

Young people and volunteering

Report for vinspired from Young People
Omnibus 2010

09 June 2010

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Introduction

This report presents findings from the 2010 Young People Omnibus Survey of secondary school pupils, carried out by the Ipsos MORI Social Research Institute on behalf of vinspired. In total, 2,756 11-16 year olds across England and Wales completed questionnaires to give their views about volunteering.

Objectives

The overall aim of this study was to look at attitudes towards volunteering among young people. Specifically, the survey set out to cover the following key issues:

- types of volunteering young people would like to get involved with;
- what would encourage young people to volunteer; and
- perceptions of the best thing about volunteering.

Methodology

The sample of schools drawn to take part in the Young People Omnibus comprised of 740 middle and secondary state schools in England. The sampling universe included LEA, voluntary aided/controlled and foundation schools, but excluded special schools and sixth form colleges. This sampling frame was stratified by Government Office Regions (GORs) and, within each stratum, schools were selected proportional to the size of the school register.

The age groups included in the survey were 11-16 year olds in curriculum years 7 to 11. Each school was randomly allocated one of these curriculum years, from which Ipsos MORI interviewers selected one class at random to be interviewed, thus producing a nationally representative sample of pupils in curriculum years 7 to 11. Interviewing was carried out through self-completion questionnaires with the whole class in one classroom period. An Ipsos MORI interviewer was present to explain the survey to pupils, to reassure them about the confidentiality of the survey, to assist them in completing the questionnaire, and to collect completed questionnaires. In classes where four or more children were absent during the self-completion session, up to two follow-up visits were arranged to interview absent pupils.

Fieldwork for the study was conducted between 11th January and 23rd April 2010. Of the 740 schools approached, 118 schools participated, giving an unadjusted response rate of 16%. Overall, fully completed questionnaires were obtained from 2,753 pupils, an average of 23 pupils per class.

Data are weighted by gender, age and region. The weights were derived from data supplied by the Department for Children Schools and Families. The effect of weighting is shown in the sample profile in the Appendices and in the computer tables.

The computer tabulations can be found in a separate volume along with further technical details of the study.

Acknowledgements

It is clear that schools are increasingly working under great pressure from a number of different sources. They also receive numerous requests to participate in surveys such as this. Consequently, we wish to record our gratitude to the many schools that took part and we are indebted to all pupils and staff who made this survey possible.

Ipsos MORI would also like to thank Hannah Mitchell at vinspired for her help and involvement in the project.

Presentation and interpretation of data

When interpreting the findings it is important to remember that the results are based on a sample of the maintained school population, and not the entire population. Consequently, results are subject to sampling tolerances, and not all differences between sub-groups are therefore statistically significant. A guide to statistical significance is included in this document.

In tables or charts where percentages do not add up to 100% this is due to multiple answers, to computer rounding, or to the exclusion of 'Don't know' or 'No response' categories. Throughout the tables an asterisk (*) denotes a value greater than zero, but less than 0.5%.

Publication of data

As with all our studies, these results are subject to our Standard Terms and Conditions of Contract. Any publication of results requires the prior approval of Ipsos MORI. Such approval will only be refused on the grounds of inaccuracy and misrepresentation.

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Checked & Approved: Julia Pye

