

Comisiwn
Cydraddoldeb a
Hawliau Dynol

Equality and
Human Rights
Commission

Research findings summary

Who do you see?

Living together in Wales



The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has been established to champion equality and human right issues and eliminate discrimination across Britain.

In December 2007, EHRC Wales commissioned GfK NOP to undertake research into people's attitudes towards discrimination, human rights and social cohesion in Wales.

The aims of the research were:

- to build on the Scottish Social Attitudes Survey, 'Attitudes to Discrimination' module and develop a new version for Wales.
- to explore the character and prevalence of discriminatory attitudes in Wales.
- to explore why people hold discriminatory attitudes.
- to explore understanding of attitudes towards human rights and social cohesion.
- to establish baseline measure of attitudes to discrimination which can be repeated at future intervals.

This report summarises key findings from the Welsh Perceptions Survey. Where possible throughout this report, findings from the 'Welsh Perception Survey' have been compared with findings from the Scottish Social Attitude Survey 2006 and with the 'Perceptions Audit' carried out for the EHRC in England and Wales in 2007. However, any similarities or differences between the findings from these surveys should be treated with caution because of the different methodologies used (the Welsh perception survey was completed over the telephone whereas the other two surveys were conducted face to face, with some self completion sections. In both the GB and Wales surveys a random method of finding respondents was used and all respondents were offered complete confidentiality of response. A possible advantage of the Wales telephone survey is that the respondent was not in the physical presence of the interviewer and, for some, this may have encouraged a more honest response.)

1. Survey Method

Interviews for the Welsh Perception Survey were carried out by telephone from the 5th February to 7th March 2008. Quotas were set by region within Wales, gender interlocked with working status, age and ethnic origin (white British/Welsh compared with other).

Interviews lasted 20 minutes on average and in total 1,589 interviews were conducted with adults in Wales aged 16 and above. In order to allow for separate analysis of those from ethnic minority communities, an interviewing boost was carried out in areas with higher ethnic minority populations. A total of 123 interviews (or 8 per cent of the total sample) were conducted with ethnic minority individuals.

Access issues were addressed by offering those with hearing impairments the chance to use a Typetalk¹ service (if their phone was suitably equipped). Those who found it difficult to communicate in English were offered the chance to have the interview interpreted using Language Line². Interviewers were also briefed to allow adequate time for those who required it, e.g. those with speech impairments, those with learning disabilities who needed and/or requested additional time.

The data were weighted by gender within working status, age, ethnicity and Welsh electoral region in order to be nationally representative of the population in Wales aged 16+.

¹ see <http://www.rnid-typetalk.org.uk/>

² See <http://www.languageline.co.uk/telephone-interpreting.aspx>

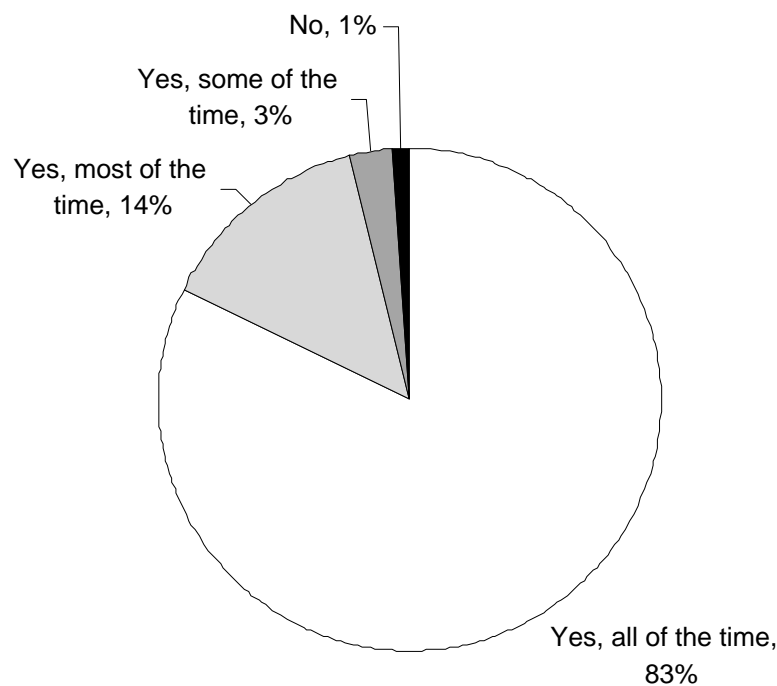
2. Human Rights

A series of questions were asked to explore views and gauge support for human rights in Wales.

Being treated with respect, dignity and fairness

There was general consensus amongst the Welsh population that public service providers should guarantee to treat all people with respect, dignity and fairness (83 per cent of Welsh adults said this should be guaranteed all of the time and a further 17 per cent said this should be guaranteed most or some of the time (Figure 1.1).

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



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

Views on human rights

Respondents were asked for their level of agreement with a number of different statements designed to gauge support for human rights in Wales. Encouragingly, the majority of Welsh adults were supportive of

human rights, with 93 per cent agreeing with the statement *'I support the fact that we have laws in Britain to protect human rights'*.

