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

Future Generations Indicator 26

This report is based on National Survey interviews carried out in 2021-22. It provides an update of [previous analysis based on the 2018-19 results](#). The National Survey for Wales is a continuous, large-scale, random sample survey covering people across Wales. Prior to the start of the Covid-19 (coronavirus) pandemic in March 2020, the survey was carried out face-to-face in people's homes; since April 2020, it has been carried out by telephone instead (with an online section for some respondents). Due to the difference in mode and possible changes because of the pandemic, care should be taken when making direct comparisons with results from previous years.

This report outlines some factors linked to whether people were satisfied with their local area. The [National Survey for Wales](#) measures a person's local area satisfaction based on a five-point scale of agreement, with those being classed satisfied responding with either 'fairly satisfied' or 'very satisfied'.

Key findings

Holding other factors constant¹, the factors below were found to be linked with people being satisfied with their local area as a place to live:

- 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 at home after dark, and when walking alone in their local area at night.
- Being satisfied with the services and facilities available in the local area.
- Living in the least deprived parts of the country, according to the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation.
- Living in a rural area.
- Not having a litter problem in the area.
- Living in Denbighshire, Torfaen or Powys; compared with living in Neath Port Talbot, Blaenau Gwent or Newport.

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 the percentage of people feeling satisfied with their local area can be explored independently.

- Having a very high level of life satisfaction.

Other factors included in our analysis and found not to be linked to people feeling being satisfied with their local area are listed in Section 5. 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. 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 put in place seven well-being goals² (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 in 2021-22 involved telephone interviews with a random sample of over 12,000 people across Wales.

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

2. Question used in the National Survey

Information relating to National Indicator 26 was collected by asking National Survey respondents how satisfied they were with their local area using a five-point Likert 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 grouped together. Respondents who answered, 'very dissatisfied', 'fairly dissatisfied', or 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied' were also grouped together.

Overall, 89% of adults were satisfied with their local area. This is consistent with the results found in 2020-21 and 2018-19.

3. Method of analysis

To get a clear understanding of how particular factors contribute to whether people were satisfied with their local area, we used a statistical technique³ to explore the link⁴ between each factor and local area satisfaction, 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 predicting factor independently (i.e. ensuring that the effect we are measuring is not influenced by external factors). We can then get a much clearer idea of how one single factor links to local area satisfaction, without the influence of other factors.

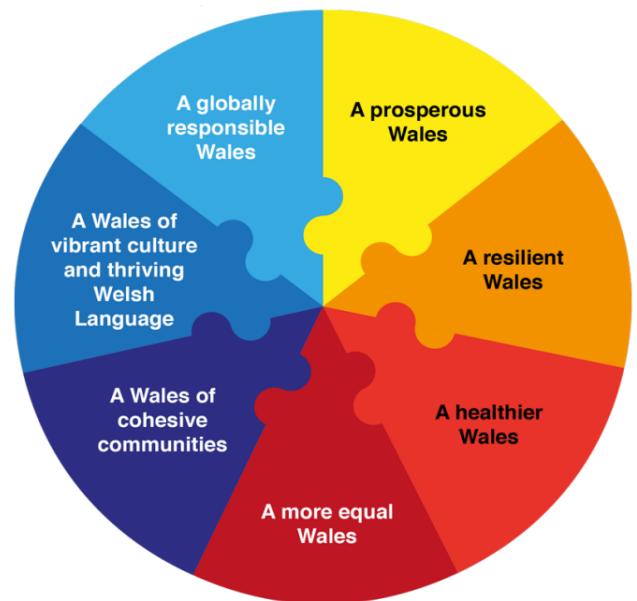


Figure 1. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015: seven well-being goals².

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

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 feeling unsafe in their local area causes people to feel satisfied with their local area).

The complexity of relationships between factors

To understand these results, we cannot always be sure about what factors are linked to, and which are affected by, local area satisfaction. For some factors the relationship is clear based on prior knowledge while for other factors, this relationship is not as obvious⁵.

Interpreting the results

All the factors presented in the charts in this report are statistically significant predictors of people being satisfied by their local area 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 their local area has a sense of community). 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) being satisfied by their local area, 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, it is not entirely clear which group within the factor is the most predictive.

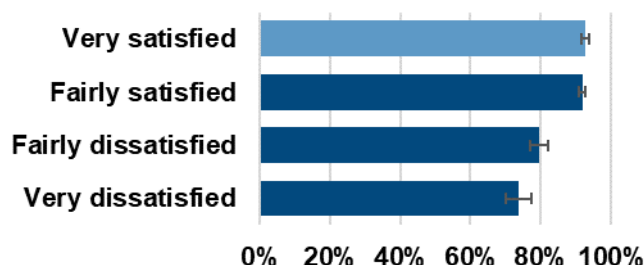
4. Main factors linked to being satisfied with the local area as a place to live

Overall, 89% of National Survey respondents were satisfied with their local area. The figures below show all the individual factors (whilst holding other factors constant) which were found to have an association with people feeling satisfied with their local area. Within each factor, the group with the highest probability (percentage) of feeling satisfied with their local area is highlighted in light blue. Also, the explanatory factors can be grouped into themes shown by the sub-heading titles.

