

GIRLS' ATTITUDES SURVEY

2016



WE DISCOVER, WE GROW

Girlguiding

ABOUT GIRLGUIDING

Girlguiding is the leading charity for girls and young women in the UK. Thanks to the dedication and support of 100,000 amazing volunteers, we are active in every part of the UK, giving girls and young women a space where they can be themselves, have fun, build brilliant friendships, gain valuable life skills and make a positive difference to their lives and their communities. We build girls' confidence and raise their aspirations. We give them the chance to discover their full potential and encourage them to be a powerful force for good.

WELCOME TO THE GIRLS' ATTITUDES SURVEY 2016

Each year, Girlguiding's Girls' Attitudes Survey takes a snapshot of what girls and young women think on a wide range of issues.

The survey gives girls' and young women's voices a platform to be heard and taken into account at the highest levels of decision-making across the UK. It empowers girls to speak out on the issues that really matter to them and affect their lives today. This major survey, now in its eighth year, canvasses the opinions of over 1,600 girls and young women aged 7 to 21,

inside and outside guiding across the UK. The findings in 2016 build on those from previous years. They give an insight into how girls feel about the specific and emerging pressures facing them today, and what these mean for their happiness, well-being and opportunities in life. Girlguiding's youth panel, Advocate, leads the development of the survey each year and analyses the results. All the results from this and previous surveys can be found on Girlguiding's website.

www.girlguiding.org.uk/girlsattitudes

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FOREWORD

FROM THE ADVOCATES



As Advocates for Girlguiding, we are at the centre of designing the Girls' Attitudes Survey each year. We have the opportunity to analyse and reflect on the findings of what girls and young women say about their lives. This is the Survey's eighth year and it reminds us that being a young woman today is actually really tough.

Some of this year's findings shocked us. Despite our hope that we'll see things continually improving for girls and young women, it's clear that in many areas of their lives, they're not.

It's disheartening that girls' overall happiness is dropping. Young women face more pressures affecting their body confidence than ever before and it's sad to see this affecting younger girls too. Too many of us are made to feel that our looks are the most important thing and girls say this and gender stereotypes are holding them back.

It's really serious that half of girls don't feel free to use their voice online because they're afraid of abuse. This silencing of girls' voices is something we feel strongly about and believe it is fundamental that girls feel free to express their views.

But we also see some positive findings. It's encouraging that girls' passion for equality for everyone stands out. Support for the LGBT community shines through with the overwhelming majority saying people should not be discriminated against. We're excited to see that many girls do feel empowered by social media to speak out and are calling out sexism when they see it.

We're proud to be part of Girlguiding. We all feel that it's really important to have a safe, girl-only space where we can be ourselves without everyday pressures; and where we feel supported, encouraged and can build lifelong friendships.

We're proud that Girlguiding listens to girls through its research and takes action to make all girls' lives better. For example, for young members Girlguiding has developed peer education resources tackling issues that the Survey has found are challenges for girls – on mental wellbeing, body confidence and healthy relationships. As Advocates we're a key part of how Girlguiding promotes change for girls outside our charity too, for example through our Girls Matter campaign.

The changes girls say they want to see here reflect our own views on what needs to change for girls to be equal. Because the Girls' Attitudes Survey findings have resonated so strongly with our own experiences, we've started a petition to end sexual harassment in schools and we hope we can empower thousands of girls to make their voices heard on this issue. We're also really excited that Girlguiding will be empowering even more girls to speak out through its new Action for Change project.

From the five-year-old in Rainbows to the twenty-five year old in The Senior Section, we know that girls and young women have a powerful role to play in the world. This survey offers clear and important actions that everyone who cares about the future generation can take to help make sure all girls are empowered to fully play that role, whatever they each want it to be. Each one of us has a responsibility to make things better for girls. We invite you to read this Survey and act.

The Advocate panel are a group of 18 Girlguiding members aged 14 to 25, which gives girls a platform to use their voices and seek change at the highest levels.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This year girls and young women tell us that they are being held back from having full lives and from achieving their aspirations. Girls are saying they can't do the things they'd like because they don't feel safe or because of double standards on what behaviours are acceptable or what roles are open to them compared with boys. Yet it's clear girls are challenging this unfairness. They are reclaiming the internet to express their views and have a voice, with half of girls saying social media empowers them to speak out. They are calling out sexism where they see it and demanding that girls and women aren't judged by how they look and have equal opportunities now and in their futures.

From as young as seven, girls feel the impact of daily sexist images of women and girls in the media, online and around them. Girls tell us that sexist objectification of women in the media makes them feel disempowered and that gender stereotypes make them feel that their gender will hold them back in life. They tell us they have to confront intense and unobtainable appearance pressures to be perfect and many say they feel they're not good enough.

Girls tell us that because of abuse online they don't feel able to have a voice on the things they care about. They think sexism is worse online and girls are being sent unwanted sexualised images and videos. Girls also tell us they don't feel safe to go where they want and face harassment from boys when they are out and about. Girls are changing their own behaviour to avoid being harassed or intimidated.

Girls also tell us they are facing immense pressures at school and beyond. From a young age girls are worried about fitting in. Older girls tell us they are fearful about finding a job, paying university tuition fees and affording a home. For too many, these experiences reflect the continued decline in their happiness and mental well-being.

At school, too few girls are getting the opportunity to learn about the role that women have played across different academic subjects or gain the skills they need to live their lives well. Only half of girls feel inspired by their education, suggesting there is still a long way to go in making sure education meets their needs.

The findings show that girls have a clear vision for a better world. Despite the pressures they face, girls and young women are passionate about challenging these pressures and the unequal expectations they face. They tell us they want to see more positive images of women and girls around them in the media and in the jobs they aspire to. Overwhelmingly, girls want to live in a world without gender stereotypes, where women and girls aren't judged on how they look, where they are safe and where people are not discriminated against.

Despite efforts to silence them through online abuse and everyday sexism, girls tell us they are using their voice to call out inequality. Girls are using online forums to use their voice, and to connect with others on the things they care about. Girls are proud of their achievements and are full of ideas about what they want to do in their futures.

There are girls who feel they can do anything if they try, feel adventurous, are proud of something they've achieved and feel brave. There are girls who tell us they've had a positive experience of school and being online and are happy.

Yet much remains to be done so that girls are not adapting their own behaviour and aspirations to navigate an unequal society. Instead society needs to change to meet girls' expectations and support them to fulfil their potential. By listening to girls we can address the barriers they face to achieving their aspirations and support them to flourish.



BODY CONFIDENCE

47% of girls aged 11–21 say the way they look holds them back

From as young as seven, girls say they feel embarrassed and ashamed of how they look. Fear of their bodies being criticised holds them back from doing everyday things they'd like to do.



WOMEN IN THE MEDIA AND EVERYDAY SEXISM

70% of girls aged 11–21 say sexism is so widespread it affects most areas of their lives

All around them, girls see and experience sexism and gender stereotypes. Yet at the same time, half of girls say they challenge sexism when they see it.



PERSONAL SAFETY AND HARASSMENT

32% of girls aged 11–21 say they feel unsafe when they are out on their own most of the time

Frequent threats to their safety means many girls are adapting their own behaviour to avoid experiencing sexual harassment.



ONLINE AND SOCIAL MEDIA

49% of girls aged 11–21 say fear of abuse online makes them feel less free to share their views

Girls think sexism is worse online and many have experienced this themselves making them feel silenced. Yet half of girls say they are using social media to empower themselves to speak out.



MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

69% of girls aged 7–21 feel like they are not good enough

The trend in girls' happiness is going the wrong way and gets worse as they get older. Yet many girls say they are proud of the things they've done and feel powerful and confident in themselves.



EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Only 43% of girls aged 11–21 say they have the same choice as boys at school in sport and exercise


Gender inequality and stereotypes are present in what girls are learning at school and they're not getting the access to the same choices as boys or to the valuable life skills they need.



ASPIRATIONS AND LEADERSHIP

63% of girls aged 11–21 would like to be a leader in their chosen job

Girls have high aspirations and feel inspired by a diversity of role models. Half feel more determined despite inequality in leadership. Yet many still see the workplace as an unequal place for women.



**“I want every girl
to be happy with how
they look.”**

(Girl aged 7–10)

BODY CONFIDENCE

Overview

From a young age, too many girls say they don't feel happy with how they look and can feel embarrassed and ashamed of their appearance. Girls experience intense appearance pressures and tell us that fear that people will criticise their bodies holds them back from doing everyday things they'd like to do.

Girls report they are made to feel that how they look is the most important thing about them – something very young girls feel and this only increases as they get older. They believe their appearance matters when it comes to being successful in life and that there are double standards for girls compared with boys.

Over the past five years, we have seen a significant decline in how happy girls feel about their appearance. In 2011, 73% of girls aged 7 to 21 were happy with how they looked, falling to 61% this year.

With such a high number of girls and young women not feeling good about themselves, the reality is that girls' lives are restricted by fear of judgement and how they are perceived by others. A quarter of younger girls, age 7 to 10, have had someone criticise their body. The impacts include girls not wearing what they like, not going where they want to and not speaking up at school.

Girls tell us they want action and that one of the most important things to them that would improve the lives of girls and women is to stop judging women on what they look like.



47%



**OF GIRLS AGED 11-21
SAY THE WAY THEY LOOK**

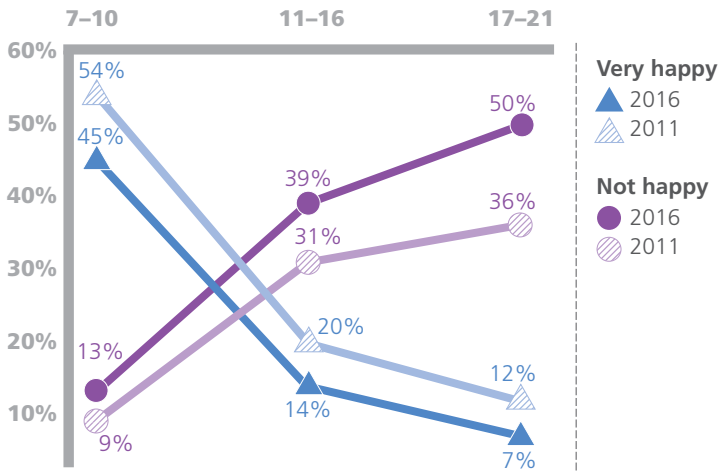


HOLDS THEM BACK

MOST OF THE TIME

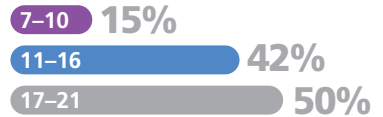
"I'm embarrassed about doing certain things because of my body." (Girl aged 11-16)

How happy are girls with the way they look?

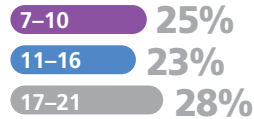


Girls feel embarrassed or ashamed about how they look

Most of the time or often

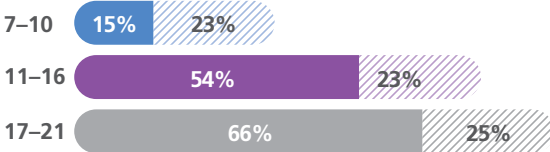


Sometimes

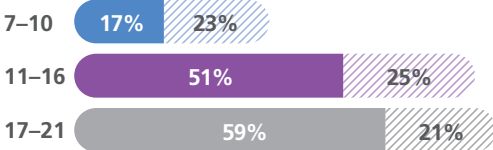


Appearance pressures

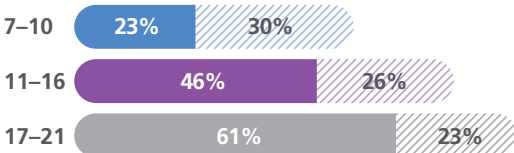
Girls feel they are not pretty enough



Girls feel they should lose weight



Girls feel they need to be perfect



Most of the time or often



Sometimes



37%

OF GIRLS AGED 11-21

SAY THEY COMPARE THEMSELVES

TO CELEBRITIES

MOST OF THE TIME OR OFTEN

29% DO THIS SOMETIMES



11-16

33% often
26% sometimes

17-21

40% often
32% sometimes

Importance placed on looks and appearance



People make girls think that how they look is the most important thing about them

7-10 **36% agree**
 11-21 **53% agree**
 11-21 **20% disagree**



Women are judged more on their appearance than on their ability

7-10 **35% agree**
 11-21 **75% agree**
 11-21 **7% disagree**



To be successful, women have to be attractive as well as good at what they do, whereas for men it doesn't matter what they look like

11-21 **42% agree**
 11-21 **34% disagree**

The impact of low body confidence

Fear that people will criticise their body stops girls from:



Wearing clothes they like
 11-16 **53%**
 17-21 **63%**



Having their picture taken
 11-16 **49%**
 17-21 **55%**



Taking part in sport/exercise
 11-16 **41%**
 17-21 **37%**



Speaking up in class
 11-16 **39%**
 17-21 **32%**



Going certain places
 11-16 **36%**
 17-21 **30%**



Using social media
 11-16 **25%**
 17-21 **24%**



Socialising
 11-16 **24%**
 17-21 **26%**



Having fun with friends
 11-16 **18%**
 17-21 **24%**

Criticism from others

25% of girls aged 7-10 have experienced someone saying mean things about their bodies

61% of girls aged 11-21 have experienced people criticising their bodies

39% of girls aged 7-10 have experienced people saying mean things to girls about their bodies at school

Action girls want to see



When asked what are the three most important ways to improve girls' and women's lives*...

54% of girls aged 7-10 included **stop judging girls and women on what they look like**

"(Stop) judging girls on their bodies and making girls feel bad about themselves."

(Girl aged 7-10)

"The way you look is seen to be much more important than worrying about any other problems." (Girl aged 11-16)

"Body shaming can make someone feel very depressed and this feeling can last for a long time." (Girl aged 17-21)

*See page 35 for full list of priorities



**“ I want girls to feel
like they can do anything
boys can do. ”**

(Girl aged 7–10)



WOMEN IN THE MEDIA AND EVERYDAY SEXISM

Overview

Three-quarters of girls tell us that they believe sexism is so widespread in society that it affects most areas of their lives. All around them, girls see and experience gender stereotypes and they feel this is holding them back. At the same time, half of girls say they challenge sexism when they see or hear it.

The media plays a crucial role in providing examples of what's possible for girls and their lives. But the majority of girls tell us they feel the media too often shows them just as sex objects and this makes them feel disempowered. Girls don't think there is enough diversity of women in the media and want it to be better at reflecting what is possible for all girls and women.

Girls want a future free from gender stereotypes and discrimination. They are overwhelming supportive of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) rights, and feel inspired by seeing women doing positive things on TV such as female Olympic and Paralympic athletes.

The vast majority of girls and young women tell us that how the media portrays women is an important issue for them and that they want the media to stop criticising women's bodies and using gender stereotypes. They want to see more diversity and girls doing the same things as boys on TV, in newspapers and in adverts. This would help to improve the lives of girls and women.



