

EUYOUPART, WP 8/D15
National Report: United Kingdom

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1 Introduction

Between the 18th October and 30th November 2004, a total of 1000 young people aged between 15 and 25 years were interviewed across the UK. The following analysis refers to a weighted data set.

49% of the young people interviewed were male and 50% were female. The age distribution in the weighted data set corresponds to that of official statistics in the UK. Thus 28% of the interviewees were aged 15- 17 years; 16% of the sample were aged 18-19 years, and 56% were aged between 20 and 25 years.

In terms of the geographic distribution of interviews, 5% of these UK interviews were conducted in Wales, 3% were carried out in Northern Ireland and 9% took place in Scotland. The vast majority, 83% of interviews, were conducted in England. Overall, there were 200 start points across the UK. The highest educational level completed at the time of the interviews was also surveyed. With regard to educational achievement, 9% of the survey respondents had had elementary level education, 47% had completed either basic vocational education or secondary education, and 23% had attained full general maturity or an advanced vocational training. 15% had completed tertiary education, and 6% of those surveyed did not provide an answer to this question.

In terms of employment status at the time the interviews were conducted, 42% of the young people interviewed were still in education, 45% were in paid work, and 6% were unemployed. A further 6% of interviewees were in full time (unpaid) care positions, looking after children or other relatives.

2 Political interest, competence and knowledge

2.1 Political interest

Table 1: Interest in politics amongst British youths

	Male	female	15-17 years	18-25 years	entire sample
very/fairly interested	24	24	23	24	24
not very interested	35	30	31	32	32
not at all interested	40	45	45	42	42
dk	1	1	1	2	2
total	100	100	100	100	100

Weighted data; percentages.

Key points from the weighted data:

- ? Equal numbers of young men and women tended to have some interest in politics: 24% of each
- ? However, young women tended to be more completely disinterested in politics than their male counterparts. 45% of young women were not at all interested in politics, compared to only 40% of young men.
- ? Age appears not to affect levels of political interest significantly; 23% of 15-17 year olds show some interest in politics, as do 24% of 18-25 year olds.
- ? Similarly, employment status only has marginal impact on young people's interest in politics.

Table 2: Interest in politics on diverse levels; entire sample (Q2)

	Local politics	National politics	European politics	International politics
very interested	2	3	2	4
fairly interested	22	27	16	23
not very interested	36	31	36	29
not at all interested	40	39	46	44
Total	100	100	100	100

Weighted data; percentages

Whilst the general trend of minimal interest in politics is replicated at the various levels of politics, the highest level of interest is directed clearly at national politics (30%). European politics ranked lowest in interest levels than all other

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categories at 18%. After an interest in national politics, young people expressed a keen interest in International politics (27%), followed by local politics (24%).

Key points from the weighted data:

- ? The vast majority of young people in Britain are not interested in any area of politics. 70% claimed to be uninterested in national politics, 73% were not interested in international politics and 76% were not interested in local politics.
- ? European politics was the most uninteresting to most young Britons; 82% said they were not interested in European politics.

In terms of following political events in the news, the vast majority of young Britons (62%) only do so less than once a week.

Table 3: Frequency of following politics in the news (Q3)

	Male	female	15-17 years	18-25 years	entire sample
every day	9	11	7	11	10
several times a week	11	10	9	10	10
once/ twice a week	17	19	22	17	18
less often	34	26	26	32	30
never	29	34	36	30	32
total	100	100	100	100	100

Weighted data; percentages

Key results:

- ? Young women are slightly more interested in following politics in the news than young men. 40% do so more than once a week, compared to 37% of young men.
- ? Interest in following politics in the news does not increase with age. 62% of 15 – 17 year olds follow politics in the news less than once a week, as do 62% of 18 – 25 year olds.

Table 4: Main channel for political information by gender and age groups

	male	female	15-17 years	18-25 years	entire sample
Television	68	64	69	64	66
Radio	3	3	3	3	3
Newspaper	11	13	11	13	12
Internet	7	7	6	7	7
None of these	11	13	11	13	12
total	100	100	100	100	100

Weighted data; percentages.

Key results:

- ? There are no significant gender-specific preferences for the media by which young people receive their political news and information.
- ? Television is the most popular means for all young people (66%), followed by newspapers (12%), the Internet (7%) and the radio (3%).

Discussions & persuading others

Table 5: Do young people try and convince others on political issues? (Q19)

	male	Female	15-17 years	18-25 years	entire sample
always	2	1	3	1	1
often	4	4	4	4	5
sometimes	25	25	28	23	25
rarely	19	15	18	16	17
never	43	47	39	48	45
Does not hold a strong opinion	7	8	8	8	7
total	100	100	100	100	100

Weighted data; Percentages

Key results:

- ? The majority of young Britons (62%) rarely or never try to convince others regarding political opinions.
- ? Young women are more likely never to try and convince others of their political beliefs (47%) than young men (43%)
- ? Young people in the UK are even less likely to try and convince others of their political opinions as they get older; 39% of 15-17 year olds never try to do so, climbing to 48% of 18-25 year olds who never do so.

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- ? A significant proportion of young Britons (7%) feel that they do not hold strong political opinions with which to try and influence others.

Table 1: With whom do young people discuss politics? (Q22)

	father	mother	siblings	friends	teachers	partner	colleagues, fellow students
always	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
often	3	3	2	4	3	3	3
sometimes	26	25	13	28	17	19	25
rarely	18	19	19	19	12	13	18
never	52	53	66	49	67	65	53
total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Weighted data; Percentages

Main results:

- ? Young Britons (over 49%) are unlikely to discuss politics with anyone
- ? They are most likely (4%) to talk to their friends, fathers, teachers or fellow students or colleagues about political issues
- ? They are least likely to talk to teachers, siblings and partners about politics

2.2 Political competence

Table 7: How often politics seems too complicated to understand

	Male	Female	15-17 years	18-25 years	entire sample
Always	20	33	28	26	27
Often	30	25	26	29	27
Sometimes	33	27	29	29	29
Rarely	13	12	13	13	13
never	4	3	4	3	4
total	100	100	100	100	100

Weighted data; percentages.

Key findings:

- ? More than half of young Britons (54%) always or often feel that politics is too complicated to understand
- ? Only 4% of young people feel they never have problems understanding political issues. 17% rarely or never have difficulties understanding.

