

Connection & cohesion

How can culture and leisure contribute to bringing people together

OVERVIEW

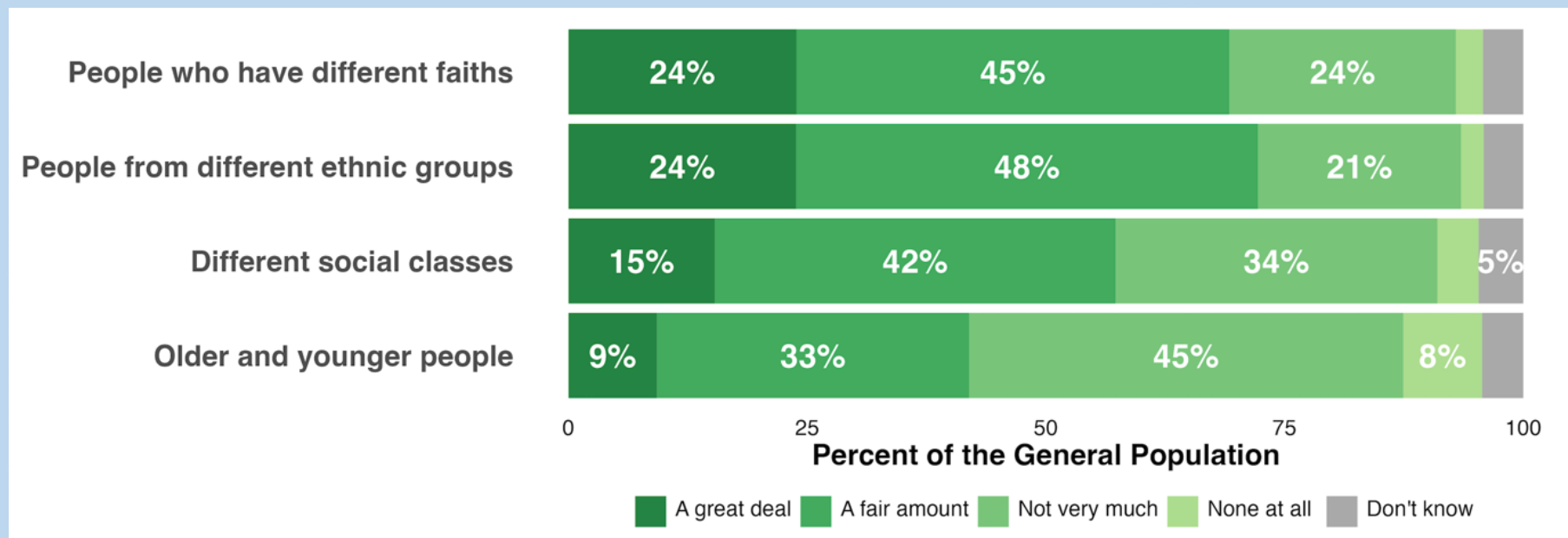
Today we will explore the role that the culture and leisure sector can play to bring people of different backgrounds together and fostering connection

Social cohesion: “The strength of relationships and the sense of solidarity between people from different backgrounds and walks of life, characterised by respect for differences; shared identities; trust; and a sense of belonging.”



Society often feels divided

How much tension, if any, would you say there is between the following groups in the UK today?



