

Calling  
← for →  
CHANGE

YOUNG LONDONERS' VIEWS  
ON A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE  
FOR THEIR CITY



Domestic appliances being recycled, SW London.  
John Cameron

# CALLING FOR CHANGE

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**To cite this report:** London Museum and Partnership for Young London (2022). *Calling for Change: Young Londoners' views on a sustainable future for their city*. London Museum.

# ABOUT THIS REPORT

The findings detailed in this report represent the experiences, suggestions and views expressed by both survey respondents and focus group participants. Over 1000 young people aged 16 to 25 who live in London participated in the research between June and September 2022. The research was commissioned by London Museum and carried out by Partnership for Young London.

**London Museum and London Museum Docklands** tell the story of London and Londoners across thousands of years through the people, places and moments that helped create the city we know today. In 2026 London Museum will open in West Smithfield. This is a once-in-a-generation chance to reimagine what a museum for London could be, built in partnership with Londoners.

**Partnership for Young London** believes in a future where every young person's right to wellbeing is recognised and fulfilled. With young people making up a third of London's population, we have to respect that they are crucial to its future.

## **CALLING FOR CHANGE: YOUNG LONDONERS' VIEWS ON A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR THEIR CITY**

January 2023

The following peer researchers were central to the design and implementation of the research and to the writing of this report:

Syeda Shakila Islam, 17 years old  
Yanis Fekar, 18 years old  
Joss Harrison, 23 years old  
Halima Mehmood, 24 years old  
Guyanne Sinon, 25 years old

Photos were sourced from UnSplash, credit to Callum Shaw, Harry Shelton, John Cameron, Josh Barwick, Markus Spiske, Nareeta Martin, Matt Seymour, Paulina Milde-Jachowska, Polina Tankilevitch, Sean Robbins, and Yelena Odintsova. Images of items from the museum's collection are also included and are credited separately.

In line with the museum's commitment to sustainability, printed versions of this report were printed on carbon neutral paper using compostable inks.

# INTRODUCTION BY SHARON AMENT DIRECTOR OF LONDON MUSEUM



Londoners have faced many challenges over the centuries as they shaped their city. This history is held in the London Museum's vast collection of objects and can be heard through the testimony of people themselves. History is constantly being made and remade, and how we have lived illuminates our present and can help shape new possibilities. That's why the museum is equally about London now and in the future.

This is especially the case as we move towards the opening of London Museum Smithfield in 2026 which will have galleries focusing on London today and its imagined futures. The climate emergency and how we respond to it is the biggest challenge Londoners have ever had to face, and as the museum for Londoners we are determined to play our small part in rising to this challenge.

Our job is to explore what it means to be a Londoner, to reflect the hugely diverse lived experiences of Londoners and to share their views, hopes and fears. It's vitally important that we give young Londoners a voice as they will be at the vanguard of change in the future. And it's clear from the findings of this research that young people feel passionately about what they would like to see happen to make London more environmentally sustainable in years to come. These findings are made all the more powerful by the fact that young people were at the centre of how the research was designed and how the data was analysed and presented. As part of this process the peer researchers were inspired by objects from the museum's collection, reinforcing the fact that reflecting on people's actions in the past can often help us make better decisions about the future.

So this research is crucially important to us. It was commissioned as part of our Arts Council England funded Curating London programme which is working with London's communities to enrich our understanding of the city and its people, including young Londoners who have been underrepresented in our collections and the stories we tell for too long. Alongside the 'We are the Youth of Today' research which we commissioned in 2020, this report will be invaluable in driving forward our transformation into the kind of museum young people want to be part of.

# INTRODUCTION BY THE PEER RESEARCHERS

From the first time we met as a team in March 2022 to our final group workshop in September, we were guided by a multi-part question: What does a sustainable London in 2035 look like for young Londoners, how do we get there, and what role might museums play in engaging young people in the process? This question brought structure, clarity and focus to our work as we grappled with the overwhelmingly large issues of the climate crisis, and the environment.

In addressing this question, each of us brought a different background, skills, experiences, and perspectives to the table. London is one of the most electrifyingly diverse cities on the planet, and it was critical that we represented that heterogeneity as a team. Going through the process of identifying what we wanted to ask young Londoners, collecting the data, and analysing and interpreting the findings, we can now present the outcome. There are so many important points to take away from the report, but some resonated with us particularly strongly as lessons we would like to see more widely implemented in the future.

Firstly, we hope to see the principle of co-design with young people institutionalised to a far greater extent in organisational and policy responses to environmental issues. Young Londoners' responses to the survey and the focus groups demonstrated a clear desire for more formal and consistent involvement in decision-making. Their responses were also marked by an extraordinary degree of both creativity and practicality, underlining the value of involving young people in policy design and the cost of failing to do so. Moreover, the project process itself was testament to the value of co-design. As peer researchers, we were intimately involved in each stage of the project, and we believe it benefited from the insights that we were able to bring as young Londoners ourselves.

Secondly, we hope that the insights of this report regarding the barriers to sustainable action are taken seriously. From the very start of the research process, we had discussions as a group regarding the extent to which it is possible for Londoners of all socio-economic backgrounds to be sustainable. This concern was borne out in the data, which demonstrated that the extent to which young Londoners feel able to take specific actions on the environment differs depending on race, gender and whether they have a disability. We therefore hope that policymakers and organisations will put intersectionality at the heart of their efforts to combat environmental issues and engaging young people, as opposed to adopting a one-size-fits-all approach.

Participating in this research project was an eye-opening process that forced us to reflect both on our own individual habits and the wider economic context for young Londoners. Our research repeatedly highlighted fundamental issues of distribution and inequality in London, which young people want to see tackled as part of a holistic approach to solving environmental issues. However, it also foregrounded the day-to-day actions that young Londoners are taking to reduce their own environmental impact. Like our peers around the city, we will make every effort to shop, consume, travel and dispose in a more sustainable manner, but will also advocate for systemic change to make London simultaneously greener, fairer and less unequal.

**Syeda, Yanis, Joss, Halima & Guyanne**



The peer researchers organising their draft survey questions into categories.

# KEY FINDINGS

## A SUSTAINABLE LONDON

### **1. Young Londoners do not think London is a sustainable city, and want to see it become one, through changes to how we organise our roads and build our houses.**

- They want to see further pedestrianisation of London's streets to encourage walking and reduce emissions, especially of key central London streets.
- Most young people support Ultra Low Emission Zones and Low Traffic Neighbourhoods.

### **2. Young Londoners want to see a green revolution in transport, with fewer cars, more cycling infrastructure, and public transport that is accessible for all.**

- Affordability is the biggest barrier to more young people using public transport, and most young people want to see transport for under 25s made free to help tackle climate change but also inequality.
- Many young Londoners want to see London become a car free city, especially in key central London and neighbourhood areas.
- Young people want to see more segregated cycling lanes to keep them safe and more secure bicycle parking to keep their bicycles safe.

## RESPONSIBILITY AND ACTION

### **3. Young Londoners think structurally and see responsibility for the environment to sit largely with national and regional government, big businesses and corporations. They want to get involved, with structures set up for them or through direct action.**

- Young people should have clear avenues to get involved in policy creation across the region with key partners, such as the creative sector and regional government.
- Young Londoners want to get involved with their own youth voice structures, or through direct action like contacting their local elected officials.

### **4. Young people want to get involved in conversations about the environment, but there are clear barriers; for some it is a lack of time or personal finances, but for some marginalised groups the barriers can also be physical or a fear of repercussions.**

- Young people care about environmental issues and are passionate to get involved or act, but there are clear barriers to their participation. Most commonly, a lack of finances is stopping many young people from engaging.
- There are intersectional barriers that prevent participation, such as the physical barriers faced by disabled young people, or the fear of repercussions by non-binary and third gender people.

## THE SUSTAINABLE LONDONER

**5. Young Londoners are taking action in the way that they shop for products, especially for clothes and food. However, sustainable products can be difficult to source, identify, or afford.**

- Young Londoners are already taking action to make their day to day lives more sustainable, such as recycling, reducing meat consumption, or changing the way that they travel.
- Many young Londoners already consider the sustainability of a product when purchasing it, but more so for food and clothing than electronics, technology, or cosmetics. More advice is needed on what sustainable products are available regionally to help reduce confusion about the overwhelming number of sustainability certifications.

**6. Young Londoners are looking to social media rather than school to learn about the environment. They want to see more education about these issues, focusing on the wider issues, not just recycling.**

- There should be more opportunities for young people to learn about the environment. Young people want to learn the basics about the climate or sustainability.

**7. Young people want sustainable employment but have less understanding of what the green economy is, or what green jobs look like in London.**

- Environmental issues do have an impact on the type of work that young people want to do in the future. They want to work sustainably for employers who are not contributing to the climate crisis.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LONDON MUSEUM

**8. Young people believe that arts and cultural spaces have a responsibility to engage and educate them on environmental issues.**

- Many young people don't know if museums listen to their views when planning displays or events but are very enthusiastic about getting involved.
- Young people see London Museum as a public space that can be host to debates, conversations, and community activities, rather than simply a place where they visit.

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LONDON MUSEUM

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## **1. Youth Inclusion and co-production should be at the heart of London Museum decision making.**

- Clearly articulate pathways across the museum's programmes for young people's engagement and co-production, including internships, volunteer roles, paid jobs, online forums and youth advisory structures, to enable a diverse range of young Londoners to engage with programme and content creation.
- Commit to reviewing the suggestions from young Londoners gathered through this research about how they would like to see the museum engage young people, and turn these into actions.

## **2. Provide a greater number and type of events, activities and opportunities for hands-on learning that young Londoners can get involved with at the museum.**

- Offer more interactive and engaging events, such as debates on environmental issues or workshops on how to live more sustainably, in addition to displays and exhibitions.
- Establish the museum as a community space for which young people feel a sense of ownership, along with other Londoners, hosting local communities and providing non-traditional functions like clothes swaps.

## **3. Establish the museum as a radical voice of Generation Z.**

- Truly represent the views, attitudes and values of young Londoners, especially with regard to sustainability, from how to build its collection to who it accepts funding from.
- Reach out to, support and display young artists who represent commitments to subjects such as the environment and climate change.
- Provide a platform for young people and speak out with them on key issues like the climate crisis.



'We Want Clean Air'

© Henry Grant Collection/London Museum



# METHODOLOGY

Peer researchers Halima and Yanis looking at the survey data.

# INTRODUCTION BY GUYANNE

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This report is the result of a collaboration between London Museum, Partnership for Young London and a group of peer researchers, guided by the aim of understanding what a future sustainable London would look like to young Londoners. The role of the peer researchers throughout this process has been crucial. We worked very closely together during all the parts of the project from brainstorming the bigger picture of sustainability to debating detailed wording of survey questions.

The survey and interview guide were designed and created in collaboration with us, the peer researchers, guided by six broad themes: green space and urban planning, transport, responsibility, politics and policy, education and employment, and social action. When designing the survey, we generated a bank of over 100 questions. We discussed, deliberated, and then selected the questions for the survey and focus groups, going through several refining processes. Key stakeholders from London Museum, Greater London Authority (GLA), London Councils and City of London also provided input and feedback to the content of the survey. It was great that we were able to engage with and pose questions to the aforementioned stakeholders to further develop their understanding of London's former, current, and future journey in sustainability.

In total we had over 1000 young Londoners spend their time completing our survey, and we want to thank everyone who took the time to do it, especially those who wrote intriguing suggestions on how they would change London for the better if they were to be in charge.

In addition, we were able to facilitate four focus groups with 20 young Londoners, to delve far more into concepts like sustainability and the power of youth voice in such a debate. The aim of the focus groups was twofold. First, they served to provide further insight and explanation into the survey responses and provide views and stories about the complexity of these subjects. Second, some were targeted toward getting the opinions and perspectives of young Londoners who may not have had access to the survey, bringing in a various range of experiences and backgrounds.

Data from the survey and focus groups were analysed in both a qualitative and quantitative way. The survey data was quantitatively analysed through graphical representation, while using data analysis software (SPSS) to test for correlations between certain identifying characteristics (think about gender or age) and how questions were answered. All statistically significant correlations were carefully interpreted and discussed one by one by the team. The transcribed focus groups and open-box survey question responses were coded by us working simultaneously in online documents, grouping themes and discussing similarities and differences between the transcripts.

All in all, combining this all together has brought us a wholesome story about London's sustainable future through and by young Londoners.

**Guyanne Sinon, 25 years old**

# METHODOLOGY

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Peer research is a form of Participatory Action Research (PAR) that involves the communities that are affected by the research in the design and delivery of it. This work has been steered and conducted by young people living, studying, and working in London.

We want to again thank the five peer researchers for their hard work from the start of this project in March 2022:

**Syeda Shakila Islam, 17 years old**

**Yanis Fekar, 18 years old**

**Joss Harrison, 23 years old**

**Halima Mehmood, 24 years old**

**Guyanne Sinon, 25 years old**

## PROCESS OVERVIEW

This project has been guided by four key principles:

- 1. Power sharing:** It was important that peer researchers were not only involved in most decisions, but had the final say on key research design decisions. They were equal partners to London Museum and Partnership for Young London.
- 2. Mutual respect for experience/expertise:** The peer researchers were recruited because of their diverse range of experiences and their enthusiasm and expertise on the environment and sustainability. Their time is valuable, and the peer researchers were paid an hourly fee for their involvement.
- 3 Informed decision making:** Peer researchers were provided with training and support to make informed decisions at each stage of the process. It was vital that they gained skills and learning alongside the decisions that they were expected to make.
- 4. Maximum involvement:** This project aimed to get peer researchers involved in as many aspects of the research project as possible; establishing research aims, designing methods, stakeholder involvement, conducting focus groups, creating transcripts, analysing results, and report writing.

The peer researchers were supported with the design and fieldwork for this project over three key stages:

- **Stage 1 – Research planning and training:** The peer researchers worked with Partnership for Young London and London Museum to decide on a research question, and to design the survey questions, and interview guide.
- **Stage 2 – Fieldwork stage:** The peer researchers supported the delivery of the survey and focus groups, ensuring that we reached as many young Londoners as possible.
- **Stage 3 – Analysis stage:** The peer researchers worked with Partnership for Young London to analyse the data from the survey, and focus groups, coming up with the structure of the report and key findings.

# STAGE 1: RESEARCH PLANNING AND TRAINING



London Museum commissioned Partnership for Young London to work with a group of five young Londoners to look at the environment, sustainability, and climate change from the perspective of young Londoners and the role that the museum can play.

