

# Quality of Life Summary Report: Key Policy Issues

This report highlights the key findings of a Cornwall-wide survey on quality of life undertaken in spring 2004. It is intended to inform policy makers in Cornwall. The survey was commissioned by Cornwall's Local Strategic Partnerships for the purpose of providing information to help monitor the impact and effectiveness of community strategies. The survey questionnaire was distributed to 15,000 homes across Cornwall. 4,200 were completed and returned (a response rate of 29%). A profile of the sample can be found on page 18. In addition to reporting the findings of the survey, this report highlights some of the key points raised at the focus groups that were undertaken as part of this study. The four focus groups involved travellers, young people, disabled people and unpaid carers. All statistics and charts presented in this report are derived from the quality of life survey unless otherwise stated.

The full detailed analysis of the survey is in factsheet form and can be accessed through the Local Intelligence Network Cornwall's website ([www.linc4info.org.uk](http://www.linc4info.org.uk)) along with the full focus group reports. See Appendix I for the full list of fact sheets available and relevant links.

## Quality of Life in Cornwall – policy pointers

- 87% of respondents said their quality of life was good, compared to 83% of residents across England in 2001 (DEFRA, 2002).
- 68% of respondents in Cornwall were optimistic about their household's quality of life in the future, compared to 64% of residents nationally. 13% of Cornish respondents were very optimistic about their household's quality of life in the future, compared to just 9% in the South West region.
- *Health* was the most important factor affecting quality of life in Cornwall. *Money* was the most important factor in the national survey. *A good neighbourhood to live in* and *the quality of your home* were ranked 2nd and 3rd in Cornwall.
- Although *a good neighbourhood to live in* was rated highly in terms of importance, satisfaction with neighbourhood appears to be in decline.
- The following issues achieved a satisfaction rate of less than 30%:
  - *Facilities for teenagers (only 10% of residents were very or fairly satisfied with teenage facilities)*
  - *Affordability of housing (14%)*
  - *Opportunities to participate in local planning and decision making processes (23%)*
  - *Availability of housing (25%)*
  - *Employment opportunities (25%)*
  - *Public transport services available (28%)*
- Satisfaction was highest for the *quality of the natural environment (83%)*.
- 86% of respondents agreed that *people from different backgrounds get on well together in their neighbourhood*; this compares to 80% nationally. This is the Home Office's headline indicator of community cohesion.
- The vast majority of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed that *ethnic differences were respected in their neighbourhood (58%)*.
- Less than one in four people felt that *as individuals they are able to influence decisions affecting their local area (23%)*.
- Disabled people were less likely to find access to a range of services easy.
- Results showed notable differences between levels of satisfaction, participation and access within the tenure group.<sup>1</sup> Although not necessarily significant in statistical terms, housing association tenants appear, as a group, to experience the greatest level of exclusion in terms of quality of life, satisfaction, access and participation out of all tenure groups. These findings raised many

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<sup>1</sup> 'Tenure group' refers to housing type - whether the respondent owns or rents his/her accommodation and if rented, from whom i.e. local authority, housing association or private landlord.

questions which suggest the need for further research into the quality of life between residents of different tenure groups.

## Introduction

### What is quality of life?

Quality of life can be broadly understood in three dimensions: economic, social and environmental well-being (ODPM, 2002). The New Economics Foundation has developed a model which details the intrinsic dimensions of quality of life. These are set out below:

Dimensions of well-being	
Dimensions	Range
survival	health vs. ill health
relations with others	happiness vs. depression, mental illness
learning and developing	vitality vs. boredom, apathy
meaning & purpose	fulfilment vs. hopelessness

*Source: New Economics Foundation*

The national MORI report 'Life, Satisfaction and Trust in Other People' (2004) notes that, although national economic wealth has increased, life satisfaction has not, and that '*actual income is not a key determinant of life satisfaction – but view of income is*'. This reminds us that there are many factors at play as far as perceptions of individual well being are concerned. These include factors such as personal outlook, expectations and genetic characteristics over which local authorities have no direct influence.

Furthermore, it is important to be aware that many factors may influence an individual's response and the responses given cannot be solely attributed to the defining characteristic of each sub-group i.e. age, gender, tenure (housing type, etc). For example, if perceptions of quality of life are found to be lowest among housing association tenants, it is not necessarily the case that housing type is the main, or only, factor determining quality of life. Quality of life is influenced by many things.

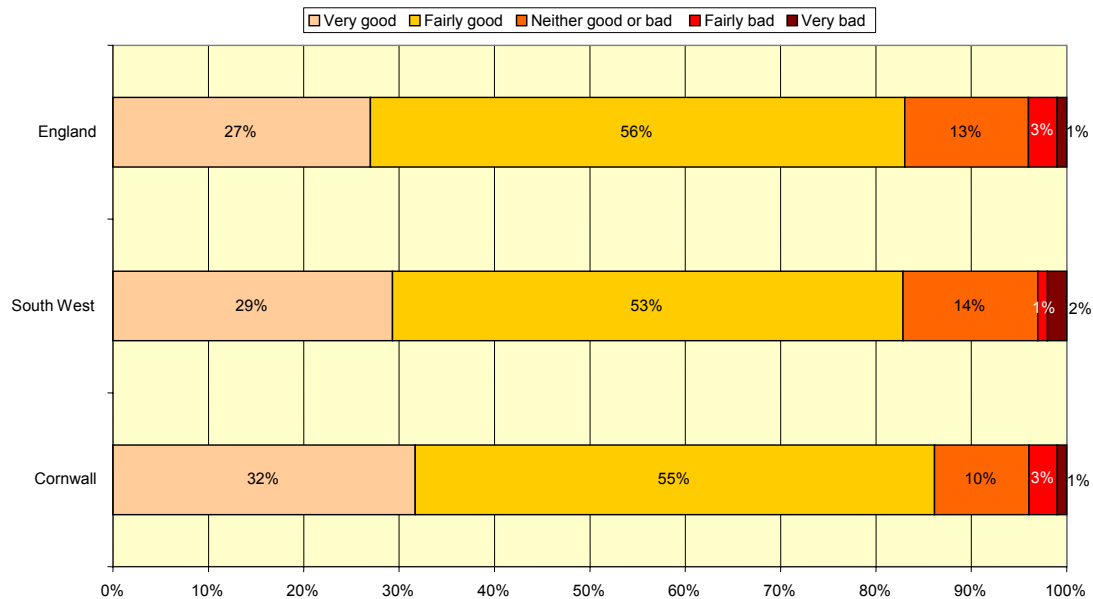
Nevertheless, the quality of life of any individual can and will be directly influenced by public authorities through the provision of services. Quality of life should therefore be the focus of policy initiatives undertaken by such bodies.

### Caveats

For this survey the base figure of respondents aged 18-24 was particularly low (43 out of the total 4,200). This means that any differences in responses between this sub-group and the other sub-groups are not statistically reliable. The number of responses from housing association tenants is also fairly low (158) and therefore not necessarily representative of this population group as a whole. For more information on the sample profile and other important notes see 'Methodology and Sample Profile' (page 18).

## Quality of life now and in the future

### How good or bad quality of life is now



Base: 4,194

Overall, 87% of respondents said that their quality of life at that time was fairly or very good. Figures for particular sub-groups of the population were as follows:

- 90% of those who have a degree or equivalent (base: 888)
- 90% of those who considered themselves not to have a long term limiting illness (base: 3,292).
- 89% of home owners (base: 3,381)
- 82% of those with no qualifications (base: 941)
- 75% of those who suffer from a long term limiting illness (base: 823)
- 72% of people who consider themselves disabled (base: 551)
- 69% of housing association tenants (base: 157)

Broadly speaking, both the Cornwall and national<sup>2</sup> surveys revealed that older respondents have a more positive view of their quality of life than their younger counterparts, although the differences were small. However, the percentage of those who said their quality of life was very good declined among the 65+ age group. The older average age of respondents compared to residents might have influenced the quality of life figures overall.