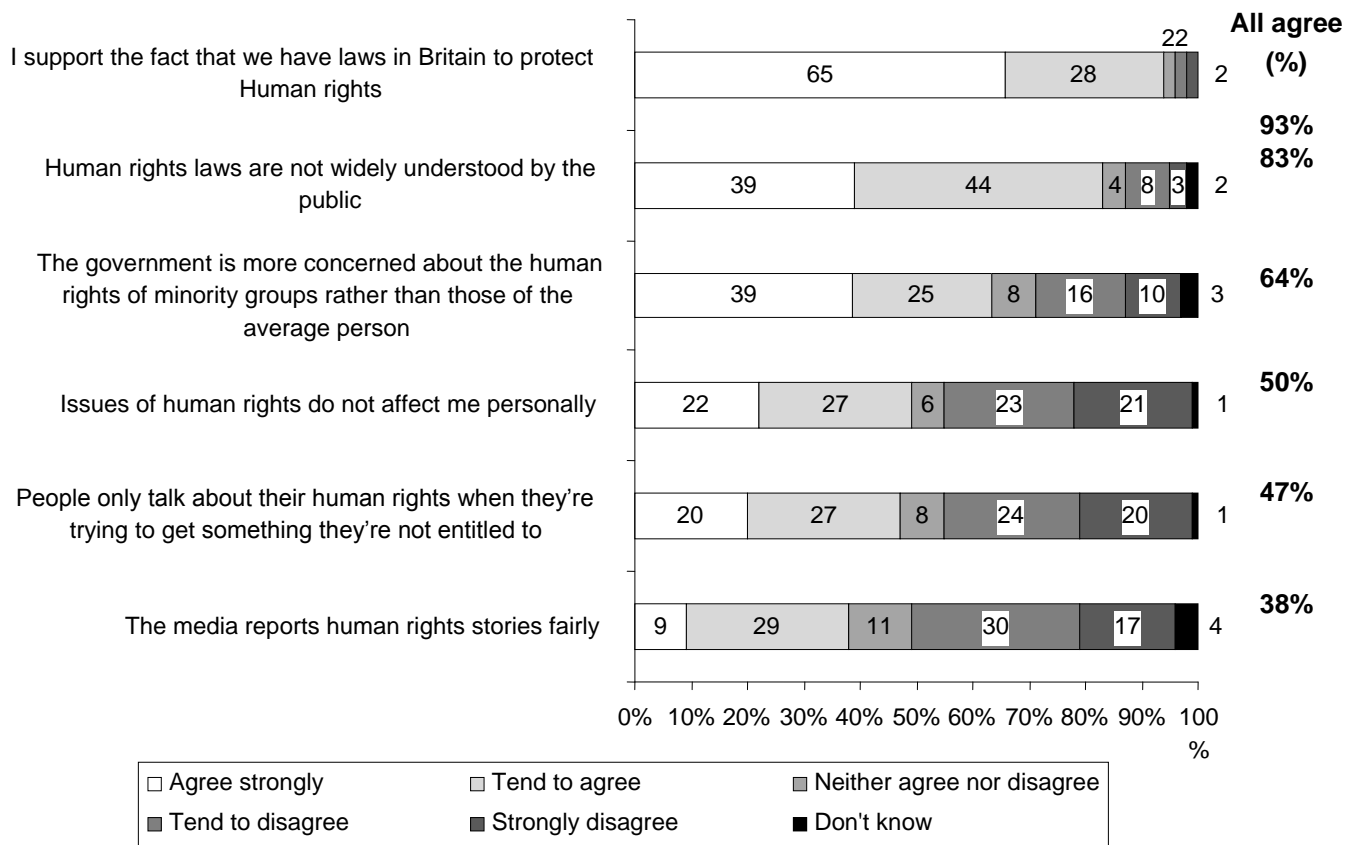
However, there was also evidence to suggest that people might not necessarily know what it is they are supporting. Approximately eight out of ten agreed with the statement *'human rights laws are not widely understood by the public'* (83 per cent), and half agreed that *'issues of human rights do not affect me personally'* (50 per cent) (figure 1.2).

Opinions were more mixed in relation to perceived abuses of human rights laws. Around two thirds agreed that *'the government is more concerned about the human rights of minority groups rather than those of the average person'* (64 per cent). However, just less than half agreed that *'people only talk about their human rights when they're trying to get something they're not entitled to'*. Findings indicated that adults in Wales were less likely to agree with this last statement than those in Great Britain as a whole (47 per cent compared with 56 per cent of the population agreed with this statement in the GB wide research).

Analysis by subgroup indicates that, in general, younger people, those who were working, those in higher social grades and those who said they would prefer to live in an area with different types of people were most likely to hold positive and supportive views about human rights.

Compared with previous research, trust in the media and the way in which it reports human rights stories appeared to be higher in Wales than it was across the whole of Great Britain. In Wales, thirty eight per cent agreed that *'the media reports human rights stories fairly'*, while in the research across Great Britain the level of agreement was markedly lower, with only twenty-three per cent of adults agreeing with this statement.

Figure 1.2 Agreement with statements about Human Rights



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

3. Neighbourhood, community and identity

Respondents were questioned on their perceptions of national identity and how strongly there is a sense of belonging. In order to ascertain people's views on immigration and the ethnic diversity of Wales, people were asked to what extent they would feel worried if more people from certain backgrounds moved into Wales.

National identity

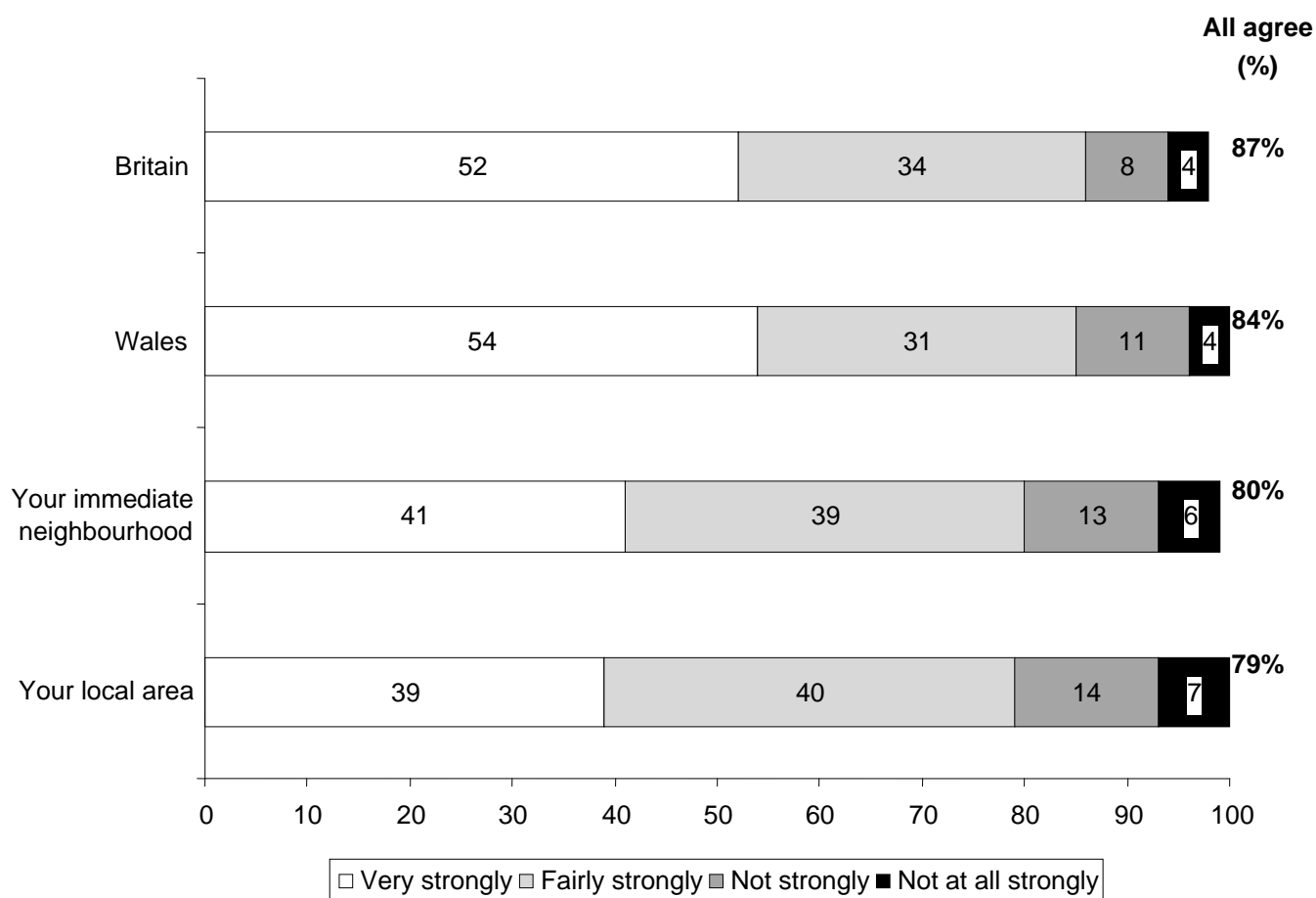
The three most commonly mentioned identities were, unsurprisingly, Welsh (58 per cent), British (31 per cent) and English (12 per cent). No other national identity was mentioned by more than 1 per cent of the sample.

