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National Youth Social Action Survey

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Foreword

1 Foreword from the #iwill campaign

Achieving the #iwill campaign's 2020 goals



Good news! This survey finds the rate of social action among 10-20 year olds nationwide has been maintained. In today's evolving world, an increasing number of distractions vie for young people's attention, and yet despite that, many choose to include social action as a part of their life. This is no accident.

When writing this foreword, I was trying to think of the one or two most important points raised by this survey. After agonising for a while, I realised that all of the conclusions reached are equally important. Gathering this data, identifying all these opportunities, is absolutely meaningless unless it is followed by action. We need to **act** on the data.

There was one statistic that really stood out to me: *The difference in life satisfaction for those who participated in social action this year is roughly equivalent to the difference between permanent employees who are happy in their job and those who don't have a job and are seeking work.* This is why the #iwill campaign is important. I can tell you from personal experience that this is equivalent to a big difference in happiness. While correlation doesn't necessarily mean causation, a difference this big is likely to mean something, in some way or another. This is why we need to **act**.

Another great success revealed by this survey was the progress made in increasing the amount of social action done by those who are from the least affluent backgrounds. These are the people who can benefit the most from social action. They are the people who need the skills developed by social action to help secure jobs. They are the people whose lives we can enrich the most if we **act**. Think about how you can use the data and conclusions from this survey to better engage with these people.

As someone who lived in an impoverished rural area, with a mother who earned minimum wage, I have directly seen the benefits, and challenges, of social action. Social action directly secured me a dream, lifelong job. I can point clearly to the parts of my CV which got me that job, and attribute social action to them. Perhaps most importantly, the joy provided by social action helped me through some very tough times in my childhood. I sincerely and truly thank everyone who is involved in promoting social action.

So please, I implore you from the bottom of my heart to read the results of the survey, and read the conclusions. Read them properly. Read it twice if you have to. Don't just let them be words on a screen. Think about **how you can act**. What will **you** do to make use of this data? Take heart from the great successes shown by this survey, look at the opportunities it has revealed, and **act**.

What can you **change** to improve access to social action opportunities for young people?

-Stephen Tutin, #iwill Ambassador (20)

Executive Summary

2 Executive summary

Step Up To Serve and the Office for Civil Society¹ commissioned Ipsos MORI to run the 2016 wave of the National Youth Social Action Survey. The study has been running alongside the #iwill campaign. This campaign, launched in 2013, aims to close the socioeconomic gap in social action participation amongst 10 to 20 year olds whilst increasing overall participation from 40% to 60% by 2020. For the purposes of the campaign, social action is defined as ‘practical action in the service of others to create positive change’ and covers a wide range of activities that help other people or the environment, such as fundraising, campaigning, tutoring/mentoring and giving time to charity.

This research has run annually since 2014, and the intention is for it to continue to capture estimates of the proportion of the UK’s 10-20 year olds participating in social action until 2020. The same methodology has been used throughout to allow comparisons over time. Ipsos MORI surveyed 2,082 10-20 year olds in their homes from 2-16 September 2016. Data are weighted by age within gender, region and the family socio-economic status to reflect the known profile of the UK population.

Key findings



42% of 10-20 year olds took part in **meaningful social action** in 2016

The #iwill campaign aims not just to increase participation rates, but also to ensure young people have opportunities to participate in *high quality* social action. As such, the key participation measure used in this study is ‘meaningful social action’: this refers to young people having felt that both they and others derived some benefit from the social action activity, as well as having participated in social action at least every few months over the past 12 months, or taken part in a one-off activity lasting more than a day. **Overall rates of participation in social action among 10-20 year olds in the UK have been stable over the three years of the survey series: in 2016 42% had taken part in meaningful social action**, which is statistically unchanged from the 40% recorded in 2014. In line with findings in previous years, 42% of young people have not participated in any social action in the past year, and 31% say they have never done social action.

The profile of young people who participate in social action is largely consistent with previous surveys in this series. Girls are more likely than boys to have taken part in meaningful social action in the past 12 months, for example, and white young people are more likely than those from ethnic minority groups to report taking part². However, there has been some change: **young people living in rural areas are significantly more likely to have participated in meaningful social action in 2016 than in 2014** (up from 36% to 47%); and young people from the least affluent families are also more likely to take part now (up from 31% to 40% of those in socio-economic groups DE). This means that, **although young people from the most affluent families are still significantly more likely than those from less affluent backgrounds to have taken part in social action, the gap in participation between the most and least affluent has closed from 20 to 9 percentage points since 2014**. In 2016, 49% of those from socio-economic groups AB had participated in social action, compared with 40% from those in groups DE.

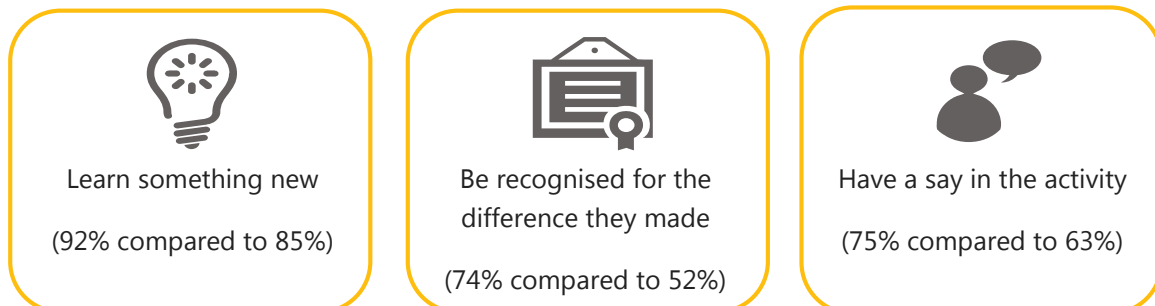
¹ Due to the machinery of government Office for Civil Society now sits within the Department for Culture, Media and Sport having previously been part of Cabinet Office.

² A similar difference by ethnicity minority groups was also found in 2015, but not previously.

In 2016, 25% of young people participated in meaningful social action at least once per month, which is in line with the rate recorded in 2015 (23%). A significant minority of young people participate in social action but do not meet the criteria for 'meaningful' social action because they have participated infrequently: finding ways to encourage this group to increase their involvement could be a key way for the campaign to achieve its goals, and potentially for young people to experience a greater benefit from their involvement.

A third (33%) of young people took part in social action programmes in the past year. These include uniformed youth groups (17%), development programmes such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award or the National Citizen Service (13%), and programmes run through charities (9%). The nature of this activity varies by age. Those aged 10-15 are more likely than those aged 16-20 to have been involved with a uniformed group (23% compared to 11%), whereas the older age group is more likely to have participated in development programmes (20% compared to 7% of 10-15 year olds). The socio-economic gap is particularly evident when looking at participation in social action programmes³; young people from affluent backgrounds are more likely than those from less affluent backgrounds to have been involved (42% ABC1 compared to 27% C2DE).

Young people who have participated in social action programmes are more likely to agree with the quality indicator statements than those who have not participated in a programme. Young people taking part in social action programmes are more likely to say they 'learnt something new' (92% compared to 85%), say they were recognised for the difference they had made (74% compared to 52%), and that they had a say in the activity (75% compared to 63%), than those not participating in a social action programme.



Four in ten (41%) young people who had participated in social action in the past year had used the internet to assist with their social action in some way. A quarter had shared their experiences (27%) or used the internet to search for activities (24%). Nearly two in ten had used the internet to track their progress (18%), and a similar proportion used the internet to participate in the (social action) activity (22%).

Young people demonstrate a significant appetite for getting involved in social action: 34% of 10-20 year olds were classified as 'committed' to social action because of their previous and current involvement, as well as future appetite for involvement. Another 49% of 10-20 year olds were classified as 'potential' participants⁴, and 17% were classified as 'reluctant' to participate because they are unlikely to participate in social action in the future.

³ A social action programme is defined as participation in youth social action through a charity, a uniformed group, a development programme or full time volunteering. Young people were given relevant examples of these based on their location.

⁴ A 'potential' participant is interested or uncertain about doing (more) social action. This includes those who say they are likely to do social action in the next 12 months, or don't know if they will participate. It includes those who are currently doing social action as well as those who have never participated.

School, college and university remain the main routes for young people getting involved in social action: 69% of 10-20 year olds got involved through these routes. Other frequently-cited routes into social action include family (21%) and friends (18%). In line with this, encouragement from teachers, parents and friends also appears to be important: those classified as most 'committed' to social action were more likely to report that parents (63%) and teachers (62%) had encouraged them, than those who are 'potential' participants (39% parents and 41% teachers) and those who are 'reluctant' to do social action (13% parents and 11% teachers).



69%
got involved through
school or college



60%
were encouraged by
their teachers

The proportion of young people who felt that taking part in social action would help them to get a job steadily rises with the frequency of participation in social action. Overall, six in ten (62%) thought that social action would help them a great deal or a fair amount. A third (33%) of those who had never done social action thought it would be helpful in getting a job, but this rose to 88% of those who participate monthly. The proportion of young people who said they didn't know whether social action would help them with getting a job steadily increases among those who have been involved in social action the least, up to 33% of those who have never participated. These findings fit with a picture of limited awareness about social action, what its potential benefits may be, and how to get involved among a group of young people who have never accessed social action.

Participation in social action is associated with higher levels of life satisfaction and social capital. The average life satisfaction score among those who had done meaningful social action in the past year was 8.6, compared with 8.1 among those who have never participated. This difference of 0.5 is consistent with the differences observed in previous years of the study, and is similar to the difference between permanent employees who are happy in their job and those who don't have a job and are seeking work. A few measures of social capital – including whether young people felt there would be someone there for them if they needed help, and whether there was a neighbour they could wait with if they had lost their keys – were also higher among participants than non-participants in social action. However, the survey data cannot tell us about the causal relationship between these associations (i.e. whether happier, better-connected people are more likely to do social action, or whether social action leads to increased happiness and better social connections). There were no relationships between the frequency of taking part in social action and life satisfaction, social capital, or recognition of other quality indicators (such as feeling recognised, or feeling the activity provided new learnings), nor between involvement in social action programmes and these factors.

Conclusions

- Young people who take part in social action appear to experience a range of benefits⁵, but these benefits are not always recognised by the young person. It may be worthwhile promoting the likely benefits of social action to those already involved (as well as those who are not yet involved, or who have limited involvement), because the advantages may not always be clear to them. One of the most common reasons that young people who had participated in some form of social action were not classified as doing 'meaningful' social action was because they did not recognise the benefit to them personally. Regular participants in social action were especially likely to feel that their involvement would benefit their future job chances, while those with no social action experience were

⁵ The 2016 survey asks young people whether they personally felt a benefit from the social action they took part in, as well as if they think social action will help their future job chances. Other studies have pointed to the link between wellbeing and social action; please see 'Introduction: Setting the Context' on page 8 for further details.

much more likely either to say they 'didn't know' whether social action would help their job chances or that it would not.