OF GIRLS AGED 11-21 SAY SEXISM IS SO

WIDESPREAD



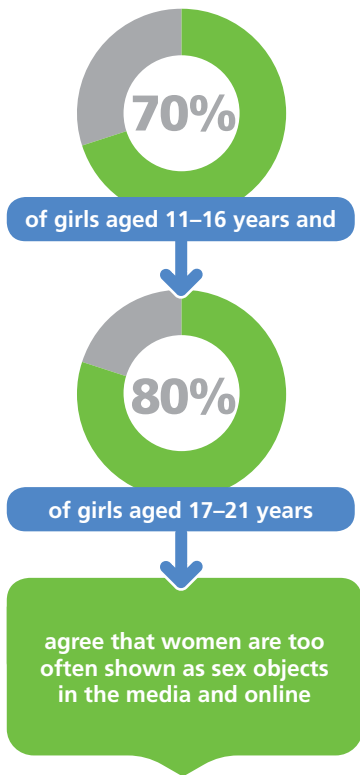
IT AFFECTS MOST

AREAS OF THEIR

LIVES

“Girls are growing up hating their bodies because of the pictures that are shown in the media.” (Girl aged 17–21)

Women in the media



When women are portrayed as ‘sex objects’ it makes girls feel disempowered

13–21 **61% agree**



Online pornography is influencing how women are portrayed in advertising and the media

13–21 **68% agree**



Online pornography is influencing how men are portrayed in advertising and the media

13–21 **49% agree**

“The media thinks all girls from every ethnicity are the same, but we are not, our issues are different.”

(Girl aged 17–21)



There is not enough diversity among high-profile women in the media (relating to race, age, body size and shape, disability etc)

11–16 **59% agree**

17–21 **66% agree**

Everyday sexism

Made to feel stupid because they are a girl

Agree

7–10 **12%**

11–16 **42%**

17–21 **57%**

Girls say seeing gender stereotypes makes them feel that they might be held back in life because they are a girl

11–21 **52% agree**

Girls think newspapers and magazines should stop criticising women's bodies



Girls would like to live in a world without gender stereotypes

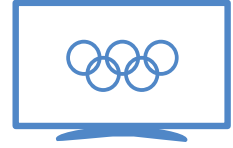


Girls who say they challenge people if they are sexist



Girls want to see more women's sport on TV

7-21 **65% agree**



Seeing the Olympics/ Paralympics on TV inspires girls to do more sport

7-21 **55% agree**

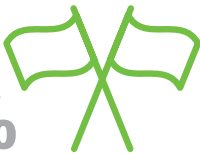
Diversity and inclusion

86%

OF GIRLS AGED 11-21 AGREE PEOPLE SHOULD NOT BE DISCRIMINATED AGAINST BECAUSE

THEY ARE LESBIAN, GAY BISEXUAL OR TRANSGENDER

ONLY 4% DISAGREE



75%

are supportive of public Pride events that celebrate lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people

"It is important that women are seen as equals and not as men's sexual objects."

(Girl aged 17-21)

Action girls want to see



When asked what are the three most important ways to improve girls' and women's lives*...

47%

of girls aged 7-10 included **fairness for people from different backgrounds**

33%

of girls aged 7-10 included **make sure girls and women are shown doing everything boys and men do on TV, in newspapers and in adverts**

22%

of girls aged 11-21 included **less gender stereotyping in the media and advertising**

"The media has a massive role to play because when girls look at it they see what they're supposed to look like."

(Girl aged 17-21)

"I don't think enough is being done to pave the way for women, especially those from ethnic minorities." (Girl aged 17-21)

*See page 35 for full list of priorities



“ I want to be able to go out and be safe.”

(Girl aged 7–10)



PERSONAL SAFETY AND HARASSMENT

Overview

Girls tell us they experience frequent threats to their personal safety, often changing their own behaviour to avoid these. The vast majority of girls do not feel safe when they are out alone, at least sometimes, and many girls report experiencing sexual harassment.

Last year we found that anxiety about potentially experiencing sexual harassment affected what girls wore, their body confidence and whether they spoke up in class. We explored harassment further this year and found that girls are changing their behaviour because they don't feel safe out alone, feel intimidated by groups of boys, experience unwanted sexual comments and street harassment.

In addition many girls face sexual pressures at some point and face double standards compared with boys. At the same time as facing such pressures, they also feel judged more harshly for sexual behaviour that is seen as acceptable for boys.

Girls say one of the most important things when it comes to improving the lives of girls and women is being safe. For younger girls aged 7 to 10 this was about feeling safe, and for girls aged 11 to 21 this was about addressing sexual harassment and violence against women and girls. Many girls told us this would give them and other girls and young women the opportunity to live fuller and happier lives where they would be more able to achieve their aspirations.



32%

**OF GIRLS AGED 11-21
FEEL UNSAFE**



WHEN THEY ARE OUT ON THEIR OWN



**MOST OF THE TIME
OR OFTEN**

47% FEEL UNSAFE SOMETIMES

AS A RESULT

67%

**OF GIRLS SAY THEY
CHANGE THEIR
BEHAVIOUR
TO AVOID THIS**



“It’s not fair on girls because boys don’t get harassed about the way they look so why should girls?”

(Girl aged 11–16)

Experiences and impact of harassment

Girls feel unsafe when they are out on their own

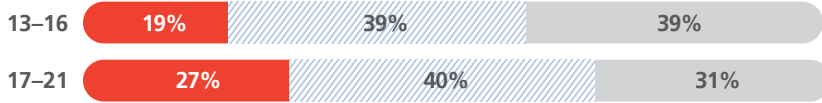


In response to feeling like this...

67%

change their behaviour to avoid this

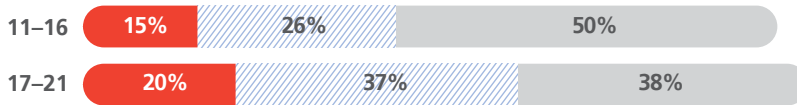
Girls experience intimidation by groups of boys



55%

change their behaviour to avoid this

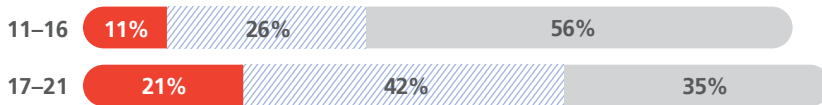
Girls experience unwanted sexual comments directed at them



45%

change their behaviour to avoid this

Girls experience street harassment



44%

change their behaviour to avoid this

● Often ● Sometimes ● Never



Girls experience unwanted touching on public transport

13–21 **17%**



31%

change their behaviour to avoid this



Girls experience unwanted touching at a nightclub

18–21 **41%**



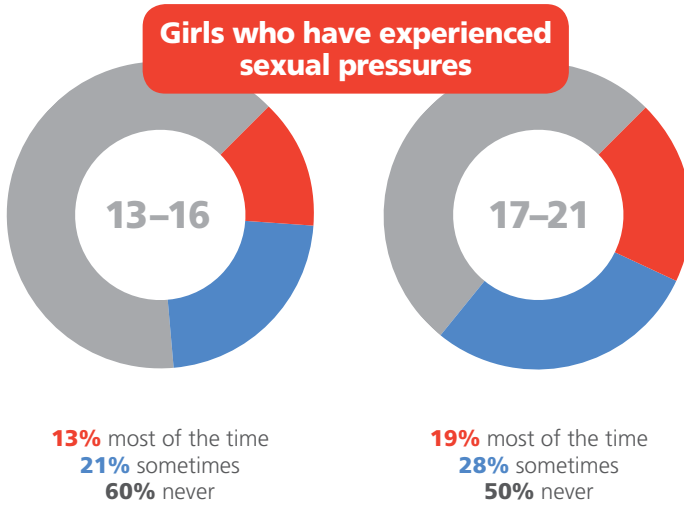
51%

change their behaviour to avoid this

Sexual pressures

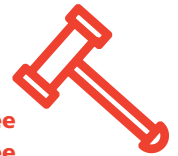
“Everyone needs to feel safe and free to be who they are.”

