The BIG Lincoln Conversation

November 2025

Report produced for LocalMotion Lincoln
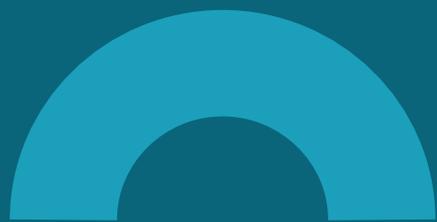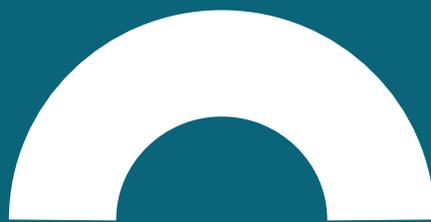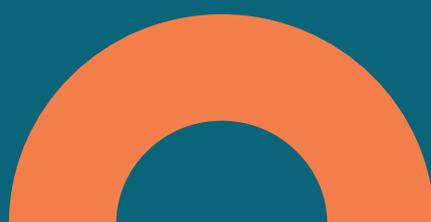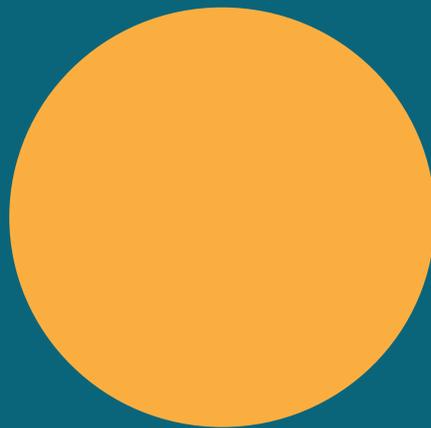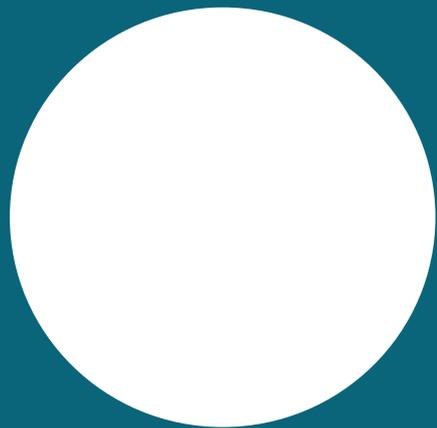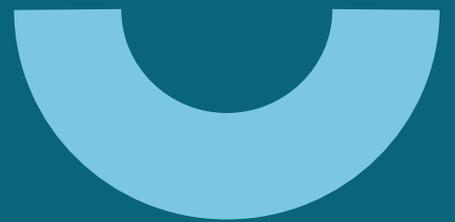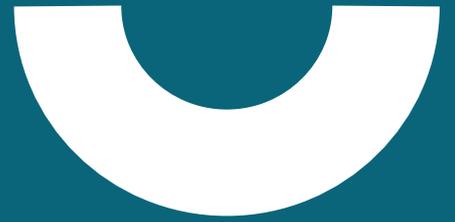
LocalMotion
Lincoln

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Introduction

LocalMotion Lincoln are listening to communities, seeking to understand what drives them forward and holds them back, and uncover local strengths. They want to work with communities to understand their experiences and collaborate on how best to address social, economic and environmental challenges being faced locally and beyond.

To support this, they have been working with Social Change to undertake a behavioural insights survey. Named The BIG Lincoln Conversation, this survey aims to explore the experiences of those living and/or working in Lincoln, local challenges stopping communities from thriving, and the picture of happiness and satisfaction in Lincoln.

This year, the survey also placed focus on exploring different cultures existing in the City of Lincoln and how this may translate to community action to create positive change. Seven cultural dimensions were used to explore people's attitudes and beliefs, a detailed overview of which is shown on **pages 12–16**.

The dimensions used were as follows:

- **Individualism vs Communitarianisn:** focus on independence versus being part of a group

- **Internal vs External Orientation:** believing that control comes from the self versus external influences

- **Achievement vs Ascription Focus:** making judgements based on performance or who someone is

- **Neutral vs Affective Culture:** being objective versus emotionally expressive when communicating

- **Specific vs Diffuse Culture:** preference for direct versus indirect communication

- **Sequential vs Synchronic Thinking:** viewing time as linear versus flexible

- **Universalism vs Particularism:** focusing on following the rules versus being flexible

Through these dimensions, we aimed to understand how people perceive their influence on the world around them, what they consider their role to be in enacting change, and the best ways to encourage and empower people to take action to create this.

This report details the key findings and behavioural insight captured through the survey and subsequent analysis, in addition to a set of recommendations as to how communities can be supported to overcome key challenges so that they may be strengthened and enabled to thrive.

A behavioural science approach

Behavioural science means to utilise expertise from across a range of disciplines to capture an enhanced understanding of human behaviour and action. It seeks to explore why humans engage in particular behaviours and generalise these assumptions across an audience group. Such disciplines it pulls upon include (but isn't necessarily limited to) psychology, sociology, cultural anthropology, behavioural aspects of biology, economics, geography, law, psychiatry and political science.

As experts in the behavioural science space, we embed behavioural science frameworks and principles throughout our work to uncover in-depth insights about our target audience and understand the best ways to enact positive change. For this brief, such frameworks include the **Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow, 1943), the COM-B Model and Behaviour Change Wheel (BCW) (Michie, van Stralen & West, 2011), MINDSPACE (Dolan, Hallsworth, Halpern, King, & Vlaev, 2011)** and **EAST (The Behavioural Insights Team, 2014)** – an overview of those embedded in this work are included within **Appendices A – E**.

These principles and frameworks were used to inform our research approach and questioning, ensuring we were able to not only understand people's perceptions of community and their value, but also why this is the case – these are called 'behavioural insights'. Using these, we are able to develop, design and deliver recommendations for interventions to achieve positive change.

Methodology

INSIGHTS SURVEY

A quantitative insights survey, with some qualitative questioning, has been selected for exploring life in Lincoln to reach and obtain feedback from a large audience, and capture findings to inform potential future in-depth qualitative research. The survey was shared through the following methods:

- Printed surveys sent to stakeholders and partners
- Digitally with stakeholder and partner networks
- Paid social media
- Organic social media
- Word of mouth

Launched in Spring 2025, the survey was live until October 2025 to account for low engagement over the summer period, where people tend to be less responsive. However, this year follows a downward trend in engagement, perhaps reflective of both this period of time and general research fatigue. The BIG Conversation 2026 is therefore poised to launch earlier in the year to assess the extent to which this impacts response rates, with wider discussions being held around how best to engage communities to support insight.

