

YOUTH PERCEPTIONS OF POVERTY IN THE UK

A REPORT BY
STAND FOR CHANGE
AND THE TRUSSELL TRUST

JULY 2023

INTRODUCTION TO THIS RESEARCH

24% of young people in the UK know someone their age that has gone hungry in the last 12 months. Stand for Change believes no child should be experiencing hunger and that, as a society, we have a collective responsibility to create a better future for young people.

I am a founding member of Stand for Change, a group of young people from across the UK, who are passionate about a common goal: fighting the causes of poverty and finding solutions for all. Working as part of the Trussell Trust's Participation team, we are using our lived experiences of financial hardship to create a better future for ourselves and others. As part of this work, we agreed that it was essential to learn more about how other young people perceive poverty in the UK, so we designed this research project, alongside Ipsos, to find out more about how young people from mixed financial backgrounds feel about poverty. **We were able to hear from 1000 11-17 year olds who were representative of young people across the UK, from various financial and social backgrounds.**

We gathered an extensive amount of data surrounding perceptions of poverty and social issues. With the help of the Trussell Trust's amazing research team, we analysed this data, highlighting overarching themes that felt important to us as young people. We also spent some time with Dan (a theatre practitioner), exploring what each theme meant to us, as well as how each finding made us feel. Ensuring that young people's voices are heard is really important to us at Stand for Change, so being part of a process like this put us at the centre of creating this research report, meaning our voices and interpretations can be shared with the world.

Through our findings, we have found a sense of unity across young people in the UK. **Reflecting our own views, we discovered that almost nine in ten (88%) young people reported feeling worried about the amount of people experiencing poverty in the UK.** As we looked through this data, we found reflections of our own experiences in the perspectives of young people, as they highlighted the structural causes of poverty and the inequalities faced by people

experiencing financial hardship. As a group, we have grown up aware of financial and social struggles, but we were surprised and saddened by the number of young people worrying about these issues outside of their own issues. It shouldn't be this way; young people should be allowed to enjoy a childhood free from social worry.

When designing the questionnaire, we were inspired by discussions surrounding need, and how this influences the amount of financial support families receive in the UK. Consequently, there is a section in this report all about what young people need to live comfortably. Some responses shocked us, such as that only **80% of young people believe being able to have three meals a day is a necessity. However, other responses felt close to our own experiences, such as the 57% (of the 11-17 year olds) who identified school uniform as a necessity.** At Stand for Change, we know how it feels not to have enough money to buy the correct school uniform, and so we weren't surprised to see this highlighted as an issue facing young people in the UK right now. Structural issues, like not having enough money to fully engage in education, negatively impact young people's emotional wellbeing and their futures. Like the majority of young people in our survey, we believe issues such as this shouldn't be happening in the UK, and young people should have the correct equipment to fully enjoy their lives, not just the bare minimum.

At Stand for Change, we believe in protecting each other, especially in times of hardship such as the current cost of living crisis. As seen in the Trussell Trust's [Hunger in the UK report](#); **14% of people across the UK faced hunger in the 12 months to mid-2022, and this translates to roughly 11.3 million people. We found that nine out of ten young people in the UK think that everyone should be able to buy enough food for themselves and their families.** Despite national social security support designed to protect people from poverty, our personal experiences have shown us it is not currently effective. As a result of this, charities such as the Trussell Trust are compelled to step in and provide

support for people struggling to afford the essentials. The prevalence of food bank use in the UK has also been indicated through our data, with the majority of young people being aware of their local food bank. It shouldn't be this way; something needs to change to decrease these issues in our society. Our report showed that young people across the UK are keen to make a difference and improve the future for themselves and others, but they need help to achieve this goal.

We are so excited to finally share our hard work with you and hope that this report encourages you to take action against poverty in the UK. We learned that many young people, like us, are worried about the current state of the UK. But there is hope: young people want to make a difference and make the world a fairer and safer place to live in. We can't do it alone, and so we hope that decision-makers listen to the perspectives of young people and work with us to create change.

Stand for Change

1

The organisations
involved in this project

2

About the research

3

Issues young people
think and worry about

10

Young people's
perspectives on poverty

17

What is needed for young
people to live comfortably?

23

How young people
view hunger in the UK

31

Young people's awareness of,
and views about, food banks

39

Personal experiences
of young people

45

How young people are taking
action and making a difference

59

Conclusion

60

Thank you

A stylized sunburst graphic composed of numerous thin, dark green lines radiating outwards from a central point, creating a sun-like effect. The word "CONTENTS" is centered within this graphic.

CONTENTS

THE ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED IN THIS PROJECT

The Trussell Trust

The Trussell Trust supports a network of 1,300 food banks across the UK. The charity provides emergency food and support to people facing hardship, and campaigns for change to end the need for food banks in the UK.

www.trusselltrust.org @trusselltrust

Stand for Change

The Trussell Trust's youth participation group, Stand for Change: Young People Against Poverty, is made up of young members from across the UK. Together, they are using their lived experience to build understanding about the causes and impacts of poverty, and encouraging more people to stand for change and end the need for food banks.

www.trusselltrust.org/youth-participation

Children in Need

BBC Children in Need is a national charity ensuring every child in the UK is safe, happy, secure and has the opportunities they need to reach their potential.

www.bbcchildreninneed.co.uk @bbccin



ABOUT THE RESEARCH

This research project was formed after discussions with the Stand for Change panel who wanted to gain a greater understanding of the views of young people from across the UK on the topics of poverty and hunger.

The Stand for Change panel, and staff at the Trussell Trust worked together with the market research agency Ipsos to build a questionnaire exploring these areas with young people. **Ipsos was commissioned to undertake an online survey among a representative sample of young people aged 11-17 years old from across the UK.** A quota sample of young people were interviewed, with quotas set by age of child, gender of child, social grade of chief income earner, and the region of residence of the parents. **Interviewing took place between 11-23 January 2023 and used statistical techniques to ensure that the data collected was representative of young people aged 11 to 17 in the UK.** Prior to interviewing young people aged 11-15 years old, parental permission was gained.

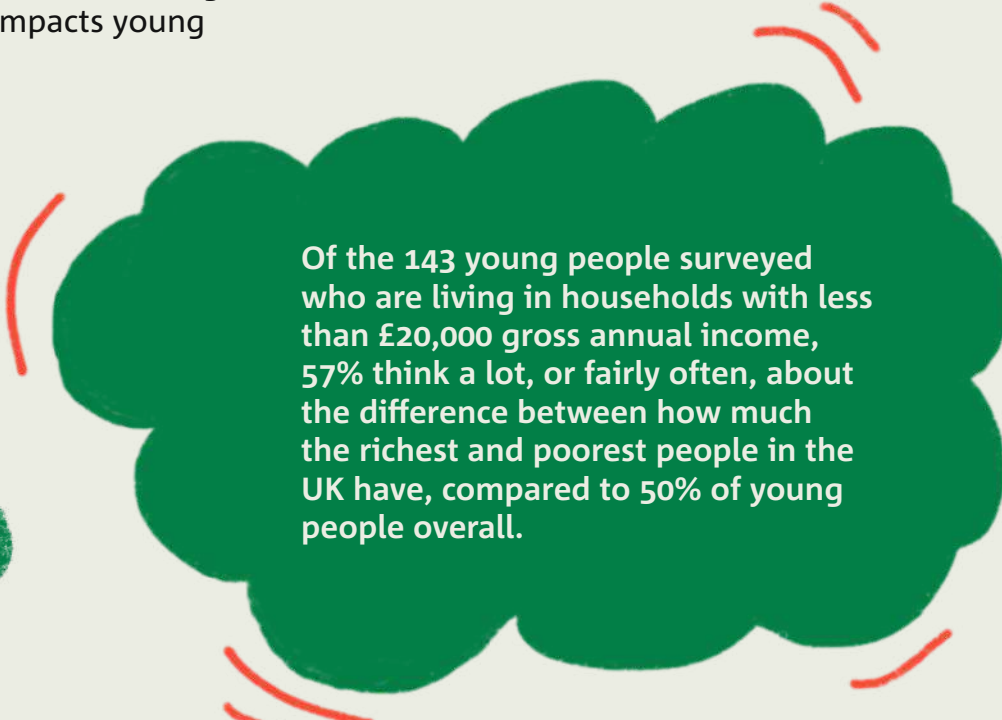
Upon completion of the data collection, there were two stages of analysis; an initial stage, in which a smaller group of the Stand for Change panel processed the data to look for key themes to explore. The second stage examined these key themes in a participatory workshop, run by theatre facilitator Dan Boyden, to better understand the perspectives of young people from the panel.

The views of the young people from the panel have guided this entire research project and are intertwined in the analysis, and amplified through quotes throughout the following pages.

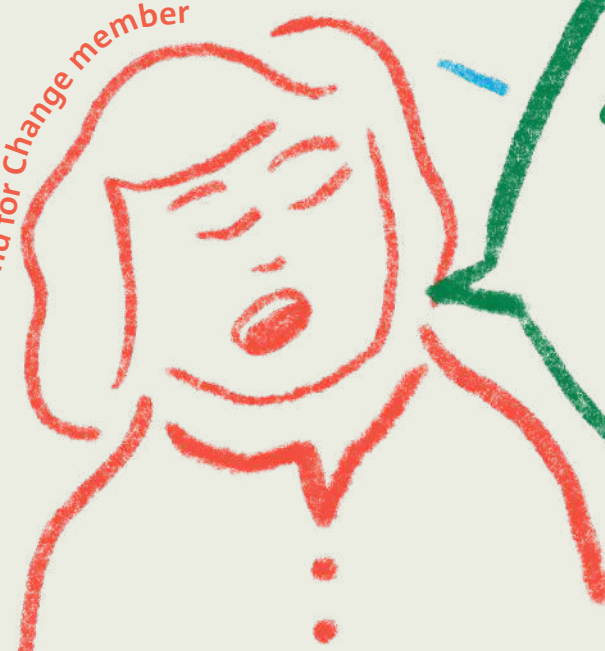
ISSUES YOUNG PEOPLE THINK AND WORRY ABOUT

Most young people from across the UK think about issues of poverty and inequality in the UK. **For around one in five young people, these are areas that they say they think about a lot.**

For many young people across the UK, these thoughts are not just passing thoughts. Throughout this report, the Stand for Change panel explores how poverty impacts young people across the country.



Of the 143 young people surveyed who are living in households with less than £20,000 gross annual income, 57% think a lot, or fairly often, about the difference between how much the richest and poorest people in the UK have, compared to 50% of young people overall.

