



UK Youth Perspectives and Priorities for Brexit Negotiations

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	3
Foreword	4
Executive Summary	5
Introduction	8
Background	9
Project Objectives and Aims of this Study	10
Insights from Past Research	11
Methods and Selection Criteria	13
Findings	17
Views on Politics, Brexit and the UK	18
Views on the Impact of Brexit	24
Priorities for Brexit Negotiations	33
Conclusions and Recommendations	39
Appendix 1. Focus Group Questions	42
Appendix 2. Survey Questions	43



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Sam Mejias and Shakuntala Banaji

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Foreword



Young people want a voice in the Brexit process, and not one that is politely listened to and then dismissed. The first step on this journey has to be evidence and data. We need a basic platform of understanding of where people are coming from, and where they want to go. Which is why this report is essential reading, because for the first time we have an in-depth, nuanced and structured picture of what young people want to see emerging from the Brexit process.

This report will be a catalyst for the national conversation we should be having. We must give voice to young people, who will be living with the consequences of the referendum for longer than anyone else. This report, along with the work of our APPG, demonstrates the burning desire of young people to participate in building a better future.

This is not to say that I agree with every word of the recommendations in this report, but that's the point. We need vigorous debate about what kind of Britain we want in the future, and we need to be able to disagree and persuade, but we need to be able to do so on the basis of real evidence, insight and analysis. This report gives us the tools we need to deliberate, and to come up with recommendations, to which the Government and other key stakeholders must surely listen.

After a year of work, forty focus groups, and countless conversations with young people, ranging from 11 to 30 years old, across the length and breadth of the United Kingdom, there can be no doubt that we now have a comprehensive account of what young people want from the Brexit process, and of their hopes, dreams and aspirations for the future of post-Brexit Britain.

And they will be heard.

Stephen Kinnock MP

Labour MP for Aberavon
Chair of the APPG-BBYP



The All Party Parliamentary Group on a Better Brexit for Young People is doing an amazing job to give young people their say and ensure their voices are heard as Britain leaves the European Union. We must fix the generational divide that is causing widespread distrust and polarisation in our civil society.

It is only right that young people are actively involved in the future of their country, and it is clear they want an open and optimistic country, not one steeped in protectionism and nationalism. I believe the next generation should always have it better than the last. This is a great opportunity for young people to take charge of their future as we forge relationships around the world.

Andrew Rosindell MP

Conservative MP for Romford
Vice Chair of the APPG-BBYP

Executive Summary

The All Party Parliamentary Group on a Better Brexit for Young People (APPG-BBYP) was created in November 2016 to act as a structured engagement platform to transmit UK youth views about Brexit directly to UK parliamentarians and Brexit negotiators. The London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) Department of Media and Communications has been researching UK young people's active citizenship in a changing European political landscape since the launch of their European Union-funded Constructing Active Citizenship with European Youth (CATCH-EyoU) project in September 2015. Since Brexit, its research agenda has shifted to investigate the changing nature of young people's engagement with the European Union. This report is intended to provide an empirical contribution to the APPG-BBYP on the views, perspectives and priorities of young people as the UK transitions out of the European Union.

The main goals of the research reported here were to

- Explore the current status of young people's views on politics, the UK and Brexit;
- Investigate and categorise the nature and levels of young people's perspectives about the impact of Brexit on their lives, the UK, and the EU; and
- Gauge and categorise their most important priorities for both UK and EU negotiators to consider on young people's behalf during the Brexit negotiations.

In 40 focus groups conducted nationally by LSE and its partner organisations between November 2016 and October 2017, British young people, drawn from a diverse range of economic, social and geographical backgrounds, overwhelmingly spoke of a vision of a more equal and globally inclusive United Kingdom. They also spoke of their concern about the economic pressures they face with regard to housing, jobs, and education, and the political, social and economic direction of travel that Brexit represents. Respondents in our focus groups felt that in recent years the British government had not and is currently not doing enough to ensure equality, social justice and shared economic prosperity. They found this to be the case both in the UK domestic sphere and in the UK's relationships with other countries. Many commented that government decisions have contributed to growing inequality. They insisted, most

strikingly, that for them Brexit, and the both the lead-up to it and its aftermath, is changing the UK even further into a more unequal and less just society. These themes and perspectives can be found across a wide range of responses to questions about their views on political and media institutions, their own voice and engagement, their educational experiences and prospects, and the UK's relationship with the EU and the rest of the world.

Our study used a number of methods to catalogue and understand the experiences, perspectives and priorities of young people in the post referendum UK. We drew on existing literature and surveys about young people's responses to Brexit to find patterns, gaps and absences. With the urgent aim of feeding their voices into the on-going policy process on Brexit, between November 2016 and October 2017, we engaged young people (N = 352) in wide-ranging qualitative focus group discussions about Brexit. Our primary data collection occurred through the conduct of 40 focus groups across a wide cross-section of the UK. In addition, in July and August 2017, using questions supplied by LSE, YouGov conducted a survey of 3,288 British young and adult citizens on behalf of the APPG-BBYP, in order to gauge cross-generational perspectives on UK politics and media, the European Union, Brexit and other Brexit related issues such as immigration, freedom of movement, racism, and global security.

Key Findings

This study is arranged into three key areas of findings that relate to the main activities and goals of the research project. The thematic findings within each area are presented in order of frequency of mentions in the focus group datasets.

1. Youth Views on Politics, the UK and Brexit

FINDING 1A. Young people in our study repeatedly highlighted **generational differences in Brexit preferences**. A significant majority expressed bemusement, anger, and resentment at the choice to leave the EU, which was made – in their view – primarily, though not exclusively, by older generations.

FINDING 1B. Young people in our study are **distrustful of many existing political and media institutions** and of their representatives, but nonetheless **most remained passionate about politics** and committed to the civic sphere in their localities, in the UK, and in Europe.

FINDING 1C. Many young people in our study display a **complex and nuanced understanding of Brexit** and of the short and long-term effects of withdrawal from the EU; but many also believe that **citizens do not have enough political knowledge** when it comes to the EU and feel that significant investment in critical political education is needed.

2. Perspectives on the Impact of Brexit on Young People, the UK and the World

FINDING 2A. Young people in our study **clearly did not want to lose the EU membership opportunities and rights** that they currently have access to, particularly in the areas of human and civil rights, cross-border families, travel, work, education, and trade.

FINDING 2B. Young people in our study want **a strong economy that provides adequate schooling, higher education, jobs and housing** for them and their families. They are concerned about the current lack of housing mobility, high fee levels, and low-paid, unsatisfying jobs. They are deeply concerned about the further negative impact of Brexit on British livelihoods already strained by years of austerity.

FINDING 2C. Young people in our study expressed strong concern about the negative impact of Brexit on multi-ethnic communities in terms of (1) **rising intolerance, discrimination and racism** in British society and (2) the **decline of Britain's tolerant and multicultural image**.

FINDING 2D. Young people in our study are **worried about the harmful effects of what they term Brexit's anti-immigration message** and the loss of **European social benefits** on the promotion of a forward-looking, cohesive and socially just society.

FINDING 2E. A small minority of young people in our study **expressed pride** in Britain for deciding to leave the EU and focusing instead on solving British problems,, or remarked that Brexit could be considered positive because it had motivated young people to become less passive.

3. Youth Priorities for Brexit Negotiations

FINDING 3A. The most frequently mentioned specific policy priority that young people in our study want addressed in the Brexit negotiations is the **preservation of EU membership benefits** beginning with freedom of movement within the EU but also including specific membership benefits such as the Erasmus study abroad scheme and the preservation of residency rights for EU citizens living in the UK and vice versa.

FINDING 3B. Young people in our study want their **voices and concerns to be listened to and acted upon** by politicians and policymakers. They want to be directly involved and accurately represented in the Brexit negotiations.

Recommendations

FINDING 3C. Young people in our study want negotiations to **prioritise sustaining and improving economic growth in the UK**. They want guarantees and evidence of strong and sustained EU and global trade partnerships with the UK.

FINDING 3D. Young people in our study want Brexit negotiations to focus on **improving their education opportunities**, by improving education funding and reducing fees in the UK, by guaranteeing higher education opportunities in the EU, and by improving domestic educational provision. Some link this to their capacity to participate effectively in British politics and others to their ability to build financially viable futures.

FINDING 3E. Young people in our study want the UK to **build open, just and positive international relationships** with both EU and non-EU countries. This includes the sphere of migration.

LSE presented these research findings at a roundtable hearing convened by the APPG-BBYP, during which time recommendations were discussed and considered by youth organisational stakeholders and APPG-BBYP representatives present. The following recommendations were agreed upon by the APPG-BBYP:

- 1 There should be guarantees on the part of both the UK government and the European Union of freedom of movement, residence, education and work across the European Union for all young people now and in the future, including:
 - a A soft border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.
- 2 The UK government should ensure that funding for education and opportunities within and across the European Union are maintained to allow UK youth opportunities available to previous generations, including:
 - a Protection of the Erasmus+ scheme;
 - b A reconsideration of university fees.
- 3 The UK government should also strengthen critical political and media education in the UK through formal and informal means.

- 4 Rights and protections under EU law enjoyed by generations in the previous 30 years should be implemented and strengthened under post-Brexit UK law, including:
 - a Families living in the UK and the EU must not be broken-up or disrupted by borders and bureaucracy;
 - b The 'health passport' for use of national health systems in Europe must be maintained;
 - c The Human Rights Act must be protected in UK law.
- 5 The UK government and civil society should act to facilitate increased intergenerational dialogue to improve social cohesion in post-Brexit Britain.
- 6 The UK government should provide young people with an officially recognised means to scrutinise and feed into the Brexit negotiation outcomes.
- 7 The UK government should concentrate on ensuring a strong economy so that there are decent jobs and affordable housing for young citizens.
- 8 There should be more checks and balances with regard to the reporting of major political topics in the UK media, with particular attention paid to the phenomenon of scapegoating of groups such as migrants, refugees, and young people.

Introduction

With the reality of Brexit, the UK finds itself in the midst of a profound moment of political, economic and generational uncertainty. Young people under 30 years of age have been members of the European Union their entire lives. The process of leaving the EU will fundamentally change the nature of their relationships with their European counterparts, and the economic, social and political outcomes of Brexit will have the greatest consequence for the youngest and future generations of UK citizens.

Debates about 'hard' and 'soft' Brexits, 'remoaners,' and 'Brexiteers' in media and policy circles have expressed and fuelled a national mood of antagonism, division and unease. UK media coverage has suggested a generational power grab by old Eurosceptics (leavers) from younger Europhiles (remainers). Our study finds that most young people in the UK today feel both powerless and unsettled about their futures after Brexit, regardless of which side of the debate they supported. Other research studies, along with findings discussed in this report, point to young people's deep dissatisfaction with established political institutions. However, despite initial estimates, a relatively high percentage of young people (64% of 18-24 year olds) voted in the referendum campaign¹. Young people also voted in record numbers in the June 2017 national election². These figures alone suggest that young people are eager to participate and to have their voices heard in politics. Brexit has provided a significant and highly visible motivation to consider, critique, and engage in specific political issues related to withdrawal from the European Union and other features of the UK's EU membership. Existing research on young people in the UK shows that they often face a media and policy environment that neglects, infantilises, criminalises, or denies their social identities, political ideas, and forms of civic action. In a climate of unequal opportunity, many young people – particularly from marginalised communities – who want to participate in politics are being left behind.

Against a backdrop of heightened uncertainty about the role that diverse youth voices in the UK might play, in late 2016 youth stakeholders took action to ensure that young people would have a platform for making their perspectives and priorities heard by politicians and policy makers during the Brexit negotiation process. During the past year, the establishment of an All-Party Parliamentary Group on a Better Brexit for Young People (APPG-BBYP) and the launch of a national 'UnDivided' campaign to solicit and channel demands around Brexit have shown vibrant offline and online mobilisations by young people eager to help set the terms of the new UK-EU relationship.

Spring-boarding from our pre-existing research on the relationship between young citizens and their governments at national and EU-level (CATCH-EyoU³), and feeding into the consultation process linked to the APPG-BBYP, our study aimed to learn from diverse young citizens aged 11-30 about their experiences and understandings of the EU referendum, and their expectations and priorities for the Brexit process. Between November 2016 and September 2017, LSE and members and affiliates of the APPG-BBYP worked in partnership to conduct 40 focus groups in representative locations with different groups of young people. The findings from this research offer insights on young people's perspectives on Brexit and priorities for the Brexit negotiations.

