

# GENERATION NEXT

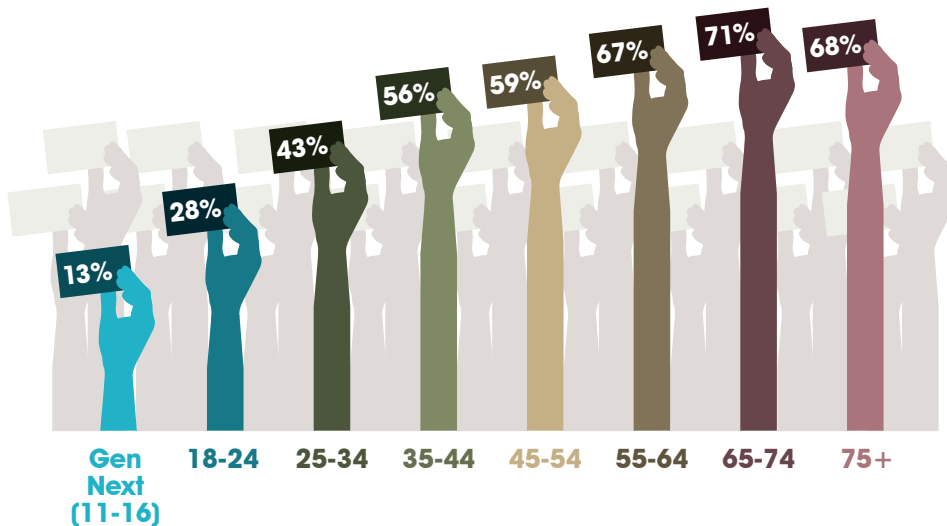
## TOMORROW'S VOTERS



Generation Next, born around the turn of the millennium, are soon to become the youngest adults in our society and tomorrow's voters. They cannot vote in May's general election and they often struggle to have their voices heard by government. However, their opinions now and in years to come will no doubt change society. This briefing, based on research published last year - *Who is Generation Next?* - sets out young people's views on what government should be doing at a national and local level, reforming the voting age and rethinking legal age limits.

### VOTING INTENTION

HOW LIKELY WOULD YOU BE TO VOTE IN AN IMMEDIATE GENERAL ELECTION, ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 10\*? (ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN TO VOTE – 10)



**It's clear that many young people in Britain do not engage with party politics.**

Young adults are less likely than older adults to vote in local or general elections, and our Generation Next survey suggests that, without action, this trend is set to continue.

\*Question wording for Generation Next: If the law is changed and you are allowed to vote when you are 16 years old, how likely would you be to vote in an immediate General Election, on a scale of 1 to 10?

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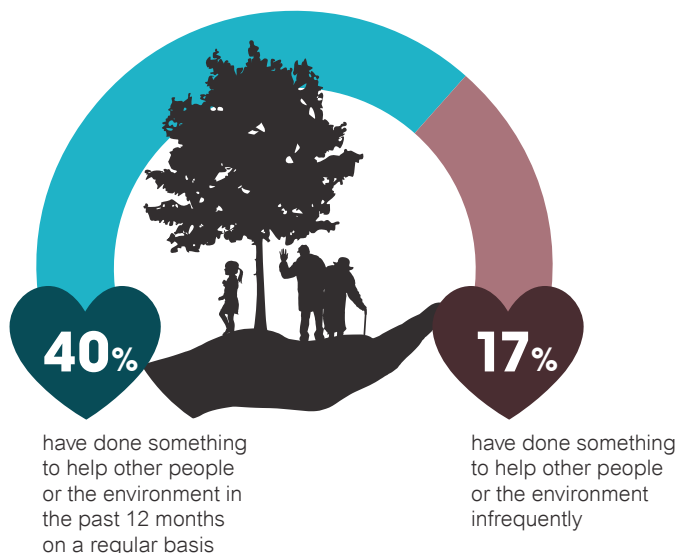
Many young people in the UK aged 16-17 want to have a say in society, they want to be represented and heard, but the message just isn't getting through to politicians. Young people should be able to influence the decisions that the Government makes as it is there to represent everyone in society, not just adults.

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Young woman, aged 17

## YOUNG PEOPLE ARE ENGAGED IN OTHER WAYS

Over half of 10-20 year olds volunteer their time to help others or improve the environment around them, most of them on a regular basis.

