



UK Perceptions of place

Exploring why trust in councils varies across the UK

commonplace.is



Trust, place, community



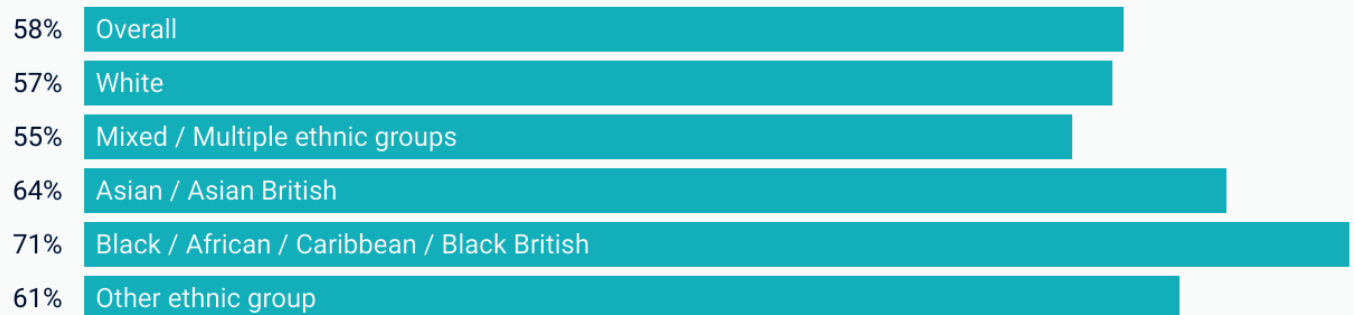
58% of the UK are satisfied with the quality of life in their community, well behind the USA metric of 66%

Our latest representative survey of the UK reached 6,645 people in under 10 days to build a local picture of:

- Quality of life
- Community characteristics
- Trust in their council

The results are streamed directly into the live Commonplace dashboard with automated reporting, smart insights and actionable workflows generated for you. We're sharing a sample of the insights generated from the 186k data points captured.

Quality of life



Non-white groups report higher quality of life than white respondents. This trend is seen in almost all UK regions: higher quality of life reported by black respondents in 11 of 12 UK regions and asian respondents in 9 of 12 regions.

