



More in  
Common

# Parks, Pride and Place:

The role green space can play in building  
pride in place and support at the ballot box

November 2025

# Webinar Overview

- The state of public mood – despair
- The role parks and green spaces could play in addressing this
- What people love about their green spaces
- The barriers stopping people from enjoying their green spaces
- What do Britons want to be done to improve their green spaces
- How should you make the case for green spaces
- The size of political opportunity parks and green spaces offer

# Research Overview

- A nationally representative survey of 3,073 Britons. Survey fieldwork took place from 9th to 11th October 2025.
- Four focus groups of 2024 Labour voters were held in constituencies emblematic of Labour's collapsing electoral coalition: Wakefield and Rothwell, Scunthorpe, Great Grimsby and Cleethorpes and Inner City Birmingham (Birmingham Hall Green & Mosley, Birmingham Yardley, Birmingham Ladywood constituencies)



# Introducing More in Common's Seven Segments

# Introducing the Seven Segments

The British Seven segments were developed to move beyond traditional left-right or party-based analysis by exploring the deeper psychological, cultural, and value-driven foundations that shape public opinion.

This approach helps explain why political loyalties have fractured and offers a more nuanced understanding of what drives attitudes on issues like immigration, climate, and the economy—enabling more effective engagement with the public across a fragmented political and social landscape.



## Progressive Activists

## Incrementalist Left

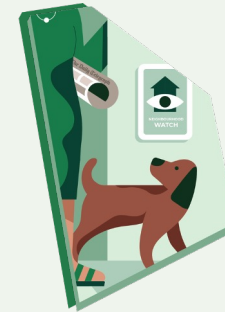
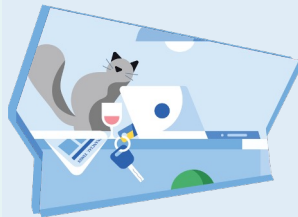
## Established Liberals

## Sceptical Scrollers

## Rooted Patriots

## Traditional Conservatives

## Dissenting Disruptors



...an outspoken group that is politically engaged and globally minded, championing social justice but feeling alienated from mainstream politics

...a group that leans left and trusts institutions, often stepping back from the news and avoiding politically fraught debates

... a prosperous group that is confident in institutions, values expertise, and believes the system broadly works

...a disengaged group that has lost trust in mainstream institutions and increasingly looks online for sources of truth

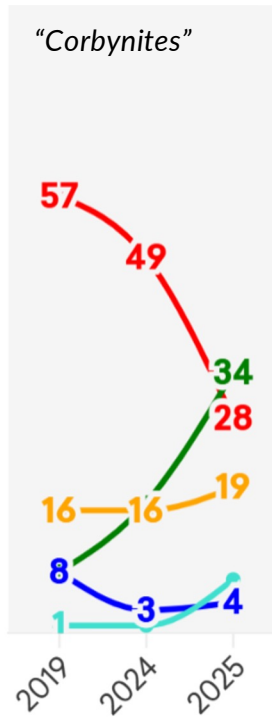
...a patriotic group that feels overlooked by elites and wants leaders with common sense to protect local identity

... a nostalgic group that respects tradition, authority and personal responsibility, while remaining sceptical of rapid change

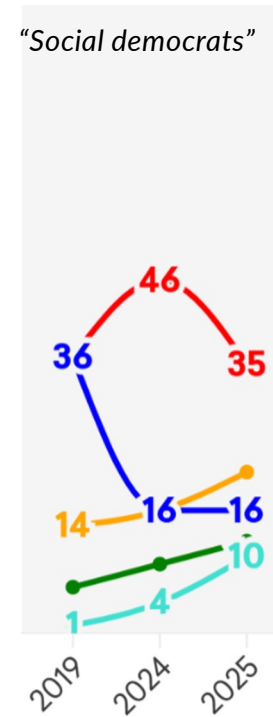
... a frustrated group that craves radical change and backs strong leaders who promise to shake up a broken system

# Voting patterns of the seven segments

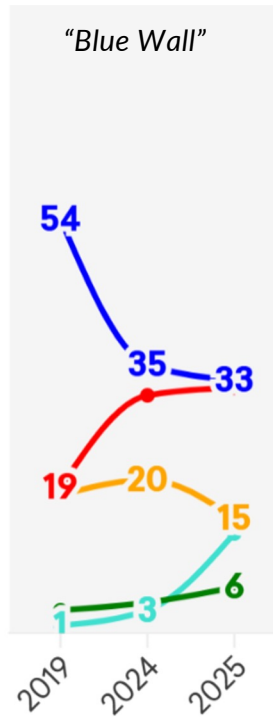
## Progressive Activists



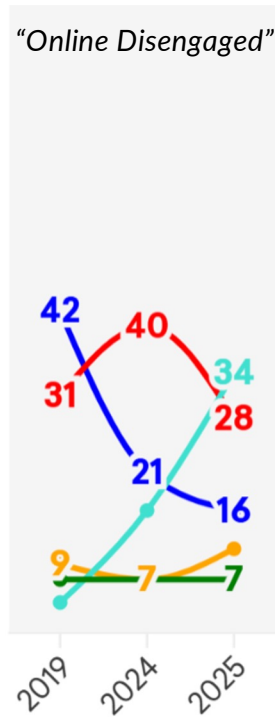
## Incrementalist Left



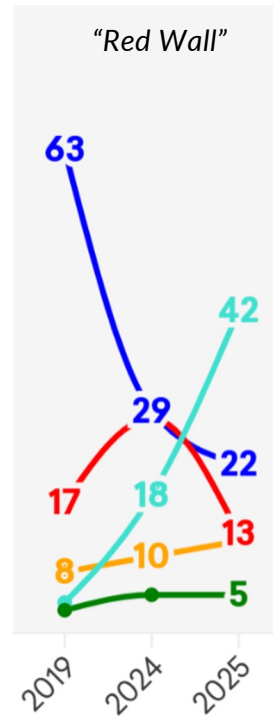
## Established Liberals



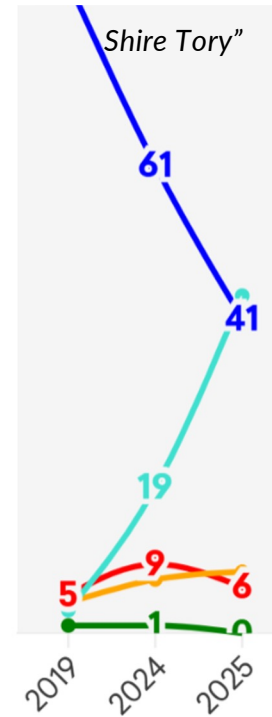
## Sceptical Scrollers



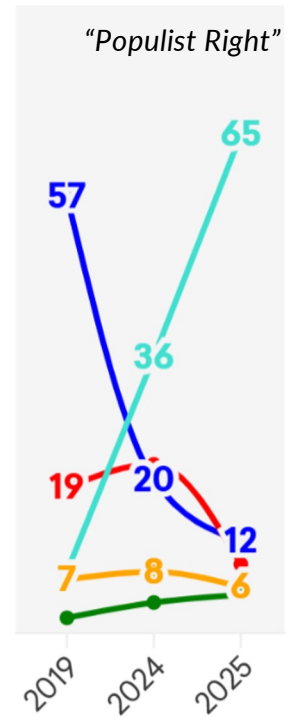
## Rooted Patriots



## Traditional Conservatives



## Dissenting Disruptors



● Conservative ● Labour ● Liberal Democrat ● Reform UK / Brexit Party ● Green

Labour's 2024 coalition



# The crisis of public confidence

# Britons have lost confidence in the Labour government's ability to improve their lives

## Confidence in the government's ability to improve Britons' lives has halved since the General Election

Please indicate which statement you agree with more using a scale of 1 to 4 where 1 means you completely agree with the first statement and 4 the second statement.

- 1- I expect the Labour government will improve the lives of people like me ● 2- ● 3- ● 4- I do not expect the Labour government will improve the lives of people like me



Confidence in Labour's ability to improve Britons' lives has collapsed: immediately after the election 54 per cent of Britons thought the government would improve their lives. This has fallen to just 27 per cent of Britons.