The survey achieved 156 total responses. A breakdown of demographic information for this sample is included in Appendix across **pages 29 – 34**.

BEHAVIOURAL INSIGHTS ANALYSIS

Following survey analysis, we used our behavioural science expertise to go one step further to identify behavioural insights that go beyond what the current picture is to communicate why this is the case. In essence, they demonstrate the cognitive biases, facilitators, and challenges maintaining current behaviour and preventing positive change. This in-depth understanding and further use of established frameworks then supported the development of recommendations for the future, detailing not only what needs to happen to support positive change but also how.

The COM-B Model of Behaviour (Mitchie et al., 2011) was included to consider what Capability, Opportunity, and Motivation factors positively and/or negatively impact people's experiences and perceptions of the world (please see Appendix B for an overview of this model). We also embedded Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow, 1943) to support understanding of the extent to which people are achieving and fulfilling each need and the barriers to them doing so.

FIG 1. MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS (MASLOW, 1943)

SELF ACTUALISATION
desire to become the most that one can be

ESTEEM NEEDS
respect, self-esteem, status, recognition, strength, freedom

LOVE AND BELONGING NEEDS
friendship, intimacy, family, sense of connection

SAFETY NEEDS
personal security, employment, resources, health, property

PHYSIOLOGICAL NEEDS
air, water, food, shelter, sleep, clothing, reproduction

This use of behavioural theory helps to highlight what is preventing people living and/or working in Lincoln from Self-Actualising (i.e., being the best one can be), and how they can be further supported to do so by first being enabled to fulfil each need.

From this analysis, we identified three behavioural insights **(shown on page 17)** and developed second recommendations **(shown on pages 18 – 22)** for change.

Key findings

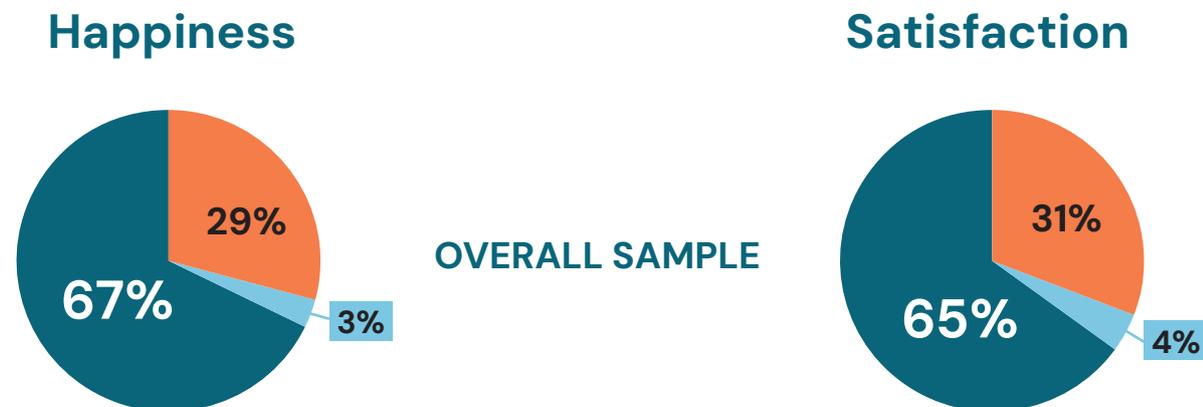## HAPPINESS AND SATISFACTION IN LINCOLN

While the majority of people in the City of Lincoln are happy and satisfied, the proportion of negative scores is higher than it has been in previous Conversations. There are a range of factors contributing to these scores, from health, job and financial security to social connection and perceived rising tensions.

Overall scores

Overall, two thirds of respondents (67%) reported a positive happiness score, with 65% reporting a positive satisfaction score. Whilst this is still relatively high, not only is it a decrease from last year (79% respectively), but this year's figures have seen an increase in negative scores (29% and 31% reported negative happiness and satisfaction scores respectively).

FIG 2 AND 3. HAPPINESS AND SATISFACTION SCORES ACROSS THE SURVEY SAMPLE

KEY: ● NEGATIVE SCORE ● NEUTRAL (SCORE OF 0) ● POSITIVE SCORE

Happiness

29%

67%

3%

OVERALL SAMPLE

Satisfaction

31%

65%

4%

When looking at theses scores by age, those aged 55–64 are the most likely to have positive happiness and satisfaction scores (84% and 79% respectively), in-line with previous trends. As highlighted in previous reporting, this could be due to them moving away from the 'mid-life slump' experienced in ages 45–54, being more stable in their employment and finances **(Automatic Motivation – COM-B).**

Happiness and satisfaction are lower in those aged 35–44, with 45% having a negative happiness score and 50% a negative satisfaction score. This continues into the 45–54 age group, who were also more likely to have a negative satisfaction score (41%). This may be attributable to the 'mid-life slump' discussed in previous years, where people gave qualitative feedback that they were finding it difficult to stay positive and motivated in life **(Psychological Capability & Reflective Motivation – COM-B).**

Interestingly, whilst those aged 16–24 are among the most likely to have a positive happiness score (83%), they are also one of the most likely to have a negative satisfaction score (42%). Lower levels of satisfaction within this age group is consistent with previous years, likely being due to them just starting their adult lives and being at the beginning of their career and/or familial journey **(Physical & Social Opportunity – COM-B).** Whilst satisfaction is low, this age group are likely to feel like they are able to make changes to various aspects to their lives. This may provide reason as to why negative satisfaction does not impact their happiness – they see it as temporary and something they can change **(Psychological Capability & Reflective Motivation – COM-B).**

Whilst the other age groups seemingly follow previous reporting trends, the picture is different for those aged 65 and over. Despite having high scores in the 2023 BIG Conversation, this year those over 65 were the least likely to have a positive happiness score (54%) and most likely to have a negative happiness score (38%). Reasons for this were not explicitly stated within the survey, but the following section provides an overview of what factors people feel negatively impacts their lives, such as health, financial security and social connection.

