

COVID-19 and disruptions to health and social care in England

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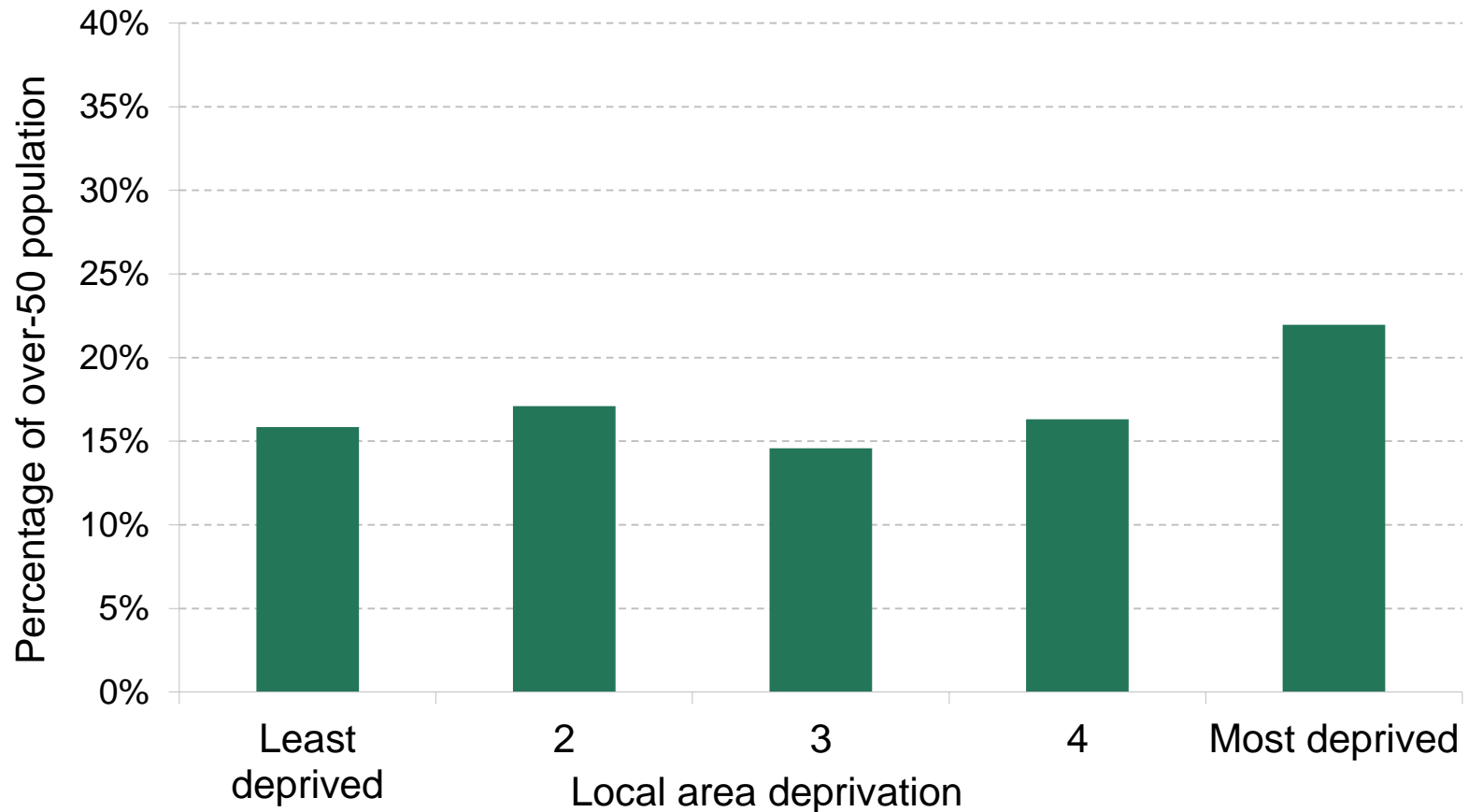
- Examination of healthcare utilisation during the early part of the pandemic (Feb to May 2020)
- Focus on older people (over 50) using ELSA data
- Survey covered use of hospital services, GP care and social care and medication

