

Who is most likely to feel safe in their local area? (Future Generations Indicator 25)

The National Survey for Wales 2013-14 results are used here to investigate what factors are linked with people feeling safe in their local area. We have controlled for a range of factors, so that even when factors are related (e.g. age and general health) the link between each factor and feeling safe can be explored independently.

Key findings

When controlling for a range of other factors, people are more likely to feel safe if they:

- Are male;
- Are in good health;
- Have no disability or limiting long-standing illness;
- Have no religion;
- Live in a rural area;
- Are educated to degree level or above;
- Are aged under 70;
- Have medium or high life satisfaction;
- Feel that they belong to the local area;
- Live in the safest communities (as measured by recorded levels of burglary, violent crime, theft, criminal damage, anti-social behavior and fire);
- Agree that the local area is free from graffiti and vandalism;

We did not find a link between the following and feeling safe: marital status; country of birth; economic status; having household internet access; housing tenure (e.g. renting or owning); and ability to keep up with bills and credit commitments.

1. Background

The [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#) is designed to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by putting in place seven well-being goals. The Act places a legal requirement on the Welsh Government to set [national indicators](#)

which measuring achievement of the well-being goals. This report focuses on indicator 25: ‘percentage of people feeling safe at home, walking in local area and when travelling’¹.

The [National Survey for Wales](#) is used to measure progress against many of these national indicators. It is a large-scale, face-to-face survey collecting detailed information on people’s views and well-being. The 2013-14 survey covered 14,771 people. It provides robust information on people’s views about a wide range of issues.

2. Measure of feeling safe

In the National Survey, respondents were asked how safe they felt in the following situations:

- At home after dark;
- Walking alone in the local area after dark;
- Travelling by public transport after dark.

They were asked to respond on a five point scale from ‘very safe’ to ‘very unsafe’. Those that responded either ‘very safe’ or ‘fairly safe’ to all three questions were coded as ‘feels safe’. 68% of people were in this group.

3. Analysis method

To get a clear understanding of how each individual factor contributes to feeling safe, we used a technique called regression analysis. Regression analysis allows us to explore the links between particular factors and feeling safe.

For example, we know that people who live in social housing are more likely to feel unsafe. However, people in social housing are also more likely to live in urban areas. This can make it difficult to say whether not feeling safe is due to living in social housing or to living in an urban area. Once other factors are controlled for, using regression analysis, it is clear that living in social housing, in itself, does not affect not feeling safe. But living in an urban area does affect this, even when other factors are taken into account.

The analysis of each factor presented below controls for a range of other factors, so the link between each factor of interest can be isolated and explored. All factors reported on below have a statistically significant link with feeling safe (that is, we are confident these findings are robust and not just due to variability in the survey estimates).

Regression analysis can identify relationships between factors; however, it cannot tell us about causality. While for some factors causality is fairly clear based on prior knowledge (e.g. feeling safe does not cause changes in age; age causes changes in feeling safe), for others the relationship between cause and effect is more blurred (low life satisfaction can influence feeling unsafe; feeling unsafe can influence life satisfaction). Therefore, where prior knowledge does not make the direction of causality clear we have generally noted that causality can operate in either direction (or both).

For a full description of how we carried out the analysis, see the accompanying [technical report](#).

¹ The Future Generation indicator is the ‘percentage of adults (aged 16+) who report feeling very safe or fairly safe in all of the following situations: at home after dark, walking alone after dark, travelling by public transport after dark, and travelling by car after dark. This report only provides partial data on this indicator as a question on safety when travelling by car was not included in the National Survey in 2013-14.

