We are the Youth of Today

Life in London for Generation Z

Young Londoners recording community stories in the "West London Living Room" installation as part of Curating London's Collecting Ends project. Photographer: Rajaa Bouchab

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About this report

This report presents the findings from a major piece of research carried out with over 3,000 young Londoners in the summer of 2020 to find out how they feel about their lives and their city. The research was commissioned by the Museum of London and carried out by Partnership for Young London.

The Museum of London and the Museum of London 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 2024, a new Museum of London will open in the city's historic centre, West Smithfield. 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.

We are the Youth of Today: Life in London for Generation Z

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Introduction

Museum of London Introduction

At the Museum of London and the Museum of London Docklands, we connect people with the lived experience of London. The story we tell is one of place and people, evolving through interaction and exchange. As London's shared place we want to engage everyone with our unrivalled London Collection reaching as many people as possible, especially children and young people. We summarise what we do in three words: We Are London. It is at once our aspiration and our mandate.

Young people are central to our vision for a new Museum of London, due to open in West Smithfield in 2024. We want young Londoners to play an active part in the creation of the museum and to see their experiences reflected in its displays and ongoing programming. It will be a new kind of museum in which young people – traditionally infrequent visitors to museums – feel comfortable, valued and inspired. This research is a vital step in us achieving this ambition.

Young people under the age of 25 represent nearly a third of the capital's population. Their needs, access to opportunities, and lived experiences vary greatly according to indicators such as wealth, race, class, and geography to name just a few. And as I write this in the summer of 2020, there are many fears about how the coronavirus pandemic will impact young people's education, employment and long-term life chances. This report provides invaluable insights into the views and feelings of young Londoners at a critical point in their lives.

We commissioned the research as part of our ground-breaking Curating London programme. Funded by Arts Council England, it aims to challenge the way we collect the everyday experience, the stuff of London. By working directly with communities across London, Londoners themselves are helping to build the museum's collection and diversify our wider curatorial practices, so enriching our understanding of London and the people who shape it, including, importantly, young people. This is more important than ever as we look towards a new Museum of London in the coming years.

But the significance of this report for the museum goes beyond how we collect, research and interpret our collection. It puts young people at the forefront of our minds as we transform ourselves into a new Museum of London, and so will inform many aspects of our work, and our future relationship with the city.

Sharon Ament
Director

Partnership for Young London
Introduction

2020 has been an extraordinary year for young Londoners, with Covid-19 causing disruption in every aspect of their lives and threatening their educational prospects, employment opportunities, and their physical and mental health. As recovery is planned, we must look at how the capital will be reshaped in the coming years for young Londoners. Generation Z are already feeling the impact of this time; we know that things will continue to be challenging and their voices must be fully integrated into regional and local planning.

This research spoke to 3038 young Londoners, between the ages of 16 and 24. It is one of the largest recent studies of Generation Z in London, and aims to reveal how they feel about the issues that impact their lives, Covid-19, their city and the changes to it. We found young Londoners lack confidence that those in power understand the issues they face, that only one in five (18%) were optimistic that the issues they face would be addressed, and over twice as many said that London was becoming a worse city for young people than said it was becoming better.

This generation of Londoners overwhelmingly identify as Londoners, and the city is more important to them than their nationality. Unsurprisingly, we found inequality between different groups, and how diverse groups of young people experience their city, from the issues they face, and how they interact with space. Young Londoners are divided in how they see the development of their city, with many feeling pushed out of the local areas they grew up in, and many not feeling like they can live in London in the future with the cost of living and housing. In this research, we hear what their priorities are, and it is for us to work together with them to plan the future of London. They are the future of London.

Matthew Walsham
Policy and Campaigns Lead

Key Findings

Part 1: Issues for young Londoners

1. Education was the most important issue for young Londoners overall, and education and employment had the biggest impact on mental health. However, this changed for different groups.

2. Young people are not optimistic that the issues they face will be dealt with, and that those in power understand the issues they deal with. With Black and Asian young people were the most likely to rank having their voice heard as important to them.

Part 2: Identity and space

3. Young people living in London overwhelmingly identify as Londoners, and regional identity is more important to them than local, or national identities.

4. Young people who feel a sense of ownership over their area are more likely to find their local area important to their identity and oppose gentrification.

Part 3: Cultural spaces

5. Over 30% of young Londoners say they rarely or never visit arts and cultural spaces, this also differs on ethnicity and gender.

6. Use of arts and cultural spaces differs based on geographical location, such as whether a young person lives in Inner or Outer-London, or boroughs with higher rates of poverty.

Part 4: Using London's spaces

7. Parks and green spaces are the spaces most likely to be used by young Londoners, and the least used space was youth clubs.

8. There is a huge split between young people on how often they use arts and cultural spaces (galleries, museums, heritage sites, and theatres), with Black and Asian young people, and those living in Outer-London boroughs, far less likely to.

Part 5: Changing London

9. Young people have, on balance, a positive to mixed view on redevelopments in their local area. However, most did not feel a sense of ownership of their local area.

10. Whether a young person is from Inner or Outer-London, and how important London is to their own identity has an impact on their outlook for the city and views on changes to their area.

The Next Generation of Londoners

This report explores some of the key issues impacting the lived experience of young people in the capital today. As one of the largest surveys of Generation Z Londoners to date, this survey undoubtedly holds invaluable information on how young people interact with our city, what they feel about their prospects, and how they relate to space. It offers insights for the arts and cultural sector, heritage organisations, youth services, policymakers and government, and all organisations working with young people in London.

The Museum of London and Partnership for Young London are committed to the wider impact of our work by and for young people and acknowledge the limits to our own interpretation of the responses. That's why we're not only sharing our findings, but also our data for others to use. We are making the full dataset open source and freely available for anyone who wishes to delve into the results of this survey and find out more. We encourage this to be used both as a research and teaching tool to inform work with and for the next generation of Londoners.

The fully anonymized dataset can be downloaded here: http://bit.ly/MOL-Youth-of-Today

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Share your findings with us @PYL_London, @CuratingLondon, @MuseumofLondon

Young Londoners participate in a community show-and-tell event for Curating London's Weaving London's Stories project. © Museum of London

Methodology

This study is the beginning of a conversation about the relationship between young Londoners and their city. We looked at two key questions:

- What are the issues that young Londoners care about?
- What is the relationship between young people and their city?

Involving young people

After a literature review was conducted, a survey was designed with a group of young Londoners. We are greatly thankful for their participation, despite the difficult Covid-19 lockdown period in which this took place. Their participation was vital in making sure that questions were relevant and appropriately phrased, with many of their suggested questions added to the final survey.

Partnership for Young London's Mayoral Hustings youth board were involved in the questionnaire design. Acting as a focus group of 18 members, they are ages 13-24, from across London with different life experiences. In the initial drafting of the survey, the group were shown a set of proposed questions from the survey and asked for feedback. They made suggestions for changes to the survey and offered alternatives for what they felt was jargon.

In the second part of the survey, they felt the wording of questions around gentrification should be verbatim from themselves and other young people, as they said, "understanding gentrification is a lot of things, and has a lot of definitions". This then led to a conversation about gentrification, and their experiences of London. When asked "How do you feel about gentrification?" they mentioned definitions of redevelopment, culture shifts, tension shifts and cost of living.

Data Analysis

3,038 young Londoners aged 16-24 responded to our survey.

We collected the following information from young people: gender, age, ethnicity, religious beliefs, disability, social class, postcode, and time at postcode. This was used to look at the difference in responses in different groups and areas. We only included relationships between variables that were found to be statistically significant (p-value of 0.05 or less), to avoid assumptions where the variation or sample size was not large enough.

- **Age -** The average age of participants was 18.7. The Museum of London defines young people as aged 16 to 24. This research aimed to engage with young Londoners as they emerge from formal education and have more agency to discover how they relate as individuals and communities to the city.
- **Gender -** More of those who responded to our survey were young women (71.1%) than young men (27.7%). Less than 1% of young people preferred not to say or listed their gender as other. However, responses by both genders were largely similar across the survey, and we have included any clear differences.
- **Social class -** 41.8% of young people considered themselves to be working class, while 37.4% describe themselves as middle class. Around 17.1% of young people said that they did not know what social class they were, while 2.7% said none, and 1% said other (many put upper class). Of those who considered themselves working class, the majority were Black and Asian young people (64.5%), while of those who considered themselves middle class, the majority were White young people (62.7%).
- **Religion -** We had an higher proportion of young people who followed a religion, with around half (51.8%) following a religion and less than half (42.7%) not. Of those who did, the significant majority followed Christianity (60%), followed by Islam (27.4%), Judaism, and Hinduism (4% and 3.7% respectively).
- **Disability -** Less than one in ten young people considered themselves to have a disability (8.2%), the vast majority stating that they did not (89.2%). However, a small minority (2.6%) preferred not to say.

Ethnicity

It was important for the survey to get a sample that was representative of the ethnic diversity of London's young people. We asked for ethnicity based on the UK Government's own classifications for ethnic groups. There were 14 different options.
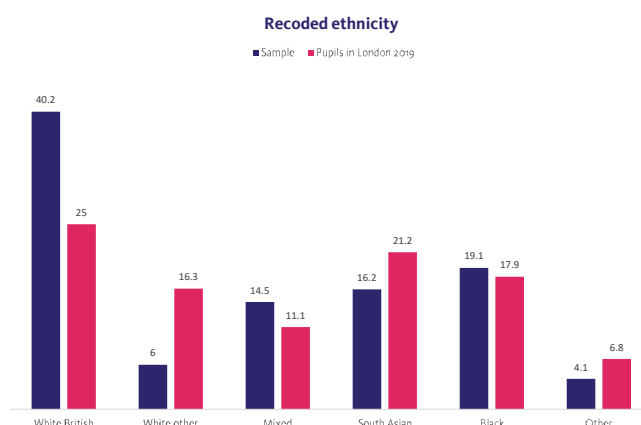
Recoding ethnicity

This was somewhat unwieldy for analysis and the categories were recoded and simplified. This was done for practical purposes to reduce the number of categories and make interpretation easier. Smaller categories like Chinese, Hispanic, and Arabic were combined into Other.

If we look at the demographic breakdown of our sample, and compare it to recent 2019 data around pupil ethnicities in London, we had a good range of diversity in our sample:

- White British (40.2% vs 25%)
- White other (6% vs 16.3%)
- Mixed (14.5% vs 11.1%)
- South Asian (16.2% vs 21.2%)
- Black (19.1% vs (17.9%)
- Other (4.1% vs 6.8%)

Ethnicity	Count	Percentage
White British	453	20.4%
Any other White background	268	16.3%
Mixed - White and Asian	69	3.1%
Mixed - White and Black African	37	1.7%
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	98	4.4%
Any other Mixed background	91	4.1%
Black or Black British - Black African	349	15.7%
Black or Black British - Black Caribbean	163	7.3%
Any other Black background	39	1.8%
Arab	41	1.8%
Asian or Asian British - Indian	95	4.2%
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	203	9.1%
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	73	3.3%
Any other Asian background	127	5.7%
Latino	24	1.1%
Chinese	16	0.7%
Other	7	0.3%

Recoded ethnicity

We had two slight differences; firstly, we had less White other, but more White British young people. Secondly, we had more "Other", but this is largely the result of including Chinese (1.1%) and Hispanic (1.2%) in this.

We also categorised the ethnicity data to look at Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) young people as a group. The term BAME, and other terms like Black Ethnic Minority (BEM), are contested ones. The term BAME was not used in the survey as it is a problematic catchall when discussing the nuances of young people's identities. However, we have used it in the analysis of this report as a way of understanding trends between demographic groups.

We found:
- Less than half of the sample were White British or White other young people (46.2%)
- More than half the sample were BAME young people (53.8%)

Borough based data

In the survey, we also asked young people to tell us the postcode that they lived in, so we could know which local authority they were living in.

- We had the most respondents from the following five local authorities; Merton (6.99%), Southwark (6.09%), Wandsworth (5.20%), Haringey (5.09%), Lewisham (4.78%).
- We had the least respondents from the following five local authorities: The City of London (0.2%), Newham (0.3%), Havering (1%), Barking and Dagenham (1.4%), Richmond (1.5%).

Poverty rate by borough

We also looked at the data based on Trust for London poverty rates, grouping boroughs into four quartiles.

- Highest 25% Poverty Rate; Tower Hamlets, Newham, Islington, Hackney, Haringey, Brent, Camden, Southwark.
- 2nd Quartile (2nd Highest Poverty rate); Hammersmith and Fulham, Westminster, Lambeth, Ealing, Waltham Forest, Barking and Dagenham, Kennington and Chelsea, Enfield.
- 3rd Quartile (3rd Highest Poverty Rate); Lewisham, Greenwich, Hounslow, Harrow, Barnet, Wandsworth, Hillingdon, Croydon.
- Bottom 25% Quartile; Kingston, Havering, Merton, Sutton, City of London, Bexley, Richmond, Bexley.

Inner-London and Outer-London

We also grouped young people by whether the borough in which they lived was an Inner-London borough or an Outer-London borough.

- Inner-London boroughs; Camden, Greenwich, Hackney, Hammersmith and Fulham, Islington, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, Lambeth, Lewisham, Southwark, Tower Hamlets, Wandsworth, Westminster, The City of London.
- Outer-London boroughs; Barking and Dagenham, Barnet, Bexley, Brent, Bromley, Croydon, Ealing, Enfield, Haringey, Harrow, Havering, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Kingston upon Thames, Merton, Newham, Redbridge, Richmond Upon Thames, Sutton, Waltham Forest.

