



SPIRIT OF 2012
INVESTING IN HAPPINESS

MOMENTS THAT MAKE US PROUD

HOW UK-HOSTED EVENTS TRIGGER NATIONAL PRIDE ACROSS THE UK

OLLY STANTON, MICHELA ARENA & AMY PRICE.
JULY 2025

 **PUBLIC FIRST**



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CONTENTS

PAGE 1	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
PAGE 6	NATIONAL PRIDE
PAGE 14	EVENTS AND PRIDE
PAGE 26	THE DIFFERENT EXPRESSIONS OF PRIDE
PAGE 32	DIFFERENT EVENTS SPEAK TO DIFFERENT PEOPLE
PAGE 58	HARNESSING THE POWER OF EVENTS



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

NATIONAL PRIDE REMAINS STRONG IN THE UK.

Nationality is a key part of identity across the UK and a large majority of the UK public feels proud to live in the UK. This pride often comes from our culture and shared values.



77%

of UK adults said that **they were proud to live in the UK.**

55%

of UK adults said **their nationality was an important part of their identity.**

53%

of UK adults believe national pride is mostly about **who we are as a nation – our culture and shared values.**

EVENTS CAN TRIGGER NATIONAL PRIDE.

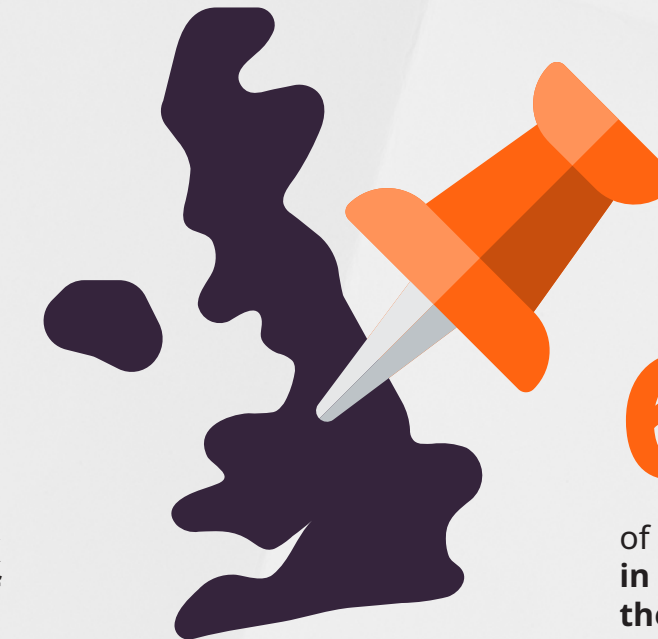
For most of the UK public, events are integral to promoting national pride. In particular, events that showcase the UK's values, trigger international recognition, and make people feel part of something bigger make us proud to live in the UK. Whilst hosting events in a local area can bring significant benefits, people can still feel included in a national moment from a distance.

74%

of UK adults said that **events that attract positive international attention for the UK make them more proud.**

53%

of UK adults say that hosting large scale events make us proud to live in the UK because **they allow them to feel part of something bigger.**



64%

of UK adults said that **events hosted in the UK made them proud to live in the UK.**

Support for events as a source of national pride is remarkably widespread across the UK. People of all ages, social grades, and ethnic backgrounds broadly agreed that events made them proud to live in the UK.

YET DIFFERENT GROUPS RESPOND TO DIFFERENT EVENTS.

Our research uncovered **four groups** within the UK public who experience national pride differently and, as a result, respond to different kinds of events. Whilst the consistency and ubiquity of sporting events means they are the most unifying category of event – there is still cross-generational appreciation for cultural, royal and symbolic occasions too.

NOSTALGIC NATIONALISTS

Traditional and reflective, Nostalgic Nationalists value solemn rituals and historical continuity as expressions of national pride. They are more likely to draw pride from commemorative and royal events.

PROUD PARTICIPANTS

Confident, optimistic and highly engaged, Proud Participants see national events as a chance to celebrate identity and come together. They draw pride from all types of events.

CULTURAL CENTRISTS

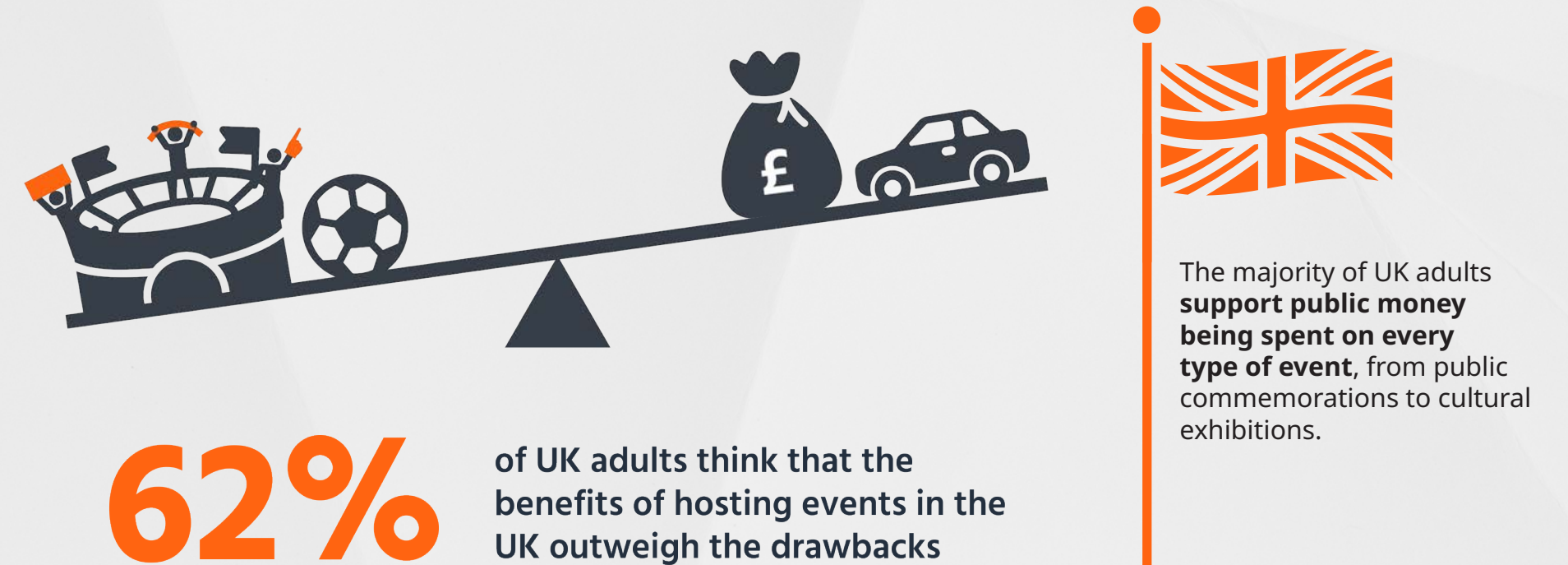
Creative, curious and moderately patriotic, Cultural Centrists favour inclusive, modern events that reflect a diverse and evolving Britain. They draw pride more from cultural celebrations than occasions steeped in tradition.

SIDELINE SCEPTICS

Disconnected and disillusioned, Sideline Sceptics feel little emotional or cultural connection to national events or public life. They rarely draw pride from events, though sporting events are the most likely to elicit a response from them.

THE UK CAN HARNESS THE POWER OF A VARIED SLATE OF EVENTS TO CREATE PRIDE FOR EVERYONE.

To speak to these different groups, the UK needs a wide variety of events. Events should focus on creating national moments, and representing who we are as a nation, if they want to evoke pride.





**MOST PEOPLE ARE PROUD TO LIVE IN THE UK, AND
OUR ABILITY TO PUT ON A GOOD SHOW IS AN
IMPORTANT SOURCE OF THAT PRIDE.**

FOREWORD

It's hard to forget the electric buzz of the London 2012 Olympic Opening Ceremony. In a single evening, the UK told the world who we are—with humour, heart and a sense of occasion unmatched anywhere else. It was a masterclass in connecting people across generations, cultures & geographies that felt like the best kind of party. Spirit of 2012 was set up to bottle that 'spirit' and explore how to continue it across events of all different types.

Pride in place has been a recurrent theme in our work, but we also wanted to know whether events are triggers for national pride—and if so, whether this pride looks and feels the same across different nations, regions and communities?

That question has been at the heart of our recent work. In June 2024, alongside Warwick Business School, we published *Creating the Golden Thread*, a report calling for a long-term national ambition for events in the UK. We argued that events can do much more than entertain—they can help foster a more confident, inclusive and outward-looking society. *Moments That Make Us Proud* builds on this thinking. It explores in rich detail how pride in the UK is felt, when it is sparked, and what role different types of events—from local festivals to national ceremonies—play in that emotional landscape for different communities.

In a time when it's easy to feel that disillusionment and disconnection runs deep, this study offers a welcome corrective: most people are proud to live in the UK, and our ability to put on a good show is an important source of that pride.

In our 2023 *Inquiry into the Power of Events*, we argued that we need to pay more attention to who benefits from events, and, more importantly, who is left out. Public First find about 17% of the UK are 'sideline sceptics': they participate in events less than their fellow citizens, and where they do take part, this has less of an impact on feelings of pride. Even here though,

we find decent proportions of attendees to sporting tournaments, music festivals and public ceremonies like Hogmanay and Bonfire Night. There is a challenge for those of who care about social cohesion to think about both how to (re)ignite their sense of connection to where they live, and what role major events might play in doing this.

Each year the UK hosts a wide range of international sporting events and cultural festivals. With Euro 2028 Glasgow 2026 and Invictus 2027 on the horizon, event organisers will be considering how they might incorporate cultural elements of storytelling through ceremonies and live sites to enhance the sporting offer, and organisers of high-profile commercial events, such as Glastonbury, are aware of their role in showcasing the UK internationally.

This report conveys the contribution that major events, both publicly funded and commercial, can make. For event organisers, policy makers and cultural leaders, it offers a rich set of insights to explore. If your goal is to bring people together, boost civic pride or strengthen a shared sense of identity, understanding how different communities experience these moments of togetherness can be invaluable. Events are not the only way to nurture pride, but they are one of the most visible and emotive. We hope this research helps prompt fresh thinking and a call to action for using events – large and small – local and national to foster and develop that sense of pride and inclusion.



Ruth Hollis OBE
Chief Executive, Spirit of 2012



CHAPTER ONE

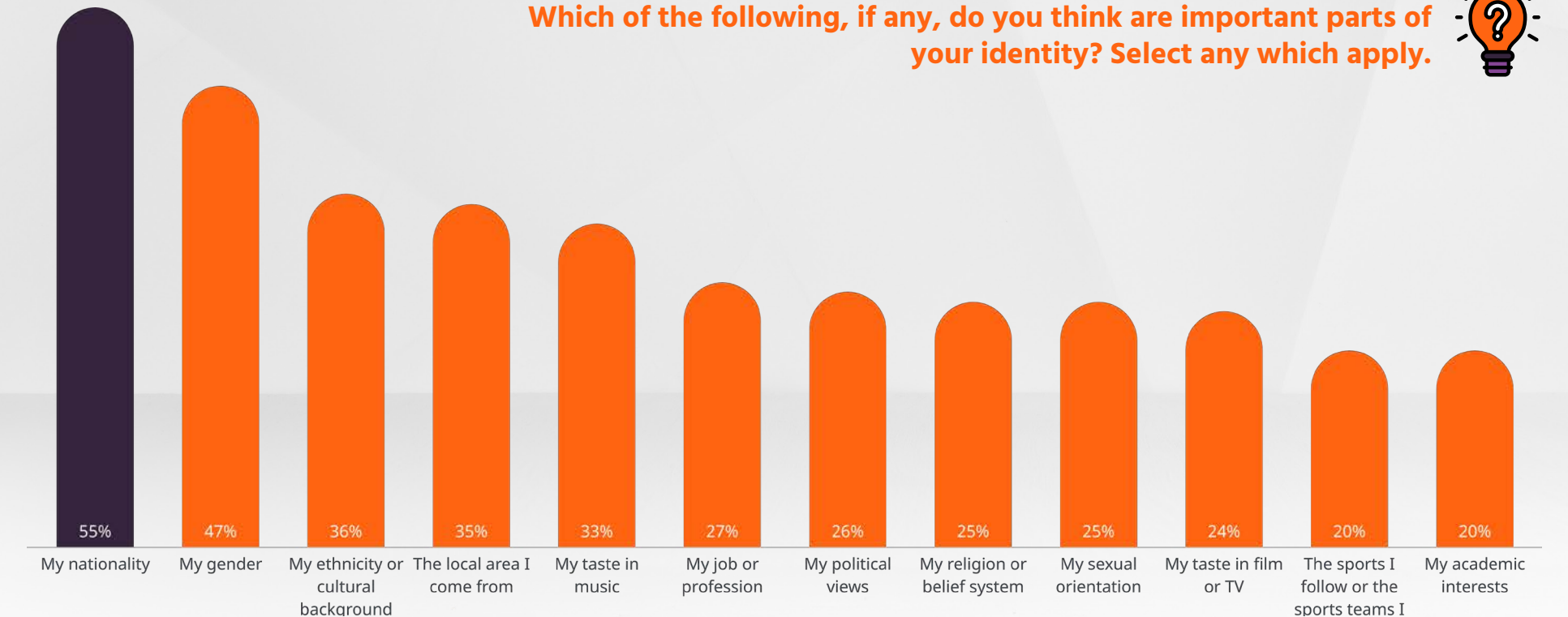
NATIONAL PRIDE

NATIONALITY IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF INDIVIDUAL IDENTITIES.