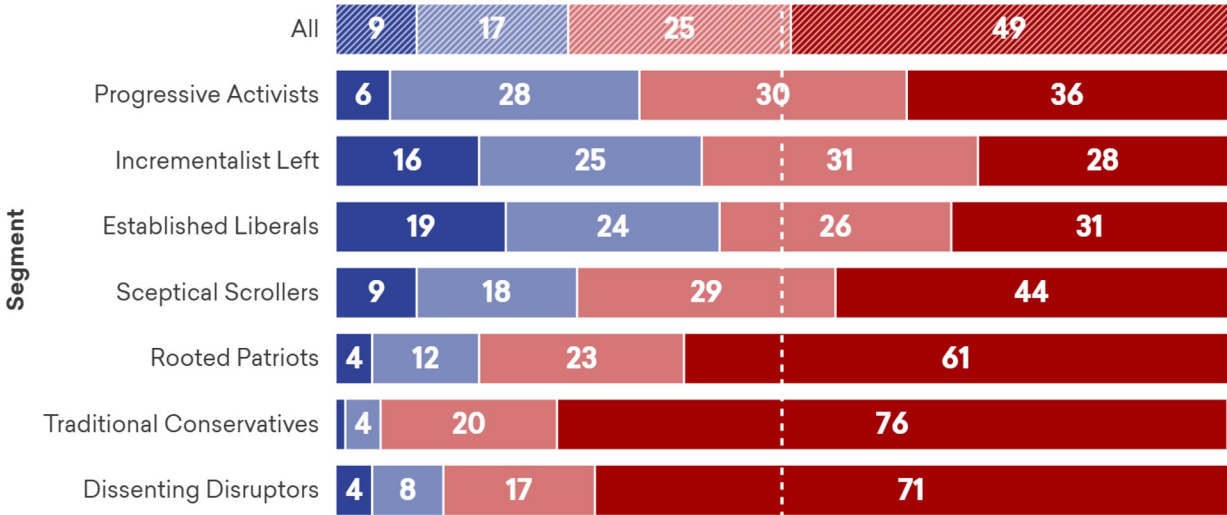
This lack of confidence in the government's ability to make Britons' lives better cuts across our segments. While our Right-leaning segments are particularly pessimistic, majorities of every segment don't think this Labour government will improve their lives.

# Britons do not think that Labour will improve their local area

## Britons also overwhelmingly do not believe the government will improve their local communities

Which of the following comes closest to your opinion?

● 1-I expect that the Labour government will help improve my local area/community ● 2-  
● 3-I do not expect that the Labour government will improve my local area/community.



Confidence is low at the local level- only a quarter of Britons (26 per cent) expect the government to **help** improve their local area or community.

This low level of confidence is greatest among our Right-leaning segments but majorities of all seven segments do not have confidence the government will improve their area.

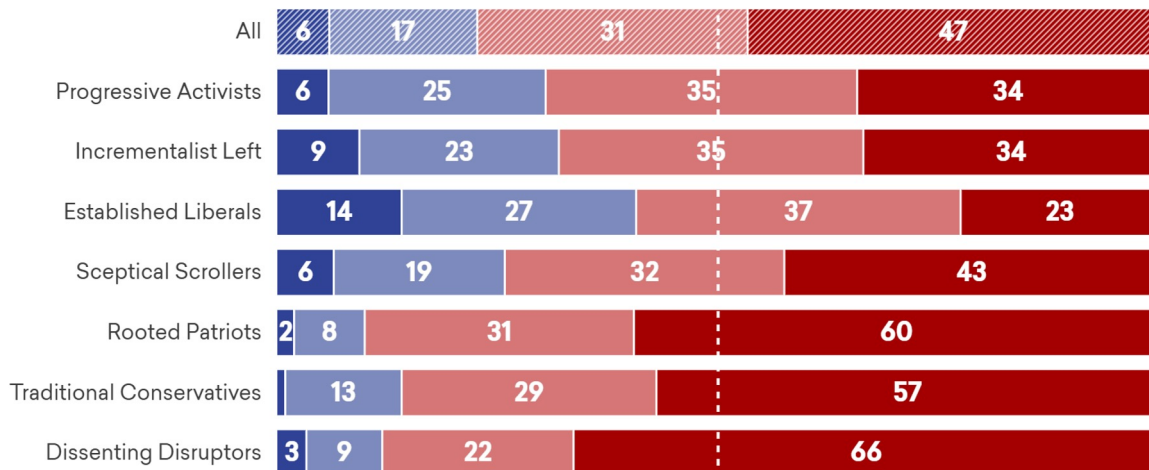
From focus group conversations in more deprived parts of the country, it was clear that this feeling is even more intense in these areas.

# Britons do not think that politicians care about their local communities

## 'Red Wall' Rooted Patriots are the most likely segment to think politicians don't care about areas like their local community

Please indicate which statement you agree with more using a scale of 1 to 4 where 1 means you completely agree with the first statement and 4 the second statement.

- 1- Politicians care about areas like my local community
- 2-
- 3-
- 4- Politicians do not care about areas like my local community



Driving this is a sense for many Britons that politicians and those in power don't care about their local communities.

78 per cent of Britons think politicians don't care about local communities like their own.

Again this feeling of being left behind and overlooked by those in power is more pronounced for key voters for Labour: 91 per cent of Rooted Patriots (typical 'Red Wall voters) believe politicians don't care about their local community - the most of any of our segments.

Regionally - belief that politicians don't care about Britons' local communities is highest in Yorkshire and Humber and significantly lower in London.

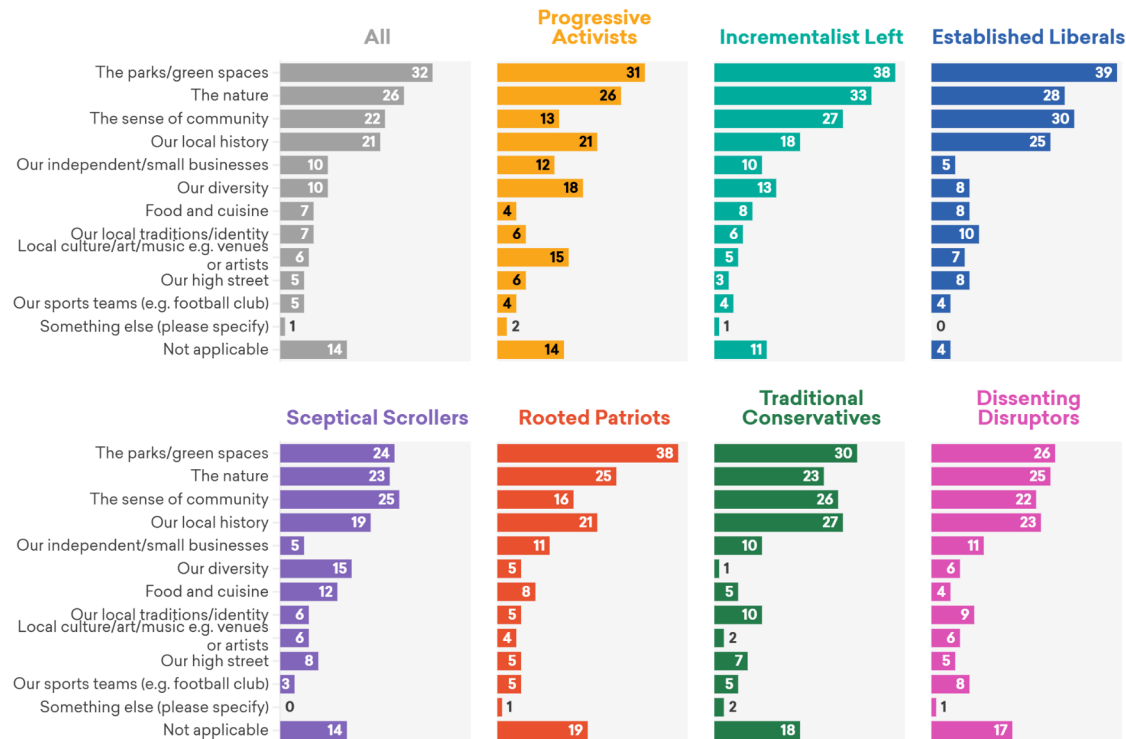
**Can green spaces play a role  
in addressing these  
feelings?**



# What makes Britons proud of where they live?

## Parks and green spaces are the biggest source of local pride for six of our seven segments

Thinking about where you are from, what makes you most proud of your local area?



With their grounding in core values and morals, our seven segments are powerful predictors of attitudes to some of the key divides shaping Britain today.

Yet on green spaces, our segments are united. Six out of seven say local parks and green spaces are their biggest source of local pride.

Parks and green spaces are unifying, not polarising in the eyes of the British public.

# Parks and green spaces are important sources of local pride in urban areas

## Parks and green spaces are just as important sources of pride for those in urban areas as they are for those in rural areas

Thinking about where you are from, what makes you most proud of your local area?



Parks and green spaces aren't just important sources of local pride for areas with high levels of greenery - 34 per cent of those living in urban/city centre areas say parks and green spaces are their biggest source of local pride.

