



Overcoming Poverty of Hope

By Lianne Smith, July 2019

Believe in
children
 Barnardo's



Foreword



by Javed Khan & Rt Hon Robert Halfon MP

Children today are growing up in a world vastly different from that of 10 or 20 years ago, let alone when Barnardo's began back in the 1860s. But that doesn't mean the challenges they face are any less serious or complex.

In 2019, UK society is changing faster than ever before – from climate change, to the increasing use of technology, to the internal political discussions about the UK's future in the modern world.

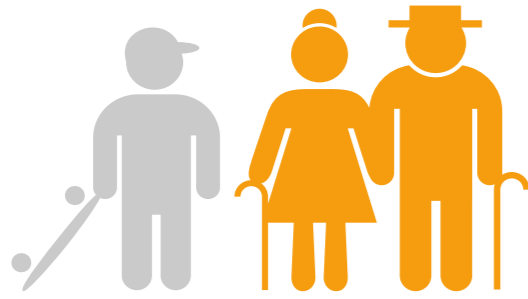
Much has been written about how the voting public feel about current challenges facing the UK. But largely missing from the debate are the thoughts and experiences of the next generation. What do the children and young people – who will ultimately be responsible for shaping the UK as we head towards the 22nd century – believe are the key challenges facing modern Britain?

The facts are stark. One in eight children has a mental health condition; more than 4million are growing up in poverty; and there is a spike in serious youth violence which is claiming too many young lives. For some of the most vulnerable young people, growing up in communities with poor housing, with no qualifications,

no jobs and no role models, it's hard to believe that a positive future lies ahead. And it's this "poverty of hope" that as a society we must help children to overcome.

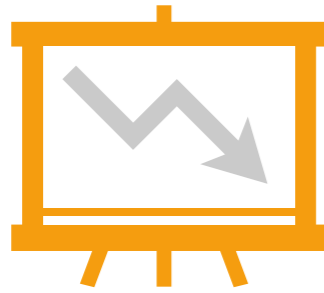
This new report seeks to reflect young people's views and concerns about their own future as well as the future of their communities and the country overall. The findings are based on a representative survey of over 1000 young people aged 16-24 as well as information gathered from focus groups with young people Barnardo's supports. Many of these young people were facing significant challenges in their own life, whether they were homeless, had been in the care system, or had struggled to access education and employment post 16. Taken together the evidence provides a compelling insight into what young people – including those from some of our most disadvantaged communities – think and feel about Britain in the 21st century.

So what did they tell us?



62%

said the Government care more about older generations than their generation



67%

of young people believe that in general their generation will be worse off than their parents' generation



54%

(over half) of young people said climate change is one of the most important issues facing this country

While many young people are hopeful and ambitious for their own futures, too often they reflect a wider “poverty of hope” about the future of their generation. They voiced concern about

a mental health crisis, with significant waiting lists for specialist services. They said their school/college curriculum is limited and lacks opportunity to explore their passions. They felt university is too expensive – putting off those who grew up struggling. They see a lack of vocational options and secure jobs. And they talked about a lack of investment in their communities and too few safe spaces like youth centres for young people to go to. Often, due to a combination of these factors, young people also reported seeing a rise in crime in their local areas and anti-social behaviour which suggested a growing disrespect for, or disconnect from, their communities.

The aim of this report is to shed light on young people’s views of the future including their hopes and what they think needs to change. Whilst we are living in an uncertain and unpredictable time, these concerns are very real and very relevant to young people’s lives here and now. These aren’t issues that can be put off until Brexit is solved – they need to be addressed today and in partnership with young people.

As a society, collectively, we are here to help young people overcome this poverty of hope and climb the ladder of opportunity. To do that, we have to believe in them, nurture their talents, tackle inequality, provide opportunities, knock down barriers, and hear their voices in decisions that affect them and their future.

Javed Khan, Chief Executive

Rt Hon Robert Halfon MP



Introduction

Barnardo’s has found children and young people today are facing increasingly serious, complex challenges with a decreasing safety net of public services available to protect them. Too many young people across Britain feel a “poverty of hope”. They report feeling they don’t have a political voice that is listened to and that they are locked out of accessing employment, healthcare and social opportunities in their communities.

As a society, we are preventing children and young people from climbing the ladder of opportunity and escaping poverty. Across the UK, over 4 million children are estimated to be growing up in poverty.¹ The United Nations Special Rapporteur on Poverty echoed this in his 2018 visit to the UK, reporting that ‘millions of children are being locked into a cycle of poverty from which most will have great difficulty escaping’.² The social mobility commission has

found social class remains a barrier to upward mobility, with individuals from working class backgrounds being 80 percent less likely to enter professional jobs.³ In the past 5 years, Barnardo’s frontline staff have reported increasing cases of children with complex vulnerabilities, including experiences of early trauma, neglect, criminal exploitation and gang violence.⁴ Barnardo’s believes this crisis is as a result of a “poverty of hope”.

