Social Capital in Scotland:
Measuring and understanding Scotland's social connections

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Social Capital in Scotland:
Measuring and understanding Scotland's social connections

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Contents

Executive Summary

In this report, 'social capital' refers to the social connections that contribute to people's quality of life, health, safety, economy and wellbeing in the neighbourhoods where they live. These social connections are a source of support through people's lives, for instance, in education, workplaces, retirement and leisure.

Using a range of data and stories from people and places, this report examines neighbourhood and social relationships in more detail. This provides a deeper insight into the nature of communities in Scotland, and what can be done to make them stronger and more inclusive.

This report looks at four inter-related aspects of social capital:

- **Social networks –** The quality of friendships, relationships, and contacts; the help that people provide and receive from neighbours; and how connected and supported people perceive themselves to be.
- **Community cohesion –** The features of neighbourhoods and communities including safety, trust and kindness; the places and spaces for people to meet; and to meet people from different backgrounds.
- **Social participation –** The time given up to support local clubs, groups, organisations, or improve the local environment.
- **Community empowerment –** The control that people have, and feel they have, over their circumstances; their influence on local decision-making; and their actions to improve the local community.

How strong is social capital in Scotland, and how it is changing over time?

The most recent findings in the Scottish Household Survey (Fig 1) provide evidence of strong community connections, including supportive relationships with neighbours, positive ratings of neighbourhoods and high levels of volunteering.

The findings also show evidence that is of more concern. Twenty one percent of people said they experience loneliness regularly; and only twenty percent said they feel they have influence over local decisions. This means 4 out of 5 people feel a lack of influence over what happens in their community.

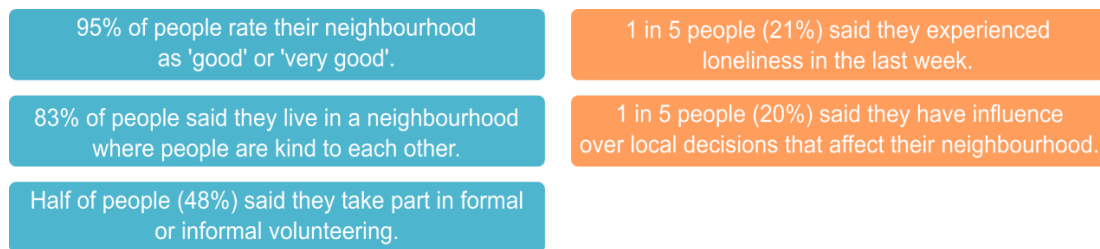|	
95% of people rate their neighbourhood as 'good' or 'very good'.	1 in 5 people (21%) said they experienced loneliness in the last week.
83% of people said they live in a neighbourhood where people are kind to each other.	1 in 5 people (20%) said they have influence over local decisions that affect their neighbourhood.
Half of people (48%) said they take part in formal or informal volunteering.	

Fig 1. Latest data shows evidence of neighbourhood strengths but also higher levels of loneliness, and low levels of perceived influence. (Scottish Household Survey, 2018)

How is it changing over time?

As well as examining current levels, this report also considers how social capital is changing over time and presents a statistical dashboard index - containing 18 variables within 4 social capital themes – to provide an indication of trends (Fig 2).[1] This index shows a picture of stability between 2013 and 2017, followed by a small (though statistically significant) decrease between 2017 and 2018.

The decrease is due to a lower proportion of people saying they would give, or expect to receive, help from their neighbours, as well as a reduction in levels of volunteering and a reduced level of perceived influence over local decisions.
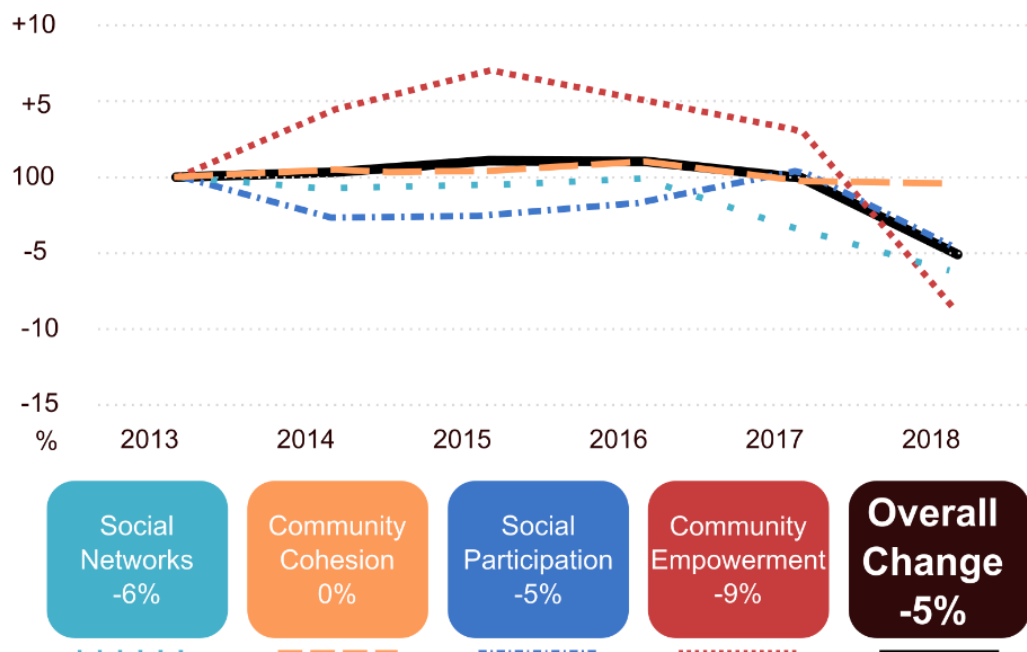

Fig 2. The social capital index shows that there have been stable trends since 2013, but a slight reduction (-5%) between 2017 and 2018 surveys. (Scottish Household Survey, 2018).

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[1] The design of the dashboard index was informed by a research study carried out by IPSOS Mori (Scottish Government, 2018) https://www.gov.scot/publications/designing-social-capital-dashboard/pages/2/

How is social capital distributed across social groups and geographies, and what groups and places have lower levels of social capital?

Although there are positive findings for the vast majority of people in Scotland overall, there are variations across different places and subgroups of the population.

For example, there are large variations between local authorities when people are asked about the qualities of their neighbourhoods, and their experience of loneliness 'in the last week' (Fig 3).
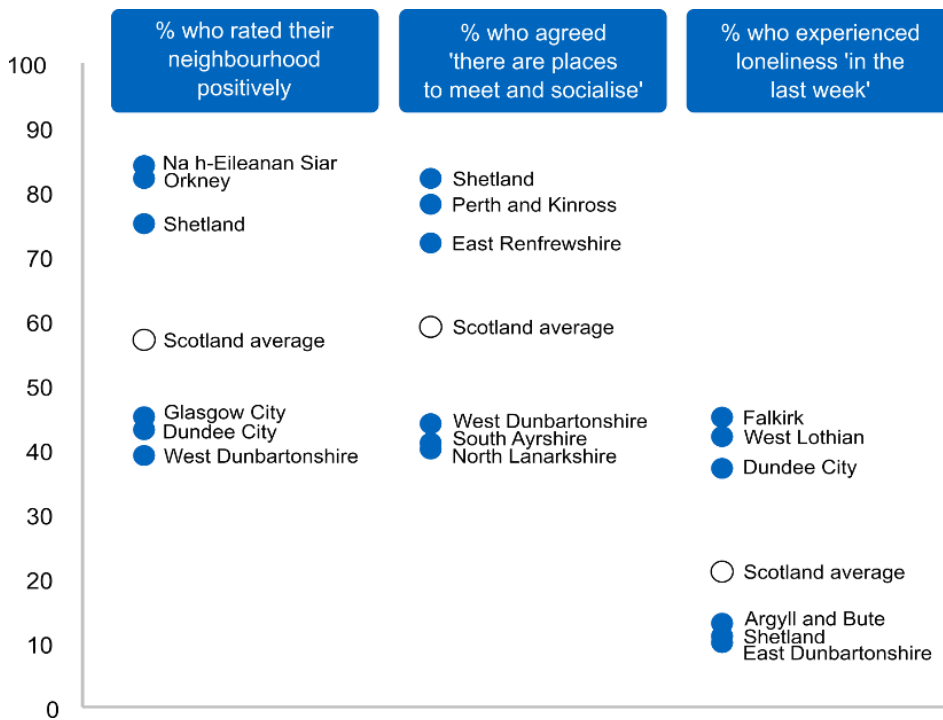

Fig 3. The highest and lowest three local authority areas on measures of social capital. There are large variations from the Scotland average across authorities. (Scottish Household Survey, 2018)

Social capital measures are lower in more deprived areas, where people are more likely to report feelings of loneliness, and less likely to rate their neighbourhood well and say they have places to interact.

People in more deprived areas (as measured by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation – SIMD) are however only slightly less likely than people in less deprived areas to report weekly social interactions with friends, relatives, work colleagues and neighbours (Fig 4). This suggests factors other than the quantity of social interaction are involved in the higher reported levels of loneliness.
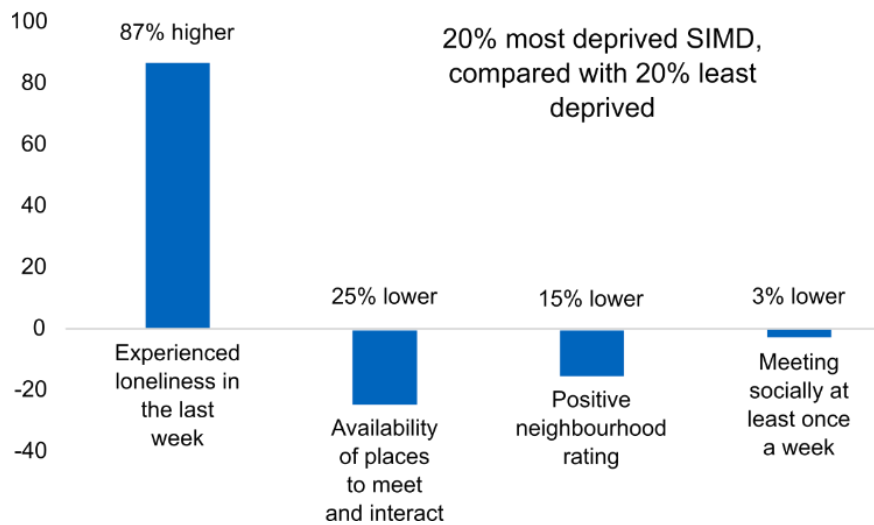

Fig 4. Social capital measures in the 20% most deprived areas (by SIMD) compared with people in the least deprived areas. People in the least deprived areas to experience loneliness, and also have lower neighbourhood ratings, but have similar levels of social interaction.

Social capital measures are generally higher than the Scotland average in rural locations and lower in urban locations (see Annex for tables).

As well as being related to immediate local circumstances, variations in social capital within and between geographical areas may be associated with the population composition of those areas (for example, concentrations of people within certain demographic characteristics or income levels) and the history and social context of the areas.

To provide another perspective, case study stories were collected to deepen the understanding of social capital. These stories help to convey the impact of broader economic change on communities, and their perceived effects on attitudes and expectations about social connections (see Fig 5) and the need for improved infrastructure and support.

"There was plenty of factories around. Then during the 80s it was as if a storm hit the community and all the big industries closed down. It was like a domino effect, one went down and then bang bang bang. The local community centres have been knocked down, schools and doctor surgeries have closed and you just take it as that is what happens here so people develop this kind of attitude of this is as good as it is going to get. There are groups of people who volunteer and who try to make spaces accessible for the community. They have raised money to get park benches and to put in goal posts so the kids can play football. People try to connect, to help each other but it can be hard at times."

Fig 5. (Excerpt from 'James's story'.)

Personal factors

Measures of social capital vary across subgroups of the population based on personal characteristics such as gender, age, ethnicity, disability and employment status, and there is strong evidence that social connections are related to people's personal circumstances and their life stage.

There are apparent differences between women and men in the survey.[2] Levels of social networking and positive neighbourhood relations are higher for women than men. In contrast, women are less likely to feel safe in their neighbourhood at night (74% of women compared to 91% of men (Fig 6)) and are more likely to have experienced loneliness 'in the last week' (24% of women compared to 19% of men).

74% of women reported feeling safe at night in their neighbourhood compared to **91%** of men.

Fig 6. Gender and safety, (Scottish Household Survey, 2017)

Younger people (16-34) are slightly more likely to experience loneliness than the national average (24% compared to 21%) but are more likely to meet socially with friends, neighbours, relatives and work colleagues. People aged 65+ typically have higher levels of neighbour support, and are more likely to feel a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood.

