What factors are linked to people being satisfied with the area that they live in?

Future Generations Indicator 26

This report outlines some factors linked to adults in Wales being overly satisfied with their local area as a place to live. The National Survey for Wales includes a measurement of the extent to which a person feels satisfied with their local area. This report is based on National Survey interviews carried out in **2018-19**. The aim of this report is to provide an updated overview of key factors linked to feeling satisfied with the local area as a place to live.

Key findings

Holding other factors constant[1], the factors below were found to be linked to feeling satisfied with the local area as a place to live.

- Being **aged 35-54**, compared with being older or younger.

- Having **no children** living in the household.

- Having **fair or good general health**, compared with having bad health.

- Living in a predominantly **rural area** (hamlets, town, and rural-urban fringe areas), compared with living in more built-up urban areas.

- Living in **Monmouthshire, Vale of Glamorgan, or Gwynedd**; compared with people who live in Pembrokeshire, Blaenau Gwent, or Rhondda Cynon Taf.

- Being able to **access information about the local authority** in a way that suits them.

- Being satisfied with the availability of **local services and facilities**.

- Feeling a **sense of belonging** to the local area.

- Feeling that people in the local area treat each other with **respect and consideration**.

- **Feeling safe** walking alone in the local area after dark.

- Not speaking Welsh in general, but **having some Welsh speaking ability**.

There were 18 factors included in our analysis that were found **not** to be linked to people feeling satisfied with their local area as a place to live, including: marital status; religion; and tenure. As with all analysis of this type, we are unable to attribute cause and effect or to allow for factors not measured in the survey.

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[1] For this analysis, we have controlled for a range of factors so that even if they are related (e.g. general health and age), the link between each factor and people feeling satisfied with their local area can be explored independently.

Contents

1. Background

[The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015](#) focuses on improving the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of Wales. To achieve this, the Act requires public bodies in Wales to think about long-term issues and targets, work better with communities and stakeholders, and to take a more joined-up and cohesive approach to decision-making. To ensure that this vision is achieved, the Act puts in place seven well-being goals[2] (**Figure 1**).

The Act requires the Welsh Government to set [national indicators](#) measuring achievement against the well-being goals. The [National Survey for Wales](#) measures progress against 15 of the 46 national indicators. The survey involves face-to-face interviews with a random sample of 12,000 people across Wales each year.

This report focuses on [National Indicator 26](#): **'Percentage of people satisfied with their local area as a place to live'.**
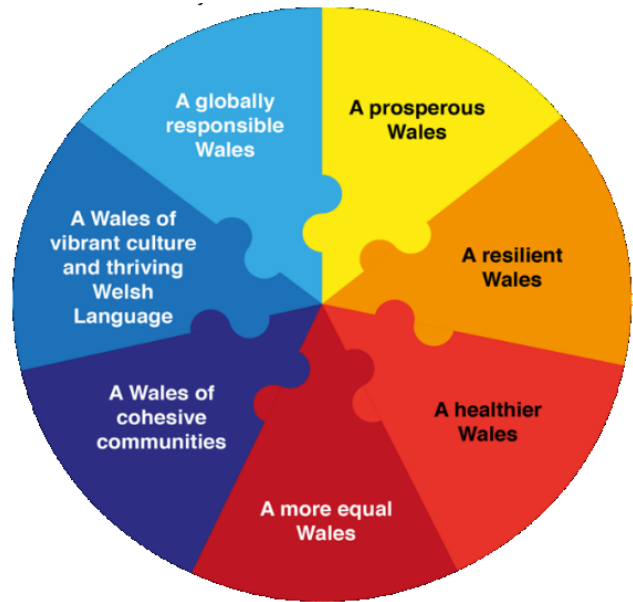

Figure 1. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015: seven well-being goals[3].

2. Question used in the National Survey

Information relating to National Indicator 26 was collected by asking National Survey respondents to what extent they felt satisfied with their local area as a place to live. Each of these three statements were answered using a five-point scale ranging from '1 = very satisfied' to '5 = very dissatisfied'. For the analysis in this report, respondents who answered 'very satisfied' or 'fairly satisfied' were combined to form a single unit of measurement for people who were 'satisfied' with their local area as a place to live. Likewise, people who responded 'very unsatisfied' or 'fairly unsatisfied' were combined as 'unsatisfied', and those who gave a neutral response were not included in this analysis.

Overall, **86% of adults** were satisfied with their local area as a place to live.

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[2] Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015: The Essentials, which can be viewed [online](#).