¹ Social metrics commission Report – ‘a new measure of Poverty for the UK’ Chaired by Philippa Stroud, CEO of the Legatum Institute, September 2018 (Accessed: 31/05/2019) <https://socialmetricscommission.org.uk/MEASURING-POVERTY-FULL-REPORT.pdf>

² “Households below average income: an analysis of the income distribution 1994/95 to 2017/18” (DWP, March 2019) (Accessed 01/07/2019) <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/households-below-average-income-199495-to-201718>

³ The Social Mobility Commission, ‘Social Mobility in Great Britain, State of the Nation 2018-2019’, April 2018 (Accessed: 16.04.19)

⁴ Barnardo’s press release, ‘Barnardo’s warns of lost childhoods as frontline staff struggle to cope with demand’ published 23 Sep 2018 (Accessed 21.06.2019)



New Barnardo's YouGov polling of over 1000 young people reveals poverty of hope⁶

The most important issues facing our country over the next 5 years:



62%

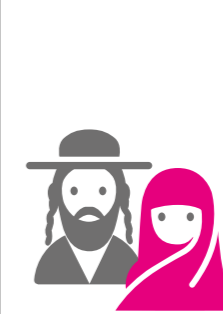
(two thirds) of young people chose
Britain leaving the EU



54%

(over half) of young people chose
climate change

The most important factor of their identity is:



38%
Political beliefs

36%

Culture



28%

Nationality

Young people do not feel the Government values their political perspective



62%

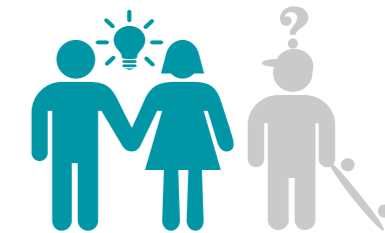
of young people felt the Government **'care more about older generations than my generation'** when making decisions about implementing new policies.

Young people do not feel they will be better off than their parents' generation



67%

of young people felt their generation would be **worse off** than their parents' generation.



50%

said they felt their generation would be **'worse off'** in regards to having a **sense of purpose** than their parents' generation.

About Barnardo's

As the UK's largest national children's charity, last year Barnardo's worked directly with **294,300** children, young people, parents and carers through more than **1,000** services. Our goal is to achieve better outcomes for more children. To achieve this we work with partners to build stronger families, safer childhoods and positive futures.

This report aims to understand the concerns and challenges of vulnerable young people. To do this we held three focus groups with Barnardo's young people – aged 14-24 – at three of our services across England. We listened to their concerns for their own future as well as their anxieties about the future of their communities and the country

as a whole. Barnardo's also reveals new YouGov data surveying over 1000 young people, offering insight into young people's views on post Brexit Britain's future.⁵

We will present the key challenges young people told us they are facing and the issues they feel are important, often in their own words. Young people we spoke to raised the issues of crime, access to mental health services, employment opportunities, education, lack of youth services and the impact of social media. Long term concerns were also raised about the future of the NHS, climate change and the impact of Brexit. In examining these issues, we will outline how young people feel we can support them to improve their hopes for the future. Barnardo's believe we can work together to ensure all children can safely achieve the positive futures they deserve.

However, young people are positive about their future physical health but do not have confidence in their future mental health.



Only **15%** of young people feel their generation will have **worse physical health and life expectancy** compared to their parents' generation.



Whereas **69%** feel they will have **worse 'overall happiness and mental health'** compared to their parents' generation.

⁵ See our methodology on page 31

⁶ New Barnardo's data from a YouGov survey. Total sample size was 1,036 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 16th - 25th April 2019. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all those aged 16-24 in GB.



The challenges young people are facing across the UK

High crime levels in deprived communities.

“Crime is the number one issue where I live.”

Young people felt high crime levels in their communities was a key concern. They reported feeling that no one cares about their community or listens to their concerns. Too many young people feel without hope that positive change is possible in their communities.

“It’s not a nice place to live but no one does anything about it, even if you say anything.”

Theft, property damage and vandalism were the main crimes young people raised as being regular occurrences with a broad range of local businesses being targeted – including the local Barnardo’s charity shop. Young people we spoke to described their communities’ crime levels as an issue they were powerless to change.

“We have a Heron (supermarket) that got robbed, butchers that got robbed four times, the Barnardo’s charity shop where I do work experience got robbed – they broke in and drilled the safe.”

Young people clearly linked high crime levels to a lack of youth services in their communities and low employment.