These factors may be of particular concerns to this group due to ageing, retirement pensions, and risk of isolation and loneliness **(Physical Capability & Physical & Social Opportunity – COM-B).** Coupled with an unlikeliness to feel they are able to make a change to various aspects of their lives (please see next section), this may indicate they feel stuck with what they have, negatively impacting happiness scores **(Reflective Motivation – COM-B).**

In addition to reviewing happiness and satisfaction scores by age, we also addressed differences in postcodes, though the smaller sample sizes for LN3 and LN4 responses (4 and 7 respectively) should be noted. Those living within the LN2, LN3 and LN4 areas were the most likely to have positive happiness scores, with over 75% achieving this. Those living within the LN5 area, however, were more likely to have negative scores, with 54% and 38% reporting negative happiness and satisfaction scores respectively (compared to averages of 30% and 31%). Those living in LN1 were also more likely than average to report negative satisfaction scores (42%).

WHAT IMPACTS THESE SCORES?

To support understanding of what impacts happiness and satisfaction scores, participants were asked the extent to which they feel able to make a change in a number of areas across their lives. This includes health, happiness, safety and security, employment and education, financial security, relationships, involvement in the community and impact on the environment and political climate. This is in addition to exploring what they feel negatively impacts them. However, this year, we also wanted to explore the opposite: what they feel has a positive impact on them, thereby supporting happiness and satisfaction scores. Understanding what makes a difference to people's scores is essential to know how collective wellbeing can be improved.

Overall feedback

Generally, people feel most able to make a change to their physical and mental health (74% and 72% respectively) and social life and friendships (75%), with 52% feeling they can do the latter without support. Those aged 55–64 and/or living in LN2 areas are more likely than other groups to feel like they can make a change to many of the areas explored; those living in LN6 were also more likely to feel able to make a change.

Conversely, respondents were more likely to report feeling unable to make a change to the political climate (58%), their career progression (30%), income and employment (26% respectively). Those over the age of 65 and/or living in LN1 or LN5 areas were more likely than others to feel unable to make a change in a number of areas explored.

This perceived ability to make a change seemingly has an impact on happiness and satisfaction scores. Those who felt most able to make a change (55–64, LN2) were also more likely to have positive happiness and satisfaction scores, whereas those more likely to feel unable to make a change (65 and over, LN1, LN5) were more likely to have lower scores. This is consistent with behavioural theory that feeling in control is essential to people's wellbeing (Locus of Control).

Security

When asked about what impacts them, people discussed their own sense of security as having a positive impact, whether it be related to their job, income, living situation **(Physical Opportunity – COM–B)**, health **(Physical Capability – COM–B)** or feelings of safety **(Psychological Capability – COM–B)**. The fact that their health feels more in control means that this can have a positive influence on their scores – it is something they feel is feasible to take action on and change. Employment and income, however, feels more out of their control, having an adverse effect **(Reflective Motivation – COM–B)**.

Indeed, respondents across all ages discussed concerns relating to their job and financial security, with those over the age of 65 being particularly unlikely to feel able to make a change in these areas – this is likely due to this group having reached retirement age, where they may feel unable to work and limited by their current pensions. Concerns stemmed from feeling that their job is secure, there being opportunities available for them, and having a stable income **(Physical Opportunity – COM–B)**. Feelings that they are unable to make a change to employment, income and career progression is consistent to previous years, showing it continues to be an area of concern for people living in Lincoln, thereby negatively impacting happiness and satisfaction scores **(Reflective Motivation – COM–B)**.

Whilst people feel able to take control and make a change in relation to their physical and mental health, this was particularly lower for those aged 65 and above, where ageing related health difficulties become more prominent **(Physical Capability – COM–B)**. Additionally, all age groups but 16–24 frequently mentioned health when discussing what negatively impacts

them, citing difficulties accessing healthcare services and long wait times as particular concerns **(Physical Opportunity – COM-B)**. These challenges put their health security at risk, particularly when this becomes more in demand with ageing related health issues, and subsequently may bring down happiness and satisfaction scores **(Reflective Motivation – COM-B)**.

Opportunities to connect

Local infrastructure was a key theme when discussing what impacts people in Lincoln, whether it be related to transport, facilities or opportunities to pursue interests in the community and connect with others **(Physical & Social Opportunity – COM-B)**. Having good transport links, activities and events in the area, and opportunities to volunteer and work within the community were all cited as things which positively impacted people. In a similar vein, people felt being able to do the things they enjoy, such as hobbies, had a positive influence. However, while 62% of respondents feel able to make a change in how involved they are in community initiatives, this drops to 33% for those aged 16–24 and 42% for those over 65, suggesting that these groups may be more likely to face challenges or lack opportunity to do so.

Despite local infrastructure being discussed as having positive impacts on them, respondents were concerned that current provision is not sufficient. They felt that there may not be enough activities and events in the local area, which acts as a barrier to them both doing what they enjoy and building social connections. Even if these are available, insufficient transport links can make it difficult for people to get to them, adding a further challenge and putting their happiness and satisfaction scores at risk **(Physical Opportunity & Reflective Motivation – COM-B)**.

The local area

Respondents felt that they were positively impacted by the City of Lincoln itself, being grateful that it offered different spaces, facilities and green areas **(Physical Opportunity & Automatic Motivation – COM-B)**. Whilst there was some concern about the local environment in terms of upkeep of such spaces, 68% of people feel it is within their power to make a change to this, indicating a motivation to maintain local areas.

Whilst people were grateful for the area they live in, there were concerns around crime and safety, with just over half (57%) feeling able to make a change to their safety and security **(Psychological Capability – COM-B)**. This worry around crime and safety could therefore be a deterrent to people spending time in the spaces they enjoy, which may impact happiness and satisfaction scores **(Reflective Motivation – COM-B)**.

Social connection

One of the biggest impacts on people was their sense of social connection. Whether it be related to family, friends, neighbours, local groups, faith or other relationships, people's own social circles and communities was a key driver of positive impact, with acceptance from others influencing feelings of social security **(Social Opportunity – COM–B)**. With a high percentage of respondents feeling able to make a change to their social life and friendships (75%), this indicates many feel the power to shape their community, even when limited by available opportunities, which would ultimately positively impact their scores **(Reflective – COM–B).**

However, not everyone feels as confident to make a change in their social lives and connections. Only 52% of those aged 65+ and 61% of 25–34 feel able to make a change in their social lives, and 17% and 38% of 16–24 and 25–34 respectively feel able to make a change to their relationships with their neighbours (compared to an average of 54%) **(Social Opportunity & Reflective Opportunity – COM–B)**. Furthermore, when looking beyond immediate social circles, people felt that there was a lack of wider social connection and rising tensions across the City. This finding is troubling when considering the emphasis people place on social connection and acceptance – if this is being threatened, happiness and satisfaction scores are likely at risk.

