

OUR NEXT GENERATION

Young People and the Highlands and Islands:
Attitudes and Aspirations.
Equalities report - September 2015



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION	1
APPROACH	1
STRUCTURE	1
2 STAYING, LEAVING AND LEARNING	2
ATTITUDES TO STAYING AND LEAVING	2
ASPIRATIONS OF SCHOOL LEAVERS	4
LEARNING	5
3 WORKING IN THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS	7
EMPLOYMENT-RELATED FACTORS IN THE LOCAL AREA	7
EMPLOYMENT-RELATED FACTORS IN THE H&I	8
IDEAL PLACE TO WORK	9
VIEWS ON H&I GROWTH SECTORS	11
DESIRED QUALITIES IN EMPLOYERS	13
4 LIFE ASPIRATIONS IN THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS	16
COMMUNITY	16
FUTURE ASPIRATIONS	19
5 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS	22
STAYING, LEAVING AND LEARNING	22
EMPLOYMENT	22
LIFE ASPIRATIONS	23
KEYS POINTS BY EQUALITY GROUP	23
CONCLUDING REMARKS	26
A. ANNEX 1: EQUALITIES PROFILE	27
AGE AND GENDER	27
RELIGION OR BELIEF	27
ETHNICITY	28
DISABILITY	29
SEXUAL ORIENTATION	31

1 Introduction

1.1 This report forms part of a wide-ranging research study, completed in August 2015, which explored the attitudes and aspirations of young people aged 15-30 in relation to the Highlands and Islands (H&I) of Scotland. Overall, a total of 4,409 young people from within and outwith the H&I participated in the research, sharing their views on the region as a place to live, work and study.

1.2 This summary report is based on the findings of the research project and is designed to examine the issue of equality. The research gathered information on age, disability, race (ethnicity), religion or belief, sex (gender) and sexual orientation, “protected characteristics” listed in the 2010 Equality Act. The profile of respondents and how characteristics have been reported is presented in Annex 1. The differing attitudes and aspirations of young males and females, young disabled people, and young people of different ethnicities, faiths or sexual orientations, is drawn out throughout the report (where sample sizes allow).

1.3 The research also gathered information on young people’s attitudes to inclusiveness within their local community, and this provides important findings. Where possible, this is compared to the situation in the H&I in 2009 when some comparable research was carried out. This report builds on the findings presented in the main report providing additional analysis to inform policy development and support specific equalities outcome planning. HIE’s 2013-2017 Equality Outcome statement, Outcome 1 is specifically designed to address the employment needs of young people aged 16-24 in the region¹.

Approach

1.4 The research made extensive use of social media, through which young people aged 15-30 were invited to complete an online survey. In total, 30 high schools across the H&I participated in the study. An online discussion portal allowed young people to provide further insight on their views. The study also gathered perspectives from stakeholders from both within and outwith the H&I region, including representatives from the public sector and other organisations. A detailed methodology is provided in Chapter 3 of the main report.²

Structure

1.5 This report is structured as follows:

- **Chapter 2** analyses respondents’ views by equality characteristic on staying and leaving the region, and discusses views on the education offer;
- **Chapter 3** is young people’s views by equality characteristic on working in the H&I;
- **Chapter 4** examines life aspirations towards the H&I by equality characteristic;
- **Chapter 5** provides summary conclusions by equality characteristic, based on the preceding analysis; and
- **Annex 1** describes the equalities profile of respondents.

¹ <http://www.hie.co.uk/about-hie/equality-and-diversity/default.html>

² This can be accessed using the following link: <http://www.hie.co.uk/common/handlers/download->

² This can be accessed using the following link: <http://www.hie.co.uk/common/handlers/download-document.ashx?id=4bc4a1d2-3377-4bdd-9248-8448bebe0bff>.

2 Staying, Leaving and Learning

2.1 The research asked young people whether they are likely to leave or stay in the H&I, and whether this is likely to be out of choice or necessity, real or perceived. It also asked respondents how they view the choices of other young people on whether to stay or leave. There are some interesting differences across the equality groups and by gender in particular.

Attitudes to Staying and Leaving

2.2 Across the H&I, 42% of young people classified themselves as committed stayers and 39% as committed leavers. **Females are more likely to be committed stayers than males** (44%, compared to 39%), with males more likely to identify themselves as committed leavers (42% compared to 38%) (see Figure 2.1).

2.3 However, females are more likely to be *reluctant* stayers i.e. they are staying although they may have aspirations to leave (6%, versus 4% for males), which may reflect an inability to leave (e.g. through dependents or due to partner employment) although the research does not allow us to state this categorically. Males are more likely to be reluctant *leavers* (14%, versus 12%), which may be linked to more limited (real or perceived) local opportunities.³

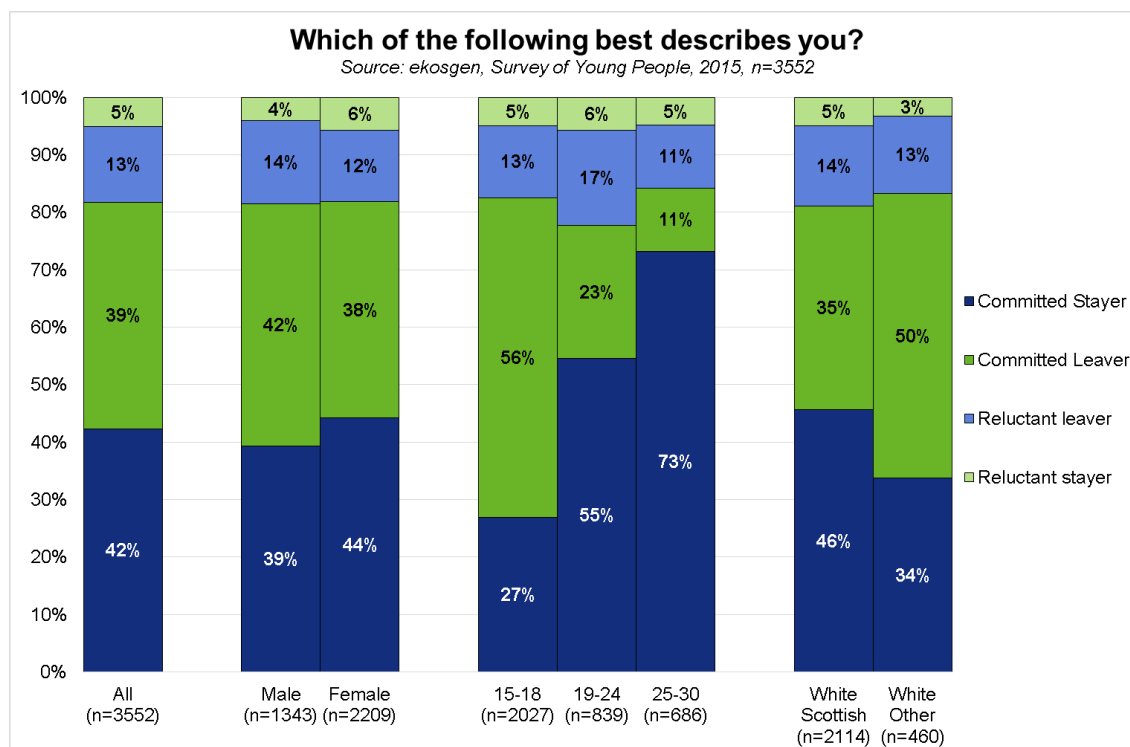
2.4 **As young people across the region get older, they tend to commit to staying in the H&I.** Those aged 25-30 are far more likely to be committed stayers (73%) than the younger age groups of 19-24 years (55%) and 15-18 years (27%). Over half (56%) of 15-18 year olds are committed to leaving the region, and this does not vary by gender or other equality characteristic.

2.5 Young people who identified as being White Scottish are more likely to be committed stayers than those who identified as being of Other White ethnic origin or of mixed, multiple, or other minority ethnic origin (46%, compared to 34% and 19% respectively)⁴.

³ Please note, these answers exclude respondents from the small number of young people from outside the Highlands and Islands.

⁴ Please note, while the sample of those who identify as being of mixed, multiple or other minority ethnic origin is small, statistics are included here to allow comparison. Nevertheless, these must be treated with caution.

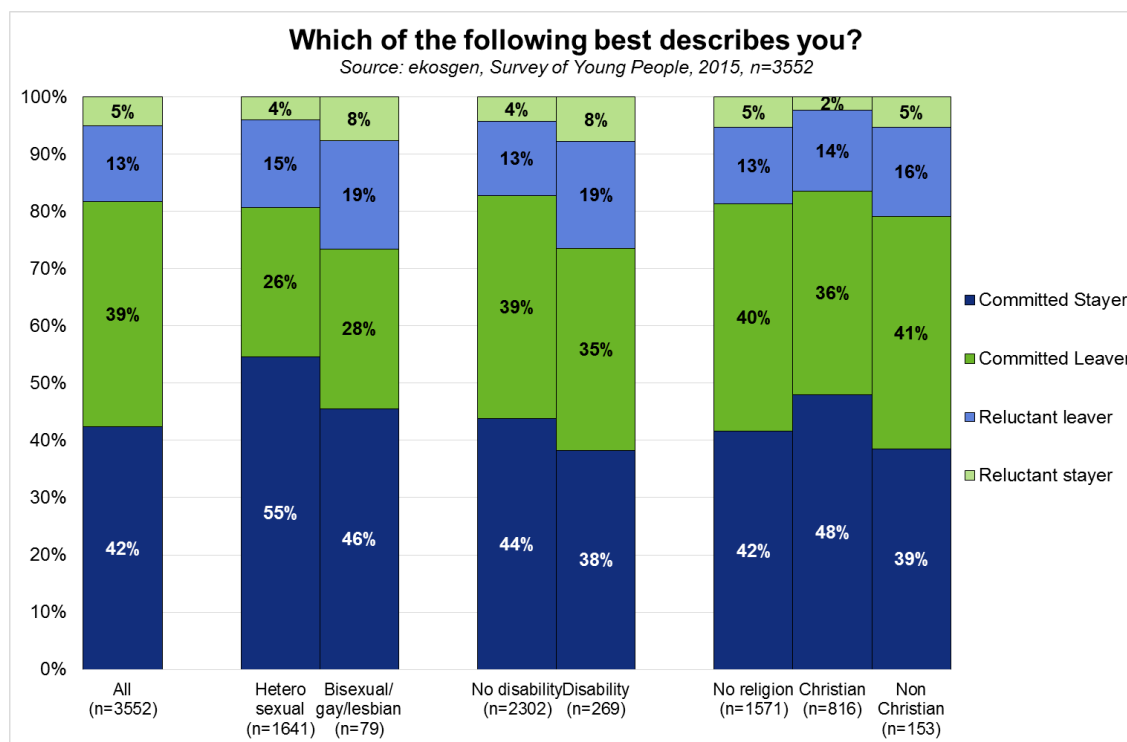
Figure 2.1⁵



2.6 Other equalities characteristics are set out in Figure 2.2 below. Nearly half of those who identify as having Christian belief (48%) are committed to staying in the region, higher than those with no identified religion or belief (42%) and those who identified as being of another religion or belief (39%). Heterosexual young people are more likely to be committed stayers (55%) than those who identify as bisexual, gay or lesbian (46%), although this should be treated with caution due to the low sample size (79). Young people without a disability are also more likely to be committed stayers (44%) than those with a disability (38%), although a higher proportion are also committed to leaving the H&I (39% v 35%). Correspondingly, those with a disability, and those who identify as bisexual, gay or lesbian, are more likely to be reluctant leavers – 19% for both compared to 13% overall.

⁵ Data for those of mixed, multiple, or other minority ethnic origin is excluded from the chart due to the small sample size, although it is included in the text.

