

The Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts CBE
Chair, Committee on Citizenship and Civic Engagement
House of Lords
London
SW1A 0PW

15 January 2018

Dear Lord Hodgson,

I write in response to the Committee on Citizenship and Civic Engagement's call for evidence.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is the UK's National Statistical Institute, and largest producer of official statistics. We aim to provide a firm evidence base for sound decisions, and develop the role of official statistics in democratic debate.

The Committee's call for evidence posed twelve wide-ranging questions on citizenship and civic engagement in the United Kingdom.

The attached note sets out what official statistics are available to decision-makers, to help them address the questions posed by the Committee. Specifically, the note explores:

- what official data can tell us about the **citizenship of the UK's resident population**; both across time, and across the countries and regions of the UK.
- what we know about **social capital in the UK**. These measures, first published in 2015, include information on civic engagement, as well as personal relationships, social support networks, and trust.
- trends in the value and division of **unpaid volunteering**; and
- changes in **electoral registration and participation**.

While we have focused our note on those issues we understand the Committee to be particularly interested in, we have also listed a wider range of data sources which may be of assistance to members. Statisticians would of course be happy to provide further analysis, to assist the Committee in its inquiry.

Yours sincerely,



Iain Bell

Deputy National Statistician and Director General for Population and Public Policy | Office for National Statistics

Citizenship and Civic Engagement

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1. Executive Summary

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is the UK's National Statistical Institute, and largest producer of official statistics. We aim to provide a firm evidence base to inform decision-making and support democratic debate.

The Office for National Statistics, in partnership with statisticians across the government statistical service, publish a wide range of data on citizenship and civic engagement. Reflecting the Committee's call for evidence, this note summarises:

- what official data can tell us about the **citizenship of the UK's resident population**; both across time, and across the countries and regions of the UK.
- what we know about **social capital in the UK**. These measures, first published in 2015, include information on civic engagement, as well as personal relationships, social support networks, and trust.
- trends in the value and division of **unpaid volunteering**; and
- changes in the **electoral registration and participation**.

While we have focused our note on those issues we understand the Committee to be particularly interested in, we have also listed a wider range of data sources which may be of assistance to members, on national well-being and language proficiency.

2. Citizenship, nationality, and country of birth

This section explores what official statistics are available to policy-makers on the citizenship held by UK residents. It explains that official statistics can provide policy-makers with information on how the makeup of the UK's resident population has changed over time and by region, by both nationality and country of birth.

This section explains that the composition of the UK's population has changed over time. It also finds that the citizenship of the UK's residents varies considerably, between countries and regions. Areas such as London have proportionally high numbers of non-UK nationals and foreign-born resident, whereas the North East have proportionally low numbers in comparison.

Box 1: What is citizenship? How does it differ from nationality? And how are these concepts recorded in official statistics?

Official data often refer to 'nationality', rather than to 'citizenship.' By way of example the *Annual Population Survey*, which underlies the UK's official population estimates, asks respondents 'What is your nationality?'

Generally British citizens, as described in official statistics, include those with UK nationality, usually through a connection with the UK: birth, adoption, descent, registration or naturalisation.

Official statistics also provide a wealth of information about the country of birth of the UK's resident population, which may be of some assistance to Committee members. It is important to understand that there are differences in the proportion of the UK resident population who report themselves to be non-British nationals, and the proportion of the resident population who are born abroad. This is because:

1. When people born abroad decide to remain in the UK, they often decide to become British nationals
2. Some people born abroad have British nationality. For example, this may be the case for people whose parents were in the military services and were based abroad when they were born.
3. Some people born in the UK to migrant parents take the nationality of their parents.

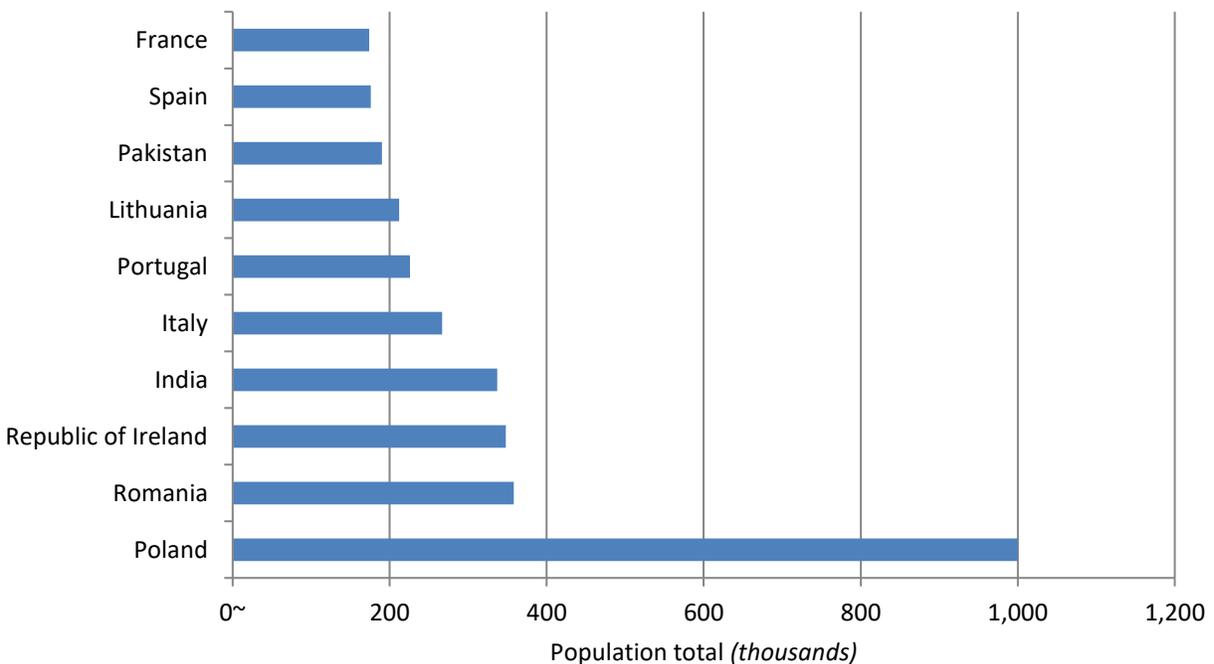
2.1 The UK's resident population: the current picture

Drawing from the *Annual Population Survey*, ONS publishes estimates of the UK's resident population by country of birth, and nationality.¹

Latest estimates show that of the UK population, approximately 1 in 7 (or 9.3 million) were born abroad and approximately 1 in 11 (or 6.1 million) held non-British nationality.

