

The Children's Commissioner's Big Ask...The Big Answers - Schools' Briefing

As you know, earlier this year, The Children's Commissioner asked all the children in England to complete a survey, to show the true voice of this generation. We used lesson plans created by ACT and others to really build engagement with the process and we'd like to thank them for all they did because it was a huge success. Over half a million children responded - the largest survey of its kind in history - and at a landmark moment for young people growing up in this country. At a critical time, as we emerge from the pandemic, children have told us how the past year has affected them and what needs to happen now. Despite the sacrifices they have made, the majority of children say they are happy. Their message is clear: this is not a 'snowflake' generation – it is a heroic generation.

Children were united - they told us they want to get on, and do well. To have fulfilling lives. To make a contribution to a better, fairer world – a greener world. Now is the time to keep children's voices on the environment at the top of the agenda. Ahead of COP26 in November, schools are being invited to take part in some activities to prepare and get as involved as possible. Please head to this [link](#), and the attached lesson plan for more activities.

What children told us

We have analysed the responses, and produced a report which sets out what children have said across six areas below - family, community, health, school, work and children in care.

- Children care deeply about family – families of all kinds. They care about being part of happy homes. Providing families with support is especially important as we recover from the pandemic, in particular for homes who have had a difficult time.
- Children care deeply about community. They want to get outside and play. To have enough to do in their neighbourhoods. They want to feel safe and protected in online spaces.
- Children were united in showing a new consciousness of the importance of health and wellbeing. The pandemic has affected their wellbeing and now they want good mental health to be a priority in their lives.
- Children are pleased to be back in school! As we recover, they have asked for support to make a success of the opportunities returned to them. This is especially important for children who found learning harder in lockdown.
- Children described ambitious plans for the world of work and their futures. They want to do jobs which help other people, and want to be part of the recovery from the pandemic. They want to be treated fairly as they choose from a variety of pathways towards a career.
- The same ambitions were true of children in care. They described both gratitude and frustration at the level of support they currently receive.

So, The Big Ask has provided a Big Answer. Not just for England's children now, but for the next generation of children too - an exciting vision of England's future. In fact, the launch of this report is just the start of an ongoing dialogue – the Children's Commissioner will continue to listen to children and continue to make sure their voices are heard.

I would like to thank all of you for getting involved and have listed below the resources available on our website. Please do contact my office if you would like to learn more about the report.

Resources

- This briefing document
- Copy of 'The Big Ask – Big Answers – The Children's Version'
- Copy of the full report for teachers to read
- Powerpoint presentation for use in assembly, form period or with attached lesson plan
- Lesson plan

Note – teachers should read the whole pack before delivering materials to children, which includes sections on children in care. Children will be asked to reflect on their own survey answers, which were shared anonymously, so should not be put in a situation where they feel pressure to talk about anything personal.