

# Inclusive Communities Household Survey

Overall report  
March 2025

# Background and methodology

# Background and Objectives

The Birmingham Commonwealth Games in 2022 did not utilise its entire budget allocation. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) agreed to return the unused funds to the region, in the form of a Legacy Fund, which aims to build on the community-based initiatives associated with the Games. Part of the funding has been allocated to the WMCA's Inclusive Communities programme. The aim of this programme is to strengthen ongoing work around social capital, social inclusion, social infrastructure and social mobility.

Through this programme, WMCA have highlighted the need to find out more about communities in the West Midlands – including how residents feel about belonging to their neighbourhood, the opportunities for themselves and their families, and what they would like to see improve in the future.

The WMCA have commissioned this survey to gather insights into residents' opinions and experiences, enabling WMCA to make more informed, inclusive, and effective decisions. By understanding residents' needs, WMCA can better ensure its policies are equitable, responsive to ever-changing needs, and foster greater trust, transparency, and regional cohesion.

This survey plays a key role in aligning decision-making with the long-term vision for the West Midlands, helping WMCA better understand the extent to which it shares a common understanding with residents and communities. Additionally, the WMCA Household Survey will address data gaps in existing regional and national datasets, providing valuable evidence at both the WMCA and local authority levels. The insights gained will help inform WMCA's approach to inclusion and other policy areas aimed at reducing inequalities across the region.

# Methodology



A quantitative survey was drafted by WMCA and reviewed collaboratively between WMCA and M·E·L Research.

The 12-minute survey was programmed in-house by M·E·L Research.

Fieldwork took place between 24<sup>th</sup> January and 28<sup>th</sup> February 2025.



The survey was distributed to West Midlands residents, via two leading online access panel partners. Respondents self-completed the survey online.

To ensure we reached a representative cross-section of West Midlands residents, interviews were also conducted face-to-face.

Respondents approached by interviewers were asked to self-complete the survey on interviewers' laptops, to ensure all data collected was comparable to that achieved online.



During fieldwork, quotas were set in each LA on gender, age, ethnicity and disability. Achievement on income and level of education were monitored.

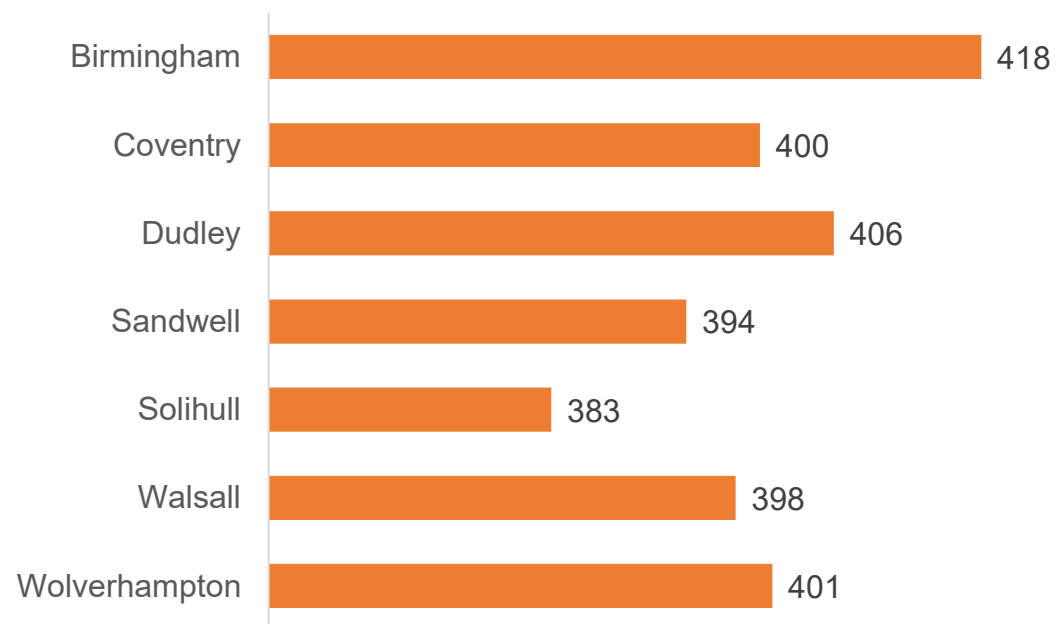
Data cleaning, processing and tabulation was undertaken internally by M·E·L Research. The data was then weighted to ensure results were representative of each LA.

Results were then analysed by M·E·L Research and findings are outlined in this report.

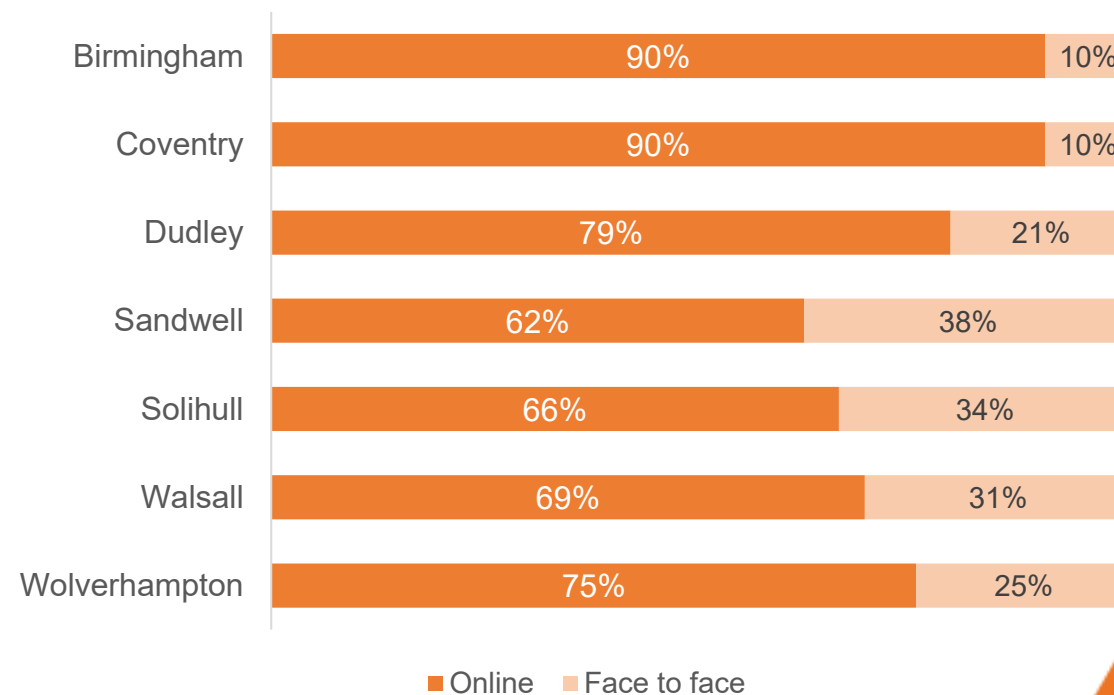
# Demographic profile

2,800 West Midlands residents aged 18+

## Local Authority



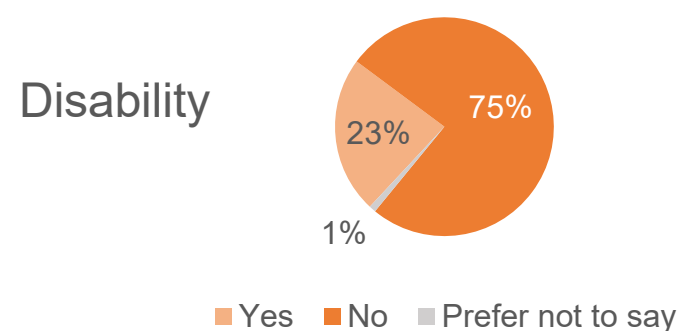
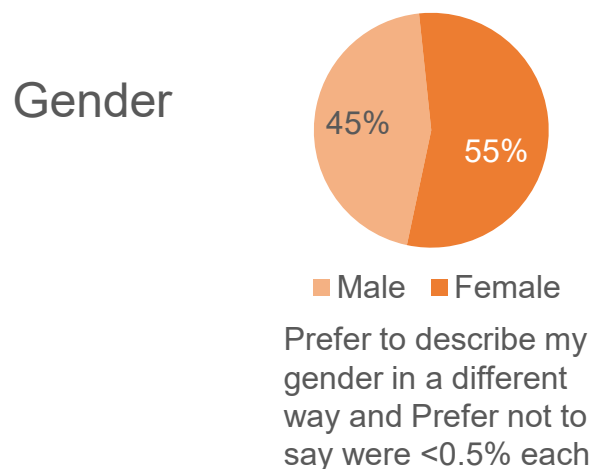
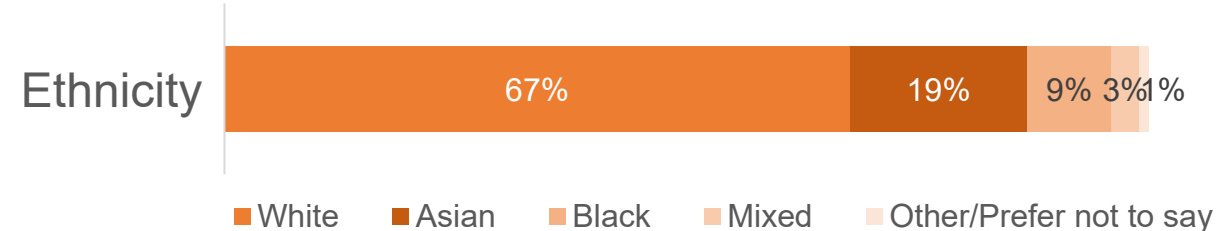
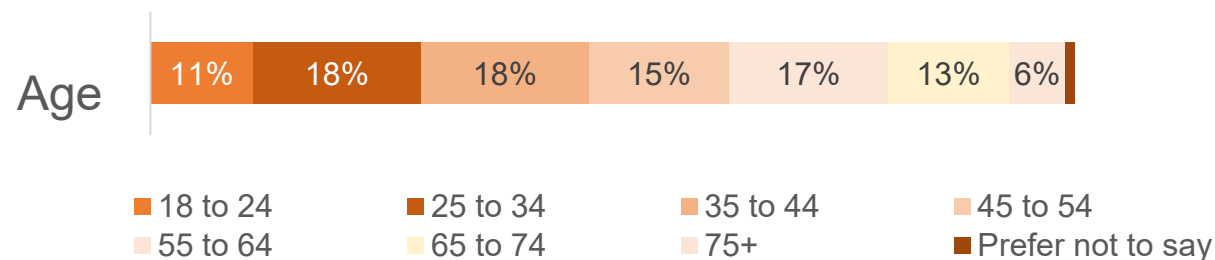
## Survey Methodology by Local Authority



Unweighted sample base: 2800

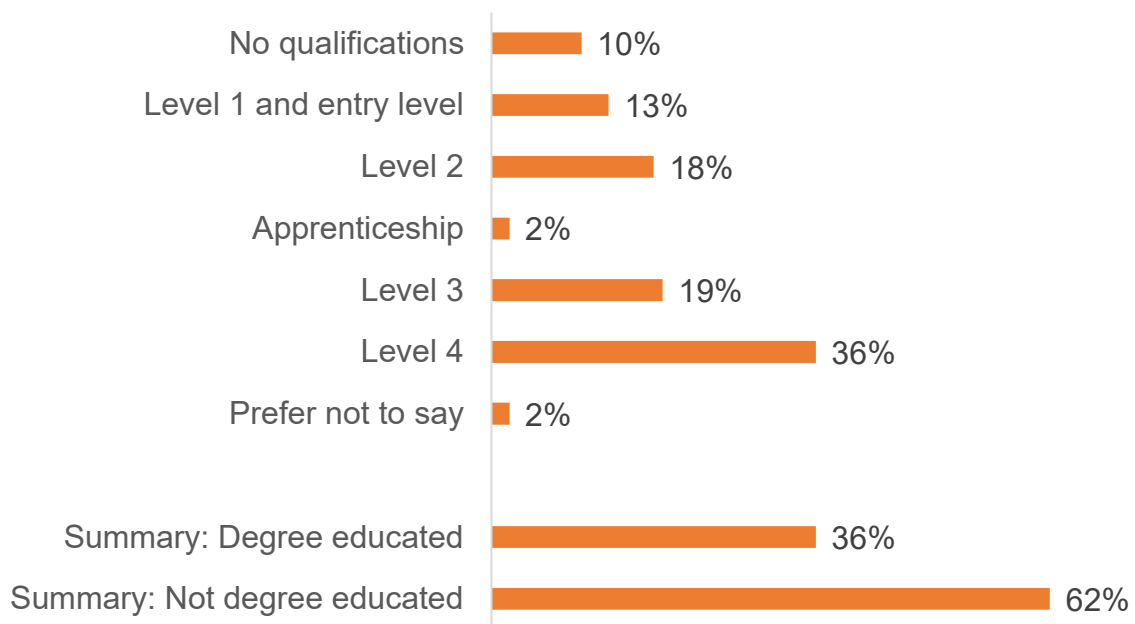
# Demographic profile

2,800 West Midlands residents aged 18+

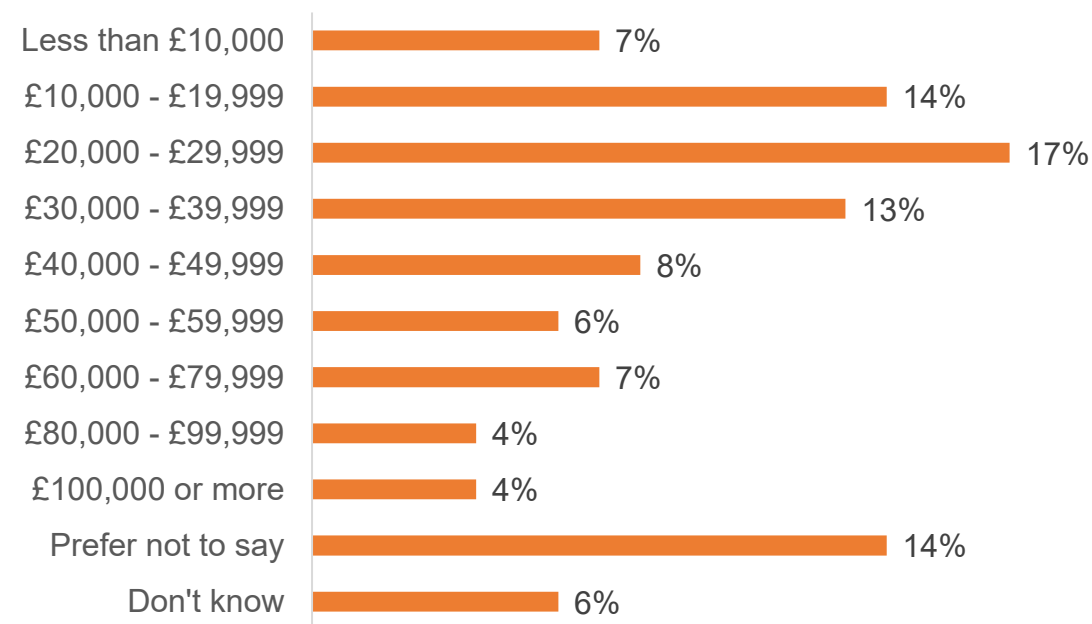


# Demographic profile

## Highest Level of Education



## Household Income



# Understanding the sample

While the profile of the sample was controlled by the discrete variables of gender, age, ethnicity and disability, in reality, these variables are interconnected.

For example, as shown in the table below, survey respondents who are in the younger age groups are more likely to be from minority ethnic groups and degree educated, and white respondents are more likely to be older and not degree educated.

This report will provide analysis by different sub-groups, identifying where there are significant variations in opinion. However, such analysis is observational, and it does not necessarily mean that the identified differences are driven by that particular aspect of the respondent's identity.