Figure 2.2

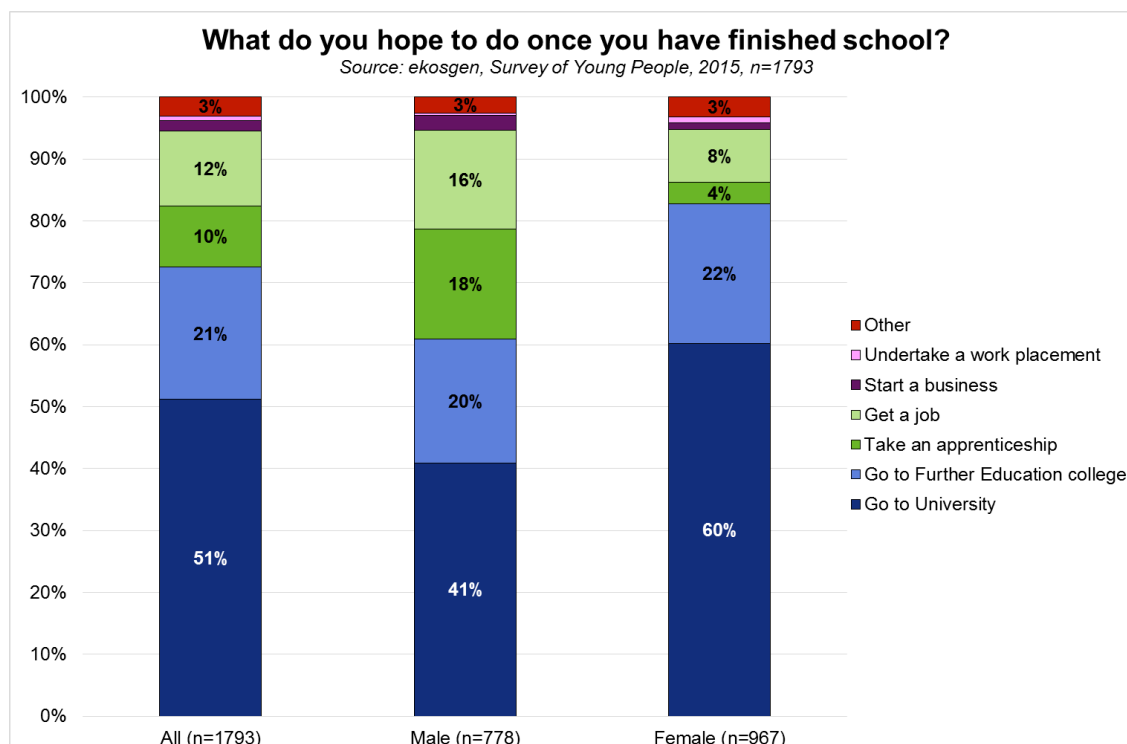


Aspirations of School Leavers

2.7 Across the H&I, over half (51%) of school pupils wish to go to university when they finish school. **Females are significantly more likely than males to want to go to university** (60%, compared to 41%). In contrast, **males are over four times as likely to want to take an apprenticeship** (18% compared to 4% of females), and twice as likely to want to enter employment straight out of school (16% versus 8%) (see Figure 2.3).

2.8 **School pupils with a disability are much less likely to want to go to university or college than those without a disability** (57% versus 76%), and more likely to want to go into employment (24% versus 10%). There is little difference by ethnicity, although young people of mixed, multiple or other minority ethnic origin are slightly less likely to want to go to University (46%, compared to 52% of White Scottish and 53% of Other White respondents), and more likely to want to take an apprenticeship (18%, compared to 10% and 6% respectively). School leaver aspirations vary little by sexual orientation or religious belief.

Figure 2.3



2.9 In terms of *where* school pupils hope to be located when they finish school, males are slightly more likely to want to stay in their local area within the H&I (16%, compared to 13% of females). This is likely to be linked to the higher proportion wishing to get a job or take an apprenticeship locally.

2.10 Where male aspiration is to move away from the local area, then this desire is to move further away than females, such as elsewhere in the UK (12% versus 7%) or elsewhere in the world (20% compared to 16%). In contrast, females are more likely than males to want to live in the Central Belt (23% versus 15%) and elsewhere in Scotland (25% compared to 18%).

2.11 There is very little variation on school pupil’s desired location after school by sexual orientation, religion or belief, disability or ethnicity, although young people of mixed, multiple or other minority ethnic origin are much more likely to want to live elsewhere in the world (32%, compared to 16% of White Scottish and 18% of Other White respondents).

2.12 Overall, there are high proportions of young people who are committed to staying in the H&I, likely to be related to increasing levels of opportunity. Attitudes are also more positive (across all groups of young people) on others’ decision to stay in the region. However, the differences outlined in this section – particularly in terms of what young people hope to do - indicate the need to consider a more granulated policy response to meet the aspirations of young men and women, young disabled people and those of mixed, multiple or other minority ethnic origin.

Learning

2.13 There is a good skills base to work from amongst the region’s young people. More than two fifths of those participating in the research and in employment/self-employment (42%) were qualified to at least first degree level, and this was slightly higher for females (44%) than males (38%). A further 18% were qualified to HNC/HND or SVQ 4-5, higher for males (22%) than females (17%). Almost a quarter (23%) of those

unemployed were qualified to at least first degree level, higher for females than males, as were a third of those post education describing themselves as neither employed or unemployed (32%), with both groups representing a significant untapped skills base in the potential workforce, although both from a low base.

2.14 A quarter of apprentices surveyed (largely males) were also educated to SVQ 4 and above level, with a further 47% SVQ Level 3 or equivalent. Many of the 17% currently in FE/HE have also already reached a higher skills level – with 16% of these possessing a first or higher degree.

2.15 Analysing the respondents in employment by equalities statistics, Other White young people are more likely to have a Higher Degree (25%, compared to 18% of White Scottish young people) or First Degree (29% versus 24%). While bisexual/ gay/ lesbian respondents are slightly more likely to have a Higher Degree than heterosexual/ straight young people (21% versus 20%), they are significantly less likely to have a First Degree (9% compared to 25%) as their highest level of qualification, and therefore more likely to have a Higher grade or Standard grade equivalent as their highest level of qualification. There is little difference by disability or religion or belief.

2.16 There are also some observable differences by protected characteristic in terms of attitudes and perceptions of learning opportunities and quality in the region. Apprentices (who are more likely to be males) are more likely to agree there are courses of interest in the H&I and that they are able to study locally.

2.17 There is very little difference in these criteria by ethnicity, religion or belief, disability or sexual orientation, although those who identify as bisexual/ gay/ lesbian are more positive about the types of courses on offer in the H&I (44%, compared to 37% of heterosexual/straight respondents).

2.18 Those who identify as having no religion or belief are more likely to agree that they can study locally (55%, compared to 51% of those of Christian belief and 42% of those of another religion or belief), and the same is true for young people of mixed, multiple or other minority ethnic origin (57%) when compared to White Scottish (53%) and Other White (51%) young people. There is little difference by disability or sexual orientation.

2.19 Homemakers and carers, who are more likely to be female, are also more likely to agree they are able to study locally, and that provision is affordable. On the whole, this suggests a local educational offering exists for these groups, although young female carers may be accepting available training to meet their caring needs rather than following wider career aspirations.

2.20 Slightly more young people who identify as having no religion or belief agree that studying in the H&I is more affordable for them (56%) than Christians (54%) or those of another religion or belief (42%). There is little difference by ethnicity, disability or sexual orientation.

2.21 Across the different equality groups, there are similar attitudes to the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) and to Inverness Campus, both of which are viewed positively, although all groups similarly view there to be limitations around the graduate placement offer.

2.22 On the whole, more than three in four young people now agree there is good access to FE, and two in three that there are good HE opportunities - an improvement on five years ago when close to half of young people surveyed thought there was limited or poor access to FE and HE.⁶

⁶ Please see Highlands and Islands Enterprise (2009) *Young People in the Highlands and Islands: Understanding and influencing the migration choices of young people to and from the Highlands and Islands of Scotland*. Available online at: <http://www.hie.co.uk/common/handlers/download-document.ashx?id=abbdead3-15dc-49f3-9473-4cdc9db2bfb1>.

3 Working in the Highlands and Islands

3.1 This section examines what young people think about local and H&I employment and career progression opportunities, their ideal location to work, familiarity with and interest in H&I growth sectors, and the characteristics they value most in employers. Key differences by characteristic are drawn out where they exist and where numbers allow.

Employment-Related Factors in the Local Area

3.2 The fact that high proportions of young people are committed to staying in the region and that attitudes on others staying are more positive suggest progress towards HIE Equality Outcome 1, which seeks to increase the number of young people moving into suitable employment in the region.

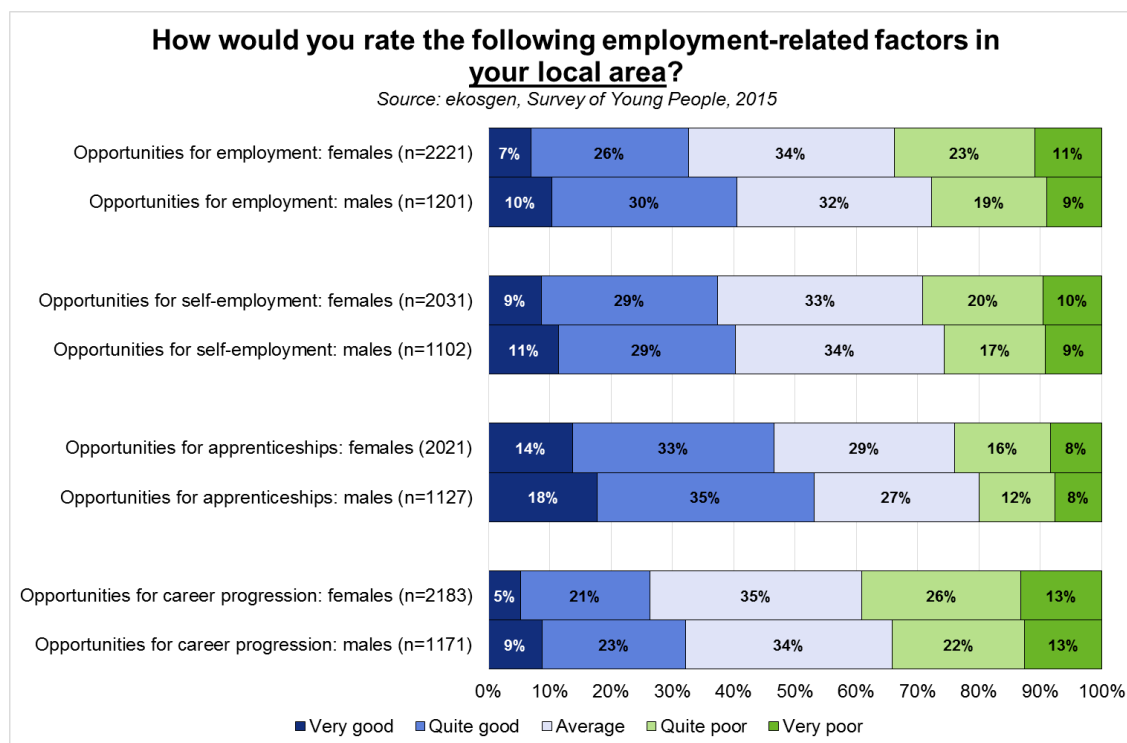
3.3 **Males are more likely to perceive the availability of the local employment-related factors more favourably** than females including: opportunities for employment; opportunities for self-employment; opportunities for apprenticeships; and opportunities for career progression as illustrated in Figure 3.1 below.

3.4 The positive view from males is particularly the case for local opportunities for employment overall, with around four in ten male respondents rating these favourably, compared to a third of females. The difference in perceptions of the availability of self-employment opportunities is less pronounced, although still more males (40%) rate these positively than females (38%).

3.5 These are interesting findings, and suggest **a particular focus may be required on increasing employment and progression opportunities for young females in the H&I in particular**. This requires promoting *good quality* employment opportunities (with good pay, progression), including higher quality opportunities in a wider range of sectors (females are still more aware of sectors which are perceived to be lower paid, notably Food and drink and Tourism, as per Figure 3.5). In some geographic areas there is a particularly low perception of good local opportunities amongst females, including areas where male-dominated sectors are prevalent, e.g. Shetland where the energy sector is strong.

3.6 There is little variation in young people's perception of local employment and self-employment opportunities by age, suggesting that attitudes towards employment opportunities locally do not change as young people get older. This holds for both males and females. The perceptions of disabled and non-disabled young people are also similar. There is no notable difference by religion or belief, sexuality or ethnicity.

Figure 3.1



Employment-Related Factors in the H&I

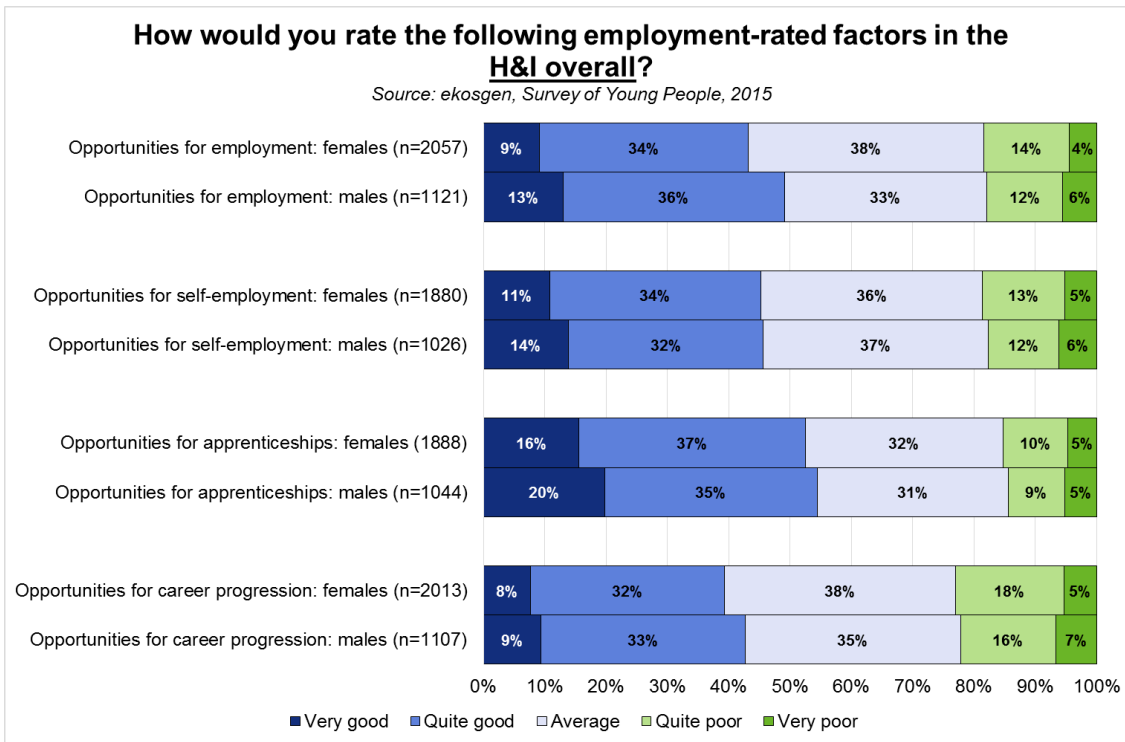
3.7 Overall, employment related factors in the H&I region are rated more positively than local opportunities, and similar to the local position, male respondents are generally more positive than females. As with local employment-related factors, the difference is greatest for opportunities for employment (49% of males rating them positively, compared to 43% for females), although overall the differences are less significant than for employment-related factors in the local area.