After exploring the topic in a workshop and learning about research questions, the peer researchers decided on a research question that looked to the future and was rooted in action:

**“What does a sustainable London look like in 2035, how do we get there, and what is the role of London Museum?”**

Using this research question as a guide, the peer researchers were supported to develop interview guides and a survey based on the topics that they had a passion for as well as to create a research project that reflected the young researchers as a collective. As a result, this project had a range of topics it explored:

- **Transport** – Several peer researchers, like Yannis, had an interest in the future of public transport, and how London can improve transport infrastructure to reduce air pollution and emissions.
- **Sustainable consumerism** – Guyanne wanted to learn more about the consumer habits of young Londoners, and how sustainability factors into their purchasing decisions for different products.
- **Environmental responsibility** – Joss felt it was important to explore who young Londoners felt was responsible for the environment, alongside the role of individual action and responsibility.
- **Youth voice** – Halima, having been a young inspector in her own borough, was interested in whether young people are involved in the environmental debate and how they would best want to be involved.
- **Environmental education** – Syeda, sitting on her secondary school’s Eco Council, was interested in how young Londoners learn about the environment and sustainability and what more schools should be doing.
- **The role of arts and cultural spaces** – After visiting London Museum, peer researchers wanted to explore the possibilities and opportunities of cultural institutions to engage with subjects such as the environment and sustainability.

# TRAINING AND SKILLS

It was important that the peer researchers on this project were supported with training to develop the skills needed to meaningfully contribute or deliver research safely and robustly. Each session consisted of two parts: learning and skills development, and decision making and design.

## **Research question – 12th March 2022**

- Peer researchers were taught about peer research, research projects, and the context of the research. It was also an opportunity to get to know each other, and meet staff from London Museum to learn more about the role of the museum in relation to the environment and sustainability.
- Decision: The peer researchers decided on a research question and established key aims.

## **Methodology – 19th March 2022**

- Peer researchers were taught about qualitative and quantitative research methods and the strengths and weaknesses of each.
- Decision: The peer researchers decided to conduct a survey, and focus groups.

## **Survey design – 9th April 2022**

- Peer researchers were taught about survey design such as the different types of survey questions and scales.
- Decision: The peer researchers designed a list of survey questions and through a several step process, narrowed down their questions into a final survey draft.

## **Focus groups and interviews – 4th June 2022**

- Peer researchers were taught about focus group and interview practice, such as interview guides and how to conduct both. They were also taught about how to create accurate clean transcripts.
- Decision: The peer researchers designed the interview guide that would be used for the focus groups.

## **Analysing data – 17th September 2022**

- Peer researchers were taught about data analysis, such as how survey data is analysed and how to analyse qualitative data like transcripts and open box answers.
- Decision: The peer researchers wrote up the findings from the survey and analysed the qualitative data through the creation of codes and themes.

## **Recommendations session – 24th September 2022**

- Peer researchers learnt about recommendations, stakeholders, and how research can be translated into change.
- Decision: The peer researchers created a draft of recommendations, which was presented to London Museum.



The peer researchers writing their ten key findings from the data before a group discussion.

# STAGE 2: FIELDWORK

1023 young people aged 16 to 25 took part in our survey between May and September 2022.

A survey designed by the peer researchers was advertised through social media with over 1000 young people spending an average of 16 minutes each to complete it. We want to thank all young Londoners who took the time to participate in the survey.

- **Age:** Participants were aged between 16 and 25, with the average age being 21.59. The survey sample was slightly older, with less than one in five (19.7%) aged 18 or under.
- **Gender:** We had an overrepresentation of young women (67.2%) compared to young men (25.6%), which was adjusted for in the analysis. We also had a minority identifying as third gender/non-binary (5%), with the rest (2.2%) preferring not to say.
- **Ethnicity:** Over half of respondents were White young people (67.7%), with less than half White British (47%), followed by Asian young people (11.1%), mixed ethnicity (10.7%), and Black young people (5%), with the rest preferring prefer not to say (1.6%).
- **Employment and education:** Most commonly respondents were either in full time or part time employment (41.3%), followed by being at university (35.5%). A smaller proportion were doing A-levels (12.4%) or GCSEs (4.2%) or doing an apprenticeship or traineeship (1.3%). Lastly, some respondents were either Not in Employment, Education, or Training (NEET) (3%) or doing work experience or an internship (2.3%).
- **School type:** Young Londoners in our sample most commonly went to a comprehensive/state school (52.8%), followed by private/independent school (17.9%) and academy school (10.2%). Additionally, almost one in five (18.2%) did not go to school in the UK. This compares to London data where over three quarters (75%) go to a state school, and one in five (21%) go to a private school. The remainder (0.9%) were home schooled or other.
- **Disability:** We had a significant minority (15.6%) who said that they did consider themselves to have a disability, compared to a majority (79.8%) who did not, with a minority (4.6%) preferring not to say.  
This is higher than the national average for children (9%), but lower than the national average for working age adults (21%).
- **Care experience:** Less than one in ten (8.5%) of our sample were care experienced, which is far more than the London average of 51 children in care per 10,000 young people (0.51%).
- **Area:** We also looked carefully at the postcode data from respondents and found good representation from across London. However, there was more engagement from inner-London boroughs, and less response from areas of South-West and North-East London.



A heatmap of survey responses in London, with more coming from those living in Zones 1 and 2.

## FOCUS GROUPS

All focus groups were about one hour long, exploring the research aims in depth steered by the interview guide. The majority of focus groups were conducted by peer researchers with support from Partnership for Young London. Four focus groups were conducted with young people from different areas and backgrounds:

- **Chickenshed Theatre (7 young people)** – A group of creative young people aged 16 to 25 based in Enfield, North East London.
- **Dome Youth Club (5 young people)** – A group of young people from a youth club based in Camden, North East London, aged 16 to 18.
- **London Youth (5 young people)** – A group of young people aged 18 to 25 from across London involved with London Youth.
- **Young Londoners Research Programme (5 young people)** – A group of young people aged 18 to 25 from across London who are working on their own research projects about access into youth services.

# STAGE 3: ANALYSIS

The peer researchers then came together to look at the survey, and the focus group transcripts. In total, the peer researchers went through all 40 of the survey questions, 5 hours of focus group recordings, and over 2000 open box survey answers.

## QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

## QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

### LEARNING

- Data preparation
- Data skills

The peer researchers learned about statistical analysis software (SPSS) and how analysis is done on quantitative surveys. It was also important that peer researchers understood how the data had been weighted and anonymised.

The peer researchers learned about qualitative data analysis, like content and thematic analysis, and how to code transcripts. They also learned how cleaned transcripts had been created from the audio.

### FAMILIARISATION

- Reading transcripts
- Reviewing survey data

Partnership for Young London presented the peer researchers with all the data from the survey, including the basic percentages for each question, and all relationships that were found to be statistically significant (p-value of 0.05 or less).

Partnership for Young London presented the peer researchers with completed anonymised cleaned transcripts from the interviews and focus groups to read through.

### INTERPRETATION

- Coding transcripts
- Analysing survey outcomes

The peer researchers then wrote an interpretation of each data point and made a judgement about how significant it was. From this we had a conversation about how the data answers our original research question.

The peer researchers coded the transcripts and looked for the key themes and ideas that came out of each. They did this with printed copies of the transcripts, highlighters, and pens. Each focus group was read and coded by multiple peer researchers.

### STRUCTURE

- Creating key findings
- Creating themes

They then organised all the data into a structure that they thought made logical sense, which the final report would be organised into. Each peer researcher was also asked to provide, from their perspective, the top ten key findings which were combined into the final ten found in this report.

The peer researchers brought all their codes together, and the frequency that they occurred, to generate some structured key findings from the qualitative data. The key quotes identified by the peer researchers can be found throughout this report.



Dan Senior standing on escalator in London.  
Harry Shelton

# A SUSTAINABLE LONDON *in 2035*

Please stand on  
the right

Please  
hold the  
handrail



# INTRODUCTION BY YANIS

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With around a third of its population under the age of 25, London is clearly a young city. We wanted to look at how young Londoners who are living and studying in the city felt about the current sustainability credentials of London, as well as their aspirations for their city.

Young Londoners identify London in 2035 as a sustainable city relying on a progressive transport policy that incorporates public transport, walking, and cycling to a much greater extent. The changes they would like to see include decreasing the cost of public transport (or making it free), investment in green transport (such as electrifying London's buses), investment in green/sustainable architecture, pedestrianisation, shifts in energy policy, shorter and greener supply-chains, and cycle-centric (instead of car-centric) roads and infrastructure.

The top three forms of transport that young Londoners want to see more of by 2035 are bicycles, walking, and tubes. First, this finding underlines the need for better cycling infrastructure and London-wide coverage for bike rental schemes such as TfL Santander Cycles (not just in Zones 1 or 2). There are countless trips I could have taken using my bicycle or a Santander bike, but instead used alternatives because there was no safe cycle parking or Santander dock near my destination. Second, we need to see more pedestrianisation enacted across the key streets in central London (such as Oxford Street), which could be facilitated if current regressive planning laws are revised. Third, I would encourage Transport for London to keep its current focus on ensuring the Underground is efficient and safe and aim to reduce the massive electric consumption of tube trains.

This research project shows young Londoner's support for policies such as Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (74.5% either support or strongly support), Ultra-Low Emission Zones (79.5%) and making public transport free for 16-24s (82.2%). Of course, support for free public transport is not a revelation but it must be kept in mind that young Londoners are ready to say no to cars if the alternative is appealing enough.

Remarkably, a significant number of young Londoners do not travel on public transport as much as they would like to as affordability is the main barrier to using public transport. More than 70% of young Londoners say they do not believe public transport in London is affordable to all, with the next most important barriers being availability of services, safety, and accessibility. Having lived in outer-London myself, the issue of public transport availability was particularly visible to me. Policymakers and decision-makers must keep in mind what London has to gain from making public transport the better option, not only in central, but also in outer-London.

The transformations that young Londoners would like to see could not be any clearer. The onus is now on decision-makers: from higher-ups in the government, the Mayor of London's office, and TfL to large businesses and corporations.

**Yannis Fekar, 18 years old**

# SUSTAINABILITY AND LONDON

We first wanted to explore the definition of sustainability, and how young Londoners understood the term. In our focus groups we found that for some young Londoners sustainability had a clear association with the environment, in particular fossil fuels and energy supply.

*“I think sustainability is about how long something can last for. Let’s say if you’re going for fossil fuels, how long are fossil fuels gonna last for and how can you re-use them? That’s what I think sustainability is.”*

However, many young Londoners do not necessarily associate the word sustainability with the environment, and instead relate it to the conditions of their own life. The term was also often applied to young people’s finances and the cost of living, not to environmental issues.

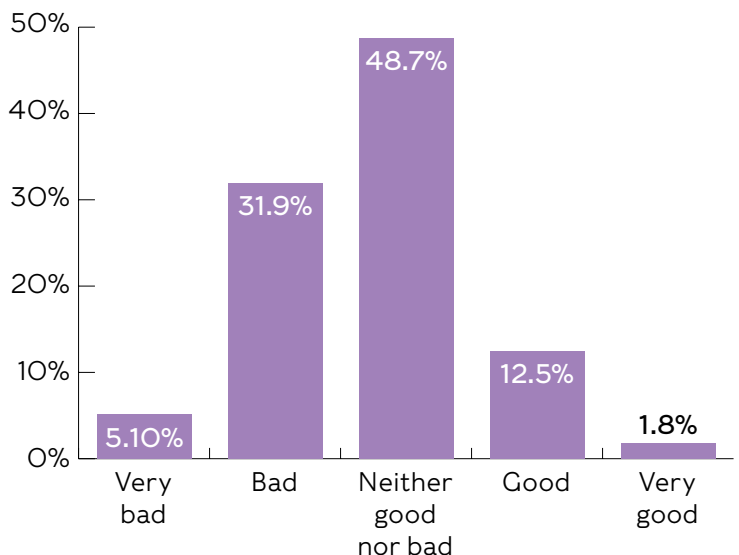
*“I think (sustainability) means being stable in the life that you’re living...To be financially sustainable. Like paying bills on a monthly basis and be able to buy food.”*

## LONDON IS NOT GREAT AT BEING SUSTAINABLE

In our survey, young Londoners had mixed feelings about the environmental sustainability of their city, with less than half (48.7%) believing that London was neither good nor bad at being sustainable. However, over twice as many young Londoners said that London was bad or very bad at being sustainable than those who said it was good or very good (37% to 14.3%).

Views also changed by age, gender, or ethnicity. Firstly, the older a young person was, the less likely they were to think London was good or very good, with 22-25s the least likely (11.5%), followed by 19-21s (15.2%), and 16-18s (20.6%). Secondly, young men were more likely to say London was good or very good (19.5%) followed by young women (12.9%), and non-binary third gender (7.5%). Lastly, Asian young people were the most likely to say good or very good (26.2%), followed by Black young people (16.9%), and White British young people (12%).

**How good do you think London, as a city, is at being environmentally sustainable?**



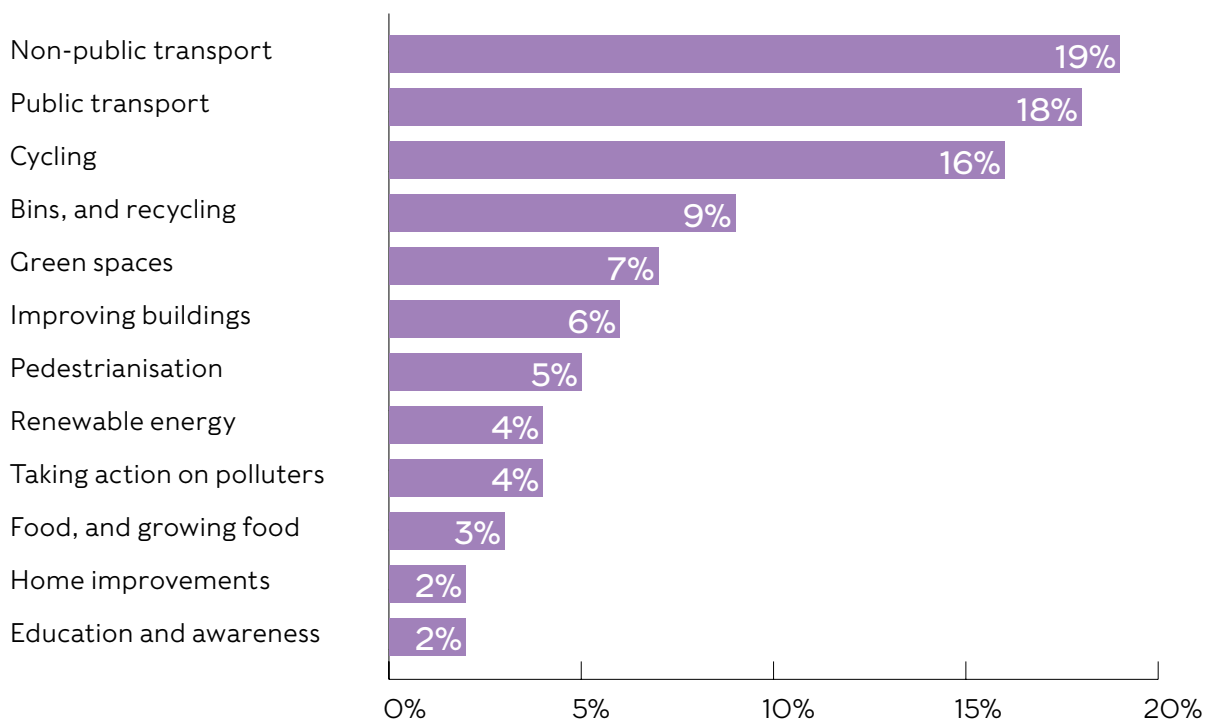


High Density London, 2017  
© Squint/Opera Ltd

# IF YOU WERE IN CHARGE OF LONDON, WHAT WOULD YOU DO TO MAKE IT SUSTAINABLE BY 2035?

We asked young Londoners what they would do if they were in charge of London to make it sustainable by 2035. We then took all their answers and categorised these to see what topics came up the most.