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Ali Ziff

Tom Frere-Smith

Summary of key findings

- There is widespread interest in a range of volunteering activities among all groups of 11-16 year olds. Levels of interest far exceed current rates of volunteering among young people, suggesting there may be a latent demand for volunteering among young people that vinspired could tap into to raise participation rates.
- A mix of altruism and self-interest draws young people to volunteering, although nearly all groups more often mention the chance to help other people than any other factor as the best thing about volunteering. Young people who are not engaged with school – and among whom interest in volunteering is much less widespread – were the only group where ‘having fun’ was given as most commonly as the best thing about volunteering.
- Being able to test volunteering experiences in a safe environment, possibly as part of a taster day, seems likely to encourage greater participation rates. The opportunity to volunteer with friends, and having a chance to try out volunteering once, were the most frequently selected factors that would encourage young people to volunteer – these were the top motivators for nearly all groups of young people. They seem to be even more important than ‘convenience’ factors, like being able to volunteer in/through school, or having someone at school helping to identify volunteering activities. However, being able to volunteer locally seems to be important, and making sure there are opportunities within easy geographical reach of young people is likely to support raised levels of volunteering.
- There is a great deal of variation in the activities that different groups are interested in, and – to some extent – the types of benefits they seem to be interested in from volunteering experiences. Targeting messages may help to raise rates of volunteering among particular groups. For example:
 - Boys show less enthusiasm for volunteering overall, but are more interested than girls in volunteering around sports and the Olympics. They are also more likely than girls to say that a chance to take responsibility would motivate them to volunteer (although, in common with other groups, were most likely of all to say volunteering with friends and trying volunteering once were most important), and emphasising this in promotional activities might help to raise participation rates for boys.

- Those less engaged with school – including those who say they do not enjoy school, and those who do not find it interesting – are also less likely to show enthusiasm for volunteering. However, they tend to be motivated to volunteer by the same factors as other young people: volunteering with friends, volunteering once to see if they liked it, and volunteering close to home. Having fun is seen to be the best thing about volunteering among this group, so any effort to stress this element could help raise participation among less engaged school pupils.
- Children aged 15-16 also tend to show slightly less enthusiasm for volunteering when compared with younger pupils, yet, they are more likely than younger groups to associate volunteering with philanthropic and altruistic motivations rather than self-interest. Stressing the benefits to other people of volunteering may appeal to this group.

Young people and volunteering

Interest in volunteering

Young people were presented with a list of possible ways in which they might be able to volunteer, and asked which they would like to be involved with.

Nearly all young people say they would like to get involved in at least one of the types of volunteering presented to them (91%). Although this is much higher than documented levels of volunteering among this group, national statistics do show that rates of volunteering, both formal and informal, are highest among younger people. According to the 2007/8 Citizenship Survey, 52% of 16-24 year olds volunteer, which is higher than among any other age group.¹

