WELCOME TO THE WORLD
LIFE AS A TEEN IN 2017
Far too often, people like to talk about young people without talking to them. As a result, young people are perceived as being ‘mysterious’. Assumptions are constantly made about what we think or what we like – and usually they’re way off the mark.

Young people deserve to have a voice, as well as more public platforms to use that voice. Sometimes when we have an opportunity to speak, we’re a bit tentative – thinking that no one is going to listen to us. We need a sense of empowerment, to feel like we can speak when we have an opportunity to speak, we’re a bit tentative –

As a member of the National Youth Board for National Citizen Service (NCS), I’m able to represent the thoughts of young people from all over the country at a senior level. We’ve also helped to shape the future of the organisation, working with their Head of Strategy to formulate a five-year business plan.

For me, it’s clear that NCS truly values the opinions of young people. They take the time to put themselves out there and listen to what we have to say – and this report proves that.

Welcome to our world is an analysis of how young people feel, according to young people. As we’ve had a major say in its creation, it gives an exclusive insight into what we actually think. Young people were even involved in coming up with the questions. Unlike many reports, this wasn’t put together by an anonymous man in a lab coat.

Our research uncovers what it’s like to be a teenager in Britain today – investigating issues around identity, family relationships, leisure activities, social responsibility, how we feel about social media and our aspirations for the future.

It sheds light on the negativity that teenagers suffer – with 50% saying they’ve been bullied, and the majority feeling overwhelmed by schoolwork. This comes as no surprise to me, but it may do to others – as talking about these subjects is often considered taboo. Hopefully, these statistics can shift the focus on to the institutional issues behind these problems, as well-sparking conversations around improving our education system and public support networks.

The sections focusing on LGBT and black, Asian and minority ethnic youth are especially important, as they allow us to look at their differing experiences – and how we can work together to close those gaps. For example, the fact that LGBT teens are more likely to be influenced by a celebrity with a similar background demonstrates why it’s so important to have more LGBT representation and role models.

The report also highlights how socially engaged many young people are (no, we don’t all sit around playing computer games!), as well as focusing on mental health – one of the most important issues affecting young people, but rarely talked about.

While this report may only have surveyed a small percentage of Britain’s teenagers, hopefully it can start a dialogue on how we can turn the negative experiences these teenagers are quite different from the popular stereotypes. They have grown up in the shadow of recession, war, and global terrorism. But despite this they are optimistic that they can build a better future for themselves, our country and our planet.

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Cynics might say that I only meet the select few – the good apples in a rotten basket. That’s why I am pleased to present this youth report, Welcome to our world. As the country’s flagship youth programme for 16 and 17 year olds NCS champions the engagement of young people with issues that impact their communities, their society and therefore their lives. This is a key feature of the NCS programme. This youth report is a testament to that engagement and speaks volumes about how important the voice of young people can be. To find out more about NCS go to page 58.

Some of what you will read is uplifting. Some of it is fascinating. And some of it is worrying. I hope that giving young people this platform will serve as a reminder that they deserve the best possible start in life. After all, our young people are our future and if we back them, we all win.

MICHAEL LYNAS
CEO, NCS

“Our Voice Matters”

“I live in a decaying age. Young people no longer respect their parents. They are rude and impolite. They frequently inhabit taverns and have no self-control.”

These words were inscribed on an Egyptian tomb six thousand years ago. But the fact that they could have been written yesterday tells us something about how little our attitudes to the next generation have to do with the facts.

I am privileged to have met many thousands of young people since I helped establish the first NCS pilots in 2009. These teenagers are quite different to the popular stereotypes. They have grown up in the shadow of recession, war, and global terrorism. But despite this they are optimistic that they can build a better future for themselves, our country and our planet.

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In August 2016, NCS commissioned ICM Unlimited to carry out a year’s worth of polls every other month among 16 and 17 year olds. The surveys covered a broad range of topics, ranging from friendship and fun to rebellion and stress. The aim was, by the end of the year, to have recorded teens’ views on all of the subjects most important to their lives.

To give teens a voice (rather than speaking on their behalf), ICM developed a participatory research method which involved hiring a small team of teen consultants to help them shape each questionnaire. The consultants were paid London Living Wage, developed skills to put on their CV, and even had the satisfaction of seeing their work in a national newspaper.

Nationally representative teens
Every other month, ICM Unlimited conducted surveys of approximately 1,000 16 and 17 year olds in England. Five waves of fieldwork were conducted online between August 2016 and June 2017, with a final, shorter survey conducted in June to ‘mop up’ any outstanding topics.

To ensure a representative sample, during fieldwork quotas were set by age, gender, region, socio-economic grade and ethnicity. At the analysis stage, data was weighted to the known demographic profile of the audience – this was designed to correct any quotas that had been under or over-filled during fieldwork.

It should be remembered that while data has been weighted to represent the population of 16 and 17 year olds in England, only a sample was interviewed rather than the entire population. A consequence of this is that all results are subject to sampling tolerances, meaning that not all differences are statistically significant.

Nationally representative adults
Every other month, ICM also surveyed around 2,000 nationally representative adults (18+) using ICM Litmus. Using this data, we have been able to compare the views of today’s teens with those of adults.

Adults were shown a shorter version of the teens’ questionnaire. In most instances, they were asked questions in exactly the same way; however, occasionally they were asked questions on teens.

This data has also been weighted to match the known profile of adults in the UK.

INTERPRETING THE DATA
Where percentages do not add up to 100, this may be due to computer rounding, the exclusion of ‘don’t know’ categories, or multiple answers – this is denoted with a † throughout.
Today’s young people are more open-minded about sexuality and gender than previous generations. They are significantly less binary in their definition of their own sexuality, perceiving themselves as somewhere along a sliding scale, rather than within distinct categories of ‘gay’ or ‘straight’. This also applies to their perception of gender, almost half believe the idea that everyone is either a ‘man’ or a ‘woman’ is out of date.

Causes and issues are an important part of how they define themselves, particularly teenage girls, who identify as feminists above any other self-description. Family, friends and music also form a huge part of teenage identity and inform their perception of themselves far more than their social media channels.

“Against a backdrop of gender-neutral clothes on the high street and increasing coverage of transgender issues, it’s interesting that teens are so much less binary in how they define themselves, both in terms of sexuality and gender. Generation Z are, on the whole, much more open-minded about these issues than previous generations. This fluidity in how they define themselves ties into an acceptance of fluidity in others.”

— Anna Colton

Child & Adolescent Psychologist

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Do you identify as being part of any of these groups?