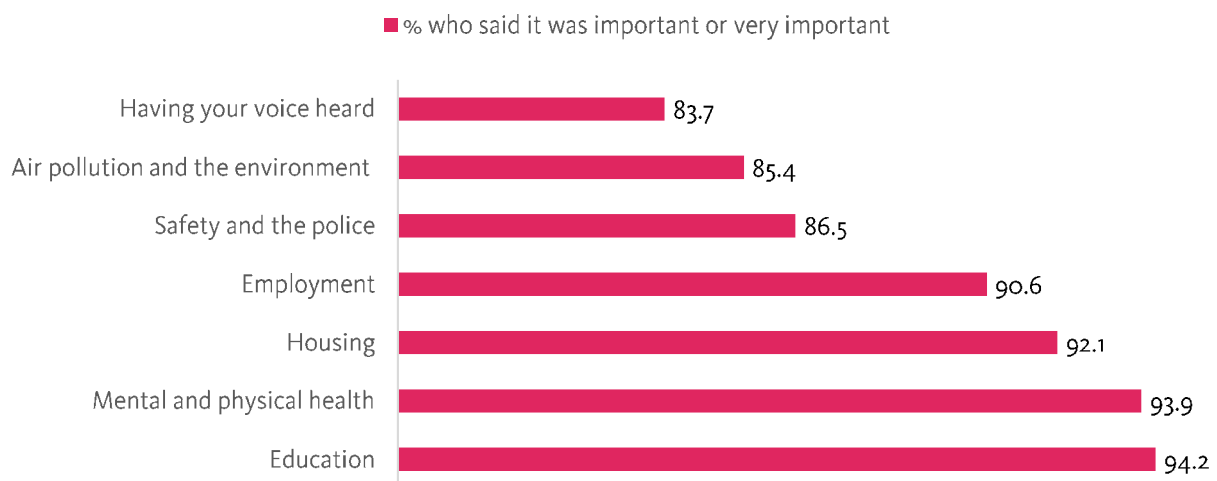| Ethnicity	Percentage
Barking and Dagenham	1.41%
Barnet	4.03%
Bexley	1.61%
Brent	3.92%
Bromley	2.30%
Camden	4.47%
Croydon	2.96%
Ealing	3.78%
Enfield	3.27%
Greenwich	3.99%
Hackney	3.30%
Hammersmith and Fulham	2.92%
Haringey	5.09%
Harrow	1.89%
Havering	0.96%
Hillingdon	2.06%
Hounslow	1.96%
Islington	3.58%
Kensington and Chelsea	1.75%
Kingston	1.61%
Lambeth	3.99%
Lewisham	4.78%
Merton	6.99%
Newham	0.34%
Redbridge	1.72%
Richmond	1.51%
Southwark	6.09%
Sutton	1.61%
The City of London	0.17%
Tower Hamlets	3.89%
Waltham Forest	4.03%
Wandsworth	5.20%
Westminster	2.65%

Issues for young Londoners

- **Overall young Londoners rank the following as the most important issues -** Education (94.2%), mental and physical health (93.9%), housing (92.1%), employment (90.6%), safety and the police (86.5%), air pollution and the environment (84.4%), and having your voice heard (83.7%).

- **Issues differ between ethnic groups -** Ethnicity played a role in how young Londoners ranked certain issues, with BAME young people significantly more likely to see education and having their voice heard as more important, while White young people ranked air pollution and the environment higher.

- **Issues differ between social class -** Middle class young people only ranked two issues higher than their working class counterparts: education, and air pollution. The issue with the biggest gap in opinion between the two social classes was having your voice heard.

- **Issues differ between gender -** Gender also played a role, with young women more likely to rank mental health, safety, and having their voice heard as more important issues to them than young men.

- **Impact on mental health -** Education and employment are the two issues that young Londoners say have the biggest impact on their mental health overall, with Black young people and South Asian young people most likely to say education and White young people most likely to say employment.

- **Young Londoners are pessimistic that issues will be addressed -** Twice as many young people were pessimistic about the issues being addressed as were optimistic (44% to 18%), with a majority disagreeing that those in power know the issues young Londoners face (58.5%).

The Issues for Young Londoners

We asked young people if they thought young Londoners face a lot of the same issues, the majority said they did (69.5%), with only one in ten (10.3%) disagreeing. While young people living in Outer-London were more likely to say they did than those from Inner-London (89.1% to 84.5%), answers were broadly similar across all groups.

We asked young Londoners to rate a series of issues in importance, from not at all important to very important. When ranking issues by number of young people who rated it important or very important, we can see that mental and physical health is the most important, with having their voice heard being least important. For the analysis, we removed respondents who answered not sure, to focus on the difference between those who said that the issue was important or very important to them, and those who said the issue was not very important or not at all important to them.

■ % who said it was important or very important

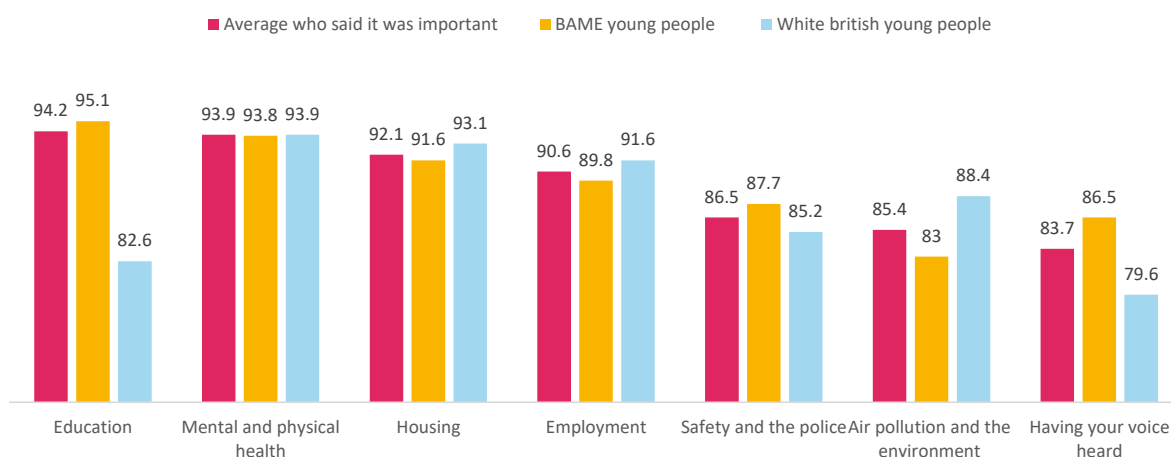| Issue	%
Having your voice heard	83.7
Air pollution and the environment	85.4
Safety and the police	86.5
Employment	90.6
Housing	92.1
Mental and physical health	93.9
Education	94.2

When we look at issues ranked by the higher proportion of young people who said the issue was either important or very important to them, the order is; **education (94.2%), mental and physical health (93.9%), housing (92.1%), employment (90.6%), safety and the police (86.5%), air pollution and the environment (84.4%), and having your voice heard (83.7%).**
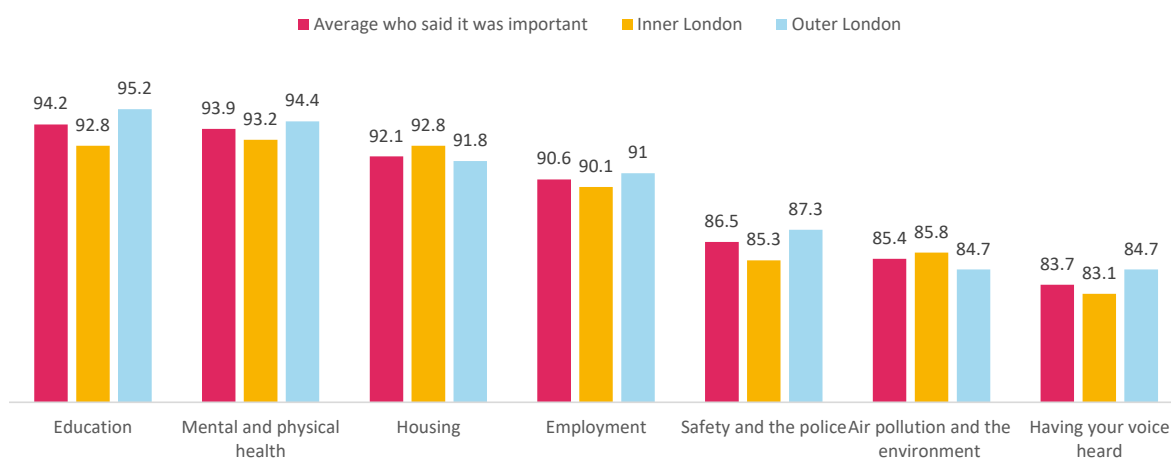
Issues differed by ethnicity

- White British young Londoners were far less likely than average to say that education was important or very important to them (82.6% to 94.2%), and slightly more likely to say that air pollution and the environment, employment, and housing were important to them.
- BAME young people were far more likely than average to say that having their voice heard was important or very important to them (86.5% to 83.7%), and slightly more likely to say that safety and the police, and education were important to them.

Legend: ■ Average who said it was important ■ BAME young people ■ White british young people

	Education	Mental and physical health	Housing	Employment	Safety and the police	Air pollution and the environment	Having your voice heard
Average who said it was important	94.2	93.9	92.1	90.6	86.5	85.4	83.7
BAME young people	95.1	93.8	91.6	89.8	87.7	83	86.5
White british young people	82.6	93.9	93.1	91.6	85.2	88.4	79.6

Issues differed by geography

- Young people in Outer-London were more likely to say that education (95.2% to 92.8%), mental and physical health (94.4% to 93.2%), employment (91% to 90.1%), safety and the police (87.3% to 85.3%), and having your voice heard (84.7% to 83.1%) were important.
- Young people in Inner-London were more likely to say that housing (92.8% to 91.8%), and air pollution and the environment (85.8% to 84.7%) were important. Overall, those in Outer-London were slightly more likely to say all issues on average were important or very important to them than Inner-London (89.9% vs 89%).

Legend: ■ Average who said it was important ■ Inner London ■ Outer London

	Education	Mental and physical health	Housing	Employment	Safety and the police	Air pollution and the environment	Having your voice heard
Average who said it was important	94.2	93.9	92.1	90.6	86.5	85.4	83.7
Inner London	92.8	93.2	92.8	90.1	85.3	85.8	83.1
Outer London	95.2	94.4	91.8	91	87.3	84.7	84.7

The issues in detail

Education was the most important issue for young people, with 94.2% saying it was important or very important to them.

- It is the second most likely issue to be ranked very important by young people (71%).
- Only one in a hundred young people (1.5%) said that education was not important to them, the lowest proportion of any issue.

Mental health and physical health were the second most important issue for young people, with 93.9% saying it was important or very important to them.

- It was also the issue most likely to be ranked very important (72%) amongst young people.
- One clear difference was that young women were more likely to say that mental and physical health were important or very important to them than young men (95.5% to 89.5%).

Housing was the third most important issue for young people, with 92.1% saying it was important or very important to them.
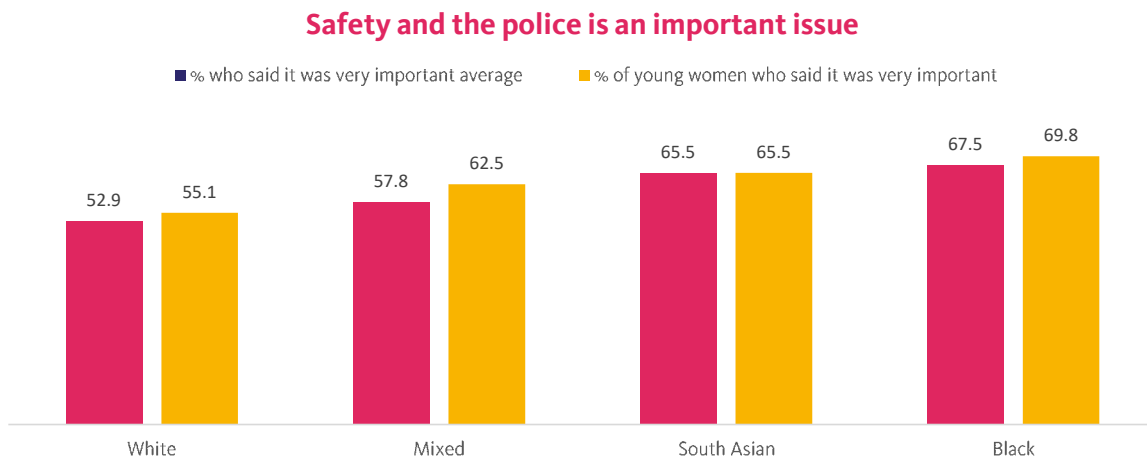
- Over-18s, with more experience of the housing market were more likely to rate housing as important or very important to them (95.7%) than under-18s (89.8%).
- Young people who identified as working class (93.5%) were more likely to rank housing as important or very important to them than those who identified as middle class (91.1%).

Employment was the fourth most important issue for young people, with 90.6% saying it was important or very important to them.

