

The Action Project

Young People's Big Ideas!

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the David Hume Institute for enabling us to support young people to engage with this ambitious and exciting project.

Thank you to our Conveners and Deputy Conveners, whose input and ideas enabled this project to happen. Thanks also to the young people from across Scotland who made SYP's 2021-26 manifesto, 'From Scotland's Young People', possible. Finally, we would like to offer our gratitude to the Children's Parliament whose collaboration made this project possible.

Background

The Action Project, hosted by the David Hume Institute, has been supporting children and adults across Scotland to think and talk about what Scotland needs to become more 'prosperous, sustainable, inclusive and fair'. The process has enabled people and communities to identify ambitious yet concrete Big Ideas that can be turned into real action.

To ensure that children's and young people's Big Ideas were part of the process, the David Hume Institute invited Children's Parliament and the Scottish Youth Parliament to support children and young people across Scotland to share their Big Ideas so they too can be considered for action.

The Scottish Youth Parliament

The Scottish Youth Parliament (SYP) is the democratic voice of Scotland's young people.

Our vision for Scotland is of a nation that actively listens to and values the meaningful participation of its young people. Our goal is to make this vision a reality, in order to ensure young people in Scotland grow up loved, safe and respected, and able to realise their full potential.

SYP's mission is to provide a national platform for young people to discuss the issues that are important to them, and campaign for changes to the nation that they live in. MSYPs listen to and recognise the issues that are most important to young people in every community across the country and ensure that decision-makers listen to their voices.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is the basis for our vision, mission and values. In particular, SYP embodies Article 12 of the UNCRC, which states that young people have the right to express their views freely and have their opinions listened to in all matters affecting them. As a completely youth-led charity, the words and sentiment of Article 12 have profound importance for our work.

Our Approach

In November 2020, we launched SYP's 2016-21 manifesto, '[From Scotland's Young People](#)'.

This youth manifesto was developed through mass consultation with young people and communicates the changes young people would like to see over the coming Scottish Parliamentary term.

Due to the wide range of calls for action included within this resource, as well as the rigorous consultation process we followed to obtain them, it was agreed that SYP would use this as the basis for our work on the Action Project.

This gave us a long list of 42 calls, spanning across 11 different policy areas. In this manifesto, we made a conscious effort to amplify the voices of seldom heard young people throughout. You can find these calls along with quotes from seldom heard groups and details of our methodology [here](#).

We then used the aims of the Action Project to undertake two rounds of shortlisting to come to a final list of actions young people believed would have the biggest impact on the projects aims.

Conveners and Deputy Conveners

To shortlist these calls, we worked with SYP's Conveners and Deputy Conveners (CDCs). This is a group of 20 young people who are elected on an annual basis by their peers to lead SYP's [Subject Committees](#).

As well as taking forward advocacy work on issues relevant to their Committee, CDCs lead SYP's policy creation. In order to carry out this work, all CDC's undergo a series of training sessions to ensure they are equipped with the necessary skills.

Initial Shortlisting Survey

The first round of shortlisting took place via an online survey hosted on the [Alchemer](#) survey platform.

In the survey, we gave an overview of the Action Project and explained our aim to shortlist manifesto calls which could have the biggest impact.

We then asked CDCs to look at all 42 manifesto statements and select up to 12 statements they would like to shortlist using the following criteria:

- Which calls would help move Scotland towards a country that is more prosperous, sustainable, inclusive and/or fair?
- Which changes do you think would have a meaningful and large impact on the lives of young people living in Scotland?
- Which calls are Big Ideas which will create Big Changes in our society?

Answers were collected using a tick box question, which was set to allow each respondent to select up to 10 options.

