



# Community Life survey 2019/20

City Intelligence Unit, GLA  
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# 1. Introduction

- The [Community Life survey](#) is a household self-completion survey of adults aged 16+ in England. The survey provides evidence on social cohesion, community engagement and social action.
- This report summarises the results from the 2019/20 survey and provides comparisons between London and the rest of England.
- There are other surveys that provide more granular evidence on these topics within London, but this survey has been selected to provide a regional comparison.
- It should be noted that the majority of the fieldwork took place prior to the COVID-19 pandemic (fieldwork was completed at the end of March 2020).
- Further details of the breakdowns presented in this report can be accessed through the data tables on the [Community Life survey webpage](#).

## 2. Social networks

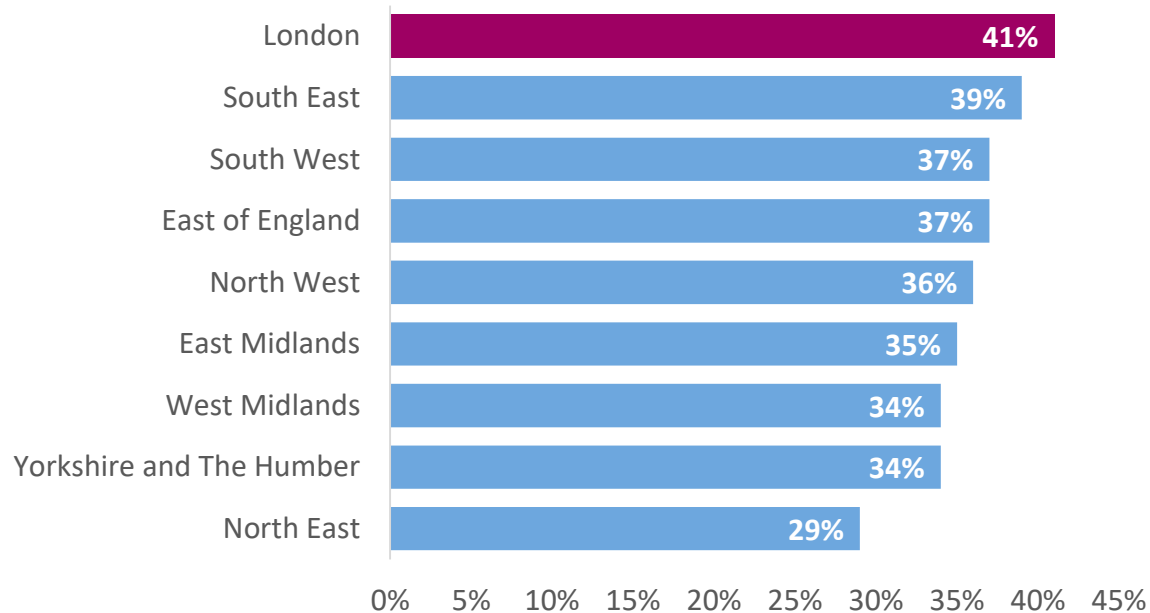
This section presents data about the way adults aged 16+ in England communicate with family members and friends.

### **Headline measures (London) – 2019/20**

- 71 per cent of respondents meet up in person with friends/family at least once a week.
- 95 per cent of respondents either definitely or tended to agree that if they needed help, there are people who would be there for them.

# Meeting and communicating with family and friends on demographic characteristics

Percentage of adults who email or write to family or friends once a week or more



Base: Adults aged 16+ London: 2,758 South East: 1,401 South West: 729 East of England: 986 North West: 1,123 East Midlands: 797 West Midlands: 1,016 Yorkshire and The Humber: 884 North East: 382

- 41 per cent of Londoners **email and write to each other** once a week or more. This is more than those in the North East (29 per cent), North West (36 per cent), Yorkshire and The Humber (34 per cent) and the West Midlands (34 per cent).
- 71 per cent of Londoners **meet up in person** once a week or more, less than those in the North East (78 per cent) but at a similar rate to all the other regions.
- 83 per cent of Londoners **speak on the phone** once a week or more, at similar rates to all the other regions.

# Support networks

- Almost all respondents agree with the statement 'if I need help people would be there for me' across all the regions with London at 95 per cent.
- The majority agree that 'if I wanted company or to socialise there are people I can call on' across all the regions with London at 92 per cent.
- Almost all respondents also agree with saying 'there is one person or more that I can really count on to listen if I needed to talk' across all the regions with London at 96 per cent.

Percentage of adults who definitely or tend to agree that if they needed help people would be there for them



Base: Adults aged 16+ London: 2,802 South East: 1,410 South West: 734 East of England: 992 North West: 1,144 East Midlands: 810 West Midlands: 1,031 Yorkshire and The Humber: 888 North East: 383



## 3. Loneliness

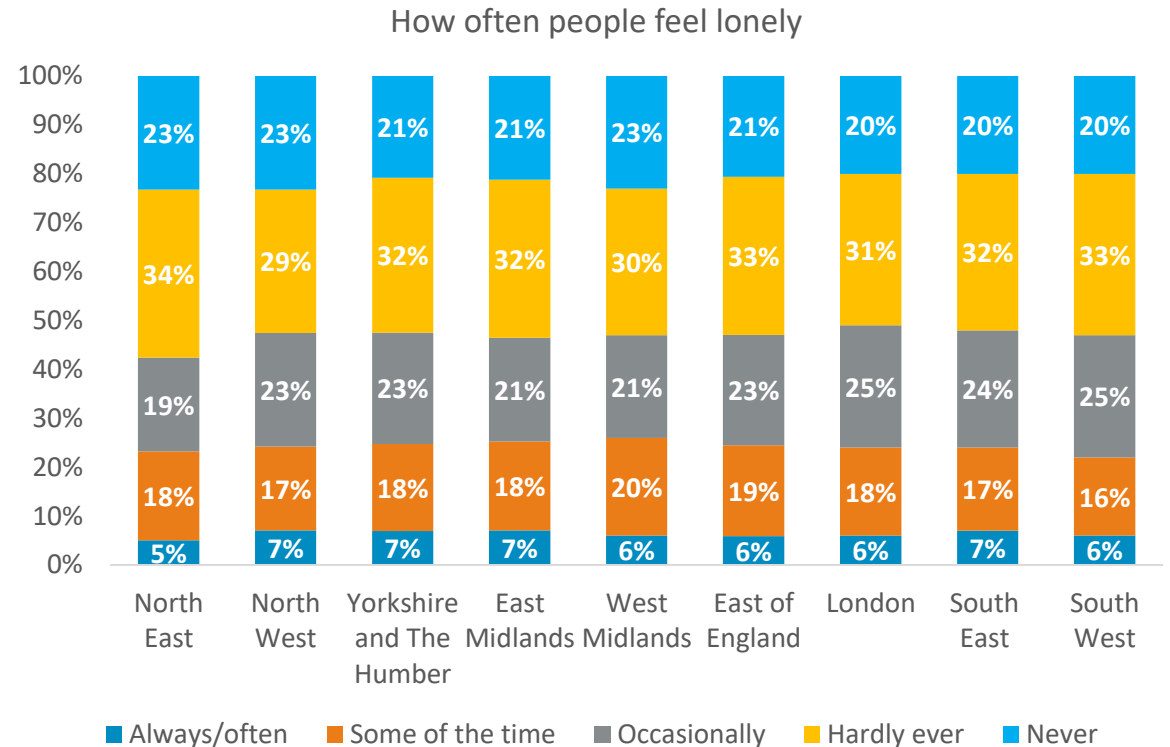
This section presents data on measures of loneliness of adults aged 16+ in England.

### **Headline measures (London) – 2019/20**

- 6 per cent of respondents said they felt lonely often/always.
- Loneliness is higher for women, 16-24 year olds and those with a long term limiting illness or disability.

# How often people feel lonely

- Responses for those who said they 'often/always' feel lonely were very low across all the regions with London at 6 per cent.
- Around half of respondents in each region said they 'hardly ever' or 'never' feel lonely with Londoners at 51 per cent.



