SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

Table 5 Breakdown of ethnic categories of the analytical sample (65+)

White: British/English/Scottish/Welsh /Northern Irish	**95.22** (6887)
White: Irish	**1.19** (157)
White: Gypsy/Irish Traveler	**0.03** (3)
Any other White background	**1.69** (137)
Mixed	**0.24** (31)
Indian	**0.56** (96)
Pakistani	**0.11** (28)
Bangladeshi	**0.06** (9)
Chinese	**0.06** (11)
Any other Asian background	**0.12** (21)
Caribbean	**0.32** (78)
African	**0.15** (31)
Any other Black background	**0.01** (1)
Other: Arab	**0.07** (5)
Any other ethnic background	**0.17** (18)
Total	**100**

Unweighted Observations	7499
Weighted count	8489.6

Weighted column percentages in bold
Un-weighted number in parentheses

Table 6 Logistic regression models showing the association between friendship network indicators and selected sociodemographic factors (Age: 65+)

	Half or less than half of friends live locally		2 close friends or fewer		Half or less than half of friends are family members	
	Unadjusted	Adjusted	Unadjusted	Adjusted	Unadjusted	Adjusted
Ethnicity						
Baseline: White						
Mixed/Other	**2.394***	**2.218***	**1.662**	**1.662**	**1.695**	**1.635**
	(1.151,4.978)	(1.077,4.569)	(0.770,3.588)	(0.745,3.707)	(0.802,3.580)	(0.783,3.412)
Asian	**1.911****	**1.736***	**1.805****	**1.763****	**1.058**	**1.044**
	(1.248,2.925)	(1.132,2.662)	(1.212,2.687)	(1.168,2.661)	(0.723,1.549)	(0.699,1.560)
Black	**1.770*****	**1.612*****	**1.771*****	**1.519***	**1.626*****	**1.568****
	(1.346,2.328)	(1.216,2.136	(1.291,2.431)	(1.093,2.111)	(1.229,2.151)	(1.174,2.094)
Age						
Baseline: Under 75						
Over 75		**0.791****		**1.546*****		**0.720*****
		(0.684,0.913)		(1.339,1.786)		(0.633,0.819)
Gender						
Baseline: Male						
Female		**0.949**		**0.812*****		**0.840****
		(0.846,1.063)		(0.718,0.917)		(0.755,0.935)
Marital Status						
Baseline: Married[A]						
Not married[B]		**1.066**		**1.594****		**0.965**
		(0.796,1.428)		(1.196,2.125)		(0.733,1.270)
Household size						
Baseline: Two or more						
One person		**0.989**		**0.696***		**1.374***
		(0.731,1.339)		(0.520,0.931)		(1.043,1.810)
Current Financial Situation						
Baseline: Comfortable/OK/Managing						
Finding it difficult		**1.365**		**1.319**		**0.907**
		(0.878,2.120)		(0.826,2.105)		(0.579,1.419)
Rurality						
Baseline: Urban						
Rural		**0.824****		**0.801****		**0.991**
		(0.714,0.951)		(0.685,0.937)		(0.862,1.139)
Long-term illness						
Baseline: No						
Yes		**1.041**		**1.211****		**1.012**
		(0.922,1.175)		(1.062,1.381)		(0.894,1.144)
Life Satisfaction						
Baseline: Satisfied						
Dissatisfied		**1.210**		**1.159**		**0.968**
		(0.996,1.470)		(0.945,1.422)		(0.801,1.169)
Neither		**1.283***		**1.480****		**0.937**
		(1.018,1.617)		(1.162,1.884)		(0.745,1.178)
N	7499	7499	7499	7499	7499	7499

*Odds ratios in bold; 95% confidence intervals in parentheses. *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001*
[A]*refers to married, civil partnerships and cohabiting individuals*
[B]*refers to single, divorced, separated, never married, widowed, former civil partners, surviving civil partners*

Table 7 Logistic regression models showing the association between friendship network indicators and selected sociodemographic factors (Age: 50+)