Girls are more likely than boys to say they are:
- Outsiders: 10%
- Feminsts: 29%
- Bookworms: 19%
- Gamers: 5%
- Intellectuels: 11%
- Feminists: 17%
- Geeks: 5%
- Sporsy: 19%
- Techies: 3%
- Feminists: 7%
- Outsidors: 9%
- Bookworms: 5%
- Environmentalists: 19%
- Activists: 14%
- Musons: 4%
- Rockers: 5%
- Art lovers: 5%
- Vegetarians or Vestans: 5%
- Hypesters: 5%
- Hip Hop heads: 5%
- Emos: 5%
- Nerds: 5%
- Environmentalists: 5%
- Musons: 5%
- Rockers: 5%
- Art lovers: 5%
- Vegetarians or Vestans: 5%
- Hypesters: 5%
- Hip Hop heads: 5%
- Emos: 5%
- Nerds: 5%

Boys are more likely than girls to say they are:
- Outsiders: 6%
- Feminsts: 33%
- Bookworms: 19%
- Gamers: 11%
- Intellectuels: 17%
- Feminists: 13%
- Geeks: 9%
- Sporsy: 17%
- Techies: 5%
- Feminists: 10%
- Outsidors: 6%
- Bookworms: 7%
- Environmentalists: 10%
- Activists: 7%
- Musons: 6%
- Rockers: 5%
- Art lovers: 6%
- Vegetarians or Vestans: 6%
- Hypesters: 6%
- Hip Hop heads: 6%
- Emos: 6%
- Nerds: 6%

LGBT teens are significantly more likely than non-LGBT teens to say they are:
- Geeks: 33%
- Feminsts: 40%
- Outsiders: 18%
- Gamers: 29%
- Intellectuels: 25%
- Feminists: 29%
- Geeks: 18%
- Sporsy: 13%
- Techies: 23%
- Feminists: 10%
- Outsidors: 19%
- Bookworms: 7%
- Environmentalists: 10%
- Activists: 7%
- Musons: 6%
- Rockers: 5%
- Art lovers: 6%
- Vegetarians or Vestans: 6%
- Hypesters: 6%
- Hip Hop heads: 6%
- Emos: 6%
- Nerds: 6%

Key:
- Male
- Female
How would you define your sexual orientation on the following scale?

- 90% straight
- 80% straight
- 70% straight
- 60% gay or lesbian
- 50% gay or lesbian
- 40% gay or lesbian
- 30% gay or lesbian
- 20% gay or lesbian
- 10% gay or lesbian
- Don’t know or prefer not to say

16–17† year olds

18+*†

Do you agree that the idea that everyone is either a woman or a man is out of date?

- 63%

- 48%

Do you agree that the idea that everyone is straight or gay is out of date?

- 6%

- 3%

- 4%

- 2%

- 5%

- 2%

- 1%

- 1%

- 1%

- 1%

- 1%

- 1%

- 1%

- 2%

- 2%

- 4%

- 2%

- 11%

- 6%

- 4%

- 3%

- 2%

- 2%

- 1%

- 1%

- 1%

- 1%

- 1%

- 1%

- 1%

- 1%

- 1%

- 1%

- 1%

- 1%

There is no question that everyone is straight or gay. The idea that everyone is either a woman or a man is out of date. Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups are more likely to agree that there is no such thing as gender identity and that there is more than just two genders. This data shows us that black, Asian and minority ethnic teens often have to deal with multiple sets of identities; they might feel they have to act differently at home with their families than they do at school or when hanging out with friends. Long-term this will certainly help them navigate a complex globalised world, but at first it creates uncertainty and development challenges for black, Asian and minority ethnic teens. Issues of diversity often addressed in a crude and simplistic way on social media platforms and in social and political debate, black, Asian and minority ethnic teens are having to navigate these questions of identity, much earlier in their lives. This isn’t helped by a lack of relatable role models from across sectors and industries.

**Alex:**

I identify as a transgender male. Right now I’m basically pre-transition, but once I’m 18 I intend to go onto testosterone, surgery and general transition.

“A common misunderstanding is that there’s just male and female - but gender is fluid,” explains Alex. “There are people who are non-binary and use gender-neutral pronouns. And people don’t realise that gender and sex are not the same thing. Schools should educate people on gender and identity - it would further understanding.”

“Many people in my friendship group are LGBT, and we explored our identities at the same time, which made things easier,” he adds. “A lot of people in college don’t know what response I’d get. I worry they’d say they’re fine with it, but then see me differently. Or they might take offence, thinking I’ve been hiding things from them - when, really, it’s none of their business, unless I want it to be.

“The way I see it is that people shouldn’t have to label themselves unless they want to. People should take you at face value. If you say you identify as something, then people should accept that. No questions asked.”

**Case study:**

Identity: Alex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key</th>
<th>100% Male</th>
<th>100% Female</th>
<th>80% Male</th>
<th>80% Female</th>
<th>60% Male</th>
<th>60% Female</th>
<th>40% Male</th>
<th>40% Female</th>
<th>20% Male</th>
<th>20% Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16–17 year olds</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18+</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*England only.
Today’s teens have very strong family values. They really enjoy spending time with their parents, although if it’s a choice of one or the other they would still prefer to spend time with their friends. Teens look to their parents for support and guidance. Despite this generation being far more open-minded about gender, it is clear that there are still distinct gender roles when it comes to parenting with mums being far more trusted than dads. Of course, young people do still have frustrations with their parents, with just under half thinking their parents or guardians don’t understand what it is like for teens today.

### Key Facts:
- **How close are you to your family?**
  - **Net: Feel close to family:**
    - **Total:** 44% (Very close), 44% (Fairly close), 11% (Not close)
    - **Males:** 46% (Very close), 43% (Fairly close), 8% (Not close)
    - **Females:** 41% (Very close), 44% (Fairly close), 13% (Not close)

- **To what extent do you agree with these statements about your parents?**
  - **I enjoy spending time with my parents or guardians:** 73%
  - **I feel my parents are involved in my life:** 91%
  - **I am happy with how involved my parents are:** 63%

Parents are the biggest role model at 24%, ahead of celebrities (7%).
When we ask “When you have a problem or an issue you want to discuss, who is usually the first person you turn to?”, 31% say their mum, and 30% say a friend.

**Family: Ife**

Family is important to Ife. “My parents’ morals and values will definitely leave a long-lasting impression,” he says. “I’ll use those to guide me in everything and anything that I choose to do. But it would be silly of me to completely want to follow in their footsteps.

“My mum’s a careers adviser, so it’s been easy to ask for advice about higher education. When I was younger I think they just wanted me to do what looked good, which was a bit irritating at times, but as I’ve grown up and become more independent, they’ve become more realistic.

“There was talk of me going to Uni when I was younger, but they were completely understanding of my decision not to go this year. There’s no point in going just for the sake of it, and I wanted to get experience of the real world.”

“I think it’s important that we have an influence on Ife’s life choices,” adds Ife’s father. “He isn’t sufficiently self-aware yet to know what aspects or qualities may need further development for the challenges of the years ahead. But I’m proud of his inclination to give me respect and listen to what I have to say, even though he may not fully agree with it – and also his inclination to challenge me. I’m proud of his determination to succeed, and the hard work he displays. In terms of following in my footsteps, I’d want him to be thoughtful in his dealings with other people.”

**Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups:**

- Significantly more likely to say their parents are very involved in their life compared with white teens
  - **SAME TEENS** 44% compared with 36% among white teens

- Significantly more likely to say that their parents are more involved in their life compared with white teens
  - **SAME TEENS** 41% compared with 24% among white teens

- More likely to say their views on how people should look, dress or express themselves are different to those of their family
  - **SAME TEENS** 46% compared with 34% among white teens

- More likely to say their views on sex and relationships are different to those of their family
  - **SAME TEENS** 41% compared with 24% among white teens

With many young people from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds belonging to a second or third generation of family who have also had to navigate many of the obstacles they will face on their own social mobility journey, it’s understandable as to why there is a higher perception of parental involvement. This should be a source of celebration, but of course comes at a price when teenagers are at a stage in their lives when they are seeking independence and wanting to carve out identities for themselves. They are also often at a crossroads where inter-generational interpretations of cultures and traditions are evolving, particularly in the context of living in multi-cultural Britain, leading to differences in views between generations. This would explain the difference in views with families, but with increased globalisation and access to information, assumptions shouldn’t be made that reasons for them are always the same in every case.
“This important new research shows the scale of the mental health crisis that young people face: more than a third of 16 and 17 year olds say that they have experienced a mental health problem during their lives, while many more have felt stressed, anxious or insecure in the last month. The findings also demonstrate the range of pressures that teens struggle with, including school stress, bullying, body image issues and the pressure created by social media. Difficult experiences in childhood – such as dealing with prejudice, or caring for a family member with mental health problems – can also have a serious impact, often several years down the line.

While girls and boys may face different pressures, and express distress in different ways, it’s crucial that we take every young person’s mental health seriously. While there is greater awareness about mental health than in the past, many teens still find it hard to tell friends, family members and professionals if they’re struggling to cope. That’s why we need to listen to the views of young people, promote good mental health in schools, and ensure there is proper funding in place for specialist mental health services.”

Dr Marc Bush
YoungMinds

**Key facts:**

- 37% of teens have experienced a mental health problem.
- 81% agree that mental health should be taught at school.
- 36% of girls say they do not know much about mental health, compared with 28% of girls.
Have any of your close family members ever been diagnosed with anxiety disorder or depression? If so, which family member(s)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Member</th>
<th>Depression</th>
<th>Anxiety</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mum</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dad</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sister</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandparent</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brother</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How likely would you be to go to the following people or places if you thought you were suffering from a mental health problem?

- Your parents: 67% anxiety, 36% depression
- Your siblings: 42% anxiety, 25% depression
- Your extended family, such as grandparents: 30% anxiety, 23% depression
- Your friends: 59% anxiety, 63% depression
- Your teachers: 30% anxiety, 63% depression
- Your religious leaders: 10% anxiety, 11% depression
- Your colleagues: 10% anxiety, 14% depression
- A mental health charity: 33% anxiety, 32% depression
- Your GP: 30% anxiety, 23% depression
- Your extended family, such as grandparents: 34% anxiety, 40% depression
- Social media: 59% anxiety, 63% depression
- Google search: 30% anxiety, 24% depression
- Your teachers: 30% anxiety, 39% depression
- Helplines: 10% anxiety, 11% depression
- Online chat rooms: 10% anxiety, 14% depression
- Your friends: 57% anxiety, 66% depression
- Your school attendance: 33% anxiety, 32% depression
- Your school attendance: 33% anxiety, 32% depression
- Your friends: 55% anxiety, 52% depression
- Your GP: 30% anxiety, 23% depression
- Your extended family, such as grandparents: 40% anxiety, 46% depression
- Social media: 59% anxiety, 63% depression
- Google search: 30% anxiety, 24% depression
- Your teachers: 30% anxiety, 39% depression
- Helplines: 10% anxiety, 11% depression
- Online chat rooms: 10% anxiety, 14% depression
- Your friends: 57% anxiety, 66% depression

My family member's depression has affected:

- My life: 33%
- My school attendance: 18%
- My friends: 14%
- My relationship with others: 10%
- My relationship with them: 38%
- My friends: 17%
Do you agree with the following?

T eens are bombarded with images telling them what a ‘perfect’ body should look like, which can have hugely damaging effects on their self-esteem.

Girls in particular say that they compare their appearance to that of celebrities, while an increasing number of boys feel under pressure to bulk up in the gym.

As a society, we should be helping girls and boys to feel positive about who they are and how they look, rather than anxious and insecure.”

Dr Marc Bush
YoungMinds

Key facts:

- How important is your physical appearance to you?
  - 50% of females have been on a diet to lose weight by the age of 17.
  - 2/3 of LGBT teens report experiencing loneliness compared with 1/3 of non-LGBT teens.
  - 40% of teens say that physical appearance is influenced by what they see on social media.
  - 1/3 of boys feel pressured to be muscly.

CASE STUDY

MENTAL HEALTH: BLESSING

“Mental wellbeing is a big issue for young people,” says Blessing, who experienced her own mental health difficulties at the time she started Year 12.

“Everything originated within my family,” she explains. “My dad was emotionally abusive. I experienced that at a very early age, and for a long time I thought that was normal family life. He was critical of everything I did, which created a mindset for me where nothing I ever did was good enough.

“It really affected me at school as I went into Year 12, where there’s increasing pressure, and it led to problems with anxiety and low moods,” she continues. “I couldn’t cope on my own any more. I ended up going to cognitive behavioural therapy to help change my mindset.

“Mental health is a critical way of thinking. Now, if things get overwhelming, I take time to stop and use the tools I’ve been given.”

Through NCS, Blessing worked alongside the BBC on the Radio One/1 Xtra campaign My Mind & Me, aimed at combating stigma around mental health. “I took part in a series of workshops to help structure and design the campaign, and shared my story in a video, released on World Mental Health Day,” says Blessing. “It made me feel like my experiences could raise awareness and help shape the conversation around young people and mental health. Hopefully, anyone going through something similar can relate to it – and reach out for the help they need.”

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HOW HAPPY OR UNHAPPY ARE YOU WITH HOW YOU LOOK?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>UNHAPPY</th>
<th>HAPPY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MALE</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEMALE</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

KEY
- VERY UNHAPPY
- SLIGHTLY UNHAPPY
- NEITHER/NOR
- SLIGHTLY HAPPY
- HAPPY

DO YOU AGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS ABOUT YOUR APPEARANCE?

1. My physical appearance is influenced by what celebrities look like.
2. My physical appearance is influenced by what I see on social media.
3. I have changed my appearance because I wanted to look like someone else.
4. I care about what people think of my appearance.
5. I compare my appearance to other people’s.

CASE STUDY

BODY IMAGE: TABITHA

Tabitha has had issues around body image since her early teens. “I’ve restricted my diet on and off since I was about 14,” she explains. “At school, I was the fat kid who was bullied, or picked on in PE because I wobble when I jump. It was disheartening. Why couldn’t people accept me for who I am?”

