



# Our City Our Resilience: Youth-Led Preparedness & Action

With the Mayor's Fund for London

# Who we are

**We are the Mayor's Fund for London,  
a charity that champions opportunities for young Londoners facing the biggest barriers across the capital.**

Throughout the lifetime of a young Londoner, we're here for them:



**Providing food as a Foundation**



**Skills as a Springboard**



**Power through our Platform**

...so they can grow, thrive, and shape London into a truly inclusive, more prosperous city.

**Starter Activity –**  
How well do you know  
how young people  
feel  
about emergency  
preparedness?



# Why Youth Voice Matters for London's Resilience

London faces growing disruption; from economic pressure and housing insecurity to climate risks, infrastructure challenges and public emergencies.

Young people are among those most affected by these changes, yet their perspectives are often underrepresented in resilience planning.

Our research explores:

**How young people understand resilience**

**Disruptions they experience most**

**How prepared they feel for emergencies**

**How they want to contribute to solutions**

**What support they need from systems**

**By listening to young people, London can strengthen preparedness, improve support systems and build resilience that works for everyone.**

# Our Research Approach

Our study combined diverse methodologies to gather comprehensive insights into young Londoners' perspectives on resilience.



## Online Youth Survey

We conducted a quantitative survey among 16-25 year olds across London to explore experiences of disruption, preparedness, and views on resilience. This provided broad insights and valuable open-text responses.



## Co-designed Youth Workshops

Facilitated in-person sessions with youth groups in London boroughs explored lived experiences and decision-making through scenario-based discussions on topics like flooding, transport, and housing.



## Youth Co-Leadership

A dedicated Youth Board collaborated on the research design and workshop activities, ensuring our approach was relevant, accessible, and truly youth-centred from conception to execution.

# Understanding Our Languages Spoken



The majority of respondents reported that **English is the main language spoken at home**, either as a sole language or alongside other languages. However, responses also show significant linguistic diversity, reflecting the multicultural nature of London's young population.

The most frequently mentioned additional languages spoken at home alongside English included **Arabic, Bengali, Somali, Urdu, Spanish, Polish, French, Yoruba, Twi and Punjabi**, each appearing multiple times across responses.