3.8 Contrary to local employment-related factors, **young people tend to become more negative about employment opportunities in the H&I overall as they get older**. Half (50%) of those aged 15-18 rate opportunities for employment in the H&I overall positively, and this drops to 43% for 19-24 year olds and 36% for 25-30 year olds. Again there is no great variation by age and gender.

3.9 Bisexual/ gay/ lesbian young people are more likely to rate employment opportunities negatively (32%) than heterosexual/ straight young people (21%).

3.10 There is little variation by religion or ethnicity and no variation by disability.

Figure 3.2

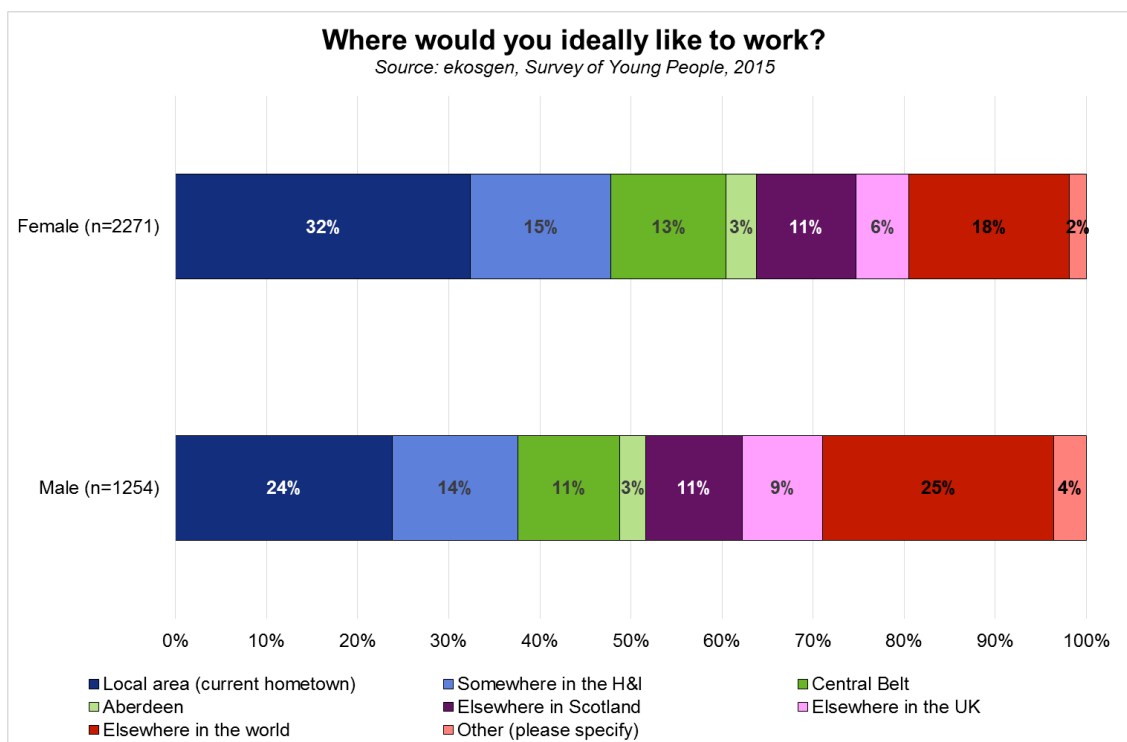


3.11 Similarly, young people become more negative about pay levels in the region as they get older, with 39% of 15-18 year olds rating pay levels positively, dropping to 28% for 19-24 year olds and 18% for 25-30 year olds. Young females are also slightly more negative about pay levels in the H&I than young males, (25% compared to 30%), and this is true for all age groups. There is no difference in pay level perceptions by disability, religion or belief, race or sexual orientation.

Ideal place to work

3.12 As illustrated in Figure 3.3 below, female respondents are noticeably more likely to want to work in their local area (current home town), with nearly a third wishing to do so (32%), compared to just under a quarter of male respondents (24%). In contrast, males are more likely to want to work elsewhere in the world (25%, compared to 18%).

Figure 3.3

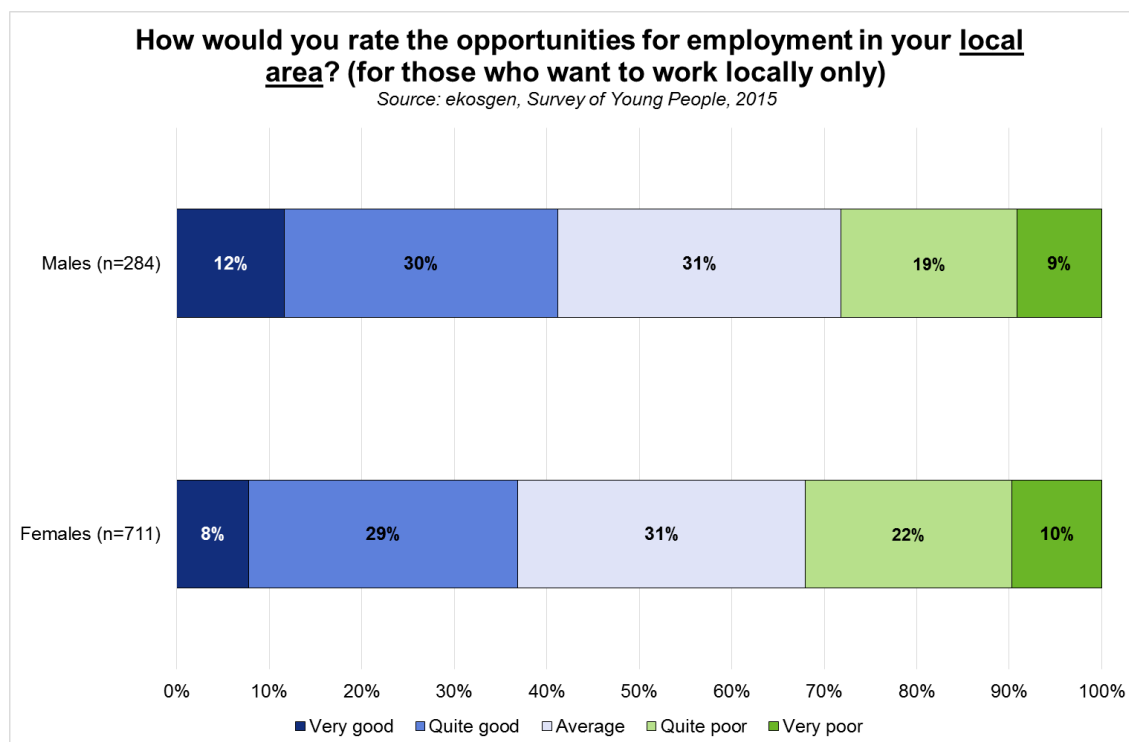


3.13 Young people who have a Christian faith are significantly more likely to want to work locally (34%) than those of another religion or belief (17%), although there is little difference with those who identify as having no religion or belief (30%). Further, there is little variation amongst other potential locations, although in contrast to those with no religion or belief (20%) and Christians (17%), those of another religion or belief are much more likely to want to live elsewhere in the world (29%).

3.14 Heterosexual/ straight young people appear to have a stronger desire to work in their local area (37%) than bisexual/ gay/ lesbian respondents (24%), although the latter group are more likely to wish to work elsewhere in the H&I (26%, compared to 17%). This shows that around half of both groups would like to work somewhere in the H&I. A desire to work locally is also stronger amongst White Scottish (33%) young people than Other White (20%) ethnic groups and those of mixed, multiple or other minority ethnic origin (15%). Overall respondents of mixed, multiple or other minority ethnic origin have less desire to work in Scotland and a greater desire to work elsewhere in the UK or the world than either White Scottish or Other White respondents. There is little variation between those with or without a disability.

3.15 **Given that slightly more young females (34%) consider local employment opportunities to be poor than males (28%), this suggests a significant mismatch between desire to work locally and perceptions of the ability to do so.** Figure 3.4 below illustrates that, of those young people who want to work locally, females tend to be slightly more negative about local employment opportunities than males. Females who wish to live locally are more positive about local employment opportunities, with 37% rating these as quite or very good (compared to 30% of those that wish to work elsewhere). There is little difference for males.

Figure 3.4



Views on H&I Growth Sectors

3.16 HIE’s Operating Plan recognises that the region’s natural assets, ambition, skills base and cultural background provide a range of opportunities to develop a vibrant sectoral economy.⁷ HIE’s growth sectors - *Financial and business services; Creative industries (including digital); Tourism (including hospitality); Food and drink; Life sciences; and Energy (including renewable energy)* are aligned to the key sectors identified in Scotland’s Economic Strategy, but with key regional specialisms under each sector.

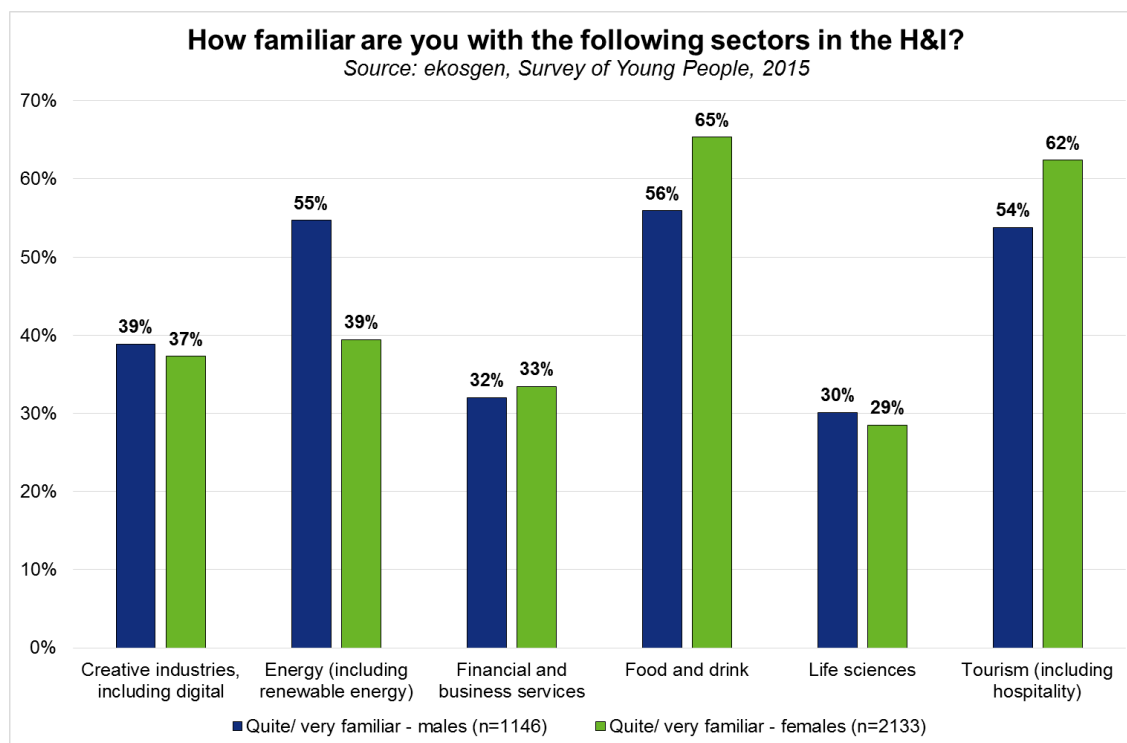
3.17 Overall, young people are most familiar with the Food and drink and Tourism sectors. While this is also the case for young females, young males are slightly more aware of the Energy sector than Tourism.

3.18 Awareness of the Energy, Food and drink and Tourism sectors indicates significant differentiation by gender. This is most significant for Energy (with 55% of *males* being familiar, compared to 39% of females), followed by Food and drink (where 65% of *females* say they are familiar, compared to 56% of males), and Tourism (62% of *females*, compared to 54% of males) (see Figure 3.5 overleaf). Familiarity with the other growth sectors varies less by gender.

3.19 There is also little difference in familiarity with growth sectors by religion, sexual orientation, disability or ethnicity.

