



Young  
Westminster  
Foundation

# Our City, Our Future.

Understanding the needs of young  
people in Westminster in 2020/21

Report by Rocket Science for Young Westminster Foundation



**ROCKET  
SCIENCE**

**Partnership  
for Young  
London**

**KING'S  
College  
LONDON**



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Thank You

# INTRODUCTION FROM PHIL

*Our City, Our Future* describes the issues and experiences of young people growing up in Westminster and has been written with the findings of ten peer researchers at its heart. We conclude that despite a challenging year, young people are optimistic for their future. The report is the culmination of over a year's work which started before the pandemic, continued through the height of the lockdowns and is published now in March 2021 as schools reopen their doors after the UK's third national lockdown. Working with Rocket Science, Partnership for Young London and Kings College London's MSC in Public Policy & Management Programme has allowed us to draw on a wealth of research expertise to inform the work undertaken through the time of Covid-19.

Our 2017 needs analysis, *A City Within a City*, was a defining point in establishing Young Westminster Foundation (YWF) and our strategy. Listening to young people's experiences helped establish four of the most pressing themes for our work including Crime and Safety; the Local Environment; Health and Wellbeing and Accessing Opportunities. This framework has supported our approach to fundraising and developing programmes. The report also provided a number of recommendations which have focussed our work over the past three years including 'acting as a bridge between different organisations and sectors' and 'brokering applications to external funders'. Fundraising to sustain the sector and having a positive impact on young people has been a massive drive and we have increased our turnover from £200k to £1.4m in three years.

Three years later, refreshing the needs analysis, the sector is more cohesive and collaborative; supported and reinvigorated by the new infrastructure of youth hubs established by YWF and Westminster City Council (WCC) in 2019. These partnerships have paved the way for a systemic approach to the research published here. Unfortunately, during the planning we had not foreseen a pandemic breaking out at the same time as focus groups were due to get underway.

We were able to quickly adapt the project through virtual means and share the initial findings from focus groups in the first phase of the project in an efficient way to keep partners up to date on the changing situation for young people.

**The need for YWF and the youth sector to adapt is needed more than ever. It is incumbent upon us all as a sector to continue to provide spaces to listen and respond.**

The pandemic has further exacerbated social and economic inequalities in Westminster; this was highlighted through the focus groups in terms of poverty, access to food, poor living conditions, isolation, physical and mental health and access to education. The need for youth services has never been so acute. YWF has been able to respond in real time to some of the initial findings of the research, for example through the Digital Futures Project, providing over 1,800 laptops for disadvantaged families.

Young people reported that the pandemic has had a significant impact on their lives, however it is encouraging to hear this is tempered by a certain optimism and motivation about communities supporting each other better in the future. Nationally, 74% of young people believe their generation "can change our future for the better"<sup>1</sup>. The potential for stronger youth voice and action is really exciting.

The emerging data on unemployment for young people in Westminster is stark and suggests an urgent need to respond. There are several practical responses to this emergency outlined in the 'calls to action' including greater collaboration between schools, youth organisations, WCC Early Help and businesses.

Another major area of concern arising in this report is around mental health and emotional wellbeing. Young people in Westminster face significant pressure. There has been progress with partners collaborating on this issue locally but we need to maintain momentum to improve referral routes, co-location of counsellors and develop new interventions in existing community and settings. A further theme emerging from this research is around accessing information on a range of services,

which provides an opportunity to respond and improve signposting. This report provides clear findings and 'calls to action' which will help focus and frame YWF's priorities for the coming few years.

This report serves as a tool for the wider Westminster community including YWF's 100+ member organisations, business partners, Westminster City Council, Met Police and NHS to collaborate and to open a conversation about the needs of young people and act together. YWF believes that every young person in Westminster should grow up healthy, safe and happy with the best opportunities for brighter futures. Coming out of this pandemic the world will be a different place and our future lies with young people. The Foundation believes that youth voice should be at the centre of decision-making.



**Philip Barron, CEO**  
Young Westminster  
Foundation

<sup>1</sup> The Prince's Trust Tesco Youth Index (2021) <https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/about-the-trust/news-views/tesco-youth-index-2021>



# ABOUT YOUNG WESTMINSTER FOUNDATION

**Young Westminster Foundation (YWF) is a cross sector partnership connecting youth charities, young people, businesses, Westminster City Council and other partners such as universities, the Met Police & the NHS.**

*Together, the YWF community shares a vision for all young people in Westminster to grow up healthy, safe, and happy with the best opportunities for brighter futures.*

*YWF's 100+ members range from large youth clubs to smaller grass roots organisations; all driven by their passion to provide the best services, opportunities and support for local young people.*

*The Foundation believes that youth voice should be at the centre of decision making. Their goal is to identify and address the challenges faced by young people today, all the while ensuring that they are truly at the heart of the conversation.*

# THE 2020 NEEDS ANALYSIS

Established in 2016, Young Westminster Foundation's first piece of work was to conduct a peer-led needs analysis, examining the experiences of young people growing up in the borough of Westminster. That report, [A City Within A City](#), formed the basis of the Foundation's strategic direction to date. As part of this work, the YWF committed to undertake a regular needs analysis every three years.

Prior to the coronavirus pandemic, Young Westminster Foundation began work with Rocket Science, King's College London and Partnership for Young London to conduct a broad assessment of young people's needs in Westminster. The project would examine the experiences of various communities of young people across the borough; with a particular focus on the new Youth Hub regions and localised experiences, ensuring the research was representative of the diversity of experience across Westminster. The emergence of Covid-19 required this planned approach to change resulting in a two-stage simple, flexible and online research process (details of which can be found in [Appendix 1](#)):

**The first stage** involved Rocket Science conducting bi-weekly focus groups with Westminster youth workers in the Spring and Summer 2020 to understand the varied impacts of Covid-19 on young people, leaning into existing relationships between young people and youth workers

**The second stage** of the research involved Rocket Science and Partnership for Young London training young peer researchers to interview 98 young people in Autumn 2020 (information about interviewees is provided in [Appendix 2](#).) The peer researchers were recruited through YWF's member organisations and were asked to conduct interviews with a range of their peers. While this report cannot represent all young people in Westminster, youth practitioners were consulted to explore the experiences of young people who may not have been represented in peer researcher findings.

**1** **scoping working**  
in January 2020 attended  
by **30** organisations from  
across the Young Westminster  
community

**4**  
**hours of**  
**online training**  
**workshops**  
for peer researchers with  
Rocket Science & Partnership  
for Young London

**2** **MSc students**  
from King's College London  
co-designing  
the project

**22** **Westminster**  
**youth**  
**organisations**  
contributing insight

**8** **focus groups**  
with 14 youth workers  
throughout Summer 2020

**98** **in depth**  
**interviews**  
with young people

**10** **peer researchers**  
recruited to co-design  
research questions and  
conduct interviews



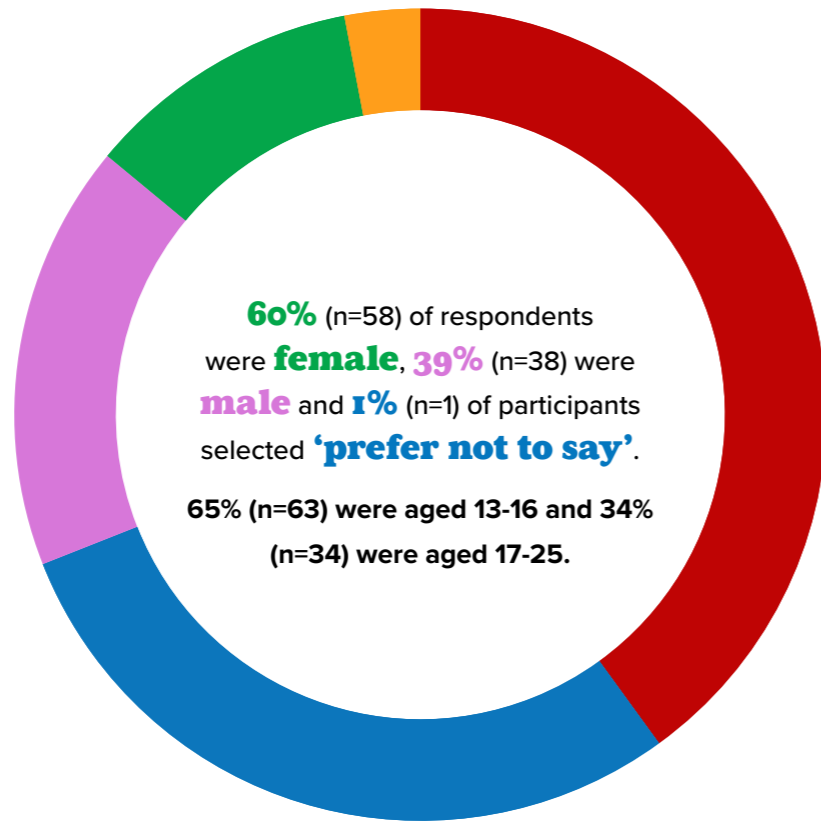
11% Asian/  
Asian British

17% Mixed/  
Multiple Ethnic Groups

29% Black/  
African Black British

40% White

3% Other Ethnic Groups



## Top 3 Most Important Social/Political issues



Covid-19



Crime & Safety



Tackling Racism



Just under **3/4**

expressed that a loss of free travel would impact how they get around.



**95%**

of young people felt supported by their youth club during the pandemic.



**1/3 (29%)** of young people

thought it would be 'very difficult' or 'somewhat difficult' to find out about education, employment or training opportunities.



Young people generally feel safe in Westminster, but

**Over 70%**

expressed concern about people carrying knives; being followed or ambushed; or sexual harassment or assault.

**Over 3/4**  
of young people

felt that mental health issues were common amongst their peers.

**44%** of young people



expressed that Covid-19 had a significant impact on their plans for the next 6-12 months.

**Over half** of young people



(56%) reported that they 'often' or 'sometimes' came across fake or unreliable news in relation to Covid-19.



**Over 3/4**

identified 'body image pressures' as a concern associated with the use of social media.

Young people in Westminster most frequently use social media (58%), watch TV shows or films (53%) and see or talk to friends (52%) in their spare time.



These activities are all things that can take place virtually from home suggesting that responses may be impacted by Covid-19.

**96%** of young people interviewed



had participated in social action in the past six months.

**Fewer than one in ten**



felt that they could greatly influence change in relation to the social and political issues that they care about.

Of the local services on offer to young people in Westminster, the **most commonly used are local parks** cited by 92% of young people.

Over half (53%) of young people interviewed had used a sports ground or sports centre and (50%) had accessed a youth club.

# IMPACT OF COVID-19

**65%**

of NEETs (those Not in Education, Employment or Training) agree that the longer they are jobless, the worse they feel about themselves.

**26%**

of young people admit they feel “unable to cope with life” since the start of the pandemic, increasing to 40% among those not in work, education or training.

**around  
a quarter**

of young people (23%) do not feel confident about their future work.

## HOW HAS COVID-19 IMPACTED THE LIVES OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN WESTMINSTER?

Covid-19 and its associated restrictions have had wide-ranging impacts on the lives of young people. Among young people who expressed worry about the effect Covid-19 was having on their lives, their main concerns were effects on schools or universities (24%), their well-being (22%), work (16%) and household finances (16%).<sup>2</sup>

**There is widespread concern about the impact of Covid-19 on young people’s mental health, particularly for unemployed young people who are significantly more likely to feel anxious and depressed.**<sup>3</sup>

Despite challenges faced during the pandemic, young people have been reported to be more optimistic than older age groups about how long they expect the effects of the pandemic to last – in June 2020, 55% of young people expected their lives to return to normal within six months.<sup>4</sup> Two-thirds 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”.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> ONS 2020 <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/ageing/articles/coronavirusandthesocialimpactsoneyoungpeopleingreatbritain/3aprilto10may2020>

<sup>3</sup> All findings from The Prince’s Trust Tesco Youth Index (2021) <https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/about-the-trust/news-views/tesco-youth-index-2021>

<sup>4</sup> ONS 2020 <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/ageing/articles/coronavirusandthesocialimpactsoneyoungpeopleingreatbritain/3aprilto10may2020>

<sup>5</sup> The Prince’s Trust Tesco Youth Index (2021) <https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/about-the-trust/news-views/tesco-youth-index-2021>

# INSIGHT FROM WESTMINSTER YOUTH WORKERS ON THE IMPACT OF COVID-19

Focus groups were held with 14 youth workers between April and July 2020 to explore impacts of Covid-19 on young people living in Westminster. Youth workers were recruited from across the Young Westminster Foundation membership including youth hubs and specialist services e.g. support for young people at risk of homelessness, and support for young people experiencing mental health issues. Key findings included:

## Mental health

During the initial lockdown in spring/summer 2020, young people were experiencing boredom and frustration, alongside anxiety. Day-to-day uncertainty led to concern amongst young people not knowing what would happen next and not being able to plan their futures. Despite this, some young people experienced a reduction in the stresses associated with attending school or were fearful about going back to an educational setting due to the risk of getting Covid-19 and passing it on to family members

## Physical health & exercise

Many young people reported feeling less fit and healthy and some described feeling newly appreciative of exercise and sports facilities. For some young people, lockdown provided an opportunity to try new sports and activities online that they would not have previously engaged with face-to-face

## Poverty & limited access to food

Young people and families felt pressure relating to food access, with parents being asked to make supermarket trips and provide three-four meals per day. Many families reported struggling to access food vouchers, though youth workers felt they were generally willing to ask for help where needed

## Poor living conditions

Practitioners voiced concern about various elements of young people's living conditions including overcrowding, safeguarding issues, isolation, and limited access to support when a parent experiences a mental health condition

## Access to education

The extent to which schools supported ongoing learning varied across schools with only some providing young people with guidance and structure and across lockdowns, with some schools developing their practices over time. Learning from home meant pupils could not support each other as easily and created anxiety around catching up on missed schoolwork. Some pupils were also worried about readjusting to school full time after time away

## Perceptions of Covid-19

It was felt that young people had received mixed messages about Covid-19 including being told to take it seriously and stay at home, whilst hearing that it

would be very unlikely to impact their own health. Young people were largely receiving information about Covid-19 by word of mouth and many believed that it was a conspiracy. While young people would usually look to youth workers for information and advice, access was limited during the crisis.

Westminster youth workers from Future Men also provided insights on the impact of Covid-19 on young people in the borough via Young Westminster Foundation.

One reported that not being able to socialise was having an impact on mental health and peer interactions<sup>6</sup>.

*"We are expecting a big fallout of young people, they are not socialising enough and are becoming increasingly anxious and volatile towards one another"*

**Westminster Youth Worker (Future Men)**

Another described children coming to the youth club to collect food to take home to their families<sup>5</sup>.

*"These young people are hungry – there are young people who are 11-12 years old who secretly come into the youth club to get food for their families."*

**Westminster Youth Worker (Future Men)**

<sup>6</sup> This quote was provided separately to the research carried out by Rocket Science.

# IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLANS

Covid-19 has had a significant impact on young people due to changes including school closures, loss of employment, and a lack of social engagement.

44% (n=43) of young people interviewed expressed that Covid-19 had a significant impact on their plans for the next 6-12 months whilst 48% (n=47) said that it had a small impact on their plans. Only 7% (n=7) of young people felt that Covid-19 had not changed their plans at all for the next 6-12 months.

When asked what the most pressing concerns were for young people over the next 6-12 months, youth workers suggested:

Mental health

Access to support from people other than peers or family e.g. mentors

Engagement with activities after school and at the weekend e.g. sports and leisure

Educational support

Isolation and being unable to socialise and communicate with others in person

Unemployment and financial issues

Lack of routine

Family life including issues such as parental anxiety



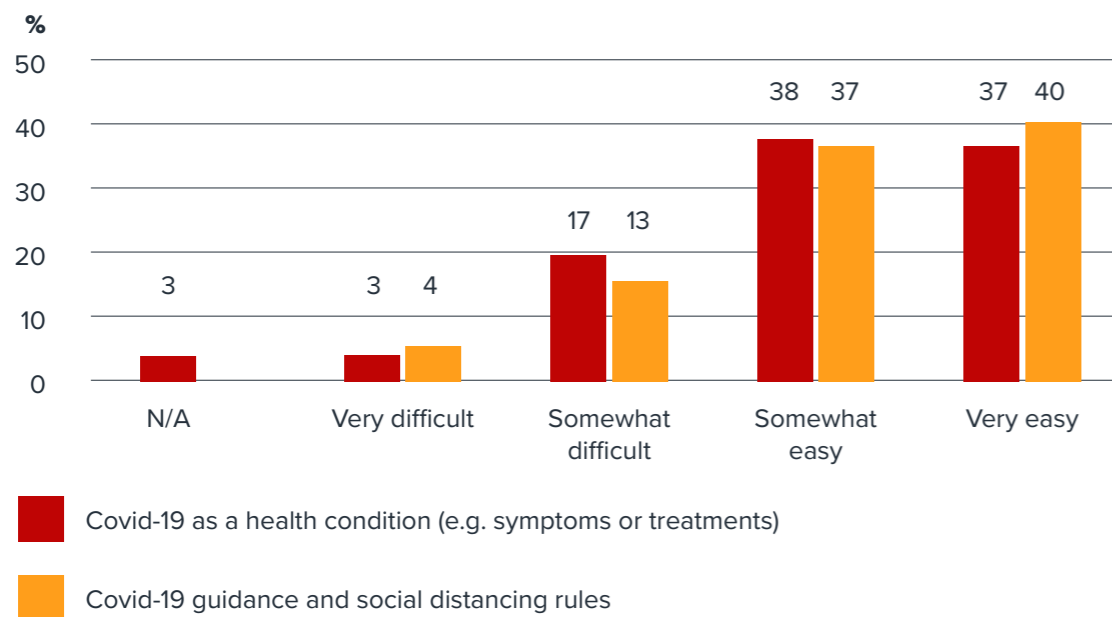


# ACCESS TO INFORMATION ABOUT COVID-19

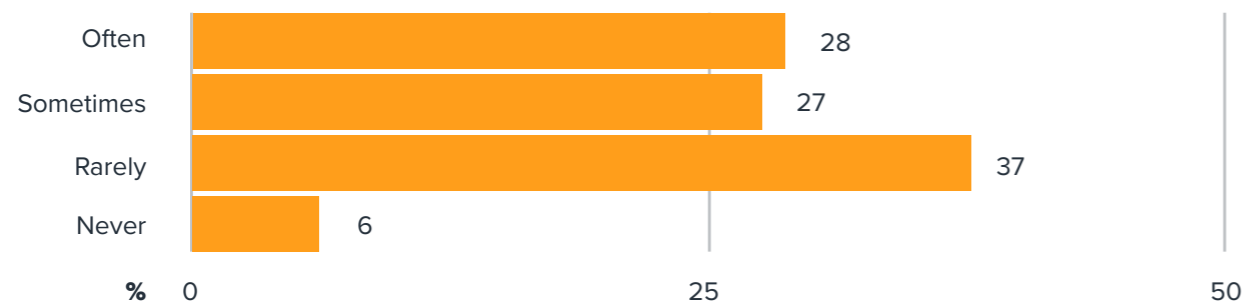
## Young people's access to reliable news during the pandemic was mixed

38% (n=37) and 43% (n=40) of young people found it 'very easy' to access reliable information on Covid-19 as a health condition and on Covid-19 guidance and social distancing rules respectively:

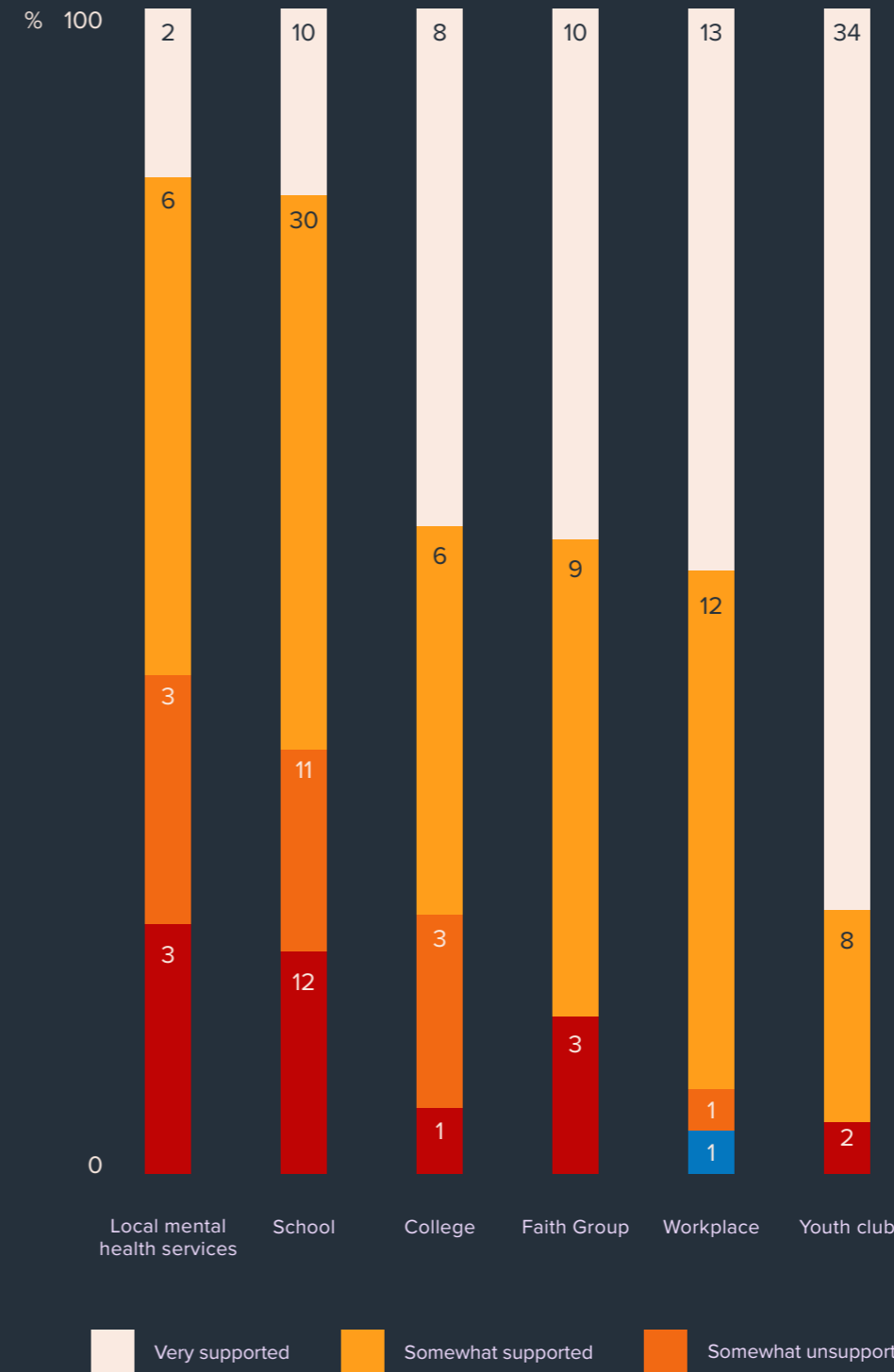
Most young people found it 'very easy' or 'somewhat easy' to access reliable information about Covid-19, whilst around a fifth found it 'somewhat difficult' or 'very difficult'



Over half of young people, (56% (n=55)) reported that they 'often' or 'sometimes' came across fake or unreliable news in relation to Covid-19:



# SUPPORT PROVIDED TO YOUNG PEOPLE DURING THE PANDEMIC



**Of young people who were accessing the services shown in this chart, they felt most supported by youth clubs.**

Young people were offered support during the pandemic by a range of youth services, including their schools and colleges, youth clubs, faith groups, workplaces and local mental health services.

Of these services, young people most frequently felt 'very supported' by their youth clubs; the service which attracted the lowest proportion of people feeling 'very supported' was school.

Please note that the number of responses for each of these services was as follows: local mental health services (14); school (63); college (18); faith group (22); workplace (27) and youth club (44).



**Youth workers suggested that one of the main ways in which Covid-19 impacted young people was that all community clubs e.g. youth clubs and after-school clubs were closed.**

One youth worker explained that when the second lockdown began, young people “really did not want the club to shut and wanted physical contact to stay... they wanted to be able to be away from family for a few hours”.

When asked how support provided to them during the pandemic could have been improved, young people identified the following:

“Outreach could be better to individuals”

**More frequent contact and improved methods of communication in particular using one-on-one communication and face-to-face support where possible**

“Encourage teachers to keep contact and some more physical or face-to-face direct support”

“More time for individuals rather than groups”

**Better enforcement of Covid-19 regulations when attending schools and youth clubs**

“More guidance on social distancing within school and more enforcement”

“By them managing the 2m rule better and wearing a mask more often”

**Improved support with the home environment and their financial situation**

“Ensure that everyone has a stable home environment”

“Extension of the furlough scheme and greater job security/guarantee for the future”

**More and better organised online lessons and remote learning from school, including more regular check-ups and support e.g. with mental health and completing work**

“If they had checked up more on our mental health and schoolwork”

“Make sure we are actually doing the work”

“Planning the working at home better”

# HOPES FOR THE

# F U T U R E

Although lockdown is still ongoing, young people were asked how they hoped things would change in their community following the outbreak of Covid-19, responses included:<sup>8</sup>

## **Bring the community together and encourage people to support each other**

*“People will be more willing to help each other out and show compassion to each other”*

*“Bring the community together by finding new ways of collaborating and working together”*

## **For things to go back to normal, services to reopen and socialising to be allowed**

*“I hope that things go back to normal and that there will be more opportunities for the less fortunate, or for the young people that have lost out on things over the course of 2020”*

*“Hopefully after this lockdown that we have now, things will go back to normal”*

*“I hope we will be able to see each other whether inside or outside and be able to hug”*

## **For there to be sustained health measures and hygiene awareness**

*“I hope people will start being more careful and acknowledging the risks they put others in by not abiding by the Covid safety rules”*

*“I want people to wear masks properly so that the spread is lessened”*

*“I really hope it changes because no one really follows the government’s rules seriously”*



<sup>9</sup> ONS (2020) <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/ageing/articles/coronavirusandthesocialimpactsonyoungpeopleingreatbritain/3aprilto10may2020>

<sup>10</sup> LG Inform, <https://lginform.local.gov.uk/search>

<sup>11</sup> Pupils with SEN with a statement of SEN or EHCP

<sup>12</sup> The Sutton Trust quoted in Institute of Health Equity (2020) <http://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/resources-reports/build-back-fairer-the-covid-19-marmot-review/build-back-fairer-the-covid-19-marmot-review-executive-summary.pdf> p.32

<sup>13</sup> ES (2019) [https://www.employment-studies.co.uk/system/files/resources/files/532\\_2.pdf](https://www.employment-studies.co.uk/system/files/resources/files/532_2.pdf) p.16

<sup>14</sup> City of Westminster, Hardship Overview, 11 December 2020.

<sup>15</sup> Resolution Foundation (2020) <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/publications/young-workers-in-the-coronavirus-crisis/>

<sup>16</sup> Both examples from the Health Foundation (2020) <https://www.health.org.uk/publications/long-reads/generation-covid-19>

<sup>17</sup> City of Westminster Hardship Overview, 11 December 2020.

<sup>18</sup> City of Westminster Hardship Overview, 11 December 2020.

<sup>19</sup> Information provided by Westminster City Council

<sup>20</sup> St James's (49%) has been excluded from this table. It is the unexpected anomaly of the wards, where the vast majority of young people are thought to be students - it is likely that the high rates are caused by the population base being undercounted (City of Westminster Hardship Overview, 11 December 2020).

<sup>21</sup> Data provided by Westminster City Council

<sup>22</sup> WCC, 2017

# LIFE PLANS



## EDUCATION, TRAINING & EMPLOYMENT

### Young people's experiences in education, training and employment have a range of wider impacts e.g. on their wellbeing, finances and self-esteem.

During Covid-19, young people have faced periods of being unable to attend school, college or university. Most young people who reported an impact of Covid-19 on schools or universities expressed concerns about the uncertainty over exams and qualifications (58%), the quality of education being affected (46%) and a move to home-schooling (18%).<sup>9</sup>

Prior to the pandemic, Westminster's rate of fixed period exclusions from school for the whole school population (6.28%) was around 60% higher than the London average (3.98%).<sup>10</sup> A higher proportion of pupils with SEN<sup>11</sup> in Westminster were excluded from school (7.92%) than the whole school population (6.28%). However, Westminster has a lower rate of fixed period exclusions amongst pupils with SEN (7.92%) than pupils with SEN across London (12.15%).

Apprenticeships, which are important in reducing inequalities in work and income, have been significantly impacted by Covid-19 – by May 2020 fewer than 40% of apprenticeships were continuing as normal.<sup>12</sup> Prior to the outbreak of Covid-19 in early 2020, young people experienced negative effects of a labour market still recovering from the 2008 economic crisis such as higher unemployment, lower pay growth and increasing offers of precarious work.<sup>13</sup> Overall, Westminster's youth unemployment rate is below average in the capital, with 23 boroughs experiencing higher levels.<sup>14</sup> However, during the pandemic younger workers have experienced "the brunt of the hit to jobs and pay, with the very youngest in the most challenging position" - one-third of 18-24 year-old employees (excluding students) have lost jobs or been furloughed, compared to one-in-six adults aged 25-64.<sup>15</sup>

Impacts on employment during the pandemic have not affected all young people equally, for example:<sup>16</sup>

- Young people from a minority ethnic background were more than twice as likely to be out of work since lockdown than their peers, with 12.8% reporting to have lost their jobs

- Young people in lower-income households were the most likely to have lost employment or have had their hours cut at 8%.<sup>17</sup>

With students removed from the data, the likely levels of unemployment for young people seeking work in Westminster are 12%, double the rate for adults aged 25-49. Claimant count trends from Spring 2019 onwards show that the unemployment rate for these young people has disproportionately worsened compared to other age groups.<sup>18</sup> The number of young people who are unemployed in Westminster has more than tripled, going from 450 young people in December 2019 to 1,560 in December 2020.<sup>19</sup>

Youth unemployment is not equally distributed across the borough, with higher rates being found in the North of Westminster.<sup>20</sup> In areas with long-standing high deprivation levels, up to one in four young people are out of work:<sup>21</sup>

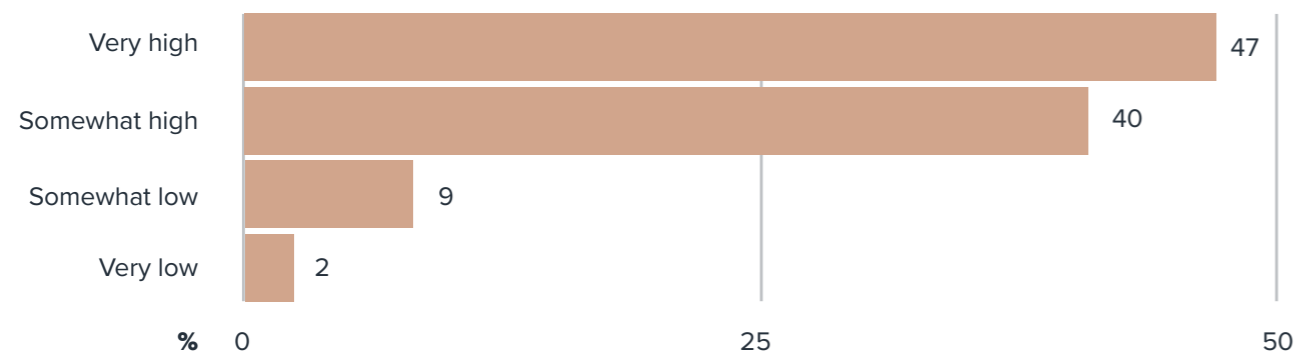
Ward	% of 18 to 24s seeking work who are unemployed
Church Street	25%
Harrow Road	24%
Queen's Park	24%
Westbourne	20%
Maida Vale	16%
Churchill	15%
Little Venice	15%
Bayswater	15%
<b>Westminster</b>	<b>11%</b>

Confidence is cited as a significant barrier to young people achieving their full potential; 54% of young people nationally believe a lack of self-confidence holds them back, and this is consistent with views held in Westminster.<sup>22</sup>

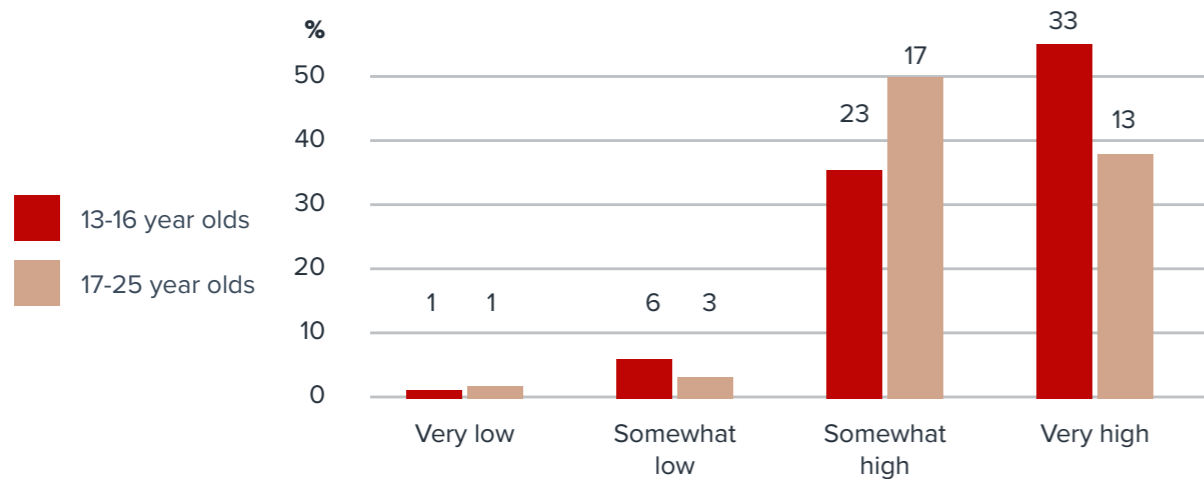
# PRESSURE TO ACHIEVE EDUCATION, TRAINING & EMPLOYMENT SUCCESS

Young people in Westminster experience pressure to achieve education, training and employment success. Almost half (48%, n=47) of interviewees rated this level of pressure as 'very high'. Another 41% (n=47) rated this at 'somewhat high'. Only 2% (n=2) of young people rated the pressure as 'very low':

89% of young people rated the level of pressure young people experience to achieve education, training or employment success as 'somewhat high' or 'very high'



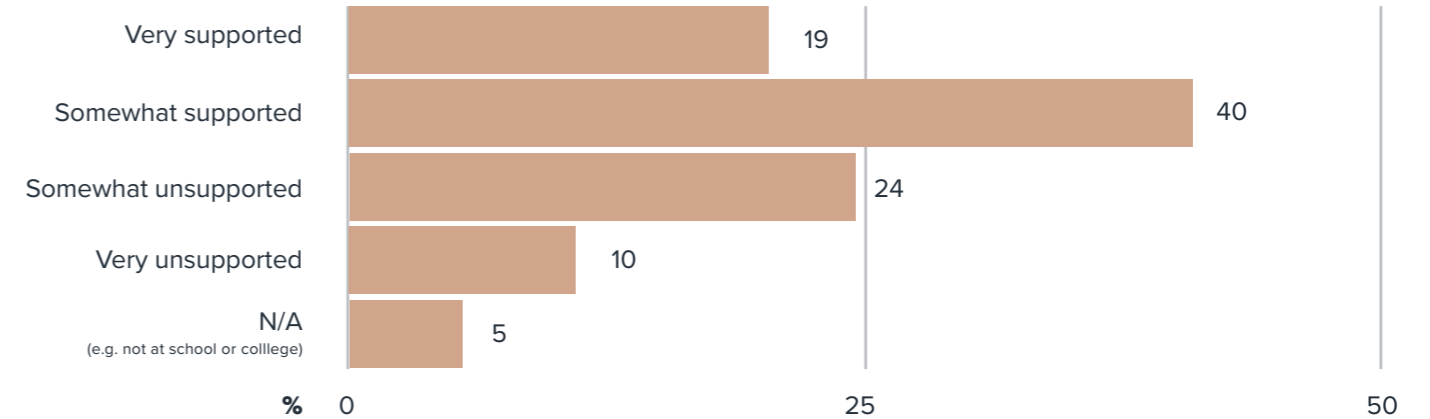
A higher proportion of 13-16 year olds (52%) rated the level of pressure young people experience to achieve education, training or employment success as 'very high' compared to 17-25 year olds (38%)



# SUPPORT TO MAKE EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT-RELATED DECISIONS

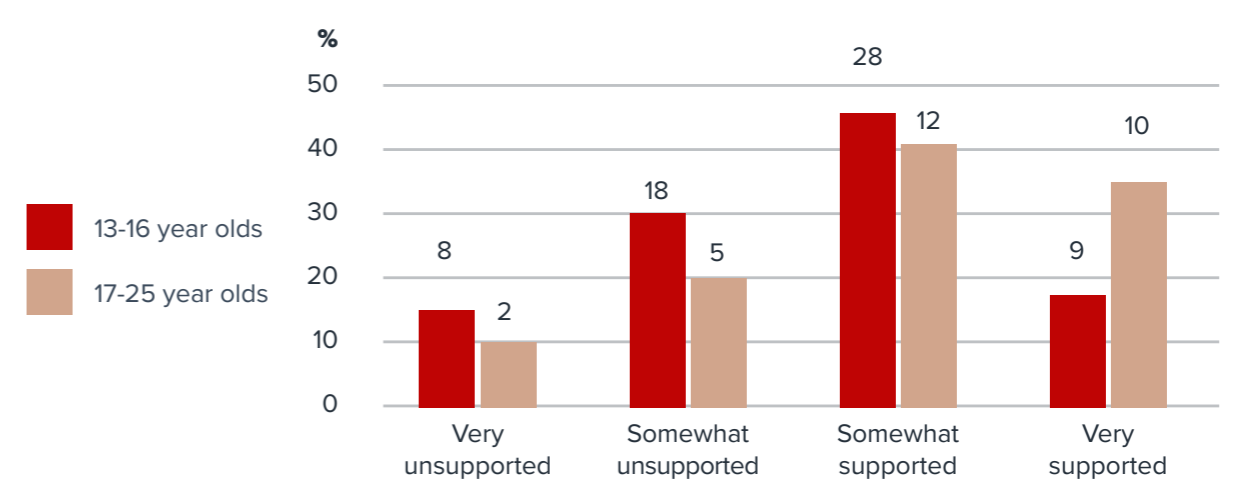
Given high levels of pressure experienced by young people to achieve education and career success, it is important that young people are receiving adequate support to understand their education and training options and to plan their future careers. Although most (60%, n=59) young people reported that they felt 'very supported' or 'somewhat supported', one in ten (10% n=10) young people reported that they feel 'very unsupported' by their school or college to make decisions about their education, training or employment:

10% of young people felt very unsupported at school or college to make decisions about their education, training or employment



Of those attending school or college, the older age group felt more supported to make education, training and employment-related decisions:

Only 14% of 13-16 year olds felt very supported at school or college compared to 34% of 17-25 year olds



When asked how support offered by school or college on education, training and employment could be improved, young people provided a range of suggestions including:

*“Be direct with students about suitability for different courses which may be too hard or beyond a student’s capacity.”*

*“Less pressure on students to go for ambitious academic roles when there is evidence of not enough capacity (parental pressure can often force young people into the wrong route).”*

### Provide more advice on jobs/sectors that young people are actively interested in

including vocational routes, and tailor this support to the capability and suitability of the young people

### More sessions that explore a variety of education and training options; and routes to identified careers

e.g. by bringing in people to speak about their careers

### Highlight the impact that GCSE and A-Level choices can have on future career options

from early on so young people are able to make informed choices about their subjects

### Provide information about possible opportunities

e.g. work experience, mentoring programmes

### More one-to-one time and informal conversations with staff members about career choices

### Provide financial capability advice including information on wages, taxes and student finance

*“School doesn’t teach you about that - taxes and everything. We aren’t prepared for the real world.”*

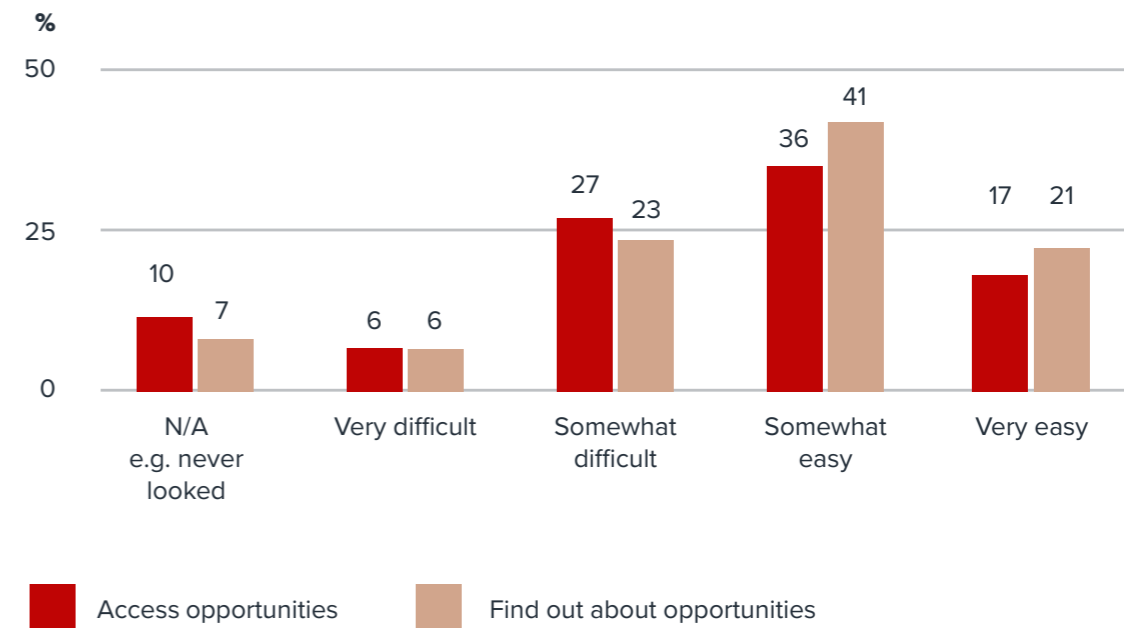
*“More information on the school websites and tell you about finance management.”*

*“[They] don’t teach us about finances and about what to do after school.”*

# ACCESSING OPPORTUNITIES

Young people were positive about their ability to find out about and access opportunities. Most young people felt that it would be either ‘very easy’ or ‘somewhat easy’ to find out about (63%, n=62) or access (56%, n=53) education, training and employment opportunities. However, around a third of young people felt that it would be ‘very difficult’ or ‘somewhat difficult’ to find out about (29%, n=29) or access (34%, n=33) opportunities:

Young people most frequently felt it would be ‘somewhat easy’ to find out about and access education, training and employment opportunities



**When asked how to improve information about and access to education, training and employment opportunities, young people suggested:**

**More advertising of education, training and employment opportunities** (including work experience placements) e.g. using social media; developing a website that collates opportunities and is easy to browse through; schools sending out newsletters or emails.