Political climate

Finally, the political climate emerged as a key risk to people's happiness and contentedness, with only 24% feeling able to make a change to this **(Automatic Motivation – COM–B)**. Respondents feel expressed concerns around the political climate (particularly in relation to immigration), widening inequalities, and increased tensions and mistreatment towards certain groups **(Social Opportunity – COM–B)**. The few respondents feeling able to make a change suggests that people largely feel that this is out of their control, which is particularly troubling when considering the role the political environment plays on the various factors which influence their happiness and satisfaction scores: employment, financial stability, health services and local opportunity.

IS LINCOLN READY FOR CHANGE?

In this year's BIG Conversation, there was a desire to explore the culture of Lincoln: how people think and feel, and what underpins their decisions and actions. To support this, we explored where people place on the following dimensions:

- **Individualism vs Communitarianism:** focus on independence versus being part of a group

- **Internal vs External Orientation:** believing that control comes from the self versus external influences

- **Achievement vs Ascription Focus:** making judgements based on performance or who someone is
- **Neutral vs Affective Culture:** being objective versus emotionally expressive when communicating
- **Specific vs Diffuse Culture:** preference for direct versus indirect communication
- **Sequential vs Synchronic Thinking:** viewing time as linear versus flexible
- **Universalism vs Particularism:** focusing on following the rules versus being flexible

The findings from this provide invaluable insight into whether people feel able and willing to work with their communities to encourage positive change. There is no single culture in Lincoln, but understanding these in more depth can help us to understand how to encourage and empower people to influence change not only in their lives, but that of their wider community.

Perceptions of personal influence

This section considers the dimensions relating to how people see themselves and their role in influencing both their own lives the world around them: Individualism vs Communitarianism and Internal vs External Orientation.

Individualism vs Communitarianism

Individualism: People see themselves as an individual. Focus is placed on independence, personal freedom and self–reliance.

Communitarianism: People see themselves as part of a group. Focus is placed on community, and how social connection can shape identity.

FIG 4. PROPORTION OF SAMPLE WHICH IDENTIFIED AS INDIVIDUALIST VS COMMUNITARIAN

INDIVIDUALISM	MIDDLE	COMMUNITARIANISM
45%	23%	32%
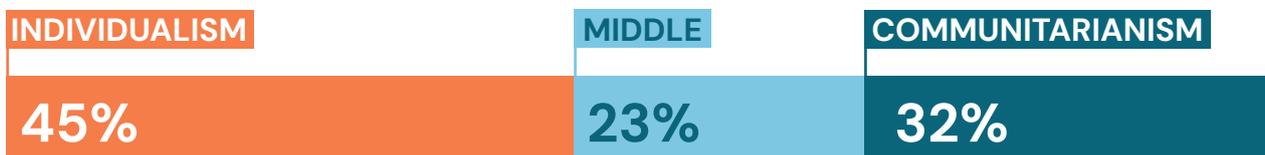
Internal vs External Orientation

Internal Orientation: The belief that one is in control of their life experiences, with their own actions and abilities determining their outcomes. They will take accountability for both successes and failures.

External Orientation: The belief that they are not in control of their life experiences, with outcomes determined by external influences. Successes and failures are attributed to factors beyond their control.

FIG 5. PROPORTION OF SAMPLE WHICH IDENTIFIED AS INTERNAL VS EXTERNAL ORIENTATION

INTERNAL ORIENTATION	MIDDLE	EXTERNAL ORIENTATION
68%	18%	14%

What this tells us

The above shows that many people in Lincoln feel some control over their lives and life experiences **(Internal Orientation)**, though there is a split on whether they place importance on their individual freedom **(Individualism)**, or roles within a community **(Communitarianism)**.

For the former, messages emphasising the individual role they can take in improving life experiences for themselves and others are more likely to be appealing and encourage action. Those focused on community, however, are more likely to be open to how they can work within their community and as part of a collective to advocate for positive change.

However, there is a proportion of people who do not feel in control **(External Orientation)**, and interestingly this group are more likely to have negative happiness and satisfaction scores. This group are more likely to need support to feel more in control over their lives, whether it be related to employment, financial, health or social support. Once they gain an increased sense of control, they will be more open to messages considering how they can achieve positive change.

How people communicate

Within this section we consider the dimensions which relate to people's preferences around communication, and reasoning decision making: Achievement vs Ascription, Neutral vs Affective Cultures, and Sequential vs Diffuse Cultures.

Achievement vs Ascription

Achievement: Making judgements and giving people status based on how well they perform and their accomplishments.

Ascription: Making judgements and giving people status based on who they are, who they know, and past accreditations.

FIG 6. PROPORTION OF SAMPLE WHICH IDENTIFIED AS ACHIEVEMENT VS ASCRIPTION FOCUSED

ACHIEVEMENT	MIDDLE	ASCRIPTION
79%	12%	9%

Neutral vs Affective

Neutral: Interactions are objective and emotions are held in check.

Affective: Emotions are expressed openly and are a natural part of interaction.

FIG 7. PROPORTION OF SAMPLE WHICH IDENTIFIED AS NEUTRAL VS AFFECTIVE CULTURED

NEUTRAL	MIDDLE	AFFECTIVE
69%	13%	18%

Specific vs Diffuse Cultures

Specific Cultures: Preference for direct, factual communication that is purposeful and to the point.

Diffuse Cultures: Preference for more indirect means of communication that may use contextual cues to convey understanding.

FIG 8. PROPORTION OF SAMPLE WHICH IDENTIFIED AS SPECIFIC VS DIFFUSE CULTURED

SPECIFIC	MIDDLE	DIFFUSE
64%	18%	18%

What this tells us

These results indicate a preference for directness and objectivity. People in Lincoln are likely to respond to direct, factual messaging **(Specific)**, that presents people with an objective picture **(Neutral)** and evidence to back it up **(Achievement)**. Therefore, when encouraging people to take action to support their lives and that of their community, they need to hear about the issues to be tackled, what they should do, and why this would benefit. Receiving this information in such an objective manner **(Neutral)**, will then support them to make decisions that they want.

However, there is a proportion of people who prefer a more personal **(Ascription)** and emotive approach **(Affective)**, that enables them to use their own interpretations to make a decision **(Diffuse)**. They are likely to listen to person-led information: stories and feedback which share not only how people have supported positive change but their perceptions on what the outcomes were.

