# Londoners’ weak attachment to England highlights growing identity divide



A recent YouGov poll has revealed a striking disconnect between Londoners and their identity as part of England. Only 29 per cent of those surveyed in the capital reported feeling a "very strong attachment" to the country, contrasting sharply with 38 per cent who identified more closely with the city itself. This finding underscores the perception that London’s unique diversity and multicultural identity fundamentally distinguish it from the rest of the nation.

The survey indicates that 30 per cent of Londoners view the city's multiculturalism as its most significant feature, a sentiment that resonates with findings from previous studies. Notably, research conducted by Queen Mary University of London in 2017 found that 46 per cent of respondents identified primarily as Londoners, far surpassing the number who considered themselves British or English. This growing regional identification raises questions about the broader implications for national cohesion, especially as London continues to attract a myriad of cultures, languages, and traditions.

Diverging regional identities within the UK are further highlighted by contrasting attitudes toward attachment to place. In areas like the North East, a remarkable 48 per cent of individuals expressed a "very strong" connection to their region, compared with a meagre 11 per cent in the East Midlands. This regional pride often correlates with specific characteristics that residents feel make their areas distinct. For example, 20 per cent in the North East cited friendliness as a defining trait, while 24 per cent in the South West emphasised the significance of coastal features.

As discussions about the impact of immigration on national identity intensify, the poll's results are especially topical. Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer has recently warned that without more stringent immigration policies, Britain risks becoming an "island of strangers." His controversial remarks have drawn comparisons to Enoch Powell's infamous 1968 speech, and while Downing Street attempted to clarify that no such parallel exists, public sentiment remains divided. According to another YouGov survey, 53 per cent of the populace agreed with Starmer's views, with half considering his rhetoric acceptable.

The poll's findings illuminate a generational divide as well. For instance, younger Londoners typically express more positive views toward immigration and ethnic diversity, which contrasts with the concerns of older generations. In all, the issue of immigration stands as the second-most important political topic among Londoners, indicating a complex interplay between cultural acceptance and local identity.

Moreover, pride in one’s local neighbourhood transcends cultural lines, as shown by research revealing that approximately 74 per cent of London's Muslim community share similar views with the broader population concerning pride and safety within their local areas. In fact, a high percentage of both Muslims and native Londoners feel a sense of belonging to the city, revealing a shared identity amid diverse backgrounds.

Interestingly, while Londoners struggle to articulate what makes their city unique—in a manner similar to residents of other areas—significant portions express dissatisfaction. Nearly a third believe London is currently the least desirable place to live within the UK. Mixed emotions towards their city reflect a tension between pride in cultural diversity and discontent regarding local governance and living conditions.

As the current socio-political landscape evolves, commentators and politicians alike, including shadow justice secretary Robert Jenrick, have spoken of the need to preserve a cohesive national identity, warning against the perceived fraying of communal ties in the face of mass immigration and prevailing "woke culture." Yet, while London remains a microcosm of cultural amalgamation, it also serves as a litmus test for wider discussions on identity and national pride across the UK.

The data highlights an enduring regional and national dichotomy, where London’s sense of identity clashes with the more traditional understanding of Englishness prevalent elsewhere in the country, challenging the notion of a unified national identity in modern Britain.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14764293/London-weak-attachment-England-new-poll-diversity-multicultural.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.qmul.ac.uk/media/news/2017/hss/londoners-identify-more-with-their-city-than-with-britain-england-or-europe.html)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14764293/London-weak-attachment-England-new-poll-diversity-multicultural.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.qmul.ac.uk/media/news/2017/hss/londoners-identify-more-with-their-city-than-with-britain-england-or-europe.html)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14764293/London-weak-attachment-England-new-poll-diversity-multicultural.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://yougov.co.uk/politics/articles/6330-londoners-just-concerned-about-immigration)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14764293/London-weak-attachment-England-new-poll-diversity-multicultural.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[4]](https://www.ipsos.com/en-uk/muslim-attitudes-real-story), [[5]](https://www.qmul.ac.uk/media/news/2019/hss/londoners-want-to-be-represented-by-local-people.html)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14764293/London-weak-attachment-England-new-poll-diversity-multicultural.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://yougov.co.uk/politics/articles/6330-londoners-just-concerned-about-immigration)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14764293/London-weak-attachment-England-new-poll-diversity-multicultural.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[7]](https://inews.co.uk/news/uk/national-pride-england-london-160973)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14764293/London-weak-attachment-England-new-poll-diversity-multicultural.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://yougov.co.uk/politics/articles/6330-londoners-just-concerned-about-immigration)
* Paragraph 8 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14764293/London-weak-attachment-England-new-poll-diversity-multicultural.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[6]](https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200506/cmselect/cmhaff/462/462we06.htm)
* Paragraph 9 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14764293/London-weak-attachment-England-new-poll-diversity-multicultural.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14764293/London-weak-attachment-England-new-poll-diversity-multicultural.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.qmul.ac.uk/media/news/2017/hss/londoners-identify-more-with-their-city-than-with-britain-england-or-europe.html> - A 2017 survey by Queen Mary University of London revealed that Londoners identify more strongly with their city than with Britain, England, or Europe. The study found that 46% of respondents considered themselves primarily as Londoners, with 25% identifying as European, 17% as British, and 12% as English. The research highlighted that views about European identity were much more polarised than other identities, with a quarter of Londoners ranking it their highest and a larger group placing it at the bottom of their choices.
3. <https://yougov.co.uk/politics/articles/6330-londoners-just-concerned-about-immigration> - A YouGov poll indicated that immigration is the second most important political issue for Londoners, with 42% stating it will influence their voting decisions in the next election. This concern is consistent with national trends, where 44% of Britons consider immigration a top issue. The survey also highlighted an age divide, with younger Londoners (18-24 years) being more positive towards immigration and ethnic diversity compared to older residents.
4. <https://www.ipsos.com/en-uk/muslim-attitudes-real-story> - Ipsos research shows that London's Muslim community shares similar views with the broader population on various issues, including democracy, concern about crime, and pride in their local neighbourhoods. Approximately 74% of Muslims and 70% of Londoners feel proud of their local neighbourhood. Additionally, 88% of Muslims and 83% of Londoners identify with London. The study underscores the shared values and concerns across London's diverse communities.
5. <https://www.qmul.ac.uk/media/news/2019/hss/londoners-want-to-be-represented-by-local-people.html> - A 2019 YouGov poll commissioned by Queen Mary University of London found that 60% of London voters desire more councillors from their local area. The survey also revealed that 37% of respondents want more councillors from an ethnic minority background, with 50% of BAME Londoners expressing this preference. The study highlighted significant age and political divides, with younger and Labour-supporting Londoners more likely to advocate for increased ethnic minority representation.
6. <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200506/cmselect/cmhaff/462/462we06.htm> - A 2005 House of Commons report presented various statistics on multiculturalism in Britain. It cited a BBC/MORI poll where 68% of people disagreed that the policy of multiculturalism had been a mistake and should be abandoned. Additionally, 62% of British people agreed that 'multiculturalism makes Britain a better place to live.' The report also highlighted that 75% of Londoners enjoy the cultural diversity of the city, marking an 8-point increase from 2003.
7. <https://inews.co.uk/news/uk/national-pride-england-london-160973> - An iNews article discussed a survey revealing that national pride and a sense of English identity are stronger outside of London. The survey found that 84% of people in the North, 83% in the Midlands, and 83% in the rest of the South identify as English, compared to 63% in London. Additionally, 61% of people in the North, 59% in the Midlands, and 60% in the rest of the South feel proud to be English, compared to 45% in London.