Regarding expectations for the future, residents in Cornwall were more optimistic about their household's quality of life than residents nationally (68% in Cornwall and 64% nationally respectively). Only 13% of residents in Cornwall were very optimistic, compared with 9% in the South West. 17% of residents of the South West region were pessimistic compared to 13% in Cornwall.

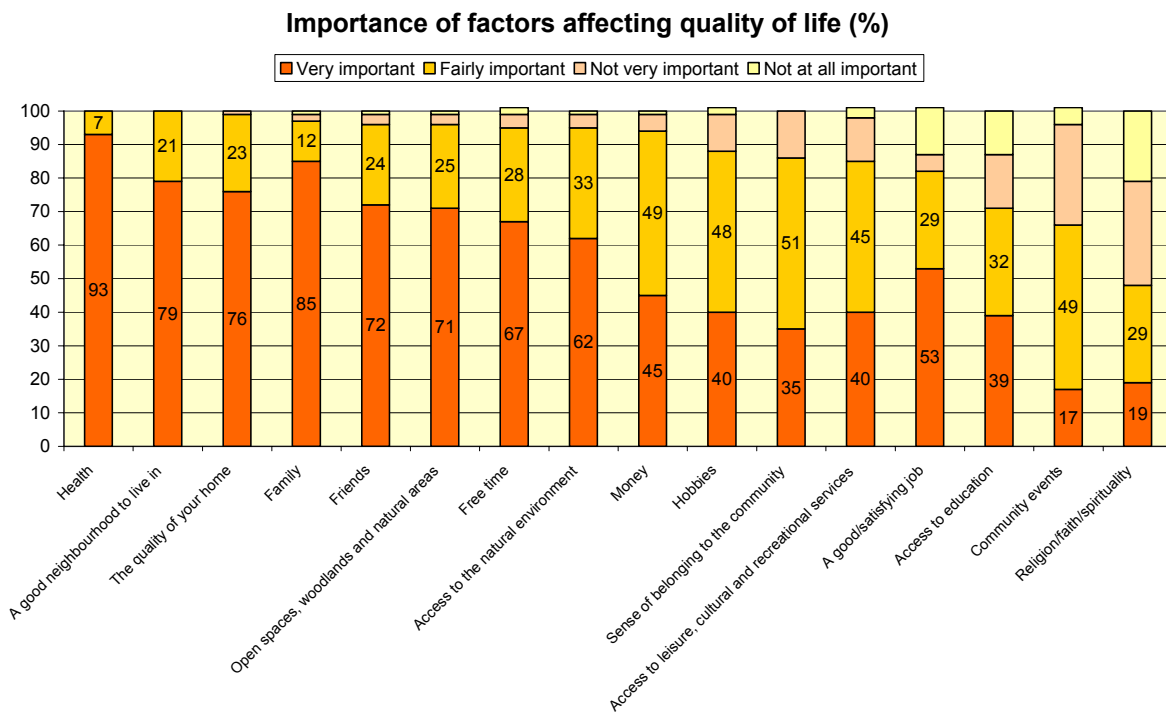
<sup>2</sup> DEFRA. 2001. *Survey of public attitudes to quality of life and to the environment*

## Factors affecting quality of life

Top three determinants of quality of life	
Cornwall 2004	England 2001 (DEFRA 2002)
1. <i>Health</i>	1. <i>Money</i>
2. <i>A good neighbourhood to live in</i>	2. <i>Health</i>
3. <i>The quality of your home</i>	3. <i>Crime</i>

The table above illustrates that residents in Cornwall differed from residents country-wide when it comes to ranking the most important factors that determine quality of life<sup>3</sup>. Priority factors for the South West mirror the national picture.

Sixteen factors which affect quality of life in Cornwall are ranked in the chart below based on the degree of importance respondents gave to each.



Base range: 3,487-4,156

The three most important factors are all influenced to some extent by public authorities, which means that there is significant scope for them to improve quality of life within their community in partnership with other local agencies. Crime/community safety was ranked the third most important factor in the national survey, and although it was not listed as a specific factor in the Cornwall survey, it was the most common factor listed under 'other factors affecting quality of life' (14% of total 'other factors').

<sup>3</sup> Some of the factors listed in the national survey differ to those in the Cornwall survey. In the national survey residents were limited to providing 2 or 3 'most important factors' whereas Cornwall residents were asked to rate each factor's importance to their quality of life.

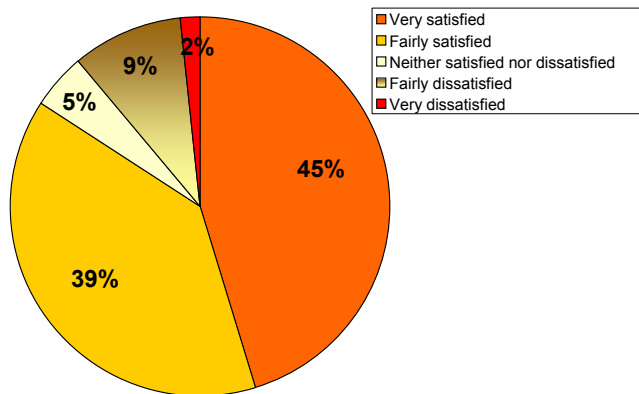
## Factors affecting quality of life - key findings of sub-groups

- ❖ Older people were more likely to say that *a sense of belonging to the community* is important (25-34: 76%, 65+: 90%) and that *religion/faith/spirituality* is important (25-34: 35%, 65+: 65%).
- ❖ When compared to men, women placed more or equal importance on all factors. The biggest differences between genders were *a good satisfying job* (female: 86%, male: 75%), *access to education* (female: 77%, male: 61%), *access to leisure cultural and recreational services*, (female: 88%, male: 81%), *religion/faith/spirituality* (female: 51%, male: 44%) and *community events and celebrations* (female: 70%, male: 59%).
- ❖ *Religion/faith/spirituality* was the only factor that disabled people considered more important than able bodied people (disabled: 57%, able bodied: 47%).
- ❖ Respondents with no qualifications placed less importance than any other qualification group on *a good satisfying job*, *free time*, *access to the natural environment*, *access to leisure, cultural and recreational services* and *access to education*, and more importance on *a sense of belonging to the community* and *religion/faith/spirituality*.
- ❖ People with a degree or higher degree were most likely to say that *open spaces, woodland and natural areas*, *access to the natural environment* and *hobbies* were important and least likely to say that *money* and *community events and celebrations* were important.
- ❖ There does not appear to be a direct relationship between age and the importance placed upon money. However, very interesting responses reveal that *money* may be less important to people within the age band 25-34 than to any other age band (just 35% compared to the average of 44%). This does not correspond with the national survey findings where those aged 25-44 were most likely to say that *money* and *jobs* affected the quality of their lives (it should be noted that the comparison that has been made here is based upon two different age bands: 25-34 years in the Cornish survey and 25-44 years in the national survey).
- ❖ The percentage of respondents who considered that *money* was very important was highest among those people with no qualifications (58%, average: 45%). This does not reflect the national survey findings where respondents with no qualifications were least likely to say that *money* was one of the factors likely to affect their quality of life.
- ❖ Within the tenure groups, *money* was most likely to be considered very important among respondents who rent from a housing association (62%) and least likely among those who rent from a private landlord (43%). The average figure is 45%.
- ❖ Housing association tenants were most likely to say that *a good neighbourhood to live in* was very important (82%).
- ❖ People aged 65+ were most likely to say that *quality of your home* was very important (83%), compared with just 67% of people aged 25-34.

## Satisfaction with neighbourhoods in Cornwall

In Cornwall, 45% of residents were very satisfied with the neighbourhood they live in and only 2% were very dissatisfied. However, over twice as many residents felt that their neighbourhood had got worse in the last two years (22%) compared with the percentage of respondents who felt that their neighbourhood had got better (10%). Six out of ten respondents felt that their neighbourhood had stayed the same. Overall, satisfaction with neighbourhoods in Cornwall had decreased by 6 percentage points since 1999 (90%, 2004: 84%) when 56% of residents were very satisfied (MORI). Only 7% of residents were dissatisfied in 1999 compared with 11% in 2004.

