

Report on responses to the Day Time activities for older people (including Day Centres)

Consultation

Autumn 2016



Date of report: December 6th, 2016

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Introduction

The report that follows aims to honestly reflect the comments, views, claims and opinion heard by the council during the consultation on the proposals on the future of daytime activities for older people in Powys. The consultation subject matter was, as anticipated, a matter of significant concern to local communities as can be seen from the number of people who became involved in the process.

Report format:

Section 1: Process

Section 2: Summary of feedback

Section 3: Feedback from meetings, emails, written correspondence and social media

Section 4. Feedback from the questionnaire

Section 1: Process

During the autumn of 2016, Powys County Council consulted upon proposals regarding the future of Daytime Activities for older people, including the subject of day centres. This followed on from a period of pre-consultation (our 'Listen and Learn' work) in the spring of 2016.

The consultation period ran from August 17th, 2016 until November 9th, 2016. Working with guidance from the Consultation Institute, the council developed a process which aimed to give people a variety of ways of getting involved:

- face to face meetings;
- paper and online questionnaires;
- an invitation to comment via the council's social media presences
- an invitation to send in correspondence via post or email;
- an invitation to send in petitions.

During the consultation period, officers held 23 meetings with day centre users, their carers and family members, county councillors, day centre staff, day centre managers and the independent/voluntary sector.

In addition, the portfolio holder and officers attended three public meetings which were organised by others - in Brecon, Llanidloes and Newtown.

A questionnaire was also produced which was designed to allow any interested parties to take part in the consultation project. Paper copies were produced and made available at the council's libraries and main offices and also sent to the day centres themselves. In addition, an online version of the questionnaire was available on the council's website at www.powys.gov.uk/haveyoursay.

The survey was also advertised to Citizens' Panel members.

A dedicated page on council's website also held copies of the consultation document as well as a number of supporting documents, including audio and easy read versions of the consultation document.

A total of 363 questionnaires were completed (either in paper form or via an online survey), and we estimate that in the region of 800 people have taken part in the various meetings.

In addition, the council received 254 items of correspondence via email and post from individuals, organisations, AMs, MPs and county councillors.

And petitions were handed into the council calling for the day centres to be kept open as follows:

- 2,000 people from the Llanidloes area;
- 2,424 from the Presteigne and Knighton areas;
- 422 from the Brecon area (organised by the Labour Party).
- 23 from the Ystradgynlais area.

In addition a petition with 3,134 signatures was handed in from the Newtown community prior to the formal consultation period and a 1,000 signature countywide petition was handed in after the consultation period had closed.

The consultation was promoted via:

- news releases sent to the local media;
- social media postings (Facebook and Twitter);
- direct correspondence (including invitations to attend the focus groups);
- posters in day centres inviting carers/service users to attend.

Section 2: Summary of feedback

There was overwhelming support from the public for the day centres to continue as they are – effectively, to support Option 1 (Not close any of the existing services and to continue 'as is'.)

The photograph on the front of this report sums up the general mood of the feedback and many simply responded 'Don't close the day centres.' However, meeting after meeting saw day centre users, carers and family members raise the following issues:

- The important role day centres play in giving elderly people an opportunity to socialise with their friends and peers with many saying that the day centres are the only time they see people other than family. This was particularly raised as an issue for people living in more rural areas.

The following quote from a family member I believe sums up this issue:

“Imagine if you were a 88 year old and were picked up and taken for lunch for a chance to socialise and this was taken away because it had to be stopped for council cuts. Devastating. Perhaps another nail in their coffin.”

(un-paid carer for service user)

“I would miss this place, I would. I’d be stuck in my room all day. I’d be a prisoner in my own room, I really would.”

(day centre user)

- The respite for family/(unpaid) carers which they receive on the occasions when the family member attends the day centre. For many, this was a matter of giving the carer an opportunity to have free time; to do shopping, to do housework or to simply relax.

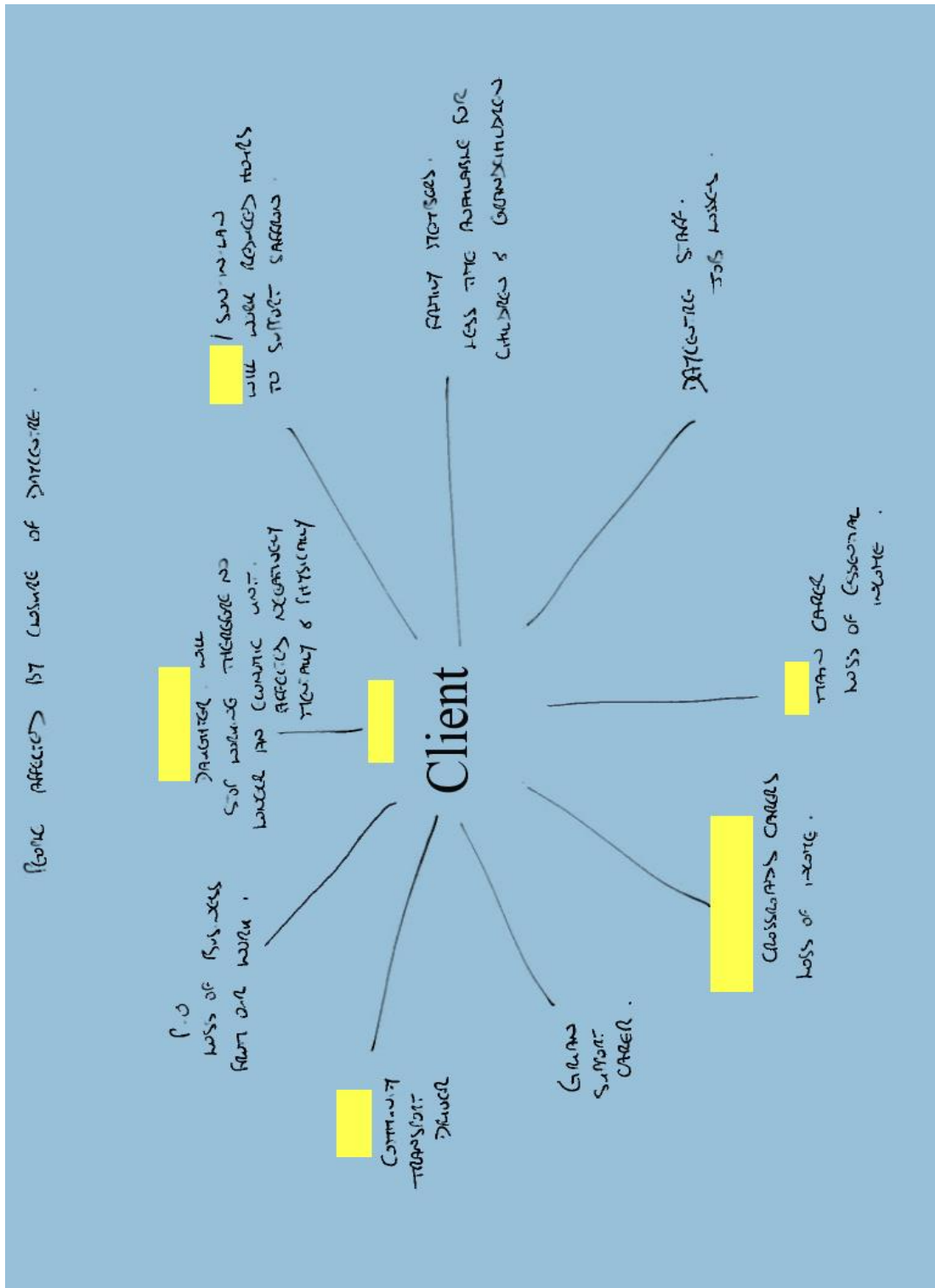
- *“My husband has had MS for 32 years. I have five hours when he comes here once a week. If he can’t come here he will have to go in a home and that will be more expensive..... I’m 74 now, how much longer can I go on? I’m at the end of my tether, I just can’t cope.”*

(family member of service user)

- For others, they said that this respite allowed the carer to continue in employment. A number of people stated that they would have to give up their jobs if the day centres closed.

To stress the point, one family member handed in the chart (on the next page) which details how a network of individuals (and organisations) were involved in supporting a service user and the implications for those if that respite was removed.

(The individuals’ names have been blocked out in this version to preserve the client’s anonymity but the linkages and effects are clear.)



- There were a number of points raised about proposals for alternative services (such as the development of befriending across the county and the increased use of volunteers and paid home care support). Many felt that a volunteer based provision was not sustainable in that there were not enough volunteers

available (and that they could not provide the same levels of professionalism/skills as the day centre staff).

In addition, many felt that, as the council would have to make provision for any client's identified need (under the council's eligibility criteria), that the 'cost shunt' to other parts of the budget through the day centres closure would eradicate any potential savings or could cost the council more. Some people were of the opinion that the alternative provision costings were not clear.

- Many people highlighted that a day centre provided other services as well as the (important) chance to socialise. Some of the day centres provide bathing opportunities for clients, with many clients saying that they were not able to bathe safely at home. In addition, day centres provide hot meals for their clients. In some day centres, community nurses and GPs (as well as other healthcare specialists such as chiropodists) make regular visits. An example of the value of this was in offering flu jabs to clients on a group basis – many clients could receive this in one sitting without a need to visit a GP surgery.
- Non-medical services (such as hairdressing) are also offered in some day centres, however a number of people felt that other services could be introduced into the existing buildings (including making them a base for befriending) and that more use could be made of the buildings, in developing a wider 'hub' of services.
- The knock-on effects on other services, particularly on the NHS. Many people said that the centres play a positive role in slowing down clients' health deterioration – both mental and physical. The closure, respondents said, would mean increased costs for the health service. On a similar point, many felt that day centres allowed clients to live at home for longer and could delay the need for residential care.
- A number of concerns were raised about the proposed alternatives being suitable for more frail and vulnerable clients, particularly those with dementia, that currently use day centres. Staff reported that in recent years they were seeing clients with much higher needs than in the past.
- Complaints about the Westwood day centre contract in Welshpool. Many people felt that the rest of the county was being treated unfairly with Welshpool receiving such a large proportion of the proposed budget.
- The council was also accused of having wasted money in the past and also having too many managers and too many councillors (or that the latter's allowances were too high).
- Staff and volunteers who worked at the day centres were widely praised for their dedication and skills.

- There were also some challenge about the consultation process itself, with many people feeling that the questionnaire was too difficult to complete, particularly for the frail and elderly.

The bullet points listed above illustrate the main issues raised although a number of other themes emerged. These are discussed in more detail in Sections 3 and 4.

Section 3: Feedback from emails, written correspondence, meetings and social media

Written correspondence and emails

As stated earlier, the council received 254 items of correspondence regarding the consultation from individuals, organisations and politicians.

The following themes were raised: (Those issues raised most frequently are detailed first).

- General support for the retention of the day centres
- The importance of respite (in the day centre) for family members and unpaid carers, including helping people access or maintain employment;
- The important opportunities for socialisation that the day centres provide
- The 'added value' of the other services provided within day centres (e.g. bathing opportunities/facilities, meals and medical visits)
- That the alternatives would (or could) cost more
- Praise for day centre staff and volunteers
- The day centre's very presence prevents/slows down health deterioration (physical and mental)
- The potential cost shunt to other services, particularly the NHS
- Day centres can allow clients to stay in their homes for longer and avoid more expensive residential care
- Information on the costings for the alternatives was not clear or insufficient
- The Welshpool day centre contract was unfair on residents in other parts of the county
- There are not enough volunteers available to support the alternative proposals
- Alternatives could not cater for particularly frail day centre users
- Day centres could provide additional services
- Criticism of the way society treats its older people
- Day centres could explore other avenues of income
- The actual alternatives have not been explained properly
- General complaints about the consultation process
- The questionnaire was too difficult to answer (particularly for more frail people)

- The alternatives may not meet the requirements of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014
- PCC has wasted money in the past;
- Any alternatives must be introduced before closures
- It is not essential for PCC to run the day centres
- Proposing alternative arrangements/ideas
- Once the buildings have gone, they are gone forever
- Closure of the day centres could undermine other community services (e.g. Dial-a-ride)
- Volunteers would not have the skills of trained staff (also concern about safeguarding)
- A belief that the community will need to become more involved in delivering social care in the future
- Reduce the number of county councillors or their allowances
- Central government (Westminster and/or Cardiff Bay) is to blame for cuts to funding
- Concerns over the future of day centre staff
- People's needs alter as they age
- PCC is already running down day centres by not referring any new clients
- The benefits to the volunteer of volunteering
- Increase Council Tax
- Increase charges to clients
- Allow self referrals (or from others – not just from Social Services)
- The cost of the consultation
- The high cost of PCC-run day centres compared to those which are not run by the council
- PCC has too many 'bosses'
- Refer to local knowledge when tendering/outsourcing services
- The inequality of provision across the county
- Day centres help with community cohesion in urban areas
- Clients should pay for transport (if able to)
- Transport costs are too high
- Neighbouring councils should contribute to costs where centres are near the borders
- Current costs to users are too high
- Increase the use of Direct Payments

Meetings

Council representatives took part in 26 meetings during the consultation period, which were attended by an estimated 800 people.

The following themes were raised: (Again, those issues raised most frequently are detailed first).

- General support for the retention of the day centres
- The important opportunities for socialisation that the day centres provide
- The importance of respite (in the day centre) for family members and unpaid carers, including helping people access or maintain employment;
- The 'added value' of the other services provided within day centres (e.g. bathing opportunities/facilities, meals and medical visits)
- Alternatives could not cater for particularly frail day centre users
- There are not enough volunteers available to support the alternative proposals
- That the alternatives would (or could) cost more
- PCC has wasted money in the past
- Day centres could provide additional services
- The Welshpool day centre contract was unfair on residents in other parts of the county
- Praise for day centre staff
- The potential cost shunt to other services, particularly the NHS
- Increase Council Tax
- Criticism of the way society treats its older people
- Central government (Westminster and/or Cardiff Bay) is to blame for cuts to funding
- The day centre's very presence prevents/slows down health deterioration (physical and mental)
- General complaints about the consultation process
- Increase charges to clients
- Concerns over the future of day centre staff
- PCC is already running down day centres by not referring any new clients
- Other services should have their funding cut and charges be increased elsewhere
- Volunteers would not have the skills of trained staff (also concern about safeguarding)
- The alternatives may not meet the requirements of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014
- The questionnaire was too difficult to answer (particularly for more frail people)
- Information on the costings for the alternatives was not clear or insufficient
- It is not essential for PCC to run the day centres
- Day centres can allow clients to stay in their homes for longer and avoid more expensive residential care
- People's needs alter as they age
- The actual alternatives have not been explained properly
- PCC has too many 'bosses'
- Closure of the day centres could undermine other community services (e.g. Dial-a-ride)
- Proposing alternative arrangements/ideas
- Allow self-referrals (or from others – not just from Social Services)

- Day centres could explore other avenues of income
- The benefits to the volunteer of volunteering
- The cost of the consultation
- Reduce the number of county councillors or their allowances
- Any alternatives must be introduced before closures
- Negative comments about the current day centres
- Current costs to users are too high
- Increase the use of Direct Payments
- A belief that the community will need to become more involved in delivering social care in the future

Social media

There were no social media postings on the County Council's Facebook page but I have been able to find some discussion of the subject on other pages. Most of the discussion was in favour of retaining the day centres or criticised the questionnaire or focussed on the decision to exclude councillors from the focus groups with service users and their family members/carers.

References and signposts to the various petitions were also circulated via social media.

A video was also made about the consultation by PVPTV News, in relation to Maesywennol Day Centre in Llanidloes and this can be found on Youtube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pnOv6CrqGKE>.

