



National Survey for Wales 2017-18 Access to local services and facilities

22 November 2018
SB 73/2018

In 2017-18, the National Survey included a series of questions about local authority services. People were asked about their involvement in decisions about local authority services and budgets, whether they know how to find out about local authority services, and whether they felt they can access information about their local authority in the way they would like. Questions were also asked about people's access to local services and facilities.¹ This bulletin presents the results.

Key findings

- 12% agreed that their local authority asks local people for views before setting its budget.
- Those aged 45 and above were more likely to strongly disagree that local people are asked about the budget, or that they have a chance to take part in decisions.
- 76% of people knew how to find out what services their local authority provides; the figure was 63% for people who do not use the internet.
- 75% said they can access information about their local authority in the way they would like.

17% 
**feel they can take part in
decisions about local services**



- 77% were satisfied with their ability to access the services and facilities they need.
- People living in towns or isolated dwellings were less likely to be satisfied that good services and facilities are available than those living in urban areas or villages.
- 81% of people with public transport links in their area were satisfied with their ability to access services, compared with 54% of those without.

About this bulletin

This bulletin provides more detailed analysis of the 2017-18 results for questions on **local authorities** and **access to services**.

The full questionnaire is available on the [National Survey web pages](#).

Additional tables can be accessed via the [Results viewer](#).

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¹ A national indicator for the [Well-being of Future Generations Act](#)

Introduction

This bulletin analyses National Survey results relating to local authorities, their services, and other facilities available in the local area.

Local authorities are responsible for services including street lighting, road maintenance, care for the elderly, housing, refuse collection and recycling. As such, local government plays a vital role in everyday life for everyone in Wales.

People were asked whether they thought that:

- they have the opportunity to participate in decision making about the running of their local services
- local people are asked for their views before their local authority set its budget
- they know how to find out about local authority services
- they can access information about their local authority in the way they would like.

The Welsh Government has a long running programme of [local government reform](#) and the way in which local authorities interact with and work effectively with citizens to deliver public services is an important element of this work. The National Survey results therefore provide an important baseline in monitoring citizens' access to and satisfaction with public services to both evaluate and shape policy in this area. This analysis can also form an important part of local authorities' own scrutiny and review processes.

The results also provide evidence for the implementation of [Well-being of Future Generations Act](#)²: specifically, the national indicator measuring the percentage of people satisfied with their ability to access / get to the services and facilities they need.

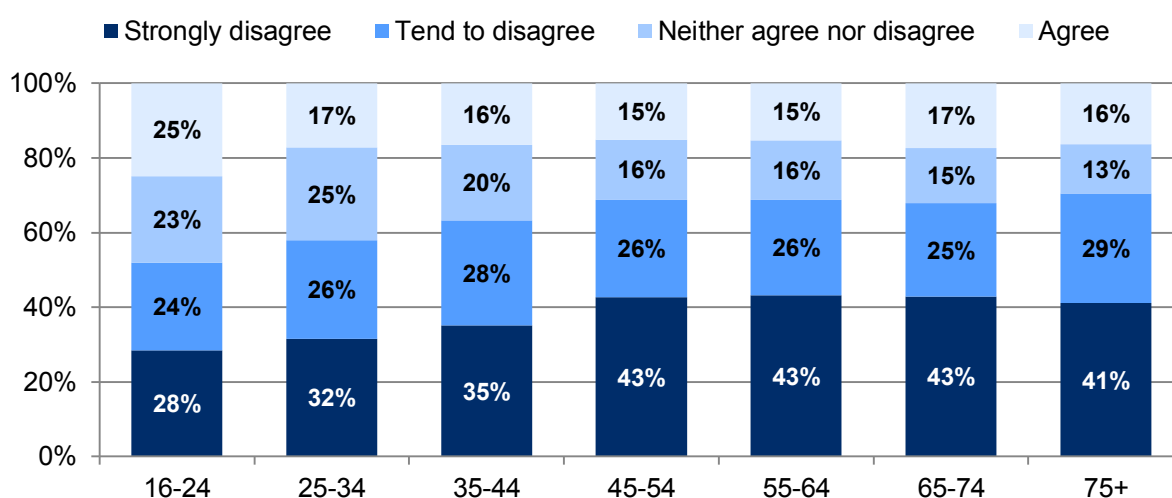
² See [Key quality information](#) for more information on the [National indicators](#).

Local authorities – decision making

Respondents were asked whether they felt they have the opportunity to participate in making decisions about the running of their local authority services. 17% agreed they have this opportunity, and 64% disagreed (38% strongly disagreed, 26% tended to disagree).

Those who were younger were more likely to agree with the statement, with 25% of 16-24 year olds agreeing they have the opportunity to participate in decisions compared with 16% of those aged 25 and above. As shown in Chart 1, there were high numbers of people who had no strong opinion (neither agreed nor disagreed), particularly in younger age groups. Chart 1 also shows that people in older age groups were more likely to disagree they could participate in decisions than younger people.

Chart 1: Level of agreement/disagreement on ability to take part in decisions about local services, by age



Agreement levels varied across local authorities, with people in Conwy and Cardiff more likely to agree that they can participate in decision making (23% and 22% respectively, compared with the national average of 17%).

Other local authorities had a high proportion who strongly disagreed with the statement; these were Blaenau Gwent, Bridgend, Gwynedd, Merthyr Tydfil, Neath Port Talbot, Newport, Powys, and Rhondda Cynon Taf.

People in ethnic and religious minority groups were more likely to agree that they have the chance to participate in decision making about their local services. 17% of those who are white agreed, compared with 31% of those of a non-white ethnic group. 17% of people who are Christian or said they have no religion agreed, compared with 25% of people with other religions. It is worth noting that there is likely a lot of overlap between these groups.