There is a complex pattern between social interaction and loneliness (Fig. 7). Some groups within the population (including women, people in remote towns, and the youngest and oldest age groups) experience higher levels of loneliness and higher levels of social interaction.

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[2] In the Scottish Household Survey 2018, the question on gender was non-binary and included 'Identified in another way' and 'Refused' responses in addition to 'Man' and 'Woman'. In previous years the question on gender was binary, i.e. only two response options were provided to respondents: 'Male' and 'Female'.

Fig 7. Loneliness and isolation, group differences from the Scotland average. There is a complex pattern between social interaction and loneliness. In some circumstances loneliness may be more associated with isolation, and for other subgroups it may be associated with life course factors, or other inequalities.

Other groups (disabled people, people in socially rented housing and people in more deprived areas) have higher levels of loneliness and <u>lower</u> levels of social interaction. This suggests a complex association between people's circumstances, their connections with other people their mental wellbeing, and their experience of loneliness.

Case study stories for this research help to illustrate how the design of services and communities can have an excluding effect, and create mental health problems as a consequence of inappropriately designed or inaccessible services (Fig 8). However, we also know that local services, designed around a well-developed understanding of needs, can support social connections and be beneficial in improving people's wellbeing and quality of life.[3]

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[3] Dodds, S. (2016), *Social Contexts and Health: A GCPH Synthesis*

"You are asking local people to take a level of involvement that many people are incapable of and they are incapable not because th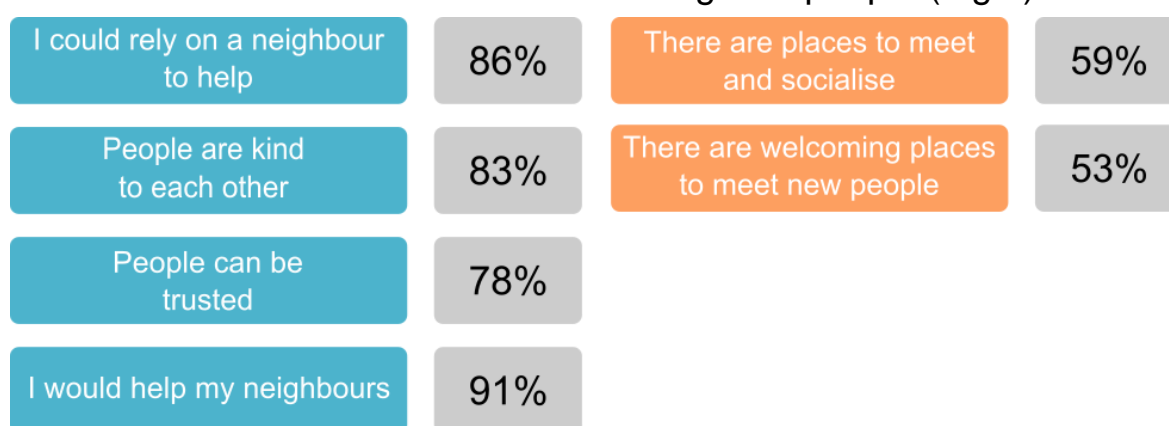ey are stupid, not because they have no capacity to read and understand but because what is going on in their lives is taking all that they have. For some people the actual distress of being ill, or living in poverty, for instance, it just takes up so much energy. Which means that those voices are missing. This is not a mental illness that I have but the circumstances that I am in create a mental health burden and you then find yourself reading websites about anxiety and being offered anti-depressants and it is not appropriate but that is where you end up. It's hard to get people to believe in complex solutions. People like straight forward projects but it's all messier and smaller than that."

(Fig 8. Excerpt from 'Kay's story')

Amenities and social infrastructure

The Scottish Household Survey asks respondents about the qualities of their neighbourhood and community. The factors that are rated most highly are the 'people' elements of neighbourhoods, for example the help, support, kindness, trust and friendship between neighbours, friends and community members.

At a national level, and across subgroups of the population, survey respondents are consistently more positive about the people aspects of their neighbourhoods and communities than the places and spaces available for social interaction and meeting new people (Fig 9).

I could rely on a neighbour to help	86%	There are places to meet and socialise	59%
People are kind to each other	83%	There are welcoming places to meet new people	53%
People can be trusted	78%		
I would help my neighbours	91%		

% agreeing with statements, Scottish Household Survey, 2018

Fig 9. People are more positive about the 'people' elements of their neighbourhoods than about the places and spaces available for social interaction.

This effect is even more pronounced in areas of higher deprivation (as shown in Fig 10), which suggests that there may be an unequal and insufficient level of provision for the places and spaces that create opportunities for social interaction. These spaces will be particularly important where the price of using commercial spaces such as cafes

or restaurants may be unaffordable; and domestic spaces in homes may be unsuited for social interactions.

% who agree 'There are places where people can meet up and socialise'

Fig 10.The availability of places to meet across different groups. The proportion of people who agree there are places to meet up and socialise in their neighbourhood is lower for people in social rented housing, areas of higher deprivation and people living in 'other' urban areas (areas with 10,000-124,999 people) .

Engagement with decision making bodies

The Scottish Household Survey asks about the means that people have to influence and improve their local area – including through undertaking voluntary activities, and through more official decision making channels.

Although the voluntary dimension is strong - 58% of survey respondents said people take action to improve their local neighbourhood - access to decision making seems more remote, and just 20% of people said they feel they can influence decisions in their local area. These low levels of perceived influence on decision making are present across all sub-groups of the population, even the groups with higher levels of voluntary action to improve neighbourhoods (as shown in Fig 11).

% who agree, 'People take action to improve the neighbourhood ●

% who agree, 'I can influence local decisions' ●

Scotland average = 58%

Scotland average = 20%

Fig 11. Formal and informal means to improve neighbourhoods, by groups. Although there are different perceived levels of vo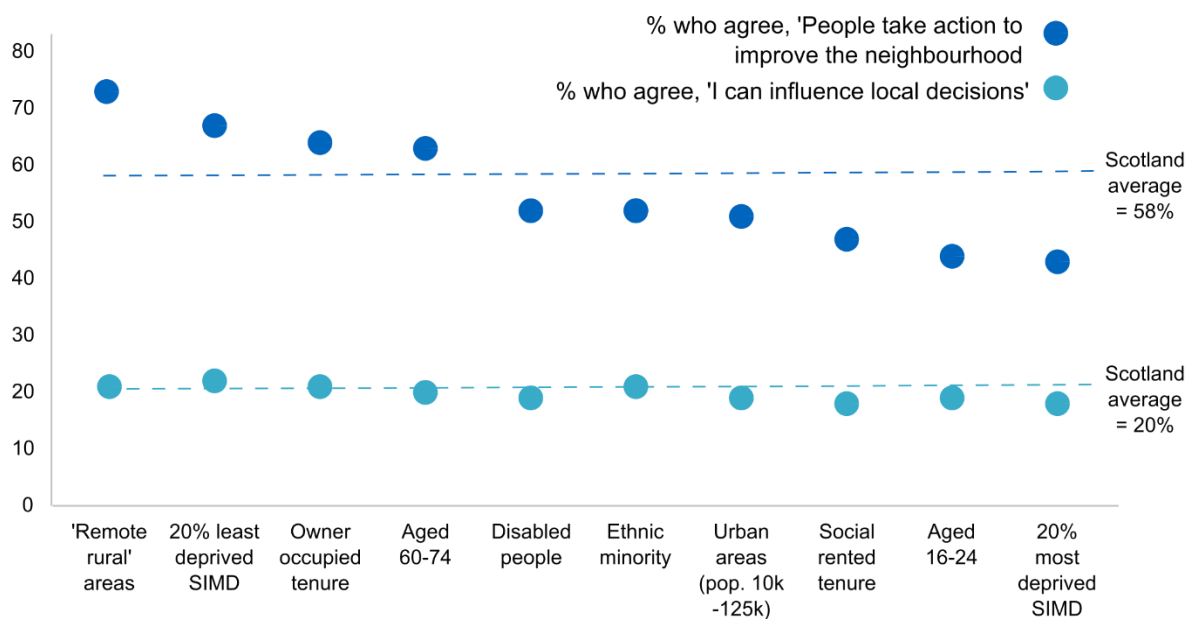luntary activities to improve neighbourhoods, there are low levels of perceived influence across all subgroups of the population.

Priorities for increasing social capital

The findings suggest that the following points are important for improving social connections and social capital in communities.

1. Policymakers and practitioners in a wide range of policy settings would benefit from a better understanding of how their work affects social relationships and wellbeing in neighbourhoods and communities. Social connections are an essential element of personal, community and societal wellbeing and as shown in this report, they are influenced by a range of environmental, social and economic factors. To improve social connections, people involved in the design and delivery of public policy (for example, in the policy and practice settings mentioned in this report: social care, public transport, urban planning, community safety, housing, employment, economic planning, procurement and local democracy), need to consider not only how to achieve their own direct policy objectives, but also how to ensure that the other (possibly diffuse) consequences of their actions can create, sustain (and not damage) opportunities for social connections in communities.

2. We need to prioritise the places and groups that have the lowest levels of connections. The National Performance Framework refers to 'all of our people' in Scotland and outcomes depend not simply on a net gain in social capital at a national level (which could be achieved through improved social capital in already privileged groups), but on increasing social capital across all places, and subgroups of the population.

3. We need to ensure there are good quality, affordable and accessible places and spaces where people spend time, gather and meet. It is essential to create, retain and maintain the environmental and social infrastructure that supports social interactions and participation in communities – the informal public places, spaces, and facilities where people spend time, gather and meet. Evidence shows this is most important in the areas where there is a perceived lack of these places, e.g. in areas of deprivation and for disabled people.

4. People need to be involved more strongly in decisions about their communities. Levels of perceived influence over local decision making have been consistently low over recent years, and across all subgroups of the population. New and culturally deeper initiatives are required to enable people to have a greater influence over local decision making.

5. We need to base our understandings of community wellbeing on fuller and more rounded accounts than statistics alone can provide. A plural and multidimensional approach to understanding and measuring social capital, for example through multi-measurement data-dashboards and qualitative research, helps to highlight the connections and interdependencies between important economic, social, personal and historical factors. Case study stories also provide a perspective rooted in lived experience that is not available through quantitative research alone.

1. Introduction

In this report, 'social capital' refers to the social connections that contribute to quality of life, health, safety and wellbeing in the neighbourhoods where people live. These social connections are a source of support through people's lives, for instance, in education, workplaces, retirement and leisure

Using a range of data and stories from people and places, this report examines neighbourhood and social relationships in more detail. This provides a deeper insight into the nature of communities in Scotland, and what can be done to make them stronger and more inclusive.

2.   What is social capital and why does it matter?

The National Performance Framework (NPF) is a vision for wellbeing in Scotland. It's focus is on improving people's quality of life and material conditions, now and in the future.

The framework sets out the purpose, values, 11 outcomes and 81 national indicators that collectively describe the kind of Scotland we want to see. One of the outcomes is 'communities' and this describes a vision for places that are 'inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe.'

The importance of social connections

Research shows how social connections make a strong contribution to our personal and collective wellbeing in the present, and in the future.

They are a source of pleasure and satisfaction in their own right, but they also help people to cope with adversity, and enable changes in circumstances through employment and educational opportunities.[4] They provide opportunities for meeting new people, and accessing the organisations and processes that have power and help people to make decisions over their lives. They can help safeguard important neighbourhood amenities and influence the design and delivery of public services to better meet people's needs.[5] Social connections enable the development of trust that supports the local and national economy, and reduces the costs of transactions in the economy.

Social capital

'Social capital' is a term that is used by different organisations to capture the aggregate value of different types of social connections and networks. The OECD defines social capital as "networks together with shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate

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[4] Dodds, S. (2016), *Social Contexts and Health: A GCPH Synthesis*
[5] Christie Commission

cooperation within or among groups" and the Glasgow Centre for Population Health (GCPH) summarises it as "the relationships and networks of support that people experience, the interconnections within communities, and the involvement of people and communities in decisions that affect their lives".[6]

There are common themes across most definitions of social capital, including the availability of supportive networks, community cohesion, and collaborative activities to improve the places where communities live, learn, work, and the full range of activities, and diverse communities, that people engage in through their lives.