There’s definitely peer pressure for young people to look a certain way,” continues Tabitha. “There’s always a popular girl crowd who are super-prettv and skinny. If you’re not like that, you get sidelined. Images of size zero supermodels don’t help either. You can’t look like that and be healthy, and people don’t realise these images are Photoshopped. It’s sad, really.

At one point, I unfollowed lots of celebrities on Instagram, as I didn’t want the negativity of aspiring to look like people I never could.”

Now 18, Tabitha has appeared in a video for BBC Radio 1, discussing body image alongside the pop star Charli XCX – and she’s feeling far more positive about her body and her eating habits. “Rather than restricting my diet, I’ve gone vegan,” she explains. “I’ve also gone on a bit of a health kick, getting into a gym and going swimming. I’ve realised there’s a healthy way to lose weight.

“But I think I’m always going to have that battle – there’s always something you think you could improve. You’re never completely happy with yourself, and it’s really hard not to compare yourself with others.”

Female versus Male Teens:

- 45% of girls are happy with how they look, compared with 66% of boys.
- 2x more girls are tempted by plastic surgery and cosmetic treatments than boys (22% and 21% compared with 8% and 10%).
- 32% of girls say they have felt obsessed with getting likes on social media, compared with 10% of boys.
“Whilst bullying has always existed, the rise of social media means that it can be more persistent, less visible to adults and doesn’t always end at the school gates. As well as having anti-bullying policies in place, schools need to be able to teach children about cyberbullying at a young age, while social media companies should take more responsibility for what’s posted on their platforms. Bullying can leave young people feeling isolated, worthless, anxious or angry, and it’s vital that we work together to tackle it.”

Dr Marc Bush
YoungMinds

CASE STUDY

BULLYING: SHANIA

After being bullied for years, Shania decided to take a stand – a life-changing moment that resulted in her leading an anti-bullying campaign. “With bullying, a lot of the time people turn a blind eye,” explains Shania, now 17. “There’s also a stigma where the victim is viewed as weak, so no one talks about it. I realised something had to be done, so I wrote to my teacher saying bullying needed to be taken seriously – and I kept on until they listened.”

Shania began a campaign that has seen her give presentations in local schools. She also sits down with both the victims of bullying and the perpetrators to discuss their problems. “I try to help both sides, not just the victims,” says Shania.

“We need to have those conversations. There are things everyone can do to prevent bullying,” she continues. “Even if it’s just standing up and saying ‘I want to help’. If you witness bullying, don’t just be a bystander. Do what you can to stop it. And if you’re being bullied, talk to someone. Please, speak up – because bottling it up can cause other problems. There’s always someone who’ll listen.”

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Many young people feel overwhelmed or anxious because of the pressure to do well in exams – and the vast majority think that schools should help them learn about mental health.

Unfortunately, the current education system places a huge emphasis on academic achievement and far less on mental health.

Max experienced school-related anxiety during his GCSEs, when exam pressures took their toll.

“Revising for 11 subjects was really stressful,” explains Max. “I was worrying about getting it all done on time, and my predicted grades were low, so I felt massive pressure to prove them wrong.”

“Some of my friends had pressure from their parents to do well, as if anything below an ‘A’ grade wasn’t good enough. And sometimes schools are only interested in kids with the most potential.”

The stress of exams affected both Max and his family. “It made it hard, because they didn’t know if they should mention exams or not,” he says. “I was on a hair trigger where anything could set me off, so that changed my relationship with my family. I kind of distanced myself.”

Max thinks today’s young people are under more pressure to succeed than his parents’ generation. “My mum didn’t have as much stress when she was at school,” he confirms. “There’s a pressure today for people – particularly girls – to have a career before having a family, so there’s definitely a generational difference there.”

Now 17, Max recently appeared in BBC Learning’s coaching network The Mind Set, and has a tonne of tips for others around exam stress: “Try not to focus on your predicted grades,” he advises. “They’re not a brick wall; you can reach the other side. Don’t doubt yourself. Keep saying ‘Yeah, I’m doing all right’ And never compare yourself to others – that’s the worst thing you can do.”
Communication is a hugely important part of all human relationships. The best way to have positive communication between parents and teens is to open up. Parents often avoid talking to their son or daughter about difficult topics, but it is important to overcome embarrassment. Parents should show a willingness to listen and talk to teens, and express concern rather than judgement. Teens are also keen to talk to their mum or dad about their parents’ previous life experiences, and parents should create opportunities for these discussions.”

**Key facts:**

- **77%** of teens talk in person with their friends at least once a day.
- **56%** of parents or guardians would like teens to be more open about sensitive issues.

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**Communication: How I connect with others**

The idea that teens are stuck in a virtual world staring at their phones isn’t an accurate one. Teens value speaking to each other in person above any other form of communication. Of course, using their mobile phone to stay in touch is still a big deal, with Snapchat the second most popular way for teens to keep in touch. Teens talk to their friends on Snapchat, text and Facebook Messenger at least once a day, with lots of teens using Snapchat “almost constantly.”

---

### How often do you talk with your friends outside of school, college or work in the following ways?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode of Communication</th>
<th>Once a day or more</th>
<th>Less than once a day</th>
<th>Almost constantly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>In person</strong></td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>On Snapchat</strong></td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>By text message</strong></td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>On Facebook messenger</strong></td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Via video chat such as Facetime or Skype</strong></td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Via messaging apps such as WhatsApp</strong></td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>On Facebook Messenger</strong></td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Via video game consoles while playing games</strong></td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>On social media through a video game console</strong></td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>On Twitter</strong></td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>On Instagram</strong></td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>On email</strong></td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>On the phone</strong></td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>On Snapchat</strong></td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS, DO YOU THINK THEY BEST APPLY TO YOU ONLINE OR OFFLINE?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Online</th>
<th>Apply the Same or Both Online and Offline</th>
<th>Don’t Know/Not Applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am the most confident</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can talk to anyone</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have the most friends</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can ask for support</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can be myself</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can be honest</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a better connection with friends</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can be in people</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My friendships are stronger</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel most nervous when talking to people</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WHO DID YOU TALK TO IF YOU WERE FEELING BULLIED?

- I told my parents: 57%
- I told my teachers: 37%
- I told my friends: 29%
- I looked for help online: 13%
- I didn’t talk to anyone: 22%

WHITE TEENS VERSUS BLACK, ASIAN AND MINORITY ETHNIC TEENS
White teens are more likely than black, Asian and minority ethnic teens to say they are most nervous when talking people offline (54% versus 34%) and are more likely to say they can talk to anyone online than black, Asian and minority ethnic teens (29% versus 20%).

KEY FACTS
50% of teens are still most nervous when talking to people face to face, however.

Like most teenagers, Cheyenne is hugely active on social media, bookending her day on various platforms.