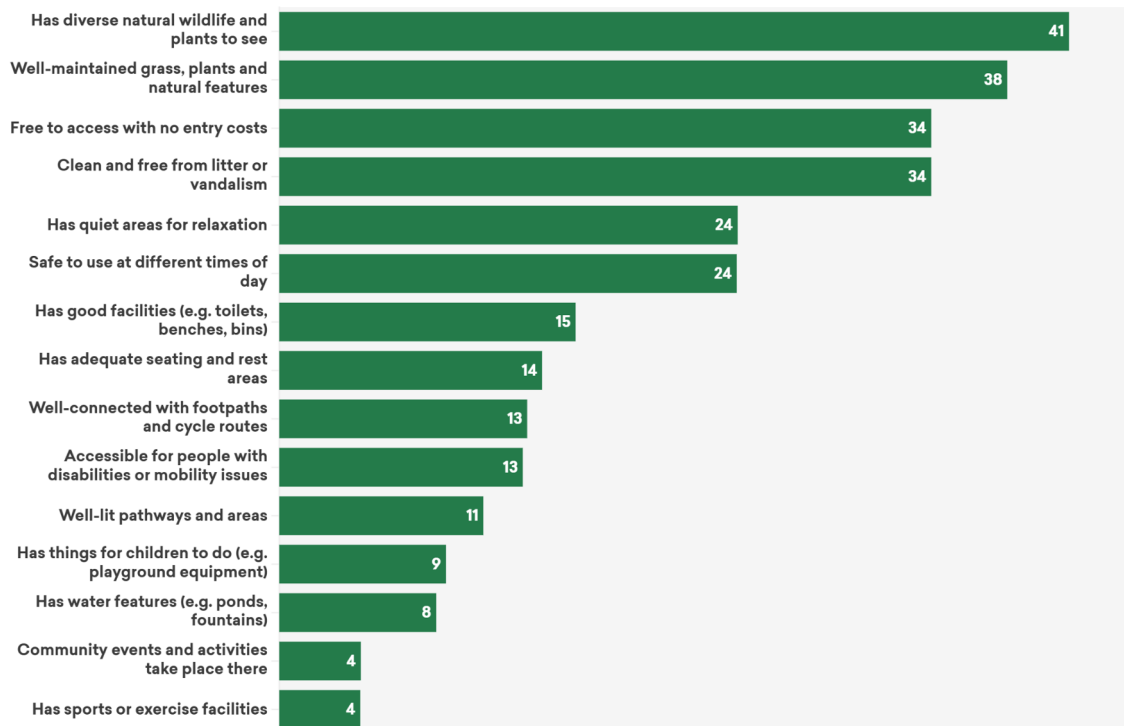
This exceeds the proportion of those living in rural areas or villages (30 per cent) and Britons overall (32 per cent) saying the same.

**What do Britons think  
constitutes a good quality  
green space?**

# Cleanliness and good nature to enjoy are the most important criteria for a quality green space

What do you think are the most important features for making a green space a high-quality green space?

All Britons



The number one criteria for all Britons is the **natural wildlife and plants** in a green space. Numbers two is **well maintained grass, plants and natural features**.

At third and fourth, is **free access with no entry costs** and being **clean from vandalism and graffiti**.

Criteria which are less important are **sports and exercise facilities** and **water features** such as fountains.

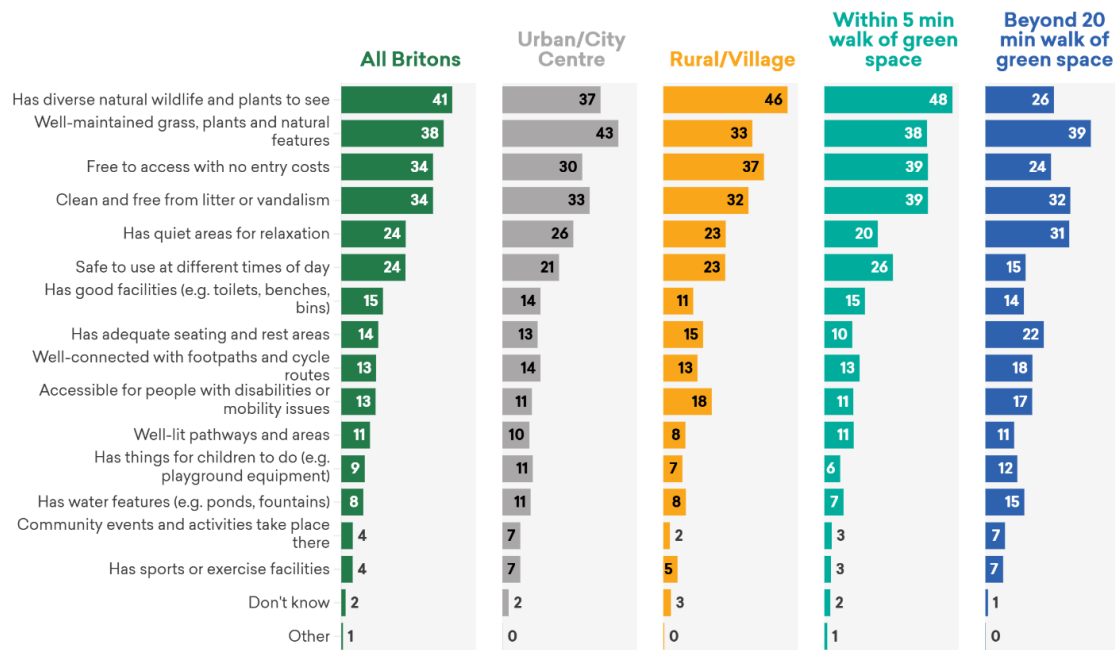
Divergence across the segments become along the lines of **safety**, where Established Liberals are the segment least concerned about safety at all times of day.

The ability to see and connect with **nature** is imperative to quality green space, but not without social elements such as **cost** and **cleanliness**.

# Those with less access to green space have simpler criteria about what constitutes a good green space

## The ability to enjoy nature is the most important criteria for a high-quality green space but facilities are more important for those living in less nature rich areas

What do you think are the most important features for making a green space a high-quality green space?



The criteria for a good quality green space for those living further away from green spaces or in urban areas is much less stringent.

They are less likely to put emphasis on nature and wildlife and more likely to put emphasis on the cleanliness and condition of green spaces and the quality of facilities.

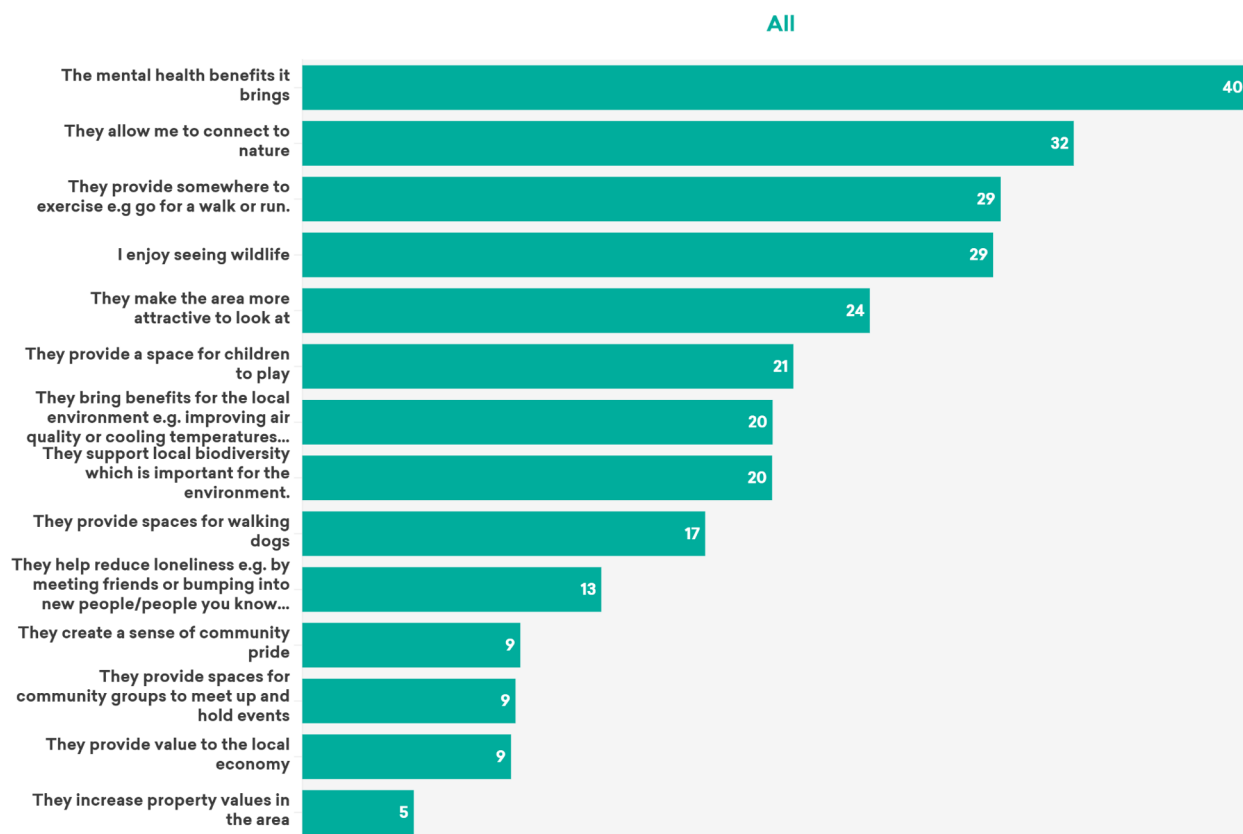
In our photo experiment they consistently ranked all of the green spaces with higher scores.



