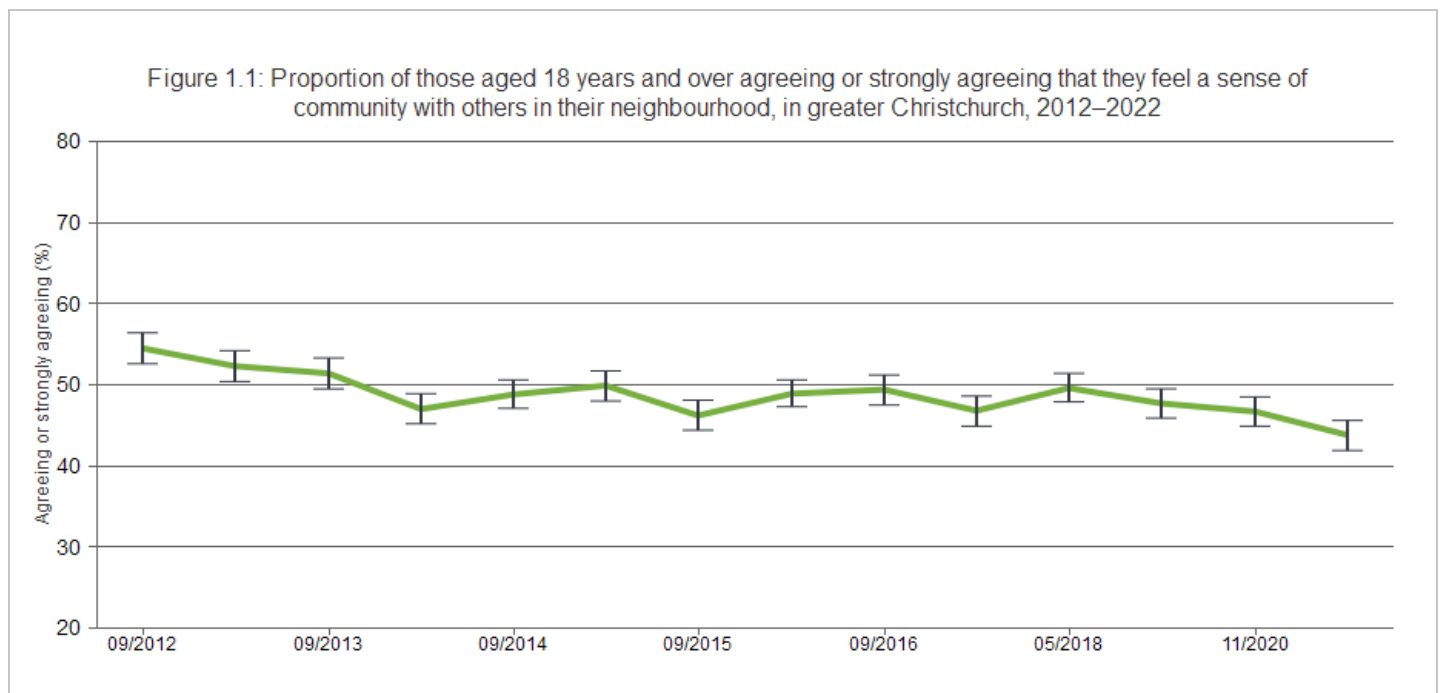


Social Capital: Sense of community

Downloaded from <https://www.canterburywellbeing.org.nz/our-wellbeing/social-capital/sense-of-community/> on 28/03/2025 9:33 AM

