

# SHAPING OUR FUTURE

The Jack Petchey COVID-19 Youth Survey

**If you think you can, you can!**





Over 6,000 young people responded to our survey.

PHOTOGRAPHY: FOTEINI CHRISTOFILOPOULOU



# Introduction

**The Jack Petchey Foundation is a progressive grant-making organisation that has invested over £133m in opportunities for young people across London and Essex and recognises the achievements of over 12,000 young people every year.**

This year, amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, young people have faced some of the most difficult challenges in recent history – not being able to see their friends, go into school or university, attend their youth clubs or have the usual opportunities to experience new things, to name just a few.

Our **Shaping Our Future Survey** asked young people from London and Essex about their experiences of the lockdown and what they want to see for young people in the future. **Over 6,000 young people** responded, showing how keen they are to have their voices heard.

One of the overwhelming views that emerged from the survey was how much young people value school, not just for the

education they receive and the resources available, but for the support and motivation it can provide. In addition to this, young people reported how much they missed attending their youth clubs over the lockdown, and reflected on the role that extra-curricular activities usually play in young people's wellbeing and in giving them opportunities to experience new things.

Responses also revealed how, despite challenges faced in the lockdown, young people have risen to the challenge of adversity and have gone the extra mile to help their communities through difficult times.

Our young respondents identified the things that will help them to thrive in the future. Young people want more opportunities for **training, work experience,**

**mental health support, volunteering and for educational support outside of school.** Young people told us they believe that these opportunities will build their self-belief and give them the confidence to positively shape the future.

The Jack Petchey Foundation will use the data gathered through our survey to ensure that youth providers, decision makers and society **hear young people's voices.** We will listen to what young people have told us and will **shape our future programmes** to provide the best opportunities to empower young people to be the best they can be.

**Trudy Kilcullen MBE**  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
**Jack Petchey Foundation**







# A note from our Youth Consultancy Panel

PHOTOGRAPHY: MEDIA TRUST

**Young people need more opportunities to speak up and speak out, especially in history-defining moments like the COVID-19 pandemic. The Jack Petchey COVID-19 Youth Survey has given us a platform to communicate our experience and voice our opinions. Over 6,000 of us jumped at the opportunity!**

We are the Youth Consultancy Panel at the Foundation, a group of young people who have previously been involved in one or more of the Foundation's programmes and now work closely with the Foundation to shape and develop its work, particularly in youth engagement and promoting young people's voices.

As a panel, we were involved in designing and promoting the survey, making sure it was asked the questions that gave young people the

opportunity to express themselves as well as possible. We wanted to focus not only on individuals' own experiences of the lockdown, but also how they have reflected during this time on how we live and what we want the future to look like for young people.

We are excited to see how this work inspires future opportunities, not just at the Foundation, but those opportunities given to young people by society at large.



# A message from Sir Jack



I am so proud of our youth. I have always found them to be resilient, creative and motivated – especially when they get a little bit of encouragement!

During the extraordinary circumstances presented by COVID-19 we have seen this more than ever. Young people are fundraising, helping their neighbours, volunteering with their schools and clubs, assisting their families and more. And doing this with incredible optimism and positivity.

Reading the citations from our special Community Awards programme gave me great hope. Our saying has always been “if you think you can, you can” and to see young people get on with life, be positive whatever the circumstances and do what they CAN fills me with joy.

This survey shows that young people want opportunities to succeed and grow. We should all make an effort to do what we can to encourage that. Sometimes all they need is recognition, a ‘pat on the back’ and a bit of positive feedback. It doesn’t cost much – but it goes a long way to build their confidence and encourage them to go further.

I am proud of our young people for their attitude during these difficult times and I believe that our future is in the best of hands!

Best wishes,

*Jack Petchey*

Sir Jack Petchey, CBE







# Education

With almost nine in ten respondents being of school age, education was an overarching theme in young people's experience of the lockdown and in their hopes for the future.

The survey showed that **three quarters** of young people missed going to school.