⁷ HIE (2014) Building Our Future: Operating Plan 2014-2017

Figure 3.5

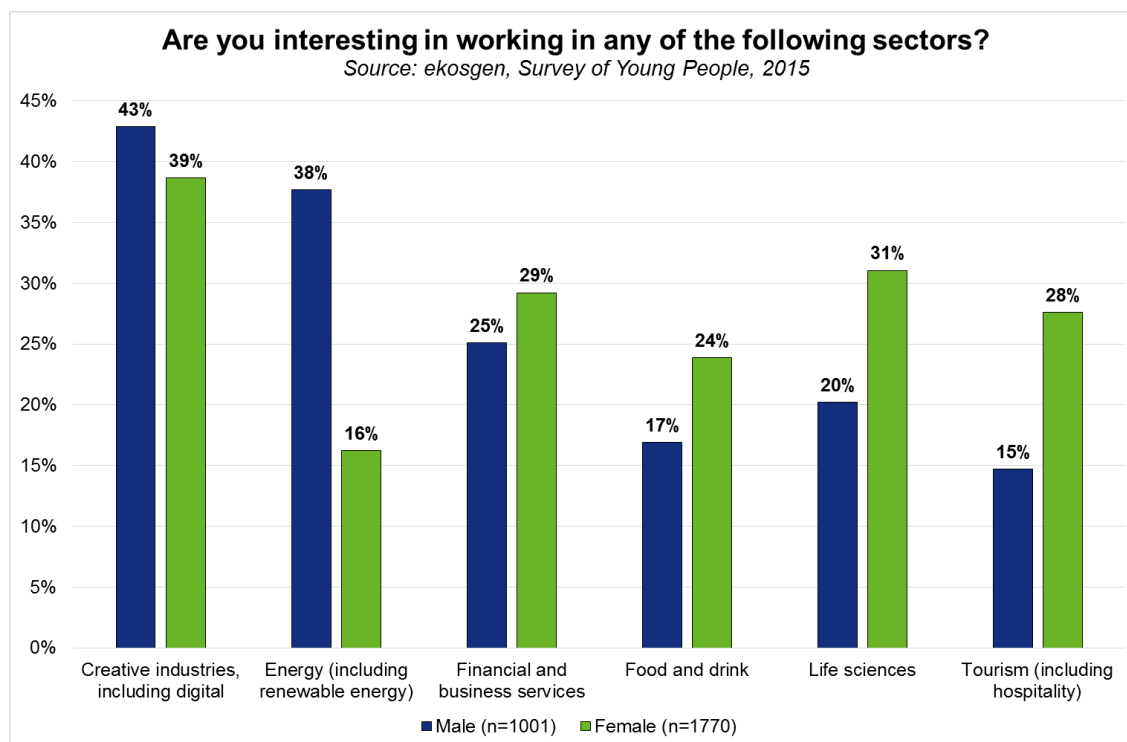


3.20 Overall, young people are most interested in working in the Creative industries sector, and this is true for both males and females. However, there are gender differences in terms of levels of *interest* in working in the different growth sectors.

3.21 **More than twice as many males (38%) than females (16%) are interested in working in the Energy sector.** This also reflects the difference in awareness levels of the sector. **Females are more likely to want to work in the Life sciences** (31% for females and 20% for males), **Tourism** (28% females, 15% males) and **Food and drink sectors** (24% females, 17% of males) (see Figure 3.6 overleaf). Food and drink and Tourism are two sectors perceived to be characterised by part-time and low paid employment, indicating that young women are more likely to be drawn to low paid work. The views of young people reflect existing patterns of occupational segregation amongst growth sectors.

3.22 Amongst the other growth sectors, more males are slightly more interested in working in the Creative industries than females and slightly less interested in financial and business services than females. There is little variation by religion, ethnicity, disability or sexual orientation.

Figure 3.6



Desired Qualities in Employers

3.23 The top three desired qualities in employers for young people in the H&I are:

1. A commitment to staff development/ good training opportunities (77%);
2. A good work-life balance (75%); and
3. Provision of options for career progression (59%).

3.24 These three held for females, although males desired strong leadership (58%) and an ambitious employer (57%) slightly more than options for career progression (55%).

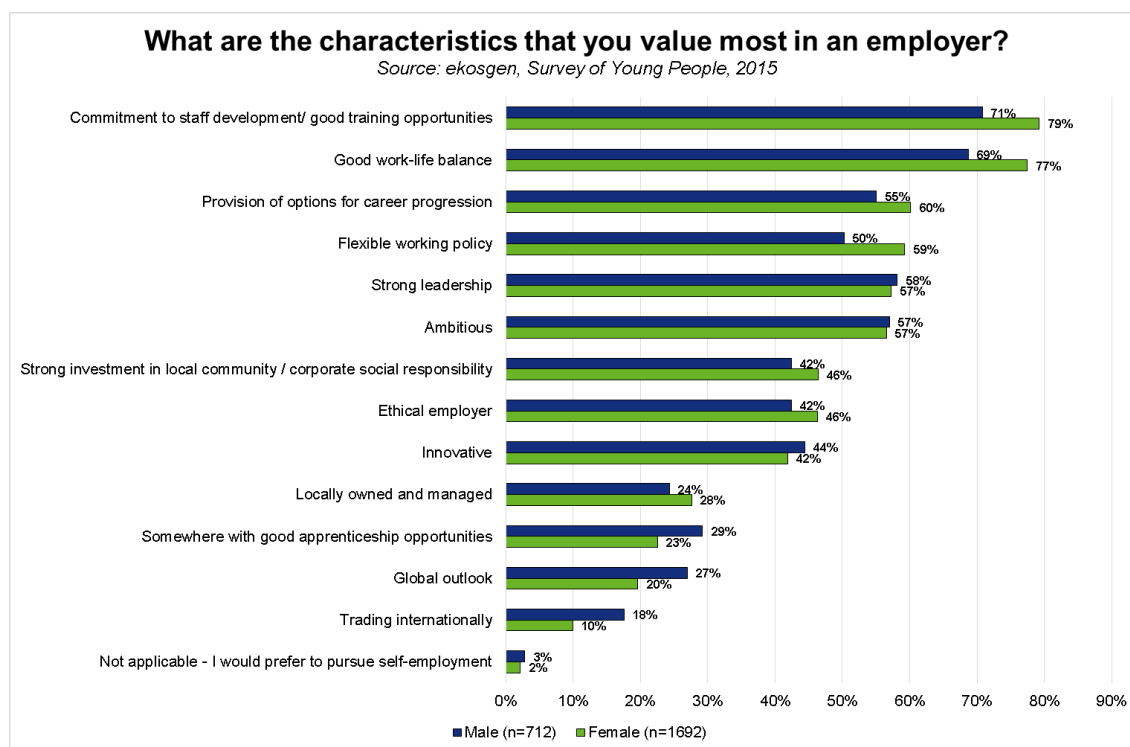
3.25 There is some further gender variation in desired qualities in employers (see Figure 3.7 overleaf). A higher proportion of **females** value:

- a **commitment to staff development/ good training opportunities** (of value to 79% of females compared to 71% of males);
- a **good work-life balance** (valued by 77% of females, versus 69% of males);
- **provision of options for career progression** (60% compared to 55%); and
- a **flexible working policy** (59% of females compared to 50% of males).

3.26 A higher proportion of **males** value:

- somewhere with **good apprenticeship opportunities** (29%, compared to 23%);
- a **global outlook** (27%, compared to 20%); and
- **international trading** (18%, compared to 10% of females).

Figure 3.7

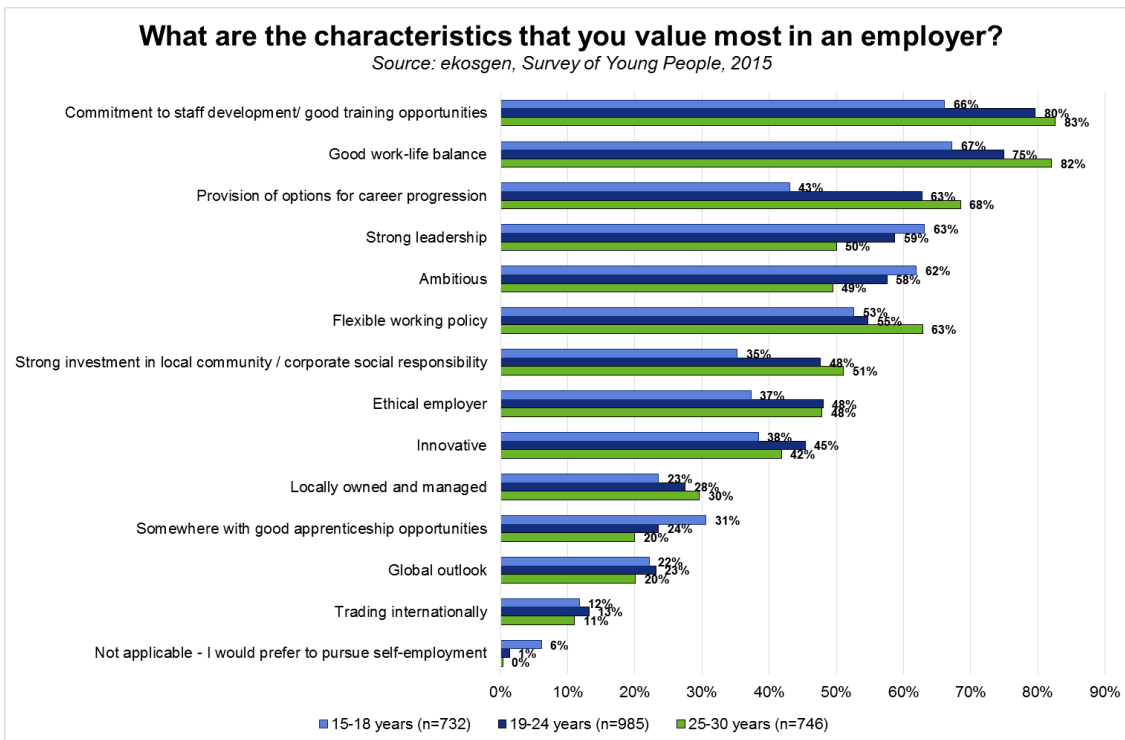


3.27 The top three desired employer characteristics outlined at 3.23 also hold for young people aged 19 to 24 years and 25 to 30 years (see Figure 3.8 below), but are different for those aged 15-18 years. For this youngest age group, a good work-life balance (67%), commitment to staff development/ good training opportunities (66%) and strong leadership (63%) are the most desired qualities.

3.28 Key variances include:

- A greater emphasis on **career progression options** for 25-30 year olds (68%) and 19-24 year olds (63%), when compared to 15-18 year olds (43%);
- A greater desire for **flexible working** for 25-30 year olds (63%), compared to 19-24 year olds (55%) and 15-18 year olds (53%); and
- A higher value in **strong leadership**, an **ambitious** employer and somewhere with **apprenticeship opportunities** for 15-18 year olds, when compared to the older groups.

Figure 3.8



3.29 Those who identify as Christian tend to place more value on employer characteristics than those of another religion or belief and those with no identified religion or belief. A particular finding to note is that almost nine in 10 Christian young people value a commitment to staff development/training (89%, compared to 77% of all young people). There is no difference in the value placed on employer characteristics by sexual orientation, with the top three characteristics the same for both heterosexual young people and their bisexual/ gay/ lesbian counterparts (the same top three as for all young people). Similarly, there is very little difference by ethnicity and also by disability, although those who identify as disabled are slightly more likely to value flexible working policies than non-disabled young people (61% versus 57%).

4 Life aspirations in the Highlands and Islands

4.1 There are a range of other factors, beyond education and employment, which affect a young person's decision on whether to stay or leave the H&I. This chapter focuses on respondents' views regarding their local community and future aspirations in the H&I.