- **The 'committed' group of young people are highly engaged with social action.** They are likely to participate in more social action in the future and say they are often made aware of other social action activities they can do when participating in activities. **Recognition of their commitment to social action may help retain their enthusiasm:** currently over a third (37%) reported they did not receive any formal recognition for the difference they made. **It may also be possible for the #iwill campaign to make greater use of this group to advocate for social action among their peers.**
- Encouragement is an important factor of commitment to social action. Almost all young people who are 'committed' to social action received some form of encouragement (96%), whereas less than a third (28%) of 'reluctant' young people received encouragement. **Schools and teachers can play an important role in getting young people motivated to participate in social action.**
- Young people who report starting to participate in social action at a younger age were more likely than those starting later to be classified as 'committed' to social action. **There may be some advantages to encouraging children younger than 10 to get involved in social action, in order to establish a habit of social action among the cohort of interest.**
- Some forms of social action are particularly likely to be accessed by regular rather than infrequent participants in social action. These include social action programmes and online forms of participation. It is not clear from the survey data why this is the case. It is possible that those young people who have social networks that promote social action are more likely to find out about these opportunities to take part. These types of **structured and online opportunities may be particularly useful for those who struggle to access social action opportunities, and promoting them among typically 'harder to reach' groups may help to widen participation in social action.**
- Schools, colleges and university remain key routes into social action for many. However, the majority (59%) of school-aged children (aged 11-15) have not participated in meaningful social action. **Exploring how schools could offer and promote social action more systematically could be a key way to increase participation rates, especially as one of the key barriers to participation among 'potential' participants was a lack of awareness about how to get involved.**
- **Almost half of 10-20 year olds are interested in taking part in social action (49%)** even though they may not be regular participants in social action presently. A third of this group (33%) do not know if they will participate in social action in the next year. **Further signposting of activities and support from wider networks may encourage this group to participate more regularly.** Support from wider networks may also encourage more participation from the reluctant group; only a quarter of this group (28%) reported receiving any encouragement.

Introduction

3 Introduction

Background

Ipsos MORI was commissioned by the Office for Civil Society and Step Up To Serve to conduct the third wave of the National Youth Social Action survey, which measures the proportion of 10-20 year olds taking part in social action across the UK. The previous two waves were conducted in September 2014 and 2015.

Step Up To Serve is a charity set up to coordinate the '#iwill' campaign. This campaign was launched in November 2013 under the leadership of HRH The Prince of Wales and the three main political parties, and aims to increase the number of 10-20 year olds in the UK involved in meaningful social action to 60% by 2020.

For the purposes of the campaign, social action is defined as 'practical action in the service of others to create positive change' and covers a wide range of activities that help other people or the environment, such as fundraising, campaigning (excluding party political campaigning), tutoring/mentoring, and giving time to charity.

As well as raising participation levels for all young people, regardless of their background, the #iwill campaign aims to increase young people's commitment to youth social action and the quality of opportunities available. The National Youth Social Action Survey supports the campaign to track our progress on these sub-goals:

- **Inclusion:** participation should be evenly spread across the UK, with equal participation across demographics.
- **Quality:** the opportunities young people take part in should offer a double benefit – so the young person is having a positive impact while also developing their own character and skills. The Young Foundation and Institute for Voluntary Research developed six quality principles for social action, that could indicate when a young person has had a high quality experience – such as whether the opportunity was youth-led, challenging or allowed progression to other opportunities - we tested these principles for the first time in this year's survey.
- **Commitment:** social action should be repeated more than once or be a one-off activity lasting longer than a day, and the young person should be able to identify specific actions they took to achieve their goal.

It is intended that the survey will be repeated annually, to track the progress of the campaign to 2020 and support strategy development by providing evidence on the enablers and potential barriers to taking part. The survey is developed in partnership with the Office for Civil Society, as part of their pledge to the #iwill campaign.

Setting the context

In recent years there has been a large take-up of social action and volunteering across the UK. Encouraging meaningful social action has been a priority for governments as set out in the *Giving White Paper* (2011), with initiatives such as the Community Organisers and Communities First programmes being established to encourage people to take a more active role in their communities.

As well as the #iwill campaign, there have been large-scale initiatives such as Join In and the National Citizen Service (NCS) which have sought to encourage more adults and young people to volunteer. Initiatives such as these are seen as likely to be associated with increased volunteering and social action among young people; the NCS programme saw an

increase of six percentage points on the number of hours summer standard programme participants spent volunteering⁶. According to the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) 2016 Almanac, 32% of 16-25 year olds said they volunteered formally (for example through a group/organisation) at least once a month in 2015/16, up from 23% in 2010/11.⁷ The Community Life Survey 2015/2016 estimates that 69% of 16-26 year olds have participated in formal volunteering in the past year.

Participating in volunteering has also been shown to have benefits, not only from those on the receiving end of the volunteering, but those who are doing the volunteering. Young people who volunteer have been found to have higher levels of wellbeing, community involvement, social cohesion and employability⁸. The National Youth Social Action Survey aims to track rates of participation in youth social action over time, contributing to the wider research on volunteering and youth social action as well as providing data to inform the ongoing #iwill campaign, thus supporting more young people to experience the benefits of social action.

This report

This report is based on the findings of a nationally representative sample of 2,082 10-20 year olds across the UK. Any differences reported are statistically significant (at the 95% confidence level – see Appendix for more explanation about the statistical reliability of the survey findings).

Methodology

The main survey fieldwork was conducted from 2-16 September 2016. Overall, fully completed questionnaires were obtained from 2,082 young people across the UK.

Interviews were conducted face-to-face in respondents' homes. Trained interviewers introduced the survey, gained parental consent for under-16s to participate, and administered the survey. A random location quota design was used in order to achieve a nationally representative sample. The survey took sampling points across the UK, with quotas set in each to ensure regionally and nationally representative samples. Boost sampling was used to achieve a minimum number of interviews in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Data are weighted by age within gender, region, and the family socio-economic status. The weights were derived from 2012 census information from the Office of National Statistics. The effect of weighting is shown in the sample profile in the Appendices and in the data tables. Full details of the study methodology can be found in the Appendix to this report.

Questionnaire Development

The Youth Social Action 2016 survey team cognitively tested several new and amended questions, on topic areas such as social capital, social action programmes and online participation. The aim of the cognitive testing was to test how respondents interpreted and understood the new questions, and to ensure key terminology and concepts were well understood.

⁶ <http://www.ncsyoes.co.uk/sites/default/files/NCS%202014%20Evaluation.pdf>

⁷ <https://data.ncvo.org.uk/a/almanac16/volunteer-profiles-2/>

⁸ https://www.demos.co.uk/files/Generation_Citizen_-_web.pdf?1392764120

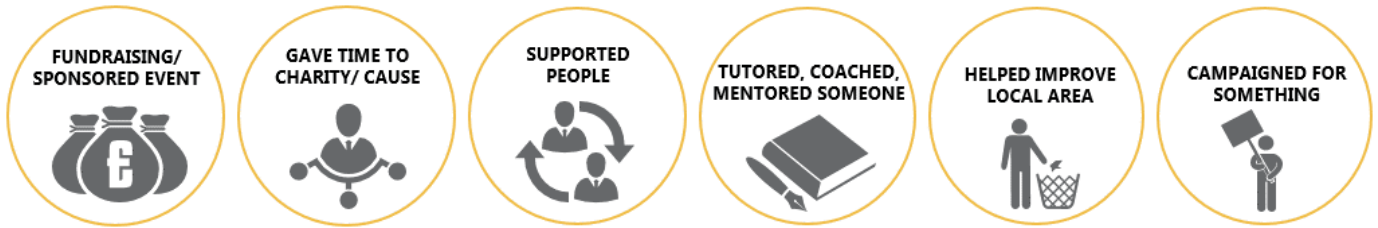
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Participation in youth social action

4 Participation in youth social action

Rates of participation in social action

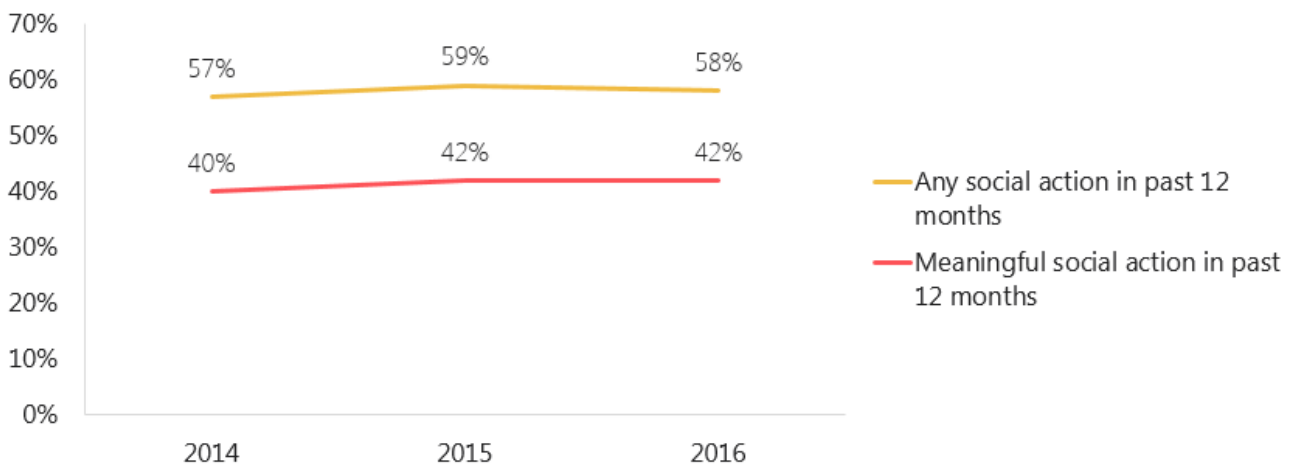
In order to identify those participating in social action, respondents were asked to indicate which of the following activities they had done in the past 12 months to help other people or the environment:



Respondents were asked if they had donated money or goods within the past 12 months. Although donating money or goods is not classified as social action under the #iwill definition⁹, this is included to ensure that respondents do not miscode donations under other categories, such as fundraising. These responses are not categorised as social action in the report.

Respondents were prompted with examples of each activity to help their recall.

Figure 4.1: Past-year participation in social action 2014-2016



Base: All respondents 2016 (2,082); 2015 (2,021); 2014 (2,038)

In the past 12 months, 58% of 10-20 year olds have participated in any social action, and of those 42% have taken part in meaningful social action (see figure 4.2 for meaningful social action definition).

Participation in meaningful social action is a key measure used by the #iwill campaign, and the majority of analysis in this report looks at participation in meaningful social action. In addition, we consider how more young people might be

⁹ For this report we have applied the definition of social action used by the #iwill campaign: i.e. that activities should provide a benefit for participants as well as others, and meet the type of criteria outlined by the campaign for high quality social action (see report introduction for details). As such, donating money or goods is excluded from the definition of social action.

motivated to get involved by looking at infrequent participation and those who have not participated in social action in the last year. There has been no statistically significant change to the headline figures (Figure 4.1) from the previous two waves of the survey.