**More sessions on education, training and employment opportunities at school** e.g. workshops or discussions in assemblies that cover less common career paths.

Ensure that there is a **careers advisor in school to offer one-to-one support** for young people on how to access and make use of relevant opportunities. If there is not a careers advisor, ensure that other staff members are able to support students

**School to facilitate work experience opportunities** and ensure that there are options for a diverse range of interests and that students are given opportunities that are relevant to them

Lack of work opportunities & part time work for young people, particularly paid roles

Lack of skills-building & development opportunities

Limited support into apprenticeships compared to university & higher education

Unclear avenues of how to get into specific career pathways

Lack of support for those on the verge of exclusion

Limited resources available for teachers & schools to support young people to access opportunities

Lack of equal access to opportunities amongst:

- Young LGBTQ+ people, in particular trans people
- Young people with no recourse to public funds
- Young people with mental health issues.

## Youth workers reported these as the main issues relating to accessing education, training and employment opportunities faced by young people

Youth workers suggested that information and support needed to identify and access education, training or employment related opportunities for young people was limited and could be improved by having more careers advisors within youth services, particularly to offer practical and specialist support to those young people who do not know what they want to do. The importance of informal support and opportunities was also mentioned. One youth worker explained that tailored support is available to help looked after children and care leavers to access education, employment and training opportunities, however

it would be beneficial to have a central location or website for this information so that young people could access it independently.

*Youth workers also spoke of digital poverty and how this was impacting the ability of young people to access education:*

**“Covid-19 has very badly impacted the children who we are working with... [Schools] are delivering online tuition, but many of the families didn't register for online learning for various reasons. Some [weren't] confident that online learning would work with young children. Some [didn't] have [the] proper equipment or facilities e.g. email, PC, printer etc.”**

**Westminster Youth Practitioner**



# YOUTH VOICE & ACTION



## CONTEXT

2020 saw youth action on a range of political and social issues, from Covid-19 to the Black Lives Matter protests.

**Nationally, research has shown that “young people are feeling more motivated than ever” to make a positive change for their future:<sup>23</sup>**

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 this year have made them want to fight for a better future

Young people cite Black Lives Matter as the issue they have been most motivated by over the past year (25%).

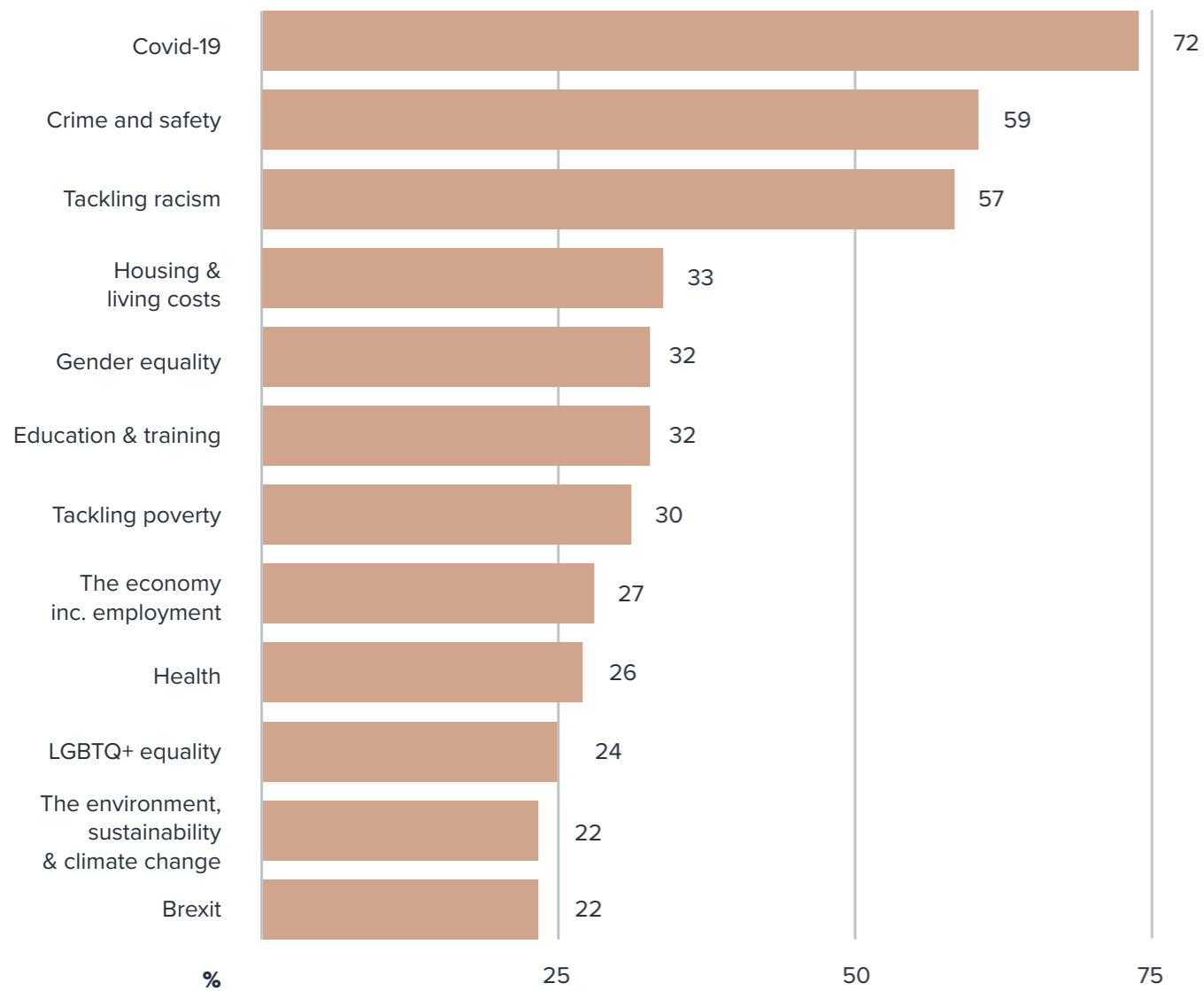
<sup>23</sup> All statistics from The Prince's Trust Tesco Youth Index (2021)  
<https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/about-the-trust/news-views/tesco-youth-index-2021>



# SOCIAL & POLITICAL ISSUES

When asked about the social and political issues they were most concerned about, almost three quarters (74%, n=72) of young people in Westminster cited Covid-19. The other two main issues mentioned by over 50% of young people were crime and safety (61%, n=59) and tackling racism (59%, n=57):

Almost three quarters (74%) of young people identified Covid-19 as one of the social and political issues they were most concerned about



When asked which social and political issues seem to matter most to young people, suggestions from youth workers included:

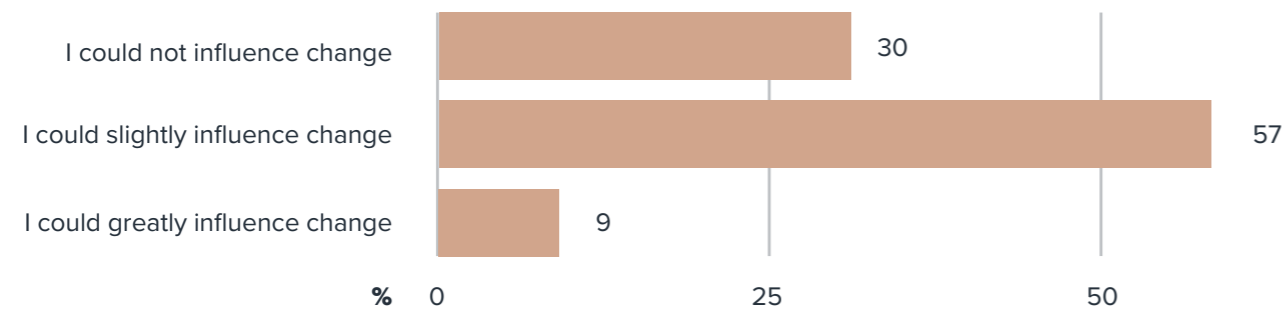
Tackling racism, including the Black Lives Matter movement	Fighting for equality and reducing discrimination against and oppression of minorities	Providing more support to the most vulnerable in society
The environment	Covid-19	Local issues that will affect young people and their families.

BLM

# INFLUENCING CHANGE

Young people generally do not feel empowered to influence change. Fewer than one in ten (9%, n=9) felt that could greatly influence change in relation to the social and political issues that they care about. Almost a third (31%, n=30) of young people felt that they could not influence change at all:

31% of young people felt that they could not have an influence in creating change in the social and political issues that matter to them



It was emphasised that looked after children and care leavers should be provided with platforms to share their views and influence changes:

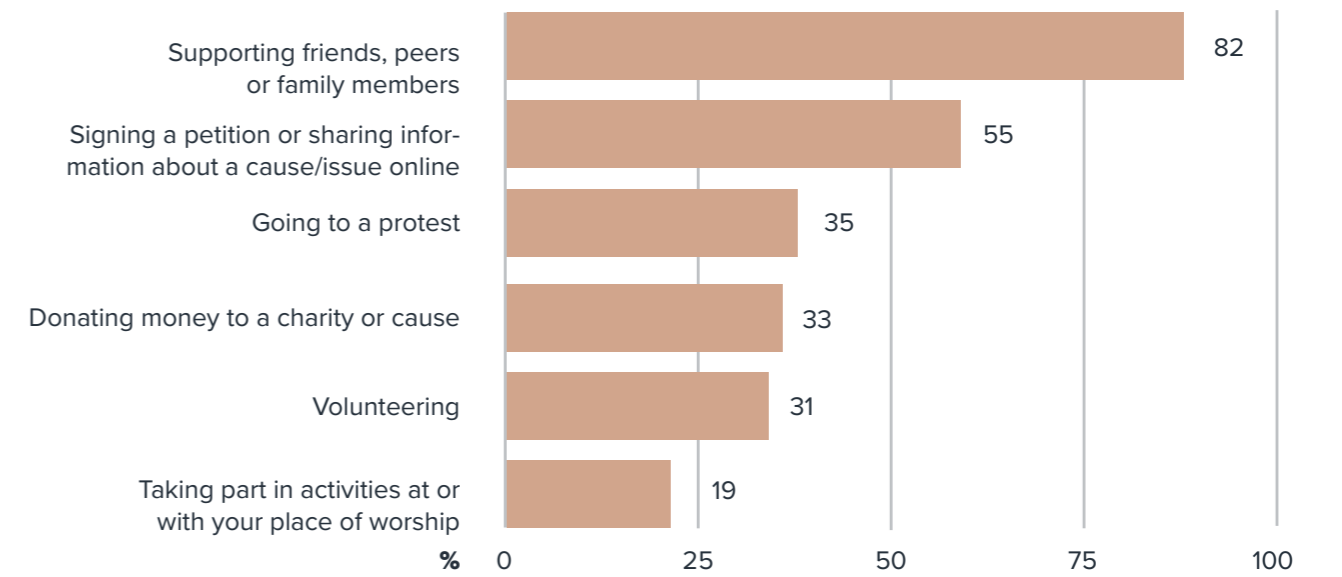
**“For looked after children and care leavers the importance of ensuring they are receiving the right services and support from the wider local authority is what matters. Being given the opportunity to make effective changes and being given platforms for sharing their views is something young people have said is important to them.”**

**Westminster Youth Practitioner**

# PARTICIPATING IN YOUTH SOCIAL ACTION

Despite around a third of young people reporting they felt unable to influence social or political change, almost all (96%, n=94) of the young people interviewed had participated in social action in the past six months. The below graph details the types of social action that young people have engaged in:

Of the young people who participated in social action in the past six months, 87% had done this by supporting friends, peers or family members



27% of young people wanted to engage in new types of social action. Within this group, the following was sought:

**More opportunities to volunteer that are easy to find (e.g. through school, or through a local volunteering website) and specific to causes that young people care about**

*“More volunteering opportunities for a specific cause like BLM - more alertness about ways to help”*

*“Volunteering, if I had links or websites to join local volunteering groups”*

**A list of certified organisations that young people can support or donate money to, should they wish:**

*“Would like to donate money [to] certified reliable organisations that will make a change”*

**Protests that are more accessible e.g. safer and more Covid-secure.**

*“Going to a protest; safe in terms of coronavirus and knowing it is organised by a certified safe group”*

Youth workers provided ideas on how the influence that young people have on social and political issues that matter to them could be improved:

**Include young people in decision making**  
e.g. on committees and act on their contributions

**Support for young people on how to advocate for issues that they care about**

**Provision of role models for young people**

**Dedicated time at school on youth voice and action**

**Encourage young people to vote**

**More local networking events to connect young people interested in similar social and political issues**

**Improved feedback loops so young people can understand the impact that their social action is having.**



## CONTEXT

Mental health and emotional wellbeing can be affected by various factors such as living in poverty, negative influences of social media and the pressures and challenges of everyday life.<sup>24</sup> Young people from the LGBTQ+ community and young people with SEND are more likely to experience mental ill health, including high rates of depression, self-harm and suicidality than their peers.<sup>25</sup> While mental health issues are common, current systems for addressing mental health problems are mixed in their effectiveness.

During the pandemic, clear links between characteristics and experiences in children and young people's lives and their mental health have been demonstrated. NHS Digital research has found that compared to children unlikely to have a mental health difficulties, it was more common for children and young people with a probable mental health difficulties also to<sup>26</sup>:

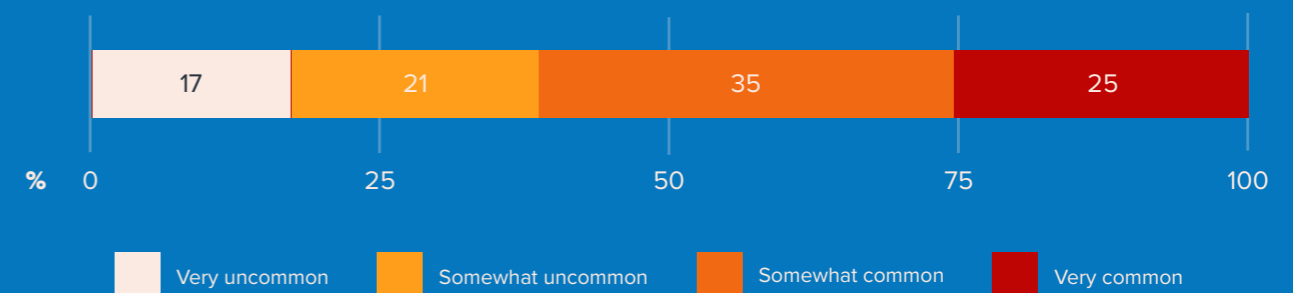
Have a parent with a higher level of psychological distress	Feel lonely	Say that the first national lockdown had made life worse	Live in a household falling behind with bills.	Worry about Covid-19 risks
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The ONS Opinions and Lifestyle Survey that has been monitoring social impacts of Covid-19 has found that young people are more likely than other age groups to report that lockdown has made their mental health worse. One in four young people feeling 'unable to cope with life' as a result of the pandemic, increasing to 40 per cent among those not in work, education or training (NEETs).<sup>27</sup> Young people (aged 16 to 29 years) were much more likely to report feeling lonely some of the time or occasionally than those aged 60 years and over and much less likely to report never feeling lonely.<sup>28</sup> High levels of severe mental health difficulties have resulted in one in four 17 year old's reporting having self harmed in the past 12 months. These figures are consistently higher amongst females (28%) compared to males (20%).<sup>29</sup>

## PREVALENCE OF AND CONCERNS ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

Young people in Westminster perceived mental health issues to be common amongst their peers. Over a quarter (26%, n=25) of young people felt that mental health issues were 'very common' amongst their peers, and over a third (36%, n=35) felt that mental health issues were 'somewhat common' amongst their peers. Less than a fifth (17%, n=17) of young people felt that mental health issues were 'very uncommon' amongst their peers:

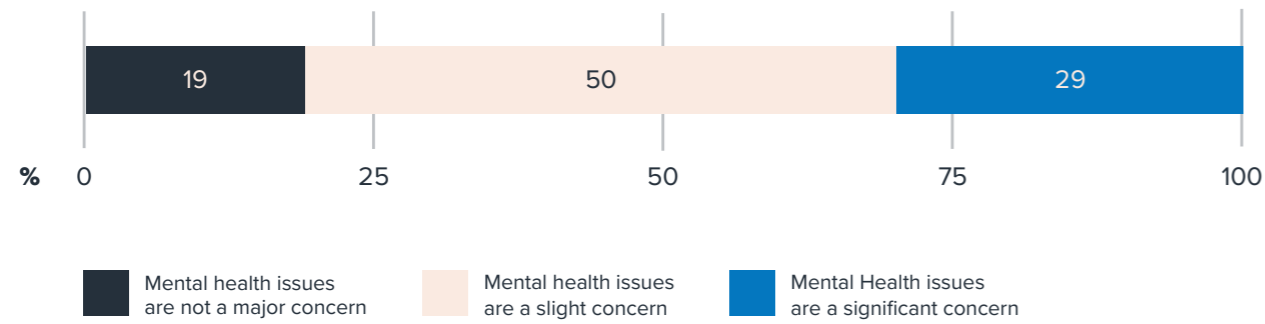
Over 60% of young people felt that mental health issues were either 'somewhat common' or 'very common' amongst their peers



24 Healthwatch (2019)  
 25 YWF, 2017; Westminster City Council, 2018.  
 26 Public Health England (2020) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-mental-health-and-wellbeing-surveillance-report/7-children-and-young-people>  
 27 The Prince's Trust, Tesco Youth Index (2021) <https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/about-the-trust/news-views/tesco-youth-index-2021>  
 28 All findings from ONS 2020 <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/ageing/articles/coronavirusandthesocialimpactsoneyoungpeopleingreatbritain/3aprilto10may2020#impacts-on-well-being>  
 29 UCL Millennium Cohort Study (2020) <https://cls.ucl.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Mental-ill-health-at-age-17-%E2%80%93-CLS-briefing-paper-%E2%80%93-93-website.pdf>

A third of young people (30%, n=29) felt that mental health issues were a 'significant concern amongst their peers'. More frequently (51%, n=50), young people identified mental health issues amongst their peers as being a 'slight concern':