Satisfaction with neighbourhood as a place to live



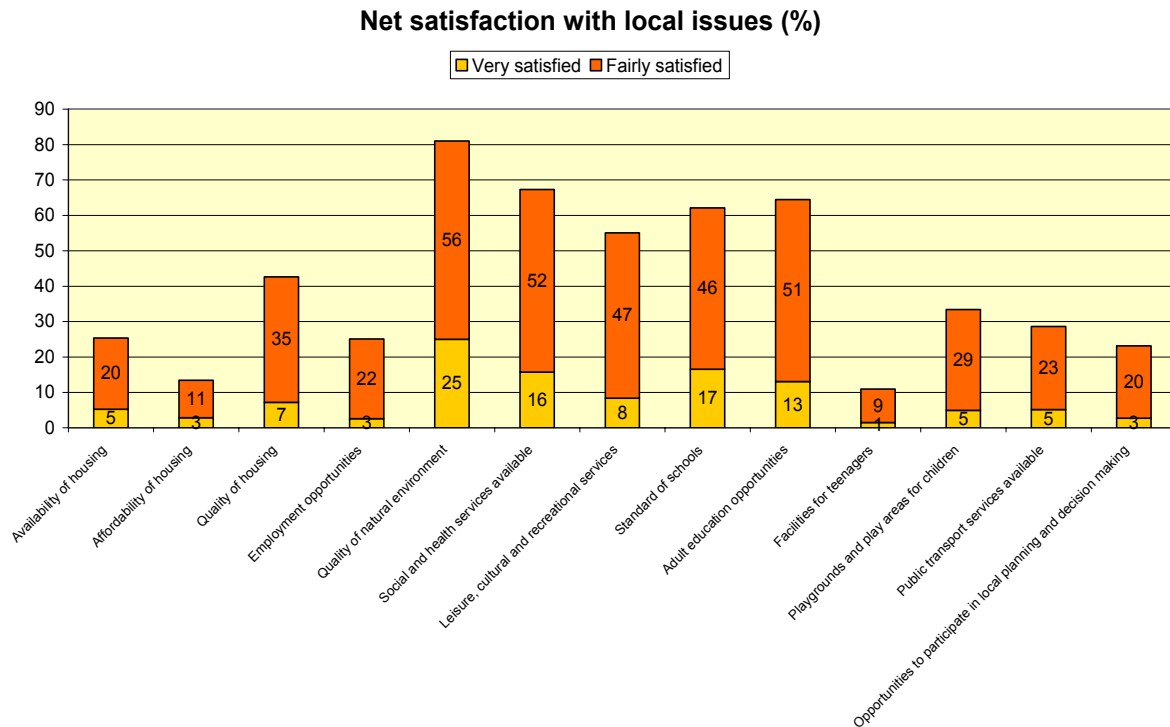
Base: 4,193

*A good neighbourhood to live in* was ranked as the second most important factor affecting quality of life according to residents, and it appeared that there was a distinct correlation between quality of life and satisfaction with neighbourhood. 94% of residents who were very satisfied with their neighbourhood also said their quality of life was fairly or very good. This compared to 87% of respondents who were fairly satisfied with their neighbourhood and 71% who were fairly or very dissatisfied.

Satisfaction appeared to increase with age, with 88% of people aged 65+ satisfied. Interestingly the gap between those in different age bands who said they were very satisfied is much wider. The proportion of people aged 65+ (58%) who were very satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live was nearly double that of the 25-34 year olds (31%).

Those who owned their own home were most likely to be satisfied with their neighbourhood (86%). Housing association tenants were least likely (65%). In fact, more than 1 in 4 respondents who rented from a housing association were dissatisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live.

## Satisfaction with local issues in Cornwall



Base range: 3,885 – 4,135

### Facilities for teenagers

*Facilities for teenagers* achieved the lowest satisfaction score (10%). The focus group discussions with members of Cornwall Youth Forum supported the general view that there were not enough facilities for teenagers and this was compounded by accessibility issues. The participants felt that they were deemed 'useful' during the summer months as affordable labour by the tourism industry, but later excluded in the winter months when there are fewer job opportunities and a limited choice of entertainment and meeting places. This seemed to be a cause of friction between younger and older residents of many communities, reflecting their opposing needs. It was felt that if teenagers had more opportunities to congregate in designated places, such frictions would be reduced.

All the participants in the focus group felt marginalised and that much more could be done by the local councils to increase the provision of entertainment and recreational opportunities. Many felt that these were limited, especially in the winter, and that too much focus was placed on self-reliance. Especially in view of the difficulty with transport, which many experienced, some expressed a sense of isolation. Generally speaking, transport issues resulted in some people feeling that they lived 'in the middle of nowhere' even when that was not geographically the case. This led to a sense of isolation from the rest of the county and of exclusion from non-local activities.

Base range: 3,885 – 4,135

Only 14% of respondents were satisfied with the *affordability of housing*. Housing affordability ratios measured in 2004 showed that the average ratio of household earnings to house prices in Cornwall was 5:4; in other words the average house cost more than five times the average household income (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2004).

Fewer than half of respondents were satisfied with the *quality of housing*. One quarter of respondents stated that their heating, electricity and hot water costs were not affordable enough for their needs (23%).

This more or less equates to the estimated percentage of homes suffering from fuel poverty. Nine out of ten considered that their housing conditions were good in terms of the impact on their health (91%), however 22% of respondents said that they had a problem with damp, condensation or mould in their home. Disabled respondents were less likely to consider their heating, electricity and hot water costs to be sufficiently affordable for their needs compared with able bodied people (70% compared to 77%).

**Natural environment**

*Quality of the natural environment* achieved the highest satisfaction score (81%). Previous surveys in Cornwall have illustrated the importance placed on the natural environment by the public. The quality of life survey attempted to establish how often residents visited various sites in Cornwall and what the barriers were that restricted access. More than six out of ten respondents visited the countryside, urban areas and the seaside (the three most visited sites) at least once a month, and more than six out of ten found it easy to access the range of sites listed. For those who found access difficult, 'difficult to access using public transport' was the most significant factor.

**How often residents visit the environment for recreational purposes (%)**

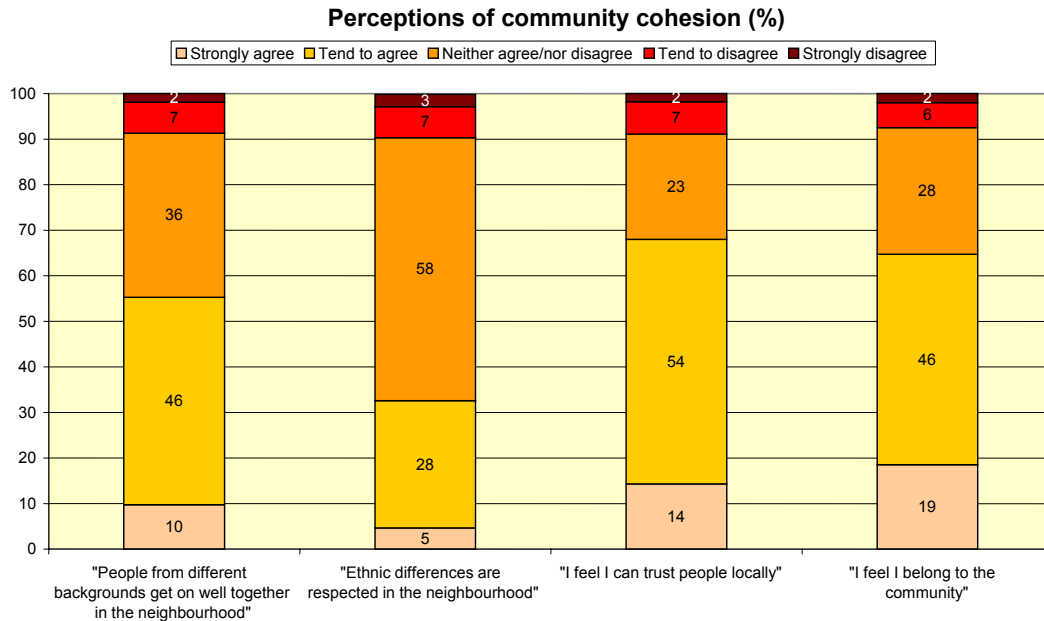


Base range: 3,689 - 4,030

The national study *'Landscapes in Britain'* commissioned by the National Trust (MORI, 2004) revealed that eight out of ten adults thought that being able to visit the countryside from time to time was important to their quality of life. This seems to support the quality of life survey findings for Cornwall in that *countryside* appeared to be the most popular destination out of those listed. Seven out of ten respondents visited the countryside frequently (at least once a month), and four out of ten at least once a week.