	Total	Female	Male	18-34	35-54	55+	Disability Yes	Disability No	Degree educated	Not degree educated
Asian	19%	18%	21%	+31%	21%	-8%	-11%	+22%	+25%	-16%
Black	9%	-8%	+10%	+15%	10%	-3%	-5%	+10%	+13%	-6%
Mixed	3%	+4%	-2%	+6%	3%	-1%	3%	3%	3%	3%
White	67%	68%	66%	-46%	-63%	+88%	+80%	-64%	-58%	+73%
Other	1%	1%	1%	1%	+2%	0%	*%	1%	1%	1%

\* denotes <0.5%  
Please note "Other" includes prefer not to say

+ denotes % significantly higher vs total at the 95% confidence level  
- denotes % significantly lower vs total at the 95% confidence level



# Key insight summary

# Digital connectivity

- The **majority of residents** across the West Midlands are **digitally confident**
  - Those who are not, are more likely to be older, to live alone and on a lower income, to not be in work, to have lower levels of educational attainment, to be white and living with a disability/ long-term health condition
- The **most common digitally social activity is scrolling through social media**, reading and interacting with content made by others
  - Residents spend more than 8 hours a week, on average, doing this
- Younger people, those with higher household incomes are among the groups of people spending most time connected through digital platforms
  - Males, older people, those living alone, not working and on lower incomes, spend less time digitally connected
- **Those that spend more time connecting with people digitally, are more active across all social activities**
- **More than half (53%) feel positive about their time spent on social media**
  - Just 6% are negative about this
- Reasons for **social media positivity** include **enjoyment, relaxation, to feel connected and to research topics**
- Those **negative about time spent on social media** feel that it is **unproductive/ wastes time** and can be a **depressing/sad** experience

# Social life

- **The most common social activity is spending time with family and friends**
- Almost **two-thirds (65%) of residents feel positive about their social life**, while 11% feel negative
- **Positivity** is linked to **spending more time on social activities and having supportive relationships**
  - Those most positive are more likely to be male, younger, employed, from young families, with higher income and education, religious, from ethnic minorities, active in the community, and feel welcome and connected locally
- **Negativity stems from social isolation, lack of outings, and difficulty maintaining friendships**
  - Those most negative are more likely to be female, live alone, not work, have lower income and education, be disabled, white, non-religious, less socially active, feel less connected, have limited support networks, and lower neighbourhood trust
  - **Lack of money is a key barrier**
- While social activity is generally linked to greater satisfaction with social life, this is not always the case – 56% of less socially active residents still feel positive
- **Four in five (81%) want to improve their social life**, predominantly through having more money
  - Those feeling negative also want more confidence, alternative ways to meet people, and better access to suitable social spaces
- **The desire for change is not limited to those dissatisfied with their social life** – young people, employed individuals, higher earners, parents, ethnic minorities, LGBTQ+ residents, and those already active in the community are also most likely to want to make changes to their social life

# Social inclusion and participation

- **Over half (57%) feel welcome and included in their community**, with just 7% feeling unwelcome
- **While 36% are active in their community, 41% are not**
  - People volunteer to give back, socialise, because they enjoy volunteering, and it gives them a purpose
  - **Lack of time is the biggest barrier to community participation**
- Almost **two in five (39%) feel connected to their community**; 25% feel disconnected
- **Over half (56%) want stronger community ties**
- **Not everyone who feels less connected to their community wants this to change**
  - Among those who do not feel connected to their local community, almost half (48%) do not want this to change
- **The profile of those with different types of connection to their community varies**
  - Those already connected but wanting greater connection, are more likely to be younger, employed, religious males, living in family units, with higher income/education levels and from ethnic minorities
  - Those disconnected but wanting change are often marginalised women (e.g. living alone, disabled, not working, bisexual)
  - Those disconnected but happy with that are more likely to be older, white and not religious (potentially retired empty nesters)
- **Most residents (72%) trust some people in their neighbourhood**, matching the national benchmark
- **83% have someone to turn to for help**, although this is lower than national figures

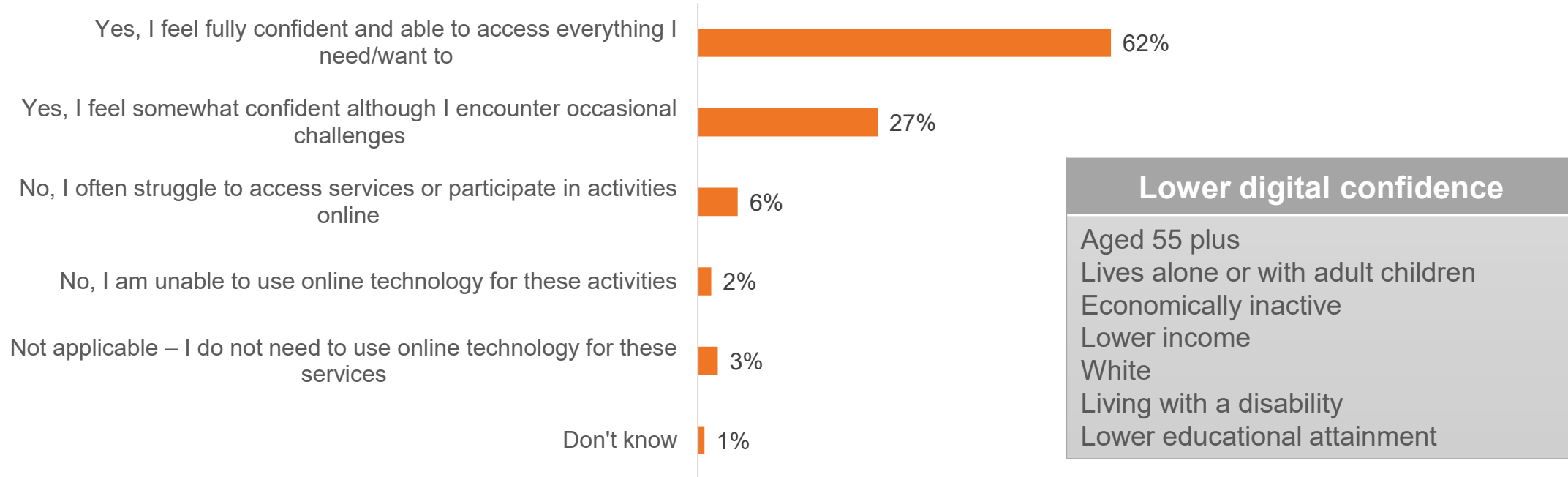
# Social infrastructure and accessibility

- **There is minority agreement among residents that the region offers groups, clubs and activities, jobs and a fulfilling life**
  - Around a quarter do not feel that their region offers these
  - Those more positive about their social life, are more likely to feel the region offers them these opportunities
  - Those most negative about their social life are less likely to see these opportunities
- **Residents most commonly cite the people as the most special aspect of their area**
  - Good local amenities, green spaces and quiet/peaceful surroundings are the next most common reasons that residents feel their area is special

# Digital connectivity

# Almost nine in ten (89%) feel confident digitally

Over six in ten (62%) are fully confident online, whilst a quarter (27%) occasionally encounter challenges

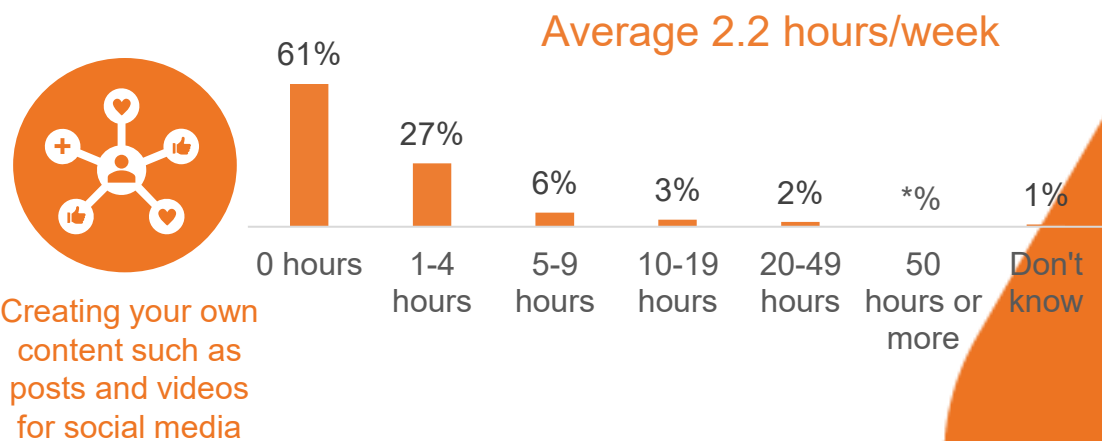
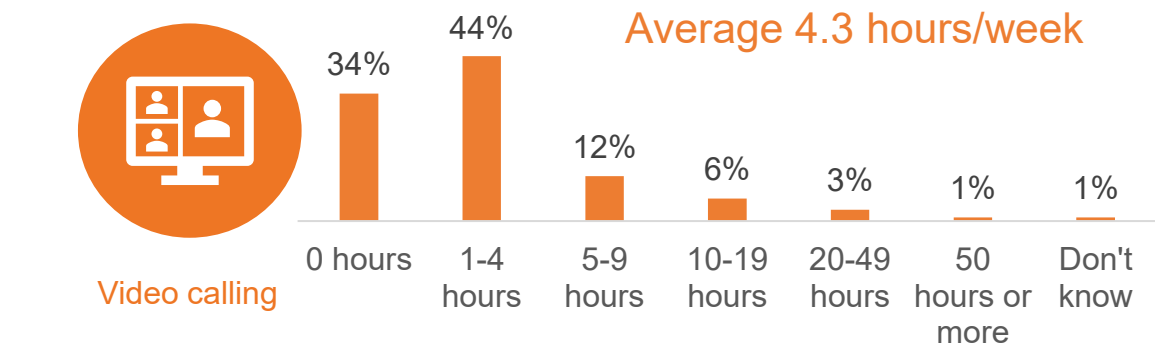
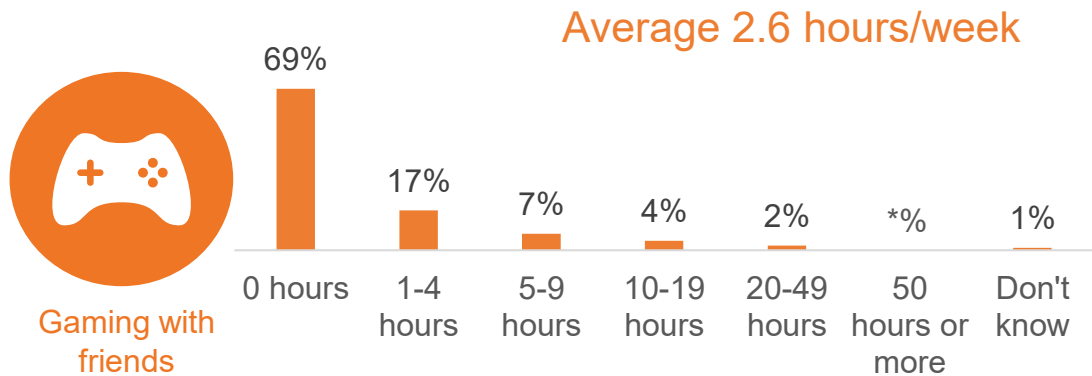
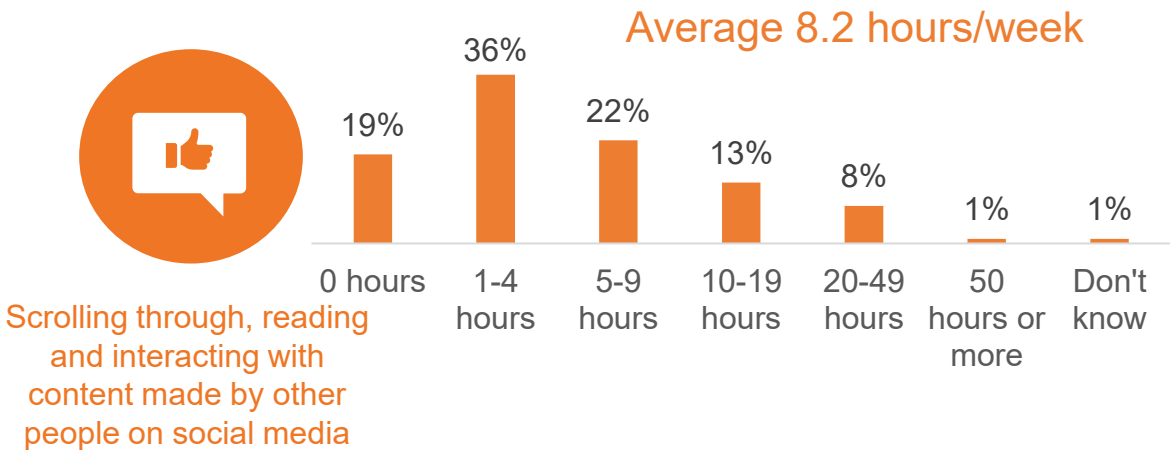


**89% Digitally confident**

**8% Not digitally confident**

# 'Passive' interaction on social media and video calling are the most common digitally social activities

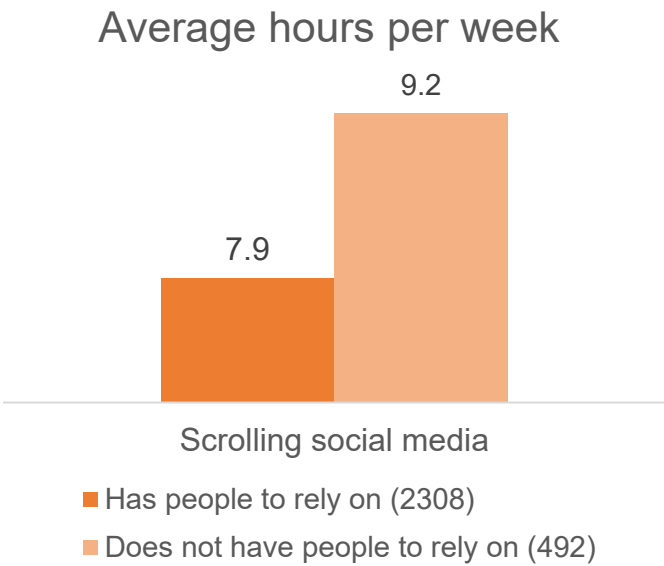
Under 35s and those living in households with £100,000k+ income are most digitally connected, on average



Q2. How many hours per week do you use each of the following as part of your digital social life?  
Unweighted sample base: 2800. \* denotes <0.5%



# Residents who do not have someone to rely on when they need help, spend more time consuming social media content



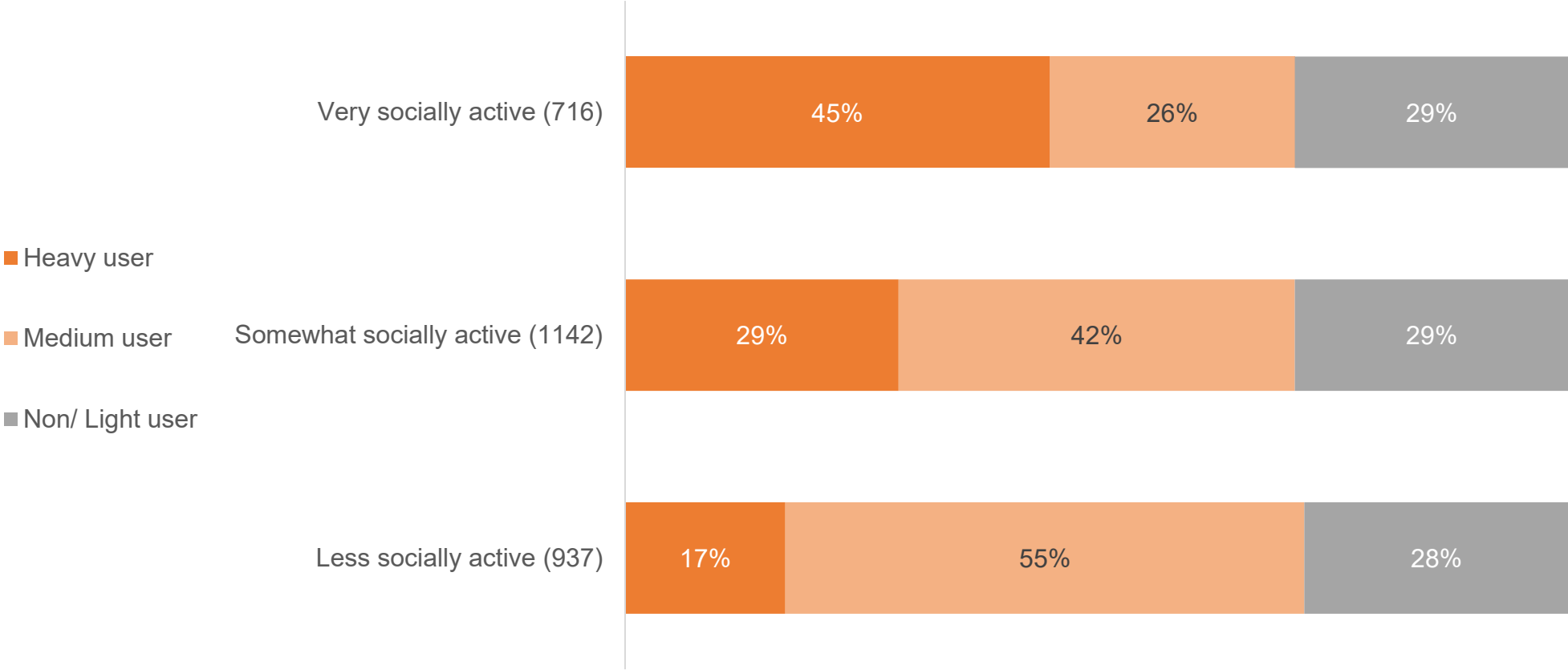
Those without someone to rely on spend more time passively scrolling on social media – perhaps due to having more time or seeking connection this way. It may be interesting to explore this in further research

