



YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE TIME OF COVID-19

A FEAR AND HOPE STUDY OF 16-24 YEAR OLDS



Rosie Carter

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FOREWORD

As a 23 year-old living in Britain today, I recognise and identify with the analysis within this important report from HOPE not hate Charitable Trust.

Young people like me have spent much of our lives bearing the impact of austerity and cuts to services as well as facing insecure employment. I myself have been employed on a zero hours contract and have seen the ease with which my friends and I have had our hours changed at the drop of a hat. Instability and uncertainty have marked our lives as young people, yet my generation's world view is more compassionate, brave and optimistic than those who have gone before us.

This report demonstrates that the majority of young people see a real possibility for change and that we want a stake in our futures. The intelligence, compassion and courage I see from young people across Britain today, particularly around issues such as refugee protection and climate change, gives me real hope for the future.

I urge decision makers to listen carefully to the rallying cry of my generation for a fairer, greener world built on the principles of solidarity and compassion.

NADIA WHITTOME

Member of Parliament for Nottingham East and honorary president for the British Youth Council





HOPE not hate Charitable Trust’s *fear and HOPE* reports have, since 2011, tracked the public mood to understand how fears and hopes unite and divide us. We found that a traditional left-right, class based political axis was failing to explain peoples’ values, attitudes and voting behaviour. Instead, we looked at how attitudes in relation to culture, identity and nation were formed on the basis of a complex interplay of class, personal experience, economic security, life circumstance, and media consumption.

We split the population into ‘identity tribes’ based on a shared worldview, which we watched shift and change over time. These tribes helped us to understand resilience and vulnerability to hateful narratives, and to better understand how major events and political changes have contributed to a shift in how people saw identity issues.

This new report builds on this research, looking specifically at how fear and hope shape the attitudes and behaviours of young people, aged 16-24, in Britain today.

[HOPENOTHATE.ORG.UK/FEAR-HOPE-REPORTS/](https://hopenothate.org.uk/fear-hope-reports/)

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With support from Nick Lowles, Jemma Levene and David Lawrence. Thanks to France O’Grady, Owen Jones, Sarah Green, Roger Harding, Leni Morris and Nadia Whittome MP for their contributions.

We are grateful to all the the organisations who joined an initial consultation to shape the research; The TUC, EVAW, Mind, Galop, Stand Up!, RECLAIM, the British Youth Council, Coram and SEBBA Trust

INTRODUCTION

HOPE not hate Charitable Trust's *fear and HOPE* reports have, since 2011, tracked the public mood to understand how fears and hopes unite and divide us. We found that a traditional left-right, class based political axis was failing to explain peoples' values, attitudes and voting behaviour. Instead, we looked at how attitudes in relation to culture, identity and nation were formed on the basis of a complex interplay of class, personal experience, economic security, life circumstance, and media consumption.

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This new report builds on this research, looking specifically at how fear and hope shape the attitudes and behaviours of young people, aged 16-24, in Britain today.

Instability and uncertainty have been major features in the lives of young people in Britain. The UK economy has wronged young people for decades, as the closure of training programmes, market de-regularisation and privatisation have closed routes to security for many, with low wages the norm, unemployment rates consistently higher for young people than older cohorts, and employment primarily in the service sector where there are fewer opportunities to progress.

Further, 16-24 year olds today have grown up in the shadow of the 2007 economic crisis, recession and imposition of austerity, adversely affected by weak jobs markets, poor housing and cuts to public services. These cuts have slashed the support of youth services and social security, and young people today are more likely now than older generations were at their age to be in poverty and debt, as a result of precarious work and high housing costs, and disproportionately employed on zero hours contracts.

The first generation to have grown up online and with social media, Gen Z are the most diverse, politically liberal and educated age set to date. However, in the wake of Coronavirus, Brexit, and ongoing political turmoil, those aged 16 to 24 are beginning their adult lives in a period of even more



uncertainty, inheriting political choices of older generations in which they weren't given a say.

This report finds that on the whole, young people hold more progressive social attitudes than older cohorts, but our research on the far right and our work in classrooms across the country has also uncovered some worrying trends among young people, particularly young men.



Men's rights and anti-feminism are increasingly become a slip road to the far right, appealing to young men feeling emasculated in an age of changing social norms. While not all misogynists share racist views and not every white supremacist is a misogynist, our research has increasingly witnessed how online men's rights and anti-feminist communities work to advance

a racist political agenda. A backlash against feminism aligns male supremacy with white supremacy, as it plays on white male insecurities to push back against progressive values and increasingly liberal social norms.

Our research, laid out in this report, finds that many young people are feeling alienated, distanced from a political system which they don't feel represents them, and pessimistic about a future in the wake of a pandemic. Our research has shown that uncertainty, pessimism and fear can tip the balance of hope and hate, and we wanted to better understand how young people, among the most likely to be impacted by the economic downturn that will follow the coronavirus outbreak, will respond.

At the same time, we find 16-24 year olds more optimistic than older age groups, engaged, and hopeful. It is clear that rather than being dismissed as 'snowflakes' who lament the state of the world with an unwarranted sense of entitlement, most young people see possibility for change and want a stake in their futures.

This report offers a snapshot of opinion among young people, creating a new set of 'identity tribes' to illustrate how young people interpret the world around them, divided by their relationship with the political system, what they value for the future and what troubles them now.

We find widespread fears, particularly for those starting their working lives in a post-pandemic landscape, with many struggling financially because of lockdown. The pressures of everyday life weigh heavy on large numbers of young people, and mental health is the biggest issue most young people say they face in their everyday lives.

There is also a lot of hope in this report. We find young people more optimistic than older generations, compassionate and conscious about issues like refugee protection and climate change. They are confident about their futures in a world of advanced technology and ambitious about what they will achieve.

The coronavirus outbreak, and its economic footprint, will have a huge impact on the lives of young people in Britain. We hope that understanding their hopes and fears, and how this feeds their politics of identity, will be a helpful contribution to shaping the response.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. HOPES AND FEARS OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN 2020

The attitudes of young people today are diverse, marked by their experiences, identities, hopes and fears. This report lays out how young people's worldview places them on a spectrum from left-wing activists to reactionary conservatives, and looks at how this informs their behaviour. We have created a new segmentation model of seven groups, each containing people with a similar worldview.

Because young people are overall more socially liberal, we have several groups who hold progressive views who make up around half the population. Two of these groups are politically motivated, with one voicing more faith in the political establishment. The third is aspirational, driven by their own interests, while the fourth is more disengaged. We find a relatively large apathetic section, who are generally indifferent around political issues and a more ambivalent group who have mixed views on social issues. Finally we find a more conservative group, within which some members engage with racist conspiracies and far right ideologies.

2. MALE SUPREMACY AND WHITE SUPREMACY

Young people share more socially liberal views than older people, but many, especially young men, hold deeply problematic views around race and gender.

A large majority (79%) of young people say that there is a place for every kind of person in this country, compared to 63% of our December 2019 nationally representative poll, and 81% say that having a wide variety of backgrounds and cultures is part of British culture, compared to 63% in the same nationally representative poll.

Young people also share more progressive views around LGBT+ issues. Yet young people have less positive attitudes of feminists, and many young men reject feminism as an ideology that displaces men. The overlay between male supremacy and white supremacy, and its pervasiveness among young people presents huge challenges as the men's rights movement increasingly acts as a slip road to the far right. A backlash against feminism aligns male supremacy with white supremacy as it plays on white male insecurities to push back against progressive values and increasingly liberal social norms.

3. "GENERATION CORONAVIRUS"

Many are pessimistic about how coronavirus will affect their future and large numbers of young people are already struggling as a result of lockdown measures. Only half of young people think that in five years' time they will have a good job and a decent place to live.

Young people are facing significant challenges in work, education, wellbeing and household finances as a result of the coronavirus outbreak, many of which will outlive the pandemic. More than half (55%) of young people feel that the coronavirus outbreak has limited their options for the future, with young people from low income backgrounds or in precarious work most likely to feel anxious.

These anxieties are opening up generational divides; a majority (67%) of young people agree that their generation will pay the price for a pandemic that has mostly affected older people; just 8% disagreed with this.

4. UNDER PRESSURE

More than half of young people state mental health in the three greatest issues they personally face. Young women and young people from Black and Asian backgrounds are most likely to report feeling under pressure in their day-to-day lives.

With such uncertainty and high levels of insecurity over the future, it is not surprising that the coronavirus outbreak has had a significant impact on the wellbeing of young people. Almost half (44%) of young people reported mental health as the biggest issue they personally face at the moment, ahead of coronavirus (36%), and more than half (56%) of young people, including 62% of young women and 60% of 16 and 17 year olds say that they feel under pressure in their day to day lives.

5. POLITICALLY DISCONNECTED

Most young people feel disconnected from the political system and feel that those in power do not care to represent them.

Pessimism among the younger generation about the impacts of Brexit have only added to a widespread sense of political neglect. Three quarters of young people believe that politicians don't care what young people think; just 25%

think that they do. Young women are particularly disillusioned with politicians; 80% think politicians don't care about what young people think and just 5% say that the political system works well.

Less than a quarter (24%) of young people agree that their generation is well represented in political discussion; 48% disagree. This increases to 59% among 16 and 17 year olds, who are not eligible to vote.

6. THE RISE OF CONSPIRACY THEORY

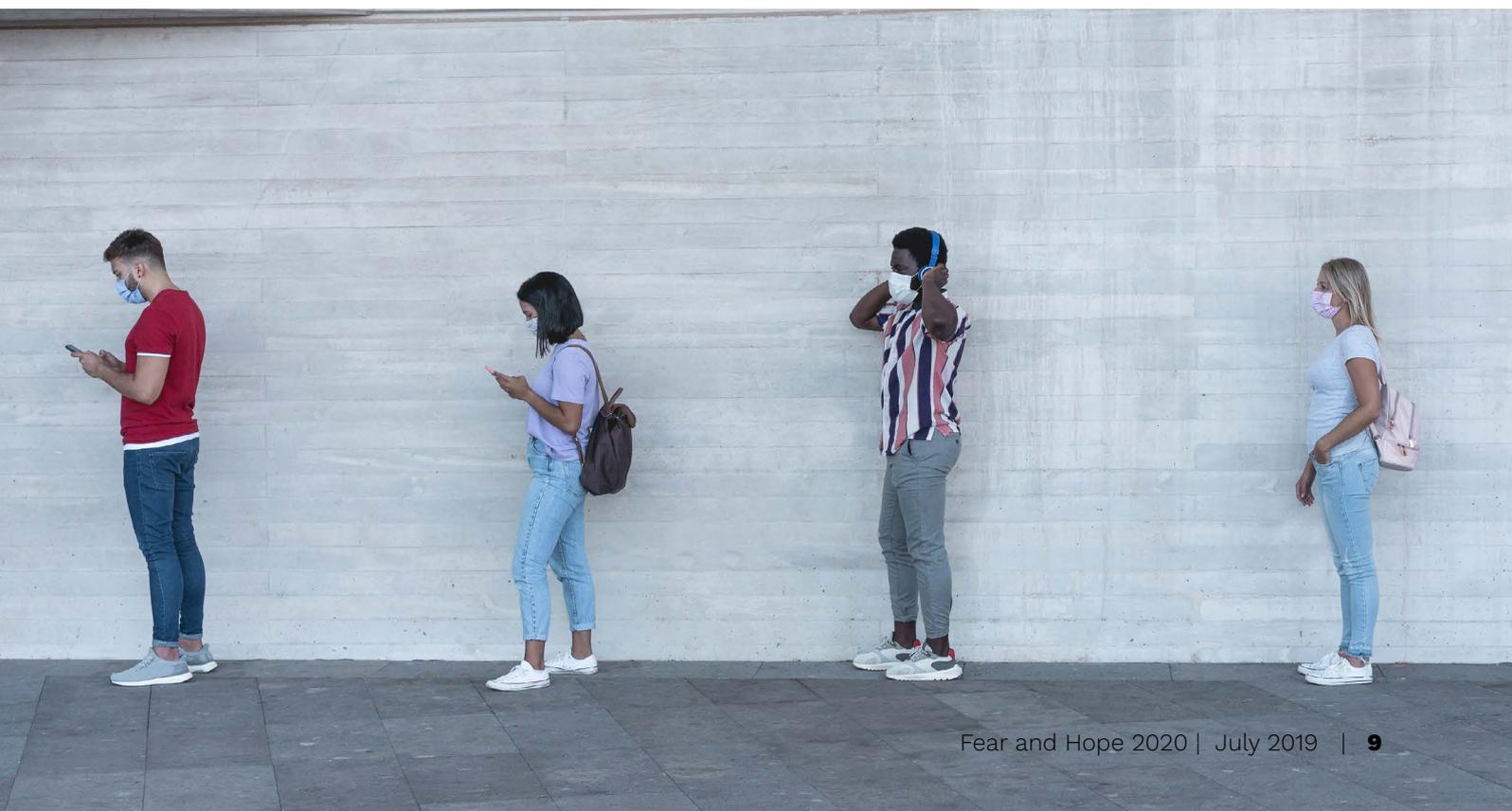
Large numbers of young people, especially young men are accessing extreme content online and many young men think political violence is acceptable. Many young people believe, or are receptive to, popular conspiracy theories, with young men more likely to believe conspiracy theories rooted in racism.

While just 29% of 16-24 year olds say that they watch the news daily, large numbers of young people, especially young men, are consuming alternative media sources online, with some accessing extreme, conspiratorial or misogynistic content online. Almost half of young men (46%)

believe that political violence can be necessary in extreme circumstances.

Many young people believe in conspiracy, with young men more likely to accept conspiracy theory based on racist tropes. Worryingly, 14% of young people, and 19% of young men, think it is true that Jewish people have an unhealthy control over the world's banking system. Moreover, 15% of young people, and 20% of young men, say that is true that the official account of the Nazi Holocaust is a lie and the number of Jews killed by the Nazis during World War II has been exaggerated on purpose.

Due to the capital some seek by being 'outrageous' or 'controversial' in contemporary online culture, a behaviour which is especially widespread among young men and can frequently occur in relation to the Holocaust, it is difficult to gauge whether all of those who agreed with this statement genuinely believe it. However, a cavalier response to these statements shows a disregard for the severity of the issues at hand, indicates a reactionary response to official narratives, and an openness to questioning the existence of discrimination and prejudice.



RECOMMENDATIONS

THIS REPORT highlights the need for immediate action to address the concerns of young people, many of whom are struggling under pressure and fearful about a future in the wake of coronavirus. Many young people are already feeling unsettled, and some are looking for answers in mistrust, blame and political disengagement. These sentiments will be magnified in the post-pandemic context unless urgent and decisive action is taken.

THERE IS A CLEAR NEED FOR A RECOVERY PLAN TO SUPPORT YOUNG PEOPLE THROUGH THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, AND THE LONG-TERM CONSEQUENCES IT WILL HAVE.

- While we welcome the Government's proposed £2 billion Kickstart Scheme to create fully subsidised 6-month job placements for 16-24 year olds claiming Universal Credit, this is a drop in the ocean given projections¹ of unemployment rising to 11.7%, or 4 million people. We need to see a longer-term recovery plan that comes with a realistic budget for the scale what is needed, to avoid large scale youth unemployment and invests in skills and training, accounts for a second or third wave of the virus, and fundamentally, that prioritises the interests of young people.
- We call on the Government to develop this recovery plan in consultation across sectors but also with young people. This could take the form of young citizens' panels run by central government in each region and nation.
- This recovery plan not only needs to address the economic impact on young people's employment and financial security, but also on their wellbeing and their ability to feel valued in society. The Government must offer more funding for pastoral care in schools and colleges, social care and youth services to account for their increased need.
- The Government must also ensure they are providing funding support for the invaluable organisations working on the frontline, especially those supporting young people with mental health and wellbeing, many of whom are facing funding crises when they are needed most.

YOUNG PEOPLE NEED TO BE GIVEN A STAKE IN DECIDING THEIR OWN FUTURES, SO THAT THEIR VOICES ARE HEARD, THEY FEEL REPRESENTED, AND POLITICAL ALIENATION AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE IS REDUCED

- 16 and 17 year olds must be given the opportunity to influence key decisions that affect their lives by reducing the voting age to 16 for all public elections
- Democratic education must become a compulsory part of the curriculum for schools to teach students how the government and local government works, how new laws are introduced and how they are able to be heard in these systems
- Too many young people are still not on the electoral register, so the Government should do more to promote voter registration, including raising awareness that students can register at both their home and term-time addresses
- All Political parties must do better to represent the needs of young people by listening to their views and creating more opportunities for real involvement in their structures. They should also consider developing a youth manifesto alongside their party manifestos

YOUNG PEOPLE SHOULD NOT BE BURDENED WITH THE CONSEQUENCES OF A HARD BREXIT, WHICH WILL ONLY ADD TO THE CHALLENGES FACED BY YOUNG PEOPLE STARTING THEIR WORKING LIVES IN THE WAKE OF A PANDEMIC

- It is critical that the Government do not push through a no-deal Brexit, or agree a hard Brexit deal that is detrimental for the UK's economy. Young people will feel the brunt of the economic impact this has, a decision in which most never had a say. It is unquestionable for their future that negotiations prioritise sustaining and improving economic growth in the UK
- Young people should be guaranteed the opportunities offered by the Erasmus+ programme so that young people are given the chance to travel and benefit from each other's world-leading education systems

THE PATHS THAT LEAD THOSE FEELING ISOLATED OR EXCLUDED TOWARDS HATRED, CONSPIRACY AND MISTRUST MUST BE BLOCKED

- Government policy around online harms must take the lead in challenging hatred, conspiracy and misinformation online and not simply defer to big social media companies. They are ultimately responsible for holding tech companies to account.
- Tech companies need to step up; not just to remove extreme content from their platforms but to place content moderation at the very heart of their operation. To shift from responding to reports of illegal or harmful content, often submitted by victims of such content, to actively seeking it out themselves. To improve staff literacy of issues relating to hate and prejudice (systemic and organised) and provide better support for their moderation teams, and to never promote extreme content or make it easy for users to find extreme or harmful content.
- Social media platforms must consistently monitor and change their algorithms to avoid the ‘recommendation’ of extreme or harmful content, and the Government must hold them to account. This is most pertinent for YouTube – where we find many young people ‘falling down the rabbit hole’ from gateway to extreme content
- Social media companies should not only crackdown on hateful and extreme content, but ensure there are positive alternatives for young people seeking to fill a void, by promoting positive counternarratives and by ensuring that influencers are actively promoting these

MORE MUST BE DONE TO CHALLENGE RACISM AND MISOGYNY IN SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES, AND MORE BROADLY TO ADDRESS THE OVERLAY OF MALE SUPREMACY AND WHITE SUPREMACY

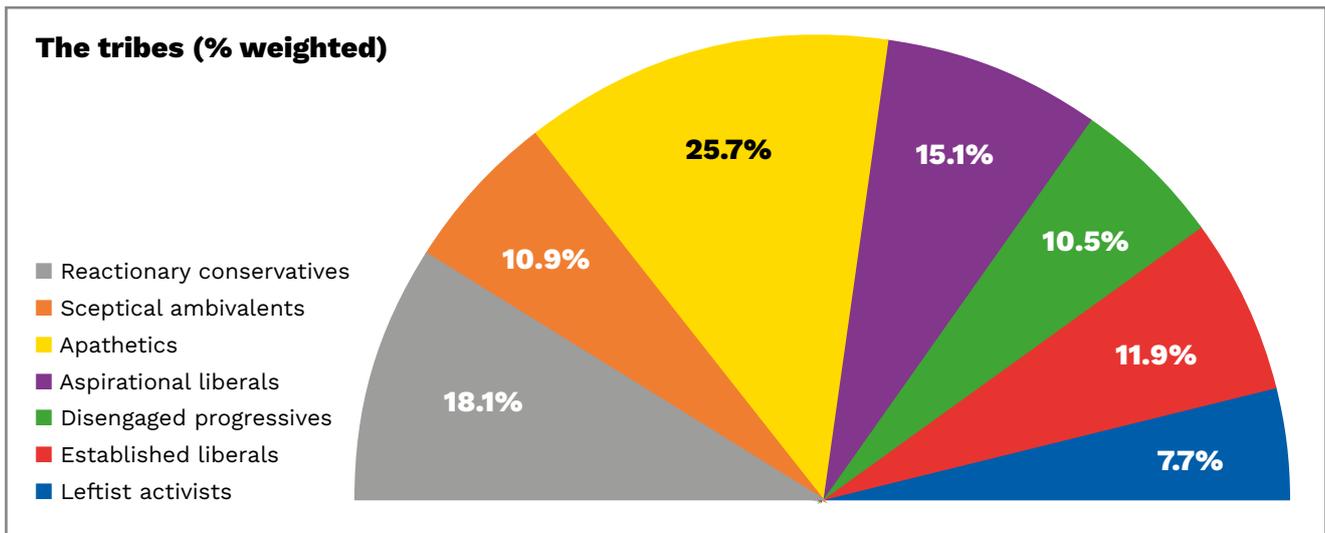
- We support calls for the long overdue addition of Black history to the curriculum, so that topics like migration and empire are an integral part of learning in schools and colleges, and teachers are supported to deliver this

- The Department for Education must urgently make tackling sexism and sexual harassment in schools a policy priority. They must offer schools guidance, ensure that there is adequate support and teacher training so that staff are able to deliver this, and ensure that the curriculum for relationships and sex education, across all key stages, is designed to promote consent, positive relationships and prevent sexism and sexual harassment
- Schools, colleges and universities must do more to address sexism and misogyny, taking a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment and adequately supporting staff to identify problematic behaviour and to adhere to these policies and procedures. They must ensure a survivor-centred approach so that young women are adequately supported.
- Policy makers must better understand how misogyny and racism intersect, as part of a wider pushback against an equality agenda and a furthering of white male supremacist power through frustrated entitlement. This includes ensuring greater support, including specialist services, for women of colour who are most likely to be on the receiving end of this hatred.

TACKLING THE SPREAD OF CONSPIRACY THEORY AND MISINFORMATION ENTAILS MORE THAN JUST REMOVING CONTENT, BUT ADDRESSING DEEPER CAUSES WHICH FUEL THE ATTRACTION

- While preventing the spread of conspiracy theory and misinformation is an essential task, more is needed to stem their appeal. Conspiracy theory is in some ways a symptom as much as a cause of a cynical outlook on politics and society. Belief in conspiracy is a product of a cynical outlook on politics as well as enforcing the feeling that actions have little chance of affecting change. It is all a setup. These are issues that call for deep changes and require greater engagement and serious structural, political and financial commitment.

THE TRIBES



To better understand the attitudes of young people in Britain today, we have created a new segmentation model of seven groups, each containing people with a similar worldview. This helps us to understand how views on particular issues interact and overlap. This should not be interpreted on a left to right political axis, nor simply on the strength of people’s attitudes to particular subjects or issues.

Because young people are overall more socially liberal, we have several groups who hold progressive views, although hold these to different strengths and place value on different things. **Aspirational liberals** hold socially progressive views, but their focus is away from politics and more towards their own prospects. **Disengaged progressives** share similar social views, but feel detached from the political system. **Established liberals** and **leftist activists** hold very strong progressive values, although the former embrace the political system whereas the latter reject mainstream politics and don’t trust the Government.

We find a relatively large **apathetic** section, who are largely indifferent around political issues and a more ambivalent group, the **sceptical ambivalents**, who have mixed views on social issues, but generally feel they are well represented by the political system.

Finally, the **reactionary conservative** group hold the most conservative views of all the tribes. Although their views on some social issues, such as immigration, is mixed, they are more likely to feel disenfranchised and reject political correctness and there is a proportion, although small, within this group who engage with racist conspiracies and far right ideologies.

Although these tribes are not constructed on demographic or socioeconomic indicators, there are some clear divides in how demographic and socioeconomic groups concentrate. Female respondents are over-represented in the more progressive groups, while male respondents are more heavily concentrated in the conservative leaning groups. Students and graduates are more likely to be in the progressive groups, while those in work are more likely to be in the conservative or apathetic groups. Those out of work are more likely to fall into the anti-establishment groups.

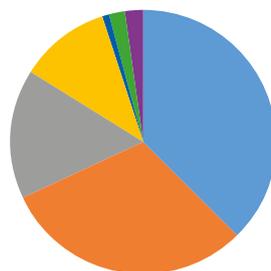
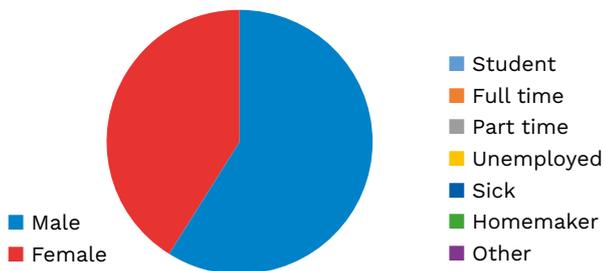
BAME respondents are split across the groups, but African and Pakistani respondents are more likely to fall into the anti-establishment groups, while Indian, Eastern European and Bangladeshi respondents are more likely to fall into moderate groups.

REACTIONARY CONSERVATIVES

This group are the most politically right-wing of all the tribes, and are motivated to react to political correctness. Most do not hold particularly strong anti-immigrant views or feel that multiculturalism has undermined British culture. While some are rejectionist, most show apathy or soft support for these issues. However they are more likely to believe that ‘feminism has gone too far’, that discrimination against white people is a serious problem, or that you ‘can’t be proud of national identity without being racist’. They are far less likely than the other groups to

think that making a joke based on someone’s race or religion is offensive, and between 15% to 30% of this group consume alternative right wing media or follow far-right figures.

This group is made up of more male than female respondents, and has a lower number of students overall. They are less likely to be graduates, and generally place less importance on education. They are more likely to be C2DE or from low-income households and many are economically anxious.



75% think that you cannot be proud of your national identity these days without being called racist

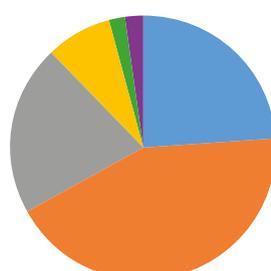
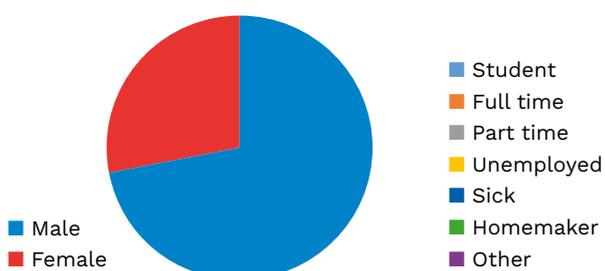
SCEPTICAL AMBIVALENTS

This group are more likely to feel they are well represented by the political system, have active lives and are most confident about their own futures. They are most positive about Brexit and are least likely to attribute concerns about the future to the impact of Covid-19, but many feel pessimistic for the future and disappointed with their lives so far.

wing views, which may explain their relative lack of support for gay couples to adopt children and scepticism around feminism, they are more liberal when given real-life situations, such as feeling comfortable if someone asked them to use gender neutral pronouns such as ‘they’. Many in this group believe conspiracy theories, and they are more likely than the overall sample to look for alternative media sources.

This group tend to hold stronger views on social issues, but these views are often contradictory. While this group contains some religious conservatives as well as some with more right

This group are more male, less likely to be students, and more likely to be older and in work. A higher proportion are religious.



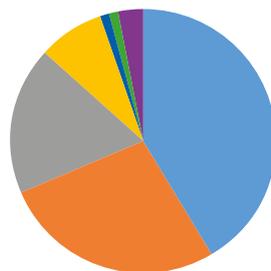
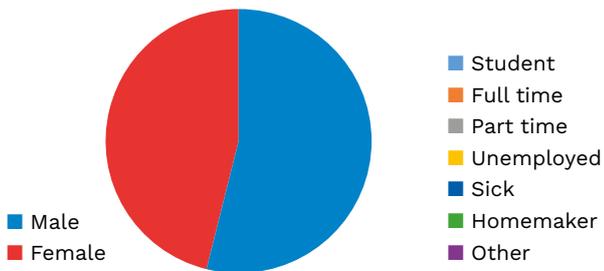
57% think that talk of a mental health crisis is exaggerated, some people need to toughen up

APATHETICS

As the name would suggest, this tribe are most indifferent about key political and social issues. They are more optimistic and happy with their lives, and have softly socially liberal views, but tend to keep these to themselves. They are conformists, and are least likely to support all forms of political action, including voting,

reflecting their disenchantment with the political system.

This group is slightly more male, slightly more likely to be in work than studying, and most do not disclose their income.



