

Growing up in Highland

Planet Youth in Highland

Survey Results 2025

Full Report



Highland Fast Glance Data 2025



WELLBEING

48% Sleep on average 8 hours or more a night 

42%

Of **girls** say their mental health is good or very good



65%

Of **boys** say their mental health is good or very good



64% Of **girls** say their physical health is good or very good

69% Of **boys** say their physical health is good or very good

LEISURE TIME

53% Spend on average 3 hours or more on social media a day 



22%

Play sports with a club 3 times a week or more

32%

Spend on average 3 hours or more playing video games a day



11%

Stayed outside after midnight once or more in the past week



SCHOOL

68% Often or almost always feel safe at school



84%

Have friends at school that care about them*



24%

The students at their school are nice to each other*

62%

Think the adults at school care about them*



59%

Often or almost always get along with their teachers



SUBSTANCE USE

11%

Were drunk in the past 30 days



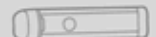
39%

Drink at least one energy drink everyday



10%

Vape daily



4%

Have used cannabis in the last 30 days



2%

Smoke cigarettes daily



*Strongly agree and somewhat agree to the statement

Foreword

The Planet Youth Model focusses on primary prevention for all and uses a whole-systems approach to match the scale of the solution to the scale of the problem, which aligns with our values and priorities.

The survey results highlight the young people's experience of growing up in their communities across Highland. There are many things to celebrate. The majority of the young people said it was easy or very easy to receive caring and warmth from their parents or carers, that they agree or strongly agree that they try their best at school, and that they don't feel they have to drink, smoke or use cannabis to fit in with their group of friends.

However, there are also areas for improvement. The majority of young people have had alcohol, starting at a young age, and the most common source of alcohol is from parents or carers. Mental health ratings are low and while level of self-harm and bullying have decreased, both are still reported at levels of concern.

The Planet Youth Oversight Group has governance over the development of the Planet Youth model in Highland. This group includes representatives from NHS Highland, The Highland Council, The Highland Children's Services Partnership Board, Highland Alcohol and Drugs Partnership, Highland Child Protection Committee, Police Scotland, Action for Children, The Child Health Commissioner, Whole family Wellbeing Programme, Highland Third Sector Interface and Highlife Highland.

At community level the Community Action Groups work collaboratively to agree the priorities and increase protective factors in the lives of young people based on their local reports. Increasing protective factors in various domains of young peoples' lives, such as family, peers, school and leisure, can delay and reduce substance use and other negative risk-taking behaviours.

Acknowledgements

We wish to express our thanks and gratitude to the teachers and other staff who organised the data collection phase of the model, and supported the completion of the surveys. More so, we wish to thank the young people for completing the survey, and doing this so honestly. We will strive to ensure the results will help inform improvements for all children and young people in the Highlands.



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Introduction

What is Planet Youth?

Planet Youth is an evidence based, primary prevention model developed in Iceland that has reduced rates of substance use amongst young people.

What is a Public Health Approach?

Planet Youth is an example of a public health approach, an approach which helps us to understand:

- the epidemiology (the frequency and patterns of health and poor health);
- the risk and protective factors for substance use and risk-taking behaviours in the population, in this case young people in the Highlands;
- how we can work to prevent and delay substance use and reduce the likelihood of young people starting to take part in other risk-taking behaviours;
- how to improve support for those who are impacted.

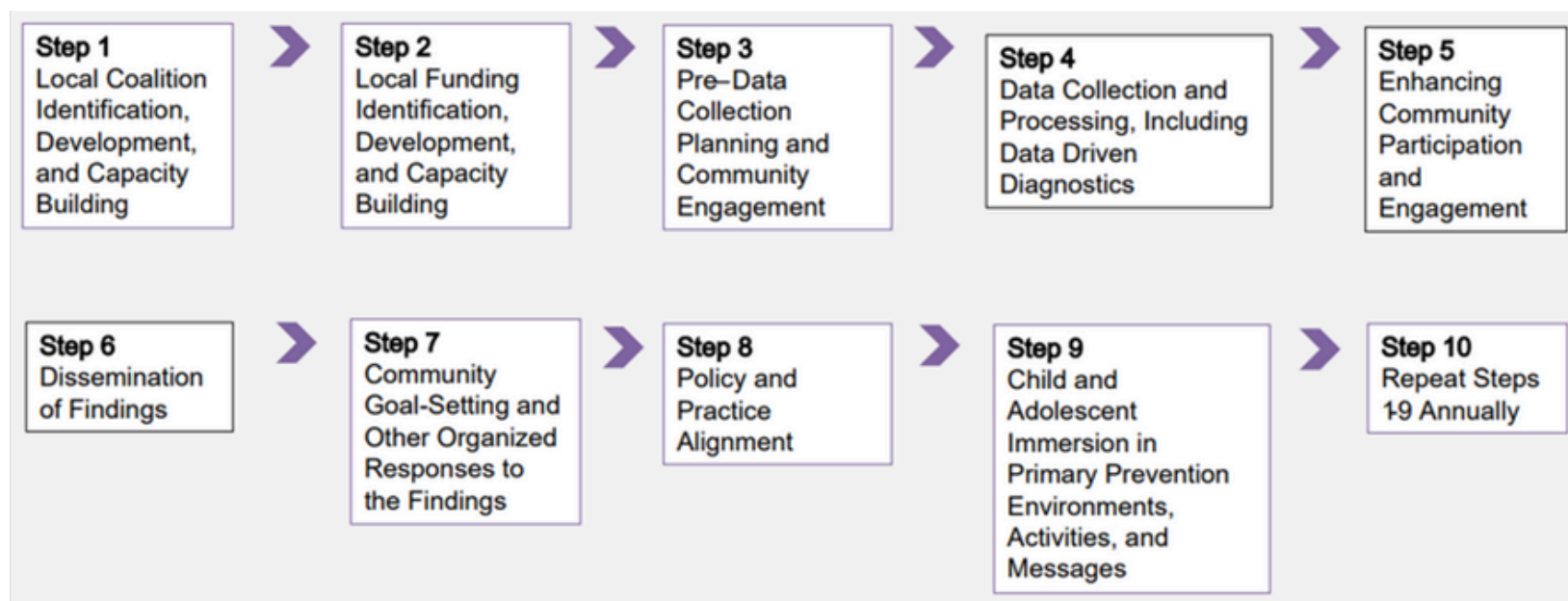
Planet Youth in Highland

Highland is one of six areas which are delivering the Planet Youth model across Scotland. Winning Scotland are coordinating the Scottish Planet Youth delivery. Highland has thirteen secondary schools involved in the approach.

Guiding Principles and Core Steps Planet Youth is guided by 5 key principles:



There are 10 core steps of the Planet Youth model:



This report highlights some of the data findings from Step 4, in which anonymous health behaviour surveys were completed by 2217 S3 and S4 pupils from Highland schools in Autumn 2025. The data monitors many aspects of the young people's health and wellbeing and identifies factors that affect risk of alcohol, tobacco, drug use and other risk-taking behaviours. The report focuses on Step 6. *Dissemination of the Survey Findings* and will support subsequent steps in the process.

GOAL ONE

Identify local risk and protective factors linked with alcohol, tobacco and other drug use

GOAL TWO

Using data, set strategic actions, tailored to the area, to support protective factors and reduce risk factors

Risk and Protective Factors

The survey that young people complete includes questions about the young people's health and wellbeing and include questions on substance use and other harmful risk-taking behaviours.

There are four main areas, with known risk and protective factors, in young people's lives:

- parents / carers and family
- school
- peer group
- leisure time.

Each child is a product of four domains within their local community which is where most young people spend the vast majority of their time. Protective factors can help prevent and delay young people from starting to use alcohol, tobacco or other drugs. Risk and protective factors will be highlighted throughout the report.

STRENGTHEN

PROTECTIVE FACTORS

- Positive relationships with peers and trusted adults
- Parental monitoring and support
- Setting clear boundaries and rules
- Engagement in healthy recreational activities
- Feeling safe and engaged with school
- Opportunities to experience success and achievement
- Adequate sleep
- Safe and supportive community
- Sense of belonging and self-worth
- Delaying use of any substances
- Good role models
- Social Media age restrictions - and monitoring/ limiting usage

REDUCE

RISK FACTORS

- Bullying and toxic relationships
- Family Conflict
- Peers involved in risk taking behaviours
- Early substance use (vapes, alcohol, tobacco or drugs)
- Parental substance use
- Lack of boundaries or rules around risk taking behaviours and substance use
- Sensation seeking
- Low mental health
- Lack of opportunities to realise what they are capable of
- Unlimited access to smartphones/ Social Media

PLANET YOUTH PARTNER SCHOOLS

TAIN ROYAL ACADEMY

GOLSPIE HIGH SCHOOL

DORNOCH ACADEMY

THURSO HIGH SCHOOL

WICK HIGH SCHOOL

LOCHABER HIGH SCHOOL

PLOCKTON HIGH SCHOOL

INVERGORDON ACADEMY

ALNESS ACADEMY

DINGWALL ACADEMY

INVERNESS HIGH SCHOOL

CULLODEN ACADEMY

NAIRN ACADEMY



Summary of key findings

Whilst the addition of S3 pupils taking part in the 2025 survey has been really positive in increasing the amount of young people completing the survey and has allowed Planet Youth Highland to align with the other 5 Planet Youth areas across Scotland, the younger age group has also contributed to lower percentages for certain aspects of the data. For this reason, for key areas such as substance use, mental health, bullying, self-harm and suicide we have carried out **separate analysis of the S4 pupils** responses which allows us to review changes over the past 3 surveys and identify possible trends.

Key findings:

SUBSTANCE USE IS DECREASING:

We can see that substance use in life time, in the last 12 months and in the last 30 days has decreased. This is really positive, however we can still see that too many young people are starting to use substances at a young age - particularly alcohol and vapes. Nicotine pouch use has increased.

BULLYING IN CERTAIN AREAS IS DECREASING:

Bullying of all types and in most settings has decreased since 2021, however bullying in schools has increased slightly between 2023 and 2025. In other settings (out of school, online and by phones) bullying has decreased. Again, this is positive.

SELF-HARM:

Reported self-harm and thoughts of self-harm have decreased since 2021, however nearly a third of young people report that they have self-harmed.

SUICIDE:

The number of S4 pupils who said they had attempted suicide decreased from 14% to 8% between 2021 and 2023 and has stayed at a similar level in 2025 (7%). Any number of young people attempting suicide is too many.

Survey details for Highland schools

All the pupils who completed the survey were from S3 and S4. In total, there were 2217 young people who completed the survey.

Across Scotland this number was 7662. Across Highland 26 records were removed. This was because there were large amounts of missing data (young people could 'skip', and therefore not answer, any questions they chose to), implausible response patterns, or because they reported use of a fictitious drug. This data cleaning process reassures us that what young people are reporting is a true reflection of their experience.

There were 88 questions asked in the survey, and so there is a lot of information to process. Sometimes, percentages in the report may not add up to exactly 100%. This is due to rounding figures to the nearest whole number and some children not answering every question.

For some questions where the results have been split by gender, the young people that identified as non-conforming, other, or preferred not to say are not included due to their small number and to protect against unintended disclosure.

Gender:

Male	Female	Non-conforming / other / prefer not to say/missing	Total
1082	1035	100	2217

A note on comparable time trends

The school surveys conducted in Highland before 2025 were completed for S4 pupils only.

The 2025 survey was extended to include S3 pupils giving a greater sample from which to understand what it is like for young people growing up in Highland. While increasing the study sample size brings benefits, it also means that for those schools that completed the survey prior to 2025, the results in this particular report are not directly comparable with the results for previous survey years. These particular results for 2025 should be treated as a new baseline of understanding about the young people in Highland.

Ethnicity

Young people were asked about their ethnicity.

91% of the young people classified themselves as White British or White Scottish and the remaining 9% percent were represented by ethnicities such as White European, Asian or Asian Scottish or Asian British. A small percentage preferred not to say.

Living arrangements

Young people were asked who they live with most of the time:

66% live with both their parents

13% live with one parent

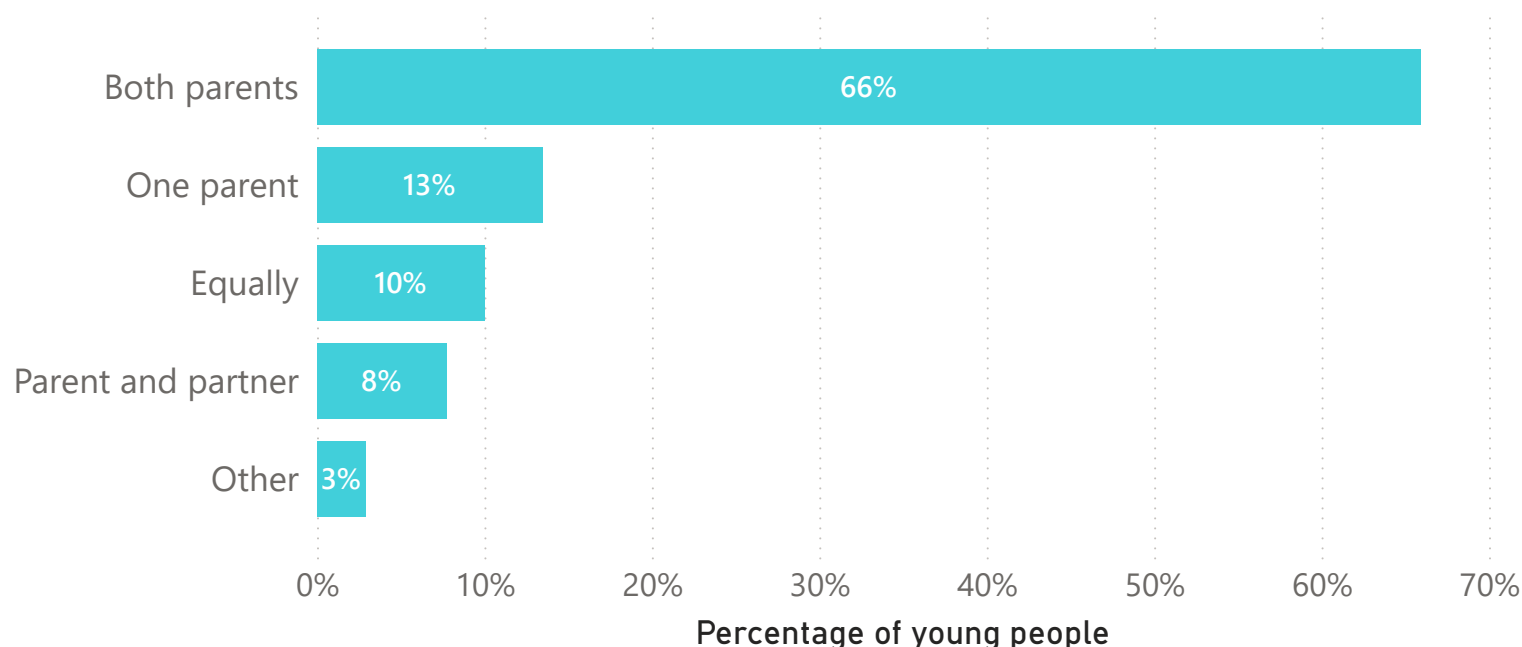
10% live equally with separated parents

8% live with one parent and their partner

3% live in other arrangements, including with other family members or are looked after by the local authority.

The majority of young people live with both of their parents.

Living arrangements



Identity

Young people were asked if any of the following described them:

Questions about identity	Applies to me	
	Percentage	Number of young people
I am a young carer (I help to care for someone in my family who is ill, disabled, or needs support)	7%	145
I am care-experienced (I have been in care in the past)	1%	21
I am currently in care (e.g. foster care, residential care)	A small number	
I am part of a travelling or Gypsy/Traveller family	1%	19
I have a disability or long-term health condition that affects my day-to-day life	5%	105
I identify as LGBTQ+	7%	162
I live in a household where English is not the main language spoken	6%	139
None of these apply to me	70%	1552
Prefer not to say	5%	103

Neurodivergence

Young people were asked if they considered themselves to be neurodivergent:

17% said yes, I have a diagnosis

15% said yes, I don't have a formal diagnosis but I think I am

45% said no

22% said I'm not sure

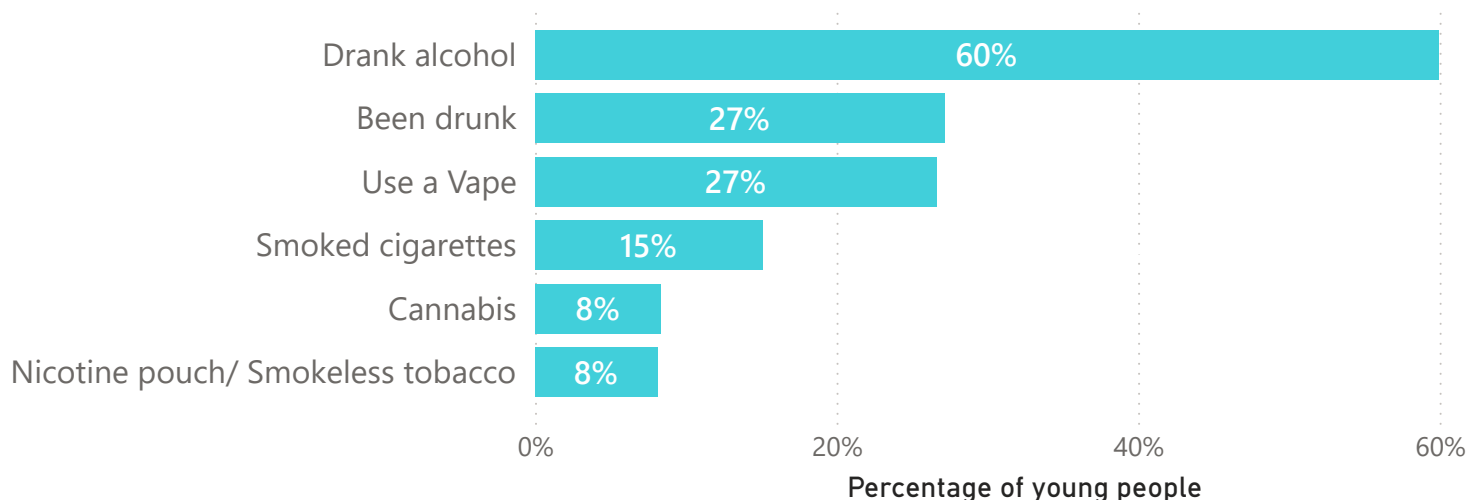
A small number preferred not to say.

Survey Results: Substance Use and Peer Group

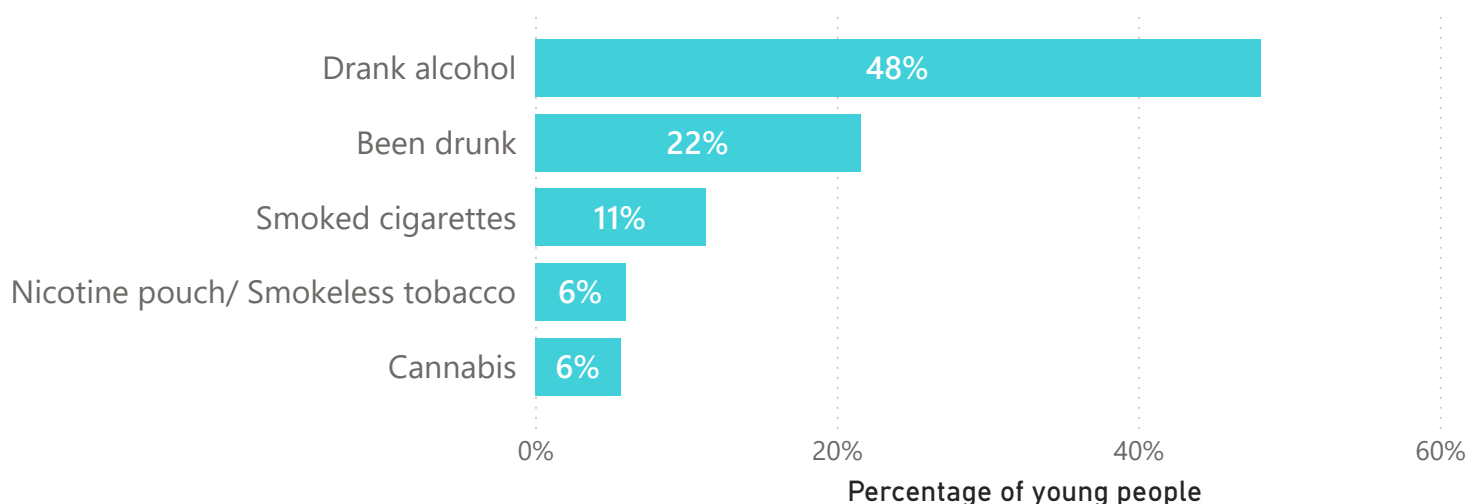
Alcohol, tobacco and other drug use (S3 and S4)

Young people were asked if they had ever used substances in their lifetime, in the last 12 months, and in the last 30 days, as shown in the following graphs:

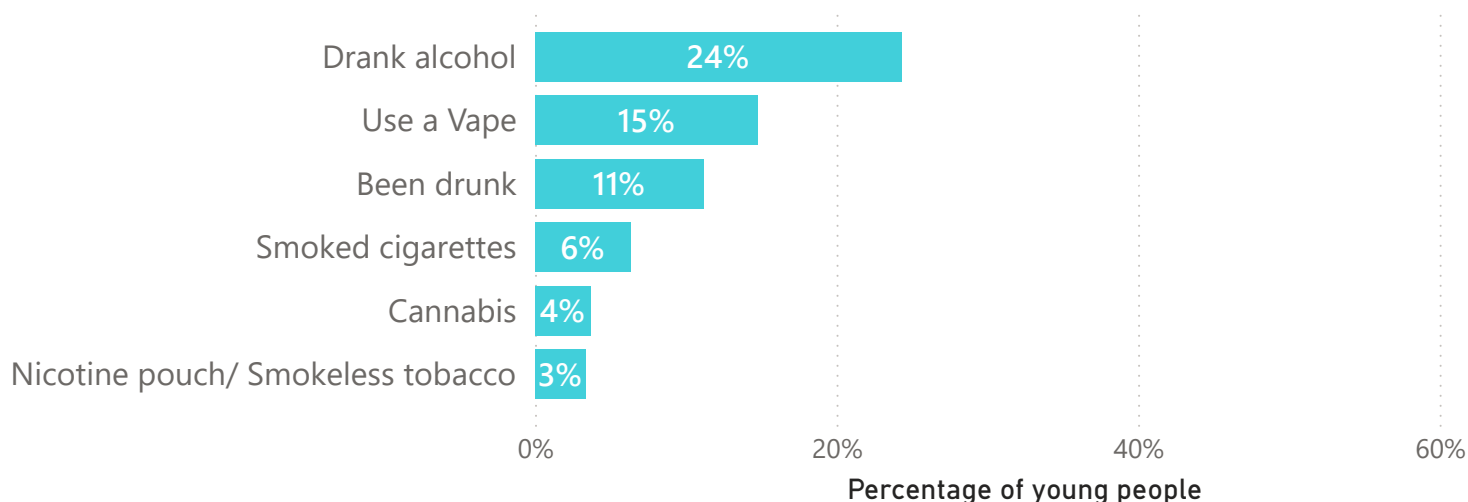
Substance use in lifetime



Substance use in the last 12 months



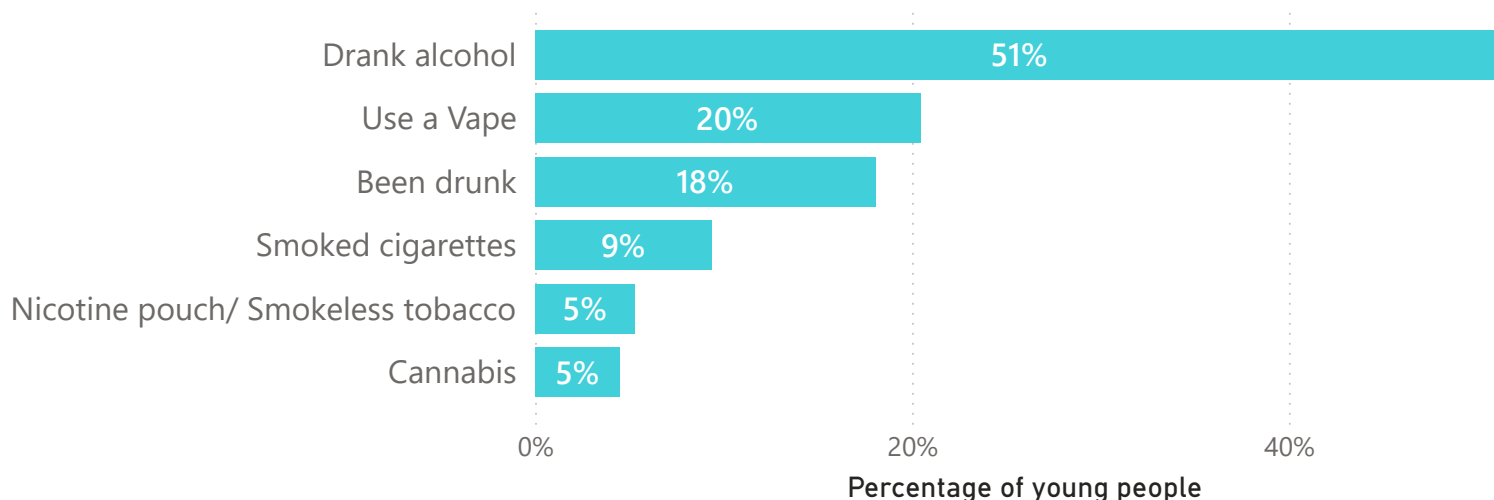
Substance use in the last 30 days



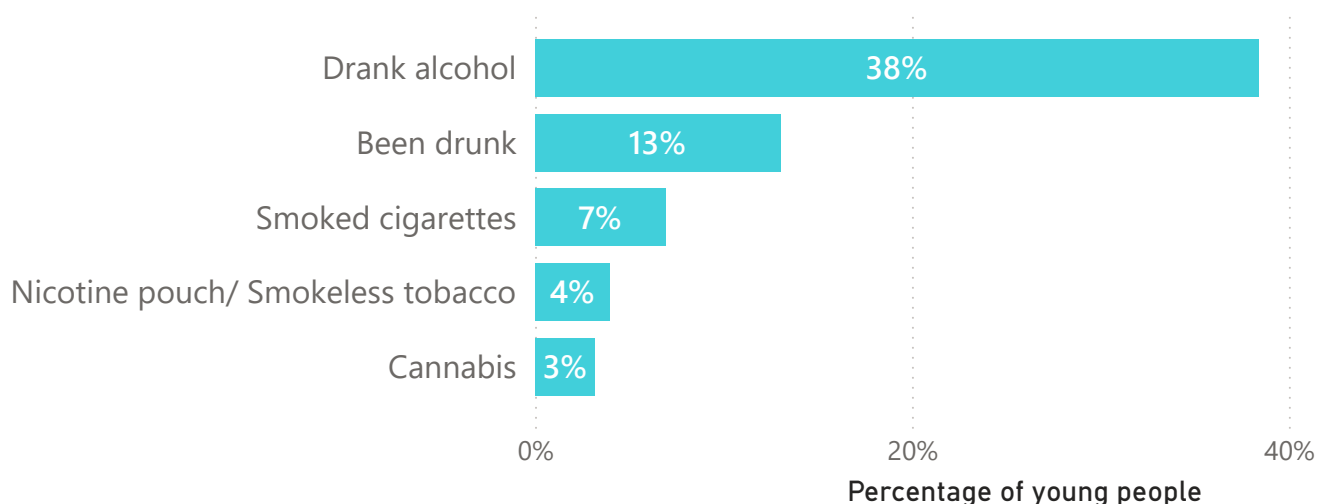
Alcohol, tobacco and other drug use (S3 only)

Young people were asked if they had ever used substances in their lifetime, in the last 12 months, and in the last 30 days, as shown in the following graphs:

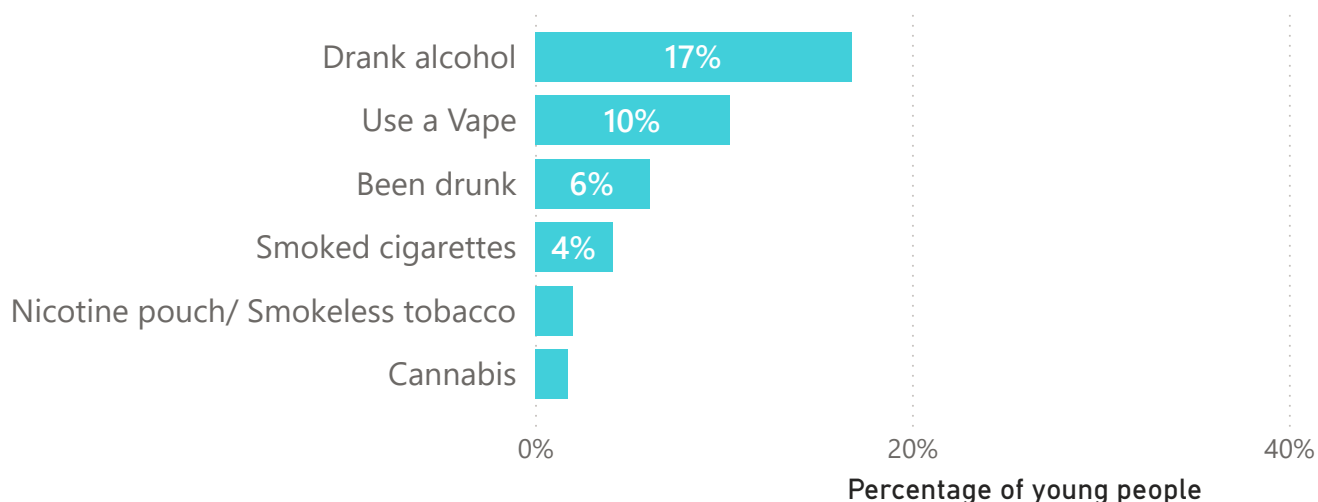
Substance use in lifetime



Substance use in the last 12 months



Substance use in the last 30 days



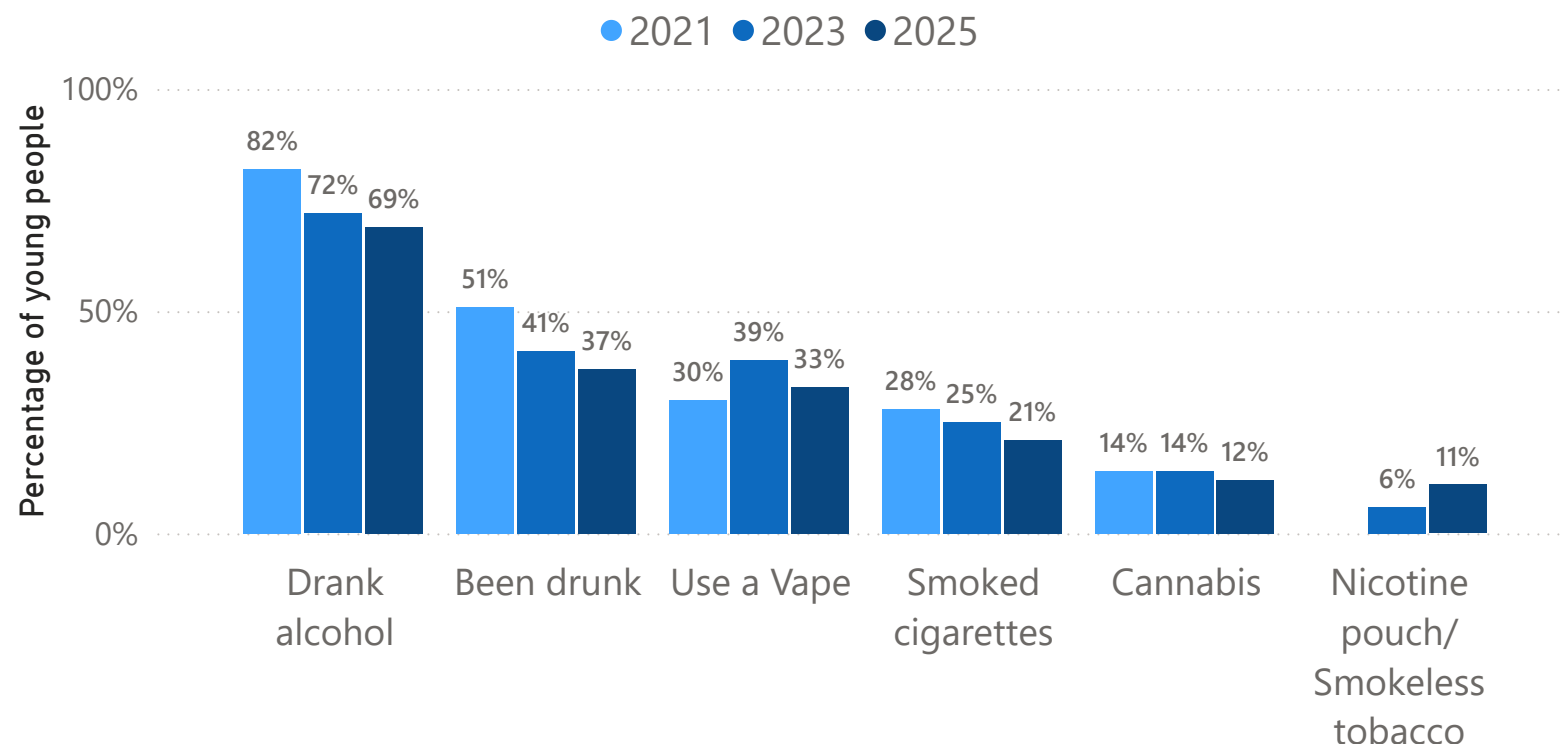
Alcohol, tobacco and other drug use (S4 only)

2021, 2023 and 2025 Planet Youth Survey data comparison

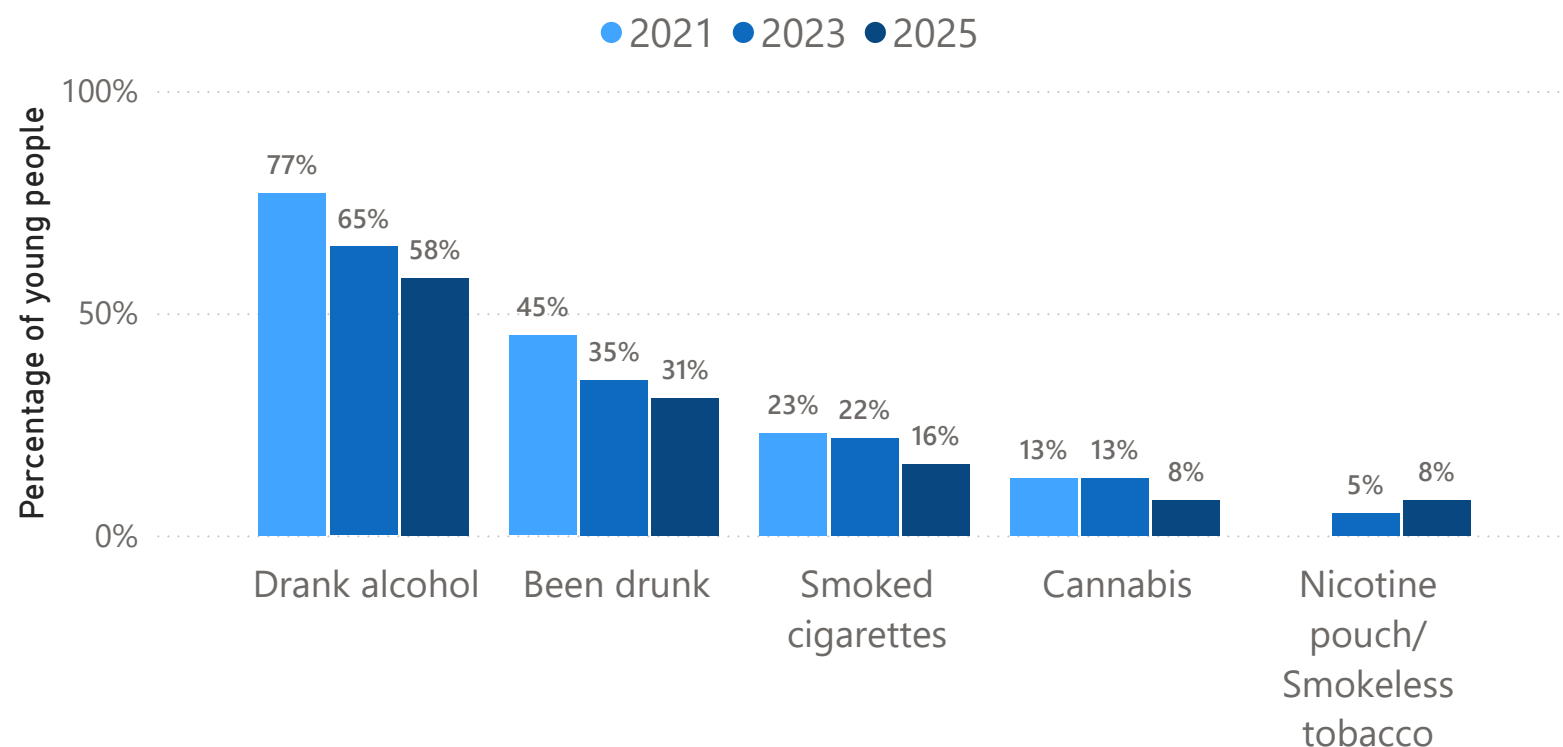
S4 pupils were asked if they had ever used substances in their lifetime, in last 12 months and in last 30 days. The following graphs show their responses in the 2021, 2023 and 2025 surveys.

There is no data regarding nicotine pouches/smokeless tobacco from the 2021 survey:

Substance use in lifetime, S4 only



Substance use in last 12 months, S4 only

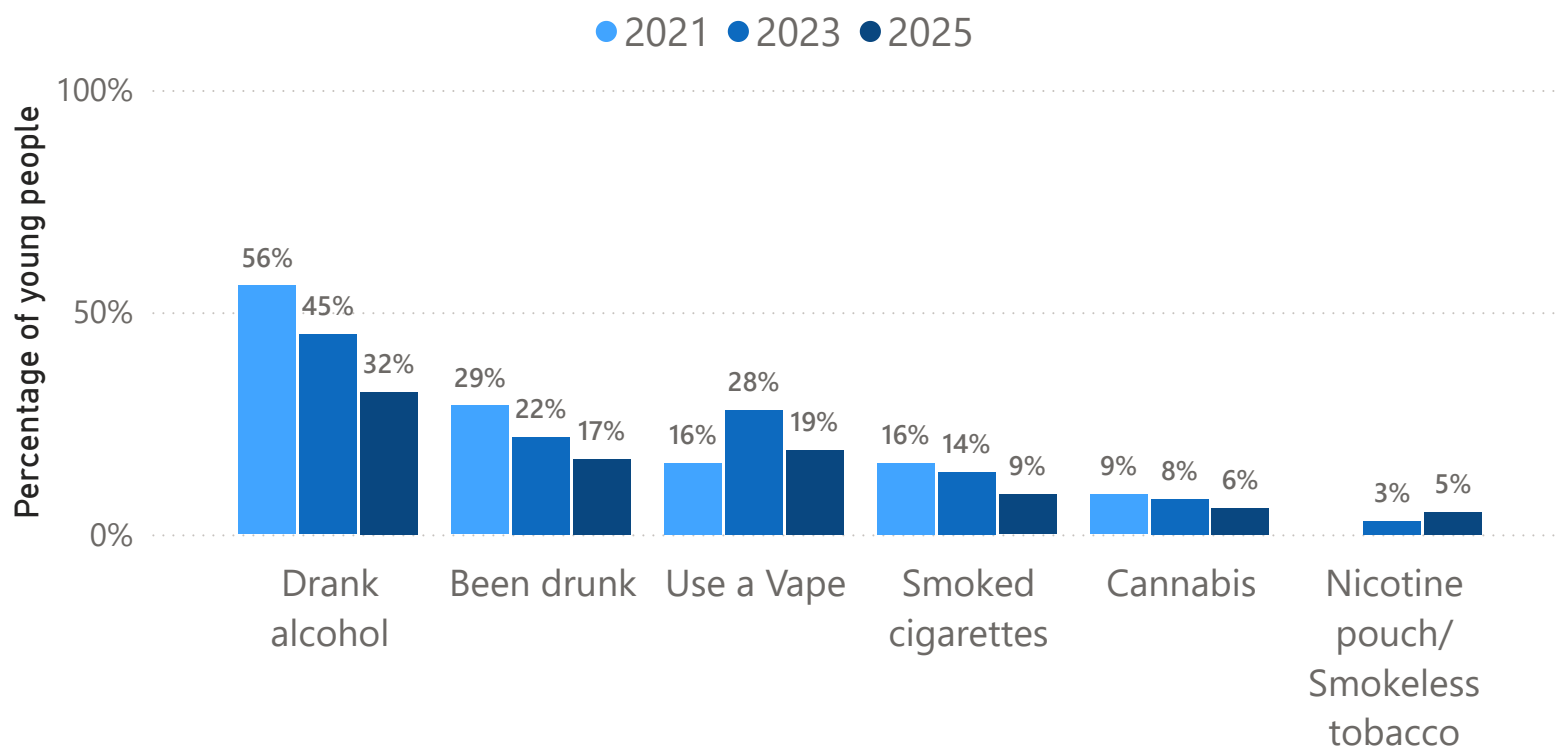


Alcohol, tobacco and other drug use (S4 only)

2021, 2023 and 2025 Planet Youth Survey data comparison

S4 pupils were asked if they had ever used substances in the last 30 days. The following graph show their responses in the 2021, 2023 and 2025 surveys (there is no data regarding nicotine pouches/smokeless tobacco from the 2021 survey):

Substance use in last 30 days, S4 only



Alcohol, tobacco and other drug use (S3 and S4)

The table shows the percentage of substance use for each substance in the young peoples lifetime, during the last 12 months and during the last 30 days, split by gender.

