



Community Life Survey: 2014 – 2015 Statistical Bulletin

This release provides headline findings from the Community Life Survey, an Official Statistic. This is the data from all quarters of the 2014-15 survey combined, which covers July 2014 to April 2015.

The findings presented here are broken down into sections covering volunteering, charitable giving, wellbeing, neighbourhood and civic engagement. This release provides an overview covering key areas from the Community Life Survey, with further analysis to be released in due course.

The Community Life Survey incorporates key measures from the previous Citizenship Survey (run by the Department for Communities and Local Government), in order that trends in such measures can be tracked over time. Where applicable, time series data is included in this release and accompanying outputs.

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Introduction

The Community Life Survey is a major survey of adults in England, aiming to track the latest trends and developments across areas that are key to encouraging social action and empowering communities.

The objectives of the survey are to:

- Provide robust, nationally representative data on behaviours and attitudes within communities to inform and direct policy and action in these areas
- Provide data of value to all users, including public bodies, external stakeholders and the public, engaging with end users to refine and develop the survey as appropriate
- Underpin further research and debate on building stronger communities.

In order to achieve this, the Community Life Survey tracks measures that are key to understanding our society and local communities, including:

- Volunteering and charitable giving
- Neighbourhood (views about the local area, and Community cohesion and belonging)
- Civic engagement (community empowerment and participation, and influencing local decisions and affairs)
- Social action
- Subjective well-being.

The Community Life Survey incorporates a small number of priority measures from the Citizenship Survey in order that trends in these issues can continue to be tracked over time. For these measures the Community Life Survey findings will be comparable to the Citizenship Survey findings (which ran from 2001 to 2010-11). For other measures, comparisons are only available with 2012-13 and 2013-14.

The Community Life Survey is a household survey carried out via face-to-face interviews from July 2014 to April 2015. Further details regarding survey methodology can be found in Annex A.

The Community Life Survey forms Official Statistics, meaning that it meets the high standards of quality set out by the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Note: Throughout this bulletin, a significant difference indicates a statistically significant difference at $P < 0.05$. This means that the probability of observed changes happening by chance is low and they are likely to reflect a real change.

Headline Findings

Volunteering and charitable giving

In 2014-15, 69% of people had volunteered at least once in the last 12 months, a significant decrease compared to 2013-14 (74%). This is driven by a significant decrease in informal volunteering (59% compared to 64%). The proportion of people formally volunteering has remained similar compared to 2013-14 (42% and 41% respectively).

Levels of participation in informal (34%), formal (27%) and overall volunteering (47%) at least once a month have remained similar compared to 2013-14 and 2012-13.

In 2014-15, 8% of people participated in employer volunteering, no change from 2013-14, but a significant increase compared to 2012-13 (6%).

In 2014-15, the amount given to charity in the four weeks prior to interview (£22) was not significantly different to 2013-14 (£21), but a significant increase compared to 2005 (£19), 2007-08 (£20), 2010-11 (£20) and 2012-13 (£19) when adjusted for inflation.

Neighbourhood

Over three quarters (79%) of people chatted to their neighbours at least once a month, a significant increase compared to 2013-14 (75%).

The proportion of people who were 'very satisfied' with their local area as a place to live (43%) was unchanged from 2013-14, but significantly higher compared to all years from 2008-09 to 2012-13.

Just under a third (32%) of people had a very strong sense of belonging to their neighbourhood, significantly higher than in 2013-14 (28%), but significantly lower than in 2008-09 to 2012-13.

Civic engagement

There was a significant increase in the proportion of people taking part in civic participation at least once a month (5%) compared to 2013-14 (3%), but no significant change from 2012-13 (4%).

The proportion of people who would like to be more involved in the decisions made by their local council (43%) was not significantly different from 2013-14 (44%), but almost a quarter (23%) said that it would depend on the issue, a significant increase compared to all survey years since 2007-08.

Volunteering

Volunteering covers three measures captured within the survey:

Formal volunteering – giving unpaid help through groups, clubs or organisations

Informal volunteering – giving unpaid help as an individual to people who are not relatives

Employer supported volunteering - volunteering undertaken by employees that is enabled by employers / companies.

Formal volunteering

Formal volunteering has been fluctuating since 2001, with lows in 2009-10 and 2010-11, and highs in 2005 and 2012-13.

In 2014-15, 27% of people said they had volunteered formally at least once a month in the twelve months prior to being interviewed, no significant difference from 2013-14, and all other survey years.

42% of people said that they had volunteered formally at least once in the last year prior to being interviewed in 2014-15, no significant difference from 2013-14 and all other survey years, apart from 2010-11 and 2001, which were significantly lower (39%).

Figure 1: Whether people had participated in formal volunteering, 2001 to 2014-15

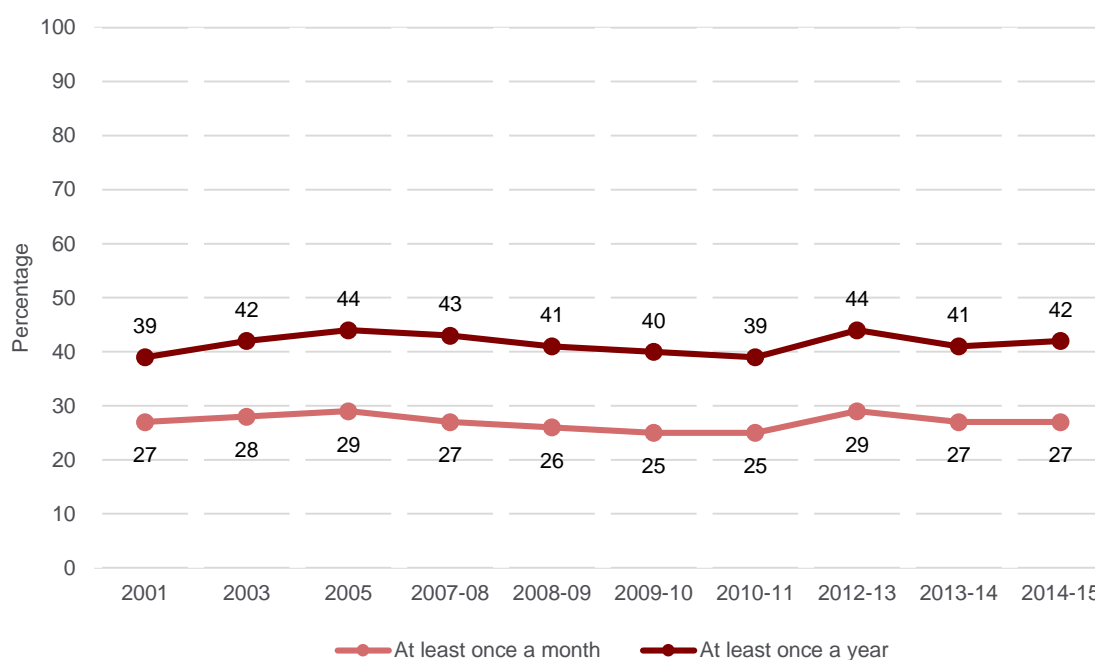


Table 1: Participation in civic engagement and voluntary activities, 2001 to 2014-15

Informal volunteering

Overall, informal volunteering has been fluctuating since 2001, with a high point in 2005. In 2014-15, informal volunteering significantly decreased compared to 2013-14 and all years prior to 2007-08, but significantly increased compared to 2009-10 and 2010-11.

Just over a third (34%) of people said they had volunteered informally at least once a month in the 12 months prior to being interviewed. This is not significantly different from 2013-14, 2012-13 and 2001 to 2008-09, but is a significant increase from 29% compared to both 2009-10 and 2010-11.

59% of people said they had volunteered informally at least once in the last year prior to being interviewed. This is significantly lower than in 2013-14 (64%), and all years prior to 2007-08, but significantly higher than in 2009-10 and 2010-11 (54% and 55% respectively).