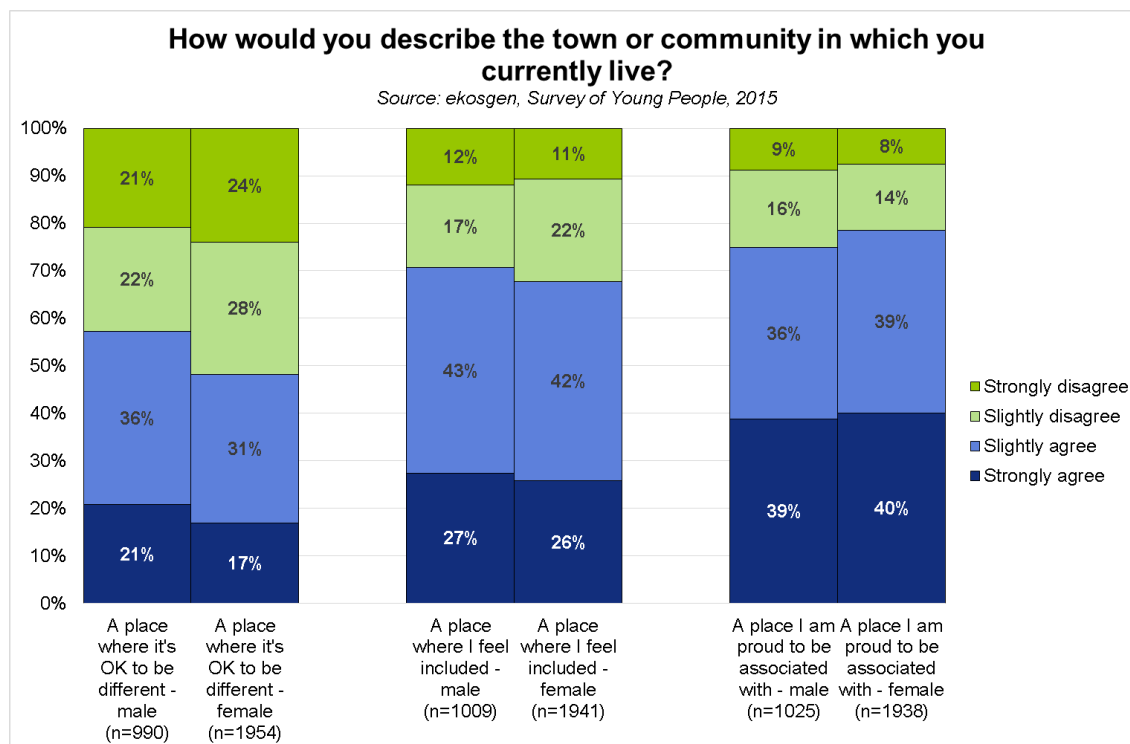
Community

4.2 Young people were asked to rank the town or community in which they live against a range of criteria. Overall, just over half of young people agree that their town or community is a place where it's OK to be different. However, a **higher proportion of females disagree with this statement** – 24% strongly and 28% slightly (52% in total), compared to 21% and 22% of male respondents (43%). This indicates a quite marked difference between genders (see Figure 4.1). The flip-side is that a higher proportion of males agree that their town or community is a place where it is OK to be different (57% compared to 48% for females), and these proportions have grown significantly since the 2009 study, for both males (38% in 2009) and females (34% in 2009).

4.3 Overall, the majority of young people feel included in their community, although this is to a slightly lesser extent for females than males. 68% of females agree that their current town or community is a place where they feel included (42% slightly and 26% strongly agreeing) compared to 70% of males (43% slightly and 27% strongly agreeing).

4.4 There is a strong sense of pride in living in the H&I. Nearly four in five young people are 'proud to be associated' with their town or community. This is very slightly higher for females (79% - 40% strongly and 39% slightly agreeing) than for males (75% - 39% strongly and 36% slightly agreeing).

Figure 4.1

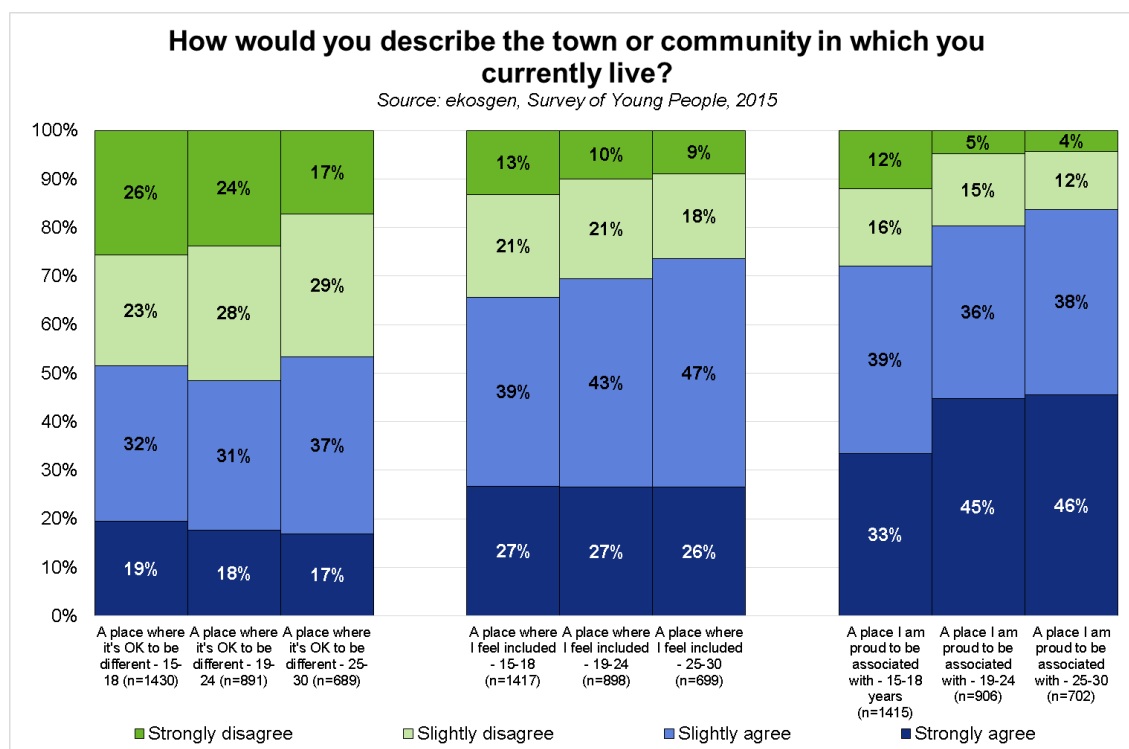


4.5 **There is limited variation in views by age as to whether their local area is a place where it is OK to be different, although strength of feeling does vary.** The proportions that strongly agree with this are similar for all age groups – between 17% and 19%. However, over one quarter (26%) of young people aged 15 to 18 years strongly disagree with this, compared to 19-24 year olds (24%) and 25-30 year olds (17%).

4.6 **Older age groups tend to feel slightly more included in their town or community than younger age groups.** Nearly three quarters (73%) of 25-30 year olds agreed that they felt included, compared to 70% of 19-25 year olds and two thirds (66%) of 15-18 year olds.

4.7 **Pride in being from the local town or community increases with age:** 72% of 15-18 year olds agree with this statement (33% strongly so), compared to 81% of 19-24 year olds (45% strongly) and 84% of 25-30 year olds (46% strongly).

Figure 4.2



4.8 **There is little difference in the views of young people by sexual orientation on whether their town or community is a place where it's OK to be different.** Of young people who identify as heterosexual just over half agree with the statement (52%), compared to 53% amongst those who identify as bisexual/ gay/ lesbian (see Figure 4.3). Again, the perceptions of both groups have grown substantially since the 2009 study, when 32% of heterosexual young people agreed, compared to 25% of bisexual young people and just 20% of those who identify as gay/ lesbian. This highlights a much improved perception of young people's local areas in this regard. There is only a slight variation by ethnicity; 46% of White Scottish young people agreed with this statement, compared to 42% amongst both those of Other White ethnic origin and respondents of mixed, multiple or other minority ethnic origin.

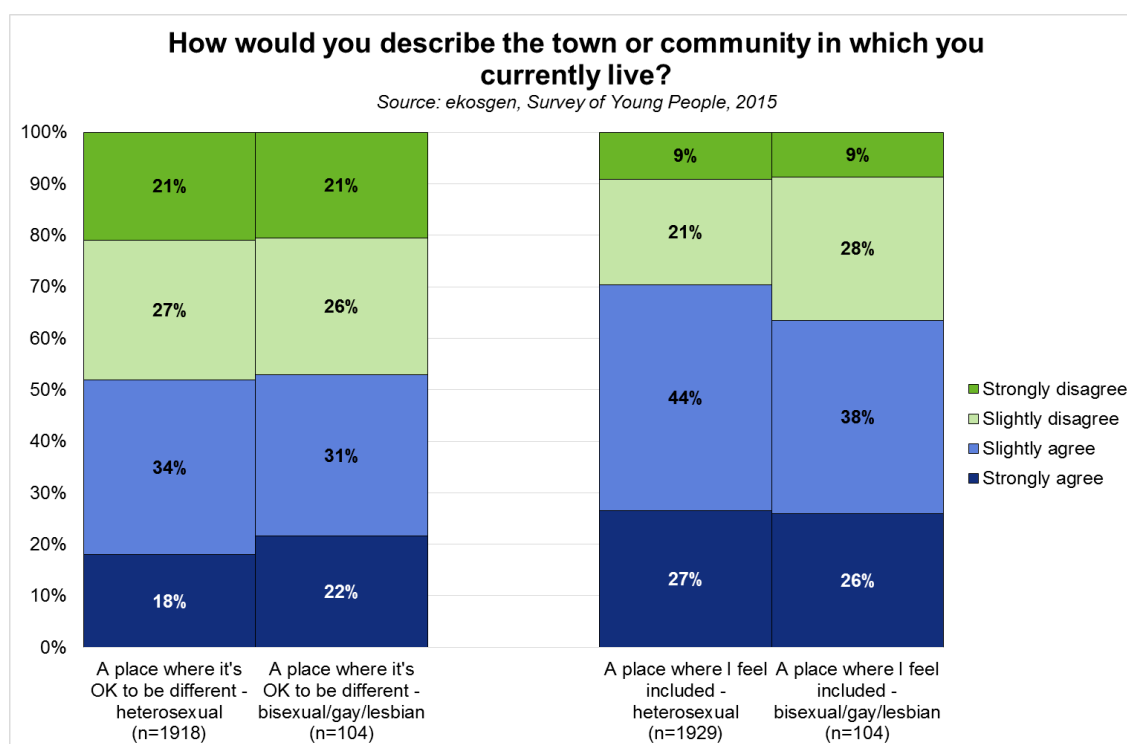
4.9 There is a difference in the views by religion or belief on whether the local area is a place where it's OK to be different. Just over half of young people who identify as Christian (52%) and those with no religion or belief (51%) agreed with this view, but those of another religion or belief (46%) were less likely to agree.

There was less variation in views by disability, with 51% of those without a disability agreeing that their community is a place where it is OK to be different (36% in 2009), compared to 47% of those with a disability (35% in 2009). Again this indicates improved perceptions of young people's local areas over time.

4.10 **Bisexual/ gay/ lesbian respondents are however, less likely to feel included in their community than their heterosexual counterparts – 64% agree that their community is a place where they feel included**, compared to 71% of heterosexual respondents and 69% overall. Of those identifying as bisexual/ gay/ lesbian, 38% slightly and 26% strongly agree with the statement that it is a place they feel included, compared to heterosexual respondents where 44% slightly and 27% strongly agree.

4.11 **Young people of mixed, multiple or other minority ethnic origin are notably less likely to feel included in their town or community (47%) than those of White Scottish (62%) or Other White (56%) ethnicities**. Christians are slightly more likely to feel included in their local community (65%) than those who identify as having no religion or belief (59%) or those of another religion or belief (52%). Feelings of inclusion vary little in relation to disability.

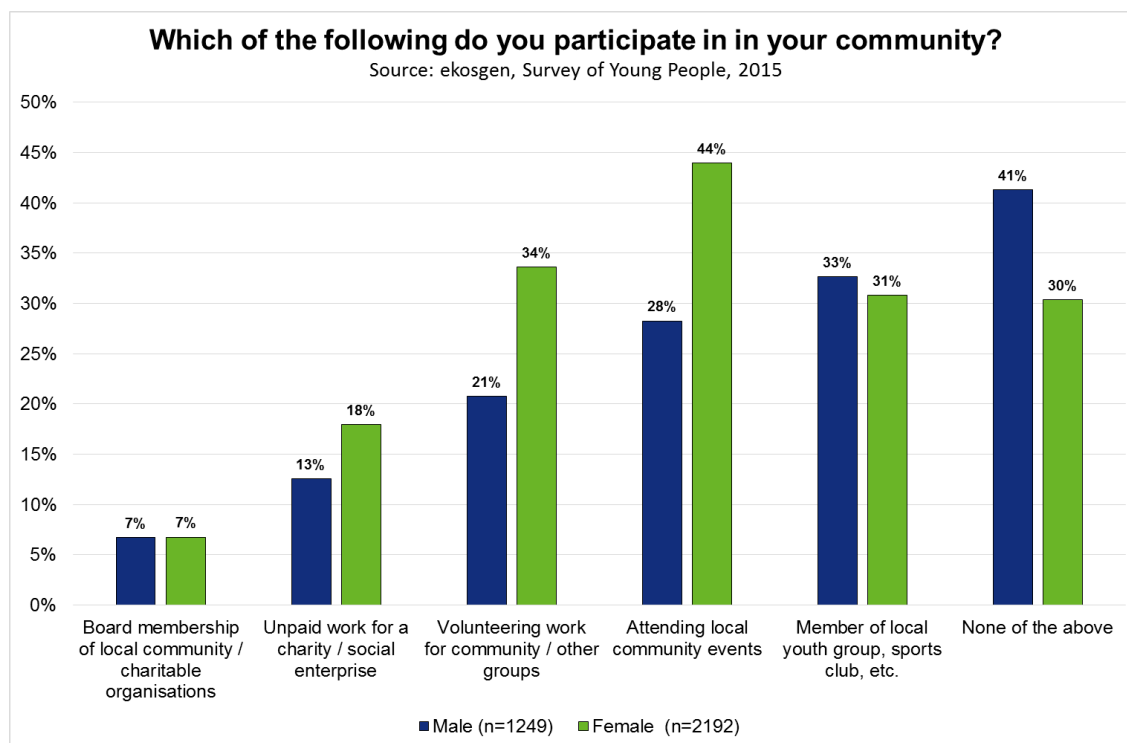
Figure 4.3



4.12 In contrast to the proportions feeling included in their community, Figure 4.4 shows that **female respondents are generally more likely to participate in activities in their community than males**. Fewer than a third (30%) state that they do not participate in the activities listed, compared to 41% of male respondents not participating and 29% overall.

