

Measuring National Well-being - Our Relationships, 2012

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Abstract

This article is published as part of the ONS Measuring National Well-being Programme. The programme aims to produce accepted and trusted measures of the well-being of the nation - how the UK as a whole is doing. This article on 'Our relationships' is the first in a series which aims to explore in more detail the different domains that have been considered as important for the measurement of National Well-being. It firstly focuses on close family relationships, both the form that those relationships take as well as the quality of those relationships. However, these relationships do not operate in isolation, and for this reason friendships and other relationships in the wider community and the workplace are also analysed.

Introduction

The amount and quality of social connections with people around us are an essential part of our well-being. The importance of relationships for an individual's well-being as well as for society more generally cannot be overlooked when making an assessment of the nation's well-being.

This was highlighted in the [ONS National Debate on Measuring National Well-being \(469.5 Kb Pdf\)](#). When people were asked what mattered most for the measurement of National Well-being, 'personal relationships' was one aspect that people considered as most important.

Previous research has also shown that personal relationships are vitally important to an individual's well-being and should be considered when making any assessment of National Well-being.

'The frequency of contact with others and the quality of personal relationships are crucial determinants of people's well-being. People get pleasure from spending time with others – be it family, friends or colleagues – and activities are typically more satisfying when shared with others. Furthermore, social networks provide material and emotional support in times of need' (Kahneman and Krueger, 2006).

'Social connections, including marriage, of course, but not limited to that, are among the most robust correlates of subjective well-being. People who have close friends and confidants, friendly neighbours and supportive co-workers are less likely to experience sadness, loneliness, low self-esteem and problems with eating and sleeping... Subjective well-being is best predicted by

the breadth and depth of one's social connections. In fact, people themselves report that good relationships with family members, friends or romantic partners — far more than money or fame — are prerequisites for their own happiness' – (Helliwell and Putnam, 2004).

Key points

Personal relationships and loneliness

- In a survey in April and June 2011, adults aged 16 and over in Great Britain were more likely to be satisfied with their personal relationships than with their life overall (8.3 and 7.4 out of 10 respectively): and those with higher levels of satisfaction with their personal relationships tend to have higher levels of overall life satisfaction.
- In July 2011 around 1 in 20 adults aged 16 and over in Great Britain reported being completely lonely in their daily lives.

Family relationships

- In 2011, two-thirds (66 per cent) of adults aged 16 and over in England reported spending time most days or every day together with their family.
- When asked in April and August 2011, adults aged 16 and over in Great Britain with a partner or spouse reported higher levels of life satisfaction than those who were single or were separated or divorced.
- In 2011, more than 9 in 10 (91.1 per cent) adults aged 16 and over in Great Britain reported levels of satisfaction with the well-being of their child or children of 7 or more out of 10.

Friendships

- In 2011, over 4 in 10 (42 per cent) adults aged 16 and over in England reported spending time most days or every day together with their friends.
- In October 2011, just under half (47.3 per cent) of adults aged 16 and over in Great Britain reported being highly satisfied (9 to 10 out of 10) with their relationships with their friends.
- About two thirds of adults aged 16 and over in the UK reported being satisfied with their social life in 2008/09, although younger and older people reported higher levels of satisfaction than those between the ages of 25 and 54.

Community

- In 2009–10, over 80 per cent of adults aged 16 and over in England reported that many or some of the people in their neighbourhood could be trusted.
- In 2010–11 nearly 8 in 10 adults aged 16 and over in England reported that they felt they belonged strongly or very strongly to their neighbourhood.
- In 2010/11, 45.7 per cent of adults aged 16 and over in England were involved with a group, club or organisation which had people who got together to do an activity or to talk about things in the 12 months prior to interview.

Workplace relationships

- Just under 9 in 10 (87 per cent) of the working population of the EU-25 in 2004 reported that they were satisfied with the people that they worked with compared with just over 9 in 10 (91 per cent) in the UK.

Personal relationships and loneliness

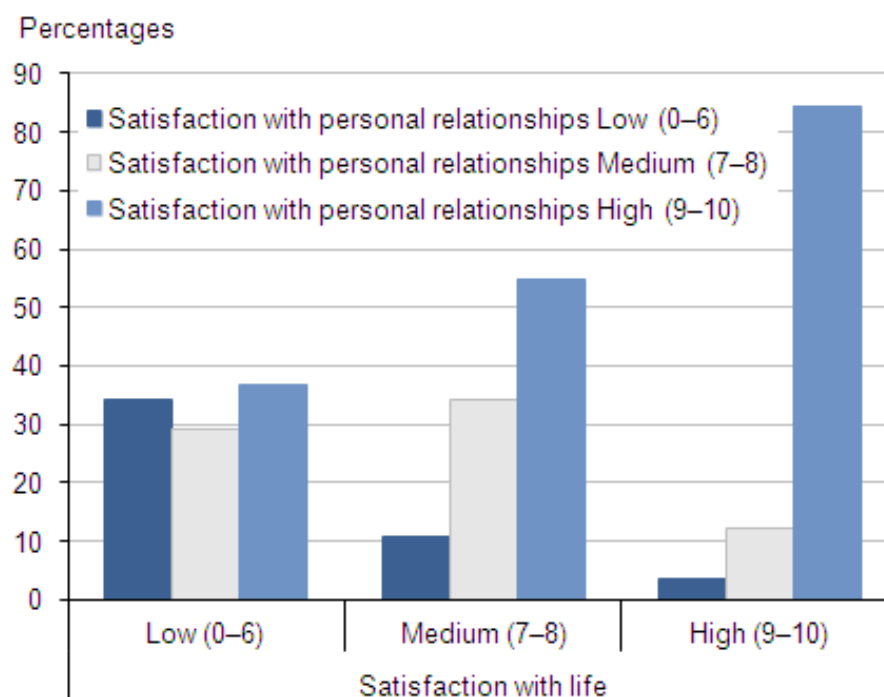
Personal relationships are very important to an individual's well-being. They provide emotional and material support and help people's ability to deal with difficult times in their lives.

