

Love thy neighbour? Public trust and acceptance of the people who live alongside us

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THE BEHAVIOURAL INSIGHTS TEAM



SOCIAL CHANGE INITIATIVE



Introduction

The World Values Survey (WVS) is an international research programme devoted to the study of people's social, political, economic, religious and cultural values around the world. Running since 1981, the WVS is the world's largest and most widely used social survey, with over 800,000 data downloads per year. The WVS covers 120 countries represented across seven waves of data, with the most recent wave – 7 – the largest wave yet.

The questionnaire has extensive coverage of a huge range of attitudes, beliefs and values. The WVS also has a 50% overlap with the European Values Survey (EVS), opening up comparisons with another five waves of European data.

In the UK, fieldwork was completed Mar-Sept 2022 by Ipsos, among a random probability sample of **3,056 adults aged 18+**. This included respondents in England (1,645) and boost samples in Scotland (523), Wales (437) and Northern Ireland (446). This means not only can we compare the UK against other countries around the world, but also the four UK nations against each other. (See the technical details section at the end of this report for more information on the UK sample and international samples.)

How countries were selected for inclusion in this report

This is wave 7 of WVS, which included around 90 countries and ran from 2017 to 2022. This report focuses on comparison with a cross-section of 24 countries from WVS wave 7 and EVS wave 5 (see table for fieldwork years).

Countries were initially shortlisted based on the availability of reliable and accurately weighted data and then narrowed down, focusing on global coverage (based on the [UN's standardised country coding system](#)), regional coverage and population size. This selection gives coverage of 12 of the 17 UN M49 geographic regions across 24 countries, representing almost 50% of the world's population (source: [World Bank](#)).

The latest data for the UK was collected in 2022. However, for analysis of trends over time, data is for Great Britain due to a lack of available trend data from Northern Ireland.

Groups selected and terms used in this report

A set of questions in this report asks the public's views on living next to certain historically marginalised groups. The groups asked about, as well as the terms used to describe them, were decided in the early 1980s and 1990s and therefore reflect the priorities and language of the time. Our analysis and more recent survey waves have not altered these, given the value of tracking long-term trends in public opinion.

Countries included and latest years for which data is available

Australia (2018)	Japan (2019)
Brazil (2018)	Mexico (2018)
Canada (2020)	Morocco (2021)
China (2018)	Nigeria (2017/2018)
Egypt (2018)	Norway (2018)*
France (2018)*	Philippines (2019)
Germany (2017/2018)	Poland (2017/2018)
United Kingdom (2022)+	Russia (2017)
Greece (2017)	South Korea (2017/2018)
Indonesia (2018)	Spain (2017/2018)*
Iran (2020)	Sweden (2017/2018)*
Italy (2018)*	United States (2017)

* European Values Survey (EVS) country; 50% question coverage.

+ UK used comparing WVS7 data; Great Britain used for analysis over time due to data availability.

1. Trust in neighbourhoods

The UK has some of the highest levels of neighbourhood trust internationally



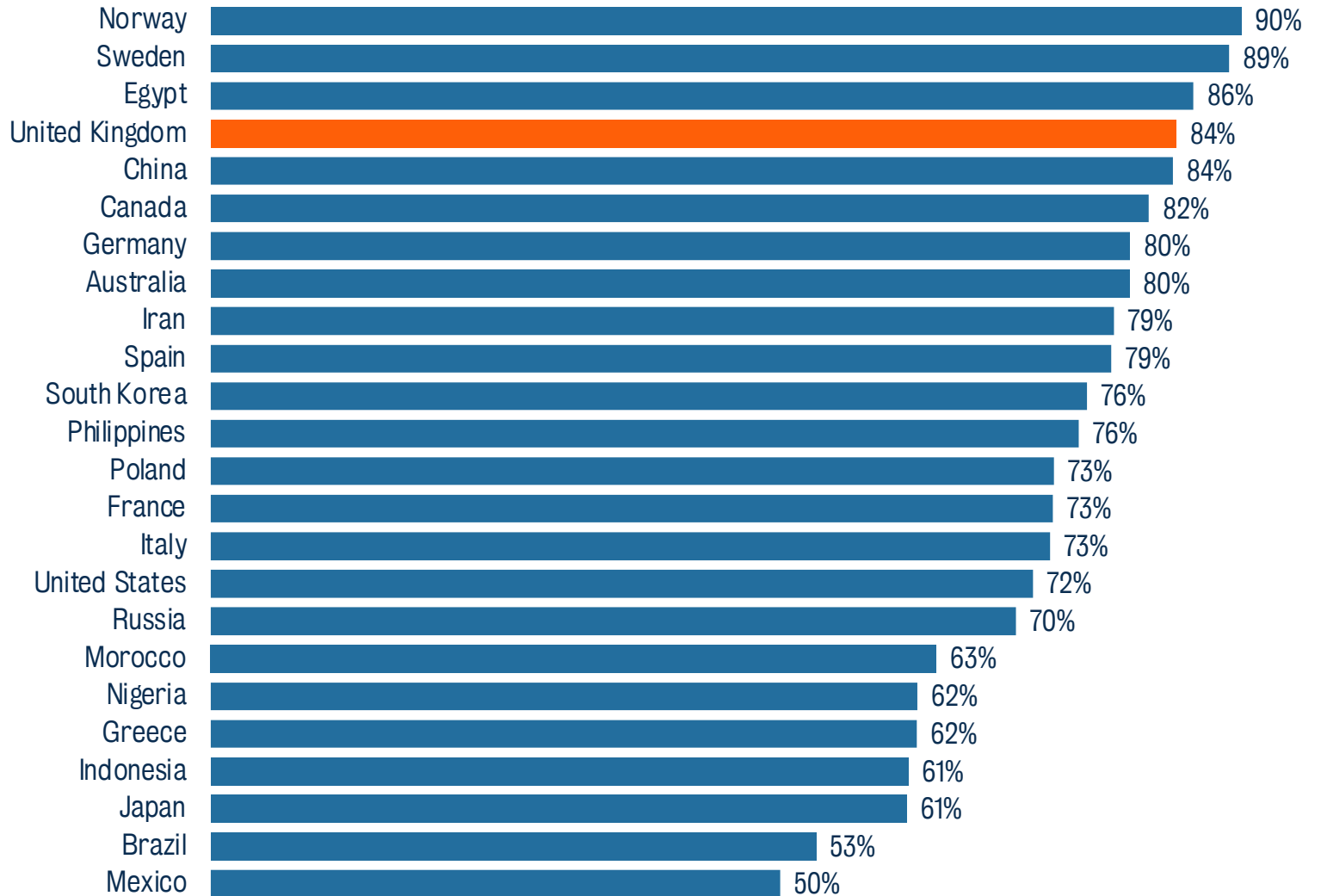
The UK public are among the most likely to say they trust the people in their neighbourhood

Out of 24 countries, the UK (84%) ranks behind only three – Egypt (86%), Sweden (89%) and Norway (90%) – for levels of trust in the people in their neighbourhood.

Other peer nations fare worse on this measure, such as the US, where 72% say they trust the people in their neighbourhood.

However, in all countries except Mexico (50%) a majority still report that they trust their neighbours.

Could you tell me for each whether you trust people from this group completely, somewhat, not very much or not at all? **Your neighbourhood** (% who trust completely/trust somewhat)

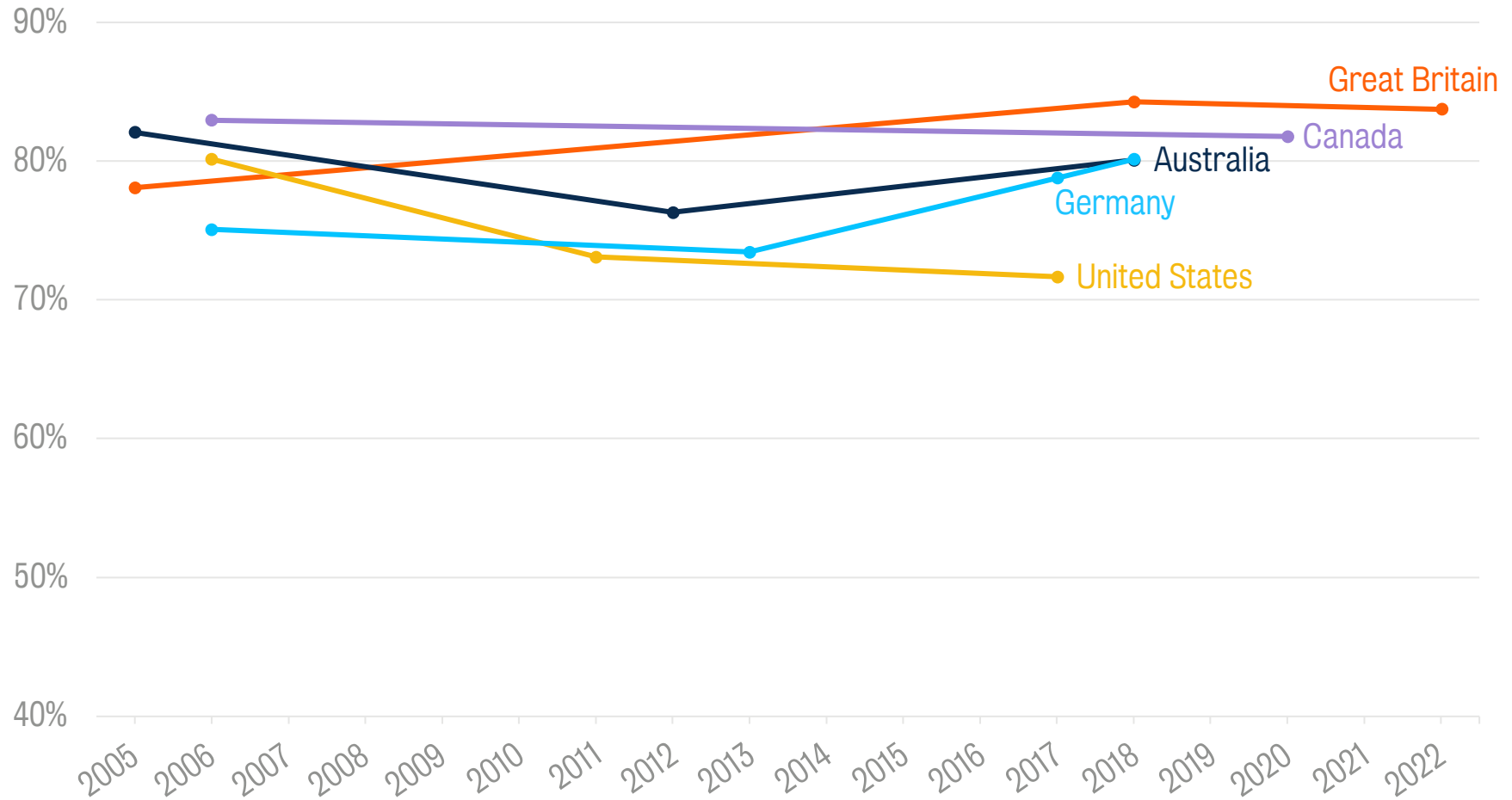


Britons' trust in their neighbours has risen, in contrast to the situation in the US

In 2022, 84% of the British public said they completely or somewhat trusted people in their neighbourhood – up from 78% in 2005.

Over a similar period, people's trust in their neighbourhood also rose slightly in Germany, but remained stable in Canada and Australia, while in the US, trust fell from 80% in 2006 to 72% in 2017.

Could you tell me for each whether you trust people from this group completely, somewhat, not very much or not at all? **Your neighbourhood** (% who trust completely/trust somewhat)



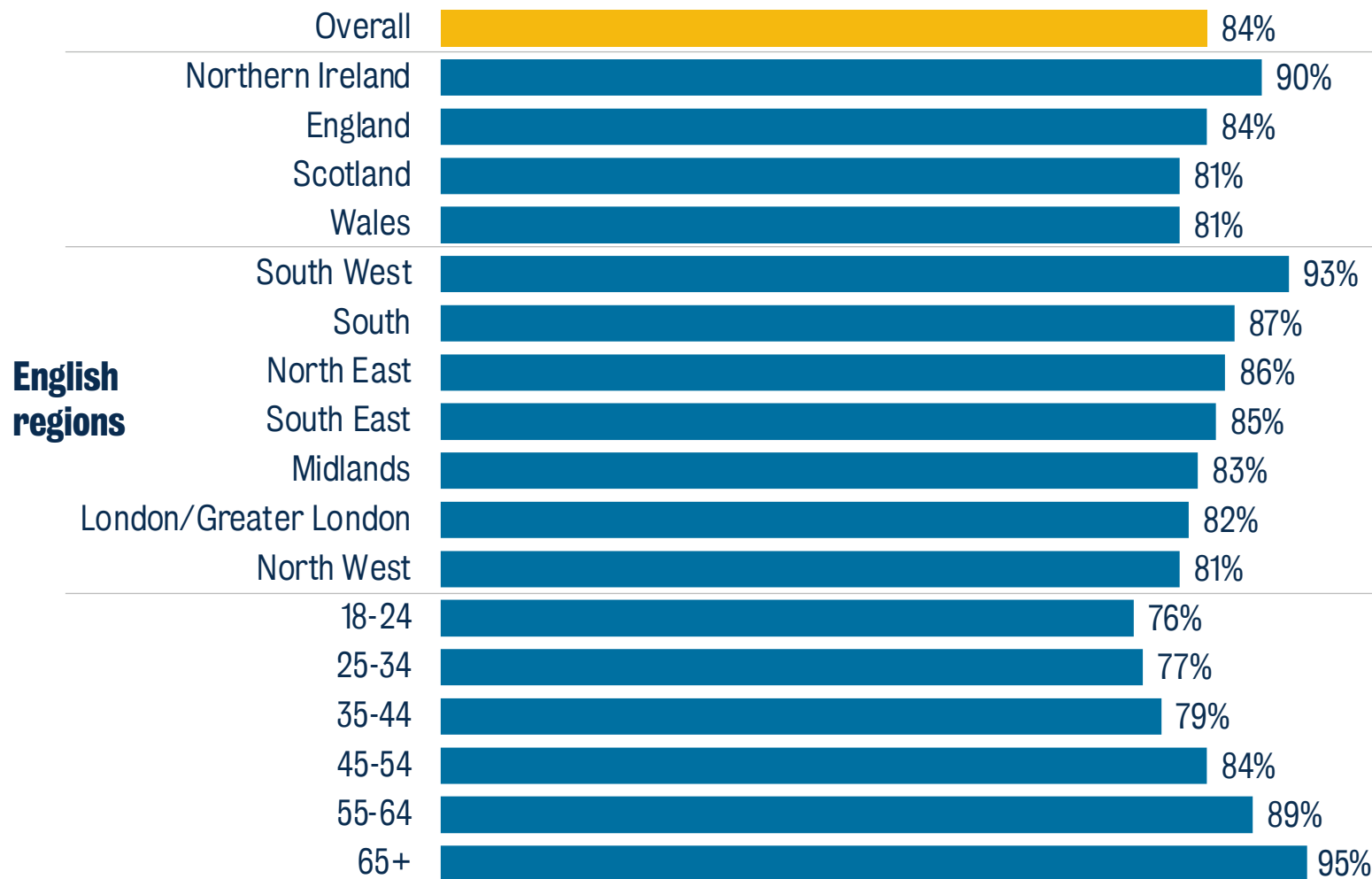
Northern Ireland is the UK nation where people are most likely to trust those in their neighbourhood, while in England, the South West is the most trusting

90% of the public in Northern Ireland say they trust people in their neighbourhood – the highest of the four UK nations.

In England, people in the South West (93%) are the most trusting of their neighbours, while those in the North West (81%) are the least – although London (82%) and the Midlands (83%) have virtually the same levels of trust.

And there is a clear age gradient to attitudes, with trust highest among older groups. 95% of those aged 65+ trust the people in their neighbourhood, compared with 76% of 18- to 24-year-olds.

