

Climate Literacy Amongst School Leavers

Prepared for The Royal Meteorological Society

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Background & Methodology

These are the findings of the Young Person's Omnibus survey conducted between **14th March and 1st July, 2022**. The results presented herein are from a sample of **271 pupils** in their final academic year (aged 15 to 16 years old) across England, Scotland and Wales.

The aim of the research was to understand the level of climate literacy, (understanding of the Earth's climate and the impact of global warming), amongst those leaving secondary education. The questions asked in the survey were developed by the Royal Meteorological Society, in conjunction with many of their members, including the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report authors, to make sure that they give a fair assessment of climate literacy and will remain relevant in years to come as we hope to repeat the survey on an annual basis.

Online based self-completion sessions were conducted with pupils in their classes and administered by school staff. For more information about the Young Person's Omnibus please see the appendix.



Summary



Most pupils say they have been taught about climate change in a lesson during their school years, and over half were taught about it in the last year



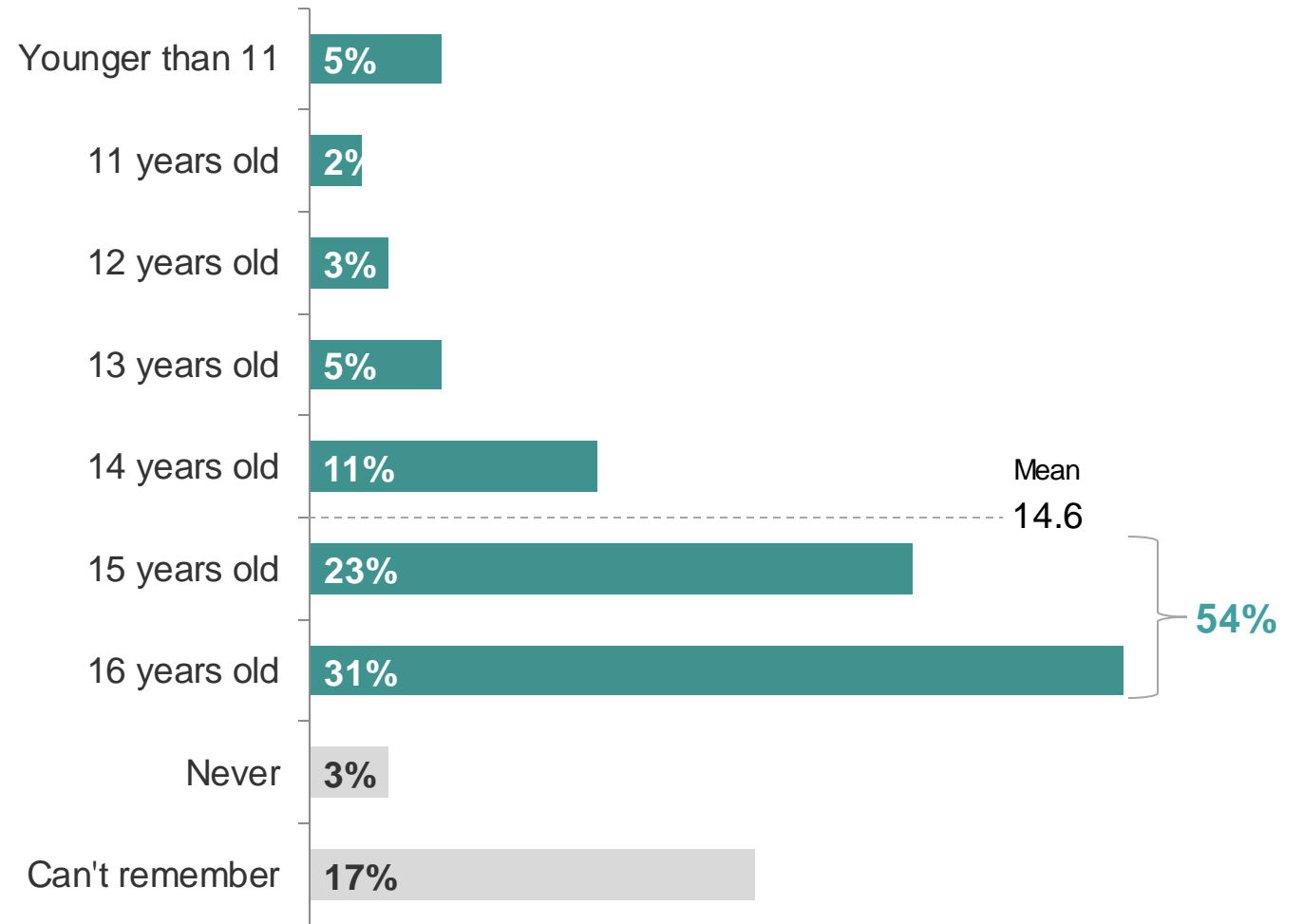
Despite this, understanding of how much the climate has warmed is low – with many not being sure



