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## Climate change top concern for British teenagers

**Nearly two thirds (63%) of 11-18 year olds said the environment and climate change was one of their most important issues for the country in a new YouGov survey commissioned by the Eating Better Alliance.**

Eating Better (an alliance of over 60 health, animal welfare, environmental and farming organisations) commissioned the research to find out if eating habits were changing amongst teenagers in response to growing concerns around meat and climate change.

Whilst 29% of 11-18 year old meat eaters surveyed want to reduce their meat consumption it seems that they are not finding this easy to do as 84% eat meat three times a week or more.

The environment and climate change is ahead of the UK leaving the EU (54%) and healthcare (42%) as one of the top issues facing the country for 11 to 18 year olds.

Whilst concern about the environment and climate change is high in this age group, the research shows that many young people feel limited in their ability to choose what they eat to help address this. Respondents who wanted to eat less meat said they wanted more meat-free options to be available in school canteens, and they don't have any say on food shopping at home.

18-year olds are more aware of the environment and climate change than 11-year olds, 76% of 18-year olds consider the environment and climate change to be one of their top issues, compared to 66% of 11-year olds.

18-year olds are also likely to have more freedom to choose how they eat and this is reflected in the survey, 25% are vegan or vegetarian compared to just 6% of 11-year olds.

***Simon Billing, Executive Director of Eating Better, says "We should all pay close attention to the two thirds of teenagers surveyed who recognise climate change as the biggest issue at present. Their increased awareness will impact the way they eat, shop and vote."***

***Anna Kernahan, 17 year old climate activist from Belfast, says "Taking action on improving the sustainability of our diets is a crucial element in solving the climate crisis and it's one of the easiest to implement as it starts in the home. It is clear from these statistics that young people want to change their eating habits to be more environmentally friendly and we need***

*to facilitate this. Reducing meat consumption not only helps tackle the biodiversity crisis, it also positively affects areas such as healthcare.”*

The Eating Better alliance is calling for a 50% reduction from current levels of meat and dairy consumption in the UK by 2030, and for a transition to ‘better’ meat and dairy as standard. Earlier this year Eating Better launched the Better by half: roadmap which sets out 24 actions to be taken across five sectors to create a food environment where everybody is able to make food choices that are better for them and the environment.

**Emily Wilson, Head of Programmes at FOUR PAWS UK, says** *“We have launched Make Food Kinder aimed at helping local authorities reduce the volume of meat and animal products in their public procurement. We have been thrilled to see that institutions across the country have been reducing the volume of meat they are offering and in doing so helping to fight climate change. How public money is spent involves everybody – and we want local authorities to step up and make similar commitments and help us achieve a healthier more sustainable future.”*

**Rob Percival, Head of Policy at Soil Association, says** *“This survey shows that teenagers are keen for schools to serve ‘less and better’ meat. The Government must use the ongoing update of the School Food Standards to re-balance school meals, getting more beans, pulses and plant proteins, and more sustainable, grass-fed and organic meat on the plate. We can’t shy away from the need to change diets if we’re serious about tackling the climate, nature and health crises.”*

ENDS

#### **Notes to editors:**

- (1) Eating Better – Eating Better is accelerating action for less and better meat and dairy for health, environment, animal welfare and social justice. We inspire and equip people, business and government, so that we can all eat better. An alliance of [over 60 civil society organisations](http://www.eating-better.org). [www.eating-better.org](http://www.eating-better.org).
- (2) Better by half: A roadmap to less and better meat and dairy’ - <http://bit.ly/BBHroadmap>
- (3) Analysis of survey data can be found here - <https://www.eating-better.org/uploads/Documents/2019/Youth%20Survey%20slide%20overview%20final.pdf>
- (4) FOUR PAWS, Make Food Kinder <https://www.four-paws.org.uk/campaigns-topics/campaigns/make-food-kinder>
- (5) Soil Association, Transforming The Way We All Eat <https://www.soilassociation.org/what-we-do/better-food-for-all/transforming-the-way-we-all-eat/>
- (6) All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 959 children/ young adults aged 11-18. Fieldwork was undertaken between 1st - 6th November 2019. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB children/ young adults (aged 11-18).
- (7) For resources such as photos or charts or to contact those quoted please contact: Mark Breen, Email: [mark@eating-better.org](mailto:mark@eating-better.org), Mob: 07793 537721