(Girl aged 11–16)



75%

OF GIRLS AGED 11–21 AGREE THAT GIRLS ARE **JUDGED HARSHLY FOR SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR** SEEN AS ACCEPTABLE FOR BOYS



11–16 **66% agree**
17–21 **84% agree**

Action girls want to see



“All girls should feel safe and they can do anything.”

(Girl aged 7–10)

“Some people are ashamed to open up about being harassed and they need to know that it isn’t their fault.”

(Girl aged 13–16)

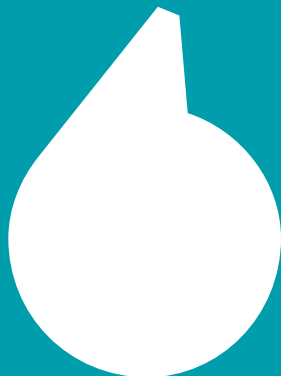
“If women feel safe in their environment they will feel freer to express themselves – say, do, wear what they want!” (Girl aged 17–21)

*See page 35 for full list of priorities



**💧💧 A lot of girls get
abused online and it
doesn't get noticed.
It needs to stop. 💬💬**

(Girl aged 11–16)



ONLINE AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Overview

Half of girls and young women think that sexism is worse online than offline and a high number say they experience sexism online themselves. Though many girls have negative experiences online, which can lead them to feeling silenced in voicing their views, almost half say social media empowers them to speak out.

Girls' experiences range from having sexist things said to them, unwanted pornographic images sent to them, being trolled for expressing their views to being threatened with sexual violence. A significant minority of younger girls are contacted online by people they don't know and many girls do not feel free to express their views online.

Cyberbullying is a significant issue, affecting girls identifying as LGBT particularly. These findings build on previous Surveys in 2014 and 2015 that highlighted the impact online abuse has in restricting what girls do, how they express themselves and for some this can lead to self-harm. This year we found that just over half of girls feel safer sharing their views anonymously and a quarter have anonymous social media accounts.

While many girls say fear of abuse makes them feel less free to share their views, many girls are reclaiming the internet as a space to have a voice about the things that matter to them and interact with others, including through online support groups. Nearly all girls tell us they want to see more done about online sexism and abuse and that this is an important issue in their lives.



49%

OF GIRLS AGED 11-21
SAY FEAR OF
**ABUSE
ONLINE**



MAKES THEM FEEL LESS FREE

TO
SHARE

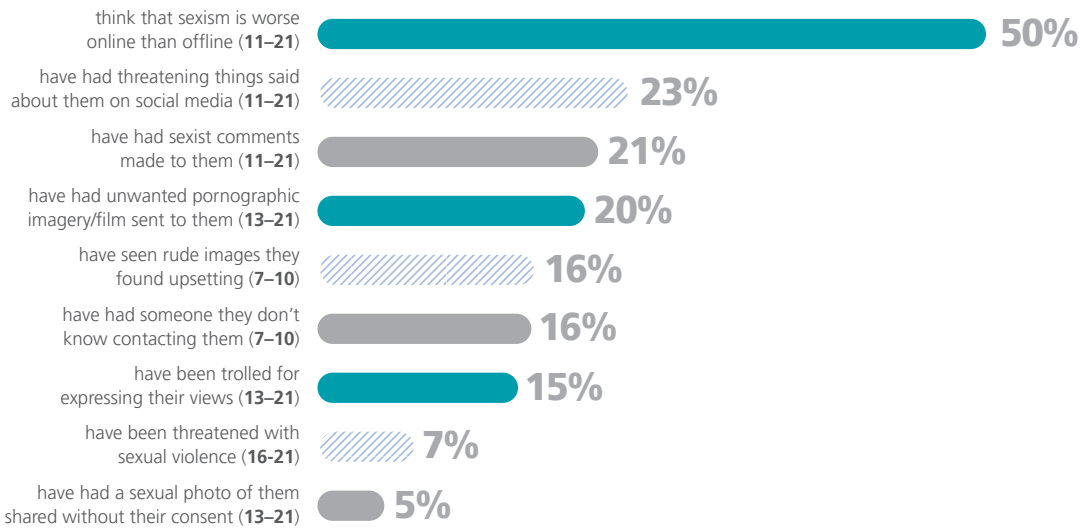
THEIR VIEWS
ONLINE

“You cannot escape people online – you can walk away from people in real life, but the internet is always there.”

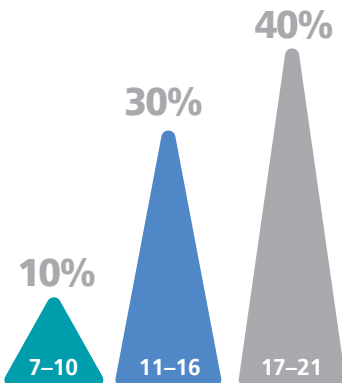
(Girl aged 11–21)

Sexism, harassment and abuse online

Girls say they...



Girls have had an embarrassing photo of them shared without their consent online



Girls have experienced cyberbullying
7–10 13%
11–21 25%



Girls have experienced homophobic or biphobic comments
11–21 8%



Amongst girls who identify as non-heterosexual
11–21 41%



Amongst girls who identify as non-heterosexual
11–21 37%

Girls' voices online

Girls feel safer sharing their views anonymously

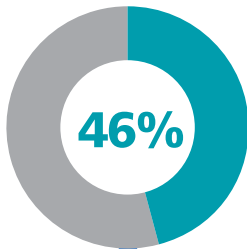


Girls have at least one anonymous social media account



14%

OF GIRLS AGED 11-21
USE ONLINE SUPPORT GROUPS



of girls aged 13-21 agree social media empowers them to speak out about things they care about

"In this generation the issue (online abuse) will only grow"

(Girl aged 17-21)

Girls feel free to express their views online



Action girls want to see



When asked what are the three most important ways to improve girls' and women's lives*...



of girls aged 11-21 agree that **more should be done to tackle sexism and abuse online**



of girls aged 13-21, agree **all pornography websites should have age verification controls**

"The internet is a huge thing and many people freely say anything they want and get away with it including sexism and abuse to women and girls, which is still a current issue in today's society." (Girl aged 11-16)

"Social media is a huge part of our lives and sexism and abuse has to stop." (Girl aged 17-21)

*See page 35 for full list of priorities

**“ Good mental health
builds the foundations
for your future.”**

(Girl aged 17–21)





MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

Overview

This year the trend in girls' happiness and well-being is continuing to go in the wrong direction and gets worse as they get older. It's clear girls are facing immense pressures. But there is good news too – many girls feel proud of things they've done and also feel brave, confident and powerful at times.

Over the past five years the number of girls who say they are unhappy has increased from 9% to 16%. Nearly all girls feel stressed about school work and many often feel worried, anxious and like they not good enough.

Amongst girls' biggest fears are not doing well at school, getting a job in the future and not being able to buy a home. Also important for younger girls are falling out with friends and concerns about bullying.

Despite some assumptions that girls and young women find it easy to ask for help, over half are put off doing so because of being uncomfortable talking about their feelings. Girls mention feeling that adults won't understand and feeling that girls are just expected to cope with so many pressures.