53% of UK adults believe national pride is mostly about **who we are as a nation – our culture and shared values.**

In fact, nationality was the most widely cited factor, ahead of gender (47%), ethnic and cultural background (36%), and local area (35%). This emphasis on nationality was consistent across the population, ranking as the top response across all age groups, social classes, regions, nations, and ethnicities.

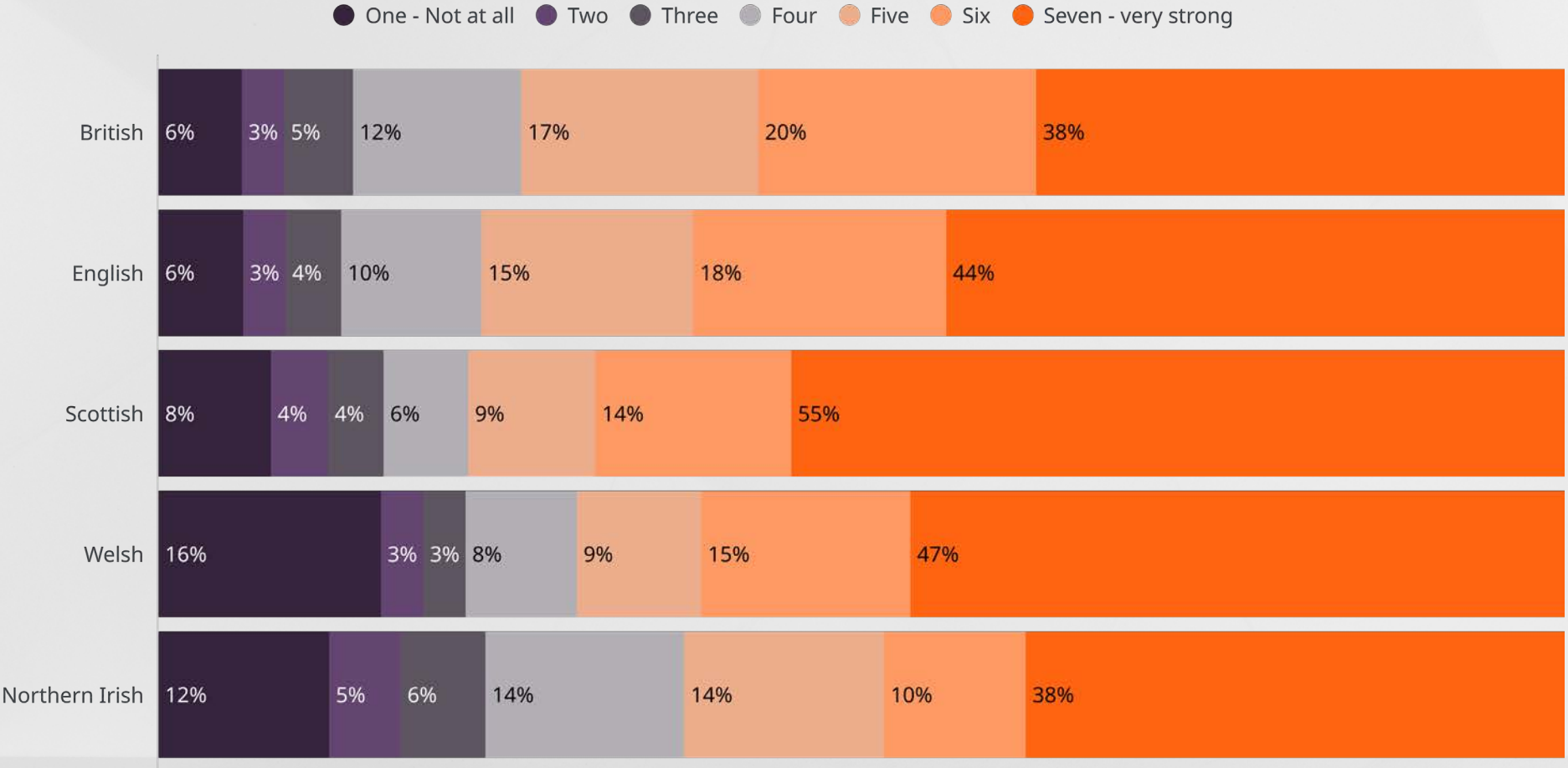
Which of the following, if any, do you think are important parts of your identity? Select any which apply.



While people do identify as British, other national identities tend to be more strongly felt.



How strongly do you identify with the following identities on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 is not at all and 7 is very strong?



Although all nationality is the most important aspect across all age cohorts, older people were more likely on average to cite it as important than younger people:

44%

of 18-24 year olds said that their **nationality was an important part of their identity.**

68%

of 65+ year olds said that their **nationality was an important part of their identity.**

36%

of 18-24 year olds felt **very strongly British.**

48%

of 65+ year olds said that they felt **very strongly British.**

Similarly, older people are more likely to identify very strongly with other national identities. 36% of 18-24 year olds felt very strongly British, compared to 48% of 65+ year olds, 25% of 18-24 year olds felt very strongly Welsh, compared to 57% of 65+ year olds. Notably, this is less true in Scotland, where identity is felt broadly equally across age groups (56% vs 59%).

National identities are then more strongly felt than local or regional ones. Only 19% of UK adults very strongly identified as being from their region of the UK, and only 17% as being from their village, town or city.

THE PUBLIC ARE PROUD TO LIVE IN THE UK.

77% of UK adults said that they were **proud to live in the UK**.

Whilst the majority of people felt proud of living in the UK across all demographics, the level of that agreement varied across:

- **Nations and regions:** England and Wales both recorded identical levels at 78%, while Scotland showed lower levels at 69% and Northern Ireland had the lowest at 64%. Within England, London stood out with the highest regional pride at 83%, suggesting that both national identity and geographic location significantly influence attitudes toward living in the UK.
- **Age groups:** While older people (65+) expressed the highest levels of pride at 85%, younger people (those aged 18-24) are still proud to live in the UK, and their responses matched the national average at 77%.
- **Ethnicities:** People from ethnic minority backgrounds demonstrated higher levels of national pride than their white counterparts, with 84% expressing pride in living in the UK compared to 76% of white people. This pattern extended to immigration status, where first generation immigrants showed particularly strong feelings of national pride at 81%, exceeding the UK average.



**PEOPLE FROM
ETHNIC MINORITY
BACKGROUNDS
DEMONSTRATED
HIGHER LEVELS OF
NATIONAL PRIDE
THAN THEIR WHITE
COUNTERPARTS.**

People express this pride in a wide variety of ways:

79%

of UK adults have taken part in a **nationwide moment of silence or national day of mourning**.

79%

of UK adults have **donated to a national charity**.

70%

of UK adults have **worn something with a UK-wide national symbol**.

64%

of parents in the UK say their children have **participated in a national celebration through their school**.

63%

of UK adults have **sung the national anthem at a public event**.

59%

of UK adults have **celebrated a sports victory with others**.

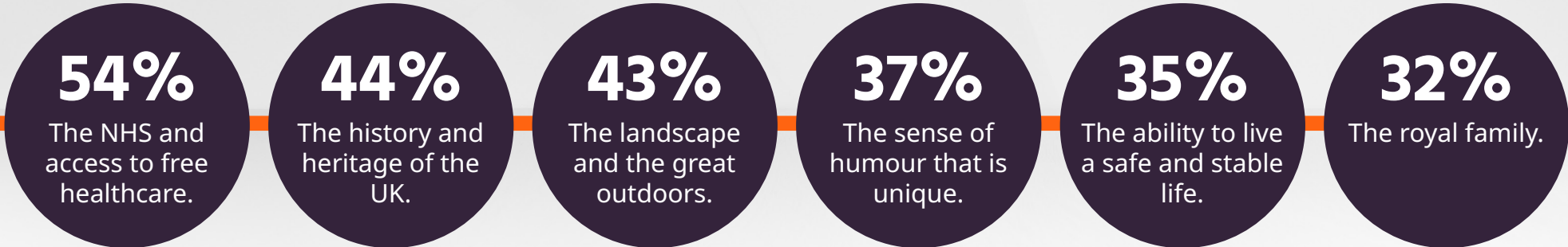
PRIDE IS ROOTED IN SHARED NATIONAL VALUES.

National pride is rooted in a feeling of community. Half of adults attach their national pride to the nation’s collective values, compared to a third that take pride in notable achievements. This implies that people will experience pride if a moment or event amplifies the values we uphold as a society in some way.



The sources of pride in the UK are wide and varied. When asked specifically what makes them proud to live in the UK today, respondents were split. While most cited the NHS there were a range of views on other parts of UK life that activate Pride – however most of the top responses are reflections of either the UK’s values (eg: free access to healthcare), traditions (our history and heritage) or our culture (sense of humour).

Which of the following, if any, makes you feel proud to live in the UK today? (Select all that apply)¹



¹ Top 6 most common responses from a list of 22, for the full results please see our complete polling tables

“I’m not fully British, I came here in the last five years. I would say being British actually means adaptability and also diversity to me, the ability to coexist with other people from different cultures.”

Woman, 28, HR Manager, London

“I am proud of being British. We’ve got great artists, great filmmakers, and great sports. I don’t think you’re truly British unless you follow at least one football team. I know it’s debated but I think we’ve got great food and cultural icons like James Bond and Doctor Who.”

Man, 21, Student, North West

“I come originally from Burma or Myanmar, to me British way of life, and being British, is about actually getting a fair chance at life to make it and so to me, Britishness is sort of having a fair shot and living in a fair society, not being oppressed.”

Man, 60, IT Director, East Midlands





CHAPTER TWO

EVENTS AND PRIDE

Events play a powerful role in shaping national pride across the UK. Whether they are commemorating national moments, showcasing cultural achievements, or uniting diverse communities, events stand out as a uniquely resonant source of pride – felt across generations, regions, and identities. In an era where common ground can feel increasingly scarce, their power to connect, inspire, and project the UK's strengths to the world is more vital than ever.

THE PUBLIC ARE PROUD TO LIVE IN THE UK.

64% of UK adults said that **events hosted in the UK made them proud to live in the UK.**

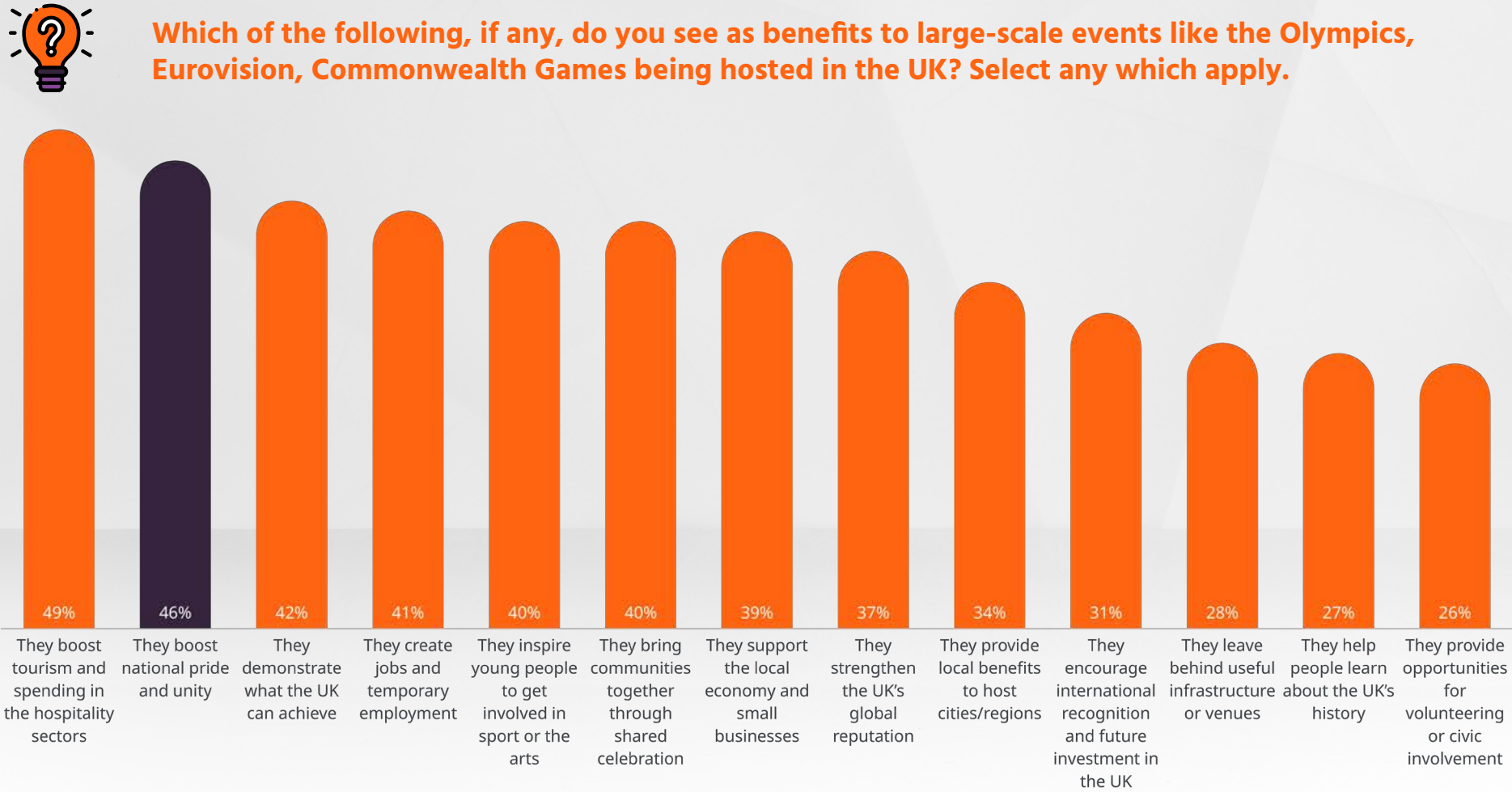
28% of UK adults said that **UK-hosted major events were one of the UK's top three proudest achievements.**

Support for events as a source of national pride is remarkably widespread across the UK. People of all ages, social grades, and ethnic backgrounds broadly agreed that events made them proud to live in the UK. Notably, 18–24 year-olds – who generally express lower levels of national pride than older generations – were among the most likely to say events made them feel proud.