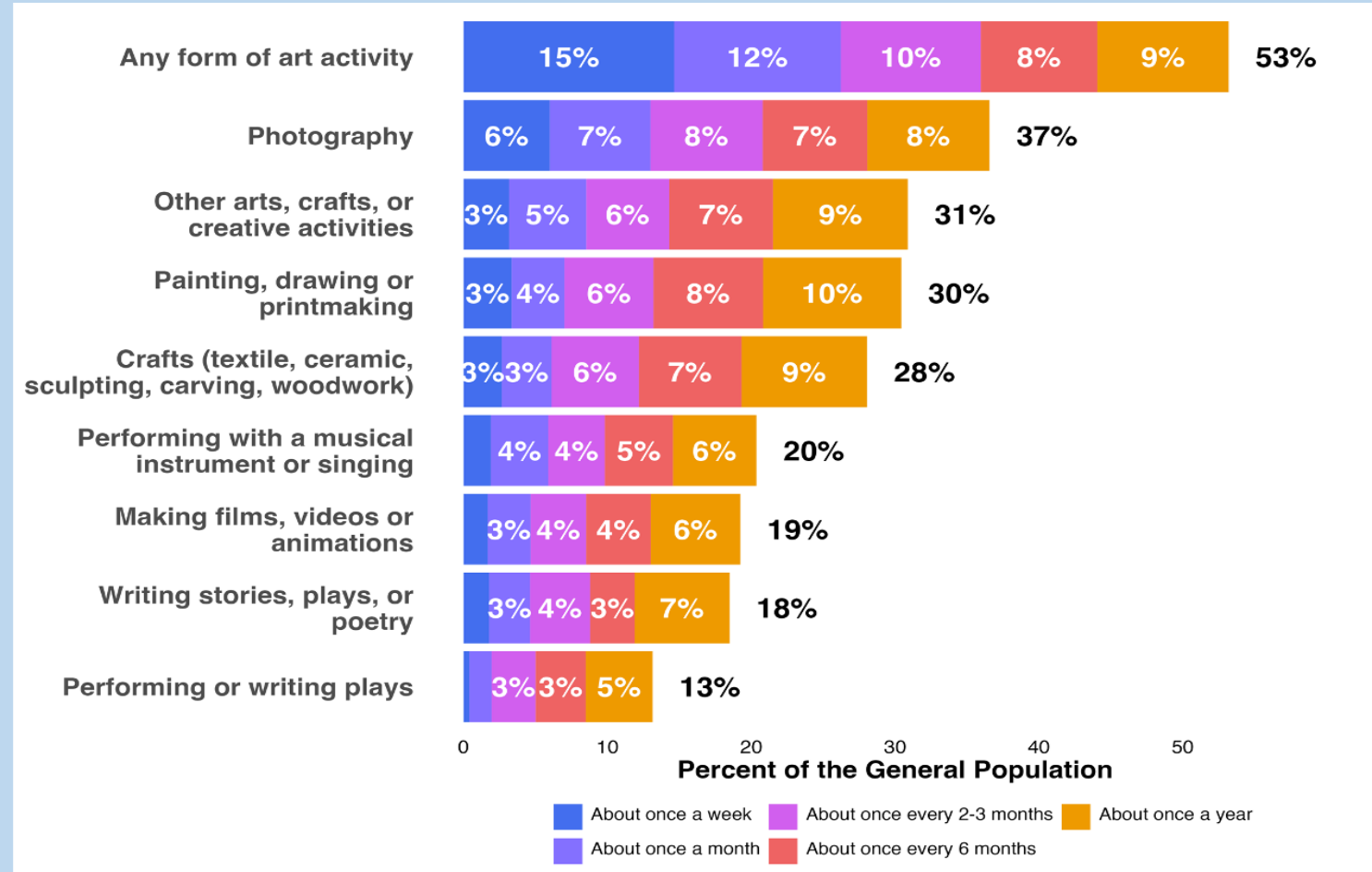
Survey A (Focaldata nationally representative survey of 1,264 adults in Great Britain, 28 March- 5th April 2024).