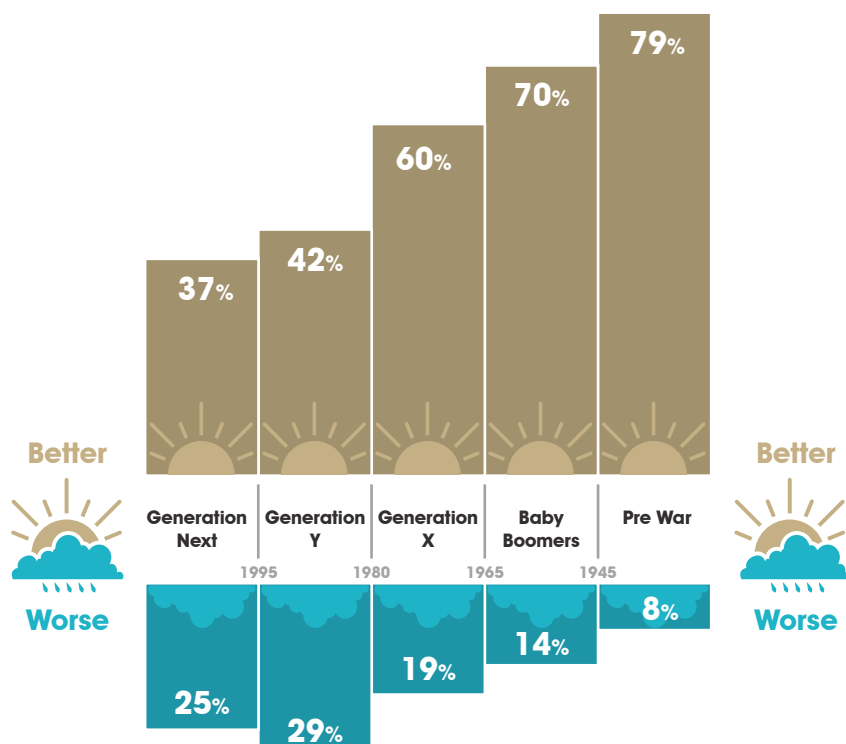


**Looking beyond party politics, however, research highlights that many young people are active members of their local communities.**

Young adults are more likely than any other age group to volunteer their time to help others<sup>1</sup>, and work carried out by Ipsos MORI for Step Up To Serve highlights the positive contributions many young people make to their communities.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

TO WHAT EXTENT, IF AT ALL, DO YOU FEEL THAT YOUR GENERATION WILL HAVE HAD A BETTER OR WORSE LIFE THAN YOUR PARENTS' GENERATION\*\*?



**But life looks tougher for Generation Next than it did for preceding generations; fewer than two in five expect their lives to be better than it was for their parents.**

This compares with 70% of the Baby Boomer generation who think their lives were better than their parents' lives. This suggests that engagement in party politics should become increasingly important for young people and young adults, and politicians need to do more to act on their concerns.

\*\*Question wording for Generation Next: To what extent, if at all, do you feel that your generation will have a better or worse life than your parents' generation?

## RETHINKING THE AGE OF LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY

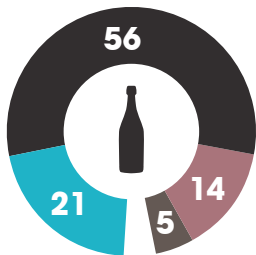
DO YOU THINK THAT THE LEGAL AGE AT WHICH YOU CAN DO EACH OF THESE THINGS SHOULD BE MADE HIGHER, MADE LOWER, OR SHOULD STAY THE SAME?

%  
Should  
be higher

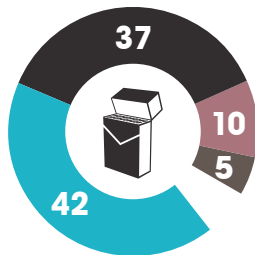
%  
Should  
be lower

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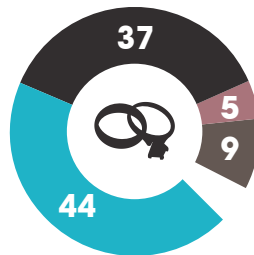
%  
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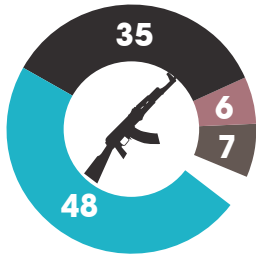
18 years old to buy alcohol



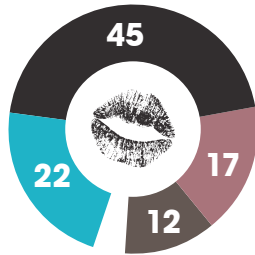
18 years old to buy cigarettes



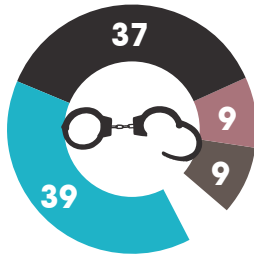
16 years old to get married



16 years old to join the army



16 years old to have sex



10 year olds to be arrested

In terms of what Generation Next want for their lives, our research highlights that they make responsible choices about the age at which they are legally able to do things or be held accountable for their actions.