Digital social life: Non or light user	
Male Older Live alone Economically inactive Christian Lower educational attainment Lower income	Heterosexual White Living with disability Not active in community <i>More likely to feel:</i> Negative about social life Disconnected from community
Digital social life: Heavy user	
Younger Economically active Live with children <18/ extended family Never married Higher income	Bisexual Ethnic minority Higher educational attainment Active in community Very socially active

Q2. How many hours per week do you use each of the following as part of your digital social life? Based on all digitally social activities combined  
Unweighted sample bases range from 64 to 2121

# Residents most socially active across all activities, are most likely to be most socially active online

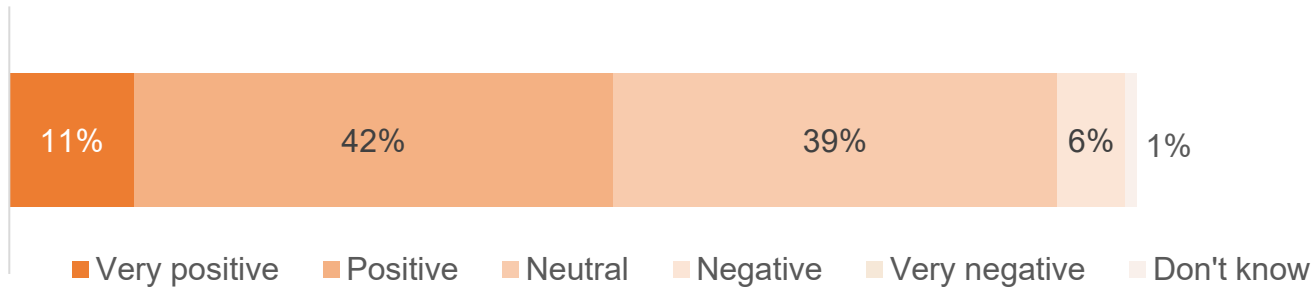
This includes video calling, gaming with friends, passive and active use of social media



Q2. How many hours per week do you use each of the following as part of your digital social life?  
Q5. During an average month, how many hours do you spend on each of the following activities?  
Unweighted bases in parentheses

# Over half (53%) say that social media makes them feel positive, with two in five (39%) feeling neutral

Only around one in twenty (6%) felt social media had a negative impact on them



## Most POSITIVE impact on

Aged 18 to 34  
Economically active  
Lived with children <18  
Ethnic minorities  
Higher educational attainment

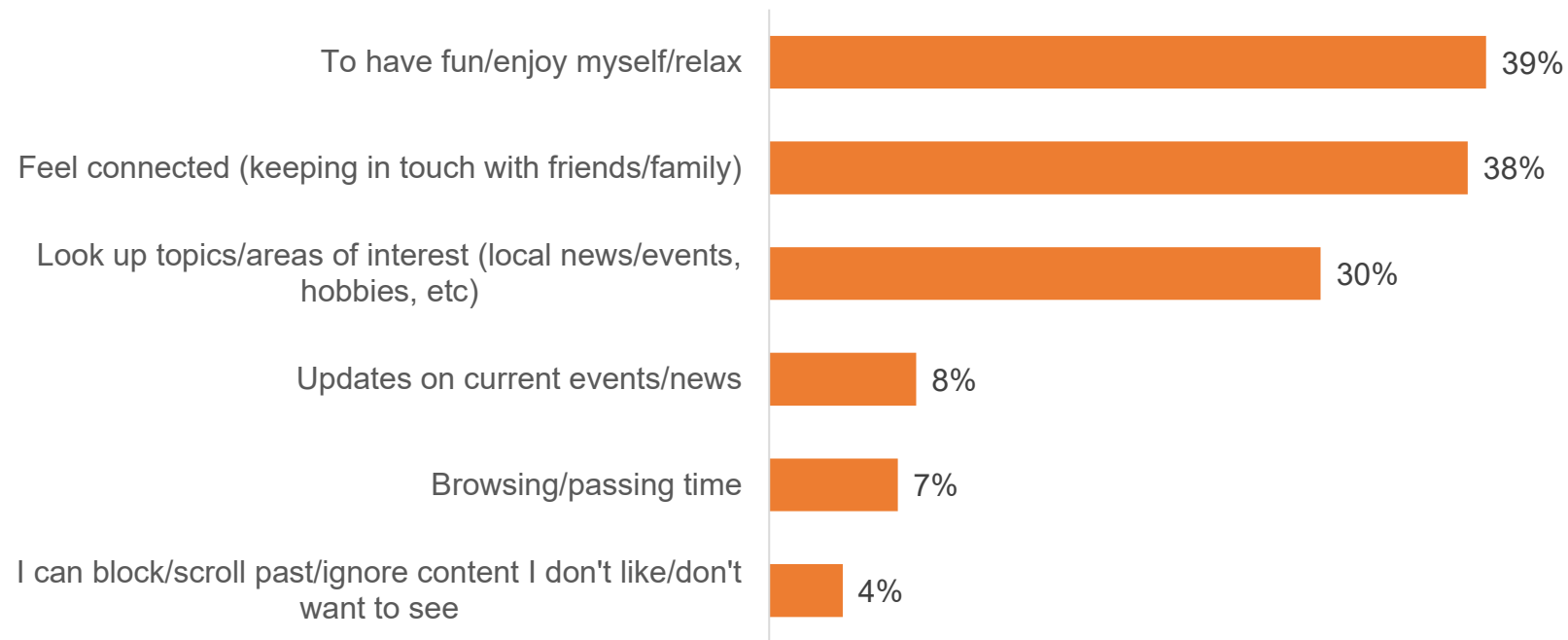


**53%**  
**positive**



**6%**  
**negative**

# For residents that feel positive about their use of social media, many use it for enjoyment and relaxation, to feel connected and to research topics of interest



Q4. Please can you explain your answer?

Unweighted sample base: 1236 (those who were positive about time spent on social media and answered the question)

Showing responses provided by >2% of respondents

# Illustrative positive comments about time spent on social media



West Midlands  
Combined Authority

*"I enjoy seeing what other people are getting up to in their lives, staying connected with friends and being inspired by strangers"*

*"It's nice to engage with others"*

*"I like to be educated and informed about things that are happening and other health related issues that affect my life"*

*"I keep up with family and friends that are not local to me and local news"*

*"I enjoy seeing what my friends and family are doing"*

*"I use it to get inspiration, whether that's home decor or fashion and I also engage with content creators I enjoy"*

*"I enjoy spending time on social media because I can connect with my friends and family"*

*"I look out for academic research and spiritual development contents"*

*"I learn a lot from time spent on social media"*

*"I use it mainly to catch up and keep in contact with friends and family, I really enjoy doing that"*

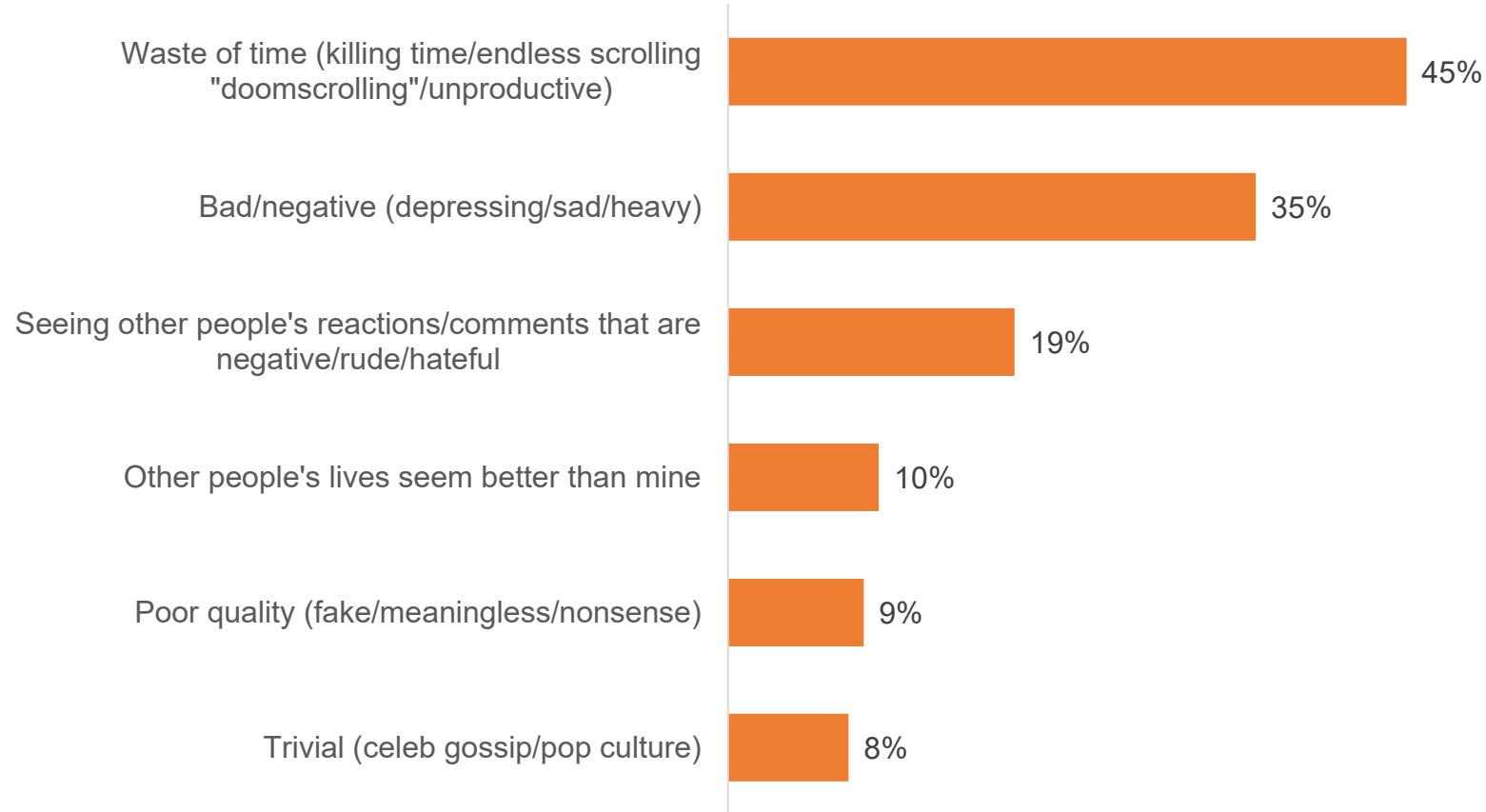
*"With social media, I can connect with friends and family which makes me very happy"*

*"It helps me relax and connect with family and friends. It also entertains me"*

Q4. Please can you explain your answer?

Unweighted sample base: 1236 (those who were positive about time spent on social media and answered the question)

# Negativity around social media use is largely driven by feeling that it is an unproductive use of time and can be a depressing or sad experience



Q4. Please can you explain your answer?

Unweighted sample base: 145 (those who were negative about time spent on social media and answered the question)

Showing responses provided by >2% of respondents

# Illustrative negative comments about time spent on social media



West Midlands  
Combined Authority

*"It's often bad news or celebrity items"*

*"A lot of the content is news and politics and I find it depressing"*

*"I see how well some people are doing which makes me feel I'm under achieving yet I also see stories about people worse off than me which is concerning"*

*"It takes away a lot of my time which I could use to do some productive work"*

*"There is too much fake news plus a lot of nonsense"*

*"It makes me feel unproductive, but I cannot seem to stop it"*

*"I feel jealous of seeing everybody else with lot of money enjoying themselves"*

*"There are a lot of people that leave harmful and abusive comments, not so much for me, but for other people, which can be quite horrible to see"*

*"I think the internet is a negative place to be most of the time, of course there are nice things to see and uplifting things but the majority are heavy, depressing and negative"*

*"I don't feel at the time it's negative but looking back probably is"*

Q4. Please can you explain your answer?

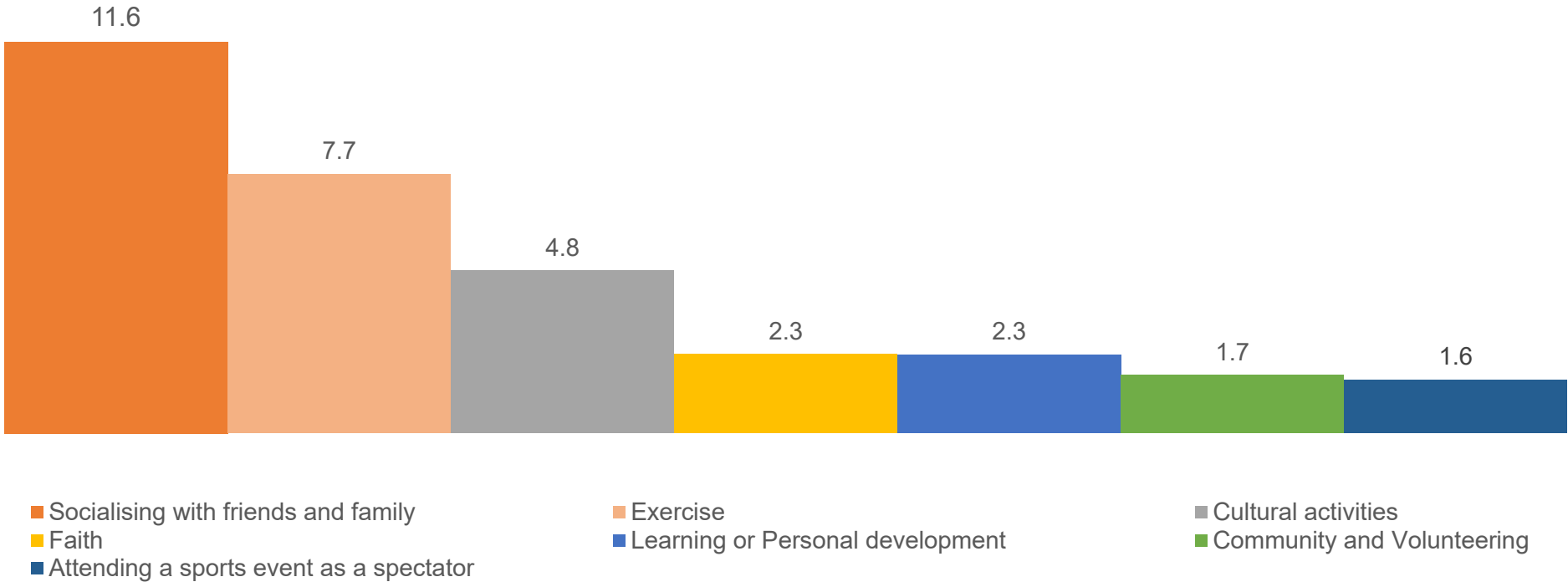
Unweighted sample base: 145 (those who were negative about time spent on social media and who answered the question)