Figure 2: Whether people had participated in informal volunteering, 2001 to 2014-15

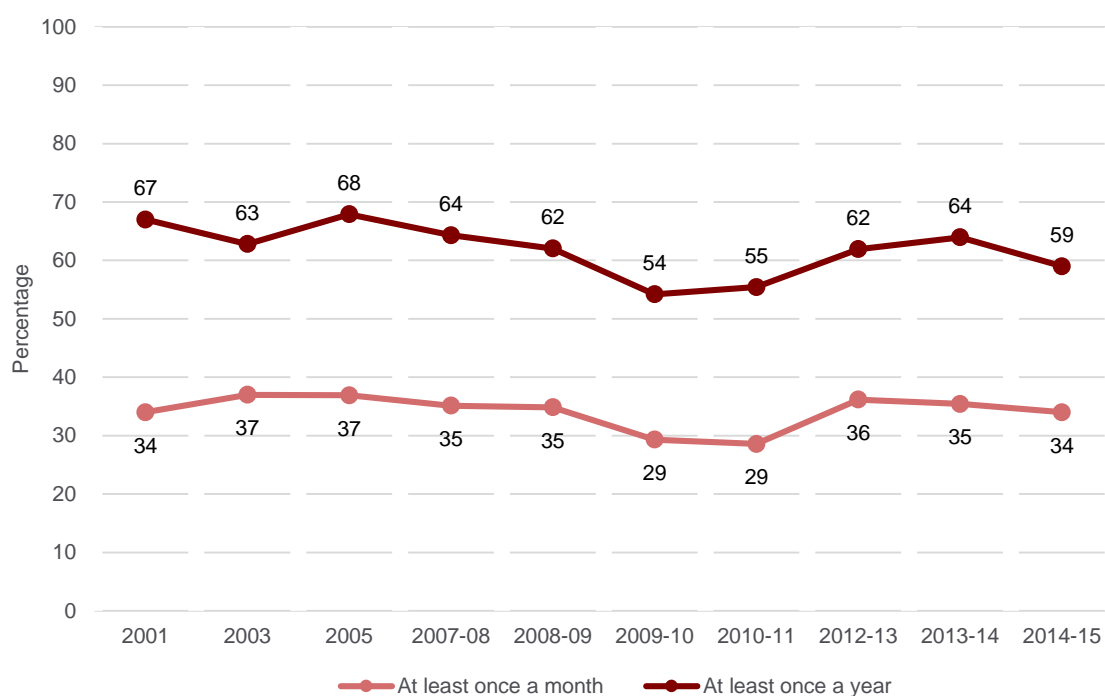


Table 1: Participation in civic engagement and voluntary activities, 2001 to 2014-15

Overall volunteering (formal and informal volunteering combined)

Overall, volunteering rates in 2014-15 significantly decreased compared to 2013-14, and all years between 2001 and 2007-08. However, they have remained similar compared to 2008-09 and 2012-13, and significantly increased compared to 2009-10 and 2010-11.

In 2014-15, just under half of people (47%) participated in formal and/or informal volunteering at least once a month in the twelve months prior to being interviewed. This is not significantly different from 2013-14 (48%) or 2012-13 (49%), but is significantly higher than levels seen in 2009-10 and 2010-11 (42% and 41% respectively).

69% of people took part in formal and/or informal volunteering at least once in the twelve months prior to being interviewed, a significant decrease compared to 2013-14 (74%), and all years prior to 2007-08, but a significant increase compared to 2009-10 and 2010-11 (66% and 65%, respectively). There was no significant change from 2012-13 (72%) and 2008-09 (71%).

Figure 3: Whether people had participated in any informal and/or formal volunteering, 2001 to 2014-15

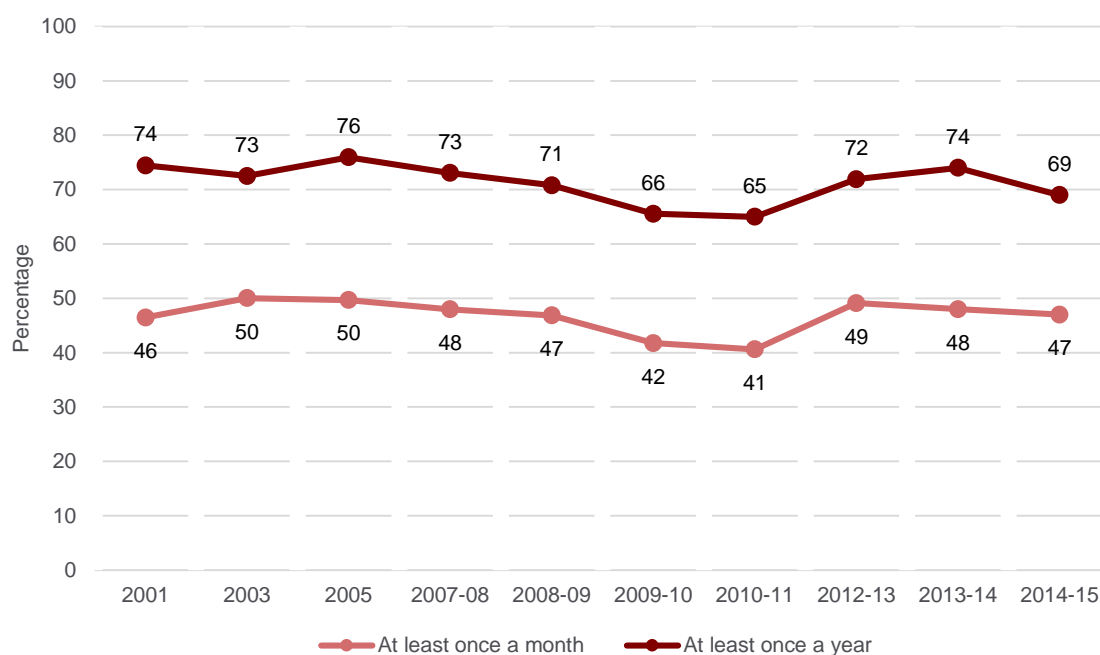


Table 1: Participation in civic engagement and voluntary activities, 2001 to 2014-15

Employer supported volunteering

Overall, employer supported volunteering has remained similar since 2012-13.

In 2014-15, 8% of people said they had been involved in employer volunteering at least once in the last year prior to interview, no change from 2013-14 but a significant increase compared to 2012-13 (6%).

In 2014-15, over 3% of people participated in employer supported volunteering at least once a month prior to interview. This is no significant change from 2013-14 (3%) and 2012-13 (2%).

Figure 4: Whether people had participated in employer supported volunteering, 2012-13 to 2014-15