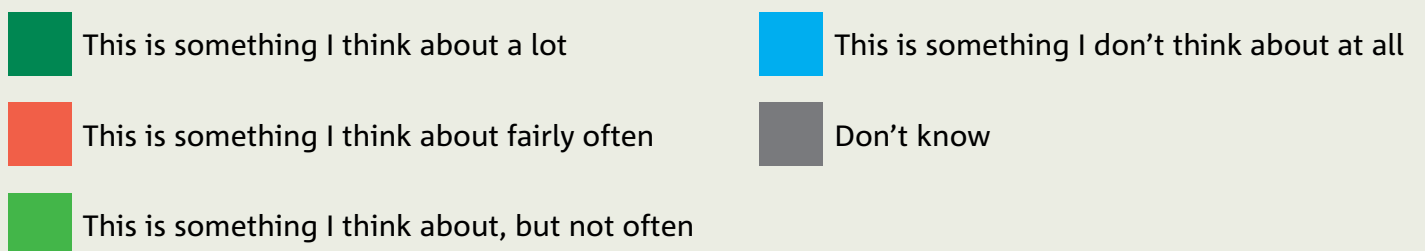
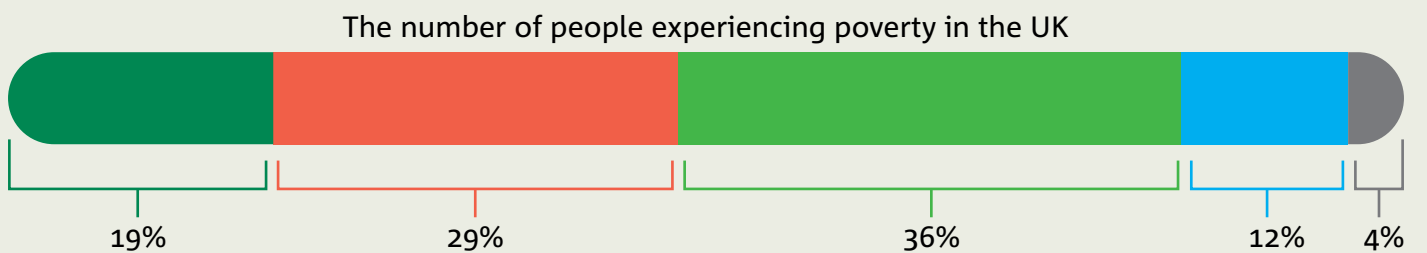
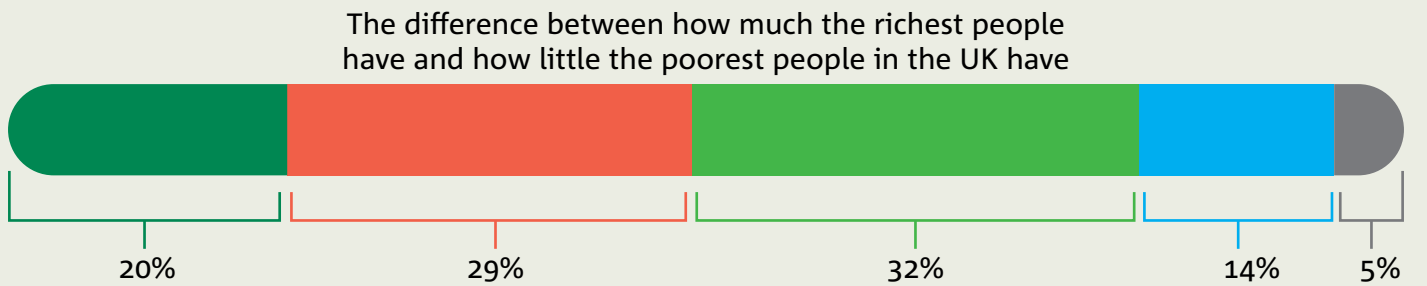
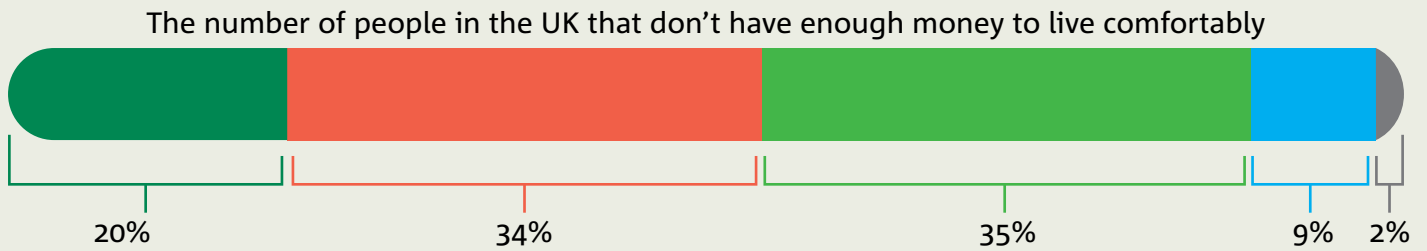


Stand for Change member

“I’ve got friends who are scared of growing older because of the cost of living—that they will be working and still not have enough.”

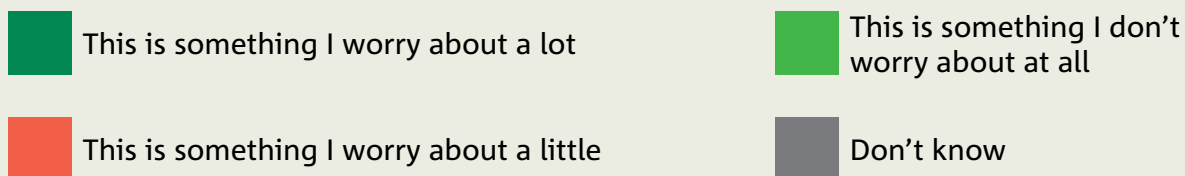
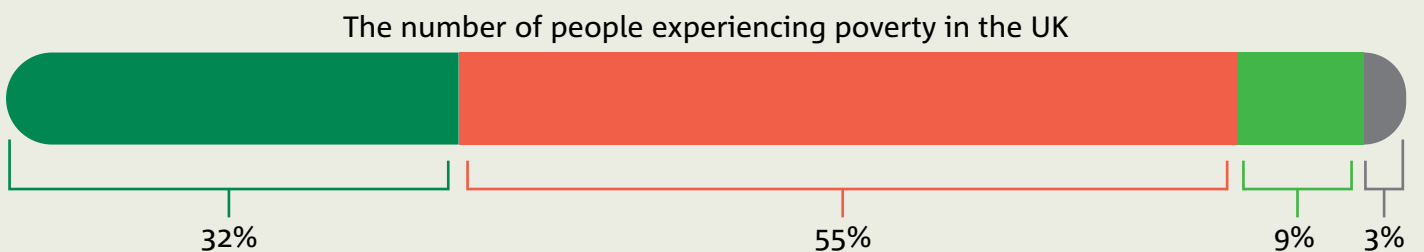
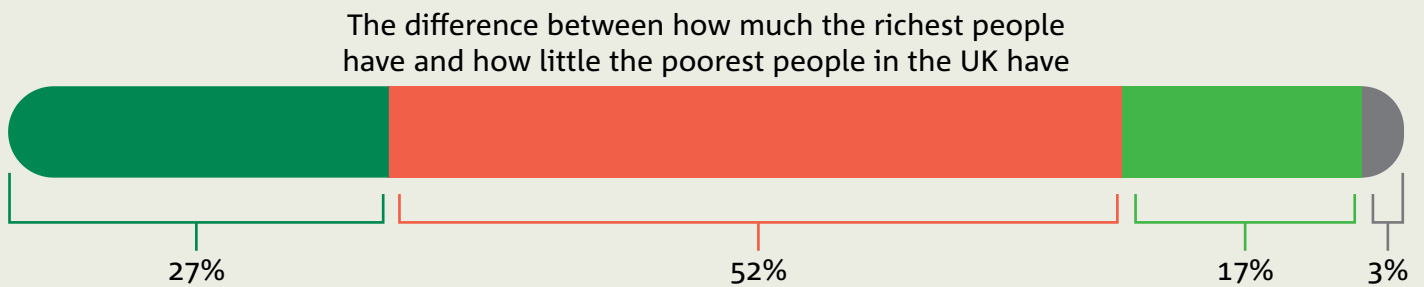
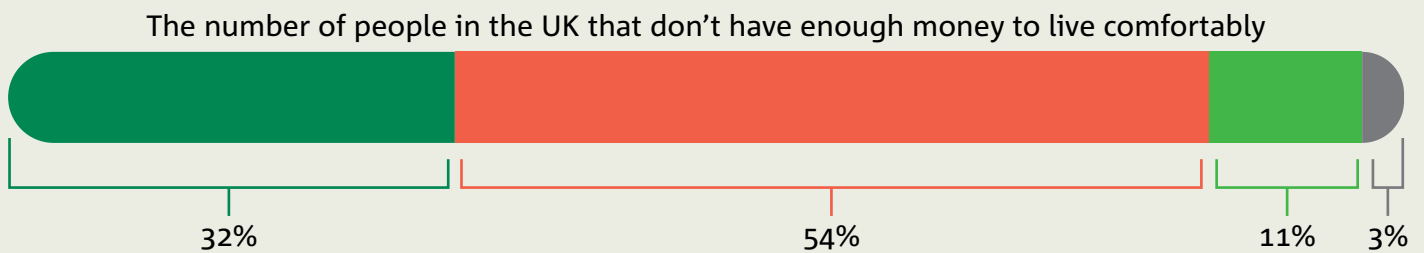
For each of the following issues, is it something you personally think about, or is it something you don't think about?


Base: n=1,000 UK young people aged 11-17,
online fieldwork conducted: 11 - 23 January 2023



For each of the following issues, is this something you worry about, or not?

Base: Young people aged 11-17 who think about any of the following issues:
The number of people in the UK that don't have enough money to live comfortably (n=885), The difference between how much the richest people have and how little the poorest people in the UK have (n=815), The number of people experiencing poverty in the UK (n=842), online fieldwork conducted 11-23 January 2023



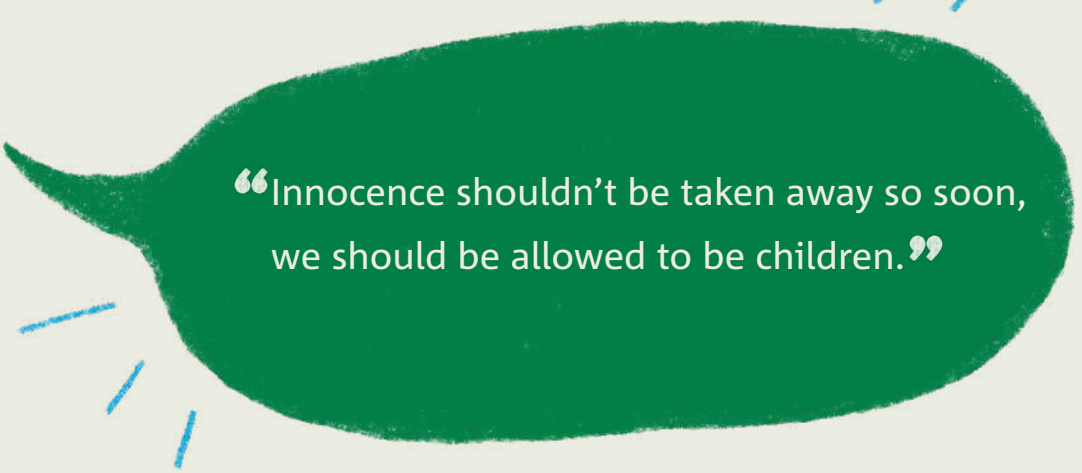



“So crazy to think about that big gap [between richest and poorest]... there doesn't seem to be a middle ground any more, where people just have enough.”

Beyond just thinking about an issue, the vast majority of the young people surveyed who thought about any of the issues (88%) said that they worry about the number of people experiencing poverty in the UK, as seen on this chart. This not only demonstrates that young people are aware of poverty, but that they also understand that poverty is something to worry about.

Stand for Change members expressed sadness at the number of young people worrying about poverty, and saw this as part of a wider societal problem, where too many people do not have enough money to afford the essentials that we all need, such as food, clothing and heating. Stand for Change and the Trussell Trust believe that, together, we can create a more just future, where everyone can afford the essentials.

Stand for
Change
member



“Innocence shouldn't be taken away so soon, we should be allowed to be children.”