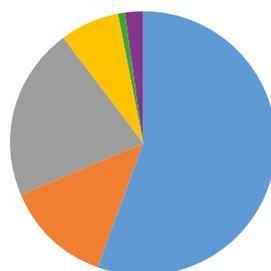
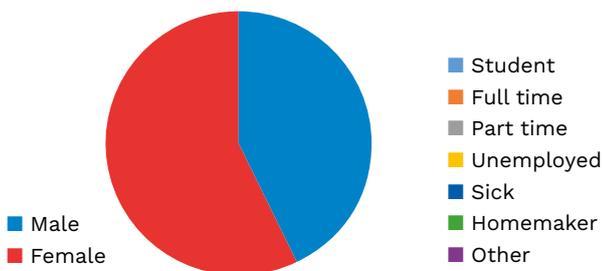
They are least likely to think that voting is the best way to have your voice heard by those in power: 54% agree

ASPIRATIONAL LIBERALS

This group hold progressive views on a range of political and social issues, but their focus is away from politics and more on their own prospects. They are economically anxious, and are most concerned about a lack of decent work or failing to achieve in the education system. Although their values are far more progressive than the national average, they are typical

of their generation and are generally more apathetic about political action.

The group is non-religious, slightly more female than male, is slightly younger, contains a higher number of students and unemployed people, and has a slightly smaller BAME population.



72% are frustrated that older people made political choices like voting for Brexit that will make it harder for my generation to live a similar quality of life

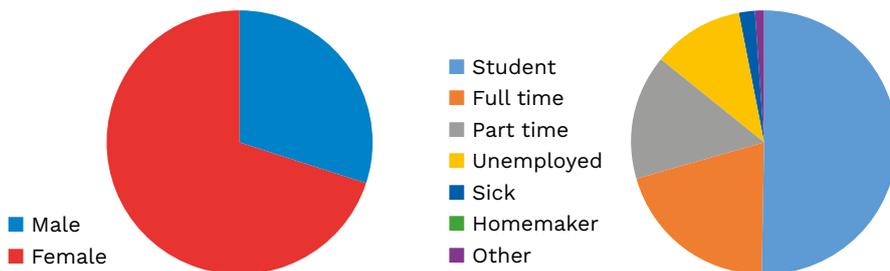
DISENGAGED PROGRESSIVES

This group hold strongly progressive views on social issues like LGBT+ rights, immigration and multiculturalism, but are not politically motivated in the same way as the established liberals or leftist activists, though they spend most time on social media. They are most likely to reject the political system, and more than three quarters of this tribe think that voting is pointless because politicians will always ignore the views of people like them.

They are most likely to feel under pressure in their

day-to-day lives and to feel more judged on how they look than how they act. This also reflects their demographic make up, as more female and younger. This group are most concerned about the impact of coronavirus on their future

Their disengagement with the political system might explain their more conservative views on issues like taxation and prison reform than other liberal groups, and that they are more likely to believe conspiracy theories, though they mostly reject those rooted in racism.



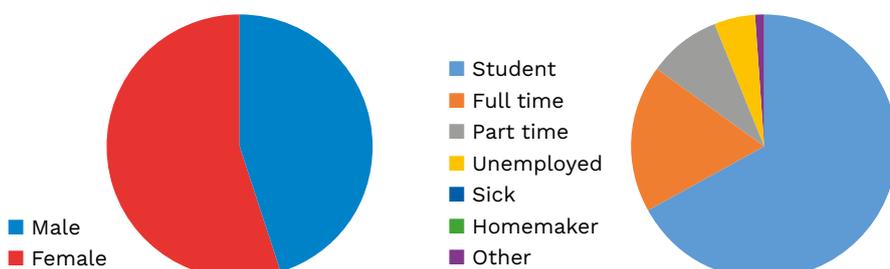
76% feel under a lot of pressure in their day to day lives

ESTABLISHED LIBERALS

This group hold strongly progressive social attitudes and feel most confident about finding change within existing structures. They are most likely to see the importance of voting, support non-violent protest, and have a higher degree of trust in the political system than most, although they do not feel that political debate currently reflects the interests of young people. They oppose Brexit and worry about the impact of coronavirus in the long term, and are most likely to watch the news.

A young group with a high proportion of students, they value education, and most are confident and comfortable in their own lives. They are generally trusting of authority figures and value their relationships with family and friends.

This tribe are more mixed in terms of gender than the other groups, are slightly younger, and are more likely to be in social grades ABC1.



67% are optimistic for the future

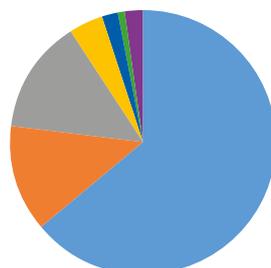
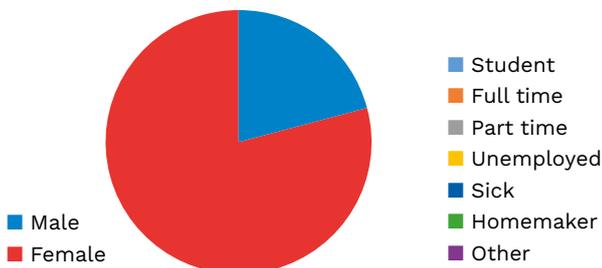
LEFTIST ACTIVISTS

This group hold the most progressive social attitudes of all the tribes, have strong values of community and compassion, strongly oppose inequality and are vocal in calling out racism, sexism but don't trust the political system to achieve their aims.

They neither trust, nor like the government, and many feel pessimistic for the future, concerned about the impact of coronavirus and Brexit on their opportunities in life. They are most likely to feel that politicians don't care what young people think and are angry at older generations for making political decisions like voting for Brexit

that their generation will have to live with. They see poverty and climate change as the biggest issues facing the country, greater concerns for this tribe than the economy, and they are most likely to see mental health as a problem they face personally.

This group are mostly female and the majority are students. They are least likely to be religious. They spend more time on Twitter than Facebook and are most likely to report having seen or experienced racism on social media, violence or threats of violence and sexual harassment.



87% think that Feminism is more relevant today than ever

THIS GENERATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE CARRIES NOT JUST THEIR OWN HOPES BUT THOSE OF THEIR FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

Roger Harding, CEO, RECLAIM

Our country's diverse next generation of young people is brimming with talent, commitment and a desire to shape the world around them. As this report captures, they want opportunities to demonstrate what they can do, but are conflicted on whether to be optimistic or very pessimistic about whether they'll get them.

This research highlights many of the issues the young working class people at RECLAIM sessions talk to us about. We should be deeply worried that half of young people don't expect to be in a good job and have somewhere decent to live in 5 years time and that a similar proportion are really struggling with their mental health right now.

We should be especially concerned that a minority of young people are finding themselves seduced by the racist conspiracy theories they're exposed to on social media platforms that urgently need regulating.

This generation of young people carries not just their own hopes but those of their families and communities. If we fail to meet the hard work of those leaving school, college and university halfway by providing better opportunities, support and routes to being heard, we risk seeing many more people losing faith in our politics and economy.

Young people – especially those marginalised by their class background, race, religion, disability, sexuality or other factor – will need a wide range of reforms to deal with the impact of COVID-19. There's no one right answer, but there is one way that guarantees we always get better answers: by asking young people what they think. It's great to see this work from HOPE not hate charitable trust doing just that.



RECLAIM

WORKING CLASS YOUNG PEOPLE BEING SEEN,
BEING HEARD AND LEADING CHANGE

GEN Z: HOPES AND FEARS

THE FIRST generation to have grown up online and with social media, Gen Z are the most diverse, politically liberal and educated age set to date. But in the wake of Coronavirus, Brexit, and ongoing political turmoil, those aged 16 to 24 are beginning their adult lives in a period of great uncertainty, inheriting political choices of older generations in which they weren't given a say. Despite this, our polling finds that when given a choice, more young people are optimistic (59%) than pessimistic (41%) for the future, with 16 and 17 year olds slightly more optimistic (66%) than those over 18 (59%). However a third of young people say that they are disappointed with their lives so far, with young people in low income households or unemployed young people most likely to feel this way. These groups are also more likely to feel that how well they do in life is decided by forces outside of their own control.

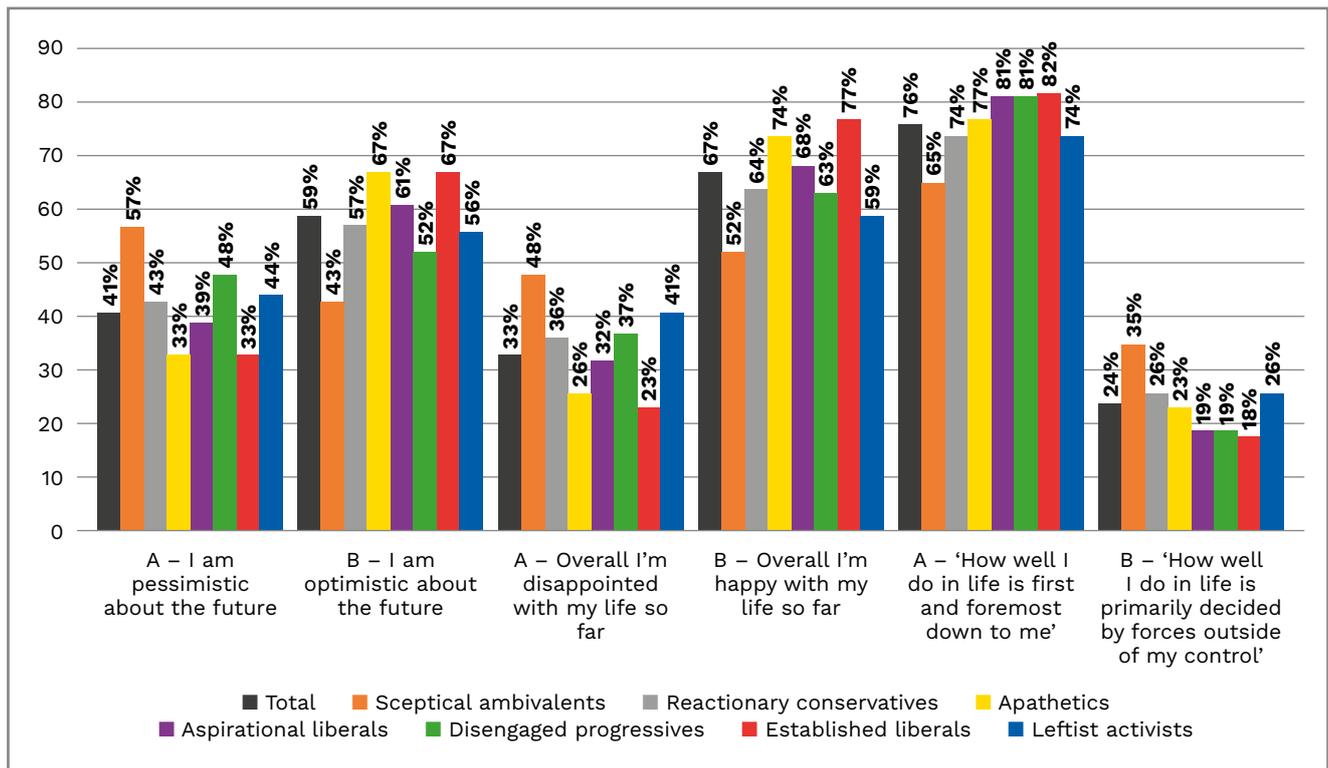
Moreover, there is widespread pessimism about what their quality of life will be like in the future. Only half of young people think that in five years' time they will have a good job and a decent place to live. Those with higher university degrees are

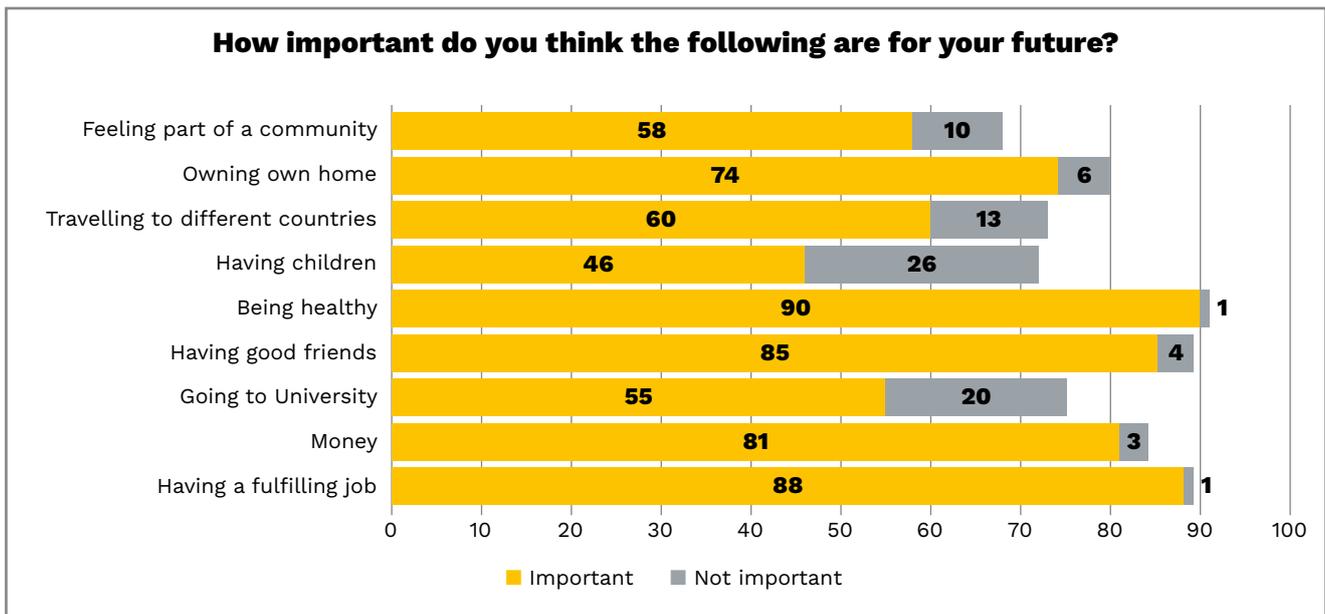
more confident (63%) while only 40% of young people in the North East think they will, compared to 53% of people in the South East.

Overall, young people see their health, having a fulfilling job, and having good friends as most important for their future, followed by more material aspirations; money and home ownership. Despite their concern about climate change, travelling abroad remains a future priority to 60%, ahead of going to university (55%) or having children (46%). A majority (58%) think it is important that they feel part of a community in their future.

While there are not very large gender divides in what young people want from the future, young women are more likely to put pressure on themselves for the future than young men, and more likely to see all of the aspects listed above as important for their futures.

16 and 17 year olds are more likely (62%) to think that going to university is important for their futures than those 18 and over (53%). BAME young people are also more likely to place importance on a university degree. But overall, fewer young





people think that going to university is essential to get a good job (37%) than think a degree is not necessary to get a good job (63%).

Across the tribes, those with the most progressive views see greater importance in being part of a community but are less likely to envisage having children, while the established liberals group see more importance in travelling and going to university.

WHAT CONCERNS YOUNG PEOPLE NOW

In their current day-to-day lives, anxieties about the future dominate. According to the Mental Health Foundation², rates of anxiety and depression among teenagers has increased by 70% in the past 25 years, with one in 15 now thought to be affected by self-harm. While some of this sheds light on higher reporting due to a greater awareness of good mental health, it also points to a crisis of mental health among young people today.

Overall, almost half (44%) of young people reported mental health as the biggest issue they personally face at the moment, ahead of coronavirus (36%). Female respondents (51%) and 16 and 17 year olds (49%), those from Northern Ireland (59%) and the North East (54%), and those in lower income households were all more likely to cite mental health among the biggest issues they currently face.

More than half (56%) of young people, including 62% of young women and 60% of 16 and 17 year olds say that they feel under pressure in their day to day lives, with only 16% saying that they do not. Those who feel under pressure are also more likely to list mental health among their greatest concerns.

There is also a high level of concern about unemployment, listed by almost a quarter (24%), and lack of a decent, secure job, listed by 21%.

Those already out of work and young people from low income households were most likely to say this, as were graduates. Indeed research from the Resolution Foundation suggests that a million under 25s face unemployment because of economic downturn triggered by the coronavirus outbreak, with education leavers most impacted³.

14% list physical health in their greatest concerns and 13% a lack of decent affordable housing. One in five (20%) of those living in rented housing or flat shares or living alone or with a partner (18%) are concerned about a lack of decent, affordable housing.

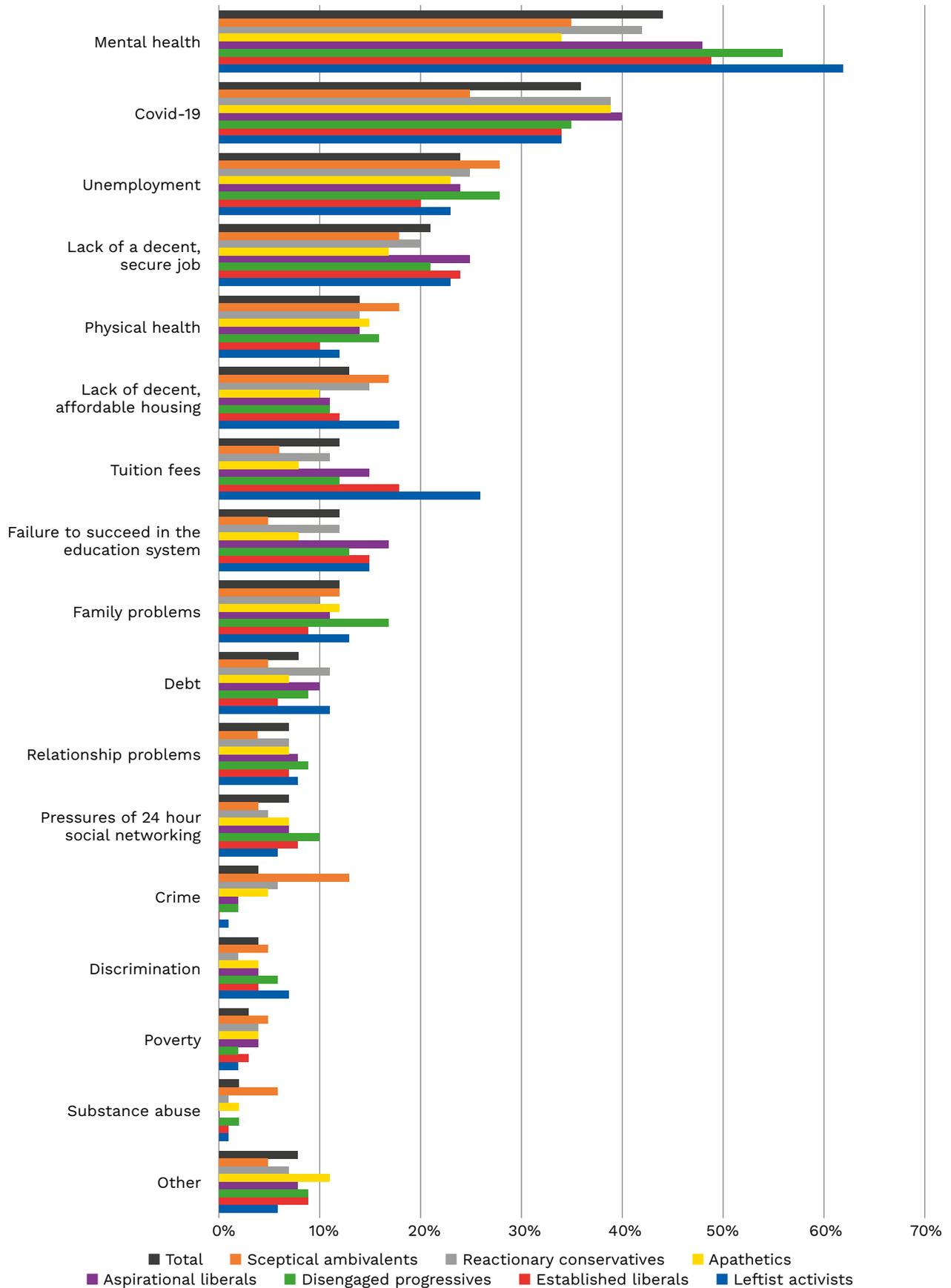
Concerns about education are more common among 16 and 17 year olds, with 20% concerned about failing to succeed and 17% worried about tuition fees. The majority of these young people will have had their GCSE or A level exams delayed or cancelled as a result of the coronavirus outbreak. Some have voiced concern⁴ that BAME and poor students will be negatively impacted by this, as predicted grades for these groups tend to be lower than their final results.

Indeed, our polling shows that there is greater concern about failing to succeed in the education system among Pakistani (19%), African (15%), and Chinese (25%) respondents. BAME respondents are also more likely to list discrimination as one of the greatest challenges they currently face; Indian (14%), Pakistani (8%), Chinese (17%) and African (10%) respondents all list discrimination as one of the biggest issues they personally face.

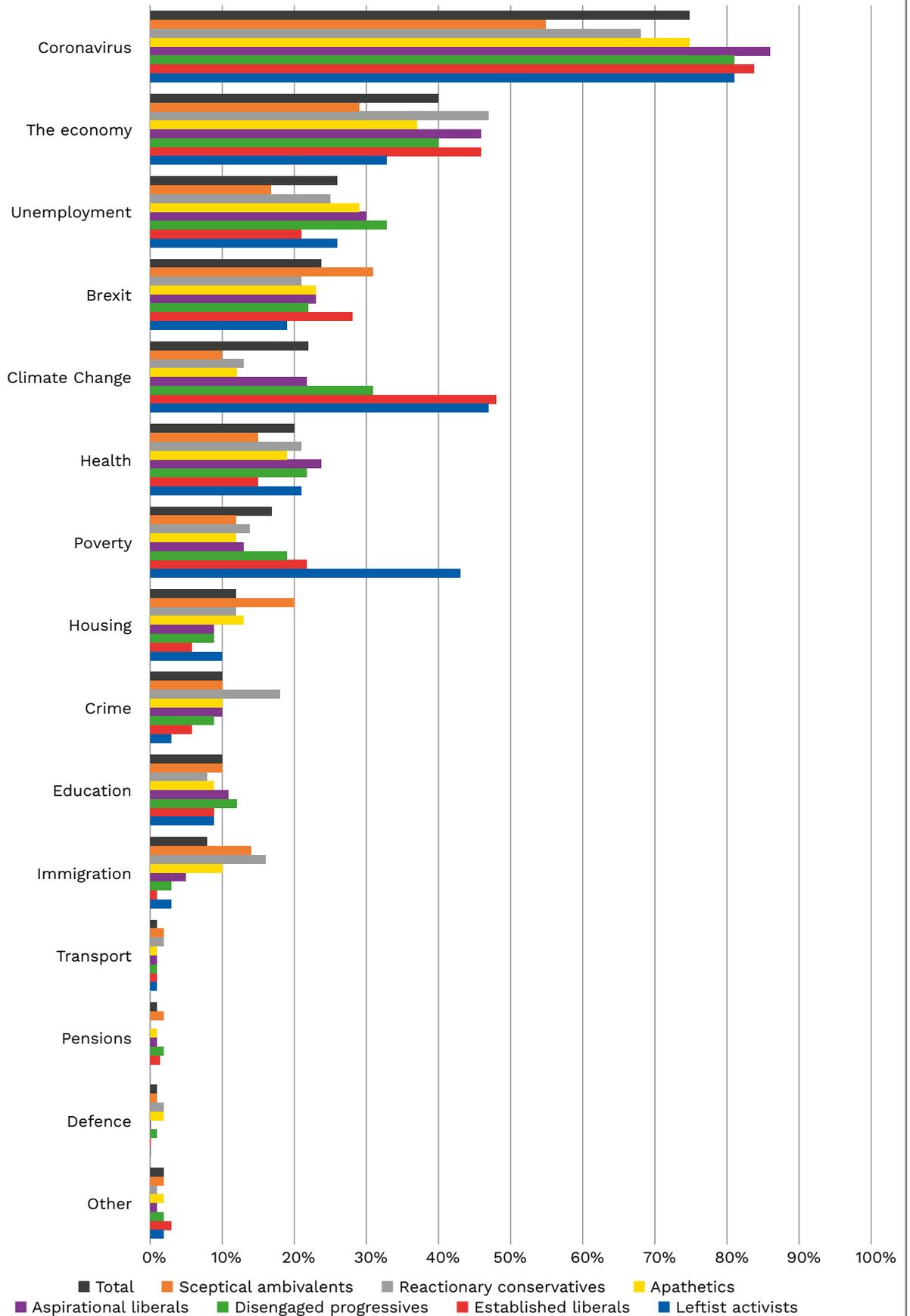
16 and 17 year olds are more likely to cite family problems (17%), while one in ten 18-24s (10%) are troubled by debt. Young men are more likely to see crime (7%) and substance abuse (3%) as problems they face in day-to-day life.

Across the tribes, leftist activists are most likely to feel concerned by mental health (62%)

What do you think are the biggest issues you personally face at the moment?



What do you think are the biggest issues the country faces at the moment?



and tuition fees (26%). Aspirational liberals are more concerned about failure to succeed in the education system (17%) or a lack of a decent, secure job (25%), while disengaged progressives are more concerned by family problems (17%) or unemployment (28%). Reactionary conservatives are more concerned by crime (6%) and poverty (4%) than the other groups.

When asked about their biggest concerns for the country as a whole, there is a lot of concern about coronavirus (75%), the economy (40%), unemployment (26%), Brexit (24%) and climate change (22%). Almost one in five young people (17%) are concerned about poverty, but those in social classification A (in higher managerial, or professional occupations) are far less likely to have concerns about poverty, unemployment or the economy.

Young men are less concerned about coronavirus, the economy and unemployment than young women but are more concerned by politicised issues like Brexit and immigration. 16 and 17 year olds are more likely to be concerned about climate change (30%) whereas older respondents are more likely to have economic concerns.

Across the tribes, there are some clear splits in where people place issues facing the country. Leftist activists see poverty (43%) as a greater concern for the country than the economy at large (33%). 16% of the reactionary conservative group list immigration in their concerns, while just 1% of the established liberal group do the same, who are instead more worried about Brexit (28%). A third (33%) of the disengaged progressives group are concerned about unemployment, which reflects the pressures they feel in their everyday lives.

IN THE 2020S, YOUNG WORKERS MUST NOT PAY THE PRICE OF THE PANDEMIC.

Frances O’Grady, General Secretary of the Trades Union Congress

Joining the jobs market in the middle of a pandemic could be seen as a piece of random bad luck. But if ministers sit on their hands, it could cause massive harm to young people’s life chances. And young people know it: HOPE not hate charitable trust’s research shows more than half think coronavirus will cause huge long-term disruption to their future prospects.

The immediate danger is unemployment. As in any recession, young workers just starting out in their careers are most vulnerable to job cuts. Workers aged 25 and under are three times more likely to work in either hospitality or arts and recreation – the two sectors where jobs are at greatest risk.

For all age groups, unemployment goes hand in hand with debt, poverty, ill-health and homelessness. But for young people, its effects can last a lifetime. More than six months’ unemployment early on holds down workers’ earnings throughout their lives. By their forties, those who experienced youth unemployment earn up to 21 per cent less. Thirty-five years later, those who were unemployed as young people are less happy.

Without decisive action, today’s young workers will see their hopes and dreams unfulfilled as their talents go unused. No wonder then that three-quarters of young workers support the government funding jobs paid at the living wage to people under 25 facing long-term unemployment.

In July, the government announced the Kickstart scheme, to give 300,000 young workers guaranteed jobs. It’s a good start, but the government needs to make sure these will be good quality jobs with training built in. They must not replace work previously done by permanent staff, and must be of real value to the community. Crucially, employers should top up wages to at least the real Living Wage.

And the government must do far more to support those sectors hit hardest by the pandemic – starting with retail, hospitality, arts and leisure, where many young workers work. This should include a targeted extension of the job retention scheme beyond October.

It’s been decades since the UK experienced mass youth unemployment. The 1980s showed the consequences of throwing young people onto a threadbare safety net. In the 2020s, young workers must not pay the price of the pandemic.



CORONAVIRUS: A STOLEN FUTURE

WITH THE coronavirus outbreak unanimously the greatest concern young people have for the country as a whole, many are pessimistic about how coronavirus will affect their future and large numbers of young people are struggling as a result of lockdown measures. In the first stages of adulthood, many are feeling that the pandemic has stolen their future.

More than half (55%) of young people feel that the coronavirus outbreak has limited their options for the future. Unemployed young people and those in low-income households are most likely to feel this way, as are those who have just completed their undergraduate degree (64%). More than half (51%) think that Coronavirus will cause huge long-term disruption to their future prospects, while the other half (49%) are more optimistic that the disruption caused by coronavirus will be short lived and we will quickly see a return to normality.

