

How did we do The Big Ask?

The main element of The Big Ask was an online survey, launched on the CCO website and social media channels in April. It was open to any child in England aged 4-17.

We sent the survey link to every single school and local authority in England. We wanted as many schools as possible to take part, so we worked with Oak National Academy to produce a video [assembly](#) about The Big Ask. We also worked with Votes for Schools to produce teaching resources, including lesson plans and activity packs, so that teachers could build The Big Ask into their class time.

In order to reach the most vulnerable children, we also sent the survey to mental health hospitals, youth custody settings, children's homes, fostering organisations, children in care councils, young carer projects, groups working with disabled children, and other charities and community groups. An 'easy read' accessible version of the survey was also produced for children with additional reading needs.

The survey ran for 6 weeks until the end of May. By the time it closed, we had received more than 550,000 responses in total – equivalent to just under 6% of England's population of 4-17 year olds. This makes it comfortably, to our knowledge, the world's largest ever survey of children. We received a decent number of responses from every single local authority (LA) in England, and can report local breakdowns of the data for each LA and even for parliamentary constituencies.¹

The survey asked children five key questions:

1. How happy they are with various aspects of their lives at the moment
2. What is most important for them, in order for them to have a good life in future
3. Which of these factors they are most worried about not having in future
4. Whether they think will have a better life than their parents when they grow up
5. What they think stops children from achieving what they want when they grow up (or what they would change to make their lives better in future)

All of these questions were tested with children before the survey was launched. Older children (those aged 9 or above) were asked the full suite of questions; younger children completed a simpler version with fewer and shorter questions.

The surveys gathered a range of other information about children, enabling us to break down the results by age, gender, ethnicity, school type and local area characteristics (such as local deprivation). We also asked children about their living and support arrangements so that we can present results for specific vulnerable groups, including children in care, children in need, young carers, and children with mental health needs.

Alongside the main survey, we also carried out focus groups and interviews with specific groups of children who are harder to reach:

¹ These are available in the online appendix at <https://childrenscommissioner.github.io/thebigask>

- Children receiving help from a social worker
- Children in care
- Children in care living in a residential children's home
- Children in care living in unregulated accommodation
- Unaccompanied asylum seeking children
- Children in secure mental health settings
- Children who are home educated
- Children and young people identifying as LGBTQ
- Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
- Parents of very young children (aged 0-3)
- Early years professionals