

GEN22 AND IDEAS MADE REAL

2023 - 2024 IMPACT REPORT



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INTRODUCTION

Gen22 is a free to access programme that creates opportunities for young people (aged 16 – 24) from the West Midlands to gain employability boosting skills and make a positive difference in their community through social action initiatives. Inspired by the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games, the programme is for young people who might otherwise struggle to access opportunities. Barriers could include: a lack of confidence; poor mental health; being a young carer or young parent; or having a criminal record.

In 2020–21 the Commonwealth Games Legacy team designed and trialled the first iteration of the Gen22 programme. It was designed following consultation with young people and was intended to engage young people who faced barriers to taking part in opportunities offered by the Commonwealth Games.

Following this initial trial, the programme was scaled up in 2021–2022, where it engaged 1,350 young people across the West Midlands.

In 2023, United By 2022 Charity was awarded a £4.7m grant from the Commonwealth Games Legacy Enhancement Fund which was overseen by the West Midlands Combined Authority.

2020–2021

A successful trial of Gen22

2021–2022

Gen22 and Ideas Made Real launch and reach **1,350 young people**

2023–2024

The second iteration of Gen22 and Ideas Made Real reaches **577 young people**



United By 2022 delivered five interlinked programmes collectively known as the Trailblazers:

- ▶ **Bring the Power**
- ▶ **Critical Mass**
- ▶ **Gen22**
- ▶ **Social Value**
- ▶ **Volunteers Collective**

These programmes were selected following a community consultation undertaken in early 2023 and using evidence from the external evaluation of Commonwealth Games legacy projects. This report focuses on the impact of the Gen22 programme in 2023 and 2024.

For this iteration of the programme, there was a strong focus on enabling participation from young people with special educational needs, disabilities, and access requirements.

The Gen22 Programme is made up of Gen22 and Ideas Made Real. Gen22 is delivered in partnership with community organisations who recruit young people and support them in completing a meaningful 30-hour social action assignment. These assignments were connected to the theme of 'Creative, Cultural & Digital' and/or 'Physical Activity & Wellbeing'.

Through the interventions, participants gained the opportunity to:

- ▶ **Earn accredited or in-house qualifications and awards**
- ▶ **Volunteer to lead activity sessions for other young people at events**
- ▶ **Participate in skills-based residential programmes**
- ▶ **Learn from professionals across various industries.**



Ideas Made Real gives young people the opportunity to turn their social action projects and community ideas into reality. Young people are invited to apply for a small grant to design and deliver their own community social action initiative. Understanding the challenges of a typical application, young people are encouraged to apply through a video application process. They are then shortlisted to attend PowerPlan Weekend, a 2-day skills-building event that culminates in a Dragon's Den style pitch to a panel of professionals. The successful projects are then granted an award of up to £8,000. Alongside this they also receive mentoring and support from an assigned partner organisation and United By 2022's youth team.

This report highlights the impact of Gen22 and Ideas Made Real throughout 2023 and 2024. It uses data from the **United By 2022: 2023 - 2024 Impact Report** to highlight the specific achievements of Gen22 and Ideas Made Real, outlining the contribution made in achieving the organisation's outcomes as highlighted in the **Theory of Change**. It also offers some further detail on the content of the projects themselves.

This report is intended to show the programme's significant impact on wellbeing, confidence and skills, particularly with participants who have low reported levels at the start. As Gen22 and Ideas Made Real continues into 2025 and 2026, the learning, evidence, and impact highlighted in this report will be used to develop and iterate the programme according to new participants and organisations, allowing United By 2022 to achieve an even deeper, richer impact for the participants who seek to benefit most from it.



SUMMARY OUTPUTS AND IMPACTS

14 Gen22 projects delivered by 2 flagship organisations and 12 grassroots organisations

546 Gen22 participants attended sessions a total of **6,296** times



734 Gen22 sessions happened at **78** different locations across the region

12 Ideas Made Real projects were funded, planned, and delivered by **31** young people

44.2% of young people engaged in Gen22 or Ideas Made Real were from the **20%** most deprived areas in the country

Nearly 1 in 5 participants identified as disabled, neurodiverse or living with a long term health condition



577 young people across Ideas Made Real and Gen22 completed a total of **22,390** hours of social action

3 training sessions on working with disabled and neurodiverse young people, were attended by **38** people, delivered by Sense Charity

People on average **rated their enjoyment of the programme: 8.8/10**

20.4% increase in participants identifying themselves as confident



22.8% increase in participants identifying that they had positive mental health

82.6% say they feel knowledgeable about using social media to campaign for social issues

12.4% increase in young people identifying themselves as resilient

26.4% increase in young people identifying that they had a positive outlook on society and the world around them

83.1% agreed that they had the skills they need to get where they want to in life

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

The 2023-2024 **Gen22** consisted of 14 delivery partners (2 flagship and 12 grassroots) from across the region, who were supported to deliver social action projects for young people. These 14 organisations were local community-based, with a track record of working with young people who face barriers to access. The delivery partners recruited and engaged the young people, supporting them through their social action project.

To further achieve the objective of supporting young people who face barriers in the Gen22 programme, an accessibility pot was made available to the 14 delivery organisations. This provided capacity building and access to additional training opportunities. The was designed to address the unique challenges and requirements faced by young people with SEND, ensuring they have equal access to employment services, facilities, and opportunities.

To achieve this, United By 2022 partnered with Sense, a charity that supports individuals who are deafblind or living with other complex disabilities. Sense developed a three-tier package that enhanced learning opportunities for participants by providing the delivery partners with personalised support to embed inclusive practice within their organisation.

Gen22 participants also had access to the Skills360 online learning platform, which had a range of training and development opportunities. They were able to enrol in 16 Employability Skills courses and earn badges by completing modules on leadership, CV writing, and safeguarding.

Each Gen22 partner delivered bespoke interventions with the participants they engaged. These spanned a range of different social causes, and used a variety of engagement methods. Together they formed a diverse set of opportunities for engagement, which had the potential to attract a broad range of young people. Each organisation's projects have been outlined below.



Powered by Can (Flagship Partner)

Powered by Can provided opportunities for young people to engage with life skills, sports, arts, social action, and creative sector skills. Through workshops, taster sessions, mentoring, and bootcamps the organisation helped raise aspirations, create bonds and forge new social networks. The sessions helped participants build social actions projects, develop their campaigns and complete the Youth Achievement Award Bronze qualification.



Birmingham City FC Community Trust (Flagship Partner)

This project focused on physical activity. The young people first travelled to Wales for a residential trip: climbing Snowdon, gorge scrambling, and team building activities. They then built on their skills in Birmingham, through football coaching, first aid training, planning workshops, sports leadership, public speaking and CV workshops. This was all led by a youth council, with support from staff mentors.

Warwickshire Cricket Foundation (Grassroots Partner)

This project enabled young women to 'Thrive on their Doorstep', by creating new and safe spaces to play cricket and other sports, where all the participants gained a qualification in Cricket Foundation Level 1. They received bespoke training to deliver a Serves Tennis Programme, football training from Strike9 Training CIC, training from Harborne Cricket Club on street hockey, tours around Edgbaston Cricket Ground, and finally an employability and CV workshop.

Your Basketball League (Grassroots Partner)

This project trained 22 participants to become young basketball leaders, training them as Level 2 referees, Level 2 table officials, and Level 2 coaches. The young people participated in theory sessions, Q&A sessions, practical sessions, and examinations and assessments. They had the opportunity to attend the City of Birmingham Camp and Valencia Basketball Camp where they were observed in a game scenario and had the experience of working alongside high level, international officials.





The Inspire Group (Grassroots Partner)

This project engaged young people in sport to explore and address social issues. It used a backwards planning approach, allowing young people to explore the social change they wanted to achieve and work backwards from there to see what steps were needed to achieve this. Participants took part in community sport design, safeguarding qualifications, volunteering at the AOC Sports Championship, part time work in schools, and partnership working on community sports sessions.

Central Youth Theatre (Grassroots Partner)

Young people participated in weekly creative skills development workshops. These workshops consisted of oral history training, marketing and promotion, event management, film making, acting, and screenplay. Following these workshops, 6 short documentaries were created that celebrated Wolverhampton residents who had contributed towards the city's cultural, social, and community development. The project culminated in a film premiere where members of the public could experience the work that the young creatives produced.



Gazebo Theatre (Grassroots Partner)

This project focused on using arts for social action in the community. The project began with team building, which led into training on using visual arts to capture their projects. Along the way they gained skills in emergency first aid, writing risk assessments, film editing, marketing, evaluation, and project development. The social action projects included an open mic night, t-shirt design, creating an inclusive space, and making and learning about bird boxes.

Girl Grind UK (Grassroots Partner)

This project delivered a week-long creative intensive trip for young people from inner city Birmingham. During the trip the young people experienced lessons on resilience, respect and values via kayaking, archery, orienteering, zip wiring, and blindfolded woodland trails. These activities were then celebrated in an awards and achievement evening on the last day of their trip.



InPower (Grassroots Partner)

This project blended martial arts with social action to improve physical health and safety in young people, and reach out to the local area and create opportunities for the community. Each participant experienced training on leadership, empowerment, and evaluation, as well as a 'fast track to Black Belt' course. The young people planned, hosted and delivered a community charity event.



Pitch 2 Progress (Grassroots Partner)

This project focused on social action reaching as many people in the local community as possible. Young people designed 12 initiatives varying in theme and target audience. The participants facilitated co-creation, planning, advertising, and delivery. Example topics included a midnight Ramadan Football League, a community fence improvement, a soup kitchen and charity bake for the homeless and local hostels, sandwich making for a local care home, a community sports day, and creative arts therapy sessions.

Solihull CEP (Grassroots Partner)

This project focused on upskilling individuals in chosen arts disciplines. It was delivered via five incubators that taught graphic design, film, television, visual arts and theatre. They allowed young people to undertake work experience placements with professionals in those specific areas. A youth board helped to interview the professionals delivering the incubators, plan the process of the programme, help choose the participants, and launch two creative careers events throughout the project.



The Gap (Grassroots Partner)

This project provided two placement opportunities for young people. The first was a Creative Production Assistant Placement – a weeklong placement working on a specific project that used creativity for social action. This placement explored the creation and the development of techniques for diverse creative disciplines in theatre and visual arts. The second was an Arts Engagement and Operations Assistant which took place over one month. This involved marketing and promotion of community events, particularly how to market to young people, customer service, front of house for events, and gathering feedback for evaluation from social action projects.