Base: Adults aged 16+ London: 2,752 South East: 1,404 South West: 731 East of England: 983 North West: 1,129 East Midlands: 796 West Midlands: 1,022 Yorkshire and The Humber: 873 North East: 376



## 4. Neighbourhood and community

The next slides show the way in which adults aged 16+ in England perceive their neighbourhood and community.

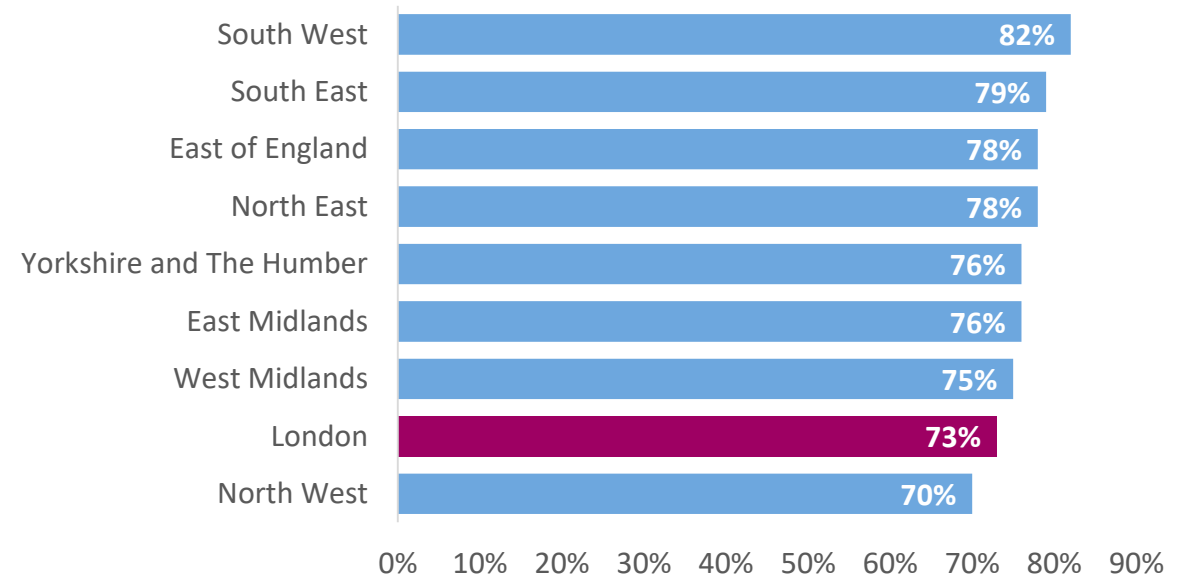
### **Headline measures (London) – 2019/20**

- 73 per cent of respondents were satisfied with their local area as a place to live.
- 59 per cent of respondents felt they belonged to their neighbourhood.
- 79 per cent of respondents felt they belonged to Britain.

# Satisfaction with local area

- Across England, the younger age groups are the least satisfied with their local area with 64 per cent of 16-24 year olds satisfied compared with 76 per cent of those aged 35-49 and 83 per cent of those aged 65-74.
- White people (77 per cent) feel this more than Black people (68 per cent) and people with a Mixed ethnic background (71 per cent).
- Respondents in the South East (81 per cent) and South West (83 per cent) feel this more than Londoners (73 per cent).
- Those living in rural areas (85 per cent) are happier with where they live than those living in urban areas (74 per cent).

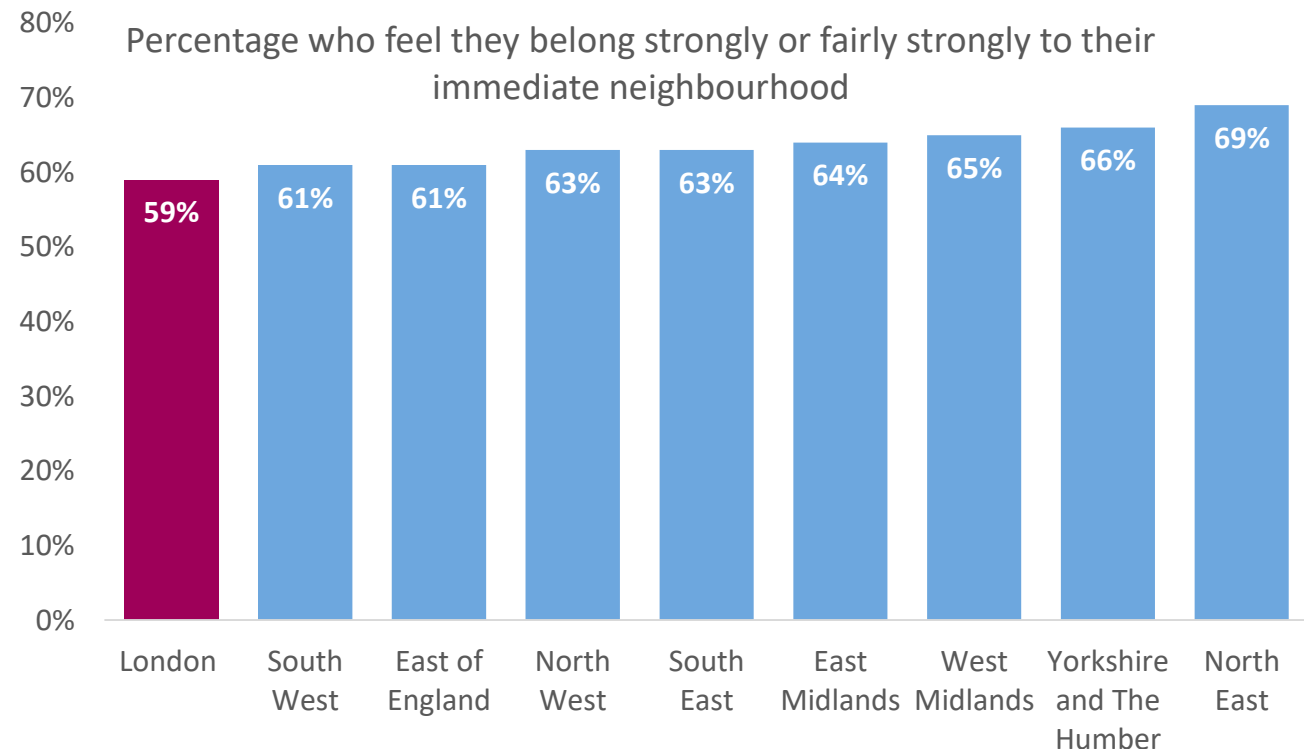
Percentage of adults who are satisfied with their local area as a place to live



Base: Adults aged 16+ London: 2,817 South East: 1,413 South West: 734 East of England: 991 North West: 1,145 East Midlands: 810 West Midlands: 1,038 Yorkshire and The Humber: 8889 North East: 383

# Belonging to immediate neighbourhood

- More than half of respondents across all regions agree with this with London at 59 per cent. However, those in the North East feel the strongest about this (69 per cent).
- Across England, 16-24 year olds (55 per cent) feel the least strongly about this whereas those aged 75+ feel the most belonging to their immediate neighbourhood (73 per cent).
- Across England, those living in rural areas (72 per cent) feel more a part of their immediate neighbourhood than those in urban areas (61 per cent).
- Disabled people in England (58 per cent) feel less strongly about this than those who are not disabled (64 per cent).