- Over-18s, with more experience of the jobs market were more likely to rate employment as important or very important to them (95.3%) than under-18s (87.4%).
- Working class young people were slightly more likely than middle class young people to rank employment as important or very important (92.1% to 91%). Those that did not identify with a social class were the least likely to say employment was important or very important to them (89.1%).

Safety and the police was the fifth most important issue for young people, with 85.5% saying it was important or was very important to them.

- Young women were more likely to say it was important or very important to them (96.8%), than young men (94.9%).
- BAME young people the most likely to rank it very important to them (67.5%), with White British young people least likely to (52%).

Safety and the police is an important issue

■ % who said it was very important average   ■ % of young women who said it was very important

	White	Mixed	South Asian	Black
% who said it was very important average	52.9	57.8	65.5	67.5
% of young women who said it was very important	55.1	62.5	65.5	69.8

Air pollution and the environment was the sixth most important issue for young people, with 85.4% saying it was important or very important to them.

There was no difference between different groups. It was clearly an issue that young people experienced more equally across demographics.

Having their voice heard was the least most important issue for young people, with 83.7% saying it was important or very important to them.

- Black young people were far more likely to say it was an important or very important issue to them than White young people (61% to 44.5%).
- Young women were more likely than young men to say it was important or very important to them (85.9% to 78.1%).
- Young people who identified as working class were more likely to say it was important or very important to them than those who identified as middle class (86.5% to 81.2%).
- Lastly, the higher the rate of poverty in the borough a respondent was from, the more important this issue was. Those in boroughs in the bottom quartile (highest percentage of poverty) were the most likely to say it was important or very important to them (97.4%).

A young Londoner being interviewed for Curating London's Brexit Talks project.
Photographer: Richard Stroud

What issues are you facing as a young Londoner?

Inequality between areas, even within my own borough (Newham) and equality within education. (Age 17)

Sometimes I am discriminated because of where I come from. (Age 19)

Being born in an area where I know I will never be able to afford because of other higher classes requiring second homes and investment properties to profit off the poor. (Age 22)

Mental health was mentioned but I don't think it can be expressed how bad it can get here compared to other places from what I've heard. (Age 17)

Young people being let down by the school system leading them to get more involved with the streets, I've seen it with my own eyes. Also, young people don't realise the opportunities they have here especially in London, and knife crime should be taught about more efficiently. (Age 16)

Inclusion for those with disabilities. (Age 19)

Trying to fix my credit so I can do something with my life...most young people have their credit scores ruined before the age of 25 as a result of dumb mistakes or fraudulent activity, they decide to have their credit scores ruined instead of a criminal record. (Age 20)
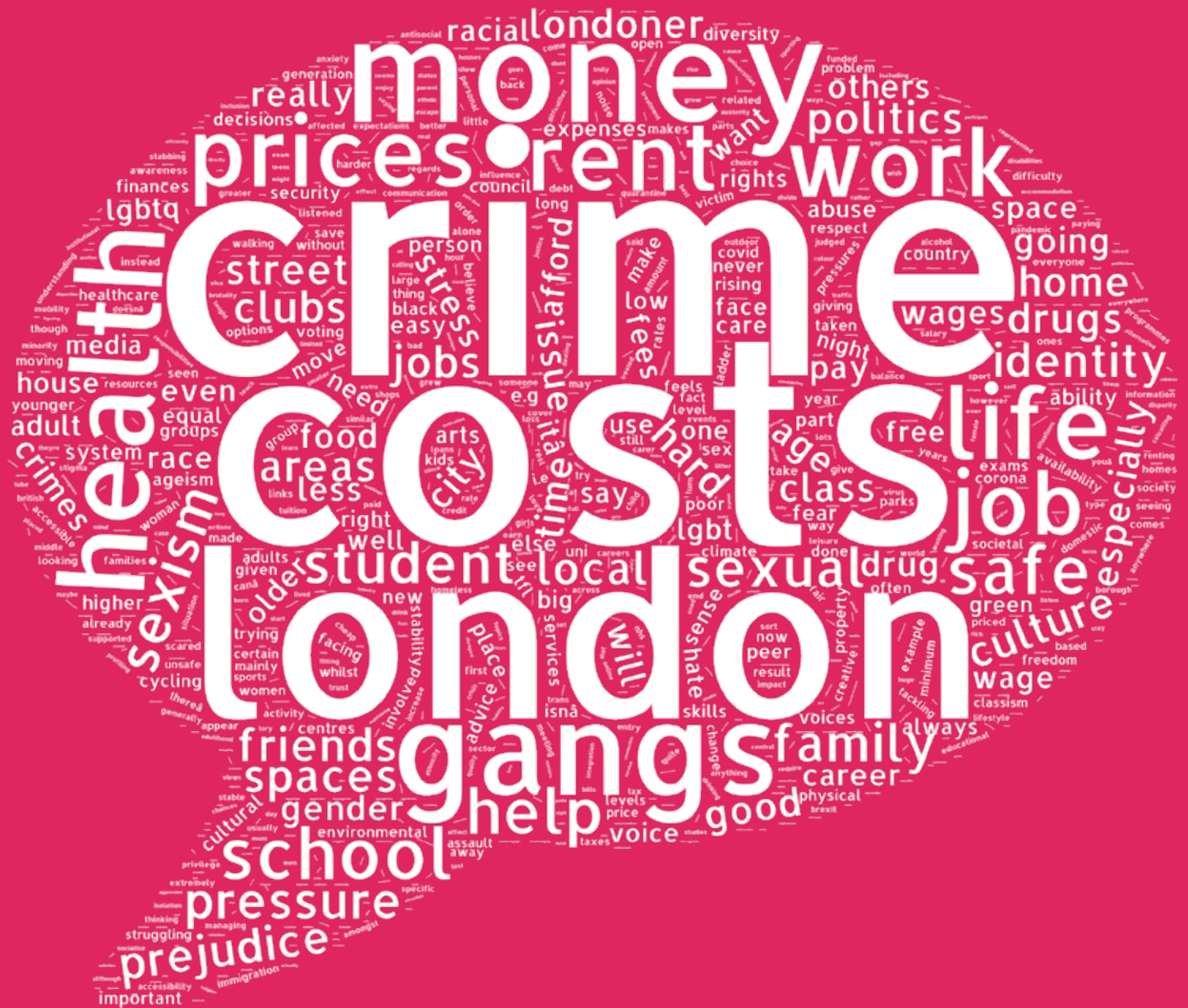
Not enough gatherings as a community, or as young people. There is an absence of the feeling of belonging. (Age 18)

Housing, but more specifically the fact that I probably won't be able to afford a property in the area I grew up in. It saddens me that even with bettering myself by going to university and having a decent job it just seems impossible. I am not from a well-off background and it feels very frustrating that young Londoners from poorer backgrounds are being priced out of the area they call home. (Age 21)

People not thinking about younger generations when voting in things like Brexit. (Age 18)

Not everyone having the same opportunities due to the place where we live or the type of school we attend. The people with more money or that are extremely smart are the ones likely to succeed. (Age 16)

The densely populated areas filled with men can be intimidating. I think as a young woman living in London can be difficult and leave you feeling vulnerable because of the sexual harassment which can easy follow. (Age 17)

The impact on outlook and mental health

Once we understood how important different issues were to young Londoners, we also wanted to know which issues have the most impact on their mental health. Employment was the issue that the most young people said had an impact on their mental health, despite only being fifth most important in the ranks generally.

- There were some key differences between different demographic groups too. The issue ranked as the most impactful changed depending on ethnicity. White British, White other, and Mixed-race young people focused primarily on employment (37.3%, 45.8%, and 33.2% respectively) while South Asian and Black young people choosing education as top (43.4%, and 41.8% respectively).
- Furthermore, White and Mixed-race young people were over twice as likely to say that air pollution and the environment is the issue that has the biggest impact on their mental health than other groups (3.8%). While Black young people were the least likely to say that safety was their main concern for their own mental health (4.9%).

Recoded ethnicity

■ White ■ Mixed ■ South Asian ■ Black

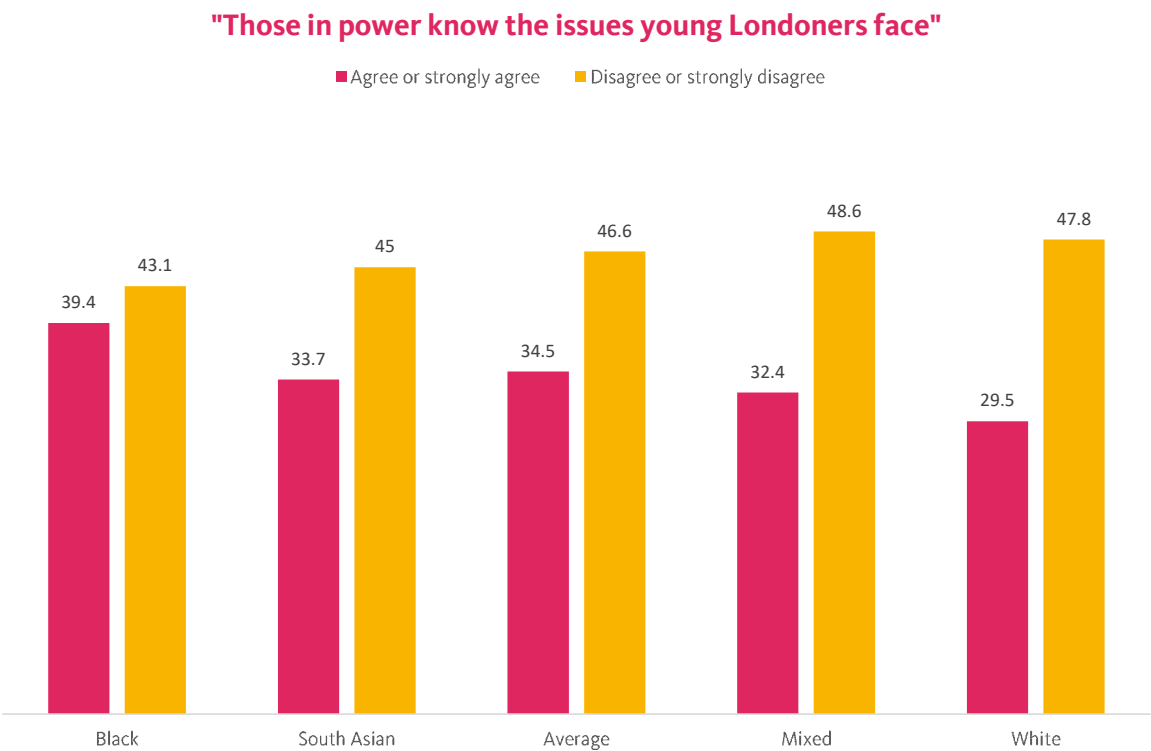|	Employment	Education	Housing	Safety	Physical health
White	38.4	28.8	9.3	7.4	6.9
Mixed	33.2	28.3	11.8	6.9	8.1
South Asian	30.2	43.4	5.4	7.4	7
Black	30.6	41.8	8.6	4.9	5.8

Young Londoners not only face a range of issues but lack optimism about them being solved in the future. Twice as many young people were pessimistic about the issues being addressed as were optimistic (44% to 18%), with around a third (36%) being unsure.

There was also a significant relationship between optimism and ranking issues. Young people who were optimistic were more likely to rate issues important or very important, and those pessimistic were more likely to rank issues as not important.

We also asked young people whether they agreed with the following statement: "Those in power know the issues young Londoners face". More young people disagreed (58.5%) than agreed with the statement (41.5%).

- We did not specify who it was "in power" though, so we do not know what level of government or figures of authority young people had in their mind when answering this question. It only speaks to a general perception about those who make decisions about their lives not being receptive to the issues of young people.
- Black young people, who also ranked having their voice heard as an important issue higher than average, also agreed more than other groups that "those in power know the issues young Londoners face", with White young people agreeing at the lower rates (39.4% to 29.5%).

"Those in power know the issues young Londoners face"

■ Agree or strongly agree   ■ Disagree or strongly disagree

	Black	South Asian	Average	Mixed	White
Agree or strongly agree	39.4	33.7	34.5	32.4	29.5
Disagree or strongly disagree	43.1	45	46.6	48.6	47.8

Identity and Place

- **Young Londoners feel like Londoners –** The vast majority of young Londoners surveyed said that they felt like Londoners (93.1%). A majority also said that London is more important to their identity than their local area (51.9%).

- **Local identity is important to identity –** The majority of young Londoners surveyed said that their local area and borough are important to their identity. However, they were split evenly about the importance of the street on which they lived to their identity (54.2% to 44.6%).

- **Local identity varies across London –** Young people living in Inner-London were more likely to feel that the area, or borough, they are from was important than those living in Outer-London. Londoners living in East London also were most likely to say that their local identity was important to them.

- **Londoners are proud of their city's diversity –** More than a third of all young people (38.2%) used the word "diversity" when asked what they most enjoy about living in London, referring to the city's different communities, and cultures.

Feeling like a Londoner

We wanted to understand how the identity of young Londoners relates to the space around them, from the country to the street where they live. London is a diverse space in terms of people, but also in terms of place, and the findings reflect that diversity.

Overall, young people agreed that they felt like Londoners (93.1%) with only one in twenty disagreeing (6.9%). This chimes with previous research about the strength of being a Londoner as an identity for young people, more than being British or English .

