

# CLIMATE ACTION: HAVING OUR SAY



# Results from one of our pilot school's

Climate Action Survey analysis, providing an insight into students' views, behaviours and motivations around addressing the Climate Emergency

This report uses the data from your Climate Action Survey to try and find out:

- who you are talking with (who is your audience?)
- why some students are already carrying out action on climate change, and others are not
- what barriers are preventing students from adopting any new behaviour, and
- what would motivate more climate action.

Going forward, this information will help you to engage students to take climate action in the first place, and motivate those already taking action to do more.



## How do we use the survey results?

**Share your results:** The most important thing to do with all your hard work is to tell school what you have found out. This is so that everyone hears the views of students. The report is filled with analysis, graphs, and tables from your survey. Access this [PowerPoint template](#) from the ICN website to create your own presentation(s) for different audiences, thinking about what will be of most interest to them.

**Use the results to encourage climate action:** ICN can follow-up to support you to turn survey findings into tailored behaviour change interventions that use the approaches most likely to encourage climate action in your school. For instance, if your school is looking to reduce waste from the school canteen who and what would inspire students to get involved?

## PART ONE

# Hearing from our students

The survey started with age, gender and ethnicity so we know who has filled it in. Later this can be used to find out any patterns in what students think, for instance are younger students more or less likely to carry out climate action?



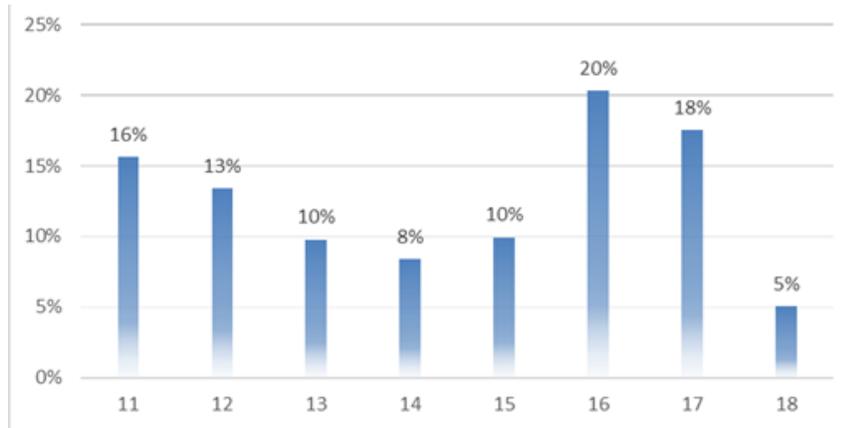
# Who completed the Survey?

**36% of school students completed the survey**

**634** students completed the survey in December 2020, out of 1719 students on roll.



## Age Breakdown



## Gender Breakdown



Female  
**58%**



Male  
**37%**



Non-binary  
**2%**



Prefer not to say  
**2%**

## Ethnicity breakdown

- 63%** White - English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British, Irish, Gypsy or Irish Traveller, Any other White background.
- 9%** Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups - White and Black Caribbean, White and Black African, White and Asian, Any other Mixed / Multiple ethnic background
- 11%** Asian / Asian British - Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese
- 12%** Any other Asian background - Black / African / Caribbean / Black British African Caribbean, Any other Black / African / Caribbean background
- 1%** Other ethnic group - Arab, Any other ethnic group
- 3%** Prefer not to say

PART TWO

# Spotlighting views from across school

Providing a summary of all the data



# How motivated are students to take climate action?



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## Students at Level 4 & 5

The good news is **45% of students are already at level 4 and 5** and are engaged in climate action. These students (compared to the students that are not taking action) are:

- more concerned about climate change
- see it as a higher priority
- link it more to humans
- take more responsibility themselves

**Going forward:** This group will most likely require a different approach from those who are less motivated. It is very important to continue to encourage these students and show how their actions are making a difference, so that everyone recognises the contribution of what they're doing and keep it going.

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## Students at Level 2 & 3

**28% of students are at level 2 & 3**, which means they are either 'getting ready' or 'are ready' to act. These students would like to undertake climate action but are either:

- unsure of what to do or
- haven't gotten round to it yet.

Overall, this group is just not feeling as strongly that climate change is of great concern, or is such a high priority. Other issues may be more pressing or seem more urgent.

**Going forward:** You will need to support these students to take the first steps to action – they are ready but need a helping hand. This might involve setting out clear ways to get involved or thinking of solutions that have joint benefits e.g. 'good for health, good for the environment'

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## Students at Level 1

**27% of students are at level 1**, and this is the harder group to engage with. Within this group:

- 41% feel powerless to make a difference
- 36% think the responsibility to take action lies with governments and big corporations, not individuals
- 21% don't feel individual actions will make a difference
- 3% don't believe in climate change

**Going forward:** To support these students we must look at turning into a positive the reasons why they haven't already made changes, and what barriers might be preventing them. Importantly this will involve helping these students to understand their responsibility, and increasing their belief that they can make a difference i.e. taking first steps into climate action no matter how small they may feel.