3. Method of analysis

To get a clear understanding of how particular factors contribute to people feeling satisfied with their local area, we used a **statistical technique[3] to explore the link[4] between each factor and satisfaction with the local area,** *whilst holding all other factors constant*. Holding other factors constant (also referred to as controlling for other factors) is important because it allows us to look at each factor independently (i.e. ensuring that the effect we are measuring is not influenced by external factors). To look at the effect of one factor (e.g. age) on people's satisfaction with their local area, we would need to control for the effects of all other factors. We can then get a much clearer idea of how one single factor links to people's satisfaction with their local area, without the influence of other factors.

The complexity of some relationships between factors

To understand these results, we cannot always be sure about what factors cause, and which are *caused by*, people feeling satisfied with their local area as a place to live. For some factors this relationship is clear based on prior knowledge – increasing age might cause people to feel satisfied with their local area; however we know that increasing age is not caused by increased area satisfaction. For other factors, however, the direction of the relationship is not as clear. For example, feeling a sense of belonging to the community in their local area might

Figure 2 The importance of holding other factors constant in statistical analysis.

cause people to feel satisfied with the area as a place to live, but on the other hand feeling satisfied with the local area may help people to feel a sense of belonging to the local community: the relationship could also work both ways[5].
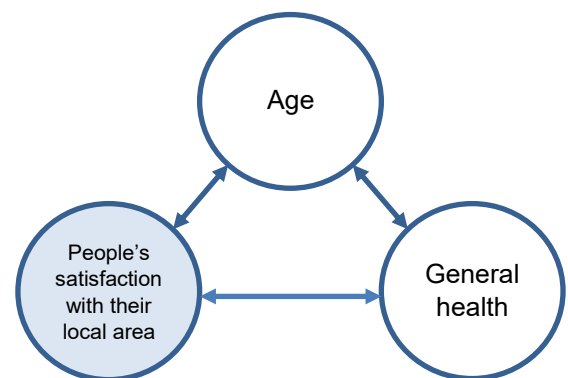
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[3] This technique is known as logistic regression. More information about the methods used in this report can be found in the accompanying regression methodology report and technical report.

[4] While this analysis can tell us about the *likelihood* of relationships between factors, it cannot tell us about causal relationships (e.g. it would be incorrect to say that having a sense of belonging to an area *causes* people to feel satisfied with their local area).

[5] This relationship can be even more complex, as there could be other factors which we haven't considered (and are not available from the National Survey) which may cause people to feel satisfied with the local area *and* feel a sense of belonging.

Interpreting the results

All of the factors presented in the charts in this report are statistically significant predictors of people feeling satisfied with their local area as a place to live, as tested by our chosen regression model. In this report, we use 'predictive margins' – presented as percentages (%) – to show the probability of a relationship between each factor (whilst holding other factors constant) and the dependent variable (people feeling satisfied with their local area as a place to live). The results show within a particular factor (e.g. sex) the likelihood of one 'average' group of people with a shared characteristic (e.g. females) people feeling satisfied with their local area as a place to live, compared with another 'average' group of people with a different shared characteristic (e.g. males). Error bars on the charts show the 95% confidence interval of the predictive margins for each group. Overlapping error bars mean that while a factor is a significant predictor of people feeling satisfied with their local area as a place to live, it is not entirely clear which group within the factor is the most predictive.

4. Main factors linked to people feeling satisfied with local area

Overall, **86%** of people were **satisfied with their local area as a place to live**. **Figure 3.1** shows all the individual factors (**whilst holding other factors constant**) which were found to have an association with the likelihood of people feeling satisfied with their local area. Within each factor, the group with the highest probability of feeling satisfied with their local area as a place to live is highlighted in light blue. The following sections provide more details about each factor. We also conducted analysis of local authority areas linked with place satisfaction, which is shown in Section 4.1.4.

Figure 3.1 Main factors linked with people feeling satisfied with their local area as a place to live.