Substance use in lifetime, last 12 months and last 30 days by gender

	Female	Male	Non-binary, other, prefer not to say
▲			
1. Lifetime use			
Smoke	18%	12%	18%
Vape	32%	21%	29%
Alcohol	61%	59%	58%
Been drunk	32%	23%	28%
Cannabis	10%	7%	12%
Nicotine pouch/ Smokeless tobacco	8%	8%	9%
2. Last 12 months			
Smoke	14%	8%	16%
Vape	N/A	N/A	N/A
Alcohol	49%	47%	45%
Been drunk	26%	17%	23%
Cannabis	7%	4%	10%
Nicotine pouch/ Smokeless tobacco	4%	4%	5%
3. Last 30 days			
Smoke	8%	5%	9%
Vape	20%	10%	18%
Alcohol	27%	22%	28%
Been drunk	15%	8%	11%
Cannabis	4%	3%	7%
Nicotine pouch/ Smokeless tobacco	3%	3%	2%

More girls than boys smoke, vape, drink alcohol, have been drunk, and have used cannabis, in each time frame. There was no difference between girls and boys for nicotine pouches. Those who identified as non-binary, other or preferred not to say showed higher levels of cannabis use, and had smoked more often in the last 30 days.

Alcohol, tobacco and other drug use (S3 and S4)

The Venn diagram shows the percentage of young people ever using substances in their lifetime and highlights where substances are used in combination focusing only on alcohol, cigarettes and other drugs. This diagram is not focused on vaping or the use of smokeless tobacco pouches:

39% of young people have never smoked, used alcohol or any drugs

43% have drunk alcohol only

1% have used any drugs only

<1% have smoked only

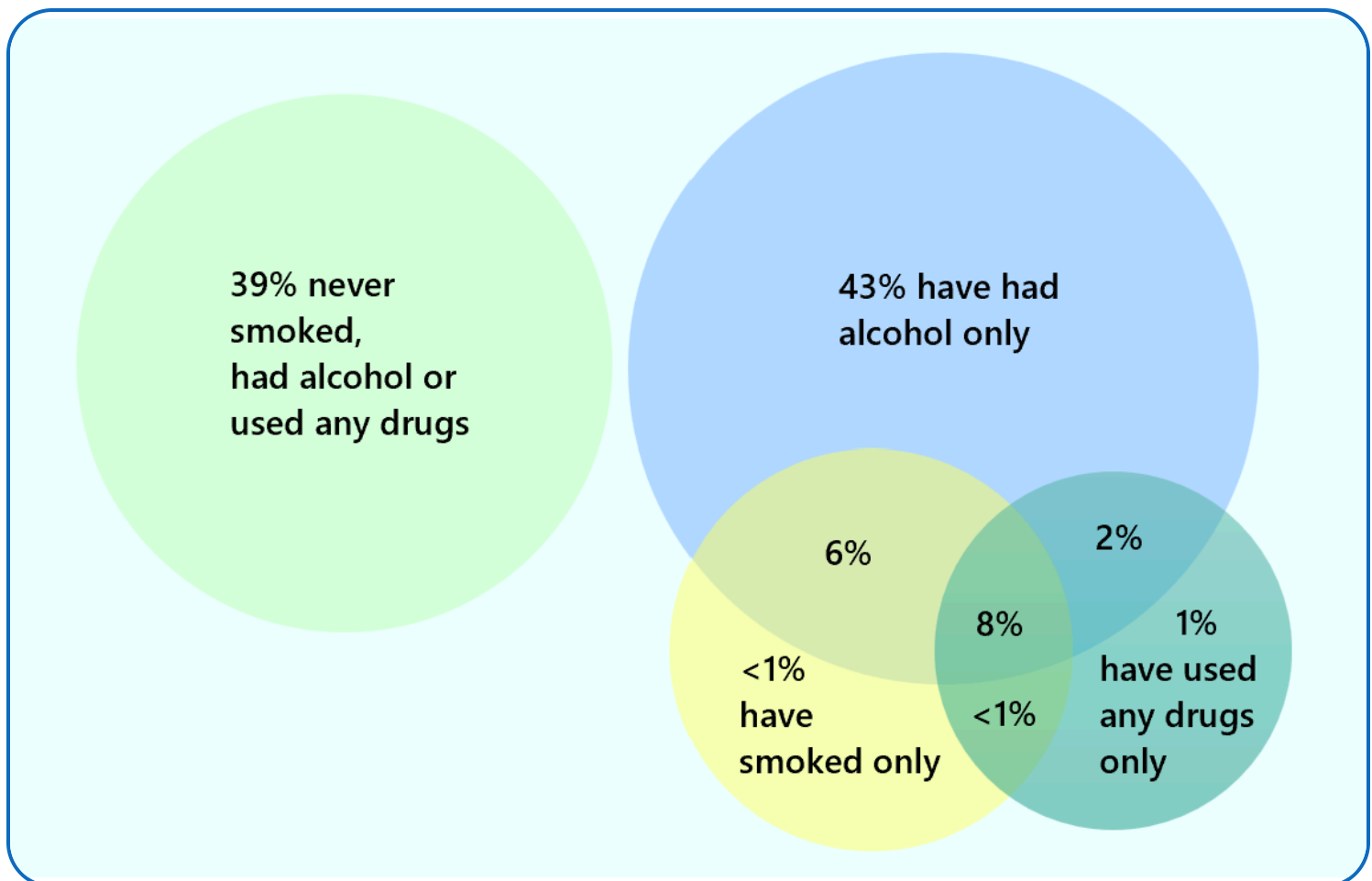
8% of young people have smoked, used alcohol and any drugs

6% of young people have used alcohol and smoked

2% of young people have used alcohol and any drugs

1% have used any drugs only

<1% of young people have smoked and used any drugs.



Cigarette, vape and nicotine pouch/smokeless tobacco (S3 and S4)

This Venn diagram shows the percentage of young people using cigarettes, vapes and nicotine pouches/smokeless tobacco ever in their lifetime and highlights where these are used in combination. This diagram is not focused on the use of alcohol or other drugs:

71% of the young people said they have never smoked, vaped or used nicotine pouches/smokeless tobacco.

12% have used vapes only

1% have used nicotine pouches/smokeless tobacco only

1% have smoked only

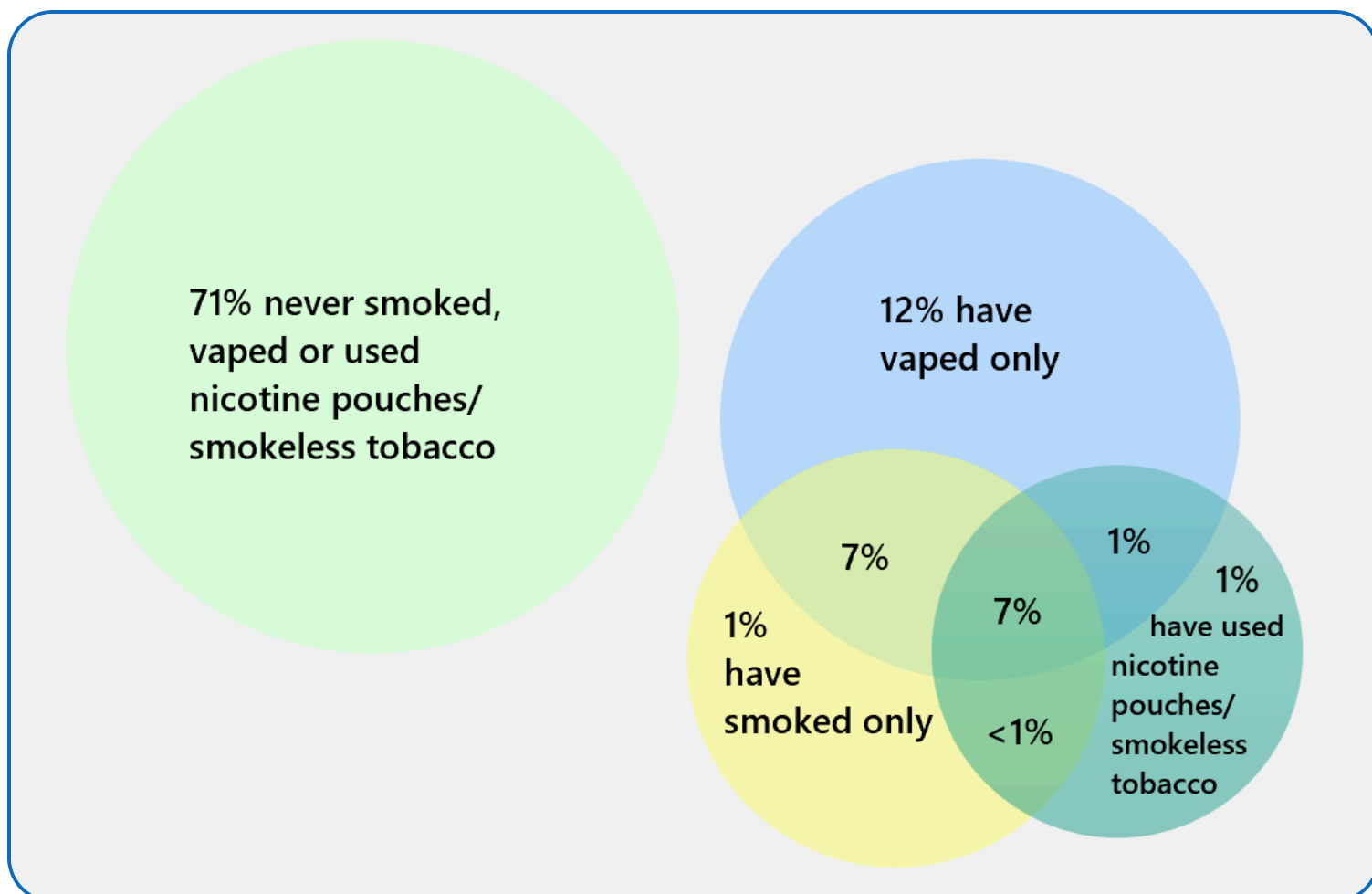
7% of young people have smoked and used vapes

7% have smoked, used a vape and used nicotine pouches/smokeless tobacco

1% have vaped and used nicotine pouches/smokeless tobacco

<1% have smoked and used nicotine pouches/smokeless tobacco.

More than half of the young people who are using vapes are also either smoking and/or using nicotine pouches/smokeless tobacco.

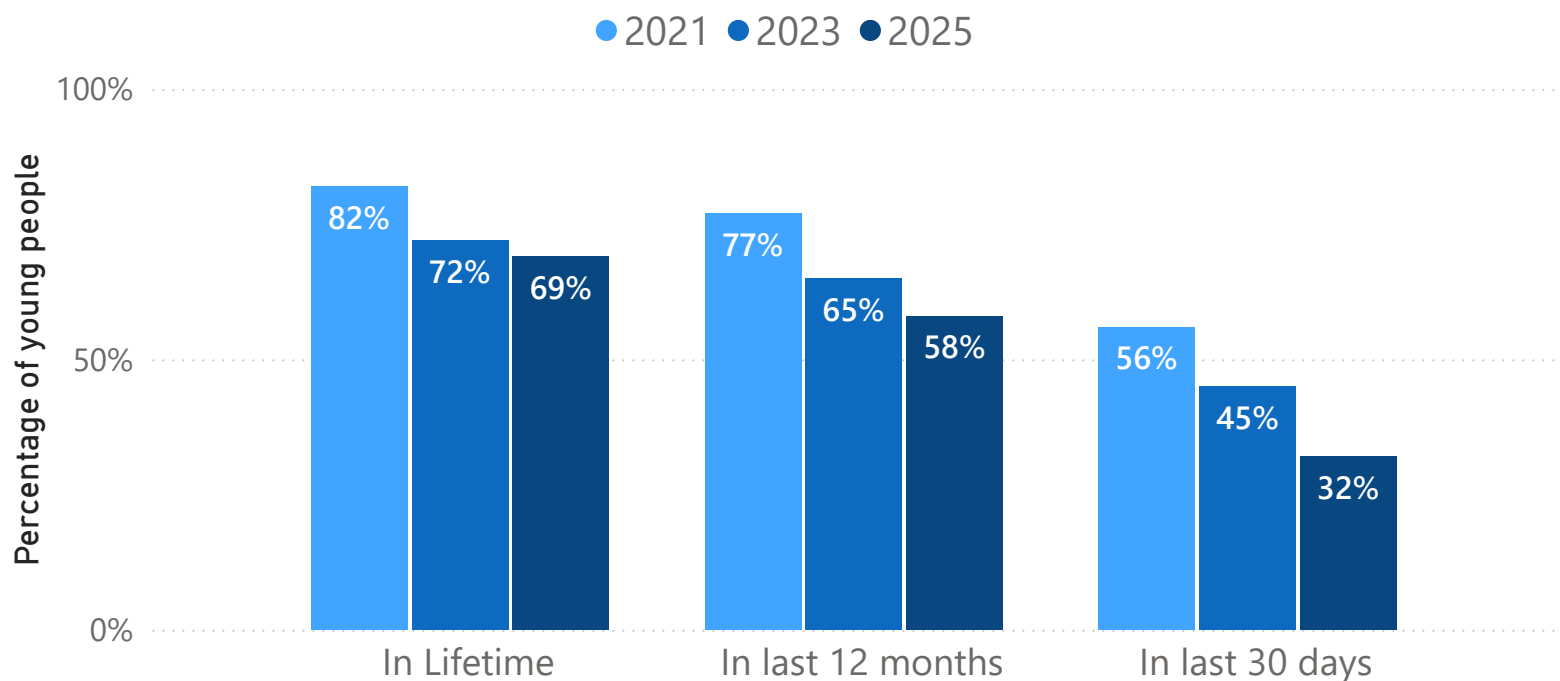


Alcohol use and having been drunk (S4 only)

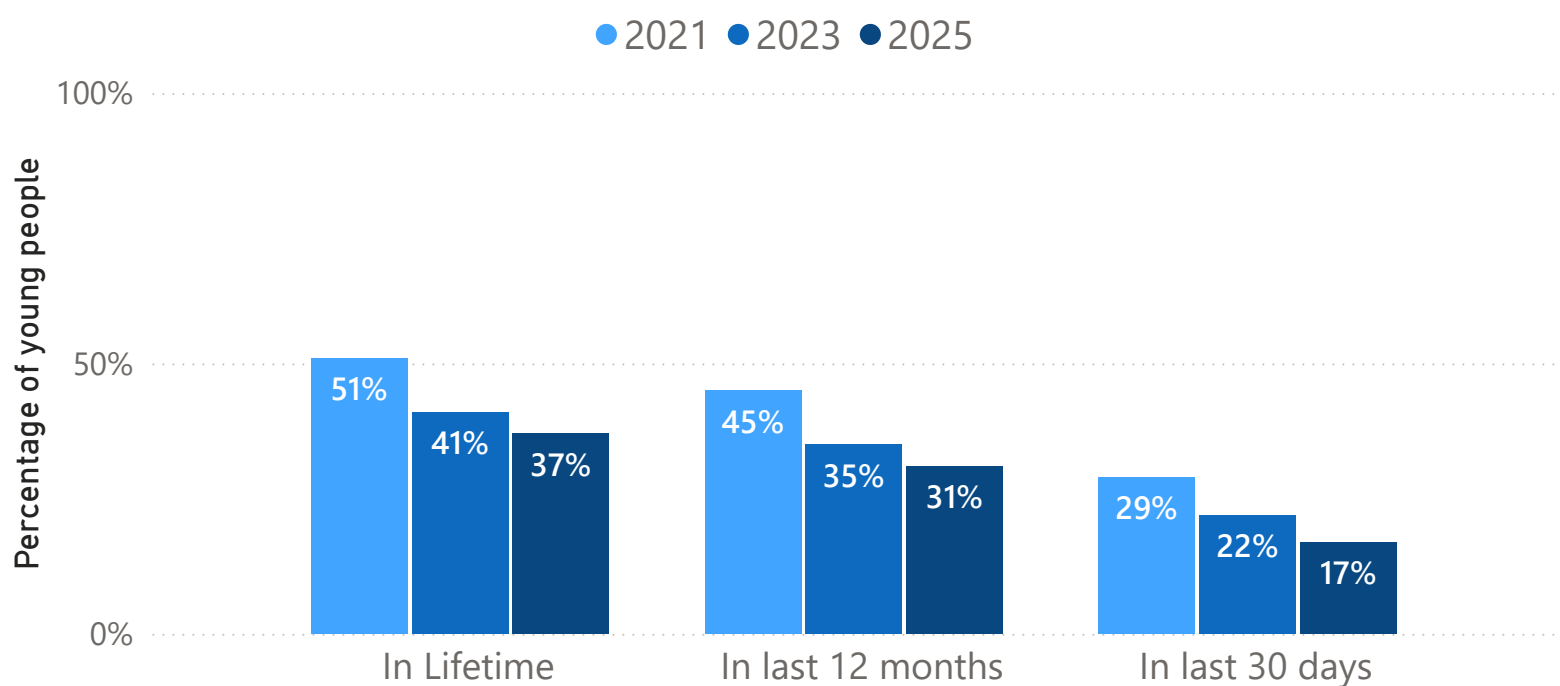
Comparison between 2021, 2023 and 2025

Young people were asked if they had ever used alcohol or had been drunk in their lifetime, in the last 12 months, and last 30 days, as shown in the graphs below:

Alcohol use in lifetime, in last 12 months and in last 30 days, S4 only



Been drunk in lifetime, in last 12 months and in last 30 days, S4 only



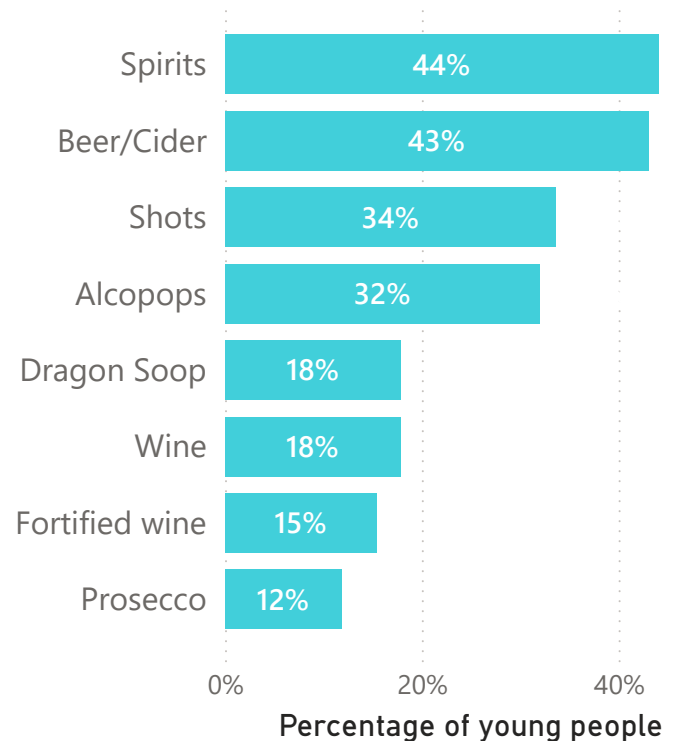
Types of alcohol (S3 and S4)

Young people were asked what types of alcohol they had had in the last month. From the young people who had had alcohol:

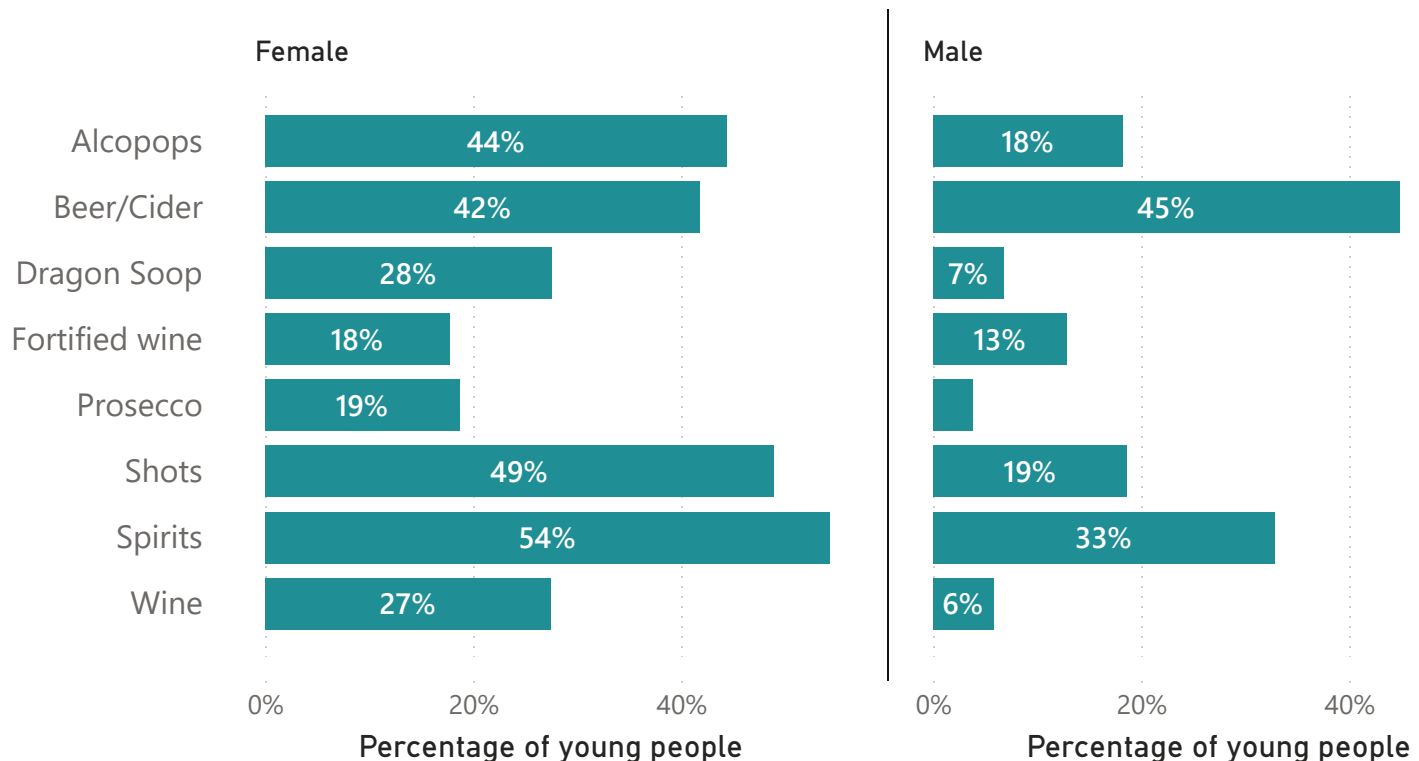
- 44% had (e.g. vodka, gin, whisky)
- 43% had beer/ cider
- 34% had shots (e.g. Sourz)
- 32% had alcopops (e.g. WKD, Hooch)
- 18% had Dragon Soop
- 18% had wine
- 15% had fortified wine
- 12% had prosecco.

Spirits, then beer or cider are the types of alcohol young people most often use. Young people may be counted more than once if they are having different types of alcohol.

Types of alcohol used in the last month



Types of alcohol used in the last month, Females and Males



Access to Alcohol (S3 and S4)

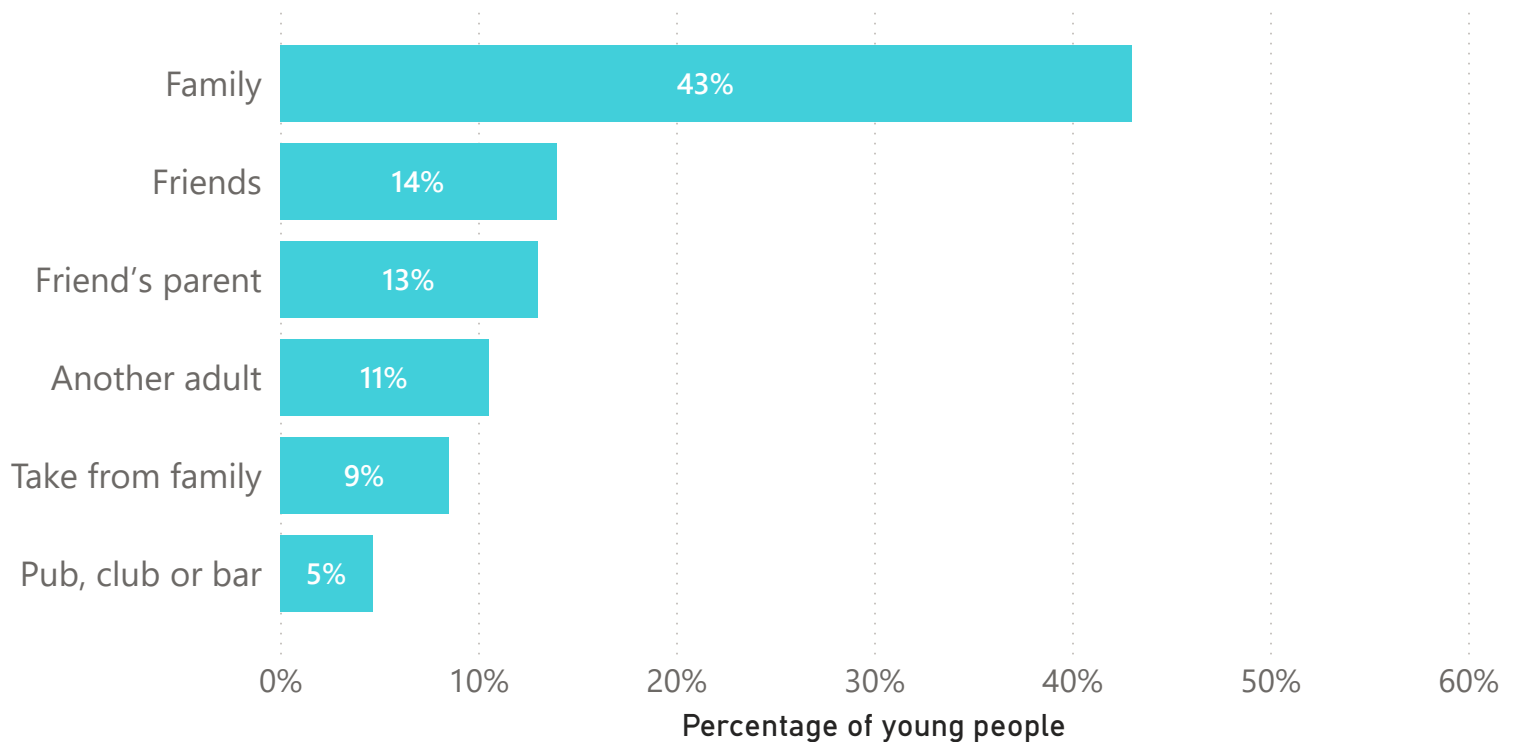
60% of young people have drunk alcohol in their lifetime.

Young people were asked where they get the alcohol they drink. Young people get alcohol from the following sources:

- 43% get alcohol from a family member
- 14% get it from friends or schoolmates
- 13% get it from a friend's parent
- 11% get it from another adult
- 9% take it from a family member without them knowing
- 5% get their alcohol from a shop or from a pub, club or bar.

Young people may be counted more than once if they are accessing alcohol through more than one source.

Where young people get their alcohol

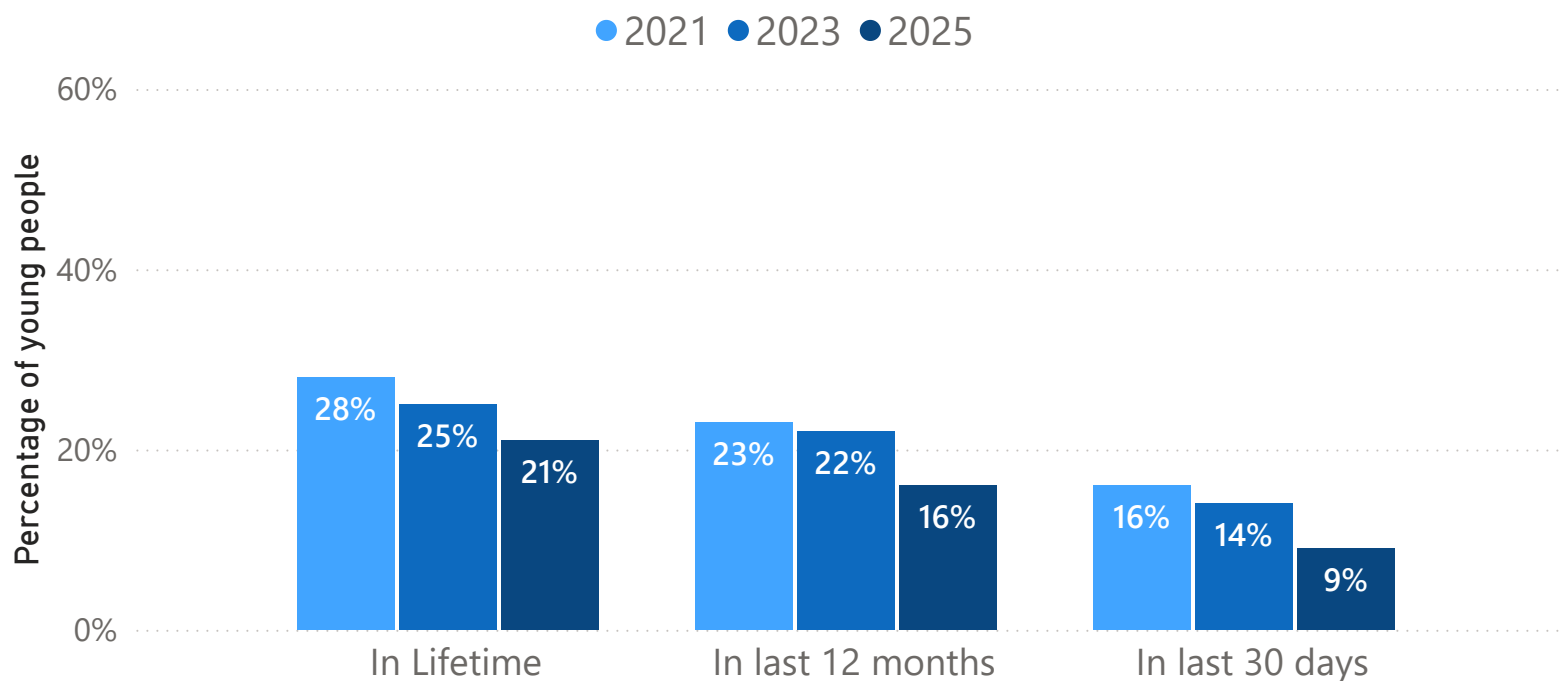


Use of cigarettes and vapes (S4 only)

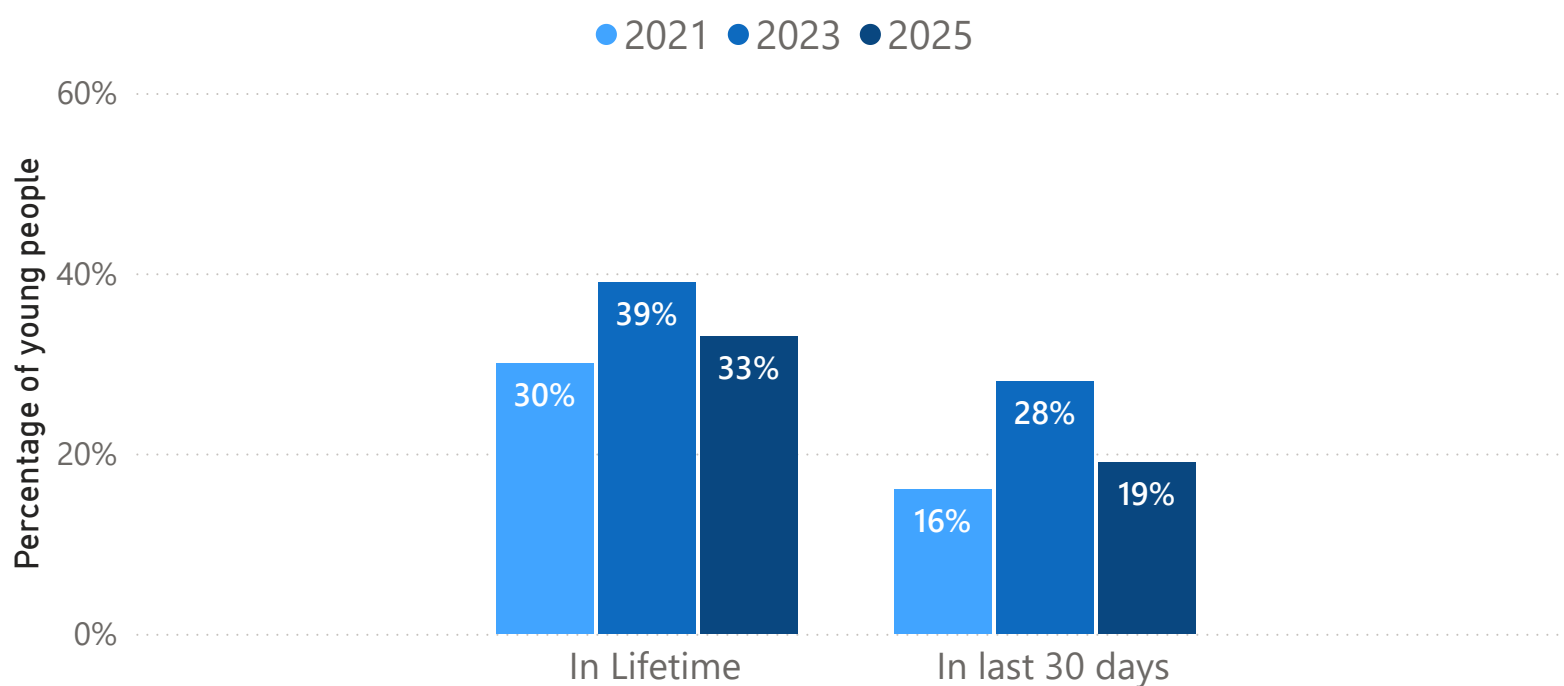
Comparison between 2021, 2023 and 2025

Young people were asked if they had ever smoked cigarettes or used vapes in their lifetime, in the last 12 months, and last 30 days, as shown in the graphs below:

Cigarette use in lifetime, in last 12 months and in last 30 days, S4 only



Vape use in lifetime and in last 30 days, S4 only



Access to Cigarettes (S3 and S4)

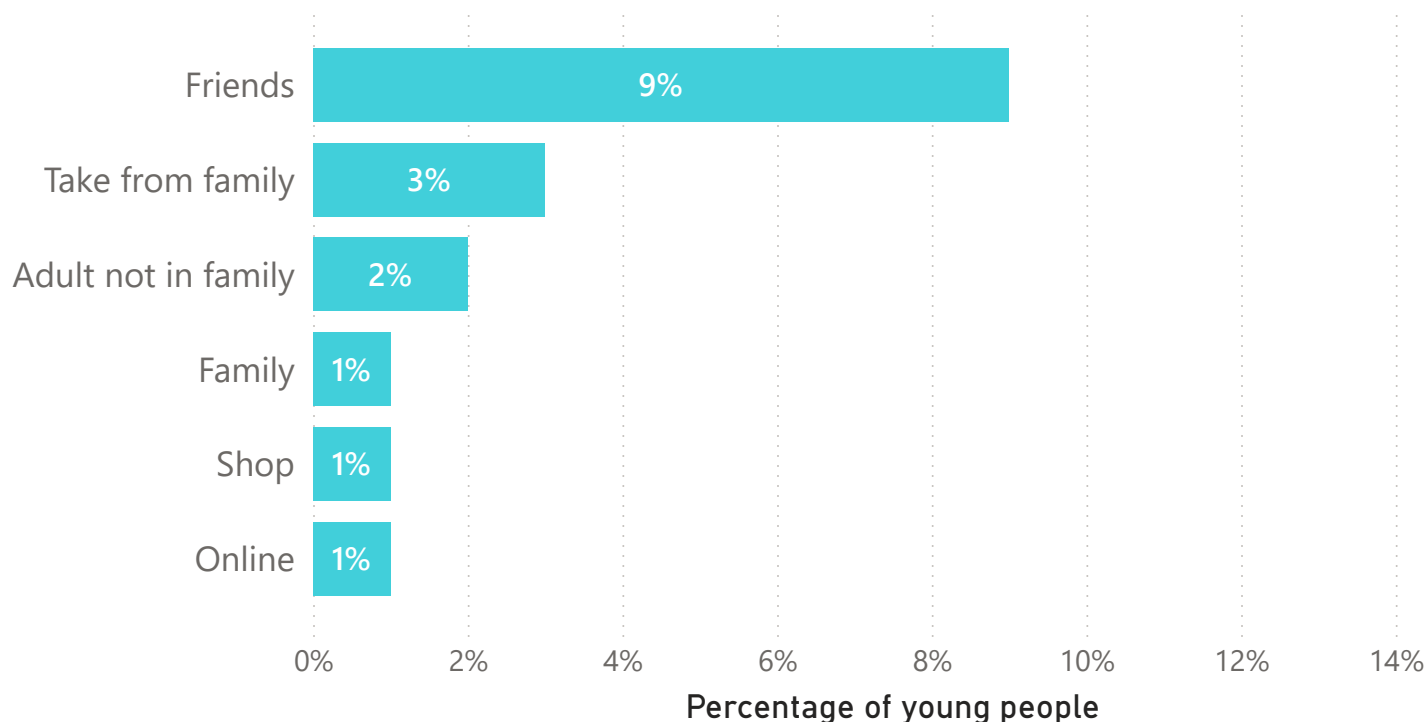
15% of young people have smoked cigarettes in their lifetime.

Young people were asked where they get the cigarettes they smoke. Young people get cigarettes from the following sources:

- 9% get cigarettes from friends or schoolmates
- 3% take them from a family member without them knowing
- 2% get them from a person 16 or older who isn't in their family
- 1% of young people buy them in a shop
- 1% gets given them by a family member
- 1% online sales
- <1% took cigarettes from a shop without paying.

Most often, young people get cigarettes from their friends or school mates. Young people may be counted more than once if they access cigarettes in more than one way.

Where young people get their cigarettes



Access to Vapes (S3 and S4)

27% of young people have used vapes in their lifetime.

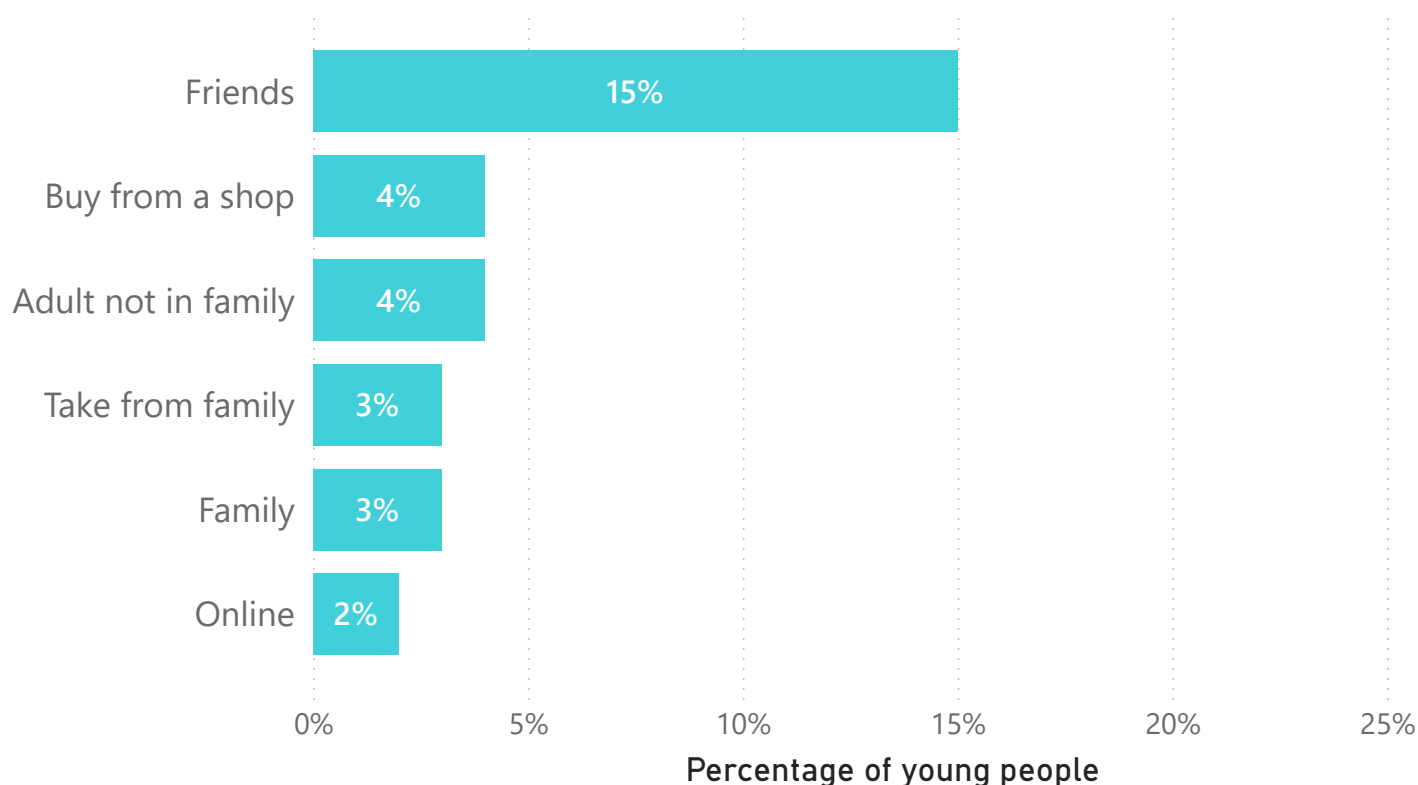
Young people were asked where they get the vapes they use. Young people get vapes from the following sources:

- 15% get vapes from friends or schoolmates
- 4% of young people buy them in a shop
- 4% get them from a person 16 or older who isn't in their family
- 3% take them from a family member without them knowing
- 3% get given them by a family member
- 2% get them from online sales

A small proportion took vapes from a shop without paying.