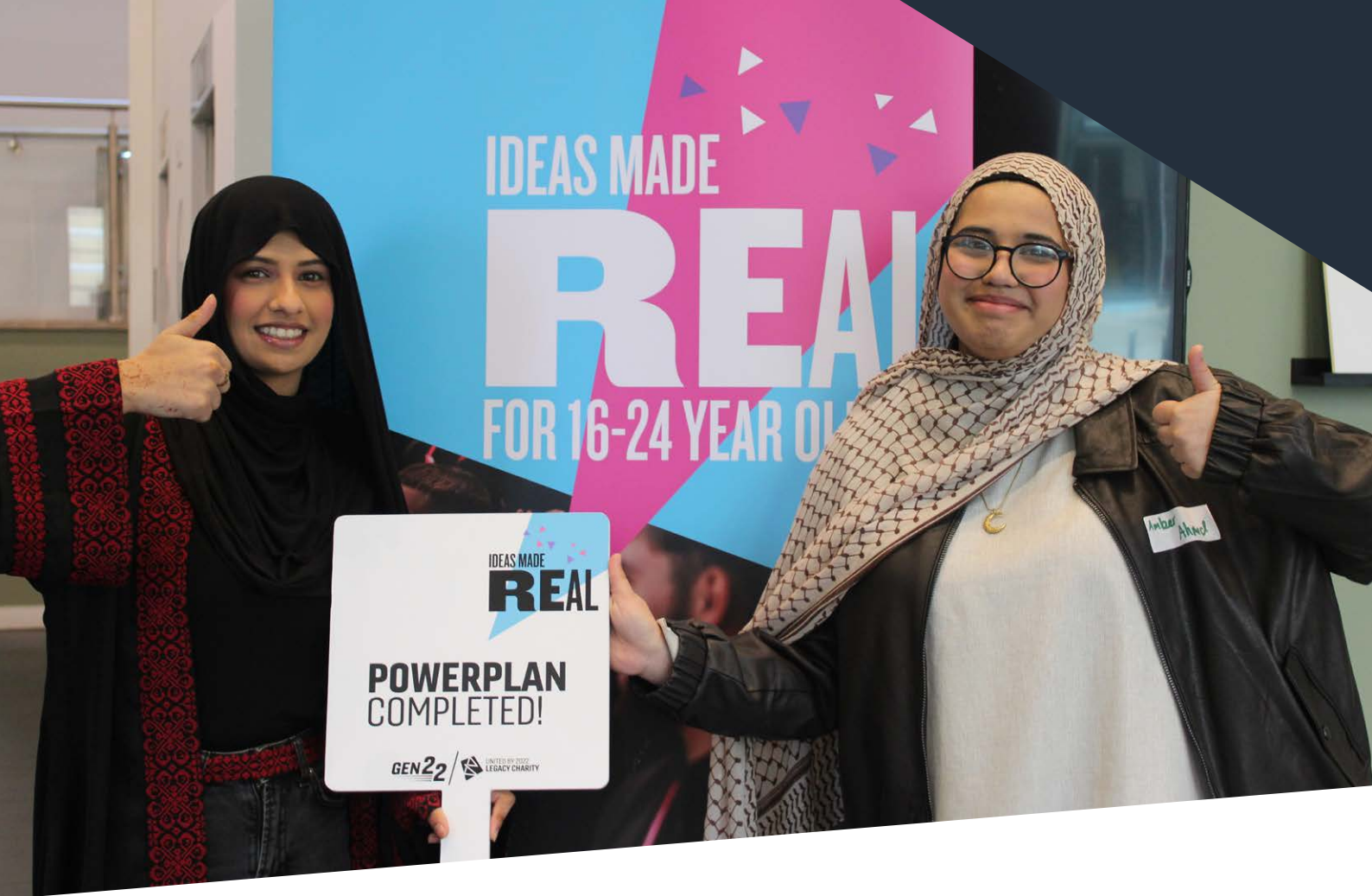
The Table (Grassroots Partner)

This project combined hospitality with social action, offering young people placements doing barista work or learning kitchen skills whilst receiving mentoring on social action. The young people began with training on their chosen skill, before volunteering in The Table's working café and kitchen. Alongside team building days, the young people also organised community days which took place at the café. These included fitness classes, table tennis tournaments, cake decorating workshops, princess parties, and mental health workshops.

Warrens Hall Riding School (Grassroots Partner)

This project opened new opportunities for young people with SEND to participate in horse riding and learn how to care for the animals and manage a stable. This was delivered through 1-2-1 horse riding lessons, group horse riding lessons, grooming lessons, 'pat a pony' lessons, and equine therapy. As part of this course participants completed Level 1 and 2 in Stable Management and completed Makaton training. They also accessed mental health counselling embedded into the equine therapy sessions.





In 2023 – 2024 successful **Ideas Made Real** applicants were each partnered with a supporting organisation, who assisted with the planning and delivery of their project. United By 2022 supported 14 projects focused on the theme of ‘Home or Community’, aiming to improve public spaces, get more girls involved in sport, and organise workshops to develop creative skills. You can find a little more information about each of the funded projects below.

Ben – Community Youth Football League

An inclusive and accessible youth football league which provided an opportunity for young people to come together and play football with their community, without the competitive element.



Chantelle – Disorderly Canal Clean Up

A community canal clean up that engaged a local school to create a sculpture and showcase a performance to encourage sustainability and creativity.

Connor - Rainbow+

Inclusive sessions for the community to access advice and support around their rights and choices, to allow members of the LGBTQIA+ community to feel welcome in a safe space.



Constance - Coventry Community Publication

A media publication led by and for young people which showcased art, poems, and photography, allowing them to express their creativity.



Grace - Sisters in Sound

A 6-week music production course aimed at women and non-binary people to create a safe space for them to collaborate and master music for themselves.



Jayden - Sporting You!

An interactive initiative that brought together football, photography, and videography to help hard-to-reach young people build skills and improve their employability.

Joshua - Walsall Festival Project

A project that used theatre to engage young creatives find their voice through intensive and collaborative workshops, creating a 3-day festival which featured performances and community events.

Kya - Dance to Heal

An initiative which used dance and movement to help young people who have experienced hospitalisation due to mental health, enabling them to move forward in life in a safer and more positive way.

Leah - Life After Being in the Care System

A website for young people in care, or care-experienced, to connect and share their story of being in the care community and making new friends to encourage young people going through similar situations.



Lucy - Wild Earth Wildlife Garden

A wildlife garden for the community to encourage young people to come together to celebrate biodiversity and the impact it has on wellbeing.

Maksym - 3-E

A project which brought together individuals of different nationalities, backgrounds, and cultures, through activities such as gaming and sports to encourage cohesion.



Malikah - Girls Can Board

An initiative for girls aged 14-23 from ethnic minorities, which allowed them to try a day of snowboarding, as a sport that is typically underrepresented in the community.



Rahul & Sevin - Fit In & Get Fit

A project that used sports and community cohesion to bring young people together to improve their physical fitness and celebrate the differences and cultures of those around them.



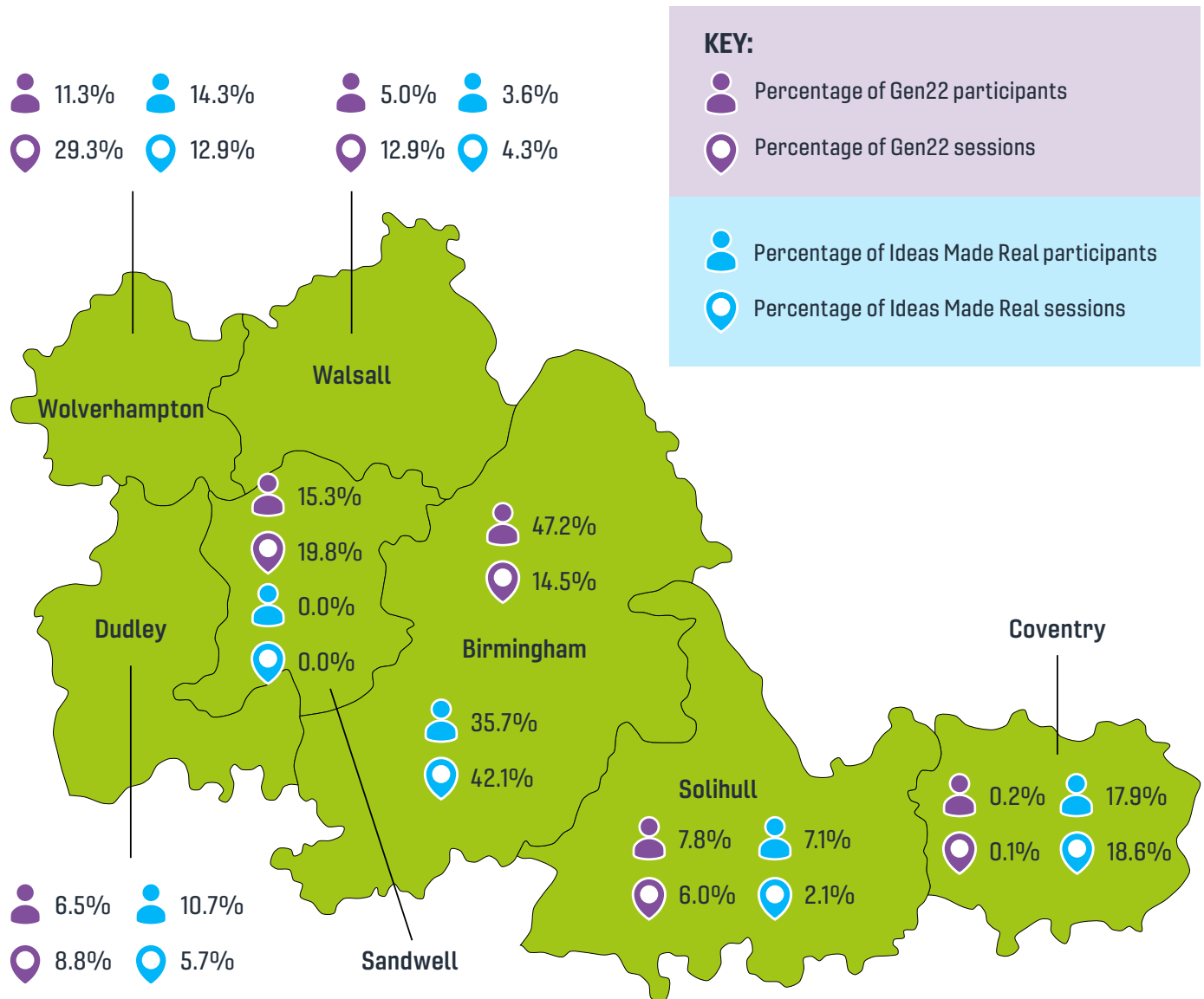
Sara - Nourishing Souls

A project focused on the mental health and wellness of young minoritised girls, providing them with nutritional education and cooking classes, enabling them to make healthier meal choices whilst celebrating the cultural diversity of traditional recipes.