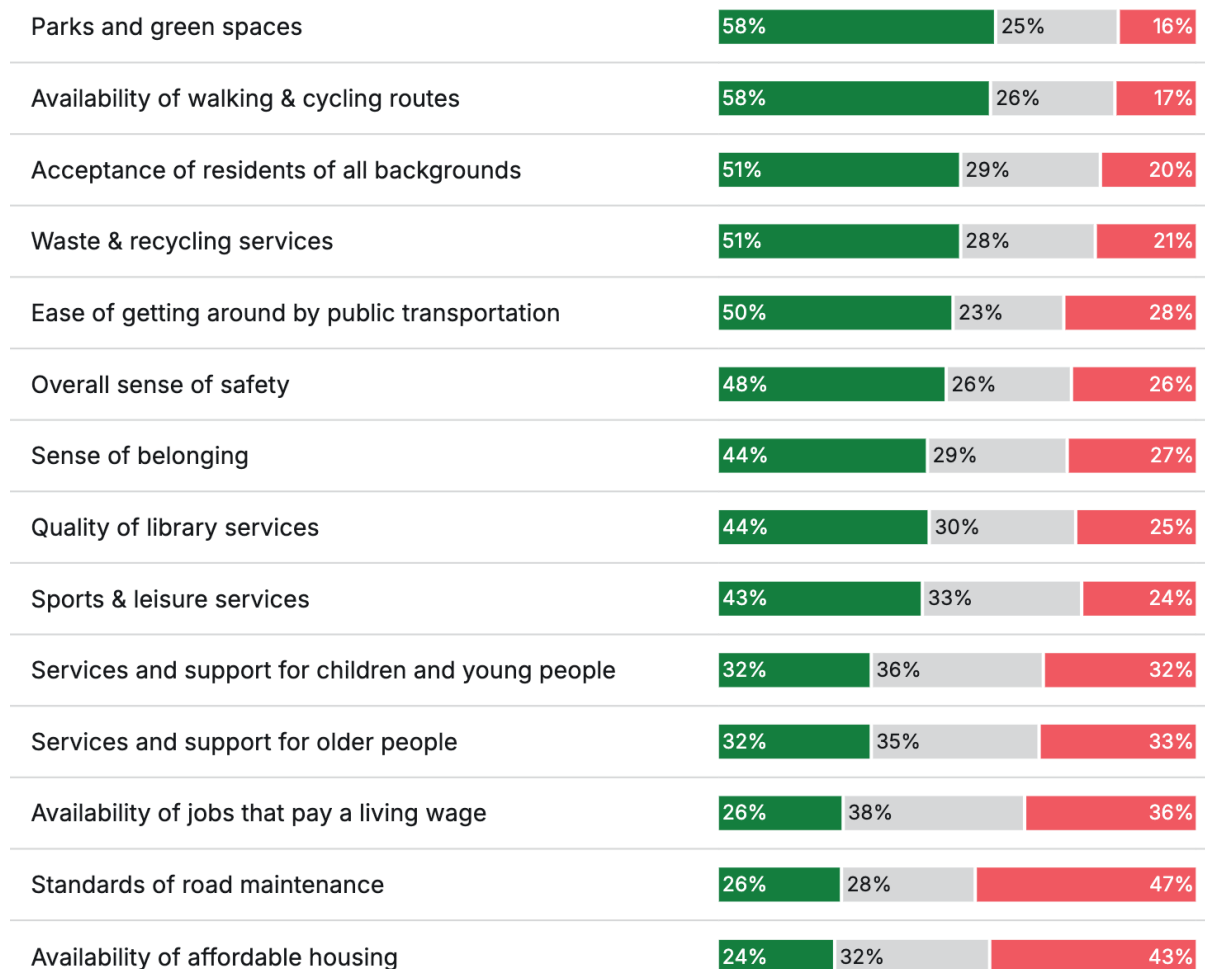
In our recent work with Ministry for Housing Communities & Local Government, we've collected over 120,000 representative survey responses from a range of programmes, including Pride in Place across the original 75 towns included in the programme. Our work now supports the expansion of the programme to 169 towns to support the town boards in understanding their priorities and building their investment case.



Local priorities & pain points



Resident experience is least positive around housing, road maintenance and living wage jobs



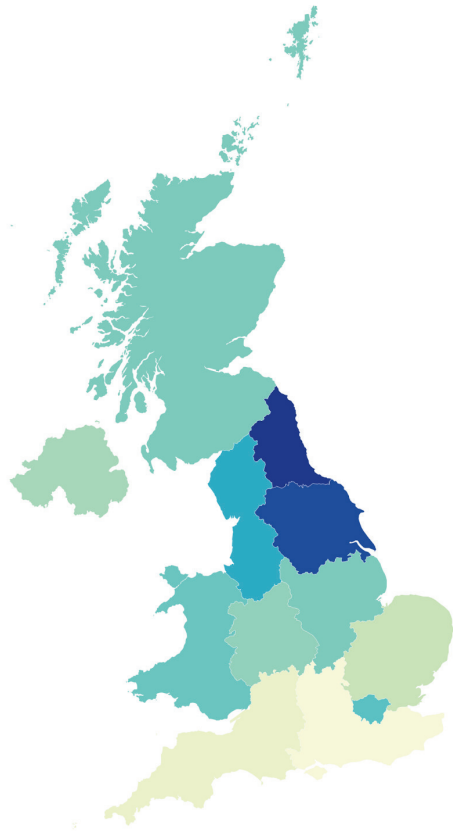
Resident feedback on their experience of living where they do is most negatively focused on affordable housing availability, standards of road maintenance or availability of jobs that pay a living wage. These characteristics show significant regional variation.



