

Article

Social capital across the UK: 2011 to 2012

How people feel about their neighbourhood across the UK. This article highlights that personal characteristics such as age, ethnicity and socio-economic status all have a role in explaining some of the differences observed between regions, urban and rural areas.

Contact:
Veronique Sieglar
QualityofLife@ons.gsi.gov.uk
+44 (0)1633 455934

Release date:
19 May 2016

Next release:
To be announced

Table of contents

1. [Main points](#)
2. [Introduction](#)
3. [The role of trust, belonging and social connections in communities](#)
4. [Differences in how people feel about their neighbourhood across the UK](#)
5. [Explanatory factors for geographical differences in how people feel about their neighbourhood](#)
6. [Background notes](#)

1 . Main points

Our research highlights that personal characteristics such as age, ethnicity and socio-economic status all have a role in explaining the differences in how people feel about their neighbourhood across the UK, in particular in the trust people have in others in their neighbourhood. Some of the main UK findings (Source: [Understanding Society](#) , 2011 to 2012) include the following.

People living in rural areas were more likely to think that people in their neighbourhood can be trusted than people living in urban areas (78% compared with 61%). Around 73% of people in Northern Ireland reported that most people in their neighbourhood can be trusted, compared with 56% of people in London.

Trust in others in their neighbourhood was higher among White ethnic groups (66%) than those from Asian/Asian British ethnic groups (62%), Mixed ethnic groups (49%) and Black/Black British ethnic groups (42%).

Trust in others in their neighbourhood was highest amongst the retired (79%) and the self-employed (70%) but lowest among the unemployed (43%), people with long-term sickness or disabilities (52%), full-time students (52%) and people on maternity leave or looking after family (56%).

People in higher managerial occupations were more likely to trust people in their neighbourhood (73%) than people in routine occupations (54%).

Around 6 in 10 people (61%) reported feeling similar to others in their neighbourhood, amongst which three-quarters of them (76%) felt they could trust others in their neighbourhood. In comparison, around 14% of people did not feel similar to others in their neighbourhood, amongst which 38% felt they could trust others in their neighbourhood.

2 . Introduction

In July 2014, we developed a list of headline measures using a framework¹ that covered 4 main aspects of [social capital](#). One aspect was “trust and co-operative norms”², which refers to values such as trust or tolerance. At a local area level, “trust and co-operative norms” refers to how people feel about their neighbourhood, for example whether they feel people living in their local area can be trusted, are generally helpful, or get on.

This article looks at 5 measures to explore how people feel about their neighbourhood using data from [Understanding Society](#), 2011 to 2012. This includes the proportion of people who:

- feel that people in their neighbourhood can be trusted
- feel that people around where they live are willing to help their neighbours
- feel that people in their neighbourhood do not get along with each other
- feel like they belong to their neighbourhood
- feel safe walking alone in their local area after dark

The article looks at variations across the English regions and constituent countries of the UK (Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland) and between urban and rural areas . It also examines the role of factors such as age, ethnicity, economic activity and socio-economic status in explaining any differences, building on earlier analysis of [Inequalities in Social Capital by Age and Sex](#). It explores the impact that feeling similar to others in their neighbourhood can have on how people feel about others in their neighbourhood.

Notes for introduction:

1. The framework aims to cover all the relevant dimensions of social capital. It is based on 4 different aspects of social capital, namely: personal relationships, social network support, civic engagement, trust and co-operative norms.
2. This refers to the trust and to the co-operative norms or shared values that shape the way people behave towards each other and as members of society. Trust and values that are beneficial for society as a whole (such as for example solidarity and equity) can determine how much people in a society are willing to co-operate with one another.
3. [The Understanding Society classification](#) of an address as an urban or rural area is derived from the Office for National Statistics Rural and Urban Classification of Output Areas. Addresses are classified as urban areas if they fall within urban settlements with a population of 10,000 or more and rural areas otherwise.

3 . The role of trust, belonging and social connections in communities

Many area-based government programmes (such as the [Community Organisers Programme](#)) and non-governmental projects aim to build relationships within local areas, by encouraging individuals to come together and actively help to improve their neighbourhood.

If people are connected and actively engaged in their local communities, they are more likely to feel positively about their neighbourhood; although an inverse relationship is also likely: how people feel about their neighbourhood will affect their participation in local projects.

How people feel about their neighbourhood can shape local areas (for example, generating very trusting communities) and can affect the behaviour of people living in these neighbourhoods (for example, people can become more co-operative and tolerant). This has been previously described as “social contagion” or spreading of behaviours and values, by the sociologist Nicholas Christakis.

Investing in interventions which build and strengthen communities can have an impact on a range of outcomes at both an individual and community level, as suggested by a recent Royal Society of Arts (RSA) [report on the value of Connected Communities](#). These outcomes include well-being and economic benefits, such improved health and employability, which can create savings in health and welfare expenditure.

4 . Differences in how people feel about their neighbourhood across the UK

For the UK as a whole, the majority of people felt positively about their neighbourhood. In 2011 to 2012, over 6 in 10 (65%) people trusted others and felt a sense of belonging (63%) to their neighbourhood. Over 7 in 10 (71%) people felt others in their local area were willing to help their neighbours and felt safe walking alone in their local area after dark (74%). Only 8% of people felt people do not get along with each other in their local area. This section explores the data further to see how feelings about neighbourhood vary by where people live.

4.1 Differences between urban and rural areas

According to the England and Wales Census 2011, around 82% of the population (45.7 million people) live in urban areas and 18% (10.3 million people) live in rural areas.