ACTIVITY AND LOCATION OVERVIEW

Gen22 and Ideas Made Real: Participant Sessions and Locations



Local Authority	Percentage of Gen22 sessions	Percentage of Gen22 participants	Percentage of Ideas Made Real sessions	Percentage of Ideas Made Real participants
Other Local Authorities in the West Midlands	4.2%	4.0%	1.4%	0.0%
Local Authorities outside West Midlands	0.3%	1.0%	4.3%	10.7%
Unknown	2.8%	1.7%	1.4%	0.0%
Online	1.2%	0.0%	7.1%	0.0%

ENGAGEMENT ANALYSIS

Gen22 and Ideas Made Real engaged a broad and diverse range of participants. There was a strong mixture of participants from different ethnic backgrounds and faiths. 19.7% of participants identified as disabled, neurodiverse or living with a long term health condition.

19.7%
of participants
identified as disabled,
neurodiverse or
living with a long
term health condition.

12.8% of participants identified as LGBTQIA+. The average (median) age of participants across both programmes was 18.

Participants also identified with a number of characteristics which can often be linked to barriers to engagement. Most pertinently, 44.2% of participants came from the 20% most deprived areas of the UK. This shows high engagement from people from low socio-economic backgrounds. 27% of participants received free school meals in education; 4.7% had a family or friend who has been, or is in, prison. 1.8% of participants are young carers or parents, and 1.2% have had experience of the care system. 16.2% of participants actively identified as having low confidence or self-esteem.

44.2%
of participants came
from the 20% most
deprived areas of
the UK.

There was a high proportion of participants from Birmingham: 47.2% gave a Birmingham local authority postcode as their home residency. This was in spite of the fact that the majority of Gen22 sessions took place outside of Birmingham – only 14.5% of sessions in the local authority area. Conversely, whilst nearly 1 in 3 Gen22 sessions took place in Wolverhampton, only 11.3% of participants identified residency there.

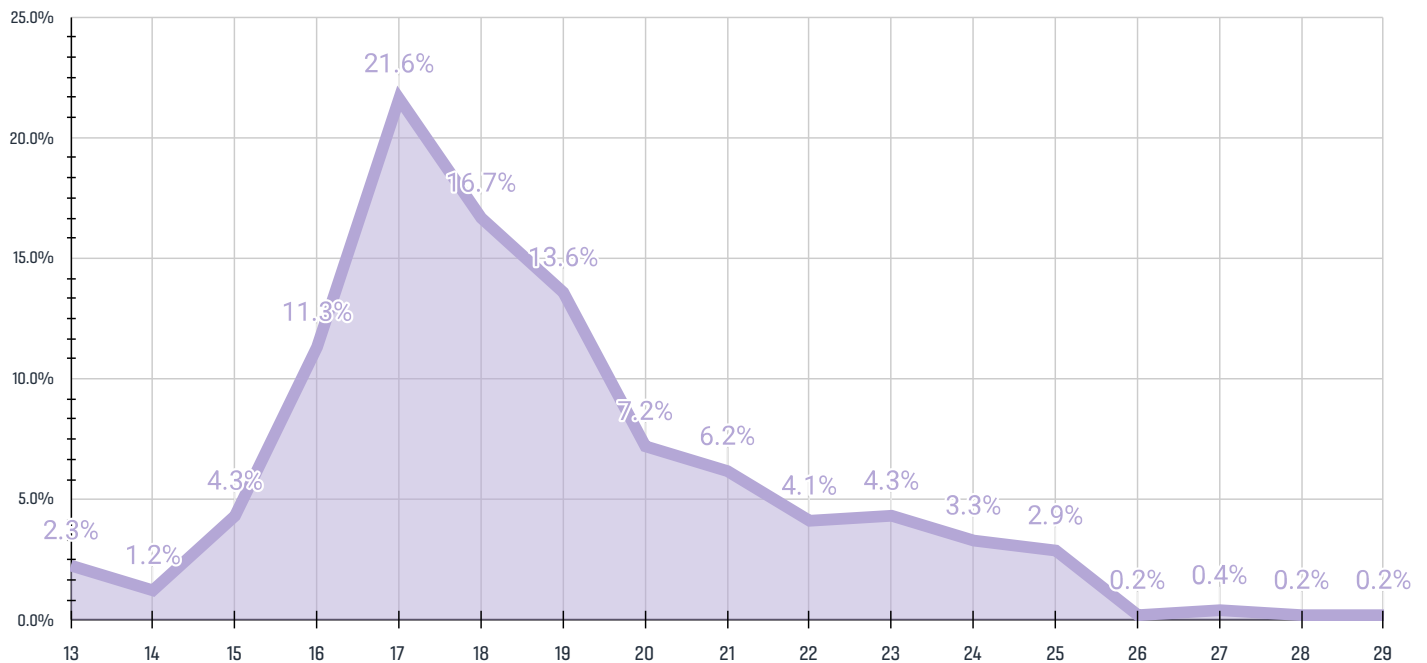


DEMOGRAPHICS

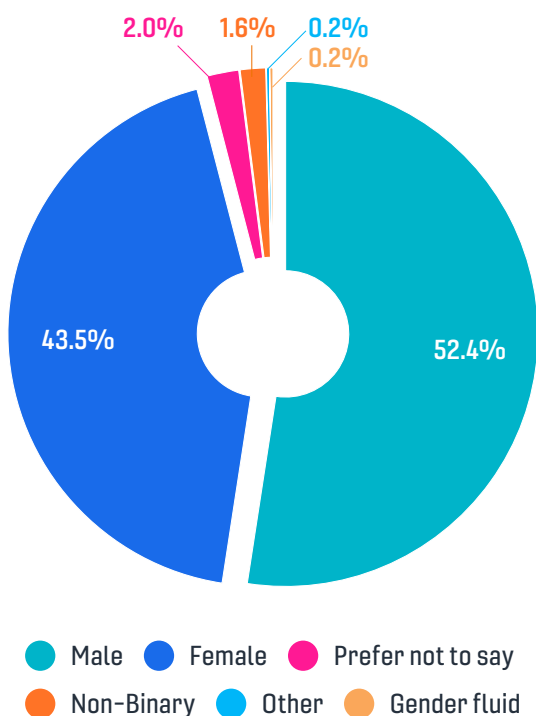
The below outlines the demographics of young people who took part in Gen22 and Ideas Made Real.

(n=507)