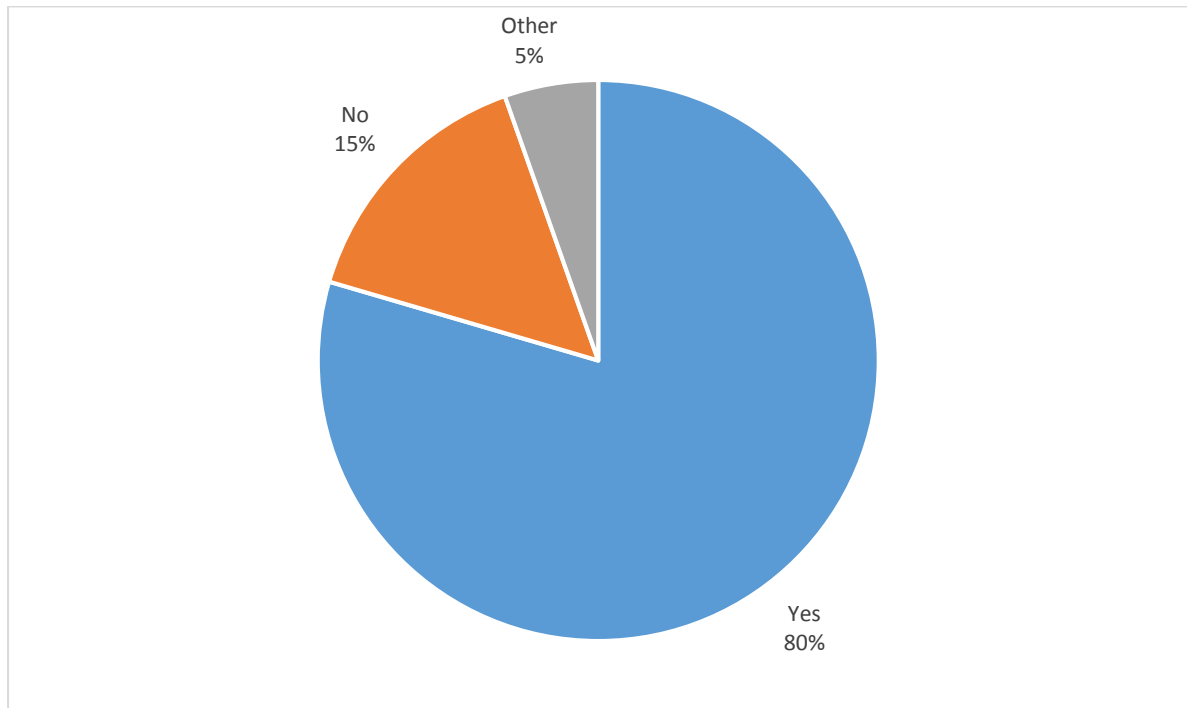
Section 4

The responses to the survey – online and on paper – were as follows:

Three hundred and sixty three people responded via the survey. Not all respondents answered every question and a number of comments were received criticising its length and complexity.

Questions relating to Option 1

Q1. If you are 50 years or over do you see yourselves making use of an Older Persons Day Centre service in the future if you are not already doing so?



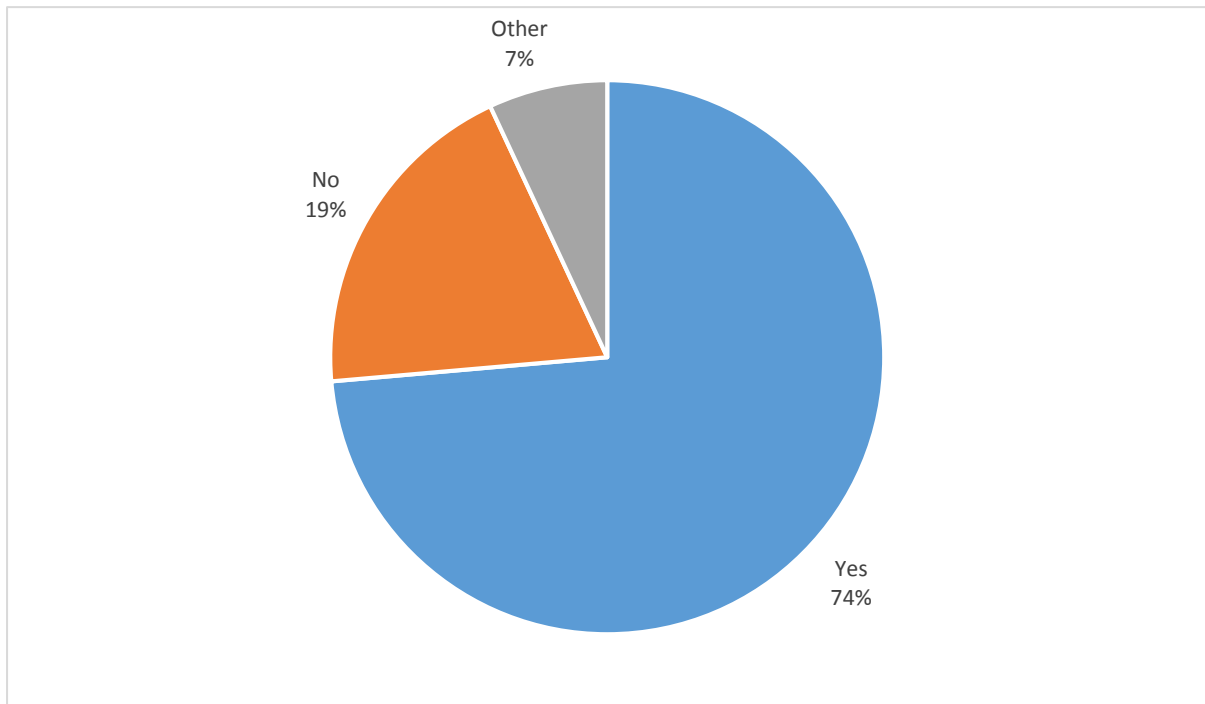
(Base = 259)

Other responses were mainly saying 'Possibly'.

Q1a In terms of your last answer, why do you feel this way? (Optional)

Most responses related to the benefits of socialisation offered by the day centres, general support for their retention and a number of people noting that future services would require more community involvement.

Q2. If you are under 50 years do you see yourselves making use of an Older Persons Day Centre service in the future?



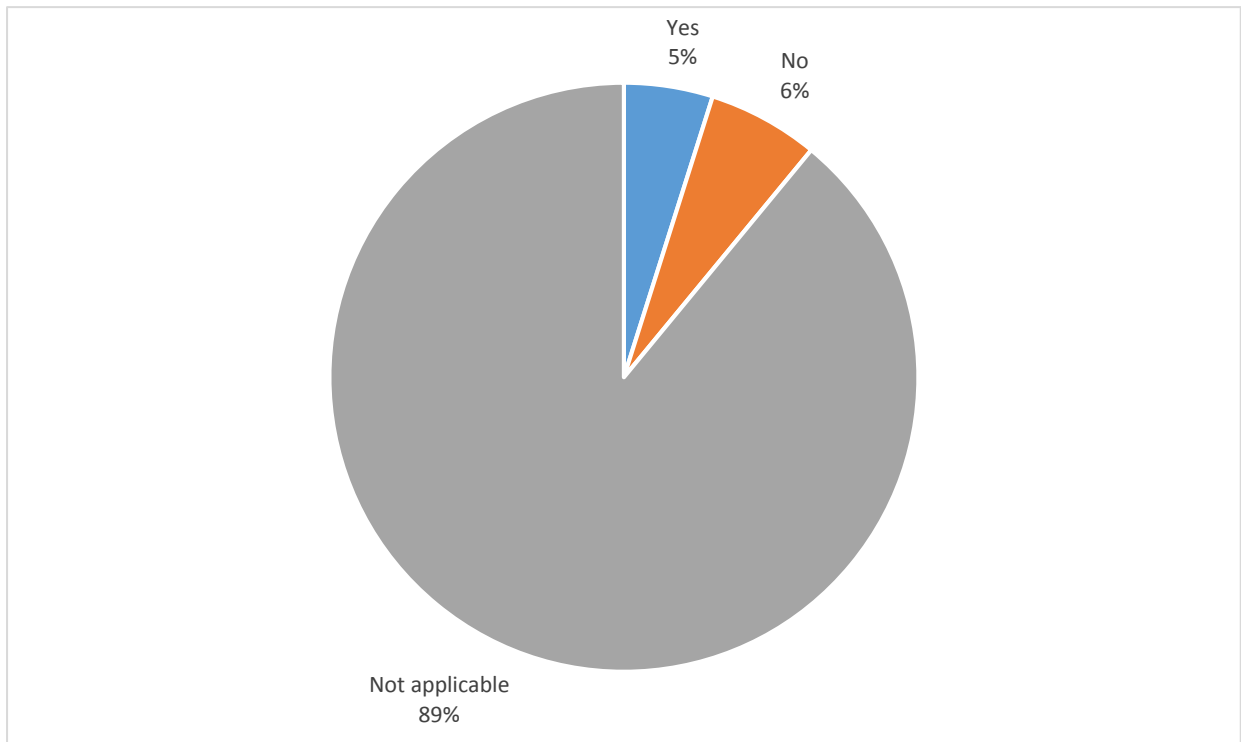
(Base: 72)

Other responses were again, mainly saying 'Possibly'.

Q2a In terms of your last answer, why do you feel this way? (Optional)

Again, alongside general support for the current day centres, respondents commented on the benefits of the socialisation opportunities.

Q3. If you are over 85 and currently not using a day centre (and there was one in your area) would you use one and be willing to pay your assessed contribution?

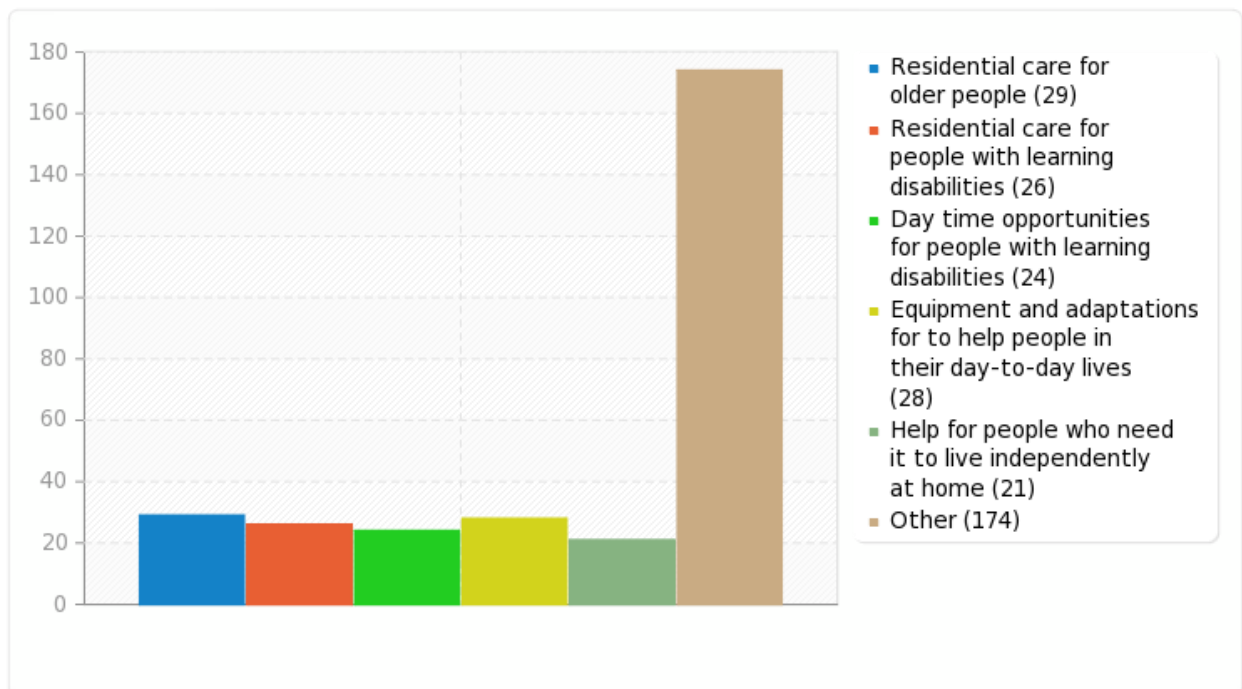


(Base= 246)

Q3a In terms of your last answer, why do you feel this way? (Optional)

The most common response was that current costs are high.

Q4. If we were to maintain the service as it currently is what other Adult Social Care Services should we reduce spending on to pay for it?



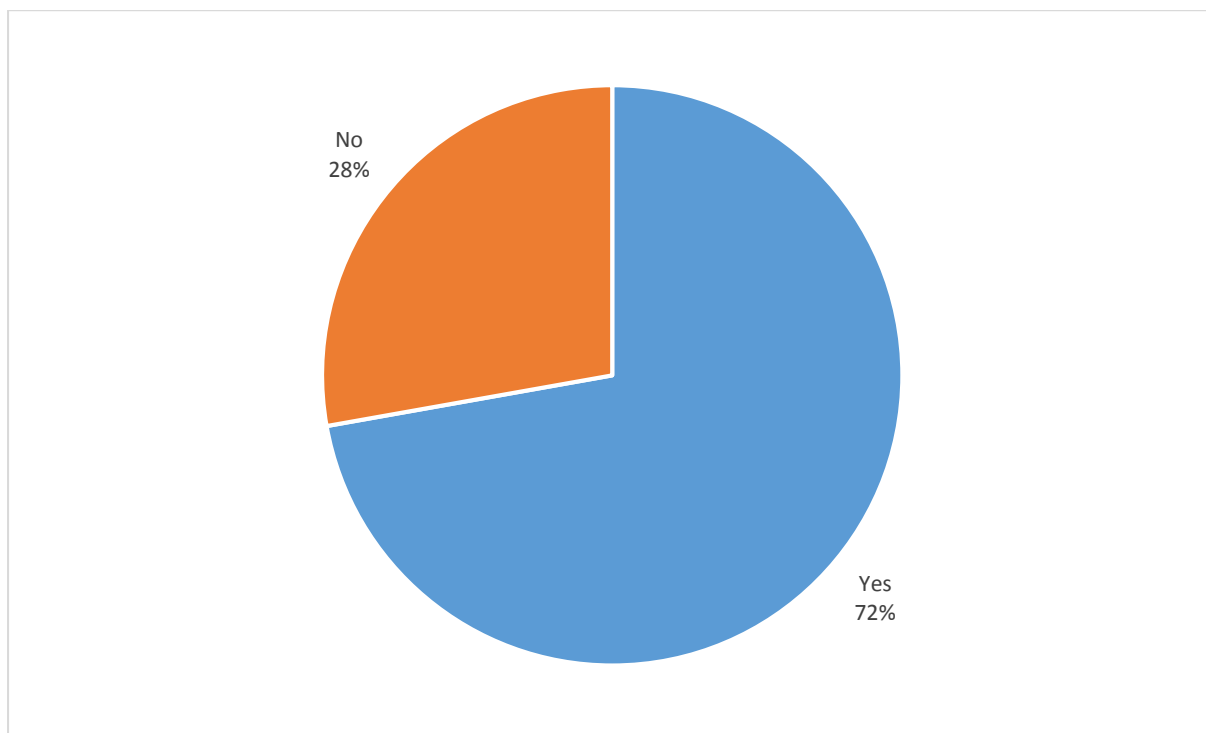
Other responses:

Most responded that none of the above should be touched or that it was an unfair question to ask.

Q4a In terms of your last answer, why do you feel this way? (Optional)

Many respondents felt that all of the above services should be maintained and, again, that it was unfair question to ask. Some felt that the cuts should be made outside social care whilst a common theme was the suggestion that the council should cut back on senior managers/staff within the council.

Q5. Would you be prepared to pay more Council Tax to fund this option?