There were very marked differences between rural and urban areas in how people feel about their neighbourhood across all 5 measures in the UK ([Dataset Table 1](#)). People living in rural areas had more positive views about their neighbourhood than people living in urban areas. They were more likely to:

- trust people in their neighbourhood (78% compared with 61% in urban areas)
- feel that others in their local area are willing to help their neighbours (81% compared with 67%)
- feel safe walking alone after dark in their local area (82% compared with 71%)
- feel a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood (72% compared with 61%)

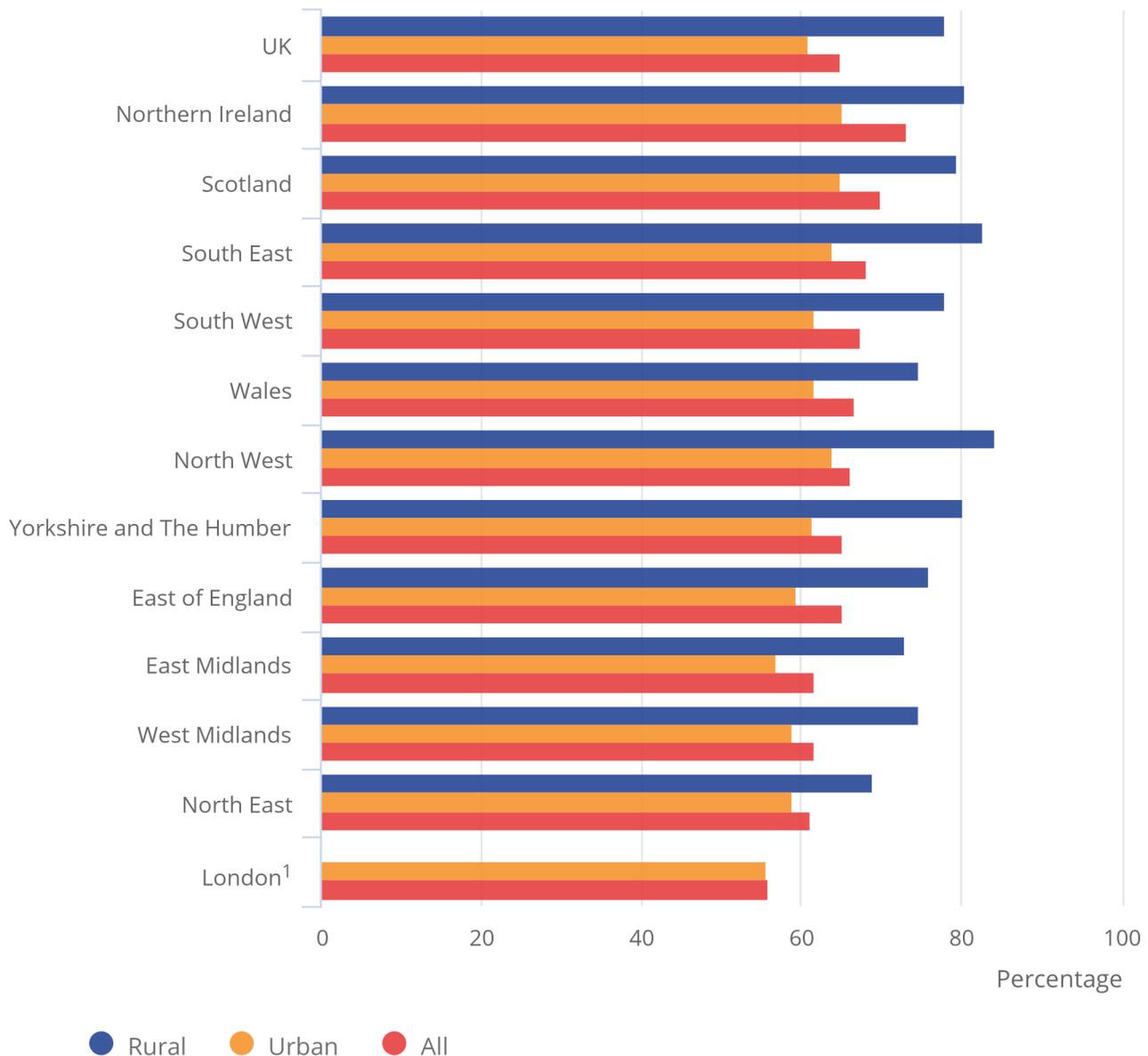
People living in rural areas were also less likely to feel that people in their neighbourhood do not get along (6% compared with 9% in urban areas).

Previous ONS analysis also suggests [an association between area and an individual's personal well-being](#), with people living in rural areas tending to report higher life satisfaction. Another ONS analysis suggests that [differences in personal well-being between areas](#) are mostly accounted for by the characteristics of individuals living in those areas.