Hospital care severely disrupted

- During the early part of the pandemic (February to May 2020), disruption to older people's hospital care was widespread
- A sixth of the over-50 population in England had an operation or treatment cancelled
- Hospital cancellations most common for heavy users of hospital services:
 - older people,
 - those living in more deprived areas
 - those with worse prior health



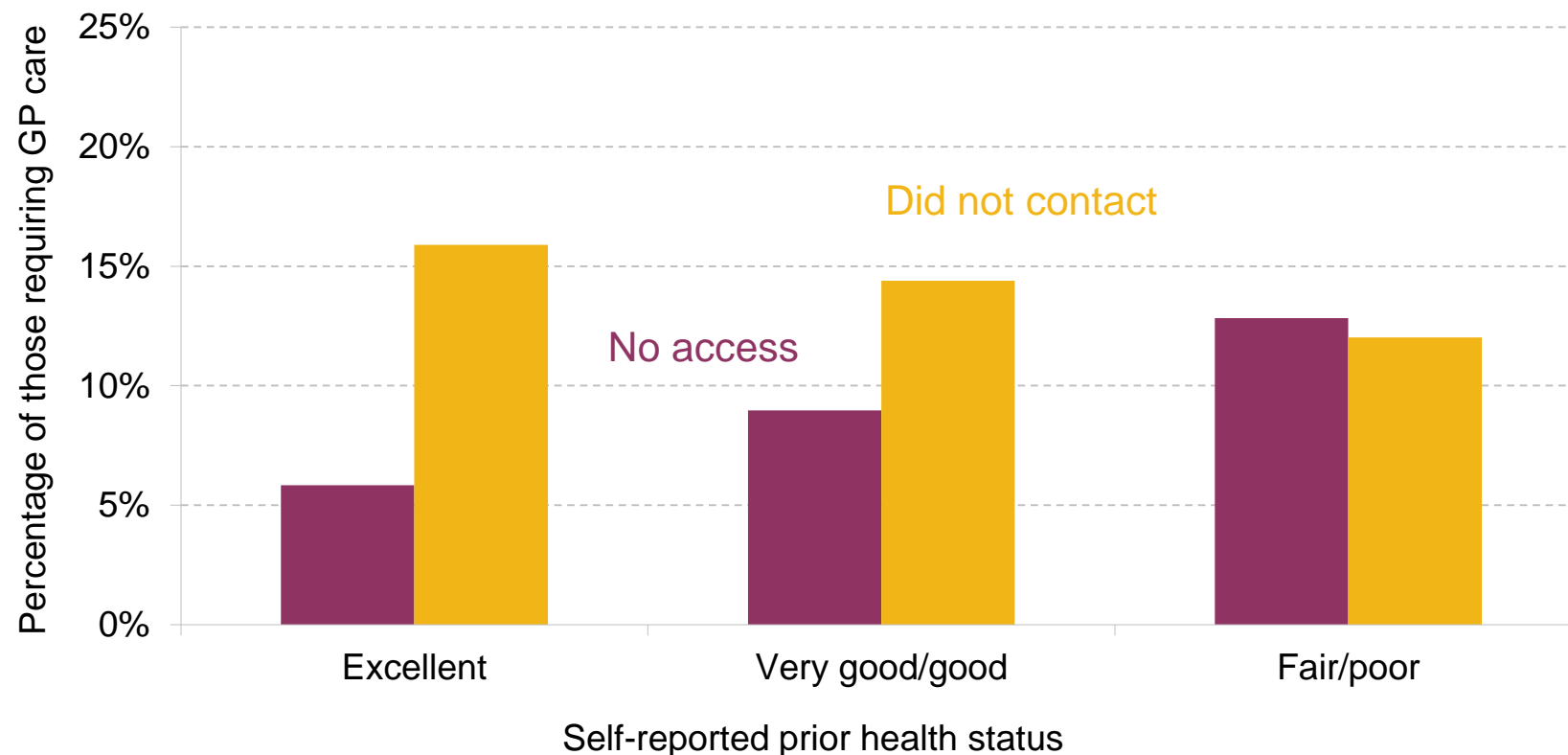
Hospital cancellations were more common in more deprived areas