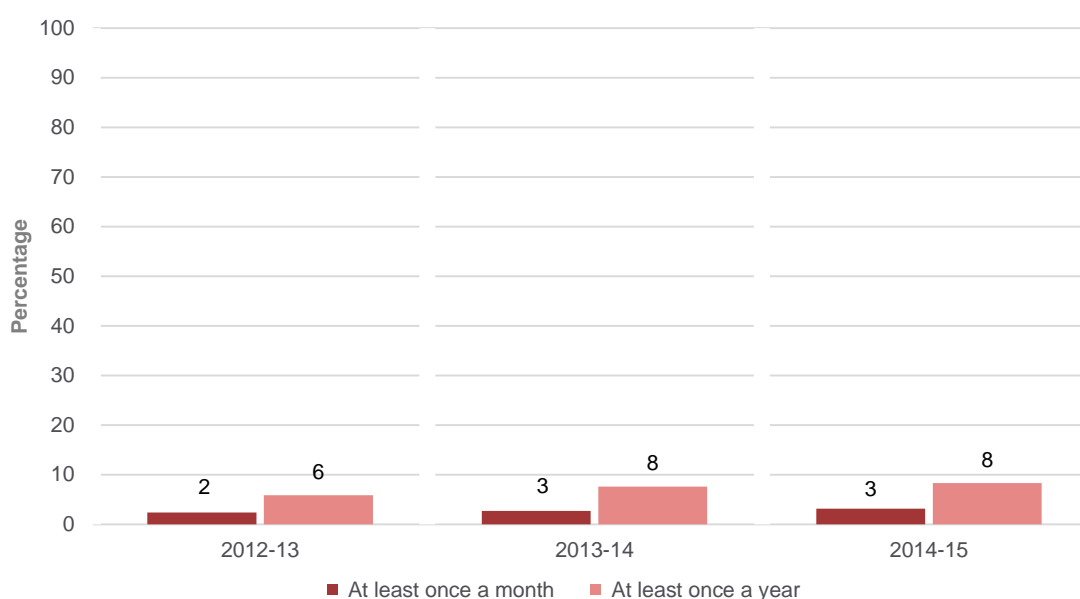


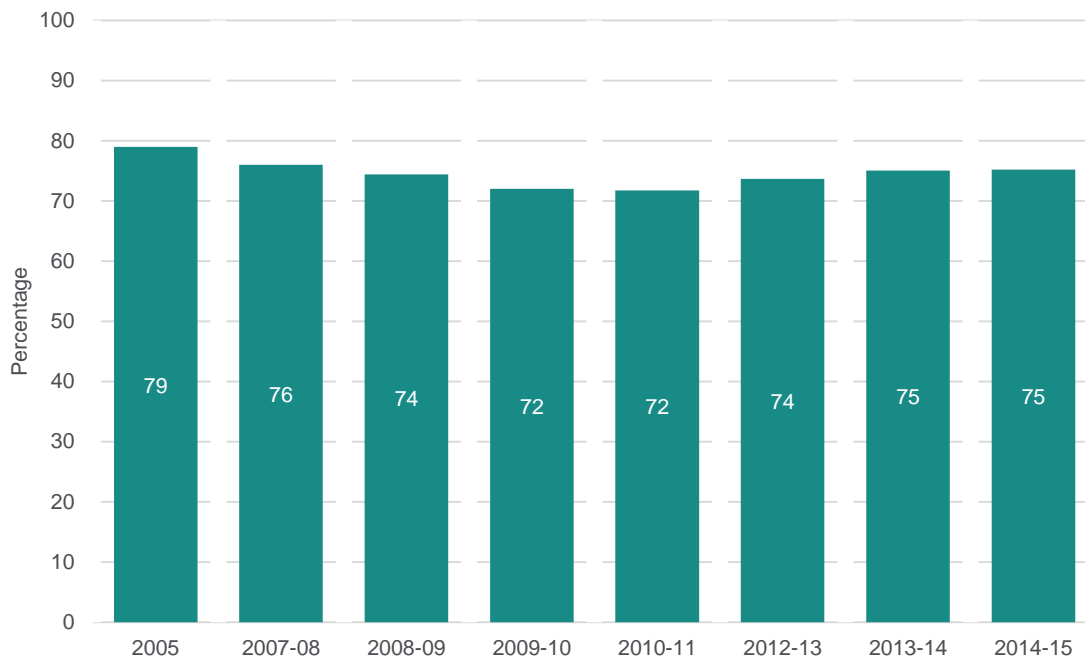
Table 1: Participation in civic engagement and voluntary activities, 2001 to 2014-15

Charitable Giving

Overall, the percentage of people who gave money to charity in the four weeks prior to being interviewed has remained similar since 2012-13, following low points in 2009-10 and 2010-11.

In 2014-15, three-quarters of people (75%) gave money to charity in the four weeks prior to being interviewed, no change from 2013-14 (75%). However, this is significantly higher than in 2009-10 and 2010-11 (both 72%), and significantly lower than in 2005 (79%).

Figure 6: Whether people had given money to charity in the four weeks prior to being interviewed, 2005 to 2014-15



- Table 5: Charitable giving by sex, age and ethnicity, 2005 to 2014-2015

In 2014-15 people gave on average² £22 to charity in the four weeks prior to being interviewed, the highest average amount given in all survey years. When adjusted for inflation³, this is not significantly different from 2013-14 (£21), but significantly more than in 2005 (£19), 2007-08 (£20), 2010-11 (£20) and 2012-13 (£19).

Figure 7: Average amount given to charity in the four weeks prior to interview, adjusted for inflation and unadjusted, 2005 to 2014-15



- Table 6: Amount given to charity in the 4 weeks prior to interview, 2005 to 2014-15

² Average (mean) excludes those who gave £300 or more and those who responded 'don't know' or for whom the figure was missing, to ensure data is comparable to the citizenship survey.

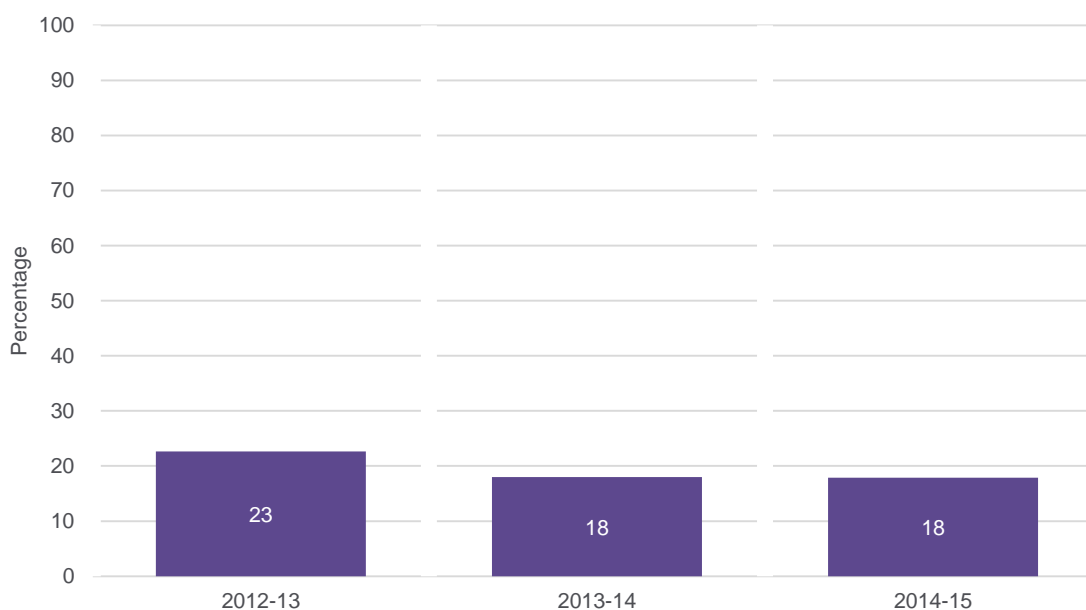
³ Inflation adjusted figures calculated using CPI measure of inflation

Social Action

In this survey, the term social action covers people getting together to support a community project in their local area, e.g. trying to set up a new service or amenity to help local residents, or organising a community event e.g. a street party.

In 2014-15, just under a fifth of people (18%) had been involved in social action at least once in the last year, no change since 2013-14 (18%) but a significant decrease compared to 2012-13 (23%). 36% of people were aware¹ of people in their area getting together to support a community project, but were not involved in it. This is not significantly different from 2013-14 (37%).

Figure 5: Whether people were involved in social action in their local area at least once in the last year, 2012-13 to 2014-15



- Table 7: Whether people are aware of or involved in social action in their local area at least once in the last year by sex and age, 2012-13 to 2014-15

¹ In 2013-14 and 2014-15, people were only asked if they were **aware** of social action projects if they were not **involved** in them, unlike in 2012-13 when everyone was asked if they were **aware**. It is therefore not possible to compare the data to 2012-13.

Well-being

People's average⁵ ratings of overall 'life satisfaction' and 'happiness yesterday'⁶ significantly increased in 2014-15 compared to 2013-14 and 2012-13. The average rating for whether people felt the things that they do in their lives are worthwhile did not significantly differ from 2013-14, but was significantly higher than in 2012-13. People's overall average rating for 'how anxious they felt yesterday' significantly decreased compared to 2013-14 and 2012-13.

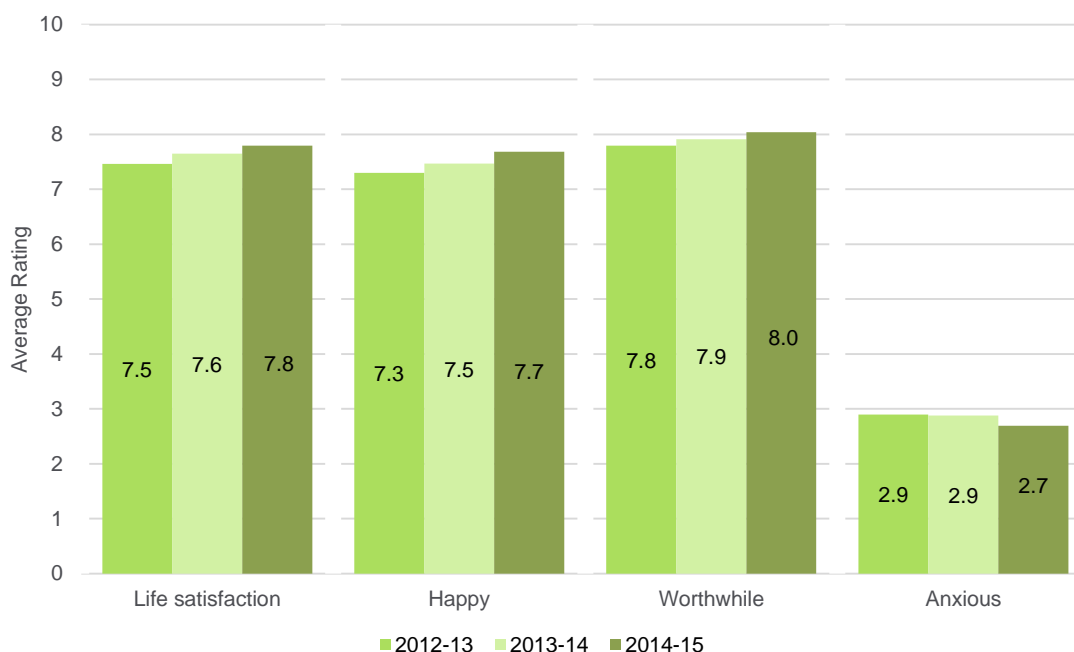
The average rating for overall life satisfaction was 7.8 in 2014-15, compared to 7.6 in 2013-14, and 7.5 in 2012-13.