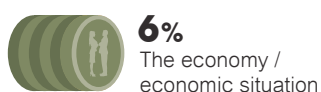
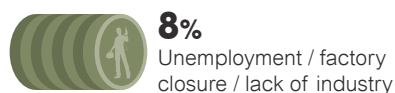
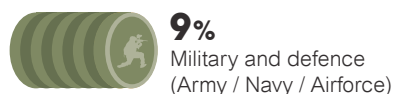
More of them think the age at which you can buy alcohol should be raised rather than lowered and around two in five want to see the legal age to buy cigarettes, get married, or join the army, raised.

## WHAT GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE DOING

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY IS THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO FOCUS ITS SPENDING ON?

**Young people's priorities for national government investment are strikingly similar to older generations' views.**

Over the last three decades, a majority of the general public consistently choose health and education as their top two priorities, within the overall envelope of public spending.



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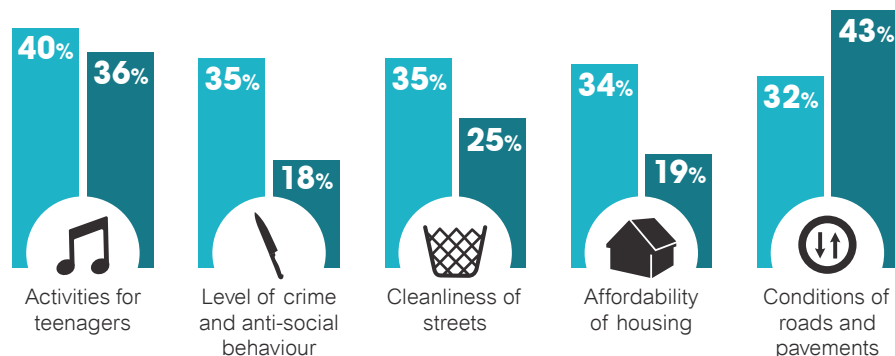
Enabling more young people to seek help and advice from the NHS on issues such as mental and sexual health and relationships is very important, to allow young people to seek help before issues such as mental health develop into wider problems.

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Young person aged 17

## LOCAL PRIORITIES

THINKING ABOUT YOUR LOCAL AREA, WHICH FOUR OR FIVE OF THE THINGS LISTED BELOW, IF ANY, DO YOU THINK MOST NEED IMPROVING?<sup>2</sup>



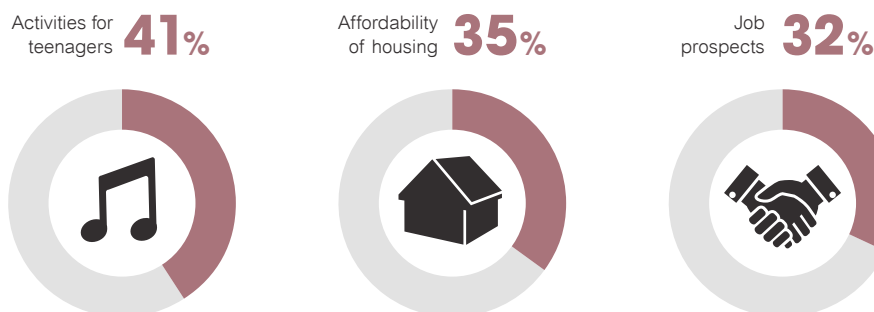
**Generation Next**  
**Adults**

**Young people, in general, are proud of the area where they live, but have clear views of what needs to be a priority for improvement.**

Young people are more concerned than adults about crime and anti-social behaviour, the cleanliness of their local areas, and the affordability of housing. They agree with adults that providing more and better activities for teenagers is a high priority.

Perhaps with an eye on the particular challenges facing their generation, the older end of this age group – those 13-16 year olds who will be legally able to vote in the 2020 general election – prioritise activities for teenagers, job prospects and affordability of housing.

### Three local priorities for 13-16 year olds



**The high turnout of young voters in the Scottish Independence Referendum highlights that young people are enthusiastic contributors when they are engaged in the political process. Our research shows that a substantial proportion of Generation Next - 39% - think the voting age should be lowered to 16 in the rest of the UK, as it has been in Scotland, a move which NCB would support. The challenge for Government and civil society is to engage the next generation of young voters, listen to their concerns, and make sure their voice is heard and valued by politicians.**

Ipsos MORI, the independent research agency, conducted 2,734 interviews with young people aged 11-16 as part of their annual Young People Omnibus survey of secondary school pupils. Fieldwork for this study took place between 3rd February and 10th April 2014 in state secondary and middle schools in England and Wales.

<sup>1</sup> Source: Community Life Survey, 2013-14; rates of monthly informational volunteering were 42% among 16-24 year olds, compared with 35% among 35 to 49 year olds, for example.

<sup>2</sup> Top mentions have been shown only. Respondents were asked to select their answer from a list.