“As soon as I wake up, I go on Snapchat,” she says. “I’ll send streaks to at least 30 people, and then go on Instagram to check how many likes or comments I’ve got on a picture I posted the night before. I’ll then go on Twitter to read inspirational posts; I check another eight times or so while at school, and I’m constantly scrolling through Instagram. People contact me on Snapchat all day, so I’m always on that.

“Before I go to bed, I’ll look at the Snapchat ‘Discover’ page. There’s one called Nifty which shows you how to load loads of cool things. I’m quite creative, so I like discovering new stuff. I also like to catch up on gossip, to be honest!”

Cheyenne thinks social media sites can be harmful, however. “Facebook has some really explicit content,” she explains. “I sat with my 12 year old brother recently while he was on it, and there were pictures of half-naked girls and stuff, which is not appropriate.

“Social media can also replace face to face relationships if you’re not careful. For example, I have about 1,000 Facebook friends, but I barely know half of them. And a lot of people might message you online or send photos on Snapchat, but they’ll walk past you in real life and never actually talk to you. It’s sad in a way. It’s not real. It feels fake.”

50% of teens are still most nervous when talking to people face to face, however.

48% of teens have a better connection with friends online, as well as stronger friendships (49%).

PARENTS: HOW MUCH DO YOU AGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel comfortable talking to my teen about sensitive issues</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would talk to my teen about sensitive issues if they were more open about their feelings</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel most nervous when talking to people</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can be myself</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My friendships are stronger</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel most nervous when talking to people</td>
<td>16%</td>
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</tr>
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**DREAMS AND ASPIRATIONS**

**MY HOPES FOR THE FUTURE**

Teens have quite conventional life goals: they'd like to get married, and be happy and healthy. Most of all, they aspire to having a job they really enjoy – and the majority think they can achieve it.

A large proportion feel that work experience and having a strong work ethic are key features of a strong CV. When it comes to skills, they feel less confident about public speaking being a recurring theme, with girls significantly more likely to say they worry about how they will cope under pressure.

Girls are the most optimistic they’ll achieve their dream job, but even at a young age, the looming gender pay gap is already on their minds, with boys much more likely to think they’ll earn a lot more than their parents compared with girls.

Black, Asian and minority ethnic teens see things a bit differently: while being the most confident they’ll earn more than their parents, they say their top life goal is to make their parents proud of them.

Overall, we found that whilst teens may worry about their future, they are also adjusting to the world around them. They might not see home ownership as possible, but they still think they can work in an area that interests them and are optimistic that they will do better than their parents’ generation.

**Key Facts:**

- **No. 1** Having a job that I enjoy doing is the number one goal for teens.

- **63%** of teens think that they will achieve their dream job.

- **28%** of teens agree that they would like to start their own business; however, this jumps to **52%** for black teens.

**What are your life goals?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Facts</th>
<th>Teens</th>
<th>Adults</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Having a job that I enjoy doing</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living a healthy life</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making my parents or guardians proud</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a job that earns lots of money</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a job that allows me to live out my passions</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a job with purpose or meaning</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a life partner</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travelling the world</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owning a home</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributing to society</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having children</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being healthy enough not to have to work</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a wide network of friends</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being famous</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have no idea what my future goals are yet</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Work experience provides young people with a great opportunity to develop their employability skills, gain invaluable insight into industry and broaden their horizons. At Santander our purpose is to help people and businesses prosper. By working in partnership with organisations such as NCS we can contribute to making sure that young people have the opportunity to realise their potential and gain valuable skills and experience. It’s a great way for organisations to meet new talent: capable and ambitious young people with fresh ideas who can help us innovate and serve our customers and society better. We believe that businesses have an important role to play in supporting the next generation to ensure they are equipped with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in the ever-changing workplace.*

Vicky Woolis, Head of Customer UK
Which skill or attribute do you believe is most important to have on your CV?

1. Work experience
2. Strong work ethic
3. Communication skills
4. The ability to work in a team
5. Independence
6. Self-confidence
7. Social skills
8. Leadership
9. Creativity
10. Problem solving

Which of the following industries would you consider pursuing a career in?

- Engineering: 26% Male, 17% Female
- Sports: 26% Male, 17% Female
- Science: 26% Male, 17% Female
- Media: 26% Male, 17% Female
- Business: 26% Male, 17% Female
- Healthcare and Medicine: 26% Male, 17% Female
- Arts and Entertainment: 26% Male, 17% Female
- Research: 26% Male, 17% Female

More girls than boys also specified other areas of work, mostly related to animals such as zookeeper or vet, and also psychology or sociology.
Do you think you’ll achieve your dream job? Only 11% said that achieving their dream job will be easy, while 67% said that achieving their dream job will not be easy.

How much do you expect to earn compared with your parents or guardians?
- I think I’ll earn a lot more
- I think I’ll earn slightly more
- I think I’ll earn about the same
- I think I’ll earn slightly less
- I think I’ll earn a lot less

Not getting the exam results I need to get into university
- Male: 34%
- Female: 43%

Not being successful in exams
- Male: 34%
- Female: 27%

Not having a job that you enjoy
- Male: 30%
- Female: 25%

Not having enough money to do the things you want to do
- Male: 28%
- Female: 26%

What are your top five worries or concerns for the future?

Do you want to start your own business? 28% Yes, 39% No, 28% Not sure, 5% Don’t know.

Which of the following attributes do you feel the least confident about?
- Public Speaking
- Social Skills
- Time Management
- Leadership
- Debating Skills
- Coping Under Pressure

Girls are significantly more likely than boys to say they demonstrate lower levels of self-confidence: 36% Female, 20% Male.

Girls are significantly more likely than boys to say they are least confident about coping under pressure: 17% Female, 5% Male.

Do you think you’ll have to move away from your local community to get your dream job? 60% Yes, 34% No, 6% Don’t know.

Do you think you’ll earn more than your parents at the peak of your career? 28% Yes, 35% No, 27% Not sure, 9% Don’t know.

Do you think you’ll achieve your dream job?
- Strongly agree: 30% Male, 25% Female
- Slightly agree: 27% Male, 40% Female
- Neither agree nor disagree: 19% Male, 19% Female
- Slightly disagree: 9% Male, 5% Female
- Strongly disagree: 5% Male, 9% Female

Only 11% said that achieving their dream job will be easy, while 67% said that achieving their dream job will not be easy.
**DO YOU LACK CONFIDENCE IN DOING THE FOLLOWING THINGS?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SAME TEENS</th>
<th>WHITE TEENS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Going to an interview in person</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a Skype interview</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Starting a new job</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing work experience</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applying for a job</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DO YOU AGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SAME TEENS</th>
<th>WHITE TEENS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I want to follow in my parents' footsteps</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My parents want me to go to university</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will outearn through parents at the peak of their careers</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can do a job that I love</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My parents will be proud of me</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My parents will be proud of the job I do</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DREAMS AND ASPIRATIONS: RICHARD**

“As a child, unlike the other future footballers and models in my primary school, I never knew what I wanted to be when I was older,” says Richard. “I still don’t.

