

Including Everyone

Public engagement report

May 2024

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Executive summary

The Equality Act (2010) requires local authorities to publish equality objectives at least every four years to comply with public sector equality duty. The Including Everyone framework outlines the council's priorities in relation to inclusion and creates a vision for the council to strive towards.

The council engaged with a wide range of stakeholders to provide insight to inform both the development of the refreshed framework and its resulting action plan. Engagement activity focused on understanding the experiences of inclusion by residents with a wide range of demographics and their priorities for EDI progress in Oxfordshire.

The primary method of resident engagement was a series of focus groups with under-heard communities, focusing on those who fell within the Equality Act 2010's protected characteristics. An online survey asking the same questions was also run to give those who could not attend a focus group an alternative opportunity to provide feedback.

Participants were asked to share their examples of good and bad inclusion in Oxfordshire, their views on the proposed goals for the Including Everyone framework, and their suggestions for improving inclusion within council services.

The feedback from both focus groups and the online survey highlighted the positive impact of community groups and organisations and the attitudes and approaches of individuals as sources of good inclusion, and the challenges of travel and transport, socio-economic divides, safety and security issues, and communication sources of poor experiences of inclusion.

The most important goals for the council to concentrate on, according to focus group participants, were "Our staff have the values, skills and knowledge they need to include everybody" and "We have a diverse workforce that reflects of the communities we serve". For survey respondents, the most important goals were "We work with communities to help them thrive" and "We work with other organisations/groups to make things fairer in our communities".

When asked to suggest additional or alternative goals, improving communication and education were highlighted, as well as the important of having an action plan.

Participants also shared their views on what makes them feel welcome and confident to be themselves when using a service, and emphasised the importance of interactions with other people, especially staff, who are friendly, respectful, understanding, and knowledgeable.

The engagement activity provided valuable insights into the experiences and priorities of residents in relation to inclusion in Oxfordshire. The feedback shows a diversity of perspectives and needs, as well as some common themes and challenges. Participants also expressed support and appreciation for the council's efforts to refresh the Including Everyone framework and to engage meaningfully with stakeholders.

1.0 Introduction

The Equality Act (2010) requires local authorities to publish equality objectives at least every four years to comply with public sector equality duty. As the previous Including Everyone framework was published in October 2020, the council must publish an updated framework by October 2024.

The Including Everyone framework outlines the council's priorities in relation to inclusion and creates a vision for the council to strive towards. Our vision doesn't just cover the council as an employer – it also identifies how we can work with partners and communities to tackle inequalities across Oxfordshire.

This is the council's chance to reflect on how Oxfordshire's EDI priorities have evolved over the past four years. We want to create a refreshed framework that will influence real, tangible change to not only make Oxfordshire County Council a more inclusive employer and partner, but also to make Oxfordshire a more inclusive county.

Oxfordshire County Council engaged with a wide range of stakeholders to provide insight to inform both the development of the refreshed framework and its resulting action plan. This report outlines the work undertaken to engage residents and the feedback heard from them.

Engagement activity focussed on understanding the experiences of inclusion by residents with a wide range of demographics and their priorities for EDI progress in Oxfordshire. Efforts were made to engage with traditionally under-heard communities and individuals with one or more protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010.

2.0 Methodologies

The primary method of resident engagement was a series of focus groups with underheard communities, focussing on those who fell within the Equality Act 2010's protected characteristic. This approach was chosen due to the sensitive nature of the topic and the acknowledgement that these groups are both the most impacted by EDI work and the least likely to engage in a survey. An online survey asking the same questions was also run to give those who could not attend a focus group an alternative opportunity to provide feedback.

Focus groups were held both online and in-person to respond to the different needs of communities and individuals. A separate session was held for representatives of the Jewish community as a reasonable adjustment, due to the initial engagement period clashing with Pesach. We worked with community partners to advertise these sessions, including:

- Interfaith networks
- Religious institutions
- Universities
- Charities/community groups
- Colleagues in the city and district councils

Sessions were facilitated by Engagement and Consultation Officers and supported by members of the council's Policy Team. Where participant numbers were high the groups were split into breakout rooms and individually facilitated.

The following focus groups were held between 23 April and 1 May:

Audience	Format	Attendees
LGBTQIA+ community	Online	0
Faith and cultural heritage group leaders	Online	7
Women	Online	4
Asylum seekers and refugees	In person at Asylum Welcome	11
Older LGBTQIA+ people	In person at Silver Pride	7
People with a disability	Online	8
Young people	In person at the Warriner School	31
Neurodiverse people	In person at the ICE Centre	13
Jewish community	Online	12

Efforts were made to hold a focus group for pregnant people and new parents, however this did not come to fruition and instead we worked with Oxfordshire Maternity Voices to promote the online survey.

The online survey was live from 4 April to 1 May 2024 and was promoted via:

- Let's Talk Oxfordshire consultations e-newsletter
- Your Oxfordshire e-newsletter
- Targeted community partners, including:
 - The county council's gypsy and traveller services
 - Religious institutions
 - University societies
 - Perinatal and parent groups
 - Cultural centres
 - Disability organisations
- Viva engage

3.0 Response rate and demographics

150 people were directly engaged with the development of the framework, 91 through attendance at a workshop and 59 via the online survey. Analysis of the demographics showed a higher degree of diversity than general population, indicating that the engagement activity achieved its goal of reaching underrepresented communities and those more likely to experience discrimination.

48 per cent of workshop attendees identified as having a long-term illness, health problem or disability, as did 37 per cent of survey respondents.

27 per cent of people who attended workshops identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, questioning or other. This group accounted for 11 per cent of survey respondents.

Women were slightly more likely than men to have attended a workshop (41 vs 40 per cent) or completed the survey (42 vs 39 per cent). 2 per cent (workshop attendees) and 4 per cent (survey respondents) identified with a gender other than that which they were assigned at birth.

For workshops, most respondents (65 per cent) chose 'White' as their ethnic group, with 36 per cent of respondents being global majority and mixed ethnic groups. The largest of this group were those who chose 'Black or Black British' as their ethnic group, this accounted for 11 per cent of total respondents.

Most survey respondents (56 per cent) chose 'White' as their ethnic group, with 35 per cent of respondents being global majority and mixed ethnic groups. The largest of this group were those who chose 'Black or Black British' as their ethnic group, this accounted for 14 per cent of total respondents.

People with no religion made up the largest single belief group for both workshop attendees (32 per cent) and survey respondents (30 per cent). 32 per cent of workshop attendees identified as Christian, followed by 13 and 11 per cent identifying as Muslim and Jewish respectively. These were also the largest faith groups among survey respondents, with 28 per cent identifying as Christian, 4 per cent as Muslim and 11 per cent as Jewish.

A full breakdown of the demographics of both workshop attendees and survey respondents can be seen in Appendix 1.

4.0 Findings

4.1. Thinking about your experiences of living, working or studying in Oxfordshire, do you have any examples of good inclusion?

Participants were asked "Thinking about your experiences of living, working or studying in Oxfordshire, do you have any examples of good inclusion?" and responses showed a breadth of positive experiences across the county with key themes demonstrated.

The feedback from that both focus groups and the online survey highlighted the positive impact of community groups and organisation (both in terms of services provided and opportunities to be a valued member of the community) were the top source of positive examples of inclusion. This was shown in 30.4% of group responses and 28.6% of survey responses.