4.2 Differences by region

Figure 1: Proportion of people reporting trusting others in their neighbourhood by region and country of the UK, 2011 to 2012

Figure 1: Proportion of people reporting trusting others in their neighbourhood by region and country of the UK, 2011 to 2012



Source: Understanding Society, 2011 to 2012

Source: Understanding Society, 2011 to 2012

Notes:

1. London is predominantly urban with no rural areas (insufficient sample sizes)

The way people feel about their neighbourhood also varies across the regions and countries of the UK ([Dataset Table 1](#) and Figure 1):

- Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales had the highest proportion of people feeling that they belong to their neighbourhood (73%, 69% and 67% respectively) and that others around their local area are willing to help their neighbours (80%, 75% and 75% respectively)
- London and the East Midlands had the lowest proportion of people feeling that they belong to their neighbourhood (59% and 61%) and that others around their local area are willing to help their neighbours (65% and 67%)
- around 7 in 10 of those living in Northern Ireland (73%), Scotland (70%) and the South East (68%) reported that most people in their neighbourhood can be trusted, compared with only 56% of those living in London, 61% in the North East and 62% of those living in West Midlands or in East Midlands
- there were fewer regional variations for the proportion of people feeling that others in their neighbourhood do not get along or for the proportion of people feeling safe walking alone in their local area after dark; however, around 1 in 10 people living in London or living in the North West reported feeling that people living in their neighbourhood generally do not get along, compared with 1 in 13 nationally

Overall, London had the lowest proportion of people who felt positively about their neighbourhood across all 5 measures and Northern Ireland the highest proportion across most measures.

Previous ONS analysis also highlighted significant differences in [personal well-being between the different regions of the UK](#). In particular, people in Northern Ireland were shown to have higher than average personal well-being, whereas people in London had lower than average personal well-being.

4.3 Differences between urban and rural areas within regions

Some of the regional variations can be related to the urban and rural findings. Northern Ireland had the highest proportion of people feeling positive about their neighbourhood and also had the lowest proportion of urban areas of all regions, with less than half (48%) of people living in urban areas of Northern Ireland. Similarly, London, which is predominantly urban, had the lowest proportion of people feeling positively about their neighbourhood.

However, people living in urban areas in Northern Ireland were also more likely than the national average for urban areas in the UK to trust others in their neighbourhood (65% compared with 61% as shown on Figure 1), to feel that people are willing to help their neighbours (72% compared with 67%) and to feel they belong to their neighbourhood (67% compared with 61%).

There were other variations in how people feel about their neighbourhood amongst urban areas within the regions ([Dataset Table 1](#)), implying that the urban effect on how people feel about their neighbourhood is not the same across all regions. For example:

- Scotland and East Midlands have a similar proportion of urban areas (66% and 70% respectively), but showed a very different profile in terms of how people feel about their neighbourhood, across both urban and rural areas; around 65% of people living in urban areas of Scotland reported that most people in their neighbourhood can be trusted, compared with 57% of those living in urban areas of East Midlands and 61% in urban areas for the whole of UK (Figure 1)
- the North West is the region with the highest proportion of urban areas (89%) after London, yet 64% of people living in urban areas of North West reported trusting others, compared with 56% in London and 61% in urban areas for the whole of UK (Figure 1)
- around 59% of people living in urban areas of London felt they belong to their neighbourhood, compared with 64% of those living in urban areas of Wales, 66% of those living in urban areas in Scotland and 61% in urban areas for the whole of UK ([Dataset Table 1](#)). This indicates that other factors are also likely to have an important role in shaping some of the geographical differences in how people feel about their neighbourhood. The size of urban areas might also be a factor, as urban area populations can range from 10,000 to 8 million.

Notes for differences in how people feel about their neighbourhood across the UK:

1. [The Understanding Society classification](#) of an address as an urban or rural area is derived from the Office for National Statistics Rural and Urban Classification of Output Areas. Addresses are classified as urban areas if they fall within urban settlements with a population of 10,000 or more and rural areas otherwise.

5 . Explanatory factors for geographical differences in how people feel about their neighbourhood

Inequalities in social capital between regions and between urban and rural areas are likely to be largely accounted for by a number of factors.

- physical, human and cultural characteristics of places. For example, previous research has shown that [living in a more green urban space affects people's well-being](#) and how they feel about their local area. A recent research paper in Nature suggests that those [living in more scenic environments report better health](#) across urban, sub-urban and rural areas, even when taking core socio-economic indicators of deprivation into account
- socio-economic factors of individuals living within different areas, such as age, ethnicity, socio-economic class and economic activity
- shared norms and values of communities, and the presence or lack of presence of the so-called “bonding” and “bridging” social capital¹. Bridging social capital is important in order to bring together communities of people with a diversity of background, hence increasing social cohesion and collective resources for communities

More research will be required to disentangle mechanisms leading to these geographical differences in how people feel about their neighbourhood, but this article aims to highlight some of the possible explanatory factors.

Methods such as regression analysis could be used to better understand how many of these geographical differences are accounted for by area effects or individual characteristics of people living in these areas. Objective factors, such as residential stability, people's health, levels of crimes or unemployment, vary across geographical areas and might have a direct impact on how people feel about their neighbourhood.

5.1 Age

Age could be a contributing factor to some geographical differences in how people feel about their neighbourhood.

As shown in our previous research, levels of trust in a neighbourhood, feeling that people in the local area are willing to help their neighbours and feeling of belonging to their neighbourhood increases with people's age. Older people are also less likely than younger people to feel that people in their neighbourhood do not get on well ([Dataset Table 2](#)).