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PART THREE

# Knowing what climate action is already happening

Helping to understand how and why some students are currently acting



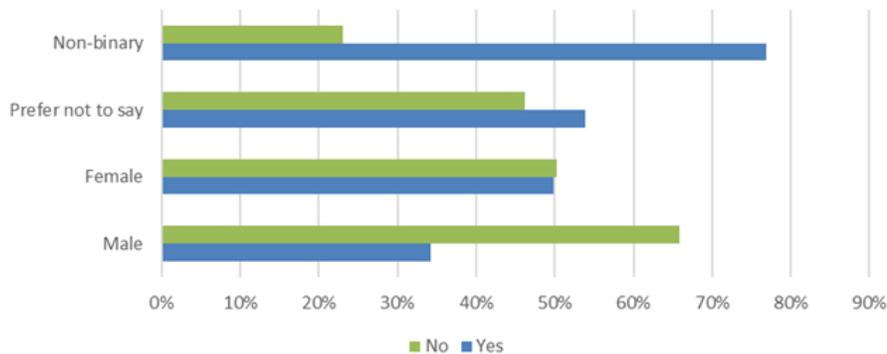
# Are students engaged in climate action?

## Students taking climate action:



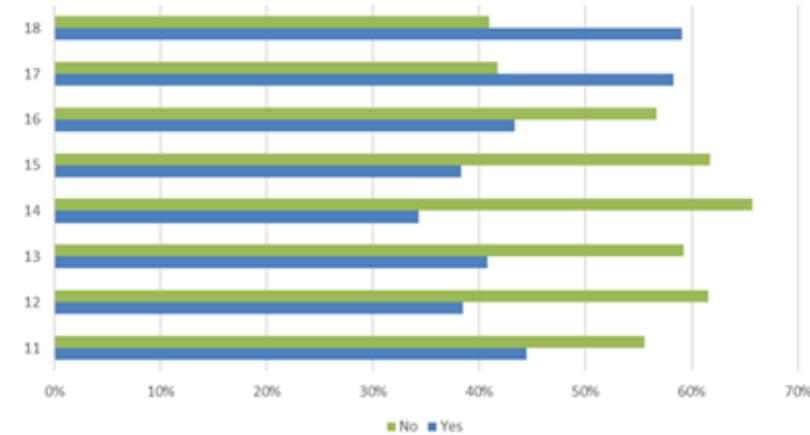
**45% YES**  
**55% NO**

Are you currently engaged in climate action? (Gender comparison)



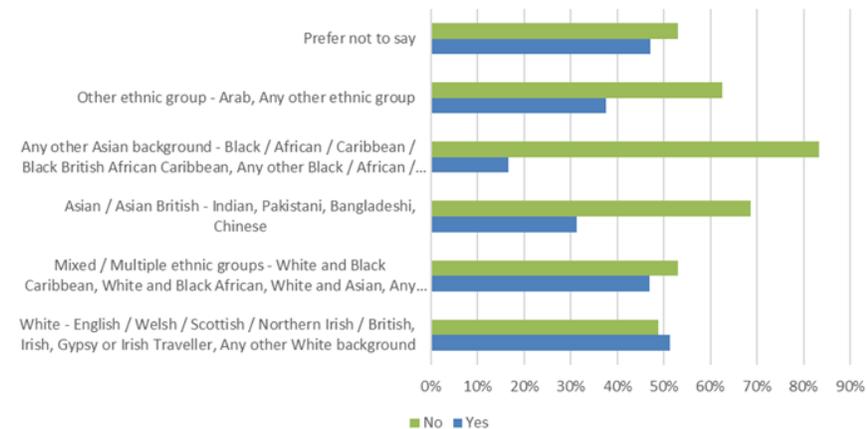
Female and non-binary respondents are more likely to be engaged in action.

Are you currently engaged in climate action? (Age comparison)



17- and 18-year-old students were more likely to be engaged in action, with 12 to 15 year olds the least likely to be engaged.

Are you currently engaged in climate action? (Ethnicity comparison)

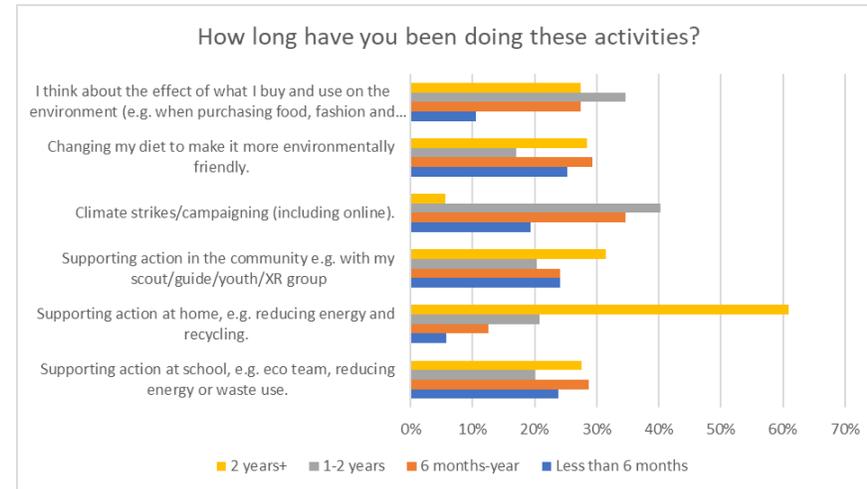


'Mixed ethnic groups' and 'white' respondents were most likely to be engaged in action.