The average rating for 'happiness yesterday' was 7.7 in 2014-15 compared to 7.5 in 2013-14 and 7.3 in 2012-13.

The average rating for whether people felt the things that they do in their lives are worthwhile was 8.0 in 2014-15, compared to 7.9 in 2013-14 and 7.8 in 2012-13.

The average rating for 'anxiousness yesterday' was 2.7 in 2014-15, compared to 2.9 in 2013-14 and 2.9 in 2012-13.

Figure 8: Average rating for well-being measures, 2012-13 to 2014-15



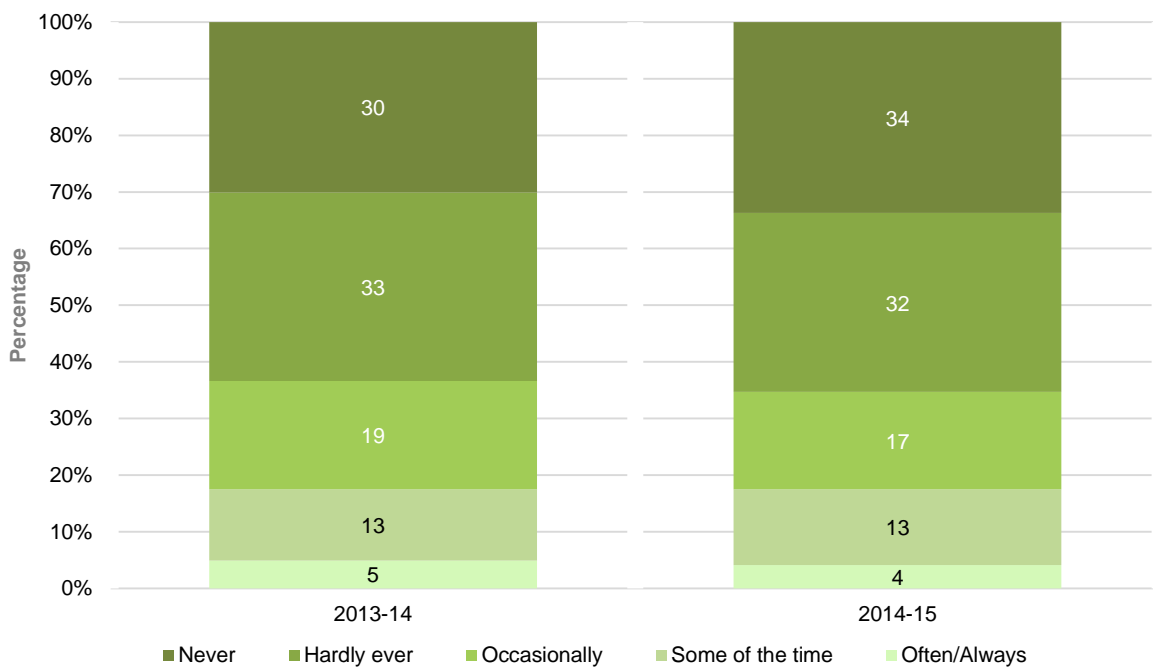
-Table 18: Average rating for Well-being measures, 2012-13 to 2014-15

⁵ Average=mean

⁶ All measures use a 0 to 10 scale where 0 is 'not at all' and 10 is 'completely'

Just over a third of people surveyed (34%) said they never felt lonely⁷, a significant increase compared to 2013-14 (30%). The proportion of people feeling lonely always/often or some of the time (18%) and the proportion of people who hardly ever or never felt lonely (65%) was not significantly different from 2013-14 (18% and 63%, respectively).

Figure 9: How often people felt lonely, 2013-14 to 2014-15



-Table 19: How often people felt lonely, 2013-14 to 2014-15

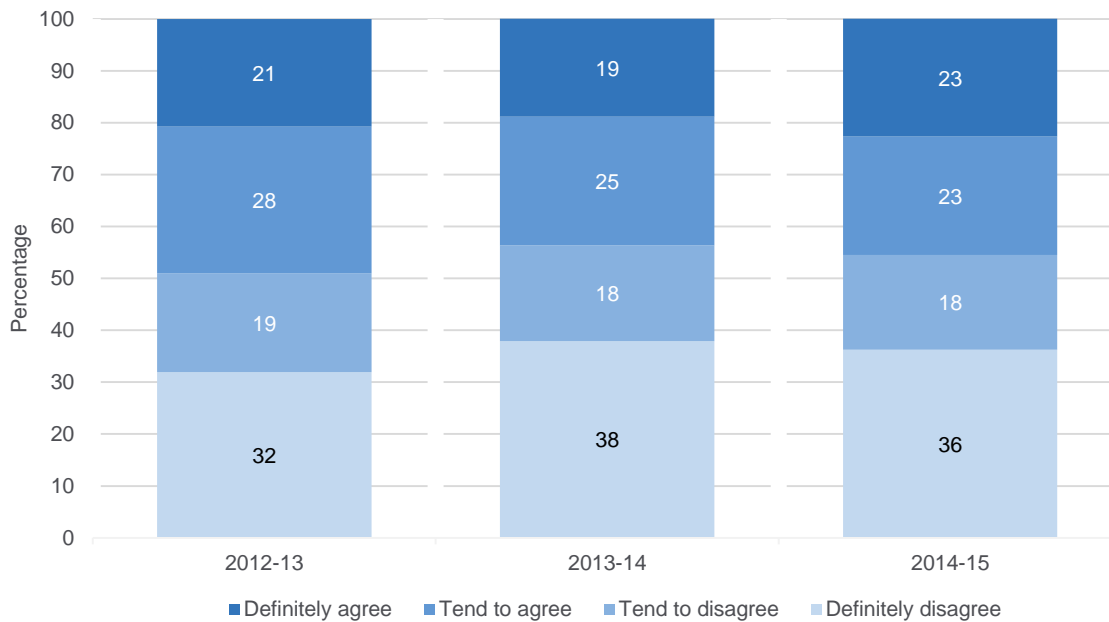
⁷ Question added in 2013-14

Neighbourhood

Borrowing

In 2014-15, 45% of people agreed that they borrow things and exchange favours with their neighbours, no significant change compared to 2013-14 (44%), but a significant decrease compared to 2012-13 when 49% of people agreed. The proportion of people who definitely agreed (23%) was significantly higher than in 2013-14 (19%).

Figure 10: Extent to which people agree that they borrow things and exchange favours with their neighbours, 2012-13 to 2014-15

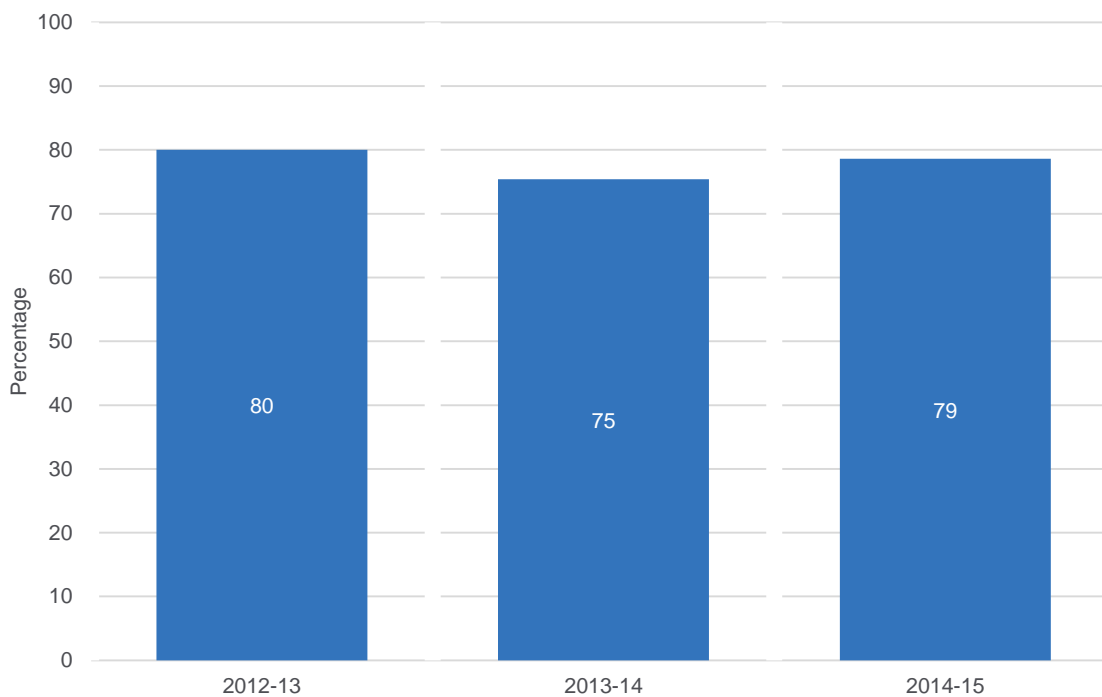


-Table 20: Whether people borrow things and exchange favours with their neighbours, 2012-13 to 2014-15

Chatting to neighbours

In 2014-15, 79% of people said that they chat to their neighbours at least once a month, more than just to say hello, a significant increase compared to 2013-14 (75%) and back at levels seen in 2012-13 (80%).