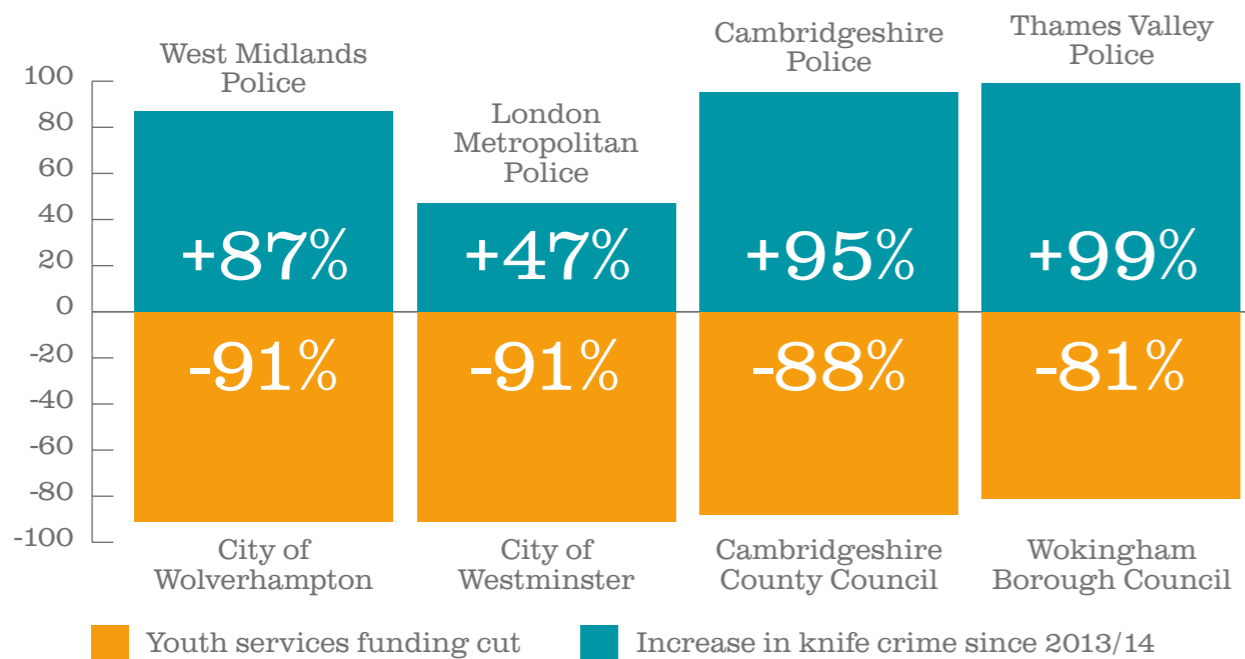
“It comes down to that there’s nothing to do so they destroy shit... For the more serious crime, it’s a case of there’s no secure jobs so it’s easier to steal someone else’s hard earned money than to try and get your own.”

Young people reported feeling that key reasons for the high crime levels were; a lack of community activities so young people had little to do and a lack of jobs in the local community which provide a secure, decent wage. The All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG)

on Knife Crime, which Barnardo’s supports, has obtained FOI data supporting the views of the young people we spoke to. Their research links local authorities that have significantly cut funding to youth services and areas of increased knife crime.

Youth unemployment is a national issue for concern. The number of young people aged 16 to 24 years who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) was 764,000 between January to March 2019, a slight reduction from last year.⁷ However, NEET figures remain too high, particularly for vulnerable young people. Care leavers are disproportionately NEET – 40.2% of care leavers aged 19-21 identify as NEET, compared to 13% of their peers in the general population.⁸

The top four local authorities that have significantly cut youth services and their corresponding change in knife crime rates:



7 ONS 'Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training'(NEET) UK, May 2019 (Accessed: 21.05.2019)
 8 House of Commons Library Briefing paper, 'Support for Care leavers', No.08429, March 2019, N.Roberts, et.al, (Accessed: 14.06.19)
 9 APPG on Knife Crime ' Research draws new links between youth service cuts and rising knife crime' 07.05.2019 (Accessed: 14.06.19)

Lack of youth centres and safe spaces for young people.

Youth centres, which serve as community tools to cut cycles of poverty and prevent youth crime have been severely cut. Many of the young people raised concerns that there weren't enough youth activities available in their community and that they had no safe public spaces to meet. Between 2011 and 2019 there has been an estimated £400 million reduction in central Government funding for youth services.¹⁰ Without opportunities to take part in extracurricular activities in a safe environment vulnerable young people can struggle to know what positive alternative life choices are available to them. The FOI request undertaken by the APPG on Knife Crime, which Barnardo’s supports, found that 87% of 103 councils reported one or more youth centres in their area had shut since 2011.¹¹

“I’m trying to think what’s in our area. All we have is one park. That’s it, there’s nothing but one run down park. I mean, if I want to do something I’ve got to go out of the area to get something to do.”

Young people feel unwelcome in public spaces.

“They’ve got these high pitched (mosquito) boxes only young people can hear and they’re plastered everywhere. The thing is, my college is in quite a high class area so it’s nothing to do with vandalism or crime, it’s literally dispersion. They’re a pain – they have them in parks as well.”

Worryingly, young people described feeling they had no spaces to meet and that they felt unwelcome to hang out together in public spaces, such as parks. The use of dispersal technology such as mosquito devices was highlighted as a pressing concern. The devices emit a high pitched frequency sound young people under 25 are sensitive to and are used to deter young people from meeting in public spaces. Mosquito device purchases remain unregulated in the UK, despite the Council of Europe’s 2010 recommendation that member states ban the technology.¹² In 2016 the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child also recommended that the UK prohibits the devices in order to guarantee children’s right to freedom of movement and peaceful assembly.¹³ Denying young people and children their right to meet or play in public spaces isolates vulnerable young people.

