

Questions were co-designed with groups of young Londoners, recruited at the start of 2020, and in consultation with a range of organisations. We have spoken online to over 60 young Londoners in focus groups too, with a diverse range of lived experiences, from refugees and migrants to those with experience of homelessness or insecure housing. We want to thank all the young people involved, who have completed surveys, spoken to us in focus groups, attended workshops and come up with questions, or analysed results and write for the report.

**MAPPING YOUNG LONDON is a collaboration with 22 organisations, who have contributed their own research, or have involved the young people that they work with in the research.**

Young Londoners are a hugely diverse group, and so are the organisations that work with them. This report highlights the huge range of work taking place across London, from what they have found from the young people they work with, to the solutions that will make a difference. A holistic approach needs to be taken, and organisations need to work together to support young people, with issues like housing, employment, and mental health intrinsically linked.

**Matthew Walsham**  
[matthew.walsham@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:matthew.walsham@cityoflondon.gov.uk)  
Partnership for Young London

# This is a collaboration between



# Methodology

This report is the result of a partnership between a range of organisations, and the research they have conducted, a survey of young Londoners and focus groups conducted by Partnership for Young London.

**Partnership for Young London conducted a survey of 1623 young people aged 16-25, that was conducted between November 2020 and February 2021.**

The survey was designed with input from three key sources:

- **Young people:** Groups of young people contributed to the survey, writing their own questions, using previous surveys of young Londoners to help focus down on topics.
- **Partner organisations:** Youth organisations with varying specialities helped craft the survey questions. For example, A New Horizon Youth Centre advised on questions surrounding insecure housing.
- **Previous Greater London Authority (GLA) survey:** Questions that appeared in the GLA's 2009 survey of Young Londoners, in which a younger age group was studied, were used in this survey.

The survey was advertised out through our networks, and through social media advertising, with specific groups targeted to make the sample as representative of London as possible.

**As part of this research, we conducted seven focus groups, with over 35 young Londoners, aged 16-25.**

These were conducted with a range of organisations. There were two clear aims; first to get the voices and perspectives of different groups who would not be able to access the survey. Secondly, to allow young people to feedback their thoughts on the survey's results.

**Data from survey and focus groups was analysed quantitatively, and qualitatively, with the support from young people.**

Survey data was analysed on SPSS, with only statistically significant findings included in this report. Focus group, and qualitative survey answers, were analysed in NVivo, automatically coded.

# Sample

**A total of 1623 completed our survey, from across London. We tried to make our sample as close as possible to London Key Stage 3 data for ethnicity.**

	Key Stage 3 Data	Our sample
White	41.8%	52%
Asian	21.2%	14.9%
Black	17.9%	14.5%
Mixed-ethnicity	11.1%	14%
Other	6.5%	4.08%
Male	50%	37%
Female	50%	60%

We also asked a range of questions, to find out who the young people doing our survey were, and their situation:

- **Age:** The average age of respondents was approximately 19, slightly younger for the age range 16-25.
- **Employment and education:** One in five (21%) were in employment, a third (30%) were doing A-levels, and a third (27%) were attending University.
- **Schooling:** Over half (56%) attended a comprehensive/state school, one in five (19%) attended a private school, and a minority in (16%) in academy schools.
- **Housing tenure:** Over half (58%) of respondents were living with parents, a third (32%) privately renting, and with small number of young people (2.8%) sleeping rough or in insecure housing.
- **Belief:** Just less than half (40%) of respondents followed a religion, with over half of those being Christian (53%), and over a third being Muslim (34%).
- **Disability:** One in ten (10%) of respondents considered themselves to have a disability.
- **Care experienced:** One in ten (13.9%) of respondents consider themselves to have care experience.
- **Class:** We asked young people to self-identify with a social class, with around half (45%) self-identifying as middle class, and around half (43%) identifying as working class.



# 1. Priorities for London

## Introduction

Young Londoners are one of the most diverse generation, and their priorities and views of London reflect that. We need to recognise this diversity, and that there is no one view from all young Londoners, and that views on London and it's challenges differ depending on ethnicity, gender, and age.

**Housing, employment, and mental health were the three most important issues chosen by young Londoners in this research, while youth services, air pollution, and safety and the police were the least important.** Housing is likely high up because of everyone's experience of lockdown, as we're all trapped in our houses! Housing encapsulates so many issues now, impacting our mental health, causing huge rental arrears, or being the place where we work or study.

**However, how young people prioritised issues varied between different groups.** For example, Asian young people prioritised employment first, and Black young people prioritised mental and physical health. So, while housing was the most important overall, it was only the most important for White young people. Priorities also differed between what gender, or class, they said that they identified with.

**Overall, most young people were happy with London, with most either satisfied or very satisfied with London, and their neighbourhood.** This reflects my experience where London is a city that me and my friends are proud to live in. Even though I know how hard it is to live here, and some of us are not sure how we will live here, many of us love living here.

**It is also interesting that while young people have different priorities, there is one thing that they all seemed to agree on: that the best thing about living in London was the mixture of people.** This has changed since the question was asked 10 years ago too, where the range of shops was the best thing about London.

The issues are clear for young Londoners, they want affordable housing, a job that they want to wake up to do, and support for their mental health and wellbeing.

**Jane D'Ornellas**  
16 years old

# Priorities for young Londoners

We gave young people a range of options and asked people to rank their top three most important issues and rank their top three least important issues.

**Housing, employment, and mental health were the most important three issues for young Londoners, while youth services, air pollution, and safety and the police were the least important.**

We found that mental and physical health was the least divisive, with the smallest proportion of young people saying that it was the least important.

What is the most important issue for young Londoners?	
1	Housing (25.8%)
2	Employment (19.8%)
3	Mental and physical health (18.1%)
4	Education (12.1%)
5	Getting your voice heard (7.1%)
6	Safety and the police (6.6%)
7	Air pollution and the environment (3.7%)
8	Youth service provision (youth clubs, activities) (3.7%)

What is the least important issue for young Londoners?	
1	Youth service provision (youth clubs, activities) (32.5%)
2	Air pollution and the environment (22.5%)
3	Safety and the police (12.2%)
4	Education (9.5%)
5	Getting your voice heard (9.1%)
6	Housing (6.5%)
7	Employment (6%)
8	Mental and physical health (1.8%)

**“I mean housing is number one, but in a way, it could link to mental physical health, because everyone's thinking about housing.**

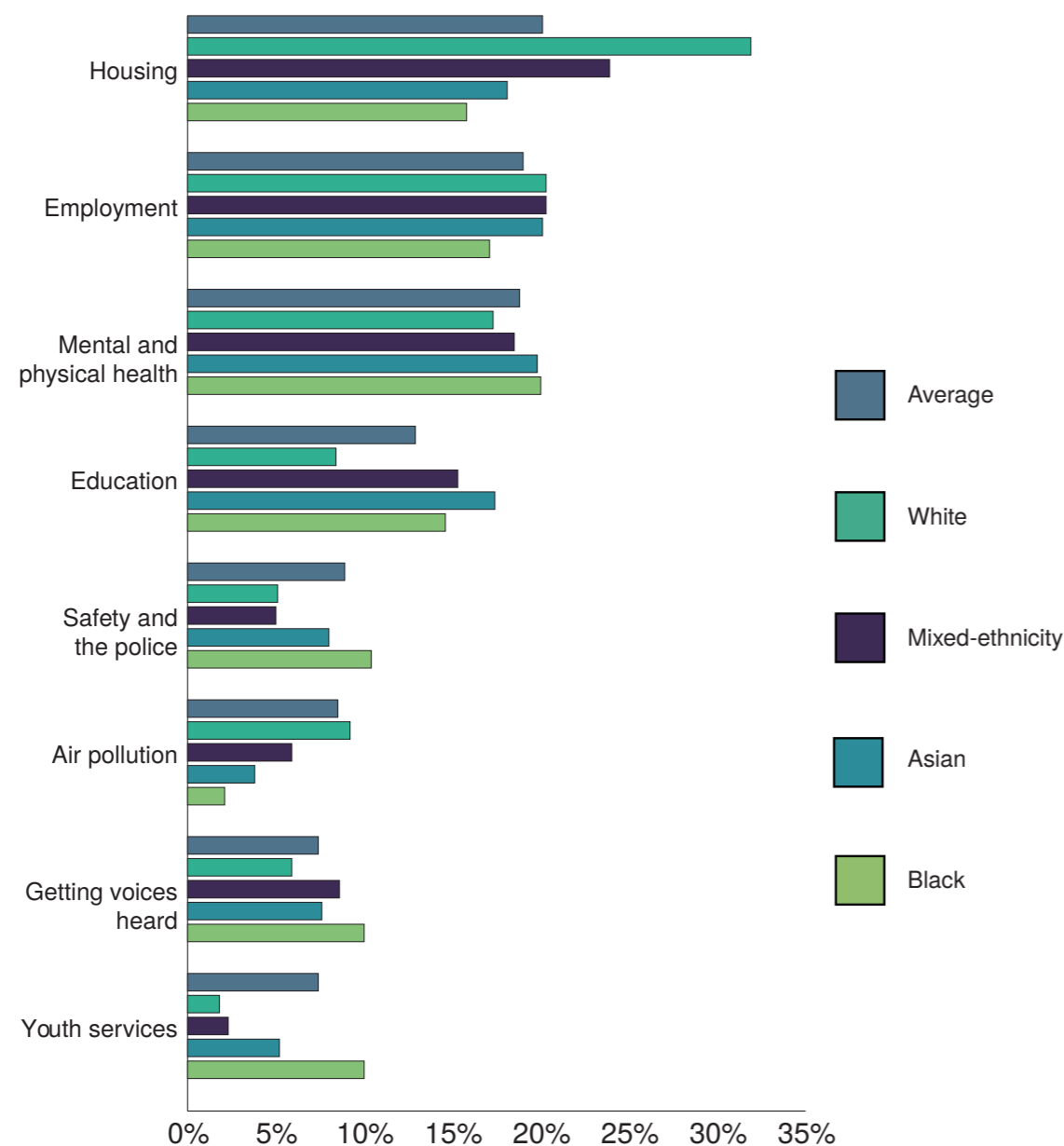
**During the pandemic, the only place you had to see was your home. And so now people are thinking about their living spaces.**

**Now you're spending the majority of your time in your living space and people are coming back to the idea of homes and where they want to live.”**

# Priorities vary between groups

Different groups of young people had different priorities for London, such as ethnicity:

- **Black young people prioritised mental and physical health (20%)**, while air pollution and the environment were the least important issue (2%).
- **White young people prioritised housing (32%)**, and were twice as likely to say that youth service was the least important issue to them than average (10% to 7%).
- **Asian young people prioritised employment (20%)**, and were second least likely to prioritise air pollution and the environment (4%).



Similarly, priorities for young Londoners varied on how old they were, what gender, and what class, they identified with.

- **Younger Londoners had different priorities from those aged over 21:** 16-17-year olds on average ranked mental and physical health as the most important issue (23.8%), while those aged 18-21 or 22-25 chose housing (21.9% and (41.6%). On the other hand, those aged 22-25 were twice as likely as 16-17-year olds to say that safety and the police was the least important issue (14.6% to 7.1%).
- **There were slight differences between young men and young women:** While housing was the top issue for both young men and young women (25.3% and 25.8%), young men were less likely to prioritise getting their voices heard (4.2% to 9.1%), and mental and physical health (14.8% to 21%).
- **Class and school also shifted how important certain issues were to young people:** Young people who identified as working class were twice as likely as those identifying as middle class to say that youth service provision was the most important issue to them (5.5% to 2.2%). While young people who went to private school were more likely to rank youth service provision as least important than those who went to a comprehensive/state school (42% to 31.2%).

**“I don't think London is London unless it's diverse. Because you meet so many different people from all different walks of life and I think that's what makes London great in a sense.”**



## The views of young refugees and asylum seekers CARAS



CARAS is a community outreach charity based in Tooting. They support people of refugee and asylum-seeking background who live in South West London. Their vision is that for people who have sought refuge in the UK are welcomed, valued and supported within a community in which they can flourish. They have carried out a consultation with 12 young people about their views on London and what could be changed to make it better for young refugees and asylum seekers to live in.

They have spoken with young people who have lived in the UK/London anywhere between 10 weeks to 4 years. Young people are aged 14-19-years old and they come from Eritrea, Sudan, Afghanistan and Syria.

### The key findings were:

- Schools and education, and the UK being a safe country, is one of the key reasons that young refugees and migrants think London is good. Also, three young people spoke about the multiculturalism again, and the range of people from different countries.
- One of the key dislikes of London that came up was the weather, being too cold and having no sun. However, the key thing was lockdown and Covid-19, with many of the young people participating having only lived in London during the time of a pandemic. As a result, they have had limited opportunities to meet friends, and create social networks.
- Young refugees and migrants were keen to want improvements to sports activities, like football and gym. We heard that both can be expensive, and difficult to afford or get access too. They also spoke about safety, and a reduction of crime, and homelessness.
- One of the key areas they wanted improvement was education, specifically more opportunities to learn English, and better access to education.
- Lastly, they were asked what the most difficult thing is when you are new to the UK, with most young people talking about the Home Office, visas, and uncertainty. They spoke about how this clearly impacted on their mental health, given a long asylum process often two or more years.
- They also said that learning English, was a real challenge when first coming to the country, as having to immerse in the new language and culture was very difficult, with access to English as a second language classes and courses being very limited.

To find out more about the work CARAS do, please go to: <https://caras.org.uk/>

## London as a city to live in

We asked young people if they were satisfied with London as a city to live in, and if they were satisfied with their neighbourhoods.

**Most young people were either satisfied or very satisfied with London (70%), and their neighbourhood (70.7%).** However, this is a lower rate of satisfaction compared to the same question asked over 10 years ago in 2009, where young Londoners were satisfied with London (85%), and their neighbourhood (84%), in higher numbers.

- **Satisfaction varied between ethnicities:** There were also some key differences too, with White young people the most likely to be satisfied with London and their neighbourhood (74.3% and 76.5%), and Black young people the least likely (60.1% and 60.4%).
- **Neighbourhood satisfaction was higher for private school students:** Young people from private schools were also twice as likely as those from a comprehensive or state to be very satisfied with their neighbourhood, (32.2% to 15.7%), and half as likely to be dissatisfied (8.8% to 17.6%)
- **Young people who identified as working class were less likely to be satisfied with London and their neighbourhood:** Young people who identified as working class were also far less likely to be satisfied or very satisfied with London and their neighbourhood (61.5% and 62.8%), compared to young people who identified as middle class (79.4% and 78.7%).
- **Private renters were more likely to be satisfied with their neighbourhood than those living with their parents:** Young people who also privately rented their accommodation were far more likely to be satisfied or very satisfied with their neighbourhood than those living with their parents (79.9% to 67.5%).

**“I think no matter what part of London you're from, you still have access to the same Central, you still have access to the same same opportunities. And I think I'm just I'm just saying compared to the rest of the UK, I think opportunity is really something that stands out.”**

## “Free transport means everything to me” Partnership for Young London

“Free transport means everything to me”:  
Understanding the impact of the suspension of free travel on under-18s



Partnership for Young London, in 2020, surveyed 2020 young Londoners about how they travel around London and the importance of transport to them.

Conducted the suspension of free travel for under-18s was under consideration, it explored how vital free travel was to different groups of young Londoners. It not only revealed how important free transport, and the transport system is to young Londoners, but also how different groups travel around London differently.

### Key findings:

- **Most young Londoners (71.3%) take the bus to school/college**, followed by the train (16.5%), walking (5.8%), tube (4.6%), and cycling (0.6%)

- **Almost 50% take at least two modes of transport to get to school/college.**

- **A large majority of young Londoners (97.8%) said that free transport was either important, or very important to them**, with less than one percent saying it was not very important or not at all important.
- **A majority of young Londoners (64.1%) said that they were worried that their parents would struggle to make ends meet if they had to pay for transport**, with a small proportion saying they were not worried (18.1%) or not sure (17.8%).
- **Just over half of young Londoners (56%) said that if they lost free travel, they would not be able to afford to go to the places they want to go**, with a small proportion saying they could afford to (17%), and around one in four not sure (27.1%).
- **Less than half of young Londoners (42.8%) said that their mental health would suffer if they had to pay for transport**, with a third (28.6%) saying it would not, and a third (28.4%) saying that they were not sure.

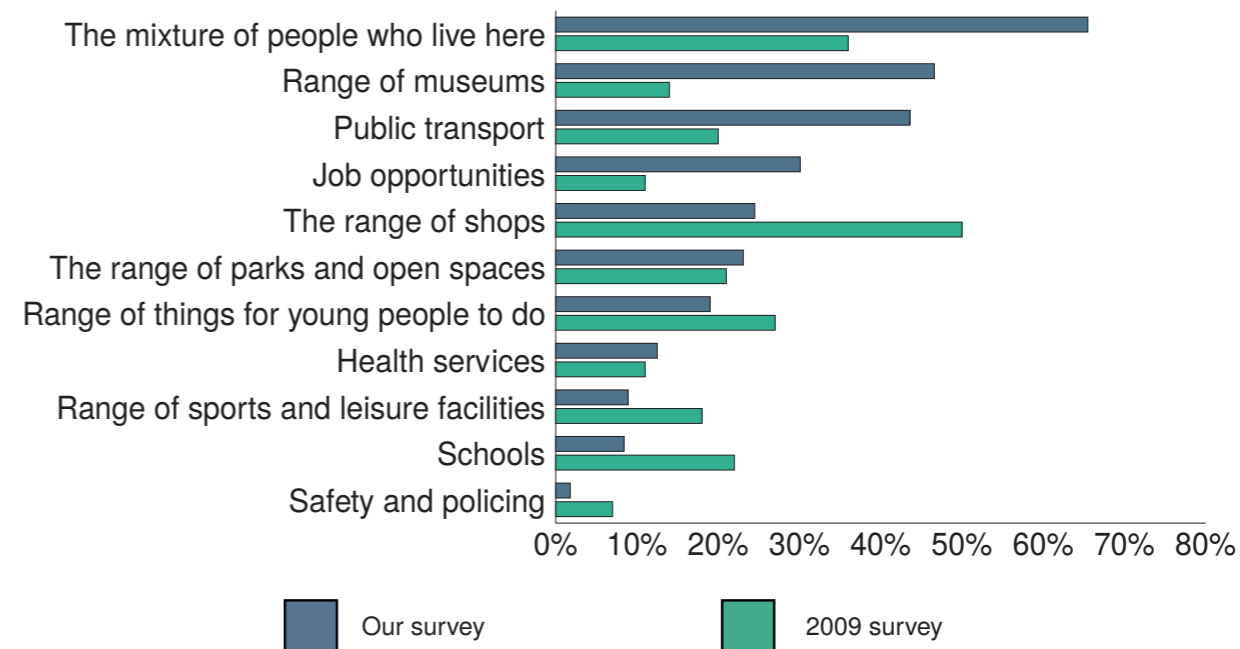
To read the full report, please go to: <https://www.partnershipforyounglondon.org.uk/post/free-transport-means-everything-to-me>

## The best things about London

We took a question from the 2009 GLA Survey of Young Londoners, asking young people what the two or three best things about living in London were, with a range of options.

**The best thing about living in London was the mixture of people who live here, followed by the range of museums, and public transport. While safety and the police were the least likely choice.**

### What is the best thing about living in London?



Compared with 2009, we found significant differences in answers, with young people today far more focused on the mixture of people, museums and galleries, and public transport, while less focused on the range of shops, schools, and policing.

Unsurprisingly, the more likely a young person was to say something was good about London, the least likely it was to be a priority for them. For example, those who said that job opportunities were the best thing were less likely to rate employment as a priority.

## The views of disabled young people Caxton Youth Services



Caxton Youth Club is a safe space in the inner city, where they can come to make and meet their friends. They prioritise the inclusion of young people with physical and/ or learning disabilities who live in Westminster. We spoke to a group of young people with a range of physical and/or learning disabilities about the challenges they face in London and interviewed a youth worker who works with them.

### Key findings:

**Young people with disabilities want more visibility, and the government to pay more attention to services, benefits, and counselling.**

“I would say visibility, not having our say. I would like a government that is taking more care with people with disabilities. Pay more attention to people with disabilities, guarding benefits, disability services, counselling, mental health. They’re not making us a first priority.”

**Young people with disabilities want more support travelling around London independently, and feel unsafe on public transport.**

“People with disabilities get picked on, on public transport, and if they had a police officer on there, it would make it a bit more friendly for people with disabilities..”

**Verbal abuse is something that is common with young people with disabilities, and contributes to not wanting to use mainstream services.**

“To me, I don’t like it (mixed services). I’m not trying to copy these other kids, I want to stick to myself. I just want to fix myself. I know I have a disability, and this is the reason I want to stick to myself.”

**Yet some young people with a disability have had interactions with police, feeling stopped and made to feel uncomfortable at times.**

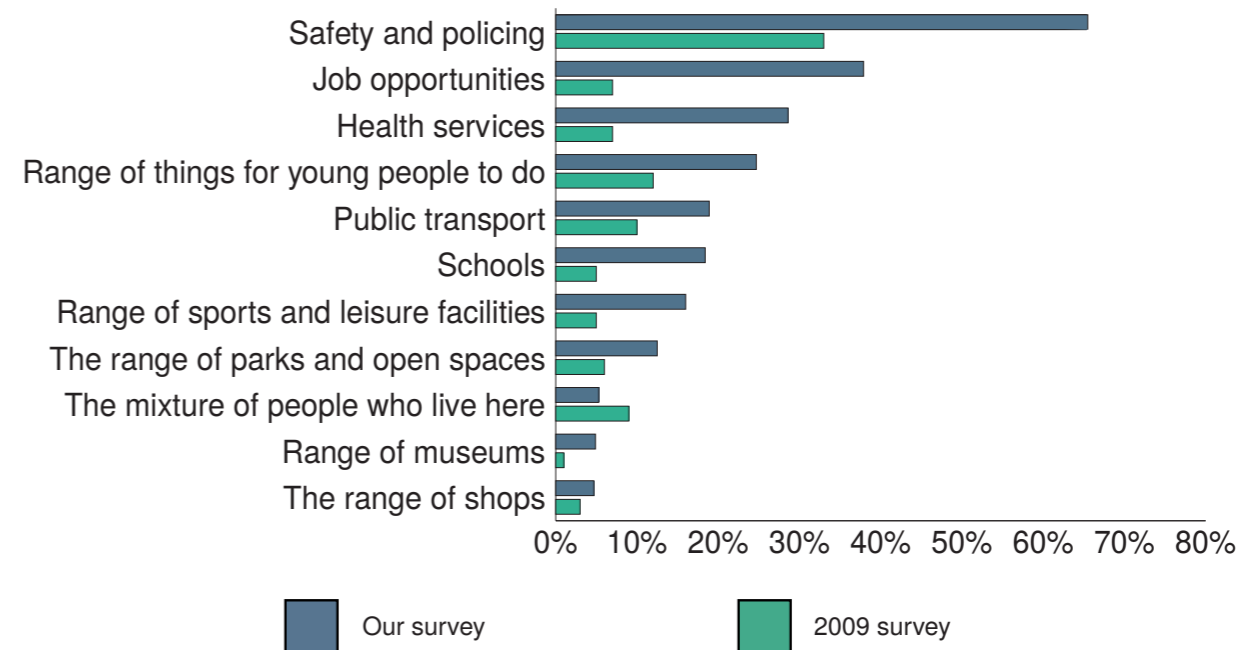
“When I was walking and suddenly out of nowhere, I’ve got stopped by police and they will talk to me questions...and on the uniform, they have a camera, and from the station they can see you, what you’re talking about. I didn’t like that feeling... ..I said to them I was going for a walk, and they were asking me questions, I couldn’t even understand.

To find out more about the work Caxton Youth Organisation do, please go to: <https://caxtonyouth.org/>

## The worst things about London

**The worst issue was around the safety and the police, followed by the job opportunities.** It also shows how divided young people are on job opportunities, being the third best thing, and second worst thing. Job opportunities is also the biggest difference from 12 years ago, being the second most common selection for our survey (37.9%), compared to the fifth worst thing previously (7%).

### What is the worst thing about living in London?



While we found similarities in our survey’s results compared to the results of the 2009 survey, views on safety and the police were consistent. For young people today, and over a decade ago, safety and the police still the worst thing about living in London.

- **Young women, and non-binary young people were more likely to say that the mixture of people who live in London was the best thing** (69.3% and 73.8% respectively) compared to young men (59.8%). While young men were twice as likely to say sports and leisure facilities than young women (13.2% to 2.4%).
- **Young people from different ethnicities had very different views on what was best about London.** White young people were more likely to say museums and art galleries (53.9%), job opportunities (34.9%), and the range of things to do (23.6%). Asian young people were more likely to say shops (23.8%), while Black young people were more likely to say sports and leisure facilities (17.5%) and health services (22.5%).
- **Young people with experience of care were almost twice as likely as those with no experience of care to say that schools** (13.7% to 7.5%) and health services (22% to 10.8%) were the best things about living in London.

# Museum of London

## We are the Youth of Today

### We are the Youth of Today

Life in London  
for Generation Z



The Museum of London and the Museum of London Docklands tell the story of London and Londoners across thousands of years through the people, places and moments that helped create the city we know today.

This report presents the findings from a major piece of research carried out with over 3,000 young Londoners in the summer of 2020 to find out how they feel about their lives and their city.

The research was commissioned by the Museum of London and carried out by Partnership for Young London.

#### Key findings

- **The top priorities for young Londoners were: Education, Mental and physical health, Housing, Employment, Safety and the police, Air pollution and the environment and Having your voice**

heard.

- **Twice as many young people were pessimistic about the issues being addressed as were optimistic (44% to 18%),** with a majority disagreeing that those in power know the issues young Londoners face (58.5%).
- **The vast majority of young Londoners surveyed said that they felt like Londoners (93.1%).** A majority also said that London is more important to their identity than their local area (51.9%).
- **Most young Londoners (68.7%) do not feel a sense of ownership over their local area, across all groups.**

## Space and place

The report looked particularly at how young Londoners use different spaces in London, from arts and cultural spaces to parks.

- **Parks and green spaces are important to all young Londoners** - The most visited spaces from most to least were; parks and green spaces (93%), shopping centres (83.3%), arts spaces (galleries, theatre) (69.2%), cultural spaces (museums, historic sites) (68.8%), sports venues (40.3%), and youth clubs (17.8%).
- **One in three young Londoners rarely or never visit art or cultural spaces** - White young people were more likely than BAME young people to go to arts spaces (77.2% to 62.3%), cultural spaces (75.8% to 63%), and parks and green spaces (95.9% to 90.4%).
- **Using space differed by geography** - Young people who lived in Inner London were more likely than their Outer-London counterparts to use parks and green spaces (92.3% to 88.7%), and cultural spaces (72.9% to 66%).
- **Interaction with the Museum of London** - Young people who had visited the Museum of London in the past two years were over twice as likely as those who hadn't to use cultural spaces (61.3% to 26.1%), and arts spaces (57% to 31.9%).
- **The mixed impact of Covid-19** - Young people were split on whether Covid-19 had changed their views on their local area. However, only White young people said that it had in a majority (51.8%), with only a third of Black young people saying it had (31.6%).

For more information, please see the full report at <https://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/collections/about-our-collections/enhancing-our-collections/curating-london/we-are-youth-today-report>

## 2. Covid-19 and lockdown



STATION

## Introduction

The COVID pandemic created a vastly different way of life over the last year with significant public health messages being imposed by the government. Namely, the extended periods of lockdown which have proved to have a big impact on young people and how they view London.

**The vast majority of young Londoners have spent far less time visiting friends and family.** This, along with having to stay indoors, has increased the sense of isolation and loneliness felt among young people. As well as direct impacts on young people, family structures and relationships have also been strained with the lack of refuge available outside the home.

**A lack of human interaction means that about two thirds of young people have said that they are spending time online far more often.** Young people are going to school online, seeing friends online, relaxing online, which is likely having a negative impact on their mental health.

**The government response surrounding this pandemic has been put into question for the last year, particularly as it pertains to young people. Almost half rated the response as very bad, with a third rating it bad.** Guidelines were seen as extremely confusing, sending mixed messages about going out, and then labelling young people at fault for such actions despite most saying they almost always followed regulations. Anger at the government was a key thing that we heard throughout focus groups too.

I have always been sceptical about how the government reacts to existing and emerging issues and I feel that this pandemic has proved that. Calls for better mental health services, provision and access of PPE, protection and fair payment of essential workers has been met with little to no action.

**The majority of young people felt that COVID changed the way they see their city or local area.** Many noted that London is a much tougher and more divisive place to live in than they originally thought, exposing the selfishness of many. However, the other side of this is that the lockdown has restored a sense of community and appreciation for workers and businesses. It has also allowed for the discovery of new places, but young Londoners would like to see more green spaces in the future.

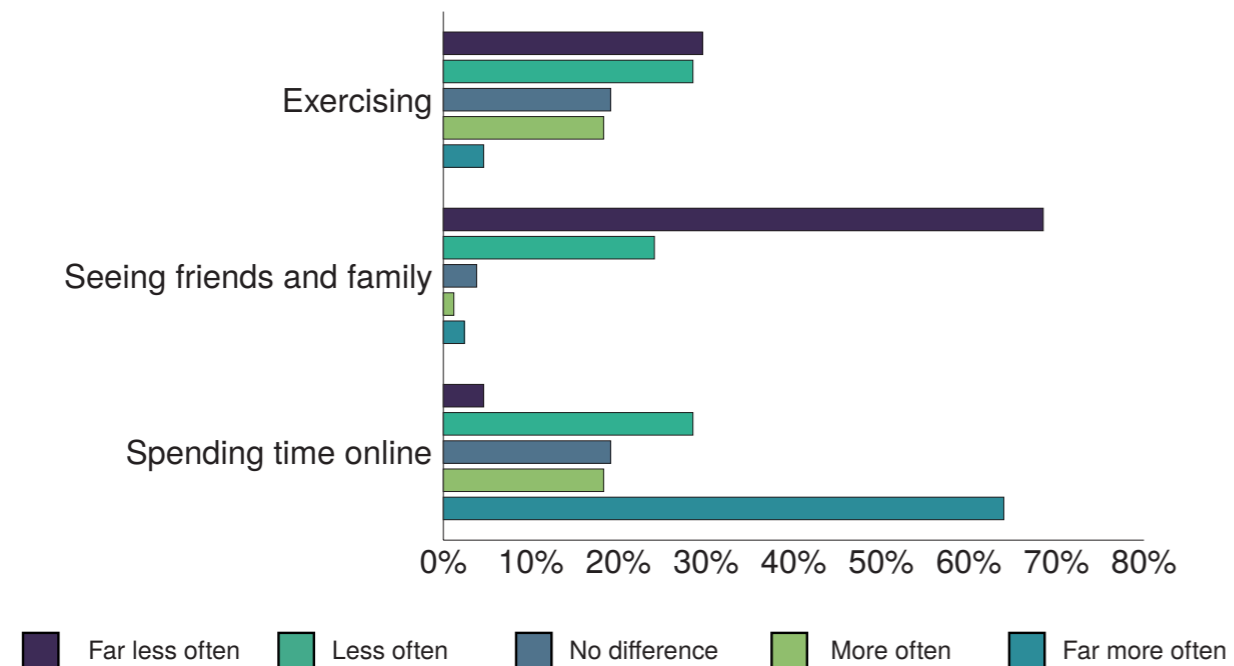
COVID has both exposed existing problems faced by young Londoners and created new ones.

**Sarah Ahmed**  
23 years old

# The impact of lockdown

Young people were spending far more time online, and far less time seeing friends and family, and more likely to being doing far less exercise too.