**One in three** did not have adequate resources to study from home.



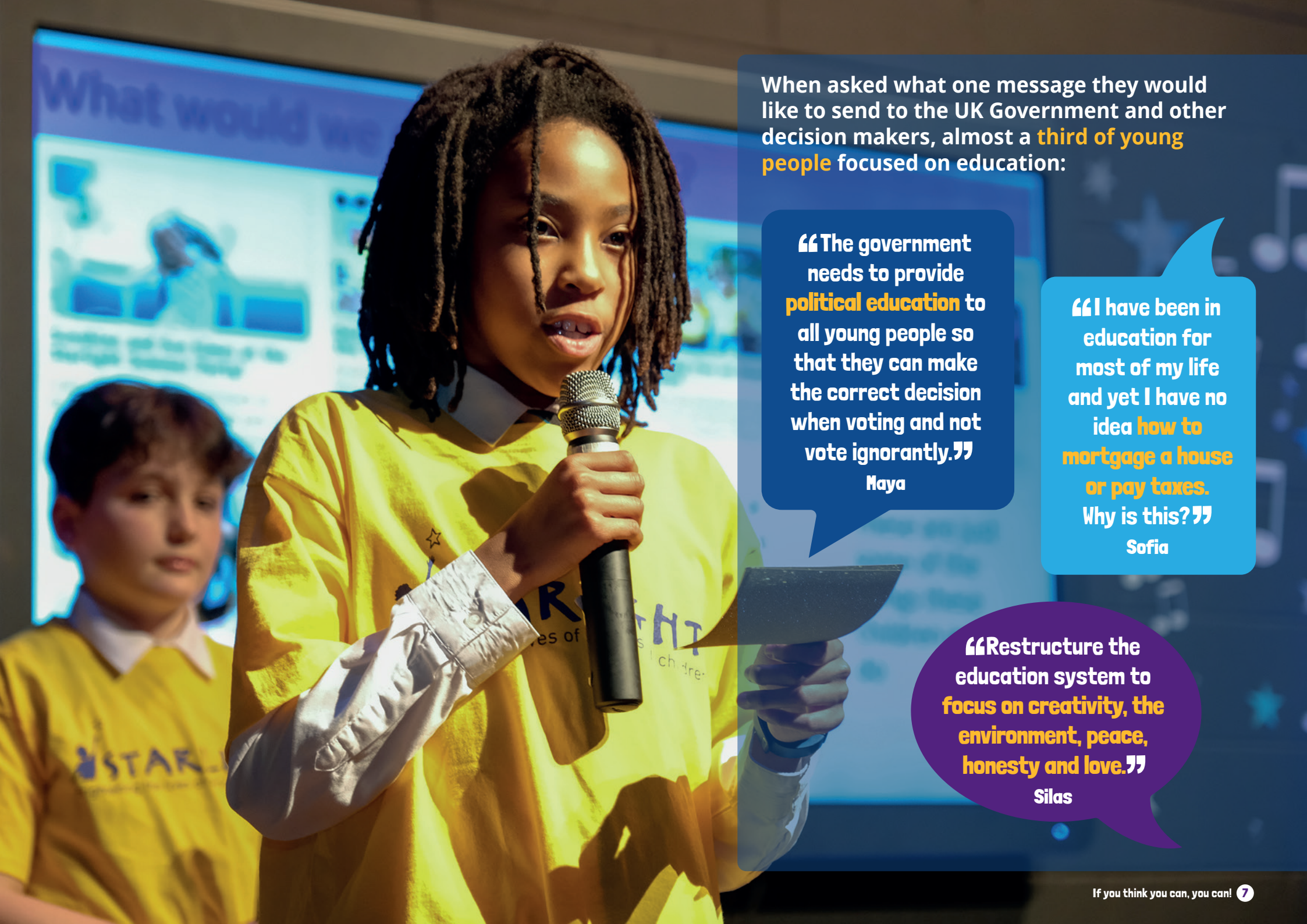
**One in five** young people reached out to a teacher or lecturer for emotional support during the lockdown, showing that educational staff provide more to young people than just teaching.



**“School is important because... learning is more than just facts. It's about learning with and from each other. It's all the day-to-day contact you miss. Online learning is okay, but you don't get the teachers getting excited or the discussions that go off topic but are really interesting, or the thoughts of other people in the class.”**

**Eliana**





When asked what one message they would like to send to the UK Government and other decision makers, almost a **third of young people** focused on education:

“The government needs to provide **political education** to all young people so that they can make the correct decision when voting and not vote ignorantly.”