**Topics spoken about by young people in response to “If you were in charge of London, what would you do to make it sustainable by 2035?” ordered by frequency.**



The most common answer to this question related to transport in some way, with most references either about cycling (16%), walking and pedestrianisation (5%), public transport (18%), or non-public transport (19%).

Bins, recycling, and improving waste management was also a common as an answer. More young Londoners spoke about the need to improve opportunities to recycle and bin collection services in their local borough, than green spaces or trees (9% to 7%).

There were a few topics that were hardly mentioned. Out of the 909 responses to this optional question, we had only 5 references to green jobs, 11 references to pollution and air pollution, and 40 references to education or raising awareness.

# QUOTES FROM YOUNG LONDONERS

“More restrictions on private cars, provide food waste service city wide, ensure easy and effective recycling for homes city wide (this is really inconsistent for flats for example and a lot of things that could be recycled are not), electrify all public transport, more greenery.”

“All public transport should only run on sustainable energy. All vehicles entering in London should be electric or hybrids. Add vehicle charging areas. Better use of the wind, the rain and the heat that hits London. More vertical green areas. Better Thames Water piping system for water and sewage.”

“Better bike parking facilities that are more financially accessible to most people. Mandate that all new apartments make accommodation for bike parking.”

“I would ensure every borough has access to a comprehensive waste disposal service.”

“Integrate nature symbiotically into the city. Take back the streets to be a place for the community. Make the streets a nice place to be with nature to facilitate more positive social interaction. Make cities a happier place to be.”

“I think community driven projects will work the best, but also changes need to be made by those higher up, such as members of parliament or the mayor, who could reduce their carbon emissions and pressure big companies to reduce their emissions and lead the change.”

“Investing massively in public transports is the main key. Open train lines extensions in the areas poorly connected (eg, the south side of the river), get new and modern sustainable tube trains, switch to green energy to power the trains, switch to LED lights across the whole network.”

# YOUNG LONDONERS SUPPORT LTNS

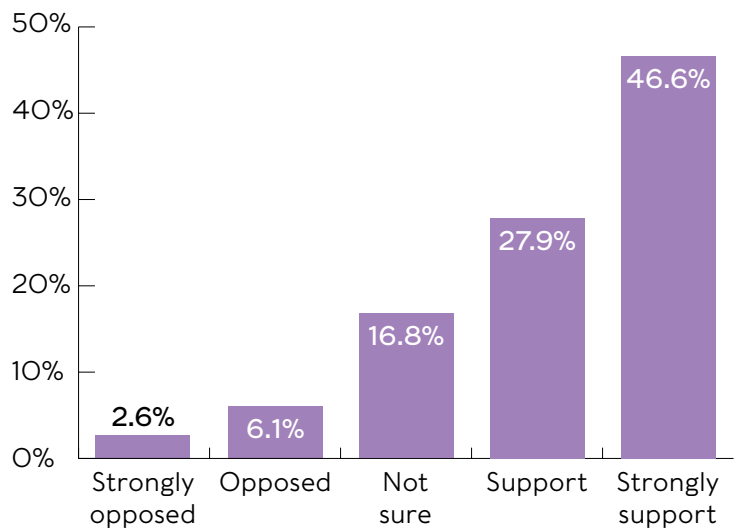
Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) aim to reduce car traffic in residential areas and have been implemented across London. While evidence has found that LTNs result in more walking and cycling,<sup>1</sup> the scheme remains divisive.

Providing a short description of LTNs and their aims, as set out by Transport for London (TfL),<sup>2</sup> we asked young Londoners whether they supported or opposed these measures.

We found that three out of four (74.5%) young Londoners support LTNs, with almost half (46.6%) strongly supporting them. Less than one in ten (8.7%) said that they either opposed or strongly opposed LTNs.

There was a small difference between groups, with White young people more likely to support LTNs (79.7%) compared to Asian (64.6%) or Black (45.1%) young people. Care experienced young people were also less likely to support LTNs compared to those with no care experience (59.2% to 76.4%).

## Do you oppose or support Low Traffic Neighbourhoods?



A low traffic neighbourhood (LTN) in London.  
Matt Seymour

1 Aldred, Rachel; Goodman, Anna (2020-09-10). "Low Traffic Neighbourhoods, Car Use, and Active Travel: Evidence from the People and Places Survey of Outer London Active Travel Interventions".

2 Transport for London (2020). "Low Traffic Neighbourhoods: what, why and where?"

# YOUNG LONDONERS SUPPORT ULEZ

Ultra-Low Emission Zones (ULEZ) are set to expand in 2023 in London, covering most of London, to tackle air pollution and reduce harmful nitrogen dioxide. We again provided an explanation about ULEZ provided by TfL,<sup>3</sup> and asked if young Londoners supported or opposed the measure.

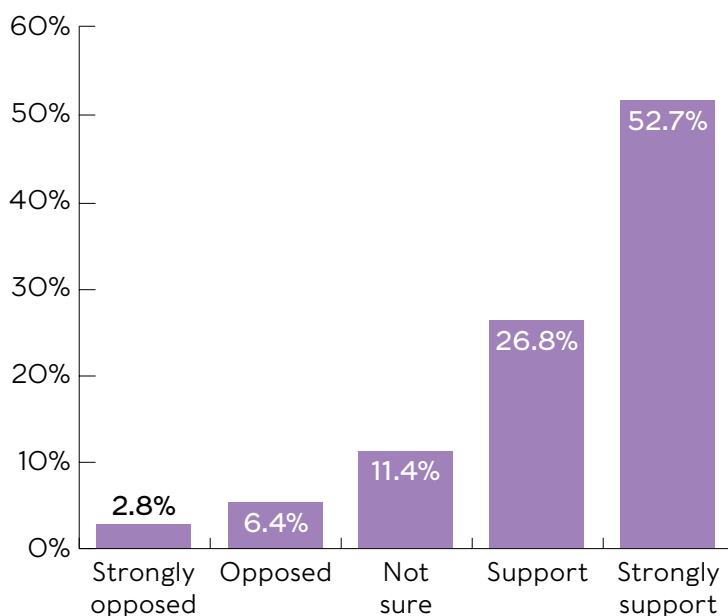
We found that four out of five young Londoners said that they either support or strongly support ULEZs (79.5%). This is a far higher level of support than previously found in polls of London's wider population (79.5% to 68%).<sup>4</sup> Less than one in ten (9.2%) opposed or strongly opposed ULEZs.

Additionally, many told us they wanted to see an expansion of ULEZs, higher congestion charges, and a focus on emissions of cars rather than the age of cars.

*"To charge ULEZ to high end cars such as Range Rovers which are as polluting as older cars that are not ULEZ...it needs to target every economic demographic."*

Support for ULEZs was also higher with White young people (83.5%) compared to Asian (77%) or Black (73.2%) young people. Interestingly, older young people were also more likely to support them, with 22-25s the most likely (81.8%), followed by 19-21s (78.8%), and 16-18s (74.4%).

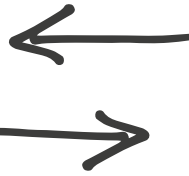
## Do you oppose or support the Ultra-Low Emission Zone?



3 Transport for London (2022). "Ultra Low Emission Zone"

4 Client Earth (2021). "Majority of Londoners support expansion of the Ultra Low Emission Zone"

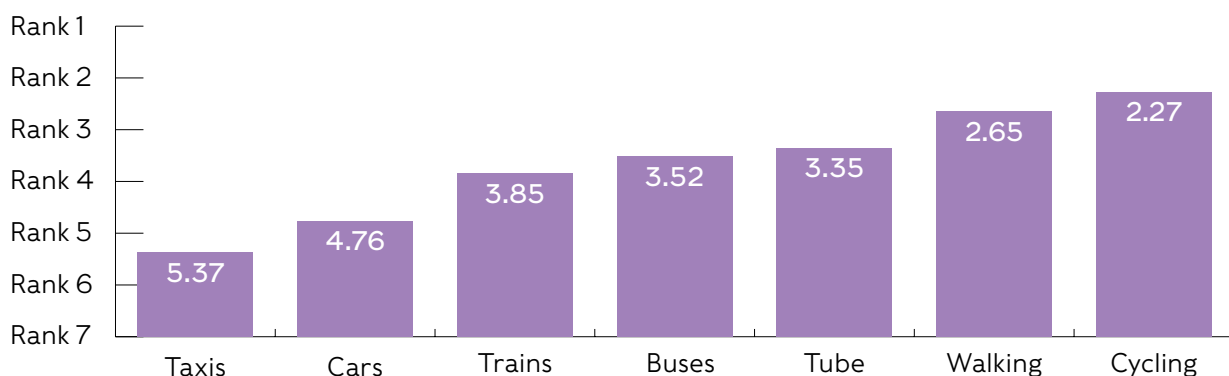
# A CYCLING AND WALKING CITY



We wanted to know what the future of transport in London might look like, namely what forms of transport young people wanted to see more of by 2035.

A recent survey of young Londoners found that most (71.3%) take the bus to school/college, followed by the train (16.5%), walking (5.8%), tube (4.6%), cycling (0.6%), and Other (1.2%).<sup>5</sup>

**Please rank these forms of transport in the order you would like to see more of by 2035**  
(The lower the number, the higher the average ranking)



We found that cycling was ranked the highest, being ranked 2.27 on average out of 7 options. This was followed closely by walking (2.65), then public transport options like the tube (3.35), buses (3.52), and trains (4.76). Given how many young people spoke about wanting to make London car free in our previous questions, it is unsurprising that cars (4.76) and taxis (5.47) were most likely to be ranked lowest.

When we asked young Londoners what they would do if they were in charge of London, out of the 909 responses to our optional open box question, we had over 349 references to cycling and 118 references to walking and pedestrianisation. Alongside calls for cycle lanes, young Londoners also wanted to see more cycling parking or shelters, more TfL Santander Cycles for cheaper, and cycling education.

*“I have been in two serious bicycle/car accidents in the last few months, in broad daylight, on main roads, when it was my right of way, because I didn’t have a safe bicycle path to be in.”*

*“I would create a city wide and free ‘Learn to cycle’ program on the weekends.”*

Young Londoners were also clear that they want more pedestrianisation of major streets (like Oxford Street), pedestrian only zones, and wider pavements for those walking.

*“Pedestrianise busy tourist areas (or keep open to buses only) eg Oxford Street, Leicester Square, Camden High Street.”*

<sup>5</sup> Partnership for Young London (2020). [“Free transport means everything to me: understanding the impact of free travel on under-18s”](#)



School children training for their National Cycling Proficiency test at St. Mary's School, 1971 by Henry Grant.

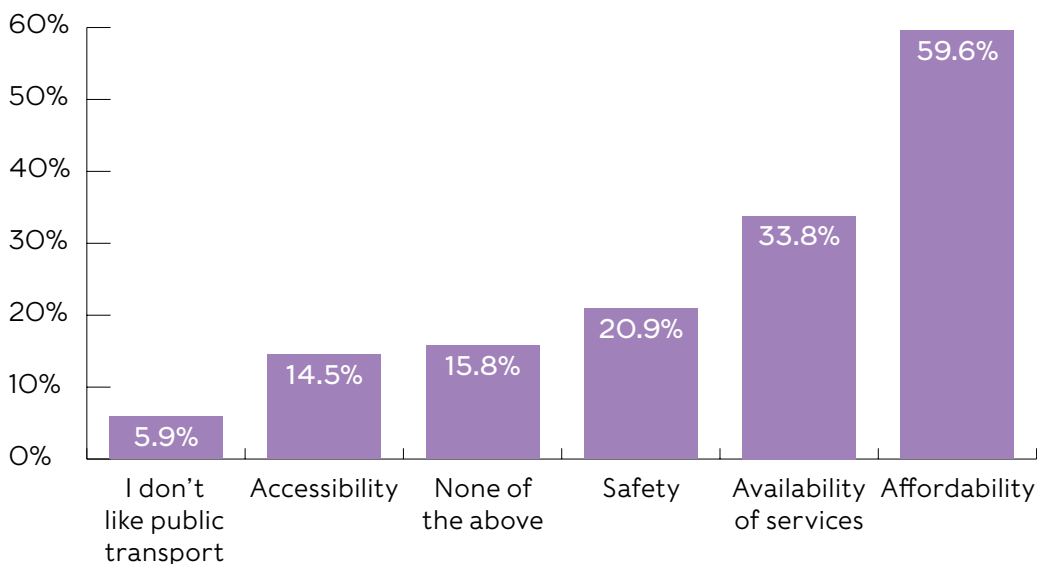
© Henry Grant Collection/London Museum

# THE BARRIERS TO USING PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Most young Londoners prefer travelling on public transport given the choice,<sup>6</sup> however there are many barriers that prevent everyone from having equal access.

We asked young Londoners to choose the three top barriers that prevent them from travelling on public transport as much as they would like to. Affordability was the most common barrier to young Londoners using public transport as often as they would like to, as it was the option selected by a majority (59.6%) of young people.

## What are the three biggest barriers to you using more public transport than you currently do?



*"Make public transport much cheaper – the tube particularly is outrageously expensive. This doesn't just apply to London though – train costs across the country are ridiculous – it's currently cheaper to take a plane to a European city than it is to take the train to other parts of the UK."*

The availability of services (33.8%) was the second most common option. In open box answers we heard how many young people want services to be more frequent, or expanded, especially to underserved areas like South London.