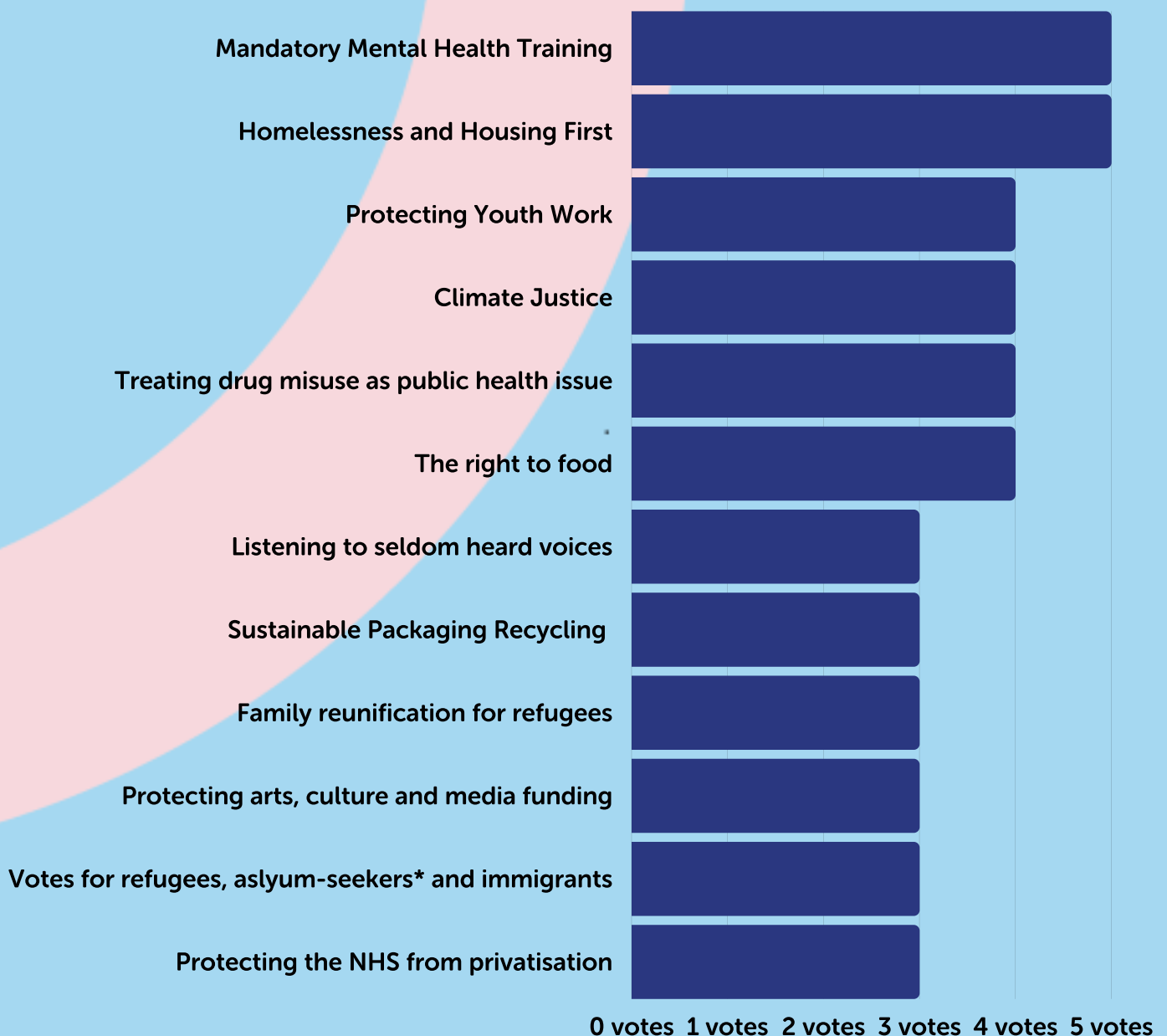
We also asked participants some open-ended questions that were then used to inform the focus group's discussion. These questions were:

- Can you tell us why you chose some of the statements you selected? Why do you think they are needed and how do you think they will make a big change?
- If you had to pick one call to take forward to the Action Project Committee, what would it be and why?

The top 12 calls were then taken to our final shortlist focus group.

7 CDC's participated in this survey exercise.

RESULTS OF INITIAL SHORTLISTING SURVEY



Under the Scottish Elections (Franchise & Representation) Act, refugees and immigrants now have the right to vote in Scottish elections. Action should therefore be focused on securing this right for asylum-seekers.)

Final Shortlisting Focus Group

The final shortlisting exercise took place during a 1 hour focus group with SYP's Conveners Group (SYP's policy group, made up of Conveners) at their meeting on January 23rd 2021. 8 Conveners were present at this meeting.

MSYPs were given a reminder of the aims of the project before moving on to a discussion using a [Google Jamboard](#).

This allowed participants to look at each of the 12 proposed actions in turn and add their thoughts on whether this change would help create a Scotland that is more:

- Sustainable
- Prosperous
- Inclusive and Fair

This was followed by a verbal discussion where MSYPs provided additional comments about why they felt an issue was important, as well as sharing what issues they felt should be included in the final shortlist. A member of SYP staff transcribed key elements of this discussion.

To support and inform their shortlisting, Conveners utilised a final survey, using the Alchemer platform. This asked MSYPs to reflect on the discussion and select the top 4 issues they'd like to take to the Action Project. They also selected which calls they felt best fitted each of the individual criteria.

Using the results of this, the Conveners Group verbally agreed on 5 issues to bring to the Action Project, ranked in order of importance.**

Our final Big Ideas, ranked in order of importance, are....

- 1. Mandatory Mental Health Training**
- 2. Homelessness and Housing First**
- 3. Protecting Youth Work**
- 4. Listening to Seldom Heard Voices**
- 5. Sustainable Packaging and Recycling**

*Chose to bring 5 ranked issues instead of 4 as they believed it was vital to include an action specifically on the environment.

Voted the joint
most inclusive
shortlisted
action

1. Mandatory Mental Health Training

There should be mandatory training for those working in education and health care settings on how to identify mental health problems and provide support for all young people, especially those most at risk.

'From Scotland's Young People' manifesto call

AGREE 89.4%

DISAGREE 3.2%

DON'T KNOW 7.4%

Why is this change important in Scotland today?

Half of mental health problems in adulthood begin before the age of 14. By the time they're 16, roughly 3 children in every class will have experienced a mental health problem. And thousands will struggle to get the help they need.***

In 2017, 7,000 young people were turned away from CAMHS services. That's 19 young people every day.***

SYP's 'Our Generation's Epidemic' report found that when it comes to finding help for your mental health, only a quarter of young people know where to go.