Most often, young people get vapes from their friends or school mates followed by an adult who isn't in their family or they buy them from a shop. Young people may be counted more than once if they access vapes in more than one way.

Where young people get their vapes

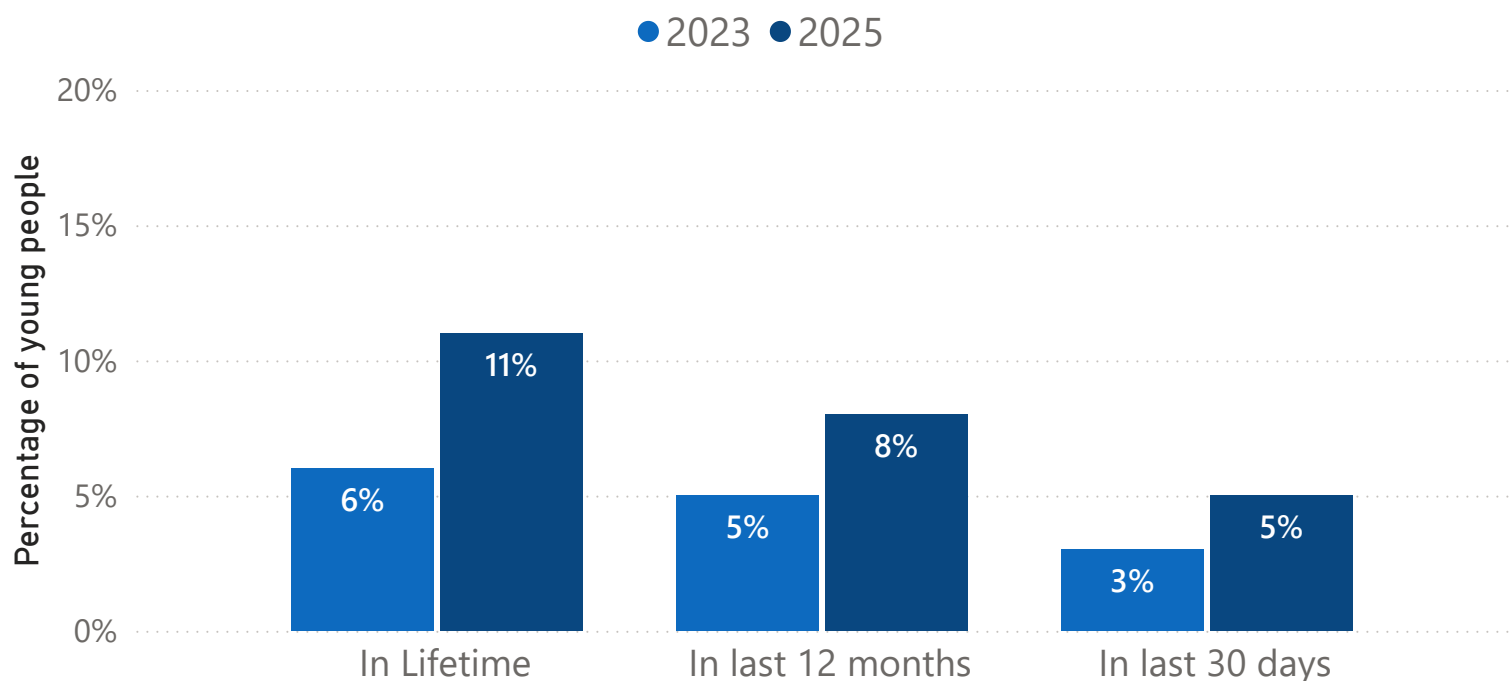


Use of nicotine pouches/smokeless tobacco (S4 only)

Comparison between 2023 and 2025

Young people were asked if they had ever used nicotine pouches / smokeless tobacco in their lifetime, in the last 12 months, and last 30 days, as shown in the graph below:

Nicotine pouch use in lifetime, in last 12 months and in last 30 days, S4 only



Access to nicotine pouches/smokeless tobacco (S3 and S4)

In 2025, 11% of young people have used nicotine pouches in their lifetime.

5% get nicotine pouches/ smokeless tobacco from friends or schoolmates

1% buy them from a shop.

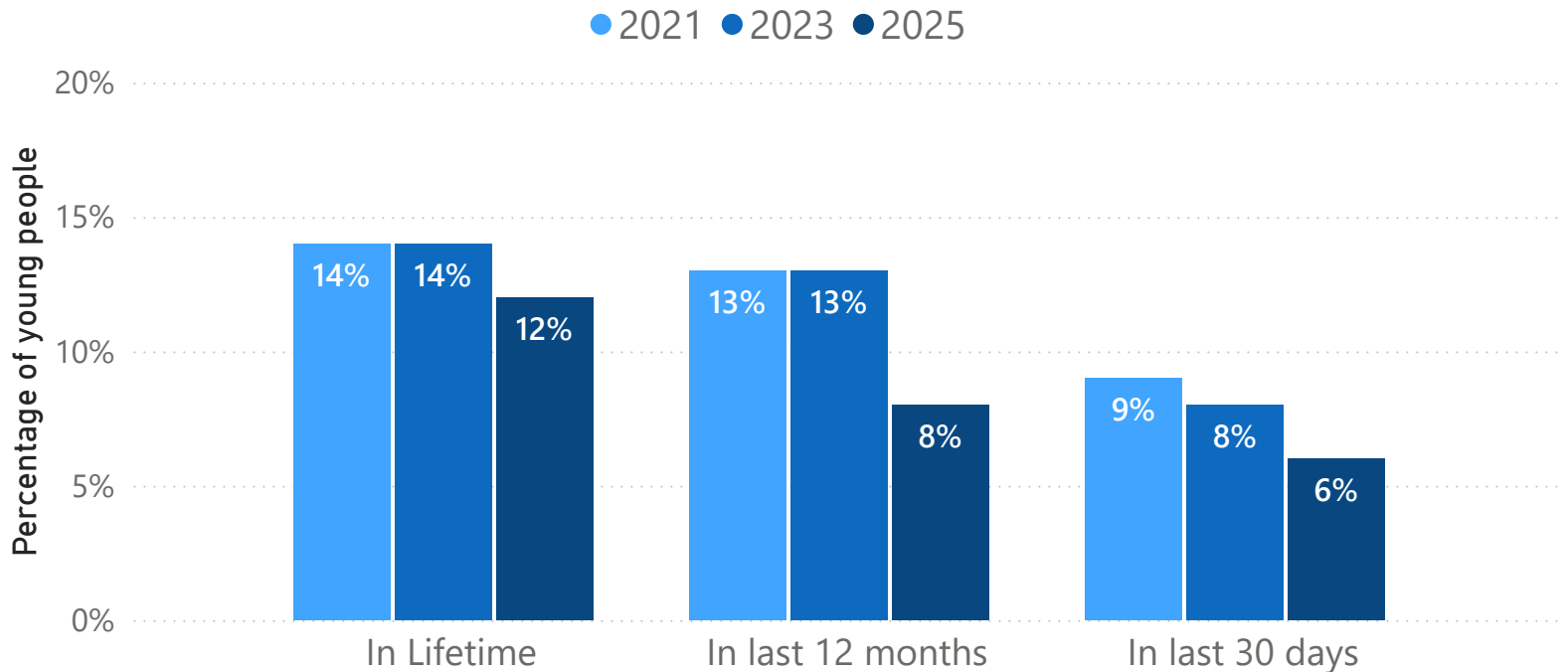
There is no data for 2021 as this question was not included in the 2021 survey.

Use of cannabis (S4 only)

Comparison between 2021, 2023 and 2025

Young people were asked if they had ever used cannabis in their lifetime, in the last 12 months, and last 30 days, as shown in the graphs below:

Cannabis use in lifetime, in last 12 months and in last 30 days, S4 only



TAKEAWAY

The most common way for young people to get drugs is from a friend

Use of other drugs (S3 and S4)

Young people were asked if they had used any of the following drugs and the percentage that said they had used particular drugs once or more are shown below:

Drug	Percentage of young people
Synthetic cannabis	2.7%
Nitrous Oxide	1.7%
Ecstasy	1.5%
Cocaine	1.4%
Ketamine	1.2%
Magic Mushrooms	1.2%
Crack	0.8%
LSD	0.8%
ADHD drugs without prescription	0.6%
Amphetamine	0.6%
Anabolic Steroids	0.6%
Methamphetamine	0.5%
Opioids without prescription	0.5%

Some young people using these substances reported using the following drugs 40 times or more:

- * Synthetic cannabis
- * Nitrous Oxide
- * Methamphetamine
- * Magic mushrooms
- * LSD
- * Ketamine
- * Ecstasy
- * Crack
- * Cocaine
- * Anabolic Steroids
- * ADHD drugs without prescription

Access to Drugs (S3 and S4)

Young people were asked where they get drugs. The most common ways for young people to access drugs is:

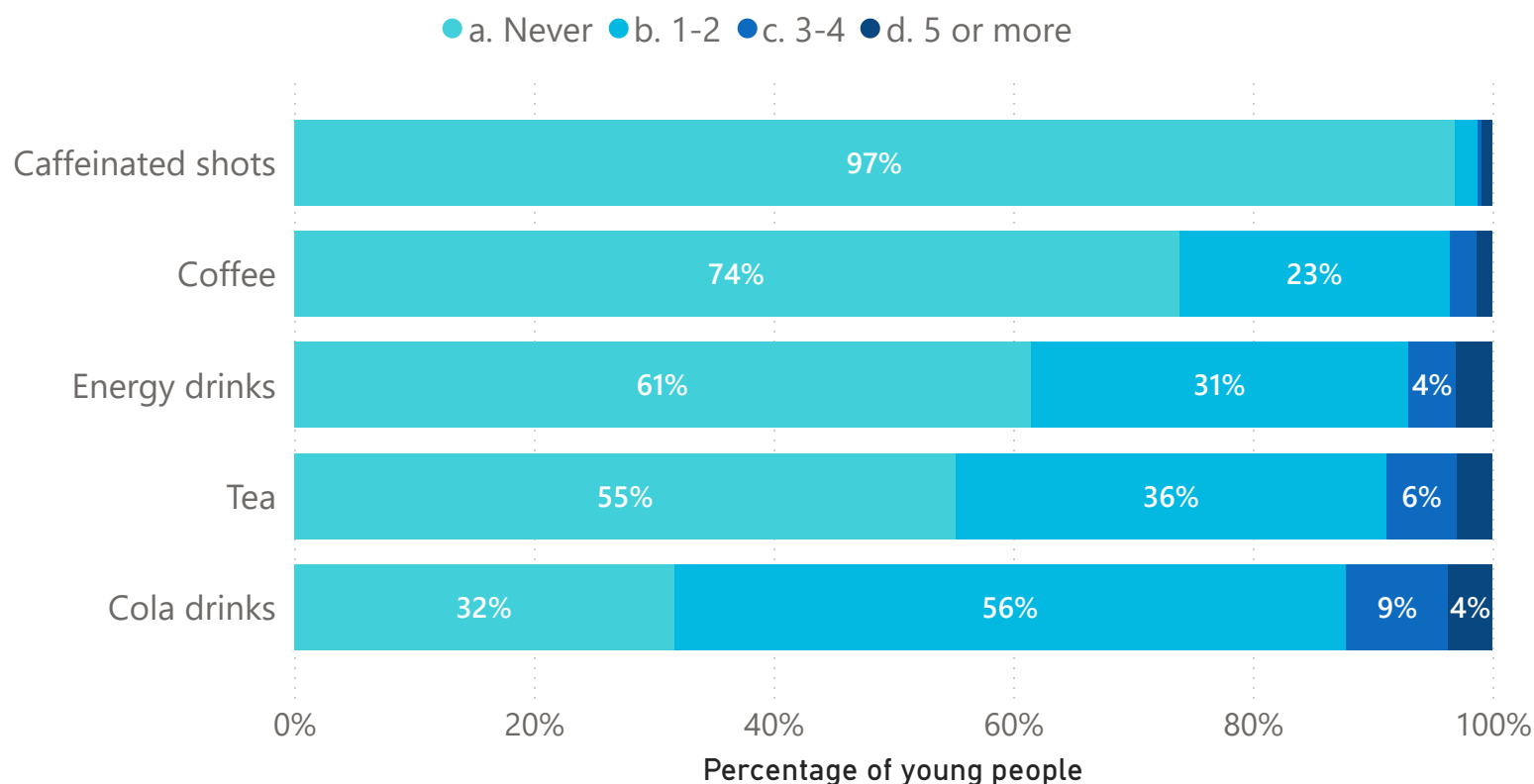
- 2.7% from a friend
- 2.4% from a dealer
- 2.2% from a friend of a friend
- 0.6% from a stranger
- 0.6% take them from a family member without them knowing.

Young people may be counted more than once if they access drugs in more than one way.

Caffeine (S3 and S4)

Young people were asked about their daily caffeine use, measured by regular sized cups or cans. The majority of young people don't consume coffee or energy drinks on a daily basis, however two thirds of young people (68%) have at least one cola drink daily. 39% have at least one energy drink a day.

Drinks of caffeine daily

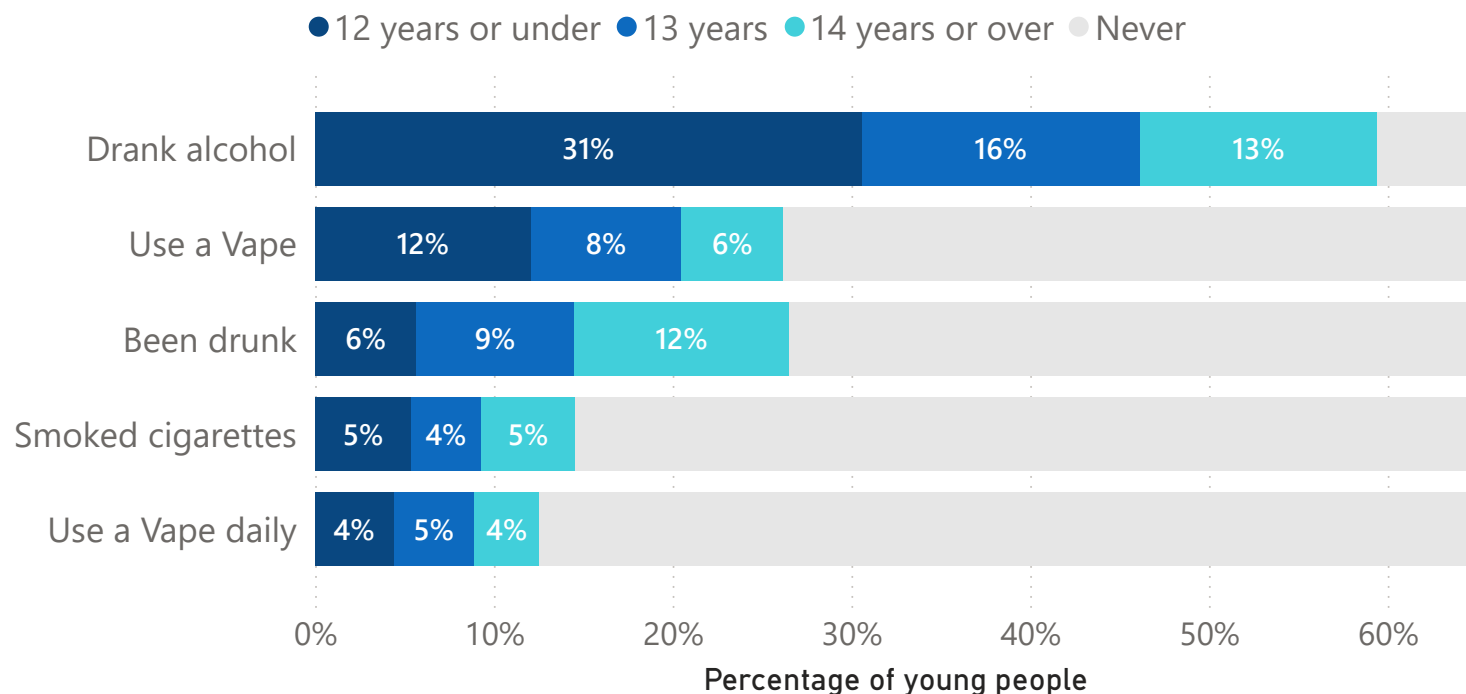


Age at first use of substances (S3 and S4)

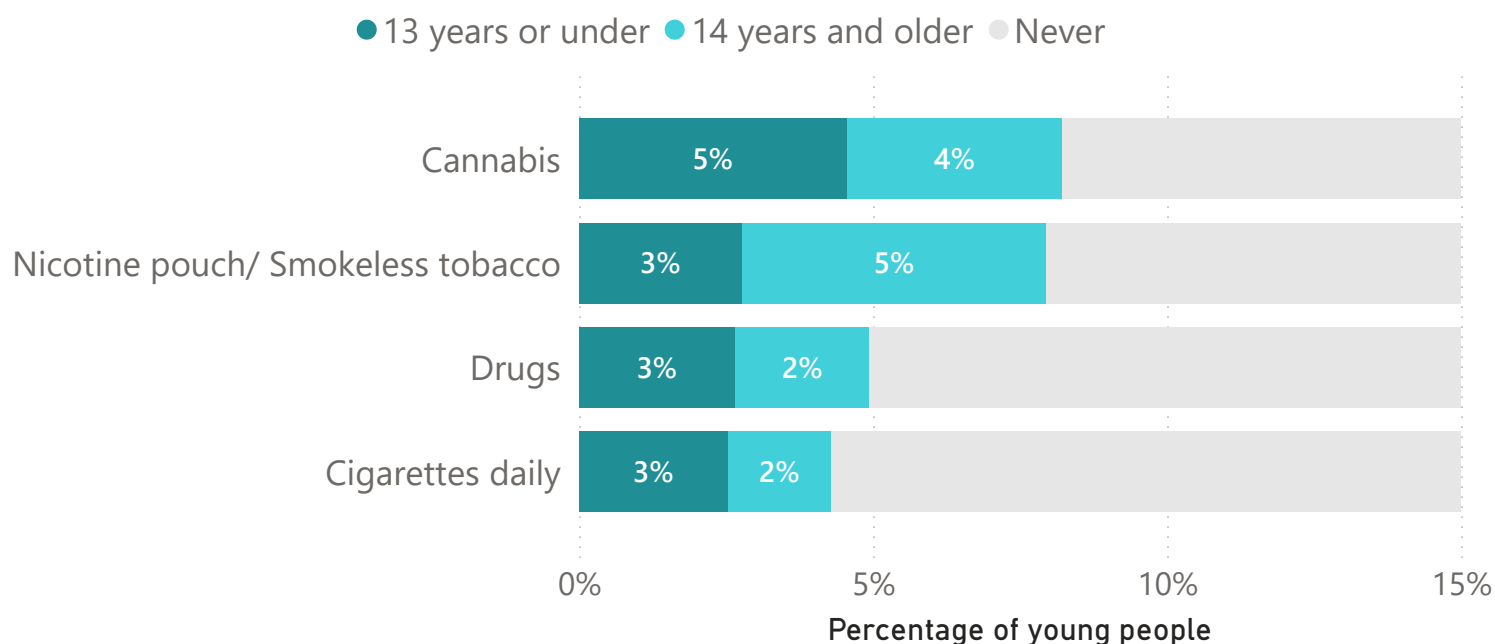
Young people were asked at what age they first drank alcohol, became drunk, smoked cigarettes, used e-cigarettes or vaped and used cannabis or other illegal drugs.

Alcohol use was shown to be experienced by most young people, including from a young age; 31% of young people had alcohol aged 12 or younger.

Age at first use or experience



About 7% of all the young people had first used cannabis by 14 years of age and a very small number as young as 11 or 12 years.



Fitting in (S3 and S4)

Young people were asked if they felt they needed to do certain things to not feel left out by their group of friends. Most young people disagreed that they had to do things to fit in.

Although the majority didn't feel they had to, more young people felt they had to drink to fit in with their group of friends than any of the other behaviours.

87% of young people disagreed they had to use cannabis to fit in

87% of young people disagreed they had to use other drugs to fit in

83% of young people disagreed they had to smoke cigarettes to fit in

82% of young people disagreed they had to vape to fit in

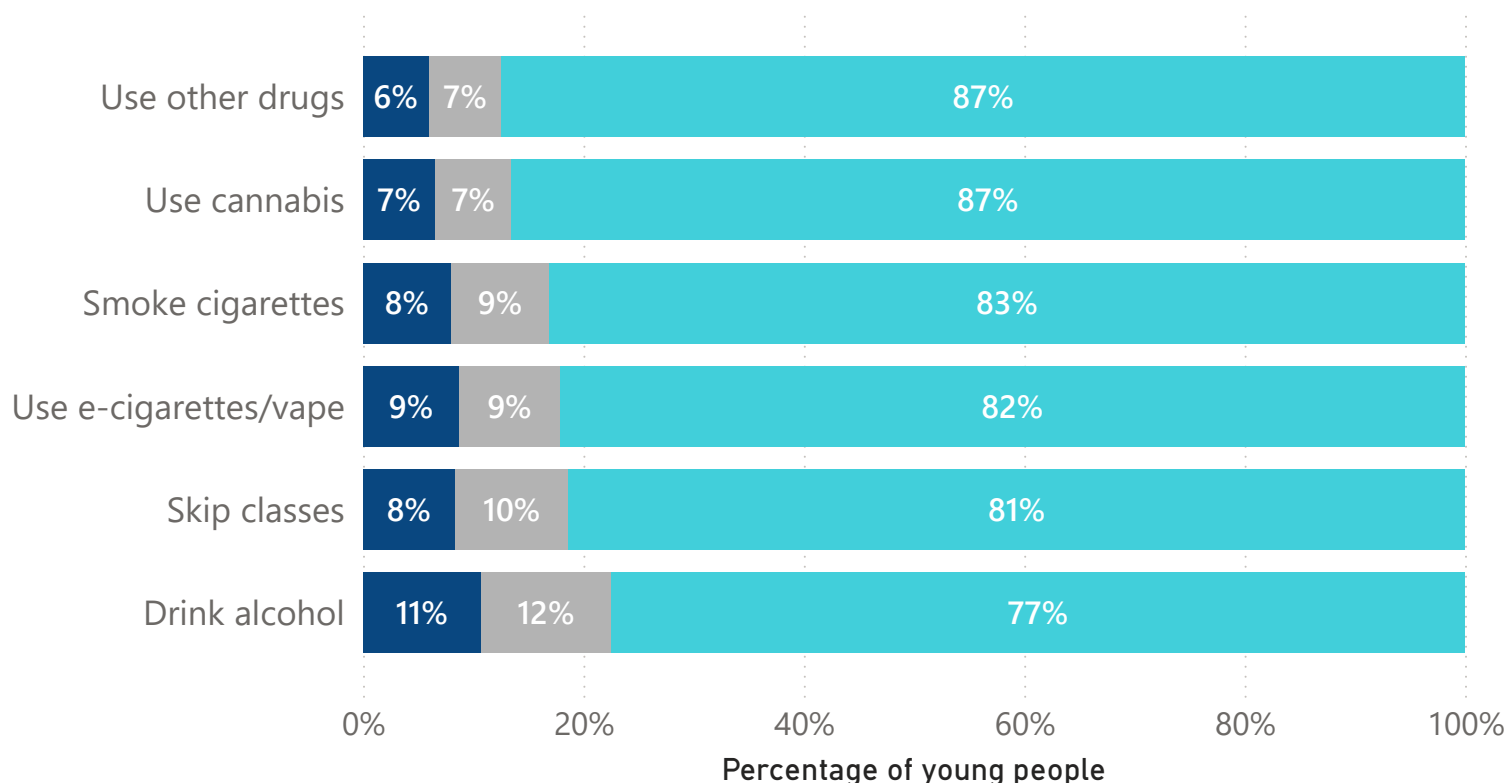
81% of young people disagreed they had to skip classes to fit in

78% of young people disagreed they had to drink alcohol to fit in.

Fitting in is important because those young people that feel they need to do certain things to fit in with friends, are more likely to use alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

Young people sometimes feel they need to do this so they do not feel left out by their friends

● 1. Agree or Strongly agree ● 2. Neither agree or disagree ● 3. Disagree or Strongly disagree

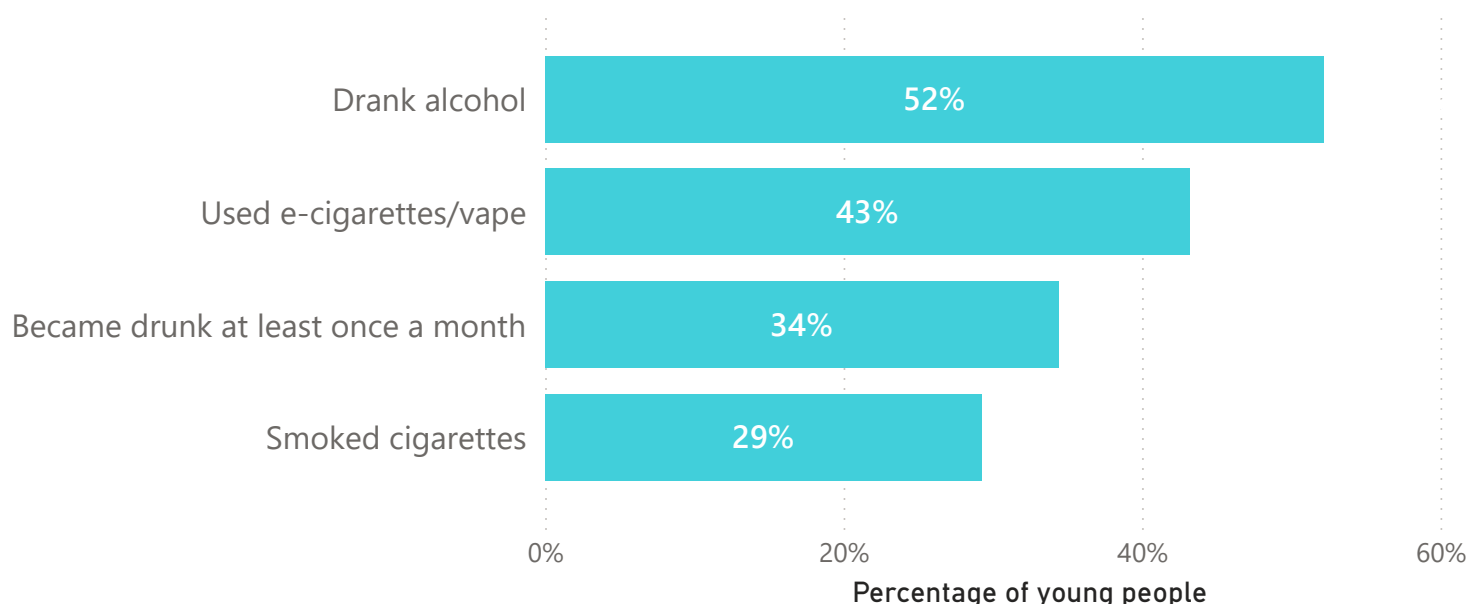


Over-estimates of substance use by young people (S3 and S4)

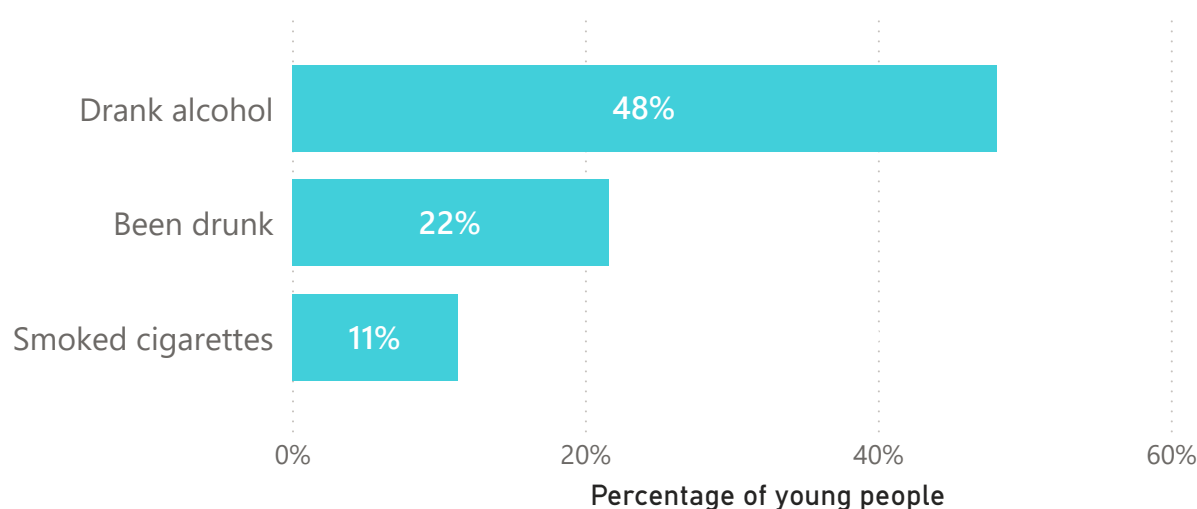
Pupils estimation of peer substance use

Young people were asked to estimate the number of their friends who use substances in the last 12 months. They over-estimated the number of their friends that drank alcohol, vaped, smoked cigarettes and had been drunk. This is important because over-estimates lead to young people thinking using substances are usual things to do, and if they seem normal to do, then young people are more inclined to try them.

Young people's estimation of peer substance use in the last 12 months



Actual reported substance use in the last 12 months



There is no question in the survey about usage of vapes in last 12 months however we know that **27%** of the young people had used a vape in their lifetime and **15%** in the last 30 days, so young people have over-estimated the number of their peers who had used a vape in the last 12 months.

Survey Results: Health and Wellbeing

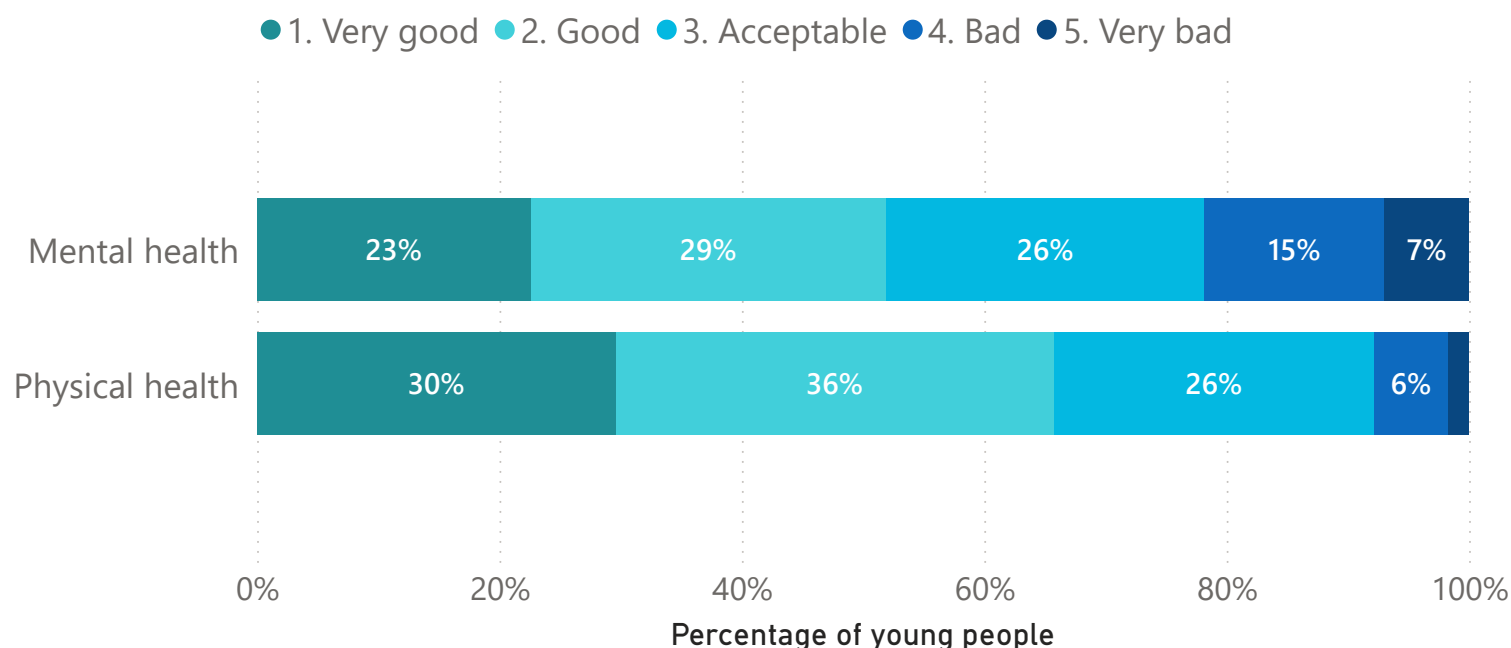
Mental and Physical health and wellbeing (S3 and S4)

Mental and physical health and wellbeing are intertwined and the survey asked young people about how they feel about themselves as well as how they would rate their own wellbeing and health.

52% of students who rated their mental health as good or very good

66% of students rated their physical health as good or very good.

How young people rate their mental and physical health



TAKEAWAY

52% rate
their mental
health as
good or
very good



TAKEAWAY

66% rate
their physical
health as
good or very
good

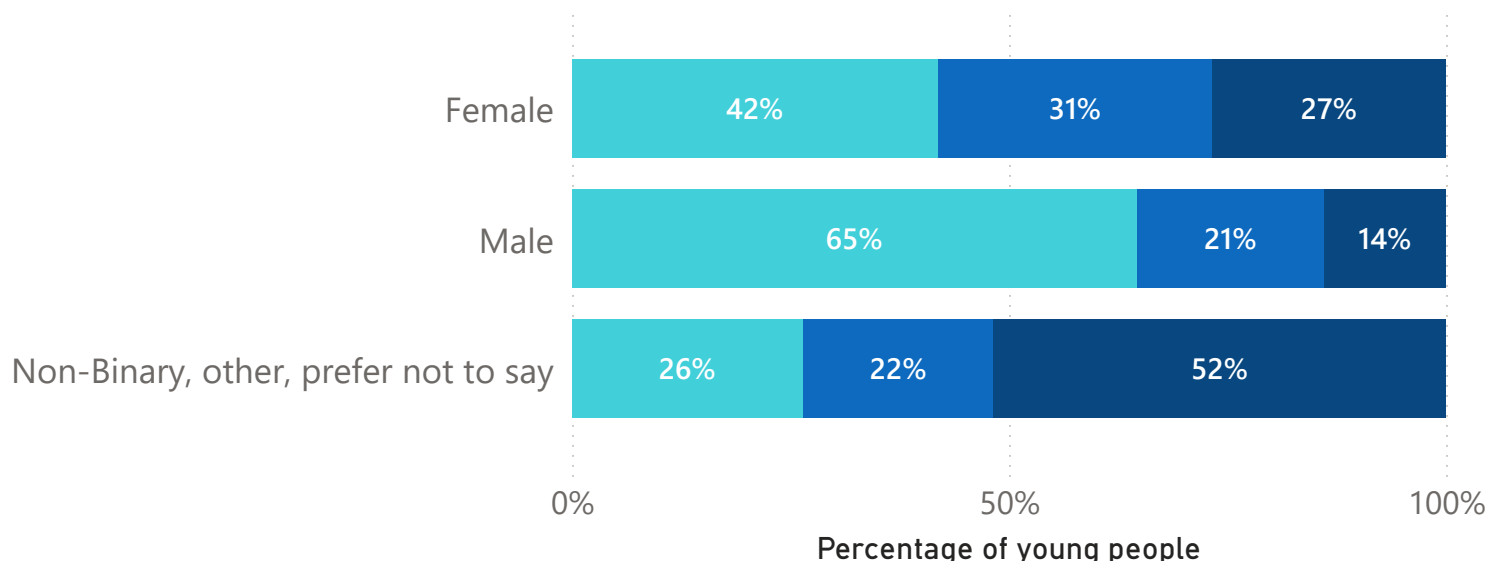
Mental and physical health and wellbeing (S3 and S4)

The young people were asked to rate their mental and physical health.

Males rated their physical and mental health better than females. Those students who identify as non-binary, other or preferred not to say rated their mental and physical health lower than the girls or the boys.

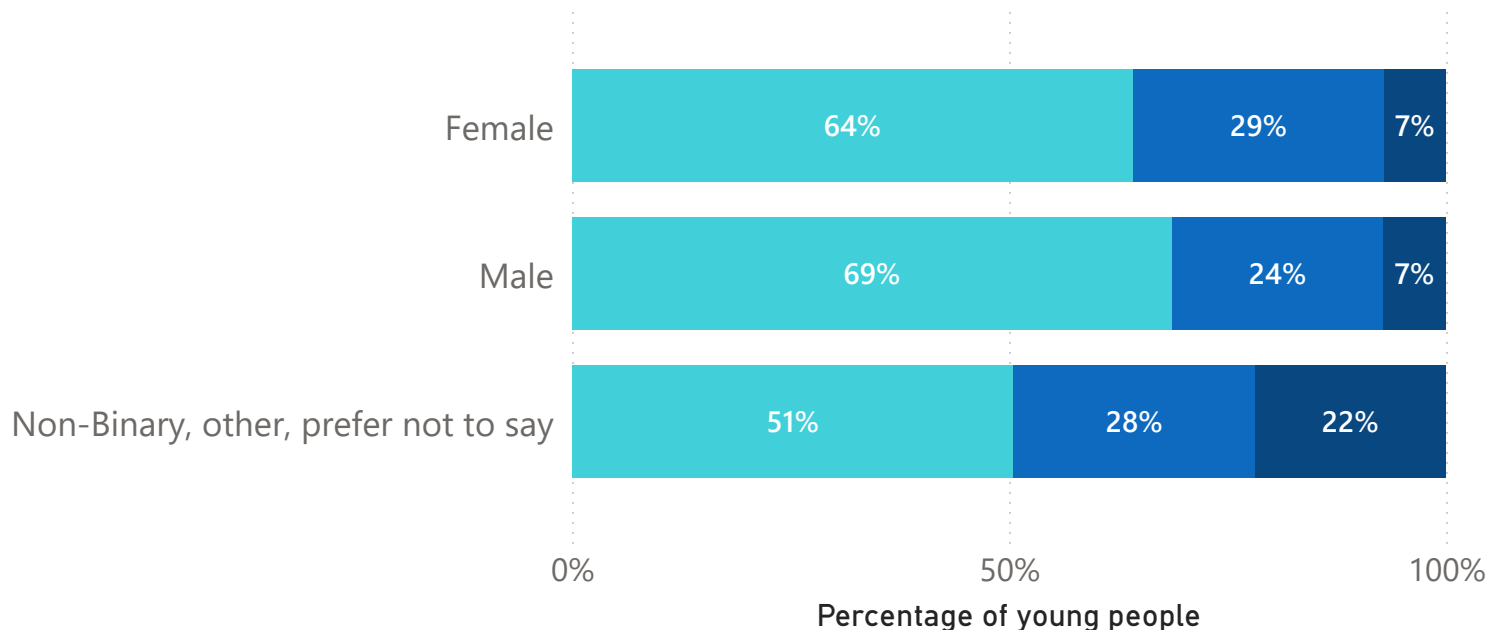
How young people rate their mental health and gender

● 1. Good or Very good ● 2. Acceptable ● 3. Bad or Very bad



How young people rate their physical health and gender

● 1. Good or Very good ● 2. Acceptable ● 3. Bad or Very bad



Mental health and wellbeing

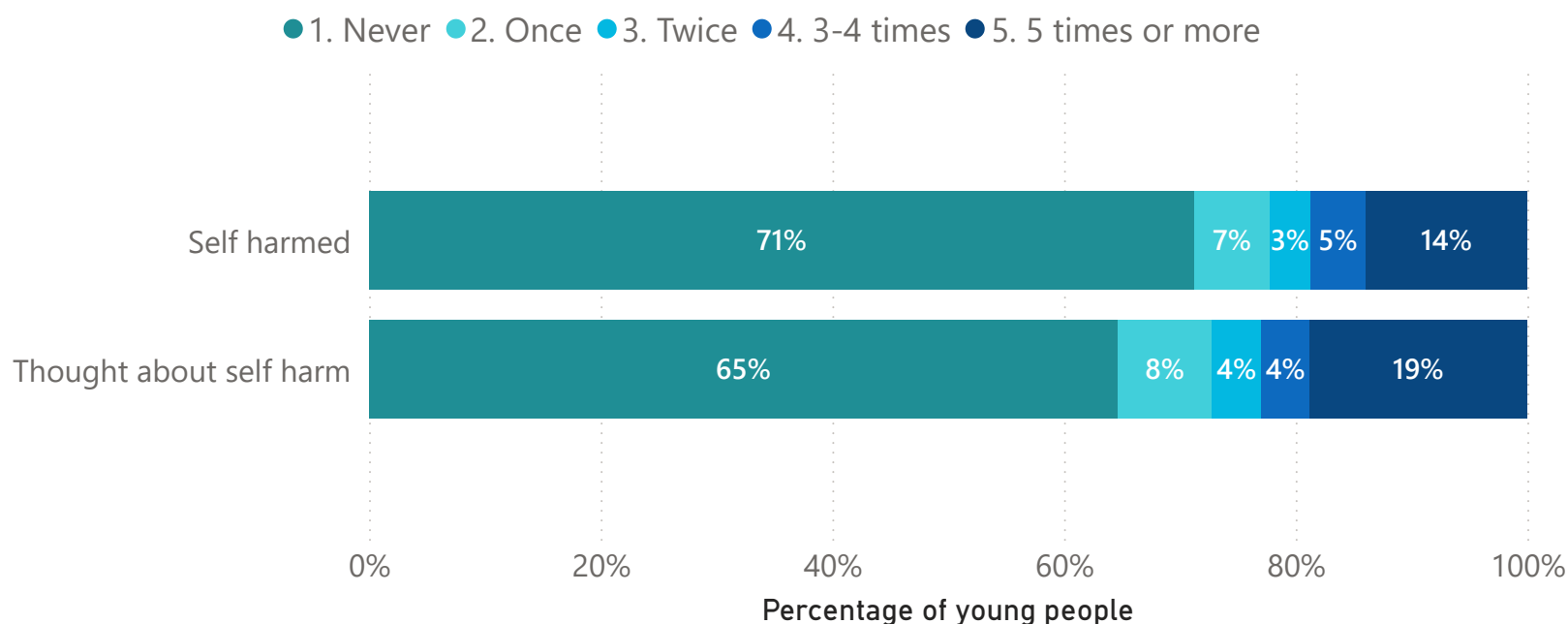
Self harm, S3 and S4

Young people were asked about self-harm. They were asked about the frequency of having actually harmed themselves on purpose (e.g., scratching, cutting, burning, preventing wounds from healing, punching), and times they had thought about doing this. In 2025,

29% of young people have actually harmed themselves on purpose once or more

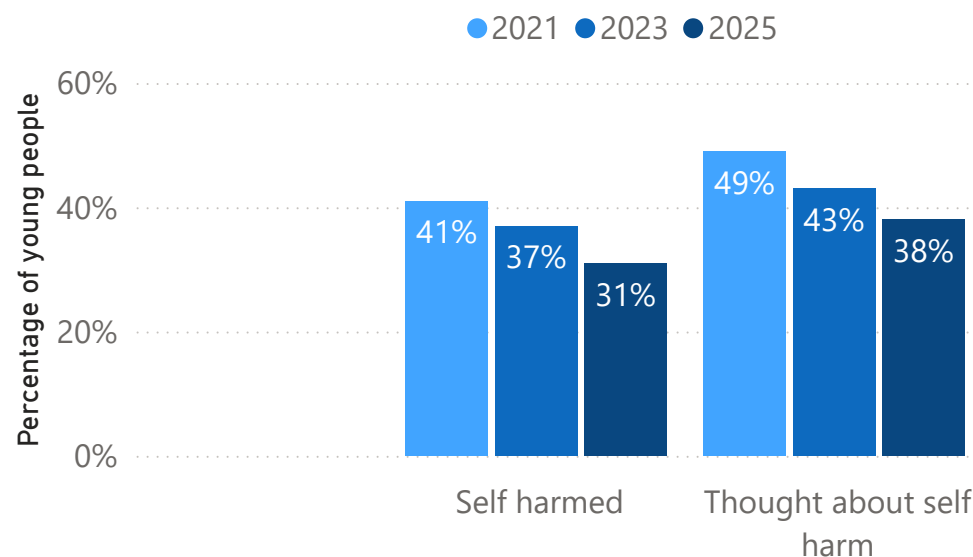
35% of students have thought about harming themselves on purpose once or more.