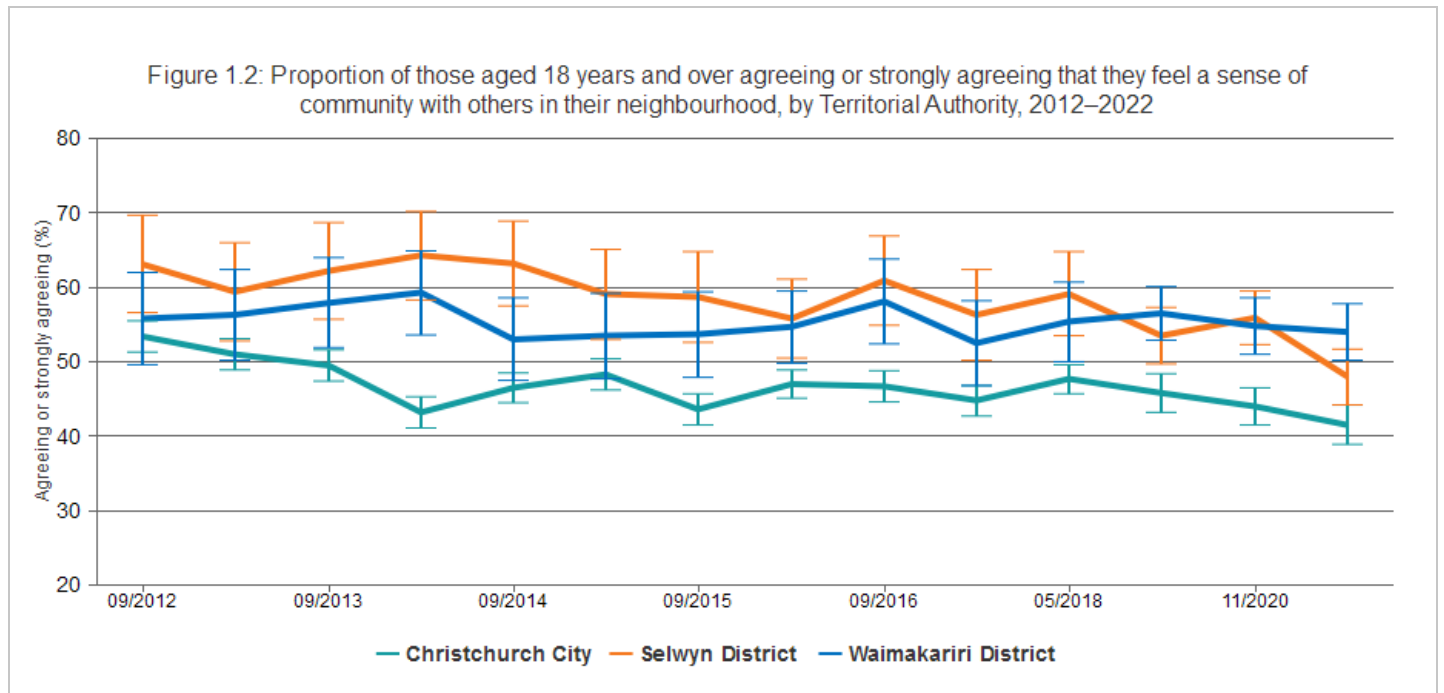
Feeling like one belongs and is accepted in meaningful social groups has been linked to wellbeing and health-related outcomes [7,8]. Sense of community is a desirable outcome, whereby community members feel a sense of belonging and commitment, and a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group [9,10]. In this context, community is mostly concerned with quality and characteristics of human relationships, rather than the geographical location (for example, neighbourhood, town, city) [11]. Sense of community embraces a number of different elements including: community spirit or membership, influence, reinforcement, emotional safety, community boundaries, sense of belonging, trust, shared emotional connections, and quality interactions [9,12]. These elements are considered to act together to strengthen the social fabric and improve community wellbeing and health outcomes [7-9].

This indicator presents the proportion of those aged 18 years and over agreeing or strongly agreeing they feel a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood, as reported in the Canterbury Wellbeing Survey.



The figure shows that in the year following the 2010 and 2011 earthquakes, over half of respondents in greater Christchurch (54.5%) agreed or strongly agreed that they felt a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood. A pattern of declining sense of community followed, and the proportion feeling a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood (agree or strongly agree) dipped below 50 percent in 2014. The current result (43.8%, 2022) is statistically significantly lower than that for 2012 and the overall downward trend in this proportion is statistically significant. Note that no pre-earthquake data are available to act as a benchmark.