Figure 4.2: Defining participation in social action

42% have participated in meaningful youth social action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Been involved in social action in the past 12 months - Participated in <i>social action</i> at least every few months, or did a one-off activity lasting more than a day in the last 12 months - Recognised <i>both</i> a benefit to themselves <i>and</i> others/ the environment as a result of their social action
16% have participated infrequently	Those who have been involved in a one-off <i>social action activity</i> in the past 12 months of a day or less
42% have not participated	Those who have <i>not</i> been involved <i>any</i> social action activities in the last 12 months <i>or</i> have only donated money or goods

Has participation in meaningful social action changed?

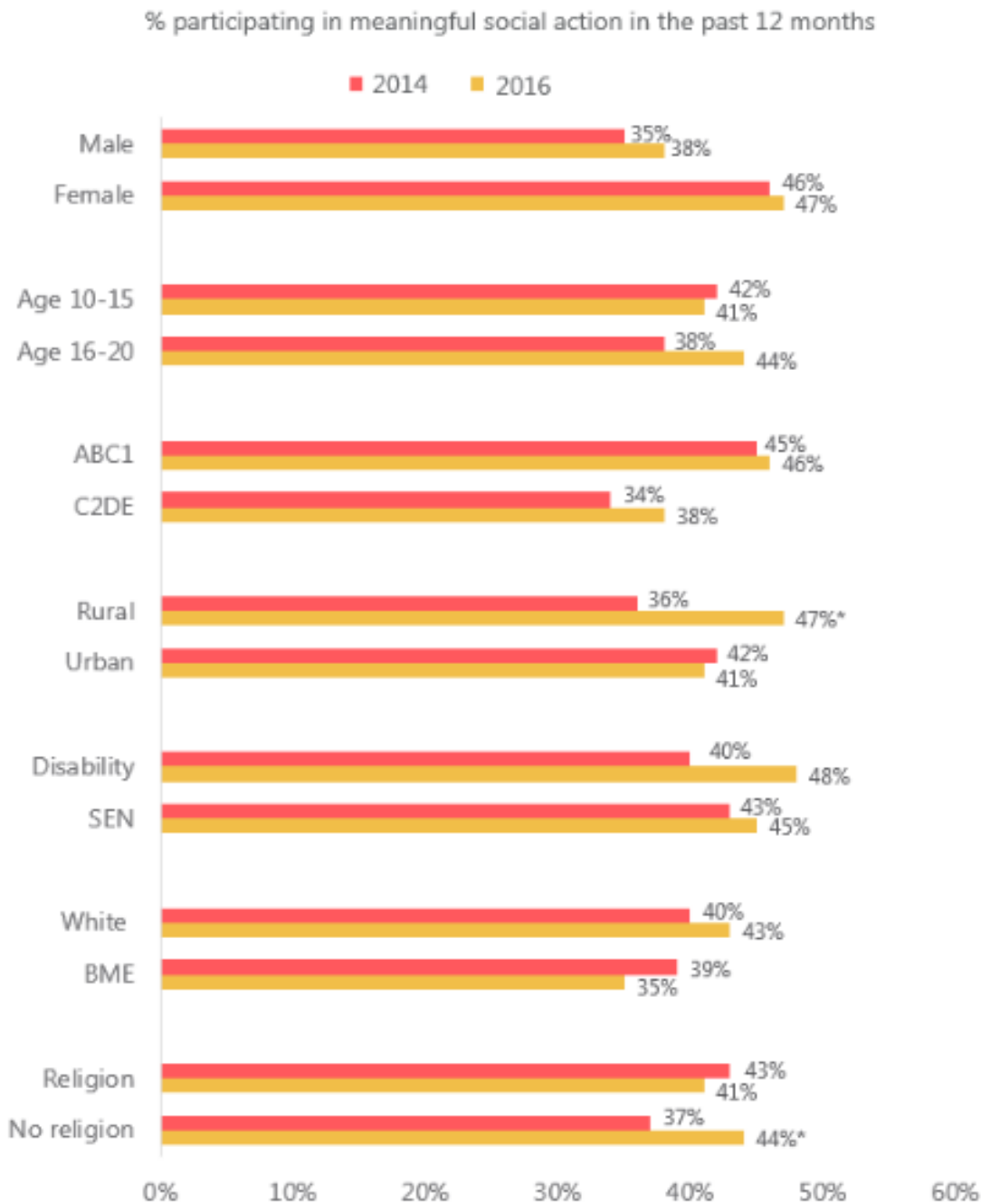
The overall rate of young people participating in meaningful social action remains at 42% in 2016, which is statistically unchanged from a 40% participation rate in 2014.

Participation across the UK nations in meaningful social action has remained fairly stable since 2014, with the exception of Northern Ireland where participation has fallen. Rates of participation are highest in Scotland, with just over half of young people (52%) reporting to have done meaningful social action in the past year. For young people in Wales this is just under half (48%) and four in ten young people in England (42%). As in previous years, rates of participation in Northern Ireland are relatively low, with just under two in ten (18%) having reported doing meaningful social action¹⁰.

In general, the profile of those taking part in meaningful social action is also stable over time. For example, girls remain more likely than boys to participate (47% compared to 38%) and those from the most affluent backgrounds are more likely to have taken part in the past year compared to those from less affluent backgrounds (ABC1 46% compared to C2DE 38%). A difference in participation by ethnicity emerged in 2015 and has remained this year with white young people more likely than those from ethnic minority groups to report taking part in meaningful social action (43% compared with 35%). Figure 4.3 charts the rate of participation in meaningful social action by key characteristics of young people taking part.

¹⁰ Please see the appendix for more information about the sample sizes in each UK nation and levels of statistical reliability. Note that all differences reported on in the text are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

Figure 4.3: Rates of participation in meaningful social action by key characteristics

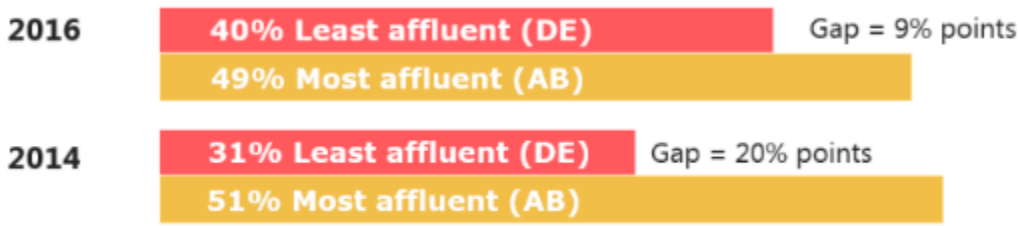


* Statistically significant difference between 2014 and 2016

Base: All respondents 2016 (2,082); 2014 (2,038)

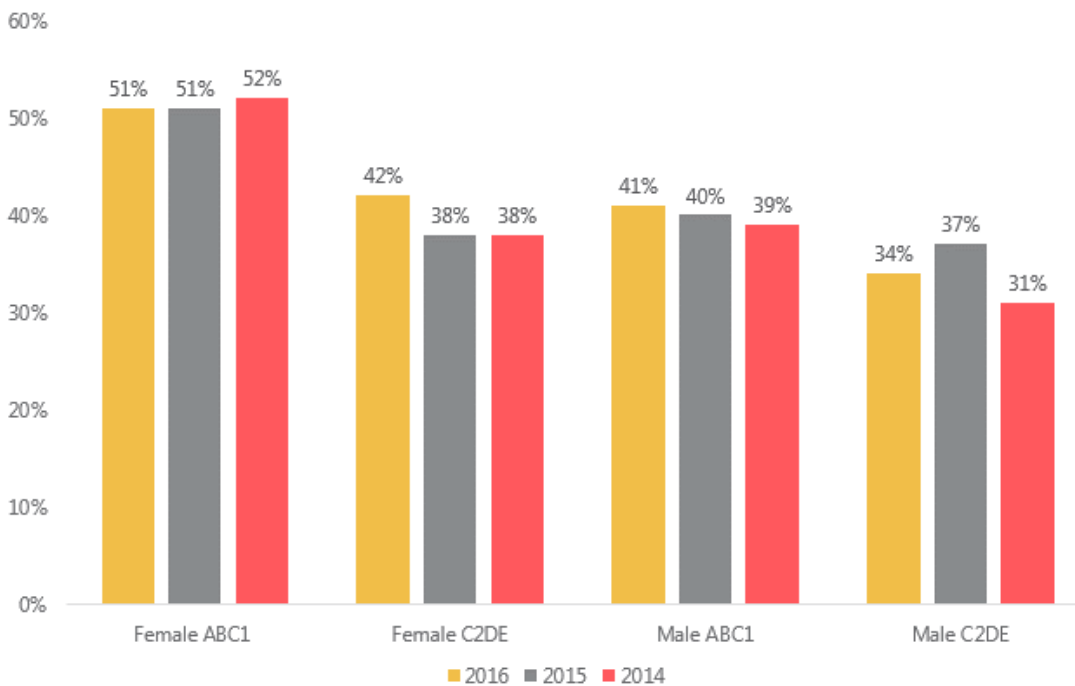
However, there are some notable changes in participation over time. Participation among young people from less affluent backgrounds (DE) has increased from 31% in 2014 to 40% in 2016. Interestingly, when comparing meaningful social action participation between socio-economic groups AB and DE, **the gap in participation appears to be narrowing**. As shown in Figure 4.4, the gap has decreased from 20 percentage points in 2014 to 9 percentage points in 2016, a difference of 11 percentage points. Clearly, overall participation rates have remained stable over the same period; this narrowing is partly due to slightly (but not significantly) lower participation rates among those in groups AB (down from 51% in 2014 to 49% in 2016) and C2 (from 38% to 35% in the same period).

Figure 4.4: Meaningful social action participation gap between socio-economic groups AB and DE



In addition, when looking at meaningful social action by socio-economic background, there is a gap between girls from higher affluent backgrounds and the other demographic groups. As shown in figure 4.5, girls from socio-economic group ABC1 have the highest levels of meaningful social action, whereas boys from C2DE backgrounds have the lowest.

Figure 4.5: Percentage of young people participating in meaningful social action, by gender and socio-economic group



Bases: Those taking part in meaningful social action in the past 12 months: 2016 (Female ABC1 291, C2DE 186; Male ABC1 244, C2DE 163); 2015 (Female ABC1 283, C2DE 165; Male ABC1 231, C2DE 170); 2014 (Female ABC1 294, C2DE 164; Male ABC1 217, C2DE 143).

Participation by age group has also changed over time. Figure 3.3 shows that social action rates among 16-20 year olds have increased over time, and this age group are now as likely as those aged 10-15 to report doing social action in the past year. Looking at figures for individual age groups shows that participation has increased for young people of every age from 14-19 years old in 2016 compared with 2014. At the aggregate level, rates of participation have fallen for those aged 10-13 from 45% in 2014 to 38% in 2016, while participation has increased for 14-19 year olds from 38% to 46%.