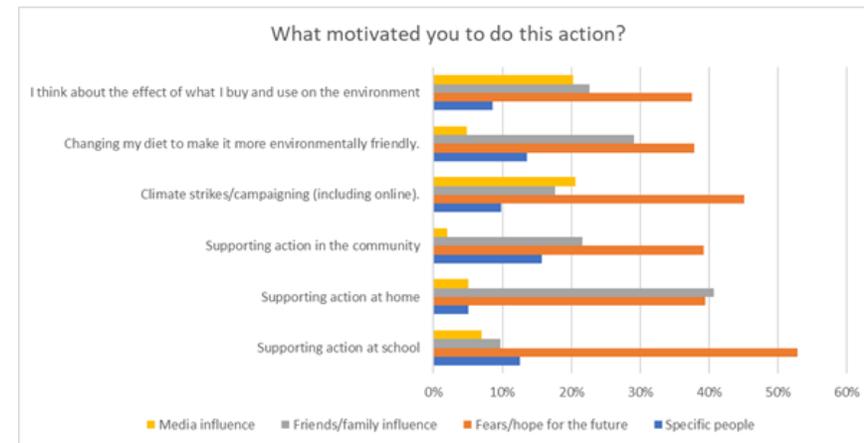
# How and why are students taking action?

Data given on this slide is **only from the 45% of students that are currently engaged in climate action.**

- 98%** Supporting action at home, e.g. reducing energy and recycling.
- 83%** I think about the effect of what I buy and use on the environment (e.g. when purchasing food, fashion and technology).
- 65%** Changing my diet to make it more environmentally friendly.
- 63%** Climate strikes/campaigning (including online).
- 40%** Supporting action at school, e.g. eco team, reducing energy or waste use.
- 27%** Supporting action in the community e.g. with my scout/guide/youth/XR group.



Supporting action at home is well established, whilst climate strikes, thinking about what to buy and, changes to diet all seem to be building momentum.



Most of these students are motivated to act due to 'Fears and hope for the future' followed by 'Friends/family influence.'

# Analysis of student action

## How and why are students acting at home?



What comes across strongly from the data is:

- **Students who are already taking climate action are clear about how to support climate action at home.** These are well established activities (most said more than 2 years) that students undertake with their family (90%).
- **Friends and families were the biggest influence** in motivating students to undertake this action (41%) followed by fears and hope for the future (39%).
- **More recently many students are also working on their own choices** e.g. changing diets or thinking about what they buy. They are mainly doing this with family (57%) or on their own (40%).



# Analysis of student action

## How and why are students acting in their school and community?

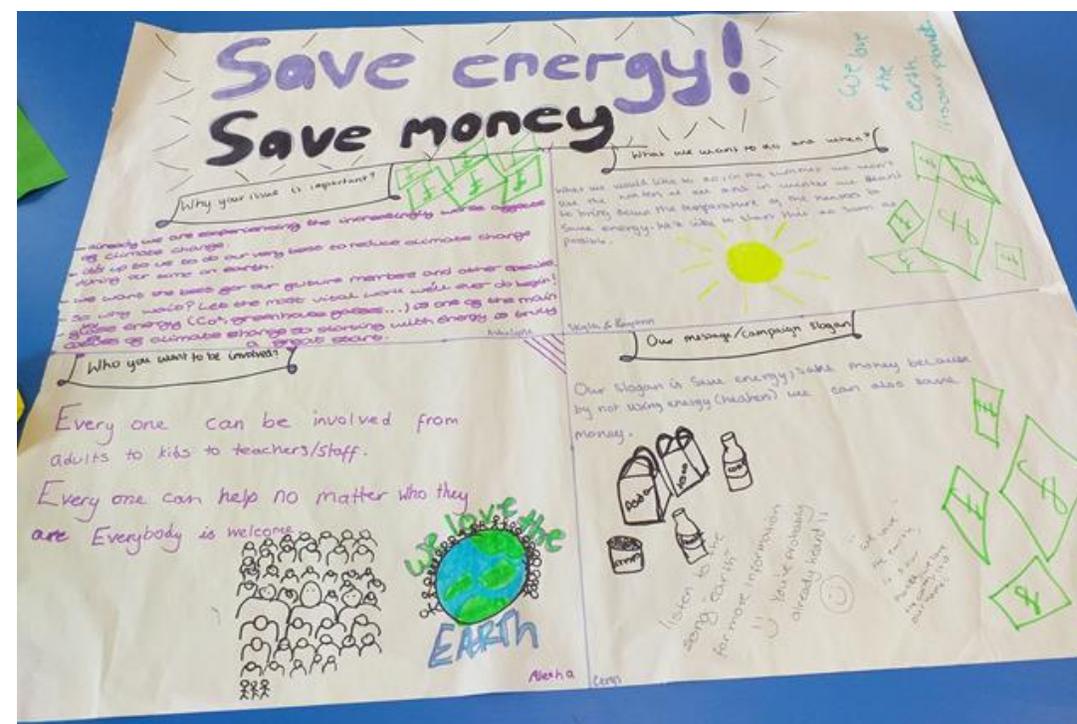


What comes across strongly from the data is **at school**:

- There is far less action at school with only 40% supporting any type of action here despite it being a trusted source of information and place where students learn about climate change.
- Most of those that do support action in school are doing it with support of a group (48%) or with their friends (27%) e.g. joining the eco-team, or reducing energy and waste use
- Over half taking action in school say they are driven by their fears for the future (53%).