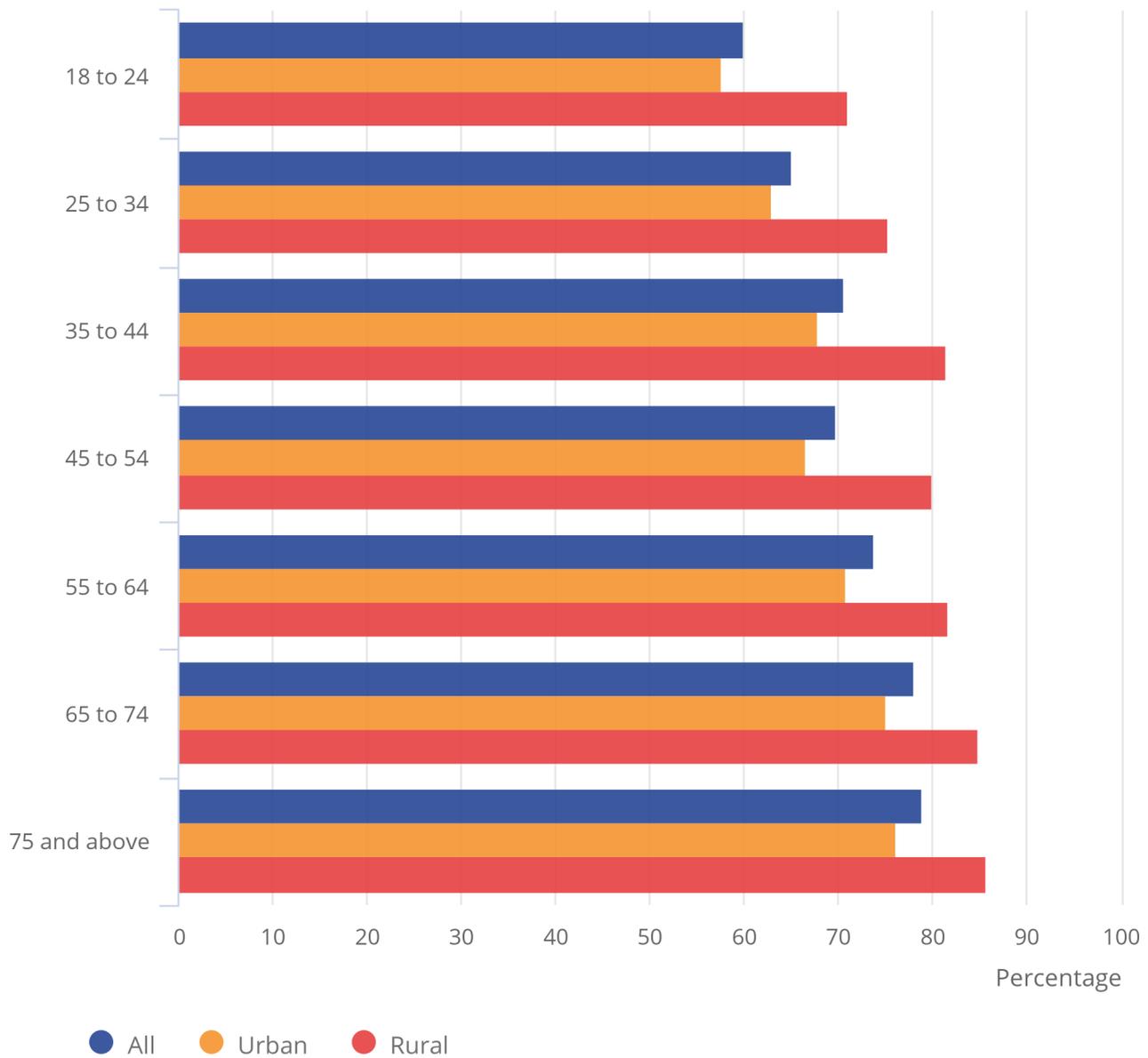
London, where people are less likely to feel positively about their neighbourhood, has the lowest proportion of people aged 65 and over (12%) of all regions and countries of the UK (ONS Mid-population estimates, 2014).

Rural areas, where a higher proportion of people feel positively about their neighbourhood, have an older age profile (median age of 45 compared with 37 in urban areas according to England and Wales 2011 Census).

However, people living in rural areas were more likely to feel that people in their neighbourhood can be trusted and are willing to help others, to feel that they belong to their neighbourhood and to feel safe walking alone after dark in their local area than people living in urban areas across all age bands from 18 to 24, to 75 and over.

Figure 2: Proportion of people who feel others in their neighbourhood are willing to help by age, for rural areas, urban areas and UK as a whole, 2011 to 2012

Figure 2: Proportion of people who feel others in their neighbourhood are willing to help by age, for rural areas, urban areas and UK as a whole, 2011 to 2012



Source: Understanding Society, 2011 to 2012

Source: Understanding Society, 2011 to 2012

For example, 71% of those aged 18 to 24 and 86% of those aged 75 and over living in rural areas felt that people in their neighbourhood are willing to help others. This compares with 58% of those aged 18 to 24 and 76% of those aged 75 and over living in urban areas who felt that people in their neighbourhood are willing to help others (Figure 2).

This indicates that there is a rural/urban effect on how people feel about their neighbourhood, independently of age.

The only exception is the proportion of people who feel that people in their neighbourhood do not get along, with urban-rural differences being less marked at older age. While a significant difference between urban and rural areas occurred for those aged 18 to 24 (12% compared with 7%), no statistically significant difference was observed amongst those aged 75 and over (8% compared with 7%). It could be possible that younger and older age groups may experience the same urban community conditions differently. Alternatively, younger and older age groups may live in parts of urban areas with different physical, socio-economic and demographic profiles, leading to very different experiences of community cohesion.