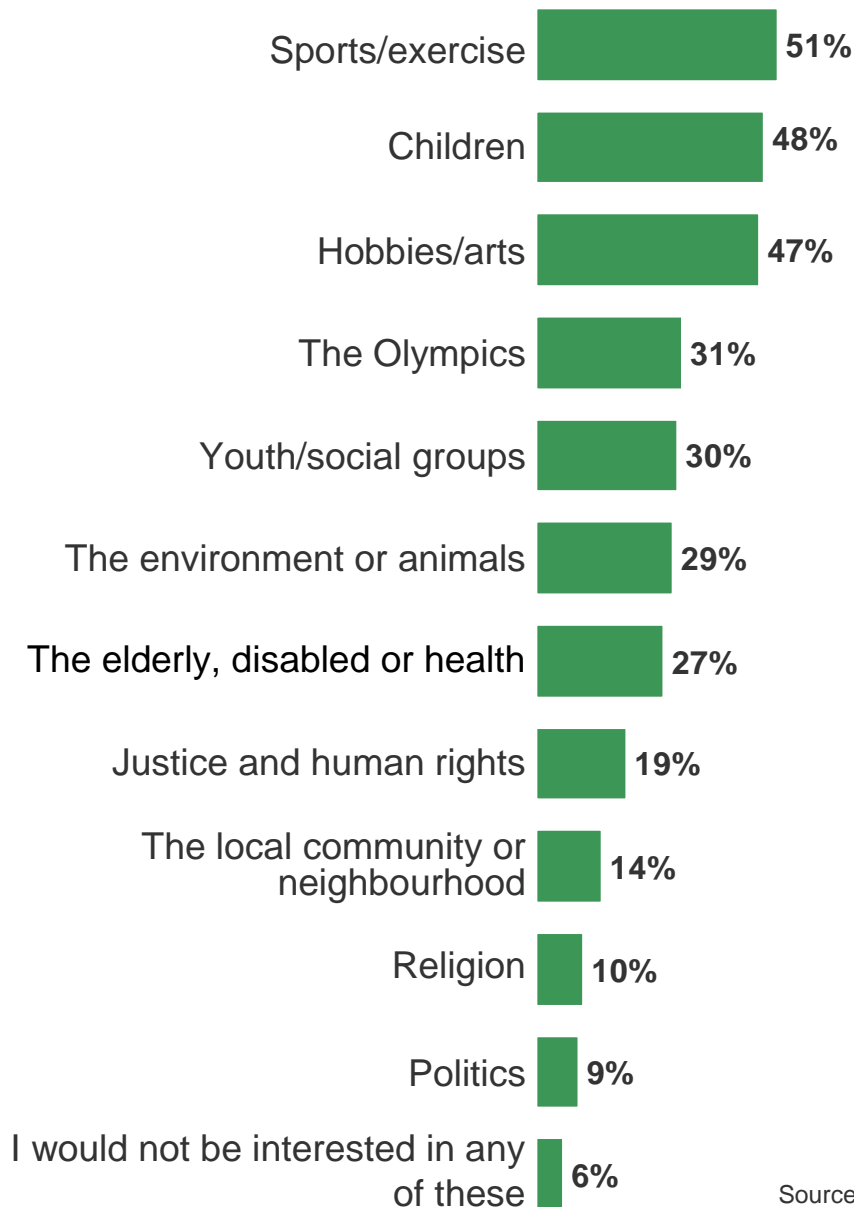
Young people are interested in volunteering across a wide range of activities, suggesting that offering a broad spectrum of activities will help to encourage and sustain higher rates of volunteering. Volunteering in the area of sports and exercise, for example teaching sport to younger children, is the most appealing option (51%), closely followed by volunteering to help look after young children (48%), and teaching or helping out at music groups, art classes or with other hobbies (47%). Three in ten young people would be keen to be involved in volunteering around the Olympics (31%), while a similar number would like to volunteer at a youth or social group (30%), do something for the environment or animals (29%) or help the elderly (27%).

There is less widespread interest in volunteering for human rights, the community or for religious or political causes.

¹ Please see <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/863680.pdf> for further information.

Types of volunteering

QB1. Which, if any, of these types of volunteering would you like to get involved with?



Source: Ipsos MORI

Ipsos MORI

All mentions above 5%. Base: 2,756 young people aged 11-16 in compulsory education in England and Wales, 11th January – 23rd April 2010

