



How can civil society help unite and empower communities?



Sunday 27 September



14:45 to 15:45



Derwent Arena Room,
Secure Zone, ACC



**Anoosh
Chakelian**

New Statesman
(Chair)



**Luke
Tryl**

More in
Common



**Leigh
Brimicombe**

NCVO



**Mayor Bev
Craig**

Mayor of Greater
Manchester



**Jess
Phillips MP**

MP for
Birmingham Yardley



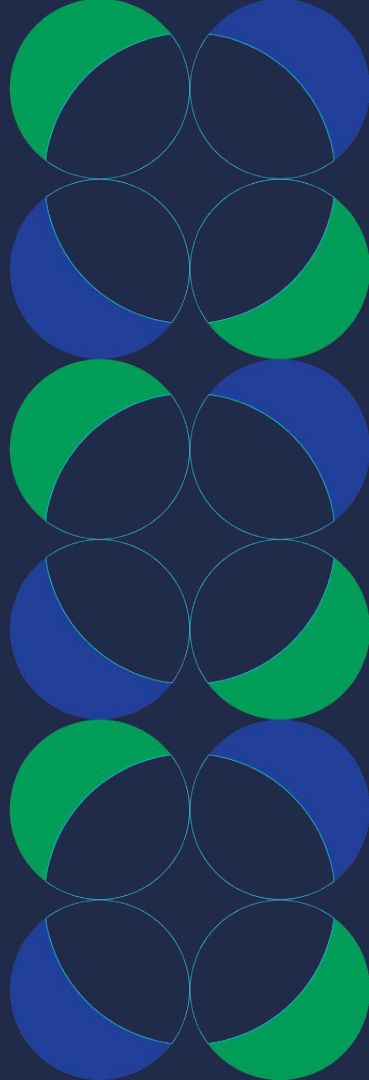
**Melanie
Ward MP**

Parliamentary
Under-Secretary of
State for Scotland



More in
Common

How can civil society help unite and empower communities?



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



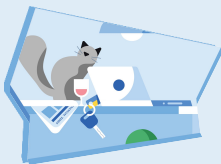
...an outspoken group that is politically engaged and globally minded, championing social justice but feeling alienated from mainstream politics

Incrementalist Left



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

Established Liberals



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

Sceptical Scrollers



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

Rooted Patriots



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

Traditional Conservatives



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

Dissenting Disruptors



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

Three “big” segments

**Incrementalist
Left**
(21% of the
population)

**Rooted
Patriots**
(20% of the
population)

**Dissenting
Disruptors**
(20% of the
population)

Four “small” segments

**Progressive
Activists**
(12% of the
population)

**Established
Liberals**
(9% of the
population)

**Sceptical
Scrollers**
(10% of the
population)

**Traditional
Conservatives**
(8% of the
population)



**What are the underlying
drivers of British public
opinion today?**

Across every segment, trust in Government is low

Lack of trust in big national institutions is a defining characteristic of public opinion in Britain today, informing people's wider attitudes to civil society and communities.

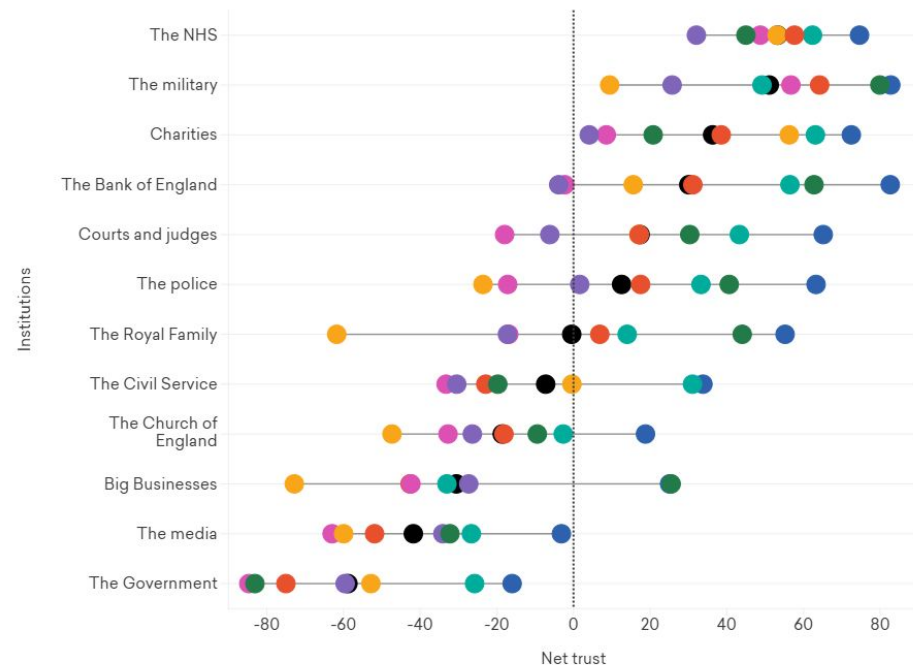
21 per cent of Britons say that they cannot trust the Government, while 79 per cent felt they could not. In every segment, more people felt they could not trust the Government than felt they could, and the same is true for trust in the media.