**Why do Britons like green spaces so much?**

# Mental health benefits are the most important benefit of access to green spaces for Britons

## Why do you think having access to green spaces is important?



The most important advantage of green spaces to Britons are the **mental health benefits** they bring - two-fifths of Britons name this as a top benefit.

When looking at Britons who suffer with mental health issues this number rises to **58 per cent, saying that the mental health benefits** are most important to them.

Second, is the **ability to connect with nature** and third is the provision of space to **exercise**.

While Britons recognise the intrinsic value of green spaces, the instrumental benefits they bring to people are why they are so important.

*"I just think they're good because then even if kids live in an area let's say, where they've not got a really nice space, they've still got somewhere they could sit on the grass or be able to sit with a friends and discuss problems or family troubles, do you get what I'm saying?"*

- **Josh, Apprentice, Grimsby**

# There is strong cross-segment agreement on the key benefits that green spaces bring

Progressive Activists stand out. A third (34 per cent) say the **biodiversity and environmental benefits** are most important to them - this figure is 11 points higher than any other segment.

Traditional Conservatives are the only segment to have the **attractiveness of green spaces** feature in their top three. Rooted Patriots, Established Liberals and Dissenting Disruptors share the same appreciation of **mental health benefits, connection to nature** and **enjoyment of seeing wildlife**.

Across six of the seven segments, Traditional Conservatives being the lone exception, **mental health benefits** are seen as the most important benefit of having access to green spaces.

## Top 3 most important things about green space per segment

Why do you think having access to green spaces is important?

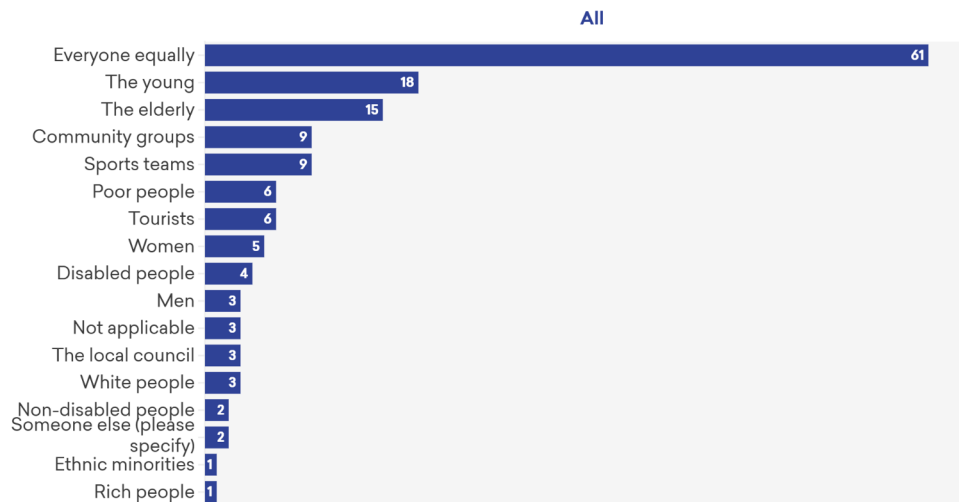


# While economic insecurity may have made Britons have a more zero-sum outlook, green spaces are something seen to benefit all people

## Britons overwhelmingly believe we are all equal beneficiaries of green spaces

Who do you think benefits the most from green spaces in your local area?

Select up to three



More in Common • October 2025

*"Yeah, I think they [green spaces] are used a lot aren't they by everybody for walking, exercise, dog walking, like say taking the kids out for a walk. It's not always people with kids or dogs. Everybody seems to have a use for them."*


**Catherine, Scunthorpe, Labour voter considering Reform**

Increasing economic insecurity and feelings that those coming to the UK (both legally and illegally) are getting unfair handouts, has created a growing sense of 'zero-sum politics' among Britons.

Almost all policies are seen to have winners and losers, with few Britons thinking they personally will be the beneficiaries. Anything positive promised by the government is met with scepticism and suggestions there must be a catch.

However, green spaces are seen as more of a collective asset. Asked who they think benefits most from green spaces in their local area - three fifths of Britons (61 per cent) say everyone benefits equally.

This sense of green spaces being seen as a shared asset all people can enjoy is true for voters of all political parties and all seven of our segments with Rooted Patriots (70 per cent) particularly like to say this.

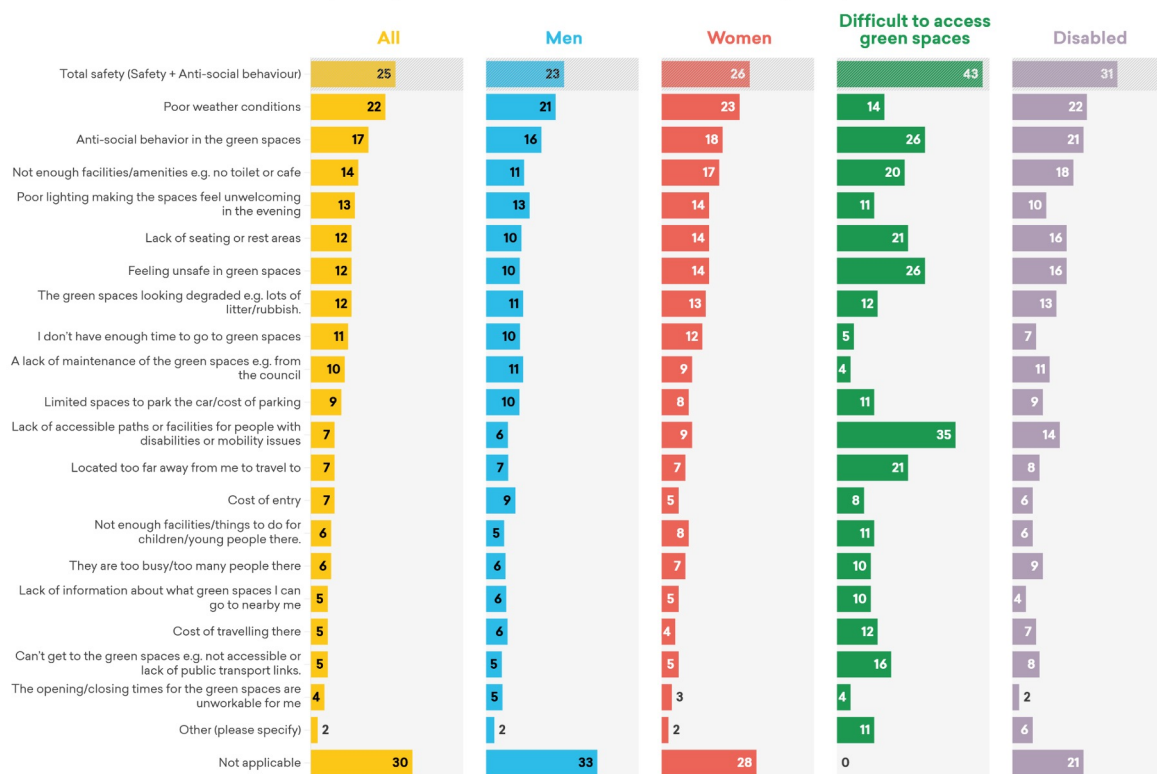


**What are the barriers  
stopping people from  
enjoying green spaces?**

# Safety is a particular barrier to accessing green spaces for our groups at risk of exclusion

Besides bad weather, safety and in particular anti-social behaviour is the biggest barrier stopping people from accessing green spaces

Safety is a top concern for those at risk of exclusion from green spaces



Safety is a greater concern for groups at risk of being excluded from accessing green spaces than the general public. While 25 per cent of Britons say at least one of feeling unsafe for anti-social behaviour is the biggest barrier preventing them from using green spaces more, this figure is 26 per cent for women, 31 per cent for disabled Britons and 43 per cent for those who say it is difficult for them to access green spaces.