Could you tell me for each whether you trust people from this group completely, somewhat, not very much or not at all? **Your neighbourhood** (% who trust completely/trust somewhat)



2. Britons' changing views on who they

would not like to have as neighbours

High and rising neighbourhood trust in the UK coincides with the public becoming much more comfortable with some – but not all – historically marginalised groups being their neighbours



Britons today are much less likely than they once were to have a problem living next to gay people, immigrants, people who have AIDS or those of a different race

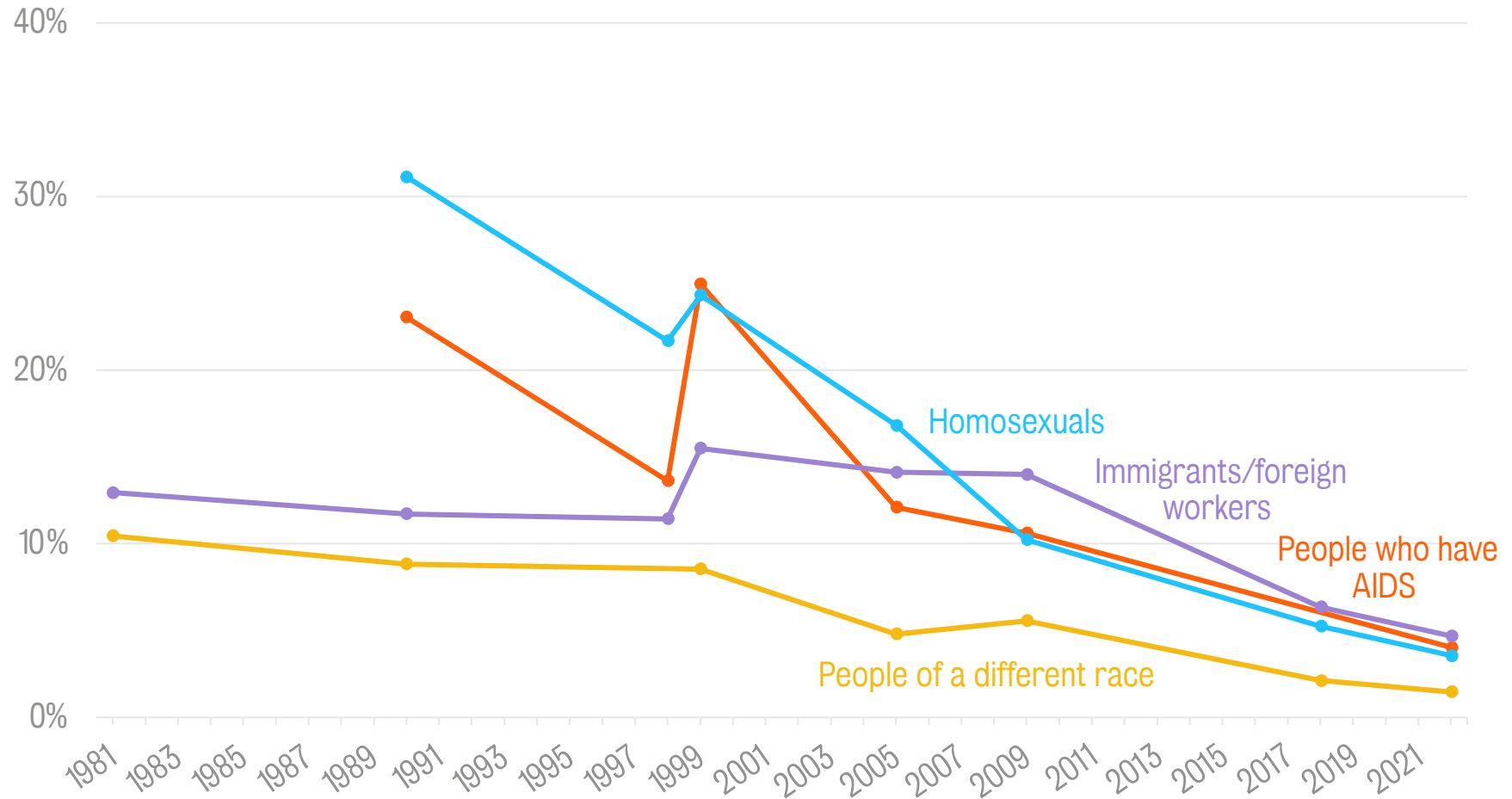
The increasing liberalisation of social attitudes in Britain is reflected in changing views of who the public would not like to have as neighbours.

In 1990, nearly a third (31%) of Britons said they would not like to live next to homosexuals. By 2022, this had fallen to 4%.

Similarly, in 1990, a quarter (23%) of the public said the same about people who have AIDS – a figure that has also now declined to 4%.

Looking further back, between 1981 and 2022, the share of the public who cited immigrants/foreign workers decreased from one in eight (13%) to 5%, while the share who mentioned people of a different race dropped from one in ten (10%) to just 1%.

On this list are various groups of people.* Could you please mention any that you would not like to have as neighbours? (% who mention group in Britain)



*Note groups asked about, as well as the terms used to describe them, were decided in the early 1980s and 1990s and therefore reflect the priorities and language of the time. Base: minimum of 1,000 people aged 18+ surveyed in Great Britain per year. See [WVSA website](#) for sample information

But the public have become *less* accepting of having drug addicts as neighbours, while a majority also take issue with heavy drinkers

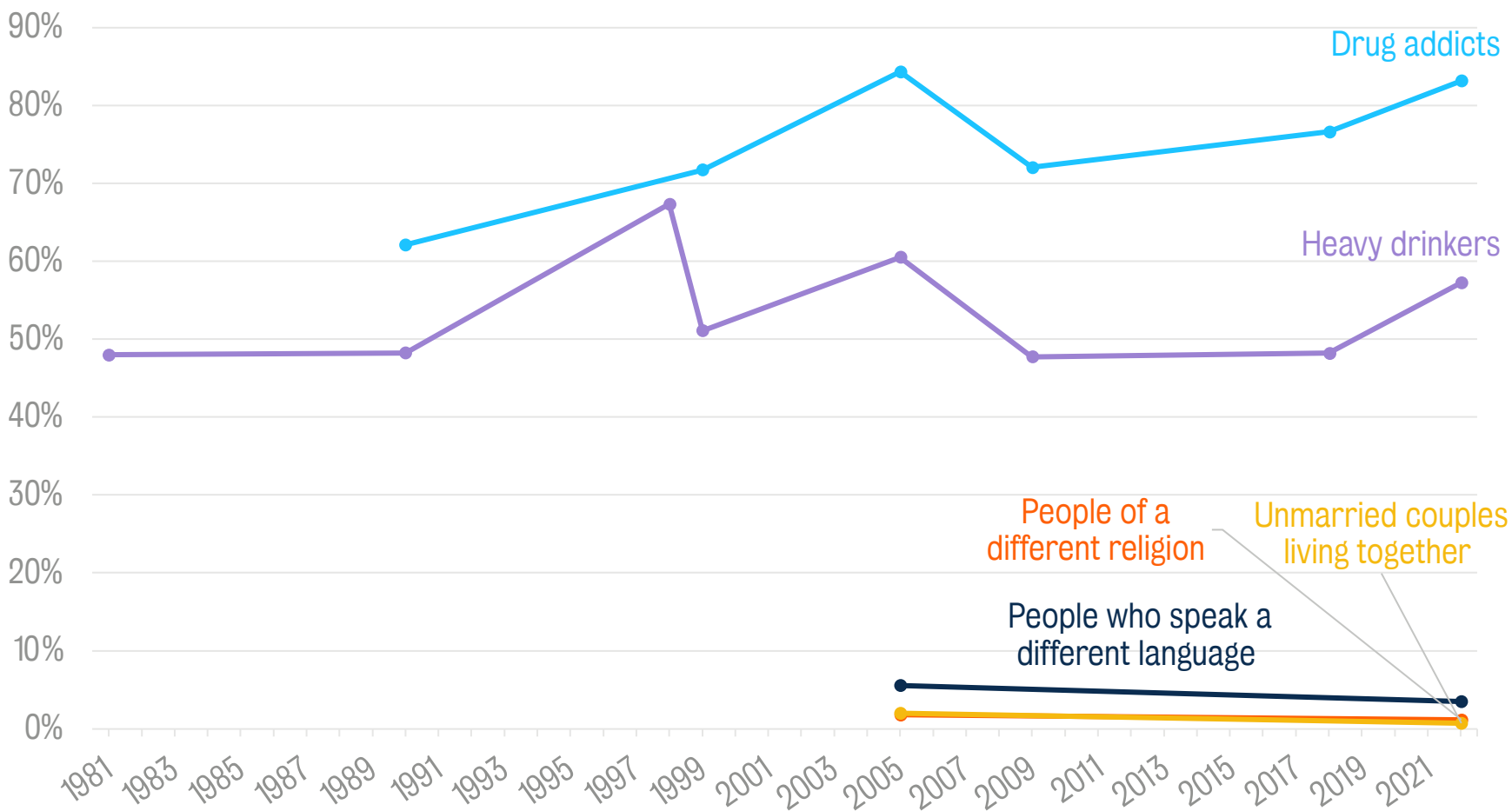
Britons' increasing tolerance of different groups and lifestyles does not extend to those who drink alcohol or use drugs frequently, potentially due to a perception that their intoxication could lead to disturbances or anti-social behaviour in the area.

In 2022, 83% of the public said they would not like to have drug addicts as neighbours – far higher than the 63% who said the same in 1990.

And the proportion who say they'd rather not live next to heavy drinkers is also now higher than it was when trends began, rising from 48% in 1981 to 57% in 2022 – although this is less of a clear upward trend.

Meanwhile, trends in attitudes towards people of a different religion, people who speak a different language and unmarried couples living together only go back to 2005 yet show there has been hardly any change in views since then, with only very small minorities of the public having an issue with living next to them.

On this list are various groups of people.* Could you please mention any that you would not like to have as neighbours? (% who mention group in Britain)



*Note groups asked about, as well as the terms used to describe them, were decided in the early 1980s and 1990s and therefore reflect the priorities and language of the time. Base: minimum of 1,000 people aged 18+ surveyed in Great Britain per year. See [WVSA website](#) for sample information

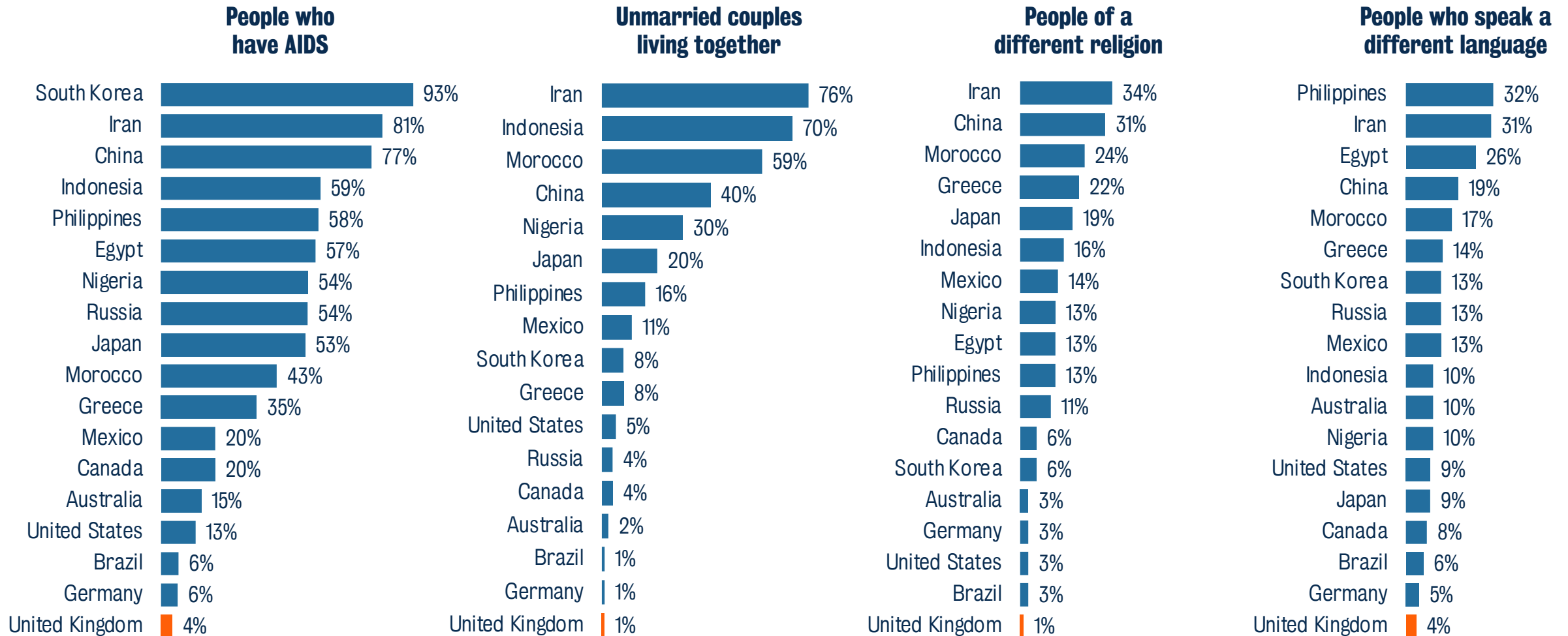
3. How the UK compares with other nations

The UK public are among the most accepting internationally of a range of different groups living next to them – although they are relatively less comfortable with the idea of heavy drinkers or drug addicts being their neighbours



The UK is the most comfortable with having various groups as neighbours, such as people who have AIDS, unmarried couples, and those of a different religion or who speak a different language

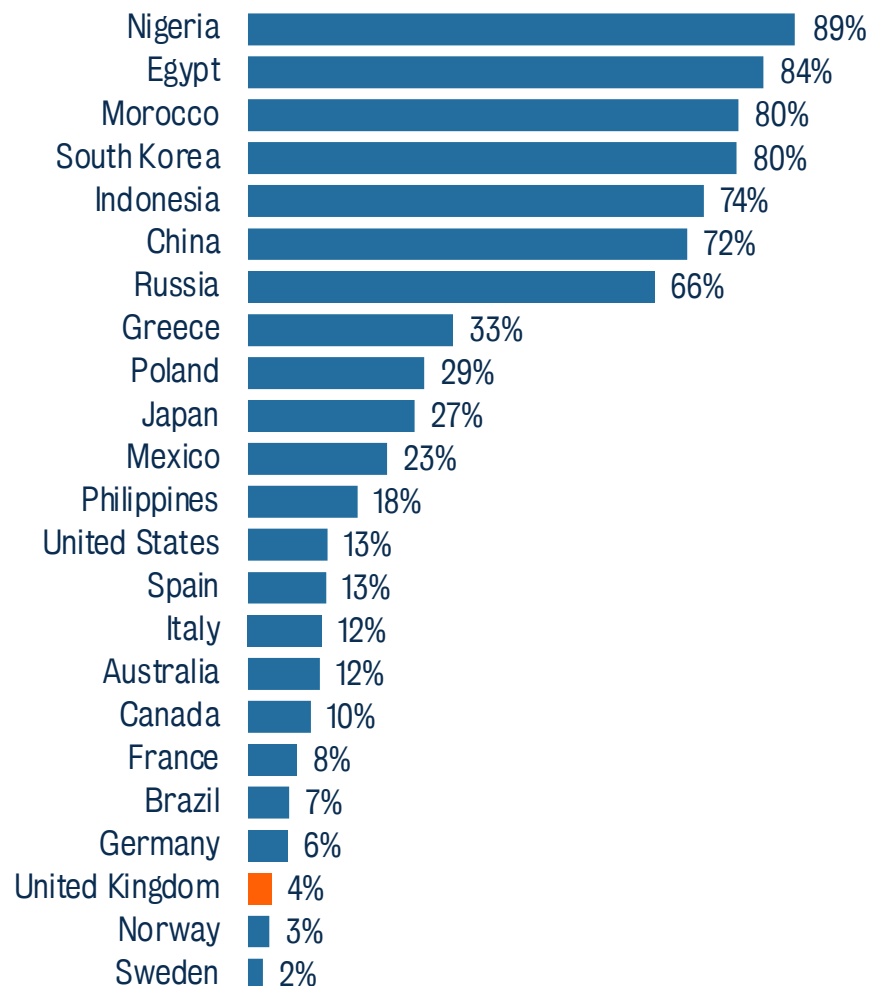
On this list are various groups of people.* Please select any that you would not like to have as neighbours (% who mention group)



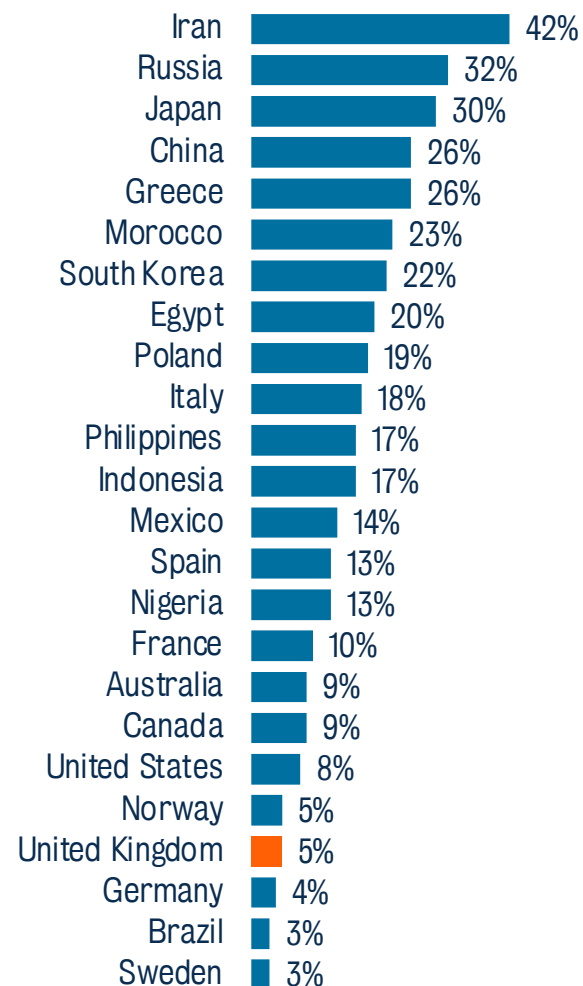
The UK is also among the most comfortable with neighbours who are gay, immigrants or of a different race