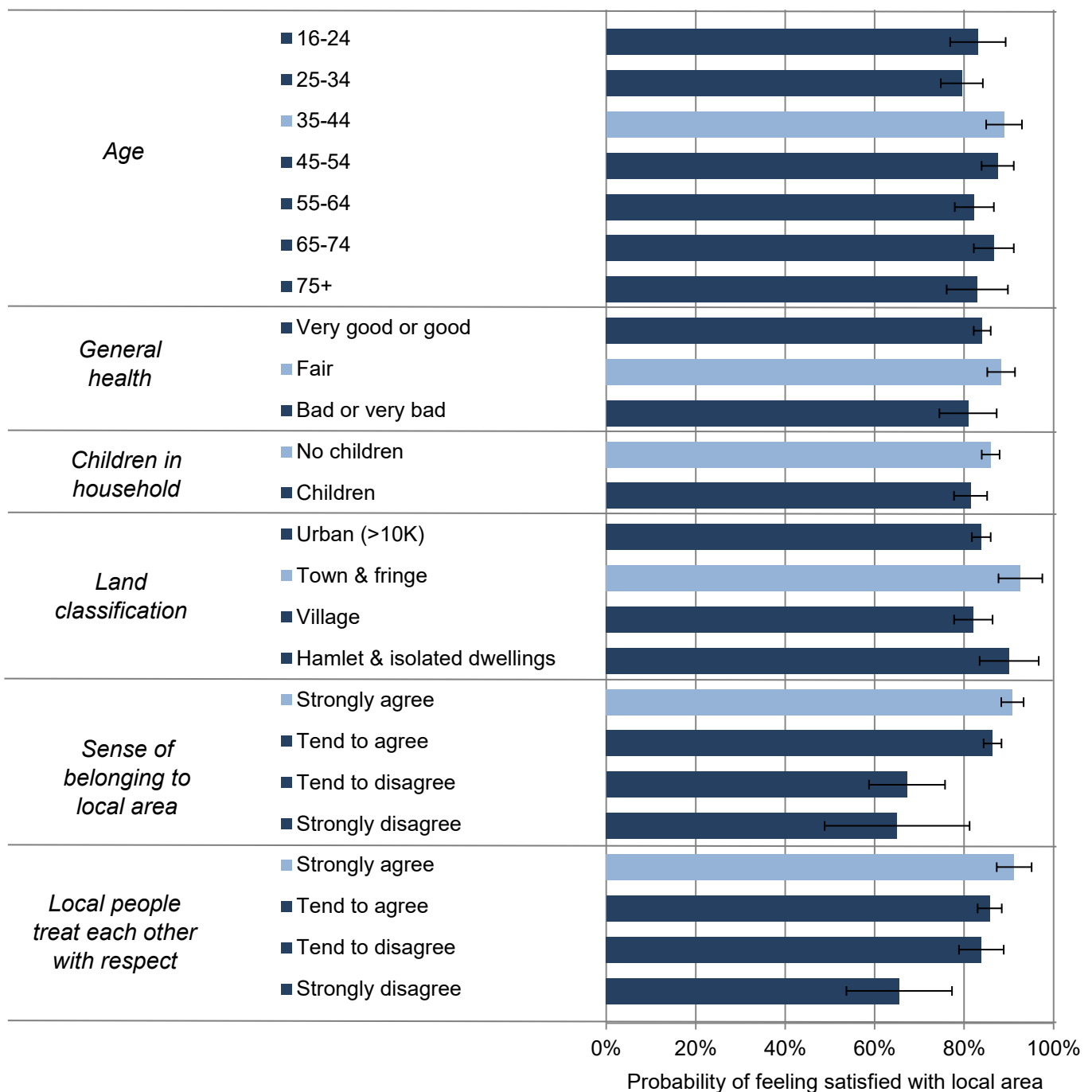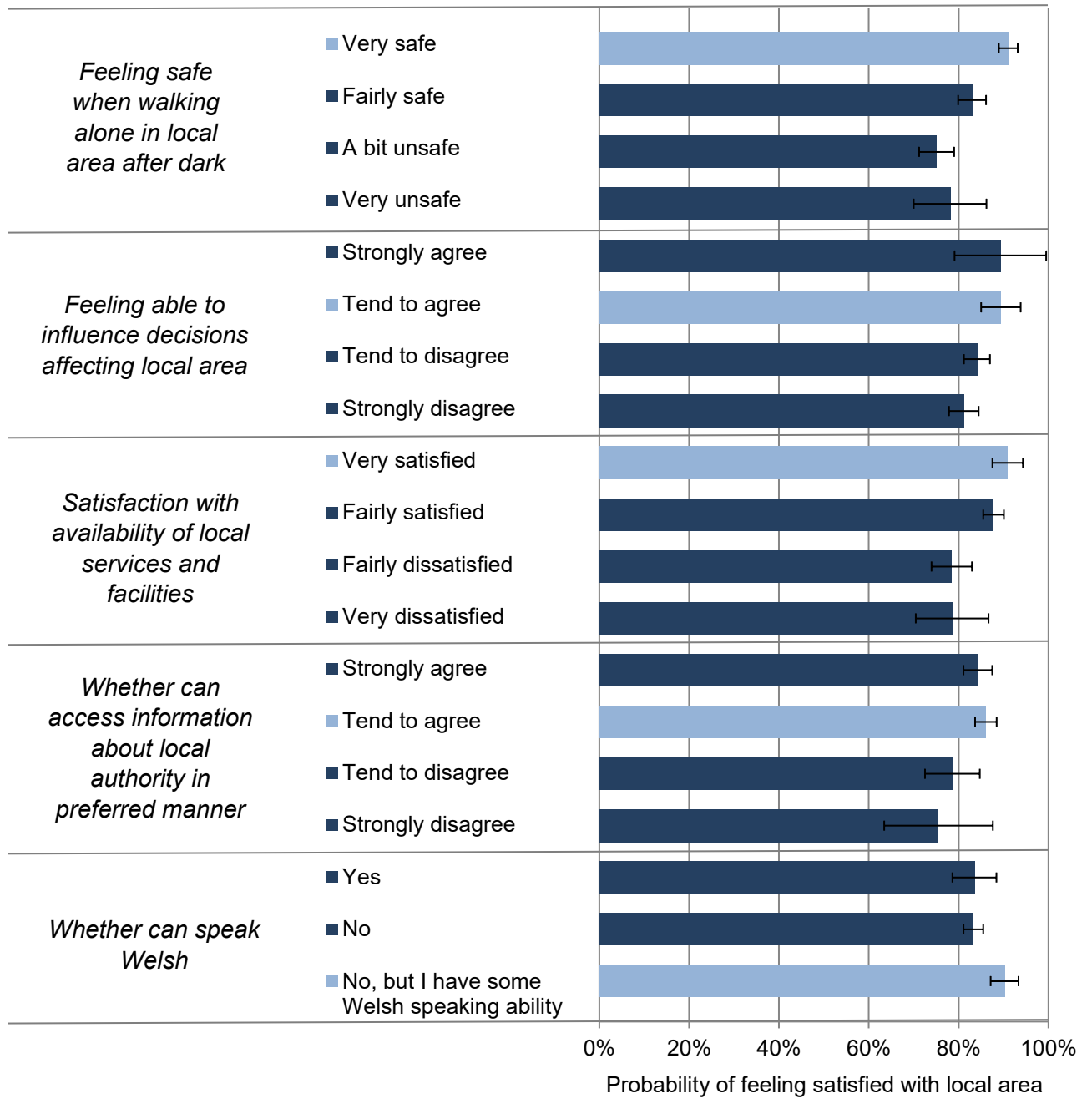**Figure 3.1 (continued)** *Main factors linked with people feeling satisfied with their local area as a place to live.*

