

IS IT DIFFICULT TO BE A MAN?

Adolescence

has been at the forefront of the national conversation recently, even sparking a discussion in Parliament around its themes of male violence and toxic masculinity. As young people are at the heart of the topic, we wanted to give them an opportunity to contribute to the discourse by sharing their thoughts and experiences. The lessons took a closer look at what it means to be a young man and to what extent this has changed over time. Our report details the breakdown of their votes and some of the main reasons they gave for their responses.

Melanie



DATA MANAGER

44,460

TOTAL VOTES

9,582

VOTES AGE 5-11

34,878

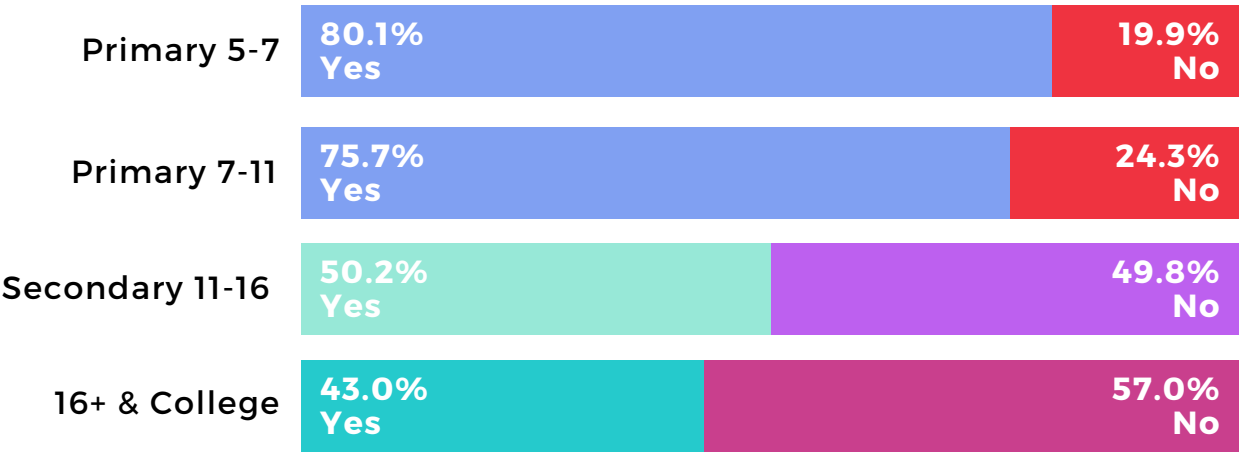
VOTES AGE 11-18+

The VoteTopic questions, discussed amongst the different age groups:

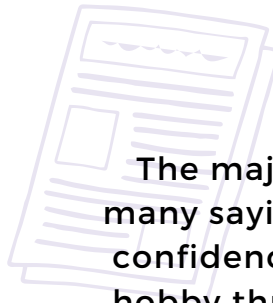
Primary 5-7: “Do role models help you?”

Primary 7-11: “Are role models important to you?”

Secondary 11-16, College & 16+: “Is it difficult to be a man?”



Please contact info@votesforschools.com to find out more about the data relating to this VoteTopic.



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The majority of Primary pupils felt favourably towards role models, with many saying they could positively influence their actions and give them the confidence to try new things; one pupil said they had found their favourite hobby through one of their role models. A smaller number highlighted the potential for role models to negatively influence people or create unnecessary pressure to live up to a certain standard.

A similar theme came through from Secondary students, with many saying that men are under a lot of pressure to appear “masculine enough”. Societal expectations can prevent them from discussing their feelings or seeking help when they need it.

Some students who voted ‘No’ did so because they felt that the difficulties facing men don’t compare to the struggles facing women. They argued that women have had to fight for equal rights and still face greater judgement and less freedom than men do today. Others thought that life is easier for men now than it has been in the past.

Many voters were in agreement that a lot of the problems facing men today are a result of trying to live up to certain expectations of what a “man” is supposed to be.

I think role models are important because they can help you build your character and your personality and they can inspire you too.

Primary ‘Yes’ Voter

It's not always healthy to have a role model who isn't morally correct, this would have a negative impact on you.

Primary ‘No’ Voter

We think that lots of the difficulties men face [and] pressure to conform and 'be a man' often comes from other men and not women. It is harder to be a woman as we are afraid of violence by men.

Secondary ‘Yes’ Voter

Girls have to deal with periods, double standards, expectations of what they can and can't do. - Boys are given more freedom, less restrictions. Held to a different standard.

Secondary ‘No’ Voter

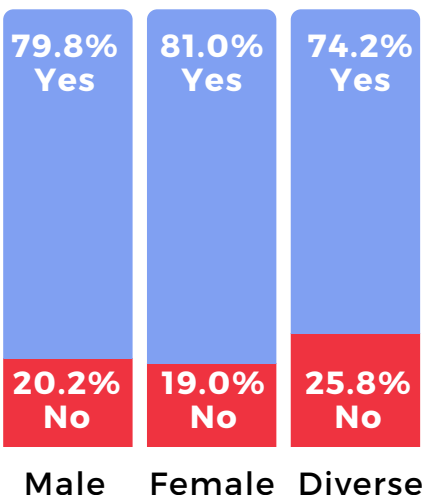
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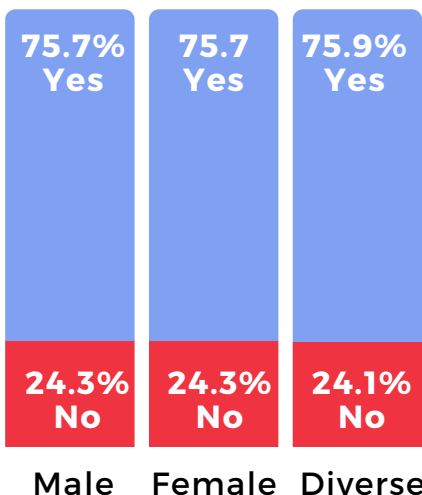
Some of the teachers who delivered these lessons noted that there was a different reaction to the question depending on the gender of their students. This was perhaps to be expected, as the topic undoubtedly brought up conversations about the difficulties facing women and non-binary people (read more about this on page 2).

This divide can be seen quite clearly in the gender breakdown of the vote for Secondary, 16+, and College students. Please note, votes collected as “Diverse” include students that identify as gender diverse, as well as students that did not wish to disclose or were not able to specify their gender.

Primary 5-7: “Do role models help you?”



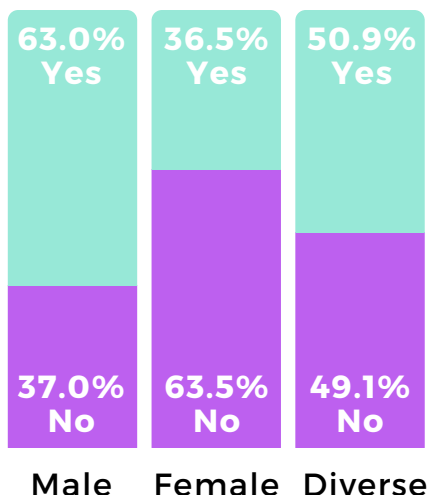
Primary 7-11: “Are role models important to you?”



The gender breakdown of the vote at a Primary level was relatively consistent, suggesting role models have an important influence on male, female and gender diverse children.

Around two-thirds of Male Secondary students voted ‘Yes’, however the Male vote at 16+ & College level was close to split. The Female vote was similar for both age groups, with around two-thirds voting ‘No’.

Secondary 11-16: “Is it difficult to be a man?”



College & 16+: “Is it difficult to be a man?”