In the community:

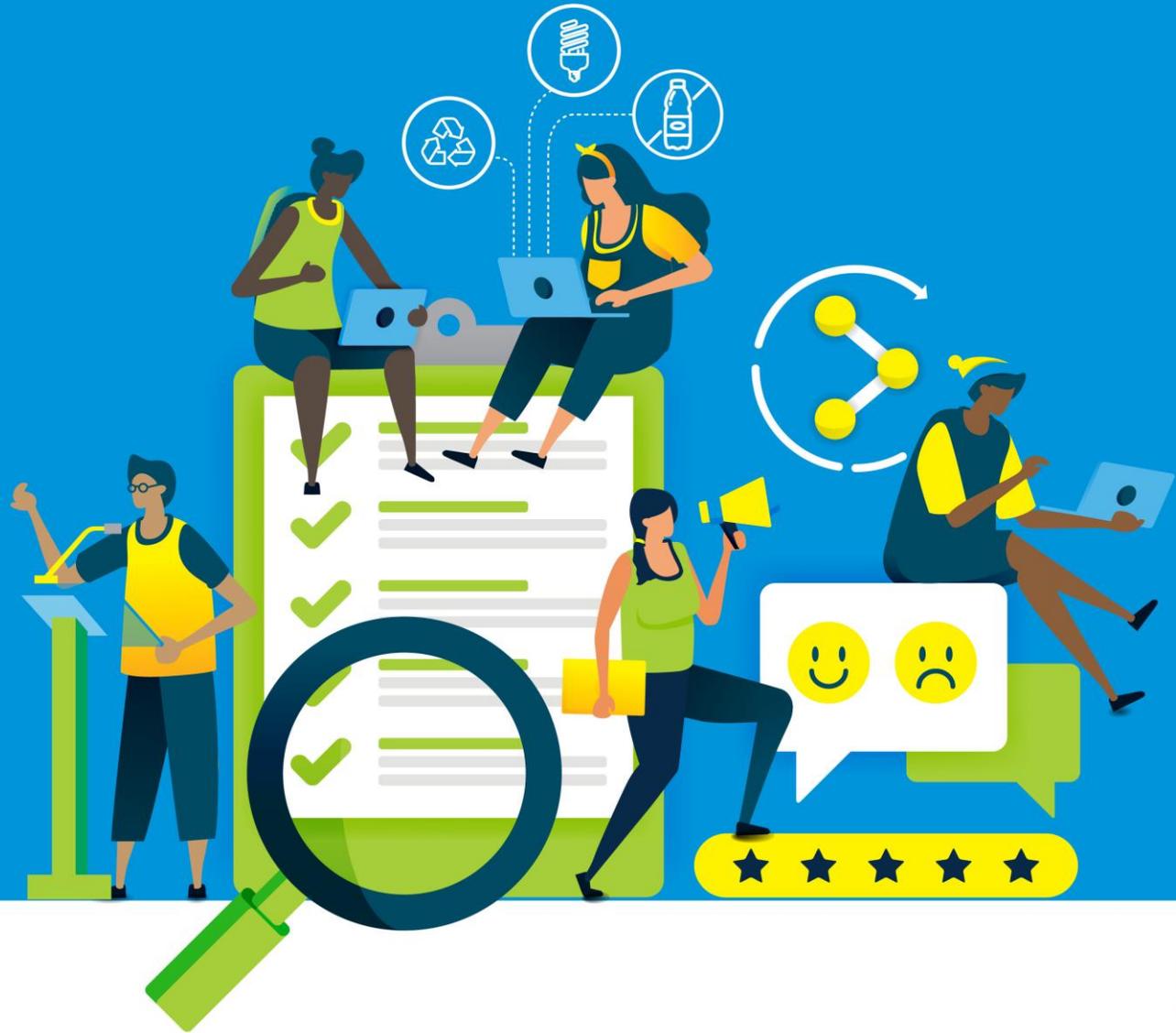
- The majority taking action in the community are doing this with an organisation (62%), followed by friends (19%) and on their own (12%). Families and school seem to play little role in the students' community action (4%).

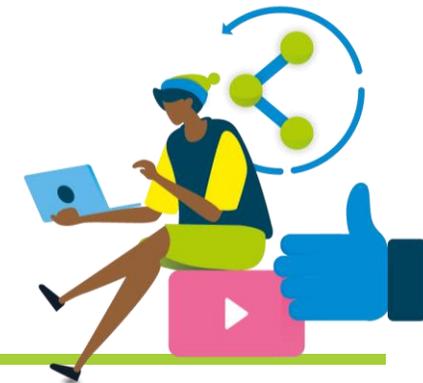


## PART FOUR

# Finding out what shapes views and inspires action

By understanding why students act as they do, and the underlying reasons for these behaviours, we can start to be clear about what the barriers and opportunities for change are





# What is most important to students right now?

There are two clear priorities for the students: **education; and friends and family**. The COVID pandemic has, perhaps inevitably, further focused attention on the top three areas, with students thinking more about health and wellbeing (85%) and family and friends (80%). For almost half of the students (47%) COVID has not influenced their thinking on climate change, whilst 32% said the pandemic had made them think climate change is more important.

There were no major differences to responses between gender, age and ethnicity, but a few observations include:

- Education and job opportunities become more of a priority for the over 15s.
- 18-year-olds were much more concerned with injustice in the world.
- Male students were more concerned with fitness compared with female students (11% to 30%).
- Religious beliefs were more of a priority for students who self-identified as from 'Asian' / 'Any other Asian backgrounds' than other ethnicities (40% compared to 8% who self-identified as 'White').