People who volunteer formally or informally were more likely to agree that they can take part in decision making, with 26% of volunteers agreeing compared with 17% of non-volunteers. Those with a limiting long-term illness were more likely to strongly disagree with the statement, with 45% strongly disagreeing compared with 35% of those without a long-term illness, however there was no significant difference in the percentage who agreed with the statement (16% and 18% respectively).

Local authorities – budget setting

12% of people agreed that their local authority asks local people for their views before setting its budget, and 68% disagreed (40% strongly disagreed). 20% neither agreed nor disagreed, and it is also worth noting that 10% of people responded ‘don’t know’ to this question (these responses are not included when producing percentages).



Cardiff, Caerphilly, Conwy and Pembrokeshire had higher levels of agreement than other local authorities, with an average of 17% agreeing.

Blaenau Gwent, Neath Port Talbot and Powys had higher than average levels of disagreement, and there was a 23 percentage point difference between the highest (83%) and lowest (60%) proportion disagreeing in different local authorities.

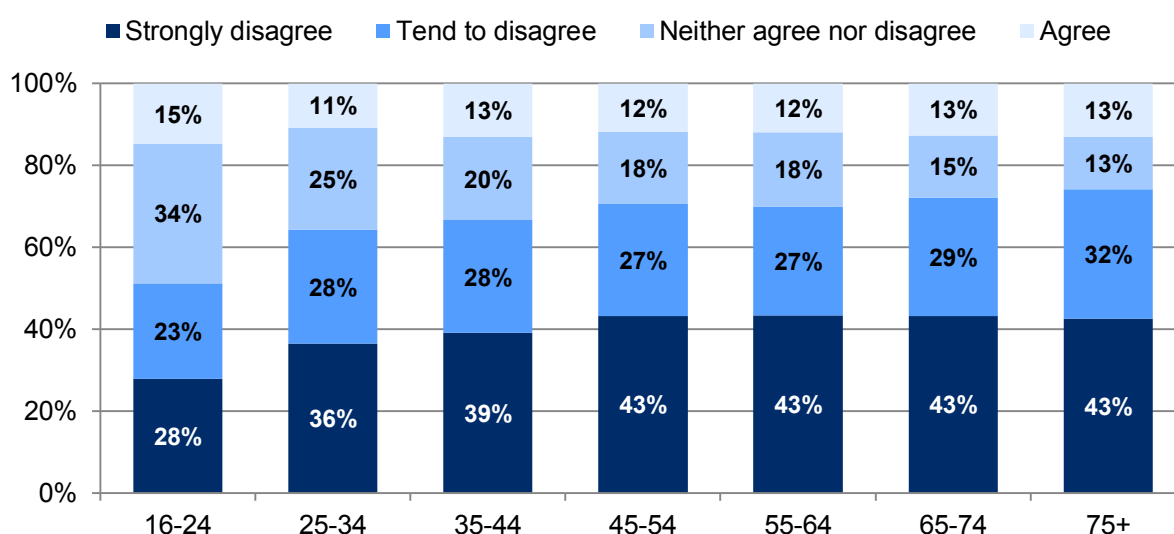
More than a quarter of people in each of Swansea, Monmouthshire and Ceredigion said that they neither agreed nor disagreed that people are asked for their views before setting the budget.

Those who are materially deprived³ were more likely to strongly disagree that local people’s views are heard, with 47% strongly disagreeing compared with 38% of those not in material deprivation.

Those with a limiting long-term illness were also more likely to strongly disagree, with 45% saying they strongly disagreed compared with 37% of those without. Those without a long-term illness were more likely to neither agree nor disagree: 23% compared with 16% of those with a long-term illness.

The percentage of people who disagreed that people were asked for their views increased with age, with people aged 25 and over more likely to disagree than those aged 16-24. 43% of people aged over 45 strongly disagreed.

Chart 2: Level of agreement/disagreement on whether local authority asks people for their views before setting its budget, by age



16-24 year olds were also the most likely to not have a strong opinion on the subject, with 34% neither agreeing nor disagreeing compared with 18% of those aged 25 and above.

³ Material deprivation – see [Terms and definitions](#)

Local authorities – accessing information

76% of people agreed that they know how to find what services their local authority provides, with 38% of people strongly agreeing.



People who use the internet were more likely to agree that they know how to find out about services, with 78% of internet users agreeing compared with 63% of those who did not use the internet.

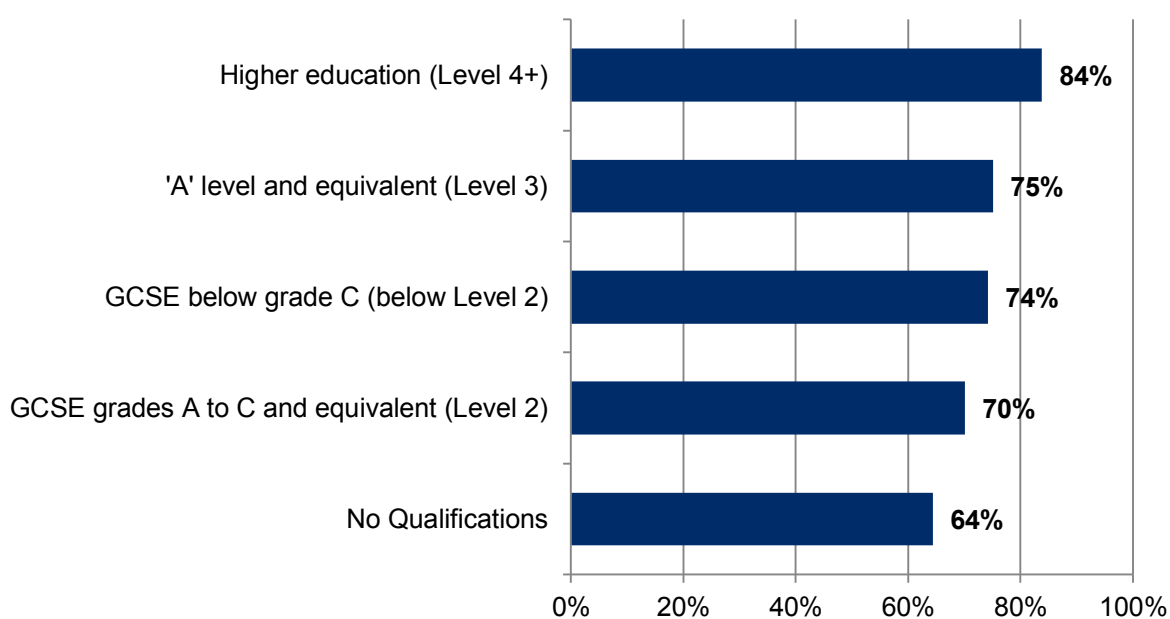
87% of people who have visited a local authority website in the past 12 months said that they know how to find out what services their local authority provided, compared with 70% of people who had not visited a website.