# Understanding Our Participants

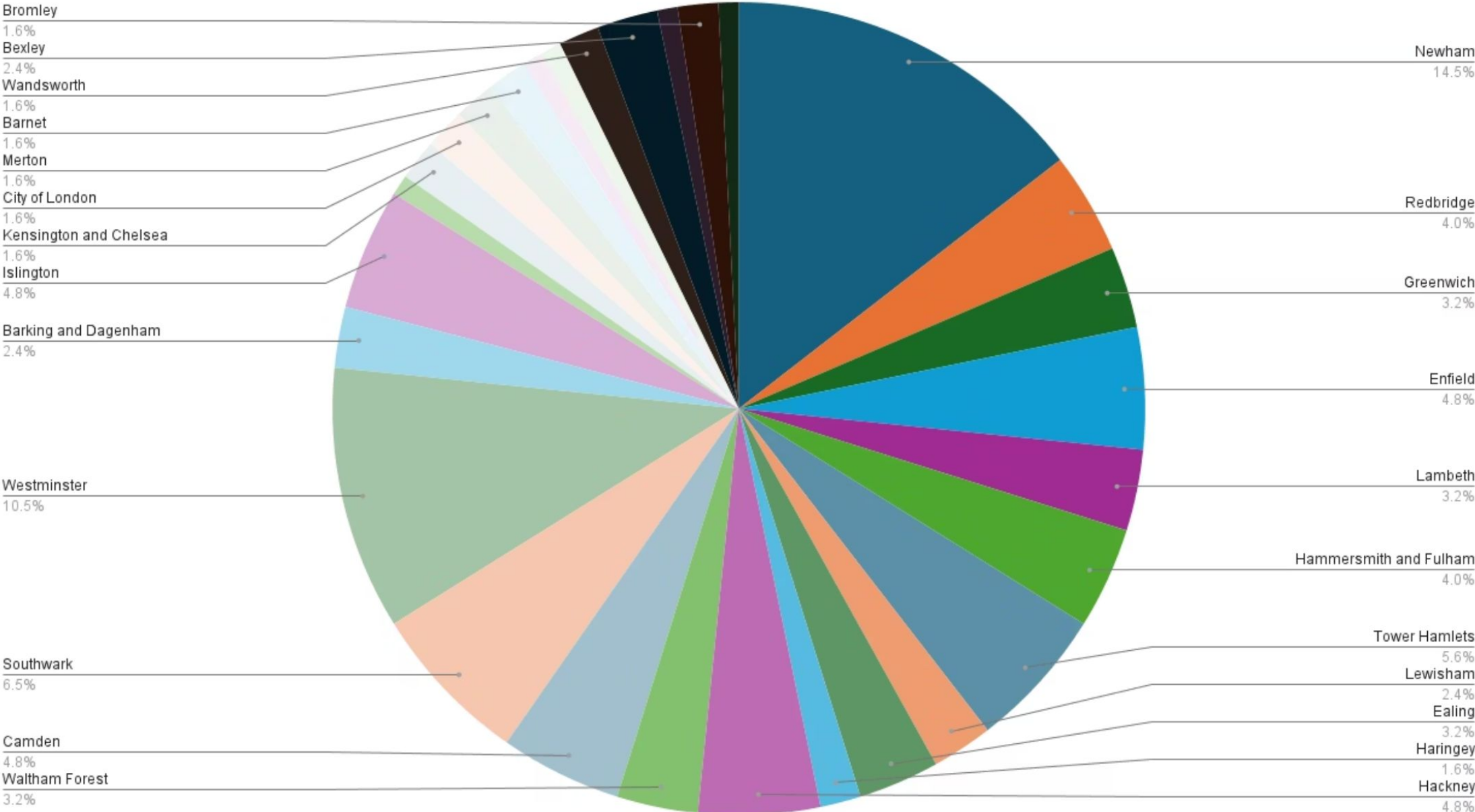
Survey responses were spread across a wide range of London boroughs, with strongest participation from **Newham**, **Westminster**, and **Southwark**. There was moderate representation from **Tower Hamlets**, **Enfield**, **Camden**, **Hackney**, and **Islington**, alongside smaller proportions from several other boroughs.

However, participation was uneven, with **lower response levels from a number of outer London boroughs**, including Bromley, Bexley, Barnet and Wandsworth (each under 3%). This suggests the need for more targeted outreach in outer London areas to ensure broader geographic representation of young people's experiences.

Overall, responses are currently weighted towards **inner London boroughs and areas with stronger youth sector engagement**, highlighting an opportunity to strengthen reach across the wider capital.

# Borough Repre

Which London Borough do you live in?