Affordability and availability were followed by safety (20.9%), accessibility (14.5%) and simply not liking public transport (5.9%). Only a minority (15.8%) said none of the above. While the forms of transport young people wanted to see were relatively consistent across different groups, the barriers they faced varied greatly.

<sup>6</sup> City Monitor (2021). "Most young Londoners prefer public transit. Let's not let them down."

For example, disabled young people were far more likely to cite accessibility as a barrier (32.5%) as well as care experienced young people (29.5%) as were Black and Asian young people (22.5% and 20.5%) respectively. Safety as a concern was far greater for young women compared to young men (25.9% to 10.7%) and for younger groups aged 16-18 (28.2%) than it was for older groups aged 19-21 (21.5%) or 22-25 (17.8%).

*“Most of the time the (wheelchair) ramps don’t bloody work. Literally it doesn’t want to come out.”*

## FREE TRANSPORT TO TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE

A majority (72%) of young Londoners said that they did not think public transport in London is affordable to all. Less than one in five (18%) said they felt it was.

*“The most expensive transport in the world. I think we’re number one.”*

Young people aged 16-18 were slightly more likely to think transport was affordable (22.5%) compared to older groups aged 19-21 or 22-25 (17% average). However, what was striking was the difference in gender, with young men being twice as likely as young women to think public transport is affordable to all (26% to 12.8%).

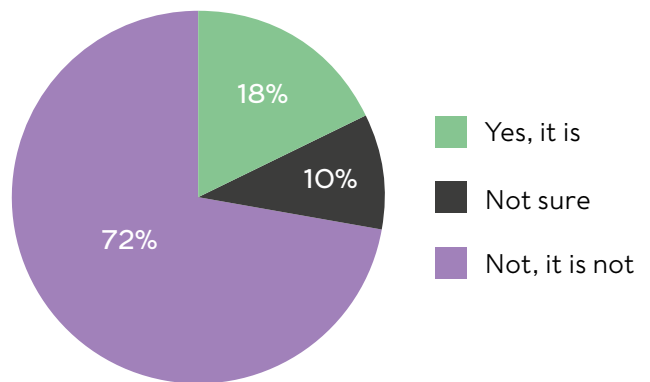
An even larger majority (82.2%) told us that they support making transport free to help tackle climate change. Only one in ten (9.8%) were against it, and less than one in ten (8.2%) were not sure.

Many respondents also supported making public transport free to tackle the cost-of-living crisis and inequality. Unsurprisingly we found that Black young people, the most likely to cite affordability as a barrier, were also far more likely to support free transport (98.5%) especially compared to White British young people (78.3%).

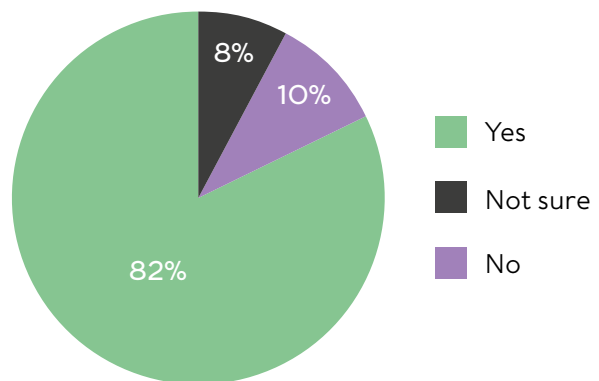
*“It [Zip Card] needs to be extended up to 25. Let’s say they’re 18, going to work? Yeah. How are you going to get like five pounds a day from their salaries when they’re only getting paid like what minimum wage? I don’t know. It’s so annoying.”*

Previous research has shown how important free transport can be to young people’s ability to access opportunities across the city and get to school safely.<sup>7</sup> However, we heard in focus groups how trains across the UK should be cheaper for recreational purposes too.

### Do you think that public transport (buses, trains, tubes) in London is affordable to all?



### Should public transport be free for 16-24s to help tackle climate change?



<sup>7</sup> Partnership for Young London (2020). [“Free transport means everything to me: understanding the impact of free travel on under-18s”](#)

# TWO DIFFERENT IMAGES OF LONDON IN 2035

On July 27th, 2022, the Young People's Action group (London Violence Reduction Unit), the Peer Outreach Workers (Greater London Authority) and London Youth Assembly came together for the Young Londoners Assemble.

We worked with this group of more than 40 young Londoners to find out how they envisioned the future of their city. We asked them to come up with two predictions:

- What does London look like in a future where we don't act?
- What does London look like in a future where we act?

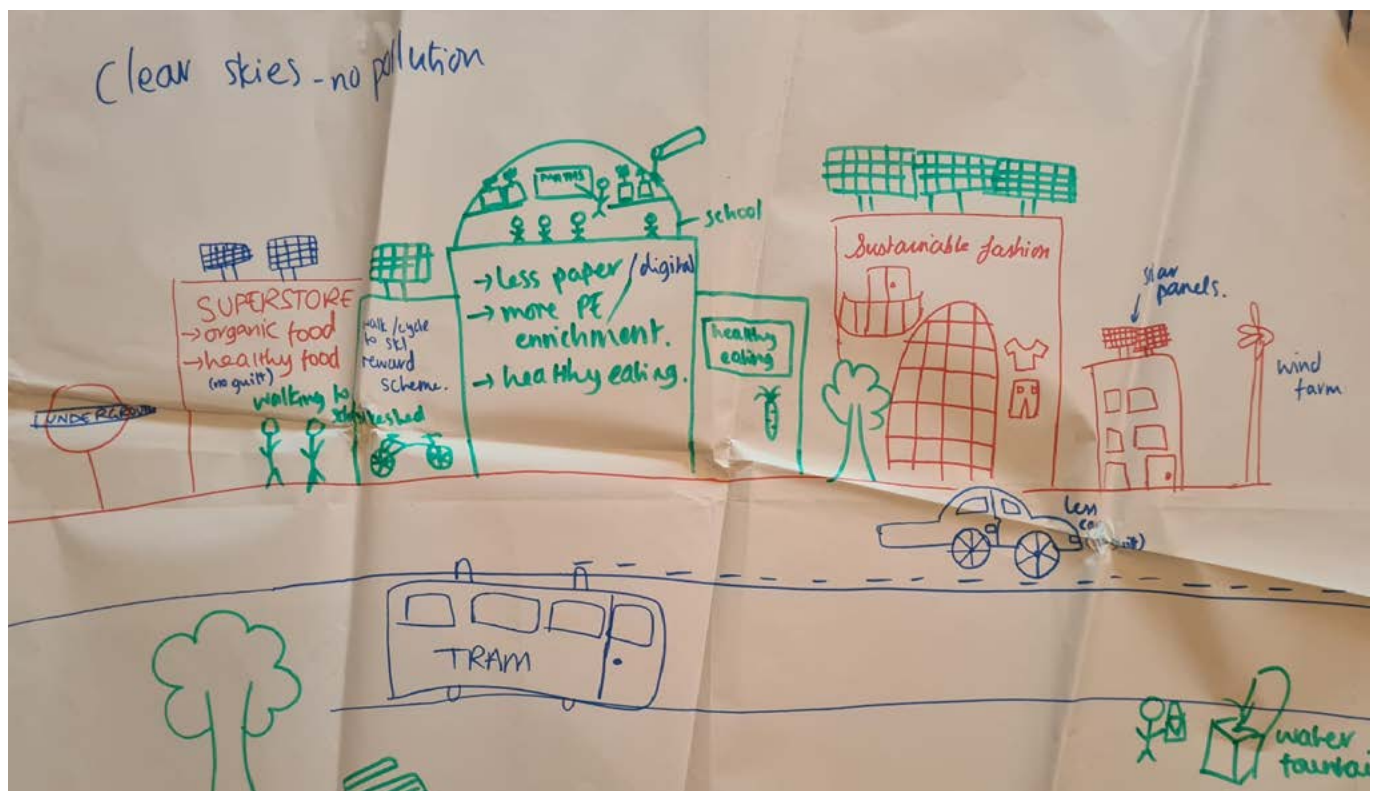
This group of engaged young Londoners put their predictions and imagination together to tell us two different stories on how London will look in 2035. We then commissioned an artist, Katie Watling, to create two paintings based on what they told us.

## HOW LONDON WILL LOOK IN 2035 IF WE FAIL TO ACT ON THE CLIMATE CRISIS ACCORDING TO YOUNG LONDONERS ON THE DAY:

- Young Londoners described a city in which the air quality would be so bad that it would be impossible to walk outside on the streets without breathing masks. This is why drones would become the new substitute for delivering packages to people's homes and robots replacing nearly all activities to minimise the number of people who have to be outside.
- Technology and robotisation will have taken over humans' tasks, which means people will be inside all the time and the problems of homelessness and poverty will have increased massively.
- The fog in the city will be permanent and when it rains, acid rain will have come to London, requiring people to wear specific gear and clothing to be outside.
- Sea levels will have risen problematically, while the supply of drinkable water needs to be sourced from a few kilometres below the Earth's surface, since the salty water has infiltrated current water sources.
- The ozone layer would become so thin that people would need to use SPF 500 to be outside without getting instantly burned and people going for holidays would be on a rocket to Mars as the only option to take a break.

## HOW LONDON WILL LOOK IN 2035 IF WE SUCCEED IN ACTING ON THE CLIMATE CRISIS ACCORDING TO YOUNG LONDONERS ON THE DAY:

- London will transition into a city with a wide and increased public transport infrastructure, replacing most fossil fuel vehicles with electric or hydrogen driven transport. Not only are buses, cars and trains electric, but the source of electricity will also be sustainable, for example solar panels and wind farms.
- The outlook of the city will be much greener and filled with life, meaning fish in the Thames, loads of green spaces for people hanging out and having picnics, and wide cycle lanes and footpaths.
- Buildings will become carbon-neutral and self-sustaining with features such as upcycled rooftop gardens. The city will function as a circular economy in which both local gardens and farms produce fruits and vegetables, with recycling centres spread across the city.
- In the city, there will be multiple charity shops, sustainable fashion stores and farmers' markets and there will be accessible water fountains on the streets where people use their reusable bottles.
- People will be healthier in general since the air will be cleaner, the city's infrastructure is more accessible for walking and cycling, and organic food is available and affordable.
- The school curriculum will include sustainability, the climate crisis and the circularity of things to not only educate people on the environment and climate, but also on how to put it in practice as a Londoner and live a healthy life for individuals as well as for the planet.



Flipchart drawing from the workshop with Peer Outreach workers on the 27th of July. It shows their ideas about what they think London would look like in a sustainable future.



How London will look in 2035 if we fail to act on the climate crisis.  
Katie Watling



# SUSTAINING ACTION, *and* responsibility



Young climate protesters in the UK.  
Callum Shaw

# INTRODUCTION BY SYEDA

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We wanted to explore how young Londoners view responsibility for the climate, and the ways in which they wanted to act as young people. We did this through asking a range of interesting questions about who they thought was most responsible for making London sustainable by 2035 as well as about the obstacles preventing them from taking part in the discussion around change.

The findings showed that a majority of young Londoners believe that national government (80.7%) and regional government (78.3%) are responsible for a sustainable London in 2035. A mere 14.2% rested their argument upon the responsibility of individuals. Many (63.9%) also expressed the importance of businesses and corporations in leading the momentum for the future of sustainability in the surge for mass change.

Most young Londoners in our survey (84.9%) said they were interested in environmental issues. When it came to how they wanted their voice heard, young Londoners expressed a preference for youth voice structures, followed by contacting elected officials. Being part of a youth voice structure myself, the Eco Council at my school, this resonates with what I have seen first-hand with the growing enthusiasm of students wanting to get involved.

Importantly, we asked about the barriers that prevent young Londoners playing an active role in engaging with environmental challenges – with a lack of time (36%) and personal finances (28.7%) being the most common reasons, perhaps amplified by the current cost of living crisis.

A lack of adequate environmental education was also reflected with one in five (22.9%) feeling ill-informed about environmental issues. I thoroughly resonate with the view that the quality of education on environmental issues is inadequate and inconsistent, and I feel the curriculum puts little to no emphasis on awareness despite climate change illustrating drastic implications for London.

Lastly, a fear of repercussions was a significant issue amongst marginalised groups, and many said that it wasn't realistic for a young person from an ethnic minority background to skip school to protest due to repercussions from parents. I find these findings very relatable to my life as a person of colour from one of the most deprived boroughs in London.

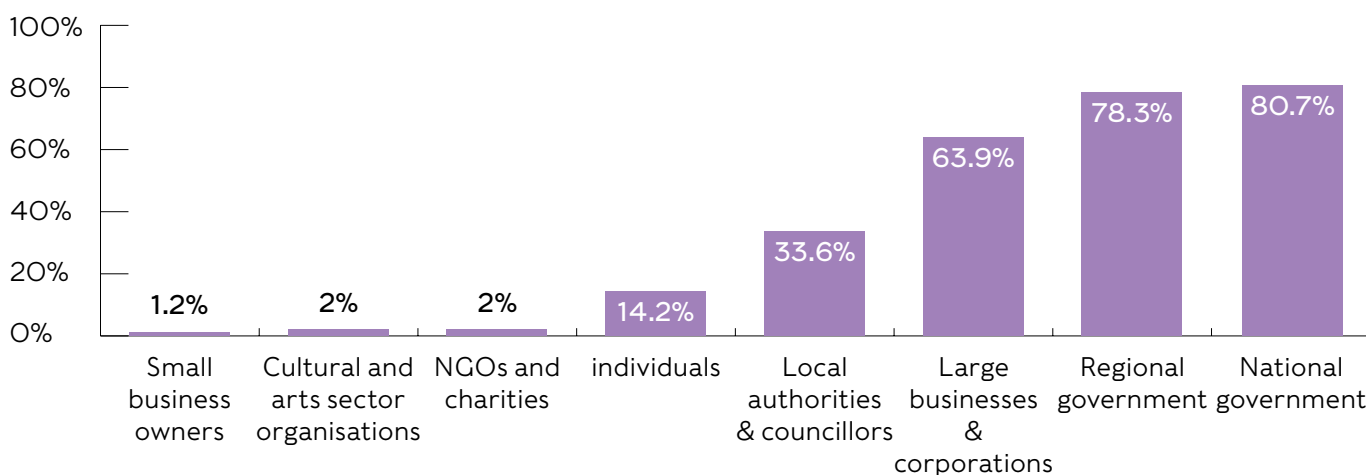
My lived experience reflects many of the findings and underlines the need for change.

**Syeda Shakila Islam, 17 years old**

# RESPONSIBILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

We asked young Londoners who they felt had the most responsibility for making London sustainable by 2035, providing a range of options from which to choose their top three.