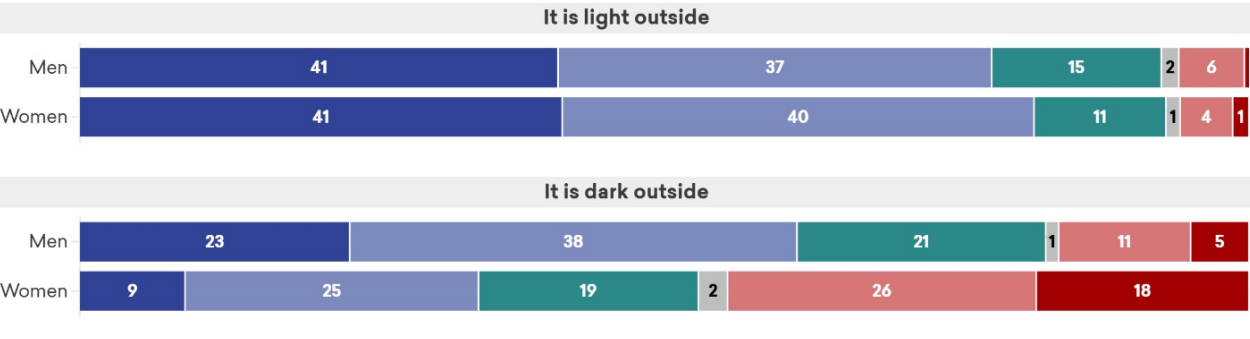
Tackling safety concerns should be a priority for ensuring all Britons feel they can access green spaces.

# Darkness is a particular driver of a lack of perceived safety - especially for women

## There is little gender difference in perceived safety of using green spaces during the day but when it is dark, women are much more likely to feel unsafe

How safe do you feel using/spending time in the green spaces near you when...

● Very safe ● Somewhat safe ● Neither safe nor unsafe ● Don't know ● Somewhat unsafe ● Very unsafe



Source: More in Common, October 2025

During the day, there is little difference between the perceived safety of green spaces by men and women - women are only 3 points less likely to see green spaces as being safe during the day.

However, there is a stark divide when it is dark. Women are 28 points more likely to say they feel unsafe in green spaces when it's dark.

If green spaces are to be inclusive and safe places for all Britons - including women - then making them feel safer as they get dark, for example by installing more streetlights, will be key.

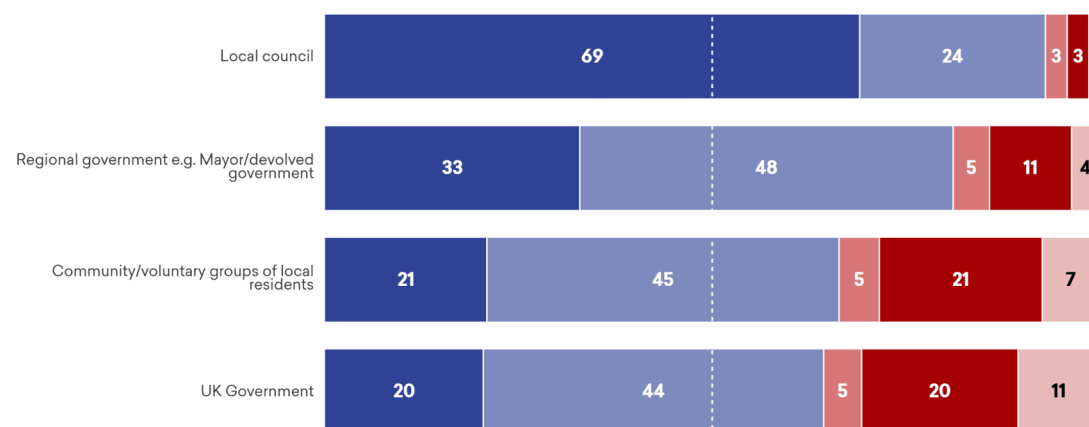
**What do Britons think we  
should do to improve the  
quality of green spaces?**

# Britons believe the maintenance of green spaces should be the responsibility of government

## Britons think local government should hold responsibility for maintaining green spaces

How responsible do you think the following should be for maintaining/upkeeping the quality of green spaces in your local area?

● Very responsible ● Somewhat responsible ● Don't know ● Not very responsible ● Not at all responsible



In focus group conversations, it is clear that while the public value the role local community groups play in looking after green spaces, they feel they are filling a vacuum left by government.

While they viewed local residents as having specific knowledge and expertise that should be incorporated into the management of green spaces they fundamentally believed that responsibility for the creation and maintenance should rest with government and saw this as a core responsibility for local councils.

In total, **93 per cent of Britons believe councils** should either be somewhat or very responsible for maintaining the quality of local green spaces compared to **66 per cent who say the same for community groups** and **64 per cent who say the same for the national government**.

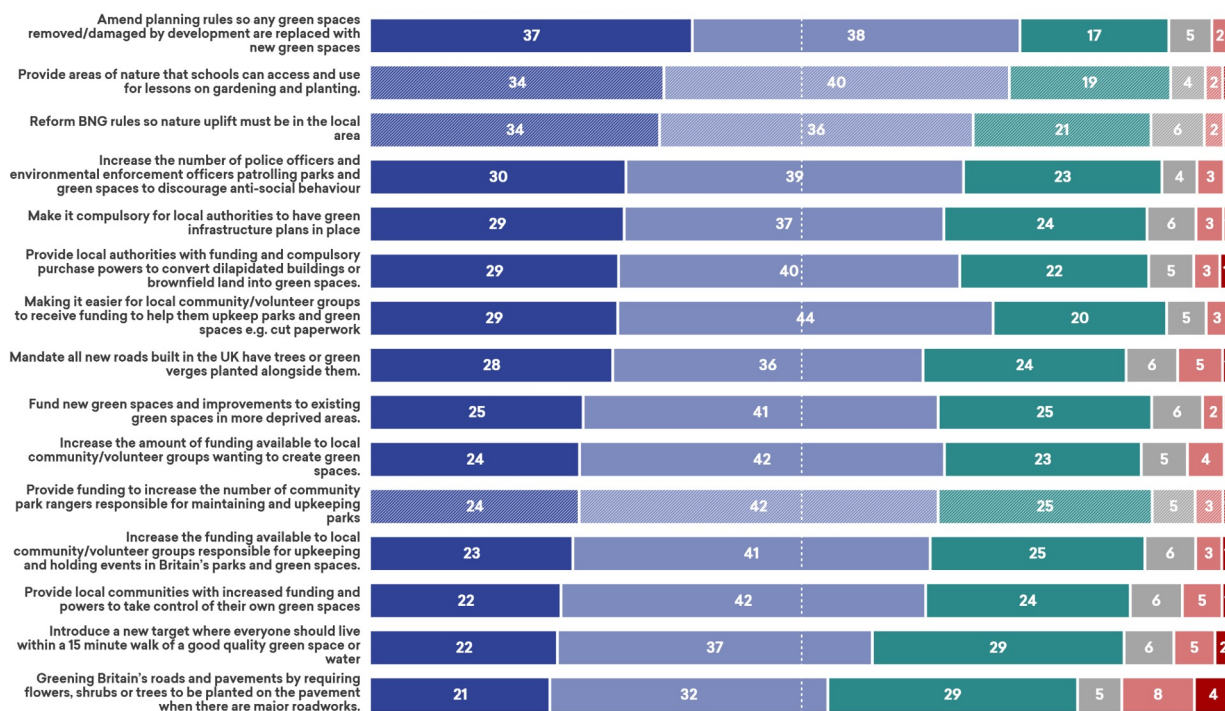
Given they view politicians and government, at the local level, as having responsibility for upkeep of green spaces it naturally followed for our focus group participants that they would like to see those in power driving improvements and the solutions to the problems green spaces face.

# Support for policies to improve access to green spaces is deep but support for planning reform and measures to tackle anti-social behaviour is notably strong

## All policies tested command majority support

To what extent would support or oppose the following potential government policies to create new or increase the quality of existing green spaces in Britain?

● Strongly support ● Somewhat support ● Neither support nor oppose ● Don't know ● Somewhat oppose ● Strongly oppose



All of the policies tested around improving green spaces had a majority support from the public, showing that there is overwhelming desire to improve Britain's green spaces.

An incredibly popular policy is access to nature in schools with near universal support. At the same time, looking to **reform regulation around Biodiversity Net Gain** to have a focus of local nature rather than national exchanges is notably popular.

**Park rangers in the community** to tackle anti-social behaviour and ensure that parks were properly maintained performed well in focus groups and polling, which helps in restoring degraded places with a sense of care.

The one falling point in the eyes of the public was relying too much on central government, especially where Britons feel they've been let down in the past.

# Protecting local access to green space and nature in planning system is seen to hold biggest potential impact

## Planning reforms and increasing park staff to tackle anti-social behaviour seen as best ways of improving green spaces

Below is the same list of potential policies - which of them, if implemented, do you think would have the most positive impact on improving access to or the quality of green spaces in your area?



Better protecting green spaces in the planning system - by requiring that any development which harms or removes green spaces be accompanied by investment in compensatory new green spaces is seen as the most impactful way of improving local green spaces. Reforming BNG comes in a close second.

However, investing in increasing the number of community park rangers and police/enforcement officers is also seen as an effective way of improving local green spaces.

