



WE DISCOVER, WE GROW

Girlguiding

GIRLS' ATTITUDES SURVEY

2020

A snapshot of
girls' and young
women's lives



ABOUT GIRLGUIDING

Girlguiding is the leading charity for girls and young women in the UK. Thanks to the dedication and support of 100,000 amazing volunteers, we are active in every part of the UK, giving girls and young women a space where they can be themselves, have fun, build brilliant friendships, gain valuable life skills and make a positive difference to their lives and their communities. We build girls' confidence and raise their aspirations. We give them the chance to discover their full potential and encourage them to be a powerful force for good.

ABOUT THE GIRLS' ATTITUDES SURVEY

Since 2009, Girlguiding has provided girls and young women with a platform to speak out on the issues that matter to them through the Girls' Attitudes Survey, our flagship research asking girls and young women how they feel about their everyday lives.

This survey is now in its 12th year. We asked over 2,000 girls and young women aged 7 to 21, both inside and outside guiding, how they feel about the specific and emerging pressures facing them today, and what these mean for their happiness, wellbeing and opportunities in life.

Girlguiding's youth panel, Advocate, leads the development of the survey each year and analyses the results. You can find all the results from this and previous surveys on Girlguiding's website: girlguiding.org.uk/girlsattitudes

A huge thank you to players of People's Postcode Lottery for their invaluable support of the Girls' Attitudes Survey 2020.



Supported by players of
People's Postcode Lottery

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CEO foreword from Angela Salt



This year has been extraordinary. We started our fieldwork for this year's Girls' Attitudes Survey before lockdown in early March and finished it in April following the closure of schools and the unprecedented changes to our lives due to Covid-19. Our data straddles two quite different realities for girls and young women, yet it's consistent on the key themes that have come out of the last decade of evidence from the Girls' Attitudes Survey.

There are persistent issues for girls that just aren't going away. The combination of specific pressures and challenges girls face, because they are girls, stops them reaching their potential and enjoying life to the full. And that's wrong. At Girlguiding, we want to help to change this and support girls to thrive.

Appearance pressure stands out among these issues again this year as a barrier to girls being happy and confident in themselves. And we know from our separate lockdown research with girls, that the Covid-19 period reinforced the pressure as girls spent more time online

exposed to images in adverts and on social media of the 'perfect' appearance. It's a contributing factor to girls reporting low levels of wellbeing, sadly a recurring theme with a downward trend.

We've also seen this year a significant opportunity for us all to rethink how we engage with racial justice through the increased attention to the Black Lives Matter movement. As part of our focus on listening to diverse voices, we highlight in our findings the experiences of girls and young women from Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds. Their different experience of pressures compared to their White peers can be marked, and it's right that we recognise and commit to an intersectional approach to supporting all girls and young women.

The data shows clear majority views on what girls want to see change. They want a society where the media reflects diversity, that celebrates women and girls for who they are and not how they look, where companies take responsibility for ending the use of outdated

and damaging gender stereotypes, and where manufacturers do more for environmental sustainability.

At Girlguiding, we are all about supporting girls and young women to gain the skills, confidence and resilience they need to have the best chance to fulfil their potential. We support girls to use their voices for change and make a positive difference in their communities and the world. Through our innovative programme, girls have the chance to try new things - from navigation to upcycling - and become leaders. We're actively supporting girls with their wellbeing and tackling the root cause of some of the immense pressures they face. I'd like to see businesses and decision-makers across society do more to tackle them too by being more inclusive and sustainable. We must listen, be guided by girls' voices and use this unprecedented moment of recovery as an opportunity to do things differently.

Angela Salt

Girlguiding Chief Executive

Executive summary

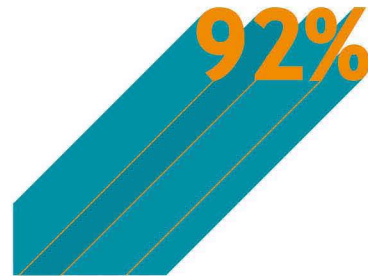


‘The one top thing I want to change is when society thinks that only women do dishes and cleaning and cooking.’

(Girl, 11-12)

‘Recycle more. Make less plastic. Make buses free for children and cheaper for grown-ups. Make it safer for us on bikes.’

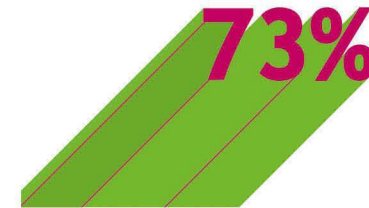
(Girl, 7-8)



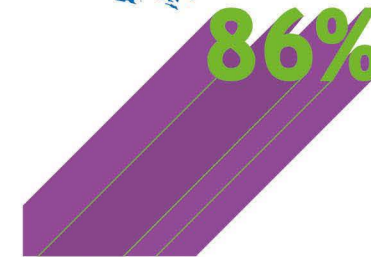
92%
OF GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN AGED 11-21 THINK THEY SHOULDN'T FEEL PRESSURED TO CHANGE THE WAY THEY LOOK



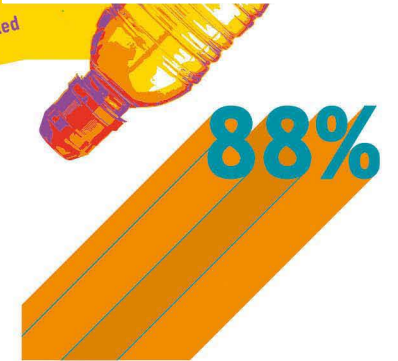
61%
OF GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN AGED 11-21 SAY BEING PART OF A YOUTH GROUP MAKES THEM FEEL ACCEPTED



73%
OF GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN AGED 11-21 SAY MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE TO MAKE POLITICS EQUAL FOR MEN AND WOMEN



86%
OF GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN AGED 11-21 THINK WOMEN IN SPORT ARE GOOD ROLE MODELS FOR GIRLS



88%
OF GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN AGED 11-21 THINK COMPANIES SHOULD BE DOING MORE TO PRODUCE CLOTHES IN AN ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY WAY

‘I’ve been inspired by body-positive videos about not feeling like you have to look a certain way.’

(Young woman, 19-21)

Self-care and self-confidence

Girls and young women say it can be challenging to relax and enjoy themselves and would like more support to do so. Some say they're worried about being themselves, and their confidence drops as they get older. They also tell us about the appearance pressures they face and the changes they'd like to see to stop girls and young women from feeling the need to change who they are.

Community and connections

Girls and young women think it's important to speak out on the issues they care about and want to work with older people to create change on topics such as loneliness. Most girls feel they have a strong support network of friends and family, and those who belong to a youth group tell us about the benefits they bring, from having fun to feeling like they belong.

Leadership and skills

Girls and young women want to see equal and diverse representation in leadership and politics. They want women leaders not to be judged on their appearance and younger people to be involved in decision-making. Many have experienced gender stereotypes at school, and feel they don't have the opportunities to explore different careers and skills.

Play and sport

Girls and young women tell us they have fun playing games online and taking part in sport and physical activity. However, sexist comments, unwanted attention and a lack of equal choices and representation have contributed to barriers that make it hard for girls and young women to feel safe and enjoy themselves both online and offline.

The environment and our future

Girls and young women are worried about the effects of climate change and global warming, causing them to be anxious, upset and angry. However, they're hopeful for the future, taking action and becoming more open to shopping and living in an environmentally friendly way. But they want companies to be responsible and do more to reduce their use of plastic.

‘I like having a social group that I look forward to seeing.’