In the year ending June 2017, the majority of non-British nationals resident in the UK (60 per cent of the total non-British population) reported that they held an EU nationality.² Of the non-British population resident in the UK over this period, Polish, Romanian, Irish, Indian and Italian were the 5 most common nationalities held.

Figure 1: Non-British Population Resident in the UK, January 2016 – December 2016, Top 10 Nationalities



Source: *Annual Population Survey (APS)*, Office for National Statistics

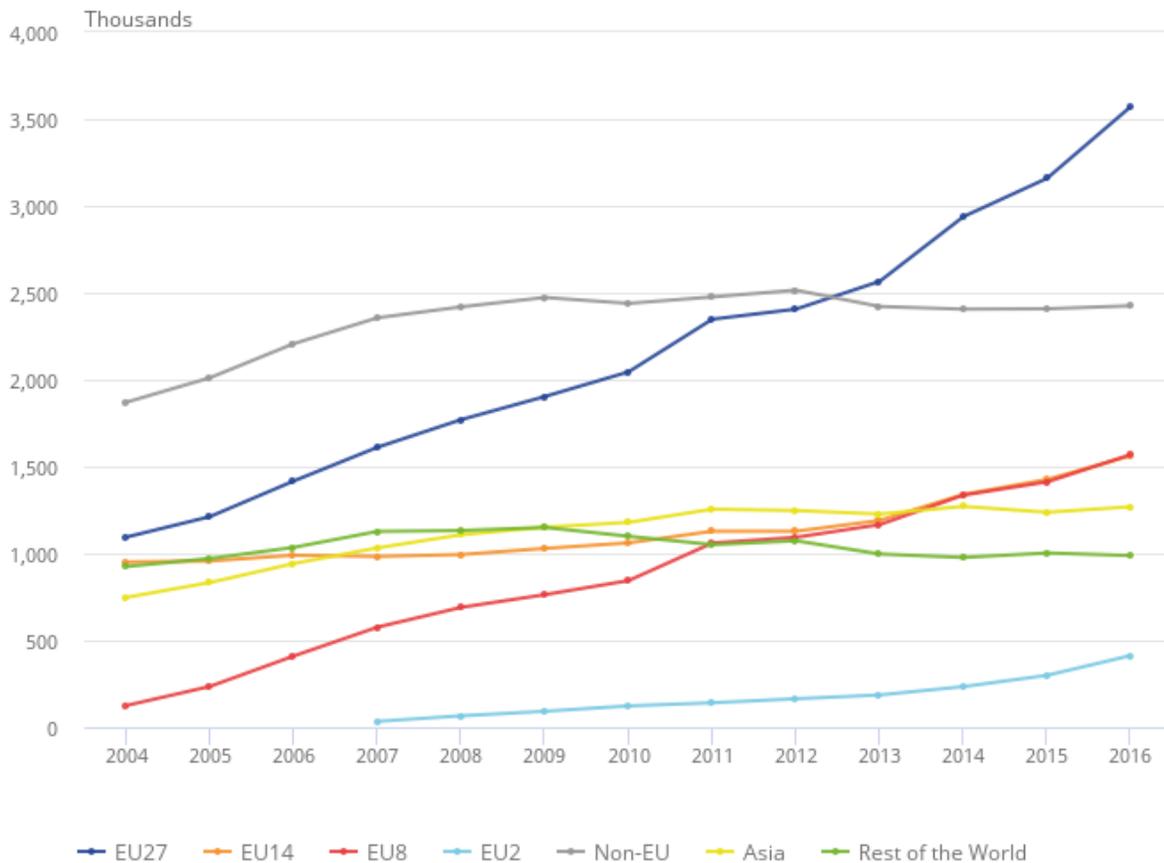
¹ The latest estimates, for the period July 2016 to June 2017, were published in November. They are available on the ONS website, [here](#).

² EU consists of the countries in the EU14 and (from 1 January 2004) the EU8, Malta and Cyprus, and (from 1 January 2007) the EU2, and (from 1 July 2013) Croatia. British nationality is not included in this grouping.

2.2 The UK's resident population: changes over time

As Figure 2 makes clear, the proportions of British and non-British nationals resident in the UK have changed over time. In 2004, non-British nationals made up 5% of the resident UK population; by 2010 this had increased to 7%. The number of non-British nationals resident in the UK (as a proportion of the total population) continued increasing until 2015 when the proportion of non-British nationals was 9%. It remained at this level in 2016.

Figure 2: Estimates of the non-British resident population of the UK by nationality, 2004 to 2016³



Source: Annual Population Survey (APS), Office for National Statistics

The number of EU nationals resident in the UK rose by 1 million between 2012 and 2016 (from 2.6 million to 3.6 million – an increase of 39%), while the number of non-EU (non-British) nationals in the UK remained stable (at 2.4 million at the end of 2016).

³EU27 is the sum of EU14, EU8, and EU2, plus Malta, Cyprus, and Croatia (from 1 July 2013). These three countries are not shown on the chart separately. Non-EU is the sum of Asia, the Rest of the World, and the rest of Europe. The rest of Europe grouping is not shown on the chart

From July 2016 to June 2017 there was a statistically significant increase in the non-British national population of the UK, increasing from 5.9 million to 6.1 million. The increase in non-British nationals has been driven by residents holding EU nationality, from 3.4 million to 3.7 million (statistically significant increase).

2.3 The UK by Nationality: geographical differences

Official data show that the proportion of British nationals and non-British nationals resident in the UK varies by region. Table 1, below, sets out the UK's resident population by nationality and region for July 2016 to June 2017.