Among Rooted Patriots - restoring the number of community park rangers is seen as being particularly impactful with 21 per cent selecting it as holding the most positive impact compared to 16 per cent of Britons overall. This idea also performed particularly well in our focus group conversations.

There is not only strong support for a range of policies to improve the quality of green spaces but also public belief that small changes, with limited associated drains on public funding, could make a real difference on this important issue for Britons.

# Role of local government is getting behind communities, not stepping aside or stepping in for them

*What I think is right is that they should talk to the people as well. The community. They should talk to the community - what do you want? How do you want this money spent and this is what we've got so what do you want?*

**Bebe, An interpreter living in Birmingham**

*The Government funds projects and the community does the work. So if you can set out live projects for us or if you could put stuff in place that the communities can guide and they can pay for it*

**Zane, A quantity surveyor living in Birmingham**

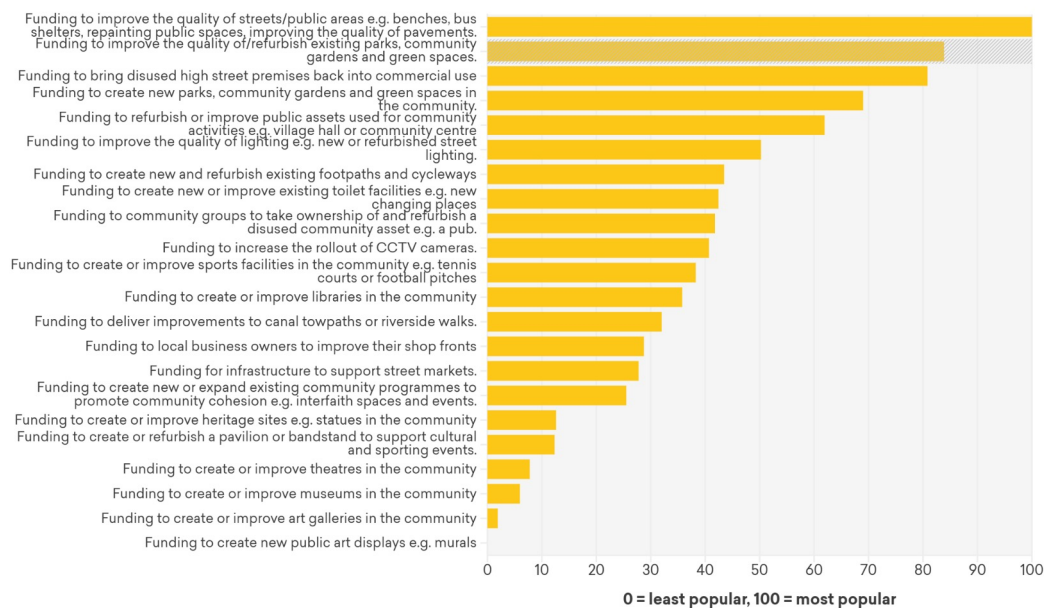
We'd have people that care about our communities doing stuff. The council don't care about our community. So the getting funding to the people that do care about our community would be great.

**Stacey, Homemaker, Grimsby**

# Britons would be extremely receptive to Pride in Place funding going to increasing the quality of local green spaces

## Funding improvements to the quality of green spaces is the second most popular possible use of Pride in Place Programme Funding

Below is a list of potential things that could be done to try to make your local town or area a better place to live. Please indicate which of them you think would make the most positive and least positive impact on how nice a place your local area is to live.



The government's new Pride in Place programme and the funding contained within it provides an opportunity to deliver these improvements to local green spaces.

A Maxdiff experiment was run to test which of the potential uses of Pride in Place funding by local councils (as outlined in the 'Exemplar Activities' document) Britons see as having the greatest potential to make their local community a nicer place to live.

This found that Britons see funding the maintenance and improvement of existing green spaces as the second most effective use of Pride in Place money - behind only public realm improvements.

This was true for Britons of all political backgrounds including Rooted Patriots demonstrating that using the scheme to improve Britons' access to green spaces and the quality of local green spaces could play an important role in rebuilding public confidence in the government's ability to improve Britons' lives and local communities.

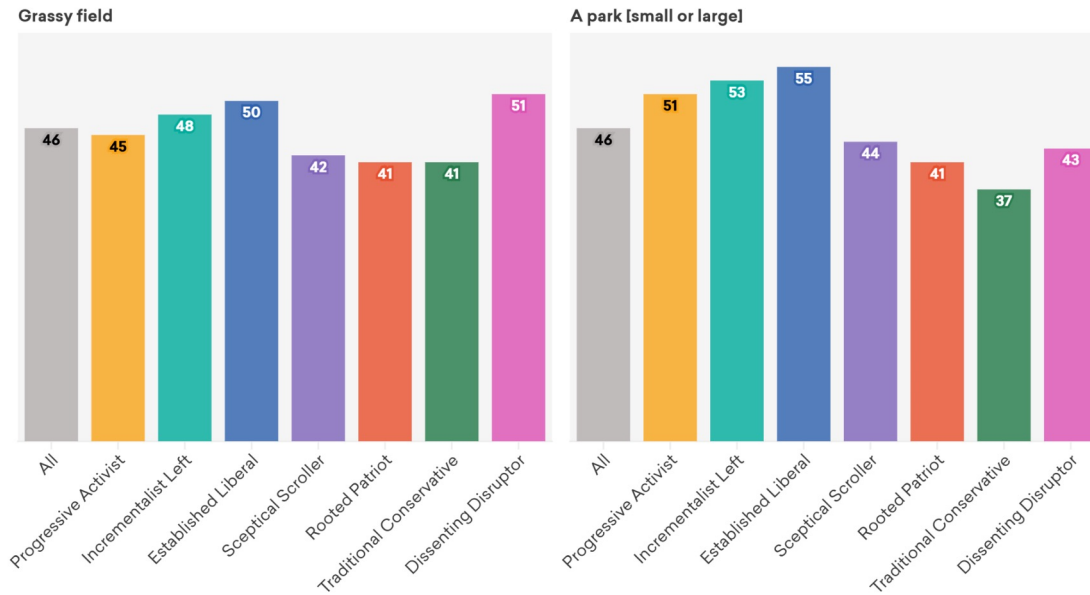


**How can support and action  
to improve green spaces be  
maximised?**

# Left-leaning segments are the biggest users of green spaces

## Left-leaning segments are most likely to use green spaces

How frequently, if at all, do you visit/go to each of the following?  
[% going on at least a weekly basis]



Established Liberals are the segment most likely to access green spaces.

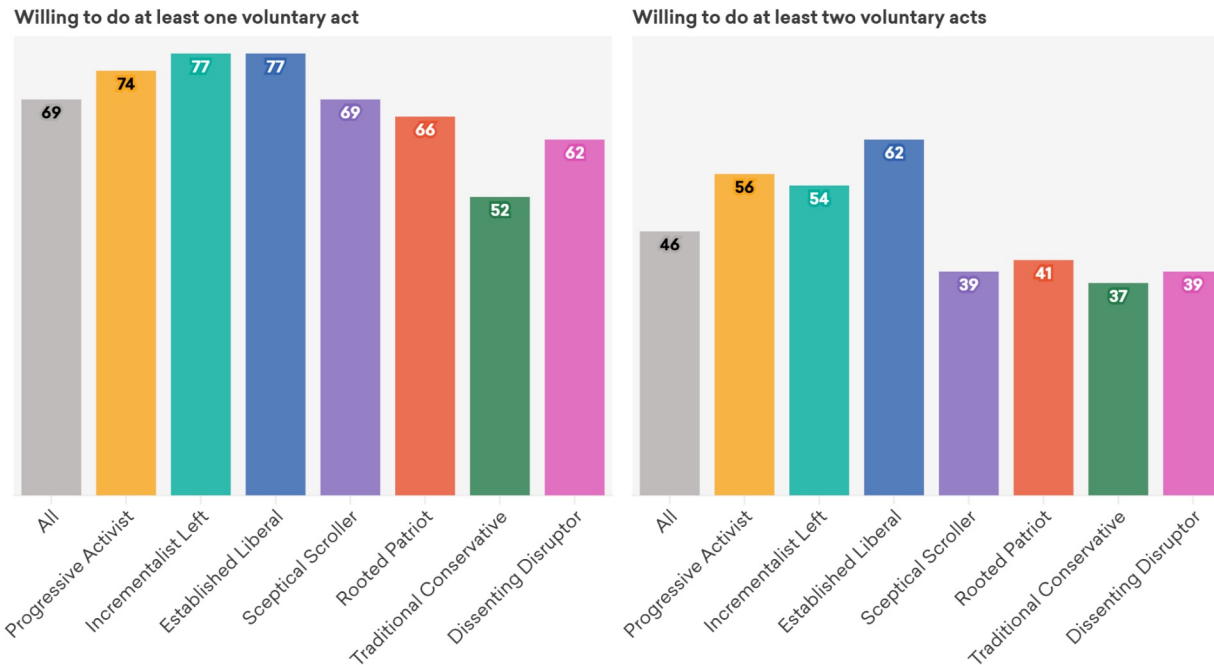
More broadly, our Right-leaning segments are less likely to access green spaces than our Left-leaning segments.