Those aged 16-24 were less likely to know how to find information about their local authority services, with 65% agreeing they know compared with 77% of those aged 25 and over. It is likely that this difference can be explained by this young cohort not yet having household responsibilities and so having less need to find out about these services.

There was a 19 percentage point difference between the highest and lowest performing local authority. Those living in Conwy, Gwynedd and Flintshire were the most well-informed, with a higher proportion saying that they know how to find out about local authority services, compared with the national average of 76%. In contrast, Blaenau Gwent, Merthyr Tydfil, Torfaen and Wrexham had lower than average proportions of people agreeing.

Those with higher qualification levels were more likely to know how to find what services their local authority provides, with 84% of those who hold a degree or equivalent qualification agreeing with the statement, and 64% of those with no qualifications agreeing.

Chart 3: Percentage who knew how to find out what services their local authority provides, by highest level of qualification⁴



⁴ Qualifications – see [Terms and definitions](#).

Preferred way of accessing information

75% of people agreed that they can access information about their local authority in the way they would like to, with 37% strongly agreeing.

Those in material deprivation⁵ were less likely to agree with the statement, with 66% of people agreeing compared with 77% of people not in material deprivation agreeing.

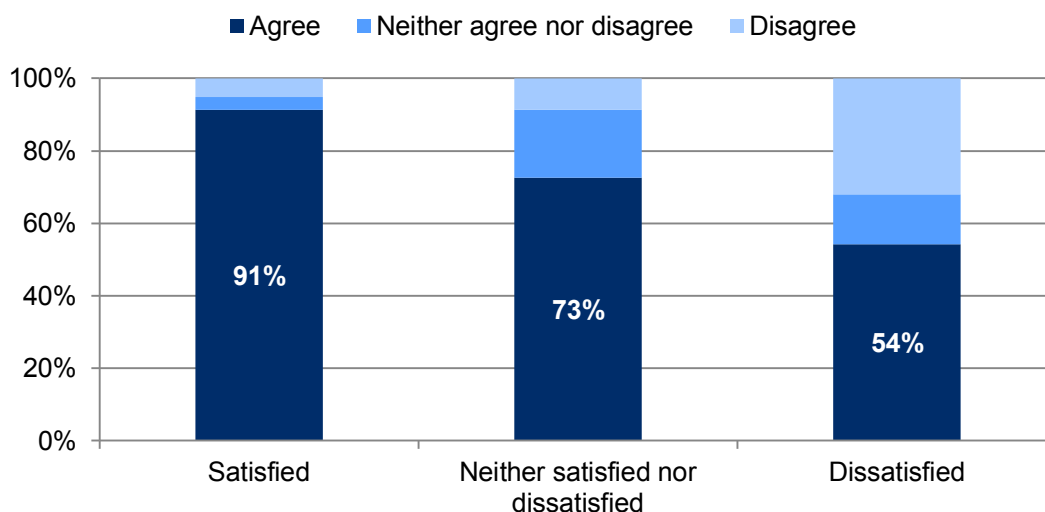
There was a 20 percentage point difference between the highest and lowest performing local authorities: 82% of people in Gwynedd agreed that they can access information about their local authority in the way they would like, while 62% of people in Blaenau Gwent agreed that they could do this. Conwy and Flintshire also had high proportions agreeing they could do this, whilst Merthyr Tydfil, Torfaen and Wrexham had lower than average proportions agreeing.

People who used the internet were more likely to agree that they can access information in the way they would like, with 78% agreeing compared with 60% of those who did not use the internet.

People who had visited a local authority website in the last 12 months were more likely to agree that they can access information in the way they would like to than those who hadn't (85% and 72% respectively).

As shown in Chart 4, people who were satisfied with the local authority's website were considerably more likely to agree that they can access information in the way they would like to.

Chart 4: Agreement that can access information about local authority in preferred way, by satisfaction with local authority website



Further analysis – provision of local authority services

More in-depth analysis was undertaken to find out which groups were least likely to know how to find what services their local authority provides.

We used a statistical method sometimes known as 'controlling for other factors'⁶. This involves studying each factor's effect on the outcome of interest (in this case, saying that they did not know

⁵ Material deprivation – see [Terms and definitions](#).

⁶ This analysis is more formally known as logistic regression. Information about the method used can be found in this [technical report](#).

how to find out about services) whilst holding the values of other factors constant. Our analysis did not allow us to tell whether each factor leads to people being less likely to know about local authority services, or vice versa.