“I went through phases of what I might end up doing – doctor, lawyer, actor – but I’ve come to realise those jobs are a lot easier said than done!

“I’ve never felt limited due to my background. I can’t control my looks, ethnicity or my parents’ profession, so why should I be affected by it?” asks Richard. “What I can control is how hard I work, what my next moves are, and which skills I develop. That’s what you need to focus on for a job.”

Richard feels that too much emphasis is put by today’s young people on the looks they project, "In this day and age, the importance of how attractive you are has been amplified – due to the media, and teens identifying with celebrities on TV or social media," he says. "A more important message is that happiness can’t be granted by external factors. True happiness is about being content with who you are and striving to become better.

“I come from a pretty traditional background,” Richard continues. “University is the only way forward” were words my parents engrained into me like it was a national anthem. For me, not going to Uni would be considered foreign, but part of me just didn’t want to go. Now, I have the confidence to carve out my own path.”

**KEY FACTS:**

- 47% of white teens think that how intelligent you are most effects your life chances, compared with 53% of black, Asian and minority ethnic teens.
- 55% of teens think that they will earn more than their parents at the peak of their careers.
Teens enjoy spending their free time online – YouTube is their number one weekend activity, outranking TV as their entertainment channel of choice. Boys are particular fans of watching YouTube videos – but they aren’t Couch potatoes, with sports still ranking high on the list for weekend fun. Teenage girls love hanging out with their friends, and are much more likely than boys to spend their free time getting into a good book.

Spending time online doesn’t mean teens lack other interests. As well as these ‘normal’ activities, teens say they want to try adventurous activities such as skiing or surfing – and not just to share the snaps on social media.

Being able to learn to drive is by far the most important freedom overall to 16 and 17 year olds. Teens in London, who tend to have less need to get behind the wheel because of the transport options, are much less likely to rank it as number one, while those in the East of England are the most keen to drive. The second most important freedom is being able to open a bank account, closely followed by being able to vote in elections.

**Top 3 Teens’ most important freedoms are:**

1. Being able to learn to drive
2. Having their own bank account
3. Being able to vote in elections

**30%** of teens say their favorite thing to do on the weekend is watching YouTube, followed closely by meeting up with their friends (28%).

**20%** of females ranked voting in elections as their most important freedom (compared with 15% of males).

**KEY FACTS:**

**Top 3**

1. Being able to learn to drive
2. Having their own bank account
3. Being able to vote in elections

**Drinking alcohol and smoking cigarettes trail way behind, reflecting an increasingly health-conscious generation.**

When they consider what holds them back, teens are most likely to say their family’s financial situation, their academic performance, or where they live. The idea that location impacts freedom is particularly true for those in the North East and least true in the South East, pointing to differences in perceived opportunities to work and succeed in life.

Over half of teens admit to drinking alcohol without their parents or guardians. Almost two in five teens admit to watching pornography. The number of males admitting they have done this is almost double the number of females. Only 3% would tell their friends about watching porn while only 3% would tell their parents.

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DO YOU THINK THE AMOUNT OF FREEDOM YOU ARE GIVEN BY YOUR PARENTS OR GUARDIANS IS ENOUGH COMPARED WITH THE AMOUNT YOU THINK YOU DESERVE?*

**What are the factors that restrict your freedom the most?**

- **Financial Situation**
  - Males: 31%
  - Females: 40%

- **Academic Performance**
  - Males: 30%
  - Females: 36%

- **Where I Live**
  - Males: 25%
  - Females: 30%

- **Gender**
  - Males: 8%
  - Females: 31%

**Do you agree that parents or guardians are right to restrict your freedom?**

- Yes: 61%
- No: 39%

**Do you agree that your parents or guardians limit your freedom to protect you?**

- Yes: 57%
- No: 43%

Two thirds (67%) say that they have had to earn their parents’ trust to get freedom. This is most so for Asian or Asian British teens (75%).

**Describe your perfect day in one sentence:**

- "Going shopping in London and to a nice restaurant then going to see one of my favourite bands in the evening."
- "Trying every extreme sport ever invented."
- "Going to the beach and relax in the sun with friends or family."
- "Playing with dogs all day."
- "A plane trip to a foreign country."
- "A trip in the European countryside, probably in a Lamborghini, to see the sites."
- "Watching YouTube videos.
- "Meeting up with my boyfriend or girlfriend."
- "Meeting up with friends."
- "Watching TV."
- "Going to parties."
- "Playing sports."
- "Reading."
- "Doing part-time paid work."
- "Going shopping."
- "Playing a game console online."

**What are your favourite things to do on the weekend?**

- Watching YouTube videos: 31%
- Meeting up with friends: 27%
- Meeting up with my boyfriend or girlfriend: 17%
- Playing a game console online: 25%
- Watching TV: 22%
- Going to parties: 16%
- Doing part-time paid work: 12%
- Going shopping: 6%
- Reading: 5%
- Playing sports: 27%

**Key**

- **Male**
- **Female**

**Far too much freedom**

- Males: 2%
- Females: 4%

**A lot of freedom**

- Males: 23%
- Females: 26%

**A little freedom**

- Males: 12%
- Females: 17%

**About the right amount of freedom**

- Males: 43%
- Females: 31%

**Slightly too little freedom**

- Males: 14%
- Females: 5%

**Far too little freedom**

- Males: 5%
- Females: 14%

**Too much freedom**

- Males: 9%
- Females: 11%

**Not enough freedom**

- Males: 18%
- Females: 18%

*Teens were given a list of options from which they picked their top three.*
Hannah has been interviewed on local radio about how much freedom young people should have regarding their phone usage. “If parents are concerned about what young people are looking at, they need an open conversation about it,” she says. “Don’t just check their phone without consent. That’s a violation of trust.”

Voting is another key freedom for Hannah. “It’s really important that everyone with the ability to vote expresses their opinion – and there are some very politically passionate teenagers,” she says. “Don’t just check their phone without consent. That’s a violation of trust.”

“For me, freedom is about having the time, space and resources to do what you want,” says Hannah. “To be able to pursue your hobbies or interests and follow a career path. Compared to my parents’ generation, young people today have far more opportunities.”

“Being in an environment where you feel able to express yourself without restraint is important. If you have social fears, that can restrict you, but overcoming that makes you feel unstoppable. Also, just being away from home can provide freedom, and my parents gave me quite a lot of freedom with that,” she continues.

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“I suppose the main limitations on freedom are time and money. There is a lot of pressure for young people to study or obtain certain grades, which can hold them back from doing other things they might want to do.”

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Influencers and Media

The People I Admire

“Social media can be a mechanism for FOMO, insecurity and bullying but it also has the capacity to connect, reassure, create communities and learn. Some influencers are incredibly positive, showcasing real authentic lives, talking about struggles that provide their audiences with insight and belief they can get through it too.”

