

Jonathan Davies MP – Youth Survey 2025

A survey of young people aged 15-25

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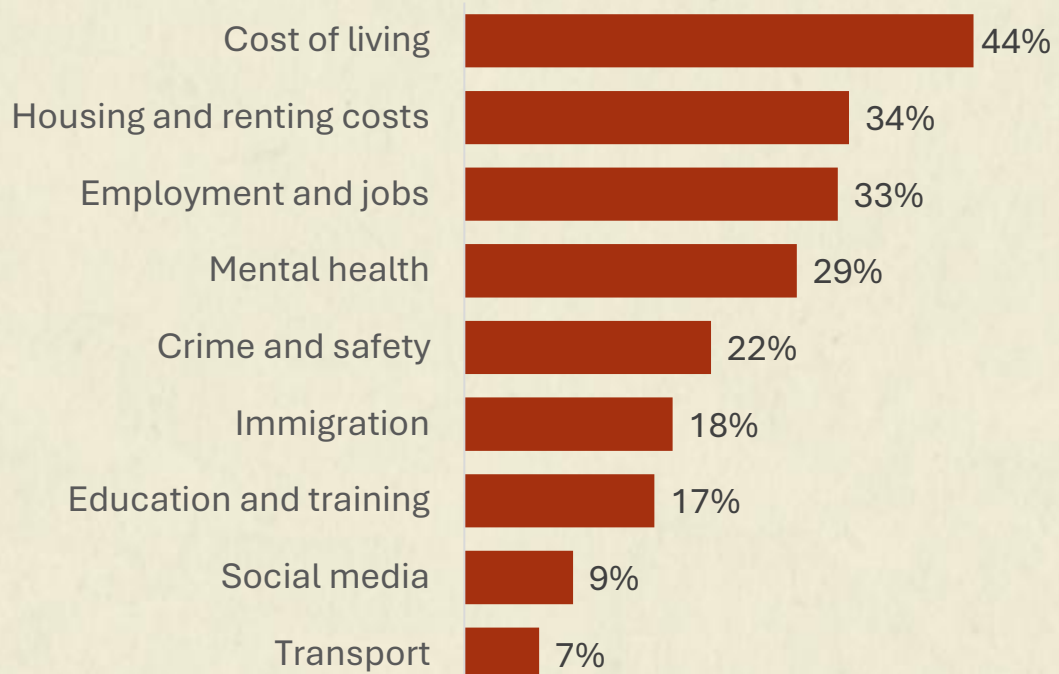
Who took part? 22

What are the biggest issues facing young people today?

The cost of living is seen as the biggest challenge. This is a combination of high and rising prices, low wages, a lack of job opportunities and unaffordable housing.

Which of the following issues do you think are the most important for young people in this country right now? Please select the top three.

Base: 506.



In your own words, what do you think is the single biggest challenge facing young people today?

“...the world of work feels impenetrable no matter how many qualifications or whatever level of education you have.”

“I have a first class degree and have found it impossible to secure a graduate job since finishing University in the summer. This has a huge impact on me and my partner as we are looking to secure our first house, which is also hard due to the cost.”

“Finding a job in this market is incredibly hard for anyone starting their career. It is frustrating when graduate positions require at least one year of experience. How are we supposed to get experience without a starter position to begin with?”

“For people around my age, there is a lack of opportunities in Derby and the Midlands in general. It’s more apparent that degrees are starting to become oversaturated and finding a job after graduation is increasingly competitive.”

“The current single biggest challenge is the housing crisis. At 22, I am aware that I will struggle to get into the property ladder and might be stuck renting for a long time.”

“Cost of living, working a full time job yet still struggling to afford things, no hope of ever being able to afford a house without significant help”

“Life for young people especially isn’t just unaffordable - it feels completely unattainable. I’ve had a job for nearly 5 years & am on minimum wage. There is no way, with the state of the housing market and general cost to live that I’d be able to sustain moving out, renting or even learning to drive/buying a car. My independence seems, and I imagine it does for a lot of young people, like it will never fully arrive.”

As well as the cost of living, people mentioned feelings of political alienation, mental health, illegal immigration, the negative impact of social media, and fear of crime.

“Most young adults feel politically sidelined, as leadership remains dominated by older generations whose priorities often conflict with ours.”

“We’re paying the price for previous generations’ mistakes.”

“I think that young people face enormous expectations to grow up and conform to social pressures of being “cool”, often causing people to disregard common decency, as well as facing bullying from their peers as well as stereotyping and unfair hostility from adults.”

“Immigration is frightening”

“Specifically for women - lack of safety, I feel unsafe walking anywhere”

How optimistic do young people feel about the future?