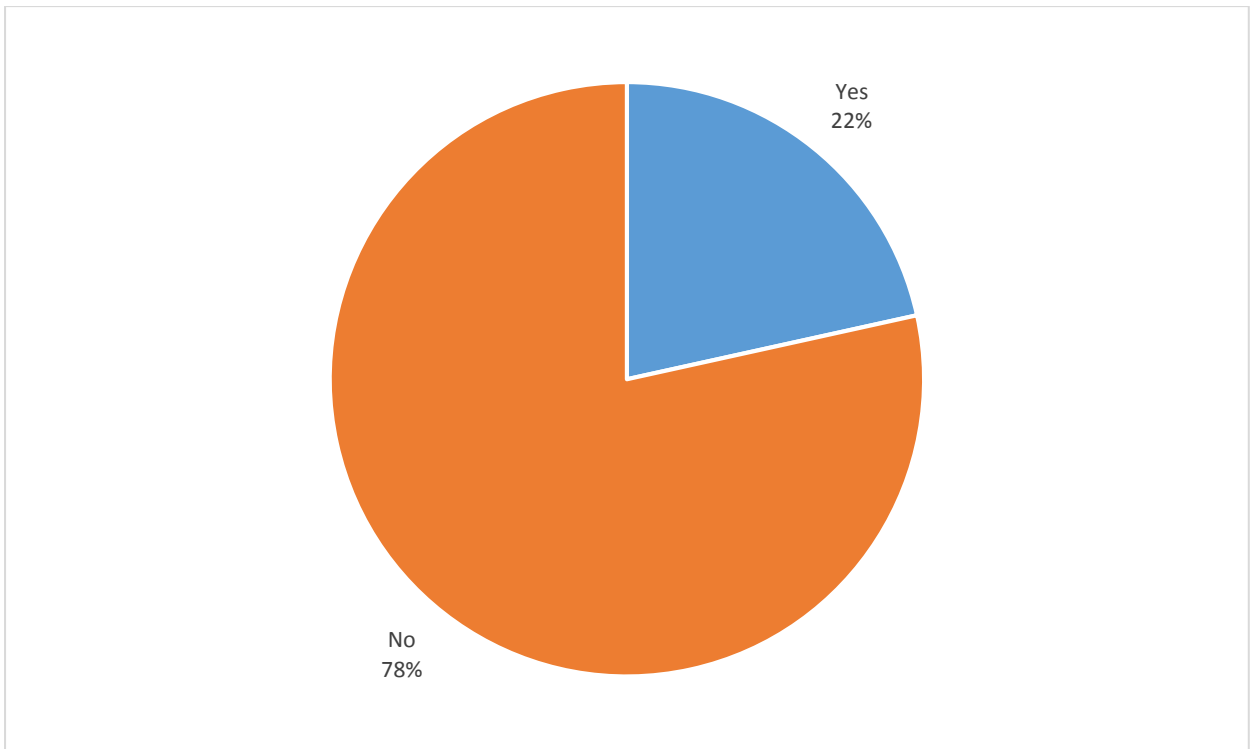
Base = 313

Q5a In terms of your last answer, why do you feel this way? (Optional)

There was support for paying more Council Tax but this was often accompanied by a caveat that the money should be ring-fenced to day centre provision. However a number expressed the opinion that, because they felt it was an important service, that they would be prepared to pay more.

Again, there were references to cutting senior management costs and references to the council having wasted money in the past. And there were a number of comments that Council Tax had risen in recent years whilst services had diminished.

Q6. Do you think it is fair and equitable that some parts of Powys do not have local access to these types of service (ie. day centres)?

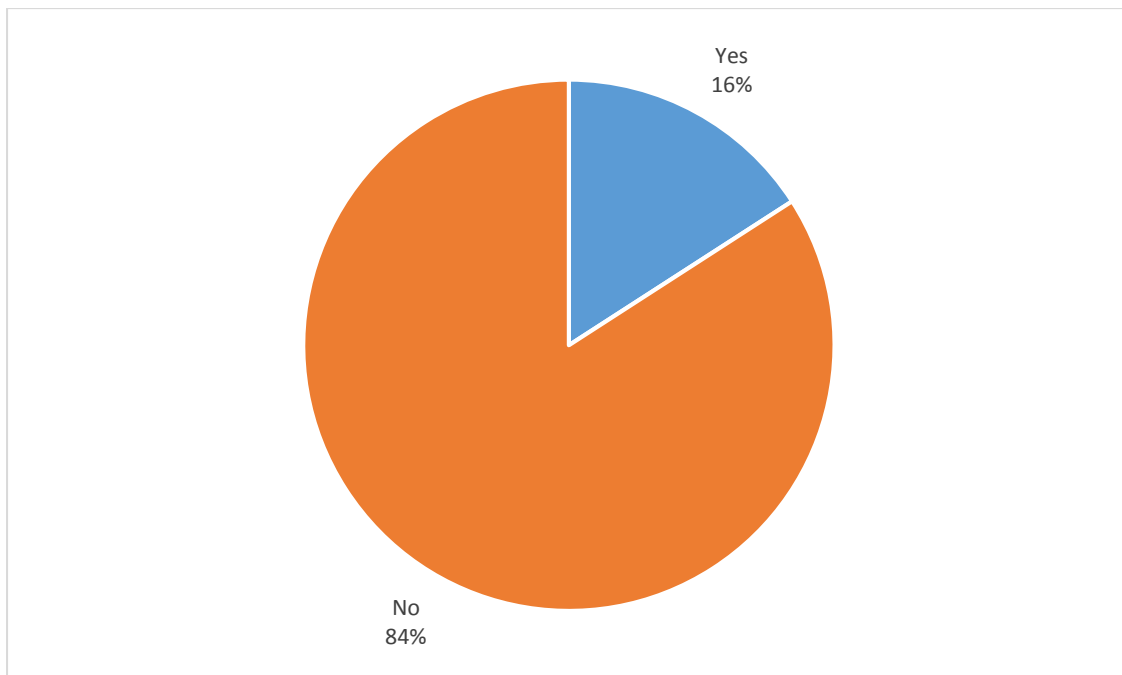


(Base = 311)

Q6a In terms of your last answer, why do you feel this way? (Optional)

The comments received to this mainly reinforced the response to Q6, where people felt that provision should be available across the county, with some making reference to a reasonable travelling distance. A number of people remarked upon the sparse rural nature of the county and the limited public transport provision in some areas.

Q7. If the service was to be run by a private or voluntary provider do you think individuals would pay an average of £40 per day for the service (the average amount it currently costs the council per person per day)?

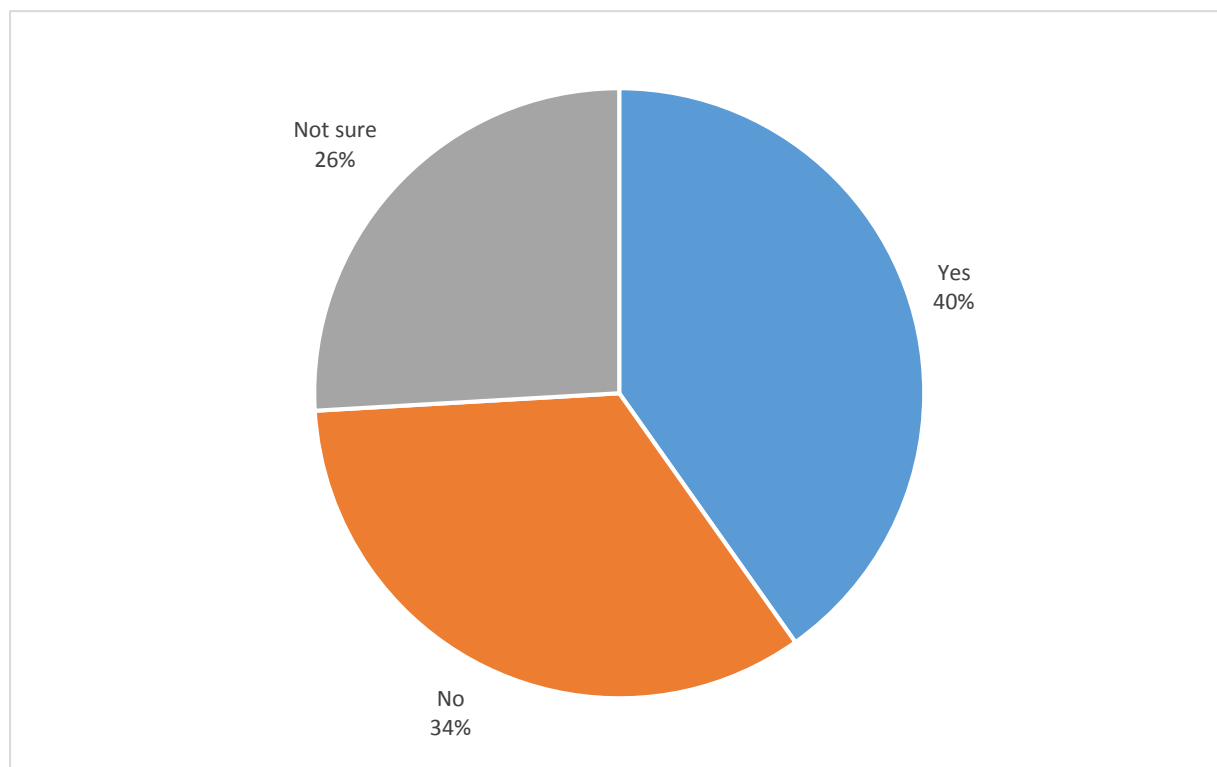


(Base = 277)

Q7a In terms of your last answer, why do you feel this way? (Optional)

The main response to this question was that the costs referred to were unaffordable or too high.

Q8. Do you think day-time activities for older people have to be delivered by Powys County Council?



(Base = 301)

Q8a In terms of your last answer, why do you feel this way? (Optional)

The most frequent comments were that it is the council's responsibility to deliver the service and that any private sector involvement would not be cheaper as they would be looking to make profits.

Q9. Is there anything, either in support or against this option that you do not think we have taken into consideration (and that which you have not already mentioned in earlier answers)?

Some suggestions were received about delivering services in another way in response to this, for example developing more befriending schemes or having luncheon clubs in local hotels/pub or opening up 'closed' hospital wards (to use for daytime activities). There were also some references to lobbying central government for more money. However, as in previous questions, many people were calling for the day centres to continue 'as is'.

Q9a. If this option was chosen how could we minimise any negative impacts and how could we further strengthen the benefits

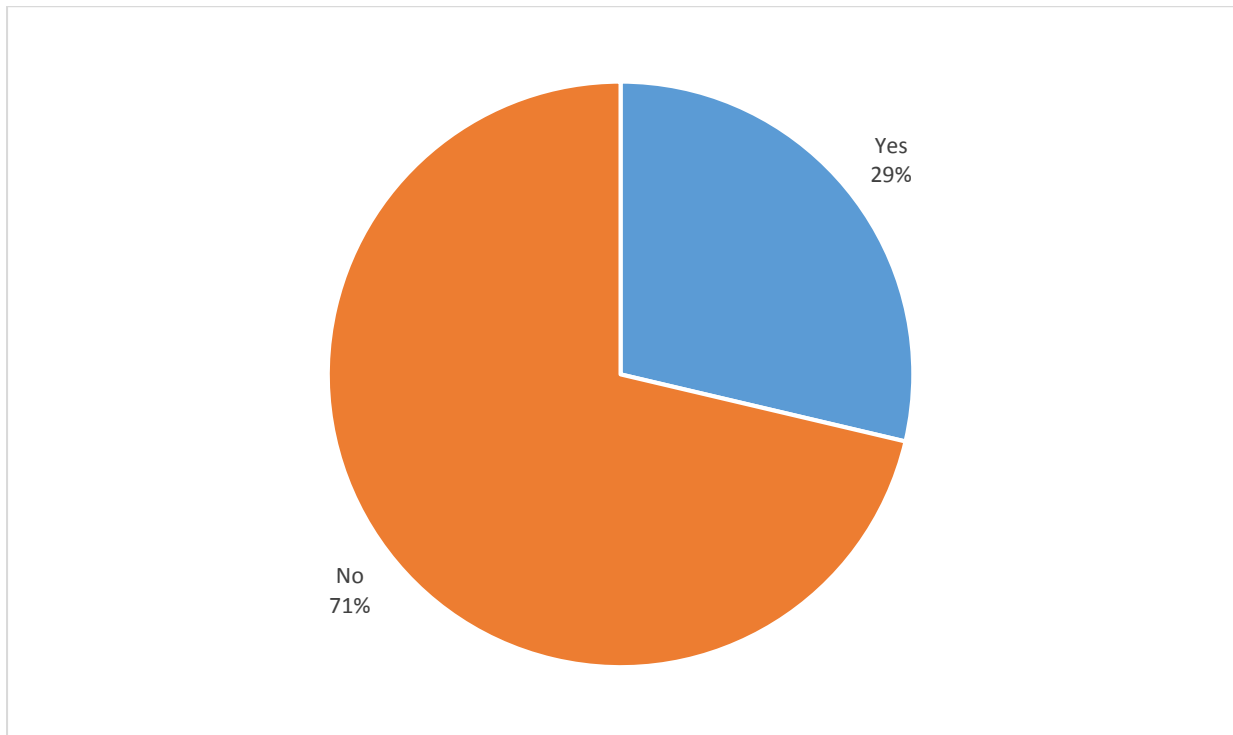
Respondents generally felt that the centres should be maintained, and developed within the existing facilities – building on the concept of developing them into community hubs. Again there were references to the council having too many senior managers and that the council has wasted money in the past.

Q10. Do you feel that this option has an impact on any particular part of the community in terms of the Equality Act 2010 If so, in what way?

Respondents felt that it would discriminate on the grounds of age and disability.

Questions relating to Option 2

Q11 As long as assessed clients are found some alternative types of service that meet their identified needs (e.g. a client who is assessed as requiring personal care could have this delivered through domiciliary care) would it make this option more acceptable?

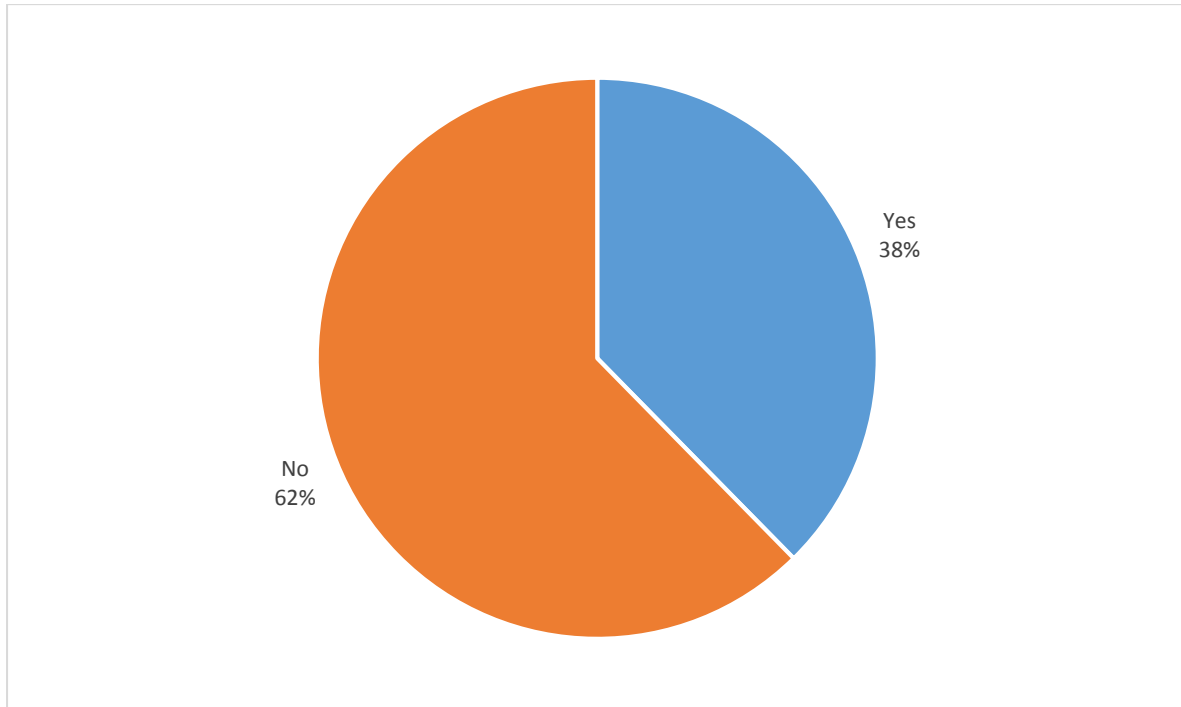


(Base = 258)

Q11a In terms of your last answer, why do you feel this way? (Optional)

Respondents felt that the alternatives were likely to cost more and that they would not offer the benefits of socialisation which the day centres do. There were also references to the council having a poor reputation for managing major service change (in relation to the changes to domiciliary care.)