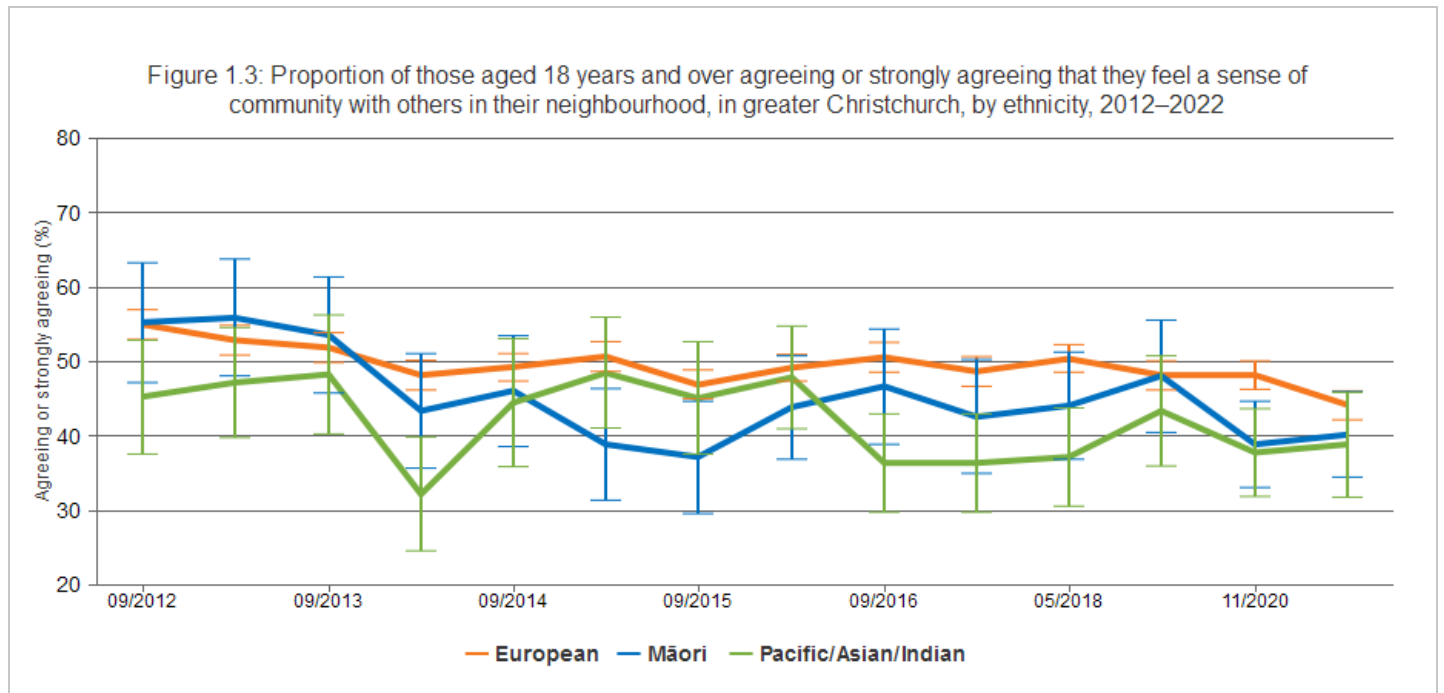
Breakdown by Territorial authority



The figure shows that Selwyn District has generally had the highest proportion of respondents reporting a sense of community (agreeing or strongly agreeing they feel a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood) over the time series.