We found that girls are proud of a diverse range of things from academic success to becoming more confident in themselves. Yet as girls get older, they are less likely to say they feel proud of themselves, brave and confident.

Girls aged 11 to 21 say mental health and well-being are the most important issues for them to improve girls' and women's lives. For many, this is an area where not enough is being done to help them.



69%

OF GIRLS AGED 7-21

FEEL LIKE THEY

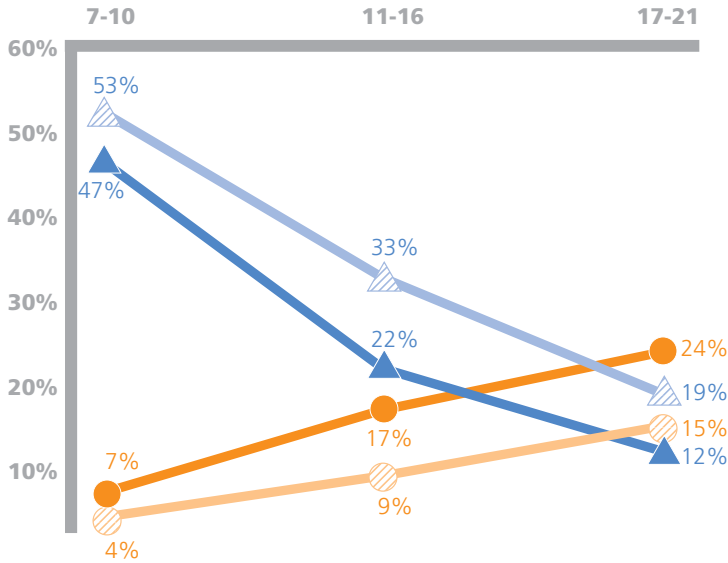
ARE NOT
GOOD
ENOUGH



“(I am proud of) being able to be more confident in myself and not worrying what people think of me.”

(Girl aged 11–16)

Happiness



Very happy **Not happy**
 ▲ 2016 ● 2016
 ▲ 2011 ● 2011

27%

OF GIRLS AGED 7-21 SAY THEY ARE VERY HAPPY IN 2016 COMPARED WITH **35%** OF GIRLS IN 2011

9% WERE NOT HAPPY IN 2011
 16% WERE NOT HAPPY IN 2016

Fears about the future

Girls' biggest fears



Not doing well at school
 7-10 **40%**
 11-16 **65%**
 17-21 **44%**



Getting a job in the future
 11-16 **44%**
 17-21 **53%**



Being able to afford a home
 11-16 **34%**
 17-21 **53%**



Falling out with friends
 7-10 **39%**



Bullying
 7-10 **37%**
 11-16 **16%**
 17-21 **13%**



Poor health
 7-10 **24%**
 11-16 **32%**
 17-21 **45%**



Being publicly embarrassed online
 13-21 **11%**



Not being safe
 7-10 **27%**
Violence towards them
 11-21 **16%**



Not fitting in
 7-21 **25%**



University fees
 17-21 **53%**



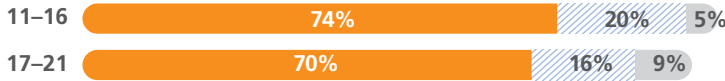
Terrorism
 7-21 **31%**



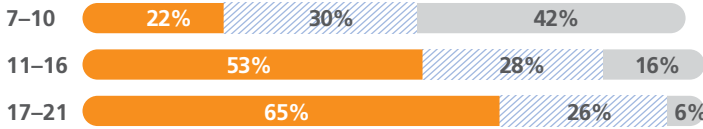
What people will think of them
 7-21 **31%**

Pressures and stress

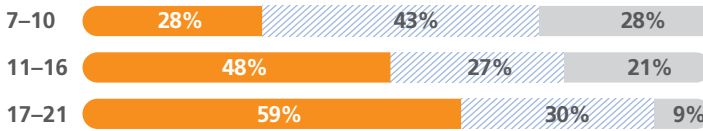
Girls feel stressed about school, college or work



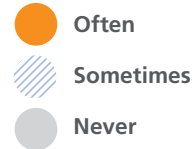
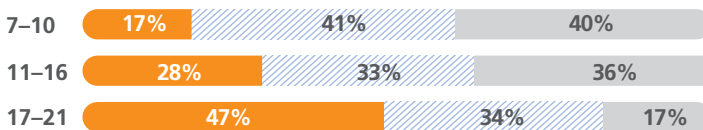
Girls feel like they are not good enough



Girls feel worried or anxious



Girls feel lonely

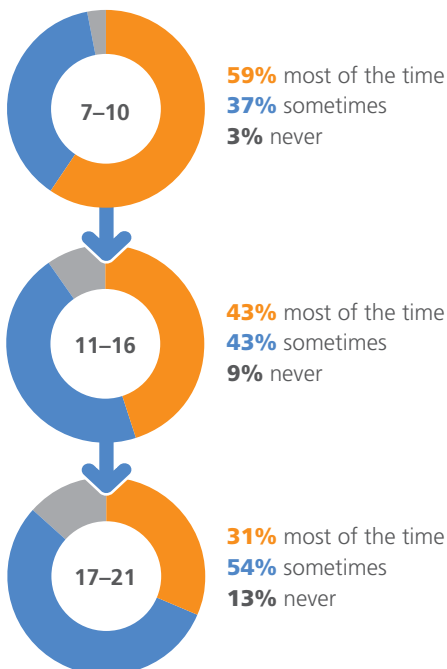


"It's important that adults understand what's going on in young people's minds."

(Girl aged 11-16)

Feelings of achievement

Girls say they feel brave



When asked what it means to be brave, girls say:

"Being strong and not being afraid."

(Girl aged 7-10)

"Being confident and being myself."

(Girl aged 11-16)

"Aren't afraid to take risks."

(Girl aged 11-16)

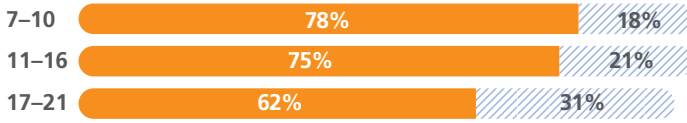
"Being able to face something or someone that is scaring you, whether it's a thought or school or a bully or showing a talent off in front of people."

(Girl aged 11-16)

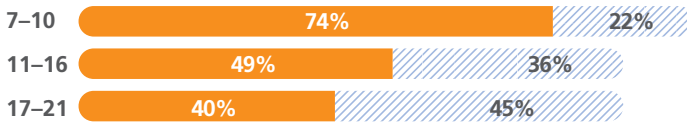
"Doing something out of your comfort zone."