# Understanding Our Participants

## Current Situation

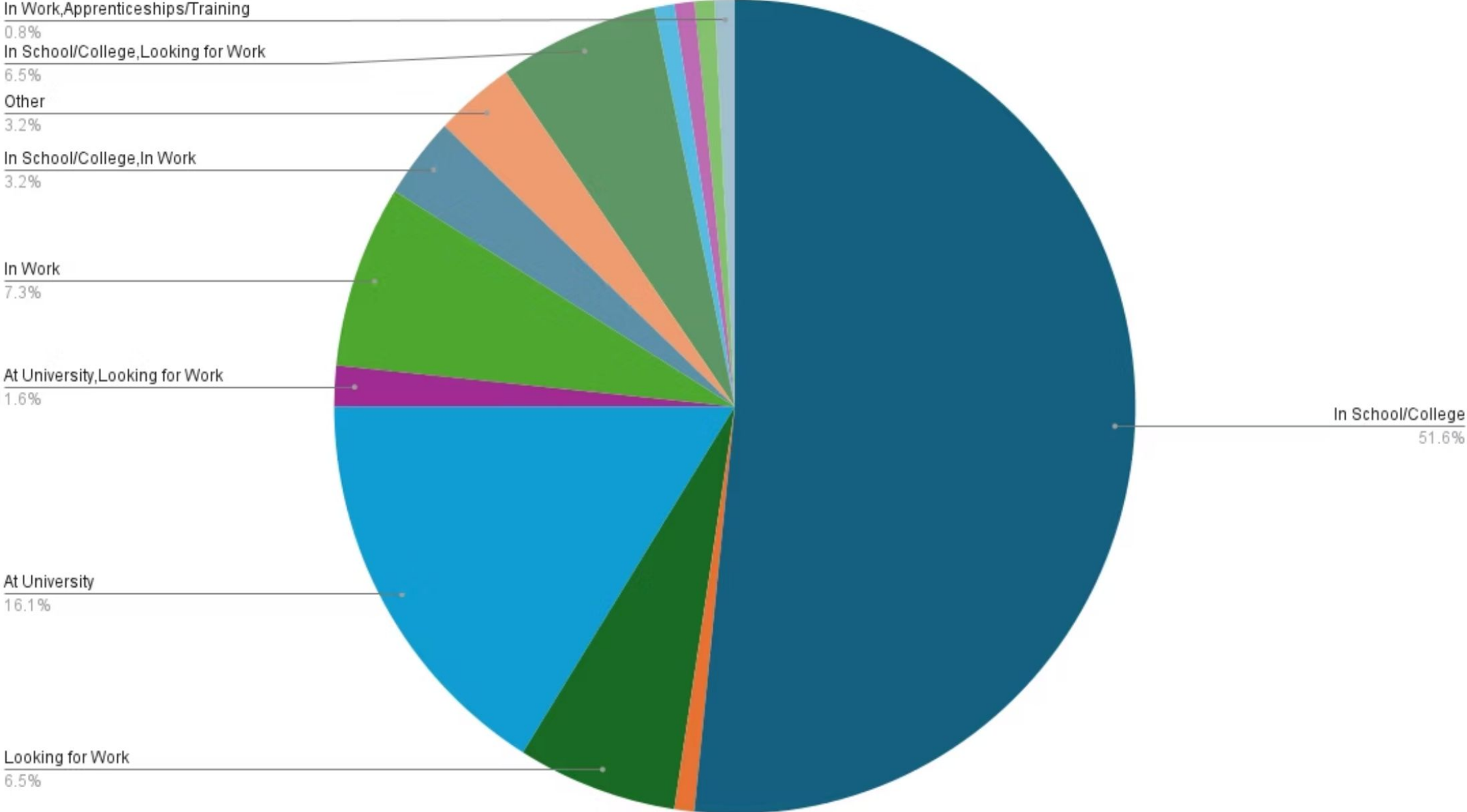
Most respondents were currently in **school or college**, making up the largest proportion of participants. A smaller but significant group were **at university**, followed by young people who were **looking for work or in employment**. A small number reported being in **apprenticeships or training**, or selected other situations.

Several respondents selected more than one option, reflecting the reality that many young people are balancing education, work, and job-seeking at the same time.

Overall, the survey currently reflects stronger participation from young people in education, with comparatively fewer responses from those in employment, training, or not in education, employment, or training.