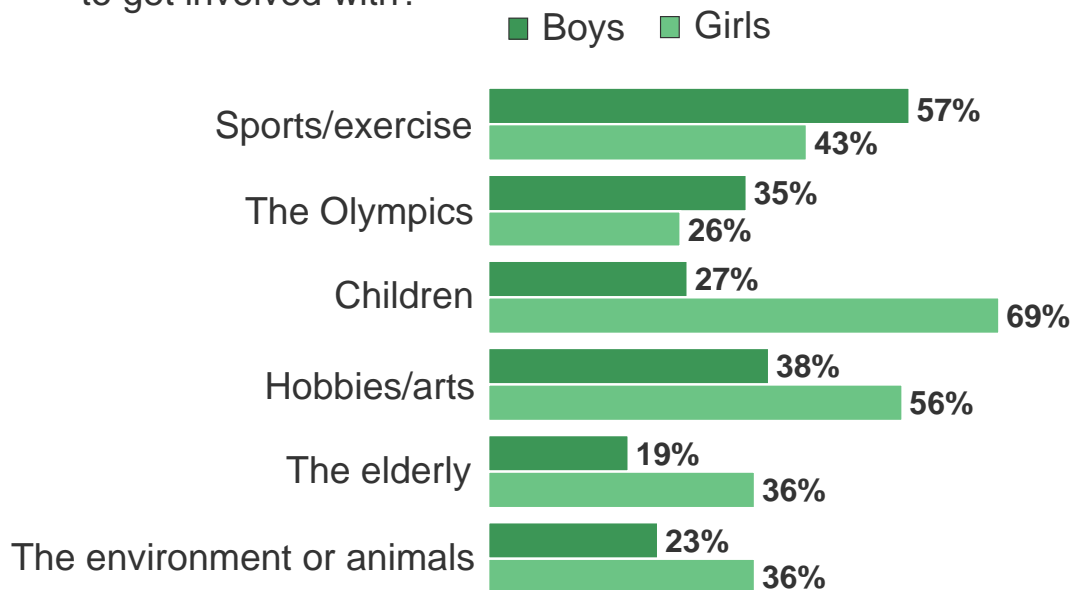


Pupils aged 11 or 12 (95%) are more likely than 15-16 year olds (86%) to express an interest in one of the types of volunteering asked about. Young people from minority ethnic groups are more likely to want to volunteer than White young people (94% compared with 90%), with Black pupils most likely of all to take an interest in volunteering (96%).

Girls are significantly more likely to say they want to volunteer more than boys overall (96% compared with 86%); there is also a gender divide when it comes to levels of interest in specific volunteering opportunities (please see the chart below). In general, boys are more likely to be drawn to sports and exercise-related activities, and girls to social and artistic forms.

Gender and volunteering

QB1 Which, if any, of these types of volunteering would you like to get involved with?



Ipsos MORI Base: 2,756 young people aged 11-16 in compulsory education in England and Wales, 11th January – 23rd April 2010



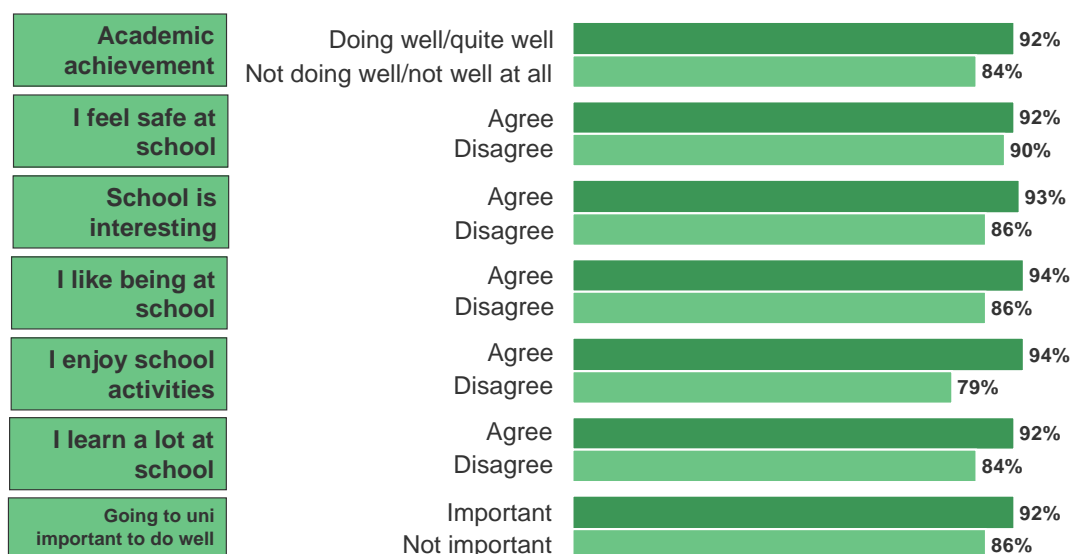
Family circumstances, including whether a young person lives with one or two parents, and their parents' work status, does not have a significant bearing on their desire to volunteer. In line with this, there are no significant differences between children attending schools in areas of high or low deprivation.