However, this effect varied by region and national identity. Those who identified as strongly English were significantly more likely to agree (73%) than those identifying as strongly Scottish (55%) or Welsh (63%). Even within England, regional differences emerged: Londoners reported the highest levels of pride from events (71%), while residents of the East Midlands reported the lowest (62%).

When asked what the benefits of hosting major events were, boosting national pride was the second most common response. Notably, just 6% of UK adults couldn't see any benefits to hosting large-scale events in the UK.



Events generate this sense of national pride through three distinct but interconnected pathways:

- They celebrate British culture and values.
- They unite communities across regional and social divisions.
- They showcase the UK's capabilities to international audiences.



NOTABLY, JUST 6% OF UK ADULTS COULDN'T SEE ANY BENEFITS TO HOSTING LARGE-SCALE EVENTS IN THE UK.

EVENTS CELEBRATE OUR CULTURE AND VALUES.

Events that reflect our national identity, through representing and celebrating our values and culture, are especially powerful in fostering collective pride. Their impact is greatest when they evoke personal meaning or honour acts of service and sacrifice, demonstrating who we are as a nation.

84%

of UK adults enjoy events more when they are **personally meaningful to them.**

75%

of UK adults enjoy events more when they **honour the service or sacrifice of others.**

42%

of UK adults say that hosting large scale events make us proud to live in the UK because **they celebrate what it means to be British today.**

79%

of UK adults enjoy events more when they **help and support good causes or charities.**

BRITISH PEOPLE TAKE PARTICULAR SATISFACTION
IN SEEING THE UK'S INFRASTRUCTURE, CULTURAL
ACHIEVEMENTS, AND ORGANISATIONAL
STRENGTHS RECOGNISED ABROAD.



EVENTS SHOW BRITAIN AT ITS BEST TO THE REST OF THE WORLD.

Events foster national pride by showcasing Britain's strengths on the world stage – enhancing its international reputation and demonstrating its capabilities to global audiences. People tend to enjoy events more if they feel that they demonstrate the UK in a positive light to international onlookers.

69%

of UK adults say that hosting events **improves the global reputation of the UK.**

British people take particular satisfaction in seeing the UK's infrastructure, cultural achievements, and organisational strengths recognised abroad.

38%

of UK adults say that hosting large scale events make us proud to live in the UK because **they show off the UK's cities, venues, or infrastructure.**

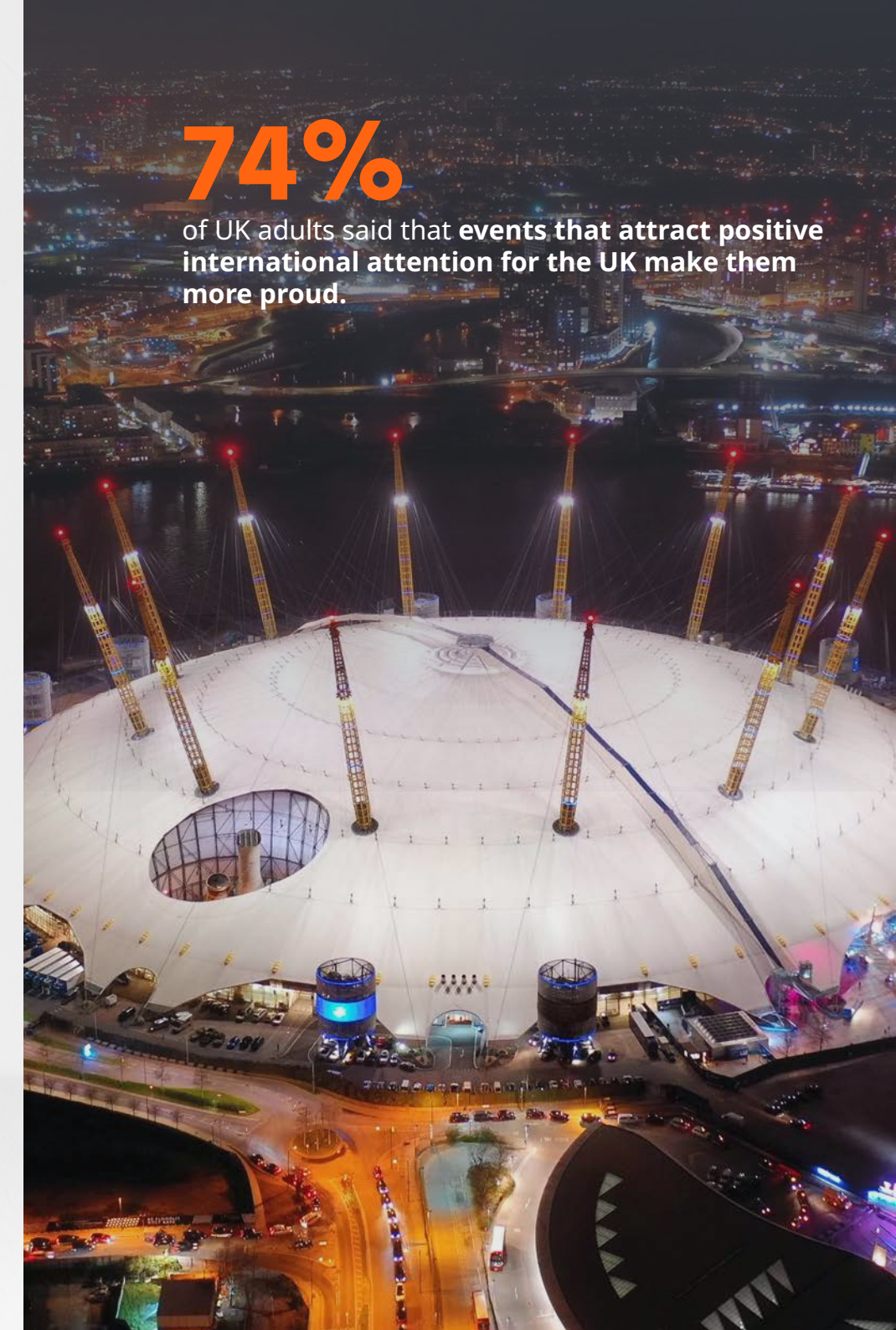
Indeed, events are more likely to generate national pride, if they attract positive international attention – in fact this was more likely to trigger additional pride than any other factor we tested.

65%

of UK adults enjoy events more if they're **watched or followed around the world.**

37%

of UK adults say that hosting large scale events make us proud to live in the UK because **they reflect the UK's contribution to global culture.**



74%

of UK adults said that **events that attract positive international attention for the UK make them more proud.**

"I think so when it comes to the Olympics, not to say the sports aren't important, because, you know, that is what the Olympics are all about. But I think the opening ceremony is really a chance for the host country to sort of show off their culture and their history, and not to sound narcissistic, but I think we did it the best."

Man, 21, Student, North West

"The events we put on, generally, are of such a high standard that the world can look on and be envious of them. We have one of the best music festivals at Glastonbury. We have probably the world's best royal events, military events, Edinburgh Tattoo, that kind of thing. We have some of the best concert halls in the world. We have some of the finest sporting events."

Man, 71, Lawyer, North West

EVENTS HAVE THE POWER TO UNITE THE COUNTRY.

Events help bridge social divides by creating shared experiences that connect otherwise disconnected communities.

56%

of UK adults who have engaged with a UK-hosted event have **talked about it with their friends, families or colleagues.**

23%

of UK adults who have engaged with a UK-hosted event have **met or talked with someone they didn't know previously** in connection to it.

82%

of UK adults enjoy events more when they **bring people across the country together.**

54%

of UK adults say that UK hosted events **make them feel more connected to others.**

The collective experience of events highlights Britain's ability to achieve great things when united behind a common purpose. This sense of national capability fosters pride and reinforces the belief that the UK can accomplish remarkable feats when its diverse communities come together.

70%

of UK adults say that UK hosted events **remind them of what we can achieve together as a country.**

And that sense of being part of something bigger is a key reason for why events are able to drive pride in the UK.



52%

of UK adults say that hosting large scale events **make us proud to live in the UK because they allow them to feel part of something bigger.**



"The royal weddings, [make me proud to live in the UK]. So you see people coming together for street parties and also waving flags or just celebrating the moment. And that gives a sense of tradition and continuity."

Woman, 28, HR Manager, London



"Events bring us together, when England are playing, for example, you can have people who have never watched football in their life, but they're still there with everyone together, chatting, laughing, joking, you know, and all that kind of stuff."

Man, 24, Insurance Broker, East of England

THE 2012 LONDON OLYMPIC GAMES: A LASTING SOURCE OF PRIDE

The London 2012 Olympics represented the largest sporting event in British history, requiring an unprecedented investment of approximately £9.3 billion from public funds. The scale of public engagement was extraordinary, with 85% of schools across the UK involved in Olympic education programmes² and 400,000 Londoners participating in grassroots sport through the Mayor's Sport Legacy programme.³

The Games achieved unprecedented global reach and domestic participation. The opening ceremony attracted 900 million viewers worldwide, while 88% of Britain's population watched some part of the Games.⁴ In the US alone, 217 million Americans watched the games, making it the most-watched television event in US history at the time.⁵

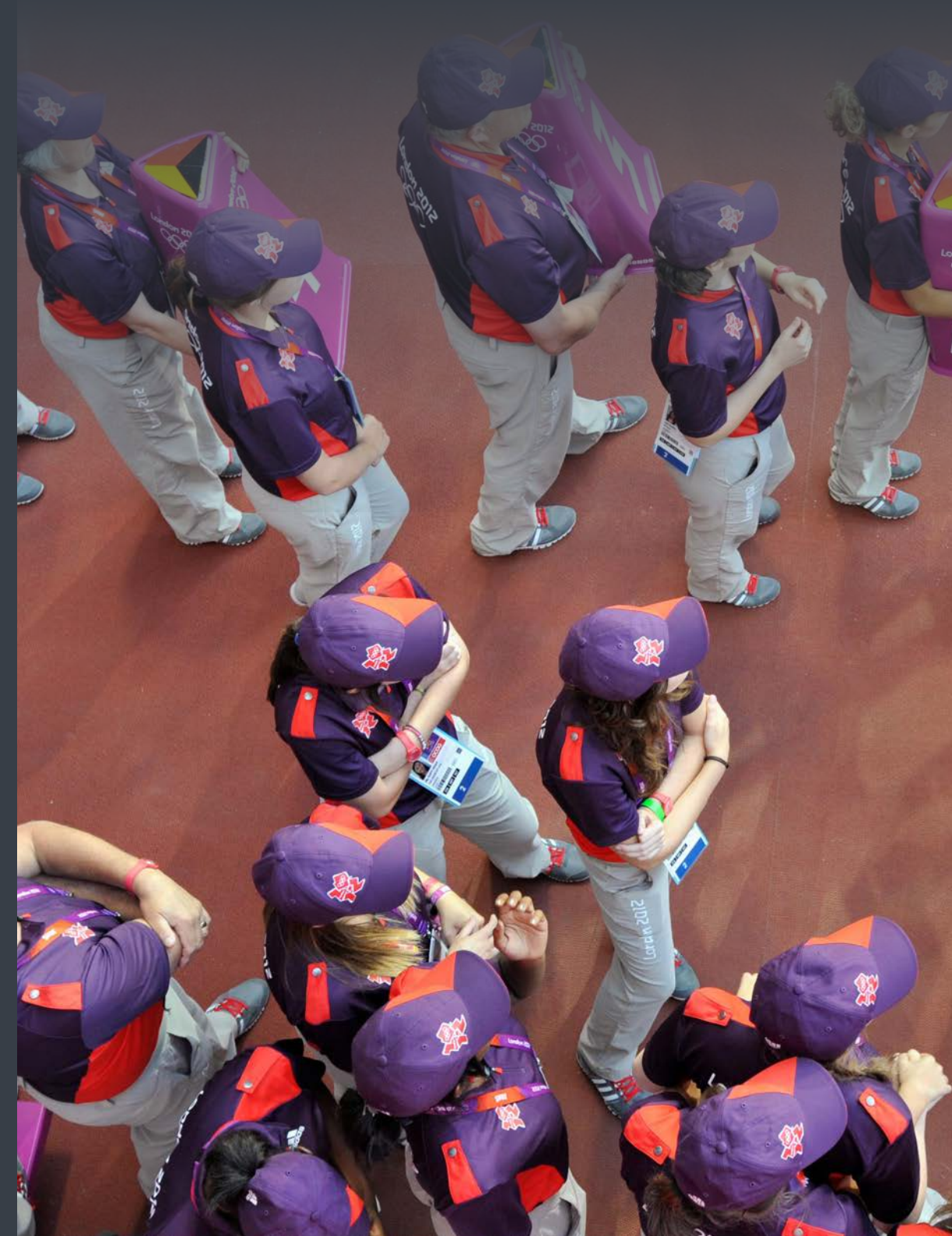
More than a decade later, London 2012 remains a defining moment in British national consciousness and a source of enduring pride. When asked which events had left **a lasting impact on the country as a whole, 45% cited the 2012 Games**, second only to the funeral of Queen Elizabeth II.