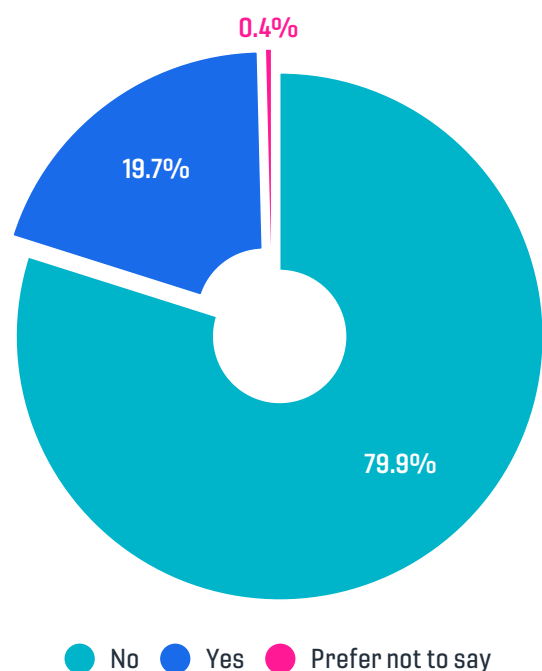
Gen22 and Ideas Made Real Ages



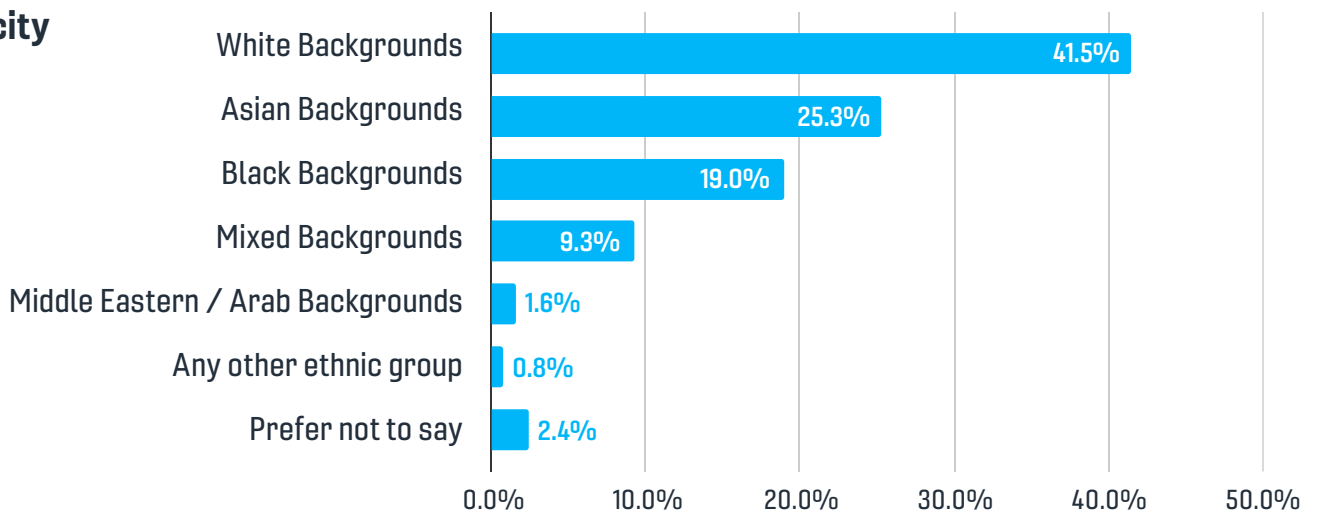
Gender



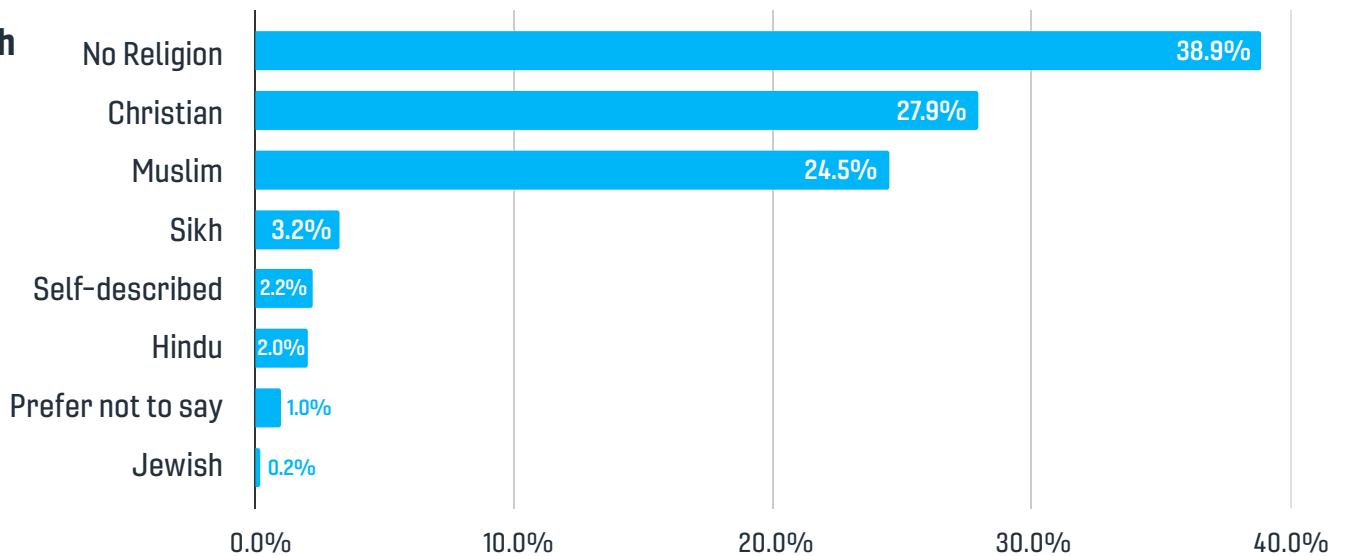
Disability, long-term health condition or neurodiverse



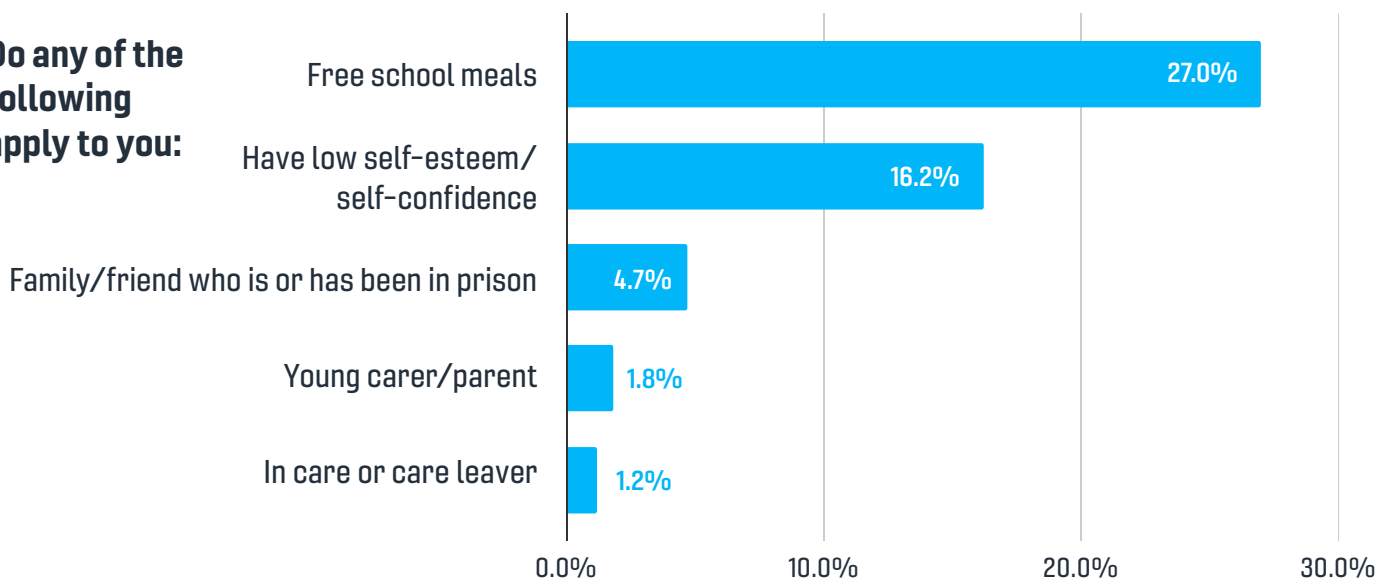
Ethnicity



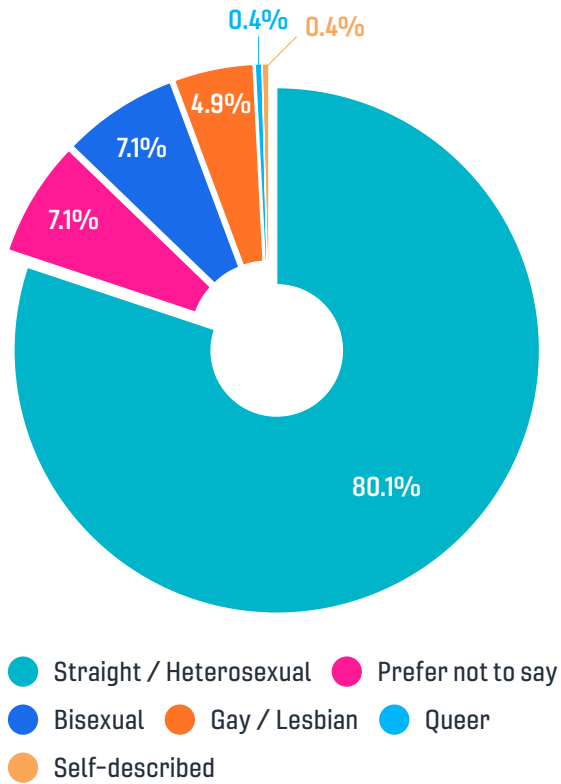
Faith



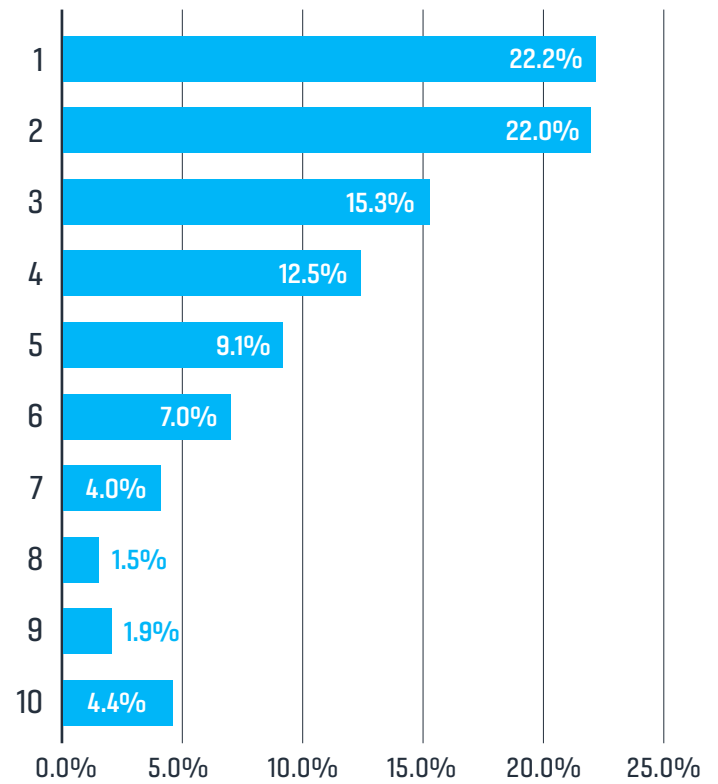
Do any of the following apply to you:



Sexuality



Deciles of Deprivation



KEY OUTCOMES: WELLBEING



Individuals feel an increased sense of wellbeing through engaging as volunteers and participants, as well as through delivering projects as staff.

Gen22 and Ideas Made Real made a significant impact on young peoples' confidence and resilience. Across both, **young people were 20.4% more likely to identify themselves as confident, from 61.4% prior to engagement to 81.8% after.** The number of young people identifying as resilient also increased as a result of the programme, from 71.5% before, to 83.9% after, representing a significant increase of 12.4%. At the endline, 80.9% of participants said they were able to adapt to change easily, representing an 11.6% shift from baseline. Across the three indicators therefore, Gen22 and Ideas Made Real had the most significant impact on young people's confidence, whilst also positively contributing to their resilience.