Figure 11: Proportion of people who agree they chat to their neighbours at least once a month, 2012-13 to 2014-15



- Table 9: Whether people chat to their neighbours at least once a month by sex, age and ethnicity, October 2012 to 2014-15

Pulling together

In 2014-15, 63% of people agreed that people in their neighbourhood pull together to improve their neighbourhood, a similar level seen in 2013-14 (60%) and 2012-13 (62%), and 2003 (65%), but significantly lower compared to all other survey years.

Figure 12: Proportion of people who agree that people in their neighbourhood pull together to improve the neighbourhood, 2003 to 2014-15

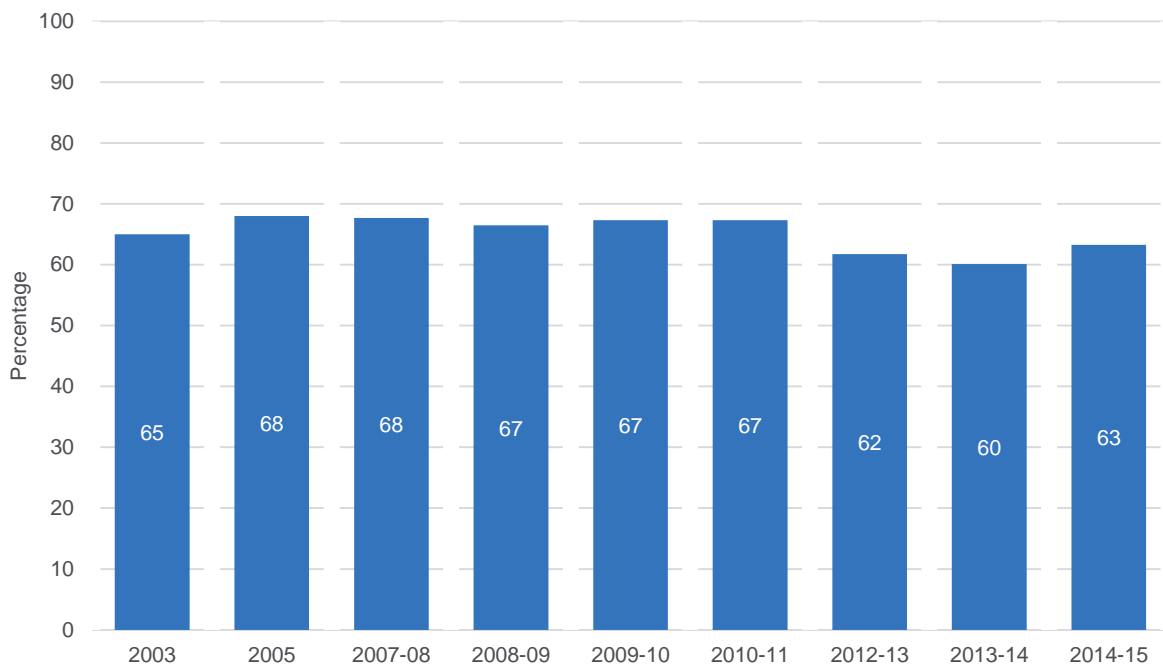


Table 8: Extent to which people agree that people in their neighbourhood pull together to improve the neighbourhood, 2003 to 2014-15

Improvement in local area

In 2014-15, 17% of people felt that their local area had got better over the past two years, a level comparable to all years apart from 2009-10, when it was significantly lower (14%). The proportion of people who felt that it had got worse (19%) remained similar across 2010-11 to 2013-14 (18%), but is significantly lower than in 2007-08 (27%) and 2008-09 (25%).

Figure 13: Proportion of people who think their local area has got better, worse or stayed the same over the last two years, 2007-08 to 2014-15