10 UNISON, 'Youth Services at Breaking Point' December 2018 (Accessed: 20/05/2019)
 11 Barnardo's FOI Youth Services (accessed: 10/06/2019)
 12 Children and Young people's commissioner Scotland, 'Position Statement: Mosquito Devices' https://www.cypcs.org.uk/ufiles/Mosquito-devices.pdf (accessed: 19.06.19)
 13 Children and Young people's commissioner Scotland, 'Position Statement: Mosquito Devices' https://www.cypcs.org.uk/ufiles/Mosquito-devices.pdf (accessed: 19.06.19)

Anxiety about not being able to access secure jobs exists across Britain.

Concern about not being able to get a well-paid job in their local area was a central concern young people raised. The Social Mobility Commission has found that just 34% of people from working class backgrounds go on to work in professional occupations and that class plays an ‘outsized role’ in individuals’ social mobility.¹⁴ Barnardo’s YouGov polling reflected this, finding that young people from a socially disadvantaged background were more likely to select ‘Jobs and Employment’ as one of their top three concerns facing the UK over the next three to five years.

“I’m worried I won’t get a job.”



Young people also highlighted regional disparities in pay as a concern. Some reported that they felt they may have to move out of their community to gain a better paid position – although they would rather stay closer to friends, family and established community links.

“There were opportunities here but the pay was naff... I’m going down to Leeds.”

The concerns of the young people we spoke to in the North East echoes the Social Mobility Commission’s findings of regional inequality in the job market.



The South-East has claimed 45% of all increased professional jobs created, which accounts for double the combined amount created in Yorkshire, Humber, the North East and the North-West.¹⁵

Lack of apprenticeship opportunities for young people who don’t want to attend university.

Regarding degree level apprenticeships a young person stated, “I don’t think there’s a lot but think there should be. I really, really think there should be.... They’re very difficult to get a hold of and very difficult to get into.”

Young people talked passionately about wanting more opportunities available for post GCSEs. They felt the limited numbers of apprenticeships were too competitive and highlighted the need for apprenticeships to have equal status to university degrees. The Government has set a target of 3 million new apprenticeships between 2015 and 2020.¹⁶ However, progress towards achieving this has been slow and when questioned by the Education Select Committee Chair, the Education Secretary, Damien Hinds, acknowledged the target will be missed.¹⁷ Also there is evidence that too few young people are accessing the opportunities that are being created – of the 375,800 apprenticeships undertaken in 2017/18, only 29% were filled by young people under 19.¹⁸

A young person who is a care leaver told us that they felt the recruitment process for apprenticeships should be more inclusive of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. Barnardo’s wants to ensure that the most vulnerable young people can access multiple paths out of poverty.



“There needs to be more apprenticeships... that young people can go into after GCSEs. If they’re supported through an apprenticeship, go into a job, the business likes it because they get to train young people, pupils like it, they’ve got an entry level job and the Government likes it because the country starts to prosper... we would start to create – and this is the biggest thing- (apprenticeships) that were seen as equal to other sorts of education.”

¹⁴ The Social Mobility Commission, ‘Social Mobility in Great Britain, State of the Nation 2018-2019’, April 2018 (Accessed: 16.04.19)

¹⁵ The Social Mobility Commission, ‘Social Mobility in Great Britain, State of the Nation 2018-2019’, April 2018 (Accessed: 16.04.19)

¹⁶ House of Commons Library online, ‘Apprenticeships and skills policy in England’ Published Jan 4th 2019 (Accessed: 21.06.09)

¹⁷ BBC news “Apprenticeship pledge “will be missed”, S. Coughlan, published 26.06.2019, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-48775244> (Accessed: 01/07/2017)

¹⁸ House of Commons Library online, ‘Apprenticeship Statistics for England’ Published 11th February, 2019 (Accessed:17.06.19)

Concerns over a lack of funding for education and that the current curriculum is too limited.

One young person said of the Government and education; *“They say young people are the future but they’re giving them less and less support.”*

“All the (SEN) schools I’ve been in, except where it was a new build, were all run down ... in my final (SEN) school the only thing I had access to was cookery or woodwork, maths, science and English.”

“The creative side is not being looked at so much in education – I think it’s being overlooked.”

Young people overwhelmingly felt there needed to be an increase in school funding and believed the Government are not investing enough in education. Some young people also raised concerns that more attention should be given to creative subjects in schools.