² <https://www.olympics.com/ioc/news/london-2012-a-spectacular-show-of-equality-growth-and-innovation>

³ <https://www.olympics.com/ioc/news/london-2012-engaging-inspiring-and-transforming>

⁴ <https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-oly-ratings-day11-idUKBRE8760V820120807/>

⁵ <https://www.nbcsports.com/pressbox/olympics/press-releases/ondon-olympics-on-nbc-is-most-watched-television-event-in-u-s-history>



"The 2012 Olympics were a huge buzz. I remember, because the torch went through my town area, so I went to see it. It was huge at the time. I remember it was very inclusive, the athletes were from all different backgrounds, and we had the Paralympics."

Man, 29, Admin Assistant, East of England

"I was one of the games makers who were admitting visitors. I was very busy. I was actually in the Olympic Park - I was so proud to be a part of it. It brings together so many things that are British. There was a great community spirit - people working with each other. and the new stadium we built, it was just unbelievable - and all the tourists I saw who came to watch really enjoyed it, they had a ball"

Woman, 60, Retired, London

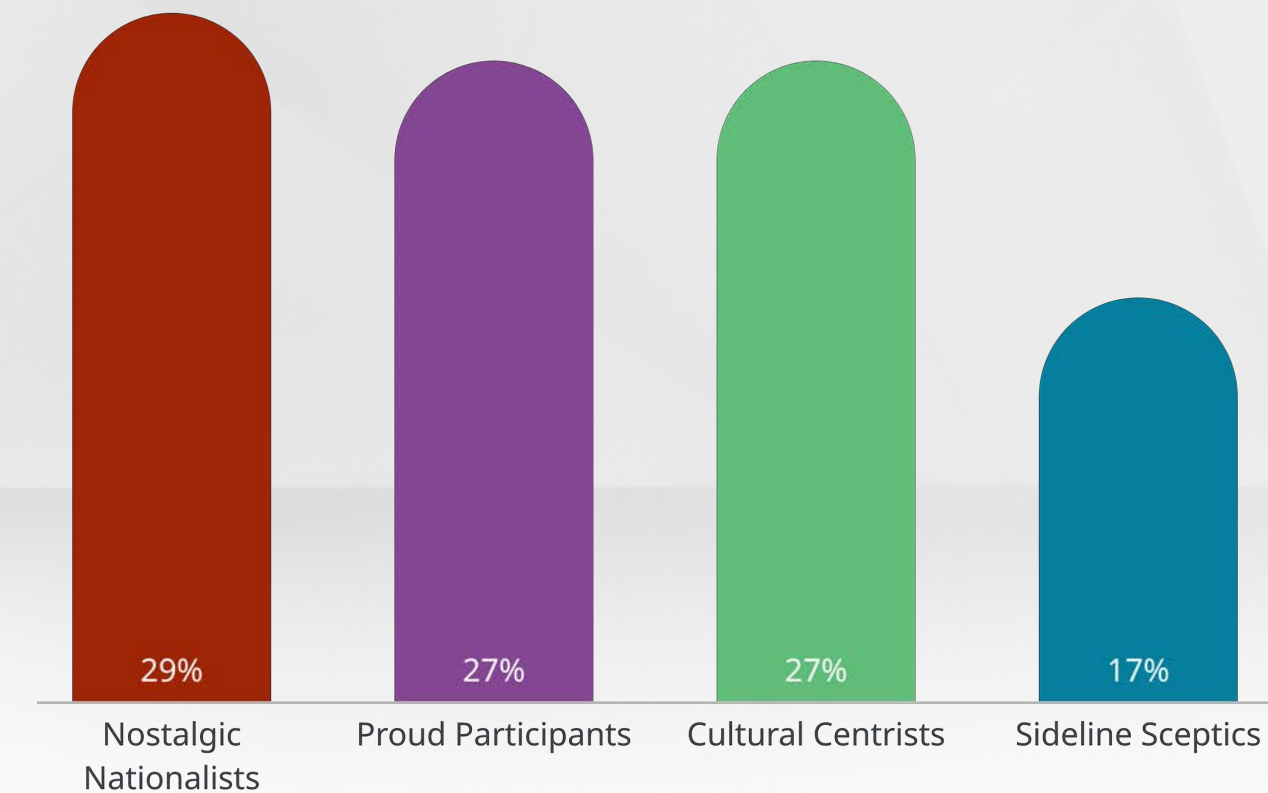


THE DIFFERENT EXPRESSIONS OF PRIDE

CHAPTER THREE

National pride is not a single, uniform sentiment. It reflects a spectrum of attitudes shaped by people's diverse experiences and beliefs about what their country represents – who will then act on their pride in different ways.

To deepen our understanding of public expressions of national pride, we therefore conducted a segmentation analysis of adults in the UK. This approach allowed us to move beyond standard demographic categories and instead group individuals according to their underlying attitudes and experiences. Using data from our nationally representative poll, we grouped respondents based on the similarity of their answers to a range of key questions. This process enabled us to build a typology of public identity – highlighting the varied ways in which people relate to Britishness and engage with public life.



NOSTALGIC NATIONALISTS

Proud of the past, drawn to tradition and ceremony.

The Nostalgic Nationalists are deeply rooted in patriotic sentiment and a strong sense of continuity with Britain’s past. For this group, national pride is built on remembrance, solemnity, and traditional values. Their engagement with public life revolves around institutions, commemorations, and symbols of heritage – not around modern or multicultural celebrations.

Demographically, Nostalgic Nationalists skew older, are more likely to live in rural areas, and are more likely to support right-wing political parties.

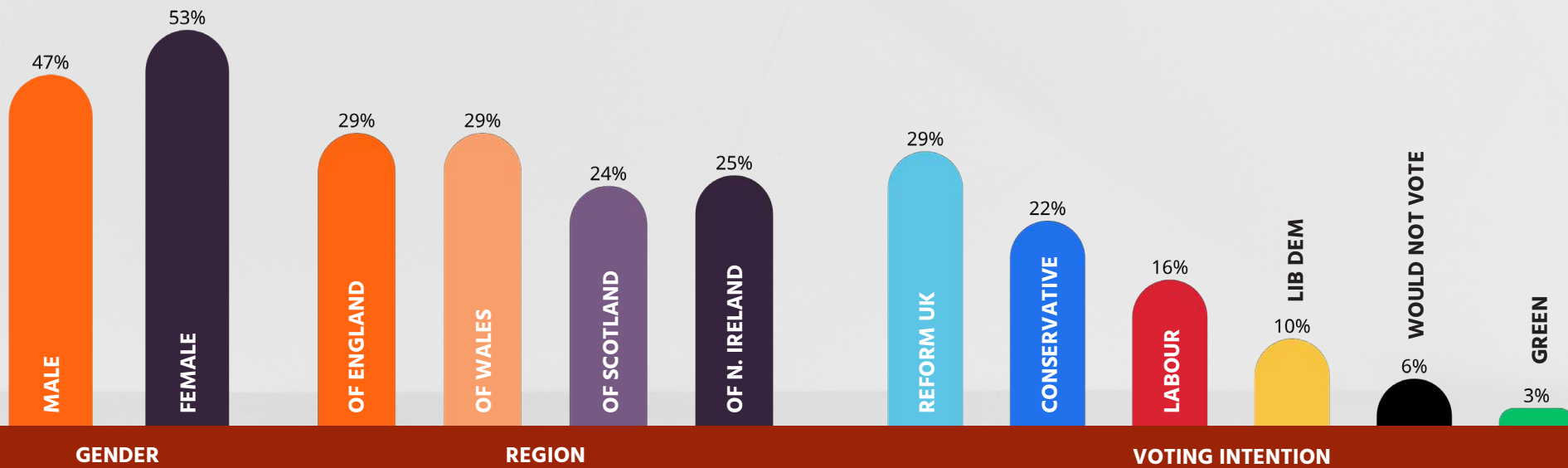
For this group, the most resonant national moments are those tied to sacrifice, service, and state. Events such as the

Queen’s funeral, the D-Day and VE Day commemorations, and royal weddings top their list of events they remember.

This is reflected in their behaviours: while they are less likely to physically attend events (only 11% have attended an event in person), they are more likely than others to take part in moments of silence 80%, wear national symbols 73%, or sing the national anthem 68%.

They are drawn to national symbols that reflect our history and traditions, and are more likely to engage with events through these symbols rather than by attending or participating in in-person events themselves.

29% OF THE UK POPULATION
AGE: OLDEST SEGMENT (AVERAGE OF 59)



PROUD PARTICIPANTS

Joyful, optimistic, and eager to join in.

The Proud Participants are the most engaged and enthusiastic group when it comes to national events. Their pride in Britain is rooted not in the past, but in the present – expressed through participation, shared experiences, and a belief in progress. For them, national pride means showing up, joining in, and celebrating what brings people together.

They are typically younger than the national average, more likely to live in cities, more ethnically diverse, and more likely to vote Labour than other groups.

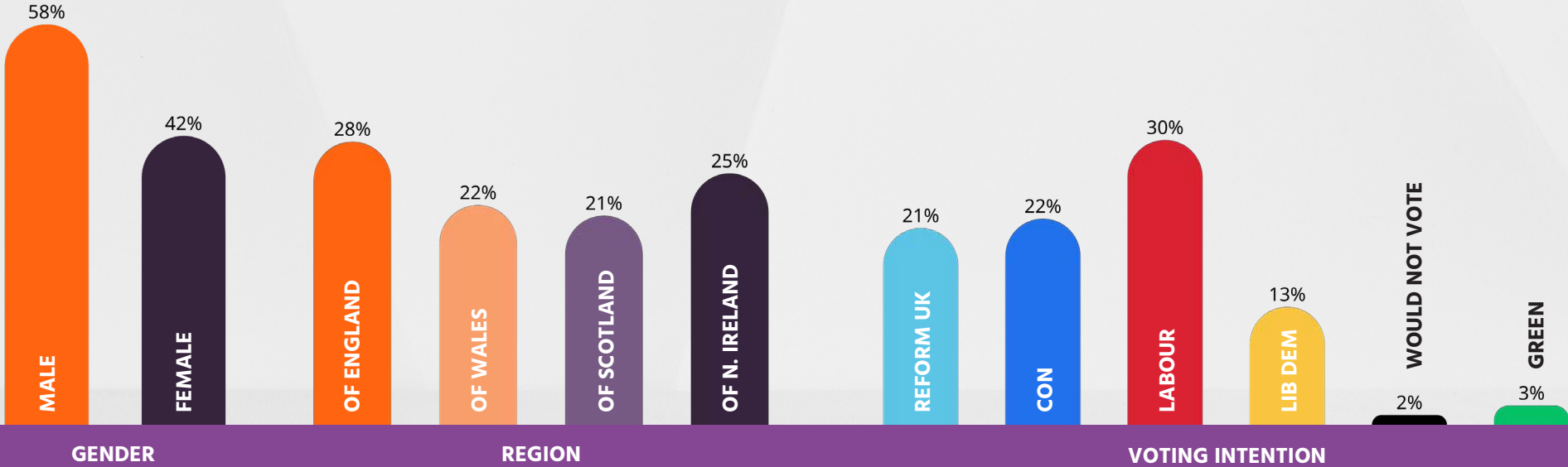
Proud Participants hold the highest levels of national pride across nearly every metric. Over half (53%) identify “very strongly” as British But this is not a pride rooted in heritage or nostalgia – instead, it’s active, inclusive, and future-oriented –

driven by a belief in the UK’s potential to unite diverse people through shared moments of joy and meaning.

This group takes part in almost every kind of event – from watching on TV to singing the national anthem or attending in person. Over 80% say they’ve sung the anthem, worn national colours, or defended the UK in conversation. Nearly half have worn face paint for an event, and three-quarters have joined a street party. For them, participation is a form of pride – inclusive, upbeat, and unifying.

This is a segment that embraces national moments with enthusiasm, especially when they feel joyful, inclusive, and open to everyone.

27% OF THE UK POPULATION
AGE: YOUNGEST SEGMENT (AVERAGE AGE OF 39)



CULTURAL CENTRISTS

Connected through culture, not ceremony.

Cultural Centrists are moderately patriotic but highly engaged in modern, creative expressions of national life. Their sense of pride comes less from tradition and more from culture – especially music, sport, and inclusive celebrations that feel contemporary and accessible. They are typically younger than the national average, highly educated, and more likely to live in diverse, urban areas.

