



Social Impact Assessment of the Clapham Park Estate

Summary

July 2025



**CLAPHAM
PARK** SW4



About this report

This report summarises research carried out in 2024 into the impact of the regeneration of the Clapham Park Estate. The research was commissioned by Clapham Park LLP, a joint venture partnership between Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing (MTVH) and Countryside Partnerships (part of Vistry Group). The aim was to establish an understanding of how residents from different tenures, backgrounds and areas within the estate have experienced the regeneration to help agencies and development partners improve their plans and services. It also acts as a baseline against which future change can be measured.

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Natasha Shah supported the community research team, with help from Imogen Bullen-Smith, Abiel Ghirmai and Colin Campbell.

The site survey was carried out by Fiona Smith and Larissa Begault

We want to thank the six community researchers - Aysha, Barbara, Montse, Julian, Jochebed and Vanessa who we worked with, for embracing the research and being so enthusiastic about interviewing fellow residents on the street or in walking interviews.

We are grateful to the individuals and organisations who took time out of their busy days to support this research, take part in workshops or be interviewed in stakeholder interviews. And we want to especially thank the staff in the Clapham Park Cube who have been fantastic and made our presence at Clapham Park possible.

We also want to thank all the different organisers and initiatives working on Clapham Park, especially Learning in Action, who engaged with us and supported the research.

About Social Life

Social Life was created by the Young Foundation in 2012, to become a specialist centre of research and innovation about the social life of communities. All our work is about the relationship between people and the places they live and understanding how change, through regeneration, new development or small improvements to public spaces, affects the social fabric, opportunities and wellbeing of local areas. We work in the UK and internationally.

www.social-life.co

Introduction

This report describes the findings of research exploring how the Clapham Park Estate regeneration programme is currently affecting people living in the area. Clapham Park is a large, diverse estate in the London Borough of Lambeth. It is bisected by two major roads – Kings Avenue and the South Circular – and is close to Brixton Hill, Clapham, Streatham and Brixton.

Working with residents from the estate as community researchers we were surprised by the enthusiasm and local support that we received, even though some of the activities took place on cold winter days in late 2024. We found that there is a strong sense of community and belonging in the area. There are pockets of strong communities connected by their length of stay on the estate, language and culture, who associate themselves with Clapham Park. People intend to stay in the neighbourhood and are generally satisfied with the area and their quality of life.

The estate faces challenges, often associated with its geography and the built environment, particularly traffic, access to social infrastructure and green spaces, activities, affordable retail and places to meet different people. Perceptions of safety are low. As the regeneration progresses, the demographic make-up of the residents is changing, presenting challenges to social cohesion.



Figure 1: Community stall at the Clapham Park Fun Day 2024

Key findings

Amenities & Social Infrastructure



Satisfaction with shopping, leisure and health facilities is weaker than in comparable areas. There is a need for more informal and affordable spaces that allow for a wide mix of people to meet and interact.

Residents described a need for cafés and coffee shops, more retail and shops and children's play areas. There is a strong perception that the number of social assets such as shops and parks on site has reduced, although residents report good transport links to facilities in the surrounding area to facilities in surrounding areas.

“More sports facilities, facilities for young people ... there used to be a football pitch a while back but it would be good to have a centre like the Cube but for sporting with a football pitch etc, places for young people to go and socialise” – Housing association tenant (male), aged 18-24

“There is a lack of certain shops around here and it would be sad if the 45 bus goes as that is a key transport link.” – Housing association tenant (female), aged 45-64



Figure 2: Clapham Park Cube

Social & Cultural Life



Clapham Park has a strong community. 74% of respondents agree that the local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together. 72% of respondents report that they feel satisfied with the local area and 69% say that they feel they belong. These are both higher than comparable areas. However, there are concerns that the sense of community is being lost and fragmented as new people move into the area.