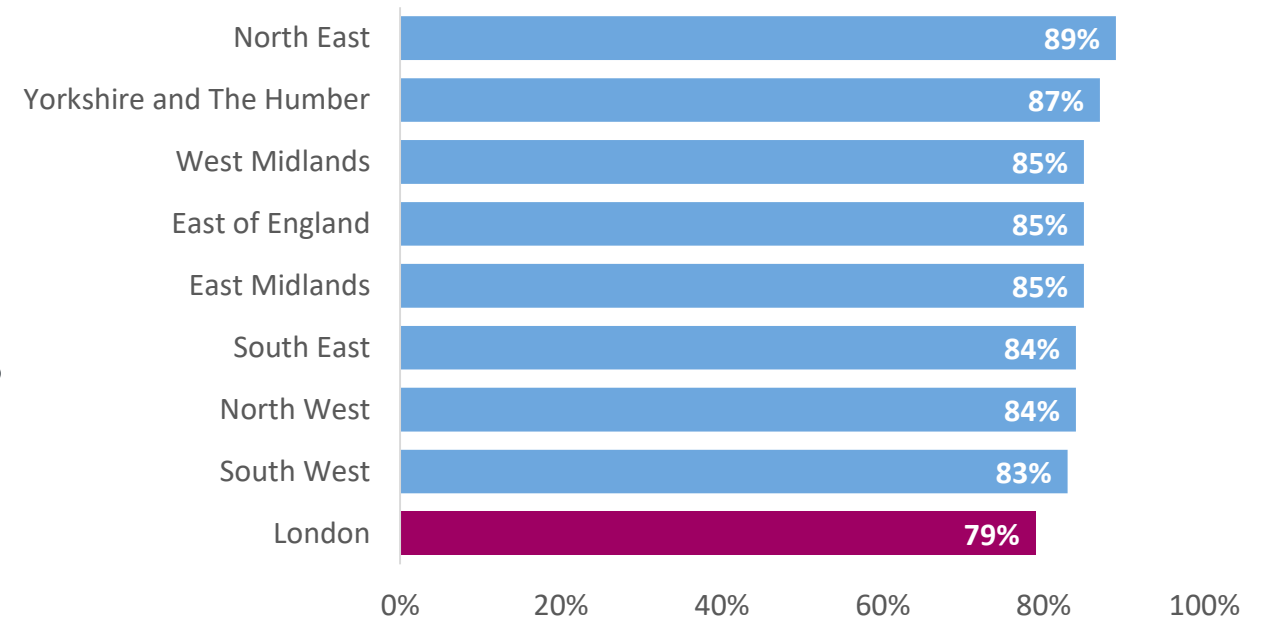


Base: Adults aged 16+ London: 2,810 South East: 1,413 South West: 733 East of England: 993 North West: 1,144 East Midlands: 809 West Midlands: 1,033 Yorkshire and The Humber: 888 North East: 380

# Belonging to Britain

- Londoners feel least strongly about belonging to Britain than all the other regions (79 per cent).
- Those aged 75+ feel very strongly about their belonging to Britain (96 per cent) whereas 16-24 year olds feel the least strongly about this (78 per cent).
- Across England, White (84 per cent), Asian (83 per cent) and Black (86 per cent) people feel they belong to Britain more than people with a Mixed ethnic background (79 per cent).

Percentage of adults who very strongly or fairly feel they belong to Britain

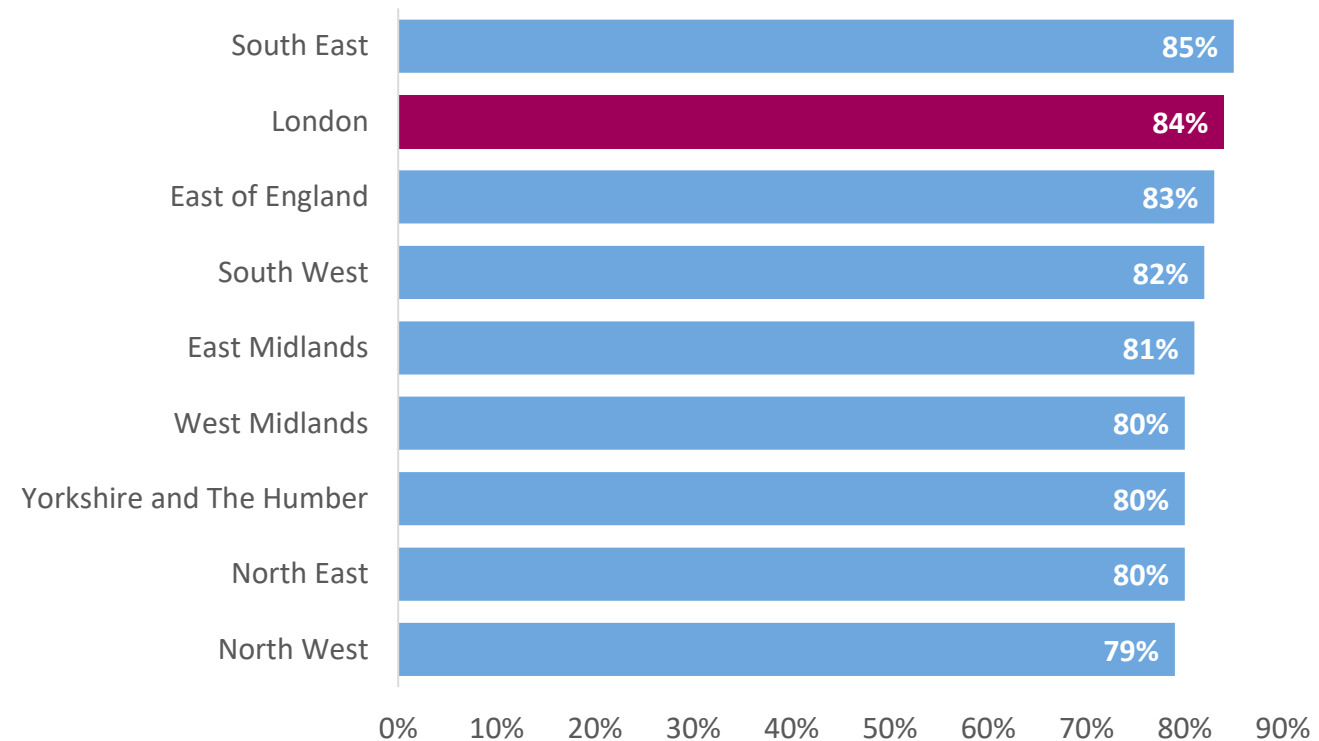


Base: Adults aged 16+ London: 1,937 South East: 1,240 South West: 668 East of England: 799 North West: 861 East Midlands: 621 West Midlands: 760 Yorkshire and The Humber: 656 North East: 278

# Local area and people from different backgrounds getting on well together

- There is strong agreement for this across all regions including London at 84 per cent.
- Across England, there is strong agreement across all age groups with those aged 75+ feeling the strongest about this (87 per cent).

Percentage who agree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together

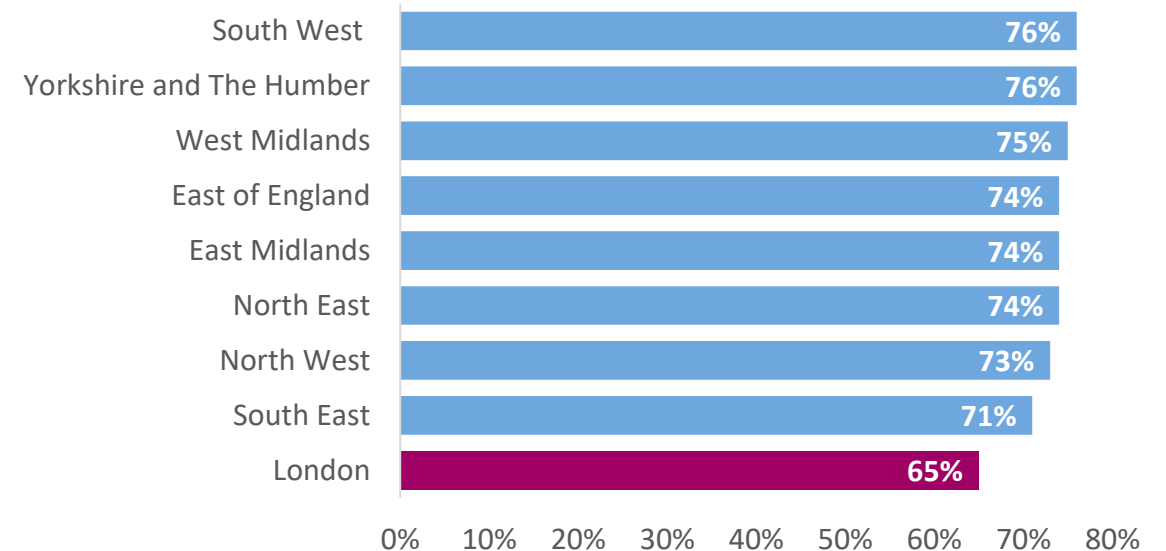


Base: Adults aged 16+ London: 2,801 South East: 1,375 South West: 718 East of England: 976 North West: 1,132 East Midlands: 794 West Midlands: 1,020 Yorkshire and The Humber: 873 North East: 371