Experimental statistics from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Opinions Survey looked at the levels of subjective well-being in the British population in 2011. In April and June 2011, adults aged 16 and over in Great Britain were asked to rate their satisfaction with their personal relationships from 0 to 10 where 0 represented not at all satisfied and 10 completely satisfied. The average reported satisfaction with personal relationships was higher than for overall life satisfaction. Overall, the average (mean) rating for satisfaction with personal relationships was 8.3, this compares with an average (mean) rating of 7.4 for overall life satisfaction. Over half (58.7 per cent) rated their satisfaction with their personal relationships as high (9 to 10 out of 10), while more than a quarter (27.1 per cent) rated their satisfaction as medium (7 to 8 out of 10) with the remaining 14.2 per cent rating their satisfaction as low (0 to 6 out of 10).

Figure 1

Satisfaction with personal relationships compared with life satisfaction,(1) 2011(2)

Great Britain



Source: Opinions and Lifestyle Survey - Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Adults aged 16 and over were asked 'Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?' and 'Overall, how satisfied are you with your personal relationships?'
2. Data for April and June 2011.

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Overall satisfaction with life and personal relationships are related. Of those who reported a high satisfaction with life (9 to 10 out of 10), 84.2 per cent also reported a high satisfaction with their personal relationships (**Figure 1**). Conversely, 34.3 per cent of those who reported a low satisfaction with life (0 to 6 out of 10) also had low satisfaction with their personal relationships. However it must be noted that a similar proportion (36.6 per cent) who reported a low satisfaction with life also had a high satisfaction with their personal relationships, which indicates that there are other factors that impact on overall individual well-being.

Inadequate levels of social relationships may lead to people experiencing loneliness in life. However the feeling of loneliness is subjective and a person may experience this even when in the company of family and friends. In July 2011, the ONS Opinions Survey asked adults aged 16 and over in Great Britain on a scale of 0 to 10 how lonely they felt in daily life. Just over a third (33.5 per cent) of respondents who answered this question recorded not being lonely at all in their daily life (0 out of 10), while 4.5 per cent recorded being completely lonely in their daily life (10 out of 10).

Apart from looking at a person's relationship overall, it is also important to look at specific relationships, namely those with family, friends and the wider community.

Family relationships

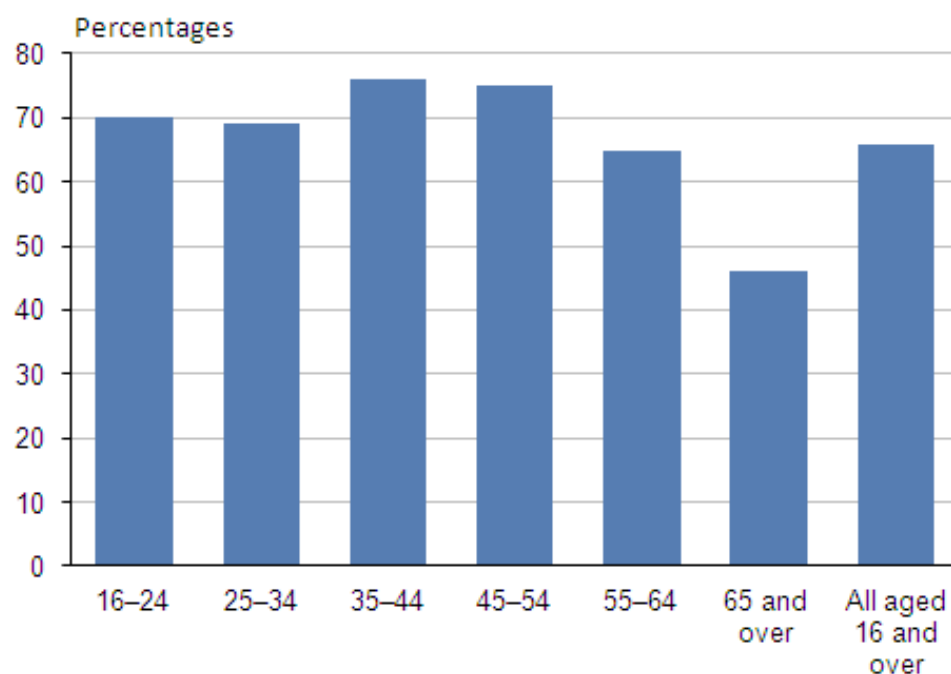
Just under half (49.2 per cent) of all adults aged 16 and over in Great Britain were married or in a civil partnership in 2010, with a further 11.3 per cent cohabiting. A quarter (25.0 per cent) were single (never married), while 2.5 per cent were married or in a civil partnership but not living as a couple. 5.7 per cent were divorced or their civil partnership was dissolved and 6.4 per cent were widowed or their civil partner had died.

The proportions of the adult population who are either married or widowed continue to decline and the proportions who are either single or divorced continue to rise. One of the main reasons for the decrease in the married population and the increase in the single population is the growth of cohabitation by unmarried couples. In the early 1960s in Britain fewer than 1 in 100 adults under 50 are estimated to have been cohabiting at any one time, compared with 1 in 6 in 2010. Cohabitation may be seen as a precursor or an alternative to marriage. The average age at first marriage is increasing and there has been a general decrease in the annual number of marriages since the early 1970s. A large increase in divorces was observed during the 1970s. The Divorce Reform Act 1969 came into effect in England & Wales on 1 January 1971 which made it easier for couples to divorce upon separation. The percentage of marriages ending in divorce has generally increased for those marrying between the late 1960s and the early 1990s¹ (ONS, 2011a).