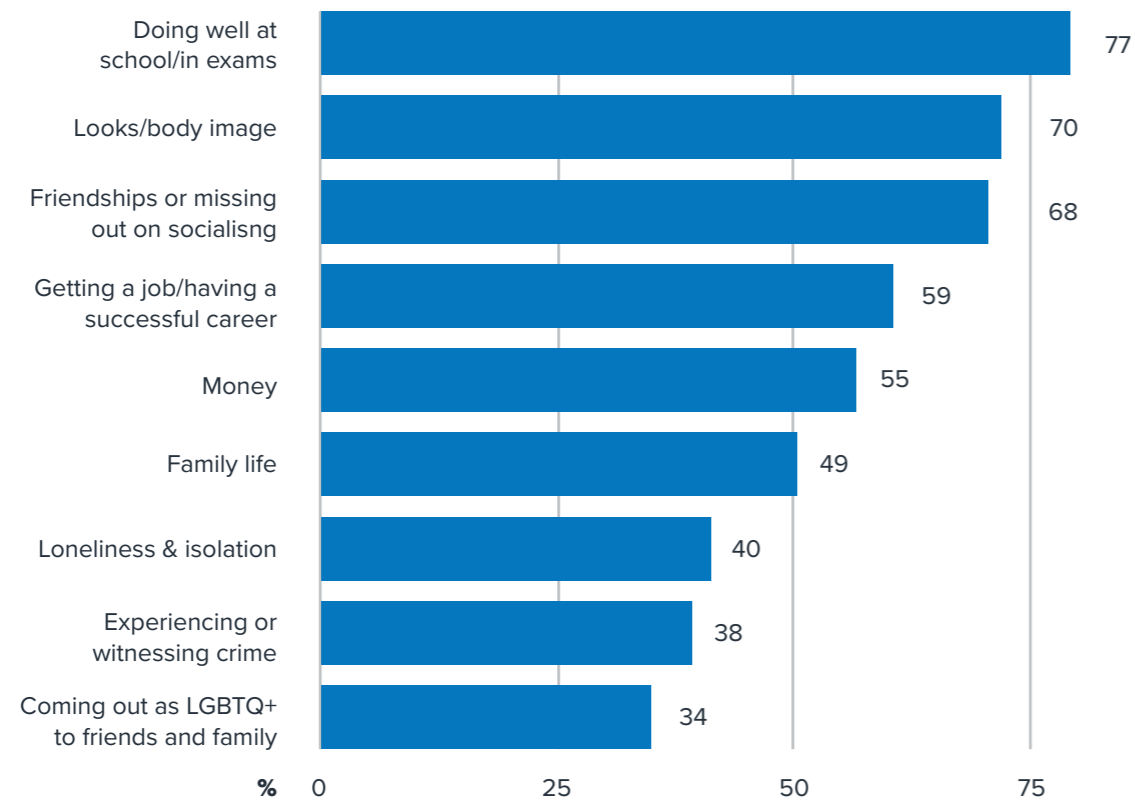
A third of young people felt that mental health issues were a significant concern amongst their peers



## FACTORS IMPACTING MENTAL HEALTH

Young people most frequently identified doing well at school and in exams (79%, n=77) as their main worry. Other factors identified as worries by over 50% of young people included 'looks or body image' (71%, n=70), 'friendships or missing out on socialising' (69%, n=68), 'getting a job or having a successful career' (60%, n=59), 'money' (56%, n=55) and 'family life' (50%, n=49):

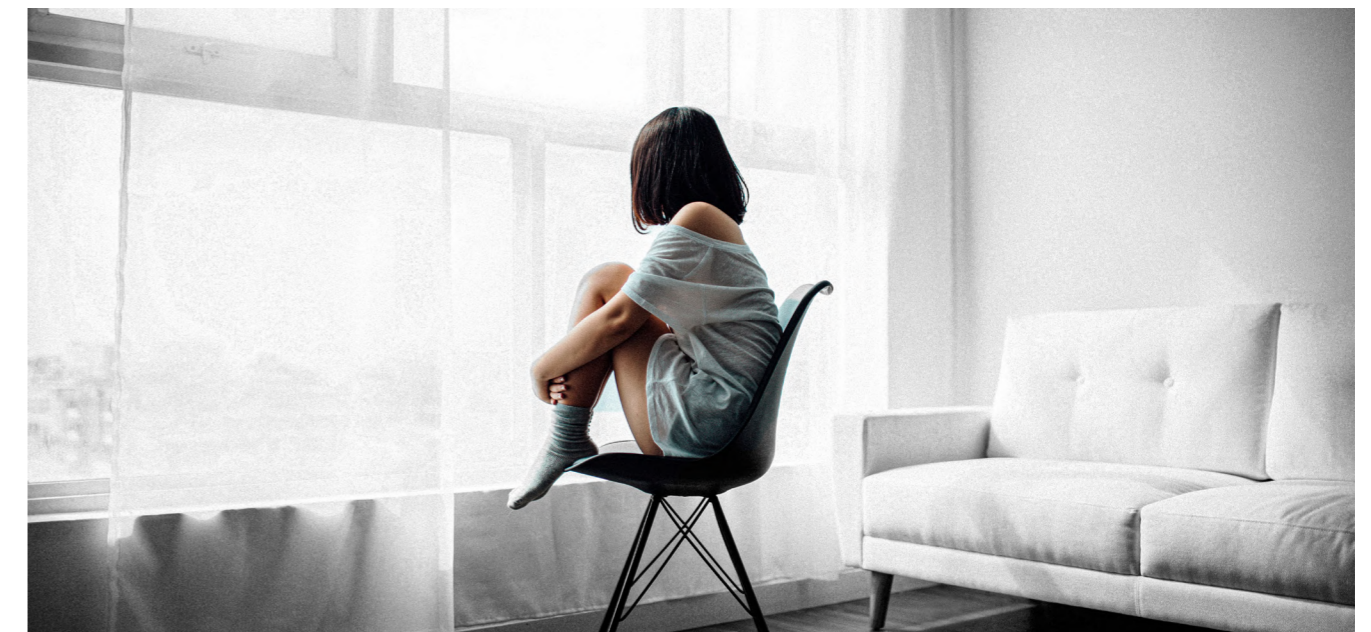
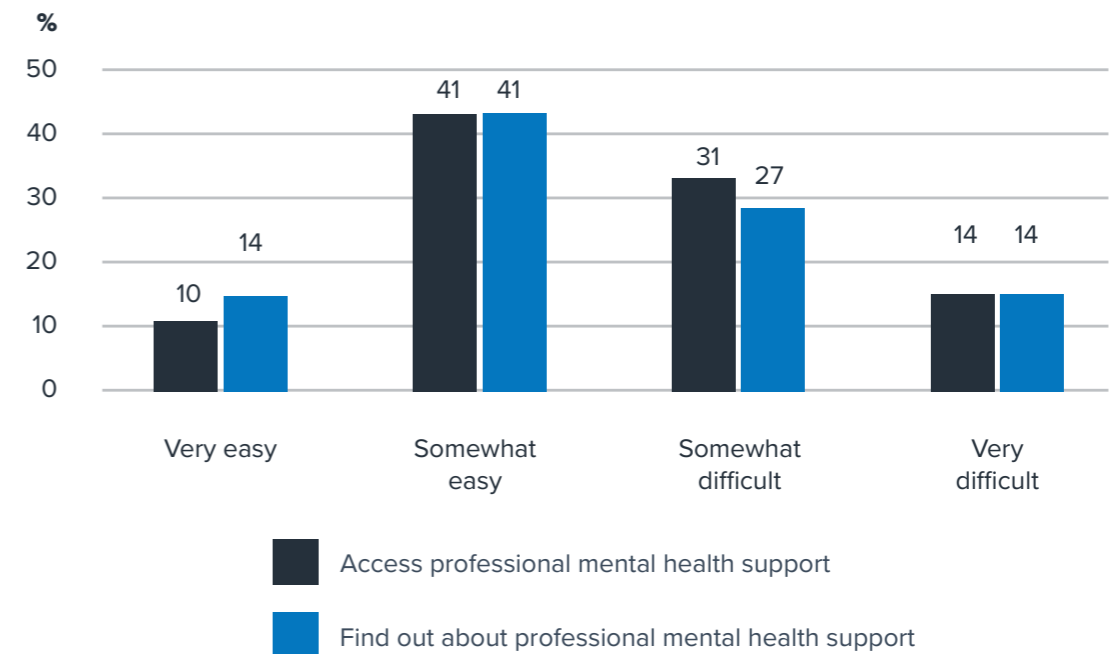
Doing well at school or in exams was most commonly identified as one of the main worries for young people



## ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

A small proportion of Westminster's young people felt that it would be 'very easy' to find out about and access mental health support should they need it. Young people most commonly (43%, n=41) thought that it would be 'somewhat easy' to both find out and access mental health services. Youth workers felt that there is good advertising of mental health support both through posters and online, though acknowledged that knowledge of these services is dependent on young people's support networks.

43% of young people felt it would be somewhat easy to both find out about and access professional mental health support in their local area if they needed to



Young people provided suggestions on how their ability to find out about and access professional mental health support in their local areas could be improved. Ideas included:

*"Social media needs to be used more to put services out there"*

*"Advertising, more confidentiality"*

**Raising awareness of professional mental health services through using more advertising via leafleting and social media. Within this, make sure to inform young people that these services are confidential**

*"Making it less of a stigma"*

*"More information on mental health services, people have a stigma of mental health services and are less open to communicating with strangers"*

*"Increase acceptance of mental health issues – destigmatise"*

**Destigmatising mental health support**

**Encouraging schools to talk more about mental health support and teach young people about what relevant services are available. One young person also suggested that schools should offer more internal mental health support**

*"Making the process more efficient, there can be a huge delay which disrupts the accessing of a service"*

*"Making contact easier, having walk-in centres, picking up the phone and responding quicker"*

**Ensure that the process of applying for mental health support is made easier and more efficient to avoid putting young people off applying and to reduce delays between applications and appointments**

*"Allowing more services to be free"*

*"[Make it] free of charge"*

**Make more free mental health support available for young people so they can access it without having to worry about money.**

# PHYSICAL & SEXUAL HEALTH



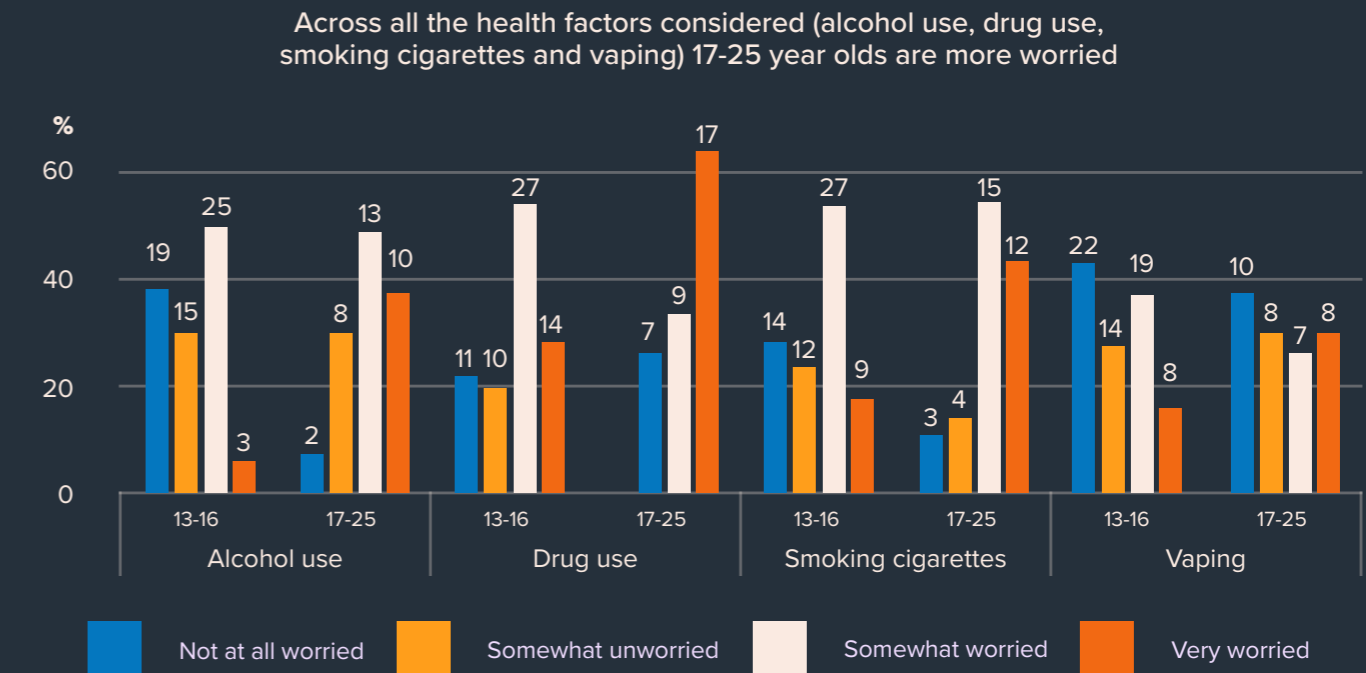
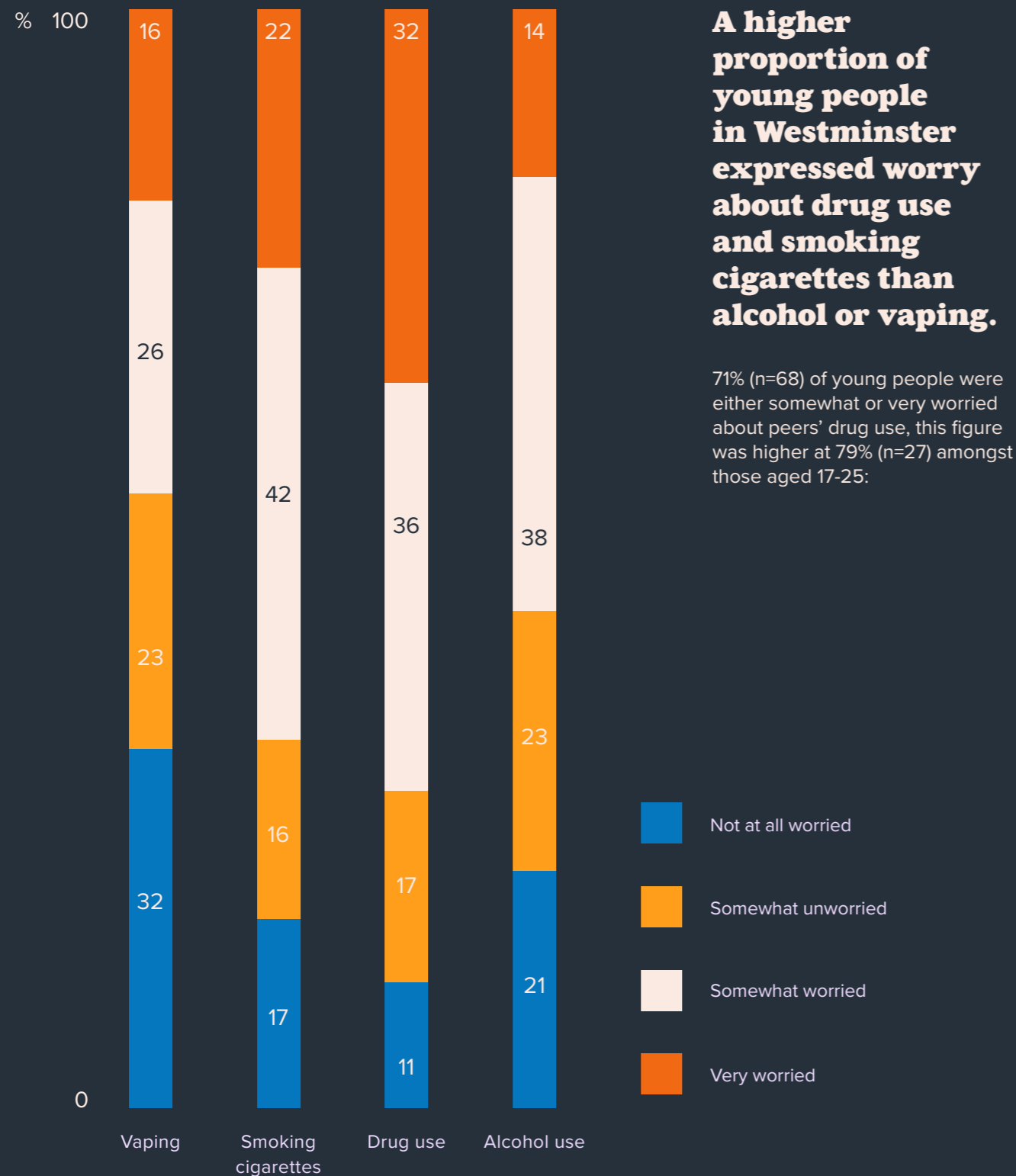
## CONTEXT

London has one of the highest rates of childhood obesity of any major city and in Westminster, obesity is a cause for concern particularly in young people aged 10-11 (WCC, 2017). According to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (2017) dental health (all age groups), physical activity, sexual health, and pregnancy are all major physical health concerns which affect the wellbeing of a young person. In the case of sexually transmitted infection, the Westminster count was significantly worse than the England average (WCC, 2017). The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) also observed an important information gap on the health and wellbeing needs of 18-25 years age group with a particular focus on eating disorders, care leavers, substance misuse and sexual health.

There has been a reducing trend in young people using drugs, consuming alcohol and smoking cigarettes in the UK. Despite this, “young people who drink alcohol are more likely to take drugs, practise unsafe sex, be involved in road accidents, and do less well at school”.<sup>30</sup> The most common drug young people consume is cannabis along with the increased use of e-cigarettes (vapes) since 2014 in the UK (Hansard, 2019). The YWF needs analysis (2017) found that the most common reasons for taking drugs and alcohol were fun (24%), stress (20%), and peer pressure (15%).

<sup>30</sup> Annual Public Health Report, 2017-2018 by Westminster Council

# DRUGS, VAPING, SMOKING AND ALCOHOL



## IMPROVING PHYSICAL HEALTH

When asked if there were any activities, services or information that young people would like to gain access to that could help to improve their physical health, suggestions included:

- More accessible and affordable gyms
- More outdoor sports activities and facilities in parks
- Group activities for exercise that would typically be done alone e.g. cycling and going to the gym
- Increased offer of specific sports e.g. boxing, basketball and yoga for young people
- Increased awareness of physical health and the connection it has with mental health e.g. via school and information provided by community and activity centres.



# INFORMATION AND ADVICE ABOUT SEX AND RELATIONSHIPS<sup>31</sup>

Young people most frequently felt that the information and advice they had received about sex and relationships was somewhat helpful (52%), 19% found that it was 'very helpful'. Almost a quarter (24%) of young people found the information and advice they had received to be 'not at all helpful' (9%) or 'somewhat unhelpful' (15%). 6% of young people had not received any information or advice in this area.

It was felt that information and advice about sex and relationships was not tailored to young people's needs e.g.:

*"They have the wrong idea of what we need help with so it's bad and it just makes everyone uncomfortable. They could try talking about issues that actually affect us now and not things that will affect us when we are 16"*

Young people provided a range of suggestions of how the information and advice they have received about sex and relationships could be improved. These included:

- Offer more sessions, workshops and discussions on sex and relationships in schools and youth clubs
- Making advice relevant to young people to increase engagement including adapting advice to different groups of young people depending on their needs and sensitivities e.g. consider religious needs
- Teaching about sex and relationships in a realistic manner in terms of how it will impact young people's lives, rather than just the science relating to sex. Suggestions including teaching young people about the benefits and risks of sex; talking through realistic scenarios and evaluating them; and discussing how to spot signs of emotional abuse:

*"They could teach us about the risks and the benefits"*

*"Make it more personal and not just about sex, give real life scenarios"*

*"It could've been improved in school by not teaching the science stuff and start teaching kids the reality of it"*

*"Discuss things beyond science (like rights, what emotional abuse looks like etc..)"*

- Moving away from a focus on heterosexual relationships and spend more time teaching about LGBTQ+ relationships:

*"Focuses on straight relationships - more focus on LGBTQ+ relations in form time and curriculum"*

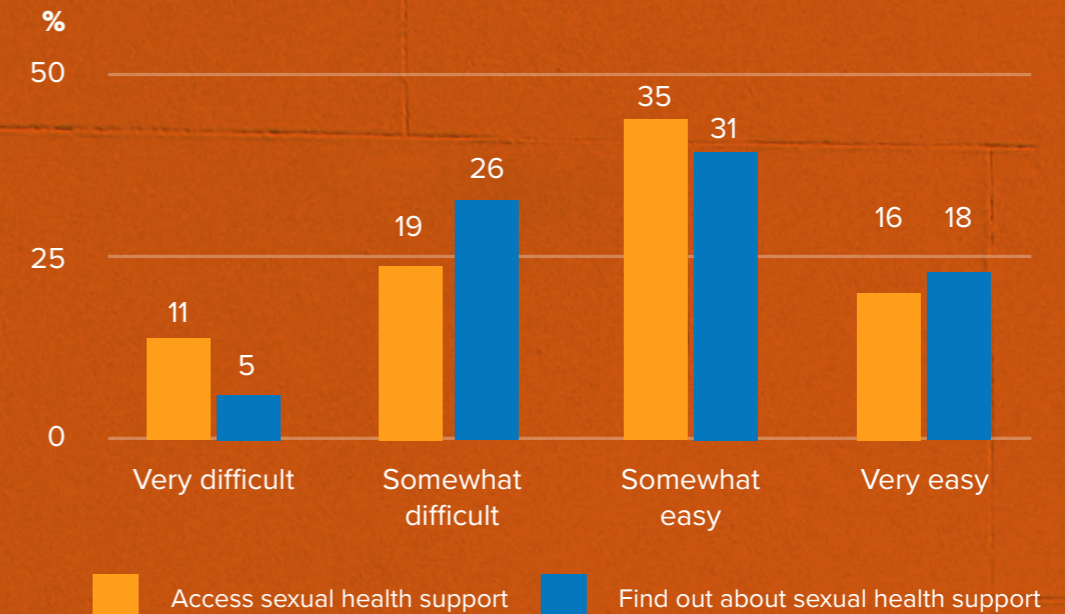
*"Sex education for the LGBTQ community at school"*

- Providing easy and free access to contraception through Westminster youth clubs.