	Half or less than half of friends live locally		2 close friends or fewer		Half or less than half of friends are family members	
	Unadjusted	Adjusted	Unadjusted	Adjusted	Unadjusted	Adjusted
Ethnicity						
Baseline: White						
Mixed/Other	**2.090***<nowiki>***</nowiki>	**1.954***<nowiki>***</nowiki>	**0.969**	**0.948**	**1.757***<nowiki>*</nowiki>	**1.614***<nowiki>*</nowiki>
	(1.414,3.089)	(1.322,2.887)	(0.620,1.516)	(0.601,1.498)	(1.136,2.717)	(1.032,2.524)
Asian	**1.785***<nowiki>***</nowiki>	**1.663***<nowiki>***</nowiki>	**1.913***<nowiki>***</nowiki>	**1.883***<nowiki>***</nowiki>	**1.048**	**0.954**
	(1.405,2.268)	(1.303,2.122)	(1.522,2.405)	(1.489,2.382)	(0.832,1.319)	(0.754,1.207)
Black	**2.813***<nowiki>***</nowiki>	**2.591***<nowiki>***</nowiki>	**1.650***<nowiki>***</nowiki>	**1.609***<nowiki>**</nowiki>	**1.244**	**1.096**
	(2.163,3.659)	(1.993,3.367)	(1.255,2.170)	(1.210,2.139)	(0.927,1.670)	(0.814,1.477)
Age						
Baseline: Under 65						
Over 65		**0.716***<nowiki>***</nowiki>		**1.215***<nowiki>***</nowiki>		**0.574***<nowiki>***</nowiki>
		(0.657,0.780)		(1.106,1.334)		(0.527,0.627)
Gender						
Baseline: Male						
Female		**0.892***<nowiki>**</nowiki>		**0.862***<nowiki>***</nowiki>		**0.801***<nowiki>***</nowiki>
		(0.830,0.958)		(0.795,0.935)		(0.744,0.863)
Marital Status						
Baseline: Married[A]						
Not married[B]		**0.960**		**1.155**		**1.085**
		(0.821,1.122)		(0.977,1.365)		(0.930,1.265)
Household size						
Baseline: Two or more						
One person		**1.155**		**0.830***<nowiki>*</nowiki>		**1.134**
		(0.976,1.367)		(0.696,0.991)		(0.961,1.338)
Current Financial Situation						
Baseline: Comfortable/OK/Managing						
Finding it difficult		**0.938**		**1.164**		**0.971**
		(0.768,1.145)		(0.947,1.431)		(0.795,1.185)
Rurality						
Baseline: Urban						
Rural		**0.942**		**0.877***<nowiki>*</nowiki>		**0.994**
		(0.855,1.039)		(0.788,0.976)		(0.901,1.097)
Long-term illness						
Baseline: No						
Yes		**1.020**		**1.239***<nowiki>***</nowiki>		**0.943**
		(0.941,1.104)		(1.135,1.352)		(0.868,1.026)
Life Satisfaction						
Baseline: Satisfied						
Dissatisfied		**1.250***<nowiki>***</nowiki>		**1.212***<nowiki>**</nowiki>		**0.929**
		(1.118,1.399)		(1.067,1.375)		(0.823,1.049)
Neither		**1.186***<nowiki>*</nowiki>		**1.438***<nowiki>***</nowiki>		**0.889**
		(1.028,1.369)		(1.231,1.678)		(0.765,1.033)
N	16032	16032	16032	16032	16032	16032

*Odds ratios in bold; 95% confidence intervals in parentheses. *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001*
[A]refers to married, civil partnerships and cohabiting individuals
[B]refers to single, divorced, separated, never married, widowed, former civil partners, surviving civil partners

Recoding selected variables from Wave 6 of Understanding Society

Key Variables

Ethnicity

In this study, the acronym BME stands for black and minority ethnic. It is often used in academic literature, by politicians and in the media to refer to individuals living in the UK who do not identify as belonging to the White majority ethnic population. The concept of ethnicity is complex and can be measured in numerous ways. In Understanding Society, ethnicity is measured by asking participants what their ethnic group is. As per the 2011 Census, the participants are provided with eighteen options to choose from presented in the table below. However, this survey had small numbers of individuals in some groups like Bangladeshi or Arab (see table 7 above). It was, therefore, necessary to combine certain ethnic groups resulting in four overarching groups; Asian, Black, Mixed/Other and White which would allow for easier comparisons when the results are presented on the cross tabulations.