## Who is the most responsible for making London sustainable by 2035?



A majority (80.7%) of young people believe that national government or regional government (78.3%) are responsible for making London sustainable by 2035. Many of the changes that young Londoners want were seen as only achievable through government action.

*“Everyone can make their own personal decisions, but for the mass change, it would have to be the people in power – the politicians.”*

Young Londoners also believe that national government is more responsible than local government, with only a third (33.6%) of young Londoners holding local authorities and councillors responsible.

*“Politicians and government should put more pressure on businesses and factories, because I think they’re the people that actually create most of the pollution.”*

Below governmental responsibility, a majority (63.9%) also held large businesses and corporations responsible. Many young Londoners spoke passionately about the need to take more action against large businesses and corporations, either through fines or legal action.

*“The majority of carbon emissions aren’t being produced by people, but rather massive corporations, so introduce taxes across Britain for carbon emissions being produced.”*

Only a minority (14.2%) put the responsibility with individuals. However, we found that Asian young people (24.8%) and Black young people (23.9%) were far more likely to focus on the responsibility of the individual compared to White young people (10.2%). Lastly, we found that young Londoners did not hold NGOs and charities (2%), cultural and arts sector organisations (2%), and small business owners (1.2%) as responsible for making London more sustainable.



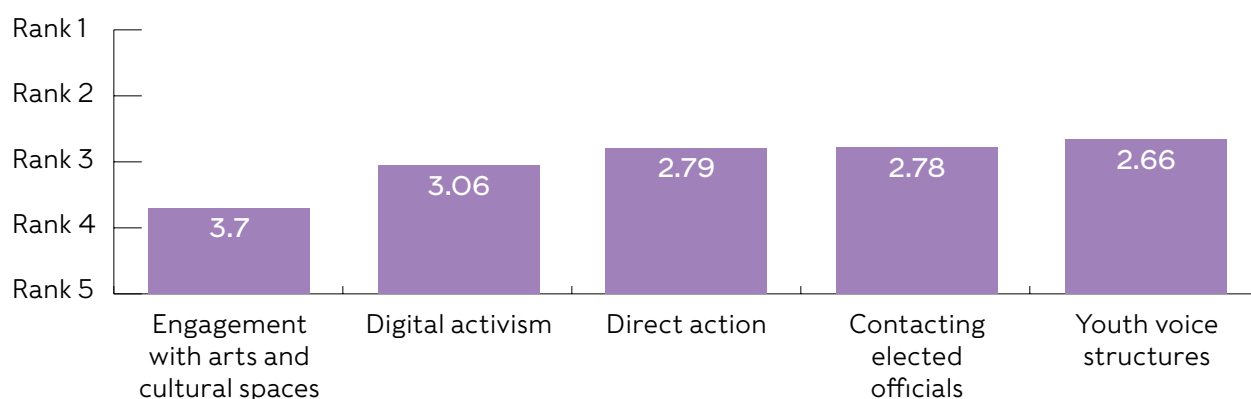
People over profit.  
Markus Spiske

# EMPOWERING YOUNG LONDONERS

We provided young Londoners with a range of ways that they could get involved in the conversation on the environment and sustainability and asked them to rank them in order of preference.

**Rank the following by how much you would prefer your voice on the environment, sustainability and climate change to be heard, with 1 being the one you want the most and 5 being the one you want least.**

(The lower the number, the higher the average ranking)



Youth voice structures was the highest ranked, being ranked 2.66 out of 5 on average. This was driven by those aged 16-18, who were the most likely to rank youth voice structures first (33.9%) compared to older young people aged 19-21 (21.5%) or 22-25s (20%). Many young Londoners spoke about how they wanted to participate in structures designed for them.

*“We should have our own channel. A programme or channel for youth we can obviously engage with every day. Because when we keep talking and protesting there’s no ending.”*

*“Also, with the youth stuff, it’s always written by some random 40-year-old guys. It’s not actually made by young people for young people. It’s made by old people trying to cater for young people.”*

Contacting local elected officials (2.78) and direct action (2.79) were similarly ranked closely behind youth voice structures, with many not seeing a distinction between them. For many, direct actions meant contacting local elected officials, but for others it meant more radical action. On the other hand, digital activism (3.06) was, on average, ranked lower than other options but overall, not that much lower.

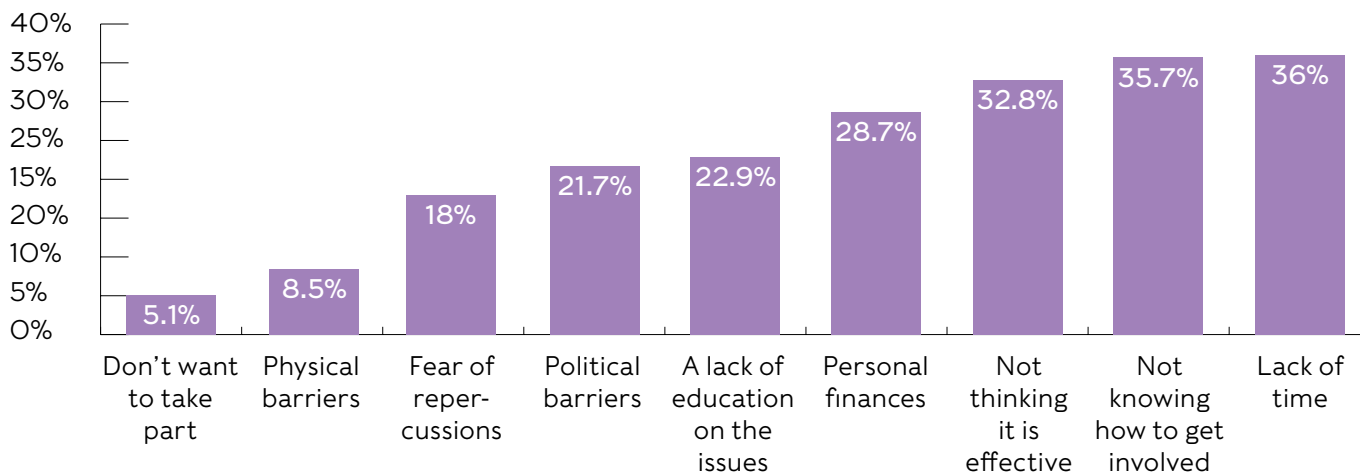
*“I signed a petition. I have to protest. Because when so many horrible things happen, when I see a petition, I just sign it because that needs to change.”*

Lastly, by far most likely to be ranked last, was engagement with arts and cultural spaces (3.7), indicating that young Londoners were far less likely to consider arts and cultural spaces as significant or relevant to having their voices heard on environmental issues.

## BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION

We asked young Londoners to rank the top three barriers to them getting more involved in the conversation around the environment. The most common reason given by young Londoners was a lack of time (36%), while a third (28.7%) cited personal finances as a barrier. A lack of time was even more common for older groups like those aged 22-25 (40.6%), compared to those aged 19-21 (31.8%) or 16-18 (28.2%).

### The three most common barriers to young Londoners participating in the conversation



*“You can’t go and say ‘oh, I want a sustainable council house’ if you’re in emergency housing and you need a roof over your head.”*

Secondly, we see that a lack of information or education is preventing more young Londoners from getting involved. Over a third (35.7%) said that they did not know how to get involved, while over one in five (22.9%) said that they lacked education on the issues. Black young Londoners were also three times more likely than White young people to cite a lack of education on the issues (46.5% to 17.4%).

*“I think there are certain topics like (the environment) that they should keep compulsory in schools. Because so many people I know are uneducated on stuff like this. We can’t make a difference if we don’t know about it.”*

Thirdly, while the issue of fear of repercussions (18%) or physical barriers (8.5%) were experienced by a minority of young Londoners, they were far more significant for marginalised groups. For example, disabled young people were far more likely to cite a fear of repercussions (23.3%) as a barrier, as were non-binary and third gender young people (27.8%). In the context of the school protests, we heard about the repercussions they would face from parents:

*“Even when Greta Thunberg was doing protests, our parents would never let us. They would drag us back to school, there’s no way we could ever do that.”*

Lastly, a third (32.8%) of young Londoners thought that getting involved is ineffective, while a minority (5.1%) did not want to take part.



# THE SUSTAINABLE *Londoner*

London's bicycle hire scheme.  
Yelena Odintsova

# INTRODUCTION

## BY JOSS

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This section seeks to uncover the actions that young Londoners are taking, or would like to take, to reduce their environmental impact. It focuses on what sustainability actually means for young people in London in their daily lives. We also gave young Londoners the opportunity to tell us about the barriers to reducing their environmental impact that they perceive themselves as facing, as we thought that the ability to live sustainably is not distributed equally among Londoners of all backgrounds.

One of the themes that I perceive as running through this report is that although young Londoners think in big picture, structural terms when it comes to the environment, they are also practically minded and willing, even enthusiastic, to change their own individual habits. The report reveals several areas in which young Londoners are already taking action to be more sustainable. However, it also reveals other cases in which they are waiting to be given the tools that they need to take action. This report thus reveals a gap that needs to be bridged between young Londoners' genuine desire to act and their limited practical ability to do so.

To offer one example, we found that the majority of young Londoners consider environmental issues as important to their future career decisions. However, their ability to act on this intention is limited by an informational deficit with regard to what terms such as 'green jobs', 'green skills' and the 'green economy' actually mean. This has the damaging effect of limiting the scope of young people's imaginations about how they could pursue a sustainable career at precisely the stage in their lives when they are starting to consider their future employment prospects. Furthermore, young Londoners are highly eco-conscious in the way they shop for products, especially clothes and food. They are aware of the potential environmental impact of their purchases and try to shop in a way that minimises harm. However, their ability to act on these good intentions is limited by impediments that lie outside their control. In particular, they point to the higher price of sustainably sourced items, in the context of a cost of living crisis. There is also confusion about the dizzying range of sustainability certification schemes used by companies, making it hard to know which items are genuinely environmentally responsible.

Finally, young people are enthusiastic to learn more about the environment and are taking the initiative to do so, particularly through online sources such as social media and internet articles. However, their efforts to learn more about sustainability are obstructed by a failure of the school curriculum to give them the information that they need, in the engaging way that they desire. This section, and the disjuncture that it reveals between young peoples' good intentions and their limited practical ability to act, accords with my own experience. It is frustrating to be told to reduce our individual environmental impact while the general economic context for us gets progressively worse year upon year. We do our best with the tools we have available, but we expect our individual actions to be matched by some level of systemic or structural change which, at the time of writing, still feels very far away.

**Joss Harrison, 23 years old**

# YOUNG LONDONERS CARE ABOUT THE ISSUES

Young Londoners are incredibly passionate about the environment, and this is reflected in our survey with most (86.9%) telling us that they were either interested or very interested in environmental issues.

This is relatively in line with previous studies, with one survey finding that a majority (79%) of young people claim to be concerned about current environmental issues.<sup>8</sup> We have also seen how Generation Z<sup>9</sup> are far more likely to prioritise environmental issues over economic growth and make changes to their own lifestyle to reduce the impact of the climate crisis.<sup>10</sup>

*“Most young people should get involved, because it’s affecting their future.”*

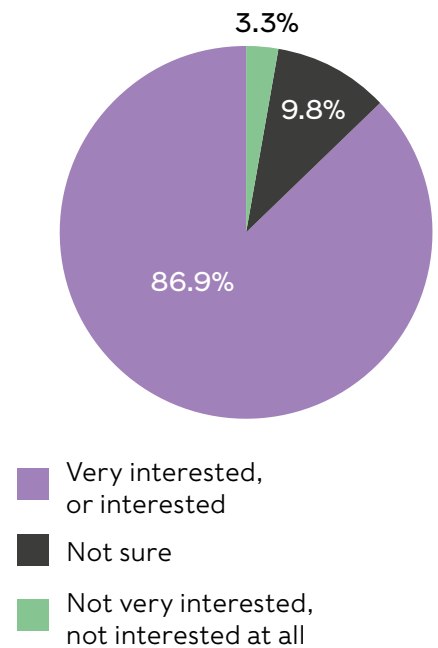
Interestingly, while a minority were either not interested at all (1.2%) or not very interested (2.1%) in environmental issues far more, one in ten (9.8%), were not sure if they were interested in environmental issues.

## THE IMPACT ON FRIENDSHIPS

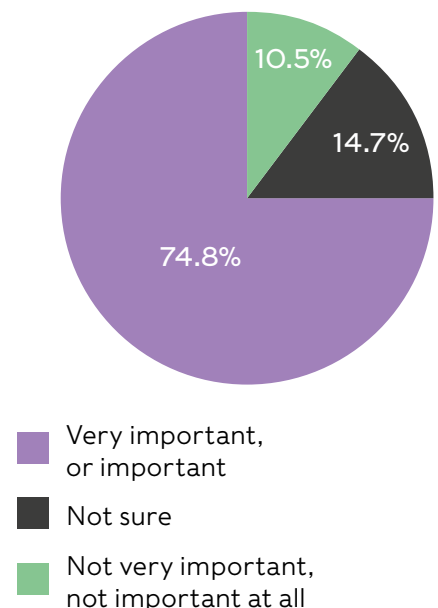
We can also see how important environmental issues have become to young Londoners by the role it plays in the personal relationships they have.

Three out of four (74.8%) young Londoners said that it was either important or very important that their friends share similar views to them on the environment. Only one in ten (10.5%) said it was not important at all or not very important, with a minority (14.7%) saying it was neither important nor unimportant. We also found that sharing similar views on the environment with friends was more important for non-binary and third gender young people (83.3%) and young women (78.6%) than it was for young men (67.2%).

**How interested are you in environmental issues?**



**How important is it that your friends share similar views to you on the environment?**



8 Channel 4 (2019). “Young people and the environment.”

9 Pew Research Centre (2019). “Defining generations: Where Millennials end and Generation Z begins”

10 King’s College London (2021). “Who cares about climate change? Attitudes across the generations”



keep London  
lovely

BE A  
FRIEND  
to the EARTH  
and DO NOT  
DROP LITTER

Anti Litter Campaign at Barnet School, 1973 by Henry Grant.  
© Henry Grant Collection/London Museum

# THE GREEN ECONOMY AND GREEN JOBS

Given a majority of young Londoners are interested in environmental issues, we wanted to know how this impacts young Londoners' decision making about their future employment and careers.

Firstly, we asked young Londoners how well they understood the term "green economy", with a majority (72.9%) saying they had at least a fair understanding.

Slightly more young Londoners said they had a good or very good understanding of the term "green economy" than those who had a poor or very poor understanding of the term (40.5% to 27.3%).