Those who had attended special educational needs (SEN) schools reported they are not receiving a well-rounded education. The young people reported receiving a curriculum which was severely restricted and described school resources as ‘run down’. The recent Timpson Review of School Exclusion looked at what could be done to tackle the rising rate of school exclusions in the UK – there are an average of 40 permanent exclusions from schools in England

every day and a further 2000 pupils are excluded for a fixed term period. The report recommended a number of changes including establishing a Practice Improvement Fund. This would provide more money for both schools and alternative provision providers to deliver quality interventions – preventing the need for permanent exclusions.¹⁹

Excluded pupils are:



More likely to be of Black Caribbean ethnicity



78% are SEN pupils, in need children or those eligible for free school meals



These pupils have poor educational attainment, with only 7% of all permanently excluded students achieving ‘good’ pass grades in GCSE maths and English.²⁰

Excluded students often face multiple disadvantages. Removing access to full educational opportunities increases the likelihood that these vulnerable young people will be trapped in a ‘poverty of hope’.



Concerns over the future of the NHS and access to Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

“I think the health care in the North East is pretty good.”

“You kinda need the NHS, except it’s suffering... so I say the NHS just needs more funding towards it, really.”

The majority of the young people who regularly engaged with the NHS felt it provided valuable, necessary health care. However, all the young people we spoke with felt the NHS’s ability to function effectively was being jeopardised by funding cuts.

Vulnerable young people are waiting too long for CAMHS treatment. They spoke of their personal experiences of CAMHS, describing access as “incredibly limited”. They described a system which was plagued by chronic under-staffing and long waiting times.

The cost of higher education was viewed as a barrier to attending university.

The cost of university was a key concern. Young people we spoke to described deep apprehension about paying back high university loans and saw the fees as a barrier for young people from lower income families. The Institute for Fiscal Studies found high fees and large maintenance loans contribute to English graduates having the highest student debts in the developed world. The 2015 policy that replaced maintenance grants with loans means students from the poorest backgrounds can accrue debts of £57,000 (including interest) from a three-year degree.²¹ For some young people intimidatingly high student loans could be a deterrent from higher education.

“A lot of families can’t afford it (university) even with student loans.”

“It’s understaffed. So, so understaffed. You’ve got huge amounts of waiting times. I mean, I was almost dying (suicidal) at one point and I had to leave A&E so I could get home so my parents didn’t find out.”

19 Timpson Review of School Exclusions, May 2019 (Accessed: 15.05.19)

20 Gov.uk ‘Permanent and fixed period exclusions in England 2016-2017 Published 19 July 2018 (Accessed: 25.06.2019)

21 IFS, ‘Higher Education in England: Past, Present and options for the future’, July 2017 C.Belfield et al.



Recent research found the average maximum waiting time for CAMHS is 6 months for a first appointment and almost 10 months until the start of treatment.²² The Government has begun a programme of reform to help improve children's access to mental health services with a green paper published in 2018 – 'Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health Provision'.²³ This had a particular focus on providing better support through schools. However, Barnardo's own consultation with young people suggests that these reforms are not nearly ambitious

enough to provide the improvements to services that young people need.²⁴

Concerns about access to NHS funded hormonal treatment and gender reassignment surgery on the NHS were also raised by some young people. Currently the average wait from receiving a GP referral to the first appointment at a NHS Gender Identity Clinic is 18 months.²⁵

Young people's opinions reflect Barnardo's YouGov poll findings, which suggest that young people are not confident in their future mental health. We found:

"I was told that my psychologist put on my CAMHS referral "could you get him in before GCSEs start?" – this was three months ago and now it's just over a week until GCSEs end and I still haven't gotten a letter back."



69%

responded that they felt their generation would have worse mental health compared to their parent's generation.²⁶

²² Education Policy Institute, 'Access and waiting times in children and young people's mental health services' E. Frith, 15th September 2017 (Accessed: 25.06.19)
²³ Department of Health and Department of Education 'Transforming children and mental health provision' Green paper, December 2017 (Accessed: 25.06.19)
²⁴ Barnardo's, 'Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health Provision, What children think of the Government's Green Paper' published Summer 2018, (Accessed: 25.06.19)
²⁵ BBC News online, 'Transgender people face wait of up to two years for a NHS appointment' 30th Jan.2019, H. Wescott (Accessed: 07.06.19)
²⁶ Barnardo's YouGov Survey 'The UK Beyond Brexit – a youth perspective' 2019 (Accessed: 16.06.2019)

Social media may be exacerbating young people's mental health issues.

Multiple young people highlighted social media's impact on mental health as a key concern. They felt social media exacerbated mental health issues, as it increased exposure to unrealistically high expectations of body image and lifestyles. Insight from Barnardo's 'Left to your own devices' report on social media and mental health, found young people with additional life challenges, such as young carers and care leavers are more susceptible to the negative impacts of social media as they are more likely to experience social isolation.²⁷



79%

of Barnardo's practitioners reported children aged 11-15 had accessed 'unsuitable or harmful' content through social media.



84%

of Barnardo's practitioners reported children aged 11-15 years old have accessed mental health advice and support through online social media.²⁸

"I think social media is massive for mental health. It's like something that you don't even notice – you could go on all girl's phones and look at who they're following. It's all girls with extremely fake bodies that they think are natural and real and then they want that but it's un-achievable without surgery."