Our recent Lockdown Lowdown research project, in partnership with Young Scot and Youthlink Scotland, has found that the pandemic has exacerbated our country's mental health issues.

In our Autumn 2020 Lockdown Lowdown survey, two in five young people were worried about their mental health. In addition to this, two in five respondents still aren't confident about accessing information on mental health and wellbeing.

In their own words

In our Lockdown Lowdown focus groups with those whose voices are often unheard, young people who are at risk told us how the pandemic has affected their mental health:

“I think there's been some very dark periods during lockdown. I've been very set back in my mental health journey; I've revisited some feelings and situations that I never wanted to return to. I had been meaning to join some support groups/clubs/socialise more.”
- a young person with disabilities.

***These statistics were taken from SAMH's 'Going to be All Right' report. Original reference can be found there.

“Deadlines and stuff were already a big stress before COVID, but now they’re more of a stress. I don’t get to physically see my lecturers. Deadlines are chasing up on us. I started uni two weeks ago and the first deadline is in a week. That’s not much teaching and not much support time. That’s a big pressure for me.”

- a young carer.

Participants from our manifesto focus groups with seldom heard young people told us this change is important to them because:

“I don’t really know where I would’ve looked for mental health support. During the pandemic, if I needed help, I wouldn’t know who to ask about it.” - Armed forces young person

“I’ve got a guidance teacher, and there’s a 'Wellbeing' room in the school. Teachers are in there and they help. A few weeks ago I was in class and it was really noisy and I had an anxiety attack, and [...] the teachers helped me calm down.”

- a young person whose family is affected by alcohol or drugs.

Why has it been shortlisted for the Action Project?

Our Conveners selected this as their top issue to take to the Action Project due to both the impact it could have on the real lives on young people and the wide range of criteria they thought it met. They felt that this idea was:

Sustainable

- Once implemented, the training strategies can be reused and reviewed to ensure they stay updated. This approach would not be as big a challenge to sustain as some other mental health policies.

Prosperous

- Mandatory training will hopefully allow for earlier identification of instances where a young person is at risk due to poor mental health, and subsequently lessen the pressure on mental health services. This is because there would be more cases where early intervention helps the young person and stops them from hitting 'rock bottom'.

Inclusive & fair

- “This policy is important as it would ensure young people can access support early and not have their situation worsened by well-meaning people who actually don’t understand.” - an SYP Convener
- “It would create opportunity for more understanding and education on a growing issue, especially within this day and age.” - an SYP Convener

What action is currently happening on this issue?

In their [Mental Health Strategy 2017-27](#), the Scottish Government committed to take action to roll out mental health training for those who support young people in educational settings.

In the [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): mental health - transition and recovery plan](#), the Scottish Government have committed to develop and deliver a new mental health training and learning resource which will be available to all school staff by Summer 2021.

However, young people want to see this go further. They want to ensure that staff have meaningful and mandatory training across all levels of educational settings.

This also needs to go beyond education and ensure that all those working in health care settings have the capacity to identify young people who are struggling and provide appropriate support, such as sign posting, advice or active listening. This training needs to be young person specific, so that staff have the appropriate skills to deal with the needs of this age range.

Young people also want this training to highlight those groups who are more likely to develop mental health problems such as the LGBT community, young carers and care experienced young people.

What additional actions could take place?

In addition to lobbying government on this issue, other suggested actions include:

- Create a project to co-design a new training session and resources for educational staff and health care workers with at risk young people.
- Create a web-hub with specifically designed resources to educate educational staff and health care workers on this issue.
- Create a template Mental Health Action Plan, with the aim to promote mental health conversations and support. These could then be promoted to/used by schools, colleges, universities and youth groups through a campaign. An award could be offered for those institutions who implement a plan. (Based on an existing SYP recommendation - see [here](#) for more details).

You can find more suggestions within SYP's ['Our Generation's Epidemic'](#) report.

We also recommend you check out the ['Our Minds, Our Future' Scotland report](#), which SYP worked on. This project aims to give the opportunity to influence the way mental health services are designed and run across the UK.

2. Homelessness and Housing First

Voted the
fairest
shortlisted
action

Anyone experiencing homelessness should receive support and shelter, and therefore, the 'Housing First' policy should be introduced across Scotland.

'From Scotland's Young People' manifesto call

AGREE 87.9%

DISAGREE 4.6%

DON'T KNOW 7.4%

Why is this change important in Scotland today?

Housing First is a housing and support approach which:

- Gives people who have experienced homelessness and chronic health and social care needs a stable home from which to rebuild their lives.
- Provides intensive, person-centred, holistic support that is open-ended.
- Places no conditions on individuals; however, they should desire to have a tenancy.

Internationally, we know that Housing First ends homelessness for approximately eight out of ten people.

In Scotland, 31,333 households were assessed as homeless in 2019/20. Of this number 1,643 households (4% of all applications) included a household member who experienced rough sleeping the night before their support application, and 2,884 households (8% of all applications) reported a household member experiencing rough sleeping in the three months prior to their application.

23% of this this overall number was made up of 16-24 year olds, despite young people only making up 11% of the nation's total population.