This loss of trust in the the government is driven by different things for different segments. For the Traditional Conservatives, for example, the loss of trust is often a product of perceived mismanagement of the economy. Meanwhile, the Incrementalist Left and Progressive Activists tend to think that Government hasn't done enough to tackle the cost of living, and Rooted Patriots feel their towns and industries are being left behind by Westminster.

Britons' trust in Government and the media is low

Thinking about the following institutions in Britain today, which of the following best describes your view?

● All ● Progressive Activists ● Incrementalist Left ● Established Liberals ● Sceptical Scrollers
● Rooted Patriots ● Traditional Conservatives ● Dissenting Disruptors



One in three Britons feel they no longer have agency over their lives

One in three Britons believe that people's outcomes in life are determined largely by forces outside of their control, although the majority still feel largely responsible for their own outcomes in life.

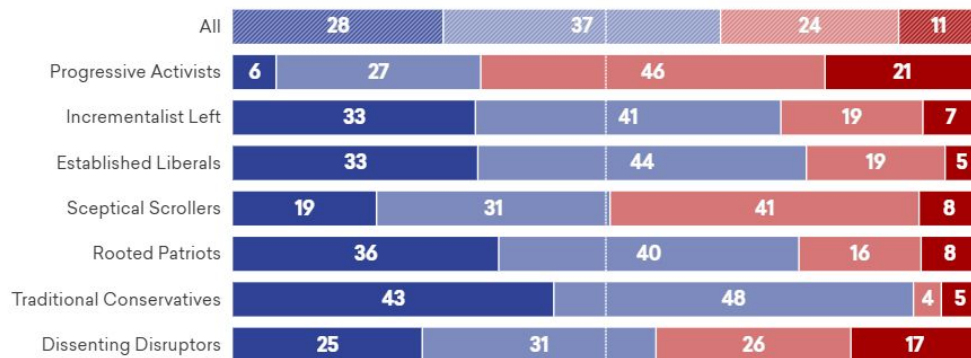
Prosperous segments, such as Traditional Conservatives and Established Liberals believe they have made the correct life choices and are now enjoying the benefits, feeling comfortable and in control.

Disillusioned Progressive Activists on the other hand feel that their lives are no longer in their control. This is often driven by a sense that big businesses and those in power are abusing their influence and intentionally fostering unjust power structures.

Most Britons feel that people are largely responsible for their own outcomes in life, but not Progressive Activists

Which of the following statements best applies to you?

- 1 - People are largely responsible for their own outcomes in life ● 2 ● 3
● 4 - People's outcomes in life are determined largely by forces outside of their control



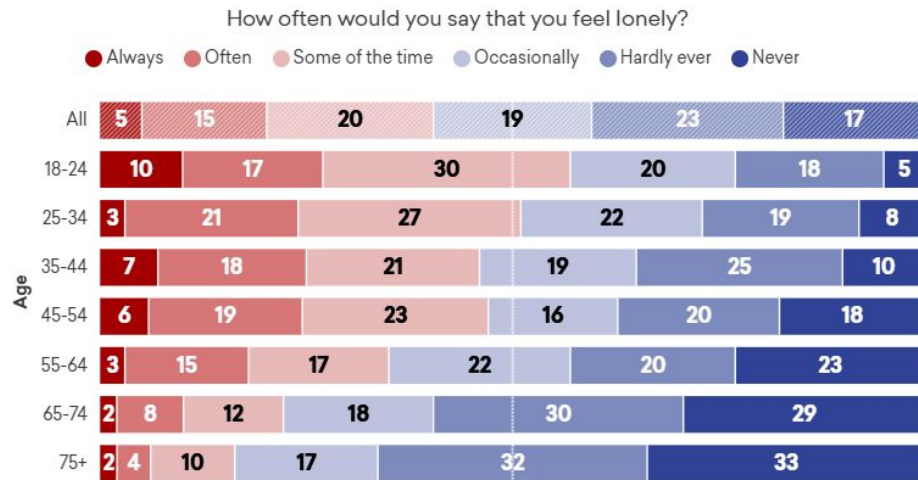
There is also a pervasive loneliness in Britain, especially among younger generations

Two in five Britons say they feel lonely at least “some of the time”, while 5 per cent say they “always” feel lonely.