Poppy Jamie
Broadcaster and entrepreneur

Teens often turn to social media to keep up with the latest trends and celebrities they admire. And for this generation, ‘celebrities’ means social media stars – the influence of vloggers is as pervasive as actors, musicians or models. However, teens aren’t following these social celebrities because they think they’re similar to themselves. Instead, it’s because they inspire this generation to be successful, have more confidence and to care about certain social issues.

Key Fact:

4 in 5 Teens use social media to keep up with the latest trends. It is also the most preferred way for teens to access news and current affairs content.

Can you name a famous person who inspires you?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inspired by a famous person</th>
<th>Not inspired by a famous person</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>Adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teens</td>
<td>Teens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adults are Most Inspired by: David Attenborough

Teens are Most Inspired by: Emma Watson

Who else are teens inspired by?

- David Attenborough
- Emma Watson
- Beyoncé
- Justin Bieber
- Selena Gomez
- Kylie Jenner
- Michelle Obama
- Anthony Joshua
- David Beckham
- Justin Bieber
- Beyoncé
- Selena Gomez
- Kylie Jenner
- Michelle Obama
YOU SAID YOU WERE INSPIRED BY A FAMOUS PERSON. WHY DO THEY INSPIRE YOU?

WHERE DO YOU GO TO FIND OUT ABOUT NEWS AND CURRENT AFFAIRS?

HOW OFTEN DO YOU READ OR WATCH CURRENT AFFAIRS OR NEWS CONTENT?

“I feel a lot of responsibility towards my audience, as they’re predominantly young people and teenagers who are quite impressionable. It’s kinda scary to think what I say or do can have an influence on other people, so you have to watch what you say. Unfortunately, people leaving hate comments on videos is inevitable,” admits Jade. “At first, they really got to me, particularly if they related to something personal I was already insecure about. But you can’t let negative comments define how you feel. Nowadays I concentrate on the positive feedback. I love it when people say they’ve been inspired by my outlook on life. It’s amazing to know you’ve made an impact.”

“Anyone with a social media following has an influence,” says Jade, whose YouTube channel, UnJaded Jade, has almost 100,000 followers. “But I’m also just a normal person.”

“Website an influential form of news/social issues. Can you tell us more about that?”

“LIKE I SAY, SHE’S A BIG FEMINIST. SHE FREQUENTLY SPEAKS OUT ON SEXISM AND OTHER MISOGYNISTIC ISSUES, SUCH AS RACISM AND HOMOPHOBIA, AND WHAT SHE SAYS REALLY INSPIRES ME.”

“I would have to say she’s a big advocate of clean and renewable energy. It made me think about how I could try and make an impact in the future.”

“HE IS A MASSIVE ADVOCATE OF CLEAN AND RENEWABLE ENERGY. IT MADE ME THINK ABOUT HOW I COULD TRY AND MAKE AN IMPACT IN THE FUTURE.”

“Seems like you’re a big feminist. She frequently speaks out on sexism and other misogynistic issues, such as racism and homophobia, and what she says really inspires me.”

“Teen inspired by Emma Watson.”

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“Teen inspired by Emma Watson.”

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White teens are significantly more likely than Black, Asian and minority ethnic teens to say they find out about news and current affairs on Facebook.

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“White teens are significantly more likely than Black, Asian and minority ethnic teens to say they find out about news and current affairs on Facebook.”

Where do you go to find out about news and current affairs?

Where do you go to find out about news and current affairs?

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Where do you go to find out about news and current affairs?

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Where do you go to find out about news and current affairs?

Where do you go to find out about news and current affairs?
REBELLION

MY OWN RULES

When it comes to teenage rebellion, some things haven’t changed. Teens still get grounded for things such as ‘backchat’, not telling their parents where they’ve been and coming home late. But there are new additions to the list of ‘groundable offences’, such as going over budget on their mobile phones.

On some of the changes they’re navigating at this turbulent life stage, most 16 to 17 year olds believe it’s acceptable to be sexually active, and to drink alcohol when underage. In comparison, smoking gets a thumbs down, with less than one in three thinking it’s okay, and black teens being the least in favour.

KEY FACTS:

3/4 of teens believe that drinking alcohol underage is acceptable.

1/2 of teens have been grounded as a result of doing something that was forbidden.

Across the board, there’s some acceptance towards people their own age taking and sending provocative selfies. But very few condone online bullying, including trolling; those who do are more likely to be boys.

Welcome to our world

LIFE AS A TEEN IN 2017

**DO YOU THINK IT’S ACCEPTABLE* IF SOMEONE YOUR AGE DID THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Going to house parties</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual activity</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drinking alcohol</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexually active</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drinking alcohol</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not doing homework</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sneaking out of the house</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys are more likely than girls to say all forms of bullying (online, at school or college, trolling online) are acceptable.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LGBT teens are more likely than non-LGBT teens to say online trolling is unacceptable (89% versus 78%).

"Total of ‘Completely acceptable’ and ‘Somewhat acceptable’"
Arguing with my parents
Fighting with my sibling
Not telling my parents where I was
Having my boyfriend over without permission

Now 18, he hasn’t had the easiest of rides, becoming homeless in 2015. “I had an argument with my dad, and he kicked me out,” he explains. “For six months on and off I’d just wander the streets at night. I’ve had about 30 social workers, and a lot of them saw me simply as another number in the system. I remember one agency that instantly tried to say I had mental health issues, when really I just needed support. “Everyone has their moments,” adds Kai. “And if they want to rant, they need someone to listen. The main thing is to keep trying to help someone. If something isn’t working, look at why it’s not working, and try a different approach. Don’t just give up on them.”

There’s still peer pressure for young people to get drunk or do drugs,” says Kai. “But equally there are a lot of negative stereotypes about young people, like they’re all causing problems on the street – and that’s not true. Kai has first-hand experience of being labelled as a troublesome teen. “I had a few anger issues at school,” he admits. “No one was really listening to me, so I backed into a corner, and began to push people away.”

He feels many adults don’t understand how to deal with young people they see as rebellious. “A lot of authority figures or parents will tell young people that they’re doing something wrong rather than asking them why they did it,” he says.

Male
data not available
Female

Thinking about the last time you were grounded, what were you grounded for?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not telling my parents where I was</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Backchatting my mother over a game of Monopoly</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not walking the dog and lying and saying I had</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drinking and throwing up in a friend’s car</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spending too much money on my phone instead of revising for exams</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arguing with my parents</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trouble with the police</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fighting with my sibling</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

KEY FACTS:
30% of white teens believe that smoking is acceptable, compared with 15% of black teens.
25% of teens believe that sending nude or provocative selfies to others is acceptable.
When I was 16, I used to visit an old lady called Mrs. Plum once a week. When I came to leave the area, I visited her to say that I hoped I’d been some help over the last two years. Before I could, she said she hoped she’d been some help to me.