30% felt optimistic about the future, while 39% felt pessimistic:

How optimistic do you feel about your own future in the UK? Base: 462



- Very optimistic
- Somewhat optimistic
- Neutral
- Somewhat pessimistic
- Very pessimistic
- Don't know

When asked for their reasons, those who were optimistic mentioned:

- They have had a good education and feel supported
- They believe in themselves, that they have a plan and can succeed
- They believe that things can change

“I have received a good education which will help me to get a well paying job in future.”

“I am very fortunate and have a lot of support from my family, to help me achieve and push me to achieve things I want to do”

“I have a plan for my future and I know what I need to do to achieve it, I also have a few backup options.”

“I know what I want to do and what I need to do”

“I want to stay here and I have faith that as I get older the right people will be in power”

Those who were pessimistic mentioned:

- The high cost of living making it difficult to make any headway, buy a home etc
- The lack of jobs and opportunities to get started

“I don’t feel as if the UK offers me the things I want, it is so much harder to get simple things these days such as a house and as a young person I feel less hopeful each day I will be able to leave home before I’m 30”

“How any young person is expected to be independent and living alone is beyond me. One income is no longer enough to afford anything, and people like myself who have a child and cannot work at the moment to add an extra income means we have to be very conscious about what we spend and where. And even when I can get a job, child care is so expensive that the entire wage I would likely earn would end up being spent on said childcare so it's not worth it.”

“I’ve worked for 3 years put all my money into savings and still can’t afford to move out comfortably.”

“I can’t get a job for the life of me”

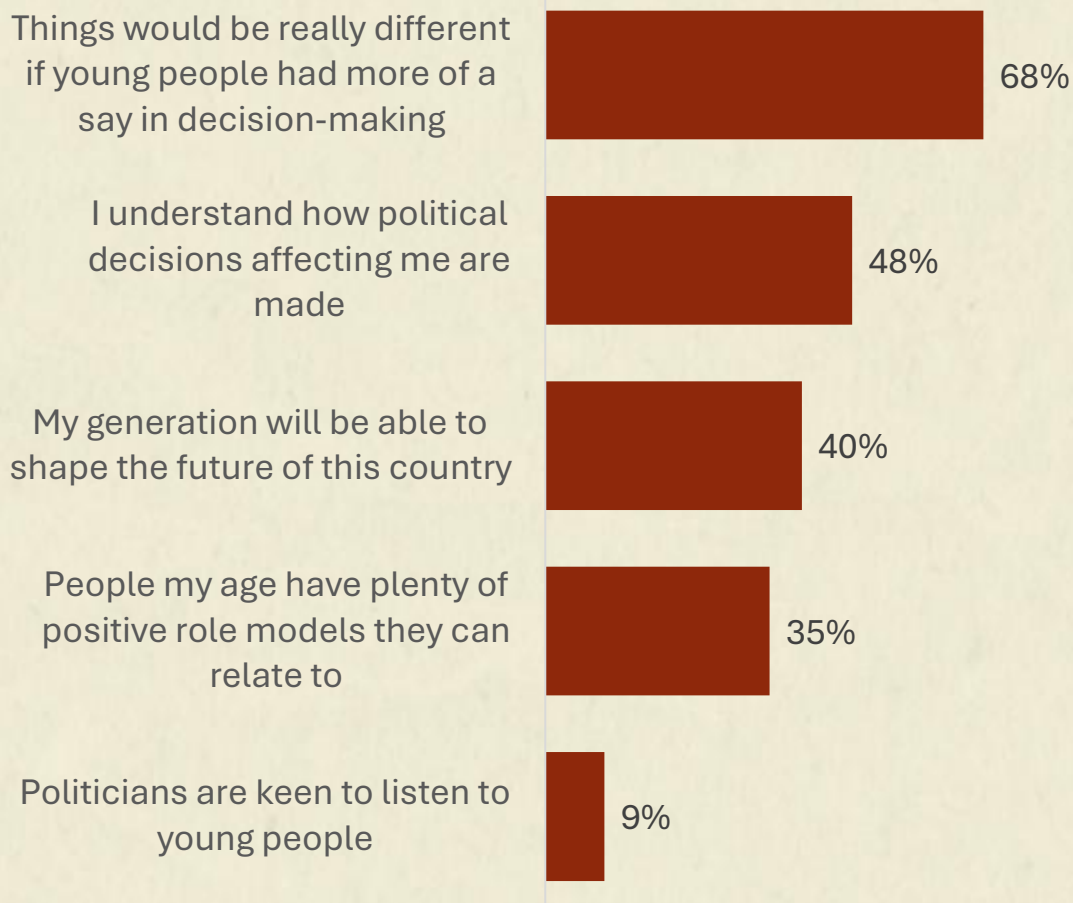
Also mentioned are concerns about inequality, the state of politics, extremism and immigration.