YOUNG PEOPLE'S PERSPECTIVES ON POVERTY

REASONS YOUNG PEOPLE THINK THAT PEOPLE ARE LIVING IN POVERTY IN THE UK

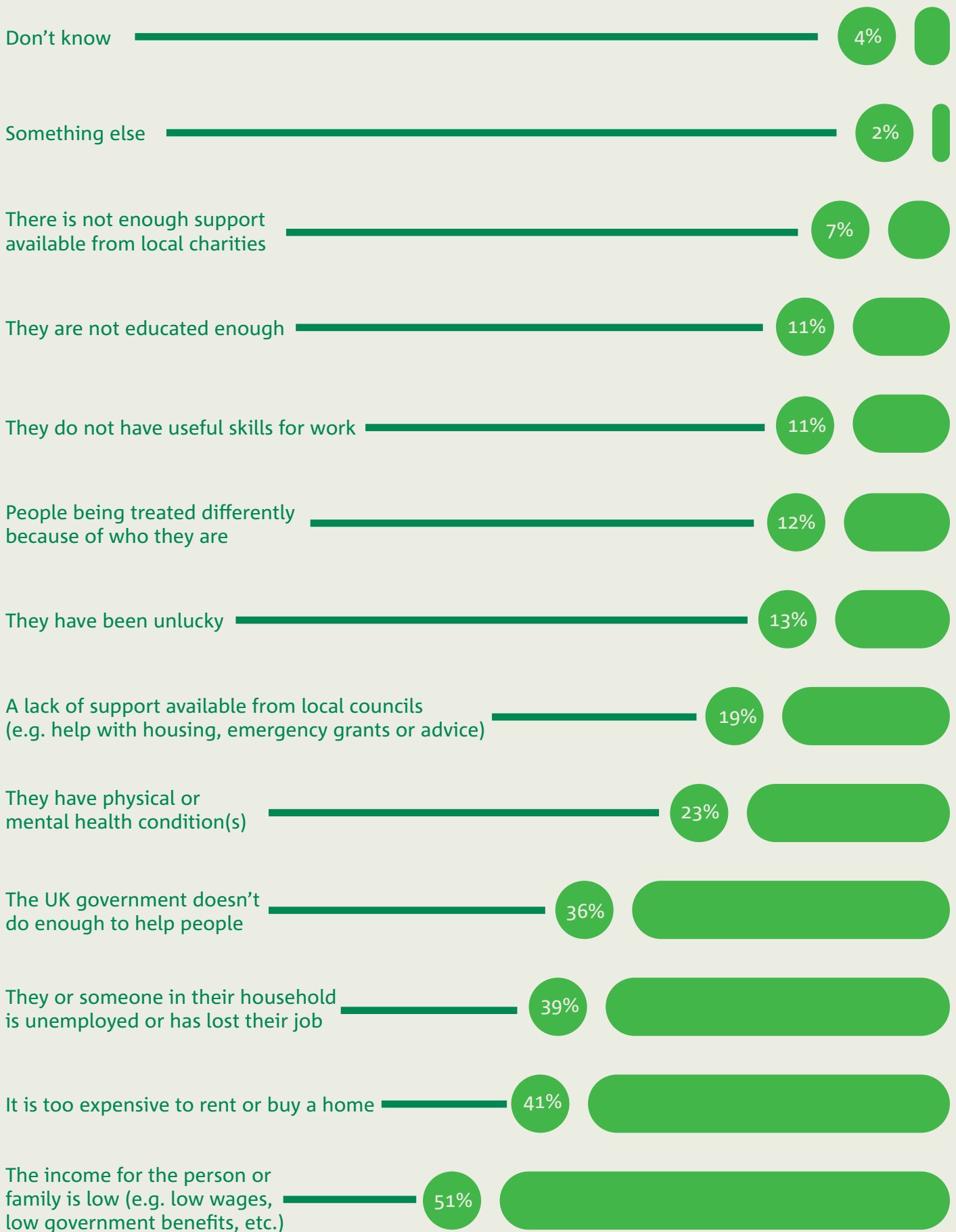
The young people surveyed believe that the main reasons for people living in poverty in the UK today are low wages, the cost of renting or buying a home, unemployment or job loss, and the UK government not doing enough to help people. **The data suggests that young people do not see the reason for a person to be living in poverty in the UK as the fault of that individual, since only the minority of them chose education level (11%) or not having useful skills (11%) as reasons.** Instead they saw people living in poverty in the UK as a symptom of broader structural issues. The notion of poverty as a structural fault, rather than an individual one, emerges repeatedly throughout this research

and is something that resonated particularly strongly with the Stand for Change members.

As a group of young people with different backgrounds, hometowns and interests, Stand for Change members are united through their experiences of financial hardship. As such, they understand that poverty impacts different people in different ways and intersects with other issues within society, such as mental health and the availability of affordable housing. Stand for Change and the Trussell Trust are committed to challenging the structural issues that lock people into poverty, and to seeing an end to the need for food banks.

Thinking about people living in poverty in the UK today, what do you think are the main reasons people are in this situation?

Base: n=1,000 UK young people aged 11-17,
online fieldwork conducted: 11 - 23 January 2023



47% of young people in households with less than £20,000 gross annual income selected 'The UK government doesn't do enough to help people' as a reason people are living in poverty compared to 36% of young people aged 11-17 overall.

30% of young people in households with less than £20,000 chose physical or mental health conditions as a reason that people are living in poverty, possibly reflecting an increased awareness of the impact of health on the financial situations of individuals and families.

Stand for Change panel members are very aware of the challenges of in-work poverty. They reflected on the stress that many people feel when trying to provide for themselves and their families but finding their earnings aren't sufficient to cover the costs of essentials.



Stand for Change member

“In-work poverty is increasing. People are taking action and working, but this shows there is nothing they can do to increase their income to what they need.”

Stand for Change member

“We need structural change. It is not as easy as just working yourself out of poverty.”



Stand for Change member

“In a way, all of this [stats about poverty] links back to the government; what support is offered? What opportunities are given?”



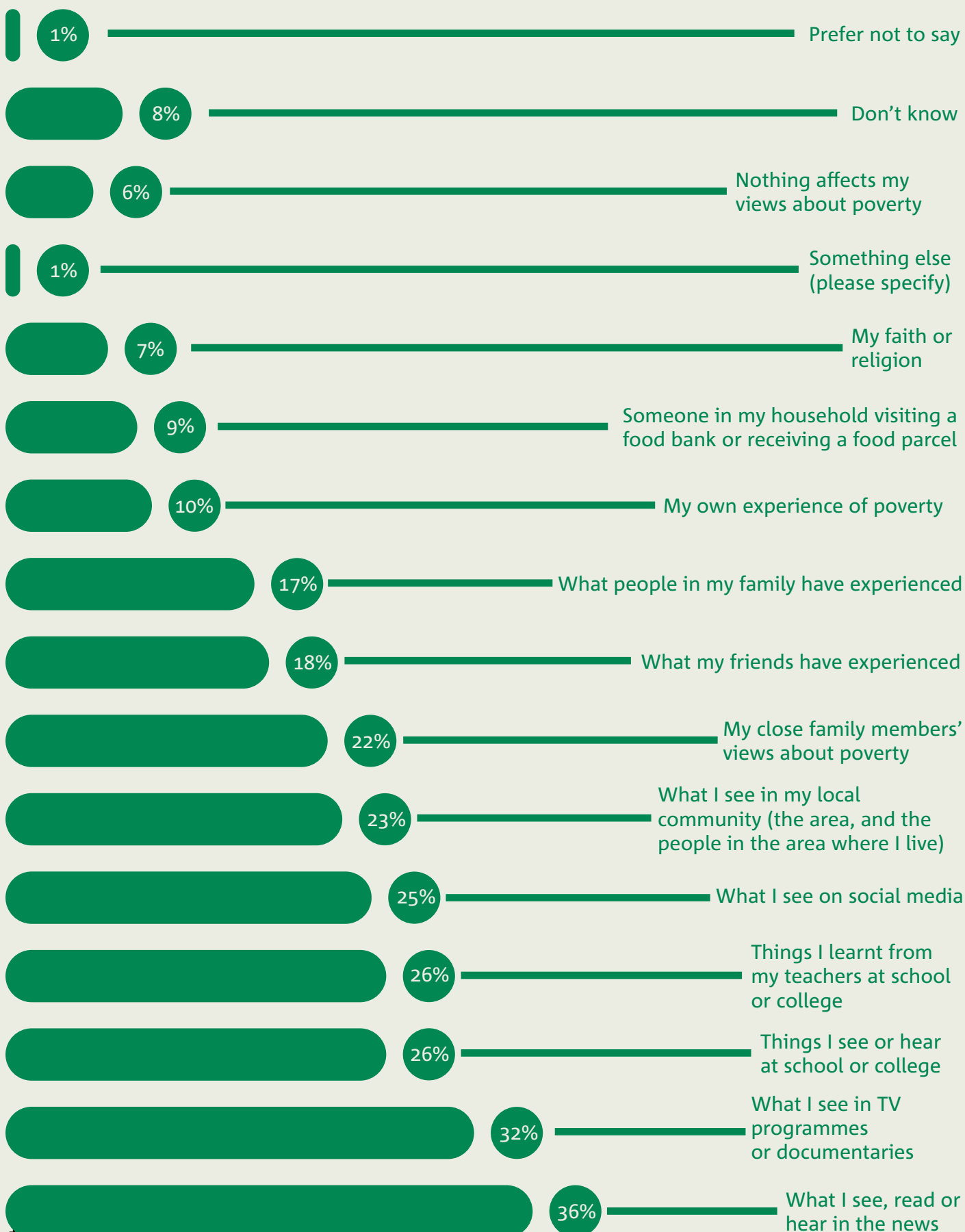
“People need jobs, but it’s not that easy to get a job.”



Stand for Change member

What, if anything, affects your personal views about poverty the most?

Base: n=1,000 UK young people aged 11-17, online fieldwork conducted: 11 - 23 January 2023



WHAT INFLUENCES YOUNG PEOPLE'S VIEWS ABOUT POVERTY

Stand for
Change
member



The Stand for Change panel is aligned with young people across the UK in what influences their personal views about poverty. For around a third of young people (36%) what they see, read and hear in the news influences their personal views about poverty the most, closely followed by what they see in TV programmes and documentaries (32%). The power of the media to influence young people's views, both for people who have experienced poverty, and others who are less affected by financial hardship, is significant.

School also plays a key role in influencing views about poverty. Because of this, the Stand for Change panel has developed a set of [toolkits](#) not only to help educators support young people experiencing financial hardship, but also to empower young people themselves to take action.

“Based on experience, it seems like today's generation is more aware of how poverty comes to be. Most adults will just say that poverty is from lack of finances/income.”

“Teachers need to be better equipped to talk to students who might be experiencing financial hardship.”

Stand for Change member

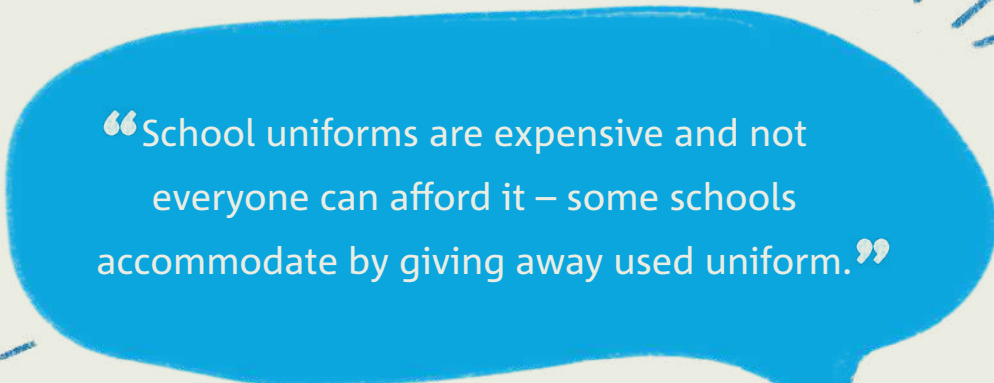
**WHAT IS
NEEDED
FOR YOUNG
PEOPLE TO LIVE
COMFORTABLY?**

When asked what a young person must have to live comfortably, the majority of the young people questioned selected having a bed (81%) and being able to have three meals a day if they want to (80%), followed closely by being able to heat their home and afford hot water. These were all necessities that young people agreed on, but the Stand for Change panel was surprised that 100% of young people had not selected these.

More than half (57%) of the respondents identified school uniform as a necessity. As a place where young people spend the majority of their time, learning, socialising and developing skills for their futures, school plays a hugely important role in a young person's life. When a young person cannot fully participate at school due to barriers like the cost of the uniform, they are placed at

a disadvantage and risk facing stigma from their peers and teachers about their inability to come to school with the appropriate uniform. Members of Stand for Change are personally aware of how not being fully equipped with the correct uniform at school can have a significant practical and emotional impact, leading to feelings of isolation, dread and embarrassment. No young person should have their education disrupted because of not being able to afford the essentials.

This is a specific example of a structural issue that has affected young people living in poverty and facing financial hardship. Stand for Change want to raise awareness about the barriers specific to young people facing these challenges and campaign for a more just future.