Sense of belonging

Welsh adults were asked how strongly they felt they belonged to the area and the country they lived in. The findings were very positive: approximately four fifths said that they either fairly or very strongly belonged to their immediate neighbourhood and to their local area (80 per cent and 79 per cent respectively).

A sense of national identity was even more pronounced, with 84 per cent feeling that they strongly belonged to Wales and 87 per cent feeling that they strongly belonged to Britain (figure 1.3). In general older people, white people and Christians were more likely to express a strong sense of belonging to all the localities investigated.

Figure 1.3 How strongly do you feel you belong to ...?



Base: All respondents (un-weighted: 1,589, weighted: 1,589). ‘Don’t know’ and ‘Refused’ are not shown

Are Welsh adults worried about different groups moving to Wales?

The groups asked about were:

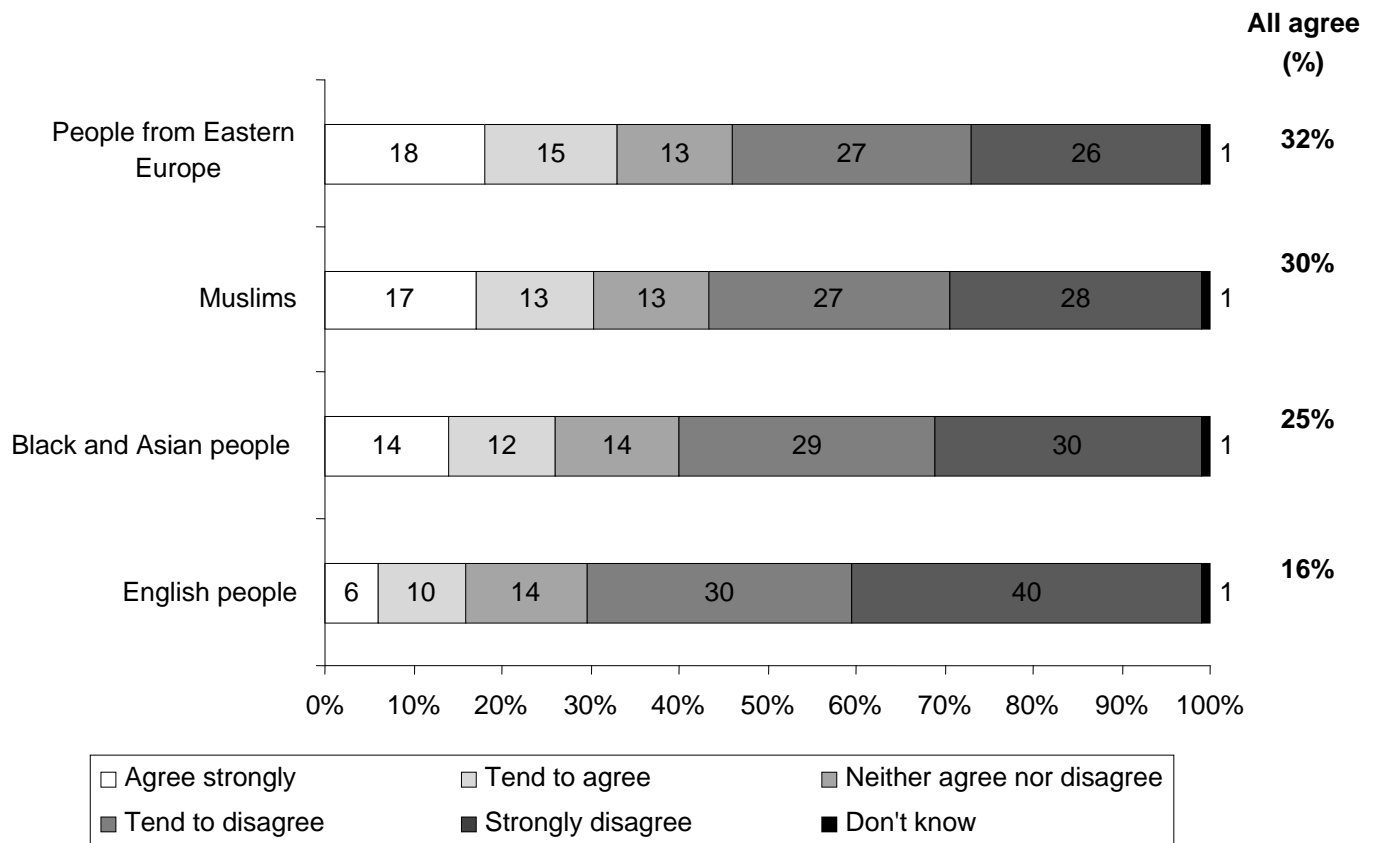
- People from Eastern Europe (e.g. Poland)
- Muslims
- Black and Asian people
- English people

The majority of people disagreed that they would feel worried if more people from these groups moved into Wales (fifty-three per cent of the population or more). However, it was clear that some people were more concerned about the prospect of further immigration amongst some of these groups compared to other groups.

The two groups that worried people the most were Eastern Europeans (32 per cent) and Muslims (30 per cent) – two groups which have been

under the glare of the media spotlight recently. Twenty-five per cent of people were worried about the possibility of more Black and Asian people coming to live in Wales. Markedly fewer people were worried about English people (16 per cent) coming to live in Wales.

Figure 1.4 How much do you agree or disagree with “I would feel worried if more of the following groups came to live in Wales”?



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

Who would be worried if certain groups moved to Wales?

Sub-group analysis indicated that those who were older, in lower social grades, white, living in South West Wales and those who said they would prefer to live in an area with people similar to themselves, were more likely to express concern about increased immigration amongst Eastern Europeans, Muslims and Black and Asian people.

In contrast, the profile of those who agreed that they would be worried about more English people moving to Wales was different. There was no age or social grade bias. They tended to include people in Mid and West Wales, people whose primary language was Welsh, those who

considered themselves to be Welsh and those who said they would prefer to live in an area with people similar to themselves.

Why are people worried about different groups moving to Wales?