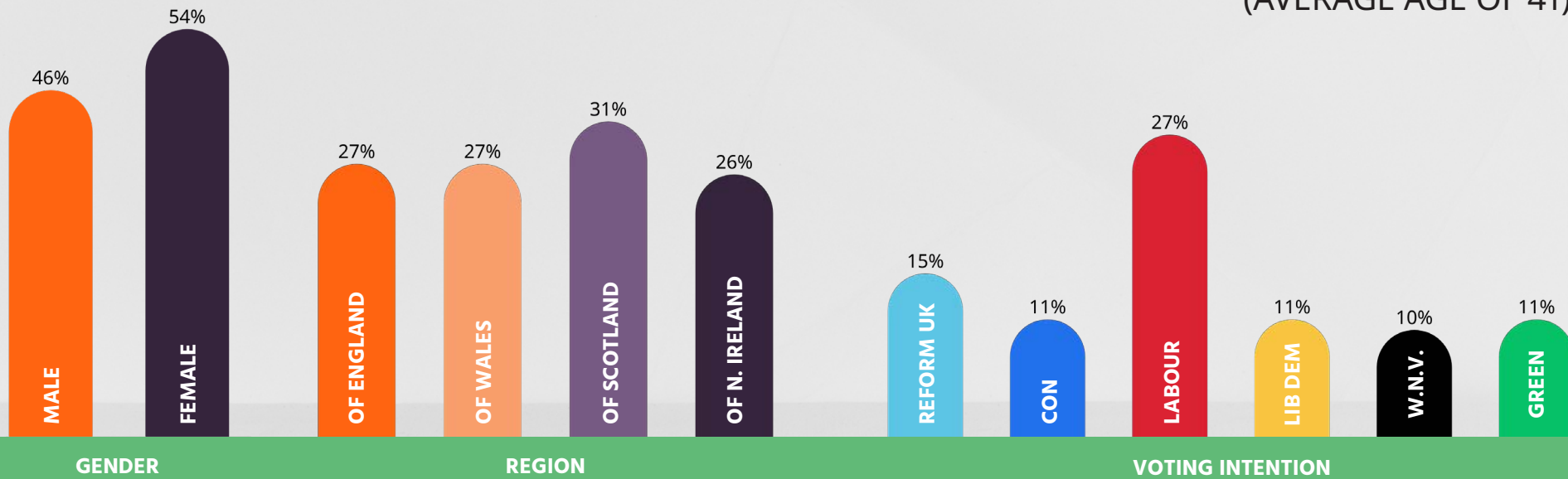
Cultural Centrists express a more measured form of national pride. Only 24% feel very strongly British, and their pride is closely tied to culture rather than institutions. They are most proud of sport (53%), music (51%), and cultural festivals (42%), reflecting a connection to modern, everyday expressions of

Britishness. Traditional events like royal (30%) and military (27%) occasions hold less personal meaning.

Their preferences show up clearly in their event engagement: this group is the most likely to stream events online (22%), follow them via social media (19%), or actively seek out tickets (24% – the highest of any segment). They’re also highly likely to wear national symbols or donate to national causes, but are less inclined toward formal ceremonies.

In short, this is a segment that does take part, but prefers forms of engagement that feel dynamic, creative, and personal rather than formal or institutionally led.

27% OF THE UK POPULATION
AGE: YOUNGER THAN NATIONAL AVERAGE
(AVERAGE AGE OF 41)



SIDELINE SCEPTICS

Disengaged, disillusioned, and hard to reach.

Sideline Sceptics feel the least pride in the UK and are the most disconnected from national identity and public life. They don't see national events as something for them – often viewing them as superficial or irrelevant to their everyday concerns.

They span all ages but a higher proportion of this group live in the devolved nations. They are the most politically disengaged group – with the highest share of people who wouldn't vote at all, and higher than average levels of support for less traditional parties like the Greens and Reform UK.

Sideline Sceptics are the least likely to feel a sense of belonging to the UK, the least likely to describe themselves as British, and the most likely to say they are not proud to live in the country (64%). This is not apathy: it is disconnection. They feel excluded from what the country stands for today and increasingly see national events as symbolic of a system that doesn't include

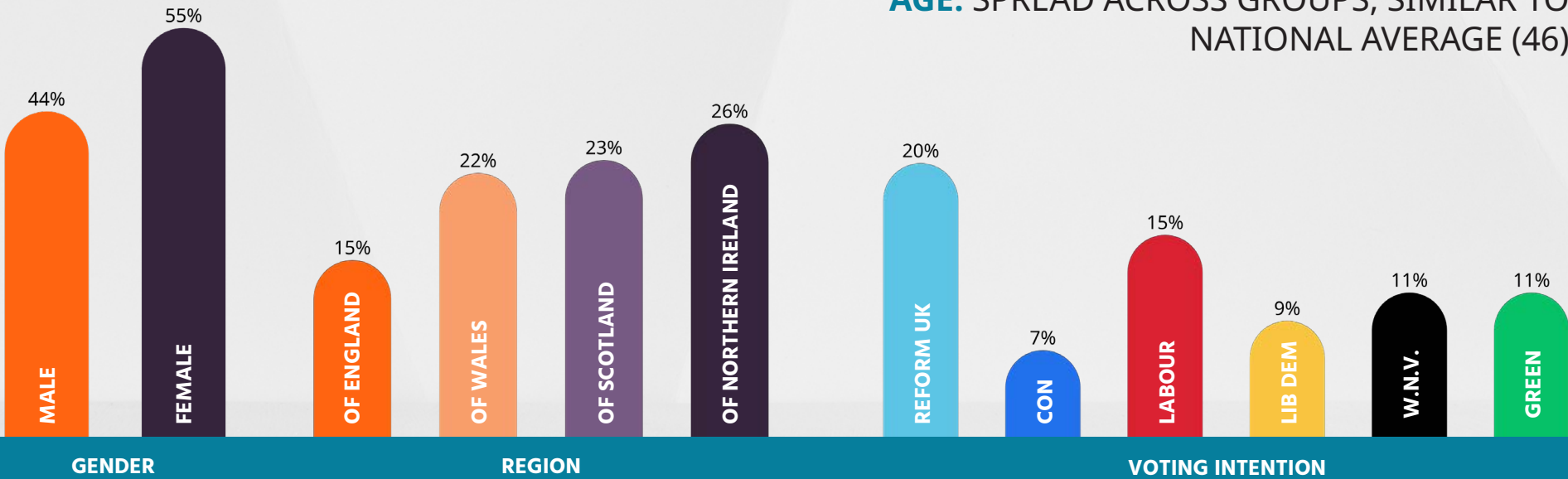
them.

Even the cultural pillars that other groups draw pride from – science, history, music, or major events – fail to resonate strongly here. One in ten say none of these make them proud. Nearly half aren't even proud of their own local area.

Unsurprisingly, this is the group least likely to have ever engaged with a national event. Just 8% have attended one in person, and over a third (36%) say they've never taken part in any way – compared to just 13% nationally.

While some may tune in on TV or show mild interest if the topic appeals, their participation is typically conditional and reactive, not proactive.

17% OF THE UK POPULATION
AGE: SPREAD ACROSS GROUPS, SIMILAR TO
NATIONAL AVERAGE (46)



CHAPTER FOUR

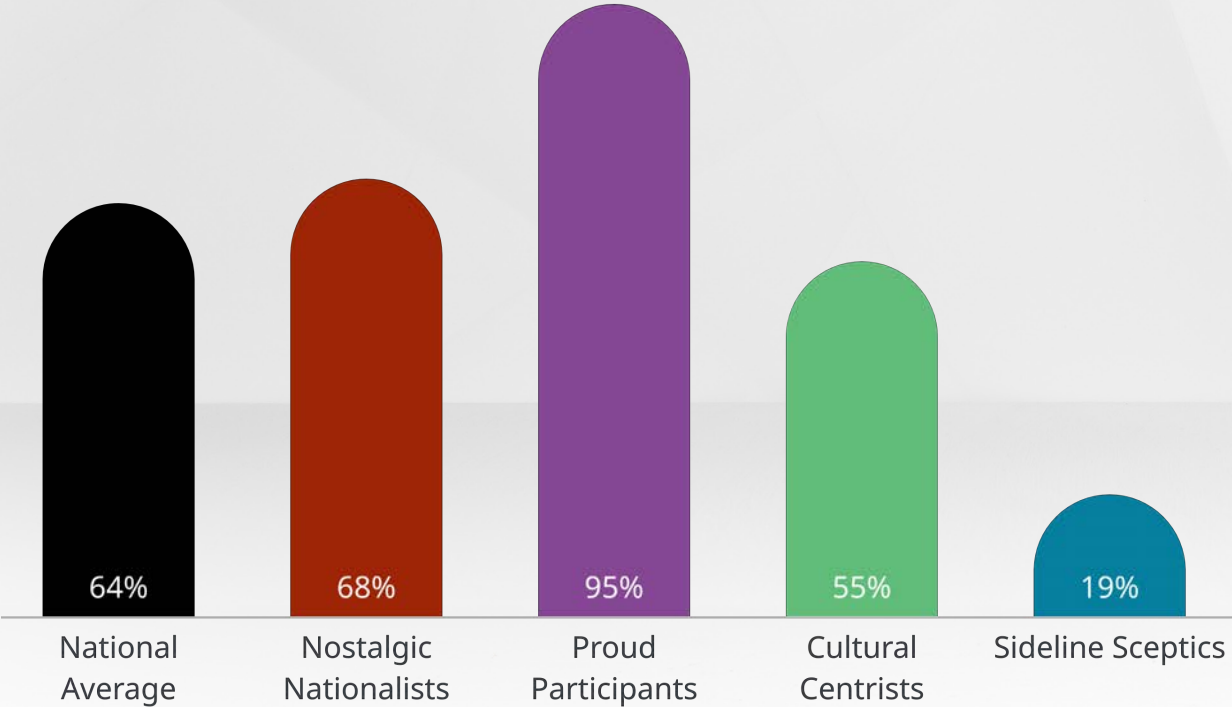
DIFFERENT EVENTS
SPEAK TO DIFFERENT
PEOPLE

Our segmentation demonstrates how the same event can land very differently depending on who you are. For some, a royal wedding is a stirring symbol of British tradition; for others, it's a reminder of institutions that feel out of touch. A street party might feel joyful and inclusive to one person – and exclusive or unfamiliar to another.

Understanding this variation is critical to understanding the different features of events that maximise national pride.



Thinking about major national events hosted in the UK like the 2012 Olympics, the Platinum Jubilee, Eurovision 2023, Edinburgh Festival or Glastonbury, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? These events make me feel proud of living in the UK.

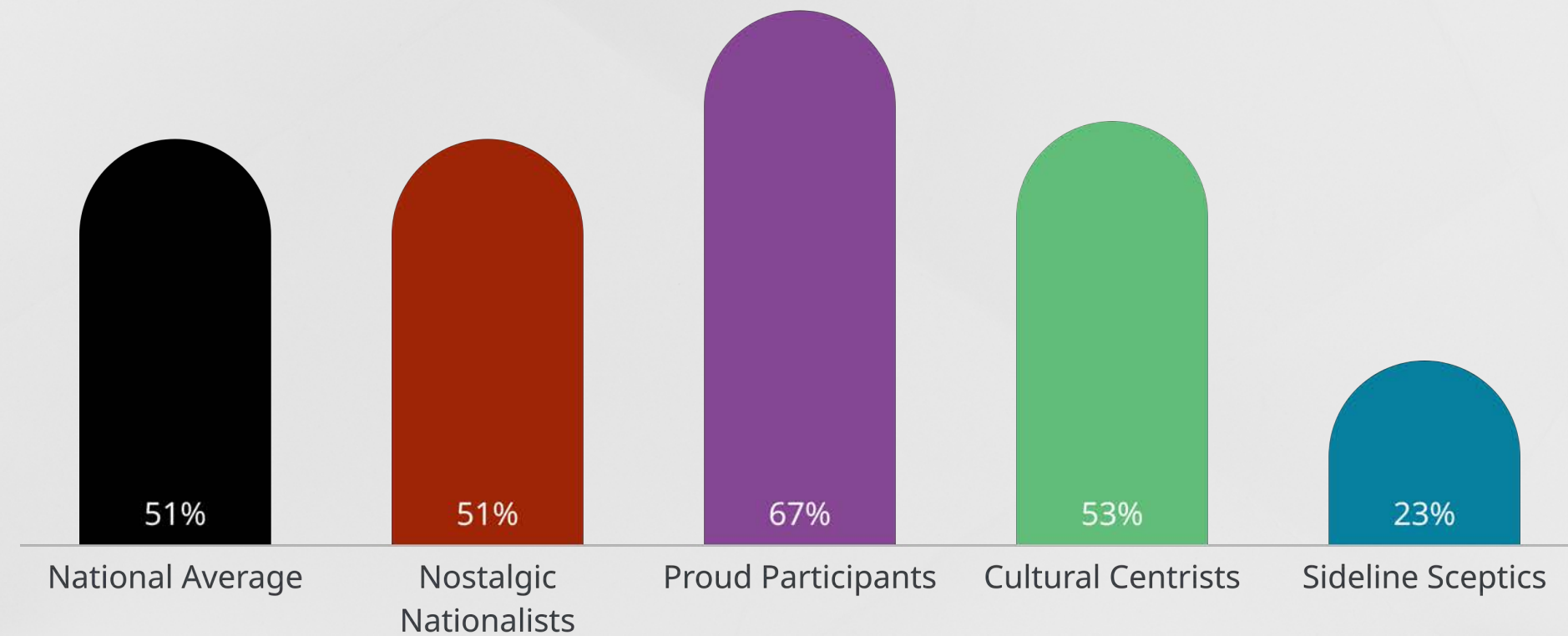


THE MAJORITY OF THE PUBLIC TAKE PRIDE IN MAJOR SPORTING EVENTS.