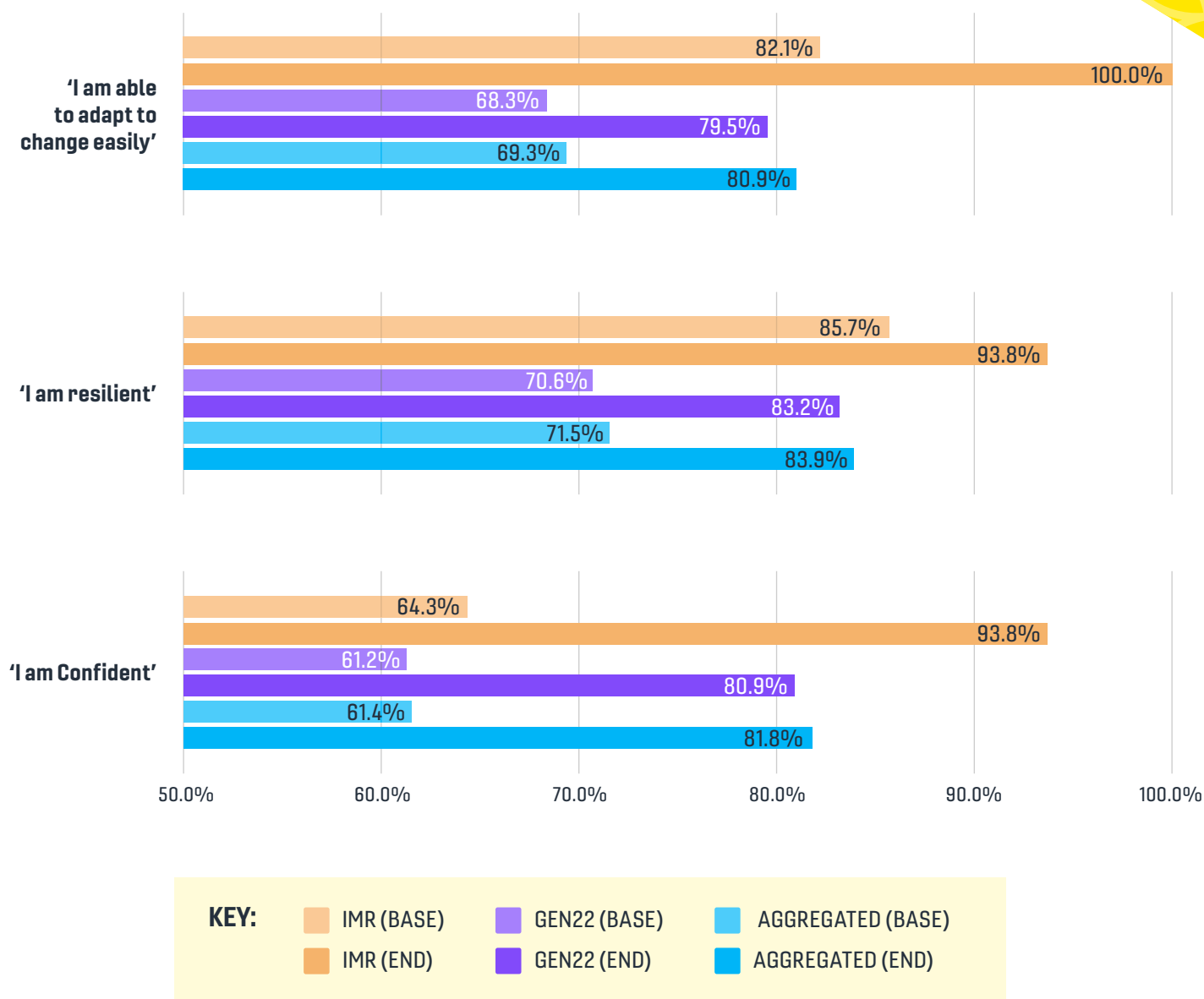
Generally, these impacts were more keenly felt for Ideas Made Real participants, as shown in figures outlined below. First, the shift from baseline to endline – which shows the impact of engagement on the young people – was greater for Ideas Made Real participants than Gen22 participants in two out of three indicators. Confidence saw a 29.5% rise for Ideas Made Real participants, compared to 19.7% for Gen22, for example. Furthermore, the overall levels of agreement were higher for Ideas Made Real participants at the endline than Gen22 – 100% of Ideas Made Real participants said they were able to adapt to change easily at the endline – 79.5% of Gen22 participants felt this way.

Despite Ideas Made Real participants experiencing a greater change than Gen22 participants, the figures below show how their baseline levels of confidence and resilience were higher than that of Gen22. This insight evidences the approach of United By 2022 in targeting participants for the programme – that Gen22 is for young people who may not have engaged in this type of work in the past, and who seek to benefit greatly from it. Ideas Made Real is aimed at participants a little further into their social action journey. The fact that Ideas Made Real participants have a higher baseline level of confidence and resilience shows that this recruitment aim was achieved.

83.9%
of participants
identified as resilient
as a result of the
programme.



Confidence and Resilience Indicators: Baseline and Endline Comparison



The above impact also reflects a broader increase to participant wellbeing as a result of their engagement. There was an increase of 22.8% (from 58.1% to 80.9%) of young people identifying that they had positive mental health.

This was more keenly felt amongst Gen22 participants – who were 23.8% more likely to identify positive mental health, compared to Ideas Made Real participants who were 9.5% more likely to. Contrary to expectations, this wasn't caused by Ideas Made Real participants starting their projects with a higher base level of positive mental health.

On average, Gen22 participants and Ideas Made Real participants began their projects with a similar attitude to the statement 'I have positive mental health'. Therefore, in this indicator, we see Gen22 having a greater overall effect than Ideas Made Real.



Nurturing Wellbeing Through Sport

The **St Andrew's Community Sports Flagship**, led by **Birmingham City Football Club Foundation (BCFC) and Bfriends Charity**, has played a crucial role in **improving the mental, emotional, and physical wellbeing** of over 200 young people. Through team-building residential, mentoring, and structured support, the programme provided a safe space for personal growth, where participants built confidence, resilience, and essential life skills.

"Ours is a sporting development programme, but more importantly, it's a leadership development programme," explained Danny Hipkiss, BCFC Project Lead. The initiative began with a Youth Sports Leaders Award, designed to increase self-belief, teamwork, and communication skills, empowering participants to take ownership of their development.

Recognising the diverse needs of its participants, the programme adopted a flexible approach. Some engaged in intensive residential experiences, allowing them to form strong peer connections and build resilience in a supportive environment, while others attended weekly evening sessions to develop skills at their own pace.

Beyond skill-building, the programme **prioritised holistic wellbeing**. Young people were supported through mentoring, career exploration, and volunteering opportunities, all of which contributed to **greater self-esteem, motivation, and a sense of purpose**.

The impact has been **transformational**. Many participants overcame social anxiety, improved their emotional resilience, and developed a stronger sense of belonging. Several have secured paid coaching roles, others have progressed to university sports programmes, and many are actively involved in their communities.

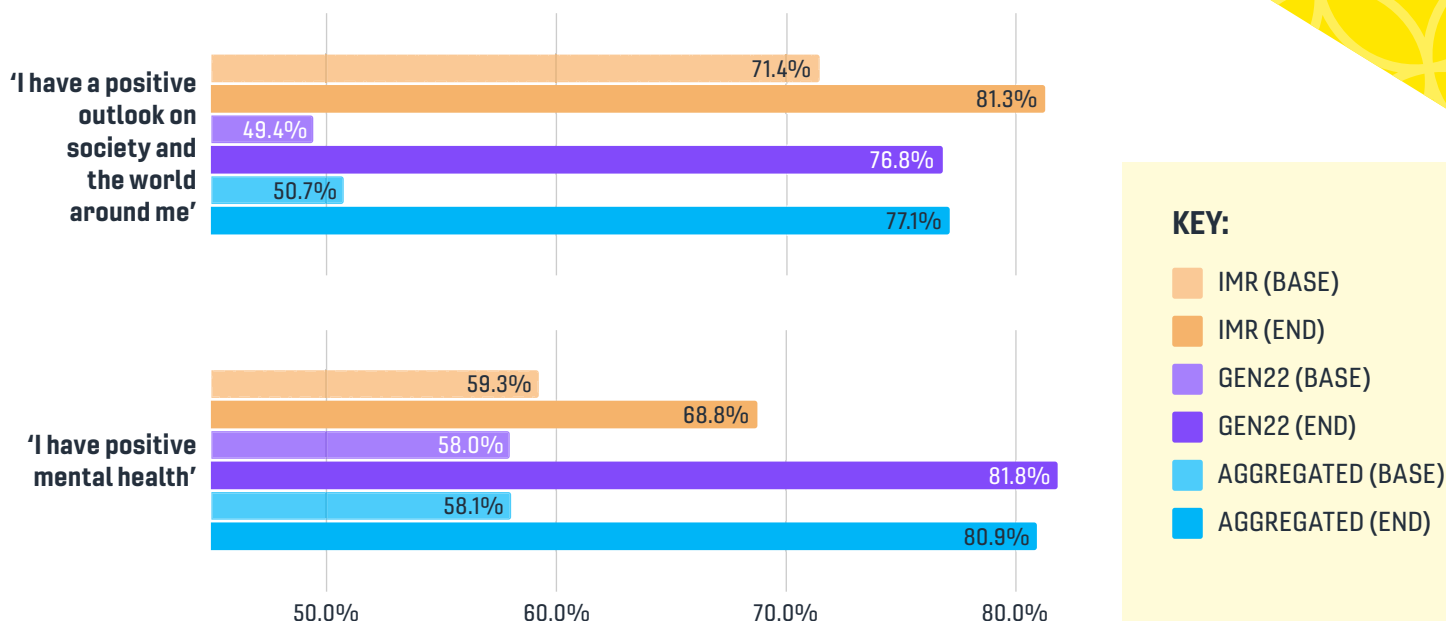
"We've seen young people go from not saying a boo to a goose to leading sessions and managing challenging behaviour. It's been brilliant," Danny shared.

Natalie Loon, from Bfriends, emphasised the importance of tailoring the programme to meet the individual needs of young people. *"The creativity to be able to produce our own programme and deliver that under a broader guideline that's not so specific... that's enabled us to work with our cohorts individually and meet their needs."* By understanding their participants, the team was able to support young people beyond sports, helping them **develop life skills, gain confidence, and take meaningful steps towards independence**.

"We've actually got to know our young people, and we can look at some of the next steps for them... whether that be around life skills, employability, training, budgeting, or personal circumstances, like needing a mentor," Natalie explained.

By **creating an environment where young people feel supported, valued, and empowered**, Gen22 has had a **lasting impact on wellbeing**. Many participants have left the programme not only with new skills but also with the confidence and resilience to thrive in both personal and professional settings.

Outlook and Mental Health Indicators: Baseline and Endline Agreement Level Comparison



Moreover, across the programme, there was a 26.4% increase in young people identifying that they had a positive outlook on society and the world around them. As above, there was a significantly higher jump in Gen22 than Ideas Made Real – showing again where Gen22 has had a more pervasive impact on young people. This difference was perhaps caused by the high percentage of Ideas Made Real participants who identified they had a ‘positive outlook’ at baseline – 71.4% – compared to the very low levels reported by Gen22 participants – 49.4%. As above, this evidences the difference in participants taking part in each programme.

Other wellbeing indicators – happiness and life satisfaction – saw broad increases across both programmes, with the most significant increase seen in response to: ‘Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?’. Ideas Made Real participants were 28.6% more likely to respond positively, and Gen22 participants 19.7% more likely, with 91.1% of participants overall agreeing that they were satisfied, after engagement in the activity strands. The anomaly in this insight was in response to ‘how anxious did you feel yesterday?’. Ideas Made Real participants saw a 4.5% drop in levels of anxiety across their engagement, whereas Gen22 participants were 11.7% more likely to report anxiety at the end of engagement. Again, this may be due to the targeting of different types of participants in the programme.

Overall, it is clear that **interventions across both Gen22 and Ideas Made Real had significant impact on participants’ confidence, resilience and mental health – which all contribute to an increased level of overall wellbeing.** In the above we can see the nuance in impact: where Ideas Made Real participants were more likely to see increases in confidence, resilience, and life satisfaction, Gen22 participants saw greater impact on their view of the world around them, as well as on their levels of positive mental health.