The reasons for feeling worried about immigration varied in relation to the group in question. The key themes were concerns relating to economic strains in the case of Eastern Europeans, particularly the perception that this group would 'take all the jobs'. Safety and security was a key issue with Muslim migration, as well as specific concerns about integration. For those worried about more Black and Asian people moving to Wales, the most prominent reason cited was that there was 'a lack of jobs/they take all the jobs' and 'too many immigrants/need tighter controls' (although the assumption on the immigration point seems to be that all Black and Asian newcomers in Wales would be immigrants to the UK which is of course not the case). Those worried about English immigration expressed concerns relating to a loss of identity plus economic concerns about housing.

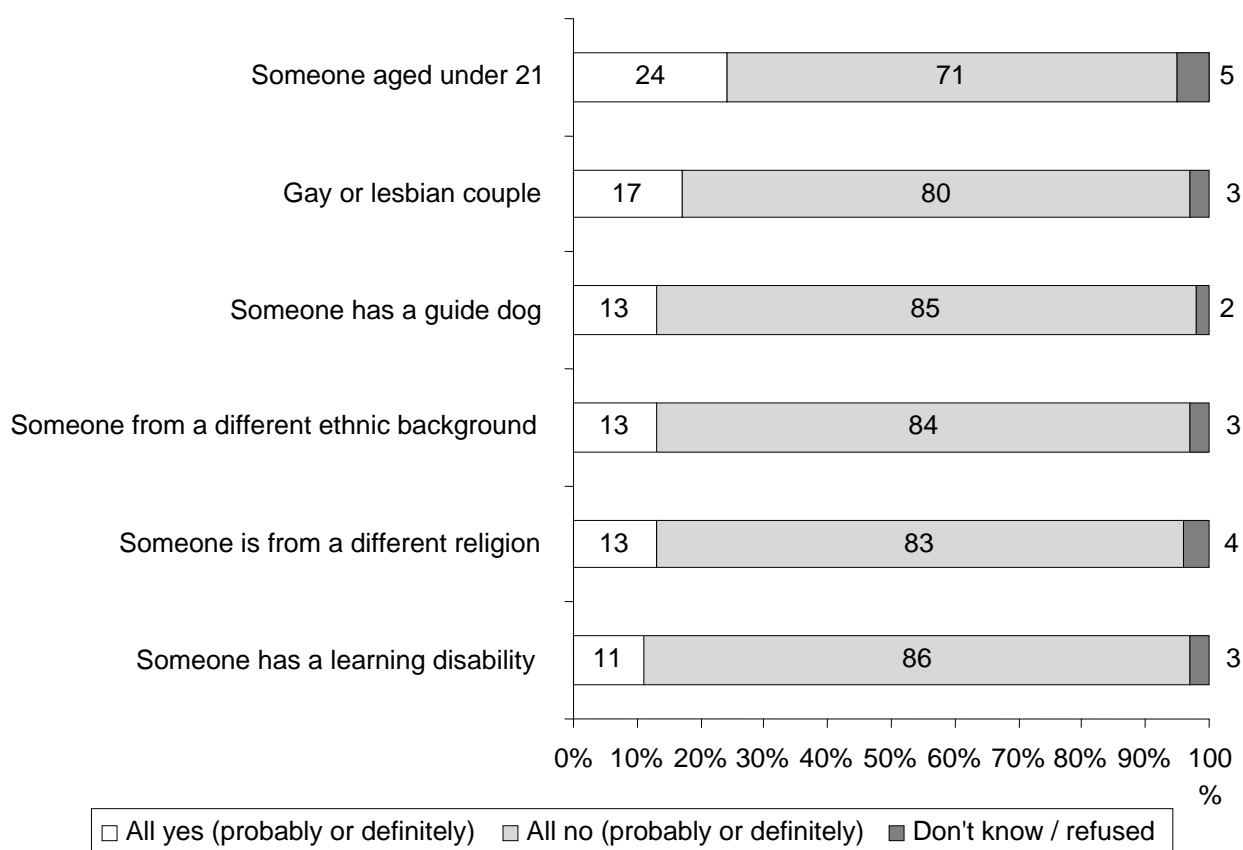
4. Everyday encounters

Welsh adults were asked three scenario-type questions about how people should behave towards different groups of individuals in common everyday situations and their attitudes regarding women breastfeeding in public.

Should Bed and Breakfast owners be allowed to refuse bookings?

When asked if bed and breakfast owners should be allowed to refuse bookings to particular groups of people, the findings were positive. Over 70 per cent of the Welsh population agreed that bed and breakfast owners should not be allowed to discriminate against members of a group by refusing to take their booking (figure 1.5).

Figure 1.5 Should bed and breakfast owners be allowed to refuse bookings?



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

More adults agreed that it would be acceptable to refuse a booking to someone aged 21 or under than any other group mentioned at this question (24 per cent compared with 17 per cent or less for all other groups asked about).

When comparing the Welsh findings with those from the Scottish Social Attitude Survey, opinions differed sharply about whether a bed and breakfast owner should be allowed to refuse a booking to a gay and lesbian couple. Only 17 per cent of the Welsh population thought that it would be acceptable to refuse a booking compared with around half of the adult population in Scotland³. For the other five scenario options, Welsh and Scottish opinion was broadly in line.

Who supported the right to refuse?

There were no consistent patterns amongst the different sub-groups relating to the right to refuse a booking at a bed and breakfast. However, older respondents aged 65+ were more likely than their younger counterparts to say that bed and breakfast owners should be able to refuse a booking if a couple are gay or lesbian or if someone has a different ethnic or racial background.

Unsurprisingly, those who would rather live in an area with people similar to themselves were more likely than those who say they would rather live in an area with lots of different types of people to support the right to refuse a booking from a gay or lesbian couple, from someone with a different ethnic or racial background and from someone with a different religion to themselves.

Who is suitable to be a primary school teacher?

When asked how suitable different kinds of people were for employment as primary school teachers, the findings varied according to the group of people under investigation. For example, attitudes towards gay men and lesbian women and Black and Asian people were relatively more positive, with three quarters or more of the population agreeing that they would be very or fairly suited to the job of being a primary school teacher.

In contrast Gypsies and Travellers and those who experience depression from time to time were thought the least suited to this role. Almost half of the Welsh population said that these groups would be very or fairly unsuitable - 47 per cent thought that Gypsies and Travellers were unsuitable and 46 per cent thought that those who experienced depression were unsuitable for the role.

A significant minority (40 per cent) thought that someone aged 70 or older was fairly or very unsuitable for the job of being a primary school

³ Differences between the Welsh and Scottish Surveys should be treated with caution. See introduction to the executive summary.