Frequency of Self harm, S3 and S4 pupils



Self harm, S4 only

Comparison between the 2021, 2023 and 2025 survey data



Suicide (S3 and S4)

Young people were asked questions about suicide.

TAKEAWAY

16% of the young people said that they had seriously considered suicide



TAKEAWAY

25% told us that a friend or someone close to them had attempted suicide

35% of the young people told us that they had had someone tell them they were thinking about suicide.

TAKEAWAY

23% of the young people said that they had thought about suicide



TAKEAWAY

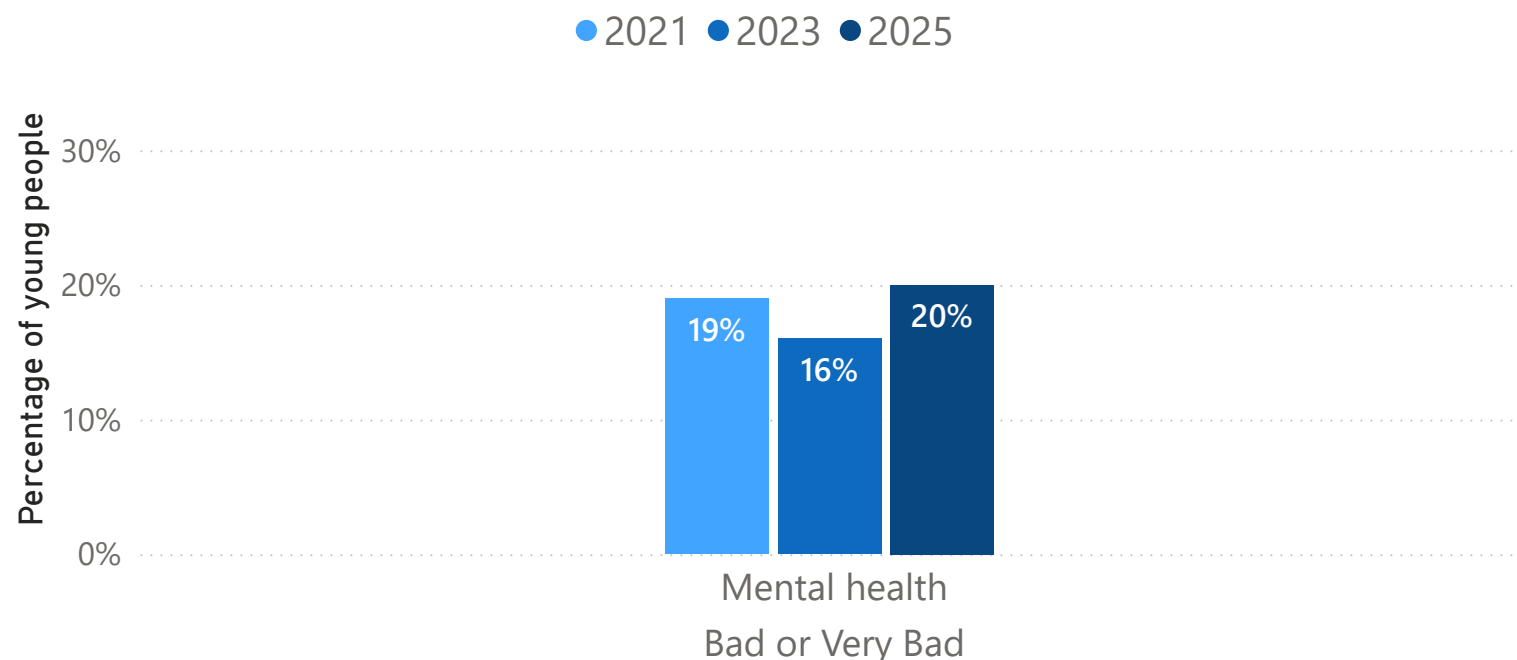
7% said they had attempted suicide and 4% had attempted suicide in the last 6 months

Mental health and suicide, S4 only

Comparisons between survey years

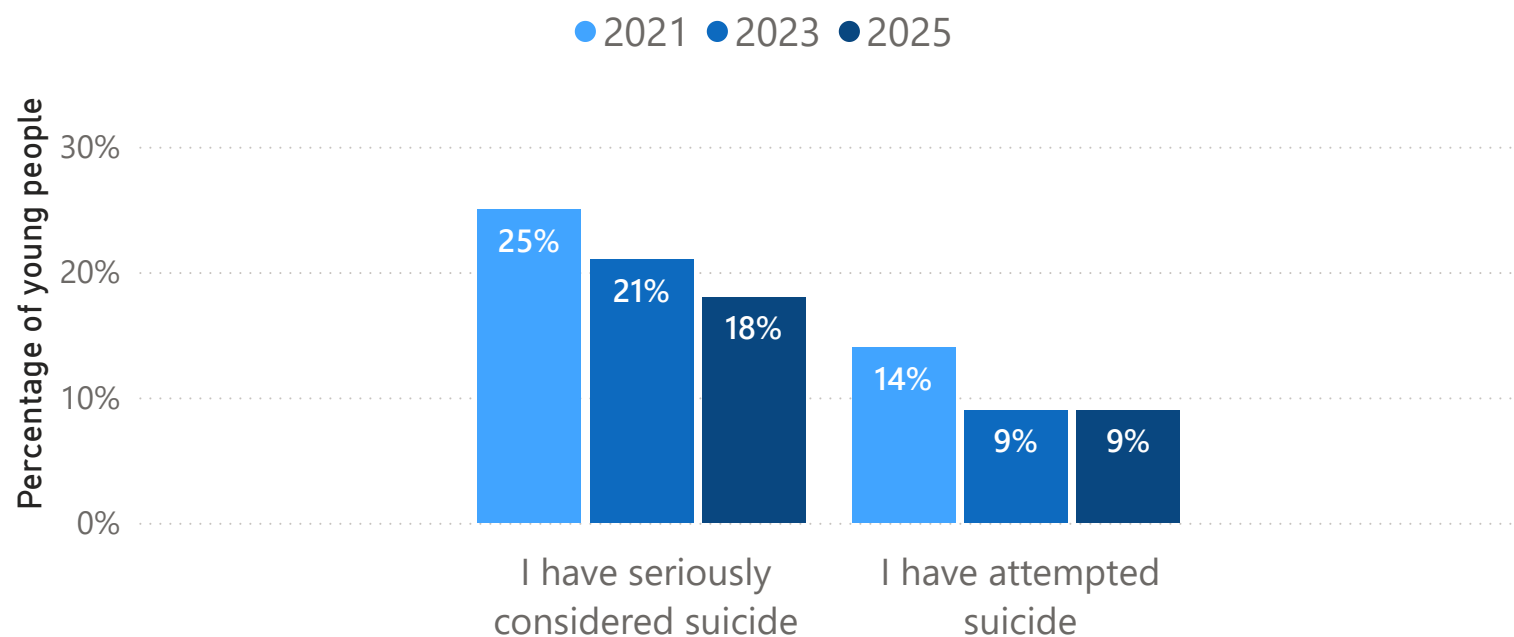
Young people were asked to rate their mental health. Here we can see the comparison % of those who rated their mental health as **bad or very bad** in the 2021, 2023 and 2025 surveys.

Bad or Very Bad Mental Health, S4 only



Pupils were asked if they had seriously considered suicide or had attempted suicide.

Thoughts or Attempt at Suicide, S4 only



Mental Health and Substance Use (S3 and S4)

How young people rate their mental health is charted with their substance use in the last 12 months: drank alcohol, been drunk, smoked cigarettes, or used cannabis. **The graphs show correlation, not causation.** Where substances had been used in the last 12 months, there was a greater proportion who rated their mental health as bad or very bad, compared to those who hadn't used substances in the last 12 months:

24% who had alcohol in last 12 months rated their mental health as bad or very bad

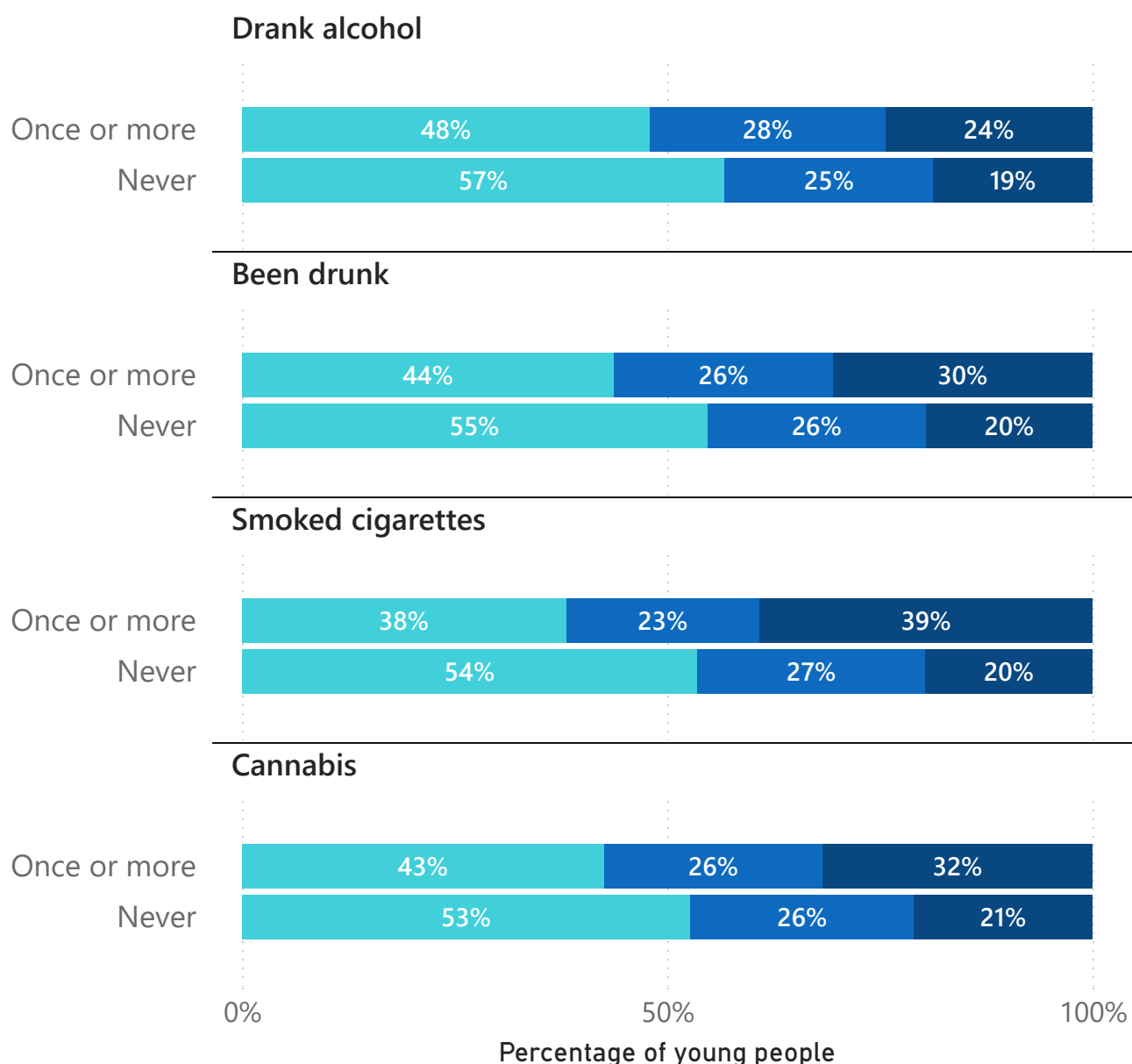
30% who had been drunk in last 12 months rated their mental health as bad or very bad

39% who had smoked cigarettes in last 12 months rated their mental health as bad/very bad

32% who had used cannabis in last 12 months rated their mental health as bad or very bad.

Substance use in last 12 months and mental health

Mental health: ● 1. Good or Very good ● 2. Acceptable ● 3. Bad or Very bad

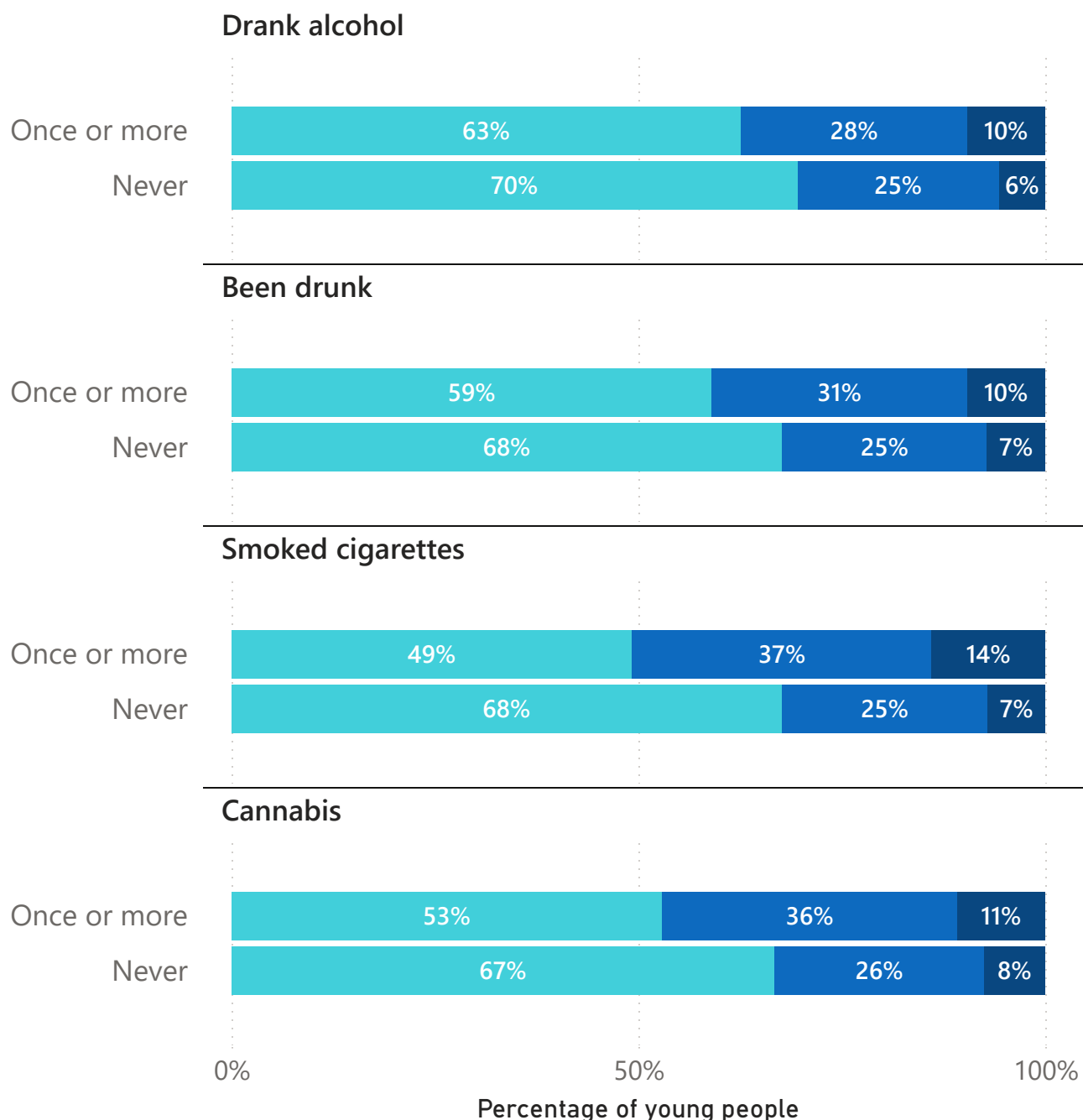


Physical Health and Substance Use (S3 and S4)

Young people were asked to rate their physical health and substance use in the last 12 months. These graphs show the number of young people who have used substances in the last 12 months, and have rated their physical health as very good, good, acceptable, or bad or very bad. There is a small relationship between substance use in the last 12 months and how young people rated their physical health, more so with cigarette usage than the other substances. **The graphs show correlation, not causation.**

Substance use in last 12 months and physical health

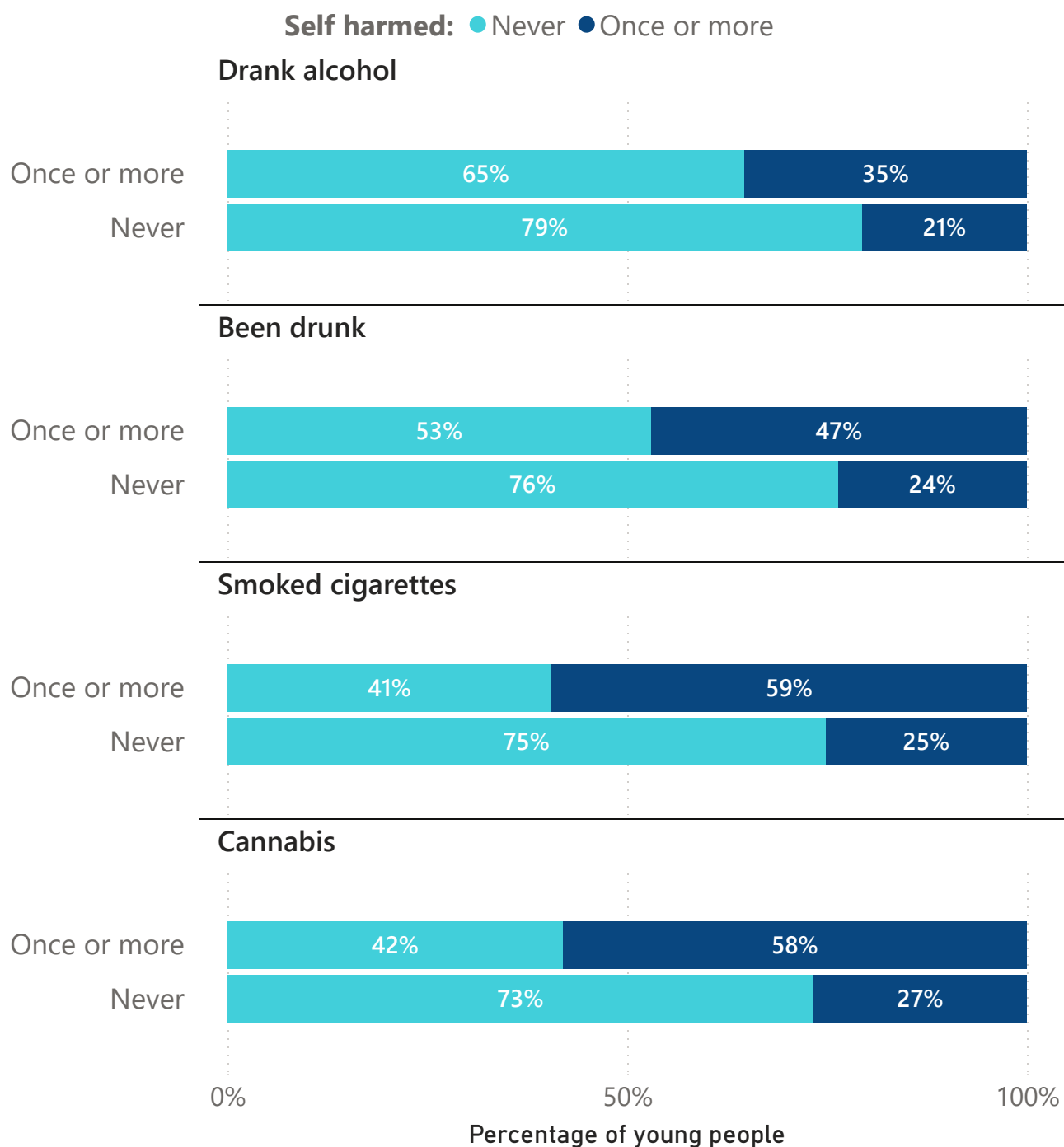
Physical health: ● 1. Good or Very good ● 2. Acceptable ● 3. Bad or Very bad



Self harm and Substance Use (S3 and S4)

Young people were asked about self harm and substance use in the last 12 months. 26% of young people said they had ever self harmed. These graphs cross reference the answers to those questions to show the number of young people who said they had self-harmed and if they had used substances. Where substances were used in the last 12 months, there were higher percentages of pupils who said they had self-harmed, compared to those who hadn't used substances in the last 12 months. **The graphs show correlation, not causation.**

Substance use in last 12 months and self harmed

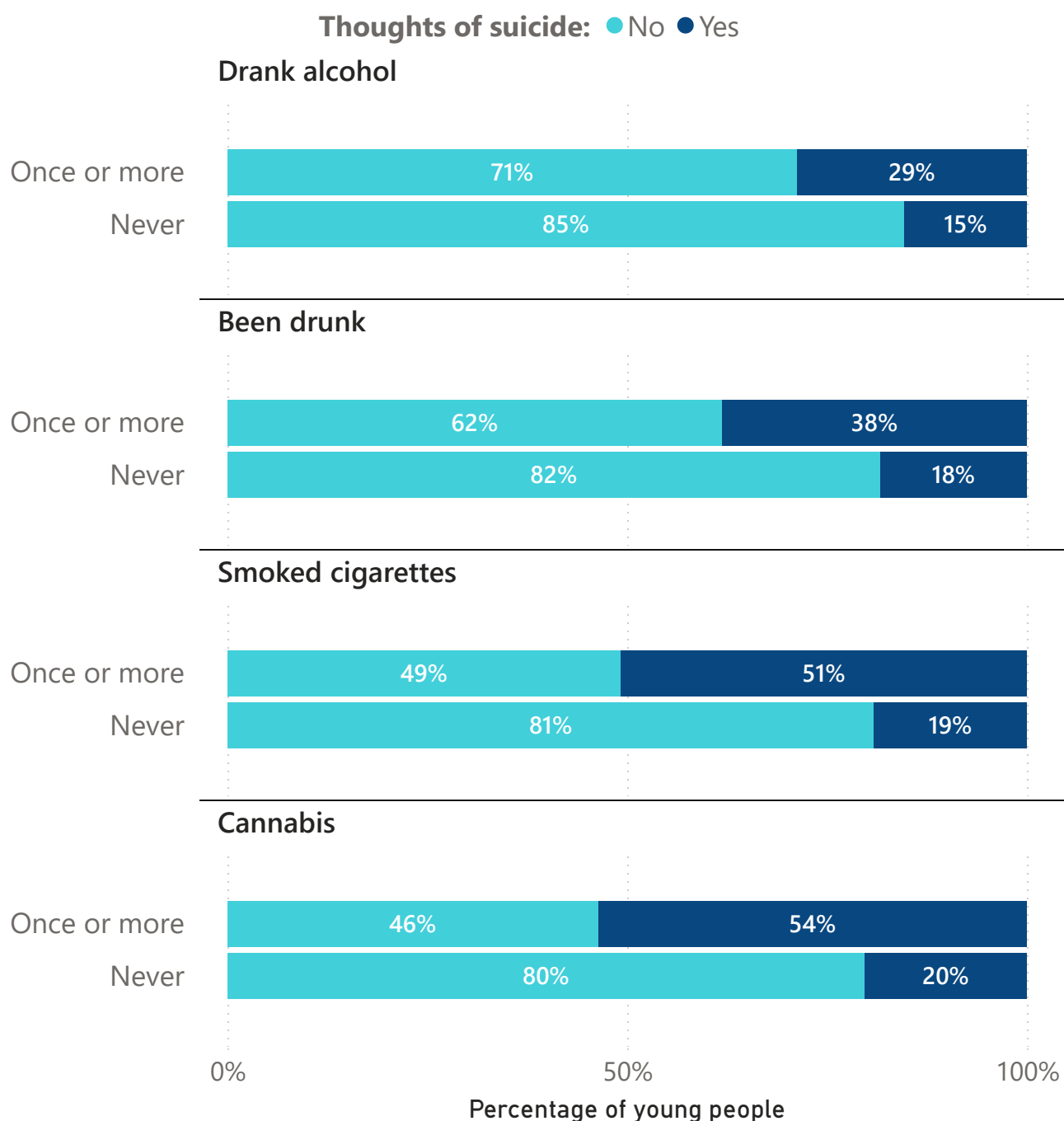


Thoughts about Suicide and Substance Use (S3 and S4)

Young people were asked if they have thought about suicide, and if they had used substances in the last 12 months.

20% of the young people said they had thought about suicide. These graphs show the number of young people who have had thoughts about suicide and if they have used substances. Where substances were used in the last 12 months, we can see a higher percentage of the young people had had suicidal thoughts, compared to those who hadn't used substances in the last 12 months. **The graphs show correlation, not causation.**

Substance use in last 12 months and thoughts of suicide

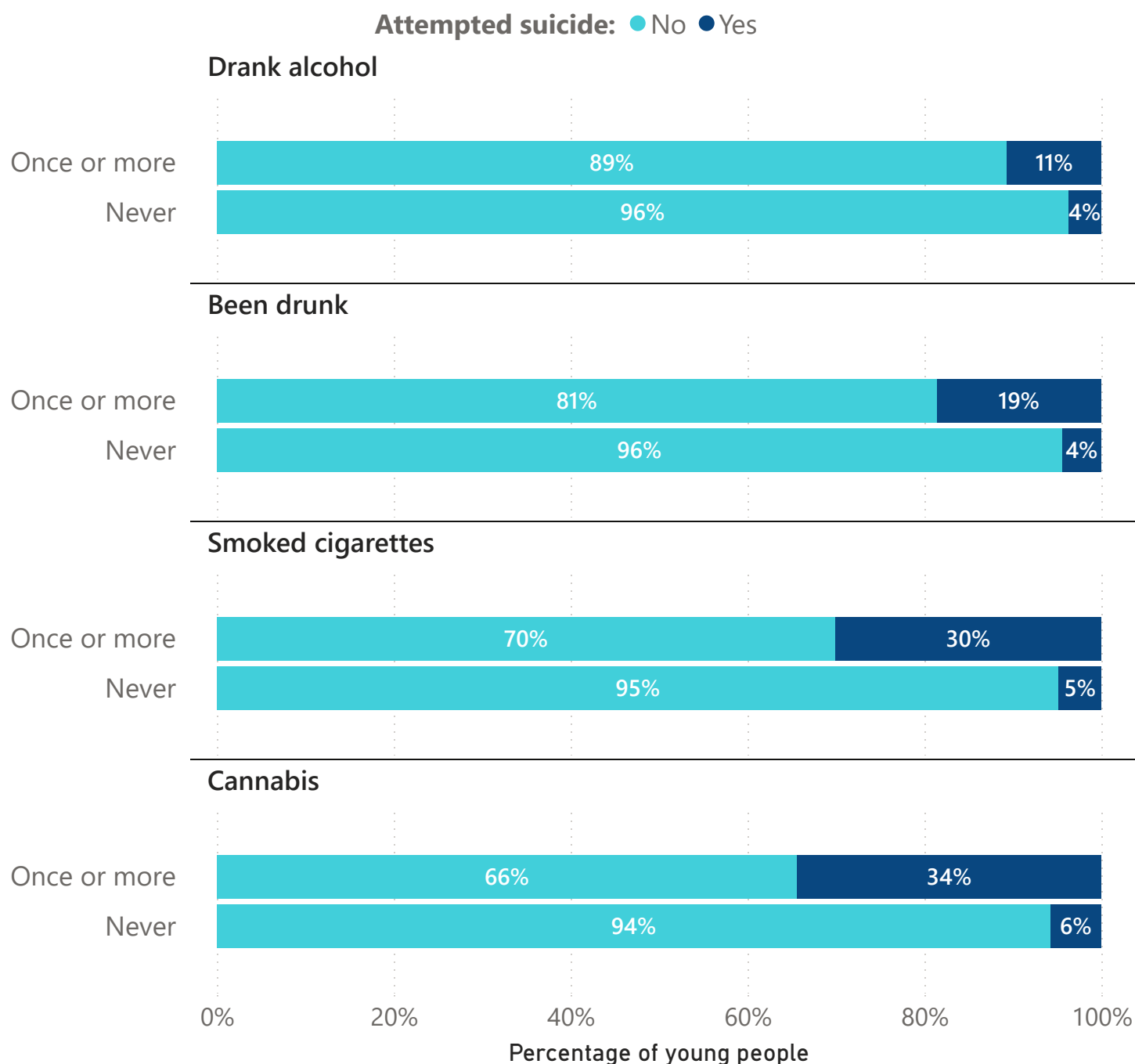


Attempted Suicide and Substance Use (S3 and S4)

Young people were asked if they had attempted suicide, and about substance use in the last 12 months.

7% of young people said they had attempted suicide. These graphs show the number of young people who have attempted suicide and if they had used various substances in the last 12 months. Where substances were used in the last 12 months, we can see a higher percentage of the young people who said they had attempted suicide, compared to those who hadn't used substances in the last 12 months. **The graphs show correlation, not causation.**

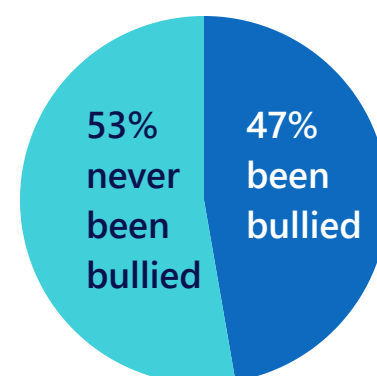
Substance use in last 12 months and attempted suicide



Bullying (S3 and S4)

Young people were asked about their experience of bullying during the last year:

- 53% said they had never been bullied
- 47% said that they had been bullied
- 40% said they had been bullied during school
- 22% said they had been bullied out of school
- 19% said they had been bullied through texts/phone calls
- 18% said they had been bullied on social media or online.

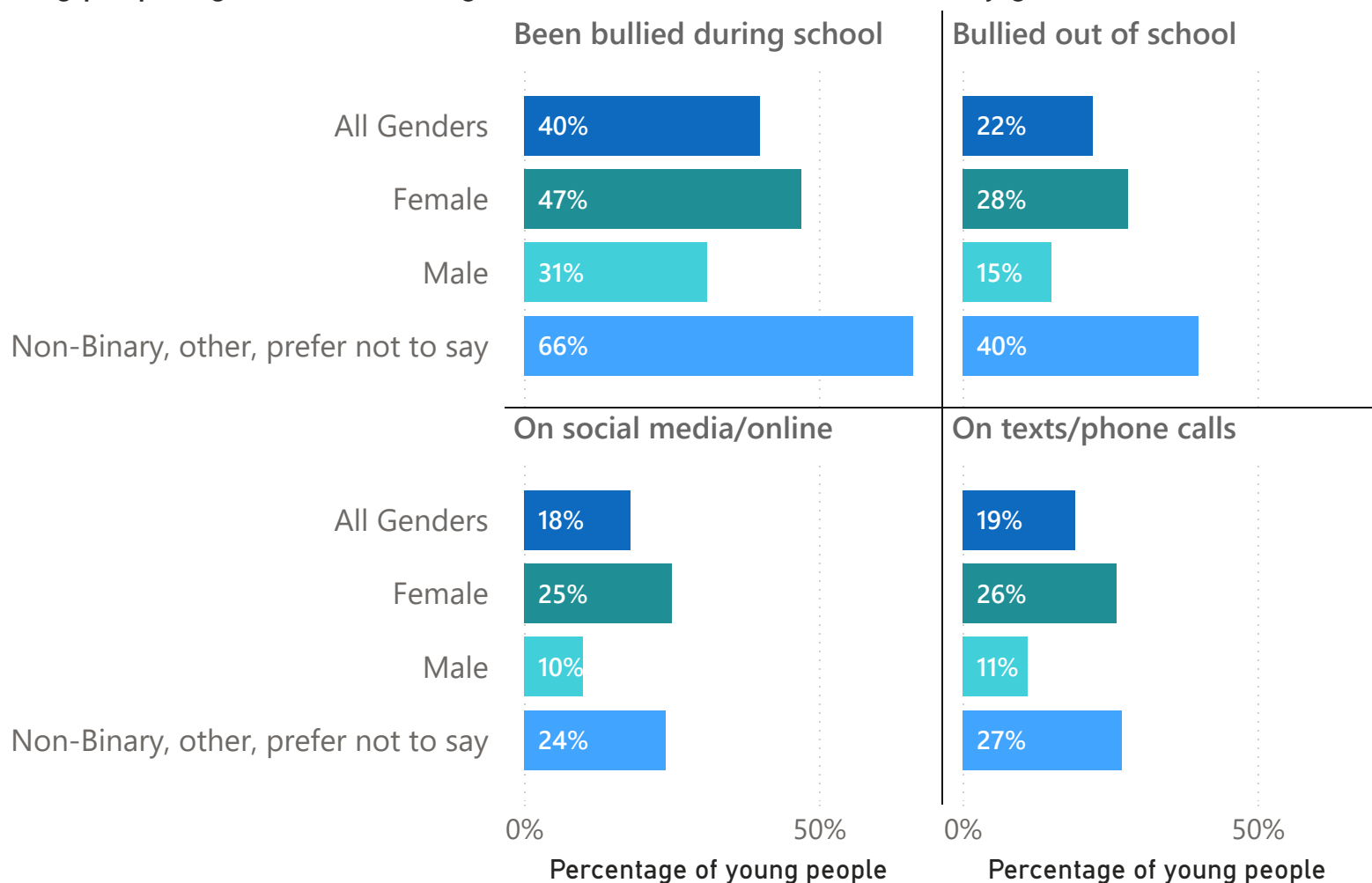


School was the most common setting for young people to experience bullying, with almost half of the young people experiencing bullying during school.

Bullying by Gender (S3 and S4)

Higher levels of bullying were experienced by those who identified as non-binary, other or preferred not to say.

Young people agreed with having been bullied in these situations by gender

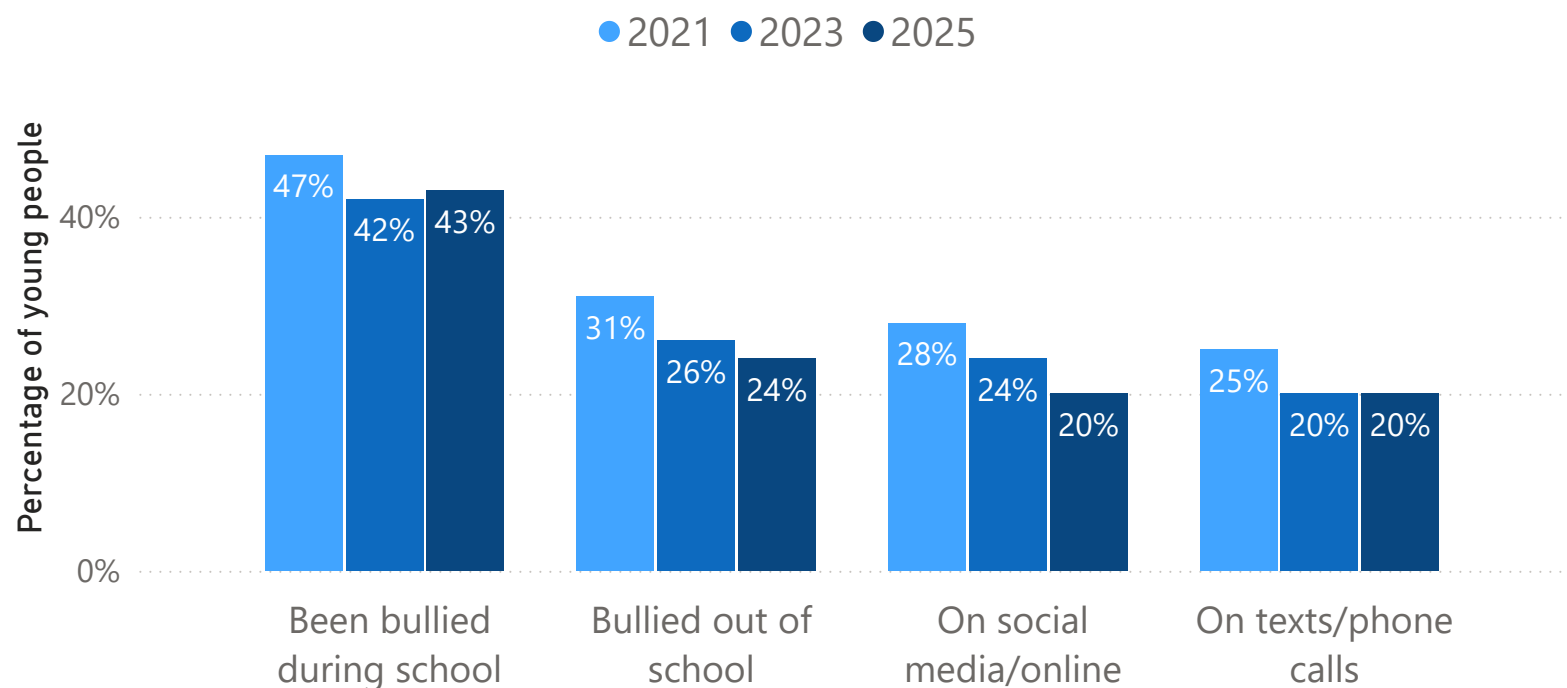


Bullying (S4 only)

2021, 2023 and 2025 Planet Youth Survey data comparison

Below is the percentage comparison of those who said they had been bullied in a variety of settings in the 2021, 2023 and 2025 surveys.