How has lockdown changed how often you do the following:



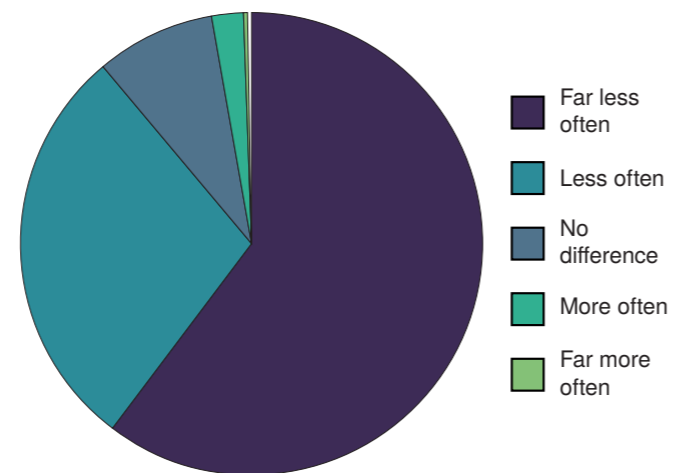
This also varies between different groups too, with Black young Londoners were more likely to spend far more time online (70.4%) compared to White (61.2%) and Asian (67%) young people, and more likely to being do far less exercise too. Young women were more likely than young men to say they were spending far more time online (66.6% to 60.2%).

Secondly, we asked how often young people followed Government lockdown and social distancing rules.

How often do you follow Government lockdown and social distancing rules?

A majority (60.1%) said they did almost always followed lockdown and social distancing rules, while a third (28.9%) said they did often.

Only around one in two hundred (0.6%) said that they never followed rules.



“Covid is a common denominator for us all.

I think even though you notice there's a disparity to it all...

...it's like the new how's the weather going, you know, like the world is on fire still?”

# Back On Track: Supporting young people out of lockdown

## YMCA



YMCA was established in 1844, and is the largest and oldest youth charity in the world, helping more than 65 million people in 120 countries. Here in England and Wales, 101 YMCAs work to transform 700 different communities, impacting the lives of nearly 570,000 people every year, in 132 of the 168 local authority areas, supported by more than 5,400 members of staff and 4,000 volunteers.

The aim of this research was to find out from young people themselves what the impact of COVID-19 and the subsequent lockdown has been on them. Research on young people and the COVID-19 lockdown was conducted by Survation on 1009 young people aged 11 to 16 living in the UK between 24-27 July 2020.

The purpose of their work is to paint a holistic picture about what young people have been going through during lockdown, from their schooling to their wellbeing, so that we can plan, prepare and act as a country to support young people in a time where they need us the

most.

### Key findings:

- **Young people are lonely:** nine-in-ten report missing being face-to-face with people (92%), and three-quarters feel lonelier and more isolated during lockdown (77%).
- **A virtual world can't be the new normal,** with three-quarters of young people (73%) tired of being online all the time.
- **Young people are struggling with school and their aspirations for the future are changing,** with 56% being worried about falling behind and 41% being worried about getting a job.
- **Young people need safe spaces outside of the home to improve family cohesion,** with more than half of young people (58%) feeling that their relationship with their family has become more strained during lockdown.
- **Prevention of young people's poor mental health is key** as more than two-fifths of young people report that they are worried about their mental health or wellbeing.

To read the full report please visit <https://www.ymca.org.uk/research/back-on-track>

# The Government's response

This survey was conducted during the second and third lockdown in London, so we asked young people how they felt about Covid-19.

**We asked how young people would rate the government's response to coronavirus, with almost half saying it was very bad (46.6%), and a third saying it was bad (29.6%).**

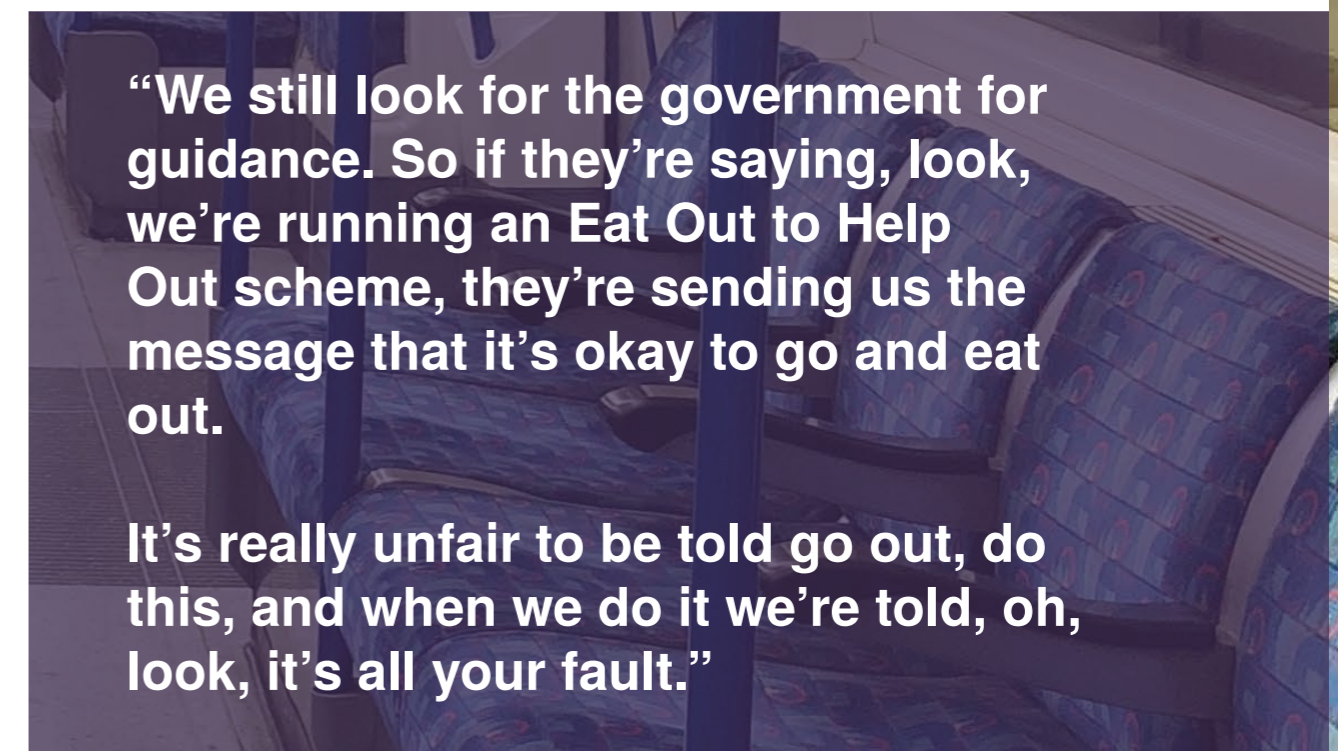
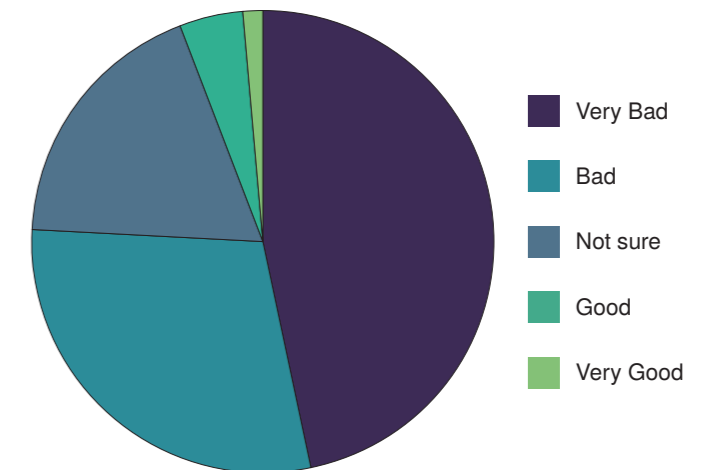
Only one in a hundred (1.2%) said that the government's response was very good.


A few groups were more likely to say bad or very bad, including young women compared to young men (79% to 71.6%), and disabled young people (81.8% to 75.3%).

**The more time a young person said they spent online, the worse they rated the government's responses.**

Those who spent far more time online, were almost three times more likely to say the government's response was very bad compared to those who spent more time online (70.6% to 24%).

How would you rate the Government's response to Covid-19?





"(We've) said that we expect from the government; increased wages, better working conditions, PPE provided, attention to mental health, and wellbeing of the staff protected.

And they have come out, and said, that's all great, but how about we give you a round of applause instead. And it's like something you should be happy with. We're clapping for you outside our homes, carry on with it."

## Covid-19 and their local area

A majority (68%) of young people said that Covid-19 and lockdown had changed their perception of London, or their local area.

Around a fifth (22%) said that it had changed their perception a lot, while only a small minority (4%) said it had made no impact.

We asked young people how Covid-19 and lockdown changed they saw London, and their local area. There were a few key themes in the answers we recieved:

- **More interaction with local shops and green spaces:** Many young people, having to stay locally, have discovered more about their local area. Some spoke about supporting local shops, or finding new green spaces or parks that they had not known about.
- **Quality of life in London is linked to the ability to travel around it:** We heard how essential being able to travel to different parts of London is to young people's quality of life. Being unable to visit friends, shop centrally, or see different areas.
- **Covid-19 and lockdown has changed how young people see their local community:** Some young people had a more positive perspective, seeing the community come together. While others had a more negative view, seeing people violate lockdown rules.
- **Lockdown has made people re-evaluate their local area:** Depending on their experience, young people do feel differently about where they live. This indicates why Housing as an issue was prioritised, as more people are linking their access to services or employment to where they live.



## How has your perception of London, or your local area, changed because of Covid-19 and lockdown?

Over 1600 young people told us what they wanted London to look like in the future.

"I've become more appreciative of local spaces and facilities."

"Increased tension, reservation and a sense of loss of community."

"I like London without all the tourists. It's quieter."

"It's made me realise how important it is to have access to green space, and how many Londoners are still struggling to access this. This didn't feel like such an issue before Covid-19."

"It has made it more apparent that we live in a Orwellian state."

"It feels a lot emptier, but it has made me realise how narrow the pavements are, and how difficult it can be to navigate."

"Too cramped together, needs more nature and diversity in community events."

"Better as you see communities getting together but you also notice the ignorant people too."

"It's made it full more collective. Clapping for the NHS really made it feel like a holistic and united community. However it does feel isolated often times."

"It made me realise that there are a lot of people in my area who do not follow the COVID guidelines."

"It's a lot cleaner nearer where I live."

"I've become more grateful for the surroundings but less for the people that take it for granted and don't take COVID-19 seriously."

"Now see London as a collection of villages and want to do more locally."

"Seems more business oriented as if people care more about money rather than lives."

"Journeys are now a bit longer and a few areas I have no access to."

"London is a little sad without the night life."

"Not much to do that's outdoors."

"It's made me tired of being in the same place all the time. Before lockdown rarely went out anywhere other than school. Lockdown has made me want to leave my local area more and explore."

"With everything closed down, the streets actually look nicer, i never know how beautiful regent street is without so many people."

"Made me more aware of green spaces for exercise."

"Shown how little the community care."

"More shops closed down."

"It was bad, now it's worse."

"The lockdown made me realise how life is important and the amount of social events that are in London."



"Enjoyment of less people on the street, but also a sense of is London worth the cost of living here if I can work remotely from anywhere?"

"Much quieter understandably. Managed to explore my local area alot."

"I have discovered new and wonderful places."

"I have been more cautious in my local area."

"Realised how many people really live in London and how cramped it is."

"I'd never realised how much I liked London because I was able to visit so many different types of place being in one city. Now I'm stuck in my area I definitely have a greater appreciation for the places I can't visit at the moment."

"Terrible city to drive in - too many fines/fees and too much traffic."

"I got to explore more about the area I live in."

"It has opened my eyes to a lot of smaller retailers and smaller companies that have to stay I open."

"It has made me value my area more."

"Appreciate the greenery and nature, residents are nice to be around. Have realised more that it's a good balance of being close to the centre but not too busy either."

"Everywhere seems to lose its character when hospitality and shops are closed. Seems very grey and lonely."

"I've began to see things differently. In terms of how things run and how hard some aspects really are."

"I still love the area I live in, but my perceptions of the people in the area have changed after the chaos in supermarkets, lack of social distancing in streets and pavements among other things."

"I start to appreciate the local parks more."

"Didn't realize how much green there is."

"Empty streets and closed shops show my local area in a different light, much more somber."

"My local area seems a lot more plain as there is not much around where I live except houses."

"I have discovered more local parks and woods to visit, which has made me realize I still have lots of places to

"London is a much tougher place to live than I originally thought."

"I've realised that there aren't any nice places to go on walks or do exercise. This area is really depressing."

"It showed that even in a global city like London people can be kind."

"Once lockdown opened up I discovered new green spaces and visited different areas of London for exercise."

"I see everything we took for granted."

"Made me appreciate more the facilities and events there used to be."

"The community coming together and helping one and other gave me a positive outlook on where I live."

"It has made me acknowledge how different the types of people are in the area and that the local economy relies a lot on restaurants and clothing stores."

"I feel it's less safe because there are less people on the road which means there's a higher chance of getting attacked."



# 3. Housing and renting

## Introduction

This report found that housing was the most common top priority for young Londoners, with one in four (25.8%) saying it was their most important issue. This section looks at some key issues around housing, satisfaction, cost of housing, homelessness, and insecure housing.

**Firstly, only over half (56.9%) were satisfied with their housing.** Furthermore, young Londoners are more likely to be satisfied with their housing if they are White (62.8%) compared to Asian (54.9%), Black (45.9%) and a Mixed-ethnicity (52.2%) young people, highlighting racial disparity within housing. Moreover, young people who were the most dissatisfied with their housing were four times more likely to be concerned about having a stable or safe place to stay.

**Secondly, a third of young people (31%) said that Covid-19 and lockdown had negatively impacted their housing situation.** Care-experienced (44.4%) young people and those who considered themselves to have a disability (44.2%) were more likely to be negatively impacted, showing that those deemed more vulnerable within society were most impacted by the pandemic. Young people who had their housing situation impacted by the pandemic and lockdown were twofold as likely to be very concerned about not having a stable or safe place to stay (24.8% to 11.6%), illustrating that Covid-19 and lockdown has increased young people's risk of insecure housing.

**Thirdly, the top three biggest challenges by young people regarding housing consisted of the cost of renting, quality of housing and cost of household bills.** The percentage of income young people spend on rent makes it difficult to cope with rent increases, rent maintenance and slow deposit returns. Furthermore, many young people did not think they would be able to own a house in the future. The older a Londoner gets, the less likely they feel like they can even afford owning a place where they grew up. Only one in five 22-25-year olds (21%) felt confident that they will be able to own a home, let alone just have a safe place or stable place to stay or rent.

**Lastly, one of the most shocking findings came from the lack of support from councils towards young people and their duty of care with just over half not being supported at all or receiving little support.** Black and Asian young people were twice as likely to seek support from their councils compared to White young people. Those from the care-system or from low-incomed or working-class backgrounds were 3 times likely to seek help from their councils. One in five of these young people received no support at all from their councils.

Personally, much in this report has reflected many of my views and my own life experience. I suffered from homelessness from the ages of 15 to 19 years old. I was thrown from one borough to another due to my parents living separately for around 3 of these years. They did not want to help or take responsibility of a duty of care. Renting, deposits and bills for a room became a major challenge. Another barrier was not knowing my entitlements and rights. Not knowing how I would afford to travel to college or university once securing accommodation. Slipping through the net and only receiving my care-leavers status at the age of 25 meant the council had no liability to care anymore. The lack of options for affordable housing, often means young renters are forced out by sudden rent increases or unfair evictions and this becomes a cycle of hardship and stress on one's mental and physical health.

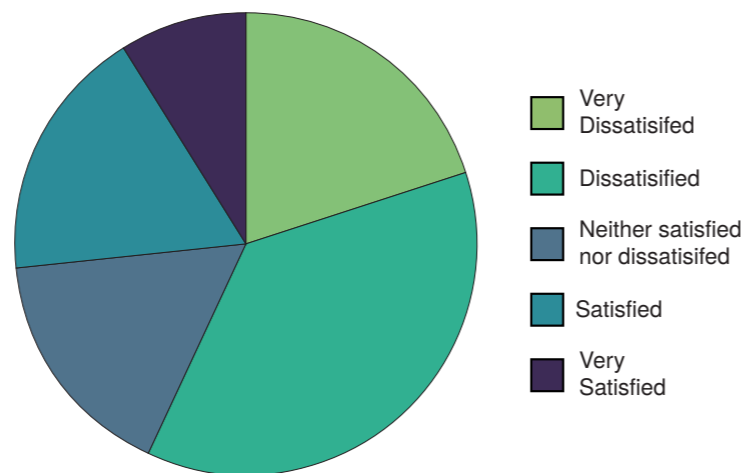
**Kismet**  
25 years old

# Housing satisfaction

Housing is one of the top priorities for young people, and we wanted to explore how young people felt about housing, privately renting, and the risk of homelessness.

We asked young people how satisfied they were with their current housing situation, with most (56.9%) saying they were satisfied or very satisfied. Less than one in ten (8.7%) said they were very unsatisfied.

How satisfied are you with your housing?



- **Young people aged above 18 were less likely to be satisfied** than those aged 16-17 with their current housing situation, similarly those living with their parents were more likely to be very satisfied than those privately renting (23.5% to 13.8%).
- **White young people were most likely to be satisfied or very satisfied** with their housing situation (62.8%), compared to Asian young people (54.9%), Black young people (45.9%), and mixed young people (52.2%).
- **Young people who went to private school were more likely to be satisfied or very satisfied with their housing situation** (66.8%), compared to those who went to state (55.1%) and academy schools (53.4%).
- **Young people who have care experience were twice as likely to say they were very unsatisfied with their housing situation** than those who did not (15.8% to 7.5%)

Unsurprisingly, a negative experience of housing made a young person more likely to see housing as a priority for London. Those who were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their housing were almost twice as likely to say housing was their top priority.

# Owning property in the future

Most young people (57.6%) said that they were either not very confident, or not confident at all they would be able to own property in London at some point in the next twenty years. Less than one in ten (7.7%) young people were very confident of this.

“I mean, we’re generation rent. That’s the term that’s thrown around with us, we’ll never be able to buy our own home, unless we have a top 1% job.”

This is unsurprising, with over 60% of Londoners now renting their homes, the highest rate in Britain (PwC, 2019), and house prices rapidly increasing in the past thirty years compared to real earnings (IFS, 2018).

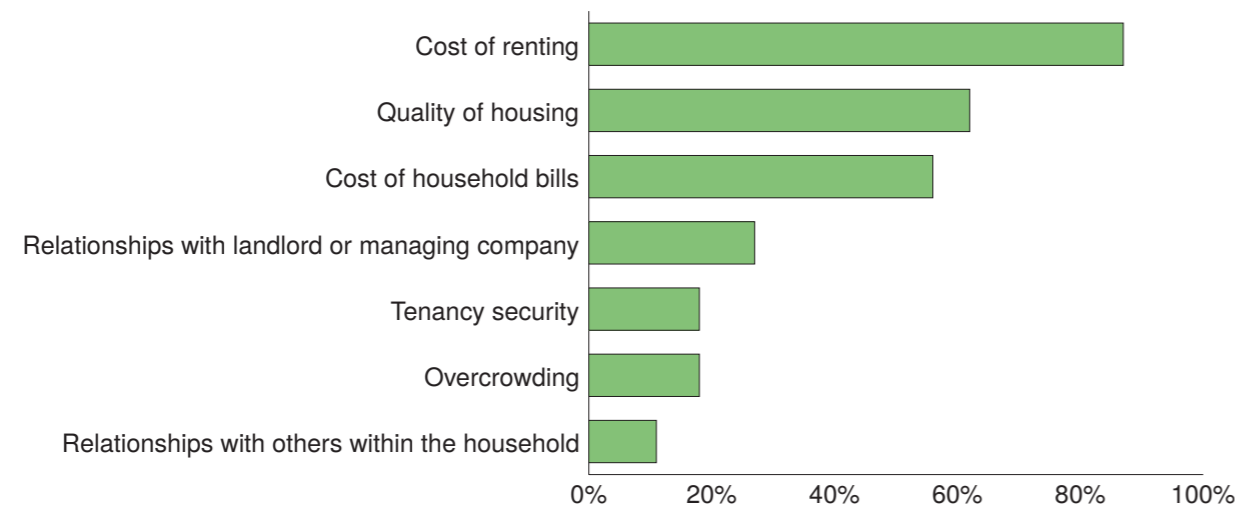
- **The confidence of young people to own property diminishes as they get older**, very confident to confident, 16-17 (32.4%), 18-21 (22.1%), 22-25 (21%).
- **Young men were far more likely to be confident or very confident** than young women (30.7% to 21%).
- **Black young people were the most likely to be confident or very confident** about owning property in the future (36.7%), with White young people the least (18.5%).

“A lot of people are already in arrears with their rent. So not only do they have to pay rent on monthly basis, they have this this debt from from a pandemic that they have to pay off.”

# The challenges of renting

We asked all young people what they thought the biggest, two or three biggest challenges were in terms of renting in London.

What are the biggest challenges of renting in London?



The most common issue, by some way, was simply the perceived cost of renting in London. Quality of housing, and cost of household bills were the second and third most common challenges chosen. Interestingly, despite lockdown, only one in ten (10.8%) cited relationships with others within the household as an issue.

“People struggle to pay their rent...not able to save enough money to cover that much rent on top of taking care of your your basic daily needs like food, clothing, and so on.”

This isn't surprising, with Londoners now spending over half of their income on rent on average, with rent costs increasing by a third in the past ten years. Those in the private rented sector were more likely than those living with parents to choose quality of housing (72.2% to 63.6%), relationship with landlord or managing company (36.4% to 25.2%), and relationships with others within the household (15.8% to 9.4%).

“Many people are unable to find jobs, many people lost their jobs.

So they rely on Universal Credit to pay off their rent.

And when you get, for example, furlough scheme and get a percent (of what you used to earn), that literally just covers the rent.

You can't live like that, you just live in just to pay for the bills.”

## The Challenges of Renting in London as a Young Person

### Toynbee Hall



When Toynbee Hall first opened its doors in 1884, the need for help and support was greater here than almost anywhere else in the UK. 135 years later and the community in which they work remains one of the unequal in the UK.

With 44% of people in Tower Hamlets still living in poverty, our work is as vital today as it was then. Their services are free of charge, and every year our residential and non-residential volunteers give them over 4,000 hours of their time to deliver services and engage with communities across Tower Hamlets and beyond.

Toynbee Hall worked with 21 peer researchers to carry out participatory action research to explore the risks private young renters face in the borough of Tower Hamlets. They conducted 14 in-depth interviews, got 80 survey responses, and consulted 14 landlords in the co-design.

#### Key findings

- **A majority (57%) of young people we spoke to spent more than half of their income on rent alone, and 8% spent 70% or more.** The percentage of income they spend on rent makes it difficult to cope with rent increases or slow deposit return.
- **Lack of options for affordable housing can force acceptance of inadequate living situations.** Even though 49% of our survey respondents reported being 'happy' or 'very happy' with their current accommodation, many spoke about having to compromise or lower their standards.
- **Regular house moves can create extra risk, with a majority had moved at least twice in the last five years;** 16 respondents, or 20%, had moved five times or more. Too often young renters were forced out by sudden rent increases or unfair evictions.
- **They often do not know their rights, including whether their landlord/agent has met their obligations.** 13 out of 80 respondents (16%) reported that they had experienced letting agents or landlords entering the property illegally.
- **They lack time and confidence to communicate with landlords and letting agents and to exercise their rights,** especially when relationships can be difficult.

To read the full report, please contact [xia.lin@toynbeehall.org.uk](mailto:xia.lin@toynbeehall.org.uk)

## The impact of Covid-19

**A third of young people (31%) said that Covid-19 and lockdown had impacted on their housing situation.** This is quite a surprisingly large number of young people, given the slightly younger sample, but there were some key differences between groups:

- **Covid-19 has disproportionately impacted on older young people** (22-25, 41.1%), or those privately renting (39.9%), compared to younger groups (16-17, 19%) or those living with parents (24%).
- **Young people who have care experience were significantly more likely to have had their housing situation impacted** than those with no experience of care (44.4% to 28.6%).
- **Disabled young people were far more likely to have had their housing situation impacted** than those who were not disabled (44.2% to 28.8%).
- **Young people who said that Covid-19 and lockdown had impacted on their housing situation were also twice as likely to be dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their housing situation.**

**We asked young people how Covid-19 and lockdown had impacted on their housing situation. There were a few key themes in the answers we received:**

- **Young people were forced to move from where they were living:** Many were forced to move because a landlord had sold the property, or because they had been furloughed or had lost their job and could no longer afford the rent.
- **Repairs to housing were not fixed, or fixes were delayed:** Some told us that lockdown had meant important repairs to their housing were not carried out, in some cases causing more serious issues like mould and damp.
- **Renting a place to live has become harder:** We heard how some landlords are expecting six months of rent upfront, and the difficulty of replacing flatmates, as more young people move out of London to live with family.

## How has Covid-19 impacted your housing?

"It has caused rent arrears."

"Had to move out of previous house because people were not following the rules and had to quickly find somewhere else."

"Living with parents, and confusion over whether I can move out and still see them."

"Moved house as wanted outdoor space."

"We were meant to have a few room restorations by the housing agency but due to covid they decided to cancel."

"I live in temporary accommodation provided by the council. Since Covid-19 happened they moved in lots of people with very chaotic lifestyles and there are now regular drugs raids and lots of targeted anti-social behaviour. I do not like this and I want them to be rehoused because I felt safer before."

"It is harder to make repairs."

"My flatmates are having to sublet because we can't shift their room at the price it's at but the landlord refuses to lower the price, we're all having to move out as a result."

"Unable to afford rent so on universal credit which covers rent in total but leaves me with nothing for food and or anything else so I scrape by with what I can."

"No access to communal areas, kitchens and leisure facilities."

"Housing agent has shown great neglect."

"Lockdown has prevented me from going back to my shared flat."

"Made me have to move to suboptimal housing, currently dealing with mould, power loss, and loss of food."

"My incomes are lower so I wanted to move but my landlord didn't want to break the contract due to the COVID then I'm struggling to pay the rent."

"No income has lead to me moving a few times to find cheaper housing, in order to financially be as stable as possible to the end of my degree."

"We can't get someone to fix the bathroom tap and it makes loud sounds all day and night."

"Online education has been difficult since very is using the WiFi at the same time."

"Cannot pay rent without government help."

"Made me homeless."

"I can't pay my rent anymore so need to move out and find a cheaper place to live in because the landlord was not compassionate."

"Broken heating and lack of hot water for several weeks without repair."

"Landlords are asking for six months advance payments altogether."

"Had to move when my flatmate couldn't pay rent anymore."

"Being in a two-bedroom house with seven people inside is really challenging. During lockdown it has been even more difficult knowing that everybody is at home and everybody has online work to do and it has been really difficult for everybody to have their own space. It has been really hard for me and it has really tested my mental health."

"It means I can't go back to halls of residence at university, which I am paying for."

"Estate Agents continually harassed us for rent and threatened eviction when we lost our jobs."

"Moved house to a slightly cheaper place but couldn't afford movers so carried everything ourselves on public transport. Can barely afford bills."

"I wanted to save money to move out, but COVID has made things go from incredibly unaffordable to impossible."

"I haven't been able to get work so I have had to move back in with my parents after graduating."

"I was homeless for six months."

"Badly."

"My flat mate moved home (internationally) due to the pandemic (and subsequent financial difficulties) and her mother being in critical care, reneging on her contract and leaving me liable for £6000 worth of her rent payments."

"Friend has been kicked out of his house so he lives on our sofa."

"My tenancy ended while my company was in redundancy talks so I couldn't afford to risk renewing for another year and am currently staying on a friend's sofa."

"Moved in with my partner partly to save costs. Main impact is not being able to afford to fix household problems."

"My flatmate was unable to pay rent for five months so I had to cover it."

"We had to move during the pandemic because the landlord wanted to sell the place due to the first buyers new rule. We had a week to get out..."

"It has caused us to go into more debt, because we rent an apartment. We might get kicked out."

"Struggling to make the money for the rent."

"Has led me to move because of incompatibility with a housemate which lockdown exacerbated."

"I used to live in supported living but the company was leaving me isolated with no heating or hot water in lockdown. I was forced to move back into my dads house which social and mental health services took me away from in the first place. But then both services abandoned me despite being entitled to section 117 aftercare and now I'm alone in my Dad's toxic house."

"My partner is extremely high risk, so I made the decision to move in with him so that my housemates could have a semi-normal life."

"Moved back with my parents."

"I need my own space. Overcrowding."

"We can't afford furniture or any renovations as we moved in before lockdown. We live in rough conditions with basic kitchen and bathroom."

"Parents are struggling to pay rent due to the fact they are vulnerable and can't work."

# Insecure housing

A large proportion (40.3%) of young people said that they were concerned, or very concerned, about not having a stable or safe place to stay.

Only one in ten (9.5%) of young people were not concerned at all about this.

- **Different housing tenures expressed similar levels of concern.**

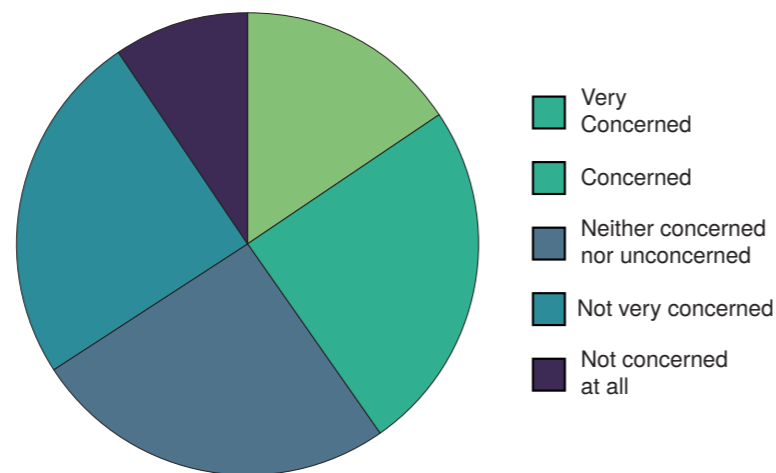
Private renters and those living with parents expressed similar levels of being concerned or very concerned about not having a stable or safe place to stay (39.7% and 37.9%).

- **Disabled young people were more likely to be concerned or very concerned** about not having a stable or safe place to stay compared to those who were not disabled (49.7% to 38.7%).
- **Young people with experience of care were more likely to be concerned or very concerned** about not having a stable or safe place to stay compared to those with no care experience (56% to 37.6%).
- **Young people who self-identified as working class were twice as likely to be concerned or very concerned** about not having a stable or safe place to stay compared to those who self-identified as middle class (49.3% to 32.3%).

Young people who had their housing situation impacted by Covid-19 and lockdown were twice as likely to be very concerned about not having a stable or safe place to stay (24.8% to 11.6%), suggesting that Covid-19 and lockdown is increasing young people's risk of insecure housing.

The most dissatisfied a young person was with their current housing situation the far more likely they were to be concerned about not having a stable or safe place to stay. For example, young people who were very unsatisfied, were four times as likely to be concerned than those who were very satisfied (39.4% to 9.6%).

How concerned are you about not having a stable or safe place to stay?



“(Homelessness) is scary. Once I hit the streets, I’m standing there in my bags. And I’m not sure where I’m going next.”

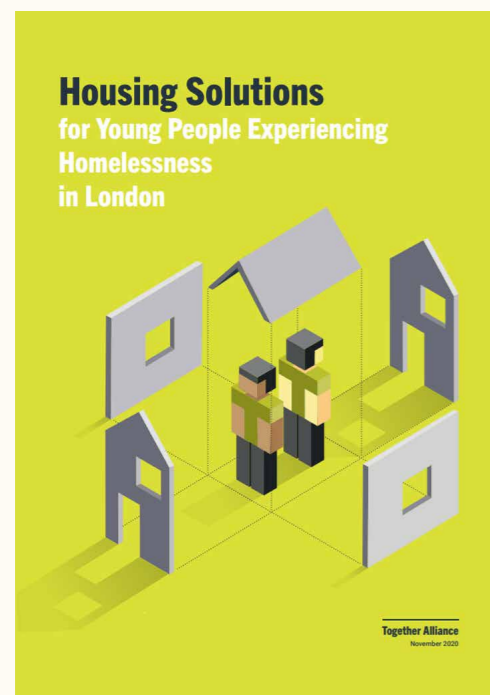
I’m just starting at London Waterloo station with my bags and not knowing what to do. People are telling me to ring the council, I’ve rung them about 19 times, we spoke, they said they would meet me in a week.