5.2 Ethnicity

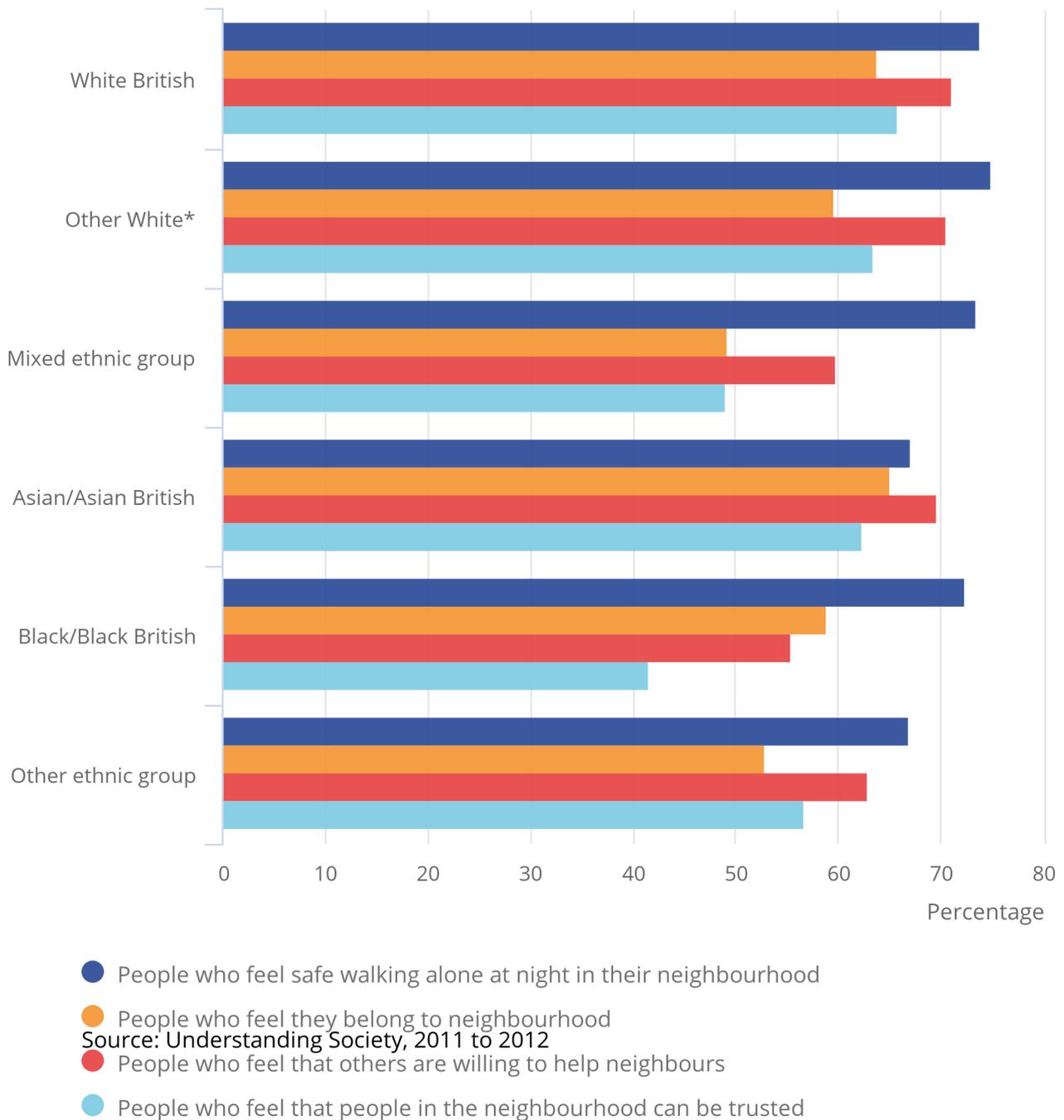
Ethnicity is likely to have an impact on geographical differences in how people feel about their neighbourhood. Previous research has shown [variations in well-being across ethnic groups](#).

People who identified as White² were more likely to feel positively about their neighbourhood than people from all other ethnic groups as a whole in terms of having trust in others in their neighbourhood, feeling a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood and feeling others in their local area were willing to help neighbours ([Dataset Table 3](#)). There was less variation found for feeling safe when walking alone after dark in the local area.

For example, around 66% of people from White ethnic groups reported trusting others in their neighbourhood compared with 55% of those from all other ethnic groups as a whole. This was the case in both urban areas (61% compared with 55%) and rural areas (78% compared with 68%) ([Dataset Table 3](#)).

Figure 3: Differences in how people from different ethnic groups feel about their neighbourhood, 2011 to 2012, UK

Figure 3: Differences in how people from different ethnic groups feel about their neighbourhood, 2011 to 2012, UK



Source: Understanding Society, 2011 to 2012

Source: Understanding Society, 2011 to 2012

Notes:

- (*) The Other White ethnic group includes those classified as Irish, Gypsy or Irish Traveller and any other White background

There were also variations observed in how people felt about their neighbourhood, depending on which other ethnic group they belonged to (Figure 3). For example:

- in the UK, less than half of people from Black/Black British ethnic groups (42%) and Mixed ethnic groups (49%) reported trusting others in their neighbourhood, compared with 62% of those from Asian/Asian British ethnic groups and 63% of those from other White³ ethnic groups; this difference was also observed in London, where 40% of those from Black/Black British ethnic groups and 49% of those from Mixed ethnic groups reported trusting others in their neighbourhood, compared with 60% of those from Asian/Asian British ethnic groups
- around 1 in 2 (49%) people from Mixed ethnic groups felt a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood, compared with 59% of people from Black/Black British ethnic groups, 60% of people from other White ethnic groups and 65% of people from Asian/Asian British ethnic groups
- around two-thirds (67%) of people from Asian/Asian British ethnic groups felt safe walking alone after dark in their local area, compared with 72% of those from Black/Black British ethnic groups, 74% of those with Mixed ethnic groups and 75% of those from other White ethnic groups.