(Girl aged 17-21)

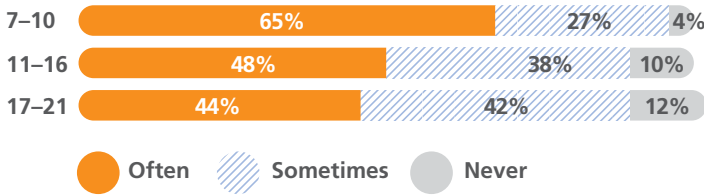
Girls feel they have been a good friend



Girls feel they can do anything if they try



Girls feel adventurous



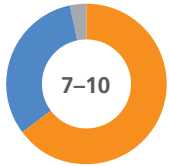
Girls feel proud of something they have done

7-10
75% often
21% sometimes

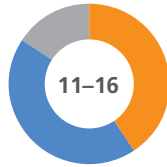
11-16
54% often
37% sometimes

17-21
41% often
50% sometimes

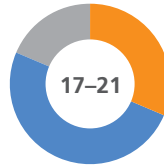
Girls feel confident in themselves



63% most of the time
31% sometimes
3% never



39% most of the time
42% sometimes
15% never



31% most of the time
49% sometimes
18% never

When asked what they are proud of, girls say:

"Achieving good grades and making my family feel proud."
 (Girl aged 11-16)

"Achieving my 4th belt in kickboxing."
 (Girl aged 11-16)

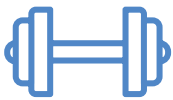
"Joining a football team and getting through to the final."
 (Girl aged 11-16)

"Standing up for myself and what I believe in."
 (Girl aged 11-16)

"Getting into university."
 (Girl aged 17-21)

"Overcoming mental illness."
 (Girl aged 17-21)

"Raising money for charity."
 (Girl aged 17-21)



Girls feel strong

7-10
55% most of the time
35% sometimes
7% never

11-16
43% most of the time
40% sometimes
13% never

17-21
33% most of the time
49% sometimes
16% never



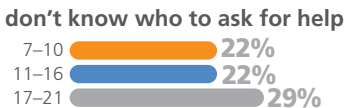
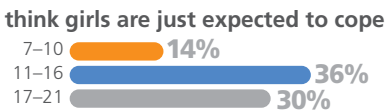
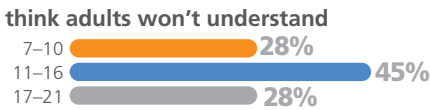
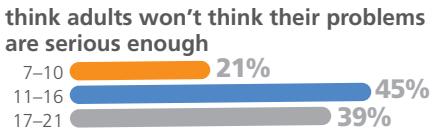
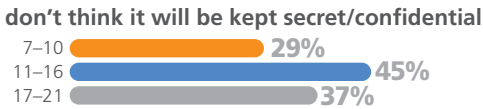
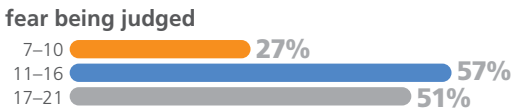
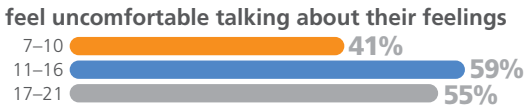
Girls feel powerful

11-16
34% most of the time
38% sometimes
21% never

17-21
24% most of the time
48% sometimes
26% never

Barriers to getting support

Girls would be put off seeking help if they were feeling down because they...



33%

OF GIRLS AGED 11-21 WOULD NOT SEEK HELP BECAUSE THEY THINK **GIRLS ARE JUST EXPECTED TO COPE**



52%



OF GIRLS AGED 7-21 WOULD NOT SEEK HELP BECAUSE THEY FEEL **UNCOMFORTABLE TALKING ABOUT THEIR FEELINGS**

Action girls want to see



When asked what are the three most important ways to improve girls' and women's lives*...

34% of girls aged 11-21 included **supporting young people with their mental health**

"If you get help at a young age it might help you in the future." (Girl aged 11-16)

"Too many young people are suffering in silence because they think nothing can be done to help them and no one will take them seriously if they tell their problems." (Girl aged 17-21)

"Mental health can be seen as something that you shouldn't tell anyone, or a secret when it shouldn't be seen as that." (Girl aged 11-16)

*See page 35 for full list of priorities



**“ Everyone should
have the same chances
at school.”**

(Girl aged 7–10)



EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Overview

Girls tell us that gender inequality and gender stereotypes are present in what they learn at school and that girls don't have the same access to sport, nor are they getting the life skills they need. Only half of girls say their education has inspired them to want to make a difference in the world.

In history, music, science and politics many girls say they've had less opportunity to learn about the contribution women have made in those subjects than have men. As girls get older they can be put off studying science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) subjects for a range of reasons including that the subjects are seen as 'more for boys'. While younger girls feel they have similar choices to boys when it comes to playing sport in school, the picture is very different for older girls who don't feel they get the same choices.

The overwhelming majority of girls (81%) tell us they want personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) to be taught in school. We also asked again this year about sex and relationships education. Many older girls and young women say they are concerned about young people's understanding of consent and want to learn about gender stereotyping at school. Younger girls want to learn life skills including online safety and fairness between women and men. Girls aged 13 to 16 are more likely to say they've been given information relevant for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in sex and relationship education than older girls aged 17 to 21.



SAY THEY HAVE THE
SAME CHOICES
AS BOYS AT THEIR SCHOOL

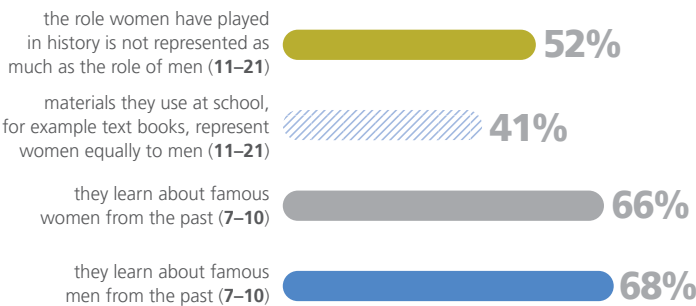
IN SPORT AND
EXERCISE



“(I want) more of a chance in sport, for example, football. Girls don’t get that chance because boys play it more often.” (Girl aged 7–10)

Gender and learning at school

Girls say that...



Science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM)



There are too few women role models teaching these subjects
11–21 **35% agree**



Girls do not tend to enjoy these subjects as much
7–10 **29% agree**
11–21 **27% agree**



Girls do not know what jobs they could do with these subjects
11–21 **31% agree**



Boys are better at science and maths
7–10 **12% agree**
11–21 **8% agree**



There are too few role models working in related careers
7–10 **22% agree**
11–21 **41% agree**



These subjects have the image of being more for boys
7–10 **15% agree**
11–21 **52% agree**



In music girls learn about both female and male musicians
11–21 **35% agree**
11–21 **29% disagree**



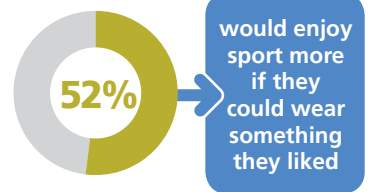
In science girls learn about both female and male scientists
11–21 **31% agree**
11–21 **38% disagree**



In politics girls learn about both female and male thinkers
16–21 **29% agree**
16–21 **29% disagree**

Sport and fitness

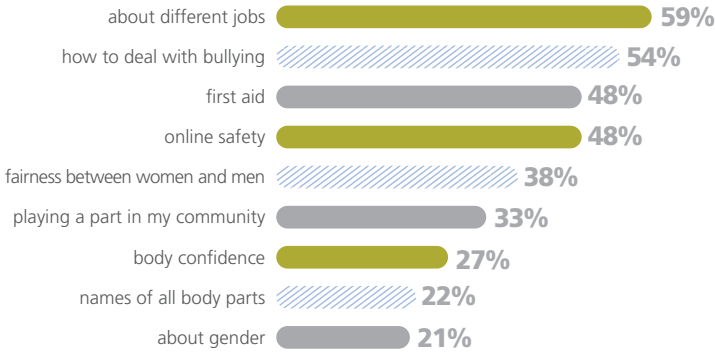
83% of girls aged 7–21 say they have to wear a school uniform sports kit



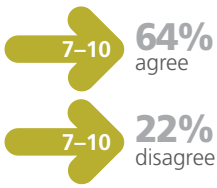
51%
OF GIRLS AGED 11–21 AGREE THAT THEIR EDUCATION HAS INSPIRED THEM TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD

Personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE)

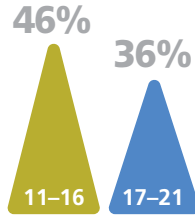
Girls aged 7–10 said they wanted to learn the following at school:



Girls say they have learned the names of all their body parts



Girls say they have learned about feminism at school



Action girls want to see



When asked what are the three most important ways to improve girls' and women's lives*...