Figure 2

Spending time most days or everyday with family:(1) by age, 2011

England



Source: Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Notes:

1. Sample composed of 1,769 adults aged 16 and over, who were asked how often in the two weeks prior to interview they had spent time together with their family.

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The 2011 survey of public attitudes and behaviours towards the environment run by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) asked people how often in the previous two weeks they had spent time together with family. Two-thirds (66 per cent) of respondents reported having spent time with family every day or most days during the two weeks prior to interview (**Figure 2**). This is an increase from 61 per cent in 2007. There was variation by age group with those aged 65 and over much less likely to report spending time with family every day or most days (46 per cent) than other age groups (Defra, 2011).

It is also important to look at the quality of family relationships. Having a positive relationship with family is an important factor in influencing people's satisfaction with life and emotional well-

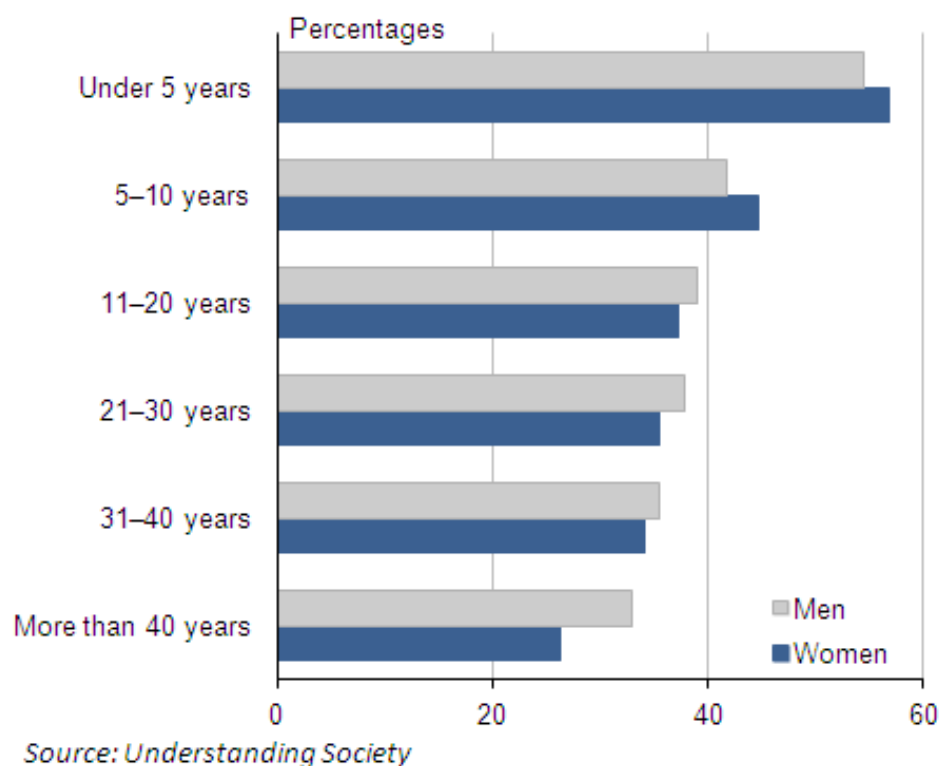
being. The ONS Opinions Survey (April and August 2011) showed that adults aged 16 and over in Great Britain who were either married or in civil partnerships, cohabiting with their partners, or were widowed, reported very similar average (mean) ratings for satisfaction with their lives. These average (mean) ratings were higher than those for separated or divorced people and for those who were single (ONS, 2011b).

According to the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS)², a very high proportion of adults aged 16 and over in the UK reported that they are somewhat, mostly, or completely satisfied with their spouse or partner (92.3 per cent in 2008–09). In each year since 2002–03 approximately 9 in 10 reported this level of satisfaction with their spouse or partner and over half reported that they were completely satisfied. In 2008–09 men were more likely than women to report being somewhat, mostly or completely satisfied with their relationship with a partner or spouse in 2008–09 at 93.8 per cent compared with 91.0 per cent of women.

Figure 3

Partnerships that reported being extremely happy or perfect: by duration of partnership, (1) 2009(2)

United Kingdom



Notes:

1. Sample composed of 5,384 men and 6,441 women (unweighted).

2. Wave 1 data which was carried out across 2009–2010. This research makes use of data from participants interviewed in 2009.

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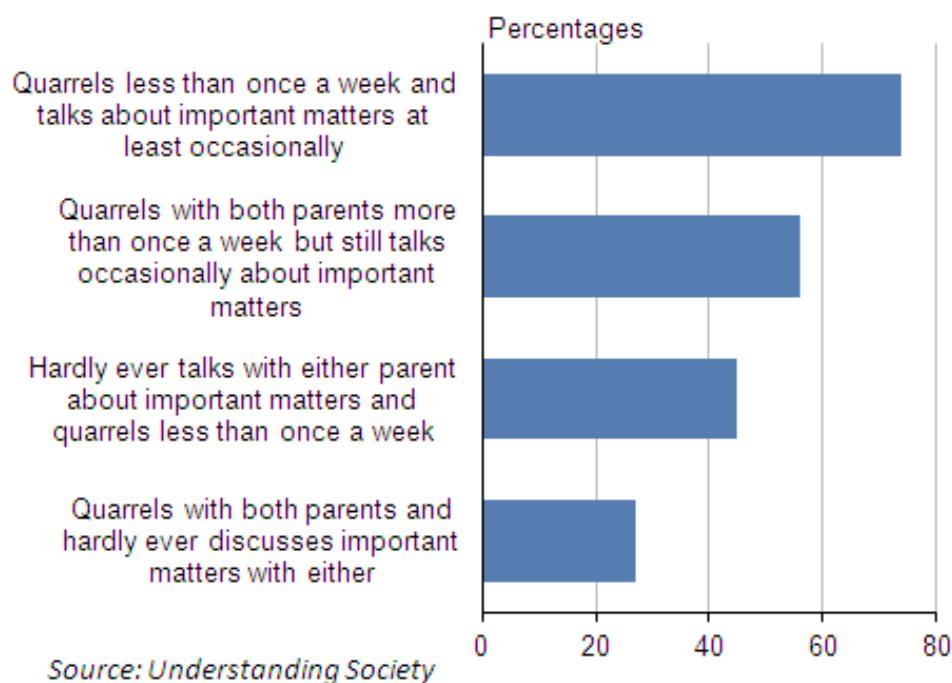
According to data from *Understanding Society* (Wave 1, Year 1), the successor to the BHPS, happiness with a partnership declines with the duration of the relationship. This applies to both men and women aged 16 and over in the UK but the decline is steeper for women than for men (**Figure 3**). For those who had been together for less than 5 years, a similar proportion of both men and women reported their partnership as being extremely happy or perfect (54.4 per cent of men and 56.9 per cent of women). However, for those who had been together for more than 40 years, just 32.9 per cent of men and 26.4 per cent of women reported their partnership as being extremely happy or perfect (Understanding Society, 2011).