Table 1: Population in the United Kingdom, excluding some residents in communal establishments, by nationality and region, July 2016 to June 2017

	All		British		Non-British	
	Number (000s)	Number (000s)	Per cent	Number (000s)	Per cent	
United Kingdom	64,952	58,798	91	6,133	9	
England	54,726	49,187	90	5,521	10	
North East	2,607	2,509	96	98	4	
North West	7,120	6,643	93	476	7	
Yorkshire & the Humber	5,362	4,996	93	364	7	
East Midlands	4,657	4,266	92	390	8	
West Midlands	5,734	5,234	91	498	9	
East	6,076	5,534	91	542	9	
London	8,826	6,738	76	2,081	24	
South East	8,915	8,185	92	727	8	
South West	5,428	5,080	94	345	6	
Wales	3,076	2,942	96	133	4	
Scotland	5,304	4,947	93	355	7	
Northern Ireland	1,846	1,722	93	124	7	

Source: APS, Office for National Statistics

For the year 2016, Wales recorded the lowest proportion of resident non-British nationals, and England the highest. However, the picture varied considerably within England.

In London, 24% of the resident population were non-British nationals, while in North East of England, only 4% of residents were non-British nationals.

3 Social capital and civic engagement

Since 2015, ONS has published estimates of Social Capital; that is, information about the connections between and collective attitudes of people in the UK. We measure social capital because the connections between increasing rates of social capital and positively functioning well-being, economic growth and sustainability are extensively noted.

This chapter explores what measures of social capital tell us about civic engagement; personal relationships; social support networks; and, trust. In doing so, it notes that recent data suggest a largely positive picture of trends in social capital in the long term.

3.1 Civic engagement

Within its annual *Social Capital* release⁴, ONS publishes 8 measures of civic engagement (the most recent data are set out at Table 2, below).

Table 2: Indicators for Civic Engagement

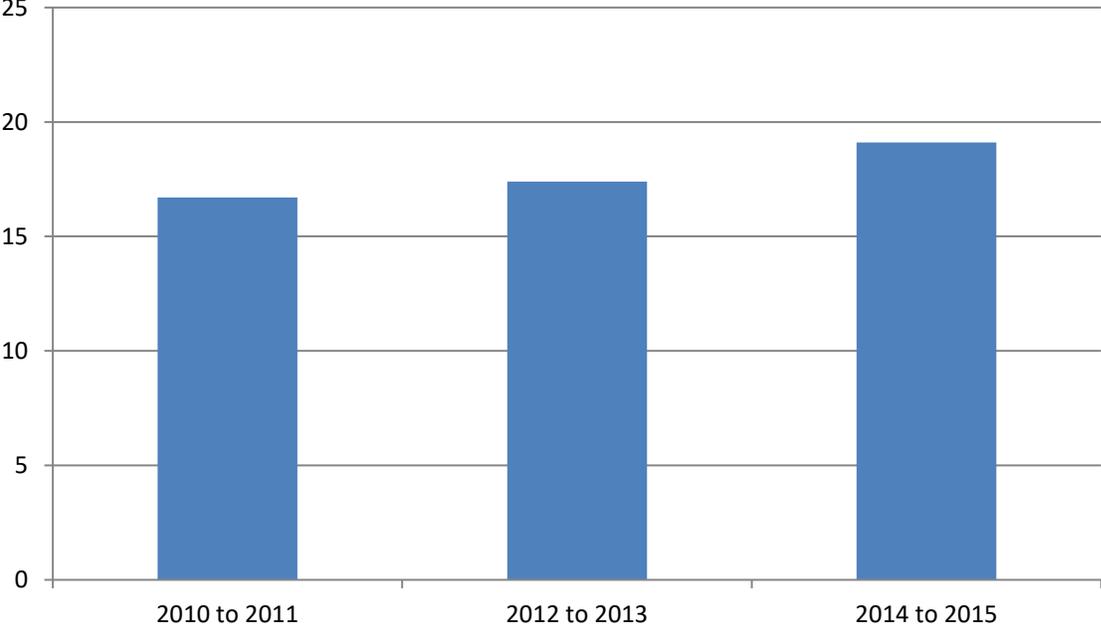
Measure	Coverage	Source	Latest Year	Latest Data
Percentage who volunteered more than once in the last 12 months	UK	Understanding Society: UK Household Longitudinal Study	2014 to 2015	19%
Proportion of people who are members of organisations, whether political, voluntary, professional or recreational	UK	Understanding Society: UK Household Longitudinal Study	2014 to 2015	53%
Proportion of people who have been involved in at least one social action project in their local area in the previous 12 months	England	Community Life Survey, Cabinet Office	2015 to 2016	18%
Proportion of people who definitely agree or tend to agree that they can influence decisions affecting their local area	England	Community Life Survey, Cabinet Office	2015 to 2016	36%
Voter turnout in UK General Elections	UK	Electoral Commission	2015	66%
Proportion of people who have been involved in at least one political action in the previous 12 months	UK	Eurofound, European Quality of Life Survey	2011 to 2012	34%
Proportion of people who are very or quite interested in politics	UK	European Social Survey	2014	56%

Source: Office for National Statistics

⁴ The latest release of Social Capital in the UK was published May 2017 and can be found, [here](#).

The proportion of people who participated in unpaid voluntary work has increased between 2010 to 2011 and 2014 to 2015. In 2010 to 2011, 17% of people reported that they had volunteered more than once in the last 12 months. By 2014 to 2015, this figure had risen to 19%.⁵

Figure 3: Percentage who volunteered more than once in the last 12 months (UK, 2010-2015)



The percentage of people who took part in a social action⁶ between 2014 to 2015 and 2015 to 2016 remained unchanged. Similarly, the percentage of people in the UK who reported membership of organisations whether political, voluntary, professional or recreational also remained unchanged between 2011 to 2012 and 2014 to 2015 (52% and 53% respectively).

While the percentages of people in the UK taking part in *social activities* showed no overall change over this period, the percentage of people who were engaged with *political actions* increased from 17% in 2006 to 2007 to 34% in 2011 to 2012.⁷

⁵ More information on volunteering is set out at Chapter 4.

⁶ By '*social action*' we mean: a community project, event, or activity which local people proactively get together to initiate or support on an unpaid basis. It is distinct from other forms of giving time in that it is driven and led by local people rather than through an existing group (as in formal volunteering) and tends to focus on a community need rather than the needs of an individual (as in informal volunteering). Examples could include organising a street party, preventing the closure of a local post office, helping to run a local playgroup, or improving local road safety'.