If the use and support for green spaces is to be grown - it may require messaging and campaigns with a particular focus on these types of people.

# Left-leaning segments are the most willing to volunteer to take action to improve green spaces

## Left-leaning segments are most willing to take action to protect the quality of green spaces

Which, if any, of the following actions would you be willing to take to get involved with supporting the creation of new high quality green spaces or the improvement of existing green spaces in your local area?



Established Liberals are the segment most likely to say they would be willing to volunteer to take action to create new green spaces or improve the quality of existing green spaces in their local area.

More broadly our Left-leaning segments are significantly more likely to be willing to volunteer than our Right-leaning segments.

This creates a strategic choice for the sector - on the one hand, there is value in doubling down on messages that perform best with our Left-leaning segments as they are likely to be the biggest source of volunteer recruits. However, doing so may restrict the sector's ability to have a volunteer base that is truly reflective of the people and attitudes of their local communities.

# Randomised control Trial: Testing the most effective messages

To examine the most effective messages for galvanising support for green spaces and voluntary action to protect them - we ran a randomised control trial with survey participants randomly split into five groups and either shown a specific frame or no frame (control). Observing how these groups respond to subsequent question allows us to identify the effectiveness of the messages

## Control

*No message shown*

## Environmental benefits

*Green spaces and environments reduce flooding risks by catching rainwater, clean air by stopping particulates floating in the air, and cool areas by providing more shade. They also provide a place for wildlife and biodiversity to live and thrive which is important in itself.*

## Public health

*Green spaces make Britain a healthier place. Giving people the space to go outside and exercise, be that dog walking, running or playing sports, they get people more active, improving their health and saving money for the NHS in the long run.*

## Mental health

*Green spaces support the mental health of people who live nearby or visit them. Research has shown that access to green space can decrease rates of depression, anxiety, and overall reduces levels of stress. Many health practitioners are even starting to prescribe time in nature as a means to improve mental health.*

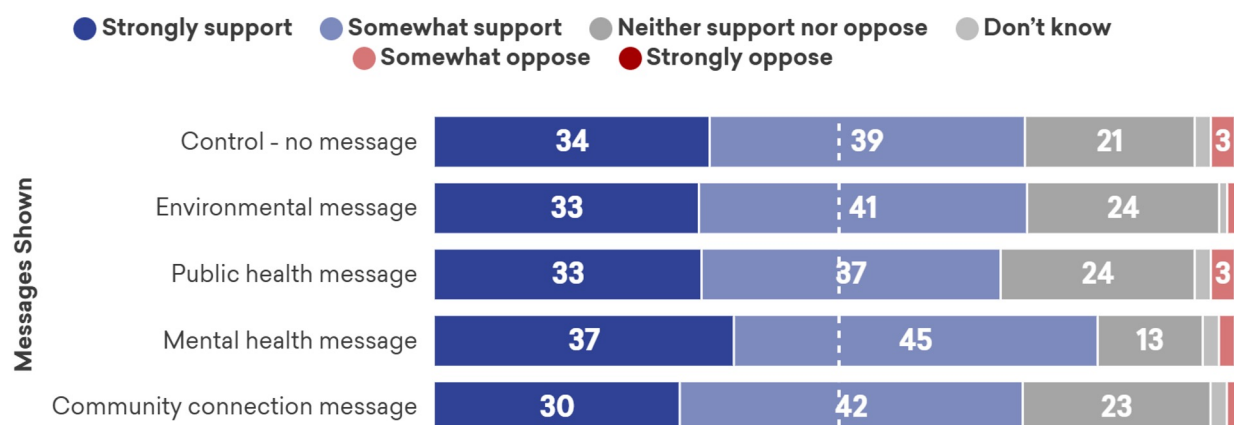
## Community connectedness

*Green spaces are the glue which hold our communities together. They facilitate chance meetings, small chats and smiles with neighbours and friends. Community parks and gardens host thousands of volunteers, children's birthday parties, picnics, sports teams and much more every week. Green spaces play a vital role in connecting people up and down the country.*

# Emphasising the mental health benefits of green spaces grows their support the most

## Emphasising the mental health benefits builds the strongest support for green spaces

To what extent would you support or oppose the government funding the creation of new high quality green spaces or the improvement of existing green spaces in your local area?



Though the effects of showing any of the messages are not extreme compared to the control, suggesting support for green spaces is firm and strong, emphasising the mental health benefits they bring is the most effective way of maximising support for local green spaces.

If the sector wants to maximise support for its aims, then leaning into this would be an effective strategy.

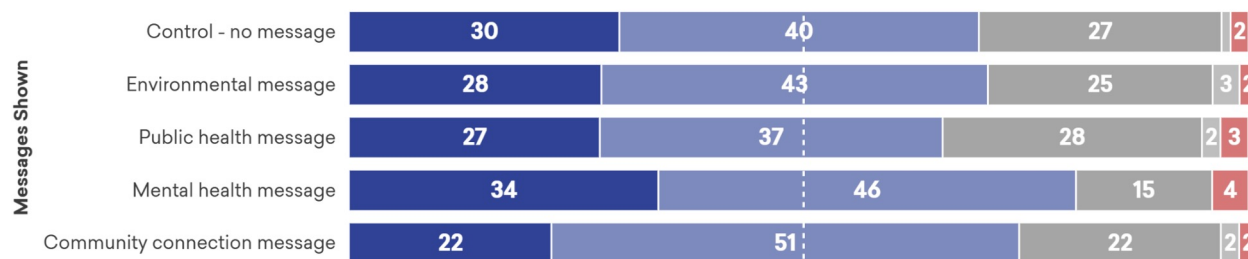
# Mental health messaging is particularly effective at growing support for green spaces among our Right-leaning segments

## Emphasising the mental health benefits is particularly helpful for growing support among more Right-leaning segments

To what extent would you support or oppose the government funding the creation of new high quality green spaces or the improvement of existing green spaces in your local area?

[Response of Rooted Patriot, Traditional Conservative and Dissenting Disruptor segments only]

● Strongly support ● Somewhat support ● Neither support nor oppose ● Don't know ● Somewhat oppose ● Strongly oppose



Support for the funding of the creation and protection of green spaces is notably lower among our socially conservative, Right-leaning segments than our Left-leaning segments.

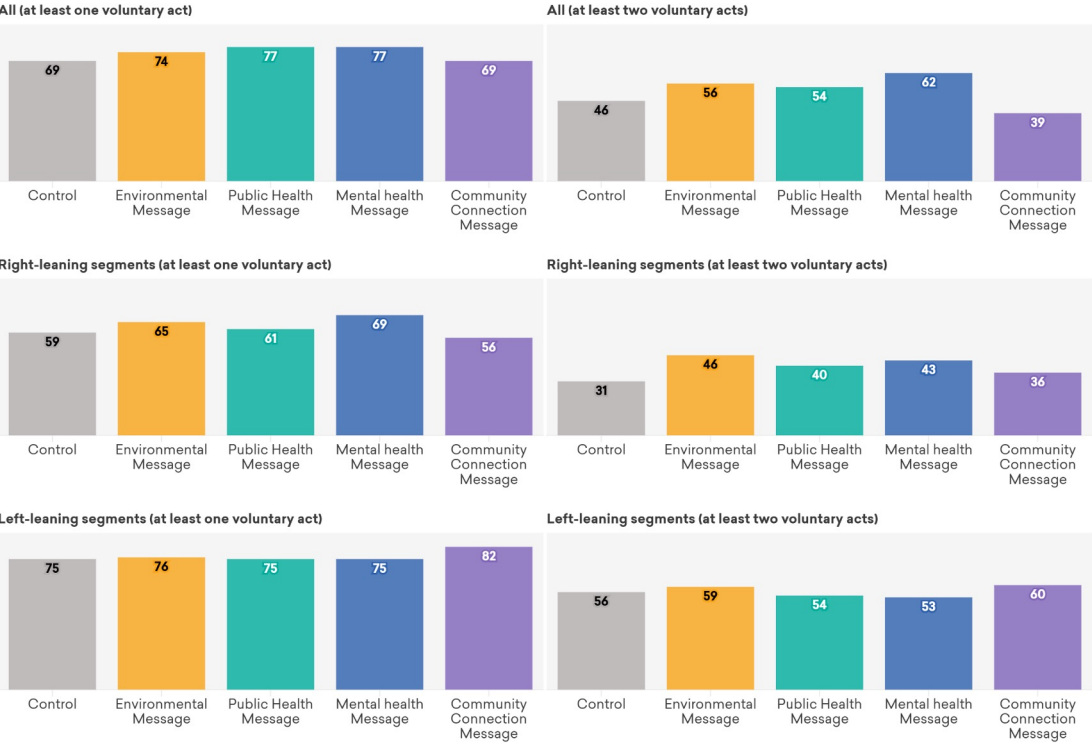
The mental health message performed particularly well among our Right-leaning segments - particularly boosting support compared to the other messages and control.

