

Young People's Experiences 2026

Helsinki

Youth Helsinki data collection
2026

Helsinki



How is the data about young people's experience utilised?

In Youth Budget workshops.

The aim is to come up with proposals that meet the needs of young people in the area as effectively as possible. The survey data provides the perspective of a broader group of young people to serve as the basis for brainstorming.

As part of the planning and management of Youth Services.

The data is shared with other divisions and services.



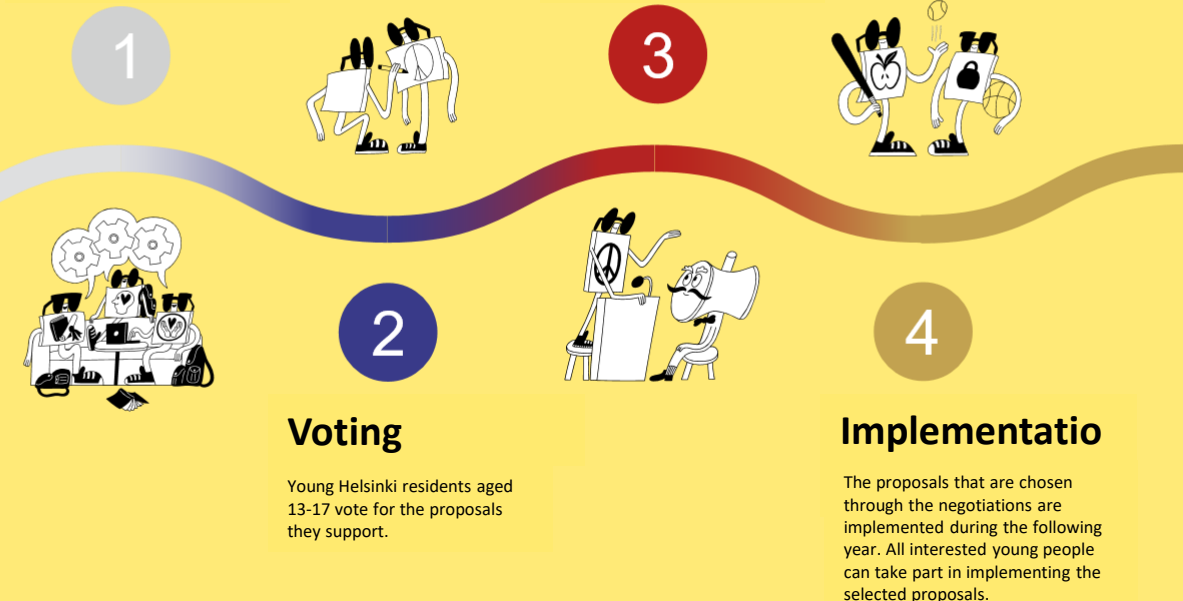
The Youth Budget is a participatory budgeting programme through which young people have an opportunity each year to influence how Youth Services' resources are allocated and what sort of leisure activities are offered to young people in different areas of Helsinki.

Workshops

Young people participating in the workshops review the results of the Youth Budget survey and develop proposals to improve leisure activities and well-being for young people

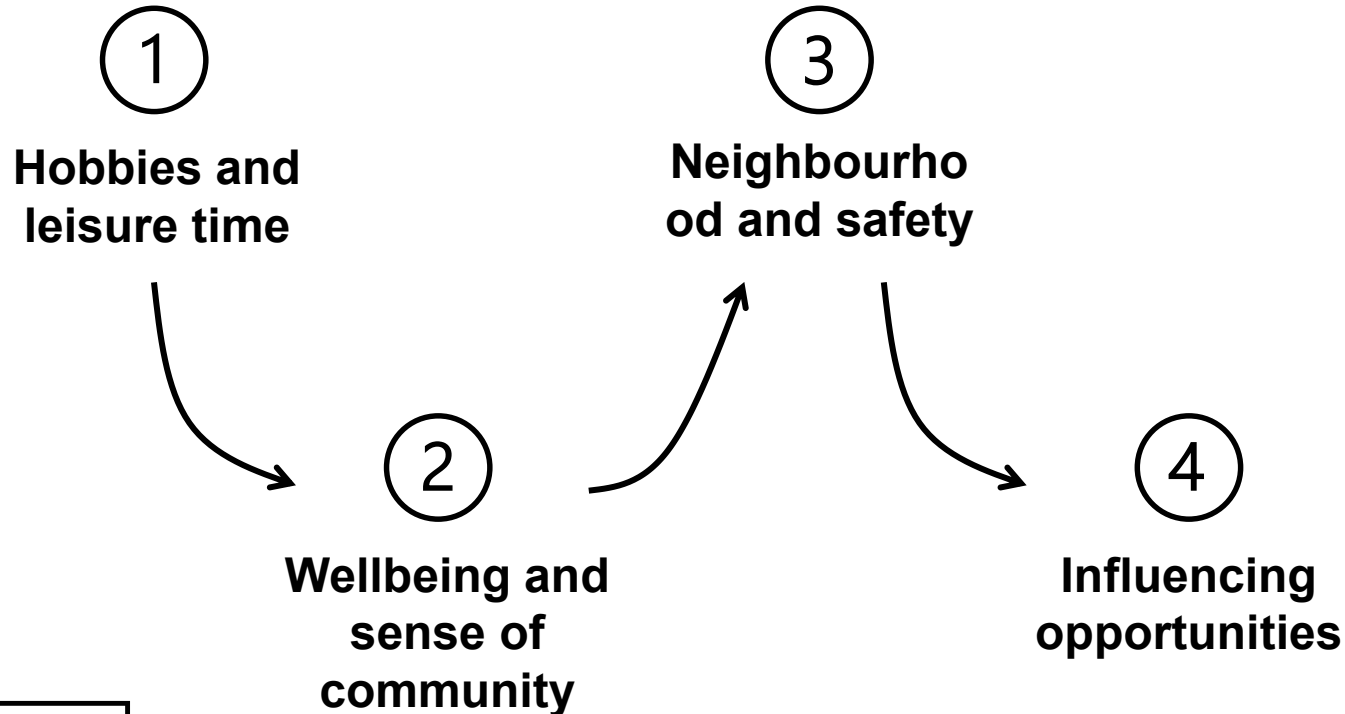
Negotiations

The most popular proposals are discussed in implementation-focused negotiations attended by the young people who submitted the proposals and other interested young people



Youth Helsinki survey 2026

What were the young people
asked?



Helsinki



10,167
respondents



13 youth
work units



23
questions

+

3 background questions
School, grade and gender

+

2 feedback questions

Accessible Youth Helsinki survey 2026

What is it about?

In 2026, two different versions of the survey were tried for the first time:

- A basic survey containing both multiple-choice and open-ended questions
- A shorter and more accessible plain-language version, containing only multiple-choice questions

Units and groups such as special schools and groups, as well as preparatory education groups, were encouraged to use the plain-language version.

A total of 226 young people responded to the plain-language version of the Youth Helsinki survey.

A separate summary has been produced of the plain-language version.