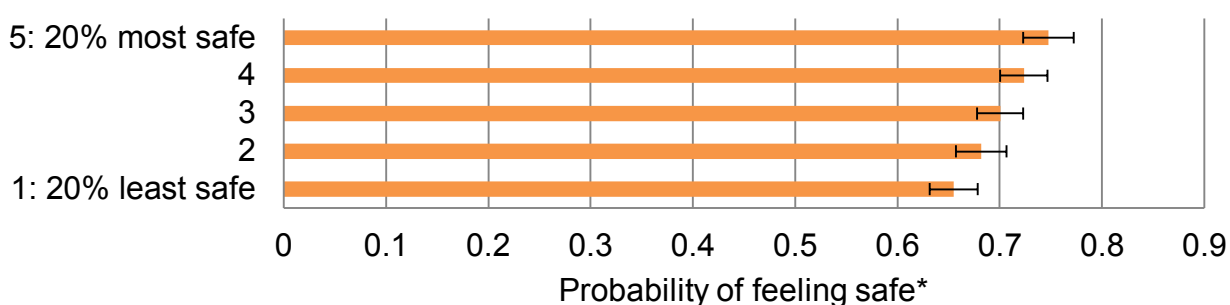
4. Main findings: predictors of feeling safe

When controlling for other factors, the following were found to be predictors of whether a person feels safe².

4.1 Area characteristics

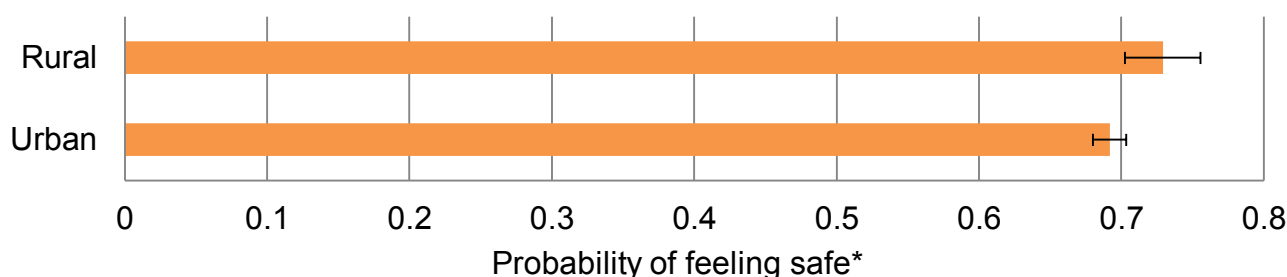
Levels of recorded crime: Incidences of burglary, violent crime, theft, criminal damage, anti-social behavior and fire are recorded for each Lower Layer Super Output Area³. This information was cross-referenced with the National Survey results. Holding the other factors constant, people who live in the 20% of 'least safe' areas have a lower probability of feeling safe (0.65)⁴. The probability of feeling safe increases with the safety of the area; those living in the 20% of safest areas have a probability of 0.75 of feeling safe, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: The link between levels of recorded crime and feeling safe⁵



Urban/ rural area: Holding the other factors constant, people from urban areas have a lower probability of feeling safe (0.31), as shown in Figure 2⁶.

Figure 2: The link between urban / rural area and feeling safe



² If the error bars for each response do not overlap, the responses are statistically significant different from one another. 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. This means we can be confident that there is a real difference in the general population – the finding is not likely to be due to variability in the survey estimates.

³ Data taken from the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD), 2014-15.

⁴ When controlling for the other factors, a probability of 0 would indicate a 0% likelihood of feeling safe. A probability of 1.0 would indicate a 100% likelihood of a respondent in this group feeling safe.

⁵ If the error bars for each response do not overlap, the responses are significantly different from one another at the 0.05 level.