# Current Situation

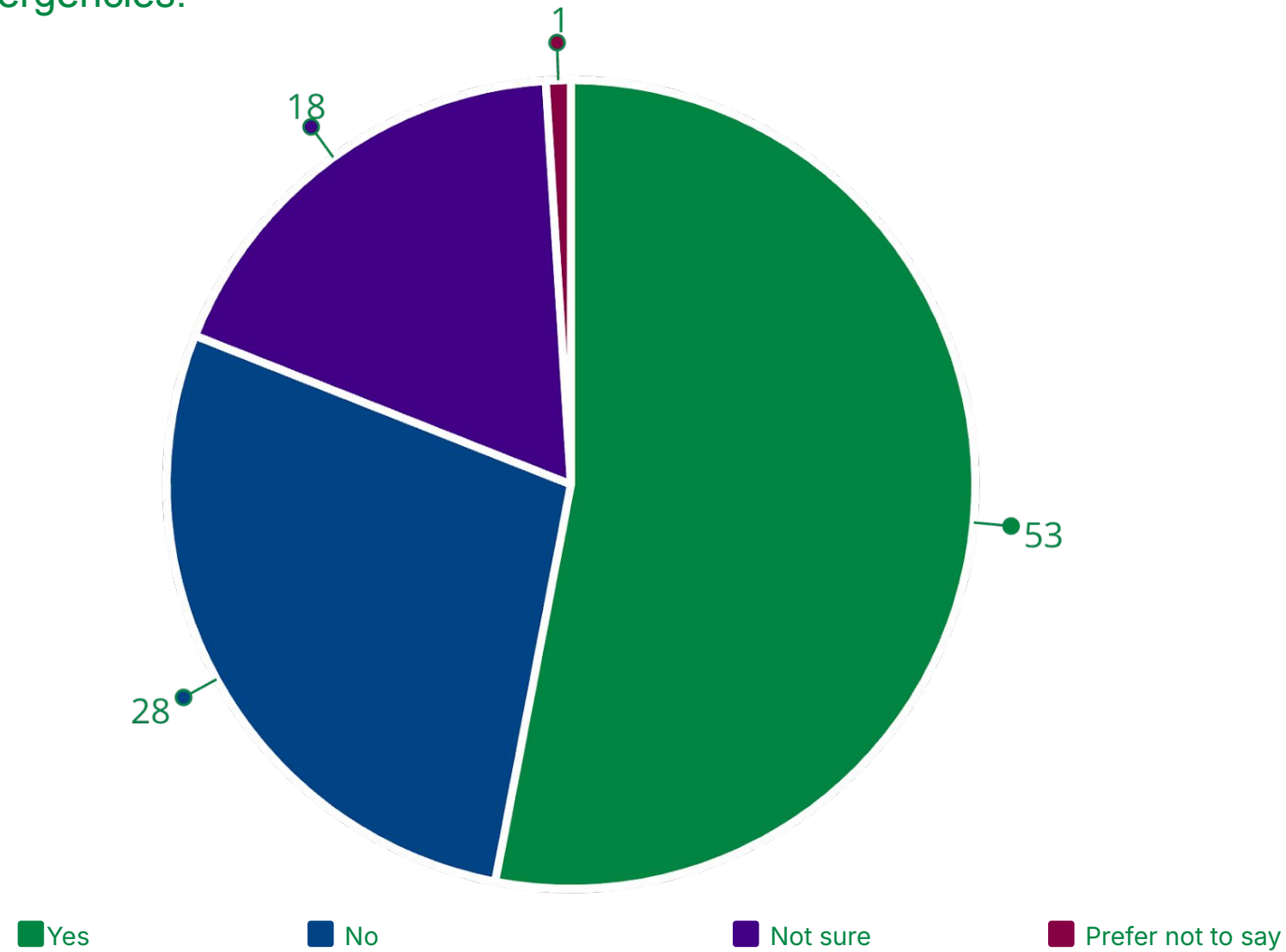
Which of these best describes your current situation?



# Understanding Our Participants

## Socio-economic Barriers to Preparedness

A substantial number of young people identified that challenges related to **housing, money, or work** made it harder for them to feel prepared for emergencies.



This finding underscores the critical link between socio-economic stability and individual resilience, suggesting that practical support in these areas is vital for strengthening community preparedness.