Adherence to rules and systems

Finally, this section considers the dimensions which explore how people like to be led, and whether this is through clear instruction or a fluid approach: Sequential vs Synchronic Thinking and Universalism vs Particularism.

Sequential vs Synchronic

Sequential: Time is seen as sequential and linear, with a preference to follow plans and engage in one activity at a time.

Synchronic: Time is seen as a constant flow, with a preference to be flexible, seeing where things lead and experience life in the moment.

FIG 9. PROPORTION OF SAMPLE WHICH IDENTIFIED AS PREFERRING SEQUENTIAL VS SYNCHRONIC THINKING

SEQUENTIAL	MIDDLE	SYNCHRONIC
68%	16%	16%

Universalism vs Particularism

Universalism: Focus is placed on rules, norms and systems. There is one reality, and people who stick to their word and agreements are considered trustworthy.

Particularism: Focus is placed on relationships and flexibility. Rules and agreements can evolve for something new, and people who are willing to adapt are considered trustworthy.

FIG 10. PROPORTION OF SAMPLE WHICH IDENTIFIED AS UNIVERSALIST VS PARTICULARIST

UNIVERSALISM	MIDDLE	PARTICULARISM
35%	31%	34%

What does this tell us

The majority of people like to have a plan in place to follow **(Sequential)**, but there is an almost even split on whether people want this plan to be set in place **(Universalism)** or flexible and ready to adapt **(Particularism)**.

Those with a Universalist world view may be more likely to place their trust in established systems, finding security in clear processes. They are likely to be interested in initiatives for change that have a clear plan and structure, and show them exactly what they can do and how to do it. People who favour Particularism, however, are more willing to try something new and different, without a pre-set pathway. They will be attracted to initiatives framed as innovative and open to adaptation – something they can shape themselves. This group find security in their ability to be flexible and adapt.

For those who prefer to live life in the moment **(Synchronic Thinking)**, it may be difficult to encourage them to stick to a particular plan of action. They may be more fluid in how they support their community, favouring to engage in different initiatives at different times depending on what they feel is of particular importance in that moment. It is therefore important to increase awareness of the different ways people can take action to encourage positive change so that they can continue to play supporting roles.

Behavioural insights

Behavioural insights go beyond the **what** of behaviours to understand the **why**, and subsequently how positive change can best be achieved. Established behavioural science frameworks used to identified these include **Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow, 1943), the COM-B Model and Behaviour Change Wheel (BCW) (Michie, van Stralen & West, 2011), MINDSPACE (Dolan, Hallsworth, Halpern, King, & Vlaev, 2011)** and **EAST (The Behavioural Insights Team, 2014)**. An overview of these is provided in the appendices across **pages 24 – 28**.

For this brief, the following behavioural insights were identified.

I WANT TO FEEL IN CONTROL

Feeling in control is an innate need **(Autonomy Bias)**, and situations where people do not feel in control or able to do things their way are likely to lead to disengagement and negatively impact happiness and satisfaction. Indeed, those with an **External Locus of Control** (belief that external influences control their lives) have both lower happiness and satisfaction scores and a low belief in their ability to make changes to their lives. This perceived lack of control teaches **Learned Helplessness**, where people stop trying to make a difference because they don't believe they can, negatively impacting **Esteem Needs**.

SOCIAL CONNECTION IS HARDER THAN EVER

An increasing sense of social disconnecting is putting Love and Belonging Needs at risk, negatively impacting happiness and satisfaction. Social acceptance is an innate need that helps people make sense of their role in the world **(Evolutionary Psychology & Social Identity Theory)**, but a perceived lack of opportunity to connect and rising tensions are preventing people from feeling they are able to achieve this. Seeing others in the community as separate to them decreases motivation and interest in supporting positive change **(Out-Group Bias)**, further exacerbating the issue.

UNCERTAINTY BREEDS NEGATIVITY

The uncertainty felt across different lifestyle factors is contributing to a negative world view where their core **Safety Needs** are at risk. Despite them finding comfort in the connections, opportunities and security they do have, stronger emphasis is placed on what puts these at risk **(Negativity Bias)**. The topical nature of these risks, e.g., health service waiting times, the political climate, and social protests, puts these concerns at the forefront of people's minds, so they are consistently seeing information that matches this perception **(Confirmation Bias)**. This uncertainty and negativity damages happiness and satisfaction scores, and disempowers people from thinking they are able to make a change.

Insight to action

Following identification of the three behavioural insights detailed in the previous section, we consulted frameworks such as the Behaviour Change Wheel to determine what interventions would be best suited to promote positive change. These recommendations take into account key findings and behavioural insights from across the research, in addition to learnings around what other initiatives have been effective or less so. Frameworks such as MINDSPACE and EAST have been further employed to help shape not only what the intervention should be, but also what this could look like and how it could be delivered. We have divided these into short-, medium-, and long-term goals to support in wider planning and strategy development.

These recommendations have been made based on available knowledge gained through the secondary and primary research, and may in some cases benefit from further research to refine these more. In particular, a Suitability, Feasibility, Acceptability (SFA) test of the recommendations would help inform your implementation strategy by highlighting those which are ready to be implemented now, and those which may require further work prior to this (e.g., to gain sufficient resource or interest). This is something Social Change always advocate, and can be achieved through various methods (e.g., internal review or external consultation).

Overall, **five recommendations** were developed to support you in your mission for change. These are detailed below.

ENVIRONMENTAL RESTRUCTURING: REFRAME THE SYSTEM

Framing messaging

Be mindful of different preferences for information when delivering communications and be sure to provide this. To appeal to and engage those favouring Specific and Neutral Cultures, factual information and evidence is important to help them make an objective decision. However, those of Diffuse and Affective Cultures are likely to respond to emotive stories and messages that are more personal **(Social – EAST)**. By combining these two messaging approaches, communications will better engage with a wider audience and deliver relevant information that they need **(Salience – MINDSPACE)**.

Build a directory of support services

Build and/or signpost to a directory of services where people can access support with the life challenges they are experiencing. Whether this may be related to employment, education and training, financial hardship, health or social connection, this will be a way for people to easily find the support they need when they need it **(Easy & Timely – EAST)**, helping to reduce uncertainty and build an increased sense of personal control **(Internal**

Orientation) (Attractive – EAST). Helping them improve their feelings of control and security in their life will then help to free up capacity for them to think about how they can support others in their community and enact positive change **(Priming – MINDSPACE)**.