Area Facilities

Satisfaction with local services and facilities

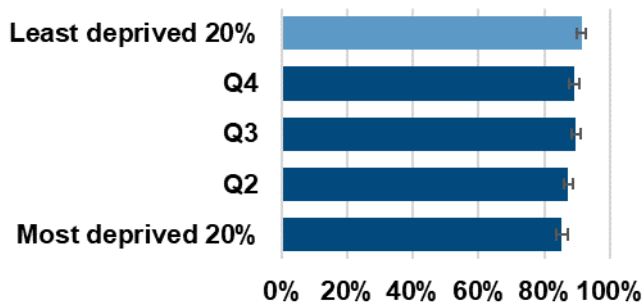
People who were very or fairly satisfied with their local services and facilities were more likely to be satisfied with their local area, compared with those who weren't satisfied.



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 be linked to not being satisfied with their local area and feeling unsafe.

Area deprivation (Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation)

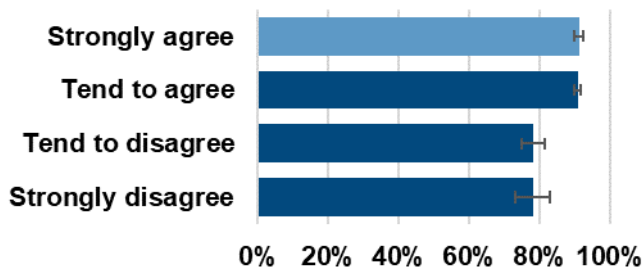
People living in the least deprived 20% areas of Wales were more likely to be satisfied with their local area as opposed to people living in the 40% most deprived areas of Wales.



Community

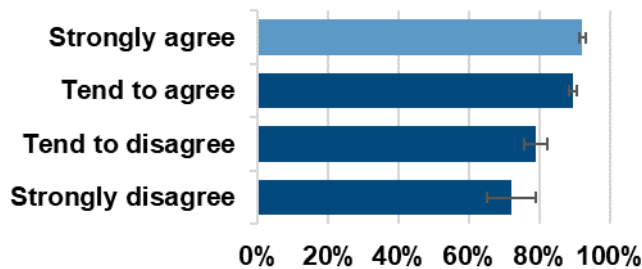
Whether people treat each other with respect in local area

People who strongly agreed or tended to agree, that people treated each other with respect in their local area were the most likely to be satisfied with their local area.



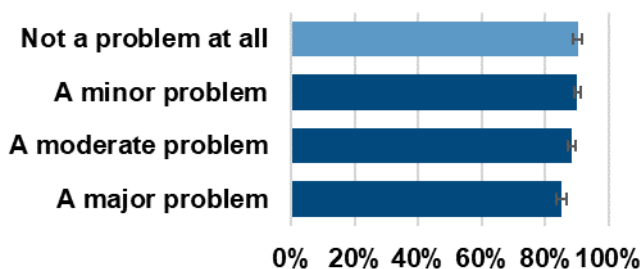
Whether a sense of belonging to the local area

People who strongly agreed that they felt a sense of belonging to their local area were the most likely to be satisfied with their local area.



How much of a problem littering is in local area

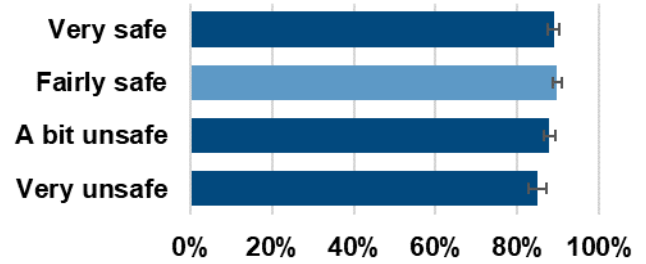
People who viewed littering as 'A major problem' were the least likely to feel satisfied with the local area, compared with any other response to the question.



Safety

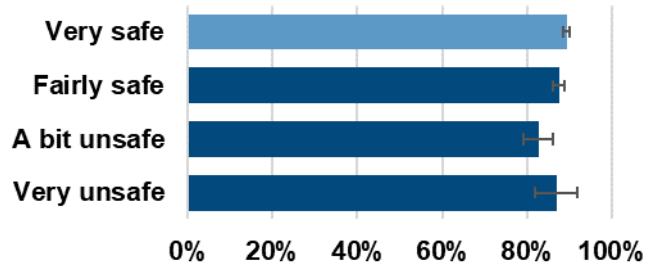
Whether feels safe walking alone after dark in the local area

People who felt 'Very unsafe' walking in their local area after dark were less likely to be satisfied with their local area compared to those who felt either 'Fairly' or 'Very' safe.