4.13 Female respondents are much more likely to attend local community events (44%, compared to 28% of males), to volunteer for community/other groups (34%, compared to 21%) and to undertake unpaid work for a charity/social enterprise (18%, versus 13%). Reflecting the age group of respondents, board membership of a local community/charitable organisation is low (7%) amongst both genders. The only activity that males are slightly more likely to participate in than females is being a member of a local youth group, sports club, etc. with a third doing so, compared to 31% of females.

Figure 4.4



4.14 A positive finding is that there is very little difference in community engagement by disability. Some 37% of young people who identify as disabled attend local community events and 30% do volunteer work, compared to 42% and 31% respectively for those without a disability. Again, community participation varies little by sexual orientation and religion or belief. There is very little variation by ethnicity, although young people of mixed, multiple or other minority ethnic origin are less likely to attend community events (27%) than those of Other White (40%) and White Scottish (41%) ethnic origin.

Future Aspirations

4.15 In terms of aspirations in five years' time, both males and females are most likely to want to live in their local area (36% for each gender) than elsewhere. A higher proportion of female respondents would like to live in the H&I (13%, compared to 11% of males) or elsewhere in Scotland (32%, compared to 29%), whereas males are more likely to want to live elsewhere in the UK (8%, versus 5%) or elsewhere in the world (16%, compared to 13%).

4.16 As young people grow older, they are much more settled in their local area. 61% of 25-30 year olds want to live in their local area in five years' time, compared to 39% for 19-24 year olds and just under one quarter (24%) of 15-18 year olds.

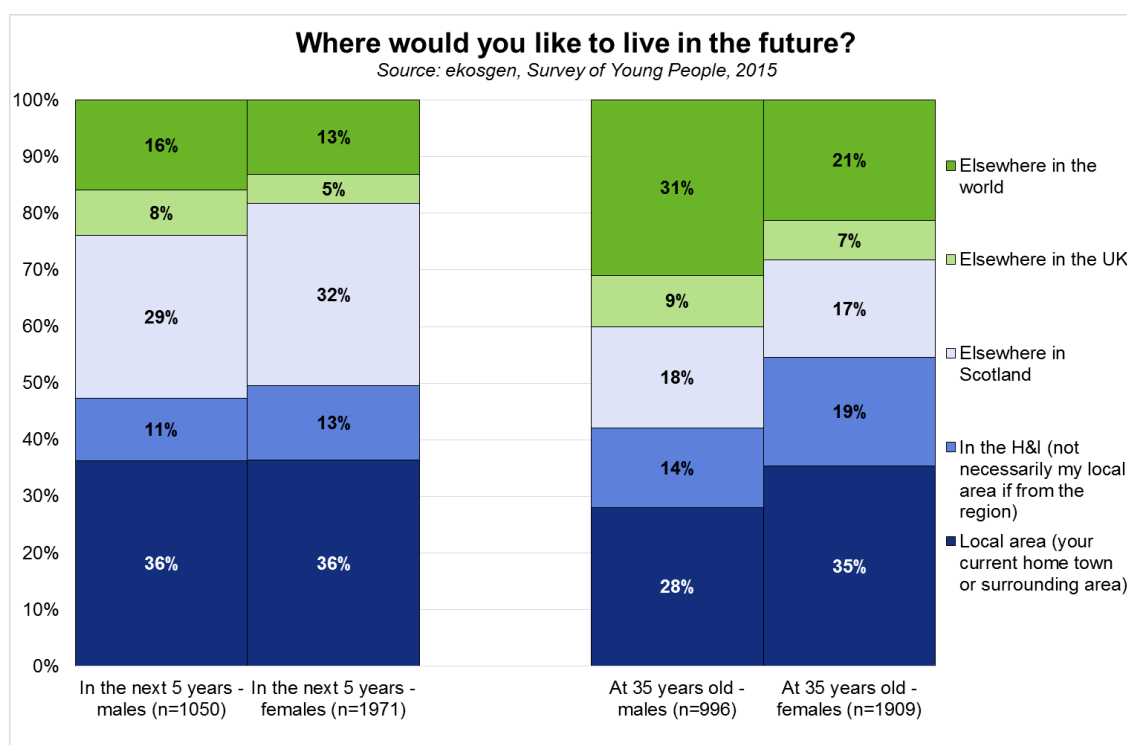
4.17 By the time they reach the age of 35 years, far **fewer males than females wish to be staying in the H&I**. 42% of males wish to be living in the region at this age compared to 54% of females. Of females, 35% wish to live in their local area and 19% elsewhere in the H&I. In comparison, 28% of males would like to be living in their local area and a further 14% elsewhere in the H&I. In contrast, over three in ten males would like to live elsewhere in the world (31%), compared to 21% of female respondents.

4.18 Again, older age groups are much more likely to see themselves staying in the H&I at the age of 35 years. Nearly three quarters of 25-30 year olds (73%) want to be staying in the H&I by the time they reach 35 years old, compared to 61% of those aged 19-24 years, and just one third (33%) of those aged 15-18 years.

4.19 Young people reporting a disability are significantly less likely to wish to be in the H&I by the time they reach the age of 35 (39% compared to 53% for those without a disability).

4.20 There is very little variation in short term aspirations by sexual orientation, although in the longer term, by the time they reach 35 years old, heterosexual young people are more likely to want to be in the local area (39%) or the H&I (21%) than those who identify as bisexual/ gay/ lesbian (29% and 18% respectively). White Scottish young people are also more likely to want to be in the local area in five years' time and significantly more so at the age of 35 years (36%), when compared to Other White (22%) and young people of mixed, multiple or other minority ethnic origins (18%).

Figure 4.5



4.21 In terms of *what* young people would like to be doing in the next five years, the greatest proportion of both females (47%) and males (53%) want to be in employment (see Figure 4.6 overleaf). However, a significant proportion wish to be studying/furthering their education (43% of females and 38% of males), and the difference reflects the higher aspiration for HE amongst females cited in section 2. Just under one in ten (8%) of both genders wish to be running their own business, while a small proportion of females (2%) wish to be a home maker/carer (0% for males).

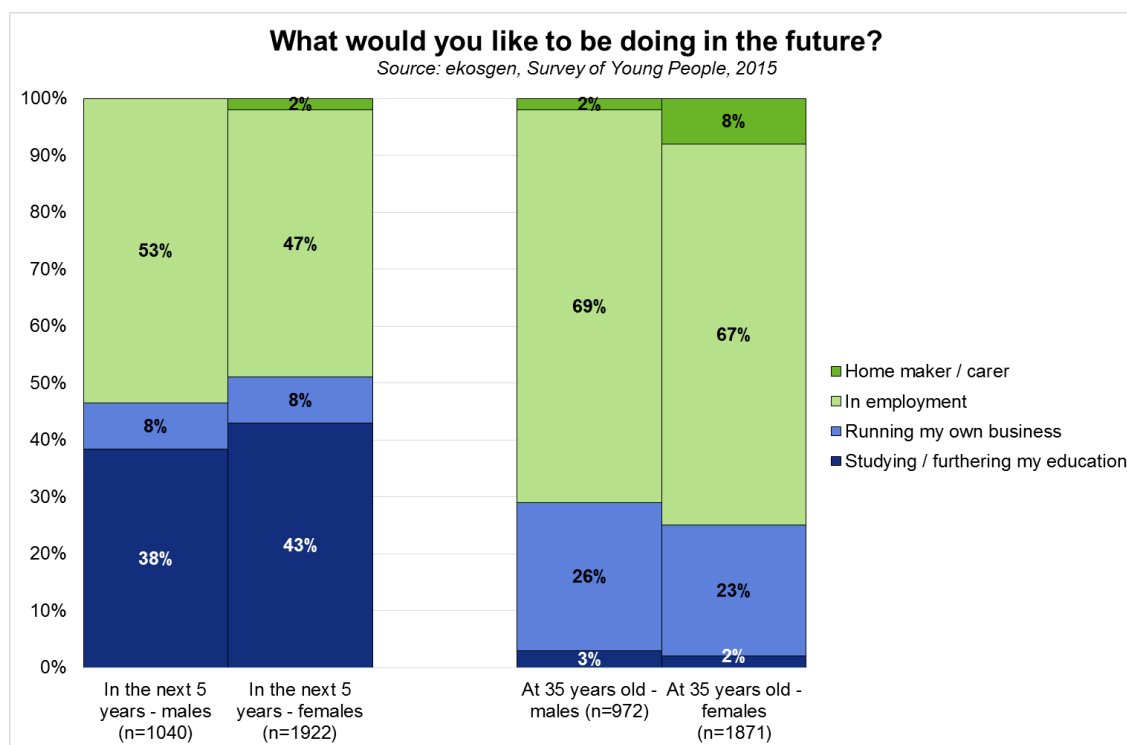
4.22 Unsurprisingly, 15-18 year olds are much more likely to want to be studying in five years' time (64%), compared to the older age groups. However, this is much more prevalent in young females (70%) than young males (55%) in this age group, with substantially more 15-18 year old males wanting to be in employment in the next five years (39% compared to 25% of females in this age group).

4.23 At 35 years old, the percentage wishing to be in employment increases. **The proportion of young females wishing to be in employment at 35 (67%) is very close to the proportion for males (69%).** Again, this indicates the need for high quality job opportunities for females in the H&I. Given the previous evidence at 3.18 that young females are more likely to be drawn to low paid work, this shows aspirations which are unlikely to be fulfilled.

4.24 The proportion wishing to be running their own business aged 35 is higher for males (26%) but it is also nearly one in four amongst females (23%). **This suggests latent entrepreneurialism amongst both young men and women.** Just under one in ten female respondents (8%) wish to be a home maker/ carer by the time they are 35, compared to 2% of males. A small percentage of male (3%) and female respondents (2%) wish to be studying/furthering their education at this age.

4.25 Those reporting a disability are significantly less likely to want to be in employment in five years (39%) and at 35 years old (57%), when compared to those without a disability (51% and 69% respectively). Conversely, young people with a disability have stronger aspirations to be studying at these points in time (49% and 6% compared to 40% and 2% for those without a disability). This finding is somewhat in contrast with the post-school aspirations of school pupils, given at paragraph 2.8. There is little variation in long term future aspirations by sexual orientation and religion or belief. Similarly, when grouped by ethnicity, young people have almost identical life aspirations aged 35.

Figure 4.6



5 Summary of Findings

5.1 There are a number of important differences by personal characteristic identified through the research, notably differences by gender.

Staying, Leaving and Learning

5.2 **Females** in the region are more likely than males to:

- Be committed to staying in the H&I.
- Wish to go on to Higher Education when they finish school.
- Want to work in their local area.
- Want to live in the Central Belt or other parts of Scotland if they do wish to leave the H&I, linked to aspirations to move into Higher Education.

5.3 **Males** in the region are more likely to:

- Be committed to leaving the H&I.
- (Where they do stay in the H&I), want to stay in their local area post-school.
- (Where they wish to leave their local area after school), more likely to want to live elsewhere in the UK or internationally.
- Want to undertake an apprenticeship or get a job, rather than go to university when they finish school.

5.4 Young people across the region tend to commit to staying in the H&I as they get older and become more settled. In addition, **heterosexual young people** are more likely to be committed to staying in the H&I than those who identify as bisexual, gay or lesbian. This is also the case for **those of Christian faith** compared to those of another religion or belief, **young people without a disability** compared to those with a disability and **those who identify as being White Scottish** compared to young people of other ethnic backgrounds.

5.5 School pupils **without a disability** are much more likely to want to go to university or college when they finish school, and less likely to search for employment than those who have a disability. **Young people of mixed, multiple or other minority ethnic origins** are also less likely to want to go to University and more likely to seek an apprenticeship.

5.6 There is little notable difference amongst the characteristic groups in terms of attitudes to learning in the region, which is viewed more favourably than five years ago. That said, there remains an expectation amongst many that university aspirations are met outside the region, and this is highest amongst **females**.

Employment

5.7 **Females** in the region are more likely than males to:

- Want to work in their local area, despite being negative about local employment opportunities.
- Be *familiar* with the Food and drink and Tourism sectors.
- *Want* to work in Food and drink and Tourism, and also Life sciences - although that is not to say interest is necessarily high in these sectors, with fewer than one in four females interested in working in Food and drink for example.
- Place higher value on flexible working and good work-life balance.
- Value employers that are committed to staff training and development.

5.8 **Males** in the region are more likely to be:

- More positive about the availability of local and regional employment opportunities, including apprenticeships.
- More positive about pay levels in the region.
- More aware of the Energy sector **and** more interested in working in it.
- Inclined to place higher value on an employer with an international focus, and somewhere with good apprenticeship opportunities.

5.9 Attitudes towards employment in the region tend to become more negative as young people get older, particularly perceptions on employment opportunities and pay levels. While bisexual/ gay/ lesbian young people are less positive, there is little variation to this by disability, religion or ethnicity.