National research by the University of Essex has also pointed to the links between use of the countryside and well-being. The findings concluded that physical and social activities in the countryside can reduce stress levels and increase vigour (CRN, 2004).

## Community cohesion



Base range: 3,910 – 4,116

'The percentage of residents who agree that people from different backgrounds get on well together in their neighbourhood' is the Home Office's headline indicator of community cohesion. In Cornwall just over half of the respondents (55%) agreed. Excluding 'neither agree not disagree' responses from the analysis gives a figure of 86% of respondents who agreed. This compares to 80% nationally (Home Office, 2003). Respondents aged 65+ were more likely to say that people from different backgrounds got on well together in their neighbourhood (63%), so the overall figure may be influenced by the older average age of the sample. People aged 18-34 were least likely to say that people from different backgrounds got on well together in their neighbourhood (44%).

There appeared to be a distinct relationship between age and the propensity of respondents to agree as individuals that: *people from different backgrounds get on well together in the neighbourhood, they feel that they belong to their community and can trust in people locally*. This is consistent with the national findings of the Home Office research (2005) which concluded that older people were more likely to have higher levels of generalised trust.

The majority of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed that ethnic differences were respected in their neighbourhood (58%). Cornwall has an exceptionally small black and minority ethnic population (1%) and the high proportion of respondents neither agreeing nor disagreeing with this statement may reflect a lack of integration - both socially and demographically - of people from different ethnic backgrounds as a partial result of small numbers of black and minority ethnic residents. Excluding 'neither agree nor disagree' responses from calculations, 77% of respondents agreed that ethnic differences were respected in their neighbourhood; this compares with 79% nationally (Home Office, 2003). The Home Office (2005) research suggests that the more ethnically diverse an area is, the less likely people are to trust others within that area. More than twice as many people agreed that they could trust people locally, compared to the proportion who agreed that ethnic differences were respected in the neighbourhood. Approximately one in ten residents disagreed with each statement.

The national report, 'Life Satisfaction and Trust in Other People' (MORI, 2004), highlighted the significant connections between levels of trust, positive economic and social outcomes and social cohesion. Some of the national trends are mirrored in Cornwall with the exception of relationships between qualification and trust and between home ownership and trust. It should be noted, however, that trust is, in the main, influenced by personality and psycho-social factors, so these findings only give tentative indicators of additional factors which influence trust.

<b>Key drivers of trust - most trusting</b>	
<b>MORI findings (national)</b>	<b>Quality of Life in Cornwall findings</b>
Education levels (those with degree most trusting)	* - those with higher degrees and those with no qualifications are most trusting (both 72%; average of all respondents 68%)
Age (younger groups less trusting)	✓ - clear age correlation
Involved in local groups	✓ - 76% of those who were active members of voluntary or community organisations felt able to trust people compared with 63% who were not members of such organisations
<b>Key drivers of trust - least trusting</b>	
<b>MORI findings</b>	<b>Quality of Life in Cornwall findings</b>
Not retired	✓ - 63% of those who were not retired felt able to trust people locally compared with 78% who were retired
Do not have a degree	* - although those with lower level qualifications were less likely to feel able to trust people locally than those with higher levels of qualification, this did not apply to those with no qualifications as indicated above
Council tenants	* - housing association tenants were least likely to trust people locally (49% compared with an average of 68%, council tenants: 66%)

More than twice the proportion of people agreed that they could trust people locally, than those who agreed that ethnic differences were respected in the neighbourhood (68% and 33% respectively). Subtracting 'neither agree nor disagree' responses from the percentage calculations gives a figure of 88% who agreed that they could trust people locally. There is no direct national comparison for this but 47% of respondents in the national Home Office survey said that many people could be trusted locally.

There appeared to be a difference in quality of life between those who feel able to trust people locally and those who do not. 91% of respondents who agreed that they could trust in people locally also said their quality of life was good (average: 86%). 69% of respondents who disagreed said their quality of life was good.

*Sense of belonging to the community* was ranked fairly low as a factor affecting quality of life in Cornwall, although in a study undertaken by MORI for Cornwall County Council in 1999, it was considered more important in making somewhere a good place to live (MORI, 1999). The 'Community Identity in Cornwall' survey undertaken by MORI on behalf of Cornwall County Council in 1993 revealed that 82% of respondents felt that they belonged to their neighbourhood/village and only 2% had no opinion on the matter. In the quality of life survey 65% of respondents agreed that they felt a sense of belonging to their community but 28% said they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. Although differences in methodology and questions between these two sources must be allowed for, it seems feasible that the proportion of people who feel that they belong to their community, village or neighbourhood has decreased in the last decade. Nationally 71% of respondents agreed that they felt they belonged to their community (after 'neither agree not disagree' responses had been removed from calculations). The comparative figure for Cornwall was 90%.

91% of respondents who agreed that they feel they *belong to their community* said their quality of life was good compared to 64% of respondents who disagreed. Seven out of ten council tenants felt that they *belonged to their community*, the highest proportion of all sub-groups (e.g. age, tenure, qualifications etc).

The proportion of people who agreed that *people from different backgrounds get on well together in the neighbourhood* was markedly lower among the housing association tenure group (40%, average 56%). A range of factors may influence this but Home Office guidance suggests that the concept of 'life opportunities' is particularly important. It may well be that social housing tenants have more limited life opportunities, socially and economically, than those who own their own home.

## Local democracy & community involvement

Those most likely to feel able to influence decisions that affect their local area	
Individually	Collectively
Penwith (25%)	Penwith (54%)
Owned own home (24%)	Private tenants (54%)
45-64 (26%)	65+ (54%)
Degree or higher degree (30%)	Degree (57%)
Those least likely to feel able to influence decisions that affect their local area	
Individually	Collectively
Restormel (18%)	Restormel (45%)
Housing association tenants (12%)	Housing association tenants (45%)
18-24* (12%)	35-44 (48%)
GCSE or equivalent (18%)	NVQ or equivalent (47%)
* Note: small sample	

Some of the main differences between sub-groups in their perception of their ability to influence local decisions are shown above. Residents felt they have less power individually than they had collectively to influence decisions that affected their local area. Only 23% of residents agreed that, as individuals, they could influence decisions that affect their neighbourhood, whilst 37% disagreed. However just over half (52%) felt that collectively they could influence decisions, with one in five disagreeing (20%). Just 12% of housing association tenants felt able as individuals to influence decisions that affect their neighbourhood.

### Participation

Most likely to be a member of a voluntary or community organisation	Least likely to be a member of a voluntary or community organisation
North Cornwall (47%)	Kerrier (36%)
Aged 55-64 (47%)	Aged 25-34 (24%)
Higher degree (54%)	No qualifications (30%)
Owns own home (42%)	Housing Association tenants (29%)

The table above illustrates the likelihood of different sub-groups being members of voluntary or community organisations. Four out of ten respondents said they were active members of local community or voluntary organisations (41%). The national MORI report 'Life Satisfaction and Trust in Other People' (2004) showed that one of the positive drivers of trust in others was being involved in local groups. In the National Citizenship Survey (Home Office 2004), 28% of respondents said they formally volunteered at least once a month in the preceding year and 42% volunteered at least once in the same year. These results are broadly consistent with the Cornwall figure (at least three times a year).