People's relationships with their children and in turn their children's experience of family life and their general well-being is also extremely important. In April and June 2011, the ONS Opinions Survey asked adults aged 16 and over in Great Britain how satisfied they were with the well-being of their child or children on a scale of 0 to 10. Over 9 in 10 (91.1 per cent) reported a rate of 7 out of 10 and over with the most common response being 10 out of 10.

Figure 4

Predicted probability that a child (1) is completely happy with family life: by relationship with parents (2,3)

United Kingdom



Notes:

1. These are predictions assuming the child is a 'typical' child age 12 years old.
2. Sample of 2,082 children aged 10 to 15 (unweighted).
3. Wave 1 data which was carried out across 2009–2010. This research makes use of data from participants interviewed in 2009.

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From a child's perspective, data for 10 to 15 year olds from *Understanding Society* (Wave 1, Year 1) shows a strong relationship between how happy a child is with their family life and the frequency with which they quarrel with their parents and discuss important matters with them. For example, children who quarrel with their parents less than once a week and discuss important matters with them at least occasionally have a 73.6 per cent chance of reporting being completely happy with their family life (**Figure 4**). Children who quarrel with their parents more than once a week, and hardly ever discuss important matters with them have only a 26.9 per cent chance of rating themselves completely happy with their families (Understanding Society, 2011).

Financial problems are often cited as a common cause of disagreement between people in both new and established relationships. A YouGov survey in 2011 asked 2,425 adults aged 18 and over in Great Britain 'Do you think times of recession or economic trouble makes people's personal relationship stronger, makes them more likely to break down, or makes no difference?' Around 6 in 10 men and women (58 per cent and 63 per cent respectively) felt that it made relationships more likely to break down and 11 per cent of men and 7 per cent of women reporting that it made relationships stronger (Yougov, 2011).

Notes

1. For more information on changes in the population by marital status over time see [Population Estimates by Marital Status](#)
2. The survey period for the BHPS was September to March with around 90 per cent of the interviews collected in September to December.

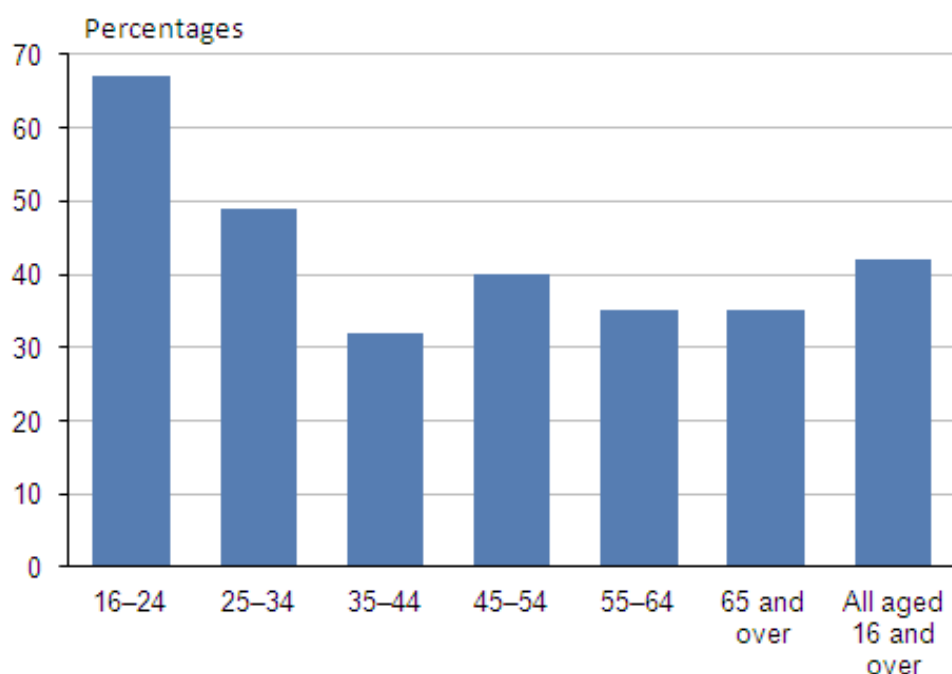
Friendships

Friends are part of a person's support system and, unlike family, are chosen by the individual. They may often give advice on decisions and are companions in life who share interests and secrets.

Figure 5

Spending time most days or everyday with friends:(1) by age, 2011

England



Source: Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Notes:

1. Sample composed of 1,769 adults aged 16 and over, who were asked how often in the two weeks prior to interview they had spent time together with their friends.