# Confidence vs Preparedness: Understanding vs Action

Key insight

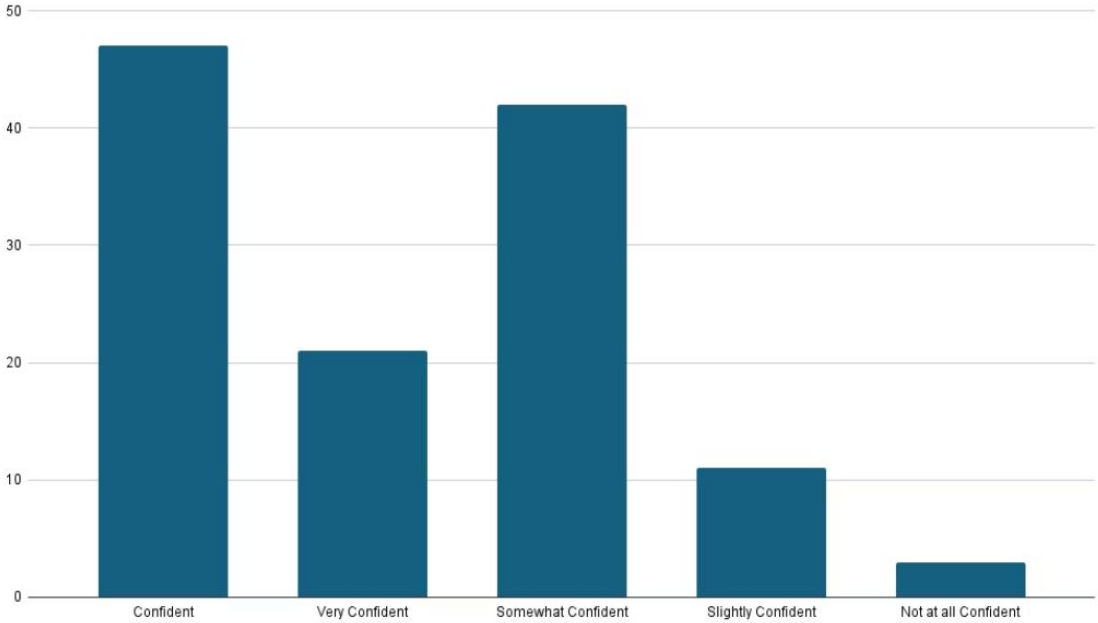
Survey participants generally feel confident explaining the idea of community resilience, but many feel less confident about what to do in a real emergency.

While most respondents said they were confident or somewhat confident explaining resilience, confidence dropped when asked about responding to real scenarios such as flooding or power cuts. Around one in five said they would not feel confident knowing what to do.

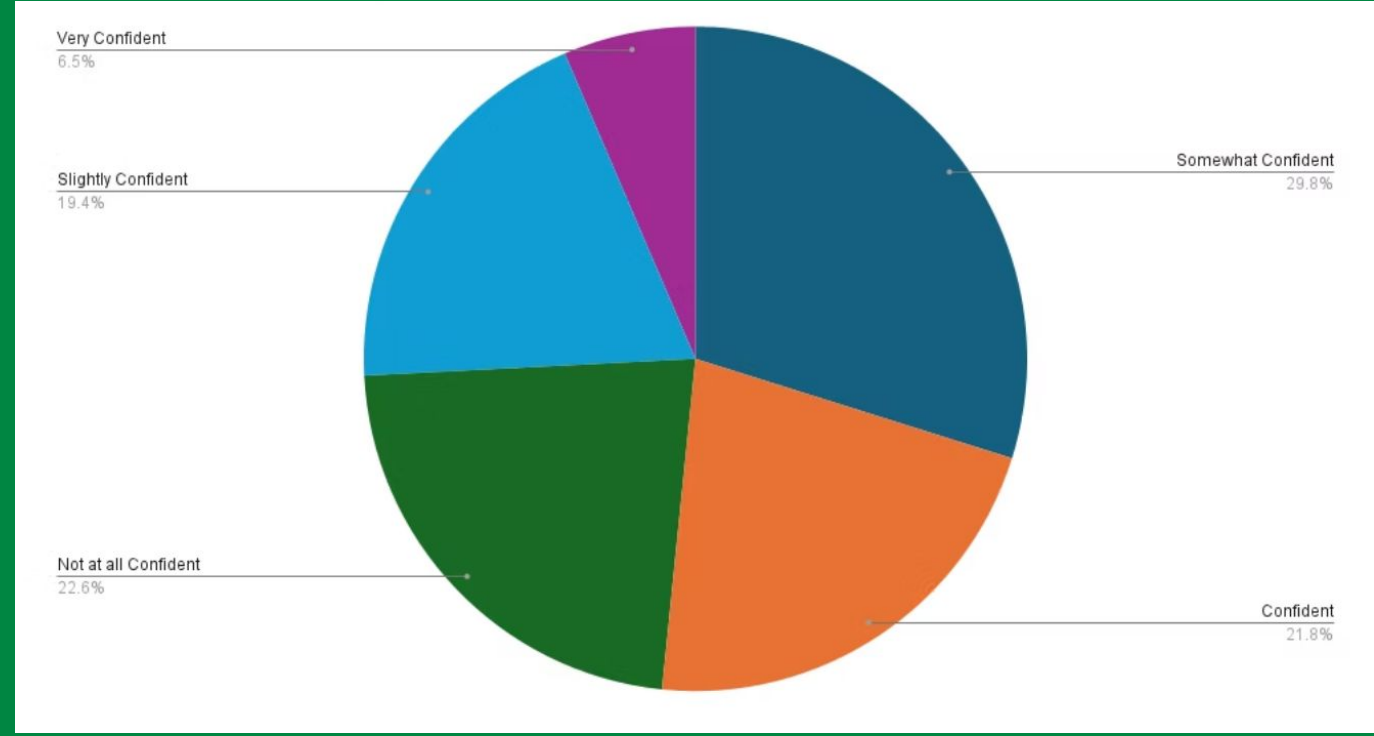
This suggests a gap between awareness and practical preparedness and indicates that understanding of what “community resilience” means may not always translate into clear knowledge of how to respond in an emergency.