26.4%
increase in young people identifying that they had a positive outlook on society and the world around them.

KEY OUTCOMES: SKILLS



Organisations and individuals will be better skilled and more confident to deliver work and to seek new work.

Prior to starting their projects, we asked participants what skills they were hoping to gain. Across both Ideas Made Real and Gen22, they identified confidence, professional skills, and practical experience in various fields, including coaching, creative industries, leadership, and community work. Many sought qualifications and career development opportunities, particularly in sports coaching, acting, filmmaking, and social action projects. Others were eager to develop transferable skills, such as communication, teamwork, resilience, and problem-solving, which would support them in education, employment, or personal growth. A strong theme of community impact and social change emerged, with several participants hoping to make a difference in their local area, mentor others, and promote inclusivity.

Additionally, some looked forward to networking and building relationships with peers and industry professionals, gaining insights into the realities of their chosen career paths.

Post-programme reflections indicate successful delivery on these aspirations, with **participants reporting significant growth in confidence, leadership, and teamwork.** Across both Gen22 and Ideas Made Real, 89.1% of participants said they gained new skills as a result of their engagement. Many gained hands-on experience in project management, coaching, event planning, and creative production, applying their skills in real-world settings. **The programme provided bespoke hands-on learning opportunities in various creative and professional fields,** including film production, event planning, music, and coaching.

Following engagement, 83.1% of participants agreed that they had the skills they need to get where they want to in life. One participant reflected positively on *“getting to learn new skills regarding cinematography. Meeting like-minded friendly people. Being able to help create a short film.”* Others appreciated access to industry insights and practical experiences, such as *“speaking with industry professionals, meeting people with similar interests, getting a very good insight into the TV industry.”* A similar sentiment was echoed by another participant who enjoyed *“listening to professionals, learning more about industry, making friends.”*

89.1%
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Improved public speaking, problem-solving, and adaptability were commonly mentioned, with several participants highlighting better communication skills and a greater ability to collaborate effectively. This is echoed by the fact that there was a 24.3% increase in participants identifying they are confident to speak up about social issues and a 22.8% increase in confidence to make change in their local communities after participating in the programme. Those involved in coaching and leadership roles reported increased resilience, patience, and self-control, while those in creative industries gained technical skills in filmmaking, acting, and design.

The Gen22 Programme also provided a strong sense of achievement, helping participants feel more empowered and capable in their future careers.


Overall, it proved to be an impactful experience, equipping young people with practical skills, industry exposure, and personal growth opportunities, while fostering community engagement and social responsibility. Though there was also a significant increase in their willingness to take action about social issues, only 66.1% of the young people feel confident to start their own social action campaigns.

Whilst this increased from 44.2% at the start of the programme, participants are still more likely to want to take action via social media:

82.6% say they feel knowledgeable about using social media to campaign for social issues.

As seen in the figure below, across all outcome indicators, skills saw a significantly higher growth in Gen22 than Ideas Made Real. This is perhaps due to the fact that Ideas Made Real participants felt like they held the skills necessary to deliver their own social action campaign, which is what gave them the confidence to apply.





Developing the Next Generation of Basketball Leaders

The **Your Basketball League (YBL) Gen22 project** has provided young people with the opportunity to gain **Level 2 Referee, Level 2 Table Official, and Level 2 Coach qualifications**, equipping them with the skills to officiate games, coach players, and inspire the next generation of basketball participants. Through hands-on experience and a structured mentoring programme, YBL has ensured that participants not only gain their qualifications but also transition into real-world roles within the sport.

Unlike many other organisations, YBL does not operate from a fixed facility and had to engage participants through clubs, colleges, universities, and social media. As Kim Accalia, the project lead, explained, *"We did a lot of advertising through the clubs involved in our league... but we also reached out through social media, which helped us immensely."*

One of the programme's key innovations was the addition of a **mentoring package**, designed to address the gap between completing a course and becoming fully qualified. Historically, many young people would complete their training but struggle to secure the required practical experience to gain full certification. *"We went a little bit outside the box. Normally, a course is delivered, and then people are left to find their own sign-off games. But we stretched ourselves further, running events to ensure they got the experience they needed."*

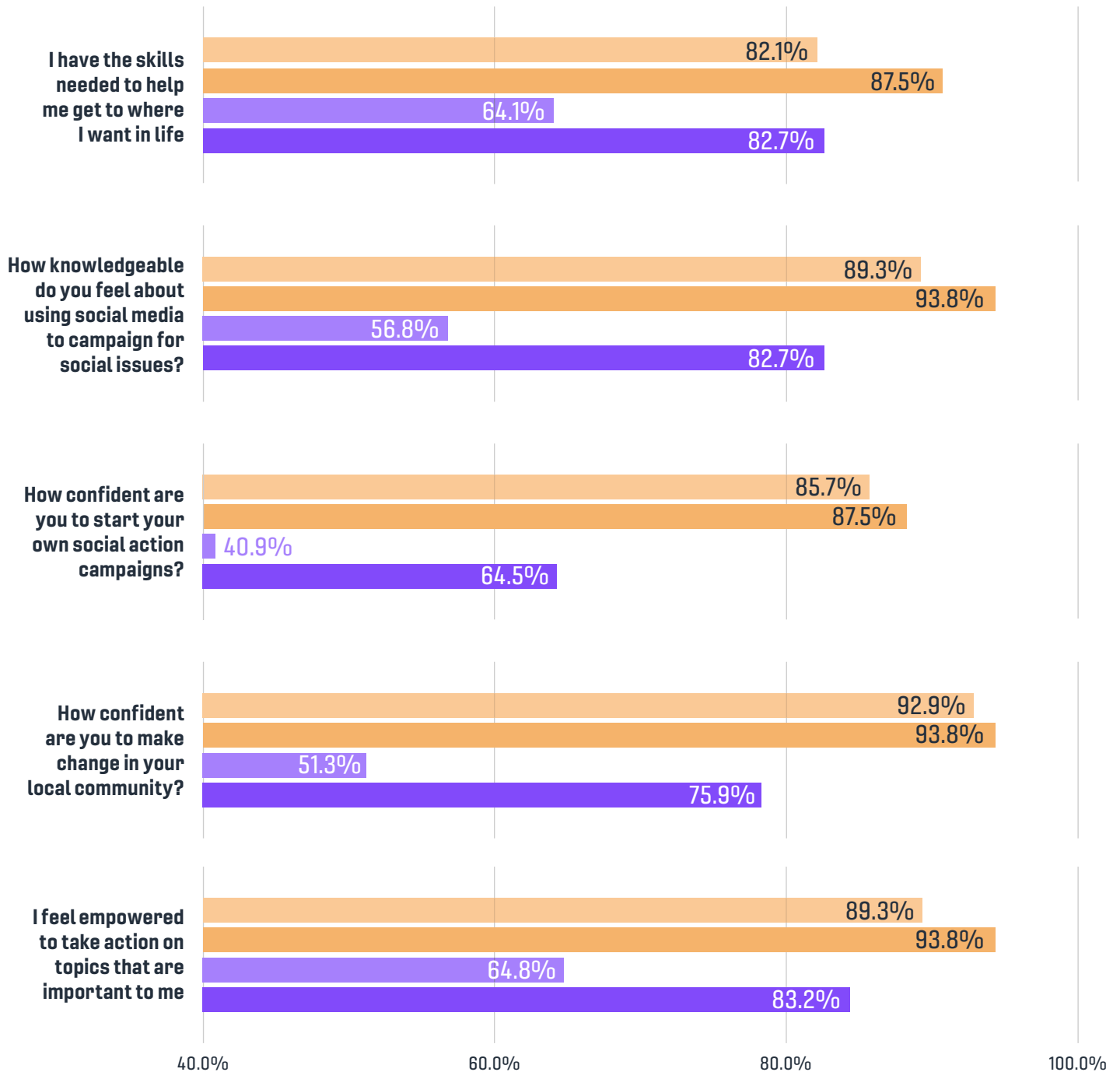
The mentoring was structured in two ways: group online sessions to track progress and one-to-one support, where mentors attended games to guide participants in real time. *"We'd point them to a game where one of the mentors would be there... we might physically observe, or even do the table or referee with them, giving immediate feedback."*

This approach significantly **improved retention and success rates**, ensuring that young people remained engaged and completed their qualifications. Many have since progressed to coaching and officiating roles in clubs, schools, and local leagues. *"Some of them couldn't afford their club fees, but now they've found a way to pay them by officiating games. Others are moving into men's leagues, being recognised as competent referees or table officials."*

Beyond qualifications, the project has had a **profound impact on participants' confidence, employability, and life skills**. *"You're not just a referee. You're learning how to make quick decisions, manage people, resolve situations, and communicate effectively—skills they'll use throughout life."*

YBL's Gen22 initiative has created real pathways for young people to progress in basketball, ensuring a **lasting legacy of trained and empowered leaders** in the sport.

Social Action Skills Indicators – Baseline and Endline Agreement Level Comparison



KEY:

■ IMR (BASE)
 ■ IMR (END)
 ■ GEN22 (BASE)
 ■ GEN22 (END)

KEY OUTCOMES: REPRESENTATION



Organisations and individuals who have traditionally been excluded on the grounds of age, class, ethnicity, gender, sexuality or disability will be better platformed, funded and empowered.

As noted, across multiple indicators, there was significant uplift in participants identifying positive wellbeing, mental health, and attitudes towards the future. This may be due to the fact that young people taking part in the programme began with relatively low levels of wellbeing. Just over half of the participants said they had a positive outlook on society at the start of the programme. Only 58.1% said they had positive mental health. This shows that **the programme significantly impacted the young people who needed it most** – low levels of mental health for example, could be an indication of having been systematically excluded.

Looking at indicators associated with the wellbeing outcome, we can see that whilst **young people from areas of higher deprivation reported positive impact across the board**, this impact was not as pervasive as those who were not from areas of high deprivation.

As the below figure illustrates, if participants were from the top 30% most deprived areas of the country, shifts in wellbeing as a result of their engagement were more likely to be smaller. For example, if participants were from an area of high deprivation, they were 13.4% more likely to feel confidence following engagement. In the general sample, participants were 20.4% more likely to.