The following factors each had a separate influence on people saying they did not know how to find out about services, when other factors were controlled for:⁷

- being aged 16-24
- being non-white
- having a low or no qualifications⁸
- not having access to the internet
- living in owner-occupied accommodation
- having low trust in others
- having a low satisfaction with life
- having a household member who needs adaptations for their illness
- having some or great difficulty keeping up with bills
- not attending arts, culture or heritage events
- not using local libraries.

Access to services and facilities

A new set of questions was included in 2017-18 to ask people about all the services and facilities they could access in their local area. The results are used to report against a national indicator for the [Well-being of Wales](#) report: the percentage of people satisfied with their ability to get to/access the facilities and services they need. In 2017-18, 77% of people said they were satisfied with ability to get to services in their local area.

Respondents were first asked whether they were satisfied that good services and facilities are available in their area. 68% of people were satisfied with the availability of good services and facilities in their local area, and 19% were dissatisfied. 3% said that there are no services or facilities in their local area at all; almost all of this small group (92%) lived in rural areas.

77%
satisfied with
ability to get
to services
in local area



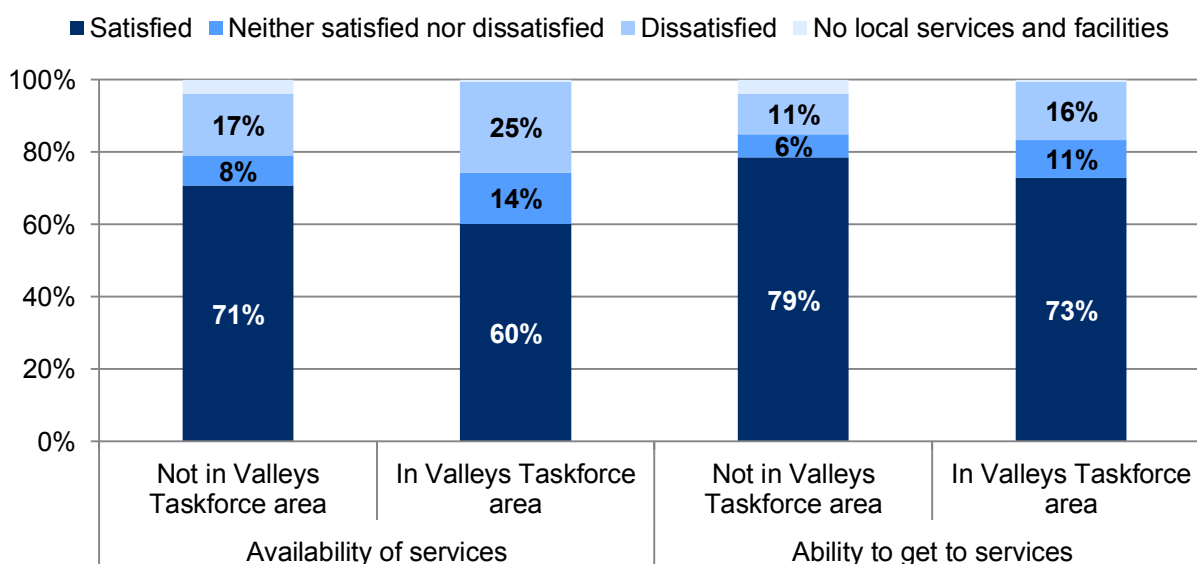
Those who said there are services available were then asked how satisfied they were with their ability to get to these services. A relevant initiative is the Valleys Taskforce. In 2016, the Valleys

⁷ The factors that were included at the start of the regression analysis were: gender, religion, age, ethnicity, Welsh language use, material deprivation, economic status, whether struggle with bills, highest qualification, limiting long-term illness, general health, internet use, trust in others, whether play sport 3 times a week, whether visit arts and culture events, whether visited a library, life satisfaction, whether household member needs adaptations, whether household contains anyone under 16, whether household contains anyone over 60, tenure, whether they lived in an urban or a rural area, local authority, WIMD area deprivation.

⁸ This includes those with qualifications below Level 2 or those with unknown qualifications – see [Terms and definitions](#).

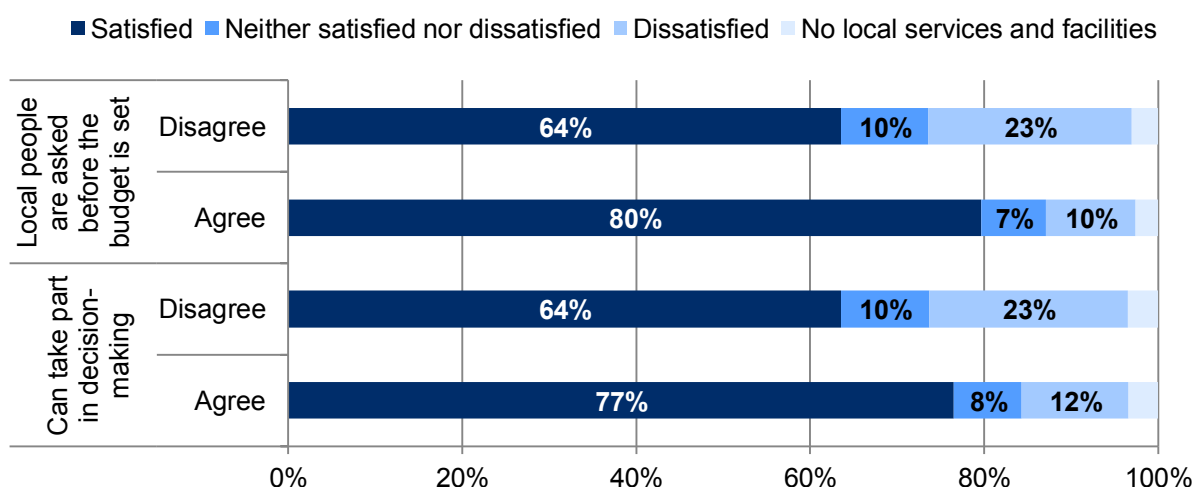
Taskforce (VTF)⁹ was set up by the Welsh Government to focus on improving lives in the South Wales Valleys. One of the three priorities of the taskforce is to improve public services in these areas. As shown in Chart 5, people not living in the Valleys Taskforce area (VTF) were more satisfied that good services and facilities are available, with 71% being satisfied compared with 60% of those living in the VTF area. When asked about satisfaction with their ability to get to these services, 79% were satisfied compared with 73% of those in the VTF area.