How do young people feel about politics?

Only 9% felt that politicians were interested in the views of young people. 68% felt that things would improve if politicians did pay more attention to young people.

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Percentage saying strongly or slightly agree.

Base: 423-463.



When asked what politicians could do to get them more interested in politics, the top themes were:

- Do the right things and demonstrate conviction

- Have a stronger public profile, in particular on social media and especially with short form content
- Address the right issues, ie those that will interest and affect young people
- Listen to young people and involve them more.

What could politicians do that would make you more interested in politics? (Write in)

“Go crazy. Go insane. Stop listening to think tanks and consultants and committees. Grow a personality get some convictions and act on them.”

“Actually answer question honestly because you see it time and time again that it seems like all politicians do is avoid questions to claim ignorance further down the line because it's easier than the rightful criticism anyone should face when making such important and influential decisions.”

“Already interested. But maybe explain more about policies on short form content and how it will impact us”

“I’m already interested, but generally speak where the young people actually are. Not cafe lunches and local surgeries, but social media, instagram, TikTok etc.”

“Actually do something that helps younger generations feel like there’s hope in the future - whether it’s figuring something out with the housing market, or more to help young women feel safe on the streets.”

“Listen and ask us questions about what we need”

“Try to listen to the younger generation more and to help make the country a better place for us to build our future. I often feel like politicians are typically from an older generation which is ok however younger generations input seems to not be taken as seriously. Understandingly from what is typically all over social media, however this is the generation that is going to have to help lead our future at some point and maybe hearing us more now could help to steer us in the right direction.”

Some had specific ideas for greater involvement such as forums, events and surveys:

“Introduce new ways for young people, and people in general, to easily have their say when it comes to decision making through surveys and Q&As”

“More initiatives such as this, that give younger people a greater voice on political issues.”

A number of people also disliked the assumption that young people weren't interested in politics:

“Nothing much, I am politically motivated anyways without them telling me”

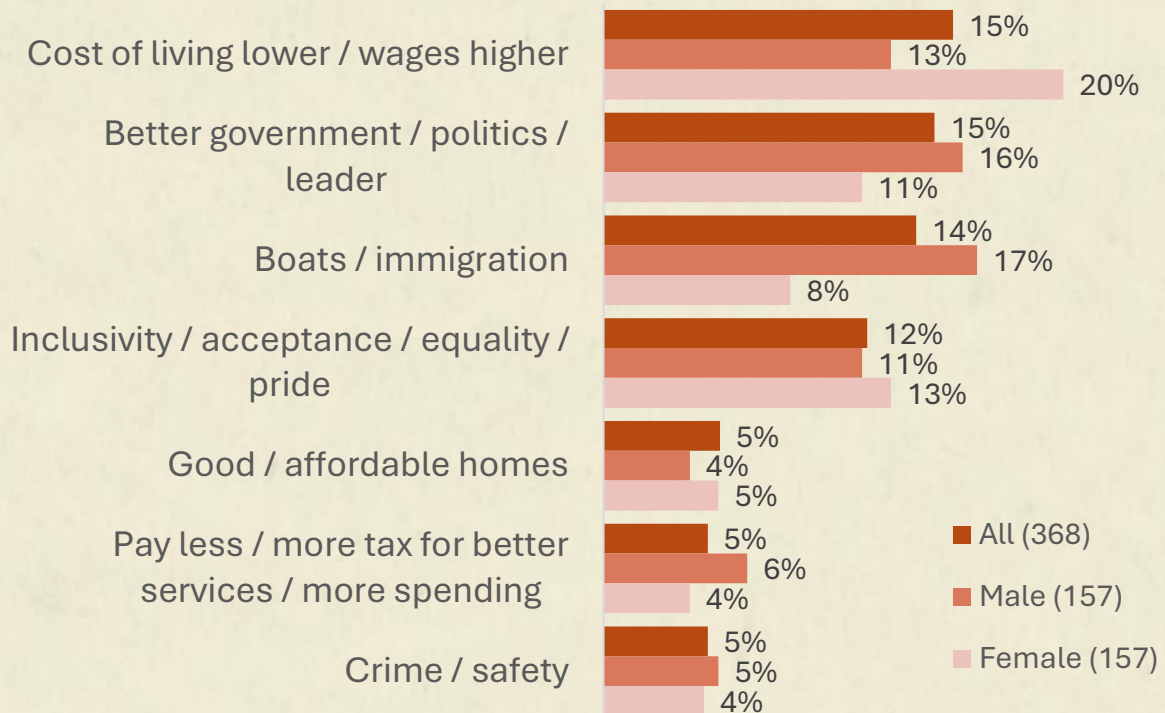
“I am already invested in it as there are actions and choices can affect my life. Politicians should listen to us more instead of deeming our views as childish because of our age”

What would young people change?