Experienced bullying in the following ways, S4 only



Bullying others (S3 and S4)

Young people were asked if they had bullied others:

13% agreed, they had bullied someone during school

10% agreed, they had bullied someone online

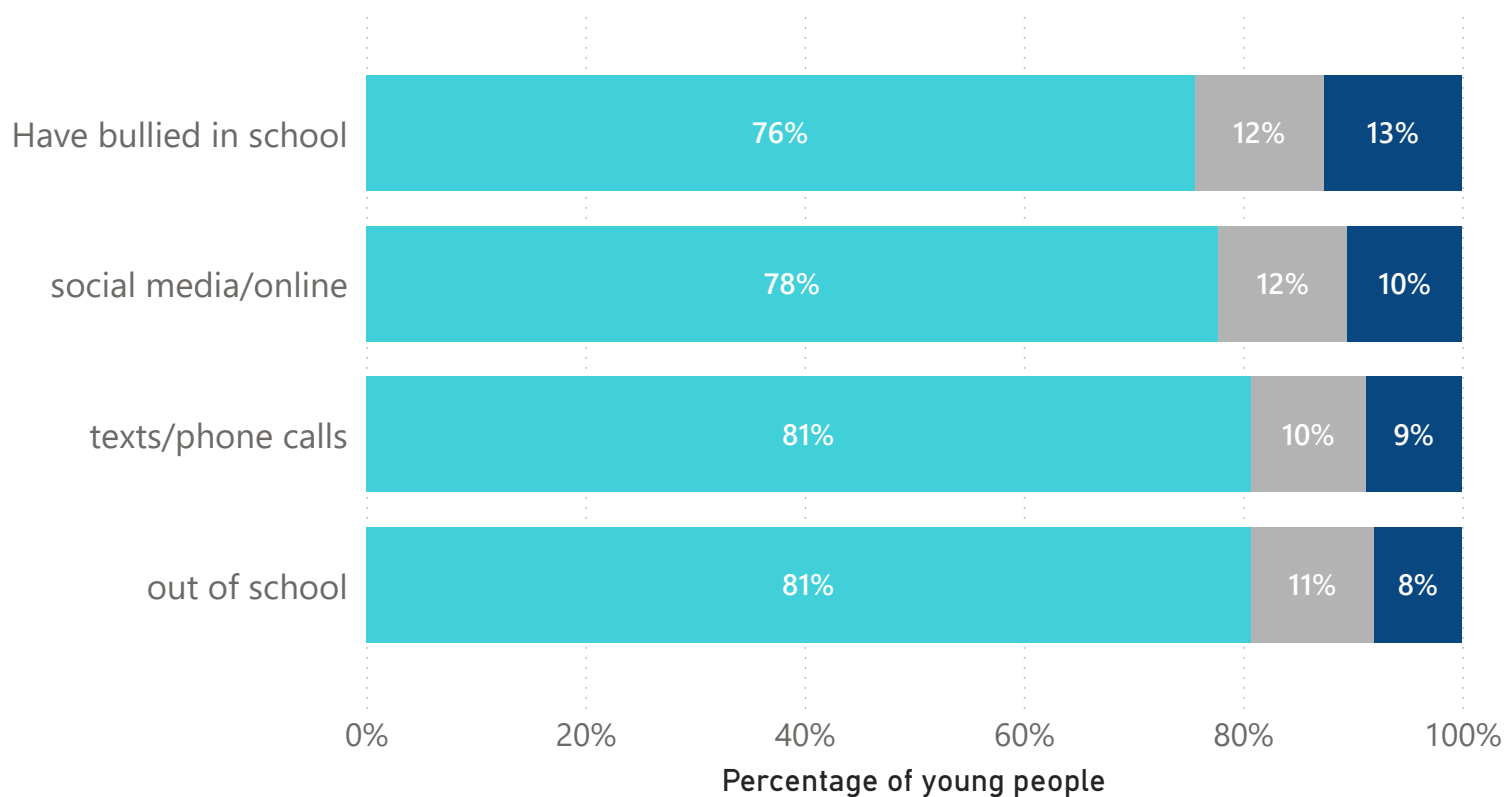
9% agreed, they had bullied someone through text message / phone calls.

8% agreed, they had bullied someone out of school

The majority of young people stated they weren't bullies. For those who had bullied, the most common setting for that was during school, followed by online.

Bullied others in the following ways

● 1. Disagree ● 2. Neither agree or disagree ● 3. Agree



Bullied by or as part of a group (S3 and S4)

Pupils were asked if they had been bullied or witnessed bullying by a group in the last year:

33% had been verbally tormented by a group

15% had witnessed someone being attacked because of learning difficulties

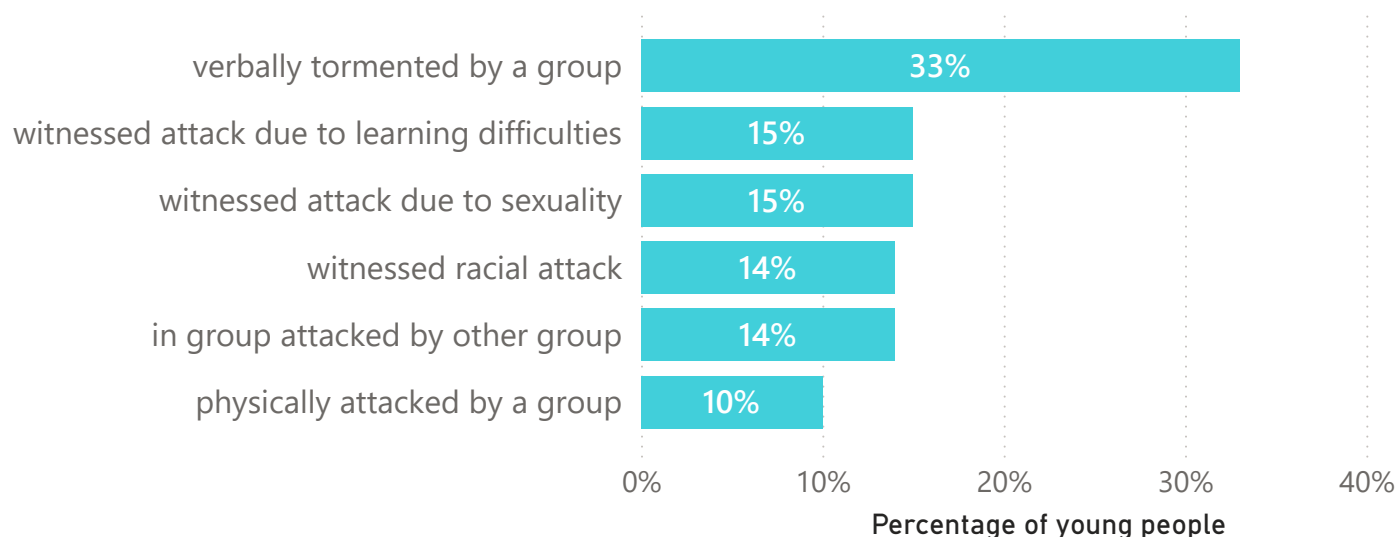
15% had witnessed someone being attacked because of sexuality

14% had witnessed someone being attacked because of race

14% had been in a group that was attacked by another group

10% had been physically attacked by a group.

Bullied by, or witnessed bullying by a group in the following ways



Young people were asked if they had bullied as part of a group in the last year:

11% had been part of a group verbally tormenting someone

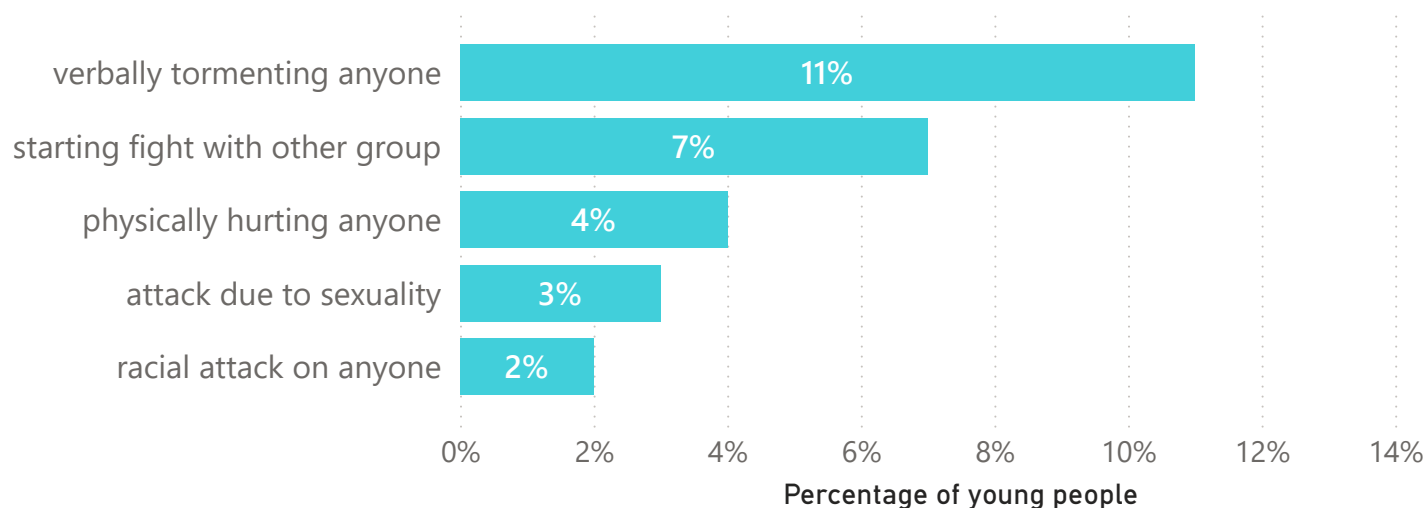
7% had been part of a group starting a fight with another group

4% had been part of a group physically hurting anyone

3% had been part of a group attacking someone because of their sexuality

2% had been part of a group attacking someone because of their race.

Bullying as part of a group in the following ways



Social media and online time (S3 and S4)

Young people were asked about their daily time spent on social media:

35% of the young people said they spend 3 to 5 hours on social media daily

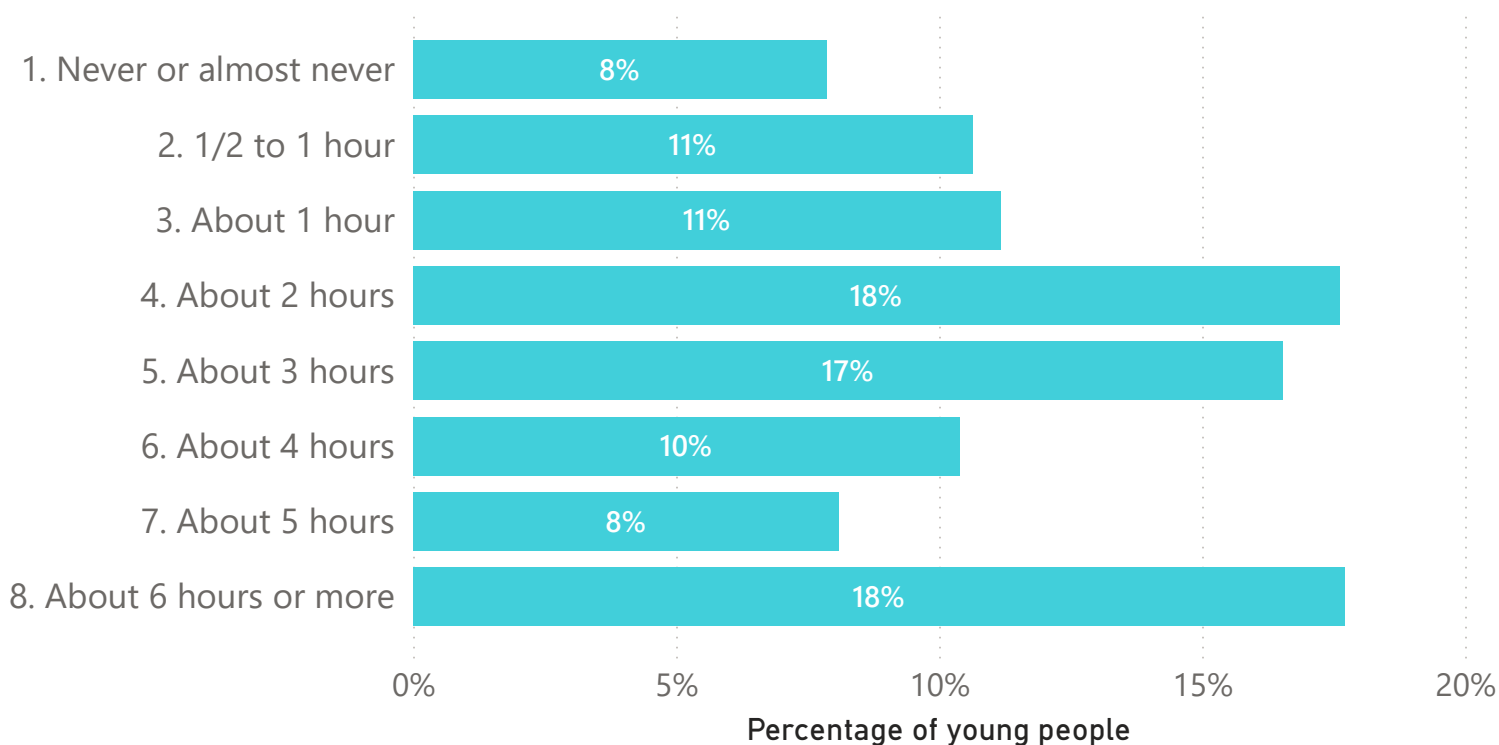
18% of young people use social media for 6 hours or more a day.

Young people were also asked questions about bullying on social media.

25% of girls and **10%** of boys reported being bullied online.

24% of those who identified as non-binary, other or who preferred not to say reported being bullied online.

Average time spent each day on social media



Screen time (S3 and S4)

Young people were asked how much time on average they spend each day:

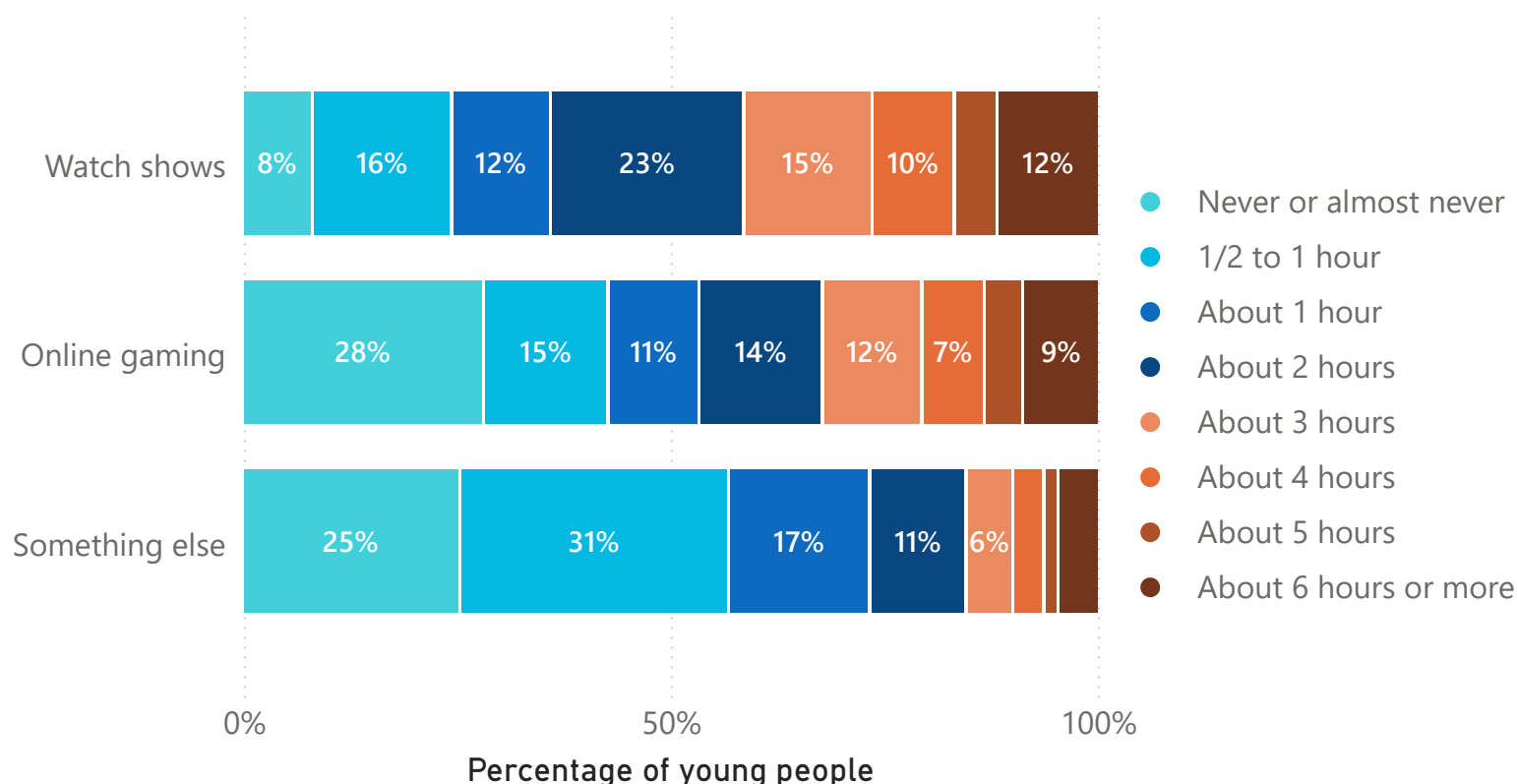
- Watching shows, movies or videos on your phone/tablet/laptop
- Online gaming
- Using the internet for something other than social media or gaming (e.g. reading or schoolwork).

12% watch shows, movies or videos for 6 hours or more per day

32% of young people online game for 3 or more hours a day and 9% online game for 6 hours or more per day

16% of young people use the internet for other than for social media or gaming for 3 or more hours a day and 5% for 6 hours or more per day.

Average time spent online each day on the following:



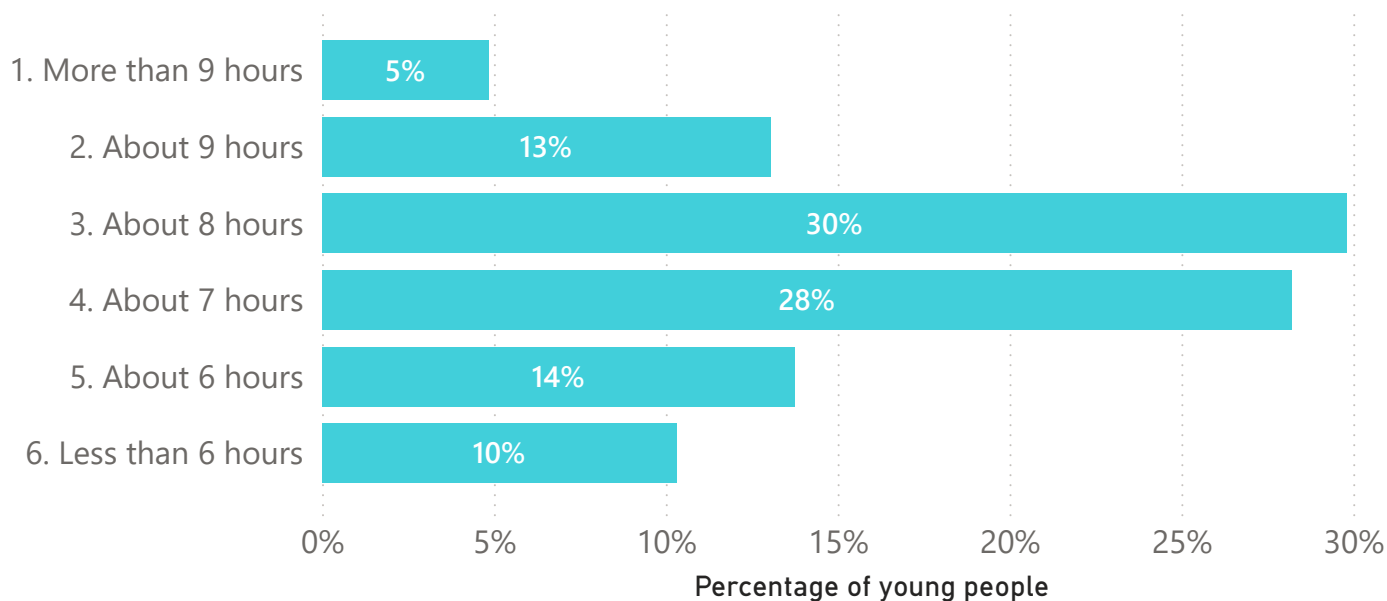
Sleep (S3 and S4)

Young people were asked about the amount of sleep they get in hours, on average every night:

52% of pupils are getting less than the recommended 8 hours of sleep on average

10% said they regularly get less than 6 hours of sleep every night.

Hours of sleep



What is affecting sleep (S3 and S4)

Young people were asked about what they believed was affecting their sleep:

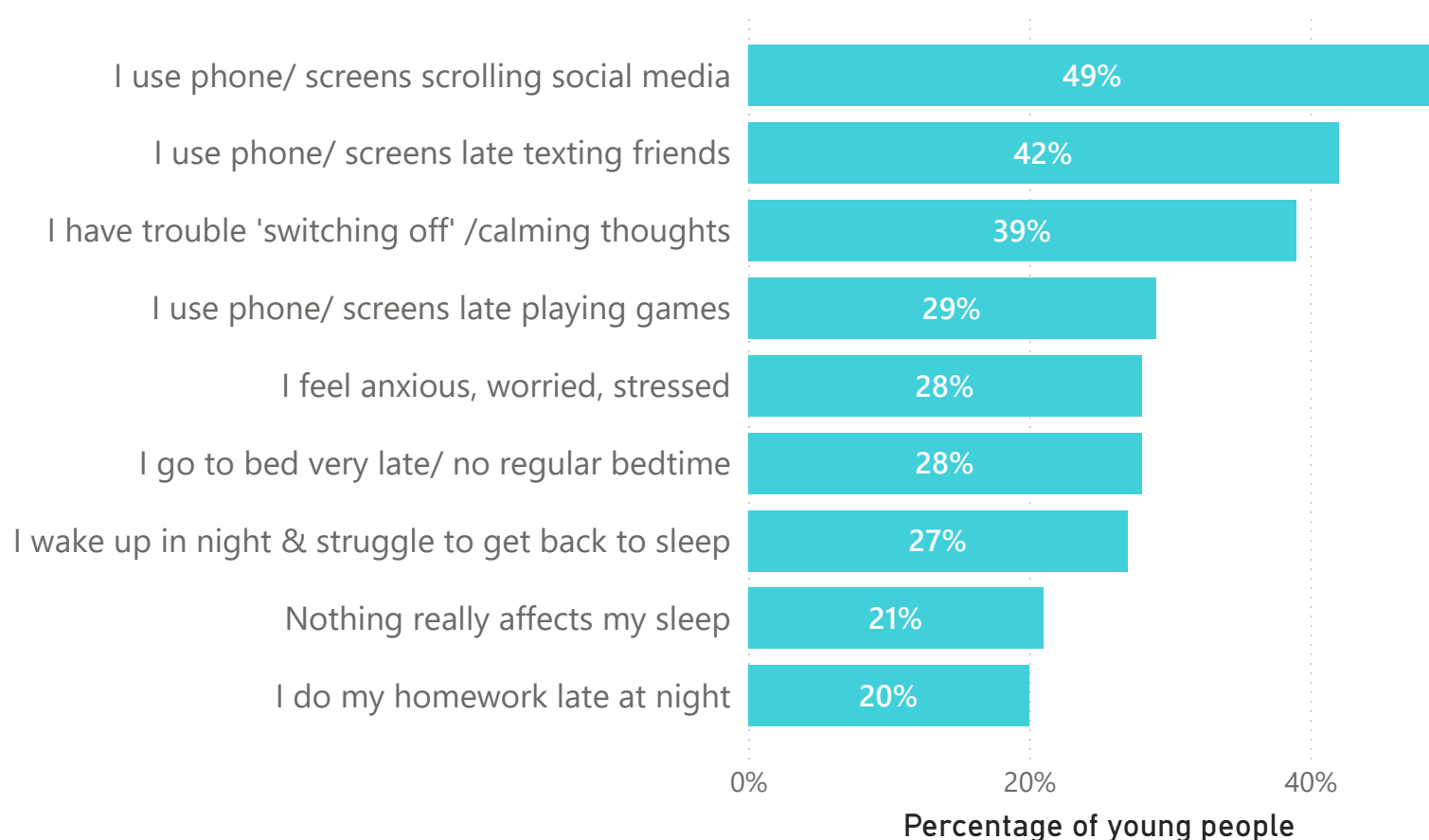
49% said using phones/scrolling social media was affecting their sleep

42% texting friends late was affecting their sleep

39% have trouble "switching off" or calming their thoughts was affecting their sleep

21% said that nothing affects their sleep.

What affects my sleep



Sleep not only refreshes the mind and body but also enhances body functions. Young people are able to focus more effectively if they have had adequate sleep.

Sexual health and behaviour (S3 and S4)

Young people were asked a series of questions about their sexual health and behaviour:

7% had had sexual intercourse in their lifetime

5% felt pressured to have sex by a partner in the last 12 months

4% had had unprotected sex with a partner in the last 12 months

3% felt pressured to have sex by someone else in the last 12 months

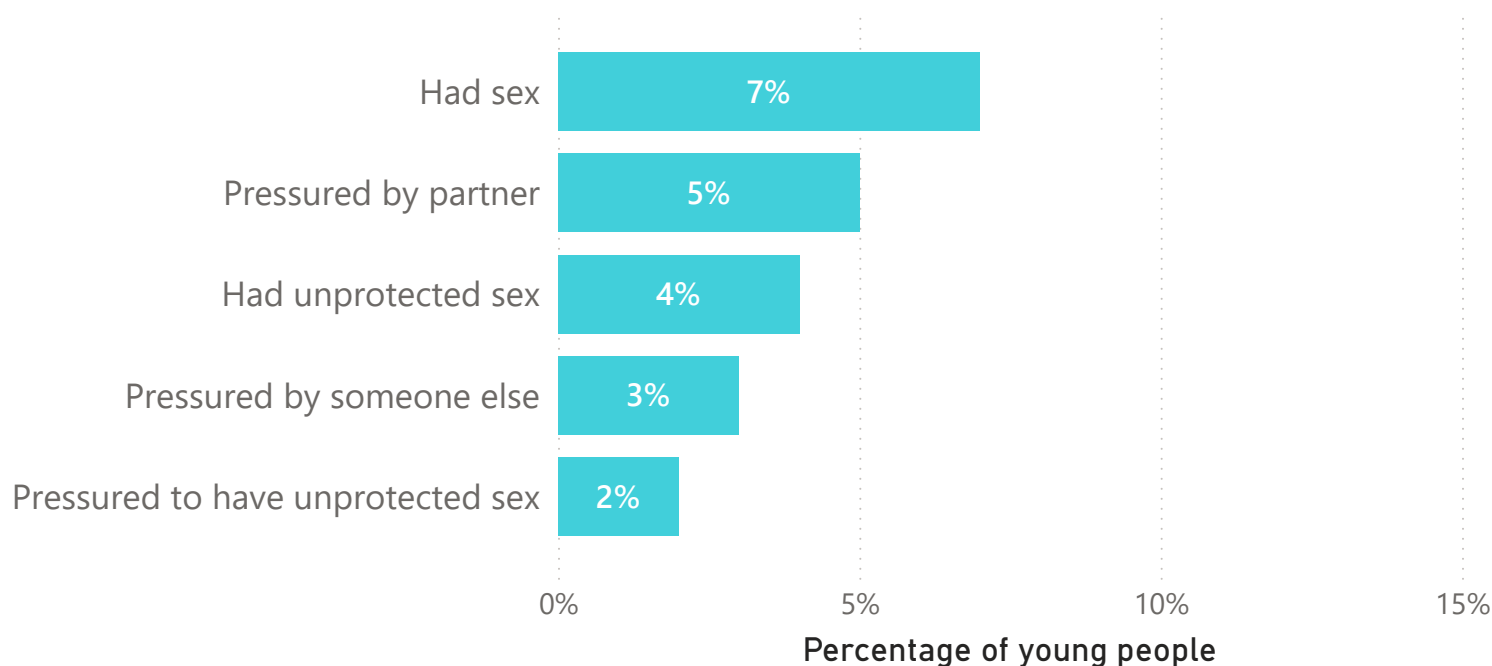
2% felt pressured to have sex without protection in the last 12 months

2% had had sex in the last 12 months whilst drunk

1% had had sex in the last 12 months whilst under the influence of drugs

A small proportion of young people stated they had pressured someone else into having sex.

Had sexual experience once or more



TAKEAWAY

2% had sex
whilst drunk



TAKEAWAY

4% had
unprotected
sex in the last
12 months

Sexual health and behaviour (S3 and S4)

Young people were asked about their sexual health and behaviour in the last year.



TAKEAWAY

18% of young people said they had viewed pornography

TAKEAWAY

4% of girls and 9% of boys said they used pornography as a source of information to learn about sex



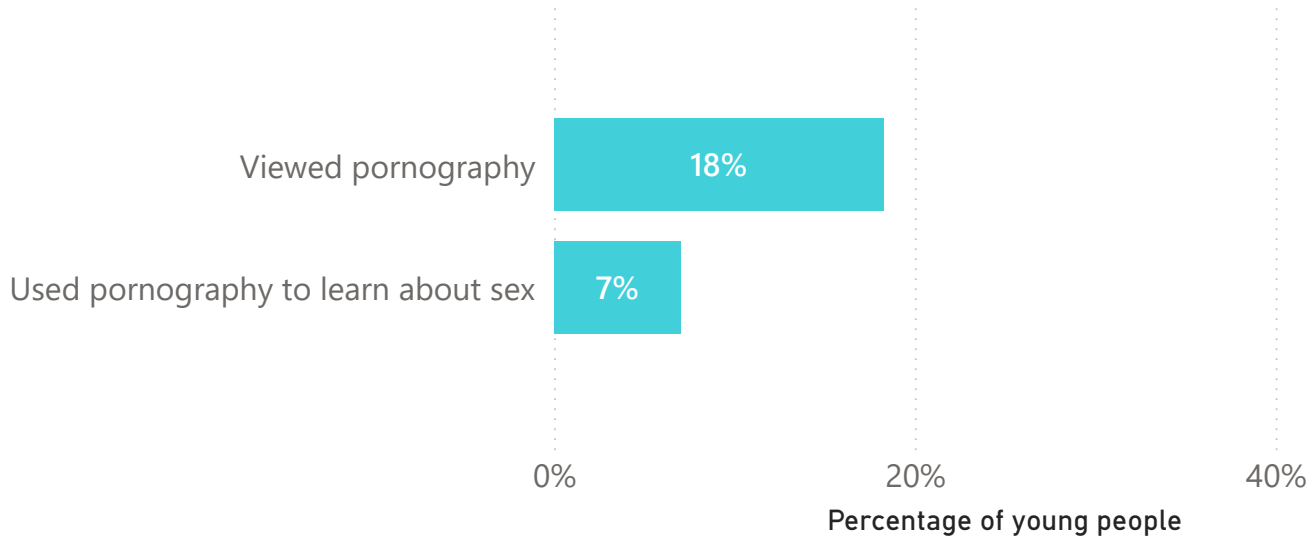
Sexual health and behaviour (S3 and S4)

Young people were asked questions about their sexual health and behaviour in the last year:

18% had viewed pornography

7% had used pornography as a source of information to learn about sex.

Sexual behaviour once or more in the last year



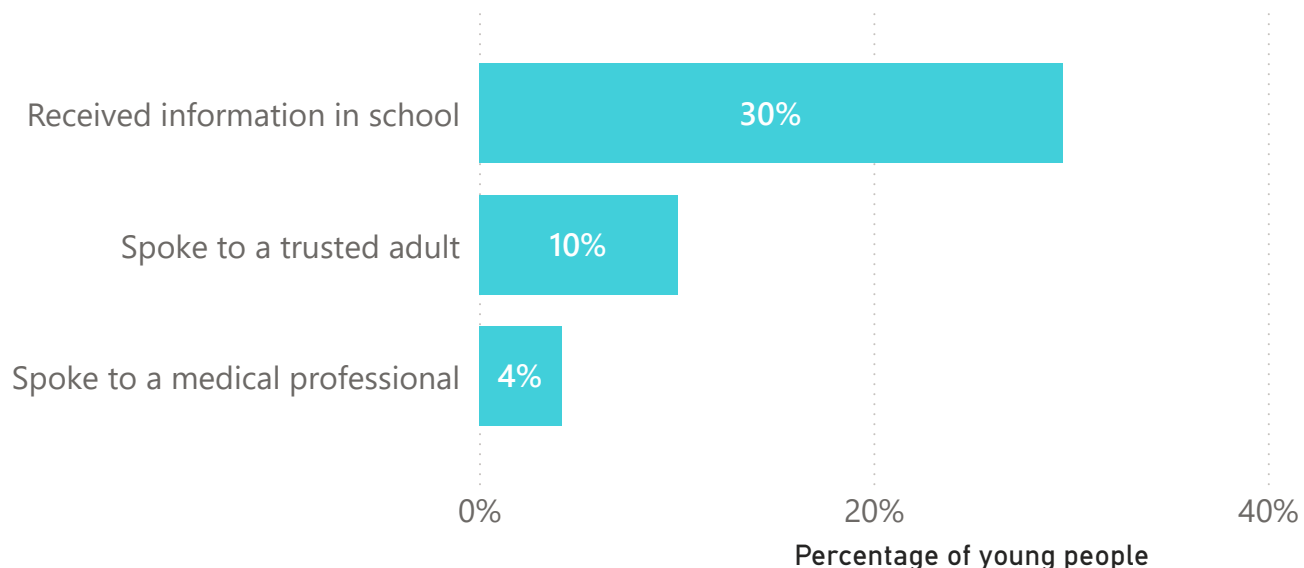
Young people were asked about their sources of sexual health information and support in the last year:

30% had received information in school regarding their sexual health

10% had spoken to a trusted adult regarding their sexual health

4% had spoken to a medical professional regarding their sexual health.

Sexual health support once or more in the last year



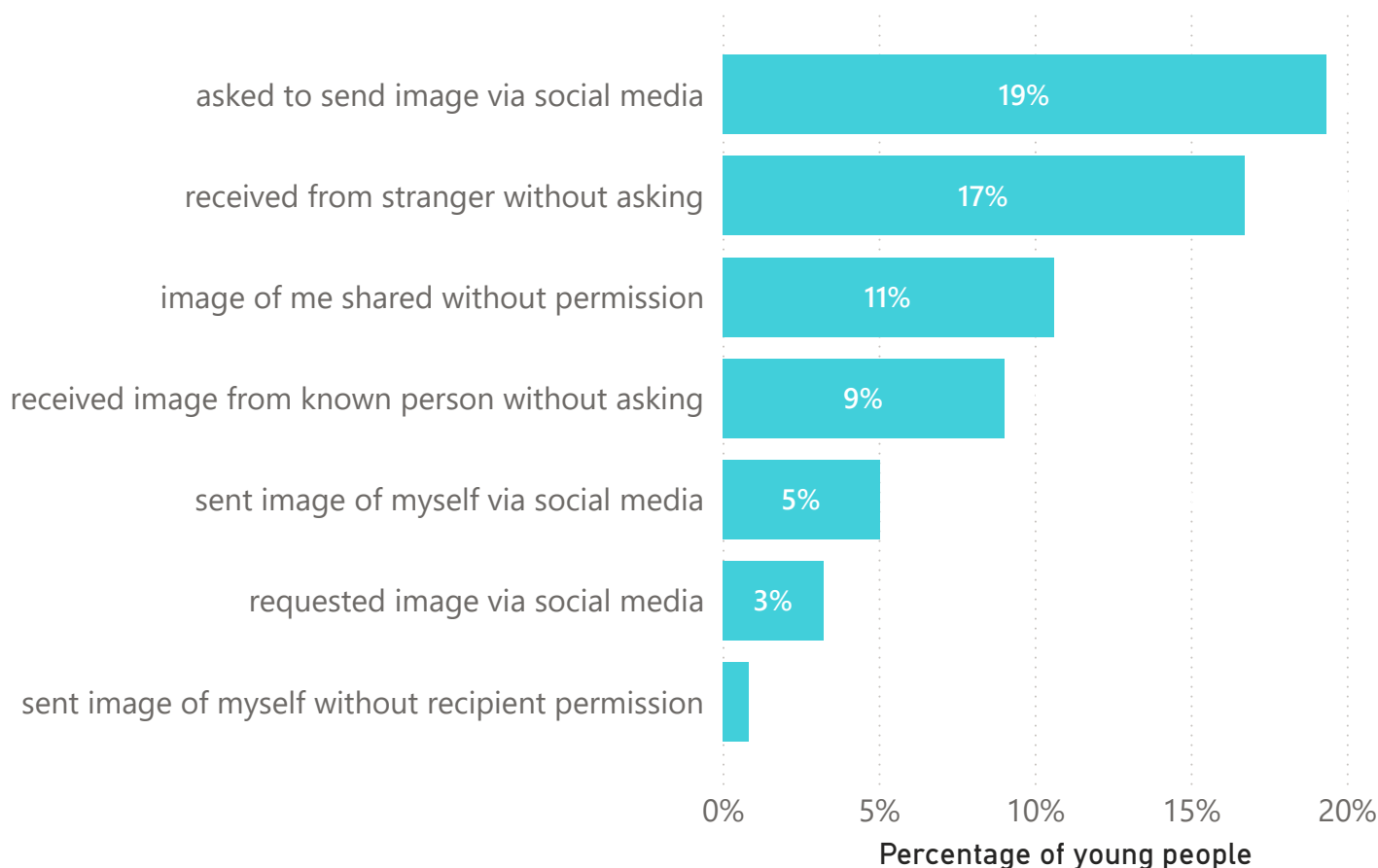
Intimate and sexual images (S3 and S4)

Young people were asked questions about the following experiences in the last year:

- 19% had been asked to send a naked or intimate picture of themselves through social media
- 17% received a naked or intimate picture from a stranger (without it being requested)
- 11% had a naked or intimate picture of themselves shared by someone else, without their permission
- 9% had received a naked or intimate image from someone they know
- 5% sent a naked or intimate picture of themselves through social media
- 3% had requested a naked or intimate picture through social media
- 1% sent a naked or intimate picture of themselves to someone else, without their permission.

A small percentage of young people preferred not to respond to these questions in the survey.

Experience of sharing intimate images once or more in the last year



Anti-social behaviours (S3 and S4)

Young people were asked questions about anti-social behaviours in the last 12 months:

- 20% stole something from family or friends
- 9% damaged or vandalized things that did not belong to them
- 8% stole something from a shop
- 5% committed any other offence
- 1% had broken into a building or car to steal

A small proportion of young people said they had used physical violence in order to rob/steal.

Exhibited anti-social behaviour in the last 12 months



Self esteem (S3 and S4)

Young people were asked series of questions about themselves, and how the statements apply to them:

58% agreed, I'm happy with my life

45% agreed, physically and mentally I feel strong and healthy

40% agreed, I'm happy with my body

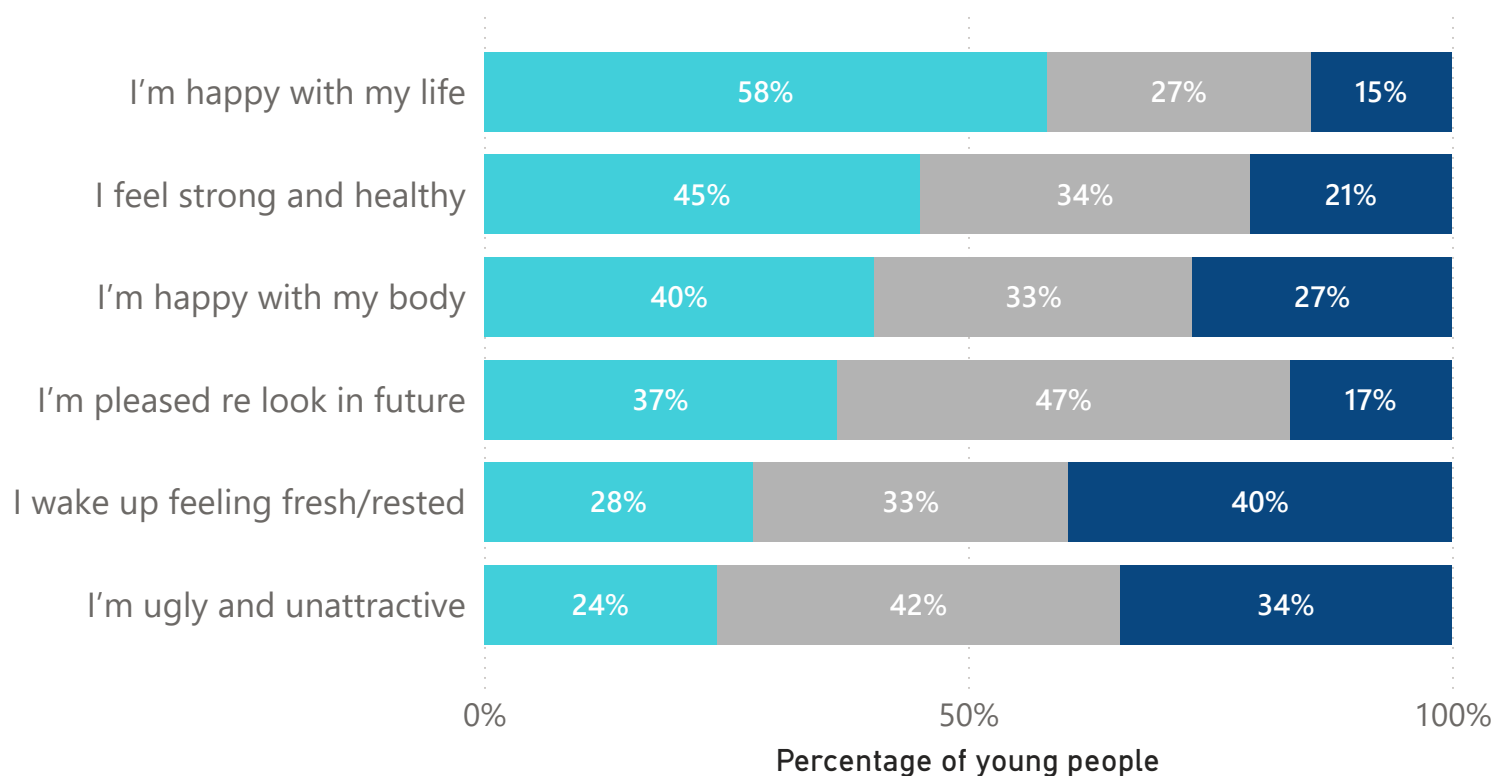
37% agreed, when I think about how I will look in the future, I'm pleased

28% agreed, I wake up in the morning feeling fresh and rested

24% agreed, I think that I'm ugly and unattractive.