1 Bruter, M. and Harrison, S. (2016). Did young people bother to vote in the EU referendum?

Opinium: <http://opinium.co.uk/did-young-people-bother-to-vote-in-the-eu-referendum/>

2 <https://www.ft.com/content/6734cd-de-550b-11e7-9fed-c19e2700005f?mhq5j=e7>

3 See www.catchyou.eu

Background

Formed in November 2016, the APPG-BBYP intends to act as a structured engagement platform to transmit UK youth views about Brexit directly to UK parliamentarians and Brexit negotiators. LSE's Department of Media and Communications has been researching UK young people's active citizenship in a changing European political landscape since the launch of their EU-funded Constructing Active Citizenship with European Youth (CATCH-EyoU, www.catcheyou.eu) project in September 2015. For the past two years, this project has explored the factors and processes contributing to young UK citizens' understandings of and attitudes towards Europe and the European Union. With the vote to leave the European Union, the LSE team's research agenda shifted to investigate the changing nature of young people's engagement with the EU. The APPG-BBYP secretariat My Life My Say (MLMS) are a youth-led youth political participation NGO who have been working alongside the LSE team as participants in an ethnographic study for CATCH-EyoU. During discussions with MLMS about the CATCH-EyoU study, LSE agreed to develop and lead an independent national youth focus group-based study to generate empirical evidence to be used by the APPG in its lobbying to Parliament on behalf of young people.



Project Objectives and Aims of this Study

We approach this research from a framework of social justice and social action. We believe that young people's participation in politics should aim to transform and improve their relationship with the often-hidden structures of power and influence that can circumscribe or enable their political, economic and social opportunities. Our work on young people's perspectives and priorities for Brexit is not just about empowering young people to voice their views to a forum governed by adults with remit and power. It is our hope that we can also connect horizontal networks of youth social action to vertical institutional spheres of power, and use the opportunity of policy upheaval in British politics to provide sustained evidence of the need for meaningful structural change for young people whose concerns and worsening economic circumstances have long been overlooked. Our core aim is to use research to build national policy support for investing in young people's everyday lives, their futures and their future relationships with Europe.

The two main objectives of this project were:

To assess youth views on the state of youth-focused policies, practices, and discursive representation in the UK, leading up to and in the months after the referendum vote; and in doing so to represent accurately areas of tension between the needs of different groups of young people and those who represent them in the UK;

To investigate young people's experiences of and expectations for the Brexit process – specifically their views about the EU, the UK, and the referendum itself, before and after the result; and the issues and aspirations they wanted considered and acted upon by policymakers during Brexit negotiations.

Our research study aimed to meet these objectives by developing a research agenda that would assist in constructing a picture of youth views and overall political experiences, the referendum vote, and their perspectives and priorities for the process of EU withdrawal since the triggering of Article 50 in March 2017.

Specifically, our study asked the following research questions:

- 1 What are young people's views on politics, youth participation, and the Brexit referendum vote?
- 2 What are young people's most pressing issues for a post-Brexit UK and world?
- 3 What are the most important priorities for young people that should be advanced by policy makers on both sides during exit negotiations?

Our study commenced with a targeted scientific literature review.

Insights from Past Research

Although a considerable body of academic and public policy research tells us that youth participation in formal politics is declining⁴, networked participation, informal movements, standby citizenship and both pro- and anti-democratic activism are thriving on the voluntary labour of young people⁵. Unfortunately, there is a widespread perception that, when it comes to young people, disengagement from voting and formal politics springs from overall apathy or indifference to the civic and political sphere. Young people's reasons for a lack of trust and participation in institutional politics, like those of their older adult peers, are complex and multifaceted. The general decline in voting rates does not reflect young citizens' actual civic engagements, but links to an often-reported lack of self-efficacy caused by deepening social inequalities, and to the perceived unresponsiveness of political elites.

Our own research suggests that a decades-long trail of negative news stories about young people's citizenship, young people as a generation, as well as about the EU in the British press; and a lack of sustained, formal engagement with the EU in schools has left many young people confused and others without the resources to argue in favour of remaining or leaving. Recent research confirms that young people feel they don't know enough about the EU⁶, but also shows that their interest levels and willingness to trust information received from both Leave and Remain camps

increased throughout the EU referendum campaign⁷. Viewed alongside evidence from Scotland on the rise in youth political engagement during the 2014 independence referendum⁸, a pattern emerges suggesting that many young people desire the resources to be better equipped to connect their increased political and civic interest to substantive policy knowledge in order to argue for their own interests. They need the platforms and opportunities with which to challenge static media constructions of a monolithic, disengaged younger generation. Their aim is not simply to make plausible interventions, and to have voice, but also to be listened to, and taken seriously.

Research about young people's views of the UK since Brexit has reported high levels of uncertainty and scepticism about political institutions⁹ and youth agency, and a sense that British politics is leaving young people behind.¹⁰ Other recent research about young people and their specific views on Brexit has shown that many young people believe that Brexit is taking the UK and the world in the wrong direction. In a youth consultation led by the British Youth Council in 2016¹¹ that included an online survey with 1000 respondents and face-to-face consultation workshop sessions with over 400 young people in the months after the referendum, young people expressed concern that the Brexit vote had 'created a platform for hate, racism and discrimination' and they also condemned campaign strategies used by the Leave campaign that targeted immigrants. The UnDivided campaign published

4 Bruter, M., & Harrison, S. (2014). *Memory, emotion, and ergonomics: The electoral psychology of voters in perspective*. Paper presented at LSE for the ECREP Workshop Series, London.

5 Amnå, E., & Ekman, J. (2014). Standby citizens: diverse faces of political passivity. *European Political Science Review* 6(2), 261-281.

Banaji, S., & Buckingham, D. (2013). *The civic web: young people, the Internet and civic participation*. London: MIT Press.

Cammaerts, B., Bruter, M., Banaji, S., Harrison, S., & Anstead, N. (2016). *Youth Participation in Democratic Life: Stories of Hope and Disillusion*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Mejias, S. (2017). Politics, Power and Protest: Rights-Based Education Policy and the Limits of Human Rights Education. In M. Bajaj (Ed.), *Human Rights Education: Theory, Research, Praxis*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

6 Sharpe, D., & Henn, M. (2016). UK young voters are not anti EU but just don't understand it. Retrieved from <http://esharp.eu/debates/the-uk-and-europe/uk-young-voters-are-not-anti-eu-but-just-dont-understand-it>

7 Fox, S., & Pearce, S. (2016). Did the EU Referendum boost youth engagement with politics? In D. Jackson, E. Thorsen, & D. Wring (Eds.), *Referendum Analysis 2016: Media, Voters and the Campaign* (pp. 112-113). Bournemouth: Bournemouth University.

8 Mackie, A., & Crowther, J. (2015). Informal Learning Experiences of Young People During the Scottish Independence Referendum. *Concept: The Journal of Contemporary Community Education Practice Theory*, 6(1).

9 Theresa May's first major Brexit speech in early 2017 outlining a 'hard' Brexit – which former deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg tweeted was 'a kick in the teeth for our youth' – reinforces the idea of the government's perceived disregard for youth concerns about their post-EU futures. It also demonstrates how young people and their views on Brexit have already been inserted into political debates about a future Brexit Britain

10 Wybron, I., Vibert, S. & Smith, J. (2017). *Next Generation UK*. Report produced by Demos for the British Council.

11 British Youth Council and UK Young Ambassadors. (2016). *Brexit Briefing*. Report by the British Youth Council.

a report in 2017¹² that surveyed youth users' agreement or disagreement with its crowd-sourced youth priorities for a better Brexit. It found that that young people wanted to be consulted throughout negotiations, and also wanted the UK government to address domestic social challenges around health, housing, mental health and inclusion, while also prioritising the protection of important aspects of their EU membership (such as the Erasmus programme, environmental commitments, and freedom of movement). In our study, we sought to build on these important efforts and on existing knowledge of young people's political participation, media representation, and political education attainment in order to contextualise their views on the process of UK withdrawal from the EU more accurately.



12 UnDivided. (2017). *Youth Manifesto Report*. Report by the UnDivided Campaign.

Methods and Selection Criteria

For this project, it was envisaged that the primary and only data collection method used would be focus groups. However, during the data collection phase, YouGov offered to support and augment existing qualitative data collection efforts. This led to the agreement of a second data collection process for this study, a short survey conducted in July and August 2017 with over 3288 UK citizens aged 18 to 65+. This secondary quantitative data from a survey designed by LSE's Media and Communications Department and administered by YouGov is presented and discussed alongside focus group findings that address specific questions regarding generational differences and perspectives on politics, the European Union and Brexit.¹³

LSE conducted half (N=20) of the focus groups in this study. Working in collaboration with the APPG-BBYP, we extended an invitation to youth stakeholder groups and organisations affiliated with the APPG-BBYP to participate in the project by each agreeing to coordinate, facilitate and transcribe one focus group. Several organisations agreed to participate and contributed significant resources to assist this study. Organisations that coordinated and ran focus groups included Common Vision; Citizenship Foundation; My Life My Say; Girlguiding; Scottish Youth Parliament; UK Youth; the UnDivided campaign; Young Scot; and YouthLink Scotland. LSE was responsible for standardising, coordinating and providing the ethical and methodological guidelines for the implementation of these focus group efforts, and for ensuring the quality of the research. This included the creation and dissemination of a guidelines document that included a description of the research project and its aims, sample selection criteria to follow, guidance for facilitation, and the schedule of questions to be asked across all focus groups.

Focus groups were most commonly comprised of 6 – 10¹⁴ young people in age ranges between 11-30. They were facilitated by Dr. Mejjas or Dr. Banaji from LSE's Media and Communications department or by a nominated and trained youth organisation representative. The selection criteria for this study emphasised diverse geographical (North, South,

East and West England; Northern Ireland; Scotland; Wales) and youth representation (economic, social, political, ethnic, national backgrounds). In particular, our criteria sought to bring disaffected and/or hard-to-reach and/or marginalised young people into the consultative process. Focus groups were held across England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Working in partnership with the network of youth organisations convened to participate in the APPG-BBYP process, our study thus reached a diverse range of young UK residents, including those from different genders, socio-economic groups, races, ethnic, LBGTQI, political, and immigrant backgrounds. The financial constraints of the project – as an unfunded study – and the choice of methodology (see below), made it impossible to ensure a completely balanced sample, for instance with regard to gender. Thus the study employed an opportunity sample approach to gain access to groups, schools, universities and institutions that expressed interest in participating or where existing networks could facilitate coordination of a focus group session. As a result, our sample included

Our project employed a primarily qualitative approach via focus groups to advance a method of research that enables political discussion and the exchange of ideas between young people. Focus groups allow the reporting of young people's detailed, inter-connected and open-ended views on past and present circumstances, as well as on hopes for the future, while also providing a rich means of active social engagement and community engagement. Facilitators in our focus groups were given detailed guidance by the LSE team on how to encourage discussion between participants whilst providing an open, permissive and respectful environment for sharing and debating sensitive political topics. Facilitators were also instructed to maintain political neutrality and avoid evaluating or commenting on the views of participants.

Young people in our focus groups were passionate about the topic of Brexit and committed to questioning their own place in UK politics hitherto. The focus group method has been shown to generate abundant qualitative data, but

13 See Appendix 2 for a list of questions used in the YouGov survey.

14 In some cases focus group organisers would invite more than 10 participants, and the policy of our study was not to turn away any young people interested in participating, therefore four groups with between 16 and 25 participants each have been included.

equally importantly to provoke thought and interaction¹⁵. The selected methods therefore align with the overall objectives to meaningfully engage young people in conversations about Brexit, their role in UK politics, their future citizenship, and how they might possibly create a more sustainable model for institutional political engagement.

In order to provide context for our focus group discussions, rather than simply asking our respondents to tell us their perspectives on and priorities for Brexit, moderators began discussions by soliciting young people's stories about their families', friendship groups' and community experiences with the EU referendum. Participants were then asked for opinions on their experiences in politics, their perceptions of the current political climate in the UK, and their personal beliefs about the role for young people in participating in UK politics. This included asking questions about:

- 1 Conversations with and views from friends and families about Brexit;
- 2 Views on how political and media institutions characterise and engage young people in politics; and
- 3 Barriers to increased youth involvement in political action, political institutions, or activism.

The full list of questions used across focus groups can be found in Appendix 1.

Analysis of focus groups and interviews included, in the first stage, textual transcription and coding of the full audio recordings, to capture verbatim responses from all participants, and to include where possible demographic characteristics (e.g. age, gender, race, nationality, and

occupation).¹⁶ As this project was conducted by the individual contributing organisations mentioned above, and initially undertaken with no formal funding, data was submitted for analysis to LSE in transcript form that corresponded to available resources of each participating organisation. In some groups, full detailed annotation of certain demographic characteristics such as age, gender or race were not always captured or provided.

The second stage of analysis involved the creation of thematic codes and sub-codes and organisation of all participants' responses into discrete themes. This allowed a basic level of quantification of which themes were discussed the most, and generated a dataset of thematically-grouped quotes that highlighted the range and quality of participant responses on each issue. Because our sampling was purposive, and the themes of the interviews were pre-agreed, our analysis used thematic analysis¹⁷ to identify the key themes and discourses emerging from literature on and representation of youth, and from the focus groups conducted.

15 See Kitzinger, J. (1994). The methodology of focus groups: the importance of interaction between research participants. *Sociology of health & illness*, 16(1), 103-121. See also: Cammaerts, B., Bruter, M., Banaji, S., Harrison, S., & Anstead, N. (2016). *Youth Participation in Democratic Life: Stories of Hope and Disillusion*. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan,

16 Throughout this report we present the voices of young people as they spoke cogently and passionately about Brexit and their future as UK citizens. Wherever possible all quotes include full information about the respondent including gender, age, and location, but in some focus groups where individual gender or ages were not provided, or where focus groups took place in a location that was not where the participant was from (e.g. one English focus group that was held in Edinburgh, England 4), we instead provide age range and general region of the participant.