Helsinki



226
respondents



13 youth
work units

20 questions

+

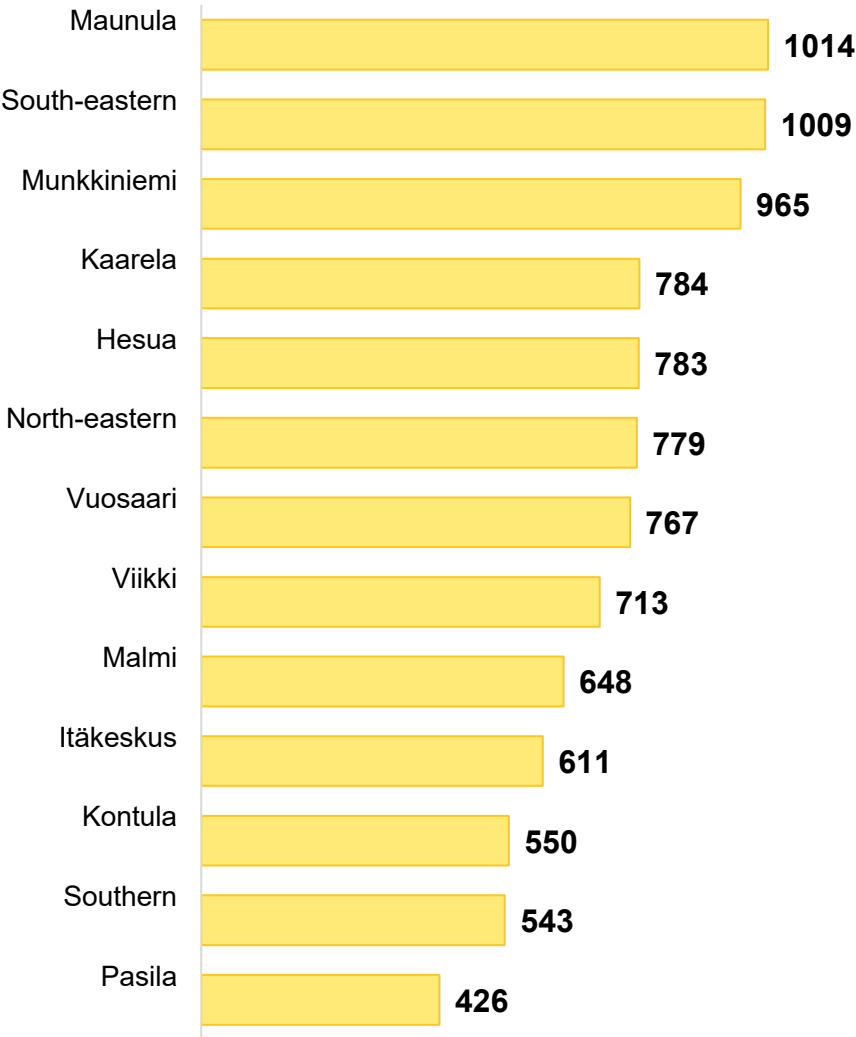


3 background questions
School, grade and gender

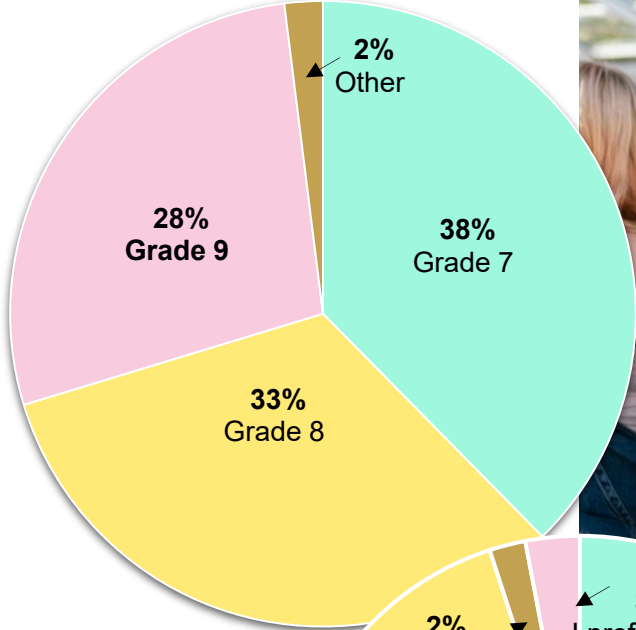
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2 feedback questions

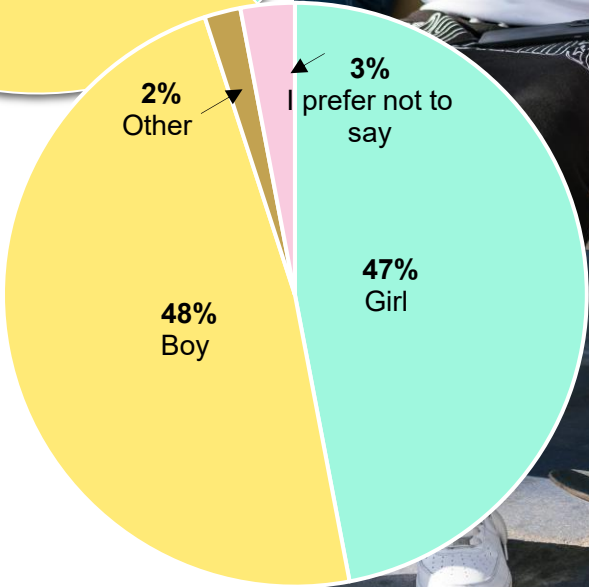
Survey respondents in 2026



Respondents by grade

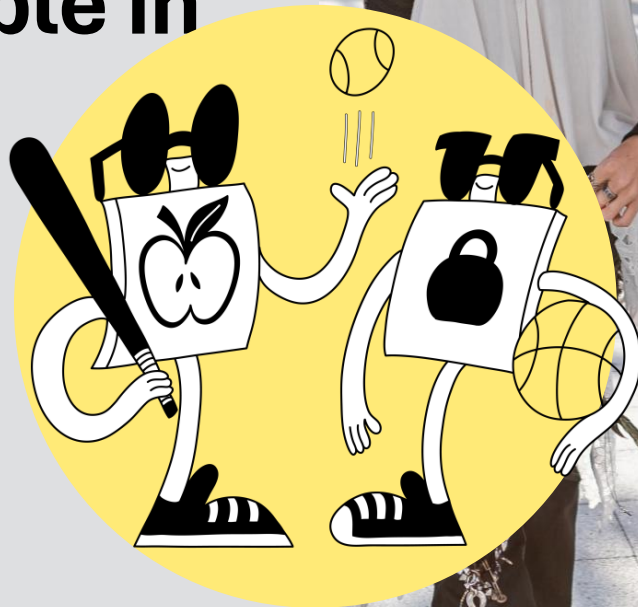


Gender distribution



What are young people talking about?

Key topics and wishes expressed by young people in Helsinki



What are young people talking about?



Key topics and wishes expressed by young people:

1 Friends, sense of community and being heard

Young people often talk about the need to be acknowledged, accepted for who they are and listened to, both within their own communities and in the City's decision-making.

Wish: Equal treatment, acceptance of diversity, safe adults and meeting places, support and guidance regarding the future, being genuinely heard and included in the community.

2 Hobbies, leisure and enjoyable activities

This is one of the most prominent and extensive themes in the entire dataset. Young people often bring up physical activity and sport, creative hobbies and cultural events, tournaments and group activities, the accessibility and free provision of leisure activities, places to spend time, a lack of things to do – particularly among older young people – and opportunities to try out new hobbies without a major commitment.

Wish: More varied, accessible and affordable opportunities for hobbies and leisure activities, close to where young people live.

3 Safety – insecurity and feeling safe

Safety was one of the most prominent topics brought up by young people in almost all questions and areas.

Wish: More safe adults, visible presence, intervention in disruptive situations, and safe public spaces.

4 Wellbeing, mental health and mental resources

Young people talk a lot about their own wellbeing and the stresses of everyday life. Recurring concerns include: mental health, stress, mental resources, pressure at school, loneliness, and emotional and interaction skills

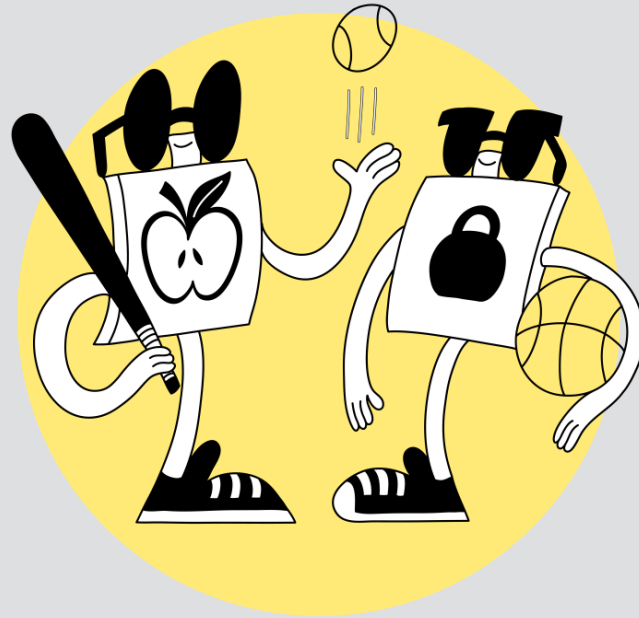
Wish: Low-threshold support, easily accessible services, and caring adults who listen and offer help in good time.

5 A pleasant and functional living environment

Young people look at their own neighbourhood from a very practical perspective. Young people often bring up places for exercise and leisure activities, parks, nature and green areas, the cleanliness of the environment, lighting, cycling routes and transport opportunities, the safety of public spaces, dedicated places where young people can hang out and socialise

Wish: A living environment that is more pleasant, safer and conducive to more active leisure time and in which the needs of young people are better reflected than at present.