# Chatting to neighbours

- Londoners (65 per cent) report chatting to their neighbours at least once a month a lot less than those in the other regions of England (73-76 per cent), except for the South East.
- Across England, 16-24 year olds (53 per cent) do this the least whereas those aged 75+ do this the most (87 per cent).
- Across England, White people (74 per cent) do this most and significantly more so than Asian (64 per cent), Black (66 per cent) and people with a Mixed ethnic background (67 per cent).
- Across England, people living in rural areas (81 per cent) do this more than those in urban areas (71 per cent).

Percentage of adults who chat to their neighbours at least once a month



Base: Adults aged 16+ London: 2,816 South East: 1,414 South West: 734 East of England: 994 North West: 1,149 East Midlands: 810 West Midlands: 1,031 Yorkshire and The Humber: 888 North East: 382

## 5. Civic engagement and social action

This next section focuses on whether adults aged 16+ in England have participated in civic engagement and social action.

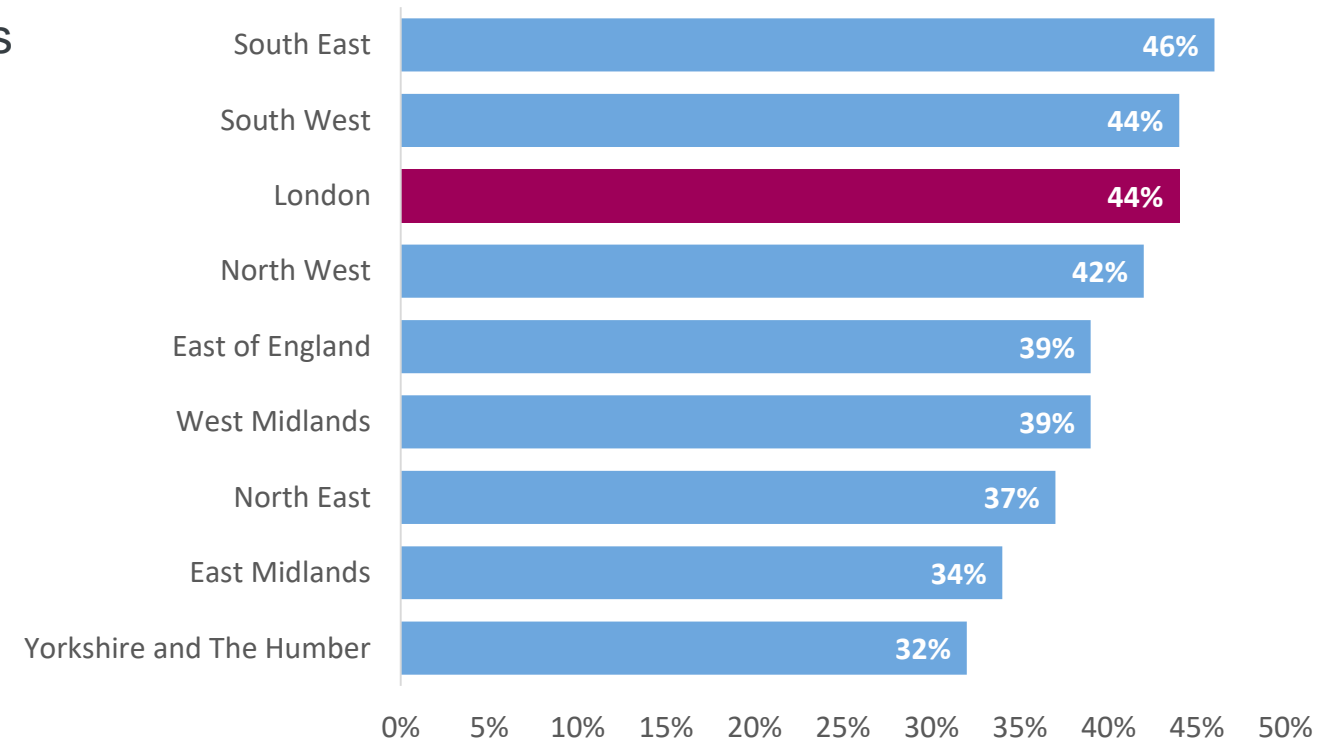
### **Headline measures (London) – 2019/20**

- 33 per cent of respondents agreed that they could personally influence decisions in their local area.
- 16 per cent of respondents had been involved in social action.

# Civic participation at least once in the last year

- Less than half of respondents across nearly all of the regions have participated in civic activities in the last 12 months, with Londoners at 44 per cent. However, those in Yorkshire and The Humber (34 per cent) do this significantly less than Londoners.
- Across England, a smaller proportion of those aged 75+ (28 per cent) report having participated compared with those aged 35-49 (45 per cent).

Percentage who have completed civic participation in the last 12 months



Base: Adults aged 16+ London: 2,823 South East: 1,415 South West: 734 East of England: 995 North West: 1,150 East Midlands: 812 West Midlands: 1,040 Yorkshire and The Humber: 891 North East: 383

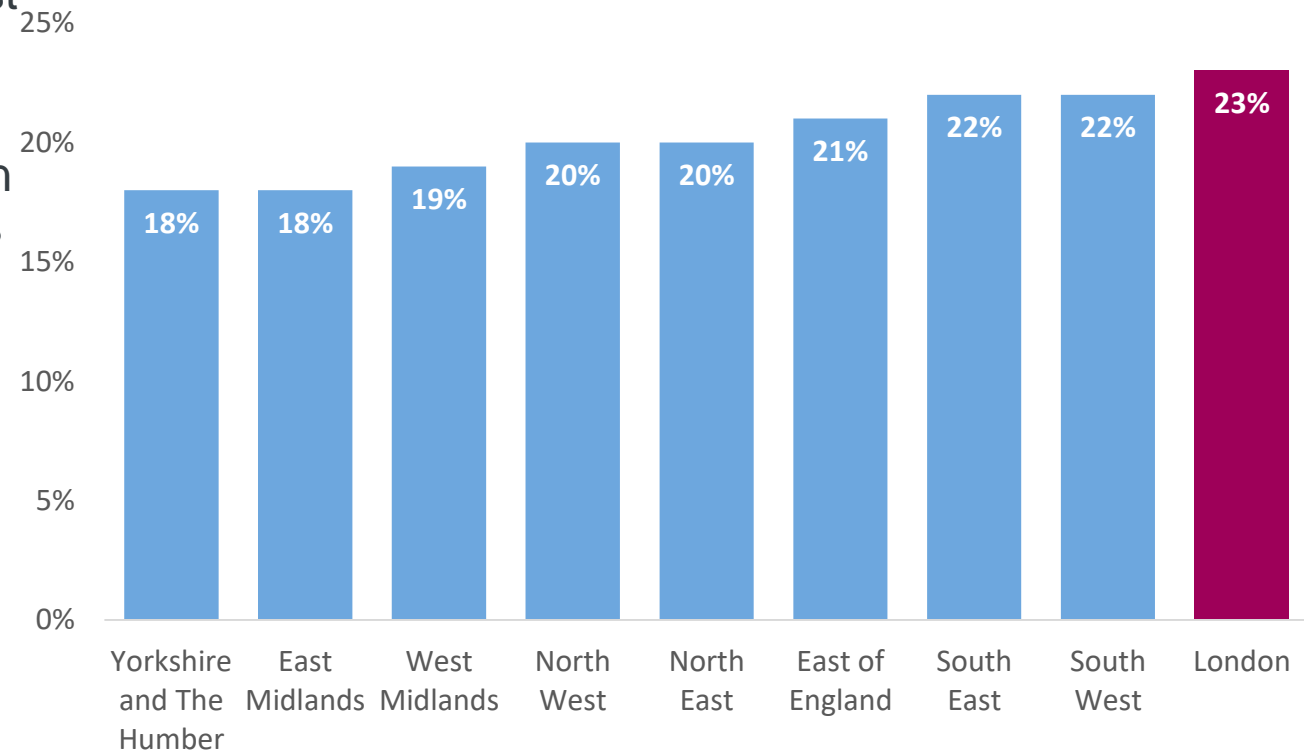
Note: Civic participation refers to engagement in democratic processes, both in person and online, including signing a petition or attending a public rally (does not include voting).