Some of these differences could be attributed to cultural or linguistic differences in the interpretation of the questions or on the perception of neighbourhood. However, these differences could also be a consequence of the fact that different ethnic groups live in different neighbourhood types. For example, previous research by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation has shown that [all ethnic minority groups in England are more likely to live in deprived neighbourhoods](#), compared with the White British population.

People from minority ethnic groups are less likely to live in rural areas than in urban areas. Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, the regions with the highest proportion of people feeling positively about their neighbourhood, are also amongst the regions with the highest proportion of rural areas and the least diverse. The population identified as ethnic minorities is 2% in Northern Ireland ([Northern Ireland 2011 Census](#)), 4% in Scotland ([Scottish 2011 Census](#)) and 4% in Wales ([England and Wales 2011 Census](#))⁴.

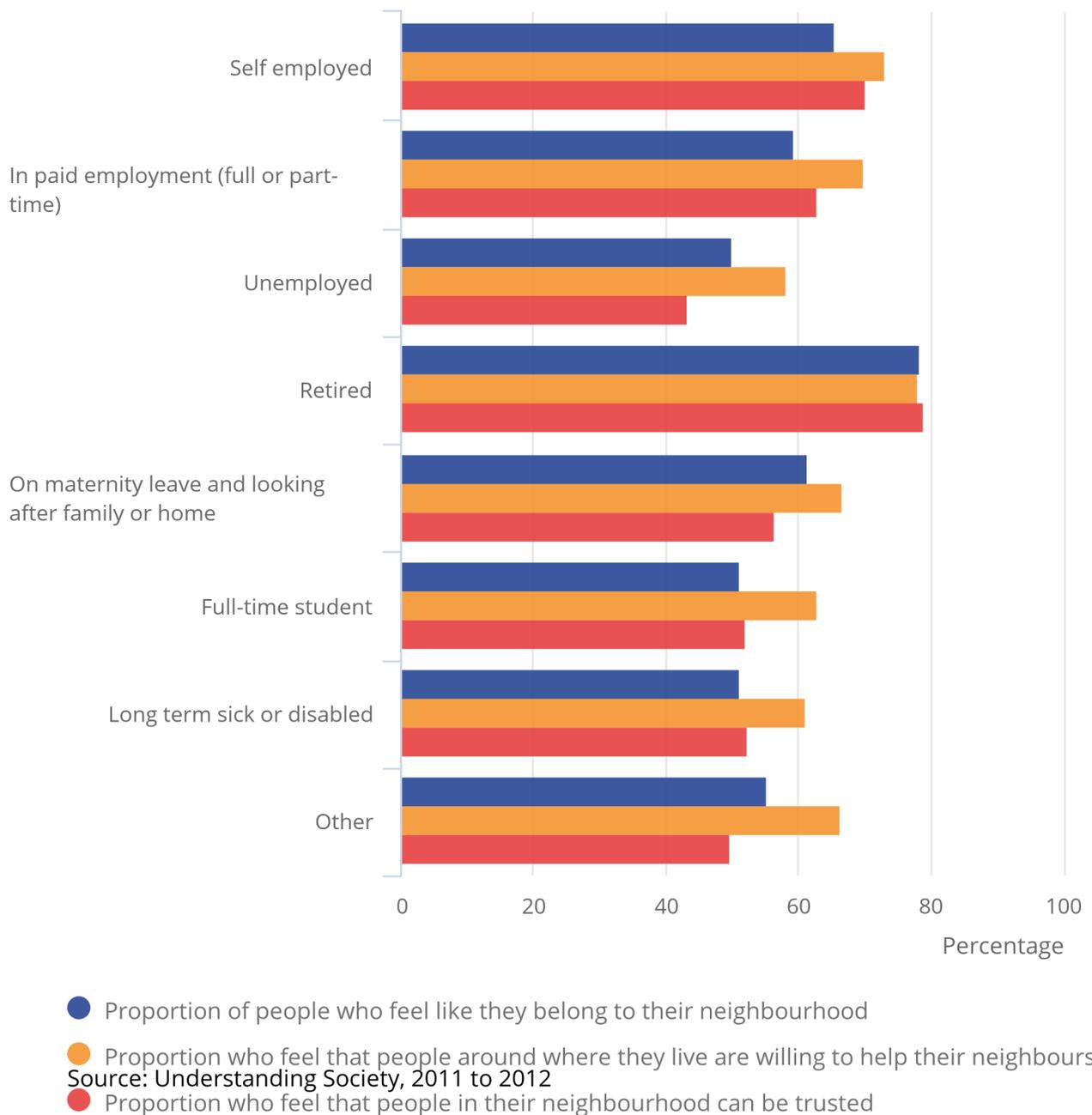
England and Wales 2011 Census data indicates that [London is the most ethnically diverse area across the English regions and Wales](#), with the lowest proportion of the population identifying themselves as White (60%), followed by the West Midlands (83%). London and the West Midlands are also the regions with the lowest proportion of people feeling positively about their neighbourhood. This could be partly driven by the fact that London and the West Midlands have a larger proportion of population of people from other ethnic groups and other ethnic groups are less likely to feel positively about their neighbourhood.

5.3 Economic activity

At an individual level, people's views about their neighbourhood vary with their economic activity ([Dataset Table 4](#)). Previous ONS research has shown that [personal well-being also varies amongst people of different economic status](#) and in particular that unemployment has a negative effect on personal well-being.