For students already taking climate action 'Causing less damage to the environment' was the 3rd priority (30%), whereas for those not taking climate action it was their 7th priority (13%).

**74%** Education (exams, applying to university)

**71%** Friends and family

**33%** Health and wellbeing

**27%** Social life

**21%** Causing less damage to the environment

**18%** Fitness

**17%** Religious beliefs

**9%** Job opportunities

**7%** Finances

**7%** Gender, sexuality and race

# Are students aware of climate change?

## Students know about climate change, they think it is important and they are concerned.

There is high acceptance of the human impact on climate change and its impact on the wider world, with 88% recognising that effects are happening now. Only 1% of students 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' to the statements that 'Emissions are caused by human activity and contribute to climate change' and 'Climate change is already having a negative effect on people's lives around the world.'

This acceptance gradually increased with age. 77% of 11-year-olds believed 'Emissions are caused by human activity and contribute to climate change,' but this rose to 93% of 18 year olds. 61% of 11-year-olds believed climate change will affect their life, and the way they live in the future and this belief was shared by 96% of 18 year olds. There were no notable differences between gender responses.

Far fewer students believe climate change is influencing their daily life right now (34%). This suggests that climate change is currently seen as too far away. This is further highlighted by the sense of urgency students felt over COVID-19 compared to climate change, which isn't so 'real' or 'dangerous for us here in the UK.'

*"As a western country, we don't feel the effects of climate change..... With Covid-19 people have had family and friends be physically affected so, therefore, will see it as more important."* Student

## 88%\* of students thought

- Emissions are caused by human activity and contribute to climate change;
- Increases in extreme weather patterns, intensified droughts, shrinking ice caps are all signs of climate change;
- Climate change is already having a negative effect on people's lives around the world.

34% of students thought climate change is already affecting their life and the way they live. Yet this rose to 81% when asked about whether climate change will affect their life and the way they live in the future.

*\*% given is of those students who strongly agreed – agreed*

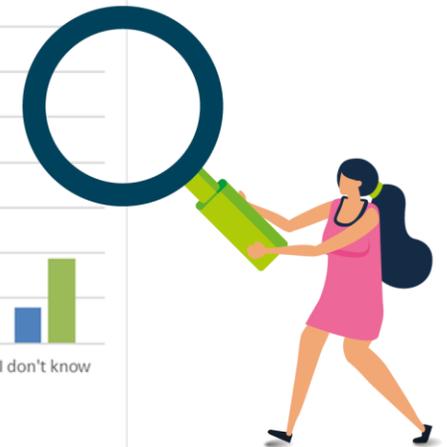
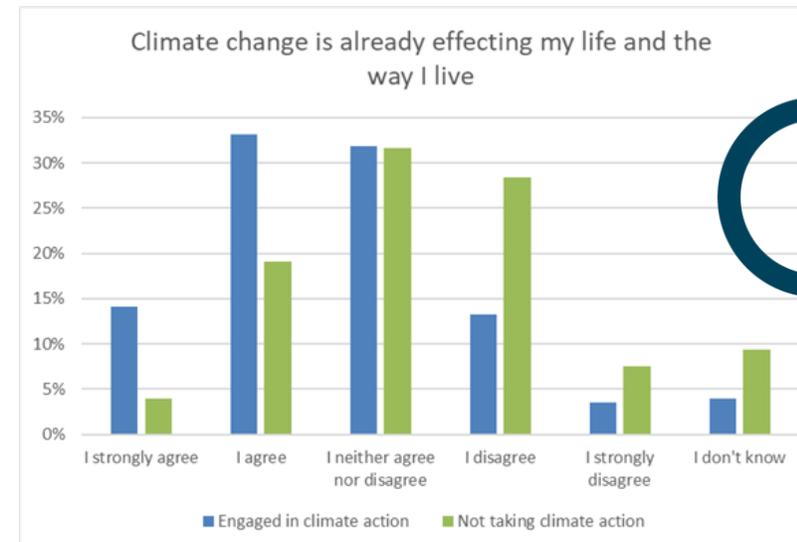
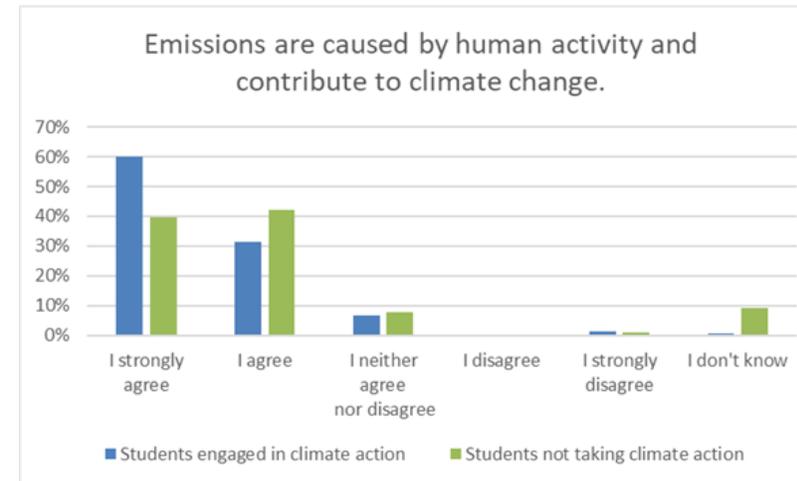


# Does awareness lead to taking more action?

Students that are already engaged in climate action are more likely to 'strongly believe' in the human impact on climate change and its impact on the wider world, including that climate change:

- is already having a negative effect on people's lives around the world;
- is already affecting their life and the way they live;
- will affect their life in the future.