Four themes of social capital:

This report looks at four inter-related aspects of social connections to consider how strong our social connections are in Scotland, how these are distributed in different places and sub-groups of the population, the areas where there are lower levels of social capital, and what might be the priorities for action. These are:

- **Social networks –** The quality of people's friendships, relationships, and contacts; the provision of supportive help to people in their neighbourhood; and how connected and supported they perceive themselves to be.
- **Community cohesion –** How people feel about their neighbourhoods; their safety; how far they experience trust and kindness; the opportunities and infrastructure that enables people to meet others, and people from different backgrounds.
- **Community empowerment –** The control that people have, and feel they have, over their circumstances; their influence on local decision-making; and their actions to improve local issues. This form of capital helps people to link with government, authorities and sources of political power.

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[6] (Dodds, 2016)
dhttps://www.gcph.co.uk/assets/0000/5594/Social_contexts_and_health__web_.pdf

- **Social participation –** The time given up to support local clubs, groups, organisations, or improve the local environment, in a paid or unpaid capacity. This helps to increase connections and bonds within communities, and also to help build social bridges across and between communities.

A note on terms

The term 'social capital' is widely used as a measure of our connections and relationships, but there are some things to bear in mind.

First, describing social connections as a 'capital' is intended to highlight their importance and value to our societal wellbeing and social economy, but is not intended to suggest that these are primarily monetary or monetizable assets.

Second, social capital is not always positive and there are ways in which social connections may have a negative impact on society. Social connections that exist strongly within a single group identity may lead to friction with other groups and create 'insiders' and 'outsiders'. They can also create informal expectations and obligations that are unwanted by members of the group. It is therefore important to understand the extent to which there is a sense of belonging, cohesion and contact between different social groups.

Third, there are research gaps in understanding some of the more structural and long-term drivers of social connection and relationships, and the impact of market and government activity on these. Social capital needs to be understood in the wider context of the social and economic activities and events that help to work for and against it. The Glasgow Centre for Population Health have explained how the concept of social capital is a problem if it implies that communities are disadvantaged as a result of a perceived lack of social connections, as opposed to the real root causes of poverty and disadvantage.[7]

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[7] Dodds, S. (2016), *Social Contexts and Health: A GCPH Synthesis*

3. How can we measure and understand social capital?

Given its value as an end in itself and the contribution to a range of outcomes, this report seeks to understand more about the nature of social capital in Scotland and how it is changing. It focuses on the following questions:

- How strong is social capital in Scotland and how is it changing over time?
- How is social capital distributed across social groups and geographies, and what groups and places have lower levels?
- How are the elements of social capital felt and experienced by people in the places they live and spend their time?

A multi-dimensional approach for understanding social capital

To answer these questions, the report uses three approaches to consider the levels, distribution and nature of social capital in Scotland:

Data dashboard – Survey variables in the Scottish Household Survey,[8] provide a way of tracking changes in measures of social capital over time and under each of the four social capital themes.

Disaggregation – Levels of social capital vary across different places and social groups. Survey data has been broken down further, to understand what levels are like for people of different ages, gender, ethnicity, housing, health conditions, and areas of higher deprivation.

Stories – Because statistics can only provide a limited account of the quality of social connections, this report also includes case study stories from people and places, to illustrate how social capital can feel in different places and spaces. This highlights the interdependence and context-specific nature of social capital as it is woven through day-to-day life and experiences.

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[8] https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/16002/PublicationAnnual

4.   How strong is social capital in Scotland and how is it changing over time?

The Scottish Household Survey is an annual, nationally representative survey of Scotland that provides a means of looking at levels of social capital at a national level, across different dimensions.[9]

Several questions (Fig 12) associated with social capital themes have been included in the survey to track change over time.[10] Some of the questions have been asked each year since 2013 and provide a measure of change, and some of them are new (reported for the first time in 2019), and will provide trend data in the future.

Fig 12. Four social capital themes, and 18 questions

Levels of social capital

The latest data from the Scottish Household Survey (2018) shows strong evidence of positive social connections in communities in Scotland (Fig 13). Ninety-five percent of respondents rate their neighbourhood as 'good' or 'very good', 91% of people say they would help their neighbours, 83% of people say people are kind to each other in their neighbourhood and 48% are involved in informal or formal volunteering.

There is also some evidence that is not as positive. The survey shows that over 1 in 5 people in Scotland (21%), said they experienced loneliness 'in the last week'. Twenty percent of people agreed that they have influence over local decisions. This means that a large proportion of people in Scotland (4 out of 5 people) do not feel that they can influence decisions about their area.

Social Networks		Community Cohesion	
Percentages of people who agreed with statements:	2018	Percentages of people who agreed with statements:	2018
Could rely on neighbour to help	86%	Positive neighbourhood rating	95%
Neighbours would keep an eye on home	85%	Neighbourhood belonging	78%
Could turn to neighbours for advice	77%	Neighbourhood safety (2017)	82%
Would help neighbours	91%	Neighbourhood trust	78%
Meets socially at least once a week	73%	Neighbourhood kindness	83%
Could rely on neighbour to help	21%	Places to meet and socialise	59%
		Welcoming places to meet new people	53%
		Diverse people get on well together	70%

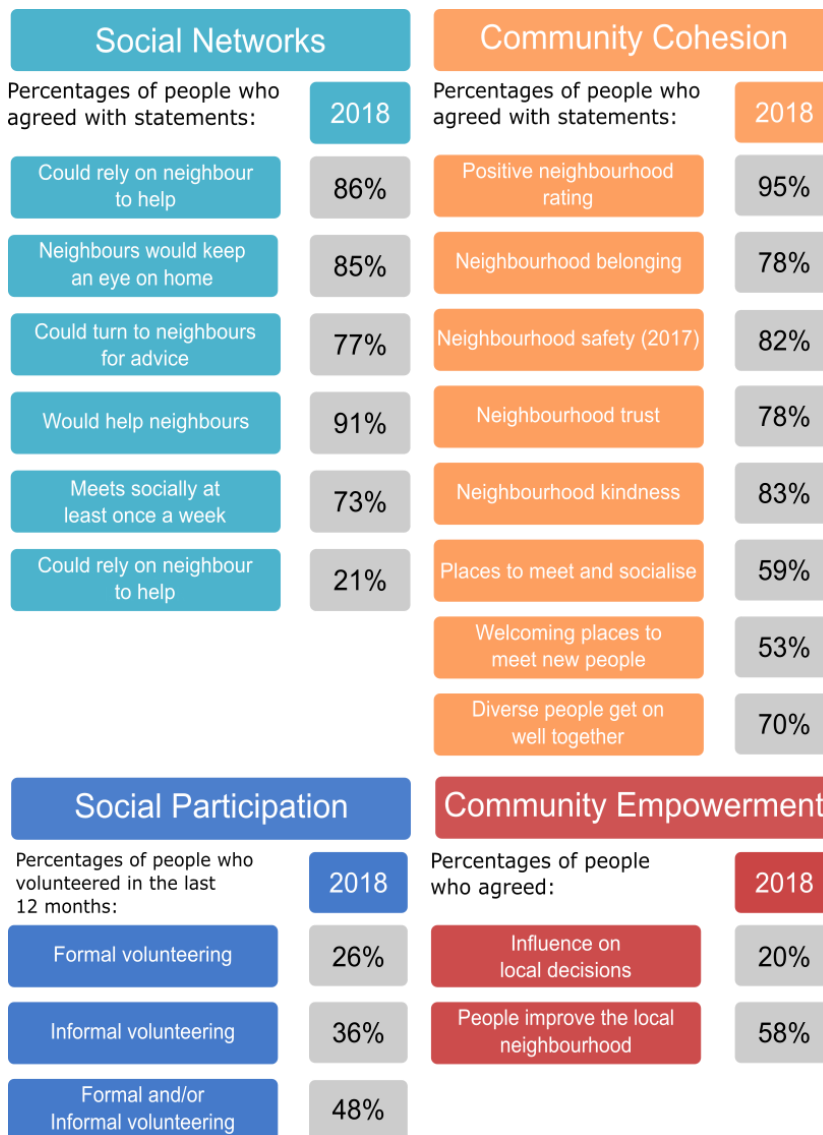| Social Participation		Community Empowerment	
Percentages of people who volunteered in the last 12 months:	2018	Percentages of people who agreed:	2018
Formal volunteering	26%	Influence on local decisions	20%
Informal volunteering	36%	People improve the local neighbourhood	58%
Formal and/or Informal volunteering	48%		

Fig 13. Levels of social capital by the most recent available measures.

Changes over time

To show changes in social capital over time, these survey questions have been monitored annually from a base year of 2013, and aggregated into a 'data index', that tracks changes in levels.[11]

Values were set at '100' in 2013 and the index shows the percentage change for subsequent years relative to the 2013 position. The trends in each of the variables have been monitored as well as the aggregated four themes (based on an equal weighting of the variables) and an overall trend (based on an equal weighting of the four themes).[12] More detailed information about the method for calculating the index is provided in Annex A.

The index (Fig 14) shows that after a period of relative stability in the four themes, by 2018 there had been an overall decrease of 5 percent in the overall measure of social capital compared to 2013. This has mainly been driven by reductions in the community empowerment theme (a smaller proportion of people say they feel they have influence over local decisions), the social networks theme (where fewer people agreed that they would provide or expect to receive help from neighbours), and the social participation theme (there has been a small reduction in the proportion of people who have taken part in volunteering).

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[11] The design of the dashboard index was informed by a research study carried out by IPSOS Mori (Scottish Government, 2018) https://www.gov.scot/publications/designing-social-capital-dashboard/pages/2/

[12] In the absence of research and evidence to show the comparative importance of social capital evidence, the index is based on an equal weighting of the 4 themes. Because there is a different number of questions in each theme, some questions have more influence over the overall trend than others. It is important to bear this in mind, and also look at the source data when interpreting findings.

Social Capital Index - % change since 2013

+10					
+5					
100					
-5					
-10					
-15					
%	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018

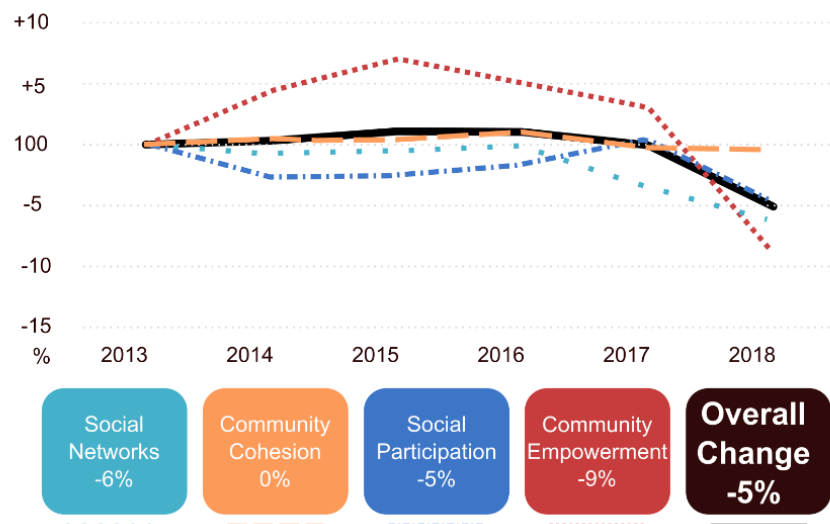| Social Networks -6% | Community Cohesion 0% | Social Participation -5% | Community Empowerment -9% | **Overall Change -5%** |

Fig 14. Trends in social capital across 4 domains.

5. How is social capital distributed in Scotland?

Trends at a national level are helpful for providing a summary of what is happening overall in society but can mask differences between communities, geographies and subgroups of the population.[13]

This section of the report looks at how social capital is distributed across social groups and geographies, including places, personal factors, amenities and influence over local decisions.

Where we live

There are large variations in measures of social capital within and between different geographies, including local authority areas, areas of higher deprivation, and urban and rural areas.

For example, 39% of those in West Dunbartonshire rated their neighbourhood as 'very good' (the most positive category) compared to the Scottish average of 57% and the highest scoring places Na h-Eileanan Siar (84%), Orkney (82%) and Shetland (75%).

Similar variation exists across many of the measures of social capital as illustrated in Fig 15, and there are large variations from the Scotland average across the country.

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[13] The complete data and tables for local authorities, for social capital variables, are available separately at: https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/16002/LAtables2018

Fig 15. The highest and lowest 3 outlying local authority areas on measures of social capital. There are large variations from the Scotland average across authorities. (Scottish Household Survey, 2018)

There is also variation across areas with higher and lower levels of deprivation. People in less deprived areas are more likely to rate their neighbourhood positively and say there are places to meet and socialise (Fig 16)[14].