Agreement with statements about self esteem

● 1. Agree or Strongly agree ● 2. Neither agree or disagree ● 3. Disagree or Strongly disagree



Self esteem and confidence (S3 and S4)

Young people were asked series of questions about themselves, and how the statements apply to them. Many young people agreed or strongly agreed with statements which reflected higher self esteem or confidence, such as,

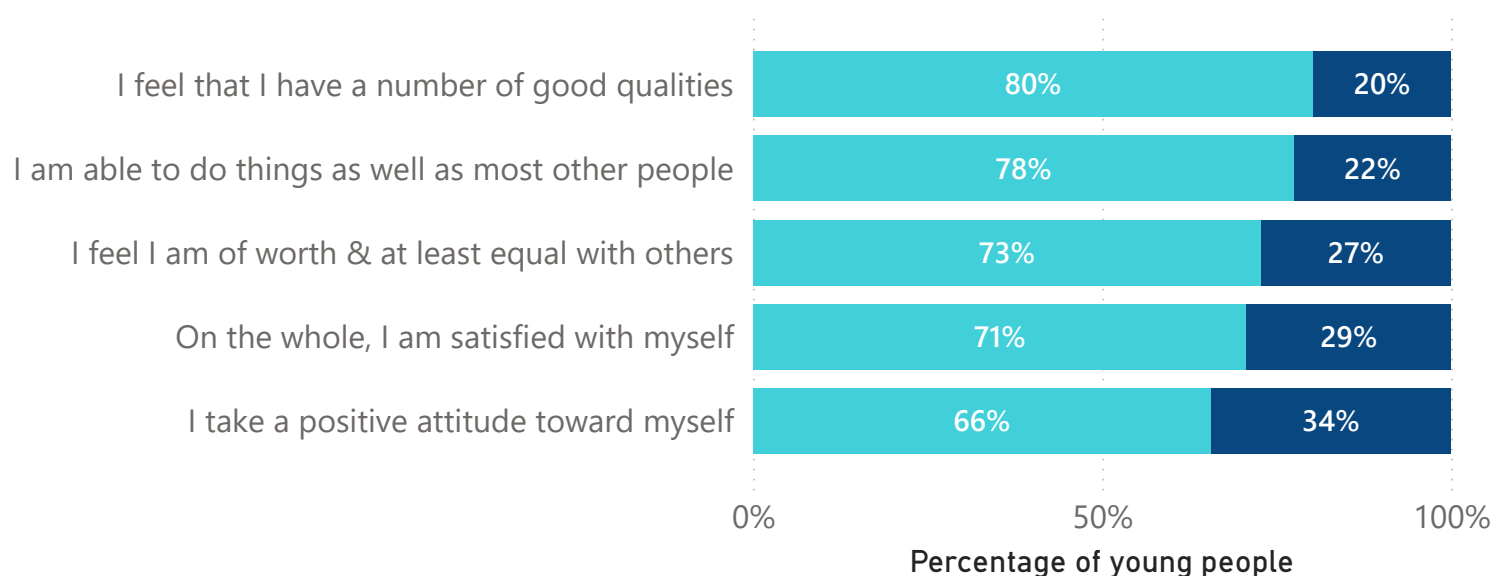
80% agreed with, I feel I have a number of good qualities;

however some young people also agreed or strongly agreed with statements which reflected lower self esteem or confidence, such as,

58% agreed with, I wish I could have more respect for myself.

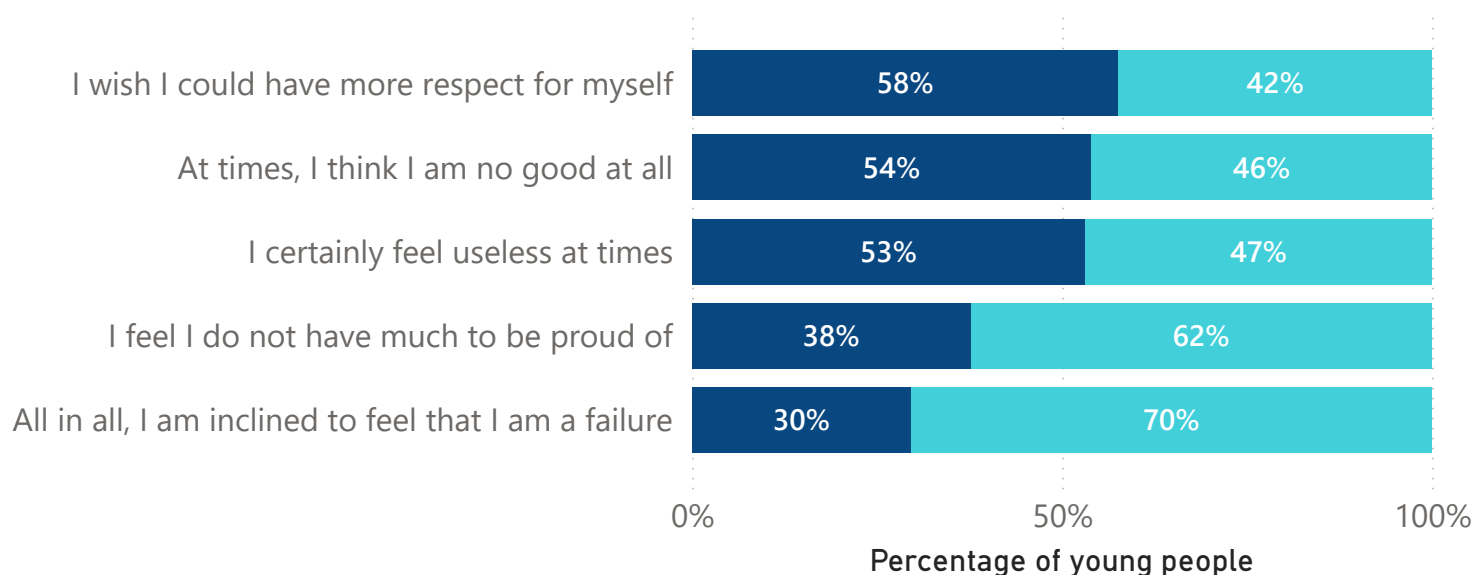
Agreement with higher self esteem or confidence

● Agree or Strongly agree ● Disagree or Strongly disagree



Agreement with lower self esteem or confidence

● Agree or Strongly agree ● Disagree or Strongly disagree



Mood (S3 and S4)

Young people were asked a series of questions about their mood in the previous week and how frequently they had experienced the following:

84% were easily annoyed or irritated

70% had an argument with someone

52% experienced outbursts of anger that they could not control

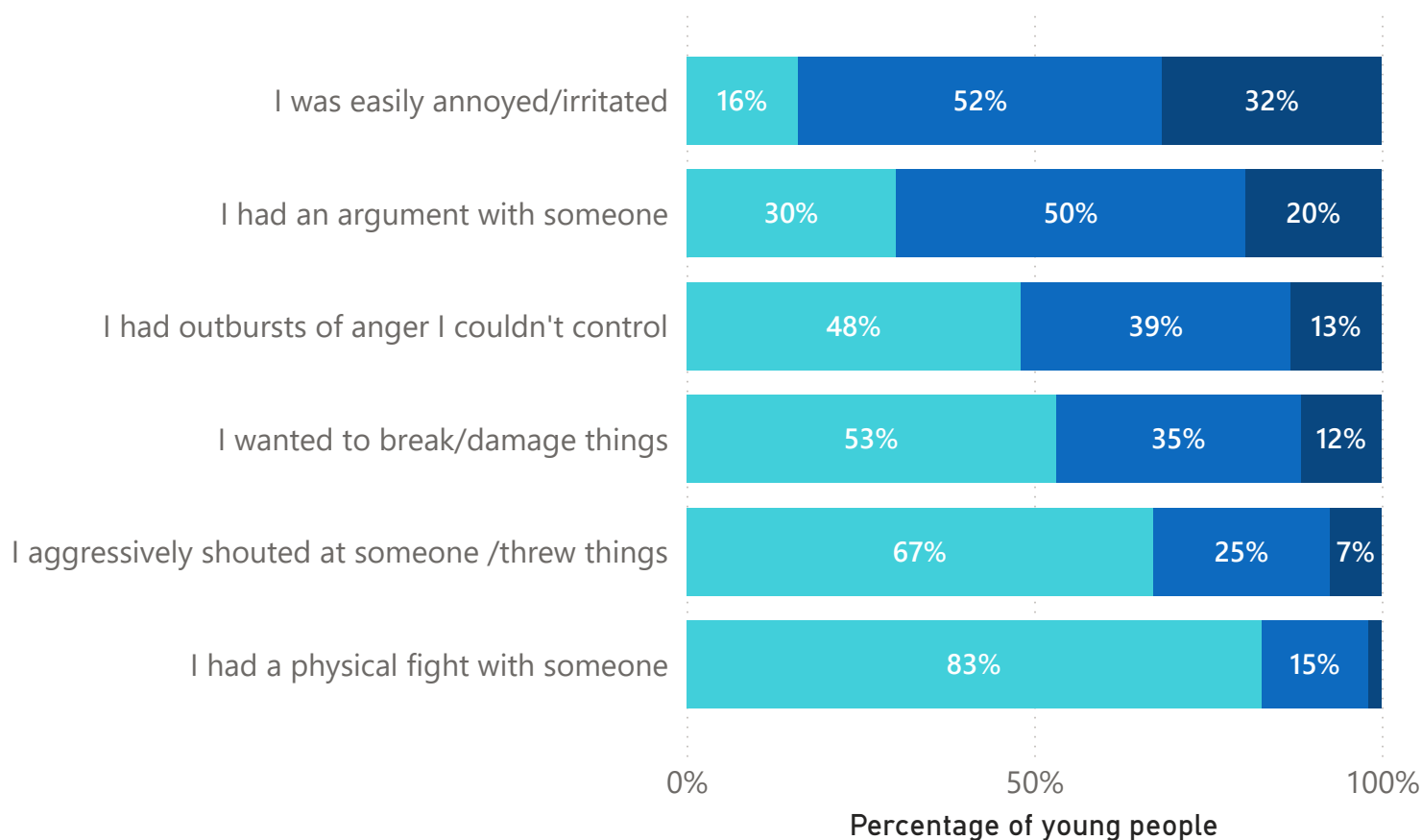
47% wanted to break or damage things

33% aggressively shouted at somebody or threw things

17% had a physical fight with someone.

Mood in the last week

● Never ● Rarely or sometimes ● Regularly or everyday



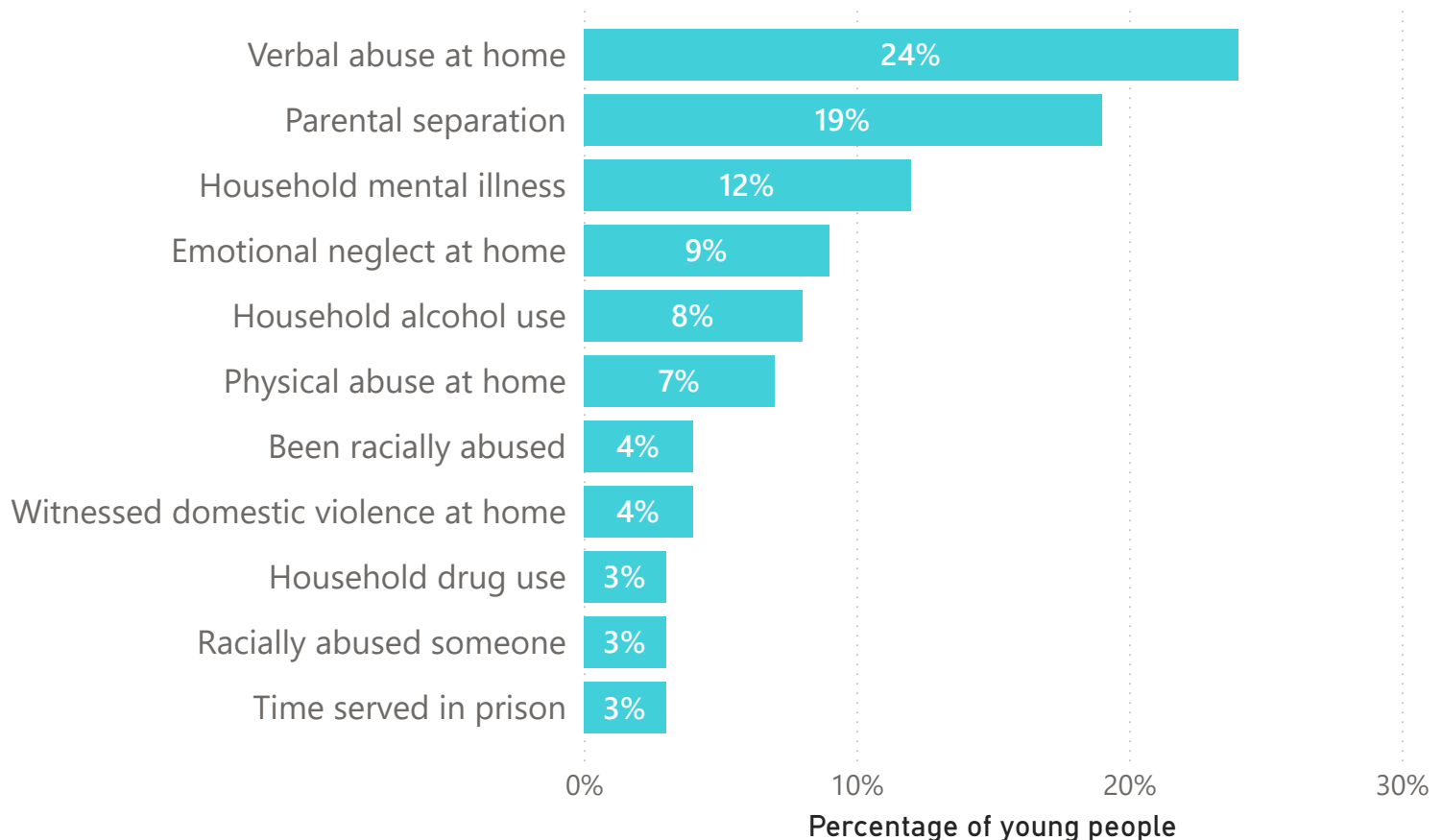
Challenges at home (S3 and S4)

Young people were asked if they had ever experienced the following:

- 24% had experienced verbal abuse within their home
- 19% said they had experienced parental separation
- 12% experienced household mental illness (live with someone depressed, mentally ill or suicidal)
- 9% said they had experienced neglect at home (parent or carer does not respond to their emotional needs)
- 8% experienced household alcohol use that's a problem (live with someone who drinks too much alcohol)
- 7% said they had experienced physical abuse at home
- 4% had witnessed domestic violence within their home
- 3% experienced household drug use (live with someone who uses drugs, including using prescription medicine inappropriately)
- 3% experienced someone they live with serve time in prison or a young offenders' institution.

A number of young people selected 'prefer not to say' in these responses, and therefore, they did not indicate if they had experienced these situations or not.

Challenges ever experienced at home



Unwanted sexual contact (S3 and S4)

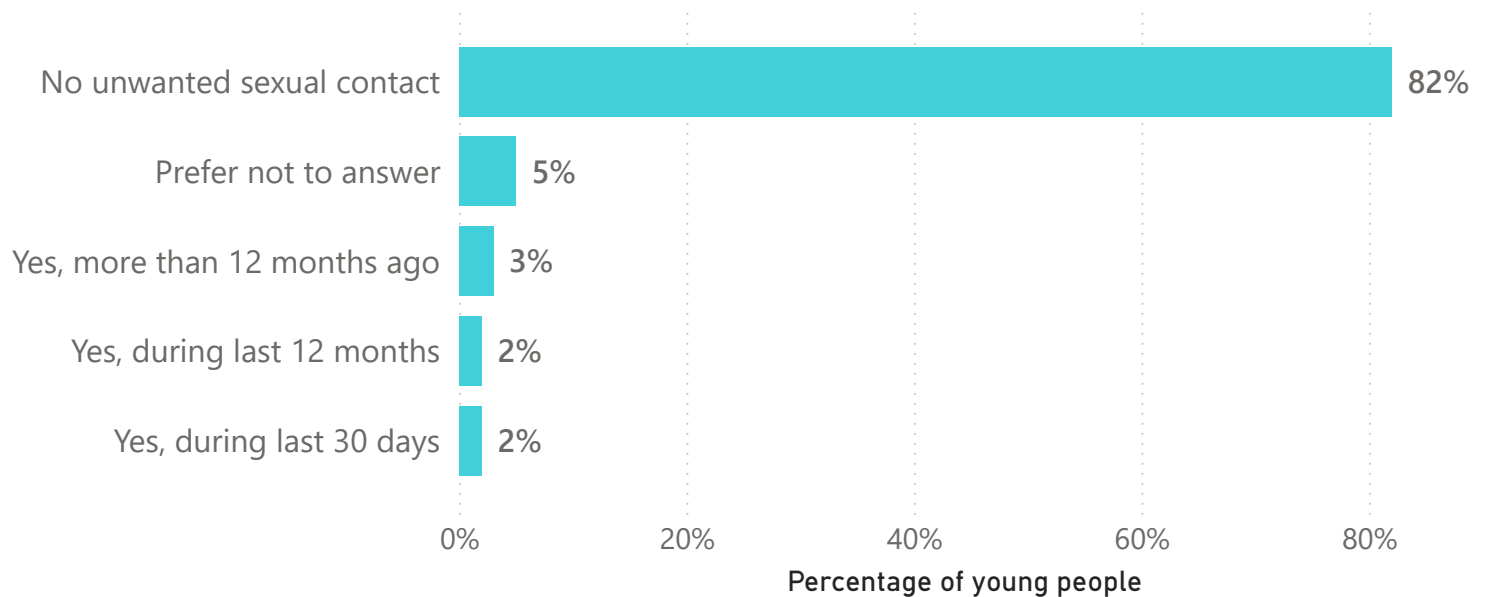
Young people were asked if they had experienced unwanted sexual contact (someone touched you or tried to touch you).

82% said they had not experienced unwanted sexual contact, however

7% of the young people said they had experience of this.

5% of young people did not respond or preferred not to answer this question. Therefore, they did not indicate if they experienced unwanted sexual contact or not.

Experience of unwanted sexual contact



TAKEAWAY

82% of young people reported knowing who to contact should they wish to discuss any form of abuse

Survey Results: Family

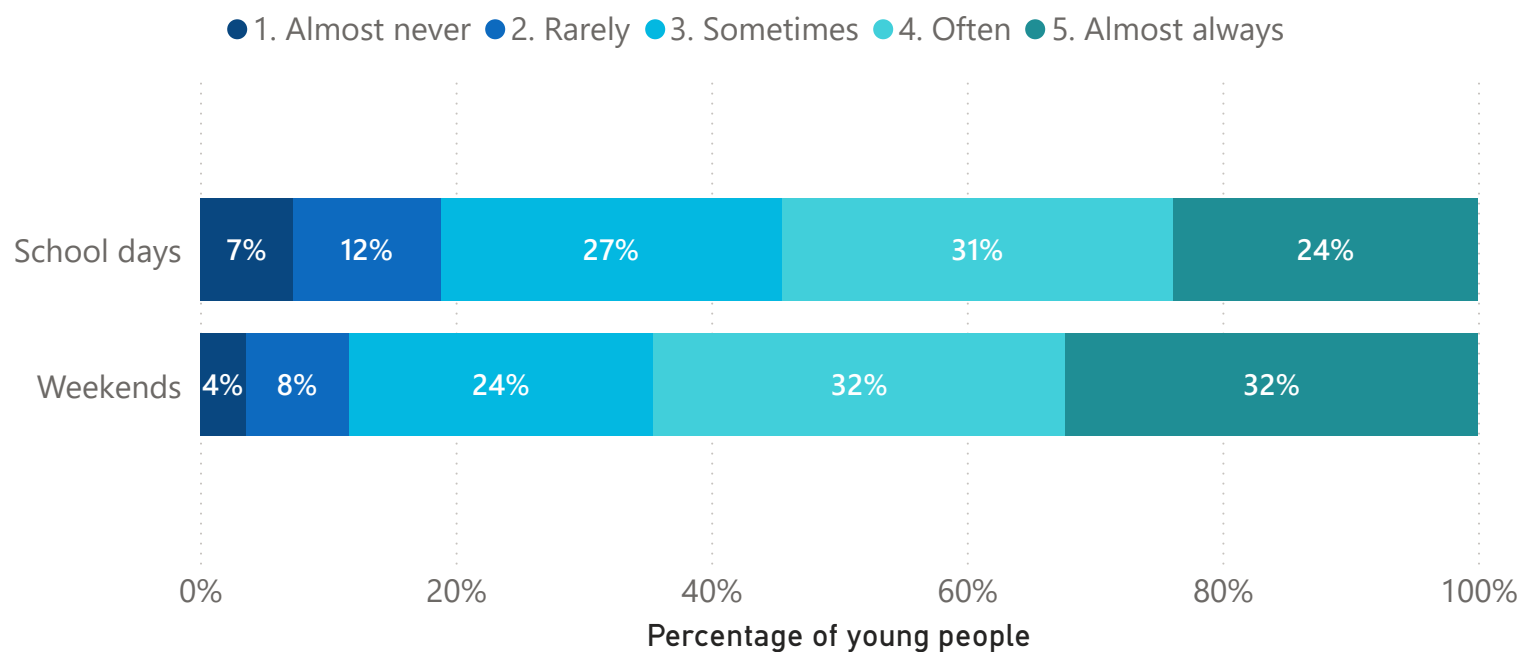
Family Time (S3 and S4)

Young people were asked how frequently they spent time with their parents or carers outside school hours on school days, and during the weekends.

Increasing time spent with parents, including parents of friends, is a protective factor for young people, and is associated with less substance use among young people in Highland.

65% often or almost always spend time with their parents during the weekends.

Time spent with family



TAKEAWAY

65% of young people often or almost always spend time with their parents during the weekends

Family Support (S3 and S4)

Young people were asked how easy or difficult it is to get various types of support from their parent(s) or carer(s):

92% found it easy or very easy to receive caring and warmth

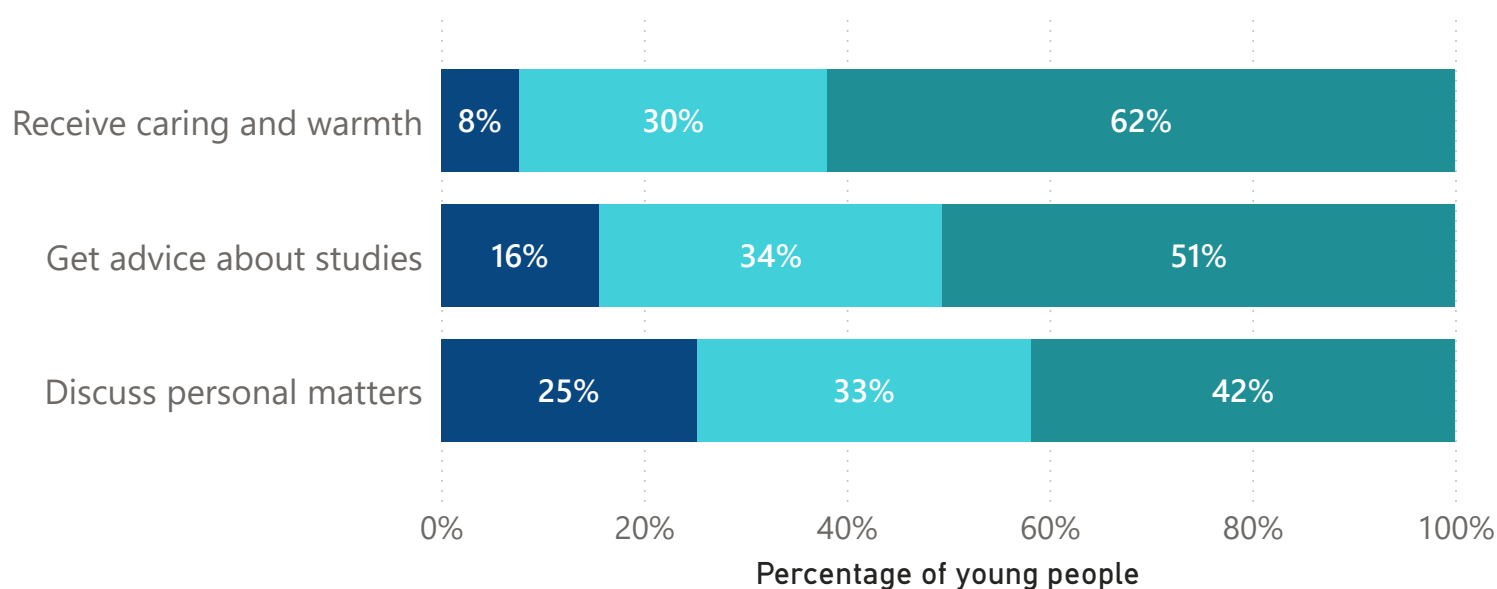
84% found it easy or very easy to get advice about schoolwork/studies

75% found it easy or very easy to have discussion about personal matters.

This is important because parent or carer support is a protective factor for young people. Increasing support for young people is beneficial.

How easy it would be for me to receive this family support

● 1. Rather or Very difficult ● 2. Rather easy ● 3. Very easy



97% said my parents or carers think it is important that young people do well with their school work.

TAKEAWAY

94% said they often or almost always feel safe at home



TAKEAWAY

92% said it is easy or very easy to receive caring and warmth from their parents or carers

Clear boundaries and rules (S3 and S4)

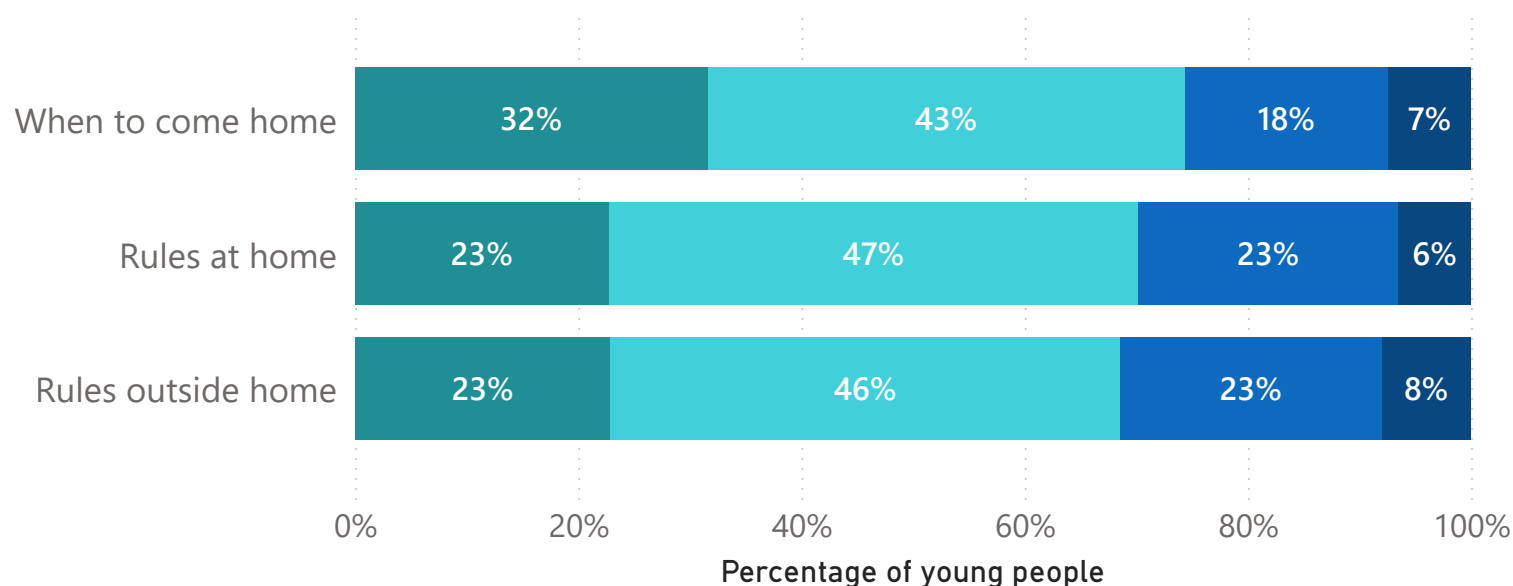
Young people were asked about rules set by their parent(s) or carer(s):

- My parents or carers set definite rules about when I should be home in the evening -
74% of young people said this applied very well or rather well to them
- My parents or carers set definite rules about what I can do at home -
70% of young people said this applied very well or rather well to them
- My parents or carers set definite rules about what I can do outside the home -
69% of young people said this applied very well or rather well to them

Families having clear boundaries and rules are an important protective factor for young people.

How well boundaries and rules apply to me

● 1. Very well ● 2. Rather well ● 3. Rather poorly ● 4. Very poorly



Family rules (S3 and S4)

Young people were asked about rules in general:

57% agree you can never be certain of anything in life

51% agree following rules does not ensure success

50% agree sometimes you need to break rules in order to succeed

44% agree nobody knows what is expected of them in life

40% agree it is difficult to trust anything, because everything changes

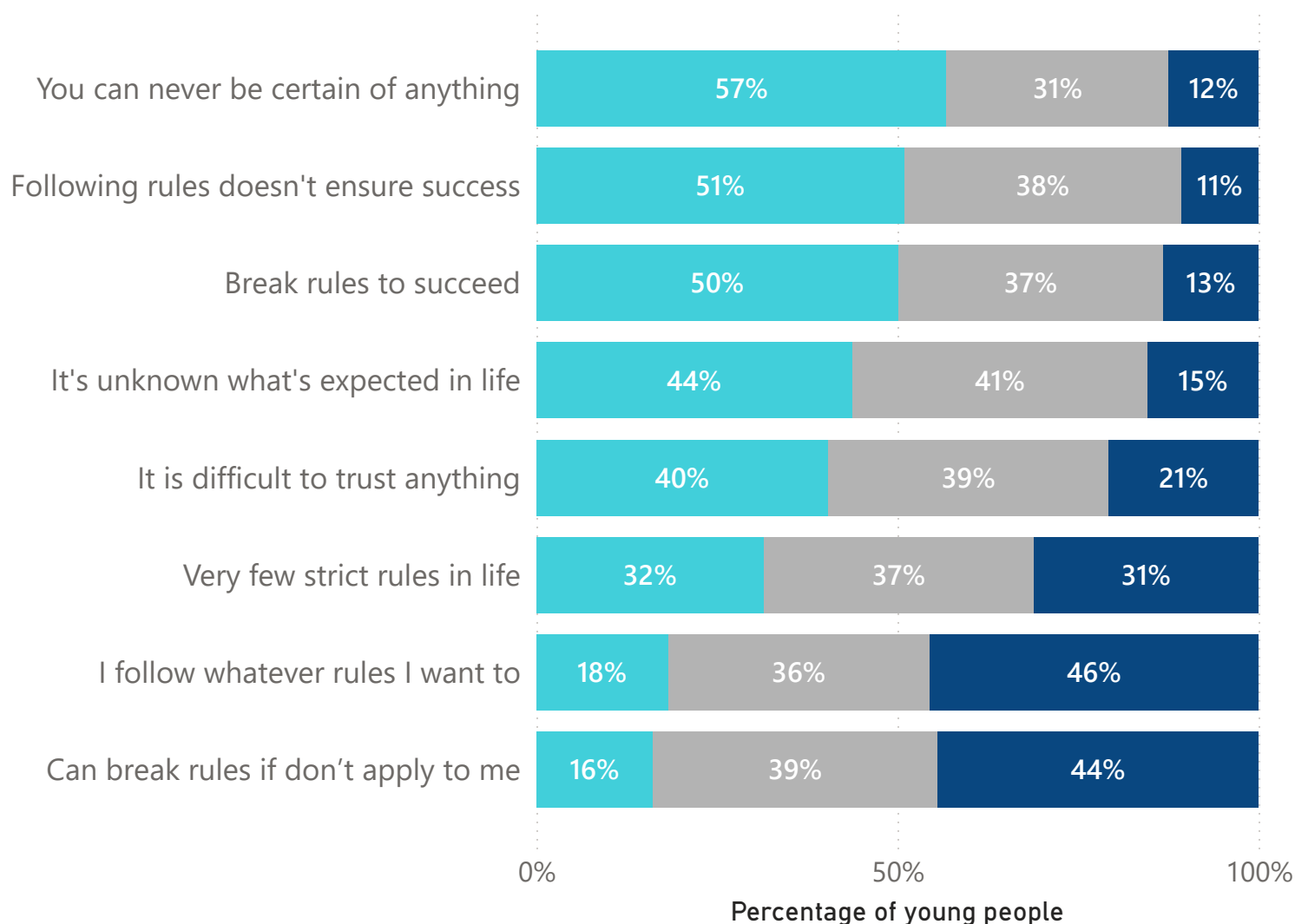
32% agree there are very few strict rules in life

18% agree I follow whatever rules I want to follow

16% agree I can break rules if they don't seem to apply to me.

Following rules in general

● 1. Agree/Strongly agree ● 2. Neither agree or disagree ● 3. Disagree/Strongly disagree



Family monitoring and social capital (S3 and S4)

Young people were asked about parental monitoring and social capital. The percentage of young people who said these situations **applied well or very well to them** were:

90% said my parents or carers know who I am with in the evenings

90% said my parents or carers know where I am in the evenings

87% said my parents or carers know my friends

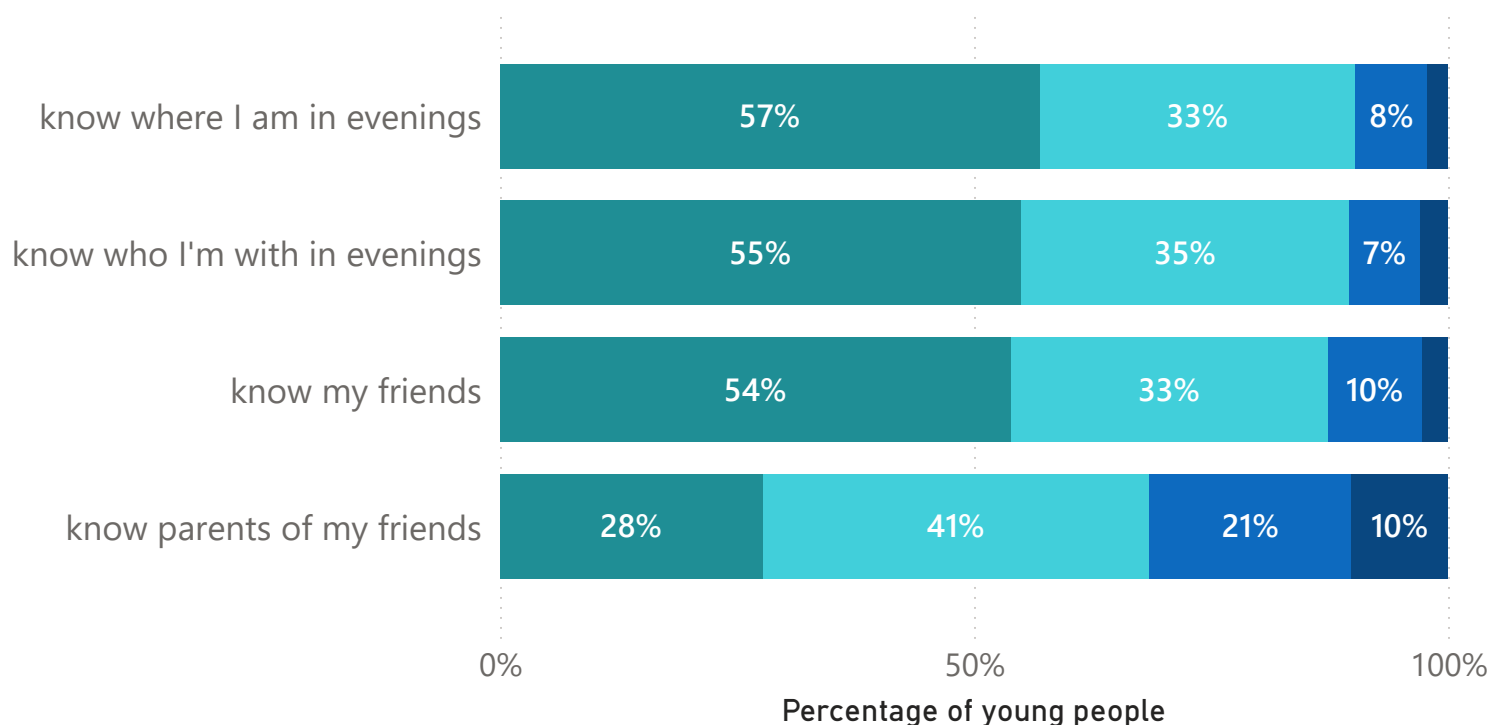
69% said my parents or carers know the parents of my friends.

When parents or carers know the friends of their children, and the parents or carers of those friends, this provides a supportive network around each young person. Parents and carers knowing where their children are is a protective factor.

90% said my parents or carers know where I am in the evenings.

Monitoring and social capital: How well my parents know the following

● 1. Very well ● 2. Rather well ● 3. Rather poorly ● 4. Very poorly



Family monitoring and social capital (S3 and S4)

Young people were asked about parental monitoring and social capital. The percentage of young people who said these situations **applied well or very well to them** were:

73% for My parents or carers know many of our neighbours by name

62% for My parents or carers have friends that live close to our home

32% for My parents or carers sometimes visit some of our neighbours

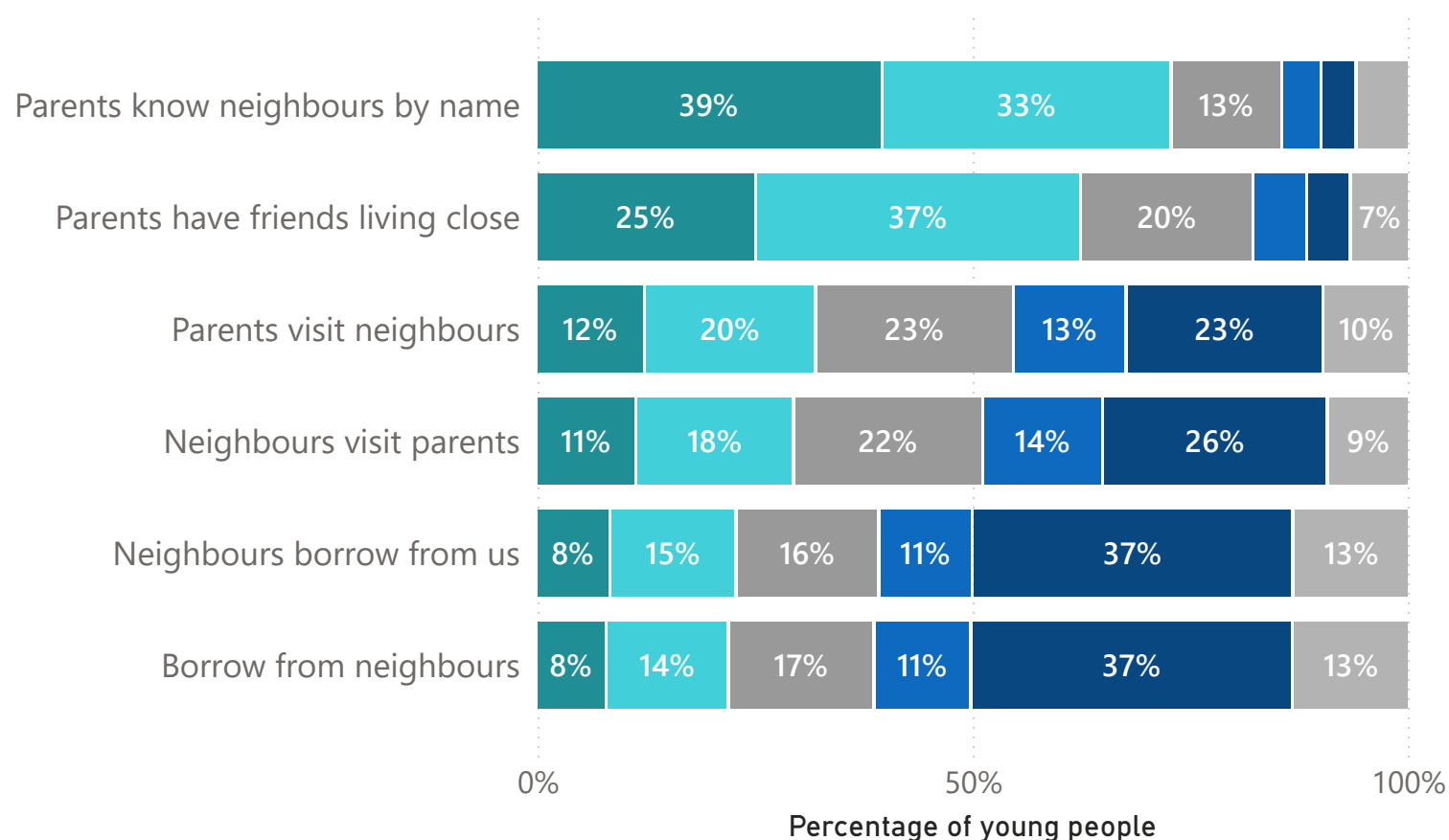
29% for My neighbours sometimes visit my parents or carers

23% for Our neighbours sometimes borrow things from us (e.g. milk, tools)

22% for Sometimes we borrow things from our neighbours (e.g. milk, tools).

