

Social contact

Key facts from the Life Opportunities Survey interim results, 2009/10

The Life Opportunities Survey (LOS) is a new large scale longitudinal survey of disability in Great Britain. Interim results from the first year of the two year baseline survey were published on the 9th December 2010(1) and the information below presents some of the key facts from this report. In addition to these results, presented in boxes are some of the findings from the qualitative research that was commissioned to complement the statistics provided by the LOS(1).

The information below explores the social contact adults(2) 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

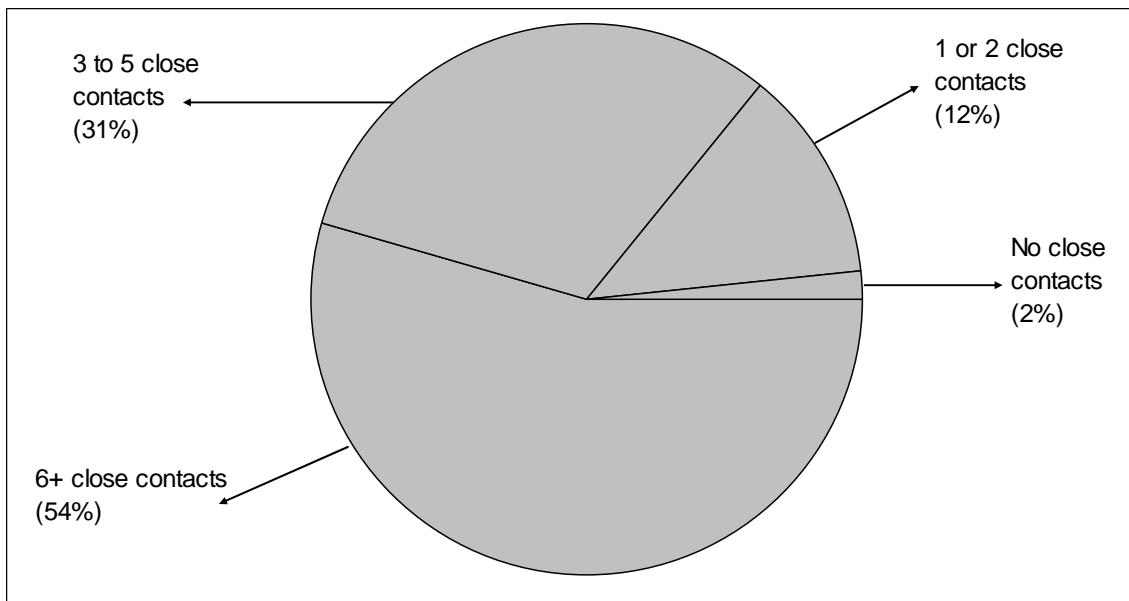
- Disabled adults, as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)(3), were almost twice as likely as non-disabled adults to have two or less close contacts (14 per cent and 8 per cent respectively).
- The findings were similar when using the impairment based definition of disability(3). As shown in Figure 1, over half (54 per cent) of adults with impairments had six or more close contacts.

1 See <http://www.odi.gov.uk/disability-statistics-and-research/life-opportunities-survey.php> for more information.

2 Results presented are from adults (those aged 16 and over) who were interviewed as part of the LOS between June 2009 and March 2010.

3 Please refer to the definition of DDA disability and adults with impairments included in Chapter 1 of the LOS Interim Report, 2009/10.

Figure 1: Number of close contacts adults with impairments reported that they could rely on if they had a problem, 2009/10



Source: Office for National Statistics

Frequency of contact

- A quarter (25 per cent) of adults with impairments and just over one fifth (22 per cent) of adults without impairments had not spoken or met with their close contacts as much as they would have liked in the previous week.

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

- Adults with impairments were more likely than adults without impairments to say that difficulties with **transport** (11 per cent and 6 per cent respectively), **financial reasons** (14 per cent and 10 per cent respectively) and **caring responsibilities** (7 per cent and 4 per cent respectively) stopped them from having contact with the people they felt close to.