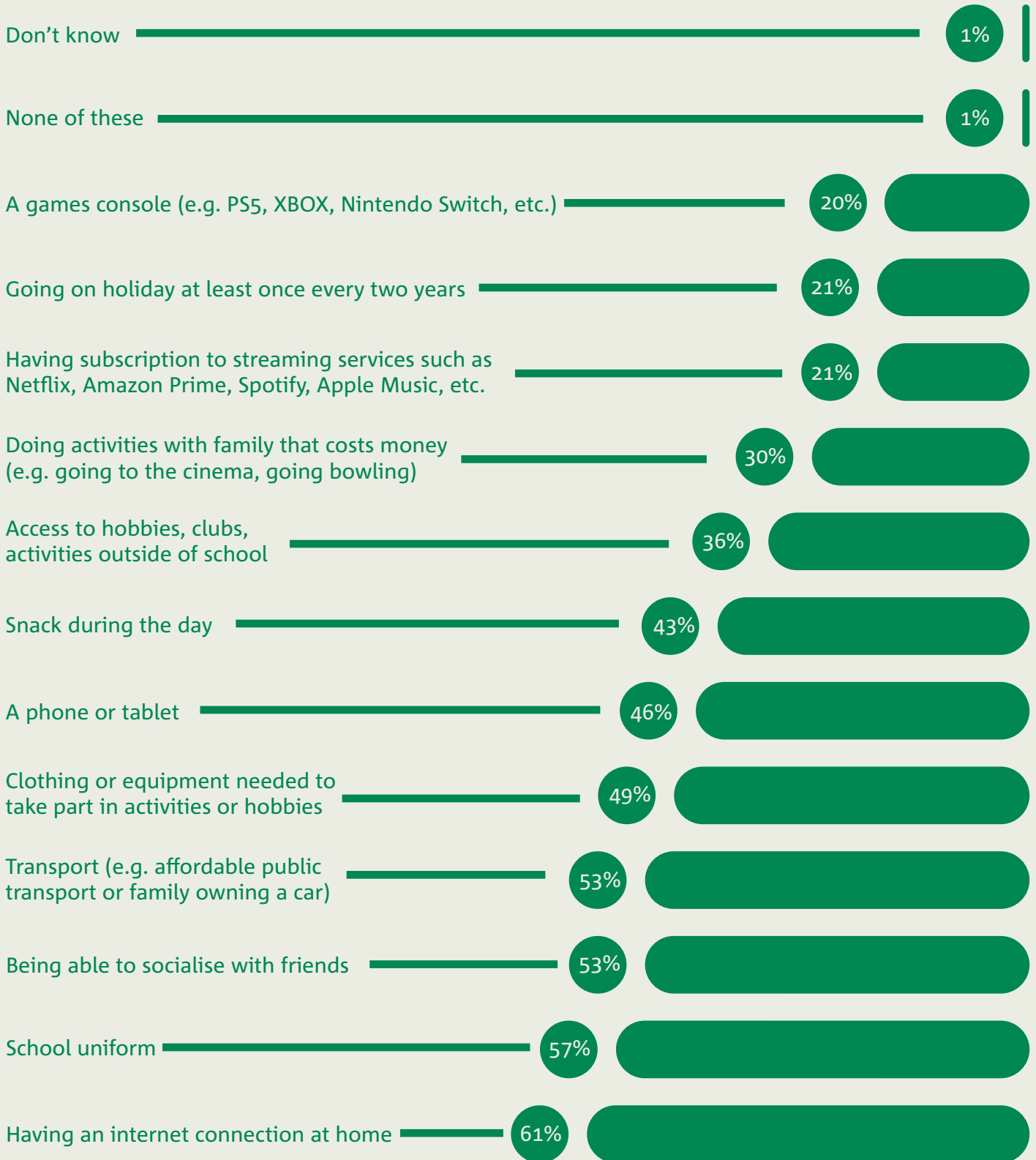
“School uniforms are expensive and not everyone can afford it – some schools accommodate by giving away used uniform.”



Stand for Change member

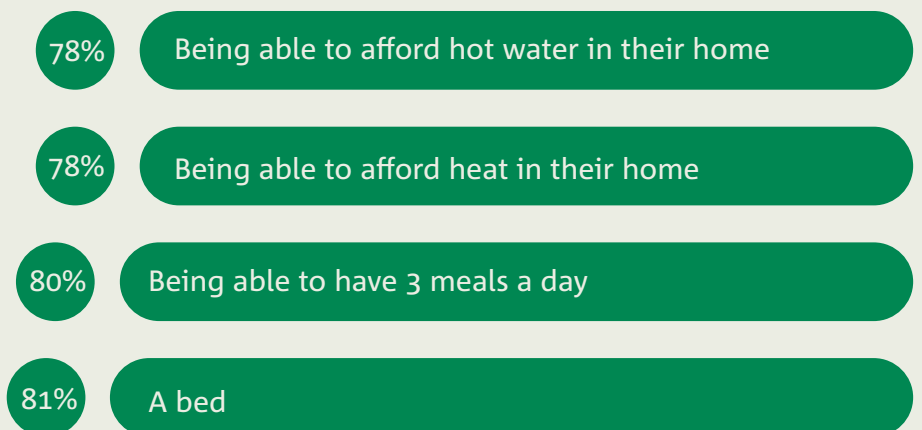
Young people from wealthier households were slightly less likely to acknowledge that some of these items were essential. For example 74% of the 327 young people whose households had an annual income


of over £55,000 thought that having a bed was needed to live comfortably compared to 86% of the 143 respondents questioned whose household had less than £20,000 annual income.



Which, if any, of the following things do you think a young person must have to live comfortably?

Base: n=1,000 UK young people aged 11-17, online fieldwork conducted: 11 - 23 January 2023





“I want [you] to be persuaded by emotion, as these everyday items are a necessity to every single young person to live comfortably. No young person should have to worry about where their next meal is coming from or struggle financially. I want [you] to hear us as young people and make a change – put your feet in their shoes for a moment and tell me if you could cope? These people do, every day!”

Stand for Change member

“People just want to have the basics, it’s about dignity.”

Stand for Change member



“I wore the wrong shoes to school one day and when I said I didn’t have others the teacher just said “I’m sure your mum can afford a cheap pair of proper shoes from Primark”. But no, she can’t afford it, and I don’t want to ask her when I know she hasn’t got the money.”

Stand for Change member

HOW YOUNG PEOPLE VIEW HUNGER IN THE UK

Stand for Change member



“Hunger isn’t an individual’s issue, it’s a systemic issue.”

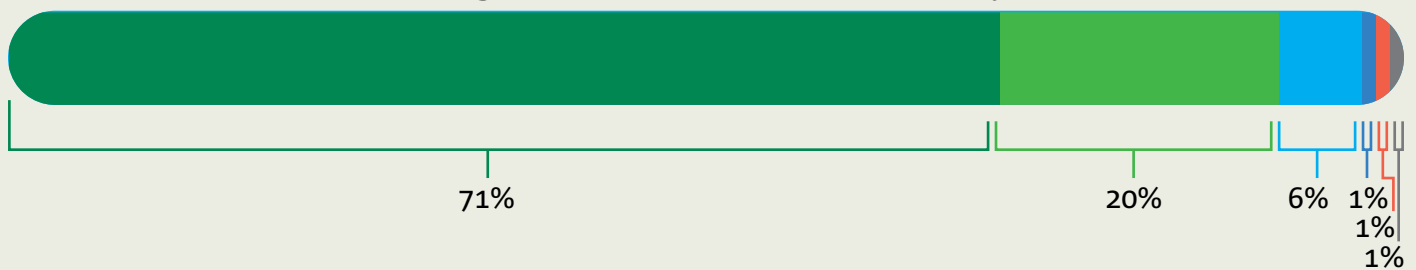
Nine out of ten young people (91%) agreed that everyone in the UK should be able to afford to buy enough food for themselves and their families. From this research we can see that young people feel strongly that no one should be pushed into poverty and hunger. **Three quarters of young people agree that it’s possible to stop hunger in the UK, but a quarter of those questioned are more pessimistic or unsure if this change is possible.**

Stand for Change panellists see that, as a society, we believe in compassion and helping each other. We created systems like our National Health Service, fire service, and social security system, because we believe in protecting each other. Our social security system is supposed to anchor any of us from being dragged into poverty, but the Stand for Change panel can see from their own experiences that currently it’s not working effectively for everyone.

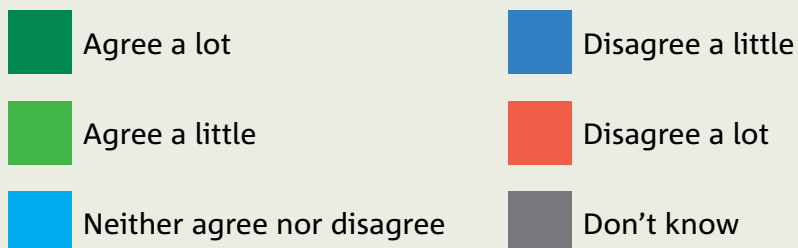
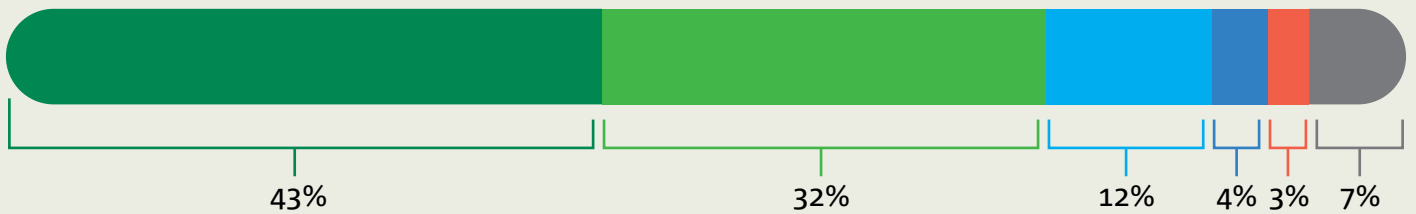
To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

Base: n=1,000 UK young people aged 11-17,
online fieldwork conducted: 11 - 23 January 2023

Everybody in the UK should be able to afford to buy
enough food for themselves and their family



It is possible to stop hunger in the UK



WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR TRYING TO END HUNGER IN THE UK?

The majority of young people think that the UK government should take responsibility for trying to end hunger in the UK (72%), while very few think that it should be the responsibility of people experiencing hunger themselves (9%). Stand for Change members mirror the views of their peers and recognise that there are many ways that people and communities become entrenched into poverty – sometimes for generations. It is difficult to break the cycle of poverty as an individual but, with structural change and more opportunities for young people, Stand for Change participants have genuine hope that we can end hunger.



Stand for Change member

“Young people are calling on the government to make things change.”

Who, if anyone, do you think should take most responsibility for trying to end hunger in the UK?

Base: n=1,000 UK young people aged 11-17,
online fieldwork conducted: 11 - 23 January 2023



HOW YOUNG PEOPLE THINK THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HUNGER IS CHANGING

Stand for Change member



“It’s scary because we don’t know what will happen next. It could be worse next year. I feel powerless.”

Two-thirds or more of young people believe that the number of people experiencing hunger in the UK is getting worse – they think that more people are experiencing hunger this year than the year before (77%) and that even more people will be experiencing hunger in a year from now (66%). It is hard to break free from hunger when there isn’t enough money to cover the cost of essentials. Young people worry about the future and how they will cope.

Stand for Change want to make a better future for themselves and others, but they also question if it should be the responsibility of young people to push for the change that is needed. They want older generations, and those with the power to enact change, to want to help build a better future for the next generation – one without the need for food banks.

Do you think that the number of people experiencing hunger in the UK is more, or less than a year ago, or do you think it has stayed about the same?

Base: n=1,000 UK young people aged 11-17,
online fieldwork conducted: 11 - 23 January 2023



Views on the number of people experiencing hunger in the UK in a year from now

Base: n=1,000 UK young people aged 11-17,
online fieldwork conducted: 11 - 23 January 2023



Stand for Change member



“It’s disturbing that [hunger] is increasing. We have advancing technological progress, so why do we still have hunger. It feels like [people in power] have turned their backs on people who go hungry, and are just getting rich.”