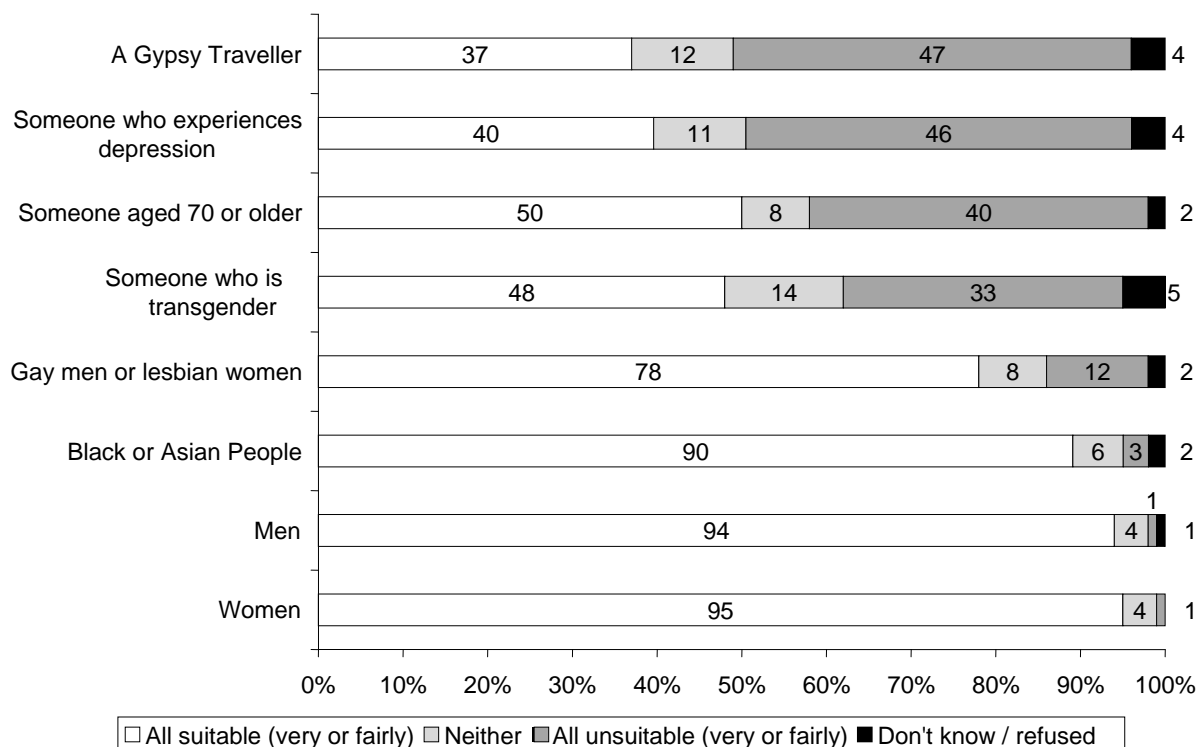
teacher. One third (33 per cent) said the same was true of someone who was transgender (figure 1.6)

Who thinks certain groups are less suited to the role of primary school teacher?

When looking at differences by subgroup one clear trend was apparent. Those from social class DE, and linked with this those who left education at 16 or under, were more likely than the Welsh population as a whole to say that people from all of the groups explored (with the exception of men and women) were not suited to the role of primary school teacher.

Interestingly, with regards to depression, it was younger and older people who were more likely to hold discriminatory attitudes at this question. At least half of those aged 16-34 (51 per cent) and 65+ (55 per cent) thought that those experiencing depression from time to time were unsuited to the role. This compared with 39 per cent of those aged 35-54 and 42 per cent of those aged 55-64. This was the only group of people asked about at this question where the youngest age group (16-34) held more discriminatory attitudes than some older age groups, and this may reflect a lack of exposure to, or recognition of, depression amongst their peer group.

Figure 1.6 Who is suitable to be a primary school teacher?



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

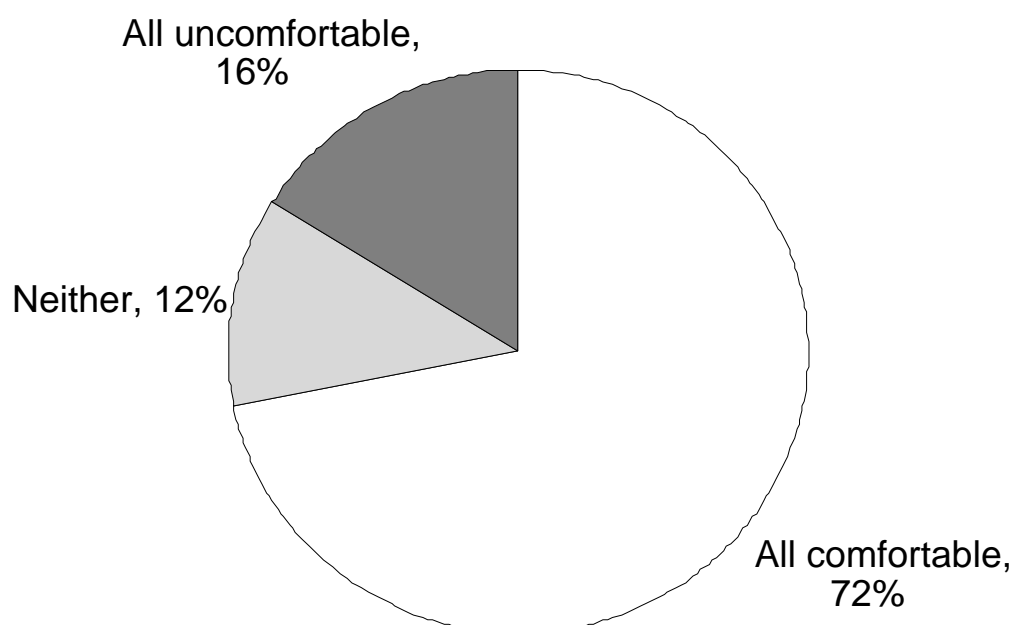
Reactions towards women breastfeeding in public

In a scenario that involved seeing a women breastfeeding in public, almost three quarters (72 per cent) of Welsh adults said they would feel comfortable in this situation. Only 16 per cent said they would feel uncomfortable (figure 1.7). Interestingly, the proportion of Scottish adults who felt comfortable seeing a woman breastfeeding in public was much lower (57 per cent).⁴

Who feels comfortable seeing a woman breastfeeding in public?

Adults who were more likely to feel comfortable seeing a women breast feeding in public were women, those aged 35-54, social class AB and those who were from the white British or Welsh majority.

Figure 1.7 Whether feel comfortable or uncomfortable if see a woman breastfeeding in public



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

⁴ Differences between the Welsh and Scottish Surveys should be treated with caution. See introduction to the executive summary. In the Scottish Survey this question was self completed by the respondent. In the Welsh Survey the interviewer gave their answer directly to an interviewer.

5. The workplace

Respondents were asked to consider a series of attitude statements about the workplace covering gender and age as well as Welsh language issues.

Gender issues in the workplace

Whilst there was unanimous agreement on some issues, others provoked a more varied response. There was support for more equitable childcare arrangements between the sexes, with ninety per cent of Welsh adults agreeing that fathers should be just as able to take time off to care for sick children as mothers.