There’s nothing else I can do. So I was scared. I was anxious. My anxieties just kept coming back, and then I was depressed.

And I’m sitting I’m sitting on a bench thinking, I’ve got to go work at twelve. Am I going to sleep? I’m just getting anxiety. I haven’t showered, am I’m going to stink?”

## Housing Solutions for Young People Experiencing Homelessness in London

### Together Alliance



Together is an alliance of youth homelessness charities and housing associations working with young people who are experiencing homelessness or who are at risk of homelessness in London. It brings together a unique partnership between the Housing Association Youth Network (Clarion Housing, The Hyde Group, Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing, Network Homes, Peabody), the London Youth Gateway (New Horizon Youth Centre, Stonewall Housing, Safer London) and funders Fusion 21 Foundation and the Berkeley Foundation.

The Together Alliance commissioned research in order to understand how to make more effective use of its collective assets (homes, support, funding and expertise) to create better pathways for supporting young people into stable accommodation, as well as preventing them from becoming homeless in the first place. As part of this project, six peer researchers were trained, who conducted 21 interviews, alongside workshops,

desk reviews, and online asset mapping.

Based on the research, the 'Housing Solutions for Young People Experiencing Homelessness in London', written Campbell Tickell, **the Together Alliance recommends and is pursuing three projects:**

- 1. Project 1 - Someone to talk to:** To prevent young people who are housing association tenants from becoming homeless by having processes and/or people in their organisations that can support their tenancy sustainment. This project will be led by the housing association members of the alliance.
- 2. Project 2 - Some support to pay:** To support young people while they are experiencing homelessness, the Together Alliance wants to create a flexible funding pot of money that can be distributed directly and swiftly to assist with immediate needs. This project will be led by the youth homelessness charity members.
- 3. Project 3 - Somewhere to stay:** To provide young people with a good next step once they leave emergency accommodation by making underused housing stock available to support young people who are experiencing homelessness. This will be a joint project.

To read the full report please visit: <https://nhyouthcentre.org.uk/news/2020/11/25/together-alliance-report>





# Support from Councils

Only one in ten (11.1%) of young people said that they had sought support from their council for housing, or homelessness support. However, different groups of young Londoners were more likely to have sought support from their council.

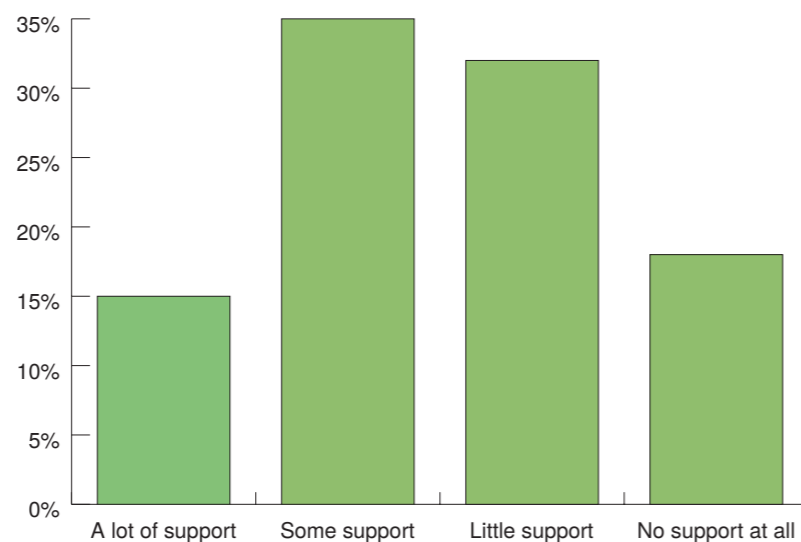
- **Black young people were twice as likely** as White young people to have sought support from their council (17.1% to 7.3%).
- **Disabled young people were twice as likely** as those who were not disabled to have sought support from their council (21.2% to 9.7%).
- **Young people with care experience over three times as likely** as those without care experience to have sought support from their council (27.8% to 8.2%).
- **Young people who self-identified as working class were three times as likely** to have sought support from their council compared to those who self-identified as middle class (16.2% to 5.9%).
- **Those who had their housing situation impacted by Covid-19 were over twice as likely** to have sought support than those who were not (20.4% to 6.9%).

Of those people who said yes, we asked them what the level of support was that they received from their council for housing or homelessness.

**Around one in five (18.2%) said that they had received no support at all.**

But overall the level of support was mixed from young people, with half (49.7%) receiving some or a lot of support, and half (50.2%) receiving little to no support.

What was the level of support you received from your council for housing or homelessness support?



# New Horizon Youth Centre Focus Group

We spoke to a group of young people who had experience of homelessness, or were currently living in insecure housing about seeking support from the local council, and what changes they would like to see. The following is a snippet from that conversation:

**Person 1**

“When the lockdown happened, it was much more difficult because the council was, very bureaucratic. You would expect them to be quicker with housing, as opposed to waiting weeks, even months. In my case it took me a month or two just to get on the list.”

**Person 2**

“Right, but obviously, the main reason why you were waiting, is (there are) vulnerable people. So there’s people with kids, single parents of kids, that have nowhere to stay. Obviously, they’re gonna go above you. So hence why he was waiting on my list for a certain amount because they need to prioritise them first.”

**Person 1**

“Yeah but, there’ll be like some workers that work for the council; they don’t know what they’re doing half the time. Like I was like talking to this one woman and I was explaining my situation I’m rough sleeping in. It seemed to go through one ear and out the other just kept saying “Yeah, yeah”, and it kept going in circles. Saying “oh you have to call this person, call that person and that person will take you back to the same person”.

**Person 3**

“Yeah it was more than one person. Call this number, and then it was going back to the previous number, and the previous number gave me another number, and the third one took me back to the first one. So it was like a loop, and no one knew what to do.”

**Person 4**

“And sometimes when you get through on the phone, they give you an appointment. Then the day you go, they will tell you “sorry we didn’t put your name on the list so we can’t do anything for you”. Most of them, they need to treat people (well). I mean, if we are homeless, (it doesn’t mean) that we don’t need respect from them. They need to consider, even if we are young, the way they talk to us or the way they’re going to help us.”

**Person 1**

“They need to themselves in our position. They don’t understand our side of the fence, the stories and struggles that we are facing because they think it’s all fine and dandy.”

**Person 2**

“It’s like, don’t judge a book by it’s cover.”



## 4. Opportunity and work

## Introduction

**While young people (44%) viewed London being the capital as a city for opportunity,** it is evident that from recent circumstances and COVID-19, young people have suffered on the employment front more than usual. I myself have had experience this past year having graduated in Law and finding it tough to secure a training contract to step into the legal field.

Not only that but many things have changed around career hunting. **Many young people are steering away from the traditional way of applying for jobs in house and are now applying online, with 75% of young people are applying from Google.** The shift to online job recruitment is not because of Covid-19, but has definitely been sped up as a result of it.

The result of COVID could have either been positive or negative, or both! Over half of the young people surveyed stated their future career plans had been changed, with certain groups being more likely to have faced repercussions such as young women, young people with experience in care and those with an experience of care.

The major flaw in the system throughout lockdown which was brought up between young people on numerous occasions was the lack of support. **Half of the young people surveyed agreed on the lack of appropriate careers, training and employment advice being available and that if it was it would have made a big difference.**

Work experience is vital to young people. The cycle that every young person has gone through, being told 'you don't have enough work experience to work here', but also not being able to get that work experience. Most professionals in career fields state that practical experience is almost as important as the studying and getting the qualification. **A majority of young people stated they would want work experience however less than half felt that they could afford to do an unpaid internship or work experience with a common barrier being lack of connections.** This is completely relatable to me as I have been through the same cycle time and time again within the legal field.

Young people are deserving of getting onto the career ladder and into the field they are interested to work in, provided they have worked hard, factors such as background, connections, or gender, should not matter when it comes to employment.

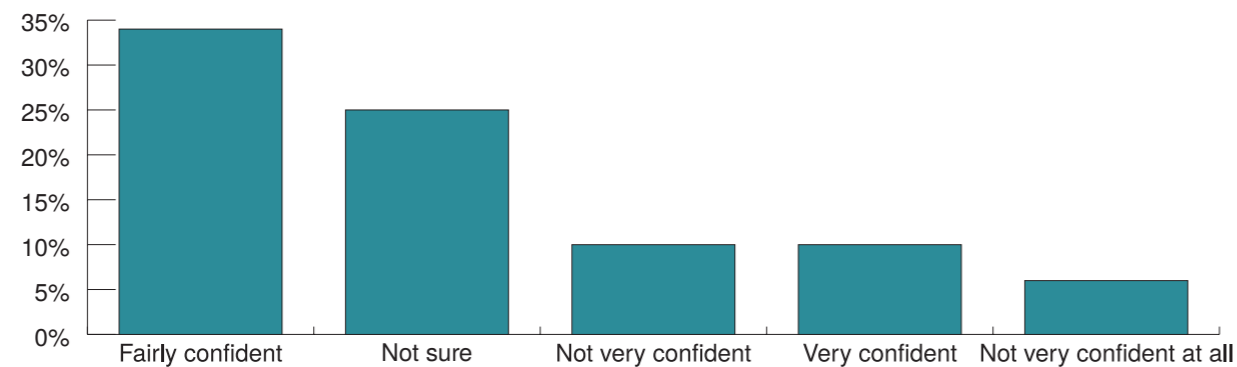
We young people spend a majority of our lives in schooling and isn't fair when all the odds are stacked against us. Give young people the opportunities, and watch the rewards come tumbling in!

**Anmol Kaur**  
24 years old

# Opportunity in London

A large proportion (44%) of young people were fairly or very confident that London as a city can provide the job opportunities they wanted in the future.

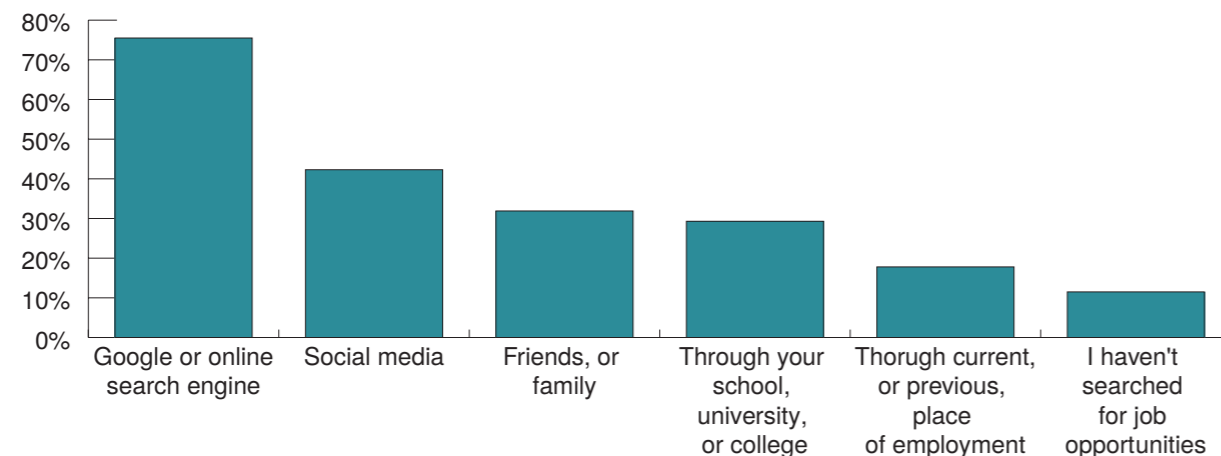
How confident are you that London as a city can provide the job opportunities you want in the future?



- **Young men were slightly more likely to be confident** and very confident than young women (49.8% to 40.7%).
- **Young disabled people were three times as likely to be not confident at all** than non-disabled young people (14.5% to 5.4%).

Young people are most likely to find job opportunities on Google or online search engines (75.5%), while one in ten hadn't searched for job opportunities (11.5%).

Where do you search for job opportunities?



# Youth Employment 2030 YE2030



YE2030 (short for youth employment 2030), is a project that focuses on two key things: first, listening to the voices of young people aged 16-25 living in England (particularly, those most impacted by covid-19), to better understand their experiences and feelings about their future employment and working life post-pandemic. Second, to advocate the views, perspectives and solutions of young people aged 16-25 to decision-makers, through purposeful and youth-led campaigns.

A co-creation group of 10 young people and a group of 11 peer researchers, aged 16 to 25 years and from areas across England, led this work. They worked closely with a team of experienced researchers to develop a survey, and to conduct focus groups and interviews with their peers to gain a deeper understanding of their experiences. Over 1,000 young people completed the survey and the peer researchers spoke with 121 young people. The analysis was conducted with guidance and oversight

from the co-creation group and peer researchers.

## Key findings

- **Work experience is vital:** 41% of young people in England rank 'getting access to the work experience they need is very competitive' in their top three barriers to following the career they want. 32% of young people also rank 'work experience opportunities' as the number one support opportunity that would be useful to them right now
- **Young people want life skills:** 43% of young people ranked 'life skills training including financial education' in their top three support opportunities that would be most useful to them right now
- **Careers advice and guidance is limited, to non-existent:** Only 5% of young people in England rank a 'careers advisor' as their top source of advice about looking for work. Family (26%), friends (11%), Google (10%) and online job boards (13%) all rank above careers advisor.
- **Covid-19 has hit different groups differently:** Young people who identify as Black Caribbean are more likely to have been furloughed due to COVID19 compared to other ethnic groups and young people who identify as Black Caribbean or Asian Pakistani are more likely than other ethnic groups to have had their working hours reduced due to COVID19.

To read the full report, please go to: <https://ye2030.co.uk/research/>

# Impact of Covid-19

Half of the young people we surveyed (51.4%) said that their future employment plans had changed as a result of Covid-19 or lockdown. However, different groups were more likely to have had their employment impacted too:

- **Young women were more likely to have had their future employment plans changed** as a result of Covid-19 or lockdown compared to young men (54.3% to 47.4%).
- **Young people were more likely to have their future employment impacted the older they were**, with over half of those aged 22-25 (65.6%) having their plans changed, compared to less than half of those aged 18-21 (48.6%), or 16-17 (37.8%).
- **Young people with an experience of care were slightly more likely to have their future employment plans change** as a result of Covid-19 and lockdown compared to young people with no experience of care (58.1% to 50.3%).

However, two thirds (66.6%) said that their, or someone in their household's, employment had been affected by Covid-19 or lockdown.

Only a third (29.6%) of respondents and their households reported employment being unaffected by the pandemic. This was also more likely for two key groups:

- **Young people who self-identified as working class were far more likely to answer yes** compared to those who self-identified as middle class (75% to 60.5%).
- **Young people who went to a state or comprehensive school were far more likely to answer yes** compared to those who went to a private school (69.7% to 58%).

**“It’s affected (my Mum’s) mental health, as she had a gap of input on employment because she was made redundant. She has got a job, but it’s not something that she’s very happy with. She doesn’t actually get up and she’s excited to go to work.”**

We asked young people how Covid-19 and lockdown had impacted on their, or someone in their household's, employment situation. There were a few key themes in the answers we received:

- **Many young people have been furloughed, or lost their jobs:** We heard repeatedly of people being let go from their jobs, or having to take a pay cut. We also heard stories about flatmates, partners, and family members also going through this.
- **Young people entering the job market have either retrained, or gone back into education:** Covid-19 and lockdown had changed the job market, meaning many in sectors like the creative industries, have felt the need to retrain to find a job or delay employment by continuing education.
- **Covid has changed the way young people work:** Those still working have seen their hours cut, more of their work going digital, and are re-evaluating the need to live in London to do their jobs.

## How has Covid-19 impacted your, or someone in your households, employment?

Over 1600 young people told us what they wanted London to look like in the future.

"Furlough for one parent, loss of work for other parent and a severe lack of employment opportunities for myself and siblings."

"My mum has to run her theatre school online now."

"My partner lost her job working as an art handler. I had previously left my job as a management consultant. Both of us have two degrees (we both studied at the University of Cambridge) and neither of us have been able to get a job, despite applying for several every day."

"Less work for parents. Less placements for me to attempt."

"I had to stop work for around 6 months with no pay."

"Partner works in the housing industry, his commission has completely gone, we used his commission to live off as we are in arrears and debt, now council tax arrears and fears of bailiffs."

"I got severely ill with Covid in March, I couldn't work for 3 weeks and was too ill to continue when I did for one month. I got three months sick pay and lost my job in June. I was a very active person with no previous illness. Have had long covid and complications with my heart and brain that have both since recovered significantly (they both flared up in November, had several hospital visits throughout year) however I'm still improving and not back to my previous aptitude."

"Had two jobs, now have no jobs."

"Contract not being renewed - having to look for a job."

"My grandmother could not work and was paid less this month. The universal credit money has also been reduced because of COVID."

"As last year students it has affected my housemate's employment chances post university. Unable to work due to restrictions."

"I've been trying to get a nursing apprenticeship for over a year. I was shortlisted. Every time they have set a date for my assessment, it's been cancelled because of tier restrictions. It knocks my confidence and annoys me. My brother has also been sent to a different location to work and he went from working everyday to barely twice a week."

"Everything is online and thus depressing."

"As I currently freelance whilst balancing my studies, all work for freelancers has essentially gone. I haven't made a single penny in profit in over a year now."

"There is less part time work available, especially for someone who has no experience."

"My industry is falling apart so I have no work at present and the job field is competitive. There is less financial support available compared to the beginning of the pandemic."

"I trained as an actor but graduated into a world where there was no theatre and the door was closed to anyone who wasn't already inside. I am now looking to retrain as a social worker as I no longer see a future in acting for myself."

"Lost their job when they did not extend furlough properly first time."

"We were out at risk of redundancy and have taken pay cuts, our jobs become less secure the longer the pandemic goes on."

"I am currently not working as a swimming coach as I am in theory self employed and as I am I student making below the government threshold if needed financial support I wouldn't be able to claim it."

"Been made redundant."

"I have lost both my jobs. My partner is on half wage and our flatmate has lost her job. It is incredibly difficult to get a new job, I apply to about four jobs a week and haven't gotten any."

"I applied for several student jobs before lockdown and never received an answer and also never got a job."

"I have lost both my jobs. My partner is on half wage and our flatmate has lost her job. It is incredibly difficult to get a new job, I apply to about four jobs a week and haven't gotten any."

"Took over 6 months to find meaningful employment. Was stuck on a zero hours contract that left me with barely little money to buy food and other stuffs. Ended up on universal credit."

"My housemates and I were all made redundant from our jobs, two of us have been on universal credit for months trying to find any work. My other housemate has had 4 shifts in the past 6 months."

"I've been fired three times due to redundancy, I can't get work in the field I've been trained in for half a decade and the trade I'm moving into has basically shut down completely."

"My mom has decreased income. I have been unable to get a part time job to support myself after applying to hundreds of different positions, which is making me very worried about money and how to afford stuff. Many friends are going to the same but also a lot

"I have been unemployed for most of 2020, and I got my degree 18 months ago. My partner has also just lost his job."

"Made me consider whether London is the hot spot for job opportunities - work from home means affordable housing outside of London and working from home is a more financially viable option due to stupidly high house prices in London."

"I was made redundant because the company for which I was working closed."

"My mum has less work as a result and I lost my internship."

"There are fewer jobs."

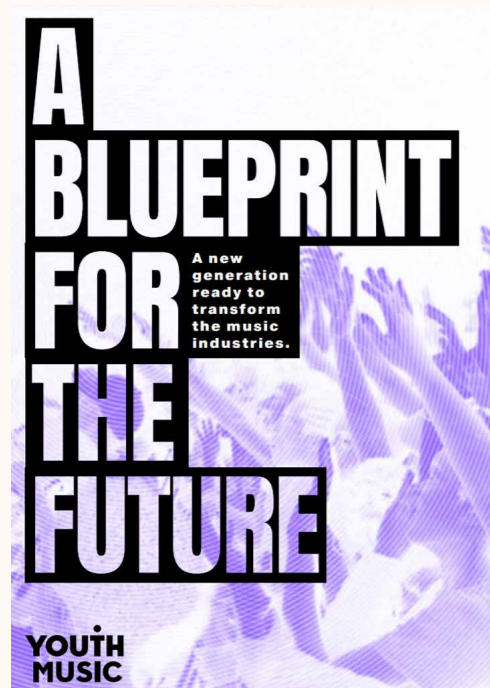
"Self employed for 18 months to March 2020, meaning he didn't qualify for self employment support. Instead having to go on universal credit which just about covered rent but nothing else."

"Parents have lost their jobs."

"Almost made redundant, changing job roles, furlough, percentage decrease in pay, now very overworked as there are far fewer staff."

"I got fired."

## Blueprint for the Future Youth Music



For the past two decades Youth Music has worked tirelessly to equalise access to music for over three million young people across the UK.

A Blueprint for the Future features the voices of 1,300 young people (aged 18-25) with plans to begin careers in the music industries. It showcases how, despite the overwhelming tenacity, determination, and entrepreneurial spirit in young people, current routes for them to move from education to employment are not fit for purpose.

### Key findings:

- **48% were already earning money from music.** Over a third were earning through performing, and between 20-25% were earning from either composition, sessions, recording, teaching and/or non-music content creation.
- **60% of those earning money were doing so from more than one music-related role**, with the number of roles increasing with age.
- **2 out of every 3 (66%) said they would be very likely or likely to pursue another career** if they were struggling to earn a sustainable income from working within the music industry in the next 5 years.
- **A lack of access to relevant industry connections was the third most significant barrier young adults identified** as stopping them from breaking into the music industries (21.4%) regardless of social background.
- **Women were less likely to be currently earning than men (41% vs 55%).**
- **Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic respondents were marginally more likely to be earning from music than white respondents.**
- **Those from Greater London and the West Midlands were more likely than those from other regions to be making money.**

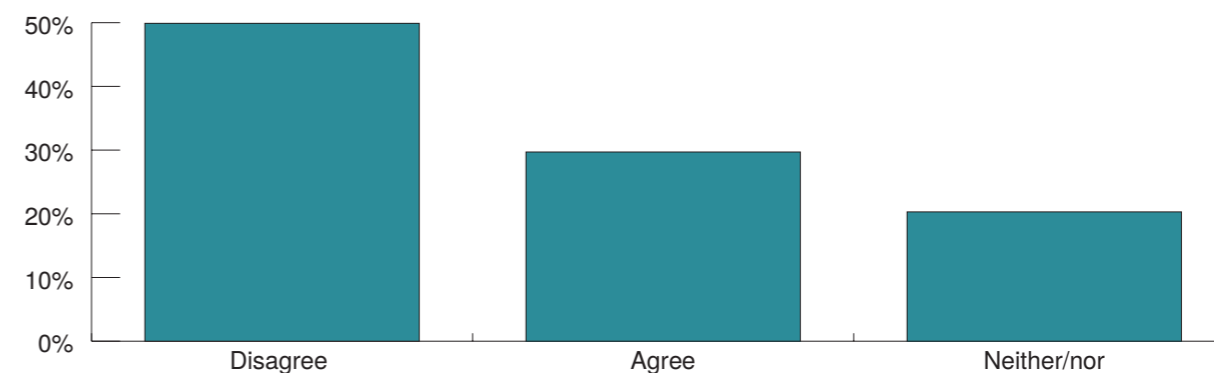
For more information, please see the full report at: <https://youthmusic.org.uk/blueprint-future>

## Careers advice and guidance

**Around half of the young people we spoke to disagreed (49.9%) that appropriate careers advice, training, and employment support was available**, with only a third (29.7%) believing there was.

This was unchanged between groups, with largely most young Londoners similarly experiencing a lack of careers advice.

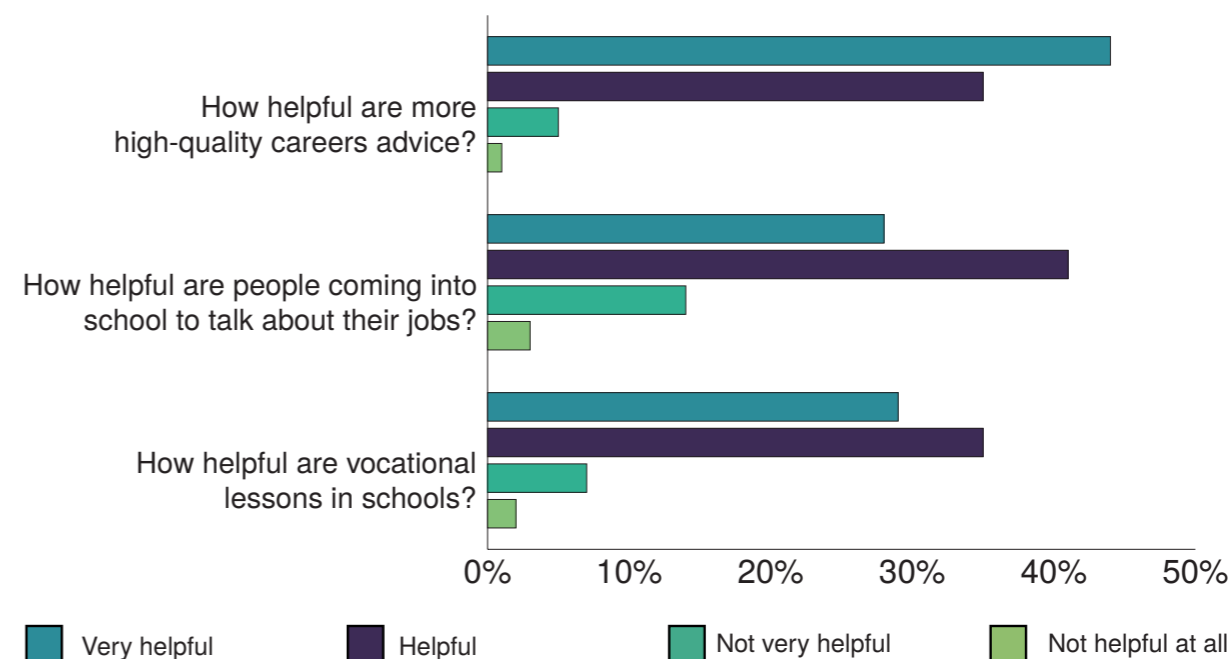
### “Appropriate careers advice, training, and employment support is available”



**Despite the lack of careers advice, a majority (79%) thought more high-quality careers advice would be helpful**, with a tiny minority (6%) saying it would not be helpful.

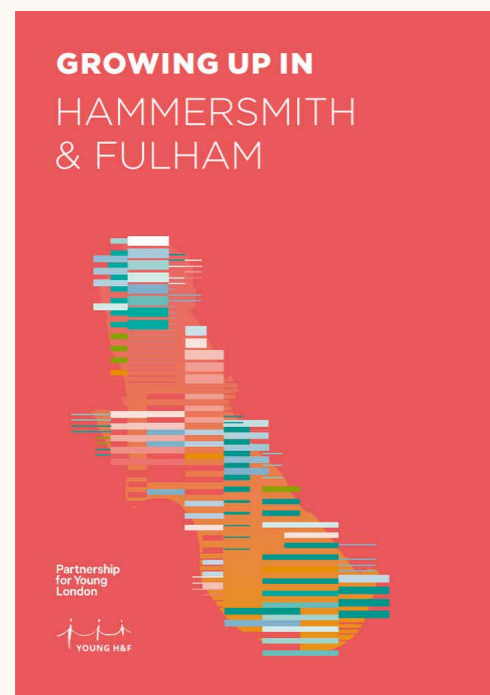
Over half of young people also thought vocational lessons (64%), and people coming to school to talk about their jobs (69%) would be helpful or very helpful.

### How helpful are the following:



## Growing up in Hammersmith & Fulham

### Young Hammersmith and Fulham Foundation



Based at the heart of Hammersmith & Fulham, Young H&F brings together the public, private and voluntary sectors to effect positive change for young people. Their membership registration is open for everyone at the local level that works with children and young people aged 0-25. This includes youth clubs, charities, schools, businesses, voluntary groups and the public sector.

Working with Partnership for Young London, this research was developed with a group of peer researchers, looking at the challenges of living in London and Hammersmith and Fulham. It spoke to 594 local young people, with surveys, in-depth interviews, and surveys.

This report had a range of findings, looking at education, safety and the police, and youth services. They also looked at the views of young people on careers advice and guidance.

#### Key findings on career advice and guidance:

- 1. Young people are split about what they would like their career to be, with some young people wanting advice to make a better decision.** The majority of young people (58.59%) said that they knew what they wanted their career to be, however the rest either were not sure (18.12%), would like advice (14.82%), or had not thought about it (8.47%).
- 2. Most young people (68.3%) planned to go to university, while one in five planned to go into work or an apprenticeship (19%).** However, almost half of the young people (44%) said that they were interested in knowing more about apprenticeships.
- 3. Young people still primarily get their support from family or teachers.** Most young people either get some support (26.32%) or a good amount of support (52.63%) from their family, similarly most young people get a certain level of support from teachers either some (36.14%) or a good level (28.19%).
- 4. On the flip side, a very small proportion (16%) of young people get support or advice from youth workers,** while just over a third (34%) get support from counsellors.

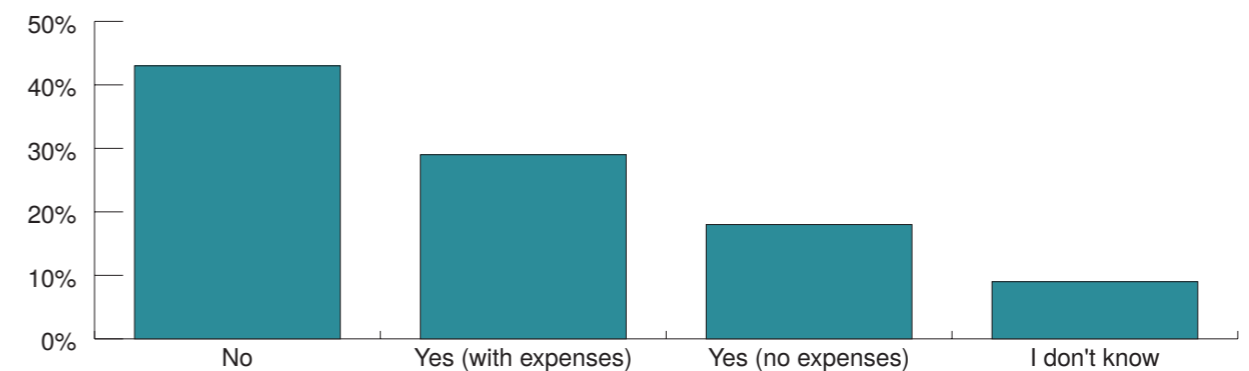
To learn more about Young Hammersmith and Fulham Foundation: <https://yhff.org.uk/>

## Work experience

**Most of the young people we spoke to said that they would want work experience (76.3%),** with less than one in five not interested in one (17.3%). Younger age groups like 16-17s were far more likely to want work experience (87.9%), along with those aged 18-21 (83.4%), compared to those aged 22-25 (59.4%).

**However, while a large majority of young people were interested in work experience, less than half (43%) felt that they could afford to do an unpaid internship, or unpaid work experience.** Only one in five (18%) could afford to do one without expenses.

Can you afford to do unpaid work experience or internship?