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Adults aged 16 and over in England were asked in the 2011 survey of public attitudes and behaviours towards the environment how often in the previous two weeks they had spent time together with friends. Over 4 in 10 adults (42 per cent) spent time with friends every day or most days (**Figure 5**). This was an increase from 37 per cent in 2007. Proportionately, younger people were more likely to report spending time with friends than older people; 67 per cent of 16 to 24 year-olds spent time with friends on most or every day in the two weeks prior to interview, compared with 35 per cent of those aged 55 to 64 and 65 and over. The lowest proportion of people spending time with friends on most or every day was those in the 35 to 44 age group (32 per cent). This may be due to having young children to look after and work commitments (Defra, 2011).

Table 1**Satisfaction with relationships with friends:(1) by gender, 2011**

Great Britain

Percentages

	Low (0–6)	Medium (7–8)	High (9–10)
All aged 16 and over	12.1	40.4	47.3
Men	13.2	43.1	43.8
Women	11.4	37.9	50.8

Table source: Office for National Statistics**Table notes:**

1. Data is at October 2011.

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In October 2011, the ONS Opinion Survey asked adults aged 16 and over in Great Britain to rate their satisfaction of their relationships with friends from 0 to 10. Almost half (47.3 per cent) reported a high satisfaction rating (9 to 10 out of 10) with 40.4 per cent reporting a medium satisfaction rating (7 to 8 out of 10) (**Table 1**). The average (mean) rating was 8.2.

Satisfaction with friends varied by gender and age with 43.8 per cent of men reporting a high satisfaction compared with 50.8 per cent of women, while 37.9 per cent of women reported a medium satisfaction compared with 43.1 per cent of men. Older people were more likely to report high satisfaction with their relationships with friends (56.4 per cent for those aged 65 to 74 and 54.3 per cent for those aged 75 and over) compared with lower age groups that ranged from 42.3 per cent for those aged 16 to 24 to 49.1 per cent for those aged 55 to 64.

According to the Princes' Trust Youth Index 2012, young people aged 16 to 25 were more satisfied with their relationships with family and friends in 2012 than they were in 2011 with the level of contentment rising from 78 to 80 points for family and 75 to 77 points for friends (Prince's Trust, 2012).

A person's social life consists of a combination of various components such as activities, people and places. While all of these are required to define a social life, the nature of each component is different for every person. Having a satisfactory social life may add to an individual's sense of well-being.

According to the BHPS,¹ nearly 7 in 10 (67.0 per cent) adults aged 16 and over in the UK were somewhat, mostly or completely satisfied with their social life in 2008–09. This was the same proportion as in 2002–03.

Social life satisfaction varied by age. In 2008–09 those aged 16 to 24 and 55 and over were more likely to report that they were somewhat, mostly or completely satisfied with their social life (75.7 per cent and 71.7 respectively). This compares with 58.2 per cent of those aged 35 to 44, 62.1 per cent aged 45 to 54 and 63.2 per cent of those aged 25 to 34. Lower satisfaction with social life for these age groups may be due to people having less time for socialising because of work or family commitments.

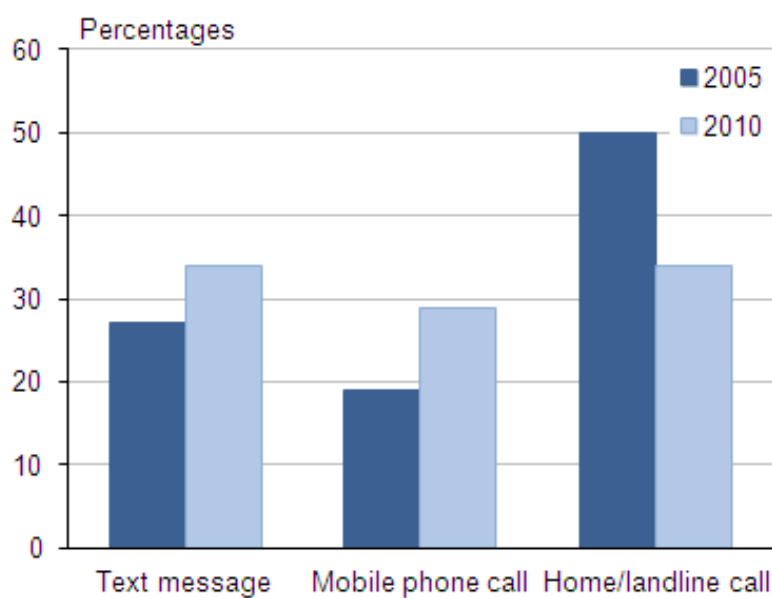
The presence of children in the family obviously has an effect. Three-quarters (75.2 per cent) of couples with no children and 71.8 per cent of couples with non-dependent children were somewhat, mostly or completely satisfied with their social life. This is higher than the equivalent figures for couples with dependent children (62.2 per cent) and lone parents with dependent children (50.8 per cent).

Two decades ago, most people would probably have used a landline phone or letter to contact friends to arrange a meeting. With the advent of new technology such as the Internet and mobile phones there are now other preferred ways of getting in touch; this is reflected in the proportions from Ofcom's Adults Media Literacy publication for 2005 and 2010 in **Figure 6**.