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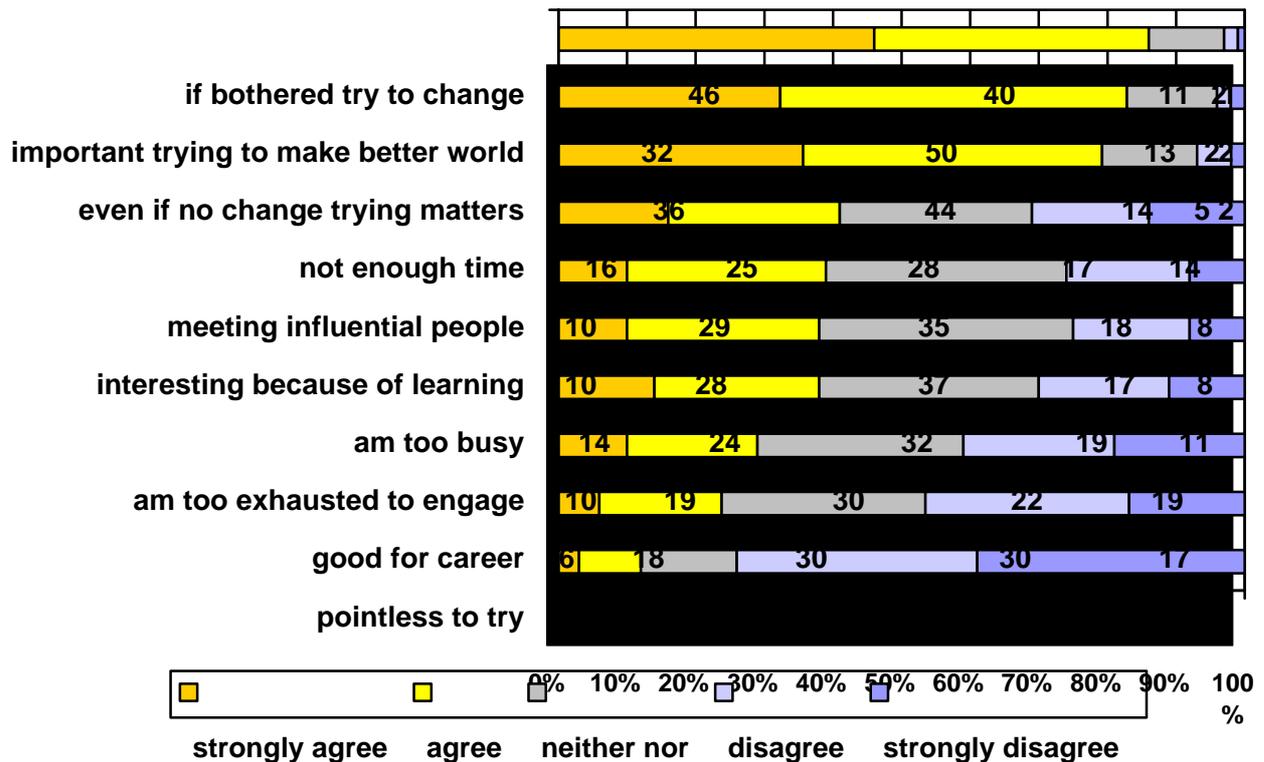
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- ? Young British women seem to be distanced from politics. More young women (33%) always find politics too complicated to understand than young men (20%). More women said they always find politics too complicated to understand than those who did so often, sometimes, rarely or never.
- ? However, more young men often find politics too complicated to understand (30%) than young women (25%).
- ? Understanding of politics does not increase substantially with age.

Motivations for being politically active (Q28)

Figure 1: Attitudes about being politically active (sorted by agreement)



Key results:

- ? Young Britons appear idealistic in their political attitudes, clearly signaling a desire to make the world a better place as their primary motivation for becoming politically active. 76% agreed or strongly agreed that this was an important reason.
- ? Only 17% of young people agreed that it was pointless to try and change things.
- ? 39% of young people in the UK regard being politically engaged as a good means to learn new things.
- ? Very few young Britons (20%) believe being politically active will further their career.

- ? Lack of time to engage politically ranks highly.
- ? Age and educational level have no significant bearing on young people's preferences.

2.3 Political knowledge

Table 8: Political knowledge via knowledge indicator (“Know”)

	male	female	15-18 years	19-25 years	entire sample
Weak (0-2 correct)	34	44	42	39	40
Medium-weak (3-4 correct)	39	38	32	41	38
Medium-strong (5-6 correct)	22	16	24	17	19
Strong (7-8 correct)	5	2	2	4	3
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Weighted data; percentages

Main results:

- ? Overall, political knowledge amongst young Britons is quite weak, with over three-quarters of all young people scoring below 4 on the political knowledge indicator
- ? Young men have a stronger knowledge of political issues than young women
- ? Older youths score better on political knowledge than the younger age group

3 Ideological orientations and partisan choices

3.1 Left right position

Table 9: Left-right position on a five-point continuum (Q20)

	male	female	15-17 years	18-25 years	entire sample
Left	7	5	7	5	6
Neither – nor	47	46	38	50	46
Right	6	7	3	8	7
Don't know	40	42	52	37	41
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Weighted data; percentages.

Key points:

- ? A large proportion of young Britons (41%) do not know whether they can be positioned as left or right wing in their ideological orientations
- ? Few young people hold ideological positions at either extreme (6% left wing, 7% right wing).
- ? Gender does not have any impact on young people's ideological orientations
- ? Age has some bearing on how some young Britons regard their ideological stance, with older respondents more able to give a clear answer. Fewer 18-25 year olds (37%) felt that they did not know where they stood ideologically than 15-17 year olds (52%).
- ? Increased age also sees a shift towards the centre ground of the ideological spectrum; 50% of 18-25 year olds regard themselves as neither left nor right wing, compared to only 38% of the younger respondents.

Table 10: Left-right position on an eleven-point-continuum

	Entire sample
Left (0)	0.5
1	0
2	1
3	2
4	3
5	44
6	4
7	2
8	1
9	0
Right (10)	0.5
Don't know	40
Answer refused	2
Total	100

Weighted data; percentages

Key points:

- ? Again, the majority of young Britons position themselves towards the centre ground of the political spectrum
- ? Only very small numbers (0.5% in each case) view themselves as at either extreme.