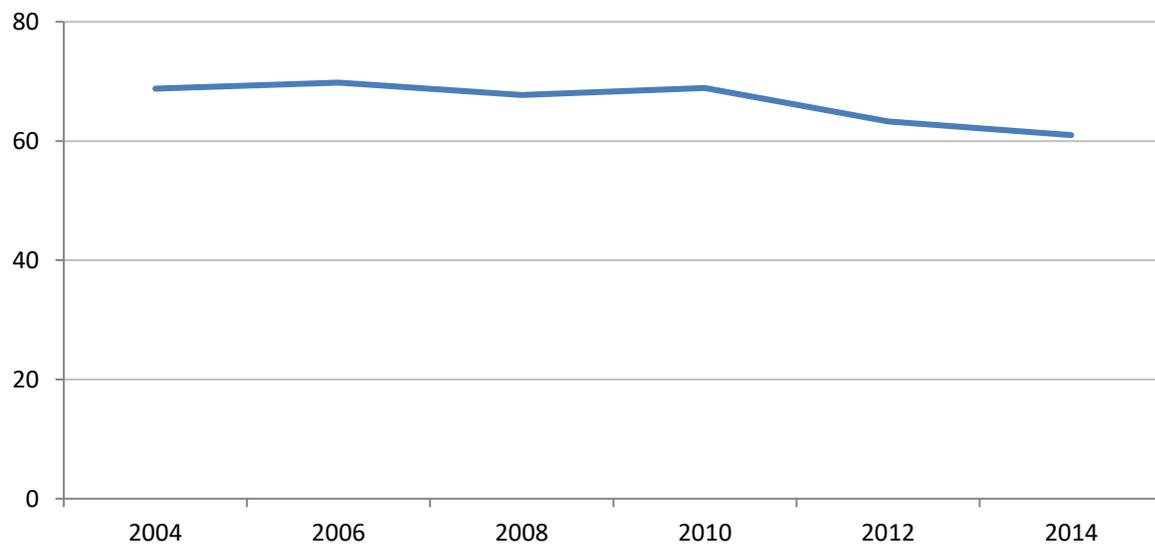
⁷ More information on electoral participation is set out at Chapter 5.

3.2 Personal relationships

The percentage of people saying they feel lonely often or always has not changed significantly between 2014 to 2015 and 2015 to 2016, with the figure staying around 4% on average.

However, the proportion of people meeting socially with friends, relatives or work colleagues at least once a week has decreased from 69% to 61% between 2010 and 2014 (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Proportion of people who meet socially with friends, relatives or work colleagues at least once a week (UK, 2002 to 2014)



Source: European Social Survey

Although the percentage of people meeting socially has dropped, there has been growth in the percentage of people reporting having at least one close friend and this figure improved between 2011 to 2012 and 2014 to 2015, rising from 95% to 97%. This disparity could be due to the rise in the use of the internet for social networking over the past 3 years. In 2016, there were 63% of us who reported using the internet for this purpose in the last 3 months, compared with 53% in 2013.

Research into the relationship between social networking and social capital is still in its early stages but early research suggests that social networking may help bolster social capital in the form of helping people strengthen relationships and aiding integration within communities (Utz and Muscanell, 2015⁸). We have therefore interpreted the increase in social networking as an improvement. The proportion of people who regularly stop and talk to their neighbours has also improved over a 3-year period, rising from 66% in 2011 to 2012 to 68% in 2014 to 2015.

⁸ <http://www.mdpi.com/2075-4698/5/2/420>

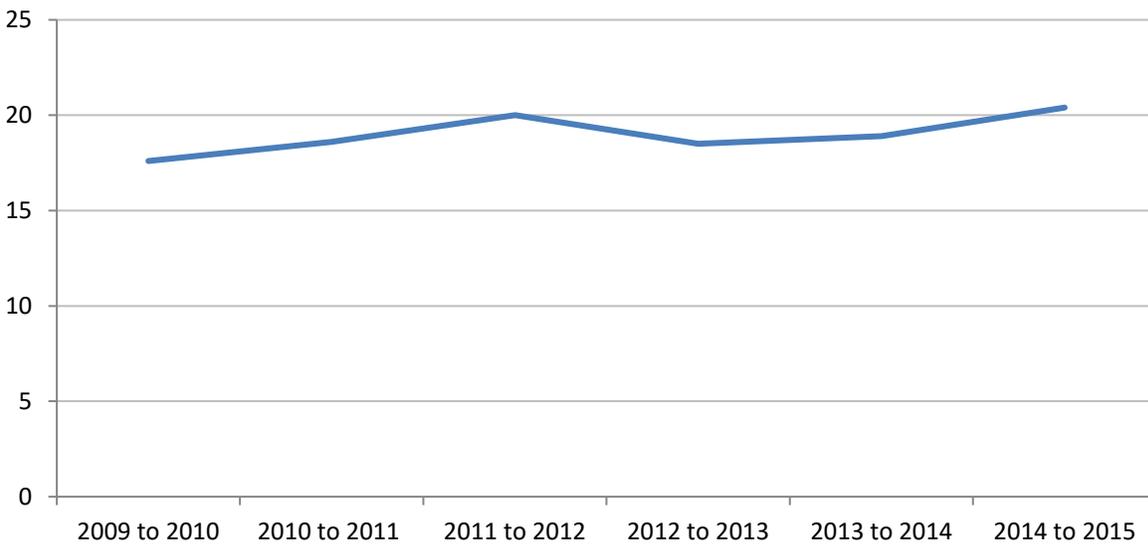
3.3 Social support networks

Between 2010 to 2011 and 2013 to 2014, there has been deterioration in the proportion of people saying that they had a spouse, family member or friend to rely on “a lot” in case of a serious problem.

This fell from 86% in 2010 to 2011 to 84% in 2013 to 2014. Furthermore, reciprocal support between parents and their adult children has decreased. The proportion of parents who regularly receive practical or financial help from a child aged 16 or over not living with them decreased from 42% in 2011 to 2012 to 38% in 2013 to 2014. Furthermore, the proportion of parents saying that they were giving help has also decreased between 2011 to 2012 and 2013 to 2014 (63% and 58% respectively). We have considered these measures from the perspective of the receivers of help and as a result assess this as deterioration.