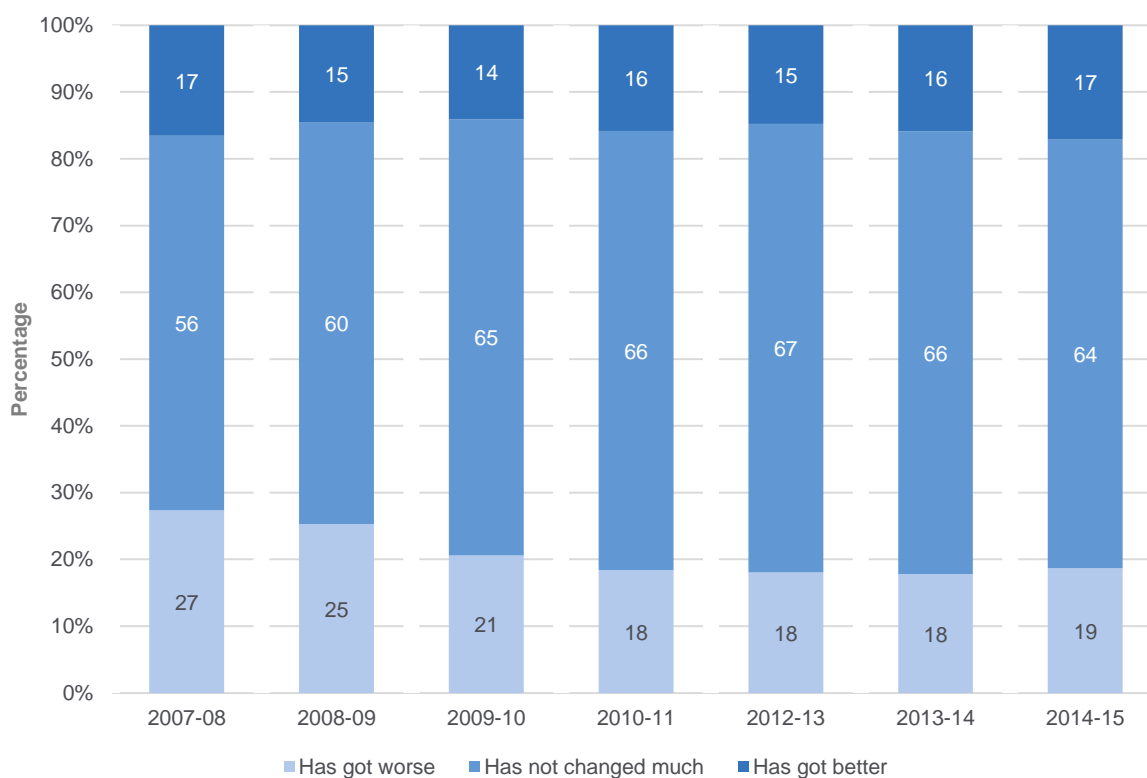


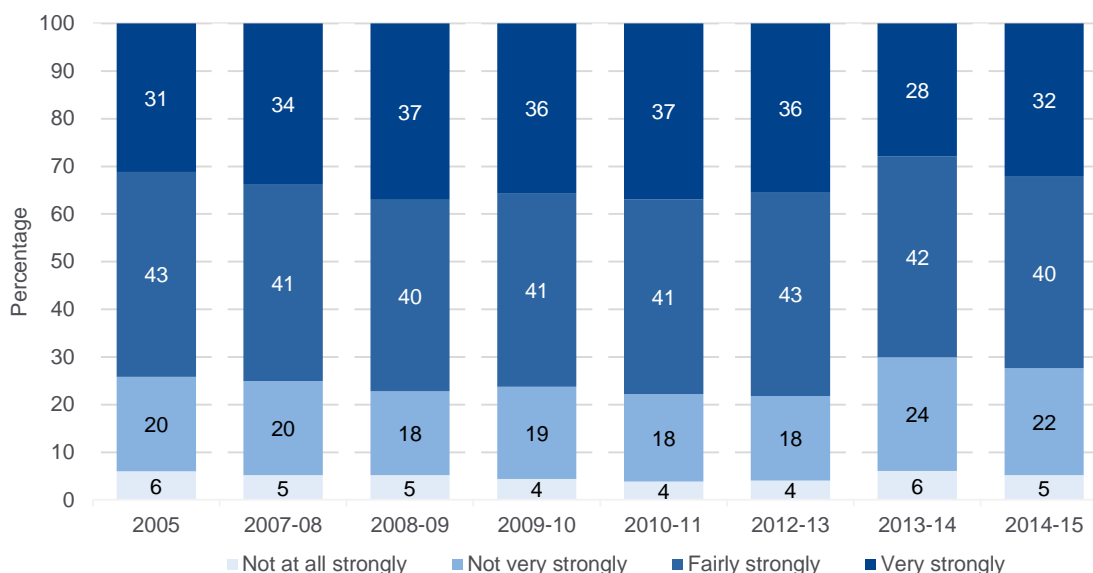
Table 21: Whether people think that their local area has got better or worse to live in over the past two years, 2007-08 to 2014-15

Belonging

In 2014-15, 72% of people felt that they belonged 'very' or 'fairly' strongly to their neighbourhood, no significant difference from 2013-14 (70%), but a significant decrease from levels in 2008-09 to 2012-13.

32% of people felt they belonged 'very strongly' to their neighbourhood, this is significantly higher than 2013-14 (28%) but significantly lower than 2008-09 to 2012-13.

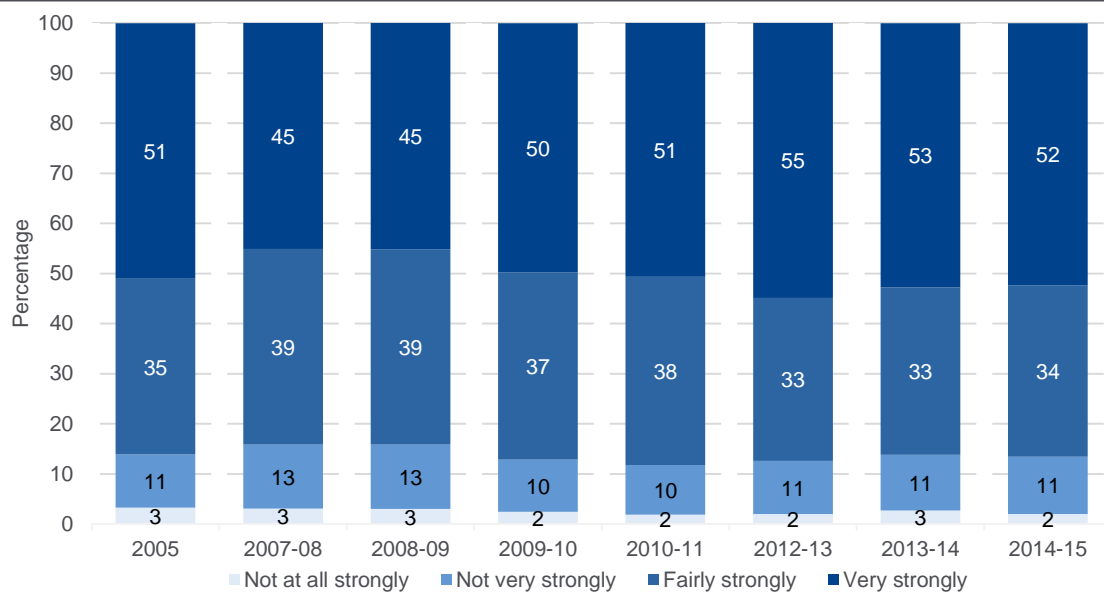
Figure 14: Proportion of people who feel they belong strongly to their neighbourhood, 2005 to 2014-15



- Table 10: Whether people feel that they belong strongly to their neighbourhood and Britain, 2005 to 2014-15

In 2014-15, 87% of people felt that they belong strongly to Britain, no significant difference to 2013-14 (86%) and any other survey year, apart from 2007-08 and 2008-09, which were significantly lower (84%).

Figure 15: Proportion of people who feel they belong strongly to Britain, 2005 to 2014-15



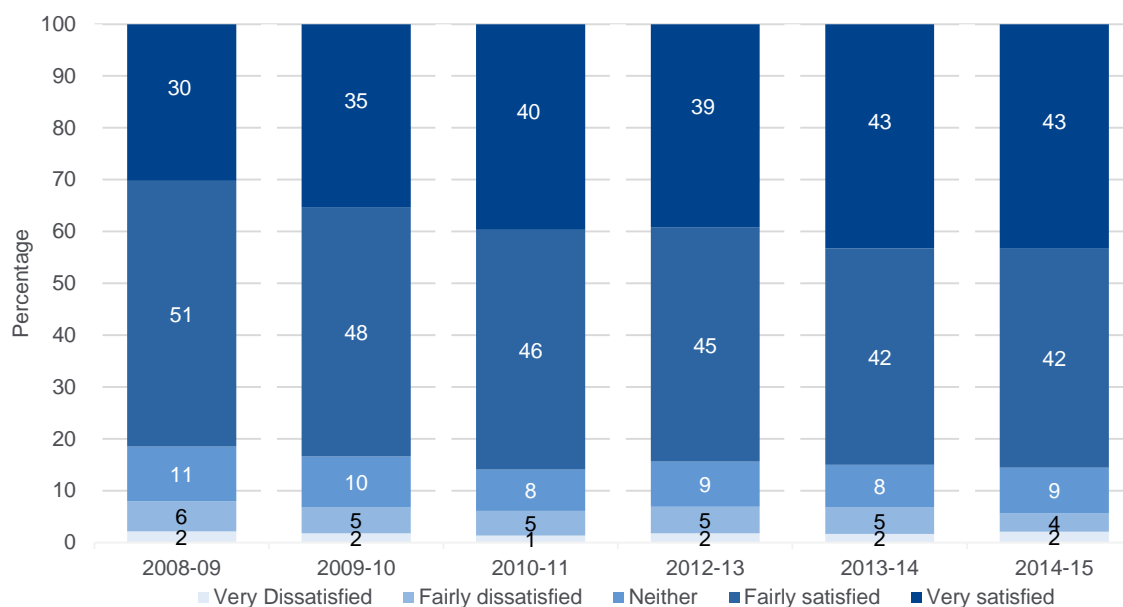
- Table 10: Whether people feel that they belong strongly to their neighbourhood and Britain, 2005 to 2014-15

Satisfaction with local area

In 2014-15, the proportion of people who were 'very satisfied' with their local area as a place to live (43%) was unchanged from 2013-14, but a significant increase compared to 2008-09, 2009-10, 2010-11 and 2012-13 (30%, 35%, 40% and 39%, respectively).

86% of people were either 'very' or 'fairly' satisfied with their local area as a place to live, no significant difference from 2013-14 (85%) and all other years apart from 2008-09 (82%), which was significantly lower.

Figure 16: Proportion of people who are satisfied with their local area as a place to live, 2008-09 to 2014-15