Those students not taking climate action still do believe in the human impact on climate change and its impact on the wider world, just not as strongly (they were more likely to choose the 'I agree' section and the 'I don't know' section). Very few students on either side disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statements.



# Whose responsibility is climate change?



Responsibility of every individual came in at 50% and there was little to no difference in response to this option either from those that are already taking climate action or those that are not yet taking action. By far the greatest responsibility, however, was felt to be that of the Government at 81%.

**“Governing bodies have the most power and so should use that power to enforce ways to combat climate change. Every individual has the responsibility to look after the planet and if everyone changes their actions then it will make a big difference.”**

**“The vast majority of pollution is created by corporations. Without them changing (with pressure from the government), individual change will not do enough.”**

<b>81%</b>	<b>The Government</b>
<b>59%</b>	<b>Businesses and Corporations</b>
<b>50%</b>	<b>Every individual</b>
<b>41%</b>	Fuel suppliers
<b>23%</b>	Young people
<b>16%</b>	Schools and places of work
<b>10%</b>	My community
<b>5%</b>	Families
<b>3%</b>	No-one

# Are students aware of their impact on the environment?



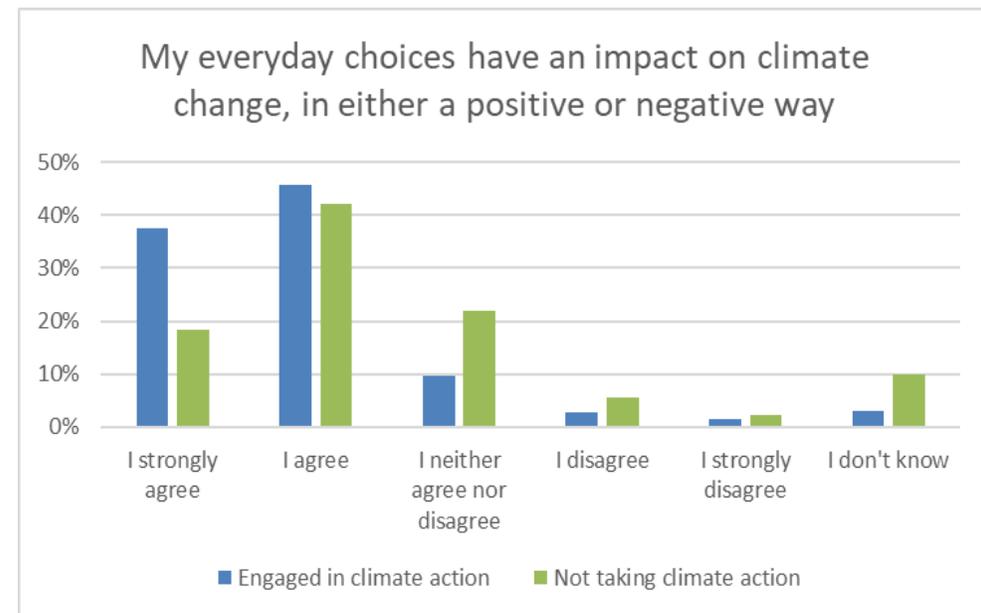
The majority of students are aware of the impact they have as individuals on climate change.

Those students that are already undertaking climate action were more likely to 'strongly believe' their choices have an impact. This suggests that a feeling of personal responsibility is more likely to lead students to engaging in action.

Although 70% of students feel their everyday choices have an impact, there is no straight line to 70% of students then undertaking action. Instead, only 45% of students overall said they were engaged in climate action.

**70%**

**Of students thought their everyday choices will have an impact on climate change, in either a positive or negative way.**



# Do students feel they can make a positive difference on climate change?



There was no lead area where students felt they can make a difference but on average, the closer ties of family, school and friends seemed to offer most opportunities.

In terms of gender, age, and ethnicity there were only a few notable observations:

- Male respondents were more likely to feel they could make 'no' or 'very little' difference. For instance, 33% of male respondents thought they had no influence on their friends compared with 11% of female respondents. And 29% of male respondents thought they had no influence in school compared with 17% of female respondents.
- Younger students were more likely to say that they could 'make a big difference,' compared to the older students who were more likely to say they could 'make a little difference.'

What came across strongly in the open statements from students is the limit they see in each of our power to make a difference. The quotes here (and there are many similar) reflect how far they think their individual choices do, or rather don't have an impact on tackling climate change.