Life Aspirations

5.10 **Females** in the region are more likely than males to take part in community activities overall and, specifically, to attend community events and volunteer at events and with third sector organisations. **Males** are less likely to participate in community based activities but, where they do, it is more likely to be in local youth groups and sports clubs.

5.11 There have been vast improvements across key equalities groups (gender, sexual orientation and disability) since the 2009 study as to whether they feel their local community is a place where it is OK to be different, although some variation still exists.

5.12 Fewer **females** than males believe it is OK to be different in their town and local area. They also feel marginally less included in the local community, as do those aged 15-18 years when compared to older age groups. **Bisexual/ gay/ lesbian** young people are less likely to feel included in their local community than heterosexual young people; although marginally more believe their local area is a place where it's OK to be different. Young people of **mixed, multiple or other minority ethnic origins** are notably less likely to feel included in their local community.

5.13 **Older age groups** and **females** are more likely to want to be living in their local area or in the H&I region when they are aged 35. In contrast, **young people reporting a disability** and young people who identify as **bisexual/ gay/ lesbian** are less likely to want to be living in the H&I by the time they reach the age of 35.

5.14 Almost as many **females** as males wish to be in employment aged 35, indicating the need for good quality employment and career progression opportunities for females as well as males. Around a quarter of females and males wish to be running their own business at 35 indicating strong enterprise interest from both genders. **Those reporting a disability** are significantly less likely to want to be in employment in five years and at 35 years old when compared to those without a disability. There is little variation in long term future aspirations by other equality characteristics.

Keys Points by Equality Group

Gender

- Females are more likely to be committed to staying in the H&I, while males are more committed to leaving.
- Female school pupils are much more likely to want to progress to university or FE college after school, while males are more likely to pursue apprenticeships or employment.

- Of those in employment, females were slightly more likely to be qualified to at least a first degree than males.
- Males are more likely to be positive about employment-related factors than females, although females are more likely to want to work in their local area. Males are more likely to want to look further afield for work.
- For young females there is a mismatch between desire to work locally and perceptions of the ability to do so.
- Males are more likely to be aware of, and interested in, the Energy sector, while there is higher awareness and interest in Food and drink and Tourism amongst females, suggesting they are more likely to be drawn to these lower-paid sectors.
- Both genders desire similar characteristics in employers, with a commitment to staff development/training opportunities and a work-life balance of highest value to both.
- Males are more likely to feel that it is OK to be different in their local area, although females have a stronger sense of pride in their local community.
- Males are more likely to want to live outside the H&I region by the age of 35 than females.

Age

- There is a clear picture of young people committing to staying in the H&I as they get older, whereas over half of those aged 15-18 are committed to leaving.
- In addition, young people tend to become more negative about employment opportunities and pay levels in the region as they get older, with females of all age groups more negative about pay levels than males.
- Older age groups place a greater value on career progression options and flexible working than younger age groups.
- Younger age groups (15-18 year olds) tend to feel slightly less included in their local area than older age groups.
- Pride in the local town or community tends to increase with age.
- As young people grow older, they are more settled in their local area and much less likely to leave.
- Those aged 15-18 are much more likely to want to be studying in five years' time, although this is more prevalent in young females than young males.

Disability

- Those without a disability are more likely to be committed to staying in the H&I, while young people with disabilities are more likely to be reluctant leavers.
- School pupils without a disability are much more likely to want to go to university or FE college, and those with a disability are more likely to look for employment after school.
- Perceptions of local and regional employment-related factors vary little by disability.
- There is little variation in awareness and interest in growth sectors by disability.
- Young people with a disability are more likely to value flexible working policies than those without a disability.
- Local area perceptions have improved over time. Young people with a disability are more likely to feel it is OK to be different in their local community than in 2009.
- Those with a disability are just as likely to engage in community activities as young people without a disability.
- Young people with a disability are much less likely to wish to be in the H&I in the long term.

Religion or Belief

- Young people who are Christians tend to be more committed to staying in the region, while those of another religion or belief and those with no religion or belief are more committed to leaving.
- School leaver aspirations vary little by religion or belief.
- Perceptions of local and regional employment-related factors vary little by religion or belief.
- Compared to those of Christian belief or of no religion or belief, young people of another religion or belief are less likely to want to work in their local area and more likely to want to work elsewhere in the world.
- There is little variation in awareness and interest in growth sectors by religion or belief.
- Young people of Christian faith place a much higher value on an employer's commitment to staff development/training opportunities than other equalities groups.
- Those of another religion or belief are slightly less likely to feel that it is OK to be different in their local area or to feel included in their community than Christians and those with no religion or belief.

Ethnicity

- White Scottish young people are more likely to be committed to staying in the H&I with young people of Other White ethnic origins more committed to leaving.
- School pupils of mixed, multiple or other minority ethnic origin are slightly less likely to want to go to university than other ethnic groups and more likely to want to undertake an apprenticeship.
- Perceptions of local and regional employment-related factors vary little by ethnicity, although the desire to work locally is stronger amongst White Scottish young people than other ethnic groups.
- There is little variation in awareness and interest in growth sectors by ethnicity.
- Similarly, the value of employer characteristics does not differ by ethnicity.
- Young people of mixed, multiple or other minority ethnic origin are notably less likely to feel included in their local community, to attend community events or to feel that it is OK to be different than White Scottish or Other White young people.
- Young people of mixed, multiple or other minority ethnic origin are less likely to want to be living in the region at 35 years old.

Sexual Orientation

- Heterosexual young people are more likely to be committed to staying in the region than bisexual/ gay/ lesbian young people, and young bisexual/ gay/ lesbian young people are more likely to be reluctant leavers.
- School leaver aspirations vary little by sexual orientation.
- Bisexual/ gay/ lesbian young people are more likely to rate regional employment opportunities negatively than heterosexual young people.
- There is little variation in awareness and interest in growth sectors by sexual orientation.
- Similarly, the value of employer characteristics does not differ by sexual orientation.
- Although local area perceptions on whether their town or community is a place where it's OK to be different have improved over time and differ little by sexual orientation, bisexual/ gay/ lesbian young people are still less likely to feel included in their local community than heterosexual young people.

Concluding Remarks

5.15 The research indicates that considerable progress has been made against HIE's young people-focused Equality Outcome 1 for 2013-2017. The Outcome – to address the employment needs of young people aged 16-24 in the region - reflected the findings from the 2009 young people research and the effects of the global economic downturn from 2008-09, which severely affected young people. Attitudes to staying in the H&I are more positive than in 2009, particularly in those parts of the region where employment and educational opportunities are greatest. Young people have some very high levels of pride in many parts of the region, with very little variation by gender, although more prevalent in the older age groups than those in their teenage years, and many are seeking to stay where they are able to do so.

5.16 That said, the equalities analysis shows that the attitudes and aspirations of young people towards the region and the opportunities it offers vary according to personal characteristics. Young females are less positive about their ability to stay locally than young males, even though their desire to do so is greatest. There is a perceived lack of good employment opportunities and progression as young people get older and for females in particular, linked to negative associations of sectors such as Food and drink and Tourism. Females want to be working in the region at 35, and want the opportunity to do so, including support to run their own business.

5.17 Although there is a higher proportion of young people now saying that it is OK to be different in their part of the H&I than in 2009, this is just 3 percentage points higher and half still disagree that this is the case. Females particularly do not think so, and those identifying as bisexual/ gay/ lesbian and those of mixed, multiple or other minority ethnic origin are much less likely to feel included in their town or community.

5.18 The findings suggests an ongoing challenge to meet the aspirations of young people in the H&I, especially more rural areas. The evidence shows this is in a more positive place on many fronts than it was in 2009. However, for some young people, such as those of mixed, multiple or other minority ethnic origin, those of another religion or belief, and young bisexual, gay or lesbian people, the evidence base remains too small to fully understand their experiences. Further research with these groups can help to reveal their attitudes and aspirations towards life in the H&I.

A. Annex 1: Equalities Profile

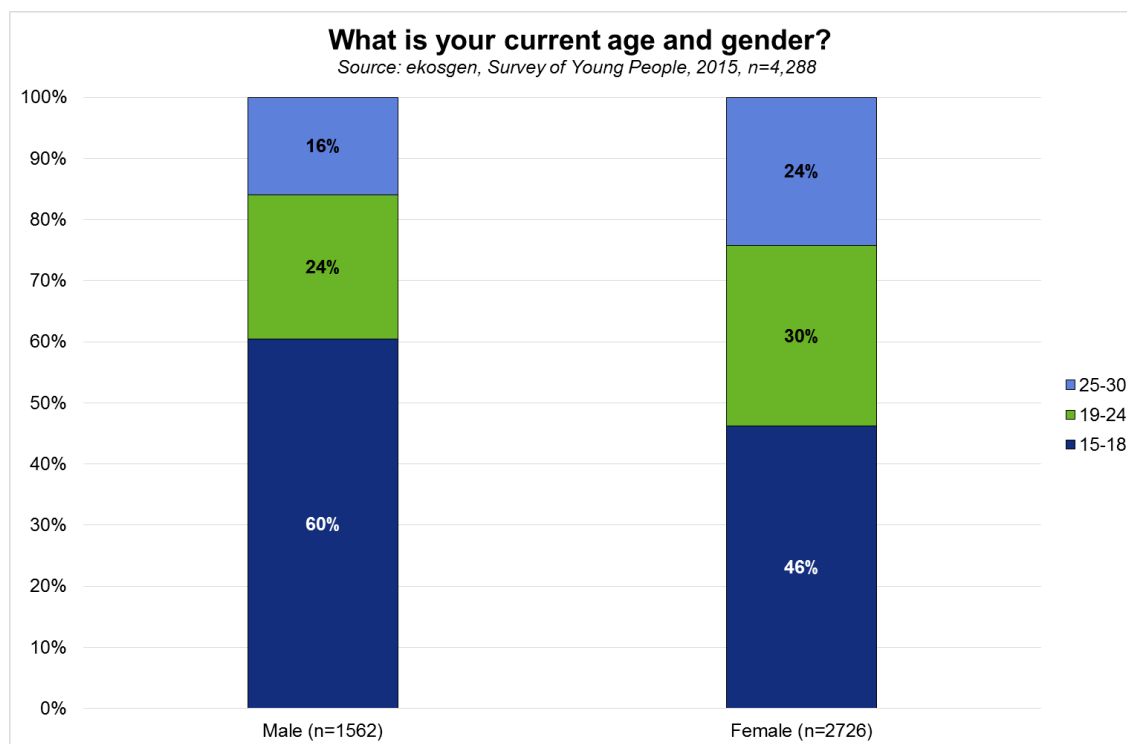
This chapter provides an overview of survey respondents by equalities criteria: religion or belief, ethnicity, gender, disability and sexual orientation. This is based on responses from 4,403 young people across the Highlands and Islands⁸. Where charts do not sum to 4,403 this is due to non-responses.

Age and Gender

Nearly two thirds of respondents (63%, or 2,726) are female, while 36% (1,562) are male. The remaining 1% (36) preferred not to disclose their gender.

Just over half (52%, or 2,272) of respondents are aged between 15 and 18 years. There is a high response from this age group due to a number of schools participating in the survey. Over a quarter (27%, or 1,200) are aged 19 to 24 years, while the remainder (22%, or 934) are aged 25 to 30 years.

The breakdown of age by gender is shown below. Male respondents are younger on average. A higher proportion of male respondents are aged 15 to 18 years (60%) than female respondents (46%), while around one quarter of female respondents (24%) are aged 25 to 30 years, higher than the 16% for males.