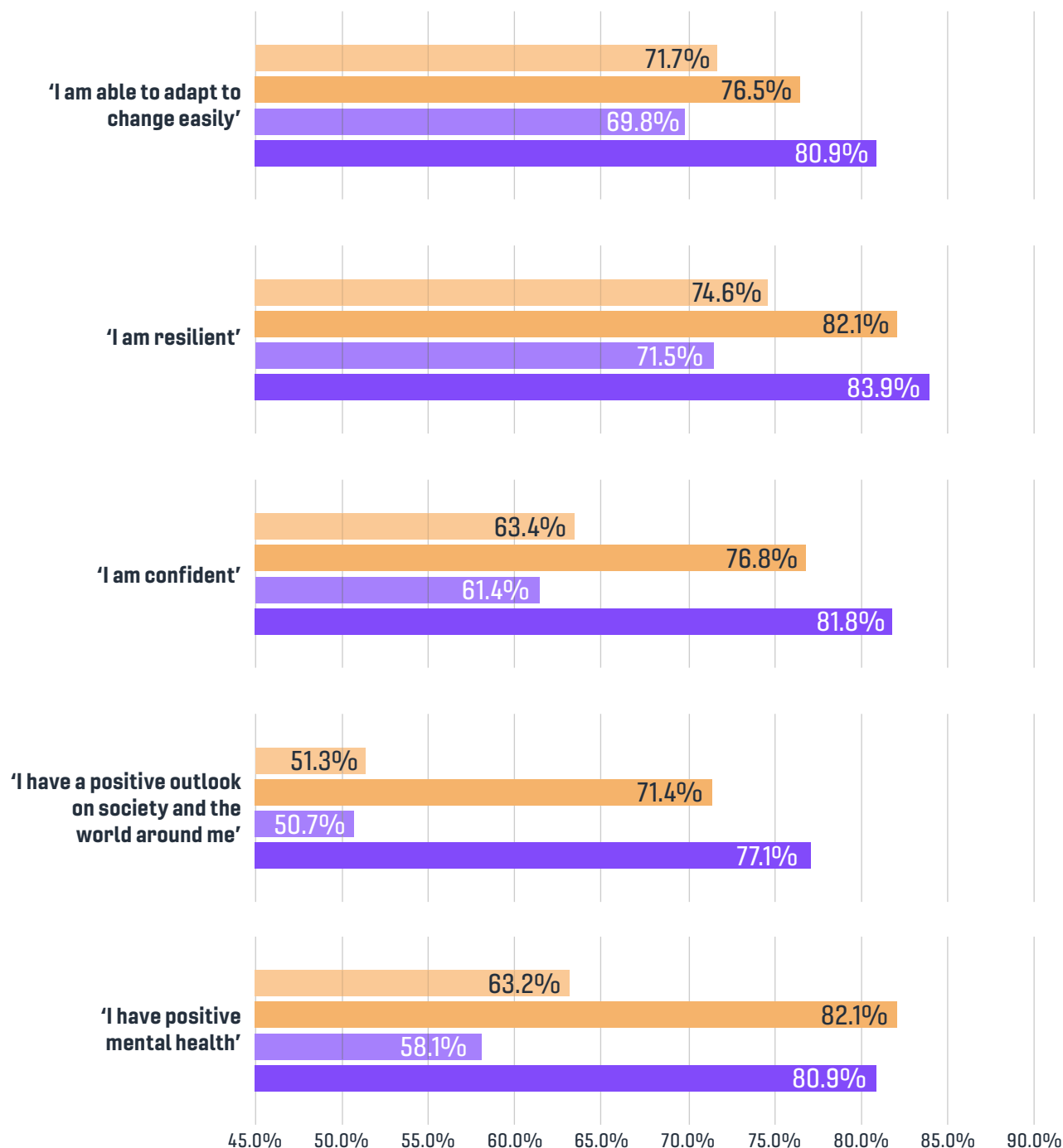
This trend – lower levels of change for those from higher areas of deprivation – is mirrored across the majority of indicators displayed on the figure. This displays the ongoing need to work with participants from high levels of deprivation. Perhaps contrary to expectation, participants from higher levels of deprivation did not begin the programme with lower baseline levels of agreement to wellbeing indicators.

On the contrary, those from areas of high deprivation were more likely to start the programme identifying themselves as confident and resilient, for example. However, they were less likely to undergo change over the course of engagement.

When conducting the same cross analysis on skills outcome indicators – the above discrepancy was not present in the data. Young people from high levels of deprivation saw similar levels of skills growth to their counterparts in the rest of the sample.



Wellbeing Outcome Indicators by IMD: Baseline vs Endline Agreement Levels



KEY:

■ HIGH DEPRIVATION (BASE)
 ■ HIGH DEPRIVATION (END)
 ■ AGGREGATED (BASE)
 ■ AGGREGATED (END)



Beyond the Boundary: Championing Female Representation in Cricket

The **Warwickshire Cricket Foundation's Gen22 Female Sports Leadership Programme** has created new pathways for young women, particularly from South Asian backgrounds, to engage in sport and coaching. The project aimed to challenge traditional barriers, increase female representation in sports leadership, and provide coaching qualifications to participants from Cadbury College and Birchfield Madrassah School.

"We know there's a massive workforce gap when it comes to female role models in sport," explained Jess Ward, Project Lead. The programme introduced young women—many of whom had never played cricket before—to the sport while providing them with Cricket Foundation Level 1 **coaching qualifications** and leadership training.

The initiative had a transformative impact, particularly for participants from Birchfield Madrassah, where **sport is not traditionally prioritised for girls**. Many participants **developed confidence in leading sessions** and are now actively engaging in **PE and coaching opportunities**. *"The fact they want to lead sessions is amazing,"* Jess shared.

A defining moment was when one participant expressed interest in studying sport post-16, despite cultural expectations that often steer young women towards careers in medicine, law, or teaching. *"Sport isn't really a career they're told about... we really need to support her on that journey because that's part of our legacy now,"* said Jess.

Beyond sport, the programme **introduced valuable life skills**, such as using public transport independently, after it emerged that many participants had never taken a bus before. This was integrated into the Edgbaston Cricket Stadium visit, where the school used the opportunity to teach students how to navigate travel independently.

By **providing coaching qualifications, leadership experience, and exposure to career pathways**, the Warwickshire Cricket Foundation's Gen22 project has empowered young women to take ownership of sport in their communities, breaking barriers and creating new opportunities for future female leaders.

KEY OUTCOMES: CO-CREATION



Co-creation is more frequently used in community projects, driving better inclusion, access and ownership.

By nature, Gen22 and Ideas Made Real embed co-creation throughout delivery. In the former, young people are provided with bespoke engagement activities which are specifically tailored to their needs – whilst all 14 delivery suppliers are delivering Gen22 projects, the activities on the ground vary greatly.

Moreover, the purposes of the projects are to allow young people space to discuss and advocate for social issues which they care about. Again, these social issues are derived from the experience of the young people engaging with the projects.

Young people are provided with bespoke engagement activities which are specifically tailored to their needs.



Empowering Young Creatives Through Social Action

The Gen22 programme at **Gazebo Theatre** has placed young people at the heart of **co-creation**, empowering them to **design, lead, and reflect** on their own **social action projects**. Now in its third round, the initiative has evolved into a platform where participants take full ownership of **creative community-led work**, shaping projects based on their interests and the needs of those around them.

Participants led a diverse range of initiatives, including self-care workshops, open mic nights, art exhibitions, networking events, and environmental activities. From curating an exhibition in a newly renovated space to organising a welcoming space for local creatives to design T-shirts, each project was a direct reflection of the young people's ideas, creativity, and leadership. Crucially, they had the freedom to experiment, adapt, and improve their initiatives, ensuring that their projects were both personally meaningful and impactful for their communities.

Beyond delivering these projects, participants **gained valuable skills** in facilitation, budget management, public engagement, and event planning, all while fostering collaborative working practices. The supportive structure provided by Gazebo helped young people navigate challenges while still maintaining control over their work. Training in creative consultation, first aid, and workshop facilitation further reinforced their ability to lead.

By embedding **co-creation at every stage**, Gazebo's Gen22 project has transformed the young people involved into decision-makers, showing that **social action is most effective when driven by the voices of those involved**. Many young people expressed a desire to continue leading projects, demonstrating how meaningful participation fosters **long-term ownership and creative leadership** in their communities.



Ideas Made Real goes a step further in the fact that it puts funds into the hands of young people to make their ideas a reality. Young people are provided with direct funding and support to develop their ideas and make a positive impact on the social issue of their choice.

In order to understand how far this co-creation was felt, participants across all United By 2022 programmes were asked how far they had the opportunity to share their thoughts, as well as how far they had the opportunity to listen to other people's opinions. These were both indicators of co-creation taking place.

Across both activity strands, young people acknowledged co-creation at play in their response to these two indicators. 90.3% said that they had the opportunity to share their thoughts, and 93.6% said that they had the opportunity to listen to others. This shows the presence of two-way dialogue throughout the activity. The below figures highlight how this was more pervasive felt through Ideas Made Real, where across both indicators no participants scored below 7 out of 10.

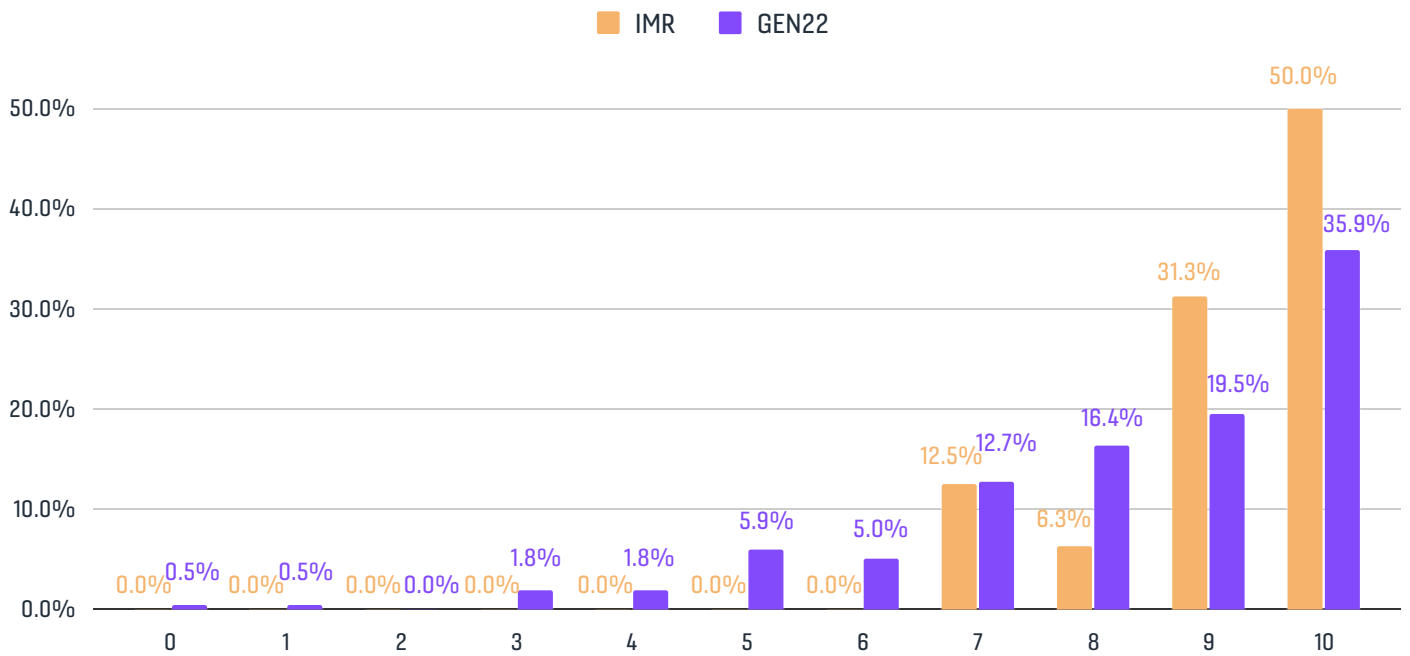
The majority of participants across both indicators scored the indicators 10 out of 10. Gen22 respondents, whilst still agreeing with both indicators, were less decisive, with a broader spread of responses between 5 – 10.

