

Theme Report 6: Social Contact, Jobs and Living Independently

August 2016

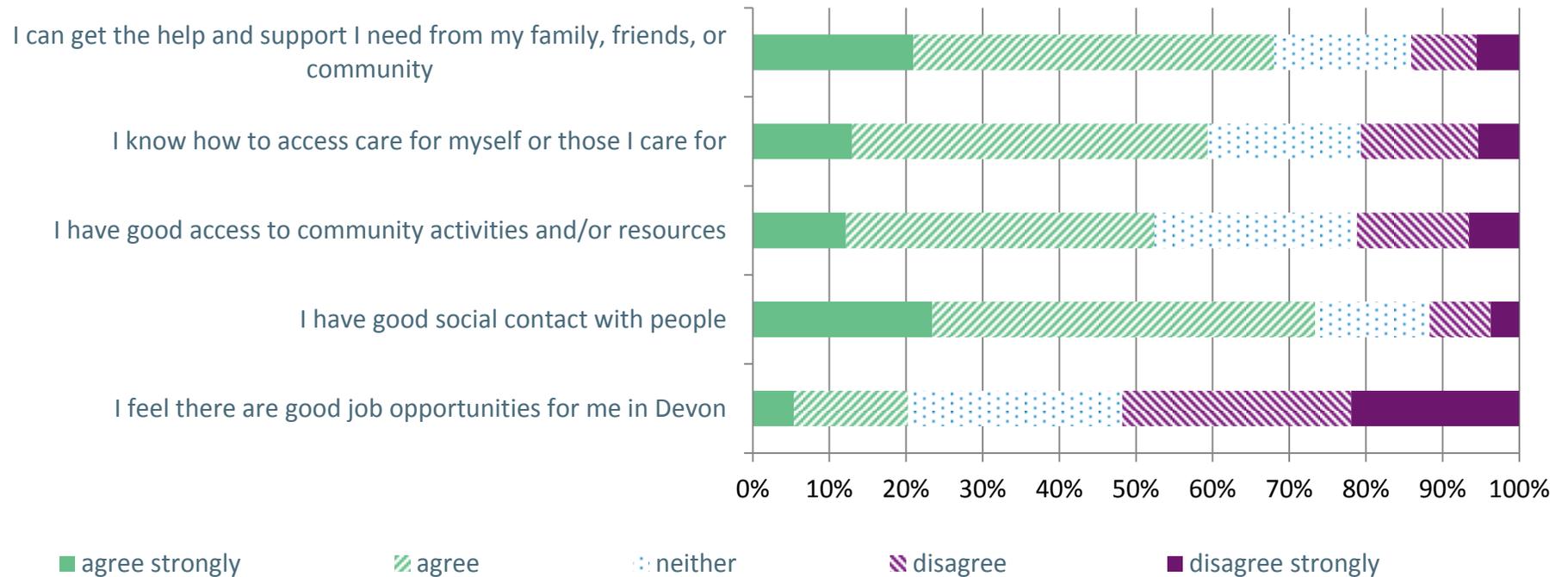
Links to Better Together outcomes – Resilient: Problems will be prevented or resolved without being dependent on public services. **Connected:** Communities will be more cohesive and inclusive. **Prosperous:** More people will find employment, including those furthest from work; there will be more new jobs and business start ups, particularly in key knowledge sectors.

Performance Result:

I can get the help and support I need from my family, friends or community.	68% agree	
I know how to access care for myself or those I care for.	59% agree	
I have good access to community activities and/or resources.	52% agree	
I have good social contact with people.	73% agree	
I feel there are good job opportunities for me in Devon.	20% agree	

Job opportunities is the area of lowest satisfaction.

Social contact, jobs and living independently



This question also included a 'not relevant to me' option which is excluded from the above results but data for this is available in the 'all counts' report. Just under half of the respondents said that the Job Opportunities question was not relevant to them.