Neighbourliness and relationships between neighbours are generally strong, Clapham Park residents report stronger perceptions of neighbourliness than people living in comparable areas. Overall residents are feeling the regeneration is making the area safer, however safety is still a top priority.

There are long-standing communities on the estate focused around language identities (Portuguese, Spanish, French) and ethnic backgrounds. These communities need to be engaged with in a more strategic manner, with tailored services, translations and cultural celebrations.



Figure 3: Clapham Park Fun Day July 2024

Key findings

Voice & Influence



29% of respondents felt they have influence over decisions affecting the local area. This is stronger than in comparable areas. Issues relating to repairs and maintenance are significant difficulties for residents. This is the most common reason for dissatisfaction with their housing quality. There are existing governance structures such as Clapham Park Residents Committee, however, some residents reported not knowing about initiatives going on.

Residents and stakeholders reported perceptions that communication channels are not well used to engage and gather input from residents. There are perceptions that expectations of new green spaces and retail facilities had not been met, and that there is a lack of clarity about the timing of the regeneration.

“There’s a lot of people that have said a lot of things previously and it still hasn’t been implemented people are kind of frustrated at certain things.” – Stakeholder



Figure 4: Street interviews at Parkfield Road

Adaptability & Resilience



Existing initiatives can enable resident representatives to shape the future of their local area and to be supported economically, however, these are not always engaging the wider community. The cost-of-living crisis has increased precarity for people who were already financially vulnerable.

There are few examples of community-led uses, meanwhile activities and informal uses of outdoor spaces, apart from planting in the refurbished blocks. There are some strong community networks and many aspects of neighbourliness are strong. However, there is a lack of confidence within the community about its capacity to absorb the arrival of people from different backgrounds to current residents.

A built environment assessment of the estate was conducted in March 2025, supplemented by design and planning information. **Clapham Park Estate's built environment achieved an average score (yellow) in two categories of the assessment - integrated neighbourhoods, distinctive places and a negative score (red) in the third one - streets for all.** The site survey is based on the Building for Healthy Life 2020 protocol developed by Design for Homes, Homes England and adapted by Social Life to incorporate social dimensions of public space.



Figure 5: Community gardening by Tilson Gardens

Key findings

Views of the Regeneration



A little under half of residents (46%) felt positive about the changes happening locally through the regeneration process. Knowledge of the regeneration plans is generally low. Housing association and other social renting tenants are more likely to have information. Housing association and other social renting tenants are more likely to feel negatively about the regeneration, while private tenants, owner occupier and shared owners are more likely to feel positively.

Top impacts reported included construction disruptions, the area becoming more expensive, loss of community and facilities and housing issues. A minority reported no impacts and some reported positive impacts from modernisation of the area and improved safety.

Top priorities for the regeneration are improved safety, security and waste management, more facilities, amenities and shops, and improved social cohesion.

“It’s been refreshing to live somewhere up to date with living standards. But the inside of the building needs to be completed. The regeneration in this area, it’s surprising, it has changed the look of it, it is brighter, people seem more upbeat and happier. Doesn’t feel so destitute. ” - Housing association tenant, aged 30-44