Polarisation flashpoints



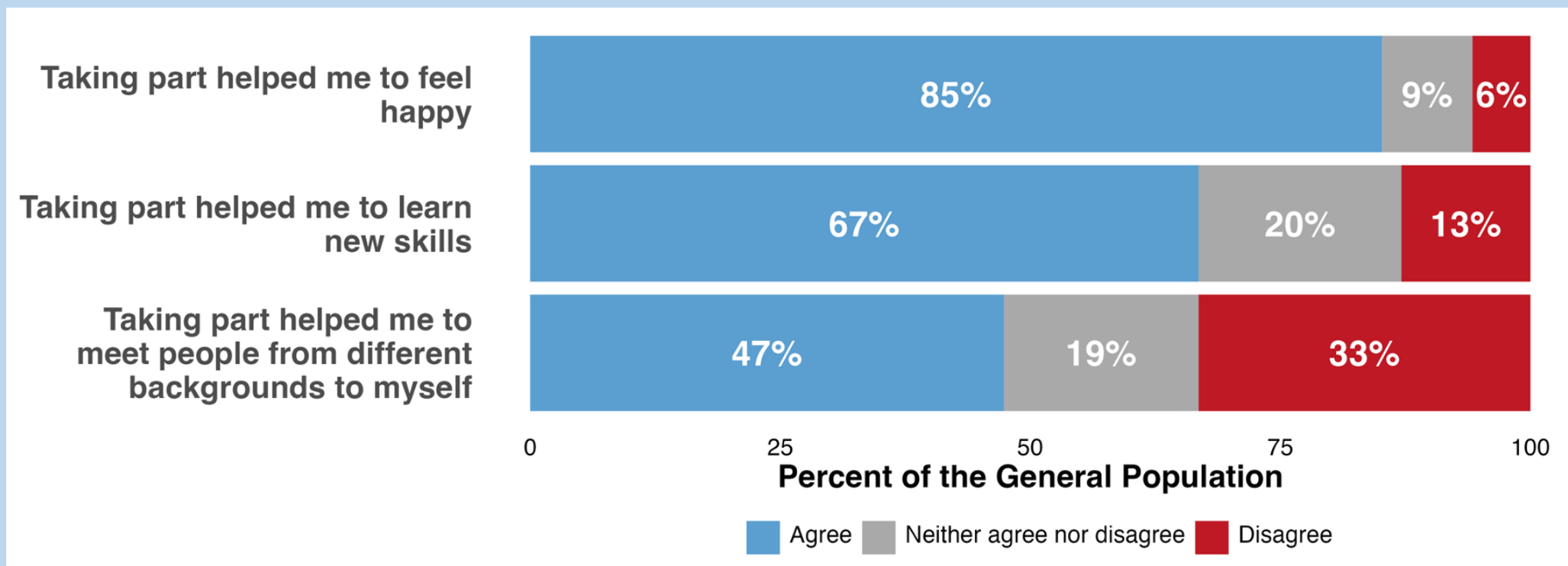
Can culture provide an antidote?

- The public has a large creative appetite
- Most people take part in at least one creative pasttime, with broad participation across ethnic groups, ages and political affiliations.
- 68% attended at least one arts event in the past year when shown a list