"Examples which stand out are the settings in which I volunteer - such as West Oxford community larder and Oxford Winter Night Shelter, where everyone is warmly welcomed for who they are within a very wide demographic."

Second common to both groups were positive experiences within county council services, with 15.2% of group responses and 19% of survey answers sharing examples. In particular, inclusion in council engagement and consultation activity and at libraries were mentioned.

"This being arranged specifically for the Jewish community outside of Pesach".

“I always feel very welcomed and included when I visit my local library, they always try to showcase different authors, genres and create a welcoming atmosphere”.

Feedback from focus groups also highlighted the impact of individuals’ attitudes and approaches, with 21.7% of responses sharing examples. This was particularly emphasised by the neurodiversity focus group who explained this this helped them to feel safe in a space.

“They remember me and what I need”.

Survey respondents also shared specific interactions, however they were more likely (16.7%) to attribute these positive experiences to how they felt treated by organisations/businesses.

“I would particularly single out arts bodies, such as the Playhouse Theatre.”

4.2. Can you think of any examples of when inclusion could have been better?

After reflecting on positive examples of inclusion in Oxfordshire, participants were asked “Can you think of any examples of when inclusion could have been better?”. 148 comments were received in response to this, and showed a diverse range of poor experiences.

The feedback from that both focus groups (10.1%) and the online survey (18.4%) highlighted travel and transport as the most common area where people felt inclusion could be better. Comments showed dissatisfaction with limits to car journeys, the affordability of public transport, and the condition of pavements causing risk to people with mobility issues.

“I feel very excluded by the County Council for their anti-car policies. I don't cycle, can only walk limited distances and buses never seem to go to places or at times that meet my needs.”

“Bus tickets are too expensive, when we have bus tickets we can talk to people. You do not feel isolated and lonely”

“Pavements for wheelchairs are very very poor.”

Survey responses also highlighted socio-economic divides in Oxfordshire and the resulting impact on lower-income households (8.2%).

“Real inclusion means welcoming people and making spaces feel comfortable for everyone, not just the middle and upper classes. Oxford is highly divided along socio-economic lines.”

However, some survey respondents felt that efforts should not be made to improve inclusion as they felt that this was not something the council should be working on (8.2%) or that promoting the inclusion of other groups was of detriment to them (8.2).

“Inclusion is irrelevant. Not your job.”

The second most common theme in comments from the focus groups concerned safety, and the frequency of feeling unsafe (7.2%). It is noteworthy that the majority of these comments were shared at the women’s focus group and they emphasised that this was the most important factor for them.

“I can't feel included until I feel safe. Our concerns aren't being taken seriously. We cannot feel included in our community if we can't sleep and we're not safe.”

4.3. Which two goals do you think are the most important for the council to concentrate on?

Participants were presented with the following seven goals which were proposed to be included in the updated Including Everyone framework:

1. We work with communities to help them thrive
2. We work with other organisations/groups to make things fairer in our communities
3. Our buildings and information are accessible, and we encourage others to do this too
4. Our staff have the values, skills and knowledge they need to include everybody
5. We have a diverse workforce that reflects of the communities we serve
6. Our senior managers lead the way in making sure that everyone feels confident to be fully themselves at work
7. We support and encourage organisations/groups that we work with to be inclusive

They were asked “Which two of these do you think are the most important for the council to concentrate on?”. For online survey respondents these options were presented to each in a randomised order to avoid order effects bias.

Focus groups identified their two most important goals as follows:

	Women	Mixed disability	Faith / cultural leaders	Jewish community	Asylum seekers/ refugees	Older LGBTQ+ people	Neuro diversity	Young people
We work with other organisations/groups to make things fairer in our communities			X			X		
Our buildings and information are accessible, and we encourage others to do this too				X	X			
Our staff have the values, skills and knowledge they need to include everybody	X	X				X	X	
We have a diverse workforce that reflects of the communities we serve	X	X		X	X			
Our senior managers lead the way in making sure that everyone feels confident to be fully themselves at work			X				X	
Our senior managers lead the way in making sure that everyone feels confident to be fully								X

themselves at work								
We support and encourage organisations/groups that we work with to be inclusive								X

The goals most commonly chosen by focus groups as most important were “Our staff have the values, skills and knowledge they need to include everybody” and “We have a diverse workforce that reflects of the communities we serve”. Many felt that these goals were interlinked, as greater diversity in the workforce would improve understanding of the experiences of different groups, while a focus on staff skills and values would make the council a safe and supportive work environment.

“We can always have frameworks, and policies, but actually it’s the people who deliver them.”

“Important that the workforce reflects community, reflecting the people that we serve, especially as Oxford is becoming more diverse.”

“Our senior managers lead the way in making sure that everyone feels confident to be fully themselves at work” and “We support and encourage organisations/groups that we work with to be inclusive” were each only chosen once, however it is noteworthy that both were chosen by the young people’s focus group.

“You need to set good examples so people know what to do”.

Survey respondents identified their most important of the goals as in Figure 1 below. Goals 1 to 7 are represented in order left to right on the chart.

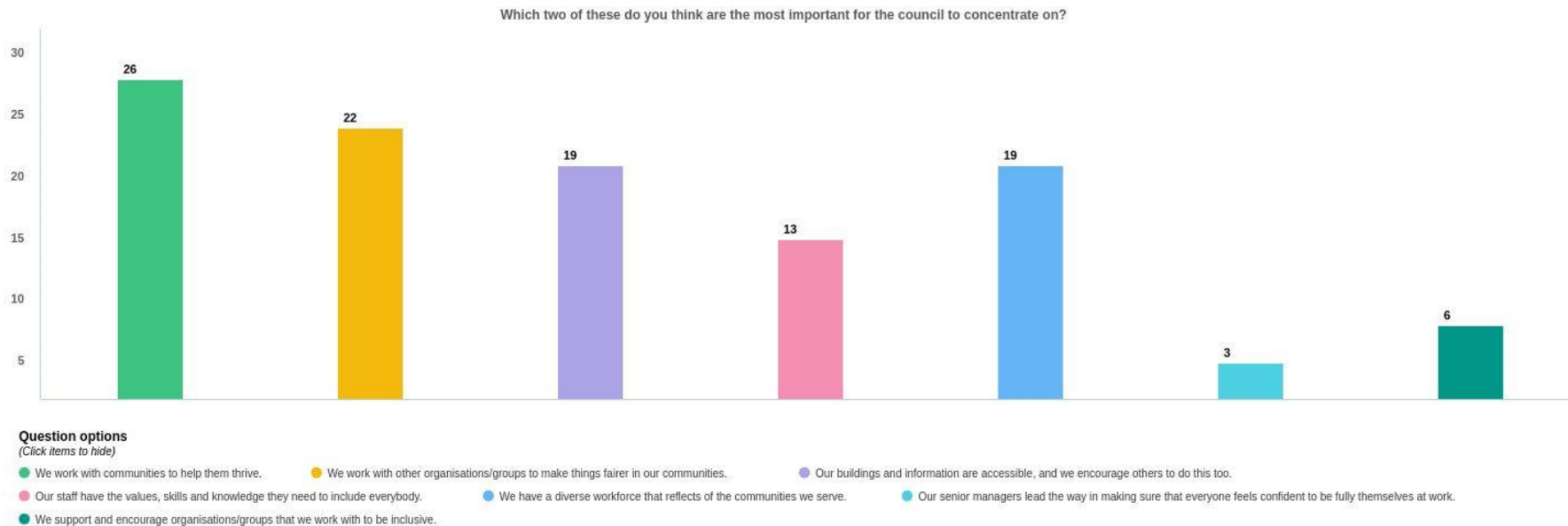


Figure 1

Survey respondents were most likely to choose “We work with communities to help them thrive” (chosen by 48.1% of respondents) as one of the most important goals for the council to concentrate on, with “We work with other organisations/groups to make things fairer in our communities” was the second most likely to be chosen (by 40.7% respondents).