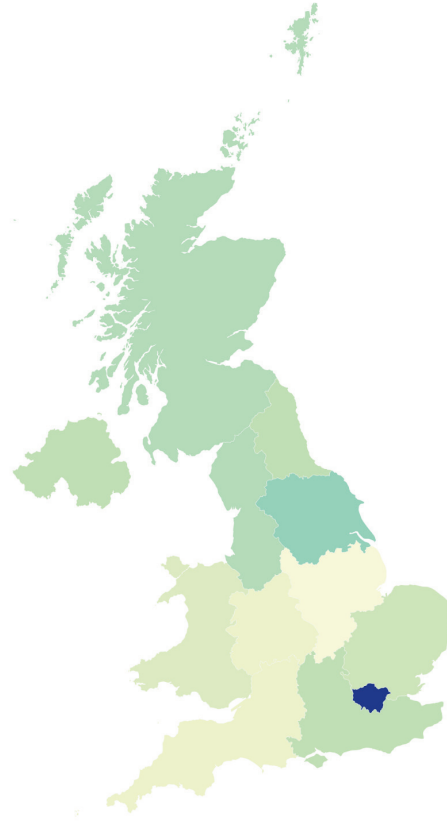
Local priorities & pain points



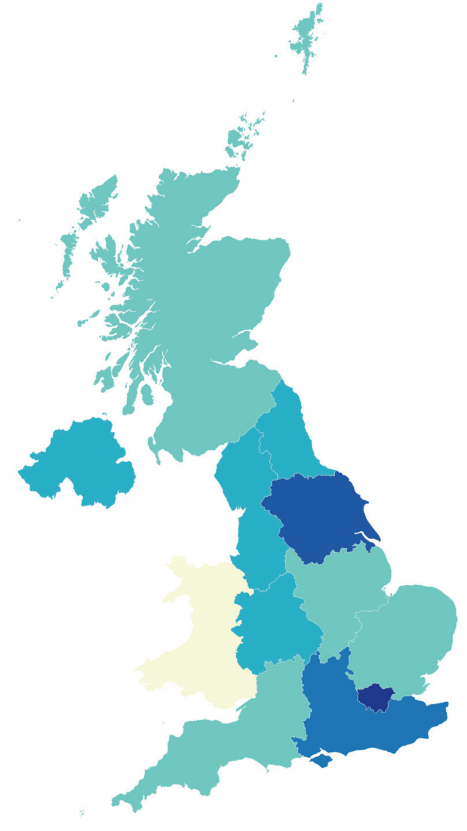
Availability of affordable housing



Standards of road maintenance



Availability of living wage jobs



Given the current media sentiment around inclusivity and community cohesion across the UK, we see it as a positive sign that ‘sense of belonging’, ‘overall sense of safety’ and ‘acceptance of residents of all backgrounds’ rated above average. North East and Yorkshire & Humber were consistent high performers on these three characteristics.

Over the past decade, our Engage platform has shaped over 16,500 projects across the UK. We’ve observed councils engaging most on parks and green spaces, walking & cycling and public transport, with waste the most talked about topic on the platform in 2024. Is this a coincidence, or do residents have a more positive outlook on the local characteristics that they’ve been involved in shaping?



Key drivers of trust



Only 28% of respondents trust their local council, although younger people are more trusting

Trust is at its highest in London at 35% (where quality of life was deemed to be low) and lowest in Wales at 23% (where quality of life was deemed to be high). This broader urban / rural trend suggests that people may be happier and may achieve a greater quality of life with less reliance on their local council in rural areas.

The key drivers of trust in their local council are:

- Value for money | 83.4% of people who agree that the council provides excellent or good value for money also have extremely high trust in the council.
- Information & communication | Over three quarters of people who feel poorly informed about local council services and benefits also have low trust in the council.
- Involve, consult & engage | Respondents who feel involved and engaged in council decision making are much more likely to trust the council.

Younger people (18–34) stand out as being more trusting of the council, indexing well above the average at 40%: they are also more likely to believe that the council provides better value for money, feel more informed and more engaged.

Commonplace Engagement Experts work alongside local councils to launch 50+ new information or engagement campaigns every week, including in-depth budget consultations, which have generated support for difficult decisions, including raises in council tax. 78% of residents say that the time they spend on Commonplace is worth it for the benefits they and their communities gain.