Fig 16. People are more likely to rate their neighbourhood positively in less deprived areas.

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[14]The complete data for all variables at Local Authority level, are available at: https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/16002/LAtables2018

There are similar levels of social interaction (74% of people meet friends, relatives, neighbours or work colleagues on a weekly basis in the least deprived areas, compared with 72% of people in the most deprived areas) but people living in the most deprived areas are much more likely to experience loneliness (see Fig 17). This suggests that the absence of social contact is not the only, or the main, factor for understanding loneliness.

Meets socially at least once a week: 74% (20% least deprived), 72% (20% most deprived)

Felt lonely in the last week: 15% (20% least deprived), 28% (20% most deprived)

■ 20% least deprived ■ 20% most deprived

Fig 17. People in more and less deprived locations have a similar level of social interaction, but experience of loneliness is much higher in more deprived areas

Urban and rural areas

People living in rural areas[15] are more likely to report higher than average levels of social capital across most of the social capital measures (Fig 18) – often significantly higher than the Scotland average. Within the urban and rural classifications, places with the lowest levels of social capital, by these measures, are often the areas that are classified as 'large urban' (settlements with more than 125,000 people) and 'other urban' (settlements with between 10,000 and 124,999 people).

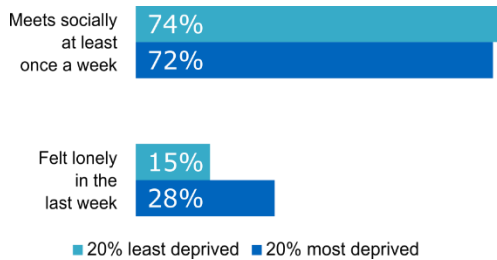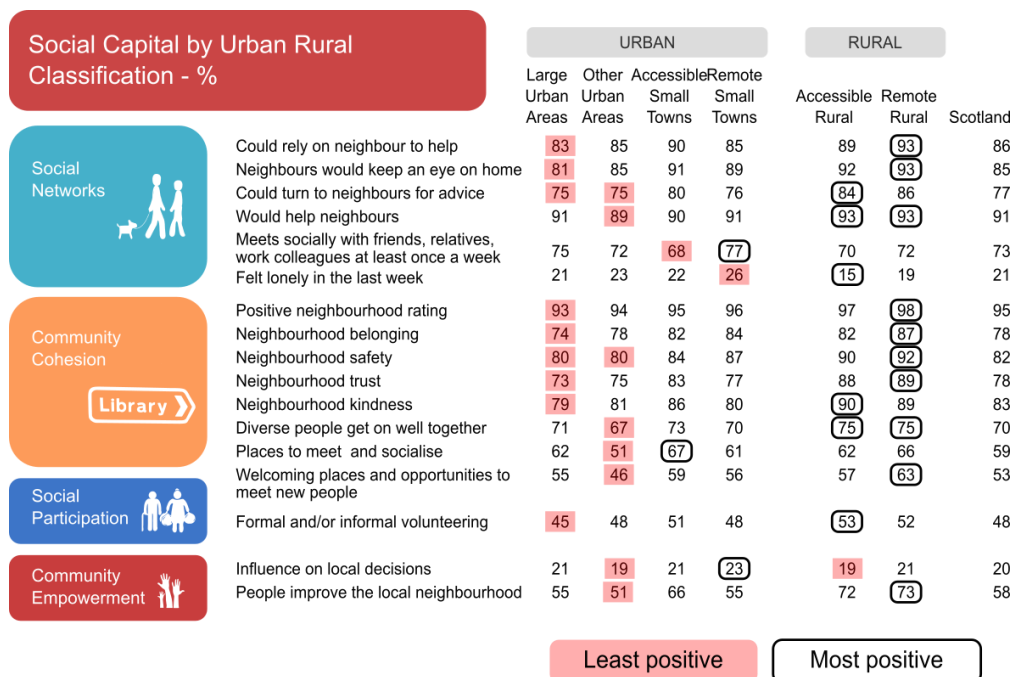| Social Capital by Urban Rural Classification - %	URBAN				RURAL		
	Large Urban Areas	Other Urban Areas	Accessible Small Towns	Remote Small Towns	Accessible Rural	Remote Rural	Scotland
Social Networks							
Could rely on neighbour to help	83	85	90	85	89	(93)	86
Neighbours would keep an eye on home	81	85	91	89	92	(93)	85
Could turn to neighbours for advice	75	75	80	76	(84)	86	77
Would help neighbours	91	89	90	91	(93)	(93)	91
Meets socially with friends, relatives, work colleagues at least once a week	75	72	68	(77)	70	72	73
Felt lonely in the last week	21	23	22	26	(15)	19	21
Community Cohesion							
Positive neighbourhood rating	93	94	95	96	97	(98)	95
Neighbourhood belonging	74	78	82	84	82	(87)	78
Neighbourhood safety	80	80	84	87	90	(92)	82
Neighbourhood trust	73	75	83	77	88	(89)	78
Neighbourhood kindness	79	81	86	80	(90)	89	83
Diverse people get on well together	71	67	73	70	(75)	(75)	70
Places to meet and socialise	62	51	(67)	61	62	66	59
Welcoming places and opportunities to meet new people	55	46	59	56	57	(63)	53
Social Participation							
Formal and/or informal volunteering	45	48	51	48	(53)	52	48
Community Empowerment							
Influence on local decisions	21	19	21	(23)	19	21	20
People improve the local neighbourhood	55	51	66	55	72	(73)	58

Least positive   Most positive

Fig 18. Social capital, by urban and rural classification. People in accessible and remote rural areas are much more likely to report higher than average levels of social capital across most of the measures.

The variation across places needs to be understood with reference to information about the people who live in these areas, the local economy, history, and environment. One of the stories included in this report (James's story in section 4) illustrates how these factors inter-relate and how changes in the local economy, through the withdrawal of employers and industries, led to a decline in social relationships.

Personal and life course factors

As well as variations in the strength of social connections in different places, there are also differences for groups within the population.

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[15] More information about urban and rural classifications:
https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/About/Methodology/UrbanRuralClassification

Gender:[16] There are similar levels of social capital for women and men across most social capital questions in the Scottish Household Survey. However measures of social networks and neighbour relations are higher for women than for men, and women are more likely to feel able to rely on their neighbours and take part in formal and informal volunteering.

Women are however less likely to feel safe in their neighbourhood at night (74% of women compared to 91% of men) and are more likely to have experienced loneliness 'in the last week' (24% of women compared to 19% of men).

Age: Measures of social networks and cohesion– such as relationships with neighbours, neighbourhood belonging, trust and kindness – tend to improve with age. However social interaction through regular meetings with other people was highest in the youngest age category, reduced for people in their thirties and forties, then rose again for people in the 60+ age categories. People aged 65+ typically have higher levels of neighbour support, and a greater sense of belonging to their neighbourhood. Despite having the highest levels of social interaction, people in the youngest and oldest age categories also had the highest experiences of loneliness (Fig 19).
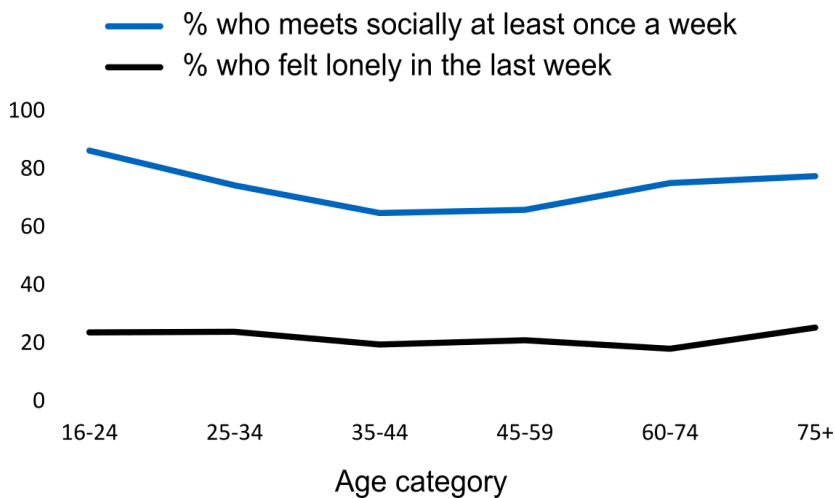

Fig 19 . Isolation and loneliness, by age category. People in the youngest and oldest age categories had higher levels of loneliness, and also higher levels of weekly social interactions.

Ethnicity: In the Scottish Household Survey people from minority ethnic backgrounds have lower levels of neighbourhood help and trust,

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[16] In the Scottish Household Survey 2018, the question on gender was non-binary and included 'Identified in another way' and 'Refused' responses in addition to 'Man' and 'Woman'. In previous years the question on gender was binary, i.e. only two response options were provided to respondents: 'Male' and 'Female'.

but also higher levels of 'getting on well together' with people in the neighbourhood, and the availability of places to meet and interact and meet new people. Because of small sample sizes, data within the Scottish Household Survey does not allow for more detailed exploration to understand more about the nature of social connections among different ethnic groups in the population. The data in this report however suggests there are important patterns that could be considered in other research.

Disabled people: Disabled people are slightly less likely to meet socially with friends, relatives, and work colleagues at least once a week, but are more than twice as likely as non-disabled people to say they had experienced loneliness (Fig 20). Disabled people are also much less likely to feel safe in their neighbourhood than people who aren't disabled.
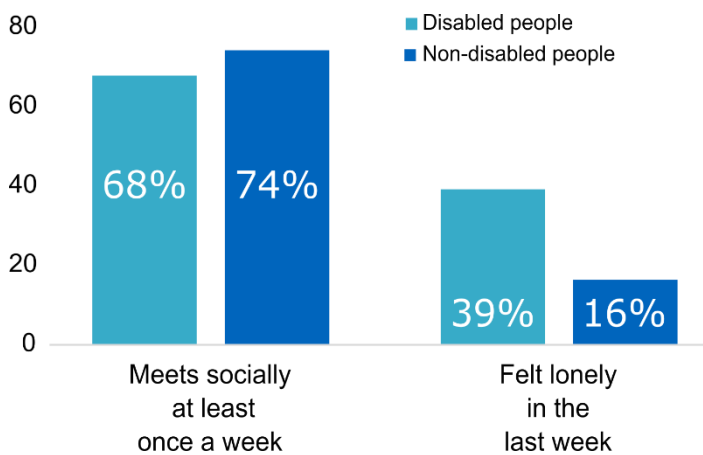

Fig 20. Isolation and loneliness, by disability. Disabled people are slightly less likely to have regular social meetings, but are more than twice as likely to experience feelings of loneliness.

Tenure: Social and private renters have similar levels of social contact and interaction as people who own their home, but the measures of loneliness are almost twice as high for social renters when compared to private renters. And 84% of homeowners have a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood compared to 72% of socially rented households and 60% cent of privately rented households.

Whilst socially rented households have a stronger feeling of belonging to their neighbourhood compared to privately rented households, they report lower levels of community cohesion across other variables and significantly lower levels of agreement that there are places to interact and socialise, and places to meet new people in their neighbourhood (Fig 21).
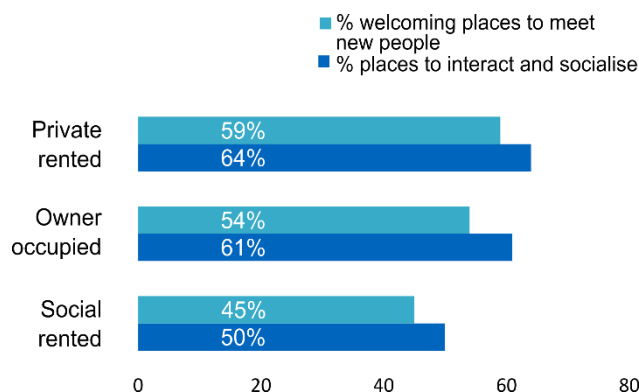
Fig 21. Places to meet, by tenure. Measures of places to meet, interact and socialise are lower for people in socially rented accommodation than other tenure categories.

Employment: The latest statistics from the Scottish Household Survey show that 49% of adults aged 16-64 are employed full time, 13% are employed part time, 8% are self-employed, 7% are in higher/further education, 5% are unemployed and seeking work and 6% are permanently sick, have short-term ill-health or are disabled.[17]

Data (provided in Annex B) shows that there is large variation in measures of social capital between people in employment or education, and people who are unemployed or permanently sick, in ill-health or disabled, with the latter groups having far higher levels of loneliness than the Scotland average. Fifty one percent of people who are off work through illness or disability, and 38% of people who are unemployed and seeking work, experienced loneliness in the last week. These levels are much higher than the national average (21%). These patterns are also present in other measures of social networks, cohesion, empowerment and participation. Further work is required to understand the relationships in the data between employment, education and social connections.