On this list are various groups of people.* Please select any that you would not like to have as neighbours (% who mention group)

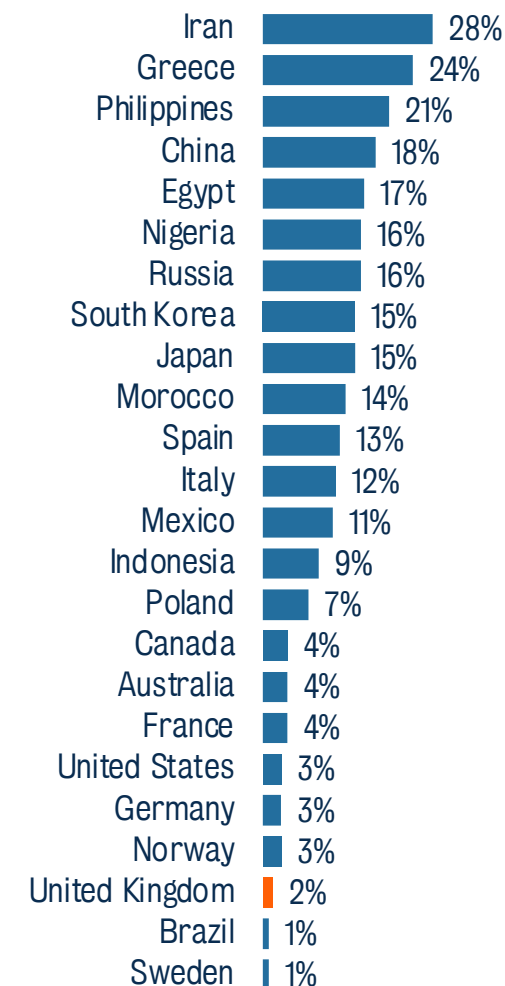
Homosexuals



Immigrants/foreign workers



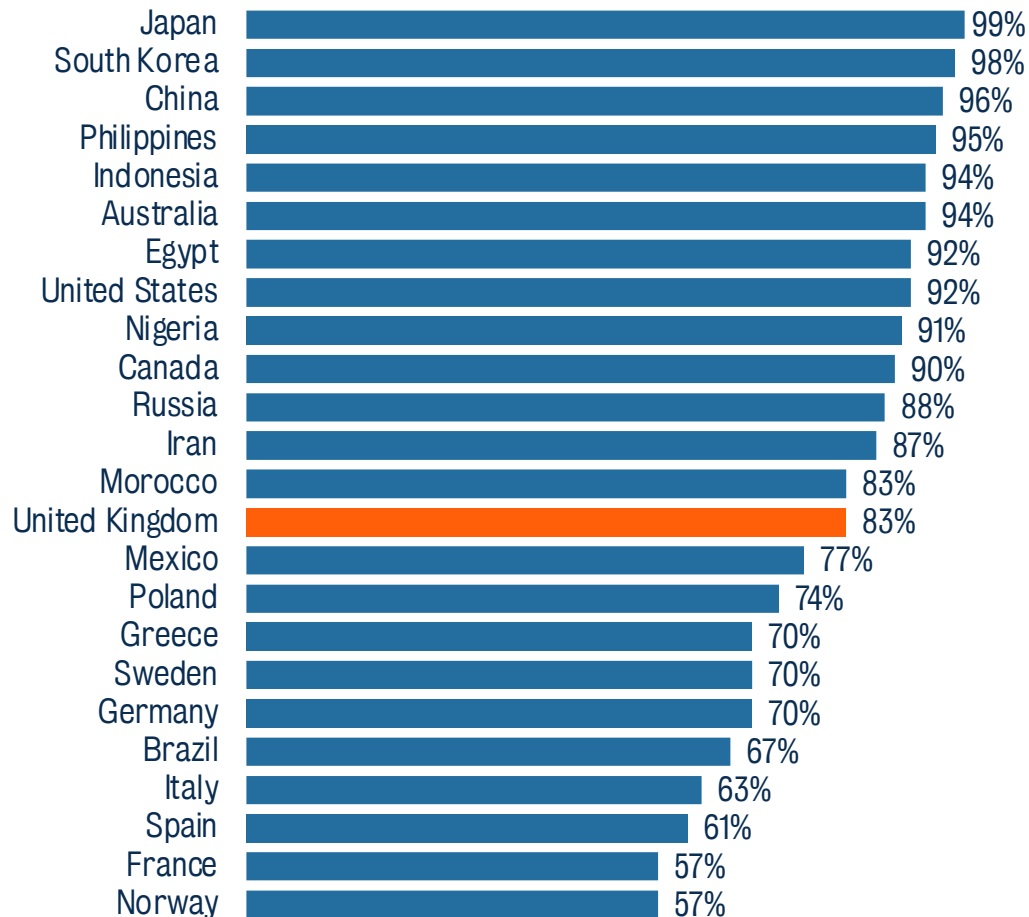
People of a different race



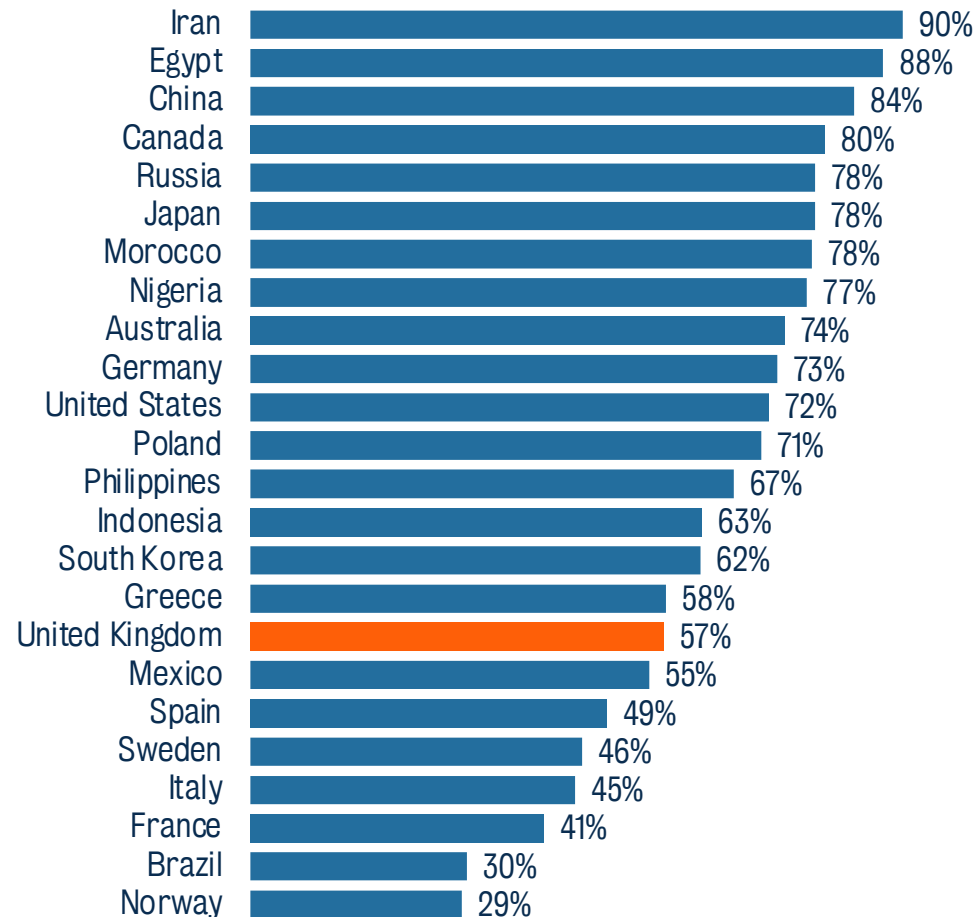
The majority of people in the UK are uncomfortable with the idea of having drug addicts or heavy drinkers as neighbours – and we're less accepting of these behaviours than a number of other countries

On this list are various groups of people.* Please select any that you would not like to have as neighbours (% who mention group)

Drug addicts



Heavy drinkers



4. Who the public would not like to have as neighbours:

Homosexuals



The UK public are among the least likely to take issue with having gay people as neighbours

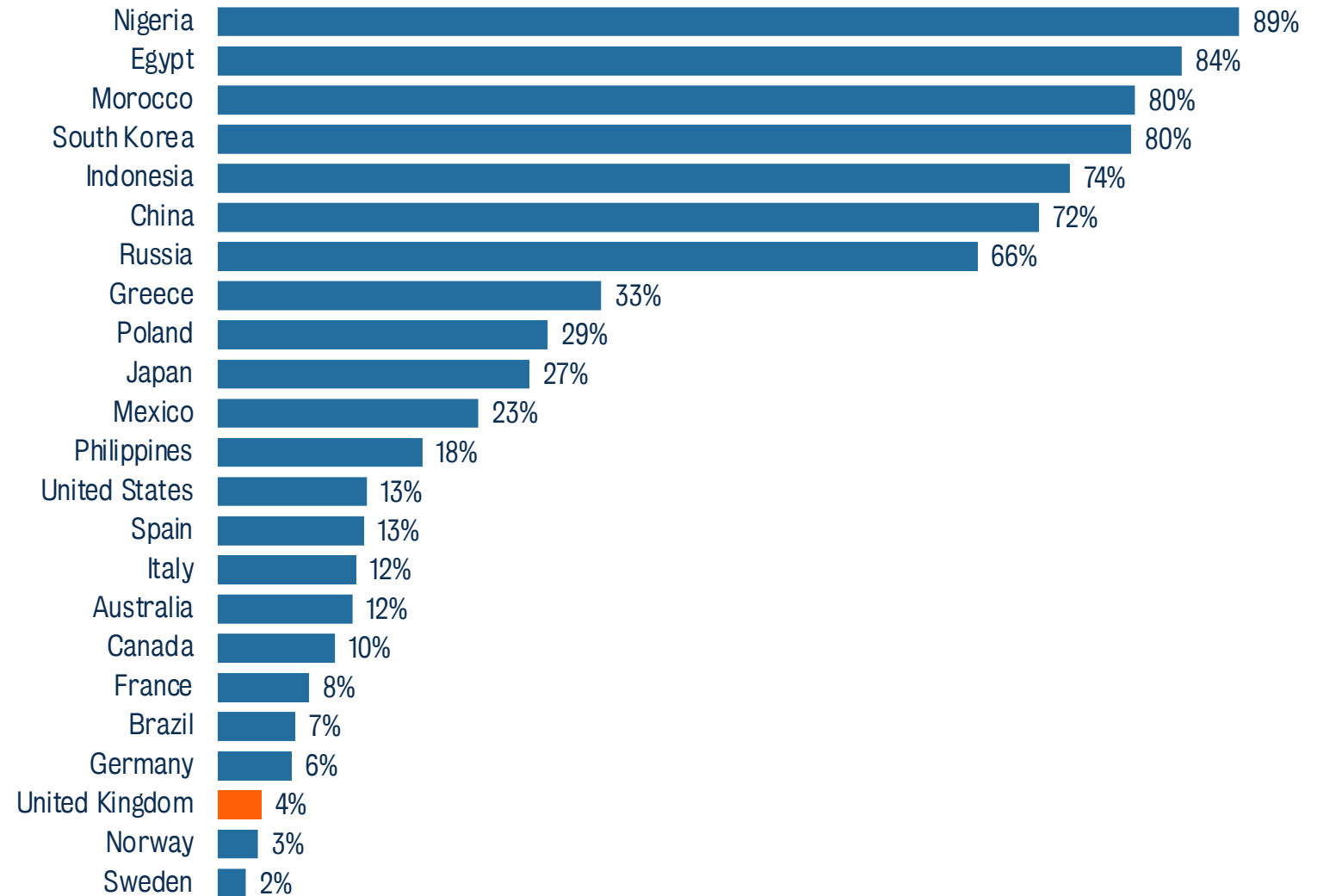
The UK ranks alongside Sweden and Norway as the most relaxed about the idea of having neighbours who are gay, with between just 2% and 4% in these nations saying they'd have a problem with this.

The public in other western countries such as the US (13%), Spain (13%) and Italy (12%) are around three times as likely as those in the UK to say they wouldn't like to have gay neighbours.

These figures contrast hugely with those in many non-western nations. Nigeria is least tolerant on this measure, with as many as nine in 10 (89%) people objecting to having neighbours that were gay, and eight in 10 or more saying the same in Egypt (84%), Morocco (80%) and South Korea (80%).

On this list are various groups of people. Please select any that you would not like to have as neighbours.

Homosexuals (% who mention group)



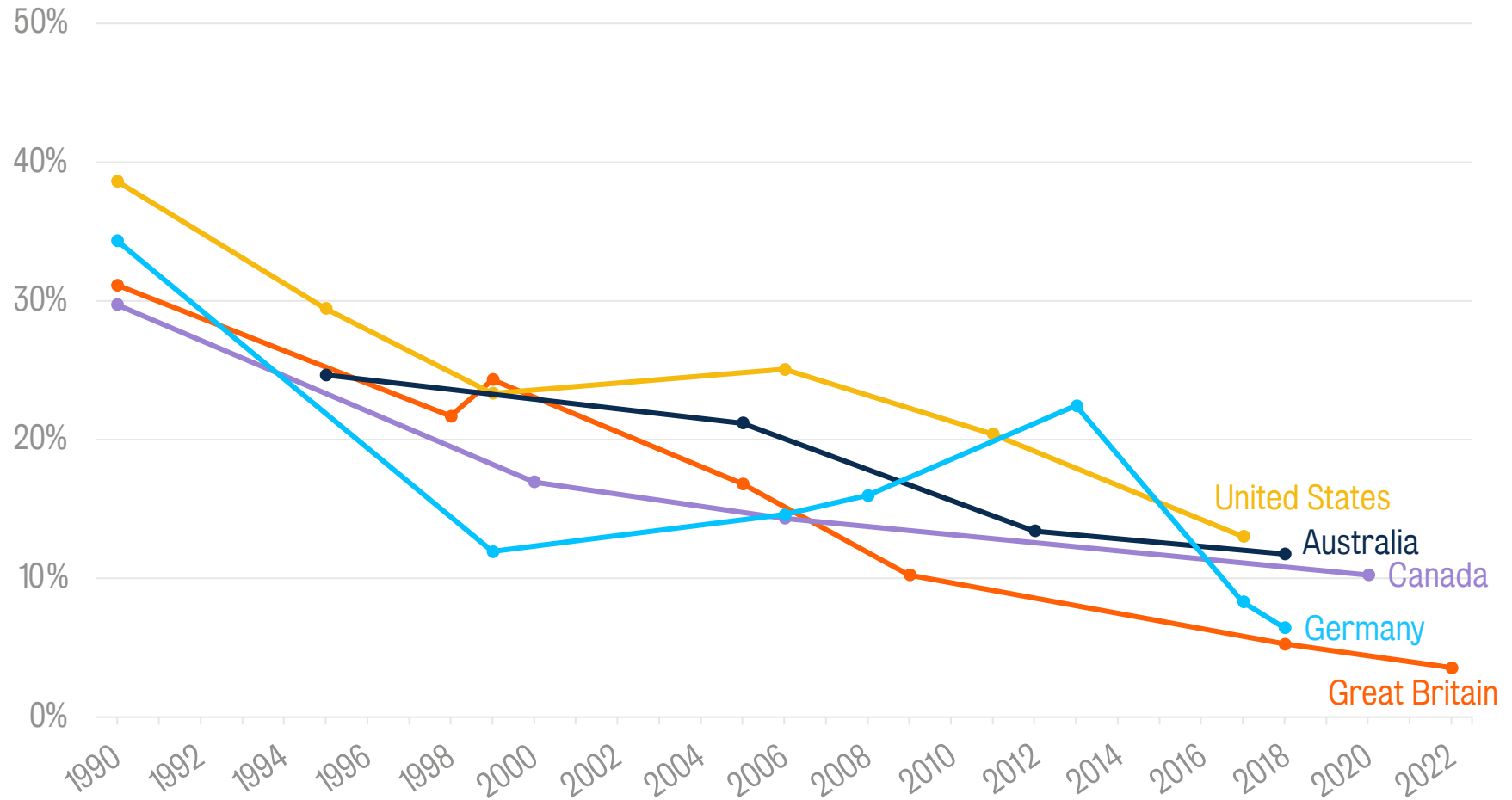
Britons' growing comfort with having neighbours who are gay is mirrored in several high-income democracies

As in Britain, attitudes towards gay people have become much more tolerant in the US, Australia, Germany and Canada, with all of these countries seeing big declines in the share of the public who say they would not like to have neighbours who were homosexual.