Q12. One key aspect that clients value about the Older People’s Day Centres and other Day Time Activities is companionship – do you think there are other opportunities for older people to get companionship in the community without an expense to the council?

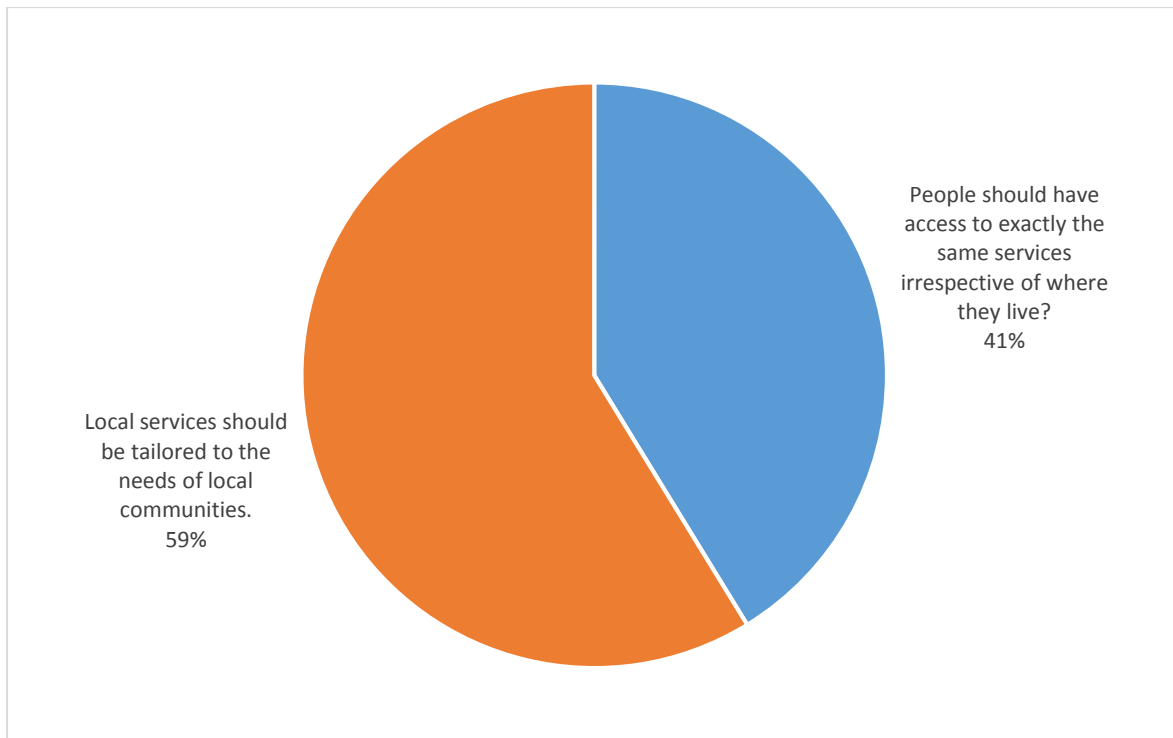


(Base = 263)

Q12a In terms of your last answer, why do you feel this way? (Optional)

A number of respondents felt that other opportunities are available, although they are not present in all communities. Transport was also raised as a barrier for many elderly people to make use of the alternatives already present. In addition, a number of people felt that funding (and voluntary support) for alternatives could not always be relied upon.

Q13. Do you think.....?:



(Base = 257)

Q13a In terms of your last answer, why do you feel this way? (Optional)

A number of people commented that they wanted to choose both options to Q13 while many others commented on the need for equity across the county. Others made reference to the need to respond to local need.

Q14. Is there anything, either in support or against this option that you do not think we have taken into consideration (and that which you have not already mentioned in earlier answers)?

Again, there were many references to the importance of socialisation (and added benefits, such as hot meal provision) for day centre users, the view that alternatives would cost more and, again, references to the council's poor reputation to major service change (in reference to domiciliary care).

Q14a. If this option was chosen how could we minimise any negative impacts and how could we further strengthen the benefits?

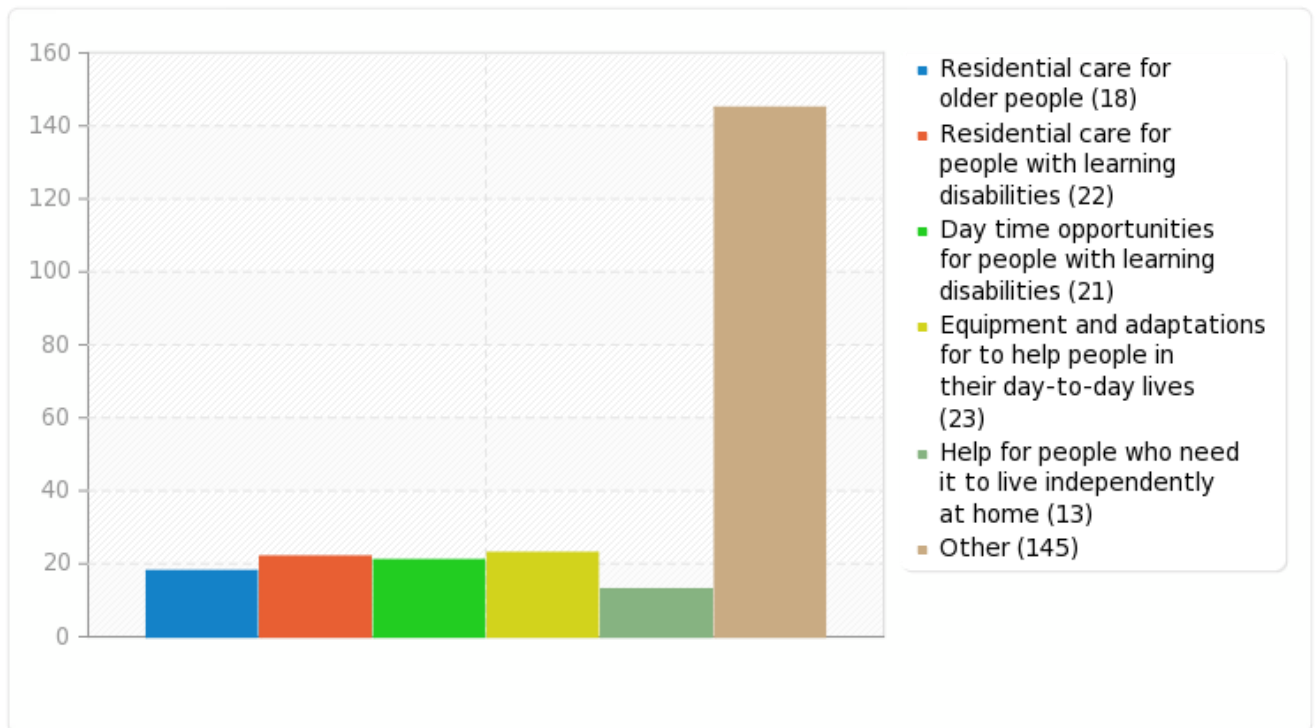
Generally, there was strong opposition to this option and the feeling was that the negative impacts could not be minimised.

Q15. Do you feel that this option has an impact on any particular part of the community in terms of the Equality Act 2010 If so, in what way?

Again, people felt that this option would discriminate against the elderly and the disabled.

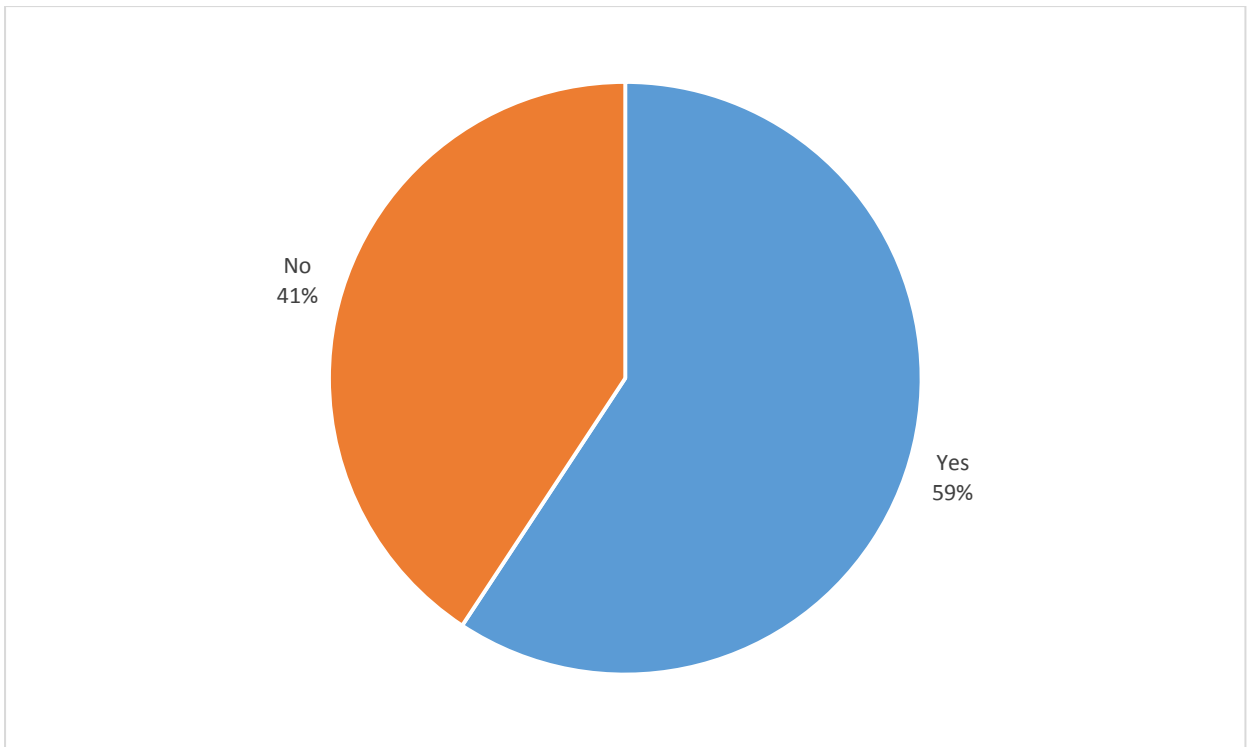
Questions relating to Option 3

Q16. What other Adult Social Care Services could we reduce our spending on to pay for a new community based support service?



The major response to this question from respondents was 'I don't know'. Others felt that the council had wasted money in general in the past or that other services (outside Social Care) should have their budgets cut.

Q17. Would you be prepared to pay more Council tax to fund this option?

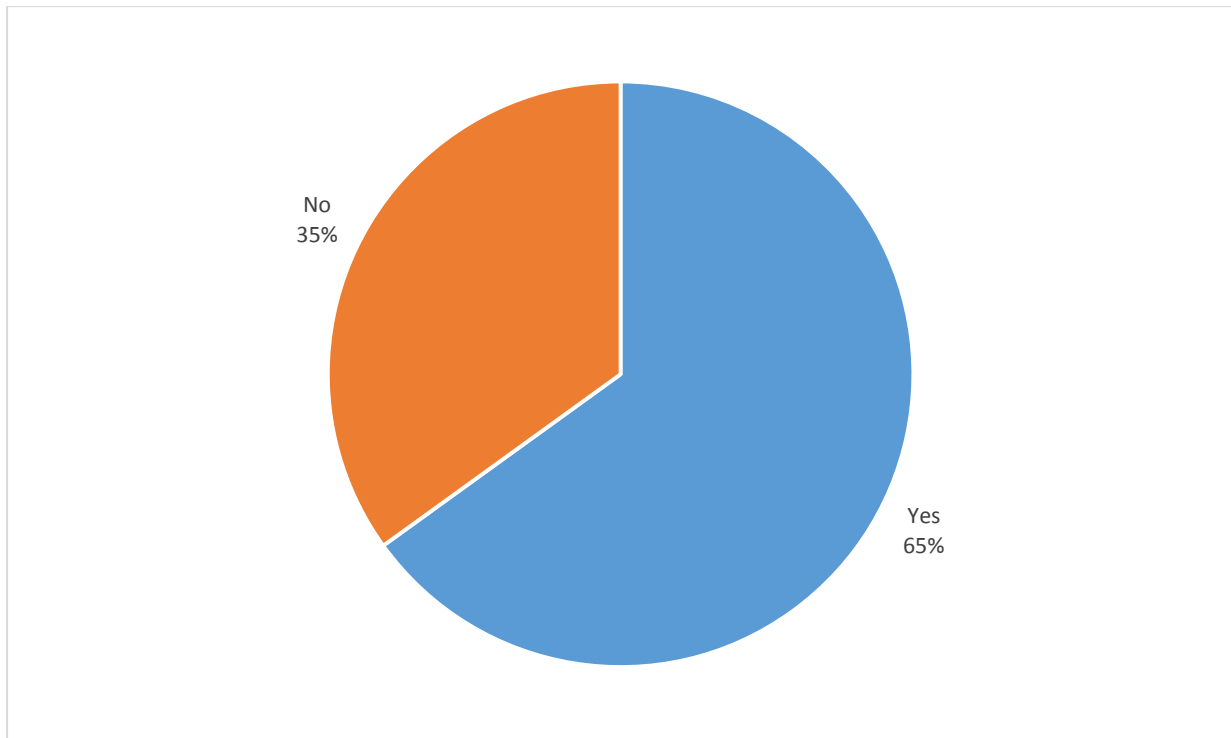


(Base = 194)

Q17a In terms of your last answer, why do you feel this way? (Optional)

Although there was majority support for paying more Council Tax to support Option 3, I have some reservations that the commentary supports this. I believe that many were saying that they would support paying more to keep the centres open rather than Option 3. Many people commented that this Option appeared to be more expensive than Option 1.

Q18. Do you recognise and support the need for communities to help themselves and to become more neighbourly and caring in order to compensate for reduced public service budgets?

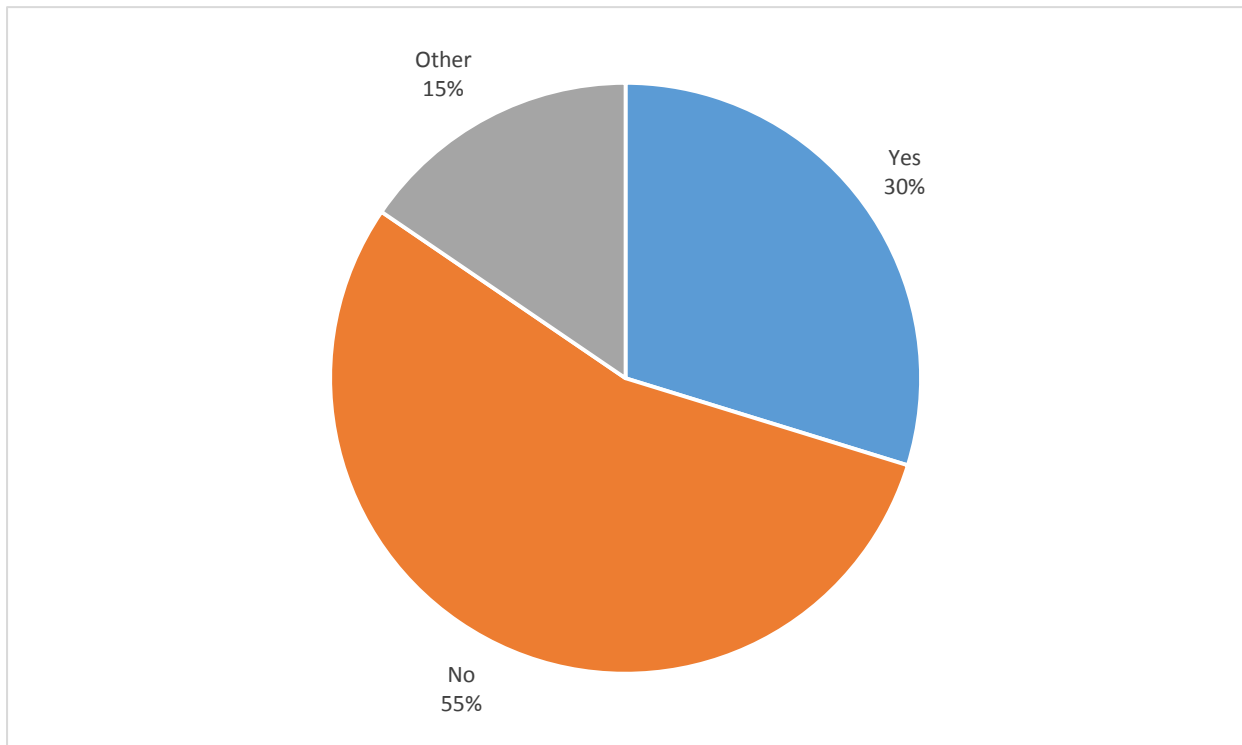


(Base = 226)

Q18a In terms of your last answer, why do you feel this way? (Optional)

Many people agreed with this but felt that replacing a professional service with voluntary input was unrealistic. Many references were made here to the increasing retirement age with a number of people describing this as a 'loaded' question. A number of people commented that there were already strong community support networks in some areas.