# Confidence vs Preparedness: Understanding vs Action

Confidence explaining “community resilience”  
to friends and family



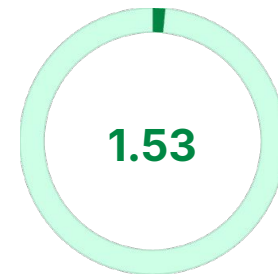
Confidence knowing what to do in an emergency



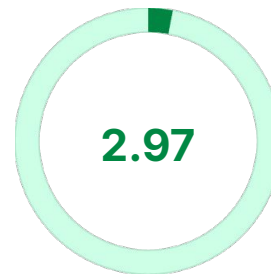
Key insight: Confidence in the concept does not equal understanding of action.

# Future Concerns: Economic, Environmental, Wellbeing

Young people in London are deeply concerned about a range of future challenges, with economic stability and climate change at the forefront. Their perceptions of impact vary across different types of emergencies, revealing key priorities for resilience planning.



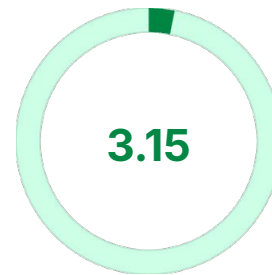
**Cost of Living & Housing**  
Perceived as the most impactful long-term concern, directly affecting daily life and future prospects.



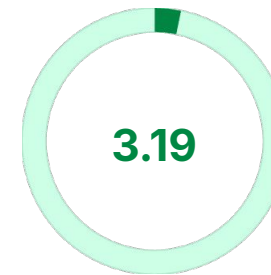
**Health Emergencies/Pandemics**  
A significant concern, reflecting recent experiences and ongoing worries about public health systems.



**Social/Civil Unrest**  
A notable concern, indicating anxieties about societal stability and community relations.



**Climate Change / Extreme Weather**  
Recognised as a moderate concern, particularly given its long-term environmental and social consequences.



**Cyber-attacks**  
Seen as least directly impactful on personal lives compared to other issues, though still a concern for overall stability.

Average impact score (1=Most impact, 5=Least impact)

This data underscores the need for resilience strategies that address not only immediate crisis response but also the underlying socio-economic and environmental factors that shape young people's vulnerability and perception of future risks.

# Future Concerns: Emerging Themes

Beyond the pre-defined categories, young people expressed a diverse range of additional concerns, highlighting areas critical for future resilience planning. These responses underscore the interconnectedness of personal wellbeing, societal issues, and external threats.