Figure 6

Selected preferred communication method for making contact with friends to arrange a meeting (1)

United Kingdom



Source: Ofcom

Notes:

1. Adults aged 16 and over (3,244 in 2005 and 2,117 in 2010).

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Between 2005 and 2010, the proportion of adults aged 16 and over in the UK using a home/landline phone to contact friends to arrange a meeting decreased from 50 per cent to 34 per cent. Over the same period, those using text messages to contact friends to arrange a meeting increased from 27 per cent to 34 per cent, while those making a call from a mobile phone increased from 19 per cent to 29 per cent (**Figure 6**) (Ofcom, 2010)

Preferences for ways of getting in touch with a friend to arrange to meet vary considerably across different demographic groups. In 2010, adults aged less than 45 were more likely to send a text (62 per cent of those aged 16 to 24, 51 per cent of those aged 25 to 34 and 44 per cent of those aged 35 to 44). Adults aged 45 and over were more likely to make a call using the home/landline phone (37 per cent of those aged 45 to 54; 58 per cent of those aged 55 to 64 and 71 per cent of those aged 65 and over). Men were more likely to make a mobile phone call (34 per cent of men

compared with 24 per cent of women) while women are more likely to send a text (39 per cent of women compared with 28 per cent of men) (Ofcom, 2010)

Social networking is also a way of increasing contact with friends and family. According to Ofcom, around half of all internet users in 2010 reported that using the internet had increased the contact they had with friends (53 per cent) or family (50 per cent) who live further away. Around a quarter (26 per cent) had increased contact with friends who live nearby and just under a fifth (18 per cent) family who live nearby. Just over a quarter (27 per cent) of internet users say they have increased contact with people with whom they share personal interests and hobbies, while 17 per cent of internet users say they have increased contact with people with different interests and hobbies (Ofcom, 2010).

Notes

1. The survey period for the BHPS was September to March with around 90 per cent of the interviews collected in September to December.

Community

Trusting other people is the foundation of most personal relationships and is a key determinant of well-being. Trust is important because people cannot get close to and maintain friendships or relationships without it.

According to the Citizenship Survey¹, half (50 per cent) of all adults aged 16 and over in England in 2009–10 reported that many of the people in their neighbourhood could be trusted and just over a third (34 per cent) reported that some could be trusted. Older age groups were more likely than younger age groups to report trust in people their neighbourhood. For example, just over 9 in 10 (91 per cent) aged 65 to 74 reported that many or some people could be trusted in their neighbourhood compared to 72 per cent of those aged 16 to 24 (DCLG, 2011).

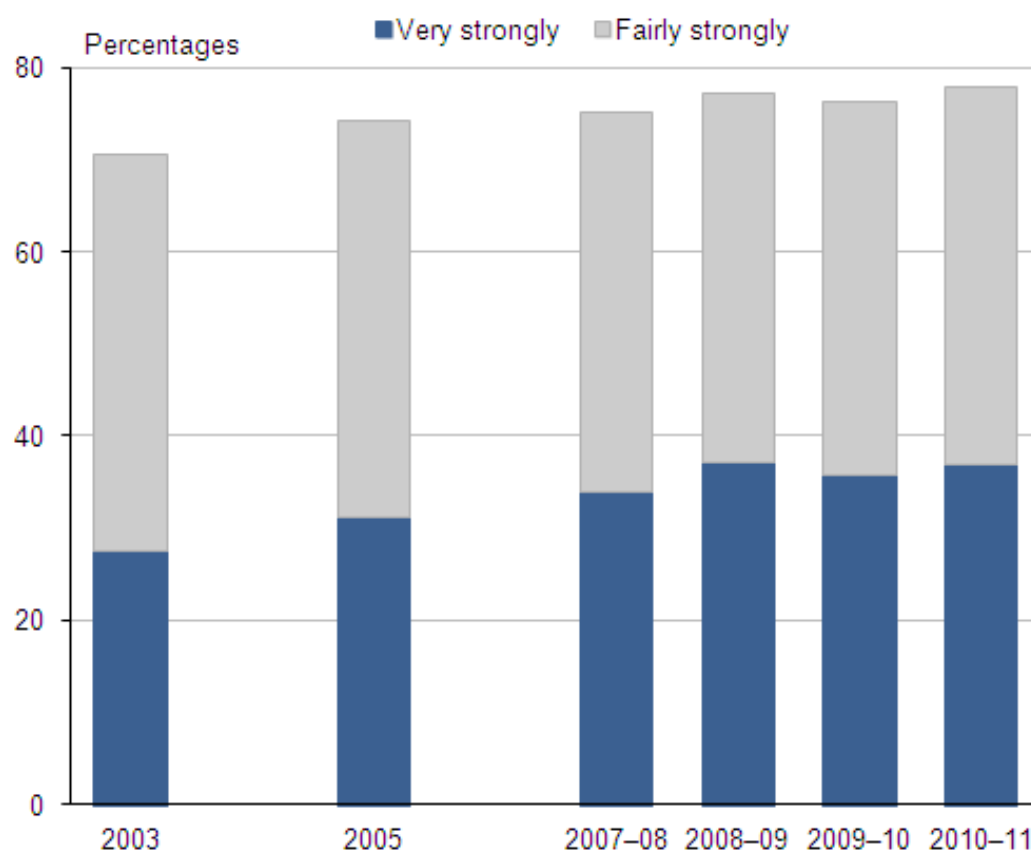
The ONS Opinions Survey asked adults aged 16 and over in Great Britain in September 2011 to rate on a scale of 0 to 10 to what extent they felt most people could be trusted, the average (mean) rating was 5.8. Just under 6 in 10 (58.4 per cent) felt their extent of trust was low (0 to 6 out of 10), while 36.6 per cent rated their extent of trust as medium (7 to 8 out of 10) with the remaining 4.9 per cent rating their extent of trust as high (9 to 10 out of 10) (DCLG, 2011).

A feeling of belonging to a local community can influence people's sense of identity and may also contribute to an individual's sense of well-being.