In their own words

Participants from our manifesto focus groups with seldom heard young people told us this change is important to them because:

“A safe place to live is very important, one of the most important things.” - a young refugee

“[It's important to] give not just a home, but a safe neighbourhood, the ability to interact with people and access to good services near-by, making it as easy as possible to integrate into an area.”

- A member of interfaith Scotland

“... some people that live around my bit are homeless and it’s quite heart-breaking actually because there aren’t many places around where they can go to stay.” - a young person whose family is affected by alcohol or drugs.

Why has it been shortlisted for the Action Project?

Our Conveners selected this as their second issue to take to the Action Project due to the impact it could have on the real lives of some of Scotland's most vulnerable people. They also believed it met a wide range of the project's criteria.

They felt that this idea was:

Sustainable

- There was a belief that this policy would also resolve some of the other issues homeless groups often face e.g. addiction, attainment, unemployment and therefore could save money and resources on other policy areas.

Prosperous

- “If there's instances where this policy has been proven to work, then it would be worth implementing across the country.” - an SYP Convener

Inclusive & Fair

- “It would provide protection for some of society's most vulnerable people.” - An SYP Convener
- “Everyone deserves a chance and this gives that chance”. - An SYP Convener

They felt that this issue was particularly relevant now due to the increased pressure the COVID-19 crisis has placed on those facing homelessness.

The fact that this issue disproportionately affects minority groups was also raised. Conveners felt that these groups often don’t get the support they need and “having a permanent place to live would be the first step towards receiving this”. This in turn would help them overcome other issues in their lives.

What's currently happening?

In 2018, the Scottish Government announced funding of up to £6.5 million for Housing First pilots. Along with homeless charity Social Bite, local authorities, third sector and housing providers they committed to support more than 800 people with complex needs to transition to a Housing First approach over three years. In doing so, they recognised a safe and secure home is the best base for recovery.

This commitment has progressed, with the country's Housing First Pathfinder programme having created 404 tenancies as of December 31 2020. The new figures from Homeless Network Scotland show that 88 per cent of tenants have remained in their homes over the first full year of the programme despite the difficulties of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This shows the scheme can work in Scotland. However, as young people have noted, progress is perhaps not fast enough for those who are still sleeping rough and facing homelessness across Scotland.

What additional action could take place?

More specific suggested actions include:

- Create a national campaign, led by those with lived experience of homelessness, to make a case for an urgent national roll out of Housing First.
- Providing additional funding for Housing First pilots. This could specifically look at young people, feeding into the Rock Trust's existing Housing First for Youth pilots, or look to fund this model in other areas of Scotland.
- Establish a dedicated service, designed by homeless young people, which works on eradicating youth homelessness. (This is based on two existing SYP policies - see here and here for more details.)
- Work with young people who are currently homeless to identify and provide other additional support they require, beyond housing. This could be a pilot scheme, with results shared with the Scottish Government.

Voted the most
prosperous
shortlisted
action

3. Protecting Youth Work

Local youth work should be invested in by national and local government and protected by law from budget cuts.

'From Scotland's Young People' manifesto call

AGREE 74.9%

DISAGREE 6.4%

DON'T KNOW 18.7%

Why is this change important in Scotland today?

Youth work is a valuable part of Scottish society. However, with funding being cut each year in most local authorities, we risk losing the positive impact it has on Scotland's Young People.

In 2019, SYP launched our 'Youth Work and Me' report which aimed to showcase the positive impact of youth work and call for more funding, amongst other things.

In our research, young people told us that youth work is important because it gives young people opportunities, support, greater confidence and self-esteem, friendship, skills, a voice, access to non-formal education, and independence.

If youth work did not exist, young people told us they thought there would be:

- More isolation, crime and antisocial behaviour, boredom, mental health problems, poverty, and deaths.
- Less opportunities, support, confidence, youth-led change, friendships, and independence.

According to research by Hall Aitken, for every £1 invested in youth work, the social return on investment is worth at least £7. Reducing youth work budgets results in increased pressure on statutory services like social care, mental health services, social work, the NHS, the police, the criminal justice system and education. All a result of the loss of support and opportunities youth work services provide. Investing in youth work saves money.

In their own words

Participants from our manifesto focus groups with seldom heard young people told us this change is important to them because:

"I've been a part of airplay (funded by RAF benevolent fund) since I was about 7. I've been the longest serving person there - I get to meet so many new people when they move here. It gives me support as well when my dad's away, and just time to release from everything else and a chance to have a bit of fun." - Armed forces young person

"Because Fife Gingerbread is for under 20s, I've been able to reach out to other mums that are my age. I think older mums don't see being a mum the way that teen mums do so it's helped with that." - a young parent

"I was 12 when I first started the Navy Youth Forum, and I did my local Youth Forum a year later. Its absolutely phenomenal, the work that they do, and how much they actually impact you. You don't realise until you actually get involved in these things. We got to go on all of these residential and meet all of these different people. Especially when we worked with younger kids, to see them getting inspired is absolutely amazing and seeing how much we can actually change people's lives." - Armed forces young person

Why has it been shortlisted?

Our Conveners selected this as their third issue to take to the Action Project. In particular, they felt this could help create a more prosperous society.