Showcase connection

Showcase examples of social connection and cohesion in the City of Lincoln **(Attractive & Social – EAST)**. The aim of these messages would be to challenge the belief that there are high levels of social disconnection, and frame cohesion as a highly prevalent social norm **(Norm – MINDSPACE)**. This could include sharing images and stories from people who have helped neighbours, taken part in a club or taken action to support their local community.

EDUCATION: SUPPORT LEARNING

Show ways to support community

Raise awareness of the ways people can support positive change in their local communities and environment. This could range from visiting a vulnerable neighbour or picking up litter, attending local forums, setting up clubs or even getting involved in local politics. Showing ways that people can have a positive impact will make it easier for them to find something that matches their level of motivation and interest **(Easy & Attractive – EAST)**, increasingly likelihood of engagement **(Commitment – EAST)**. This information should detail how the action will benefit both themselves **(Individualism)** and their communities **(Communitarianism) (Incentive & Ego – MINDSPACE)**, and should include both factual information on how these activities have a positive impact, and stories from others who have taken part **(Salience – MINDSPACE)**.

Raise awareness of local events and opportunities

Make it **Easier (EAST)** for people to form new connections by raising awareness of and signposting to local activities, events and opportunities in the local area **(Salience – MINDSPACE)**. This can include social groups, interest clubs, community hubs, community forums, local fairs and more, and particular emphasis can be placed on those of no-to-low cost to show how they can gain a lot for little **(Attractive – EAST)**.

Having these different options will appeal to those favouring Synchronic Thinking in particular, as they can pick and choose which activity appeals to them in the moment **(Timely – EAST)**. However, for those who like to know what to expect and plan their visit **(Sequential Thinking and Universalists)**, ensure they are able to find out more about the opportunities showcased, satisfying their need for information **(Attractive – EAST)** and giving them a plan to follow. Having images and/or quotes from others who have attended these opportunities will add to this communication by showing people what to expect **(Priming – MINDSPACE)** and build reassurance that they'll be accepted by others and enjoy their time **(Social – EAST)**.

Share tips and advice around areas

In addition to the signposting mentioned previously, share tips and advice on how people can manage areas of their lives that bring concern, such as employment, health and social connection. These could be from both credible experts (e.g., for employment and health advice) and peers (e.g., for social support) to build trust and belief in the messages **(Messenger – MINDSPACE)**. The advice could include small steps they can take themselves to build confidence and assurance in these areas, with the further signposting to direct to services should they need further help **(Salience – MINDSPACE; Timely – EAST)**. By using small steps to frame positive changes as easier and more attainable to achieve, this would make people more likely to engage **(Easy & Attractive – EAST)** and in doing so build people's sense of control.

ENABLEMENT: BUILD LOCAL SUPPORT

Local area boards

Establish local area boards to act as the voice of their community, both obtaining feedback about local challenges and sharing this with relevant organisations and authorities **(Commitment – MINDSPACE)**. These boards should be led by members of the local community to ensure they understand the area and are relatable to members of the community **(Salience – MINDSPACE)** – this would position them as credible and trusted voices **(Messenger – MINDSPACE)**, encouraging people to come forward **(Easy – EAST)**.

Support the set-up of these boards by establishing clear roles, responsibilities and processes in so interested members can fully understand what this would entail **(Specific Cultures and Universalism) (Easy – EAST)**. However, to encourage a sense of Autonomy and ownership, give them flexibility in how they implement their roles within the community **(Particularism) (Ego – MINDSPACE)**. If people feel this sense of ownership, then they are more likely to commit to sustained engagement **(Commitment – MINDSPACE)**.

Create opportunities for feedback and follow-up

Continue utilising Community Researchers to provide residents with opportunities to provide feedback on their experiences, but to follow-up on and further explore key findings from the BIG Conversation. This further engagement will create a positive feedback loop where people feel that they are listened to and their voices valued **(Attractive – EAST)**. This will in turn make them feel they do have some influence, encouraging future engagement with opportunities to provide feedback **(Ego – MINDSPACE; Attractive – EAST)**.

Some areas which could benefit from being explored further through qualitative engagement with the community include:

- In-depth exploration of the areas which positively and negatively influence people, and the degree to which they feel able to control these

- Perceptions of rising social tensions, where they feel this stems from and potential solutions

- Types of initiatives that would be of interest to them to support positive change for themselves and communities

- What influences often lower happiness and/or satisfaction scores among those aged 16–24

- What influences often higher happiness and/or satisfaction scores among those aged 35–54

- Experiences of those aged 65 and over and what influences happiness and satisfaction scores to support understanding of why these fluctuate

MODELLING: DEMONSTRATE IMPACT

Case studies

Share examples of people taking action to support positive change in their community to provide evidence of the difference a person can make **(Social – EAST)**. Use a mixture of fact and emotive stories to demonstrate the impact they have had, appealing to different information preferences **(Incentivisation – MINDSPACE; Attractive – EAST)**. These case studies would both normalise community action **(Norms – MINDSPACE)** and give examples for people to work towards and aspire to **(Commitment – MINDSPACE)**.

PERSUASION: INSPIRE ACTION

Demonstrate how feedback is used

Showcase instances of where direct feedback from residents (such as through the BIG Conversation or Community Researchers) has been used to influence and enact change. Being able to see proof that their feedback is both valued and actively worked upon will make them feel listened to and more empowered to make a change, encouraging engagement in feedback opportunities in future **(Commitment & Ego – MINDSPACE)**. This could be done through messages that employ a "What you told us; What we did" approach, which directly link activities to feedback obtained from residents. Being able to see how their feedback has been used to help the community will encourage people to continue providing this in the future **(Attractive – EAST)**.

Show how people can have an impact

Whether it be on their own lives, their community, or local and national politics, implement communications that demonstrate the impact people can have to build belief that they can make a difference, subsequently increasing feelings of control and motivation to take action **(Ego – MINDPSACE; Attractive – EAST)**. These communications would be supported by the advice, evidence and case studies mentioned in previous recommendations **(Education, Modelling)**.

This is particularly important for politics, where people feel the least able to make a change. Communications should use information from local voting data (Specific and Neutral Cultures) and stories from others who have been involved in local politics (Diffuse and Affective Cultures) to build a picture of how their engagement and voting behaviours have an influence **(Salience & Affect – MINDSPACE)**.

These communications will help build people's belief that they do have control over their lives and can make a difference, increasing motivation and willingness to get involved in community action.