We asked what one thing young people would change about the UK. The top themes were the cost of living, a more inclusive society – with a variety of political views being expressed - better politics/political reform, and less illegal immigration. There were some differences in priority between men and women.

If you could change one thing about the UK, what would it be? (Write in)

Word count cloud from WordArt.com. Chart shows biggest groupings of responses by gender.



“Cost of living, people used to be able to afford a house, food, a car, a holiday once or twice a year and more on just one income alone. Today that is a completely unrealistic expectation for the majority of the country not just for my generation.”

“The division. As a country the people are more divided than ever, especially around the future of our country and the people in it. For better or for worse people have different opinions and views leading to actions that bring me fear over the future of the UK.”

“A change to the voting system. No longer to we have a mainly two party system. Need to allow the smaller political party parties to have a chance”

“The over reliance on the boomer vote and the inescapable 5 year cycle short termism. Honourable mention being the billionaire funded media shaping our narrative to become so toxic and hateful.”

“Stop the ongoing hatred and scapegoating of migrants”

“Tighter control on illegal migration”

“More controlled immigration to start with. Immigration is good but we make it far too easy for anyone to get into the country and live more comfortably than a lot of British people. Controlling immigration would free up funds which would hopefully be used to help the British people more”

“The amount of bus routes. Especially on the outskirts of towns, there are little to no bus routes and they usually come every other hour.”

“Cost of public transport”

“More train stations and cheaper tickets”

“More activities for youth because I feel like society doesn’t cater for teenagers.”

“At the moment, there are very few ‘third spaces’—places that aren’t home or school—where young people can spend their free time constructively.”

“I would love there to be more opportunities for youth groups and community for my age group, as this is something I have wanted for a while and would immediately benefit from along with many others in my area.”

“Nicer looking areas that are less shabby”

“Clean the environment around my area like parks”

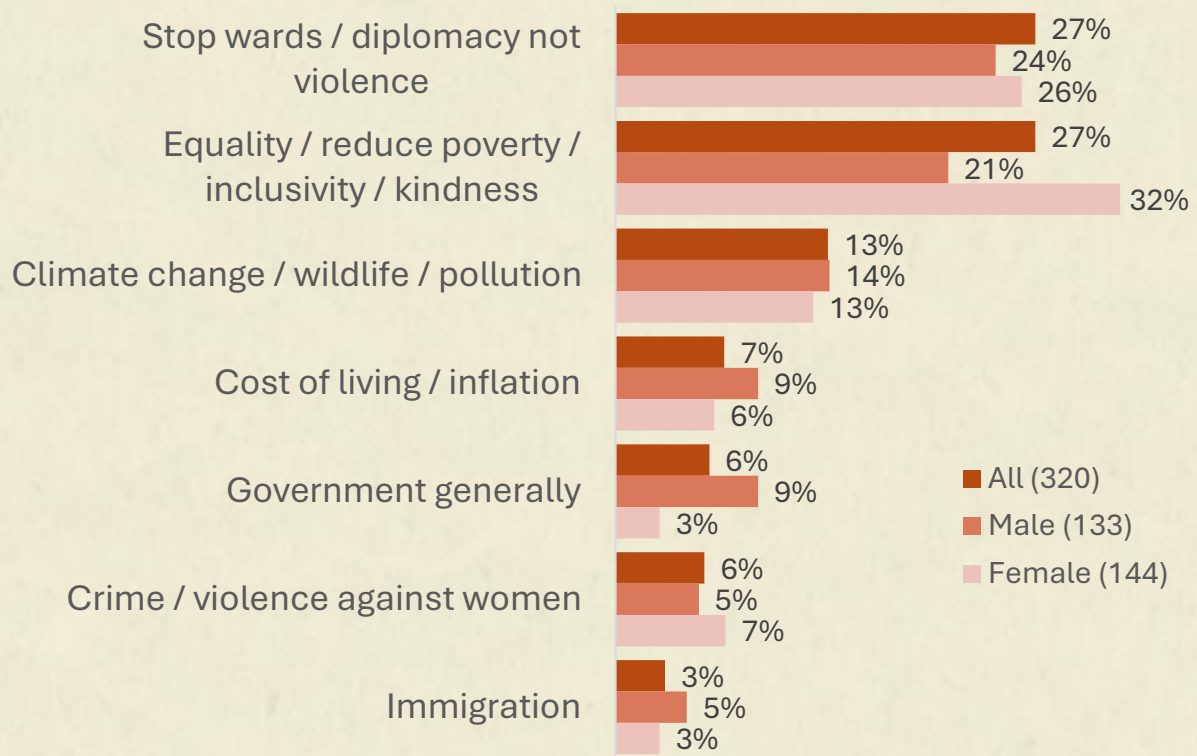
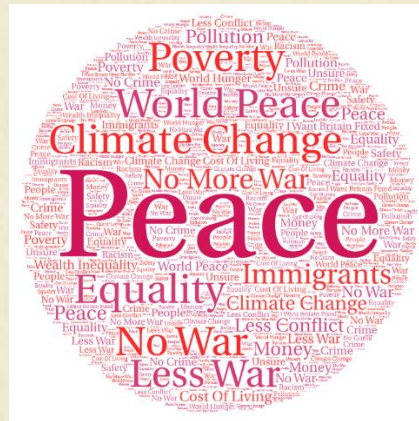
“Make it a safer place for younger generations”