# Social life



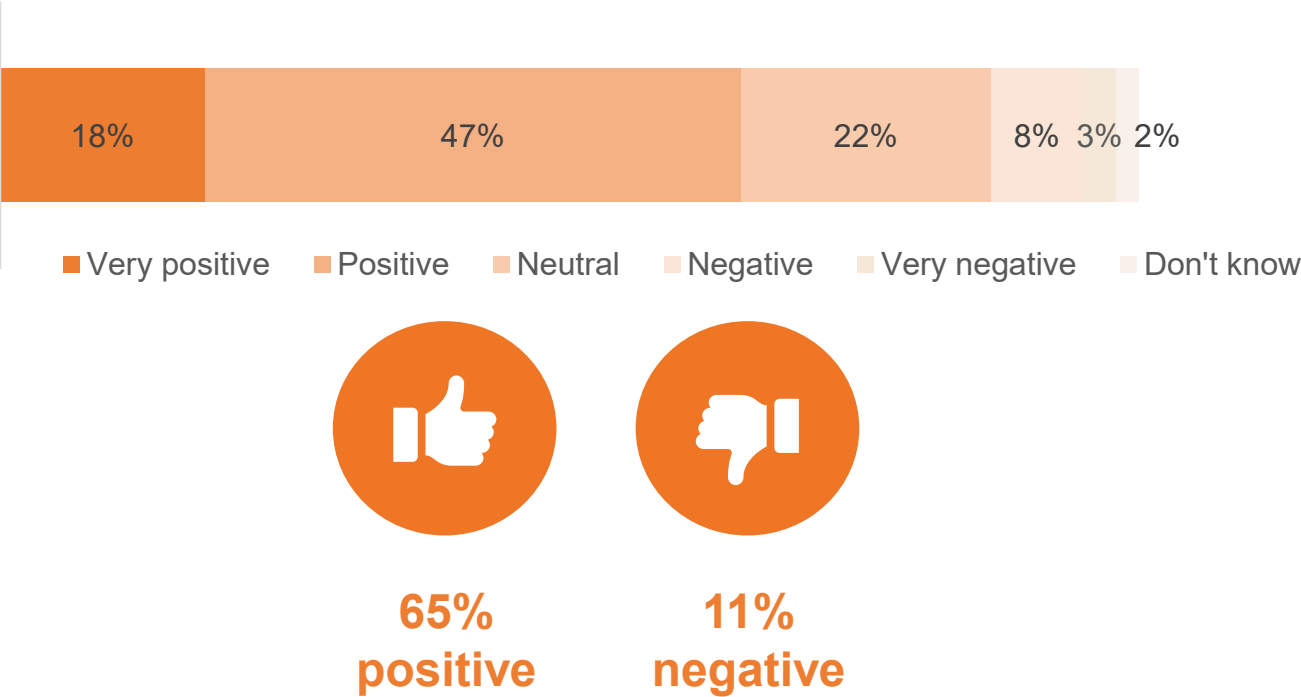
# The most common social activity of West Midlands residents is socialising with family and friends

Showing average hours per month spent doing these activities



# Two thirds (65%) feel positive about their social life, with just one in ten (11%) feeling negative

Among other differences, younger residents and those who feel welcome and connected to the community are more likely to feel positive about their social life

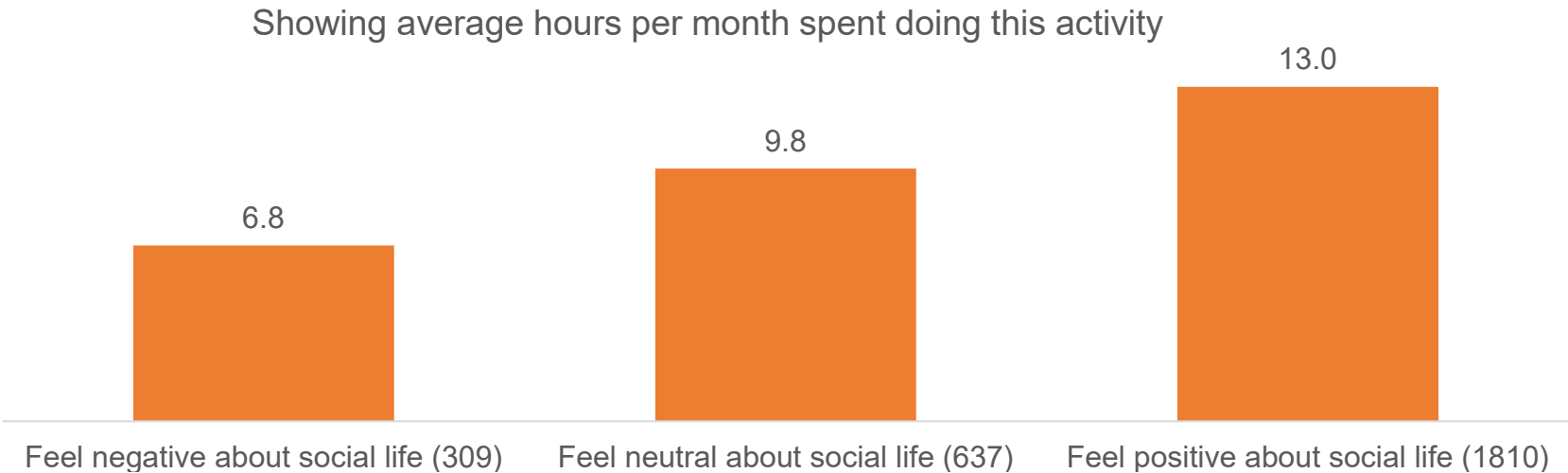


More likely to feel positive  
about social life

Males  
Aged 18-34  
Married/ legal partnership  
Living with children >18  
Economically active  
Higher household income  
Christian/ Muslim/ Hindu  
Ethnic minority  
Higher educational attainment  
More active in community  
*More likely to feel:*  
Welcome/included in community  
Connected to community

# Residents who spend more time socialising with family and friends, feel more positive about their social life

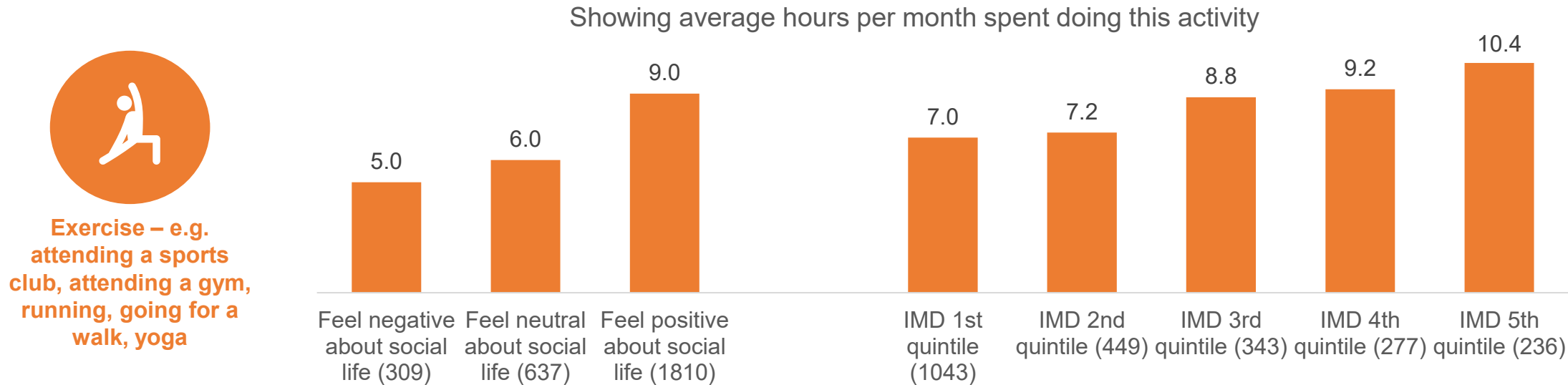
Non-heterosexual residents spend less time with family and friends vs their heterosexual counterparts



Other notable differences
Heterosexual residents spend more time socialising with family and friends vs those who are not heterosexual
Those aged 55+ spend more time socialising with family and friends vs those aged 18-54

# More time spent exercising equates to greater positive feelings about social lives

With this trend in mind, it is important to look at who is not able to spend so much time exercising – it appears there are greater barriers to exercising in the following groups – females, under 55s, lower income/higher deprivation, ethnic minorities, those not identifying as heterosexual, those with disabilities and those with lower educational attainment



More time exercising	Less time exercising
Males	Females
Aged 55+	Aged 18-54
White	Ethnic minority
Higher educational attainment	Lives with a disability
Heterosexual	Lower educational attainment
	Not heterosexual

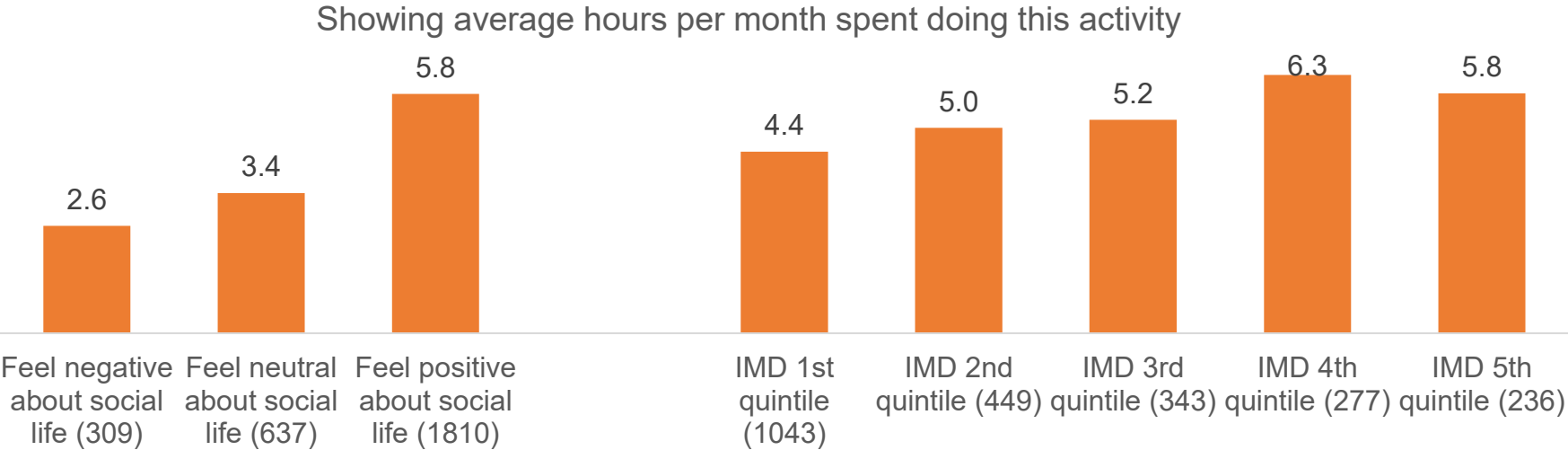
Q5. During an average month, how many hours do you spend on each of the following activities?  
Unweighted sample bases in chart parentheses

# Residents who spend more time involved in cultural activities, feel more positive about their social life

Lower income/higher deprivation, economic inactivity, being female, from an ethnic minority, disabled and lower educational attainment are associated with less time spent doing cultural activities



**Cultural activities**

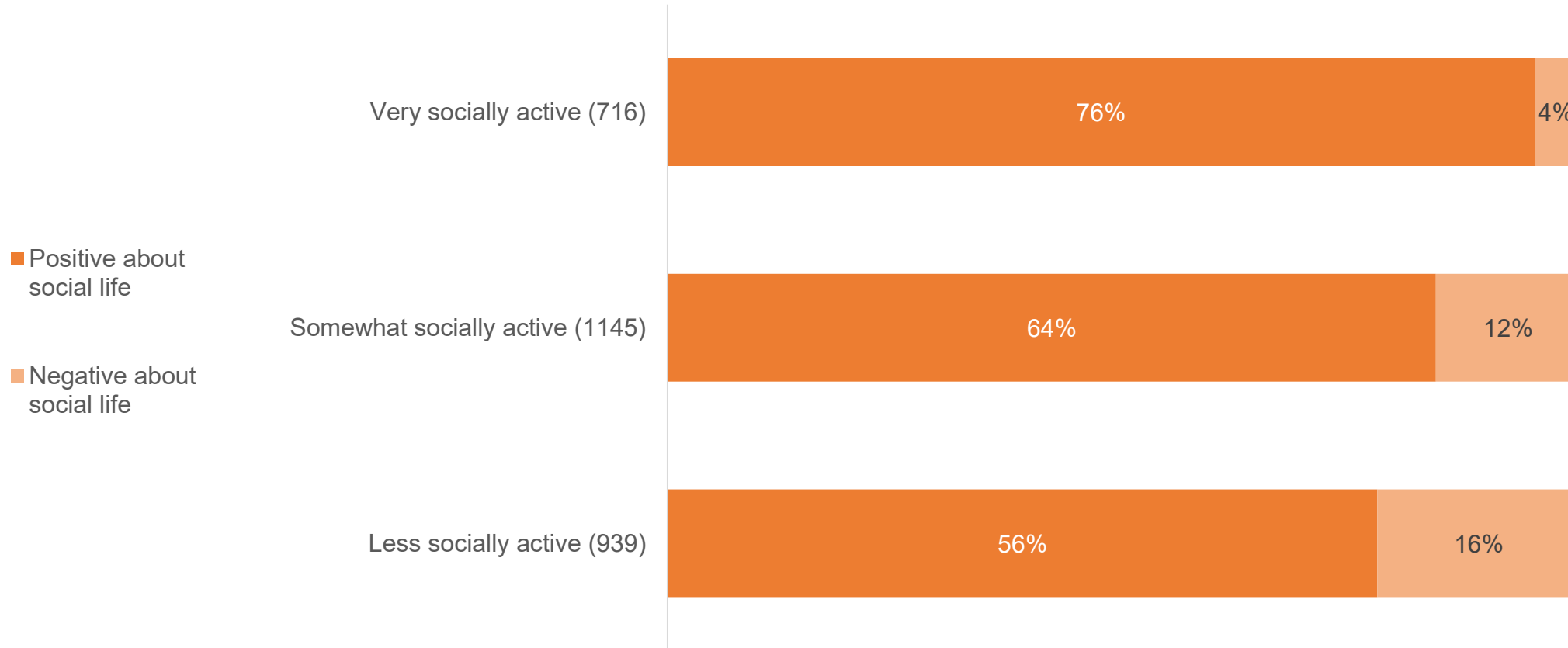


More time involved in cultural activities	Less time involved in cultural activities
Males	Females
White	Ethnic minority
Higher educational attainment	Lives with a disability
Heterosexual	Lower educational attainment
Higher household income	Not heterosexual
Economically active	Lower household income
	Economically inactive

Q5. During an average month, how many hours do you spend on each of the following activities?  
Unweighted sample bases in chart parentheses

# While generally more social activity = more positive sentiment about social life, it is important to note that less social activity does not all always generate negativity

More than half (56%) of those who are less socially active, feel positive about their social life



Q5. During an average month, how many hours do you spend on each of the following activities?

Q6. How do you feel about your social life?

Unweighted sample bases in parentheses

# Residents who feel positive about their social life put it down to spending a lot of time with family and friends and having supportive friends



Q7. Please can you explain your answer?

