



**Barking &  
Dagenham**

**Education & Participation  
Strategic Plan 2023 - 2026**

**November 2023**

one borough; one community; no one left behind

# Foreword

**By Councillor Kangethe**

**Cabinet Member for Education Attainment and School Improvement**

A good education provides strong foundations for our children and young people in Barking and Dagenham to grow and flourish into happy, healthy, independent and successful young adults. As a former Headteacher, I know this well.

We have a proud history across the borough's family of schools, early years settings and colleges of working together to provide the best chances for our children and young people, with a clear focus on those who are disadvantaged. Today this shows in the high proportion of our schools being rated by Ofsted as 'Good' or better, increasing numbers of our schools being recognised in their Ofsted inspections for their strong wellbeing support, and some of the best ever A Level and GCSE outcomes we had have in the borough in 2023. I have seen these strengths in my visits to the borough's schools, Additional Resourced Provisions (ARPs) and special schools for children and young people with SEND, alternative provision settings and early years settings.

These next few years are crucial for the Council, schools and education settings and our partnerships, particularly with Health, as we support our children and young people to realise their ambitions and overcome adversity. Our children and young people are not only dealing with the impacts of the pandemic, which has affected their experiences of education, their health, wellbeing and careers outlook, but they are growing up with daily challenges of the cost of living crisis.

Despite this tough backdrop, we know that our children and young people possess a wealth of talent and gifts. This shines through in their progress and achievements during their education. As a Council, our role is to work with schools and partners to support children and young people and raise their aspirations even higher. For example, by helping to further embed the 'Thrive' initiative across schools to support children and young people's wellbeing, by supporting collaboration on innovative practice at A Level, and by generating high quality post 16 training and employment pathways with the Creative and Food industries. We will keep working with schools, early years and other settings, families, and partners to deliver the very best education, training and employment opportunities that our children and young people deserve.



# Barking and Dagenham: Our context

This borough has a long-standing aim of striving to place children and young people in a good school local to them wherever possible and appropriate, and a strong commitment to increasing aspirations and opportunities for all children and young people in education.

Summer 2023 saw our best ever A Level results, and strong outcomes at GCSE. In a national context where the gap between disadvantaged areas and their peers is widening, this is significant and highlights the hard work and efforts of our children and young people and the quality of the borough's schools. Barking & Dagenham is becoming increasingly recognised for its high levels of inclusion in schools. The range of cultural and creative opportunities in schools and in the early years is ever widening and impressive. At post 16 for 2022, the proportion of our young people who are not in Education, Employment or Training remains low, in the top performance quintile nationally.

At the same time, our children and young people have been adversely impacted by the pandemic, with the youngest, those with SEND and those who have additional vulnerabilities many of the most affected. Some of our children and young people are struggling with their wellbeing. Levels of deprivation in the borough continue to be stark, with 46% of children estimated to live in poverty - and 62.4% households in the borough with at least one measure of deprivation, the highest proportion in England and Wales.

Barking and Dagenham ranks the 34th lowest average out of English LAs across the 10 indicators of poverty, against a backdrop of a national cost of living crisis. Rightly, recent years have required an even stronger focus on supporting our most vulnerable children and young people. The recent roll out of the Community and Family Support Hubs, which will work in partnership with schools, is a strong example of this.

SEND is a particular priority, highlighted as such in this Strategic Plan. Nationally and locally, increases in SEND needs and their complexity have continued to rise. Requests for assessments for Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) doubled in the borough between 2021 and 2022, greater than the national increase of 23%. In Barking & Dagenham, demand for appropriate specialist places in the borough has continued to outstrip places available. The Council, together with schools and partners, is working innovatively to plan and provide for these places, and to support children and young people with SEND in mainstream where this is appropriate and best for the child.

This context underlines the importance of partnership work with Health, Social Care, families, the community and voluntary sector, and businesses to provide the support that our children and young people need.