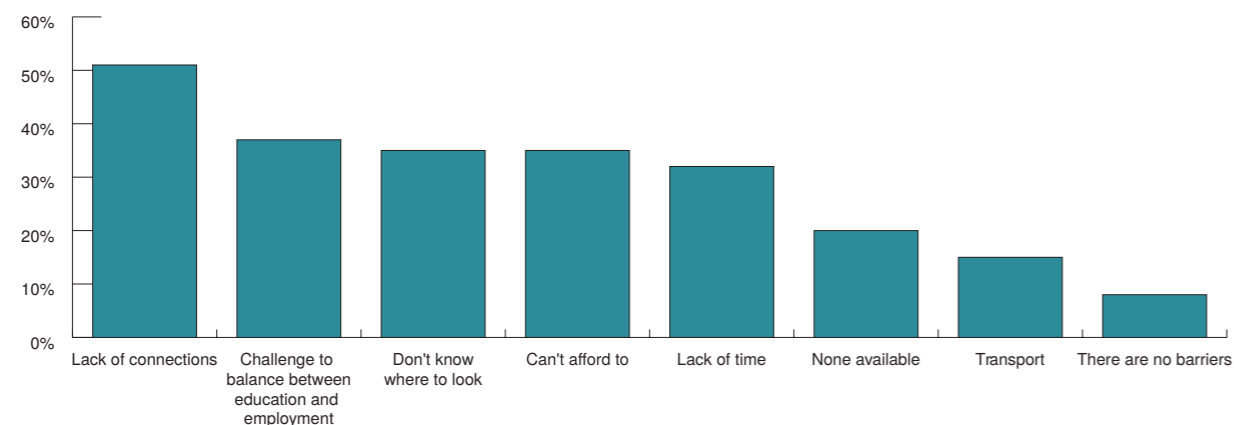
The ability to do an unpaid internship or work experience greatly varied depending on a young person's background, experience, or the stage of life they were at:

- The ability of a young person to afford to do an unpaid internship or work experience decreased the older they got,** with 22-25s the least likely (67.5%), followed by 18-21s (37%), and lastly by 16-17 (22%).
- Young people who self-identified as working class were more likely to say they couldn't afford to do one** compared to those who self-identified as middle class (50.6% to 38.6%). Similarly, those who went to a state or comprehensive school were less likely than those who went to a private school (48.9% to 29%) to say they couldn't afford work experience.
- Young disabled people were less likely to be able to afford to do one** compared to non-disabled young people (55.8% to 41.9%).

The most common barrier to doing work experience or internships was a lack of connections (51%), with less than one in ten (8%) saying there are no barriers.

However, there were a range of reasons, from lack of time (32%), not being able to afford to (35%), not knowing where to look (35%), and challenges to balance between education and work (37%).

What are the barriers to you getting work experience?



## Creating Futures Roundhouse



The Roundhouse is a hub of inspiration where artists and emerging talent create extraordinary work and where young people can grow creatively as individuals. Each year, 7,500 young people take part in creative opportunities at the Roundhouse, or out in our local community – of the young people who take part 46% are from ethnically diverse communities and 58% are from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Through music, media and performance projects, young people develop their skills and confidence and through professional opportunities, young people take their first steps in the creative industries.

The Roundhouse Creating Futures report evidences, for the first time, the importance of our creative projects and the value of creativity on the future of the young people who take part in them – especially when it comes to getting a job. They spoke to 167 young people, aged 16-25 at the start of their Roundhouse project, and therefore, up to

age 30 on the date of the phone call.

### Key recommendations

We want the Government, business and funding partners to invest in programmes that are proven to build skills, confidence and resilience in young people because, as opportunities open up again post Covid, we want young people to be fully ready for the world of work. For that to happen we propose:

1. Investment in existing and new high-quality spaces for young people, where they can access support, learn skills and gain experience.
2. A revitalised creative careers information service that includes advice on self-employment, entrepreneurship and skills development.
3. Proactive measures to enable under-represented young people to access entry-level work schemes and support structures.
4. To get this right, young people's voices must be at the centre of government policy.

To read the full report please visit: <https://www.roundhouse.org.uk/about-us/our-work-with-young-people/roundhouse-creating-futures>





# 5. Mental and physical health

## Introduction

The COVID 19 pandemic has exerted a seismic effect on many different domains of life, including mental and physical health. The pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on young people between the ages of 16-24.

In a series of studies conducted on young people who live in the UK, data show that:

- **Worryingly, over a third (34.4%) of respondents scored low well-being scores that are indicative of depression.**
- **Most young people (79.3%) said that Covid-19 and lockdown has had a negative impact on their mental health, with less than one in ten (8.7%) saying it had not.**

Pre-pandemic, the waiting times before being able to access physical and psychological health services under the National Health Service have been a concerning issue. The pandemic seems to have exacerbated this issue, including and not limited to:

- **Waiting lists for support were the most common barrier for young people seeking support for their mental health (44.7%), followed by Covid-19 and the lockdown restrictions (42.2%), and lack of trust with staff (39.3%).**

Overall, there is significant evidence to suggest that the pandemic has had a negative impact on young people's mental health across the UK, however, how does the physical health impacts compare? Evidently, lockdowns have decreased outdoor mobility over the last couple of months, therefore, it follows that the general population has had decreased access to sunlight, and routine physical activity, which can strongly influence cardiovascular, sleep and immunological health.

The effects of the pandemic have been especially pronounced in economically deprived and dense urban areas in the UK, particularly owing to the lack of green spaces and inappropriate public services in these regions. These areas coincide where minority ethnic groups are overly distributed, giving rise to the compounded effects of the pandemic and lockdowns it has had on these communities.

Young people are facing a mental health crisis, and are likely less physically healthy after a year of lockdown, closed gyms, and reduced exercise. They need to be supported as they come out of lockdown, and services need to be funded properly for them, so that they're not stuck on a waiting list.

**Florence Onabanjo**  
23 years old

# Young people's mental health

We asked young people if they agreed with the statement "I know what good mental health is", and most said that they did (78%), with less than one in ten (7.8%) not knowing.

We then looked at the mental health of young people, using the World Health Organisation's Well-Being Index, which asked five simple questions.

On average, across all questions, young people scored 1.81 out of 5 – with a score of 2 being "Less than half the time" and 1 being "Some of the time".

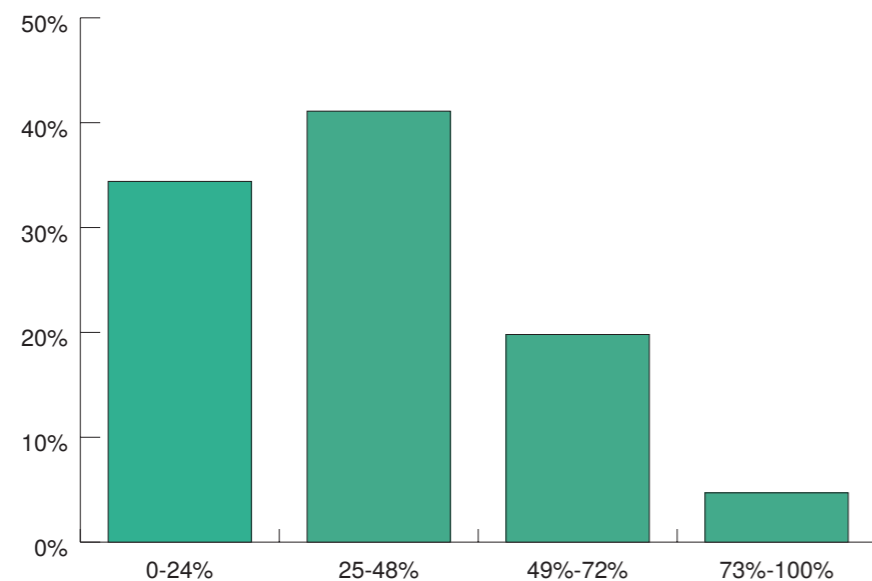
Scores across all five questions were put together to calculate a total score in a percentage form.

Our findings show a serious challenge to the mental health and well-being of young people, with an average score of 36.1%. Evidence suggests, a score under 50 is indicative for low mood.

## The World Health Organisation Five Well-Being Index

- "I have felt cheerful in good spirits."
- "My daily life has been filled with things that interest me."
- "I felt calm and relaxed."
- "I have felt active and vigorous."
- "I woke up feeling fresh and rested."

## WHO-5 Wellbeing Scores

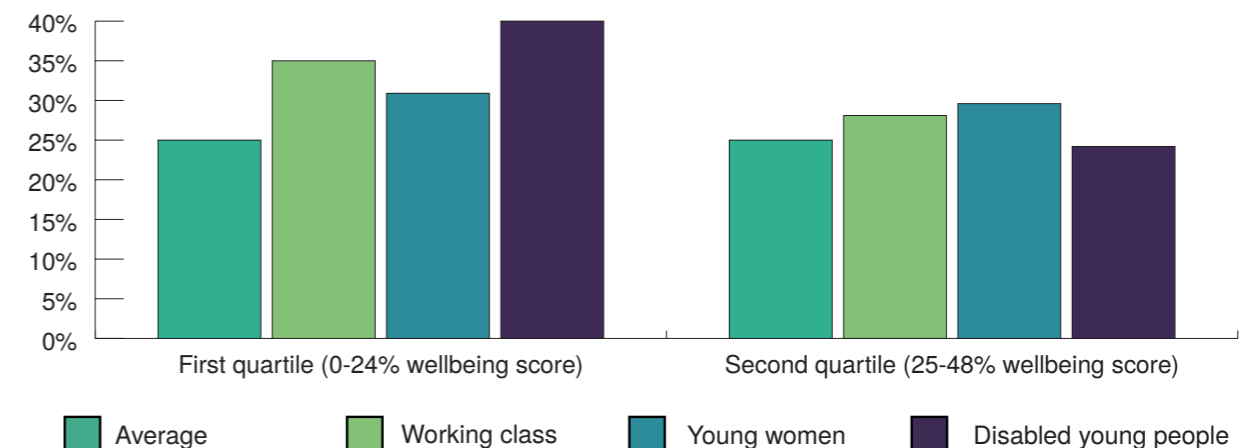


Worryingly, over a third (34.4%) of respondents' scores were placed in the first quartile, which is a percentage score of 24% or less, with a score 28% being indicative of depression.

# Worse for different groups

We also found that certain groups were overrepresented in the bottom 25% and 50% of the mental health percentage scores, indicating a worse mental health in those groups than the average.

## Bottom 25% and 50% of wellbeing scores

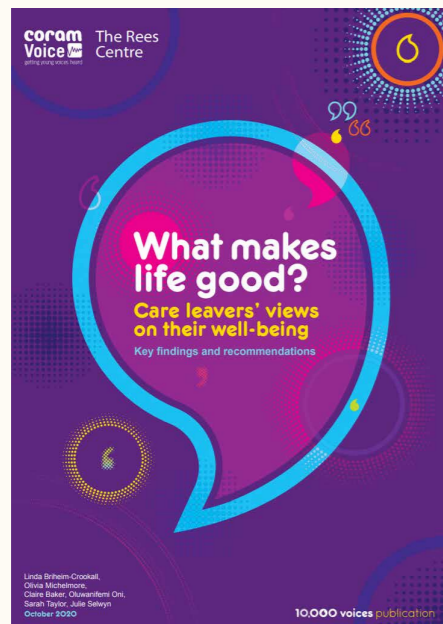


- Young women were more likely than men to be in the bottom 50% of well-being scores (60.5% to 45.4%).
- Young people with a disability were far more likely more likely to be in the bottom 50% of well-being scores than non-disabled young people (64.2% to 52.8%)
- Young people who self-identified as working class were more likely to be in the bottom 50% of well-being scores compared to middle class young people (63.1% to 48.5%)

"Mental and physical health is the main issue for young Londoners, because in every aspect, whether it's housing or employment, mental health and physical health will play a role."

## What makes life good? Care leavers' views on their well-being

### CORAM



Established by Thomas Coram as The Foundling Hospital in 1739, Coram is the UK's oldest children's charity and has been supporting vulnerable children for 280 years. Over the past year, the Coram Group has directly supported nearly 145,000 children, young people, parents and carers, helped over 400,000 children and young people.

The report, 'What Makes Life Good, Care leavers' views on their well-being', published by Coram Voice and the Rees Centre, is the first of its kind in examining the well-being of a large sample of care leavers from their perspective, enabling comparisons across local authorities. Based on 1,804 care leavers' responses from across England on how they feel about their lives, the study identified 10 key issues that lead to high well-being.

#### Key findings:

- **Nearly a quarter (24%) of care leavers reported a disability or long-term health problem**, against just 14% of 16-24-year olds in the general population.
- **Over a quarter of care leavers (26%) have low life satisfaction** compared to just 3% in the general population.
- **One in five care leavers (20%) report struggling financially**, more than twice the percentage of non-care experienced young people (9%).
- **Care leavers also reported significantly higher levels of loneliness (22%), high anxiety (33%) and feeling unsafe where they live (16%).**

#### Key recommendations for local authorities, guided by factors that care leavers themselves have identified, include:

- Improving connections, building trusting relationships and addressing loneliness
- Providing emotional and mental health support to address stress, negativity and help care leavers feel good about their future
- Providing money management and financial support to care leavers
- Improving accommodation support to help care leavers feel safe and settled

To read the full report, please go to: <https://coramvoice.org.uk/latest/well-being-inequality-highlighted-in-new-care-leavers-report/>

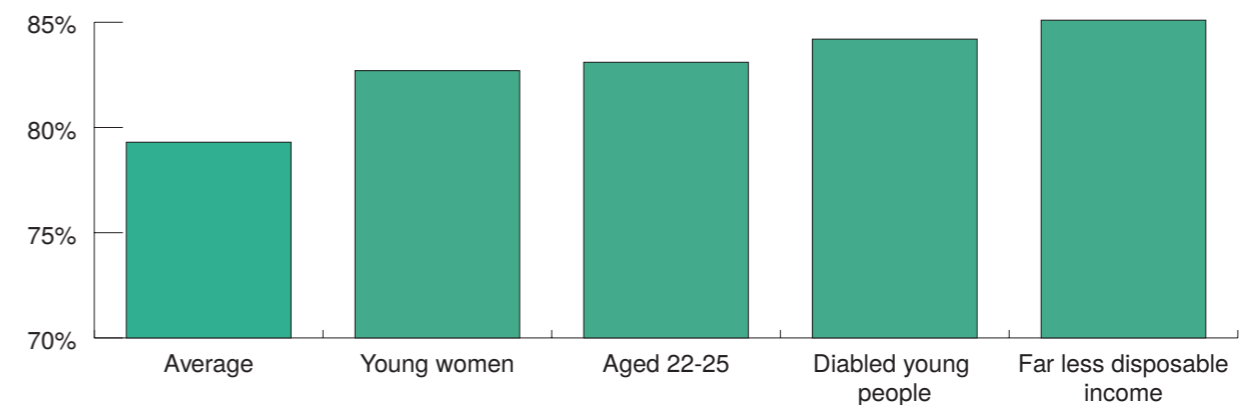
## The impact of Covid-19

**Most young people (79.3%) said that Covid-19 and lockdown has had a negative impact on their mental health, with less than one in ten (8.7%) saying it had not.**

Young people who said that Covid-19 had a negative impact on their mental health, were far more likely to have lower well-being scores. There were also differences between different groups:

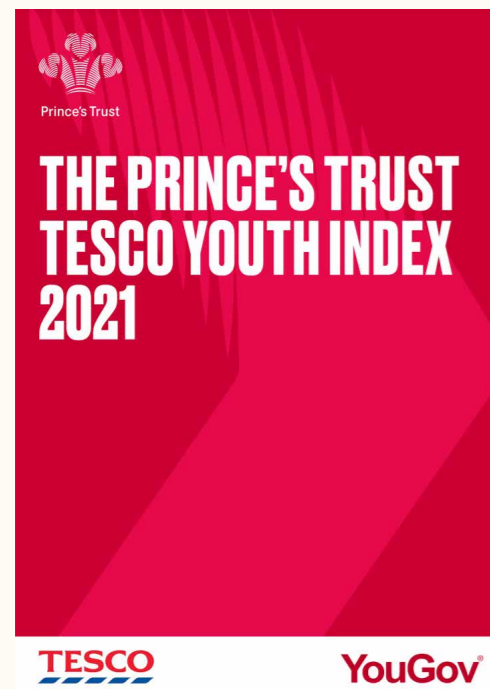
- **Young women were far more likely than young men to have a negative impact on their mental health (82.7% to 74%).**
- **Older young people aged 22-25 were more likely than younger age groups to have a negative impact on their mental health (83.1% to 73.2%).**
- **Disabled young people were more likely to agree that the pandemic had a negative impact on their mental health than young people who did not consider themselves to have a disability (84.2% to 78.3%).**
- **Young people with far less disposable income as a result of Covid-19 were more likely to have their mental health negatively impacted (85.1% to 72.7%).**

#### Agree or strongly agree with :“Covid-19 and lockdown has had a negative impact on my mental health”



## Tesco Youth Index 2021

### The Prince's Trust



The Prince's Trust helps young people to develop the confidence and skills they need to realise their ambitions, so that they can live, learn, and earn. The charity supports 11- to 30-year-olds who are unemployed, struggling at school and at risk of exclusion – helping over a million young people to date, 70,000 in the last year alone.

Many of the young people helped by The Trust are in or leaving care, facing issues such as homelessness, mental health problems, or have been in trouble with the law. The programmes offered by the charity give young people the practical and financial support needed to stabilise their lives, helping develop self-esteem and skills for work. Three in four young people supported by The Prince's Trust move into work, education, or training.

The Prince's Trust Tesco Youth Index 2021 reveals the impact the COVID-19 pandemic is having on young people's mental health in the UK. The

findings are derived from the results of an online survey in which a sample of 2,180 16 to 25-year-olds participated between 25th November and 8th December 2020. Figures have been weighted to be representative of 16-25 year olds across the UK.

#### Life in a pandemic

The pandemic has taken a devastating toll on young people's mental health, with this year's report suggesting more young people are feeling anxious than ever in the 12-year history of the Index.

- One in four 16 to 25-year olds (26%) admit they feel "unable to cope with life", increasing to 40% among NEETs
- Half (50%) say their mental health has worsened since the start of the pandemic
- More than half of young people (56%) "always" or "often" feel anxious, rising to 64% for NEETs
- A quarter of young people (23%) do not feel confident about their future work
- 65% of NEETs agree that the longer they are jobless, the worse they feel about themselves

#### Mental health crisis

The global crisis is having a detrimental effect on young people's mental health, with many showing symptoms of poor mental wellbeing. More young people are feeling down or depressed than at any other time in the history of the Youth Index

Since the pandemic began:

- One in five young people (21%) have experienced suicidal thoughts, rising to 28% of NEETs
- 10% have self-harmed, increasing to 14% of NEETs
- One in five (22%) have experienced panic attacks, compared to 28% of NEETs

#### Change for the future

While the pandemic has taken its toll on young people's mental health and wellbeing, many are also more motivated than ever to make a positive change for their future.

- Three-quarters of young people (74%) agree that "my generation can change our future for the better"
- Two-thirds (66%) say the political events of the year have made them want to fight for a better future, with more than half (58% agreeing that they are "more motivated than ever"
- Young people cite Black Lives Matter as the issue they have been most motivated by in the past year, followed by movements to tackle climate change
- Despite this motivation, some feel that their voices aren't being heard. Over a third of young people (37%) feel powerless to change their own future and nearly one in three (31%) think that their opinions on issues don't matter

#### Career dreams vs reality

As competition for training and job opportunities increases, fears for future work are having a significant impact on young people's wellbeing

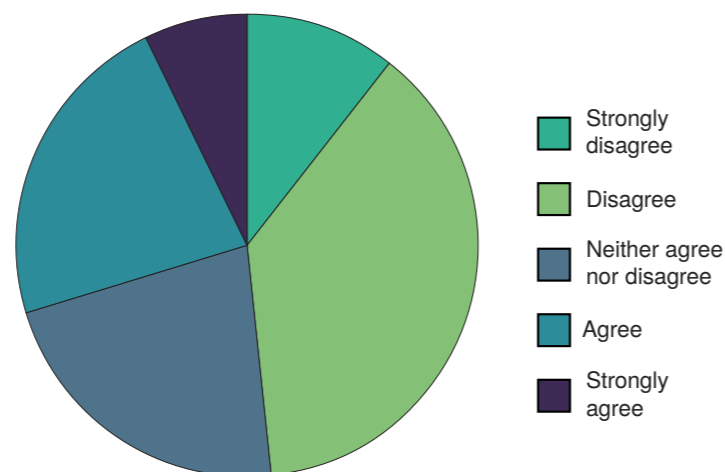
- A quarter of young people (24%) say the pandemic has destroyed their career hopes
- While 78% are hopeful for a better year ahead, 60 per cent say getting a new job feels impossible now because there is so much competition One in five (21 per cent) feel scared that their skills and training are no longer useful

For more information, please see the full report at <https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/about-the-trust/news-views/tesco-youth-index-2021>

## Accessing mental health services

Half of the young people we spoke (48.7%) agreed or strongly agreed that they knew where to get support for their mental health, only less than one in ten (7.7%) said they did not.

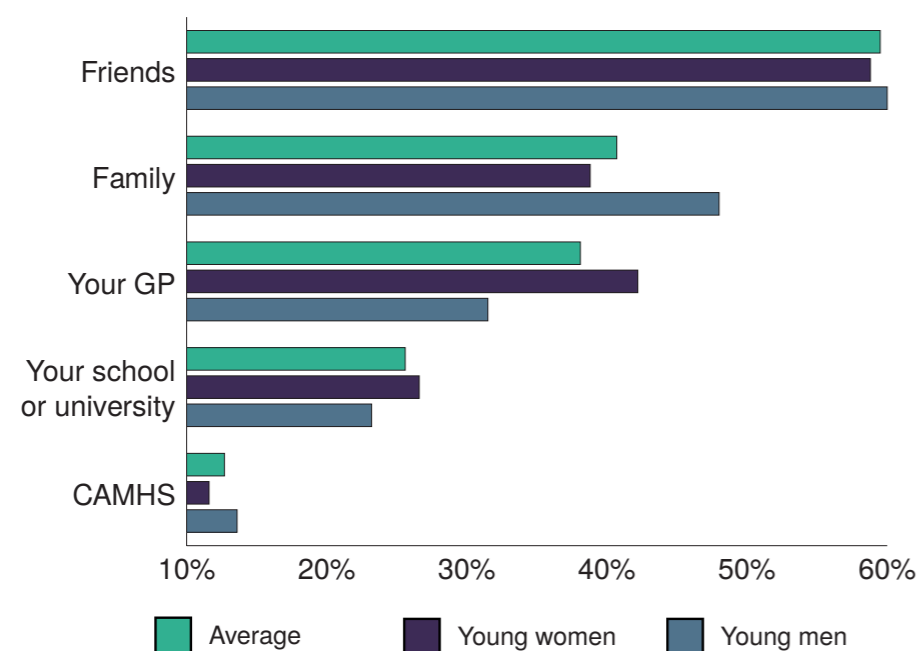
“I know where to get support for my mental health.”



This has an impact on other areas, with the young people who said that they knew where to get support for their mental health having higher well-being scores, and were less likely to say that Covid-19 and lockdown has had a negative impact on their mental health.

Young people were most likely to get support for their mental health from friends (59.5%), followed by their family (40.7%), and then the GP (38.1%).

Where do you seek support for your mental health?



There was a slight difference between young men and women too: with young women more likely to see their GP compared to young men (42.2% to 31.5%), and less likely to seek support from family (34.8% to 48%).

## Redbridge CVS – Focus group on Mental Health

Redbridge CVS worked with Partnership for Young London to conduct two focus group with young people in Redbridge about their mental health and seeking support.

### Key findings:

- **Young people seek mental health support from friends, family, and often, themselves.**

“I want to turn to myself, because I feel like, as much as I advise other people, I know the answers to why I feel a certain way and stuff. When you speak to yourself out loud, you do kind of find your answers from within.”

- **Young people believe that youth services can be impersonal and have huge waiting lists because they don't have enough funding.**

“CAMHS has got massive waiting lists, and I think is quite underfunded for what the fund should be.”

“You want it to be personal, and you want it to be in a situation where you actually have time to be able to connect with someone.”

- **Young people want mental health services in informal, community settings, and prefer face to face provision. Places like youth clubs and libraries were preferred to clinical settings like GPs and want to spend time talking in person to someone.**

“I would probably say a community venue, because of course in a medical setting...it doesn't really have good connotations.”

“I personally say, if anything, out of all of them, face to face would be the most preferred because I feel like you'd feel less alone. And loneliness is something that can really overpower you sometimes.”

- **Stigma and judgement are key barriers for young people seeking out support. A generational divide between staff and young people was key in this.**

“I just don't want to talk to someone who's really, really old...They've been through a different system. And the system they have been through is not the same as yours.”

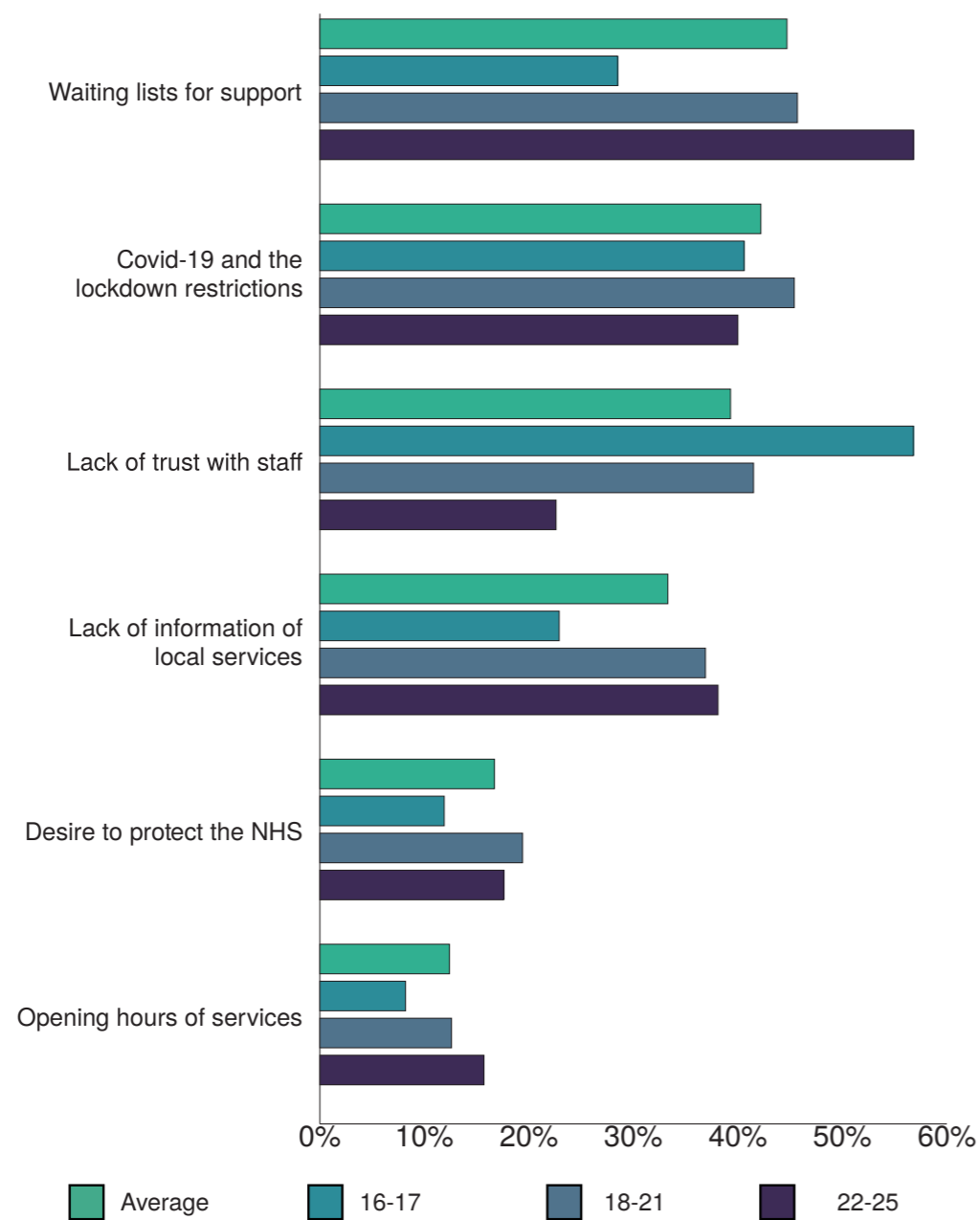
“I think it's the feeling or being judged...so I try and break through that stigma and trying to get help.”

# Barriers to seeking support

Waiting lists for support were the most common barrier for young people seeking support for their mental health (44.7%), followed by Covid-19 and the lockdown restrictions (42.2%), and lack of trust with staff (39.3%).

The biggest difference between the barriers young people faced depended on age, with older young people aged 22-25 more likely to cite waiting lists as a barrier, those aged 18-21 most likely to talk about Covid-19 and lockdown, and those aged 16-17 most likely to say lack of trust in staff.

What are the barriers to you seeking support for your mental health?

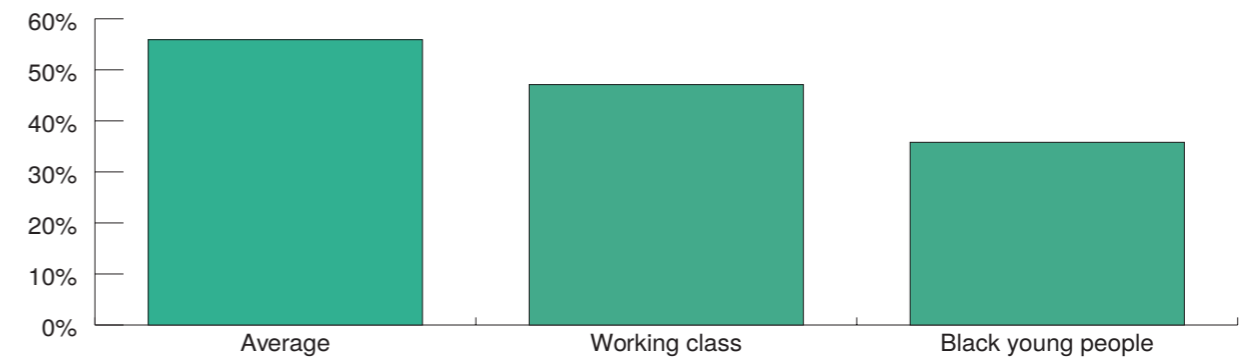


# Healthy eating

Over half of the young people we spoke to (55.9%) said they consider themselves to be healthy eaters, with a third (32.1%) saying that they did not, and one in ten not sure (12%).

There were some clear differences to this question from different groups. In terms of ethnicity, Black young people were the least likely to consider themselves healthy eaters (35.8%), with White young people the most likely (64%). Young people who self-identified as working class were also far less likely to consider themselves healthy eaters (47.1%) than those who self-identified as middle class (65.4%).

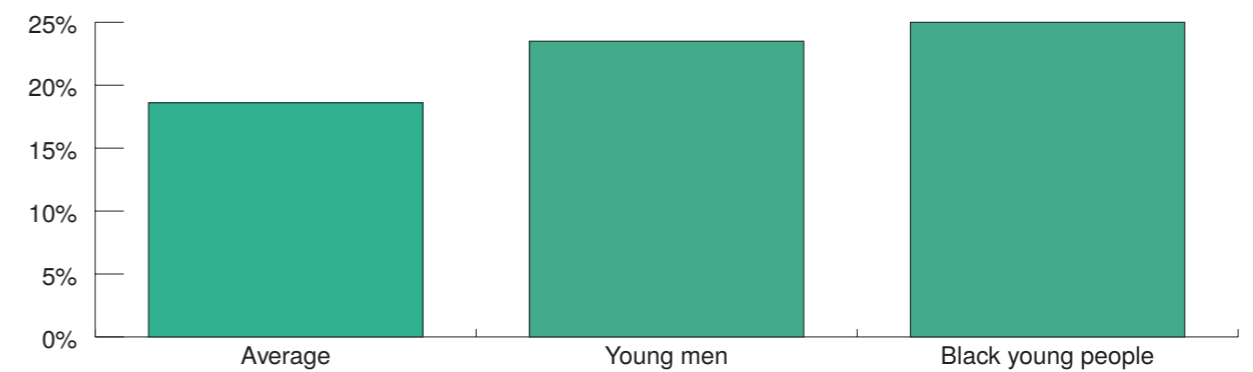
Agree or strongly agree with "Yes, I consider myself a healthy eater"



Over half of the young people we spoke to (55.6%) said they eat takeaway once a week or more, with the most common single option being once a month (40.1%).