Figure 7

Whether people feel that they belong strongly to their neighbourhood (1)

England



Source: Communities and Local Government

Notes:

1. Excludes respondents who answered 'don't know' and those with missing answers.

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In 2010–11, 78 per cent of adults aged 16 and over in England felt they belonged strongly to their neighbourhood (**Figure 7**): the proportion of people who said they belonged strongly to their neighbourhood in 2010-11 was higher than in the period 2003 to 2007–08 (between 70 per cent and 75 per cent), but very similar to later years (77 per cent for 2008–09 and 76 per cent for 2009–10)¹ (DCLG, 2011).

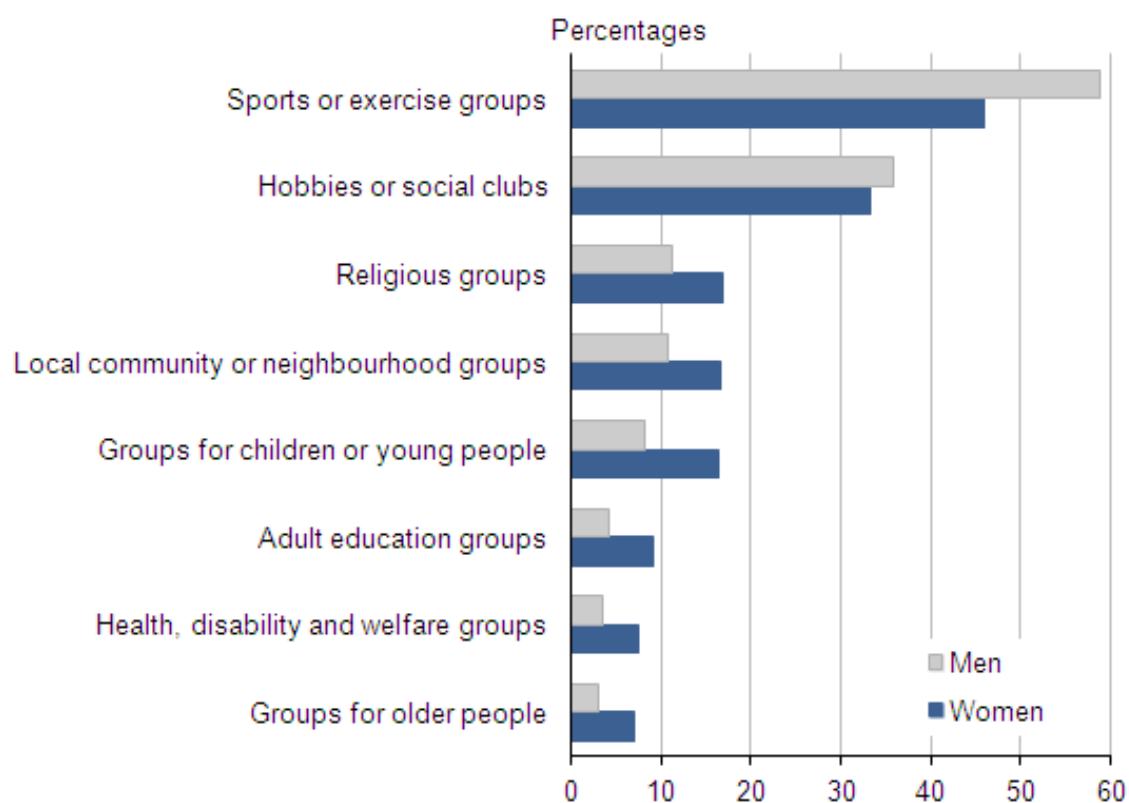
The proportion of people who felt strongly they belonged to a neighbourhood varied by age, with a higher proportion of older people reporting that they belonged strongly to a neighbourhood. For example, around 87 per cent of people aged 65 and over felt strongly that they belonged to their neighbourhood, compared to 66 per cent of those aged 25 to 34.

Being involved in groups or activities outside of the home is a good way of meeting and communicating with other people. According to the Taking Part Survey in England in 2010/11, in the 12 months prior to interview, 45.7 per cent of adults aged 16 and over were involved with a group, club or organisation which had people who got together to do an activity or to talk about things. There was very little difference in the proportion of men and women who were involved in these groups (44.5 per cent and 46.9 per cent respectively). The most frequently reported activity groups were sports and exercise groups and hobbies or social clubs (DCMS, 2011).

Figure 8

Participation in selected activity groups:(1,2) by gender, 2010/11

England



Source: Culture, Media and Sport

Notes:

1. Adults aged 16 and over that reported that they had been involved with a group of people who get together to do an activity or to talk about things in the 12 months prior to interview.
2. Groups not included in the chart are Environmental, Political, Trade Union, Other groups and excludes those who answered don't know.

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A higher proportion of men reported that they were involved with a sports or exercise group than women (58.9 per cent and 46.0 per cent respectively) (**Figure 8**). Around the same proportion of men and women participated in hobbies or social clubs (35.9 per cent of men and 33.2 per cent of women). However a higher proportion of women participated in some groups compared with men: for example, religious groups (16.8 per cent compared with 11.2 per cent), local community or neighbourhood groups (16.7 per cent and 10.7 per cent) and groups for children and young people (16.4 per cent and 8.2 per cent) (DCMS, 2011).

When people from different ethnic or religious backgrounds mix socially it can make communities more cohesive so that the communities may suffer less from problems associated with anti-social behaviour, crime and lack of trust. Any reduction in problems is likely to improve the well-being of residents.