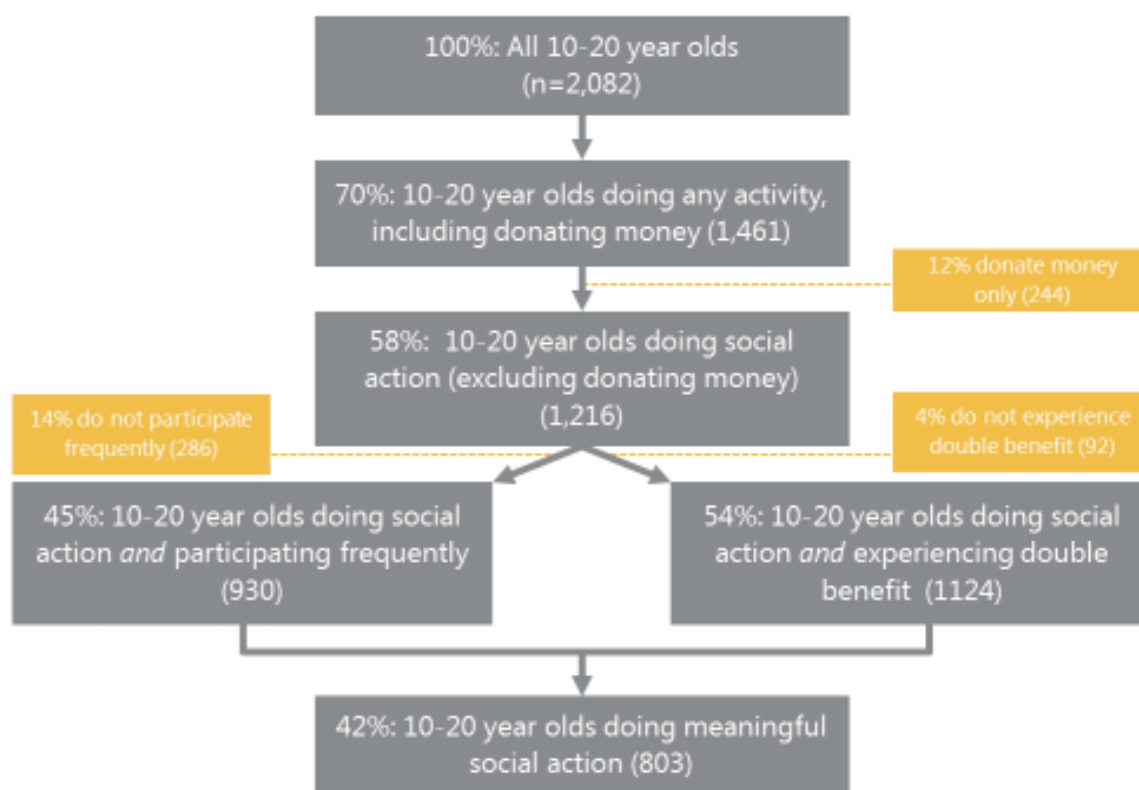
The participation of young people in rural areas has significantly increased from 36% to 47% between 2014 and 2016. This means that young people from rural areas are now more likely than those from urban areas to report participating.

Those doing social action that is not classified as 'meaningful'

A third of young people indicated they took part in social action in the past 12 months but did not meet the criteria for 'meaningful' social action applied in this report. There are three reasons why young people who had taken part in some form of activity were not classified as meeting the criteria, as shown in Figure 4.6:

- Young people had donated money or goods to a cause or charity, but had not taken part in any social action¹¹ (12% of all 10-20 year olds);
- Young people had taken part in social action but did not participate regularly or were unable to say how regularly they participated (14% of 10-20 year olds); and,
- Young people had taken part in social action but did not experience the double benefit of participating (4% of all 10-20 year olds).

Figure 4.6: Young people who do not meet the 'meaningful social action' requirements



Base: 2,082 10-20 year olds. All numbers quoted are weighted. Percentages are based on all 10-20 year olds (2,082)

The main reason why young people who had taken part in social action but did not meet the meaningful social action criteria was the infrequency of their participation. Generally speaking, those who failed to meet the frequency threshold had taken part in a one-off activity (89 did a one-off activity lasting one day, and 167 a one-off activity lasting a few hours; figures are weighted). The remainder (30) who failed to meet this criterion were those who did not specify how frequently they had taken part in social action activities.

¹¹ Donated money or goods is not included in the definition of social action as used by the #iwill campaign, and as such is not included when referring to social action.

Frequency of participation

Figure 4.7 highlights how frequently young people participated in social action in the past year. A quarter (25%) had participated at least every month, and another 17% at least every few months: together these groups make up the 'meaningful social action' category. Some 42% of young people had not participated in the past 12 months. This includes 13% who had done social action in the past, but not in the last 12 months, and 29% who had never done any social action. These figures are in line with those recorded in the second year of the survey.

Figure 4.7: Frequency of young people participating in social action in the past year



Base: 2,082 10-20 year olds.

There were a number of demographic differences in the frequency of participation, which largely correspond with overall patterns of participation:

- Girls were more likely than boys to participate monthly or more frequently (29% vs 21%), while boys were more likely to have never done any social action (33% vs 24% girls).
- By age group, 10-15 year olds and 16-20 year olds were equally likely to have participated in meaningful social action, but 16-20 year olds were more likely to take part at least monthly (29% vs 22% 10-15s).
- 10-15 year olds and 16-20 year olds were equally likely to have participated in social action in the past 12 months, but the younger cohort was more likely never to have done social action at all (32% vs 25%) while the older cohort was relatively likely to have taken part at some point but not in the past 12 months (19% vs 8% of 10-15 year olds).
- As well as being more likely to take part in social action at all, young people from the most affluent families were also more likely to participate in social action monthly (28% ABC1 vs 22% of C2DEs). Some 33% of young people from the least affluent families said they had never participated (33% C2DE vs 25% ABC1).

These groups also have an appetite for further social action. Girls are more likely than boys to say they are likely to participate in social action in the future (72% compared to 62%), and those from more affluent backgrounds are also more likely to indicate future participation than those from less affluent backgrounds (72% vs 61%). In addition, young

people taking part in meaningful social action are more likely than those doing one-off social action to say they'll participate in the future (93% vs 87%).

Factors associated with frequency of participation

There was a limited association between the frequency of participation and whether young people had been encouraged by family, friends and/or teachers to take part in social action. Those who had participated in the past 12 months were twice as likely as those who had not to say they had received encouragement from someone (94% compared with 46%)¹². However, those who had participated in the past 12 months were equally likely to say that family, friends and teachers had encouraged them to take part regardless of the frequency of their involvement.

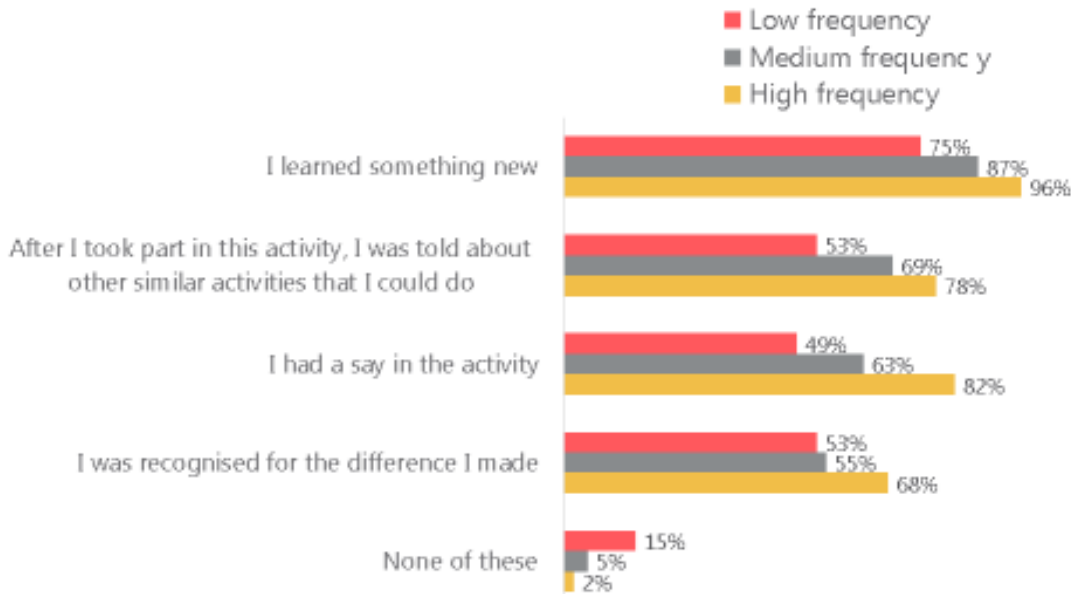
The frequency of participation was sometimes associated with the type of social action young people had been involved in. For example, those taking part in a social action programme were more likely to report participating on a monthly basis than young people who had participated in social action in other ways (54% vs 37%).

It was also notable that more frequent participation in social action was associated with young people being more likely to report that their social action met a number of quality criteria¹³. For example, 78% of those who participated at least monthly said they were told about other activities they could take part in once they had completed their activity, compared with 69% of those who participated every few months, and 53% of those who did one-off activities lasting no more than a day. Similar patterns can be observed for the other quality principles asked about on the survey: whether young people had a say in the activity, whether they were recognised for the difference they made, and whether they learned something new as a result of taking part. As shown in Figure 4.8, those participating in social action most frequently are also more likely to report their social action met all quality criteria than those participating less frequently.

¹² The survey asked about encouragement from parents, friends, teachers, other family members, celebrities, community leaders, faith leaders, or another person.

¹³ Note that young people were not asked whether their social action was high quality, but were asked to report on a number of attributes which are believed to indicate that social action has been high quality, based on the #iwill campaign's six quality principles (e.g. whether their contribution was recognised, and whether they learnt something new as a result of taking part).

Figure 4.8: Quality criteria by frequency of participation in social action¹⁴



Base: 1525 participating in high frequency social / 361 participating in a medium frequency social action / 331 participating in low frequency social action

Those who participated monthly or more were most likely to report using the internet in some way to access or take part in social action (53% of those who participated monthly, compared with 42% who took part every few months or did one-off activities lasting more than a day; and 21% of those who took part in short one-off activities). Those participating most frequently were more likely to use the internet in all the ways asked about in the survey, including finding out about social action opportunities, taking part in social action, recording their progress, and sharing their experiences with others.

The routes into social action for young people were similar, regardless of how frequently they had participated in the past 12 months. School, college and/or university were by far the most common routes into social action. Those who participated at least monthly were more likely than those participating less frequently to mention getting involved through a few routes, including their local community, a club or group, and via development programmes for young people. However, on the whole, the patterns of how young people got involved in social action are strikingly similar across the frequency groups, as shown in Table 4.1.