Black young people were more likely to say they ate takeaway often (at least twice a week) (25%). Young men were also far more likely (23.5%) compared to young women (14.3%).

Eats takeaway at least twice a week



# Harrow Change Champions Focus Group

We asked a group of young people about their eating and exercise habits during lockdown. The following is a snippet from that conversation:

**Person 1:** “Takeaways have been a bit more frequent during lockdown just because I’m not out to cook lunch and dinner every day. Because I am still a young person. And I never signed up for a parenting role, but unfortunately, locked down has put me in that position. So takeaways have been a bit more frequent, and they’re not as healthy.”

**Person 2:** “I used to kind of being lazy athlete in that all the sports I used to get was running for the bus running for the tube running because I’m late. And that used to keep my like my metabolism at the perfect level where I think gained lose weight.”

**Now I’ll just eat because I’m bored. I’ll have something to eat because I’ve got nothing today.** I find myself having takeaways more frequently because I cannot be bothered to cook even though I love cooking. And the annoying thing is with with sometimes healthy eating can be expensive, especially if you don’t have the right supermarkets near you.”

**Person 3:** “Yeah I agree except apart from a bit of being a lazy athlete, actually, because I before the lockdown consider myself to be quite an athlete. But since lockdown, I think I do all the cooking here at the house. So when I go and do the shop, I try and think of really interesting meals because I don’t want all of us to live off microwave meals, but the power of social media to advertise fast food.”

**I’m always getting an offer from delivery or an offer from Uber Eats.** So I’m I have a takeaway probably two or three times a week, (compared to before when) I wouldn’t have a takeaway for six or seven months.

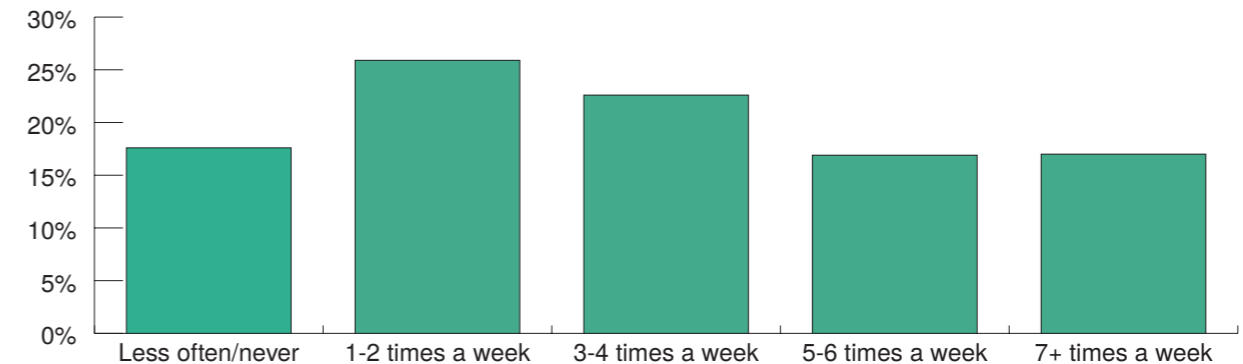
**Person 4:** “I don’t go running anymore because I’m worried that if I go out running, I’m going to catch something from someone or I’m going to pick something up or something like that and bring that home into the house.”

**Person 5:** “To be honest, this lockdown I got fat. Man has been eating an awful food. I haven’t been exercising.”

# Exercise

**Less than one in five (17.6%) young people are getting 30 minutes of physical exercise outside of school less than once a week, or never.** One in four are getting exercise once or twice a week (25.9%), while over half (56.5%) are getting exercise more than three times a week.

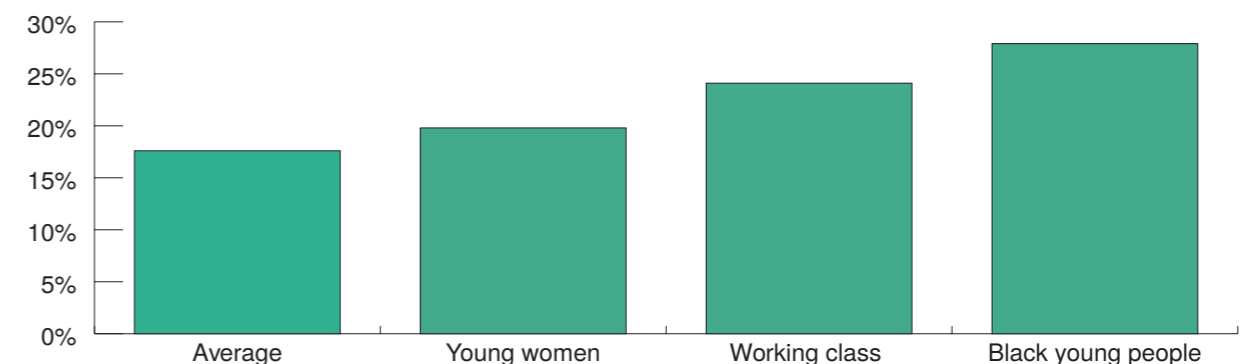
How many times a week do you get at least 30 minutes of physical exercise including sports and other activities such as dance outside school?



When we look at groups getting exercise once a week or less, there are some clear differences again between different groups in London.

- **Black young people were also the group to get the least amount of exercise out of school.** Only one in ten White young people (12.8%) said they get exercise less than once a week, compared to over one in four Black young people (27.9%).
- **Older young people aged 22-25 were more likely to be healthy eaters, and eat less takeaway,** they were the most likely to get exercise less than once a week (12.7%), with those aged 18-21 the most likely (20.8%).

Gets 30 minutes of exercise less often than twice a week, or never





## 6. Education and the curriculum

## Introduction

Many young Londoners feel their education gives them the necessary skills to get a job, but many more feel their education has given them the vital skills to go on to college and university.

**White young people, according to this data, were most likely to say that their education system gives them the skills to go on to college or university compared with Black and Asian young people;** with only 76.7% thinking that the education system gives them adequate skills to go on to further education.

**This data is very eye-opening, with people from different backgrounds thinking differently about what skills they have got from their education.** I think more available resources in school to help students catch up and feel comfortable and confident in their learning is necessary, as if not students will be stressed over their education affecting their mental wellbeing!

**The top 3 topics that young people wanted to see emphasised in the school curriculum in order were Black history, the legacy of colonialism and empire and homophobia.** The top topic that I would like to see more of in the education system would be more Black history as I believe it is crucial to learn about different backgrounds were people are from.

Education is so important where people learn basic and crucial skills to continue with life that could be by going to college or university or writing a letter to a future employer.

### Education is key!

When young people were asked what kind of support/information they are interested in receiving in school the emerging themes were work experience, career and job opportunities. All of the above are skills people may need in life. I think in PSHE/Citizenship/form time more students should learn about how to secure a job or how a mortgage works, as in the future these skills will be very useful and effective.

**Jazzminejada George**  
**14 years old**



# Preparing for the future

Whether it was for college or university, or a career or job, most young people felt that their education was giving them the necessary skills (67.9%).

However, far more felt that their education gave them skills to go on to college and university (79%), than it did for a career or job that they wanted (56.8%). There were also some key differences between groups:

- **Young people who self-identified as middle class were far more likely to feel that their education was giving them skills to go to college or university (85.2%)** or to get the career or job that they wanted (63.5%), compared to young people who identified as working class (74.8% and 50.2% respectively).
- **Care experienced young people were less likely to say that their education gave them the skills to go on to college or university** than non-care experienced young people (64.3% to 81.6%).
- **White young people were the most likely to say that their education was giving them the skills to go on to college or university (82.1%),** compared to Black (76.7%) or Asian (76.7%) young people.

“I think living in London, and having going to school in London, even though you might not go to the really good schools, you have that reputation like, ‘oh, you went to school in London’, you get more opportunities in that way.”

## London Poverty Profile Trust for London



Trust for London is an independent charitable foundation. We aim to tackle poverty and inequality in London and we do this by: funding voluntary and charity groups – currently we make grants totalling around £10 million a year and at any one time we are supporting up to 300 organisations.

London's Poverty Profile provides evidence on and insight into poverty and inequality in London.

### Key data for young people's education in London:

- **Qualification levels of 19-year-olds have significantly improved over time.** 35.5% of 19-year-olds in Inner London did not have Level 3 qualifications in 2018, down from 61% in 2005, compared with 34.4% of 19-year-olds in Outer London, down from 52.9% in 2005.

- **The attainment gap between advantaged and disadvantaged students is lower in Inner London than in Outer London and lower in Outer London than it is in the rest of England.**

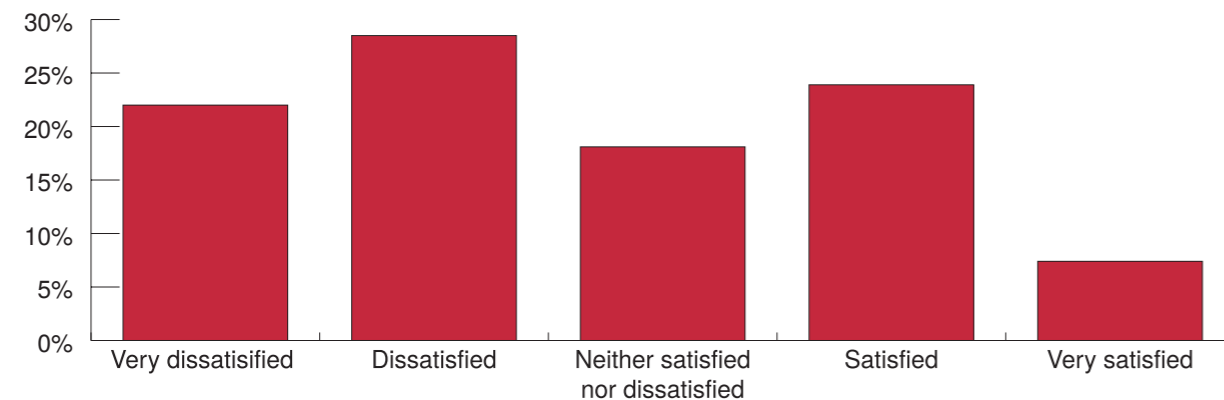
- **Disadvantaged students were less likely to pursue higher education.** In 2018, 41% of London's Key Stage 5 disadvantaged students went on to pursue higher education for at least two years, in comparison to 46% of non-disadvantaged students.
- **People with higher qualification levels are less likely to live in poverty.** In London, 32% of people with less than 5 GCSEs and equivalent as their highest qualifications were in poverty.
- **There is a large variation between London boroughs in terms of the proportion of the working-age population that have degree-level or above qualifications.** Wandsworth has the highest proportion of its working-age population with degree-level or above qualifications (66.9%), whilst Barking and Dagenham has the lowest (24%).
- **The better a school's Ofsted rating is, the less deprived a neighbourhood it tends to be located in.**

To read the London Poverty Profile, go to: <https://www.trustforlondon.org.uk/data/>

# Covid-19 and digital learning

We asked University students about their University's transition to digital learning and found that over half were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied (52.4%). Four times as many students were very dissatisfied than very satisfied (28.5% to 7.4%).

How satisfied are you with your University's transition to virtual and digital learning?



When we looked at this question in focus groups, we found that students focused less on the quality of digital learning, but on two elements; a lack of a reduction of university fees given the transition to virtual and digital learning, and the feeling of isolation among those living in privately rented housing.

“They hit you with, ‘Alright, we’re going to be monitoring your eyes (during the exam with an app), you may not be able to go to toilet, you have this particular hour and a half to complete this exam. If you mess up, sorry, you’re getting a zero.’”

How has Covid-19, and the switch to digital learning, impacted your education?

“...studying in London, you have no access to your friends, your friends, your family, you’re stuck in accommodation by yourself.”

“I really feel for students right now, more than everybody else. Because there is an understanding that the world’s on fire, but it’s expected that students should act like nothing has changed. A lot of academic institutions haven’t really done enough to compensate for students.”

“As one of those students who’s paying for a house they haven’t been in since December, when they were told back in September, come back to university, it’ll be fine, don’t worry. And then as soon as we turn up, you get locked in your house, you’re told it’s all virtual and online and you pay nine and a half grand for a course that cost £3000 at an Open University.”

## Impact of Covid-19 on children and young people's mental health

### YoungMinds



Young Mind's is the UK's leading charity for children and young people's mental health. They provide young people with tools to look after their mental health. They empower adults to be the best support they can be to the young people in their lives. And they give young people the space and confidence to get their voices heard and change the world.

In June 2020, YoungMinds conducted a survey with 1,135 teachers and members of school or college staff in the lead up to schools re-opening to a larger number of students. Teaching staff and support staff made up the most common groups of respondents, with 607 respondents reporting these roles.

#### Key findings:

- **74% of respondents agreed that schools being closed to most students over the period of lockdown has had a negative impact on the mental health of young people.**

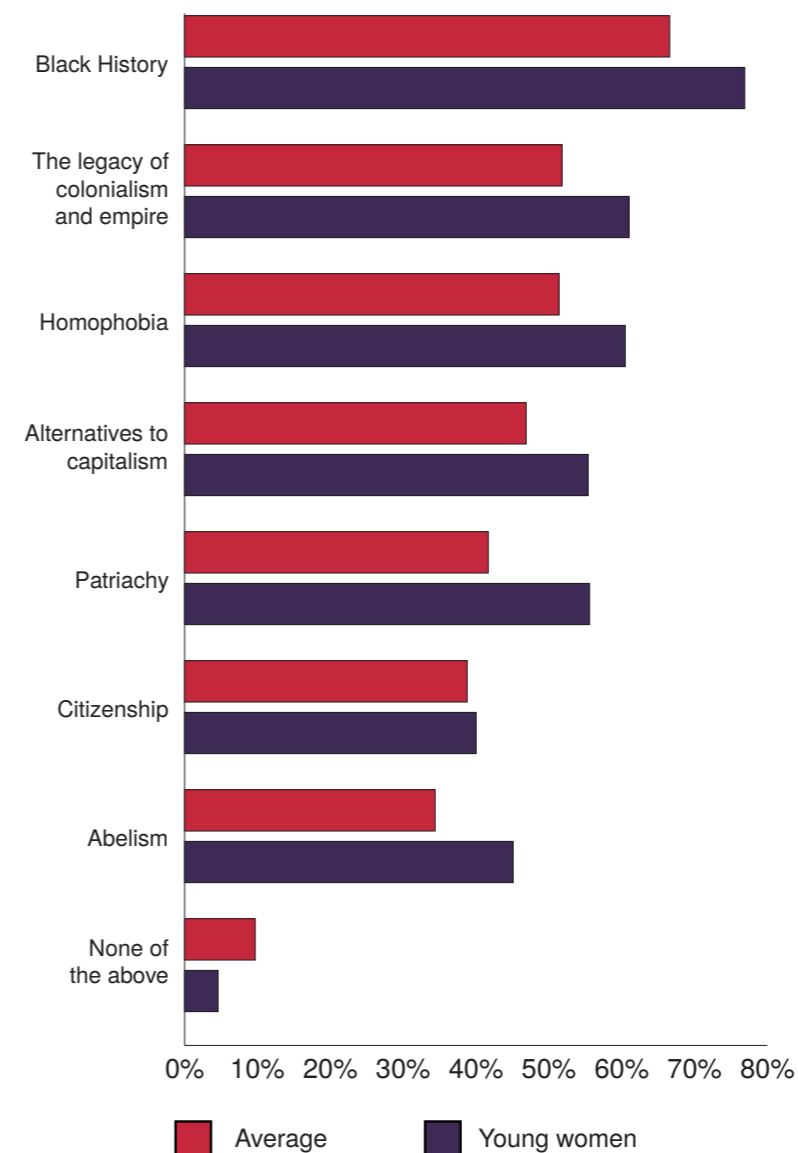
- **88% of respondents agreed that a lack of structure and routine has had an effect on student wellbeing**, while 79% thought that increased anxiety stemming from the pandemic has had an effect.
- **73% of respondents reported concern about young people spending more time in unsuitable home environments** over the course of the lockdown period and as schools gradually reopen.
- **78% of respondents reported that additional pastoral support, such as in-school counselling, would be helpful**, in order to support children as they return to school.
- **24% of respondents felt unconfident that their school or college was well equipped to support students on their return.**
- **70% of respondents reported that they were 'quite' or 'very' concerned about the impact on student attainment of schools being closed**, while 13% stated they were unconcerned.
- **30% of respondents did not feel confident that students at their school or college had the physical resources necessary to complete online learning.**

To see the full report please go to: <https://youngminds.org.uk/media/3828/youngminds-survey-with-school-staff-may-2020.pdf>

## Changing the curriculum

Two thirds (66.6%) of young people wanted more emphasis on Black History in the curriculum, followed by over half wanting more on the legacy of colonialism and empire (51.8%), and homophobia (51.4%).

#### What of the following, if any, do you want more emphasis on in the school curriculum?



There were some clear differences again between what different groups wanted emphasis on in the curriculum:

- **Black history was by far the most popular issue with all young people (66.6%), but especially with Black young people (82.5%).**
- **Young women were more likely to choose more issues to put more emphasis on across the board**, with men three times as likely to say none of the above (17% to 4.6%). In particular, young women were over twice as likely to want emphasis placed on patriarchy than men (55.6% to 21.7%).
- **Disabled young people were twice as likely to want emphasis placed on ableism** than non-disabled young people (59.4% to 31%).



# 7. Safety and the police

## Introduction

There are rising concerns among young Londoners about the relationship they have with The Metropolitan Police Service. Throughout the city, young Londoners have been campaigning for politicians to take a stand as less than half of young people feel safe in London.

**Although there is an overwhelming amount of young people that are dissatisfied with the protection provided by The Met Police, the reasons vary across demographics.**

For example, young women were less likely to feel safe across all areas than men. This is extremely disappointing and paints a bad picture for young women growing up in London. The recent kidnapping and murder of Sarah Everard by accused Metropolitan Police officer, Wayne Couzens, will without a doubt strain tensions between young women and The Metropolitan Police. Although case-specific due diligence is being done, little reassurances are being extended to young women by either the metropolitan police or local politicians to help them feel safe within their communities.

**The improvements that young Londoners wanted to see are reflective of demographic-specific relations with the police.**

Youth services were twice as common as a choice for how young Londoners wanted to see improvements with those who went to a state or comprehensive school than a private school. On the other hand Asian young people, on average, were more likely to choose more police. This highlights a unique challenge to London compared to other cities throughout the UK because the diverse composition of the city also results in diverse opinions on improvements that young Londoners would like to see. This conversation requires nuance that is often neglected for various reasons. Currently, solutions are often implemented with a broad brush. Whereas this may be favorable to some communities, it is detrimental to others.

**I believe that the findings in our report about how young Londoners feel and the data being used to inform policy should be more closely aligned.** For example, the statement presented in the UK's race report that the UK "should be regarded as a model for other white-majority countries" directly conflicts that 83.3% of young people said that there is still systematic racism in the police. It is possible that the data and research demonstrate that there is not systemic racism in the police but our findings highlight the growing divide in perception between young people and the police. When comparing statements issued by local authorities and The Met Police and the expressed views of young people, it is clear that young voices are not being heard.

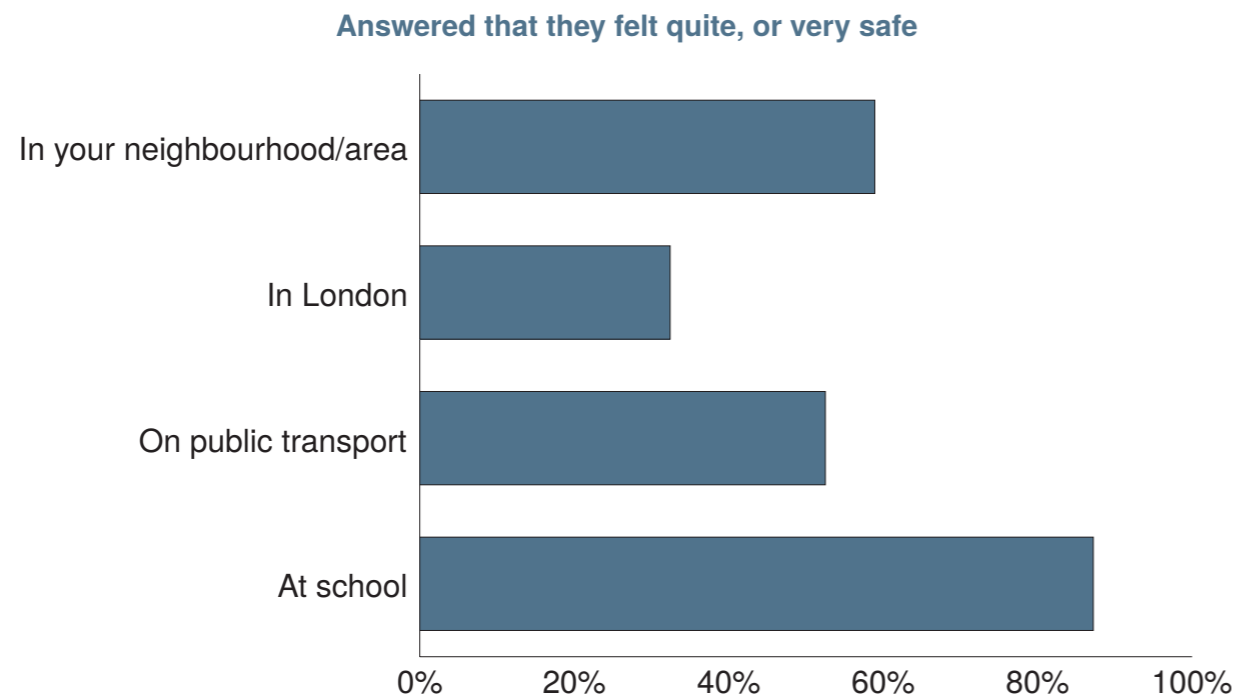
The continued exclusion of young people from the dialog of safety in their communities and social change will undoubtedly exacerbate current challenges in communities throughout London.

**Dominic Norton**  
26 years old

# Feeling safe in London

Less than half (40.8%) of young people said that they felt either quite, or very safe in London.

This differs from research from MOPAC (2018), where it was found that that three out of four (74%) of the 11-16-year olds surveyed felt safe in the area they were in.



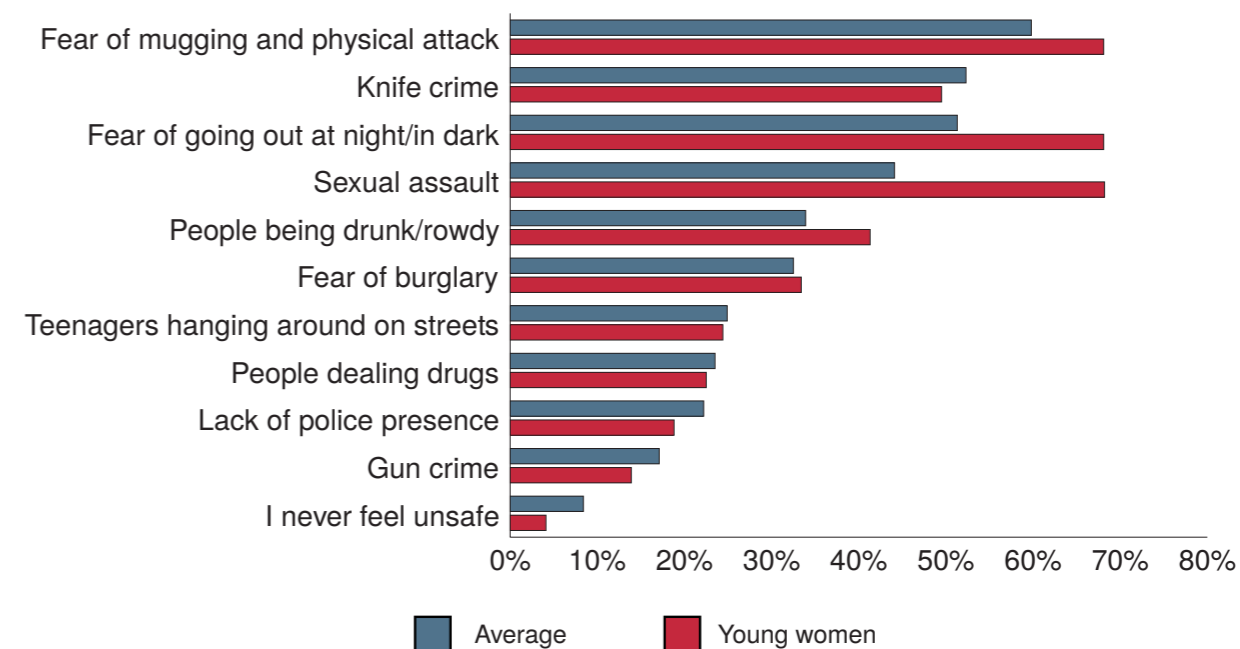
There were again clear differences between how safe groups felt:

- Young people aged 16-17 were less likely to feel safe across all areas, except for school, where they felt significantly safer than average.
- Young women were less likely to feel safe across all areas than young men.
- Young people who self-identified as working class were less likely to feel safe across all areas than those who self-identified as middle class.

# Reasons for feeling unsafe

Over half of all young people said that they felt unsafe because of a fear of mugging and physical attack (59.8%), knife crime (52.3%), and a fear of going out at night/in the dark (51.3%). Only less than one in ten (8.4%) said that they never unsafe.

Thinking about safety, for what reasons, if any, do you feel unsafe in your local area?

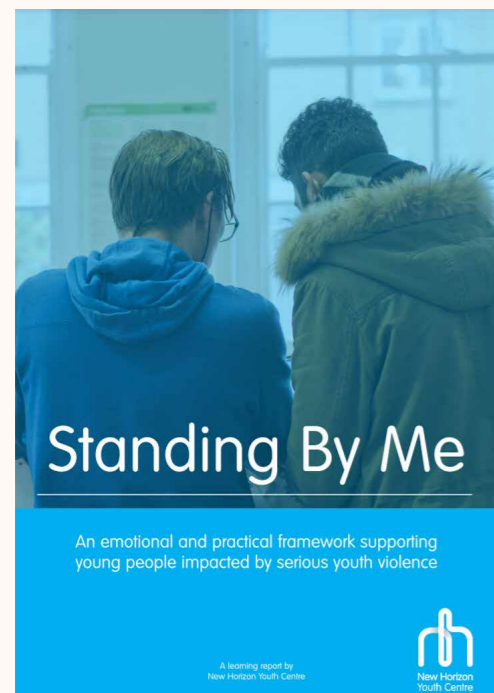


We found that different groups also have different reasons to feel unsafe in their local area:

- Young women were far more likely to cite a fear of sexual assault and going out at night or in the dark than young men (68.2% to 11.2%, and 68.1% to 28.6% respectively).
- Different groups had different issues that made them feel unsafe. Asian young people were more likely to feel unsafe because of people being drunk/rowdy (43.8%), and Black young people were more likely to say knife crime (65.6%). White young people were less like to choose any of the reasons.

# Standing By Me: An emotional and practical framework supporting young people impacted by serious youth violence.

## New Horizon Youth Centre



Every year New Horizon Youth Centre provides a vital support network for thousands of 16-24 year olds with nowhere else to go or at risk. Through the 'one stop shop' services offered at its day centre, remotely and via outreach it helps young people in London to improve their safety and wellbeing, change their economic circumstances and find somewhere they can call home.

The Youth Outreach Project (YOP) at New Horizon has worked with over 2,500 children and young people impacted by serious youth violence and criminal exploitation in the community, prisons and young offender institutions since 2012, and has been supported by the Mayor's Young Londoners Fund since 2019.

Recognising their histories of insecure housing, poverty and adverse childhood experiences, YOP helps young people in addressing the impact of early and ongoing trauma by prioritising their mental

and emotional health needs alongside housing, employability, and safety. The project has pioneered a highly effective model of working closely with young people on a long term basis, supporting them with both their practical and emotional needs. More recently YOP has started to pilot the Enhanced Constructive Resettlement approach with partners in Camden.

Standing By Me is a learning report, focusing on the best practice of their successful trauma-informed YOP model. The report highlights two major structural barriers young people face when trying to escape violence or criminal exploitation and turn their lives around: gaps in mental health provision and getting trapped in homelessness

## Recommendations

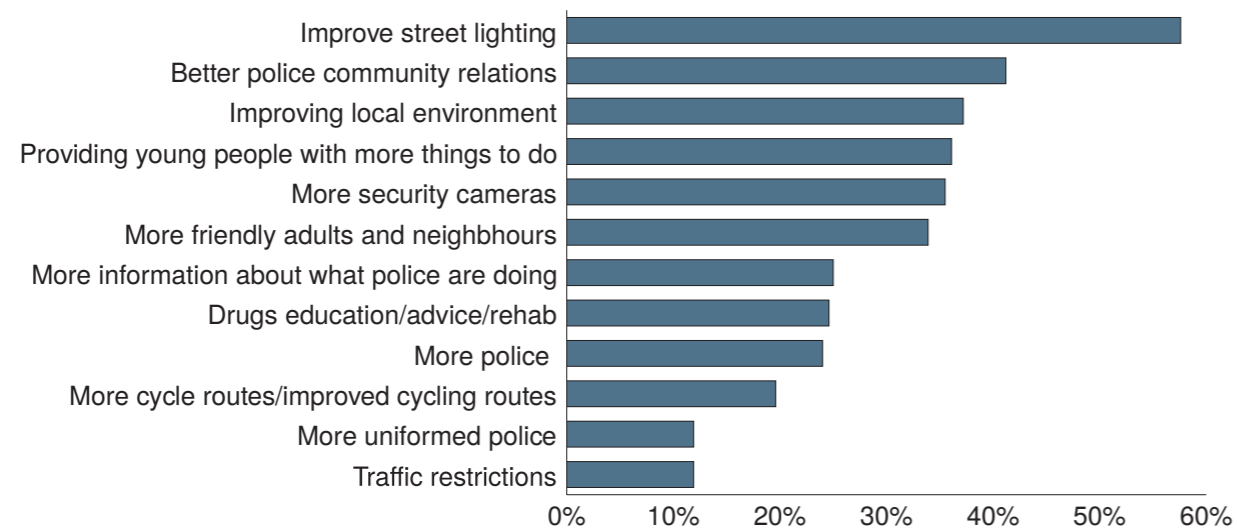
1. **The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government should update its Homelessness Code of Guidance around priority need and vulnerability to better reflect the circumstances and needs of young people impacted by serious youth violence and their families.** Being or the risk of becoming a victim of violence on the streets should be explicitly recognised as a vulnerability.
2. **Local authorities should demonstrate commitment to putting in place and expanding reciprocal arrangements.** Reciprocals could be extended to voluntary participation of third sector accommodation and hostel providers, include ring-fenced bed spaces, and be incentivised by commissioning requirements.
3. **Central and local government should create more youth-appropriate safe accommodation for young people who are at high or immediate risk, are criminally exploited, or need a place when leaving custody.** At pan-London level a systematic audit is needed of all bed spaces available for this group in local authority, commissioned and third sector accommodation to maximise existing provision or identify gaps for cross-borough investment.
4. **Access to appropriate mental health provision for young people in secure estate and the community should be improved by investment in, and roll out of, models that are able to follow the young person, irrespective of transfers and relocation.** This could be encouraged by joint health and justice commissioning of appropriate services which are familiar with this type of flexibility.
5. **Through training and formal guidance, public services should increase trauma awareness and consider adopting trauma-informed approaches when working with children and young people involved in offending and serious youth violence.**
6. **A better understanding of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and its impact on behaviour should be embedded in services relevant to young people affected by youth violence, with clear guidance for local housing authorities about the validity of the diagnosis in decision-making about priority need.**

To read the full report please visit: <https://nhyouthcentre.org.uk/news/2019/11/22/serious-youth-violence-best-practice-report>

# Improving safety

Over half of the young people (57.6%) we spoke to wanted to see improvements to street lighting, with better police community relations being the second most common choice (41.2%).