Patterns of inequality

As reported above, there are different patterns of social connection across sub-groups in the population. One of the most apparent differences is in the complex pattern between social interaction and loneliness (see Fig 22), which illustrates the importance of acknowledging the range of factors that drive this element of our wellbeing.

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[17] https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-people-annual-report-results-2018-scottish-household-survey/pages/5/

Some groups within the population (including women, people in remote towns, and the youngest and oldest age groups) experience higher levels of loneliness <u>and</u> higher levels of social interaction. Some groups (e.g. disabled people, unemployed people, people in socially rented housing and people in more deprived areas) have higher levels of loneliness and <u>lower</u> levels of social interaction.

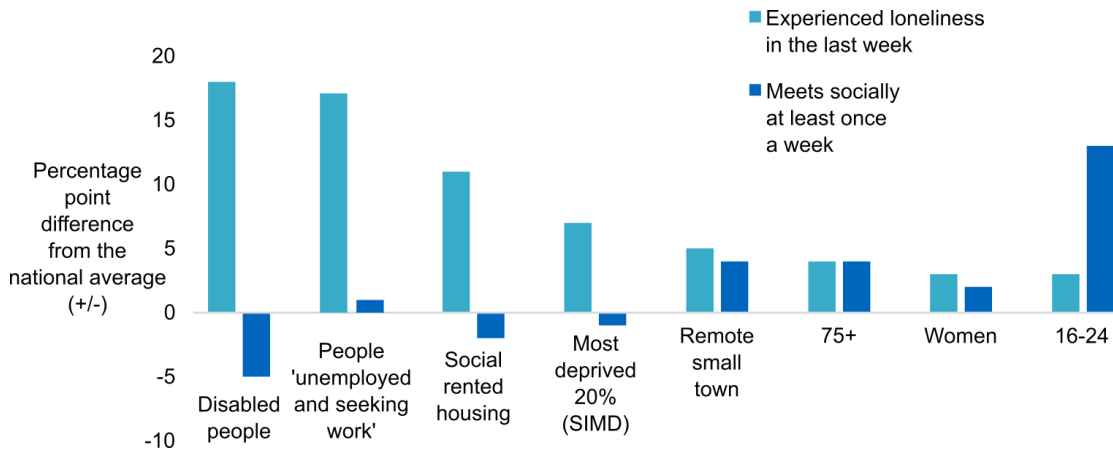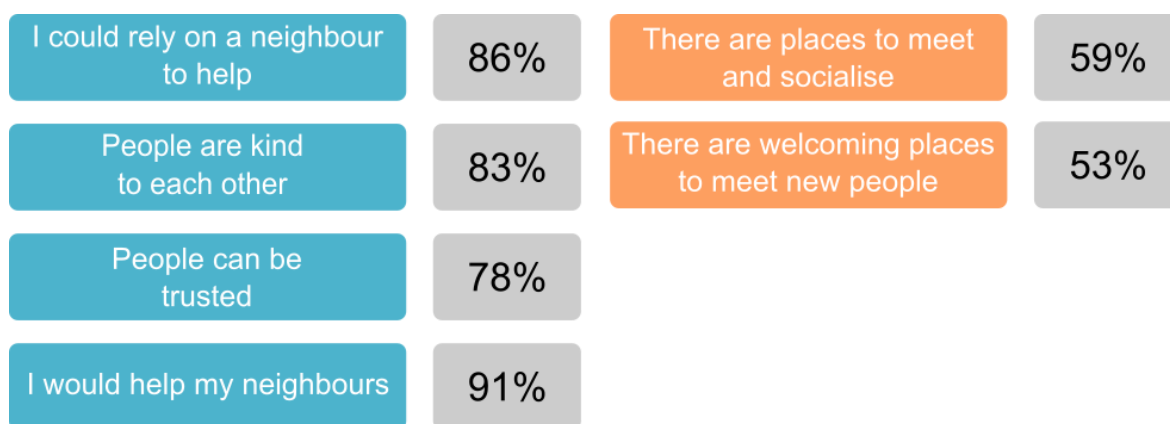Fig 22. Loneliness and isolation, difference to the Scotland average by group.
There is a complex association between loneliness and social interaction.

Case study stories for this research (see Kay's Story in section 4) help to illustrate how the design of services and communities can exacerbate exclusionary effects further, and create mental health problems through inappropriately designed or inaccessible services.

Amenities and places for interaction

One of the elements that might explain some of the variation in levels of interaction between groups is the provision of places for people to interact, and meet new people.

Evidence from the Scottish Household Survey shows that, although at a national level people rate their neighbourhoods positively, they are consistently more positive about the 'people' elements of neighbourhoods (for example, the help and support from neighbours, the perception of trust and kindness – all with high levels of agreement) than about the places available to meet and interact (see Fig 23).

I could rely on a neighbour to help	86%	There are places to meet and socialise	59%
People are kind to each other	83%	There are welcoming places to meet new people	53%
People can be trusted	78%		
I would help my neighbours	91%		

% agreeing with statements, Scottish Household Survey, 2018

Fig 23. Proportion of people who agree who feel positively about the people and places in their neighbourhood. Survey respondents are more positive about the 'people' elements of neighbourhoods than about the places and spaces available for social interaction.

This effect is even more pronounced (see Fig 24) for some groups of the population, including people in socially rented housing, and areas of higher deprivation (as measured by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation – SIMD), and urban areas. These are also some of the groups with higher levels of experienced loneliness. Increasing the possibilities for people to meet and interact may impact on the opportunities for developing greater social connections, particularly in areas of higher deprivation and more urban settings.

Engagement with decision making bodies

Chart: % who agree 'There are places where people can meet up and socialise'

- 20% most deprived areas (SIMD): 50%
- Social rented housing: 50%
- Urban areas (with 10k-125k population): 51%
- Disabled people: 54%
- Scotland: 59%
- Private rented housing: 64%
- Remote rural areas: 66%
- 20% least deprived (SIMD): 66%
- Minority ethnicity: 68%

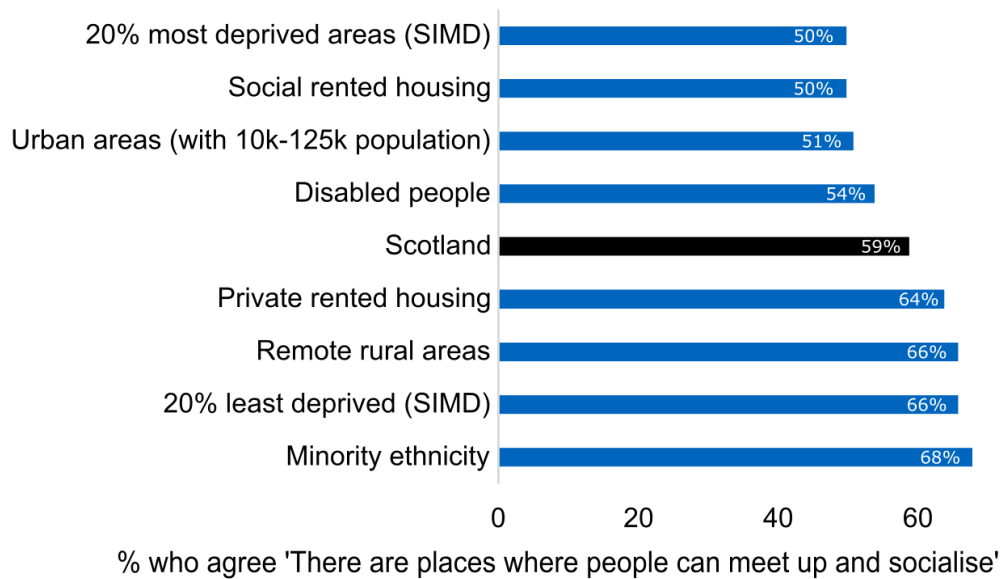% who agree 'There are places where people can meet up and socialise'

Fig 24. Engagement with local decisions, by groups. The proportion of people who agree there are places to meet up and socialise in their neighbourhood is lower for people in social rented housing, areas of higher deprivation and people living in 'other' urban areas.

The Scottish Household Survey contains questions about the means for people to improve and change their neighbourhood. Although evidence shows high levels of voluntary activities (Fig 25) to improve neighbourhoods (58% of people across Scotland said that local people take action to improve their neighbourhood), levels of perceived influence and access to decision making are much lower(just 20% of people said they feel that they are able to influence decisions about their local area). Notably, there are low levels of perceived influence on decision making across all sub-groups of the population.

Even groups with higher levels of voluntary action to improve their neighbourhoods do not perceive themselves to be strongly engaged in official decision making. This is perhaps a surprising finding given other measures that show higher than average levels of social capital for these groups. This suggests there is a need for people to be able to improve their neighbourhood through 'official' sources of power and planning as well as voluntary means.
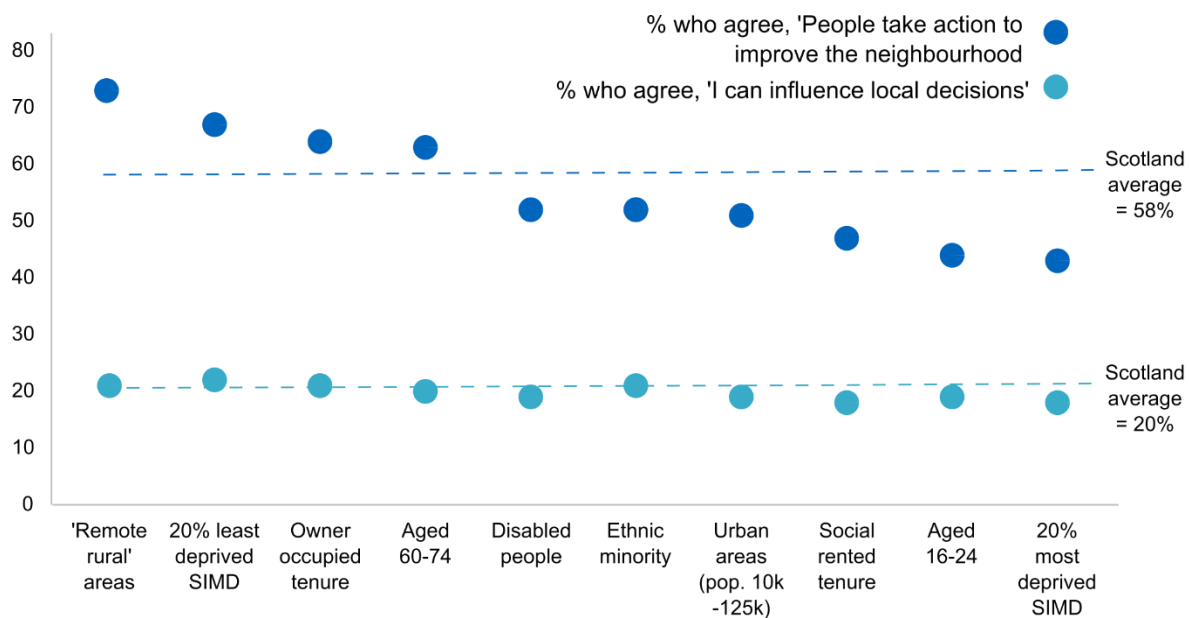
Fig 25. Formal and informal means to improve neighbourhoods, by groups. Although there are different perceived levels of voluntary activities to improve neighbourhoods, there are low levels of perceived influence across all subgroups of the population.

6. Stories of social capital – experience from people and places

The above findings from the Scottish Household Survey provide a helpful overview of changes in social capital at a national level, and indications of different experiences for groups in the population. This statistical analysis however doesn't provide a first-hand understanding of social capital as it is felt and experienced in everyday life.

This section of the report provides two stories from a number that were collected by a researcher to highlight some of the possible ways that social connections and relationships are experienced by people in different situations and to help position some of these findings within a societal, organisational, cultural and historical context.

These stories were collected in a small qualitative study that took place over three months in 2018-19. It is not a representative account of social connections and social capital, but these stories are intended to illustrate some of the realities and challenges that are relevant to the context of social connection and how it is created and impeded - from the point of view of people's experiences and the things they feel are important in their lives.

James's story includes an account of social networks, participation and volunteering in an area that has experienced deindustrialisation. Descriptions of the local physical and economic environment are tied to the social and economic history of the place, and offer an understanding of how things had been and how they had changed. His story highlights affective barriers (feeling judged, stigmatised, 'not feeling I matter') as well as structural and material ones.