Unweighted sample base: 1791 (those who were positive about their social life and answered the question)

Showing responses provided by >2% of respondents

# Illustrative positive comments about social life

*"I love to spend time with friends and relatives, I am quite lucky in the fact that I have a decent family structure around me"*

*"I feel positive about my social life as I have strong connections with family, friends, and my community"*

*"I have a small group of close friends & I am happy with that"*

*"I enjoy regularly meeting up with friends and family"*

*"Spending time with family and friends is essential in life"*

*"I'm lucky as I have a large group of friends. Also friends online I keep in touch with"*

*"It's great to be with our family, especially sons and granddaughter"*

*"It gives me joy to connect with my family so I feel confident and positive"*

*"I have a small but close and loyal group of friends and I stay in touch with them regularly"*

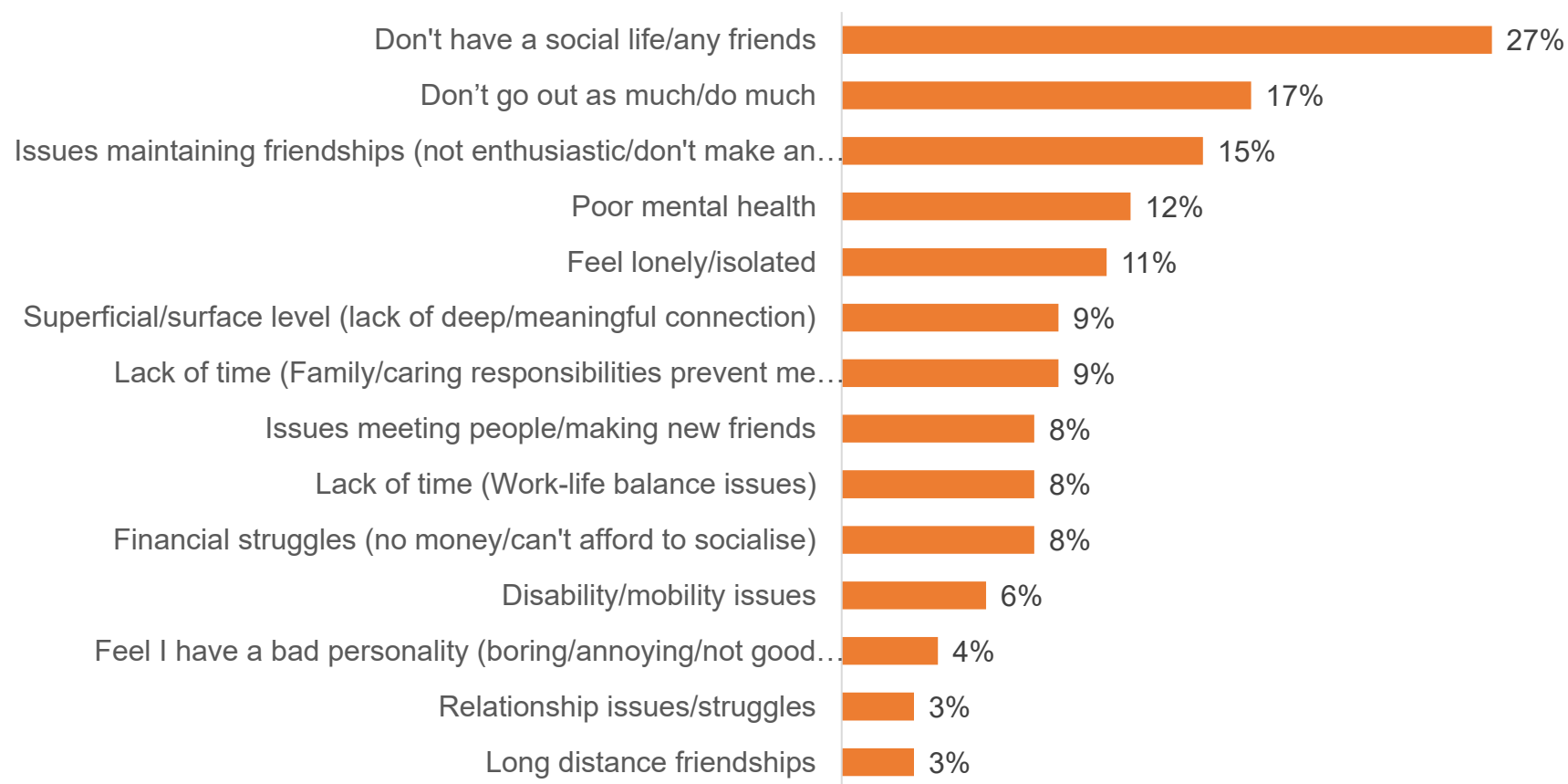
*"These are positive and good for mental health, looking forward to it being more active when partner retires in the future"*

Q7. Please can you explain your answer?

Unweighted sample base: 1791 (those who were positive about their social life and who answered the question)



# Negative sentiment about residents' social lives are driven by not having friends, not going out enough and issues maintaining friendships



Q7. Please can you explain your answer?

Unweighted sample base: 309 (those who were negative about their social life and answered the question)

Showing responses provided by >2% of respondents

# Illustrative negative comments about social

*"Maybe due to my age I don't feel enthusiastic anymore"*

*"I don't have a girlfriend or any serious friends so I feel isolated and lonely"*

*"My friends are far away and there is no community spirit where I live, no one talks to you"*

*"I am not sure it feels like due to lack of motivation and nothing happening around me it seems like I am wasting my youth"*

*"Events have made me miserable and depressed. Tend to stay at home and remain isolated. I am not good company for socialising so avoid it"*

*"I'm quite introverted and prefer to stay indoors. The only time I socialise is when I either really need to go out or when I have made plans with my friends"*

*"I don't go out, I have no one to go with"*

*"I don't have friends in real life and just a couple of online friends. I have a difficult relationship with my mum due to her alcohol consumption and the way she treats me, so feel alienated from family"*

*"I feel like I am not sociable, people can easily get bored around me"*

*"I feel left behind"*

Q7. Please can you explain your answer?

Unweighted sample base: 309 (those who were negative about social life and who answered the question)

# Profile of those who feel negative about their social life

Those who feel most negative about their social life would like to have more money, more confidence, and changes to their environment to make it easier to meet people

## Broad characteristics of those who feel more negative about their social life

- Female
- Live alone
- Live with a disability or long-term health condition
- Economically inactive
- Experiencing greater deprivation
- Lower educational attainment
- No religion
- White
- Less socially active/ active in community
- Feel less connected to/ welcome in community
- Less likely to have people to rely on
- Seek more connection to community
- Less likely to trust people in neighbourhood
- More likely to be negative about their area
- Less digitally confident
- Feel negative about time spent on social media
- Feel other people's lives seem better than theirs (on social media)

**Those who feel negative about their social life are more likely than those who feel positive or neutral to wish for changes to their social life, particularly:**

- To have more money
- To have more confidence to go out
- To have alternative ways to meet new people
- To have a safer neighbourhood to meet people
- To have easily accessible and suitable places to meet people



Q6. How do you feel about your social life?

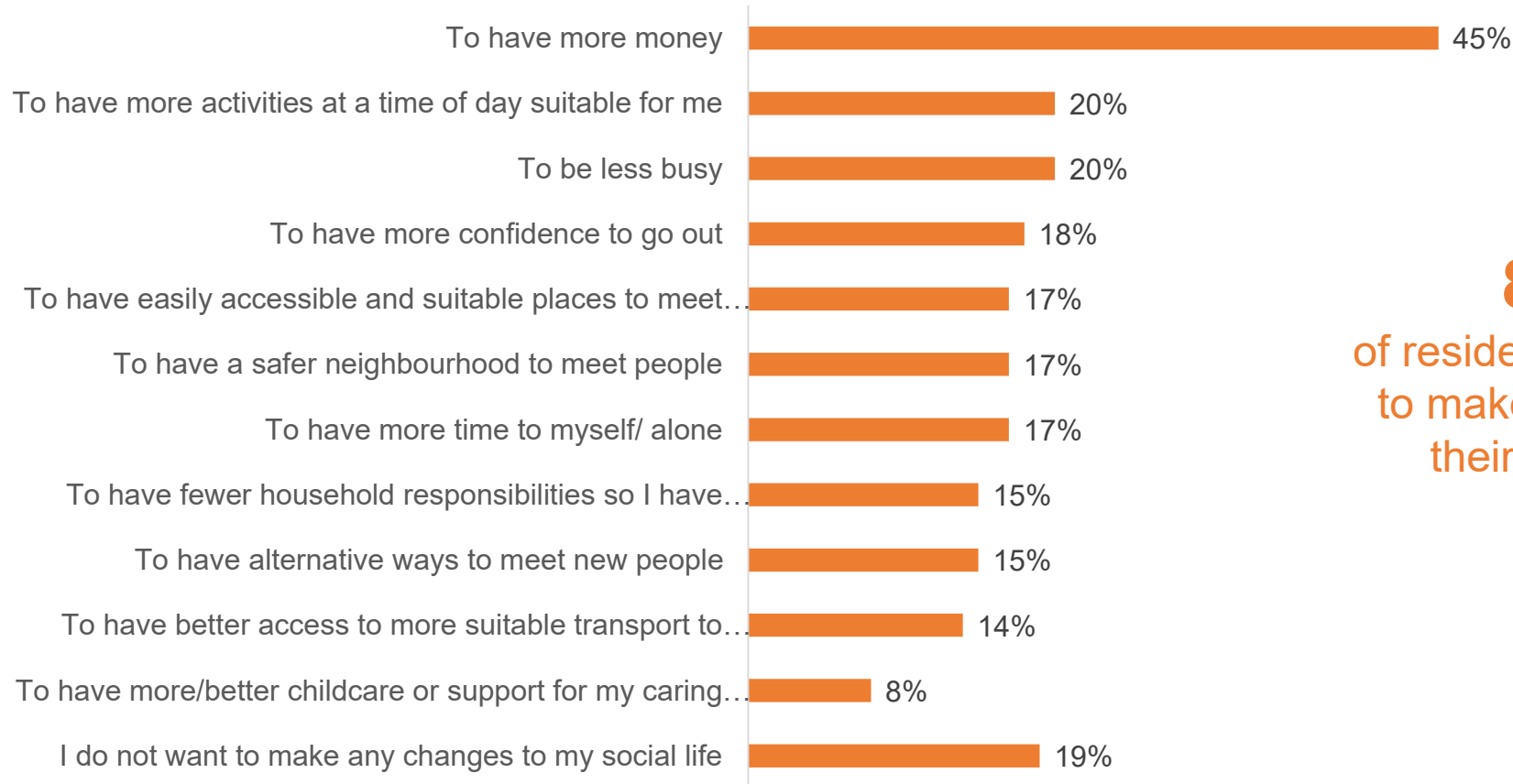
Q8. What changes, if any, would you like to make to your social life? I would like:  
Unweighted sample base: 309 (those who feel negative about their social life)

# When asked about changes residents would like to make to their social life, approaching half (45%) say they would like more money



West Midlands  
Combined Authority

One in five (20%) wished for more suitable activities or to be less busy



**81%**  
of residents would like  
to make changes to  
their social life

Q8. What changes, if any, would you like to make to your social life? I would like:

Unweighted sample base: 2800

# Who is most likely to want to make changes to their social life?

The top change that residents in all these groups would like is to have **more money**

## 85% or more of the following groups of residents want to make changes to their social life

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Aged 18-54</li><li>• Household income of £60,000+</li><li>• Not heterosexual</li><li>• Black/Mixed ethnicity</li><li>• Economically active</li><li>• Higher educational attainment</li><li>• Never married</li><li>• Currently/ previously served in the armed forces</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lives with children under 18</li><li>• Lives with extended family</li><li>• Live with lodgers/housemates</li><li>• Feel negative about social life</li><li>• Does not have people to rely on</li><li>• Does not feel welcome/ included in community</li><li>• Already active in community</li><li>• Spending more time on digital social activity</li></ul> |
|---|---|

# Focus on specific changes that certain groups would like to make to their social life



**Women** are more likely than men to wish for changes, particularly:

- More money
- More activities at a suitable time
- More confidence to go out
- Fewer household responsibilities
- More/better childcare or support for caring responsibilities
- More time to myself/ alone



Residents from **ethnic minorities** are more likely than white residents to wish for changes, particularly:

- Less busy
- More time to myself/alone
- Accessible and suitable places to meet people
- Alternative ways to meet new people
- More/better childcare or support for my caring responsibilities



**LGBTQ+** individuals are more likely to wish for changes, particularly:

- More activities at a suitable time
- Alternative ways to meet new people
- Accessible and suitable places to meet people
- More money

# Focus on specific changes that certain groups would like to make to their social life



**Younger people aged 18-34** are more likely than over 35s to wish for changes, particularly:

- Better access to more suitable transport
- More activities on offer at a time of day that is suitable for me
- Easily accessible and suitable places to meet people
- More/better childcare or support for my caring responsibilities



**Those in work** are more likely than those not working to wish for changes, particularly:

- More activities on offer at a time of day that is suitable for me
- Fewer household responsibilities
- More time to myself/ alone
- Less busy
- Alternative ways to meet new people
- Safer neighbourhood to meet people
- More/better childcare or support for my caring responsibilities
- More money



**Those living with a disability/long-term health condition** are more likely than those without to wish for:

- More confidence to go out
- Better access to more suitable transport
- Safer neighbourhood to meet people
- Easily accessible and suitable places to meet people

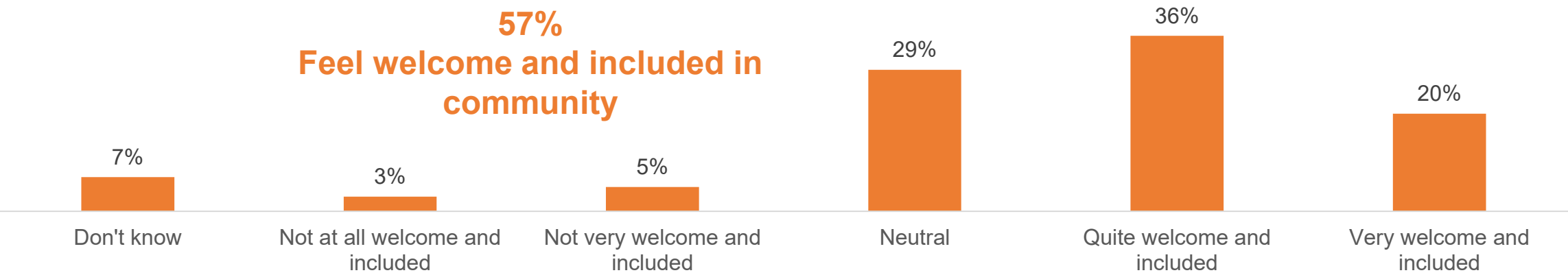
# Social inclusion and civic participation



# Almost six in ten (57%) feel welcome and included in community events and spaces



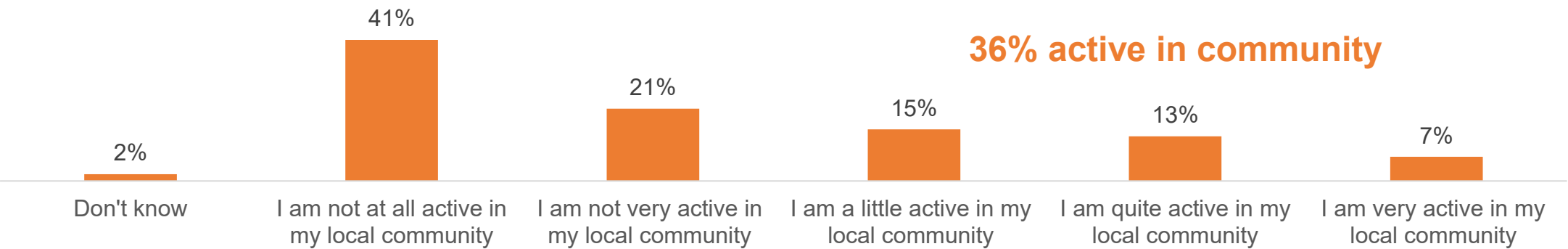
One in five (20%) feel very welcome and included, whilst a further one in three (36%) feel quite welcome/ included. Just 7% do not feel welcome/ included



More likely to feel welcome/ included	Less likely to feel welcome/ included
Males	Over 35s
18 to 34s	Economically inactive
Live with children <18	Living alone
Economically active	Living with disability
Ethnic minorities	Lower Household income
Muslim/Hindu	No religion
Higher Household income	White
Higher educational attainment	Lower educational attainment
More digitally confident/ connected	Less digitally confident/ connected
More socially active/ active in community	Less socially active/ active in community