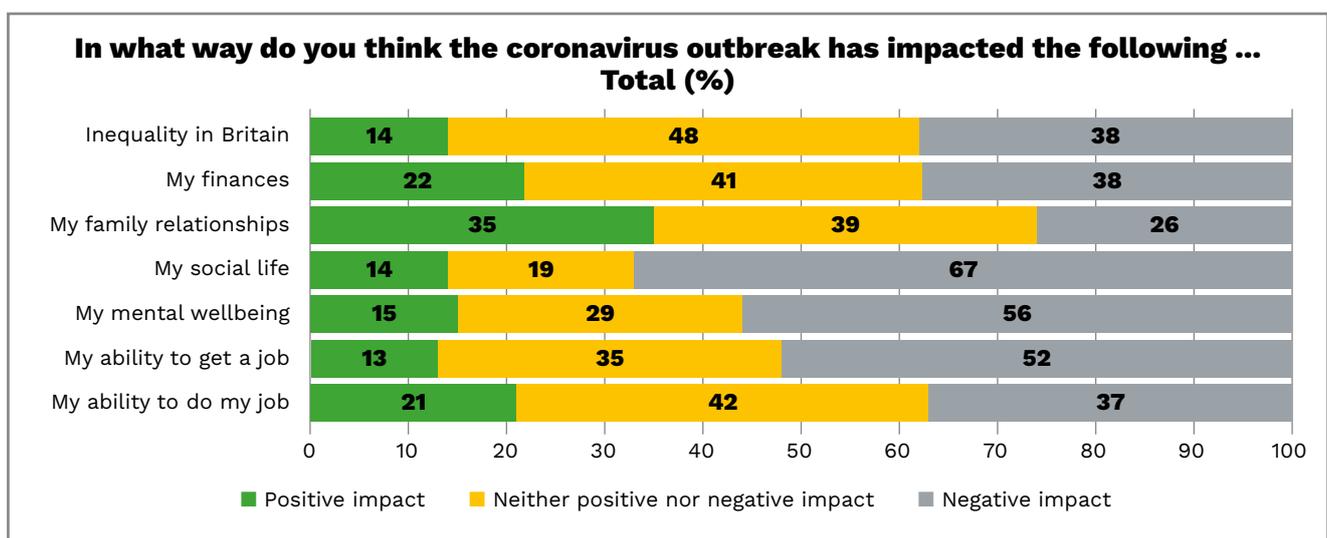
Those most concerned about the impact of coronavirus are more likely to be unemployed, new graduates (64%) or those with no formal qualifications (61%) or from lower income households. The economically concerned disengaged progressives group are most concerned of all the tribes; 63% think their future options have been limited by coronavirus.

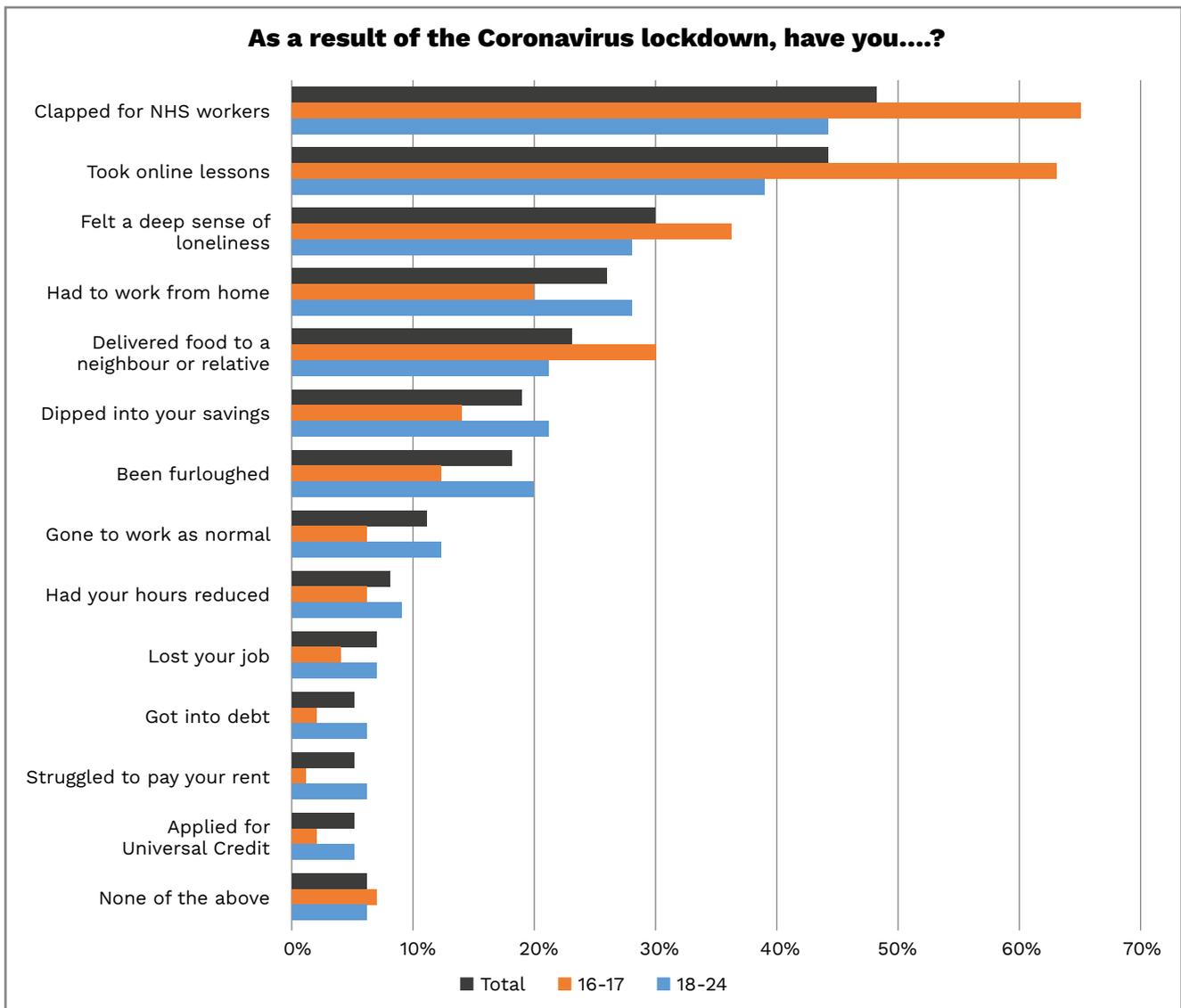
Many are already feeling negative impacts from the coronavirus outbreak. While 35% say that their family relationships have improved under lockdown, young people are more likely to see

a negative impact on their social lives, mental wellbeing, finances, and ability to both get and do their jobs. Young women, in particular, are struggling across all aspect, and 65% say the coronavirus outbreak has had a negative impact on their mental wellbeing. 67% of 16-24s say the outbreak has had a negative impact on their social life, but interestingly 14% say it's had a positive impact, perhaps suggesting relief at eased social pressures. More say that the impact on their family relationships has been positive (35%) than say it has been negative (26%). Those in more financially precarious situations have been hit hardest; 44% of unemployed young people say the impact of covid-19 on their finances has been negative.

When asked about their experiences of lockdown, there are bigger gaps between the age groups. 16 and 17 year olds, more likely to be in full time education and living at home, are more likely to have engaged with their communities, delivering food to neighbours or relatives or clapping for the NHS. But this age group are also more likely to be feeling a deep sense of loneliness (36%) and a majority (63%) have had to adapt to online learning.

Young people living in house or flat shares or alone or with a partner are most likely to be financially struggling. Of those in house or flat shares, 26% had dipped into their savings, 24% had been furloughed, and 18% had struggled to pay their rent.





And those from lower income households are most likely to be struggling; 12% of young people in households with an income of £10,000 or less have got into debt, 11% have lost their jobs, 10% have struggled to pay their rent, and 9% have applied for Universal Credit.

Clearly, there is a lot of uncertainty about the future for young people in the post-pandemic world. The predicted scale of economic decline will make it all the harder for young people to get a foot on the ladder, as they are starting or in the early stages of their working lives. But there is consensus that something can be done to improve their chances.

Three quarters (75%) of young people think that the Government should fund a scheme to guarantee jobs paid at the living wage to people under 25 facing long-term unemployment as a result of the coronavirus outbreak; only 6% disagreed. A majority of all political and demographic breaks across our poll supported the initiative.

HOW YOUNG PEOPLE ARE BEING IMPACTED BY THE CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

- The Resolution Foundation suggest that the employment rate for lower-qualified education leavers in this crisis three years after leaving education could be as low as 40 per cent. COVID-19 and the economic crisis risks pushing an additional 600,000 young people into unemployment in the coming year
- According to the Resolution foundation, hourly pay for education leavers is estimated be up to one fifth lower than it would be if the coronavirus outbreak had never happened.
- 65% of young women say the coronavirus outbreak has had a negative impact on their mental wellbeing
- Childline have reported a sharp rise in the number of calls from distressed young people struggling to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on their lives, with most callers concerned about their mental and emotional health or feeling that support for ongoing issues had fallen away
- More than half (55%) of young people feel that the coronavirus outbreak has limited their options for the future.
- Young people living in house or flat shares or alone or with a partner are most likely to be financially struggling. Of those in house or flat shares, 26% had dipped into their savings, 24% had been furloughed, and 18% had struggled to pay their rent.
- A survey of 4,000 young people aged eight to twenty-four in Britain carried out by Barnardos found that more than a third of children and young people have been suffering with increased mental health difficulties during the coronavirus lockdown



THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON YOUNG PEOPLE

ALTHOUGH RESEARCH from the Office of National Statistics⁵, as well as HOPE not hate charitable trust (HNHCT) polling⁶, suggests that younger people are more optimistic about lockdown than older people, with half as many 18-24s as those over 55 expecting a return to normal to take longer than a year, or to not return to normal at all⁷. Nonetheless, young people are facing significant challenges in work, education, wellbeing and household finances as a result of the coronavirus outbreak. Many of these challenges will outlive the pandemic.

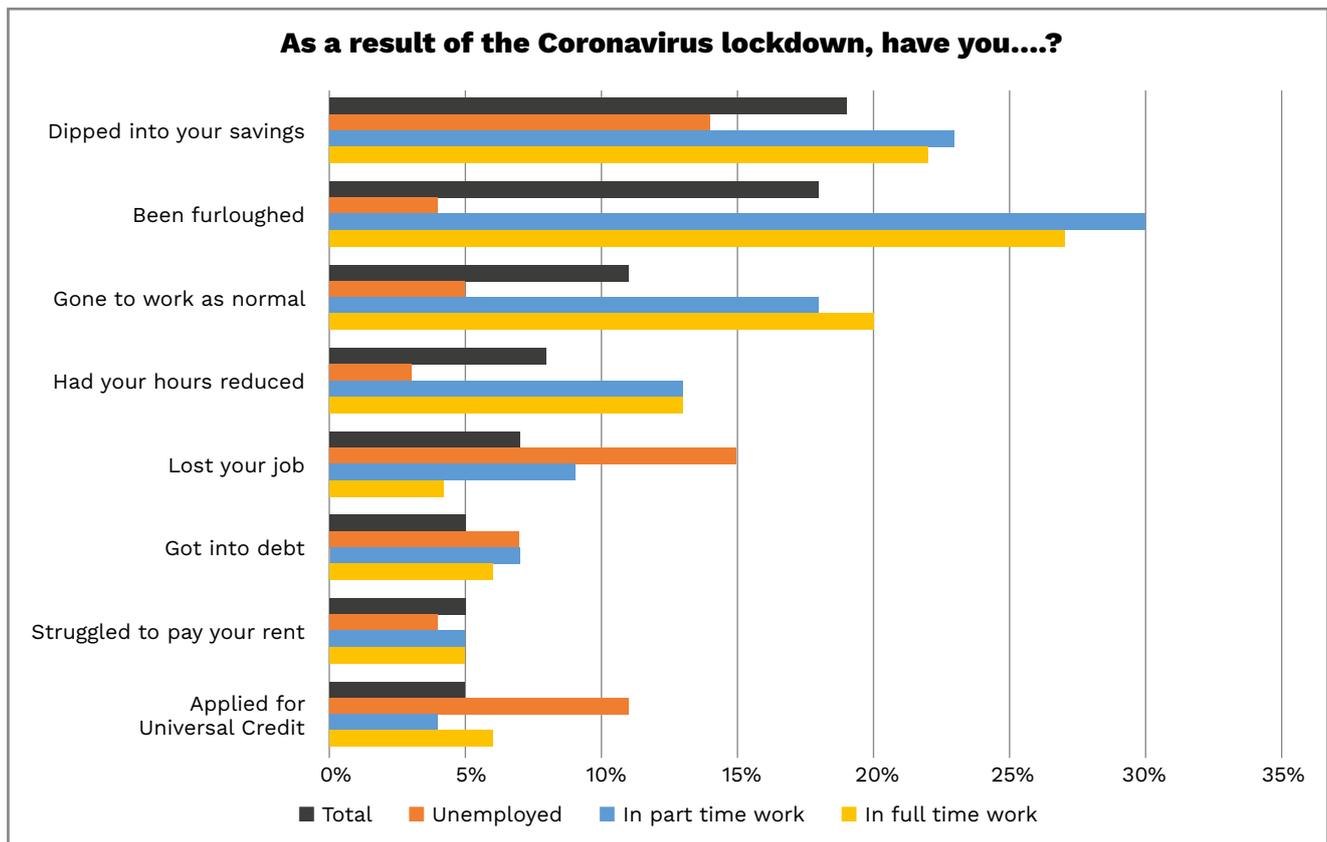
EDUCATION

The closure of schools and colleges as a result of the outbreak changed the lives of millions of families across the UK overnight. Pupils moved to home schooling and online learning, and public exams including GCSE and A level assessments were cancelled. Clearly, this has had a profound

impact on 16 and 17 year olds, including those in our poll; 63% said they had taken online lessons as a result of coronavirus and 20% listed failure to succeed in the education system as one of the biggest issues they face personally.

The impact of school and college closures is set to be uneven. An assessment by the Education Endowment Foundation⁸ suggests that the costs of learning loss will be felt by all pupils, but that the attainment gap between disadvantaged children and their peers is estimated to widen by more than a third (36%), with the worst predictions stating a 75% widening in attainment gaps.

Data from TeacherTapp, which takes responses from 6,000 teachers daily, found that teachers working in the most disadvantaged state schools felt that 43% of their students were doing less than an hour of learning a day, compared to 14% in more advantaged state schools. The digital divide – whereby only around half of households



earning between £6,000-£10,000 a year have home internet access compared with 99% of households earning over £40,001 a year – will leave those who are already most disadvantaged behind. Even in homes with internet access, students may have to share access to a laptop, PC or tablet with family members.

Only 25% of those eligible for free school meals, or who had been in care or adopted from care, achieved grades 9-5 in GCSE English and Maths, compared to 50% of all other pupils⁹. That is before taking account the exceptional circumstances of pupils missing exams this year, with results instead reliant on predicted grades. University College London's Institute of Education found that just 16% of predicted A-level results are correct, with Black students most likely to have their grades not just mispredicted, but under-predicted¹⁰. The impact of schools and colleges closing will not only be felt by those leaving school to work, but also by those looking to continue their education.

Universities are taking big hits from the virus outbreak, with the sector predicted to lose around £2.5bn in the next year in tuition fees alone, as many students, especially those from abroad, postponed enrolment due to uncertainty¹¹.

For current students, lectures and tutorials have been suspended, and moved online, expected to return in September. For those students working in part-time jobs to finance their education, many will have lost their jobs or been forced to take time off work. 12% of students in our poll reported being furloughed, 6% had their hours reduced and 5% had lost their job as a result of the coronavirus outbreak.

With such uncertainty, it is unsurprising that students are anxious about what lies ahead. A survey of 10,000 students from the National Union of Students found that 81% were worried about their future job prospects, 71% worry about the impact the pandemic will have on their employability and up to 85% of working students may need additional financial support as incomes drop¹².

WORK

Anxiety among education leavers is warranted. Research from the Resolution Foundation¹³ has highlighted how this group are likely to be some of those most impacted by economic downturn resulting from the pandemic.

While graduates are likely to suffer from unemployment and underemployment, those with lower levels of education are predicted to suffer for longer. Based on data from previous periods of economic decline, the research highlights how the impact of economic decline is not only more harsh, but also longer lasting for the lowest qualified.

Under current projections, the Resolution Foundation suggest that the employment rate for lower-qualified education leavers in this crisis three years after leaving education could be as low as 40 per cent. They also predict hourly pay for education leavers to be up to one fifth lower than it would be if the coronavirus outbreak had never happened. Again, the lowest qualified are likely to feel the biggest hit.

The proposed £2bn Government 'kickstart scheme' to subsidise six-month work placements for people on Universal Credit aged between 16 and 24, who are at risk of long-term unemployment is welcome, but young people could be facing employment challenges that last for many years.

Moreover, for those already in work, the current rate for the National Minimum Wage remains far lower for younger people, at £4.55 for under 18s, £6.45 for 18 to 20-year-olds, £8.20 for 21 to 24-year-olds and £8.72 for those over 25, double the rate of just £4.15 for apprentices. All fall short of the Living Wage Foundation's predicted real living wage of £9.30 across the UK and £10.75 in London¹⁴.

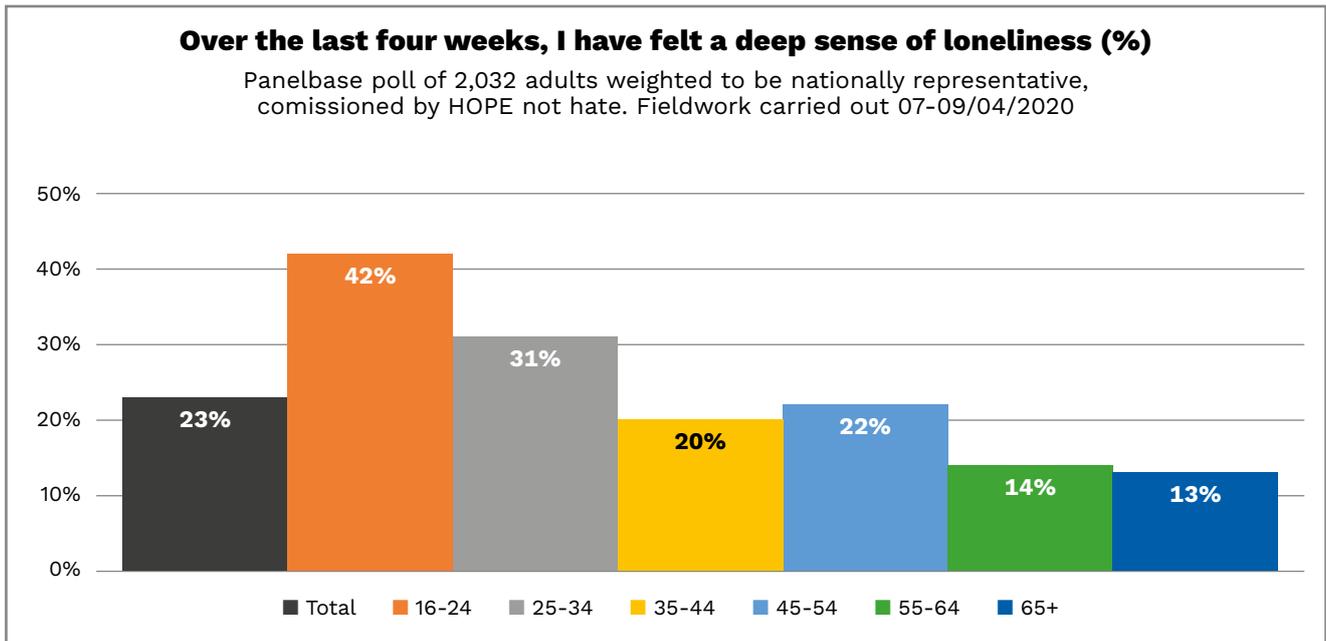
Our poll shows the scale of struggles already faced by young people in work during the lock down period, particularly those in part time work. Almost a third of 16-24s in full time (27%) and part time (30%) work report being furloughed and 13% of young people in work have had their hours reduced. One in ten of those in part time work (9%) and 15% of those who are unemployed report losing their jobs as a result of the pandemic.

For many young people, the coronavirus outbreak has not only derailed their future hopes, but looks set to leave many in poverty, and many more left behind before they have had a chance to start.

WELLBEING

With such uncertainty and high levels of insecurity over the future, it is not surprising that the coronavirus outbreak has had a significant impact on the wellbeing of young people. HOPE not hate charitable trust research¹⁵, and research from the ONS¹⁶ has repeatedly shown that people aged 18-24 are more likely to report feeling lonely than people in older age groups.

The closure of schools and universities and the introduction of social distancing measures has left young people feeling isolated. It is not just isolation that is harming the wellbeing of young people, but multiple shocks to their education, training, employment and income. As a result, many are feeling more anxious or depressed. A survey by the Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH)¹⁷ found that 70 per cent of 18 to 24-year-olds are experiencing more anxiety than usual, compared with 47 per cent of over-75s. The study showed how young people reported "amplified"



poor wellbeing and low mood among 18-24s.

Moreover, many of the existing protective measures for young people’s wellbeing have been removed. For young people no longer able to attend school, college or university, the most vulnerable have lost the pastoral support and safeguarding which often protects them from harm.

Although younger people have been at less risk than older people from the virus, the impact of Covid-19 on young people has been disproportionately negative, and is set to outlive the pandemic itself. Urgent action is needed to address the concerns of young people emerging from the pandemic with uncertain futures.

OK BOOMER: GENERATIONAL DIVIDES AMIDST CORONAVIRUS

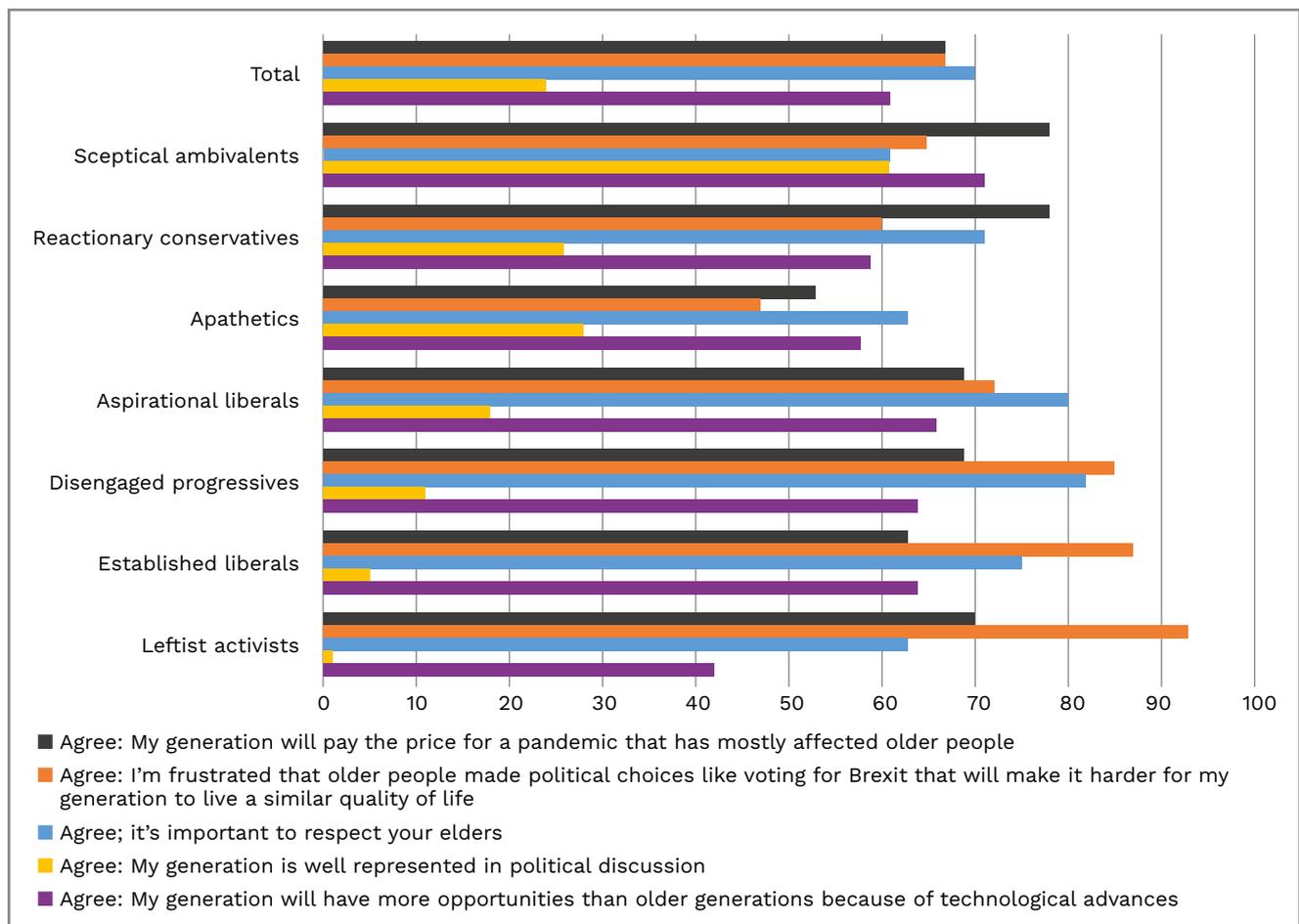
“OK BOOMER”, a dismissive retort used to portray baby boomers as out of touch, became one of the most circulated memes of the last couple of years. Encapsulating frustrations with older generations’ hold over power, their responsibility in making life harder for younger generations, and for failing to take account for key Gen Z issues – climate change, student debt and housing – the phrase shone light on intergenerational inequality. With so much anxiety about their future, disproportionately burdened with the fallout of the coronavirus outbreak, and saddled with Brexit (a political choice they were unable to participate in), it is not surprising that many young people voice some resentment towards older generations.

A majority (67%) of young people agree that their generation will pay the price for a pandemic

that has mostly affected older people; just 8% disagreed with this. The same proportion (67%) say that they are frustrated that older people made political choices like voting for Brexit that will make it harder for their generation to live a similar quality of life. This increases to 75% of 16-17 year olds.

Across the tribes, the reactionary conservative group are most likely to see themselves paying the price for a pandemic that has mostly affected older people (78%), but this sentiment spreads across the liberal tribes too. Liberal activists are most frustrated about the political choices that older people made, such as voting for Brexit, emblematic of their strong political views.

Overall, less than a quarter (24%) of young people agree that their generation is well represented in



political discussion; 48% disagree. This increases to 59% among 16 and 17 year olds, who are not eligible to vote. Young women are also less likely to feel represented by political discussion; just 17% do, compared to 32% of young men.

Although a majority of the sceptical ambivalent group feel well represented, this is not the case in any of the other tribes, with those with the most progressive values most likely to feel they are not represented.

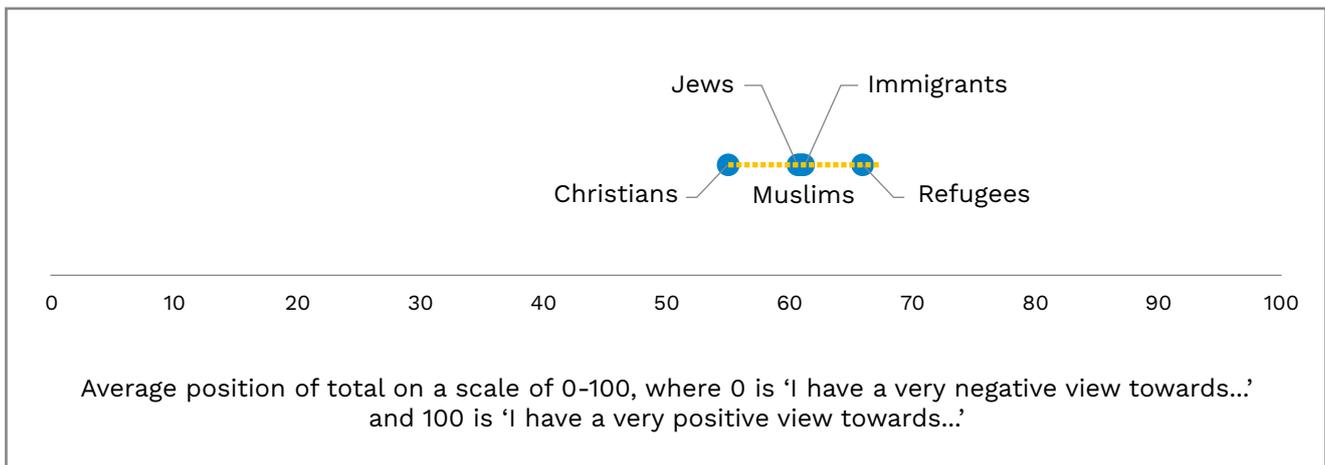
At the same time, there is optimism about the future for Gen Z. Although half of young people fear that their generation will have fewer opportunities, half feel hopeful that their generation will have more opportunities than older generations. A majority (61%) of young people think that their generation will have more opportunities than older generations because of technological advances. Among the most digitally literate cohort yet, 16 and 17 year olds are most optimistic that their opportunities will be greater than those of older generations because of technological advances; 66% agree.

Ultimately, although there are some resentments between the generations, this does not translate into antagonism. A majority (70%) agree that it is important to respect your elders; just 17% disagree. This cuts across demographic and political divides.