YOUNG PEOPLE'S AWARENESS OF, AND VIEWS ABOUT, FOOD BANKS



For the young people who participated in this survey, who were born after 2006, the number of food banks in the UK has grown hugely during their lifetimes, and there have been record numbers of food parcels given out by food banks in the Trussell Trust network over the last few years. This increase in need and awareness of food banks was reflected in the research, with **nine out of ten young people having heard of food banks in the UK and six out of ten saying they are aware of food banks in their own local area.**

This awareness of food banks comes from a variety of sources; **many have seen food bank collections in their local supermarkets and three out of ten young people have seen information about food banks in national media. A further quarter have seen content about food banks on social media.**

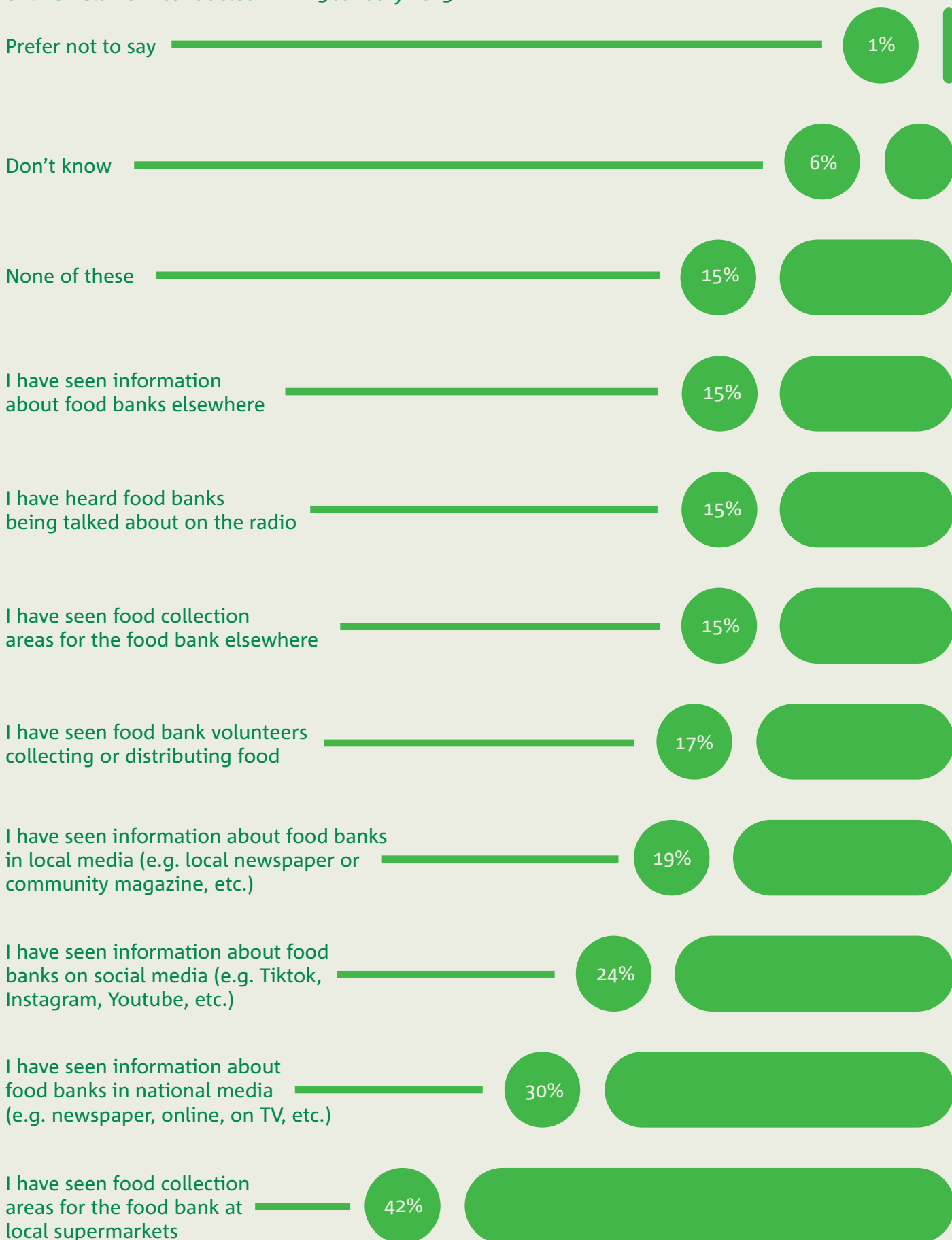
There is also regional variation in the awareness of food banks, with half of young people in South England (49%) and Scotland (51%) saying they have seen food collection their local supermarkets (42%), compared to 40% of young people living in the Midlands and 33% living in London.

61% of young people are aware of food banks in their local area.

90% of young people aged 11 – 17 have heard of food banks.

Which, if any, of the following have you personally seen or heard about in the past 12 months?

Base: n=1,000 UK young people aged 11-17,
online fieldwork conducted: 11 - 23 January 2023



As reflected on earlier, school is a huge part of young peoples' lives. The Stand for Change panel sees this space as hugely important both for supporting young people who are experiencing poverty and for educating their peers on the topic and empowering them to take action for change. The school space that was traditionally for learning, growing and socialising is increasingly being used as a hub to support people in the local community that cannot afford the essentials.

20% of young people have seen information about their local food bank in their school or college.

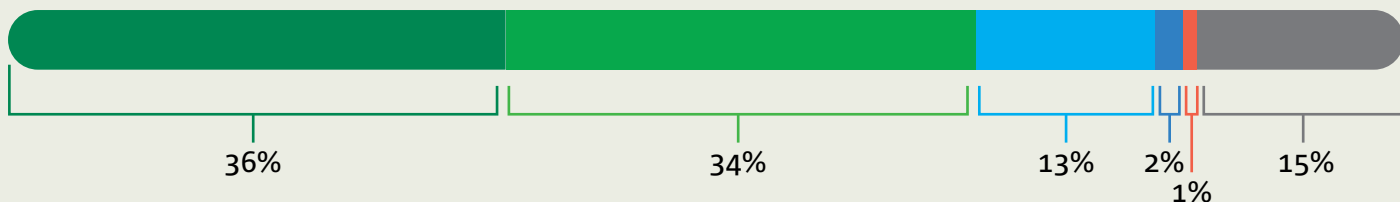
11% of young people said that their school has a food bank or similar organisation where students and parents can collect food.



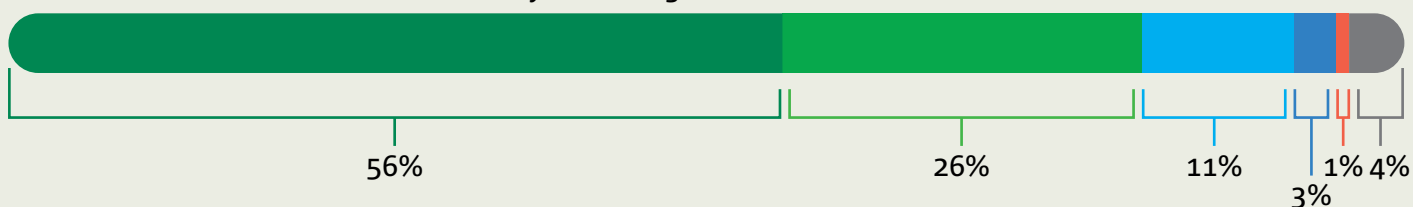
To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

Base: n=1,000 UK young people aged 11-17,
online fieldwork conducted: 11 - 23 January 2023

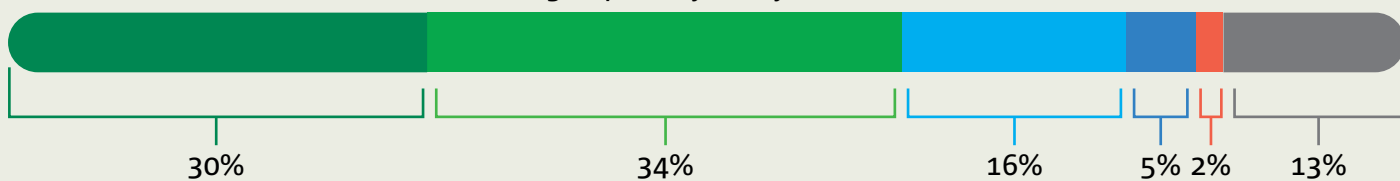
There are people in my local area that need food banks



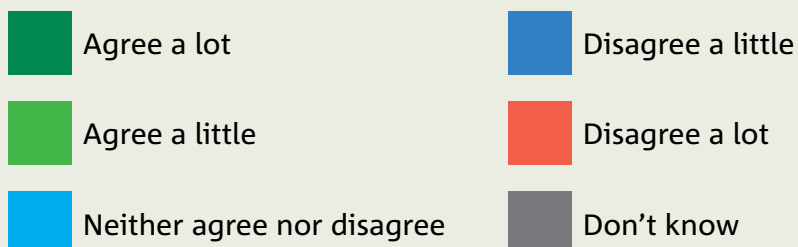
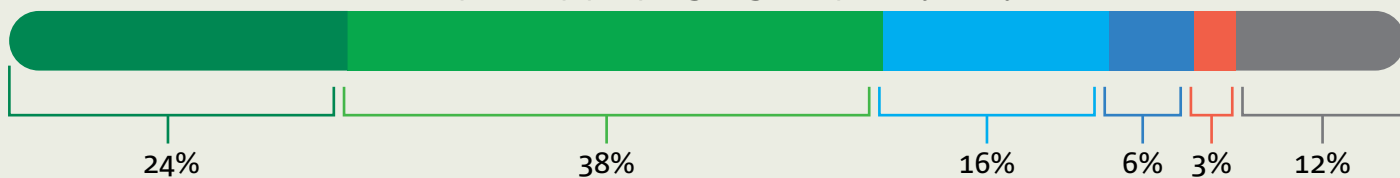
Nobody living in the UK should ever be in a position where they need to get food from a food bank



Food banks aren't enough to help people from being in poverty in my local area



Food banks help to stop people going into poverty in my local area



“I think the government should take action –something like increasing Universal Credit. They should stop relying on food banks as it is not a solution, just a substitution.”

Stand for
Change
member

Young people have a strong awareness of food banks and the role that they play in their local communities. They are aware of the level of need that some people in their community have for food banks, with **seven out of ten agreeing that there are people in their local area who need support from a food bank.**

There is a feeling among the Stand for Change panel that is also reflected among young people in the UK, that food banks aren't enough to help people facing hardship in their local area. **64% of young people across the UK recognise that food banks aren't enough to help people from being in poverty in their local area.**

Despite the strong level of understanding and awareness of the important role that food banks are currently playing in their communities, **eight out of ten young people think that nobody living in the UK should ever be in the position where they need to visit a food bank in order to put food on the table.** This view is reflected by the Stand for Change panel who, alongside the Trussell Trust, are committed to challenging the structural issues that lock people into poverty, and seeing an end to the need for food banks.