- Young people living in Outer-London boroughs were more likely to agree that they felt like Londoners than those from Inner-London boroughs (94.4% to 92.1%, "Not sure" removed).
- Young people who said they felt like Londoners were also more likely than those who did not feel like Londoners to say education (94.8% to 88%), and having their voice heard was important (85.2% to 76.2%).
- Young people who felt like Londoners were also more likely to want to live in London in the future (85.4% to 50.1%) and were twice as likely to have a sense of ownership of their local area (23.5% to 11.2%).

Interestingly, compared to London as an identity, far fewer young people felt that the country they were from was important to them (81.5%) than not important (18.5%).

- The largest gap was found with ethnicity; with Black young people far more likely to say the country they were from was important to their identity than White young people (76% to 58%).
- The second largest gap was age, with over 18s less likely to think it was important (58.7%) than those under 18 (85.7%).
- Lastly, there were smaller variations based on geography. Young people from Outer-London were more likely to think country was important to them than Inner-London (84.7% to 77.1%).
- Similarly, this might be the case with young people living in boroughs with the highest rates of poverty, who were more likely to say it was important (82.6%) than those living in boroughs with the lowest rates of poverty (76.3%).

Local identity

A majority thought the part of London they were from (North, East, West, South) was important to their identity (80.1%) with only one in five saying it was not important (19.9%).

- However, this changed depending on the area. Firstly, young people from East London were most likely to value the part of London they were from (84.3%), with those from West London being least likely (74%).
- Secondly, young people in Inner-London were more likely to find it important (82.6%) than those living in Outer-London (78.3%).
- Lastly, young people living in boroughs with the lowest rates of poverty were less likely to think it was important than those living in the boroughs with the highest rates of poverty (76.3% to 82.6%).

A large majority again felt that their local authority/borough was important to their identity (80.3%), with only one in five saying it was not important (19.7%).

- Young people living in East London, once again, had a stronger local identity, being the most likely to say that their borough was important to them (84.6%) with West London again the least likely (75.6%).
- Similarly, it was more important to young people living in Inner-London than Outer-London (84.6% to 77.5%), and those living in boroughs with the highest rates of poverty compared to those with the lowest rates of poverty (84.6% to 77.5%).

However, young people were split on how important the street that they lived on was important to their identity, with half agreeing (50.5%) and half disagreeing (49.5%).

- Under-18s, more likely to live at home, were more likely to say it was important to them (54.2%) than those over 18 (44.6%).
- This question also saw the biggest difference between ethnic groups, with Black, South Asian, and Mixed ethnicity young people believing it was more important than not (43.5%, 41.5%, and 37.1% respectively). In comparison, only White young people were more likely to say that it was not important to them (40.7%) compared to important to them (33%).

Overall, young people were split on whether their local area is more important to their identity then London as a city, with half agreeing (48%) and half disagreeing (51.9%).

What are the things that you love about living in London?

Being a Londoner and having so much history surrounds you and never knowing until you do some research and also having everything so close to you. (Age 22)

The difference that everyone has. You can go anywhere and you see a huge range of people from different backgrounds who have different lives experiences which you usually don't get in other parts of the UK. (Age 19)

I get so many amazing opportunities in London which I honestly don't think I would get if I lived elsewhere. (Age 16)

I love the diversity of the culture. Different people from various backgrounds and getting involved in the arts is my favourite thing about London. Going to museums and watching live theatre at the west end, also the range of creativity is truly inspiring in London. (Age 24)

That nobody you meet is truly a Londoner. Everybody has an amazing story about where they come from and wears their heritage proudly. Even if it is being from somewhere like Essex to South Africa. (Age 24)

The diversity of London's spaces. Being able to walk from a busy street into an open green space with wildlife. The freeing travel and identifying as a Londoner. (Age 17)

The diversity and range of things to do, the colourful and bright cultural events and the fact that people don't judge at all. You can be whoever you want and embrace any culture or religion and you will always be welcomed. I love the mindset that Londoners have, which I feel is that "change is always a possibility" and that we are constantly looking for solutions to any problems. Nothing is considered "weird", and mental health is an issue that is actually taken seriously. (Age 17)

The culmination of art and culture on an international level, and the intersectionality of different nationalities being able to simultaneously experience the cityscape and the architecture, as well as the copious amounts of green space. That constant juxtaposition is what makes London beautiful. (Age 19)

The freedom I have in London to be myself (a queer woman of colour) without having to look over my shoulder at who's watching. (Age 22)

The convenience of having everything on your front door, being able to explore, as well as the mix of cultures giving me insight into lives and cultures and food that I've never experienced. (Age 19)
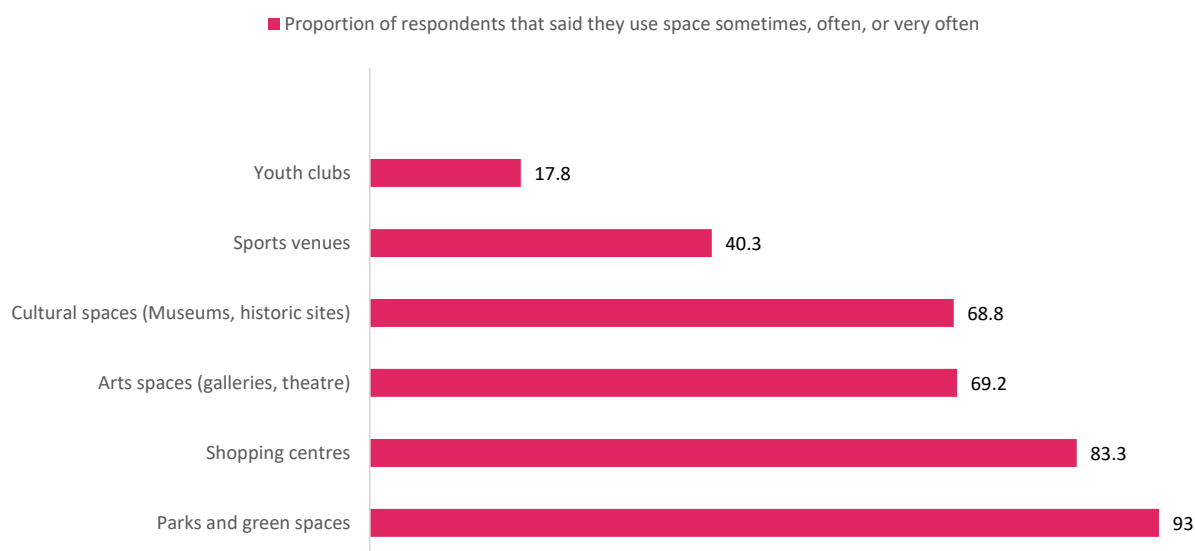
Using London's spaces

- **How frequently young Londoners use space -** The most visited spaces from most to least were; parks and green spaces (93%), shopping centres (83.3%), arts spaces (galleries, theatre) (69.2%), cultural spaces (museums, historic sites) (68.8%), sports venues (40.3%), and youth clubs (17.8%).

- **Using space differed by ethnicity -** White young people were more likely than BAME young people to go to arts spaces (77.2% to 62.3%), cultural spaces (75.8% to 63%), and parks and green spaces (95.9% to 90.4%). This difference was more pronounced between different groups, with Black young people less likely to use those spaces than South Asian young people, or those with Mixed ethnicity.

- **Using space differed by geography -** Young people who lived in Inner-London were more likely than their Outer-London counterparts to use parks and green spaces (92.3% to 88.7%), and cultural spaces (72.9% to 66%). Similarly, those living in boroughs with the highest rates of poverty were less likely than those living in boroughs with the lowest rates of poverty to use arts spaces (62.7% to 72.6%), and cultural spaces (63.1% to 71.3%).

- **Interaction with the Museum of London -** Young people who had visited the Museum of London in the past two years were over twice as likely as those who hadn't to use cultural spaces (61.3% to 26.1%), and arts spaces (57% to 31.9%).

- **The mixed impact of Covid-19 -** Young people were split on whether Covid-19 had changed their views on their local area. However, only White young people said that it had in a majority (51.8%), with only a third of Black young people saying it had (31.6%).

- **How Covid-19 has had an impact -** When we asked young people how Covid-19 had changed their views on their area, the clearest theme was on a sense of community, or unity that they had seen in their area. For some it created a sense of ownership over their area, spending more time locally.
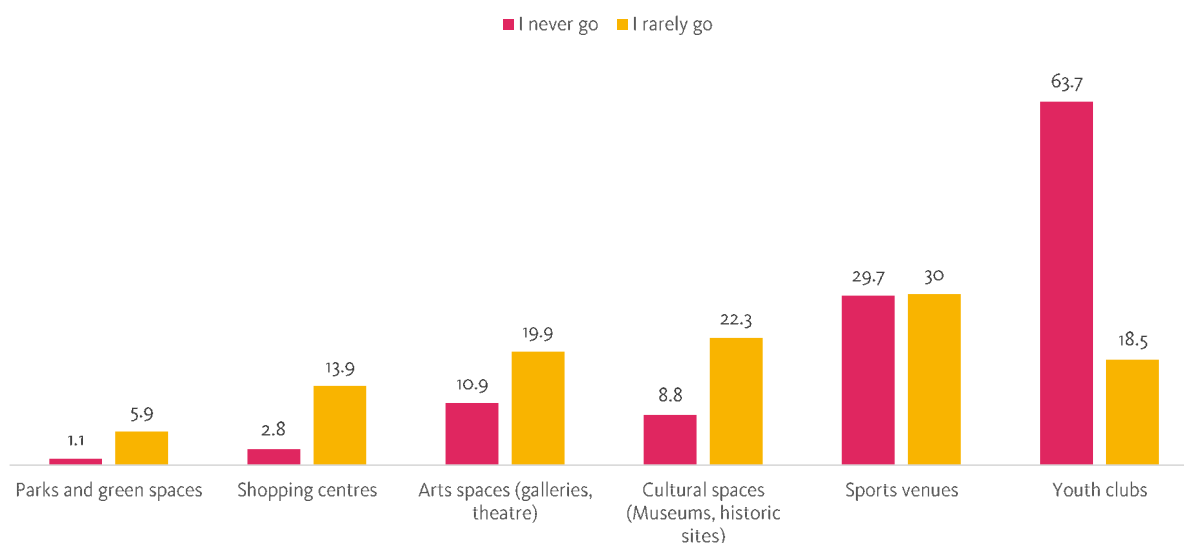
Using London's spaces, an overview

We also wanted to look at how young Londoners use the spaces of London, and how this varied across different groups and geographies. The most used space on average was parks and green spaces (90.2%) while youth clubs were the least used (8.6%).

■ Proportion of respondents that said they use space sometimes, often, or very often

Space	Value
Youth clubs	17.8
Sports venues	40.3
Cultural spaces (Museums, historic sites)	68.8
Arts spaces (galleries, theatre)	69.2
Shopping centres	83.3
Parks and green spaces	93

We also looked at how many young people said that they rarely, or never go to certain spaces. Youth clubs had the higher proportion of young people saying they never go (63.7%).

Visiting spaces rarely or never

■ I never go   ■ I rarely go

Space	I never go	I rarely go
Parks and green spaces	1.1	5.9
Shopping centres	2.8	13.9
Arts spaces (galleries, theatre)	10.9	19.9
Cultural spaces (Museums, historic sites)	8.8	22.3
Sports venues	29.7	30
Youth clubs	63.7	18.5

Young Londoners at the public launch of the museum's City Now City Future programme. Photographer: Katy Davies
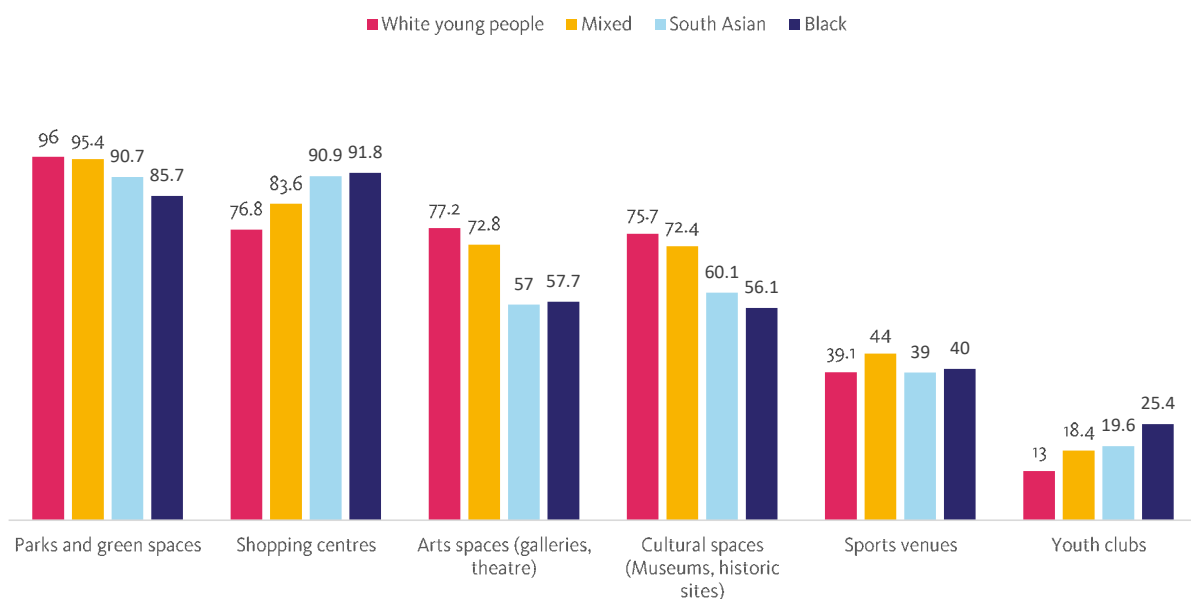
Social class

Social class has an impact on the use of four spaces of London, with middle class young people the most likely to go to parks and green spaces, art spaces, and cultural spaces.