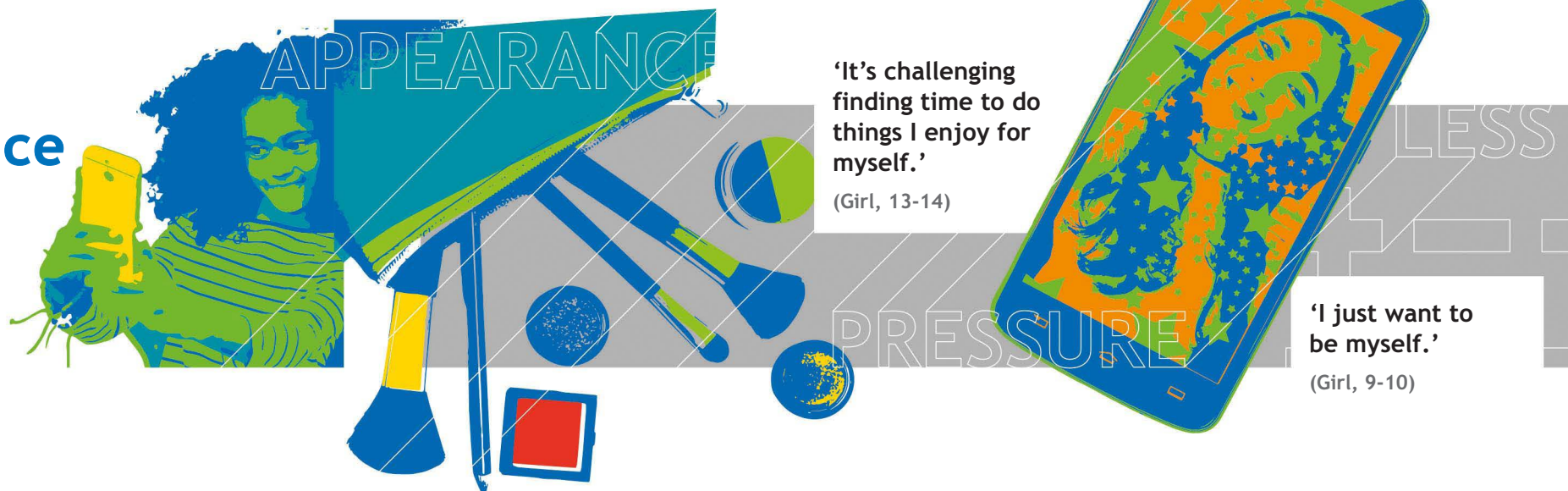
(Girl, 15-16)

‘It feels like I have to like pink and play with dolls and I can't like blue and play with cars.’

(Girl, 9-10)



Self-care and self-confidence



Girls and young women tell us they're subject to pressures about their appearance and fear criticism for being themselves or doing what they enjoy. Older girls, in particular, are significantly affected by the constant judgement of their appearance online and offline, and being made to feel uncomfortable with who

they are. Girls and young women who are from BAME backgrounds, identify as LGBTQ or say they have a disability are in some cases less likely to feel accepted and more likely to feel pressured to change who they are.

We know from our previous research with

girls and young women in lockdown, that they're spending more time on social media and have felt increased pressures in online spaces that focus on women's appearance more often than usual.

It's clear that girls and young women want more support with their wellbeing, whether that's

through finding ways to relax, encouragement to be themselves, or introducing legislation so that they don't feel the need to change the way they look.

Self-care

Almost seven in ten (69%) girls and young women aged 7 to 21 recognise the importance of having time to relax and feel calm. However, a significant minority (33%) of girls aged 7 to 16 say they often take care of others before themselves, and this increases to almost half (47%) for girls aged 17-21.

Girls and young women also reveal what stops them from

taking care of themselves and doing the things they enjoy. Almost a fifth (19%) of girls and young women aged 7 to 21 say not having enough time is an issue, increasing to over a quarter (26%) for the older age group aged 17 to 21. However, girls aged 11 to 21 tell us that lack of money (30%) and feeling guilty about taking time out for themselves (26%) is more of a concern. Both of these increase for older girls aged 17 to 21 (41% and 33% respectively).

A third (33%) of girls and young women aged 7 to 21 say they'd like more help and support to find ways to enjoy themselves and relax. This need is higher as girls get older, with 44% aged 17

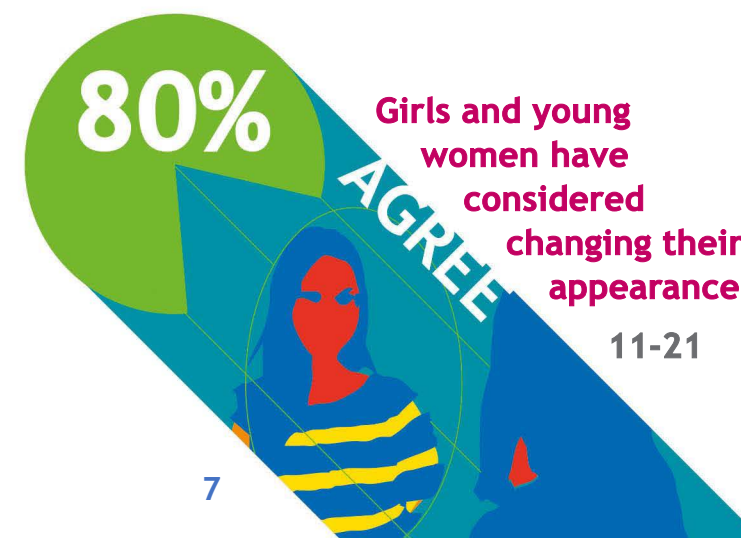
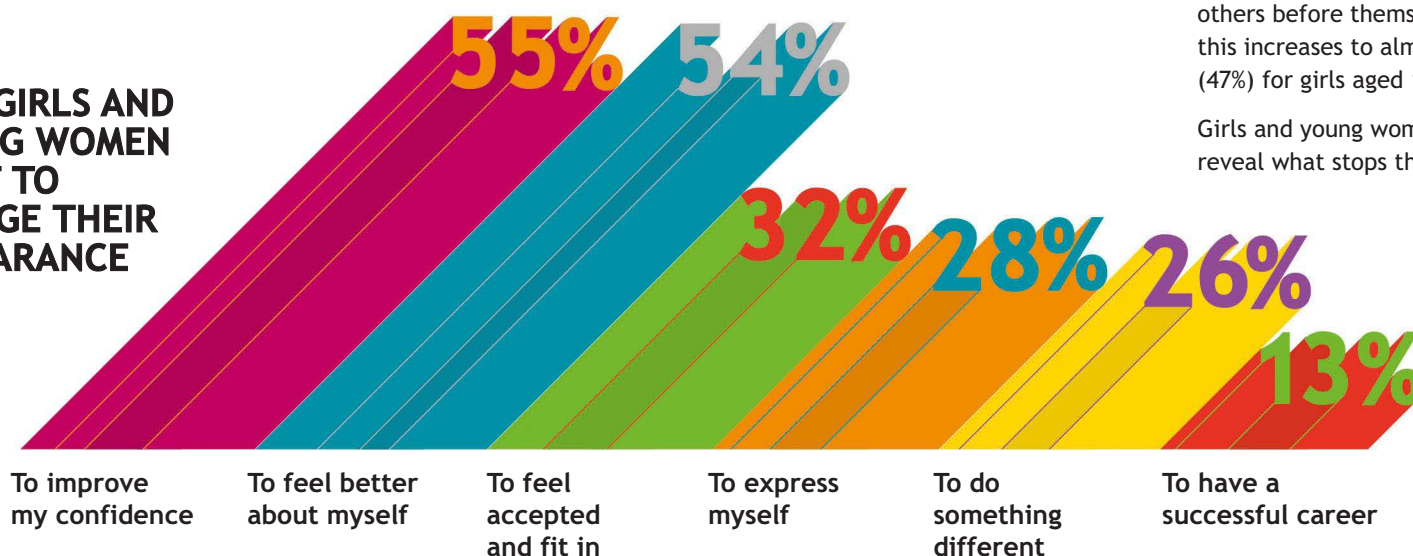
to 21 stating this. Additionally, girls and young women aged 11 to 21 who identify as LGBTQ are more likely to say that they'd like more help with this (51%), compared to those who identify as straight or heterosexual (34%).

Appearance pressures

Eight out of ten girls and young women aged 11 to 21 (80%) have thought about changing their appearance. Most often it's in the hope that it will improve their confidence (55%) and make them feel better about themselves (54%), but a third (32%) would do it to feel more accepted and fit in. The figure rises to half (50%) of girls who identify as having a disability.

WHY GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN WANT TO CHANGE THEIR APPEARANCE

11-21





'I find it hard to go through Insta because everyone looks perfect and it lowers my self-confidence.'

(Young woman, 19-21)

'Seeing models and influencers on social media is challenging when people compare themselves to them all the time.'

(Young woman, 17-18)



'Girls shouldn't be told how to look all the time.'

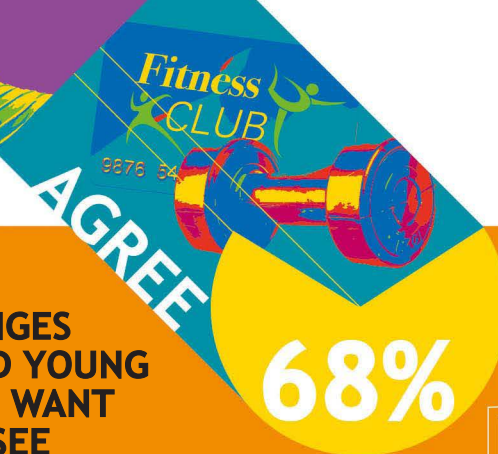
(Girl, 7-8)



There should be a minimum age of 18 for cosmetic procedures

CHANGES GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN WANT TO SEE

11-21



Diet products and weight-loss clubs shouldn't be advertised to under 18s

When it comes to social media, girls and young women aged 11 to 21 are most likely to use apps and filters on their photos because it's fun and creative (65%). But almost half (48%) say they do it to make themselves look better. Over a third (34%) won't post a photo of themselves unless they change aspects of their appearance, and this increases as girls get older.