**Some key figures for education in Barking and Dagenham** – *please note 2023 results are provisional. Some 2023 national and London averages are not yet available:*

- At September 2023, 96% of Barking and Dagenham schools are rated 'Good' or better by Ofsted, just above the London average and well above the national average.
- Over the last three years, over 98% of pupils have received one of their top three preferences for Reception school places and over 93% of pupils have received one of their top three preferences for secondary school places
- The borough's 2023 Good Level of Development performance in the Early Years Foundation Stage, at 65.2%, is an improvement on 2019 but below the 2023 national average
- The borough's 2023 Key Stage 2 Reading Writing and Maths combined, at 60.3%, remains the same as in 2022, and is above the 2023 national average
- At GCSE in 2023, the headline measure of 9-5 English and Maths, at 48.4%, saw an almost 6% increase on 2019. This is above the 2023 national average (45.3%) and below London (53.9%). For 9-4 English and Maths, at 65.8%, this measure saw an increase on 2019 and is above the 2023 national average (65.1%) but below London (71.0%)

# Barking and Dagenham: Our context

During the lifetime of this Strategic Plan, we will continue to work with schools and education settings, Barking and Dagenham School Improvement Partnership (BDSIP) and partners to focus on supporting all children and young people – and particularly those most disadvantaged and those with SEND.

Striving to meet London standards across all education performance measures remains our aspiration. Continuing to increase specialist places, and improving pathways and opportunities for education, training and employment at post 16 for young people with SEND is a priority, including through working closely with the families of these children and young people.

Finally, the next 3 years will include supporting future school leaders and succession planning in our schools and ARPs, including in the areas of Inclusion and SEND. We are committed to nurturing the leadership of the future to bring out the best in all our children and young people.



## Some key figures for education in Barking and Dagenham continued:

- The borough's 2023 Attainment 8 score, at 47.9, is better than in 2019, above the 2023 national average (46.3) but below London (50.5).
- At A Levels in 2023, on all key performance measures, results improved since 2019 and in many cases significantly. Particularly impressive is a 13.0% rise on A\*-B – key grades for entry to the more competitive courses and less than 1% below the 2023 national average. An 11.4% rise at A\*-C takes the borough above the 2023 national average for this indicator for the first time ever. The proportion of young people achieving the very highest grades A\*-A rose by 5.7%. This is the borough's best ever performance on this measure, with just over a fifth of young people gaining these highest grades.
- 2022 saw our largest ever number of young people progressing to Higher Education (HE) from borough institutions (a 6% increase on 2021), representing 81% of the Year 13 cohort. The proportion of young people progressing to HE from borough institutions has risen by 70% since 2010.
- In 2022 the percentage of Looked After Pupils reaching the expected standard in Reading, Writing and Maths was ranked 3rd in the country, placing the borough in the top performance quartile A nationally. Our Key Stage 4 Progress 8 score placed us in the B performance quartile nationally and we remain in the A performance quartile for attendance and exclusions.
- For 2022, Barking & Dagenham is in the top performance quintile nationally for the proportion of young people who are not in Education, Employment or Training or whose destination is unknown, better than London and national.

# The Barking and Dagenham Best Chance Strategy - Our partnership plan for babies, children, young people and their families - September 2022 – 2025

We know what we *must* achieve for our children and families for them to live better, more prosperous lives...



Giving every child the best start in life (the first 1001 days)

Reducing prevalence of harm caused by domestic abuse

Acting together against child poverty

Improving quality, access and support for those with SEND

Reducing obesity and improving best start health outcomes

A better offer for those with social, emotional and mental health needs



# Education 5 Priorities

These are long standing priorities for Barking and Dagenham and partners have been working persistently for more than a decade to make the progress achieved to-date. These priorities will help us deliver ‘**The Barking and Dagenham Best Chance Strategy - Our partnership plan for babies, children, young people and their families**’ ([Best Chance 0-25 Partnership | London Borough of Barking and Dagenham \(lbbd.gov.uk\)](https://london.gov.uk/best-chance-0-25-partnership))

1. A place in a good or outstanding school or setting.
2. Supporting achievement for all, including children exceeding national then London standards.
3. Strengthening outcomes, support and opportunities for vulnerable children & young people, including those with SEND.
4. Supporting the wellbeing & resilience of children & young people.
5. Improving opportunities for young people post 16 and maximising numbers who are in education, employment and training.