However, almost half (49 per cent) disagreed that *'being treated unfairly at work because you are a woman is a thing of the past'*. Age analysis showed that those aged 16-34 were much more likely to agree with the statement than older adults: 49 per cent agreed compared with 41 per cent or less in other age groups. However, it was younger *women* that were driving this difference: 47 per cent of women aged 16-34 agreed that being treated unfairly on the basis of gender was a thing of the past, compared to 36 per cent of those aged 35-54 and 30 per cent of those aged 55-64.

Age issues in the workplace

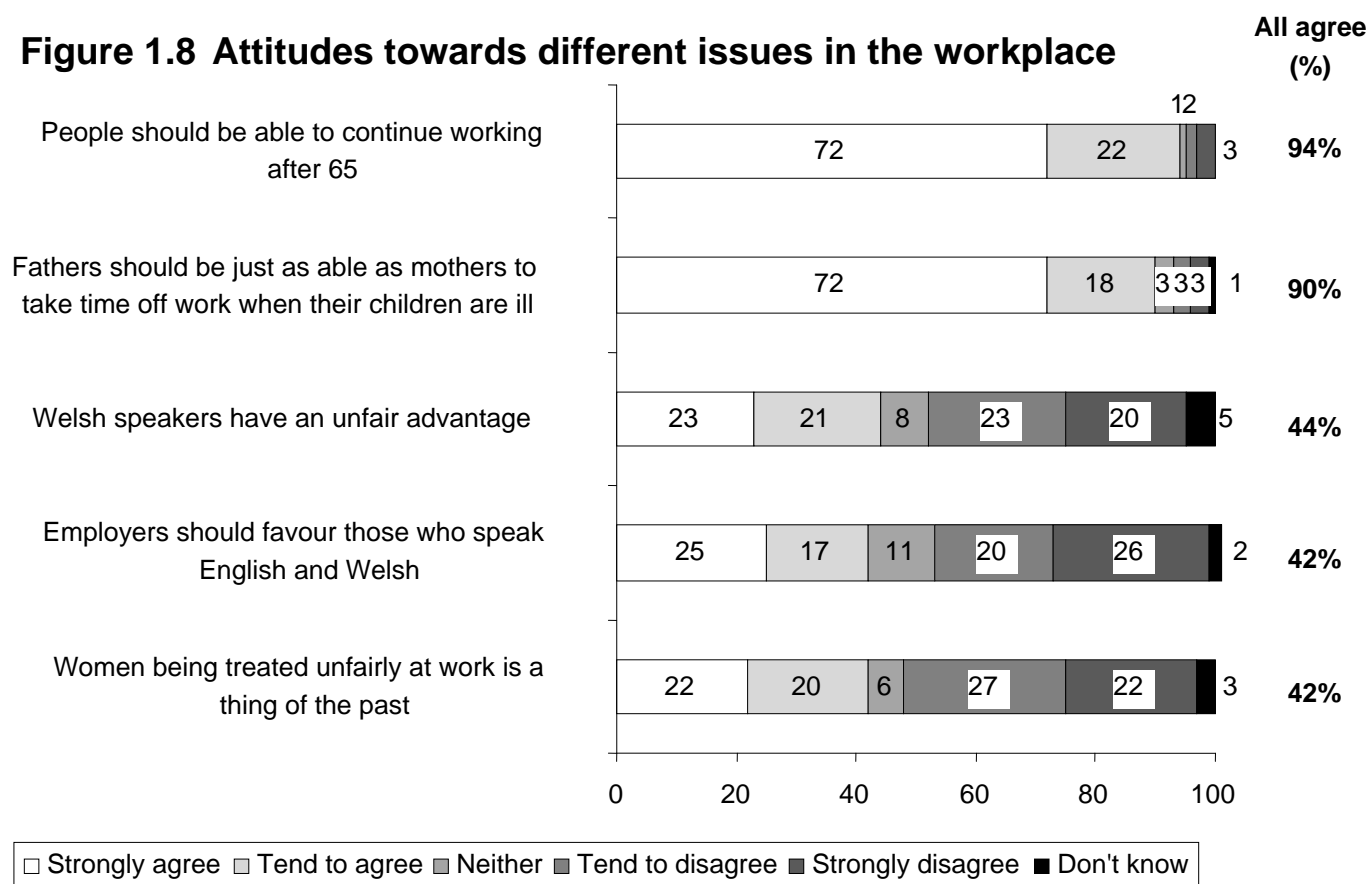
In relation to age, Welsh adults overwhelmingly agreed that people should be able to continue working after the official age of retirement if they wish (94 per cent agreed with this sentiment). However, it is interesting to note that, as cited above, 40 per cent of people felt that those aged 70 or over were unsuitable to be primary school teachers.

Opinions were more mixed in relation to younger people and the existence of a lower minimum wage for those aged 21 and under. Over half thought this was unfair (55 per cent), but a third was supportive of this arrangement (35 per cent). Noticeably AB adults were more likely to think the current arrangements were fair than those in other social grades (42 per cent of ABs compared with 33 per cent in other social grades).

Welsh language and workplace recruitment

Welsh adults were evenly split in their views on Welsh language and recruitment into jobs. Around four in ten (42 per cent) agreed that *‘employers should favour those who speak both Welsh and English when filling jobs’*, while a similar proportion (43 per cent) disagreed with the statement that *‘those who speak Welsh have an unfair advantage in accessing jobs, particularly in the government, local councils, etc’* (figure 1.8). Not surprisingly, levels of agreement were influenced by whether someone spoke Welsh at home and their reported identity (i.e. Welsh, British, other), with Welsh speakers or those identifying themselves as Welsh more likely to agree with the first statement and less likely to agree with the second.

Figure 1.8 Attitudes towards different issues in the workplace



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

Positive action in the workplace

Positive action in the form of additional qualifications and training for women and Black or Asian people under-represented in senior positions was deemed to be fair by a slight majority of Welsh adults. Fifty five per cent felt that way in the case of women and 54 per cent in the case of Black and Asian individuals. Yet, substantial proportions felt such interventions were unfair (42 per cent and 43 per cent respectively).

Those less likely to support positive action were characterised as belonging to higher social grades, being in employment, and leaving education at 19 or later – in other words, the type of individuals who would usually support anti-discriminatory measures.

The findings mirror those of the Scottish Social Attitudes Survey 2006, and indicate that there is a long way to go before even the more liberal quarters of the Welsh public are fully convinced by such means of delivering equality of opportunity in the workplace.

6. Children and Young people

Welsh adults were asked to consider a number of attitude statements concerning perceptions of children and young people and older people's behaviour towards them.

Behaviour and attitudes of young people

There was evidence of some fairly negative perceptions of young people in Wales. Around three quarters of Welsh adults agreed that *'the behaviour of young people is worse than it was in the past'* and that *'young people lack respect for older people'* (figure 1.9).

Interestingly, age had no impact upon levels of agreement, with the youngest age group being as likely to agree with these statements as those in the oldest age groups.