6 in 10 school leavers are concerned about climate change and a similar proportion believe that they will be impacted by it during their lifetime

Over half of school leavers say they have been taught about climate change in the last year- although 1 in 6 can't remember when they were taught about it

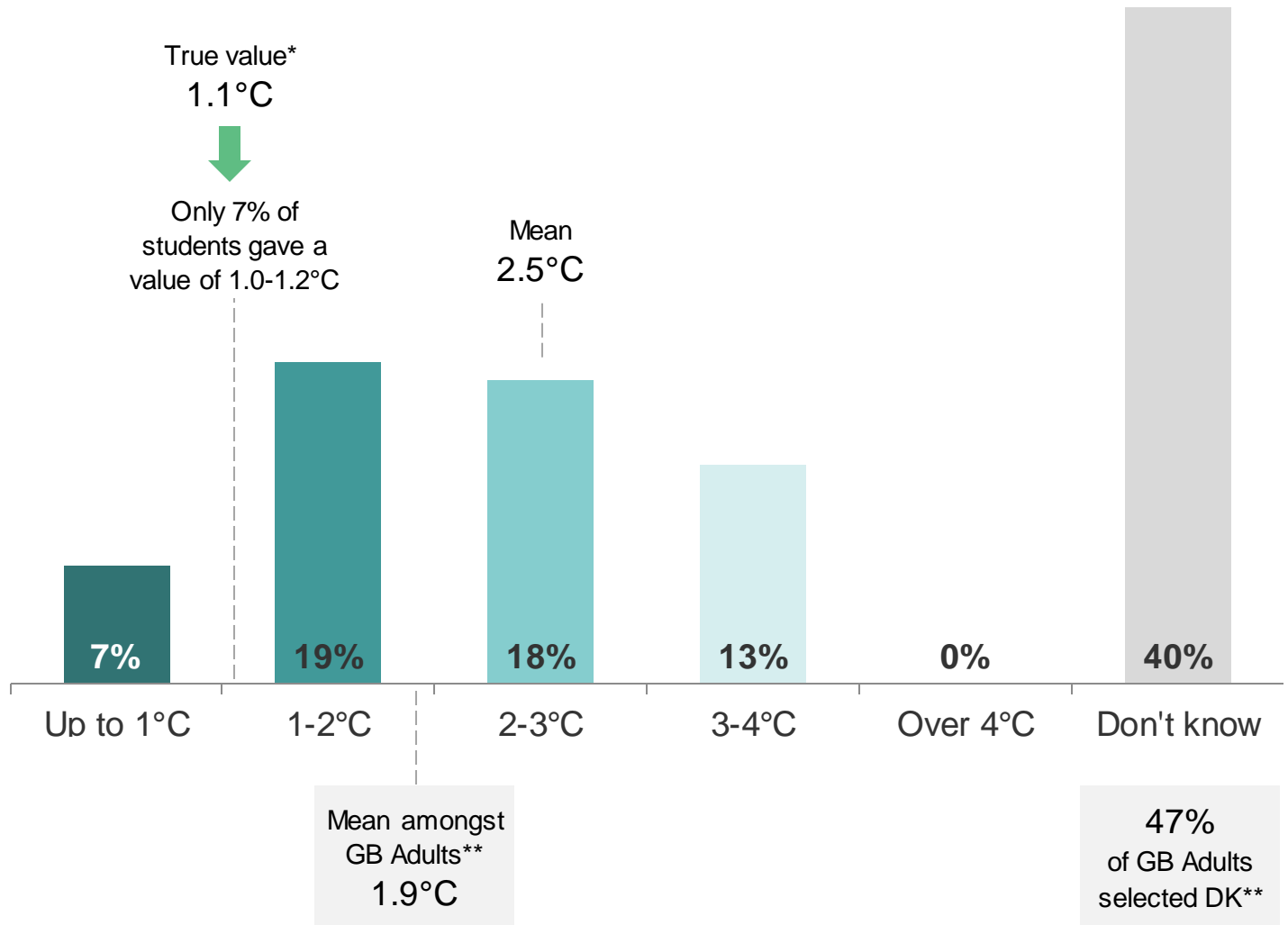
Q. How old were you when you were last taught about climate change in a lesson at school?