# We want our babies, children and young people to get the best start, be healthy, be happy and achieve

## Early Years

**Priority 1** – A place in a good or outstanding school or setting.

**Priority 2** – Supporting achievement for all, including children exceeding national then London standards.

- In partnership with early years settings, we will maintain a sharp focus on communication and language, with an emphasis on vocabulary development. This is fundamental to supporting our youngest children, particularly following the impact of the pandemic.
- Barking & Dagenham School Improvement Partnership (BDSIP) will provide support for early years settings in schools in response to performance on the annual 'Good Level of Development' outcome measure, where commissioned by the Council.
- We will continue working with Health partners to make best use of resources in the early years. Priorities will include building capacity for Speech and Language Therapy and Occupational Therapy.
- We will work with partners so that all settings are inclusive and maximise the take up of 2, 3 and 4 year old places, particularly for children with SEND.
- Working alongside the Start to Life and Best Start strategies to support vulnerable families from ante-natal to age 5, we will help promote school readiness.
- We will work with settings so that there are sufficient, good quality inclusive childcare places to meet parental demand.



# **We want our babies, children and young people to thrive in inclusive schools and settings**

**Priority 1** – A place in a good or outstanding school or setting.

**Priority 2** - Supporting achievement for all, including children exceeding national then London standards.

We want the vast majority of children and young people to be offered a place at a good school local to them. To support this, we are:

- Working with DfE to deliver a 3FE Primary School, Ford View on Beam Park, which will open in 2026/27.
- Reviewing the primary school estate in view of levels of demand and forecasts over the next 5 years to support schools to remain financially viable in the long term.
- Expanding and improving facilities for Mayesbrook Park School (2023-26).
- Working with the DfE to deliver Oxlow Bridge, a new special school, which will open in 2025 in Dagenham. The expansion of Riverside Bridge on the City Farm site will provide an additional 90 places - this commenced in September 2022 with 30 places, growing by 30 pupils for each of the next 2 years.
- Replacing temporary accommodation and remodelling Trinity Special school to provide improved and expanded facilities, particularly for those with the highest level of needs.
- Increasing the number of ARP places in the secondary phase to meet demand. Currently, there are 34 good quality ARPs in the borough at August 2023. These are supported by an annual external Quality Assurance review for every ARP and by Council-commissioned support from BDSIP.
- Working in partnership with schools as they develop their own internal SEND arrangements, supported by agreed, secured funding, shared principles and appropriate high quality training.





# We want our babies, children and young people to thrive in inclusive schools and settings

**Priority 1** – A place in a good or outstanding school or setting.

**Priority 2** - Supporting achievement for all, including children exceeding national then London standards.

We want to raise children and young people's aspirations and education standards even higher in the borough:

- We will work with schools to provide the right support, either commissioned or traded, to meet the changing needs of the school population. In particular:
  - An annual School Improvement visit to every community school.
  - An annual Inclusion quality assurance visit to every school.
  - In response to outcomes of national exams and tests at all Key Stages, commission training and support for schools from BDSIP and other providers, including schools.
  - Training to support schools' self evaluations, inspection readiness, curriculum, evaluation and pedagogy.
  - Extending A level subject networks led by successful school subject leaders and coordinated by BDSIP.
  - Support for curriculum adaptation for children and young people with different levels of identified SEND need e.g. those at pre-formal and semi formal stages or learning.



# We want our babies, children and young people to thrive in inclusive schools and settings

**Priority 1** – A place in a good or outstanding school or setting.

**Priority 2** - Supporting achievement for all, including children exceeding national then London standards.

- We will work with schools to help improve attendance through dedicated advice and support from Education Inclusion Partners.
- We will maintain strong day to day dialogue and communication with Headteachers and schools through: a programme of meetings with Headteachers, sponsoring an annual conference for Headteachers and joint working parties to address shared priorities. For 2023 and beyond, shared priorities will include:
  - Embedding the borough's Inclusion principles and developing a shared inclusion charter.
  - Embedding new procedures for Top Up and the allocation of school places for children and young people with SEND who require additional support.
  - Expanding specialist placements, particularly in the secondary phase.
  - Embedding the Alternative Provision (AP) framework, which provides a quality assured and compliance system. The framework is designed to meet the needs of pupils who require additional or alternative provision. Working with schools to provide Inclusion support, guidance, and advice for groups of children and young people aged 4-16 years.
  - A joint initiative to support Headteachers' wellbeing.



## **We want our babies, children and young people to thrive in inclusive schools and settings**

**Priority 3** – Strengthening outcomes, support and opportunities for vulnerable children & young people, including those with SEND.