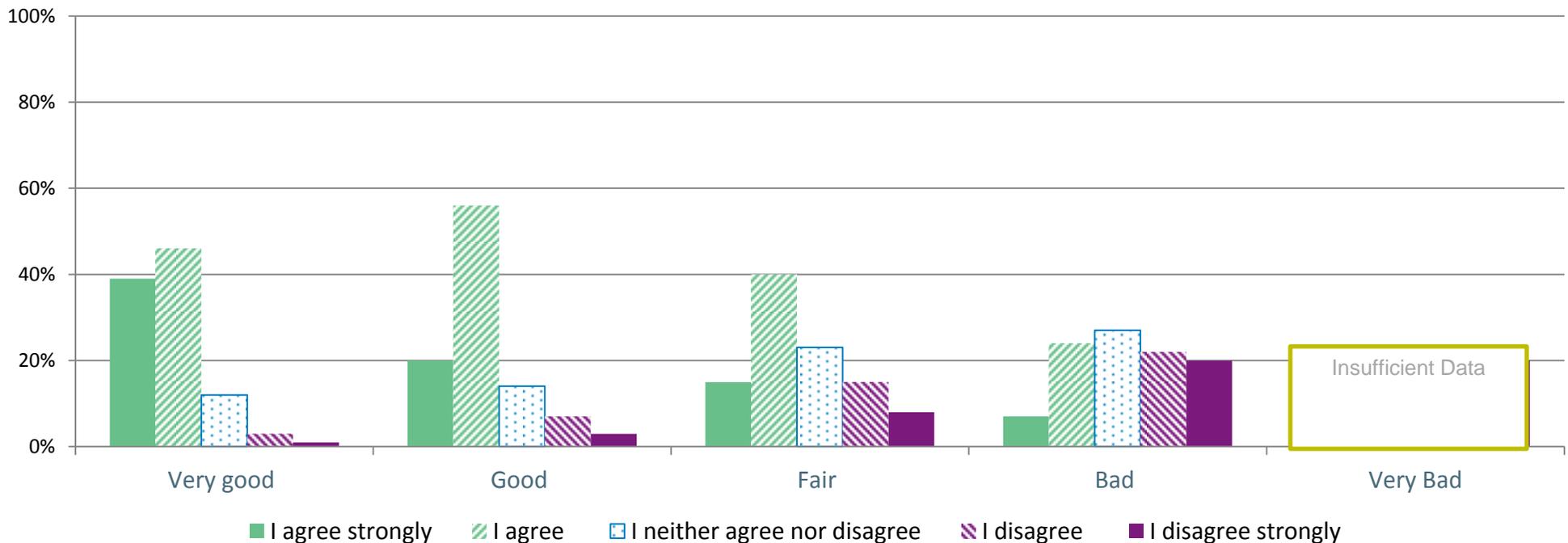
Identifying Inequalities

Disabled people who said their day-to-day activities were limited a lot, or those who had poorer physical or mental health, were more likely to disagree with the statements in this section. This difference was significant in more disagreeing that they had good access to community activities, resources or social contact. Carers were also slightly less likely to agree overall that they had good social contact with people, and similarly those without use of a car.

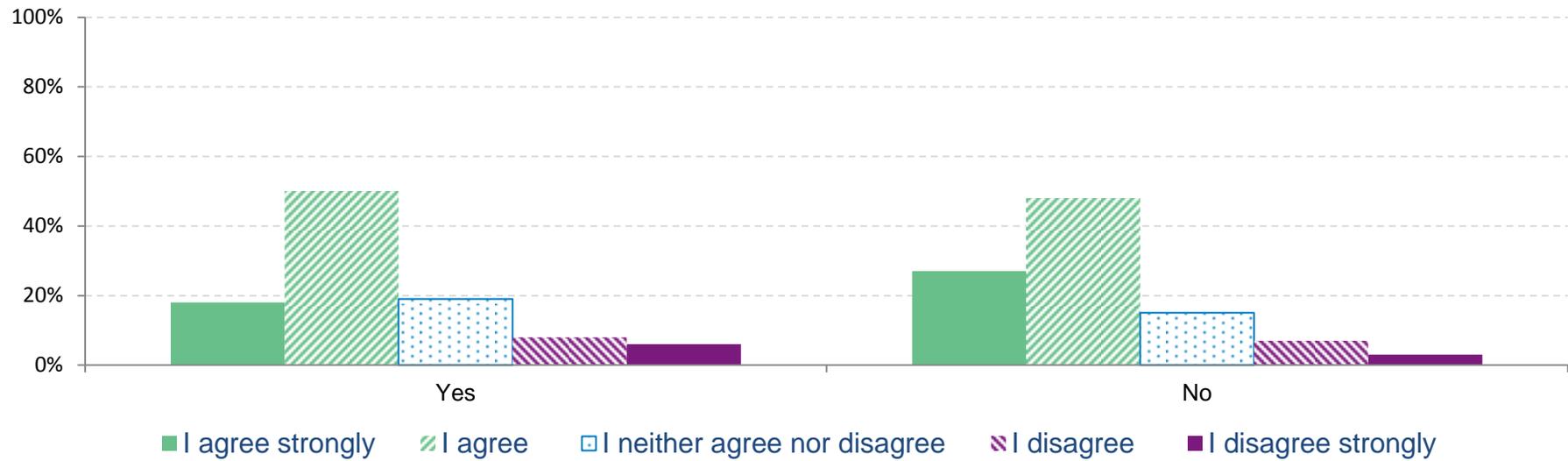
Those who said they were from a Black or Minority Ethnic (BME) background (including White non-British) were slightly less likely to agree that they knew how to access care for themselves or those they cared for.