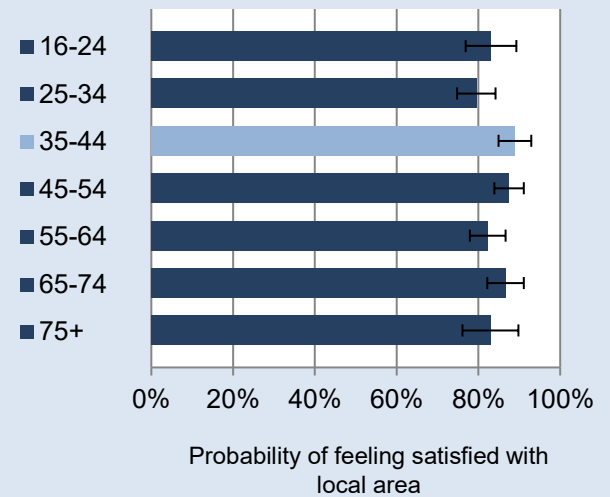Probability of feeling satisfied with local area

4.1 Analysis

Holding all other factors constant, the following factors were found to be linked with people feeling satisfied with their local area as a place to live. Individual factors which share similar characteristics are grouped into **themes** (e.g. demographic factors). Factors **not** found to be linked to satisfaction with the local area are listed in Section 4.2.

4.1.1 Demographic factors

Age group

As shown in **Figure 4.1**, people **aged 35-44**, and **45-54** were the most likely to feel satisfied with their local area as a place to live. People aged 25-34 were the least likely.