*"I feel as if every little helps, however the impact my personal choices have are minuscule compared to how much change is needed."*

*"Not particularly, my family are interested in why I choose to be vegetarian however it doesn't impact their meat eating. As a collective with petitions and strikes we can make some impact, but it is still quite minor in terms of influencing the gov and fuel companies etc."*

Where do students feel they can make the biggest difference\*

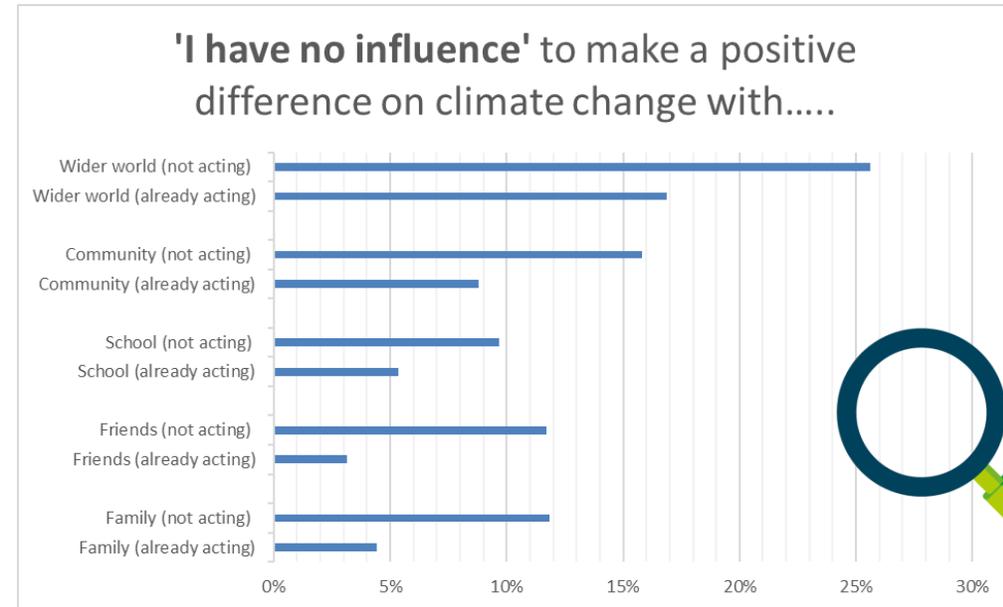
64%	Family
63%	School
61%	Friends
55%	Community
51%	Wider world

\*% given is a combination of 'I can make a little difference' and 'I can make a big difference'.

# Does a sense of power lead to action?

Students already taking climate action are more likely to feel that they can make a 'big difference' on climate change with their friends and family.

- 26% of students that are acting feel they can make a 'big difference' with their family, compared to 9% for those who haven't acted.
- 19% of students that are acting feel they can make a 'big difference' with their friends, compared to 10% for those who haven't acted.
- Interestingly however, there's an even split for both groups in relation to making a 'big difference' in school (20% vs. 20%), the community (19% vs 15%), and the wider world (31% vs. 31%).



Students that are not already taking climate action are more likely to feel they have 'no influence,' especially with friends.

# Who and what is shaping students views on climate action?



Perhaps unsurprisingly social media is a primary resource for young people to access information about climate change. Students' responses also highlighted the importance of school in talking about climate change.

In terms of individuals that influence students, it is clear the great impact Greta Thunberg and David Attenborough have had: 30% of students cited Greta as having made a big difference to what they think about climate change. Teachers and parents also play an important role.

***"Greta Thunberg, she is a girl around my age who is very inspirational she was passionate about this and made her voice known."***

***"I think that Greta Thunberg has made a huge difference she has stood up for something she believes in and is an amazing person. I went to see her at a climate change march with some of my friends and my mum and it was an absolutely amazing experience!"***

***"My teachers at school, Mrs Molnar and Mrs Clapson, they are very strong advocates for becoming more green and have started so many climate saving initiatives in our school! I am so grateful to both of them."***

***"Eco team from my school inspired and educated me on how I could help improve the environment."***

***"My dad makes a huge effort in the house to help the climate movement whenever he can, and feels strongly about it. This affects me positively because he's always supportive about new changes to lifestyle and likes to talk about it. He's hopeful about the movement and this inspires me."***

<b>66%</b>	<b>Social Media</b>
<b>64%</b>	<b>School</b>
<b>54%</b>	<b>TV</b>
<b>26%</b>	<b>Friends</b>
<b>21%</b>	<b>Charities</b>
<b>19%</b>	<b>Family</b>
<b>14%</b>	<b>Celebrities</b>
<b>13%</b>	<b>My community</b>
<b>12%</b>	<b>Print press</b>
<b>1%</b>	<b>Religious setting</b>

# What is the impact of these sources of information?



The two most trusted sources of information are school topped only by charities. However, it is social media that inspires most to get involved at 39%, with school inspiring action for 36%.

In terms of gender, age, and ethnicity there were a few notable observations:

- Female respondents were slightly more inspired to get involved in climate action by the information sources, particularly with social media (51% of female respondents said social media 'Inspires me to get involved' compared to 24% of male respondents).
- Social media inspired more of the older students to get involved.
- The impact on the community in inspiring students to get involved was greater for 'White' and 'Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups' compared to those from 'Asian' backgrounds (40% to 12%).

On the whole students didn't feel the information sources gave across too many negative messages, with the highest negativity coming from print press at 25% and lowest were charities, religious setting and friends (all at 4%).

Despite being the most trusted, charities were seen as the least representative (10% 'I see people like me (e.g. my age/gender/race) talking about it'), followed by print press (11%). Social media on the other hand was seen as more representative (34%). There was little noticeable difference between ethnicity and age. In terms of gender female respondents were more likely to say they 'see people like me (e.g. my age/gender/race) talking about it' amongst friends, school and social media.