¹⁴ All differences between frequency for each statement are statistically significant, with the exception of low and medium frequency for 'I was recognised for the difference I made'

Table 4.1: How young people got involved in social action in the last 12 months, by frequency of participation (%)

<i>Multiple options young people could choose from</i>	Participated in social action at least monthly	Participated at least every few months, or a one-off activity lasting more than a day	Participated in a one-off activity lasting no more than a day
School	59	68	59
College	12	9	6
University	5	4	3
Job	3	5	2
Local community	11	7	3
Place of worship	8	7	5
Club or group	14	9	3
Uniformed Youth Group	10	6	9
Programme through	1	3	1
Development programme for young people	11	5	1
Full-time volunteering e.g. gap year	2	1	*
Friends	17	20	18
Family	21	25	18
By yourself	6	6	3
Website/ social media	2	2	*
Other	4	3	6
Don't know	*	-	*

How young people participate in social action

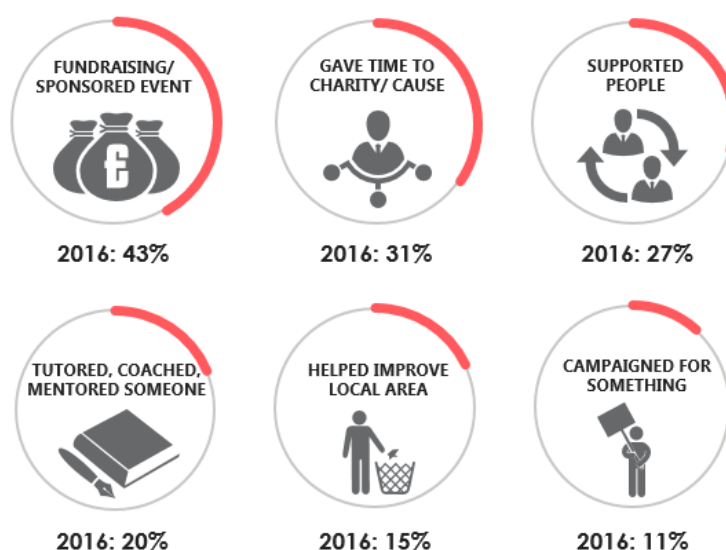
5 How young people participate in social action

Participation by activity

Rates of participation in specific types of social action are statistically unchanged since 2015/2014. As shown in Figure 5.1, young people are most likely to have been involved with a fundraising or sponsored event (43%), followed by a third who have given time to a charity or cause (31%) and supported people (27%) in the past 12 months.

When asked about the types of activities they had taken part in, young people were provided with a short list of examples for each type of social action. For the 2016 survey, additional examples were provided for campaigning compared with previous years, but there has been no change in reported participation for this activity.

Figure 5.1: Types of social action young people have participated in during the past 12 months



Base: All respondents 2016 (2,082)

Participation in each activity varies by age group. In line with previous years, young people aged 10-15 are more likely to have done any social action activity than young people aged 16-20 (60% compared to 57%, respectively)¹⁵. Young people aged 10-15 are more likely to have taken part in a fundraising or sponsored activity compared to 16-20 year olds (49% and 36%, respectively). As in 2015, young people aged 16-20 are more likely than those aged 10-15 to have: supported other people (32% versus 24%); given time to a charity or cause (34% versus 29%); tutored, coached or mentored someone (23% versus 17%); and campaigned for something (14% versus 9%).

Additionally, young people are asked if they have donated any money or goods within the past 12 months. Whilst this is not included as social action, it is interesting to note that the number of young people who have only donated and not taken part in any social action has significantly fallen since 2014, from 17% to 13%.

¹⁵ Note that this difference, although statistically significant, is very small. The difference by age group is not observed for participation in meaningful social action, when the rates of participation for 10-15 and 16-20 year olds are statistically similar (41% and 44%, respectively).

Generally speaking, the proportion of young people taking part in each type of social action increased with the frequency of taking part. For example, 36% of those who took part in social action monthly had done activities aimed to improve their local area in the past 12 months; this fell to 21% of those taking part every few months, and to 15% of those who did one-off activities. The exception to this was in fundraising and sponsored activities, where participation was as high or higher among those participating infrequently as those participating every month: 70% of monthly participants, 80% of those participating every few months, and 72% of those participating infrequently said they had taken part in fundraising or sponsored activities in the past 12 months. This may indicate that fundraising and sponsored activities are easier to access, or are more likely to be offered via the channels through which infrequent participants get involved in social action.

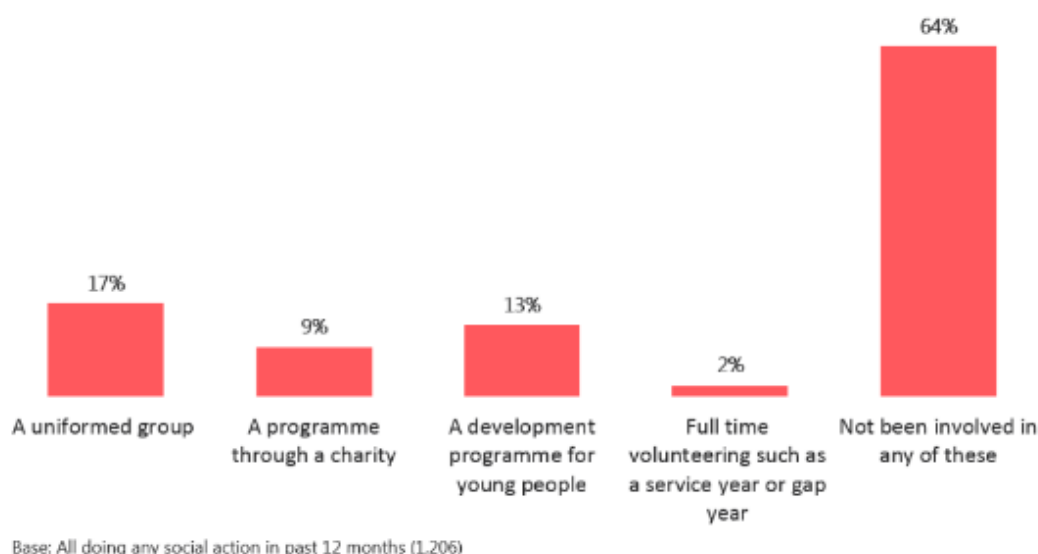
Participation in social action programmes

Young people were asked if they had taken part in any social action activities via a social action programme. Social action programmes were separated into the following categories with examples:

- A uniformed youth group such as Scouts, Girl Guides, Cadets, Boys Brigade;
- A programme through a charity such as: England/Wales - WE Day, Fixers or Children in Need; Scotland - Fixers, Oxfam, Young Scot, Youth Scotland; Northern Ireland- St Vincent DePaul, Special Olympics, Habitat for Humanity;
- A development programme for young people, such as National Citizen Service programmes, Duke of Edinburgh's Award, British Youth Council, Scottish Youth Parliament, The Prince's Trust Team;
- Full time volunteering such as Service Year, e.g. City Year, Year Here, Volunteering Matters.

A third of young people (33%) aged 10-20 who had done social action in the past year reported taking part in a social action programme in the past 12 months. Of those, 17% had been involved with a uniformed youth group, followed by 13% with a development programme (see Figure 5.2 for full breakdown).

Figure 5.2: Young people who have taken part in social action activities with a social action programme in the past 12 months



Characteristics of those involved with social action programmes

Participation in social action programmes is higher than average among 14-16 year olds (44% compared with average 33%), but there are significant variations by the type of social action programme that different age groups are involved with. Young people aged 10-15 are much more likely than those aged 16-20 to have been involved with a uniformed youth group (23% compared to 11%), whereas the older age group is more likely to have participated in development programmes (20% compared to 7% of 10-15 year olds). The higher take-up of development programmes is driven by a high proportion (34%) of young people aged 16 participating in these. It is not possible to identify why 16 year olds are particularly likely to have taken part in development programmes from our data, but the availability of specific programmes for this age group (e.g. National Citizen Service and The Duke of Edinburgh's Award) could help to explain this pattern.

The socio-economic gap is particularly evident when looking at participation in social action programmes; young people from affluent backgrounds (ABC1) are more likely than young people from less affluent backgrounds (C2DE) to have been involved (42% compared to 27%).

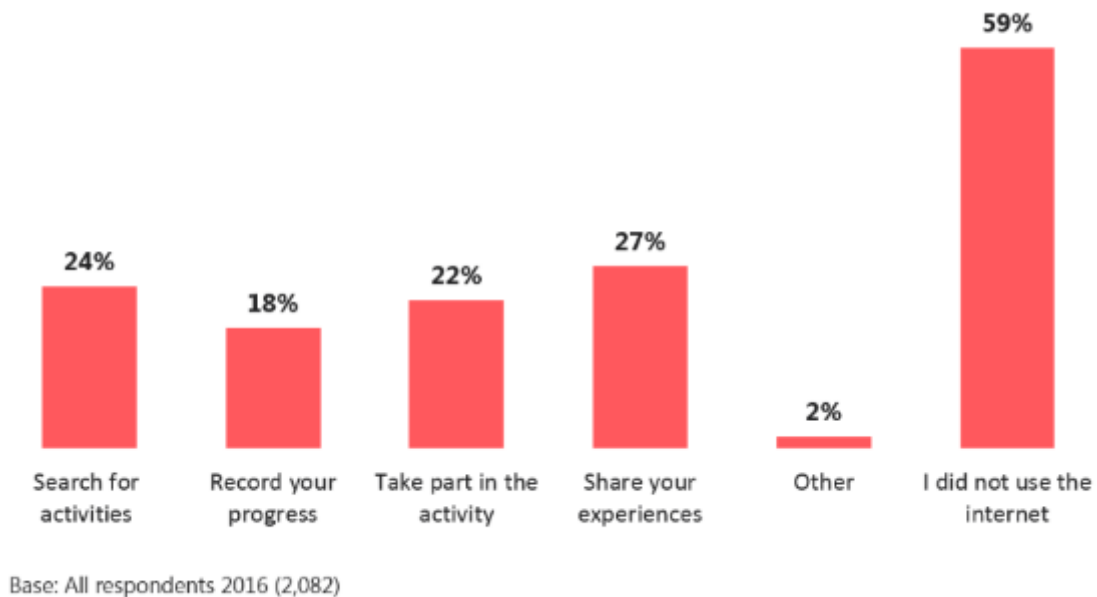
Young people participating in social action programmes are also likely to take part in social action regularly; they are more likely to report to participating in social action on a monthly basis than other young people who had participated in social action in other ways (54% vs 37%).

Online participation

The Youth Social Action 2016 survey asked young people for the first time about the ways in which they have used the internet in relation to social action. Previously the survey had only collected limited information about whether young people had participated online or in person.

Four in ten (41%) young people who had participated in social action in the past year had used the internet to assist with their social action in some way. As shown in Figure 5.3, of those a quarter had shared their experiences (27%) or used the internet to search for activities (24%). Nearly two in ten had used the internet to track their progress (18%), and a similar proportion used the internet to participate in the (social action) activity (22%).

Figure 5.3: Young people who have used the internet on a computer, phone or tablet to assist their social action



As noted in Chapter 4, young people who participate in social action more frequently are also more likely to use the internet. This may be a function of their greater levels of participation (i.e. because these young people do more, they have also done more online) or it could imply that regular participants take part in social action in different and more diverse ways. In line with this difference, the specific sub-groups of young people who participate more frequently are more likely to have used the internet to participate:

- Young people aged 16-20 are more likely to have used the internet in some way than those aged 10-15 (51% compared to 33%);
- Girls are more likely than boys to have used the internet in any way (44% compared to 38%);
- Young people from rural areas are more likely than those from urban areas to have used the internet in any way (46% compared to 40%); this finding is of interest because online participation means that young people living in areas with potentially limited access to face-to-face opportunities can still get involved in social action;
- Nearly two-thirds of young people in Scotland have used the internet (60%).