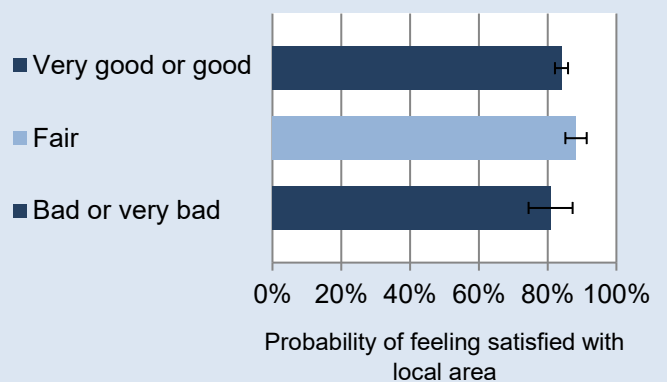*Figure 4.1 The relationship between satisfaction with the local area and age.*

4.1.2 Health factors

General health

While **general health** was associated with feeling satisfied with the local area there was no significant difference between the health responses. See **Figure 4.2**.

Figure 4.2 The relationship between satisfaction with the local area and general health.
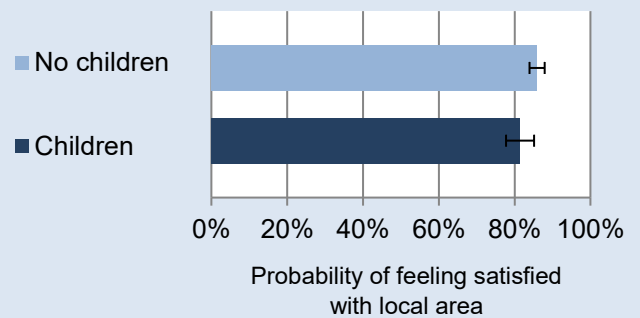
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4.1.3 Household characteristics

Presence of children in the household

The presence of **children living in the household** was linked with area satisfaction but there was no clear distinction between households with children and those without. See **Figure 4.3**.

Figure 4.3 *The relationship between satisfaction with the local area and presence of children in household.*
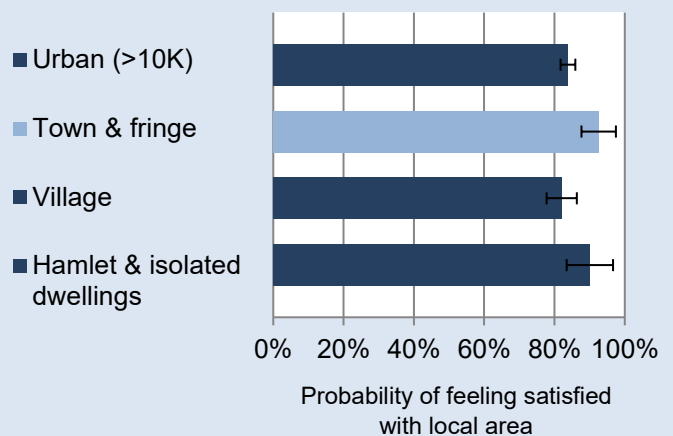
4.1.4 Local area characteristics

Land classification

People living in **town and fringe areas** and people living in hamlets and isolated dwellings were most likely to feel satisfied with their local area. People who live in villages were the least likely to feel satisfied with their local area as a place to live, as shown in **Figure 4.4**.
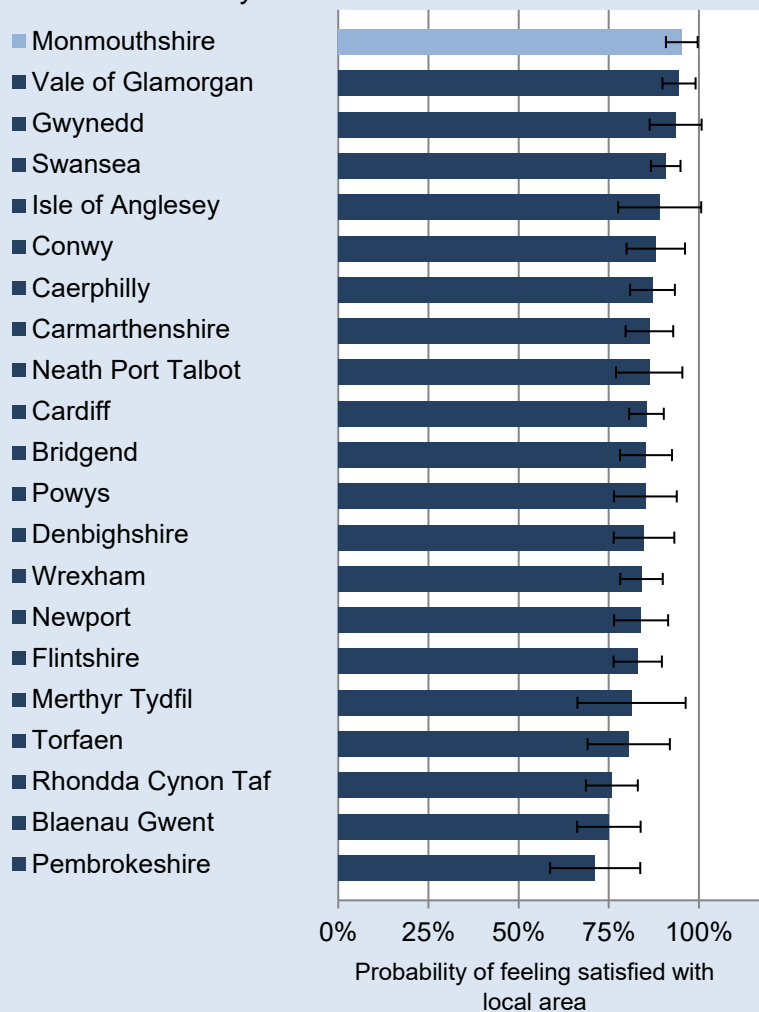
Figure 4.4 *The relationship between satisfaction with the local area and land classification.*