<sup>31</sup> Questions on sexual health were optional, of the 98 interviewees, 81 chose to respond.

While young people most frequently felt it would be somewhat easy to find out about and access sexual health support, over a third of young people (37%, n=30) felt it would be somewhat or very difficult to access support:

Most young people felt that it would be 'somewhat easy' to find out about and access sexual health support in their local area if they needed to



# COMMUNITY & SPACES



## LIVING IN WESTMINSTER AND LOCAL SERVICES

### CONTEXT

The City of Westminster encompasses a diverse range of communities, industries, and many of London and the nation's landmark sites, including the West End, the seat of the UK Government, and top UK universities.<sup>32</sup> Westminster City Council's "City for All" strategy recognises its diverse population, central location, connectedness and assets which are available to individuals from across London and beyond.

Westminster is home to 24 museums, 56 theatres, and a World Heritage site, as well as 62 state schools and 36 independent schools.<sup>33</sup> A report by Westminster City Council reported on barriers to accessing culture which included reasons such as not knowing what is on; money e.g. unaffordable ticket prices and the expense of travel to events and cultural venues; distance and time to get these venues; and unwillingness or hesitancy to try out new things.<sup>34</sup> There are 70,995 young people in Westminster, 28% of the total population; 10% of these are 17-24, 6% are 11-16, 7% are 5-10% and 5% are under 5. There are 130 looked after children who are supported by Westminster City Council, 69 of which live in the borough, and 61 live elsewhere.<sup>35</sup> The child poverty rate in Westminster is 29%.<sup>36</sup>

Specific local services for young people include five Youth Hubs and the 100+ youth organisations who form the membership of the Young Westminster Foundation.<sup>37</sup> These Youth Hubs are:

- Amberley Youth Project (Future Men)
- Avenues Youth Project
- Churchill Gardens Youth Club (Future Men)
- Fourth Feathers Youth & Community Centre
- St Andrew's Club

Serving young people in specific localities across the borough, the Youth Hubs work together closely to shape the overall development of youth services

in Westminster as part of a model that champions innovation and collaboration. Through knowledge-sharing and local leadership, they bring together a diverse range of youth organisations, forging partnership opportunities and fostering a thriving community of practitioners who are ambitious for youth work. Driven by insight and the experiences of young people, Youth Hubs are supported to undertake projects that have a lasting impact on the quality of provisions for everyone growing up in Westminster.

Young Westminster Foundation and the Youth Hubs have signed up to the jointly developed Early Help Strategy 2019 – 2022.<sup>38</sup> This represents a commitment from all key organisations in Westminster to create an Early Help system which puts children and their families first and strives to create a joint response to emerging needs, so that resources are used to their best. The strategy is ambitious not only due to jointly agreed priorities, but also the behaviours that will be adopted across the 'system' to create sustained change and increased resilience for families.

There are over 22,000 low-income households in Westminster, and over a quarter of all children in Westminster live in housing dependent on housing or council tax benefits.<sup>39</sup> Studies conducted by the Westminster City Council and the Trust for London (2018) have identified Westminster to have the third-highest pay inequality of the 32 London boroughs, behind only Kensington and Chelsea.

<sup>32</sup> City of Westminster, City for All Vision and Strategy 2021/22.

<sup>33</sup> UK Government, Find and Compare Schools in England (2021), <https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/schools-by-type?step=default&table=schools&region=213&la-name=westminster&geographic=la&for=primary>

<sup>34</sup> Westminster City Council, Access to Culture: A Culture of Culture, [https://www.westminster.gov.uk/sites/default/files/access\\_to\\_culture\\_task\\_group\\_report.pdf](https://www.westminster.gov.uk/sites/default/files/access_to_culture_task_group_report.pdf)

<sup>35</sup> Information provided by Young Westminster Foundation, originally from WCC

<sup>36</sup> Trust for London, London's Poverty Profile 2020, <https://www.trustforlondon.org.uk/data/boroughs/westminster-poverty-and-inequality-indicators/>

<sup>37</sup> City of Westminster, City for All Vision and Strategy 2020/21, <https://indd.adobe.com/view/c421fd79-4525-4113-b829-6e3f57d1194e>

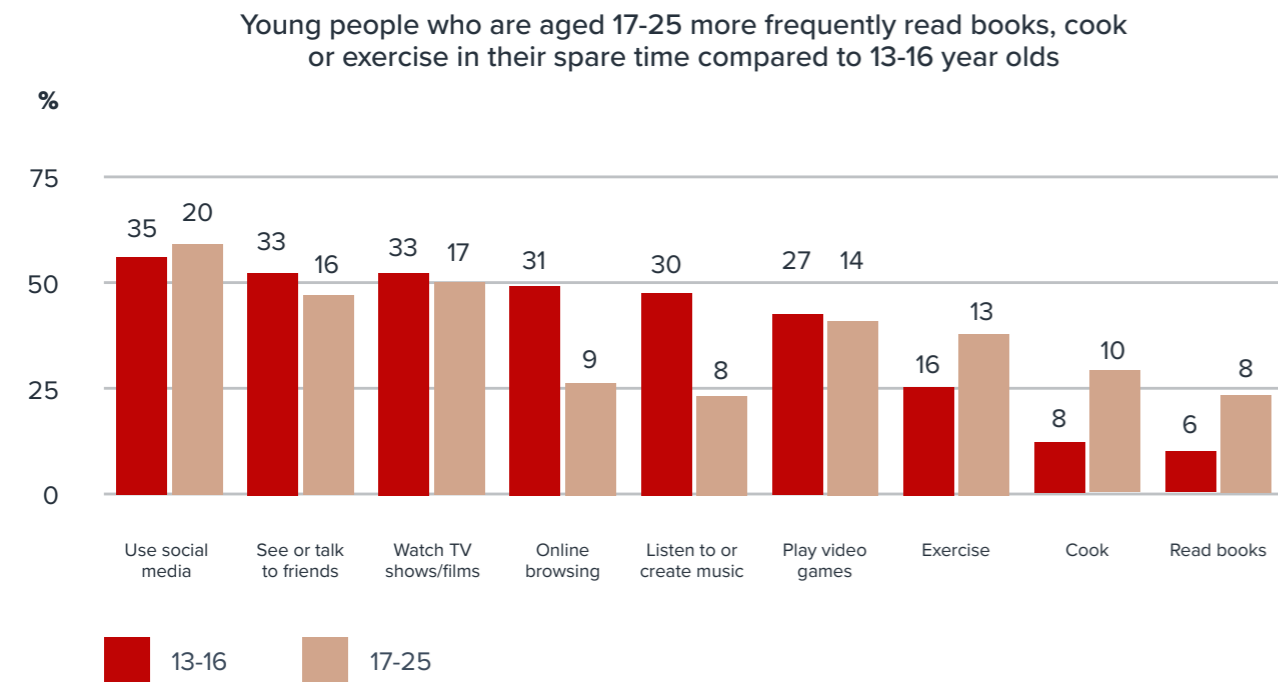
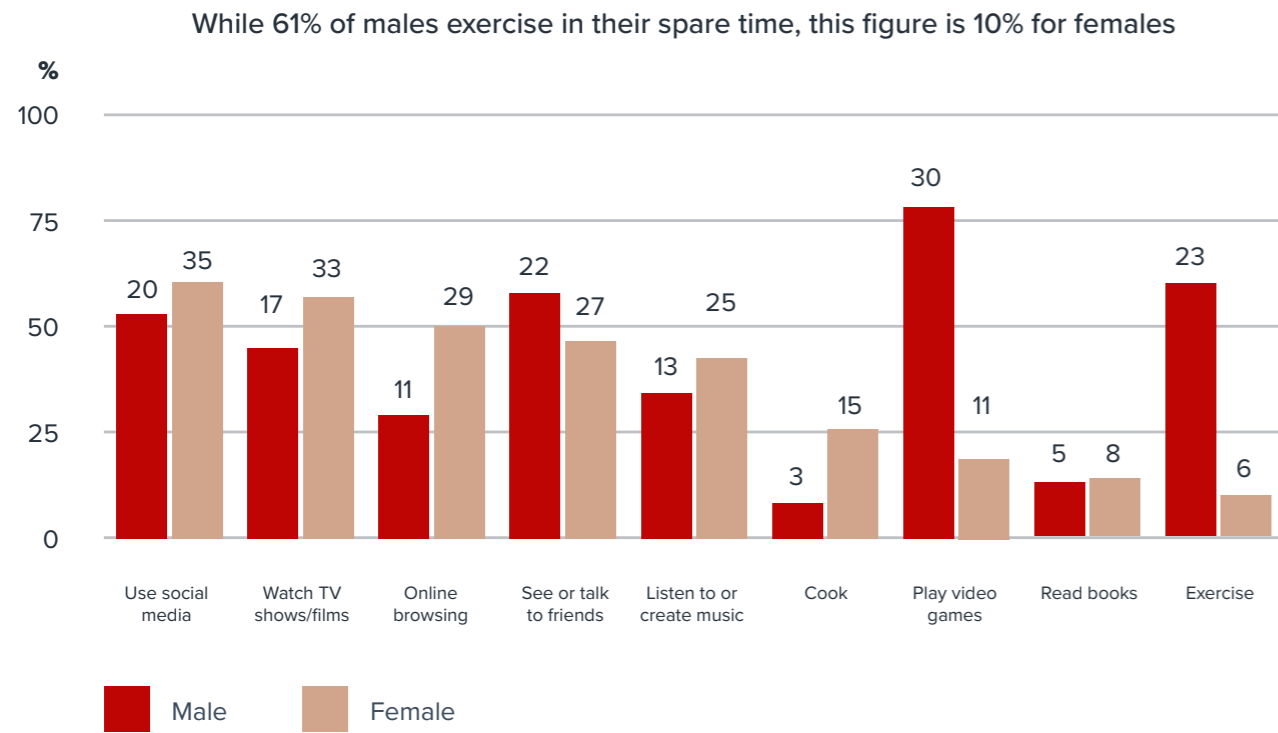
<sup>38</sup> Early help Strategy 2019-2022, [https://www.westminster.gov.uk/sites/default/files/early\\_help\\_strategy\\_2019\\_2022.pdf](https://www.westminster.gov.uk/sites/default/files/early_help_strategy_2019_2022.pdf)

<sup>39</sup> City of Westminster Hardship Overview, 11 December 2020

# YOUNG PEOPLE'S SPARE TIME

Young people in Westminster most frequently use social media (58%, n=56), watch TV shows or films (53%, n=51) and see or talk to friends (52%, n=50) in their spare time. These activities are all things that can take place virtually from home suggesting that responses may be impacted by Covid-19.

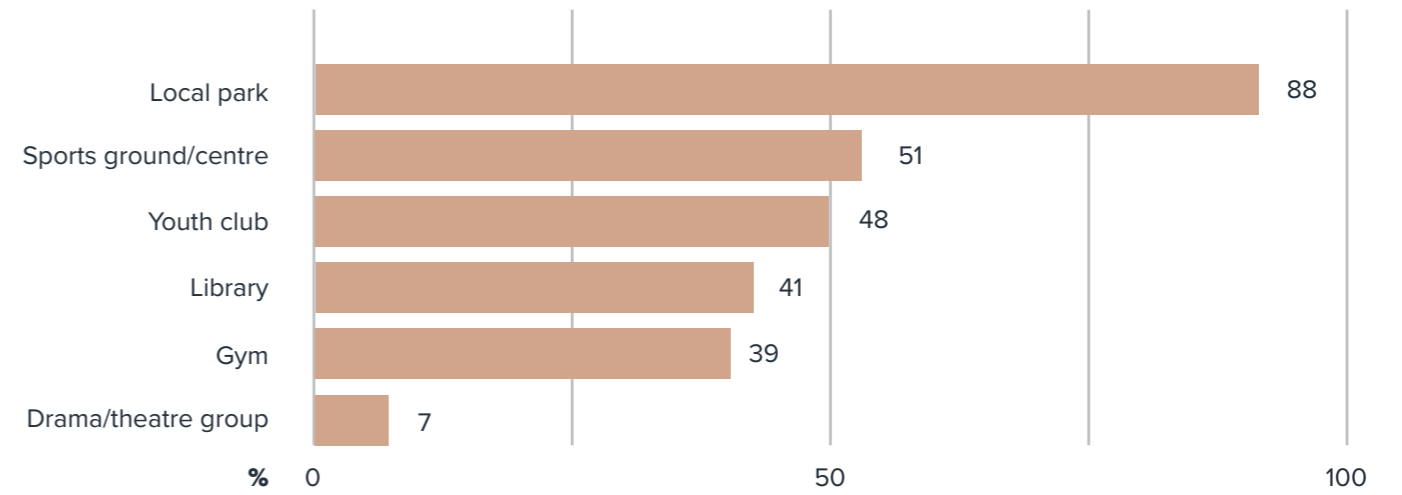
The following graphs show areas of similarity and difference in use of spare time for males and females<sup>37</sup> and young people of different ages:



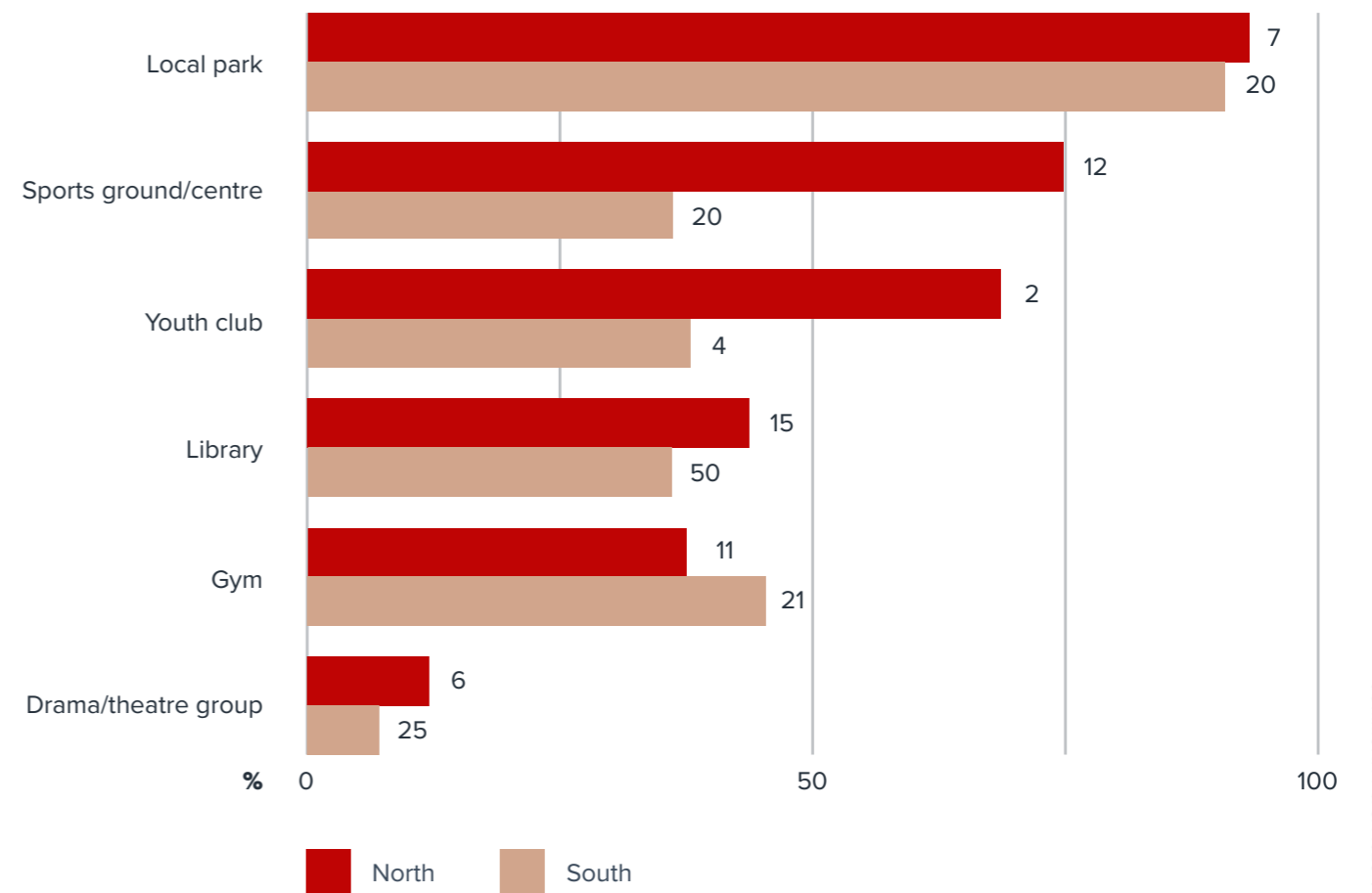
# ACCESSING LOCAL SERVICES & ACTIVITIES

Of the local services on offer to young people in Westminster, the most commonly used are local parks cited by 92% (n=88) of young people. Over half (53%, n=51) of young people interviewed had used a sports ground or sports centre and 50% (n=48) had accessed a youth club:

**92% of interviewees had access a local park in the last 12 months**



**75% of interviewees from the north of the borough had accessed a sports ground or centre in the past 12 months compared to 36% in the south of the borough**



## Westminster has a large range of creative and cultural spaces including theatres, music venues, museums and art galleries.

However, over half of the young people interviewed reported that they 'never' make use of art galleries (63%, n=62), museums (51%, n=50) and music venues (54%, n=53). Additionally, 44% (n=43) of young people never go to the theatre. This suggests that these services are not accessible or appealing to young people in the borough. Young people who said they 'never' or 'rarely' access these services were asked why? The most common reasons were:

- That they were not interested in the arts or that these specific arts services were not targeted at young people:

*"They aren't very interesting to young people"*

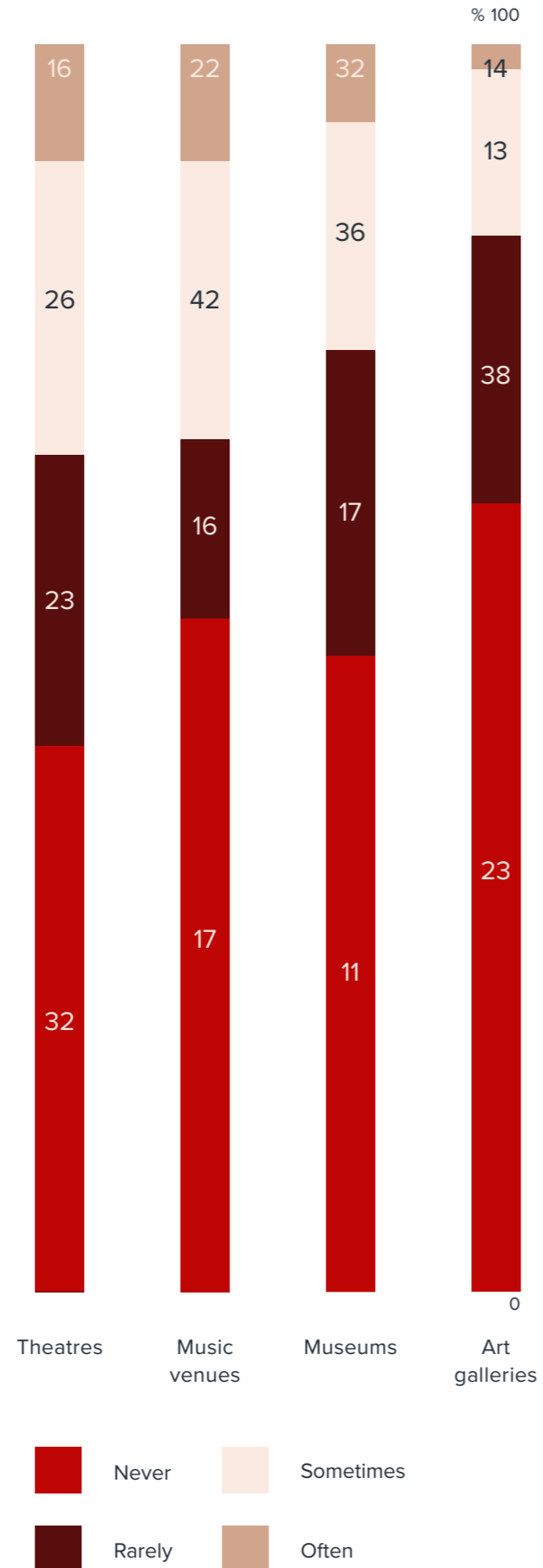
*"Feels out of place – [the displays are] pretentious and racially divided"*

- That these services were too expensive or that they did not have the time to attend.