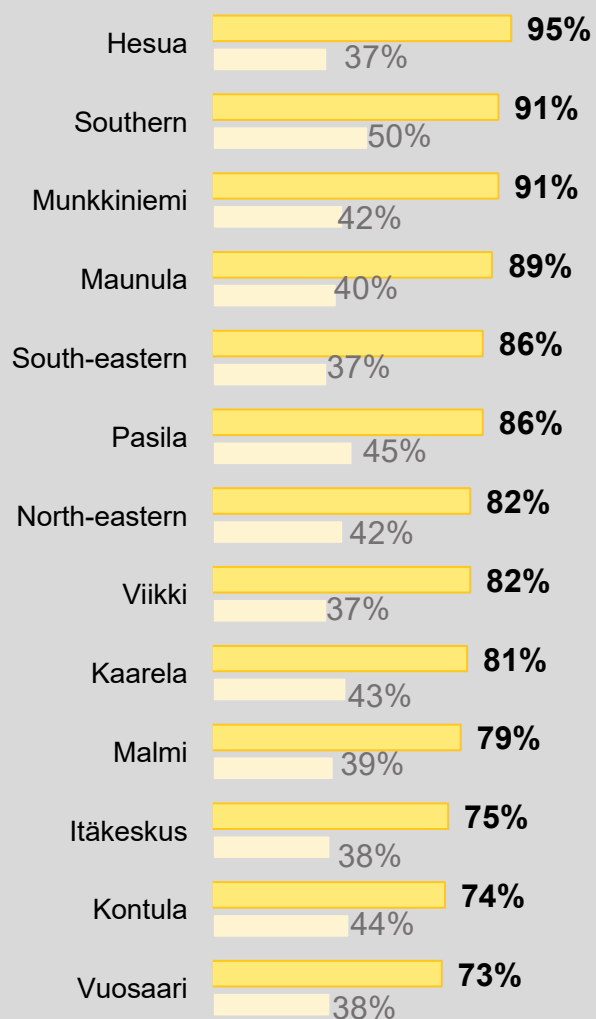
Hobbies and leisure time



Wishes regarding hobbies

 Do you have at least one hobby that you enjoy?

 Would you like to try a new hobby?



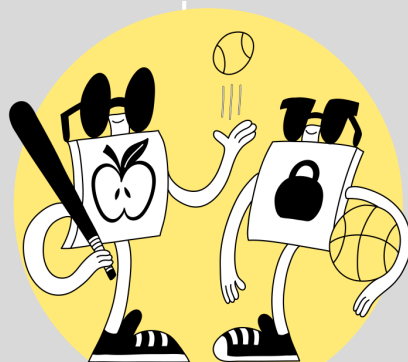
Percentage of 'yes' responses

Most popular sports and physical activities:

1. Basketball
2. Badminton
3. Football
4. Boxing and martial arts
5. Dance
6. Tennis/padel
7. Volleyball
8. Gym
9. Climbing
10. Horse riding

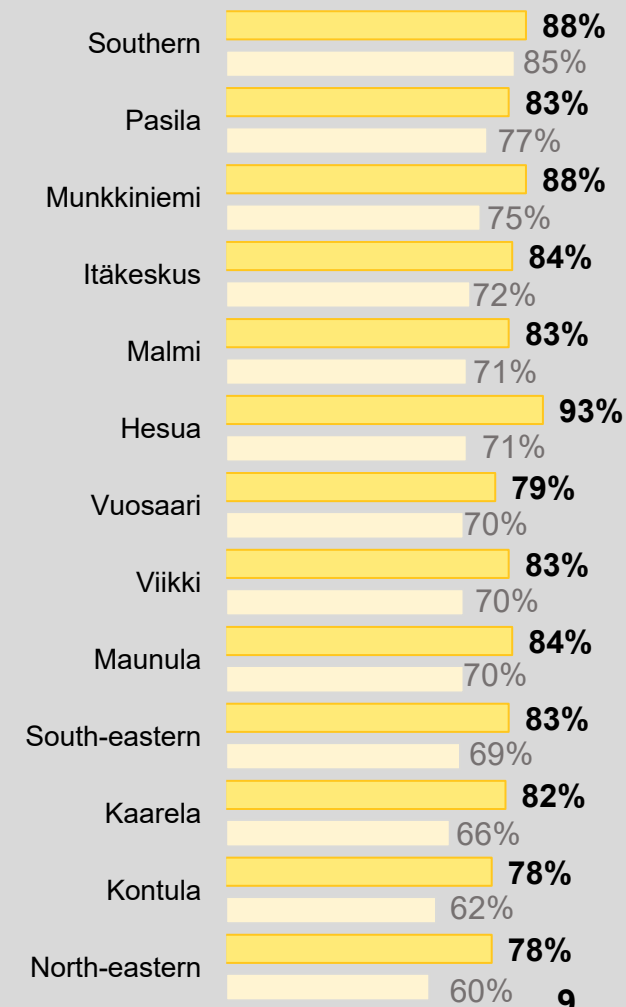
Most popular other hobbies and activities:

1. Music
2. Arts and crafts
3. Cooking and baking
4. Theatre and performing arts
5. Games and gaming activities
6. Events and competitions
7. Film and media activities
8. Animal hobbies
9. Reading and literature
10. Groups and clubs



 Are there opportunities for physical activities to your liking in your neighbourhood?

 Do you have enjoyable opportunities for creative activities or other hobbies?



Percentage of 'yes' responses

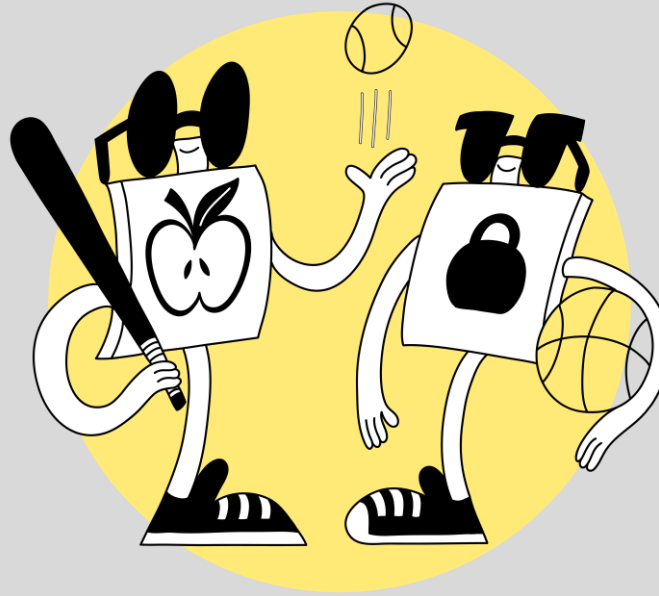
Young people's wishes regarding leisure activity opportunities

What further physical activity opportunities would you like to have?

- 1 **Sports fields and time slots, artificial turfs and winter training facilities**
- 2 **Free or affordable gyms and outdoor gyms**
- 3 **Boxing and martial arts activities**

Other wishes:

- K-pop, hip hop and other dance groups
- Sports and ball game groups for girls
- Cycling, jogging and walking routes and trips
- Skate and parkour spots
- Climbing and bouldering spots and trips
- Horse riding opportunities, trials and lessons
- Swimming halls and swimming trips



A prominent, overarching wish:

- free or very affordable hobbies
- opportunities to try hobbies without commitment
- young people's independent activities, own groups and events.

What further opportunities for other hobbies or creative activities would you like to have?