- We will work with all partners to drive forward improvements on the timeliness of EHC plans and placements, and on engagement and responsiveness with families and schools.
- We will further increase the capacity of the EHC Team to meet growing demand, including the creation of a new Head of SEND Statutory Services post, Virtual Headteacher for SEND post, and a new SEND Family Liaison and Co-Production post. Work creatively to recruit to Educational Psychologist vacancies.
- We will work with Health partners to increase access to therapists. In the short term, funding private therapy and Speech and Language Therapy to help meet immediate need.
- We will review and implement the allocation of High Needs Top Up Funding for those with and without EHC Plans, so that it is as fair and transparent as possible and releases funding to mainstream schools in a timely way.
- We will increase the capacity of the Council's Education Team to work with schools to strengthen support for children and young people with Autism, Speech and Language needs and SEMH.





## We want our babies, children and young people to thrive in inclusive schools and settings

**Priority 3** -Strengthening outcomes, support and opportunities for vulnerable children & young people, including those with SEND.

- We will improve monitoring and tracking of vulnerable and at risk pupils, including those pupils with Severe Absence or who are at risk of this through the introduction of a new IT casework management system.
- We will further develop and broaden the borough's Alternative Provision (AP) to offer, in particular a creative and cultural offer, to meet young people's interests and aspirations.
- The Virtual School will develop its support for all students with SEND through a new staff lead in this area, continue to implement the Aspire Higher programme to further improve the percentage of care leavers who go on to Higher Education, and develop the Virtual School's Careers Offer to encourage engagement and aspiration.
- The Virtual School has created the new post of Assistant Headteacher for Children with a Social Worker. The postholder is working to support schools to further improve outcomes for these children and young people. Plans include working with Start for Life to improve home learning for the most vulnerable 0-5s, and monitoring and tracking attendance and attainment to support schools.
- We will improve the joining up of data and intelligence across our Education Team through expansion of a shared case management and information system to further strengthen outcomes for vulnerable children and young people, including Children Missing Education and Electively Home Educated children.



I am 29  
I like eating and dancing  
My favourite colour is green  
I have a cat called Tina

*A drawing from a children's and young people's creative and cultural activity (2023)*



## **We want our babies, children and young people to be safe and secure, free from neglect, harm and exploitation**

**Priority 3** - Strengthening outcomes, support and opportunities for vulnerable children & young people, including those with SEND.

In everything we do, keeping children and young people safe runs through the heart of how we work. Safeguarding children and young people is a collective responsibility.

- We will continue to strengthen partnership working with services and agencies so that we make a particular contribution to:
  - Attendance, as a protective factor
  - Inclusion and keeping children and young people in school
  - the Alternative Provision framework
  - Supporting the interface between schools and Social Care through a new MASH Education post.
- We will promote the voice of children and young people through the shaping of service design and policy and practice, through co-production, particularly the voice of SEND children and young people.
- We will support the next stage of the 'Step Up, Stay Safe' multiagency partnership programme to help keep children and young people safe from exploitation, and risk of serious youth violence.



# We want our babies, children and young people to thrive in inclusive schools and settings

## Priority 4 – Supporting the wellbeing & resilience of children & young people.

- We will work with schools:
  - To develop and secure a commitment to the 'Inclusion Charter' based on the agreed inclusion principles.
  - To promote and support inclusive and nurturing practice such as THRIVE, through funding, training and sharing good practice.
  - Through leading the VRU-funded inclusive and nurturing schools programme for 10 schools (2023-26)
  - Through developing a network of specialist mentors, with the aim of enabling all vulnerable children and young people to access an appropriate mentor who want one.
  - To support the rollout and implementation of Mental Health Support Teams in schools.
- We will support all schools to access to a good quality cultural, physical activity and residential offer through links with the Cultural Education Partnership (CEP), Physical Activity Coordinators, Community Music Service, Music Education Hub and Trewern, with priority given to expanding participation for our most vulnerable.
- In the early years, we will promote cultural experiences and opportunities for children including in Music, Dance and Art through the CEP and Community Music Service.