# Over one third (36%) of residents are at least a little active in their local community

Two in five (41%) are not at all active in their local community



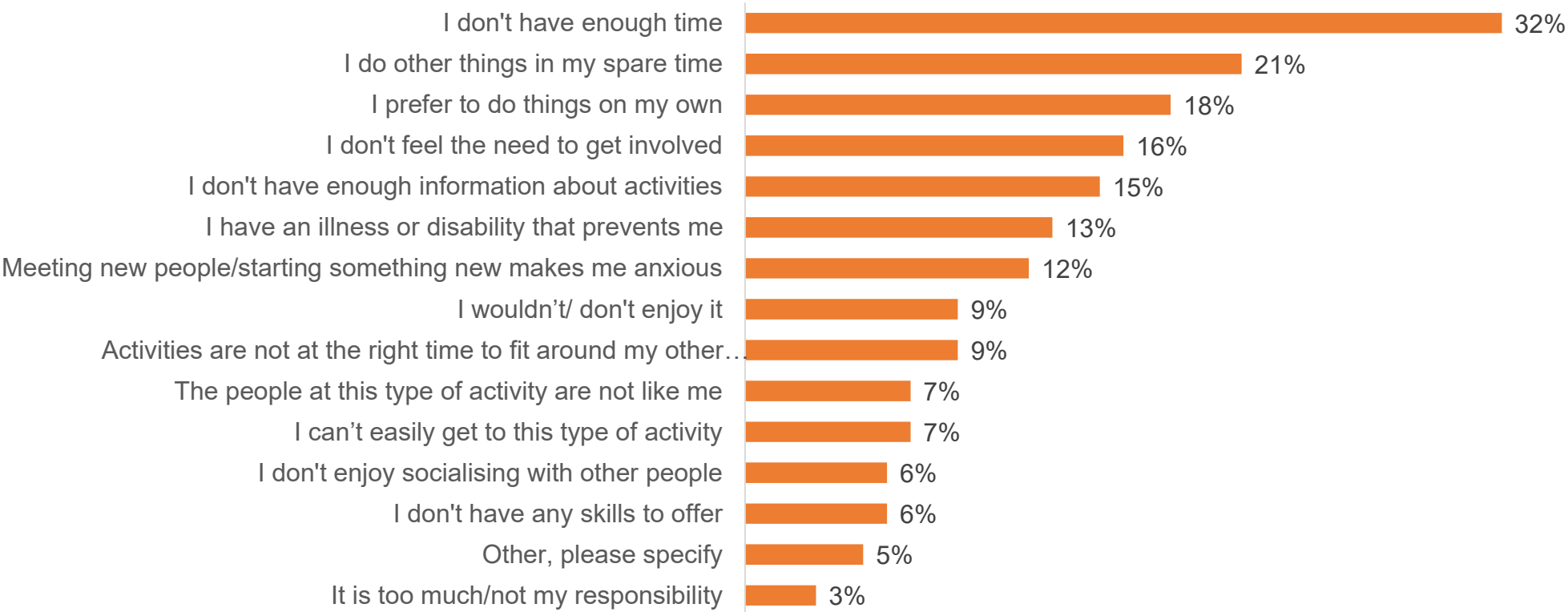
More likely to be active in community	Less likely to be active in community
Males	Over 55s
18 to 34s	Economically inactive
Economically active	Lower Household income
Higher Household income	Live alone
Live with children <18	No religion
Ethnic minorities	White
Higher educational attainment	Living with disabilities
Digitally confident/ connected	Lower educational attainment
Positive about social life	Less digitally confident/ connected
Feel welcome/ connected to community	Negative about social life
	Does not feel welcome/ connected to community

# Residents active in their community want to give back to their community, to spend time with others, volunteer for enjoyment and because it gives them purpose



Q11. Which of the following best describes why you are active in your local community?  
Unweighted sample base: 1015 (those who are active in their local community)  
Showing responses provided by >2% of respondents

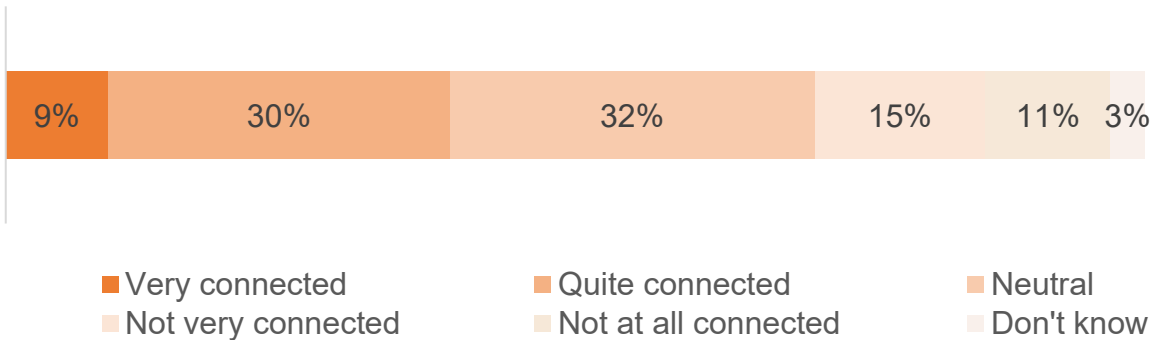
# Lack of time is the greatest barrier to community participation




Q12. Which of the following best describes why you are not very active in your local community?  
Unweighted sample base: 1737 (those who are not active in their local community)  
Showing responses provided by >2% of respondents

# Around 2 in 5 residents (39%) feel connected to their local community

A quarter (25%) do not feel connected to their community





39%

Connected



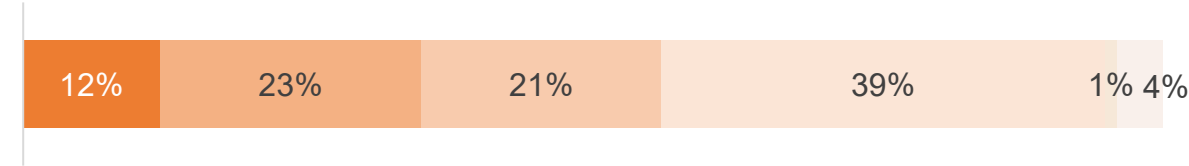
25%

Disconnected

More likely to feel connected to community		Less likely to feel connected to community	
Males	Higher educational level	Over 55s	Lower educational level
18-34s	Higher Household income	Living alone	Lower Household income
Living with partner	Digitally confident	Economically inactive	Negative about social life
Living with children <18	Positive about social life	No religion	Does not feel welcome/ not
Economically active	Feels welcome/active in	Bisexual	active in community
Hindu/ Muslim	community	White	Does not have people to rely on
Ethnic minorities	Has people to rely on	Living with disability	

# More than half (56%) of residents would like to experience greater connection to their community

A large minority (39%) are happy with the extent to which they feel connected to their community. Just 1% are seeking less connection than they currently have



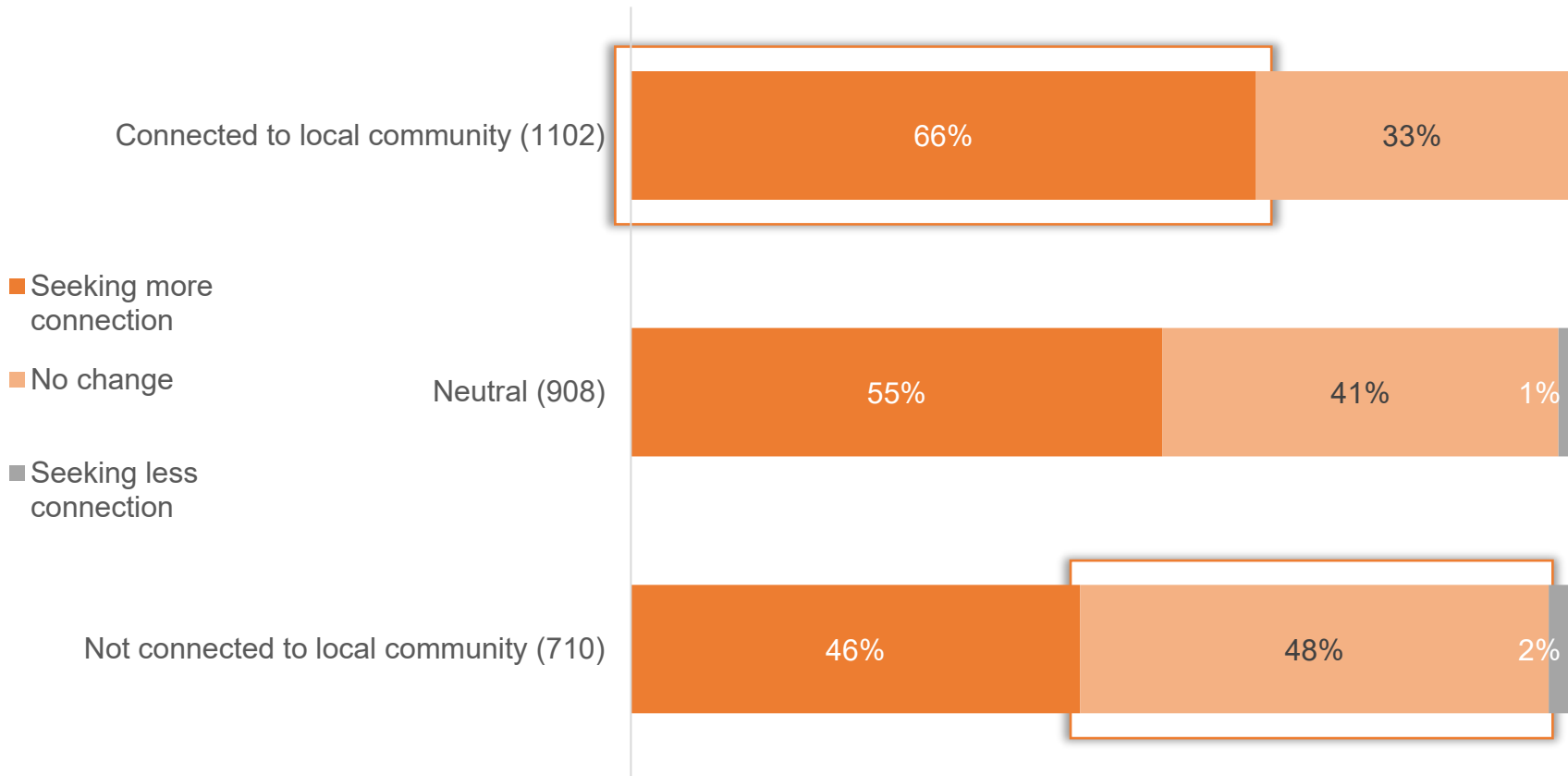
- I would like to feel much more connected
- I would like to feel a little more connected
- I would like to feel less connected
- I would like to feel somewhat more connected
- No change to connection
- Don't know

**56%**  
of residents would like to feel more connected to their local community

More likely to be seeking greater connection	
Females	Higher Household income
Aged 18-34	Higher educational attainment
Bisexual	Lives with children <18
Muslim/ Hindu/ Christian	Lives with lodgers/housemates
Ethnic minorities	Already feels connected to community
Economically active	

# Not everyone who feels less connected to their community wants this to change

Among those who do not feel connected to their local community, almost half (48%) do not want this to change. Two thirds (66%) of those who already feel connected to their local community, are seeking even greater connection



Q13. Which of the following best describes how connected you feel to your local community?  
Q14. Which of the following best describes how, if at all, you would like the connection you feel to your local community to change?  
Unweighted sample bases in parentheses

# The profile of those with different relationships to their community tends to vary



Connected and seeking greater connection (746)	Not connected and seeking greater connection (325)	Not connected and not seeking greater connection (338)
<p><i>More likely vs total:</i></p> <p>Male</p> <p>Aged 25-44</p> <p>Living with partner/ children &lt;18</p> <p>Higher Household income</p> <p>Economically active</p> <p>Christian/Muslim/Hindu</p> <p>Asian/Black</p> <p>Higher educational attainment</p> <p>Previously/ currently serve in armed forces</p>	<p><i>More likely vs total:</i></p> <p>Female</p> <p>Live alone</p> <p>Economically inactive</p> <p>Bisexual</p> <p>No religion</p> <p>White</p> <p>Live with a disability</p>	<p><i>More likely vs total:</i></p> <p>Aged 55-74</p> <p>Live alone</p> <p>Live with adult children</p> <p>Economically inactive</p> <p>No religion</p> <p>White</p>

Q13. Which of the following best describes how connected you feel to your local community?

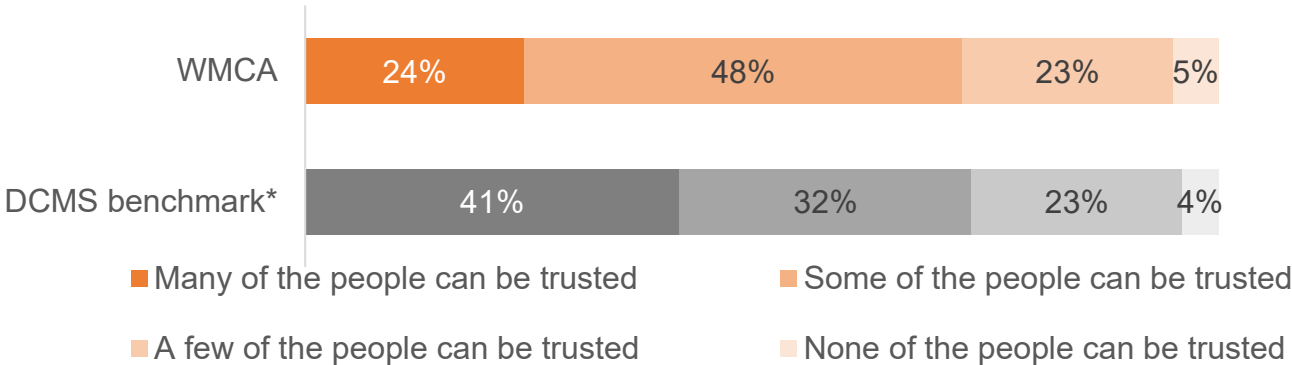
Q14. Which of the following best describes how, if at all, you would like the connection you feel to your local community to change?

Unweighted sample bases in parentheses



# Most residents (72%) trust at least some of the people living in their neighbourhood, in line with the benchmark for England

The proportion of West Midlands residents that feel most people in their neighbourhood can be trusted is lower compared to the benchmark for England



**72%**  
of residents feel that at least  
some of the people who live  
in their neighbourhood can  
be trusted  
(DCMS benchmark 73%)

Most likely feel many people can be trusted		Least likely to feel many people can be trusted	
Males	Higher education level	Females	Lower education level
Aged 55+	Digitally confident	Lives alone	Negative about social life
Lower deprivation	Positive about social life	Higher deprivation	Does not feel welcome/ less
Christian	Feels welcome/ active in community	Ethnic minority	active in community
White	Has people to rely on	Living with a disability	Does not have people to rely on

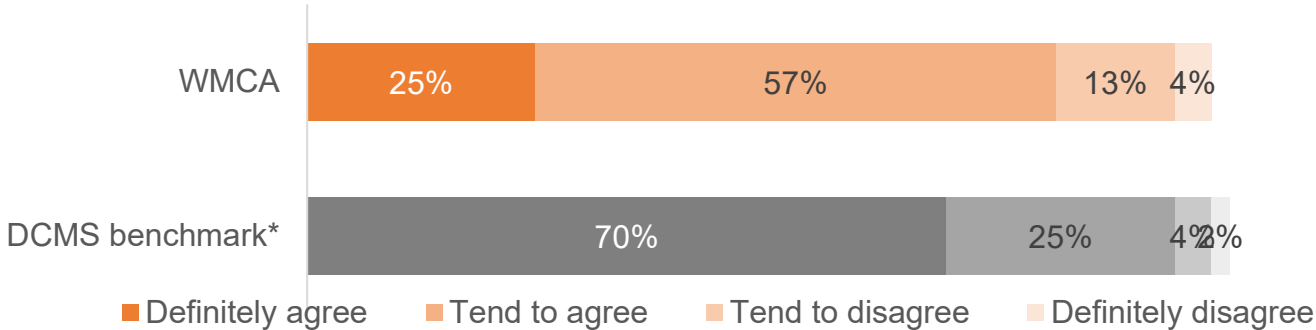
Q15. Thinking about the people who live in this neighbourhood, to what extent do you believe they can be trusted?