Base: Young people in year 11, S4 or S5 in secondary schools (excluding special schools, fee-paying schools and sixth form colleges) n=271

However, 4 in 10 say they don't know how much the climate has warmed, and those who think they do tend to overestimate

Q. How much do you think the climate of the Earth has warmed since 1850, if at all?

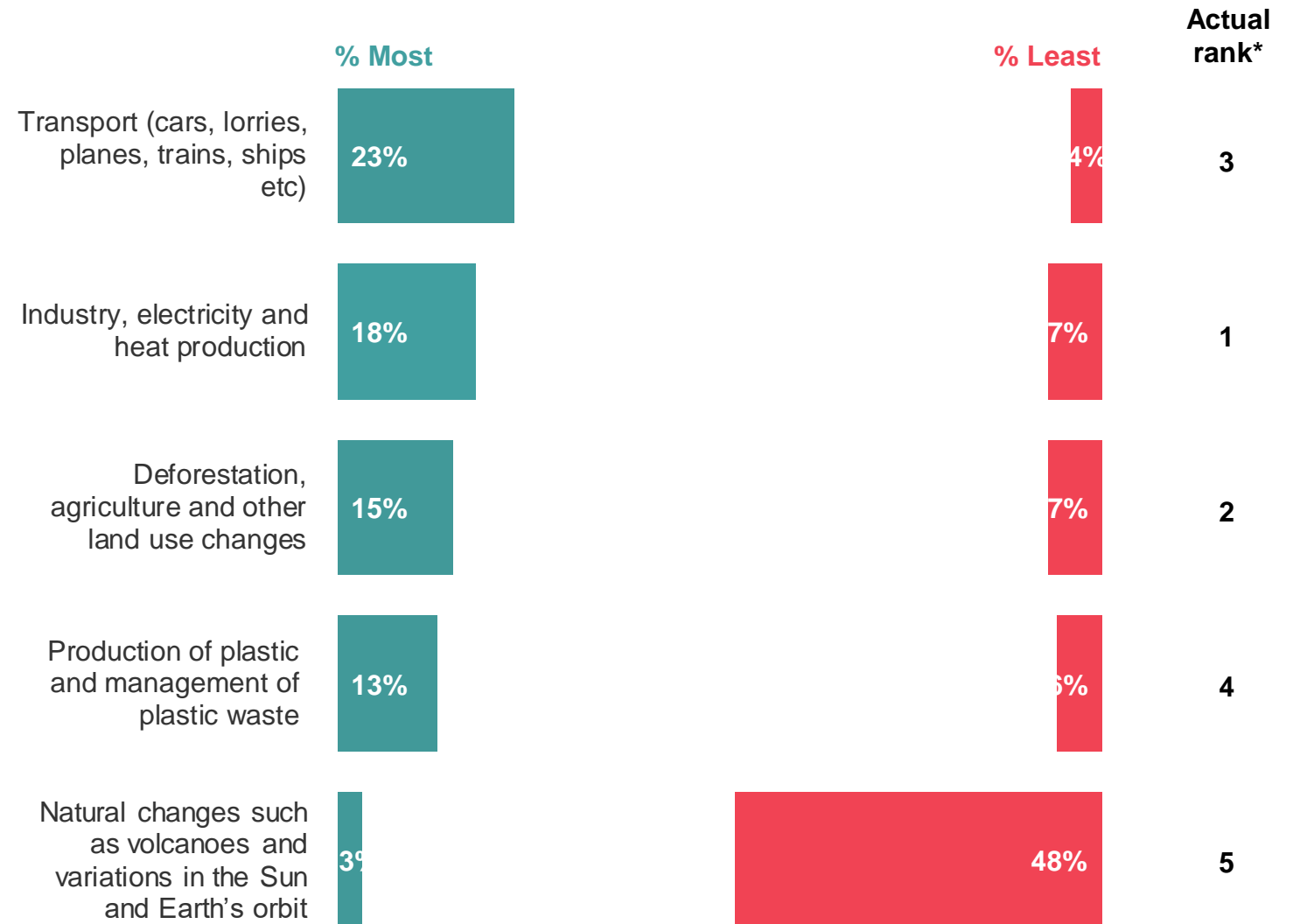


Base: Young people in year 11, S4 or S5 in secondary schools (excluding special schools, fee-paying schools and sixth form colleges) n=271
 *Source: IPCC, 2021: Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Available here: https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_WGI_SPM.pdf
 **Figure from Ipsos' Earth Day 2022 research: n=1,001 GB Adults aged 16-74, 18 Feb- 4 Mar 2022.

Almost a quarter incorrectly attribute transport as the biggest contributor to global warming vs 18% who correctly identify industry, electricity and heat production