Whether safe at home after dark

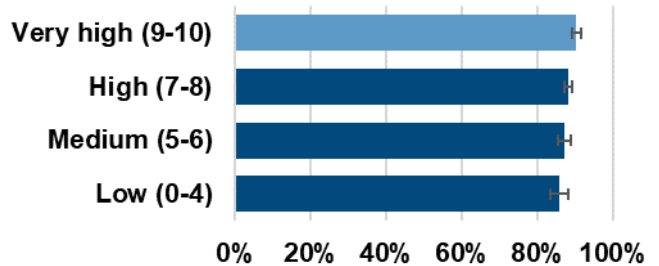
The exact relationship between feeling safe at home and local area satisfaction remains unclear.



Well-being

Overall satisfaction with life

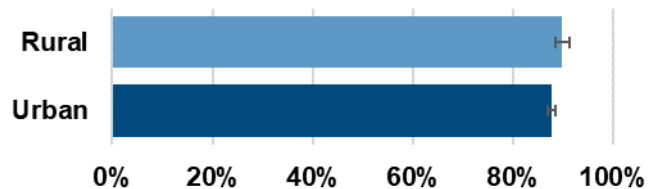
People who had a very high life satisfaction score were the group most likely to feel satisfied with their local area.



Geography

Living in urban or rural areas

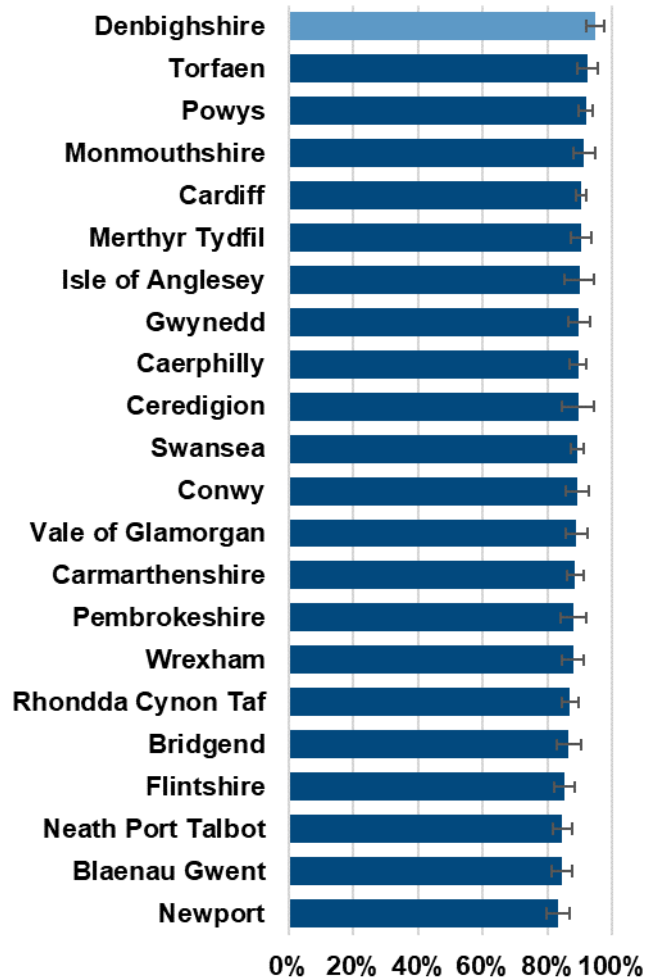
People living in rural areas were more likely to be satisfied with their local area, compared with those living in urban areas.



Local Authority

Local authority where living

People living in Denbighshire, Torfaen or Powys were the most likely to feel satisfied with the local area, while those in Newport, Blaenau Gwent or Neath Port Talbot were the least likely to feel satisfied.



5. Factors not linked to being satisfied with the local area as a place to live

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

- Sex.
- Ethnicity.
- Religion.
- Age (split into 16-44, 45-64 & 65+).
- Marital Status.
- Household type (tenure).
- Household contains children.
- Whether has a limiting long-term limiting condition.
- Being in good general health.
- Whether views fly-tipping as a problem in the local area.
- Whether views dog fouling as a problem in the local area.
- Whether views graffiti as a problem in the local area.
- Whether believes people from different backgrounds in the local area get along well.
- Frequency of going for walks longer than 10 minutes.
- Household has a car or van available for use.
- Whether in material deprivation.
- Welsh speaking ability.
- Whether feels safe travelling by car after dark in the local area.

6. Summary and recommendations for further research

In summary, we have provided an analysis of factors (and overall themes) linked to Future Generations National Indicator 26: 'Percentage of people satisfied with their local area as a place to live'. Overall, six central themes emerged from our analysis:

1. Area facilities.
2. Community.
3. Geography.
4. Safety.
5. Well-being.
6. Local authority.

The relationship between particular factors and people being satisfied with their local area as a place to live is likely to be more complex than suggested in this analysis and influenced by factors not measured in the National Survey. However, many of the related factors first discussed in the earlier [2018-19](#) report remain true following analysis of the 2021-22 National Survey results. Further research could include more small-scale investigations involving qualitative⁶ or mixed-methods⁷ approaches.

⁶ [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.

⁷ [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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Views expressed in this report are those of the researchers and not necessarily those of the Welsh Government.

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Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.

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