16% of girls aged 13–21 included **improving young people's understanding of sexual consent**

“(Improving young people’s understanding of sexual consent) will make young people feel less vulnerable. As a young person I hear of too many situations where people don’t understand the concept of consent and it causes distress purely from ignorance.”
(Girl aged 17–21)

“Everyone has the right to have control.”
(Girl aged 17–21)

*See page 35 for full list of priorities

Sex and relationship education (SRE)

Girls think...

people their age clearly understand what sexual consent means
13–21 **44% agree**

there are blurred lines around sexual consent
13–21 **20% agree**

people their age understand sexual consent is about both getting *and* giving consent
13–21 **54% agree**
13–21 **25% disagree**

in relationship and sex education, they are given information relevant to:
same-sex couples
13–16 **48% agree**
17–21 **27% agree**

transgender people
13–16 **41% agree**
17–21 **20% agree**

81%

of girls aged 11–21 say **the government should ensure that PSHE is taught in all schools**

63%

of girls aged 11–21 say **their school should do more to tackle gender stereotypes**



“ No one should say girls can't do anything. Girls can do any job they want.”

(Girl aged 7–10)

6 ASPIRATIONS AND LEADERSHIP

Overview

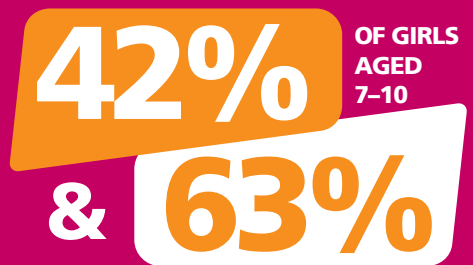
Girls have a diverse range of role models including women who have achieved fame from speaking out on issues they care about or achieving success in their field. Two thirds of young women want to be leaders in the future and for half of girls, current inequality in leadership makes them feel more determined to succeed.

However, many girls also feel they may not have equal opportunities in the future, with this feeling increasing as girls get older. Girls see the workplace as unequal with more than half thinking employers prefer to employ men over women and girls saying they think having children will impact their careers.

Whilst girls can identify leaders as brave, ambitious and powerful, many struggle to see themselves this way. Girls were more likely to describe themselves as friendly, caring, kind, fun and hard working.

Girls have a variety of dream jobs. Although many girls referenced a job they knew of such as being a teacher, doctor, nurse and vet, there were also other jobs they wanted such as becoming an artist, a football player, a scientist, working in mental health and 'being my own boss'. Girls value and feel inspired by their role models because they work hard, are ambitious, strong and powerful, embrace their bodies, are kind and generous, talented, feminists, and stand up for what they believe in.

Despite the challenges girls face when it comes to their future careers, they feel strongly that there needs to be action to address this. Girls say they want to know more about what jobs they can do and want there to be more opportunities for women at the top.



OF GIRLS AGED 11-21

WOULD LIKE TO BE
A LEADER

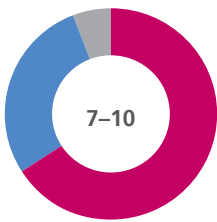


IN THEIR
CHOSEN JOB

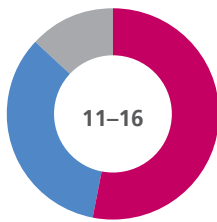
"I feel that if I work hard, I wouldn't be able to get as far as men, even if they are less suited for something than I may be. I think there is still a lot of sexism when it comes to jobs, especially top jobs, and women aren't as appreciated in the workforce." (Girl aged 17–21)

Role models

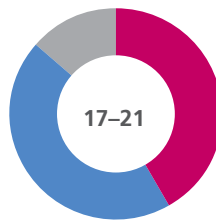
Girls feel inspired by someone they look up to or a role model



58% most of the time
25% sometimes
5% never



49% most of the time
31% sometimes
12% never



40% most of the time
43% sometimes
13% never



Women Olympic and Paralympic athletes are good role models for girls

11–21 **82% agree**

Famous people girls look up to

Adele:

"Because she always is herself and doesn't take criticism." (Girl aged 11–16)

Angelina Jolie:

"An amazing woman who has achieved a lot in helping others." (Girl aged 17–21)

Beyoncé:

"Because she is a really good singer and tells people that everyone is beautiful the way they are."

(Girl aged 11–16)

Emma Watson:

"She is fighting for equal rights for both men and women." (Girl aged 11–16)

Malala Yousafzai:

"She is extremely brave and courageous, she fights for what she believes in." (Girl aged 11–16)

Taylor Swift:

"She is determined and hard working."

(Girls aged 17–21)

Barack Obama:

"He is ambitious, hard working and persistent."

(Girl aged 17–21)

Leadership

Girls who agree they would like to be a leader in their chosen job

7–10 **42%**

11–16 **59%**

17–21 **66%**

They feel encouraged when they see a woman doing a job they want to do

7–10 **76% agree**

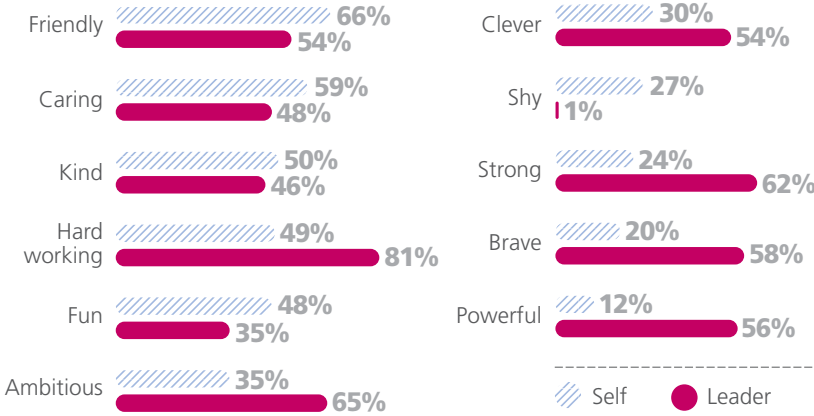
When they hear there are not enough women in leadership positions it makes them feel:

they have less chance of succeeding (themselves)
11–21 **45% agree**

more determined to succeed (themselves)
11–21 **55% agree**

Words girls would use to describe themselves and a leader

11-21



65%

OF GIRLS AGED 11-21
DESCRIBE A LEADER
AS AMBITIOUS

35%

OF GIRLS AGED 11-21
DESCRIBE THEMSELVES
AS AMBITIOUS

Gender equality at work

Girls and boys have the same chance of being successful in their future jobs

7-10 **86% agree**
11-16 **54% agree**
17-21 **35% agree**

Employers prefer to employ men than women

11-16 **45% agree**
17-21 **64% agree**

Having children will not affect their future career

11-16 **40% agree**
17-21 **38% agree**

Boys are better at being in charge than girls

7-10 **6% agree**

Dream jobs



Girls aged 7-10

"Scientist"

"Doctor"

"A famous runner that runs for Britain!"

"A United Nations Women's Goodwill Ambassador"

"YouTuber"

"Footballer"

"Pilot"

"Teacher"

Girls aged 11-16

"Chef"

"An actor and author"

"Astronaut"

"Vet"

"Architect"

"Nurse"

Girls aged 17-21

"Car mechanic"

"Fashion designer"

"Having my own business"

"Lawyer"

"Psychologist"



Action girls want to see



When asked what are the three most important ways to improve girls' and women's lives*...