## Low Wages & Unemployment

Worries about **low wages and unemployment** were frequently cited, reflecting widespread anxiety about financial stability and future opportunities.



## Public Services

Worries included **cuts to vital public services** like healthcare and youth centres, impacting daily life and support systems.



## Safety & Social Issues

Concerns about **knife crime, gang violence and theft** were prominent, alongside fears of rising **racism, Islamophobia and far-right ideologies**.



## Global & Political Instability

Fears of **war, international conflict, and political instability**, alongside a lack of trust in government, were also mentioned as potential future disruptors.



## Mental Health & Community

**Mental health challenges** among young people, coupled with **social isolation** and the **lack of community spaces**, were identified as significant future impacts.

These additional concerns highlight the importance of holistic resilience strategies that go beyond immediate disaster response to address underlying societal vulnerabilities and support young people's comprehensive wellbeing.

# Engaging Young People in Resilience

**Planning** Young people offered numerous other suggestions on how they could be better involved and contribute to London's resilience. Their ideas span from active community participation to influencing policy.

1

## Empowerment in Governance

Advocating for **mandatory, well-resourced Youth Councils** in every borough to ensure youth voice in high-level decision-making. This includes engaging with representatives and collaborating with NGOs.

2

## Active Community Involvement

A strong desire for direct action through **creating awareness clubs** and building community spirit via **local events** in schools, colleges, youth clubs.

3

## Responsible Information & Support

Emphasising the importance of **being informed and avoiding misinformation, co-designing safety resources or campaigns** alongside providing **mutual support for one another**, recognising the value of presence and listening.

4

## Systemic Investment & Respect

Calls for **structured government programmes with proper funding** for essential services like housing and healthcare, and a greater respect for young people's contributions to society.

# What We Learned From Young

## Londoners

Across the survey and workshops, several consistent themes emerged about how young people understand resilience, experience disruption, and want to be involved in shaping London's response.



### Resilience is Collective Support

Young people associate resilience with communities supporting each other, sharing resources, and staying connected during challenges.



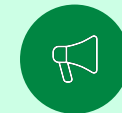
### Confidence ≠ Preparedness

Many felt confident discussing resilience, but fewer knew what to do in real emergencies, highlighting a gap between awareness and practical readiness.



### Everyday Pressures Shape Resilience

Transport disruption along with economic and health challenges were commonly experienced disruptions, linking resilience closely to daily realities.



### Young People Want to Contribute

Respondents expressed strong interest in volunteering, sharing information, contributing ideas, and participating in decision-making processes.



**Key insight: Resilience for young Londoners is practical, collective and shaped by everyday pressures.**

# What This Means for London's Resilience Planning

These findings suggest the need for a more practical, inclusive and youth-centred approach to resilience.



## Shift from awareness to practical preparedness

Resilience planning should prioritise clear, accessible guidance on what to do during emergencies.



## Address everyday drivers of vulnerability

Economic pressure, housing and transport disruption shape how resilient young people feel and must be considered in resilience planning.



## Strengthen trusted communication channels

Young people rely on peer networks, schools, social media and community organisations.



## Embed youth voice in resilience systems

Move beyond consultation toward co-design, local action and leadership opportunities.

**Overall implication:** Resilience policy should integrate practical support, inclusive communication and meaningful youth participation.

# Building a More Resilient London With Young People:

A resilient London is built not only through emergency response, but through empowered communities and meaningful youth partnership.

## Key Takeaways



### Provide clear and accessible youth-friendly information

Deliver practical guidance on preparing for and responding to emergencies through trusted and accessible channels.



### Strengthen access to support during disruption

Ensure young people can access financial, social and community support during disruption.



### Create meaningful youth participation pathways

Enable young people to contribute through co-design, consultation, local action and leadership opportunities.



### Invest in community connection and preparedness

Support local networks, trusted spaces and collective responses that help communities support one another.



**A resilient London depends on young people not just preparing for emergencies, but shaping how the city responds, recovers and thrives.**