Experiences of participation

**Q: To what extent do you agree with the following statements?
(Among those who took part in creative arts)**

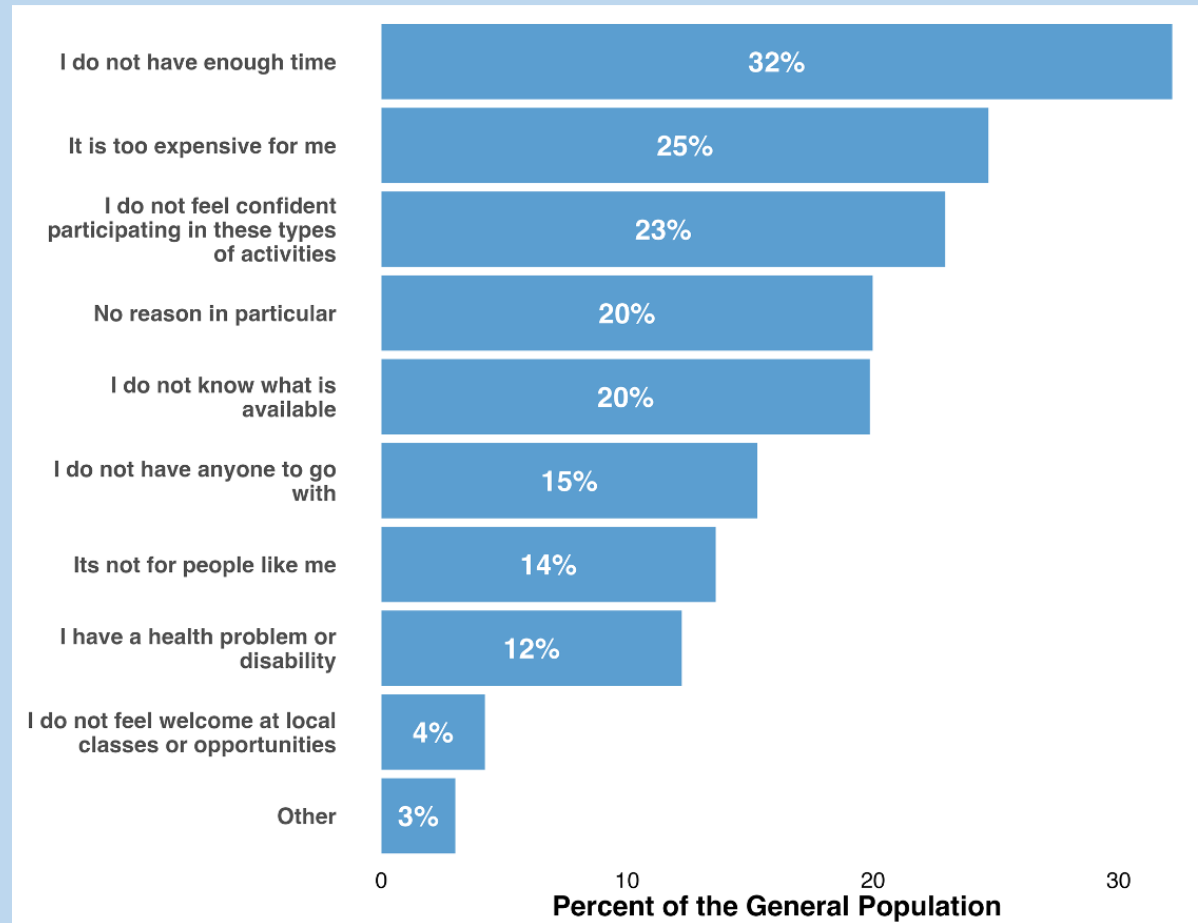


What's working well?

- **Culture and creativity offer an enjoyable, accessible route into meeting people different to oneself**
- **Cultural projects offer opportunities to explore feelings of belonging, e.g. themes of local identity, and can be used to safely traverse conversations about discrimination and how to live together well.**
- **For new arrivals to the country, arts and culture projects can offer fun and empowering methods to equip people to thrive in their communities:** from providing English skills to training people in transferable skills like photography or leadership.
- **Culturally themed events can also uniquely mobilise communities to come together at a larger scale.** Where social cohesion formed part of an organisers' overarching event strategy, shaping their event from its outreach to communications and legacy, this improves residents' feelings of connectedness and civic pride.