# Civic consultation at least once in the last year

- Around a quarter of Londoners (23 per cent) have engaged with civic consultation in the last year, similar to all the other regions.
- Across England, 65-74 year olds (25 per cent) are more likely to take part in civic consultation in the last year compared with 16-24 year olds (15 per cent).
- People living in rural areas in England (28 per cent) are more likely to have taken part than those in urban areas (19 per cent).

Percentage of adults who have done civic consultation at least once in the last year



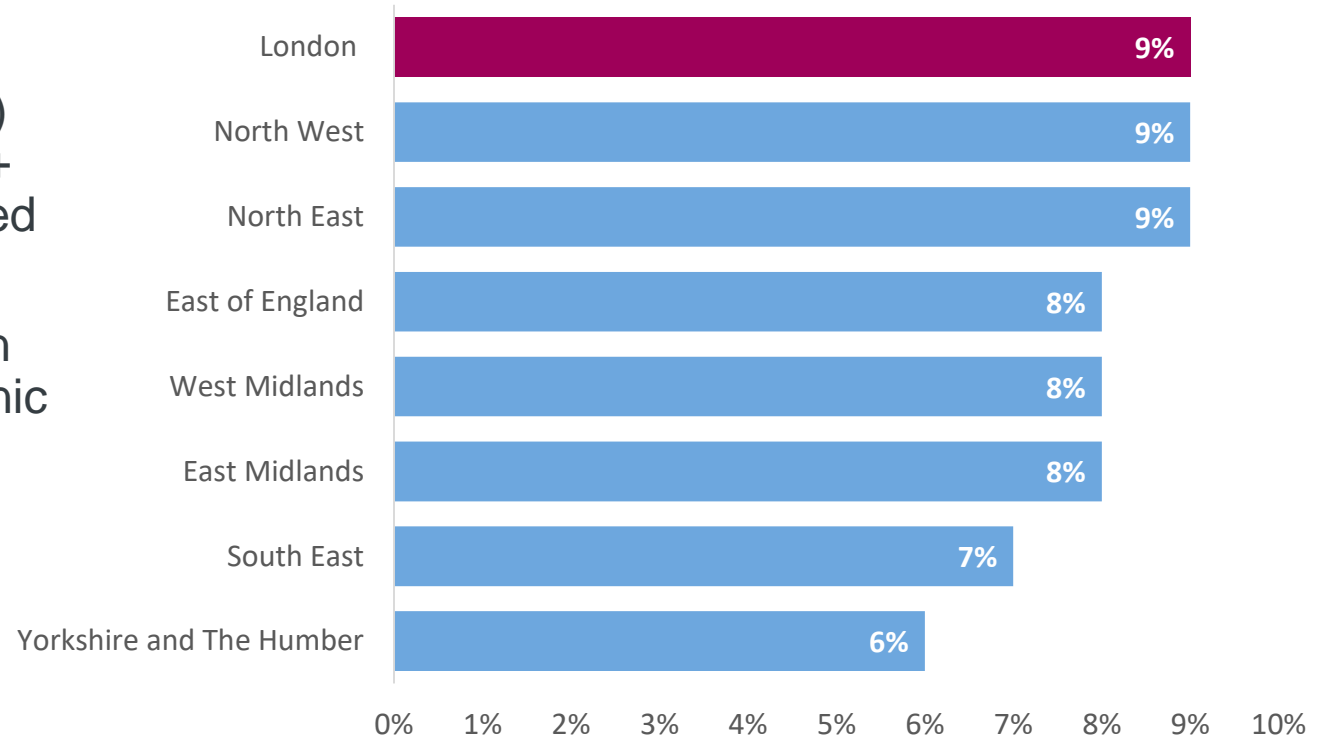
Base: Adults aged 16+ London: 2,823 South East: 1,415 South West: 734 East of England: 995 North West: 1,150 East Midlands: 812 West Midlands: 1,040 Yorkshire and The Humber: 891 North East: 383

Note: Civic consultation refers to taking part in consultations about local service, both in person and online.

# Civic activism at least once in the last year

- A very small percentage of Londoners (9 per cent) have engaged in civic activism in the last year, similar to all the other regions.
- Across England, 16-24 year olds (5 per cent) are the least active whereas those aged 75+ (12 per cent) are more likely to have engaged in civic activism.
- There are no significant differences between participation in civic activism across the ethnic groups in England.

Percentage who have done civic activism at least once in the last year



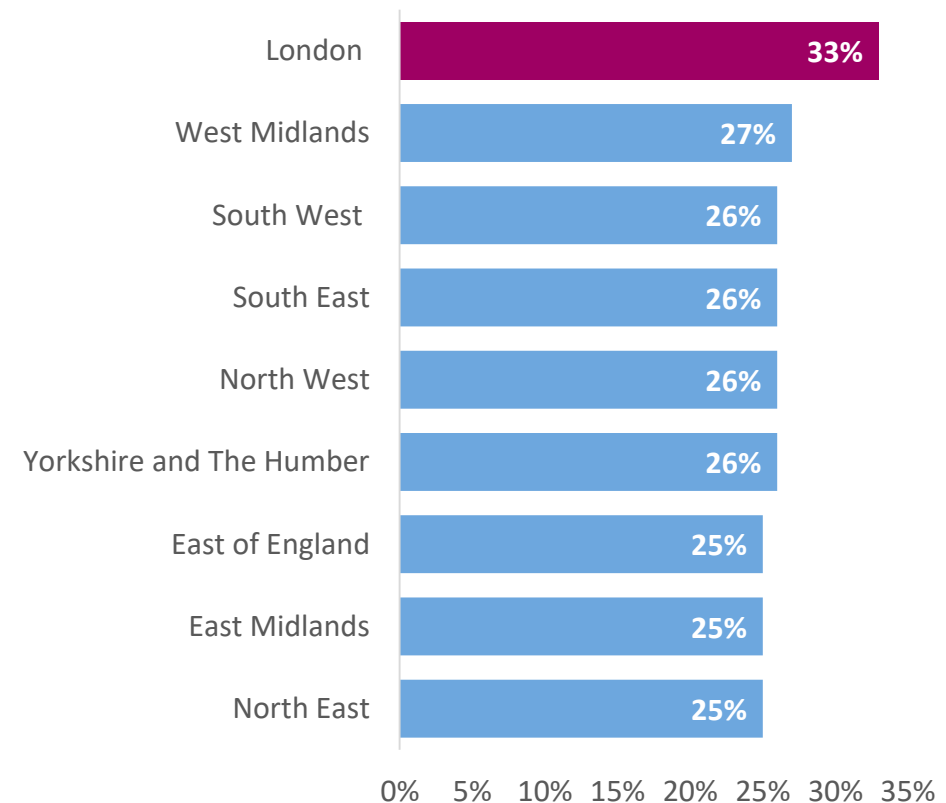
Base: Adults aged 16+ London: 2,823 South East: 1,415 South West: 734 East of England: 995 North West: 1,150 East Midlands: 812 West Midlands: 1,040 Yorkshire and The Humber: 891 North East: 383

Note: Civic activism refers to Involvement in decision-making about local services, both in person and online. Some responses options, such as being a local councillor or school governor, were not presented as options to those aged under 18.

