

A pair of hands is shown holding a small, round, green moss ball. The moss ball is made of many small, green, hair-like plants growing together. The hands are positioned as if they are carefully holding or presenting the moss ball. The background is a blurred green, suggesting an outdoor setting.

Helping the Environment - A Snapshot Survey of Children and Young People in Wales

Children's Commissioner for Wales

November 2024

The logo consists of four circular icons arranged in a square. The top-left icon is purple with a white hand. The top-right icon is blue with a white megaphone. The bottom-left icon is green with a white person. The bottom-right icon is white with a green person.

**Comisiynydd
Plant Cymru**
Children's
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Introduction

During November 2024 we asked children and young people how they help the environment at home, in school, and in their community, and how aware they are of local and national action in this area.

The survey was part of an ongoing series of topical questions we ask children and young people monthly to hear their views on a variety of issues, called Monthly Matters. It was shared directly with all schools signed up to our children's rights schemes for primary and secondary schools, as well as community groups.

As part of the survey pack, children and young people were shown a video introducing the topic, and they were asked to consider some questions, like what they do at home to support efforts to help the environment, and their awareness of and involvement in local and national initiatives . We suggested in our session outline that, following this video, children and young people should have a few minutes to discuss their views with each other before answering the survey. Schools and groups had two options for completing the survey; children and young people could either do it independently, or a teacher or group leader could complete the survey on behalf of the group by answering a different set of questions to give an overview of the discussion.

494 children and young people answered the survey individually. A further 626 children took part in groups, with teachers and youth workers submitting a summary of their views. A broad range of ages took part, from children under the age of 6 up to 18-year-olds. We received responses from 16 local authority areas.

Questions were developed by the Commissioner's experienced staff team based on themes that had emerged from previous engagement exercises with children, young people, and professionals.

Questions for children and young people

What do you and your family/carers do at home to help the environment?

Reuse shopping bags (371) - 74%

Turning off lights (360) - 72%

Use a food waste bin (360) - 72%

Turn off electronic devices at night e.g. TV (298) - 59%

Use less water e.g. shower instead of a bath, turning tap off when brush teeth (222) - 44%

Try and buy more local food (like meat and vegetables) (176) - 35%

Buy food that has less packaging (like loose bananas, not bananas in a bag) (163) - 30%

Active travel e.g. walking/cycling/scooting instead of using the car (151) - 30%

Changing your diet (74) - 15%

Use more public transport like the train or bus (73) - 15%

Something else (35) - 7%

I don't know (27) - 5%

My family aren't taking any actions at the moment (3) - 1%

What is your school/community group doing?

Recycling (387) - 77%

Using a food waste bin (303) - 60%

Eco councils/groups (291) - 58%

Litter picking (281) - 56%

Turning lights off (252) - 50%

Encouraging you to walk, cycle, or scoot to school, or get the train or bus (220) - 44%

Changing the dinner menu (178) - 35%

Reducing/banning single use plastics (99) - 20%

I don't know (40) - 8%

Something else (19%) - 4%

My school/community group aren't doing anything specific at the moment (5) - 1%

What else would you like your school/community group to do?

Litter picking (152) - 31%

Change the dinner menu (125) - 25%

Turning lights off (125) - 25%

Recycle (116) - 24%

I don't know (111) - 23%

Reduce/Ban single use plastics (110) - 22%

Use a food waste bin (108) - 22%

Encourage pupils to walk, cycle, or scoot to school, or get the train or bus (100) - 20%

Eco councils/groups (67) - 14%

Nothing else (29) - 6%

Something else (24) - 5%

Is there anything you're proud that your school/community group is doing that you want to tell us about?

No (363) - 74%

Yes (130) - 26%

What is your school/community group doing?

The highest number of responses related to:

- Recycling
- Growing their own food
- Picking up litter

Do you know what Welsh Government are doing to help the climate/the environment?

I don't know (238) - 47%

No (165) - 33%

Yes (100) - 20%

What have you heard about?

The highest number of responses referred to reducing plastic bag use

How do you find out about what Wales is doing to help the environment?

News (251) - 51%

Lessons in school (222) - 45%

Parents/family (147) - 30%

Social media (123) - 25%

Looking online (117) - 24%

I don't look/I'm not interested (73) - 15%

Other (17) - 3%

Do you know about any groups of people who are trying to help the climate/the environment? This could be a group within your school or local community or a national/global organisation.

I don't know (206) - 42%

Yes (161) - 33%

No (126) - 26%

What groups have you heard of?

The highest number of responses referred to school-based eco groups/councils.

Do you take part in any groups that help the climate/environment?

No (285) - 58%

Yes (131) - 27%

I don't know (78) - 16%

Would you like to take part in a group like this?

No (103) - 36%

I don't know (92) - 32%

Yes (89) - 31%

Do you feel like you have enough information about climate issues, and what you can do to make a difference?

Yes (230) - 46%

I don't know (144) - 29%

No (61) - 12%

I'm not interested in this topic (60) - 12%

Questions for Teachers

Where teachers responded on behalf of a group, their answers reflected the answers given by children directly. Teachers were also able to give their own perspective and experiences in the following questions:

Do you have the information around this issue to be equipped to share with children and young people and facilitate discussions?

Most teachers felt they did have enough information.

Conclusion

- From the findings, it is evident that children and young people across Wales engage in a range of activities to support the environment.
- Given that almost half (45%) of children and young people reported that they access their information about this topic from lessons in school, it is reassuring that teachers reported that they feel equipped with the knowledge to share information with children and young people on this topic and facilitate discussions.
- 31% of participating children and young people would like to take part in a group that help the environment however, 42% responded “I don’t know” when asked if they knew of any groups that supported the environment, and 47% responded in the same way when asked if they knew what Welsh Government are doing to help the environment. Considering these findings, child-friendly information about the actions being taken in Wales, and opportunities to take action to help the environment would be helpful to further promote climate action.
- Only 15% of children and young people responding to this survey reported using ‘more public transport’ to help the environment. This reinforces the importance of the Children’s Commissioner for Wales’ [calls](#) for free public transport for under 18’s, not only to alleviate poverty, but to introduce life-long behaviours in relation to transport which can benefit the environment.