There is a strong consensus among 11 to 21s that girls and young women should not feel pressured to change the way they look (92%). However, two out of five 11 to 21s (39%) say they feel unhappy that they can't look the way they do online. More than half (54%) of girls this age have seen adverts online that have made them feel

pressured to look different, and this is higher for girls who identify as LGBTQ (67%). Over two thirds (68%) support legislation that would protect them from seeing advertisements for diet products and weight-loss clubs under the age of 18. Three quarters (75%) agree there should be a minimum age of 18 for cosmetic procedures, such as lip fillers and Botox.

Most girls and young women aged 11 to 21 (71%) feel that newspapers, magazines and influencers on social media need to do more to stop reinforcing gender stereotypes, and over half (54%) are worried about fake news. A similar number (54%) of girls aged 7 to 16 say they have the skills to understand what is real and not real in the news, media and online, increasing to (67%) for young women aged 17 to 21.

The fear of being criticised for how they look leads girls and young women aged 11 to 21 to change their own behaviour - this includes changing what they wear (46%), refusing to have their picture taken (44%) and not speaking up in class (31%). It's important to note that girls from BAME backgrounds are more likely than their White peers to not use social media (33% aged 11 to 21 compared with 24% with those who are White) and not go to certain places (32% aged 11 to 16 compared to 19% of girls who are White) due to fear of criticism of their bodies.

Belonging and self-confidence

Seven in ten (70%) girls aged 7 to 10 say they feel like they can be themselves wherever they go. However, confidence in being themselves falls rapidly with

age. Just over half (52%) aged 11 to 16, and a little over a third (38%) aged 17 to 21 say the same.

Most girls and young women aged 7 to 21 (63%) say they feel accepted by others. However, a significant minority disagree (21% disagree). Three in five girls and young women aged 11 to 21 (58%) aren't afraid to express themselves, yet over a quarter (29%) do feel afraid to express themselves through what they wear, what they say and their interests. Girls and young women aged 11 to 21 who identify as LGBTQ are also more likely not to feel accepted by

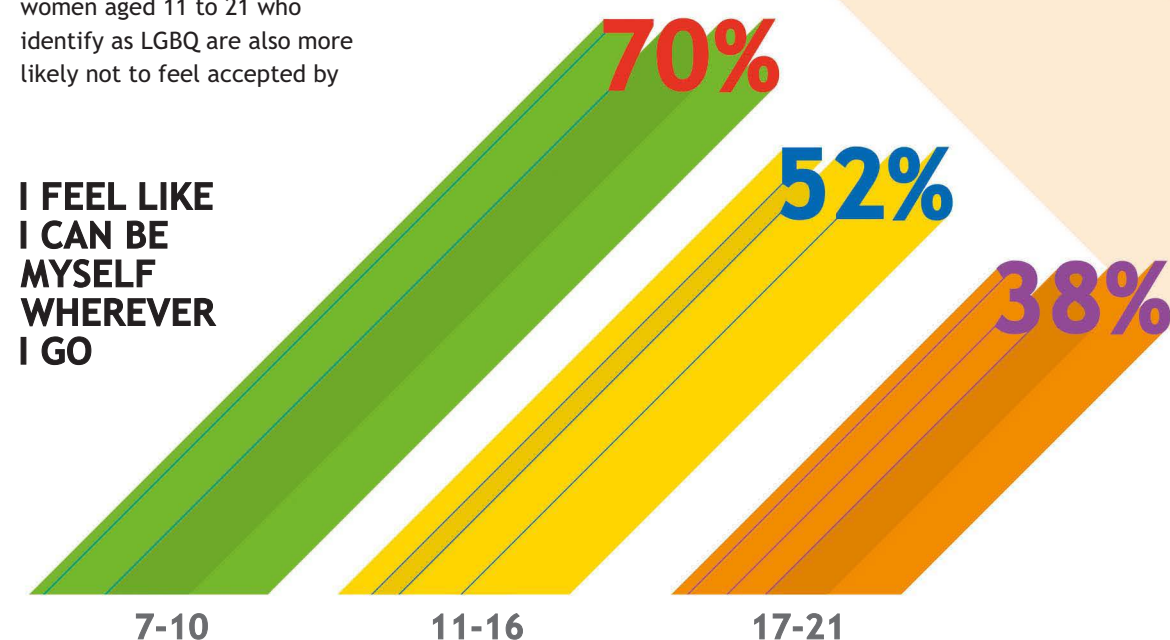
others, with 45% of girls feeling this way compared to 23% of girls who identify as straight or heterosexual.

Over a quarter (29%) of girls aged 7 to 10 and a third (33%) aged 11 to 16 find it hard to figure out their personality, interests and opinions - a difficulty that increases as girls get older, with almost half (48%) of young women aged 17 to 21 agreeing. Girls with disabilities are also more likely to agree

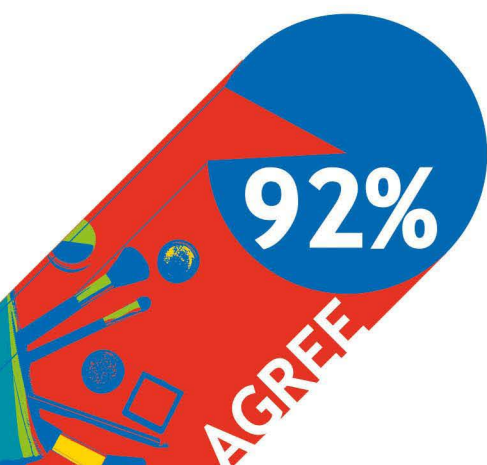
that this is harder for them, with 50% aged 7 to 21 saying this compared to 36% of girls without disabilities.

'I shaved all my hair off a few days ago. It makes me feel so happy and feel like it's time to make more changes and be myself more.'

(Young woman, 17-18)

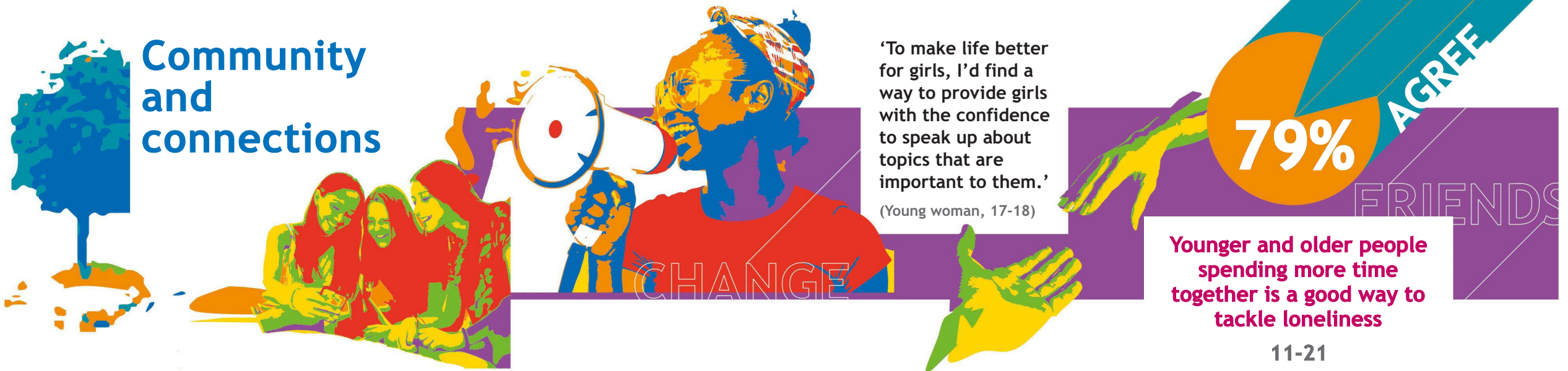


I FEEL LIKE I CAN BE MYSELF WHEREVER I GO



Girls and young women shouldn't feel pressured to change the way they look

11-21



Girls and young women want to speak out about issues that matter to them. However, they're worried that people won't listen to them, and some fear harassment for their views. A significant number of girls aged 11 to 21 feel worried and unsafe outside, with the number who say they receive unwanted attention when they go outside doubling across the age range. Girls who are LGBTQ and girls who

identify as having a disability are more likely than others to feel unsafe when they're outside.