Figure 4: Differences in how people feel about their neighbourhood, by economic activity, 2011 to 2012, UK

Figure 4: Differences in how people feel about their neighbourhood, by economic activity, 2011 to 2012, UK



Source: Understanding Society, 2011 to 2012

Around 6 in 10 (63%) people in employment reported trusting people in their neighbourhood. Trust in others in their neighbourhood was much lower amongst the unemployed (43%), those with long-term sickness or disabilities (52%), full-time students (52%) and people on maternity leave or looking after the family (56%). It was highest among the self-employed (70%) and retired (79%) (Figure 4).

People who are not in the labour market because they are unemployed, on long-term sickness, or full-time students were also less likely to feel they belong to their neighbourhood and less likely to feel that others in their local area are willing to help their neighbourhood (Figure 4).

For example, amongst unemployed people, only 1 in 2 (50%) people felt that they belong to their local neighbourhood and 58% felt that others in their local area are willing to help their neighbours (Figure 4).

By contrast, nearly 8 in 10 (78%) retired people felt that they belong to their local neighbourhood and felt that others in their local area are willing to help their neighbours (Figure 4). Similarly, amongst the self-employed, nearly three-quarters (73%) feel that others in their local area are willing to help their neighbours and 65% reported feeling that they belong to their local area. People who are self-employed were more likely to feel positively about their neighbourhood: perhaps because they are running their business themselves, they are more likely to be involved with their local community.

Around 17% of the unemployed, 16% of people with long-term sickness or disabilities, 12% of people on maternity leave or looking after the family and 10% of full-time students felt that people in their neighbourhood do not get along, compared with 6% of those in paid employment or self-employed ([Dataset Table 4](#)).

There were variations in the proportion of people with different economic activities across different regions. For example, in January 2012, ONS data indicate that [unemployment rates were higher in London \(10.3%\) and lower in Northern Ireland \(6.4%\)](#), compared with the UK as a whole (8.4%). The fact that London has a lower proportion of people feeling positively about their neighbourhood could be partly caused by the fact that London has a larger proportion of population of unemployed people and the unemployed are less likely to feel positively about their neighbourhood.

However, there are also regional variations in how people feel about their neighbourhood across people with the same economic status. People with the same economic status, but living in rural areas, were more likely to feel positively about their neighbourhood than those living in urban areas, across the 5 measures. Also, for example:

- 67% of people retired in London felt they can trust others in their neighbourhood, compared with 80% in Wales, 83% in Scotland and 84% in Northern Ireland
- 68% of self-employed in London felt that others in their neighbourhood were willing to help their neighbours, compared with 80% in Scotland and 87% in Northern Ireland
- 37% of those with long-term sickness or disabilities in London felt they can trust others in their neighbourhood compared with 70% in Northern Ireland

5.4 Socio-economic status

National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (NS-SEC) is a measure of socio-economic position used in official statistics, which uses people's occupations to classify the population. Those in the most advantaged occupations (higher managerial occupations) are likely to live in different areas and to have different social networks than those in the least advantaged occupations (routine occupations). A wide range of existing literature documents class differences in the extent and character of individual social networks (Halpern⁵, 2005).

Figure 5: Differences in how people from different socio-economic status feel about their neighbourhood, 2011 to 2012, UK

Figure 5: Differences in how people from different socio-economic status feel about their neighbourhood, 2011 to 2012, UK



Source: Understanding Society, 2011 to 2012

People in higher managerial occupations were more likely to trust people in their neighbourhood (73%) than people in routine occupations (54%) (Figure 5 and [Dataset Table 5](#)). They were also more likely to feel that others in their local area are willing to help their neighbours (75% compared with 65%). This is in line with previous research showing that individuals with higher educational attainment have greater civic and voluntary engagement, larger and more diverse social networks and higher trust in others (Halpern, 2005).

However, people in higher managerial occupations and people in routine occupations were equally likely to feel they belong to their neighbourhood (61% and 59% respectively). This indicates that sense of belonging to the neighbourhood is independent of an individual's socio-economic occupation. However, previous research has shown that [people living in deprived areas were less likely to be attached to their neighbourhood](#) than those living in more affluent areas.

There were large differences observed between urban and rural areas for people of the same socio-economic status. For example, amongst those in higher managerial occupations, 73% felt they belong to their neighbourhood in rural areas, compared with 58% in urban areas. Amongst those in routine occupations, 66% felt they belong to their neighbourhood in rural areas, compared with 57% in urban areas ([Dataset Table 5](#)).

5.5 Lack or presence of bridging capital

There are a number of different background factors to consider that are relevant to social capital and how well people get on with those of different backgrounds; factors include age, sex, socio-economic group, ethnicity, nationality or beliefs. Previous ONS research has shown that a [majority of people in the UK felt that people get on well in their neighbourhood](#), indicating that people in the UK tend to be tolerant.

Feeling similar to others in a neighbourhood is a subjective measure on the perception of others in the local area. This measure might indicate either common characteristics between people living in an area or common values or norms of behaviours that shape the way people feel and think about each other in their local area. However, people not feeling similar to others in their neighbourhood could also indicate a lack of bridging social capital, or social networks and connections between groups of different ages, socio-economic groups or ethnicities.

In the UK around 6 in 10 people (61%) reported feeling similar to others in their neighbourhood, while 14% did not feel similar to others in their neighbourhood. Another 25% reported neither feeling similar nor dissimilar to others in their neighbourhood.

Previous ONS research has shown an [association between the feeling of belonging and feeling similar to others in the neighbourhood](#). Almost 8 out of 10 of those who felt that they were similar to others also felt a sense of belonging to their local area, compared with just under 3 out of 10 who did not feel similar to others in their neighbourhood.