Chart 5: Satisfaction with availability and with access to services, by whether or not in the Valleys Taskforce area



People who agreed that they have the opportunity to participate in making decisions about the running of local authority services were also more satisfied with the services available locally: Similarly, those who agreed that their local authority asks for people’s views before setting its budget were more satisfied with local services.

Chart 6: Satisfaction with availability of services, by agreement with statements about local authorities



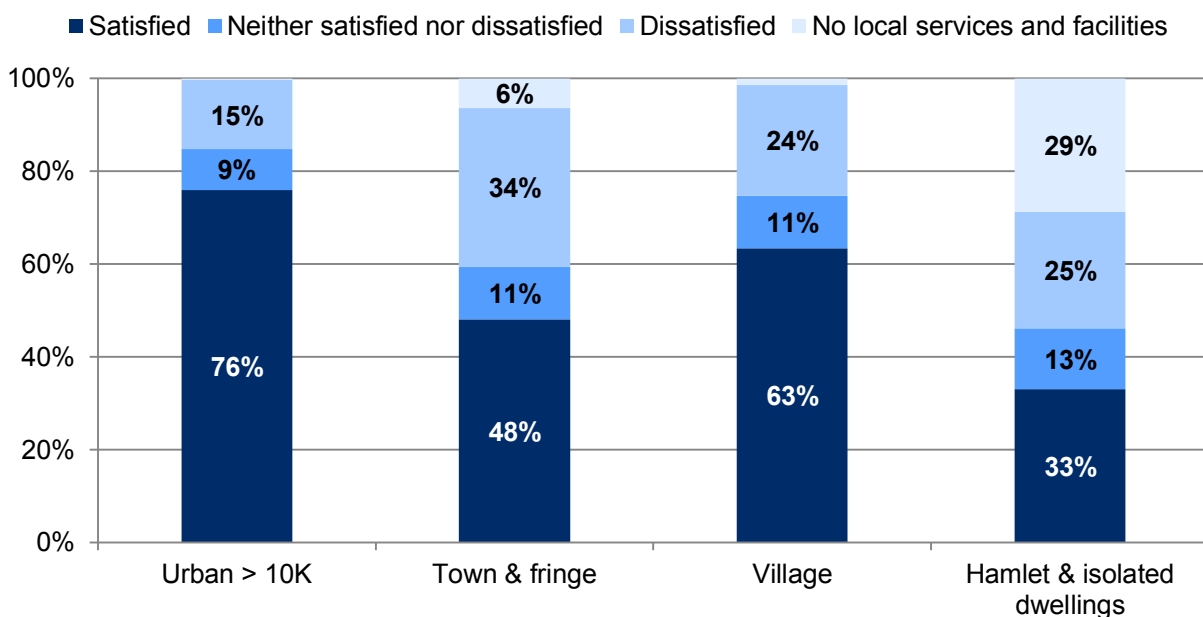
⁹ More information on the work of the taskforce can be found in [Our Valleys, Our Future](#).

Those living in an urban area with more than 10,000 people were most likely to be satisfied, with 76% of people in urban areas being satisfied (Chart 6). Those living in town & fringe areas were less likely to be satisfied, with 48% saying that good services were available. 29% of those living in hamlets and isolated dwellings said that there were no services or facilities in their area.



The comparatively lower proportion of people living in towns who were satisfied may be due to the composition of those areas, which traditionally have a ‘town centre’ with houses at a distance away, such that some residents may not consider those facilities local. It is important to note that the definition of a local area was the respondent’s own interpretation.

Chart 6: Satisfaction with availability of services and facilities, by urban/rural area ¹⁰



79% of those who knew how to find out what services their local authority provided were satisfied with their ability to access the services they need compared with 68% of those who said they did not know how to find out this information.

Those in Cardiff, Carmarthenshire and Flintshire were notably more likely to be satisfied than average with their ability to access services, whilst those in Gwynedd, Neath Port Talbot and Powys were less likely than average to be satisfied.