SOCIAL ATTITUDES

Our research has consistently shown social attitudes to be more progressive among younger people. Those under 25 are more likely to be open-minded about a range of issues, including immigration, multiculturalism, LGBT+ rights and racial justice. Young people tend to have positive views of marginalised groups and even among the reactionary conservative tribe, do not share a distinctly negative view of Muslims, which our polling has found with older respondents.

Nonetheless, not all young people are driven by values of social justice, and we have also identified problematic attitudes among some subsections of young people, particularly around anti-feminism and misogyny.



THE VIEW FROM THE CLASSROOM

Owen Jones, HOPE not hate charitable trust’s head of education and training reflects on his experience in schools across England and Wales.

HOPE not hate Charitable Trust’s Education Team deliver lessons that explore the causes and consequences of prejudice and discrimination in schools. We cover a wide range of ages from 8 year-olds through to 22 year-olds, although the bulk of our audience is teenagers. We travel the length and breadth of the country, from extremely rural parts in the East to urban cities in the North, from underperforming schools in deprived areas through to elite grammar schools. This gives our Educators an extremely good snap shot of the attitudes within modern day British classrooms.

When we first started the Education Unit in 2016 we expected to have to deal with a lot of racial prejudice unearthed during our sessions, and so trained our team accordingly. However, what we found was a slightly different challenge – that of wide spread and heavily normalised misogyny.

Around a year ago at a school near Thetford, I was preparing in the school hall. As the pupils began filing in and taking their seats, I saw a small group of boys hound a teacher for “hating men”. She had her back against the wall with five or six male year twelve pupils (aged 16-17) pointing in her face, saying that she was “sexist” toward men. The teacher, and myself, were rather bemused as to why she was being accused of this, so the students explained.



In a previous lesson she had told the class that she believed in gender equality and would consider herself to be a feminist. They explained to her that feminists hate men, want to oppress men and it was appalling that the school would allow “someone like her” to teach. Other teachers were in the room, but nothing was done. The interaction went completely unchallenged.

A week or so passed by and I found myself in a leafy part of North London delivering a session on stereotypes. The class were set the challenge of discussing the origins of traditional gender attributes, boys like cars, girls like pink, and so on. A female pupil raised her hand to inform me that she felt that some of these low-level stereotypes can have a detrimental effect on women as they grow up forming gender roles of men being providers and women expected to stay at home. This was exactly what we wanted to hear from the students.

Nonetheless, my glow in response, thinking that the pupils understood that this was a lesson with broader meanings for social justice rather than just a psychology lesson, was short lived. While she was offering her analysis, a boy at the front shouted out that she was a “Feminazi”. No one, including the teacher in the room, batted an eyelid at this interruption.

My next booking was two days later at a school in Lincolnshire when I changed my usual introduction exercise and instead asked each class if they thought sexism exists today. In each class, of mixed sex, around 90% said they thought that sexism was a thing of the past, not something that happens today.

I could retell many more examples like these from Kent, Cheshire, Cumbria, Redcar...

In response, our work in the classroom has put more emphasis on gender equality, and it is easily the hardest subject that we have to teach. All too often, pupils dismiss any suggestion that sexism is a real problem today, and we are aggressively put down by largely, but not exclusively, male students. Suggestions that women have fewer opportunities than men, or that aspects of male culture can have a detrimental impact on women and girls is often interpreted as a personal attack on the males in the room.

Sexism in the classroom is nothing new. However, what we are now witnessing is an aggressive backlash from male students, who not only deny the issue, but try to silence any notion of female empowerment or critique of male culture.

To use Fernand Braudel’s *longue durée*, these instances are just the small short-term bubbles on top of a wave and we should be looking at what factors are driving the underlying current beneath. We have a great opportunity to learn from the racial equality movement on how we might have popped a few bubbles – children know it is wrong to use language charged with racial hatred – but as the Black Lives Matter campaign has highlighted, that current beneath the wave is still very strong and causing untold problems within communities.

Everyday misogyny is not only at large within schools, it is normalised. It’s not just boys proudly talking about “bros before hoes” but talking about women in the most explicit sexual terms, and this language is brazen. And this goes unchallenged, not just in front of female pupils but within clear earshot of teachers. When we have seen this behaviour challenged, all too often we see boys shrug off concerns with giggles and eye rolling.

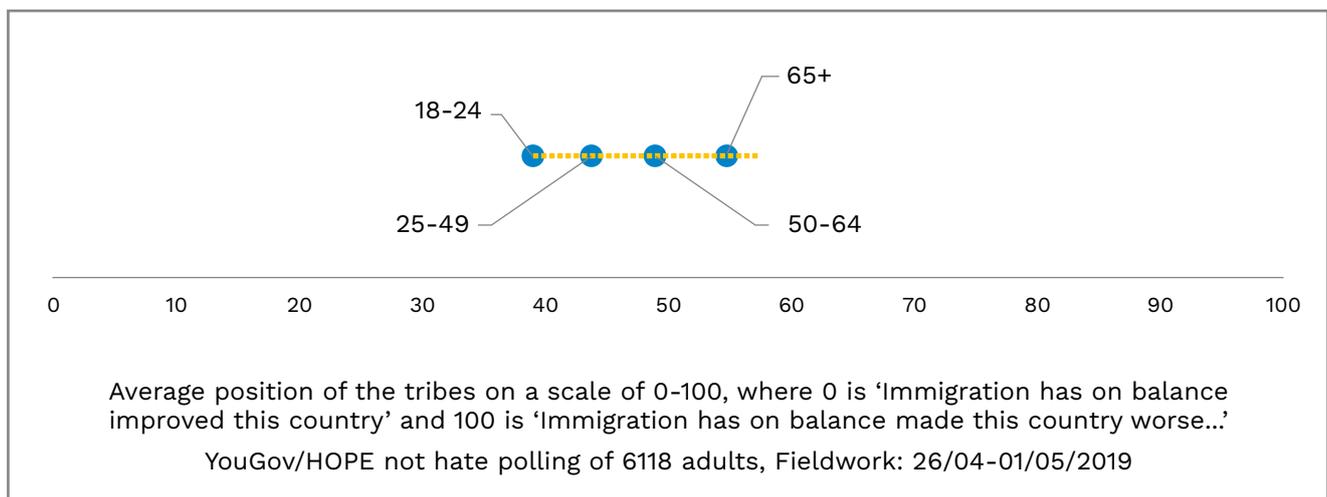
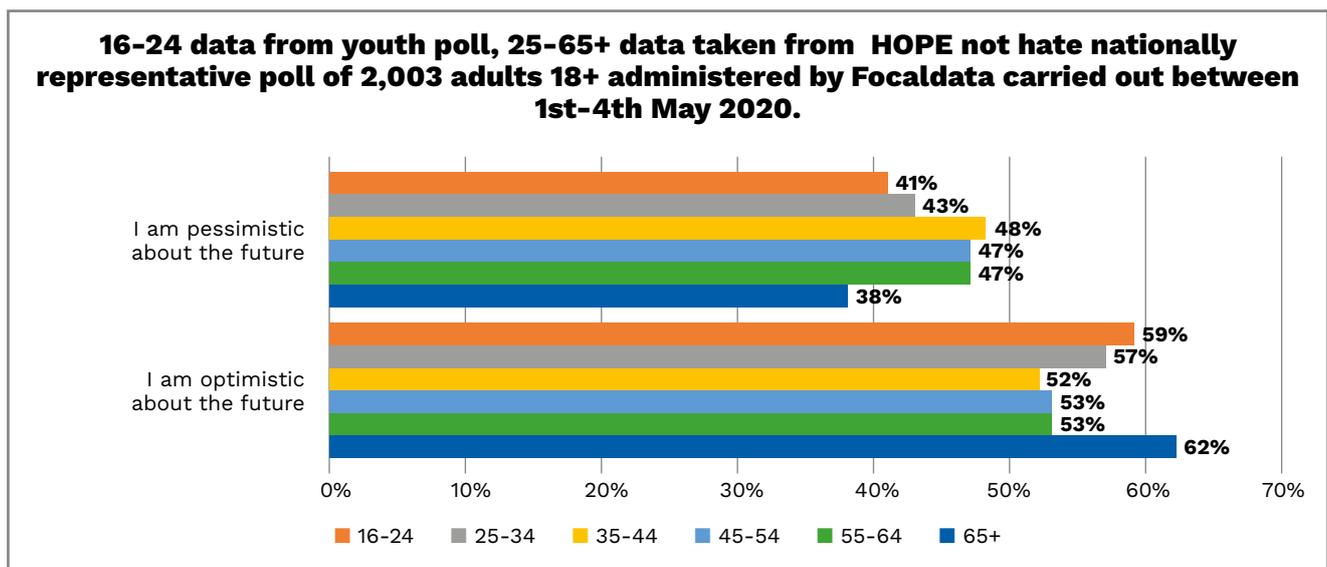
GENERATION WOKE? HOW VIEWS OF YOUNGER PEOPLE COMPARE TO THE WIDER POPULATION

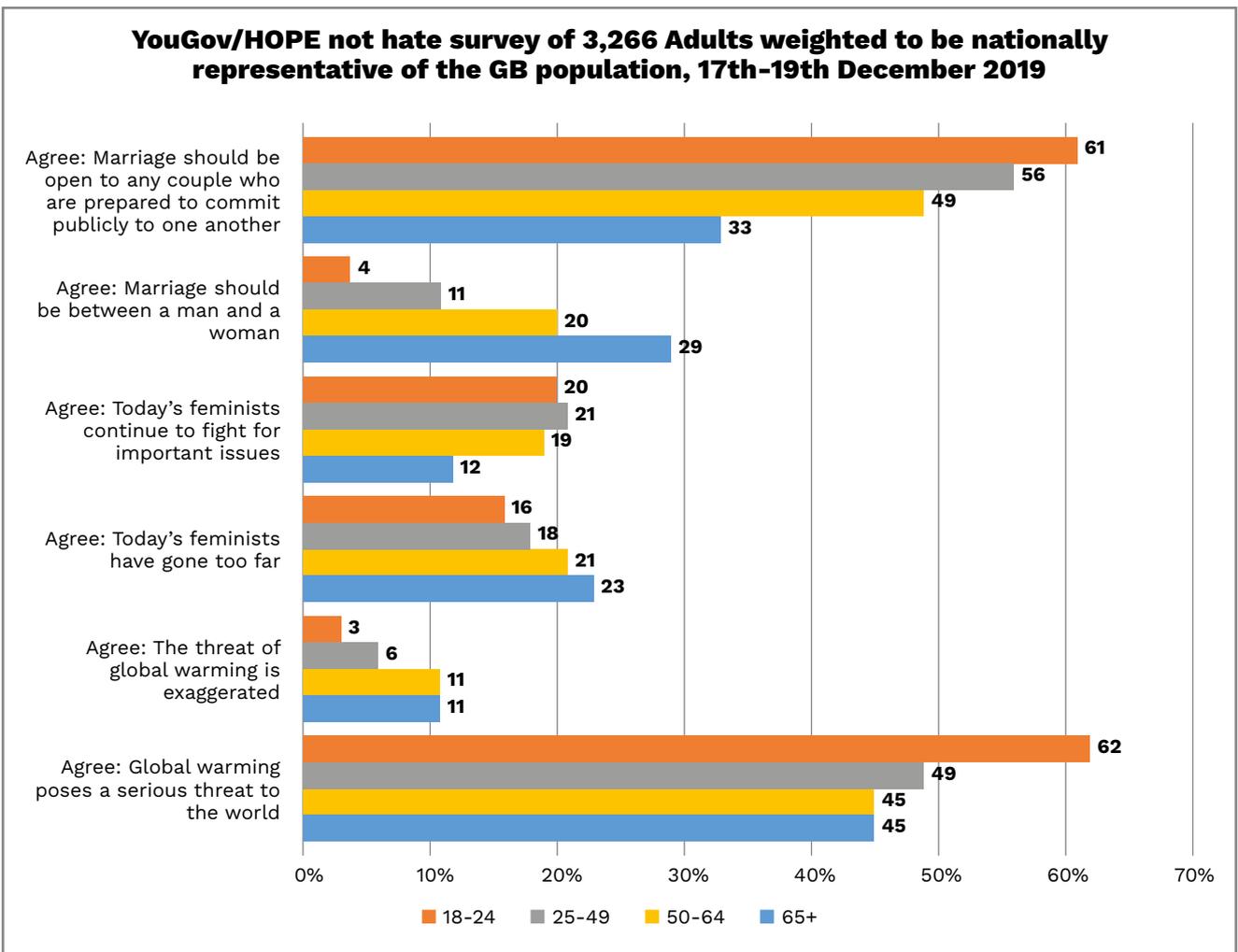
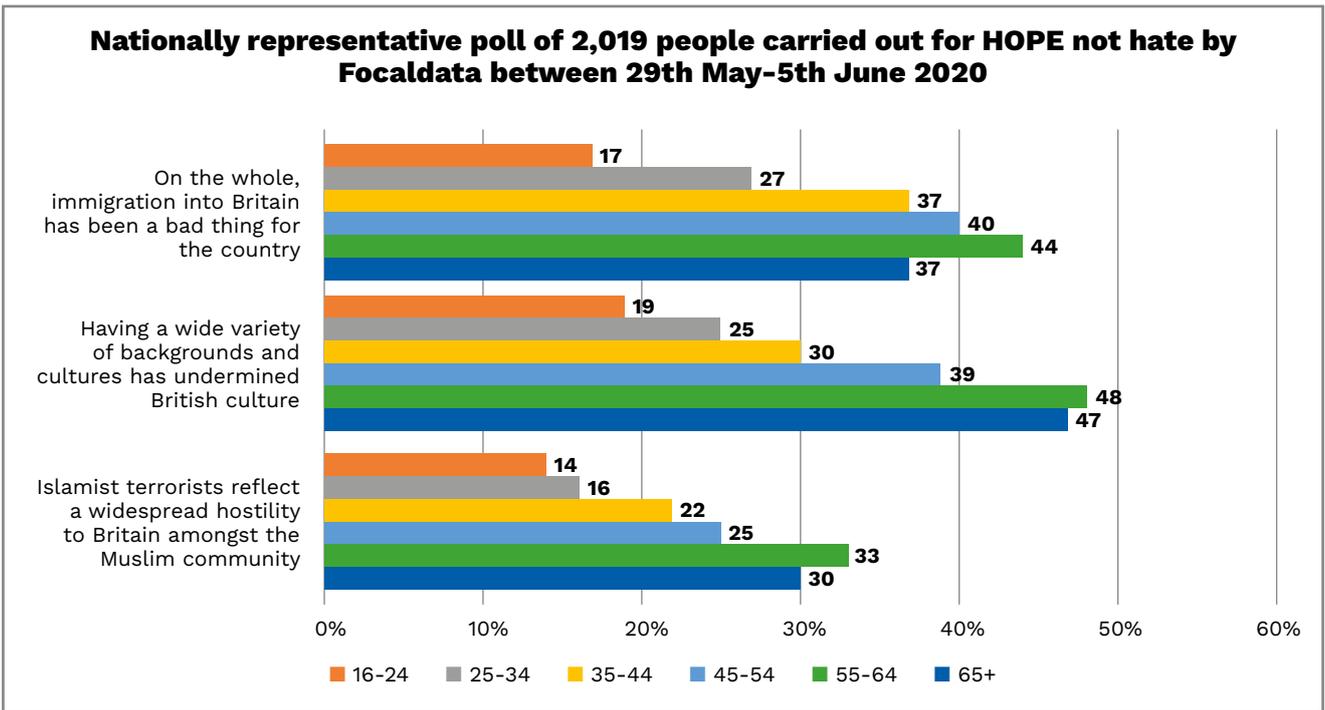
YOUNGER PEOPLE generally have more progressive social attitudes than older generations. This is in part down to their different priorities, but also demographics, as younger generations are more diverse and become more educated, and due to changing social norms. Gen Z tend to hold similar social values to millennials, though there is some evidence to suggest that their views are more flexible, pushing the boundaries on progressive social norms¹⁸.

Comparing 16-24 year olds' views to HNHCT polling of older age groups from our nationally representative samples, some of these views

are clear, although as this report lays out, young people's views are in no way homogenous.

Those aged 16-24 are more optimistic than older age groups, with the exception of those over 65, a sentiment which extends to the current situation. There is an expectation gap between the generations about what will happen after the pandemic. In HOPE not hate charitable trust polling from May 2020, older people were far more likely to be cynical about a return to normal; 19% of over 65s and 21% of 55-64s say that we cannot expect a return to normal, while only 10% of 18-24s and 12% of 25-34s felt the same way.





Younger people were also more optimistic about an economic recovery- 19% of 18-24s think it will, but just 6% of over 65s feel the same.

When it comes to social attitudes, younger people tend to be more socially liberal, and have a more open view on issues such as multiculturalism and immigration.

In a nationally representative poll of 2,019 people carried out for HOPE not hate charitable trust by Focaldata between 29th May-5th June 2020, just 17% of 18-24 year olds thought that immigration had been a bad thing for the country, compared to 73% of 25-34s, 37% of 35-44s, 40% of 45-54s, 44% of 55-64s and 37% of those over 65.

In the same poll, young people were also far less likely to feel that British culture was undermined by multiculturalism or that Islamist terrorists reflect a widespread hostility to Britain amongst the Muslim community.

Young people also share more open views on sexuality, with just 4% of 18-24 year olds in our YouGov poll from December 2019 agreeing with the statement ‘marriage should be between a man and a woman’, instead more likely to think that marriage should be open to any couple who are prepared to publicly commit to one another. This compares to almost a third (29%) of over 65s who think that marriage should be between a man and a woman.

However, when asked about the role of feminists in today’s society, there was no substantial difference between the views of those under 25 and those in older age groups. Moreover, research has shown how young people actually hold some

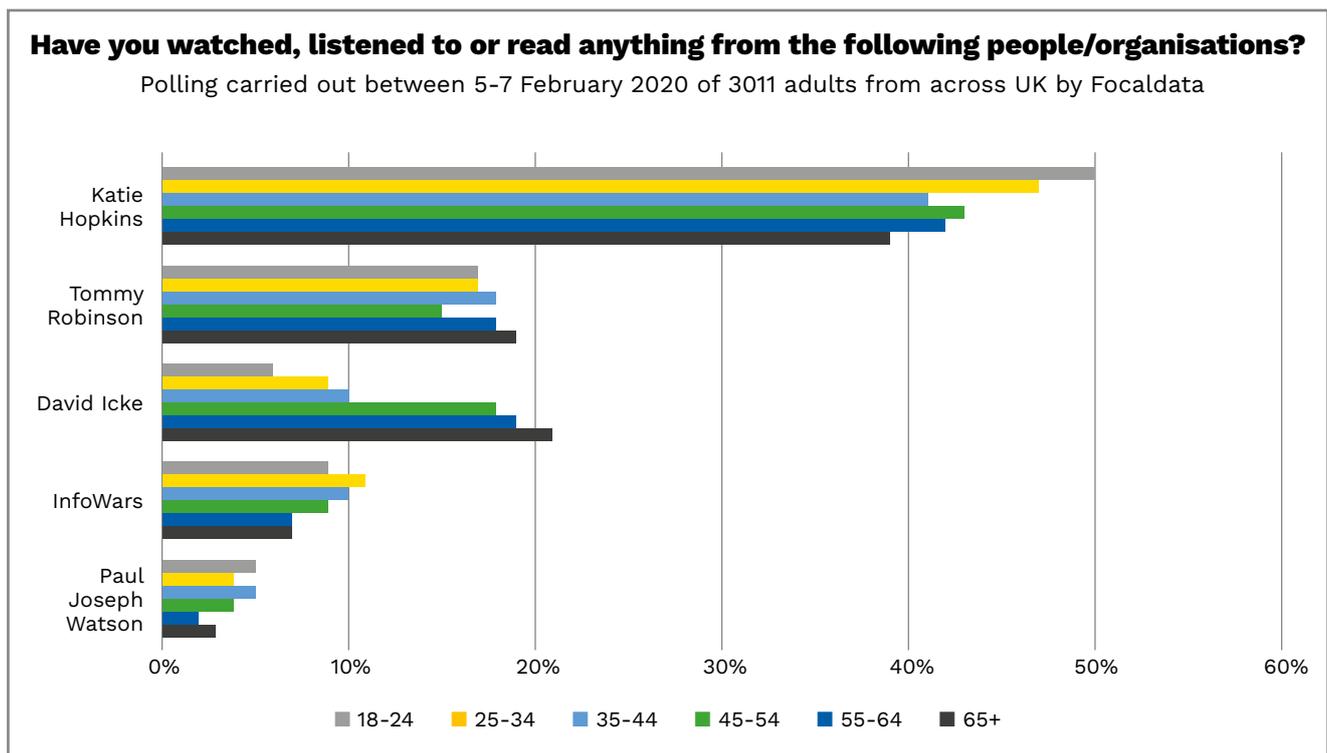
of the most regressive attitudes about sex, sexual violence, consent and relationships¹⁹.

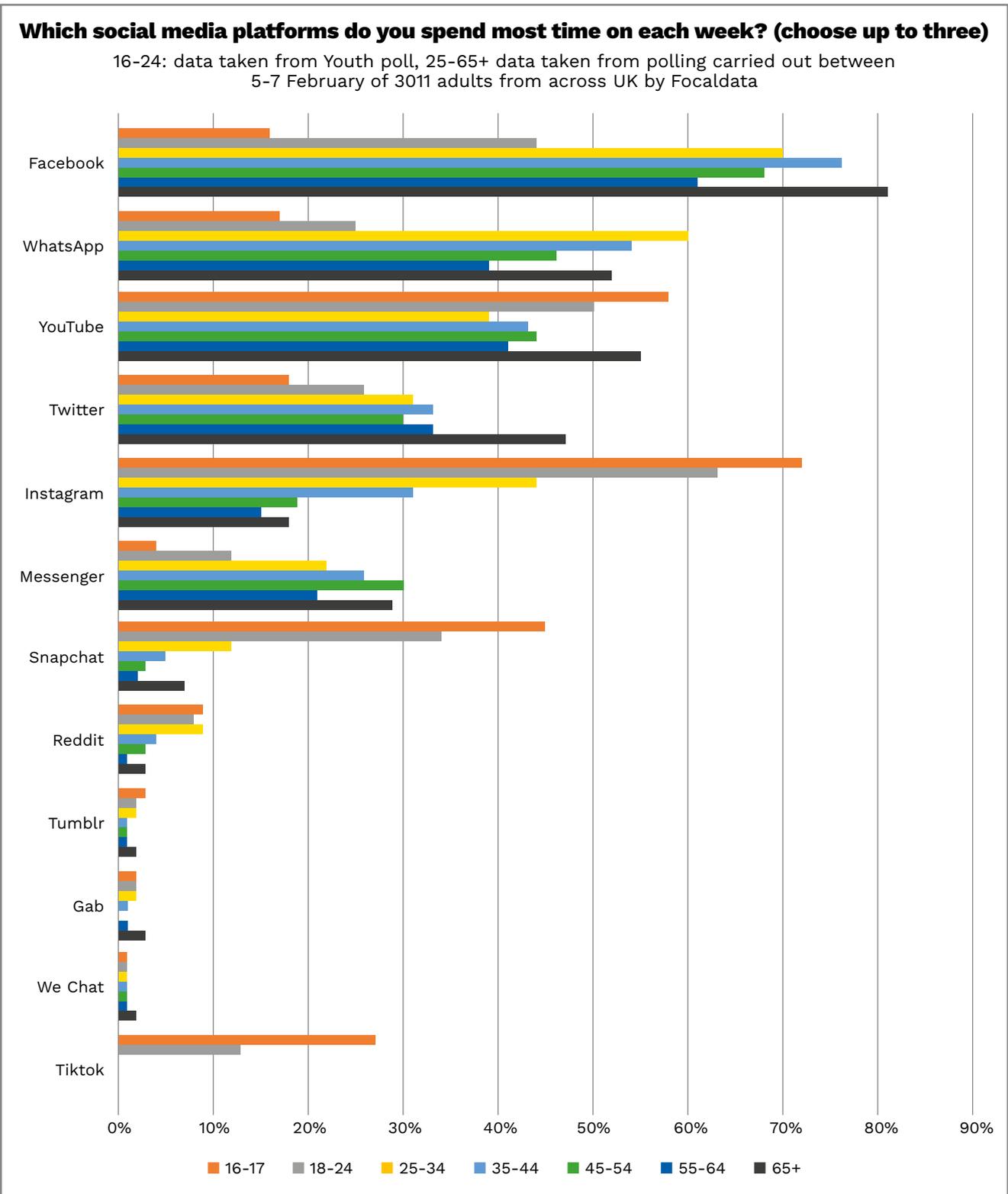
While much of the differences between age groups can be attributed to general shifts in social norms, growing diversity and increased education, where different generations get their information from also shapes their views.

OfCom’s 2019 report²⁰ found notable differences in how older and younger people consumed the news. They found that older people aged 65+ are more likely to stick to the more traditional platforms for news, including TV, radio and print newspapers, with TV use among this age group being almost universal (94%). And while half of all adults said they used social media for news, those aged 16-24 are much more likely to use social media for news than their older 65+ counterparts (76% vs. 16%).

Our polling shows how the age groups differ in their consumption of social media, with older people more likely to spend time on Facebook, while just 16% of 16-17 year olds spend their time on the platform. By contrast, younger people are spending their time on Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube and Tiktok.

When it comes to consumption of alternative media, there are not dramatic differences between the age groups consuming content produced by far right or conspiratorial figures such as David Icke, who spreads a variety of conspiracy theories including several that contain clearly anti-Semitic tropes, or Katie Hopkins and Tommy Robinson, far-right activists who regularly spread misinformation, particularly about Muslims.





Nonetheless, the differences in the way different age groups use social media means they are also accessing and consuming this content in different ways. This has implications for social media companies, who need to take responsibility for the content on their platforms, beyond simply the removal of extreme content from one platform.

While overall, numbers of people who believe in conspiracy theory remain low, HOPE not hate charitable trust polling shows how young people are more open to many conspiracies. While older generations are more likely to believe anti-Muslim conspiracies about ‘no go zones’ than young people, reflecting generational gaps in anti-

Muslim prejudice, young people are far more likely to believe in other conspiracies.

In polling carried out between 5-7 February 2020 of 3011 adults from across UK by Focaldata, 41% of 18-24s thought it was true that regardless of who is officially in charge of governments and other organisations, there is a single group of people who secretly control events and rule the world together, compared to 31% of 55-64s and 28% of over 65s, who instead were more likely to think this was false.

And while conspiracy theory is often considered more of an eccentricity than a threat, it often lines the way to darker ideas, such as antisemitic conspiracy and Holocaust denial. Worryingly, 13% of 18-24 year olds thought it was true that the

official account of the Nazi Holocaust is a lie and the number of Jews killed by the Nazis during World War II has been exaggerated on purpose, more than six times the figure of over 65s who think this is true (2%). While it is difficult to gauge whether all of those who agreed with this statement genuinely believe it, this is a worrying indication of a disregard for the severity of the issues at hand.

Young people are overall more socially liberal, but our polling would suggest that this isn't the full picture. As this report shows, young people are not a homogenous group, and when compared with older generations, are more likely to hold conspiratorial views and believe antisemitic tropes.

SHEDDING MUCH NEEDED LIGHT ON THE DRIVERS OF ESCALATING HATE CRIME AND PREJUDICE IN THE UK

Leni Morris, Chief Executive – Galop

This research provides a vital snapshot of the views of young people in the UK today.

We are heartened to see that the majority of young people polled are supportive of LGBT+ rights. Three quarters agree that gay couples should be able to freely adopt children and over half find gender-neutral pronouns easy to use.

However, we were disappointed to see that nearly 1 in 10 young people in Britain have very negative views of LGBT+ people, in particular young men.

These young men have broadly concerning views towards minoritised identities, with 1 in 5 young men buying in to racist and anti-Semitic conspiracies theories, and half saying that feminism has gone too far. Nearly half of young men think that these views can be justification for violence in extreme circumstances, in order to defend these beliefs.

Hate crime are disproportionally committed by young men. Racist, anti-faith, anti-LGBT+ and anti-disability hate crime have all escalated since the EU referendum.

In 2018/19, hate crimes against people based on their sexual orientation increased by 25% from the previous year. In the same period, transphobic hate crime rose by 37%.

These extremely negative views have real impact in people's lives, and makes the UK a less safe place for many. We know from the majority that there is hope, but there is still work to do to keep LGBT+ people safe.

We welcome this report from HOPE not hate charitable trust, which sheds much needed light on the drivers of escalating hate crime and prejudice in the UK.



IDENTITY, RACE AND IMMIGRATION

YOUNG PEOPLE tend to have more open social attitudes on identity, immigration and race relations than the population at large. A large majority (79%) of young people say that there is a place for every kind of person in this country, compared to 63% of our December 2019 nationally representative poll, and 81% say that having a wide variety of backgrounds and cultures is part of British culture, compared to 63% in the same nationally representative poll.