Table 1: Differences in trust in others by whether feel similar to others in neighbourhood, by individual characteristics, UK, 2011 to 2012

		Trust in others in neighbourhood amongst those who		
		Feel similar	Neither feel similar or dissimilar	Do not feel similar
NSSEC				
	Routine occupations	63.78	46.21	32.31
	Higher managerial, administrative and professional occupations	83.52	62.61	50.74
Employment status				
	Self employed	79.89	60.50	47.69
	Unemployed	56.44	35.26	23.35
Age				
	18 to 24	59.31	43.64	34.95
	65 to 74	84.42	63.40	50.18
Ethnicity				
	All other ethnic groups	67.19	45.70	30.02
	White	76.57	52.53	39.05
All		75.95	51.92	38.33

Source: Understanding Society, 2011 to 2012

Similarly there is an association between trust in others in the neighbourhood and feeling similar to others in the neighbourhood, which is observed across various groups with very different characteristics (Table 1). Around 76% of those who felt similar to others in their neighbourhood felt they could also trust others in their neighbourhood, compared with 38% of those who did not feel similar to others in their neighbourhood and 52% of those who neither felt similar nor dissimilar to others in their neighbourhood.

These differences were observed across various groups. For example, amongst those who felt similar to others in their neighbourhood (Table 1):

- around 6 in 10 (59%) of those aged 18 to 24 and over 8 in 10 (84%) of those aged 65 to 74 felt they could trust others in their neighbourhood, compared with just over a third (34%) of those aged 18 to 24 and 1 in 2 (50%) of those aged 65 to 74 who did not feel similar to others
- over three-quarters (77%) of people from White ethnic groups and 67% from all other ethnic groups as a whole felt they could trust others in their neighbourhood, compared with 39% of those from White ethnic groups and 30% of all other ethnic groups as a whole who did not feel similar to others in their neighbourhood
- over 8 in 10 (84%) people in higher managerial professions and 6 in 10 (64%) people in routine occupations felt they could trust others in their neighbourhood, compared with around 1 in 2 people (51%) in higher managerial professions and around a third (32%) of those in routine occupations who did not feel similar to others in their neighbourhood
- around 8 in 10 (80%) of those people who are self-employed and 56% of those unemployed felt they could also trust others in their neighbourhood, compared with less than 1 in 2 (48%) of those self-employed and less than a quarter (23%) of those unemployed who did not feel similar to others in their neighbourhood

The proportion of people who felt similar to others in their neighbourhood varies geographically. For example, people living in Northern Ireland (72%), Scotland (64%) and Wales (64%) were much more likely to feel similar to others living in their neighbourhood, whereas the lowest proportion was found in London (53%). Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales were also the regions with the highest proportion who felt positively about their neighbourhood, whereas London had the lowest proportion.

More research is required to understand what feeling similar to others entails and whether increasing people's perception of feeling similar to others across lines of age, ethnicity and socio-economic status (through generating more diverse social networks within neighbourhoods) could have an impact on how people feel about their neighbourhood. A [recent report of the Social Integration Commission](#) has revealed a persistent lack of integration for all groups (across lines of age, ethnicity or social grade) alongside a growing diversity of British society, which can have several negative consequences and financial costs for individuals and society. Preliminary findings in this report suggests that amongst the minority who did not feel positive about their neighbourhood, a lack of bridging capital is apparent, as illustrated by people stating they did not feel similar to others in the neighbourhood.

Notes for explanatory factors for geographical differences in how people feel about their neighbourhood:

1. The term bonding social capital is often used to describe networks bringing together people of similar background; the term bridging social capital is often used to describe networks bringing together people of different background (nationality, ethnicity, socio-economic status, age etc.).
2. The White ethnic group includes those classified as White British, English, Scottish, Welsh, Northern Irish, Irish, Gypsy or Irish Traveller and any other White background.
3. The Other White ethnic group includes those classified as Irish, Gypsy or Irish Traveller and any other White background.
4. These estimates include all ethnic groups other than White. (Remember that the White group also includes some minority White ethnic groups). Note that with the 2011 Census there are some comparability issues when comparing across countries for the detailed ethnic groups due to differences in data collection and categories.
5. Halpern D (2005) 'Social Capital', published by Polity Press: Cambridge.

6. Background notes

1. Author: Veronique Siegler, ONS

2. We would like to thank Angela Potter-Collins, ONS and Rittah Njeru, ONS for their contribution in producing this report.
3. If you have any comments on the ONS work on social capital, please email us at: nationalwell-being@ons.gsi.gov.uk
4. The data analysed in this report were from collected from the UK Longitudinal Household Survey (UKHLS), also referred to as Understanding Society study, begun in 2009 as a successor to the British Panel Survey (BHPS). It is conducted by the Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER) at the University of Essex and captures important information about the socio-economic circumstances, well-being and attitudes of people living in 40,000 households. It is an annual survey of a nationally representative sample of individuals. Each person aged 16 or older answers the individual adult interview and self-completion questionnaire. Young people aged 10 to 15 years old are asked to respond to a paper self-completion questionnaire. Information from the Longitudinal Survey is primarily used by academics, researchers and policymakers in their work, but the findings are of interest to a much wider group of people. These include those working in the third sector, health practitioners, business, the media and the general public. More information can be found on the [Understanding Society](#) webpage.
5. Details of the [policy governing the release of new data](#) are available from the [UK Statistics Authority](#).