“People with lived experience know how exclusion impacts on them, it's important that the council proactively works with marginalised communities to 'walk a mile in their shoes' and help to remove barriers.”

“Helping communities thrive and working together and focusing on solutions is very important, doing this together in groups with a board and dynamic outlook on diversity”.

“Our senior managers lead the way in making sure that everyone feels confident to be fully themselves at work” was the least likely to be chosen as one of the most important goals with only 5.6% of respondents choosing this option.

4.4. Are there any other goals that you think should be included?

The question of whether any other goals should be added had few responses, with only 55 comments from across the focus groups and survey. Discussion indicated that the smaller number of responses was due to a feeling that the proposed goals were already comprehensive.

23.5% of comments from focus groups suggested an additional goal on improving communication, as they felt there was a disconnection between the council and communities. This was borne out in conversation where many participants were unaware of actions the council is taking (such as the council's commitment to Oxfordshire being a county of sanctuary) or not understanding that services they use are funded or commissioned by the county council.

“Don't just put it on a website! Go out and do outreach, go and meet them “on their turf” - Failure to engage and communicate renders this all ineffectual.”

Survey respondents (18.4%) emphasised the importance of education to teach people about different groups and experiences and foster an inclusive culture.

“Inform children [what] a fair community is and what they can do to contribute.”

15.8% of survey responses also addressed the need for an effective action plan to ensure that the goals are achieved.

“I think we need to set ourselves measurable objectives - these goals feel very vague and difficult for us to hold ourselves to account. What does success look like?”

4.5 Goals

People were asked to explore the seven proposed goals in greater detail. To prevent the focus groups from being inaccessible by length, participants first gave feedback on the goals they had chosen as most important for the council to work on, and then looked at the other goals if there was time. Therefore, not all groups have commented on each goal.

4.5.1 We work with communities to help them thrive

4.5.1.1. What could the positive impacts of this goal be?

Shared key themes

Making people and the county better and safer came out as the top themes; also mentioned in the same responses were people feeling happier and more included. Other important shared themes included; a sense of residents being able to safely give feedback and that being genuinely acted upon; communities being valued for their opinions – that they matter and are valued. Building relationships and trust also featured. (*Safety mentioned several times*).

“Make people feel more included and happy”
“Engagement with people 'on the ground', a genuine addressing of local issues”.

Focus group feedback

Additional comments centred around building of trust within communities and avoidance of conflict. Cost effectiveness (not just financial) and people need to hear the results of engagement with communities.

Survey feedback

Early communication is important to enable communities to achieve goals and help themselves to become stronger. Better inclusion and more sustainable resources were also mentioned.

4.5.1.2. What could the negative impacts of this goal be?

No shared themes

Focus group feedback

Importance of a closer more personal relationship with the council which is seen as remote and detached. Communities may not like the council's goals.

Survey feedback

A sense that different communities may have conflicting priorities and needs - therefore compromise is needed. Goals could be seen as political flag waving and virtue signalling and a waste of money. Poor quality health, well-being, poverty and discrimination continues.

4.5.1.3 Do you think that anything should be added, removed or changed in this goal?

No shared themes

Focus group feedback

Polarised responses – liking of simplicity but confusion over language. Need to establish regular community working groups to enable consistent feedback.

Survey feedback

Negative comments about the 20mph limits and Oxford traffic plans. Important to develop sustainable employment and improve skills and create more purposeful community interest projects.

4.5.1.4 What are your ideas for how we could achieve this goal?

Shared key themes

Communication, information and accessibility within communities are the most frequently mentioned themes. The importance for council representation (eg councillors) to come to local communities at times to suit them, not the council, was emphasised. Also listening to what people are saying and reporting actions back to communities.

“Less about formal meetings, and more about informally going to their own territory. Meeting people where they are”.

“Making sure councillors are accessible, and that they are genuinely directing the policy of the Council”.

Focus group feedback

Clearly defined areas of responsibility for when the council engages with communities so that everyone knows who is responsible for what, to avoid confusion and misunderstandings.

Better empower communities to improve skills and enable local people to engage more effectively.

Survey feedback

Better support cultural diversity through community-based organisations to enable them to be mouthpieces for their communities. Safe spaces were again mentioned in the context of putting on inclusive events, conferences and social activities to facilitate improved participation. Council should provide development assistance (and financial support) to local groups to make this happen.

“Ask a broad range of people within the community and listen to what they say would be most helpful”.

“More live and inclusive events (advertise them)”

4.5.2 We work with other organisations/groups to make things fairer in our communities

4.5.2.1 What could the positive impacts of this goal be?

Shared key themes

Shared themes include what OCC’s role is in working with other organisations to make things fairer, and the importance of relationships that foster understanding and trust to drive inclusion and change. Being able to access and apply the expertise available from different groups also came through as a positive.

‘Other organisations/groups may have more knowledge and particular understanding of what’s needed and how to reach a particular goal.’

‘The council can be “an agent of change”—the council can initiate projects that lead the way’

Focus group feedback

Focus group attendees commented in relation to the relationships that OCC has with other groups and communities – for example, building trust and understanding, expertise, increased accessibility with more opportunities and diversity. There were also comments in relation to OCC's role in working with others – as an agent of change and a source of positive engagement for inclusion.

Survey feedback

Survey responses suggest a preference for grassroots and bottom-up engagement when working with other organisations and groups on inclusion. In addition, better connecting and understanding of communities and being able to harness the knowledge and enthusiasm of communities/groups on the ground would be a positive impact of this goal. Comments also suggested targeted support for specific vulnerable communities (such as the elderly) and healing divisiveness between communities and groups.

4.5.2.2 What could the negative impacts of this goal be?

Shared key themes

The key shared themes were concern about challenges of including everyone in practice, such as communities with different values, priorities and abilities to advocate for themselves.

'Some groups may not have the same agenda or goals or values as the communities they say they represent.'

'Different organisations and groups will have different values, and I would be a bit concerned that the Council could end up discriminating'

Focus group feedback

Participants indicated concern that some groups / communities have more of a voice than others, and that different groups have different agendas and priorities – this could be difficult to unify. There were also concerns about the resources available to do this effectively.

Survey feedback

Respondents indicated concerns about creating further discrimination by listening to some groups more than others or by trying to bring together groups that don't share the same values or priorities. The need to listen to communities and different groups and doing more than token gestures or superficial activities also came through as a theme. Again, a preference to a bottom—up community led approach also came through.

4.5.2.3 Do you think that anything should be added, removed or changed in this goal?

Shared key themes

A preference to enable fairness for everyone rather than communities, as well as wanting to ensure that the groups / organisations we work with aren't led by politically biased activists but communities themselves.

'Clarify that the organisations and groups you are working with have no political axe to grind, including activism.'

'It should be fairer for everyone, not just in individual communities.'

Focus group feedback

The key theme from the focus group was that it should be about fairness for everyone, not just targeted communities.

Survey feedback

Respondents commented that the goal isn't clear enough and groups could be seen as politically biased and led by activists more than communities themselves.