Working class ■ Middle class ■

	Parks and green spaces	Shopping centres	Arts spaces (galleries, theatre)	Cultural spaces (Museums, historic sites)
Working class	91.1	87.3	66.1	67.5
Middle class	96.2	76.4	77.6	75.6

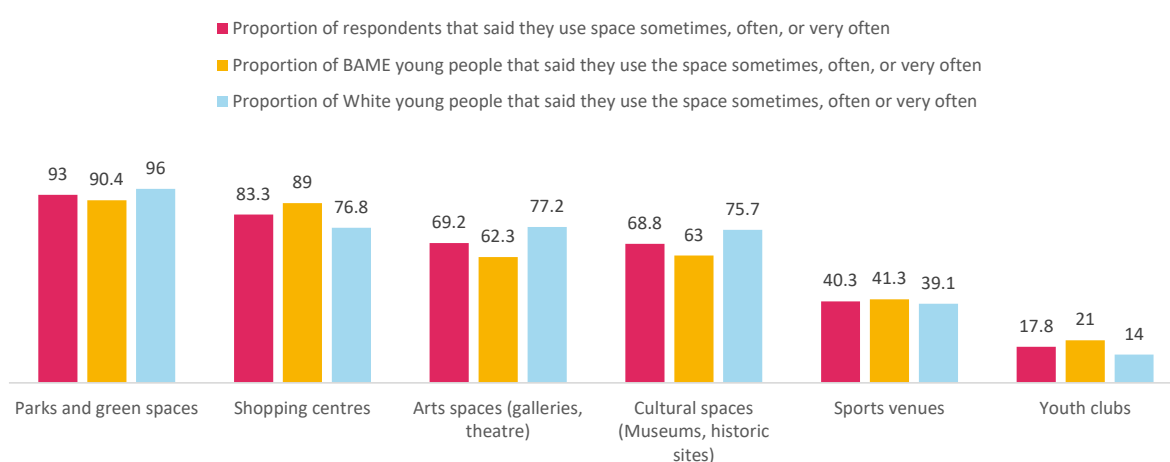## Using London's spaces by ethnicity

When we break down the usage of spaces by ethnicity even more, we can see more differences between groups.

- Around one in four Black young people said that they used youth clubs (25%), more than any other group, and significantly more than White young people (15%).
- In arts spaces, Black young people were on par with South Asian young people in their tendency to visit arts spaces (57.7% to 57%), far less than White young people (77.2%).

White young people ■ Mixed ■ South Asian ■ Black ■

	Parks and green spaces	Shopping centres	Arts spaces (galleries, theatre)	Cultural spaces (Museums, historic sites)	Sports venues	Youth clubs
White young people	96	76.8	77.2	75.7	39.1	13
Mixed	95.4	83.6	72.8	72.4	44	18.4
South Asian	90.7	90.9	57	60.1	39	19.6
Black	85.7	91.8	57.7	56.1	40	25.4

Black, Asian and Minority Ethic (BAME) use of space

- BAME young people were more likely than White British young people to visit the following spaces sometimes to very often; shopping centres (89% to 76.8%), sports venues (41.2% to 39%), and youth clubs (20.9% to 14%).
- White British young people were only more likely than BAME young people to say they visit three spaces sometimes to very often: arts spaces (77.2% to 62.3%), cultural spaces (75.8% to 63%), and parks and green spaces (95.9% to 90.4%).
- The clearest difference concerns cultural and arts space use. This difference is reflected in previous research about museum and gallery visits, where White people were more likely to visit a museum or gallery in the past year than BAME people (51.1% to 45.3%).
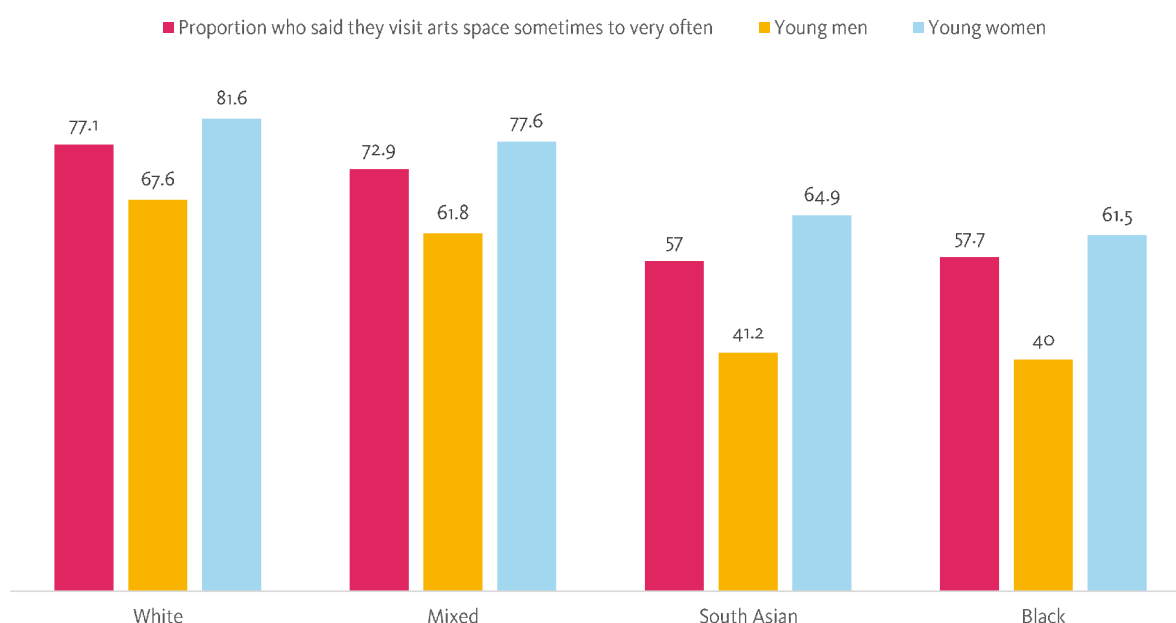
■ Proportion of respondents that said they use space sometimes, often, or very often
■ Proportion of BAME young people that said they use the space sometimes, often, or very often
■ Proportion of White young people that said they use the space sometimes, often or very often

	Parks and green spaces	Shopping centres	Arts spaces (galleries, theatre)	Cultural spaces (Museums, historic sites)	Sports venues	Youth clubs
Respondents	93	83.3	69.2	68.8	40.3	17.8
BAME	90.4	89	62.3	63	41.3	21
White	96	76.8	77.2	75.7	39.1	14

A breakdown of using London's spaces

Arts spaces were the third most used space in London across all groups. Just more than half of young people said that they use art spaces sometimes to very often (69.2%), compared to rarely or never (30.8%).

- White young people were significantly more likely (77.2%) to say they go to arts spaces sometimes to very often than BAME young people (62.3%).
- Black young people and South Asian young people said they visit arts spaces a similar amount, with over half saying they visit sometimes to very often (57% to 57.7%).
- Mixed-race young people said they visit arts spaces significantly more than the BAME average (72.9%), but less than young people.
- Young women were also more likely (62.6%) to use arts spaces than young men (42.4%). This gender difference was more pronounced for different groups. White young men visited arts spaces slightly less than White young women (72.2% to 80%), while this gap doubles when looking at Black young men and women (40% to 61.5%) or South Asian men and women (41.2% to 64.9%).

Visits art spaces often or very often

■ Proportion who said they visit arts space sometimes to very often　■ Young men　■ Young women

	White	Mixed	South Asian	Black
Proportion who said they visit arts space sometimes to very often	77.1	72.9	57	57.7
Young men	67.6	61.8	41.2	40
Young women	81.6	77.6	64.9	61.5

- Geographically, arts space use varied across London, likely in line with the visibility or presence of arts spaces. For example, young people from Central London were most likely to use art spaces sometimes to very often (75.6%), as were young people from Inner-London (73.6%) compared to Outer-London (65.9%).
- Young people in boroughs with the highest rates of poverty were also far less likely to use arts space (62.7%) than those in boroughs with the lowest rates of poverty (72.6%).
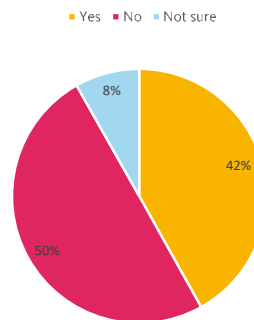
Cultural spaces were the fourth most used space in London across all groups. Just more than half of young people said that they use cultural spaces sometimes to very often (68.9%), compared to rarely or never (31.1%).

- Young people with Mixed ethnicity were the most likely to use cultural spaces often (60.5%), followed by White young people (66.7%), and BAME young people (39.8%).
- Secondly, the older young people were the more likely they were to use cultural spaces often. Just over half of under 18s (60.9%) said they use cultural spaces often, compared to a larger majority of over 18s (81.9%).
- Like arts space, cultural space use also varied geographically likely in line with the visibility or presence of cultural spaces. For example, young people from Inner-London were most likely to use art spaces often (72.9%), compared to Outer-London (66%).
- Young people in boroughs with the highest rates of poverty were also far less likely to use cultural spaces (63.1%) than those in boroughs with the lowest rates of poverty (71.3%).

Visits cultural spaces often or very often

■ Proportion who said they visit arts space sometimes to very often   ■ Young men   ■ Young women

	White	Mixed	South Asian	Black
Proportion	75.7	72.4	60.1	56.1
Young men	73.1	66.4	45.8	44.2
Young women	76.8	74.9	67.4	58.6

Visting the Museum of London

A total of 1273 young people said they had visited the Museum of London in the past two years, just less than half (41.9%), compared to 1515 who said they had not (49.9%). Around 250 young people, less than one in ten (8.2%) were not sure if they had.

- Those who had visited the Museum of London in the past two years visit arts spaces more often (57%) than those who had not (31.9%), and are much more likely to visit cultural spaces (61.3%) than those who hadn't (26.1%).
- This indicates that when young people had some experience in the past two years of the Museum of London, they were twice as likely to have engaged with arts or cultural spaces in London in general.

■ Visited the Museum of London   ■ Hasn't visited the Museum of London

Young Londoners watch a discussion on the lived experiences of Black Women at Curating London's HERstories event. © Museum of London

Parks and green spaces were the most used space across all groups. A majority said that they use them sometimes to very often (92.9%) while less than one in ten said they rarely or never used them (7%).

- The largest difference in use was found in self-reported social class, with those identifying as middle-class more likely to visit green spaces sometimes to very often (95.3%) than those identifying as working class (87.1%).
- Geographically, young people in Inner-London were more likely to use parks and green spaces sometimes to very often (92.3%) than those living in Outer-London (88.7%).
- Additionally, the longer young people lived at their current postcode the less likely they were to use parks and green spaces.

Shopping centres were the second most used space in London across all groups. A majority said they visited them sometimes to very often (83.2%) compared to rarely or never (16.7%).

- White young people were also over twice as likely (4.6%) to say they never visit shopping centres than BAME young people (1.4%).

Shopping centre use also varied according to where young people were geographically.

- Firstly, young people from Outer-London were more likely to visit sometimes to very often (88.4%) than those in Inner-London (76.9%).
- Secondly, young people living in West London were more likely to use shopping centres often or very often (90.7%), with those in central London the least likely, with just over half using them often (69.7%).
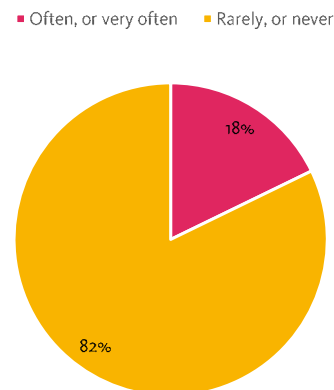
The part of London you're from

■ The part of London you're from

West London	East London	South London	North London
90.7	86.8	84.8	84.7

Sports venues were the fifth most used space in London across all groups. Only a small minority of young people said they used sports venues sometimes to very often (40.3%) compared to rarely or never (59.7%).