Unweighted sample base: 2800

\*Community Life Survey from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, base 158,832, people aged 16 and over in England, Oct 2023 – March 2024.  
N.B. The DCMS survey included people aged 16+, whereas this survey for WMCA included people aged 18+. Please bear in mind when interpreting results

# Most residents (83%) agree that they have someone to rely on if they need help

However, residents in the West Midlands are less likely to feel that they have people who would be there for them if they needed help, compared to the benchmark for England



83%

Have people who would be there for them if they needed help  
(DCMS benchmark 94%)



17%

Do not have people who would be there for them if they needed help  
(DCMS benchmark 6%)

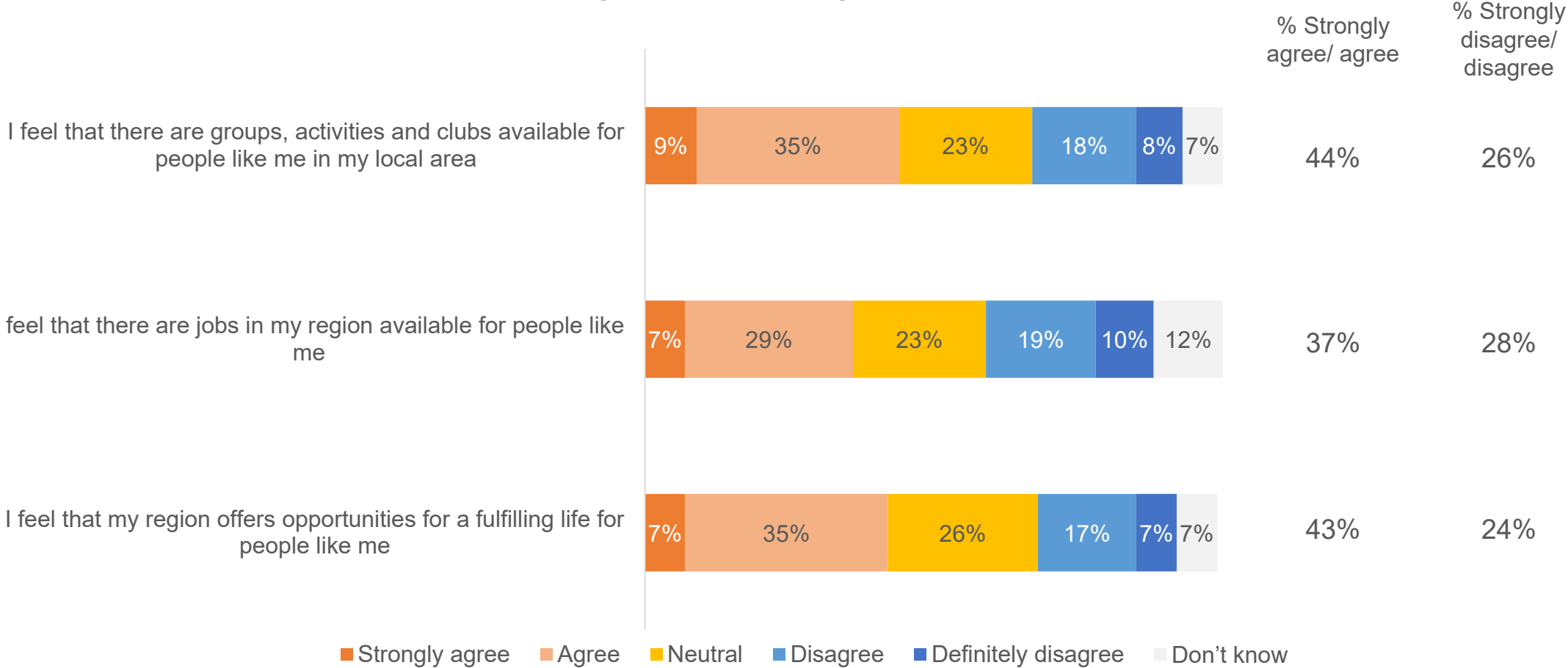
More likely to have people to rely on		Less likely to have people to rely on	
Aged 55+	Higher education level	Aged 18-54	Living with disability
Married/partnership	Digitally confident	Lives alone	Lower education level
Lower deprivation	Positive about social life	Higher deprivation	Lacking digital confidence
Heterosexual	Feels welcome/ active in community	Not heterosexual	Negative about social life
Muslim		No religion	Does not feel welcome/ not active in community
Asian		Mixed ethnicity	

Q16. To what extent do you agree or disagree that 'if I needed help, there are people who would be there for me'? Unweighted sample base: 2800  
\*Community Life Survey from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, base 51,560, people aged 16 and over in England, Oct 2023 – March 2024.  
N.B. The DCMS survey included people aged 16+, whereas this survey for WMCA included people aged 18+. Please bear in mind when interpreting results

# Social infrastructure and accessibility

# There is minority agreement overall that the region offers a fulfilling life, jobs and groups, activities and clubs for residents

Around a quarter of residents do not agree that the region offers these



**Broadly, males, those that are younger, degree educated, religious, Black, living with partners and young children, and experiencing lower levels of deprivation, are most likely to feel that the region offers them jobs, activities and a fulfilling life**

Those most likely to disagree are less connected to their community and are more likely to be female, older, living alone, not working, not religious, White, disabled, not degree educated and experiencing higher levels of deprivation

More likely to feel the region offers a fulfilling life, jobs and groups, activities and clubs for residents		Less likely to feel the region offers a fulfilling life, jobs and groups, activities and clubs for residents	
Male Younger Lives with partner Lives with children under 18 Economically active Lower deprivation Christian/ Hindu/ Muslim Black	Higher educational attainment Digitally confident Positive about social life Feels welcome/ active in community Has people to rely on	Female Older Lives alone Economically inactive Higher deprivation No religion White Lives with disability	Lower educational attainment Lacking digital confidence Negative about social life Does not feel welcome/ not active in community Does not have people to rely on

Q17. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?  
I feel that there are groups, activities and clubs available for people like me in my local area  
I feel that there are jobs in my region available for people like me  
I feel that my region offers opportunities for a fulfilling life for people like me  
Unweighted sample bases range from 86 to 2635

# When asked what is special about their area, residents most commonly mention the people

Good local amenities, green spaces and the quiet/peace are the next most common mentions. One in five (21%) say that there is nothing special about their area



Q18. What is special about your local area?  
Unweighted sample base: 2785 (those who answered the question)  
Showing responses provided by >2% of respondents

# Illustrative examples of residents' views on what is special about their area



West Midlands  
Combined Authority

*"It's a very supportive society, we all wave and greet each other whenever we see outside the house. It's an ethnically diverse society as well"*

*"Feels like a family"*

*"People from different backgrounds have integrated"*

*"The provision of activities for families is great"*

*"There are a few things that make it special such as rich industrial heritage, cultural scene, diverse community, football pride, green spaces, academic excellence as well as convenience location"*

*"I like this area as it has a lot of shops, gyms, schools, restaurants, nearby big hospitals and the neighbourhood is safe. There are a lot of opportunities for my family and I"*

*"Friendly. Everything I need at my fingertips"*

*"Different races living together"*

*"There is connection among the people"*

*"It is special for its cultural diversity"*

*"We have Dudley Zoo and its castle - we also have the Black Country Living Museum. Merry Hill Centre is not too far away"*

*"Beautiful location with lots of shops, parks and good transport options"*

*"It's a strong community where people help each other out"*

*"The Arboretum is special to our area as a place to meet people, watch the wildlife, enjoy walks and participate in community projects"*

*"There are lots of green places to visit"*

*"We have a lovely community revolving around events run by the local creative factory and allotments. During Covid, a Facebook group was set up for people to support people who are vulnerable with shopping etc. That group has stayed active and really helps the community spirit"*

*"My area is rich in industrial history, evident in its preservation architecture like cathedral ruins and the iconic Lady Godiva"*

Q18. What is special about your local area?  
Unweighted sample base: 2785 (those who answered the question)

# Some takeaways to consider

1

Digital platforms are a key way for WMCA and LAs to connect with some harder to reach residents, but other methods or digital upskilling are still needed for those less digitally able

2

There is appetite for greater connection in the region among many residents. Lack of money is a key barrier to engaging in social and civic opportunities. More free or low-cost activities and community volunteer opportunities could support greater connection, although it is important to acknowledge that not everyone wants to participate

3

The data obtained in this survey is rich and complex and there is a great deal of variation across the discrete characteristics. It may be worth considering a future segmentation piece, either with this data, or in a separate survey. This would utilise factor and cluster analysis to group residents by attitudes and behaviours, to which demographics can then be overlaid. Detailed personas of the different resident types could then be developed, to help WMCA and LAs understand these in detail. This can support more effective communications, outreach and engagement with residents





# West Midlands Combined Authority

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# Appendix

# List of educational attainment levels residents could select in the survey

No qualifications
Level 1 and entry level qualifications: 1 to 4 GCSEs grade A* to C, Any GCSEs at other grades, O levels or CSEs (any grades), 1 AS level, NVQ level 1, Foundation GNVQ, Basic or Essential Skills
Level 2 qualifications: 5 or more GCSEs (A* to C or 9 to 4), O levels (passes), CSEs (grade 1), School Certification, 1 A level, 2 to 3 AS levels, VCEs, Intermediate or Higher Diploma, Welsh Baccalaureate Intermediate Diploma, NVQ level 2, Intermediate GNVQ, City and Guilds Craft, BTEC First or General Diploma, RSA Diploma
Apprenticeship
Level 3 qualifications: 2 or more A levels or VCEs, 4 or more AS levels, Higher School Certificate, Progression or Advanced Diploma, Welsh Baccalaureate Advance Diploma, NVQ level 3; Advanced GNVQ, City and Guilds Advanced Craft, ONC, OND, BTEC National, RSA Advanced Diploma
Level 4 qualifications or above: degree (BA, BSc), higher degree (MA, PhD, PGCE), NVQ level 4 to 5, HNC, HND, RSA Higher Diploma, BTEC Higher level, professional qualifications (for example, teaching, nursing, accountancy)
Prefer not to say

# Residents' reasons for feeling more neutral about their use of social media reflect both the positives and negatives of engaging with social media



Q4. Please can you explain your answer?

Unweighted sample base: 892 (those who were neutral about time spent on social media and answered the question)

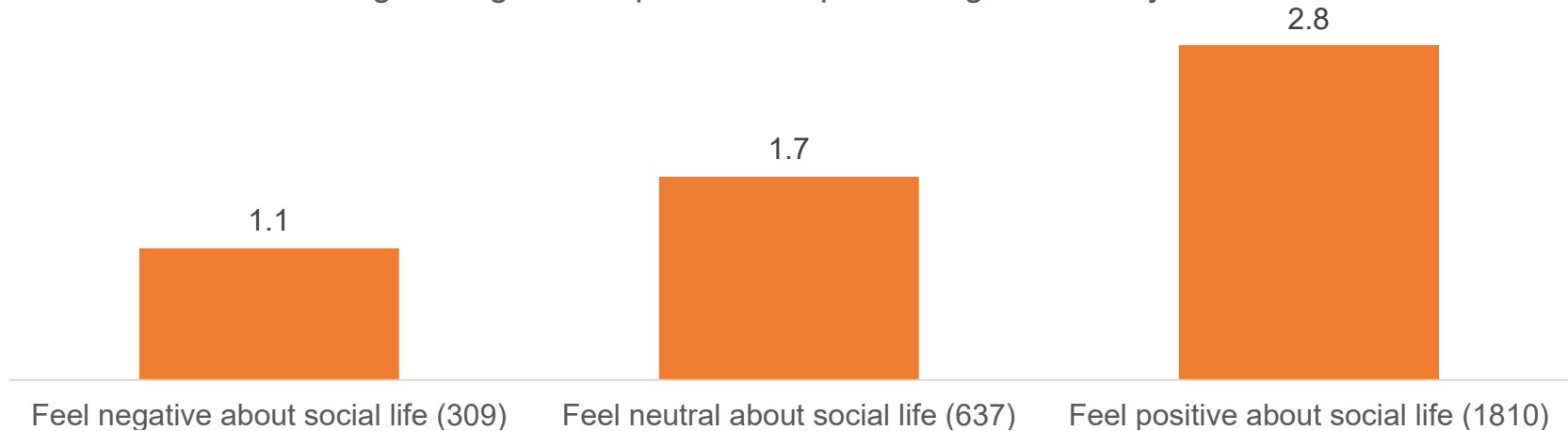
Showing responses provided by >2% of respondents

# More time spent involved with faith activities, generates more positive sentiment about social life

There are some similar trends around residents with certain characteristics experiencing greater barriers to spending time on religious activities



Showing average hours per month spent doing this activity



Q5. During an average month, how many hours do you spend on each of the following activities?  
Unweighted sample bases in chart parentheses

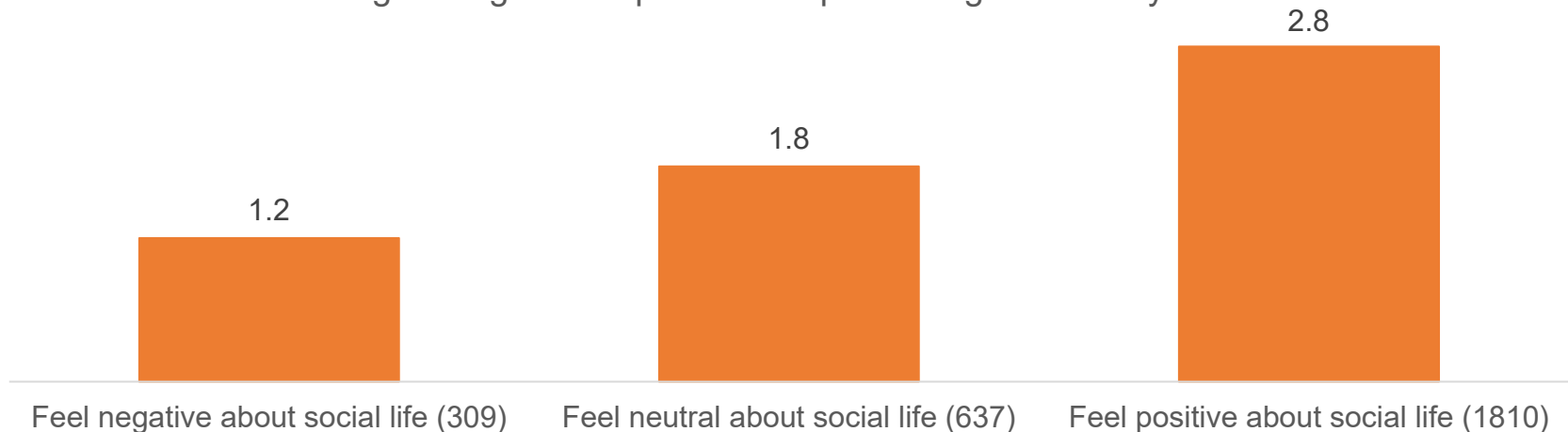
# More time spent on learning and personal development, generates more positive feelings about social life

There are some similar trends around residents with certain characteristics experiencing greater barriers to spending time on learning and personal development