As girls get older and their world expands, finding their place in it can be harder. Girls and young women tell us they'd like more opportunities to create change with older people, and think intergenerational connections are key to combating loneliness.

They also tell us about the importance of belonging to youth groups and clubs, with benefits such as gaining confidence, learning new skills, and making friends with people outside school and in their local community. Vitally, these groups can provide a space where girls and young women can be themselves and have fun, away from the pressures of needing to be popular or compete with others.

Speaking out

Despite the insecurities and pressures girls face, four in five (82%) aged 7 to 21 say it's essential to speak out on the issues they care about. Most girls, especially the youngest, feel comfortable speaking out around their friends and family (78%), and more than two in five (44%) aged 13 to 21 talk to

people online about the issues they care about.

More than three in five (63%) girls aged 7 to 16 say their school has taught them the skills they need to speak out confidently. And more than two thirds (69%) of girls and young women aged 11 to 21 try to stand firm on their opinions and beliefs, even when in a group with people who have different views from their own.

However, fear of being picked on or harassed stops girls of all ages from speaking out. This is less so for girls aged 7 to 16 (30%) but much higher for girls aged 17 to 21 (50%). Girls and young women aged 11 to 16 from BAME backgrounds are more likely to agree that fear of being harassed stops them from speaking out (34%) compared to only 28% of girls the same age who are White.

Intergenerational connections

Girls and young women would like younger and older people to help each other more, with four in five (82%) of those aged 11 to 21 agreeing there should be

more opportunities to do so. A similar number (79%) agree that encouraging these two groups to spend time together would help to combat loneliness.

However, some are concerned about the extent to which older people listen to and respect girls' and young women's opinions. Over half (59%) aged 11 to 21 feel this way, and two thirds (66%) feel young people have a bad reputation, for example, in the media. But just over half (54%) of the same age agree they can work together to create change on the issues they care about.

Family, friends and community

Most girls and young women aged 11 to 16 feel they have a strong support network of friends and family (79%), but confidence in this drops to two thirds (67%) for young women aged 17 to 21. However, connections with people online increase as girls get older.

As for friendships, more than half (57%) of girls and young

women aged 7 to 21 find it difficult to tell a friend when they've been upset by them, and this is similar across the age range. Our findings suggest this feeling is fuelled by a desire to be popular and liked, with over half (54%) of girls saying they want to be popular among their peers. Many girls aged 11 to 16 feel people expect them to compete against one another (41%), and this increases for those aged 17 to 21 (62%). When asked what one thing girls think would make their lives better, some said they wished girls were more supportive of one another and weren't expected to compete against each other.

'What I enjoy most about belonging to my youth group is I can find out more about my disability, and it's nice to ask advice from those who share similar issues.'

(Young woman, 19-21)



Social media makes me feel confident to speak out about the things I care about

13-21

'Brownies is fun. I like playing games and going to camps.'

(Girl, 7-8)

'Doing gymnastics with my teammates boosts my confidence because we cheer each other on and we have close bonds with each other.'

(Girl, 11-12)

'I'm able to express myself without being judged.'

(Young woman, 17-18)

Children and young people should be more involved in designing playgrounds, parks and outdoor facilities

7-21

'I feel accepted, loved and like I belong to a small community of people who are like me and respect my opinions.'

(Young woman, 19-21)

Importantly, girls who identify as having a disability are less likely to feel part of their local community, with 45% of girls aged 7 to 21 saying so compared to 28% of girls without disabilities. Girls and young women aged 7 to 21 from BAME backgrounds are more likely to agree that girls are expected to compete against each other (45%), compared to girls and young women who are White (30%).

Youth groups and clubs

Most girls aged 7 to 10 belong to a youth group or a club (82%), and this drops slightly as girls get older, with 73% aged 11 to 16 belonging to one, and 69% aged 17 to 21. The most popular group for girls to belong to are a hobby or interest group (34%) or a sports team (30%). These girls and young women aged 11 to 21 say their groups are fun and enjoyable above all else (70%). But importantly they also help girls to feel accepted and

respected (61% and 56% respectively), and to form positive connections with other people (60%).

There's consensus among girls and young women aged 7 to 21 that they're more likely to feel comfortable and be themselves when they're in a girls-only group. More than two in five feel this way (46%) with a slight increase as girls get older. A similar number (45%) of girls and young women are also more likely to speak up about the issues that are important to them in this environment when compared to a mixed group (13%).

Feeling safe outside

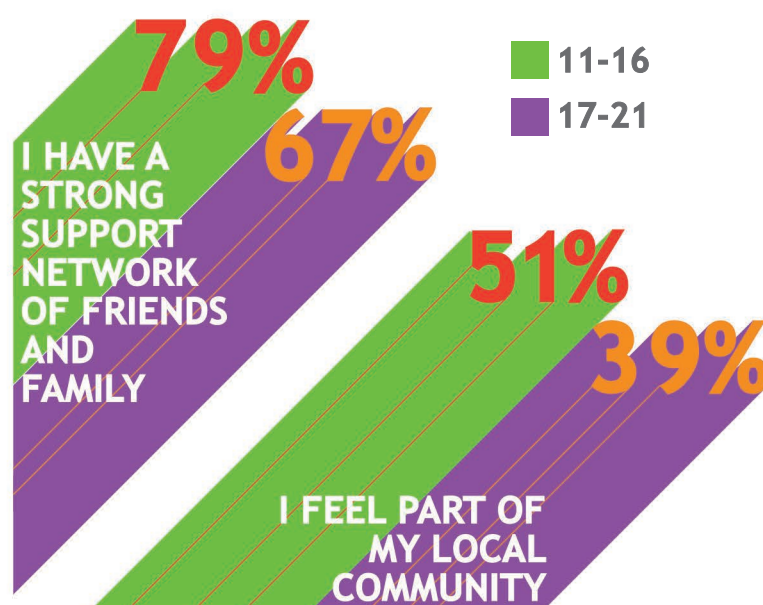
A significant minority of girls and young women feel unsafe when they go outside. Over a quarter (26%) aged 7 to 10 feel this way, increasing to two fifths (41%) for those aged 11 to 16, and almost half (49%) aged 17 to 21. Additionally, a third (34%) of girls aged 7 to 21 say they feel worried to do things outside on their own. Almost one in ten

girls aged 7 to 10 say they are often stared at and receive unwanted attention when they're outside, increasing to almost a quarter (22%) for those aged 11 to 16, and rising to 41% for young women aged 17 to 21. It's important to mention that all of these are higher for girls and young women who identify as having a disability or identify as LGBTQ. Significantly, girls and young women aged 11 to 21 who

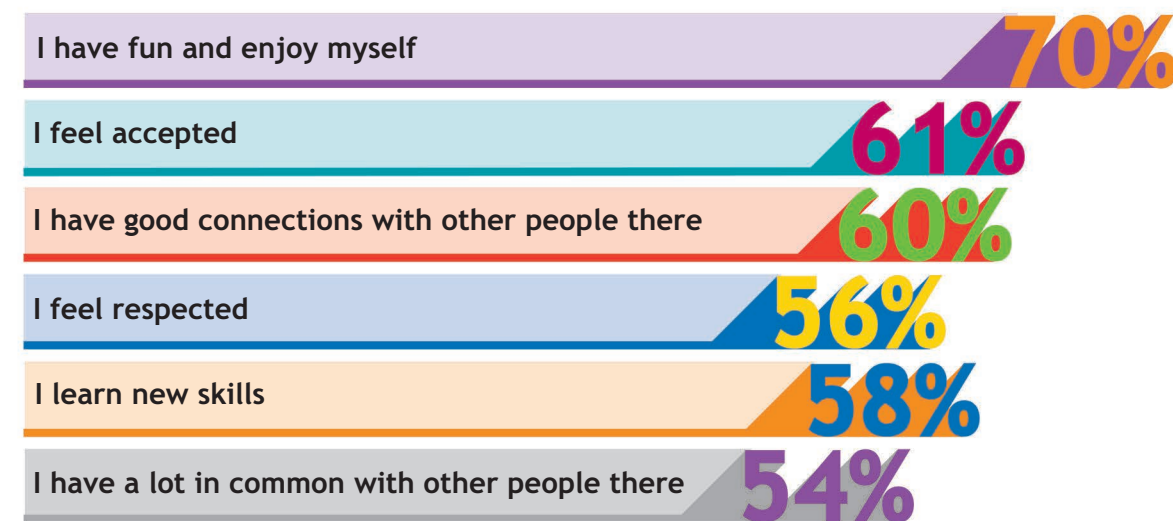
identify as LGBTQ are more likely to receive unwanted attention (46%) compared to those who don't identify this way (29%), and girls aged 7 to 21 who identify as having a disability are more worried about being outside alone (53%) compared to girls not identifying as having a disability (33%).