Despite this, the proportion of people who give special help to at least one sick, disabled or elderly person living or not living with them has risen from 19% to 20% between 2013 to 2014 and 2014 to 2015 (see below).

Figure 5: Proportion of people who give special help to at least one sick, disabled or elderly person living or not living with them (UK, 2009 to 2010 and 2014 to 2015)



Source: Understanding Society; UK Household Longitudinal Study

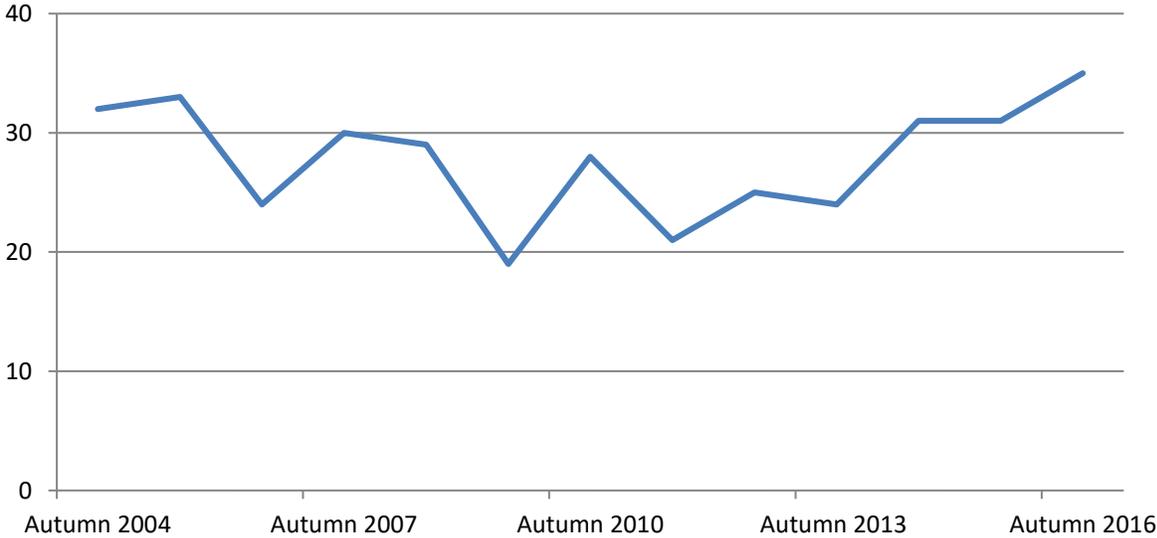
3.4 Trust and cooperative norms

To assess generalised trust, the European Social Survey asks, “Generally speaking would you say that most people can be trusted, or that you can’t be too careful in dealing with people?” Respondents are then asked to score their ratings on a scale, from 0 to 10, where 0 means you can’t be too careful and 10

means that most people can be trusted. In 2010, there were 35% of people who rated their general trust as high (7 to 10) and this remained unchanged in 2014.

Another source assessing trust in national government however, over a 3-year period, noted the proportion of people who said they “tend to trust” the national government rose from 24% in the autumn (September to November) of 2013 to 35% in the autumn of 2016

Figure 6: Percentage of those who have trust in national government (UK, between Sept to Nov 2004, and Sept to Nov 2016)



Source: Eurofound European Quality of Life Survey

Further improvements include the proportion of people who agree or strongly agree that they feel they belong to their neighbourhood rose from 63% in 2011 to 2012 to 69% in 2014 to 2015. In addition to this, the proportion of women who felt “fairly” or “very” safe walking alone after dark rose from 57% in 2012 to 2013 to 62% in 2015 to 2016.

4. Volunteering

While ONS's Social Capital release presents headlines summaries of trends in volunteering, ONS also publishes more detailed analyses of this issue. This chapter summarises these analyses, addressing the allocation of volunteering across households, families and communities. It explains that the proportion of people volunteering over the last 12 months has increased in recent years, while noting that the average time spent volunteering per day has fallen.

4.1 Understanding participation in volunteering activity

In March 2017, ONS published an article on *Changes in the value of division of unpaid volunteering the UK: 2000 to 2015*.⁹ The article, which draws together data from the 2015 Community Life Survey (CLS), the 2001 Home Office Citizenship Survey (CS), and the 2000 and 2015 time use surveys¹⁰, aims to provide decision-makers with improved information about participation in volunteer activity.

Box 2: How does ONS define volunteering?

Volunteering in this publication is defined as voluntary activity in which people volunteer either for an organisation or through an organisation, for free. The kind of activities included range from administrative work on behalf of clubs or teams to coaching, donating blood, or helping out at refuges.

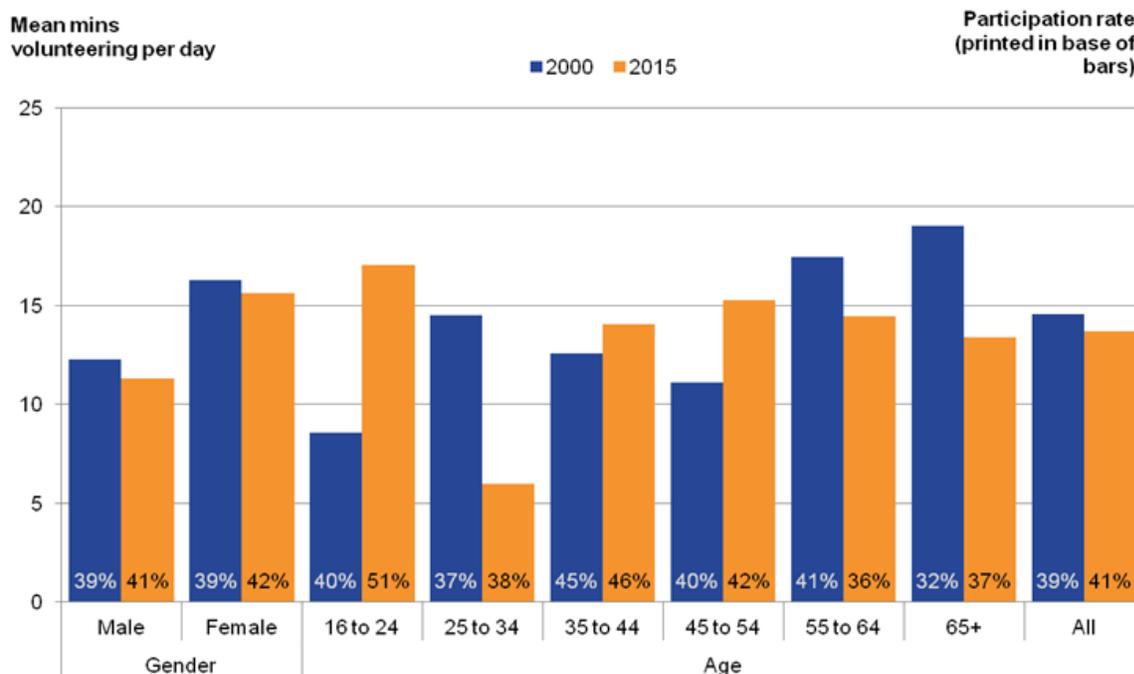
Between 2000 and 2015, the *proportion* of people whole had volunteered over the last 12 months increased for both men (from 39% to 41%) and women (from 39% to 42%). At the same time, the average *time* spent volunteering decreased for both men and women.