Maya

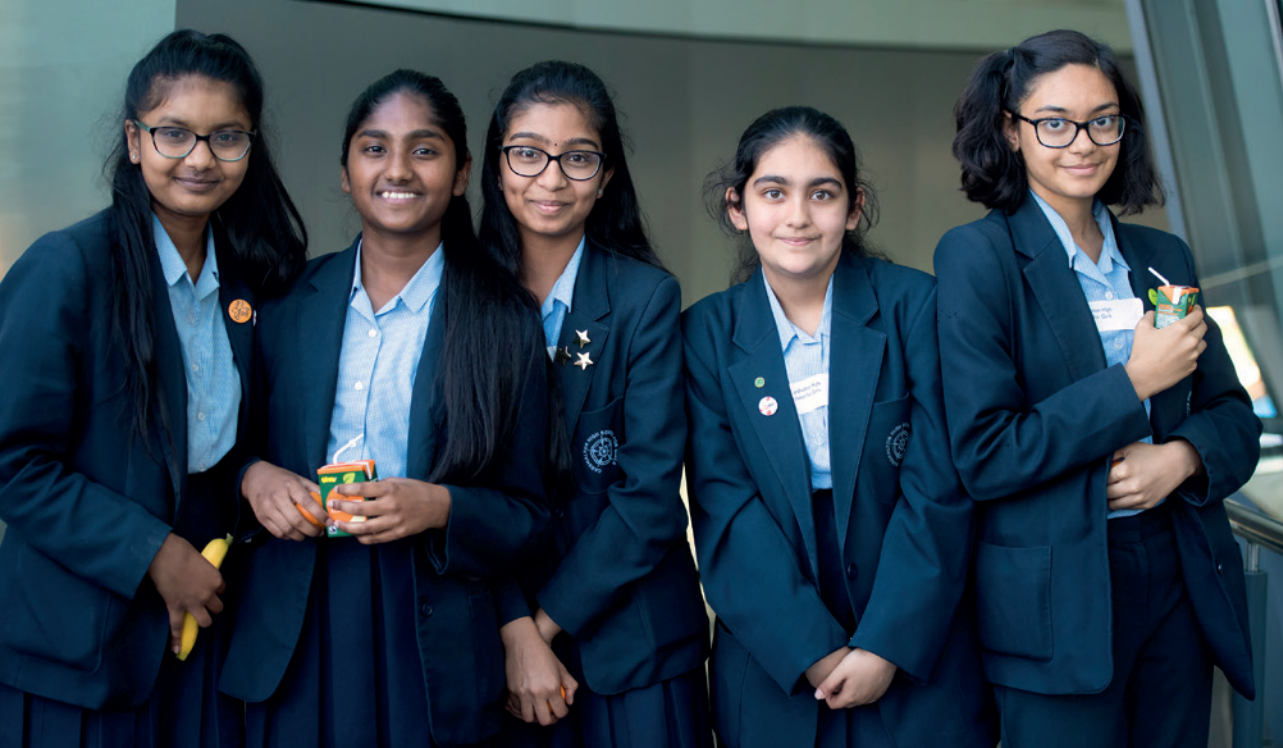
“I have been in education for most of my life and yet I have no idea **how to mortgage a house or pay taxes.** Why is this?”

Sofia

“Restructure the education system to **focus on creativity, the environment, peace, honesty and love.**”

Silas

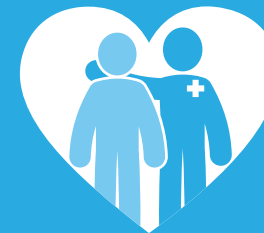




# Employment

The lockdown has had a profound impact on young people's perceptions of their future careers. Almost **two thirds** of young people in London and Essex expressed that they are more worried about the impact of COVID-19 on their future job opportunities. **One in ten** has been furloughed or taken a pay cut during the pandemic.

**Despite these worries and the challenges that young people have faced, they have been inspired in new ways as well:**



**2 in 5**

young people are more inspired to pursue a caring profession in the future



**1 in 5**

young people are more inspired to pursue a teaching role in the future



**“The youth are the future. We will be the next generation of politicians, bankers, drivers, cleaners etc. We need more opportunities for work and we need to be taken seriously.”**

**Zakiya**



We asked young people what opportunities should be prioritised to help them succeed in the future:

**53%**

wanted more internships and work experience

**53%**

wanted more training opportunities and career advice

**30%**

wanted more support for young people to start their own businesses





# Social and Emotional Wellbeing

**Over half** of respondents expressed more worry about their mental health and **almost three-quarters** were more worried about their friends'/family's wellbeing than before lockdown.

## In the lockdown...

**75%**

of young people  
spent more  
time on social  
media

**45%**

did more  
creative  
activities

**45%**

spent less  
time outside

**14%**

meditated  
more

One of the overwhelming insights gained from the survey was the importance of extra-curricular activities to young people's social and emotional wellbeing.

