

# The Great Friendship Project



**Building Friendships.  
Ending Loneliness.**





# About Us



**The Great Friendship Project** is a youth-led non-profit set-up to tackle loneliness through campaigns, research and community activities.

We're on a mission to address the loneliness epidemic and build a more **socially connected future** for young adults - where no one feels they've got nowhere to turn, and loneliness can be spoken about without shame.

**Building Friendships. Ending Loneliness.**





# Founder's Story



“At the time, I most needed the doors to be open for connection; the **world had closed its doors** - taking an extreme toll on my mental health and leaving me in a far lonelier place than I'd ever been before.”



Building Friendships. Ending Loneliness.



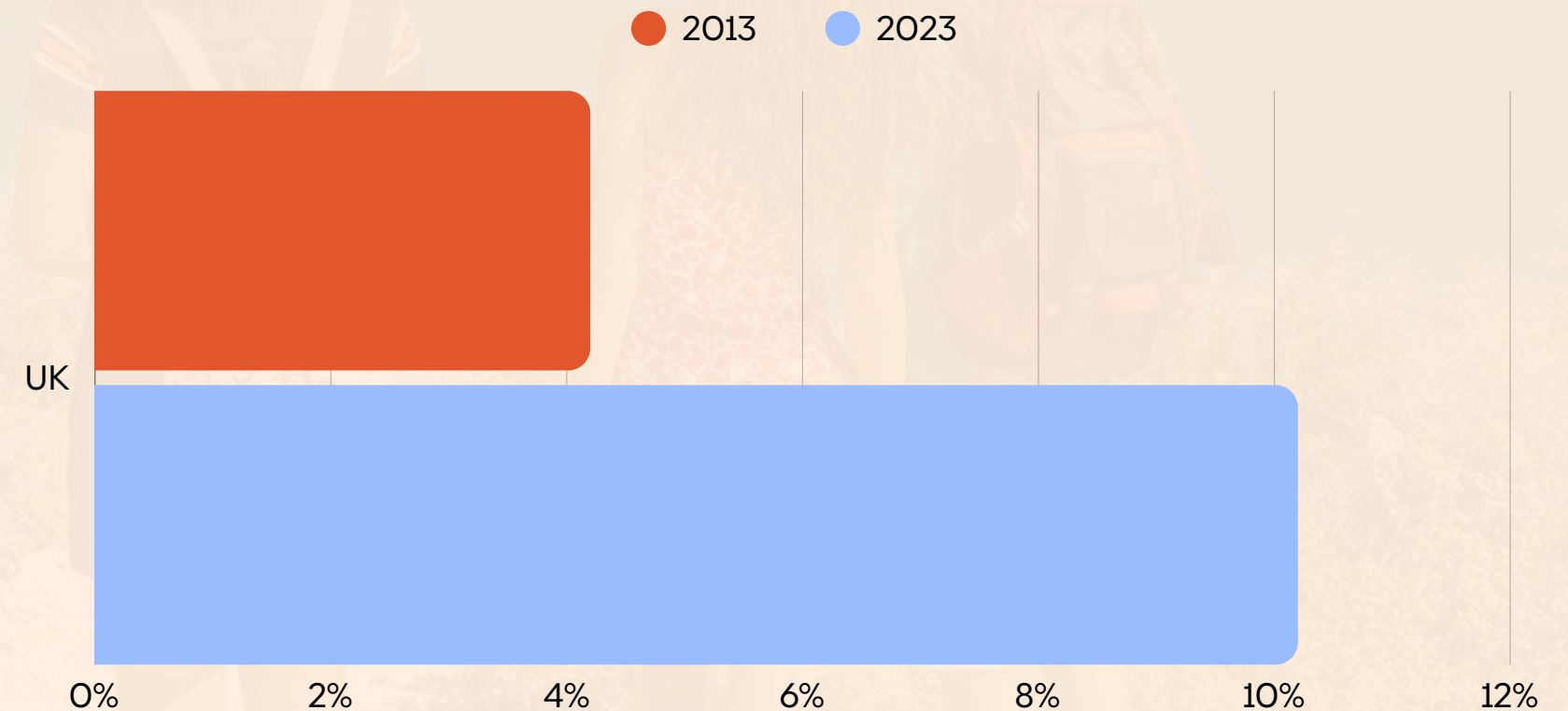


# The Facts



- Loneliness rates amongst young people has **over doubled in the last 10 years.**
- Roughly 1 in 10 young adults now report feeling lonely often or always - that's around a **million young people, between 18-34.**