Staying power



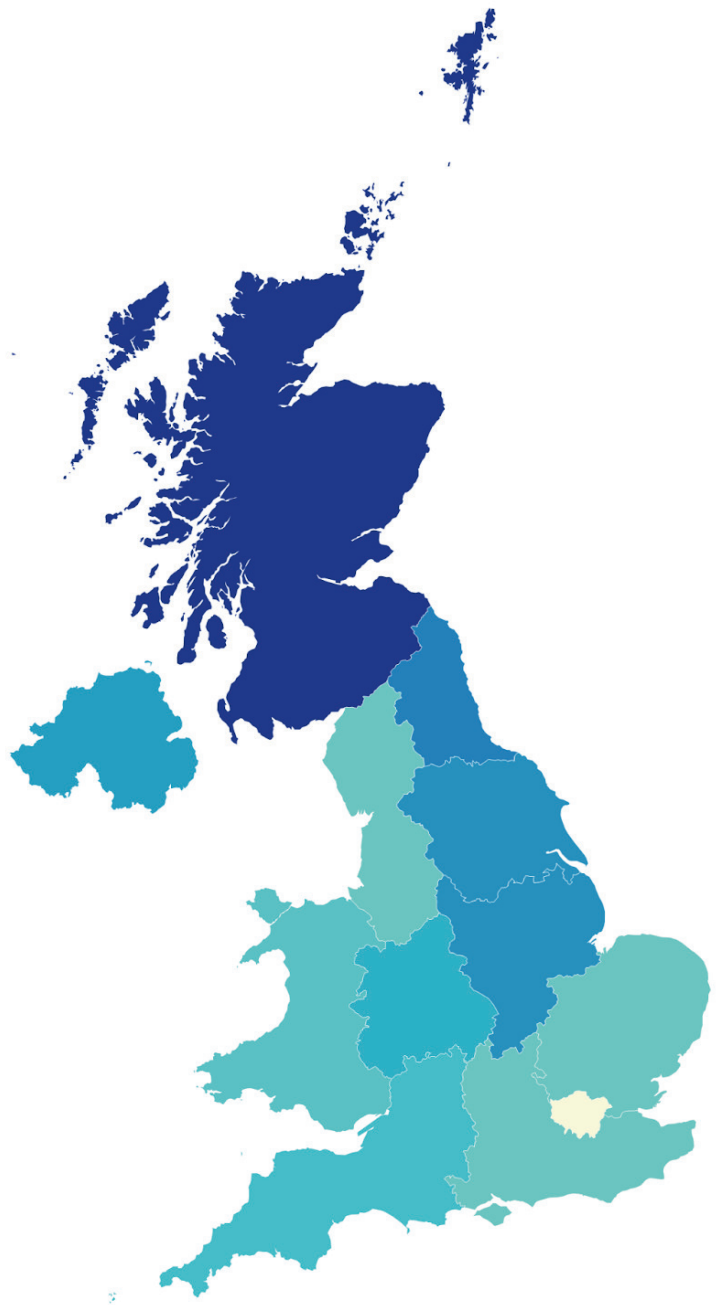
Despite generally low trust in local councils, most respondents expect to remain in their current area over the next five years.

The clearest exception is London, where the intention to leave is highest - suggesting that even with higher levels of trust the cost of living, housing pressure, and mobility opportunities may outweigh neighbourhood attachment and keep churn elevated.

Staying power differs by age: 31% of 18–34s are very likely to stay five years vs 50% of 55+. Younger adults are more mobile (jobs, study, housing), while older residents are more rooted - shaping higher turnover and different service needs in younger areas, and longer-term, age-friendly priorities in older ones.

Intention to stay living here in five years

Agreement
53% 72%



Conclusion



1 Experience & trust

- Younger and non-white residents report better local experiences and higher trust in their councils.
- These groups also shows greater optimism about place and future outcomes.

2 Priority concerns

- Top issues to address: affordable housing, living-wage jobs, and road maintenance.
- These pressures vary by region, so local tailoring is essential.

3 Fast trust builders

- Build trust through transparency with clear communication and proactive updates.
- Involve and engage residents continuously, collaborate and co-design to build a stronger connection with your community.
- Focus on 2 key indicators each quarter, catch up with the leading regions and residents will feel a step-change quickly.

Interested in learning about the results in your region?

In our webinar we look at the insights from our survey and in particular the variances we see across the UK.





Understand how your local community is feeling

Arrange a demo with our Engagement Specialists



Benjy Meyer
Managing Director (UK)



Dorrian O'Neill
Senior Account Manager