17 Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research in psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.

Sample

Overall, 352 young people took part in focus group discussions analysed in this report. The table below provides demographic information about the focus groups conducted.

ID	Location / Participants	#	Age	% Female
ENGLAND 1	Gosport – Participants at a regional student council youth forum	6	13-16	67%
ENGLAND 2	Portsmouth – Staff members of a local education charity	7	19-28	29%
ENGLAND 3	Huddersfield – Undergraduate students from Huddersfield, Bolton & Manchester	5	19-22	40%
ENGLAND 4	Edinburgh – Youth representatives from England at UK-wide youth forum	6	17-24	50%
ENGLAND 5	London – Members of a girls charity from across England	5	15-21	100%
ENGLAND 6	London – Members of a girls charity from across England	6	15-21	100%
ENGLAND 7	Manchester – Undergraduate students	6	19-22	67%
ENGLAND 8	Birmingham – Young people from a local youth work charity	7	15-24	86%
ENGLAND 9	Nottingham - Mix of youth workers, young professionals, and young people not in education, employment or training	9	18-26	44%
ENGLAND 10	Cornwall – Students at a local sixth form college	11	17-18	36%
LONDON 1	London – NHS workers at a north London hospital	13	21-25	57%
LONDON 2	London - Mix of undergraduate students and young professionals	11	19-26	64%
LONDON 3	London - Mix of undergraduate students and young professionals	6	18-26	33%
LONDON 4	London - Mix of undergraduate students and young professionals	3	18-26	33%
LONDON 5	London – Students at a non-selective sixth form academy in London	8	15-23	50%
LONDON 6	London – Students at a non-selective sixth form academy in London	7	15-23	86%
LONDON 7	London – Students at a non-selective sixth form academy in London	8	15-23	38%
LONDON 8	London – Mix of undergraduate students and young professionals	4	20-28	50%
LONDON 9	London – Undergraduate students	4	20-23	25%
LONDON 10	London - Mix of youth workers, secondary and undergraduate students, and young people not in education, employment or training	17	16-24	65%
LONDON 11	London – Mix of undergraduate students and young professionals	7	18-30	43%
LONDON 12	London – Young professionals	7	22-29	71%
NORTHERN IRELAND 1	Ballymena – Year 12 & 13 students at an integrated sixth form college	10	16-18	80%

ID	Location / Participants	#	Age	% Female
NORTHERN IRELAND 2	Belfast – Year 9 &10 students at an integrated sixth form college	10	12-14	60%
NORTHERN IRELAND 3	Warrenpoint – Year 9, 10, 12, & 13 students at a sixth form college	12	13-19	67%
NORTHERN IRELAND 4	Ballymena – Year 12 & 13 students at an integrated sixth form college	10	16-17	70%
NORTHERN IRELAND 5	Belfast – Year 12 & 13 students at an integrated sixth form college	7	16-18	86%
SCOTLAND 1	Falkirk and Clackmannanshire – Young carers working with a young carers charity	6	15-18	67%
SCOTLAND 2	Edinburgh – Participants in Brexit event hosted by a Scottish youth association	5	16-23	60%
SCOTLAND 3	East Renfrewshire – Members of a local youth forum	6	14-19	83%
SCOTLAND 4	Kirkcaldy – Members of a local authority youth club	6	11-12	100%
SCOTLAND 5	Edinburgh – Youth attendees at a national youth politics event	25	12-23	--
SCOTLAND 6	Glasgow – Mixture of college and undergraduate students	11	17-21	36%
SCOTLAND 7	Glasgow – Young people from a local Muslim women's centre	14	14-21	64%
SCOTLAND 8	Glasgow – Young people from a local youth club	6	16-24	83%
WALES 1	Swansea – Students from a comprehensive Welsh-medium secondary school	9	15-17	--
WALES 2	Carmarthenshire – Students from a bilingual secondary school	18	12-18	--
WALES 3	Carmarthenshire – Students from a bilingual secondary school	16	14-16	--
WALES 4	Port Talbot – Students from a comprehensive secondary school	7	15-16	43%
WALES 5	Cardiff – Undergraduate students	11	20-22	36%
TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS				352

Table 1. Focus groups participating in the study

Findings

Anger at UK political institutions is flaring on both sides of the Brexit debate. Evidence from referendum voting patterns appears to support the perception of an 'old' nation that is robbing its youth of their future, and fuelling the embers of youth discontent. Our focus groups reveal young Britons' engagement with multiple aspects of the local, regional and national civic sphere, their critical analysis and deep anxieties about post-Brexit futures. Issues of fairness – in economics, community cohesion, mental health, identity, generational cohorts, and towards migrants and refugees – loomed large, all framed by wariness towards or open distrust of the current government and the British media. Our analysis of findings supports the view that 'fake news' is in the news, and that young people's trust in mainstream media as well as in alternative online sources, and many official political messages, appears to be equally low. With legitimate anxieties about housing, education, jobs, debt, and the future at the forefront of their minds, young people who were both pro- and anti-Brexit in our focus groups insisted that the UK government should enact Brexit in equitable ways. Overall, the young people in our focus groups uniformly voiced their support for social justice in both economic and cultural domains across a range of issues.

In this section, we present the key findings from our focus group study across three distinct themes:

- 1 Views on politics, the UK and Brexit;
- 2 Perspectives on the impact of Brexit on the UK; and
- 3 Priorities for UK and EU negotiators.



Views on Politics, Brexit and the UK

Findings in this section present the themes that emerged from initial contextual and framing questions, and also from YouGov survey questions where thematically relevant.

FINDING 1A.

A generational divide revealed and compounded by Brexit

Young people in our study repeatedly highlighted **generational differences in Brexit preferences**. A significant majority expressed bemusement, anger, and resentment at the choice to leave the EU, which was made – in their view – primarily, though not exclusively, by older generations.

Young people in all 40 focus groups voiced concern, resentment and even anger at the electoral impact of the generation gap between young remainers and old leavers on the outcome of the Brexit referendum. In over half the focus groups, at least one respondent cited the shorter remaining life span of older generations to explain their anger at the outcome of the referendum, saying: 'They won't have to live with the consequences of this decision, but we will'. One participant's comment succinctly encapsulates the views of many of our respondents:

We've all been born members of the European Union. So, we've grown up and seen what we've got and we've said, "We don't want to lose that". Obviously, most elderly people, they were born in a time when we were not in the European Union. There is this kind of desire to perhaps go to some kind of golden age. My friend actually overheard someone on a bus once saying that she voted to leave 'to turn back the clock.' And that really quite angered me cause I'm thinking, 'hold on but it's not going to be your clock to turn back necessarily.' I feel as though our future has been determined by [older voters].

MALE, 17, CORNWALL [ENGLAND 10]

I was really really angry about it, because it felt like the large majority of the older people were the ones that had voted leave. You've had the benefits of the EU your entire life, you've reaped all those benefits, and you're a bit annoyed about extra laws on fishing, so you're gonna decide that your children and your grandchildren aren't allowed to have those benefits that you had. And it's just like, I was so cross the next day, it was like, you're gonna be dead in five years.

FEMALE, 15-21, ENGLAND [ENGLAND 6]

Other comments in the same vein emphasise that feelings of resentment are becoming deeply entrenched and, in several cases, are further complicated by family dynamics, with numerous young people recounting disagreements with their parents, grandparents, aunts or uncles about the European Union, and about Brexit.

Despite initial reports to the contrary¹⁸, over 64% of 18-24 year olds and 65% of 25-39 year olds voted in the EU referendum¹⁹. Of those votes, 71% of the 18-24 bloc and 62% of 25-39 year olds voted for the UK to remain in the EU, giving statistical support to the initially anecdotal notion that the remain vote was strongest amongst young people. In our focus groups, young people explained their experiences and feelings in the lead-up to the referendum, speaking of division within and across generations:

It was very divided in my family. My sister's 25 and she's totally disengaged. She came to uni but she's working. My dad, he's a bit disenfranchised, just as the media and the politicians are all saying about people like us. Disenfranchised and confused. He doesn't feel represented, or that he can change anything in politics. But me and my mum had a lot of heated debates.

FEMALE, 19-22, HUDDERSFIELD, BOLTON & MANCHESTER [ENGLAND 3]

¹⁸ <https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/eu-referendum-brexit-young-people-upset-by-the-outcome-of-the-eu-referendum-why-didnt-you-vote-a7105396.html>

¹⁹ Endersby, James. 'Did young people bother to vote in the EU referendum?' Opinium. <http://opinium.co.uk/did-young-people-bother-to-vote-in-the-eu-referendum/>.

The main discussion in my family was democracy in the EU. Of course my family is a big Labour family so my grandfather and his brothers were linked to the Labour Leave campaign, they supported it, however my dad and his brothers all supported Remain. So we were trying to find out whether we should back Remain or Leave because I had family who were very vocal supporters of both sides.

MALE, 17, EAST RENFREWSHIRE [SCOTLAND 3]

Most of our respondents, when specifically talking about generational differences, tended to affirm the conventional wisdom borne out by statistics that characterised young Remainers being forcefully taken out of the EU against their will by older Leavers:

I don't think it's fair that our generation is denied the same opportunity that previous generations were allowed to do, just to move around Europe freely, I don't think it's fair that we didn't get a say. Especially 16 year olds. It's a whole different issue that 16 year olds shouldn't be able to vote, cause it's gonna affect us so drastically and we don't get a say.

MALE, 16, CORNWALL [ENGLAND 10]

If you tried to voice an opinion about Brexit, very, very frequently you were told that, being under 18, you had no idea what you were talking about. You could come out with facts, with figures, and people would say "No, you don't know what you are talking about, that's speculation." I think this campaign was more of an example than ever before of young people being totally pushed out and people not allowing young people to have opinions about politics.

**PARTICIPANT AGED 14-16,
CARMARTHENSHIRE [WALES 3]**

I disagree with ... more old people choosing for us because the new generation is more open-minded and we are more open to immigrations and different races. However, I feel like the people from the older generations are not that open-minded.

FEMALE, 16, LONDON [LONDON 6]

However, a small number of respondents who were pro-leave offered perspectives that differed from the prevailing narrative, expressing solidarity with some but not all members of their family, indicating a different type of cross-generational intra-family split:

My dad didn't vote, but my mom did, and she voted out because, sort of my persuasion, because I really like watched it and saw what was happening. We had like loads of conversations about it, and I think it was probably for the better cause for like one we're pioneering the way and proving to others that you can leave even though you joined it.

FEMALE, 13, GOSPORT [ENGLAND 1]

My mom was the opposite. My mom wanted to leave, but my family was quite split, whereas me and my mom were very vote Brexit, vote leave, whereas the other half, side of my family they wanted to stay...

FEMALE, 16-18, BELFAST [NORTHERN IRELAND 5]

Such a highlighting of familial and/or generational differences occurred in nearly all of the focus groups conducted. It was particularly prominent in focus groups with young people under 18, or those who were under 18 at the time of the EU referendum vote. In the majority of focus group sessions with these younger cohorts, an open frustration with not being able to have a voice in what was considered to be such a momentous and impactful decision was frequently contrasted with the existence of votes for 16 and 17 year olds in Scotland since 2016. Most young people argued that citizens from 16 upwards should have been able to vote in the Brexit referendum, and in Scotland participants also shared frustration that although 16 year olds can vote in Scottish elections, they were not permitted to vote in the UK-wide Brexit referendum.

Responses from the YouGov survey (N = 3,288) showed some generational variation in opinion, notably around freedom of movement (discussed later in this report), but also concerning perceptions of the media's role in reporting on the EU and on young people. 59% of 18-24 year olds agreed that the media should report more on young people, but agreement with this statement diminished with increasing age: 40% of 25-49s, 34% of 50-64s, and only 29% of UK citizens aged 65 and above thought that the media should be more inclusive of youth lives and concerns. Similarly with questions around the media's reporting of Brexit, older generations appeared to be somewhat satisfied with the media's performance in presenting positive images of the EU (53% of 50-64s and 52% of 65 and above were satisfied), while 18-24 year olds were much less likely to agree that the media reported positive views on the EU (only 35% were satisfied).

FINDING 1B.

Institutional scepticism, renewed political interest

Young people in our study are **distrustful of many existing political and media institutions** and of their representatives, **but nonetheless most remained passionate about politics** and committed to the civic sphere in their localities, in the UK, and in Europe.

Analysis of data from both the focus groups and our YouGov survey leads us to this finding. In response to the YouGov survey question 'I am mostly satisfied with how the British government has acted after the Brexit vote,' 59% of young people aged 18-24 disagreed. And as discussed above, results from the YouGov survey also show that young people were more likely than older generations to see the media as being biased against the EU, and to call for increased attention to youth-related issues.