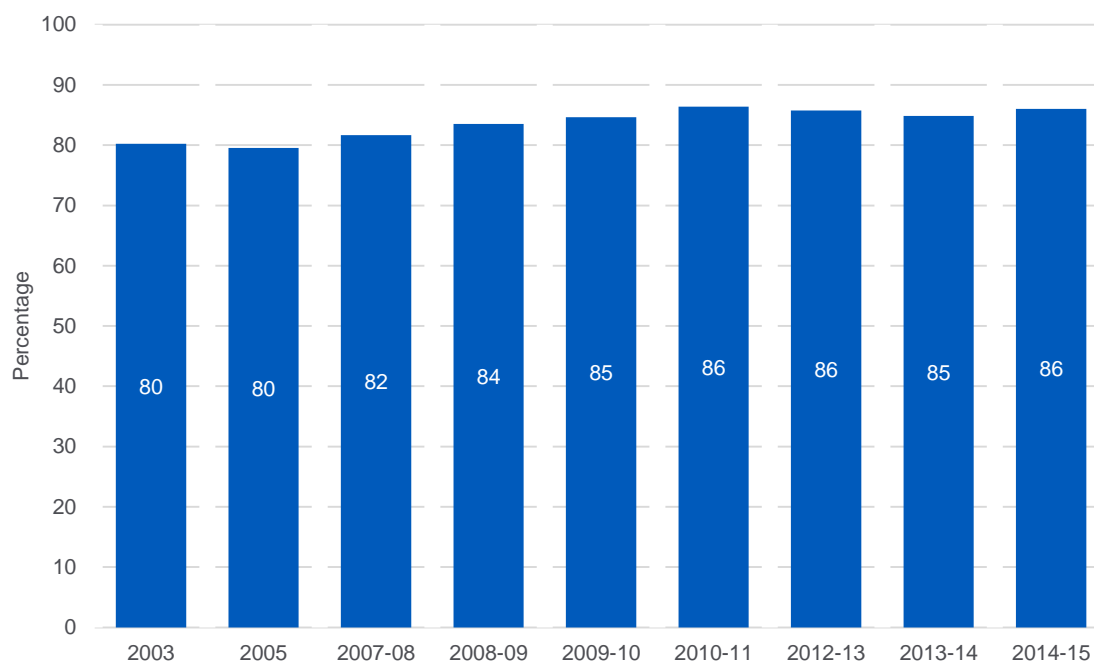


- Table 12: Satisfaction with local area, 2008-09 to 2014-15

Community Cohesion

In 2014-15, 86% of people thought that their community was cohesive, agreeing that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together. This is similar with levels from 2013-14 (85%) to 2009-10, but a significant increase compared to all other previous survey years.

Figure 17: Proportion of people who agree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together, 2003 to 2014-15



- Table 13: Community cohesion by sex, age, ethnicity and region, 2003 to 2014-15

Civic engagement

Civic engagement⁸ covers three measures captured within the survey:

Civic participation – engagement in democratic processes (both in person and online), such as contacting an elected representative or attending a public demonstration

Civic consultation – taking part in consultations about local services such as completing questionnaires, attending public meetings or being involved in discussion groups (both in person and online)

Civic activism – involvement in decision-making about local services or in the provision of these services (both in person and online) such as being a school governor or magistrate

Civic participation continued to be the most common form of civic engagement in 2014-15, with 30% of people engaging in some form of civic participation in the 12 months prior to being interviewed. This is no change from 2013-14, but a significant decrease from 41% in 2012-13. 5% of people engaged in **civic participation** at least once a month, a significant increase compared to 2013-14 (3%), but not significantly different from 2012-13 (4%).

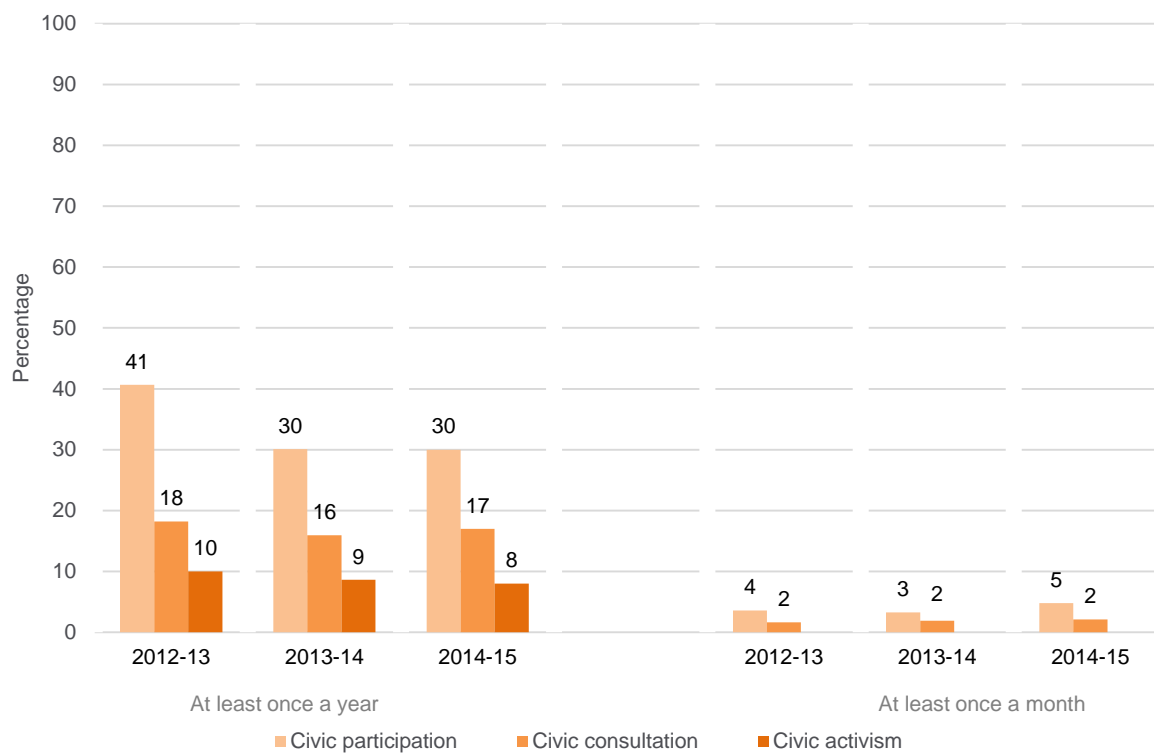
17% of people took part in some form of **civic consultation** at least once in the 12 months prior to being interviewed in 2014-15. This is not significantly different from 2013-14 (16%) or 2012-13 (18%). The proportion of people participating in **civic consultation** at least once a month has also remained unchanged from 2012-13 and 2013-14 (2%).

8% of people had participated in some form of **civic activism**⁹ in the twelve months prior to being interviewed, no significant difference from 2013-14 (9%), but a significant decline compared to 2012-13 (10%).

⁸ Civic engagement data is not directly comparable to Citizenship Survey data as the questions covering these measures were updated in the Community Life Survey to include online participation.

⁹ People were only asked if they engaged in civic activism at least once in the past 12 months

Figure 18: Whether people engaged in civic participation, civic consultation or civic activism at least once in the past 12 months, and at least once a month, 2012-13 to 2014-15

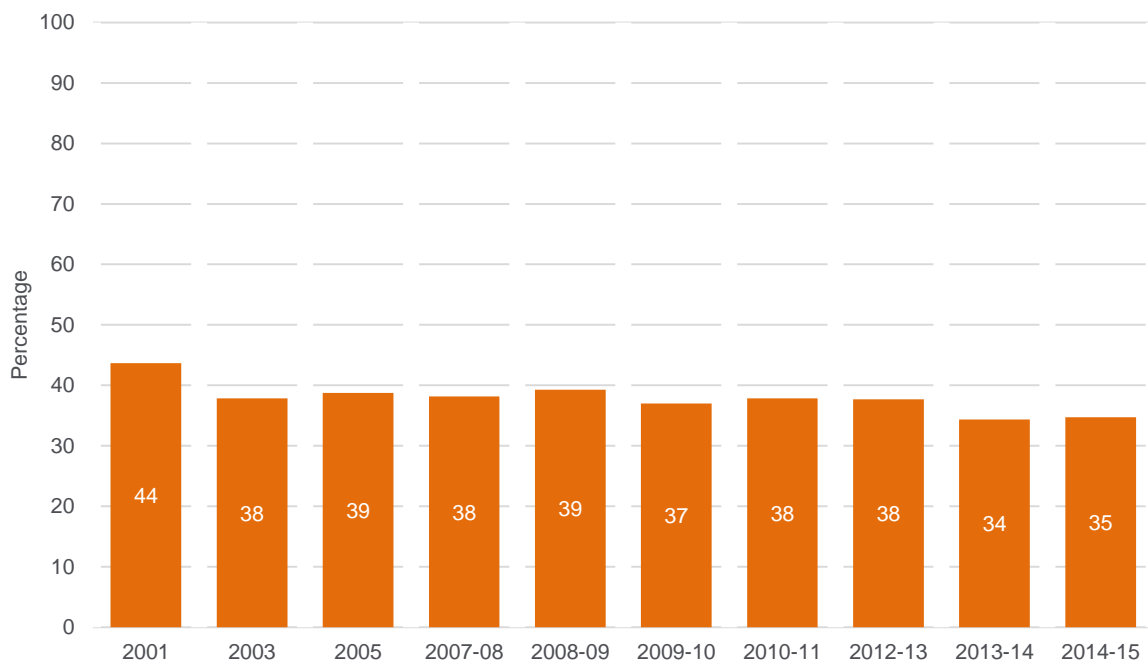


- Table 1: Participation in civic engagement and voluntary activities, 2001 to 2014-15

Influencing decisions

In 2014-15, 35% of people felt that they could influence decisions affecting their local area. This is not significantly different from 2013-14, 2012-13 and 2009-10 (34%, 38% and 37% respectively), but remains significantly lower than all other years.