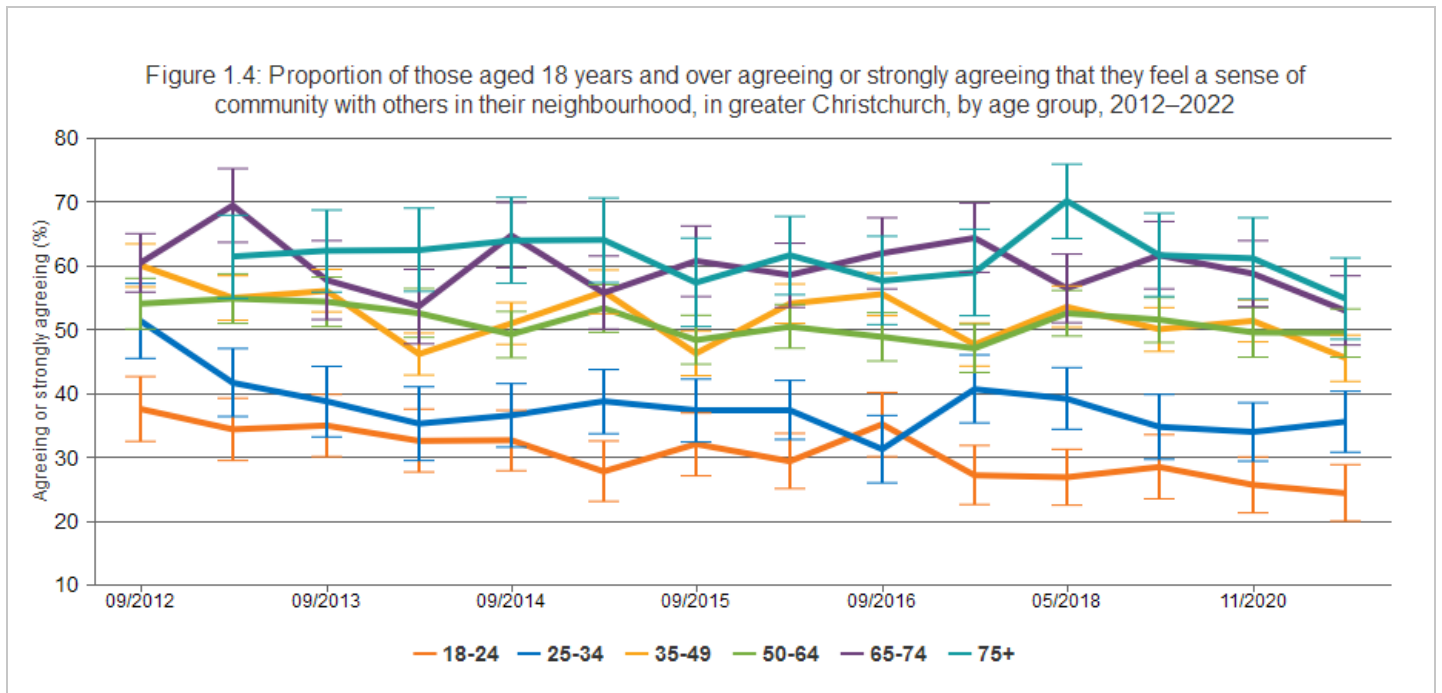
In 2022, Christchurch City (41.5%) continues to have the smallest proportion of respondents reporting a sense of community; lower than Selwyn District (48%) and statistically significantly lower than Waimakariri District (54%). Over the time series, Selwyn District appears to show the greatest decline in sense of community.

Breakdown by ethnicity



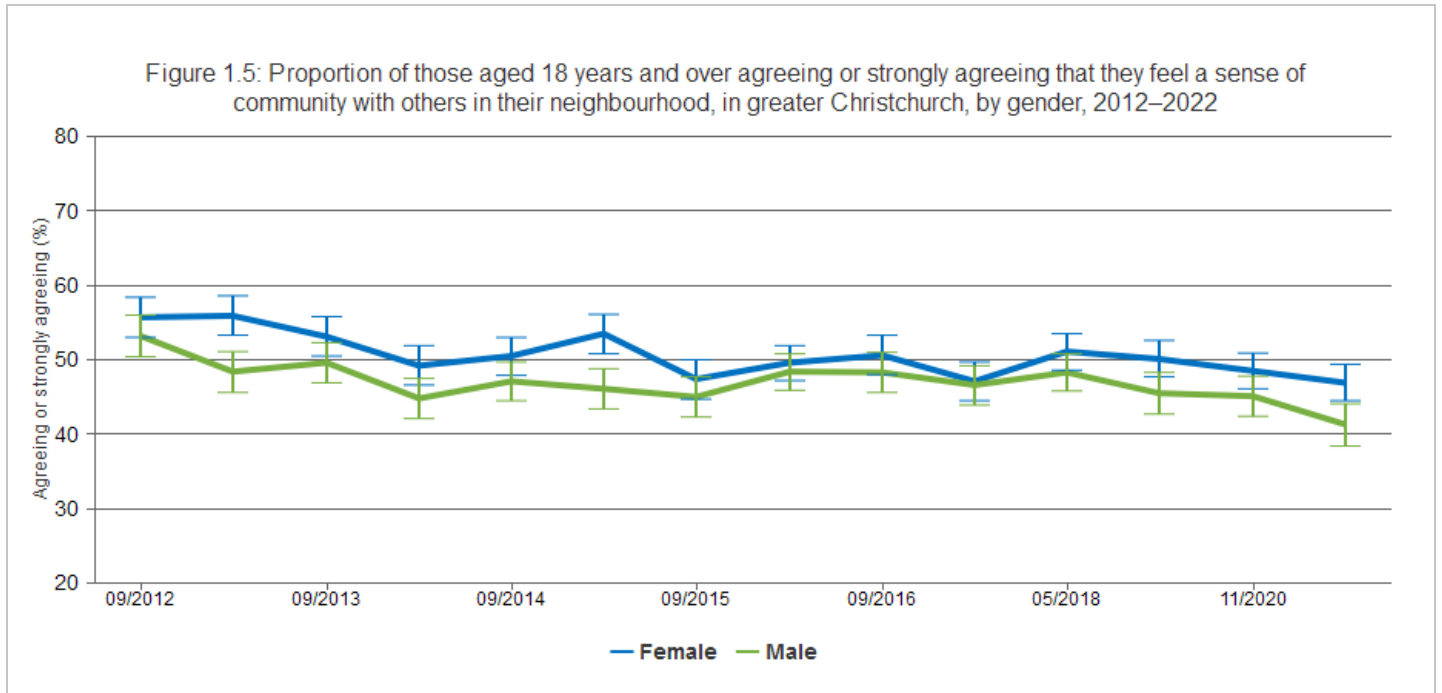
The figure shows that in 2022, the proportion of European respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that they feel a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood was 44.2 percent; higher (but not statistically significantly higher) than both Pacific/Asian/Indian respondents (38.9%) and Māori respondents (40.2%). There is noticeable variability in the results for Māori and Pacific/Asian/Indian respondents due to smaller absolute numbers in the sample. These smaller numbers contribute to wider confidence intervals and make it difficult to discern differences for Māori and Pacific/Asian/Indian respondents.