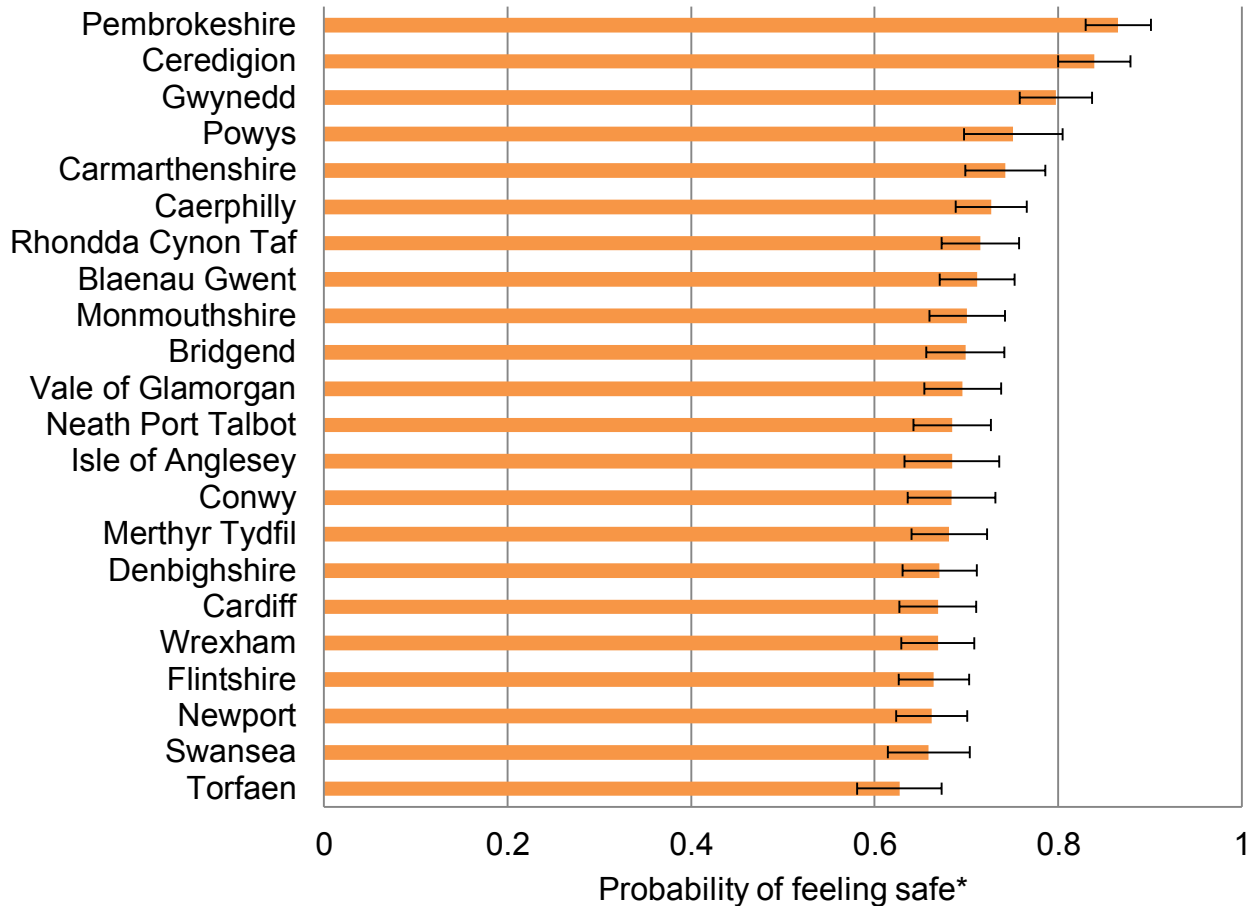
* Holding the other factors constant.

⁶ Even though the error bars slightly overlap, further tests showed that the difference is statistically significant.

* Holding the other factors constant.

Local authority area: Holding the other factors constant, people living in Torfaen have the lowest probability of feeling safe (0.63), followed by those in Swansea (0.66). Those with the highest probability of feeling safe are in Pembrokeshire (0.87) followed by those in Ceredigion (0.84). There was no significant difference between most of the local authority areas, as shown in Figure 3:

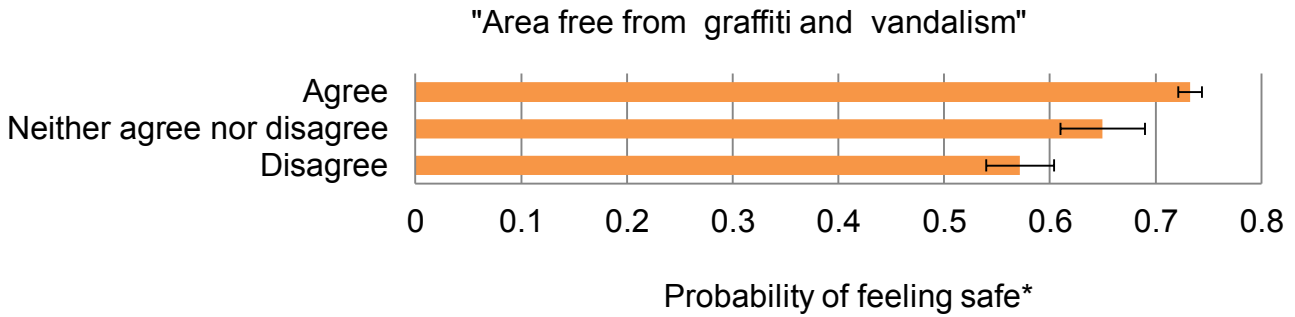
Figure 3: The link between local authority area and feeling safe