TOMATOES
SAUCES

NOODLES
COFFEE
VEGETARIAN

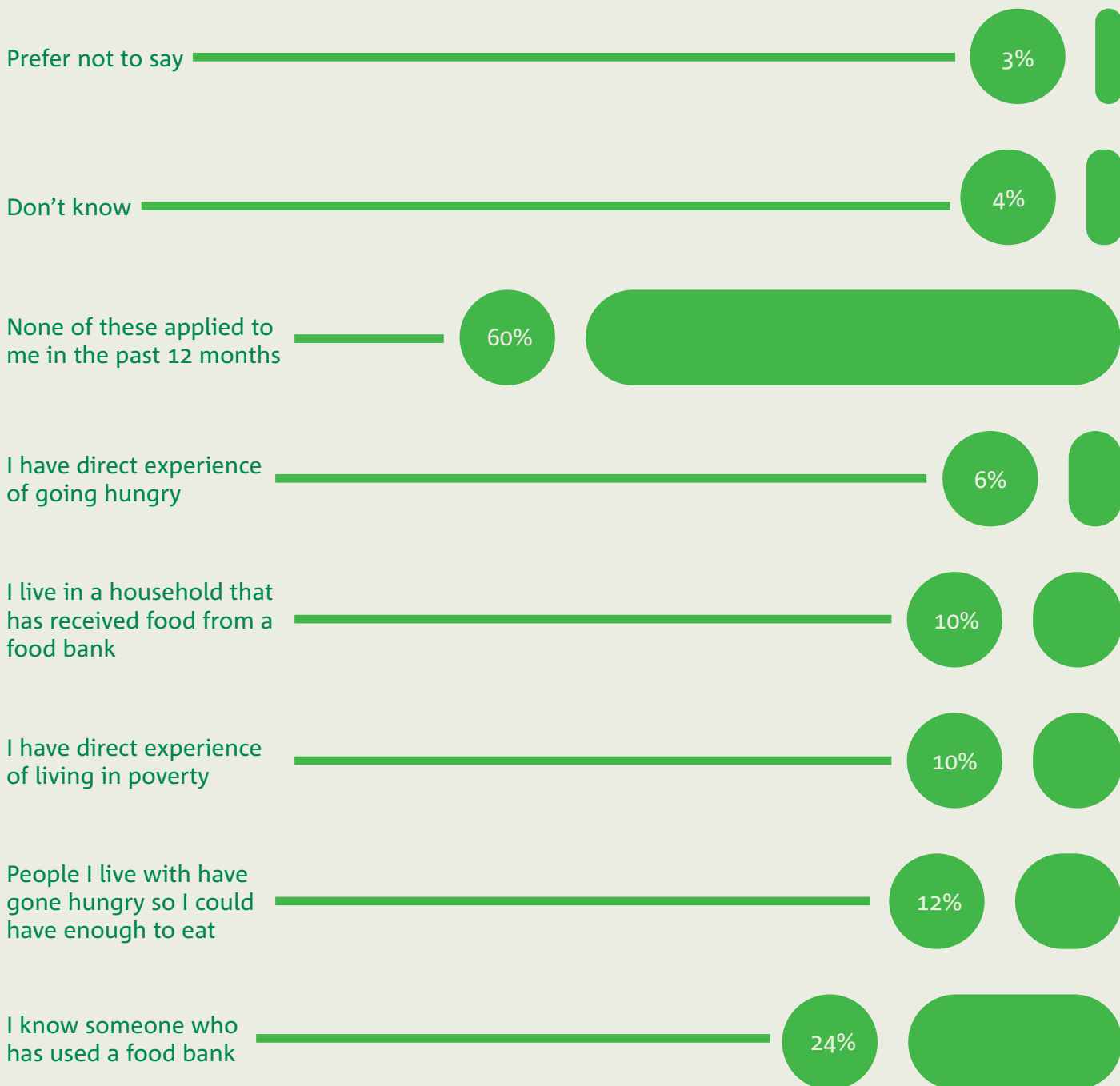
A

BEEF TOMATOES

PERSONAL EXPERIENCES OF YOUNG PEOPLE

Which, if any of the following applies to you personally in the past 12 months?

Base: n=266 UK young people aged 16-17,
online fieldwork conducted: 11 - 23 January 2023



Stand For Change member



We asked just the 266 16-17 year olds about any related personal experience they have had in the last year. **12% said that people they live with have gone hungry so that they could have enough to eat and one in ten said that they have direct experience of living poverty, with the same proportion saying that they live in a household that has received food from a food bank.** No one in the UK should ever be in the position where they can't afford the essentials, but this research shows that many, including a sizeable proportion of young people, have experiences of poverty.

“Young people living in poverty know their own struggle and have tried to get out of it. No one wants to be in poverty.”

Stand for Change member



“Already an alarming amount of people are going hungry, but we also need to highlight hidden hunger. If we knew the realities, this would be higher.”

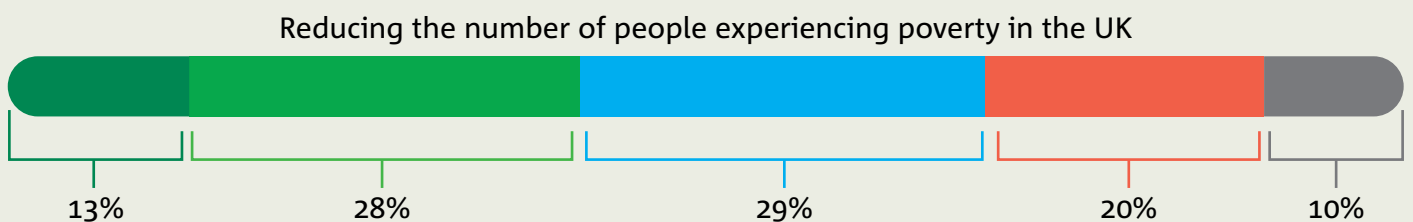
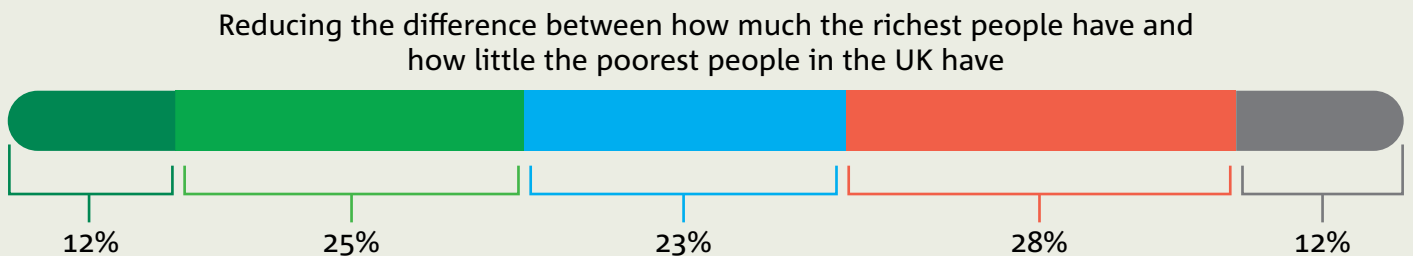
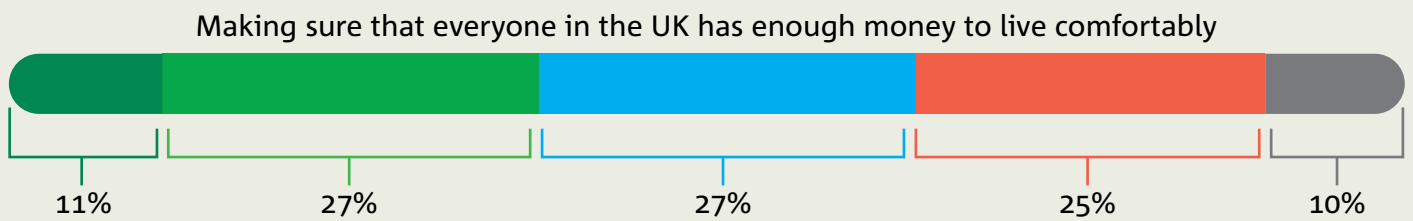
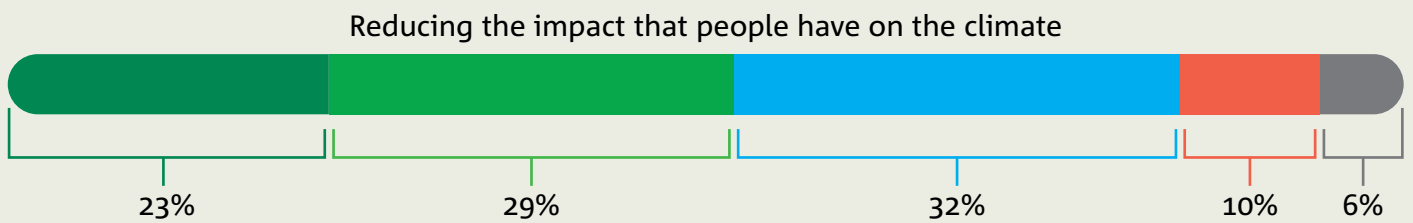
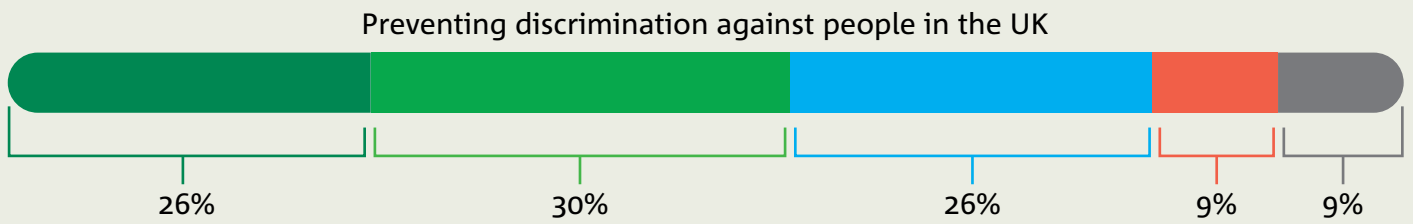
**WHEN ASKED
“DO YOU
KNOW
ANYONE
YOUR AGE
WHO GOES
HUNGRY, OR
NOT?”**

**24% OF YOUNG
PEOPLE SAID
THEY KNOW
SOMEONE
THEIR AGE
WHO GOES
HUNGRY.
NO CHILD
SHOULD BE
EXPERIENCING
HUNGER.**

HOW YOUNG PEOPLE ARE TAKING ACTION AND MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Do you think individual people can make a difference to each of the following areas through the things they do or say or not?

Base: n=1,000 UK young people aged 11-17,
online fieldwork conducted: 11 - 23 January 2023



- Yes, individual people can make a big difference
- Yes, individual people can make a small difference
- Yes, individual people can make some difference
- No, individual people cannot make any difference
- Don't know

WHERE INDIVIDUAL PEOPLE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Many young people are keen to make a difference and improve the future for themselves and others, but we believe they need help to achieve this goal. In order to empower young people to use their voices and make change, adults must lead the way in setting an example for how change can be achieved. Change doesn't always have to be seismic – small changes can make a big difference!

When asked if individuals can make a difference across a variety of current issues, young people were more likely to say that individuals can reduce the impact that people have on a global issue as huge as climate change than:

- **reducing the number of people experiencing poverty in the UK (71%*)**
- **making sure that everyone in the UK has enough money to live comfortably (66%*)**
- **reducing the difference between how much the richest people in the UK have and how little the poorest people in the UK have (60%*).**

Stand for Change members empathised with this viewpoint, highlighting that they had all been taught about climate change at school, and the things they could do to combat it as an individual and as a society, but had not had similar conversations about poverty. It can often be difficult to talk about poverty and financial hardship due to societal stigmas, but starting this conversation and raising awareness is an important step towards making change and ending the need for food banks.

** Combined Yes, individual people can make a big difference, some difference and a small difference.*

Stand for Change member



“It is hard for people to speak about this stuff [poverty].”

“Climate change is addressed at school: things individuals can do, like switching off lights and recycling. Communities can make bigger change and take action. And then we understand there needs to be even bigger change too. We need to understand these levels of changing poverty in a similar way.”

Stand for Change member



“It needs to be talked about like climate change, it’s just as big a problem... Teachers need to talk about it.”