However, as Figure 7 (overleaf) shows, patterns vary across age groups.

⁹ *Changes in the value and division of unpaid volunteering in the UK*, published March 2017, can be found [here](#).

¹⁰ UK Harmonised European Time Use survey (HETUS)

Figure 7: Average daily minutes provided for volunteering, by age category and gender, UK, 2000 and 2015^{11,12}



Source: UK Harmonised European Time Use survey (HETUS), 2000 and 2015; Home Office Citizenship Survey 2001; Community Life Survey (CLS), 2015/16

In 2015, 51% of those aged 16 to 24 volunteered for an average of 17.0 minutes per day, over the year. This was the highest of all age groups both in terms of participation and average time spent volunteering. Between 2010 and 2015, those in this age group have increased the time they devote to volunteering while those in the next age category up have decreased their volunteering time.

Those aged 16 to 24 saw the highest increase in volunteering participation with a percentage point increase of 11 percentage points between 2000 and 2015. Participation rate changes were then at lower positive growth levels for age groups 25 to 34, 35 to 44 and 45 to 54 (between 0 and 3 percentage points for each group) while those in the 55 to 64 age group saw their rate of participation fall by over 4 percentage points between 2000 and 2015.

It is important to note an increase in volunteering for 16-24 year olds over the past 15 years could be influenced by a number of factors. These include a general increase in numbers going into higher education, changes to school leaving age and a drive from education establishments to increase employability skills, for example an increase of baccalaureate type qualifications which require a certain

¹¹ Mean average time volunteering is taken from the 2000 and 2015 HETUS surveys and is provided for those who indicated they had carried out some volunteering in the 4 weeks prior to being surveyed.

¹² Volunteering participation rates are taken from the CLS and reflect the proportion of any group who report regularly volunteering at least once every 12 months.

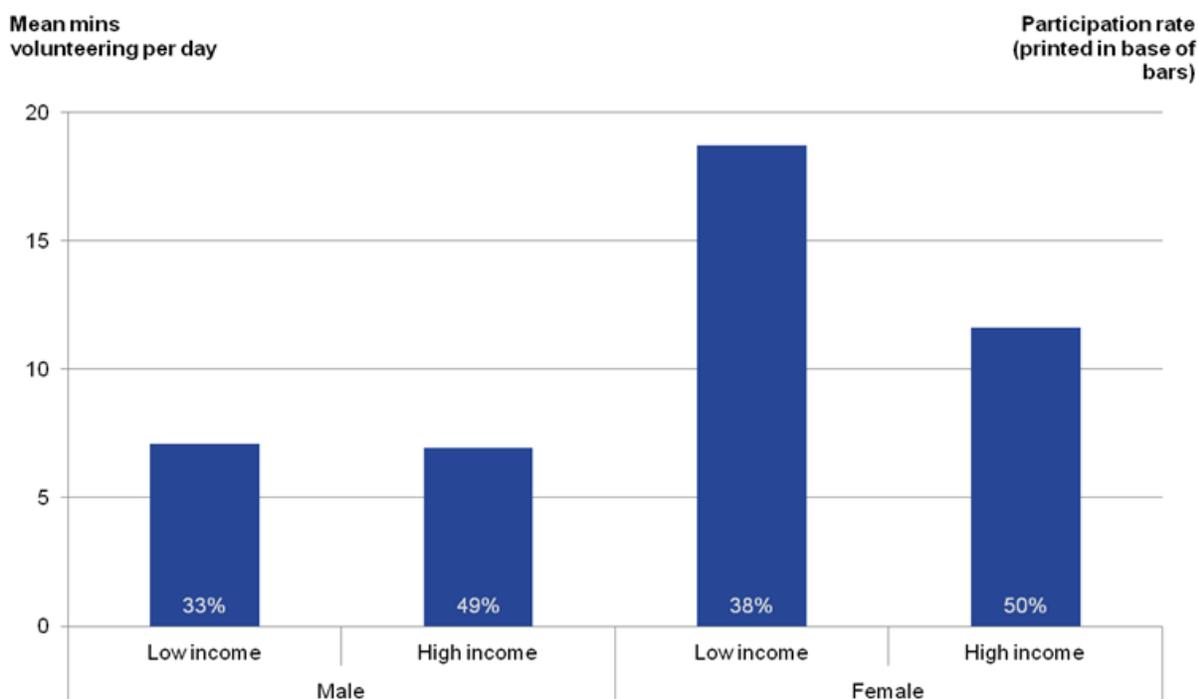
number of hours volunteer work and initiatives like employability "passports" which require volunteering experience.

4.2 Exploring patterns in volunteering, across different income groups

Figure 8 (below) shows both the volunteering participation rate and the average time volunteering per day for groups based on their equivalised household income band and their sex. The data refer to 2015 only. The data shows that the higher average time volunteering performed by the women volunteer group (seen in Figure 7) was driven by women volunteers from low income households in 2015. In that year, those women volunteers performed the highest average time volunteering per day, at around 19 minutes per day.