Q. How much, if at all, do you think the following have contributed to global warming?

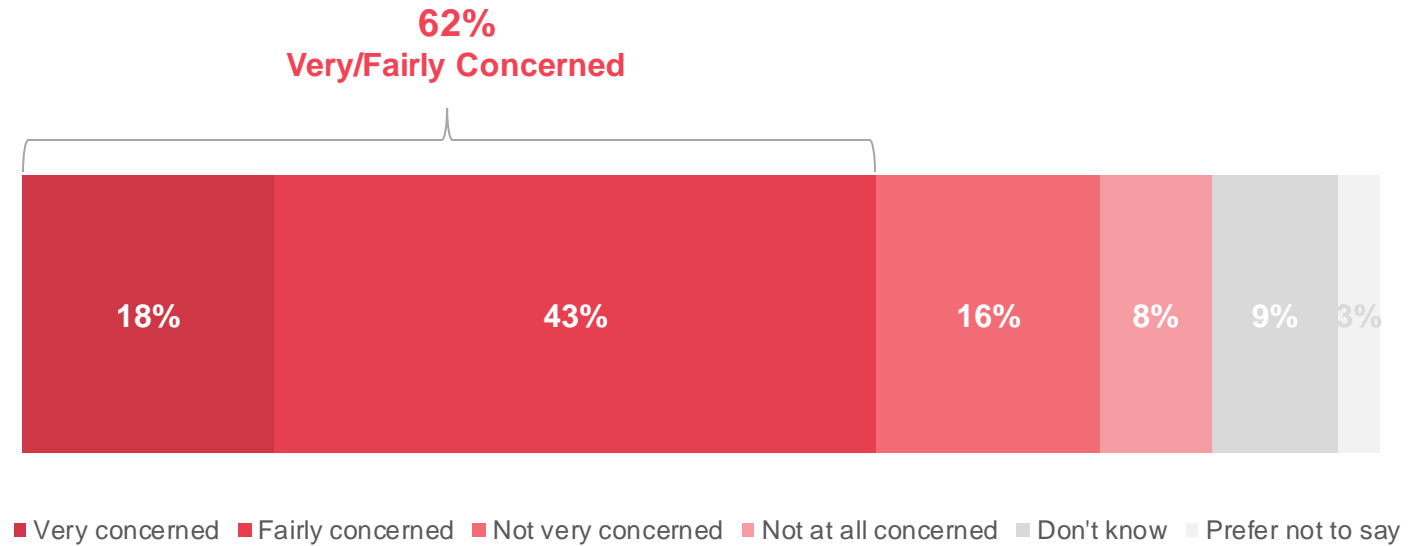
Rank selection, most to least



Base: Young people in year 11, S4 or S5 in secondary schools (excluding special schools, fee-paying schools and sixth form colleges) n=271
 *Source: IPCC, 2022: Climate Change 2022: Mitigation of Climate