Table 2: Proportion of people mixing with others from different ethnic or religious backgrounds:(1) by location, ethnicity, sex and age, 2010-11

England

Percentages

	Home or their home	Work, college or school	Child's creche, nursery or school	Pub, club, café or restaurant	Group, club or organisation	Shops, volunteer or	Formal or informal volunteering	Place of worship	Any mixing (excluding at home)	
All	36	54	17	45	33	64	19	15	15	82
Men	37	58	15	50	37	64	20	15	14	83
Women	34	50	19	41	29	64	19	16	16	80
16 to 24	54	79	9	67	47	74	25	19	14	92
25 to 34	49	73	28	61	38	73	18	16	19	92
35 to 49	37	68	33	50	35	69	22	18	15	88
50 to 64	29	49	8	37	28	60	19	14	13	80
65 to 74	20	11	3	26	24	52	17	12	14	65
75 and over	13	2	1	13	16	40	11	7	16	52
Ethnic Minority Groups ²	63	73	33	59	44	85	23	25	46	95
White	32	51	15	44	31	61	19	13	11	80

Table source: Communities and Local Government**Table notes:**

1. Percentage mixing at least once a month.
2. Ethnicity figures based on all samples, other figures based on core sample.

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In 2010–11, around 8 in 10 (82 per cent) people mixed socially at least once a month with people from different ethnic or religious backgrounds in a range of settings (excluding at home) (**Table 2**). People were most likely to mix socially with people from different backgrounds at the shops (64 per cent), followed by work, school or college (54 per cent), and then a pub, club, café or restaurant (45 per cent). Men were more likely than women to have met people from other backgrounds at work, school or college (58 per cent of men and 50 per cent of women) or in a pub, club, café or restaurant (50 per cent of men and 41 per cent of women) (DCLG, 2011).

Notes

1. The Citizenship Survey (formerly known as the Home Office Citizenship Survey, or HOCS) has been commissioned every two years since 2001. Approximately 10,000 adults in England and Wales (plus an additional boost sample of 5,000 adults from minority ethnic groups) are asked questions covering a wide range of issues, including race equality, faith, feelings about their community, volunteering and participation. Since 2007, the survey moved to a continuous design, allowing the provision of headline findings on a quarterly basis.

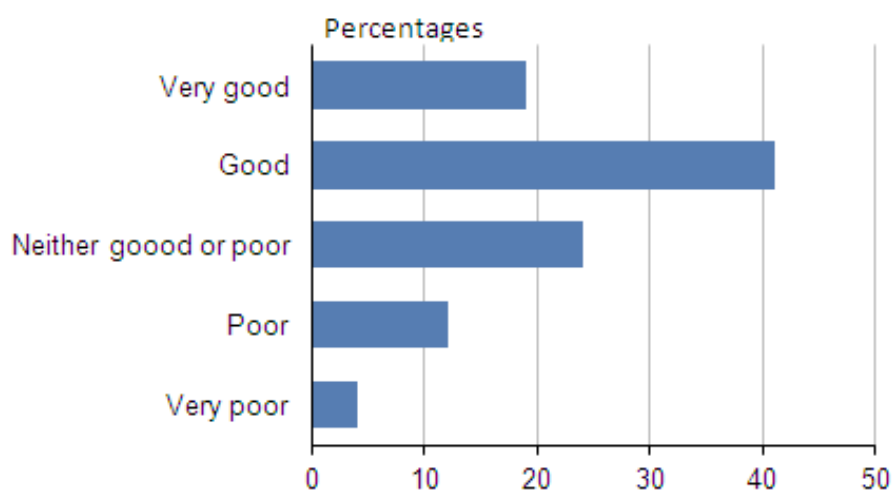
Working relationships

Another important form of relationship is that between work colleagues. Good workplace relationships can help make the working environment enjoyable and add to a person's well-being and may also improve productivity. A special Eurobarometer asked adults aged 15 and over who were working in December 2004 about their satisfaction with the people they work with. Just under 9 in 10 (87 per cent) of the working population of the EU-25 reported that they were satisfied with the people that they worked with compared with just over 9 in 10 (91 per cent) in the UK. Conversely, 8 per cent of the working population of the EU-25 reported that they were not satisfied with the people that they worked with compared with 4 per cent in the UK (Eurobarometer, 2005).

Figure 9

Employees perception of relations with management,(1) 2004

United Kingdom



Source: Workplace Employment Relations Survey, ESRC, Acas, Policy Studies Institute

Notes:

1. All employees in workplaces with 10 or more people were asked 'In general, how would you describe relations between managers and employers here?'

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Another important relationship within the workplace is that of employers and managers. The quality of the relationship between a manager and employee can significantly impact the performance of the workforce. According to the 2004 Workplace Employment Relations Survey¹, just under 1 in 20 (19 per cent) of employees in workplaces with 10 or more people in the UK reported that relationships between managers and employers were very good, while just over 4 in 10 (41 per cent) reported relations as good. Just over 1 in 10 (12 per cent) described relations as poor and 4 per cent as very poor (WERS, 2004).

Notes

1. This is the latest data available and employment and economic conditions will have changed over time.

About the ONS Measuring National Well-being Programme

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This article is published as part of the ONS Measuring National Well-being Programme.

The programme aims to produce accepted and trusted measures of the well-being of the nation - how the UK as a whole is doing. It is about looking at 'GDP and beyond' and includes:

- greater analysis of the national economic accounts, especially to understand household income, expenditure and wealth,
- further accounts linked to the national accounts, including the UK Environmental Accounts and valuing household production and 'human capital',
- quality of life measures, looking at different areas of national well-being such as health, relationships, job satisfaction, economic security, education environmental conditions,
- working with others to include the measurement of the well-being of children and young people as part of national well-being,
- measures of 'subjective well-being' - individuals' assessment of their own well-being,
- headline indicators to summarise national well-being and the progress we are making as a society.

The programme is underpinned by a communication and engagement workstream, providing links with Cabinet Office and policy departments, international developments, the public and other stakeholders. The programme is working closely with Defra on the measurement of 'sustainable development' to provide a complete picture of national well-being, progress and sustainable development.

Background notes

1. Details of the policy governing the release of new data are available by visiting www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html or from the Media Relations Office email: media.relations@ons.gsi.gov.uk

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This document is also available on our website at www.ons.gov.uk.

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