

## **Guide for completing *The Big Future* in youth groups, clubs, and out-of-school settings**

The Children's Commissioner, Dame Rachel de Souza, has a statutory and independent role to promote and protect the rights of children, and to make sure that their voices are heard by those who make decisions about their lives.

To help her do this, Dame Rachel has launched her biggest survey yet. *The Big Future* is open to all children in England and asks about childhood today. About the things that worry them, the things they love, the ways they have fun, and the changes they want for a better future.

At a time when there is a mood of doubt across Westminster and the nation at large about how we raise our children today – from screentime to schooling, from future jobs to AI – we will be granting many of those same children the right to vote for the first time. Yet, children consistently say they're not heard and excluded from the debate.

That's why *The Big Future* will offer a new and comprehensive look at what children have to say about childhood today, and what they think needs to change for a better future.

### **Completing the survey**

Some children may want to take the survey as part of their regular youth group, club, or other out-of-school setting activity or session.

Running a short session on *The Big Future* as part of your group could help more children to take part, as well as helping them to develop skills in citizenship and communication.

Taking part in the survey provides an opportunity for children to share their views and for your group to have meaningful discussions about your local area.

How children can answer the survey in your group:

- This guide outlines a short activity to help you speak with children and young people about the survey and their futures. Children can either fill in the survey as part of the activity, or when they get home.
- The survey can be completed on a wide range of devices (tablets, laptops, smartphones, etc).
- It is open to anyone aged 0 to 18, for children themselves to complete, with or without adult help, or an adult can complete it on their behalf.
- It takes about 5 minutes to complete the survey.
- The survey is open until 23 October 2026, with findings published in February 2027.
- There are questions about school, your local area, online safety, and space for you to tell us what you think is important:

*What should the government do to make your future better?*

**Take part now**



**Survey:** [childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/thebigfuture](https://childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/thebigfuture)

**Resources & FAQs:** [childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/the-big-future](https://childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/the-big-future)

**Socials:** #TheBigFuture

@ChildrensCommissioner ✕ @ChildrensComm

# THE BIG FUTURE

## **Activity: *The Big Future* (20-30 minutes)**

### **Setting the scene (5 minutes)**

The Children's Commissioner, Dame Rachel de Souza, is the representative for children's voices. She is independent from the Government, and it is her job to hear children's views about the things which matter most to them and share these with Government.

A message from the Commissioner:

*"For the first time, hundreds of thousands of children will be eligible to vote in the next general election at age 16. That's the biggest change to the franchise in half a century. Yet, children tell me they're not heard and feel excluded from the debate.*

*That's why I'm doing my final survey, *The Big Future*, to listen to a million children, including you. I want to find out what it's like to be a child today, and the changes you want for a better future.*

*I will ask about what you love, what worries you, how you have fun, and about voting, school, your area, and online safety. More than anything, I want to know what you think a good childhood should look like, now and in the future."*

### **Group discussion (10 minutes)**

To get children thinking about the questions, you could use the following group conversation prompts. You might want to want to ask some specific questions:

- If you were allowed to vote, would you know who to vote for?
- What do you like about your school? What would you change to make it better?

# THE BIG FUTURE

- What's the best thing about where you live? How could life be better for other children in your local area?
- Do you feel safe online? What role should social media play in future childhoods?

You could end the discussion with this question:

- What is the one thing that the government could do to make your future better?

## Take the survey (5-10 minutes)

We'd like every child to fill in the survey online so that we can capture their views.

There are two options for this, depending on whether children and young people have access to devices during your session.

**In session option:** If children have access to their own or shared devices (e.g., smartphone or laptop) in your group, you could invite them to scan the QR code below and fill in the survey after your group discussion.



The survey will take each child around 5 minutes.

It will be helpful to find out the names and postcodes of children's schools in advance, as one of the questions for school pupils asks for this. All children are also asked for the local authority they live in.

**Survey:** [childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/thebigfuture](https://childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/thebigfuture)

**Resources & FAQs:** [childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/the-big-future](https://childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/the-big-future)

# THE BIG FUTURE

If there are children in your group who may not be able to fill in the survey, an adult at your group could fill in the survey on their behalf. See **Resources & FAQs** for a *Guide for adults completing The Big Future on behalf of children*.

**At home option:** Below is a message you could share with children, young people and their parents or carers following your session, so that they can fill out the survey at home.

*Today at [group name] we talked about the work of the Children's Commissioner to represent children's views to those who make decisions on their behalf. The Commissioner has recently launched The Big Future survey for children to share their views about what children in England need to have the best childhoods, today and in the future. We discussed some of the themes in the survey today, and would like to invite every child to fill out the survey by clicking the link here: [www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/thebigfuture](http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/thebigfuture)*

## Tell us about your session

We'd love to hear more about your group's session on *The Big Future*. If you would like to, you can share this via social media using the handles below:

#TheBigFuture    @ChildrensCommissioner    @ChildrensComm

We will be sharing posts from schools, individuals, and other groups.