- 1 **Music, studio work and band activities**
- 2 **Art, handicraft and street art activities**
- 3 **Cooking and baking clubs**

Other wishes:

- Theatre, musical and acting clubs and groups
- Film clubs and filmmaking
- Photography and videography clubs
- Games, gaming and gaming culture activities
- Fan and subculture activities
- Introductions to animal and nature hobbies
- Young people's own competitions, tournaments and events
- Reading groups, book clubs and book courses

Youth facilities

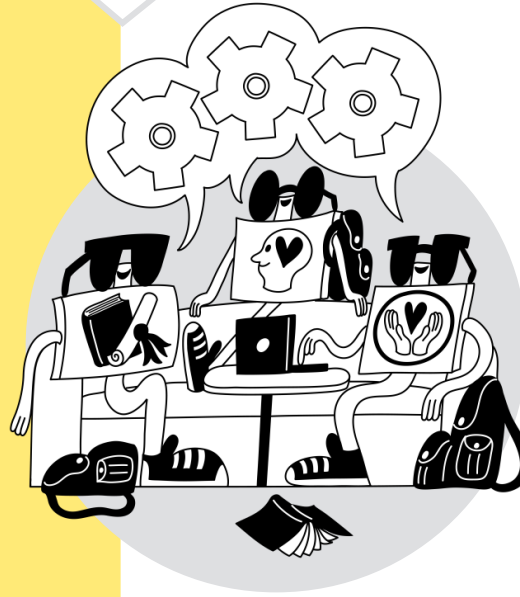
Reasons for visiting a youth facility:

- 1 Friends and nice people** – young people go there first and foremost to see friends, meet new people and spend time with others.
- 2 Interesting activities and hobbies** – young people appreciate the fact that youth facilities provide a wide range of activities that are not necessarily available elsewhere.
- 3 Friendly and safe adults** – young people value adults who are easy to approach, safety, a laid-back atmosphere, and adults being friendly and treating young people well.
- 4 A safe place to spend leisure time** – youth facilities provide a safe and free place for hanging out, where young people can be themselves.

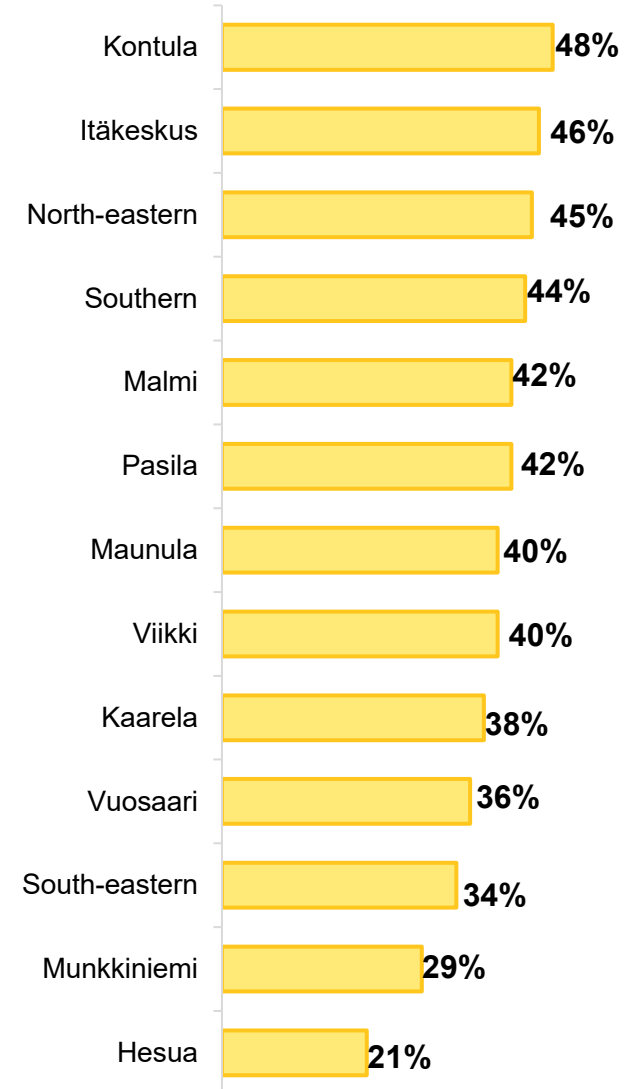
Barriers to going to youth facilities:

- 1 No time or energy** – school, hobbies and other leisure activities already fill up young people's days.
- 2 The facilities are frequented by unpleasant people** – disruptive behaviour, an unpleasant crowd, a restless atmosphere, and a sense of not belonging.
- 3 The activities do not feel suitable or interesting** – young people prefer to spend time with friends somewhere else. Some feel that the youth facilities do not provide activities that suit them.
- 4 Location, travel or opening hours** – practical obstacles: the distance is too great, transport connections are inconvenient, the opening hours are unsuitable, people in the same age group are not there at a suitable time.

Youth facilities are safe and communal places where young people can meet friends, hang out and take part in enjoyable activities.



Those who have visited a youth facility during the past year



The percentages represent the responses 'several times a week', 'once a week', 'a couple of times a month' and 'less than once a month'.

Activities at youth facilities – young people's wishes

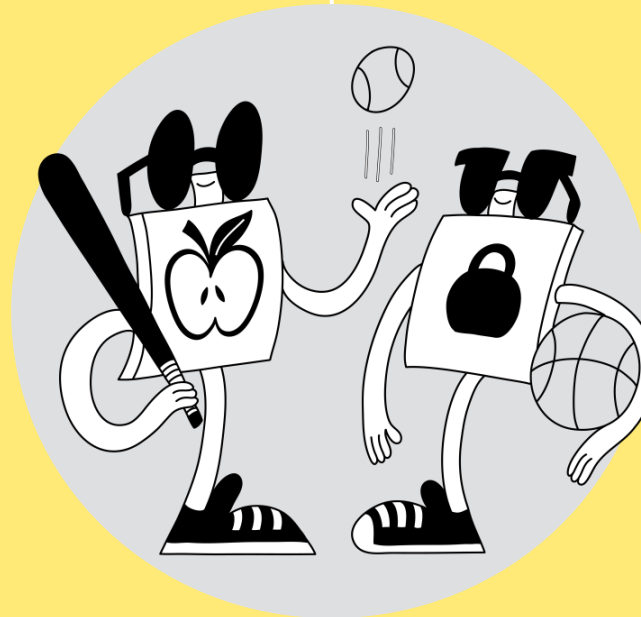
What kind of activities would you like to have at the youth centre?

- 1 **Games and gaming activities**
- 2 **Food, cooking and baking**
- 3 **Events, tournaments, competitions**

Other wishes:

- Exercise and ball games
- Trips and experiences
- Music, studio work and band activities
- Visual art, arts and crafts
- Hanging out, a sense of community and meeting new friends
- Movie nights and media activities
- Dance activities and performances

➡ Young people want more than hobbies; they want **things to do together, low-threshold participation, events, and opportunities to meet friends and new people.**



What kind of activities would you like to help organise?

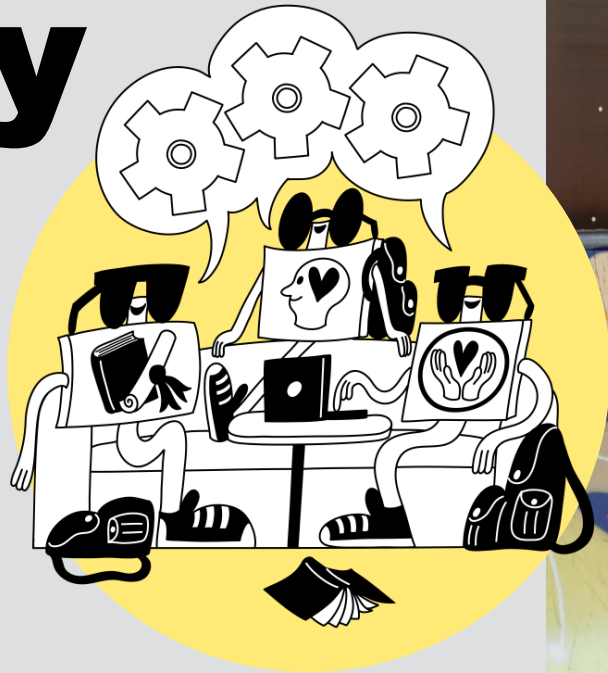
- 1 **Sports and exercise**
- 2 **Tournaments and competitions**
- 3 **Cooking, baking and food**

Other wishes:

- Games, gaming and e-sports
- Trips, camps and experiences
- Art and creative workshops
- Music, dance and performing
- Communal events and friend activities
- Theatre, performing arts and fan culture
- Nature, animal and environmental activities

➡ **Taking part is more appealing than organising activities.** Many young people want to take part, especially when the activity is based on their own interests and gives them an opportunity to do things together with other young people. **The role of an organiser, by contrast, feels less appealing.**

Wellbeing and sense of community

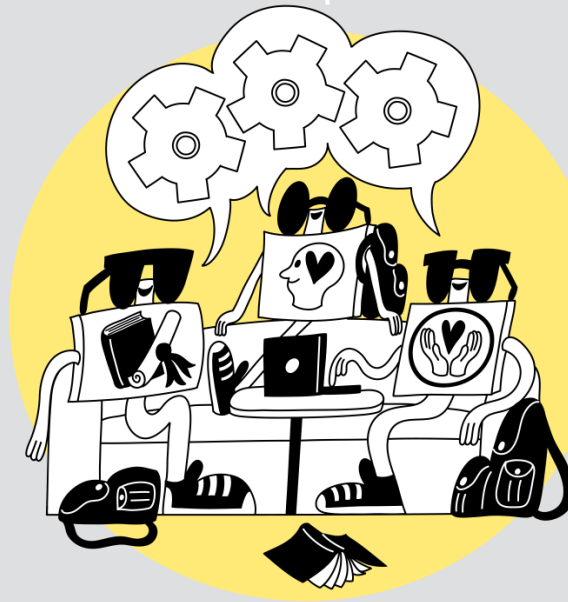


Sense of community

What should we do to ensure that everyone is included in the group and can be themselves?