Between three and four in 10 people in all of these nations felt this way in the 1990s, but in the latest data this has now fallen to around one in 10 or fewer.

On this list are various groups of people. Please select any that you would not like to have as neighbours.

Homosexuals (% who mention group)

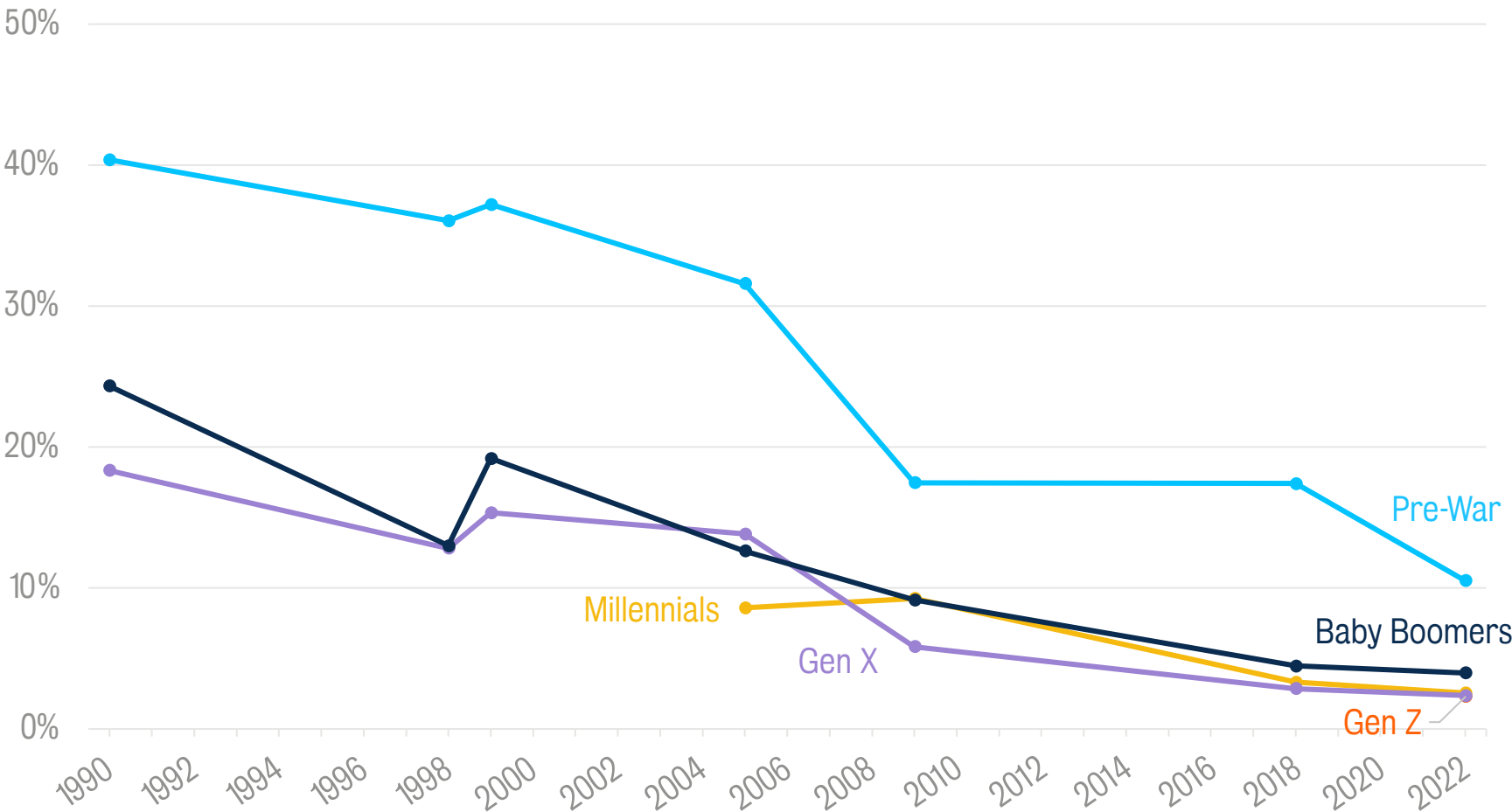


All adult generations in Britain have become much more relaxed about living next to people who are gay, with the Pre-War generation experiencing the largest shift in attitudes

In 1990, 40% of the Pre-War generation said they would not like gay people as neighbours. By 2022, this was down to 11% – the biggest change of any cohort.

Yet those born before 1945 are still more likely than other generations to state such a preference, with 4% or fewer of those in younger cohorts having a problem with neighbours who were gay.

On this list are various groups of people. Please select any that you would not like to have as neighbours.
Homosexuals (% who mention group by generation in Britain)



5. Who the public would not like to have as neighbours:

People who have AIDS



The UK public are the most relaxed about people who have AIDS being their neighbours

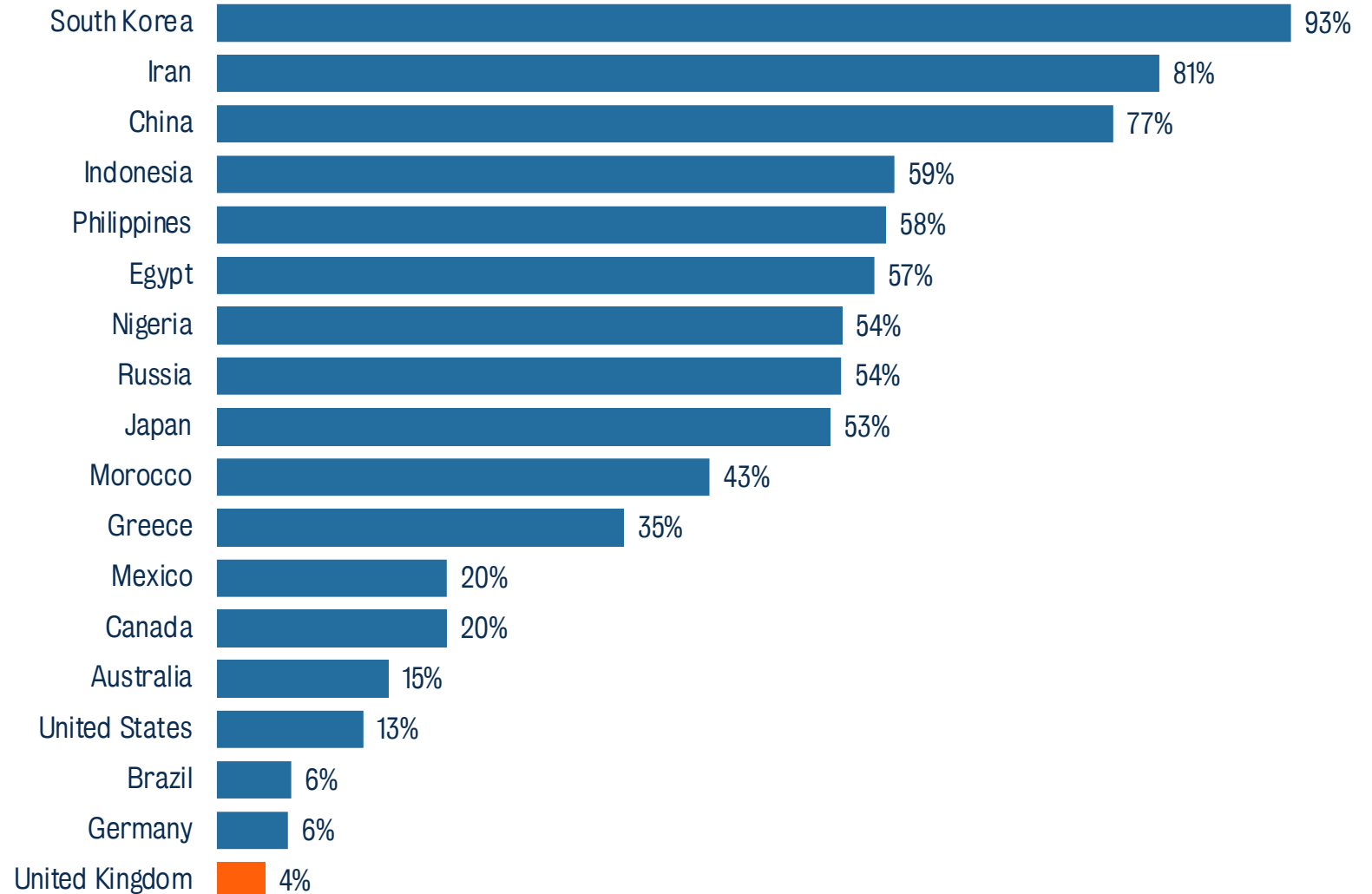
Just 4% of people in the UK say they would not like to live next to people with AIDS, with people in Germany (6%) and Brazil (6%) also among the most tolerant.

By contrast, a third (35%) of those in Greece would have a problem with this – the highest among western nations included – while one in five (20%) also feel this way in Canada.

But in other regions, such as East Asia, discomfort with this idea is far greater. For example, 93% in South Korea say they would not like to live next to people with AIDS, as do majorities in China (77%) and Japan (53%).

On this list are various groups of people. Please select any that you would not like to have as neighbours.

People who have AIDS (% who mention group)



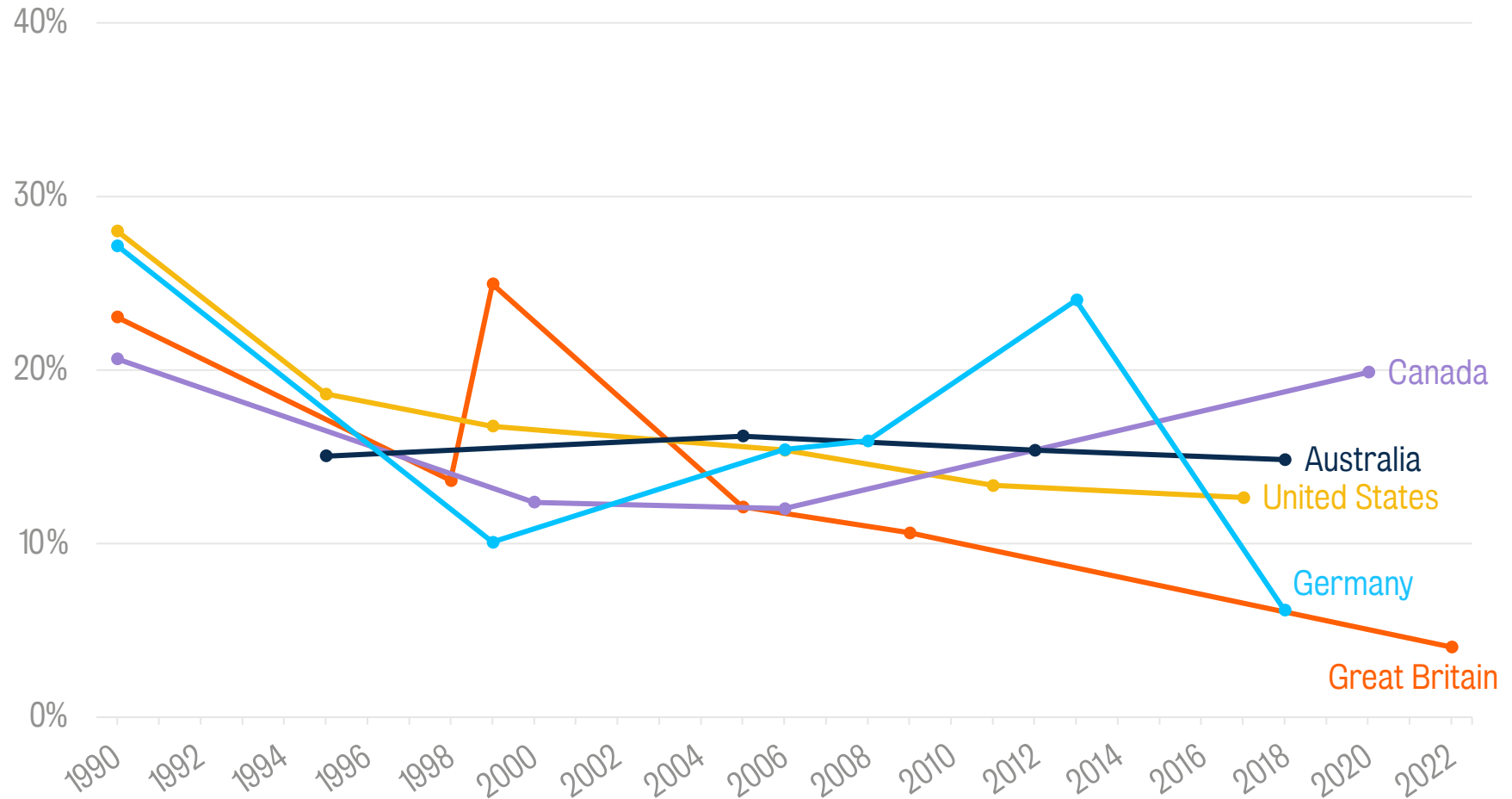
While Britons have become more willing to live next to people who have AIDS, attitudes in Canada and Australia are the same today as they were back in the 1990s

In the most recent data for Britain, the US and Germany, the public in all three countries are more comfortable with the prospect of having neighbours with AIDS than they were when trends began.

But Canada and Australia are exceptions, with the proportion of the public who say they would not like to live next to people with AIDS at the same level as several decades ago.

While attitudes have remained consistently stable in Australia, with one in seven (15%) feeling this way, in Canada, the public have actually become less tolerant in recent years, with one in five (20%) now preferring not to live next to those with AIDS.

On this list are various groups of people. Please select any that you would not like to have as neighbours.
People who have AIDS (% who mention group)

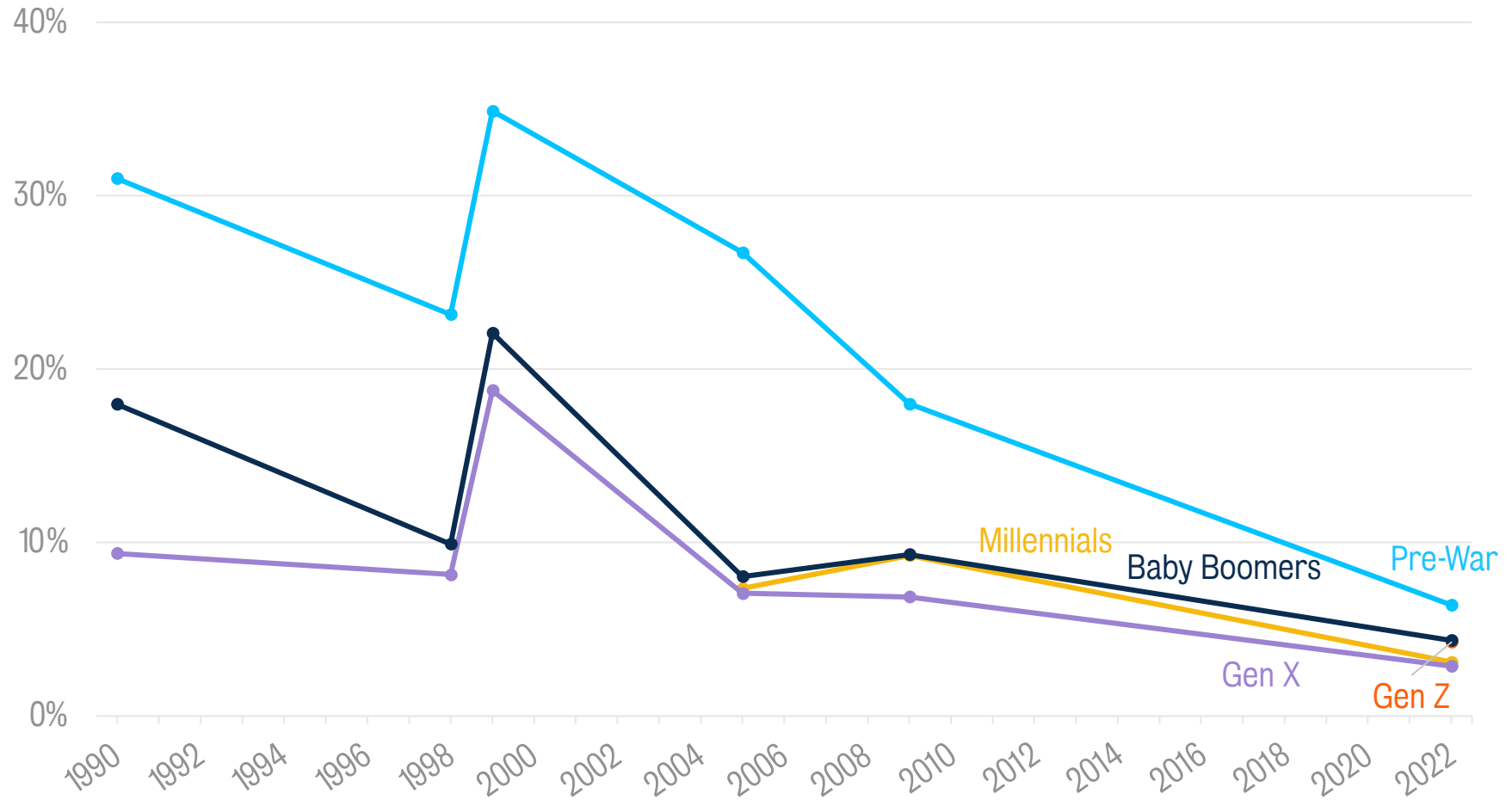


Acceptance of people with AIDS has grown among all generations in Britain

Very few people belonging to any generation in Britain now say they would not like to have people with AIDS as neighbours, with between just 3% and 6% feeling this way.