4.5.2.4. What are your ideas for how we could achieve this goal?

Shared key themes

Positive and authentic engagement with groups / communities / organisations that is adequately resourced.

'County Council should uplift what is already being done e.g. the interfaith walk'

'Reach out to certain communities and ask what they think would make things fairer.'

Focus group feedback

Building on existing successful initiatives that bring people together across communities and groups came through as a strong theme. Sharing best practice and learning from other groups, with transparency and managing expectations, as well as increased funding or resources that can contribute to this work. Quality assurance and diverse representation in work that is delivered is also important.

'We have this wonderful walk run by the council of faiths—how can we draw on that?'

'This is a great beacon and example against extremism and extreme views'

'Need to be open and clear – transparent about what is / isn't feasible in the projects.'

Survey feedback

Key themes include authentic and communicative engagement with communities, shaped by clear principles for working with other organisations. Engaging with local councillors and community champions for inclusion could support this work, and enable communities to empower individuals to work for the council and bring more diversity and authentic representation to OCC.

‘Then the organisations from the deprived communities should be empower to recruit people who have ingenuity and empathy to serve within the government offices or other NHS professionals cadres to give room to diversities’
‘Community Champions Programme on Health Education and Social inclusion’

4.5.3 Our buildings and information are accessible, and we encourage others to do this too

4.5.3.1 What could the positive impacts of this goal be?

Shared key themes

The overarching key comments are concerning increasing and improving accessibility – both physical and through supplying information in a multiplicity of different formats. In particular, the ability to phone the council, or meet someone face to face, should always be offered. This would enable better engagement with those who are disadvantaged and give people a voice independently of a reliance on others to do so for them. Also cited is the importance of supplying printed materials (leaflets, posters, etc) alongside information being available online.

All of the above should be “normality”.

Focus group feedback

Council buildings can offer neutral spaces to host cross-cultural, inclusive events, as long as there is easy accessibility, for example in libraries and other public and community places.

“Disabled people can also be employed and have a voice to help shape services to be more inclusive”.

Survey feedback

Many council premises are in Oxford which makes access difficult, particularly with poor public transport links from rural areas into the city.

4.5.3.2 What could the negative impacts of this goal be?

Shared key themes

There is some acceptance that many older buildings are not easy to adapt and can have restrictions on what can be done in terms of accessibility. However, some see that as an excuse for not modernising, despite the potentially increased costs of doing so for an ‘historic’ building.

Focus group feedback

Nervousness about sharing data with the council and the reasons for requiring to submit personal information was not fully understood.

“Often feels one sided, organisation keen to get your details but what is it for, how will info be used are not clear. An amount of transparency encouraged”.

Survey feedback

Transport issues in Oxfordshire are a significant block to access in person.

“The current situation. No one can get anywhere in Oxfordshire”.

4.5.3.3 Do you think that anything should be added, removed or changed in this goal?

No shared themes

Focus group feedback

Emphasis on the legal requirement for buildings and information to be accessible.

Survey feedback

Transport issues throughout the county are again emphasised – people are put off travelling to a council building, if that would be their choice.

4.5.3.4 What are your ideas for how we could achieve this goal?

Shared key themes

There is a general sense that information from councils should be much more accessible and easier to find. Make it simpler to find information online, the times/days that council buildings are open and to provide clear access arrangements. A significant level of feedback mentioned the need to provide easier to understand information, forms and consultations and to supply printed copies of such in a timely manner (in Plain English).

Focus group feedback

There is a lot of emphasis on supplying information in appropriate and different formats by default – whether online or not. 48% of comments in this section expressed concern over finding accessible information.

“Information needs to be diversified, translated, consistent”.

“Customer experience is very important. Want to be able to find the right place”.

Survey feedback

Ensure that instances of lack of access is recorded and actioned appropriately.

Again, a strong message is delivered that it should always be possible to find multiple means of accessing information and advice: e.g. in person, by email/chat, by phone or in writing - not just online.

“Leaflets through post for household to be aware of the buildings and information they can access”.

4.5.4 Our staff have the values, skills and knowledge they need to include everybody

4.5.4.1 What could the positive impacts of this goal be?

Shared key themes

Building relationships with those in communities is paramount in serving the needs of local people. Personal, individual interactions are necessary to enable people to feel comfortable, valued and included in dealing with the large and impersonal organisation this is the county council. Council staff should enable a safe environment where concerns can be raised without fear of judgement.

Focus group feedback

Good and experienced staff (and management) with varied life experiences, will have a good effect and will encourage people to provide feedback which they know will be valued and will improve inclusion.

Survey feedback

Enabling people to feel valued would have a huge positive benefit and would go some way to counter the large negative effect that a lack of inclusiveness can have.

4.5.4.2 What could the negative impacts of this goal be?

Shared key themes

Staff having the right skills sets is seen as vital to enable positive engagement with communities. However, such skills need to be accompanied by real-life experience, not just knowledge obtained from training courses.

Focus group feedback

There appears to be a lack of action from the knowledge gained through engagement. It is important to show that the council are using the feedback gained and feedback to those who have been involved.

Survey feedback

There are no excuses to not strive to include everyone, which requires a genuine understanding of people's needs and which is not restricted through politics or ideology.

4.5.4.3 Do you think that anything should be added, removed or changed in this goal?

Shared key themes

The main concern is that more empathetic language should be used, with a suggestion to change the wording from 'skills' and 'knowledge' to vocabulary which represents 'understanding' and 'compassion'. A move towards a more human and less corporate viewpoint, would show a more personalised understanding, with staff who have lived experience to reflect the communities they serve.

Focus group feedback

None in addition

Survey feedback

None in addition

4.5.4.4 What are your ideas for how we could achieve this goal?

Shared key themes

A change in culture and society to enable professionals to fully understand what a particular condition may mean to someone and their life.

Focus group feedback

It is important to include lived experience, good quality staff training should include real people – not just online. People felt that this could play a role in building stronger relationships with communities as the council publicises its inclusivity and gets to know communities.

Improving kindness and empathy is as important as learning about different cultures. The council should be honest and admit to where communications have not occurred in the right way and accept suggested improvements.

Mediation on behalf of communities would be a great help in dealings with the council.

Survey feedback

The council should employ staff who genuinely want to help others and create community partnerships with local authorities.

4.5.5 We have a diverse workforce that reflects of the communities we serve

4.5.5.1 What could the positive impacts of this goal be?

Shared key themes

Overall comments wanted to see change and felt that a diverse workforce would make a difference. Having the breath of the diverse areas of the wider community would mean that services might be better too.

Focus group feedback

All feedback was positive towards this goal. They felt that this could only bring positive change to the organisation and that it would encourage others to step up to work for the Council as well seeming to be a more approachable service, because there were staff who 'looked more like you'.

Survey feedback

They felt that having staff that reflected the community would help empathy of issues being dealt with and "...Communication strategy Cultural Competence approaches For the people by the people". would improve outcomes. A comment was made that there should be. However, there were a few comments that were not sure, as they felt they had not enough information.

"Brings in more people, more understanding, better representation of the needs of the community"

4.5.5.2 What could the negative impacts of this goal be?

Shared key themes

That diversity in the workforce should not be the key aim, that skills and meeting the needs of the service delivery should come first while working towards ensuring diversity.

Focus group feedback

That there could be gaps in the workforce if we focus on diversity and that for some people having such a diverse workforce could be difficult to ensure delivery.