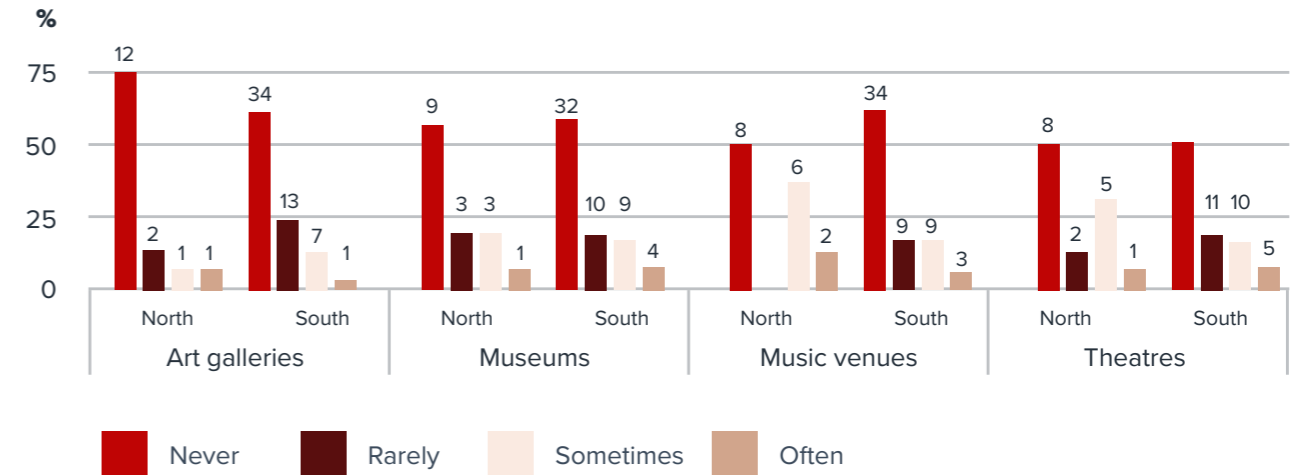
One youth worker expressed the value of young people being able to access these services claiming that:

*"It is important to allow young persons access to all of the venues in Westminster to make them feel worthy".*

**Westminster Youth Worker**



Across the North and South of the borough, interviewees most commonly reported that they 'never' make use of local art galleries, museums, music venues or theatres



**42% of interviewees reported that there was something they wanted to do in their local community in the past 12 months but that they could not.**

Of the people who explained what stopped them doing the thing they wanted to do, 82% explained that this was due to Covid-19 restrictions. Other reasons included that:

- The activity or facility was not available (8%)
- The activity or facility was difficult to travel to (4%)
- A parent or carer didn't want them to (4%)
- The activity or facility was too expensive (2%)

The young people who specified that the activity or facility were not available mentioned basketball and tennis as two sports that are not well catered for in the area.

Young people were also asked what changes they would want to see in community and youth activities/services available in Westminster. Suggestions included:

- More affordable activities to provide more choice to young people, including more youth clubs and more outside activities
- Increase the availability of accessible advice and support e.g. outside of school hours

- Supporting youth organisations e.g. youth clubs to have longer opening hours
- Make travelling to youth activities and services easier and safer
- Increase the awareness of youth activities and services through advertising.

Youth workers expressed a need for flexible funding to allow youth services and activities to "be agile" and target their spending on what is most needed. In the meantime, the importance of providing young people with technology (laptops, WiFi etc.) was highlighted so that they could access virtual activities as well as better promotion of activities and services. One youth worker expressed that:

*"Young people could be better resourced and supplemented to enable them to realise their potential, especially those in the most deprived wards as they often feel they do not belong in Westminster."*

**Westminster Youth Worker**

Below is a case study detailing the experience of a young person in Westminster who accessed the Future Men Transition Project.<sup>40</sup> This provides an example of services on offer in Westminster and the impact that they can have for young people:

*Client A* came to the country in January and was due to start primary school March, but this did not happen due to closure of schools. The family have struggled since seeking asylum in the UK but have been receiving support from Family Lives. *Client A* is ESOL and speaks very limited English meaning he had no friends and would spend large amounts of time on his phone or with adults. *Client A* was referred to the summer program by a Family Lives support worker as they felt he would benefit from the enriching 6-week period.

Being new to the country is not easy and as this year will be his first time going to school in England, the transition workshops really benefited *Client A*, conversations were had about what he learned about secondary school and what he could expect. *Client A* reported to feeling more excited now that he had attended workshops and been with people his age. This also helped to improve his English and gain confidence speaking, looking back from one word answer responses and speaking very quietly at the start of the program to answering questions and talking to everyone more was a successful outcome attained. Taking part in the summer program therefore helped *Client A* learn a bit about London, play sports which in turn can lead to a new hobby and most importantly experience socialising and making friends in a new country.

“The summer program was very good, and I enjoyed taking part, I made friends and tried Go karting and Kayaking for the first time, I enjoyed this program and look forward to doing more”.

#### **Future Men, Transition Project Case Study**



# TRANSPORT



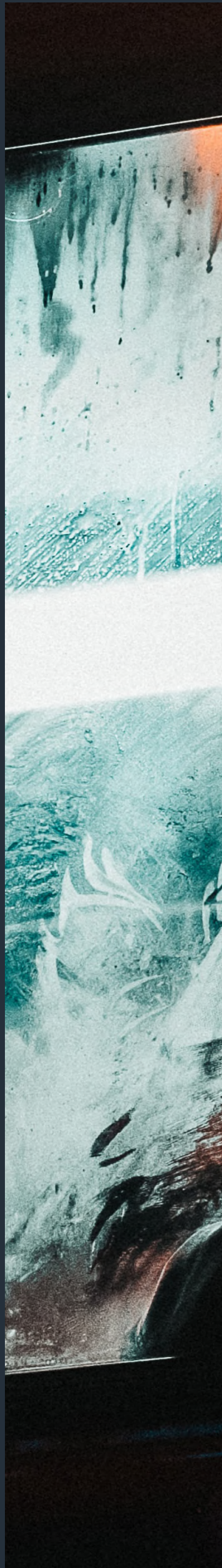
## CONTEXT

Young people (aged 18 and under) have been able to travel on public transport for free or at a discounted rate since 2005. In 2020, in response to plans to cut free travel for young people, the 'Don't Zap the Zip' campaign was launched. Research conducted by YouGov for the Child Poverty Action Group found that<sup>41</sup>:

- Over half (54%) of parents believe they would have to cut back on something else if the suspension went ahead, with 41% saying they would have to cut back on food
- Almost three quarters of young people surveyed (74%) use their Zip card to get to school or college
- More than a quarter of all children surveyed (26%) and more than a third (36%) of those in low-income families worry that scrapping free travel would limit their options for school/college places (or work-places for apprenticeship/training placements)
- Almost half of young people (45%) said they would have to cut back on seeing friends and family if free travel was scrapped.

<sup>41</sup> YouGov/Child Poverty Action Group (2020) <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/mayor-hosts-roundtable-with-young-campaigners>

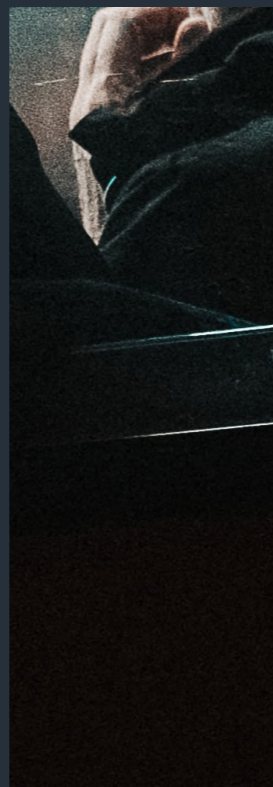
**BUS 36%**



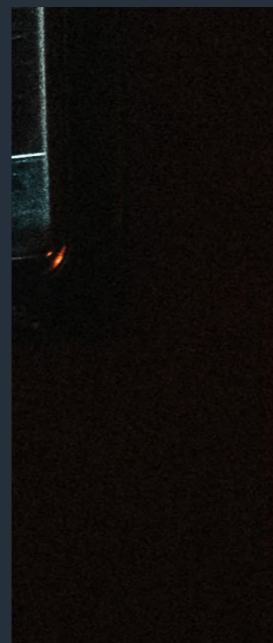
**WALK 31%**



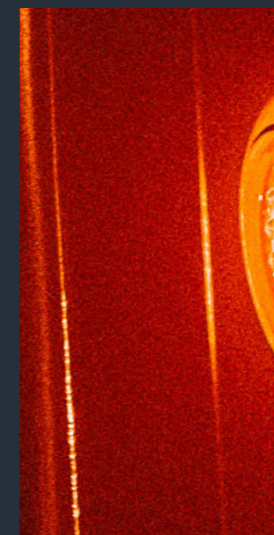
**CAR 12%**



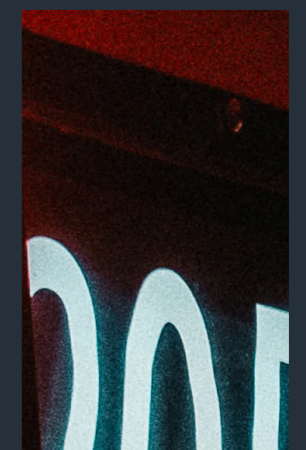
**TUBE 9%**



**CYCLE 7%**



**TRAIN 5%**



# HOW YOUNG PEOPLE TRAVEL WITHIN & OUTSIDE OF WESTMINSTER

**The bus is the most frequent form of transport for young people in Westminster to get around in Westminster and London**

Young people were asked how they typically travel around Westminster and London. Over a third (36%, n=35) of young people use the bus, followed by 31% (n=30) who walk. These are currently the two forms of free transport for young people in London. When asked about the removal of free bus travel for under 18s, 70% (n=63) of young people said this would impact on the way they travel. Asked to explain their answers, these respondents observed:

- Young people rely on public transport
- The loss of free transport will mean young people incur extra costs
- Young people will take public transport less and therefore it will make it harder to get to places, seven young people specified that they would opt to walk instead of taking public transport if they had to pay.

When asked if there was anything that would make them more likely to travel around and explore new parts of London, young people suggested:

Reduction in cases of Covid-19 and the associated restrictions

Specific activities that are affordable e.g. interesting new places to go, events targeted at young people, to take part in sports activities and more advertising of the above mentioned activities

Cheaper transport and safer cycling options

# CRIME & SAFETY



## CONTEXT

Across London, the majority of Young Londoners feel safe in the area in which they live (74%) and at school (84%).<sup>43</sup> Around a quarter of young people (26%) know someone who has carried a knife or who is in a gang (23%). Young females are more likely to have experienced sexual harassment than young males: over two-thirds of girls in school years 10 and 11 say they have experienced unwanted staring over the last year (68%, 435 of 642), while around a third have experienced jokes or taunts of a sexual nature (30%, 191 of 634) or sexual comments (34%, 218 of 639).

To address concerns about crime in London, The Mayor of London set up the Violence Reduction Unit in 2018 which works towards<sup>44</sup>:

- Reducing school exclusions and keeping young people in education
- Enabling youth practitioners to reach young people in A&E and in custody suites
- Supporting parents and carers to create resilient home environments
- Providing young people with positive opportunities to develop skills.

In Westminster, 21% of victims of all crime were aged 18-24 and 4% were under 17, from October 2019 to September 2020. Throughout the year 2019/20 there were 604 youth violence victims aged 1-19, and 111 knife with injury victims, 33% (n=37) of which were aged under 25.<sup>45</sup> Westbourne, Little Venice and Knightsbridge and Belgravia and Hyde Park were recorded as the wards with the highest number of knife crime with injury victims.

Westminster has the highest Serious Youth Violence rate per 1000 residents of all London boroughs, however, only 40% of youth violence that takes place in the borough is committed by Westminster residents.<sup>46,47</sup> Westminster has the 4th highest rate of knife crime of all London boroughs, though it has decreased 34% from 2018/19 to 2019/20. During this year, there was a 58% reduction in knife crime in the six months following the outbreak of the pandemic, compared to the six months before. The rates of violence varied

across the borough; West End, St James's and Westbourne were the wards with the highest number of knife crime offences.<sup>48</sup> This geographical nature of crime in the borough was described by a member of Westminster City Council:

**“43% of all violent crime in Westminster is located within St James’s and West End wards, fuelled by the strong night-time economy. Most youth violence in Westminster is committed by non-Westminster residents. Youth violence involving Westminster residents is more likely to be concentrated in the north of the borough where most of the Integrated Gangs and Exploitation Unit (IGXU) and Youth Offending Service (YOS) cohorts reside and where there are greater concentrations of deprivation.<sup>49</sup> Whereas non-resident youth violence is most concentrated in the West End and St James’s area.”**

**Westminster City Council Officer<sup>50</sup>**

Contextual safeguarding of young people is a priority for Westminster City Council and is supported through initiatives such as the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership which is a joint initiative involving Hammer-smith & Fulham, Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster (LSCP, 2019). The GLA published the ‘Making London Child-Friendly’ strategy in 2019 which emphasises designing places and streets for young people and children. Of particular importance in Westminster is the issue of Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG); between 2017-18, for example, the Angelou Partnership received over 1,300 referrals requesting support for people affected by abuse (WCC, 2017). Over 280 cases involved victims who were deemed to be at high risk of serious harm.

<sup>43</sup> All statistics in section from MOPAC (2018) [https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/youth\\_voice\\_survey\\_report\\_2018\\_final.pdf](https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/youth_voice_survey_report_2018_final.pdf)  
<sup>44</sup> Mayor of London (2021) <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/mayors-office/policing-and-crime-mopac/our-priorities/making-london-safer-young-people>  
<sup>45</sup> Westminster City Council, Analysis of Serious Youth Violence October 2019-September 2020  
<sup>46</sup> Westminster City Council, Analysis of Serious Youth Violence October 2019-September 2020  
<sup>47</sup> GLA (2018), A Public Health Approach to Serious Youth Violence: Supporting Evidence <https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/a-public-health-approach-to-serious-youth-violence>  
<sup>48</sup> Information provided by Young Westminster Foundation, originally from WCC’s City Wide Operations and IGXU teams  
<sup>49</sup> Westminster City Council, Analysis of Serious Youth Violence October 2019-September 2020  
<sup>50</sup> The wards with the highest numbers of the Integrated Gangs and Exploitation Unit (IGXU) cohort living in them are in Queen’s Park, Westbourne and Church Street, Information provided by Young Westminster Foundation, originally from WCC’s City Wide Operations and IGXU teams  
<sup>50</sup> Quote provided by Young Westminster Foundation, originally from WCC officer

<sup>39</sup> YouGov/Child Poverty Action Group (2020) <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/mayor-hosts-roundtable-with-young-campaigners>



# INSIGHT FROM WESTMINSTER YOUTH WORKERS

In summer 2020, Westminster youth workers were asked how better relations with the police and opportunities for youth voice and action could be supported. They provided the following suggestions:

- While providing spaces for young people to talk is important, it is also crucial that discussions lead to policy change to demonstrate respect for youth voice and prevent further youth disenfranchisement
- Youth organisations and schools can support youth voice and action by giving them a platform and the confidence to affect change. During this time (July 2020), it has been useful for youth organisations to have fluid programmes to create spaces for young people to talk about racism as and when is needed, particularly as some young people are less able to talk to parents
- Police officers could benefit from training around de-escalation and talking to young people, and young people should be supported to make complaints to the police where needed
- Greater dialogue, trust and sharing of intelligence between youth workers and police teams.

Westminster youth workers from Future Men also provided insights on crime and safety in Westminster.<sup>51</sup> One expressed that incidents of youth violence were impacting young people's feelings of safety:

***“Following two murders in quick succession in North West Westminster in Summer of 2020, young people in the immediate area are voicing feelings of increased paranoia and fears for their safety both inside and outside of their households”***  
**Westminster Youth Worker (Future Men)**

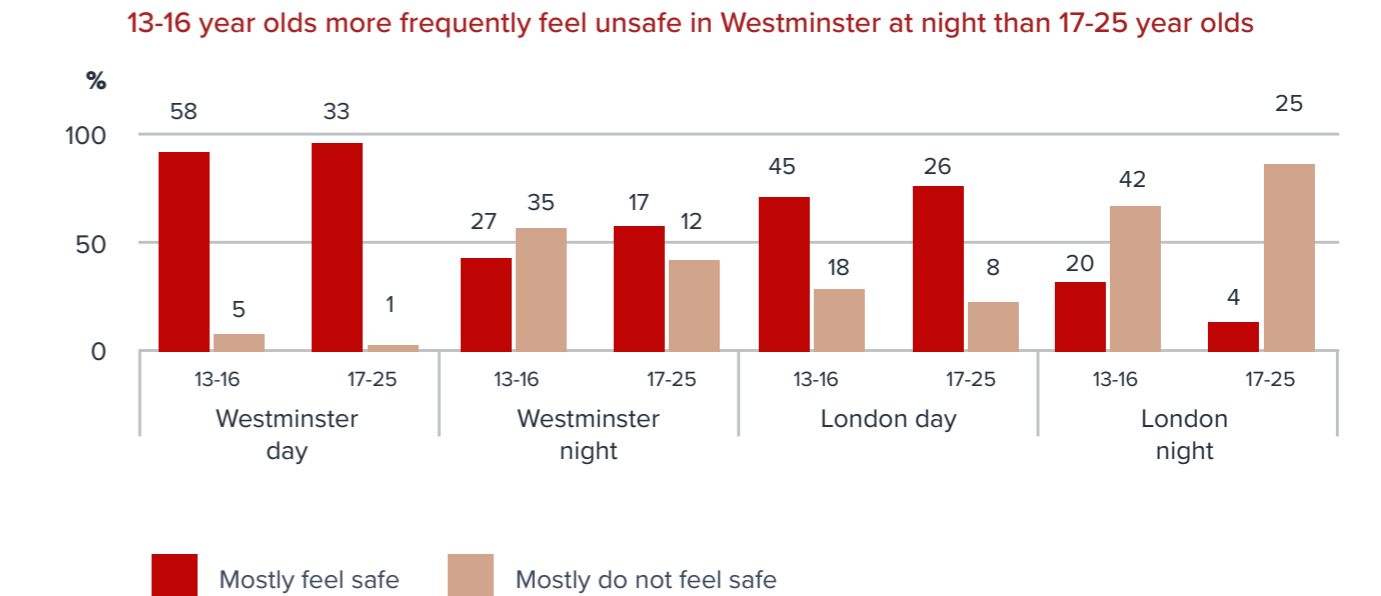
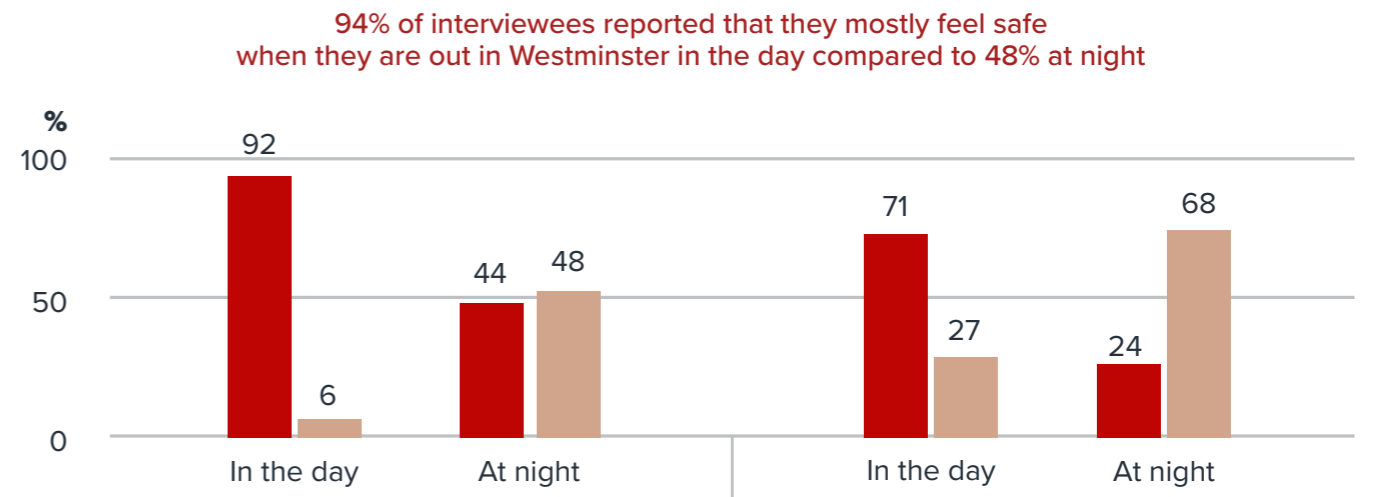
<sup>51</sup> This quote was provided separately to the research carried out by Rocket Science



# FEELINGS OF SAFETY IN WESTMINSTER

Almost all young people interviewed (94%, n=92) stated that they felt safe when they were out in Westminster during the day, compared to 72% (n=71) in other parts of London. At night, over half of young people (52%, n=48) stated that they do not feel safe in Westminster and 74% (n=68) that they do not feel safe in other parts of London. The borough is perceived to be relatively safe by young people; perceptions of feeling unsafe relate to the night-time, rather than the local area itself.