But older generations were once much less accepting. In 1999, as many as a third (35%) of the Pre-War generation and a fifth of Baby Boomers (22%) and Gen X (19%) were not comfortable with the idea of living next to someone with AIDS.

On this list are various groups of people. Please select any that you would not like to have as neighbours.
People who have AIDS (% who mention group by generation in Britain)



6. Who the public would not like to have as neighbours:

Immigrants/foreign workers



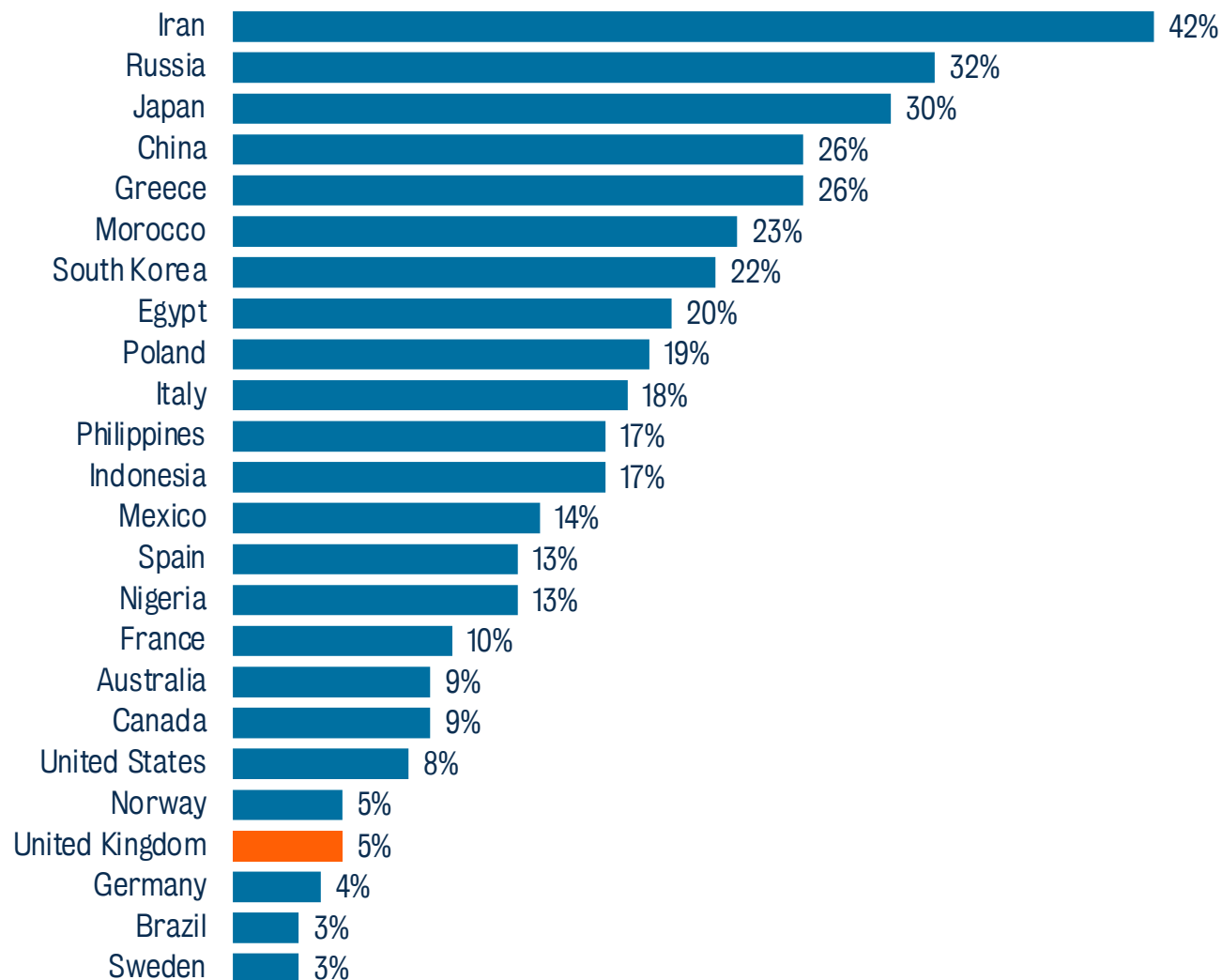
One in 20 people in the UK say they wouldn't want immigrants as neighbours – among the lowest internationally...

Just 5% of the UK public say they wouldn't like to have immigrants or foreign workers as neighbours – only marginally higher than Sweden (3%), Brazil (3%) and Germany (4%), which rank just below the UK on this measure.

Among higher-income democratic nations, Japan is the least accepting, with 30% of the public saying they wouldn't like immigrants as neighbours.

Meanwhile, of European countries surveyed, Greece (26%), Poland (19%) and Italy (18%) are most resistant to this idea.

On this list are various groups of people. Please select any that you would not like to have as neighbours.
Immigrants/foreign workers (% who mentioned group)



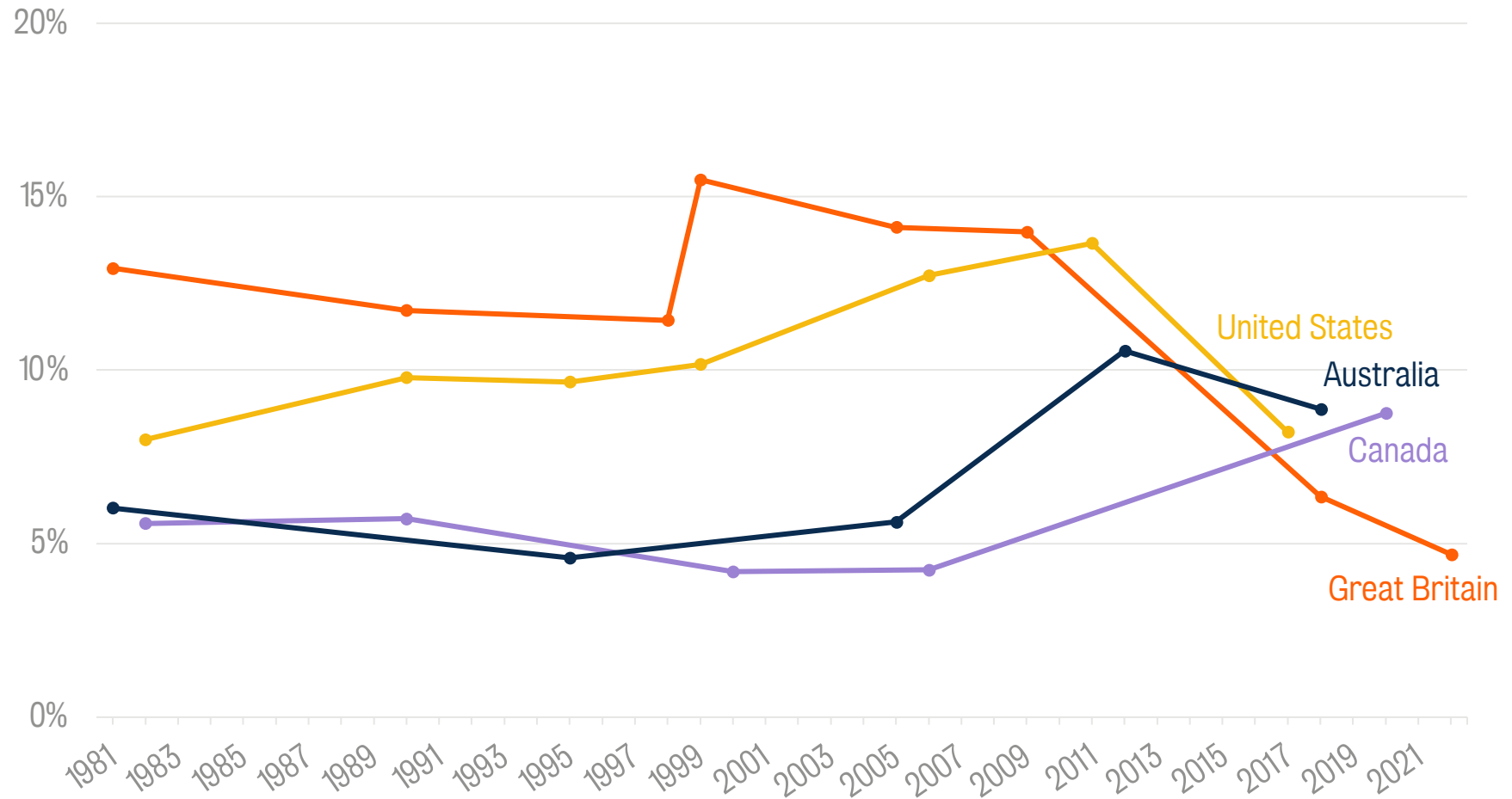
...and this has decreased considerably in Britain since the 2000s

While one in 20 (5%) people in Britain said they wouldn't like immigrants as neighbours in 2022, this was as high as one in seven (14%) as recently as 2009.

There has been a similar decline in the US, where 8% said they wouldn't want to have immigrants as neighbours in 2017 – down from 14% in 2011.

By contrast, over the last decade or so, both Australia and Canada have become slightly less accepting on this measure. For example, in Canada, 4% said they wouldn't like immigrants as neighbours in 2006, which had risen to 9% by 2020.

On this list are various groups of people. Could you please mention any that you would not like to have as neighbours? **Immigrants/foreign workers** (% who mention group)



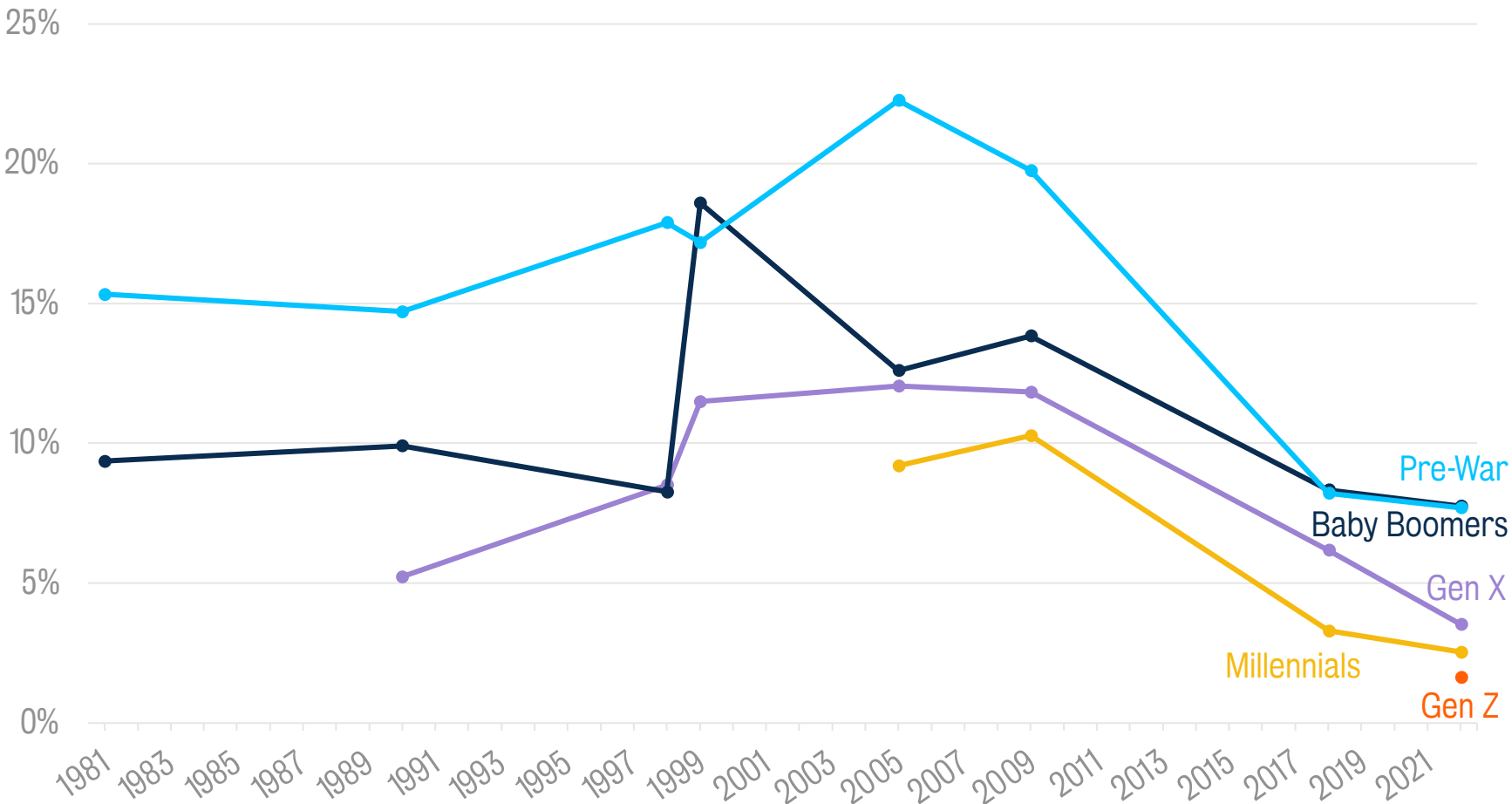
Older generations in Britain are slightly more likely to say they wouldn't want immigrants as neighbours – but their views have nonetheless softened a great deal

In 2022, the youngest generation, Gen Z (2%), were least likely to say they wouldn't like to have immigrants as neighbours, while the Pre-War generation (8%) and Baby Boomers (8%) were the most likely.

But despite this, older generations have undergone considerable shifts in attitudes – for example, in 2009, the share of the Pre-War generation who expressed this preference was more than twice as high (20%).

Similarly, the proportion of Baby Boomers who say they wouldn't like immigrants as neighbours has almost halved since 2009, falling from 14% to 8% in 2022.

On this list are various groups of people. Could you please mention any that you would not like to have as neighbours? **Immigrants/foreign workers** (% who mention group by generation in Britain)



7. Who the public would not like to have as neighbours:

People of a different race



The UK is among the most open to having neighbours who belong to a different race

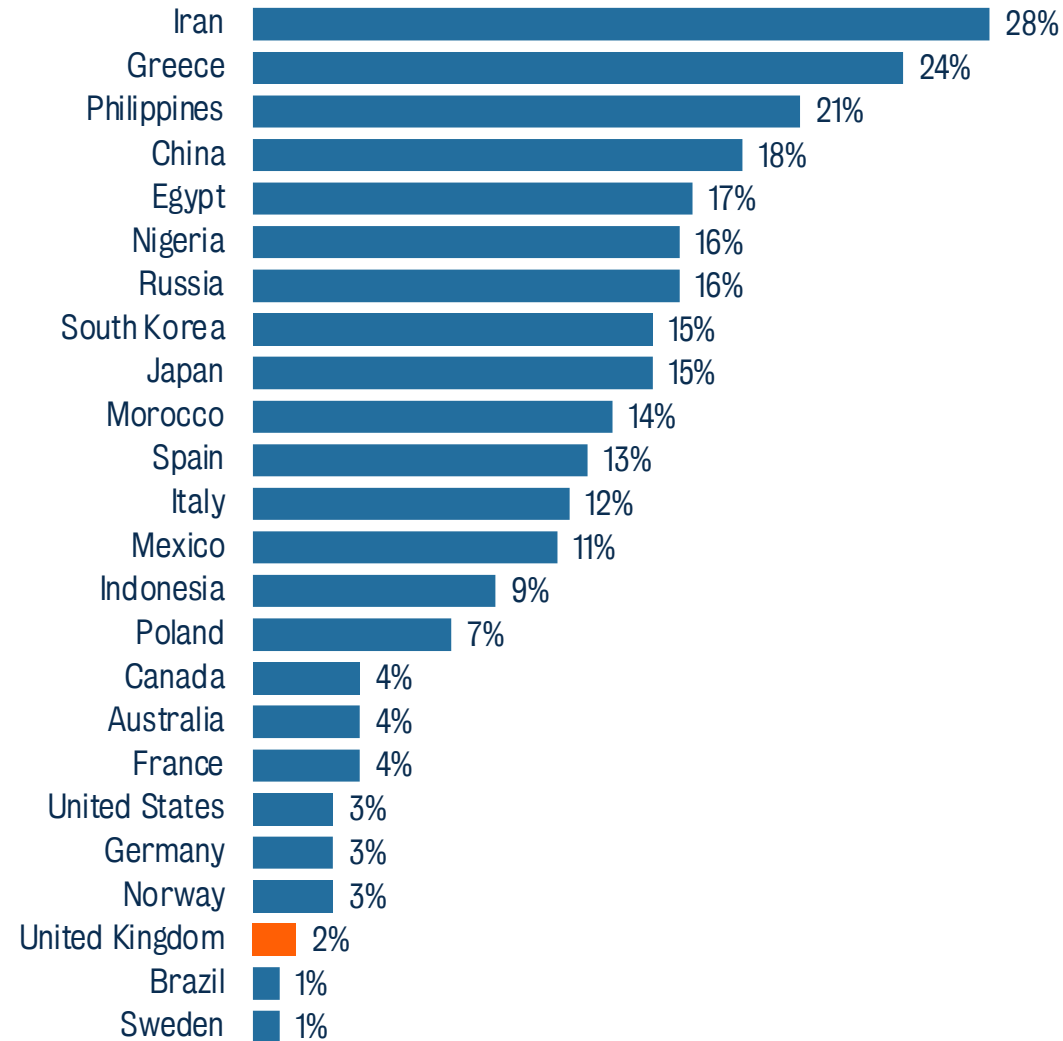
The UK public (2%) rank among the very least likely to say they would not like to have people of a different race as neighbours, on a par with those in Brazil (1%), Sweden (1%) and several other western nations such as Norway (3%), Germany (3%) and the US (3%).