The level of participation in informal volunteering appeared to be greater in Cornwall than in the rest of England. 83% of Cornwall respondents had done one of more of the unpaid actions listed in the survey once or more in the preceding twelve months. This compares with 63% nationally in 2003<sup>4</sup>.

Research undertaken by the Economic & Social Research Council (ESRC, 2004) suggests that helping others raises the quality of life of individuals with associations between voluntary activity and positive outcomes including better health, better educational attainment and lower crime rates. The findings suggest that there is a strong link between communities with lots of volunteering and those where people are very satisfied with their lives.

<sup>4</sup> The definition of informal volunteering used by the Home Office is consistent with the Cornwall quality of life survey - 'giving unpaid help to an individual or others who are not members of the family'. The list of actions was also consistent.

## Access to services & travel

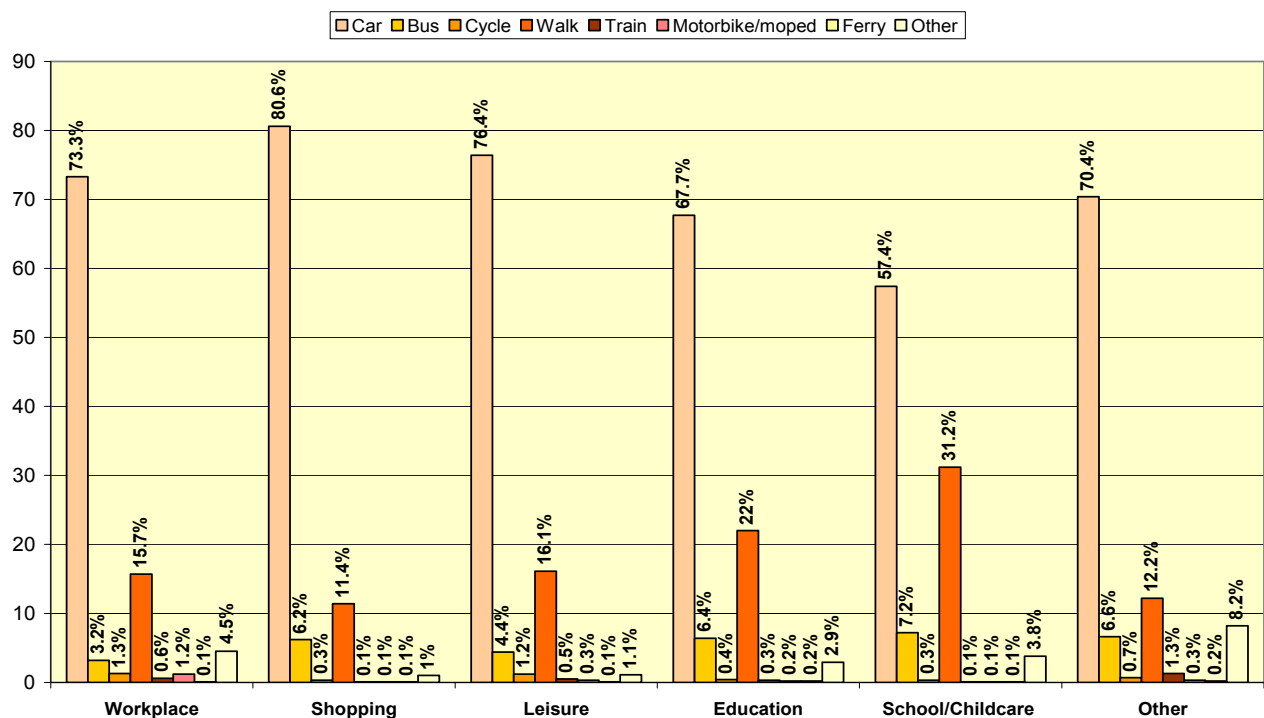
The *local shop* (91%), *post office* (88%) and *Doctor's surgery* (86%) were considered to be the three most accessible services. Nearly eight out of ten residents found their *workplace* to be either very or fairly easily accessible (78%).

Although 85% of respondents said that access to *leisure, cultural and recreational services* was important to quality of life, access to *cultural/recreational facilities* appeared to be quite limited, with just half of the respondents finding them fairly or very easy to access (51%). Half of the respondents found access to *museums* easy (50%).

Generally speaking, social housing tenants were less likely to find access to local services easy, particularly housing association tenants.

As expected, the car was the most popular form of transport used by respondents to access workplace, shopping, leisure, education, school/childcare and other destinations, with three quarters (74%) of all journeys taken by car. The car was used most for accessing *shopping* (81%), *leisure* (76%) and the *workplace* (73%). In the 2001 Census, 65% of Cornwall residents said they travelled to work by car; in 1991 the figure was 63%.

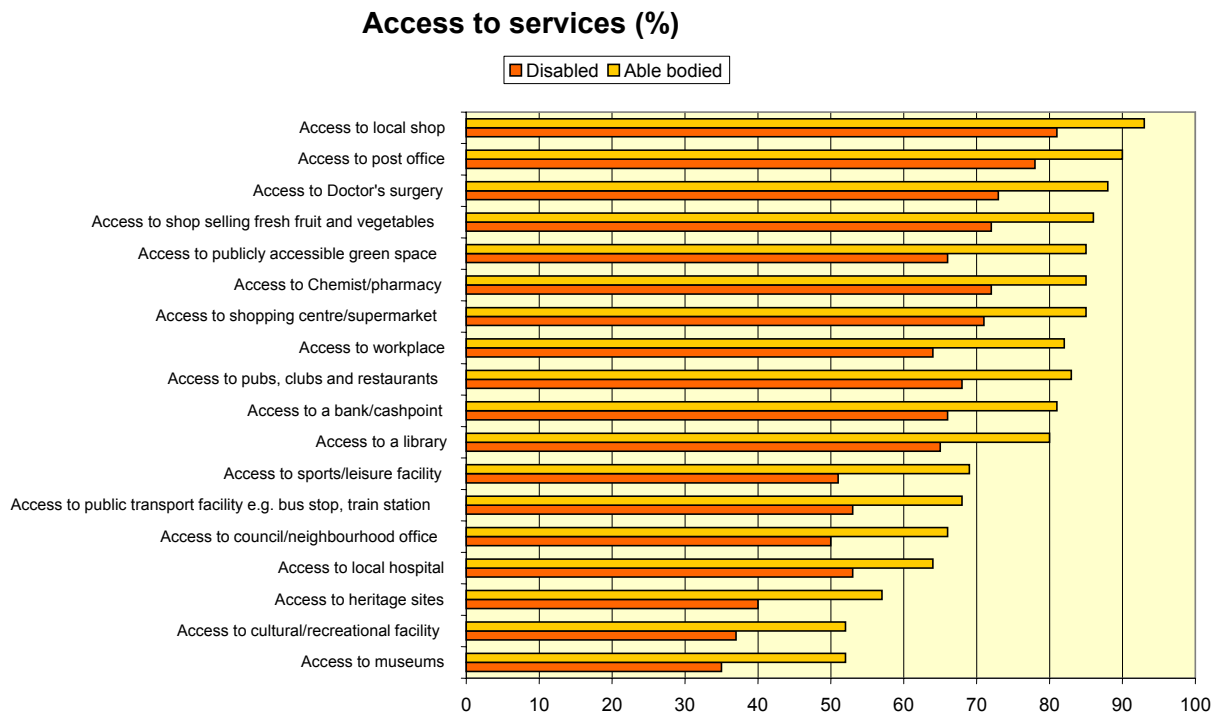
### Destination by mode



Base: 3,968

On average 17% of respondents walked to each of the six destinations, with the majority walking to *school/childcare* (31%) and the lowest proportion walking to the *shops* (11%). Public transport usage (trains, buses and ferries) was shown to be very low (on average 6% to any one destination) as was cycling and motorbike/moped usage (0.7% and 0.4% respectively). Public transport accounted for 8% of journeys made in Great Britain in 2002/2003, with no change since 1989 (ONS, 2004).