Empower people to take action

Once strategies have been employed to build people's awareness, perceptions of control and security, and belief in their ability to make a difference, deliver empowering messages that encourage people to engage in community action **(Timely – EAST)**. This will be the point when they're most receptive to these messages, so show them how the power can be in their hands and how the decisions and actions they take either by themselves (Individualism) or with others (Communitarianism) can help improve the lives of everyone **(Incentive & Ego – MINDSPACE; Attractive – EAST)**.

Conclusion

Ultimately the core Needs highlighted in Maslow's Hierarchy are at risk. People are experiencing uncertainty around their personal security **(Safety Needs)**, social connections **(Love and Belonging)** and sense of overall control and their freedom **(Esteem Needs)**. Without these Needs being met, they are unlikely to be motivated and empowered to encourage positive change within their communities. It is therefore important to make it as **Easy** as possible for people to address these needs, building security and connection, improving happiness and satisfaction, and helping people to be in a position where they can begin to look towards self- and community improvement.

When encouraging people to work with communities to take action towards positive change, a staged approach is needed. First, ensure people have the support they need to build confidence in their personal security, addressing core concerns such as health, financial security, and employment. Couple this with helping them to improve their social connections will contribute towards meeting key Safety and Love and Belonging Needs. Once they feel safe, secure, and in more control over their lives, they are more likely to have the capacity to think towards community improvement.

Therefore, the second stage would be to ensure opportunities are in place for them to learn more about creating positive change, understanding what they can do both individually with others, and the impact this has on the world around them. These opportunities can be pre-existing within the community, with messages showcasing local opportunities, or newly established by LocalMotion and its partners. Having and being able to participate in such opportunities and initiatives will build Esteem Needs and the belief that they are able to make a change, again enhancing perceptions of control.

Finally, once capacity and opportunities are in place, employ persuasive messaging to encourage them to take the first steps towards getting involved, empowering people to use their skills and capacity for good. Throughout this phased approach, different communications could appeal to different people – fact and evidence for those who prefer objectivity, and emotive stories for those who prefer a personal touch. This would further help to ensure there is something for everyone, and no one feels excluded.

Appendices

APPENDIX A: MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS

Maslow, 1943

The hierarchy suggests that people have five categories of 'Needs': Physiological, Safety, Love, Esteem, and Self-Actualisation. Typically, once a Need has been sufficiently fulfilled, Needs higher up in the Hierarchy begin to emerge. For example, once someone feels personally secure, in good health and employment, with sufficient resources and property **(i.e., Safety Needs are fulfilled)**, then they will begin to look towards friendship, intimacy, family and connection **(Love and Belonging Needs emerge)**.

FIG 1. MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS

SELF ACTUALISATION
desire to become the most that one can be

ESTEEM NEEDS
respect, self-esteem, status, recognition, strength, freedom

LOVE AND BELONGING NEEDS
friendship, intimacy, family, sense of connection

SAFETY NEEDS
personal security, employment, resources, health, property

PHYSIOLOGICAL NEEDS
air, water, food, shelter, sleep, clothing, reproduction

APPENDIX B: THE COM–B MODEL OF BEHAVIOUR

Michie et al., 2014

The COM–B model proposes that there are three components to any **behaviour (B): Capability (C), Opportunity (O) and Motivation (M).**

FIG 12: THE COM–B MODEL OF BEHAVIOUR

TABLE 1: THE COMPONENTS AND SUB-COMPONENTS OF THE COM–B MODEL OF BEHAVIOUR

Component	Sub-component	Description
Capability	Physical	Our physical strength, skills or stamina
	Psychological	Our knowledge / psychological strength, skills or stamina
Opportunity	Physical	Opportunities provided by the environment, such as time, location and resources
	Social	Opportunities as a result of social factors, such as social norms and social cues
Motivation	Automatic	Reflective processes, such as making plans and evaluating things that have already happened
	Reflective	Automatic processes, such as our desires, impulses and inhibitions

APPENDIX C: THE BEHAVIOUR CHANGE WHEEL

Michie et al., 2014

Once behaviour has been understood through research, the Behaviour Change Wheel **(BCW)** is an invaluable tool to help design and develop interventions that work. With COM–B components at its centre **(Capability, Opportunity, Motivation)**, the middle and outer circles of the BCW highlight a number of different interventions and delivery methods. For example, if a lack of information **(psychological capability)** is identified as a key issue, this can be solved through **education** via **communications and marketing**.

FIG. 13: THE BEHAVIOUR CHANGE WHEEL
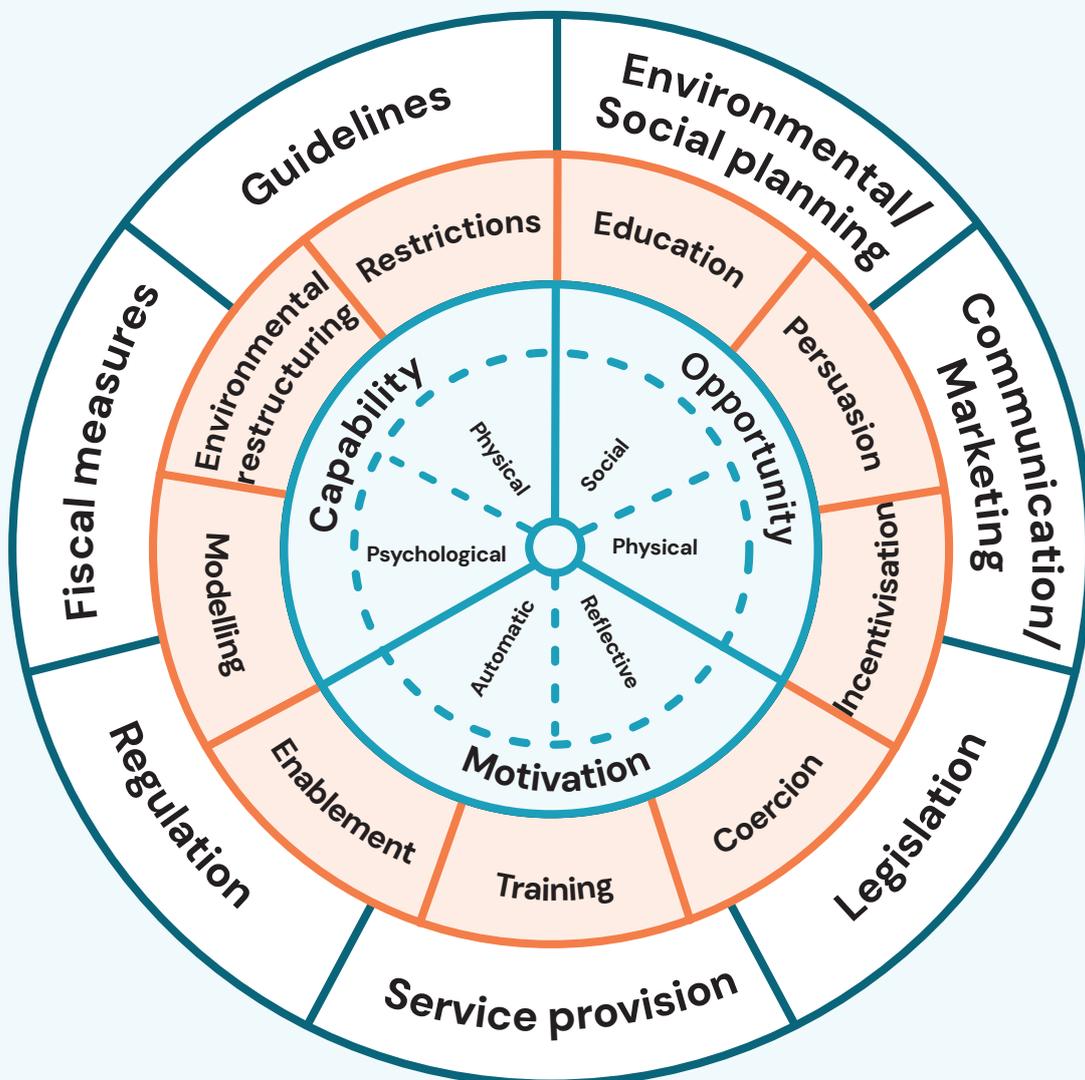
APPENDIX D: MINDSPACE