Stand for Change member



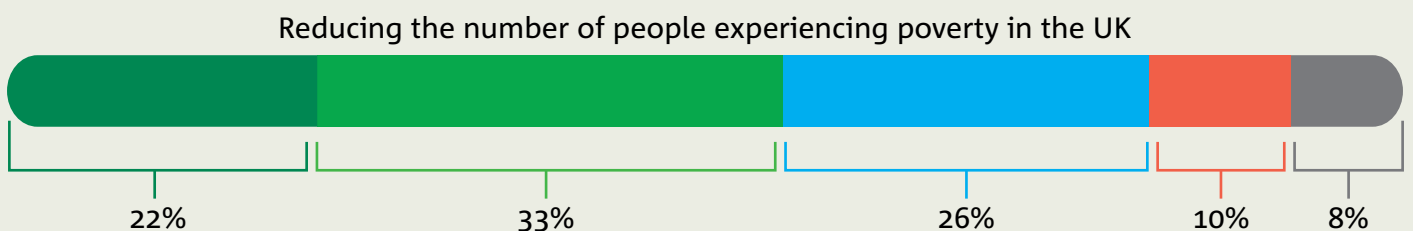
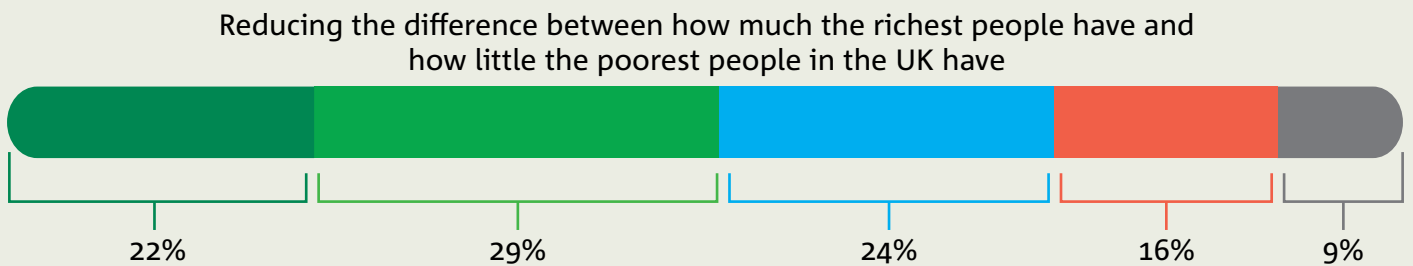
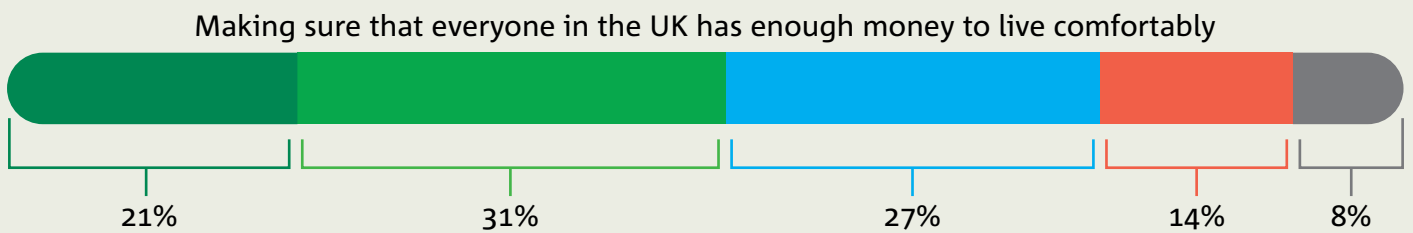
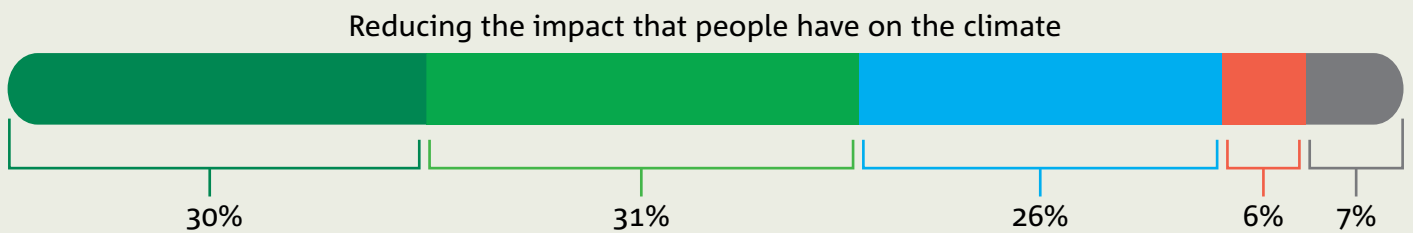
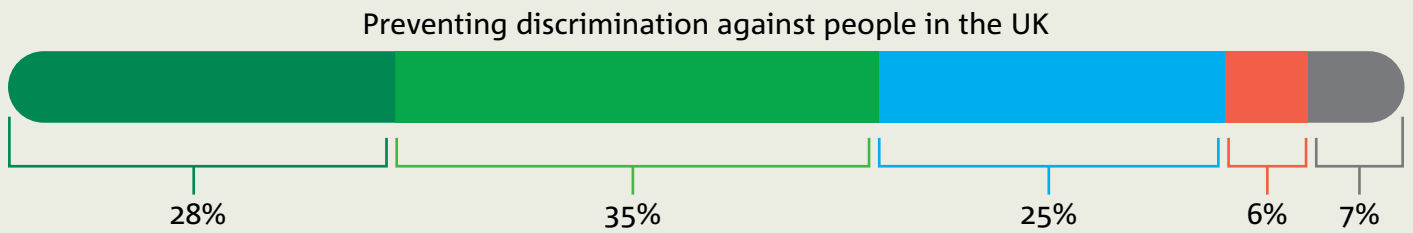
Stand for Change member

“I feel like poverty is a hard talk to have, but a talk we need to have. It’s an uncomfortable conversation to have.”



Do you think a group of people working together can make a difference to each of the following areas through the things they do or say, or not?

Base: n=1,000 UK young people aged 11-17, online fieldwork conducted: 11 - 23 January 2023



■ Yes, a group of people can make a big difference
■ Yes, a group of people can make some difference

■ Yes, a group of people can make a small difference
■ No, a group of people cannot make any difference

■ Don't know

WHERE PEOPLE WORKING TOGETHER CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE



Stand for
Change
member

“Definitely, change is possible... It’s possible by taking action.”

A higher proportion of young people think that, in general, it is more likely that a group of people can make a difference than a single individual. **Despite this, many were still more likely to think that people coming together could reduce the impact that, as a society, we have on the climate (87%) than:**

- **reducing the number of people experiencing poverty in the UK (82%*)**
- **making sure that everyone in the UK has enough money to live comfortably (79%*)**
- **reducing the difference between how much the richest people have and how**

little the poorest people in the UK have (75%*).

Young people see power in collective action. Stand for Change and the Trussell Trust are committed to providing a platform for change where young people can use their lived experience of financial hardship to raise awareness and challenge the structural issues that lock people into poverty. Together, we can create a more just future.

*Combined Yes, a group of people can make a big difference, some difference and a small difference.

ACTIONS YOUNG PEOPLE ACROSS THE UK HAVE TAKEN

There are some young people across the UK who are already taking action around the issue of poverty.

Some are taking local and direct action, through donating clothes or toys to charity (43%) and around a quarter (27%) have donated food to a charity or food bank. The Stand for Change panel sees that there is a need for change at all levels, however there are far fewer young people taking actions with a more direct link to structural change. This current lack of action does not mean that young people are not willing to take these kinds of action.

- **While just 3% of young respondents had told us that they had written to decision makers (such as an MP, local council leader, etc.), 20% said that they would be willing to take this action in the next 12 months**
- **And while 5% of young respondents had told us that they had been part of a group of people who want to see things change in society (e.g. a march or local campaigning group), 29% told us that they would be willing to join such a group.**

Young people want to see change within the UK, and many want to be part of that change – we must help them do it! However, there is a contention expressed by the Stand for Change panel that pushing for this change should not have to be driven solely by young people. Stand for Change members want to see adults and people in power also engaging with the issues of poverty and working towards leaving young people across the UK with a better future.

“Young people shouldn’t have to be campaigning for something better; adults should be leaving better for them.”

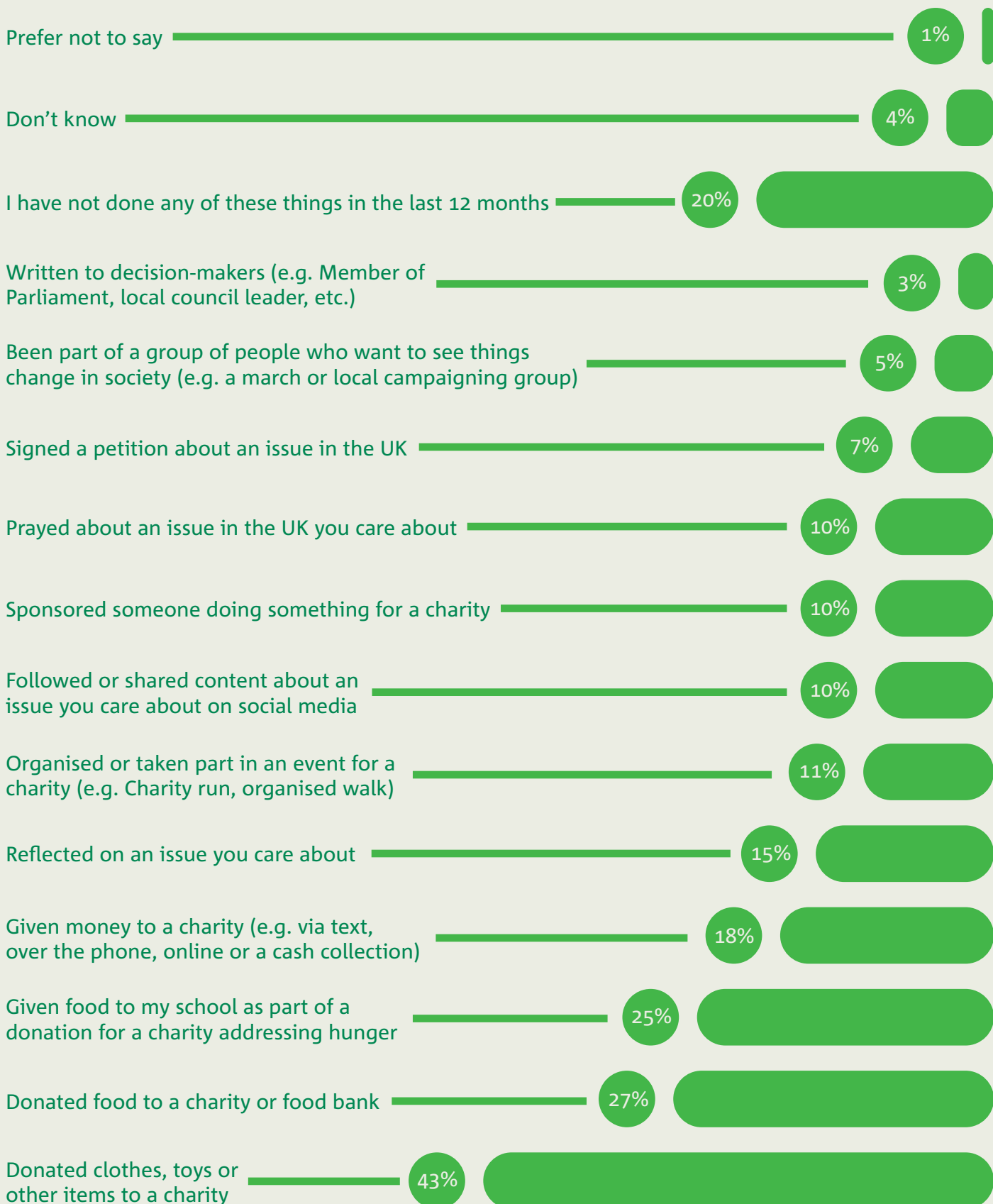
“You should be able to live a good life without hoping for change by writing a letter to a stranger.”

Stand for
Change member

Stand for
Change member

In the last 12 months, which, if any, of the following have you personally done?