Which one of the following would most make you feel safer in your neighbourhood?



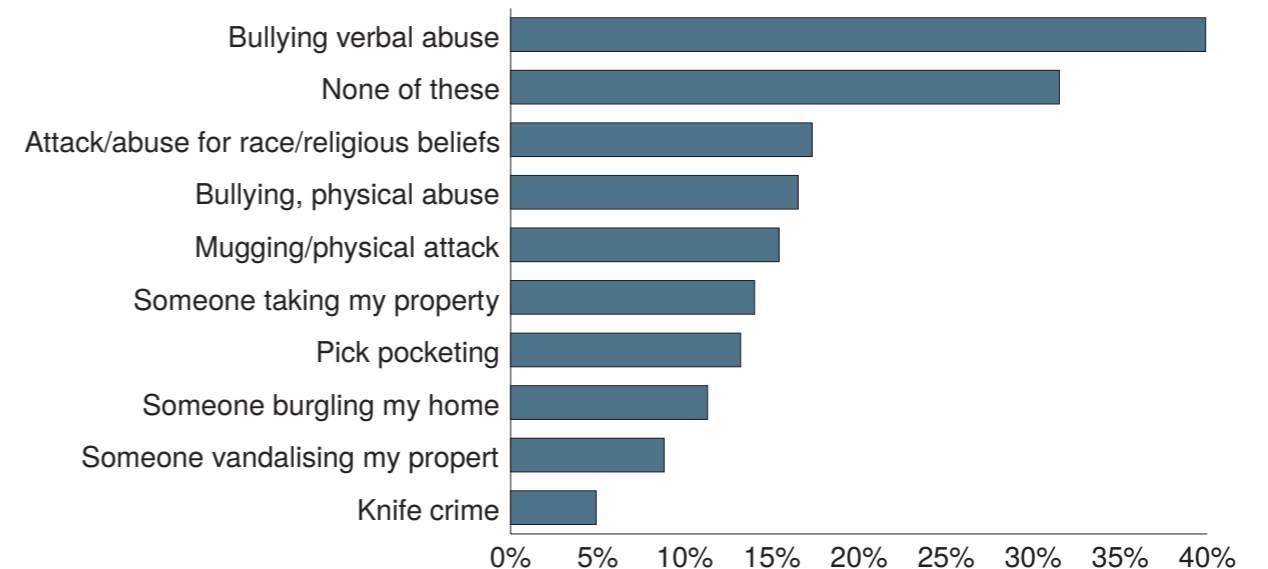
There were some small differences between what different groups of young people choose:

- For example, providing young people with more things to do was more important to Black young people than average (47.9% to 36.1%), self-identified working class young people (42.5% to 36.1%), and twice as common as a choice for those who went to a state or comprehensive school than a private school (40% to 21.8%).
- Asian young people were also more likely than average to choose more police (33.7% to 24%), and twice as likely to choose more police than Black young people (33.7% to 13.8%).

# Experience of crime

Over two thirds of young people (68.5%) said they have been the victim of either a crime, or abuse. The most common option being bullying verbal abuse, which over a third (39.9%) said that they had been a victim of.

Have you personally ever been the victim of any of the things shown?



Different groups also were more likely to be the victim of different crimes:

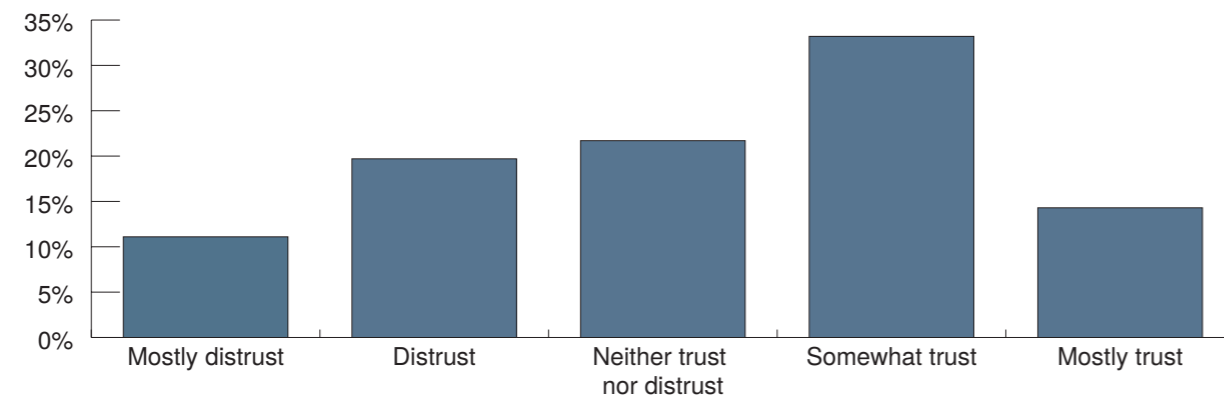
- Young women were more likely to be victims of bullying verbal abuse than young men (41% to 36.9%), and burgling their home (13.8% to 8.4%), but young men were more likely to say they were victims of knife crime (7.9% to 2.6%), mugging or physical attack (24.1% to 8.8%), and bullying physical abuse (19.9% to 13.5%).
- Disabled young people were much more likely than non-disabled young people to say they were victims of bullying verbal abuse (50.9% to 37.8%), discriminatory attack or abuse (27.9% to 14.9%).
- Asian young people were the most likely to say they have been a victim of a hate crime (33.3%), followed by Black young people (27.5%), Mixed young people (23.9%), and lastly White young people (6.7%).

# Trust in the police

Just less than half (47.5%) of young people we spoke to said that they somewhat, or mostly, trust the police, compared to around a third (30.8%) who said they distrust or mostly distrust the police.

Black young people were the least likely group to somewhat or mostly trust the police (22.1%), with White young people and Asian young people the most likely (54.7% and 54.2% respectively).

How much do you trust the police?



Young people's experience of crime and safety had a huge impact on how much they trusted the police:

- Young people who did not feel safe in their local area were far more likely to distrust the police than those who felt safe (45.8% to 28.4%).
- Similarly, young people who felt safe in London were far more likely to distrust the police than those who did not feel safe (41.1% to 28.45%).
- Young people were more likely to choose a lack of police presence in their area as a reason they feel unsafe, if they trusted the police.

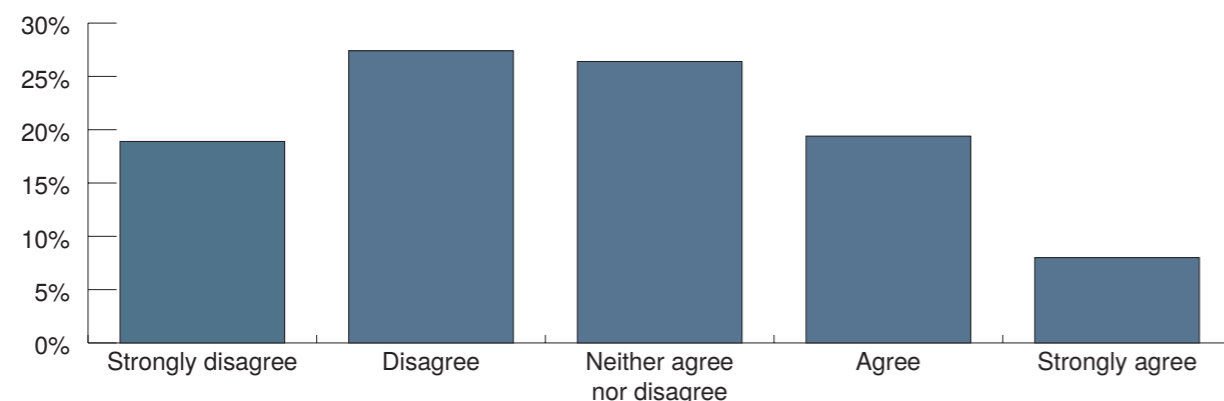




# Stop and search

Stop and search was commonly discussed in relation to distrust in the police, and we found that slightly more young people thought it to be ineffective than effective (46.3% to 27.4%).

Agree or disagree: "Stop and search is effective at stopping crime."



Interestingly, there was more similar agreement between different groups on the stop and search question. Around half of Black (50.9%), White (49.4%), and Mixed ethnicity (46%) young people disagreed that it was effective, compared with over a third of Asian young people (34.8%).

Only a minority of young people (14.5%) said that they have been stopped and searched, however we found that different groups were disproportionately stopped and searched:

- Black young people were the most likely to have been stopped and searched (26.7%), followed by Mixed ethnicity young people (18.9%), Asian young people (16.3%), and White young people (8.6%).
- Young men were over four times as likely to say they had been stopped and searched than young women (25.7% to 6.2%).
- Young people with care experience were almost three times as likely to say they had been stopped and searched than those with no experience of care (32.8% to 11.3%).
- Young people who self-identified as working class were over twice as likely to have been stopped and searched as those who self-identified as middle class (20.1% to 7.9%).

# Systemic racism in the police

Most young people (83.8%) said that they agree that there is still systematic racism in the police, with over half (54.4%) strongly agreeing.

There was mostly wide agreement that systemic racism exists in the police across all groups, and while all groups largely agreed:

- Young women were more likely to agree or strongly agree with this statement than young men (88.7% to 77.1%).
- Black young people were the most likely to agree or strongly agree (91.3%), compared to Mixed young people (83.8%), White young people (83.4%), and Asian young people (81.3%).

Views on stop and search, and trust in the police also changed the extent to which young people believe that systemic racism existed in the police:

- Young people who disagreed that stop and search was effective were far more likely to agree or strongly agree that there was systemic racism in the police (95.7% to 61.6%).
- Young people who said that they distrust or mostly distrust the police were far more likely to agree or strongly agree that there was systemic racism in the police (93.4% to 69.9%).

Nine out of ten (88%) young people said that they agree or strongly agree with the statement "I support the Black Lives Matter movement." Interestingly, this high level of agreement remained constant across most groups.

Unsurprisingly, existing views of policing changed the extent to which young people supported the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement.

There was more likely to be support for BLM amongst participants if they cited the following/ if they strongly identified with the following: that there was systemic racism in the police, that they had less trust in the police and if they had been stopped and searched.



# 8. Discrimination

## Introduction

**London is considered to be one of the biggest and diverse cities around the world. Nevertheless, the majority of young people of colour in London have experienced discrimination**, from Black young people (63.7%) to those who identify as Working Class (54.1%). Furthermore, only a small amount of people (5.4%) said that discrimination is rare, with three in four young people saying discrimination was somewhat or very common in London.

**It is significant that only a small percentage have said that discrimination is rare**, or they were not sure if it was racism. Most of the time, a person might be aware that they are being discriminated, but they might not know about the steps they should be taking in order to prevent it. This might mean that cases of discrimination go underreported.

For example, when I was a course representative during my master's program, I would receive complaints from students experiencing discrimination from instructors. As a liaison, when I had brought this up to the university's attention through the student union, it would still go unaddressed. After personally experiencing discrimination, and not knowing how to proceed with the situation, I learned that is something that might prevent someone to seek help.

**In summary, young people are aware that they are being discriminated against, and have shared their stories of what discrimination looked like to them.** However, the biggest challenge is taking initiative to prevent this discrimination. Awareness is the key to this challenge, and by making people aware of how to tackle the situation by educating people about what it looks like to experience discrimination.

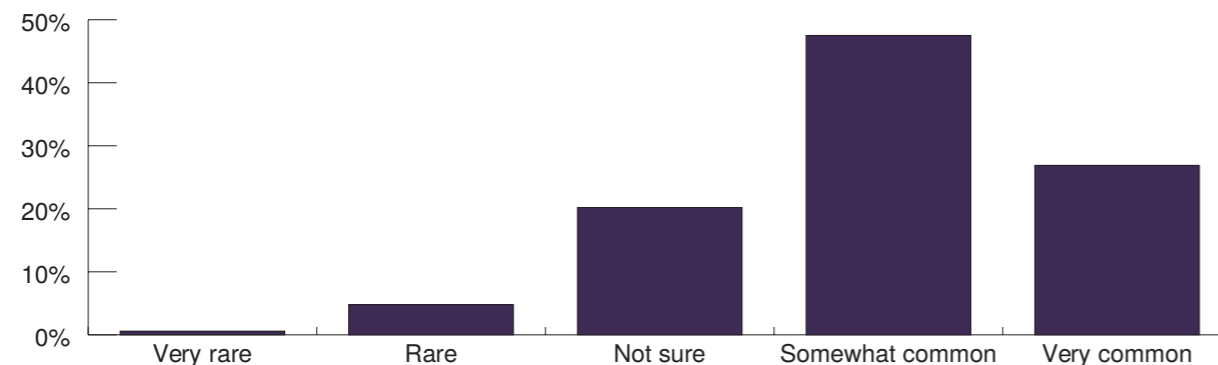
**Anky Guchait**  
25 years old

# Discrimination is common

Three in four young people (74.4%) said they thought discrimination was either somewhat or very common in London. Only one in twenty said that it was rare or very rare (5.4%).

“(London is a good place to live) depending on the colour of your skin.”

How common is discrimination in London?



While different groups (Black young people, young men) were slightly more likely to say discrimination is more common, it remained at least a majority for all groups.

“If they're black, they will already have in their mind what this person is going to be like, like a bad person. And they probably think that they're in gangs.”

# Time and Time Again BEATFREEKS



BEATFREEKS is an engagement and insight agency with a growing community of young creatives. We work with brands, governments and funders who see value in sharing power with young people.

NATIONAL YOUTH TRENDS is Beatfrees' channel for all things young people, youth voice and pop culture in the UK today. You'll find young people's thoughts on hot topics, some stone-cold memes, a truly undeniable statistics game, and a chance to benefit your organisation through free insights based on our research with thousands of young people.

They ran a survey, open to anyone aged 16 - 25 (inclusive) who was living in the UK between the 17th August and 12th October. The survey had 1803 respondents, with 307 being people of colour. Six digital focus groups were also conducted.

## Key findings:

- **Only 1 in 5 young People of Colour said that British culture treats all cultures equally.** Over double - 54.1% - said that British culture actively 'excludes and appropriates other cultures'.
- **Almost half young People of Colour - 46.7% - said that they didn't feel represented at all.**
- **Young People of Colour were more likely to say that it's important to see representation in the workplace, in our leaders and in the media,** and significantly less likely to say that it's important to see representation in government.
- **Only 25% of the young People of Colour we spoke to said that their culture and heritage was authentically represented in their education.**
- **Nearly 50% of all young people we spoke to said that the British Empire is relevant today in its ongoing legacy of racism and exclusion in society.**
- **Nearly 70% of the young people we spoke to, said that the main way that want to see brands get involved in social issues** (above giving money to other organisations or social campaigning) is by making changes to their own organisations.

To read the full report please visit <https://beatfreesyouthtrends.com/reads/time-and-time-again/>

**Person 1: “Racism is incredibly prevalent here. Incredibly, even though we’re such a diverse city...”**

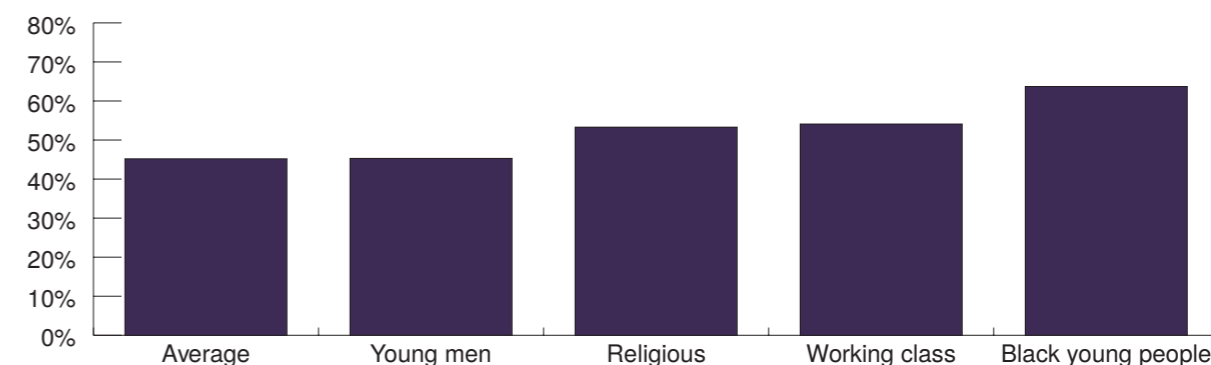
**Person 2: “Yeah but the important thing is that, (racism) is in London, but it doesn’t come from London, I think racism is absolutely everywhere. I think, including London.”**

## Experiencing discrimination

Just less than half of young people (45.2%) said that they had experienced discrimination in London, with one in twenty (6.9%) not sure if they had.

We found that different groups were more likely to say that they had experienced discrimination in London compared to the average, like young men (53.2%), religious (53.3%), working class (54.1%), Black young people (63.7%).

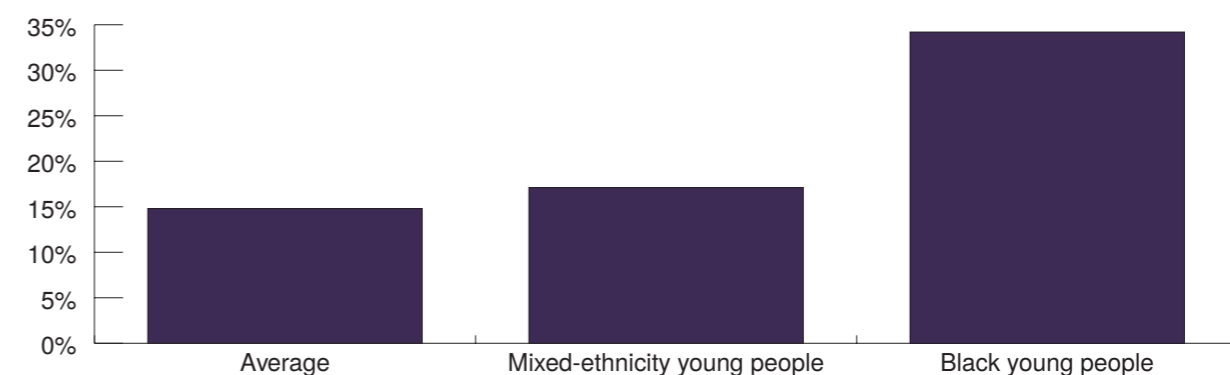
Have you experienced discrimination in London?



Young people wanted to ask in the survey about natural hair, given stories in the news about black pupils being wrongly excluded over their natural afro hair.

While only a small minority (14%) said they feel uncomfortable wearing their natural hair in school or work, Black young people were over twice as likely to have said they do not feel comfortable (34.2%).

Said no to “Do you feel comfortable wearing your natural hair at school or work?”



## Know Your Roots Partnership for Young London

KNOW YOUR ROOTS is a project from Partnership for Young London, that used mixed media technology to develop art work that celebrates the beauty of black hair with young people from London schools and youth centres aged 11 to 25.

Participants embarked on a super, kinky, curly exploration of the connections between heritage and hair. They were given the opportunity to sharpen their creative skills to produce a vibrant online exhibition celebrating the beauty of afro hair and the global influences of African hair styles within other ethnic groups.



Know Your Roots is located in the present day. However, it references key periods in history that have acutely impacted the personal and social outcomes for black people. These include the transatlantic slave trade of the 18th & 19th centuries, the subsequent colonising of swathes of Africa, The Caribbean and Asia and the period of immigration related to 'The Windrush Generation' following World War II (Hall, 1997).

A key aspect of the project was to research how black people have been represented historically and how some of those representations have been constructed to introduce and reinforce ideas of difference between Europeans and Africans to justify racist practices and ideologies. These have involved denigrating the physical appearance and intellect of people of African origin such as comparing physical features like – 'flat noses', 'full lips', 'dark skin' and 'woolly hair,' (Fryer, 1984, p.135).

To see more about the project, please go to: <http://knowyourroots.uk/>



## How have you been discriminated against?

We had over 600 young people share with their experiences and stories of being discriminated against. We heard about racism, sexism, abelism, and discrimination based on religious beliefs.

"I've been verbally abused on the tube while I was wearing a Jewish symbol."

"Just a lot of trash talk really, nothing out of the ordinary, someone always gonna be racist at you at some point no matter what."

"When using crutches, been shoved and/or verbally abused for being slow on multiple occasions."

"Having my experiences gaslighted, being looked down on for being a girl and for being brown."

"I had a knife pulled out at me in orpington and when talking the police my statement, they said I was overreacting. I'm transgender and have not started hormones yet and the police even misgendered me."

"My skin tone was discriminated against simply because I am of a darker shade of black."

"People will cross the road when they see me or when I am bus they will move far away from me."

"Going into to supermarket and the security guard following me around the store."

"I was discriminated for assuming because I spoke Chinese, It was okay for people to keep saying ni hao to be in the streets."

"Being paid less than male counterparts for the same work."

"I was walking home from basketball training and I was just because I looked suspicious because I was wearing a tracksuit I was stopped and searched."

"In school, the teachers thought we were intimidating even though we had our hoods up."

"People have called me terrorist for being Muslim."

"My school unenrolled me for being too disabled?? And existing as a trans person in this miserable island is a nightmare."

"I was racially abused and called a nigger."

"I've been consistently discriminated against on the basis of my gender for as long as I can remember."

"Some people made fun of me for being Jewish. It was always friendly banter but still hurt."

"Some drunk people yelling China virus to me."

"I've been consistently discriminated against on the basis of my gender for as long as I can remember."

"I've been shouted at when holding hands with my girlfriend for being gay, called names for growing up with a white mum and no dad, had security follow me around shops, had my bag searched after leaving shops, I get cat called all the time."

"Discrimination at school due to the length of my hair. This meant I was placed in isolation for having short hair."

"Because I am Romanian many people told me to go back to my country."

"When being interviewed for a new job in an all-male workforce, I was told I couldn't be "too sensitive" because "boys will be boys" and having a "pretty thing" around is bound to provoke some comments. I got the job but turned it down as the job title and workload offered to me was 2/3 of what would usually be expected for that role and received quite an aggressive email in response."

"I have been verbally attacked with homophobic comments, nearly escalated into physical abuse."

"I was being paid £10k less than a man despite doing the exact same role, same responsibilities, similar experience, I had a better education, and we started at the same time. I could not believe it when I found out. I'm still outraged."

"I came out of a mosque and a man screamed terrorist and the police did nothing about it."

"I was called the n-word frequently by white people in my area. Also, in school teachers often treat me different than the white students. I get treated like I'm less capable, despite the fact I've proved my capabilities numerous of times."

"Micro aggression."

"Used to get bullied a lot for my sexuality (I don't define it, but I'm not fussy about gender etc.), as well as autism - have found some facilities lack proper support for autistic people e.g. sensory overload."

"I was told I would not be able to go to a meeting because my pretty girl brain would get confused."

"Countless instances of verbal abuse for being gay, being effeminate, being in public with same sex partner."

"I was told my English is surprisingly good (though it's my first language so I'd be worried if it wasn't). I was abused when I wore a hijab on the way to the mosque during Ramadan. I've been refused job opportunities because of my name. The list is endless."

"I was told that my disability made me univestable as a person, among other detractors comments. Despite having passed the interview."

"Some faculty are not educated about different types dyslexia. Got verbally insulted and harassed unintentionally due to my learning disability."

"My native language is Spanish and I've had people come up to me once or twice at the pub and asked me to speak in English 'bEcAUSe In EnGlaND wE sPeAK eNGLiSh'."

"Many occasions, many different places, festivals, school, uni, work, public places- all verbal abuse."

"I have a invisible-disability and have a 'please offer me a seat' I have been denied a seat, shouted at for 'lying' about having a disability."

"I get rejected by white ('friends' & 'teachers') people who say I ""want to be black and fit in when I don't belong"" I get rejected by black ('family members' & 'friends') because im not black enough."

"In public, I've had black people call me a stupid hite boy and I've had white people call me an incompetant foreigner."

"Racially discriminated at the workplace made a formal complaint but nothing ever happened and I can't afford to take it to court."

"Called a dyke, sexually assaulted at nearly every club ve been to, cat called constantly."



# 9. Fairness and finances

## Introduction

Fairness and inequality in the UK are growing issues. London is an unfair city for people to grow up in, with huge inequalities, depending on how much money you have, or what race you are. We have so much money, but at the same time areas with a lot of poverty.

This report has shown us that there are still inequalities that exist in our everyday lives. **For example, the older the younger person in this study, the more likely they were to believe London was unfair, and if they were female, this increased.**

The issue of coronavirus has exacerbated the existing issues in our society. Young people have been hit in particular, with the labour market appearing bleak. Opportunities relating to work experience and jobs have decreased, as companies are struggling to operate on a day-to-day basis.

**One in five (20.2%) young people said that their financial situation meant that they have to go without essentials.** The future is supposed to be optimistic for young people, but with young people struggling to even pay for essentials, it seems to be uncertain. For a country that is supposed to be about fairness and equality, the decisions being made at the highest levels fail to reflect this.

We need to invest in our young people and make a fairer, more equal society by involving them in key decisions. The UK must commit to equality in every area of society. Young people are the future. Our generation will need to focus on issues such as the environment, Brexit, the effects of COVID, and sadly, inequality.

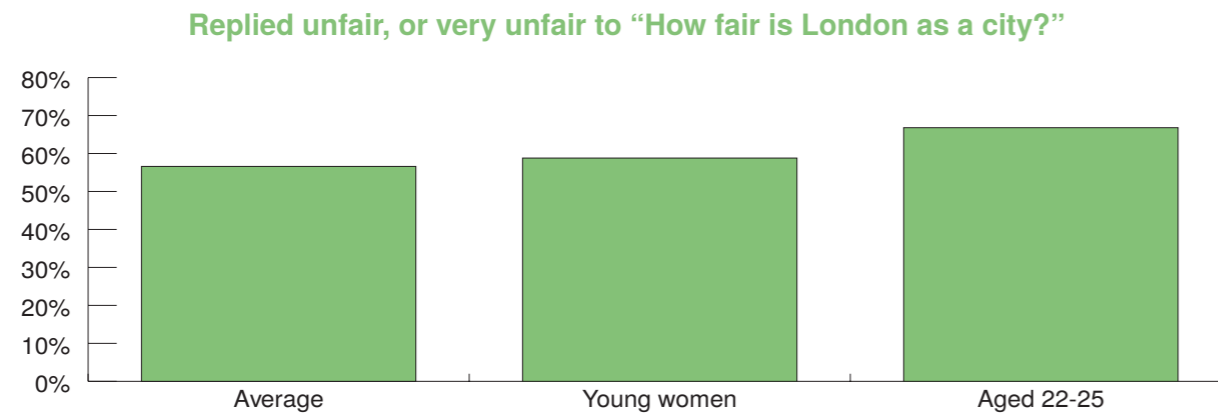
**Most (84.6%) of young people disagreed or strongly disagreed that everyone has the same opportunities.** The UK has to start putting young people at the forefront of its policies; inequality exists from birth but investing in services and education will help to reduce the gap.

Fairness and inequality need to be discussed more openly; these are not the issues of the past but rather the present and the future, unless we start taking steps to create a better future.

**Ishaa Asim**  
19 years old

## London and fairness

Over half (56.6%) of young people said that they thought London was either unfair or very unfair as a city. Only a minority (17.2%) said London was fair or very fair.



The older a young person was, the more likely they were to say London was unfair or very unfair. Young women were also more likely than men to say that London was unfair or very unfair.

“I live in Kingston, Chelsea. So you know, you’ve got £20 million houses opposite council states...an insane place to live sometimes.”

## An intergenerational audit for the UK Resolution Foundation



The Resolution Foundation is an independent think-tank focused on improving the living standards of those on low-to-middle incomes. We work across a wide range of economic and social policy, combining our core purpose with a commitment to analytical rigour. These twin pillars of rigour and purpose underpin everything we do and make us the leading UK authority on securing widely-shared economic growth.

Our Intergenerational audit for the UK, supported by the Nuffield Foundation, takes stock of generational living standards differences in Britain according to the latest data. This research uses data from an online survey conducted by YouGov and funded by the Health Foundation. Total sample size was 6,005 adults.

### Key findings:

1. **Coronavirus has determined the impacts of the crisis on physical health and social interaction across cohorts, while the nature of the pre-pandemic economy has largely driven the impacts on living standards.** This has manifested itself in profound physical health risks to older adults, and a very clear distinction between the economic experiences of pensioners and working-age families during the lockdown.
2. **The labour market hit has been clearly U-shaped, affecting the youngest and oldest workers most.** But policies to support incomes, including the JRS and boosts to benefits, mean that incomes fell most in lockdown for those in their late 40s.
3. **Consumer debt usage has accelerated for 35-44-year-olds;** falling equity prices have dented the wealth of those in their 50s; and there were no particularly clear age differences by age (within the working-age population) in the likelihood of falling behind with housing payments in mid-lockdown.
4. **Post-lockdown impacts may be more clearly tilted towards the bottom of the age range.** By July, younger adults had become the most likely to fall behind with housing payments; young people risk long-term employment and pay ‘scarring’ effects from starting careers in a downturn; the prospects for a post-coronavirus home ownership increase among aspirant buyers appear limited; and the removal of temporary welfare boosts looks set to provide a major drag on the incomes of young and childrearing-age adults.

To read the full report please go to: <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/publications/intergenerational-audit-uk-2020/>



# Economic inequality

Over half (59.5%) of young people agreed or strongly agreed that they would do as well, or better, than their parents.

- Young people were less likely to agree as they got older, with 22-25s more likely than those aged 16-17 (47.6% to 72%).

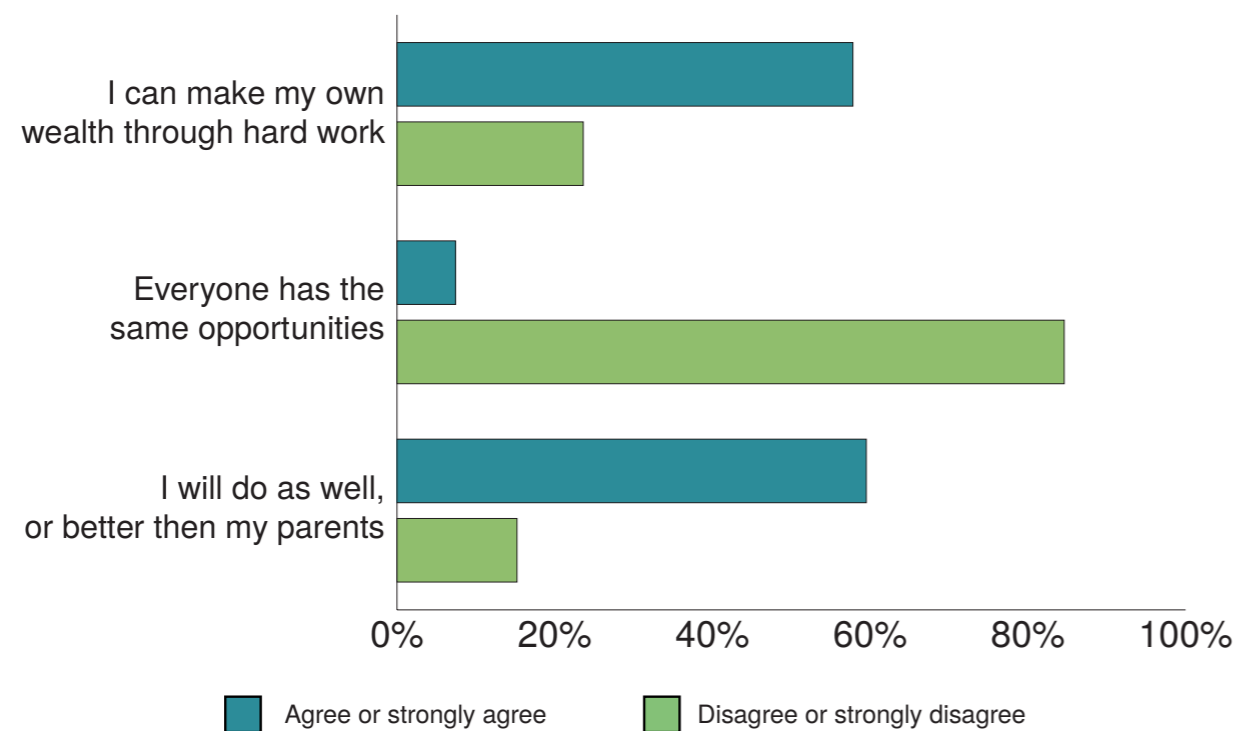
A huge majority (84.6%) of young people disagreed or strongly disagreed that everyone has the same opportunities.