Dolan et al., 2010

A mnemonic for nine influences on behaviour, the MINDSPACE framework aims to communicate the ways in which behaviour can be influenced and changed. Using it alongside the development of interventions for change will help to consider how it could best be framed and its opportunity for success maximised.

TABLE 1: COMPONENTS OF MINDSPACE

Messenger	We are strongly influenced by who communicates information to us
Incentive	Our responses to incentives are shaped by predictable mental shortcuts such as strongly avoiding losses
Norms	We are strongly influenced by what others do
Default	We 'go with the flow' or pre-set options
Salience	Our attention is drawn to what is novel and seems relevant to us
Priming	Our acts are often influenced by sub-conscious cues
Affect	Our emotional associations can powerfully shape our actions
Commitment	We seek to be consistent with our public promises, and we reciprocate acts
Ego	We act in ways that make us feel better about ourselves

APPENDIX E: EAST

The Behavioural Insights Team, 2014

This framework is a shorter alternative to MINDSPACE, equally communicating how behaviour should be presented in order to encourage and enable people to engage in it. Considering how behaviour can be framed as easy, attractive, social and timely should be embedded in intervention development so that people are not only being enabled to engage in the behaviour, but also receive motivation to do so.

TABLE 2: COMPONENTS OF EAST

E	Easy	Make the desired behaviour easy to implement
A	Attractive	Grab people's attention to the behaviour and make it desirable to engage in
S	Social	People are influenced by others and are more likely to engage in a behaviour if many others are too or if they've made a public commitment
T	Timely	People are influenced by the timing of prompts and are more likely to change their habits if costs and benefits are felt immediately rather than later

APPENDIX F: BREAKDOWN OF SURVEY SAMPLE

TABLE 3: SURVEY SAMPLE BROKEN DOWN BY AGE

Response	Percentage
16–24	8%
25–34	17%
35–44	13%
45–54	21%
55–64	24%
65 and over	17%

TABLE 4: SURVEY SAMPLE BROKEN DOWN BY GENDER

Response	Percentage
Man	33%
Women	63%
Non–Binary	1%
Prefer not to say / Did not answer	3%

TABLE 5: SURVEY SAMPLE BROKEN DOWN BY GENDER

Response	Percentage
LN1	24%
LN2	28%
LN3	3%
LN4	4%
LN5	17%
LN6	19%
Prefer not to say / did not answer	5%

TABLE 6: SURVEY SAMPLE BROKEN DOWN BY ETHNICITY

Response	Percentage
Arab / Arab British	0%
Asian / Asian British	2%
Black / African / Caribbean / Black British	1%
Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Groups	1%
White	92%
Prefer not to say / did not answer	4%

TABLE 7: SURVEY SAMPLE BROKEN DOWN BY FAITH

Response	Percentage
Atheist	19%
Agnostic	15%
Buddhist	2%
Christian	40%
Hindu	0%
Jewish	0%
Muslim	0%
Sikh	0%
None	4%
Other	3%
Prefer not to say / did not answer	14%

TABLE 8: SURVEY SAMPLE BROKEN DOWN BY HEALTH/DISABILITY

Response	Percentage
Yes – I have a long-term health condition and/or disability	46%
No – I do not have a long-term health condition and/or disability	49%
Prefer not to say / did not answer	5%

TABLE 9: SURVEY SAMPLE BROKEN DOWN BY RELATIONSHIP STATUS

Response	Percentage
Single	21%
In a relationship	22%
Married	44%
Civil Partnership	1%
Divorced	6%
Separated	1%
Widowed	3%
Prefer not to say / did not answer	3%

TABLE 10: SURVEY SAMPLE BROKEN DOWN BY HOUSING/LIVING STATUS

Response	Percentage
I own my house	62%
I have a shared ownership of a family home	1%
I am renting	26%
I am living with parents	4%
Other	8%

TABLE 11: SURVEY SAMPLE BROKEN DOWN BY INCOME THRESHOLD

Response	Percentage
Up to £10,000	12%
£10,001 – £20,000	15%
£20,001 – £30,000	25%
£30,001 – £40,000	15%
£40,001 – £50,000	6%
£50,001 – £60,000	5%
£60,001 – £70,000	2%
£70,001 – £80,000	2%
£80,001 – £90,000	3%
£90,001 – £100,000	0%
Over £100,000	0%
Prefer not to say / did not answer	16%

TABLE 12: SURVEY SAMPLE BROKEN DOWN BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Response	Percentage
In education	3%
Undergoing an apprenticeship	0%
Part-time employed	17%
Full-time employed	38%
Unemployed	3%
Unable to work due to health/disability	6%
Unable to work due to caring responsibilities	1%
None of the above	6%
Other (e.g., retired, self-employed, in education and part-time employed)	26%

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