Breakdown by age



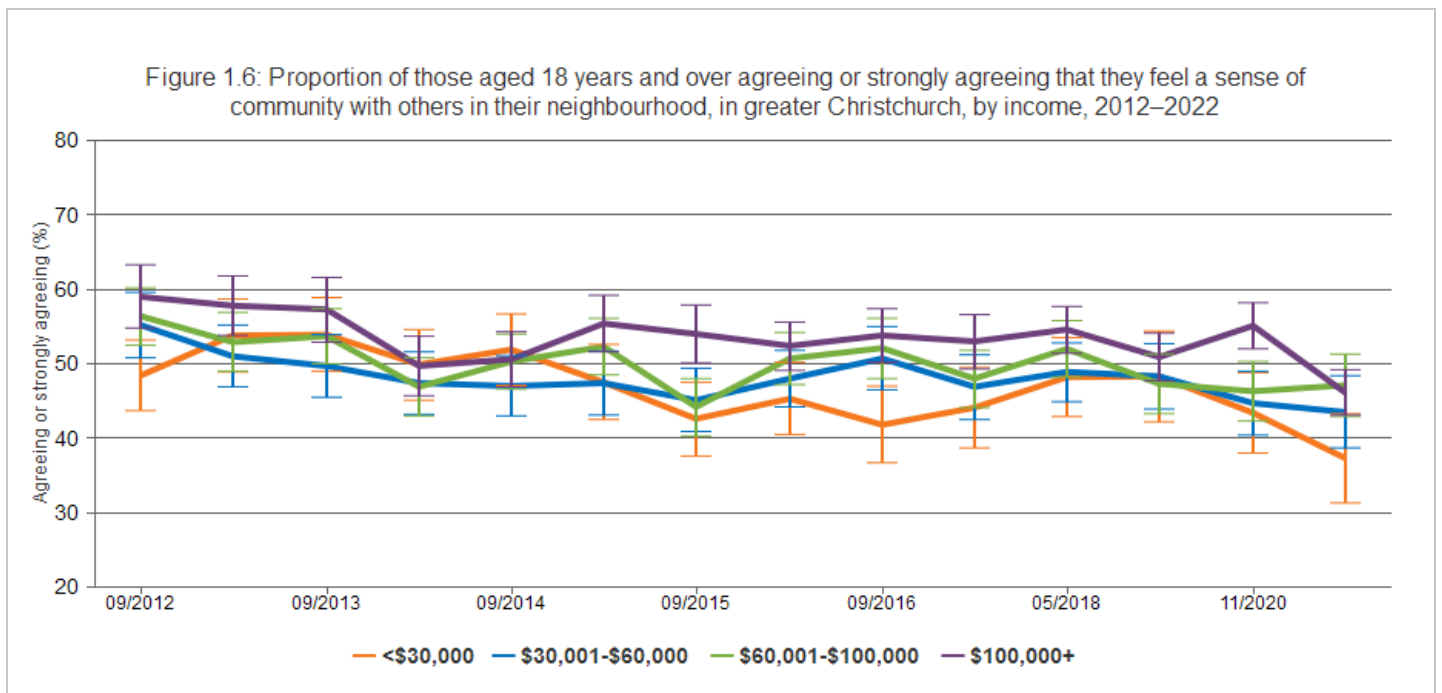
Across the time series, younger respondents' sense of community is notably different from older respondents' sense of community (that is, lower, and in sharper decline). In 2022, 54.9 percent of respondents from the 75+ years age group indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed that they felt a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood, compared with only one quarter (24.4%) of 18 to 24-year-old respondents. Across most of the time series, younger respondents' (those in the 18-24 and 25-34-year-old age groups) sense of community is statistically significantly lower than all other age groups. This may reflect actual relational differences within neighbourhoods by different age groups, for example, as young people may be more transient and less likely to have neighbourhood attachments, such as owning a home or having children attend a local school. It may also reflect different understandings of the question (for example, younger respondents may have different understandings of 'community' and 'neighbourhood'), or a combination of these and other aspects.