What should adults do?

- 1 **Treat everyone kindly and equally**
- 2 **Embrace diversity and accept everyone as they are**
- 3 **Ensure that no one is left alone – by including everyone**
- 4 **Take action against bullying, discrimination and exclusion**
- 5 **Listen, show interest and be understanding**
- 6 **Encourage others and create a safe atmosphere**



What could you yourself do?

- 1 **Include everyone in the activities and the group**
- 2 **Be friendly, nice and kind to others**
- 3 **Accept different people as they are**
- 4 **Refrain from judging or criticising others**
- 5 **Behave respectfully and fairly**
- 6 **Help and support others**

➡ **The most important task for adults** is to create an accepting, safe and non-discriminatory environment in which everyone is treated as equals. Young people want adults to actively involve everyone in activities, listen to young people, intervene in cases of bullying and discrimination, and encourage everyone to be themselves without fear of judgement or being excluded.

➡ **Young people feel that everyone can help foster a sense of community** by including others, being friendly and respectful, and accepting different people as they are. Non-discrimination is considered particularly important, as is ensuring that young people who are left alone are noticed, supported and encouraged to take part in activities.

Need for support and information

1 The future and schooling

Working life and job-seeking:

Many need information about working life, summer jobs, professions and working life skills.

Studying and learning: Some young people need support for their studies, learning and managing at school.

Further studies: Young people are thinking about their own future, their educational choices and what they should do after comprehensive school.

2 Mental health and mental resources

Stress, anxiety, loneliness, recovery and managing with everyday life. Young people have a need to process their emotions and talk about their worries.

3 Hobbies, friendships and finding one's place in the world

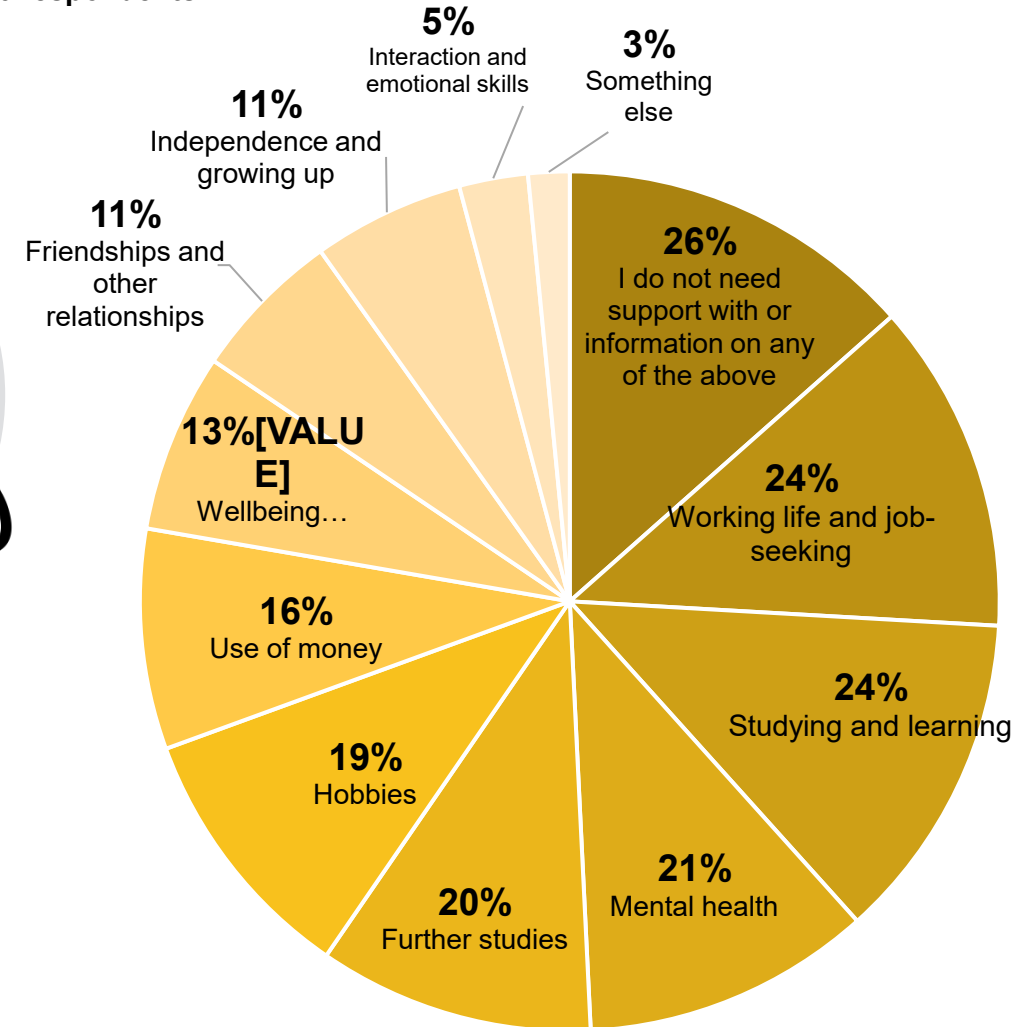
How to find suitable activities and fit in with a group, finding a hobby, making friends, getting involved, and acting in social situations.

4 Managing everyday life and becoming independent

Practical skills for everyday life, use of money, becoming independent and taking responsibility for one's own affairs. Practical skills for growing up.

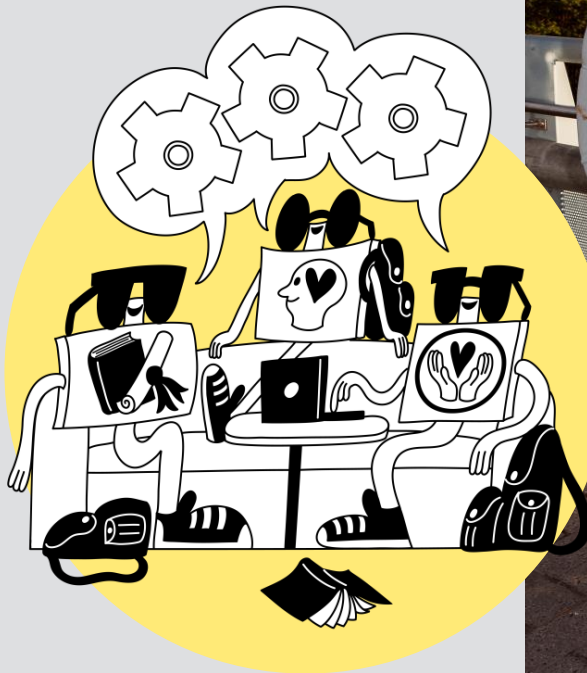


What kind of things do you most need support for or information about?
8,340 respondents



1–3 options to select

Neighbourhood and safety



What should be improved in Helsinki?

1 **More activities and opportunities for hanging out, hobbies and spending leisure time for young people**

Hobbies, sports facilities, fields and halls, youth facilities, places to hang out, events, meeting places, places to go with friends, free and affordable leisure activities

2 **More safety and less disruptive behaviour**

Less substance abuse, fewer drugs, less crime, less disruptive behaviour – more safety

3 **A more pleasant and tidy environment, more nature**

More nature, parks, trees, a tidier environment, more litter bins, litter collection, more places to sit

4 **Better services and accessibility**

Cycling routes, lighting, public transport, improvements to school yards and outdoor areas, various local services and improved accessibility

5 **More events and a stronger sense of community**

Local events, campaigns organised by young people themselves, communal activities, opportunities to meet new people



“Less drug use.”

“More nature.”

“More events.”

“Places to hang out and outside youth facilities.”

“More activities and entertainment.”

“More litter bins.”

“Safety.”

“More shops and closer to home.”

“I think my neighbourhood provides all opportunities.”