Focus group responses about youth political participation indicate high levels of interest on the part of young people, but significant questions regarding lack of engagement from public institutions²⁰. Respondents repeatedly told us that they don't think that young people are taken seriously enough by politicians in government and by the media. They pointed to the lack of movement on the 'votes at 16' campaign across the whole of the UK, and to the way the UK media stereotypes and then dismisses them as a political constituency. Participants repeatedly cited both the media and politicians as the main culprits of scapegoating during the EU referendum campaign. When asked the question 'what do you think the message was from the media that you were getting about Brexit?' one participant responded by saying:

Save Britain, yeah, get immigrants out of Britain, that's all.

MALE, 15-16, PORT TALBOT [WALES 4]

Although this will no doubt reflect which media sources this particular respondent and other young people were exposed to during the EU referendum campaign, it is consistent with many of the responses we received about the media's role in influencing the ways in which the key issues of immigration were discussed during the campaign.

On the subject of politics and politicians, the themes of political cynicism, lies, and instrumentalism were by far the most often cited as reasons for mistrust.

Both sides of the campaign exaggerated their positions. You had people like David Cameron saying that it's going to start World War 3 but then you also had people like Boris Johnson saying that you going to get 350 million pounds a week. So, you actually don't know who to believe because both of them are lying to you. Whereas I think if one side would have told the truth then it would have made that choice easier.

FEMALE, 15-24, BIRMINGHAM [ENGLAND 8]

[Politicians] use us as a talking point to make their arguments, but they completely forget about us afterwards. They say "think of the children," and then, [they] themselves, just don't. Our politicians want us to have high test scores and low arrest rates, but besides that, they don't care.

MALE, 17, BALLYMENA [NORTHERN IRELAND 4]

There is a lack of empathy for young people – we are always used as ammunition. Every government, every political campaign says that their policies will make jobs for young people and make young people happier and give them a better life, but as soon as young people actually speak up and respond to that in any way then we are just shut out.

PARTICIPANT AGED 12-18, CARMARTHENSHIRE [WALES 2]

Most of the politicians who we kind of think of when we say politicians are not young people themselves. They're middle aged or older. And also, they're not a very diverse range of that group of people as well. So, you're not hearing the views of a massive proportion of the population expressed when you're hearing the voices of those politicians. And if they're trying to speak out on behalf of other groups, including young people, it's not going to be as accurate a representation as if they were directly interacting with young people.

FEMALE, 15-21, ENGLAND [ENGLAND 5]

²⁰ Participants highlighted institutions such as government and political parties and schools.

So, trust in UK institutional politics is low amongst this cohort, and the Brexit campaign was seen to be at fault for further entrenching the feeling that neither politicians nor the media are to be trusted. Young people specifically voiced their anger and frustration at the continued homogenising and censoring of the European Union, immigrants and refugees during the EU referendum 'Leave' campaign. They cited the negative impact of this campaign on British multiculturalism and its link to the rise of hate crimes:

More people are now more openly racist.

FEMALE, 17-24, BIRMINGHAM [ENGLAND 8]

The UK is founded on immigration, it's founded on people coming in, helping to build the infrastructure, helping to build its natural resources, and started from the bottom really. So I just didn't really agree with trying to get us [immigrants] out of it.

MALE, 26, NOTTINGHAM [ENGLAND 9]

Indeed, one of several striking focus group findings is that young people in the UK are deeply critical of the ways in which the Brexit referendum 'Leave' campaign and its aftermath scapegoated both the EU and immigrants living and working in the UK.

I know that there's people who voted to leave who aren't racist or whatever. Of course not. But it is kind of a validation of some of the views in relation to free movement and what not that do come from a hateful place, and I'm just scared that in a way it's going to encourage that sort of mindset.

FEMALE, 15-21, ENGLAND [ENGLAND 5]

The immigrants were basically scapegoated. When things get tough, the first groups to get put on the spot are the ones who are in the minority groups.

FEMALE, 19-26, LONDON [LONDON 2]

Some respondents highlighted a conflation between European Union citizens living in the UK and non-European immigrants:

I personally voted for Remain myself, but it was more on the basis that I did not want to legitimise things like the racist shooting of [Labour MP] Jo Cox, which is extremely upsetting that that happened and it didn't have to happen. And the racist actions towards immigrants that weren't actually even coming from Europe - and Europe almost being made the scapegoat of immigration.

MALE, 19-22, HUDDERSFIELD [ENGLAND 3]

I come from a Turkish background and it was really upsetting how Turkey was used as a political football during the EU referendum debate. My family felt betrayed by both the EU and the Government but ultimately voted to Remain.

FEMALE, 19-22, MANCHESTER [ENGLAND 7]

Despite widespread disapproval of the perceived scapegoating of immigrants and the EU in the referendum campaign, their levels of political empathy were particularly noteworthy. Like much of the political commentary in the UK since the Brexit vote, young people too recognised that the themes animating anti-immigrant and anti-EU sentiment were in some cases driven by more basic concerns around economic welfare and livelihood:

There were far too many losers who were angry [because of] globalisation so the response was to blame something which isn't associated with you, because it's all confusing, what's happening: the change in your communities, technology, work, etcetera. I wouldn't say those who voted 'out' were racist. Some may be. Some are fearful. But I think it's the otherness you externalise what could be the cause but you don't quite understand it, it's easy to blame an immigrant you don't see because... it's not you - and there's quite a nice overlap of places which voted leave to ethnic minority proportions and it's - you can map them out: those which don't see ethnic minorities that much voted out.

MALE, 18-26, LONDON [LONDON 3]

Young people also felt they were not fully included in debates about their European future during the referendum.

In lots of ways there was actually much less emphasis on young people for the Brexit vote than there was for example in the [2015] general election. General election, it was all very young people focused. There's a lot of information and organisations out there. But when it came to EU referendum, that level of infrastructure and organisation just didn't seem to really exist around young people specifically.

PARTICIPANT AGED 20-28, LONDON [LONDON 8]

However, despite several comments to this effect, young people in our sample, even before the results of the June 2017 election, already recognised one crucial way in which their voices could gain more weight:

Young people underestimate their power. If they voted in bigger numbers and if we stand united against anything, we could've made our voices heard. It's an engagement issue with young people because they all get taken seriously when they actually vote in big enough numbers.

PARTICIPANT AGED 20-28, LONDON [LONDON 8]

For some young people, Brexit has become a reminder that their informed political participation is necessary to build a better world for their future and to prevent political wrongs from occurring unchallenged.

FINDING 1C.

Many young people in our study displayed a **complex and nuanced understanding of Brexit** and of the short and long-term effects of withdrawal from the EU; but many also believed that **citizens do not have enough political knowledge** when it comes to the EU and expressed the view that significant investment in critical political education is needed.

In focus group discussions young people demonstrated a critical understanding of the questions at the heart of the Brexit outcome and aftermath, often referencing their knowledge of and opinions about specific aspects of EU membership that affected them as citizens:

I am not going to claim for a moment that the EU is perfect, so many of the things which I like about growing up in this country have come from the EU. I mean rights for workers. Closer to equal opportunities for women. And human rights. Protection of the environment. Freedom of movement of people. And the ease of trading of course within Europe, and the ease of travel. They all seem to be good things to me.

FEMALE, 15-21, ENGLAND [ENGLAND 5]

Across nearly all focus groups, the message from young people was that they believed the UK education system does not sufficiently prepare citizens to engage critically in politics, nor does it provide any kind of substantive teaching or learning about Europe and the European Union before the stage of A levels. Respondents consistently expressed their view that there was insufficient information about and debate pertaining to the EU and to the referendum during the referendum campaign. Several noted that British educational structures and systems insufficiently prepare British citizens to participate in and take critical positions on British or EU politics. They voiced a deep support of and desire for increased and better political education in UK schools.

If we were taken seriously then politics would have been a subject on our school timetable.

PARTICIPANT AGED 15-23, LONDON [LONDON 5]

You turn 18 and suddenly they expect you to have all your solid political views. Similar to all choices we have to make as young adults, it would be helpful to have these classes before we leave compulsory education.

PARTICIPANT AGED 15-17, SWANSEA [WALES 1]

They demonstrated a keen understanding of and wariness towards the rhetoric and action of politicians and government around young people, and also around Brexit. Over half of respondents mentioned lack of information about the EU as a serious concern. The issue of education was brought up in every focus group.

We have school systems that do not encourage critical thought, and discourage involvement in politics by dodging around its existence in most of the curriculum. Therefore, not so many young people are interested or aware of the political landscape around them.

PARTICIPANT AGED 12-23, EDINBURGH [SCOTLAND 5]

Young people in our focus groups recognised the connections between education, privilege, and ability to participate successfully in politics, and to make a difference to the society in which they reside:

When you live in an underprivileged environment, you kind of concentrate more on survival rather than having a say.

FEMALE, 19-22, LONDON [LONDON 1]

Someone who is privileged does have a better chance of being taken seriously in politics...they've kind of got an advantage. Someone who's been able to get a good education and doesn't have any of the drawbacks of living in a deprived area...they're going to find it easier to get out there. Female, 15-18, Falkirk & Clackmannanshire [SCOTLAND 1]

Overall, our focus group framing questions around politics and Brexit revealed striking similarities with other recent research on young people's views and on generational differences. Generational resentment amongst young people is real, significant, and lingering. The sharp binary stereotype of older leavers and younger remainers appears to have become firmly entrenched in the zeitgeist. Generational differences reported in our focus groups, whilst conclusive in expressing this widespread view, were nonetheless complex and in many cases confounded the accepted view. For example, some young people in our focus group described older family members who 'donated' their vote to their younger generation family member, while one teenager described convincing her mother to vote leave in order to protect the future of her children. Our respondents shared different motivations and factors behind their own and their families' support for Remain and Leave campaigns, and described often with pain or frustration how opposing views were debated and argued within families.

Our study provides new statistical evidence through our quantitative findings clearly showing that the generational perspective gap is also real pertaining to issues such as immigration and freedom of movement.

In line with previous studies, we found evidence of significant levels of dissatisfaction and mistrust of politicians and political parties, particularly during the EU referendum campaign. We also found criticism consistent with research studies on UK newspapers and political media coverage regarding the role of media in influencing political discourse and participation.

Across both of these areas, Brexit seems to have exacerbated resentment, whether directed at older generations, political parties and the UK government, and untrustworthy media institutions.

Encouraging findings throughout the focus groups included strong levels of interest in political participation, a substantial knowledge of current Brexit-related political issues, and a widely expressed interest in improving the provision of political education in order to equip young people to more effectively participate in politics.

One of the most pressing issues that our study sought to illuminate was what young people expected the potential impact of Brexit to be on their lives. In focus groups participants were asked the question 'how will Brexit affect you and other young people in the next ten years?' This question was explicitly framed in an open-ended and neutral way in order to allow for positive, negative and neutral responses.

Participants overwhelmingly framed their expectations about and sense of the current the impact of Brexit on young people as concerns, in terms of possible negative consequences and outcomes. A much smaller number of participants envisioned the impact of Brexit in optimistic terms. The tables below highlight first the main concerns identified in the discussions, in order of frequency, and secondly a shorter list of positive possibilities mentioned, also in order of frequency.

Concerns about the Impact of Brexit

Concerns about losing EU membership structures, opportunities, and rights

Concerns about negative impact on the UK economy

Concerns about an uncertain future

Concerns that young people will be the most adversely affected

Concerns about increases in intolerance and racism in the UK

Concerns about the decline of multiculturalism in the UK

Concerns about the UK becoming an isolated country

Concerns about negative impact on families and on connections between UK and EU

Concerns about increases in desire to leave the UK and move abroad

Concerns about social welfare

Concerns about global instability

Concerns about Irish unification

Concerns about collapse of the EU

Concerns about rising inequality and a de-emphasising of social justice

Concerns about negative impact on the environment

Table 2. Youth concerns about the impact of Brexit

Views on the Impact of Brexit

Optimism about the Impact of Brexit

Could increase pride in the UK

Could make more young people politically active

Could work out positively in the end

Table 3. Positive youth views about the impact of Brexit

When asked about their views regarding the impact of Brexit over the coming decade, more than 250 young people in almost all 40 focus groups offered specific concerns. Overall, the concerns reported to us related to perceived negative impact of Brexit on the UK and its citizens. There was little evidence of concerns or possibilities which validated the main apprehensions articulated by the ‘Leave’ campaign – the worry that borders would not be tight enough to combat unchecked immigration, and an expectation that taking control of legislative and trade processes would give Britons more say in governing their lives. A very small number of young people felt optimistic about the impact of Brexit, albeit for sometimes very different reasons: some felt it could strengthen an independent Britain, while others felt that it could boost youth activism in the direction of a more interdependent and socially just Britain. These themes are discussed in detail in the following sections.

FINDING 2A.

Lost membership, lost generation?

Young people in our study **clearly did not want to lose the EU membership opportunities and rights** that they currently have access to, particularly in the areas of human and civil rights, cross-border families, travel, work, education, and trade. Furthermore, they expressed strong concern that the loss of such structures would have the most detrimental effects on young people.