# Agreement on personal influence on decisions affecting local area(s)

- A greater proportion of Londoners (33 per cent) feel they can personally influence decisions in their local area than those in the other regions of England (25-26 per cent), except for the West Midlands.
- Across England, Black people (44 per cent) agree with this at a greater rate than White people (25 per cent), Asian people (35 per cent) and people with a Mixed ethnic background (33 per cent).
- Across England, those aged 75+ (23 per cent) are less likely to agree with this statement. This compares with 29 per cent of those aged 50-64.

Percentage of adults who think they can personally influence decisions in their local area

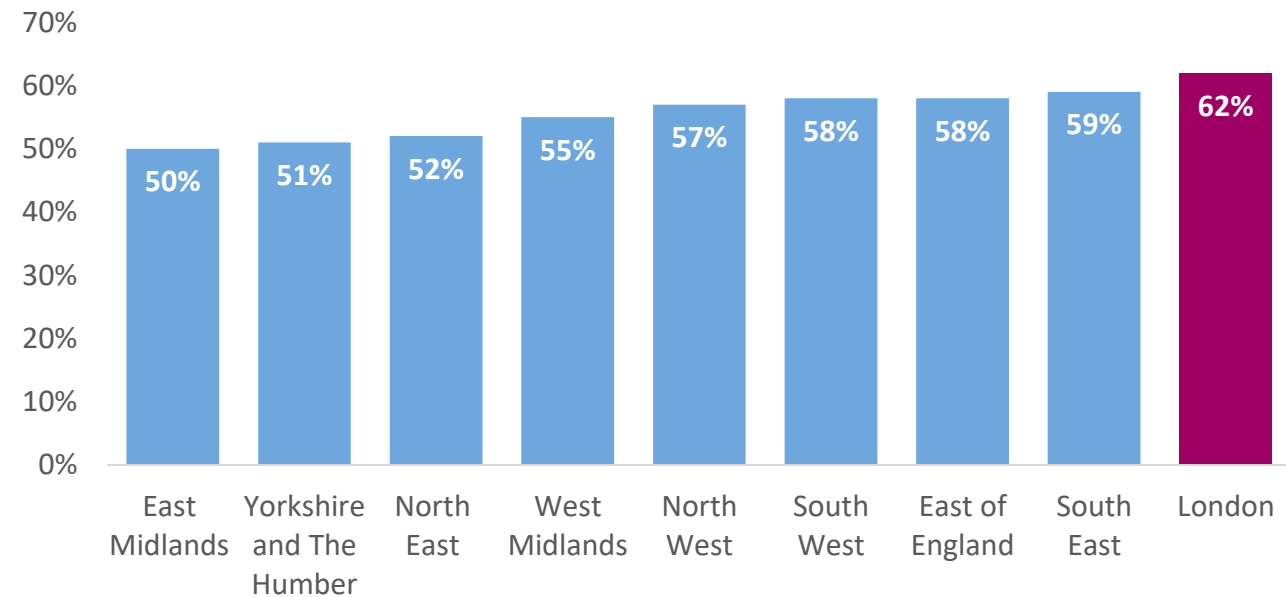


Base: Adults aged 16+ London: 2,769 South East: 1,390 South West: 727 East of England: 980 North West: 1,133 East Midlands: 795 West Midlands: 1,026 Yorkshire and The Humber: 868 North East: 377

# Importance of the ability to influence decisions in local area(s)

- A greater proportion of Londoners (62 per cent) agree it is important to be able to influence decisions in their local area than those in the North West (57 per cent), West Midlands (55 per cent), North East (52 per cent), Yorkshire and The Humber (51 per cent) and East Midlands (50 per cent).
- Across England, Black people (71 per cent) feel the strongest about this, whereas White people (56 per cent), Asian (59 per cent) and people with a Mixed ethnic background (58 per cent).
- Across England, less than half of 16-24 year olds agree (44 per cent) compared with around six in ten (62 per cent) of older respondents aged 35-74.

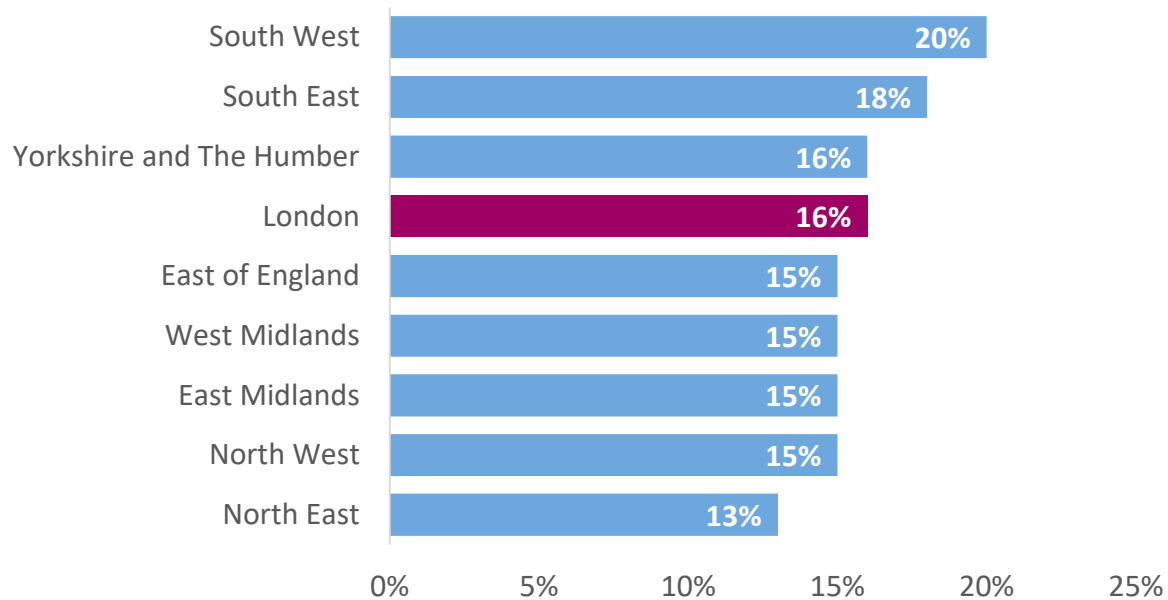
Percentage of adults who agree it is important to be able to influence decisions in their local area



Base: Adults aged 16+ London: 2,796 South East: 1,401 South West: 731 East of England: 987 North West: 1,139 East Midlands: 807 West Midlands: 1,035 Yorkshire and The Humber: 877 North East: 381

# Involvement in social action in the last year

Percentage of adults personally involved in social action in the last 12 months



Base: Adults aged 16+ London: 2,769 South East: 1,399 South West: 724 East of England: 985 North West: 1,132 East Midlands: 800 West Midlands: 1,027 Yorkshire and The Humber: 871 North East: 378

- Around one in six (16 per cent) Londoners have been involved in social action in the last year. Respondents in the South West were more likely to have been involved (20 per cent) compared with those in the North East (13 per cent).
- Those living in rural areas were more likely to have participated in social action (23 per cent) than those living in urban areas (15 per cent).
- 24 per cent of those aged 65-74 have been involved in social action – a higher incidence than any other age group.

Note: Social action is about being involved with issues affecting the local area by doing things like setting up a new service/amenity, stopping the closure of a service/amenity, stopping something happening in the local area, running a local service on a voluntary basis, helping to organise a street party or community event.