²⁷ Barnardo's, 'Left to their own devices' report, M.Papamichalis, N. Sheera, June 2019 (Accessed: 07.06.2019)
²⁸ Barnardo's, 'Left to their own devices' report, M.Papamichalis, N. Sheera, June 2019 (Accessed: 07.06.2019)

Young people are concerned the UK Government is not prioritising climate change.

“Well it doesn’t matter what the politics are gonna be if we have no future.”

Overwhelmingly, young people were concerned by climate change and felt strongly that the Government do not view preventing climate change as a high priority. Many young people felt that the Government’s international climate change targets are not ambitious enough.

“They need to make better targets, because all of their targets are like 2050. We need to reduce it by half. That’s too late. We need to act now.”

Children and young people have been leading the international climate change debate. The 15 year old Swedish student Greta Thunberg started the ‘School Strike for Climate’ in 2018, after she began protesting outside Sweden’s parliament every Friday to demand climate change action. Since then, Thunberg’s campaign has become a global protest movement. The most recent international student protest took place on 15 March 2019 across over 125 countries, with over a million children and young people participating. An estimated 125 UK towns and cities took part.²⁹

What is the UK’s current climate change policy?



The current 2008 Climate Change Act commits the UK Government by law to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80% of 1990 levels by 2050.³⁰



Internationally, the UK is a signatory to the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement that aims to keep global temperatures from increasing 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.³¹



In June 2019 the Government amended the Climate Change Act to enshrine in law a commitment to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050.³²



Concern that Brexit is taking the Government’s attention away from more important issues.

“They’re just flailing around about Brexit and not doing anything.”

The majority of the Barnardo’s young people we spoke to were not eligible to vote in the referendum. Resoundingly, they described Brexit as distracting the Government’s attention from other issues which they felt were important such as climate change and the future of the NHS. Some concerns were also raised by the young people about how Britain’s future exit from the EU would affect their future job prospects. Barnardo’s YouGov polling found that:

This concern reflects findings from Barnardo’s YouGov polling. This found that climate change was the top issue young people listed as “the most important to their generation which older generations didn’t seem to understand or care about” – 42% of respondents listed it.



54%

(over half) of young people also felt the environment and climate change was one of the top three most important issues facing the country in the next three to five years.



62%

(two thirds) listed ‘Britain Leaving the EU’ was one of their top three most important issues facing the UK.

“Globally people are on strike from school every Friday and it never made it to mainstream news sites until like, last week.”

“They’re just using Brexit as a distraction technique so we don’t focus on the real issues.”

²⁹ BBC online ‘School strike for climate: protests staged around the world’ published: 24th may 2019 (Accessed: 21.06.2019)
³⁰ The Committee on Climate Change online, ‘UK Regulations: The Climate Change Act’ <https://www.theccc.org.uk/tackling-climate-change/the-legal-landscape/the-climate-change-act/> (Accessed: 20.06.2019)
³¹ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change online, ‘Summary of Paris Agreement’ (Accessed: 20.06.2019) <https://unfccc.int/resource/bigpicture/#content-the-paris-agreement> (Accessed:20:06.19)
³² The Guardian online, ‘Theresa May commits UK to net zero climate emissions by 2050’ P.walker, published:11th June 2019 (Accessed:21.06.2019)

Young people do not feel their views are valued or listened to by politicians.

In reference to recent cabinet resignations *“A lot of them (politicians) run away. The fact that they’re able to say ‘I’ve got enough money to leave my job!’”*

Young people strongly voiced their concern that the Government doesn’t care about their political views or consider the long term impact of policies on their future. Many felt the Government judges young people as immature and that older generations were listened to more due to their being seen as a more dependable voting demographic.

On why the Government may care more about older generations rather than younger generations; *“They vote more and are more likely to turn out (to vote). So, obviously they would support them.”*

Young people from communities where there is high unemployment expressed feeling there was a disconnect between their own struggle to even get a job

“The only time you see politicians caring about young people is when it comes to vote. Anyone’s who’s around the age to vote, they target young people who they want to vote to boost things, then we just get chucked aside.”

with the experience of Ministers. In the current turbulent political landscape young people reported that they felt many Ministers seem to just resign, with no reference to the financial consequences, this contrasted markable with their own experiences.

This perspective is reflected in Barnardo’s YouGov polling findings:



62%

of respondents felt ‘the Government cared about older generations more than my generation’.



13%

felt they cared ‘about as much about my generation as they do about older generations’.



6%

of respondents agreed that the Government ‘care more about my generation than older generations’.



About Barnardo’s

As the UK’s largest national children’s charity, last year Barnardo’s worked directly with 294,300 children, young people, parents and carers through more than 1,000 services. Our goal is to achieve better outcomes for more children. To achieve this we work with partners to build stronger families, safer childhoods and positive futures.

Barnardo’s is committed to training all our staff and interested volunteers in trauma-responsive practice, so we can continue to deliver research-based, sector-leading support to children who have experienced trauma and abuse. We want to ensure our services are trauma informed and able to safely support children and young people through the most difficult parts of their lives.

Barnardo’s response – how we’re helping children and young people overcome poverty of hope.

