

Social Contact

Key facts from the Life Opportunities Survey - Wave one results, 2009/11(1)

The Life Opportunities Survey (LOS) is a large-scale longitudinal survey of disability in Great Britain. Results from the full first wave of the survey were published on the 8th December 2011 and the information below presents some of the key findings from this report. The report and the key findings below update the interim findings that were published in December 2010 based on the first half of wave one interviews.

The information below explores the social contact adults, aged 16 and over, had with other people. Social contact is considered in terms of the number of close contacts people had, the number of close contacts met or spoken with in the past week and the frequency of this contact. A close contact is defined as someone who could be counted on if you had a problem, such as a close friend or relative.

Number of close contacts

As shown in Table 1, adults with impairment(2), were less likely than adults without impairment to have six or more close contacts (54 per cent and 65 per cent respectively).

The findings were similar when using the Equality Act definition of disability(2).

Table 1: Number of close contacts adults reported that they could rely on by impairment status, 2009/11

Number of close contacts	Percentage of adults without impairment	Percentage of adults with impairment
None	1	2
1 or 2	7	12
3 to 5	27	32
6+	65	54

Source: Life Opportunities Survey Wave One Results, 2009/11

1 http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/los/index.php?page=los_wor

2 Please refer to the Introduction of the Life Opportunities Survey Wave one report, 2009/11, for the definitions of impairment status and Equality Act disability status.

Frequency of contact

24 per cent of adults with impairment and 21 per cent of adults without impairment had not had as much social contact as they would have liked in the previous week.

Barriers to having no or less contact with others than would like

Adults with impairment were more likely than adults without impairment to report a barrier to social contact due to financial reasons (14 per cent and 10 per cent respectively) and difficulties with transport (10 per cent and 5 per cent respectively).