

Comisiwn  
Cydraddoldeb a  
Hawliau Dynol

Equality and  
Human Rights  
Commission

Human rights

# Who do you see?

Living together in Wales



## **Key messages**

- There is overwhelming agreement that public service providers in Wales should guarantee to treat all people with respect, dignity and fairness.
- There is strong support for the laws we have to protect Human Rights
- 47% agree that people only talk about their human rights when they're trying to get something they're not entitled to
- A significant proportion of people in Wales agree that human rights laws are not widely understood by the public
- Half of the Welsh population believe that issues of human rights do not affect them personally.

# Human rights

## Introduction

This document provides the findings of the question on human rights within the EHRC attitudinal survey. Questions were designed to assess views about human rights and gauge levels of support.

### **Being treated with respect, dignity and fairness**

There was overwhelming agreement (83 per cent) that public service providers in Wales should guarantee to treat all people with respect, dignity and fairness 'all of the time'. 14 per cent said this should be the case 'most of the time' and 3 per cent felt it should be the case 'some of the time'. Only 1 per cent disagreed with this statement.

Some notable differences were displayed in the subgroups most likely to agree 'all of the time'. White adults were more likely than non-white adults to say that all people should be treated with respect, dignity and fairness 'all of the time' (83 per cent compared with 75 per cent).

85 per cent of those in employment felt that this should be the case 'all of the time'. This was higher than the proportion of retired people and those who were not in employment (80 per cent and 78 per cent respectively). Adults in the AB<sup>1</sup> and C1<sup>2</sup> social grades were markedly more likely than those in social grades C2<sup>3</sup> and DE<sup>4</sup> to agree that all people should be treated with respect, dignity and fairness all of the time (88 per cent and 86 per cent compared with 75 per cent and 77 per cent respectively).

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<sup>1</sup> higher and intermediate managerial/administrative/professional households

<sup>2</sup> supervisory, clerical, junior managerial/administrative/professional households

<sup>3</sup> skilled manual workers

<sup>4</sup> semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers or on state benefit/unemployed

**Table 1.1 In your opinion should public service providers in Wales guarantee to treat all people with respect, dignity and fairness?**

	<i>Unweighted base, n=</i>	<i>Weighted base, n=</i>	<i>Yes, all of the time (%)</i>	<i>Yes, most of the time (%)</i>	<i>Yes, some of the time (%)</i>	<i>No (%)</i>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,589</b>	<b>1,589</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>
White British/Welsh	1438	1555	83	13	3	1
Other	151	34	75	21	2	-
Working	899	876	85	12	3	*
Retired	428	432	80	16	3	*
Not working	262	281	78	16	4	1
AB	382	376	88	9	2	*
C1	533	538	86	12	1	*
C2	242	241	75	17	7	2
DE	428	431	77	18	4	*

Note: \* denotes a finding of less than 0.5%, but more than 0.

Although these differences were apparent in the data, it is worth bearing in mind that the levels of agreement were very high across each group.