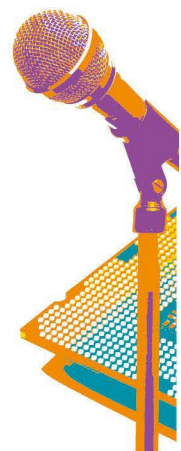
The majority (82%) of girls and young women aged 7 to 21 think that children and young people

should be more involved in designing playgrounds, parks and outdoor facilities in their local area, and almost half (48%) would like more to be done so that girls and young women can feel safe outside.

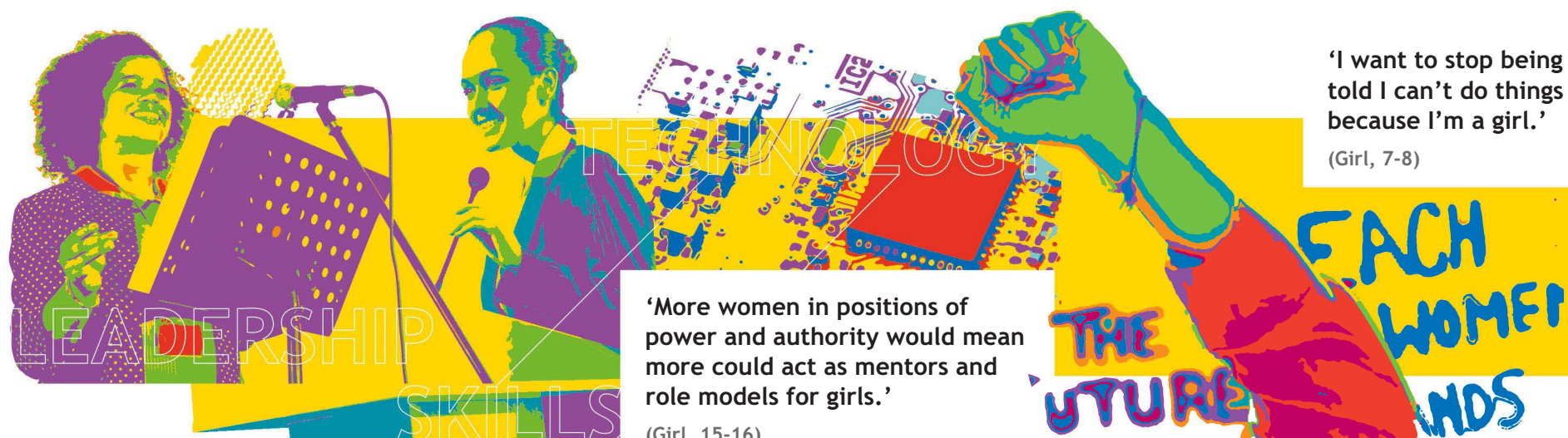


THE IMPACT OF BELONGING TO A YOUTH GROUP OR CLUB 11-21





Leadership and skills



'More women in positions of power and authority would mean more could act as mentors and role models for girls.'

(Girl, 15-16)

Girls and young women feel strongly that more action is needed to make politics equal for women and men and to encourage more girls and young women to become

leaders. Most would like to see more opportunities for young people and those from different backgrounds to get involved in decision-making and politics.

Yet girls say their voices are still not heard and people don't take them seriously.

Most girls and young women agree that their school should be doing more to tackle gender stereotyping. Girls tell us they've felt patronised, made to feel stupid or

that they can only do certain subjects or careers because they're a girl. They've felt pressured to make decisions about their future careers, but don't feel opportunities are available to them to explore different skills or careers.

Leadership and politics

Around three in four (73%) girls and young women aged 11 to 21

say more needs to be done to make politics equal for women and men. To encourage this, almost two thirds (64%) of girls this age agreed it was important for women leaders not to be judged on their appearance. A similar number said more help should be available to girls and young women to build their skills and confidence. Over half (56%) would like to see more visibility of diverse women who they can relate to, in leadership positions.

Nearly three in four (73%) girls and young women aged 11 to 21 think there should be more opportunities for young people to be involved in politics, and

THERE SHOULD BE MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO BE INVOLVED IN POLITICS AND DECISION-MAKING

11-21



WHAT WOULD ENCOURAGE MORE GIRLS AND WOMEN TO TAKE UP LEADERSHIP ROLES?

11-21

73%

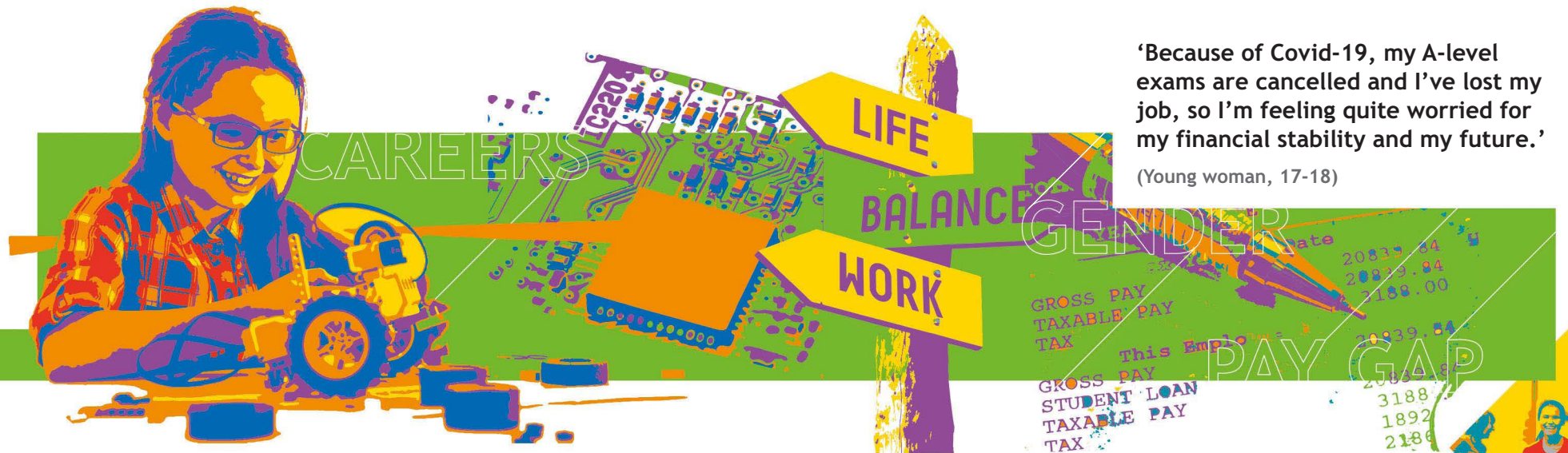
More needs to be done to make politics equal for men and women

11-21



'I feel like people underestimate girls. When I tell people I study physics they think I'm joking because I don't look like a person who would do that apparently. It annoys and frustrates me. It's weird because girls can also be engineers.'

(Girl, 15-16)



'Because of Covid-19, my A-level exams are cancelled and I've lost my job, so I'm feeling quite worried for my financial stability and my future.'

(Young woman, 17-18)

68% say there should be more political education in schools. Most girls and young women aged 7 to 21 would like to see more opportunities for people from different backgrounds to get involved in politics (71%).

Gender stereotypes, education and careers

Three in five (61%) girls and young women aged 11 to 21 feel, or have felt, under pressure to make decisions about their

future career. Just under half (47%) have felt pressured to follow a particular path, such as going to university. A significant minority (26%) don't feel opportunities are presented to them to explore different skills at school, college or university, or careers targeted traditionally at men. More than half (52%) are also concerned there are no meaningful work experience or part-time job opportunities in their area related to the career they want. A similar number (54%) find it difficult to balance

education with work and other commitments, such as extra-curricular activities or spending time with friends.

Over half (56%) of girls and young women aged 11 to 21 agree that schools could be doing more to tackle gender stereotypes. Almost a quarter (21%) of girls aged 7 to 10 and more than two in five (44%) aged 11 to 21 have been patronised or made to feel stupid because they are a girl. Some (41%) think there are still certain subjects or

careers people expect them to do because they're a girl. Interestingly, almost half (45%) of girls and young women aged 7 to 21 would consider a job in technology, with similar numbers across the ages.