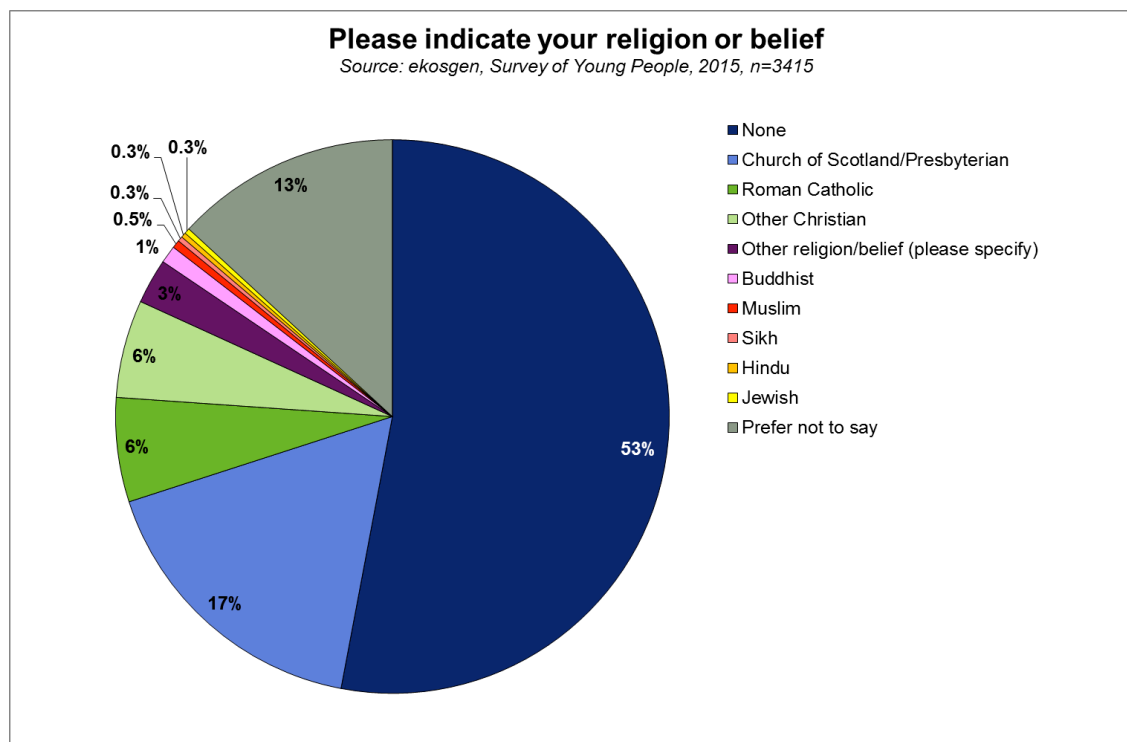


Religion or Belief

Over half of young people identified as having no religion or belief (53%, or 1,809 respondents). Of those who stated a religion or belief, just under one fifth are Church of Scotland/Presbyterian (17%, 582) and a smaller proportion are Roman Catholic (6%, 208) and other Christian (6%, 195). Some 3% (90) have another

⁸ Please note that a small number (6) were discounted from the analysis as they had either not answered the relevant questions or provided invalid responses.

religion/belief. Small numbers are Buddhist (1%, 35), Muslim (0.5%, 16), Jewish (0.3%, 11), Sikh (0.3%, 10), or Hindu (0.3%, 10). 13% (449) preferred not to say.



Due to small sample sizes, robust analysis of data for individual religions and beliefs was not possible. Therefore, to facilitate analysis, data for religious groups have been aggregated, with the following terms used to describe the groups of religions and beliefs analysed within the report:

- **Christian** - Church of Scotland/Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, Other Christian;
- **Another religion or belief** - Buddhist, Muslim, Sikh, Hindu, Jewish and Other religion or belief;
- **No Religion or Belief** – None.

Ethnicity

The majority of respondents' ethnic backgrounds are white. Of those that stated, 99% of respondents identified as white. Nearly three quarters (or 2,484 respondents) identify their ethnicity as White Scottish, 8% (286) as White British, 5% (171) as White English, 1% (49) as Other White Background and 1% (18) as White Irish. 1% (31) state their ethnicity as Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Group. 9% (294) preferred not to say.

Ethnicity	%		%
White Scottish	73%	Indian, Indian Scottish or Indian British	0.2%
White British	8%	White Welsh	0.2%
White English	5%	Black, Black Scottish or Black British	0.1%
Other White Background	1%	White Northern Irish	0.1%
Mixed or multiple ethnic group	1%	Arab, Arab Scottish or Arab British	0.1%
White Irish	1%	African, African Scottish or African British	0.1%
White Polish	0.3%	Bangladeshi, Bangladeshi Scottish or Bangladeshi British	0.1%
White Gypsy/Traveller	0.3%	Caribbean, Caribbean Scottish or Caribbean British	0.1%
Chinese, Chinese Scottish or Chinese British	0.2%	Prefer not to say	9%
Pakistani, Pakistani Scottish or Pakistani British	0.2%	Other (please specify)	1%

Source: *ekosgen, Survey of Young People, 2015, n=3423*

Due to small sample sizes, robust analysis of data for individual ethnic groups was not possible. Therefore, to facilitate analysis, data for ethnic groups have been aggregated with the following terms used to describe the combined ethnic groups analysed within the report:

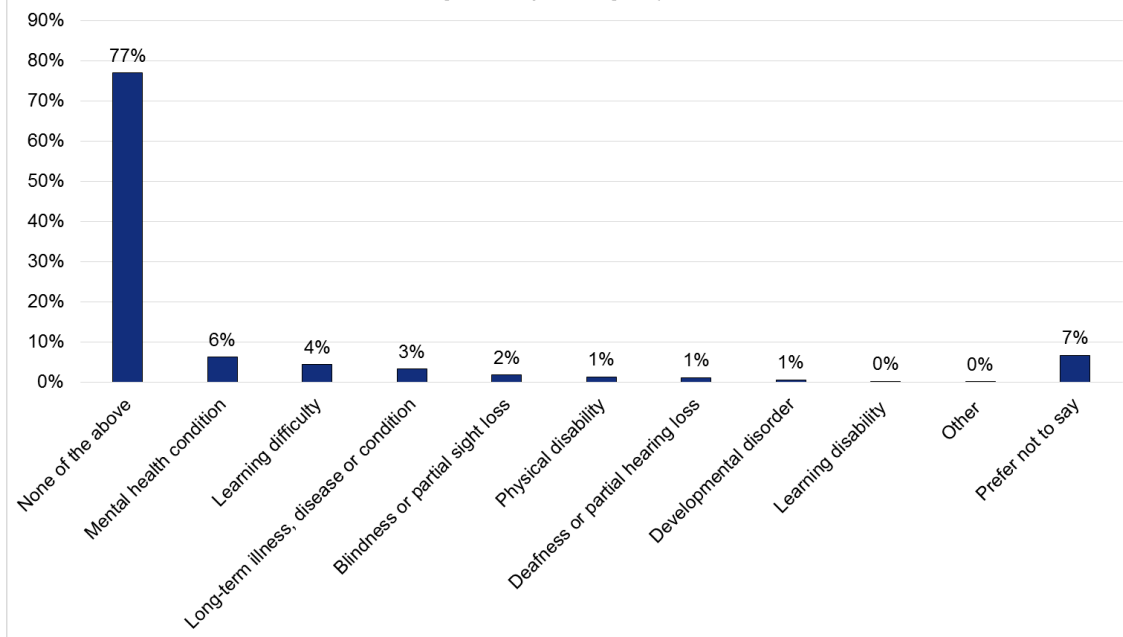
- **White Scottish** – White Scottish;
- **Other White** - White British, White English, White Welsh, White Northern Irish, white Irish, White polish and White Gypsy,/Traveller, Other White background;
- **Mixed, multiple or other minority ethnic origin** – Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Group, all Indian, all Black, all Arab, all Chinese, all Pakistani, all African, all Bangladeshi and all Caribbean categories.

Disability

Just over three quarters (77%, or 2,517) of young people do not have a disability. 7% (216) preferred not to say. However, 16% of young people (603) reported some form of disability. Of those recording a disability, a mental health condition (6%, 201) or learning difficulty (4%, 140) are most common, followed by a long-term illness, disease or condition (3%, 105).

Do you have any of the following conditions which have lasted, or are expected to last, at least 12 months? Please tick all that apply.

Source: ekosgen, Survey of Young People, 2015, n=3,274

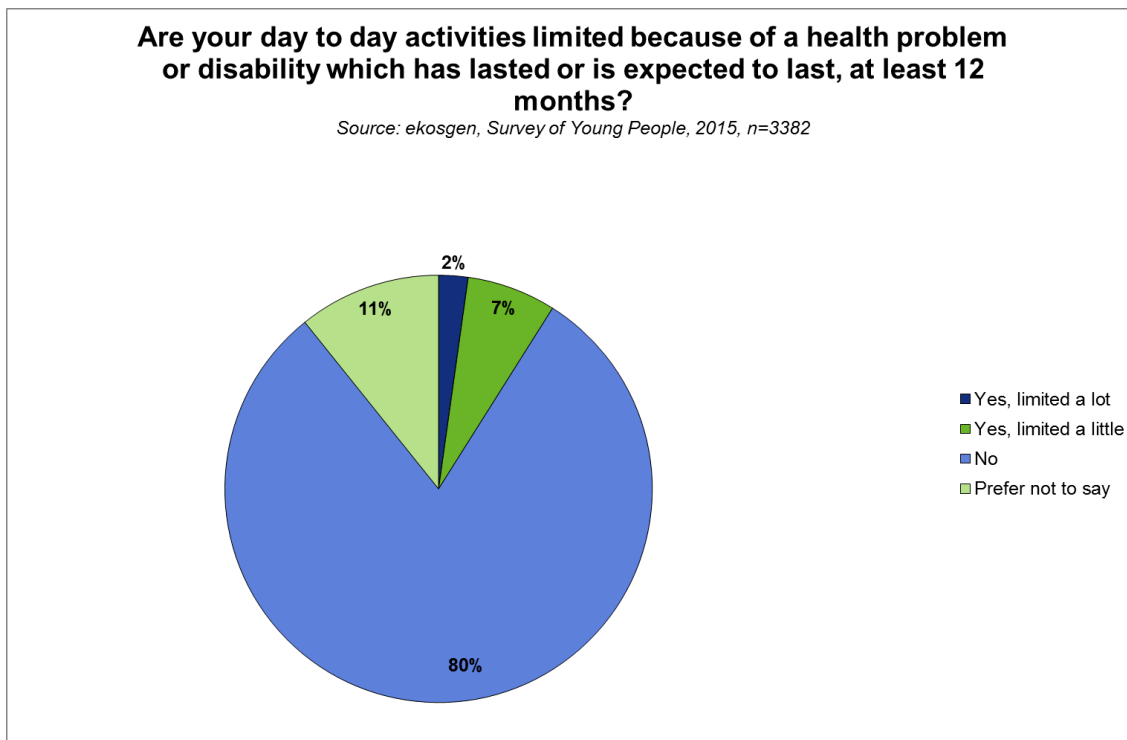


The majority (80%, or 2,715) of young people's day-to-day activities are not limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months.

For some 7% (228) of respondents, day-to-day activities are limited a little, while for 2% (75) they are limited a lot. The remaining 11% (364) preferred not to say.

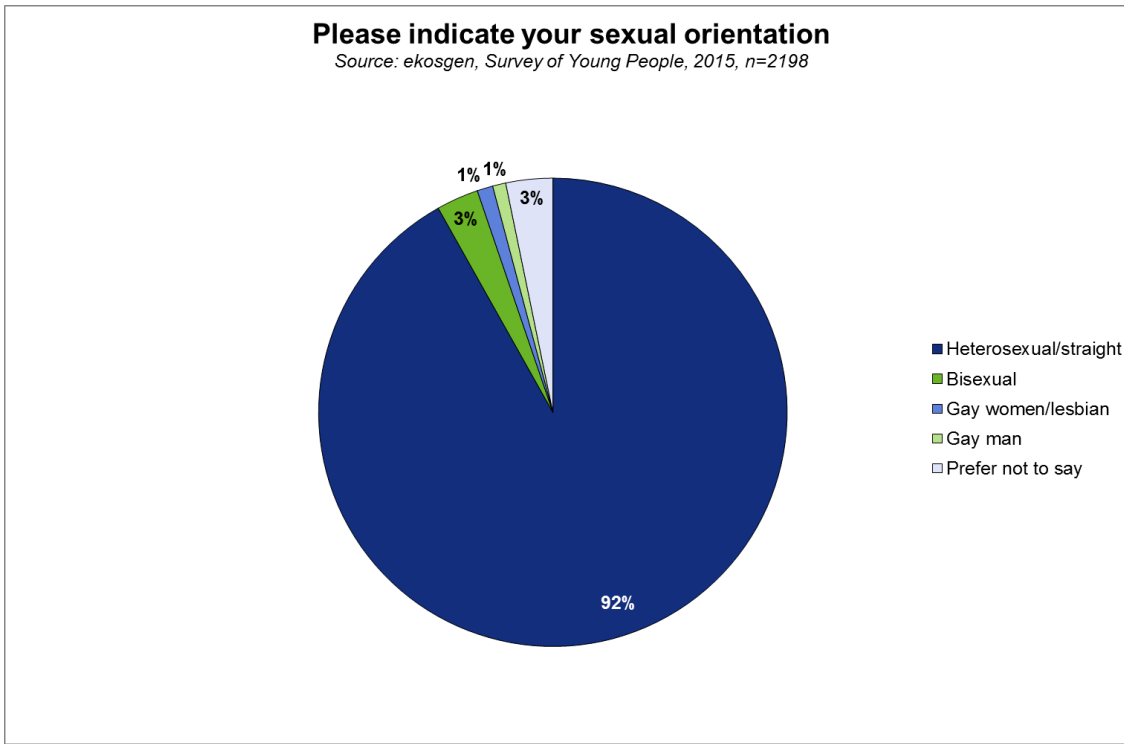
Are your day to day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted or is expected to last, at least 12 months?

Source: ekosgen, Survey of Young People, 2015, n=3382



Sexual Orientation

In all, 92% (or 2,019) of young people identified themselves as heterosexual/ straight, 3% (64) bisexual and 1% are either a gay woman/lesbian (24) or a gay man (20). The remaining 3% (71) preferred not to say.



All participants had the option to select a “Prefer not to say” option. This can indicate levels of confidence in disclosing personal details and varies by protected characteristic:

- Race – 9%
- Disability – 7%
- Religion or belief – 13%
- Sexual orientation – 3%

Benchmarking non-disclosure rates is useful for identifying trends over time.

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