32%

of girls aged 7-10 and 27% of girls aged 11-21 included **more women in top jobs**

"I want everyone to be equal and girls can get as much money as boys if they have the same job." (Girl aged 7-10)

"The more women get top jobs the more they will be role models for others." (Girl aged 11-16)

"Women don't have equal opportunities as men and I would like to see myself in a top job." (Girl aged 11-16)

*See page 35 for full list of priorities

METHODOLOGY

Girlguiding commissioned ChildWise, the leading specialists in research with children and young people, to conduct the Girls' Attitudes Survey.

A total of 1,627 girls and young women aged 7 to 21 took part from across the UK and from within and outside Girlguiding.

The majority of questions were completed online. Additional face-to-face interviews were conducted with young women who were not in education, employment or training (NEET).

Questions were adapted to be suitable for different age groups.

Where data does not total 100%, the remainder said 'Don't know'.

Sample details

Data was weighted at analysis to correct any imbalance in the final sample across the age range and within geographical region.

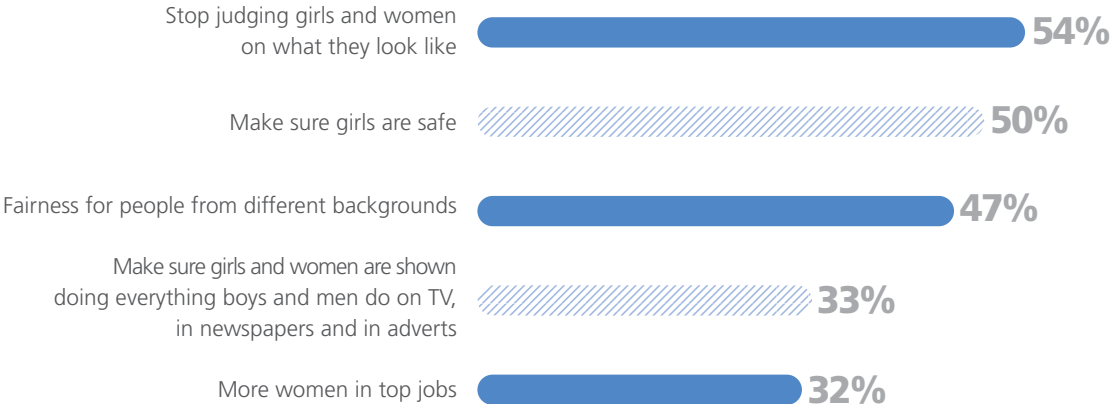
TOTAL	7-8 YRS	9-10 YRS	11-13 YRS	14-16 YRS	17-18 YRS	19-21 YRS
1627	319	240	339	220	231	278
	England	Wales	Scotland	NI	Urban	Rural
	1300	113	90	124	1209	418
7-16	School performance:		Outstanding / Good		Satisfactory / Poor	
1118			896		222	
16-21	ABC1	C2DE	At school / Uni / FE		Working	NEET
509	256	253	311		106	92

ETHNIC BACKGROUND	
White British / Irish / Other	65%
Black British / Black African / Black Caribbean / Other Black	4%
Indian / Pakistani / Bangladeshi / Other Asian	10%
Mixed heritage	5%
Other	1%
Don't know / Prefer not to say	15%

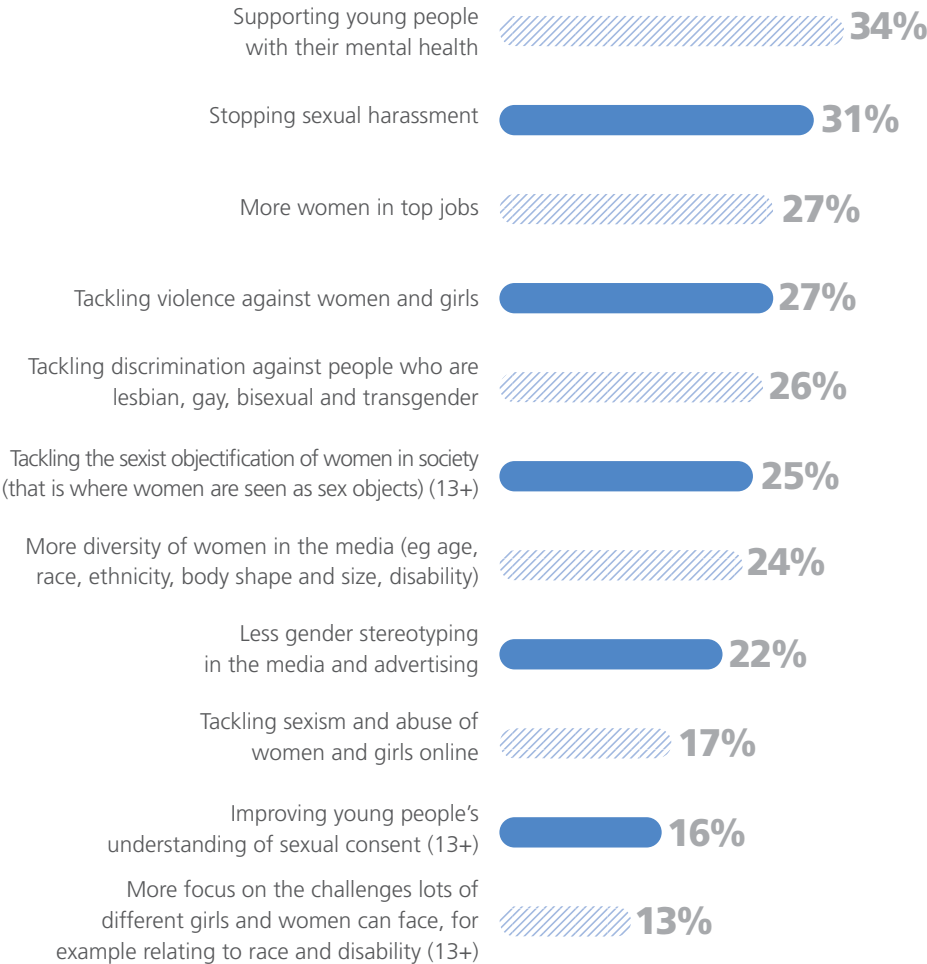
ANNEX 1

When asked what are the three most important ways to improve girls' and women's lives, girls said:

7-10



11-21





WE DISCOVER, WE GROW

Girlguiding

Girlguiding is the leading charity for girls and young women in the UK. We build girls' confidence and raise their aspirations. We give them the chance to discover their full potential and encourage them to be a powerful force for good. We give them a space to have fun.

We are for all girls

We are for all girls and young women, whatever their background and circumstances. We offer them fun, exciting activities and the chance to make lifelong friends. You'll find us in many communities, helping to give girls a head start in life and encouraging them to be happy, self-confident and curious about the world they live in and the difference they can make.

We give girls their own space

We give girls a place where they can really be themselves with other girls and share the experience of growing up as a girl in today's world. We provide a safe, non-judgemental environment where girls can explore the issues they care about while having lots of fun, enjoying new experiences and learning vital skills.



**We give girls
a voice**

We give girls the confidence, skills and information to make informed decisions.

We offer a supportive, inclusive and exciting environment where they can reach their own conclusions about the world. We show them how they can speak out and take positive action to improve their lives and the lives of others.

**We change as the
lives of girls change**

We are relevant to today's girls because we listen to them and constantly evolve and adapt what we offer them without losing what makes us uniquely us. We provide support, comfort and friendship in what can often seem a complex world for girls as they grow up.





@girlguiding
#GirlsAttitudes



Registered charity number 306016

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