- Interestingly, this was largely the same across different groups across London.
- While small differences were found by equalities data, like gender, it was not statistically significant enough to be included.
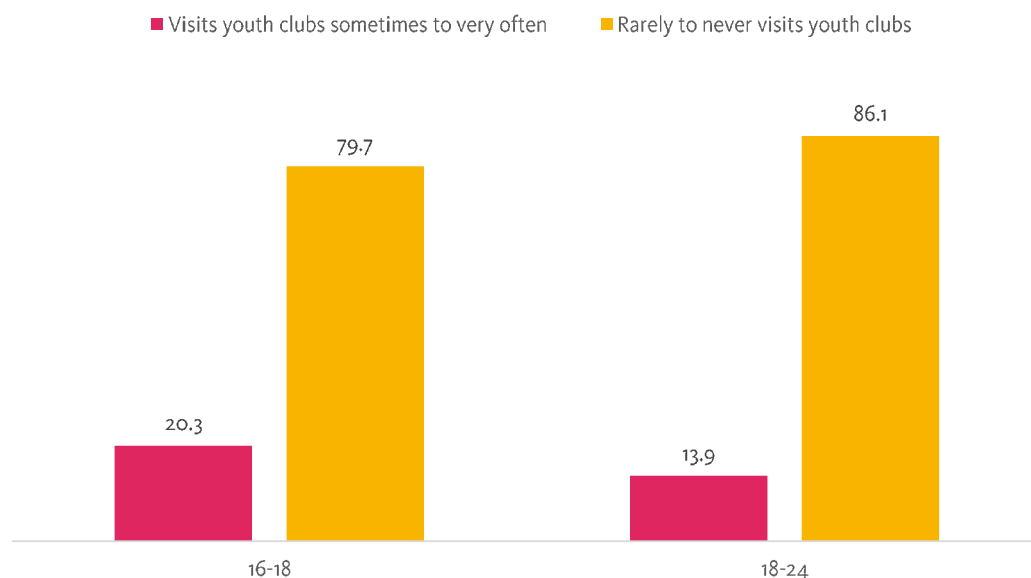
Youth clubs were the least used space in London across all groups. Only a small minority said they used youth clubs sometimes to very often (17.8%) compared to rarely or never (82.2%).

- However, almost twice as many BAME young people said they use youth clubs often or very often (10.8%) than White British young people (6%).
- The clearest difference between the use of youth clubs was around age, with younger Londoners more likely to use youth clubs. 16-18-year olds were more likely to say they go to youth clubs sometimes to very often than 18-24 year olds (20.3% to 13.9%), and less likely to say they rarely or never go (79.7% to 86.1%).
- Interestingly, youth clubs had the highest proportion of respondents saying they never go (63.7%), at least twice as many as any other.

Visiting youth clubs, often/very often vs rarely/never

■ Often, or very often   ■ Rarely, or never

Visits to youth clubs often or very often

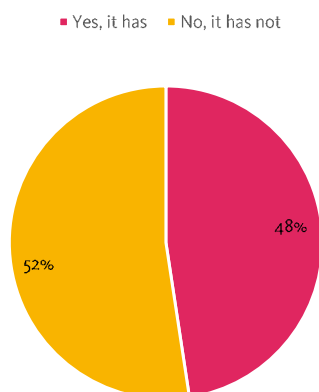■ Visits youth clubs sometimes to very often   ■ Rarely to never visits youth clubs

The impact of Covid-19

Given the current context, we asked young people if Covid-19 has had an impact on the way they view their local area. We know that lockdown has had an impact on the mental health of young Londoners.
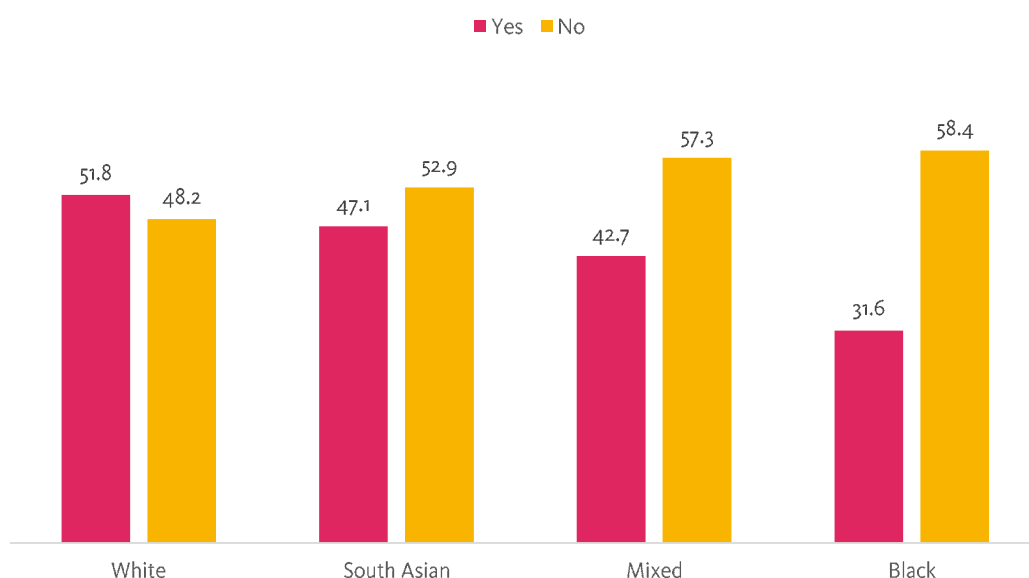
Responses were split quite evenly, with just under half saying it had (47.6%) and just over half saying it had not (52.4%).

- Young women were more likely to say

Has Covid-19 changed your view on your local area?

■ Yes, it has   ■ No, it has not

48%

52%

Covid-19 has changed their views than young men. Young people who said that Covid-19 had changed their views were also more likely to say that having their voice heard was important to them.
- When this answer is broken down by ethnicity, more White young people felt that Covid-19 had changed their views than had not (51.8% to 48.2%). While more than half of Black young people said that it had not changed their views than had (58.4% to 31.6%).

Has Covid-19 changed your view on your local area?

■ Yes   ■ No

	White	South Asian	Mixed	Black
Yes	51.8	47.1	42.7	31.6
No	48.2	52.9	57.3	58.4

How has Coronavirus changed your view of your local area?

Moved back to countryside as my area was too densely populated to feel safe. (Age 19)

I have discovered parks, nature reserves and roads connecting other boroughs by cycling. Realised how much East London has to offer. (Age 21)

I see my local area as more of a community, I have seen the way others have helped people at their lowest lows that otherwise I wouldn't have seen. (Age 16)

I live in East Dulwich, as a Mixed-race young adult, I feel ignored by the White middle class families, so much so that they don't step aside on the street so we can both walk. Now the pandemic has happened my opinion has changed, I'm not invisible, they choose not to see me. They actively choose not to interact with other classes or demographics. I no longer believe when times get tough they'll support their neighbours, they'll support their own. (Age 22)

Throughout lockdown I've been able to explore different parts of my area and have actually learnt quite a bit about its history as well I've really fallen deeper in love with my borough. (Age 24)

It has made me see how much I value where I live. (Age 18)

It has made me realise that the people that live in my local area give it its identity. (18)

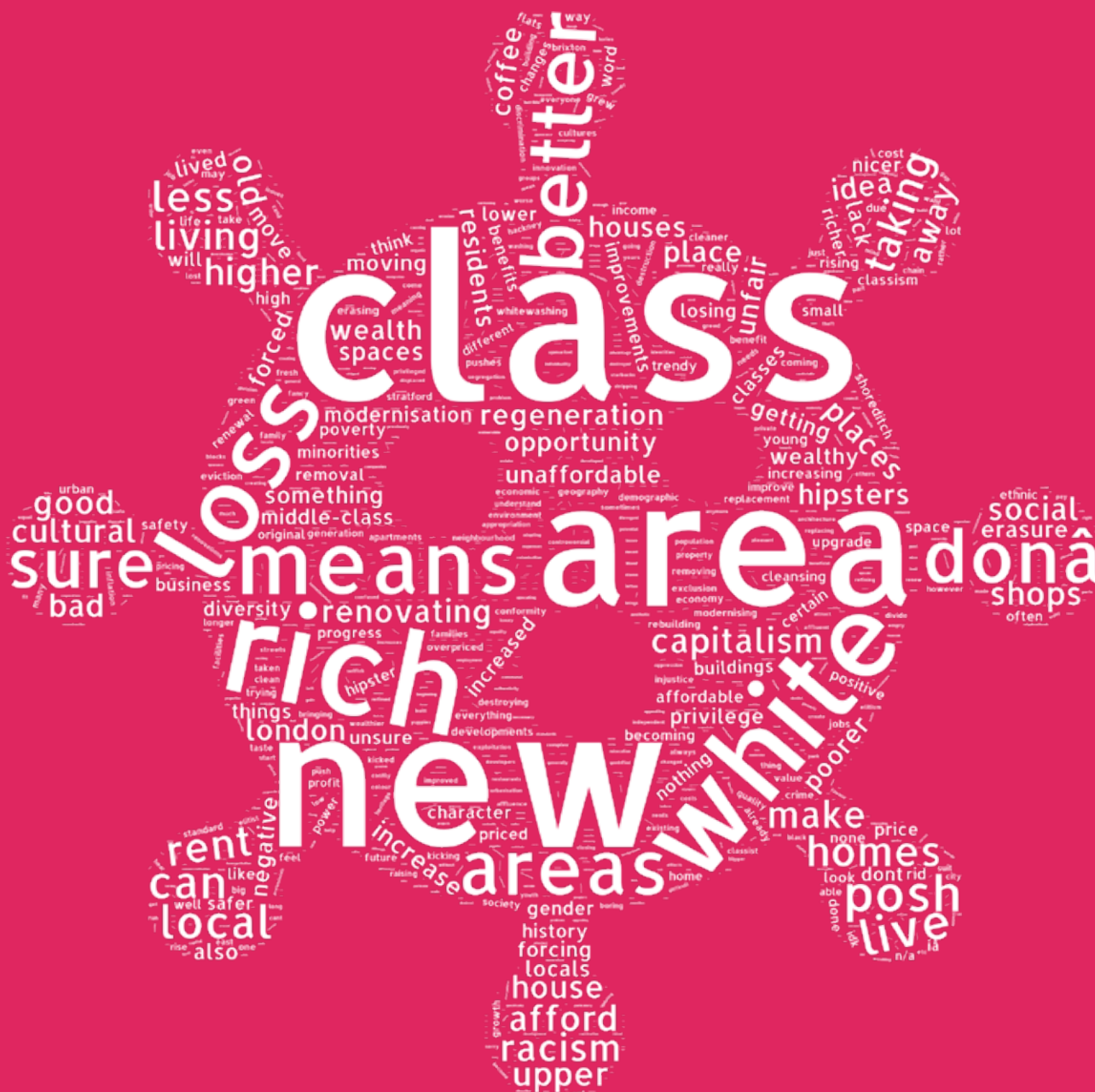There haven't being any stabbings so far and I'm happy. (Age 17)

My street already had good networks of communication within it. However, since Covid-19 we now have an official WhatsApp group to allow everyone to partake. Within the group people have baked and shared, provided assistance to those in need and donated items to those in need, just to name a few. We are not just a street anymore, we are a community that will be forever bonded by how we coped during this pandemic. (Age 20)

I feel isolated, and realise my neighborhood is not very welcoming. (Age 17)

Now that I spend all my time here (and there is less foot/vehicular traffic) I can spend more time realising how beautiful my local area is and how much it has to offer. (Age 23)

Makes me realise how isolated I am from my school friends without public transport. (Age 16)

Racism towards Asians in my area has increased. I used to think this was a safe area but now I feel unsafe when I go out because I am Asian. (Age 17)

class area new white rich means loss better coffee way change brew word cultures innovation

less old lived may even move life take will living higher think moving high hackney brixton going everyone come years fresh lost family displaced demolition whitewashing

wealth spaces erasing different pushes poverty stratford minorities modernisation regeneration lower income houses place really cleaner improvements residents benefit trendy unfair losing small classes coming getting nicer idea black due richer lot rising classism away taking

good cultural safety sure business bad diversity longer removal renovating conformity geography demographic understand economic environment appropriation replacement increasing hipsters social erasure shops often ethnic space doñâ

eviction something middle-class original generation apartments neighbourhood property removing population replacing modernising cleansing upgrade divide however

loss rich hipster wealthier destroying everything developments becoming poorer capitalism buildings affordable privilege positive make homes price posh live

london unsure taste new push profit power character increase priced areas white gender history forcing locals house afford racism upper negative rent can also local well safer rise east one future ticking feel kicked improved raising standard society nothing value always black classist injustice exploitation independence jobs crime quality always look dont rid able done idk n/a city growth

Changing London

- **Most young Londoners want to live in London -** Most young Londoners (59%) said that they wanted to live in London, but less than half of Black young people said that they did (45.3%).

- **Most young Londoners don't think they can -** However, less than half of young Londoners (40%) think they will be able to live in London in the future, with Black and South Asian young people the most likely to say they would be able to (46.9%, 47.3% respectively).

- **The cost of living in London -** We asked the young Londoners who thought they could not live in London why they wouldn't be able to. We got a range of answers focused on the cost of living, the culture of the city, and issues of community and diversity.

- **Optimism about London, just not for young people -** While one in four young (25.5%) Londoners felt that London was changing for the better, only one in five (20.5%) thought it was becoming a better city for young people.

- **Young people lack a sense of ownership over their area -** Most young Londoners (68.7%) do not feel a sense of ownership over their local area, across all groups. The more a young person felt that their local area, or street, or part of London was important to their identity, the more ownership they felt.

- **Redevelopment can bring positive change -** Most young Londoners (83%) believe that redevelopment can change the identity of an area, and that redevelopments in their area can benefit them (72%) and can mean more opportunities (57%).

- **Different areas and groups feel pushed out of London -** Black young people and young people in East London were the groups most likely to feel pushed out of the areas that they grew up in (61%), while young people living in West London were least likely (28%).

- **Gentrification is a negative term -** Overall, most young Londoners (61.5%) agreed that "gentrification is a bad thing", however Black young people (71.5%), and those living in Inner-London (66.1%) were more likely to agree.