Of all event types tested, sporting events like the FA Cup Final, Commonwealth Games or the Euros had the broadest appeal. They are one of the few categories that cut across generational, cultural and political lines – with most segments finding something to enjoy. But while the headline levels of engagement are high, the reasons for participation vary significantly between groups.



Which of the following types of UK-hosted events, if any, make you feel proud to live in the UK? Select all that apply: Major Sporting Events (e.g. FA Cup Final, Wimbledon or the Commonwealth Games)



PROUD PARTICIPANTS

are the most actively engaged.

- **91%** say they enjoy major sporting events – by far the highest across segments – and **67%** say they make them feel proud to live in the UK.
- These events are opportunities to come together and celebrate national achievement.
- This group shows high levels of both symbolic and practical engagement: **80%** have celebrated a sports victory with others, **89%** have donated to a related national cause, and **63%** have attended a public screening or fan zone.

NOSTALGIC NATIONALISTS

also express strong support.

- **65%** say they enjoy sporting events, and **51%** say they're a source of pride.
- But their engagement is shaped by a preference for historic or institutionally significant events (such as the Olympics), rather than new or globalised competitions.

CULTURAL CENTRISTS

are also broadly supportive, though for different reasons.

- **71%** say they enjoy sporting events, and **53%** say they make them feel proud.
- For this group, sport offers an inclusive, modern form of shared identity – distinct from more traditional state occasions.
- They are more likely to attend in person than for other event types (with **24%** attempting to get tickets), and more than a third celebrate through online or social media channels.
- National pride here is tied less to heritage, and more to energy, creativity and global relevance.

SIDELINE SCEPTICS

are somewhat more positive about sport than other event types.

- **41%** say they enjoy sporting events — higher than for royal (**20%**), commemorative (**36%**) or military occasions (**23%**) — and **23%** say they make them feel proud to live in the UK.
- Celebrating a sporting victory with others is one of the few actions where this group approaches the national average (with **39%** saying they've done so in the last year), suggesting that sport can offer a rare moment of communal connection even for those otherwise sceptical of national institutions.

Of all event types tested, sporting events like the FA Cup Final, Commonwealth Games or the Euros had the broadest appeal. They are one of the few categories that cut across generational, cultural and political lines – with most segments finding something to enjoy. But while the headline levels of engagement are high, the reasons for participation vary significantly between groups.

“When Jude Bellingham got us into the quarter final, I just remember the absolute joy and unity in that one moment, even people that don’t care about football - never cared about football. We were just so happy and elated when that happened. I don’t think I felt more proud of England and more proud to be British than ever at that moment.”

Man, 21, Student, North West

“When Andy Murray won Wimbledon twice I think we were all very proud of him as a British people and that was definitely a very proud sporting moment, I think sporting events create a very uplifting sense of pride, they are real British moments.”

Woman, 60, Retired, London

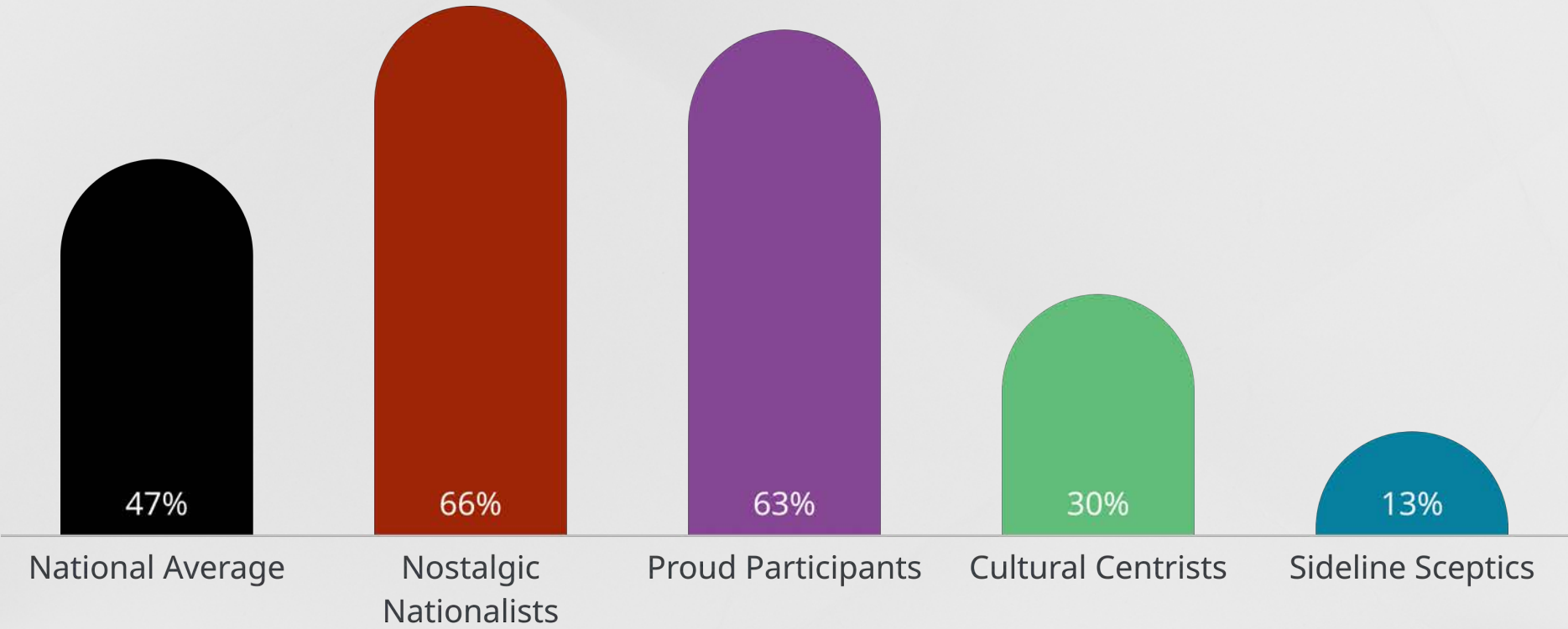
**SPORTING EVENTS ARE A RARE UNIFIER -
MOMENTS THAT APPEAL ACROSS POLITICAL,
CULTURAL AND GENERATIONAL LINES.**

ROYAL AND STATE OCCASIONS ALSO TRIGGER PRIDE, PARTICULARLY FOR OLDER GENERATIONS.

Royal and ceremonial events like the Coronation or Jubilee are seen by some as powerful expressions of national identity – and by others as exclusive, outdated or simply irrelevant. These moments are among the most polarising in our research. Attitudes vary sharply across segments, shaped by different values around tradition, belonging and how Britain should present itself.



Which of the following types of UK-hosted events, if any, make you feel proud to live in the UK? Select all that apply: Royal Events or state occasions (e.g. Coronation, Royal Weddings, Jubilee celebrations)



NOSTALGIC NATIONALISTS

are enthusiastic for these events, in a reflective and tradition-focused way.

- **76%** enjoy royal events and **66%** say they feel proud of them.
- Their pride is strongest around occasions that emphasise continuity and sacrifice: **73%** cite the Queen's funeral as a meaningful moment, and over half mention D-Day or VE Day as legacy events.
- However, their participation tends to be private – just **11%** attend events in person, with most preferring to watch from home.

PROUD PARTICIPANTS

are similarly enthusiastic, but are more keen to take part in the proceedings.

- **89%** say they enjoy royal events, and **63%** say these moments make them feel proud to live in the UK – well above the national average.
- These events are not just symbolic, but deeply personal: **84%** sing the anthem, **85%** wear national symbols, and **75%** have taken part in a local celebration.
- Their strong identification with Britishness and a desire to connect with national rituals makes them highly engaged both emotionally and practically.

CULTURAL CENTRISTS

are more ambivalent.

- **46%** say they like royal events, but only **30%** say they make them feel proud.
- This group is more likely to engage digitally than physically: **22%** stream online, and **19%** engage via social media.
- For them, royal occasions are more about shared experience than deep personal meaning as the monarchy doesn't strongly reflect their identity.

SIDELINE SCEPTICS

are actively disengaged.

- Just **20%** say they enjoy royal events – the lowest of any segment – and only **13%** say they make them feel proud to live in the UK.
- Only **9%** consider the royal family an important source of national pride.
- For many, these events feel performative or unnecessary: **32%** believe events prioritise image over real needs. Their views reflect a wider scepticism about institutions and public life.

Royal events still connect with a large part of the population, especially those who value tradition, heritage and shared national moments. But they are far from universal. The existence of the monarchy is a polarising topic in British life, and as such, it engenders very different reactions across the population. While some view royal occasions as celebrations of our history, that can bring people together (59%) others see them inaccessible (30%).

“The royal weddings, [make me proud to live in the UK]. So you see people coming together for street parties and also waving flags or just celebrating the moment. And that gives a sense of tradition and continuity.”

Woman, 28, HR Manager, London

“Things like funerals, Royal Family, they do nothing for me [...] other people maybe get something from flag waving, funerals, weddings. I’m sorry it does nothing for me.”

Man, 66, Teacher, Scotland



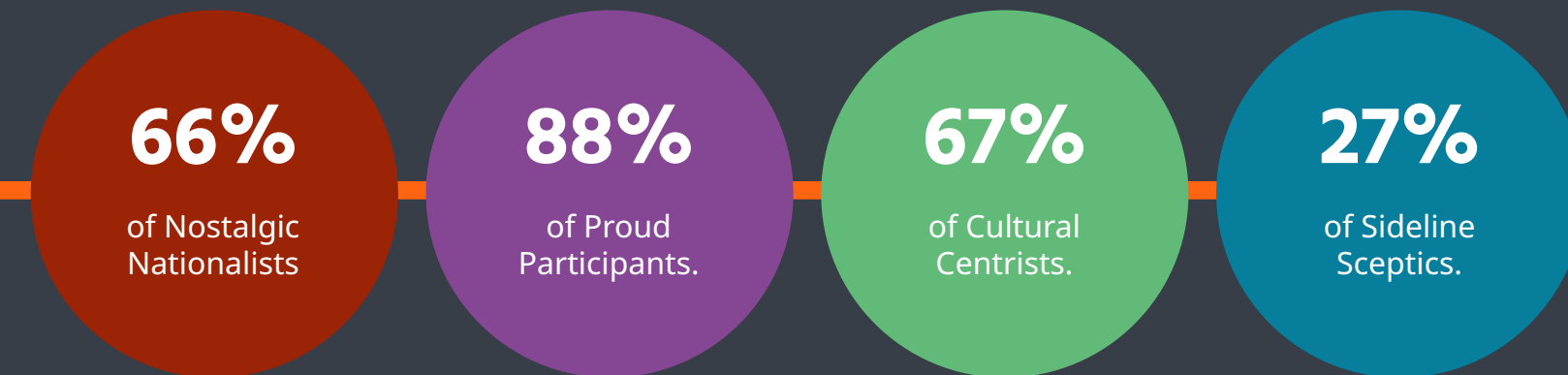
THE EXISTENCE OF THE MONARCHY IS A POLARISING TOPIC IN BRITISH LIFE, AND AS SUCH, IT ENGENDERS VERY DIFFERENT REACTIONS ACROSS THE POPULATION.

EVENTS THAT ARE FRAMED AS TRIUMPHANT ACHIEVEMENTS MAKE PEOPLE JOYFUL AND PROUD OF THE UK.

As part of our poll, we asked participants to watch a 30-second video of highlights from the 2012 Olympics' Super Saturday. This video framed national pride through the lens of success and excellence – Viewers saw Team GB athletes in moments of triumph: medals, celebrations, and crowds waving Union Jacks.

65% of UK adults said that **events like this make them feel proud to live in the UK.**

This frame triggered widespread pride Nostalgic Nationalists, Proud Participants and Cultural Centrists.



The video also evoked a sense of excitement and joy from respondents. Feedback featured frequent mentions of “proud,” “athletes,” “Olympics,” “British,” “excited,” and “memories,” revealing a collective emotional resonance with sporting excellence, national representation, and moments of success.



How did you feel while watching the video?

“I felt proud. Events like this definitely bring us together as a nation despite your race or background or if you were born here or somewhere else. That honestly made me smile so happy when moments like these happen.”

Woman, 25, West Midlands

“It brings me goosebumps and amazing memories as I was a volunteer at the Olympics and it was the best 2 months, it brings me so much pride.”

Woman, 40, Yorkshire and the Humber

“You could actually feel the pride, when Jessica Ennis and Mo Farrah and others actually won the gold. So it wasn’t just about sports, it felt more like a celebration of National spirits and also diversity and excellence.”

Woman, 28, HR Manager, London

“You see sunshine coming out of their faces, don’t you? Jessica Ennis and Mo Farah, the glow of success was upon them, and the love of the nation was there too.”