One thing that would make girls' lives better is...

When asked what would make life better for girls and young women, girls aged 7 to 21 had plenty of ideas. Many suggested ways that society could treat girls and women more equally,

from changing the mindset that women aren't as good as men at certain things such as building or fixing things, to ensuring equal pay across the workforce and being able to study and have careers that are often targeted towards men. Girls want an end to the damaging stereotypes that limit their opportunities. They want to be valued for themselves, and not judged or told they have to do certain things because they're girls. They also want to see more girls and women feeling able to stand up for themselves and use their voice.



Schools should do more to tackle gender stereotypes

11-21

THERE ARE CERTAIN SUBJECTS AND CAREERS I'M EXPECTED TO DO BECAUSE I'M A GIRL



'I'd like there to be more women running things... like the country.'

(Girl, 7-10)

'Inclusiveness of women of every religious, economic and ethnic background in every part of politics, news, social media, TV, movies, would show girls that there are people like them who are doing what they aspire to do.'

(Young woman, 19-21)



Play and sport

'I'd like more computer games that have girl main characters.'

(Girl, 7-8)

'Some boys think PS4 is only made for them because they have better skills than girls. I feel some games that are made for boys make them feel they're smarter than girls.'

(Girl, 7-8)



Our previous research with girls in lockdown shows that they're spending more time online, including playing games online. In this survey, girls say they have fun and are learning through video games, but also confront sexism

especially as they get older. They want games to be a safe and equal space for girls, and for gaming companies to tackle unacceptable comments that make them feel excluded.

When asked about their experiences of physical

education (PE) at school, the youngest girls are mostly positive - they enjoy taking part and can do the same things as boys. Engagement and confidence drop with age, with fewer saying they have the same choices as boys. Many of the oldest girls also feel pressured to take part in sport and physical activity to change the way they look, rather than something to be enjoyed in its own right.

Online gaming

The majority (81%) of girls and young women aged 7 to 21 play games online. For many, the experience is positive, with 57% aged 11-16 saying it's fun and 33% agreeing they learn new things. Over a quarter (28%) aged 11 to 16 say online gaming is a good way to make new friends, increasing to 40% of young women aged 17 to 21. More girls and young women aged 11 to 21 who identify as LGBTQ agree (50%), compared to 31% of the same age who identify as straight or heterosexual.

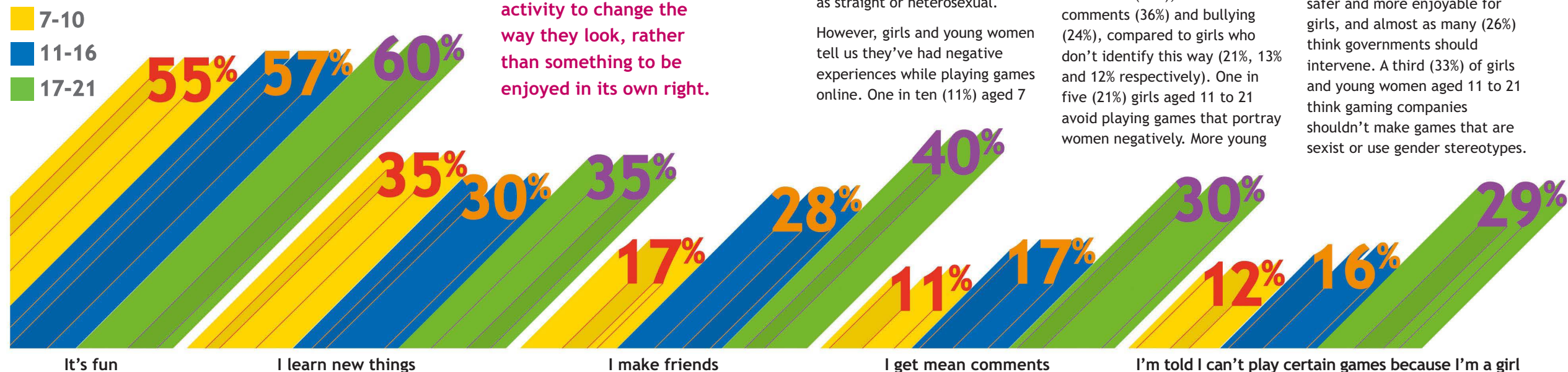
However, girls and young women tell us they've had negative experiences while playing games online. One in ten (11%) aged 7

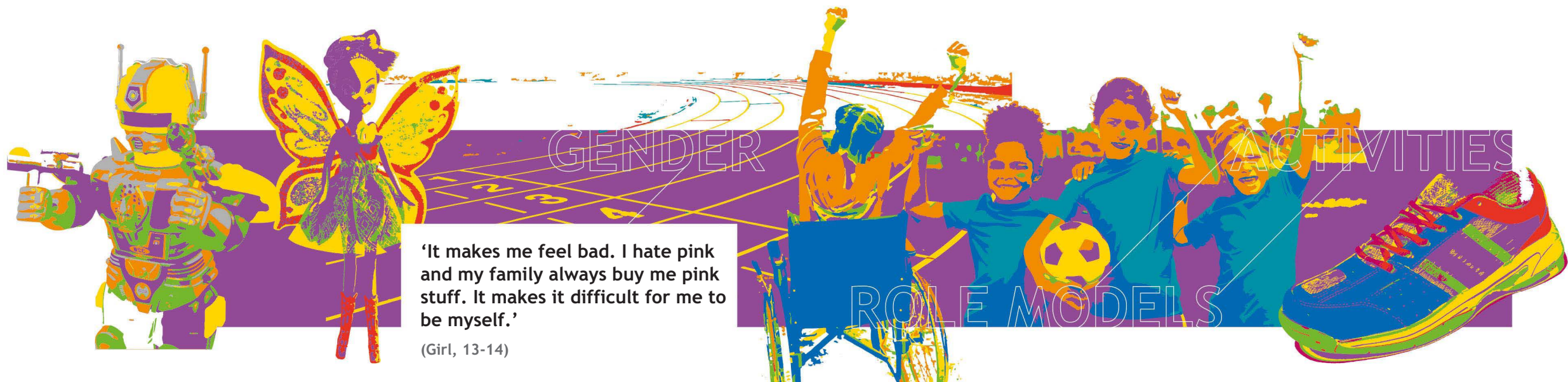
to 10 say they've experienced mean comments, increasing to 30% for those aged 17 to 21. Over one in eight (14%) girls aged 11 to 21 have experienced bullying. Similarly, a fifth (19%) of girls aged 7 to 21 say people have told them they couldn't play certain games because they're girls, and one in six 11 to 21-year-olds (17%) have experienced sexist comments playing games online. Crucially, girls and young women aged 11 to 21 who identify as LGBTQ are more likely to experience mean comments (36%), sexist comments (36%) and bullying (24%), compared to girls who don't identify this way (21%, 13% and 12% respectively). One in five (21%) girls aged 11 to 21 avoid playing games that portray women negatively. More young

women aged 17 to 21 from BAME backgrounds do this, with a third (34%) agreeing compared to 21% of women the same age who are White. Additionally, over one in ten (13%) girls and young women aged 7 to 21 hide their gender and don't tell others they're girls.

For a significant minority, this rapidly growing industry doesn't do enough to challenge gender stereotypes, sexist behaviour or bullying. A third (33%) of girls and young women aged 11 to 21 think gaming companies should be doing more to make gaming safer and more enjoyable for girls, and almost as many (26%) think governments should intervene. A third (33%) of girls and young women aged 11 to 21 think gaming companies shouldn't make games that are sexist or use gender stereotypes.

WHAT GIRLS THINK ABOUT PLAYING GAMES ONLINE





'It makes me feel bad. I hate pink and my family always buy me pink stuff. It makes it difficult for me to be myself.'