Barnardo’s works with children, young people and families across the UK to transform their lives and the system around them for the better.

Barnardo's Employment Training Skills

ETS-North – North East Yorkshire & Humber

Since 1983, Barnardo's ETS-North has been committed to providing quality employment, training and vocational qualifications for 14-24 year olds in the North East.

ETS-North supports the development of young people's interpersonal skills, while equipping young people with the qualifications and vocational training needed to gain long term employment in their local community.

The service offers a wide variety of employment training programmes, including qualifications in beauty, construction and IT. They also provide work experience placements for young people to gain practical experience while studying. Alongside this, ETS-North provide core Math and English key stage 4 qualifications to learners at risk of exclusion and young mothers.

ETS-North's positive impact measured:

In 2017/18 ETS-North met and exceeded it's learner outcome targets:



82%

of ETS-North learners were accepted onto their applied apprenticeship placement in their local community.



83%

of ETS-North learners aged 16-18 on a study programme positively progressed into employment, training or further education in their local community.

ETS North success story:

Gary is a 22 years old learner at ETS-North and has struggled with learning difficulties throughout his life.

Gary did not attend a mainstream school; he attended a senior school for children with moderate learning difficulties based in North Tyneside. In year 11, Gary left senior school and attended a further education (FE) college where he studied Maths, English and employability skills.

Gary left FE college after completing his courses and attended a connexions meeting, in which he was referred to Barnardo's Palmersville Training to start a retail course. Gary enjoyed studying retail, however, after a while Gary decided retail was not for him and Barnardo's ETS-North supported him to make the decision to enroll onto their painting and decorating course.

Once enrolled on the painting and decorating course, Gary successfully secured himself an apprenticeship with DP Decorators in Gateshead. During this apprenticeship he was able to go on different jobs and was involved in prepping and stripping walls as well as putting up wallpaper.

The opportunities ETS-North provided Gary allowed him to develop personally and choose the career path he wants. Gary said of his apprenticeship; "I have developed my confidence and learnt a lot of new skills I never thought I would be able to do".

Gary has now completed his apprenticeship and is employed as a painter and decorator.



Preston Foyer

Homelessness and Care Leaver Accommodation in Preston, North Lancashire

Barnardo's Preston Foyer is committed to delivering emergency supported accommodation to vulnerable young people with the aim of supporting them into independent living. The service provides both homeless young people and care leavers with emergency short term or long term housing. Preston Foyer staff offer young people a range of support to help young people access sustained employment and/or further education, as well as working with the residents to help them learn key life skills aimed at equipping them to successfully live independently.

Preston Foyer success story:

David*, aged 20 spent 4 years in a Residential School before coming to live in Preston Foyer Supported Accommodation. Whilst living at the Foyer he was supported by staff to learn many new life skills to help him gain independence. These included cooking, cleaning and learning how to pay gas and electricity bills.

Recently, David has successfully moved on from Preston Foyer supported accommodation and is now living independently. David said that having to pay his own gas and electricity whilst at the Foyer's accommodation helped him to learn how to independently budget his finances. Since leaving Preston Foyer, David has said he is happy to be living independently and is pleased with the support he received as he feels the staff really helped him in the time he lived there. (*name anonymised)



Barnardo's Cymru Divert Project

Knife crime and serious youth violence early intervention in Newport, South Wales

Barnardo's Cymru Divert Project is working in partnership with Newport Live's Positive Futures to provide one-to-one to young people aged 11-16 at risk of getting caught up in gang culture and serious and organised crime across Newport. Divert was commissioned by Gwent police and began in January 2019. The project currently works across 5 local authorities in Newport and has already supported 15 young people and their families to create brighter, more positive futures.

Intelligence from 4 police forces in Wales shows that organised crime gangs in Wales are grooming children into serious and organised crime including "county lines" drug running, sexual exploitation, theft and burglaries. Therefore, Barnardo's Cymru Divert Project is taking a multi agency, public health approach; working with Gwent Police and Newport Youth Offending Service. They are using early intervention in order to identify young people most at risk for gang and serious criminal exploitation in order to refer them to Divert.

The aim is to divert young people away from crime by providing them with a personal project worker they can trust and who will work with the whole family to create a more positive home life. Divert workers develop strong relationships with the young people, becoming trusted adults who can help to recognise positive alternative life paths. The project also runs workshops in four Newport secondary schools to reach vulnerable children and young people at risk of serious criminal exploitation early.



Barnardo's Cymru Divert Project success story:

Fifteen-year-old Kieron* was truanting from school and last year he began hanging around with a gang of youths in Newport.

He had no positive male role model and his mother was concerned that he was running drugs, getting into fights and smashing things when angry. Kieron said it felt good to be part of a gang and be respected. He denied that he was drug running but admitted that he had delivered drugs as a favour on his bike in the past. He was using cannabis daily and drinking heavily.

He was put in touch with Newport Live in January and now chooses to use the gym every day, not

just his two allocated sessions. He is doing better in school, is using less cannabis and alcohol and is no longer meeting up with the gang. Kieron initially had difficulty recognising his feelings, let alone expressing them or asking for help. He also failed to recognise his own strengths.