Graffiti and vandalism in area: Holding the other factors constant, people who agree that the area is free from graffiti and vandalism are more likely to feel safe (0.73), than both those that neither agree nor disagree (0.65) and disagree (0.57), as shown in Figure 4:

* Holding the other factors constant .

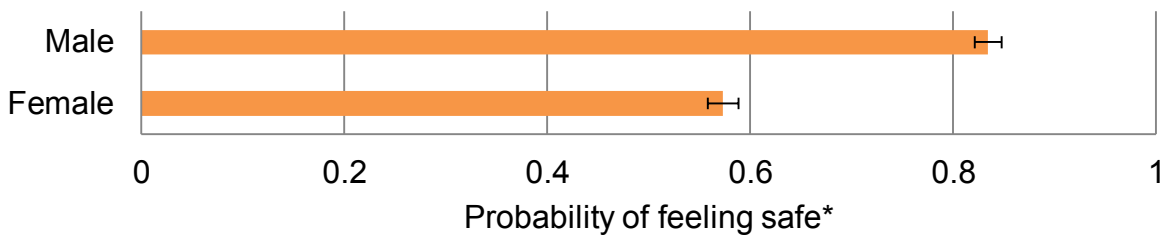
Figure 4: The link between graffiti and vandalism and feeling safe



4.2 Respondent characteristics

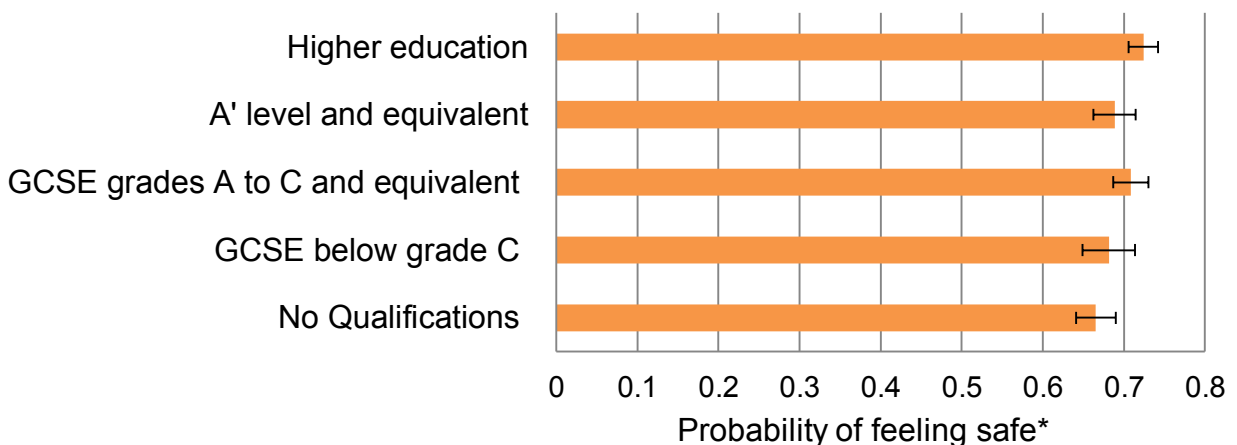
Gender: Holding the other factors constant, women have a lower probability of feeling safe (0.57) than men (0.83), as shown in Figure 5:

Figure 5: The link between gender and feeling safe



Highest qualification: Holding the other factors constant, people with no qualifications have a lower probability of feeling safe (0.67) than those educated to degree level or above (0.70), as shown in Figure 6:

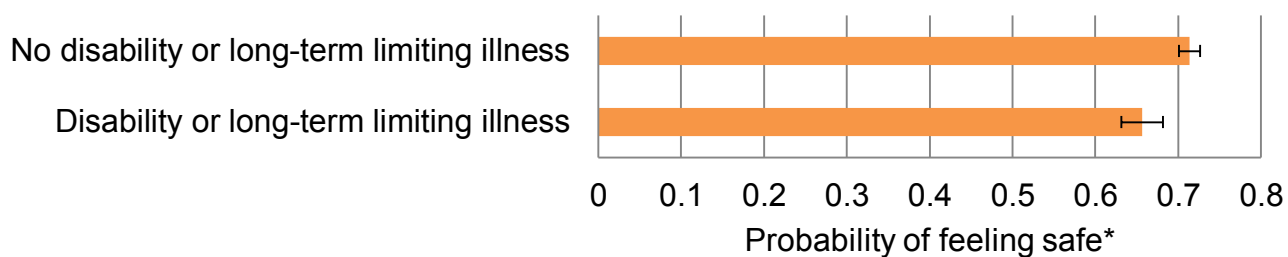
Figure 6: The link between highest qualification and feeling safe



Disability or long-term limiting illness: Holding the other factors constant, people who have a disability or long-term limiting illness are less likely to feel safe (0.66) than those without a disability or long-term limiting illness (0.71), as shown in Figure 7:

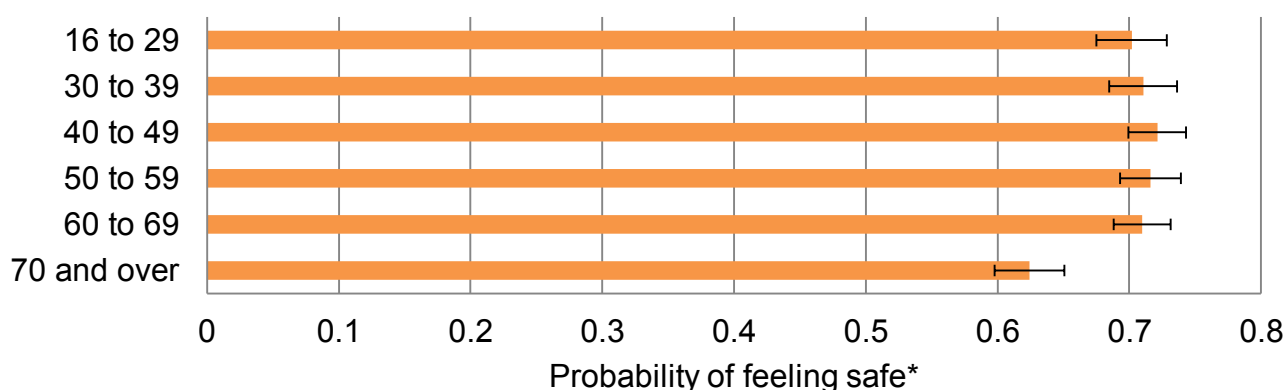
* Holding the other factors constant.

Figure 7: The link between disability / long-term limiting illness and feeling safe



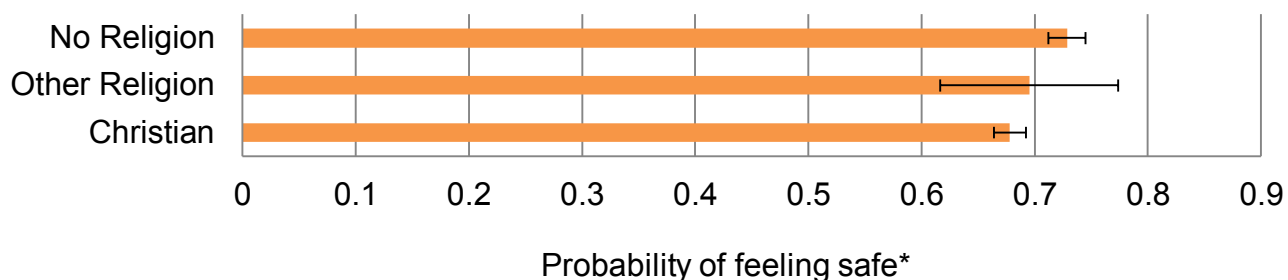
Age: Holding the other factors constant, people aged 70 and over have a lower probability of feeling safe (0.62) than those in other age groups, as shown in Figure 8.