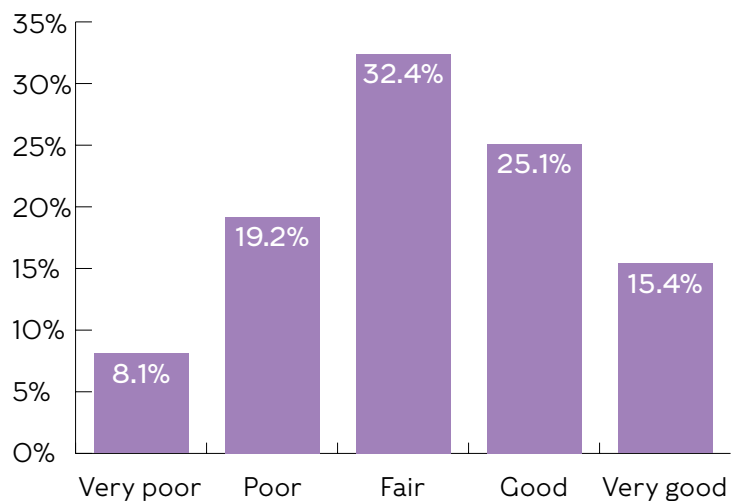
While less than one in ten (8.1%) said that their understanding of the green economy is very poor, we found in focus groups that there was a worse understanding of terms such as "green jobs" or "circular economy".

Secondly, we found in focus groups that the idea of a green job, especially in an urban environment such as London, can be difficult to visualise and often seen as working with renewable energy rather than jobs that indirectly benefit the environment such as in green financing.

*"But in terms of green jobs, there's not much at all. So, it's like, if I'm interested in a career in sustainability, how do I know if that's the right career for me? How do I know which jobs were available? How do I know what degree to do to get into the sector? Or do I need to do a degree, or do I need to do an apprenticeship? There's not that information out there."*

This was made worse by a lack of consistent careers advice and guidance for young Londoners,<sup>11</sup> which might have been able to provide more information about the employment opportunities in the green economy.

**What is your level of understanding of the term "green economy"?**



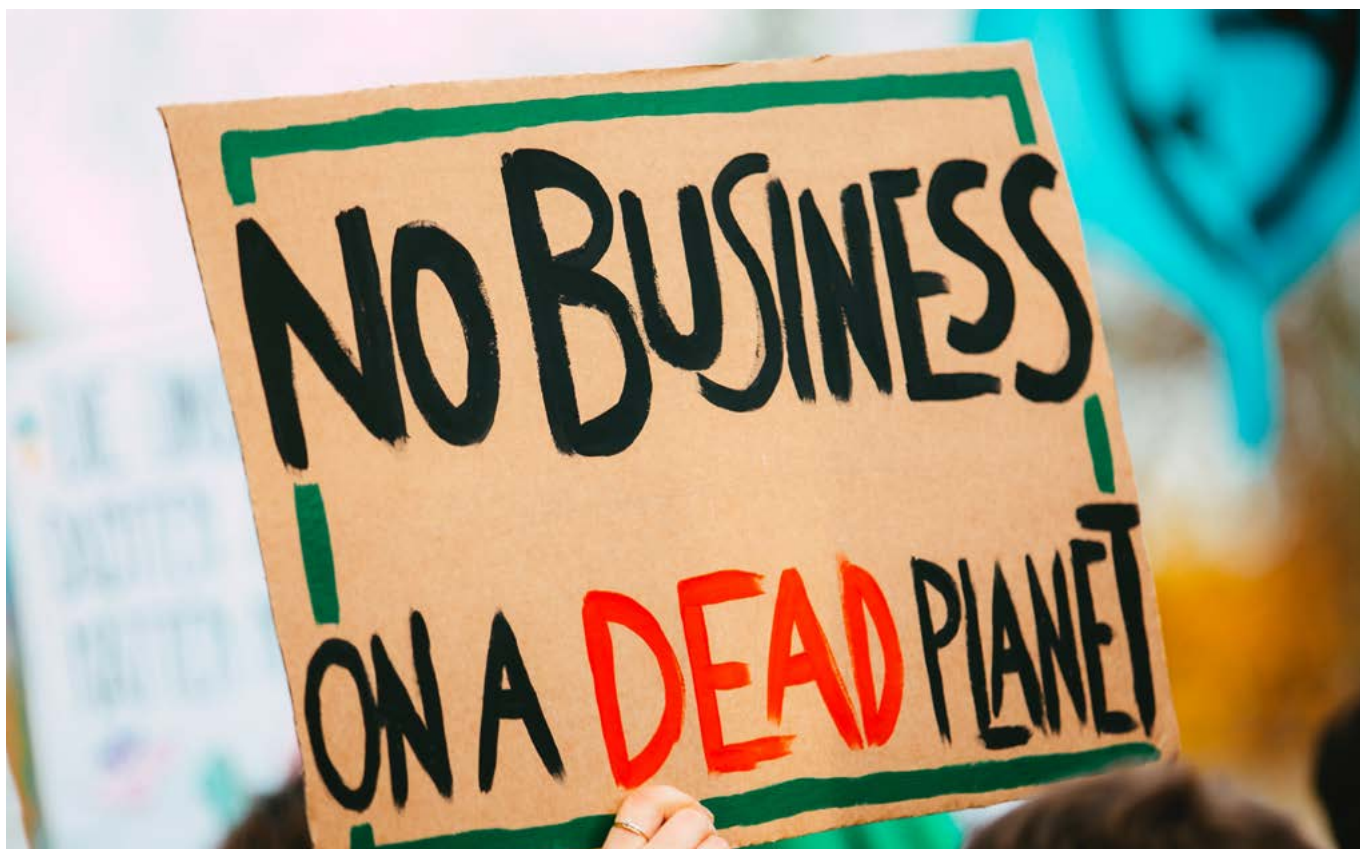
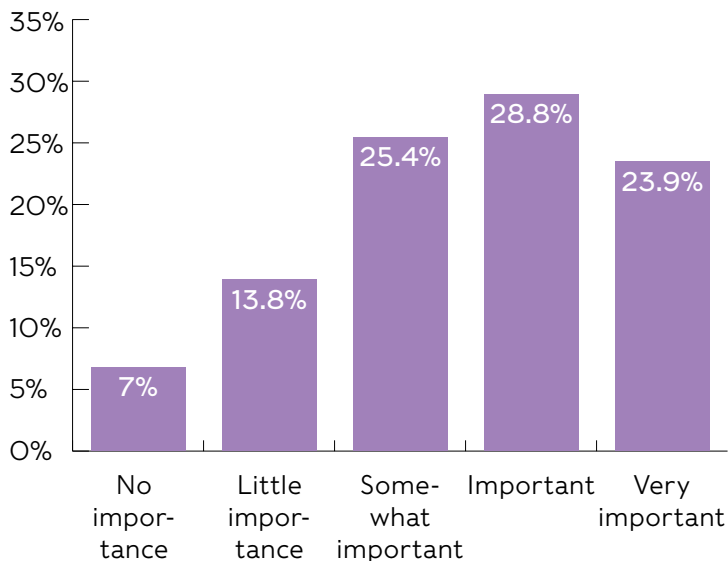
<sup>11</sup> Partnership for Young London (2021). "Mapping Young London"

## ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES IMPACT CAREER CHOICES

Lastly, we asked young Londoners how important environmental issues are to the type of work they wanted to do in the future. More than half (53.7%) said that environmental issues were important or very important. Less than one in ten (7%) said that environmental issues were not at all important to their employment decisions.

Recent studies have found that a majority of Gen Z (77%) want to work at an organisation whose values are aligned to their own,<sup>12</sup> and that most (68%) want to work for an organisation that is doing something positive for the planet.<sup>13</sup>

How important are environmental issues to the type of work you want to do in the future?



No business on a dead planet.

Markus Spiske

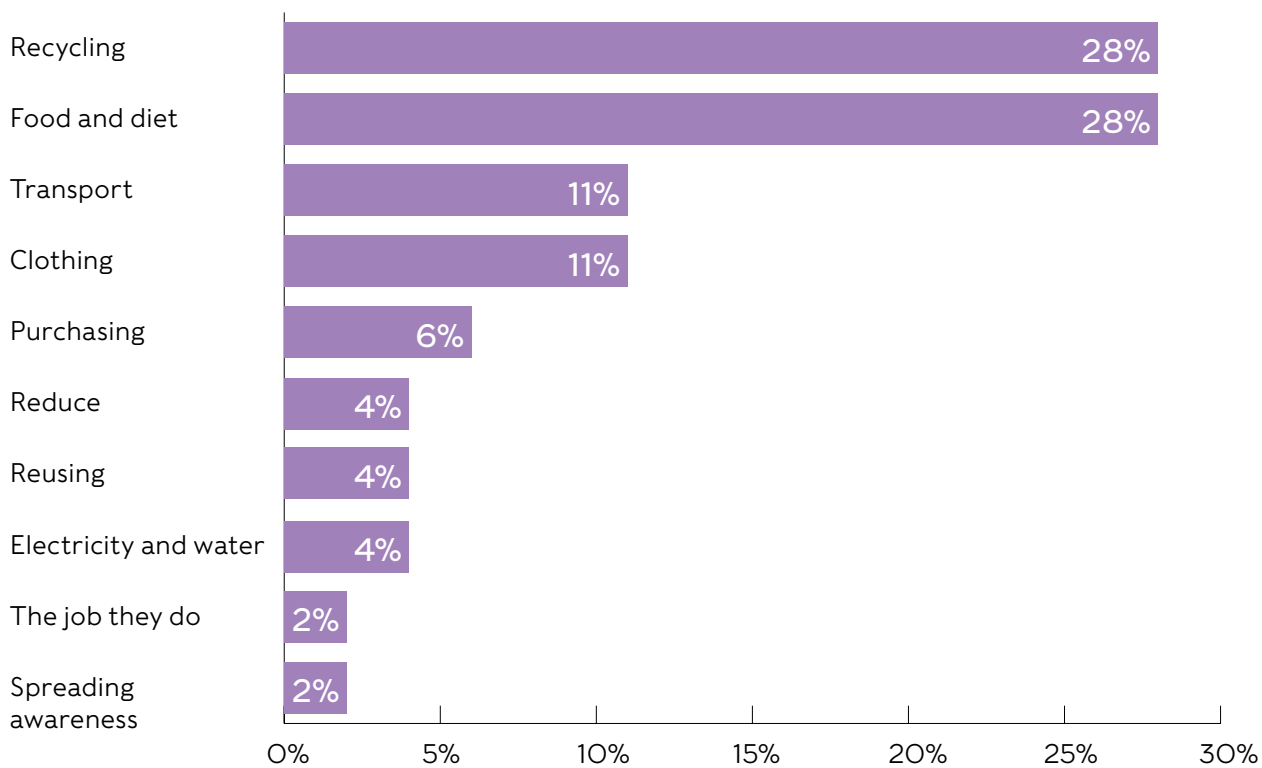
<sup>12</sup> BBC (2022). "How climate change is reshaping the way Gen Z works"

<sup>13</sup> Business Leader (2021). "76% of young people feel employers need to improve when explaining environmental commitments"

# HOW DO YOU TRY TO BE SUSTAINABLE IN YOUR DAY TO DAY LIFE?

We asked young Londoners how they try to be sustainable in their day to day life. We then took all their answers and categorised them to see what topics came up the most.

**Topics spoken about by young people in response to “How do you try to be sustainable in your day to day life?” ordered by frequency.**



Young Londoners spoke about their attempts to recycle (28%), with many highlighting how difficult it can be to recycle properly and the lack of transparency about where their rubbish goes. We also heard how many (28%) have made changes to their diet, either reducing meat consumption, sourcing food locally, or changing to a fully vegetarian or vegan diet.

A relatively small proportion (11%) spoke about transport, in particular how they decide to walk or cycle more instead of using a car or even buses. Far more spoke about their decisions around clothing (11%), what they purchase (6%), and their attempts to reduce (4%) consumption by reusing (4%) items. In particular we heard how young Londoners like second hand products, and avoid purchasing products with single use plastics. Similarly some spoke about their efforts to reduce their electricity or water consumption (4%), through cold showers or not turning the heating on, though there was a recognition this was about saving money as much as being environmentally sustainable.

Lastly a minority (2%) spoke about the type of work they do, or the activities they undertake to spread awareness, educate others, or campaign on the issues.

# QUOTES FROM YOUNG LONDONERS



“I recycle all my plastic, cardboard, and other items that don’t belong in the household bin.”

“I always check if my packaging is recyclable and selecting the appropriate bin when available, or even holding onto the rubbish a bit longer until I find the right bin.”

“I always make sure to remind the people around me how to recycle properly.”

“I stopped using plastic products, switching out my shampoo, body soap, and toothpaste.”

“Second hand clothes, furniture, kitchenware, all purchased infrequently.”

“I make an effort to have a mostly vegetarian diet while incorporating weekly vegan meals.”

“Less electricity as possible, but also because of money.”

“Walk wherever I can. Where I can’t walk any longer, I take the bus or the tube.”

“I recently sold my car and have bought a bicycle to get about.”

“I have a job that allows me to make an impact.”

“I speak to the Mayor of Camden about sustainability in Camden.”

“I vote for politicians that prioritise the environment.”

# SUSTAINABLE CONSUMERISM



We wanted to look at the extent to which young Londoners consider the sustainability of products when they make purchasing decisions.

A 2020 YouGov poll found that Gen Z are far more likely to pay a premium for eco-friendly products, and are key in pushing retailers to be more sustainable.<sup>14</sup>

*“If I know there [are] lots of ingredients, then I know that it probably takes more time to put together, it’s probably less environmentally friendly. I think young people are getting better at it. Like I always check the label on where something comes from.”*

We found that most young Londoners (66.4%) said that they did always or often think about the sustainability of a product when buying it (66.4%), with an additional one in four (24.1%) saying that they sometimes consider it. Very few, less than one in ten (9.5%), said that they rarely or never consider the sustainability of products.

While young Londoners do often think about sustainability, there is a huge difference between different types of products.

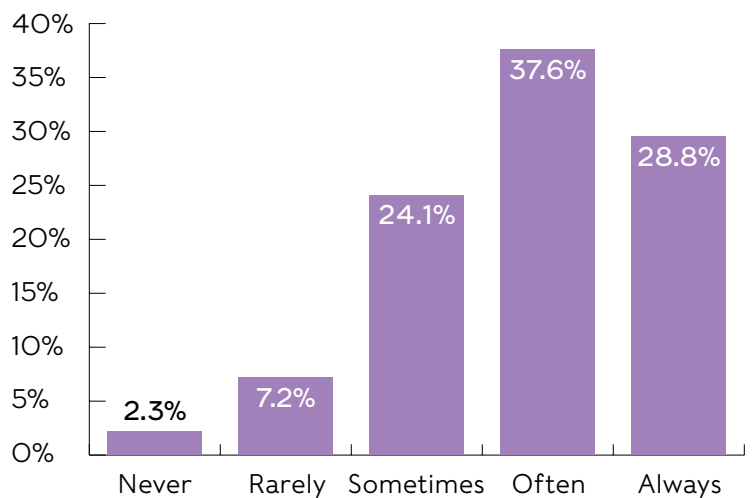
We asked young Londoners to rank different product categories, such as clothing or food, in order of how much they consider sustainability when purchasing.