**Two in every three** respondents said that they were usually involved in youth clubs or youth centres outside of the lockdown, but only half of those clubs had remained open during the lockdown.

**Over half** of respondents said that they are more motivated to get involved with their school, university or youth club's activities than they were before lockdown.





PHOTOGRAPHY:  
FOTEINI CHRISTOFILOPOULOU

So many young people told us how important youth clubs and services are to them now, and in the future...

“It is vital that young people can make their own communities... Youth services provide places and a community for young people who want to step out of where they are from. You cannot choose the community you are born into, but you can choose the one to grow up in. Open the youth centres back up. Make them safe places to go to provide kindness, a listening ear, and education if it is needed.” Sara

“So many children need places where they feel like they are noticed and special, where they feel loved and their achievements are noticed and celebrated rather than ignored or told that they are not important. Please fund and open more youth centres.” Cairo



“I want to see the opening of more Youth Zones to help give young children a second home which helps them stay off the street and out of trouble.” Duncan



**43%**

of young people said their clubs and extra-curricular activities were important for their wellbeing over the lockdown.





# Giving Back

Over the past few months, so many young people have shown their resilience against the difficulties of the lockdown and have reacted to their new circumstances with **kindness and positive actions**:

**56%** of young people have taken positive action to help others during the lockdown.



As well as motivating and mobilising young people to help others, the lockdown seems to have inspired even more community spirit.

**65%** of respondents said they would like to see community spirit prioritised in a post-COVID world.



When asked what opportunities they would like to see in the future...