Figure 8: The link between age and feeling safe



Religion: Holding the other factors constant, people who are Christian are less likely to feel safe (0.68) than those with no religion (0.73), as shown in Figure 9.

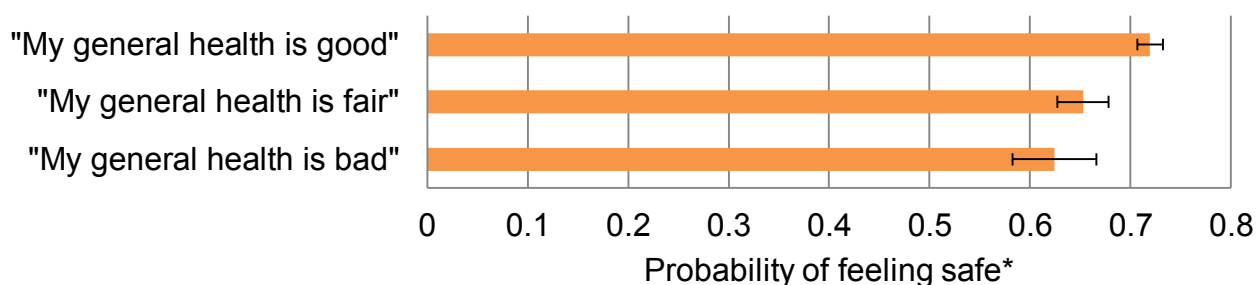
Figure 9: The link between religion and feeling safe



General health: Holding the other factors constant, people who report good general health have a higher probability of feeling safe (0.72) than those who report bad general health (0.62), as shown in Figure 10.

* Holding the other factors constant.

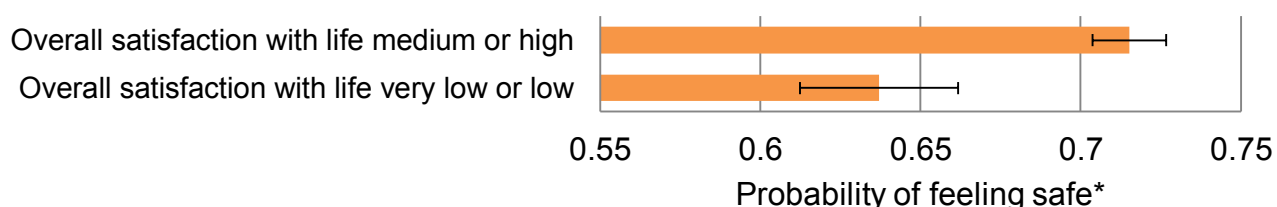
Figure 10: The link between general health and feeling safe



4.3 Social characteristics

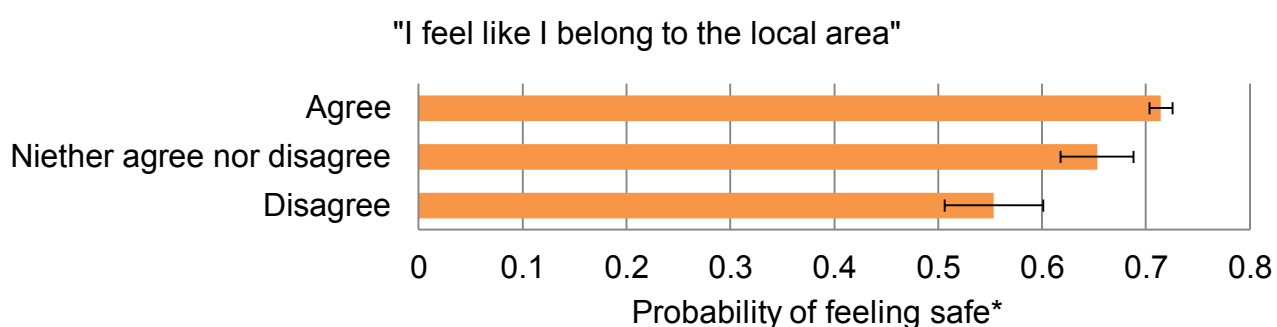
Overall satisfaction with life: Holding the other factors constant, people with very low or low life satisfaction have a lower probability of feeling safe (0.64) than those with a medium or high life satisfaction (0.72), as shown in Figure 11.