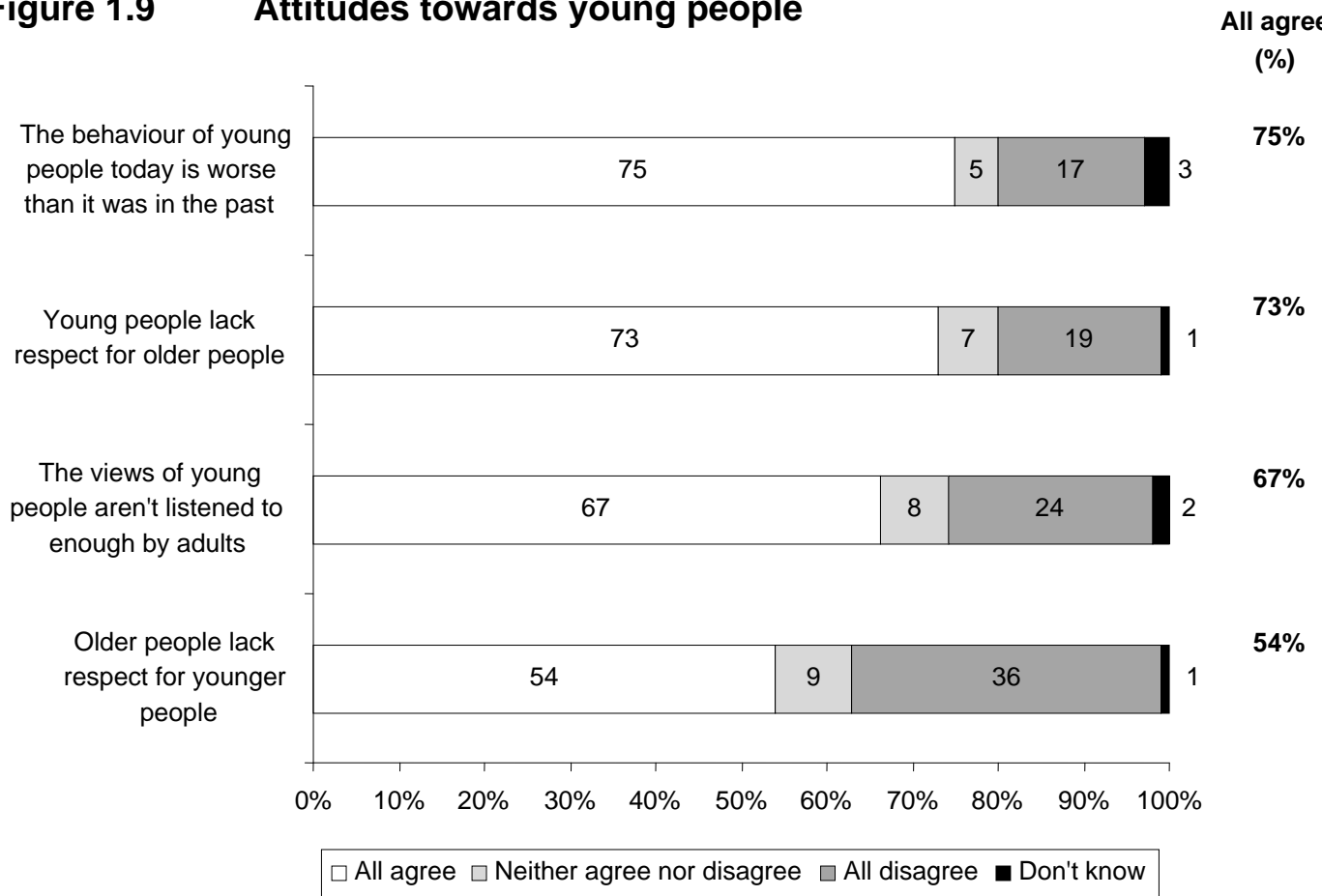
Respect for young people and their views

When looking at the contrasting statement that, 'older people lack respect for younger people' 54 per cent said that they agreed with this position. This was markedly lower than the agreement level with the previous two statements mentioned.

Despite a prevalence of negative opinions towards children and young people, most Welsh adults agreed that 'the views of young people were not listened to enough by adults'. This, perhaps could reveal an acknowledgment that there may be a connection between young people not feeling 'heard' and impacts on their behaviour (67 per cent agreed).

In this instance the results were heavily influenced by age. Older people were less likely to agree than younger age groups that the views of young people were not listened to enough (73 per cent of those aged 16-34 compared with 61 per cent of those aged 65+).

Figure 1.9 Attitudes towards young people



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

7. Social networks and relationships

Questions were asked to ascertain the social networks Welsh people hold and how they would feel if a close relative married or formed a long-term relationship with someone from a particular group.

People's family and friendship groups

Welsh society seemed well integrated with approximately three-quarters of the population saying they knew someone who was:

- from a different religion (80 per cent)
- from a different racial or ethnic background (77 per cent)
- younger or older than them by 20 years or more (95 per cent) (Encouragingly, 75 per cent also said they were friends with someone who was younger or older than them by 20 years or more)
- disabled (74 per cent)
- gay, lesbian or bisexual (74 per cent)

What types of people are more likely to have diverse social groups?

Those with the most diverse social networks tended to be younger people, those from AB households, those who left education aged 19 and above, and, perhaps unsurprisingly, those who would rather live in an area with lots of different people to themselves.

Long term relationships

When asked how they would feel if a close relative of theirs married or formed a long-term relationship with someone from a particular minority group, attitudes varied depending on the group in question.

A relatively small proportion of the population (11 per cent or less) held negative attitudes in relation to those with a different religious belief, someone from a different ethnic background or someone who had a learning disability.

In the case of a close relative having a long-term relationship with someone of the same sex as themselves, attitudes were also relatively positive with more people saying they would be happy than unhappy