Q19. Do you think that the council should stop giving grants to organisations in order to establish an improved future model of service for early intervention and prevention?



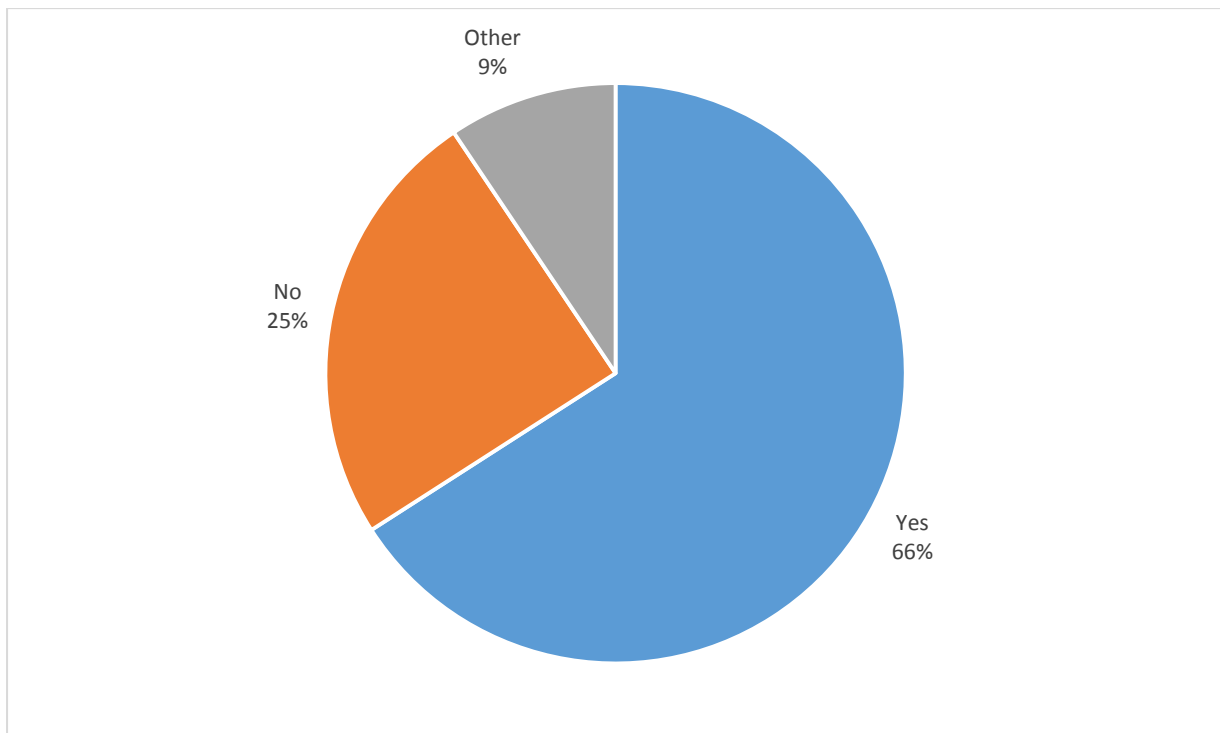
(Base: 168)

Other responses: The main response was that they did not feel informed enough to judge this.

Q19a In terms of your last answer, why do you feel this way? (Optional)

Again, people made reference to not having the information to make a decision on this matter. There were also a number of comments about the need to monitor grants closely. A number of people made reference to the council having wasted money in the past.

Q20. Do you think a 24/7 community based response service which older people could call on if they got into difficulty would make them feel safer and more secure in their own home?

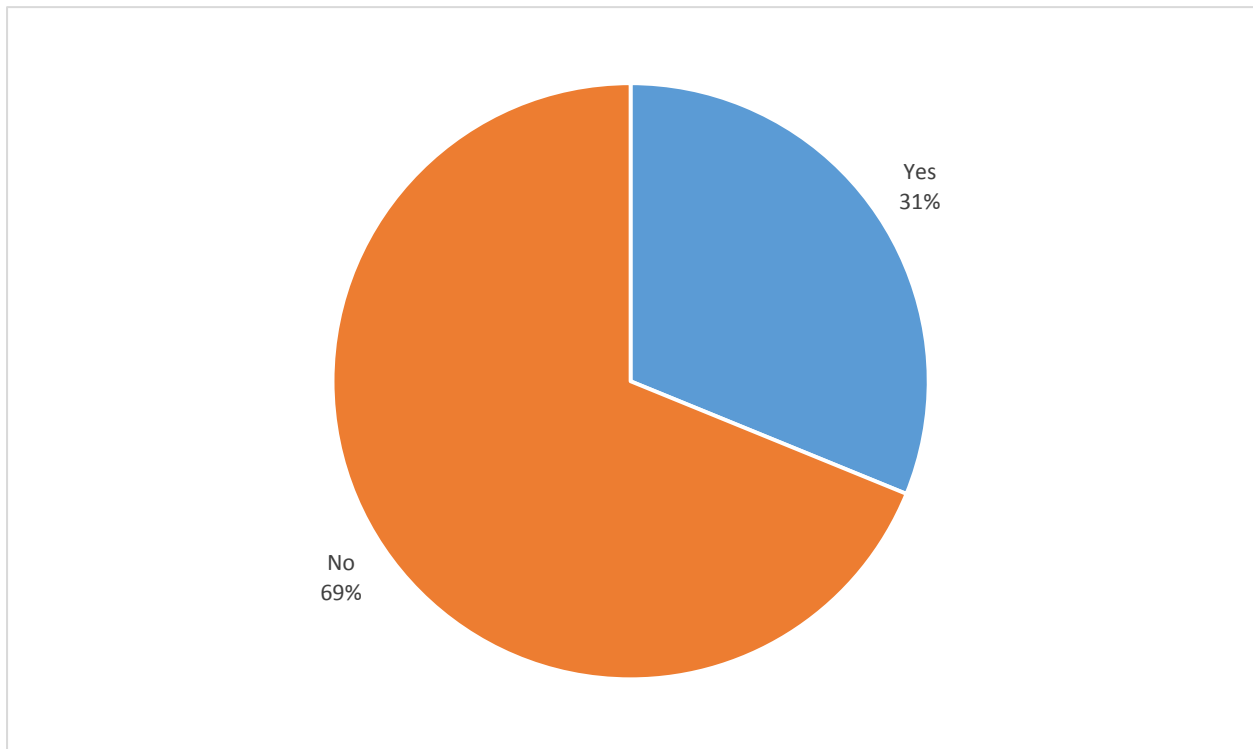


(Base = 223)

Q20a In terms of your last answer, why do you feel this way? (Optional)

A number of people felt that the alternatives are not practical although there was a lot of support for a 24/7 service and the principle of early intervention. Others feared that there was danger of duplicating existing services. Many people supported the principle but not as an alternative to day centres.

Q21. Do you think Day Centre buildings are the only place that Day Time Activities can be delivered?



(Base = 231)

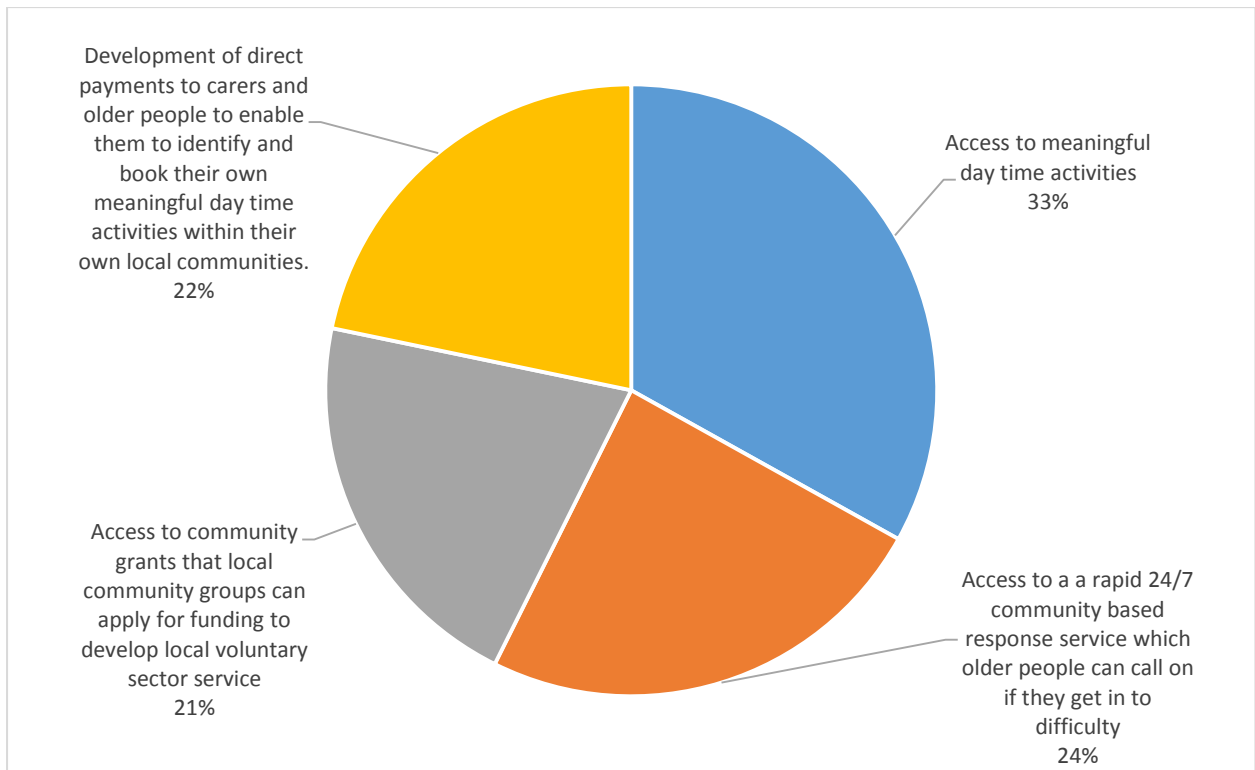
Q21a In terms of your last answer, why do you feel this way? (Optional)

While many people felt that services could be provided in other locations (e.g. community centres), many people felt that the existing buildings were best suited, with a number of services under one roof.

Q22. How do we help people prepare and plan for older age to help them remain independent and more able to meet their own needs? Please share your ideas.

A number of people stressed the importance of people 'keeping active' into old age as well as the importance of providing good information and education. Some people felt that there was a need for money to be spent in this area while others, again, stressed that this concept was not an alternative to day centre provision.

Q23. Please rank the following in order of priority to help older people live independently:



(The percentages relate to the 'score' given to each option, based on the ranking)

(I have to issue a health warning with the answer to this ranking question as we have recently been informed that our online surveying system Limesurvey does not operate ranking questions correctly on mobile devices.)

Q24. If this option was chosen how could we minimise any negative impacts and how could we further strengthen the benefits?

There were a number of complaints about the consultation process in this section, while others stressed the need to involve other public or voluntary organisations in service provision.

Q25. Do you feel that this option has an impact on any particular part of the community in terms of the Equality Act 2010? If so, in what way?

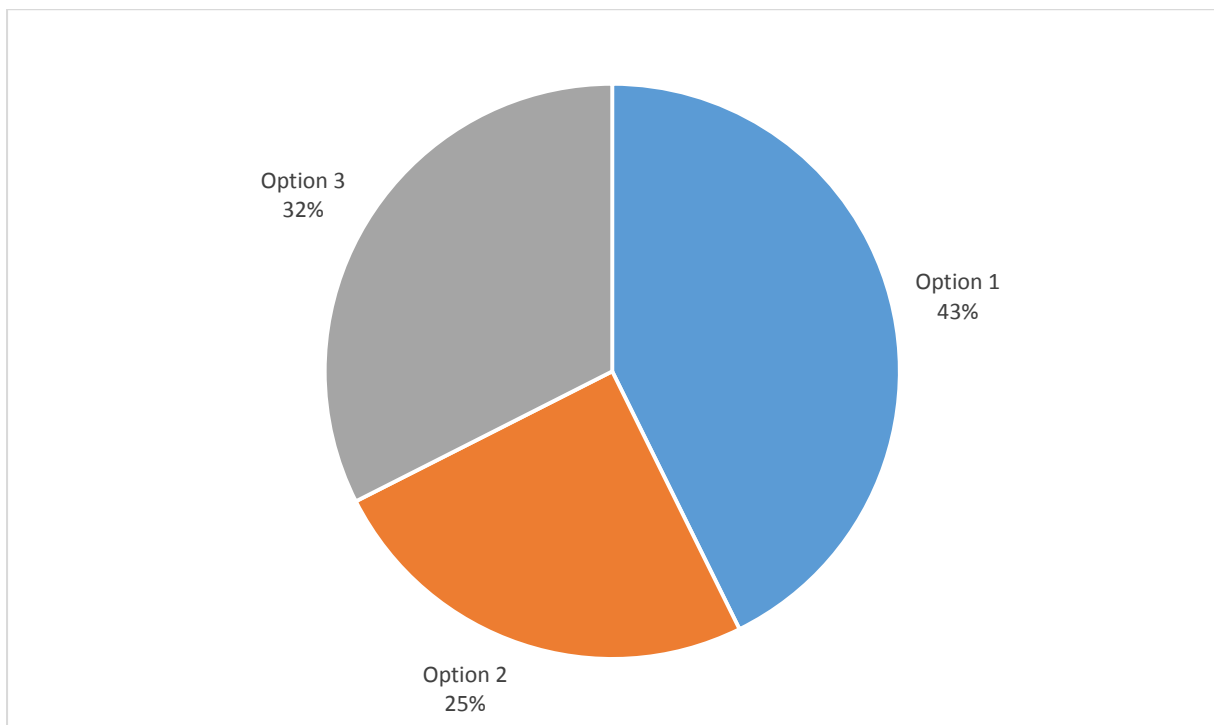
Again, age and disability were the protected characteristics flagged up as most affected.

General questions

Q26. Is there anything else you would like to tell in response of this consultation?

Again, there were a number of complaints about the consultation process alongside widespread support for the retention of the day centres. To this question, people also highlighted the need to work together with other public and voluntary organisations to the benefit of older people. A number of people also felt that older people did not appear to be valued members of society.