Change. Contribution of Working Group III to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Figure 2.13.
 Available here: https://report.ipcc.ch/ar6wg3/pdf/IPCC_AR6_WGIII_FinalDraft_FullReport.pdf

6 in 10 are very or fairly concerned about climate change

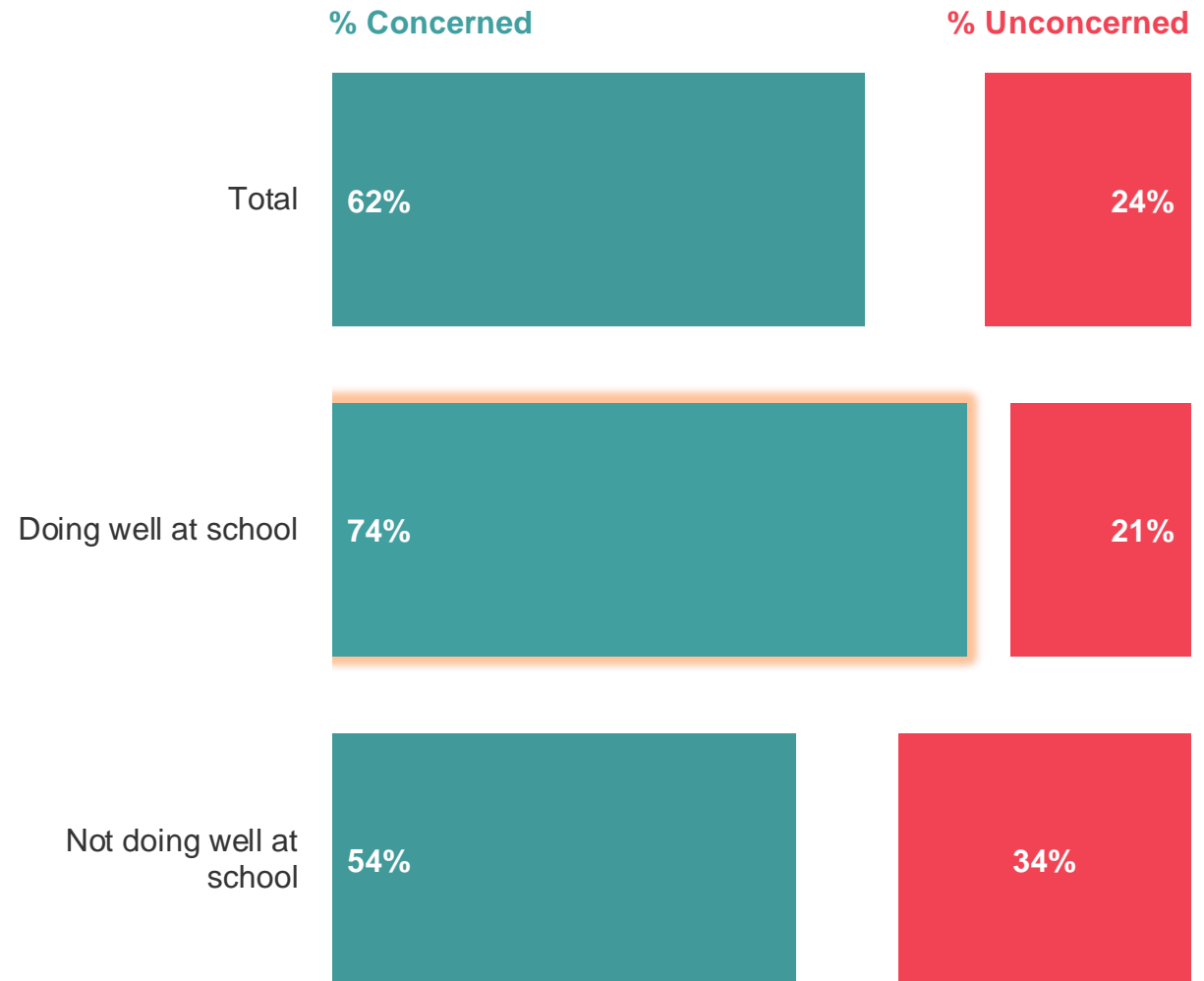
Q. How concerned are you about climate change, if at all?