3.2 Party closeness

Table 11: Closeness to the Labour party

	male	female	15-17 years	18-25 years	In paid work	Student	Unemployed	other	entire sample
Very close	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1
Close	8	9	9	8	8	8	13	12	9
Neither-nor	45	48	45	46	46	46	46	53	45
Distant	26	21	23	24	25	26	15	14	23
Very distant	20	21	22	21	20	20	25	19	22
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Weighted data, percentage.

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Main results:

- ? Fewer young people feel very close or close to the ruling Labour party than feel distant or very distant.
- ? Gender makes only a very slight difference in young people's views towards the Labour party, with more young men distant or very distant from the party (46%) than young women (40%).
- ? Unemployed youths felt closer to the labour party than either students or young people in paid work. 14% of unemployed young people said they felt close or very close to Labour, compared to 9% of students, and 9% of working young people.

Table 12: Closeness to the Conservative party

	male	female	15-17 years	18-25 years	In paid work	Student	Unemployed	other	entire sample
Very close	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
Close	4	6	5	5	5	6	2	3	5
Neither-nor	41	47	43	45	43	43	43	50	45
Distant	30	24	25	26	28	27	25	20	26
Very distant	25	22	27	24	23	23	30	27	24
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Weighted data, percentage.

Main results:

- ? Few young Britons (5%) feel close to the main opposition Conservative party. This compares with 10% of young people who feel close or very close to the ruling Labour party.
- ? Half of young people in the UK (50%) regard themselves as distant or very distant from the Conservatives.
- ? Unemployed young people felt the furthest removed from the Conservative party; 30% said they felt "very distant" from the Tories.
- ? Young females felt marginally closer to the Tories. 7% of young British women, compared to 4% of young men, felt either close or very close to the party. Only 46% of young women said they felt distant from the party, compared to 55% of young men.

Table 13: Closeness to the Liberal Democrats

	male	female	15-17 years	18-25 years	In paid work	Student	Unemployed	other	entire sample
Very close	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1
Close	6	4	3	7	6	6	6	5	6
Neither-nor	50	67	46	52	51	49	48	53	50
Distant	21	14	24	20	20	22	17	19	20
Very distant	23	15	26	21	22	22	29	23	23
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Weighted data, percentage.

Main results:

- ? Half of young Britons (50%) are ambivalent towards the Liberal Democrats.
- ? Fewer young women (29%) than men (44%) felt distant from this party.
- ? Attitudes to the Liberal Democrats improve with age; 7% of 18-25 year olds felt close to the party, compared with 4% of 17-25 year olds. Similarly, only 41% of the older age bracket felt distanced from the party, compared to 50% of 15-17 year olds.

Table 14: Closeness to the Green Party

	male	female	15-17 years	18-25 years	In paid work	Student	Unemployed	other	entire sample
Very close	1	1	1	1	2	1	0	0	1
Close	5	7	6	6	5	8	4	6	6
Neither-nor	46	52	44	50	50	45	48	53	49
Distant	24	19	22	22	22	24	15	21	21
Very distant	24	21	27	21	21	22	33	20	23
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Weighted data, percentage.

Key results:

- ? There is less apathy amongst young Britons towards the Green party than towards the Liberal Democrats, particularly among young women. Whilst 67% of young women who expressed an opinion said they felt neither close to nor distant from the Liberal Democrats, only 52% have the same feelings about the Green party.
- ? Women feel less distance from the Green party (40%) than do young men (48%).

- ? The Green party finds its biggest support amongst students; 9% of students said they felt either close or very close to the party, compared with 7% of young people in employment and 4% of unemployed youths.

4 Voting, non-voting and electoral participation

4.1 Voting in national elections

The young people who were eligible to vote at the last national general election in 2001 were:

- ? 44% male and 56% female youth
- ? 53% in paid work, 14% unemployed youth, 12% students and 21% others.

Of those who actually voted:

- ? 49% male and 51% female youth
- ? 56% in paid work, 15% students, 12% unemployed youth and 17% others

Table 15: Party voted for in the last general election (2001)

	male	female	In paid work	Student	Unem- ployed	other	entire sample
Labour	50	48	41	50	63	62	49
Conservative	13	13	15	20	0	8	12
Liberal Democrats	19	20	24	30	0	14	20
Green Party	6	7	6	0	12	8	6
UKIP	3	3	6	0	0	0	3
SNP	0	3			13		2
Plaid Cymru	3	3	3			8	3
SDLP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Scottish Socialist Party	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
UUP	0	3	0	0	12	0	2
Other party	6	0	5	0	0	0	3
Cast an invalid vote	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Weighted data; percentages.

Key results:

- ? Despite their reluctance to describe themselves as ideologically close to the Labour party, almost half of young Britons (49%) cast their vote for this party at the last general election.
- ? In national elections, young people tend to reject the main opposition Conservative party in favour of the Liberal Democrats. 12% of young people voted for the Tories, compared with 20% who voted Lib Dem.
- ? Young people also favoured the Green Party, with 6% voting Green in the last general election, more than from any other party other than the main three.
- ? Young people in paid work were least receptive to the Labour party, with all three other categories of employment status giving much greater levels of support to Labour.
- ? There were few gender-specific differences in the way young people voted at the last general election.
- ? Age also had only a marginal impact on voting behaviour at the general election of 2001.

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4.2 Voting in European Elections

The young people, who were eligible to vote at the European elections in June 2004 were:

- ? 45% male and 55% female youth
- ? 50% in paid work, 18% students, 13% unemployed youth and 19% others

Those, who actually voted were:

- ? 43% male and 57% female youth
- ? 55% in paid work, 23% students, 10% unemployed youth and 12% others

Table 16: Party voted for in the European elections in June 2004

	male	female	In paid work	Student	Unem- ployed	other	entire sample
Labour	36	23	25	20	57	33	29
Conservative	12	16	25	7	0	0	14
UKIP	8	10	7	20	0	0	9
Liberal Democrat	16	14	7	20	29	17	14
Green Party	0	6	0	13	0	0	4
British National Party	4	6	4	0	0	33	5
Respect	4	0	4	0	0	0	1
SNP	4	9	0	20	14	0	7
Plaid Cymru	4	0	4	0	0	0	2
Other party	12	13	20	0	0	17	13
Invalid vote	0	3	4	0	0	0	2
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Weighted data; percentages.