(Girl, 13-14)

Gender and toys

There is consensus that encouraging girls and boys to play with certain toys and games can affect them negatively. Almost three in five (58%) girls and young women aged 11 to 21 say this encourages people to think that gender stereotypes are true. Just under half (42%) aged 7 to 21 agree it makes it harder for girls and boys to play together, and 41% think it makes it harder for girls and boys to find out what they're good at

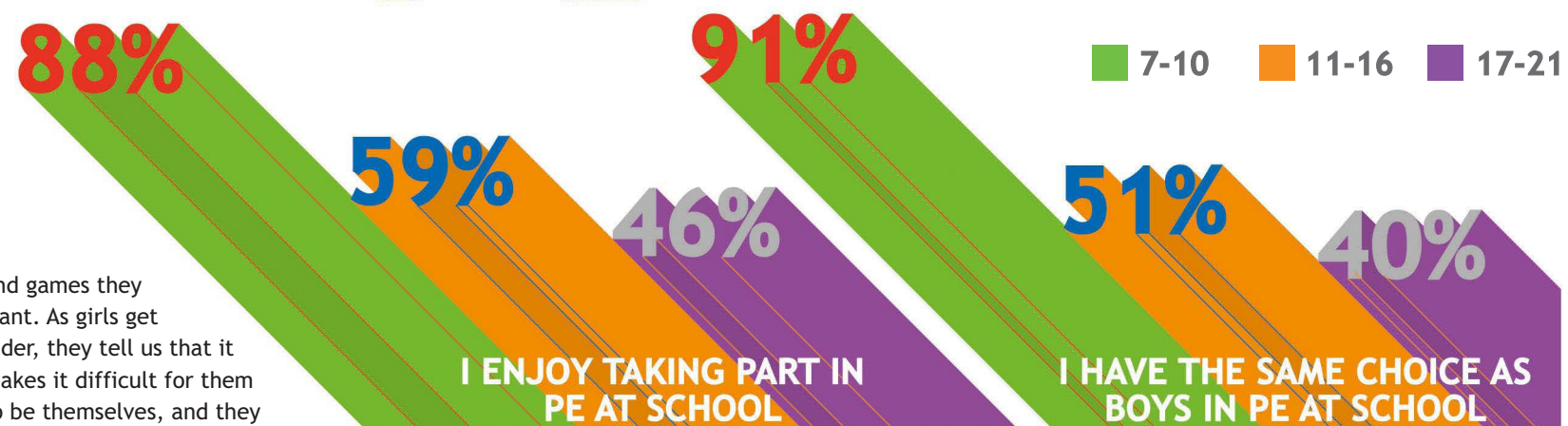
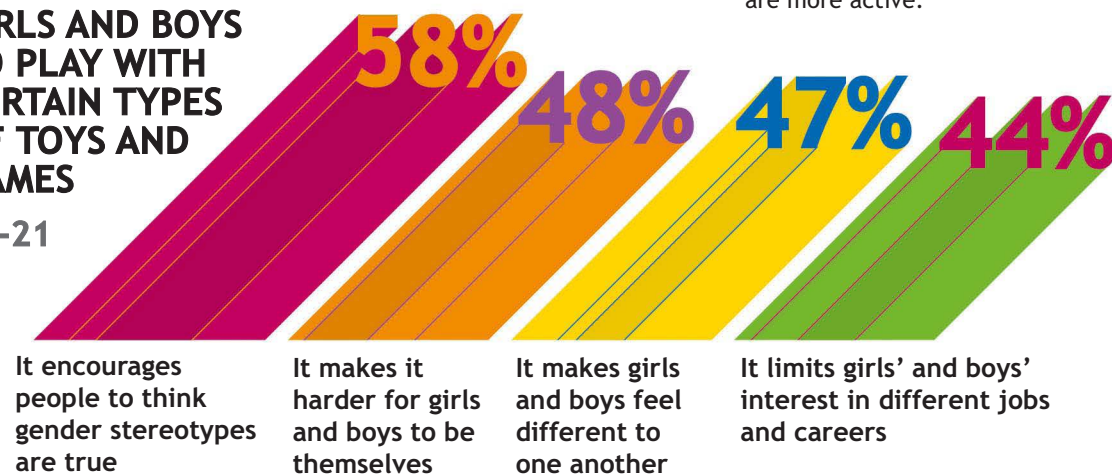
and enjoy doing, as well as reducing children's confidence to try new things (37%), or developing a wide range of skills (36%). Over a third (33%) aged 7 to 10 say it stops them from playing with toys they like.

Girls and young women of all ages are angry and frustrated that children are encouraged to play with certain toys or games because of their gender. Even at a young age, girls say it isn't fair and they don't like to be told what they can and can't play with. Instead, they would like the freedom to choose the toys

and games they want. As girls get older, they tell us that it makes it difficult for them to be themselves, and they recognise how it can stop children from discovering what they're good at and enjoy. Girls and young women also tell us that it reinforces the idea that girls are better at caring for others while boys are more active.

THE IMPACT OF ENCOURAGING GIRLS AND BOYS TO PLAY WITH CERTAIN TYPES OF TOYS AND GAMES

11-21



Sport and physical activity

Girls say their choices in sport and PE at school decrease relative to boys as they get older, from nine in ten (91%) aged 7 to 10 saying they have the same choices, to 51% aged 11 to 16, and less than half (40%) aged 17 to 21. Their enjoyment of physical activity follows the same pattern, with 88% aged 7 to 10 saying they enjoy it down to 59% of 11 to 16-year-olds, and 46% aged 17 to 21.

Most (86%) girls and young women aged 7 to 21 think women in sport are good role models for girls, and seven in ten (70%) say seeing women in

sport use their bodies powerfully makes them feel inspired. A third (32%) of girls aged 7 to 21 are turned off sport by the way the media shows women athletes, including how they look instead of their talents. Girls and young women aged 11 to 21 who identify as having a disability are more likely to think this, with half (50%) agreeing to this statement compared to those who don't consider themselves to have a disability (31%). This is also true for girls aged 7 to 10 from BAME backgrounds (39% compared to 24% of their White peers), and girls and young women aged 11 to 21 who identify as LGBTQ (43% compared to 33% who identify

as heterosexual or straight).

Two in five (42%) aged 11 to 21 feel pressured to be physically active because what they see on social media makes them want to change how they look. Again, this is higher for girls who identify as having a disability (59% compared to 42%). It's also higher for those who identify as LGBTQ (53% versus 41%).

'Women's sport should be more supported.'

(Girl, 13-16)



The environment and our future



'We need to hold big businesses accountable for the impact they have. It's not a working-class responsibility, but the role of those with billions who can really impact the globe.'

(Girl, 15-16)



'Stop chopping down the rainforests.'

(Girl, 7-8)

Our previous research into girls' lives during lockdown showed that they felt positive about the improvements to the environment during this time, such as less pollution and reduced carbon emissions. This

survey shows that girls and young women feel hopeful that climate change is being talked about more, and they're taking action on this issue. But they're also concerned, worried and angry about the

destruction of animals' habitats being caused by climate change and global warming.

Girls are receptive towards buying clothes in a more environmentally friendly way, but the

pressure increases to keep ahead of the latest fashion trends as they get older. Most agree that companies should be doing more to produce their clothes in a 'greener' and ethical way, and the use of plastic in clothing should be more transparent. Knowledge of

environmentally friendly period products increases with age, and there is a strong consensus that manufacturers should be more transparent about plastic use in their products too.

Climate change and global warming

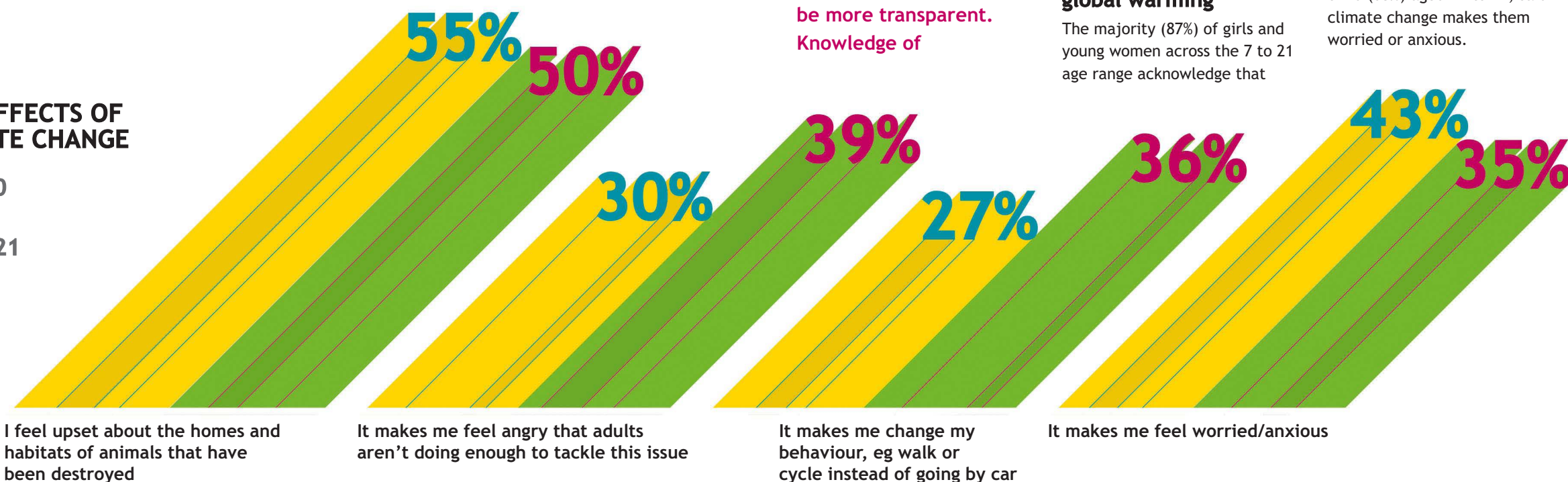
The majority (87%) of girls and young women across the 7 to 21 age range acknowledge that

their lives are affected by climate change and global warming. When asked, over half (51%) of girls aged 7 to 21 said they feel upset about the destruction of animals' homes and habitats. Over a third (36%) felt angry that adults aren't doing enough to tackle the issue, rising to 42% aged 17 to 21. More than two in five (43%) of girls aged 7 to 10, and over a third (35%) aged 11 to 21, said climate change makes them worried or anxious.