# Awareness of others in local area(s) getting involved in social action

- Around a third of people across all the regions were aware of people in their local area getting involved in social action, with Londoners at 32 per cent.
- Across England, greater proportions of those aged 65-74 (39 per cent) and 75+ (38 per cent) were aware compared with younger age groups. Those aged 25-34 (25 per cent) were the least aware.
- Across England, a greater proportion of White people (34 per cent) were aware compared with Black and Asian people (both 24 per cent) and people with a Mixed ethnic background (25 per cent).
- Across England, those living in rural areas were more aware (44 per cent) than those living in urban areas (32 per cent).

Percentage of adults who were aware of people in their local area getting involved in social action



Base: Adults aged 16+ London: 1,910 South East: 1,228 South West: 662 East of England: 794 North West: 857 East Midlands: 611 West Midlands: 759 Yorkshire and The Humber: 651 North East: 278



## 6. Volunteering and charitable giving

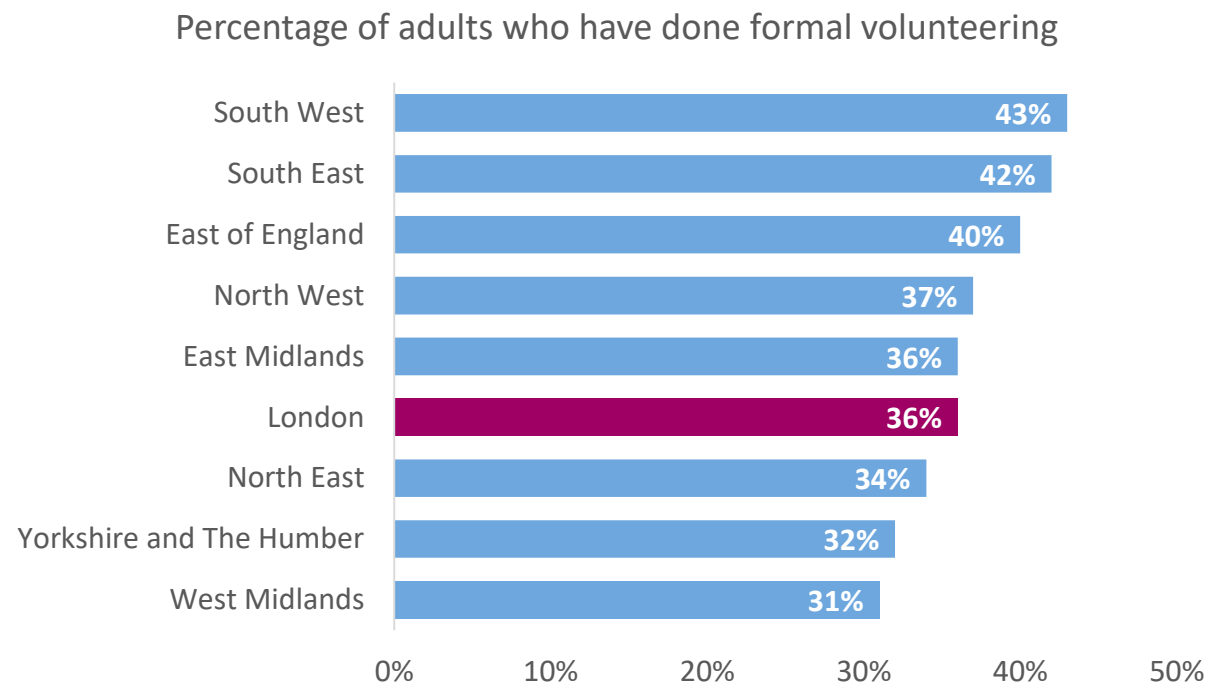
This final section presents information about whether adults aged 16+ in England have volunteered and given to charitable causes.

### **Headline measures (London) – 2019/20**

- 63 per cent of respondents have done any formal or informal volunteering in the last year.
- 72 per cent of Londoners have donated to charitable causes in the last four weeks.

# Formal volunteering in the last year

- Around one third (36 per cent) of Londoners formally volunteered in the last year. Those in the South West are more likely to have formally volunteered in the last year (43 per cent) compared with those in the West Midlands (31 per cent).
- Across England, those aged 75 and over are the least likely age group to have formally volunteered in the last year (33 per cent).
- Across England, Asian people (35 per cent) are less likely to have volunteered than Black people (39 per cent).
- In England, people who are economically inactive are less likely to have formally volunteered in the last year (31 per cent) compared with those in employment (40 per cent).

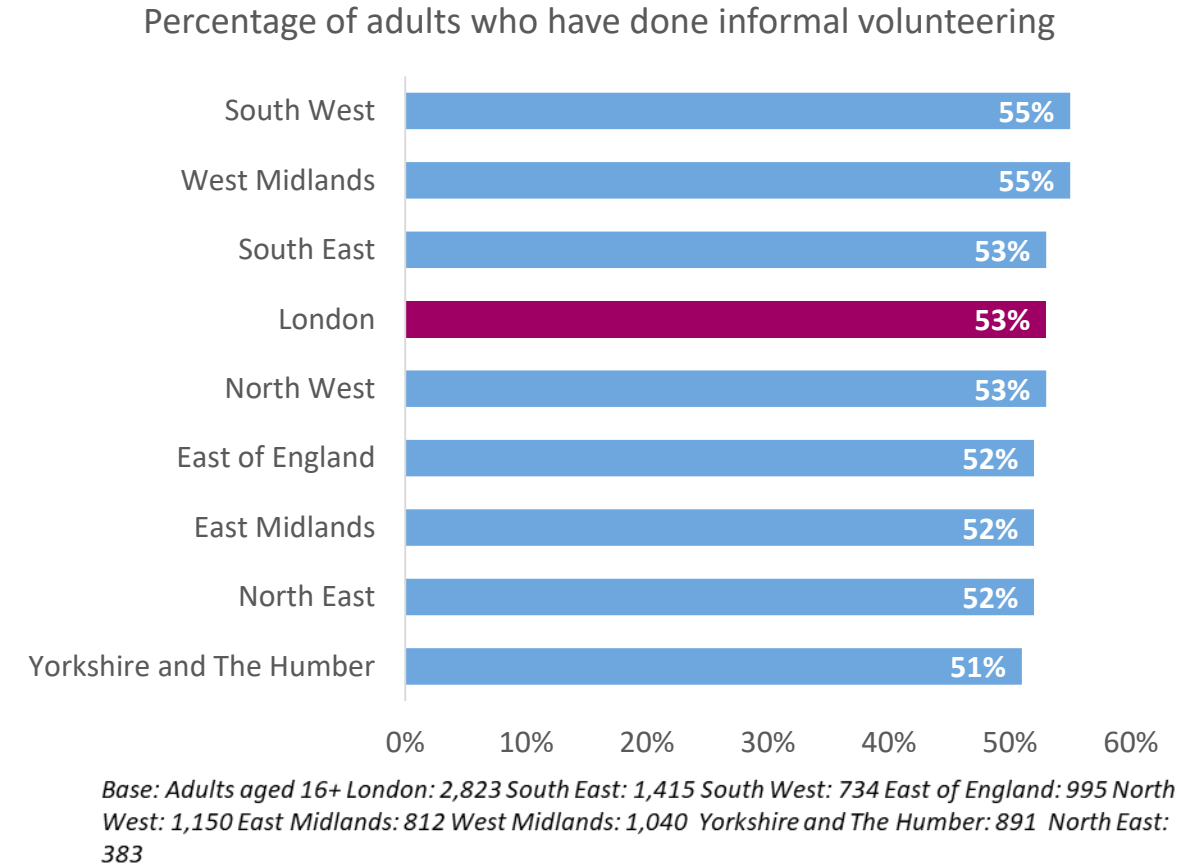


Base: Adults aged 16+ London: 2,823 South East: 1,415 South West: 734 East of England: 995 North West: 1,150 East Midlands: 812 West Midlands: 1,040 Yorkshire and The Humber: 891 North East: 383