Main results:

- ? When it comes to voting at the European level, the Labour party is again the most favoured party amongst British youth voters, although not by as clear a majority as in general elections (29% of the youth vote at the European elections in 2004 compared with 49% of the youth vote in the 2001 general election).
- ? The Conservative party fares better in youth support at European elections than it does at the national level; it ties in second place for support amongst young voters (14%).
- ? UKIP was the third most popular party amongst young voters, securing 9% of their vote.
- ? More young women (16%) than men (12%) voted Conservative at the 2004 European election.

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- ? Substantially more young men (36%) than young women (23%) voted for the Labour party in the last European elections.
- ? Unemployed young people clearly favoured the Labour party and the Liberal Democrats over the Conservative party and UKIP.
- ? The Conservative party did best among young people in paid employment

4.3 General voting behaviour

Table 17: Have you ever voted?

	male	female	18-25 years	In paid work	Student	Unemployed	other	entire sample
Never	80	75	68	69	86	80	72	77
Never during last 12 months	2	2	2	1	1	3	3	2
Once	13	18	22	21	10	11	21	15
Twice	4	3	5	5	2	4	3	3
3-5 times	1	2	2	3	1	1	1	2
More than five times	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Weighted data; percentages.

Main results:

- ? Of the young people in the UK who are eligible to cast a vote, 68% have never cast a vote
- ? More young women than men have voted at least once during the last twelve month.
- ? Students are the most likely group to cast a vote. Young people in paid employment tend to vote more often than others.

Key results from the weighted data: (other questions 13 1-3)

- ? Only 0.4% of respondents said they had ever cast an invalid vote. 75% of these were female.
- ? Deliberately casting an invalid vote does not constitute an effective means of political engagement for young Britons. However, young women tend to regard this as more of an option than do young men.
- ? Similarly, only very minor numbers of young Britons felt that not voting was an effective form of political protest. Only 1% of young people had ever not voted out of protest.
- ? Of those young people who decided not to vote as a form of political protest, 54% were young men, and 46% were young women. 50% were in paid employment, 43% were students and 7% were full time homemakers or carers.

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5 Political participation and various types of involvement

5.1 Participation behaviour of young Britons

Main results:

TOP 5 activities

- ? Voting remains the top political activity of young Britons; 23% say they have voted.
- ? This is matched by signing a petition. 23% of young Britons have signed a political petition.
- ? Other forms of political activity are much more infrequent amongst the youth in Britain. 4% of young people have attended a public meeting focusing on political or social issues.
- ? The next most common activity relates to consumer power; 3% of young people have boycotted certain products for political, moral or environmental reasons. The same number have also bought products specifically for these reasons. 3% have collected signatures for a petition with political content.
- ? Around 2% of young Britons have engaged politically in the following ways: worn a badge with a political message, participated in a legal demonstration, written an article for a student newspaper or on the internet, and donated money to support the work of a political group or organization.
- ? The least common forms of political engagement among young people in the UK are taking part in violent or illegal demonstrations, writing political graffiti or blocking streets or railways.

Table 18: Percentages of young people in Britain who have ever:

signed a petition	23
Attended a political public meeting	4
bought products for political reasons	3
boycotted products	3
collected signatures	3
participated in a legal demonstration	2
worn a political badge	2
donated money to a political group	2
written an article	2
written/forwarded a political letter	1
contributed to a political discussion on the Internet	1
distributed political leaflets	1
contacted a politician	1
participated in a strike	0

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participated in an event where there was a violent confrontation with police	0
participated in an illegal demonstration	0
held a political speech	0
written political graffiti	0
participated in an event where there was a violent confrontation with opponents	0
blocked railways/streets	0
participated in a political event where property was damaged	0
occupied buildings	0

Main points:

- ? It is therefore clear that young Britons are much more in favour of legal means of political action. Violent protests are rejected.
- ? Social involvement is more favoured than political engagement

Of those young people who had ever voted, 41% were male, and 59% were female. 38% of those who had ever voted had professed to be interested in politics. There was a clear relationship between education and political activity; 39% of those young people who had voted had completed elementary and basic vocational training, whilst a further 43% of young voters had reached at least full general maturity during their education. For other main activities –boycotting or buying products for political reasons and collecting signatures, 100% of those young people who had done so had also completed at least level 3 of their general education.

There are no significant gender differences in political engagement amongst young people in Britain.

Involvement with political parties

Key points:

- ? Activity in political parties is rare amongst young people in the UK. Only 3% of young people have been actively involved in supporting party political election campaigns.
- ? Of the young people in the UK who have directly supported an election campaign for a political party, 48% were young men and 52% young women.
- ? A marginally higher percentage of young people, 4%, have ever tried to convince other people to vote for a particular candidate or party.
- ? Of those young people, 49% were young men and 51% were young women.

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Table 19: Involvement in schools; sorted by rank

	male	Female	15-17 years	18-25 years	entire sample
attended students' meeting	49	51	34	66	17
speaker for the class	42	58	43	57	10
active role in meeting	46	54	32	68	10
member of student council	37	63	42	58	9
protest movement at school	33	67	42	58	5
organised political event at school	48	52	39	61	3

Weighted data; percentages

Political activity in the workplace

Key points:

- ? 57% of young people surveyed had experience of working in a steady, paid job
- ? 43% of young people had no experience in a steady, paid job

Table 20: Involvement at work; sorted by rank

	male	female	15-17 years	18-25 years	entire sample
attended staff meetings	41	59	13	87	3
participated in elections for worker's council	36	64	0	100	2
member of workers' council	30	70	10	90	2
organised workers to influence management	56	44	0	100	2
active role in staff meeting	50	50	0	100	1

Weighted data; percentages.

Key points from the data:

- ? young people in Britain are very inactive in political activity in the workplace
- ? the activity for which highest levels of activity were recorded (3%) was attending staff meetings
- ? however, only 1% of young people had ever taken an active role in staff meetings
- ? age had an important bearing on young people's political activity in the workplace. People aged between 18 and 25 were significantly more likely to take an active role in the workplace.
- ? Young women were found to be slightly more active politically in the workplace than young men.