Percentage of under-30s who say they felt lonely "most" or "all of the time" in the past week, by country



Source: The Times & European Social Survey

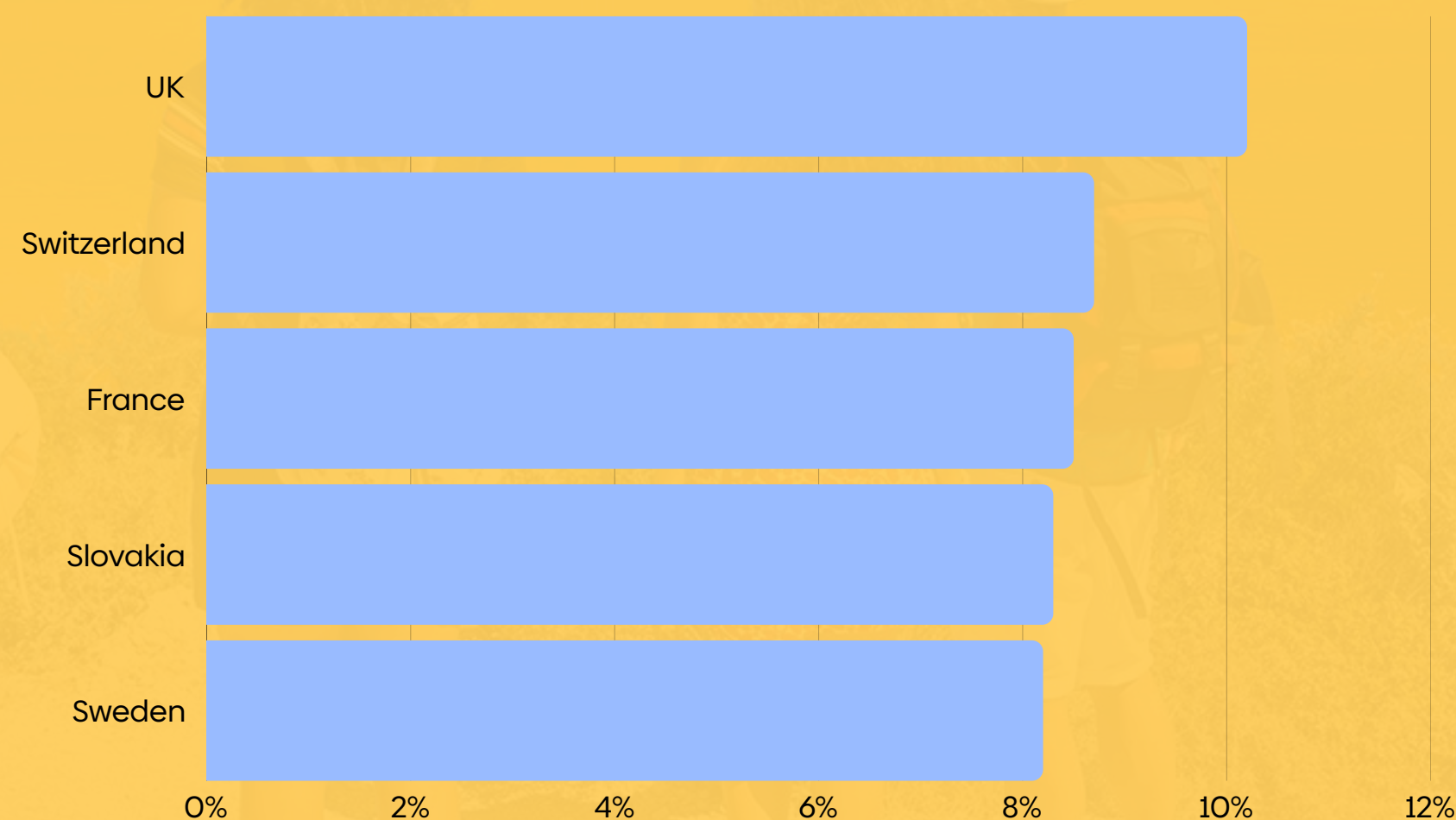


# The Facts



- The UK now has the **highest rates of loneliness** in Europe, amongst those under 30 years old.
- Young people aged 16–34 are now **five times more likely to suffer from chronic loneliness** than those over 65.