Among 18 to 24 year olds, these figures rise significantly – to 57 per cent and 10 per cent respectively – with the youngest adults the most likely group to report loneliness. By contrast, 16 per cent of the over 75s feel lonely at least “some of the time”, and only 2 per cent “always” feel lonely.

While the national narrative about loneliness among older generations is – no doubt – an important and driving issue, there is a parallel crisis of loneliness among younger generations.

27 per cent of young adults feel lonely 'always' or 'often', compared to 6 per cent of over 75s





**How do Britons feel
about their local area
and the role of the third
sector?**

Britons feel more positive about their local area than the country as a whole

On a national scale Britons feel pessimistic. However, at a local level, when asked about the area immediately surrounding where they live, people are often more optimistic:

In one or two words, how would you describe the UK?



In one or two words, how would you describe the area that you live in?



The public are split on whether they feel connected to their local area, but nearly half say they do

Whether driven by pessimism about the national picture, or optimism about the local, **more are turning towards their local community for support and connection.**

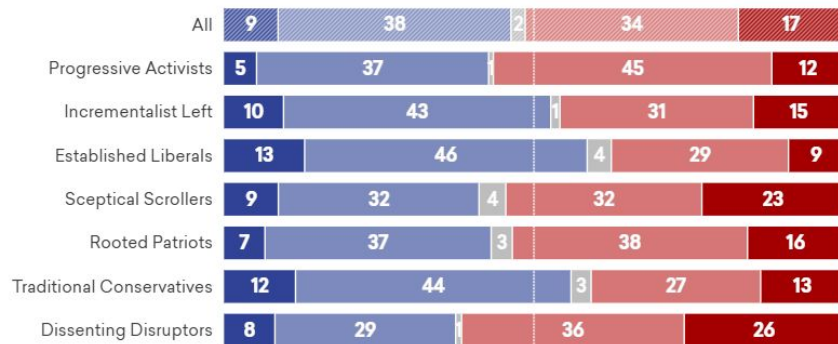
Nearly half (47 per cent) already feel connected to their local community and 33 per cent want to feel more connected to their community (on top of the already 55 per cent who feel happy with their current levels of community connection).

Sceptical Scrollers, Progressive Activists and Dissenting Disruptors are the groups least likely to currently feel connected to their local community, and the most likely to want to feel more connected. These disillusioned groups are united by a sense of a broken social contract and craving radical change.

47 per cent of Britons feel connected to their local community

How connected do you feel to people in your local community/where you live?

● Very connected ● Quite connected ● Don't know ● Not very connected ● Not at all connected



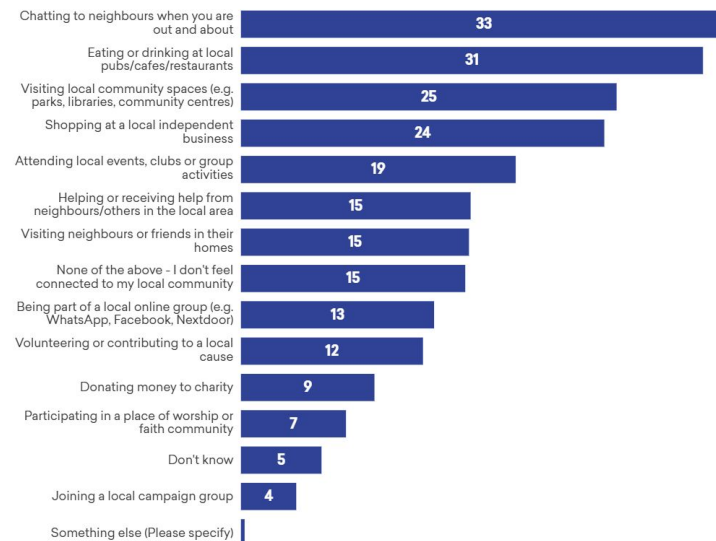
In person, informal moments with neighbours are what make most Britons feel connected to their community

The most popular forms of community connection are simple: **chatting to neighbours** (33 per cent), eating at **local restaurants** (31 per cent) or **visiting local community spaces** (25 per cent). Just 13 per cent say online communities, such as WhatsApp or Facebook groups, make them feel connected locally.