5.2 Involvement in organizations and NGOs

Membership - main results:

- ? The highest number of young Britons are members of in a sports clubs (23%)
- ? There is a wide gap between this and the next most popular form of social organization, youth associations (5%), cultural groups (4%) and religious or church organizations (4%).

Table 21: Membership, participation in activities, volunteered (entire sample)

	Member	Participated	volunteered
Sports club	23	20	2
Youth association	5	4	2
Cultural group	4	4	1
Religious or church organization	4	3	2
Charity or social-welfare organization	3	4	3
Environmental organization	2	1	1
Animal rights group	2	1	1
Trade union or youth part thereof	2	1	0
Human rights group	1	1	0
Professional organization	1	1	0
Youth organization of a political party	1	0	0
Peace organization	0	1	0
Immigrants' association	0	0	0
Women's organization	0	0	0
Anti-globalisation organization	0	0	0
Political party	0	0	0
Consumer association	0	0	0

Percentages, sorted by membership

Key points:

- ? Amongst British youth, volunteering is the least popular means of engaging with social organizations. Far fewer volunteer for such groups than are members or participate in the organizations.
- ? Social organizations, such as sports groups, religious or youth organizations, are much more popular amongst young people in Britain than is being a member of an explicitly political grouping.
- ? Nevertheless, campaign and pressure groups in the fields of animal rights and environmental issues are more popular than membership of traditional political groupings, primarily political parties and trade unions.

Gender differences in social and political organizations

Key points:

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- ? Young women are more likely to volunteer in social, political and cultural organizations than young men. Of the young people who have volunteered for religious or church organizations, 61% are young women against only 39% who are young men. Amongst volunteers for youth organizations, 59% were young women and only 41% were young men.
- ? Young men are most likely to be a member of a sports club (65%) or a cultural group (56%). Young women are most likely to be members of a charity or social welfare organization (64%) or a youth association (60%).

Table 22: Gender breakdown of the young people who said that they are members, participate or volunteer for such organizations (principal 5 groups only):

	Member		Participated		volunteered	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Sports club	65	35	63	37	41	59
Youth association	40	60	49	51	41	59
Cultural group	56	44	52	48	50	50
Religious or church organization	52	47	44	56	39	61
Charity or social-welfare organization	36	64	41	59	48	52

percentages

6 Attitudes towards society, confidence in social and political institutions

6.1 Attitudes towards society

Table 23: Actual standard of living

	male	female	15-17 years	18-25 years	In paid work	Student	Unemployed	other	entire sample
Very low/low	11	10	9	11	6	8	29	18	11
Average	59	61	47	65	65	52	52	68	59
High/very high	30	29	44	24	29	40	19	14	30
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Weighted data; percentages.

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Main results:

- ? Over half (59%) of all young people in the UK believe they have an average standard of living
- ? Only 11% of young people say they have a low or very low standard of living.
- ? Age is a significant factor in how young people regard their situation in life. Older youths are more likely to regard their standard of living as being low or very low (11% of 18-25 year olds, compared with 9% of 15-17 year olds).
- ? Almost twice as many 15-17 year olds (44%) believe that they have a high or very high standard of living than 18-25 year olds (24%)
- ? Unsurprisingly, those young people who are in paid employment regard their situation in life as better than students or unemployed youths.

6.1.1 Future living conditions: in comparison to parents' living conditions**Table 24: Income in 10 years (compared to parents)**

	male	female	15-17 years	18-25 years	entire sample
much better	32	23	57	29	28
Better	50	49	33	46	49
Same	10	18	6	15	15
Worse	8	9	4	9	8
much worse	0	1	0	1	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Weighted data; percentages

Key data:

- ? Around half of young Britons (49%) feel that they will be better off in 10 years compared to their parents
- ? More young men than young women are confident they will earn more in ten years, compared to their parents
- ? Few young people expect they will be worse off than their parents in 10 years

Table 25: Job in 10 years (compared to parents)

	male	female	15-17 years	18-25 years	entire sample
much better	28	27	25	29	27
Better	53	49	55	48	50
Same	14	16	16	15	15
Worse	4	8	4	7	7
much worse	1	0	0	1	1

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Total	100	100	100	100	100
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Weighted data; percentages

Key results:

- ? Half of young Britons believe they will have a better job in 10 years, compared to their parents
- ? Over a quarter of young Britons (27%) believe they will have a much better job in 10 years, compared to their parents
- ? There are no significant variations in expectations on the basis of either gender or age

Table 26: Social security in 10 years (compared to parents)

	Male	female	15-17 years	18-25 years	entire sample
much better	17	17	16	18	17
Better	35	35	40	33	35
Same	34	34	38	32	34
Worse	13	13	6	15	13
much worse	1	1	0	2	1
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Weighted data; percentages

Main results:

- ? Around one third of young people (34%) in the UK expect that their social security situation in 10 years will be the same as their parents' today
- ? Around one third of young people (35%) also expect that their social security situation will be better than their parents', with 52% believing it will be either better or much better.
- ? Older youths appear to be slightly more pessimistic about their future social security situation than the younger age group.
- ? There are no significant variations for gender.

Table 27: Quality of life in 10 years (compared to parents)

	male	female	15-17 years	18-25 years	entire sample
much better	114	100	47	173	220
Better	205	206	118	294	413
Same	98	147	82	168	250
Worse	26	39	11	55	66
much worse	6	2	1	7	8
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Weighted data; percentages

Table 28: Education in 10 years (compared to parents)

	Male	female	15-18 years	19-25 years	entire sample
much better	19	19	20	19	19

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Better	41	48	54	41	45
Same	30	26	21	30	27
Worse	9	7	5	9	8
much worse	1	0	0	1	1
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Weighted data; percentages

Main results:

- ? 64% of young Britons believe their education levels will be better or much better than those of their parents
- ? Younger people are more optimistic about their future education prospects than slightly older youths

6.1.2 Country's main problems

Table 29: Main political problems in Britain (q31)

	Very important	Fairly important	Not very important	Unimportant	% Total
Crimes and Violence	77	22	1	0	100
Terrorism	75	22	2	1	100
Drugs	73	24	2	1	100
Poverty	54	42	3	1	100
Pollution of the environment	53	44	2	1	100
Number of immigrants	53	42	4	1	100
Racism/Xenophobia	53	42	4	1	100
Unemployment	52	45	2	0	100
Reduction of Welfare State	49	43	7	1	100

Weighted data; percentages

Main results:

- ? Crimes and violence is the issue about which most British youths are concerned. 77% of respondents rank this as very important in society
- ? Terrorism is equally highly regarded as a current political problem, as is the issue of drugs
- ? Immigration and pollution are issues which stir similar levels of sentiment amongst British youth
- ? Unemployment and the reduction of the welfare state are the issues about which youths in Britain are least concerned

6.2 Political trust

Table 30: Satisfaction with the British government (Q32)

	male	female	15-17 years	18-25 years	entire sample
Very satisfied	1	1	0	1	1
Satisfied	13	11	15	11	12
Neither/nor	53	53	59	50	53
Dissatisfied	26	28	21	30	28
Very dissatisfied	7	7	5	8	7
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Weighted data; percentages.