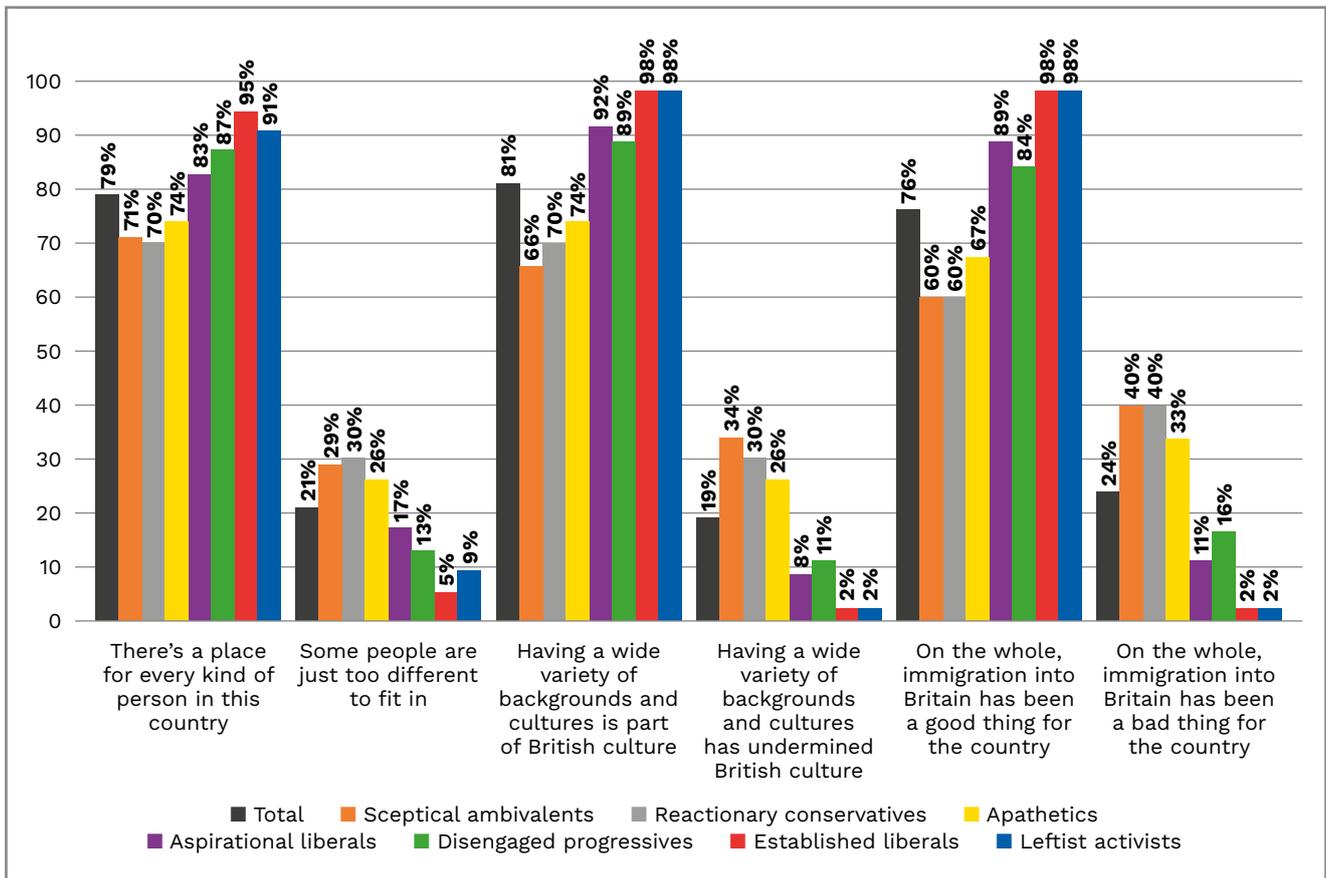
More than three quarters (76%) of young people think that on the whole, immigration into Britain has been a good thing for the country, and the majority share a positive view of refugees with young women and 16-17 year olds sharing the most positive attitudes.

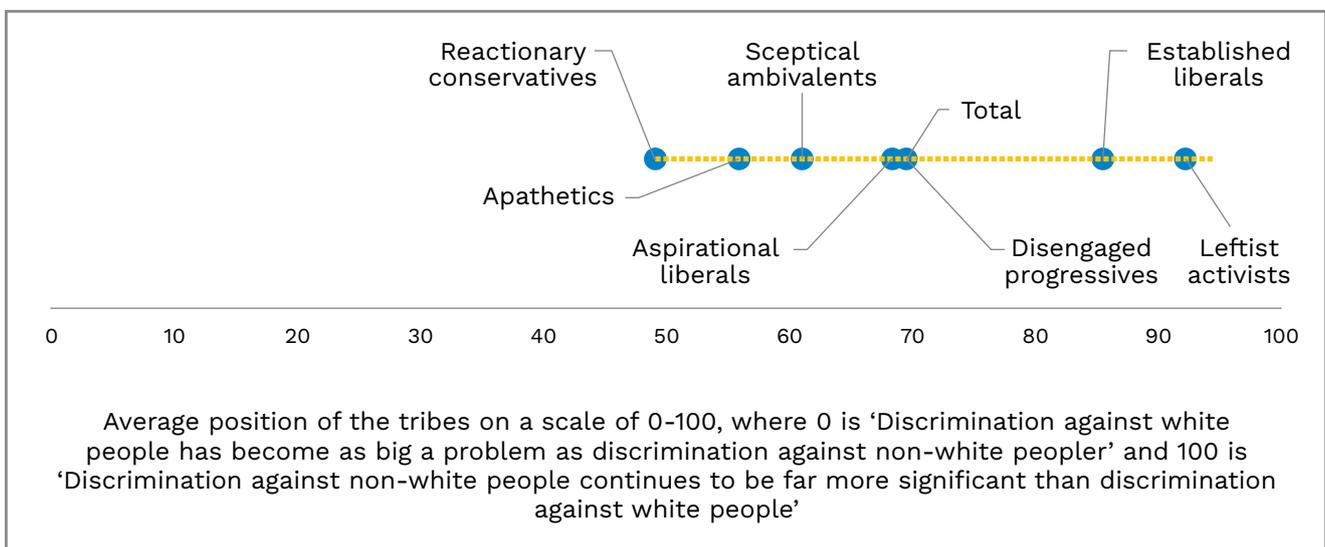
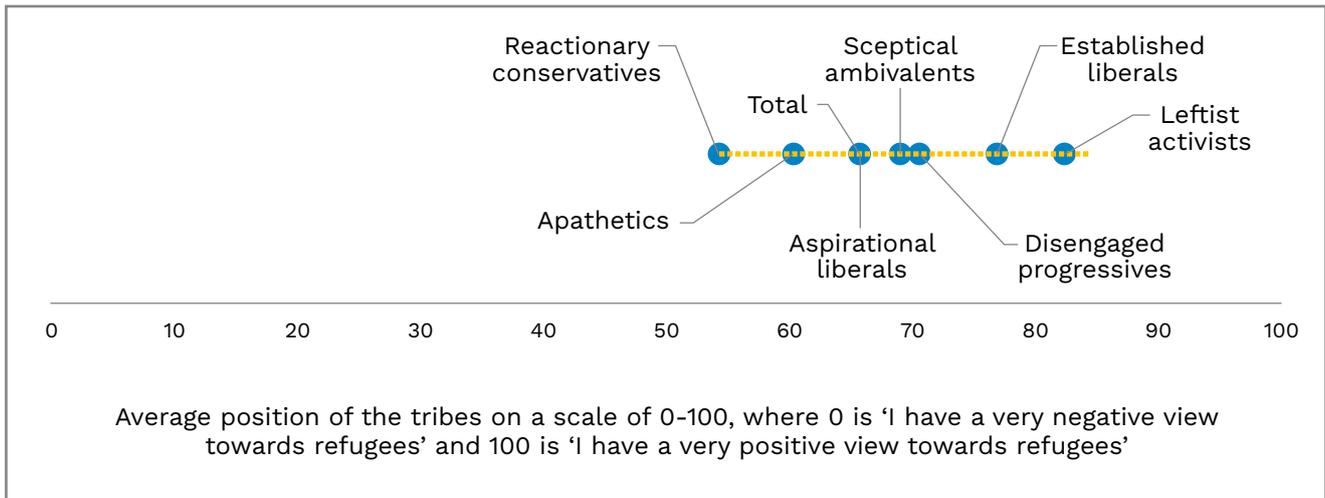
Across the tribes, there is not huge variation as a majority see immigration and multiculturalism positively. Even among the reactionary conservative tribe, 60% think immigration has

been a good thing for the country and 70% think that British culture is inherently multicultural.

Hostility towards immigration and multiculturalism is a view rejected by young people; just 4% share a negative view of refugees and 7% share a negative view towards immigrants.

Young people's inclusive views translate into their social norms. Most young people think it would be wrong to make a joke about someone's religion (59%) or race (66%) and a majority are willing to call out prejudice; more than half (53%) think it is wrong to not say anything when a friend makes a comment you find offensive. Just 10% think this is not wrong. Yet young men are more than three times as likely (16%) as young women (5%) to think that it is not wrong to make a joke based on someone's race, with 16 and 17 year olds also more likely to think this is acceptable (13%). Just 7% of young Londoners think that jokes based on a person's race are acceptable, compared to





20% of those in the North East. Although most of the tribes reject this, around half (54%) of the reactionary conservative group think making jokes about someone's race is wrong while 21% do not.

And although a minority view, almost one in ten young people (8%) believe that discrimination against white people has become as big a problem as discrimination against non-white people. Again, young men are more likely to believe this (9%), as are those with no formal qualifications (28%) and those in the reactionary conservative tribe (17%).

And more young people agree (36%) than disagree (31%) that you cannot be proud of your national identity these days without being called racist. Again, young men were more likely to think this (40%) than young women (33%), while three quarters of the reactionary conservative tribe agreed (75%), while only 7% of the established liberals and leftists activists felt the same way.

But our research has also shown that younger generations have a more complex understanding of how historical racism bears on systemic discrimination today than older people, who

are instead more likely to focus in on debates around statues as '*political correctness gone mad*'. In a nationally representative poll of 2,104 people for HOPE not hate charitable trust by Panel Base between June 17th to 18th 2020, we found that 70% of 18-24 year olds supported the anti-racist BLM protests in response to the murder of George Floyd, but only 37% of those over 65 felt the same. Younger people were as likely as older age groups to agree that Black and Asian people face everyday discrimination, but were far more likely to see racism as a structural issue than older cohorts²¹.

Young people do show more open-minded views on immigration, multiculturalism and race relations than the population as a whole, and tend to hold positive views of marginalised groups. Nonetheless, there remains a stream of rejectionist sentiment among young people, rooted in a rejection of 'P.C. culture' and for some, a feeling that their place in society has been compromised to pander to the demands of marginalised groups.

This is a trend our research has observed for

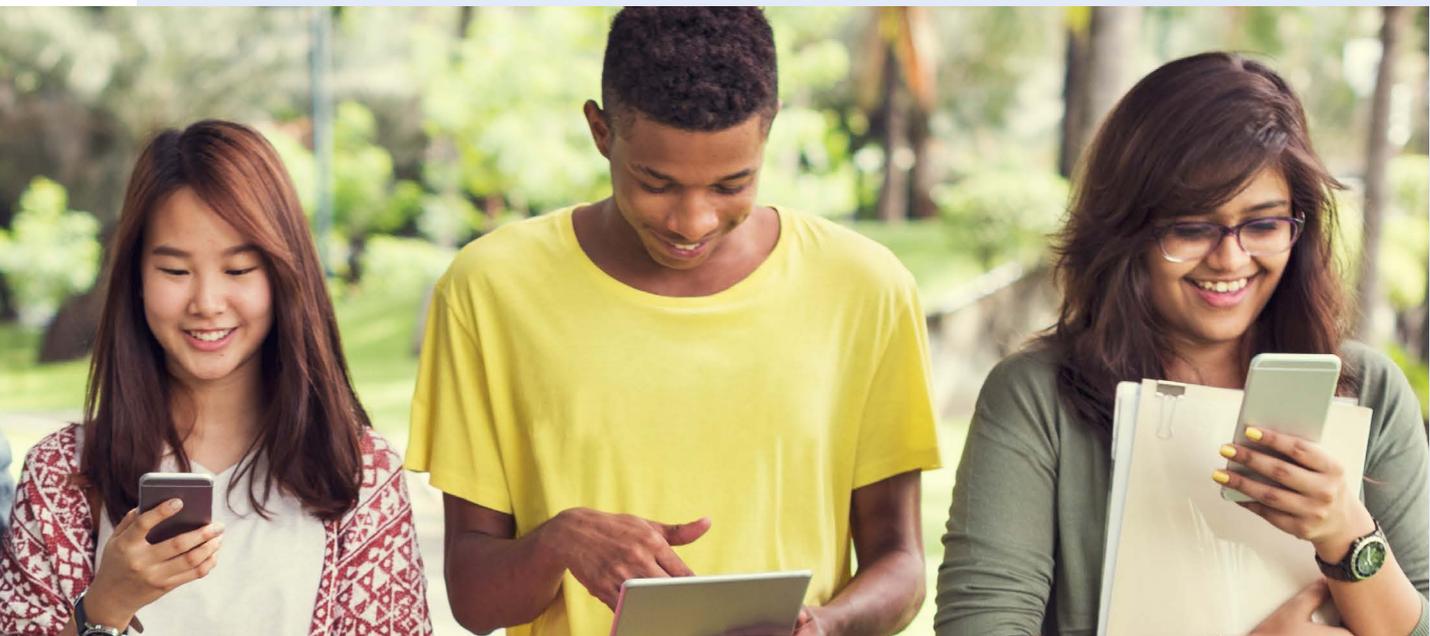
some time, with a small proportion of young men drawn towards alt-right ideologies, in which the concept of society compromising to accommodate demands of minorities is key.

For many, it is their attitudes around sex, gender, and in particular anti-feminism, which endorses a push back against a broader set of progressive values.

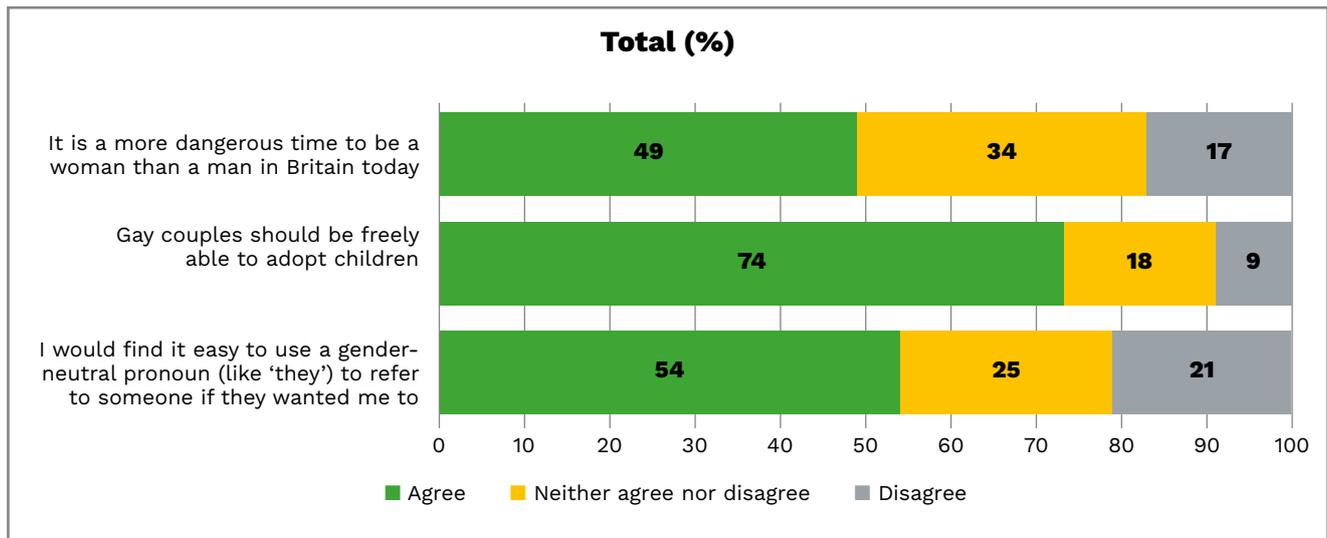
BAME YOUTH

Young people from Black, Asian and mixed race backgrounds are less likely to report feeling under pressure in daily life than white British respondents, and are less likely to report mental health as one of the biggest issues they currently face. At the same time, they are all more likely than white respondents to say that they are more judged on how they look than how they act. Worryingly large numbers of young Black and Asian people have witnessed or experienced violence, bullying and racism online.

- 28% of young people who identify as mixed white and Black African, 10% of young people from African backgrounds, 8% from Pakistani backgrounds, and 14% from Indian backgrounds list discrimination as one of the biggest issues they face personally, compared to just 2% of white British young people
- Around half of Pakistani (49%), Bangladeshi (47%) and African respondents(47%) think that voting is pointless because politicians will always ignore the views of people like me
- Only slightly more than a third (37%) of young people from Caribbean backgrounds say that they trust the police to tell the truth
- Young people from BAME backgrounds are more likely to see a university degree as important for their futures than white British respondents. Just 31% of white British respondents say that going to university is essential to get a good job compared to 68% of young people who identify as Indian, 54% who identify as Caribbean, 50% who identify as African, 58% who identify as Chinese, and 39% who identify as Pakistani.
- Black respondents are more optimistic for the future than young people from other ethnic groups; 67% of those who identify as Caribbean, 70% of those who identify as African and 89% of those from any other Black background say they are optimistic for the future compared to just 59% of all respondents
- Only 37% of Chinese respondents, 41% of Pakistani respondents and 43% of Caribbean respondents feel confident that they will have a good job and a decent place to live by 2025. 51% of white British respondents say the same



BEYOND BINARIES? GENDER AND SEXUALITY

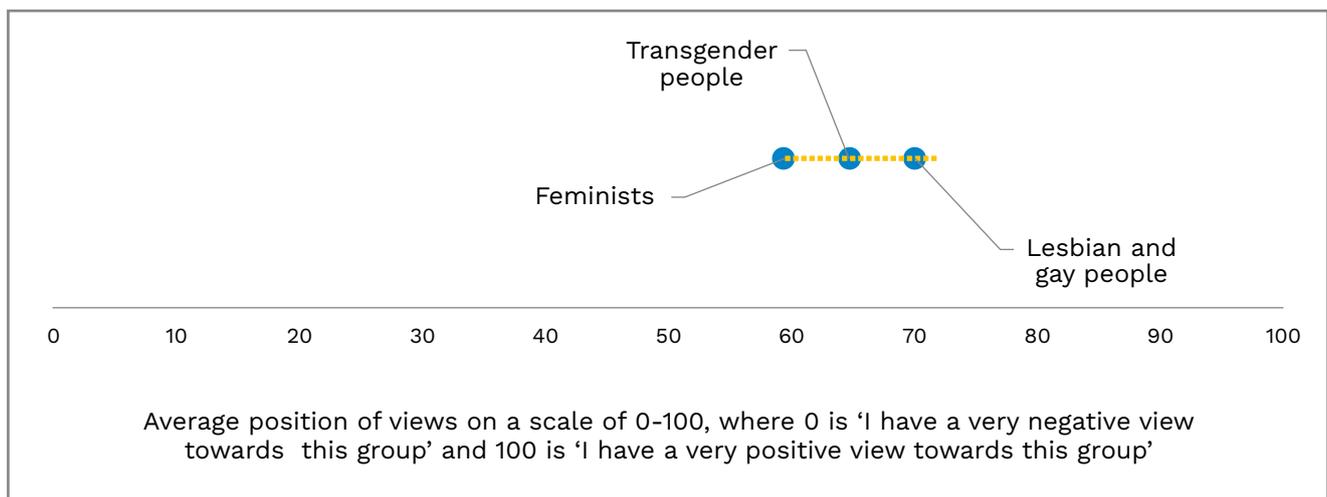


ATTITUDES AROUND sexuality have grown increasingly open over generations²², as over time the British public have rejected traditional gender roles, and attitudes towards sexual relationships have liberalised.

Most young people show liberal attitudes to sexuality, as research from Ipsos Mori found in 2018²³ – where just two thirds (66%) of Gen Z thought of themselves as exclusively heterosexual, compared with 71% of Millennials, 85% of Gen X and 88% of Baby Boomers. Well over half (56%) knew someone who uses non-gender-binary terms – Gen Z are embracing more fluid understandings of gender and sexuality.

Our research finds that the majority of young people view lesbian and gay people and transgender people positively, and more than half (54%) say that they would find it easy to use a gender-neutral pronoun (like 'they') to refer to someone if they wanted them to, with a minority (21%) disagreeing with this.

Three quarters of young people (74%) agree that gay couples should be freely able to adopt children, with only 9% opposing this. Young women are more open on this question (83% agree) than young men (64%). Although young Muslims are less likely to agree with this, more than half do (51%). Young women are more



likely to voice more open views on gender and sexuality than young men, as do those with lower levels of education, who tend to hold less open-minded social attitudes more generally. But across the tribes, a majority share progressive views on LGBT+ rights, including the reactionary conservative group.

This is welcome news, considering that Trans issues have become a keystone for mainstreaming hateful narratives, as public awareness of the issue has increased in recent years. Transgender rights have noticeably become a more visible topic of debate in the media, but as visibility has increased, the debate has become polarised and often hateful.

Yet young people have less positive attitudes of feminists, and many young men reject feminism as an ideology that displaces men.

Only around half (49%) of young people, including 39% of young men and 59% of young women, think that it is a more dangerous time to be a woman than a man in Britain today. Almost one in five young men (18%) hold negative views about feminists and 14% see anti-abortion activists positively. And more young people agree (36%) than disagree (35%) that feminism has gone too far and makes it harder for men to succeed. Among young men, 50% agree while only 21% disagree.

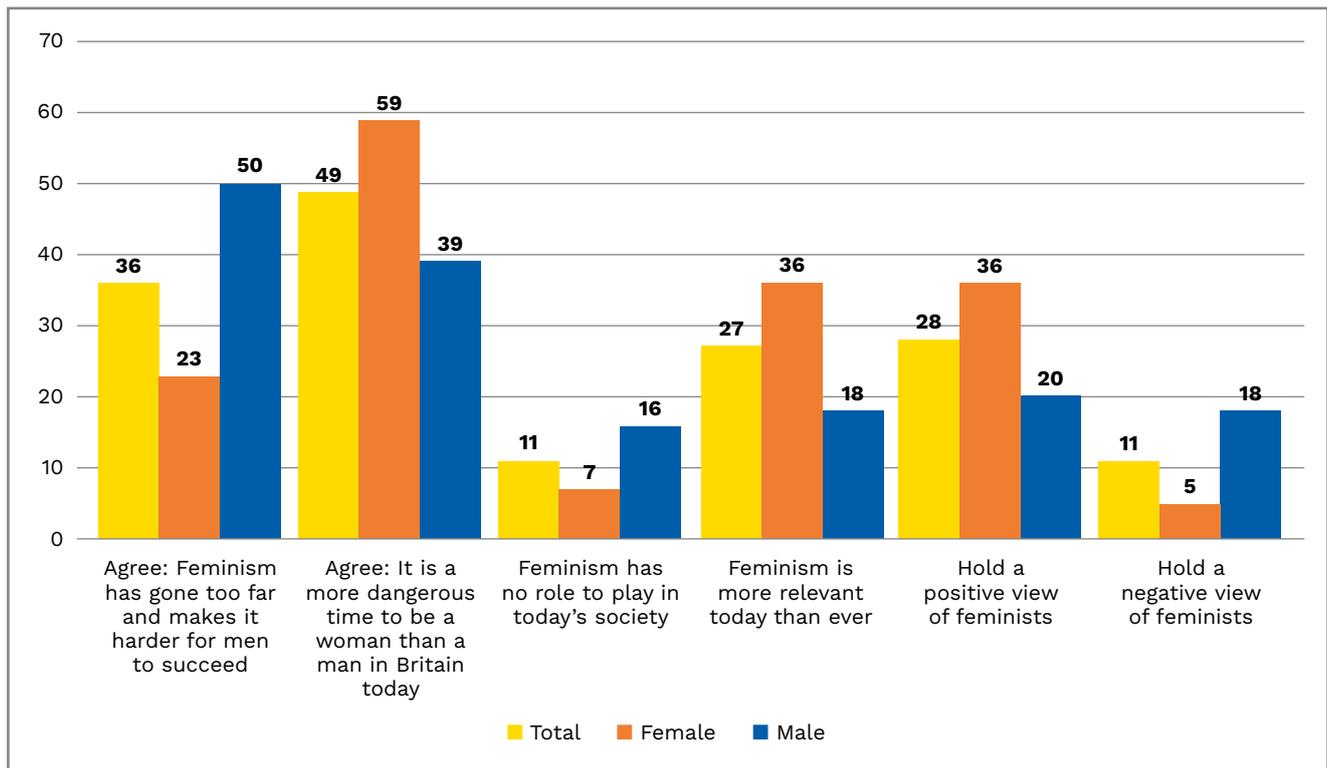
The majority of the reactionary conservative tribe (75%) feel that feminism is holding men back, while just 3% of the leftist activist group feel the same way.

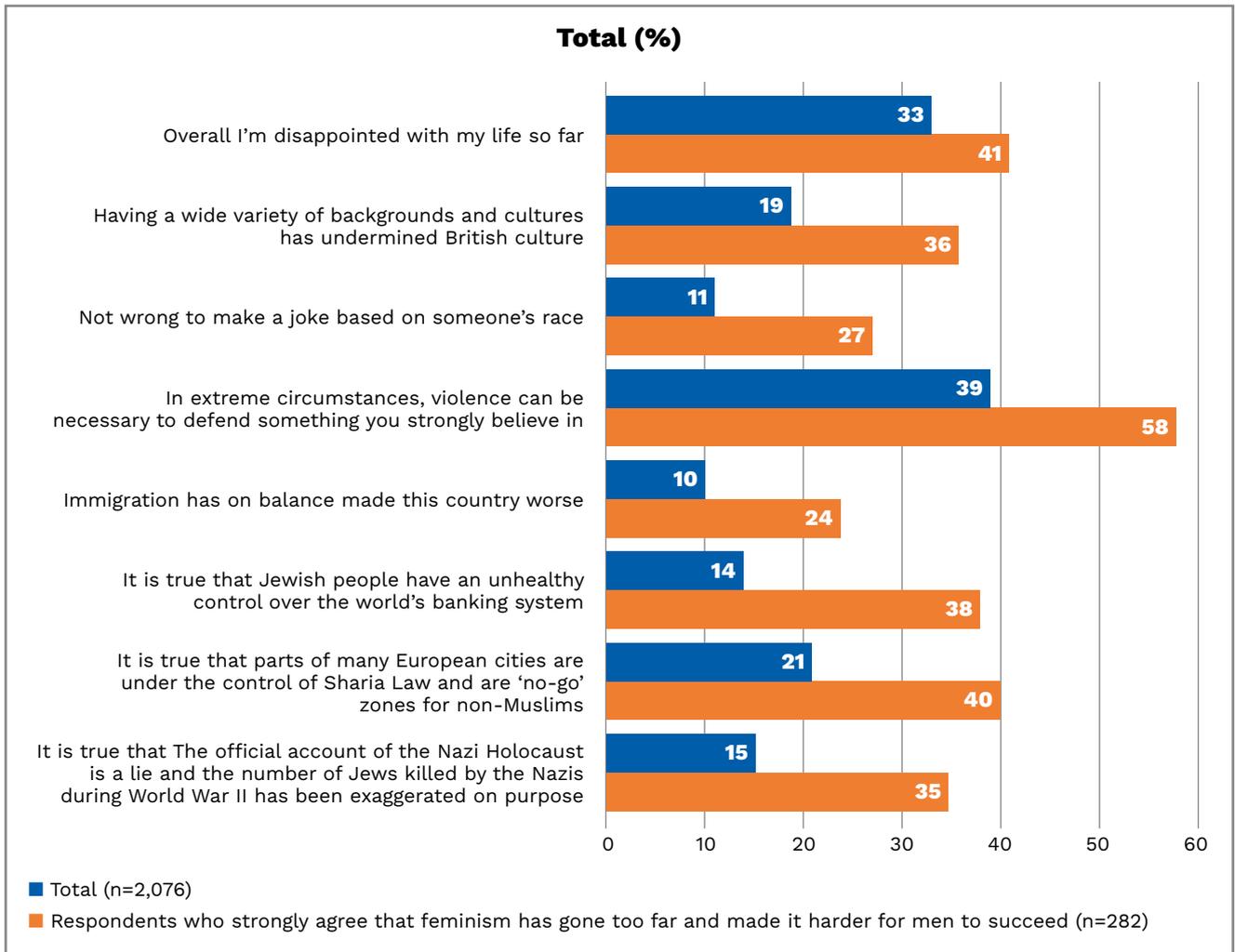
Misogyny and anti-feminism are critical areas where the far-right have spread out beyond their traditional remit, with areas within the organised men’s rights movement (MRA), pick-up artists and the so-called ‘manosphere’²⁴ acting as slip roads to more extreme parts of the far-right. While the far-right has always had a problem with misogyny, these tactics and connections are new.