If the sector is to grow its support among new right-leaning audiences, then emphasising mental health benefits would be a good idea.

# Emphasising the mental health benefits of green spaces is the most effective way of growing willingness to volunteer

## Mental health frames are an effective way of mobilising Right-leaning segments to take action to protect green spaces

Which, if any, of the following actions would you be willing to take to get involved with supporting the creation of new high quality green spaces or the improvement of existing green spaces in your local area?  
 [Broken down by RCT message shown]



Across the public overall, emphasising the mental health benefits of green spaces is the most effective way of growing willingness to volunteer - 62 per cent of respondents shown the mental health message say they are willing to do at least two of the voluntary actions shown compared to just 46 per cent of those shown no message.

There are some differences between the most effective frames for our different segments however.

For our Left-leaning segments, the message of community connection is the most effective frame for galvanising volunteering whereas for our Right-leaning segments, emphasising the environmental and mental health benefits are the most effective messages to deploy.

# The key takeaways

## Centre people not plants

One thing the sector can be guilty of is focusing on the importance of the green spaces for the environment, not for people themselves.

Britons love green spaces, primarily, because of the benefits they bring to themselves as individuals.

A mission to improve the quality of green spaces could play a real role in addressing the perception of a 'Broken Britain' that dominates the national mood.

To unlock support for this the sector must focus on making the case for what green spaces do for people, not plants and biodiversity.

## Tackle concerns around safety

While Britons love their green spaces, there are clear safety barriers stopping them from enjoying them - particularly around anti-social behaviour.

When talking about improving green spaces, emphasise the need to make them safer and tackle the anti-social behaviour which harms the experiences of other users of green spaces.

## Mental health offers an opportunity to broaden the coalition

While the environmental benefits of green spaces are acknowledged, it is the mental health and wellbeing benefits that green spaces offer which are seen as most important for the public.

This is particularly the case for Right-leaning segments who aren't the stereotypical champions of green spaces.

Emphasising the mental health benefits of green spaces is the best way of growing and diversifying support for them.

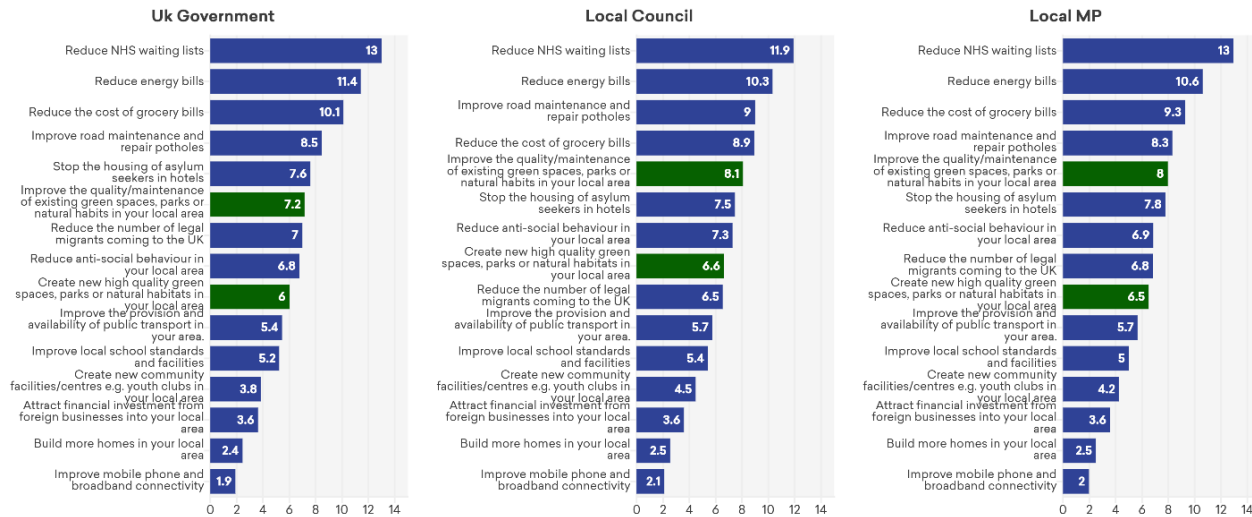


**The magnitude of political  
opportunity**

# Improving the quality of green spaces would provide a similar boost to Britons' confidence in government to improve their lives as cutting legal migration numbers

## Improving the quality of green spaces would give Britons more confidence in the ability of those in power to improve their lives than cutting legal migration

If the UK government [your local council/ local MP was to achieve [campaign to achieve] the following things, then which would grow your confidence that they are capable of improving the lives of people like you the most and least?



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0 = Least, 14 = Most. [Units are utility scores in maxdiff experiment]

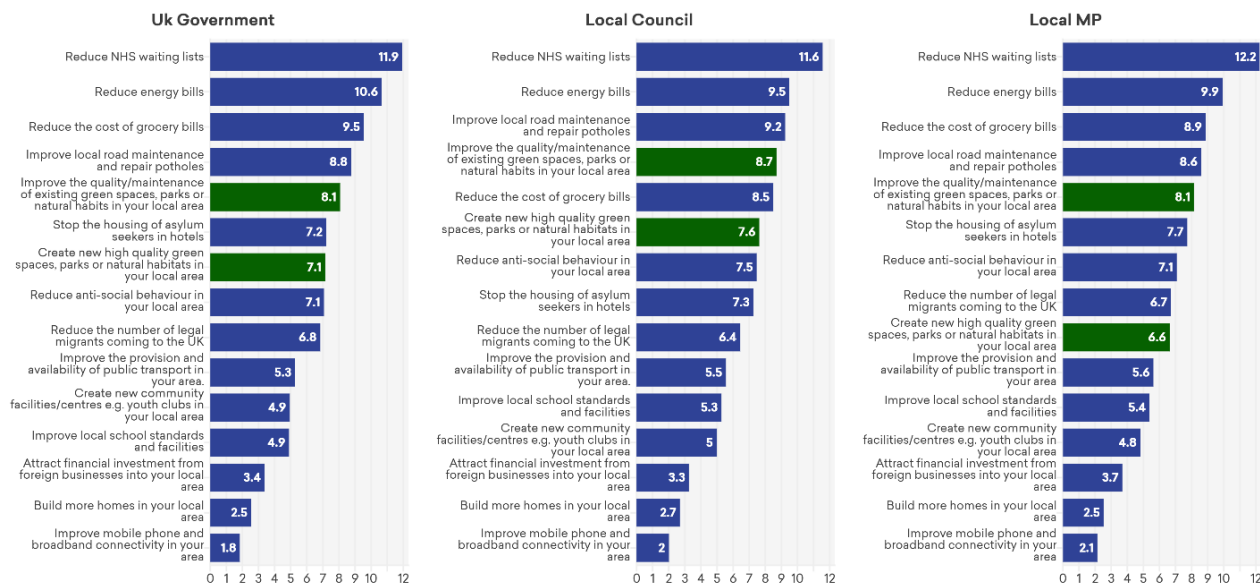
Of the things the UK government could do to improve confidence in their ability to make Britons' lives personally better it ranks sixth below repairing potholes and stopping the housing of asylum seekers in hotels but above cutting the number of legal migrants coming to the UK.

Reflecting the fact that Britons see local government and politicians as most responsible for it, improving green spaces performs even better among the things local MPs and councils can do to improve Britons' lives coming in ahead of stopping the housing of asylum seekers in hotels in fifth place.

# The boost to confidence in the government's ability to improve Britons' communities is even stronger

## Improving the quality of green spaces would give Britons more confidence in the ability of those in power to improve their local communities than cutting legal migration

If the UK government [your local council/ your local MP] was to achieve [or strongly campaign for] the following things, then which would grow your confidence that they are capable of making your local area a better place to live the most and least?



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0 = Least, 12 = Most. [Units are utility scores in maxdiff experiment]

The potential boost to Britons' confidence in politicians from improving green spaces is even greater at the place-based level, reflective of green spaces' role as a shared, community asset. In the ranking of things the UK government could do to improve confidence in their ability to make Britons' local areas nicer places to live, improving green spaces comes fifth, outperforming the ending of the housing of asylum seekers in hotels. It ranks in fifth on this metric for local MPs as well and reflective of their reduced ability to influence this, the improvement of green spaces outperforms reducing the cost of grocery bills for local councils, leaving it as the fourth best thing local councils could achieve or campaign for to grow public confidence in their ability to make their local areas better places to live.

**Questions?**

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