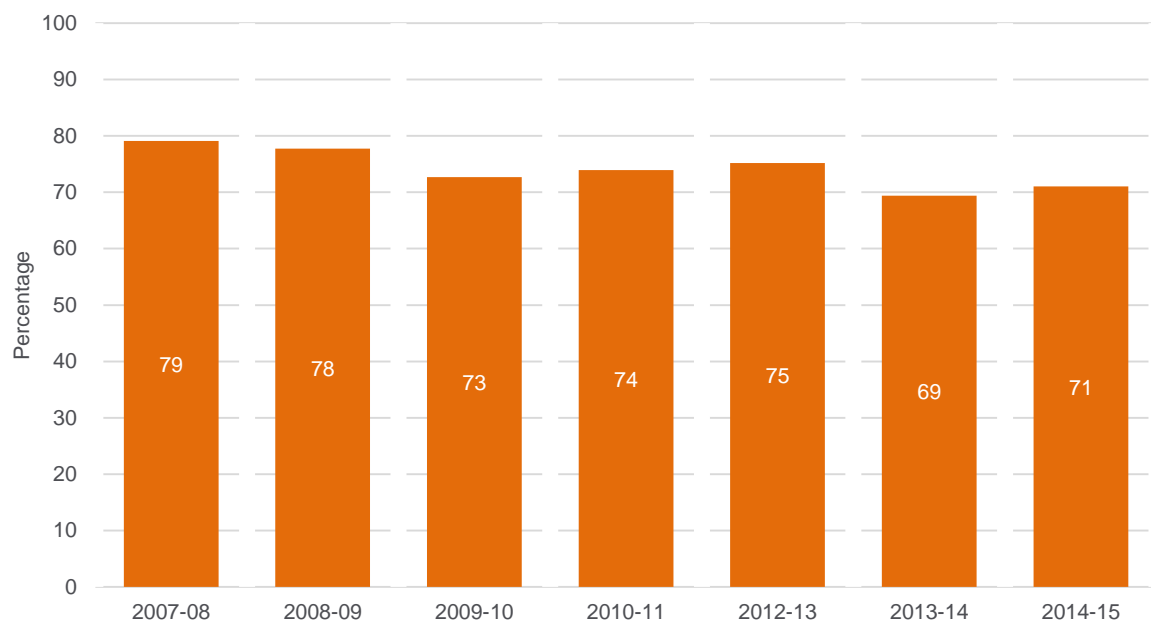
Figure 19: Proportion of people who feel they can influence decisions affecting their local area, 2001 to 2014-15



- Table 14: Whether people feel able to influence decisions affecting their local area, 2001 to 2014-15

In 2014-15, 71% of people thought it was important to feel that they can influence decisions in their local area, comparable to levels in 2013-14 and 2009-10 (69% and 73% respectively), but a significant decrease from levels seen in 2012-13 (75%) and all other years.

Figure 20: Proportion of people who think it is important to feel that they can influence decisions in their local area, 2007-08 to 2014-15



- Table 16: How important is it for you personally to feel you can influence decisions made in your local area, 2007-08 to 2014-15

Involvement in decisions

In 2014-15, there was no change in the number of people wanting to be more involved in council decisions about their local area (43%) compared to 2013-14 (44%), 2010-11 (44%) and 2009-10 (44%), but a significant decrease compared to 2012-13, 2008-09 and 2007-08 (47%, 49% and 50% respectively).

However, there was a significant increase in 2014-15 in those who felt it would depend on the issue (23%) compared to all other survey years.

Figure 21: Whether people would like to be more involved in decisions made by the council affecting their local area, 2007-08 to 2014-15



- Table 17: Whether people would like to be more involved in decisions made by their local council, 2007-08 to 2014-15

Annex A

Key terms and definitions

1. **Local area** – area within a 15-20 minute walk from home.
2. **Community cohesion** – local area (defined as 15-20 minutes walking distance) is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together.
3. **Civic engagement** – covers the following three separate measures:
 - **Civic participation** – engaging in one of the following activities:
 - contacting a local councillor, Member of Parliament, member of the Greater London Assembly
 - contacting a public official working for a local council, central Government, Greater London Assembly
 - attending a public meeting or rally
 - taking part in a public demonstration or protest
 - signing a petition (either paper petition or e-petition/online petition)
 - **Civic activism** – involvement (in person or online) either in direct decision-making about local services or issues, or in the actual provision of these services by taking on a role such as a local councillor, school governor or magistrate.
 - **Civic consultation** – active engagement (in person or online) in consultation about local services or issues through activities such as attending a consultation group or completing a questionnaire about these services.
4. **Formal volunteering** – giving unpaid help through groups, clubs or organisations.
5. **Informal volunteering** – giving unpaid help as an individual to people who are not relatives.
6. **Employer supported volunteering** - volunteering undertaken by employees that is enabled by employers / companies.
7. **Social action** – getting together with others to support a community project in the local area, e.g. trying to set up a new service or amenity to help local residents, or organising a community event e.g. a street party.

Content of Report

8. The Statistical Release is designed to report on the key topic areas within the Community Life Survey and includes data supporting the Cabinet Office's and Other Government Departments' key priorities. However the Community Life Survey covers many other topics, which cannot all be incorporated into a Release such as this, so the underlying data will be made available through the University of Essex data archive.
9. Anonymised data for the full survey year will be available to download through the University of Essex Data Archive (www.data-archive.ac.uk) in Autumn 2015.

Background notes

10. The Community Life Survey is a survey commissioned by the Cabinet Office and fieldwork for the survey is conducted by TNS-BMRB. It is a household survey covering a representative sample, which in 2014-15 consists of 2,000 adults over four quarters, aged 16+ in England. The survey covers a range of topics including volunteering, charitable giving, social action, community cohesion and civic engagement.
11. The survey is carried out via face-to-face interviews and has a continuous design. This release cumulatively covers four quarters' worth of data, based on interviews carried out between July 2014 and April 2015. The total sample size for this period was 2,022. The median interview length was 36 minutes 30 seconds.
12. This release is an Official Statistic produced by the Cabinet Office to standards specified in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. More information can be found at <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/code-of-practice-for-official-statistics.pdf> .
13. In accordance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, the statistics in this release match up to the six dimensions of quality defined by the European Statistical System (ESS). These are relevance, accuracy, timeliness, accessibility, comparability and coherence. More information on these quality indicators will be available in the full technical report for the Community Life Survey, which will be published in Summer 2015.

14. The data are weighted to ensure the representativeness of the Community Life sample by compensating for differences in sampling probabilities and non-response by sub-group. Weighting is based on ONS 2013 mid-year population estimates in terms of age, sex and regional distribution.
15. For more information about the Cabinet Office's revision policy and how revisions are handled for the Community Life Survey, please see Cabinet Office's statement of compliance on our website at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/community-life-survey>
16. All differences and changes reported in the release, both between groups and over time, are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level, unless otherwise specified. This means that the probability of any observed change happening by chance is low (1 in 20). The number of respondents the percentage is based on and the percentage observed will affect whether an observed change is statistically significant or not. A 'ready reckoner' has been provided alongside the Excel tables which can be used to test for statistical significance between percentages in the tables at the 95% confidence level. An overall design factor of 1.36 has been applied to the dataset. More information on design factors will be available in the full technical report for the Community Life Survey, which will be published in Summer 2015.
17. The Community Life Survey incorporates key measures from the previous Citizenship Survey (run by the Department for Communities and Local Government), and has used a comparable methodology in order that trends in such measures can be tracked over time. Where applicable, time series data is included in this release and accompanying outputs. Any statistically significant differences are based on a comparison between 2014-15 and 2013-14 data unless otherwise specified. The Citizenship Survey was commissioned by the Department for Communities and Local Government and ran from 2001 to 2010-11 (more information can be found at <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20120919132719/www.communities.gov.uk/communities/research/citizenshipsurvey/>).
18. The Cabinet Office has consulted with end users on a number of different issues to inform and shape the future of the survey. A written response to this consultation will be published in due course and will be available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/community-life-survey>
19. The statistical contact for this release is Katie Green. Any comments on issues relating to this release or the survey in general are welcomed – please contact us at:

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4.01, 1 Horse Guards Road,
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Email: communitylife@cabinetoffice.gov.uk

20. The fieldwork for this survey is being conducted by TNS-BMRB. More information can be found at <http://www.tns-bmr.co.uk>