Survey feedback

Comments were predominantly about the difficulty with ensuring you get the right people for jobs, that you don't want to dismiss a candidate who has the right experience because of the pursuit for diversity. The other concern is that those who might be employed may not be able to facilitate the job as well:

“for example a partially deaf person may be less able to help someone who wants to talk face to face because of their difficulty”.

and that management need to take the diverse workforce seriously and understand that false assumptions of diversity should not be made.

4.5.5.3 Do you think that anything should be added, removed or changed in this goal?

Shared key themes

No significant shared themes other than a desire for positive changes that work

Focus group feedback

Participants were happy with the wording and wanted to encourage working for the people.

Survey feedback

This question is polarised. Although the positives are that the goal is showing the want for change. The negatives say it language isn't right.

4.5.5.4 What are your ideas for how we could achieve this goal?

Shared key themes

Overall the main theme was that advertising needed to be better; that the Council needs a stronger 'presence' in communities; meeting people and showing that it is a great place to work. In addition to this the recruitment was something that needed to be improved too so that the right staff were employed and supported with training.

Focus group feedback

The overwhelming strongest comments were about better publicity and meaningful engagement out in public and conversing with people, for example attending community spaces, bus advertising.

Survey feedback

Change the way we recruit and monitor, better and meaningful engagement with the community and "Apprenticeships from local secondary schools".

One response suggested alternative wording for this goal: "We have a workforce that is fair-minded and competent and we pride ourselves in serving all members of our community to our best."

4.5.6 Our senior managers lead the way in making sure that everyone feels confident to be fully themselves at work

4.5.6.1 What could the positive impacts of this goal be?

Shared key themes

There is a general sense that this is a positive goal in the work environment which can nurture inclusiveness, a more content workforce, higher productivity and values which can be passed onto colleagues, and which has a benefit when dealing with clients and customers.

Focus group feedback

This goal would help colleagues be happier, build more confidence and maintain a better level of retention for employers. It would also improve inclusivity.

"If more people are nice, more people stay – people leave jobs if they aren't treated nicely".

"People would be able express themselves / show their identity without the fear of discrimination".

Survey feedback

It is important to lead by example. Senior managers should be more aware of the benefits of showing that it is acceptable for staff to be themselves at work.

There was one detractor in this goal who did not agree.

"People are perhaps likely to work better in an environment where they feel able to be themselves".

4.5.6.2 What could the negative impacts of this goal be?

Shared key themes

Workers may bring more 'personality' than that which is seen to be acceptable in a work environment. This could be viewed as exclusive and even offensive to others and may prevent others wishing 'to be themselves'.

Focus group feedback

This goal may result in workers feeling they can be uninhibited in what they do and say and could result in inappropriate behaviour in the workplace. Also because of this, some may not fully open up about themselves.

Survey feedback

There is a view that senior managers do not necessarily show their true personalities at work and therefore this goal would not be achievable in terms of cascading those intentions to all staff.

“Need to spend time with any staff less comfortable in a more inclusive environment”.

4.5.6.3 Do you think that anything should be added, removed or changed in this goal?

Shared key themes

There was some feedback about the wording to make it clearer, as there was some perception that this is not a comprehensible goal. Also questioning why senior managers would not already be demonstrating such traits of ‘being yourself’.

Focus group feedback

Clarity needed around the meaning of ‘senior’ – it would be better to talk about council leadership. However, it is suggested this goal should apply to all workers in the council, not just management.

“What does ‘fully themselves’ mean? Perhaps ‘fully accepted’, ‘fully included’.”

Survey feedback

The most important aspect of this goal is to ensure that professionalism is always at the forefront, rather than ‘self-expression’ being emphasised, and that staff are properly listened to by senior management.

4.5.6.4 What are your ideas for how we could achieve this goal?

Shared key themes

The most commented on shared theme is the need to improve senior managers’ in-depth understanding of cultural awareness and for their genuine support of diversity and inclusion.

Focus group feedback

The focus for senior staff should be on those who may feel less valued within councils and to listen to these concerns. There is also a need to hear from the council about EDI in external settings.

“Support diversity and make sure everyone is happy and feels included”.

Survey feedback

Explore what ‘fully themselves’ really means in this context as it would not necessarily be appropriate for anyone to bring their full ‘private’ personality into the workplace.

4.5.7 We support and encourage organisations/groups that we work with to be inclusive

4.5.7.1 What could the positive impacts of this goal be?

Shared key themes

Overall this was seen as a positive goal, one that is welcomed so that the council can create partnerships amongst local groups and positivity the wider community.

Focus group feedback

Most of the feedback was positive and pleased that the council would like to do things with community and to strengthen it and create partnership. One comment mentioned that ‘gatekeepers’ at the council would need to be addressed.

Survey feedback

All responses were positive and think that this would have a great impact on the community that it serves.

4.5.7.2 What could the negative impacts of this goal be?

Shared themes

No shared themes

Focus group feedback

The impact on how the Council maybe seen; it needs to ‘get itself in order’ before it can support communities on inclusivity, and potential for embracement to seek help.

Survey feedback

Need to be careful to delivering and expectations of negative interactions; patchy support, communities having to ‘give up their beliefs’ in order to be inclusive; and priorities may be different for services and across communities.

4.5.7.3 Do you think that anything should be added, removed or changed in this goal?

Shared themes

No shared themes

Focus group feedback

Participants felt this goal should be expanded to support groups to be even more inclusive of the wider community where they can.

Survey feedback

Need to consider the potential conflicts and difficulties that may arise but it needs to come from/with the community.

4.5.7.4 What are your ideas for how we could achieve this goal?

Shared key themes

Many ideas mostly themed around supporting communities to be better supported so they can help their communities and to involve more people.

Focus group feedback

A variety of ideas mostly to help organisation/communities to feel empowered so they can support individuals to develop and be aware and help better represent their communities too.

“Youth centre services that support specific groups”

Survey feedback

Overall, a plan for working with community is needed. This could include intervention, contracts but also co-production with community groups, in order to support them to do their best.

“A local community conference organised by the council and local community”

4.6 We all use services in our day-to-day lives, whether it's visiting your local library, doing your food shopping, signing up to the gym or receiving care at home. When using a service (face to face, on the phone or online) what is the most important thing the service can do to make you feel welcome and confident to be yourself?

Participants were asked what is the most important thing that a service can do to make them feel welcome and confident to be themselves, and responses from both groups showed that interactions with other people were the most impactful factor in the service being inclusive.

The demeanour and attitudes of staff was highlighted as a key influence, with approximately a third of all responses from focus groups (37%) and survey respondents (33%) stating that this was the aspect that most influenced whether they felt a service was inclusive and welcoming to them.

“Being friendly to everyone. A smile and a wave makes groups feel more included.”

“Be kind and understanding that we aren’t all the same.”

Respondents also felt that being able to talk to a person was important and felt that services moving to only being accessible online was detrimental to inclusion. This was emphasised in 9% of both group comments and survey responses.