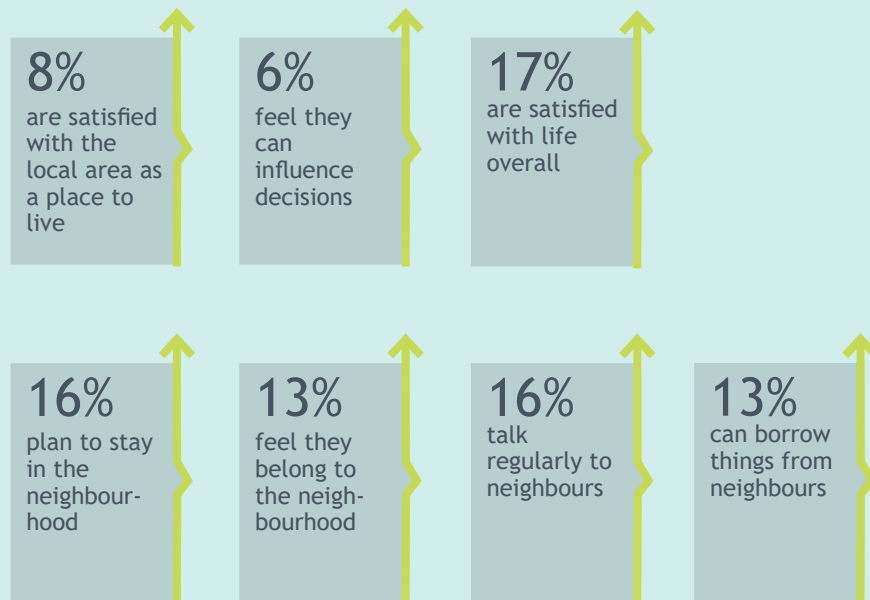
Figure 6: Community gardening by Tilson Gardens

Comparing Clapham Park with similar places

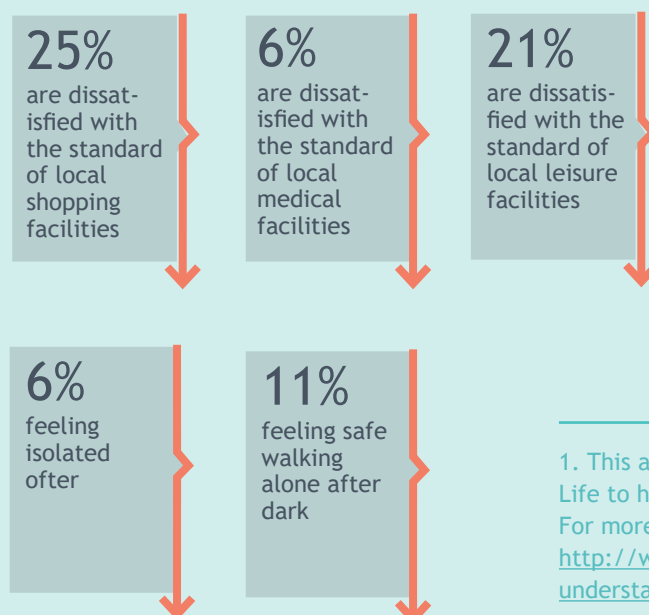
We have compared the results of the 2024 Clapham Park survey to similar areas. The data shows us where residents attitudes and experiences are stronger or more positive than in comparable areas (indicating strengths), or more negative (indicating vulnerabilities).

The residents' survey data was analysed using an approach that Social Life¹ has developed to compare data from small areas to "comparable areas" - other areas nationally with similar social and physical characteristics. This uses national survey data from the Research Councils UK and Office for National Statistics (ONS) Output Area Classifications. Where possible we use this data to put our results in context, alongside available Lambeth-specific data.

Better than comparable area



Worse than comparable area



1. This approach has been developed by Social Life to help understand how areas are faring. For more information see: <http://www.social-life.co/publication/understanding-local-areas/>

Recommendations

The proposed recommendations are focused around the long, medium and short term of the project.

In the long term, building a cohesive and welcoming community is critical for the success of the regeneration. In the medium-term, upgrading social infrastructure, green spaces and retail and leisure facilities is key. In the short-term, residents want to see improvements to safety, waste and repairs and more temporary and meanwhile uses.

Building a cohesive community

1. **Develop a social cohesion strategy and action plan** that recognises the diverse past, current and future communities on the Clapham Park Estate and their spatial distribution.
2. **Review communications** across the estate and expand reach by engaging and supporting formal and informal community groups, networks and channels.
3. **Invest in youth provision and family support** across tenures.