Kay's Story is about isolation, and describes Kay's experience of public services and community empowerment. In her story the role of structural barriers and hierarchical relationships is central. Both Kay's and James's stories illustrate the connections between structural and affective processes and how inequality affects wellbeing.

Connections to social capital themes

The stories were written with a focus on social capital but because they are situated within people's lives and within specific local contexts they refer to a wider range of other policy areas such as crime and safety, public services, inequality, regeneration, economic policy and urban planning.

The stories are written from the point of view of the researcher and author of the stories Paula Jacobs.[18]

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[18] The report and methodology is explained in a companion report, 'Stories of Social Capital' (Jacobs, P, 2020, The Scottish Government). The images for the stories of social capital were drawn by Candela Sanchez, and are used with her permission.

James's Story - Black clouds and open skies

I decided to follow James into this story by starting at his favourite place up where the clay pits lie.

From there you can look over the whole of Glasgow, James says. *And on a lovely summer's day you can sit there for hours and if it was not for the fact that you have all the noise from the nearby highway you can get lost in your thoughts. So if you take people up there who are new to the area, who think it is this horrible, junkie ridden area then you take them here and they are so surprised.*

James is proud of his community. He cares about it deeply. I can feel that when I talk to him. *I am not going to say that it is a dump*, he tells me. *Why always start with the negatives? I am trying to bring over the positives and what people are doing.*

This is James's story of where he lives and of other people that live there. It is about how people try to make their community a safer and kinder place but it is also a story about the community and its social, physical and economic realities that can stand in the way and that can make living here difficult.

James has always lived in the community and he has seen it change over the past decades. James says it used to be a community where you would leave school one day and move into a job right away.

There was plenty of factories around. Then during the 80s it was as if a storm hit the community and all the big industries closed down. It was like a domino effect, one went down and then bang bang bang.

James was a teenager through this and he remembers that things got bad very quickly. Unemployment went up and then the drugs hit the area. *There was lots of violence*, James says. *But that was in the 80s and the 90s. It is different now, not like it used to be. Yes there is a drug problem, we got high alcohol use, there is very little employment, there is a high rate of elderly and there is a high rate of people on sickness benefits, but there are a lot of good things happening now*, he says. Things have changed but it is frustrating for James that it still got

the stigma of what it was like in the 80s. *So there are a lot of judgements made about you if you come from here.*

Family is important to the people here and it would not be unusual for parents, their children and grandchildren to all live close together. *Just now we have members of the same family below us, above us and beside us*, James tells me. *There are groups of people who volunteer and who try to make spaces accessible for the community. They have raised money to get park benches and to put in goal posts so the kids can play football. People try to connect, to help each other but it can be hard at times.*

James thinks it has a lot to do with people's self-esteem and during our conversation he mentions the feeling of a 'black cloud' hanging over the place several times*. Sometimes you feel like there is a heaviness and a black cloud over the area. There is an expectation of things being done to you.* What does he mean by things being done to people I ask.

James starts to tell me about the facilities and services that have closed.

The local community centres have been knocked down, schools and doctor surgeries have closed and you just take it as that is what happens here so people develop this kind of attitude of this is as good as it is going to get.

In the end of our conversation I ask James what community wellbeing means to him. He says, community wellbeing is when there is a vibrant feeling in the community where all people feel as if they are part and they want to be in the community. *There are lots of groups and activity within the community that people have started and that they want to be part of.* James is part of the local church and he volunteers with different groups. *You find there is a core of people that volunteer at events*, he says. *It is always the same faces that turn up so the hard thing is getting people motivated to get involved. It is breaking the ice with people and asking if they can help.*

He feels that volunteering can be beneficial for both the community and the individual. He feels that there is so much potential within

everyone but sometimes people forget. *It is bringing it out and giving them value. Let them know that you want to hear their story, because they feel as if they are forgotten about.*

Kay's Story – "The messy and the small"

I talk to Kay on the phone and we end up speaking for almost two hours. She has a lot to say. At the end of our conversation I note down two words: Hope and Failure. I feel that there is both in her experience, experiences of failure, frustration and resignation. But there is also hope and the will to engage and help to make a difference. I ask Kay if she thinks both feelings contradict each other. She answers that her hope is that if you understand how you have failed me, you won't fail me again.

Kay is disabled through chronic illness and has been ill for a long time. She is in her forties now. Kay has left the house 17 times this year, mostly to go to medical appointments or public engagement events. *But I can only go when the right support is provided for me and this is not always the case*, she tells me.

My ability to go out and about is limited and I cannot go on public transport. A lot of people assume that your friends and family will provide support to access things, but if you speak to anyone with chronic illness you will hear a very common story: In the first few years when you are ill people offer to help and then as it goes on and on and on and on and on you have fewer friends and they are less willing to provide help. So there comes a point where you run out of people and you turn to organisations and the state and say can you help me and the answer is NO. I keep being told I am the wrong age, I have the wrong type of disability, I live in the wrong part of the country.

Kay feels that the level of support that she needs is not big but without it she is really stuck. *For instance, there is a community centre within reach of my home, and I could go there if I took a taxi and knew that someone will meet me from the taxi and take me in, fetch me a chair, take me to the room where the activity is taking place, introduce me to people, make sure I knew where the toilets are, give me a mobile phone number to call in case I get into difficulty and make sure I get home safely. But you can't count on that, unless there was someone really nice, because it is not an official thing. It is an exception that they made. It is a kindness that they offered you. It is not a service.*

Later on she tells me about a public engagement she went to where she knew the organisers through email and phone contact and they knew her and how it made all the difference. *It helped me to know that*

she was there and that she knew what support I might need and it helped me not to need the support. That is the other thing people don't get. It is taking less energy from me because I am not so worried. I am not hyper vigilant to what is happening around me. So the more support I have the less support I need.

Kay says that while she needs support to go out she feels that the biggest barrier is lack of information. To help me understand she asks me to look up her postcode. So after our call I go to Google Maps and type in her postcode.

I can see blocks of flats and a number of two story semi-detached houses. It is a large urban area with busy roads, busy traffic and a few green spaces here and there. She asks me to go and search for activities and events in her area.

G*o through the pages*, she says, *and think to yourself as someone who lives here what did I just learn about the place and would I go there*. I can see a hall on the map close to her and I click on it but it does not have a website. I find a few other centres and organisations close by who have websites with information about their programs and contact details but I can see what she means. There is little information about the accessibility of buildings.

No one is providing information about the environment you will get when you arrive, walking distances and noise and light, how long the thing lasts and is there someone you can ask for help and where is the toilet. They just say it is fully accessible by which they mean they have a wheelchair ramp. So you phone people and you ask questions and people say 'just pop along for a wee chat' but people in my position do not pop.

Another main barrier Kay mentions throughout our conversation is a focus on labels and fixed organisational practices.

In terms of social care support it is mainly care agencies and the vast majority of them are geared towards the elderly and children, she tells me. *What is in the middle tends to be labelled so you have addiction problems, or you have mental health problems or you have epilepsy or some other specific condition. So you can't just say what service you need. You have to meet certain criteria and there isn't a mechanism to report unmet need, to say there is no service for me.*

I have £22 a week Disability Living Allowance and no service wants it. There is no service for £22 a week or even £90 a month and the way the organisations are set up they want you to book things in advance, so they can organise their rota, and they want you to book the same time every week. They want you to fit in with what suits them. Another option is to employ someone yourself as a PA, but it is not just that it is impossible to employ someone on £22 a week, it is the fact that I am not fit to do that. I don't have the energy for all that comes with it. So you become more and more isolated and the physical barriers and the resulting isolation mean that you lose your confidence. I do not suffer from a mental illness, she says, *but it has an effect on your mind. It has an effect on your confidence.*

Everything is overwhelming and actually leaving the house and going to something becomes in itself a problem, which you did not have before. And then there is no support with that either so it creates a level of disability in itself. I can hear her frustration when she talks. *This is not a mental illness that I have but the circumstances that I am in create a mental health burden and you then find yourself reading websites about anxiety and being offered anti-depressants and it is not appropriate but that is where you end up.*

Despite it all Kay continues to try and talk about her experience and to make suggestions how things could be improved but it is not always easy to get involved. *You are asking local people to take a level of involvement that many people are incapable of and they are incapable not because they are stupid, not because they have no capacity to read and understand but because what is going on in their lives is taking all that they have. For some people the actual distress of being ill, or living in poverty, for instance, it just takes up so much energy. Which means that those voices are missing.* Kay suggests that we

should ask a lot more questions. Who did not come? Who is not there? Why are they not there? But she feels that people don't like looking at what is not working. People don't like failure. *I am supposed to say everything is fine and I am supposed to say everything is great but I refuse to do so.*

Speaking to Kay I get the sense that what she is partly asking for is actually quite simple. She is asking for honesty - honesty about who remains excluded, about what cannot be offered, what cannot be provided and owning up to it. *For instance, if they say sorry we don't provide transport and if they'd made it clear in the event information then that might be ok, but making me ask and then telling me no you need to provide your own transport makes it harder to even consider being involved in anything. It makes it my problem, not their failing,* she says. *It is now my problem again, like it's my fault I need help.* After our conversation I wonder if Kay is feeling that she is not listened to despite her attempts to get involved and participate. She does not say it when I ask her but I feel that this might be one of her main frustrations. Not being listened to, or maybe even more frustratingly being listened to but not being heard.

When I ask Kay what community wellbeing means to her she says: *I think the bigger picture for community wellbeing is information and support. Information to allow people to make choices about what to be involved in and adequate support to overcome barriers to participation, in order that things are genuinely person-centered.*

And it will not be just about one thing, which makes it challenging because it's hard to get people to believe in complex solutions. People like straight forward projects but it's all messier and smaller than that.

7. Conclusions and recommendations

This report provides a positive story of social connections in Scotland and evidence that people enjoy their neighbourhoods and communities, and interact regularly with others in and across communities.

The most recent national data included in the social capital index shows a slight decrease in the overall levels of social capital since trends started to be measured in 2013 – including decreases in some of the measures of social networks, participation and empowerment. This is a small reduction but it is important to monitor trends in future years and explore the reasons for change in more detail.

There are also some findings that show areas of greater concern. One in five adults in Scotland feel lonely some, most or all of the time and this varies by both place and personal factors. There are higher levels of loneliness in younger and older people, people living in deprived areas, women, disabled people, and people who live in socially rented accommodation. The evidence in this report suggests that the economic context of areas, the provision of amenities and public services, and social inequality are all relevant factors for understanding the variation in levels of social capital.

There is a consistent picture that it is the personal ties and bonds that are the most positive aspects of communities and neighbourhoods. Alongside this evidence of strong personal connections however, people are less likely to agree that there is sufficient provision of places to meet and interact. This findings is more pronounced in some local authority areas, the urban areas outside the big cities[19], and in the most deprived locations.

There is a relatively low level of perceived influence on decision making and connections with power across <u>all</u> of the population sub-groups that were analysed for this report.

This research does not provide an explanation of the social and economic policy drivers of social capital, but it highlights a range of factors that play out differently in neighbourhood and personal settings. Other available evidence[20] highlights the wide range of social, economic and environmental factors that lead to different levels of social connection and the need to act on the barriers such as poverty and inequality, poor housing, illness, discrimination and antisocial

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[19] 'Other urban areas' are defined as settlements with a population between 10,000-125,000.
[20] https://www.gcph.co.uk/assets/0000/5594/Social_contexts_and_health__web_.pdf

behaviour and provide the financial investment, public services and support for community development.

Priorities for increasing social capital

The findings suggest that the following points are important for improving social connections and social capital in communities.

1. Policymakers and practitioners in a wide range of policy settings would benefit from a better understanding of how their work affects social relationships and wellbeing in neighbourhoods and communities. Social connections are an essential element of personal, community and societal wellbeing and as shown in this report, they are influenced by a range of environmental, social and economic factors. To improve social connections, people involved in the design and delivery of public policy (for example, in the policy and practice settings mentioned in this report: social care, public transport, urban planning, community safety, housing, employment, economic planning, procurement and local democracy), need to consider not only how to achieve their own direct policy objectives, but also how to ensure that the other (possibly diffuse) consequences of their actions can create, sustain (and not damage) opportunities for social connections in communities.

2. We need to prioritise the places and groups that have the lowest levels of connections. The National Performance Framework refers to 'all of our people' in Scotland and outcomes depend not simply on a net gain in social capital at a national level (which could be achieved through improved social capital in already privileged groups), but on increasing social capital across all places, and subgroups of the population.