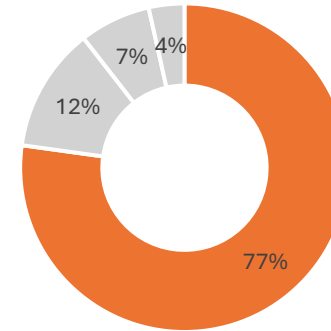
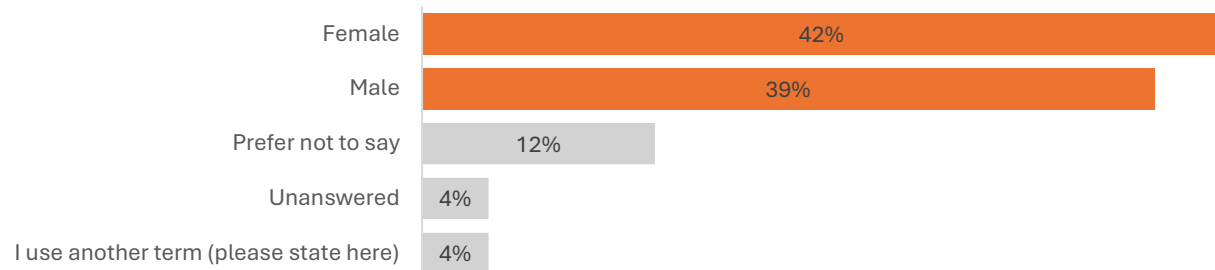
“People with certain learning style and or senior people or those new to the country for various reasons may find day to day tasks where they're essentially forced to use technology and the internet very limiting and or a stressful obstacle, I think we need to make local authority services and consultations more accessible and less restrictive in how it's done, more telephone and face to face options and support with online forms.”.

Appendix 1

Participant demographics

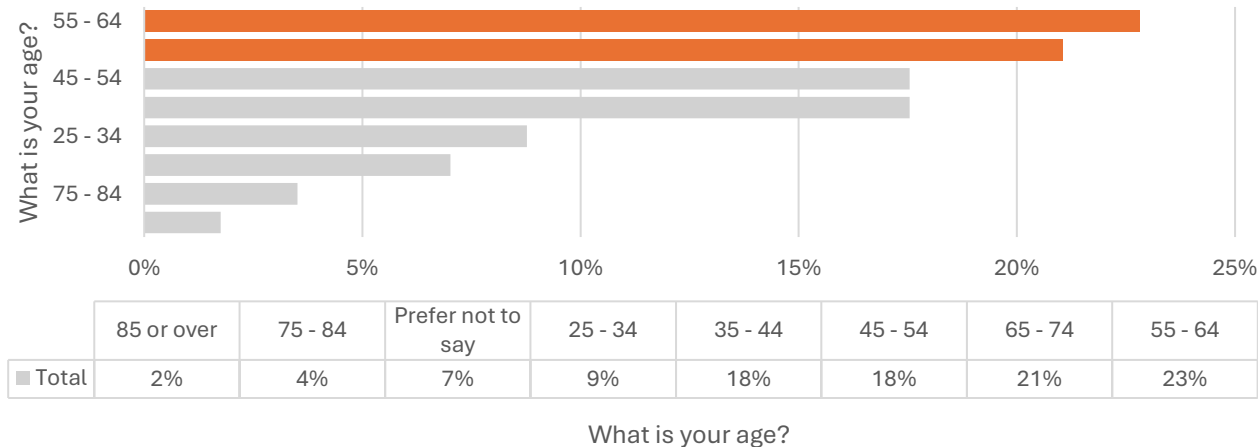
Survey respondent demographics

'What is your sex': **Female** and **Male** appear most often.



Yes accounts for the majority of 'Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?'.

Percentage distribution of 'What is your age?'

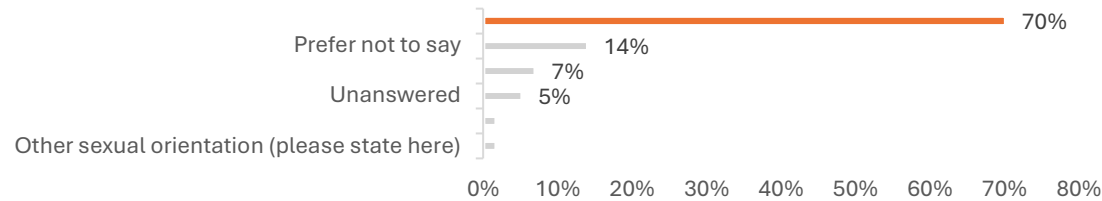


Of those who answered the question, 'what is your sex?' Most respondents chose female. **16%** of respondents chose not to answer, and **4%** use a different term.

Those in the 45-64 age range were most represented.

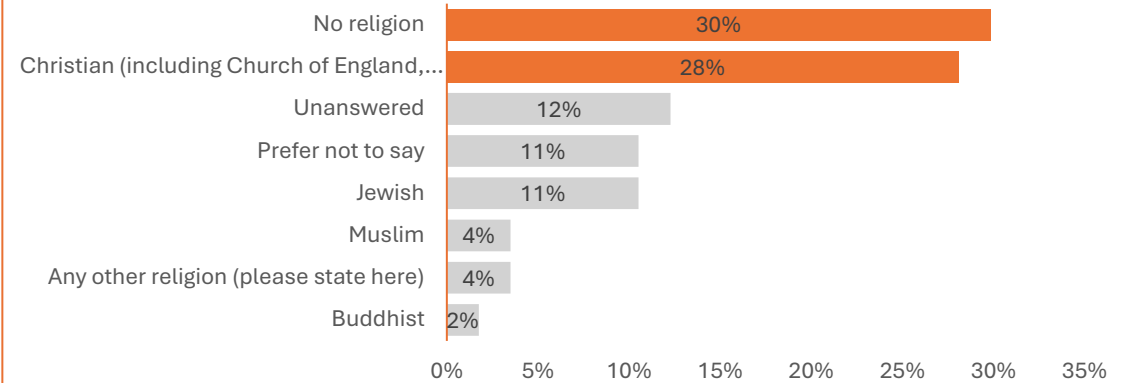
77% of respondents identified with their sex registered at birth, **19%** chose not to answer the question and **4%** did not identify with their sex registered at birth.

Straight/Heterosexual accounts for the majority of 'What is your sexual orientation?'

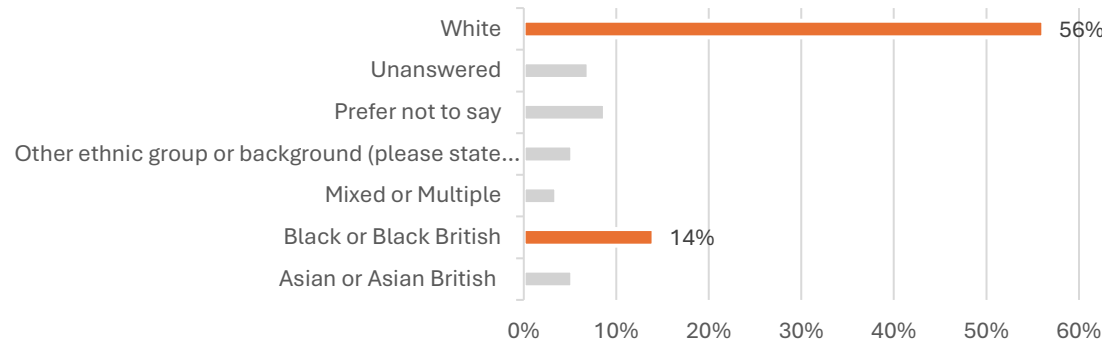


	Other sexual orientation (please state here)	Gay or Lesbian	Unanswered	Bisexual	Prefer not to say	Straight/Heterosexual
Total	2%	2%	5%	7%	14%	70%

'What is your current religion, if any?': **No religion** and **Christian** appear most often.