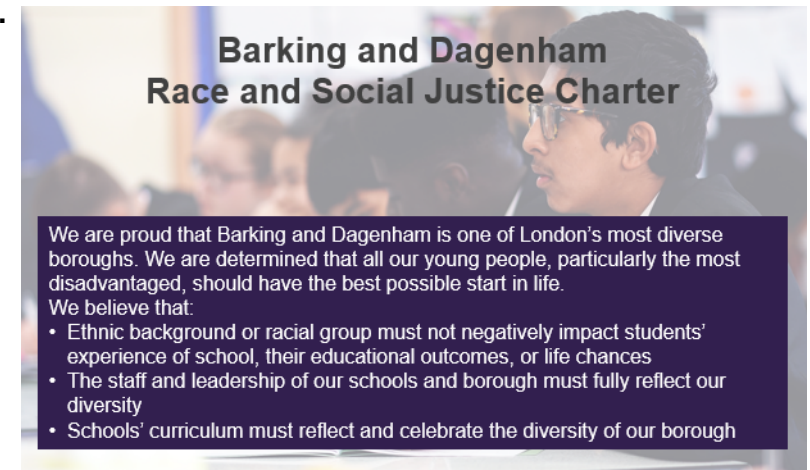




# We want our babies, children and young people to thrive in inclusive schools and settings

## Priority 4 - Supporting the wellbeing & resilience of children & young people.

- We will support all schools to develop whole school approaches to promoting wellbeing through active participation in the Healthy Schools Programme.
- We will further strengthen the reach and impact of the borough's Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF), particularly for the most vulnerable families, with increasing numbers of schools hosting programmes and reach increasing year on year.
- Working with BDSIP, we will support schools to further embed the borough's Race & Social Justice (RSJ) programme by incorporating actions and learning into schools' key strategic plans and documents and day to day activities. This programme aims to further promote the diversity across schools' curriculum, staffing and resources, supported by strong cultural awareness; and to work hard to protect children and young people, staff and the school community from inequality, discrimination and racism.
- We will work in collaboration with Public Health partners to sustain, through additional funding, the following programmes which support children and young people's wellbeing and resilience: Healthy Schools, Trewern Outdoor Adventure Centre, Physical Activity Coordinators, C-Card Programme including Young Inspectors, Health Youth Workers and the School Health Survey.



Our school embraces our role in making these beliefs a reality. We have:

1. **A named lead facilitator for race and social justice** - co-ordinating work in our school and between schools
2. **A lead governor for race and social justice** - who ensures our governing body consistently considers how the school is addressing issues of race and social justice
3. **Used the Barking and Dagenham race and social justice self-evaluation tool** to identify priority areas we need to address **in our school improvement plan**
4. **A curriculum intent** which is explicit in representing and celebrating the diversity of people and communities in our borough
5. **Recruitment and progression** practices which create fair, equitable pathways for all candidates and employees, ensuring we reflect the communities we serve
6. **A commitment to staff development** - ensuring all our people have the skills and confidence to address issues of race and are knowledgeable about the communities we serve
7. **A clear commitment to working with pupil voice**, ensuring that the views of young people are central our approach
8. **Established links with our community** and engaged families in the development of the school's approach to race and social justice



# We want our babies, children and young people to grow up to be successful young adults

## Priority 5 – Improving opportunities for young people post 16 and further reducing number who are NEET

- We will continue to support the renewed Post 16 Partnership. This will lead on A level and the level 3 curriculum offer and improvement programmes through BDSIP's teachers subject networks expertise. As part of this, we will work in partnership with Barking & Dagenham College to improve outcomes for young people who retake Maths and English.
- We will continue to fund and sustain the Colin Pond Scholarship Awards, incentivising the borough's young people to stay in Barking and Dagenham when studying A levels.
- For our care leavers, we will develop an initiative to improve their work-related opportunities.
- We will work with partners to build on existing strong initiatives to support all young people to move to a positive destination at 16 and 18. This will include:
  - Working with BDSIP, Careers Hub East and other partners to provide and promote a strong work related learning, careers and Higher Education (HE) offer; while maintaining strong performance on reducing the numbers of young people who are NEET and increasing those progressing to HE.
  - Commissioning Mayesbrook Park School to provide Transition Coaches for the most vulnerable in mainstream to support them to sustain post-16 placements
  - Continuing to work closely with Barking & Dagenham College, including the TSA, to further improve access to professional and technical pathways into training and employment.