Living in London in the future

London is changing at a rapid pace, and we wanted to look at how young people felt about their future in the capital and the changes that they see happening in their area.
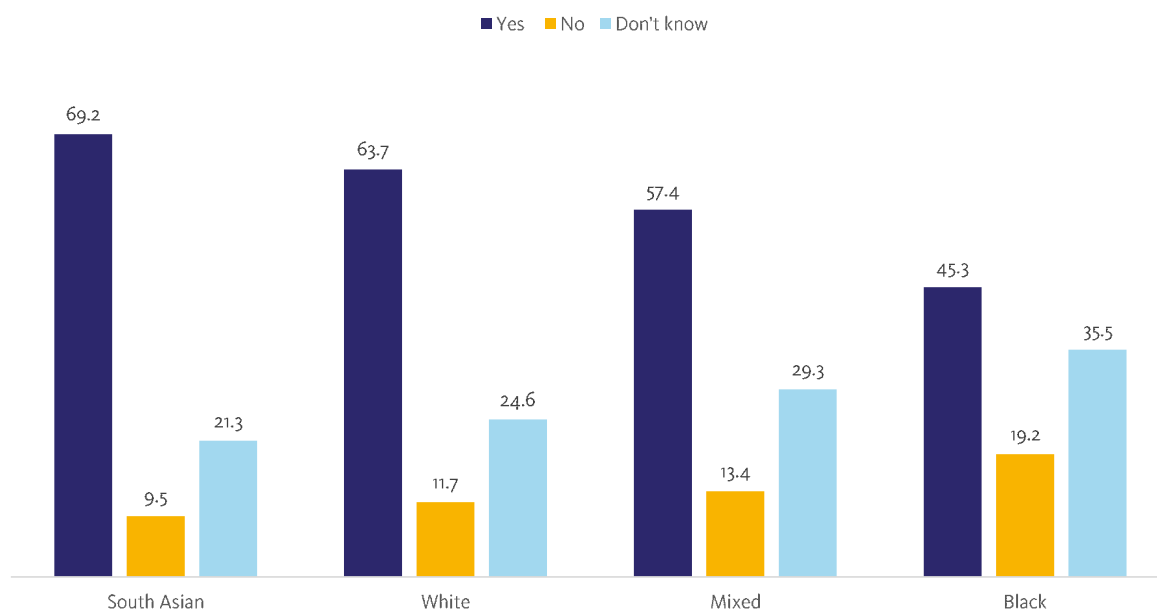
Firstly, we wanted to find out how many of them see their future in London. While a majority wanted to live in London in the future (59%), young people were twice as likely to say they were not sure (27%) than that they would not (13.2%).

- Young people who said that London was important to them were also more likely to want to live in London in the future (86.7% to 26.4%).
- South Asian and White young people were the most likely to say they wanted to live in London in the future (69.2% to 63.7%), with Black young people the least likely (45.3%).

Do you want to live in London in the future?

■ Yes ■ No ■ Not sure

Do you want to live in London in the future?

■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know

Having asked young people if they wanted to, we then wanted to compare this to if they felt they could live in London in the future. Fewer young people think they can live in London in the future than want to. Less than half believe they could (40%), and around one third say no (29.9%), and one third not sure (30.1%).

- Young people who replied no to this question were more likely to rank housing as an important issue to them.
- Also, while Black young people were least likely to say they wanted to live in London they were significantly higher than White young people to say they think they could not (46.9% to 34.1%).

Do you think you can live in London in the future?

Yes ■ No ■ Not sure

Do you think you can live in London in the future?

■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know

We also wanted to know how many young people expected to have to move to a different part of London, for whatever reason.

A large majority of young people thought they would have to (57%), with only a minority not believing they would have to move (14%).

Why do you think you will not be able to live in London?

It's hard to find a job furthermore everything is expensive. For example, if I wanted a house I'll have to get a mortgage but to get a mortgage you need a high deposit which we as young Londoners can't get because of not finding a job that pays well. (Age 20)

House prices and rent is increasing. It's just not worth it. A lot of properties are empty and owned by the rich, so it seems fruitless, even as someone on the path to a comfortable career (medicine). (Age 23)

I won't be comfortable alone renting. It's too expensive, I don't know how to receive help from housing. Maybe if I'm in a relationship it will be doable. (Age 24)

Because of the cost of living. I don't want to be renting my whole life. I want to own a house by 30 and in London that sadly isn't a possibility. (Age 23)

I will not be able to afford living in the safe and nice parts of London on an NHS salary. (Age 18)

Because housing is so expensive now and with the industry I want to get into it's all freelance work so there isn't a a sustainable workflow for me to be able to afford a place here. (Age 17)

MONEY. (Age 17)

The combination of insanely high rent costs and high living costs prices most young people out of London. (Age 22)

Housing prices, due to rising house prices and gentrification making it almost completely impossible to live as an adult where I've grown up. (Age 17)

Because the levels of racism in London has increased and I just can't see myself bringing children up in the future in an area where they are not safe because they look different due to their ethnic background. (Age 17)

I have to live with parents because despite earning an average salary in a fairly skilled job I still cannot afford to live in the areas of London I grew up in and still want to be a part of. Working class Londoners cannot afford adequate housing. (Age 23)

The housing is getting way too expensive unless a miracle happens and I'm a millionaire then I will probably live here. (Age 17)

The amount of money to be able to live in London is constantly rising and with there being less housing and jobs available it would be hard to survive in London when further out you can get more for your money. (Age 18)

The future of London

During the survey, at different points, we asked young people questions about how they felt about the future of London.

We first asked if they agreed with the statement that London was becoming a worse city to be in for young people, with around half agreeing (47.6%), a third being neutral (31.9%), and one in five disagreeing (20.5%).
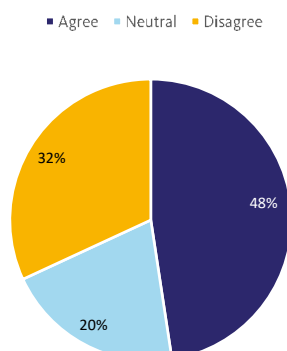
This is in line with previous studies, which have found young British people to be amongst the most pessimistic in the world, with young Londoners nearly twice as likely on average to believe the world is becoming worse rather than better.

Furthermore, young people who said that London as a city was not important to them were more likely to say that it was becoming a worse city to be in for young people, than those who said it was an important city to them (64% to 46%).

However, there was less certainty when we asked them to think about it in positive terms, if London was changing for the better. While a majority (56%) of young people remained neutral on this statement, slightly more agreed (25.5%) than disagreed (21.2%).

- Young people who said that they disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement were also more likely to rank issues like housing, safety and the police, and having their voice heard as more important.
- Also, the more important London was as a city for a young person, the more likely they were to agree or strongly agree that London was changing for the better.

"London is becoming a worse city for young people"

■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree

"London is changing for the better"

■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree

"W.W Journal" from Curating London's Collecting Ends project for Young Londoners. Director: Alia Hassan. Art Direction: Alyssa Victoria, Alia Hassan, Sam Campbell. Photographer: Cameron Ugbodu. © Museum of London

New developments, new opportunities?

An important part of London's changing environment is redevelopment. We wanted to look at how young Londoners viewed redevelopment, and the impact they believe it has on their city and communities.
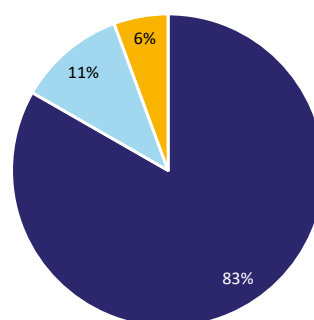
Firstly, most young people believe that redevelopments can change the identity of an area (83.2%). Interestingly, responses to this were consistent across groups and geographies of London.

We then wanted to look at how redevelopment is viewed in terms of benefits, or opportunities. With neutrals removed, most young people agreed that redevelopments in their area can benefit them (71.5%), compared to one in three disagreeing (28.3%).

- However, the biggest variation was geographically. Young people from Outer-London were more likely to agree with the statement (74.8%) than those from Inner-London (67%). This varied greatly by part of London, with Central London least likely to agree (63.3%), followed by East London (71%), West London (72.2%), South London (74.3%), and North London (76.1%).
- Young people who also agreed with the statement were much more likely to rank safety and the police as important or very important to them (88.8%) than those who disagreed (76.7%).
- South Asian young people were the most likely to agree or strongly agree with the statement than any other group (78.1%). Black young people were the least likely to agree (66.1%) with the statement.
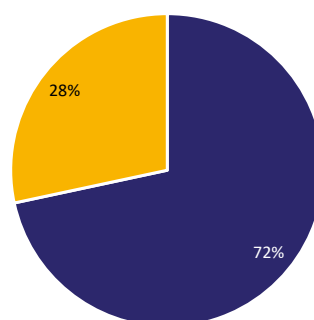
"Redevelopments can change the identity of an area"

■ Agreed or strongly agreed ■ Neutral ■ Disagree or strongly disagree

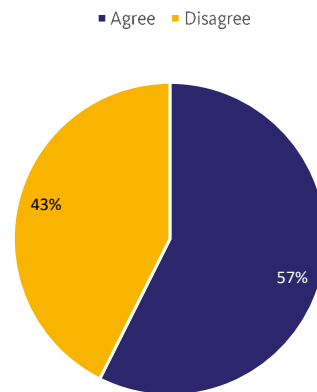**"Redevelopments in my area can benefit me"**

■ Agree ■ Disagree

We next asked about opportunities, economic or otherwise. Interestingly, when framed in terms of opportunities, less young people agreed with the statement (57.4%) and more disagreed (42.6%).

This indicates that fewer young people believed it would bring new opportunities for them, than it would bring benefits for them generally. This might partly be due to opportunities more specifically associated with employment.

- Geographically, young people from Outer-London were again more likely to agree with the statement (60.5%) than Inner-London (53.5%).
- However, while those from Central London were again least likely to agree (50.2%), East London was now the area most likely to agree (63.2%). This indicates a higher association in East London of positive opportunities and redevelopment than in other areas of London.

" New developments mean new opportunities "
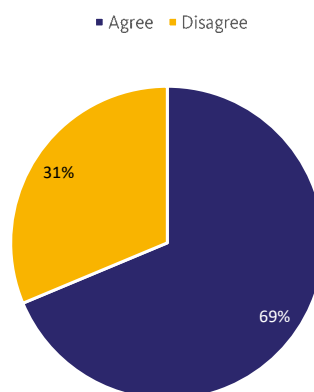
■ Agree ■ Disagree

43%

57%

Ownership and displacement

An important aspect of redevelopment is the sense of ownership that the community feel in their area, and the pressures it can place upon them.

Young people responding to this survey felt overwhelmingly like Londoners, and a majority felt that their borough, area, and street were important to them. Yet, a large majority did not feel a sense of ownership over the local area (68.7%), and only a third did (31.3%).

"I feel a sense of ownership over my area"

■ Agree ■ Disagree

- Young people who said that their local area was more important to their identity than London were more likely to say that they have a sense of ownership of their local area (32%% to 12.4%).
- Young people who said that their street was important or very important to them were more likely to say they have a sense of ownership of their local area (29.9% to 13.6%)
- Young people who said that the part of London they were from (North, East, South-East, etc) was important to very important to them were more likely to say they have a sense of ownership of their local area (27.1% to 10.4%).
- Furthermore, this was largely unchanged across all areas of London and different groups, indicating that lack of ownership of their area is something that is felt by young Londoners as a whole.
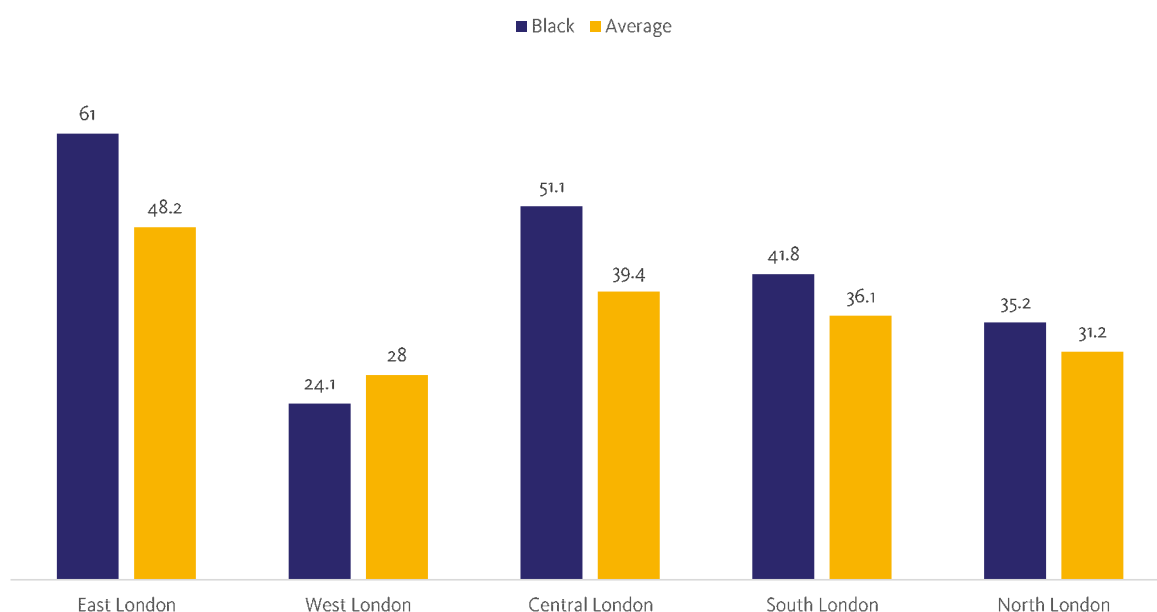
Screening of Curating London's film project We the People, featuring Young Londoners interviewing experienced activists. © Museum of London

Displacement

We also asked young people if they had felt pushed out of areas they grew up in and found a very mixed response depending on groups and location.