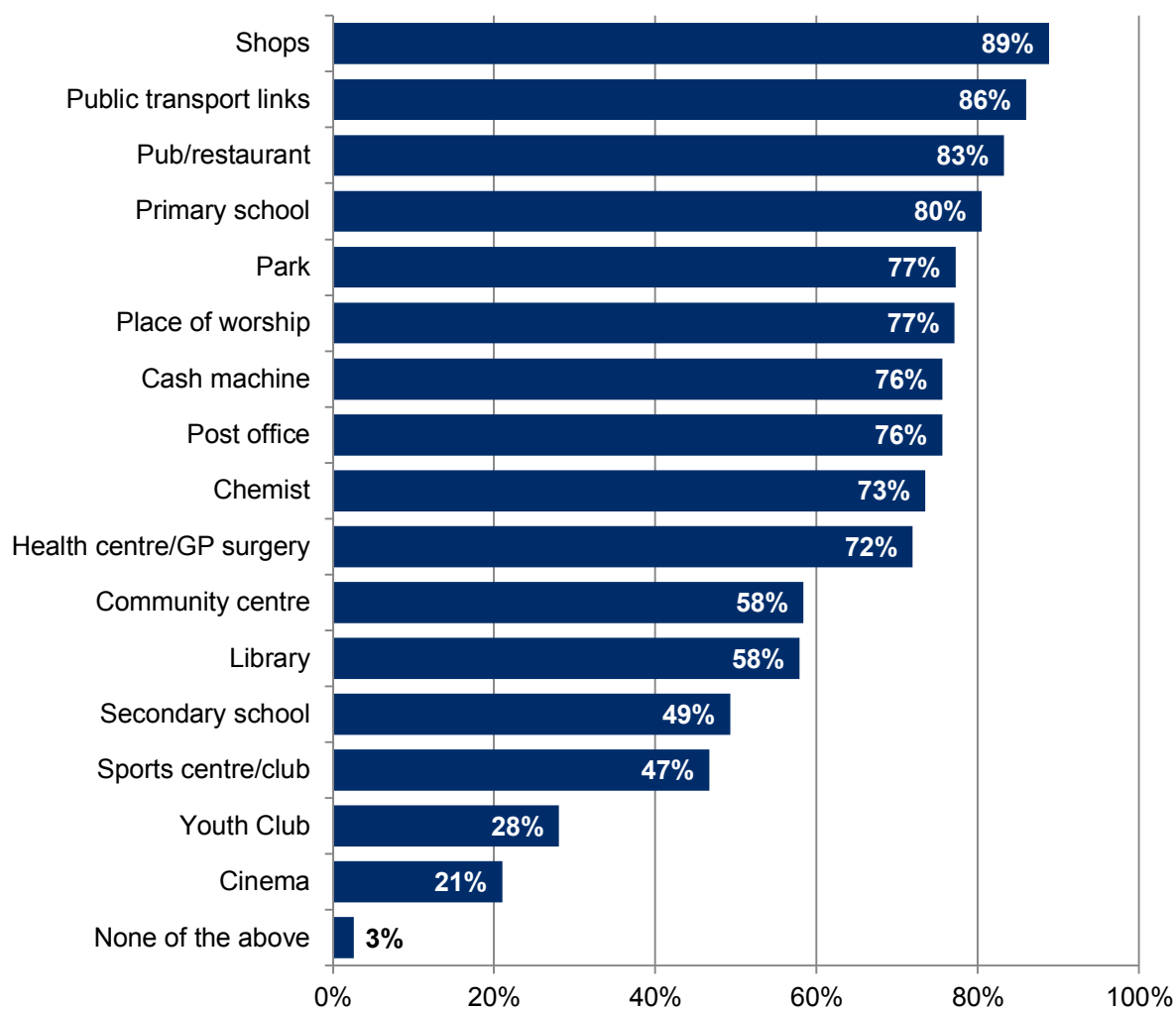
People with a limiting long-term illness were less likely to be satisfied than those without (70%, compared with 81%).

¹⁰ Urban/Rural area classification – see [Terms and definitions](#).

Services and facilities available in the local area

Respondents were also asked to state which of the services and facilities listed in Chart 7 were available in their local area. Shops were the most commonly available service, with 89% of people saying they had them nearby. Public transport links (even if infrequent), pubs/restaurants and primary schools also were available to most people, with 86%, 83% and 80% respectively saying they had these things in their area.

Chart 7: Percentage of people who have each service or facility in their local area



Those with public transport links in their local area were highly likely to be satisfied with their ability to access the services they need, with 81% being satisfied compared with 54% of those without public transport links. Similarly 79% of those with a car or van available for use were satisfied compared with 68% of those without a car or van.

16% of residents in Powys said that they had none of the listed services and facilities within walking distance of their house, which is likely due to the fact that 31% of people in Powys live in hamlets or isolated dwellings.

Whilst 73% of people living in Ceredigion said they were satisfied with their ability to access local services, they also had some of the lowest proportions of residents saying they had the services and facilities listed in Chart 7, when compared with other local authorities.

People who lived close to services and facilities were more likely to make use of them; 39% of people who had a library in their local area had visited one within the last 12 months, compared with 28% of people without a local library. Similarly, 37% of people with a sports centre nearby played sport three or more times per week, compared with 29% of those without a sports centre.