3. We need to ensure there are good quality, affordable and accessible places and spaces where people spend time, gather and meet. It is essential to create, retain and maintain the environmental and social infrastructure that supports social interactions and participation in communities – the informal public places, spaces, and facilities where people spend time, gather and meet. Evidence shows this is most important in the areas where there is a perceived lack of these places, e.g. in areas of deprivation and for disabled people.

4. People need to be involved more strongly in decisions about their communities. Levels of perceived influence over local decision making have been consistently low over recent years, and across all subgroups of the population. New and culturally deeper initiatives are

required to enable people to have a greater influence over local decision making.

5. We need to base our understandings of community wellbeing on fuller and more rounded accounts than statistics alone can provide. A plural and multidimensional approach to understanding and measuring social capital, for example through multi-measurement data-dashboards, and qualitative research helps to highlight the connections and interdependencies between important economic, social, personal and historical factors. Case study stories also provide a perspective rooted in lived experience that is not available through quantitative research alone.

8. Annex A – Technical note for the Social Capital Index

The Scottish Government developed an index based on four social capital themes: 1) social networks, 2) community cohesion, 3) social participation, and 4) community empowerment. Under these headings, data from 18 survey questions from the Scottish Household Survey is tracked over time to show aggregate change in the four themes, and for an overall measure of change in social capital nationally since 2013.

To account for the different magnitude of scores, each of the questions has been indexed and set to the value 100 for the base year 2013. Percentage changes for each question in subsequent years are calculated, relative to the base year.

The four themes and associated survey questions are:

1) Social Networks

- Could rely on neighbour to help ('Strongly agree' or 'tend to agree')
- Could count on neighbour to keep eye on home ('Strongly agree' or 'tend to agree')
- Could turn to someone in neighbourhood for advice ('Strongly agree' or 'tend to agree')
- Would help neighbour ('Strongly agree' or 'tend to agree')
- Meets socially with friends, relatives, neighbours, work colleagues ('every day or most days', 'a few times a week', 'once a week')
- Felt lonely in the last week (all or almost all of the time', 'some of the time', 'most of the time'

2) Community Cohesion (8 variables)

- Neighbourhood rating ('very good' + 'fairly good')
- Neighbourhood belonging ('very strongly' + 'fairly strongly)
- Feelings of safety walking home ('very safe' + 'fairly safe')
- Neighbourhood trust ('Strongly agree' or 'tend to agree')
- Neighbourhood kindness ('Strongly agree' or 'tend to agree')
- Has places to meet up and socialise in their neighbourhood ('Strongly agree' or 'tend to agree')
- Welcoming places and opportunities to meet new people ('Strongly agree' or 'tend to agree')
- A neighbourhood where people get on well together ('Strongly agree' or 'tend to agree').

3) Community Empowerment (2 variables)

- I can influence decisions ('Strongly agree' or 'tend to agree')
- People take action to improve the area ('Strongly agree' or 'tend to agree')

4) Social Participation (1 variable (combined from 2))

- In the last 12 months, has given up time to help any groups, clubs or organisations in an unpaid capacity ('Yes')
- In the last 12 months, has given unpaid help to other people or to improve your local environment, that is apart from any help given through a group, club or organisations (not help given to relatives) ('Yes')

The indexed measures of variables within each theme are averaged to provide an index score for each theme. The four scores for each theme are averaged to provide an overall indicator. This means each theme has equal weight in the calculation of the overall score.

This approach uses variables that are already existing and some that were collected for the first time in 2018. Adding data from new variable with a base year value of 100 would artificially drag the overall average towards 100, which would be incorrect. New data will therefore be included at the current average, so they will contribute to show their proportional effect on the average in subsequent years. If variables are added or removed to the index in future, the remaining questions will be re-based from that point onwards in a similar way.

9. Annex B – Further Tables

CHANGES ACROSS SOCIAL CAPITAL THEMES SINCE 2013

1. Social Networks

Fig 26. Social Networks overall theme changes, 2013-2018, (Scottish Household Survey 2013-2018)

Social Networks						
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
% of people who agreed with statements:						
Could rely on neighbour to help	90	89	90	90	88	86
Neighbours would keep an eye on home	91	90	90	90	87	85
Could turn to neighbours for advice	86	86	85	86	82	77
Would help neighbours	94	93	94	94	91	91
Meets socially at least once a week	-	-	-	-	-	73
Felt lonely in the last week	-	-	-	-	-	21

Table 1. Social networks trend data 2013-2018, (Scottish Household Survey 2013-2018)

2. Community Cohesion

Fig 27. Community cohesion overall theme changes, 2013-2018, (Scottish Household Survey 2013-2018)

Community Cohesion						
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
% of people who agreed with statements:						
Positive neighbourhood rating	94	94	95	95	95	95
Neighbourhood belonging	77	77	77	77	78	78
Neighbourhood safety	84	85	85	86	82	0
Neighbourhood trust	-	-	-	-	-	78
Neighbourhood kindness	-	-	-	-	-	83
Places to meet and socialise	-	-	-	-	-	59
Welcoming places and opportunities to meet new people	-	-	-	-	-	53
Diverse people get on well together (SOCIAL3)	-	-	-	-	-	70

Table 2. Community cohesion trend data 2013-2018, (Scottish Household Survey 2013-2018)

3. Social Participation

Fig 28. Community cohesion overall theme changes, 2013-2018, (Scottish Household Survey 2013-2018)

Social Participation						
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
% of people who volunteered n the last 12 months:						
Formal volunteering	28	27	27	27	28	26
Informal volunteering	-	-	-	-	-	36
Formal and/or informal volunteering	-	-	-	-	-	48

Table 3. Community cohesion trend data 2013-2018, (Scottish Household Survey 2013-2018)

Community Empowerment

Fig 29. Community empowerment overall theme changes, 2013-2018, (Scottish Household Survey 2013-2018)

Community Empowerment						
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
% of people who agreed:						
I can influence local decisions'	22	23	24	23	23	20
People take action to improve the neighbourhood'						58

Table 4. Community cohesion trend data 2013-2018, (Scottish Household Survey 2013-2018)

2. BREAKDOWNS FOR SUBGROUPS OF THE POPULATION

Table 1. Age category

Question	Question code	Age Category						Scotland
	Question code	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-59	60-74	75+	Scotland
Social Networks								
Agrees that 'If I was alone and needed help, I could rely on someone in this neighbourhood to help me'.	RB4DN	81	79	85	87	89	93	86
Agrees that 'If my home was empty, I could count on someone in this neighbourhood to keep an eye on my home.'	RB4DN	78	77	85	88	90	94	85
Agrees that 'I feel I could turn to someone in this neighbourhood for advice or support.'	RB4DN	72	68	77	78	83	86	77
Agrees that 'In an emergency, such as a flood, I would offer to help people in my neighbourhood who might not be able to cope well.'	RB4DN	89	90	92	93	92	83	91
Meets socially with friends, relatives, neighbours, work colleagues at least once a week.	SOCIAL1	86	74	65	66	75	77	73
Felt lonely in the last week some/most/almost all/all of the time.	SOCIAL2	24	24	19	21	18	25	21
Community Cohesion								
Rates neighbourhood positively (very/fairly good)	RB1	93	93	94	95	97	98	95
Feels a positive sense of neighbourhood belonging (very/fairly strong)	COMMBEL	72	67	76	79	85	87	78
Feels safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark.	RA4AC	82	85	88	85	81	62	82
Agrees that 'This is a neighbourhood where most people can be trusted' (2017)	SOCIAL3	69	69	75	79	85	87	78
Agrees that 'This is a neighbourhood where people are kind to each other'	SOCIAL3	79	78	84	83	85	87	83
Agrees that 'This is a neighbourhood where people from different backgrounds get on well together'.	SOCIAL3	68	67	68	72	74	71	70
Agrees that 'There are places where people can meet up and socialise'	SOCIAL3	57	58	58	59	61	60	59
Agrees that 'There are welcoming places and opportunities to meet new people'.	SOCIAL3	52	53	53	50	54	55	53
Community Empowerment								
Agrees that 'I can influence decisions affecting my local area'.	RF10	19	20	21	21	20	20	20
Agres that 'This is a neighbourhood where local people take action to help improve the neighbourhood'.	SOCIAL3	44	52	60	61	63	62	58
Social Participation								
Formal and informal volunteering	RF11A2018 and VOLVI1	47	45	56	50	50	34	48
Base size 2018	RF11A2018 and VOLVI6	**680**	**1300**	**1370**	**2390**	**2540**	**1430**	**9700**
Base size 2017 (for variable RA4AC)	RF11A2018 and VOLVI5	**650**	**1290**	**1400**	**2410**	**2590**	**1480**	**9810**

Table 2. Gender

Question	Question code	Gender		Scotland
	Question code	M	F	Scotland
Social Networks				
Agrees that 'If I was alone and needed help, I could rely on someone in this neighbourhood to help me'.	RB4DN	84	87	86
Agrees that 'If my home was empty, I could count on someone in this neighbourhood to keep an eye on my home.'	RB4DN	84	87	85
Agrees that 'I feel I could turn to someone in this neighbourhood for advice or support.'	RB4DN	75	79	77
Agrees that 'In an emergency, such as a flood, I would offer to help people in my neighbourhood who might not be able to cope well.'	RB4DN	91	90	91
Meets socially with friends, relatives, neighbours, work colleagues at least once a week.	SOCIAL1	70	75	73
Felt lonely in the last week some/most/almost all/all of the time.	SOCIAL2	19	24	21
Community Cohesion				
Rates neighbourhood positively (very/fairly good)	RB1	95	95	95
Feels a positive sense of neighbourhood belonging (very/fairly strong)	COMMBEL	77	79	78
Feels safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark.	RA4AC	91	74	82
Agrees that 'This is a neighbourhood where most people can be trusted' (2017)	SOCIAL3	76	79	78
Agrees that 'This is a neighbourhood where people are kind to each other'	SOCIAL3	81	84	83
Agrees that 'This is a neighbourhood where people from different backgrounds get on well together'.	SOCIAL3	70	71	70
Agrees that 'There are places where people can meet up and socialise'	SOCIAL3	59	59	59
Agrees that 'There are welcoming places and opportunities to meet new people'.	SOCIAL3	53	53	53
Community Empowerment				
Agrees that 'I can influence decisions affecting my local area'.	RF10	20	20	20
Agres that 'This is a neighbourhood where local people take action to help improve the neighbourhood'.	SOCIAL3	56	59	58
Social Participation				
Formal and informal volunteering	RF11A2018 and VOLVI1	46	50	48
Base size 2018		**4320**	**5380**	**9700**
Base size 2017 (for variable RA4AC)		**4540**	**5270**	**9810**

Table 3. Urban and rural location

Question	Question code	Urban-Rural Classification						Scotland
	Question code	Large urban areas	Other urban areas	Accessible small towns	Remote small towns	Accessible rural	Remote rural	Scotland
Social Networks								
Agrees that 'If I was alone and needed help, I could rely on someone in this neighbourhood to help me'.	RB4DN	83	85	90	85	89	93	86
Agrees that 'If my home was empty, I could count on someone in this neighbourhood to keep an eye on my home.'	RB4DN	81	85	91	89	92	93	85
Agrees that 'I feel I could turn to someone in this neighbourhood for advice or support.'	RB4DN	75	75	80	76	84	86	77
Agrees that 'In an emergency, such as a flood, I would offer to help people in my neighbourhood who might not be able to cope well.'	RB4DN	91	89	90	91	93	93	91
Meets socially with friends, relatives, neighbours, work colleagues at least once a week.	SOCIAL1	75	72	68	77	70	72	73
Felt lonely in the last week some/most/almost all/all of the time.	SOCIAL2	21	23	22	26	15	19	21
Community Cohesion								
Rates neighbourhood positively (very/fairly good)	RB1	93	94	95	96	97	98	95
Feels a positive sense of neighbourhood belonging (very/fairly strong)	COMMBEL	74	78	82	84	82	87	78
Feels safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark.	RA4AC	80	80	84	87	90	92	82
Agrees that 'This is a neighbourhood where most people can be trusted' (2017)	SOCIAL3	73	75	83	77	88	89	78