- Unsurprisingly, young people who agreed that they felt pushed out of areas they grew up in were also more likely to rank housing and having their voice heard as more important to them. However, while less than half agreed (36.7%), this question had a lot of variation between groups.
- Young people from East London in particular, were the most likely to agree with this statement (48%) than any other area, with West London being the least likely (27.7%). Secondly, geographically, Inner-London was far more likely to agree with the statement (40.2%) than young people from Outer-London (34%).
- Another clear difference in terms of ethnicity was found with Black young people, who were more likely to say they felt pushed out.

Black young people feel more pushed out across London than average

■ Black ■ Average

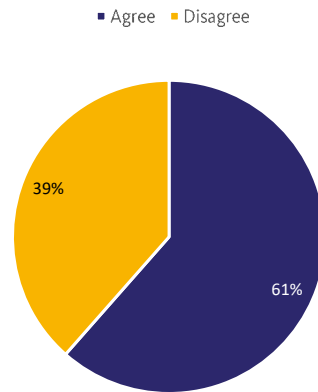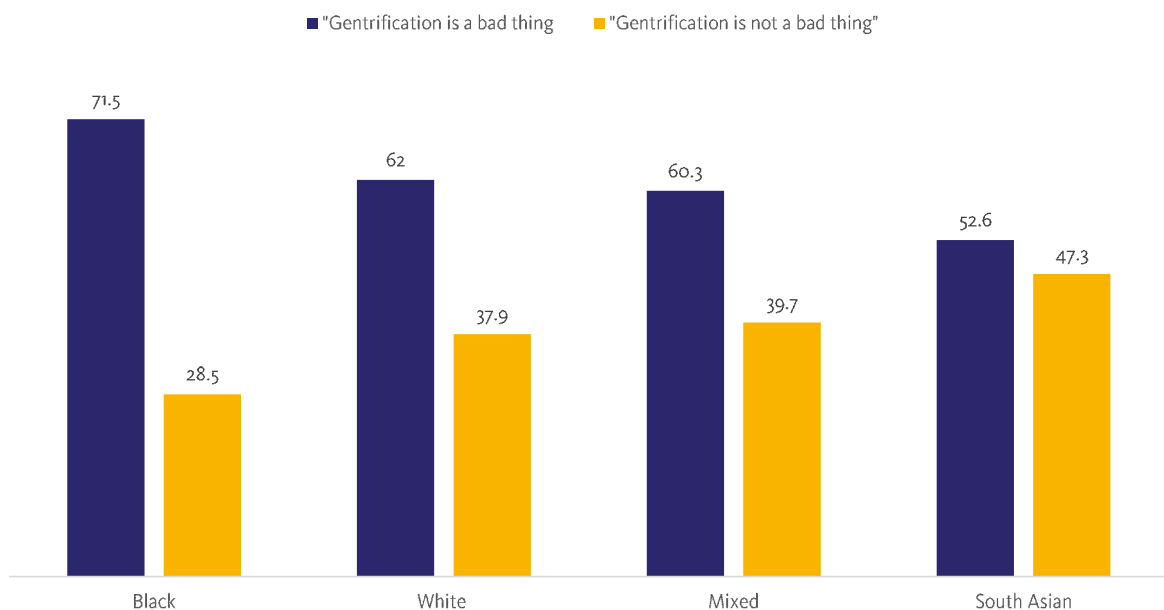| Area	Black	Average
East London	61	48.2
West London	24.1	28
Central London	51.1	39.4
South London	41.8	36.1
North London	35.2	31.2

Gentrification

Gentrification is often a loaded term, especially when used in the media. Unlike other terms, like 'urban regeneration' or 'social mixing', it can be tricky to see outright support for it. Similarly, our survey found a majority agreed or strongly agreed that it was a bad thing (61.5%), while a minority said it was not (38.5%).

- Young people who also disagreed that gentrification is a bad thing were more likely to rank safety and the police, as important or very important to them (86.9% %) than those who disagreed (82.4%).
- Young people who agreed that gentrification is a bad thing were more likely to say having their voice heard was more important or very important to them (86.3%) than those who disagreed (81.6%).
- Young people from Inner-London were more likely to be agree that gentrification is a bad thing (66.1%) than those in Outer-London (56.8%).
- Ethnicity also played a role in the answer given. Black young people were the most likely to agree that gentrification was a bad thing (71.5%), with South Asian young people being the least likely to (52.6%).

"Gentrification is a bad thing"

■ Agree ■ Disagree

39%

61%

Young people's views on gentrification

■ "Gentrification is a bad thing" ■ "Gentrification is not a bad thing"

	Black	White	Mixed	South Asian
"Gentrification is a bad thing	71.5	62	60.3	52.6
"Gentrification is not a bad thing"	28.5	37.9	39.7	47.3

What word or words come to mind when you hear the word gentrification?

Posh, forcing out poorer people, fancy restaurants etc, widening inequality and poorer people must move further East. (Age 17)

A new look for a community or area, more housing opportunities, potential for new businesses to open. (Age 24)

Rich, wealthy, posh, frustration but also understanding that it will be necessary at some point and can often improve the area for others too. For the most part, it is an effective way to push out those from poorer backgrounds through increase in rent prices etc. (Age 23)

Pret-A-Manger. Better lighting. Cleaner streets. Brighter streets. Feel safer. Lack of character. Devoid of soul. (Age 24)

White middle class 20-year olds taking over your local council estate. (Age 18)

Posh White pricks forcing out people from their homes and businesses because they need another brunch spot. (Age 24)

It's very complicated - of course there are benefits, but there is the inevitable cultural erosion of an area and the consequences that comes with. (Age 19)

Replacing small businesses in the community with chain businesses and making a certain area more commercialised. (Age 18)

Grenfell, local communities being pushed out, hipsters, overpriced coffee, unaffordable housing. (Age 23)

Modernising places for the interest of middle classes whilst slowly destroying the lives of the working classes. (Age 17)

I think of East London first. And then I think of all the fancy flats that I can't afford. (Age 19)

The diminishing of local culture. Loss of individuality. Loss of respect for local areas. Loss of money to those who need it most. Minimises cultural diversity. (Age 18)

Bittersweet. Although an area is trying to improve it can also have negative effects. Of course we want areas to become a nicer environment and adopt a certain atmosphere however it can have damaging effects on the lower classes as it's almost pushing them out or just create an even bigger class divide within the community. (Age 19)

Not being able to afford to live in the places I grew up in. (Age 18)

Discussion

Being a Londoner is the most important geographical identity to young people

We wanted to look at whether young people living in London felt like Londoners, and how important they felt their local area was to their identity. A recent 2017 poll by YouGov for Queen Mary, University of London, provides some basis of comparison for our findings.

Firstly, most young people (93.1%) said that they felt like a Londoner to some extent. This was largely the case across all groups we asked, with only a small difference between Inner and Outer-London (94.4% to 92.1%). This aligns to a recent 2017 poll of adults which found that 89% of those polled felt like Londoners to some extent. We then specifically asked young people to decide which was more important to their identity; their local area or London as a city, with slightly more than half (51.9%) saying London. Interestingly though, many young people define their local area as an area of "London" rather than a borough or ward, and there needs to be more exploration about how young people define their local area.

Secondly, we asked young people how important different geographies were to their identity, with country (81.5%), different areas of London (80.1%), and boroughs (80.3%) all being of near equal importance. Interestingly, we found a consistent trend between areas of London on this question. Young people living in East London were the most likely, and those living in West London least likely, to say that the part of London (84.3% to 74%), and borough (84.6% to 75.6%) they were from were important to them. This trend between East and West London is seen across the study.

Thirdly, we then asked how important the street that they live on was to their identity, with variety between ethnic groups; with only White young people being more likely to say that it was not important, and all other groups more likely to say it was more important than not important. While we cannot read too much into this one point, it reflects one of the clear themes emerging from this study; the difference in answers by different ethnic groups.

Different groups of young Londoners place importance on different issues

We also wanted to look broadly at some of the issues that young Londoners face, and how important they felt they were. Across the entire sample, the most important issues were: education (94.2%), mental and physical health (93.9%), housing (92.1%), employment (90.6%), safety and the police (86.5%), air pollution and the environment (84.4%), and having your voice heard (83.7%).

Our findings are interesting when compared to previous studies. Young Londoner's Priorities for a Sustainable City (2019) found the most important issues to be knife crime, affordable housing, homelessness, and air pollution. While Make Your Mark (2019) identified four topics; the environment, hate crime, votes at 16, and refugees. Compared to these, our study found that safety and the police, air pollution and the environment, and youth voice were ranked significantly lower as an issue than education, mental and physical health, housing and employment. However, the picture was far more complicated when looking at different racial, age, or geographical groups.

Firstly, ethnicity played a huge role in changing how young Londoners ranked different issues. We grouped Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) young people together for analysis purposes and found that their top priority was education (94.2%). While White young people's priority was mental and physical health (93.9%), with education ranking sixth out of seven for them. Similarly, while air pollution was lowest ranked for BAME young people (83%), it was ranked fourth most important by White young people (88.4%). Secondly, there was a clear difference between the rankings in Inner and Outer-London. Rather expectedly, Inner-London respondents placed more importance on housing (92.8% to 91.8%) and air pollution and the environment (85.8% to 84.7%). Lastly, we asked young people to self-identify as working class or middle class and found again a complete shift in how issues were ranked. Working class young people ranked every issue as more important than their middle-class counterparts on average (90.5% to 89%), except air pollution and the environment (84.4% to 87.1%) and education (94.1% to 94.8%). How different young people ranked issues differently also fed through to the importance placed on issues in terms of impact on mental health.

We also found a relationship between how young people ranked issues in importance, and their optimism about the future of the city. Twice as many young people said they were pessimistic about the issues being addressed than optimistic (44% to 18%), with pessimism increasing in those who ranked issues of higher importance. Furthermore, while young people were split as to whether they thought that those in power know the issues they faced, this was hugely depended on ethnicity again, with Black young people most likely to say that they did, and White young people the least likely (39.4% to 29.5%).

Young Londoners participate in a community show-and-tell event for Curating London's Weaving London's Stories project. © Museum of London

Different groups of young Londoners visit London's spaces differently

We then looked at how young people used different spaces in London, and found similar differences by ethnicity and geography. Across the entire sample, the most visited spaces to least were; parks and green spaces (93%), shopping centres (83.3%), arts spaces (galleries, theatre) (69.2%), cultural spaces (museums, historic sites) (68.8%), sports venues (40.3%), and youth clubs (17.8%).

What was striking was the small proportion of those surveyed that told us that they use youth clubs to some extent (17.8%), especially when compared to the average across the other five spaces surveyed (70.9%). This is likely a reflection of the cuts to youth clubs and centres in the past decade, from 234 open in 2011-12 to 130 in 2018-2019 . However, on the flip side, parks and green spaces were unanimously the most visited space for all young Londoners, though this might reflect the survey taking place during summer and during the Covid-19 lockdown.

The use of London's spaces varied greatly according to ethnicity, gender, and geographical location. The most striking difference was in the use of arts and cultural spaces, with White young people more likely than BAME young people to use them to some extent (77.2% to 62.3%, and 75.8% to 63%). This difference was far more pronounced between young women and young men too, with the gender gap being more pronounced with BAME young people for arts and cultural spaces. For example, with use of cultural spaces gap between South Asian young women and men was 21.5% (67.4% to 45.8%), compared to that between White young women and men at 3.7% (76.8% to 73.1%). Lastly, where young people lived had an impact on how they used spaces, with differences between Inner and Outer-London, different areas of London, and whether young people live in a borough with a high or low rate of poverty.

We also wanted to look at the impact of Covid-19 and lockdown on how young people saw their local area. While there was broadly an even split in opinion (47.6% to 52.4%) about whether it had changed their views, interestingly White young people were the only group that said it had by a majority (51.8%). Black young people were the least likely group to say that it had (31.6%).

Young Londoners' future in the city

We wanted to look at how young people felt about the future of London, and their own future in the city. While most young people said that they wanted to live in London (69%), less than half believed they would be able to (40%). When we asked those who said they would not be able to why they felt that way, the most common answers related to the cost of living, including expensive transport and housing.

Over twice as many young people agreed that London was becoming a worse city for young people than disagreed (47.6% to 20.5%). This is in line with previous studies, which have found young British people to be amongst the most pessimistic in the world, with young Londoners nearly twice as likely on average to believe the world is becoming worse rather than better. When thinking about whether London is changing for the better more generally, it was split more evenly between agree or disagree (25.5% to 21.2%). This might indicate that while more young people think London is changing for the better as a city, less believe that positive change is to the benefit of young people.

Artistic impression of the New Museum of London at West Smithfield.
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