Strengthening support and infrastructure

4. **Improve social and retail infrastructure provision** on the estate by enhancing current assets and introducing new ones such as a café and shops which cater to a range of price points.
5. **Improve leisure provision** by providing and maintaining outdoor play areas and sport provisions.
6. **Maximise the opportunities provided by the extensive green spaces** by introducing meanwhile uses, with purposeful uses such as pocket parks and seating provision.

Addressing the day-to-day

7. **Improve safety** by introducing better lighting across the estate, traffic solutions and develop a wayfinding strategy.
8. **Provide an accessible and clean urban realm** by addressing issues of parking, waste management and street maintenance.
9. **Improve resident engagement** through temporary and meanwhile interventions and better repair feedback loops.



Figure 7: Murals on construction hoardings near Brickfield Road

About the research

The aim of the research was to establish an understanding of how different residents have experienced the regeneration. Our findings will act as a baseline against which the impact of future changes can be measured. They are also designed to give residents knowledge and insight that can empower them in their conversations and discussions with agencies.

The assessment of such a complex scheme was developed in close collaboration with residents as well as existing initiatives and organisations. We learned from the work already going on the estate. Our aim from the outset was to build upon and strengthen existing estate relationships. We used a mix of methods such as street and online surveys, stakeholder interviews, walking interviews, workshops, and observations to fully be able to understand the area.

The research explored residents' perceptions of the estate, of their everyday life and how they feel about their neighbours and their local community. It drew on a social sustainability framework developed by Social Life. This captures how the built environment and local services support and promote wellbeing and collective life; perceptions of belonging, wellbeing, relationships with neighbours and between people from different backgrounds; how people feel that they can influence their environment; and how they come together to take action to improve the area.

It is our aim that this work will add to the insights being generated through other projects and will in this way add to the growing collective bank of knowledge that can support the joint venture's work in the years to come. Thank you to all the residents and local stakeholders who contributed to this research.



Figure 8: Social Life's Design for Social Sustainability Framework

Community Researchers

We committed to recruit, train and work with six paid community researchers, all of whom were local residents. The community researchers worked alongside Social Life researchers to design the survey, carry out interviews and analyse the data. We provided training and support. It was important for us to work closely with residents to use their expert knowledge of the estate and its community to shape the most effective research approach.

The community researchers - Aysha, Barbara, Jochebed, Montse, Vanessa and Julian worked together with our field and research team and were critical friends to the process, providing an experiential lens to the research process. Reflecting on their experience, they reported developing personal and professional skills, understanding their community better and feeling motivated to engage further.

“I’ve learned about the range of people, around from different cultures, different languages and also through the group of us researchers... it was good to meet different people at different ages and backgrounds that are outside my normal circle of friends and immediate neighbours.” - Julian

“Instead, when you feel connected to the person or you feel comfortable, you feel like community researchers give this feeling of trust. Which doesn’t need to be built with a random researcher because you almost have the feel of connection or community already” - Aysha



Figure 9: Community Researchers - Julian, Barbara, Aysha and Montse with Social Life and MTVH staff.

The Clapham Park Estate

The Clapham Park Estate is a residential-led mixed-use regeneration of approximately 36 hectares. It includes demolition of up to 1,037 residential homes, refurbishment of up to 834 existing residential homes and the construction of up to 3,289 residential homes. The regeneration of Clapham Park is expected to end in the late 2030s at which point there will be 4,203 homes. By May 2025, over 1,900 new and refurbished homes had been completed.

Residents' reported positives about the estate related to good transport links, green spaces and the strength of the community, which was described as friendly and welcoming, with good relationships between neighbours. On the other hand, the most common challenges reported were concerns over crime, safety and anti-social behaviour and issues relating to parking, traffic and waste management.

“There is good transport links in the area to the surrounding stations and few bus stops. Good schools and nurseries [...] Great restaurants just outside the local area in the outskirts of the Clapham Park and social gathering location bus rides or medium length walks away.”
– Housing association tenant aged 45-64

“It’s a bit busy now, how I don’t know anybody now, there has been a real loss of community, there is issues with the bins, parking is closed in the underground carpark, there is a real lack of security, and a real lack of privacy.” – Housing association tenant, aged 65+



Figure 10: Clapham Park Estate regeneration vision (blue and in construction and red are planned).