As one MSYP noted, "The fact that all of us are here [working on the Action Project] is a testament to how impactful youth work can be. We wouldn't be having this conversation about making big changes if we weren't involved in youth work. That's an opportunity that shouldn't be denied to any young person."

Sustainable

- Much like Housing First, there was a belief that this issue would help to prevent other societal issues from occurring, such as crime and unemployment, and therefore save public money overall.
- "The protection from budget cuts would help ensure that the service is sustainable." - an SYP Convener

Prosperous

- This could help to off-set some of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. "This is more important than ever with young people having less access to social interaction and requiring more support than before." - an SYP Convener
- Youth work inspires young people
- "Youth work changes lives - it can have a domino effect. The higher quality youth work is, the better the leaders of the future will be." - an SYP Convener

Inclusive & Fair

- Currently, youth work provision varies greatly depending on where you live.
- “This change would give opportunity to those who haven’t been given it already.” - an SYP Convener

Again, with young people not being able to access regular in person learning during the pandemic, youth work can provide a life line for many of those who are struggling, meaning action could have a big impact across the nation.

What is currently happening?

SYP has raised this issue twice at the Annual Cabinet Meeting with Children and Young People. From this, the Scottish Government have committed to meeting with SYP and COSLA to discuss this issue.

Progress has been slow and this action is still outstanding.

The Scottish Government has created a newly created £3 million Youth Work Education Recovery Fund which will be targeted at those communities and young people who need the most support.

However, we would like to see sustainable action taken on a long term basis in order to ensure the future of youth work in Scotland. We note Youthlink’s calls for youth work budgets to return to pre-austerity levels.

What additional action could take place?

In addition to supporting and bringing greater prominence to campaigning efforts on this issue, some ideas of potential action include:

- Creating a designated fund for digital youth work, ensuring that every young person has the opportunity to engage with youth work throughout the pandemic and beyond. This could involve providing devices, equipment and data to young people and youth workers who currently struggle to access these things. Methods of distributing this support should be designed in collaboration with young people and youth workers, to ensure they provide effective remedies to this issue in practice.
- Create a fund for youth work organisations who are struggling due to the economic impact of the pandemic.

4. Listening to Seldom Heard Voices

Voted the joint most inclusive shortlisted action

Children and young people from seldom heard groups (such as immigrants and refugees, gypsy traveller communities, single parents, disabled people, Armed Forces, care experienced, and justice experienced) must be listened to by policymakers on issues that affect them.

'From Scotland's Young People' manifesto call

AGREE 80.4%

DISAGREE 5.7%

DON'T KNOW 13.9%

Why is this change important in Scotland today?

Over the past 5 years, we have seen a notable improvement in the way Scottish policymakers listen to the voices of children and young people. With subsequent policy changes including UNCRC Incorporation and Equal Protection, the annual Cabinet Meeting with Children and Young People is one example of this can meaningfully work in practice.

However, there are still many barriers to inclusion; particularly for those groups who are marginalised within our society.

These groups have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19.

Their lived experience and ideas for practical solutions hold considerable value as we design policies to recover from the pandemics impact. Now, more than ever, it is vital that we move towards a society where they can have their voices heard.

In their own words

Participants from our focus groups with seldom heard young people told us this change is important to them because:

“I think they (decision makers) focus on things that will make a change to them, but act like they care about things that will change for us.” - a young parent

“[Decision makers] might have an idea of what life is like for a service child in general, but the difference between the experience of a service child years ago and now is really different... if they could just take the time to consult the younger generation on how things have changed I think they’d be really surprised.” - an Armed Forces young person.

“It’s hard to imagine that the views of refugees and migrants are being represented and heard, it’s not something I see represented in policy. Groups like refugees are often excluded in policy, and decisions are made by politicians rather than actually listening to these groups.” - A member of interfaith Scotland

Why has it been shortlisted for the Action Project?

SYP’s Conveners Group felt this was fundamental change required to help move Scotland towards the kind of society they, and the Action Project, would like to see.

Sustainable

- Those with lived experience of a specific issue are often best placed to come up with creative and effective solutions, that can be more cost effective and sustainable in the long run.

Prosperous

- It would allow for all young people’s voices to be treated equally and creating meaningful change for those who need help the most.

Inclusive & Fair

- Seldom heard young people can provide guidance on issues affecting all young people but they in particular can also help to shape practices to be more inclusive overall.
- It could help to provide support for those who may not be able to advocate for themselves.
- It would ensure that we treat everyone fairly when making decisions

What’s currently happening?

Thanks to the efforts of third sector organisations, Scottish Government Ministers are starting to increase their engagement with these groups with young people.

In 2017, Who Cares? Scotland secured a pledge from the First Minister to listen to 1,000 voices in a commitment to understand the experience of young people who are either in care or who are care experienced. The First Minister has also met with young refugees from the Scottish Refugee Council’s Guardianship Service to hear about their experienced of being separated from their families.

However, this engagement often does not make its way down to policymakers. Through our work with seldom heard groups in the second [Lockdown Lowdown report](#), SYP has aimed to ensure their experiences of COVID-19 are meaningfully heard. We also took this issue to the Scottish Government Executive Team in a recent takeover event, where young people from seldom heard groups shared what issues were affecting them.