Of European countries, Greece is by far the least tolerant, with one in four (24%) people objecting to living next to someone of a different race.

This sentiment is also relatively widespread in Spain (13%) and Italy (12%), where around one in eight people take issue with this.

On this list are various groups of people. Please select any that you would not like to have as neighbours.

People of a different race (% who mention group)

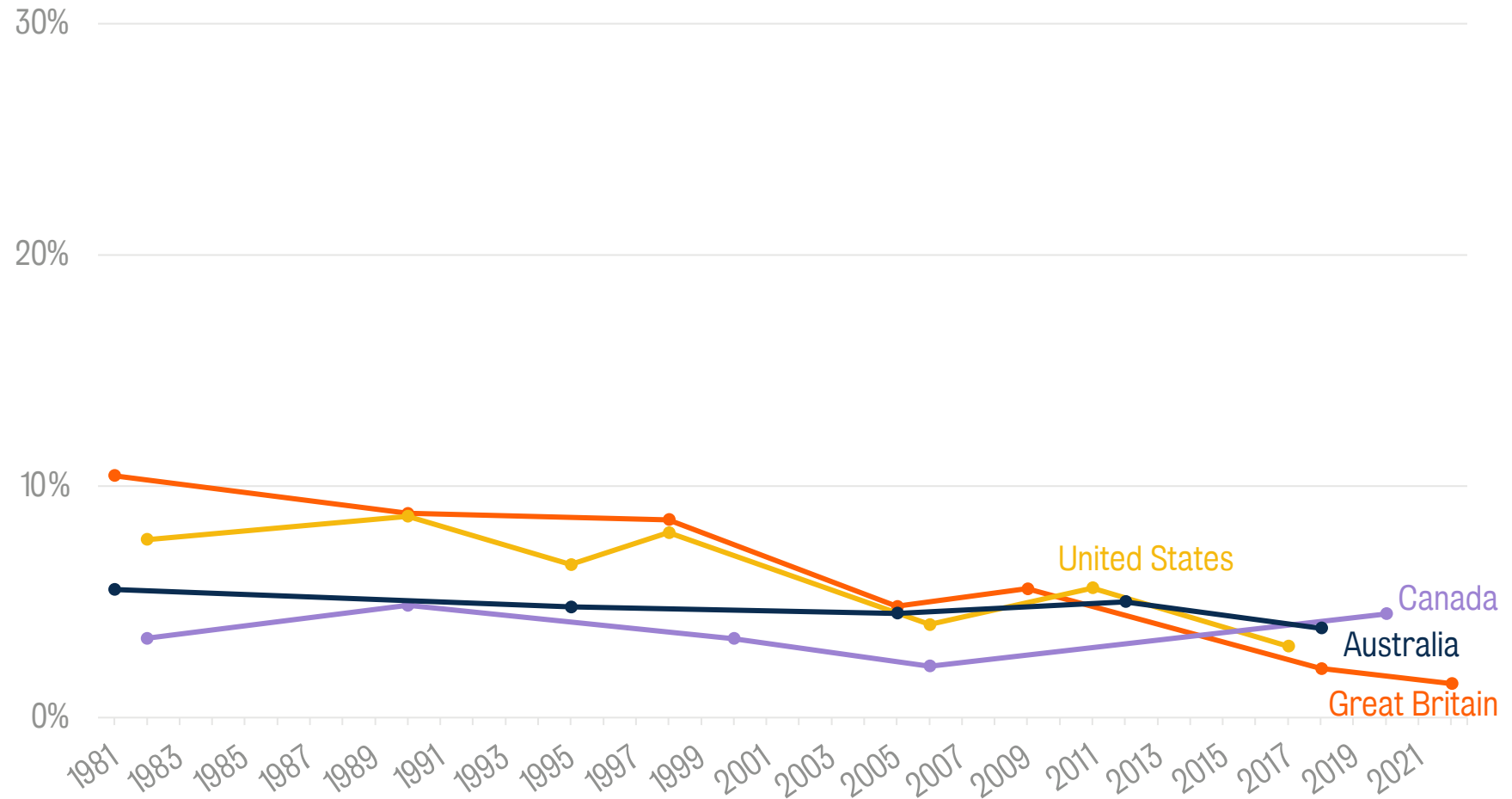


The British public were once less tolerant than the US, Australia and Canada when it comes to having neighbours of a different race – but they have since overtaken them

In 1981, 10% of Britons said they didn't want to live next to people of a different race – higher than in Canada (3%), Australia (6%) and the US (8%) at around the same time.

But since then, attitudes in those countries have softened less than in Britain. Views in Australia and Canada are virtually unchanged from the early 1980s, and in the latest available data, people in the US (3%) are now slightly more likely than those in Britain (1%) to be uncomfortable having neighbours who belong to a different race.

On this list are various groups of people. Please select any that you would not like to have as neighbours.
People of a different race (% who mention group)



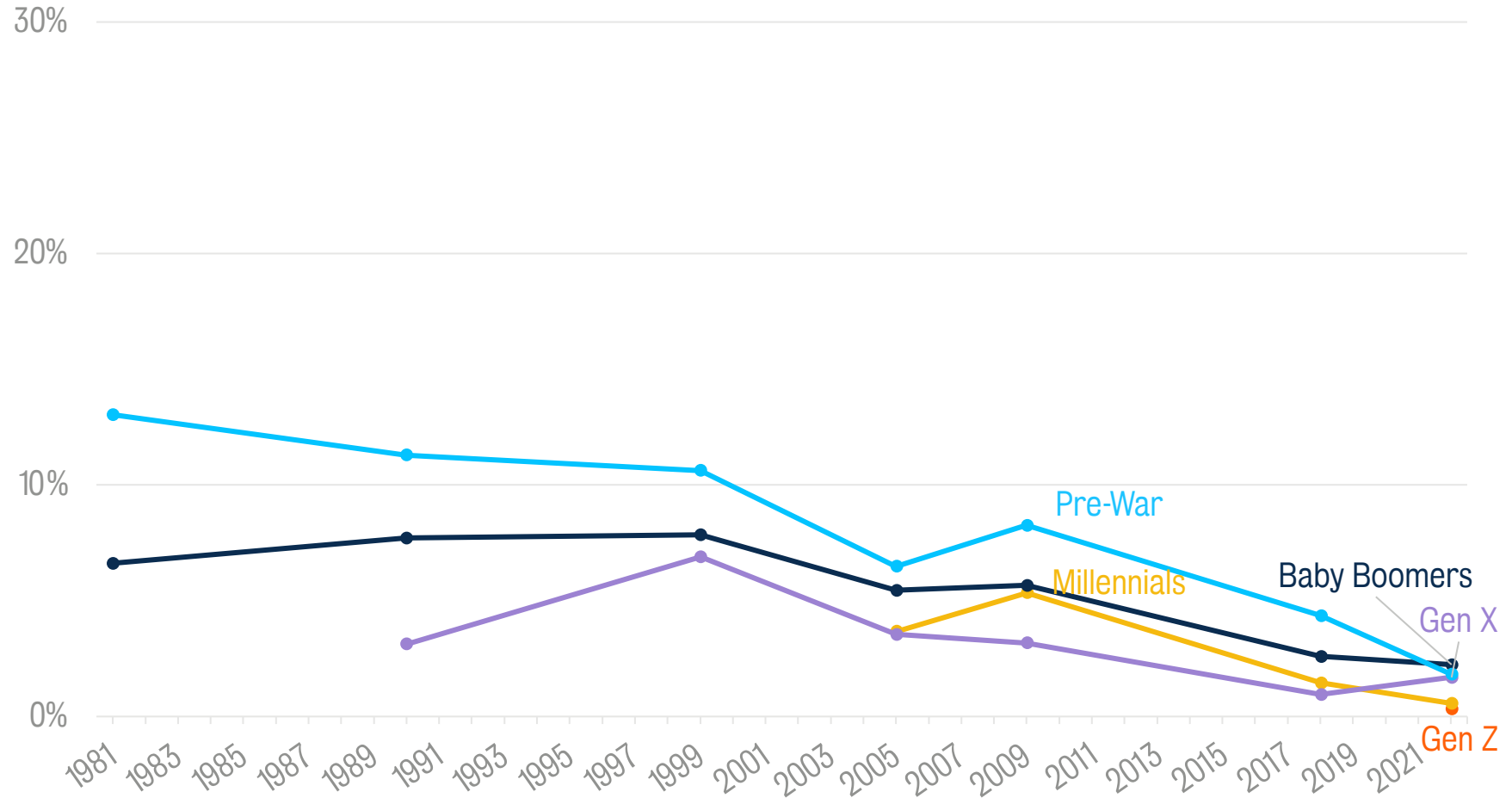
Only a tiny minority in each generation in Britain now object to having neighbours who belong to a different race, with virtually no difference in views between older and younger groups

In 1981, 13% of the Pre-War generation and 7% of Baby Boomers said they would not like to live next to people of a different race, but by 2022 this had fallen to just 2% among both cohorts.

Gen X and Millennials have similarly become more accepting over a shorter timeframe.

These shifts mean no more than 2% of any generation now object to people of a different race being their neighbours, with Gen Z the least likely to, as less than 1% hold such a view.

On this list are various groups of people. Please select any that you would not like to have as neighbours.
People of a different race (% who mention group by generation in Britain)



8. Who the public would not like to have as neighbours:

Drug addicts



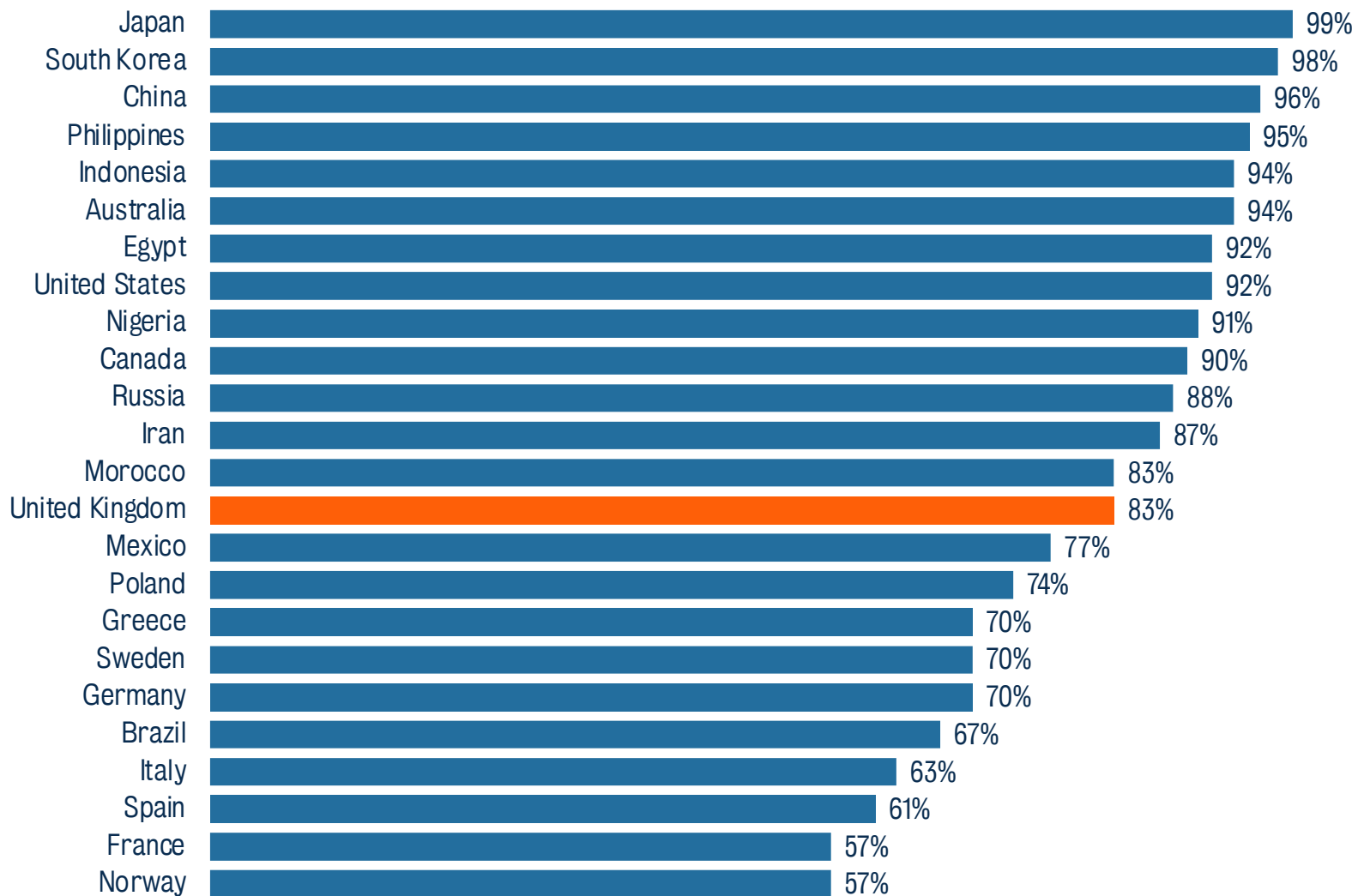
Majorities in all countries would not like to live next to drug addicts, with the UK ranking mid-table for this view

83% of people in the UK say they wouldn't like drug addicts as neighbours, with the country less accepting of this group than other western nations, such as Germany (70%), Italy (63%), Spain (61%), France (57%) and Norway (57%).

However, other anglophone countries – Australia (94%), the US (92%) and Canada (90%) – are more likely than the UK to take issue with living next to heavy drug users.

Yet it is in East and Southeast Asia where objection to this idea is highest, with close to 100% of the public in some countries having a problem with such a scenario.