By far the most frequently mentioned worries expressed by young people referenced the loss of benefits and opportunities for the nation as a whole and for individuals that could emerge from changes in the UK-EU structural relationship. Our analysis of the data suggests that young people are most concerned about the negative impact on

their lives of losing the structures, opportunities and rights that they currently enjoy as members of the European Union. Structures refers to the systems, benefits and opportunities that young people did not want to surrender or change after Brexit, and included mainly concerns about losing freedom of movement; losing EU funding for education, arts, and rural/farming regions; losing the protections of EU laws and EU-linked rights; and loss of soft-border access along the Northern Ireland/Ireland border.

All of the Brexit-related concerns voiced by young people were specifically about the loss of protection from or negative change to such structures.

Concerns about loss of EU structures, opportunities, and rights	Specific concerns cited in focus groups
Losing freedom of movement	Right to work abroad, Holidays, Intercultural exchange, Studying abroad, non-specific
Losing EU Funding and revenue from EU citizens in the UK	Education, Arts, Farming, Social welfare, Rural, Students and EU workers in the UK, non-specific
Irish border problems	Irish citizenship, Threat of violence, Border controls, Cross-border education
Losing EU membership benefits	Erasmus, Health care, Family members in other countries, quick stamping at borders, non-specific
Losing EU laws	Disability rights, Workers rights, non-specific

Table 4. Concerns expressed about post-Brexit EU membership changes

A result from our YouGov survey highlighted an important difference in opinion about Brexit across generations. Agreement with the statement ‘I think that the UK government should restrict immigration and freedom of movement

between UK and EU countries as part of Brexit negotiations' showed a sharp upward correlation with increased age. At the youngest end of the survey 24% of 18-24s and 37% of 25-49 year olds agreed with this anti-freedom of movement statement, while 52% of ages 50-64 and 61% of those 65+ agreed. This finding, along with focus group results, clearly reveals the extent to which young people value freedom of movement. By a considerable margin young people were most angry or frustrated about losing this automatic right of EU members, which they described as a valuable and valued opportunity for them educationally, economically (in terms of both individual job opportunities and economic benefits to the UK), and in terms of cultural exchange:

I know lots of people that had intentions about travelling for university and study and aren't any more, people that come to the UK from other countries in the EU to study, whose positions are now threatened. Our universities depend on those international students to stay open and to be able to continue with the current already very high fee levels that we see. It's threatening international students and British students, and British students that wish to travel abroad.

PARTICIPANT AGED 14-16, CARMARTHENSHIRE [WALES 3]

You could move [but] It's just gonna be harder. You have to apply for visas, you'll have to apply for work permits.

MALE, 26, BRITISH, NOTTINGHAM [ENGLAND 9]

Of course, speculation about whether work visas would be granted or not to UK citizens after Brexit was occasionally expressed as the fear that such visas would not be granted, something that cannot be determined until the outcome of the negotiations. As such, we found areas where clear communications with young citizens are needed to keep them informed of what the UK government is negotiating on their behalf.

[Brexit] is affecting everyone's future because you're not going to be able to get a work visa to work in Europe anymore. There's even young people now who are like, "I want to get my career and I do want to move abroad, I do want to move to Europe and I do want to live there." But it's not going to be an option anymore... it's not really fair.

FEMALE, 16, EDINBURGH [SCOTLAND 2]

A second specific aspect of EU membership benefits discussed in many focus groups was the potential negative impact of the loss of EU funding for a variety of social and economic programmes. Again, this was framed by

focus group participants on multiple levels, as affecting education, culture, and economic livelihoods, particularly in rural areas. And it demonstrated that young people – at least now that the referendum is over – have become acutely aware of specific financial benefits and support provided by membership in the EU. One respondent felt that:

Culture will suffer [after Brexit] – for example touring bands, art, drama. Science will suffer a lot.

PARTICIPANT AGED 15-17, SWANSEA [WALES 1]

Another participant concurred with this view, specifically expressing concern that art funding previously provided by the EU for UK projects could disappear:

There's a lot of funding which comes from the EU for film and [it isn't clear] whether the British government steps in and continues that funding, but if they don't it harms the film industry here and there's more of an incentive to go film in Europe.

MALE, 20, GLASGOW [SCOTLAND 6]

Several participants also connected loss of EU funding for public institutions within the UK such as colleges and health care facilities with the notion that budgets will have to be set anew and agendas changed:

We're basically starting from scratch as a country again. I think it's going to get worse before it gets better. I work in education and our college is – we get like one hundred and fifty million from the EU so I think it'll affect us.

MALE, 24, YORKSHIRE & HUMBER [ENGLAND 4]

I'm a wee bit worried about the Northern Ireland Hospice... because it receives funding from the government [and] a big portion of that comes from EU funding. If we leave, we're not going to get that.

FEMALE, 16-18, BALLYMENA [NORTHERN IRELAND 1]

A focus on the possibly harmful impacts of Brexit-spurred funding cuts on rural areas and on rural livelihoods was mentioned across Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales:

Rural areas around the UK, a lot of them are funded by the EU and I worry that Westminster will lose sight of those kind of places and their communities won't thrive as well.

FEMALE, 16, EAST RENFREWSHIRE [SCOTLAND 3]

In my community, a lot of farmers were saying things like the single farm payment might stop and there was lots of speculation around that.

FEMALE, 13, WARRENPOINT [NORTHERN IRELAND 3]

I live in the agricultural community and there was a lot of stuff flying around about all the grants we get from the EU ... whether that would still continue ... a loss of farming subsidies ...

FEMALE, 14-16, CARMARTHENSHIRE [WALES 3]

We were interested by the fact that many of the young people expressing such sentiments and fears discussed how these had been expressed by older adults in their communities. The reporting of such intergenerational anxieties suggests that some of the older adults who were swayed by the arguments of the Leave campaign, might actually be regretting their decision now that they are weighing up the actual costs.

Beyond freedom of movement and EU funding for arts, science and education, young people in our study often mentioned specific EU programmes that they valued, either because they had used them and seen their benefits, or because they wanted to have the opportunity to take advantage of them in the future as previous generations of British citizens have been able to:

One of the big concerns that we always spoke about was the Erasmus exchange programme because obviously now that we're going to be leaving the EU we're not really sure what's going to happen with that and if that is going to continue on. It's such a great opportunity and it opens so many doors, and if that's taken away that's putting a lot of people at a disadvantage when it comes to employment.

FEMALE, 19, EAST RENFREWSHIRE [SCOTLAND 3]

The EHIC²¹ card is something that no one has mentioned, the EU health insurance cards, which means if you have one you can get health care free if you're in one of the member states. And also, the passports, what it means going through the borders, we're gonna be stuck in these massive queues, taking ages to get through instead of just going through the fast EU system. Drivers' licenses, the EU drivers' licenses, if you've gotta drive there, it could become more difficult. Generally, it's those little things they just have not mentioned.

MALE, 22, CARDIFF [WALES 5]

Participants also expressed fear that Brexit would adversely affect the UK's extension of European human and civil rights frameworks to its citizens. Some questioned whether previous commitments to upholding the rights guaranteed by the European Convention on Human Rights and European Court of Justice would be upheld and protected by UK law after Brexit.

I worry that we're going to have an enormous backwards step because suddenly all these things which we now take for granted, like protection of workers' rights, are going to be up in the air. They're going to be up for debate. And lots of people are going to try and challenge it. Try and find loopholes.

FEMALE, 15-21, ENGLAND [ENGLAND 5]

There are so many things that are written under EU law that the UK abide by that a lot of people don't know about. Like I know for disability laws...a lot of that was brought in, especially through the EU and then because being a member of the EU everyone was in the UK was part of the law. Gradually things like that will start to dwindle away.

FEMALE, 14, EAST RENFREWSHIRE [SCOTLAND 3]

Some participants explicitly mentioned environmental concerns, linking the UK's ability to contribute to global efforts to combat climate change to membership in the EU:

The environment is one particular area where it will not receive the protection it previously did, which is going to be a massive problem for our generation. We need to sort out climate change, because otherwise it's going to be too late.

FEMALE, 15-21, ENGLAND [ENGLAND 5]

Personally, I want us to focus on making sure that we still abide by European environmental regulations. I know that Michael Gove recently announced this Green Brexit stuff but we need something more concrete.

FEMALE, 19-22, MANCHESTER [ENGLAND 7]

Across all of the focus groups, the connective thread linking young people's various concerns about the aspects of EU membership that would change because of Brexit was a conviction that they will be the most affected by the impending changes. They discussed these perceived future impacts of Brexit almost exclusively in terms of a deprivation of entitlements. As discussed earlier these views are often framed in terms of anger at the actions of older generations:

21 European Health Insurance Card

I feel like Brexit really does restrict us for the future... Brexit has really made it harder for us and the thing is 10 years later for the majority that voted for Brexit, it is not really going to affect them as much as it affects us and even people from different backgrounds.

FEMALE, 16, LONDON [LONDON 6]

Thus the issue of generational differences and resentment was expressed by young people in our study on two distinct levels: first in terms of disenfranchisement (discussed above), especially for young people in our study under 18 who were not able to vote; and secondly in terms of the actual future impact of Brexit, which was seen to be more problematic for the young.

FINDING 2B.

Economic decline, national uncertainty

Young people in our study want **a strong economy that provides adequate schooling, higher education, jobs and housing** for them and their families. They are concerned about the current lack of housing mobility, high fee levels, and low-paid, unsatisfying jobs. They are deeply concerned about the further negative impact of Brexit on British livelihoods already strained by years of austerity.

After concerns over the loss of EU membership benefits, participants in our study most frequently mentioned economic decline and increased economic hardship as being the immediate and long-term impact of Brexit on young people. 76% of YouGov survey respondents aged 18-24 felt that it was either extremely (58%) or very (18%) important that university education, public transport and housing to be made affordable for everyone.

Our respondents discussed the economy in several ways. Most commonly they referred to Brexit's negative impact on 'the economy' in either an unspecified or vague manner, which in the context of the focus group discussions could usually be interpreted as taking a macro view of the UK's overall economic growth, but could often also refer to regional or local economic growth and the effects of slow down on local or regional communities.

I come from a farming background. And [since the Brexit announcement] the prices of selling animals is going down. So we're getting less for animals. And we have to pay more for feed and everything for them.

FEMALE, 18, WARRENPOINT [NORTHERN IRELAND 3]

Many participants were more specific in discussing how the economic effects of Brexit would impact them personally, most commonly mentioning the loss and unavailability of jobs, rising costs of goods and services, and their declining ability to secure affordable housing. A majority of young people in our study appeared to view Brexit as potentially (and in some cases even currently) compounding existing personal and local economic hardships brought on by austerity, and leading the country in the direction of further social and economic inequality.

Moving, and getting a house has become a lot harder even recently than it was for our parents. [In the past] you could get a loan from the bank and it would be fine. But that's gotten harder already. And you hear about all the news articles like millennials still living at home and stuff. But will that become even harder [than it is now]?

FEMALE, 15, FALKIRK & CLACKMANNANSHIRE [SCOTLAND 1]

My mum always worries about the business side of it because she has a lot of customers in Europe and the tariffs might go up ... [especially] in this market!! And Brexit is going to make it harder even, we haven't solved anything. Prices will not change for young people. Rents in Manchester are much more expensive than Bolton.

MALE FROM STOCKPORT, 19-22, HUDDERSFIELD, BOLTON & MANCHESTER [ENGLAND 3]

Finally, some spoke of the economy in aspirational and sometimes nationalistic terms, of wanting to live in a country that is economically prosperous and competitive, but which might lose its prestige by leaving EU trade partnerships.

In the long run, we're gonna lose a lot of competitiveness, our value in the world is reduced because our role at the moment, we're like a middleman between America and the EU. We can like trade, because we're like in this time zone, it's actually quite important for buying like stocks and goods and stuff like that. Without being in the single market in Europe, we'd lose our importance and people won't care as much for buying our services.

MALE, 16, CORNWALL [ENGLAND 10]

In contrast, some participants in our study who supported Brexit framed economic forecasts not in terms of concerns but as potentially beneficial opportunities:

Brexit potentially might allow us to have more jobs because it will leave a massive gap in the job market if we are controlling our borders. I am not saying I agree with it but it might have a positive impact if the Government provides us with the right training. I want the Government to focus on creating more job opportunities for young people in the UK. As I said before, we need to focus on people in this country and how we can fill that jobs market that is going to be created post Brexit.

FEMALE, 19-22, MANCHESTER [ENGLAND 7]

Running parallel with discussions of the economy, was the theme of national uncertainty. Although respondents' comments about feeling uncertainty permeated across many of the topics (such as immigration, politics, and opportunities), it was often mentioned in connection to the effects of an uncertain economy on personal livelihoods.

Money can get dearer, in fact we might struggle for money. My parents right now are struggling for money and all that but that's not their fault technically. But basically it's the sort of thing where it's unbalanced and it could be even more unbalanced if we're separated from the EU.

FEMALE, 12, KIRKCALDY [SCOTLAND 4]

People are scared of the unknown and if you don't know what's going to happen with you, it's difficult to prepare for what's to come.

PARTICIPANT AGED 20-28, LONDON [LONDON 8]

It's a bit scary to know that not only we don't know but our parents don't know. Like the people who organised Brexit now don't even really know!

FEMALE, 18, FALKIRK & CLACKMANNANSHIRE [SCOTLAND 1]

One participant summed up this general mood of uncertainty and dismay, and his sense that neither public nor Government appears to know what to do, as:

We're up s**t creek without a paddle.