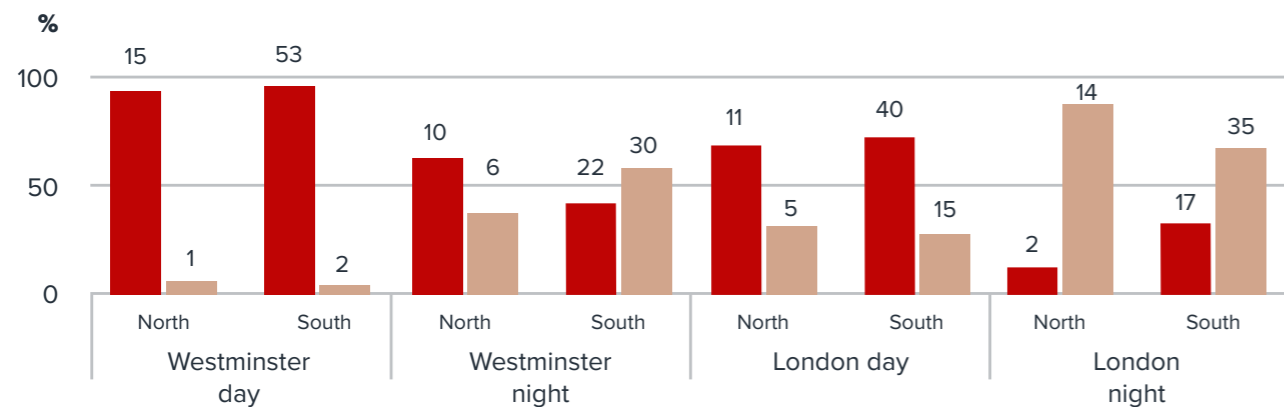
The following graphs show feelings of safety amongst all interviewees; those in younger and older age groups; males and females; and from the south and north of the borough:



In Westminster, 58% of females do not feel safe in Westminster at night, compared to 40% of males



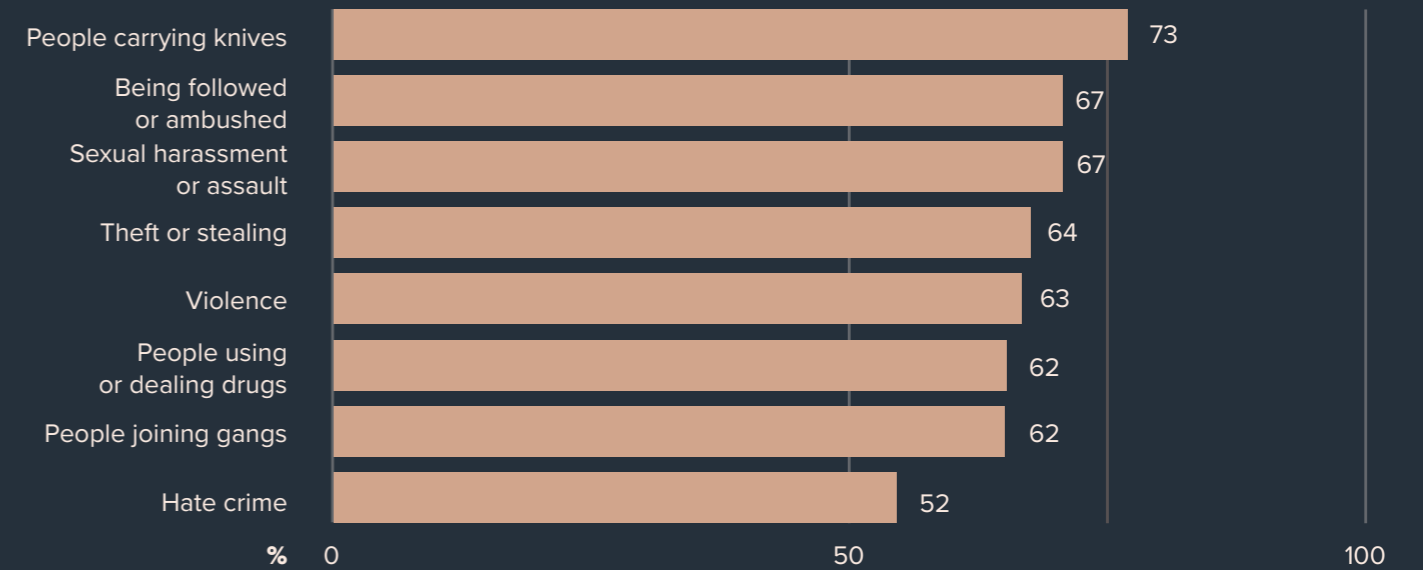
58% of interviewees from south of the borough reported that they mostly do not feel safe in Westminster during the night, compared to 38% of interviewees from the north



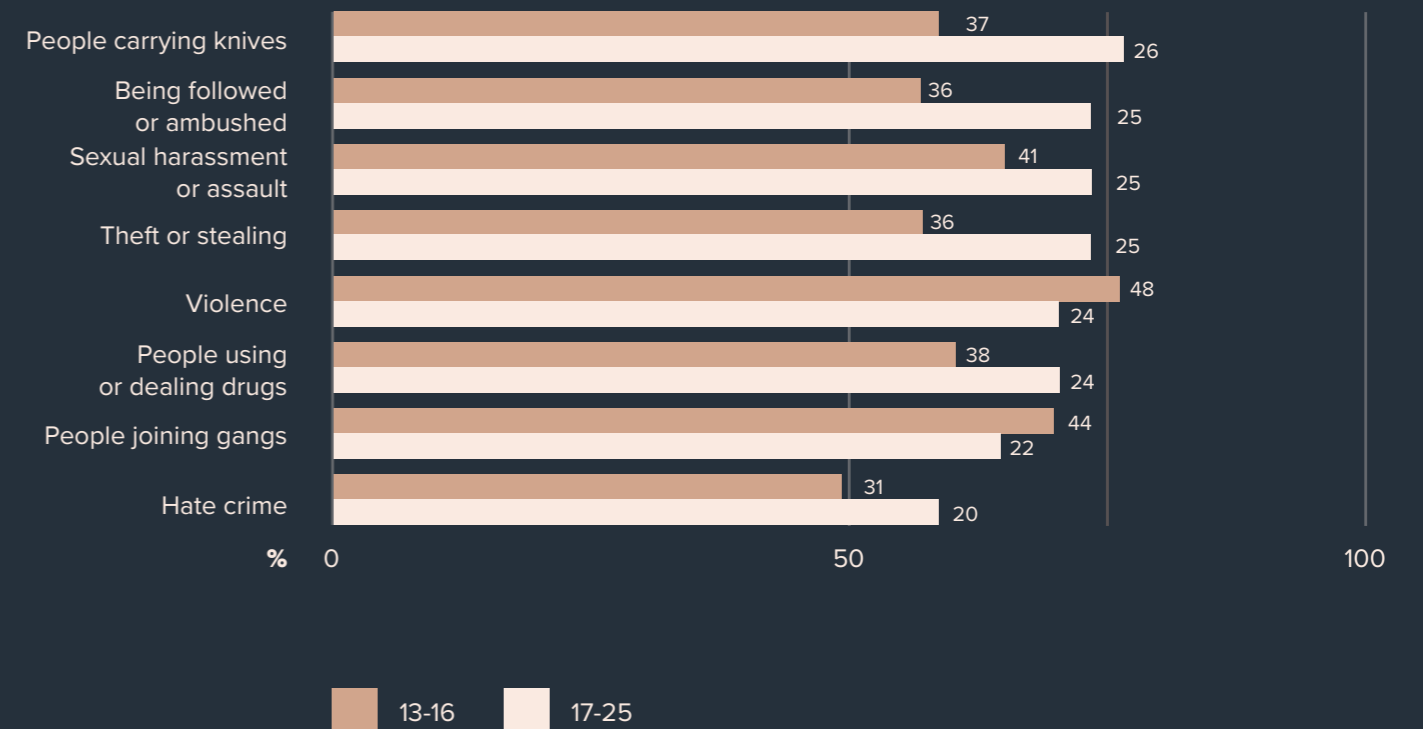
Mostly feel safe (Red) Mostly do not feel safe (Tan)

# SAFETY CONCERNS

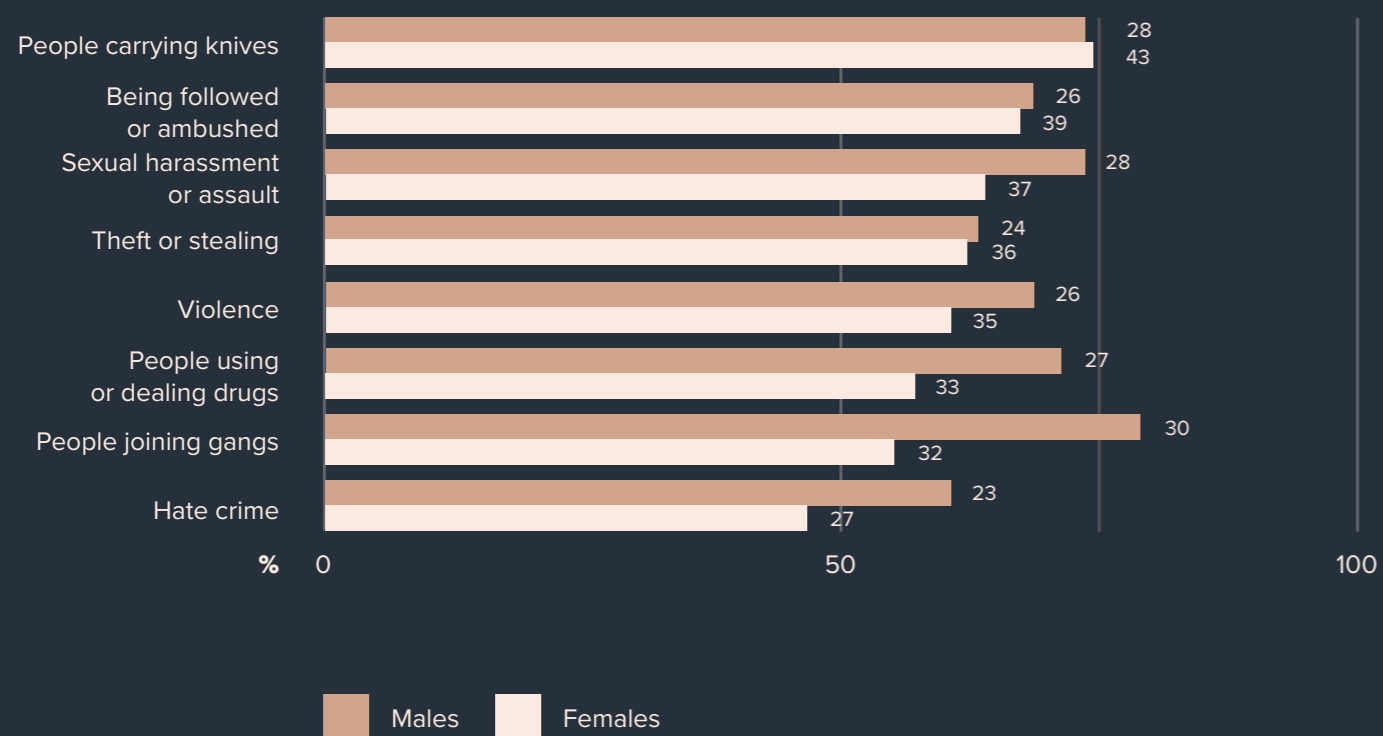
'People carrying knives' was reported as the most frequent (77%, n=73) concern for young people in Westminster in relation to crime and safety. This was followed by 'being followed or ambushed' (71%, n=67), sexual harassment or assault (71%, n=67) and theft or stealing (67%, n=64):



People carrying knives and sexual harassment are the two safety concerns that a higher proportion of 13-16 year olds are worried about than 17-25 year olds



People carrying knives and sexual harassment are the two safety concerns that a higher proportion of 13-16 year olds are worried about than 17-25 year olds



# IMPROVING SAFETY IN WESTMINSTER

Young people were asked how to improve feelings of safety in Westminster and suggestions included:

- More youth clubs or youth activities to give young people something to do

*“Putting more activities in safe places”*  
Young Person

*“A place they could go to, to enjoy themselves for example a youth club”*  
Young Person

*“Open up more youth services, more funding for sports areas, free access to facilities, open up more services to support young people”*  
Young Person

- Improved community services that offer support to young people
- Regenerating areas of the borough that feel less safe e.g. by ensuring that there is adequate lighting
- Increased crime management and education on crime.

*“Educating young boys more about gun crime, gangs and knife crime. Funding people to end poverty”*  
Young Person

*“We could have more workshops on knife crime”*  
Young Person

Youth workers were also asked to provide suggestions on how feelings of safety could be improved. Several ideas were similar to those put forward by young people themselves:

Work on making schools a safer place to be e.g. by providing information sessions on safety awareness and preventative measures and reducing levels of bullying and peer pressure

More peer leaders in the community to support young people to have more positive images of themselves

More and better resourced youth services and support including youth clubs with experienced youth workers, group activities to form connections between different groups of young people from across the borough

Devote time and resources to control hate speech and reduce division within the community based on identity.

Safer physical spaces including housing estates being redesigned and back streets being better lit

Improved relationships with the police, with mention of increased local community policing to enable this and short term actions including young people learning their rights in relation to stop and search

# INTERNET & SOCIAL MEDIA



## CONTEXT

Many children and young people are spending increasing amounts of time online, leading experts to describe life at present as 'digital by default'.<sup>52</sup>

**“Being online can be a hugely positive experience for adults, children and young people, however it also presents a risk of harm and there is growing concern about the relationship between technology and the mental health of children and young people... The pandemic has brought this into sharp focus with children’s screen time averaging nine hours per day during lockdown, which is nearly double the average prior to Covid-19”.**<sup>53</sup>

**Rachel Bishop, the Deputy Director of Online Harms Policy at DCMS**

According to a study conducted by Ofcom called ‘Children’s Media Lives’ (2020), parents are concerned about the content which young people are exposed to online. MOPAC’s Youth Voice Survey (2018) of young Londoners reported that over half of young people had experienced someone they did not know trying to add them or speak to them online; a quarter had faced someone saying mean things or bullying them online; and a quarter had been sent rude or sexual content.<sup>54</sup>

Despite a focus on concerns associated with the use of social media and the internet, most young people find access to be positive. In the OECD’s Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) wellbeing study of 15 year olds, 90.5% of boys and 92.3% of girls in the UK agreed with the statement that “it is very useful to have social media networks on the Internet”.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>52</sup> LSE (2020) <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/medialse/2020/12/21/life-is-digital-by-default-so-whats-the-impact-on-young-peoples-mental-health/>

<sup>53</sup> LSE (2020) <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/medialse/2020/12/21/life-is-digital-by-default-so-whats-the-impact-on-young-peoples-mental-health/>

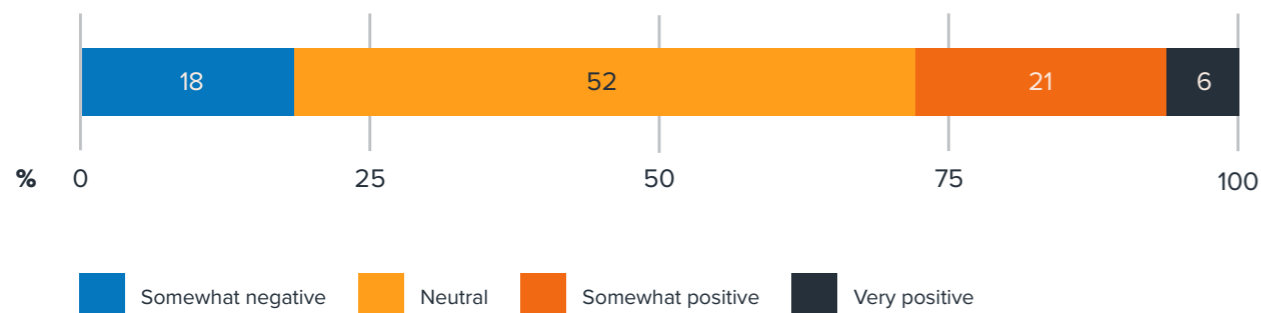
<sup>54</sup> MOPAC Youth Voice Survey (2018) p.23

<sup>55</sup> House of Commons (2019) <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmsstech/822/822.pdf> p.17

# IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON YOUNG PEOPLE'S LIVES

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':

Over half of young people rated the impact of social media on their life as neutral



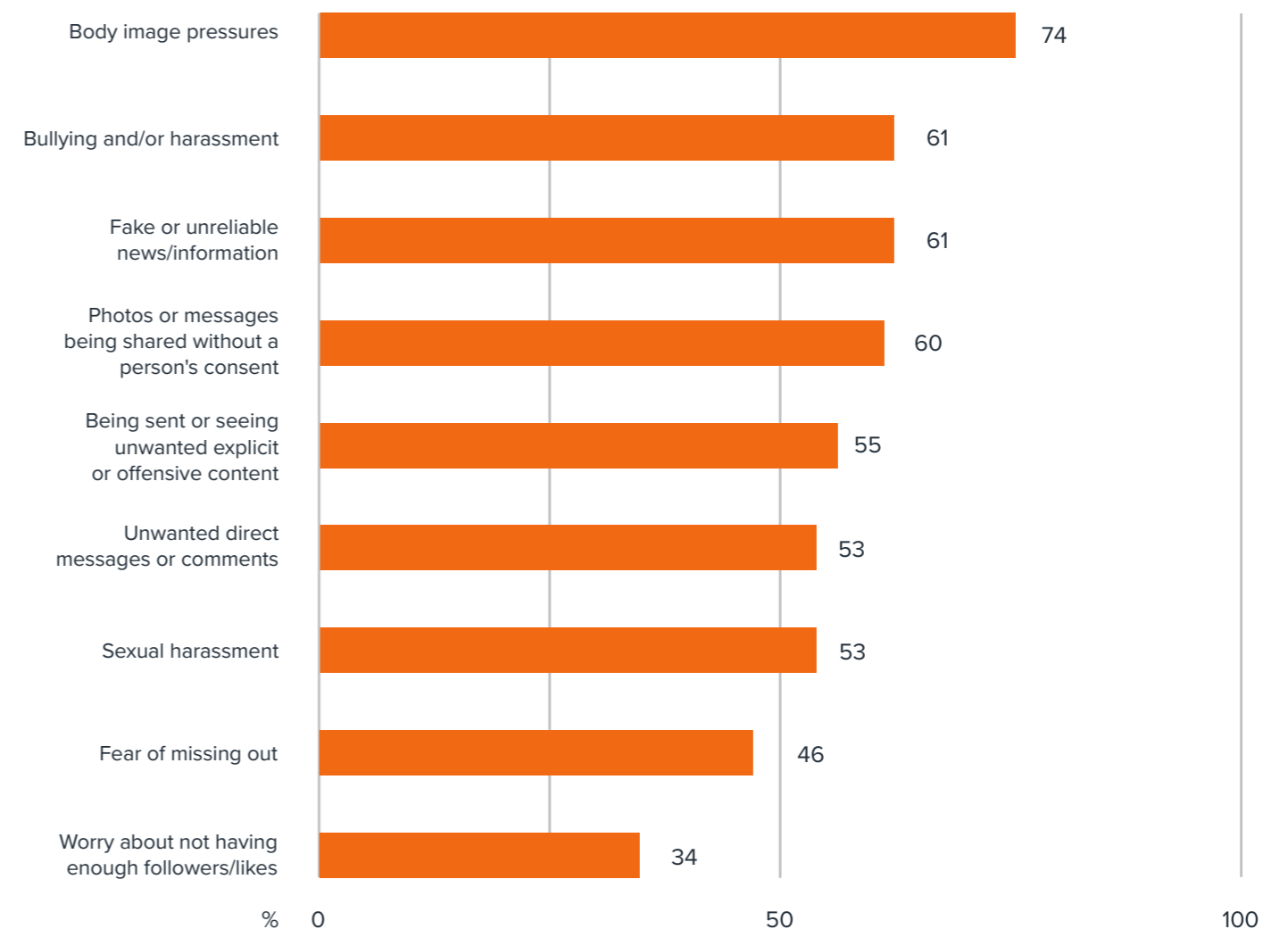
In contrast, of nine youth workers who responded to a survey, two thirds (n=6) expressed that they felt social media generally has a negative impact on young people's lives.