On this list are various groups of people. Please select any that you would not like to have as neighbours.
Drug addicts (% who mention group)



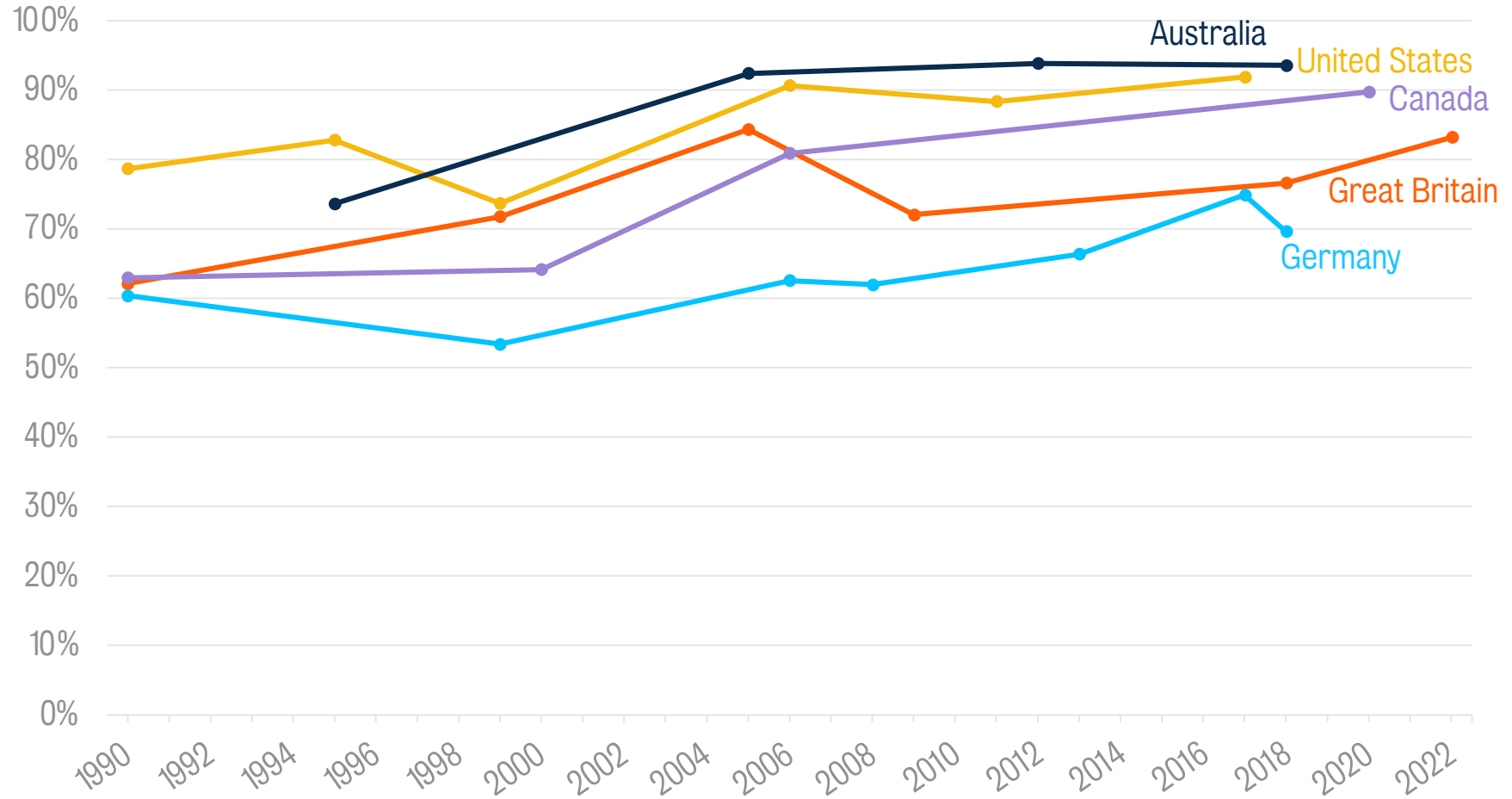
Britain is far from the only country where attitudes have hardened towards having drug addicts as neighbours

Britain is not alone in becoming less accepting of drug addicts; other high-income democracies have experienced similar changes in attitudes.

For example, between 1990 and 2020, the proportion of people in Canada who said they would not like to live next to drug addicts increased from 63% to 90%. And over a similar period, the equivalent figure for the US rose from 79% to 92%, while Australia and Germany have also seen public attitudes harden in his way.

On this list are various groups of people. Please select any that you would not like to have as neighbours.

Drug addicts (% who mention group)

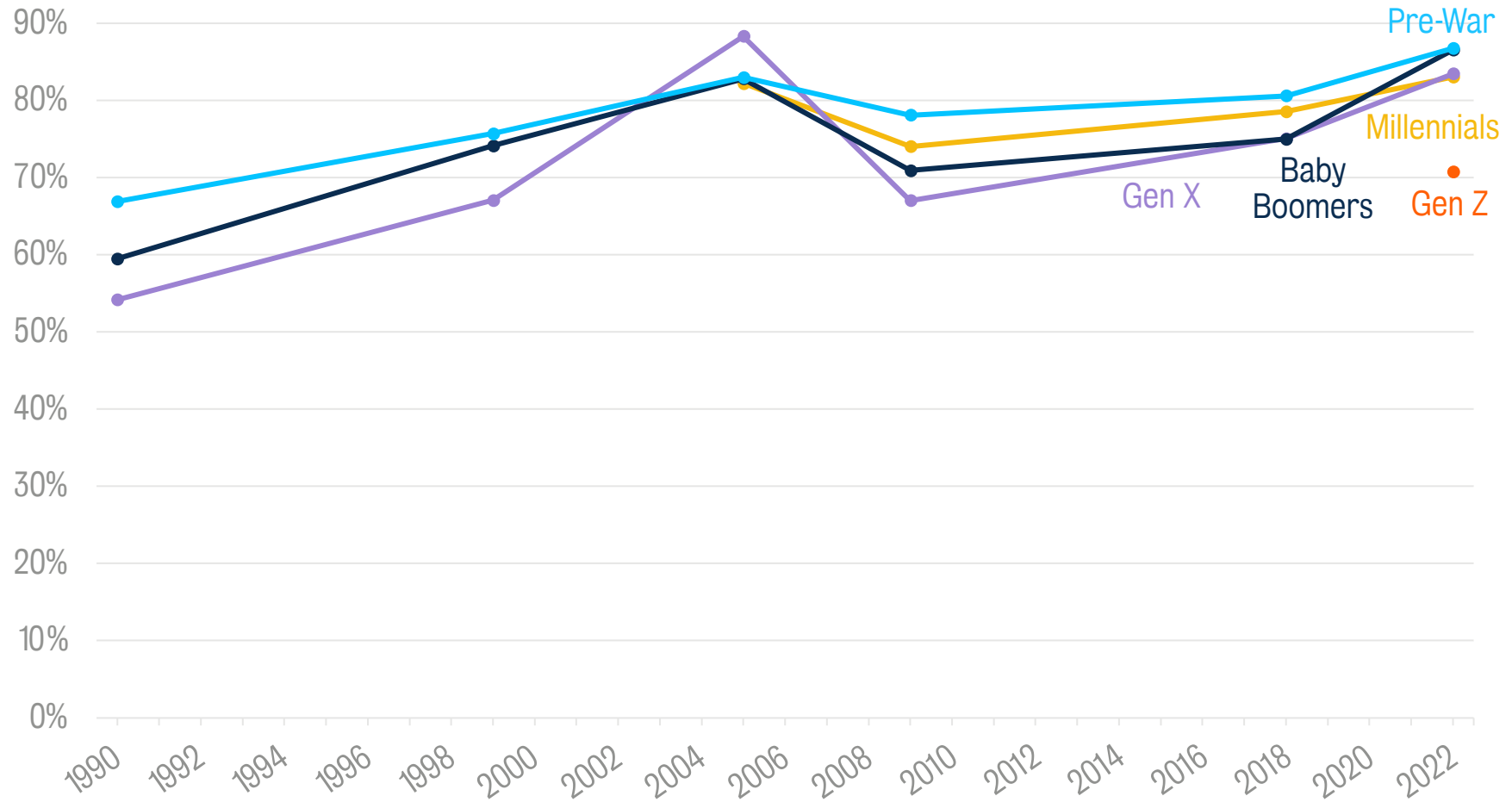


All adult generations in Britain have become less accepting of having drug addicts as neighbours

More than eight in 10 of all generations for which there are trends now say they would not like to have neighbours who were drug addicts – which in some cases represents a considerable increase on previous decades.

The proportion of the Pre-War generation who feel this way has risen by 20 percentage points since 1990, while among Baby Boomers and Gen X it has risen by around 30 points.

On this list are various groups of people. Please select any that you would not like to have as neighbours.
Drug addicts (% who mention group by generation in Britain)



9. Who the public would not like to have as neighbours:

Heavy drinkers

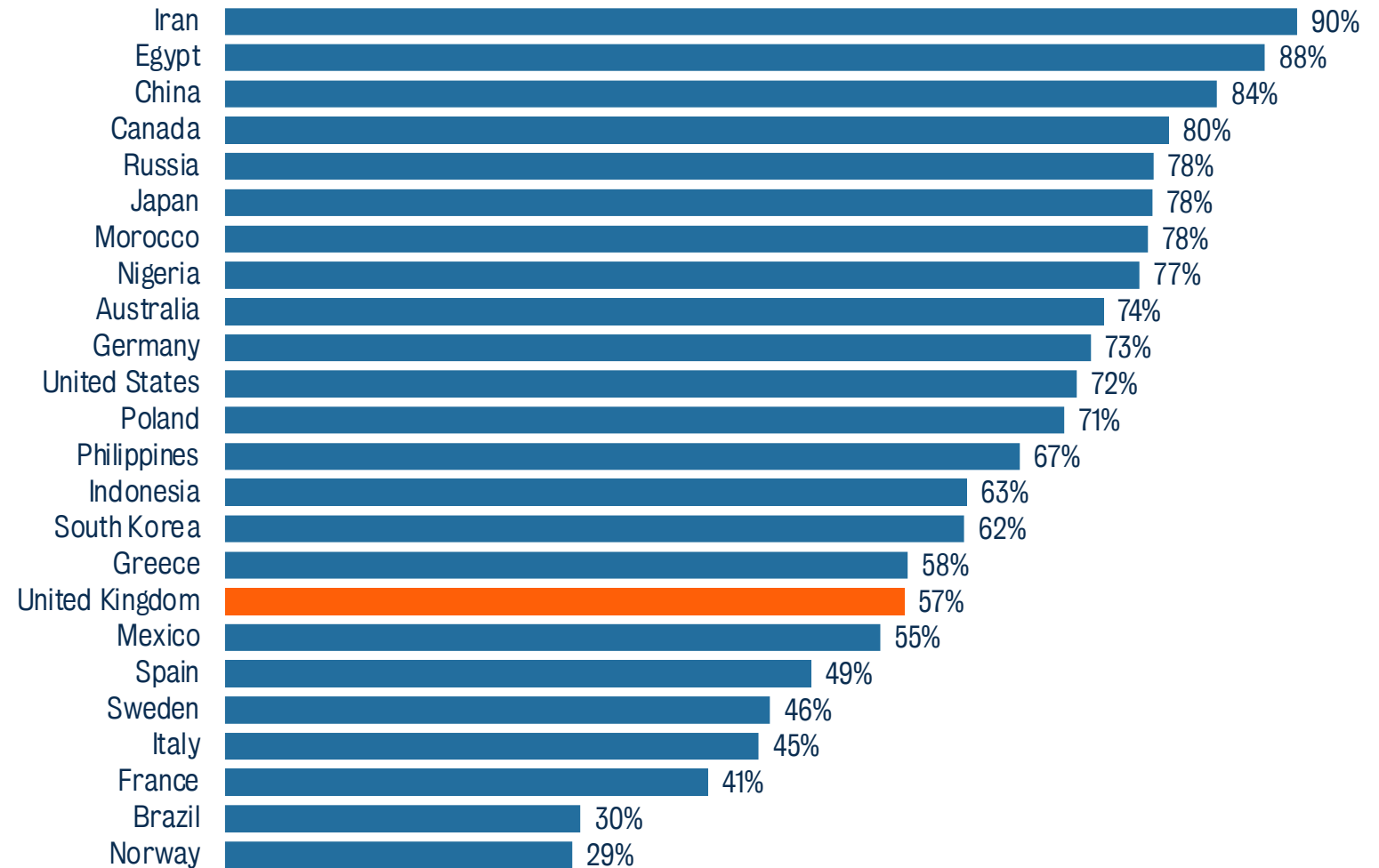


A majority in the UK would rather not live next to heavy drinkers, with the country somewhat less tolerant than several peer nations

A majority of 57% in the UK say they would not like to have heavy drinkers as neighbours – lower than in some comparable western nations, such as Canada (80%), Australia (74%) and the US (72%), but much higher than others, such as Norway (29%), France (41%) and Italy (45%).

People in Iran (90%) and Egypt (88%) are the most likely to have an issue living next to people who drink a lot, reflecting strict religious customs and laws around alcohol consumption in those nations.

On this list are various groups of people. Please select any that you would not like to have as neighbours.
Heavy drinkers (% who mention group)

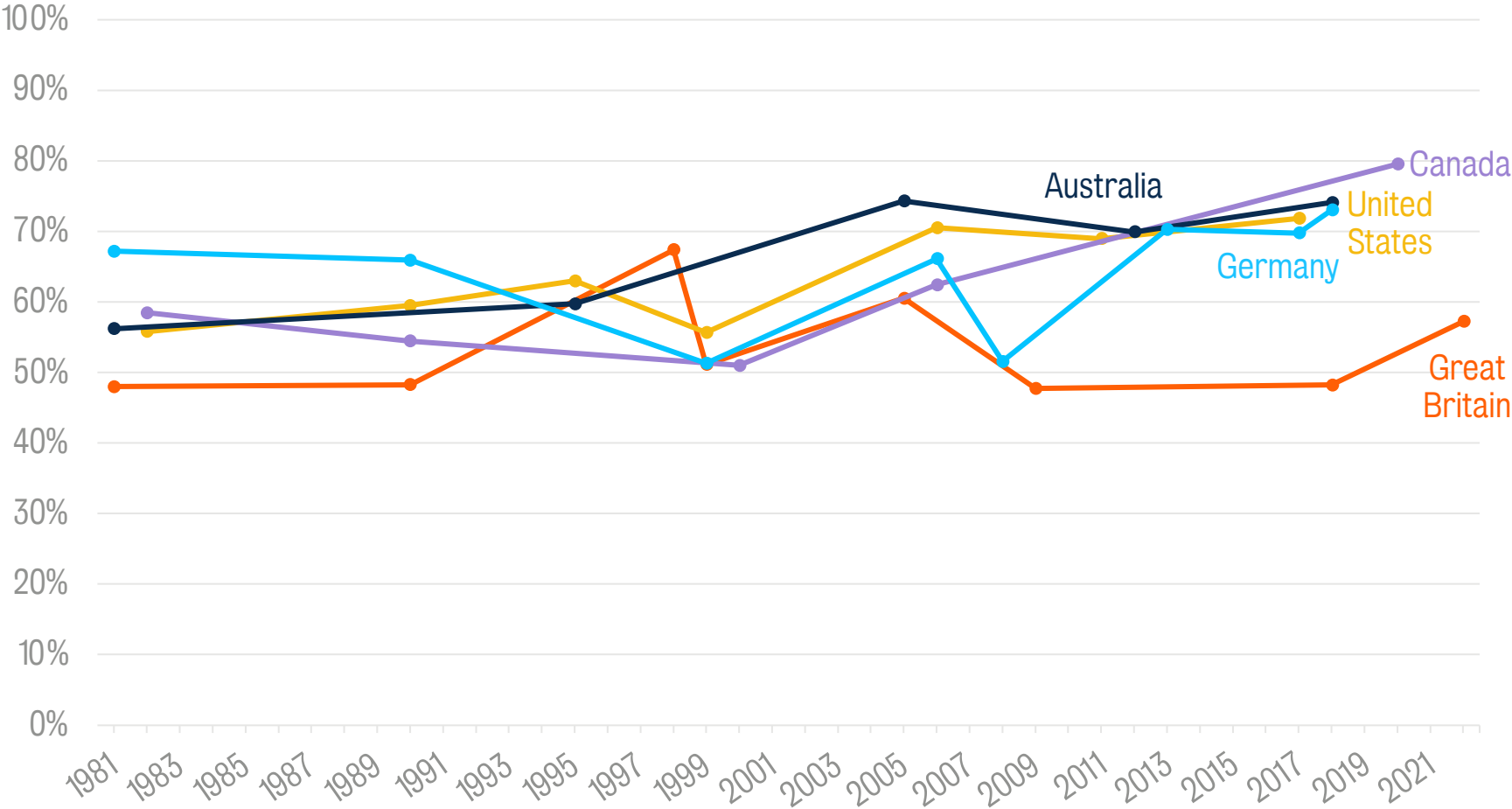


Reluctance to have heavy drinkers as neighbours has grown in Britain – but not as much as in other high-income nations

Between 1981 and 2022, the share of Britons who said they would not like to have heavy drinkers as neighbours rose from 48% to 57% – but over a similar period, the public in other countries have become even less open to this prospect.

Between 1982 and 2020, the share of the public who felt this way in Canada rose from 58% to 80%, while in Australia and the US it rose from 56% at the beginning of the 1980s to more than 70% towards the end of the 2010s.