“A huge crackdown on antisocial crimes that make communities feel unsafe”

When asked what one thing you would change about the world, the top themes were peace and fewer wars; equality and more inclusivity such as an end to hunger and better understanding; and climate change.

If you could change one thing about the world generally, what would it be? (Write in)

Word count cloud from WordArt.com. Chart shows biggest groupings of responses by gender.



“Less political tension, a return to diplomacy rather than violence.”

“Teach people to be accepting and learn we don't need to fight wars because we're not children and we can use our words to talk things out”

“Less crime against people for their race, sexuality or religion, etc”

“The wealth of the world should be able to support everyone on it. I would like for everyone to live a meaningful, fair and fulfilling life where money or necessities like food and water shouldn't be a barrier.”

“Take some actual initiative to acknowledge the fact that we are slowly making our world worse through climate change and make plans to help the planet survive”

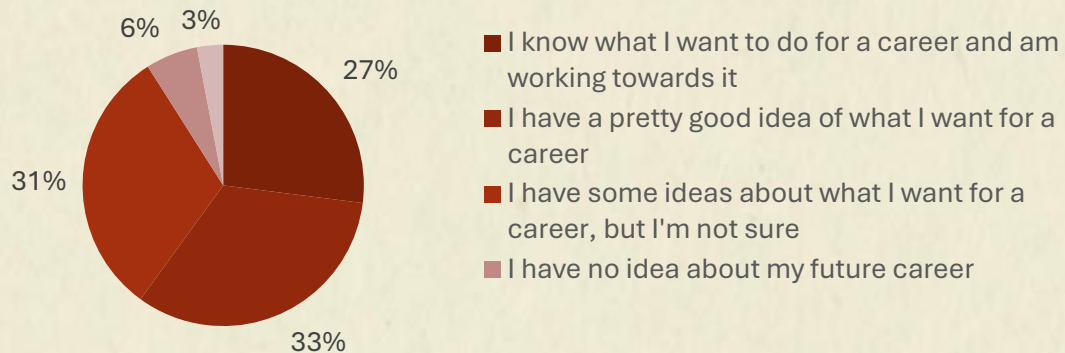
“That action is taken on the most important issue of our time: global warming.”

How do young people feel about their future?

Most people still at school or college said they had at least some idea of what they wanted to do and were working towards it.

Which of these is your main status currently?

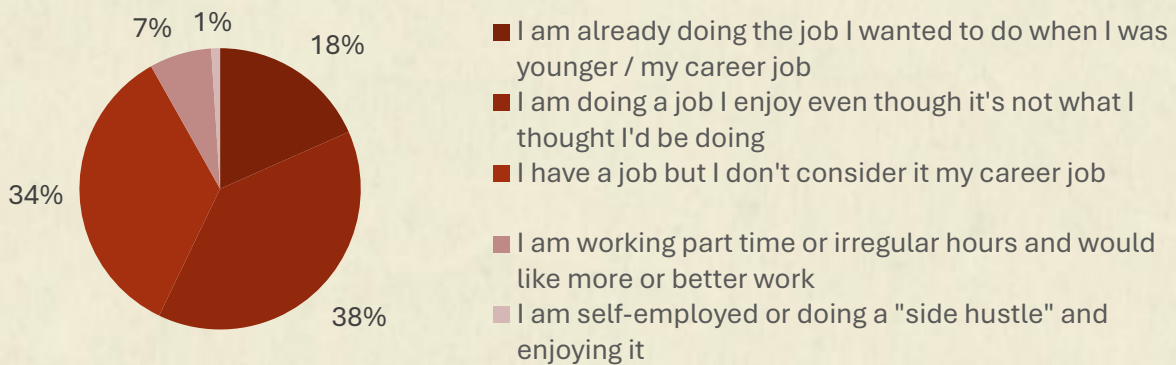
Base: 320



Of the people who were working, the majority were already doing a job they enjoy, or were doing the job they thought they would be doing when they were younger.