- Young women were far more likely to disagree than young men (90.4% to 76.4%).
- Black young people were the most likely to disagree (52.1%), followed by White young people (49.6%), Mixed ethnicity young people (44.1%), and Asian young people (35.8%).

Over half (57.8%) of young people agreed or strongly agreed that they can make their own wealth through hard work.

- Young men were more likely to agree than young women (62.7% to 58.3%).
- Young people who went to a private school were twice as likely to agree than those who went to a state or comprehensive school (26.4% to 13.4%).

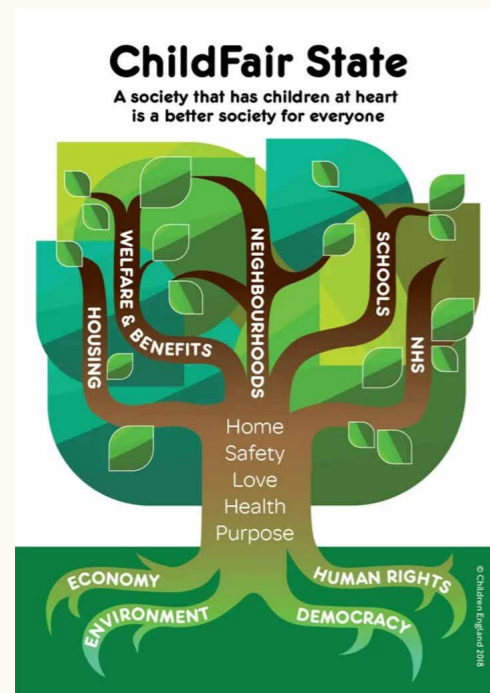
Do you agree or disagree with the following:



“We’re definitely not all in this together.

There’s still a lot of inequality.”

## The Young Leaders of the ChildFair State Children England



Children England is a charity created, governed and inspired by other charities. Their mission is to change the world for England's children by harnessing the energy, ingenuity and expertise of the voluntary organisations that work on their behalf.

Children England, working with Leaders Unlocked, worked with 26 young people aged 13-21 to look at young people's experience of the welfare state. In total, they spoke to 271 young people, aged 9-21, from across England, through in-depth interviews, workshops, and a survey.

The report has produced some key findings across five different subject areas, housing, healthcare, welfare and benefits, neighbourhood, and education.

### Key findings on welfare and benefits:

- **Nobody is fully independent.** Regardless of whether you have a mortgage, a job etc everyone

is dependent on the state. E.g. their children's education, family's health needs, social care needs etc.

- **Young people feel that if the systems were more universal, there would be a level of quality that everyone has access to.** At the moment, it feels unfairly means tested.
- **The benefit system gets you the bare minimum and doesn't support one of the five basic needs described by Maslow - a sense of purpose.** Young people don't feel it supports them to explore or move on in their lives.
- **There's a sense of punishment when accessing benefits.** People feel they're asking for things that they're not entitled to.
- **The way the system treats people is compounding the sense of stigma and shame.** It shouldn't be a shameful thing.
- **Too many young people are stuck in the income poverty trap.** Many young people feel their ambitions are being curbed as a result of low-skilled work.
- **Young people aren't getting enough money, in fact they're getting less money than they need because of their age.**

The Peer Researchers on this project spoke to young people about a range of subjects, and here is what they heard on the subject of welfare and benefits.

**Job Centres** - "Job centres are very intimidating, they're horrible places for young people. They should get rid of the security guards, and not have everything in one building."

**Universal Credit** - "I think some of the provisions are A not efficient and B quite cruel sometimes, so yeah it does need a lot of like reform. I don't like how it lumps all different types of benefit into one rather than seeking what people actually need specifically and who needs it the most."

**Age restrictions** - "There are a lot of laws and rules which I've come across which don't help at all, like getting less benefits for under 25's and the fact you can't get help with housing if you have a family member who lives in the same city as you. You have to prove why you can't live with them, and they make that really hard. These have had really negative effects on my mental health."

**Disability/Care** - "My brother is autistic, it's a life long conditions, he's being reassessed every year, this man had to come in and do an interview/ assessment to see if he could work. In 5 minutes and then we said he can't talk he asked us to answer for him, which defeats the point. I feel like their wasting their time on these kinds of cases."

**Looking for jobs** - "When you don't have papers for the UK, you can't work. They give you money, but it's not enough to live, especially if you have children, it's definitely not enough. They should let you work, but I know it's better to have a little money, than nothing at all. If the UK won't let you work when you first arrive, they should provide you with enough money to live."

**Independence** - "Money is the discriminating factor in your independence. If you have the financial means, as a young person you can pretty much do whatever you want. You can move out of your parents house, if you are in an abusive relationship, you can move out, but if you don't have the financial means, you cant buy yourself a nice suit to go to a job interview. In London, the transport is expensive and if you don't have money to get around, it might be the difference between getting a job or not."

**Shame/Stigma** - "The idea of someone being on benefits has been warped by the media, it doesn't reflect well on the people who genuinely need the benefits. It makes people out to be scroungers and that's just not true. I haven't directly been affected by this but it makes me angry that people are."

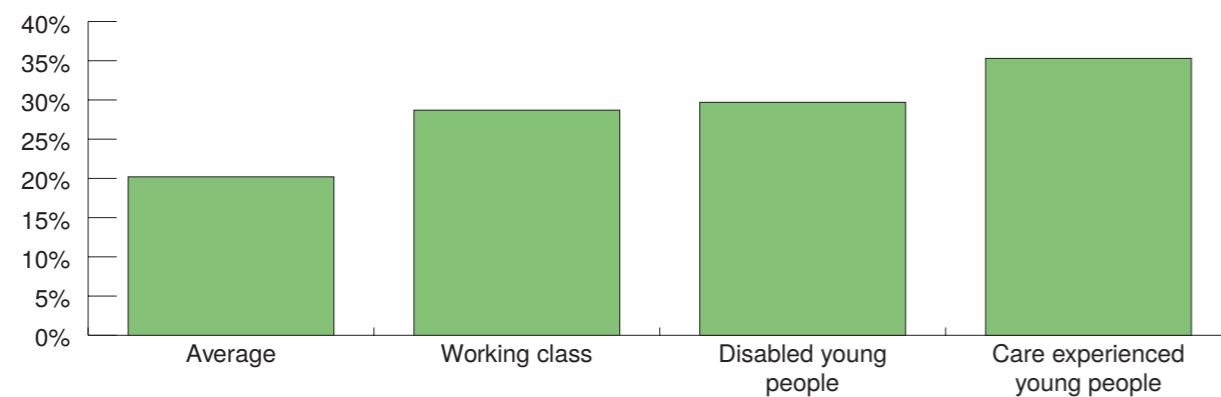
To read more about the project, and their findings on other areas, please go to: <https://www.childrenengland.org.uk/childfair-state-inquiry-summary-of-findings>

# Personal finances

One in five (20.2%) young people said that their financial situation meant that they have to go without essentials. This also varied between different groups:

- **Young people who were aged-16-17 were the least likely to have to go without essentials**, compared to those aged 18+ (16.2% to 21.8%).
- **Black and Mixed ethnicity young people were the most likely to go without essentials** (23.3% and 23.9% respectively), compared to White and Asian young people (19% and 18.1% respectively).
- **Disabled young people were significantly more likely to go without essentials**, compared to those who did not consider themselves to have a disability (29.7% to 18.4%).
- **Young people with experience of care were twice as likely to go without essentials**, compared to those without care experience (35.3% to 17.5%).

Answered yes to “Does your financial situation ever mean that you have to go without essentials?”



“Class is about money. Middle class have can afford to have options, afford to go on holiday, afford to pay the bills, and send your kids to private school.

They say money can't buy you everything, but realistically in this day and age it kinda does.”



# 10. Politics & the media

## Introduction

There is not one catch all phrase to describe young Londoners relationship with politics or the media, therefore, it's important we look at all perspectives.

I know my political identity has been shaped by my own personal identity. I am a Black Working Class Queer person, and I think I was born into a city that immediately politicises my life – with negative stereotypes and statistics which means equity and access to opportunities is something I constantly have to think about. This is what has motivated me to get more involved in social issues and politics in general, and I am fortunate enough to be one of the one in five young people that have met my MP, however this as only made possible by very active teachers.

In this section you will also see a growing discontent young people are having with politics. **Three in four young people think young people's views are rarely taken seriously.** I would agree with this statement, as this is what I have heard in conversations with my peers and younger children. I rarely see the things we care about spoken about by policy makers and leaders in the media.

**It is not surprising that over 65% of young people felt that they were portrayed unfairly on the news.** I'd argue that young people in London are only spoken about on the news and social media when it comes to knife crime, and sometimes youth clubs. For so many young people that live beneath the poverty line for example, these aren't on the top of our list of priorities for the city.

Also, young people's relationship with social media isn't perceived to be positive, with youth workers in the young Westminster research feeling that social media had a bad impact on young people's mental health. I think it is important to consider young people are mostly accessing their news via social media, and it makes it obvious policy makers and youth workers should be thinking about how they can use social media to improve relationships with young people, not just as something that can cause potential harm.

**It will be interesting to see the youth voter turn out in the upcoming mayoral elections of 2021, especially as this section reveals 90% of young people surveyed intend to vote.** However, given the apathy that young people have about politics, and how negative they feel the media coverage of them is, it will be unsurprising if they disengage from the Mayoral Election.

**Kelsea Sellars**  
22 Years Old

# Voting and views on politics

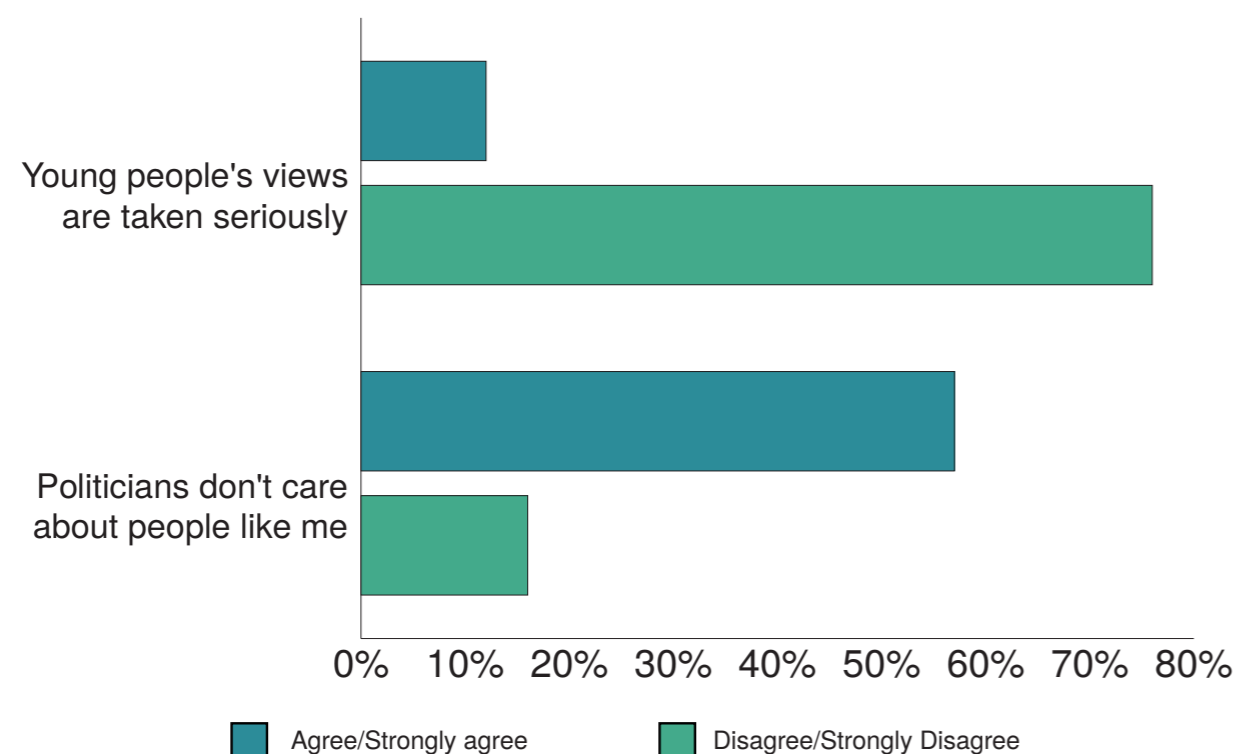
**Nine out of ten young people (90.3%) told us that they are intending to vote when they next have the chance to.** However, while most young people told us they intend to vote, their views on politics generally are less positive.

**Nearly half of those we spoke to (57.4%) agreed or strongly agreed that “Politicians don’t care about people like me” with a minority disagreeing or strong disagreeing (23.9%).**

- Black young people were much more likely to agree or strongly agree with this (64.6%), especially compared to White young people (52.9%).
- Young people who self-identified as working class were twice as likely to strongly agree than self-identified middle class (29.1% to 15%).

**Three in four (75.7%) young people disagreed or strongly disagreed that “Young people’s views are taken seriously”,** with one in four (27.3%) strongly disagreeing. Only one in ten (11.6%) agreed or strongly agreed.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements:



**“The answer is always the same. Well, something will be announced something will happen, something will change, write a petition, start a campaign.**

**These students started a petition which got over a million signatures and has been debated in Parliament three times, which is the largest number of debates for a single issue in political history in the UK.**

**And we’re still waiting...”**

## The importance of political literacy

### Shout Out UK



Shout Out UK (SOUK) is a multi-award winning education platform and creative social enterprise. They believe that the most effective way to engage young people in democratic life is by helping them learn about our political institutions and by empowering them to speak up on issues they are passionate about.

They delivered a political literacy programme to 906 young people in secondary schools, colleges, and youth clubs across the UK. Their evaluation with young people aged 16 and over highlights the need for political literacy education.

#### Key findings:

- A majority (71.8%) of young people believed there should be a GCSE in Government and Politics.
- Less than half (38.5%) of young people strongly agreed, or agreed, with the statement “I understand British/local/international institutions.”
- Only one in six young people (14.8%) strongly agreed, or agreed, with the statement “I feel motivated to work with others to create change in society.”
- Only one in four young people (23.9%) strongly agreed, or agreed, with the statement “I believe I can be politically active and make a difference.”
- Only one in six young people (15.9%) could correctly identify what type of government the UK had before the programme.
- Less than one in five (18.5%) could correctly identify what electoral system the UK uses to elect MPs.

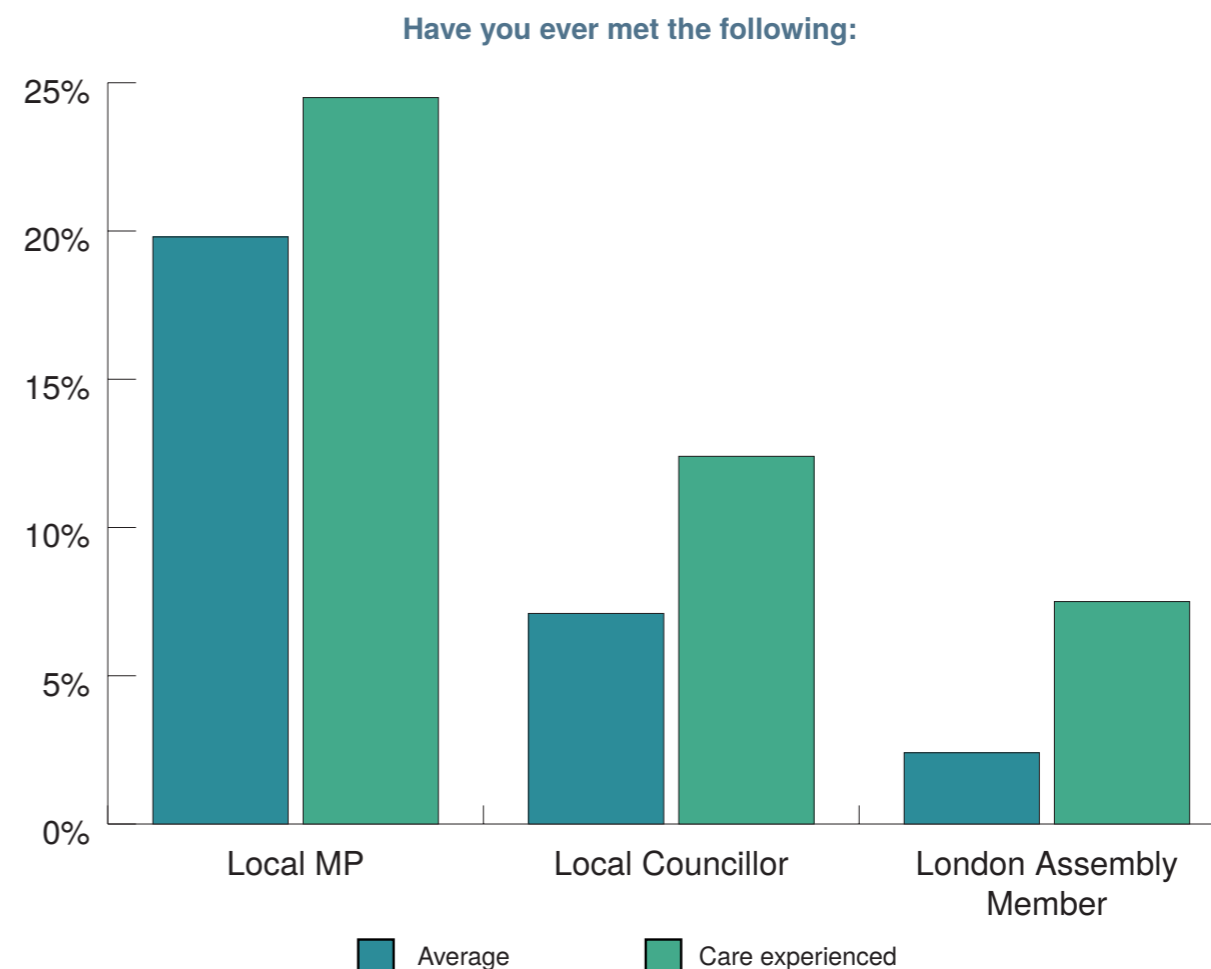
To learn more please visit : <https://www.shoutoutuk.org/about-us/>

## Meeting elected officials

Apathy in politics might be partly due to lack of interaction with elected representatives, with less than one in five having met or spoken to their MP (19.8%), less than one in ten their local councillor (7.1%), and around one in twenty their local assembly member (5.3%).

“Most politicians are the same. They say one thing when it’s popular, but...when it really boils down to it, they don’t really act like it.”

Care experienced young people were more likely to have met elected members, across all levels, as were young people who considered themselves to have a disability.



## Political identities Survey Regional Youth Units

Partnership for Young London partnered with Youth Focus North East, and Youth Focus North West, to conduct research. They conducted a survey of 388 young people, looking at young people's political identities and what shapes them.

Identity is very important to young people, but there is a clear complexity and diversity, with young people recognising a large range of factors as important to their identity.

### Key findings:

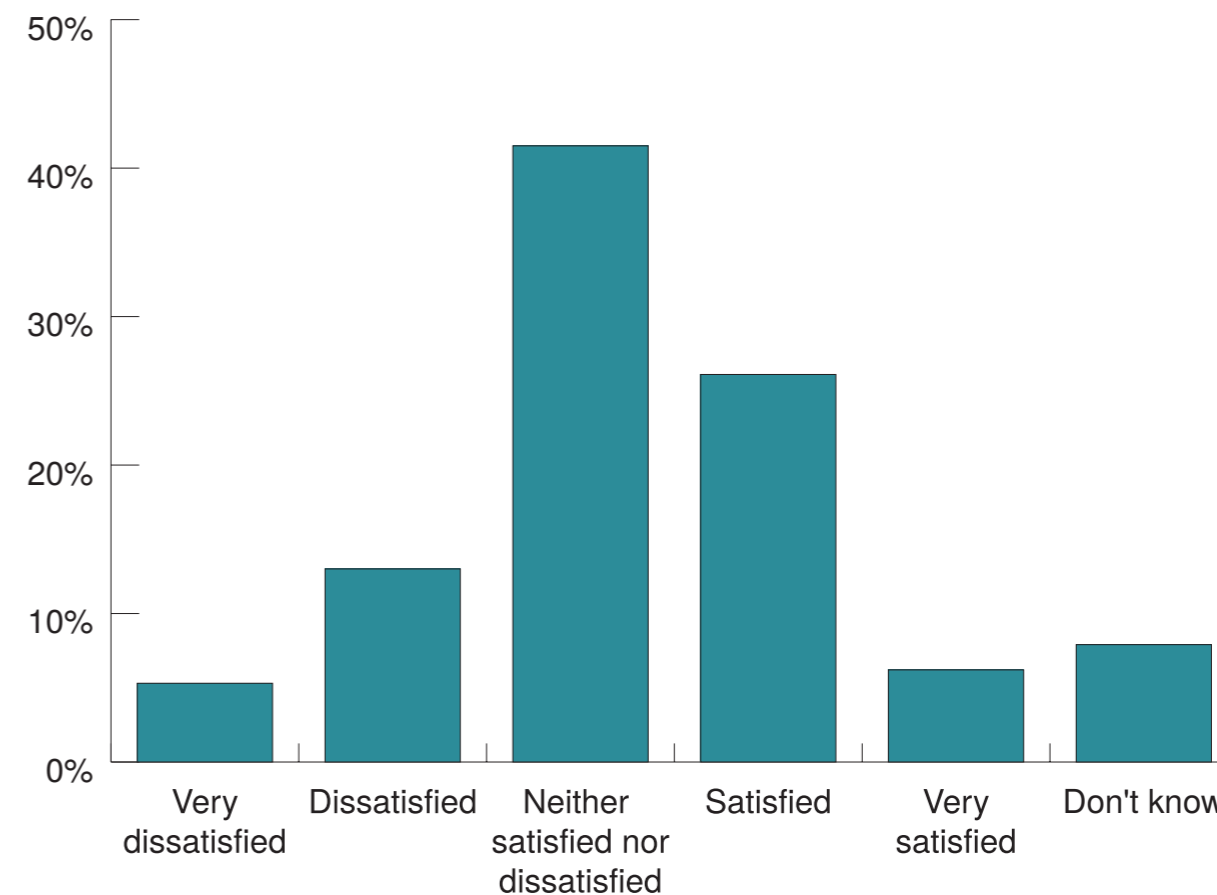
- **Political Identity is clearly important to young people with 71.6% saying they think about their identity regularly or always.**
- **More than 50% of the young people in our survey see their political identities as complex** with a majority agreeing that they have multiple aspects to their identity, that their identity is subject to change, that it impacts their mental health and that it played an important role in their life decisions.
- **Age, Gender and Ethnicity were important factors for young people's political identity but class and nationality were less significant.**
- **Young People felt their political identity was most likely to be influenced by their immediate social environment** with family, friends, interests and education being more important influences than political movements or demographic factors.
- **There were some interesting variation with age.** Over-18s perceived Race as a more important part of their identity while Under 18s identified Sexuality as substantially more important than Over-18s. Under-18s were also more likely to believe that identity has an impact on their mental health.
- **Non-White respondents were more likely to think about their identity than White respondents.** Non-White respondents were also substantially more likely to state that Nationality and Religion were important to their political identity than White respondents.
- **Female respondents were significantly more likely to state that Social Movements and Political Parties were important to their political identity than Male respondents.**
- **Gender, Ethnicity and Nationality were all significantly more important to the political identities of London based respondents than those in other regions.**

## London Mayor

**Almost nine out of ten young people (86.1%) said that they knew the name of the London Mayor.** Older groups aged 22-25 were more likely to know Sadiq Khan's name (91.5%), as were White (89%) and Asian (87.2%) young people.

**Around a third (32.3%) of young people said that they were satisfied, or very satisfied, with the job that Sadiq Khan was doing.** The most common answer was neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (41.5%), with less than one in five being dissatisfied or very dissatisfied (18.3%).

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way Sadiq Khan is doing his job as Mayor?



**Around two thirds of young people (66.9%) said that they thought 16 and 17-year olds should be given the right to vote in the Mayoral election.**

**What do you think of the job Sadiq Khan has done as Mayor for London?**

**“I don’t think young people, younger than 18 aren’t really targeted, and don’t seem to have too much of a voice in the mayor’s eyes, or any mayors’ eyes.”**

**“I guess one thing that I’ve liked about Sadiq Khan, he’s been quite critical of people that we expected, like the UK Government to say something about for example, like Donald Trump, I think this was probably the only person that took a stand against Donald Trump.”**

**“If the mayor was interested in communicating to young people, the mayor would be on distribution outlets where young people are listening to and I haven’t really heard him in very long.”**

## **Our City Our Future 2021** **Young Westminster Foundation**



Young Westminster Foundation is an exciting cross-sector partnership. We connect and nurture our community of member and partner organisations through information-sharing, networking opportunities, training and grants.

Our City, Our Future is Young Westminster Foundation’s 2020/21 needs analysis, covering the issues and experiences of young people growing up in Westminster over the past year. To produce this report, we worked with a trained group of 10 young people as peer researchers, in addition to hearing from youth workers and practitioners through a series of online focus groups, conducted in partnership with Rocket Science, Partnership for Young London and King’s College London’s MSC in Public Policy & Management Programme.

### **Key findings on social media were:**

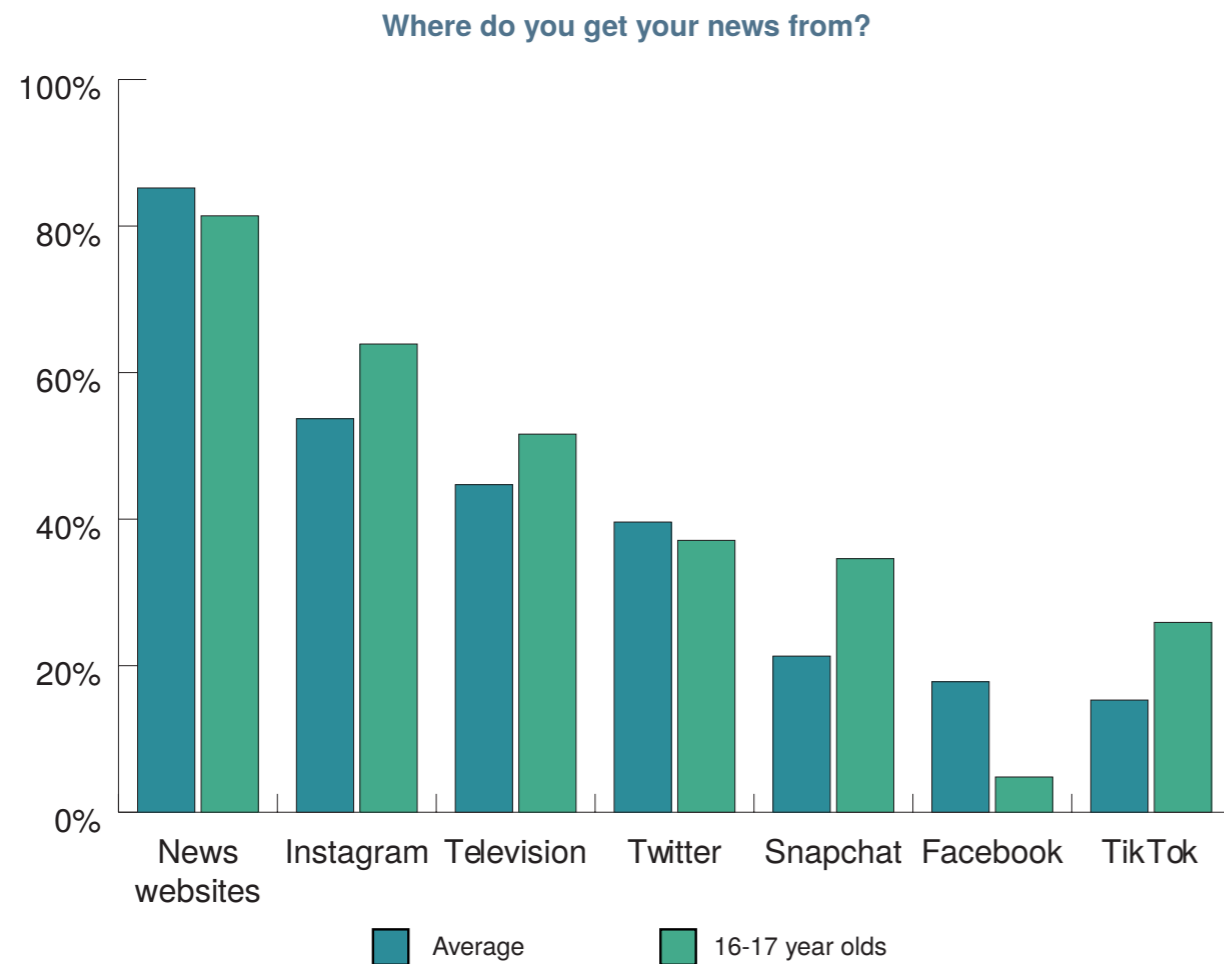
- **Over half of young people rated the impact of social media on their lives as neutral**, with 28% of young people rating the impact as ‘somewhat positive’ or ‘very positive’ and 19% as ‘somewhat negative’. No young people rated the impact of social media as ‘very negative’.
- **In contrast, of nine youth workers who responded to a survey, two thirds expressed that they felt social media generally has a negative impact on young people’s lives.**
- **When asked about time spent on social media, 62% of young people responded that they ‘feel fine with how much time they spend on social media’.** However, 31% responded that they ‘want to spend less time on social media’.
- **When asked about specific issues associated with the use of social media amongst young people, over three quarters (76%) of young people identified ‘body image pressures’ as a concern.** Other frequent concerns were bullying and/or harassment (62%), fake or unreliable news or information (62%); and photos or messages being shared without a person’s consent (61%, n=60)

To read the full report please visit: <https://www.youngwestminster.com/our-city-our-future/>



# Media and the news

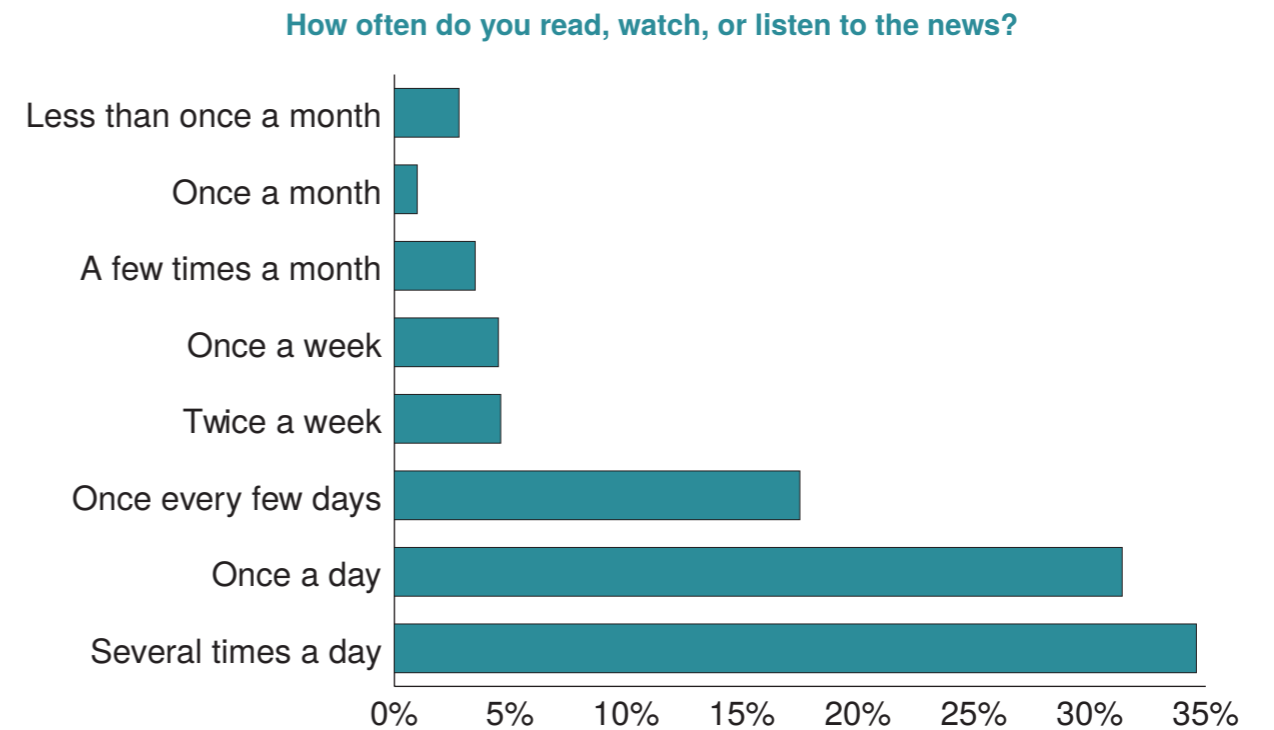
We asked young people how they get their news, and how often they look at the news. We found the most common source were news websites (85.2%), followed by Instagram (53.7%), and television (44.7%).