However, we think that more infrastructure is required to create a culture where Scottish policymakers, and society, listen to the voices of seldom-heard groups as a standard.

What additional action could take place?

Whilst the Incorporation of the UNCRC into Scots law should further improve young people's ability to have their voices heard, we think that more can be done to ensure that all policymakers know both how to effectively engage with seldom heard groups, and what the value in doing so is.

With this being a Scottish Parliament election year, there is potential for action on this issue to have a big impact.

A suggestion for how this could be achieved is:

- Create a resource for policymakers on the importance of engaging with seldom heard children and young people, along with details of organisations which can help them to do so. This should be co-designed with seldom heard children and young people and the organisations that support them. The resource could launch to coincide with the new cohort of MSPs assuming their seats, before rolling out to other policymakers both locally and nationally.

The Conveners Group also wanted to highlight that SYP's '[From Scotland's Young People](#)' manifesto highlights several issues brought to us by seldom heard groups. By considering these issues, their voices are being heard.

Any further action on these issues should include close consultation with the appropriate seldom heard group(s). Relevant issues included in our initial shortlist include:

- The right to vote for asylum seekers
- Family reunification of refugees
- Treating drug misuse as public health issue

5. Sustainable Packaging and Recycling

Voted the most sustainable shortlisted action

The food and retail industry should...

'From Scotland's Young People' manifesto call

Make it possible to recycle and reuse packaging:

Agree 93.5%

Disagree 2.4%

Don't know 4.1%

Avoid using too much packaging in their products:

Agree 90.7%

Disagree 3.9%

Don't know 5.4%

Make it possible for people to rely less on plastic packaging:

Agree 89.3%

Disagree 3.9%

Don't know 6.8%

Make it possible for people to rely less on packaging that can only be used once:

Agree 85.8%

Disagree 4.7%

Don't know 4.4%

Why is this change important in Scotland today?

A [recent survey](#) by YouGov, on behalf of Zero Waste Scotland, revealed the concern citizens of Scotland have around single-use plastic items and packaging. The findings are in line with SYP's research with young people into this topic.

After consultation with 10,200 young people, Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYPs) voted for our 2019-20 national campaign to focus on environmental protection. The campaign, ['Pack it up, Pack it in'](#), was designed and developed by young people.

The campaign concentrated on reducing pollution levels which contribute to climate change. We aimed to do this by focusing on the themes of reducing single-use packaging and waste, and improving recycling in Scotland.

Some of the key findings from our [campaign research report](#) include:

- Nearly three quarters of young people think plastic packaging items are damaging to the environment.
- Packaging that is recyclable and reusable is more important to young people than packaging that is affordable.
- A quarter of young people would be encouraged to use environmentally friendly alternatives more often if they were cheaper or free.

- Young people generally feel they are aware of what can and can't be recycled in their area, although there is less awareness of whether or not less common or mixed-material items can be recycled.
- Over half of young people would be encouraged to start recycling, or to recycle more, if there were more recycling bins in public places

As part of our research for 'Pack it up, Pack it in' we gave young people a list of sixteen packaging items which commonly contain plastic, and asked them to tick whether they support or oppose a ban on each item being made out of plastic.

Overall, the majority of respondents supported a ban on all of the items listed being made out of plastic, with the exception of yoghurt pots (49.9% support) and sanitary products (39.8% support).

One respondent to the survey told us that:

“All of these products can be made out of other materials, and they're the kind of products that people often do not recycle, with many people not even being aware that some of these products are recyclable.”

This was not an issue any of our manifesto seldom heard focus groups chose to discuss. However, a respondent to our 'Pack it up, Pack it in' report told us they believed that:

“Plastic packaging on things like stationery, wrapping paper, clothing items etc is also completely unnecessary and should be banned as in these cases the plastic is not being used to keep anything safe for human consumption. I once saw metal straws for sale which were wrapped in plastic packaging which is beyond me.”