Of the young people who had campaigned for something in the past year, two-thirds (63%) had used the internet in some way and nearly four in ten (39%) had used the internet to take part in the activity. Whilst this does not prove that using the internet was directly linked to their campaigning, it does imply there is a propensity of those campaigning to use the internet to assist with their social action in some way.

Encouraging more social action

Committed, Potential and Reluctant young people

6 Encouraging more social action

Classifying participation

Young people can be classified into three groups based on their current, previous and intended future participation in social action: committed, potential and reluctant. These three groups were defined in collaboration with #iwill partners for the 2015 Youth Social Action wave 2 survey, and will be used to understand engagement in social action (see Figure 6.1). The defined groups will also provide insight to better target activity and strategy, to encourage and support more young people to take part in social action.

Figure 6.1: Definitions of reluctant, potential, and committed groups

Reluctant: 17%	Potential: 49%	Committed: 34%
<p>Reluctant to engage in social action: this group says they are unlikely to do social action in the next 12 months. This group includes those who are currently participating, but is dominated by those who have not participated in social action in the past 12 months.</p>	<p>Interested or uncertain about doing (more) social action: those who say they are likely to do social action in the next 12 months, or don't know if they will participate. It includes those who are currently doing social action as well as those who have never participated.</p>	<p>Strong commitment to social action: this group has done meaningful social action in the past 12 months, has a history of participation prior to that, and are likely to do more social action next year.</p>

Characteristics of each group

Table 6.1 details the profile of young people classified as committed, potential and reluctant. As shown in the table, the committed group are particularly likely to: come from an affluent family (63% compared with 48% of those who are reluctant to do social action); have taken part in a social action programme (42% compared to 27% and 28% of potential and reluctant young people); and have started participating at a young age (45% first did social action aged 10 years old or younger, compared with 33% of past-year participants classified as potential or reluctant). Within the committed group, there is a large socio-economic gap between those from more affluent backgrounds and those from less affluent backgrounds (63% vs 37%). This is unchanged from last year (64% and 36% respectively).

As shown in Table 6.1, there are few differences between young people classified as potential and reluctant. Those classified as potential/reluctant are relatively likely to be male (53% and 58% respectively) and not to have taken part in a social action programme (27% and 28%, respectively). Those identified as potential are more likely, however, to be of a younger age (57% aged 10-15), whereas those identified as reluctant are more likely to be older (59% aged 16-20).

Table 6.1: Profile of committed, potential and reluctant young people

% of characteristic within each group	Committed	Potential	Reluctant
Male	46%	53%	58%
Female	55%	47%	42%
Age 10-15	51%	57%	41%
Age 16-20	49%	43%	59%
More affluent (ABC1)	63%	54%	48%
Less affluent (C2DE)	37%	46%	52%
White	89%	87%	86%
BME	11%	13%	14%
Urban	72%	77%	65%
Rural	28%	23%	35%
School	56%	59%	44%
College	16%	15%	17%
University	15%	8%	8%
Employed	11%	15%	25%
Unemployed	2%	3%	6%
Participated in a social action programme	42%	27%	28%
Participated in social action when under 10 years-old	34%	21%	18%

Barriers to social action

The most common reason given for not participating in social action by potential respondents is 'I don't have enough time' (29%), which was also the most common reason given in 2015. As shown in Table 6.2, a higher proportion of potential young people this year have reported they didn't know how to get involved/no one has asked them (27% in 2016 compared to 18% in 2015), suggesting that potential participants would like to be involved but are not sure of the routes in. This coincides with fewer potential reporting it had never occurred to them to participate in social action compared to 2015 (17% and 29% respectively). Note that the list of options that respondents selected their response from for this question was changed for 2016, and so comparisons with 2015 should be treated with caution¹⁶.

¹⁶ The least common responses given at the 2014/15 surveys were removed and updated/refined for 2016. Details on the new and removed answer codes can be found in the appendix.

Table 6.2: Barriers to social action for potential and reluctant participants in 2016 and 2015

Barriers to social action	Potential 2015	Potential 2016	Reluctant 2015	Reluctant 2016
Don't have enough time	34%	29%	34%	30%
It never occurred to me to take part	29%	17%	30%	12%
I don't know how to get involved/ no one has asked me	18%	27%	10%	10%
My friends aren't doing this type of thing	13%	19%	10%	20%
I'm not interested	7%	12%	37%	35%

There appears to be a large drop in the number of young people saying it never occurred to them to take part in social action; however, we would caution against making direct comparison between 2015 and 2016 due to significant changes to the question made in 2016 (new options were added - please see the appendix for more details).

As in 2015 the most common reason for not participating in social action by reluctant respondents is 'I'm not interested' (35%), followed by 'I don't have enough time' (30%). Reluctant young people from less affluent backgrounds (C2DE) are more likely to say they are not interested in social action compared to Reluctant young people from more affluent (ABC1) backgrounds (43% compared to 35%). Young people from more affluent backgrounds are, however, more likely than those from less affluent backgrounds to say they do not have enough time, both by potential (35% compared to 22%) and those who are reluctant (33% compared to 27%).

Encouraging participation

Young people were asked if they receive encouragement from anyone to take part in activities to help other people or the environment. Parents and teachers are most frequently cited by young people as having encouraged them (mentioned equally by 43%), but friends are mentioned as another important source of encouragement (38%).

As would be expected, the committed group are much more likely to have received encouragement to participate in social action than the other groups: almost all committed (96%) received encouragement, compared to 75% of potential and 28% of reluctant young people. When looking at who encouraged social action, all three groups had the highest levels of encouragement from parents, and interestingly committed young people were far more likely than reluctant young people to have received encouragement from their friends (53% compared to 9%), as shown in Table 6.3.

Table 6.3: Common sources of encouragement for committed, potential and reluctant young people

	Committed	Potential	Reluctant
Parents	63%	39%	13%
Teachers	62%	41%	11%
Friends	53%	37%	9%

Motivations for social action

Three-quarters of young people (74%) identified as potential mentioned at least one factor that would motivate them to do social action, whereas under half of reluctant young people (44%) mentioned at least one factor. As shown in Table 6.4, the most common motivational factor mentioned by young people was if they could do it with their friends (potential 45% and reluctant 23%), in line with last year's findings. Over a quarter of potential also said they would be more likely to take part "if someone asked me to get involved" (28%) and if they could do it at school, college, university or work (26%). Lower proportions of reluctant young people cited these motivational factors; instead a third of those reluctant (34%) said there was nothing that would motivate them.

Table 6.4: Factors that would motivate potential and reluctant young people to do social action

Motivating social action	Potential 2015	Potential 2016	Reluctant 2015	Reluctant 2016
<i>Mentioned at least one factor that would motivate them to do social action</i>	78%	74%	49%	44%
If I could do it with my friends	36%	45%	21%	23%
If someone asked me to get involved	23%	28%	11%	12%
If I could do it at school/college/university/work	16%	26%	5%	10%
If it was close to where I live	12%	25%	9%	9%
If it related to my interests e.g. sports / drama	15%	21%	11%	16%
Nothing /Not interested (unprompted)	4%	6%	27%	34%

Conclusions

The committed group of young people is highly engaged with social action. They are likely to participate in more social action in the future (85% are either definitely or very likely to participate in the next 12 months) and are often made aware of other social action activities they can do (77%). Recognition of their commitment to social action may help retain their enthusiasm: currently just under two-thirds (63%) say they were recognised for the difference they made.

The potential group want to be involved in social action, but often do not know how to get involved and want the support of others such as friends. A third of this group (33%) do not know if they will participate in social action in the next year. Further signposting of activities and support from wider networks may encourage this group to participate more regularly.

Support from wider networks may also encourage more participation from the reluctant group; only a quarter of this group (28%) reported receiving any encouragement. There are, however, a number of reluctant young people (34%) who report that they are not interested in social action (35%), and that nothing could motivate them to participate in social action (34%).

Benefits of social action

7 Benefits of social action

High quality social action

The #iwill campaign is interested not only in encouraging more widespread participation in youth social action, but also in improving access to high quality opportunities. The #iwill campaign outlines six principles of high quality social action¹⁷, which are:



Questions on the 2016 study aimed to unpick how far the social action opportunities that young people had participated in over the past 12 months fulfilled certain quality criteria. As Figure 6.1 below demonstrates, the majority (94%) of young people who had participated in social action in the past 12 months felt they had experienced at least one of the quality indicators tested. Of the quality criteria asked about, young people were most likely to say they had learnt something new, a measure which aimed to tap into the 'challenging' principle of the #iwill framework.

As highlighted in Figure 6.1, young people who had participated in *meaningful* social action in the past year were even more likely to recognise each of the benefits asked about. In general, there were no differences between those doing meaningful social action and those participating in structured programmes in the benefits they felt they experienced, with the exception of recognition. Those participating in structured programmes were particularly likely to say their contribution had been recognised formally, through awards or certificates (74%, compared with 62% of those doing meaningful social action). Other research has demonstrated that recognising young people's efforts and achievements in social action can have a motivating effect, particularly for young people who may have less experience or opportunity to participate in social action¹⁸.

¹⁷ More information about the six principles of high quality social action can be accessed at: <http://www.iwill.org.uk/about-us/principles/>

¹⁸ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/561162/Evaluation_of_the_Uniformed_Youth_Social_Action_Fund_2.pdf

Figure 7.1: Quality indicators by different levels of social action participation

There are few consistent differences on the quality measures between different groups of young people. Young people from the most and least affluent families were equally likely to report that they had a say in the activity, that they had learnt something new, and that they were told about other opportunities available to them after taking part in social action. Those from the most affluent families were more likely than others however to say that they had been formally recognised after taking part in social action (64% from groups ABC1 vs 53% from socio-economic groups C2DE).

Embedding social action

As in previous years, school remains the most common route into school action, with just under two thirds of young people doing social reporting they got involved this way (62%). This is an increase from 2014, when just over half of young people (56%) said they got involved in social action through school. When looking at subgroups such as socio-economic background and gender, there are no differences when it comes to getting involved in social action through school. This suggests schools are increasingly important when it comes to embedding social action and providing equal access. Teachers can play an important role in this; 43% of young people report to being encouraged by teachers to participate in social action, and those from different socio-economic backgrounds report similar levels of encouragement (ABC1 43% vs C2DE 41%).

Family and friends remain the next most common routes into social action (21% and 18% respectively), and one in ten young people say they got involved in social action through a club or group (10%) or a uniformed youth group (9%).

Double benefit

Almost all young people participating in social action feel a double benefit (94%). Girls are more likely than boys to feel this benefit (60% compared to 49%) and those from higher affluent backgrounds compared to those from less affluent backgrounds (58% compared to 49%), suggesting that the double benefit is not always equally felt.