“Well, I think things are going well.”

Insecurity and harassment

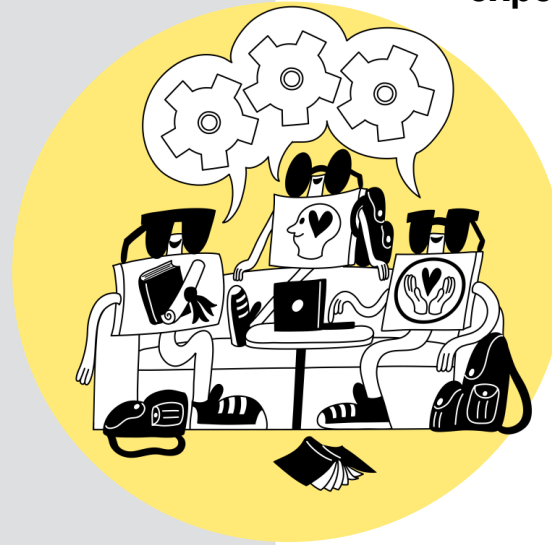
Young people feel the most insecure:

- 1 **Near intoxicated people**
- 2 **After dark and in the evening**
- 3 **On public transport**

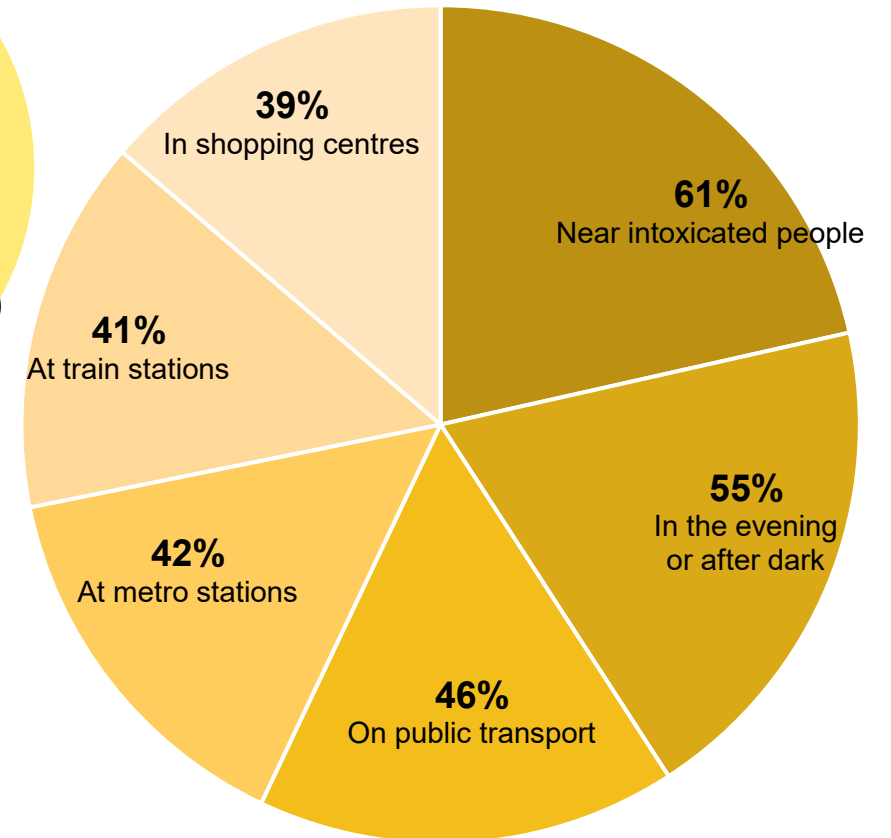
Young people feel the most safe and experience the least harassment in shopping centres.

The young people were given an opportunity to clarify their answers. By far the most common experiences of insecurity are related to **people's unpredictable behaviour**. This fear often has to do with a stranger potentially following, approaching or talking in an aggressive manner.

Young people feel particularly unsafe **in the evenings and after dark on public transport, at stations and in busy city centre meeting places** where disruptive behaviour, harassment or behaviour perceived as threatening occurs.



In what places or situations have you been afraid or experienced insecurity or harassment? 8,620 respondents



The percentages represent the 'often' and 'sometimes' responses.

Insecurity and harassment

The most frequently mentioned districts – directly named places:

- 1 Malmi
- 2 Itäkeskus
- 3 Kontula
- 4 City centre
- 5 Pasila / Tripla
- 6 Sörnäinen

Named shopping centres:

Itis – 272
Tripla – 150
Kamppi – 131
Columbus – 53
Redi – 41
Forum – 22
Hertsi – 15
Kaari – 12

Other specifically named places:

Railway Square
Laajasalo
Puistola
Malminkartano
Mellunmäki
Siilitie
Jakomäki
Puotila
Rastila
Arabia
Käpylä
Lauttasaari
Pikku Huopalahti
Kaisaniemi
Myllypuro
East Helsinki



How could safety be improved in your neighbourhood?

- 1 Improving the tidiness of the environment
- 2 Better control of substance abuse in public places
- 3 Quick repair of defaced and vandalised places



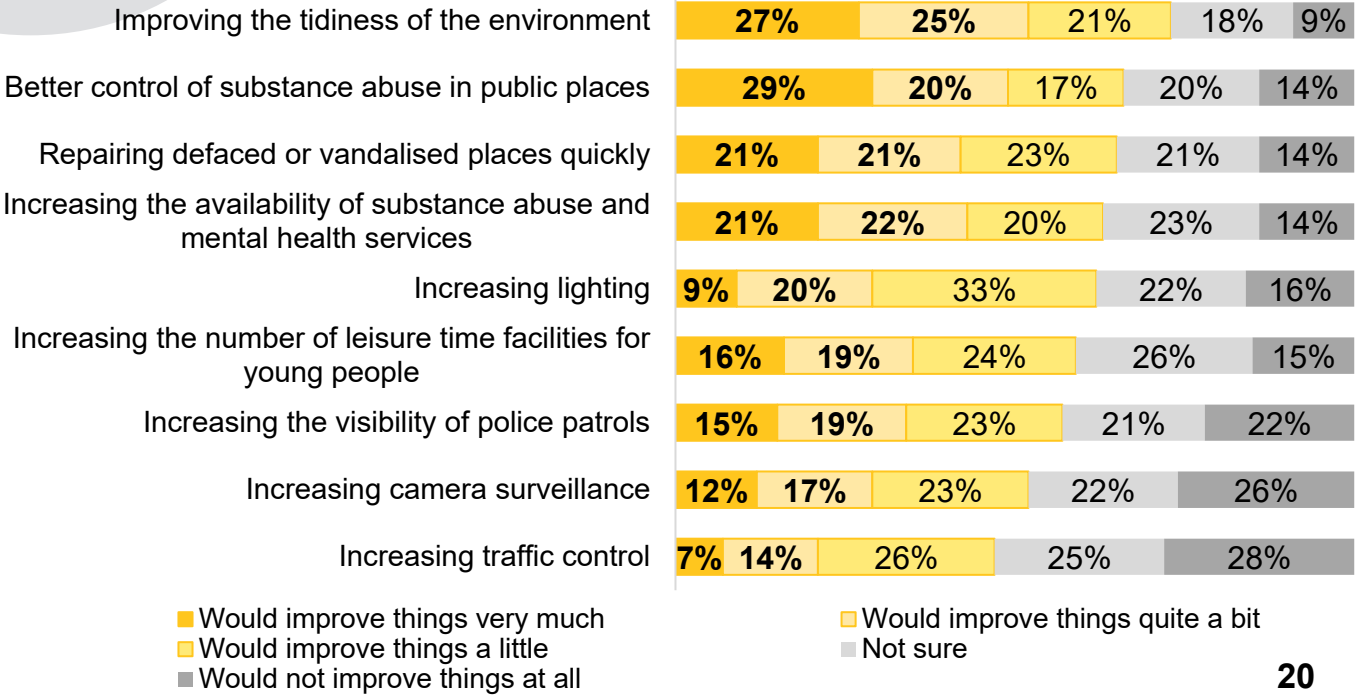
Increasing the availability of substance abuse and mental health services was also assessed to have a somewhat great impact.

It is important to note that increasing lighting also received quite a lot of support, with responses ranging from ‘would improve things a little’ to ‘would improve things very much’.

Leisure time facilities for young people generated the most uncertainty among young people with regard to the effectiveness of the measure, garnering ‘not sure’ responses.

