

Trees for Welford have taken this article verbatim from the Save the Children website.

## **SURVEY REVEALS SCALE OF CLIMATE ANXIETY AMONG BRITISH CHILDREN ON EVE OF COP27**

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- **70% are worried about the world they will inherit, Save the Children finds**
- **Children available for interview: 'We feel powerless and scared. The government must do more'**

Climate anxiety is rising in children in the UK, with 70% worried about the world they will inherit, new research revealed in the run-up to COP27 this weekend.

A survey of 3,000 children for Save the Children sent a powerful message to Rishi Sunak and other world leaders gathering in Egypt: no fewer than 75% want the government to take stronger action on the climate and inequality crisis.

Some 60% think climate change and inequality are affecting their generation's mental health in the UK. More than half (56%) believe it is also causing a deterioration in child mental health globally.

Caroline Hickman, a lecturer at the University of Bath, psychotherapist and climate anxiety expert, describes children as having deep concerns about climate change that are going unheard.

*"Why wouldn't children worry when they look at the state the world is currently in? An increase in climate disasters, on track to become worse, and deepening inequality. They are aware this is the world they are growing up in, and it seems no one is taking their concern seriously," she said.*

*"Children care about the world and what is happening - these figures reflect exactly that. Their response is natural, in fact, healthy. The solution to ease climate anxiety is actually quite simple: taking urgent action on the climate crisis and inequality."*

The survey results reveal a worrying snapshot of children's perceptions of the world they are growing up in and what they may have to deal with in the future. Save the Children has previously **warned** that today's children are set to face seven times more heatwaves during their lives than their grandparents. Many in the UK have experienced record-breaking temperatures this year.

*"I'm worried about the world I'm inheriting because it's something that's out of my control... It's in its most dire situation that it's ever been in." says 16-year-old Roisin, from County Antrim, a member of Save the Children's Youth Advisory Board.*

*“A lot of the time we can feel powerless and out of control and people tend to be scared of things that they can't control. The heat waves and storms really worry me because they are a clear sign of the consequence of inaction or action by humans.”*

Save the Children's survey of children aged 12-18 across the UK was published as the prime minister prepared to fly to Sharm El-Sheikh for COP27 after changing his mind about going.

**Gwen Hines, the chief executive of Save the Children UK, said:**

*“This generation of children stand to inherit a deeply unequal world if immediate action is not taken.*

*“The level of anxiety children feel about the world they are growing up in is alarming but warranted. Children should be excited about the future but instead they are carrying the weight of huge global issues which they had no part in creating. We need to listen to children and start taking serious action on the climate crisis and growing inequality.*

*“It's great the PM is attending COP27 but he must do more than just show up. It's time for him and other world leaders to show children they are listening and prepared to protect their futures.*

*“Children are demanding a greener and more just future. We owe it to them to deliver that.”*

Global leaders at COP last year made commitments to tackle climate change, but progress has been slow and fragmented, reflecting a global failure to step up for children's futures. Under the UK's COP presidency, pledges made in Glasgow did not go far enough to address the climate crisis Save the Children believes. The UK's decision to slash the aid budget has also left it struggling to meet its own climate pledges. The government has yet to make a promised payment of \$288 million to the Green Climate Fund (GCF)- a fund set up to provide climate finance to poorer countries- which it had committed to do by September this year.

*“Even if we're in an economic crisis, we still are definitely more advantaged than developing countries would be. So therefore, I worry that we're getting too comfortable and just taking care of ourselves rather than taking care of everyone,”* added Roisin.

Sixteen-year-old William, from Chorley, who is also on Save the Children's Youth Advisory Board, shared his fears that those in power will fail to act:

*“We know that climate change is a threat, and it can be detrimental to our way of life and what our futures will look like. For me personally, I do have some anxieties, particularly when governments don't seem to want to act to alleviate the consequences.”*

Save the Children is calling on the UK government to step up its action to address the climate and inequality crisis by meeting its fair share of a \$100 billion international climate finance commitment and mobilising support for a new commitment in the trillions to match scale of the problem. The agency is also urging the government to ensure children's rights are at the heart of climate finance by maintaining the services children rely on during climate disasters, including education, health and social protection.