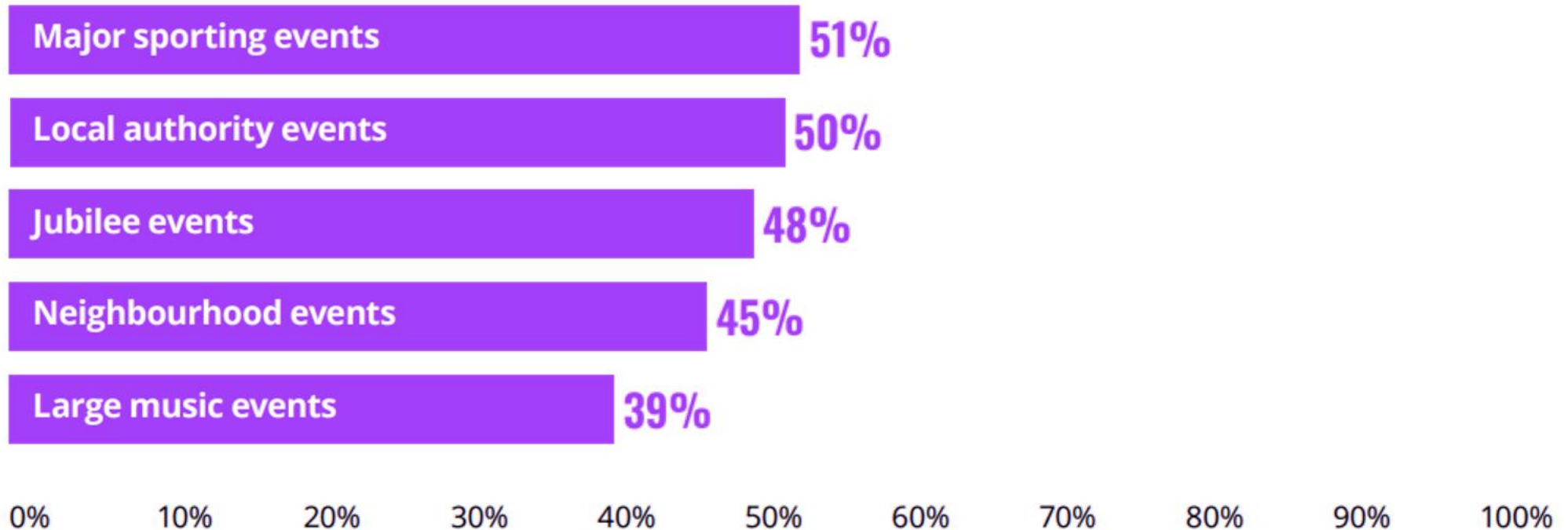
Barriers and challenges

Q. What, if any, are the barriers to you spending more time participating in creative activities?



The power and reach of events

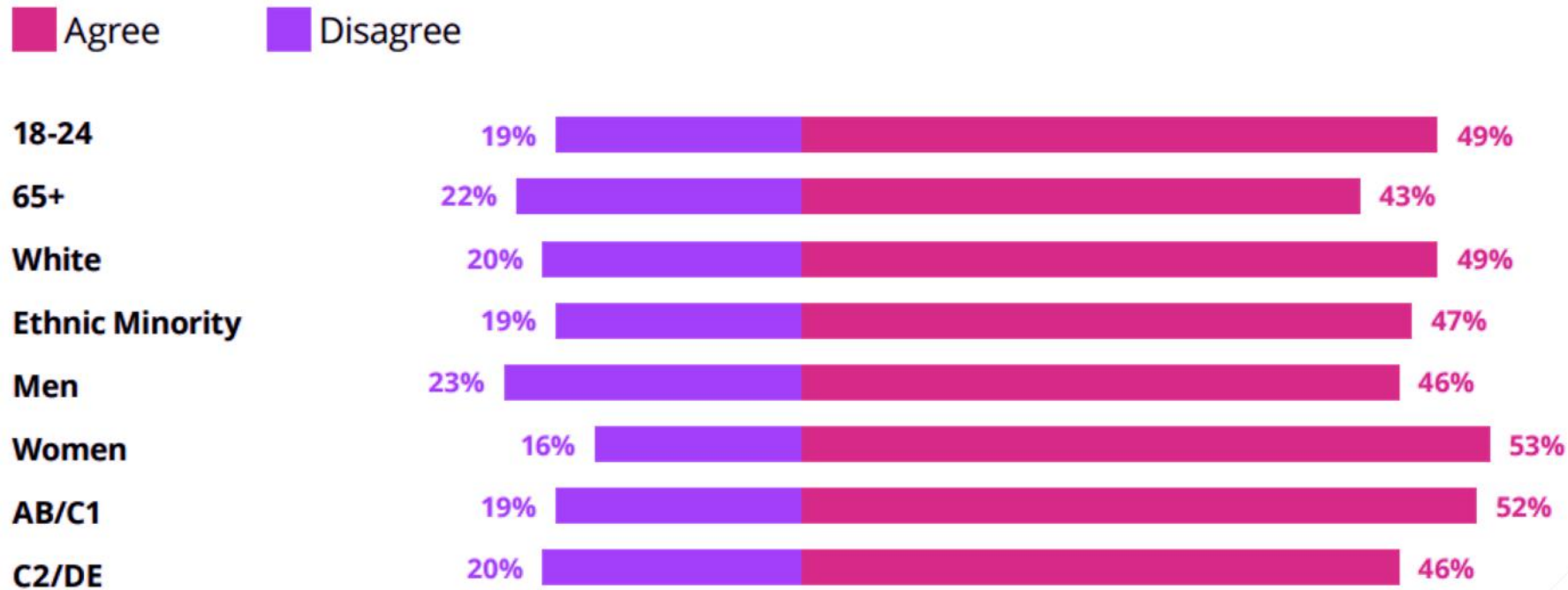
Figure 2.1 Are particular events for 'people like me'? – all UK adults



Source: Focaldata poll of 2,018 UK adults, 6-7 June 2022.