Only 12 per cent say volunteering makes them feel connected. The cost of living crisis rumbles on, and many people are taking second jobs or extra childcare to stay afloat, so Britons feel increasingly time poor. The latest government figures show volunteering has fallen from 45 per cent of adults ten years ago to 28 per cent last year, weakening one of the ways communities connect.

Chatting to neighbours and eating and drinking at local businesses makes Britons feel connected to their local community

Which of the following, if any, make you feel most connected to your local community? Please select up to three.



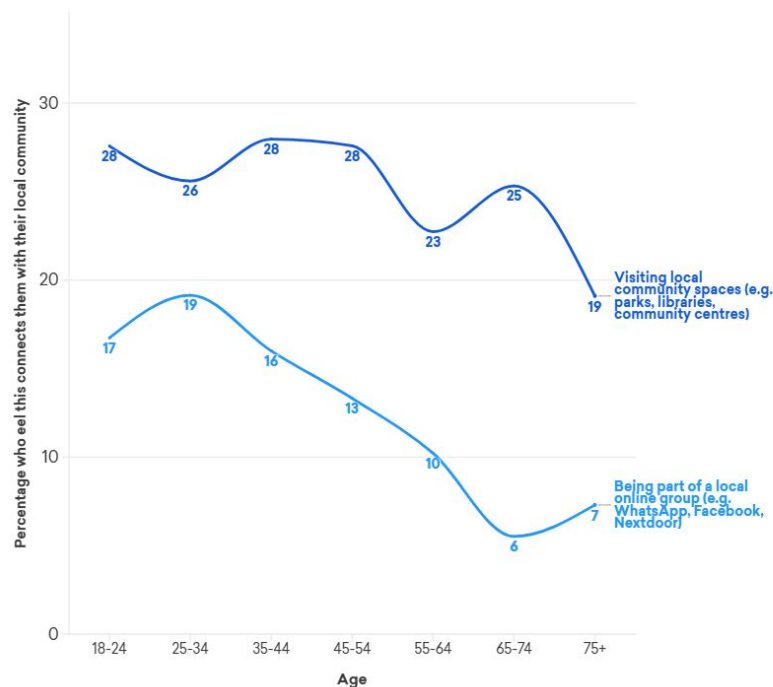
Young people feel connection through local community spaces and online

As younger people feel increasingly squeezed by the cost of living and renting, spaces they can access for free are becoming more popular. 28 per cent of 18–24s find community connection in parks, libraries and community centres, compared to 19 per cent of over 75s.

Use of online methods to connect, such as community Whatsapp or Facebook groups, are also popular with up to a fifth of those under the age of 35. Meanwhile just 7 per cent of the over 75s feel connected with their community via the internet. As more of the world around them moves online, there is a risk that older people are left behind, isolated, and don't feel as able to connect with their local community as they once did.

Younger people connect with their community in local community spaces or online, much more frequently than older people

Which of the following, if any, make you feel most connected to your local community? Please select up to three. [Answer options condensed for readability]



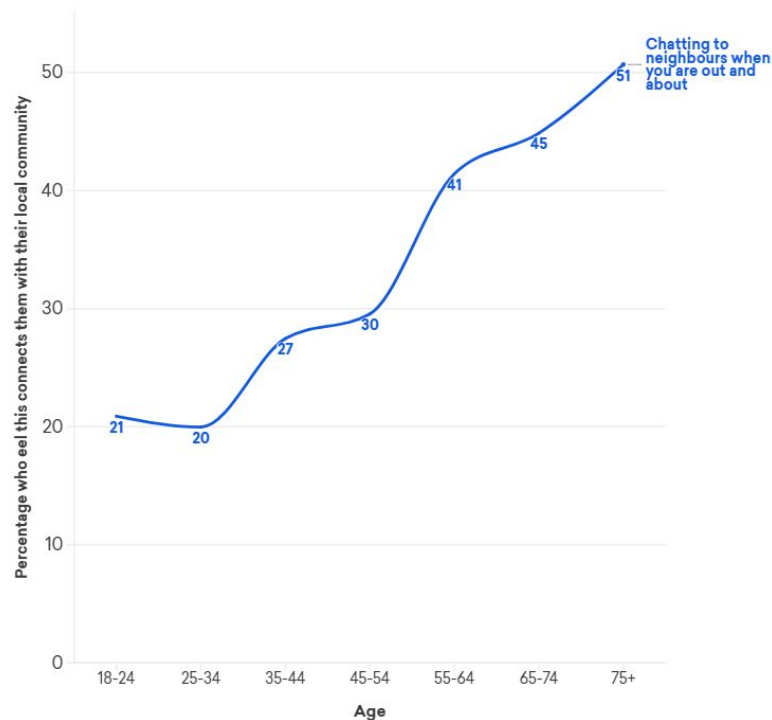
Older people find community connection in impromptu ways, bumping into their neighbours when out and about