The organised men’s rights movement acts to reassert men’s status and power at the expense of equality for others. Misogynistic resentment of women’s quest for equal rights as a threat to men’s power can easily move towards racist resentments among white men – and women – towards minorities and women, concerning what they see as a displacement of status and dominance.

Cloaked as protecting ‘free speech’ against liberal elites, MRAs promote the idea that feminism is an authoritative, controlling ideology to create room for sexism and misogyny to be legitimised through the undermining of feminist reform. In this way, feminists become linked directly to the idea of an out of touch ‘liberal elite’, one that has ‘gone too far’ and become repressive towards men, caught up in identity politics and political correctness.

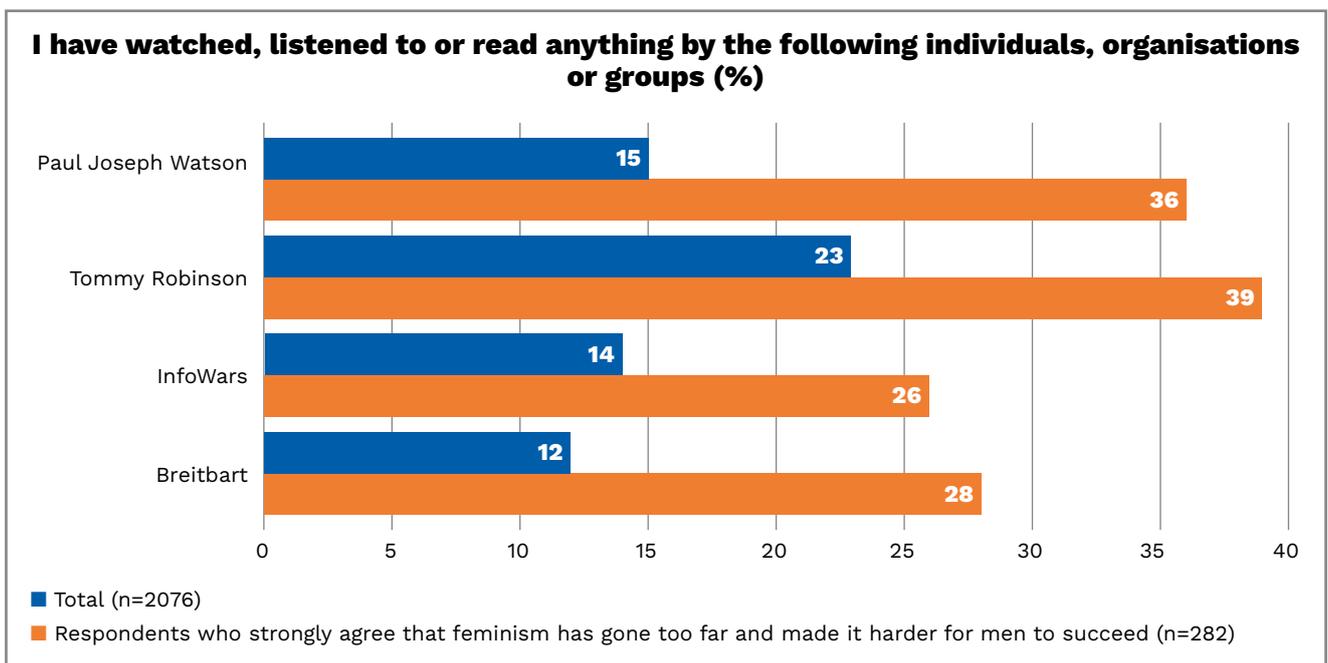
A widespread rejection of feminism among young men reflects the potential power of these messages to penetrate into the mainstream with greater force than the far-right’s traditional message. These narratives speak to broader





resentments about a lack of opportunity, the availability and quality of work, and issues that affect everyday life, like education and housing.

They reassert a hierarchy, where white men remain at the top, and offer a scapegoat in the form of those attempting to disrupt this order.



Our polling finds that young people who feel strongly that feminism is suppressing men are much more likely to agree that you cannot be proud of your national identity these days without being called racist. They are around twice as likely to think that making a joke based on someone's race or religion is acceptable, and more than twice as likely to think that discrimination against white people has become as big a problem as discrimination against non-white people.

They are overwhelmingly male (78%), less likely to be optimistic about the future, but more likely to feel disappointed by their life so far and that their

chances in life are determined by forces outside of their control. A majority support political violence. Many are conspiracy theorists and they are far more likely to have watched, listened to or read something by far right and alt right figures like Paul Joseph Watson or Tommy Robinson and more likely to have watched, listened or read something from pick up artists.

The overlay between male supremacy and white supremacy, and its pervasiveness among young people should come as a great concern. Moreover, many young women are feeling the effects of misogyny in their daily lives.

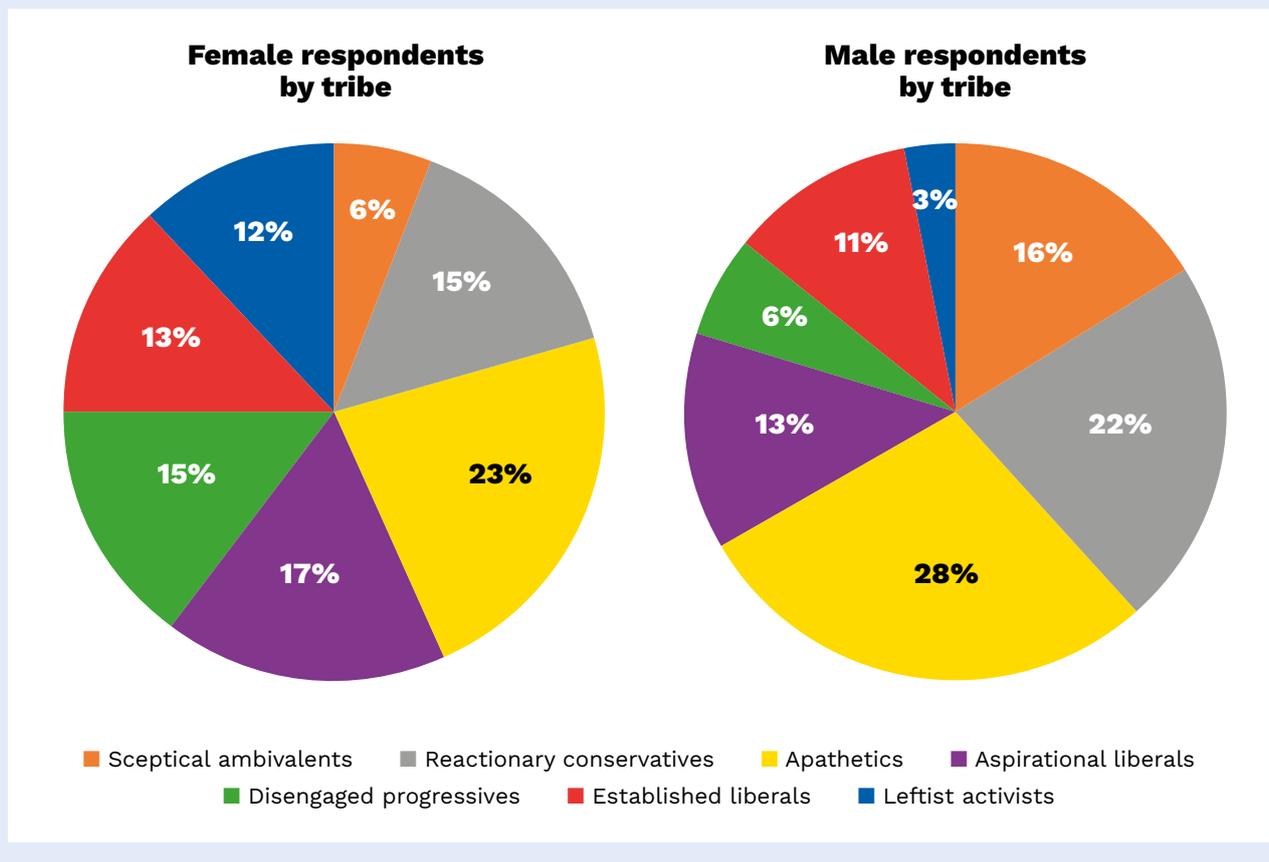


YOUNG MEN VS. YOUNG WOMEN

Male respondents n=1017, female respondents, n=1059

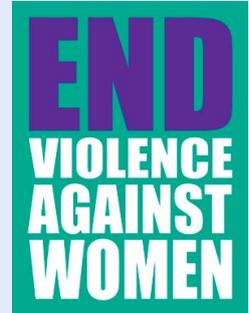
Both young men and young women in Britain today face significant challenges. While both reject traditional gender roles in theory, young women report feeling under significant pressure, with most struggling with mental health issues and almost a third having witnessed or experienced sexual harassment (29%) or sexual assault (14%). Young men are more likely to be concerned about unemployment and a lack of decent affordable housing, and are less likely to express their concerns than young women.

- Young women (51%) are more likely to be concerned about the impact mental health is having on their lives than young men (36%)
- 62% of young women and 45% of young men feel judged on how they look more than how they act
- 27% of young men think that talk of a mental health crisis is exaggerated, some people need to toughen up. Just 14% of young women think the same
- 62% of young women and 50% of young men feel under pressure in their day to day lives
- Young men are twice as likely (30%) as young women (16%) to think prominent YouTubers tell the truth
- Three times as many young men (6%) as young women (2%) think that it's acceptable to share intimate photos that your romantic partner has sent you with a friend
- Young men are less likely to trust friends, family, GPs and teachers, but more likely to trust sports stars, business owners, politicians and journalists than young women
- Men are more likely to believe conspiracy theories; twice as many (20%) think the official account of the Nazi Holocaust is a lie and the number of Jews killed by the Nazis during World War II has been exaggerated on purpose is true as young women (10%)



WE MUST CHALLENGE THOSE WHO PUSH A ZERO-SUM IDEA ABOUT POWER AND EQUALITY

Sarah Green, Director, End Violence Against Women Coalition



Many of the findings in this report are deeply worrying. Most of all, the clear overlap between young men with racist attitudes and sexist/misogynistic views. It is so deeply sad after decades of anti-racist and feminist activism, and social and political change, that a significant proportion of young white men feel they have had something taken away from them – that women and ethnic minorities gaining more freedom and equality must mean they lose out.

These changes don't have to be perceived or experienced this way. HOPE not hate charitable trust's analysis that online misogyny and men's rights are working as a "slip road" to the far right is chilling but totally credible – racists have always resorted to traditional ideas about masculinity and order as their vision and rallying call.

There are findings that are very welcome in this research too, including more progressive views on LGBT rights, and a large majority rejection of many racist ideas, sexist ideas and sexual harassment by the majority of young people. This gives hope, because these are the likely influencers, in time, of their discontented peers.

We should challenge those who push this zero-sum idea about power and equality head on, because when this sense of frustrated entitlement to supremacy is not tackled it can cause real harm in real life, with women of colour most likely to be on the receiving end.

We need Government policy around online harms to seriously step up and stop deferring to the big media companies; and we need those companies themselves to put their policies where their progressive-looking brand values are and take concerted action on hate on their platforms.

We urge all those influencers with strong followings among young people, and frontline professionals working with young people, to make naming and tackling these views a central part of their mission.



LIVING UNDER PRESSURE: EXPERIENCES OF YOUNG PEOPLE TODAY

Young people today are feeling under pressure. As well as mental health being the most common issue impacting young people in their day to day lives, a majority (56%) say that they feel under a lot of pressure in their day to day lives, with 16 and 17 year olds (60%) and young women most likely to be feeling under pressure (62%). And while most (59%) reject the idea that ‘talk of a mental health crisis is exaggerated, some people need to toughen up’, 21%, agree with this statement, including 27% of young men, making them twice as likely to agree with this as female respondents (14%). Pressures on young men, to be tough, or ‘man up’ have long existed, and has been a central theme in commentary on intergenerational conflict, with ‘snowflake’ millennials put in opposition with older generations. The Future Men²⁵ study from 2018 found that a majority (61%) of 18–24 year olds felt that UK society expects a man to “man up” when faced with a challenge.

This has also been the mantra for many figures such as Jordan Peterson, a clinical psychologist who is not a far right figure himself, but has attracted support from alt-right figures like Paul Joseph Watson. His international bestseller *12 Rules for Life: An Antidote to Chaos* taps into the pressures and concerns of young men by offering advice based on individual responsibility and accountability. While much of the work offers banal directives to “clean your room” and “stand up straight with your shoulders back”, critics have centred on his promotion of male dominance, and a rejection of ‘political correctness’ around gender identity. Two in five young men in our poll said they had read, watched or listed to something by Jordan Peterson.

The pressures felt by young people also reflect how marginalised groups are impacted by traditional gender roles. More than half of young people (53%), including 62% of young women, say that they feel more judged on how they look than how they act.

And there is a heightened sense of pressure felt by some minority groups. Eastern European (64%), mixed white and Black Caribbean (77%) and those from other mixed backgrounds (77%), Caribbean (57%) and Chinese respondents (62%) were most likely to feel this way.

The vast majority of young people reject racist or sexist behaviours, and think it is wrong to make

jokes based on someone’s race (66%) or religion (59%). Most (78%) say that it would be wrong for a man to call out a women’s appearance or wolf whistle her on the street, and 81% say it would be wrong to share an intimate picture from a romantic partner with a friend.

Moreover, the majority of young people say they would call out a friend for making an offensive comment; 53% say it would be wrong not to say anything, with only 10% thinking that this would be acceptable. 16 and 17 year olds are less likely to think making jokes based on race or religion are wrong, and are also less likely to call out a friend for saying something offensive.

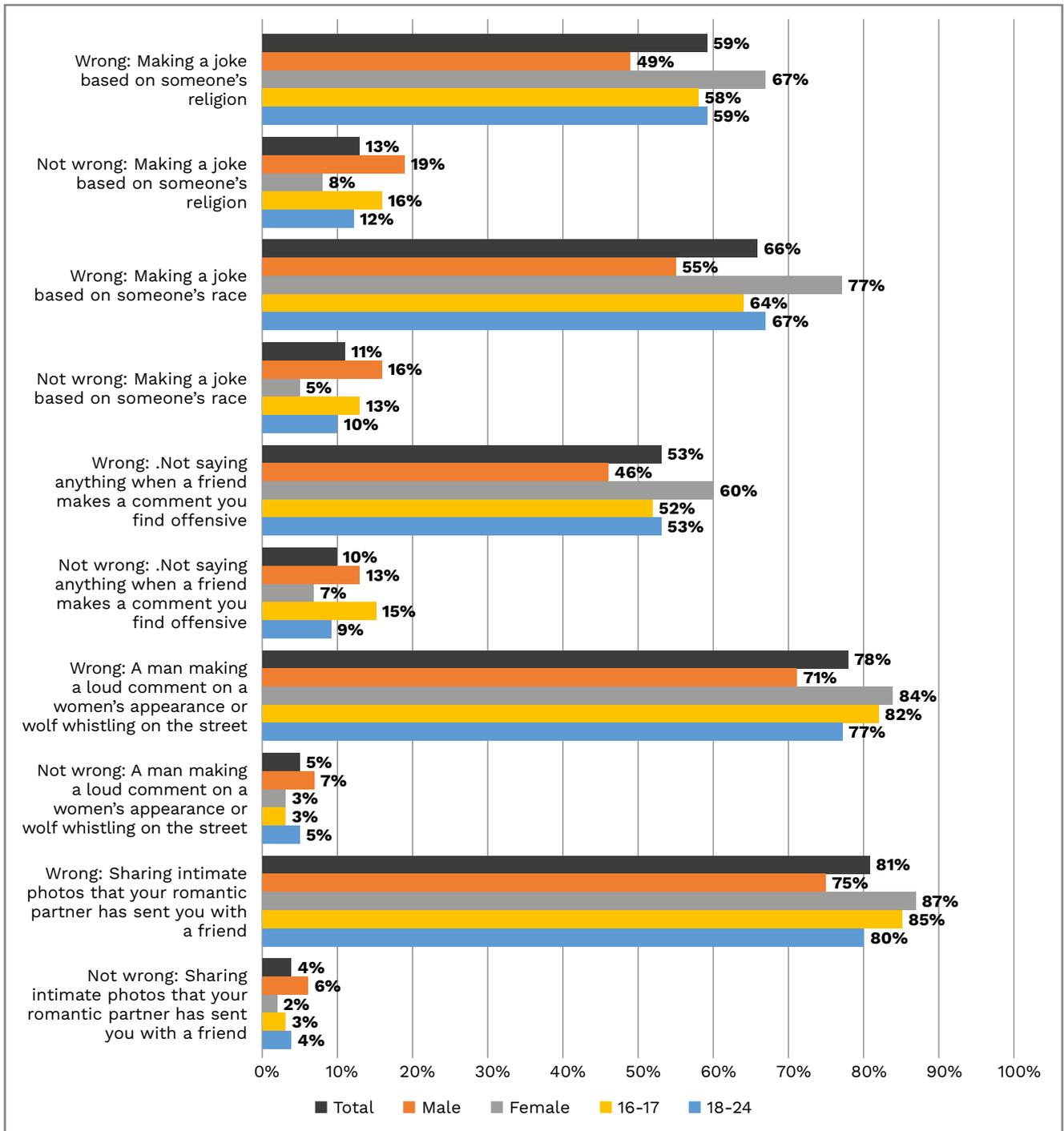
While it is just a small proportion of young people who think these behaviours are acceptable, young men are more likely to accept racist and sexist behaviour; 6% would have no problem sharing an intimate picture from a romantic partner with a friend. This is a worrying trend, with research showing that around 10% of Britons become victims of revenge porn²⁶.

Our poll finds that sadly, prejudice, violence, sexual violence and bullying are features of many young people’s lives. Large numbers of young people have experienced or witnessed discrimination, bullying, violence and harassment. 16 and 17 year olds were more likely to have seen or experienced any of these harmful behaviours.

Almost half have seen or experienced racism on social media (48%), 45% have seen or experienced bullying online, and 29% have seen or experienced violence or threats of violence. More than half (54%) of young people from African backgrounds have experienced racism on social media, while young people from BAME groups were all more likely to have seen or witnessed violence or threats of violence.

Sexual violence is worryingly prevalent among young people. Almost a third of young women (29% say they have seen or experienced sexual harassment and 14% say they have seen or experienced sexual assault. Among 16 and 17 year olds, the numbers are even higher, as 24% of both genders report experiencing or witnessing sexual harassment and 12% say the same for sexual abuse, which echoes findings of increased sexual violence experienced by girls in schools²⁷.

This also reflects an increase in reporting of young people seeking help for peer-on-peer abuse in the



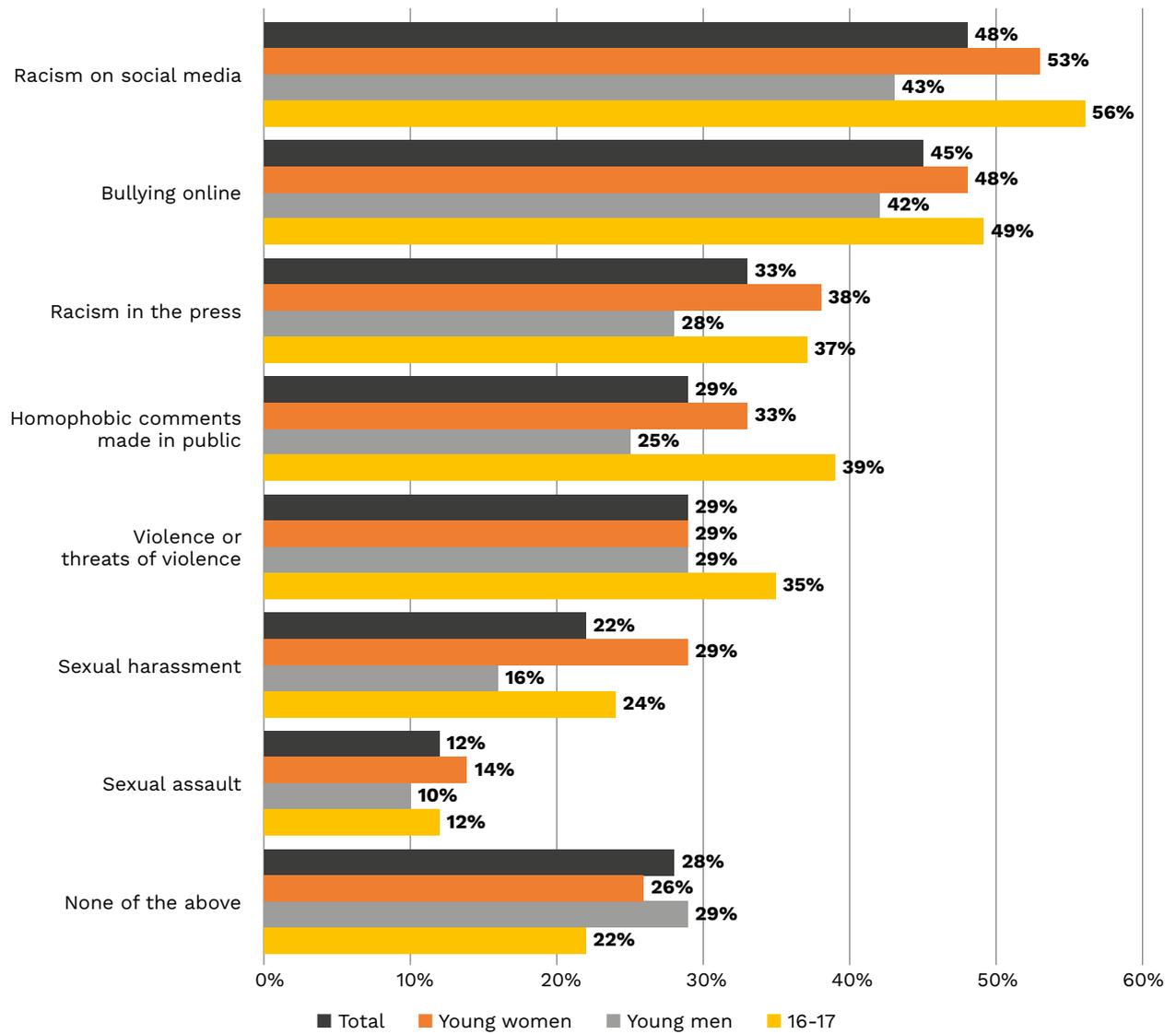
UK²⁸, with Childline reporting that many of their callers are not clear about what consent means. Our poll finds that four in ten young people (38%) say that they have felt pressured into some form of sexual activity (including sending sexually explicit messages and/or pictures) that they have felt uncomfortable with.

A third (33%) of 16 and 17 years olds say this is something they have experienced, while 42% of young women and a third (33%) of young men say they have felt pressured into sexual activity they've felt uncomfortable with.

It is clear that many young people are living under huge amounts of pressure.

Traditional gender roles met with a liberalisation over ideas of gender and sexuality means that many young men are feeling anger and resentment about their experiences of perceived disadvantage and the high expectations they face²⁹. While only a minority feel it is acceptable to manifest this through sexist or racist behaviours that reassert their status, many young women and young people from BAME backgrounds are feeling the pressures of these behaviours.

In the last 12 months, have you witnessed or experienced any of the following?



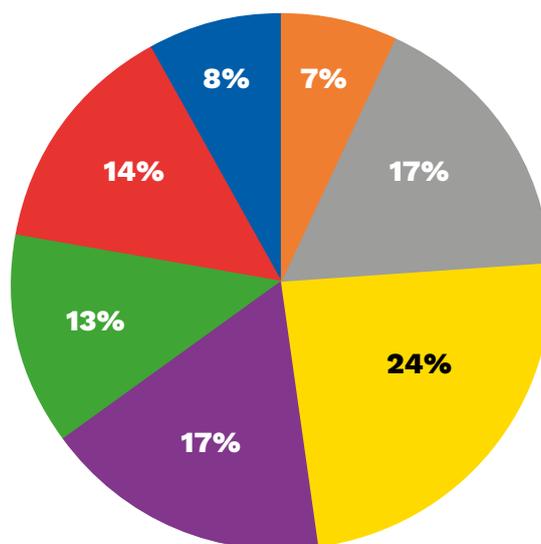
16 AND 17 YEAR OLDS

n= 423

Those in their final years of schooling are set to be some of the most impacted by coronavirus. With schools closed and exams cancelled, many are feeling stressed, lonely and struggling with their mental health. Although 16 and 17 year olds hold more liberal social views on a range of issues, many feel jokes based on race or religion are acceptable, and they are less likely to call out their friends for saying something offensive.