However, with digital sources, age groups varied greatly in where they got their news:

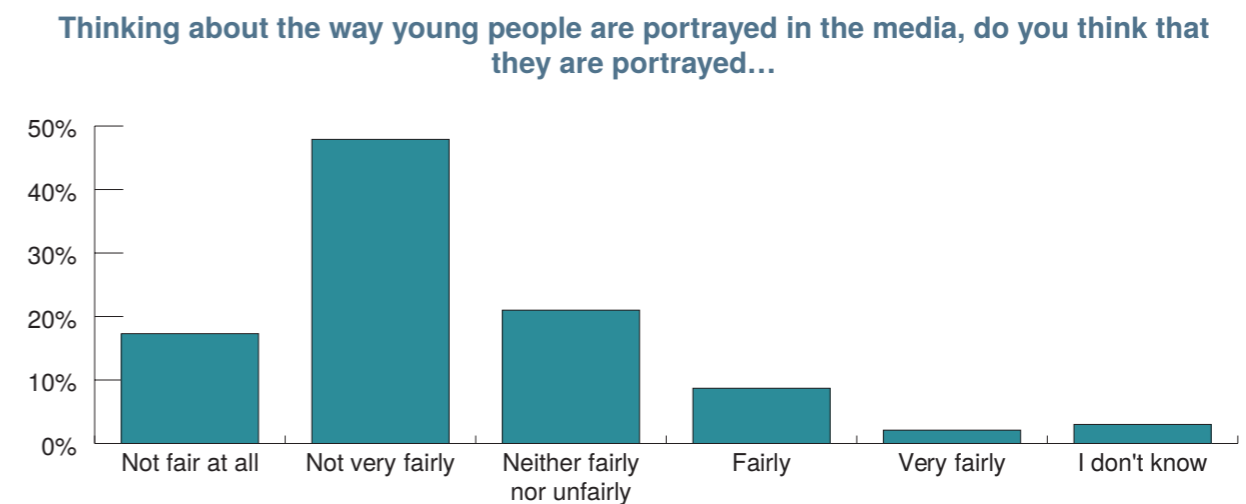
- For example, those aged 16-17 were far more likely than those aged 21-25 to get their news from Tik Tok (25.9% to 5.8%), Snapchat (34.6% to 6.3%), Instagram (63.9% to 41.1%), and television (51.6% to 36.5%).
- Those aged 21-25 were, however, far more likely than those aged 16-17 to get their news from Facebook (28.2% to 4.8%).

We also found that two third of young people (66%) read, watch, or listen to the news at least once a day. Only a tiny proportion said they did once a month or less (3.8%).



Over half of young people (65.2%) thought that the media portrayal of young people was either not very fair or not fair at all.

Only around one in ten (10.8%) thought the media's portrayal was fair or very fair. With young women far more likely than young men to think the media's portrayal was not very fair, or not fair at all (72% to 55.6%).





# 11. Youth services

## Introduction

Youth services should help young people improve their social mobility by allowing them to identify their developmental needs and facilitate the meeting of these in order for them to gain improved life skills and the ability to create a better future for themselves and their peers.

**While reading this report two main things spoke to me: the lack of youth services during lockdown and the availability of mentorships.**

**It was particularly concerning to me that two thirds of young people either had no access or found it hard to access youth service during lockdown;** understandably due to restrictions. However some young people are dependent on these sorts of places being open for their wellbeing and sometimes safety and with only 5% of youth workers saying that their organisation were still able to deliver face-to-face essential services to young people, a lot of young people may now find themselves in compromising situations or feeling isolated .

**In terms of the availability of mentorships I strongly feel that more should be done for mentorship programmes to be widely accessible.**

Often young people just need a little guidance and insight to unlock their ultimate potential. "Around a third (28.2%) of young people told us that they had a mentor, with young people in private school slightly more likely to have one than those in a state or comprehensive school (30.9% to 26.3%)." I have been lucky enough to find mentorship programmes to partake in and around London and I can confidently say without them I wouldn't have the confidence, interpersonal skills, time management or diligence I now possess.

**Brook Lord  
16-years old**

# The diversity of youth services

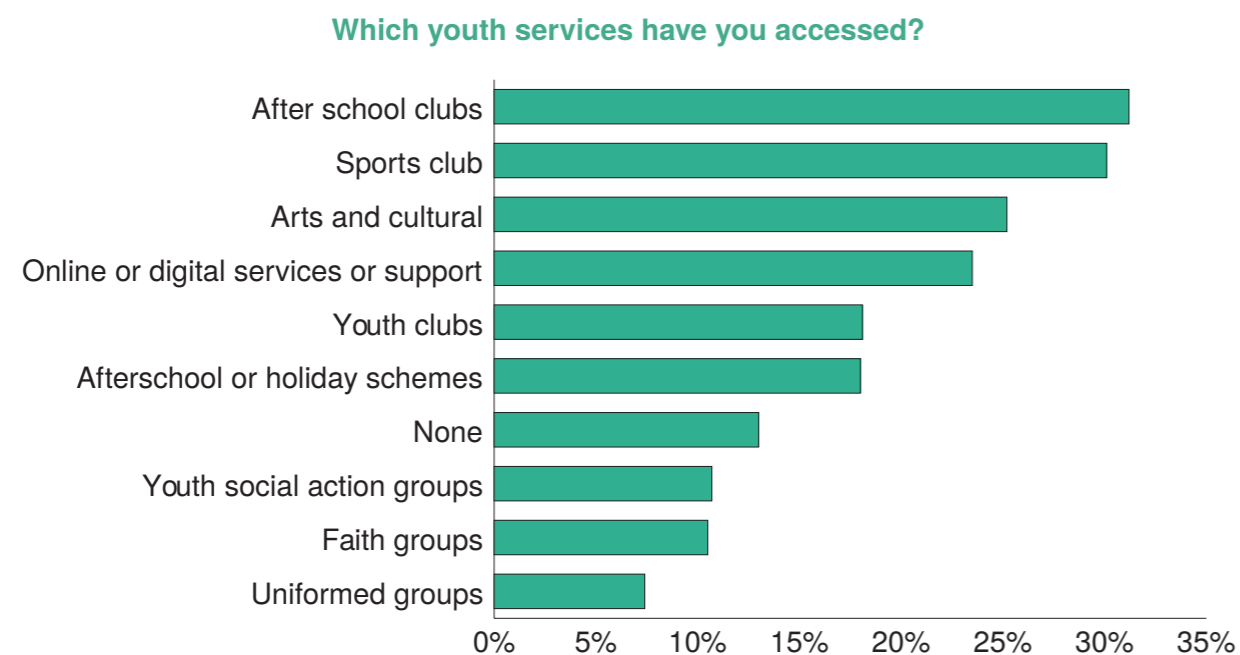
Almost nine out of ten (88%) young people said that they do not feel that they have a say in how services are set up and run.

Young people who felt that politicians didn't listen to them, or that young people's views aren't taken seriously, were more likely to say they did not feel like they had a say.

We found that the most common youth services to be accessed were after school clubs (31.2%), sports clubs (30.1%), and arts and cultural youth services (25.2%). The least common were youth social action groups (10.7%), faith groups (10.5%), and uniformed groups (7.4%).

Youth clubs use was the most varied depending on the group. For example, Black young people were twice as likely as White young people to have accessed it (27.9% to 14.2%), as were those with care experience compared to those with no experience of care (29% to 16.2%).

Young women were far more likely to have accessed arts and cultural youth services than young men (29.9% to 17.9%), while young men were more likely to have accessed sports clubs (38% to 25.1%).



# London's Lost Youth Services

## Sian Berry - London Assembly Member



This research from Green Party Member of the London Assembly, Sian Berry, shows that further cuts have been made to youth services in London. It shows that the trend of shrinking budgets for youth work had not gone away, despite efforts from the Mayor's office to plug some of the gaps from years of councils struggling to fund them.

Young people have, ever since 2011, found it harder and harder to access the help and support that youth services and youth workers provide.

The report asked each council in London to provide data on youth service budgets, youth worker employment, youth centre provision, any external grants being received by councils. It is the fifth iteration of the report, and asks new specific questions about number of referrals to children's services and the number of specific LGBTQA+ projects for young people are currently being run by the council.

### Key findings:

- Since 2011-12, at least £35.5 million has been removed from council youth services budgets.
- Another £600,000 is currently planned to be removed in the 2020-21 budget year.
- Comparing the earliest data to the most recent data from all councils shows a net loss of 733 youth worker jobs.
- Shows a net loss of 101 youth centres since 2011-2012.

### Recommendations:

- The Mayor of London should commit to support for the Young Londoners Fund on a permanent basis.
- The Government must help councils with restored funding to bring youth services back to at least pre-austerity levels.

To read the full report, please go to: <https://www.london.gov.uk/about-us/london-assembly/assembly-members/publications-sian-berry/publication-sian-berry-londons-lost-youth-services-2020>

# Impact of Covid-19

One in five young people (19.3%) told us that they had issues when trying to access youth services in London, which we think is likely a higher proportion due to the pandemic.

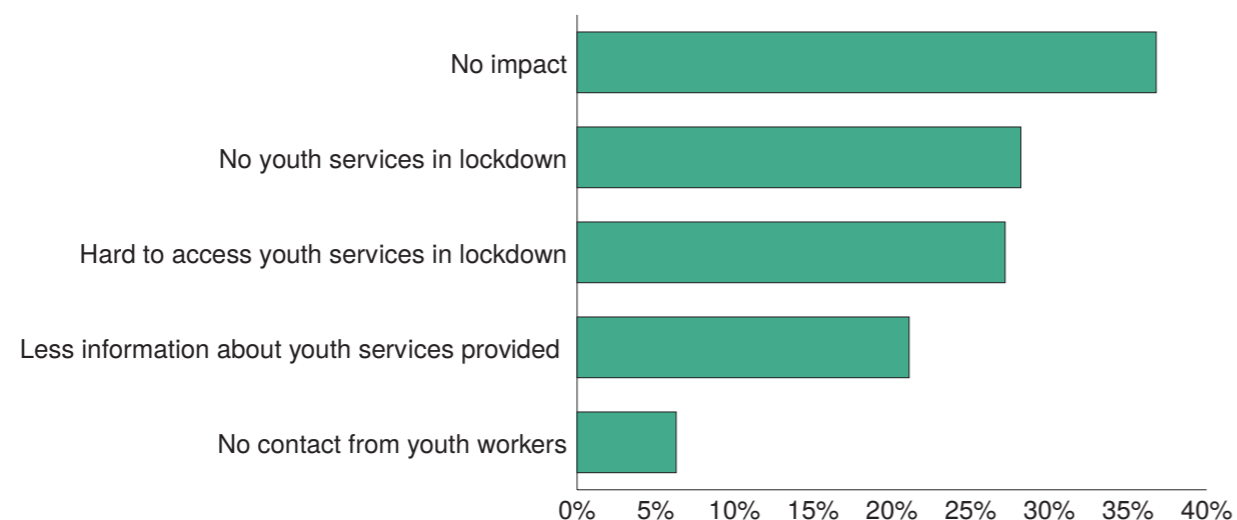
We then asked what the impact had been on access to services. Over a third (36.8%) of young people said that Covid-19 and lockdown has had no impact on their access to the services they use.

However, a third (28.2%) also told us that there were no youth services in lockdown, while another third (27.2%) said that it was hard to access youth services in lockdown.

Different groups were more likely to have more negative experiences of different impacts of coronavirus on their access to youth services:

- White young people were the most likely to say that there was no impact on the services that they used than average (40.1% to 36.8%).
- Young people with experience of care were twice as likely to say that there was no contact from youth workers as a result of Covid-19 and lockdown than those with no experience of care (10.8% to 5.5%).

What, if any, has been the impact of coronavirus on your access to these services?



# Impact of COVID-19 on London Youth Members London Youth



London Youth is the largest membership body for youth work in London. They directly develop the confidence, resilience and relationship skills of over 27,000 children and young people each year through our arts and culture, employability, outdoor education, sports, and youth social action programmes.

Between 26th March and 23rd April 2020, London Youth surveyed 290 youth workers from 149 youth organisations in their network on the impact of COVID-19 on their youth organisation, how they were adapting, and what support they needed.

### Key findings:

- A third of youth workers said that their youth organisation was facing significant and immediate financial pressure, with a quarter of youth workers listing funding and income as their organisation's most immediate concern.
- While only 5% of youth workers said that their organisation was still delivering face-to-face essential services to young people, almost two thirds of youth workers said that their youth organisation is moving to some form of digital provision, rather than suspending services and support entirely.
- 97 of 290 youth workers (33%) said that their youth organisation was facing significant and immediate financial pressure to the extent that they were considering redundancies or had concerns about covering rent or the future sustainability of the charity.
- 76 of 290 youth workers (26%) said that one of the most immediate concerns for their youth organisation was income and funding.

To read the full report please visit <https://londonyouth.org/covid-19-financial-impact-on-our-members/>

## What were the issues you had when trying to access youth services in London?

One in five (19.3%) told us they had issues accessing youth services in London, and we asked them why.

"I don't even know what a youth service is."

"Not run properly or non-existent."

"There was a period of time where lots of youth services closed down."

"I didn't know where the youth club was located."

"Trying to find youth clubs."

"They were closed down."

"They are nonexistent in my Borough."

"I don't know about any of them. And in the past when things have been offered externally in school they weren't available to me."

"Many no longer working because of the pandemic."

"There is none or not good enough advertising of them."

"Lack of certain services in my local area."

"They are too busy so I don't get answered."

"Depend on area I live in."

"There not a lot of youth services in my area due to cut."

"Not enough youth clubs or incentives for young people to grow. Young people are seen as a burden rather than a credit."

"Not good enough social activities for young people to do. If there is not everyone is aware of it."

"They had no funding so shut down."

"There is barely any. Bare long to travel."

"Passwords and emails incorrect."

"I don't know what services are available and how to access them."

"Honestly, I've barely ever heard of any youth services, which again, is due to the lack of focus on young people in general, or maybe just cause I'm poor and apparently live in a different place than everyone else."

"Most of the youth clubs in my area were shut down and my only option was to join the cadets."

"I didn't know it was happening."

"Not enough space, no wide range of different activities."

"You don't even know where to start plus poor advertisement."

"There aren't many and covid has made it near impossible to do any social youthful stuff."

"Many youth clubs are closing down meaning youth have to travel far to access them."

"They shut down and so were no longer available."

"There isn't that many good services available for working class households."

"There's not that many youth services in London and the ones in my area aren't run by the government but more by the community."

"Limited range and affordability within my area."

"There isn't much to do and plus the time and my area is dangerous."

"Lack of available free services and cost of travel and lack of time due to other responsibilities, homework and helping in the home and such."

"Not as much out there for 18-25 year olds making it more difficult to receive support especially during this time."

"They don't seem very interesting or exciting."

"The lack of youth services."

"Having problems with other young people involved and not having funding to attend."

"That you have to live in certain places."

"Sports facilities are expensive or we have to pay to enjoy and it's so sad."

"Travel distance; money."

"There's not enough or they're underfunded."

"They are quite hard to find especially when you are quite unsure of which ones would be best for you."

"Just waiting lists being long and people getting in before me on the list for some reason."

"The lack of range of youth services. Most youth services have a main target audience and you must meet the requirements to join and the majority of the time I don't for example I may not live in the exact borough its hosted in."

"Hard to find LGBTQ+ groups that are currently running."

"Cuts to funding shutting things down rapidly."

"Unclear which services I am eligible for."

"I love sport however when before lockdown I tried to find the club to play for or somewhere to train I found it difficult to access that."

"Connection or internet issues."

"Needed to meet certain criteria to be able to access the services."

"Lack of range for my specific interest."

"Most staff are friendly but they only really look after the people who are popular or stand out. Maybe I am an introvert and struggle talking to people but it was a similar story with my friends."

"My Wi-Fi not working and contacting the people."

"Can't meet up and do activities anymore."

"Shut down because of lockdown, or not being able to travel out to better ones."

"Not having the funding to access a specific youth service."

"I didn't know they existed or how to join them."

"There is not enough opportunities."

"Most are closed because of Covid restrictions."

"They have never been promoted to me, so I have never known to try and access them."

"I am never informed about them, or aware of my eligibility."

"There is a big lack of youth clubs which is something I wanted to join however my local club and many around London have closed."

"They're all closing down or there's not enough for girls only."

"There are less people to answer and they don't always help."

"Very long waiting lists."

## Youth Sector Data Standard

### The Centre for Youth Impact



The Centre for Youth Impact work collaboratively with partners across the UK youth sector to develop shared approaches to learning, evaluation and continuous improvement. For this research they partnered with Partnership for Young London and London Youth.

The London Data Standard is a set of standard questions designed specifically for organisations working with and for young people in London. The survey ran over November and December last year, and received 122 responses.

#### Key findings:

- **Around 1 in 10 organisations – 9% - have paused or stopped all provision as a result of Covid-19**, while over half – 57% have paused or stopped most or at least half of all provision.

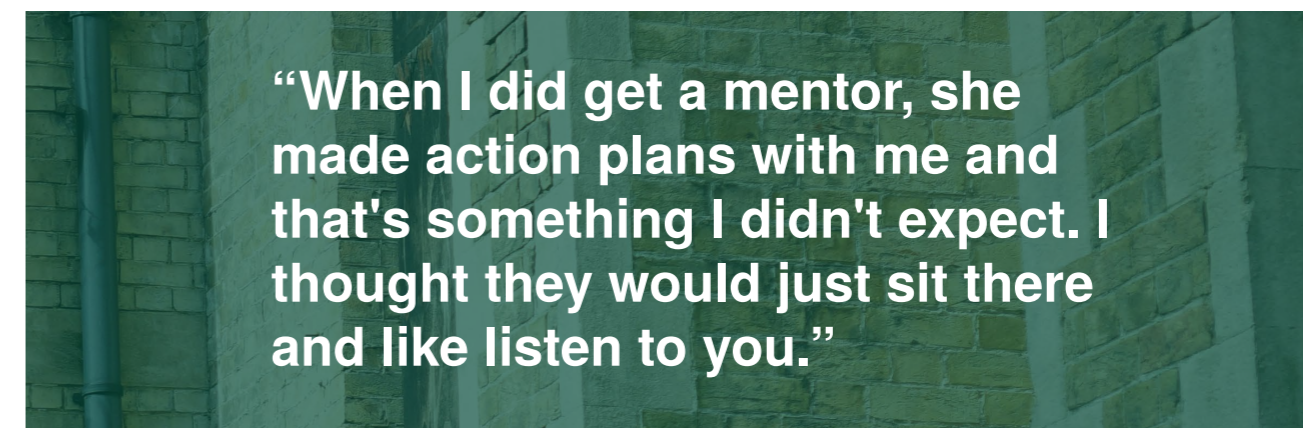
- **The top three support priorities for young people for organisations were:** responding to mental health and anxiety issues (85%), inclusion and access for young people experiencing isolation or marginalisation (55%), and meeting basic needs of young people and their families (43%).

- **While 56% of organisations said that their finances were stable, 44% said that they will not be able to meet costs in 12 or less months.**
- **22% of organisations said that they did not have reserves equalling three months running costs**, while 9% said they were not sure.
- **65% of organisations estimated a 25% to 49% reduction in staff capacity at time of survey.**
- **Over half – 53% - of organisations have furloughed staff**, with an additional 6% of organisations only not furloughing staff because they were ineligible to do so.
- **Around 1 in 4 organisations – 27% - are facing the prospect of making some staff redundant in the next 12 months.**

To read the full report please visit: <https://nhyouthcentre.org.uk/news/2019/11/22/serious-youth-violence-best-practice-report>

## Mentorships

**Around a third (28.2%) of young people told us that they had a mentor, with young people in private school slightly more likely to have one than those in a state or comprehensive school (30.9% to 26.3%).**

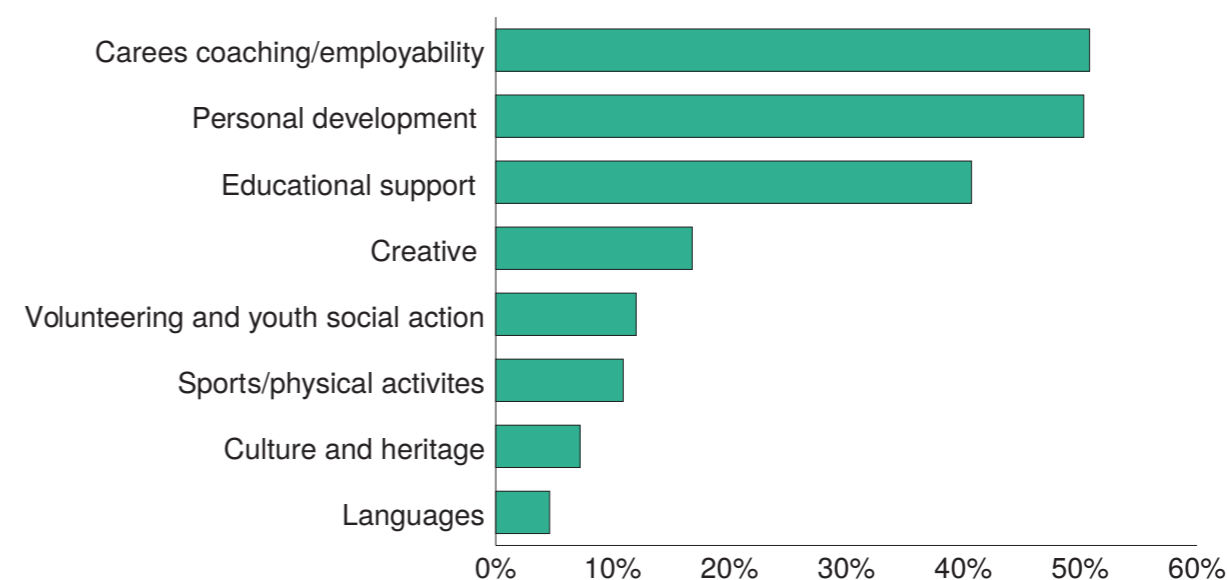


**Of that third, we asked what their mentor currently supports them with, with over half of them being supported with their career or employability, or their personal development (50.8% and 50.3% respectively).**

It was less common for mentors to support with languages (4.6%), culture and heritage (7.2%), or sports and physical activities (10.9%).

However, over half (52.2%) of young people said that they would like a mentor or would benefit from one. Young women were slightly more likely to say that they would than young men (57.8% to 47.4%).

#### What does, or did, your mentor support you with?





# 12. The future of London

## Introduction

Our young people are the future, and it is key to listen to their voices about the changes that they would like to see. A young person's voice gives a new perspective and ensures that policies that are developed are suited to those of all ages and not just adults, as it has been in the past when young people's views have been overlooked.

**Young Londoners want a future that encapsulates their goals for a better London.**

Progress is constantly taking place in everything to improve and this development towards the new future of London is something that many young people are keen to see. There are a lot of similarities among young people in terms of their aims for the prioritisations in moving forward towards a new London.

**Most young people, when asked what they want London to look like in the future said a few main things. These include affordable houses, job opportunities, green spaces, public transport, and mental health.** Affordable housing is key for young people, without it there can be a detrimental effect of the quality of one's life, therefore it is key that provisions are put in place for this. For example public transport is essential in many everyday lives so it's important that its prioritised.

**A lot of the other young Londoners are looking towards creating a greener London.**

More green spaces are important to create this. This hope for more sustainability within our daily lives and within our city is something that I agree is key in creating the future of London.

I want London to continue in growing to be a city of great hospitality. This lockdown has highlighted the severity of mental health problems among the youth as well as exacerbating it, so collectively more needs to be done to help those among us going through this. I look forward to a city where everyone feels comfortable and no one has to live in fear from anything. This means that issues such as knife crime and assault need to carry on being tackled to create a safer space of habitation for all of us as well as the future generations to come.

**London should be a place that everyone can thrive in.**

**Salem B. Habtom**  
18 years old

## Shaping Our Future Jack Petchey Foundation



The Jack Petchey Foundation is a progressive grant-making organisation that has invested over £133m in opportunities for young people across London and Essex and recognises the achievements of over 12,000 young people every year.

The Shaping Our Future Survey asked young people from London and Essex about their experiences of the lockdown and what they want to see for young people in the future. Over 6,000 young people responded, showing how keen they are to have their voices heard. Responses also revealed how, despite difficulties faced in the lockdown, over half of young people have risen to the challenge of adversity and have gone the extra mile to help their communities through difficult times.

### Young people's priorities in a post-lockdown society:

- 73% want a cleaner environment.
- 61% want more family time.
- 67% want more time for their interests or hobbies.
- 61% want more time for self-care.
- 65% want more kindness and community spirit.
- 54% want less pressure to be busy.
- 83% said they are more motivated to be kind to others in the future

### Additionally, the survey found:

- **Young people have been inspired:** Two in five young people are more inspired to pursue a caring profession in the future and one in five young people are more inspired to pursue a teaching role in the future.
- **They would like more support for their careers:** 53% wanted more internships and work experience, 53% wanted more training opportunities and career advice, and 30% wanted more support for young people to start their own businesses.
- **What it was like to be a young person in lockdown:** 75% of young people spent more time on social media, 45% did more creative activities, 45% spent less time outside, and 14% meditated more.

To read the full report, please go to: <https://www.jackpetcheyfoundation.org.uk/media-hub/shaping-the-future/>

## London in 2025

We asked young people what they wanted London to look like in 2025. There were a few key themes in the answers we received:

- **Young people wanted a cleaner, greener city:** While air pollution and the environment, when considered next to other issues, was less of a priority, it was far more talked about when young people consider the future of the city as a place to live in.
- **The issue that young people are most concerned about tended to be the issue they spoke about improving by 2025:** We heard about all issues, from housing, to employment, and safety. The only issue that was absent was politics, which might reflect the apathy and lack of optimism previously found.
- **Young people want London to be a more equal and fair place:** Across all issues, it was clear that young people want to see solutions to key problems because they believe London should be a fairer city. A city where everyone has opportunities, and discrimination in all forms is eliminated.



# What do you want London to look like in 2025?

Over 1600 young people told us what they wanted London to look like in the future.

"I would like every aspect of London to reflect the diverse community that lives in this city. My police should reflect my community, my politicians should do the same, my local council should do the same. If private companies such as Sainsburys are able to successfully employ these strategies by recruiting to reflect the local communities of their stores. It's an absolute shame our government cannot follow suit."

"I want London's vibrancy to return. I want it to be a safe place to live and everyone to be able to interact with each other without fear of prejudice or discrimination."

"More of a community and safer place where less crime & more inclusive for those with a disability."

"A safe and happy place with more spacious and frequent public transport for overcrowded routes. More cycle lanes and pedestrian routes."

"A place which allow opportunity for younger people to develop and be independent. I feel strongly that young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are not offered the guidance or support and due to lack of support find themselves in situation that they commit crime but also lose trust in the system."

"The same just a lot safer."

"Just as it is, but without covid hopefully."

"More affordable housing, a streamlined and better managed system of local governance/councils etc, and an eradication of all forms of discrimination."

"A prosperous mega city on the world stage that all people wish to come to, essentially a perfect city."

"I would like London to be a more socially and economically equal place."

"Thriving, more job opportunities for everyone, even when you are not that experienced. More financial support for university fees, housing and living cost. Healthy environment more clean and fresh street."

"EQUAL opportunities, voices for young Black people to be heard and for an acknowledgement and education of Britain's colonial past."

"By the year 2025, I'd like to imagine that London has become more composed. Knife and gun violence within the city is at an all time low. The power the police are give is no longer abused by them and they have learnt to stop racial discrimination. The city is cleaner, the housing problem is solved so that homelessness decreases and that house prices have decreased just a little bit so more people can afford mortgages."

"Less gentrification, halting police discrimination and curbing the homeless problem within the city by providing more affordable housing instead of luxury housing for the super rich."

"Communist, equal city where cars are of the past, a statue celebrating the guillotining of bojo, local n national governments being run by black queer disabled folk, no police, slowing of gentrification, actually affordable housing, better and safer schools, funding for mental health services so I don't have to wait for months to get help with PTSD."

"I would like air pollution to be reduced and for rents to be cheaper. I would like more to be done to fight homelessness so that no one has to sleep rough."

"I would like London to become a city where all people regardless of race/religion/wealth can feel safe, and a city where nobody starves or is forced to become homeless."

"Cleaner, more green, less polluted, HAPPIER!!, friendlier people, and better job prospects"

"A friendly, diverse and open-minded community. It would be nice to able to strike up a conversation with anyone. Improved mental and physical health care. More affordable housing and knowledge on property. Decreased air pollution. More activities for young people and adults! Schools providing an education into politics, finance and career opportunities for all children from a young age."

"Private landlords using housing as a business need to get in the bin. More cycle lanes, less cars pls the air is hard to breathe. Cultural diversity and honesty about the British Empire's legacy - the way it has shaped the unhealthy aspects of society. Easier access for immigrants to live here. Less spending on the police, more spending on social services."

"I would like there to be a lot more youth services. Youth centres opening up all around London. Indoor and outdoor facilities for sport and other activities. More help for young people to get employment and vocational education. Better mental health services, especially for young people."

"I would like London to be more accepting of people and safer. I hope that people are better informed about situations that occur so that we reduce the bias they might have as a result of their beliefs."

"Legalised weed."

"Cheaper, more single occupancy housing."

"Less dirty and rubbish, plastic and broken glass littered, more recycling awareness, greener, safer for cyclists, more funding and services for NHS, hopefully still have grassroots music and arts venues around."

"WAY more equal and equitable. More opportunities for disadvantaged people whether that's to do with finances, postcodes, race, gender, sexual orientation. London is great but needs to go much further to be fairer. We need better education on the world and how to treat each other. We'll ALL benefit."

"Inclusive."

"A smoking crater in the ground."

"As happy as the 2012 Olympics. Supporting local businesses. Affordable rent. Less noise. Plant more sidewalk trees."