Chatting to neighbours as a way of connecting with the local community rises dramatically with age. While only a fifth (21 per cent) of 18–24 year olds connect with their community in this way, half (51 per cent) of people over the age of 75 say they do.

It seems then that younger people are increasingly making their connection with the local online, while for older people it is face to face. This could weaken opportunities for intergenerational mixing.

Older people are much more likely to find community connection by bumping into their neighbours

Which of the following, if any, make you feel most connected to your local community? Please select up to three. [Answer options condensed for readability]



Feeling part of a community makes the practicalities of everyday life easier for people across Britain

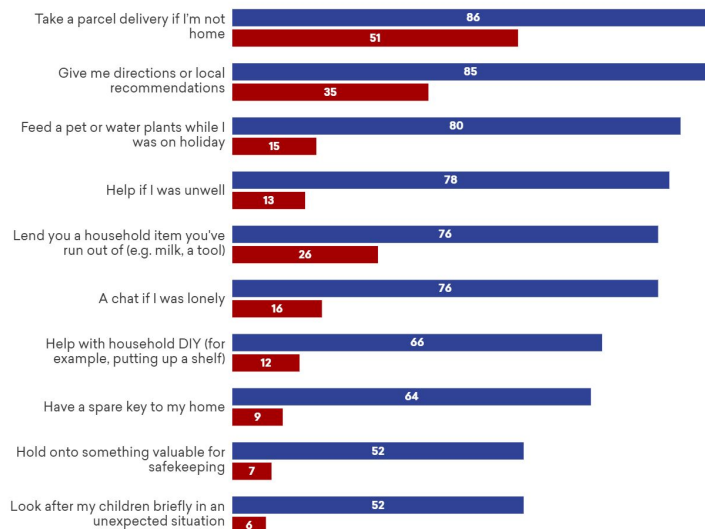
On a practical level, Britons find it helpful to be able to rely on their neighbours and community for help with everyday tasks, and so value community connection highly. Taking parcel deliveries, offering directions, looking after pets and plants while on holiday – are all community connections that make day-to-day life easier.

Those who already feel connected to their local community are much more likely to perceive these benefits, as in the case of Traditional Conservatives and Established Liberals segments. Both groups have a greater sense of agency over their own lives than other segments and are relatively comfortable and happy with the status quo. This sense of agency – of having actively chosen their lifestyle and where they live – reinforces their connection to their local community and makes them more likely to perceive the practical benefits.

Those who feel very connected to their local communities feel able to turn to their neighbours for help

Which of the following situations, if any, would you turn to your neighbour or someone in your local community to help you with?

● Those who feel very connected ● Those who feel not at all connected



The practical help communities offer each other, over time, becomes emotional support too, helping to combat loneliness

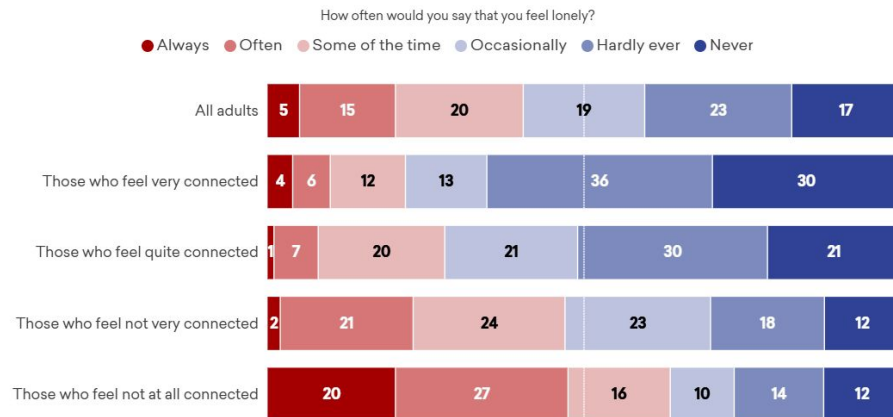
Alongside practical benefits to feeling close to one's community, there are emotional benefits too. **Those who feel connected are much less likely to regularly feel lonely.**