Men from both high income and low income households performed lower amounts of volunteering than women, with the average duration of volunteering at around 7 minutes per day for men volunteers in 2015. Comparatively, women from high income households performed less volunteering than women from low income households but still volunteered for an average of 12 minutes per day.

Figure 8: Average daily minutes of volunteering provided by gender and equivalised household income band, UK, 2015¹³



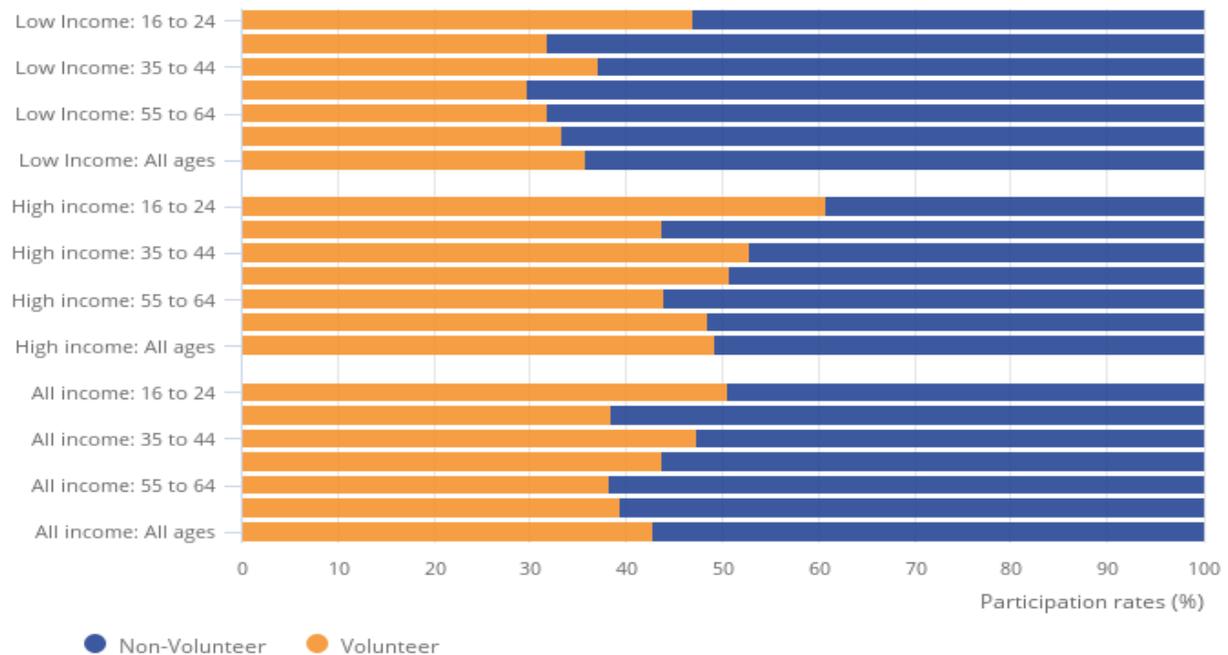
Source: UK Harmonised European Time Use survey (HETUS), 2015; Community Life Survey (CLS), 2015/16

¹³ Mean average time volunteering is provided for groups who indicated they had carried out some volunteering in the 4 weeks prior to being surveyed.

Data suggests that the distribution of volunteering participation rates across age groups similar across income levels.

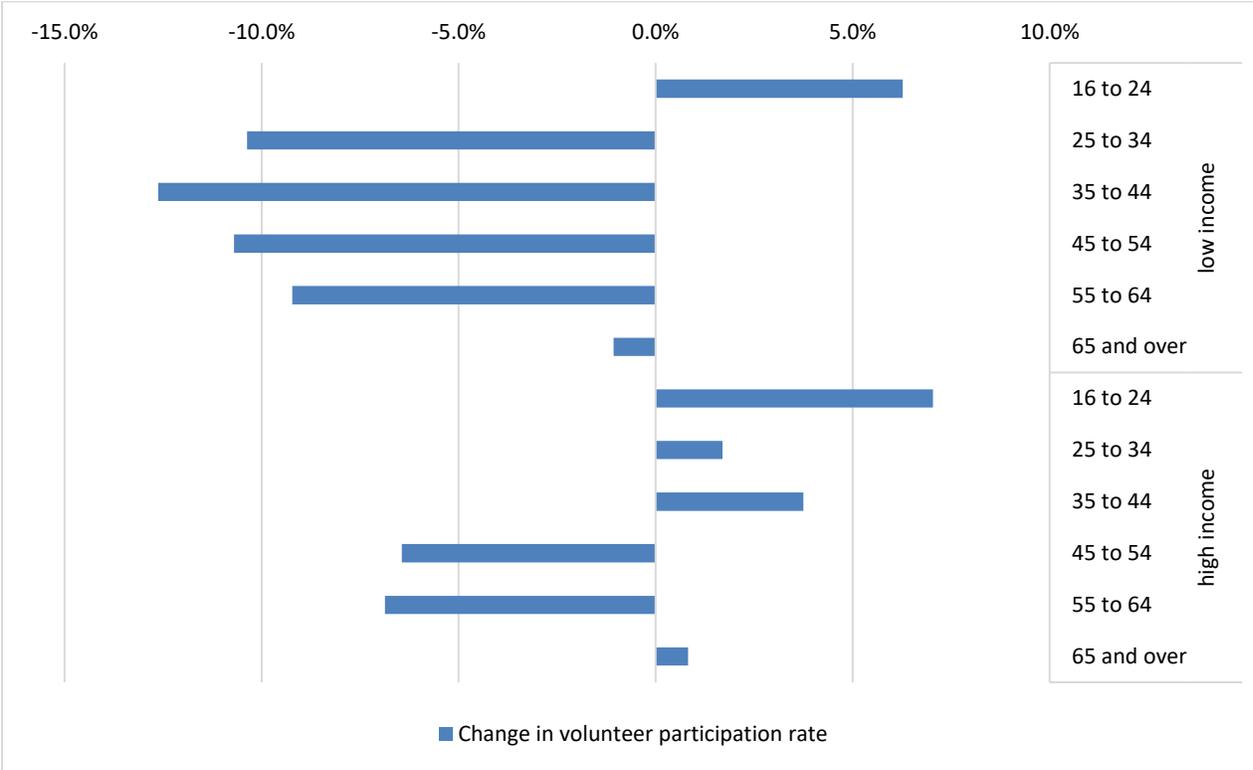
Regardless of household income, volunteering participation rates for the 25 to 34 age group are among the lowest (32% for low income households and 44% for high income households) while the participation rates of the 16 to 24 year olds were the highest (47% for low income households and 61% for high income households in 2015).