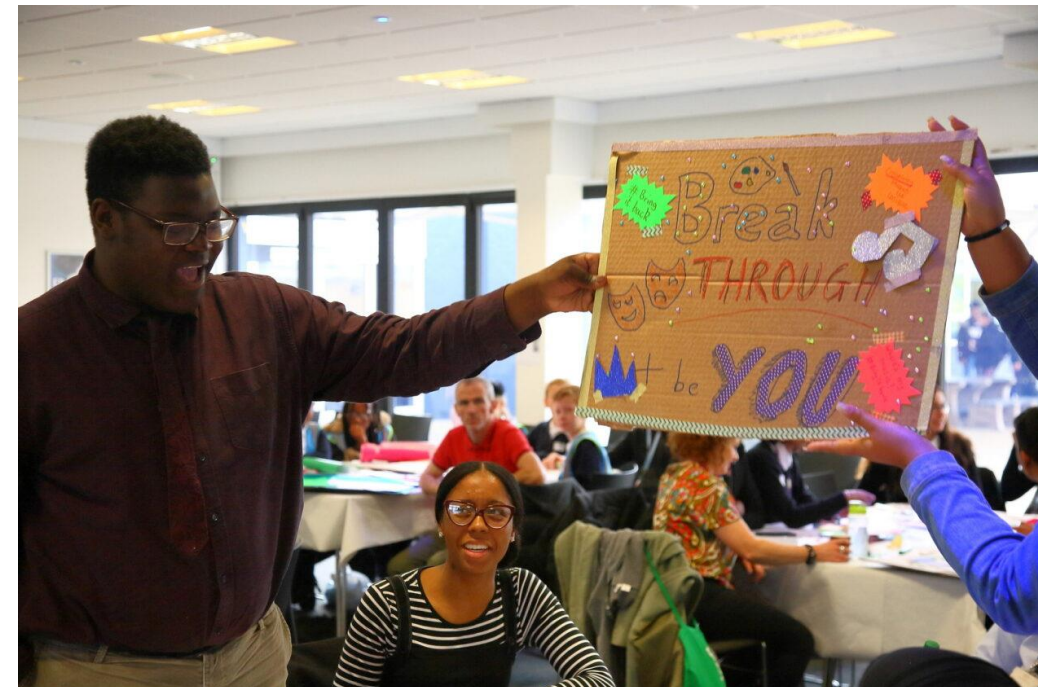


# We want our babies, children and young people to grow up to be successful young adults

## Priority 5 – Improving opportunities for young people post 16 and further reducing number who are NEET

Working with partners to build on existing strong initiatives to support all young people to move to a positive destination at 16 and 18 also includes:

- Supporting the development and opening of the Barking & Dagenham Further Education Food College and encouraging strong uptake by young people and families. Alongside this, the Food Education Partnership with schools will increase opportunities for children and young people's learning and career pathways.
- Working with the Inclusive Growth Team to maximise the benefits for young people of education, training and employment opportunities in and around the borough. This includes in newer industries such as Cultural and Creative, Film, Food and Green sectors through partnership activities and programmes such as the Cultural Creative and Digital Skills Month.
- Supporting more young people with SEND into employment before the age of 25 through development of a Supported Employment and Internship Pathway for vulnerable young adults in partnership with Inclusive Growth.
- Working with partners to strengthen careers support and improve opportunities for post-16 young people with Learning Disabilities and Difficulties.
- Continuing to develop and support the borough's strong Post 16 Provider Forum Network so that Barking and Dagenham's NEET performance remains in the top performance quintile nationally.



# Appendix

## The Prince's Trust Class of Covid: Report 2022



### THE FUTURE OF THE CLASS OF COVID

**49%**

feel anxious about their future on a daily basis

**51%**

feel their aspirations for the future are lower now as a result of global events since 2020, such as the pandemic and now a cost of living crisis

**35%**

feel their life is spiralling out of control

**40%**

are feeling less in control than ever



### THE JOURNEY TO WORK

**36%**

of young people think their job prospects will never recover from the pandemic

**51%**

of young people agree the expected recession makes them more concerned than ever for their job security

**33%**

no longer think they will achieve their career goals



### COST OF LIVING FEARS

**60%**

For of young people surveyed, the cost of living crisis was most likely to make them feel uncertain about the future.

**58%**

worry the cost of living crisis will prevent them from reaching their goals

**35%**

agree their salary no longer covers their rent or mortgage



### CONFIDENCE, RESILIENCE, DETERMINATION

**51%**

of young people feel less confident in their future now than before the pandemic began

**49%**

agree living through the pandemic has made them more resilient, and more determined to achieve their goals (52 per cent)

**66%**

of young people agree that having a clear career path and having the right skills for work (65 per cent) will make them feel more in control of their life