Local authority

People who live in Monmouthshire were the most likely to feel satisfied with their local area as a place to live, and those in Pembrokeshire the least likely[6] (**Figure 4.5**).

Figure 4.5 *The relationship between satisfaction with the local area and local authority.*

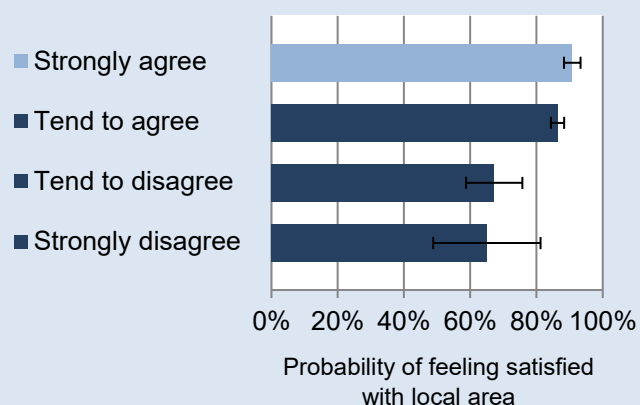Probability of feeling satisfied with local area

4.1.5 Community cohesion

Sense of belonging

Overall, people who agreed that they felt a sense of belonging to the community in their local area were more likely to feel satisfied with their local area, than those who did not (**Figure 4.6**).

Figure 4.6 *The relationship between satisfaction with the local area and sense of belonging.*
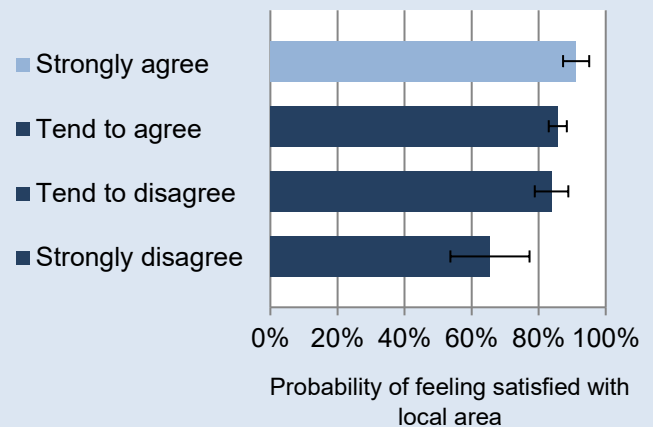

Probability of feeling satisfied with local area

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[6] Ceredigion was also included in this analysis, however it was not suitable for the style of regression used as all people from this area answered a similar way.

Local people treat each other with respect and consideration

As shown in **Figure 4.7**, people who 'strongly agreed' that people in their local community treated each other with respect and consideration were the most likely to feel satisfied with the area as a place to live, and those who 'strongly disagreed' were the least likely.