Monitoring and social capital: How well these statements apply to me

● 1. Very well ● 2. Well ● 3. Neither ● 4. Poorly ● 5. Very poorly ● 6. Don't know



Family monitoring and social capital (S3 and S4)

Young people were asked about neighbours responses in certain situations. The percentage of young people who said **their neighbours would be very or rather likely to do something** (i.e. respond) in these situations are:

59% said neighbours would respond if somebody was breaking into a car or a house on your street

48% said neighbours would respond if the kids were putting graffiti (tagging) on houses in the area

47% said neighbours would respond if a fight broke out in front of your house

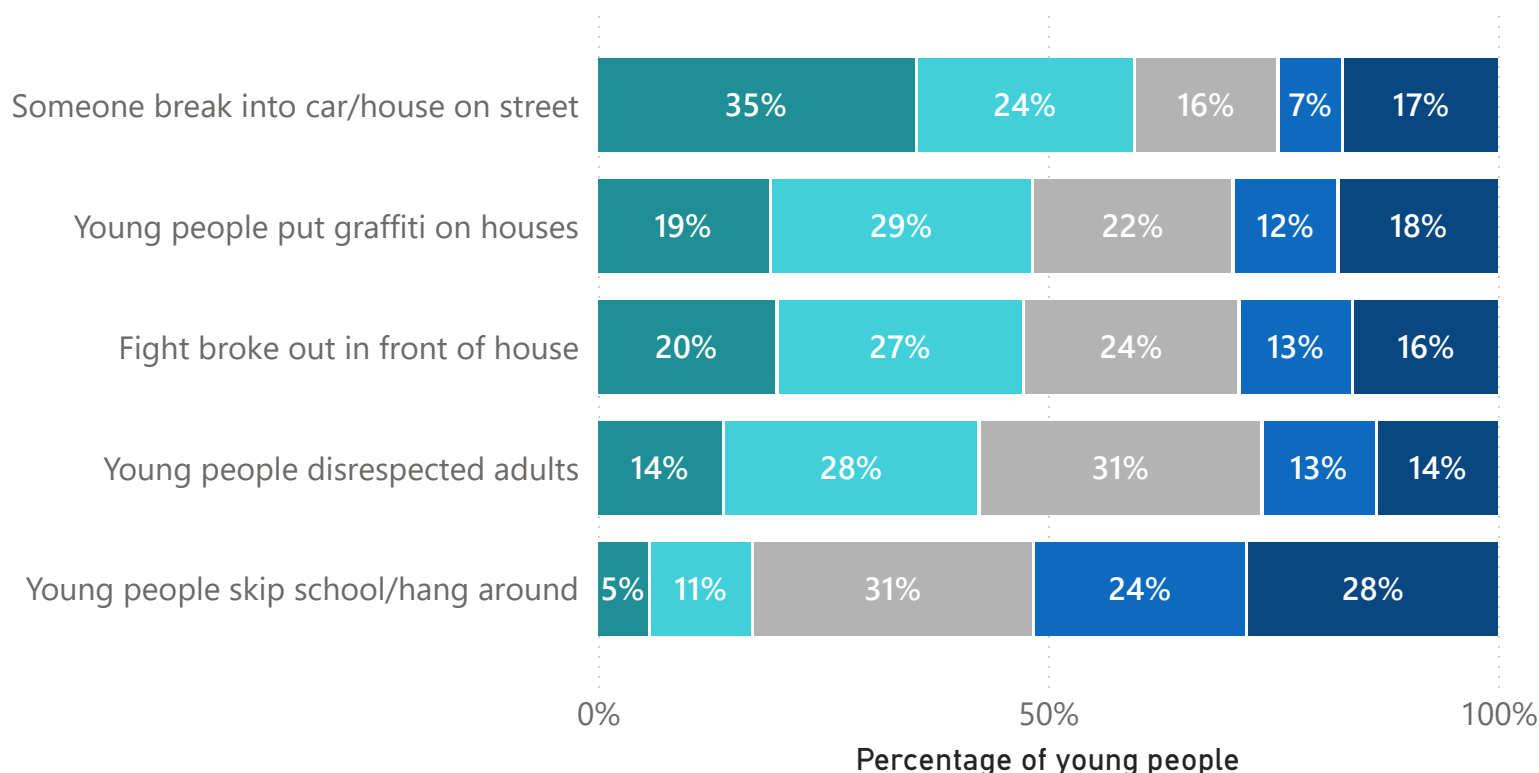
42% said neighbours would respond if the young people disrespected the adults

17% said neighbours would respond if the kids in the neighbourhood were skipping school and hanging around.

Social capital is high when neighbours support positive choices, and so it is a protective factor.

Monitoring and social capital: Neighbours' response to the following

● 1. Very likely ● 2. Likely ● 3. Neither ● 4. Unlikely ● 5. Very unlikely



Perceived parental reactions to alcohol, tobacco and other drug use (S3 and S4)

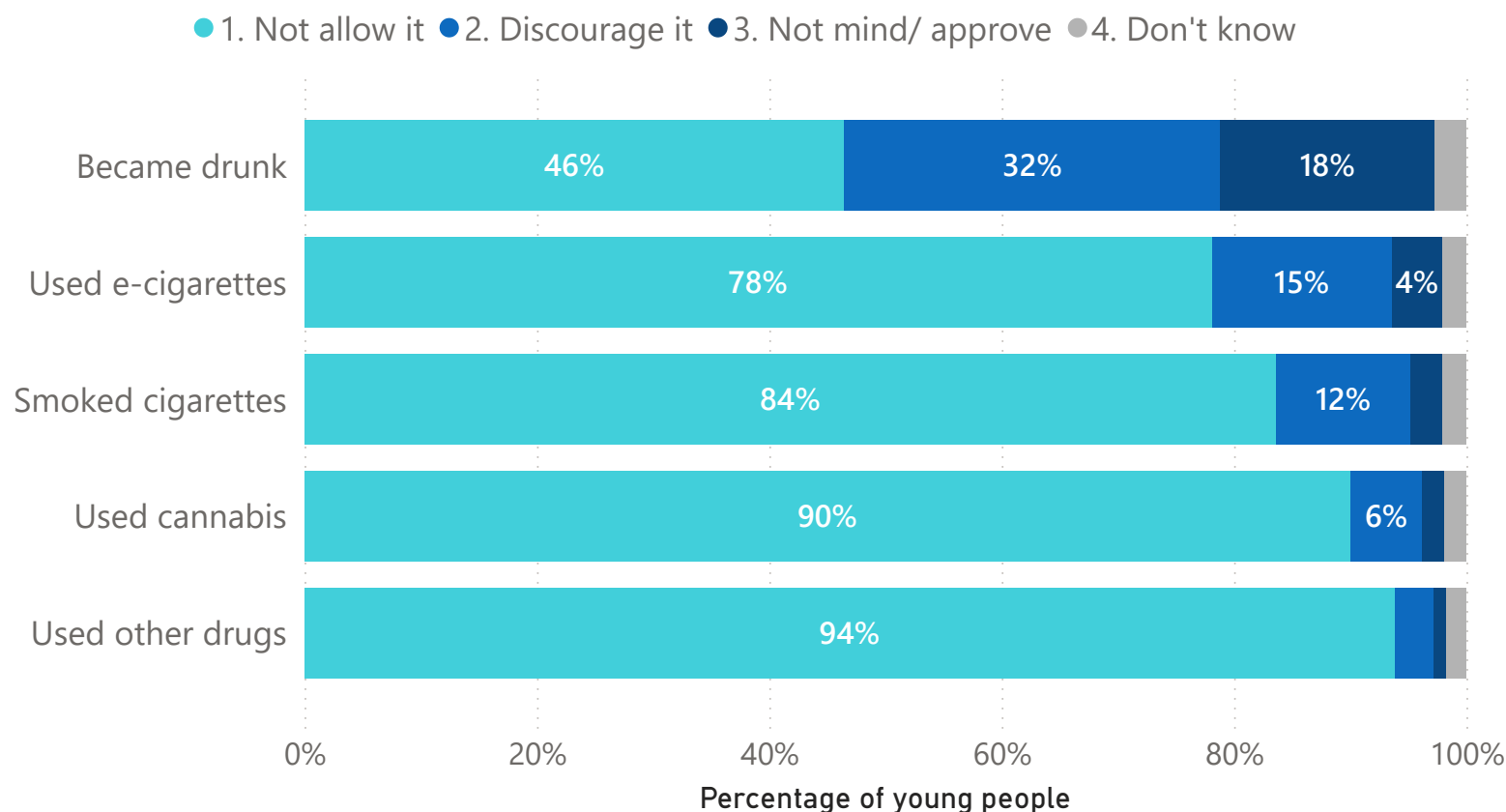
Young people were asked about how their parents or carers would react to the following.
From the young people that responded:

- Became drunk - 46% of parents or carers would not allow this
- Vaped - 78% of parents or carers would not allow this
- Smoked cigarettes - 84% of parents or carers would not allow this
- Used cannabis - 90% of parents or carers would not allow this
- Used other drugs - 94% of parents or carers would not allow this.

Parents and carers having firm boundaries around access to alcohol, tobacco and other drugs is a protective factor for young people, and challenges perceptions of acceptance of these behaviours, which can lead to reduced use.

84% of boys' parents and 73% of girls' parents would not allow them or discourage them from becoming drunk.

Young people perceived what their parents reaction would be



Survey Results: School

Supportive adults at school (S3 and S4)

Young people were asked about their experience of supportive adults at school:

62% agreed the adults at my school care about me

61% agreed the adults at my schools are fair and kind to me

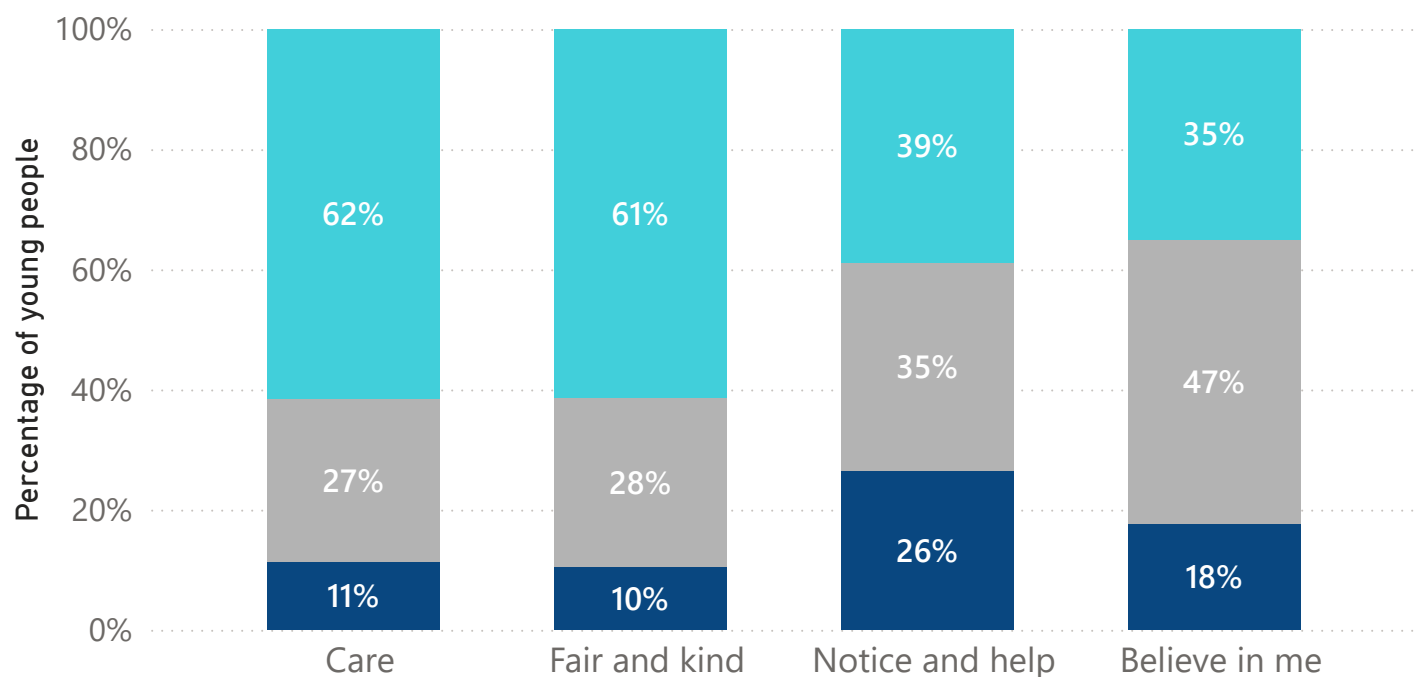
39% agreed the adults at my school notice when they are having a hard time and offer to help them

35% agreed the adults at school believe I can make the world a better place.

It is important to have access to supportive adults at school, especially for young people that don't have high levels of support at home.

Adults at school being supportive in the following ways

● 1. Disagree or Strongly disagree ● 2. Neither agree or disagree ● 3. Agree or Strongly agree



Peers at school (S3 and S4)

Young people were asked about their experience of supportive peers at school:

84% agreed they have friends in school that care about me

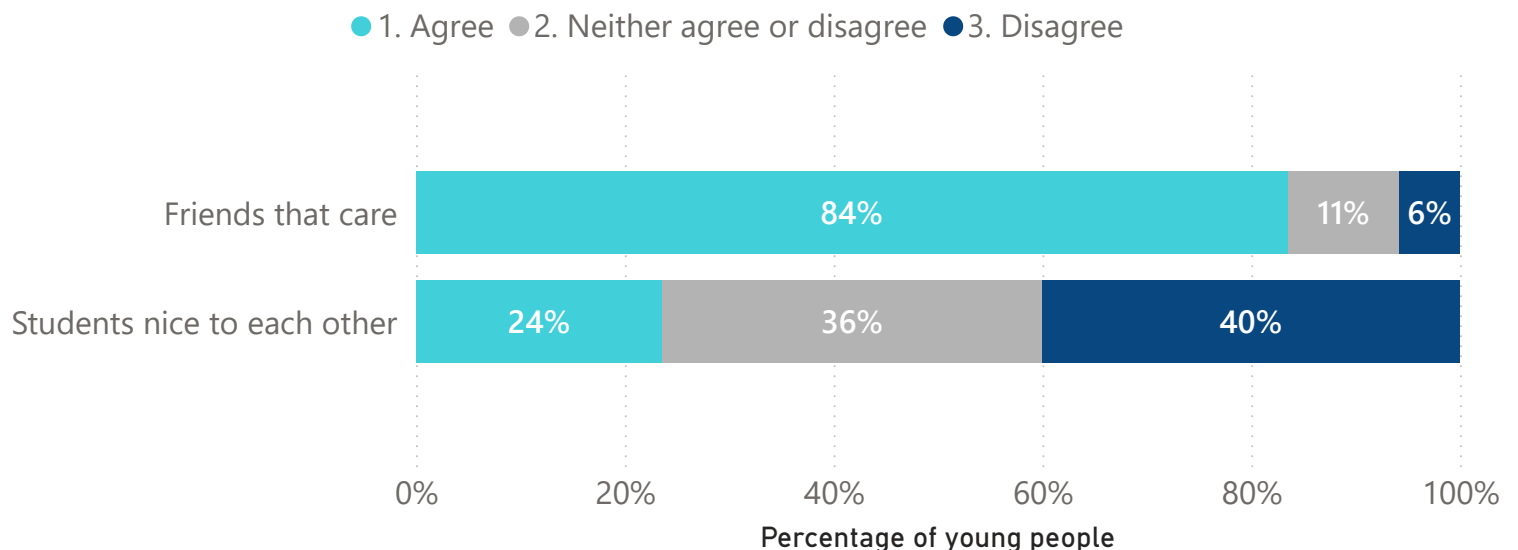
24% agreed that the students at my school are nice to each other

40% agreed they have been bullied during school

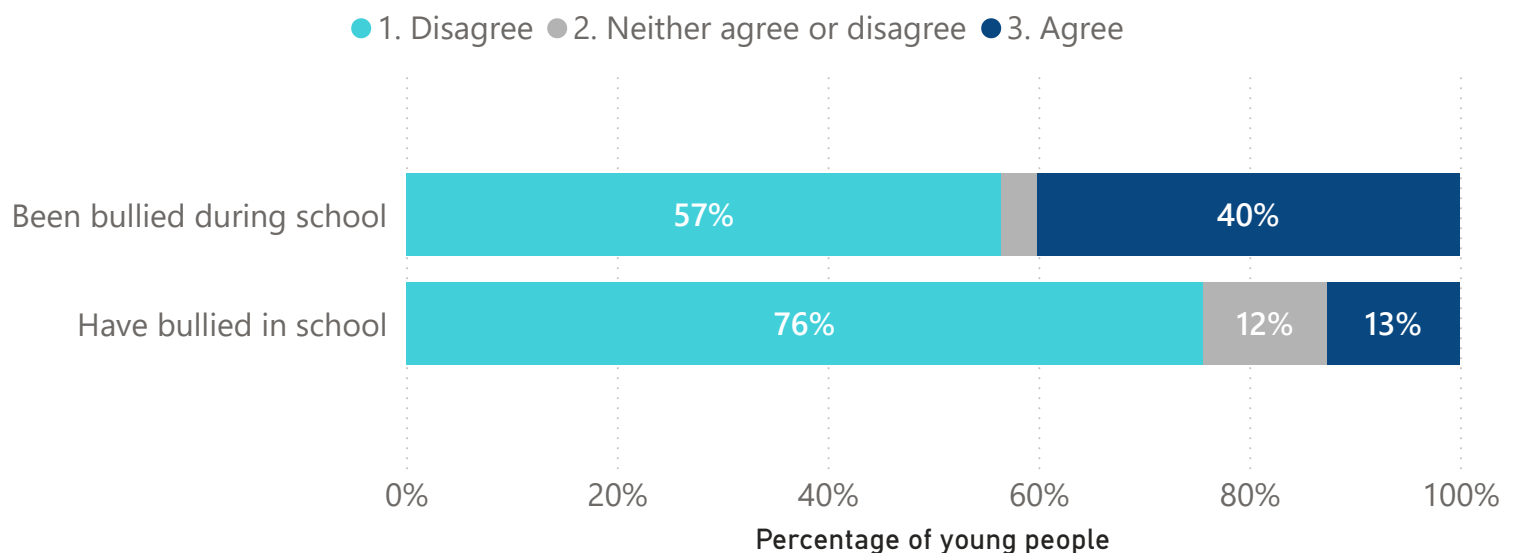
13% agreed they have bullied someone during school.

It is important to have a supportive culture at school, for young people to have supportive peers at school, and for school to be a comfortable place to be. Supporting young people to be friendly with one another, and challenging when people are being left out or are being bullied is key.

Supportive friends at school



Unsupportive behaviours at school



Motivation to learn and grow (S3 and S4)

Young people were asked about their motivation to learn and grow. From the young people that responded:

74% agree they try their best in school

72% agree doing their best in school now will help them to have a good life when they are older

59% agree at least one thing they do at school makes them want to be the best they can be

54% agree their school is helping them achieve goals that matter to them

52% agree they have a good time participating in activities at their school

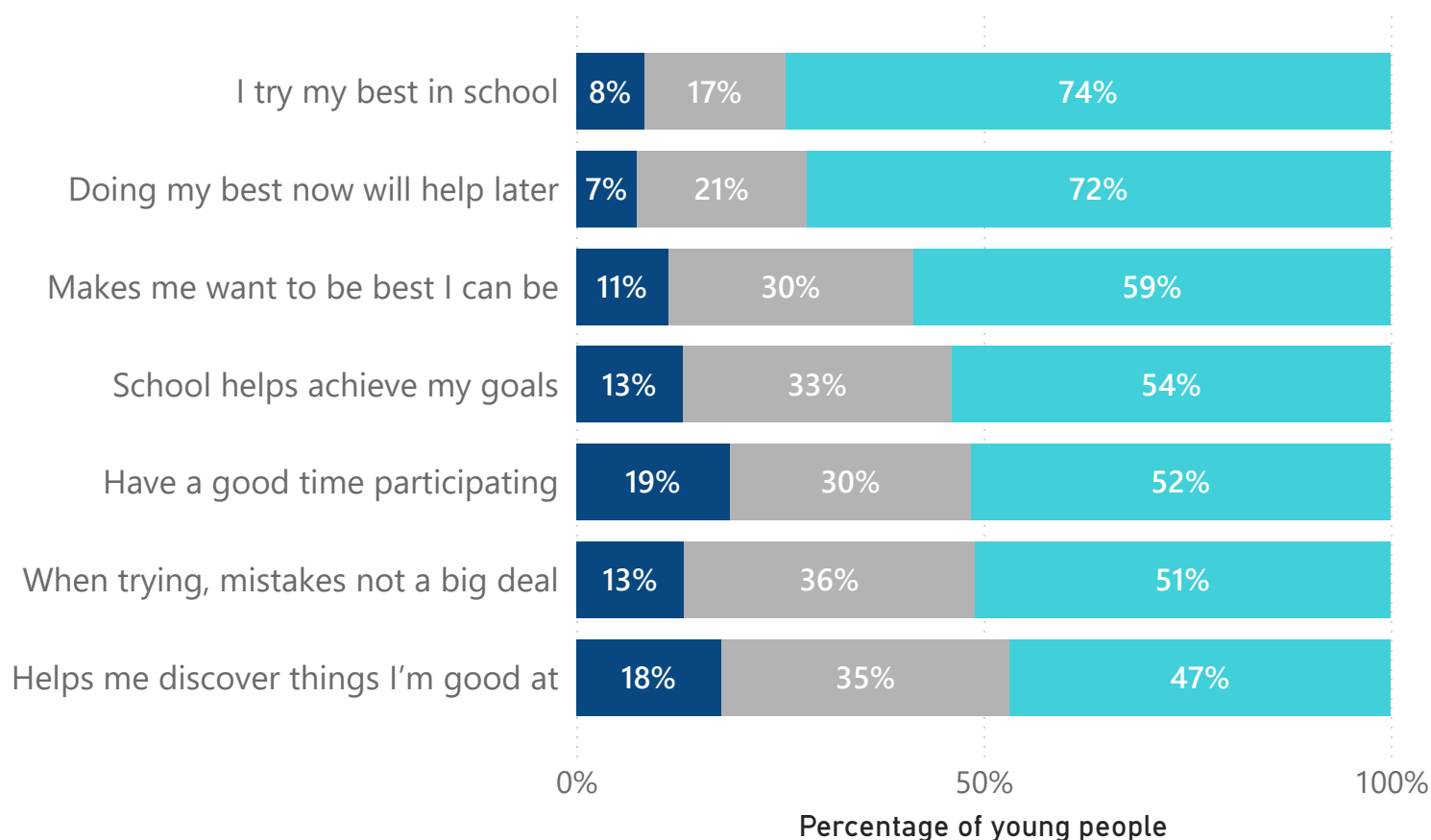
51% agree it is not a big deal to make mistakes when trying their best at school

47% agree that their school helps them discover things they are good at doing.

Positive attitudes towards school and studies, motivation to learn and grow, are important protective factors that support young people with future healthy goal setting.

What motivates young people to learn and grow

● 1. Disagree or Strongly disagree ● 2. Neither agree or disagree ● 3. Agree or Strongly agree



Attitudes to studies (S3 and S4)

Young people were asked about their attitudes to studies and from those that responded:

33% often or almost always find their studies boring

17% often or almost always find the school work pointless

17% often or almost always find the school work too difficult

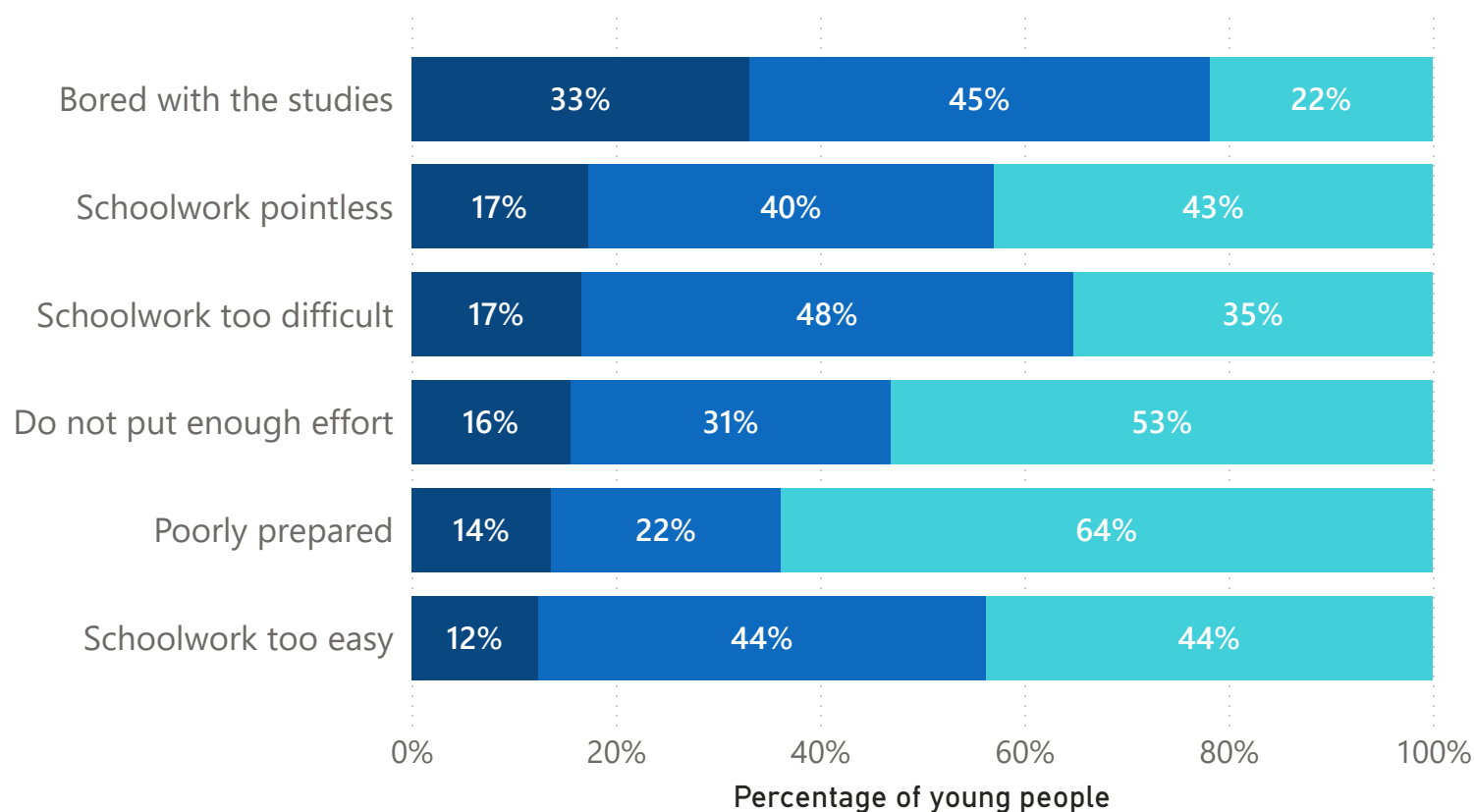
16% often or almost always feel they do not put enough effort into their school work

14% often or almost always feel poorly prepared for classes

12% often or almost always find the school work too easy.

Attitudes to studies

● 1. Often or Almost always ● 2. Sometimes ● 3. Rarely or Almost never



Positive attitudes towards school and studies, motivation to learn and grow, are important protective factors that support young people with future healthy goal setting.

Attitudes to school (S3 and S4)

Young people were asked about their attitudes to studies and from those that responded:

59% often or almost always get along with teachers however

30% often or almost always feel unhappy at school

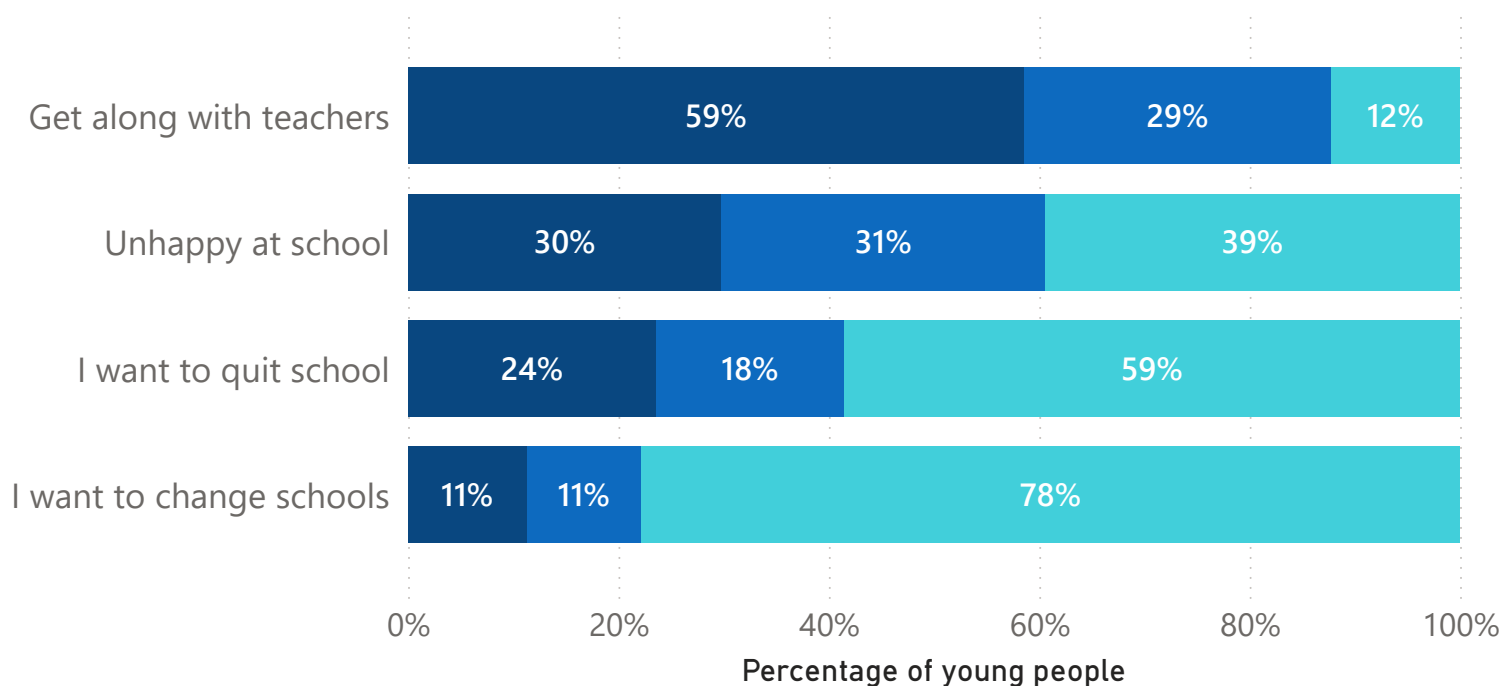
24% often or almost always want to quit school

11% often or almost always want to change schools



Attitudes to studies

● 1. Often or Almost always ● 2. Sometimes ● 3. Rarely or Almost never



Having a positive attitude to school is an important protective factor.

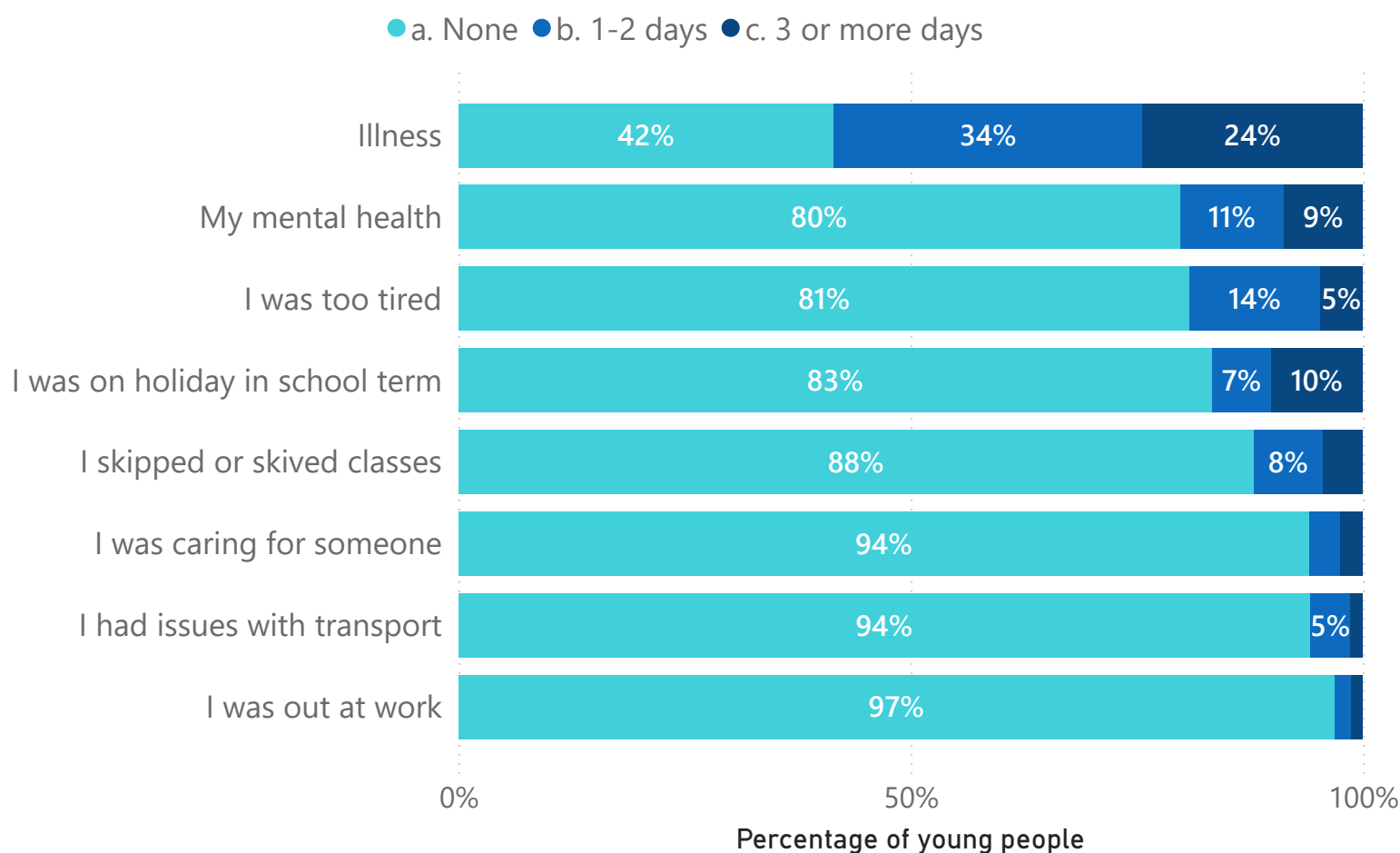
School absenteeism (S3 and S4)

Young people were asked about any whole days they were absent from school during the last 30 days and the reason for this absence:

- 58% because of illness
- 20% because of my mental health
- 19% because they were too tired
- 17% because they were on holiday during school term
- 12% because they skipped or skived classes
- 6% because they were caring for someone
- 6% because they had issues with transport
- 4% because of responsibilities at home
- 3% because they were out at work.

Being in school is a protective factor, and while young people might need to be off for valid reasons, avoiding unexplained absenteeism is something to work against to reduce risk factors experienced by those young people.

Number of days absent and reason for absence from school in the last 30 days



School sense of safety (S3 and S4)

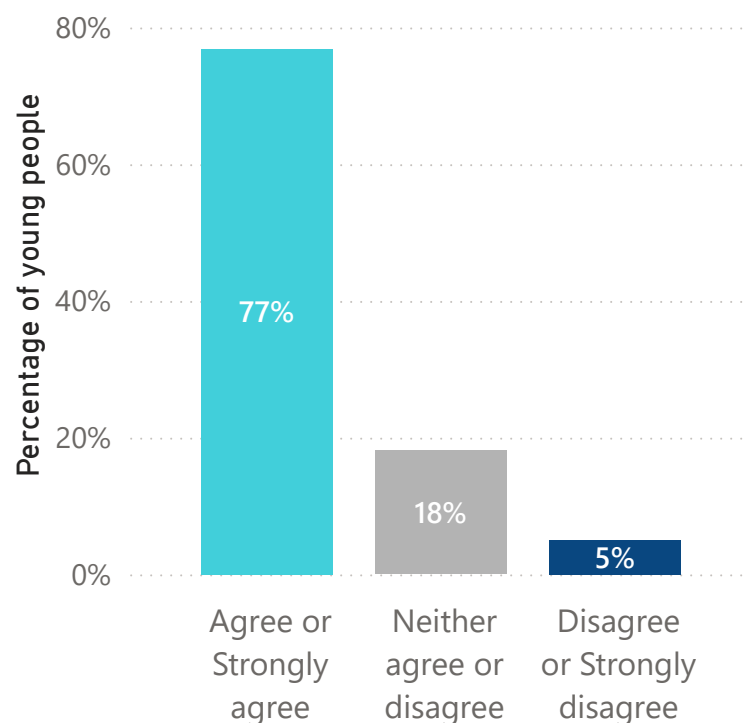
Young people were asked about their sense of school safety:

77% agree it is safe to be around the adults at school

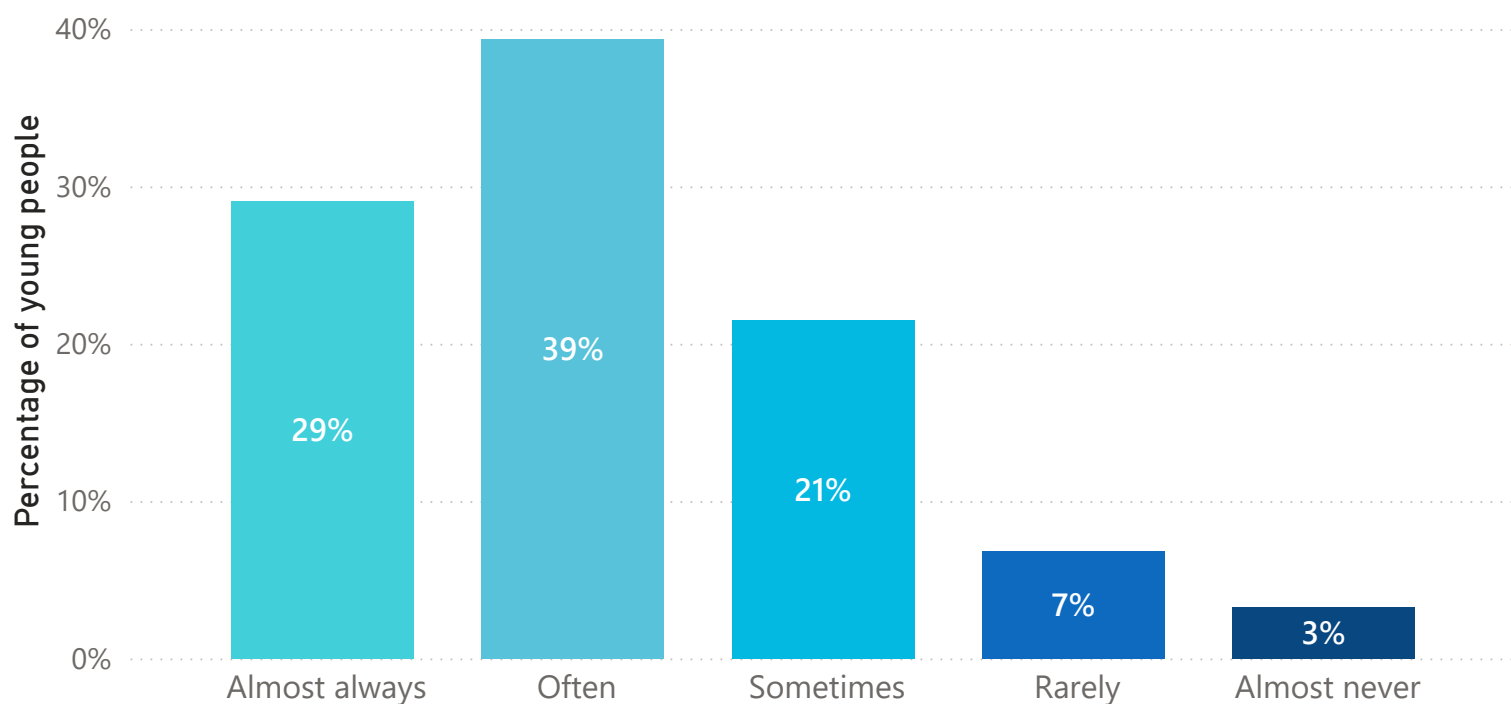
29% of young people almost always feel safe at school.

Feeling safe at school is very important. Aggressive or violent behaviour or bullying should be taken very seriously.