Figure 11: The link between overall satisfaction with life and feeling safe



Belonging to local area: Holding the other factors constant, people who do not feel they belong to the local area have a lower probability of feeling safe (0.55) than those who 'neither agree nor disagree' (0.65) and those that agree (0.71), as shown in Figure 12.

Figure 12: The link between belonging and feeling safe



Combined effects of gender and age: Investigating the relationship between gender and age shows that men aged 16 to 29 have the highest probability of feeling safe (0.87). This differs from women of the same age (0.54), whose feelings of safety do not differ significantly from women aged 70 and over (0.49), as shown in figure 13.

* Holding the other factors constant.

Figure 13: The link between age and gender and feeling safe

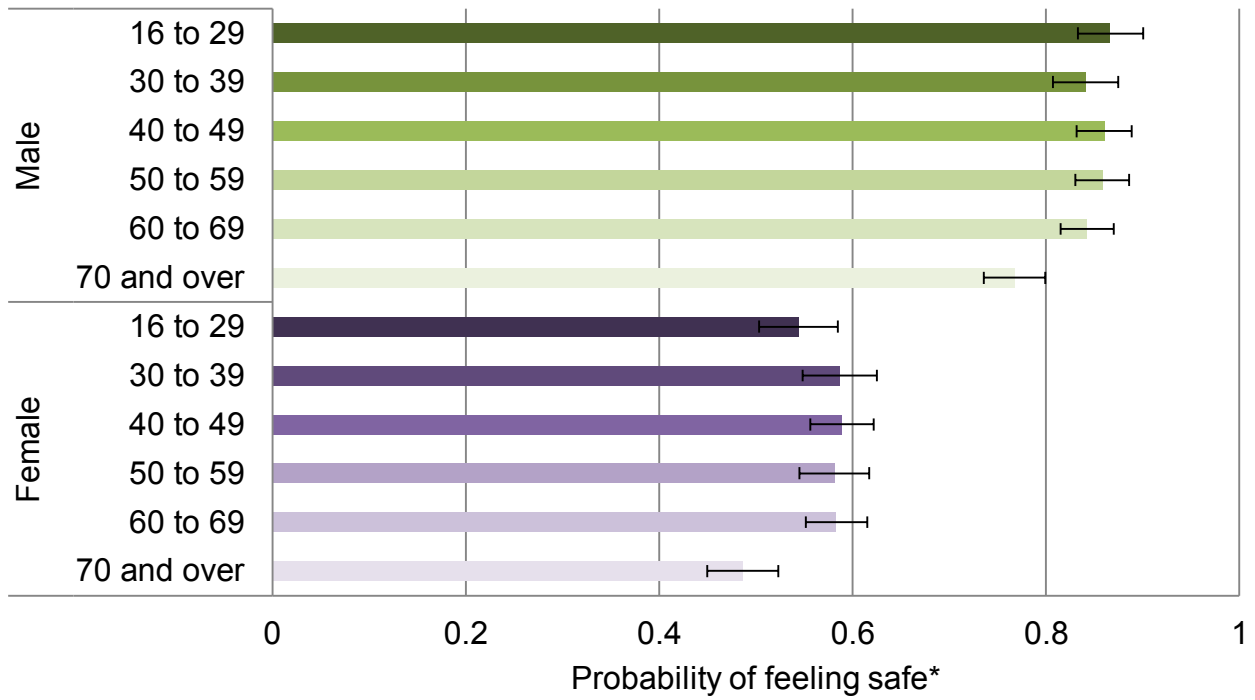
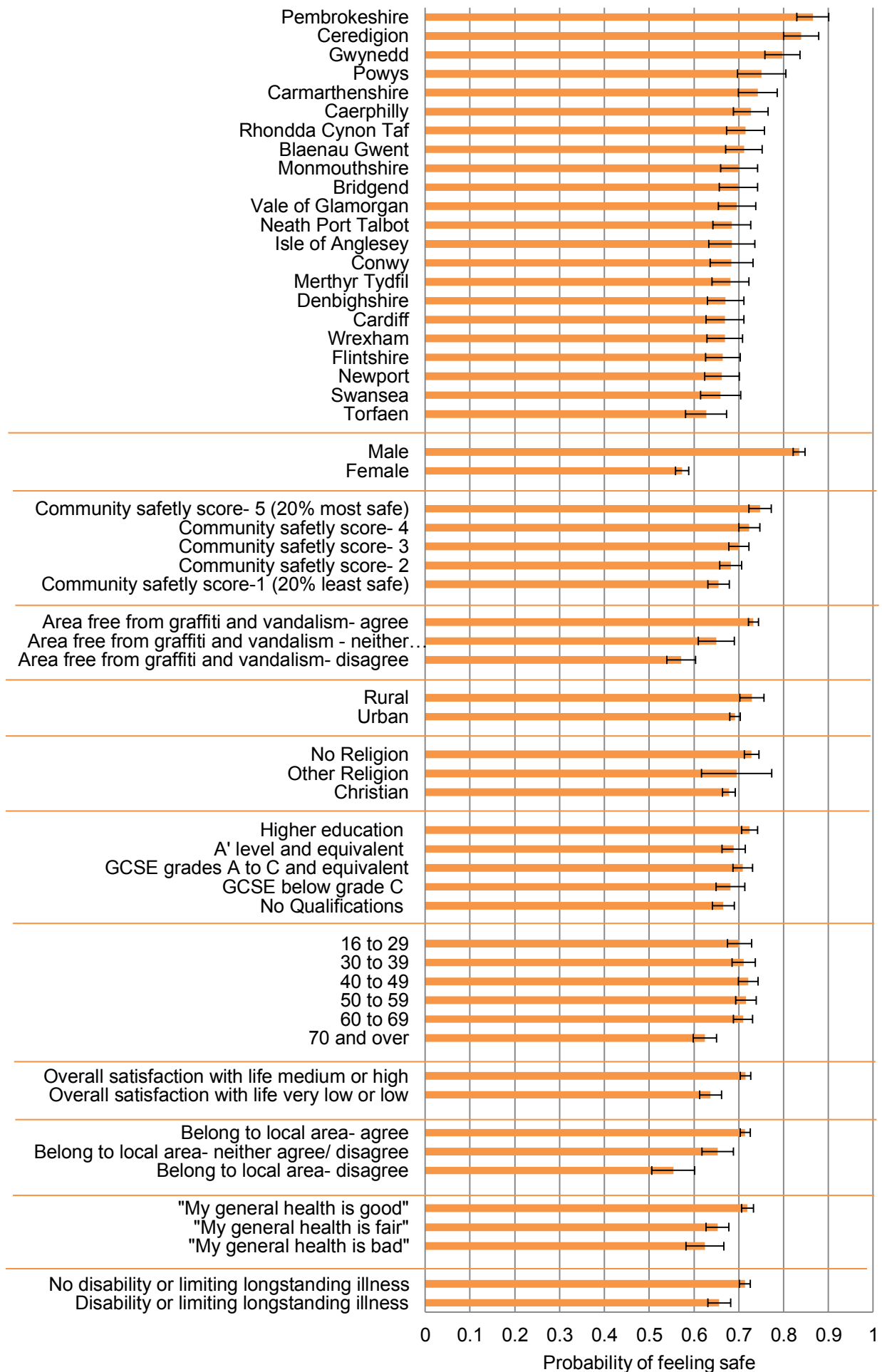


Figure 14 shows the relative contribution of each factor to feeling safe.

Figure 14: Probability of feeling safe⁷



4.4 Factors not linked to feeling safe

We did not find a link between the following and feeling safe:

- marital status;
- country of birth;
- economic status;
- having household internet access;
- housing tenure (e.g. renting or owning); and
- ability to keep up with bills and credit commitments.

Further details on how we carried out the analysis are available in the accompanying [technical report](#).

⁷ As before, the error bars can be used to see where there are statistically significant differences among categories of each factor: if the bars do not overlap, the difference is likely to be 'real'. However, it would not be correct (or meaningful) to conclude that non-overlapping error bars mean that a category of one factor (e.g. people with degree level education) predicts safe significantly different to a category of another factor (e.g. people with good general health).

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Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.

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