Source: Figure 2.2, “COVID-19 and disruptions to the health and social care of older people in England”

Disruptions to GP access

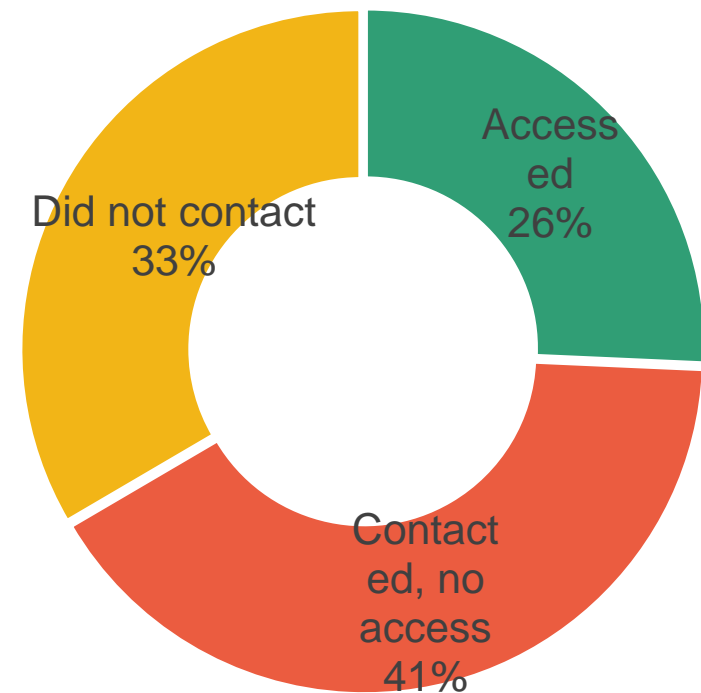
Healthier people more likely to be able to speak to their GP when needed



Source: Figure 3.3, "COVID-19 and disruptions to the health and social care of older people in England"