- More than half of 16 and 17 year olds (56%) have witnessed or experienced racism on social media
- 49% have witnessed or experienced bullying online
- One in 3 have felt pressured into some form of sexual activity (including sending sexually explicit messages and/or pictures) that they have felt uncomfortable with
- They are more likely to think jokes based on race (13%) or religion (16%) are acceptable than 18-24 year olds. And they are less likely to call out friends who make offensive comments
- Most 16 and 17 year olds spend their time on Instagram, YouTube and Snapchat
- One out of two (49%) list mental health as the biggest issue they currently face
- 80% say that politicians don't care what young people think
- As a result of coronavirus, 63% have taken online lessons and 36% have felt a deep sense of loneliness
- 57% would find it easy to use a gender neutral pronoun, like they, if someone asked them to

16 and 17 year olds by tribe

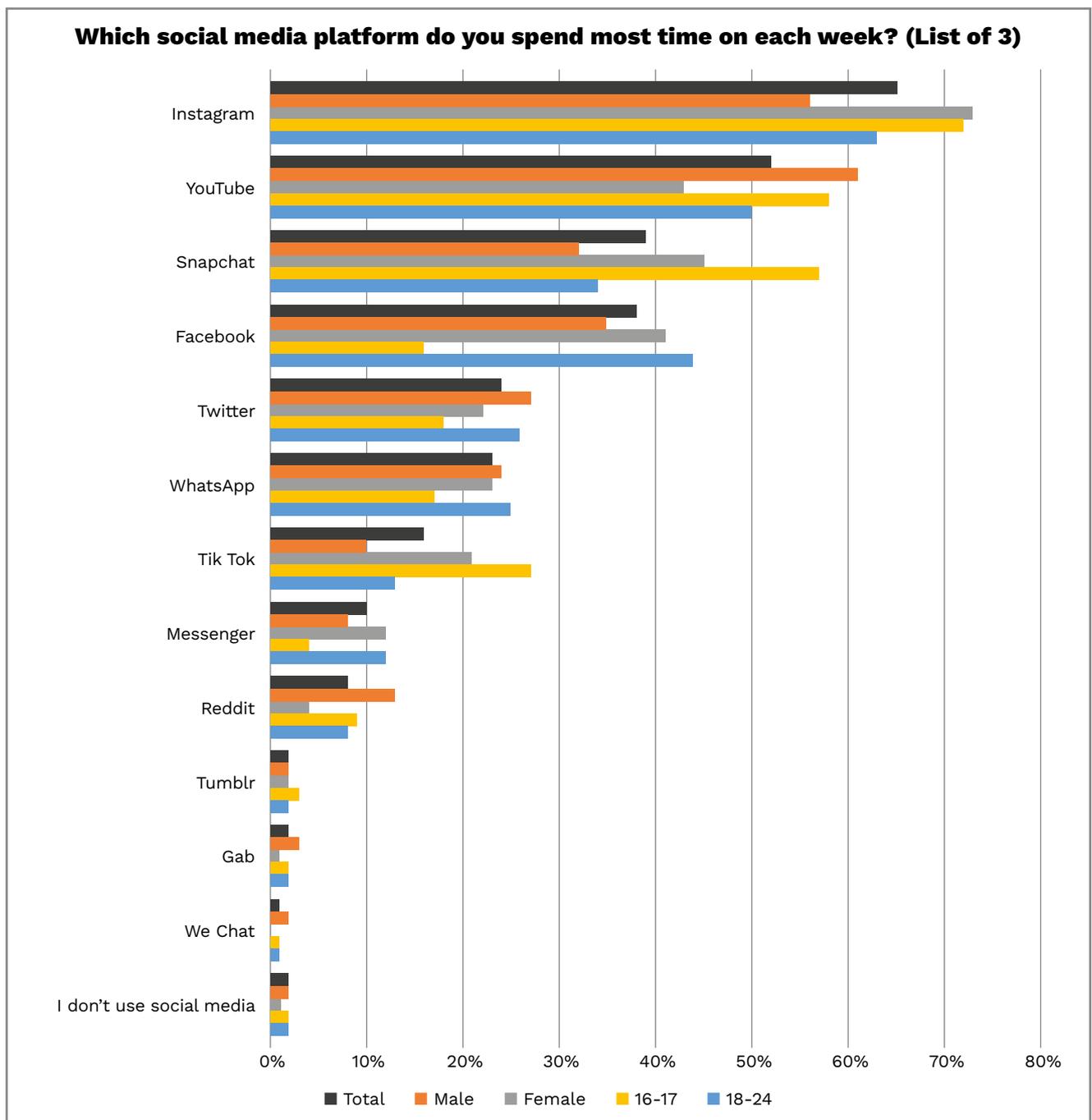


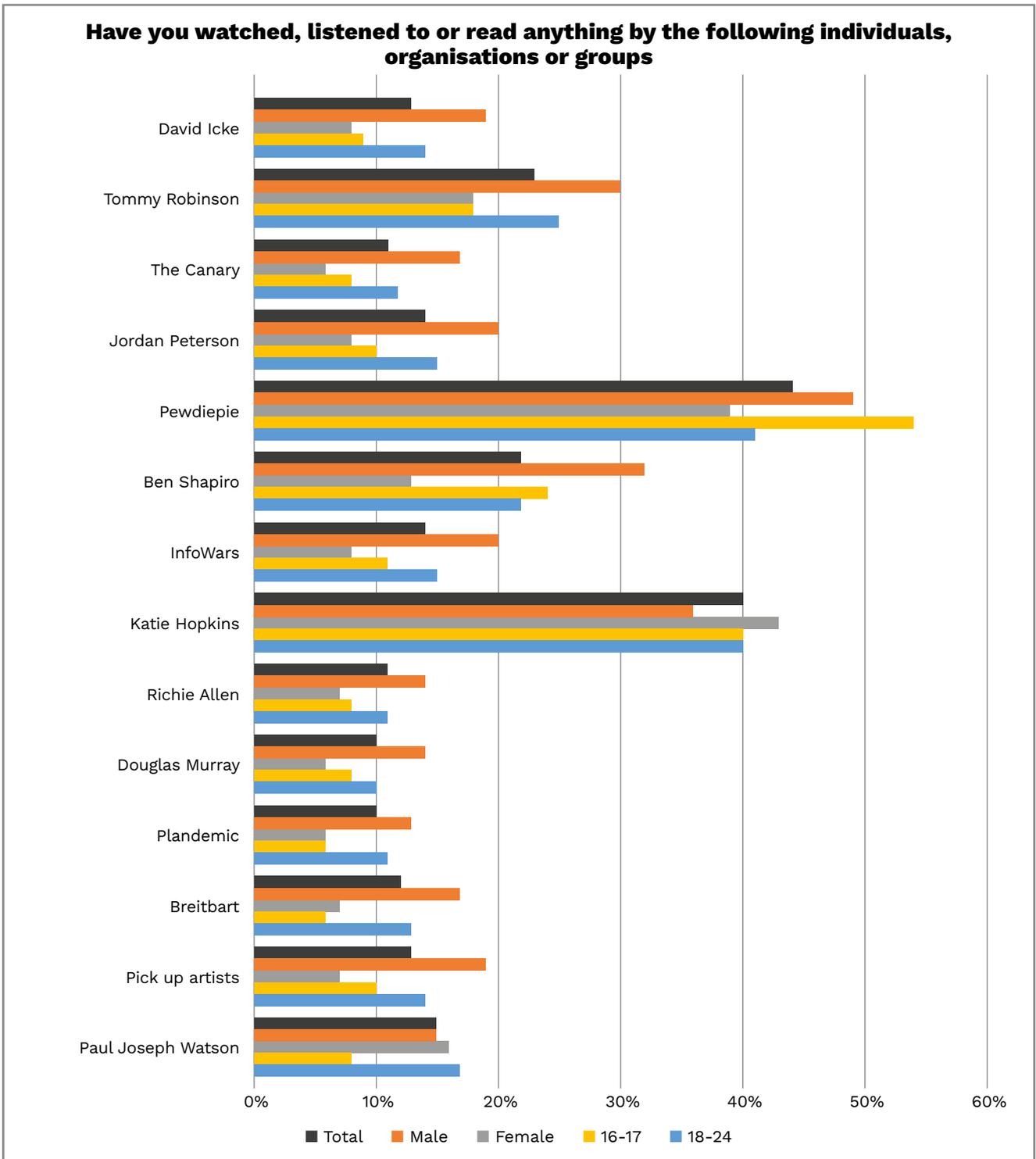
■ Sceptical ambivalents
 ■ Reactionary conservatives
 ■ Apathetics
 ■ Aspirational liberals
■ Disengaged progressives
 ■ Established liberals
■ Leftist activists

ONLINE ACTIVITY

WHILE DIGITAL poverty is an issue for some, as 1.9 million households in the UK have no connection to the internet, this is a generation who have grown up online. Most will be unfamiliar

with the tones of a dial-up internet connection, and smartphones will be second nature. Even the oldest of our survey respondents would have been just 13 years old when the first iPhone was





released. Most 16- 24 year olds are confident that their digital literacy places them well for the future, with a majority (61%) agreeing that their generation will have more opportunities than older generations because of technological advances. 16 and 17 year olds are most confident about this (66% agree).

More young people see the internet as a force for good (78%) than think it is not (22%), although a small proportion (7%) of 16-24 year olds list the

pressures of 24 hour social networking among the biggest issues that they personally face.

The majority (80%) of 16-24 year olds use social media daily, with most listing Instagram (65%), YouTube (52%), Snapchat (39%) and Facebook (38%) among the three platforms they spend most time on each week. Moreover, these platforms have a huge influence, as more young people say they trust prominent YouTubers to tell the truth (23%) than journalists (16%), sports

stars (18%), people who run large businesses/companies (17%), or politicians (16%).

Young women are most likely to spend time on Instagram (73%) while young men are more likely to spend time on YouTube (61%). 44% of 18-24 year olds list Facebook among the platforms they spend most time on, while just 14% of 16 and 17 year olds do the same. And almost a third (27%) of 16 and 17 year olds spend most time on TikTok and 57% say Snapchat, but just 13% of those aged 18-24 list TikTok and 34% list Snapchat in their most commonly used platforms.

Across the tribes, the politically motivated leftist activist and established liberal groups were more likely to say they spent time on Twitter (35%), whereas the reactionary conservative group were more likely to spend time on Facebook (44%). Disengaged progressives were more likely to use platforms like Snapchat (44%) or TikTok (28%).

ALTERNATIVE MEDIA

While just 29% of 16-24 year olds say that they watch the news daily, large numbers of young people, especially young men are consuming alternative media sources online, with some accessing extreme, conspiratorial or misogynistic content online.

We asked our poll whether they had watched, read or listened to any content from a range of high profile figures with large social media footprints and alternative media sources reflecting a range of viewpoints. This included dangerous and divisive conspiracy theorist David Icke who was recently removed from various social media platforms for spreading coronavirus disinformation³⁰, far-right American conspiracy theory and fake news website

Infowars, and left wing alternative news site The Canary, which has come under criticism for promoting conspiracy theories³¹.

Clearly, these figures operate in different spaces, with very different political agendas and some more dangerous and divisive than others. Nonetheless, we felt it was important to include a range of alternative media outlets and high profile figures with large followings and varied degrees of divergence from the mainstream in the opinions they regularly express, to better understand young people's interactions with alternative media outlets.

Moreover, our research on conspiracy theory³² has found that alternative news sites have significantly higher readership among believers in conspiracy theory than the population overall. In polling from February 2020, of those who thought that 5G is connected to the coronavirus, 30% said that they had read one alternative news site in the last six months compared to 8% among those who did not subscribe to the theory.

While consuming content from these figures does not indicate support for what they say, it reveals some interesting patterns in how the young people polled consume alternative media, with older male respondents more likely to have watched, read or listened to something by alternative media sources or figures. Across the tribes, the reactionary conservative group are more likely to have consumed content from far-right or conspiratorial platforms or figures such as Breitbart (15%), Infowars (24%) or Tommy Robinson (31%).

CONSPIRACY THEORIES

Support for conspiracy theories tends to rise in volatile and uncertain times. These ideas can provide solace by providing someone or something to blame and give a form of explanation to people's hardship. When large, world-changing events take place we seek meaning, and often intent behind what is going on. Simple accidents often do not suffice as explanations. The uncertainty faced by young people currently, twinned with their use of, and trust in, social media and alternative media sources opens some up to conspiracies. Many young people believe in conspiracy, with young men more likely to accept conspiracy theory based on racist tropes. Younger people largely reject conspiracies that are rooted in anti-Muslim prejudice or anti-immigrant sentiment that are more accepted by older generations, reflecting their social attitudes. Nonetheless, they are more likely to believe others, including antisemitic conspiracies.

Despite high levels of concern among young people about climate change, more than one in five (21%) think that the idea of man-made global warming is a hoax, though 16 and 17 year olds are less likely to accept this (15%). 19%, including 21% of young men, think that the moon landings 50 years ago were staged, while a third (33%) of young people think that Governments suppress evidence about UFO sightings and landings. More young people (41%) believe that Lady Diana was murdered, her death was not an accident, than think that this is false (26%).

While many of these conspiracies are harmless and eccentric, they indicate a tested relationship with power. A third of young people (33%), including 42% of the reactionary conservative group and 40% of the disengaged progressive tribe, believe that regardless of who is officially in charge of governments and other organisations, there is a single group of people who secretly control events and rule the world together. 25% of young people believe that Covid-19 was created in a Chinese military lab.

This susceptibility to conspiracy thinking can be a gateway into darker territories, including more extreme ideas such as conspiratorial antisemitism. Worryingly, 14% of young people, and 19% of young men, think it is true that Jewish people have an unhealthy control over the world's banking system. Moreover, 15% of young people,

and 20% of young men, say that is true that the official account of the Nazi Holocaust is a lie and the number of Jews killed by the Nazis during World War II has been exaggerated on purpose.

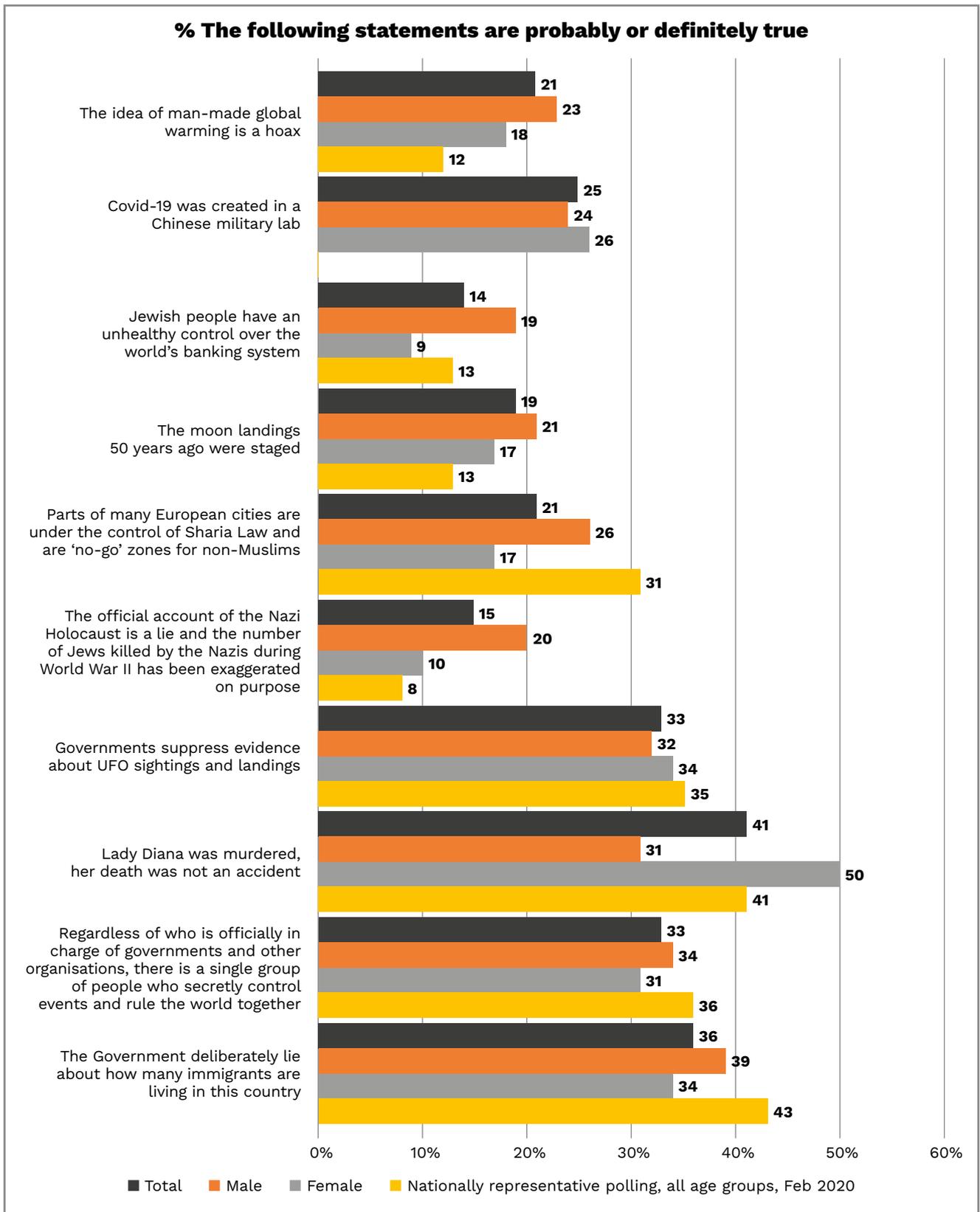
These figures are shocking, but come with the caveat that it is difficult to gauge whether all of those who agreed with these statements genuinely believe them. Moreover, there is a growing trend in contemporary online culture to seek capital through being 'outrageous' or 'controversial'. This behaviour is especially widespread among young men and can frequently occur in relation to the Holocaust.

But a cavalier response to these statements shows a disregard for the severity of the issues at hand, indicates a reactionary response to official narratives, and in some cases, an openness to questioning the existence of discrimination and prejudice.

Those with lower levels of education, who are unemployed, or are from low income households are all more likely to believe in conspiracy theory. Those in the leftist activist tribe are more likely to believe conspiracy about the government suppressing information, reflecting their politicised anti-Government stance, while the disengaged progressive and reactionary conservative groups are more likely to believe 'puppet master' conspiracies about populations being controlled by a single group of powerful figures, reflecting their own feelings of powerlessness.

Conspiracies are often a means to contextualise hardship when people do not feel they are given a viable alternative. It is not a coincidence that those who have the lowest income and least belief that the political system acts in their interests are also those that are most prone to conspiracy theory. As the economic impacts of the crisis start to bite, leaving many looking for explanations, we could see more turning to misinformation and conspiracy in order to make sense of a chaotic world.

A high level of belief in conspiracy among young people raises concerns about their exposure to misinformation online, but it also reflects the other challenges and pressures they feel in their lives.



YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAITH

*No religion, n=1066, Christian, n=612, Muslim, n=181, Hindu, n=48
Samples for Jews, Buddhists, Sikhs or other religion, n=>40*

Almost half (45%) of young people in our study report belonging to a religion, religious denomination or religious body, with Christians (29%) and Muslim (9%) the largest groups. While there are a wide range of views across each religious group, we also found a small strand of religious conservatism that cuts across the groups. As a result, religious young people are overrepresented in the reactionary conservative and sceptical ambivalent groups when compared to non-religious young people.

- Young Muslims are most likely to trust their local religious leader to tell the truth; 67% do compared to 43% of Christian respondents, 52% of Hindu respondents and 29% of all young people
- Young Muslims are more than twice as likely (7%) as non-religious young people (3%) to list discrimination among the biggest issues they are facing personally
- Young religious people are more likely to see having children as important for their future; 51% of young Christians, 60% of young Muslims and 54% of young Hindus say this is important, compared to just 42% of the non-religious group.
- Young religious people are also more likely to say that feeling part of a community is important for their future than non-religious groups. 55% of non-religious young people say it's important, compared to 66% of young Muslims, 63% of young Christians, and 60% of young Hindus
- Young Muslims are most likely to think that religion has an important place in our national way of life (47%), followed by young Hindus (36%) and young Christians (34%). Only 16% of non-religious young people think the same
- Non-religious young people are most likely to support the right of gay couples to adopt children (80%), but among religious groups very few actively disagree that gay couples should be freely able to adopt children; only 16% of young Muslims, 12% of young Hindus and 9% of young Christians.



POLITICAL TRUST AND ACTION

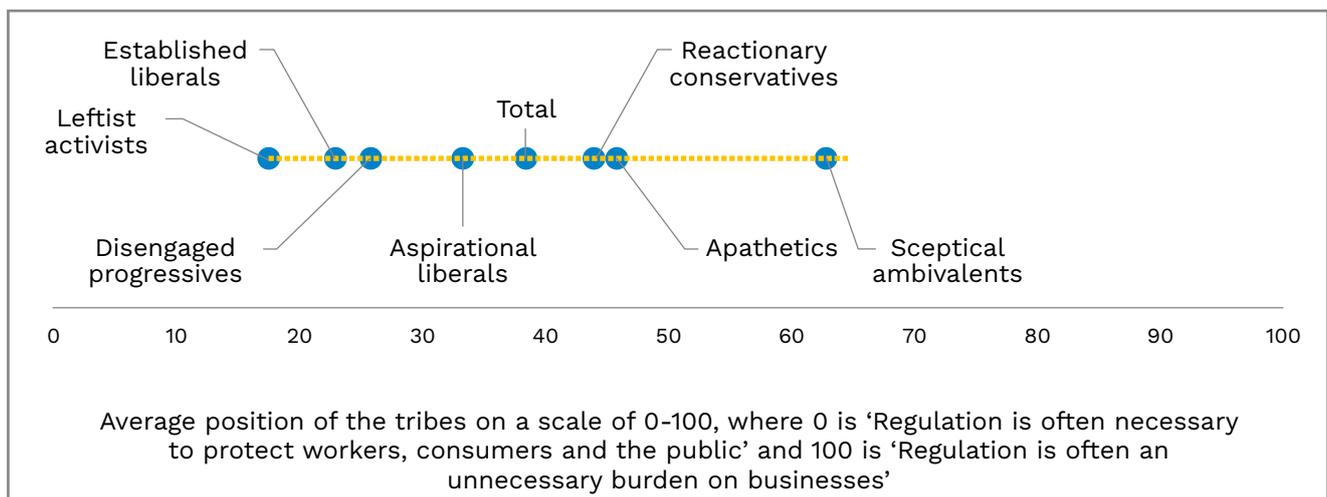
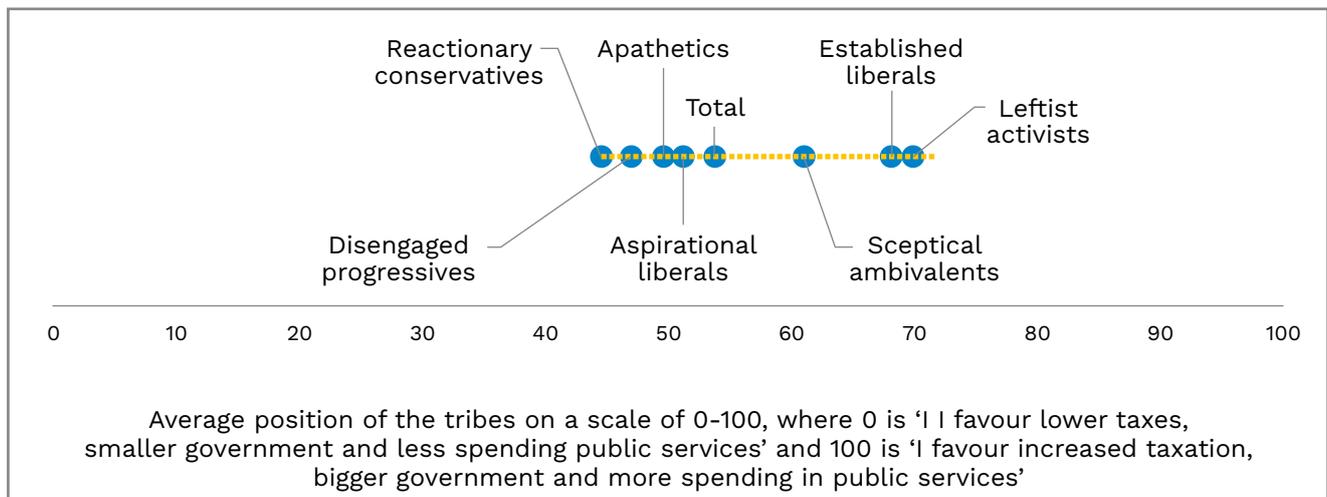
FROM STREET demonstrations to Remain in the EU, to school strikes against climate change, to direct action through Extinction Rebellion and most recently the Black Lives matter protests, young people have been a highly visible force in politics over recent years. The 2017 election saw a surge in youth political engagement as the so-called ‘youth quake’ saw 18-24 year olds turn out in force for Jeremy Corbyn’s Labour party, though this was not replicated in the December 2019 election. And 16 and 17 year olds remain unable to vote.

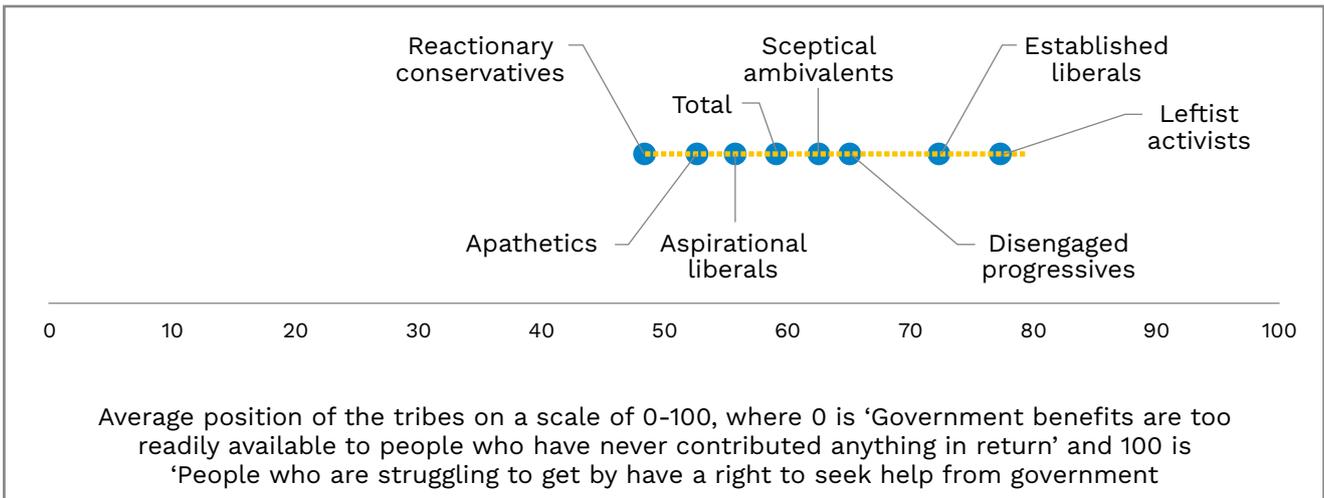
Politically, most 16- 24 year olds lean to the left. They are more likely to favour higher taxation and public spending, to want regulation of business, and to support government benefits

for those struggling to get by. While younger people and the less politically engaged tribes are less likely to have strong opinions on these issues, on the whole young people hold left wing economic values alongside their socially liberal or ‘cosmopolitan values’.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change is an issue that most young people are greatly concerned by. Although climate denial exists among a small proportion of young people (16% – and 22% of young men – believe that human behaviour is not the primary cause of climate change), for most addressing global warming is a political priority.





The majority (70%) think that climate change puts the future of humanity at risk, but less than a quarter of young people (22%) agree that the Government is doing everything it can to tackle climate change; 54%, and 61% of 16-17 year olds, disagree that the Government is doing all that it can to address the issue. Across the tribes, with the exception of the sceptical ambivalent and apathetic groups, a majority of all groups feel the Government should be doing more to address climate change.

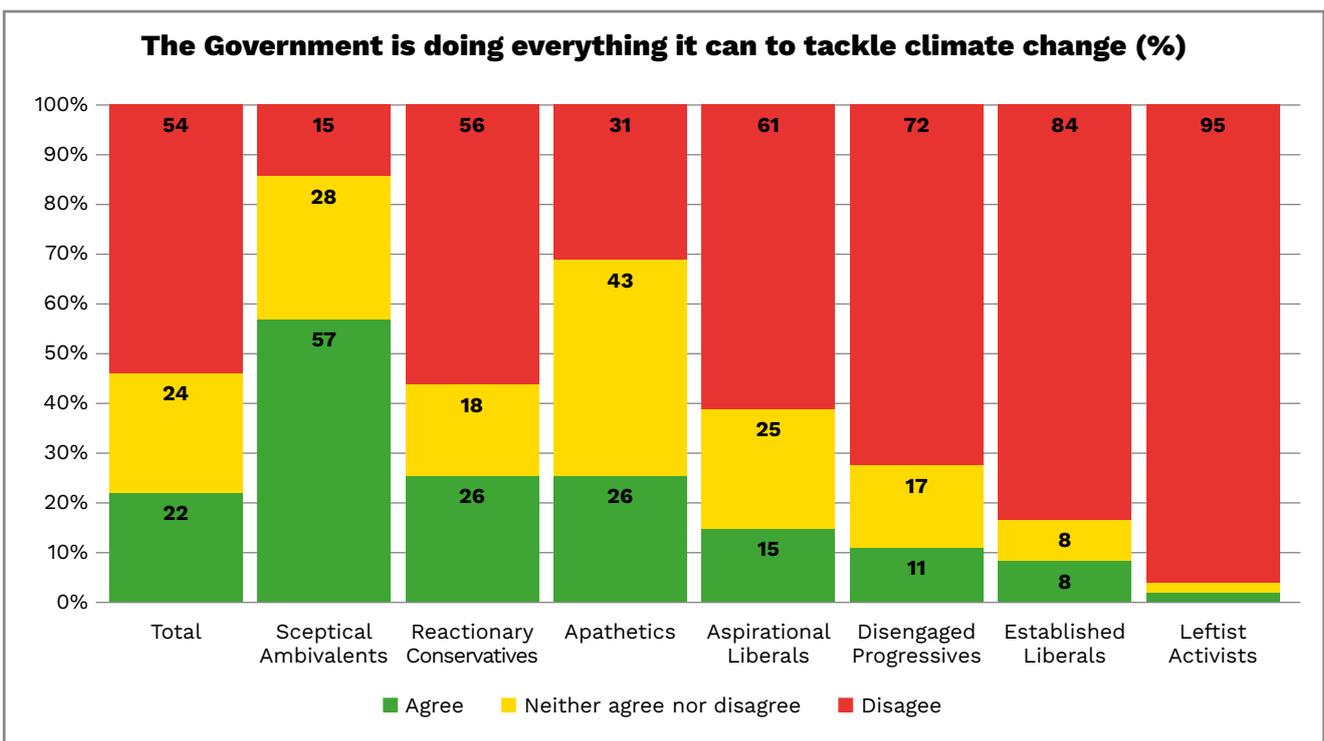
At the same time, many young people see addressing climate change as a personal responsibility. The majority (78%) of young people believe that we must all be prepared to make some sacrifices to our lifestyles in order to stop global warming; only 7% disagree.