THE AFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

7-10

11-21



'We need to be more careful about what we buy and use.'

(Girl, 7-8)



'Companies need to start thinking about how much plastic there is in their products and where it ends up.'

(Girl, 7-8)



However, over a third (38%) of girls aged 11 to 21 feel hopeful that people are talking more about climate change. A similar number (33%) of girls aged 7 to 21 say their behaviour has changed, with about one in six (18%) saying they've acted to help the environment, such as taking part in climate strikes. Additionally, one in five (20%)

girls and young women aged 11 to 21 said it's made them interested in studying or working on climate change and global warming, such as in environmental science.

Fast fashion

Nearly two in five (39%) girls and young women aged 11 to 21 feel pressured to buy the latest

clothes and keep on top of fashion trends. However, half (50%) of girls and young women aged 11 to 16 think fast fashion has a negative effect on the environment, rising to 63% for those aged 17 to 21.

As a result, two fifths (39%) of girls and young women aged 11 to 21 try to buy clothes that are recycled, second-hand or from charity shops. However, two thirds (68%) of girls the same age find it difficult to shop in an environmentally friendly way.

Most (89%) girls and young women aged 11 to 21 think companies should do more to reduce the amount of plastic in the clothes they produce. A similar number (88%) agree companies should be doing more to produce clothes in an environmentally friendly way.

'Recycle more. Make less plastic. Make buses free for children and cheaper for grown-ups. Make it safer for us to use our bikes.'

(Girl, 11-21)

GIRLS' VIEWS ON FAST FASHION

11-21

Clothing companies should reduce the amount of plastic in the clothes they produce

89%

Clothing companies should be doing more to produce clothes in an environmentally friendly way

88%

I want to buy clothes in an environmentally friendly way but find it difficult

68%

Fast fashion has a negative effect on the environment

56%

Sustainable periods

Most (86%) girls aged 11 to 21 think manufacturers should be doing more to reduce plastic waste in period products, and three in four (78%) agree they should list the amount of plastic in them.

A fifth (21%) of girls and young women aged 11 to 21 say they're not aware of the different period products available to them. And four in five (80%) say there should be more education

on environmentally friendly period products.

Despite this, three in four (74%) girls and young women aged 11 to 21 say they'd consider using more environmentally friendly period products, and most (85%) girls say they should be more widely available in shops. Also, while some girls think eco-friendly period products have a negative reputation (34%), more than two in five (43%) aged 11 to 21 don't agree. However, over half (58%) say environmentally friendly period products are too expensive.

'Governments need to take the lead and make big changes, even if it upsets businesses.'

(Girl, 11-12)



MANUFACTURERS OF PERIOD PRODUCTS SHOULD

11-21

Do more to reduce plastic waste in their period products

List how much plastic is included in their period products

Advocates' postscript



Our Girlguiding advocates highlight their reflections and concerns from this year’s report.

Phoebe, 20

📺 Appearance pressures heightened through increased exposure to online adverts and images are having a detrimental impact on girls’ self-confidence and wellbeing. The rise of social media sites, combined with the emergence of influencer culture, has only sought to add to these pressures and make it more difficult for us to have time to relax and be ourselves.📺

Emma, 20

📺 It’s telling that girls are aware of the issues surrounding self-care and self-confidence, yet we’re poorly equipped when it comes to getting the support we need. Until we reach a point where girls are free from appearance pressures, and we recognise the damaging impact these pressures have on our lives, there is still so much work to be done.📺

Lauren, 18

📺 Given the current pandemic, it’s heartening to read that girls

place a high value on meaningful connections in their communities and would be willing to devote time to engaging with older people to tackle the growing problem of loneliness.

The number of young women who feel unsafe going out and receive unwanted attention when they do is incredibly worrying. We must create safe spaces for girls and young women and help them to feel more secure in their communities.📺

Francoise, 20

📺 This research highlights the political and technological awareness and ambition of girls. However, the lack of opportunities on offer, stereotyping within all sectors, and the focus on women’s appearance are continuing issues. In the future, we want to be part of a society where we can feel empowered, represented and judged for the merits of our work rather than our appearance.📺

Madison, 24

📺 Girls and young women are hugely ambitious, and the research in this report highlights our desire to develop our skills.

Additional opportunities need to be created for meaningful work experience in all sectors to give us the chance to discover careers we’re passionate about and allow us to become the leaders of the future.📺

Emily, 17

📺 Gaming continues to give girls and young women a space to enjoy interacting with friends. However, the negative impact of stereotypes continues to threaten the inclusivity of gaming, with experiences of receiving mean comments tripling between the youngest and oldest girls surveyed, hitting minority groups the hardest. Action must be taken to ensure online gaming is a healthy and safe experience for everyone.📺

Kate, 22

📺 It’s evident that young people are at the heart of current discussions on climate change. In particular, girls care about aspects that impact them, such as fast fashion and sustainable period products. There is a need for a greater focus in society on intergenerational justice and consideration of the ethical impacts of wasteful and unsustainable activities.📺

Our methodology

Girlguiding commissions CHILDWISE, leading specialists in research with children and young people, to conduct the Girls’ Attitudes Survey each year. A total of 2,186 girls and young women aged between 7 and 21 took part in the 2020 survey.

Interviews were completed online, with data first collected in schools during March, and then via a large proprietary online panel - following the government’s nationwide closure of schools due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Interviews with young women who were not in education, employment, or training (NEET) were also included via the online panel, ensuring representation of this potentially marginalised group.

The questionnaire was adapted to be suitable for the different

age groups, 7 to 10 and 11 to 21 years. Core questions were asked across the full age range, so that changes in attitudes as girls get older could be tracked.

Data was weighted at analysis to correct any imbalance in the final sample across the age range and within the geographical region. All questions are based on those answering. CHILDWISE used statistical testing to give an indication of significant differences at the standard 95% confidence level between different groups.

Fieldwork took place from March to April 2020.

Total	7-8 years	9-10 years	11-13 years	14-16 years	17-18 years	19-21 years
2,186	358	355	371	360	366	376
	Primary		Secondary		Post-16	
	713		731		742	
	England		Wales		Scotland	
	1,329		163		527	
					Northern Ireland	
					167	

Total (7-21)	Primary		Secondary		Post-16	
	White	BAME	White	BAME	White	BAME
2,026	520	120	564	100	559	163

Total (7-21)	Disability	
	Yes	No
2,021	135	1,886

Total (11-21)	Sexual orientation	
	Straight or heterosexual	Lesbian or gay/Bisexual or Bi/Questioning/ Something else
1,343	1,073	270

The data in these last three tables is from those that chose to tell us their ethnic background, whether they consider themselves to have a disability or not, and their sexual orientation.

We are Girlguiding

WE ARE FOR ALL GIRLS

We are for all girls and young women, whatever their background and circumstances. We offer them fun, exciting activities and the chance to make lifelong friends.

WE GIVE GIRLS A VOICE

We give girls the confidence, skills and information to make informed decisions. We offer a supportive, inclusive and exciting environment where they can reach their own conclusions about the world.

WE CHANGE AS THE LIVES OF GIRLS CHANGE

We are relevant to today's girls because we listen to them and constantly evolve and adapt what we offer them without losing what makes us uniquely us.

WE GIVE GIRLS THEIR OWN SPACE

We give girls a place where they can really be themselves with other girls and share the experience of growing up as a girl in today's world.



WE DISCOVER, WE GROW

Girlguiding

Registered charity number 306016

 @girlguiding  #GirlsAttitudes

[girlguiding.org.uk](https://www.girlguiding.org.uk)



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