## Disabled access



Base range: 3,803 – 4,116

On average the difference between the proportion of disabled respondents and the proportion of able bodied respondents who found access easy was 15 percentage points (see chart above). Of equal significance is the difference in 'doesn't apply/don't know' responses. Disabled respondents were three times more likely to say that access to *cultural/recreational services* 'doesn't apply/don't know' than able-bodied respondents. One fifth of disabled respondents said that access to *museums* 'does not apply' compared with just 8% of able-bodied respondents and as many as 7 out of 10 disabled respondents said that access to *workplace* did not apply to them (twice as many as able-bodied respondents). There were also notable differences in 'doesn't apply' responses to *heritage sites*, *sport facilities* and *access to pubs, clubs and restaurants*.

The greater difficulty that disabled people have in accessing public services could have been expected but it is not clear why there was so big a difference in 'doesn't apply' responses. One explanation might be that disabled people do not expect to be able to access services (depending on the nature and severity of their disability and age of disabled respondents - 58% of disabled respondents being aged over 65). These responses may also reflect the experiences that disabled people have had in attempting to access certain services.

These findings are significant for public authorities, who have a duty under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 to promote equality of opportunity. Public authorities are required by law to ensure that all services are accessible to disabled people and they are required to make reasonable adjustments to the provision of services in order to enable this.

The discussion at the focus group with members of Cornwall Disability Forum revealed that, without doubt, access is of paramount importance to people with disabilities. This theme related in varying degrees to all the other issues raised by the group. Access was discussed in terms of physical opportunities and making these 'reachable', as well as in terms of providing facilities and contexts in which people with disability can meet at socially-supportive events. In this way access is both a physical and a psychosocial issue. Many participants were hopeful that the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) would help play an important role in improving their quality of life generally. Participants felt that all councils had some way to go in improving access and inclusion. However, one participant, in particular, cited an example where preservation of cobbled streets

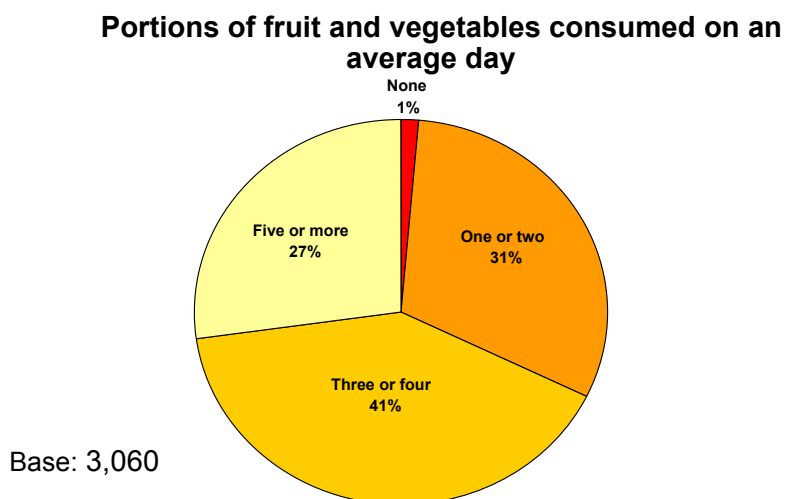
directly conflicted with accessibility. The participant felt very strongly that disability should not be marginalised in favour of conservation.

## Health

*Health* was the single most important factor affecting the quality of life of respondents in Cornwall. 100% of respondents said it was either very or fairly important. Nearly half (48%) of the respondents considered their health to be good. This figure is considerably lower than the 2001 Census figure for Cornwall (66%) and was likely to have been influenced by the age profile of the sample. 18% of residents who said their health was not good also said their quality of life was fairly or very bad (average who said their quality of life was bad: 4%). 26% of housing association tenants considered their health to be 'not good'.

Health inequality relates to disparity in rates of disease, health outcomes and life expectancy between groups of people, and will have a significant bearing on quality of life. The Trading Standards Institute (TSI, 2004) has noted the many factors that determine health, some of which also influence quality of life:

- Age, sex and hereditary factors
- Individual lifestyle factors
- Social and community influences
- Living and working conditions
- General socio-economic, cultural and environmental conditions



Average fruit and vegetable consumption among the population in England is less than 3 portions a day (DoH, 2005). Consumption tends to be lower among children and people on low incomes. According to the Quality of Life survey most people in Cornwall ate three or four portions (41%) and a quarter (27%) of residents consumed five or more portions of fruit and vegetables a day compared to 31% who ate just one or two. Two of the main barriers to eating more fruit and vegetables have been identified as access and availability – whether people have access to good quality, affordable fruit and vegetables locally. The Quality of Life survey has shown that more than 80% of residents found it easy to access a shop selling fresh fruit and vegetables. Out of 18 key local services listed, *shop selling fresh fruit and vegetables* was ranked fourth in terms of ease of access.

Those who lived in social housing were least likely to consume the recommended daily amount of fruit and vegetables (18%, average: 27%). Those who owned their own home were most likely, three in ten (29%). Nearly half the residents living in social housing consumed no more than two portions a day (48%). This is 16 percentage points more than the overall proportion consuming this amount in Cornwall and five percentage points more than the average for those who consider their health to be not good.

Over half of residents undertook moderate exercise 5 times a week or more (55%) compared to just 6% who took part in sport this frequently. A further 24% took moderate exercise 3-4 times a week or more. One quarter of respondents never participated in sport. 12% stated that their health did not permit them to take part in sport and 5% did not undertake physical activity for the same reason.

## Exclusion: focus group findings

### Young people – key points from the focus group report

The focus group identified the following key issues which affect quality of life:

- Transport emerged as the most prevalent theme, which seemed to affect most areas of young people's quality of life. Participants found public transport to be somewhat limited and services sporadic.
- Limitations with public transport were also deemed to impact on the choice of schools and colleges young people attended, which also meant they may have had to compromise on their chosen vocation.
- Opportunities and choice affected people's perception of where they saw themselves in the future. The majority felt that if more educational and employment opportunities were available to them in the county, they would happily remain. The main issue with this appeared to be the possibility of having a choice, rather than feeling either forced to leave in order to pursue their careers or to stay with some compromise on their part.
- Participants felt that communication by local authorities was poor and, as a result, young people were not aware of council responsibilities and services. In particular it was felt that links between the councils and young people were limited and that there appeared to be no effort or desire to engage them in consultation.
- Generally speaking participants felt that whilst there was a danger that second-home owners were raising market prices, they were also bringing more opportunities, wealth and expertise to the county. They shared the view that local residents should not be marginalised in favour of more privileged newcomers or indeed occasional residents.
- All the participants present felt a strong sense of identity and belonging by living in Cornwall, independently of whether or not they were born, or how long they had been resident, here. Some felt this to relate to the county's own sense of identity, independence and heritage, as well as to the fact that it differs from the rest of the country in many ways.

### Disabled people – key points from the focus group reports

The two main threads which were raised by participants related to psychosocial issues regarding having a disability in society generally, and how this impacted on their quality of life in Cornwall. What surfaced from this discussion was the importance and sensitivity needed to appreciate that disability is as unique and diverse as each individual who experiences it. Thus, while there are shared experiences, the individual behind the disability should not be overlooked.

It was suggested that it is important for both councils and the general public to remember and be made aware that differences exist within society. The prejudicial attitudes, conscious and unconscious, which members of this group experienced were reported to be predominantly in terms of feeling patronised or being treated as 'nuisances'. It was noted that by raising awareness about disability, negative assumptions would be greatly reduced, which in turn would increase quality of life for disabled people. The key points are summarised below:

- Increased contact between able-bodied and disabled people was deemed to be a crucial aspect of an individual's quality of life.
- Increased involvement of individuals by the council and local businesses at the *planning stages* of construction of new buildings should be increased.
- Social isolation is a common feature of life in rural settings, particularly so for more marginalised groups. Participants expressed the need for increased social support and networks, both with able-bodied and disabled groups, especially in view of the limitations some individuals faced with independence of mobility and therefore spontaneity and freedom of social contact.
- Young participants in particular felt they lacked opportunities to socialise in ways that would render their lives more meaningful and active, particularly given the importance that outdoor pursuits have in Cornwall, and the fact that for some, this can be limited or even impossible.