Geographical location however, does appear to have an effect; young people in the North East (88%) and Yorkshire and Humber (86%) are less enthusiastic about volunteering than pupils in London (94%) and Wales (95%), where enthusiasm is highest.

Other factors that appear to have a bearing on interest in volunteering are attitudes to schooling and perceived academic achievement, as shown in the chart below.

Academic orientation and volunteering

% interested in any volunteering



Ipsos MORI Base: 2,756 young people aged 11-16 in compulsory education in England and Wales, 11th January – 23rd April 2010



Encouraging young people to volunteer

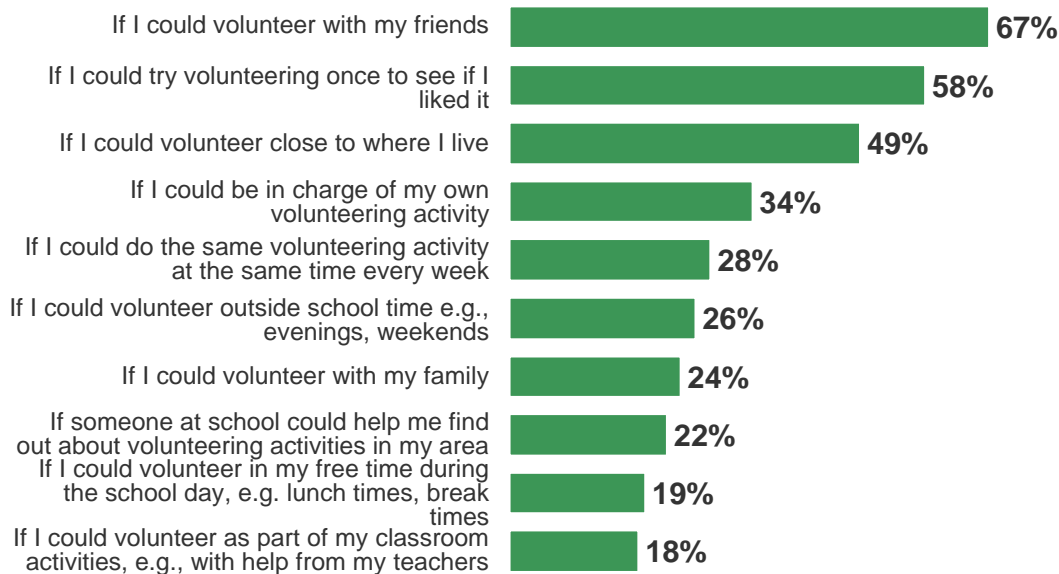
Pupils were then asked about things that might encourage them to volunteer. Again, they were presented with a list from which they could select their responses.

There are a wide range of factors that pupils say would encourage them to volunteer: 87% cited at least one factor. Two-thirds of pupils would be encouraged to volunteer if they could do so with their friends (67%), making this the greatest motivator of volunteering among young people, and reflecting the importance of friendship groups among secondary-age children. Friends emerge as more important than family when it comes to volunteering, with just a quarter (24%) of young people saying they would be encouraged to volunteer if they could do so with their families.

Around three in five young people would be encouraged to volunteer if they could try it once to see if they liked it (58%), while half would be encouraged to volunteer if they could do so close to their home (49%). A third are inspired by the notion of being in charge of their own volunteering activity (34%), while just under three in ten would be more motivated if they had the routine of volunteering at the same time every week (28%).

Being encouraged to volunteer

QB2 Which, if any, of these would encourage you to volunteer?



Ipsos MORI

Top 10 responses shown. Respondent could give more than one answer. Base: 2,756 young people aged 11-16 in compulsory education in England and Wales, 11th January – 23rd April 2010



Girls are more likely than boys to say most of these factors would motivate them to volunteer; the only aspect cited more frequently by boys than girls was 'If I could be in charge of my own volunteering activity' (37% of boys compared with 30% of girls). Given the lower levels of interest in volunteering among boys than girls, there may be value in emphasising this aspect of volunteering activities to increase uptake among boys.