“Today, my early engagement in my community taught me the true meaning of citizenship. By giving back to others, we ourselves get so much back. Our society and our country are stronger when we recognize that we are part of a shared endeavor. The more diverse we become as a country, the more these shared bonds matter.

“That is why I have devoted my life as a public servant to the cause of community and citizenship. I have particularly focused on helping our young people to be included as active citizens. As Education Secretary, I championed Millennium Volunteers to support volunteering among young people. And I established Citizenship education in schools because I believe this to be an essential component of a rounded education. I now serve as a Board member of NCS, because I view this as an essential opportunity to engage all our teenagers with their power to make a difference as citizens.

“This effort spans across political parties, because it is so important to our future. And it is bearing fruit. Despite the unfair stereotypes about young people that they are lazy and uncaring, the research shows that the truth is quite different. Our teenagers are passionate about social issues and want to build a better future. They are now volunteering more than any other age group, including the recently retired.

“I am more convinced than ever that it will be determined and empowered young citizens who will build the better country which we all want to live and work in.”

The Rt Hon. Lord David Blunkett
Non-executive director, NCS Trust

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT ARE THE CAUSES THAT TEENS ARE MOST PASSIONATE ABOUT?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MENTAL HEALTH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HUMAN RIGHTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT ARE THE MAIN REASONS YOU VOLUNTEER OR FUNDRAISE?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IT MAKES ME FEEL GOOD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT IMPROVES MY CV OR JOB OPPORTUNITIES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I CARE ABOUT THE CAUSE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

70% OF TEENS HAVE VOLUNTEERED OR FUNDRAISED

Girls are more likely to have volunteered or fundraised for charity or a local cause than boys.

Teens are more likely than adults to have volunteered for a charity or local cause (54% versus 34% of adults).
How involved are you in your community?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Slightly agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>43%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Total of ‘Strongly agree’ and ‘Slightly agree’

How engaged are you with politics?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Slightly agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>40%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Total of ‘Strongly agree’ and ‘Slightly agree’

Have you ever done any of the following?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wished you could vote</th>
<th>Belonged to a political party</th>
<th>Been on a march, demonstration or street protest</th>
<th>Signed an online petition</th>
<th>Fundraising or volunteering for charity or local causes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>61%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

HOW MUCH DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS ABOUT FUNDRAISING OR VOLUNTEERING FOR CHARITY OR LOCAL CAUSES?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Slightly agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>27%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key

- Strongly agree
- Slightly agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Slightly disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don’t know

Black, Asian and minority ethnic teens are more likely to have done any of these things than white teens, apart from being part of a political party.

Those in London are the most likely to have been on a march, demonstration or street protest.

LGBT teens are significantly more likely than non-LGBT teens to believe the voting age should be lowered to 16 (70% versus 58%).

The ability to vote in an election should be decided by how much you know about politics, not how old you are.

Most people my age don’t know enough about politics to vote in elections.

People in my local area pull together to improve the neighborhood.

I believe I can influence decisions affecting my local area.

I want to make a difference to the lives of people in my local area.

I would like to be more involved in the decisions that affect my local area.

Doing activities to help other people is important to me.

I would like to volunteer in the future.

I want to help out in my local community but don’t know how to get involved.

I don’t know where to go to find out about volunteering or fundraising.

Doing activities to help the environment is important to me.

I would like more information about how to get involved with volunteering or fundraising.

I would like to volunteer in the future.

I want to help out in my local community but don’t know how to get involved.

I don’t know where to go to find out about volunteering or fundraising.

Wished you could vote

Belonged to a political party

Political Protest

Signed an online petition

Fundraising or volunteering for charity or local causes

Net who agree:

I don’t know where to go to find out about volunteering or fundraising

I want to help out in my local community but don’t know how to get involved

I don’t know where to go to find out about volunteering or fundraising

Doing activities to help the environment is important to me

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I want to help out in my local community but don’t know how to get involved

Doing activities to help other people is important to me

I would like to volunteer in the future

How involved are you in your community?*

How engaged are you with politics?*

TO THE NEXT QUESTION: LGB and non-LGB teens do not disagree on how much they know about politics. UNESCO

UNICEF

Key

- Strongly agree
- Slightly agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Slightly disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don’t know
People were shocked and shaken by what we told them,” continues Raj. “Some shared their own stories. To get publicity, we also went to the local press and appeared on London Live. Overall, it was really successful.”

Raj thinks more young people could get involved in social action: “Many of my friends aren’t doing much to make an impact in the community. Volunteering in a charity shop is fine, but we need more people out on the front line. “Adults often say ‘You’re just a kid – what do you know?’,” he adds. “They think we’re too young to make a difference. But there are lots of issues in our area – drugs for instance – that older people won’t have experienced or don’t even know about. So they should take us seriously.”

“To me, being a good citizen means being a good person,” says Raj. “If you can help people, you do it, it’s about being considerate.”

Raj lives in an area of London with high levels of knife crime – which he chose to tackle through an awareness campaign. “Someone from a local school was stabbed and killed,” he explains. “So a group of us decided to do something – about an issue that affected us, where we could make a change.

“We created a logo and a slogan (‘Drop A Knife To Save A Life’), got support from local businesses to keep costs down, met with local councillors, and spoke to the public, telling them about crime statistics and how they could help.

“If you could solve one social issue*, which would it be?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key facts:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17% of teens are part of a volunteer group.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**LGBT teens** are significantly more likely to want to solve the social issue of LGBT rights. They are 23 times more likely to want to solve this issue (23% of LGBT teens compared with 1% of non-LGBT teens).

* Teens were given a list of the top ten social issues. Results exclude teens who could not pick just one.

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From Lancashire to London, and Cornwall to Cumbria, hundreds of thousands of teenagers have had a life-changing experience on NCS. This is their journey.

**ADVENTURE**
The adventure begins. 16 and 17 year olds from all backgrounds meet on day one of NCS. Together, they embrace the great outdoors: canoeing, rock climbing, hiking and abseiling, channeling their independent spirit and making friends for life.

**DISCOVERY**
Living away from home, NCSers learn to work as part of a team and develop skills for work and life such as cooking, budgeting, project planning and public speaking. Countless teens have seen their confidence, communication and creativity soar.

**SOCIAL ACTION**
Lights... camera... social action! NCSers use the tools, opportunities and respect they’ve gained on the programme to change the world around them. Every group makes their mark on their community with a social action project they plan and deliver.

**CELEBRATION**
The NCS celebration event is a chance to recognise everyone’s achievements, and a night NCSers will never forget! But the journey doesn’t end there: NCS graduates have access to a world of opportunities, allowing them to stay connected with each other, continue to make their mark on their community and make the right start in life. You never really finish NCS – you just become a member of the NCS family!

To find out more, visit ncsyes.co.uk
W hoever you are, forget the teenage stress. Focus on your present. Go get a burger.

S aramarie, NCS graduate