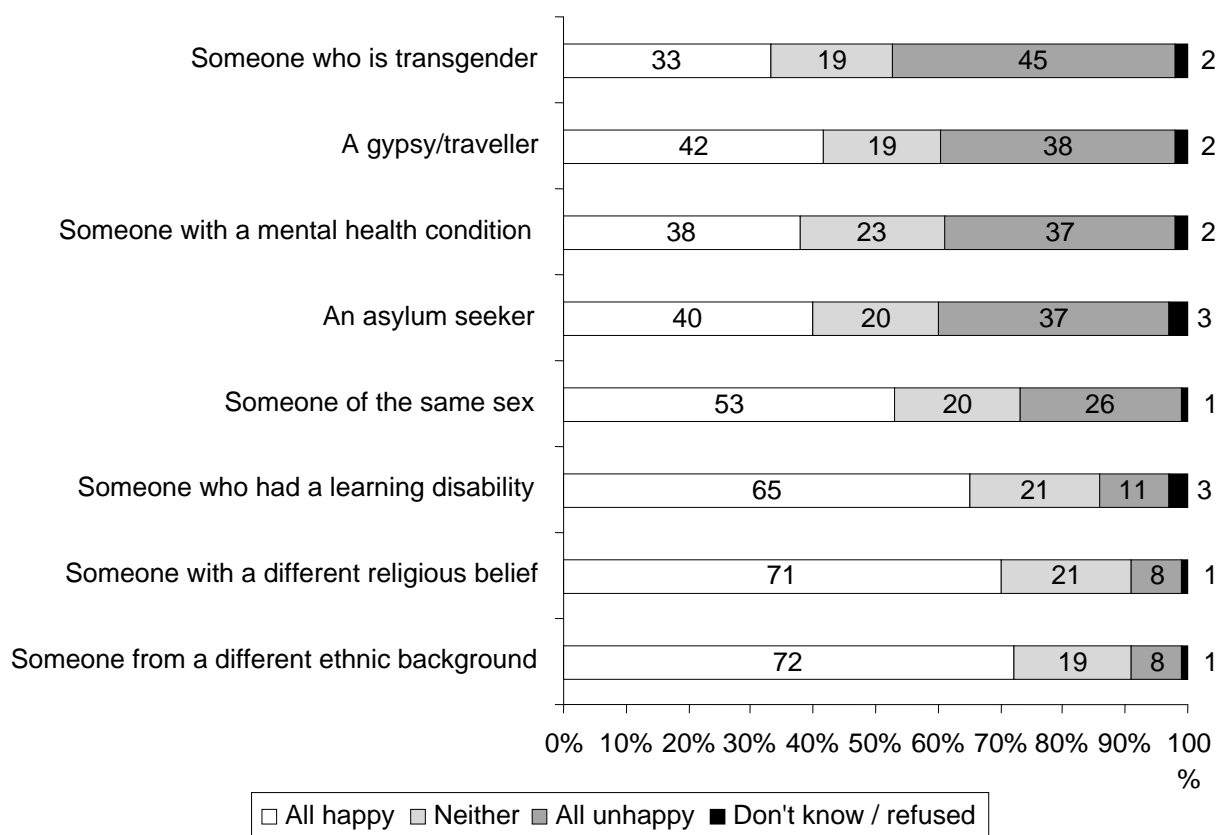
about this: 53 per cent said they would be happy and a quarter of adults (26 per cent) said they would be unhappy.

Views towards asylum seekers, Gypsies and Travellers and those with a mental health condition such as schizophrenia or depression were more mixed. Similar proportions of the Welsh population said they would feel happy and unhappy with the situation. For example:

- asylum seekers - 37 per cent said they would be unhappy compared with 40 per cent who were happy
- a Gypsy/Traveller - 38 per cent compared with 42 per cent
- someone with a mental health condition - 37 per cent compared with 38 per cent.

Discriminatory attitudes were even more evident towards people who were transgender: Welsh adults were more likely to express unhappiness than happiness when asked to imagine their reaction if a close relative formed a long-term relationship with someone from this group (44 per cent said they would be unhappy compared with 33 per cent who said they would be happy).

Figure 1.10 Generally speaking how happy or unhappy would you be if a close relative of yours married or formed a long-term relationship with someone from the following groups?



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

How do views on relationships vary across groups in society?

In general older people, those from social class DE, Christians, and those who would rather live in an area with similar people to them were more likely to express unhappiness at a relative or close relative marrying someone from one of these groups.

How do views on relationships vary by knowledge of certain groups?

Where it was possible for a direct comparison to be made, people who knew someone from one of the groups researched were less likely to hold discriminatory attitudes towards their family building relationships with individuals from that group. Thus, those who knew someone from different ethnic or religious backgrounds to themselves or who knew people who were gay, lesbian or bisexual were less likely to say they

would be unhappy if a close relative married someone from these groups than those who did not. This underlines the positive benefits derived from diverse social networks.

8. Domestic Violence

Two questions were included in the questionnaire to provide an initial indication about what Welsh adults think about domestic violence and how it should be dealt with. As this is such a sensitive topic, further research would need to be undertaken to deliver a more in depth understanding of people's views.

Domestic violence was defined as follows:

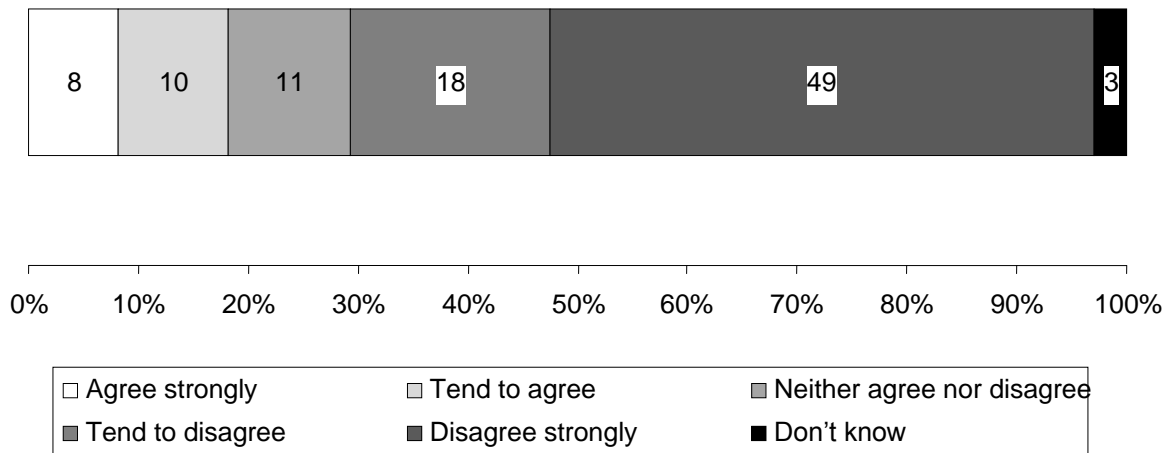
“Domestic violence occurs when a family member, partner or ex-partner is or attempts to be physically violent towards another or tries to dominate them in another way. This may include hitting or threatening to hit another.”

Violence and bullying towards partners

There was overwhelming agreement amongst Welsh adults that it is never OK to bully or hit a partner (97 per cent of the Welsh population said this was definitely not OK). The similar nature of response to this question across all demographic subgroups confirms that it is highly socially unacceptable to be seen to disagree with this sentiment (figure 1.11).

In terms of how to best deal with domestic violence, two thirds (67 per cent) of the Welsh population disagreed that *‘domestic violence is best handled as a private matter instead of by the police’*. However, a significant minority (19 per cent) agreed that it was best handled as a private matter. Those in agreement were more likely to be men, older adults and those from non-white ethnic groups.

Figure 1.11 Do you think that domestic violence is best handled as a private matter instead of by the police?



Base: All respondents (1,589 unweighted; 1,589 weighted). 'Don't know' and 'refused' not shown (< 0.5%)

9. Conclusion

Overall the findings of the research are relatively positive. In the main the people of Wales feel a strong sense of togetherness and are largely comfortable with those from different backgrounds. However the research also highlights some serious negative perceptions and significant prejudice in relation to some people and communities.

Notes

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