Concern about climate change is higher amongst those doing well at school

Q. How concerned are you about climate change, if at all?

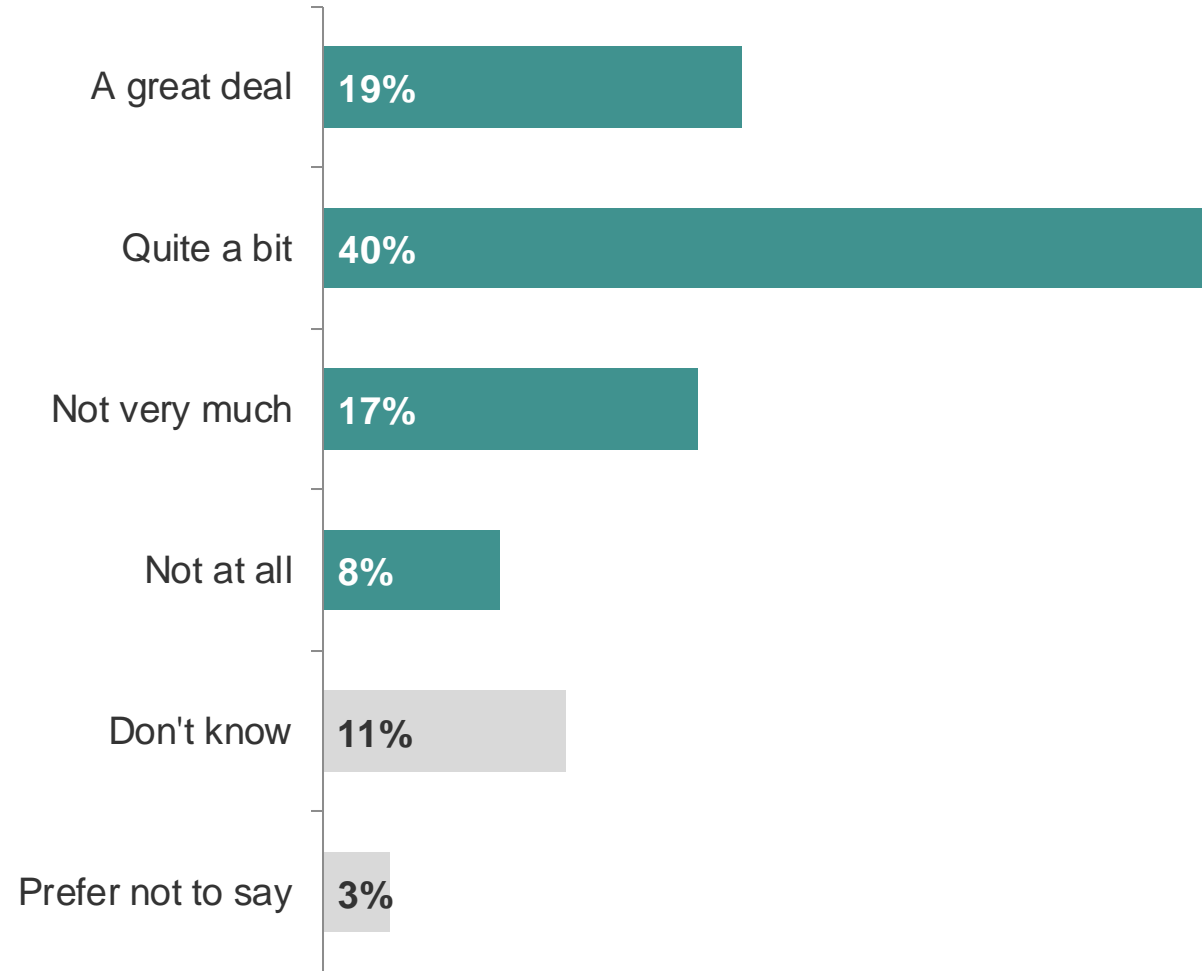
Self-reported academic achievement



Base: Young people in year 11, S4 or S5 in secondary schools (excluding special schools, fee-paying schools and sixth form colleges) n=271, Doing well at school (137), Not doing well at school (100)

1 in 5 believe that they will be impacted greatly by climate change, only 8% don't think they will be affected

Q. In your lifetime, to what extent do you think climate change will affect you personally, if at all?



Base: Young people in year 11, S4 or S5 in secondary schools (excluding special schools, fee-paying schools and sixth form colleges) n=271

Appendix

Methodology

The Young People Omnibus is a representative survey of pupils attending state secondary and middle schools in England and Wales.

Fieldwork

- Fieldwork for the study was conducted between the 14th March - 1st July 2022.
- In total, 2,559 pupils participated, from 60 schools across England, Scotland and Wales.
- Of those 18 schools offered sessions with Year 11 pupils and 271 completed questionnaires were obtained.
- Ipsos recruiters provided each school with a unique link to access an online survey. In each school two mixed ability classes were asked to take part.
- The questionnaire took on average 18 minutes to complete..

Points to note

- In advance of the survey taking place, each school was sent an introductory leaflet providing full details of the project for both the school and participating pupils.
- A parent letter was sent out in advance of the survey taking place, providing information about the Young People Omnibus.
- Class teachers were asked to complete a short survey to provide information about the class completing the survey.

Interpreting the findings

When interpreting the findings it is important to bear in mind the following points:

Statistical significance

- Results are based on a sample of the maintained school population, and not the entire population. Consequently, results are subject to sampling tolerances, and not all differences between sub-groups are statistically significant.
- In this report, we have only commented on statistically significant differences between sub-groups and years.