Percentage of under-30s who say they felt lonely "most" or "all of the time" in the past week, by country



Source: The Times & European Social Survey



# How did we get here?



- **Digital Life Replaced Real Life:** We've increasingly shifted our lives - shopping, working and socialising online, often at the cost of real-world connection.
- **Loss of Third Spaces:** Places that once brought people together - youth clubs, community centres, faith spaces have closed or become underfunded.
- **The Impact of the Pandemic:** Lockdowns disrupted social development, especially for young adults. Many never fully rebuilt those lost routines or relationships.
- **Cost of Living Crisis:** Financial pressure limits access to social activities, travel, or even stable housing - making it harder to build independence, friendships, or community.

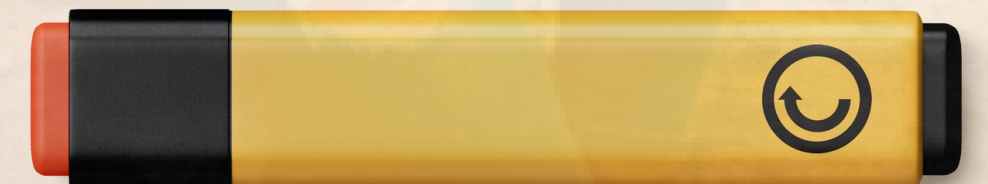




# The Problem for LA's



- **Funding and focus has been historically placed on the elderly**, leading to young adults being overlooked and a short supply of appropriate interventions and pathways.
- **Talking therapies are overstretched**, expensive and not always appropriate
- **Social Exclusion & Vulnerability:** Disconnected young adults can be more susceptible to exploitation, political polarisation and radicalisation.
- **Nearly 1 million young adults are not in education, employment, or training (NEET)** - the highest level in over a decade, increasing demand across local services, welfare and housing support.





# How We Tackle Loneliness



We tackle loneliness amongst young adults in the **following 4 ways:**

## 1. Community Activities



## 2. Resources & Support



## 3. Research



## 4. Campaigns





# Our Activities



- **Activities for everyone** - from board games afternoons, picnics, walks, quizzes and many more - our schedule of activities is designed to cater for a wide range of interests.
- **Co-Created by Members** - Shaped by 3 years of feedback and lived experience.
- **Welcoming & Stigma-Free** - Youth-led, safe, and judgement-free spaces.
- **Free or Low-Cost** - Connection shouldn't come at a cost and so we work to keep it affordable.
- **Backed by Research** - Rooted from findings from leading research, insights and science of connection, endorsed by one of the leading experts on friendship - Robin Dunbar.





# Our Impact



- Since November 2021, we've built a community of over **45,000 young adults** and in the last year alone, over **18,500 accessed our activities**, with 77% saying they **built new friendships through our work**.
- We're currently working with the University of Exeter and QMUL on a **UKRI-funded research project, ahead of a national expansion**.
- We've formed partnerships with organisations like **Sky, Hinge, Canva, and Snapchat**, and we have **been featured in iNews, Mail Online, and The Independent**.
- Our awareness work has helped tackle stigma of loneliness nationwide and our **#TheLonelyMillion campaign alone reached over 40 million people** last winter and culminated in an event at Parliament.





# Working with Local Authorities



**We collaborate with councils to reduce loneliness among young adults through:**

- **Delivering a local model of our project in your borough** - or helping you design your own programme of support
- **Supporting the creation or delivery of your local loneliness strategy**
- **Running bespoke campaigns and co-delivered events** to engage young people and reduce stigma
- **Mutual signposting between our network and local services** to ensure joined-up support