Understanding Society Wave 6 Ethnic group option.
White: British/English/Scottish/Welsh/Northern Irish
White: Irish
White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller
White: Any other White background
Mixed: White and Black Caribbean
Mixed: White and Black African
Mixed: White and Asian
Mixed: Any other mixed background
Asian/Asian British: Indian
Asian/Asian British: Pakistani
Asian/Asian British: Bangladeshi
Asian/Asian British: Chinese

Asian/Asian British: Any other Asian background
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: Caribbean
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: African
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: Any other Black background
Other Ethnic Group: Arab
Other Ethnic Group: Any other ethnic group

Age

In Wave 6 of Understanding Society, this is derived from the exact date of birth and the date of the interview. The data were grouped into ten year age intervals for comparisons amongst different age groups; 65-74, 75-84, 85-94 and 95 and over.

Gender

Gender, this is derived from the question related to the sex of the participant to which participants have two options; Male or Female.

Marital Status

Respondents were asked to state their legal marital status at the time of the interview. For ease of comparison, the available responses shown in the table below were re-coded into 4 categories; Single, Married/Civil partnership Divorced/Separated, and Widowed.

Understanding Society Wave 6 : Marital Status options
single, never married/civil partnership
married
civil partner (legal)

separated legally married
divorced
widowed
Separated from civil partner
a former civil partner
surviving civil partner

Household size

At the time of the interview, this variable was calculated by totalling the number of individuals per household including absent household members (Knies, 2016). The responses were re-coded into four categories; 1 Person, 2 People, 3-6 people, and 7+ people.

Geographical location

Geographical location was classed as urban if the address of the respondents fell in an urban area of a population of 10,000 or more and rural if it was less.

Long-standing illness or disability

Respondents were asked whether they had had any long-standing physical or mental impairment, illness or disability over the last 12 months. The respondents stated either yes or no to the question.

Current financial situation

There was a range of variables that could be used to indicate socioeconomic status such as retirement status and pension provision. However, selecting such variables may mask assets, savings, and benefit receipt of some respondents. Thus, current financial situation, a subjective measure of socioeconomic status was selected. There were five responses, but the last two

categories were combined to reflect the responses, of those who were finding it difficult overall. The four categories were Living comfortably, Doing alright, Just about managing and Finding it very/quite difficult.

Overall life satisfaction

This variable was one of the few subjective variables that were indicative of the self-assessed quality of life of the respondent. The respondents were asked to describe how dissatisfied or satisfied they were. The responses listed in the table below were then re-coded into three groups for easier comparison; Dissatisfied, Not satisfied or Dissatisfied Satisfied.

Understanding Society Wave 6: Life Satisfaction options
Completely dissatisfied
Mostly dissatisfied
Somewhat dissatisfied
Neither Sat nor Dissatisfied
Somewhat satisfied
Mostly satisfied
Completely satisfied

Proximity of friends

The variable that was chosen as an indicator of the proximity of some members of the social network was one where respondents were asked the proportion of friends living in their local area. Respondents were provided with five options to choose from; All of them, More than half, About half, Less than half, and None.

Number of Close friends

Respondents were asked to state the number of close friends that they had. Their responses ranged from having no close friends to having 500 close friends. For ease of comparison, these responses were re-coded into four categories; None, 1-2 two friends, 3-6 friends and 7 or more.

Number of family members who are friends

This variable is interesting as it could provide a picture of the type of relationship that older people have with family members and help fill in the knowledge gap in this under-researched area. Respondents were asked to state the proportion of friends who are family members and were given five options to choose from; All of them, More than half, About half, Less than half, and None.

Whether you go out socially or visit friends when you feel like it

This was a multiple-response variable. Respondents were first asked whether not they went out socially or visited friends when they felt like it. Those who answered no to this question were then asked to provide the reasons as to why they did not go out socially or visit their friends as listed in the table below. Only the most cited responses which were most relevant to social isolation and loneliness were selected for analysis. There were various transport related reasons which were all combined into one transport variable. The final list variables that were included were re-coded into the following: financial reason, health reason, transport issue, no one to go with, caring responsibilities and nowhere to go.

Understanding Society Wave 6: Reasons for not going out socially
Too busy / not enough time
Financial reasons
A health condition, illness or impairment, or disability

No public transport available
Public transport is infrequent or unreliable
Can't access the public transport that is available
No access to a car as a driver or passenger
Nowhere to go in the area
No-one to go with
Attitudes of other people
Fear of crowds
Fear of crime
Anxiety / lack of confidence
Caring responsibilities
Other reasons