## Inspires students to get involved

<b>39%</b>	<b>Social Media</b>
<b>37%</b>	<b>Charities</b>
<b>36%</b>	<b>School</b>
<b>31%</b>	<b>Friends</b>
<b>29%</b>	<b>My community</b>
<b>28%</b>	<b>Family</b>
<b>27%</b>	<b>Celebrities</b>
<b>27%</b>	<b>TV</b>
<b>17%</b>	<b>Religious setting</b>
<b>10%</b>	<b>Print press</b>

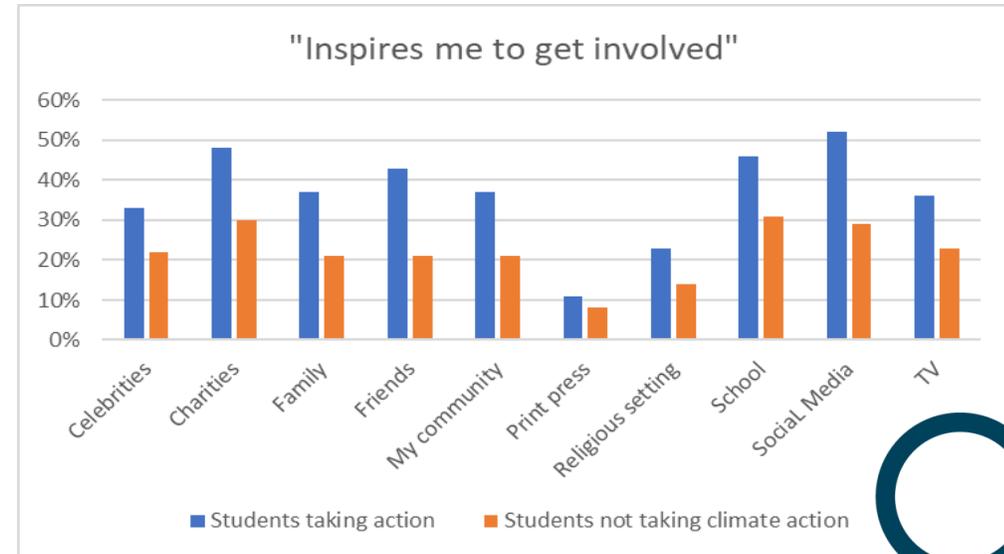
## Provides information student's trust

<b>57%</b>	<b>Charities</b>
<b>56%</b>	<b>School</b>
<b>43%</b>	<b>TV</b>
<b>43%</b>	<b>Family</b>
<b>30%</b>	<b>Print press</b>
<b>30%</b>	<b>My community</b>
<b>29%</b>	<b>Friends</b>
<b>24%</b>	<b>Religious setting</b>
<b>23%</b>	<b>Social media</b>
<b>16%</b>	<b>Celebrities</b>

# Do information sources impact action?

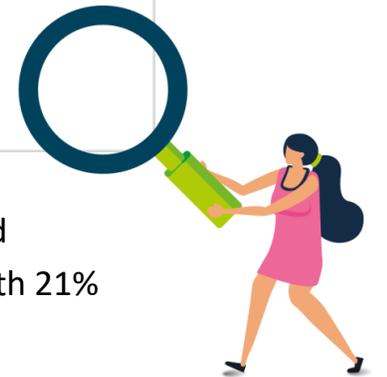
All the students trusted the sources of information to the same extent, whether they are already taking action or not. There were also very similar responses to whether students saw themselves represented. Therefore, there can be no conclusion drawn that reasons for not acting are that students don't trust the different information, or don't see themselves reflected in the different sources.

However, students that are already taking climate action are more 'inspired to get involved' by the information sources, in particular by friends and social media. This raises the question, are the students who are acting already actively looking for information to inspire them (e.g. following people like Greta on social media), or are they more ready to respond to what they read?



**43%** of students already taking climate action said friends 'inspires me to get involved' compared with 21% not taking action.

**52%** of those taking action were inspired by social media, compared with 29% of those that weren't.



## PART FIVE

# Focusing on what students believe can motivate action

Section 6 in the survey used research to identify 5 different approaches to motivating students to undertake climate action. Students say which they thought would most likely motivate them.



# Motivating action

For each approach students said the extent to which they felt these options would influence their behaviour and motivate them to take action.



	This would motivate me	This might motivate me	I would ignore this approach	Don't know
Install more equipment that make it easier to undertake action, e.g. more recycling bins around school.	54%	36%	4%	6%
Track results and showcase the positive impact of our actions, for instance how much energy or waste we have saved.	52%	33%	6%	8%
Linking climate action to other campaigns that make life better, such as improving your health.	42%	45%	7%	6%
Introduce changes that we are not really aware of e.g. mix more vegetarian options into the rest of the canteen menu.	40%	30%	20%	10%
Greater engagement with students so they understand the rules and how they will help.	39%	45%	8%	8%
Sustainability taught across all subjects.	39%	38%	10%	13%
Stronger school rules to ensure climate friendly behaviour by everyone, for instance about cutting energy use or food waste.	36%	46%	9%	9%
Rewards and competitions to encourage action.	36%	40%	18%	7%
Careers guidance on 'green' skills and jobs that are going to be needed.	35%	37%	14%	13%
More opportunities for students to feed in and influence rules and targets, e.g. forums, elected eco-reps, anonymous suggestion boxes.	31%	41%	19%	9%
Hear from inspiring (local) people about the positive difference they are making.	30%	40%	18%	11%
Access to more groups and activities to discuss and carry out action e.g. climate forums.	24%	44%	20%	11%
Have student monitors, e.g. energy and recycling monitors.	22%	38%	26%	14%