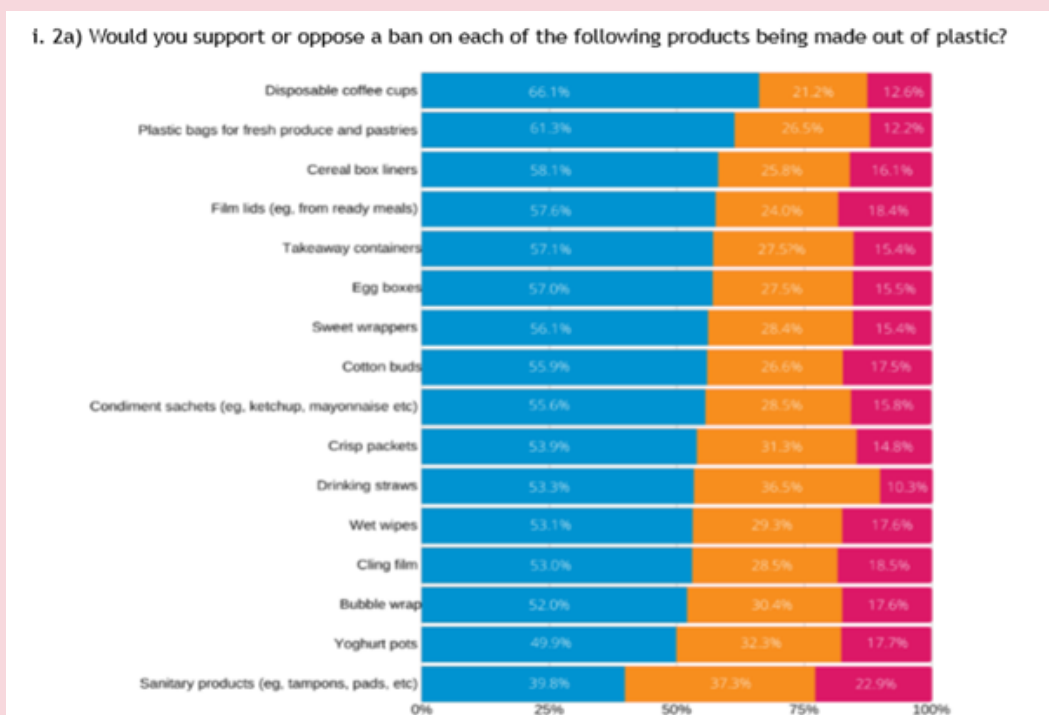


Image from SYP's 'Pack it up, Pack it in' report

Why has it been shortlisted for the Action Project?

SYP's Conveners Group felt that out of our manifesto statements, this one was the most likely to bring meaningful and tangible progress towards making Scotland a more sustainable society.

They also highlighted that the COVID-19 pandemic is leading more people to turn towards online shopping. This, in turn, will have increased the consumption of unnecessary packaging, making this a more pressing issue requiring urgent action.

Additional thoughts from the focus group's discussion include include:

Sustainable

- "The future of our world and the impact of climate change is major. Anything that can be done to combat this should be done." - an SYP Convener
- The climate sustains us, without sustaining it how do we sustain anything else?

Prosperous

- By addressing this issue in a sustainable way, it would free up resources to address another area of policy.

Inclusive & Fair

- These actions could allow people from all backgrounds to live more sustainably, rather than limiting it to those who can afford sustainable products.

What is currently happening?

The Scottish Government are in the process of introducing a deposit return scheme for single-use drinks containers, which is due to come into effect July 2022.

They are also aiming to match the EU ambition for all plastic packaging to be economically recyclable or reusable by 2030.

As part of this, the Scottish Government have recently consulted on the potential introduction of market restrictions - effectively a ban - on the most commonly littered single-use plastic items found on European beaches.

Their plan to introduce legislation to develop Scotland's circular economy has been withdrawn due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They now plan to incorporate elements into the Green Recovery agenda.

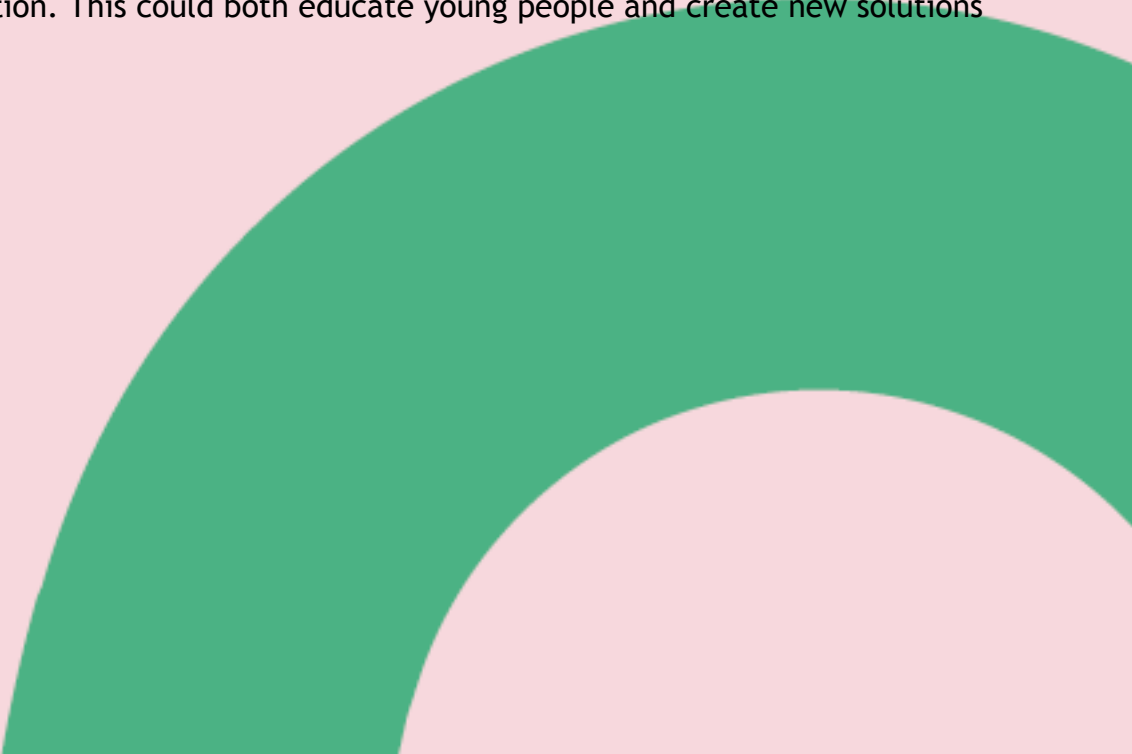
Zero Waste Scotland has worked on this issue through several practical schemes including providing funding to a number of local authorities, education establishments, leisure facilities, tourist attractions, hospitals and shopping complexes for public recycling bins. Over 4000 Recycle on The Go bins have been installed across the country to date from Zero Waste Scotland funding alone