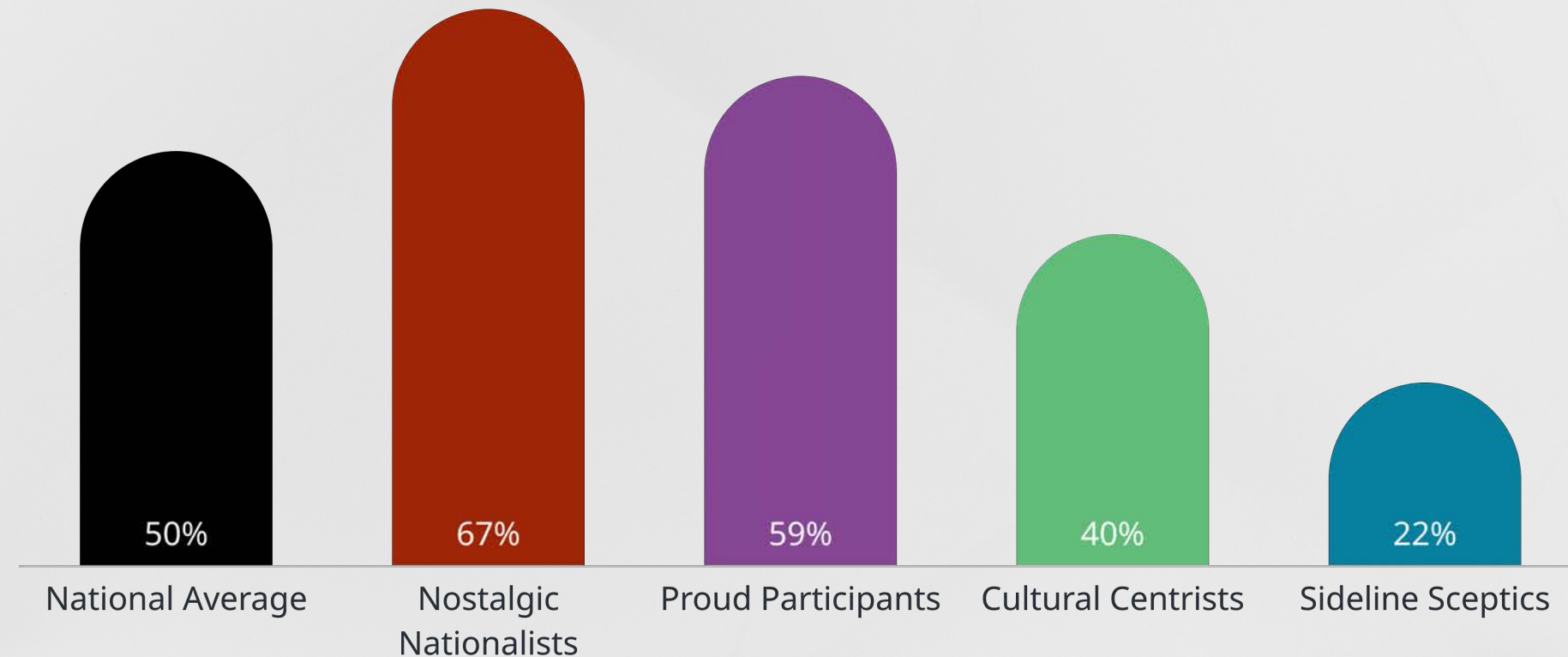
Man, 71, Lawyer, North West

HALF OF UK ADULTS FEEL PROUD OF MOMENTS THAT PAY TRIBUTE TO SACRIFICES MADE IN THE NATION'S PAST.

Commemorative events, such as Remembrance Sunday, D-Day anniversaries or Trooping the Colour, are deeply meaningful for some, evoking pride and reflection. But for others, they lack relevance or feel disconnected from contemporary life. Responses to these events mirror those towards royal occasions though are not identical.



Which of the following types of UK-hosted events, if any, make you feel proud to live in the UK? Select all that apply: Commemorative Events (e.g. Remembrance Sunday, VE Day anniversaries)



NOSTALGIC NATIONALISTS

are the strongest supporters of these events.

- **81%** say they enjoy commemorative occasions, and **67%** say they make them feel proud to live in the UK – the highest across all segments.
- Their pride is rooted in tradition, memory and sacrifice. Military and commemorative moments dominate the legacy events they recall most vividly: **73%** cite the Queen's funeral, **37%** D-Day, and **32%** VE Day.
- They are also the most likely to express pride in military events specifically, at **55%**.
- While they rarely attend in person (just **11%**), they consistently engage through national rituals like moments of silence or televised coverage.

PROUD PARTICIPANTS

also express strong support.

- **92%** enjoy commemorative events, and **59%** say they make them feel proud.
- Their approach is more participatory and inclusive – combining respect for tradition with a desire for civic unity. They are the most likely group to have volunteered at a national event (**64%**) or donated to a cause tied to military or health services (**89%**).
- While they may be less focused on military symbolism than Nostalgic Nationalists, they still see these events as a chance to connect across generations and reaffirm shared values.

CULTURAL CENTRISTS

are more mixed.

- **64%** say they enjoy commemorative events – a relatively high figure – but only **40%** say they make them feel proud to live in the UK.
- Their pride is more often tied to cultural or social expression than solemnity or sacrifice.
- Just **27%** express pride in military events, and **30%** in royal occasions.

SIDELINE SCEPTICS

remain largely disengaged.

- **36%** say they enjoy commemorative events – the lowest of any segment – and only **22%** say they make them feel proud.
- Just **16%** express pride in military occasions.
- Their connection to national memory is weaker overall. A third say no past event has made them feel proud – and commemorative traditions rarely break through that barrier.

Commemorative and military events still carry emotional significance, particularly for those who value continuity, duty and shared sacrifice. But these events can feel distant, both to younger generations and to those for whom national pride comes less naturally.

“I think the symbolism of the actual Poppy is what people are proud about and what that stands for. And so whilst, yes, it’s a sombre occasion, you’ll see people wearing the poppy a lot earlier than that because of what it represents about us as a country.”

Man, 24, Insurance Broker, East of England

“I thought with the 80th Anniversary of Victory in Europe, we could finally say goodbye to this obsession with wartime. I want us to move on into the modern world and stop looking backwards to find our British values.”

Man, 71, Lawyer, North West

**COMMEMORATIVE AND MILITARY
EVENTS STILL CARRY EMOTIONAL
SIGNIFICANCE, PARTICULARLY FOR
THOSE WHO VALUE CONTINUITY, DUTY
AND SHARED SACRIFICE.**

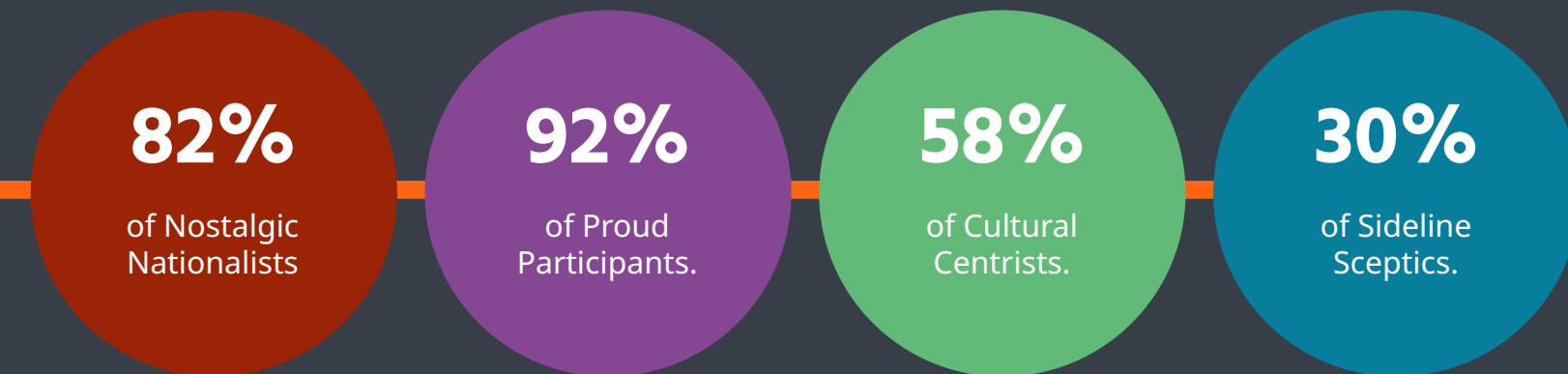


EVENTS THAT ARE FRAMED AS TRADITIONS AND RITUALS, MEANT TO REPRESENT OUR HISTORY AND VALUES, ELICIT MORE SOMBRE RESPONSES FROM THE PUBLIC.

In our poll, we asked participants to watch a 30-second video of a national remembrance ceremony - a solemn, symbolic portrayal of Armistice Day. The clip focused on ritual and ceremony: wreath-laying, moments of silence, and visual markers of national heritage like poppies and memorials.

70% of UK adults said that events like this make them feel proud to live in the UK.

This framing evoked the most pride from Proud Participants and Nostalgic Nationalists:



This pride was often accompanied by feelings of sadness and gratitude, when asked how they felt after watching the clip, respondents consistently used words like “emotional,” “respect,” “remember,” and “sacrifice.”



How did you feel while watching the video?

“Proud and very thankful to live where I do when I do. Admiration of members of the Royal Family who give their lives to the service of the country and thankful for the service personnel who gave their lives.”

Man, 62, Yorkshire and the Humber

“There are wars that maybe we should never have fought, but they have been fought, and people have actually died for the cause, and I’m proud of them, but it is a different kind of pride than, you know, Jessica Ennis doing really well or Mo Farrah picking up gold.”

Woman, 60, Retired, London

"I felt very emotional and proud seeing this. Keeping up with traditions like Armed Forces Memories celebrations is very important for everyone in our community and abroad. It highlights our intentions of preserving these kinds of celebrations for our full generations. It shows as well our respect for anyone who was involved in defending our country, especially those who have died doing it."

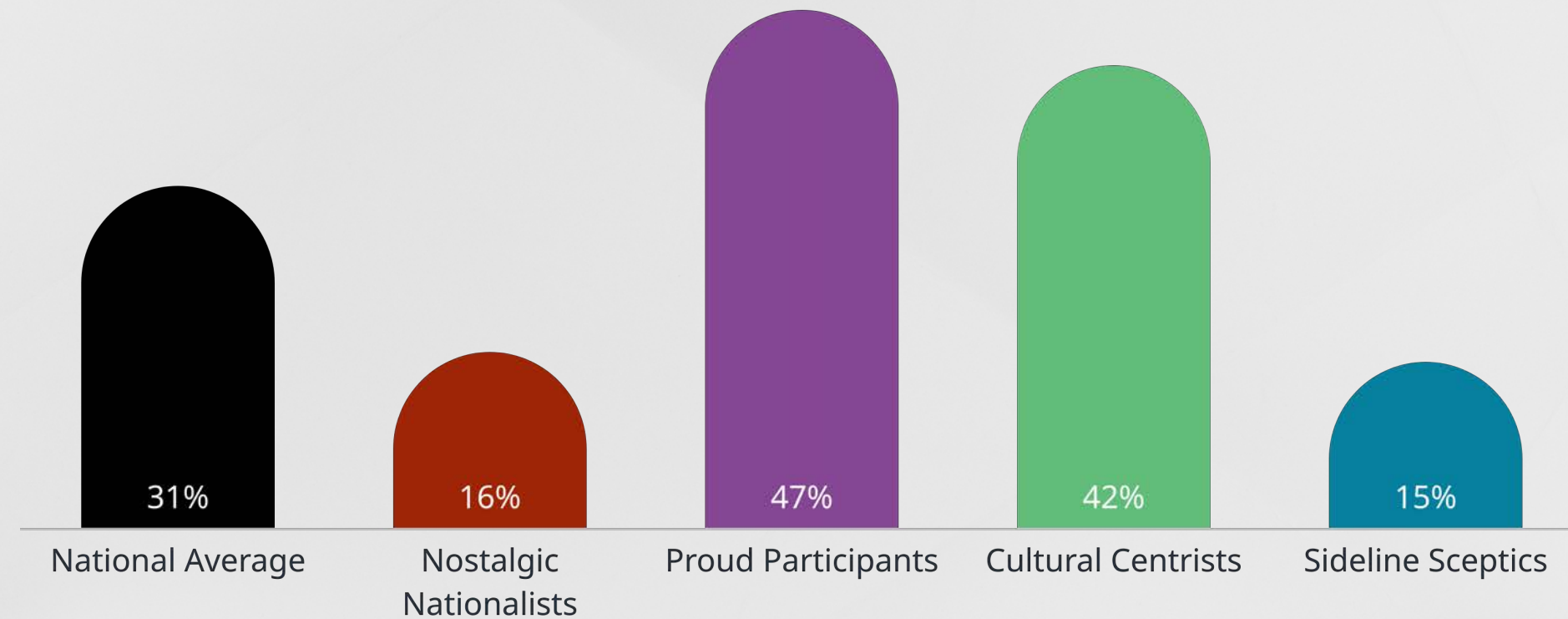
Man, 65, London

WHILE ONLY A THIRD OF BRITONS TAKE PRIDE FROM CULTURAL FESTIVALS, THEY SPEAK POWERFULLY TO YOUNGER GENERATIONS.

Cultural festivals – including Glastonbury, the Edinburgh Festival Fringe or the UK City of Culture – appeal to those who see British identity as evolving, diverse and creative. They're among the most positively viewed event types by segments that are younger, and more engaged events when they can attend in person. But their reach is not universal, and the place-based nature of these events often means they are less accessible to the wider public.



Which of the following types of UK-hosted events, if any, make you feel proud to live in the UK? Select all that apply: Cultural Festivals (e.g. UK City of Culture, Notting Hill Carnival, Edinburgh Festival Fringe)



CULTURAL CENTRISTS

are the core audience for cultural festivals.