Overall, respondents tended to disagree that there were good job opportunities for them in Devon, with those in North Devon more likely to disagree strongly. In the comments, older workers felt they were overlooked and discrimination in accessing work was mentioned, for example a deaf person being given phone numbers to call in relation to a job, or a carer finding they cannot get back into work due the gap in their career.

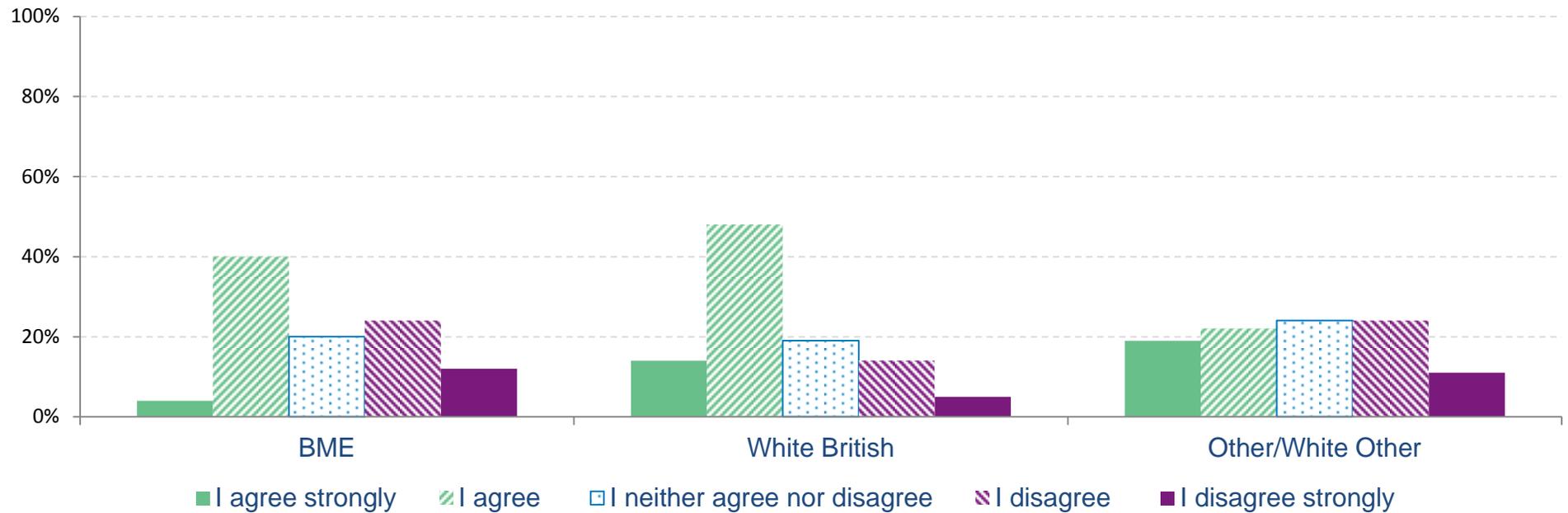
I have good social contact with people, by mental health



I have good social contact with people, by carer



I know how to access care for myself or those I care for, by ethnicity



Comments

Respondents highlighted issues around jobs, care and support. In relation to jobs, opportunities for work were seen as limited, and where work existed, not necessarily good quality or well paid. Issues of equality in finding work were also mentioned. Availability of, and accessing care and support, were mentioned.