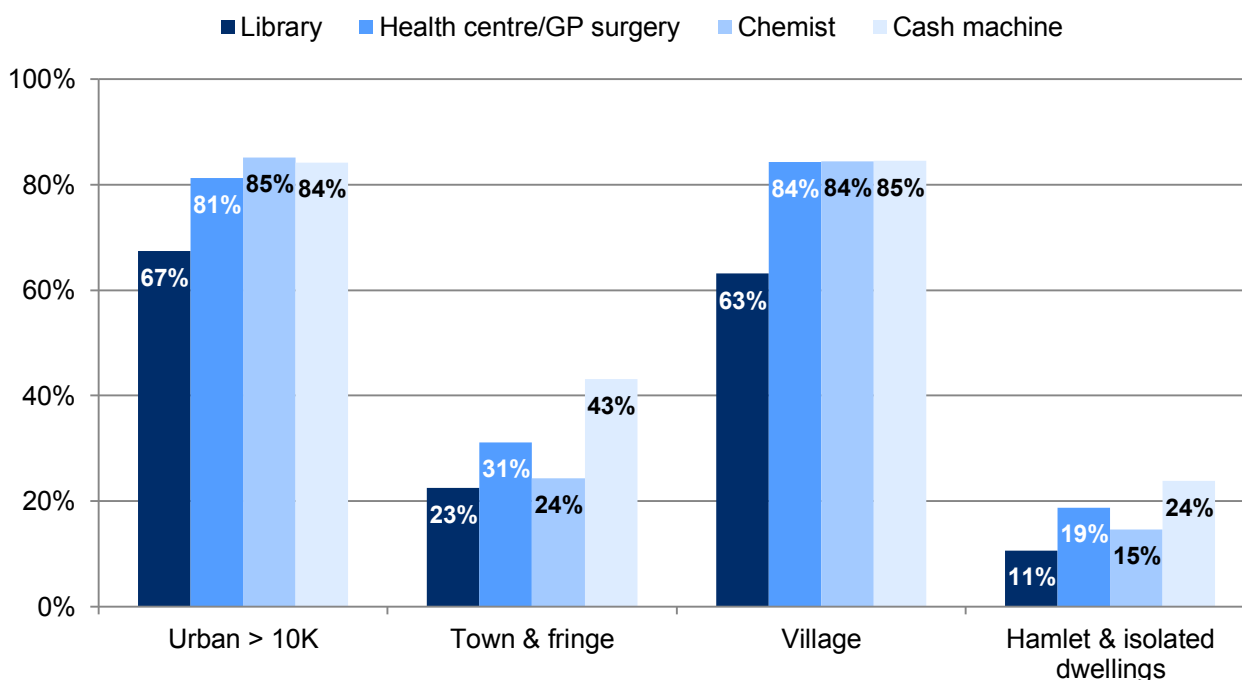


Non-parents were asked if they were satisfied with places for children and young people to meet and get together. Those with youth clubs in their local area were more satisfied (64%) than those without youth clubs (40%), and those with sports centres were also more satisfied (59%) than those without (37%).

Chart 8 illustrates how those living in urban areas and villages were much more likely to have facilities in their local area than those in town & fringe areas and hamlets & isolated dwellings. The most notable differences are in those who had libraries, a health centre or GP surgery, chemists and cash machines.



Chart 8: Whether respondent had the listed service or facility, by urban/rural area¹¹



Further analysis

More in-depth analysis was undertaken to find out which groups of people were most likely to be satisfied with their ability to access the services and facilities they need .

To get a clearer understanding of the effect of each individual factor we used statistical methods to separate out the individual effect of each factor on the likelihood of being satisfied with access to services. These methods allow us to look at the effect of one factor while keeping other factors constant – sometimes called “controlling for other factors”¹²

¹¹ Urban/Rural area classification – see [Terms and definitions](#).

¹² This analysis is formally known as logistic regression. Information about the method can be found in [Regression analysis](#) .

The following factors each had a separate link with being satisfied with their ability to access services and facilities:¹³

- living in an urban area of more than 10,000 residents or in a village
- having a car or van available for use
- having public transport links in the local area
- strongly agreeing that they can access information about their local authority in the way they would like
- agreeing that local people are asked before the budget is set
- not having a limiting long-term illness
- not having a household member who needs adaptations for an illness.

¹³ The factors that were included at the start of the regression analysis were: gender, religion, age, ethnicity, material deprivation, Welsh language use, economic status, tenure, general health, life satisfaction, trust in others, urban/rural area morphology, WIMD area deprivation, whether have limiting long-term illness, whether have car or van, highest qualification level, whether visited library, does sport 3 times a week, attends arts, culture and heritage events, household contains under 16, household contains over 60, whether can access LA information in preferred way, whether know what services LA provides, whether has public transport links, whether lonely, whether can take part in decision making, whether local people are asked about the budget, whether struggles with bills, whether household member needs adaptations for illness.

Terms and definitions

Urban / rural

“Urban” includes settlements with a population of 10,000 or more. All other areas are considered rural and separated into “Town & fringe” (fringe being the outskirts of a town), “Village” and “Hamlet & isolated dwellings”, by considering the density of individual dwellings in each settlement area.

Material deprivation

Material deprivation is a measure which is designed to capture the consequences of long-term poverty on households, rather than short-term financial strain.

Non-pensioner adults were asked whether they had things like ‘a holiday away from home for at least a week a year’, ‘enough money to keep their home in a decent state of decoration’, or could ‘make regular savings of £10 a month or more’. The questions for adults focussed on whether they could afford these items. These items are really for their ‘household’ as opposed to them personally which is why they were previously called ‘household material deprivation’.

Pensioners were asked slightly different questions such as whether their ‘home was kept adequately warm’, whether they had ‘access to a car or taxi, when needed’ or whether they had their hair done or cut regularly’. These also asked whether they could afford them, but also focussed on not being able to have these items for other reasons, such as poor health, or no one to help them etc. these questions were less based on the household and more about the individual.

Those who did not have these items were given a score, such that if they didn’t have any item on the list, they would have a score of 100, and if they had all items, they had a score of 0. Non-pensioners with a score of 25 or more were classed as deprived and pensioners with a score of 20 or more were classed as deprived.

Parents of children were also asked a set of questions about what they could afford for their children.

In this bulletin the non-pensioner and pensioner measures of deprivation are combined to provide an ‘adult’ deprivation variable. The terms ‘adult’ and ‘household’ deprivation may be used interchangeably depending on context.

Qualifications

Respondents’ highest qualifications have been grouped according to the National Qualification Framework (NQF) levels, where level 1 is the lowest level of qualifications and level 8 is doctoral degree or equivalent. For the National Survey, respondents have been grouped into 5 groups, those with no qualifications are in the lowest category and respondents with qualifications at levels 4 to 8 have been grouped together in the highest qualification category. [More information about the NQF levels.](#)

To provide more meaningful descriptions of the qualifications, these short descriptions have been used in this bulletin.