Figure 4.7 *The relationship between satisfaction with the local area and feeling that people treat each other with respect and consideration.*
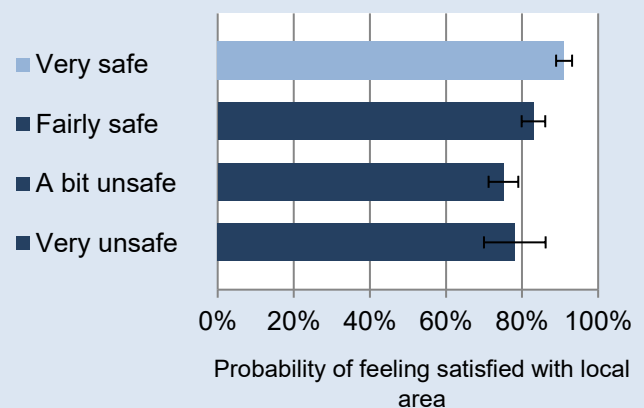
4.1.6 Community safety

Feeling safe when walking alone in local area after dark

Overall, people who felt 'safe' when walking around their local area at night were the more likely to feel satisfied with their local area than those who felt unsafe. See **Figure 4.8**.

Figure 4.8 *The relationship between satisfaction with the local area and feeling safe walking around the local area.*
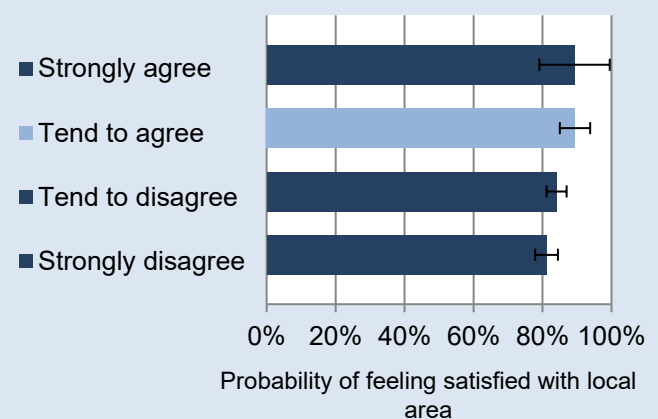
4.1.7 Local democracy

Feeling able to influence decisions affecting the local area

People who agreed that they felt able to influence decisions affecting their local area were more likely to feel satisfied with their local area as a place to live (**Figure 4.9**).

Figure 4.9 *The relationship between satisfaction with the local area and feeling able to influence decisions affecting the local area.*
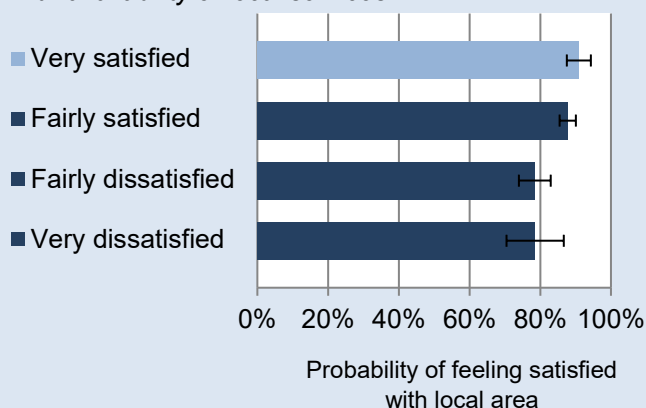
4.1.8 Local authority services

Satisfaction with availability of local service s and facilities

Overall, people who felt satisfied with the availability of local services and facilities in their area were more likely to feel satisfied with their local area as a place to live than people who felt dissatisfied. (**Figure 4.10**).
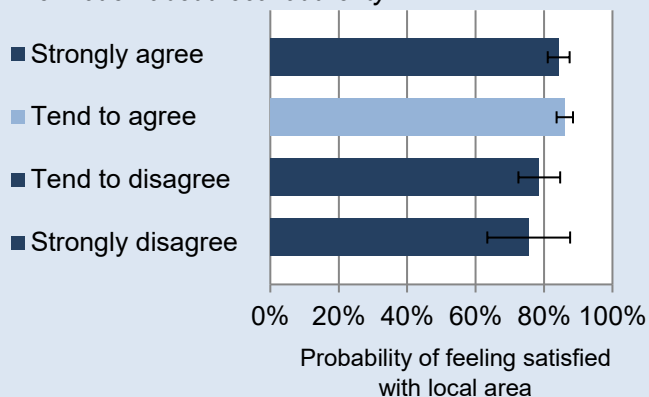
Figure 4.10 *The relationship between satisfaction with the local area and satisfaction with availability of local services.*

Probability of feeling satisfied with local area

Can access information about local authority in a preferred manner

Overall, people who felt that they were able to access information about their local authority in a way that suited them were more likely to feel satisfied with living in their local area (See **Figure 4.11**).