Young Londoners told us that they were most likely to consider sustainability when purchasing either clothing (2.31) or food (2.33). This reflects the conversations we had in focus groups, where many young Londoners spoke to us about fast fashion, as well as the impact of a meat diet on the environment.

Clothing and food were followed by transport (3.27), where the decision often was between public transport or a private, more polluting, form of transport like an Uber. Lastly, we found young Londoners are far less likely to consider the sustainability of electronics and technology (4.19), and home items (4.56).

Cosmetics and personal care were an exception, with a large difference between young women and young men, with the former far more likely to rank cosmetics and personal care higher.

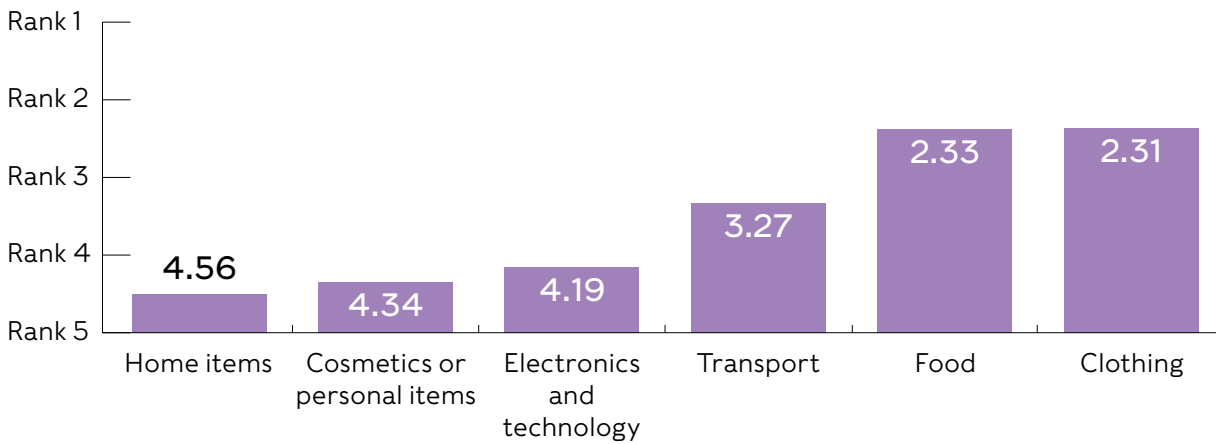
**How often do you think about the environment or sustainability when buying a product?**



14 Circular (2022). [“Research finds packaging sustainability influences Gen Z shopping choices”](#)

**Rank the products by how much you consider sustainability when purchasing, with 1 being the products you consider the most and 5 being the products you consider the least.**

(The lower the number, the higher the average ranking)



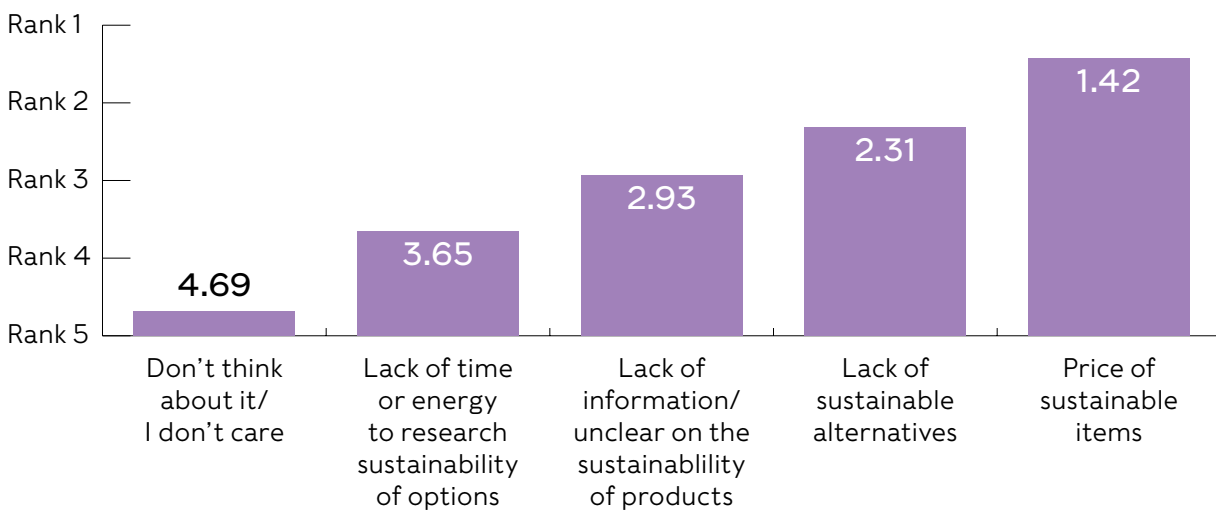
## BARRIERS TO SUSTAINABLE CONSUMERISM

While we know young Londoners are keen to make sustainable choices in the purchases they make, often it can be difficult to do so for a variety of reasons. We asked young Londoners to rank the various factors that impact on their ability to live sustainability by importance.

Affordability, or the price of sustainable items, was by far the most highly ranked option (1.42), followed by the lack of decent sustainable alternatives (2.31), lack of information/unclear information on the sustainability of products (2.93), and lack of time or energy to research sustainability (3.65). While we can see that there are many barriers to young Londoners living more sustainably, not caring or not thinking about it is not one of them, being consistently ranked last (4.69).

**Rank the following by the impact on how sustainable you can live, with 1 being the biggest impact and 5 having the least impact.**

(The lower the number, the higher the average ranking)



# AN ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

We asked young Londoners whether they felt that they were given enough information about the environment, sustainability, and the climate crisis from their primary or secondary school education.

Most young Londoners (59.4%) disagreed (30.2%) or strongly disagreed (29.2%) with the idea that they were given enough information. Only one in five (23%) felt that their school education did give them enough information.

We also wanted to know what young Londoners wanted to learn, asking them to rank environmental topics in order of what they most wanted to learn about in schools.

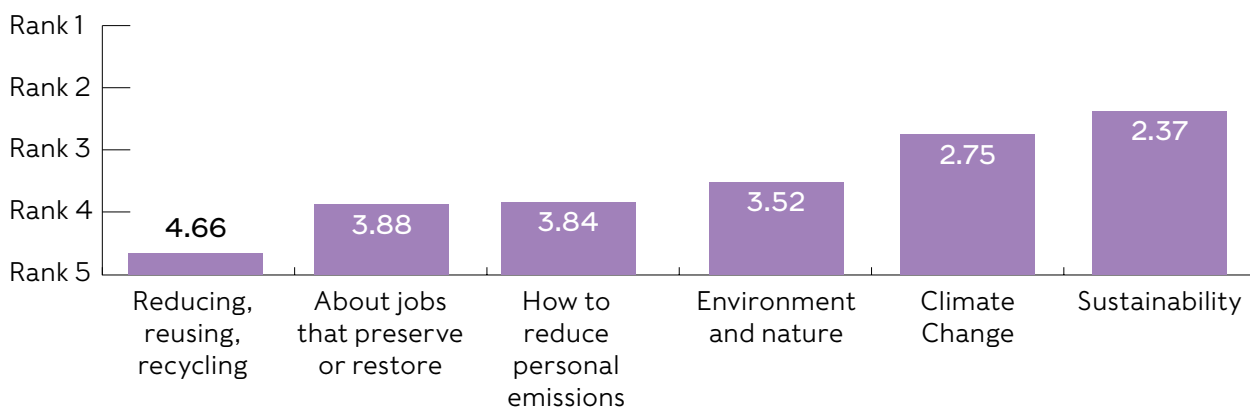
Young Londoners told us that they, on average, most wanted to learn simply about sustainability (2.37), the climate crisis (2.75), and the environment and nature (3.52).

*“Honestly, until the other day I didn’t know how climate change happened. Even the basics need to be taught.”*

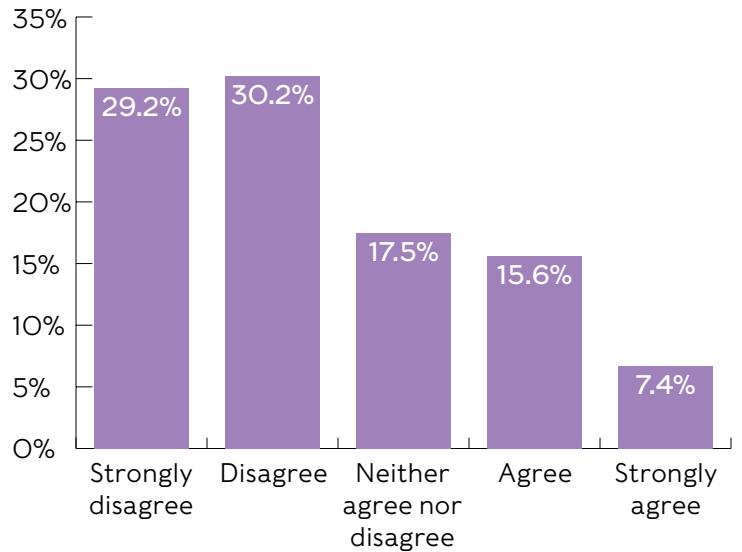
More practical learning, such as how to reduce personal emissions (3.84), on jobs that preserve or restore the environment (3.88), or on how to reduce, reuse, or recycle (4.66) was ranked as less important.

## What would you have liked to have learned more about at school, 1 being the subject you most wanted to learn about and 5 being the least.

(The lower the number, the higher the average ranking)



## Do you agree or disagree with the statement: “I was given enough information about the environment, climate change and sustainability in primary and/or secondary school education.”

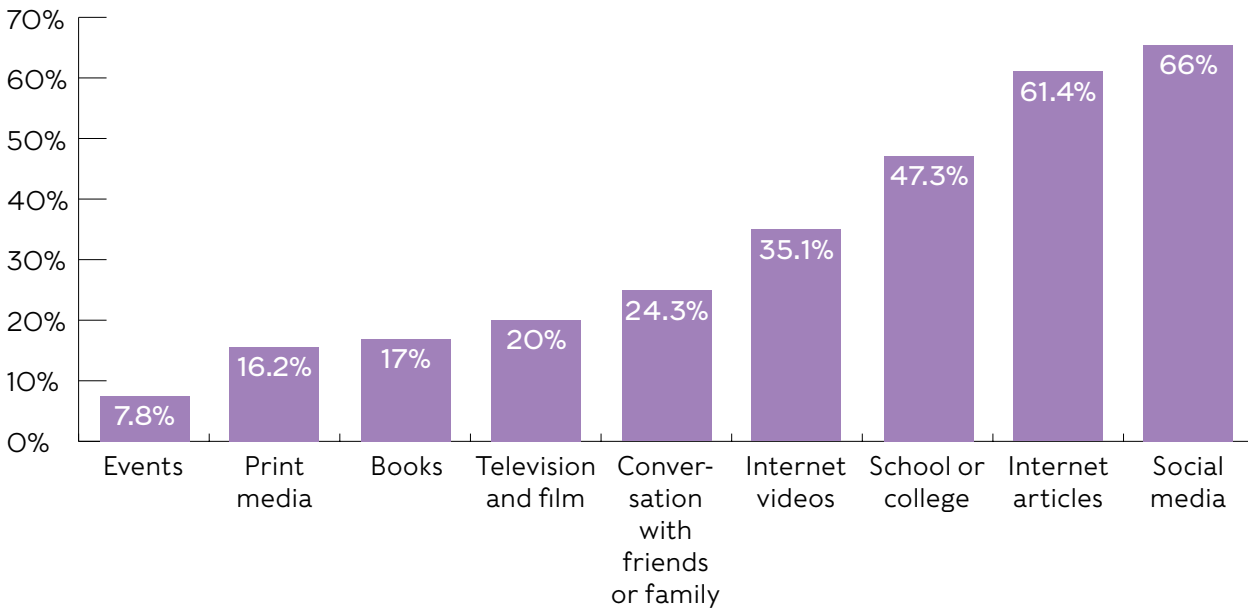


# YOUNG LONDONERS ARE LEARNING FROM THE INTERNET

We wanted to understand where young Londoners learn most about the environment, sustainability, or the climate crisis. We provided a range of options and allowed respondents to choose their top three options. Over half of young Londoners said that they learn the most from social media (66%) or internet articles (61.4%), while a third (35.1%) said internet videos.

Traditional sources of information, such as school or college (47.3%) or conversations with friends or family (24.3%) were not as common as internet sources. Unsurprisingly, those likely to be still at school aged 16-18 were the most likely to say they learnt the most from school or college (63%).

## Where do you learn the most about the environment, sustainability or climate change?



*“Up until year 9 yeah you do like learn about (the climate crisis) and they teach you about that...but if you don’t pick a subject that has anything to do with the environment, you’re not going to learn about it. Especially at the stage of A Levels.”*

Lastly, traditional media, like television and film (20%), books (17%), and print media (16.2%) were even less commonly used as a source of information, and a tiny minority (3%) provided another option for where they learn about the environment. For example, some learnt about the environment through the job that they did or through the musicians and celebrities that they follow speaking up on the issue.

However, a reliance on internet sourced information differed depending on ethnicity, with Black young people being the most likely to learn about the environment from internet videos (52.1%), followed by Asian young people (49.7%), and White young people (29.3%).

Young climate protestor in the UK.

Josh Barwick



# THE ROLE OF *London Museum*

# INTRODUCTION BY HALIMA

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It was a complex task finding out what our peers considered to be the role of London Museum, or museums in general in the conversation on climate change and sustainability. When designing the questions to ask, we needed to consider what young Londoners perceived the responsibilities of London Museum to be. Furthermore, we needed to consider what young Londoners wanted from their arts and cultural spaces, and how the museum could transform into something more relevant to their lives.

The questions we asked were centred around the demographics of young Londoners and the reasons why they would visit arts and cultural spaces. This also shifted towards how they would use these spaces, and what they would consider using these spaces for if given the opportunity.

On the whole, we established that there is an infrequent or low level of engagement with arts and cultural spaces by young Londoners when considering climate change or sustainability issues. This is closely tied in with young Londoners feeling unsure about whether museums listen to their views and opinions and is reflective of the wider sense of disempowerment in young Londoners that I encounter. Young Londoners do agree that these spaces have a responsibility to engage with these specific issues, and our participants produced a wealth of ideas as to how museums could engage more meaningfully.