### **Views on human rights**

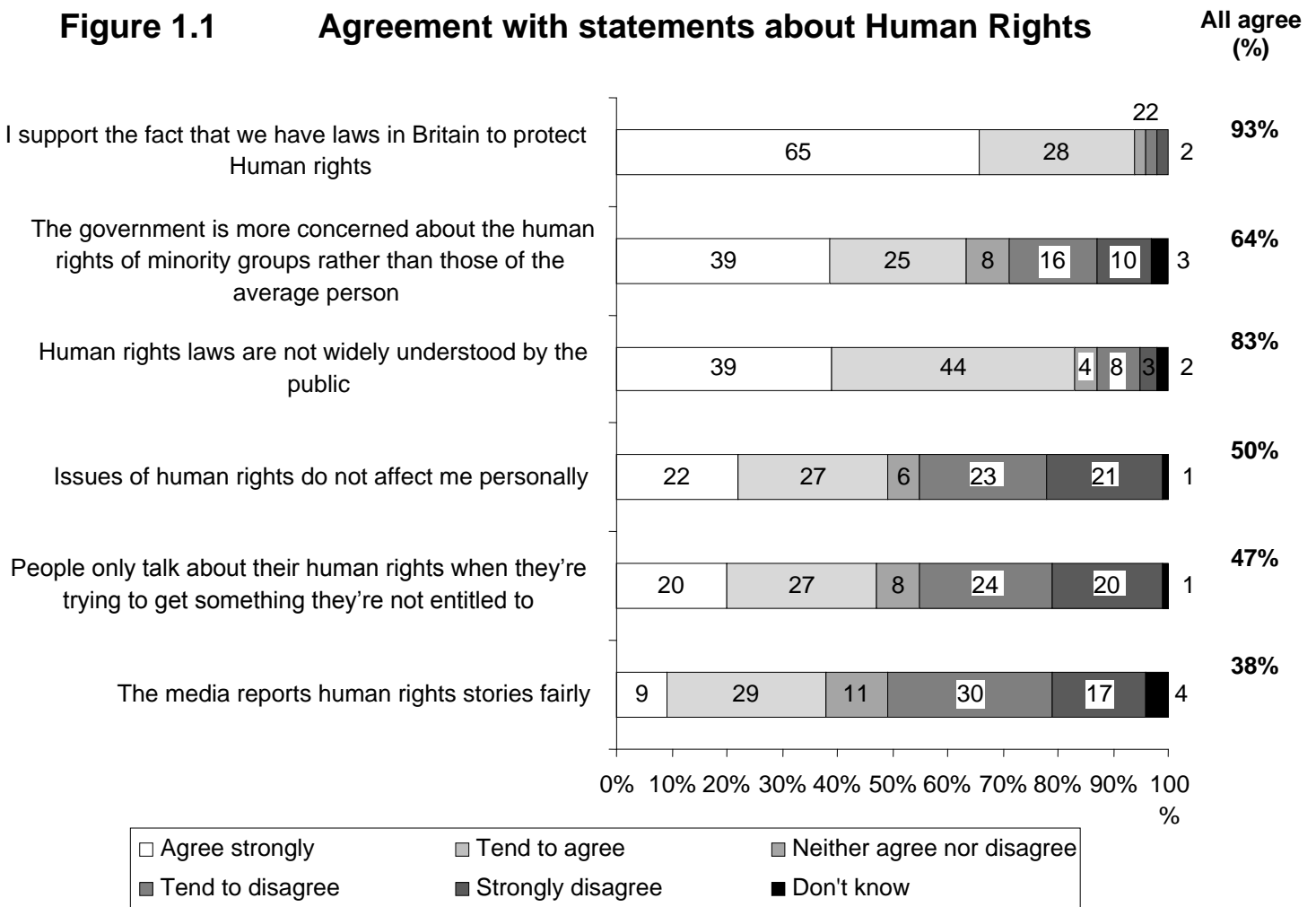
Six statements were used in order to gauge people's response to the phrase 'human rights', rather than test awareness and understanding.

The vast majority of Welsh adults supported human rights laws (93 per cent). However, 64 per cent agreed that such laws, as they perceived them, distract government from reviewing the rights of the average person. Indeed, there was an element of scepticism on two levels:

- a fifth (20 per cent) agreed strongly that people only talk about human rights when they're trying to get something to which they are not entitled
- 47 per cent disagreed that the media reports human rights stories fairly

Analysis suggests that there is an element of ‘disconnection’ with human rights. There was wide scale agreement that human rights laws are not well understood (83 per cent) and half of adults (49 per cent) did not feel that human rights issues affected them personally. This could suggest that few people associate human rights with their everyday encounters.

**Figure 1.1 Agreement with statements about Human Rights**



Base: All respondents (unweighted: 1,589, weighted: 1,589)

Analysis of the sub-groups indicated that certain groups were more likely to express positive views about human rights.

Overall, younger people, those who were working, those in higher social grades and those who say that they would prefer to live in an area with different types of people were most likely to be positive. This pattern can be seen across three of the statements (table 1.2), and further detail on these subgroups per statement is provided below.

**“I support the fact that we have laws in Britain to protect Human Rights”**

- People aged under 65 were slightly more likely than those aged 65 or over to agree with this statement (94 per cent compared with 89 per cent). Linked with this, 95 per cent of those in employment also agreed, which was higher than amongst retired people (90 per cent).
- Nearly all (97 per cent) of those who said that they would rather live with different kinds of people supported human rights laws. In comparison 90 per cent of those who said they would rather live with people similar to themselves and 93 per cent of those who expressed no preference supported human rights.