- Those who found that access to nature was limited or impossible regarded this as a significant gap in their lives that they had come to accept. Others had been able to take up outdoor pursuits again after many years, which had improved their quality of life.
- Some participants remarked on the limited availability of disability-friendly buses and taxis.
- Without exception, and regardless of individual difficulties with specific disabilities, all the participants ultimately felt that living in Cornwall increased their quality of life, whether they were born here or had moved to the county. They felt that the quality of life they enjoyed as a result of living in Cornwall far out-weighed some of the limitations they faced living in a predominantly rural area.

### **New age travellers – key points from the focus group report**

Social and legal issues were closely related to travellers' quality of life. In essence, what permeated all the major themes that emerged from the focus group was the need for greater social/legal respect and inclusion. The group felt that inconsistent recognition of their needs largely related to having 'cultural community' rather than 'ethnic minority' status, which they felt would grant them increased legal rights and social recognition. Some of the key issues are listed below:

- Availability of land.
- Access to education and health care was a real problem, with negative attitudes and prejudices limiting the quality of services experienced.
- The quality and consistency of the education of traveller children was compromised by bullying, prejudice and possible eviction.
- Lack of awareness of traveller needs limited access to services.
- Travellers felt that they played an important part in community life and the local economy, and that this was often not recognised.
- Biased reporting of traveller issues in the media fuelled fear and negative attitudes within the community.
- It was felt that public authorities had a role to play in countering the often inaccurate or misguided news stories.

### **Unpaid carers – key points from the focus group report**

Those present at the focus group occupied a number of roles and therefore raised issues from different perspectives. Namely, their own quality of life and needs as carers, the quality of life of the relatives they care for and their varying needs, and from a more general perspective, their own quality of life as individuals living in Cornwall. All participants felt there to be an underlying common assumption that 'carers' choose to look after relatives 'out of the goodness of their heart'. Individuals in this position felt that this resulted in complacency on the part of the government in improving provisions for care, which would in turn offer full-time carers the option of *not* taking on this role, and therefore having the option of not forsaking their contributions to the professional workforce, safe in the knowledge that their loved ones would not be neglected. Other key issues were:

- All participants had at one time or another experienced contradicting information from the different bodies involved in health and social care provision, resulting in carers missing out on opportunities both for their relatives and themselves, in ways which hampered the quality of life of both.
- A lack of clarity of roles led to a polarisation of power between health and social care professionals (seen as 'those with power') and the resulting powerlessness of carers and their relatives.
- It was felt that establishing the needs and emotional/physical limitations of the carer, and attending to these, was an important factor in the quality of life of carers and their relatives.
- Without exception, participants felt that there were too many people involved in the provision of care, thus running the risk of both patient and carer 'getting lost in the system'. Ultimately, carers felt they were 'screaming to be heard' in this structure.
- It was evident from the different geographical locations represented that healthcare provisions and funding varied significantly between areas across the county.
- Participants felt that while respite care beds were often available, their availability was not well publicised, often leading to missed opportunities and wasted funding. Equally they felt that there was a lack of emergency respite care, often limiting carers to having to plan (when stress and exhaustion can often be cumulative rather than time-specific).
- Participants felt that not enough was done generally to support carers.

## Methodology and sample profile

### Important notes

**Sampling frame** - The Postcode Address File (PAF) was used as a sampling frame. The PAF is used in most government postal surveys because it provides the most comprehensive sample of addresses and is one of the more cost effective methods. However this method only allows you to target respondents geographically – not demographically – as it does not provide any demographic data. There are limited practical alternatives for random sampling due to the constraints on accessing personal information resulting from data protection legislation.

**Representation** - It is important to note that a sample is only broadly representative of the views of residents in Cornwall and as such the results are subject to sampling tolerances which means not all differences in response will be statistically significant. The Audit Commission guidance specifies that a statistical reliability level of 95% and a +/-5% confidence interval should be achieved for household surveys. The quality of life sample has reached this level (down to district level).

**Age profile** - Postal surveys are self-selecting and as such it is expected that the demographic characteristics will not be fully representative of the population. In particular, older residents are more likely to respond to the survey and so there would be an over-representation among this group. Younger respondents (18-24) are least likely to participate in postal surveys and for this survey the base figure of respondents aged 18-24 was particularly low (43), therefore any differences between this sub-group and the other sub-groups were not statistically reliable. Cornwall County Council will be considering ways of boosting responses from young people in future consultations.

**Tenure profile** - Those who ticked 'live with family' or 'other' have been excluded from analysis by tenure due to small numbers. The number of responses from housing association tenants was fairly low and therefore not necessarily indicative of this population as a whole. However, there were some commonalities in response from this group, which suggested that housing association tenants might experience lower levels of satisfaction with quality of life, lower levels of social participation and access than the other tenure groups, including council tenants. This certainly warrants further research in order to explore the differences between tenure and quality of life in more detail.

**Overall importance** - In the analysis of some survey questions, data will have been aggregated to create a figure of overall satisfaction or importance. For these calculations 'very important' and 'fairly important' responses are added together and any neutral responses, i.e. 'don't know', 'doesn't apply', are excluded.

**Base figures** – The base figure which is provided for each chart is the number of respondents i.e. all those providing an answer that can be measured and tabulated (due to missing or invalid cases this may not be the same as the total sample). The base size may, therefore, vary from question to question, depending on the number of those who responded to each question. Some of the charts will have 'base range' figures if the question required more than one response, as the figures relate to the range of respondents answering each part of the question.

Table 1. Geographical profile of responses	Number of respondents	Valid percent	Statistical reliability +/-%	% of Cornwall's population within district (2003)	Approx % of surveys sent	Approx response rate per district (%)
Caradon	721	17.1	3.6	15.6	16.2	30.5
Carrick	731	17.3	3.6	17.5	18.4	27.3
Kerrier	692	16.4	3.7	18.7	16.1	29.5
North Cornwall	739	17.5	3.6	16.2	16.8	30.2
Penwith	493	11.7	4.4	12.5	13.6	24.8
Restormel	727	17.2	3.6	18.8	18.8	26.6
Cornwall / Base	4,217	100.0	1.5	*	*	29

The following tables provide a demographic profile of the sample. The average age of respondents is 56 compared to the average age of 43 in Cornwall (2001 Census).

Table 2. Age profile		Cornwall	Cornwall mid year estimates 2003
18 - 24	Count	43	
	%	1.4	7
25 - 34	Count	272	
	%	8.8	10.4
35 - 44	Count	499	
	%	16.2	13.7
45 - 54	Count	551	
	%	17.9	13.6
55 - 64	Count	739	
	%	24.0	14.4
65+	Count	975	
	%	31.7	20.2
Base	Count	3,079	

Table 3. Gender profile		Cornwall	Cornwall mid year estimates 2003
Male	Count	1,726	
	%	42.27	48
Female	Count	2,354	
	%	57.65	51.5
Total/Base	Count	4,080	

Table 4. Respondents who consider themselves as disabled		Cornwall
Yes	Count	558
	%	13.5
No	Count	3,589
	%	86.5
Total/Base	Count	4,147

Table 5. Qualifications		Cornwall
GCSE or O level	Count	877
	%	21.6
A level or equivalent	Count	538
	%	13.2
Higher degree	Count	281
	%	6.9
NVQ or other vocational qual	Count	528
	%	13.0
Degree or equivalent	Count	892
	%	22.0
None	Count	945
	%	23.3
Base	Count	4,061

Census comparisons have not been included because the categories are different. However the % of people in Cornwall who have no qualifications amount to 28.9% according to the 2001 Census.