Figure 9: Volunteering participation rates over the past 12 months by age and equivalised household income band, 2015



Source: Community Life Survey, 2015/16

Figure 10: Change in volunteering participation rates, by equivalised household income band, 2012/13 to 2015/16¹⁴



Source: Community Life Survey, 2012/13- 2015/16

Figure 10 shows that from 2012 to 2015, there have been large increases in volunteering for the 16-24 year old age groups from both low and high incomes. Increases have also been seen in all other age groups in the higher income bands, apart from 45-54 and 55-64 year olds. For low income groups, there has been a marked decrease in volunteering for all age groups, apart from the aforementioned 16-24 year olds.

¹⁴ Please note, individual income was used to calculate income bands for 2012, whilst the highest household income was used to calculate income bands for 2015 data

5. The UK's Electoral Statistics

ONS publishes a range of measures on elections and electoral participation. The following section considers both the number of registered voters in the UK and the most recent voter turnout figures, for the 2015 General Election. It shows both sets of data have increased.

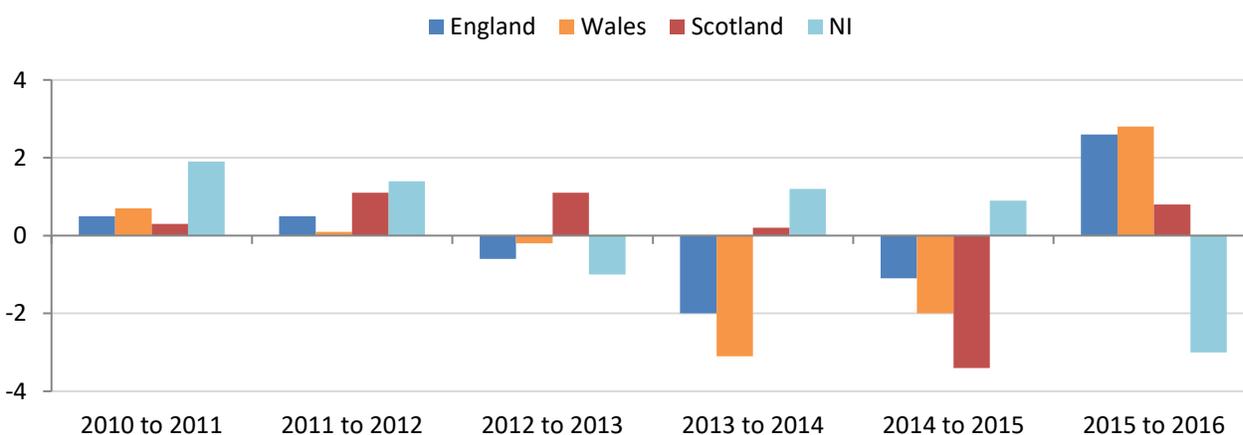
5.1 Registered voters

ONS published its most recent electoral statistics in March 2017.¹⁵ The data within this release capture those people registered to both in parliamentary and local government elections as recorded in electoral registers on 1 December.

In the year to December 2016 the number of people registered to vote in parliamentary and local government elections across the UK increased by around 1 million. In the previous two years the number of people registered to vote had decreased partly as a consequence of the introduction of Individual Electoral Registration (IER). A key driver of the increase in the size of the electorate in the year to December 2016 was public engagement with the EU referendum in June 2016.

Figure 11 shows the different patterns of change in parliamentary electors between the UK constituent countries over the last 6 years. Between December 2015 and December 2016 the number of electors increased in England, Wales and Scotland but decreased by 3% in Northern Ireland. This is the opposite of the pattern observed in the 2 years between 2013 and 2015 where the electorate in Northern Ireland increased but decreased across the other 3 countries of the UK.

Figure 11: Annual percentage change in parliamentary electors for UK constituent countries, between 2010 and 2016



Source: Office for National Statistics, National Records of Scotland, Electoral Office for Northern Ireland

¹⁵ ONS (March 2017): [Electoral statistics for UK 2016](#)

5.2 Voter Turnout

In addition to its statistics Electoral statistics release, publishes estimates of voter turnout within its *Measuring National Well-Being: Life in the UK, April 2017* release¹⁶.

These data are derived from administrative data from the Electoral Commission and is not estimated. For the 2015 election, this figure was 66%, a small increase compared to the 2010 election where voter turnout was 65%. When broken down by country, as seen in Table 3, Scotland returned the highest voter turnout (71%) in the 2015 election compared to the other constituent countries of the UK, whilst Northern Ireland had the lowest (58%). In the further breakdown by region in the same table, the South West had the highest voter turnout (70%) in contrast to the North East who had the lowest (62%), a difference of 8%.

Table 3: Percentage of electorate voting in General Election as a proportion of those of voting age, 2015, by region

Regions	2015
England	66.0
North East	61.8
North West	64.3
Yorkshire and The Humber	63.3
East Midlands	66.5
West Midlands	64.1
East	67.5
London	65.4
South East	68.6
South West	69.5
Wales	65.7
Scotland	71.0
Northern Ireland	58.1

Source: Electoral Commission

¹⁶ National Well-Being in the UK, published April 2017, can be found [here](#).

Annex A: Other resources

In addition to the sources set out in this note, Committee members may be interested in the following sources:

Wellbeing:

- In November 2010, the Measuring National Well-being programme was established. The aim was to monitor and report “how the UK as a whole is doing” by producing accepted and trusted measures of the well-being of the nation. One question, from the Understanding Society, UK Household Longitudinal Study, asks respondents whether they agree that they “belonged to their neighbourhood”. Respondents are asked to rate their sense of belonging to their neighbourhood from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". Data are available [here](#).

English language proficiency:

- Two questions on main language and proficiency in spoken English were included for the first time in the 2011 Census following the content consultation for the England and Wales census form. Using this data, ONS published an article in 2013 looking at Language in England and Wales: 2011 available [here](#).