The measure that received the most ‘would not improve things at all’ responses was **increasing traffic control**.

What would make your neighbourhood safer and more pleasant?
8,593 respondents



How could adults make young people feel safer?

Above all, young people would feel safer if adults intervened more actively in cases of harassment, bullying and other threatening situations. Young people would like to have more visible, easy-to-approach adults in public places who are prepared to help and take action if problems occur. In particular, young people want stronger adult presence and support with regard to intoxicated people, disruptive behaviour and the sense of insecurity experienced by young people at stations, in shopping centres and in the evenings.

1 **Active and non-hesitant intervention in situations**

2 **Adults who are present, safe and easy to approach**

3 **Increasing safety and supervision in public places**



Taking action against harassment, bullying and dangerous situations

- Swift and decisive action – not standing on the sidelines

Active, visible and genuine presence

- Willingness to listen and an interest in young people's wellbeing
- Trustworthy adults and friendly interactions

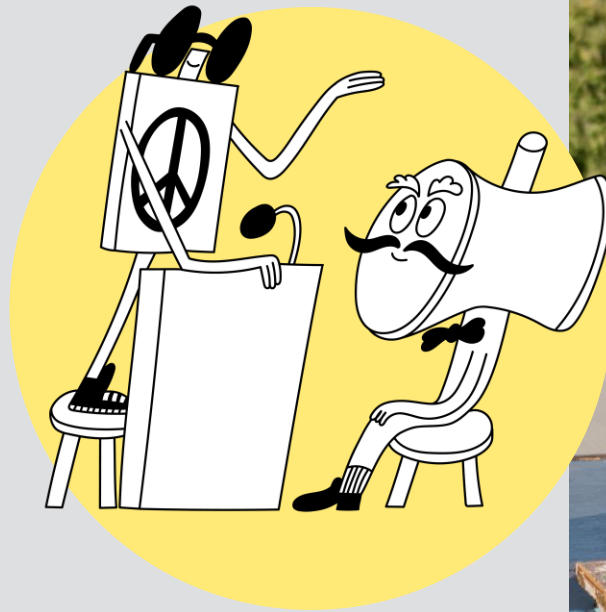
More supervision and safe adults

Fewer problems caused by substance abuse and action against substances

More supervision and taking young people into account in public places

Improving the sense of safety in the evenings

Influencing opportunities



Influencing matters important to young people

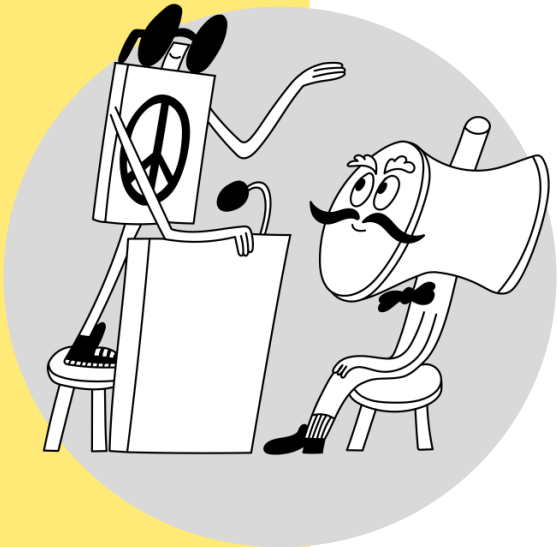
On average, 55% of young people in Helsinki feel that they are able to influence matters that are important to them *very well* or *to some extent*

– a 14% increase from 2025

I get to influence matters that are important to me:

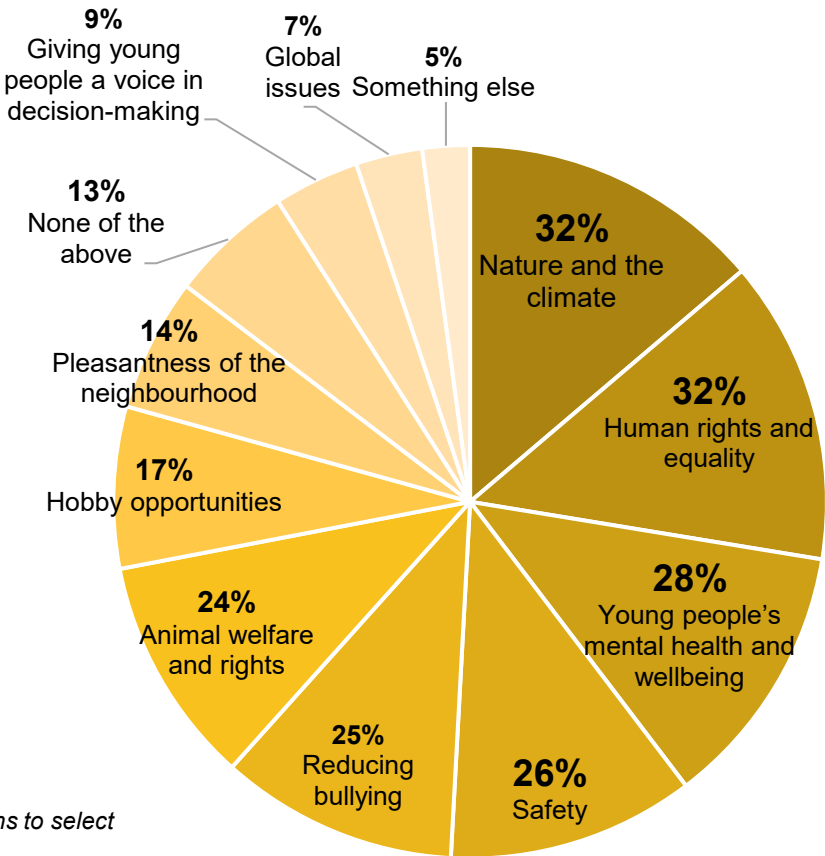
1. Southern	61%*
2. Itäkeskus	59%
3. Kontula	59%
4. Hesua	57%
5. Vuosaari	56%
6. North-eastern	56%
7. Munkkiniemi	56%
8. South-eastern	55%
9. Malmi	54%
10. Viikki	53%
11. Maunula	53%
12. Kaarela	53%
13. Pasila	50%

*The percentages represent the responses 'very well' and 'to some extent'



Things that I am willing to take action for:

- 1 Nature and the climate
- 2 Human rights and equality
- 3 Young people's mental health and wellbeing



1–3 options to select

How could young people be heard in the City's decision-making?

3,188 respondents

1 Taking young people's views seriously

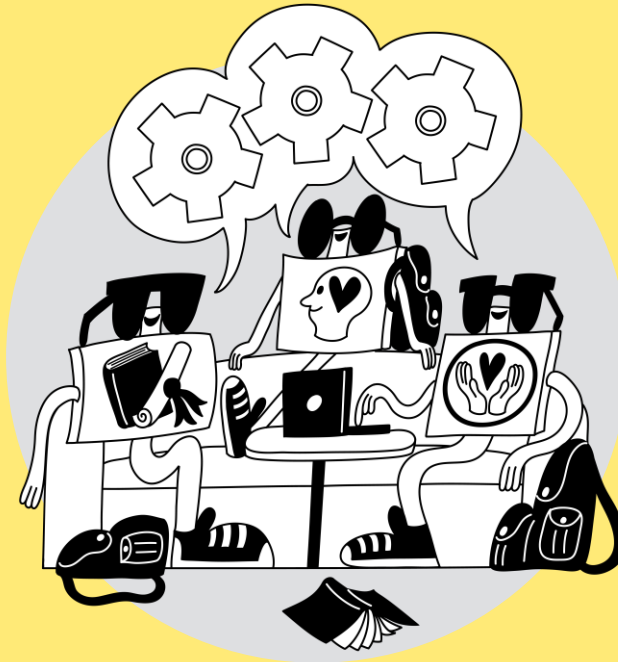
The most common message is that young people are listened to, but the impact is not always visible. Young people want their views to be genuinely valued and for listening to them to lead to visible changes. Trust in the City's decision-making would be strengthened if young people were told how their views have been utilised.

2 Surveys, votes and easy ways to get involved

Young people regard surveys and votes as the most important and most accessible ways of influencing matters and would like to have more of them, both at schools and online. Influencing should be a low-threshold activity that people can get involved in quickly, without needing any particular experience or having to commit.

3 Influencing channels and young people's involvement in decision-making

Young people do not want to be mere respondents to surveys; they also want to be involved in the preparation and planning of matters. School student bodies, youth councils, young people's influencer groups, workshops and discussion events are seen as important channels. Young people want to influence matters where they already are in their everyday lives and be involved before decisions are made.