On this list are various groups of people. Please select any that you would not like to have as neighbours.
Heavy drinkers (% who mention group)



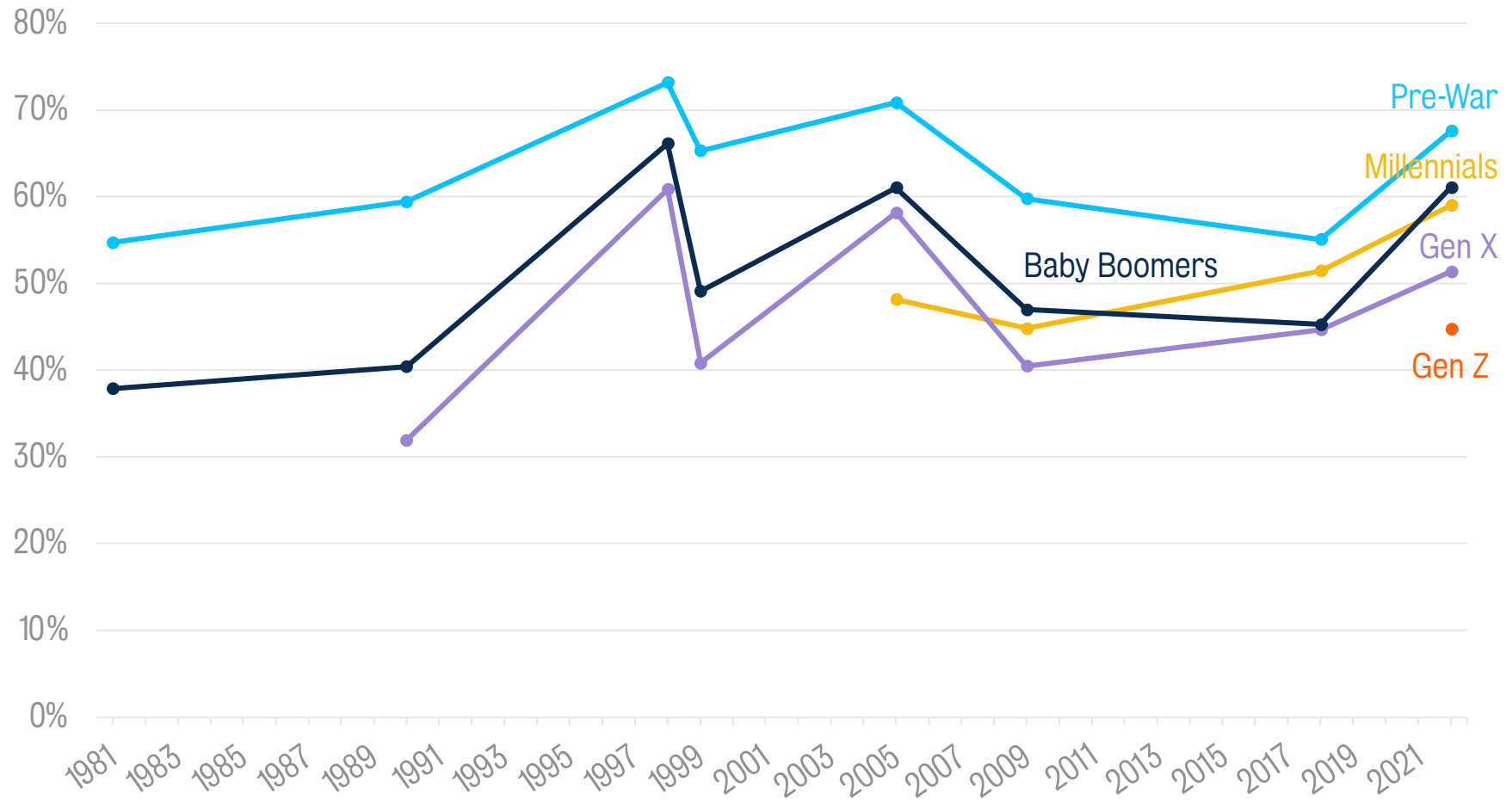
A majority of all generations except Gen Z would prefer not to have heavy drinkers as neighbours

In 1981, two in five (38%) Baby Boomers said they would not like to have heavy drinkers as neighbours – a figure that had risen to three in five (61%) by 2022.

All other adult generations have undergone similar shifts in attitudes, with Millennials (59%) now less accepting than the older Gen X (51%).

Meanwhile, Gen Z (45%) are the most tolerant on this measure, as the only generation with less than half who would rather not live next to heavy drinkers.

On this list are various groups of people. Please select any that you would not like to have as neighbours.
Heavy drinkers (% who mention group by generation in Britain)



10. Who the public would not like to have as neighbours:

People of a different religion

People of a different race

Unmarried couples living together



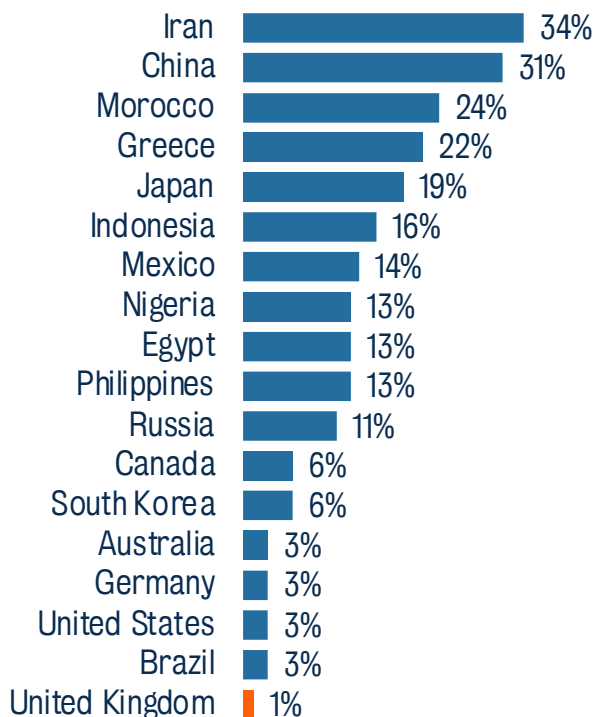
The UK is least likely to have a problem with neighbours who are of a different religion, who speak a different language or who are unmarried couples

Just 1% of the UK public say they would not like to live next to people of a different religion – the lowest of 18 countries, although Australia (3%), Germany (3%), the US (3%) and Brazil (3%) are similarly relaxed about such neighbours.

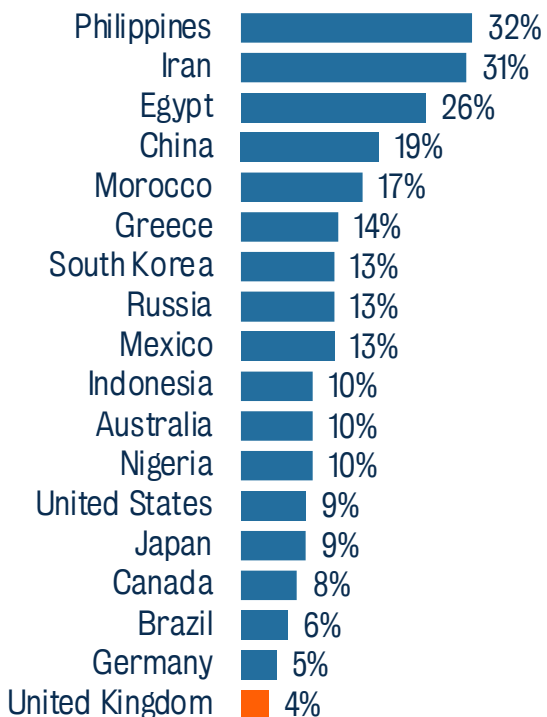
The UK is also the most comfortable with the idea of neighbours who speak a different language, and along with Germany (1%) and Brazil (1%), has the very lowest share of the public who say they would not like to have neighbours who were unmarried couples.

On this list are various groups of people. Please select any that you would not like to have as neighbours (% who mention group)

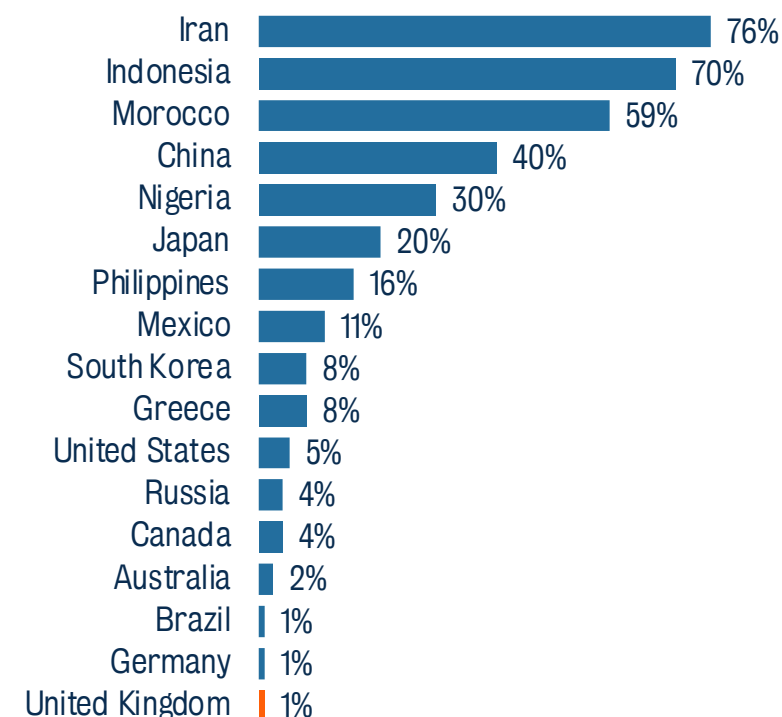
People of a different religion



People who speak a different language



Unmarried couples living together



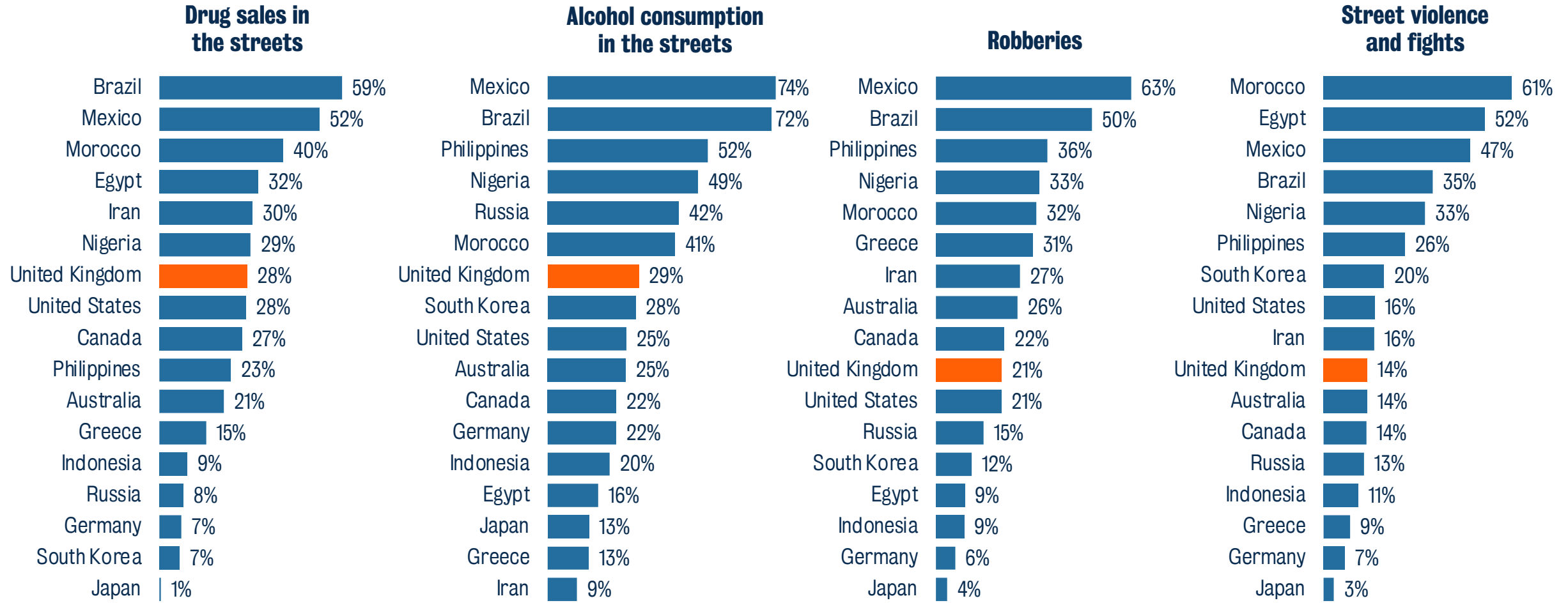
11. Neighbourhood safety and quality of life

The UK fares worse than some peer nations on perceptions of how often illegal or anti-social behaviour takes place in local neighbourhoods – although it is still minorities who have experience of these



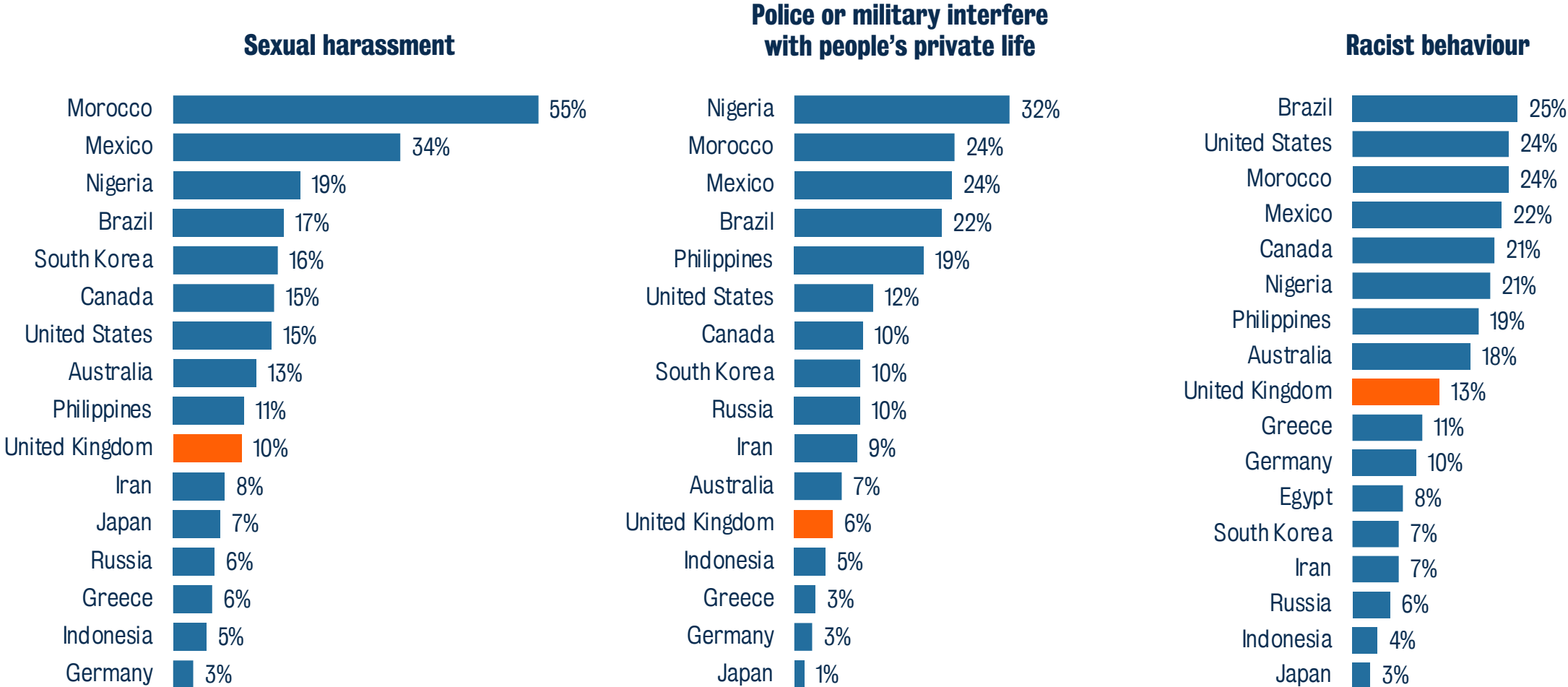
The UK is more likely to report issues with alcohol and drugs in local neighbourhoods than some peer nations such as Germany and Australia, and is on a par with the US for perceptions of robberies and violence

How frequently do the following things occur in your neighbourhood? (% who say very/quite frequently)



But the UK does fare better than the US on perceptions of sexual harassment and police/military interference in neighbourhoods, and much better when it comes to racist behaviour

How frequently do the following things occur in your neighbourhood? (% who say very/quite frequently)



UK base: 3,056 people in the UK aged 18+, surveyed 1 Mar–9 Sept 2022. Other countries all surveyed in wave 7 of WVS at various points between 2017 and 2022. See [WVSA website](#) for sample information

12. Technical details



Technical details

Ipsos interviewed a random probability sample of 3,056 adults aged 18+ across the UK. This included respondents in England (1,645) and boost samples in Scotland (523), Wales (437) and Northern Ireland (446). Data has been weighted by region, education and age interlocked with gender to be nationally representative. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic respondents were able to complete the survey either through a face-to-face survey (1,509 completes), an interviewer-led video interview through MS Teams (86), or through either a self-completion paper survey (592) or an online push-to-web follow-up (869). Fieldwork ran from 1 March to 9 September 2022. Ipsos is a member of the British Polling Council and abides by its rules.

Further information on the sampling methodology for other countries included in this report is available via the [World Values Survey Association website](#).

Unweighted sample sizes for UK nations

England	1,645
Northern Ireland	446
Scotland	523
Wales	437
Region unknown	5
Total	3,056

Unweighted subgroup sample sizes

Age

18-24	199
25-34	438
35-44	467
45-54	452
55-64	494
65+	835

English region

London/Greater London	403
Midlands	515
North East	293
North West	416
South East	463
South West	195

The **UK** *in the* **WORLD** **VALUES** **SURVEY**

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