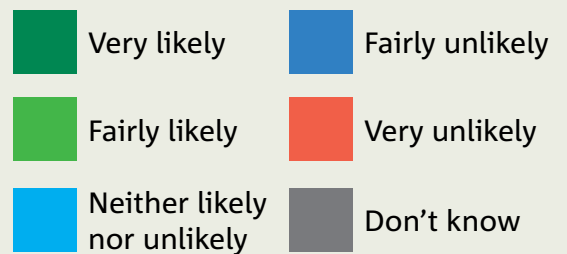
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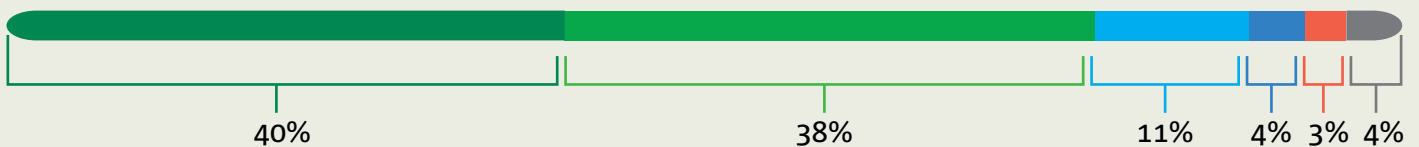
LIKELIHOOD OF YOUNG PEOPLE TAKING ACTION IN THE FUTURE

How likely or unlikely would you be to do any of the following in the next 12 months? - Summary

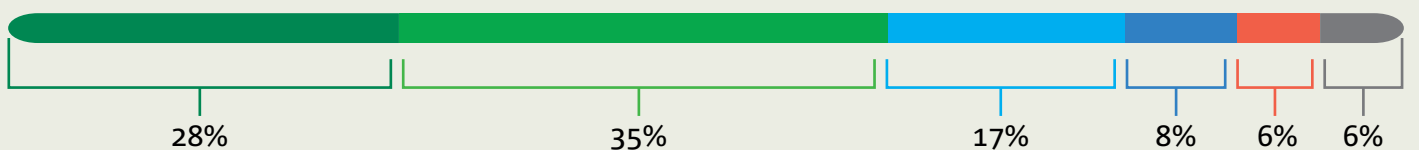
Base: n=1,000 UK young people aged 11-17, online fieldwork conducted: 11 - 23 January 2023



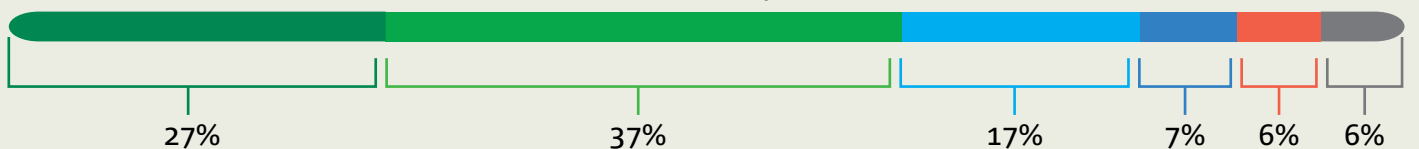
Donate clothes, toys or other items to a charity



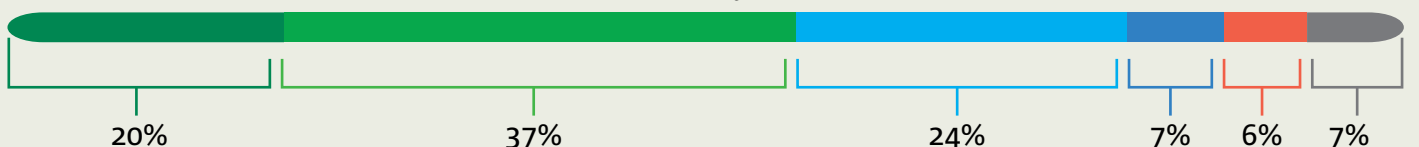
Give food to my school as part of a donation for a charity addressing hunger



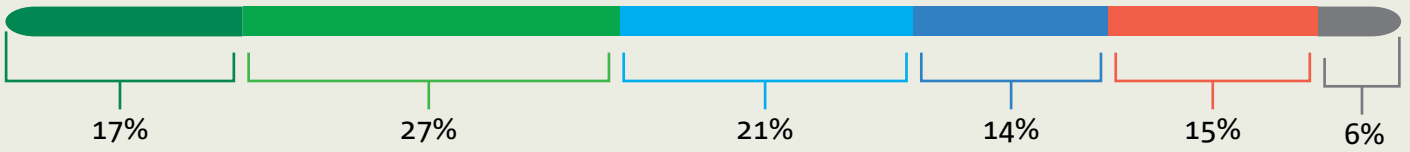
Donate food to a charity or food bank



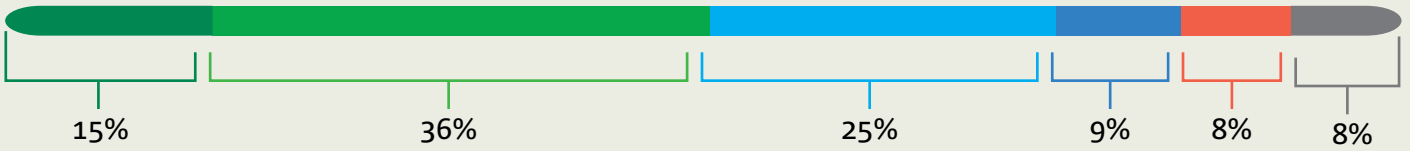
Reflect on an issue you care about



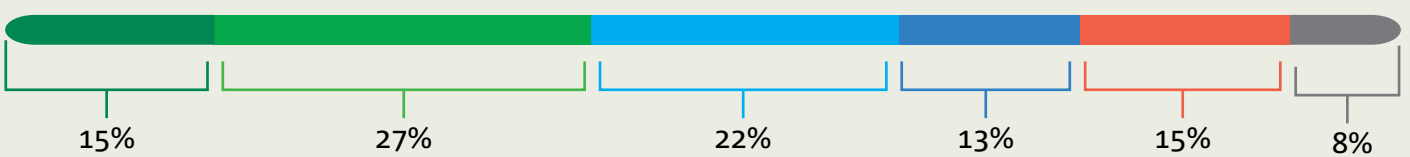
Give money to a charity (e.g. via text, over the phone, online, or a cash collection)



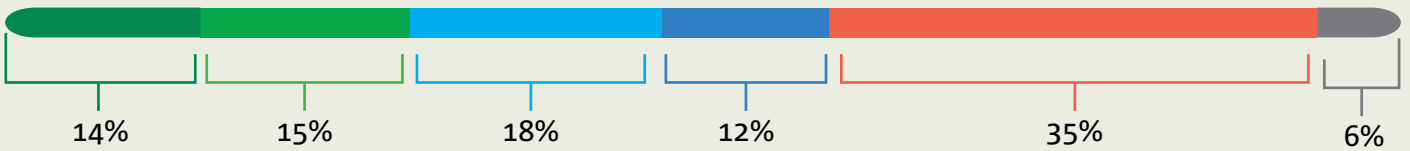
Sponsor someone doing something for a charity



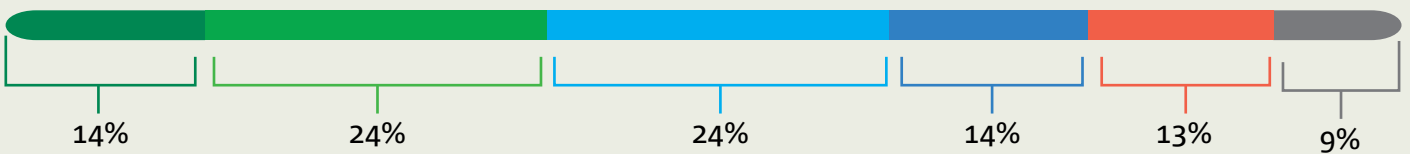
Follow or shared content about an issue you care about on social media



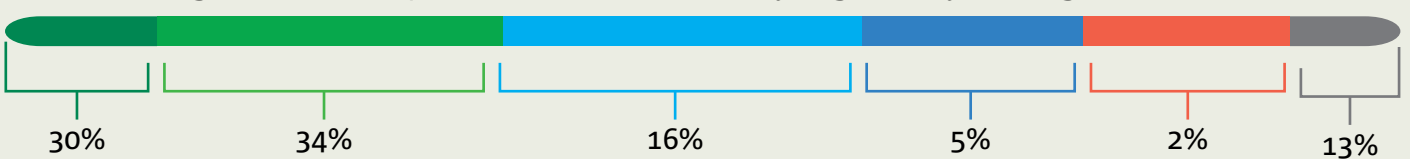
Pray about an issue in the UK you care about



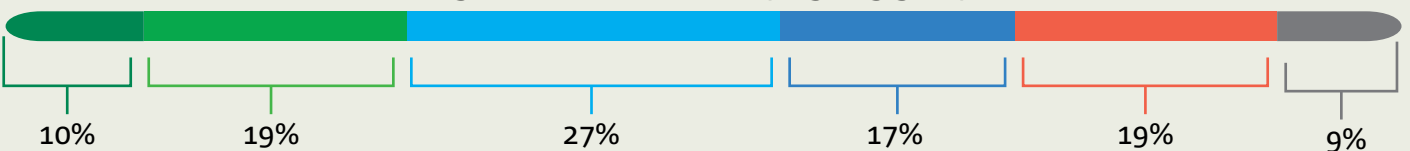
Sign a petition about an issue in the UK



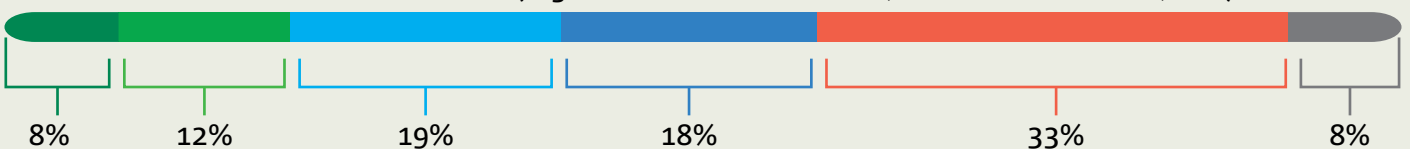
Organise or taken part in an event for a charity (e.g. Charity run, organised walk)



Be part of a group of people who want to see things change in society (e.g. a march or local campaigning group)



Write to decision-makers (e.g. Member of Parliament, local council leader, etc.)



Stand for Change member



“Lack of faith in the government but not sure what they could do. Lots of resources are closing, like youth clubs.”

Stand for Change member

“I feel sad about the fact that young people don't feel empowered.”



Stand for Change member



“Young people want to do something but don’t know what to do about it.”

Stand for Change member



“Young people are concerned and taking action... Why should they have to be doing this?”

CONCLUSION

“We need people to listen to us.”

Young people deserve to grow up without the worry of hunger.

In the UK, many young people are worried about poverty and recognise the negative impact it can have on individuals and society. Based on our own experience, we know how facing financial hardship as a young person can feel lonely, expose us to harmful stereotypes and create barriers that prevent us from fulfilling our potential. We don't want any young person to grow up feeling the impact of not having enough money to afford the essentials; feeling like they can't fully participate at school because they don't have the correct uniform, or turning up at school hungry and tired because they haven't had breakfast and can't afford their bus fare. From our findings, we know that many people across the UK are keen to make a difference and improve the future for themselves and others, but we need help to achieve this goal. **We hope that, after reading this report, you are ready to help us stand for change and work towards a future without the need for food banks.**

While this report has taught us a lot about how young people in the UK perceive poverty, it has also shown us the areas where we can work together to create lasting and positive change. Over the coming months and years, we believe that we can achieve change if we:

- empower young people to campaign for change by contacting decision makers like MPs and local council members who can give their voice and concerns a platform



Stand for
Change
member

- encourage action against poverty to be treated in a similar way to the climate crisis, facilitating a multi-level response that offers ways to make individual change as well as change at local and national levels
- use schools to drive awareness about poverty through campaigns that educate young people on how to reduce poverty and support those living in financial hardship.

We believe that great change is possible in the UK. This report has shown us that young people care about their communities and want to make them better, safer places, where no one needs to live without the essentials. To make this happen, we need your support. **Please join our fight to end the need for food banks by listening to the young people in your lives and helping to amplify and champion their voices.**

Finally, to the young people reading this – thank you! We want you to feel empowered to make positive change and hope that this report has inspired you to start, no matter how small.

Thank you,
Stand for Change

THANK YOU

We would like to thank everyone who made this report possible. The brilliant young members of Stand for Change, Ipsos, Dan Boyden, Get It Done, our funders at Children in Need and our colleagues at the Trussell Trust.

For more information on the project, contact the Trussell Trust Participation Team at participation@trusselltrust.org or look online at www.trusselltrust.org/youth-participation

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Get It Done



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