

Over 80% of young people eager to take action to help the environment

The [Children's People and Nature Survey](#) asked a younger and nationally representative sample to report on their thoughts and feelings about environmental protection, as well as wider topics such as what they enjoy most about nature and what prevents them from getting outdoors.

Nearly 8 in 10 8-15 year-olds (78%) agreed that looking after the environment was important to them, and more than 8 in 10 (81%) said they wanted to do more to look after the environment.

Crucially ahead of COP26, 46% of those surveyed do not think adults are doing enough to protect the environment (an increase of 7% since last year).

Marian Spain, Chief Executive, Natural England said:

The message is clear: children and young people care deeply about the natural environment and are eager to act. With COP26 just around the corner, we must seize on this as an opportunity to make lasting change in what will be a crucial year for the environment.

The research also shows that not all children have the same opportunities to enjoy nature. We need to heed the call of future generations and ensure that children and young people – wherever they live and whatever their background – can access good quality green spaces close to home – and reap the benefits to health, wellbeing and quality of life that being in nature brings to us all.

Other key findings include:

- Those spending time outside at least once a week were more likely to rate their anxiety as 'low'.
- Most (96%) children and young people spent time outdoors beyond the garden at least once during the week. This did not vary based on gender, ethnicity, or income.
- Despite the pandemic, just 16% said anxiety about coronavirus stopped them from spending more time outside.
- More than 8 in 10 (85%) children and young people agreed that being in nature made them very happy. White children were also more likely to agree that being in nature made them very happy (86%) than Black children (75%).

Although concern for the environment was very high across all groups surveyed, younger children and those with higher household income were most

likely to be concerned.

Children and young people aged 8-11 were more likely to agree that looking after the environment was important to them than those aged 12-15. Those with a higher household income (greater than £50k) were more likely to agree that looking after the environment was important to them (82%) than those with household income less than £15k (68%).

Natural England is committed to promoting health and wellbeing through the natural environment, and helping more people from a wider cross-section of society benefit from the environment. It continues to work with Defra and DfE on the Children and Nature programme to improve the physical and mental wellbeing of children from disadvantaged backgrounds. This includes a range of work, including training and support for school staff, providing outdoor resources, improvements to school grounds for wildlife and learning, and opportunities for off-site visits or residential stays in nature.

An infographic showcasing the survey's key findings is available [here](#) and the full Children's People and Nature Survey report can be found [here](#), as well as released data and summary tables.