In order to derive the double benefit, young people who had participated in any social action within the past 12 months were asked if they felt they had personally benefited from taking part in those activities, and if they felt others had

benefited from the activities. Eight in ten young people (81%) reported that they had benefited a lot/fair amount, and a much smaller proportion reported they had only benefited a little or not at all (16%). The number of those benefited a lot/a fair amount has actually fallen since 2014 (88%), driven by fewer who say they benefited a fair amount (44% in 2014 vs 36% in 2016) and a slight increase in those saying they benefited a little (9% in 2014 vs 13% in 2016). Young people from higher affluent backgrounds are more likely to say they felt a personal benefit compared to those from a less affluent background (83% vs 77% respectively).

When asked if they felt other people or the environment had benefited from the social action, nearly nine in ten young people (86%) reported that others had benefited either a lot or fair amount, and just one in ten reported that others had only benefited a little or not at all (11%). Girls are more likely than boys to say others benefited a lot/fair amount from their social action (88% compared to 83%), and those from more affluent backgrounds (ABC1) are more likely than those from less affluent backgrounds (C2DE) to say others benefited 'a lot' from their social action (51% vs 45%).

Do young people think social action improves their career prospects?

For the first time in the 2016 study, young people were asked to gauge to what extent they thought that taking part in social action would help them to secure a job in the future. Six in ten (62%) thought that social action would help them a great deal or a fair amount. However, two in ten did not think social action would help them much or at all (21%), and a similar proportion did not know whether social action would help them (18%).

When looking at the proportion of young people who think social action *will* help their job chances by age, this is a similar proportion for both age groups (61% of 10-15 year olds and 62% of 16-20 year olds). However, young people aged 16-20 are more likely than those aged 10-15 to say that social action would *not* help their future job chances, either by not very much or not at all (25% vs 16% respectively). A higher proportion of young people aged 10-15 did not know if social action would help their job chances (23% compared to 12% of 16-20 year olds).

The proportion of young people who felt that taking part in social action would help them to get a job steadily rises with the frequency of participation in social action, as shown in Table 7.1. A third (33%) of those who had never done social action thought it would be helpful in getting to a job, but this rose to 88% of those who participate monthly. It is notable that the proportion of young people who said they didn't know whether social action would help them with getting a job steadily increases among those who have been involved in social action the least, up to 33% of those who have never participated. These findings fit with a picture of limited awareness about social action, what its potential benefits may be, and how to get involved among a group of young people who have never accessed social action.

Table 7.1: Young people's perceptions of how much taking part in social action will help with getting a job in the future

	Great deal/ fair amount	Not very much/ not at all	Don't know
All 10-20 year olds (2,082)	62	21	18
Participated in social action monthly (477)	88	6	6
Participated in social action at least every few months/ one-off lasting more than a day (371)	81	13	6
Done a one-off social action activity lasting no more than a day (358)	65	16	19
No social action in the past year, but participated previously (285)	44	34	22
Never done social action (591)	33	35	33

Social action and life satisfaction

Survey respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with their lives on a scale of 0-10, where 0 represented not at all satisfied and 10 completely satisfied. Young people who had participated in social action in the past 12 months report higher levels of life satisfaction than those who have never done any social action (8.6 vs 8.1). This difference of 0.5 is similar to the difference between permanent employees who are happy in their job and those who don't have a job and are seeking work¹⁹. There were no statistically significant differences in life satisfaction among those participating in social action regularly and less frequently, and no differences among those participating in structured programmes and those doing other forms of social action²⁰. Note that a survey of this nature cannot establish causality (i.e. whether happier people do social action, or whether social action makes people happier).

Social action and social capital

For the first time the 2016 survey captured a number of measures of social capital. These were added to investigate whether there was an association between participating in social action and social capital. Three measures of social capital were added to the survey which asked whether young people agreed with the statement 'If I needed help, there are people that would be there for me'; whether young people felt that if they lost their door keys there was a neighbour they could wait with; and the proportion of friends who come from the same ethnic group.

Those who had participated in social action in the past 12 months were more likely than others to report that they 'definitely agreed' there are people that would be there for them if they needed help, and that there was a neighbour they

¹⁹ http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20160105160709/http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171766_312125.pdf

²⁰ Mean scores: 8.56 for those doing structured programmes, and 8.57 for those not participating in structured programmes.

could wait with if they lost their keys; those who had never participated in social action were least likely to 'definitely' agree with these statements. There was a less clear-cut pattern when it came to young people's mix of friends: the majority reported that more than half their friends belonged to the same ethnic group as them (67% of all 10-20 year olds) and this was similar regardless of young people's participation in social action.

Table 7.2: Links between social action and social capital: proportion in each social action group reporting each measure of social capital

	Any social action in the past 12 months (1,206)	No social action in the past 12 months, but have participated previously (285)	Never done social action (591)
'Definitely agree' there are people who would be there for me if I needed help	83%	70%	62%
'Definitely' agree there are neighbours I could wait with if I lost my door keys	76%	69%	57%
Less than half of friends come from same ethnic group as me ²¹	8%	7%	10%

²¹ Based on those answering the question (excluding 'don't know' responses)

Conclusions and next steps

8 Conclusions and next steps

- **Rates of participation in social action and meaningful social action among the UK's 10-20 year olds are stable over time.** At 42%, past-year participation in meaningful social action is unchanged from previous studies in the series. Similarly, the proportions of young people classified as 'committed' to social action (34%), with the 'Potential' to be involved/more involved in social action (49%), and those 'Reluctant' to take part in social action (17%) are also unchanged from 2015.
- **Young people who take part in social action appear to experience a range of benefits, but these benefits are best recognised by those who are already taking part. It may be worthwhile promoting the likely benefits of social action to those who are not yet involved, or who have limited involvement, because the advantages may not be clear to them.** Almost all participants experience a "double benefit", feeling that both they and others gained something from their activities. Those participating in meaningful social action were especially likely to mention having experienced various benefits, including learning new things, being told about other activities they could take part in, and having a say in the activity they did. Regular participants in social action were especially likely to feel that their involvement would benefit their future job chances, while those with no social action experience were much more likely either to say they 'didn't know' whether social action would help their job chances or that it would not.
- **The 'committed' group of young people are highly engaged with social action.** They are likely to participate in more social action in the future and say they are often made aware of other social action activities they can do when participating in activities. **Recognition of their commitment to social action may help retain their enthusiasm:** currently over a third (37%) reported they did not receive any formal recognition for the difference they made. **It may also be possible for #iwill to make greater use of this group to advocate for social action among their peers.**
- **Young people who report starting to participate in social action at a younger age were more likely than those starting later to be classified as 'committed' to social action. There may be some advantages in extending the campaign and developing social action programmes to cover children in primary school, in order to establish a habit of social action among the cohort of interest.**
- **Some forms of social action are particularly likely to be accessed by regular rather than infrequent participants in social action.** These include social action programmes and online forms of participation. It is not clear from the survey data why this is the case. It is possible that those young people who have social networks that promote social action are more likely to find out about these opportunities to take part. These types of **structured and online opportunities may be particularly useful for those who struggle to access traditional social action opportunities, and promoting them among typically 'harder to reach' groups may help to widen participation in social action.**
- **Schools, colleges and university remain key routes into social action for many. However, the majority of school children have not participated in meaningful social action. Exploring how schools could offer and promote social action more systematically could be a key way to increase participation rates, especially as one of the key barriers to participation among 'Potential' participants was a lack of awareness about how to get involved.**
- **Almost half of 10-20 year olds are interested in taking part in social action (49%) even though they may not be regular participants in social action presently. A third of this group (33%) do not know if they will participate in social action in the next year. Further signposting of activities and support from wider networks may encourage this**

group to participate more regularly. Support from wider networks may also encourage more participation from the reluctant group; only a quarter of this group (28%) reported receiving any encouragement.

Next steps

The survey captures detailed information about the participation of young people in social action. This report aims to provide an overview of the key findings and trends across the lifetime of the study. However, there is potential to conduct more analysis of the findings, and specifically:

- Regression analysis to understand the factors that are independently associated with participation in social action, and those who are 'committed' and 'potential' participants.
- Further analysis of the 'committed' and 'potential' groups to understand their motivations for engaging in social action in greater depth, and the reasons why the 'reluctant' group does not want to engage. Follow-up qualitative research among these groups may also be helpful in understanding how the #iwill campaign can generate greater take-up of social action opportunities for different sub-sets of young people.

There may also be interest in conducting in-depth analysis of the findings for each of the UK nations for subsequent studies. Currently, the sample sizes for each UK nation allow for comparisons of participation rates across the nations but they are not sufficiently large to analyse separately. Increasing the sample sizes for the UK nations in future waves would facilitate this level of analysis, should it be a priority.

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Glossary

Any social action - All young people who have participated in any social action (Q1B-G) in the past year, not including donating money or goods.

Committed- Young people in this group have done meaningful social action in the past 12 months, have a history of participation prior to that, and are likely to do more social action next year.

Meaningful social action- All young people who have: been involved in social action in the past 12 months; participated in social action at least every few months, or did a one-off activity lasting more than a day in the last 12 months; and recognised both a benefit to themselves and others/ the environment as a result of their social action.

Infrequent social action- Young people who have been involved in a one-off *social action activity* in the past 12 months of a day or less.

No participation in social action- Young people who have *not* been involved *any* social action activities in the last 12 months *or* have only donated money or goods.

Never participated in social action- Young people who have *never* participated in any social action

Potential-Young people in this group say they are likely to do social action in the next 12 months, or don't know if they will participate. It includes those who are currently doing social action as well as those who have never participated.

Reluctant- Young people who fall into this group say they are unlikely to do social action in the next 12 months. This group includes those who are currently participating, but is dominated by those who have not participated in social action in the past 12 months.

Methodology

Ipsos MORI was commissioned by the Office for Civil Society and Step Up To Serve to measure the participation of 10-20 year olds across the UK in social action over the past 12 months. The wave 2 questionnaire was revised for the third wave and further tested by Ipsos MORI.

Questionnaire Design

New questions were added to the survey this year and were cognitively tested with young volunteers in August. The aim of the cognitive testing was to test how respondents interpreted and understood the new questions, and to ensure key terminology and concepts were well understood.

Full details on the cognitive testing can be found page 47 of the appendices.

Main Fieldwork

The main survey was conducted face-to-face in respondents' homes. Trained interviewers introduced the survey, gained parental consent for under-16s to participate, and administered the survey. A random location quota design was used in order to achieve a nationally representative sample. The survey took a sample of sampling points across the UK, with quotas set in each in order to achieve nationally representative samples. Boost sampling was used to achieve a minimum number of interviews in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

The main survey fieldwork was conducted from 2-16 September 2016. Overall, fully completed questionnaires were obtained from 2,082 young people.

Data Processing and Weighing

The data was manually punched and verified, and all findings systematically checked against the raw data outputs.

The data were weighted for two reasons. First, the survey used a disproportionately stratified design in order to boost the number of interviews in the UK nations. Second, although the survey used a quota approach, interviewers in some instances achieved a marginally different profile of interviews than the quota targets. As a result, a small amount of weighting was required so that the profile of the achieved sample matches the population on key characteristics. The research team reviewed the research findings to identify the key variables on which to apply weights.

