

# Impact of Influencers on Climate Change

Rachel Corroon

We're all concerned about who's influencing our next generation, whether it be their teachers, peers or indeed, the controversial social media influencers.

According to *Eurostat* almost 9 in 10 of Europeans aged between 16 and 24 are on social media. This begs the question, what influence is this having on climate change, one of this generation's most pressing issues. Social media sites have a wide range of content creators and accounts, those accounts with higher followings considered influencers. With such large followings and the average teenager in Ireland now checking social media at least 60 times a day, we must consider the effect these influencers have on our environmental impact.

Some may say that social media provides a great opportunity to advocate and where there is awareness for those issues that are so critical today there is definitely truth to this perspective. For example *Titanic* actor Leonardo DiCaprio's Instagram page, with a following of 50.2 million, features frequent posts containing shocking stories relating to climate change, yet manages to keep a positive outlook, sharing campaigns and projects around the world that are fighting these issues.

On the other hand there are a mass of influencers who have a negative effect, such as those perpetuating the fast fashion crisis. Examples of this include reality TV show *Love Island* stars such as Molly Mae Hague, a creative director of online fashion brand *Prettylittlething* who do not use eco-friendly materials.

Although there are certainly influencers advocating for change in our society, it is vital that individuals take personal responsibility in how their social media feed appears. The correct accounts that represent our values and provide accessible information can be a valuable resource.

Personally, to keep myself aware of my responsibilities as a consumer, I use the app *Good On You*, which is a site that rates fashion brands on the grounds of labour, environment and animal welfare. It is through social media that I learned of this app, only confirming the need to filter what we follow.