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'.



# ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

When asked about specific issues associated with the use of social media amongst young people, over three quarters (76%, n=74) of young people identified 'body image pressures' as a concern. Other frequent concerns were bullying and/or harassment (62%, n=61), fake or unreliable news or information (62%, n=61); and photos or messages being shared without a person's consent (61%, n=60):



Youth workers felt that the main concerns associated with young people's lives online or use of social media included: online violence including hate speech, bullying, trolling and grooming; access to explicit content and information; over familiarisation with violent and sexual topics; damaged self-confidence and issues relating to identity and body image; and friendship burnouts due to intensified interactions.

Despite these concerns, 93% of young people do not feel that they need additional support in relation to managing concerns or pressures on social media.



The following tables outline key findings from the 2020/21 needs analysis and associated calls to action for YWF; YWF Members and Partners; and YWF Funders:<sup>53</sup>

Finding	Call to action
<p><b>IMPACT OF COVID-19</b></p> <p><b>Young people have had widely varying experiences of the pandemic and value one-to-one support</b></p>	<p><b>YWF</b> Provide practitioners with resources to help them signpost young people to relevant support</p> <p><b>YWF</b> Work with the wider community to identify young people falling through gaps in service provision and connecting them to youth services. Prioritise funding, training and capacity for outreach youth work in digital and community spaces</p> <p><b>YWF</b> Continued commitment to undertaking regular needs analyses to understand the changing needs of young people post-pandemic</p> <p><b>YWF Members and Partners</b> Prioritise opportunities for one-to-one support enabling youth workers and school staff members to understand individuals' unique experiences and needs</p> <p><b>YWF Members and Partners</b> Meet young people in their own spaces. Develop outreach programmes through the borough to ensure the voices and needs of young people falling through gaps are met</p> <p><b>YWF Funders</b> Recognise and support the increased cost and capacity required for one-to-one delivery and prioritise outreach work</p>

<sup>53</sup> YWF and partners were involved in the process of developing calls to action and producing examples for how calls to action could be implemented in Westminster (highlighted in gold)

## Finding

## Call to action

**Youth organisations and schools have adapted to changing circumstances throughout the pandemic and have shown their motivation to collaborate**

### YWF

Facilitate forums to strengthen relationships between schools and youth organisations; and share learning e.g. around how to adapt to changing Covid-19 regulations and what has worked well in providing support to young people during the pandemic.

Example – YWF and YWF Members and Partners to commit to supporting information sharing around Covid-19 vaccine roll outs

YWF Members and Partners - Enable collaboration and sharing resources (e.g., activity packs, digital equipment)

## Finding

## Call to action

**Young people face significant pressure to achieve career success, however around a third feel it will be difficult to find out about and access opportunities**

### YWF

Advertise training and employment opportunities for young people in Westminster

Example – Advertising through YWF Our City website

### YWF

Understand more about where pressure for young people is coming from by carrying out research to further investigate pressure and its causes

### YWF Members and Partners

Continue to work with local employability programmes to facilitate work experience and paid opportunities with local employers for those young people who do not have previous experience. Ensure that work experience is open to all young people through working with youth organisations as well as schools.

Example – Continue to work with 2-3 Degrees, Inspire and Westminster Befriend A Family to grow the Mastering My Future employability programme

## Finding

## Call to action

### YWF Funders

Support local and London wide initiatives to improve access to employment and education opportunities for young people

Example – Pledge support for GLA's London Mission for all young Londoners to have access to a mentor for one-to-one support, someone else to turn to besides school or family members

### YWF

Connect organisations, services and individuals working to develop more cohesive career support for young people

Example – Develop a collaboration between the careers advice lead in each school, youth organisations and WCC Early Help

### YWF Members and Partners

Provide young people with resources to learn about less well-known careers and plan their education and training pathways, with an emphasis on vocational routes (e.g. apprenticeships and vocational training)

### YWF Members and Partners

Link young people to learning opportunities with mentors within their sectors of interest

### YWF and Partners

Ensure that businesses in Westminster understand the barriers young people see to joining their industry, involve young people in shaping their opportunities

**Young people seek information about varied career paths and options for education and training (including vocational routes)**

**There are a range of inequalities in relation to young people's access to employment**

### YWF Members and Partners

Identify young people who may be disproportionately impacted by unemployment and planning their access to careers advice and support (e.g. those living in areas with long-standing high deprivation levels in Westminster)

## Finding

## Call to action

**Young people have a range of hopes and are motivated to ensure their community will see positive changes after the pandemic**

### YWF

Open up opportunities for young people to be empowered to share their experiences and have a say in local decision-making

Example – Involve young people in local decision-making through the re-launch of the YWF Young Ambassador Programme

### YWF

Work in partnership with YWF Members to ensure recruitment of a diverse cohort of young people for decision-making opportunities

### YWF Members and Partners

Encourage young people to imagine bright futures and suggest solutions to local problems

### YWF Funders

Facilitate meaningful mechanisms for youth voice in grant making

**Young people suggested that more frequent contact and improved methods of communication would have improved the support provided to them during the pandemic**

### YWF

Work with partners to tailor communications based on young people's needs

Example – Use the Our City website as a resource for young people and ensure that information on it is provided in a way that meets the needs of young people

### YWF Members and Partners

When carrying out outreach youth work, consult young people on the best way to get out information on specific issues e.g. careers advice, mental health support etc.

## Finding

## Call to action

**Over three fifths of young people felt that mental health issues were common amongst their peers, however just under half felt it would be difficult to access professional mental health support**

### YWF

Raise awareness about existing mental health services, with an emphasis on their confidentiality

### YWF

Improve signposting and referral routes to professional mental health support

### YWF Members and Partners

Destigmatise access to support through open conversations in schools and youth clubs

### YWF Member and NHS/Statutory Partners

Consider new models for programme delivery e.g. CAHMS workers in Youth hubs setting

### YWF, YWF Members and Partners and YWF Funders

All three parties to work with young people to identify and address gaps in mental health support for young people across the borough

## HEALTH AND WELLBEING

**Young people sought information and advice about sex and relationships that was realistic and relevant for their lives. 37% felt that it would be difficult to access sexual health support in their local area**

### YWF

Work with young people to identify the types of information and advice about sex and relationships that would be useful for them e.g. co-designing sessions

### YWF

Improve awareness about local sexual health services and ways to access contraception

Example – Use the Our City website to share information on local sexual health services

### YWF Members and Partners

Ensure LGBTQ+ relationships are included in information and advice about sex and relationships



### Finding

### Call to action

**When asked how physical health could be supported young people primarily sought activities and spaces for sport and exercise**

**YWF**  
Work with Members and Partners to review the affordability of gyms and sport activities across the borough and supporting concessions for young people

**YWF Members and Partners**  
Work to improve accessibility of activities and spaces for sport and exercise e.g. providing taster or beginner sessions; or online classes

**YWF Funders**  
Prioritise improving inclusivity of sports

**Just under three quarters of young people expressed concern about their peers' drug use**

**YWF Members**  
Open up dialogue about drug use concerns to understand the types of advice or resources which would be most appropriate to support young people of different ages

**YWF and Members**  
Consider new models of delivery of this information e.g. in Youth Hubs

### Finding

### Call to action

## COMMUNITY & SPACES

**Over half of young people never make use of art galleries, museums or music venues in Westminster**

**YWF** – Work with Members and Partners to review affordability and accessibility of creative and cultural venues in Westminster including tailoring activities to their interests

Example – YWF and YWF Members and Partners can support Westminster City Council's Cultural Strategy 2021-2025 by encouraging and empowering young people to participate in local culture through creation of new platforms and partnerships<sup>57</sup>

### Finding

### Call to action

**Just under three quarters expressed that a loss of free travel would impact how they get around**

**YWF**  
Pledge commitment to pan-London campaign to keep free travel for under 18's

**YWF/YWF Funders**  
Support ongoing reduced or free travel for young people to encourage their continued use of buses to explore new parts of Westminster and London and reduce pressure on their overall living costs

**Young people generally feel safe in Westminster, however over 70% expressed concern about people carrying knives; being followed or ambushed; or sexual harassment or assault**

**YWF/YWF Members and Partners**  
Provide young people with opportunities to take part in positive activities and form connections with young people from other parts of the borough

Example – Provide opportunities for positive activities via an expansion of the Transitions Project

**YWF Members and Partners**  
Improve relationships between young people and the police and supporting young people to make complaints to the police where needed

**YWF and Partners**  
Work with Met Police and other appropriate agencies to facilitate introductions into the community

**Over three quarters of young people identified 'body image pressures' as a concern associated with the use of social media**

**YWF**  
Carry out a best practice review on methods of support for young people in relation to body image, collate existing resources and share these findings with YWF Members and Partners

**YWF and YWF Members and Partners**  
Share supportive resources directly with young people and facilitate conversations about body image and the impact of social media.

<sup>54</sup> Westminster City Council, Cultural Strategy 2021-2025 (2021) <https://www.westminster.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/documents/Westminster%20City%20Council%20Cultural%20Strategy%202021-2025.pdf>

# PEER RESEARCH WHAT DID WE LEARN?

## Peer researcher reflections

Peer researchers reflected that the process was a positive opportunity to meet new people and hear the views of others living in Westminster. While it could be challenging to ask others to commit to taking part in 20-30 minute interviews, peer researchers described a range of skills that were developed through the process of undertaking training and conducting interviews with their peers such as:

- Learning how to make research accessible (online and in-person)
- Designing research questions and processes
- Managing sensitive information
- Building rapport and making interviewees feel comfortable

## Young Westminster Foundation's reflections

Young Westminster Foundation remains committed to conducting peer researched needs analyses every three years, supplemented by ongoing opportunities for young people to share their views and be involved in decision making. As our communities begin to recover and re-build following the pandemic, listening to young people will be more important than ever.

Conducting this needs analysis has been a collaborative process from the outset involving YWF working in partnership with our members and partners to adapt our methodology in response to the limitations imposed by lockdown and the changes to our ways of working. We hope to share our learnings to inform our future research and to support other organisations embarking on similar projects, including:

- Collaboration is key - Engage and listen to participating organisations/individuals from design through to launch
- Partnerships with specialist research organisations – These are important for developing a robust methodology including the training of peer researchers and analysis of gathered data

- Lean into existing relationships – For example, those between youth workers and young people
- Develop informal methods to support peer researchers on a one-to-one basis in addition to the virtual training programme e.g. socially distanced visits, WhatsApp group for daily communication, weekly check-ins.

## YWF's ambitions for 2023

- Utilise interview guides from 2020 to gather longitudinal data
- Conduct in-person focus groups with young people across the borough, in a range of community settings
- Prioritise hearing from young people who do not, at present, engage with youth services in the borough

# APPENDIX 1: METHODOLOGY

Rocket Science were commissioned by Young Westminster Foundation in early 2020 to conduct a wide-ranging youth needs assessment for Westminster. This project was intended as part of an ongoing process of understanding youth needs in Westminster and to update findings from the previous 2018 City Within A City Report, which can be found here. The emergence of Covid-19 necessitated a two stage research process:

## Stage 1: Covid-19 impact research (April-July 2020)

Bi-weekly workshops were held with youth workers working across Westminster to explore the impacts of Covid-19 on young people throughout the various phases of the pandemic. Workshop findings were written up in [easy-to-read short reports](#) which were circulated amongst YWF partners and members.

### Core research questions:

- The ways in which Covid-19 impacted young people including experiences of isolation; access to food; engagement with education; sleep and routines
- How youth organisations responded to the pandemic including the provision of online sessions; distribution of activity packs and enabling access to digital devices
- Gaps in support for young people and how these could be addressed
- Expectations for youth needs over the next 6-12 months.

### Methods:

**Recruitment:** A range of youth workers were recruited by Young Westminster Foundation to participate in bi-weekly focus groups facilitated by Rocket Science. Participants worked for organisations which addressed varying needs and supported individuals from across the under 25 age range to ensure we gathered insights which were representative

**Initial scoping workshops:** Initial scoping workshops with youth workers enabled the group to outline pressing issues for young people during the pandemic. These issues formed the basis of the research areas which were explored in more detail through subsequent focus groups

**Research areas and focus groups:** Two focus groups

were held with practitioners every two weeks. The first group included practitioners who primarily worked with those aged 14 and under, and the second group included those working with those aged 15 and older. Three topics were discussed in each group. The list of topics explored included:

Focus group	Topics explored
Session 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Poverty and access to food</li> <li>▪ Living conditions</li> <li>▪ Perceptions of Covid-19</li> </ul>
Session 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Mental health</li> <li>▪ Access to education</li> <li>▪ Physical health, eating and exercise</li> </ul>
Session 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Sleep and routines</li> <li>▪ Access to public spaces</li> <li>▪ Youth voice and action</li> </ul>
Session 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Relationships and social life</li> <li>▪ Experience of trauma</li> <li>▪ The 'new normal'</li> </ul>

**Analysis and reporting:** Findings from focus groups were written up into short bulletins which were published on Young Westminster Foundation's website [here](#), and circulated amongst participants and partners.

## Stage 2: Youth needs peer research project (September-November 2020)

A group of 10 young people from Westminster were recruited through youth sector organisations to undertake training and went on to complete one-to-one interviews with 98 of their peers on topics such as: health; education, employment and training; crime; and the internet and social media.

### Core research areas:

- Young people's perspectives on life in Westminster
- Concerns relating to crime and safety
- The ways in which community services and facilities could be enhanced to meet the needs of young people
- The impact of social media use on young people's lives
- Mental and physical health of young people, including access to services
- Access to education, training and employment
- Social and political issues that matter to Westminster young people

### Methods:

**Recruitment:** Young Westminster Foundation's partner organisations circulated a link amongst young people to sign-up as peer researchers. Ten young people aged under 25 were recruited through the YWF membership to participate in the needs analysis.

**Training:** Two training sessions were held with the peer researchers in September 2020. The sessions were co-delivered by Rocket Science and Partnership for Young London. The sessions covered the following:

- Session 1: Introductions; Explanation of the research and their role; Research question co-design
- Session 2: What is peer research?; Qualitative and quantitative research; How to conduct interviews (including tips and tricks); Ethics and safeguarding; Consent

**Peer research:** Peer researchers were paid the London Living Wage to conduct 20-30 minute interviews with their peers. Interviews covered topics including life in Westminster; the impact of Covid-19; health and wellbeing; local services and support; crime and safety; internet and social media; employment, education and training; and youth voice and action.

- Peer researchers captured quantitative data through multiple choice questions and recorded qualitative discussion using open text boxes.
- A total of 98 interviews of young people aged 13-25 were completed and submitted to Rocket Science for analysis.
- 65% of the young people interviewed (n=63) were aged 13-16 and 34% (n=34) were aged 17-25. 60% (n=58) of respondents were female, 39% (n=38) were

male and 1% (n=1) of participants selected 'prefer not to say'. 40% of respondents were white, 29% were Black/African/Caribbean/Black British, 17% were mixed of multiple ethnicities and 11% were Asian/Asian British. More detail on interviewee demographics can be found in Appendix 2.

**Youth practitioner consultation:** Eight youth practitioners working across age groups and needs submitted insights relating to the themes explored by peer researchers. Practitioners were consulted to ensure that the experiences of young people who may not have been represented in peer researcher findings were covered through the research e.g. care leavers.

**Peer researcher reflection session:** Young Westminster Foundation and Rocket Science held a reflection session with the peer researchers in November 2020 to discuss their experiences, skills gained from participation and their impressions of pressing issues amongst their peers

**Analysis and reporting:** Rocket Science produced a final report including an analysis of peer research and youth practitioner findings for publication in early 2021.

# APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEWEES

98 young people aged 13-25 were interviewed. 65% (n=63) were aged 13-16 and 34% (n=34) were aged 17-25 (1% unknown). Full details on the age of participants are detailed in the table below. 60% (n=58) of respondents were female, 39% (n=38) were male and 1% (n=1) of participants selected 'prefer not to say'. There was a range of ethnicities amongst the young people interviewed which are detailed in full in the table below.<sup>55</sup>

Age	Number	Percentage
13-16	63	65%
17-25	34	35%

Ethnicity	Number	%
White	38	40%
Black/Asian/Caribbean/Black British	27	29%
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups	16	17%
Asian/Asian British	10	11%
Other ethnic groups	3	3%

Most (62%, n=61) of the young people interviewed were studying at school or sixth form, though there were young people represented who were attending college and university, completing apprenticeships and in full time or part time employment. There was one young person who was not in education or employment.

Current occupation	Number	%
Studying at school or sixth form	61	62
Studying at college	12	12
In full-time employment	11	11
In part-time employment	10	10
Studying at university	6	6
Completing an apprenticeship/traineeship	2	2
Not currently working or studying	1	1

90% (n=87) of the young people lived with their parent or parents, whilst 6% (n=6) lived independently. 4% (n=4) had other living arrangements including living with their grandparents or with friends. When asked "If you met someone from another part of London, where would you say you lived?" 35% of interviewees responded with "Westminster". Others gave answers including West London, Central London and more specific parts of the borough.<sup>56</sup>

# THANK YOU

The Young Westminster Foundation is grateful to the following organisations and individuals who contributed to the findings of the Our City Our Future report.

## Organisations

ROCKET SCIENCE	FOURTH FEATHERS YOUTH & COMMUNITY CENTRE	MOSAIC LGBT+ YOUNG PERSON'S TRUST
PARTNERSHIP FOR YOUNG LONDON	FUTURE MEN	CAXTON YOUTH ORGANISATION
KING'S COLLEGE LONDON	AMBERLEY YOUTH PROJECT	QUEEN'S PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL
WESTMINSTER CITY COUNCIL Early Help Team Looked After Children Team Employability Service Youth Offending Team Integrated Gangs and Exploitation Unit	CHURCHILL GARDENS YOUTH CLUB	BRENT, WANDSWORTH & WESTMINSTER MIND
ST ANDREW'S YOUTH CLUB	WEST LONDON ZONE	DREAMARTS
AVENUES YOUTH PROJECT	PEABODY	HADAF PERSIAN SCHOOL
	CARDINAL HUME CENTRE	WESTMINSTER SUPPLEMENTARY SCHOOL

## Individuals

MOLLIE	CLAYTON	SAMEYA
WILLIAM	AVA	JOSIAH
INDY	OPPORTUNE	EDSON
	MIA	

## Funders

**CONWAY**  
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 Westminster Foundation

 kusuma trust

 Trust for London  
Tackling poverty and inequality

## Supporters

 CITY BRIDGE TRUST

 JOHN LYON'S CHARITY

YWF PROJECT MANAGEMENT: MATIRA WHEELER

ILLUSTRATIONS: CECILIA HORNER (YOU PRESS)

LAYOUT & DESIGN: ALEX POWELL

<sup>56</sup> Note there were some respondents who accessed education, training or employment in Westminster and therefore gave answers outside of the borough.



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