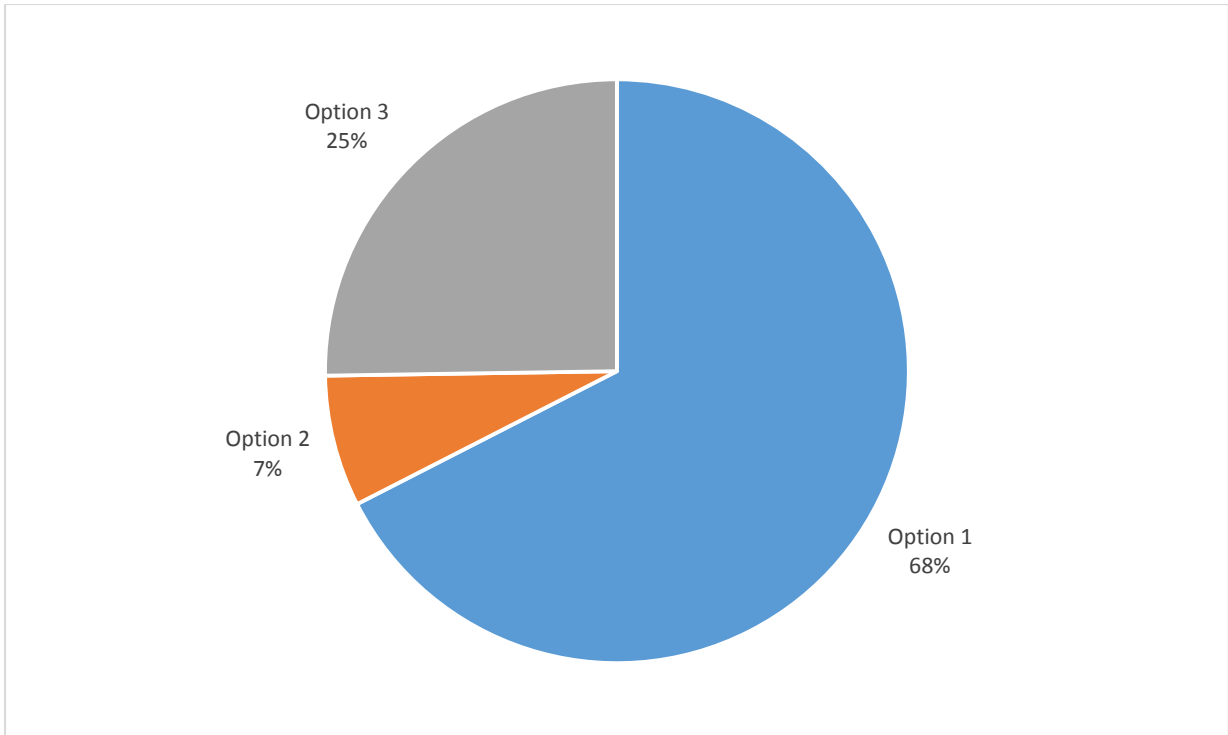
Q27. Bearing in mind the costs involved and the constraints of budget pressures affecting Adult Social Care, please would you rank the three options in order of preference:



(The percentages relate to the 'score' given to each option, based on the ranking)

(I have to issue a health warning with the answer to this ranking question as we have recently been informed that our online surveying system Limesurvey does not operate Ranking questions correctly on mobile devices.)

However, the following chart shows the first choice scorings (ie percentage of people who chose each option as their first choice)



(Base= 206)

It should be noted that we received comments regarding this question on the following lines:

- that 'Option 4' (ie any option which was put forward by respondents or others) was not included as a choice;
- that some only wanted to choose Option 1 and did not want to give any score to Options 2 and 3.

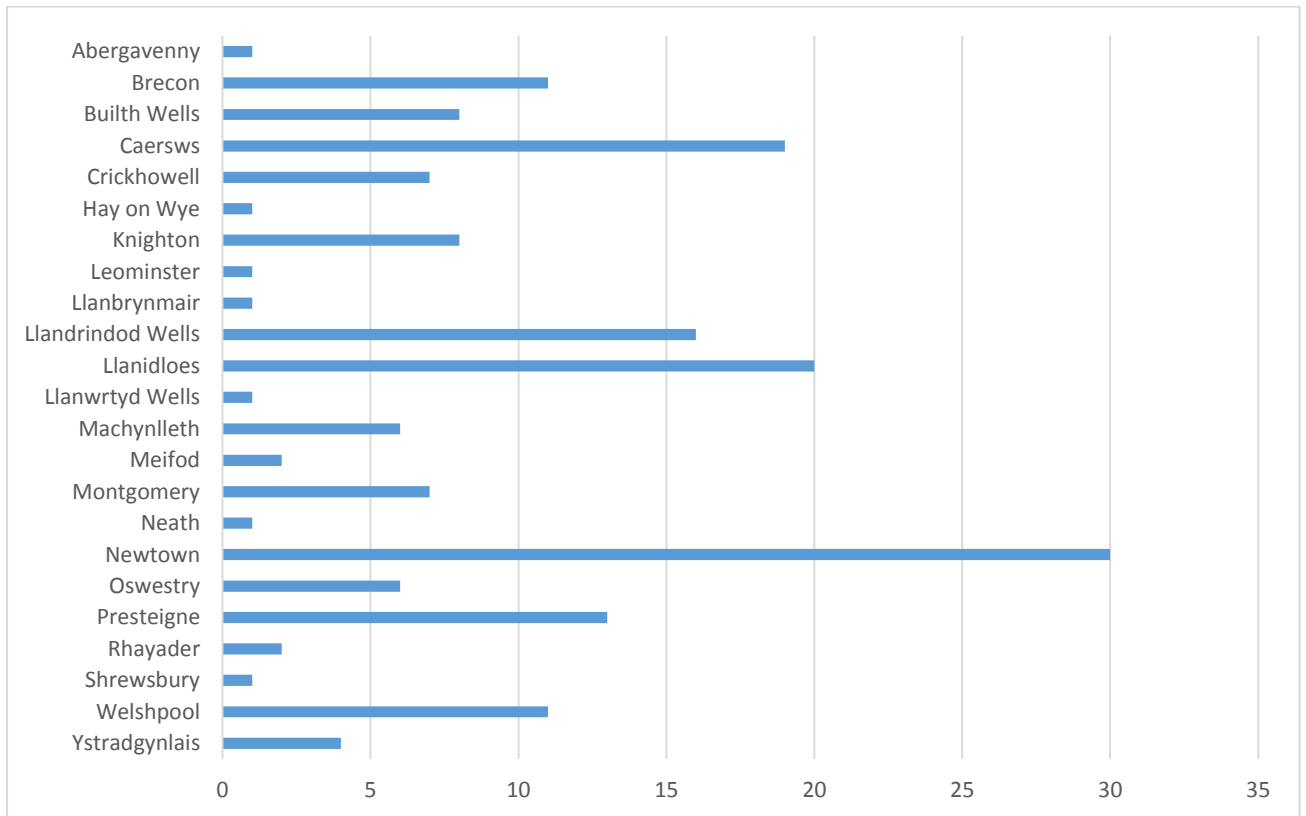
(I have to issue a health warning with the answer to this ranking question as we have recently been informed that our online surveying system Limesurvey does not operate ranking questions correctly on mobile devices.)

Q27a In terms of your last answer, why do you feel this way? (Optional)

Whilst there was some support for service change, the majority view was for the retention of the day centre service.

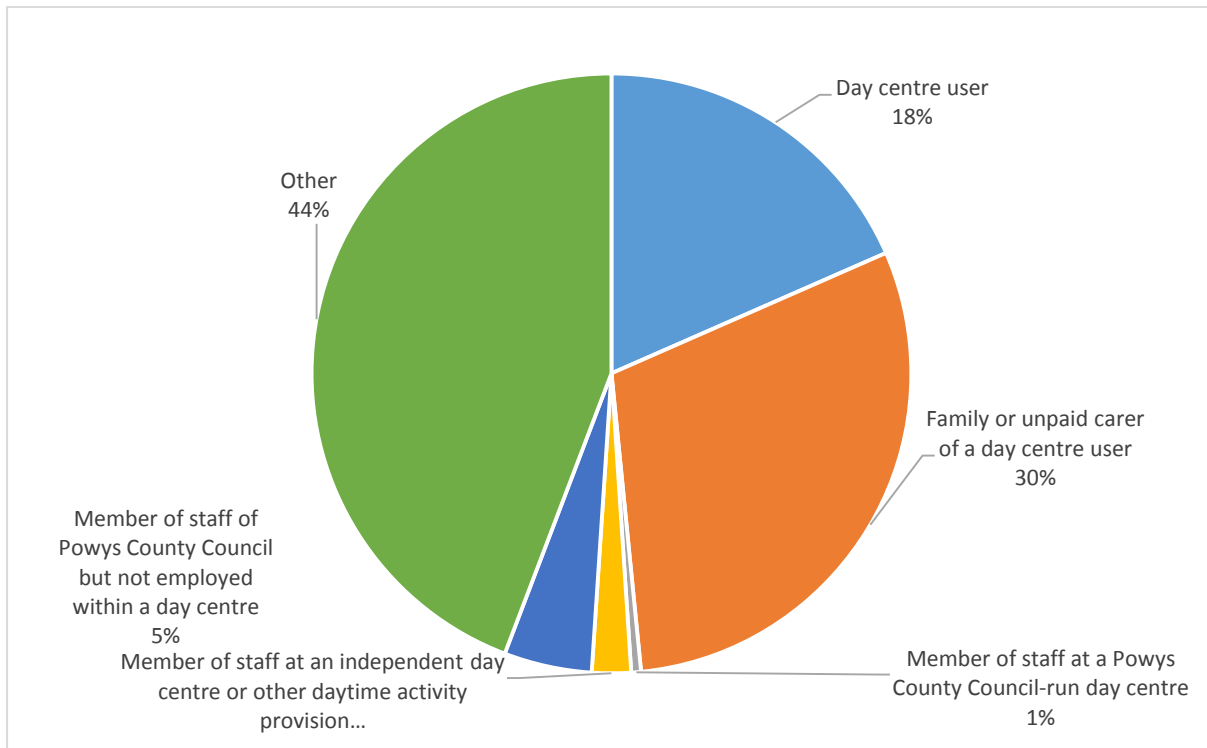
About You section

QA What is your home postcode?



Note: Only 177 respondents answered this question.

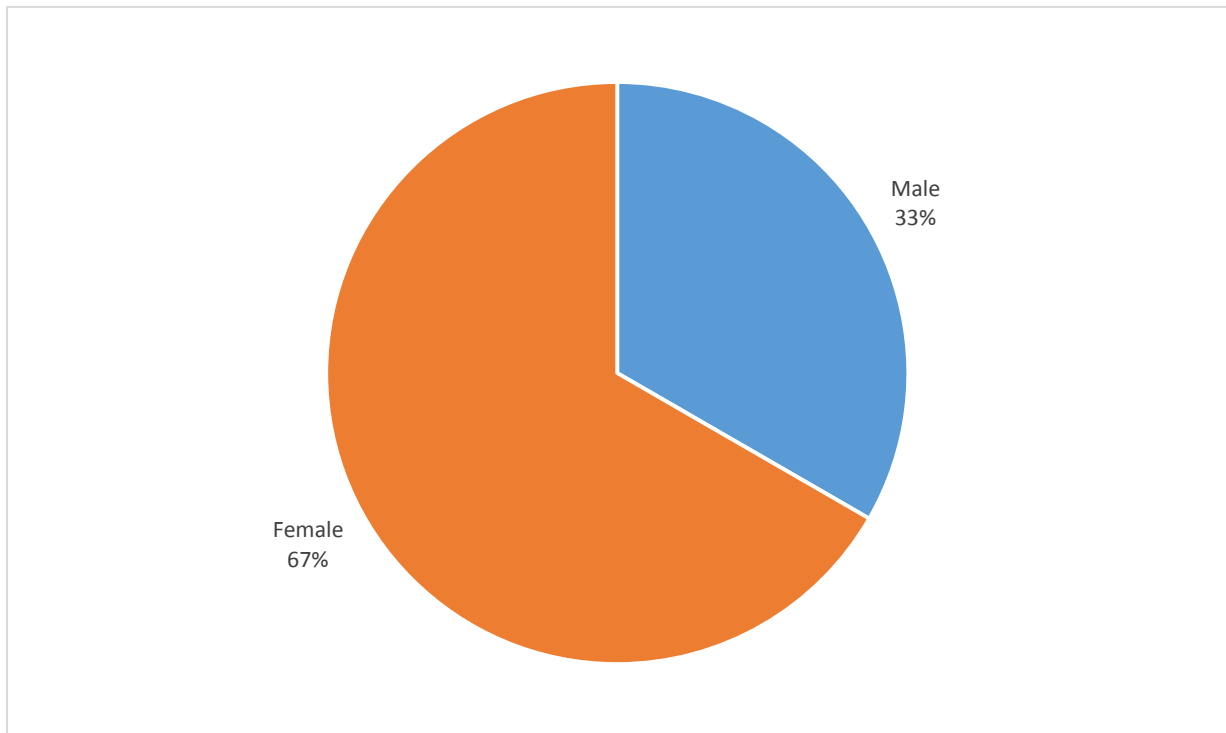
QB. Please tick which of the following apply to yourself:



Other responses included:

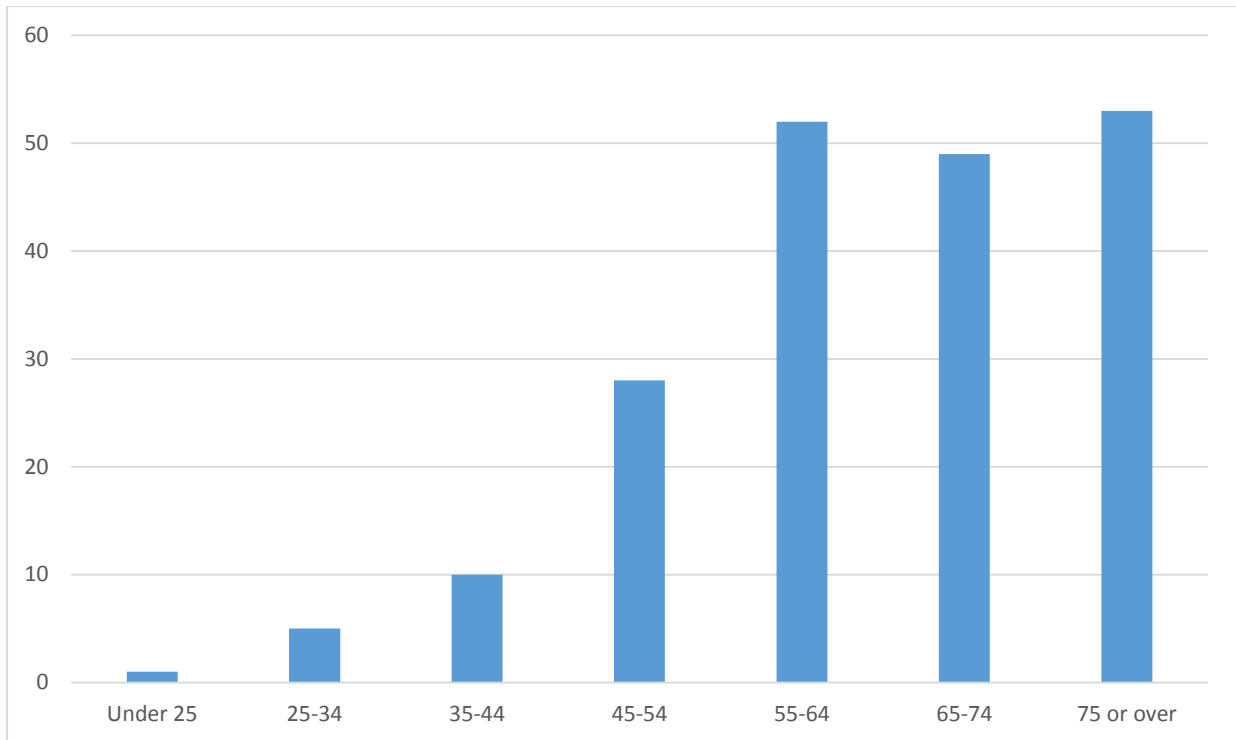
- A resident of Powys
- A retired person
- A health worker
- Charity trustee
- Volunteer at a day centre

QC. What is your gender?