White (British, Irish, or any other white background) accounts for the majority of 'What is your ethnic group or background?'

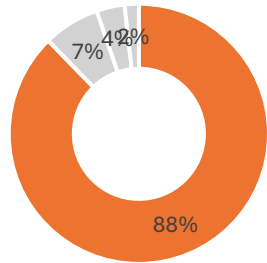


The majority (**70%**) of respondents chose Straight/Heterosexual, when asked about their sexual orientation. **19%** didn't answer the question and **11%** were LGB and other sexual orientations.

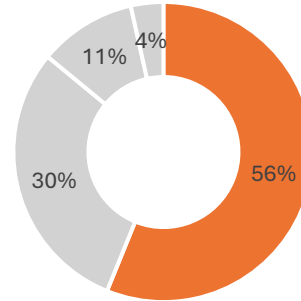
Most respondents (**56%**) chose 'White' as their ethnic group, with **35%** of respondents being global majority and mixed ethnic groups. The largest of this group were those who chose 'Black or Black British' as their ethnic group, this accounted for **14%** of total respondents.

Although most respondents chose '**No religion**' (**30%**) when asked about their religion, **47%** of respondents did answer that they were religious, with a large proportion of respondents (**28%**) chose 'Christian' as their religion.

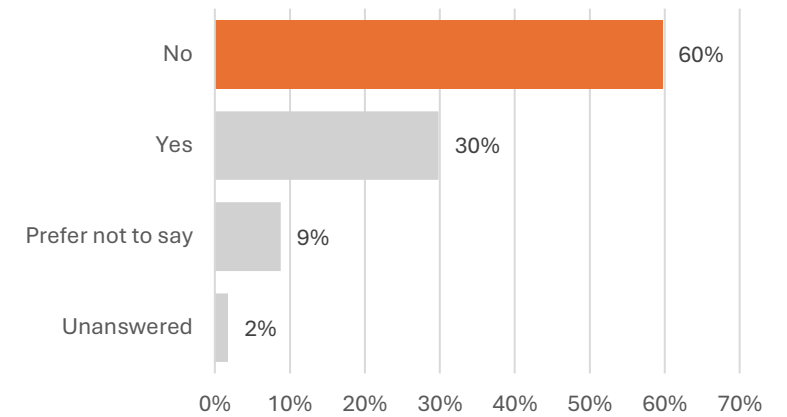
No accounts for the majority of 'Are you pregnant, on maternity leave, or returning from maternity leave?'



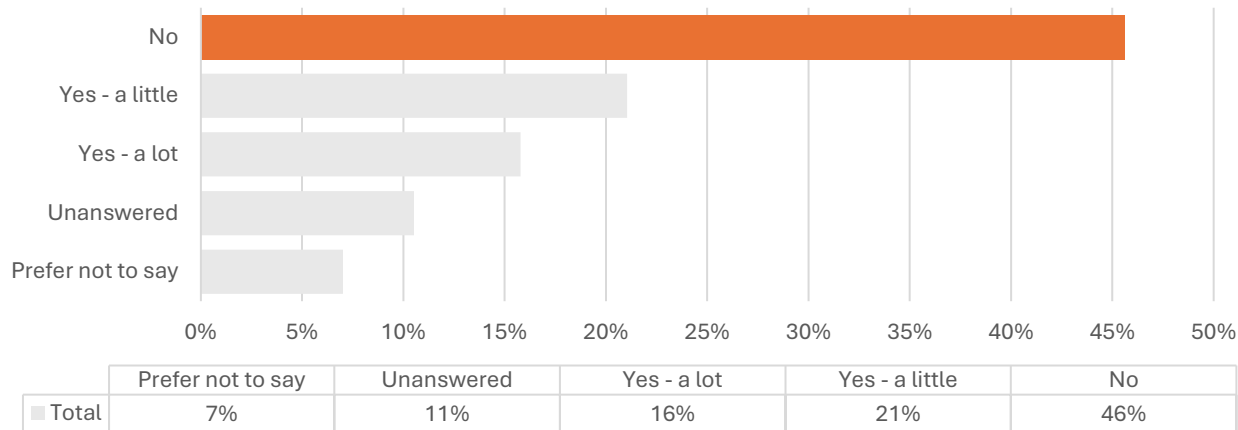
Yes accounts for the majority of 'Are you married or in a civil partnership?'



Percentage distribution of 'Are you a carer?'



Percentage distribution of 'Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a long-term illness?'



88% of respondents answered that they weren't pregnant, on maternity leave, or returning from it. **11%** of respondents chose not to answer the question, and just **2%** chose 'Yes'.

56% of respondents answered, 'Yes' to the marriage or civil partnership question, **30%** answered 'No' and **15%** chose not to answer.

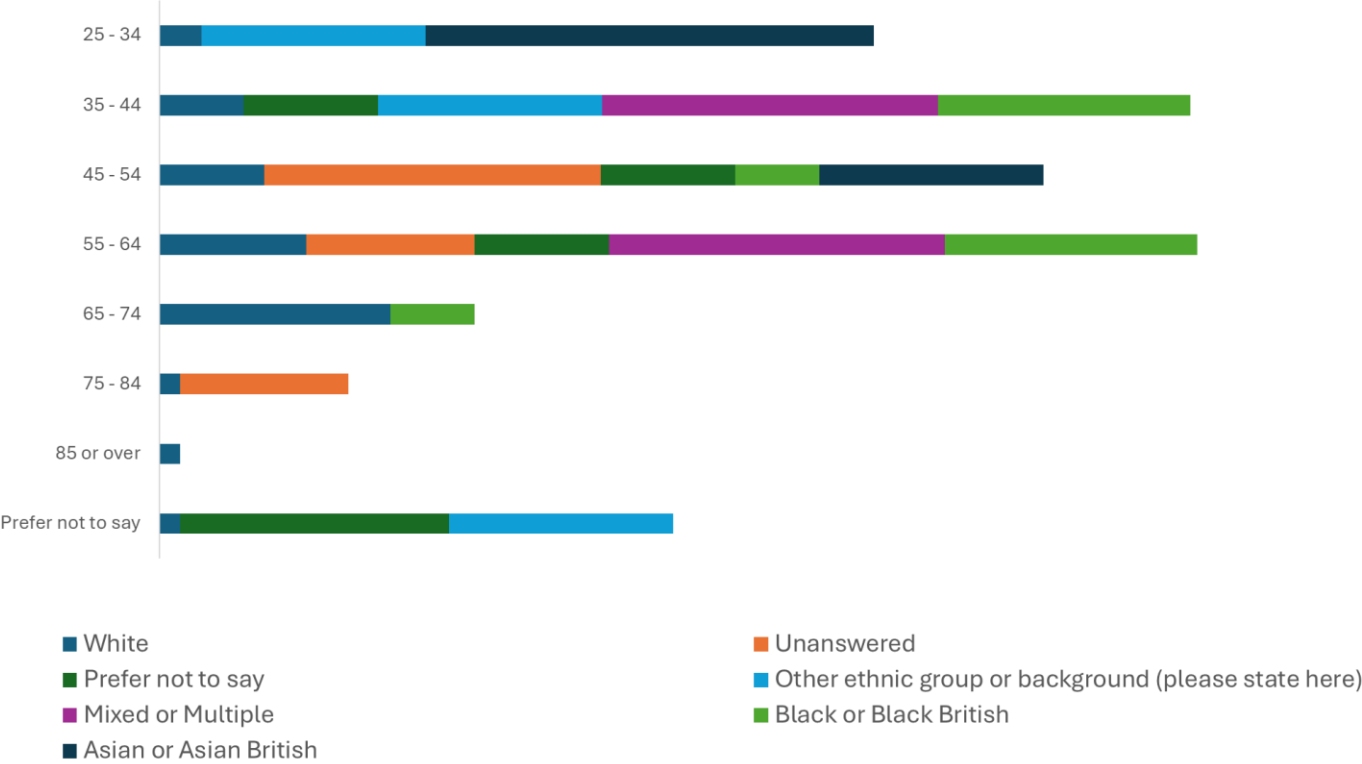
60% of respondents answered 'No' to the carer question, with **30%** answering that they were.