Severe disruptions to community health and social care

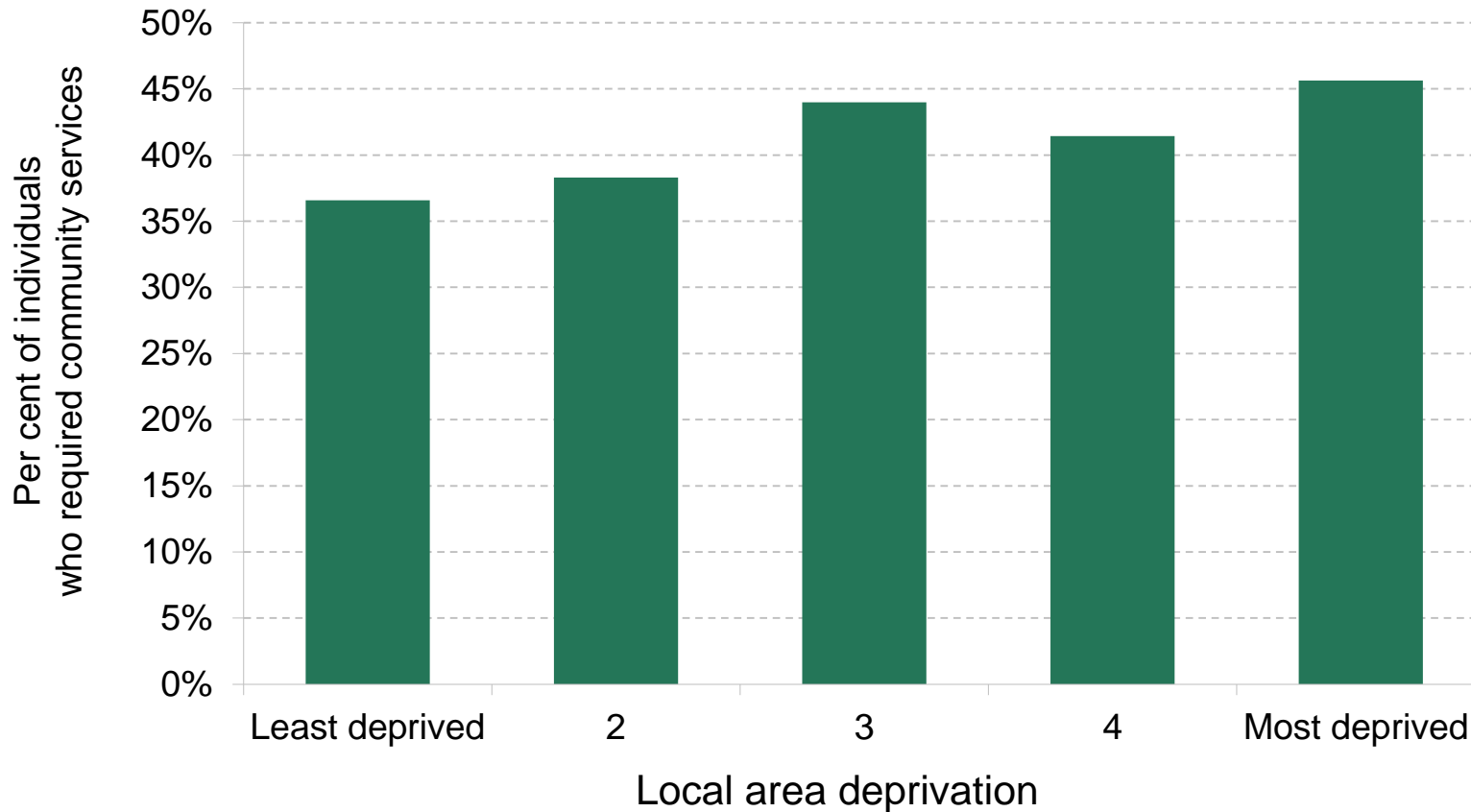
- Disruptions to community care from a dentist, podiatrist, nurse, counsellor or personal care worker affected more people than disruptions to hospital or GP care
- Only a quarter of those who required community care during the period received it
- Almost half of those who missed care did not contact services in the first place



Source: Figure 3.1, "COVID-19 and disruptions to the health and social care of older people in England"

Unequal access to community care

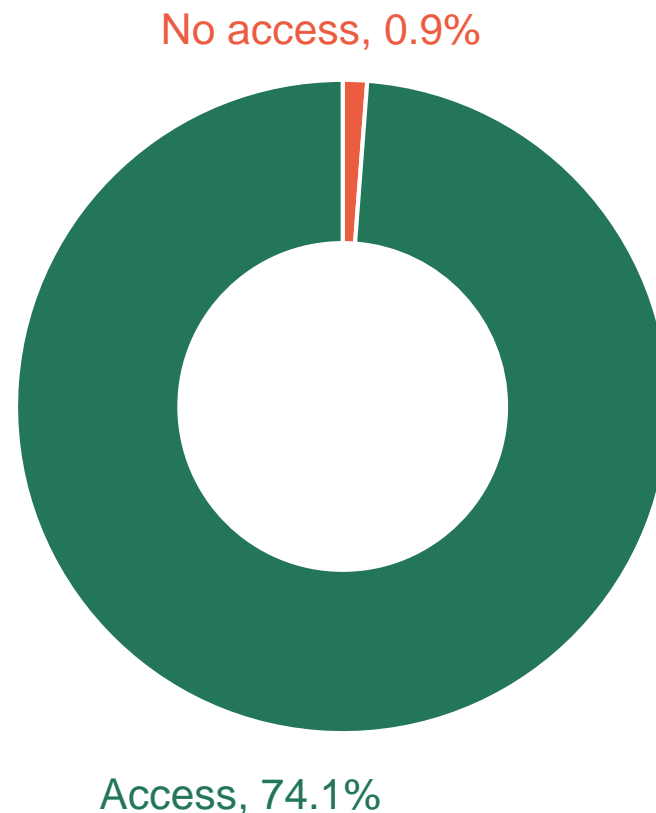
Share unable to access community services after contacting them highest in most deprived areas.