Another recent initiative that aims to help move people away from single use items is Scottish Waters Top up from the Tap campaign. The campaign both encouraged people to refill water bottles from their own taps at home, as well as providing water refill points in public places across Scotland.

What additional action could take place?

For this call to be fully actioned, we would require change from the retail and food sector, other manufacturing businesses, and decision makers.

Here are some more specific actions for change that could help everyone towards a Scotland which is more sustainable in their use of packaging:

- Research and create more cost effective solutions to single use options in supermarkets and other shops. This could be done on a small scale pilot initially.
 - Research how the cost of reusable items could be reduced as well what infrastructure is required to help people use them consistently is e.g. cheaper or free reusable coffee cups and having places people can wash them out whilst on the go. These solutions could then be implemented.
 - Run a project competition with schools across the country to design a single use item that would help reduce their plastic consumption. The winning schools product would be made and gifted to them, along with a follow up study to see if the item has helped reduce consumption. This could both educate young people and create new solutions to this issue.
- 

Demographics

'From Scotland's Young People'

In the process of developing 'From Scotland's Young People', we worked with a wide range of young people aged 12-25 from across the country.

Due to the innovative and multifaceted approach we took with this manifesto in response to the pandemic, we do not have the exact number of young people we engaged throughout this process. However, we estimate this to be around 10,000.

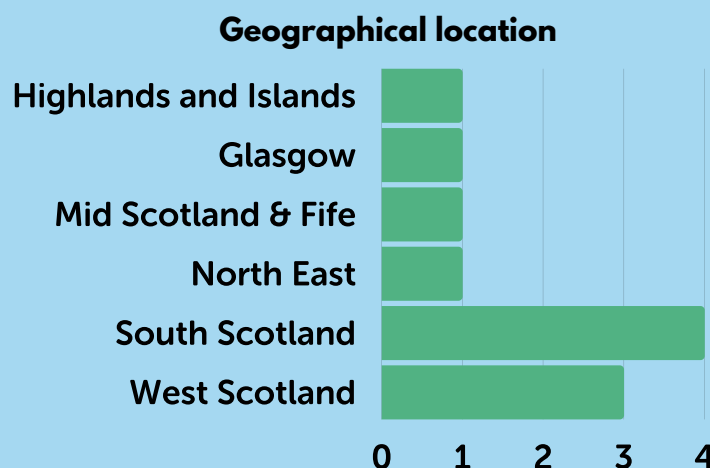
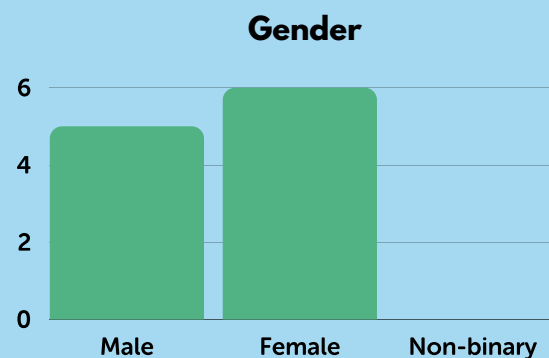
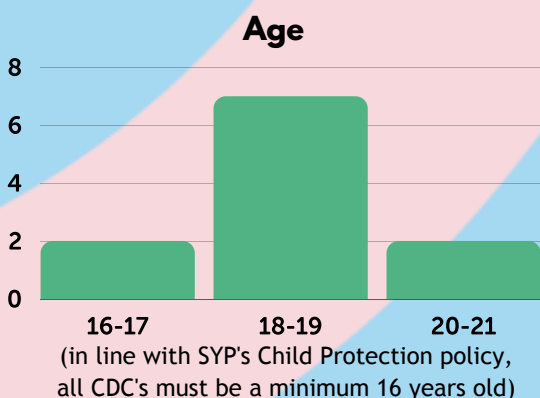
We did include specific questions within our consultation survey which provided us with the following demographic breakdown:

- Age
- Gender
- Education
- Ethnicity
- Geographical region
- SIMD regions

You can find all of this information within our [manifesto key findings report](#).

Conveners and Deputy Conveners who participated in the Action Project

A total of 11 Conveners and Deputy Conveners fed in to SYP's work on the Action Project. They can be broken down into the following demographics:



This shows the geographical spread, in terms of SYP's regional groups. Whilst these are based on the Scottish Parliament's electoral regions, our regions may differ slightly. [Click here](#) to find out which region a local authority is in.

**If you would like to find out more about SYP,
visit us at**

www.syp.org.uk

**For further information about this report or
SYP's input to the Action Project, please contact**

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