Safety around adults at school



Feeling safe at school



Survey Results: Leisure Time

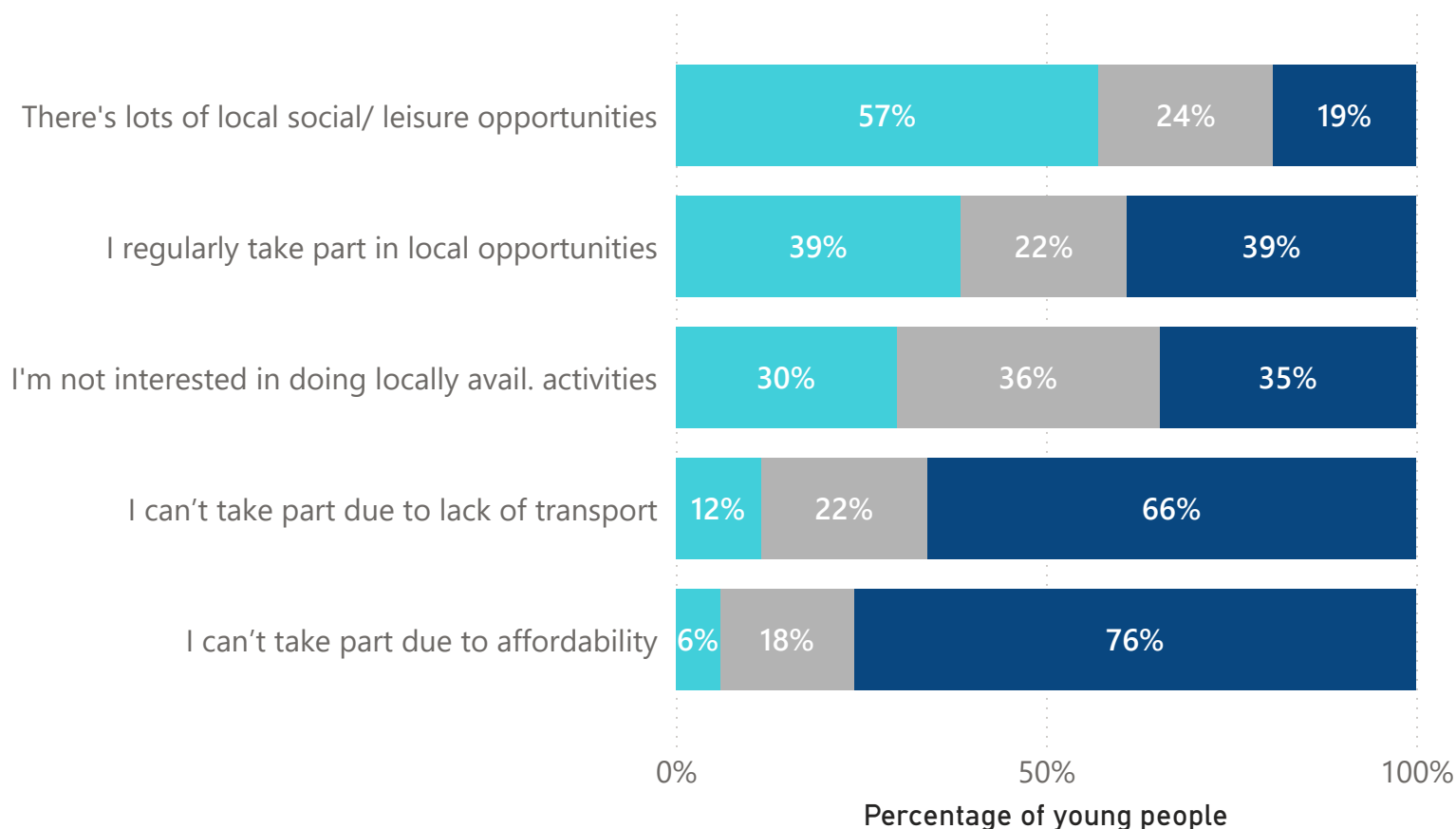
Access to and participation in organised recreational and extracurricular activities (S3 and S4)

Taking part in organised leisure activities is an important protective factor. Diversionary activities help with character building, support a pro-social environment in which young people are happy to play with and be around each other. These questions focus on this domain. Young people were asked about their access to, and participation in organised recreational and extracurricular activities. The % who **strongly agree or agree** are:

- 57% believe there are a lot of social and leisure opportunities in their neighbourhood
- 39% regularly take part in the leisure and social opportunities available in their community
- 30% are not interested in doing any of the activities available in their community
- 12% can't take part in activities due to lack of transport
- 6% cannot participate in activities because their parents or carers can't afford them.

Access to and participation in organised recreational and extracurricular activities

● 1. Agree or Strongly agree ● 2. Neither agree or disagree ● 3. Disagree or Strongly disagree



Access to and participation in organised recreational and extracurricular activities (S3 and S4)

Young people were asked how many times a week they participate in activities out of school supervised by adults:

49% take part in sports (practice or compete) with a sports club/team at least once a week

28% take part in other after school activities at least once a week

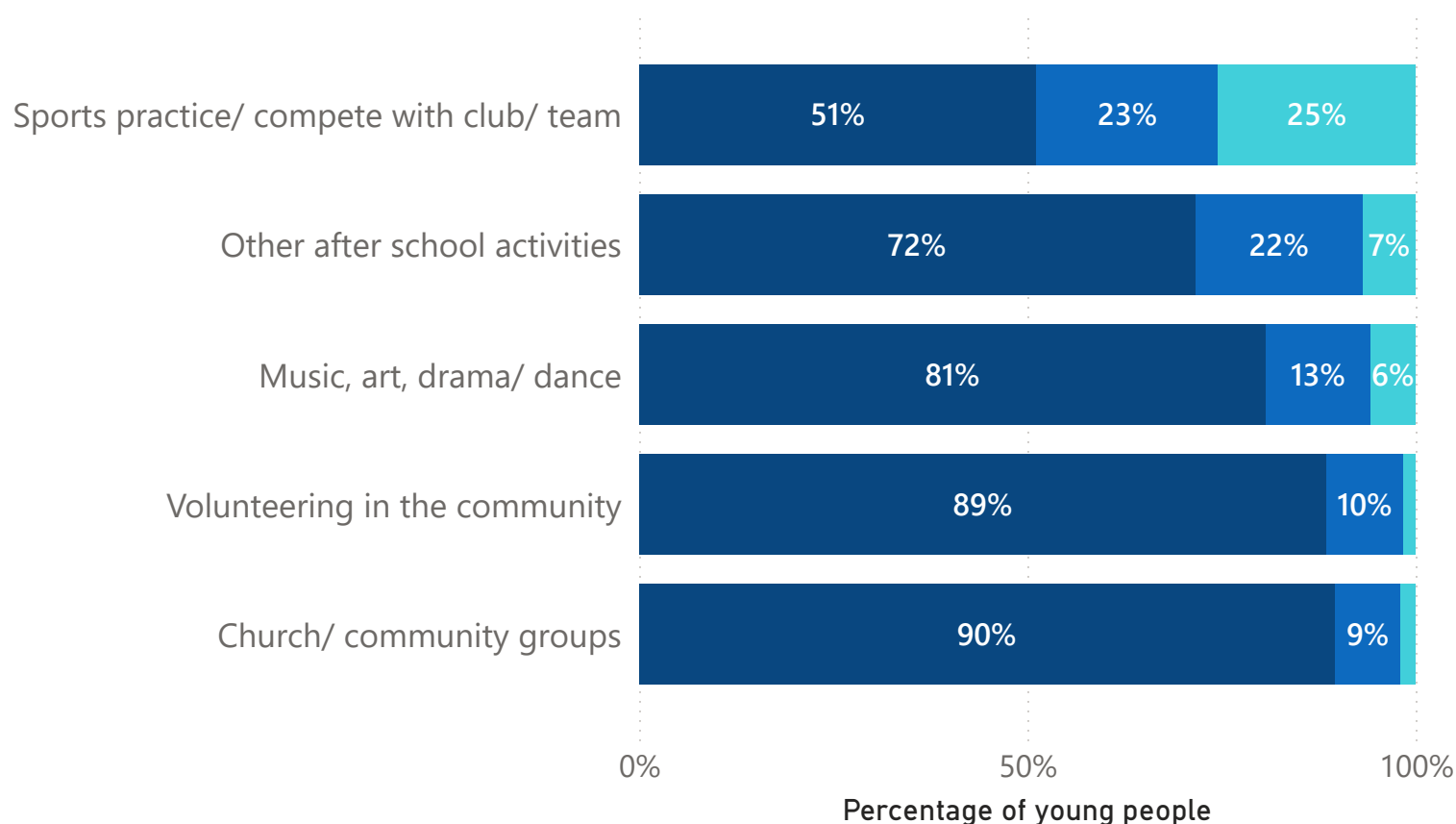
19% take part in music, art, drama or dance at least once a week

11% take part in volunteering in the community at least once a week

10% attend church or community groups at least once a week.

Weekly frequency of participation in organised recreational and extracurricular activities

● a. Never or less than once ● b. Once or twice ● c. 3 times or more



Frequency of participation in physical activities (S3 and S4)

Young people were asked how often they do the following activities:

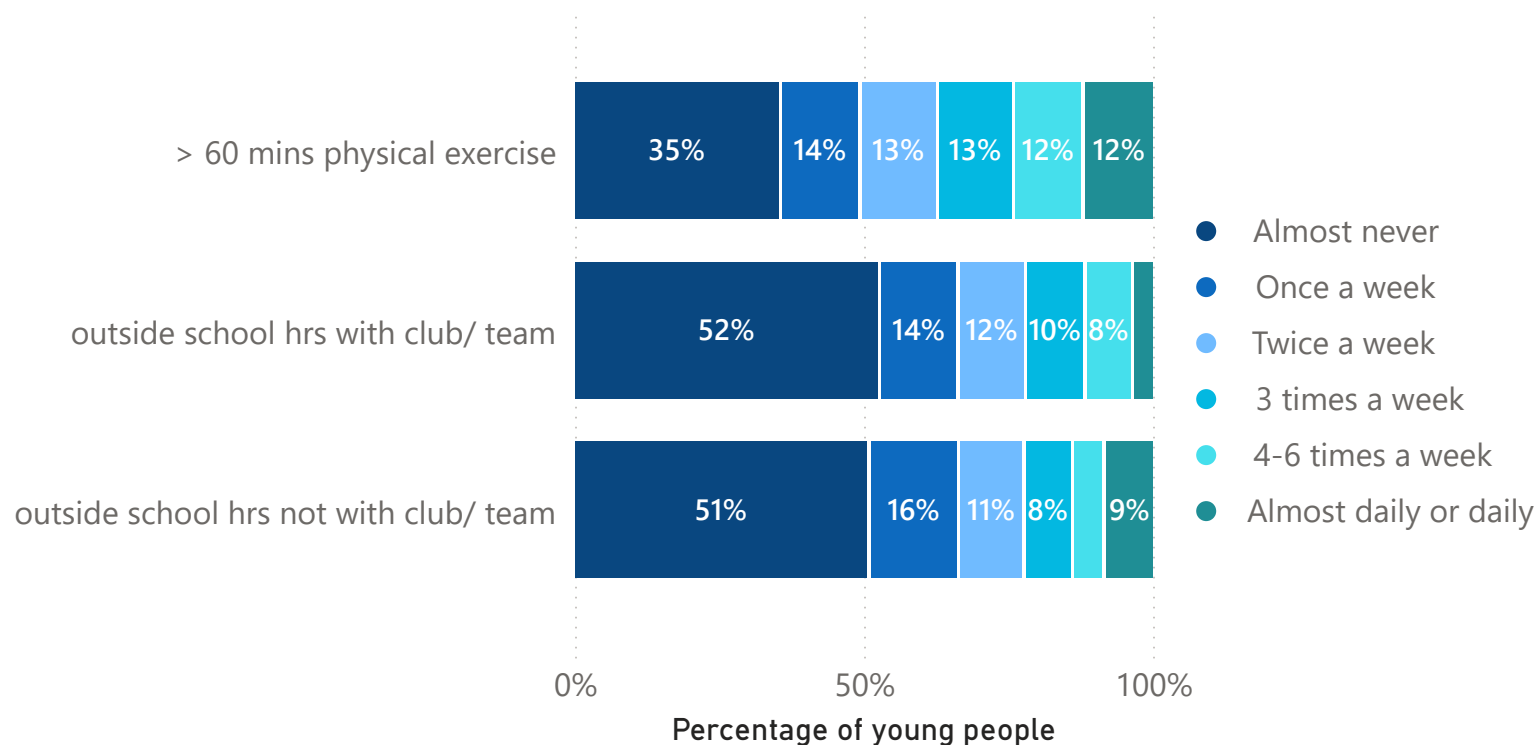
38% take part in physical activity **three times a week or more** for more than 60 minutes that increases their breathing rate

48% take part in physical activity outside school hours with a club or team **at least once a week**

49% take part in physical activity outside school hours not with a club or team at least once a week.

Improving engagement with organised recreational and extracurricular activities and physical activities are protective factors.

Frequency of participation in physical activities



Community life (S3 and S4)

Young people were asked about life in their community or neighbourhood and gave responses as to whether they agreed with the following:

59% agree it is good to live in their neighbourhood or community

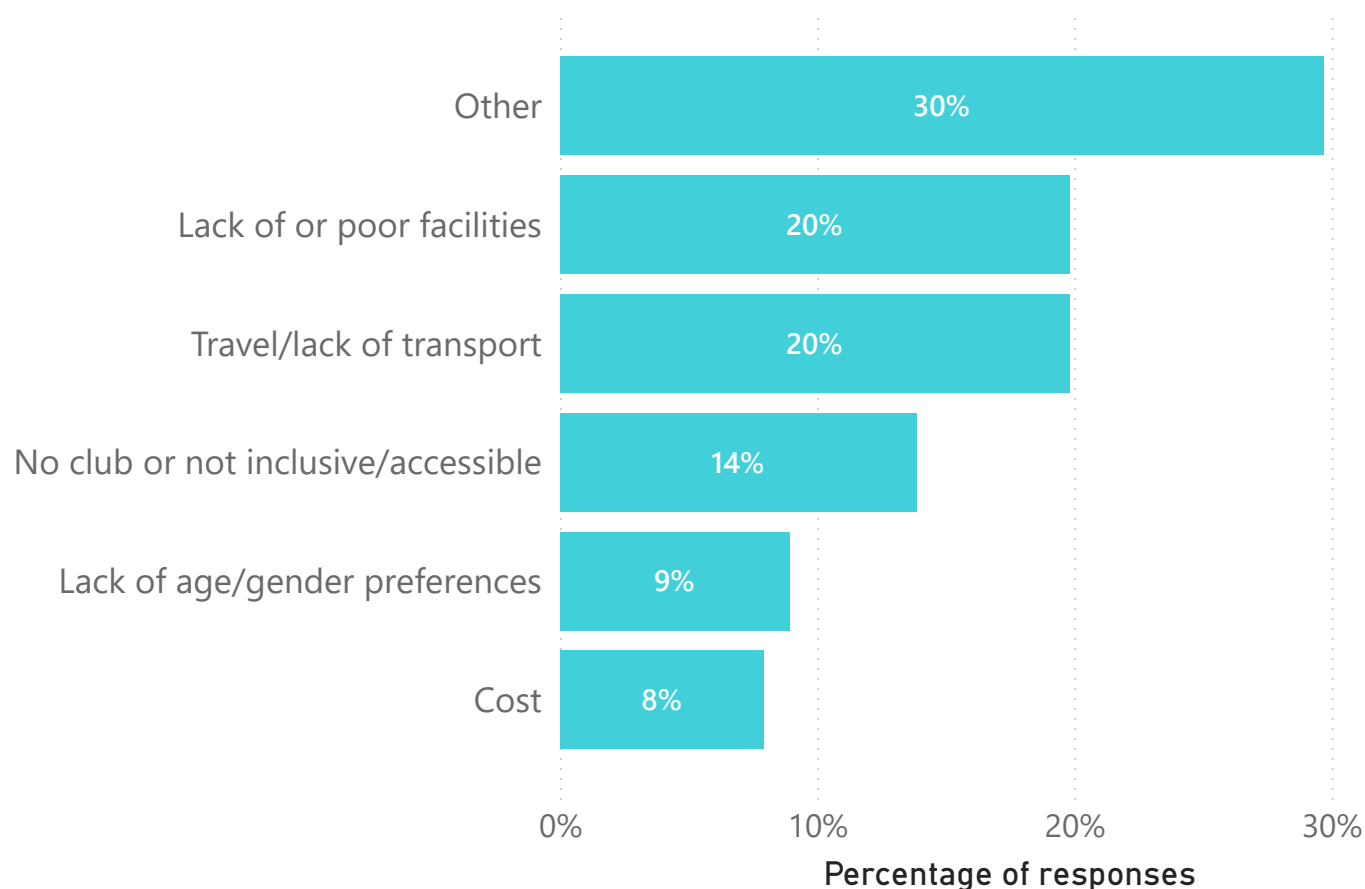
57% agree there are a lot of social/leisure opportunities in their area such as youth clubs, sport facilities, etc.

26% agree that in the future they would like to continue to live in the neighbourhood or community that they live in now.

Reasons for not taking part in activities (S3 and S4)

Young people were asked about what was preventing them from taking part in activities. Some young people may have given more than one reason:

Reasons for not taking part in activities



Community life (S3 and S4)

Young people were asked about the availability of opportunities to take part in. The percentage of young people **agreed there was opportunity to take part in these activities:**

In my community there are lots of opportunities to take part in:

66% for sports

60% for outdoor activities

56% for fitness activities

56% for activities with family

41% for volunteering

39% for water-based activities

37% for martial arts

35% for dance activities

35% for musical activities

30% for environmental activities

(e.g. community recycling)

28% for skills development (e.g.

mechanics, DIY, plumbing, building, woodwork, engineering)

27% for arts and crafts activities

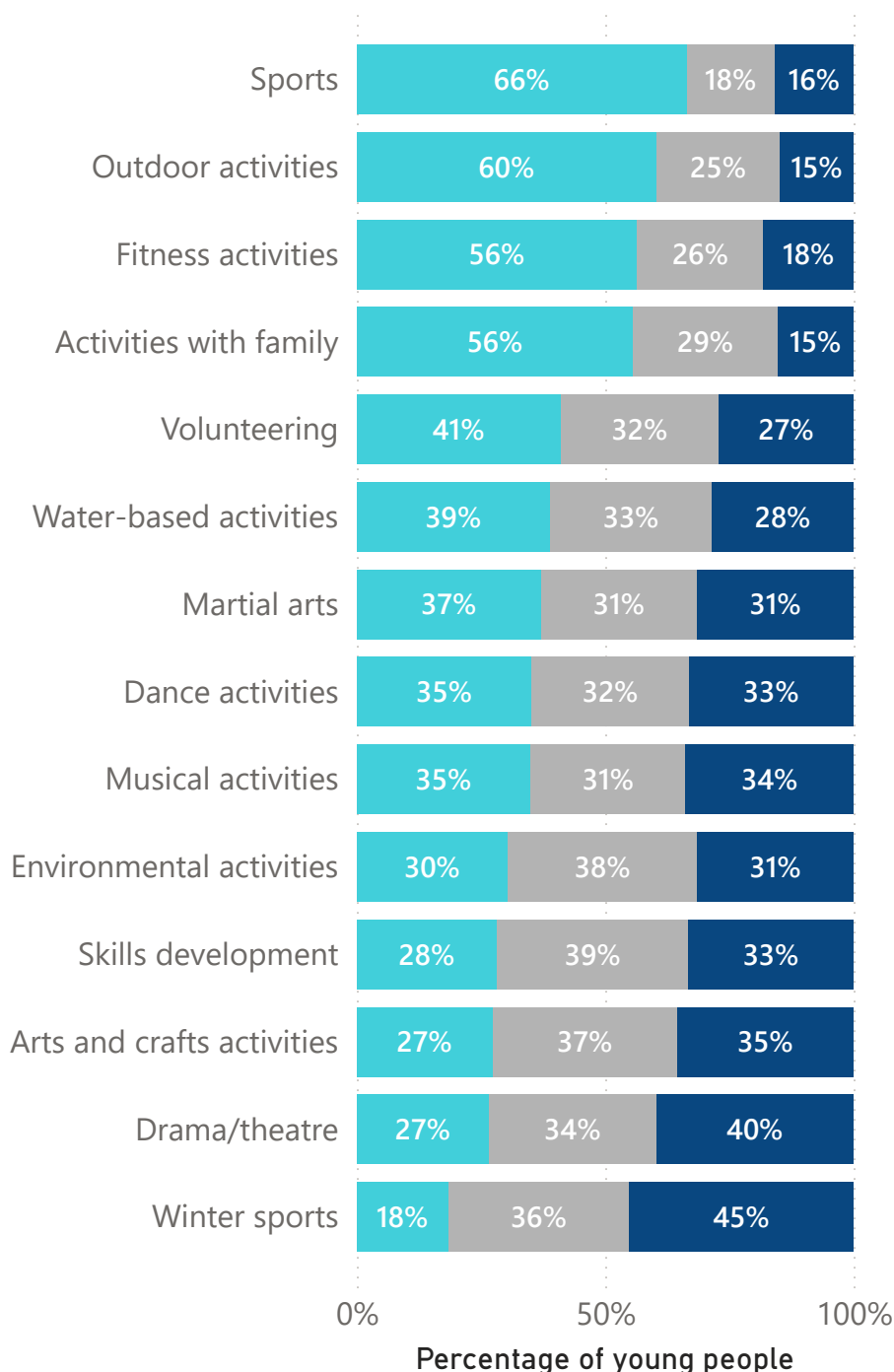
(e.g. painting / ceramics)

27% for drama / theatre

18% for winter sports

Having a range of options to suit all young people is important.

● 1. Agree ● 2. Neither agree or disagree ● 3. Disagree



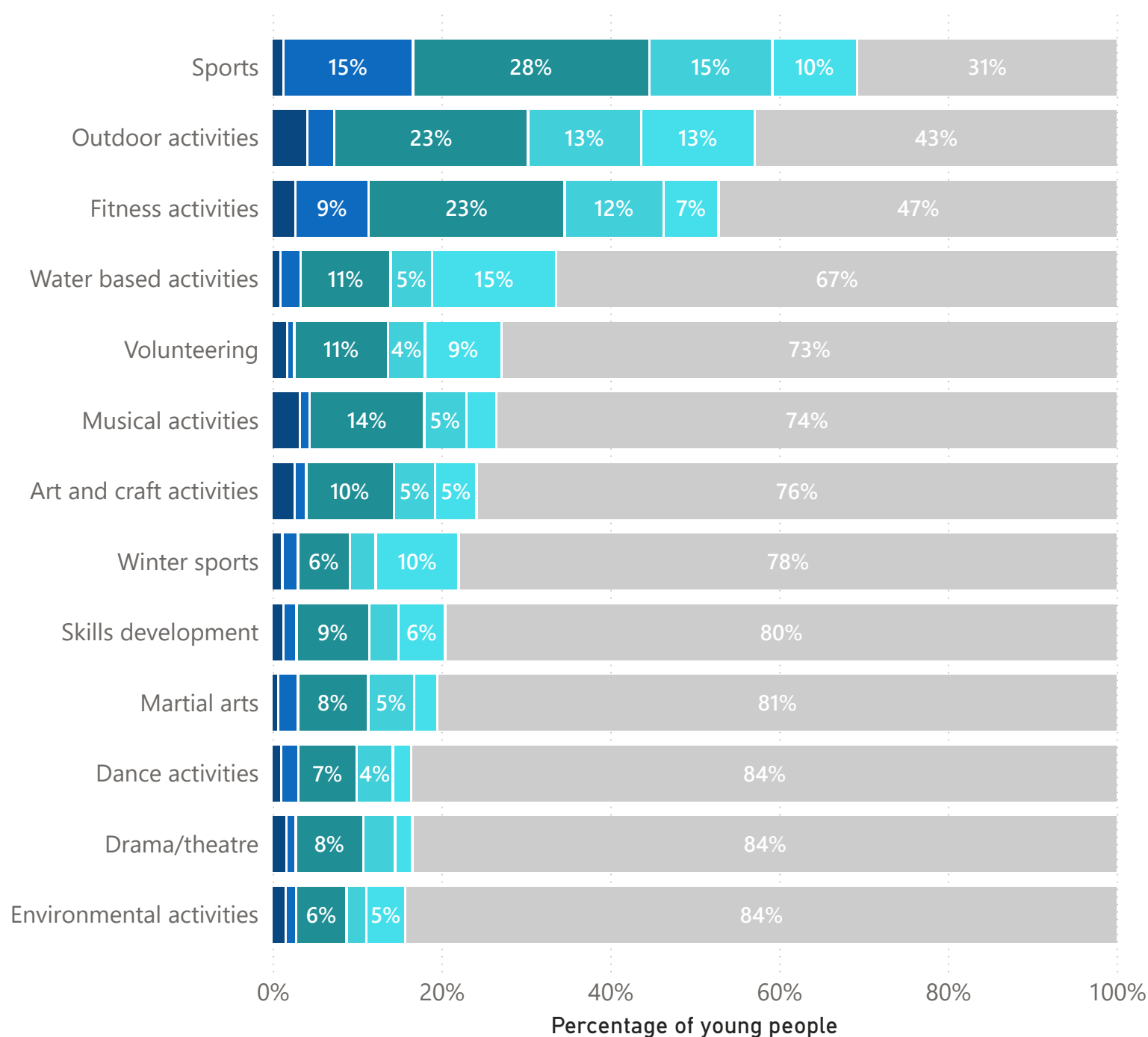
Community life (S3 and S4)

Young people were asked when they would like to take part in a range of activities with the percentages shown below by their preferred timings. A small proportion of young people wanted to take part in activities before school, during break, or (non-PE activities) during PE time.

Of the young people that want to take part in activities, most want to do so after school.

I'd like to take part in these activities at these times:

● 1. Before school/in break ● 2. During PE ● 3. After school ● 4. Evenings ● 5. Weekends ● 6. Not interested



The young people were asked what activities they would like to be able to access in their communities:

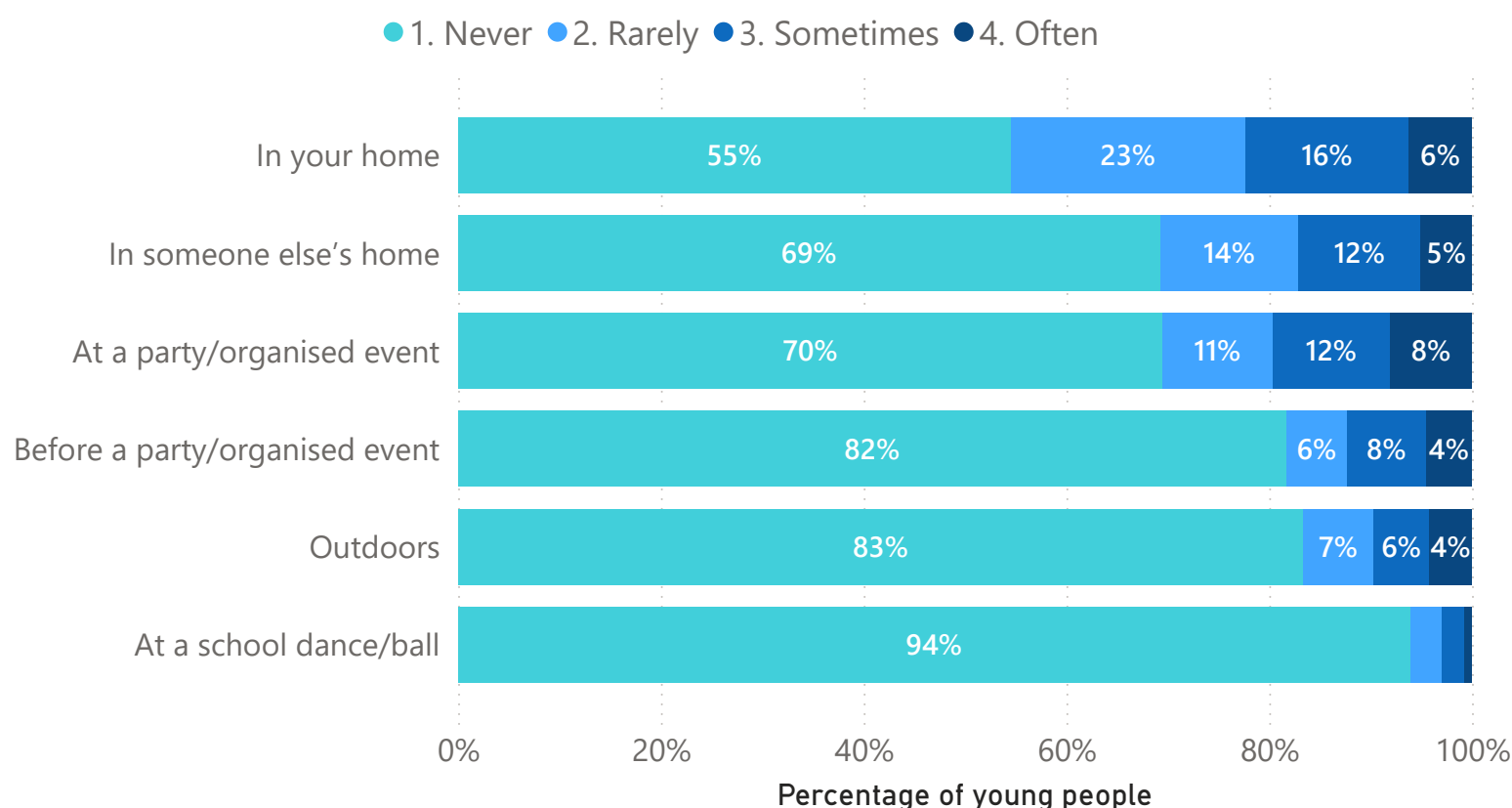


Where alcohol use takes place (S3 and S4)

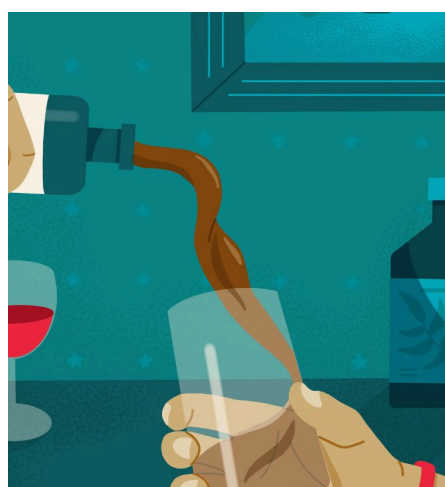
Young people were asked about where alcohol use takes place. From those who responded:

- 45% had consumed alcohol in their home
- 31% had consumed alcohol in someone else's home
- 30% had consumed alcohol at a party or organised event
- 18% had consumed alcohol before a party or organised event
- 17% had consumed alcohol outdoors
- 6% had consumed alcohol at a school party or ball.

Where alcohol use takes place:



It is important to know where alcohol use is accepted, as challenging this, is a protective factor for young people.



TAKEAWAY

45% had consumed alcohol in their own home

31% had consumed alcohol in someone else's home

Unorganised leisure time (S3 and S4)

Young people were asked how often and where they hang out:

19% hang out at a friend's home with no adult present once a week or more

18% hang out with friends at a shopping centre or in town once a week or more

13% hang out with friends in fields or woods once a week or more

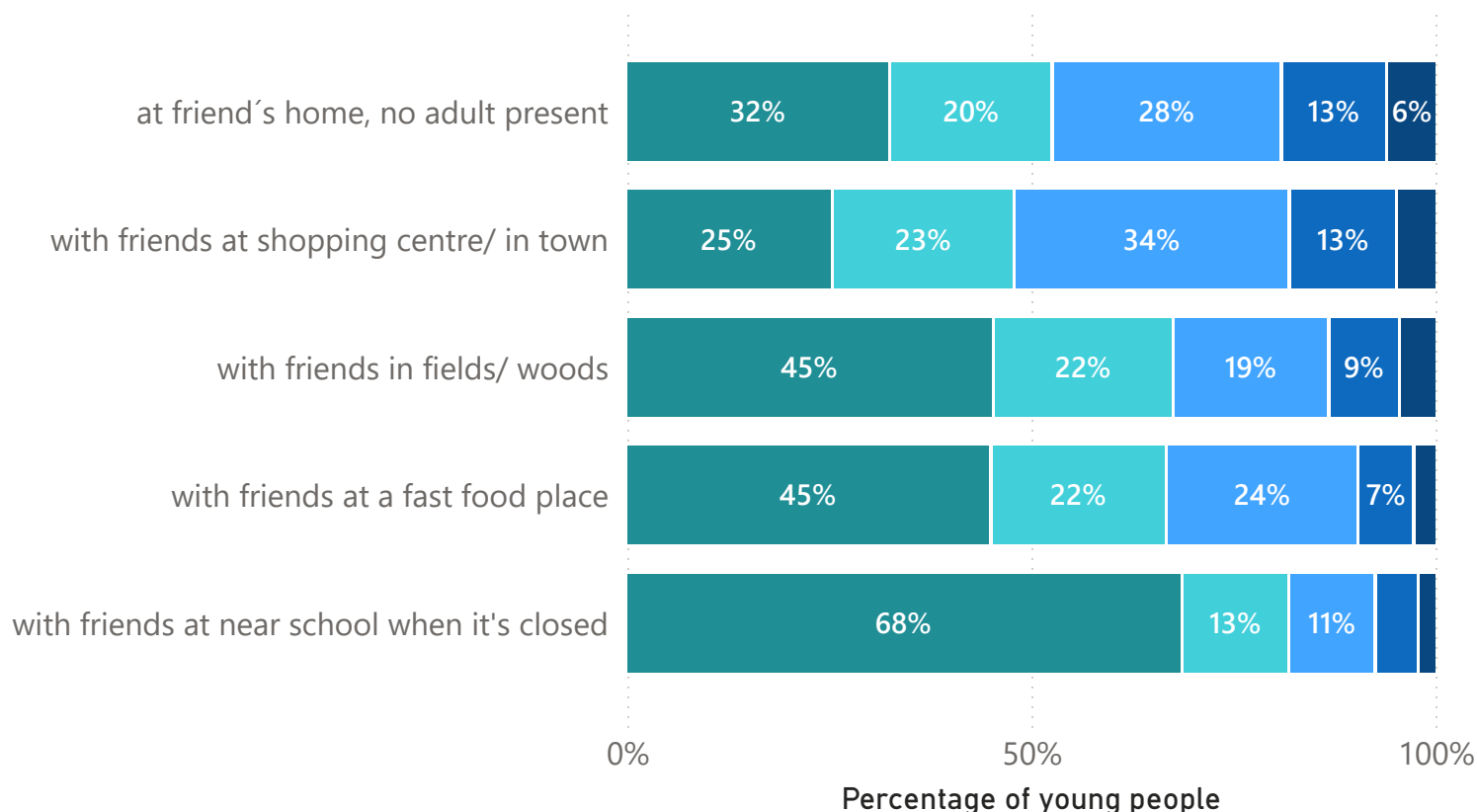
10% hang out with friends at a fast food takeaway once a week or more

8% hang out with friends at a nearby school when the school is closed once a week or more.

Unorganised leisure time can be a risk factor if young people have too much free time. Young people need time to relax and space to do this, but too much free time can be a risk factor that increases the likelihood of negative risk-taking behaviours, particularly during adolescence.

Number of times spent in unorganised leisure time by location

● a. Never/almost never ● b. < 1 /month ● c. 1-3 /month ● d. 1-3 /week ● e. 4 /week or more



Late outside hours (S3 and S4)

Young people were asked about their evening activities during the last 7 days:

91% stayed at home all evening at least once

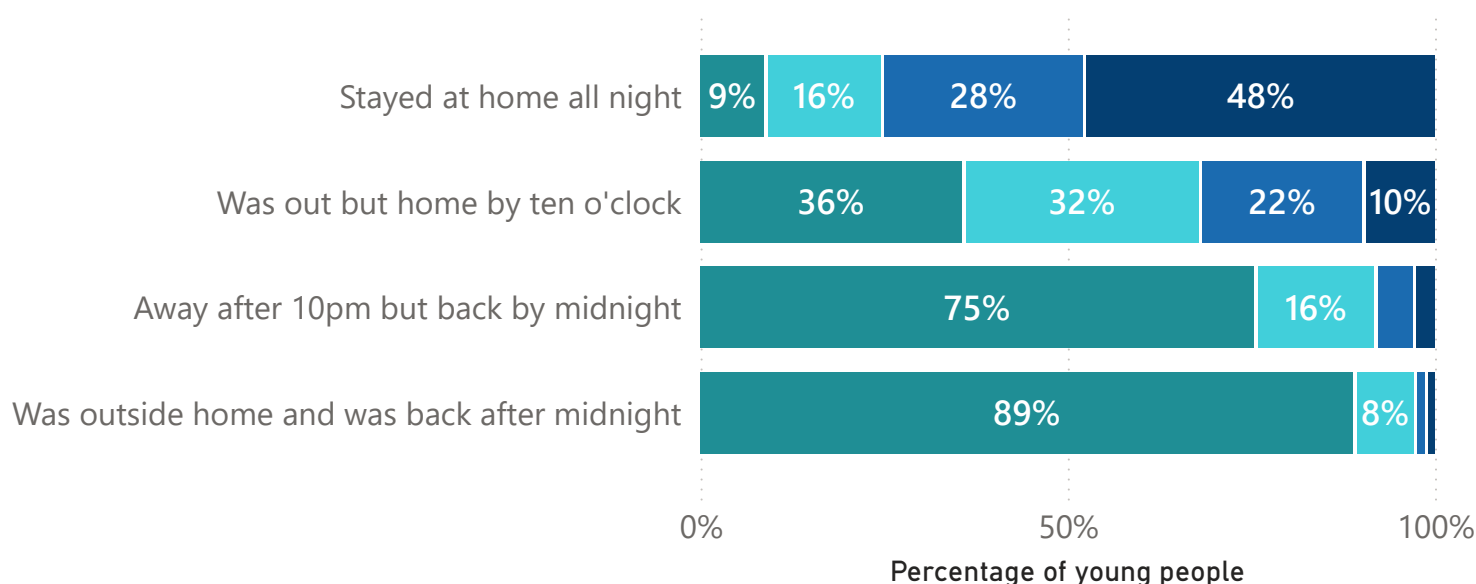
64% were away from home in the evening but back by 10pm at least once

25% were away from home after 10pm but home before midnight at least once

11% were outside home and returned after midnight at least once.

Number of times being out late in the last 7 days

● a. Never ● b. 1 to 2 times ● c. 3 to 5 times ● d. 6 times or more



Late outside hours are a risk factor, and so reducing the amount of time spent in this way is important for reducing risk.

Feeling safe (S3 and S4)

The young people were asked about where and how often they felt safe:

94% of young people felt safe at home

80% of young people felt safe during leisure activities

79% of young people felt safe while online

74% of young people felt safe in their community or neighbourhood

68% of young people felt safe at school.

Next Steps

What next?

The findings from the 2025 survey paint a powerful and encouraging picture.

Young people in Highland are, on average, safer, healthier, and experiencing fewer harms than they were four years ago, however there is still a long way to go and focussing on **early intervention and prevention** is key to this.

We can see that mental health indicators have improved. Bullying and feelings of being unsafe have declined. Smoking, drinking and drug use have reduced over time - however it is only through consistent, collaborative action that we can continue to make positive changes that will affect all aspects of child and adolescent health across Highland. The data also helps us to identify the protective and risk factors that have the biggest impact on many areas affecting the health of young people, these being:

Three protective influences stand out for Highland:



Consistently linked to better outcomes across ten areas



One of the most powerful single predictors of improved wellbeing



A universal behavioural protective factor across multiple mental health indicators

Three of the most influential risk factors in Highland include:



A major driver of harm across mental health and wellbeing outcomes



Strongly associated with a wide range of behavioural risks



Makes pupils progressively more vulnerable for each negative life event they experience

Source: Will Bibby and Giulia Piazza, **Planet Youth Scotland Highland Survey 2025**, An analysis of outcomes, predictors, and inequalities among Highland's young people. January 2026.

Recommendations

The 13 Planet Youth Community Action Groups (CAGs) have been established and they include a wide range of engaged individuals, driven by personal and professional interests. Information, ideas and actions are shared at the CAG. The community plays a fundamental role in the success of implementing the Planet Youth process. Changing the social environment requires the collaborative participation of a wide-range of community members.

Informed by local knowledge and the data presented within this report, the Planet Youth Community Action Groups will create a set of actions to strive towards. These actions will be supported by the overarching Planet Youth in Highland Oversight Group which consists of a variety of key stakeholders and partner agencies.

Current and ongoing Highland-wide actions include:

1. Increase number, range and access to organised activities for young people and families
2. Support parents' and carers to deliver consistent messages regarding alcohol, tobacco, drugs and other risky behaviours
3. Increase social cohesion among families through shared activities and communications
4. Ensure the number, range and choice of positive activities reflect a wide range of student interests
5. Increase number of family-to-family activities that include young people's friends and families
6. Create resources and learning sessions for parents, carers and professionals based on the data.

Measures and evaluation for each of these have been considered.

Conclusion

A significant survey response rate of **79%** for the combined S3 and S4 pupils in the 13 Planet Youth Partner Schools was achieved overall in Highland in 2025. This high completion rate provides robust, reliable and up to date information on the health and wellbeing of young people and their experience of growing up in their communities.

While there are many areas to celebrate, there are other areas that remain challenging for our young people. The Planet Youth approach has achieved successful outcomes for young people in Iceland and across the world. The same can be achieved in Highland through working in partnership and by actioning what the young people are telling us. Working collaboratively to increase protective factors and reducing risk factors will allow us to put prevention into action and to support the improved health and wellbeing of future generations of Highland's children.

Together we can make a difference.

Useful links:

The Parent Hub - The Planet Youth in Highland engagement and resource page:

<https://nhsh.uk.engagementhq.com/planet-youth-highland>



The Parent Hub



The Planet Youth Padlet

The Planet Youth Highland Parent and Carer information and advice Padlet:

https://padlet.com/victoriac Clark5_1/planet-youth-parent-and-carer-padlet-working-with-communitie-m6ddc873byvdsod

Highland Substance Awareness Toolkit: www.h-sat.co.uk

H-SAT Planet Youth model:

www.highlandsubstanceawareness.scot.nhs.uk/planet-youth-model/

Parent's Guide: <https://bit.ly/3K1aGs0>

Winning Scotland:

<https://winningscotland.org/current-projects/#planet-youth-scotland>

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