Breakdown by gender



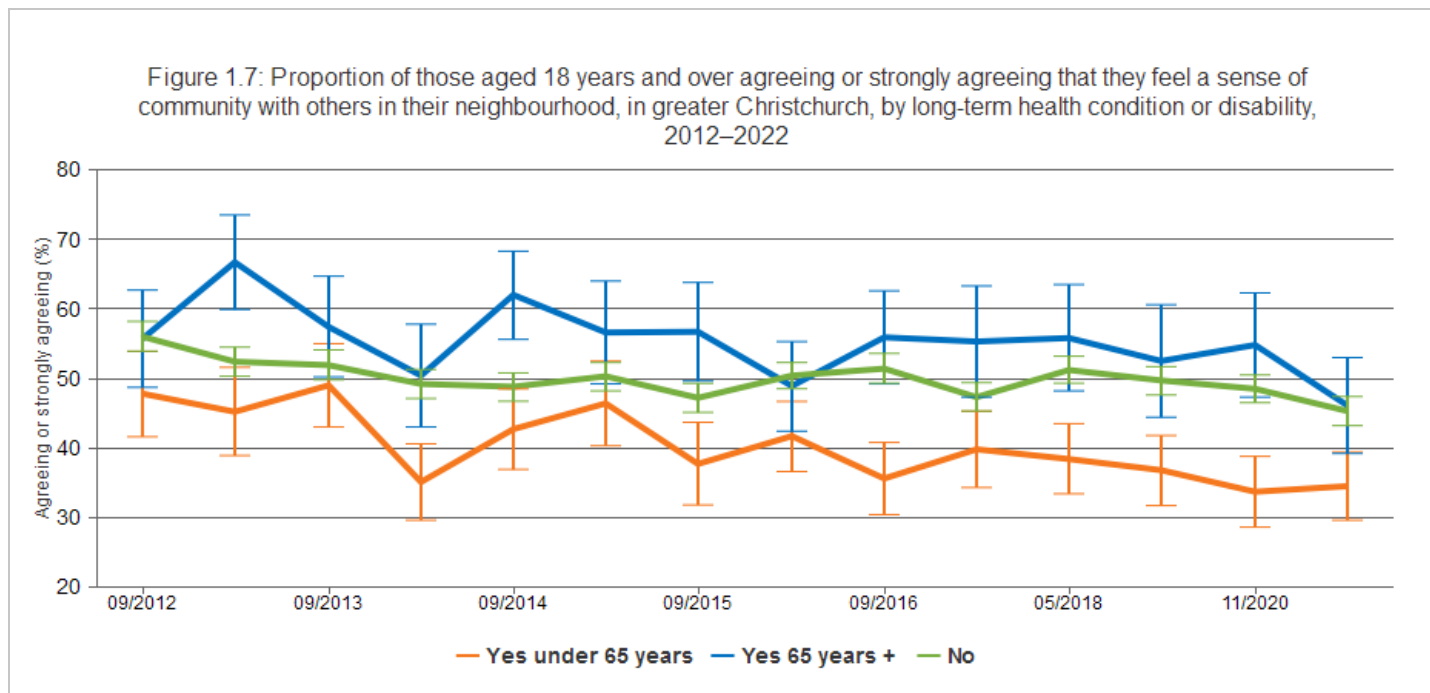
The figure shows a pattern of generally similar levels of sense of community (proportion agreeing or strongly agreeing that they feel a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood) for female respondents and male respondents in greater Christchurch, over the period 2012 to 2022.