Which of these is most true of you?

Base: 71



There was a good degree of optimism when people were specifically asked about their own careers, with more than six in ten saying they felt they could make a career out of doing something they love.

The lowest scores were about opportunities or desire to stay in their local area.

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Percentage saying strongly or slightly agree.

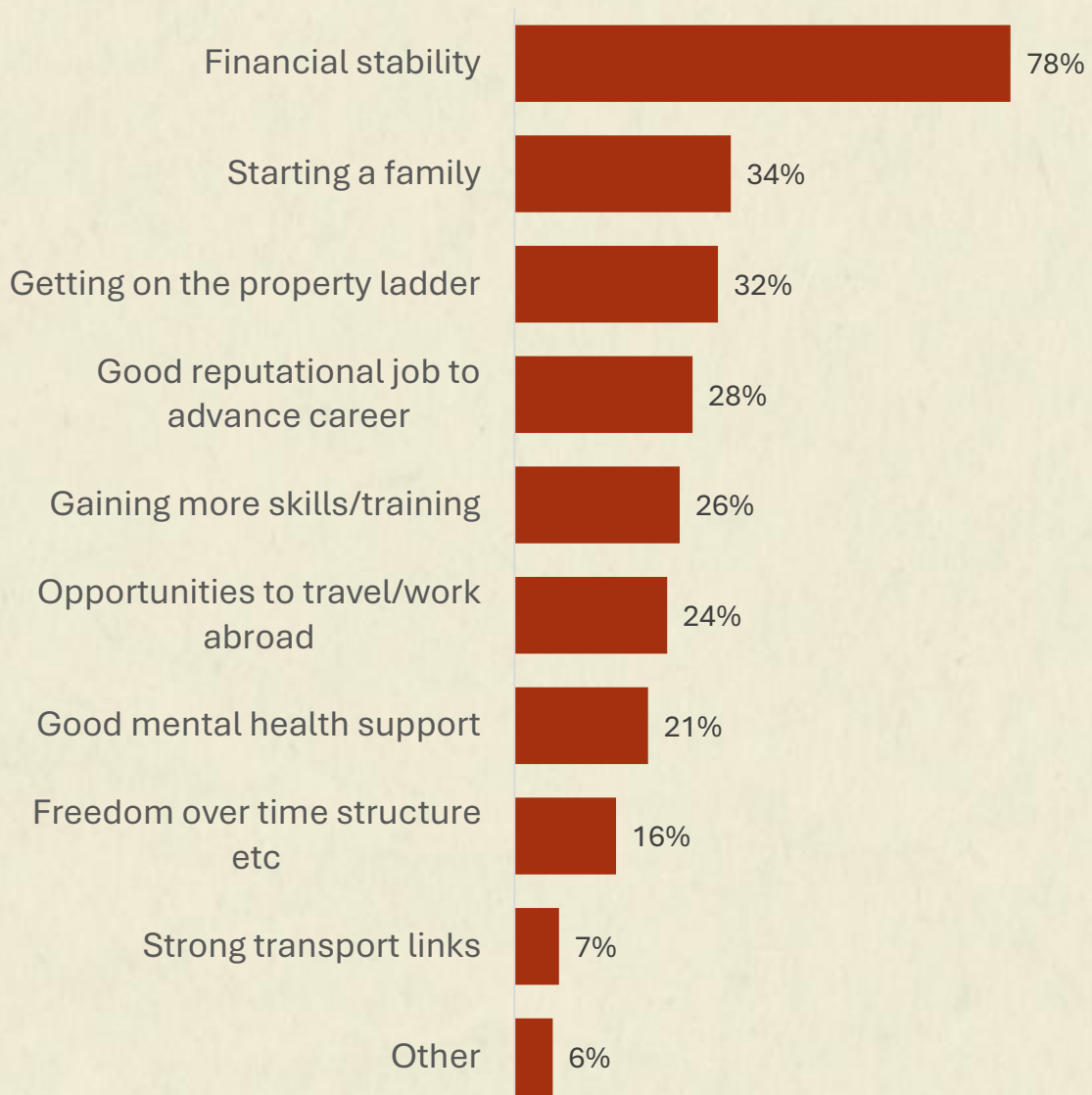
Base: 423-465



In terms of what was important to their future, financial stability came out strongly:

When thinking about your future, what three things matter to you most? (list provided)

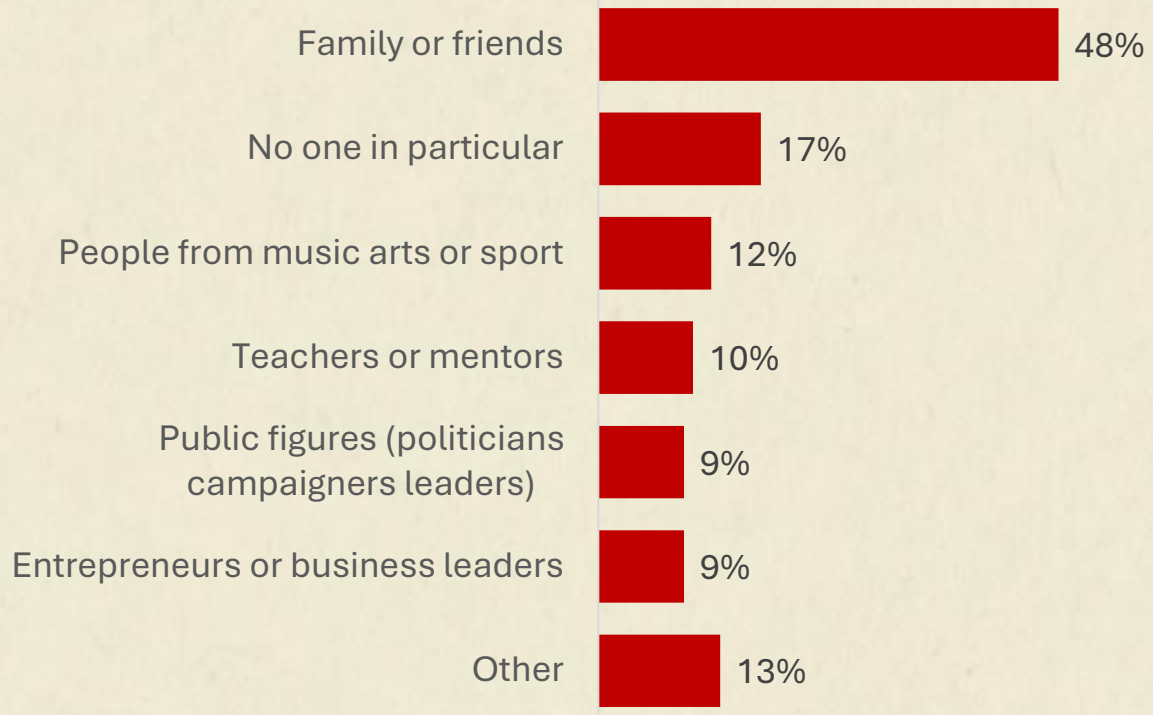
Base: 428



We asked about what role models people have, and the highest number of mentions were for friends and family.

Who or what inspires you most when thinking about your future? (list provided)

Base: 423



Key barriers are seen as managing to get some work experience, and confidence issues:

When thinking about work, what if any, barriers do you face to a career in the sector of your choice? (list provided)

Base: 420



When asked what would make it easier to get started, the biggest mentions were about getting advice and support, and just having opportunities.

What would make it easier for you to achieve your career goals? (Write in)

“If I could get a job to get some experience that would help, but I can't get a job without experience so it's a vicious cycle.”

“Being connected with local people in the field to mentor/ advise on the process of getting into that career”

“Just having more knowledge about it because we get told about colleges and post 16 opportunities but with the amount of options and information we get it's overwhelming to pick an option, so having them explained more would help.”

How interested are young people in creative careers?

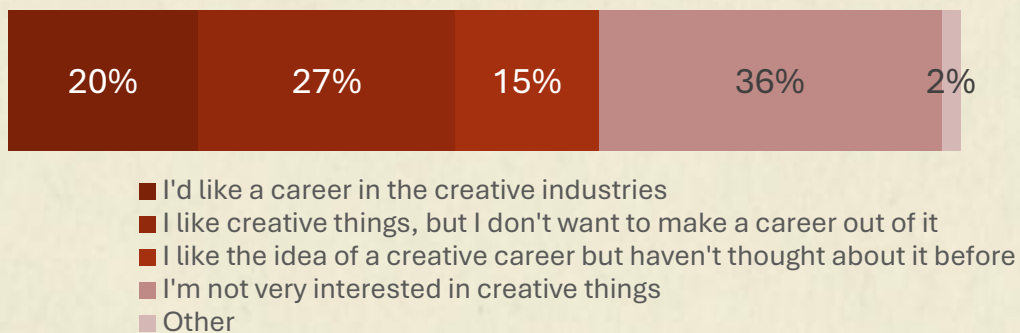
Around one in five young people are interested in pursuing a creative career.