Black pupils are also more likely than average to be encouraged by being in charge of their volunteering activity (45% vs. 34% overall). Asian children are more likely than average to say being able to volunteer close to where they live and/or during the school day would inspire them to volunteer. They are also more likely than average to say that having someone at school to identify volunteering opportunities for them would encourage their involvement (29% vs. 22%).

On the whole, young people aged 15-16 are less inspired by the motivators mentioned, and are more likely than average to respond 'don't know' to this question (15% compared with 11% on average). Other groups more likely to say they do not know what would encourage them to volunteer are those who do not enjoy school activities (22% compared with 7% of those who do enjoy school) and those who feel they are not doing well at school (21% vs. 10% who think they are doing well).

Those who are engaged with school are more likely than those not engaged to cite a range of factors that would encourage them to volunteer. The differences are particularly stark for the following factors:

- being able to try volunteering once (64% of those who find school interesting compared with 46% who do not would be encouraged by this);
- being able to volunteer with friends (72% who find school interesting compared with 55% who do not);
- being able to volunteering close to where they live (54% who find school interesting compared with 40% who do not);
- being able to volunteer outside school time (32% who find school interesting compared with 16% who do not); and
- if someone at school could help them to find out about volunteering opportunities in the area (27% who are interested in school compared with 14% who are not).

There are no clear relationships between the types of activity young people would like to volunteer for and the factors they say would encourage them to volunteer. Irrespective of the activities they express an interest in, the same elements – being able to volunteer with friends, try it once to see whether they like it, and volunteering close to home – are important. Within this general pattern, there are a few differences:

- Those interested in volunteering for local community, politics and justice/human rights groups were more likely than others to be interested in someone at school helping them to identify volunteering activities in their area. This factor would be motivating for only 32% young people interested in volunteering for other activities, but for 51% of those interested in volunteering in the local community, 48% of those interested in politics, and 47% who were interested in justice and human rights groups.
- Volunteering with family, and outside of school time, seems to be a greater motivator for those interested in getting involved in religious groups and local community groups. For example, 53% young people who were interested in joining community groups thought being able to volunteer outside school time would be motivating, and 48% if they could volunteer with their family.
- Those expressing an interest in 'cause'-based volunteer work are more likely to mention being in charge of their own volunteering activity as important. For example, 52% of those expressing an interest in volunteering with religious groups, 57% of those

registering an interest in politics, and 51% of those citing an interest in volunteering for justice/human rights organisations would be motivated by this.

The best thing about volunteering

Finally, pupils were asked what, if anything, they think is the best thing about volunteering. They were asked to select only one response.²

The responses reveal a mix of altruistic and self-interested factors motivating young people: one in three young people think the best thing about volunteering is the chance to help others (35%), and another 12% the chance to make a difference to something they care about. A quarter of pupils think the best thing about volunteering is having fun (26%), while 11% prioritise the chance to learn new skills. These views are consistent, irrespective of the type of volunteering that young people express an interest in.

The best thing about volunteering

QB3 What, if anything, do you think is the best thing about volunteering?



Ipsos MORI

Chart shows answers given by at least 3% of respondents. Base: All those giving a single response or no answer [those giving multiple responses excluded] (1,746), 11th January – 23rd April 2010



There appears to be a clear gender split regarding perceptions of the benefit of volunteering. Boys are more likely than girls to see volunteering as a good way to have fun (30% vs. 22%

² The base number for this question is 1,746 pupils - lower than for the two previous questions. The reason for this is that 1,010 pupils selected two responses instead of just one when completing the questionnaire, and, as such, their responses have been removed from the base for the purposes of

of girls) and learn new skills (13% vs. 9%). Girls, on the other hand, tend to be drawn to volunteering for more philanthropic reasons such as helping other people (38% vs. 32% of boys) and making a difference to something they care about (17% vs. 8% of boys).