Table 6. Tenure		Cornwall	Cornwall & Scilly 2001 Census
Own your own home	Count	3,395	
	%	80.9	72.3
Rent from the council	Count	251	
	%	6.0	6.3
Live with family	Count	33	
	%	0.8	*
Rent from a housing association	Count	158	
	%	3.8	5.5
Rent from a private landlord	Count	290	
	%	6.9	11.7
Other	Count	64	
	%	1.5	4.1
Base	Count	4,191	

\* This was not a category used in the Census. People who ticked 'live with family' or 'other' have been excluded from analysis due to small numbers and issues of statistical reliability.

For more information, please contact the Local Intelligence Network Cornwall (LINC)  
Website: [www.linc4info.org.uk](http://www.linc4info.org.uk)

Phone: 01872 323556

Email: [enquiries@linc4info.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@linc4info.org.uk)

	Indicator	Link
1	Factors affecting quality of life	<a href="http://syd.paribus.co.uk/linc-data/download/4149492c06da3e0a0106da7b807f00ce/Factors%20affecting%20quality%20of%20life.pdf">http://syd.paribus.co.uk/linc-data/download/4149492c06da3e0a0106da7b807f00ce/Factors%20affecting%20quality%20of%20life.pdf</a>
2	Quality of life now and in the future	<a href="http://syd.paribus.co.uk/linc-data/download/4149492c06da906c0106dad0c3dc00d0/Quality%20of%20life%20now%20&amp;%20future.pdf">http://syd.paribus.co.uk/linc-data/download/4149492c06da906c0106dad0c3dc00d0/Quality%20of%20life%20now%20&amp;%20future.pdf</a>
3	Satisfaction with neighbourhoods	<a href="http://syd.paribus.co.uk/linc-data/download/4149492c06da906c0106dae852650179/Satisfaction%20with%20neighbourhoods.pdf">http://syd.paribus.co.uk/linc-data/download/4149492c06da906c0106dae852650179/Satisfaction%20with%20neighbourhoods.pdf</a>
4	Satisfaction with local issues	<a href="http://syd.paribus.co.uk/linc-data/download/4149492c06da906c0106dade503b0143/Satisfaction%20with%20local%20issues.pdf">http://syd.paribus.co.uk/linc-data/download/4149492c06da906c0106dade503b0143/Satisfaction%20with%20local%20issues.pdf</a>
5	Access to local services	<a href="http://syd.paribus.co.uk/linc-data/download/4149492c06da3dd70106da4b62b40021/Access%20to%20services.pdf">http://syd.paribus.co.uk/linc-data/download/4149492c06da3dd70106da4b62b40021/Access%20to%20services.pdf</a>
6	Travel	<a href="http://syd.paribus.co.uk/linc-data/download/4149492c06da906c0106db04648d021c/Travel.doc">http://syd.paribus.co.uk/linc-data/download/4149492c06da906c0106db04648d021c/Travel.doc</a>
7	Community cohesion	<a href="http://syd.paribus.co.uk/linc-data/download/4149492c06da3e0a0106da6a203e005e/Community%20cohesion.pdf">http://syd.paribus.co.uk/linc-data/download/4149492c06da3e0a0106da6a203e005e/Community%20cohesion.pdf</a>
8	Sense of belonging	<a href="http://syd.paribus.co.uk/linc-data/download/4149492c06da906c0106daf870cc01af/Sense%20of%20belonging.pdf">http://syd.paribus.co.uk/linc-data/download/4149492c06da906c0106daf870cc01af/Sense%20of%20belonging.pdf</a>
9	Citizenship – local democracy	<a href="http://syd.paribus.co.uk/linc-data/download/4149492c06da906c0106dac4eba30061/Influencing%20decisions.pdf">http://syd.paribus.co.uk/linc-data/download/4149492c06da906c0106dac4eba30061/Influencing%20decisions.pdf</a>
10	Formal & informal volunteering	<a href="http://syd.paribus.co.uk/linc-data/download/4149492c06da906c0106db1758b50287/Volunteering.pdf">http://syd.paribus.co.uk/linc-data/download/4149492c06da906c0106db1758b50287/Volunteering.pdf</a>
11	Unpaid care	<a href="http://syd.paribus.co.uk/linc-data/download/4149492c06da906c0106db0c3b1e0252/Unpaid%20care.pdf">http://syd.paribus.co.uk/linc-data/download/4149492c06da906c0106db0c3b1e0252/Unpaid%20care.pdf</a>
12	Access to the environment	<a href="http://syd.paribus.co.uk/linc-data/download/4149492c06da3e0a0106da5b545d0027/Access%20to%20the%20environment.pdf">http://syd.paribus.co.uk/linc-data/download/4149492c06da3e0a0106da5b545d0027/Access%20to%20the%20environment.pdf</a>
13	Recycling and home composting	<a href="http://syd.paribus.co.uk/linc-data/download/4149492c06da906c0106dad604e70106/Recycling%20&amp;%20composting.pdf">http://syd.paribus.co.uk/linc-data/download/4149492c06da906c0106dad604e70106/Recycling%20&amp;%20composting.pdf</a>
14	Sustainable purchasing	<a href="http://syd.paribus.co.uk/linc-data/download/4149492c06da906c0106dafebc3c01e5/Sustainable%20purchasing.pdf">http://syd.paribus.co.uk/linc-data/download/4149492c06da906c0106dafebc3c01e5/Sustainable%20purchasing.pdf</a>
15	Neighbourhood noise & light pollution	<a href="http://syd.paribus.co.uk/linc-data/download/4149492c06da906c0106dacacc640096/Noise%20and%20light%20pollution.pdf">http://syd.paribus.co.uk/linc-data/download/4149492c06da906c0106dacacc640096/Noise%20and%20light%20pollution.pdf</a>
16	Health	<a href="http://syd.paribus.co.uk/linc-data/download/4149492c06da3e0a0106da82587e0105/Health.pdf">http://syd.paribus.co.uk/linc-data/download/4149492c06da3e0a0106da82587e0105/Health.pdf</a>
17	Housing and health	<a href="http://syd.paribus.co.uk/linc-data/download/4149492c06da906c0106dabfacef002b/Housing%20and%20health.pdf">http://syd.paribus.co.uk/linc-data/download/4149492c06da906c0106dabfacef002b/Housing%20and%20health.pdf</a>
18	Exercise and sport	<a href="http://syd.paribus.co.uk/linc-data/download/4149492c06da3e0a0106da747fb50094/Exercise%20and%20sport.pdf">http://syd.paribus.co.uk/linc-data/download/4149492c06da3e0a0106da747fb50094/Exercise%20and%20sport.pdf</a>
	Quality of Life of Young People	<a href="http://syd.paribus.co.uk/linc-data/download/4149492c06e566910106e5a729fc0105/Youth%20Forum%20Report.doc">http://syd.paribus.co.uk/linc-data/download/4149492c06e566910106e5a729fc0105/Youth%20Forum%20Report.doc</a>

	(Focus group report)	
	Quality of Life of Disabled People (Focus group report)	<a href="http://syd.paribus.co.uk/link-data/download/4149492c06e8c7be0106e92741b70060/CDF%20report.doc">http://syd.paribus.co.uk/link-data/download/4149492c06e8c7be0106e92741b70060/CDF%20report.doc</a>
	Quality of Life of Carers (Focus group report)	<a href="http://syd.paribus.co.uk/link-data/download/4149492c06e566910106e585f6b20057/Carers'%20Report.doc">http://syd.paribus.co.uk/link-data/download/4149492c06e566910106e585f6b20057/Carers'%20Report.doc</a>
	Quality of Life of Travellers (Focus group report)	<a href="http://syd.paribus.co.uk/link-data/download/4149492c06e566910106e5a2b21900cf/Travellers%20focus%20group%20report.doc">http://syd.paribus.co.uk/link-data/download/4149492c06e566910106e5a2b21900cf/Travellers%20focus%20group%20report.doc</a>