Main results:

- ? Few young people are very satisfied with the British government
- ? The majority of young people are ambivalent towards the government
- ? Gender plays no significant role in young people's perceptions of the government

Table 31: Trust in political institutions (Q51)

Trust in....	Not at all/a little bit	Neither-nor	Very much/much
	Politicians	57	33
Political parties	55	39	6
The European Commission	53	36	10
The European Parliament	52	37	11
The government	48	41	11
The UK Parliament	47	36	17
Attac	44	45	11
Greenpeace	28	39	33
Amnesty International	28	40	32

Weighted data; percentages

Main results:

- ? Young people in Britain today place more faith in non-governmental organisations than in political organisation. 33% have trust in Greenpeace, whilst 32% have trust in Amnesty
- ? The UK Parliament is the most trusted political institution: 17% of young Britons trust it, compared to only 11% who trust the government, and 6% who trust political parties.
- ? Young people do not trust politicians (57%) or political parties (55%)

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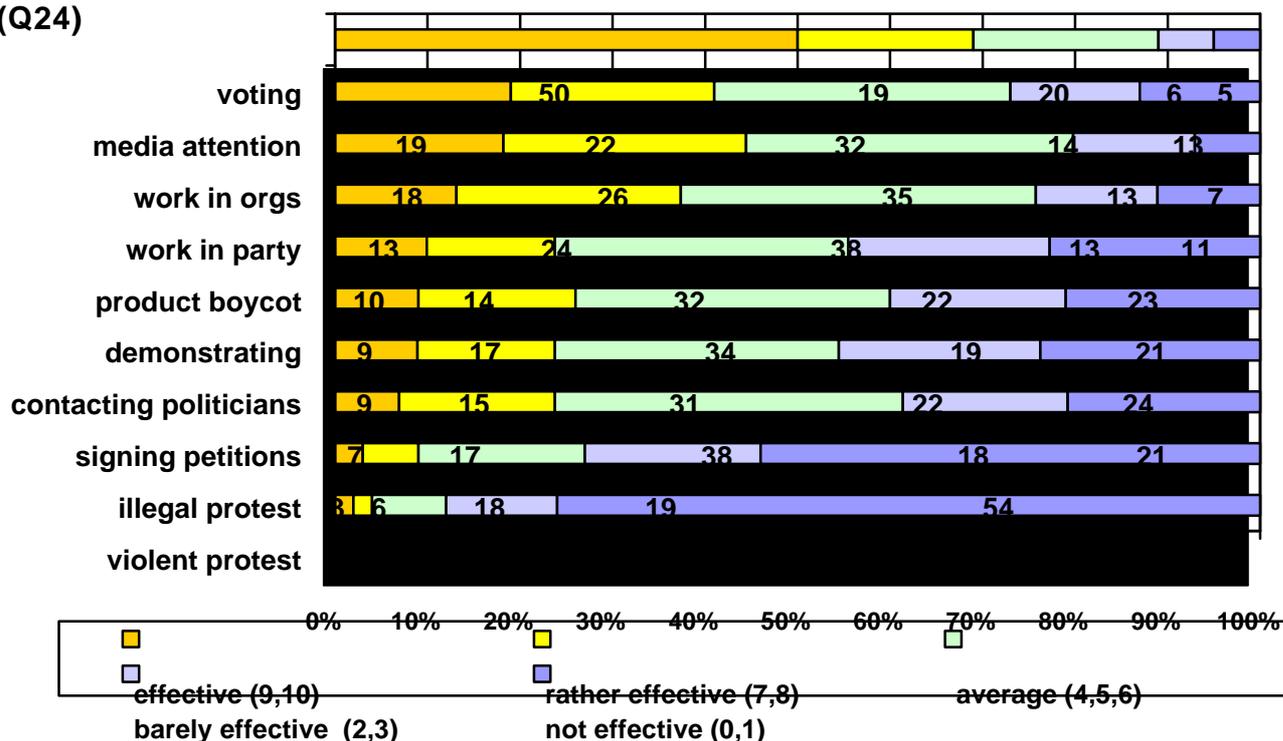
- ? European institutions rank similarly low in terms of trust levels among young people: 53% of young Britons do not trust the European Commission, and 52% do not trust the European Parliament.

7 Belongings, beliefs and values

7.1 Ways to influence decisions in society

Figure 2: Effectiveness of ways of participation (11 point scale; recoded)

(Q24)



Main results:

- ? Amongst young people in Britain, voting is perceived as the most effective way of influencing decisions in society. 23% regard this as an effective means of engagement
- ? Securing media attention for political issues (14%), and signing petitions (13%) are also regarded as effective ways in which to influence political decisions.
- ? Illegal and violent actions are rejected by young people in Britain as an effective means to secure political outcomes. Only 5% of respondents regard illegal or violent protests as an effective way to influence decisions.

Gender and age differences:

- ? There are no significant statistical differences between young men and women regarding perceptions of effective means to influence political decisions
- ? Age also has a minimal impact on young people's perception of the effectiveness of various means to influence political decisions

7.2 Belongings

Table 32: Religious denomination (recoded; 5 categories)

denomination	percentage
Catholic	11
Protestant	38
Muslim	3
Other	3
no religion	39
dk/ar	6

Table 33: Identity (Q26), sorted by "very strong"

	Part of family	UK national identity (English, Scottish, Welsh, NI)	British	Town or community	Part of school/ uni	Part of company	World citizen	A European
1-not at all	1	5	6	6	13	13	23	27
2	3	3	5	10	11	13	16	20
3	5	12	13	21	22	24	27	25
4	14	19	21	22	31	27	20	16
5 – very strong	77	61	55	41	23	23	14	12
total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Main results:

- ? The majority of young people in the UK say they have no religious denomination (39%)
- ? The biggest religious group amongst young people is protestant (38%)
- ? Young people feel the strongest community affiliation to their families. Over three-quarters of young people (77%) feel a very strong sense of belonging to their families.