93.6%
said that they had
the opportunity to
listen to others.

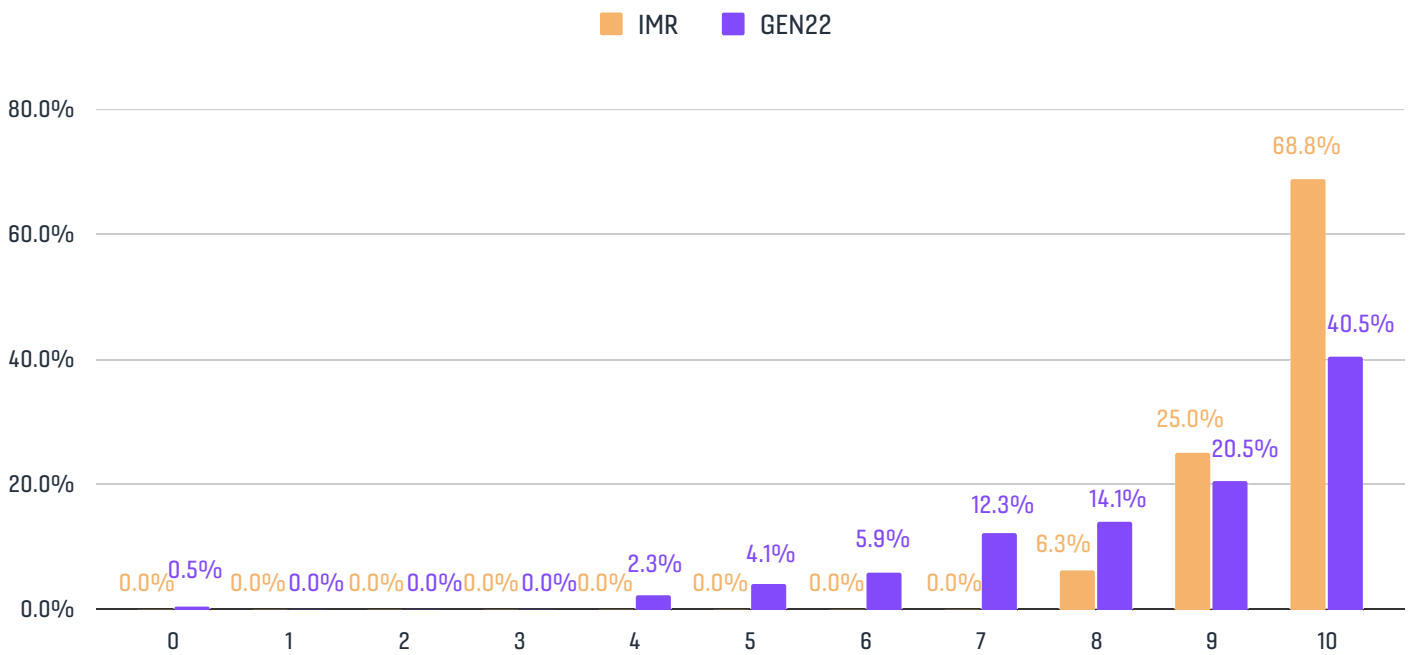


Co-creation Indicators - 0-10 IMR vs Gen22 Comparison

'During this project, I have had the opportunity to share my thoughts'



'During this project, I have had the opportunity to listen to other's opinions'



Young People Driving Change from the Pitch to the Community

Pitch 2 Progress, based in East Birmingham, has transformed Green Lane Playing Fields into a hub for youth development, sport, and social action. Through Gen22, the organisation engaged **40 young people in 12 community-led social action projects**, all designed to **positively impact their local area** while fostering leadership and confidence.

The initiative encouraged young people to **co-create, lead, and deliver projects**, ranging from soup kitchens for the homeless and community clean-ups to sports events and cultural exchange programmes. One of the most impactful activities was a homeless support project, where participants planned and ran a soup kitchen, taking full ownership of preparation, delivery, and community engagement.

A major goal of Pitch 2 Progress is to **bring young people from different backgrounds together**, challenging the **postcode rivalries** that often **divide youth in urban areas**. *“We’re trying to break those barriers. We’ve created a space where young people from different postcodes meet on the pitch, and from there, they build friendships. The fact that they now see each other as mates rather than rivals is incredible.”*

Beyond delivering community projects, the programme **created opportunities for progression**. Several participants transitioned from **volunteers to paid staff**, demonstrating the long-term impact of **youth-led initiatives**. Reflecting on Gen22’s role, Haroon stated, *“The opportunities and provisions Gen22 has allowed us to put on for these young people are priceless.”*

Despite facing challenges moving forward—including funding struggles and site access issues – Pitch 2 Progress remains committed to **providing a safe and positive space** for young people. Their work continues to **break down barriers**, bringing together participants from different backgrounds and fostering **a stronger, more connected community**.

Pitch 2 Progress is a shining example of how **co-creation and sport can drive meaningful social change**. By placing young people at the heart of decision-making, the initiative has empowered them to lead, develop key skills, and build a more connected community.





Processes (from application to participation to evaluation) are fully accessible on both program and project levels. Best practice is acted upon, shared and iterated.

Embedding Inclusive Practice Through Sense Level 1 Training

The **Sense Level 1 Training** has significantly improved **awareness and accessibility** across **Gen22 partner organisations**, equipping them with tools to **better support disabled people**. The training covered understanding access needs, making reasonable adjustments, supporting individuals in the workplace, and assistive technology, ensuring best practices are shared and implemented.

For many, the training **shifted perspectives**, particularly in recognising hidden disabilities. One organisation reflected: ***"It definitely made us more aware of spotting needs... Young people often don't like to talk about their disabilities, so it gave us a new awareness of checking in and using another sense to recognise where support might be needed"***. Simple adjustments, such as requesting ground-level rooms for accessibility, were immediately actioned. Others adopted clearer communication methods, including BSL (British Sign Language) and verbal acknowledgements, to improve engagement.

The training also introduced the Access to Work scheme, increasing **awareness of funding for workplace adjustments**. However, some organisations felt they needed further guidance, stating: *"I have Level 1, but I need to put it into practice for it to feel real"*.

Assistive technology was another key takeaway, prompting some to explore website accessibility improvements, such as text-to-speech features and clearer readability. Others adapted social media to be more inclusive by adding captions and image descriptions.

The training also fostered **new partnerships**, supporting inclusive recruitment and expanding networks. However, challenges remain, particularly the need for further training on neurodiversity and mental health support and financial constraints limiting accessibility improvements.

Ultimately, Sense Level 1 Training has **embedded accessibility into programme delivery** and organisational culture, ensuring people with disabilities can engage fully and equitably in social action projects.

CONCLUSION

The 2023-24 iteration of Gen22 and Ideas Made Real has delivered substantial positive outcomes for young people across the West Midlands. The programme has demonstrated exceptional success in reaching and supporting a highly diverse cohort, many of whom were from areas of high deprivation, identified as having low self-esteem, and reported low baseline levels of wellbeing. Most remarkably, strong increases were recorded across wellbeing, confidence, resilience, and skills acquisition, transforming the trajectories of hundreds of young lives. The programme has proven its dual-pathway effectiveness. Gen22 has excelled in supporting young people at the start of their social action journey, while Ideas Made Real successfully enabled more experienced participants to deepen their impact and leadership capabilities.



The programme's core strength lies in its focus on co-creation, accessibility, and inclusive practice.

Participants consistently reported high levels of ownership, creativity, and agency throughout their engagement, providing clear evidence of empowering practice. The accessibility training delivered by Sense represents a positive innovation that has already enhanced organisational practice across the network and demonstrates the programme's commitment to inclusive excellence.

Delivery partners demonstrated adaptability and creativity in tailoring interventions to local contexts and participant needs, resulting in **rich and varied programme outputs that authentically reflect the diverse communities they serve.**

Building on these strong foundations, the evaluation identifies key areas where targeting enhancements can amplify success. While young people from the most deprived backgrounds engaged with the programme, fine tuning support strategies can help them achieve the same exceptional wellbeing gains as their peers.

The programme has successfully built social action skills and confidence, and the next step involves developing targeted support, mentoring, and progression pathways to help participants, particularly Gen22 alumni, transition to leading their own campaigns with confidence.



Moving forward, United By 2022 will **continue to build on these proven successes through expanding investment in accessibility and inclusive practice training**, scaling up the innovations that are already transforming organisational practice. This includes developing structured progression routes specifically designed for participants from high-deprivation backgrounds, strengthening follow-on support systems for participants ready to lead their own campaigns or social ventures.

By building on the strong foundations established through this delivery phase, **Gen22 and Ideas Made Real are perfectly positioned to continue deepening their impact** and widening access to transformative opportunities for young people across the region in 2025 and beyond. The programme has not only delivered measurable positive outcomes but has created **a proven model for youth empowerment** that can inspire and inform practice far beyond the West Midlands.

The success stories, increased wellbeing scores, enhanced confidence levels, and strengthened social action skills of hundreds of young people stand as testament to what can be achieved when programmes prioritise co-creation, accessibility, and genuine youth agency. These remarkable achievements deserve celebration and provide the perfect springboard for even greater impact ahead.





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