MALE, 21, EDINBURGH [SCOTLAND 2]

Participants highlighted several ways in which Brexit amounted to a retreat from the global community. Many focus group participants expressed anxiety about becoming isolated. They felt that the vote for Brexit communicates a message to European and global nations that the UK wants to curtail its active engagement with the international community. Young people in our study specifically mentioned national isolation as a potential negative outcome that could ultimately harm national security:

Our ties with other countries will be more broken. We are denying the fact that we have to co-operate. Community is such an important thing in a globalising world. By subtracting ourselves from this equation ... I think we are making ourselves very vulnerable.

PARTICIPANT AGED 15-17, SWANSEA [WALES 1]

One respondent spoke of the isolating effect of closing the borders to European citizens, in terms of how closed borders could symbolically damage UK-EU relationships cultivated over decades through European freedom of movement:

If we do put an end to free movement we are going to become a very isolated country on the world stage. Because immigration is a two-way street. People can travel to the UK but we can also travel out of it. There are many UK expats living in Spain for example, on the southern coast. They're gonna find themselves in a very awkward position where they live, it's gonna create a very big social and political tension in the rest of the Europe that's perhaps going to make us [Britons] less safe.

MALE, 17, CORNWALL [ENGLAND 10]

Whilst another participant stated that the impending national isolation could also be seen as an absence of belonging within Europe:

It stops you from feeling a part of something, of feeling like you belong. And it just makes you feel cut off. I think it's really negative.

FEMALE, 18, WARRENPOINT [NORTHERN IRELAND 3]

Many respondents in the focus groups also made connections between the isolation that closing borders against European immigrants could create and the rise in post-Brexit occurrences of intolerance, violence and hatred towards non-British and BAME British citizens:

I felt the fear set in. Like, we're going to be closed, as a society. We're going to be in lockdown, and we [my family] are going to be on the inside, with all these people full of hate. And no jobs. And we're going to get this movie-style totalitarian regime setting in, and the EU are not going to be there as a cushion for us, to protect us. So... I guess what I want is the opposite of that – of that locked down totalitarian state with no jobs.

FEMALE, 19-22, LONDON [LONDON 1]

I heard things on the news [that] as soon as people voted leave and it was confirmed that that was the decision, there were attacks on minorities...I don't know [if] people thought it was more OK to be racist, because they were leaving. And that's not everyone in the UK. Like it would be great if everyone could be so open-minded and like we could remain [in the EU] and get even more diverse; but we're going to look really closed off because the masses voted on immigration.

FEMALE, 15, FALKIRK & CLACKMANNANSHIRE [SCOTLAND 1]

Black and brown people, [and from] different religions, are getting more racially targeted. It's increased since Brexit.

FEMALE, GLASGOW [SCOTLAND 7]

If you break it down on a more personal level [Brexit] affects people's identities. I feel like due to those people we're feeling more segregated than before because you've kind of given them a key to be racist or to tell people to go back to their countries when actually they identify with the country that they live in.

FEMALE, 19, ENGLAND [ENGLAND 4]

Another way in which young people expressed concern in this area related to the potential negative impacts of Brexit on EU migrants living in the UK. Several of our participants were in fact EU citizens who had spent most of their lives living in the UK. In one of the Northern Ireland focus groups, two female students both from Poland (and not related to each other) expressed fear and uncertainty about how Brexit would impact them and their families on a personal level:

That was my family's first concern whenever we found out that Brexit actually happened. And we were waking up and it's like, it actually happened. And as a family we had a talk about what will happen, because we were all scared, because my brothers and I, if we were to go back to Poland, it would be really hard for us, because we've been here for so long, we can hardly talk in Polish, nevermind write. If there would be a possibility that we might not stay here, it'd be such a big disaster. We can't go back to Poland.

FEMALE, 17-18, BELFAST [NORTHERN IRELAND 5]

Me and my family kept track of all the hate crime that was happening in the UK. And the amount of hate crime ever since Brexit happened, it's insane. In London, there was a man was killed...beaten to death.²² And there were loads of different incidents, where people who were, like hurt and they were talking Polish, they were either beaten or killed.

FEMALE, 17-18, BELFAST [NORTHERN IRELAND 5]

Many of the British young people in our study expressed compassion on behalf of those living in the UK who were from the EU:

It is pretty scary and I think it's very scary for lots of vulnerable people as well, that might not know what's going on. And especially people that live in other parts of the EU and live here who are from other parts of the EU. It is lots of uncertainty about it.

FEMALE, 25, GLASGOW [SCOTLAND 8]

I know a lot of the NHS people that are working are, a lot of them are from Europe, and they're, they might not want to stay here once the policy goes through.

FEMALE, GLASGOW [SCOTLAND 7]

If we were in the same situation we would probably do the same. We would move to a different country to have a better life instead of staying here. And that's what basically people are doing is protecting their own families.

MALE, 17, GLASGOW [SCOTLAND 8]

22 This appears to be referring to the death of a Polish citizen in Harlow, Essex, in August 2016. See <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/sep/05/death-arkadiusz-jozwik-post-referendum-racism-xenophobes-brexit-vote>

FINDING 2D.

A less fair and just society

Young people in our study are **worried about the harmful effects of what they term Brexit's anti-immigration message** and the **loss of European social benefits** on the promotion of a forward-looking, cohesive and socially just society.

A sizeable number of the young people in our study expressed concern about the rise of intolerance and racism after Brexit, while also voicing opinions about the aspects of British society that they worried would increase injustice and inequality. As discussed in the previous section, many of these concerns about intolerance and racism reflected a consensus that Brexit had somehow granted 'permission' to UK citizens to act in a hostile manner towards immigrants living in the UK. However, our respondents also demonstrated a keen understanding of the political impact of the Brexit vote and how it could shift British society politically towards the right:

The rising xenophobia we've been seeing in the past year or so has been astonishing and that shows how Brexit for many extremists has been an opportunity to push British politics to the extreme right and encourage xenophobia and frankly more racism. Until something is done to address the rights of EU nationals and something is done to address racism and xenophobia in this country, I think this is one of the first things we have to establish as Brexit Britain.

PARTICIPANT AGED 14-16, CARMARTHENSHIRE [WALES 3]

One participant told a harrowing and vivid story about their experiences with intolerance and hatred after the referendum vote. A young youth worker from Nottingham offered details of an incident that occurred outside the very building where the focus group session was being held:

Two days after we left the EU we had all them Swastika stickers hung up, that said 'No Jews, No gays', it was just our building that was targeted out of the whole street. So we had to shut it down while we cleaned it up. We didn't think it was a safe place for young people to be when it was targeted. Three days after, we was outside having a fag weren't we, and then this group of lads came up to us and were like, 'No gays' and all of this. And so we had to report them to the police. This building does get targeted a lot by hate crime. This building hadn't been targeted before, but as soon as we [voted to leave] the EU, there were just massive stickers, with Swastikas.

FEMALE, 20, NOTTINGHAM, [ENGLAND 9]

Another participant framed racism as a 'threat' to global equality:

I think we've touched on the fact that racism and xenophobia... it is dangerous. We've already seen dangerous increases in this after Brexit, and it is a threat to the [kind of] world which I want to see. I want to see a world where everyone's equal.

FEMALE, 15-21, ENGLAND [ENGLAND 5]

A response by one focus group participant discussed funding from schemes such as Erasmus in relation to a social equality agenda in the UK, lamenting that only wealthy young people would be able to travel abroad for extended periods if it was no longer available to UK citizens.

Certain things make you much more employable, so like having study abroad ...[and] I know that's not the only thing that young people care about, but it makes you more employable. And Erasmus funding enables that at the moment, but if you cut the Erasmus funding, it's only going to be people who can afford to do that from like richer backgrounds and that if you cut that funding, it's going to ... make the class divide even bigger.

FEMALE, 15-21, ENGLAND [ENGLAND 5]

In a similar vein, a discussion by another respondent in the same focus group about EU funding cuts was explicitly framed in terms of how it might lead to further austerity in the UK:

There's still a lot of issues in the UK that I'm worried about. What's going to have to be cut in order for us to compensate for not being in the EU? So is the NHS going to change? [Are] mental health services going to change? What's going to happen to funding for education and all that sort of stuff? And it's all just not directly on the EU. That's very much a UK thing, but it's still going to be affected.

FEMALE, 15-21, ENGLAND [ENGLAND 5]

Responses in this area appear to be primarily concerned with anxiety about the ways in which the Brexit vote might negatively affect struggles for equality and social justice, both in domestic terms (such as in the ability of young less affluent UK citizens to have life and advancement opportunities potentially no longer available after Brexit) and in global terms (i.e. how UK citizens treat non-British citizens in their country). Responses from the YouGov survey showed that 77% of young people aged 18-24 felt that it was very or extremely important to end racism and hate crimes toward ethnic minorities and immigrants.

FINDING 2E.

New opportunities, positive outcomes

A small minority of young people in our study expressed pride in Britain for deciding to leave the EU and focusing instead on solving British problems, or remarked that Brexit could be considered positive because it had motivated young people to become less passive.

A small percentage of focus group data showed a sense of positive energy but in some cases in remarkably different contexts. The majority of responses in this category were young leavers who spoke of satisfaction that the UK was focusing on prioritising finding solutions to the problems of British citizens. Some also expressed general optimism about the future:

You know what it's OK. Britain will still be Britain.

MALE, 18-26, LONDON [LONDON 3]

[It's] quite an exciting time. First time for quite a while, it's the country that looks out for itself for a change instead of following what the EU says. It will finally be able to look inwards and actually support our economy for our people, our businesses, our families. Maybe revamped a sort of more nationalist society where we can actually be proud of ourselves. Support ourselves rather than looking at other people and supporting them.

MALE, 12-18, CARMARTHENSHIRE [WALES 2]

This particular quote constructs British nationalism as a direct and needed response to 'looking at other people and supporting them,' which frames non-British people as the other who have been consuming state resources. This is an interesting perspective in that it offers further evidence of scapegoating in the blaming of British economic failure on an outward-looking culture. A similar view was expressed by another focus group participant, who also supported leaving the EU:



We're near enough being treated like a dog by the EU because we're under their control. And we should be able to have our own laws and I think if we did then it would be like a good amount – that would make us be a free country again.

Male, 12-14, Belfast [NORTHERN IRELAND 2]

This perspective appears to further assign blame to the EU for problems in the UK, arguing that Brexit will allow Britain to be 'free' again and lamenting perceived EU sovereignty over British laws. Other pro-leave voices in our focus group sample framed the opportunities presented by Brexit in terms of addressing existing regional inequalities within the UK:

I feel very left behind, to be quite frank because there are so many amazing opportunities in London and it's why I'm here quite a lot. My personal hope is that Brexit is going to be a fantastic opportunity for this country to get rid of some of those inequalities, those regional inequalities, try and rebalance the economy. To get our Northern cities up and running again, particularly Manchester, all the northern powerhouse stuff. Theresa May talks about the Midlands engine, so where I'm from, the Midlands. It'd be great if we could use Brexit as an opportunity to try and help lift people out of, being, from disadvantaged areas, you know, create opportunities for them. And that's what I'd like to try and see from it because that's clearly something that people, particularly up north, felt for a long time as well.

Male, 21, North Staffordshire [LONDON 11]

This quote offered a nuanced perspective, interpreting Brexit as potentially enabling a realignment of economic opportunity across the UK.

Young people who supported or voted to leave the EU mainly shared these types of responses, and in many of the focus groups, there were usually one or two participants who either supported leaving the EU or presented arguments for why Brexit could end up creating a positive outcome for the UK. Only one focus group contained a majority of pro-leave perspectives, which included young people between ages 13 and 16 who were participating in a student council forum in Gosport, England. These participants mainly discussed how Brexit could improve the economy and pointed to how dire predictions in the media and by Remain campaigners about a spiralling British economy post-Brexit had not materialised. Interestingly, young people in this focus group shared many of the same views as other heavily pro-Remain focus groups on issues such as lack of trust in politicians and media, lack of educational preparation for youth political engagement, and political differences between generations.

In a somewhat different vein, a number of respondents who were anti-Brexit also expressed optimism about the effect of Brexit on young people's engagement and political participation.

One good thing since with Brexit and the rise of populist things and since the Scottish independence vote actually, with the young people not being able to be heard as much actually it's quite frustrating to the young people so they get more involved, because historically it's always been older groups going out to vote but now in recent years a lot for young groups have been going to vote, so there's a bit of a silver lining to it that young people have been getting more, involved in politics and things that affect them in the future.

MALE, 20, GLASGOW [SCOTLAND 6]

It feels like everyone's become loads more politically aware. At least that's what I feel.

MALE, 17, CORNWALL [ENGLAND 10]

Overall, despite the existence of a few optimistic perspectives of the potential for Brexit to be beneficial, young people in our focus groups mostly talked about the impact of Brexit in negative terms. They did not want to lose entitlements they currently enjoy, regardless of how often or not they use them. They identified the two most salient issues connected to the Brexit campaign, economy and immigration, and spoke frequently and passionately about their concerns that Brexit would imperil their and the country's economic livelihoods while creating an image of an inward looking, non-inclusive country. Both these issues were repeatedly framed by respondents in terms of how they would affect the provision and protection of social justice and welfare for all, and of how

they could potentially exacerbate inequality.