There was a strong sense that young Londoners want museums to be radical, and to shift away from the traditional exhibition-focused role that museums hold. Young Londoners want museums to move towards being more dynamic, creative spaces in which there are exhibitions but simultaneously spaces in which young Londoners can be freely political and engaged with their peers. There is certainly an opportunity here for museums to shift into the realm of amplifying and empowering young Londoners, and to act as a conduit to influential figures and stakeholders.

As a young Londoner, the views of my peers resonate deeply with me. I rarely feel inspired or motivated to engage with museums beyond the superficial sense of enjoying the light learning from exhibitions. Having the opportunity to explore themes through dynamic events specifically geared towards my generation would shift my perception of museums away from static institutions and towards a sense of collective ownership and growth. It would create a space with meaningful inclusion and empower my generation to have the opportunity to engage, and to inspire other institutions to do the same.

**Halima Mehmood, 24 years old**

# ARTS AND CULTURAL SPACES SHOULD ENGAGE ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

We wanted to know what young Londoners thought London Museum should be doing to engage young people on the environment.

Firstly, we looked at how often they currently engaged with arts and cultural spaces on the environment.

We found most young Londoners (63.9%) said that they either sometimes, frequently, or always think about going to arts and cultural spaces.

However, we can see that slightly more young Londoners said that they never (15.7%) or rarely (20.4%) think of going to arts and cultural spaces than those who said they would frequently (21.7%) or always (8.1%) consider them.

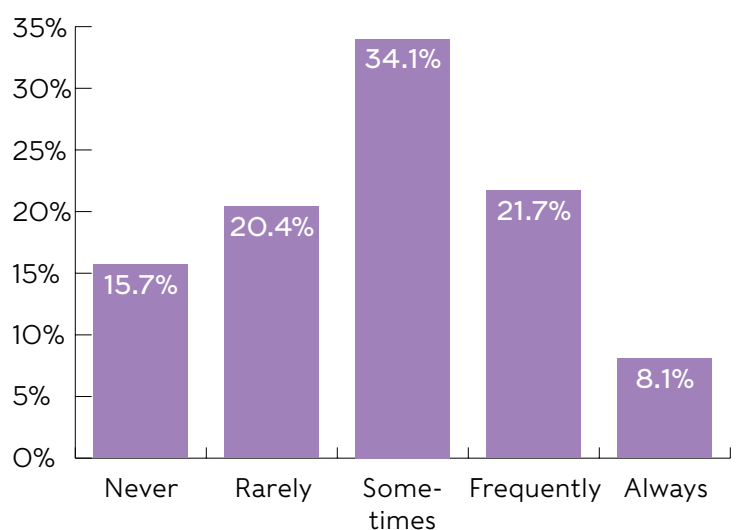
## ARTS AND CULTURAL SPACES HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO ENGAGE

Most (66.1%) young Londoners also agreed or strongly agreed that arts and cultural spaces have a responsibility to engage with young people on environmental issues.

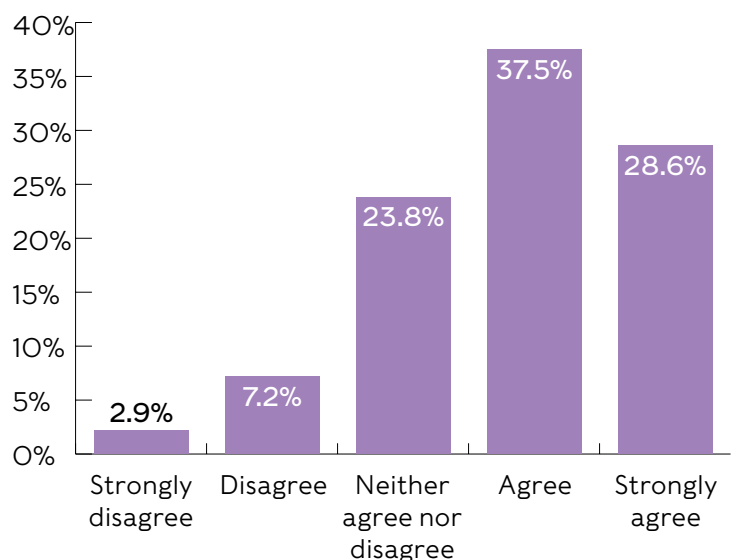
*“Museums are places where you can learn. Lots of people want to talk about climate change and think about how to improve London.”*

Only a small proportion either disagreed (7.2%) or strongly disagreed (2.9%), while one in four (23.8%) neither agreed nor disagreed.

**How often would you think of going to arts and cultural spaces like London Museum to engage with environmental issues?**



**Do you agree or disagree with the statement: “Arts and cultural spaces have a responsibility to engage with young people on environmental issues.”**



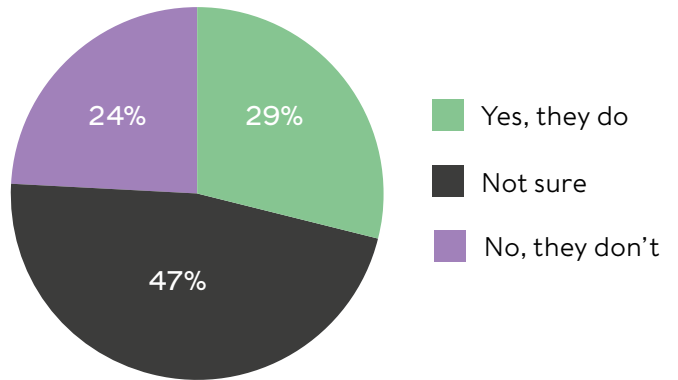
# MUSEUMS NEED TO BE VISIBLE IN HOW THEY INVOLVE YOUNG PEOPLE

However, while most young Londoners believe arts and cultural spaces have a responsibility to engage, they are less clear on how much young people are engaged.

Only a third of young Londoners (29.1%) said that they think museums listen to young people, while one in four (24.8%) said that they thought they did not. The most common answer however, for almost half (46%), was that they did not know.

A belief that museums listen to young people also differed by ethnicity, with White young people the most likely to say that they feel museums do listen to them (32.4%), compared with Asian young people (19.3%) and Black young people (16.9%).

**Do you think that museums listen to young people’s opinions and views when planning their displays, events, and projects?**

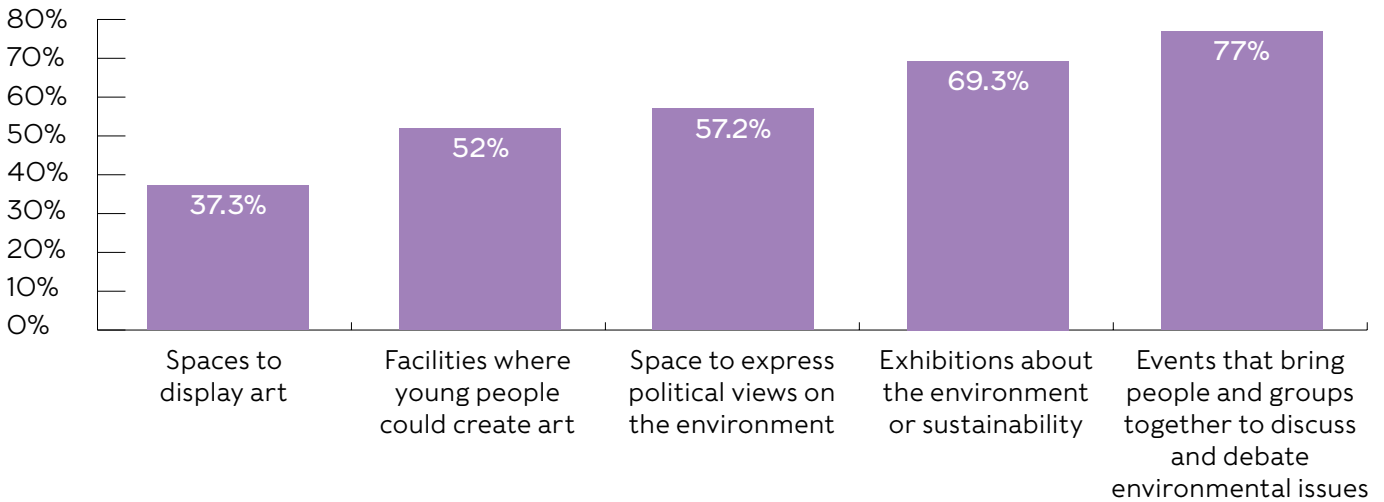


A display of feedback from Londoners exploring how they have made their mark on London.

London Museum

We looked at how young Londoners feel about London Museum, and how they would like to see it engage on environmental and sustainability issues going forward. We provided a range of options and allowed respondents to choose their top three options.

**What would you like to see arts and cultural spaces, like London Museum, do in their space?**



Just over half (51.6%) of young Londoners had visited London Museum, with over a third (38.6%) not having attended, and one in ten (9.8%) not sure. However, this had no impact on what they would want to see London Museum do with their space.

When we asked young Londoners what they wanted to see arts and cultural spaces do in their spaces, we found them asking for non-traditional activities. For example, they wanted to see London Museum host events that bring people and groups together to discuss and debate environmental issues (77.4%), more so than exhibitions (69.3%).

*“The way education around environmental sustainability is at the moment doesn’t work very well... I think everything should be more interactive, more hands-on, you should be made to want to be sustainable, not kind of told.”*

They also wanted space for themselves, to express political views on the environment (57.5%), or to get involved and create their own art (52%). Spaces to display art (37.5%), something many arts spaces commonly do already, was the least popular option.

*“I think the way of education around sustainability, should be more open, a way to show that you can do something that will make a difference, you know, like providing children or young people with the opportunity to do social action projects, which they can actually see like, an outcome, like something that has improved the sustainability of their local area.”*



This is Our London, City Now City Future launch at Museum of London.

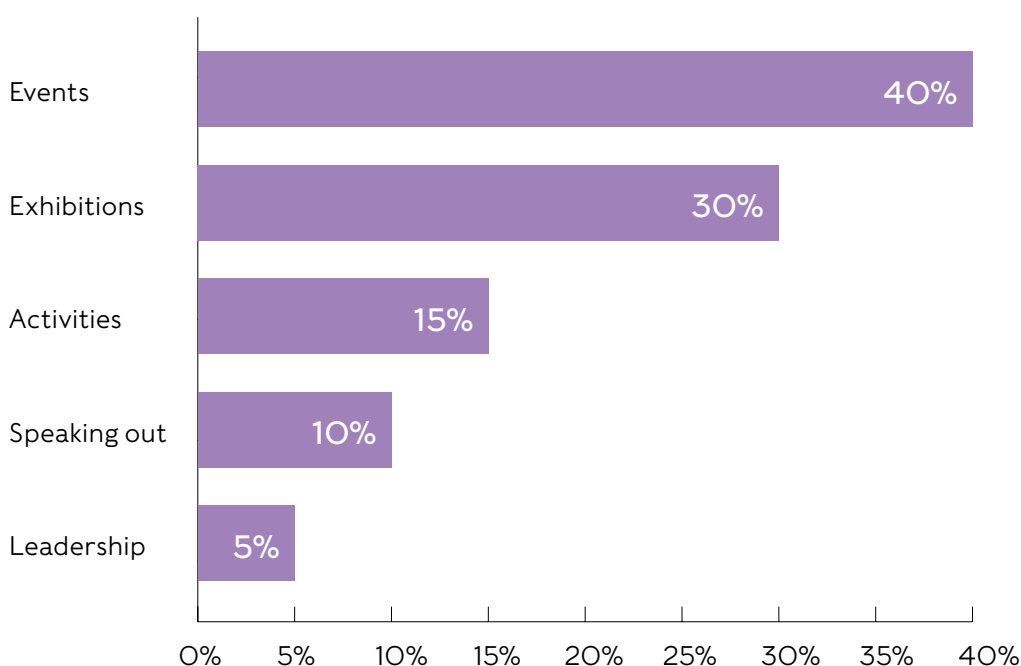
©Katy Davies

# WHAT SHOULD LONDON MUSEUM BE DOING

## TO ENGAGE YOUNG PEOPLE ON THE ENVIRONMENT, SUSTAINABILITY, AND THE CLIMATE CRISIS?

We asked young Londoners what they think London Museum should be doing to engage more young people on the environment, sustainability, and the climate crisis, with 650 responses and over 1000 suggestions.

### Topics spoken about in response to “What should London Museum be doing to engage young people on the environment, sustainability, and the climate crisis?”



Most commonly, young people wanted to see London Museum host more events (40%) and more interactive activities (15%). Young people wanted events that were more participatory, like workshops where they could learn practical skills, or activities to engage with like growing vegetables or repairing your bicycle.

Despite exhibitions being the activity most associated with museums, we found only a third of suggestions (30%) asking for exhibitions. Many wanted exhibits to ground the topic of the environment, with real examples of sustainable change in London, or by showcasing positive and meaningful examples of where action is having an impact.

Lastly, a small minority called on the museum to speak out (10%) on environmental issues and show leadership (5%) in the sector. Either by calling out polluters or highlighting the role corporations play in the climate crisis, or taking a leadership role by linking up young people with decision makers.

# QUOTES FROM YOUNG LONDONERS



“Create a music/food/sustainability event, buy low fee tickets for entry, support local musicians/bands. Bring in new small and larger sustainable businesses, for food, clothes, biking, etc. but also innovative projects brought in by local artists/designers to show off their work.”

“Organise events that promote sustainable activities such as cycling, workshops in growing vegetables and plants or mudlarking, so young people can actually implement those activities in their lives. This could make them more interested in the ecology of the city and show them that sustainability is a lifestyle, not just recycling and pollution.”

“Invite influential figures among young people – artists, activists – to communicate the urgency of the climate change and urge young people to encourage each other and those around them to make achievable everyday goals in order to reach a more sustainable way of living.”

“Display who produces the most carbon in the UK and publicly shame those responsible for causing the most environmental harm. Young people would love and respect that and think it’s epic.”

“Exhibitions sound good but we need to have a platform for disadvantaged people whom climate change affects most – ethnic minorities, the disabled, people who can’t afford expensive alternatives like expensive meat substitutes or not buying plastic.”

“Offering them opportunities to act as a collective – facilitating conversations with local and national government, elevating their voices on your platforms and using your influence to help them. It’s so frustrating being stuck in the echo chamber of social media and feeling relatively well informed about an issue but not feeling able to make a difference. If you were able to share your power with young people to help get our voices heard, it would make a massive difference.”



Supported using public funding by  
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