National Qualification Framework levels	Description used in bulletin
NQF levels 4-8	Higher education (Level 4+)
NQF level 3	'A' level and equivalent (Level 3)
NQF level 2	GCSE grades A to C and equivalent (Level 2)
Below NQF level 2	GCSE below grade C (below Level 2)
No Qualifications	No Qualifications

Key quality information

Background

The National Survey for Wales is carried out by The Office for National Statistics on behalf of the Welsh Government. The results reported in this bulletin are based on interviews completed in 2017-18 (1 April 2017 – 31 March 2018).

The sample was drawn from the Royal Mail Small Users Postcode Address File (PAF), whereby all residential addresses and types of dwellings were included in the sample selection process as long as they were listed as individual addresses. If included as individual addresses on the PAF, residential park homes and other dwellings were included in the sampling frame but community establishments such as care homes and army barracks are not on the PAF and therefore were not included.

The National Survey sample in 2017-18 comprised 23,517 addresses chosen randomly from the PAF. Interviewers visited each address, randomly selected one adult (aged 16+) in the household, and carried out a 44-minute face-to-face interview with them, which asked for their opinions on a wide range of issues affecting them and their local area. A total of 11,381 interviews were achieved.

Interpreting the results

Percentages quoted in this bulletin are based on only those respondents who provided an answer to the relevant question. Some topics in the survey were only asked of a sub-sample of respondents and other questions were not asked where the question is not applicable to the respondent. Missing answers can also occur for several reasons, including refusal or an inability to answer a particular question.

Where a relationship has been found between two factors, this does not mean it is a causal relationship. More detailed analysis is required to find whether a factor causes change in another.

The results are weighted to ensure that the results reflect the age and sex distribution of the Welsh population.

Quality report

A summary [Quality report](#) is available, containing more detailed information on the quality of the survey as well as a summary of the methods used to compile the results.

Sampling variability

Estimates from the National Survey are subject to a margin of uncertainty. Part of the uncertainty comes from the fact that any randomly-selected sample of the population will give slightly different results from the results that would be obtained if the whole population was surveyed. This is known as sampling error. Confidence intervals can be used as a guide to the size of the sampling error. These intervals are calculated around a survey estimate and give a range within which the true value is likely to fall.

In 95% of survey samples, the 95% confidence interval will contain the 'true' figure for the whole population (that is, the figure we would get if the survey covered the entire population). In general, the smaller the sample size the wider the confidence interval. Confidence intervals are included in tables of survey results published on StatsWales.

As with any survey, the National Survey is also subject to a range of other sources of error: for example, due to non-response; because respondents may not interpret the questions as intended or may not answer accurately; and because errors may be introduced as the survey data is processed. These kinds of error are known as non-sampling error, and are discussed further in the quality report for the survey.

Significant differences

Where the text of this release notes a difference between two National Survey results (in the same year), we have checked to ensure that the confidence intervals for the two results do not overlap. This suggests that the difference is statistically significant (but as noted above, is not as rigorous as carrying out a formal statistical test), i.e. that there is less than a 5% (1 in 20) chance of obtaining these results if there is no difference between the same two groups in the wider population.

Checking to see whether two confidence intervals overlap is less likely than a formal statistical test to lead to conclusions that there are real differences between groups. That is, it is more likely to lead to "false negatives": incorrect conclusions that there is no real difference when in fact there is. It is also less likely to lead to "false positives": incorrect conclusions that there is a difference when there is in fact none. Carrying out many comparisons increases the chance of finding false positives. Therefore, when many comparisons are made the conservative nature of the test is an advantage because it reduces (but does not eliminate) this chance.

Where National Survey results are compared with results from other sources, we have not checked that confidence intervals do not overlap.

Regression analysis

Where further analysis has been carried out selection of the initial variables used in the regression was based on; the results from cross-analysis, policy direction, and the practicality of using the variable. The results for some factors were only available for a sub-sample of respondents, or there were a large number of 'missing' results which resulted in a substantial drop in the sample size on which the regression model could be tested. For this reason some variables/factors were omitted from the investigation. The final models consisted of those factors that remained significant even after holding the other factors constant. These significant factors are those that have been discussed in this bulletin and the use of regression analysis is indicated by the statement that we have 'controlled for other factors'. It is worth noting that had a different range of factors been available to consider from the survey, then some conclusions about which factors were significant may have been different.

More details on the methodology used in the regression analysis in this report are available in the [Technical Report: Approach to regression analysis and models produced](#).

Technical report

More detailed information on the survey methodology is set out in the [technical report](#) for the survey.

National Statistics status

The [United Kingdom Statistics Authority](#) has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#).

National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value.

All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for Statistics. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the UK Statistics Authority's regulatory arm. The Authority considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate.

It is Welsh Government's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected of National Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the Authority promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFG)

The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The Act puts in place seven well-being goals for Wales. These are for a more equal, prosperous, resilient, healthier and globally responsible Wales, with cohesive communities and a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. Under section (10)(1) of the Act, the Welsh Ministers must (a) publish indicators (“national indicators”) that must be applied for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the Well-being goals, and (b) lay a copy of the national indicators before the National Assembly. The 46 national indicators were laid in March 2016 and this release includes 1 of the national indicators, namely the percentage who are satisfied with their ability to get to/access the services and facilities they need.

Information on the indicators, along with narratives for each of the well-being goals and associated technical information is available in the [Well-being of Wales report](#).

Further information on the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#).

The statistics included in this release could also provide supporting narrative to the national indicators and be used by public services boards in relation to their local well-being assessments and local well-being plans.

Further details

This document is available at:

<https://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/national-survey/?tab=current&lang=en>.

The [first release](#) for the survey was published on 20 June 2018.

More detailed information on the survey methodology is set out in the [Technical report](#) for the survey.

Next update

Not a regular output.

We want your feedback

We welcome any feedback on any aspect of these statistics, which can be provided by email to surveys@gov.wales.

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