**Almost half**  
of respondents wanted to prioritise more volunteering opportunities for young people to give back.

**Almost a third**  
said they wanted more schemes to recognise young people's achievements.



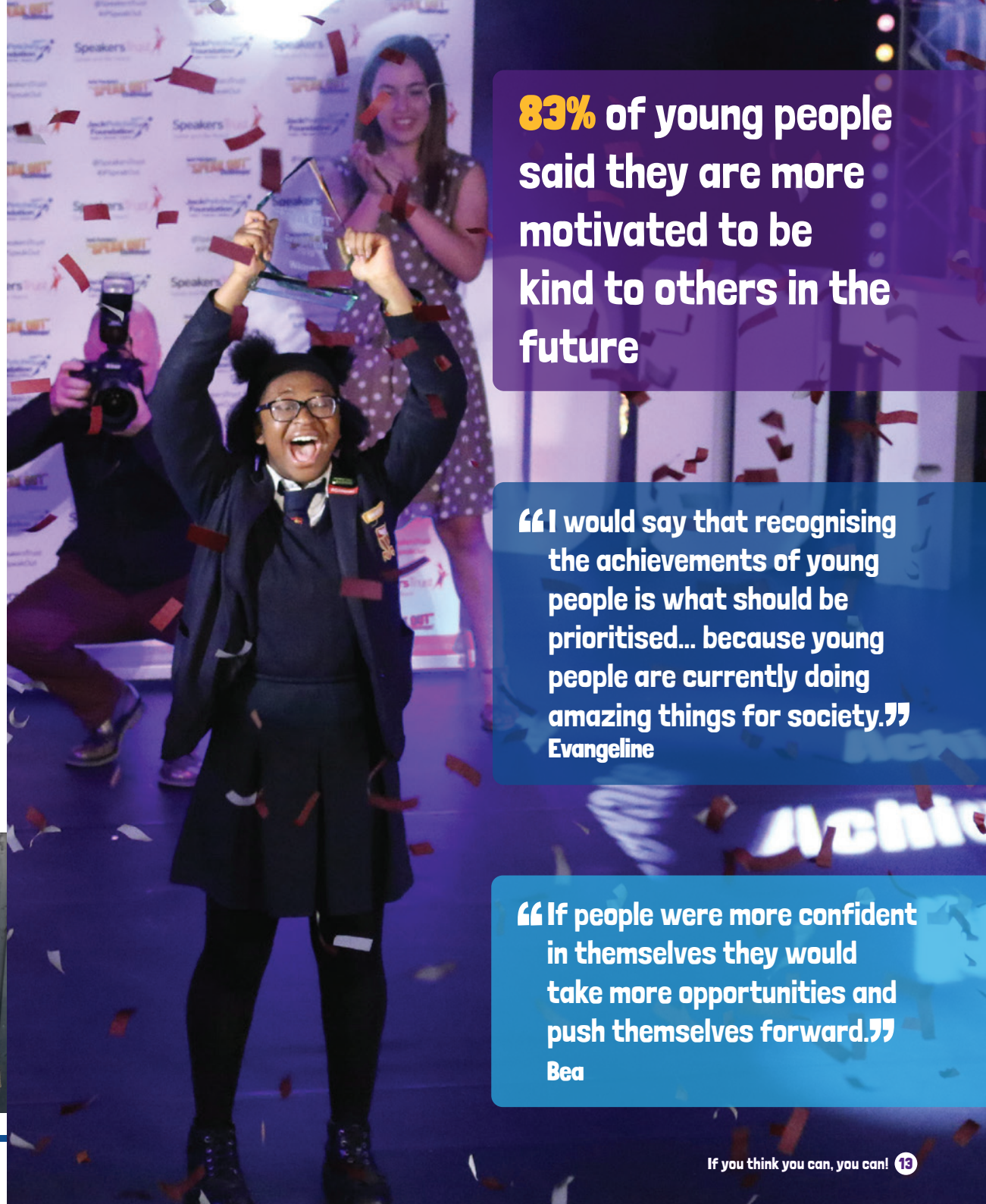
# Jack Petchey's Community Awards

During the lockdown, the Jack Petchey Foundation developed a Community Awards scheme, where members of the public could nominate a young person going above and beyond to help their community during the pandemic. Young people were nominated for a whole host of activities to help others: from shopping for vulnerable neighbours, delivering medication, volunteering, supporting classmates and much, much more.



“This award has made me realise that it is the small good deeds that we do that matter, especially if they are done out of the goodness of your heart. It also reminds us to be good people because in times like these all we need is positivity.”  
Cynthia, Kingston-Upon-Thames

“This award motivates me to do more within the community and shows me that I can go past and exceed any limitations I've been set by myself or others.” Ahmad, Newham