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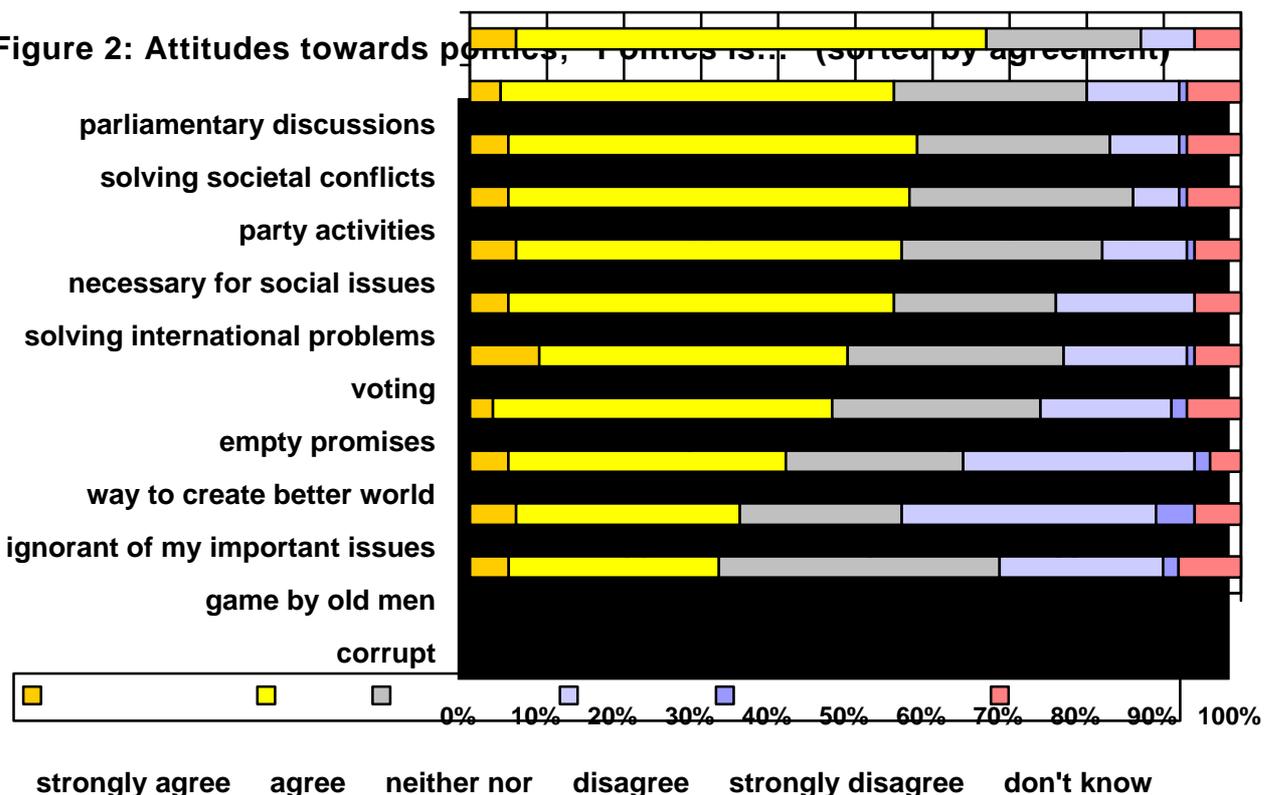
- ? Young people feel a stronger sense of belonging to their respective UK nation than feel “British”. 61% say they strongly regard themselves as English, Scottish, Welsh or Northern Irish, compared with 55% who feel strongly that they are British.
- ? A sense of European identity is lacking amongst British youth. The smallest proportion of the sample felt themselves strongly to be European (12%), and over a quarter of young people (27%) said they felt not at all European. European identity ranks even lower amongst British youth than international identity as a “world citizen”.

Gender and age differences:

- ? No significant gender differences were recorded
- ? Older youths have a slightly stronger sense of transnational belonging than younger youths; 17% of youths aged 18-25 considered themselves very strongly to be a world citizen, compared with 12% of young people aged 15-17.