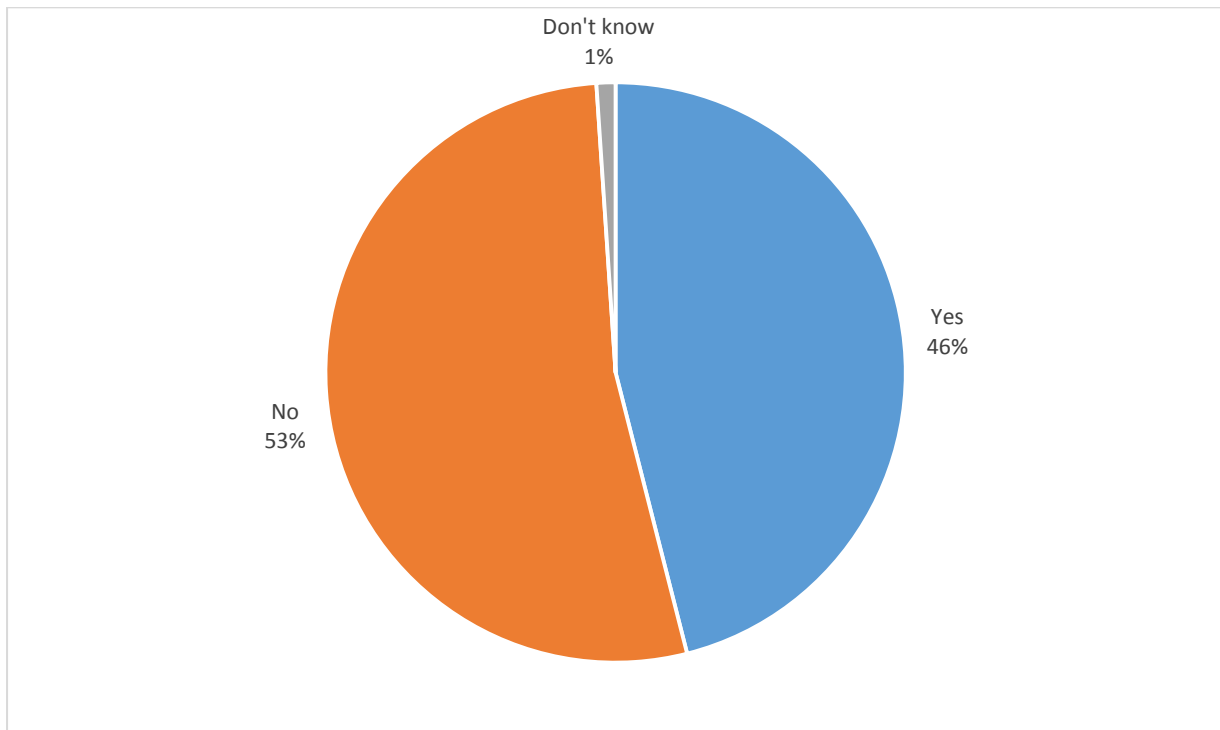


Base = 204

QD: What is your age?

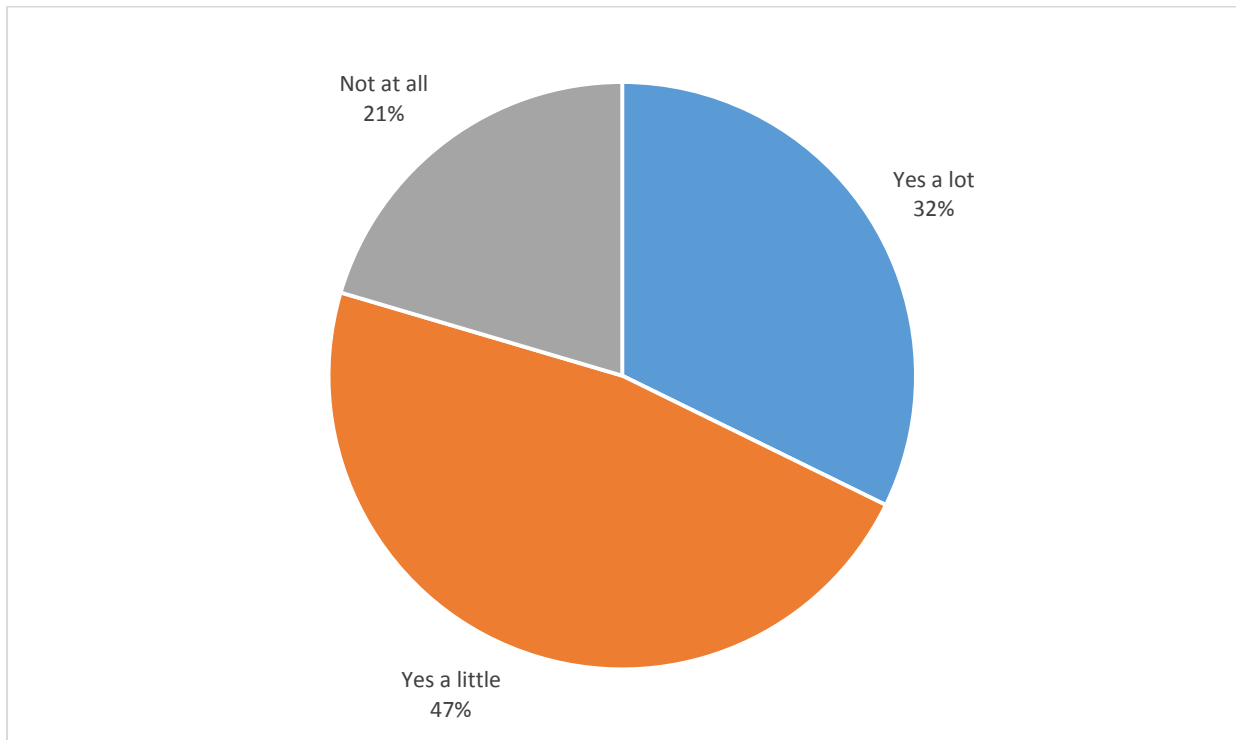


QE1. Do you have any physical or mental health conditions, illnesses or impairments, lasting, or expected to last, 12 months or more?

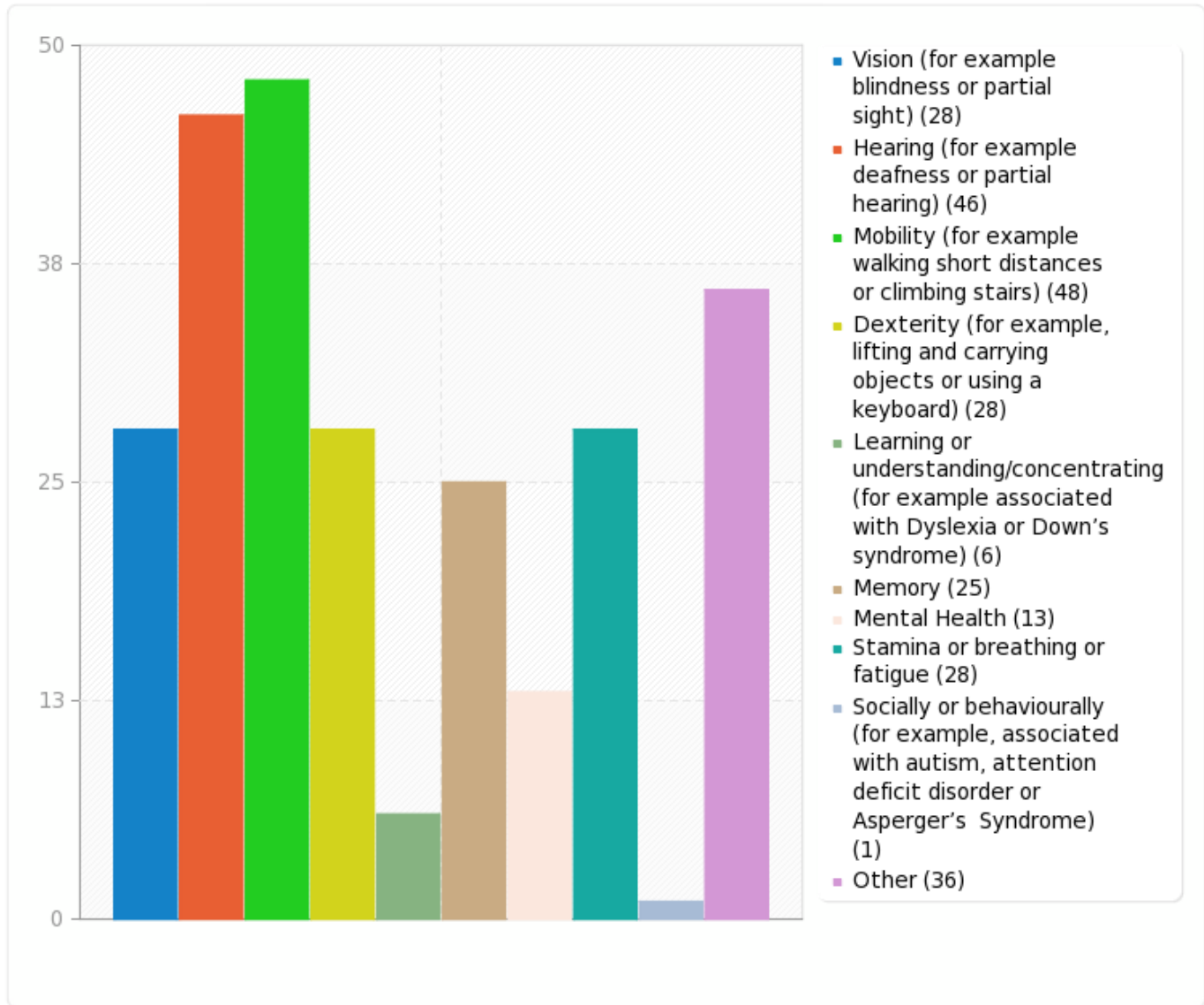


Base = 189

QE2. If you answered 'Yes' to question QE1, does your condition, illness or impairment/ do any of your conditions, illnesses or impairments reduce your ability to carry out day-to-day activities?



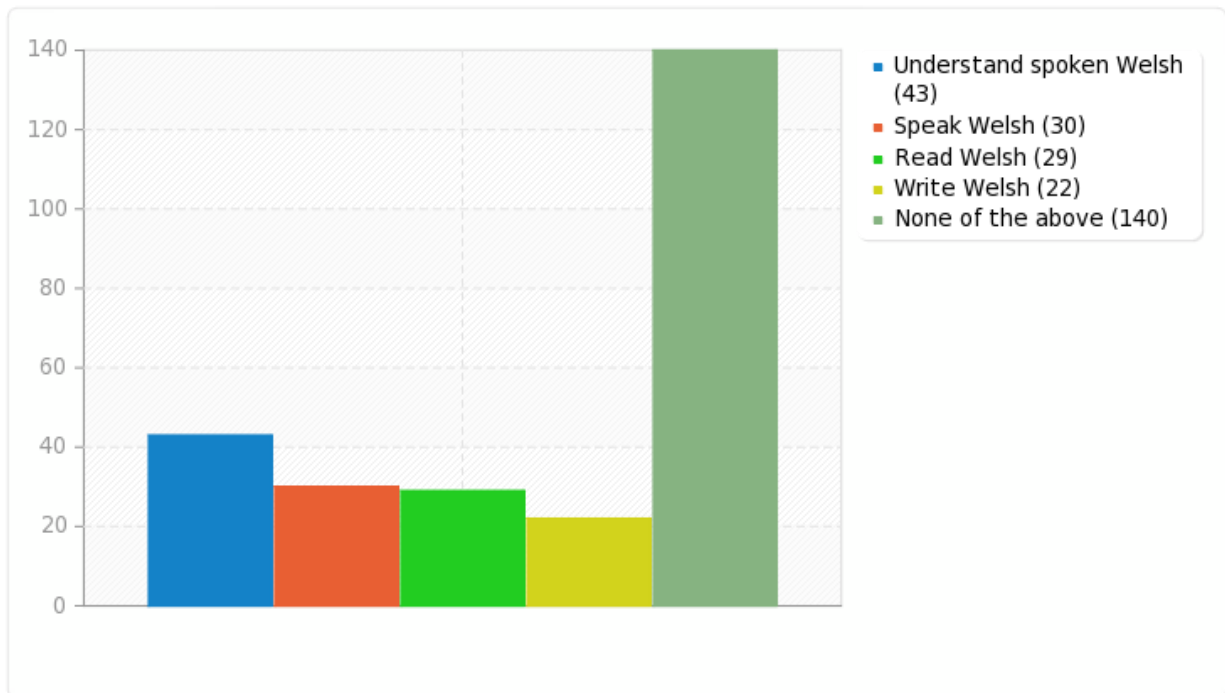
QE3. Do you have any health conditions, illnesses or impairments which affect you in the following areas?



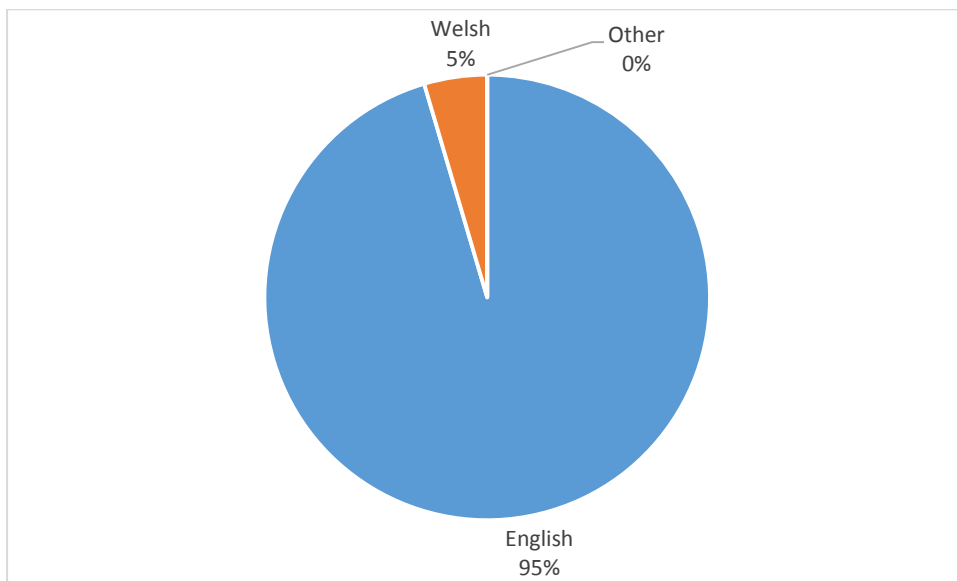
QF: IF FEMALE: Are you currently pregnant, or have you given birth within the past 26 weeks?

No respondents were currently pregnant or had given birth within the previous 26 weeks.

QG. Can you understand, speak, read or write Welsh? Please choose ALL that apply.

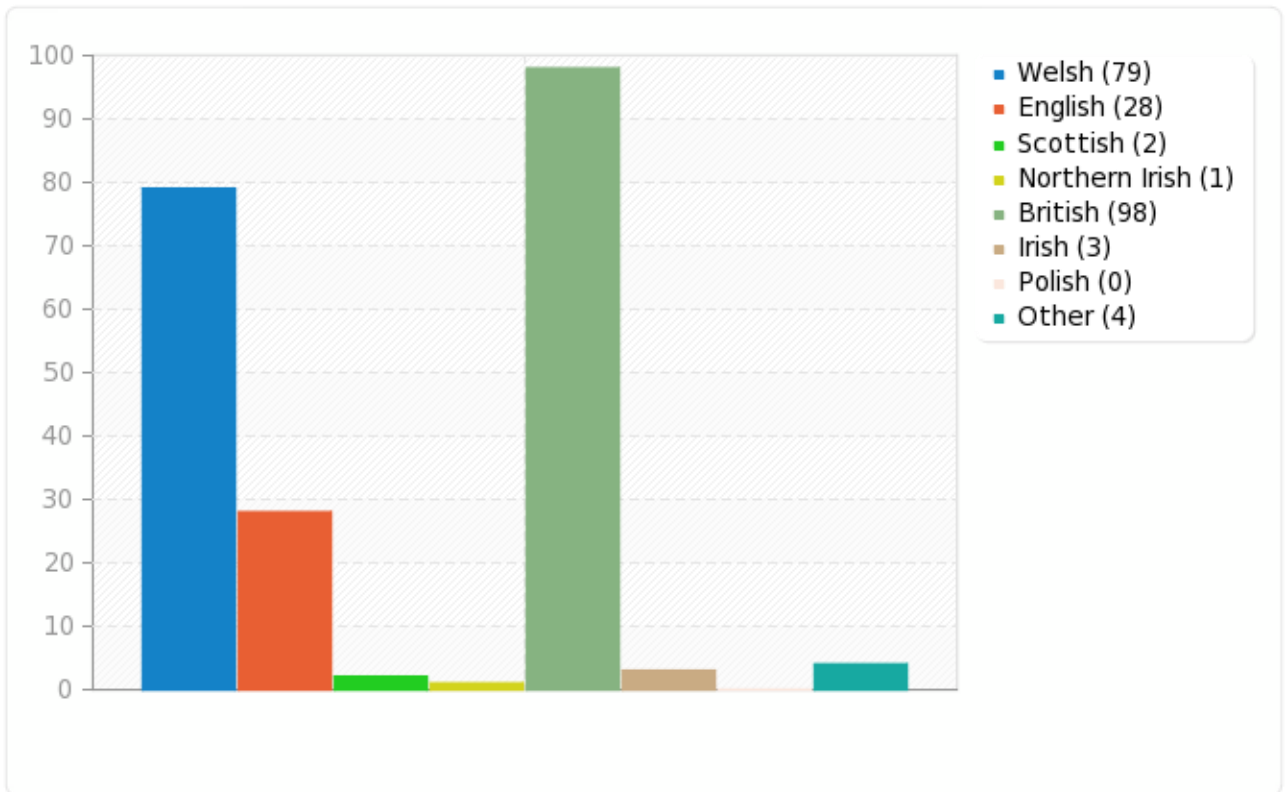


QH: What is your main language?