Breakdown by income



The figure shows a pattern of generally similar levels of sense of community (proportion of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that they feel a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood) across the four annual household income groups shown, in greater Christchurch, over the period 2012 to 2022.

Breakdown by disability



The figure shows that the level of sense of community (proportion of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that they feel a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood) for older respondents with a long-term health condition or disability (aged 65 years and over) was not significantly different from the proportion for those without, at the majority of timepoints presented (46.1%, and 45.3% in 2022, respectively). However, the proportion for younger respondents (those aged under 65 years) with a long-term health condition or disability was statistically significantly lower than the other two groups at several timepoints but not statistically significantly different in 2022 (34.5%).

Data Sources

Source: Te Whatu Ora Waitaha Canterbury - formerly the Canterbury District Health Board.

Survey/data set: Canterbury Wellbeing Survey to 2022. Access publicly available data from Te Mana Ora | Community and Public Health website www.cph.co.nz/your-health/wellbeing-survey/

Source data frequency: Annually.

Metadata for this indicator is available at <https://www.canterburywellbeing.org.nz/our-wellbeing/index-data>

REFERENCES

This is the full reference list for **Social Capital**.

- 1 Putnam RD, Leonardi R, Nanenetti R (1993) *Making democracy work: civic traditions in modern Italy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- 2 Rocco L, Suhrcke M (2012) *Is social capital good for health? A European perspective*. Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe.
- 3 Islam MK, Merlo J, Kawachi I, Lindström M, Gerdtham U-G (2006) Social capital and health: Does egalitarianism matter? A literature review. *International Journal for Equity in Health* 5: 3.
- 4 Scheffler RM, Brown TT (2008) Social capital, economics, and health: new evidence. *Health Econ Policy Law* 3: 321-331.
- 5 d'Hombres B, Rocco L, Suhrcke M, McKee M (2010) Does social capital determine health? Evidence from eight transition countries. *Health Econ* 19: 56-74.
- 6 Folland S (2007) Does "community social capital" contribute to population health? *Social Science and Medicine* 64: 2342-2354.
- 7 Syme SL (2000) Foreword. In: Berkman LF, Kawachi I, editors. *Social epidemiology*. New York: Oxford. pp. ix-xii.
- 8 Browning CR, Cagney KA (2003) Moving beyond poverty: neighborhood structure, social processes and health. *J Health Soc Behav* 44: 552-571.
- 9 McMillan DW (1996) Sense of community. *Journal of Community Psychology* 24: 315-325.
- 10 Sonn CC, Fisher AT (2005) Immigrant Adaptation: Complicating our understanding of responses to intergroup experiences. In: Nelson G, Prilleltensky I, editors. *Community Psychology: In pursuit of liberation and wellbeing*. London, UK: McMillan, Palgrave. pp. 348-363.
- 11 Gusfield JR (1975) *The community: A critical response*. New York: Harper Colophon.
- 12 Sarason SB (1986) The emergence of a conceptual center. *Journal of Community Psychology* 14: 405-407.
- 13 Pinker S (2015) *The village effect: Why face-to-face contact matters*. London: Atlantic Books.
- 14 Thoits PA (1995) Stress, coping, and social support processes: where are we? What next? *J Health Soc Behav Spec*: 53-79.
- 15 Haber M, Cohen J, Lucas T, Baltes B (2007) The relationship Between Self-Reported Received and Perceived Social Support: A Meta-Analytic Review. *American journal of community psychology* 39: 133-144.
- 16 Berkman LF, Syme SL (1979) Social networks, host resistance, and mortality: a nine-year follow-up study of Alameda County residents. *Am J Epidemiol*. 109: 186-204. doi: 110.1093/oxfordjournals.aje.a112674.
- 17 Thoits PA (2011) Mechanisms Linking Social Ties and Support to Physical and Mental Health. *J Health Soc Behav* 52: 145-161.
- 18 Uchino BN, Bowen K, Carlisle M, Birmingham W (2012) Psychological pathways linking social support to health outcomes: a visit with the "ghosts" of research past, present, and future. *Social science & medicine (1982)* 74: 949-957.
- 19 Cohen S, Wills TA (1985) Stress, social support, and the buffering hypothesis. *Psychol Bull*. 98: 310-357.
- 20 Uchino B (2006) Social Support and Health: A Review of Physiological Processes Potentially Underlying Links to Disease Outcomes. *Journal of behavioral medicine* 29: 377-387.
- 21 Schonfeld IS (1991) Dimensions of functional social support and psychological symptoms. *Psychological Medicine* 21: 1051-1060.
- 22 Ministry of Social Development (2016) *The Social Report 2016: Te pūrongo oranga tangata*. Wellington: Ministry of Social Development.
- 23 Ateca-Amestoy V (2011) Leisure and subjective well-being. In: Cameron S, editor. *Handbook on the economics of leisure*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar. pp. 52-76.
- 24 Throsby D (2001) *Economics and culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- 25 Aked J, Marks N, Cordon C, Thompson S (2008) *Five Ways to Wellbeing: A report presented to the Foresight Project on communicating the evidence base for improving people's well-being*. London: New Economics Foundation.
- 26 Arts Council England (2012) *Measuring the economic benefits of arts and culture: practical guidance on research methodologies for arts and cultural organisations*: Arts Council England.
- 27 Wheatley D, Bickerton C (2017) Subjective well-being and engagement in arts, culture and sport. *Journal of Cultural Economics* 41: 23-45.