Source: Figure 3.5, “COVID-19 and disruptions to the health and social care of older people in England”

Prescription medication

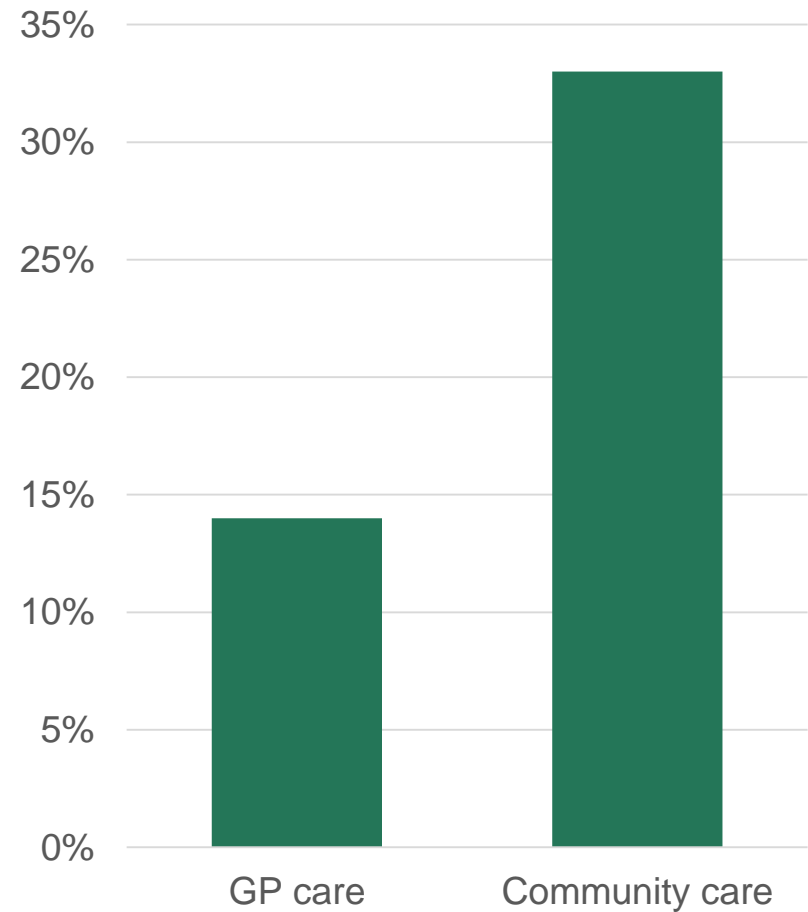
- Almost three-quarters (74.1%) of the over-50 population reported that they required regular medication.
- Among those who required regular medication, almost everyone reported that they had been able to maintain access to this medication



Source: Figure 3.1, "COVID-19 and disruptions to the health and social care of older people in England"

Big changes to care-seeking behaviour

- A significant proportion of patients with care needs did not actively seek help during the early stages of the pandemic:
 - 14% of those requiring GP care
 - a third of those needing community care services



Source: Figure 3.1, "COVID-19 and disruptions to the health and social care of older people in England"

Conclusions

Widespread disruptions of health care for the over-50 population in England in spring 2020

- Hospital services, GP care and community services all affected
- The burden has disproportionately fallen on those who were already disadvantaged and in poorer health

The future does not look good

- Waiting lists for hospital care at their longest since records began + staff shortages already exist
- Need to deal with the backlog to avoid entrenchment of existing health inequalities
- Increase innovation in ways of delivering services
- Focus resources on more deprived areas and those in poorer health

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