4 Hearing young people in everyday life – schools, youth facilities and social media

Many emphasised the notion that young people should be heard in the places where they already spend their time. Schools are considered to be the most natural place to reach young people, but youth facilities, leisure activities, events and social media were also seen as important channels.

5 Face-to-face discussions and interaction

In addition to surveys, many young people want to have opportunities to discuss matters directly with adults and decision-makers. Young people would like to have more encounters, workshops, discussion events and opportunities to exchange ideas face-to-face, rather than just filling out a form.

6 Transparency and feedback on decisions

Many young people wonder what happens to their responses. They would like to be informed more on how decisions are made, how young people's views have been taken into account, and why certain decisions have been made. Simply being heard is not enough if the influencing efforts yield no visible results.

What is the best way for young people to have their voices heard?

For young people in Helsinki, social media is by far the most important way of making their voices heard. Its popularity has risen by 13% since 2025, when 39% felt that they could make the greatest difference through social media.

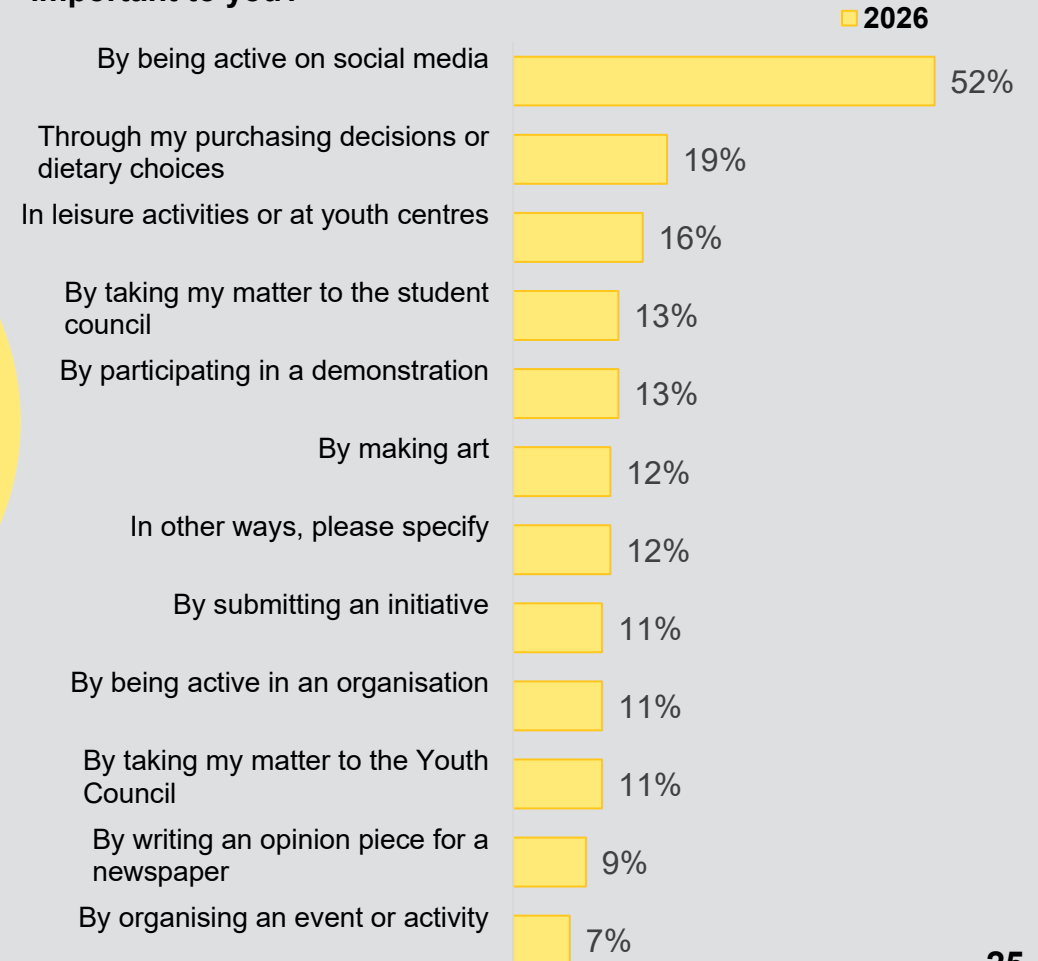
The popularity of all influencing means has risen slightly over the past year. The biggest change concerns the popularity of social media as a means of influencing.

Among the three most popular means, influencing matters in everyday life through conscious purchasing decisions and hobbies stands out.

As a new option in the 2026 survey, the young people could choose making art as a means of influencing.



What is the best way for you to influence matters that are important to you?



**Multiple choices could be selected*

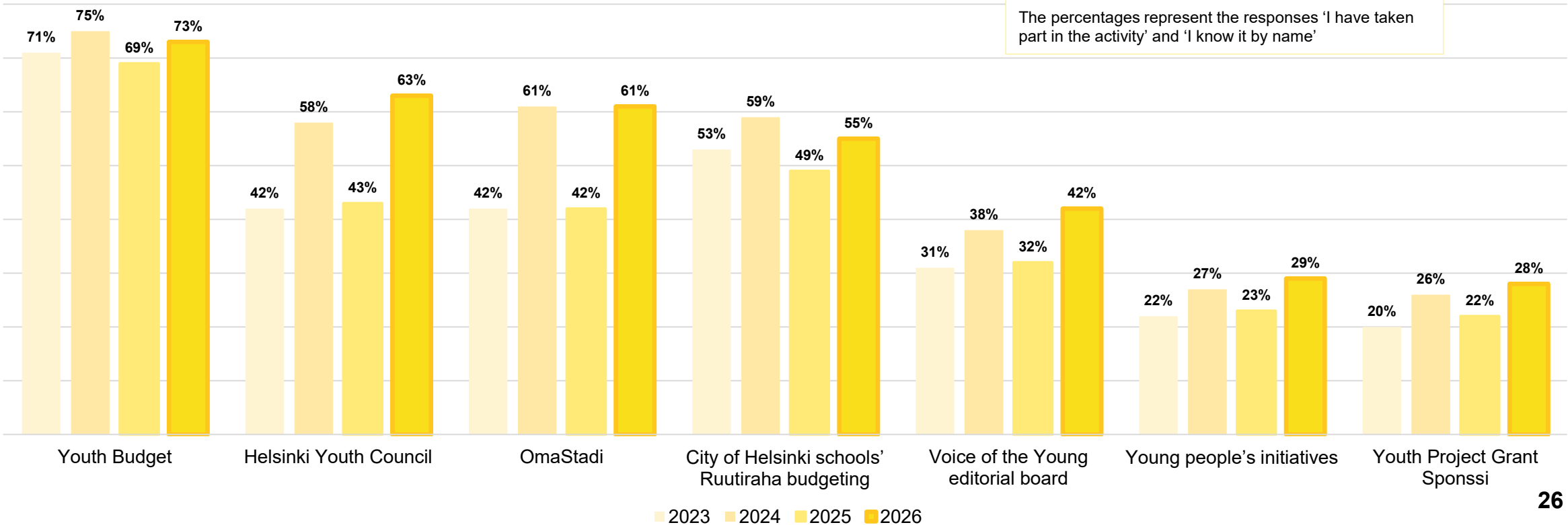
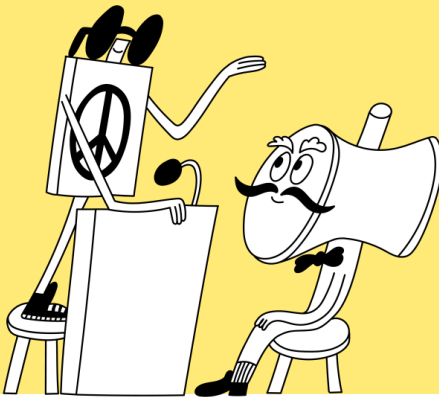
Do you recognise any of these...?

The best-known influencing channel is the Youth Budget. Awareness has risen slightly since 2025 and has remained high for several years now.

The most significant changes over the past year were related to awareness of the Youth Council and OmaStadi.

- Youth Council +20%
- OmaStadi +19%
- Voice of the Young editorial board +10%

Awareness of influencing channels has risen clearly from 2025. On average, the channels' popularity peaked in 2024, but 2026 is a new record year!





Next Youth Helsinki data collection in→ 2028