- A guide to statistical significance is included in the appendices.

Presentation of data

- In tables and charts, where percentages do not add up to 100%, this is due to multiple answers, computer rounding, or to the exclusion of 'Don't know' or 'No response' categories.
- Throughout the tables an asterisk (*) denotes a value greater than zero, but less than 0.5%.
- Data are weighted by sex. The weights were derived from data supplied by the Department for Education, StatsWales and the Scottish Government. Further information relating to weighting and the research design can be found in the Appendices.

Sample design and response rate

A three-stage sampling method was used to survey a representative sample of pupils aged 11-16 years attending academies and maintained secondary and middle schools in England and Wales:

1. In England and Wales, the sample of schools was selected from the DfE 'Get Information about Schools' database and in Scotland, from the Scottish Government database of schools. Special schools, fee-paying schools and sixth form colleges were excluded from the sampling frame. The frame was stratified by Country and within England by Government Office Region (GOR) and, within each stratum, schools were selected proportional to the number of pupils attending, to ensure that when a random sample of class groups from within schools is selected, all young people in the survey population have an equal chance of participating in the survey. In total **470** schools from England and Wales were selected to participate;
2. Two classes from curriculum year groups (Year 7-Year 11) took part in the survey for each school. Interviewers were given preferences for curriculum year groups to recruit, and where possible, were instructed to select only mixed ability class groups for survey completion.
3. All members of the selected class within the nominated curriculum year were asked to complete the self-completion online survey.

Of the **470** schools approached, **60** schools participated, giving an unadjusted school response rate of **13%**. Overall, fully completed questionnaires were obtained from **2,599** pupils. However the research presented in this deck was conducted amongst Year 11 Students only.

Thank you.

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