In focus group conversations, those who felt connected to their community spoke of shared experiences with their neighbours, as they go through the same struggles and worries together, which further **developed into shared camaraderie and looking out for one another**. Older residents in particular felt they had companions who regularly checked in on them for no other reason than they were neighbours looking out for each other.

"If I see (my neighbour's) curtains being pulled and not opened, I'll knock her door to see if she's okay. And I've got another lady next door to me. I'll knock her door whether I hear her or not. I just say to her, "Just give me a shout. Don't bother to get up!" but just to make sure that she's okay."

Bonnie, aged 64, retired, Chingford

While 10 per cent of those who feel 'very connected' to their local community regularly feel lonely, 47 per cent of the 'not at all connected' feel the same



Practical and emotional barriers are what hold Britons back from connecting with their community

One in five say they don't experience any barriers when connecting with people in their local community.

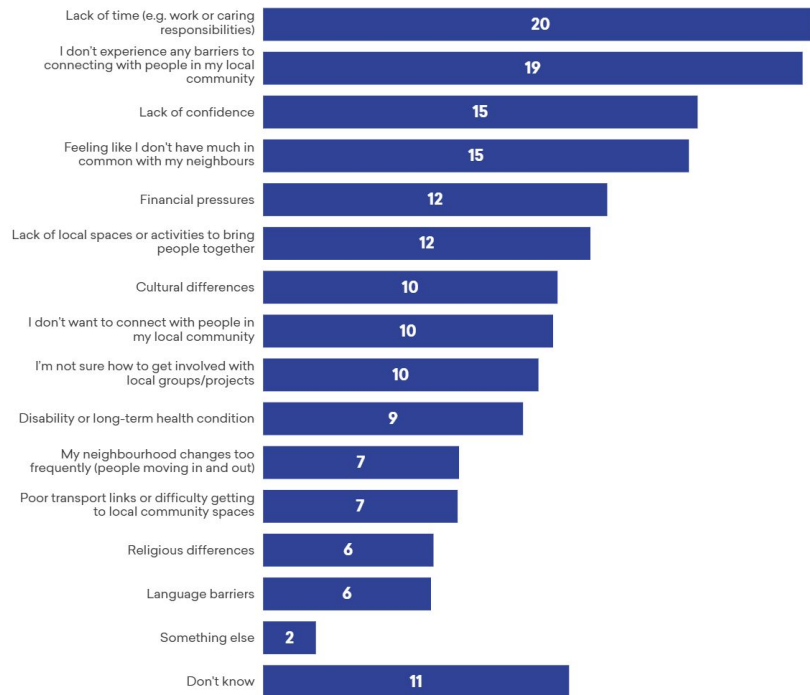
However, for those who do, most common reasons are a **lack of time** (20 per cent), a **lack of confidence** (15 per cent), and feeling like they **don't have much in common with their neighbours** (15 per cent).

Younger people in particular are the most likely to report a lack of time being a barrier to connection (33 per cent).

Cultural, religious and language barriers come much further down the list: while divides along these lines do exist in Britain, few feel they are the main reason why they are struggling to connect with their local community.

A fifth of Britons say that a lack of time prevents them from connecting with their local community

Which of the following, if any, prevent you from connecting with people in your local community as much as you would like? Please select up to three



Britons think charities have a role in facilitating community connection and reducing loneliness

Around one in three see reducing loneliness the key benefits of charities and community groups in their local area (36 per cent). This was more common among older people (49 per cent of over 75s), who perhaps have the time to engage. A similar proportion, 34 per cent, said charities and the third sector were helped **supporting those in crisis**.

While younger people also recognised these benefits, they are more likely to see charities as **contributing to their local economy by offering jobs to local people** and helping them into work (selected by 31 per cent of 18–24 year olds, compared to 12 per cent of the over 75s).

Britons think the key benefits to having charities active in their local area are reducing loneliness and supporting those in crisis

Which of the following, if any, do you think are the key benefits of charities and community groups in your local area? Please select up to three