Older pupils aged 15-16 are less likely to see volunteering as a way to have fun compared with all other age groups, particularly the youngest children aged 11 (17% compared with 32%). They are also more likely than average to say they see nothing good about volunteering (6% compared with 3% on average).

Again, perceived academic achievement and interest/enjoyment of school appear to have an impact on views. Pupils who feel they are doing well academically are eleven percentage points more likely to see helping others as the best thing about volunteering compared with pupils who do not think they are doing well at school (36% vs. 25%). Young people who do not find school interesting are more likely to think the best thing about volunteering is having fun (29% vs. 23% of pupils who do find school interesting).

this report. However, both the topline and tables show the results for this question based on all responses given.

Appendices

Sample profile

	Number	Unweighted %	Weighted %
Total	2753		
Gender of Pupils			
Male	1349	49	50
Female	1390	50	49
Age of Pupils			
11	288	10	18
12	543	20	19
13	567	21	19
14	568	21	19
15	508	18	15
16	279	10	10
Year of Pupils			
7	585	21	28
8	558	20	18
9	551	20	21
10	549	20	15
11	510	19	18
Ethnic Origin			
White	2290	83	82
BME	449	16	18
Household Composition			
Two parents in household	2098	76	76
Single parent in household	573	21	21
Sibling in household	2244	28	81
Work Status of Household			
Two parents work	1803	65	65
One parent works	734	27	27
No parent works	216	8	8
Region			
London	288	10	12
East of England	243	9	11
West Midlands	222	8	11
East Midlands	410	15	9
North West	428	16	13
South West	285	10	9
South East	315	11	14
North East	204	7	5
Yorkshire & Humber	88	3	10
Wales	270	10	6

Source: Ipsos MORI

List of Local Education Authorities by Government Office Region

Eastern: Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Luton, Norfolk, Peterborough, Southend, Suffolk, Thurrock.

East Midlands: Derby, Derbyshire, Leicester, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, Rutland.

London: Barking, Barnet, Bexley, Brent, Bromley, Camden, Croydon, Ealing, Enfield, Greenwich, Hackney, Hammersmith and Fulham, Haringey, Harrow, Havering, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Islington, Kensington and Chelsea, Kingston on Thames, Lambeth, Lewisham, Merton, Newham, Redbridge, Richmond upon Thames, Southwark, Sutton, Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest, Wandsworth, Westminster.

North East: Darlington, Durham, Gateshead, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Newcastle upon Tyne, North Tyneside, Northumberland, Redcar & Cleveland, South Tyneside, Stockton-on-Tees, Sunderland.

North West (incl. Merseyside): Blackburn, Blackpool, Bolton, Bury, Cheshire, Cumbria, Halton, Knowsley, Lancashire, Liverpool, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, St Helens, Salford, Sefton, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford, Warrington, Wigan, Wirral.

South East: Bracknell Forest, Brighton and Hove, Buckinghamshire, East Sussex, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Kent, Medway, Milton Keynes, Newbury, Oxfordshire, Portsmouth, Reading, Slough, Southampton, Surrey, West Berkshire, West Sussex, Windsor and Maidenhead, Wokingham.

South West: Bath and North-East Somerset, Bournemouth, Bristol, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Isles of Scilly, , North Somerset, Plymouth, Poole, Somerset, South Gloucestershire, Swindon, Torbay, Wiltshire.

West Midlands: Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Herefordshire, Sandwell, Shropshire, Solihull, Staffordshire, Stoke-on-Trent, Telford and Wrekin, Walsall, Warwickshire, Wolverhampton, Worcestershire.

Yorkshire and Humberside: Barnsley, Bradford, Calderdale, Doncaster, East Riding of Yorkshire, Kingston-upon-Hull, Kirklees, Leeds, North East Lincolnshire, North Lincolnshire, North Yorkshire, Rotherham, Sheffield, Wakefield, York.