Source: <https://yourclaphampark.co.uk/regeneration/the-development/>

Who we spoke to

In total, interviews with 176 different residents and former residents, 11 stakeholders and five walking ethnographies carried out. We also engaged with young people, stakeholders and residents through workshops and events.

The main research findings were taken from in-depth street interviews, walking interviews and in-depth interviews with local agencies and stakeholders.

153

street interviews
with residents

11

in-depth interviews
with agencies and
local stakeholders

23

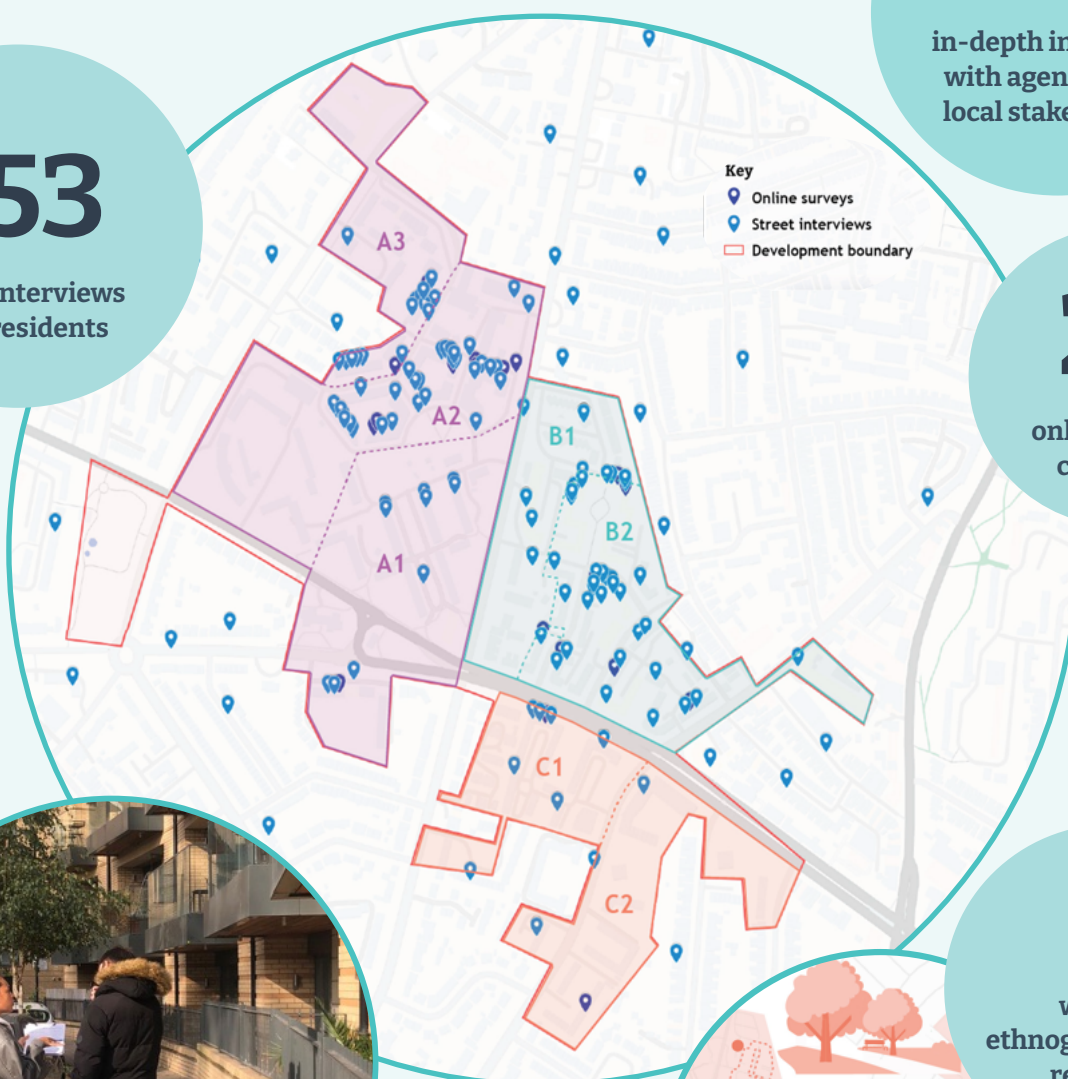