The small percentage of young people who were passionately pro-Leave spoke of a Brexit impact that could elevate the UK by bringing prosperity to citizens via independence and also touted the benefits that increased national sovereignty would bring to trade.

The final questions asked in our focus group questions sought to give young people an opportunity to clearly state the issues about Brexit that they cared most about. They were specifically asked the question 'what are the most important issues to you that you want UK policymakers to focus on during the Brexit negotiations with the EU?'

Unsurprisingly, many of the concerns expressed earlier in the focus groups and discussed in the previous section of this report were reframed as urgent priorities for the UK government.

As with our analysis of young people's views on the impact of Brexit, this section presents and discusses the key priorities for young people in the order of how frequently they were mentioned in the focus groups. The table below highlights the main priorities articulated in order of frequency, and the sections that follow go into detail about the views and motivations of respondents.

Priorities for Brexit Negotiations

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Priority
Freedom of movement
EU membership benefits
Provide mechanisms for youth voices to be heard
Improve education
Economic growth
EU and/or Global Relationships
No Brexit
Involve youth in negotiations
Single market access
Northern Ireland
EU and/or Global Trade
EU-UK Rights to Remain
Guarantee human rights in the UK
Strong and clear negotiation
Improve NHS
Promote an inclusive and multicultural society
Devolve power to regions
Engage young people
Make immigration fairer
Oppose inequality
Youth policy

Table 5. Priorities expressed by young people for Brexit negotiations

FINDING 3A.

Keep fundamental EU membership benefits, especially freedom of movement

The most frequently mentioned specific policy priority that young people in our study want addressed in the Brexit negotiations is the **preservation of EU membership benefits** beginning with freedom of movement within the EU but also including specific membership benefits such as the Erasmus study abroad scheme and the preservation of EU and UK rights to remain.

When asked what their most important priorities for the Brexit negotiations were, almost half of all individual focus group participants in over half of the 40 focus groups stated their preference for keeping essential aspects of their EU membership intact. This included either keeping freedom of movement, EU membership benefits, residency rights for EU citizens living in the UK and UK citizens living in the EU, and in several cases outright calling for Brexit to be reversed.

As with their concerns about the impact of Brexit, freedom of movement was mentioned frequently, and often in the context of the impact that its absence would have on economic realities and on jobs; however, some young people were convinced that capital would continue to move flexibly after Brexit and hoped that the same would be true of human beings:

[It's] frustrating that we prioritise the freedom of movement of capital over the freedom of movement of people.

PARTICIPANT AGED 15-17, SWANSEA [WALES 1]

Yeah, I [prioritise] free movement of people ... at least free movement of workers, so that we can still have people coming in to fill nursing jobs, and we can go there to find jobs. If you look at what the EU was founded on, the principle that labour should be allowed to move freely, the idea that if we still have this immigration, if we still have people coming in, if you look at the statistics of nurses, at the moment, the amount of people coming from the EU to apply for nursing positions has dropped. And the NHS is already in horrific crisis, and we're having these EU citizens who are good at what they do, they specialize in what they do, flooding out of the country. I think the single market is really important but also there are other aspects of the economy which are kind of influenced by the talent we have coming in from the continent.

MALE, 22, CARDIFF [WALES 5]

EU membership benefits, particularly studying in Europe and taking advantage of European education programmes and reduced tuition fees for EU members, were also mentioned many times as priorities:

I [am] hoping to get into a career and I quite like the idea of working in Europe.

FEMALE, 20, CARDIFF [WALES 5]

I'd be quite upset if it was lost because my mom went on the Erasmus plus programme [in the 1980's]. Probably Erasmus maintained, that's the first [priority].

MALE, 19, LONDON [LONDON 9]

The one thing I'd ask for is the flexibility to go to university in Europe. Education is the most important thing to us.

PARTICIPANT AGED 15-17, SWANSEA [WALES 1]

Keeping EU-UK residency rights for citizens currently living outside their country was also frequently discussed, as was the maintenance of EU funding schemes:

Status for EU nationals... and also sources of EU funding like EU structural funds for deprived communities and persons, that's something they've not confirmed when we leave where all this money is going to come from or if these groups and projects are just going to suddenly have no funding left and not be able to continue operating.

FEMALE, 23, EDINBURGH [SCOTLAND 2]

FINDING 3B.

Involve young people in setting the Brexit agenda

Young people in our study want their **voices and concerns to be listened to and acted upon** by politicians and policymakers. They want to be directly involved and accurately represented in the Brexit negotiations.

After EU membership benefits, young people in our focus groups were most likely to prioritise their own involvement and agency during the Brexit negotiations. Specifically, many young people asked for the establishment of mechanisms for their voices to be heard, or to be involved in the negotiations somehow. Some young people also expressed a desire for the government to engage them more generally, or to create specific youth policies to support their voices and preferences.

I think young people especially during this time they need to have the biggest say overall really.

FEMALE, 16, EDINBURGH [SCOTLAND 2]

If MPs and MSPs got more involved in young people's lives, what matters to young people that could have...not just as much of an effect as that would but kinda come closer to it. I think even if they just did that a couple of visits a year just to schools or to erm local youth err clubs or stuff like that they could take a lot back from it I think.

FEMALE, 14, EAST RENFREWSHIRE [SCOTLAND 3]

Leading up to the negotiations they need to create a shadow youth negotiation panel. So they'll have a team of negotiators that will go to Europe, right? I think there needs to be a shadow of that but made up of young people, a panel from all across the UK, from all across socioeconomic backgrounds and ages and up to about twenty-four maybe twenty-five ... but they work in tangent with them. And so, whatever they come up, they will be scrutinised. It's almost like a scrutiny panel, but made up of young people. That's what I would suggest.

MALE, 18-26, LONDON [LONDON 4]

We're the future of this country...with elections, a lot of time is spent on like older generations, when you're gonna be trading with young people in the future, so you need to focus on them when you're negotiating things.

FEMALE, 17, CORNWALL [ENGLAND 10]

FINDING 3C.

Deliver economic security.

Young people in our study want negotiations to **prioritise sustaining and improving economic growth in the UK**. They want guarantees and evidence of strong and sustained EU and global trade partnerships with the UK.

In the focus group sessions, young people spoke of the importance of economic growth to their own life chance and to overall prosperity in the UK. Some young people specifically asked that single market access be maintained, while others spoke of the importance of keeping EU and global relationships stable via strong trade deals. Again, these priorities were often framed both in terms of the disproportionate impact that economic stagnation could have on young people, and also on building a fairer and more equitable future for people in the UK:

The most important thing is to have economic certainty. That whatever the negotiations happen they won't cause either a meltdown in the UK economy or the global economy. Because for young people, we're going to bear these consequences for the rest of our lives.

MALE, 18-26, LONDON [LONDON 3]

Jobs for young people, I would say... all over the UK, you know, not just London. Like I said, creating more engaging and more effective job centres that don't just target kind of to get people out of benefits, that target a more permanent career to help people just get out into society.

PARTICIPANT AGED 20-28, LONDON [LONDON 8]

We're a part of Europe, we're a part of something else, there's that coalition between us that we have this reciprocity in trade and work, and I want to see this at the heart of wherever the negotiations end up. I don't want that to go, to change to 'Little England'. People can just say I can go and work there. People from Ireland can trade with them in Europe and its not going to cost any extra. We make like 200 billion a year in exports. That's so much money for us in the UK. That's what I want to see protected, as well as everyone's freedom of movement.

FEMALE, 19-22, HUDDERSFIELD [ENGLAND 3]

We've got to get some sort of access to the single market, cause if we don't we're gonna have serious problems. At least the minimum we have to get access to it, otherwise it's gonna be awful for our economy.

MALE, 22, CARDIFF [WALES 5]

FINDING 3D.

Improve education.

Young people in our study want Brexit negotiations to focus on **improving their education opportunities**, by improving education funding and reducing fees in the UK, by guaranteeing higher education opportunities in the EU, and by improving domestic educational provision. Some link this to their capacity to participate effectively in British politics and others to their ability to build financially viable futures.

Findings from the YouGov survey showed overwhelming support for improving political and media education in schools. 67% of YouGov survey respondents between the ages of 18-24 felt that it was important to improve political and media education in schools. However, agreement about

the importance of improving political and media education in schools diminished across generations, with 51% of 25-49 year olds, 49% of 50-64 year olds, and 47% of respondents aged 65 and above finding it important.

In many of the focus groups, young people lamented the lack of information available to them about the EU during the referendum campaign, and they also expressed scepticism about the information they were provided by politicians and the media – the disputed claim that £350 million pounds a week would be redirected to the NHS if citizens voted for Brexit being the most often cited example. They also overwhelmingly spoke of the absence of sufficient and critical political education in schools, and education about the EU. Many felt that improving education about both politics and the EU was essential to equipping young people with the tools to participate in politics.

Well one of the bigger things is, you need a political education. I think specifically, if this is gonna happen, we need a specific education around the EU...[and] politics in general but it's pivotal because the young people don't know how it affects them.

FEMALE, 24, NOTTINGHAM [ENGLAND 9]

Maybe even not as a [school] qualification but a government think tank or a government group that represents all parties goes in [to schools or colleges] and says this is how politics works in the UK. You now know how to vote, how it works, and I think that's where the difference goes because obviously we chose a path to study politics but I know people that are 25 that have a great job but they have no understanding of the political system. You know, they didn't really understand what a referendum was. I think the google searches for "What is a referendum?" spiked. So I think grabbing young people at a young age and not having teachers who have maybe their own political views, kind of inform them.

PARTICIPANT AGED 20-28, LONDON [LONDON 8]

We could learn more about Europe in schools, because at this stage we're not really getting taught.

MALE, 13, WARRENPOINT [NORTHERN IRELAND 3]

With regard to political education, the male dominated nature of the political sphere and school classrooms dealing with politics was also referenced as a cause for concern:

Gender [is another possible barrier to learning about politics]. Because when I was doing A Levels, whilst we were a female majority class, the two males that there were in the group made it clear that politics was not a place for women apparently ...And it was only because we all basically said to them you have no right to tell us this and you are outnumbered here. So, we respect your viewpoint, but we are not leaving because you tell us to. So that we even got through – but even through those past few years were horrific. And I was glad to finish the course, which was of course was getting me the knowledge to make informed decisions about my future. So, I think there should be more of a kind of – politics shouldn't just be seen as kind of a man's world.

FEMALE, 15-21, ENGLAND [ENGLAND 5]

FINDING 3E.

Build open and global relationships.

Young people in our study want the UK to **build open, socially just and positive international relationships** with both EU and non-EU countries, and to prioritise fairness and equity in the UK. This includes the sphere of migration.

In over a quarter of all focus groups, youth participants spoke passionately about the importance of the UK remaining an open and inclusive member of the global community of nations and building strong EU and global relationships. They also discussed the importance of arriving at a peaceful and feasible solution to the issue of Northern Ireland's border with the Republic of Ireland. Finally, they insisted that post-Brexit, the UK enact policies that are inclusive and multicultural, and that prioritised a socially just approach to migration and cultural exchange.

The stuff that existed for young people should stay there because, like young people nowadays, my generation obviously had the benefits of the EU. The next generation is just not gonna have any benefits of the EU, it's just gonna, say if Erasmus goes, they're gonna have to just study in the UK and that's it. And I would want the next generation, the generation after that, to go to the European countries, learn about their cultures and stuff instead of being if they stay in the UK and that's it, that's gonna deliver more hatred towards the EU because you're not gonna know that much about European countries. Cause the only reason why there's so much like racism nowadays since the election of the Brexit, is that people don't know about EU cultures and stuff like that. So, if they was to go and actually learn about EU cultures, there wouldn't be that

xenophobia. But, because obviously like Brexit's happened and like currently there's a hard Brexit, so we won't know about what's happening in the EU either way.

MALE, 20, LONDON [LONDON 9]

On the one hand, the idea that ignorance of other cultures causes greater intolerance was repeated by many of our participants. The idea that travel and encounter discourage closed and racist views, was also nuanced by those who argued that more needs to be done to make travel economically viable for economically insecure young people.

On the other hand, amongst the participants who stated that they supported leaving the EU, some stated their desire for maintaining good relationships with their global neighbours, although this was first framed in terms of needing independence from Europe in order to do so:

I hope with Brexit we don't become an insular nation. Well the whole point was that we get independent from Europe and we can spread out to across the world. I would like to see us become more global post-Brexit, rather than less global.

MALE, 17, EAST RENFREWSHIRE [SCOTLAND 3]

Others felt that globalization required the UK to be a stronger member of the global community and that leaving the EU was a step in the wrong direction:

We're in a globalized world and we don't want to feel like the UK is going backwards. And that's really important, and I feel like a lot of students don't want to feel like we're being hindered...in terms of this whole process of being a part of a globalized world. Me personally, I don't want to follow this trend that America is following of isolating themselves from the rest of the world. Because I feel like the UK is better than that. I just feel like symbolically, I hope that the UK can take a certain stance and that the EU can also appreciate a certain stance whereby we can continue to have a friendly relationship and if down the line, in ten twenty years down the line, things are to change in the UK and people in power are to have a different sort of mindset, then hopefully we could get back to recovering and maybe to an even better point than we were with the EU before. But in the short term I feel like for me and for a lot of students the future seems bleak.