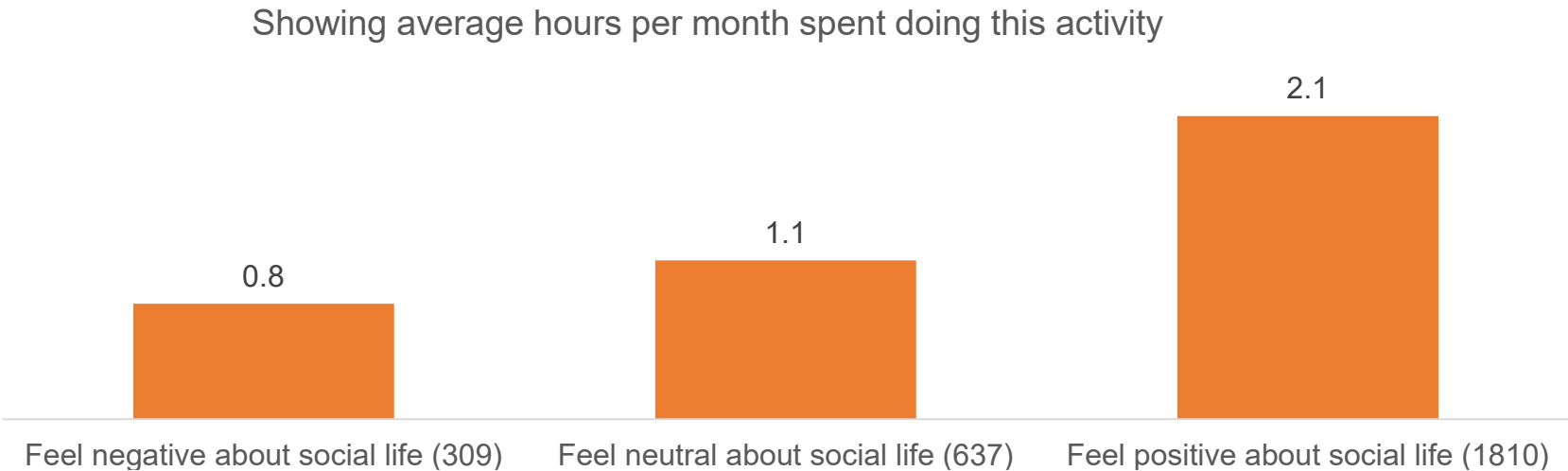
**Learning or  
Personal  
development**

Showing average hours per month spent doing this activity



Q5. During an average month, how many hours do you spend on each of the following activities?  
Unweighted sample bases in chart parentheses

# More time spent volunteering in the community leads to greater positive sentiment about social life



### Other notable differences

Females (1.5 hours) vs males (2 hours)  
Not degree educated (1) vs degree educated (2)

Q5. During an average month, how many hours do you spend on each of the following activities?  
Unweighted sample bases in chart parentheses

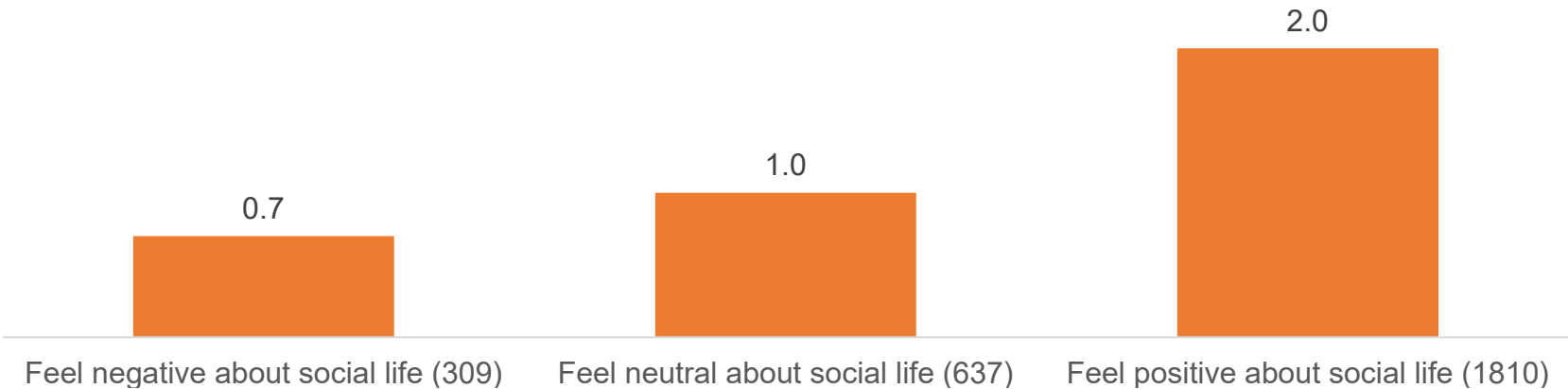


# Those able to spend more time attending sports events, feel more positive about their social life



Attending a sports event as a spectator

Showing average hours per month spent doing this activity



Other notable differences
Females (1 hours) vs males (2 hours)
Aged 55+ (1) vs aged 18-54 (2)
Economically inactive (1) vs economically active (2)
Less than £30k income (1) vs £100k+ (4)
Not degree educated (1) vs degree educated (2)

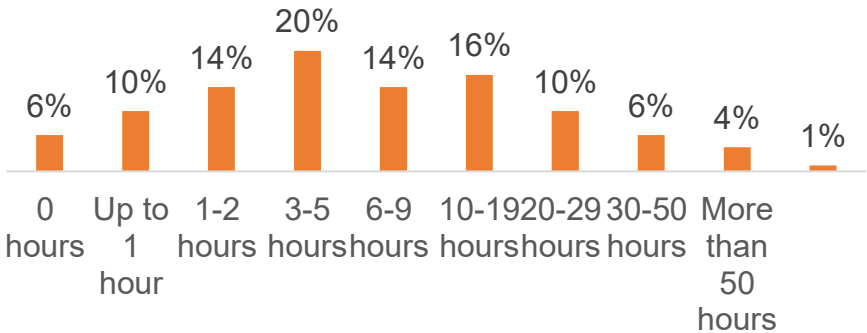
Q5. During an average month, how many hours do you spend on each of the following activities?  
Unweighted sample bases in chart parentheses

# Socialising, exercise and cultural activities are the most common social activities

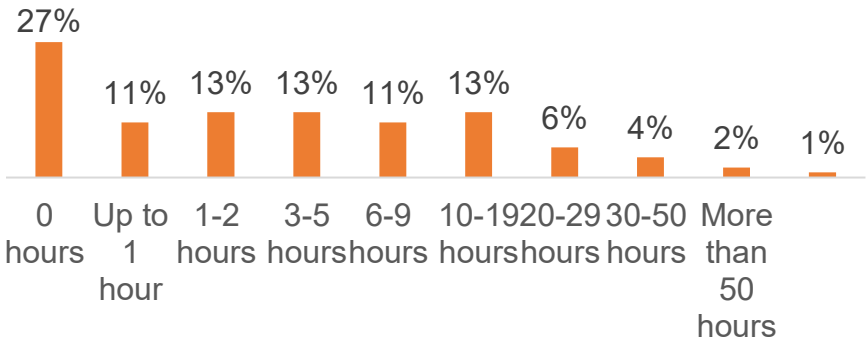
Around a third spend over ten hours with friends and family



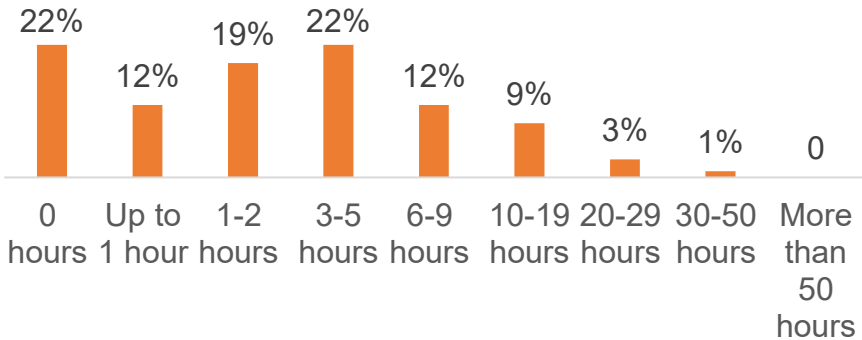
Socialising with friends and family in person



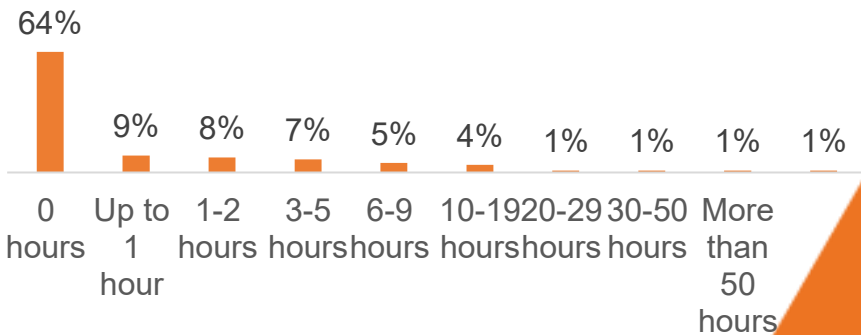
Exercise – e.g. attending a sports club, attending a gym, running, going for a walk, yoga



Cultural activities in person



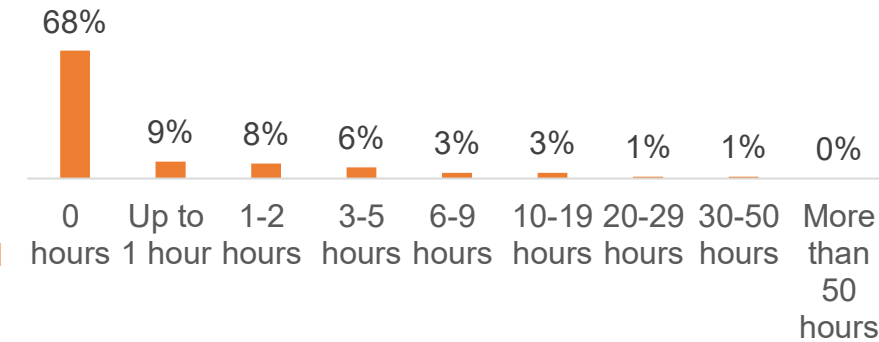
Faith – e.g. attending a place of worship group



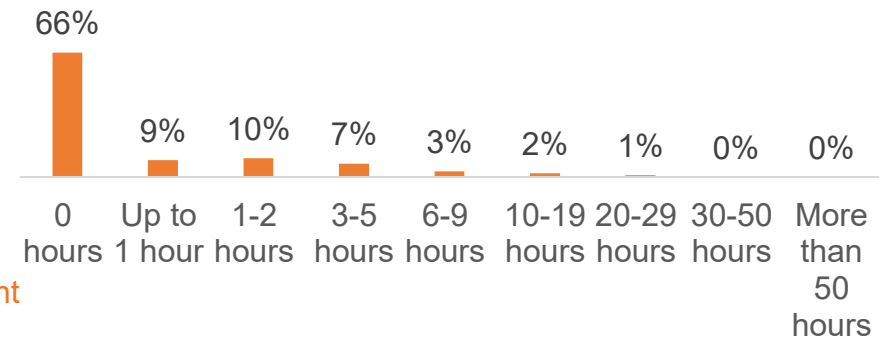
# Volunteering, learning/personal development and attending sports events are less frequent activities



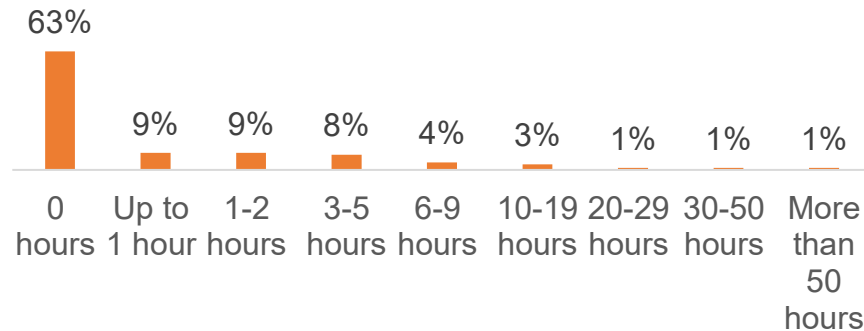
Community and  
Volunteering



Attending a sports event  
as a spectator

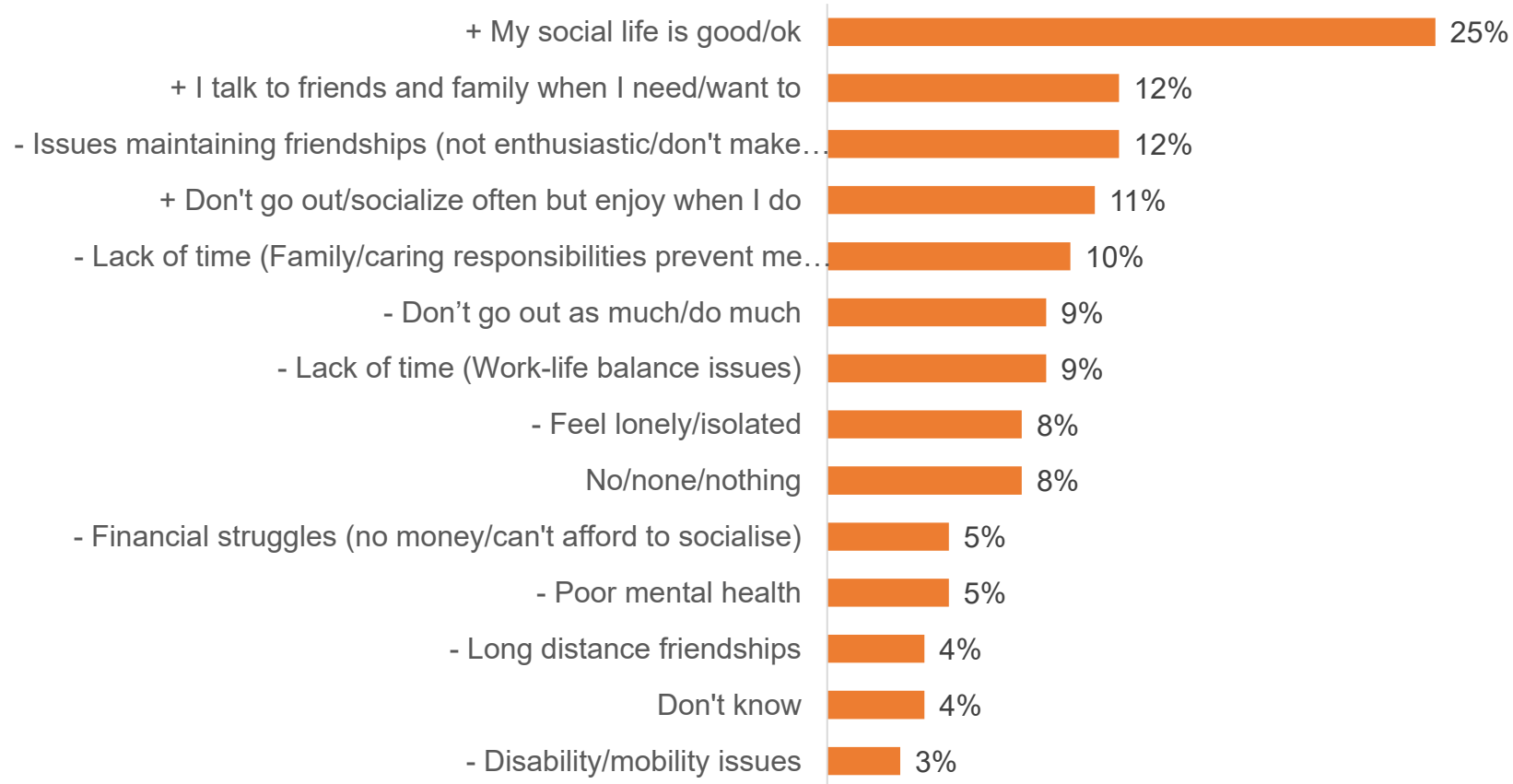


Learning or  
Personal  
development



Q5. During an average month, how many hours do you spend on each of the following activities?  
Unweighted sample base: 2800

# Reasons given for more neutral sentiment about social life reflect the positives and challenges of maintaining relationships



Q7. Please can you explain your answer?

Unweighted sample base: 632 (those who were neutral about their social life and answered the question)

Showing responses provided by >2% of respondents