**“The government is more concerned about the human rights of minority groups rather than those of the average person”**

- Around seven in ten (69 per cent) Welsh adults aged 55 or over agreed with this statement. In comparison six in ten people aged up to 55 (61 per cent) agreed.
- Around seven in ten of those in social grades C2 (72 per cent) and DE (69 per cent) agreed with this statement. Agreement levels were largely lower amongst AB and C1 adults (56 per cent and 62 per cent respectively).
- More than four in five (82 per cent) of those who would rather live with similar people agreed. This compared with just 46 per cent of those who would rather live with different kinds of people.
- Just under two thirds (64 per cent) of white British/Welsh people agreed with the statement. Amongst non-white people 49 per cent agreed. In the case of faith and belief, two thirds (67 per cent) of Christians agreed with this statement. This compared with 54 per cent of people with another religion and 56 per cent of those who had no religion.

**“People only talk about their human rights when they’re trying to get something they’re not entitled to”**

- Those aged 55 or over were more likely than their younger counterparts to agree that ‘*people only talk about their human rights when they’re trying to get something they’re not entitled to*’ (52 per cent compared with 44 per cent). Around half (53 per cent) of retired people agreed with the statement compared with 44 per cent of those in employment.
- A third (35 per cent) of AB adults agreed with this statement, compared with more than half of C2 and DE adults (51 per cent and 59 per cent respectively).

- Six in ten (61 per cent) adults who said they would rather live with people similar to themselves agreed. The level of agreement amongst those who said they would rather live with different types of people was markedly lower at 31 per cent.

Similar differences between sub-groups were also found in relation to the statement '*issues of human rights do not affect me personally*'. This statement is essentially neutral but it can be seen that those groups more likely to hold negative views about human rights were also more likely to feel that human rights issues do not affect them.

### **“Issues of human rights do not affect me personally”**

- Around six in ten (58 per cent) adults aged 65+ and 54 per cent of those aged 55-64 agreed with this statement. Agreement was markedly lower amongst both 16-34 year olds and 35-54 year olds (44 per cent and 46 per cent respectively).
- Retired people were considerably more likely than those who were in employment to agree with this statement (58 per cent compared with 45 per cent).
- 54 per cent of people in social grades C2 and DE agreed that issues of human rights do not affect them personally. Less than half of those in social grades AB and C1 agreed (48 per cent and 45 per cent).
- Those who indicated that they would prefer to live in an area with people similar to themselves were far more likely than those who would prefer to live in an area with different kinds of people to agree (57 per cent compared with 36 per cent).

There were no discernible response patterns in relation to the remaining two statements, but the differences that were apparent are summarised below.

### **“Human rights laws are not widely understood by the public”**

- Those who were employed were more likely than those who were retired to agree with this statement (85 per cent compared with 79 per cent).
- 86 per cent of people in social grades AB agreed with this statement, in comparison agreement was lower amongst those in social grades DE (80 per cent).
- Those who said they would like to live in an area with different kinds of people were much more likely than those who would like to live in an area with similar people to themselves to agree with this statement (86 per cent compared with 78 per cent). Those who

expressed no preference on the area in which they live were also more likely to agree (83 per cent).

### **“The media reports human rights stories fairly”**

- While men and women were just as likely to agree with this statement, men were more likely to disagree with it (51 per cent compared with 43 per cent).
- 28 per cent of people in social grades AB agreed with this statement. Agreement was far higher amongst other social grades; 38 per cent amongst C1s, 41 per cent of C2s and 46 per cent of DEs agreed.
- Two out of five (41 per cent) Christians agreed with this statement, while just 30 per cent of those with no religion said the same.

**Table 1.2 Agreement levels with the statements about human rights**

	<i>Unweighted base, n=</i>	<i>Weighted base, n=</i>	Support the fact that we have laws in Britain to protect Human Rights	People only talk about their human rights when they're trying to get something they're not entitled to	The government is more concerned about the human rights of minority groups rather than those of the average person	Issues of human rights do not affect me personally	"Human rights laws are not widely understood by the public	The media reports human rights stories fairly
			<i>% agree</i>	<i>% agree</i>	<i>% agree</i>	<i>% agree</i>	<i>% agree</i>	<i>% agree</i>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,589</b>	<b>1,589</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>38</b>
16-34	385	413	96	42	61	44	83	40
35-54	598	581	93	44	62	46	84	37
55-64	262	248	94	53	70	54	81	35
65+	344	347	89	52	68	58	81	40
Working	899	876	95	44	64	45	85	37
Retired	428	432	90	53	68	58	79	38
Not working	262	281	92	46	59	51	82	42
AB	382	376	95	35	56	48	86	28
C1	533	538	93	43	62	45	82	38