**83%** of young people said they are more motivated to be kind to others in the future

“I would say that recognising the achievements of young people is what should be prioritised... because young people are currently doing amazing things for society.”  
Evangeline

“If people were more confident in themselves they would take more opportunities and push themselves forward.”  
Bea





PHOTOGRAPHY: MEDIA TRUST

# Shaping our Future

Despite the hardships of recent months, young people have been reflecting on life and society as we know it and considering what they want to see in their futures.

We asked young people what they would like to see prioritised in a post-lockdown society:



**73%** want a cleaner environment



**61%** want more family time



**67%** want more time for their interests or hobbies



**61%** want more time for self care



**65%** want more kindness and community spirit



**54%** want less pressure to be busy



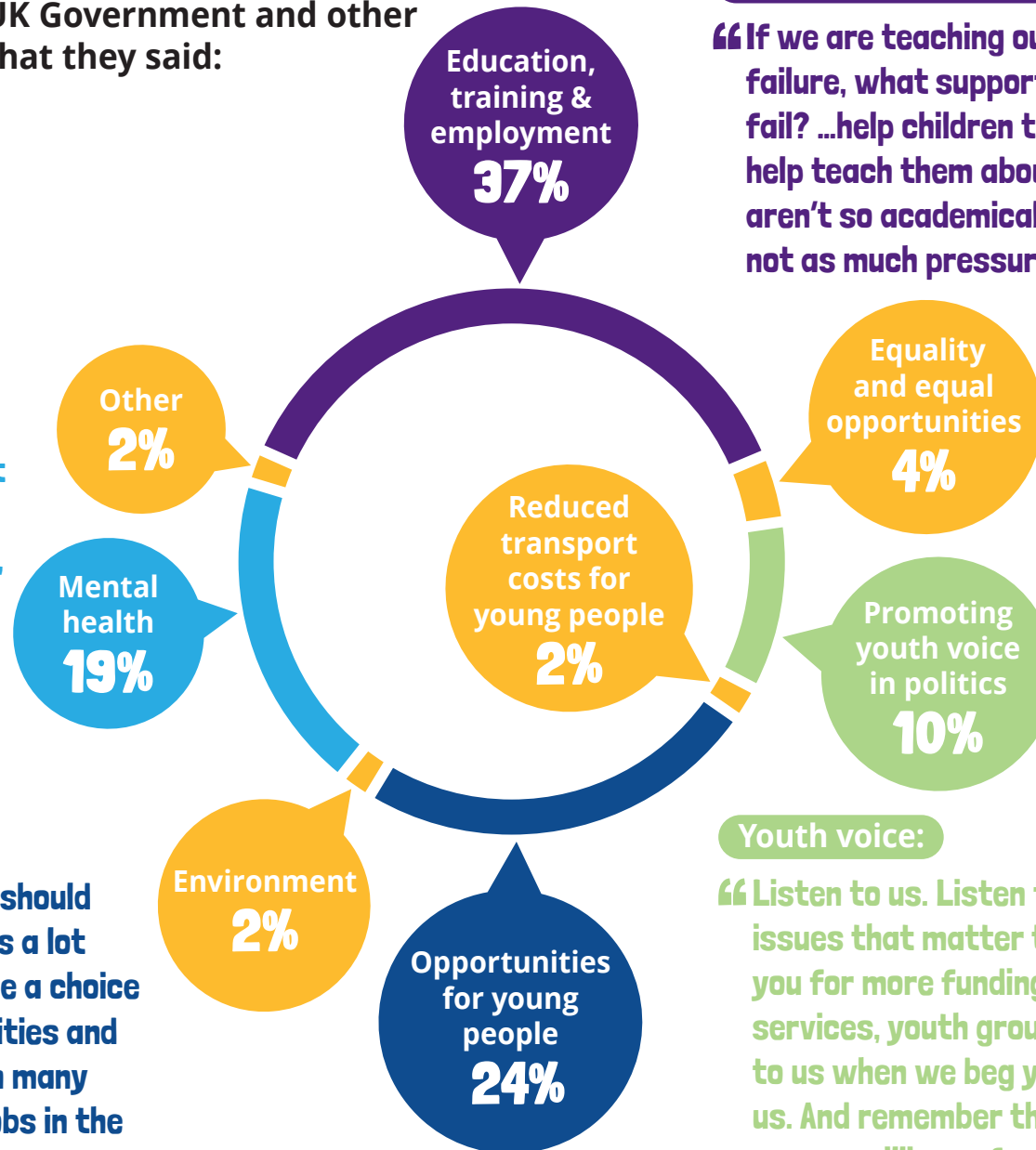
We asked young people to tell us the **one** message they want to send to the UK Government and other decision makers. Here's what they said:

#### Mental health:

“I think a priority for young people is just making sure they remain engaged, with themselves, the community, their education and their friends. Without engagement with all of these things, mental health and wellbeing, as well as the skills you develop to get you through life, will take a hit.”  
Becky

#### Opportunities:

“I think that the Government should promote youth organisations a lot more as it gives young people a choice to experience new opportunities and new people which can help in many ways such as applying for jobs in the future, self confidence and socialising.”  
Letiya



#### Education, training & employment:

“If we are teaching our new generations the fear of failure, what support is there for them if they do fail? ...help children to learn at their own pace and... help teach them about alternative careers that aren't so academically weighted so that there is not as much pressure surrounding grades.” Emily

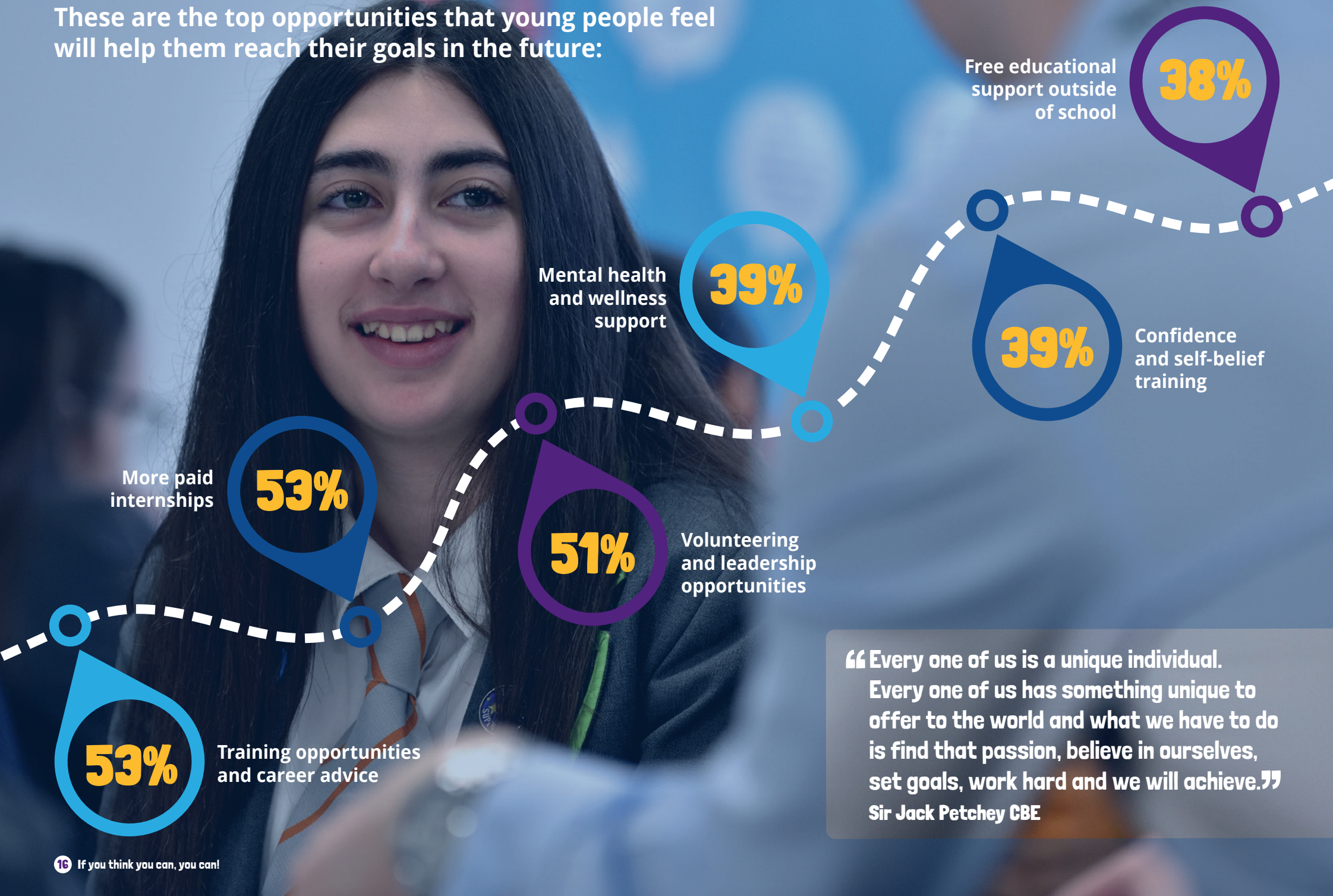
“They should work on opportunities given to young people such as work experience and apprenticeships to make sure they get the job they want to do when they are older.” Zakiya

#### Youth voice:

“Listen to us. Listen to us when we speak about the issues that matter to us. Listen to us when we ask you for more funding for our schools, mental health services, youth groups, higher education.... Listen to us when we beg you to keep the planet alive for us. And remember that when the next election comes, millions of us will gain the right to vote. And we will remember.” Arlie



These are the top opportunities that young people feel will help them reach their goals in the future:

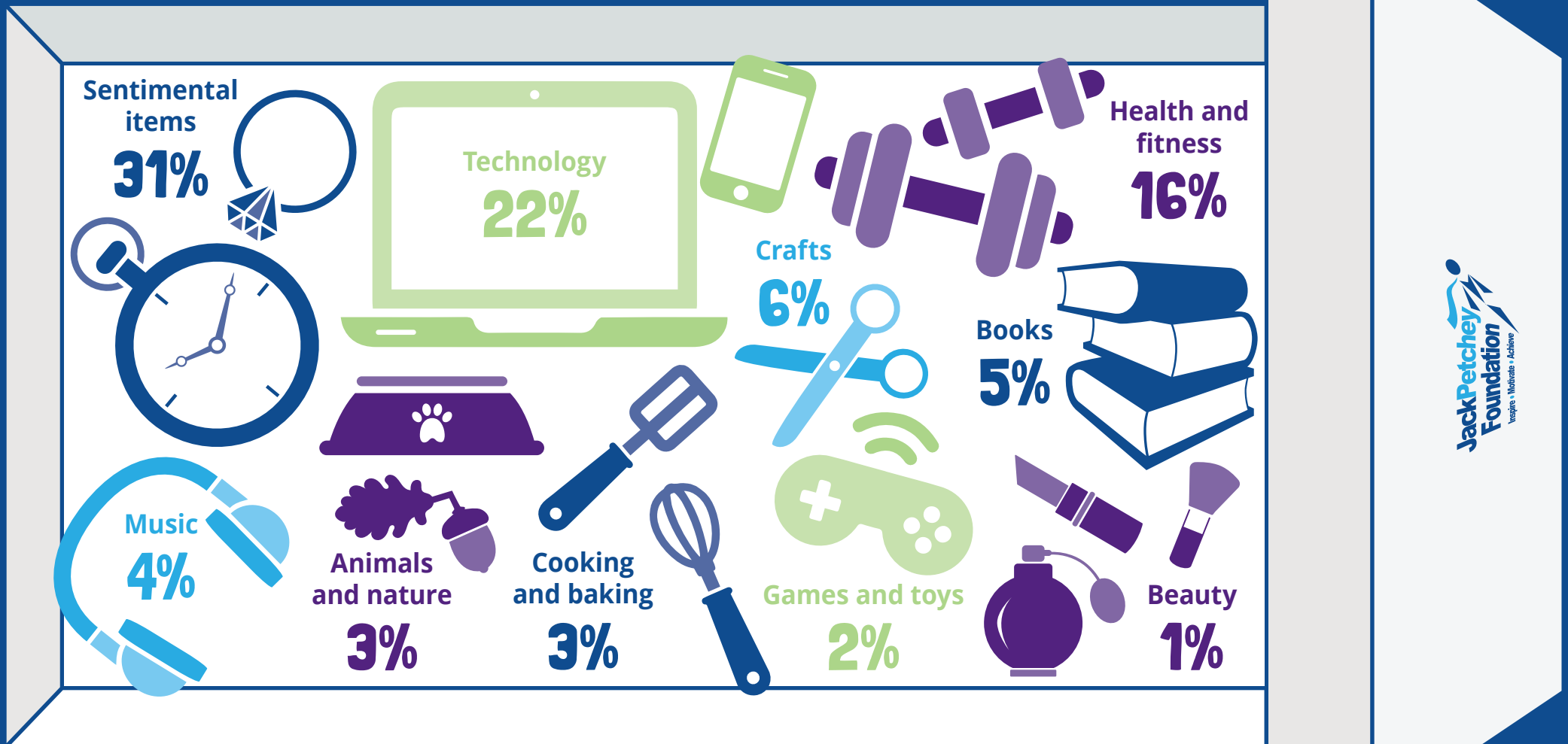


“Every one of us is a unique individual. Every one of us has something unique to offer to the world and what we have to do is find that passion, believe in ourselves, set goals, work hard and we will achieve.”  
Sir Jack Petchey CBE



# A Defining Moment

We asked each young respondent to choose something that they would put in a time capsule to remember the lockdown. Here are some of the most popular things they said they wanted to put inside:



The Jack Petchey Foundation will use this information to create a time capsule of young people's experiences of the lockdown, including a copy of this report, to be buried near our base in Canary Wharf and to be opened in 2049 - our 50th birthday!





## How we will use this report...

We place young people at the heart of all that we do. We are determined to use this report to amplify young people's voices to decision makers and to respond to their views in our work as a Foundation. We commit to embedding young people's suggestions in our work going forward and to providing young people with the opportunities they have told us they need in order to thrive and be the best they can be.

The Foundation will also be creating a physical time capsule to represent young people's experiences of the lockdown with the items suggested in our survey.

To find out more about our work, and how you can get involved, please visit our website.

## Methodology

All figures and statistics used in this report are from the **Jack Petchey COVID-19 Youth Survey**. A total of 6,051 11-25 year olds completed the survey, with 88% of them being from London and Essex and 87% aged 11-19.

The survey was open from 6th July to 10th August 2020 and carried out online using Survey Monkey. Questions were a mixture of multiple choice and open questions.





## Who we are...

**The Jack Petchey Foundation has invested over £133 million in programmes and opportunities for young people across London and Essex.**

Our flagship programme is the Jack Petchey Achievement Award Scheme which is run in 1,600 youth clubs and secondary schools and recognises over 12,000 young people's achievements every year. Our other programmes include Jack Petchey's "Speak Out" Challenge!, Step Into Dance, Glee Club Challenge, Perfect Pitch, Vlogstar Challenge and more. We provide young people with opportunities across sport, science, maths, engineering, public speaking, singing, dancing – there really is something for everyone!



# Spread the Word

We want to raise young people's voices and amplify their ideas to the UK government, youth service providers and other decision makers so that they know what young people want to see from the future. To do this we need your help!



## Visit our website

to download an email-template to send the results of this survey to your local MP, local mayor and leader of your council.



## Sign up to our newsletter

to find out how we are acting on the results of the survey through our own work improving opportunities for young people.



## Tell others about our survey.

Be part of the positive message, whether you filled in our survey or not. Download our graphics to share on your social media using the hashtag #ShapingOurFuture



**Discuss the findings** of this survey in your school council or youth club and send us your ideas and suggestions for new programmes to address the issues highlighted in this report.

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