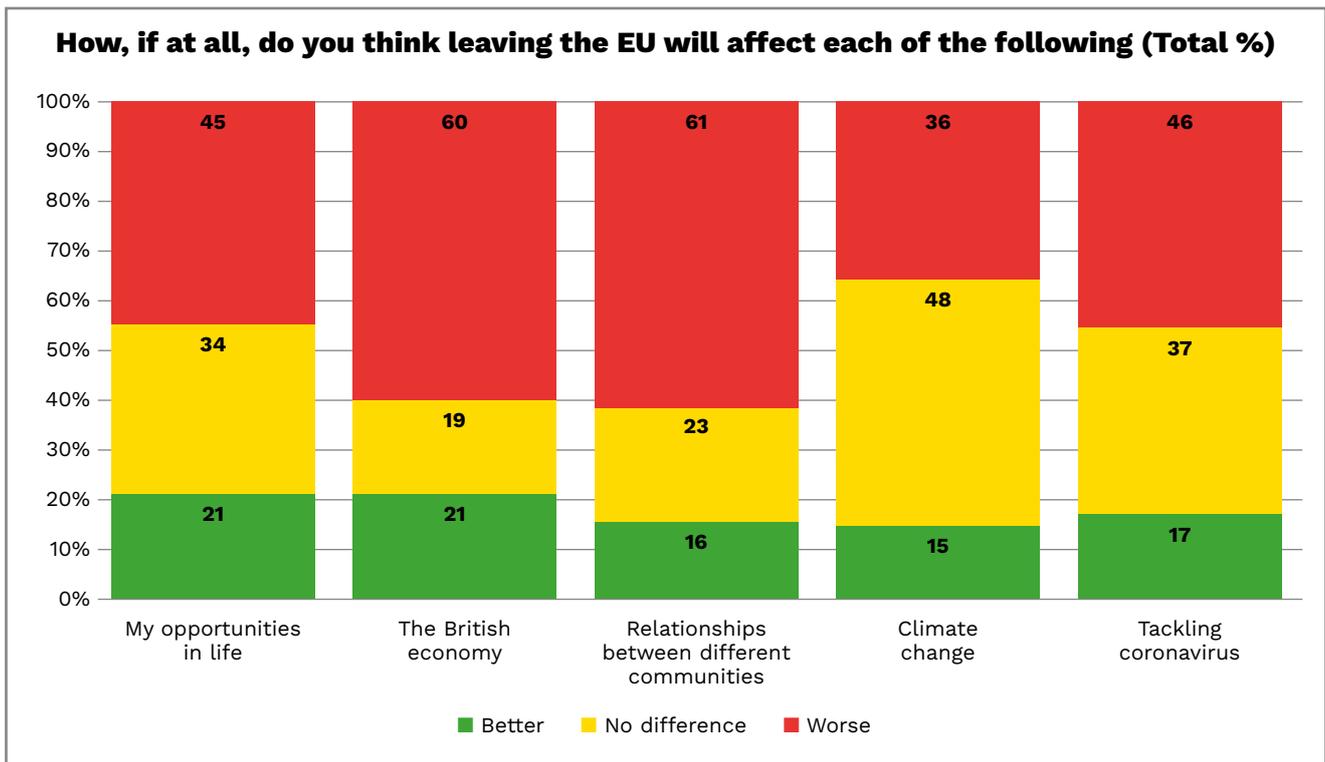
BREXIT

The majority of respondents were ineligible to vote in the 2016 EU referendum, but many are frustrated at the impacts Brexit will have on their lives.

Most young people are pessimistic about the impacts of Brexit. 45% think their own opportunities in life will get worse, 60% say the economy will get worse, 61% say relationships between communities will get worse, 36% say climate change will be worse and 46% say tackling coronavirus will be worse.

Across the tribes, those with the most progressive values and who hold the most left wing views are most concerned about the impacts of Brexit. While the leftist activist group are most





concerned about the impact on relationships between communities (91% expect them to get worse), the established liberals group are more concerned about the impact on the British economy (84% expect it to get worse).

The reactionary conservative group share a mix of views on Brexit, and while they are less concerned about the impact of leaving the EU on their opportunities in life (32% think it will make things better, while 31% think it will make things worse) or the British economy (24% think it will make things better), more than half (57%) think Brexit will have a damaging impact on relationships between communities.

Young Eastern Europeans are among those most concerned about the impact of leaving the EU. Many of these respondents would have been of school age at the time of the referendum, when xenophobic bullying towards Eastern European pupils was reported to soar in schools³³. 66% think their own opportunities in life will get worse as a result, 82% think it will have a negative impact on the British economy, and 80% predict Brexit will damage relationships between different communities.

TRUST AND POLITICAL REPRESENTATION

Pessimism among the younger generation about the impacts of Brexit have only added to a widespread sense of political neglect. Three quarters of young people believe that politicians don't care what young people think; just 25% think that they do. Young women are particularly

disillusioned with politicians; 80% think politicians don't care about what young people think and just 5% say that the political system works well.

Less than a quarter (24%) of young people agree that their generation is well represented in political discussion; 48% disagree. This increases to 59% among 16 and 17 year olds, who are not eligible to vote.

Feelings of political representation are a key divider across the liberal tribes. While a majority across all groups feel that politicians don't care what young people think, the established liberal and aspirational liberal tribes have more trust in the political system than the disengaged progressive and leftist activist tribes, with whom they share similar social attitudes. 80% of the disengaged progressive group and 82% of the leftist activist tribe say the political system is broken, while only 22% of the aspirational liberal and 27% of the established liberals group say the same.

Politicians, journalists and large business or company owners are the least trusted figures for young people, and more young people trust prominent YouTubers (23%) or sports stars (18%) to tell the truth. Young men are especially likely to trust these figures over traditional authority figures. The most trusted figures for young people are those they know directly, friends and family as well as GPs and teachers.

Almost twice as many young people say that they don't trust (40%) the government to tell the truth

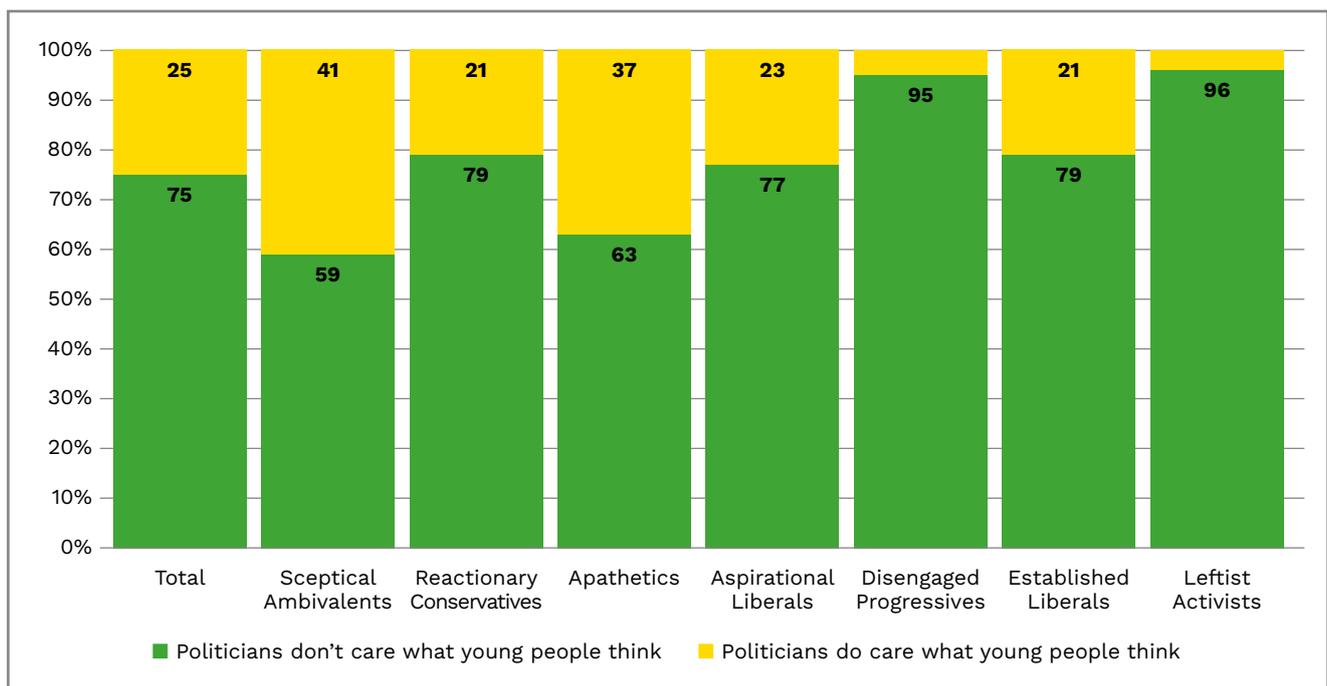
as think they do (23%). Across the tribes, those who already have a strained relationship with power are among the least trusting. Just 1% of the leftist activist group say they trust politicians to tell the truth.

The reactionary conservative group are less trusting of traditional authority figures – the police, politicians, religious leaders and teachers – and of their friends (62% trust them to tell the truth) than most of the other groups, but have a higher degree of trust in YouTubers, reflecting their draw towards alternative media sources.

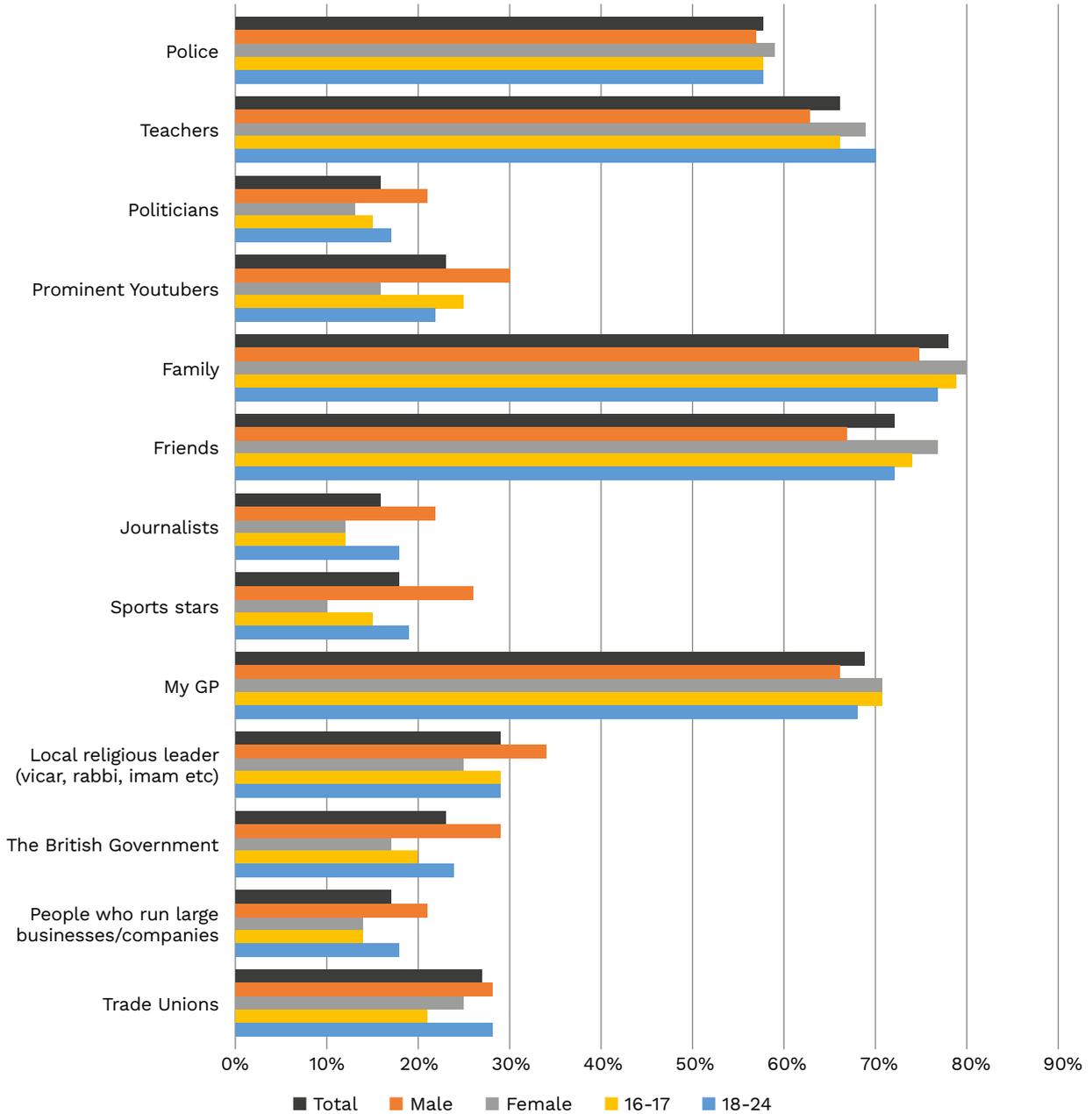
The trust bestowed in different figures also reflects the experiences young people have. On the whole, religious young people are more likely to trust their religious leaders, and young Muslims are most likely to trust their local religious leader to tell the truth (67% compared to 29% of all young people).

A majority of white British (62%), Indian (63%) and Pakistani (60%) respondents say they trust the police to tell the truth, but this falls sharply among Black respondents. Only slightly more than a third (37%) of young people from Caribbean backgrounds and 40% of those from African backgrounds say that they trust the police to tell the truth.

Those from low-income households are also less likely to trust all authority figures.



To what extent do you trust the following types of person or organisations to tell the truth? NET: Trust (%)



YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE FAR RIGHT

Young people who say that they see far right activists positively (between 80-100 on a 0-100 scale) n=183

Although just 9% of young people overall voice a positive opinion of far right activists, which doesn't directly infer that they align with their views, the views of this cohort is concerning. Overall, they reject mainstream media, more likely to spend their time on YouTube, have a fractious relationship with power and many support political violence. They are far more likely to buy into conspiracy theories or see feminism as a means to suppress men. Many feel under pressure in their own lives, a group who are overwhelmingly white British and male (74%), more likely to be from low income households, less educated than the total sample, and more likely to be in work.

- Young people who see the far right positively are more likely to spend their time on YouTube than other social media platforms
- 67% think that the mainstream media only shows what suits people in power
- 59% think that violence can be necessary in extreme circumstances, to defend something you strongly believe in
- 58% feel under a lot of pressure in their day to day life
- Half (48%) think that talk of a mental health crisis is exaggerated, some people need to toughen up. Only 21% of all 16-24s think the same
- They are more than twice as likely as all 16-24s to think that gay couples should not be freely able to adopt children (19%)
- 62% think that feminism has gone too far and makes it harder for men to succeed
- They are more than 3 times as likely to see crime as one of the biggest issues they face personally
- More than a third feel that how well they do in life is primarily decided by forces outside of their control
- A third have read, watched or listened to something from Breitbart (31%) or Infowars (32%), 39% have read, watched or listened to something by pick up artists, and almost half have consumed content from Tommy Robinson (44%) or Paul Joseph Watson (45%)
- They are most likely to believe in conspiracy theory, especially antisemitic conspiracies; 46% say it's true that Jewish people have an unhealthy control over the world's banking system. More think it's true (37%) than false (34%) that the official account of the Nazi Holocaust is a lie and the number of Jews killed by the Nazis during World War II has been exaggerated on purpose
- 62% believe that regardless of who is officially in charge of governments and other organisations, there is a single group of people who secretly control events and rule the world together

YOUNG NAZI TERRORISTS

BY NICK LOWLES

ONE OF THE most worrying developments on the British far right in recent years has been the large increase in young people getting involved, especially in some of the most violent and terroristic organisations.

Over the last 40 years, the British far right has overwhelmingly been populated by middle-aged or even elderly white men, angry at the changing world and their diminishing role within it. The main organisations were the National Front and more significantly the British National Party (BNP). Their focus on electoral politics, doorstep campaigning and appearing more respectable than they actually were, proved unattractive and even boring to many young people.

The collapse of the BNP after its heavy defeat in 2010 and the emergence of the English Defence League at around the same time, took far right activism back onto the street and in a more confrontational direction. This was far more appealing to a younger, more violent group of people, and between 2009 and 2013, as many as 25,000 people were active in the EDL while ten times as many engaged with them on social media.

At the same time, the BNP's demise put an end to thoughts of a parliamentary road to fascism and those activists who remained became increasingly hardline in their politics and more confrontational in their approach.

A group of former Young BNP members became the nucleus of National Action (NA), an avowedly national socialist group which openly glorified terrorism and the extermination of their opponents. At its peak, NA consisted of no more than 150 people, but this was a new generation of tech savvy young nazis in a manner than had not been seen in this country since the late 70s or early 80s.

In 2016, after NA members celebrated the murder of Labour MP Jo Cox, the group was proscribed as a terrorist organization by the Home Secretary – the first far right group to be designated as such since WW2.

The banning of NA eventually led to the formation of several other splinter groups, each seemingly more extreme. Amongst them was the Sonnenkrieg Division (SKD), which itself was eventually banned in February 2020. Almost all of its adherents were under 25, with several being teenagers.



Another worrying feature of the SKD was its link to the Order of Nine Angles, unarguably the most extreme nazi-satanic group in the world. The British-based O9A not only called for the violent overthrow of society, but also openly advocated for sexual violence and rape as to be used to spread fear and intimidation.

This interest in and open encouragement of sexual violence is now commonly found amongst the nazi groups most populated with young activists.

In 2019, thirteen far right activists were convicted for terrorism offences in the UK, of whom four were teenagers and a further four were aged between 20 and 25. Several more young far right activists have been convicted of terrorism already this year, and there are a further eight trials pending, three of which involve teenagers.

While of course the numbers of young people getting attracted to far right terrorism is still small, there has certainly been a sharp increase in recent years. This most likely reflects an upsurge in interest in far right extremism amongst a small, but no longer insignificant proportion of young people. HOPE not hate charitable trust polling has found considerable support amongst young people for Stephen Lennon (aka Tommy Robinson) and an acceptance of political violence sometimes being necessary.

POLITICAL TRUST AND ACTION

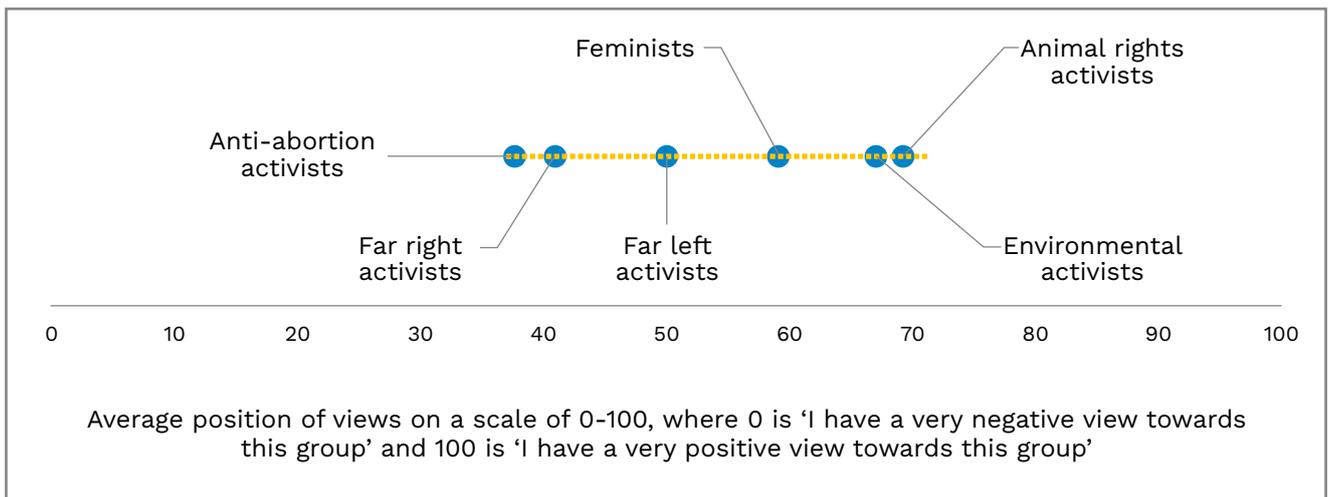
Despite many young people not feeling listened to by those in power, and their mistrust in the political system, a majority (61%) agree that voting is the best way to have your voice heard by those in power. At the same time, 40% agree that voting is pointless because politicians will always ignore the views of people like me; 31% disagree.

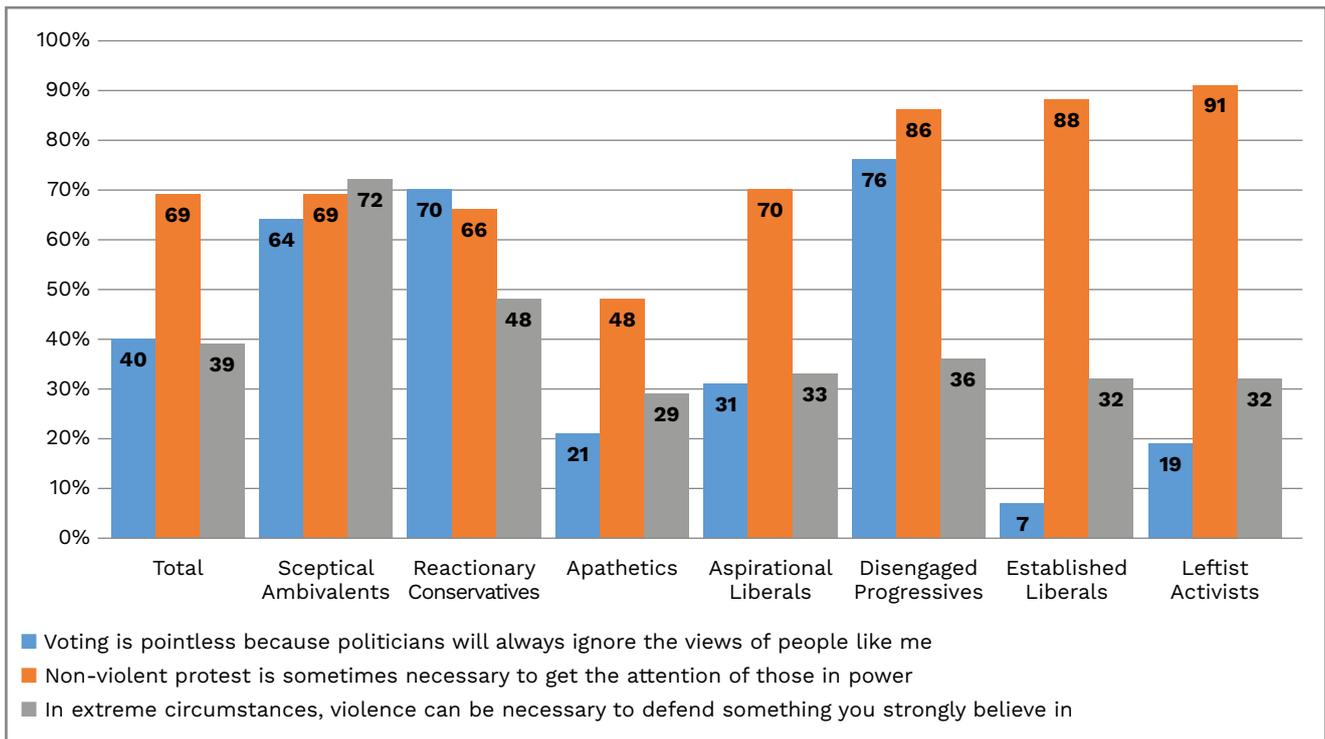
Across the tribes, there is more divergence across the liberal groups. Despite their dislike and distrust of politicians, just 19% of the leftist activist tribe agree that voting is pointless because politicians will always ignore the views of people like them, compared with 76% of the disengaged progressive tribe. Those from low income households, with lower levels of education and from BAME backgrounds are all more likely to feel ignored by the political system, and are less likely to show willingness to engage with it.

A mistrust of the political system spills over into a dismissal of mainstream media. The majority (62%) of young people believe that the mainstream media only shows what suits people in power. Only 11% disagree with this statement.

Political disenchantment is driving some young people to the extremes of politics. While the liberal tribes see far right activists extremely negatively, the other groups remain neutral with a minority showing warmth towards them.

Three quarters (74%) of those who voice a positive view of far right activists are male, more likely to be from lower income households, and in work.





They are more concerned about immigration and Brexit, and are more likely to see family problems, crime and substance abuse as the biggest issues they face personally. They are far more likely than most to say that they have felt pressured into some form of sexual activity (including sending sexually explicit messages and/or pictures) that they have felt uncomfortable with (60%), despite the fact that the group are mostly male who were less likely to have experienced this. They are also more likely to see jokes based on race or religion or sexist behaviours such as sharing nude photos as acceptable.

Young people tend to see other activists more positively, especially those calling for action on climate change and animals rights.

The majority of young people support political action beyond voting; 69% agree that non-violent protest is sometimes necessary to get the attention of those in power. Only 9% disagree. More young people agree (39%) than disagree (34%) that, in extreme circumstances, violence can be necessary to defend something you strongly believe in.

Almost half of young men (46%) believe that political violence can be acceptable (27% disagree), while around a third of young women (32%) feel the same way. Despite their strong political views, just 32% of the leftist activist group think political violence can be acceptable, but 91% of the same group support non-violent political protest.

CONCLUSION

THIS REPORT has captured the hopes and fears of young people in Britain today. Our research suggests that 16-24 year olds today are, on the whole, compassionate and engaged members of their communities. They share a range of views, but most are open-minded and tolerant. For most young people, diversity and difference are just a normal part of life.

Nonetheless, many feel under pressure, and fearful about their future, starting their adult lives at a time of great uncertainty. Many young people are already feeling unsettled, and some are looking for answers in mistrust, blame and political disengagement. These sentiments will be magnified in the post-pandemic context.

The long-term impacts of the coronavirus outbreak remain unclear, but predictions point towards an economic recession that will hit young people the hardest. Unemployment is a very real threat for large numbers of young people, who the Institute of Fiscal Studies have shown³⁴ are more than twice as likely to have been employed in sectors shut down because of lockdown, with education leavers likely to face reduced pay and employment prospects even after the economy has recovered. This impact will be uneven, affecting women, people from Black and Asian backgrounds, and those with less education most, all groups who are already more likely to be in low-paid and insecure work.

There is a clear need for a recovery plan to support young people through the Covid-19 pandemic, and the long-term consequences it will have. This not only needs to address the economic impact on young people's employment and financial security, but also on their wellbeing and their ability to feel valued in society.

There is always a risk that political apathy can turn into alienation. It is essential to address social isolation and political exclusion, but also to block the rabbit holes that lead those feeling isolated or excluded towards hatred, conspiracy and mistrust. Moreover, it is often those who are most vulnerable, who will have been hit hardest by the impact of coronavirus, who turn to these channels. It's essential than in the recovery process, they don't slip through the net.

The majority of young people are optimistic and open-minded, but they will need support if they are to hold these sentiments into the future.

GLOSSARY

Alternative media: Small-scale, politically radical media usually distributed through online outlets, often produced by activists, which differ from established or dominant types of media in terms of their content, production, or distribution.

BAME: BAME ‘Black, Asian and minority ethnic’ or BME ‘Black and Minority Ethnic’ are terms widely used by government departments, public bodies, the media and others when referring to ethnic minority groups.

BLM: The Black Lives Matter movement, shorthand BLM, is a decentralized movement advocating for non-violent civil disobedience in protest against systemic racism with a focus on incidents of police brutality and racially motivated violence against Black people.

Boomer: An informal term for baby boomer, a person born between 1946–65, sometimes used as shorthand for ‘OK boomer’, a viral internet slang phrase used, often in a humorous or ironic manner, to call out or dismiss out-of-touch or closed-minded opinions associated with the baby boomer generation and older people more generally.

Gen Z: Generation Z, or Gen Z for short, is the demographic cohort succeeding Millennials, born between 1995 and 2015.

Manosphere: A loose collection of websites, forums, blogs and vlogs concerned with men’s issues and masculinity, oriented around an opposition to feminism and, within parts, embrace of extreme misogyny.

Meme: Most often associated with an image or video that portrays a particular concept or idea, usually humorous, and is spread through social platforms on the internet.

MRAs: Men’s Right’s Activists, or MRAs, are those who believe that men face widespread societal discrimination and campaign for men’s rights, and some against feminism or gender equality agendas.

Woke: A political term of African American origin indicating awareness of social and racial justice.

METHODOLOGY

SAMPLE

2,076 adults aged 16-24 who were sampled from across Great Britain

FIELDWORK DATES

Fieldwork was carried out between 20th-26th May 2020.

SAMPLING METHODOLOGY

This survey has been conducted using an online interview administered by Focldata. Our platform collects data from our commercial suppliers, such as traditional online panels and numerous programmatic sampling platforms, which allow us to find respondents to a range of panels through software. We then use Machine Learning to filter out bad respondents and get as representative a sample as possible. Users fill out the surveys in real-time across mobile, desktop, and tablet devices on the Focldata platform.

The data was weighted to be representative of the GB population. Focldata contacted members of the panel that match the demographic profiles of the country, in particular age, gender and socioeconomic grade (using the NRS definition). It then weighted the raw data to match the known population of Great Britain.

SEGMENTATION

Respondents were clustered based on their answers to 11 questions, selected from an initial analysis, which combined a mixture of attitudes towards immigration, feminism, political trust and political attitudes. These questions were mapped to a numerical scale (where 'strongly agree' was five and 'strongly disagree' was one) where applicable. They then applied a K-Medoids clustering algorithm. To decide the optimal number of clusters, they used clustering scores to see what number of clusters maximised clustering quality (according to the silhouette clustering metric), which gave a narrower list of the number of potential clusters. After looking more closely at each clustering, seven was the best balance of cluster quality metrics while also making sense with the domain.

ABOUT FOCALDATA

Focldata is an AI-driven polling company based in London. It has conducted market research for a range of both commercial organisations and campaigns including M&C Saatchi, O2, AbinBev, London Sport and Best for Britain. It was the MRP provider for the Conservative Party for the 2019 General Election.

Focldata is a member of the British Polling Council (BPC) and abides by its rules. Focldata is also a member of the MRS

FURTHER ENQUIRES

justin@focldata.com

NOTES

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<https://charity.hopenothate.org.uk/appeal/the-hope-education-fund>



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