7. 3 Attitudes towards politics

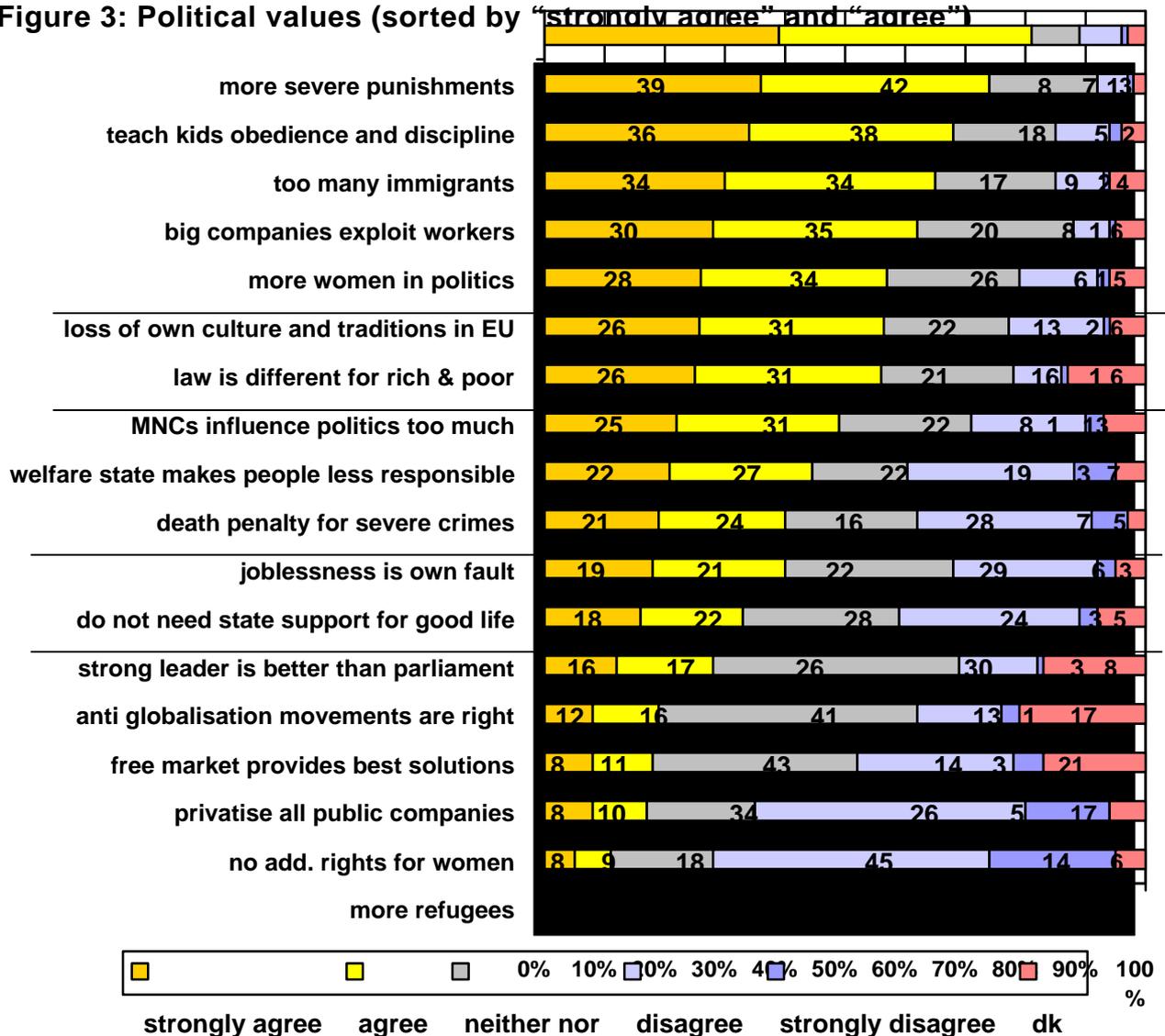
Figure 2: Attitudes towards politics, 100% (sorted by agreement)



Main results:

- ? Young Britons feel most strongly (67%) that “politics” refers to discussions in parliament
- ? They tend to regard politics as necessary for solving societal conflicts (55%), for social issues (57%) or for solving international problems (56%)
- ? However, 32% of young people in the UK regard politics as corrupt, and 35% feel it is just a game for old men.
- ? 32% of young people in Britain feel that politics is ignorant of their most important issues
- ? Gender and age had no statistically significant impact on the results

Figure 3: Political values (sorted by “strongly agree” and “agree”)



Main results:

- ? Young Britons express a preference for stronger law and order in society.

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- ? There is a high level of support for more right-wing views on law and order, with a large section of youths supporting individual responsibilities, and a greater emphasis within society on protection of law and order
 - ? Negative sentiments towards immigrants and refugees are high; 68% agree that there is too much immigration into the UK today, and only 11% believe that the UK should accept more refugees.
 - ? With regard to the protection of national culture and traditions, the EU is held in poor esteem. 57% of young people in Britain feel that Britain's culture and traditions are being eroded by EU membership.

Differences by gender and age:

- ? The only statistically important difference in terms of response to this set of questions is in regard of whether there is a need for more women in politics. 74% of young women either agree or strongly agree that there should be more young women in politics, compared to 49% of men. Only 2% of young women either disagree or disagree strongly with this statement, compared to 13% of young men.

8 Summary of the most important results

- ? Low levels of Britain's youth display any active interest in politics. Fewer than 30% said they were keen to take an interest in political issues. Of those young people who do follow politics, there is no gender imbalance; equal numbers of young men and women tended to have some interest in politics: 24% of each. Most interest is directed at national political events; least attention is given to European/EU-level politics.
- ? The majority of young people in Britain today find politics too complicated to understand. This seems to be more of a problem for young women than young men. This ability to comprehend political developments is reflected in the extent to which young people choose to discuss politics with others, or try and convince others of their own opinions. Young people rarely discuss political issues with others in their lives, and almost half of them (45%) never try to convince other people on political topics. Young Britons displayed weak levels of political knowledge, and significant numbers of young people believe they do not hold a strong enough opinion to convince others of. Over one third of young Britons (35%) felt politics is simply a game conducted by old men, with the vast majority of young people (75%) regarding "politics" as discussions conducted within parliament.
- ? Nevertheless, there are some signs of optimism and faith in a 'better future'. Young people strongly believe that being politically active is important if the world is to become a better place, and very few believed that it is pointless trying to change the status quo. Despite low levels of activism in mainstream political activities, young people in the UK often take the time to sign petitions, and often also collect them. They are also keen to attend politically-oriented meetings, or to make consumer choices on the basis of political reasons. However, a significant percentage of young people felt that a lack of time prevented them from becoming more directly engaged with political issues.
- ? Young people in Britain today reject mainstream politics in favour of alternative means of making their voices heard (though these alternative forms of action are relatively passive in nature, ie. they are not about 'taking to the streets to protest!'). Whilst voting in elections remains the most effective way to change politics, young people believe, they also support campaigns to gain media attention, the signing of petitions, working for voluntary organisations or buying certain products on political grounds. This rejection of traditional forms of political engagement is reflected in the trust young people have in political institutions; Voluntary bodies such as Greenpeace or Amnesty International are much more widely respected than politicians or political parties. European institutions are particularly poorly trusted by Britain's youth.

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- ? Perhaps somewhat paradoxically, despite young people's support for the work of Greenpeace and Amnesty, their political values display a marked preference for more right wing policies. 81% would like to see more severe punishments for crime, and almost three-quarters of young people (74%) would welcome society teaching children greater standards of obedience and discipline. Few welcome greater immigration into the UK. However, the majority of young people (46%) felt they were neither left nor right wing in their political beliefs, with a sizeable proportion (41%) unsure as to where they would position themselves on a left-right continuum. The EU ranks poorly in young people's eyes; over half of young people in the UK (57%) are concerned that the UK's EU membership means a loss of British culture and tradition.
- ? Despite high levels of political apathy, young people in Britain are optimistic about the future in their country. Around half believe they will surpass their parents educational levels and income standards within ten years.