Statistical reliability

The respondents to the questionnaire are only samples of the total “population”, so we cannot be certain that the figures obtained are exactly those we would have if everybody had been interviewed (the “true” values). We can, however, predict the variation between the sample results and the “true” values from a knowledge of the size of the samples on which the results are based and the number of times that a particular answer is given. The confidence with which we can make this prediction is usually chosen to be 95 - that is, the chances are 95 in 100 that the “true” value will fall within a specified range. The table below illustrates the predicted ranges for different sample sizes and percentage results at the “95 confidence interval”.

Size of sample on which survey results is based	Approximate sampling tolerances applicable to percentages at or near these levels		
	10 or 90	30 or 70	50
	±	±	±
100 interviews	6	9	10
500 interviews	3	4	4
1,000 interviews	2	3	3
2,753 interviews (<i>Young People Omnibus in England and Wales</i>)	1	2	2

Source: Ipsos MORI

For example, with a sample of 2,753 where 30 give a particular answer, the chances are 95 in 100 that the “true” value (which would have been obtained if the whole population had been interviewed) will fall within the range of plus or minus 2 percentage points from the sample result.

When results are compared between separate groups within a sample, different results may be obtained. The difference may be “real”, or it may occur by chance (because not everyone in the population has been interviewed). To test if the difference is a real one - i.e. if it is “statistically significant”, we again have to know the size of the samples, the percentage giving a certain answer and the degree of confidence chosen. If we assume “95 confidence interval”, the differences between the two sample results must be greater than the values given in the table overleaf:

Size of sample compared	Differences required for significance at or near these percentage levels		
	10 or 90	30 or 70	50
100 and 100	8	13	14
250 and 100	7	11	12
500 and 250	5	7	8
500 and 500	4	6	6
1,000 and 500	3	5	5
1,000 and 1,000	3	4	4
1,500 and 1,000	2	4	4

Source: Ipsos MORI

Letter to Schools

Ipsos MORI National Young People Omnibus 2010

Head Teacher
ADDRESS
ADDRESS
ADDRESS,
ADDRESS,
ADDRESS,
POSTCODE

December 2009
ID: ID NUMBER

Dear [head teacher name],

Ipsos MORI has been commissioned by a range of public and voluntary sector organisations to undertake a large-scale survey of pupils in compulsory secondary education (aged 11-16) throughout England and Wales. The survey aims to discover what pupils think about a range of social issues including crime, volunteering and higher education.


We would like your school to take part in this important survey, which will take place **between January and March 2010**. We are very conscious of the heavy demands placed on pupils and teachers and aim to keep disruption to the school routine to an absolute minimum by **randomly selecting two classes to participate in the survey**. An Ipsos MORI interviewer will attend each class, explain the survey process and hand out a self-completion questionnaire. She/he will be on hand to answer any queries and will then collect the completed questionnaires at the end of the session. Each pupil will be given an Ipsos MORI pen to complete the survey and as a thank you for taking part.

Participation in the survey is completely confidential: school and pupil names will not be revealed to any of the sponsors, or identified in any analysis. **As a thank you for taking part, participating schools will receive a resource pack to assist with the planning and teaching of modules relating to citizenship.** In addition, a summary of the findings will be available on the Ipsos MORI website after the survey has been completed: www.ipsos-mori.com/youngpeopleomnibus

An Ipsos MORI representative will contact you soon to explain the process in more detail. Before then, you can let us know whether the school is able to take part in the study by returning the enclosed form, either via fax or by post in the envelope provided.

We very much hope that your school will want to take part in this research – I should stress that Ipsos MORI will endeavour not to contact your school again in the current school year. **If you have any queries or would like further information, please do not hesitate to contact Ruth Gosling or Steven Ginnis at Ipsos MORI on 020 7347 3000.**

Yours faithfully,



Fiona Johnson
Research Director
Head of Education Research