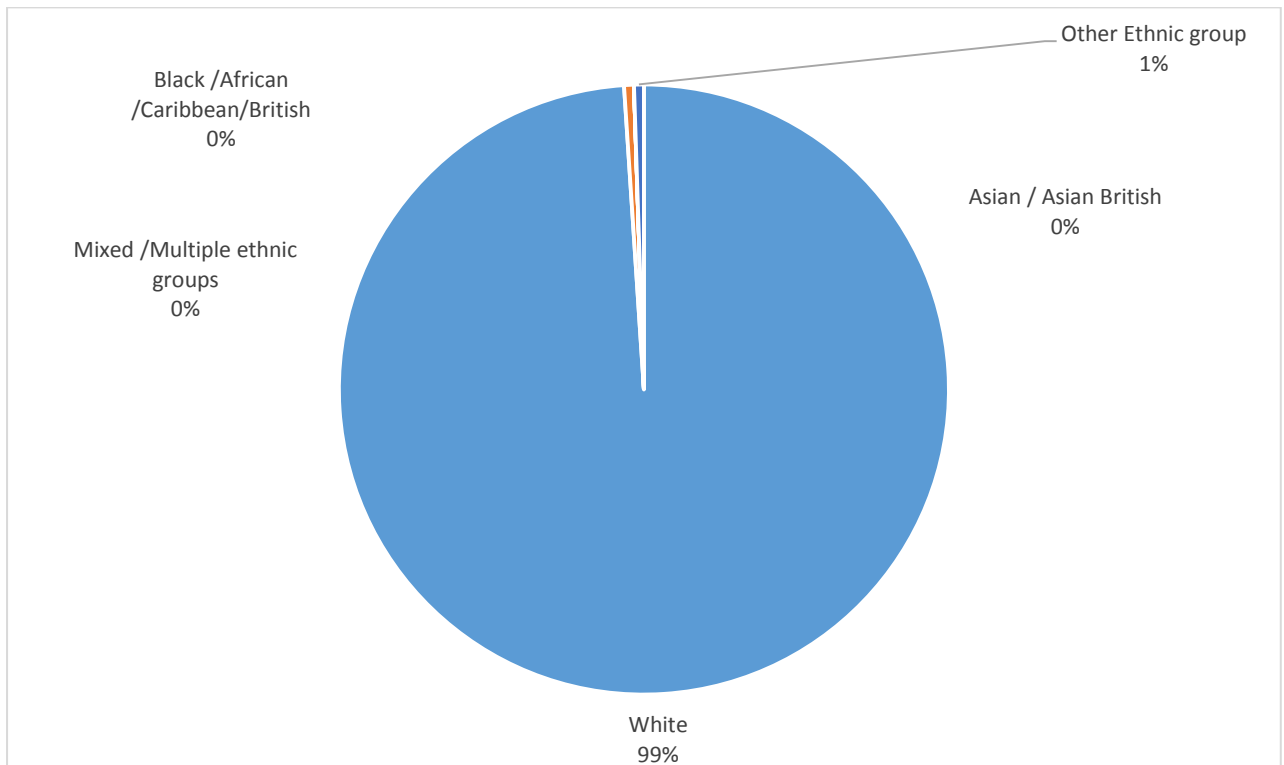
(Base = 197)

QH1: How would you describe your national identity?



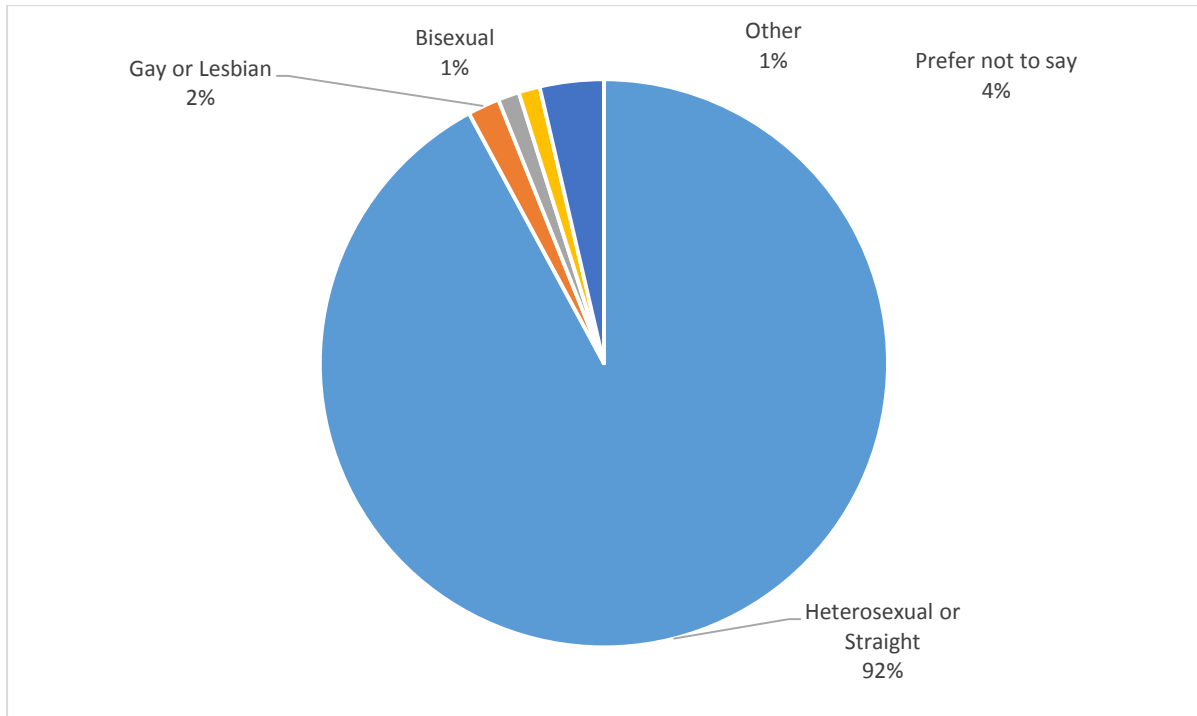
Other: European

QH2: What is your ethnic group? Please choose JUST ONE of the options below that best describes your ethnic group or background.



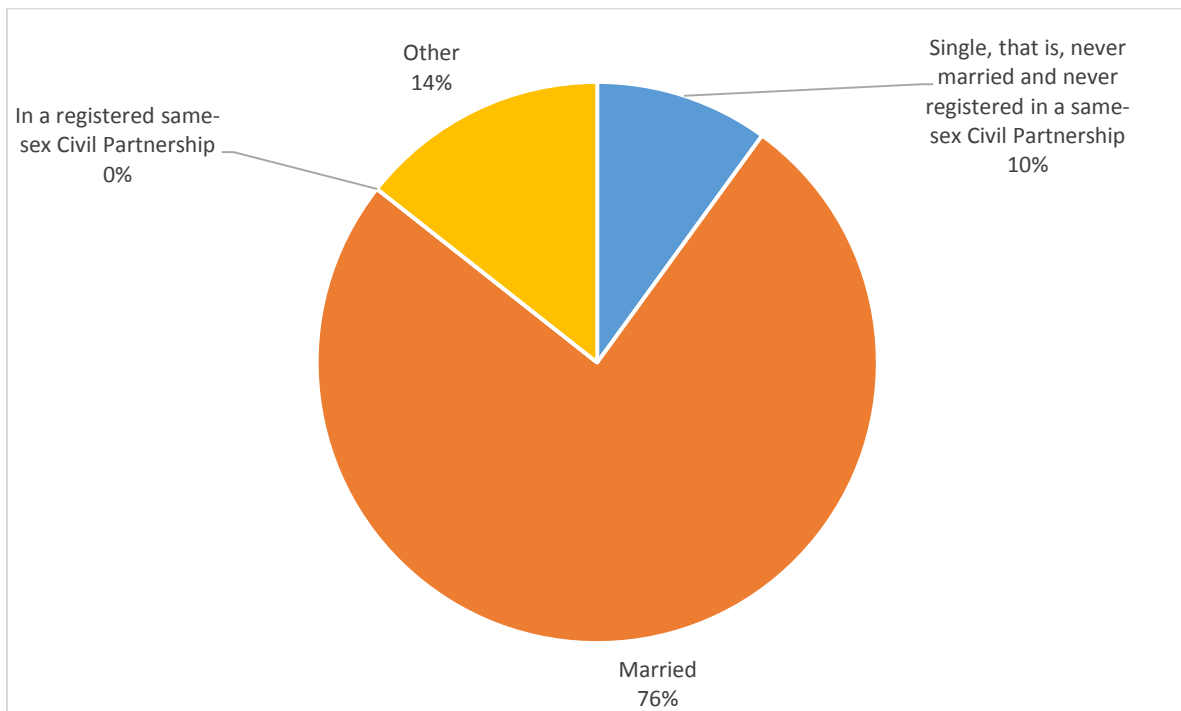
Base = 192

Qi: IF AGED 16 OR OVER: Which of the following options best describes how you think of yourself?



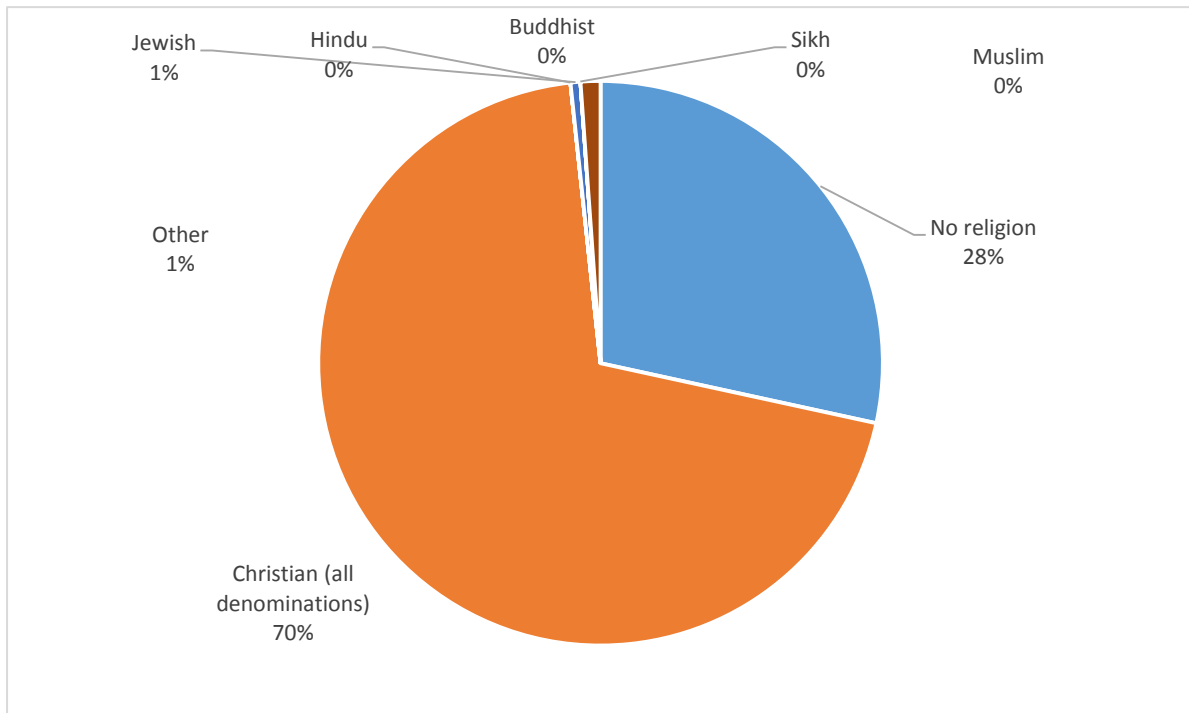
Base = 165

QJ: IF AGED 16 OR OVER: What is your current marital or same-sex civil partnership status?



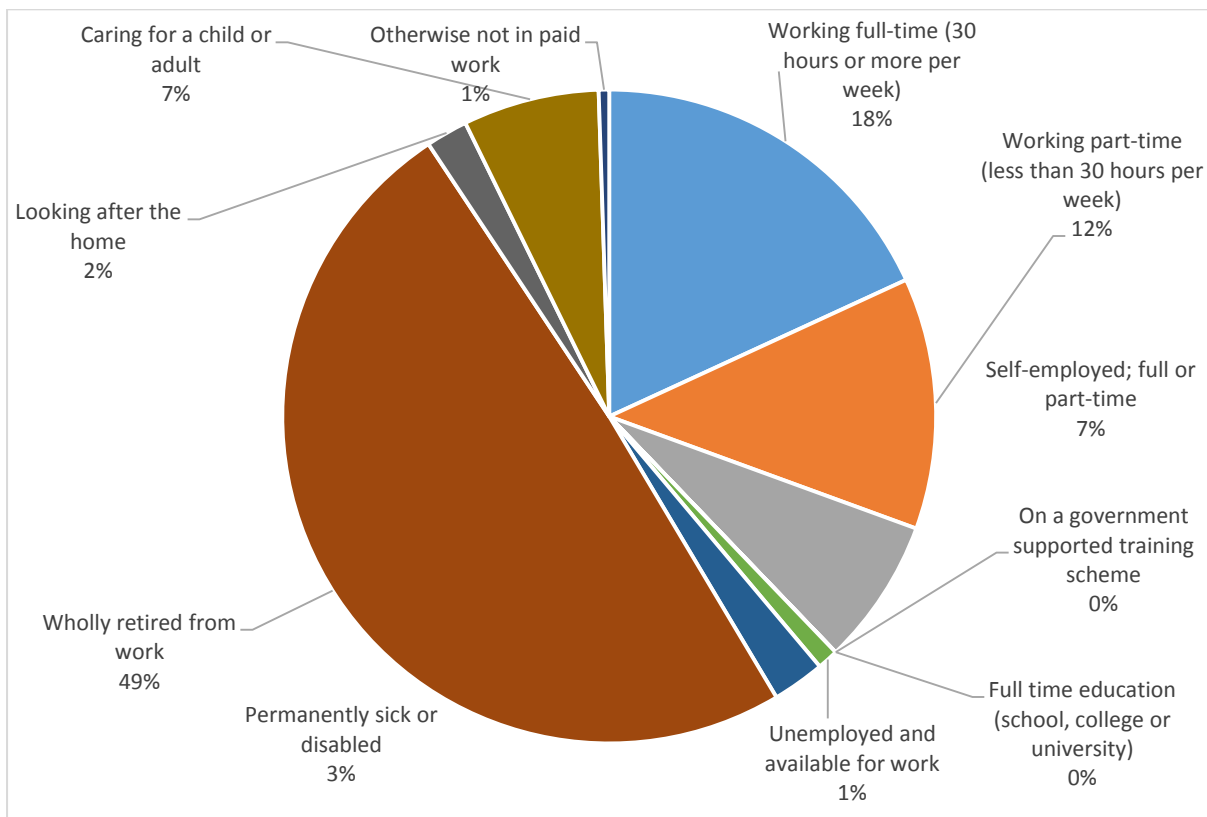
Base = 160

QK. What is your religion?



Base = 176

QL: Which of these best describes what you are doing at present?



Base = 193

ends