Jobs

Although a few expressed that they felt they couldn't get work because they were older, many who commented on this section were in the younger age bands or were parents saying their children couldn't find work.

There appeared to be a general perception of a lack of jobs, that jobs were low pay, and there was very little opportunity for progression. Additionally the low pay was compared to the high cost of living, including the cost of housing. Part time work was mentioned as particularly poorly paid:

“Most grads leave the area, or return to where they grew up because there are few good jobs. A lot of jobs in Devon are poorly paid, not wages I can live off.” And: “There is not enough local work to pay the mortgages on these new homes that are being built.”

Living rurally presented additional problems due to transport costs, as travel was required to access work, including having to leave the county altogether.

Salaries for part time work are appalling in Devon...hardly any opportunities for higher level part time jobs.

Job opportunities for my children are poor in Torrington, and not well paid.

Too few opportunities for over 50's as employers favour younger staff.

It is difficult to progress a career in Devon after a certain level. It is likely that I will have to leave the county to find work in a bigger city.

Limited job opportunities, and salaries very very low considering the cost of living - businesses collude to keep salaries down.

Living rurally part time hours are not viable due to transport costs.

I am 62 years old and my experience is that jobs for women my age are not all that varied, accessible, available or advertised.

More needs to be done to encourage employers to set up in Devon – fast broadband, connections to London.

I am 60 and blind, I have little chance of getting a job in Devon - if at all and that's not me being pessimistic, that's living in the real world.

Knowing how to Access Care

Having good, clear information was important; perhaps with a 'rating system' of the care available. People did not want to be passed from pillar to post in a "ridiculous roundabout of calls". These comments also reflect similar comments in the theme about Being Informed.

Even where information may be available, there appeared to be some feeling that there was less, or even no, care and support available by a few respondents: "I know how to access care but the resources are not there". Those who currently didn't need care thought there may be little available and may be of poor quality. Although 'self-care' may be considered fine, there is a reliance on friends or relatives which may or may not be desired and there may be no 'care in the community' available. Even in a 'vibrant' community, there may be "little confidence that quality social care would be available". When professional care is provided, important social interaction cannot be provided due to time restraints. Cuts to services were potentially leaving "older people and carers depressed and isolated". Others found it difficult to access information about care: people did "not know where to start", found it "hard work getting the correct information", or found it "extremely difficult in a crisis". As before, a lot of information was online and people were expected to have a computer to access this.

I know how to access care but the resources are not there.

Ridiculous roundabout of calls in an attempt to find some respite care. It has become almost impossible in North.

If I needed care I would not know where to start. I had a bad experience when my late husband was discharged with nothing in place.

Cuts to day services are leaving older people and carers depressed and isolated.

I know where to access care and support, however the council do not make it easy to get it...

Trying to access care for my father with dementia was a nightmare! ...How do people with fewer skills and less experience manage?

Accessing community mental health care is extremely difficult in crisis.

Hard work getting the correct information that I was entitled - too much information appeared to be cloak and dagger, and quite often not forthcoming without a struggle.

Social contact and community support and resources

Whilst social contact was an area of higher satisfaction for many, there are some who are extremely isolated. Comments suggested that without support of family or friends, people may easily become isolated. A paid carer didn't necessarily provide social contact as they are under time pressures. A lack of public transport and lack of disability access/support also prevented people to access social contact and community resources or activities.

No bus, except Wednesday, so no access.

As a carer of more than 10 years I feel there is less help and support...

Lack of public transport forces me to stay at home, no social life anymore.

My health issues mean I am unable to socialise at all. Help and support is non-existent, I live alone. I am unable to access community activities.

So many second homes mean no neighbours, no social contact.

Carers are too stretched for time and cannot give me the interaction I need as a (housebound) human being. It is incredibly depressing.

My friends...who use wheelchairs are unable to visit me, as my current accommodation is not suitable.

Can't access community activities easily, as taxis refuse to lift my wheelchair.

No community activities or resources in my area - have to travel to cities.

I have no family network. Difficult to get help.

Some positive comments were made about community resources:

- I belong to U3A (university of the third age) which is excellent.
- Good village community.
- I go to blind clubs/luncheon clubs.

But even where there is a good social scene, it sometimes lacks variety and interest:

- Life is very good to me – but sometimes I wish I lived in a more interesting environment. There are only so many coffee mornings and village stall type events one can cope with!