57

Agrees that 'This is a neighbourhood where people are kind to each other'	SOCIAL3	79	81	86	80	90	89	83
Agrees that 'This is a neighbourhood where people from different backgrounds get on well together'.	SOCIAL3	71	67	73	70	75	75	70
Agrees that 'There are places where people can meet up and socialise'	SOCIAL3	62	51	67	61	62	66	59
Agrees that 'There are welcoming places and opportunities to meet new people'.	SOCIAL3	55	46	59	56	57	63	53
Community Empowerment								
Agrees that 'I can influence decisions affecting my local area'.	RF10	21	19	21	23	19	21	20
Agres that 'This is a neighbourhood where local people take action to help improve the neighbourhood'.	SOCIAL3	55	51	66	55	72	73	58
Social Participation								
Formal and informal volunteering	RF11A2018 and VOLVI1	45	48	51	48	53	52	48
Base size 2018		**2970**	**3250**	**840**	**580**	**1030**	**1030**	**9700**
Base size 2017 (for variable RA4AC)		**2810**	**3530**	**880**	**570**	**1000**	**1030**	**9810**

Table 4. Deprivation (Scottish Indices of Multiple Deprivation 20% vigntile)

Question	Question code	Most deprived to least deprived 20% (SIMD vignitiles 1=most deprived, 5=least deprived)					Scotland
	Question code	1	2	3	4	5	Scotland
Social Networks							
Agrees that 'If I was alone and needed help, I could rely on someone in this neighbourhood to help me'.	RB4DN	80	83	88	87	90	86
Agrees that 'If my home was empty, I could count on someone in this neighbourhood to keep an eye on my home.'	RB4DN	79	82	86	89	90	85
Agrees that 'I feel I could turn to someone in this neighbourhood for advice or support.'	RB4DN	72	74	78	80	80	77
Agrees that 'In an emergency, such as a flood, I would offer to help people in my neighbourhood who might not be able to cope well.'	RB4DN	86	89	91	93	94	91
Meets socially with friends, relatives, neighbours, work colleagues at least once a week.	SOCIAL1	72	73	71	72	74	73
Felt lonely in the last week some/most/almost all/all of the time.	SOCIAL2	28	24	22	18	15	21
Community Cohesion							
Rates neighbourhood positively (very/fairly good)	RB1	85	93	96	98	100	95
Feels a positive sense of neighbourhood belonging (very/fairly strong)	COMMBEL	71	73	80	81	83	78
Feels safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark.	RA4AC	68	78	85	89	90	82
Agrees that 'This is a neighbourhood where most people can be trusted' (2017)	SOCIAL3	60	70	81	86	89	78
Agrees that 'This is a neighbourhood where people are kind to each other'	SOCIAL3	74	77	85	87	89	83

Agrees that 'This is a neighbourhood where people from different backgrounds get on well together'.	SOCIAL3	62	65	71	75	78	70
Agrees that 'There are places where people can meet up and socialise'	SOCIAL3	50	55	59	64	66	59
Agrees that 'There are welcoming places and opportunities to meet new people'.	SOCIAL3	45	48	54	58	59	53
Community Empowerment							
Agrees that 'I can influence decisions affecting my local area'.	RF10	18	18	21	21	22	20
Agres that 'This is a neighbourhood where local people take action to help improve the neighbourhood'.	SOCIAL3	43	52	61	65	67	58
Social Participation							
Formal and informal volunteering	RF11A2018 and VOLVI1	41	46	48	51	53	48
Base size 2018		**1840**	**1850**	**2140**	**2100**	**1770**	**9700**
Base size 2017 (for variable RA4AC)		**1820**	**1960**	**2140**	**2080**	**1810**	**9810**

60

Table 5. Ethnicity

Question	Question code	Ethnicity		Scotland
	Question code	White	Minority Ethnic	Scotland
Social Networks				
Agrees that 'If I was alone and needed help, I could rely on someone in this neighbourhood to help me'.	RB4DN	86	75	86
Agrees that 'If my home was empty, I could count on someone in this neighbourhood to keep an eye on my home.'	RB4DN	86	67	85
Agrees that 'I feel I could turn to someone in this neighbourhood for advice or support.'	RB4DN	77	67	77
Agrees that 'In an emergency, such as a flood, I would offer to help people in my neighbourhood who might not be able to cope well.'	RB4DN	91	82	91
Meets socially with friends, relatives, neighbours, work colleagues at least once a week.	SOCIAL1	73	73	73
Felt lonely in the last week some/most/almost all/all of the time.	SOCIAL2	21	23	21
Community Cohesion				
Rates neighbourhood positively (very/fairly good)	RB1	95	93	95
Feels a positive sense of neighbourhood belonging (very/fairly strong)	COMMBEL	78	71	78
Feels safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark.	RA4AC	82	80	82
Agrees that 'This is a neighbourhood where most people can be trusted' (2017)	SOCIAL3	78	69	78
Agrees that 'This is a neighbourhood where people are kind to each other'	SOCIAL3	83	82	83
Agrees that 'This is a neighbourhood where people from different backgrounds get on well together'.	SOCIAL3	70	78	70
Agrees that 'There are places where people can meet up and socialise'	SOCIAL3	59	68	59
Agrees that 'There are welcoming places and opportunities to meet new people'.	SOCIAL3	52	64	53
Community Empowerment				
Agrees that 'I can influence decisions affecting my local area'.	RF10	20	21	20
Agres that 'This is a neighbourhood where local people take action to help improve the neighbourhood'.	SOCIAL3	58	52	58
Social Participation				
Formal and informal volunteering	RF11A2018 and VOLVI1	48	43	48
Base size 2018		**9410**	**290**	**9700**
Base size 2017 (for variable RA4AC)		**9490**	**310**	**9810**

Table 6. Housing tenure

Question	Question code	Tenure				Scotland
	Question code	Owner occupied	Social rented	Private rented	Other	Scotland
Social Networks						
Agrees that 'If I was alone and needed help, I could rely on someone in this neighbourhood to help me'.	RB4DN	90	80	72	86	86
Agrees that 'If my home was empty, I could count on someone in this neighbourhood to keep an eye on my home.'	RB4DN	90	81	69	83	85
Agrees that 'I feel I could turn to someone in this neighbourhood for advice or support.'	RB4DN	81	74	64	74	77
Agrees that 'In an emergency, such as a flood, I would offer to help people in my neighbourhood who might not be able to cope well.'	RB4DN	94	84	87	85	91
Meets socially with friends, relatives, neighbours, work colleagues at least once a week.	SOCIAL1	72	71	75	81	73
Felt lonely in the last week some/most/almost all/all of the time.	SOCIAL2	16	32	29	33	21
Community Cohesion						
Rates neighbourhood positively (very/fairly good)	RB1	97	87	93	93	95
Feels a positive sense of neighbourhood belonging (very/fairly strong)	COMMBEL	84	72	60	70	78
Feels safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark.	RA4AC	86	69	84	81	82
Agrees that 'This is a neighbourhood where most people can be trusted' (2017)	SOCIAL3	85	61	65	77	78
Agrees that 'This is a neighbourhood where people are kind to each other'	SOCIAL3	87	74	74	81	83
Agrees that 'This is a neighbourhood where people from different backgrounds get on well together'.	SOCIAL3	73	63	67	64	70
Agrees that 'There are places where people can meet up and socialise'	SOCIAL3	61	50	64	58	59
Agrees that 'There are welcoming places and opportunities to meet new people'.	SOCIAL3	54	45	59	51	53
Community Empowerment						
Agrees that 'I can influence decisions affecting my local area'.	RF10	21	18	21	13	20
Agres that 'This is a neighbourhood where local people take action to help improve the neighbourhood'.	SOCIAL3	64	47	46	54	58
Social Participation						
Formal and informal volunteering	RF11A2018 and VOLVI1	52	38	45	58	48
Base size 2018		**6190**	**2250**	**1160**	**110**	**9700**
Base size 2017 (for variable RA4AC)		**6250**	**2170**	**1250**	**140**	**9810**

Table 7. Disability

Question	Question code	Disability		Scotland
	Question code	Yes	No	Scotland
Social Networks				
Agrees that 'If I was alone and needed help, I could rely on someone in this neighbourhood to help me'.	RB4DN	84	86	86
Agrees that 'If my home was empty, I could count on someone in this neighbourhood to keep an eye on my home.'	RB4DN	85	86	85
Agrees that 'I feel I could turn to someone in this neighbourhood for advice or support.'	RB4DN	76	77	77
Agrees that 'In an emergency, such as a flood, I would offer to help people in my neighbourhood who might not be able to cope well.'	RB4DN	82	93	91
Meets socially with friends, relatives, neighbours, work colleagues at least once a week.	SOCIAL1	68	74	73
Felt lonely in the last week some/most/almost all/all of the time.	SOCIAL2	39	16	21
Community Cohesion				
Rates neighbourhood positively (very/fairly good)	RB1	91	96	95
Feels a positive sense of neighbourhood belonging (very/fairly strong)	COMMBEL	76	78	78
Feels safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark.	RA4AC	67	87	82
Agrees that 'This is a neighbourhood where most people can be trusted' (2017)	SOCIAL3	73	79	78
Agrees that 'This is a neighbourhood where people are kind to each other'	SOCIAL3	80	83	83
Agrees that 'This is a neighbourhood where people from different backgrounds get on well together'.	SOCIAL3	67	71	70
Agrees that 'There are places where people can meet up and socialise'	SOCIAL3	54	60	59
Agrees that 'There are welcoming places and opportunities to meet new people'.	SOCIAL3	48	54	53
Community Empowerment				
Agrees that 'I can influence decisions affecting my local area'.	RF10	18	21	20
Agres that 'This is a neighbourhood where local people take action to help improve the neighbourhood'.	SOCIAL3	52	59	58
Social Participation				
Formal and informal volunteering	RF11A2018 and VOLVI1	42	50	48
Base size 2018		**2616**	**7086**	**9700**
Base size 2017 (for variable RA4AC)		**2621**	**7191**	**9810**

Table 8. Employment status

Question	Question code	Employment status									Scotland
	Question code	Self employed	Employed full time	Employed part time	Looking after the home or family	Permanently retired from work	Unemployed and seeking work	In Education (including School, HE/FE)	Other	Permanently sick or short term ill health or disabled	Scotland
Social Networks											
Agrees that 'If I was alone and needed help, I could rely on someone in this neighbourhood to help me'.	RB4DN	86	85	88	83	91	75	80	85	78	86
Agrees that 'If my home was empty, I could count on someone in this neighbourhood to keep an eye on my home.'	RB4DN	87	85	87	84	92	74	74	83	79	85
Agrees that 'I feel I could turn to someone in this neighbourhood for advice or support.'	RB4DN	80	75	81	76	85	66	67	83	72	77
Agrees that 'In an emergency, such as a flood, I would offer to help people in my neighbourhood who might not be able to cope well.'	RB4DN	94	94	94	91	88	87	86	90	75	91
Meets socially with friends, relatives, neighbours, work colleagues at least once a week.	SOCIAL1	70	69	72	70	78	75	86	91	60	73
Felt lonely in the last week some/most/almost	SOCIAL2	15	16	19	28	21	38	24	23	51	21

all/all of the time.

Community Cohesion											
Rates neighbourhood positively (very/fairly good)	RB1	96	95	94	89	97	87	97	93	85	95
Feels a positive sense of neighbourhood belonging (very/fairly strong)	COMMBEL	81	75	81	74	87	67	70	94	69	78
Feels safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark.	RA4AC	90	91	83	74	73	82	81	92	58	82
Agrees that 'This is a neighbourhood where most people can be trusted' (2017)	SOCIAL3	82	77	79	71	87	61	68	82	60	78
Agrees that 'This is a neighbourhood where people are kind to each other'	SOCIAL3	83	83	85	79	87	71	79	79	73	83
Agrees that 'This is a neighbourhood where people from different backgrounds get on well together'.	SOCIAL3	73	70	74	68	73	58	72	71	57	70
Agrees that 'There are places where people can meet up and socialise'	SOCIAL3	59	59	62	56	61	48	65	56	46	59
Agrees that 'There are welcoming places and opportunities to meet new people'.	SOCIAL3	56	51	57	51	55	41	61	52	42	53
Community Empowerment											
Agrees that 'I can influence decisions affecting my local area'.	RF10	19	20	21	19	21	24	20	21	15	20

Agres that 'This is a neighbourhood where local people take action to help improve the neighbourhood'.	SOCIAL3	63	58	62	54	64	43	43	57	44	58
Social Participation											
Formal and informal volunteering	RF11A2018 and VOLVI1	53	50	56	47	45	45	52	66	26	48
Base size 2018		**589**	**3140**	**991**	**381**	**3258**	**316**	**389**	**29**	**608**	**9700**
Base size 2017 (for variable RA4AC)		**616**	**3221**	**978**	**420**	**3383**	**293**	**366**	**16**	**519**	**9810**

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