MALE, 21, CARDIFF [WALES 5]

While all five of our focus groups in Northern Ireland mentioned the importance of coming up with a solution to the border situation that did not impose a hard border or violate the Good Friday Agreement, there was also concern outside of Northern Ireland about the need to come up with a workable solution:

You close that [Northern Ireland/Ireland] border, that whole thing just goes in disarray.

FEMALE, 23, LONDON [LONDON 9]

I think Northern Ireland needs to be considered quite a lot. Because there's quite a lot threats in terms of if there was ever a hard border in Northern Ireland and if Northern citizens their rights aren't – because they have a right to be an Irish citizen or a British citizen. So does that mean we're still EU citizens by birth or?

FEMALE, 17, BALLYMENA [NORTHERN IRELAND 1]

Finally, some respondents saw the UK's role as needing to be one where tolerance and openness to multiculturalism needed to be prioritised post-Brexit:

We need to keep on encouraging tolerance because I think this could be such an opportunity to regress. And so, we need as many policies and kind of societal attitudes to push for a continued multicultural environment.

FEMALE, 15-21, ENGLAND [ENGLAND 5]

This was accompanied by comments in which young people specifically demanded that the UK government guarantee human rights in the UK that reflected current rights protections afforded by EU membership. And the issue of social justice and fairness continued to appear throughout the focus group sessions, in terms of prioritising improvement of the NHS, a fair immigration policy, and the opposing of inequality in the UK. Some young people felt that fairness in the UK should be extended to all who have legal status in the UK, regardless of citizenship status:

Essentially, if someone works and pays taxes to their country, then they are contributing to their country as much as a national. So, say someone who is born here and raised here and works and pays taxes and all that, and compared to someone who moved here when they were twenty and they worked here and paid taxes, their voices are just as valid because they are both contributing to this country, they should both have a say.

**PARTICIPANT AGED 12-18, CARMARTHENSHIRE
[WALES 2]**

While some young people mentioned social justice and social welfare as the main priorities for the Brexit negotiations, responses across the major priority themes – particularly maintenance of EU membership benefits, being a more inclusive global community, and maintaining economic stability – overwhelmingly framed these concerns and priorities in terms of fairness, social welfare and justice, and a desire for equality and rights.



Conclusions and Recommendations

Overall, our study revealed that the structures, opportunities and rights that are currently available to young people as full members of the European Union are the most important priority for Brexit negotiations. Highest on the list was the desire to maintain freedom of movement for a number of reasons related to traveling, working and studying in Europe. Closely following this was the maintenance of EU funding and EU citizen-generated revenue in the UK, which was considered extremely important. Dealing with the sensitive issue of the Northern Ireland/Republic of Ireland border was discussed by many participants who felt that it was imperative that a soft border be maintained post-Brexit. Young people in our study spoke often about wanting to retain membership benefits related to education, health, families living in other countries, and ease of cross-European travel. Many also spoke passionately about the importance of maintaining rights consistent with EU rights laws after Brexit.

The second priority most often voiced by participants was to involve young people in setting the Brexit agenda. Suggestions in this area included generally listening to and acting upon young people's views with the same commitment as is shown to older voter cohorts. The suggestion was made to include young people or their representatives directly in negotiations through the creation of youth structures explicitly to support youth voices in the negotiations such as a 'shadow youth negotiating team'; and to lower the voting age to 16, so that future national referenda and elections would include young people's views.

The UK economy was the third most important priority for young people in our study, who expressed concern mainly about the need for UK negotiators to deliver economic security and prosperity to post-Brexit UK, and to not complicate or compound existing domestic challenges for young people in the areas of schooling and higher education, jobs and housing.

Improving education was also cited as an important priority, particularly with regard to the provision of knowledge and discussion about both politics and the European Union as part of compulsory formal education.

Finally, young people also felt that it was extremely important to prioritise an approach to global relationships that was fair, inclusive and open, particularly around issues of international social justice and migration.

The vast majority of young people in our study told us explicitly that they did not want the United Kingdom to leave the European Union and if the UK does leave, they want Brexit to be as soft as possible. They explained this in focus groups, and they supported their comments with evidence. Significantly, they want a UK and EU future that allows them and their families to live dignified, confident lives, and that invests in their capacity to be active and critically informed citizens, whichever country they choose to reside in. They are critical of the media and of leading political institutions upon which British democracy rests, but affirm their belief in the strength and resilience of democratic participation in politics.

Young people in our study consistently articulated a commitment to fairness, social justice and welfare, and respect for the rights of all people, regardless of whether they were UK or EU citizens. Responses across many themes and issues demonstrate that they are particularly passionate about equality and fairness in the UK – in jobs, in education, in migration, in generational political power, and in social welfare. We found that the belief – that politics in the UK and surrounding Brexit are not about relationships between nations as much as they are about moral values linked to equality of rights and opportunity – was expressed both explicitly and implicitly in most groups. Young people take very seriously their responsibility as citizens and the responsibilities of their fellow adult citizens, to work towards achieving and guaranteeing these rights and opportunities.

In their discussions about their families, friends and communities, young people who participated in our study continually spoke of their frustration at the lack of information, and the lack of trustworthy authoritative voices – in the media and in Parliament. They spoke openly of the growing disconnect between generations that Brexit has exposed. They were sceptical of attempts by politicians and mainstream media organisations to scapegoat the European Union, European immigrants, and refugees for the discontent in British society that drove the leave vote to victory.

Young people in our study revealed an overwhelming sense of the burdens that austerity at a national level has placed upon them and their families, and outlined their fears that Brexit would lead to worsening circumstances. Cuts in funding for schools, hospitals, and the arts, unemployment and under-employment, high tuition fees and an abolition of grants, and a lack of opportunities for affordable housing were discussed in every group. They differed, however, in their attribution of causes for austerity and suggestions of ways forward to a better UK.

In a minority of cases, the need for a national narrative of strength and success was cited as a positive reason for Brexit, and austerity was linked to the drain of the European Union or migrants upon the UK. In an overwhelming majority of cases, however, the rise in resentment against the EU and against migrants were discussed as being a result of increasing economic insecurity, limited political education, and an absence of unbiased information explaining the allocation of resources. Thus, a majority of youth in the UK, as exemplified in our study, come across as alert to injustice and discrimination, critical of media bias, critical of the absence of political education, committed to social justice, wishful of protecting the environment, appreciative of the importance of a welfare state, outward looking and eager to build an inclusive global future that encourages multicultural exchange and understanding with Europe and the rest of the world.



Recommendations

In writing this report for the APPG-BBYP, LSE felt that recommendations should emerge from APPG-BBYP consultation and stakeholder inclusion processes. LSE presented these research findings at a roundtable hearing convened by the APPG-BBYP, during which time recommendations were discussed and considered by youth organisational stakeholders and APPG-BBYP representatives present. The recommendations below are presented as they have been discussed and agreed upon by the APPG-BBYP.

- 1 There should be guarantees on the part of both the UK government and the European Union of freedom of movement, residence, education and work across the European Union for all young people now and in the future, including:
 - a A soft border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.
- 2 The UK government should ensure that funding for education and opportunities within and across the European Union are maintained to allow UK youth opportunities available to previous generations, including:
 - a Protection of the Erasmus+ scheme;
 - b A reconsideration of university fees.
- 3 The UK government should also strengthen critical political and media education in the UK through formal and informal means.
- 4 Rights and protections under EU law enjoyed by generations in the previous 30 years should be implemented and strengthened under post-Brexit UK law, including:
 - a Families living in the UK and the EU must not be broken-up or disrupted by borders and bureaucracy;
 - b The 'health passport' for use of national health systems in Europe must be maintained;
 - c The Human Rights Act must be protected in UK law.
- 5 The UK government and civil society should act to facilitate increased intergenerational dialogue to improve social cohesion in post-Brexit Britain.
- 6 The UK government should provide young people with an officially recognised means to scrutinise and feed into the Brexit negotiation outcomes.
- 7 The UK government should concentrate on ensuring a strong economy so that there are decent jobs and affordable housing for young citizens.
- 8 There should be more checks and balances with regard to the reporting of major political topics in the UK media, with particular attention paid to the phenomenon of scapegoating of groups such as migrants, refugees, and young people.

Appendix 1.

Focus Group Questions

APPG on a Better Brexit for Young People

YOUTH FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

- 1 Could each of you start by telling me a little bit about the conversations you had with friends and families in your communities leading up to the referendum vote? Particularly – what were people saying about Europe and the EU?
- 2 What are your thoughts about how much or how little young people's views and opinions were taken into account in both Leave and Remain campaigns? And by the media?
- 3 What's your opinion on how the media talks about young people's experiences and views about politics more generally?
- 4 What's your opinion on how politicians talk about young people?
- 5 What kinds of things do you think are barriers that stop young people from getting involved in political action, political institutions, or activism?
- 6 In your opinion, how will Brexit affect you and other young people in the next ten years?
- 7 What are the most important issues to you that you want UK policy-makers to focus on during the Brexit negotiations with the EU?
- 8 What would need to happen to give young people more power in the political process in the UK?

Appendix 2. Survey Questions

Survey on Media, Politics and Brexit

Developed by London School of Economics and Political Science
for the All Party Parliamentary Group on a Better Brexit for Young People

How old are you?	_____ years
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Please indicate your gender. I am ...	
<input type="checkbox"/> Female	<input type="checkbox"/> Male
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	

Which of the following best describes your ethnicity?
<input type="checkbox"/> My ethnic group is White [British/Northern Irish/Welsh/Scottish/Other]
<input type="checkbox"/> My ethnic group is Black [African/Caribbean/Black British/Other]
<input type="checkbox"/> My ethnic group is Asian [Indian/Bangladeshi/Pakistani/Sri Lankan/Chinese or Other Asian]
<input type="checkbox"/> My ethnic group is Mixed/Multiple [White and Black, White and Asian, Black and Asian, Other]
<input type="checkbox"/> My ethnic group is Other [Arabic, Latinx, Traveller, any other origin]

Where do you most often access the <u>news</u>? Please select only ONE.	<i>Printed newspapers and magazines</i> <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>TV</i> <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Radio</i> <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Internet</i> <input type="checkbox"/>
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How often do you usually watch, read or listen to news (about politics, celebrities, sports or culture)?	<i>Never</i> <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Less than once a month</i> <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Several times a month</i> <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Several times a week</i> <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Once a day</i> <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Several times a day</i> <input type="checkbox"/>
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In general, where do you hear and discuss most about <u>politics</u> (including political parties, as well as issues like the economy and jobs, immigration, terrorism and border security, climate change, poverty and inequality, housing, racism, and sexuality)? Rank the options below from 1-6, where 1 is the most and 6 is the least	
<input type="checkbox"/>	At home with or from my family
<input type="checkbox"/>	In my local community, with or from my friends and acquaintances
<input type="checkbox"/>	At school or university
<input type="checkbox"/>	At work
<input type="checkbox"/>	From the news (either TV, radio, or online)
<input type="checkbox"/>	On social media (Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, Twitter, Kik, WhatsApp)

Please indicate whether or not you agree or disagree with the following statements.

When I read, watch or listen to news, I hear mostly positive opinions about the European Union.	Strongly disagree	Mostly disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Mostly agree	Strongly agree
	1	2	3	4	5

I am mostly satisfied with how the media reports on Brexit.	Strongly disagree	Mostly disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Mostly agree	Strongly agree
	1	2	3	4	5

I think that the media should do more to report on young people's lives and concerns.	Strongly disagree	Mostly disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Mostly agree	Strongly agree
	1	2	3	4	5

I am mostly satisfied with how the British government has acted after the Brexit vote.	Strongly disagree	Mostly disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Mostly agree	Strongly agree
	1	2	3	4	5

I think that the UK government should restrict immigration and freedom of movement between UK and EU countries as part of Brexit negotiations.	Strongly disagree	Mostly disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Mostly agree	Strongly agree
	1	2	3	4	5

I think that EU programmes that provide travel and study opportunities for young people should be preserved during Brexit negotiations.	1	2	3	4	5
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I think that the UK government will need to compromise on freedom of movement in order to have a positive future relationship with EU countries after Brexit.	Strongly disagree	Mostly disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Mostly agree	Strongly agree
	1	2	3	4	5

In your opinion, how important is it to do the following?	<i>Not important at all</i>	<i>Somewhat important</i>	<i>Very important</i>	<i>Extremely important</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Make university education, public transport and housing affordable for everyone	1	2	3	4	5
Improve political and media education in schools	1	2	3	4	5
End racism and hate crimes toward ethnic minorities and immigrants	1	2	3	4	5
Protect UK borders from the threat of terrorism	1	2	3	4	5
Reduce youth drug and alcohol use	1	2	3	4	5
Expose fake news	1	2	3	4	5

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