online surveys
completed

5

walking
ethnographies with
residents

6

community
researchers

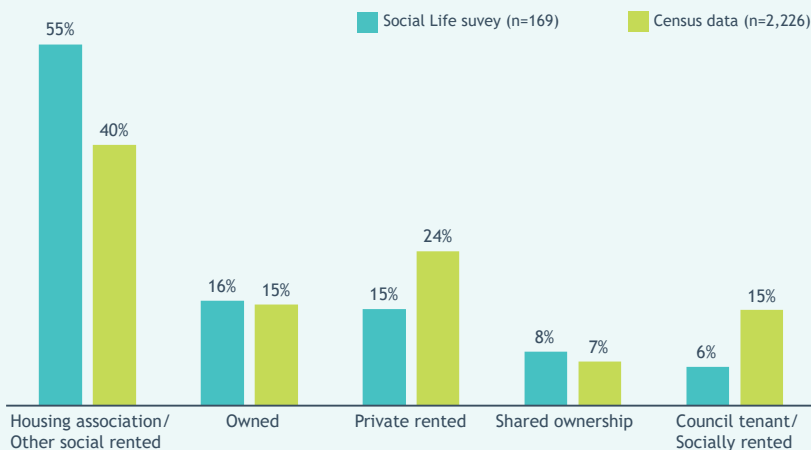


Number of people interviewed

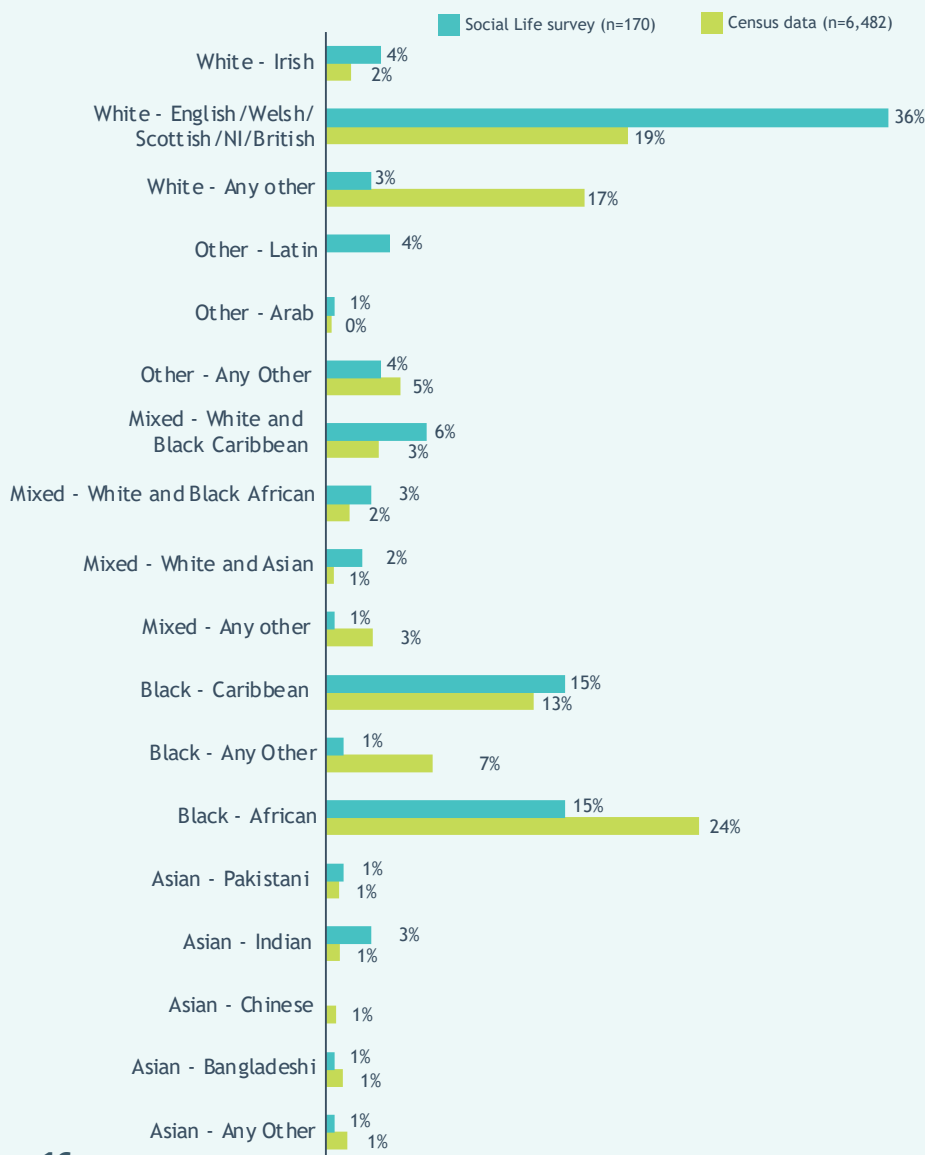
176
TOTAL

153 street surveys
23 online surveys

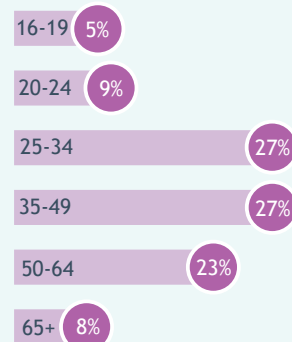
Tenure



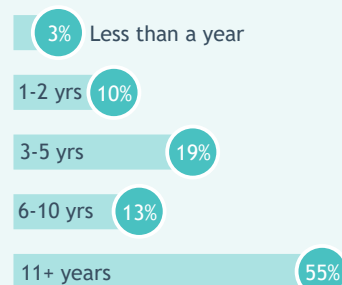
Ethnicity



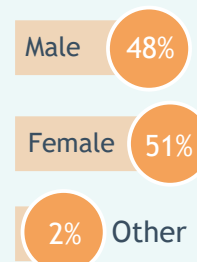
Age



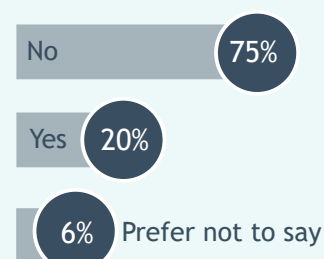
Length of time living in Clapham Park



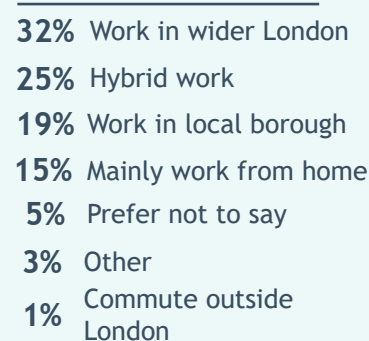
Gender



Disability



Location of employment



Social Life is an independent research organisation created by the Young Foundation in 2012, to become a specialist centre of research and innovation about the social life of communities. Our work is about understanding how peoples' day-to-day experience of local places is shaped by the built environment - housing, public spaces, parks and local high streets - and how change, through regeneration, new development or small improvements to public spaces, affects the social fabric, opportunities and wellbeing of local areas.

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