Figure 4.11 *The relationship between satisfaction with the local area and accessing information about local authority.*

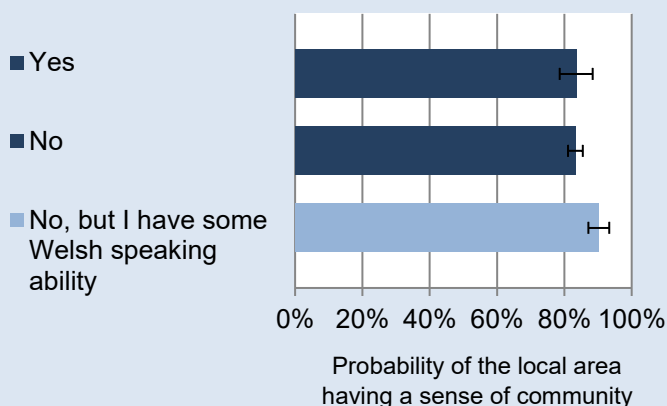Probability of feeling satisfied with local area

4.1.9 Welsh language

Speaking Welsh (in general)

People who reported that they could not speak Welsh, but did have some Welsh-speaking ability, were the most likely to feel satisfied with their local area as a place to live. See **Figure 4.12**.

Figure 4.12 *The relationship between satisfaction with the local area and whether speaks Welsh.*

Probability of the local area having a sense of community

4.2 Factors not linked to people feeling satisfied with their local area

In this analysis, other factors were included in our regression model, but we did **not** find a link between the following factors and the probability of people feeling satisfied with their local area:

- Marital status.
- Educational attainment.
- Religion.
- Tenure.
- Economic status.
- Material deprivation.
- Mental well-being.
- Whether has a limiting long-term limiting condition.
- Agreeing that people from different backgrounds get along well in the local area.
- Feeling safe at home after dark.
- Feeling safe travelling by car in the local area after dark.
- Feeling safe travelling by public transport in the local area after dark.
- Thinking that the local councillor works closely with the community.
- Whether contacted the local councillor in the past 12 months.
- Having a good understanding of what the local councillor does for the local community.
- Knowing how to find out what services the local authority offers.
- Speaking Welsh in everyday life (and knowing more than a few words of Welsh).
- Participating in three or more sports activities a week.

5. Summary and recommendations for further research

In summary, we have provided an analysis of individual factors (and overall themes) linked to **National Indicator 26: 'Percentage of people satisfied with their local area as a place to live'**.

Overall, nine central themes[7] emerged from our analysis:

1. Demographic factors.
2. Health factors.
3. Household characteristics.
4. Local area characteristics.
5. Sense of community.
6. Community safety.
7. Local democracy.
8. Local authority services.
9. Welsh language.

The relationship between particular factors and the percentage of people who are satisfied with their local area as a place to live could be more complex than suggested in this national report, and the results could **vary** between and within different geographies. Therefore, further research could include more small-scale investigations involving qualitative[8] or mixed-methods[9] approaches.

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[7] In total, we looked at factors linked to **7 National Indicators for Well-being** as part of a project using data from the 2018-19 National Survey for Wales. As some factors were found to be linked to more than one National Indicator, we have provided a separate document which highlights the similarities and differences between the individual factors, and overall themes, found to be linked to all National Indicators. This document is available online: Hafferty, C. (2020). *Key themes linked to a selection of National Indicators for Well-being in Wales.* Cardiff: Welsh Government, GSR Report. Available at: https://gov.wales/national-survey-wales-april-2018-march-2019.

[8] Qualitative research is often used to understand people's underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations to uncover trends in people's thoughts and opinions to provide a better understanding of a particular issue. Qualitative data collection methods are often small-scale and collect non-numeric data by using techniques such as interviews and focus groups. On the other hand, *quantitative* research seeks to understand a problem by collecting numerical data which can be used in statistical analysis, often to produce generalised results for a large sample of a population (e.g. attitudes, behaviours, and opinions). For example, the National Survey for Wales predominantly collects and analyses information in this way.

[9] 'Mixed-methods' is an approach to research which involves the collection and analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data within the same study. As policy makers, practitioners, and others in applied areas strive to produce well-informed research based on multiple forms of evidence (such as the multi-faceted well-being of communities and future generations), mixed-methods research can be a good way to explore these complex social situations.

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