15% of young people haven't considered it, but might be interested, suggesting that more people might go in that direction if they are encouraged to think about it.

The creative industries is a term for work and jobs based around creative sectors such as art, music, design, drama, cinema or writing. That means either performance or creative work itself and roles which support this, such as producer, creative agent or a technical role.

Have you thought about a career in the creative industries? (list provided)

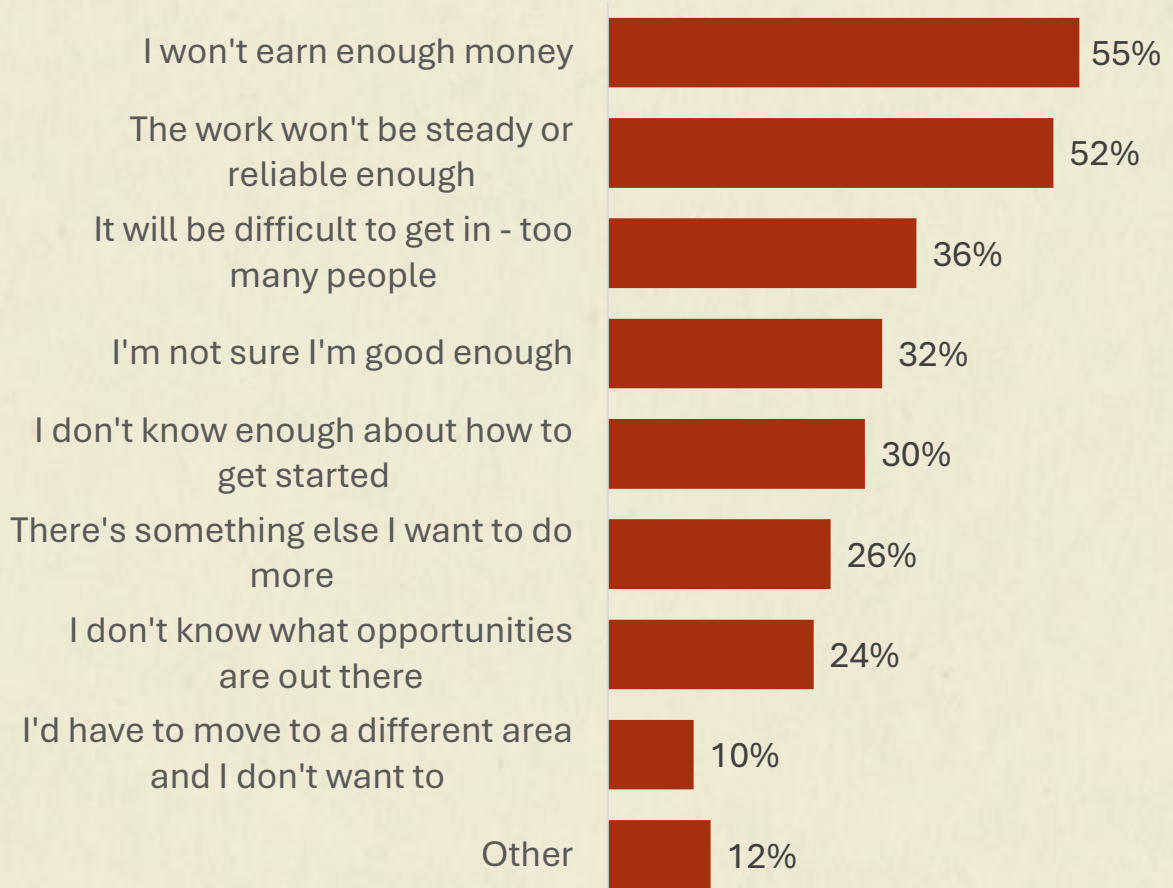
Base: 397



Reasons not to consider a creative career (other than just lack of interest) focus on financial stability.

If you aren't thinking about a creative career, why not? (tick all that apply)

Base: 168



Who took part and when?

Below is a demographic breakdown of participants.

Gender

Male	187	37%
Female	182	36%
Other/non binary	13	3%
No answer	125	25%

Ethnicity

White British	326	64%
Other (various)	58	11%
No answer	123	24%

Disability

Yes	53	10%
No	353	70%
No answer	101	20%

Constituency			% of those who answered
Mid Derbyshire	194	38%	81%
Derby North	28	6%	12%
Other	17	3%	7%
No answer	268	53%	

The survey was completed online and on a paper version which was then entered online, between September and December 2025. Just over 500 people took part.