- **66%** say they enjoy them – the second-highest of any group – and **42%** say such events make them feel proud to live in the UK.
- This is a group that values music, creativity and multiculturalism, and cultural festivals reflect all three.
- **44%** say music is a key part of their identity, and **51%** express pride in music-based events.
- They are also the most likely group to try to attend festivals in person, with **24%**

PROUD PARTICIPANTS

are also generally positive.

- **83%** say they like cultural festivals, and **47%** say they make them feel proud.
- Their preferences are broader than Cultural Centrists as they enjoy a wider range of events, and draw pride from all events – but the appeal of modern, expressive events still resonates.
- More than half (**52%**) express pride in music-based events, and **77%** feel they bring people together.

NOSTALGIC NATIONALISTS

are far less enthusiastic.

- Just **34%** say they enjoy cultural festivals, and only **16%** say they make them feel proud.
- These events are often viewed as unfamiliar or disconnected from their understanding of national pride.
- UK art and culture, including music, theatre and literature, ranks low among their sources of pride (**25%**), and multiculturalism even lower (**18%**).
- Their low interest may also reflect generational and geographic gaps, with many living outside urban cultural centres.

SIDELINE SCEPTICS

show little connection to cultural festivals.

- Just **31%** enjoy them, and only **15%** say they make them feel proud.
- While some may engage with music events (**31%**), this rarely translates into a sense of national pride (**19%**).

Cultural festivals are powerful tools for connecting with those who already feel culturally engaged – especially younger, urban and more diverse audiences. However, not all audiences feel as connected to them.

“The comedy scene in the UK is pretty unrivaled. In comparison to a lot of other countries, there are lots of tours that go on the UK and lots of famous names that love to come perform, I’ve been and seen a bunch of comedians that have come to my city and it’s something that’s really nice to see that, you know, people coming here to perform.”

Man, 24, Insurance Broker, East of England

“I find [the Edinburgh Fringe] weird, its not to my taste. I don’t think you can expect everyone to love everything about each other’s culture. It’s just not for me.”

Man, 60, It Director, East Midlands

“Concert and things like that, when big stars that have come to the UK to perform, and everyone gets together. And again, you don’t have to worry about how much money’s in your bank or anything. Everyone’s showing an interest in the same thing. Seeing thousands of people there together - its just a proud moment when you’re standing there.”

Woman, 20, Recruitment Consultant, London

**CULTURAL FESTIVALS ARE POWERFUL
TOOLS FOR CONNECTING WITH THOSE
WHO ALREADY FEEL CULTURALLY
ENGAGED - ESPECIALLY YOUNGER,
URBAN AND MORE DIVERSE AUDIENCES.**

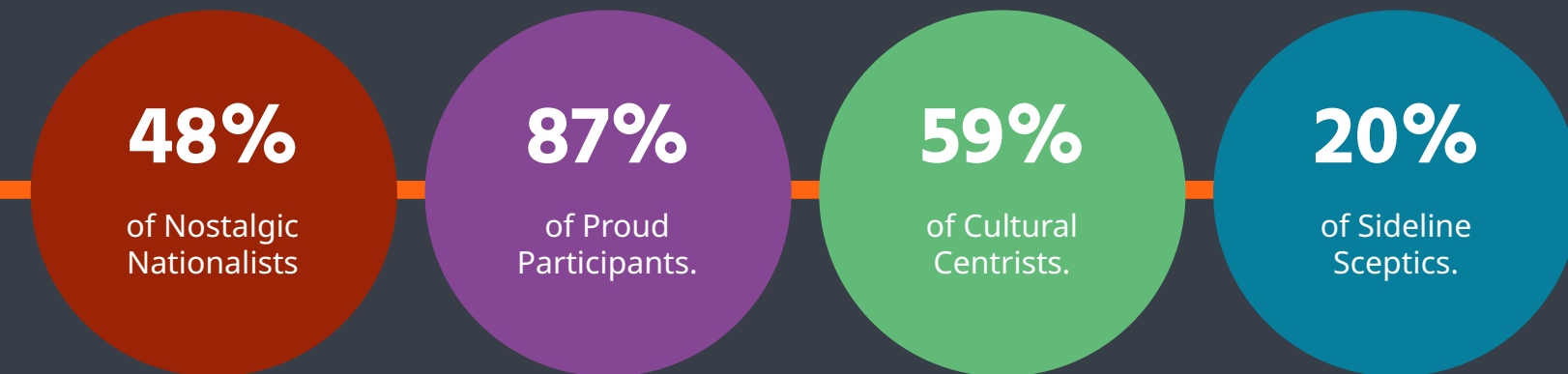


EVENTS THAT ARE FRAMED AS COMMUNAL EXPERIENCES CAN STILL MAKE US FEEL PROUD BUT ALSO HAPPY AND CONNECTED.

As part of our poll, we asked participants to watch a 30-second video which framed national pride through the collective spirit of cultural participation – showing scenes from the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. It featured street performers, families in open-air crowds, and informal interviews, highlighting grassroots energy, creative expression, and shared experience..

58% of UK adults said that events like this make them feel proud to live in the UK.

This frame proved more popular with Proud Participants and Cultural Centrists.



The emotional tone this frame evoked was more light-hearted and personal. It helped people feel positively connected – especially those who see modern British identity as diverse and evolving. Responses reflected this lighter, more festive tone, with commonly used words including “happy,” “fun,” “exciting,” “together,” “inclusive,” and “interested.”



How did you feel while watching the video?

"I felt the event was a space where people expressed themselves and pushed boundaries and also connected across differences. I love it when people are being creative and having that creative freedom. So it's something I am proud of, and I think Britain does it really well."

Woman, 28, HR Manager, London

"It does make me feel proud to be Scottish. [...] it's in some ways it's not even events, it's atmosphere. It's a brilliant atmosphere to be amongst people. I've been to some shows there before that I never thought I'd like but the atmosphere has been great."

Man, 66, Teacher, Scotland

“[It makes me feel] Proud, Arts and theatre is definitely one of the strongest parts of national identity and heritage.”

Man, 41, South East

HULL CITY OF CULTURE 2017: A COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION

In 2017, Hull stepped onto the world stage as UK City of Culture. Spirit of 2012 played a crucial role in supporting this year-long celebration, which delivered over 2,800 events, cultural activities, exhibitions and installations across twelve months. The scale was unprecedented for Hull, with more than 90% of residents engaging with at least one cultural activity during the year.

The sheer breadth of programming – from the Land of Green Ginger project celebrating local stories to the No Limits education programme involving 56,000 school children – created multiple entry points for residents to connect with their community and discover new creative interests. Over 2,400 volunteers contributed 337,000 hours across 84,000 shifts, with 92% of Hull residents agreeing that volunteers provided a positive representation of their city.

The impact on local pride was profound and measurable. Three in four residents reported that the year changed their perception of Hull for the better, while two-thirds felt their knowledge of the city's history and heritage had increased. Perhaps most significantly, there was a 9% increase in cultural confidence among residents, with over half discovering new art forms and 95% saying the experience encouraged them to attend similar events in the future.⁶

⁶ <https://spiritof2012.org.uk/what-we-do/featured-projects/hull-volunteering-programme/>



**THE IMPACT ON LOCAL PRIDE WAS
PROFOUND AND MEASURABLE. THREE IN
FOUR RESIDENTS REPORTED THAT THE
YEAR CHANGED THEIR PERCEPTION OF
HULL FOR THE BETTER.**



CHAPTER FIVE

HARNESSING THE POWER OF EVENTS

ONLY A VARIED SLATE OF EVENTS WILL TRIGGER PRIDE ACROSS THE UK.

While events have the power to bring us together and unify the country, no one event will speak to everyone. Younger Brits are more likely to find pride from cultural celebrations, whereas older generations draw more pride from traditional ceremonies and commemorations. To reach all communities, the UK must ensure that its events calendar has a mix of events that have the power to speak to everyone.

The public understand the power of events, and see the benefits of investing in them:

62%

of UK adults think that **the benefits of hosting events in the UK outweigh the drawbacks** compared to just 22% who think the drawbacks outweigh the benefits.



The majority of UK adults **support public money being spent on every type of event**, from public commemorations to cultural exhibitions.



Younger people generally favour money being spent on cultural occasions, whilst older people favor commemorative or royal events.

The public understand the power of events, and see the benefits of investing in them:

67%

of 18-24 year olds support public money being spent to help fund a major **music or cultural festival** with national reach, in comparison only 36% of 65+ year olds.

64%

of 65+ year olds support public money being spent to help fund a **large state or royal celebration** compared to just 56% of 18-24 year olds.

Whilst there is more we can do to ensure the UK is home to a wide variety of events, the country is set to host an impressive array of events in the coming years. Events like the Invictus Games, UEFA EUROs along with recurring occasions in the UK's events calendar like the Glastonbury Festival and Remembrance Day Commemorations all offer the opportunity to bring the country together and make us proud of the UK.

To ensure the UK makes the most of these opportunities, using them to make the nation proud, organisers should focus on creating a national moment & using the events to celebrate the UK's cultural identity.



**YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE PHYSICALLY
CLOSE TO AN EVENT TO FEEL ITS EFFECTS.**

TO TRIGGER PRIDE, EVENTS NEED TO CREATE NATIONAL MOMENTS.

Events make us proud when they unite the country, bringing people together in a shared experience. People gain even more pride from events when they attract positive international attention.

74%

of UK adults said that UK-hosted events make them more proud when **they attract positive international attention for the UK.**

Whether it's gathering in a local pub to watch a sporting event, or watching a royal occasion on the TV, events bind us together in shared moments. You don't have to be physically close to an event to feel its effects.

52%

of UK adults feel part of a national moment, **even if the event takes place somewhere else in the country.**

While there are numerous benefits to hosting events for local communities, if policymakers want to leverage events to inspire national pride they should must focus first and foremost on being national moments that reach the widest possible audience, both within the UK and internationally.



"I felt proud to be British during the royal wedding, it was quite a national event, and everyone was talking about it, so you kind of want to be part of it. Its got that FOMO effect"

Man, 29, Admin Assistant, East of England



"Concerts and things like that, when big stars that have come to the UK to perform, and everyone gets together. And again, you don't have to worry about how much money's in your bank or anything. Everyone's showing an interest in the same thing. Seeing thousands of people there together - it's just a proud moment when you're standing there."

Woman, 20, Recruitment Consultant, London

A photograph of a group of people running in a park. In the foreground, a woman in a pink hoodie and black leggings is running. Behind her, another woman in a blue hoodie and red beanie is running. To the right, a woman in a green long-sleeved shirt and black leggings is running. They are all smiling and appear to be enjoying their run. The background shows trees and a path.

**PRIDE IS MORE
LIKELY TO COME
FROM OUR VALUES
AND CULTURE THAN
IT IS FROM OUR
ACHIEVEMENTS.**

EVENTS THAT WANT TO GENERATE NATIONAL PRIDE, SHOULD CELEBRATE WHO WE ARE AS A NATION.

Pride is more likely to come from our values and culture than it is from our achievements. If events want to generate pride, they must reflect that. The public enjoy events that reflect what the UK is and celebrate it – whether that's through marking historical landmarks or creating cultural displays like the 2012 opening ceremony.

Yet different groups hold different understandings of British identity and values. For example, while Sideline Skeptics rarely draw pride from any events and Proud Participants draw pride from all events, Cultural Centrists relate more to events that are more likely to enjoy events celebrating diversity, whereas the Nostalgic Nationalists are more likely to enjoy events honouring sacrifice.

69%

of **Cultural Centrists** enjoy events more when they celebrate **diverse identities and experiences**, compared to 42% of Nostalgic Nationalists.

81%

of **Nostalgic Nationalists** enjoy events more when they **honour the service or sacrifice of others**, compared to 68% of Cultural Centrists.

Whilst our national identity brings us together, no two people have identical conceptions of what the UK means to them. Not all events have to be for all people, but over a programme of events, organisers should seek to spread benefits widely by programming a variety of events which speak to the different facets of the UK's identity and as a result resonate across society.



AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Whilst this research clearly demonstrates the link between UK-hosted events and national pride, there are several questions it raises that were not in the scope of this report, and deserve future consideration.

Events trigger pride for the majority of the public, by bringing us together and reflecting our values. But there is little evidence of how long lasting this pride is. People feel a great nostalgia towards past events, but it's unclear that they continue to create pride after they have concluded.

Another area of ambiguity is how events can continue to reach mass audiences and unite the country, in a time where our media consumption is increasingly fragmented and independent. The declining popularity of linear television poses a challenge for event organisers seeking to create the national moments we know are key to stoking pride.

Finally, our research identifies one particular group Sideline Skeptics who rarely engage with events, and feel little to no pride towards the UK. Further research could shed light on how events could be designed to reach this group, and expose them to the positive effects events can have.

ABOUT PUBLIC FIRST

Public First is an independent consultancy that works to help companies and organisations develop new policy proposals, better understand public opinion, and model their economic and social impact. Public First is a member of the Market Research Society and the British Polling Council and we abide by their rules and guidelines.

ABOUT SPIRIT OF 2012

Spirit of 2012 is the London 2012 legacy organisation. It was founded with a £47million endowment from the National Lottery Community Fund in 2013 and will undertake a planned closure in 2026. Their research, learning and insights from over a decade of funding projects to inspire a social legacy is available at www.spiritof2012.org.uk.





SPIRIT OF 2012
INVESTING IN HAPPINESS

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