Data are weighted by age within gender, region, and the family socio-economic status. The weights were derived from 2012 census information from the Office of National Statistics. The effect of weighting is shown in the sample profile in the Appendices.

When interpreting the figures in this report, please note that we only report on statistically significant differences throughout; the effect of the data weighting is taken into account when significance tests are conducted.

Sample profile

Sample profile	Number	Unweighted %	Weighted %
Total	2,082	100	100
Gender of Pupils			
Male	1019	49%	51%
Female	1063	51%	49%
Age of Pupils			
10	221	11%	8%
11	163	8%	8%
12	203	10%	9%
13	137	7%	9%
14	155	7%	9%
15	155	7%	9%
16	239	11%	9%
17	215	10%	9%
18	191	9%	10%
19	188	9%	10%
20	215	10%	10%
Ethnic Origin			
White	1868	90%	87%
BME	214	10%	13%
Status			
SEN	61	3%	3%
Disability	77	4%	3%
Occupation			
School	1128	54%	55%
College	360	17%	16%
University	206	10%	11%
Job	257	12%	13%
Apprenticeship	39	2%	2%
Unemployed	92	4%	3%

Social Grade			
AB	340	16%	27%
C1	714	34%	29%
C2	424	20%	21%
DE	604	29%	23%
Region			
England	1410	68%	84%
Greater London	212	10%	13%
South East	235	11%	14%
South West	98	5%	8%
North East	115	6%	4%
North West	161	8%	11%
Eastern	208	10%	13%
East Midlands	112	5%	7%
West Midlands	141	7%	9%
Yorkshire & Humberside	128	6%	8%
Wales	230	11%	5%
Scotland	220	11%	8%
Northern Ireland	222	11%	3%

Source: Ipsos MORI

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 all 10-20 year olds in the UK had been interviewed (the true values). We can, however, predict the variation between the sample results and the true values from 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. Table 8.1 illustrates the predicted ranges for different sample sizes and percentage results at the 95% confidence interval using t-tests.

Table 8.1: Size of sample by sampling tolerances

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
2,038 interviews (<i>All 10-20 year old respondents to this survey</i>)	1	2	2

Source: Ipsos MORI

For example, with a sample of 2,038 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.

Strictly speaking the tolerances shown here apply only to random samples, although they offer an approximation for the quota design used by the current study. Good quality quota surveys have been shown to behave in the same ways as findings derived from random probability studies.

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 table 8.2:

Table 8.2: Size of sample by differences required for significance at percentage levels

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 (e.g. boys vs. girls)	3	4	4
1,500 and 1,000	2	4	4

Source: Ipsos MORI

Cognitive testing

The Youth Social Action 2016 survey cognitively tested several new and amended questions, on topic areas such as social capital, social action programmes and online participation. The aim of the cognitive testing was to test how respondents interpreted and understood the new questions, and to ensure key terminology and concepts were well understood.

The approach taken to the cognitive testing was the same as the approach taken for the 2015 survey. A total of five informal participants were recruited; they were aged between 10 and 20 years old and were known to have participated in social action either in the past 12 months or over 12 months ago.

The majority of interviews were conducted over the phone. For these interviews the young people were sent a copy of the questionnaire in advance but were asked not to read it beforehand in case it affected their judgement or answers. The interviewer read out the questions during the call, and the young people used a copy of the questionnaire / showcards to help them select their answers. Two interviews were conducted one-to-one in a private setting (e.g. the young person's home).

Cognitive testing: new questions

The following new questions were cognitively tested and included in the survey:

Q3* Thinking overall about the things you've mentioned...did you use the internet on a computer or your phone / tablet to:

- a) Search for activities
- b) Record your progress
- c) Take part in the activity
- d) Share your experiences
- e) Other
- f) I did not use the internet

Yes / No

Q5 Thinking about the past year...have you taken part in any activities with any of the following:

- A club or group e.g. sports, hobbies, general youth group, youth work through your local council
- A uniformed group such as Scouts, Girl Guides, Cadets, Boys Brigade
- A programme through a charity such as:
 - England/Wales: WE Day, Fixers or Children in Need
 - Scotland: Fixers, Oxfam, Young Scot, Youth Scotland
 - Northern Ireland: St Vincent DePaul, Special Olympics, Habitat for Humanity
- A development programme for young people, such as National Citizen Service programmes, Duke of Edinburgh's Award, British Youth Council, Scottish Youth Parliament, The Prince's Trust Team
- Full time volunteering such as a Service Year e.g. City Year, Year Here, Volunteering Matters

Yes / No

Q7 Thinking about the activity you did most often in the past 12 months... do you agree or disagree with the following statements? ²²

- a) I learned something new
- b) I was recognised for the difference I made, for example through a ceremony, certificate or award
- c) I had a say in the activity
- d) After I took part in this activity, I was told about other similar activities that I could do to help other people or the environment

Definitely agree / Tend to agree / Tend to disagree / Definitely disagree / Don't know

Q11 How much do you think that doing activities to help other people or the environment will help you get a job in the future?

- A great deal
- A fair amount
- Not very much
- None at all
- Don't know

Q14 What proportion of your friends are from the same ethnic group as you? ²³

- More than a half
- About a half
- Or less than a half?
- Don't know

Q13 How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement? 'If I needed help, there are people who would be there for me'. ²⁴

- Definitely agree
- Tend to agree
- Tend to disagree
- Definitely disagree
- Don't know

Q15 Suppose you lost your keys – Is there a neighbour you could go and wait with for a few hours?²⁵

- Definitely
- Probably
- Probably not
- Definitely not

²² This question was developed with Step Up to Serve for the 2016 survey and based on their quality principles.

²³ This question was based on similar questions asked to young people of a similar age.

²⁴ Question is taken from the Community Life Survey 2015-16

²⁵ This question was based on a question from the British Social Attitudes and Young People's Social Attitudes Surveys, 2003: 'Suppose you lost your keys, or were locked out of your home. Is there a neighbour you could go and wait with for a few hours?'

Cognitive testing: amended questions

Q1 So firstly in the past 12 months have you... *Campaigned for something you believe in?*

- Examples given on the showcard were updated:
 - Raising awareness on an issue in school, community or through social media
 - Creating online campaigns/petitions
 - Representing other young people, for example through school council, youth panel, youth parliament

Q4 Thinking overall about the things that you've mentioned. How did you get involved in the activities? Please choose as many answers on the card as apply.

- Examples of programmes through a charity, uniformed youth groups and development programmes for young people were updated to match the new Q5
- 'Apprenticeship' was combined with 'Job' to make a combined category
- 'A club or group' had additional examples added:
 - youth work through your local council
 - the Urdd
 - Young Farmers Association

Q8a Please can you say why haven't you been involved in these kinds of activities in the past 12 months?

- New answer codes added:
 - Can't afford it
 - I tried but am too young
 - It's not as important as school
 - It's not as important as work experience
 - I applied but didn't hear from anyone
 - It's not cool
- Answer codes removed:
 - Put off by a previous experience
 - Travelling is difficult/ expensive
 - Don't think I'd find it fun/ engaging
 - I don't feel like I would be able to make a difference

Q8b Thinking overall about types of activities that benefit other people or the environment, which of these would encourage you to take part in them?

- New answer codes added:
 - If I could do it from home
 - If could do it in person
 - If I could do it at school/college/university/work
 - If I could find more about it online
 - If someone asked me to get involved
 - If it was linked to getting into university or a job
- Answer codes amended:

- If I could do it with my friends (family removed for 2016)
- If it related to my interests e.g. sports/ drama (drama added for 2016)
- Answer codes removed:
 - If someone I admired was doing the activity
 - If I could try it once to see if I liked it
 - If I knew more about the chances to take part
 - If I knew how it would benefit me/ my career or others/ the environment
 - If I could help a particular cause/ charity
 - If I saw an advert that inspired me to help

Q10b Do any of these people encourage you to take part in activities to help other people or the environment?

- Additional answer codes provided:
 - Celebrities
 - Community leader (e.g. Youth club leader)
 - Faith Leaders / Religious groups

Removed questions

The following questions were removed from the survey to allow space for the new questions:

Q Using this card please tell me how much you agree or disagree with the following statements

- a) Doing activities to help other people or the environment is important to you
- b) Doing activities to help other people or the environment is part of your routine
- c) Doing activities to help other people or the environment is something you'll always aim to do

Agree strongly / Agree / Neither agree nor disagree / Disagree / Disagree strongly / Don't know

Q Thinking overall about the things you've mentioned ... Have you done them in person or online, or a mix of both?

- In person only
- Online only
- A mix of in person and online
- Don't know

Q And why was that? (In response to 'How much do you feel you personally benefitted from taking part in activities to help others or the environment?'- A lot / A fair amount)

- I enjoyed helping other people
- I helped a charity/ cause/ group that I believe in
- I had fun
- I felt better about myself
- I could spend time with my friends/ family
- I met new people
- I felt I made a difference
- I learnt new skills
- I got experience making decisions/ leading an activity

- It added to my CV/ job opportunities
- I felt valued as part of a team
- I gained confidence/ self-esteem
- I learnt about things that affect me/ my community/ the environment
- The activity was related to personal interest e.g. sports
- It was well organised
- Something else
- Don't know

Q And why was that? (In response to 'How much do you feel you personally benefitted from taking part in activities to help others or the environment?' - A little / Not at all)

- I didn't think it was a worthwhile cause/ charity
- I didn't have any say in the activity
- I didn't find it fun/ engaging/ interesting
- I didn't think it helped the community
- I didn't learn anything
- It didn't help build my experience/ CV
- It was a one-off activity/ event
- The activity was poorly planned/ organised
- Something else
- Don't know

Q And why was that? (In response to 'How much do you feel other people or the environment benefitted from the things you?' - A lot / A fair amount)

- Other people had fun
- Other people learnt new skills/ gained confidence/ self-esteem
- The local community/ the environment were improved
- Other people's lives were improved
- Money was raised for a good cause/ charity
- Awareness of the issue/ charity has improved
- It helped people in other countries
- It was motivating to see other people helping others/ the environment
- Made the environment better for the future
- Something else/other
- Don't know

Q And why was that? (In response to 'How much do you feel other people or the environment benefitted from the things you?' - A little / Not at all)

- It hasn't made a difference to anyone's lives/ the environment
- It didn't raise awareness about the issue/ cause/ charity
- There is no improvement in the local/ wider community/society/ the environment
- It didn't improve other people's skills/ self-confidence/ self-esteem
- The area/ issue/ cause did not need help

- It seemed a pointless activity
- It was not well planned/ organised
- Not enough time/ activity was too short
- Something else/other
- Don't know

Q On a scale of 0-10, where 0 is not at all worthwhile and 10 is completely worthwhile, overall, to what extent do you feel the things you do in your life are worthwhile?

Scale: 0 Not at all satisfied – 10 Completely satisfied

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The Social Research Institute works closely with national governments, local public services and the not-for-profit sector. Its c.200 research staff focus on public service and policy issues. Each has expertise in a particular part of the public sector, ensuring we have a detailed understanding of specific sectors and policy challenges. This, combined with our methods and communications expertise, helps ensure that our research makes a difference for decision makers and communities.