- 28 Arts Council of New Zealand, Creative New Zealand (2020) *New Zealanders and the arts. Ko Aotearoa me ōna toi. Survey findings for Canterbury residents 2020*. Wellington: Creative New Zealand.
- 29 Arts Council of New Zealand, Creative New Zealand (2020) *New Zealanders and the arts. Ko Aotearoa me ōna toi. Summary Report 2020*. Wellington: Creative New Zealand.
- 30 Directorate-General for Communication (2015) *Special Eurobarometer 437; Discrimination in the EU in 2015*. European Union.
- 31 Harris RB, Stanley J, Cormack DM (2018) Racism and health in New Zealand: Prevalence over time and associations between recent experience of racism and health and wellbeing measures using national survey data. *PLoS ONE* 13: e0196476.
- 32 Tofler IR, Butterbaugh GJ (2005) Developmental Overview of Child and Youth Sports for the Twenty-first Century. *Clinics in Sports Medicine* 24: 783-804.
- 33 Dalziel P (2011) *The economic and social value of sport and recreation to New Zealand, Research Report No. 322*.
- 34 Steptoe AS, Butler N (1996) Sports participation and emotional wellbeing in adolescents. *The Lancet* 347: 1789-1792.
- 35 Office of the European Union (2011) *European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions Second European Quality of Life Survey: Participation in volunteering and unpaid work*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. 56 p.
- 36 OECD (2007) Measuring and fostering the progress of societies, 2nd World Forum in Istanbul, Turkey, 27–30 June, 2007: Organisation for Economic Development and Cooperation.
- 37 Heitmueller A, Inglis K (2004) *Carefree? Participation and pay differentials for informal carers in Britain, IZA Discussion Paper No. 1273*. Bonn, Institute for the Study of Labour.
- 38 Mellor D, Hayashi Y, Stokes M, Firth L, Lake L, et al. (2009) Volunteering and its relationship with personal and neighborhood well-being. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 38: 144–159.
- 39 Dolan P, Peasgood T, White M (2008) Do we really know what makes us happy? A review of the economic literature on the factors associated with well-being. *Journal of Economic Psychology* 29: 94–122.