# Informal volunteering in the last year

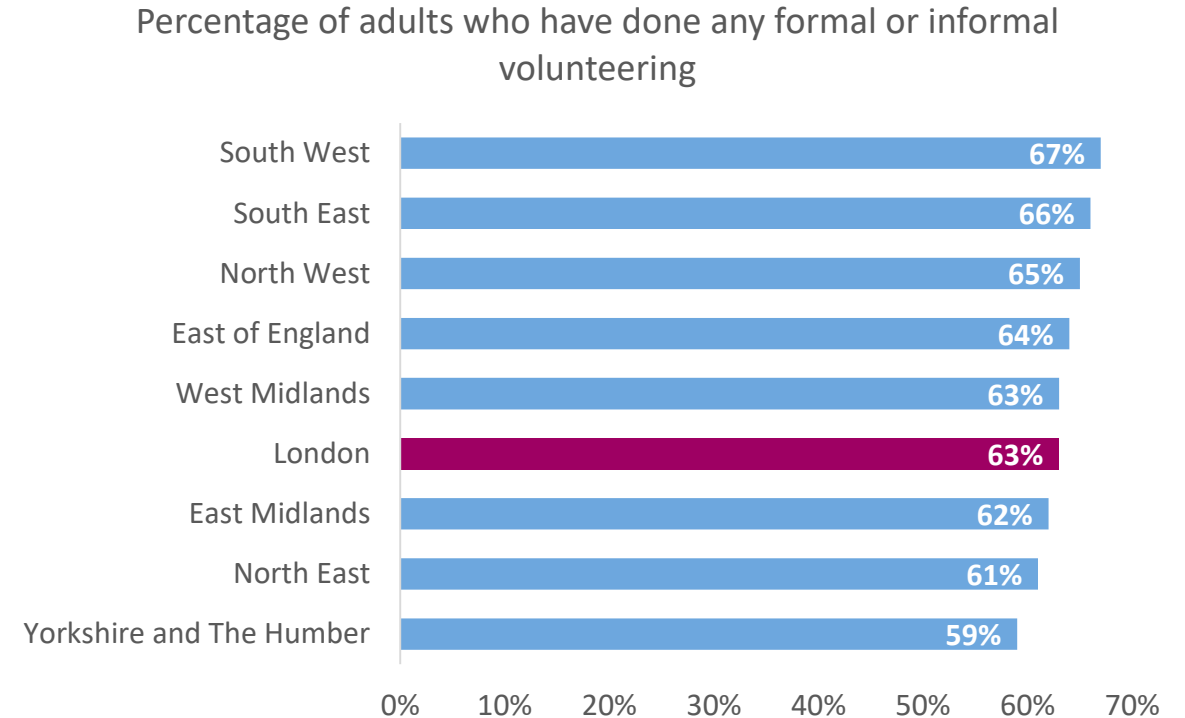
- Around half (53 per cent) of Londoners have done this, similar to all the other regions.
- Across England, women (57 per cent) have informally volunteered in the last year at a greater rate than men (50 per cent).
- Black people (60 per cent) are the ethnic group most likely to have informally volunteered in the last year, whereas people with a Mixed ethnic background are least likely (48 per cent).
- People aged 16-24 (48 per cent) and 25-34 (49 per cent) in England are the age groups least likely to have informally volunteered in the last year.



Note: Informal volunteering refers to giving unpaid help to individuals who are not a relative.

# Any formal or informal volunteering in the last year

- Around six in ten (63 per cent) of Londoners have done any formal or informal volunteering in the last year. Those in the South West are more likely to have volunteered in the last year (67 per cent) compared with those in Yorkshire and The Humber (59 per cent).
- Across England, those aged 25-34 are least likely to have participated in any volunteering in the last year (60 per cent) compared with those aged 65-74 (70 per cent).
- Across England, people living in rural areas (69 per cent) are more likely to have participated in some form of volunteering than those living in urban areas (62 per cent).

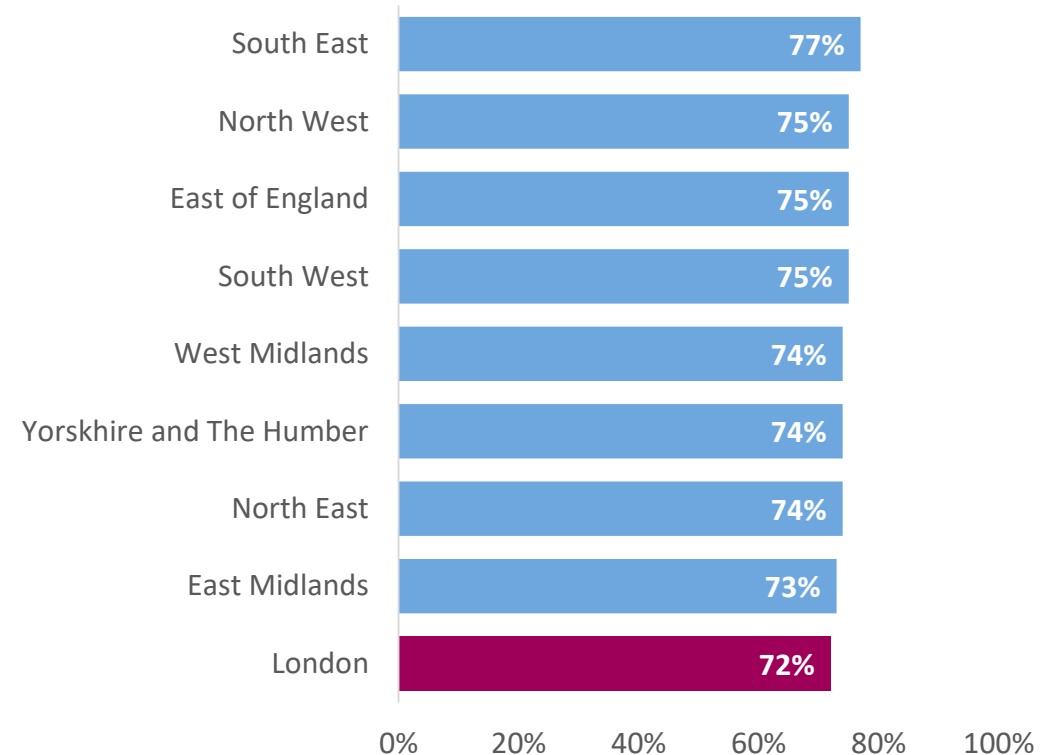


Base: Adults aged 16+ London: 2,823 South East: 1,415 South West: 734 East of England: 995 North West: 1,150 East Midlands: 812 West Midlands: 1,040 Yorkshire and The Humber: 891 North East: 383

# Donations to charitable causes in the last four weeks

- 72 per cent of Londoners have given to charitable causes in the last four weeks, similar to all the other regions, except for the South East where 77 per cent of adults have donated in the last four weeks.
- Across England, women (79 per cent) are more likely to have donated than men (70 per cent).
- Older people in England are more likely to have given to charitable causes in the last four weeks with 85 per cent of those aged 75+ having donated in the last four weeks compared with 59 per cent of those aged 16-24.

Percentage of adults who have given to charitable causes in the last four weeks



Base: Adults aged 16+ London: 2,771 South East: 1,392 South West: 721 East of England: 975 North West: 1,126 East Midlands: 801 West Midlands: 1,008 Yorkshire and The Humber: 873 North East: 376

# 7. Conclusion

- These findings, taken from the 2019/20 Community Life survey which ran from April 2019 to March 2020, generally show Londoners have good social networks and support groups.
- However, Londoners partake less in community engagement and feel the least connected/belonging to their communities compared to respondents in the rest of England.
- Londoners generally agree that if they needed help people would be there for them, while rates of chronic loneliness are in-line with other regions in England.
- The majority of Londoners also make an effort to volunteer and donate to charitable causes, which is evident through the finding that around six in ten Londoners (63 per cent) have volunteered in any way in the last year.



# Contact details

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