Potential to 'bridge' and as 'bond'

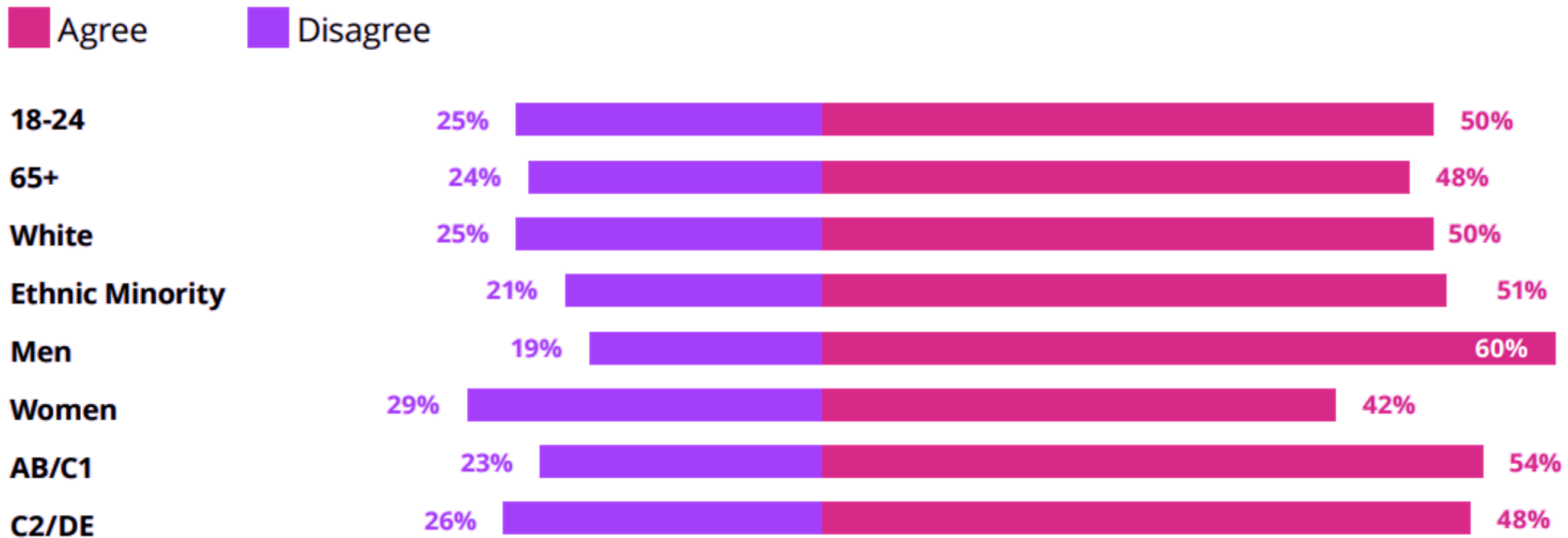
Figure 2.5: Who thinks that Local authority events in their village, town or city (for example a food festival) are for 'people like me'?



Source: Focaldata poll of 2,018 UK adults, 6-7 June 2022

The reach of sporting events

Figure 4.1 Who thinks that major sporting events are for 'people like me'?



Source: Focalddata poll of 2,018 UK adults, 6-7 June 2022

Recommendations

Arts organisations and arts-based events

Identify projects that bridge people of different ages and backgrounds

Prioritise social cohesion as a golden thread, from audience outreach, activity planning and communications to evaluation and legacy.

Funders and policymakers:

Recognise the role of culture, leisure and sport in upcoming policies and funding for cohesion, and placemaking

Enable capacity building – support networks to share ‘what works’ and top tips for engaging in tougher areas

Thanks for listening



Full report available at britishfuture.org