C2	242	241	87	51	72	54	82	41
DE	428	431	94	59	69	54	80	46
Would rather live with different kinds of people	236	231	97	31	46	36	86	28
Would rather live with similar people	337	342	90	61	82	57	78	45
No preference	1005	1005	93	46	62	50	83	38
White British/Welsh	1,438	1,555	93	47	64	50	83	38
Other	151	34	95	49	49	48	82	43
Christian	1,123	1,144	93	50	67	52	82	41
Other religion	103	56	93	40	54	44	82	36
No religion	349	375	92	38	56	44	83	30
Finished education: Still studying	78	92	97	44	54	43	83	40
16 or under	638	651	90	58	74	58	82	43
17-18	327	334	94	50	68	53	81	40
19+	544	511	95	31	51	38	85	30

## Comparisons with GB research

Three of the statements about human rights were used in a survey that GfK NOP conducted on behalf of the Equality and Human Rights Commission across Great Britain<sup>5</sup>.

Comparison of the findings indicates that people in Wales were less likely to agree that '*people only talk about their human rights when they're trying to get something they're not entitled to*' (47 per cent compared with 56 per cent in the Great Britain wide research). They were also more likely to agree that '*the media reports human rights stories fairly*' (38 per cent compared with 23 per cent).

**Table 1.3 Comparison of attitudes towards human rights between public perceptions research in Wales and across Great Britain**

	Wales		Great Britain	
<i>Unweighted base</i>	1,589		1,950	
<i>Weighted base</i>	1,589		1,949	
	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>
	%	%	%	%
The government is more concerned about the human rights of minority groups rather than those of the average person	64	25	68	15
People only talk about their human rights when they're trying to get something they're not entitled to	47	44	56	25
The media report human rights stories fairly	38	47	23	48

<sup>5</sup> Comparisons between the two surveys are made with caution due to differences in methods used

## Summary

Amongst Welsh adults, there was a general consensus that all people should be treated with respect, dignity and fairness. There was a very high level of agreement and support for laws in Britain to protect Human Rights. This suggests that the vast majority of people in Wales see human rights laws as a good thing in themselves.

Nevertheless, there was a strong suggestion that people might not necessarily know what it is that they are supporting. More than four in five agreed that '*human rights laws are not widely understood by the public*', and around half agreed that '*issues of human rights do not affect me personally*'. Opinions were more mixed in relation to the two statements that touched upon perceived abuses of human rights laws.

## **Notes**

Further information on the research is available on the Commission in Wales pages on our website at:

[www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com)

### **About the attitudinal survey**

EHRC Wales commissioned GfK NOP to undertake research into people's attitudes towards discrimination, human rights and social cohesion in Wales. The research seeks to explore people's attitudes towards discrimination relating to gender, ethnic minority groups, disabled people, gay men and lesbians, issues on age, religion and faith and also the Welsh language. These results establish a baseline measurement of attitudes which could be repeated at future intervals.

The overall sample was 1,589 respondents. The survey was carried out by telephone. All respondents were offered the option of completing the survey in Welsh. Access issues were addressed by offering those with hearing impairments the opportunity to use a TypeTalk service. Those who found it difficult to communicate in English were offered the chance to have the interview interpreted using Language Line.

The sampling method used in the survey combined the selection of Random Digit Dial (RDD) numbers with the application of quotas to control the profile of those taking part in the survey. Quotas were set by region within Wales (five regions), by gender interlocked with working status, by age band and by ethnic origin based on demographic information derived from the 2001 Census. These were set to ensure that the sample would be representative of the Welsh population by these factors.

An interviewing boost was carried out in areas with higher proportion of ethnic minority people in the population.

### **Comparisons with Scotland and GB**

Comparisons have been drawn with the findings from the Scottish Social Attitudes Survey 2006 and the perceptions audit carried out by GfK NOP. It should be noted that only broad comparisons are possible because different methodologies were used in both these surveys. Therefore, any similarities or differences between the findings from these surveys and the results of the EHRC Wales survey must be treated as indicative rather than absolute.