His project worker is continuing to help him cope with issues and deal with emotions in a more constructive way. At the same time he is recognising his values and setting goals for life.



What young people want from the future

In this report the combined findings from focus groups held with Barnardo's young people and our YouGov polling provide a valuable insight into the complex challenges young people face. The striking finding that 67% of young people feel their generation will be worse off than their parent's generation highlights the 'poverty of hope' too many young people feel about their futures. We found young people from disadvantaged backgrounds had different concerns from their well off peers; prioritising employment and crime as their most important issues.

Young people communicated a variety of concerns. They told us they are worried about the future of the NHS, waiting times and access to mental health services. Many reported that they are concerned about a lack of diverse job opportunities and safe spaces such as community youth centres. Widespread concerns were voiced about educational funding and limited curriculums. Additionally, young people felt high crime levels in their communities was a key issue. Long term concerns raised included

a need for increased Government action on climate change and the still uncertain impact of Brexit.

Overwhelmingly, this report reveals young people from disadvantaged backgrounds feel significantly less confident in their ability to climb out of poverty. Barnardo's experience working with these vulnerable children and young people tells us 'poverty of hope' will only be overcome through a sustained, multi-agency response from Government.



In their own words

What we heard from children and young people in our services.



How you can support young people to overcome poverty of hope

A key finding from our conversations with young people is that there is no single solution to help them overcome the problems they identified. The issues they face, which include a lack of local youth services, few job opportunities and increases in crime, are complex and interlinked. Therefore, Barnardo's is calling on all Government departments to recognise that they should develop a long term, multi-agency approach to help the most disadvantaged young people in the UK feel listened to and believe they can achieve positive futures. We recommend Government departments undertake the key actions listed below to help young people overcome their 'poverty of hope'.

Focusing on wellbeing

In May 2019 Ofsted published a revised education inspections framework for schools. However, the Department for Education and Ofsted should review the reporting and inspections procedures to ensure every school prioritises both children's wellbeing and mental health alongside academic achievement.

Investing in mental health services

Children and adolescent mental health services are in need of urgent and sustained investment, which could come from the £20.5bn a year NHS funding settlement. This would help to ensure all children have access to preventative and early intervention services, and reduce waiting times for the most intensive support.

Responding to trauma

All professionals working with vulnerable children should be trained in trauma-responsive practice, so they can better understand the impact of early life trauma and abuse.

Making social media safer

The Department for Education should ensure all children, young people and parents have access to education and guidance on safe social media use.

Reviving youth services

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport should increase investment in community youth work and safe spaces for young people. This should be done by cooperating with charities and other partners to provide targeted early interventions in disadvantaged communities.



Tackling serious youth violence

The Government should commit to funding a long term, multi-agency strategy to tackle the root causes of youth violence. This approach should encourage agencies, including schools, hospitals, local authorities, charities and youth services – to work together to tackle this growing epidemic. They should also provide young people access to housing and route into education, training and employment to help secure a brighter future.

Tackling school exclusions

Ofsted and the Department for Education should implement the policy recommendations outlined in the Timpson school exclusion report, including ensuring that schools and alternative education providers have the necessary resources to effectively support young people who are at risk of or have been excluded. Schools should always remain accountable for exam results and wider outcomes for the children they exclude.³³

Providing access to good quality education and training

The Government should renew its commitment to introduce 3 million apprenticeships by 2020 and work with employers to ensure that a sufficient number of these are offered at an intermediate level. Ensuring these opportunities are accessible to younger people with fewer qualifications should also be a priority.

Listening to young people

The Government should establish formal processes for gathering and responding to the concerns of younger citizens. MPs should hold surgeries or “town hall” meetings aimed at gathering young constituents’ views. When a specific national issue has particular relevance to children and young people such as knife crime or climate change, the Government should ensure young people’s perspectives are always represented in relevant task forces and working groups.

Preventing criminalisation

The police and criminal justice system should not criminalise children who are victims of criminal exploitation and forced into gangs, to carry knives, traffic drugs, or commit other offences. These children should be treated as victims and investment should be placed in developing services which enable young people to exit exploitation and work towards a positive future.

Taking action on climate change

The Government should ensure that the views and concerns of young people, including those from the most disadvantaged backgrounds, are represented in the creation of future climate change policy and political debate.

Our methodology:

We held three focus groups with Barnardo’s young people aged 14-25 at three of our services across the country.

We spoke to young learners at ETS-North an employment training skills centre in the North East, met residents at Preston Foyer Homelessness Link accommodation and visited The BASE in Newcastle, a holistic youth service that provides relationship, homelessness and employment support to socially excluded young people.

New Barnardo’s data from our YouGov survey of over 1000 young people is also included, offering new insight into young people’s views on post-Brexit Britain’s future. Total sample size was 1,036 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 16th – 25th April 2019. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all those aged 16-24 in GB.



³³ Timpson Review of School Exclusions, May 2019 (Accessed: 15:05:19)

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