37% of respondents answered that they had some long-term ill health which causes their day-to-day activities to become limited. **40%** of respondents answered no to the question and **18%** did not answer the question.

Intersectionality analysis

Age – Ethnic Group

Distribution of ages and ethnic groups



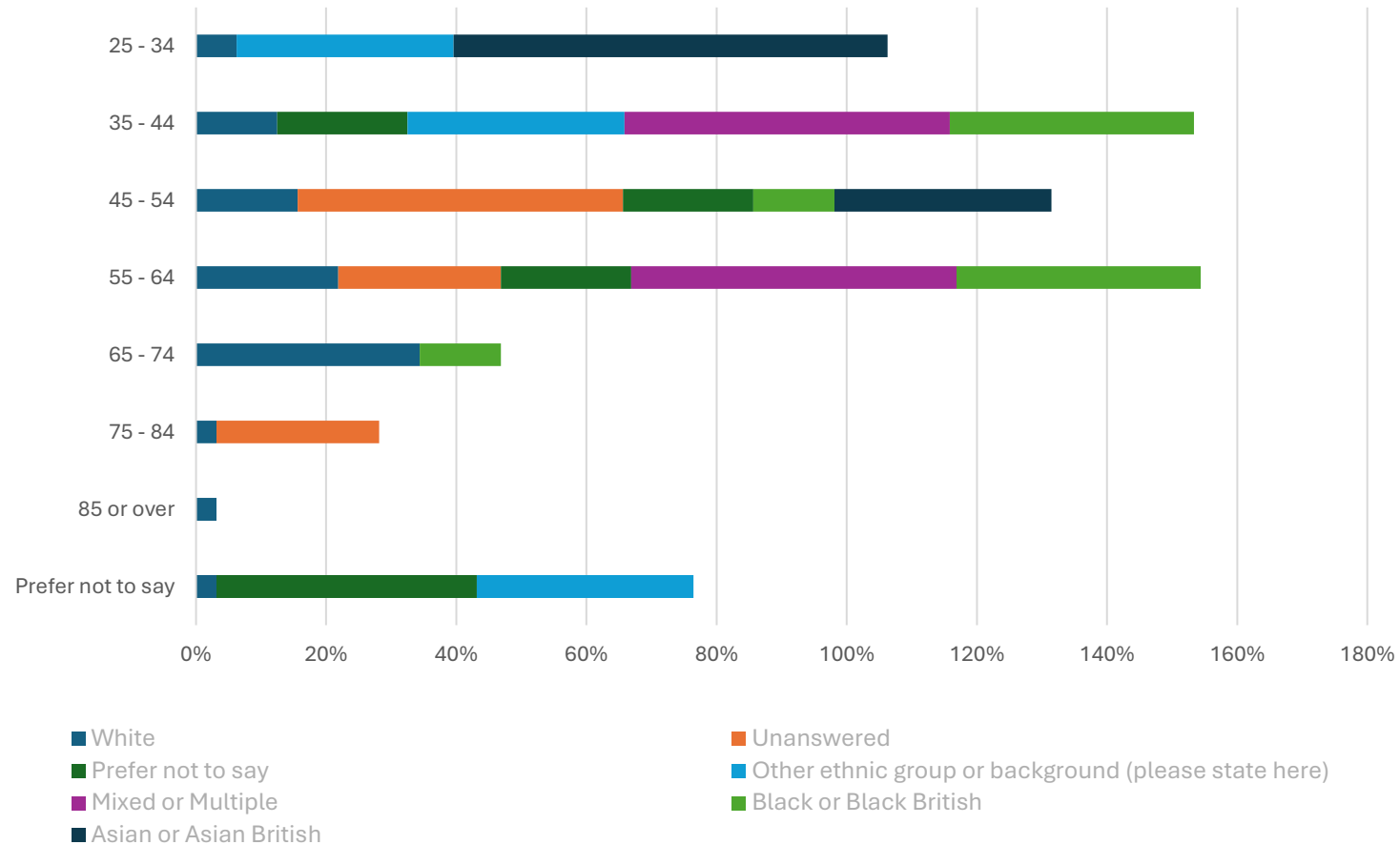
Analysis of the proportional representation of ethnic groups within each of the age bands.

The majority ethnicity of those in each of the age ranges, who chose to answer the question:

- 24-34 – Asian (67%)
- 35-44 – Mixed or Multiple (50%)
- 45-54 – Asian (33%)
- 55-64 – Mixed or Multiple (50%)
- 65-74 – White (34%)
- 75 - 85+ White (6%)

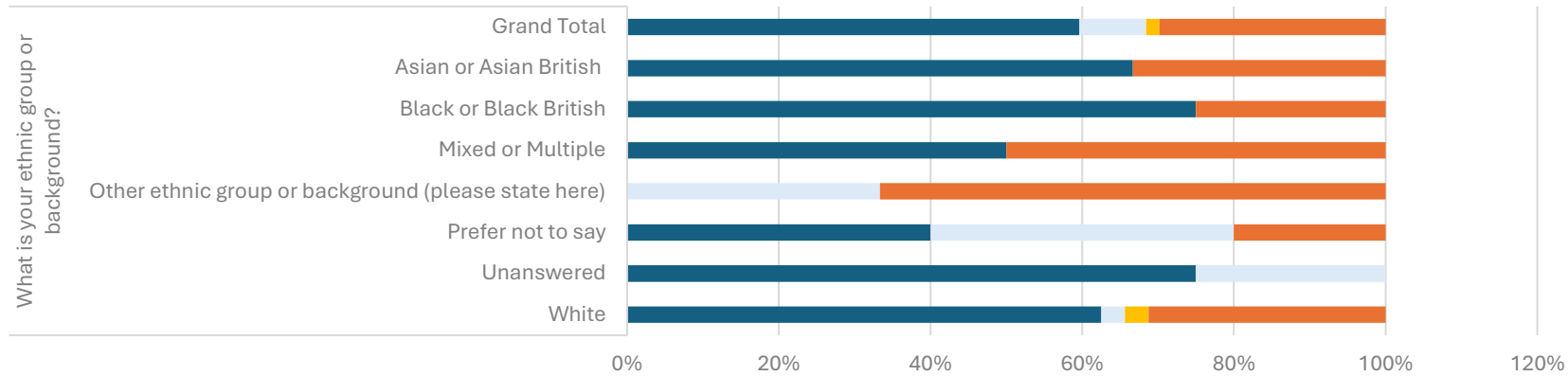
Ethnic

Distribution of 'Are you a carer?' for each 'What is your ethnic group or background?'



Distribution of carers in ethnic groups

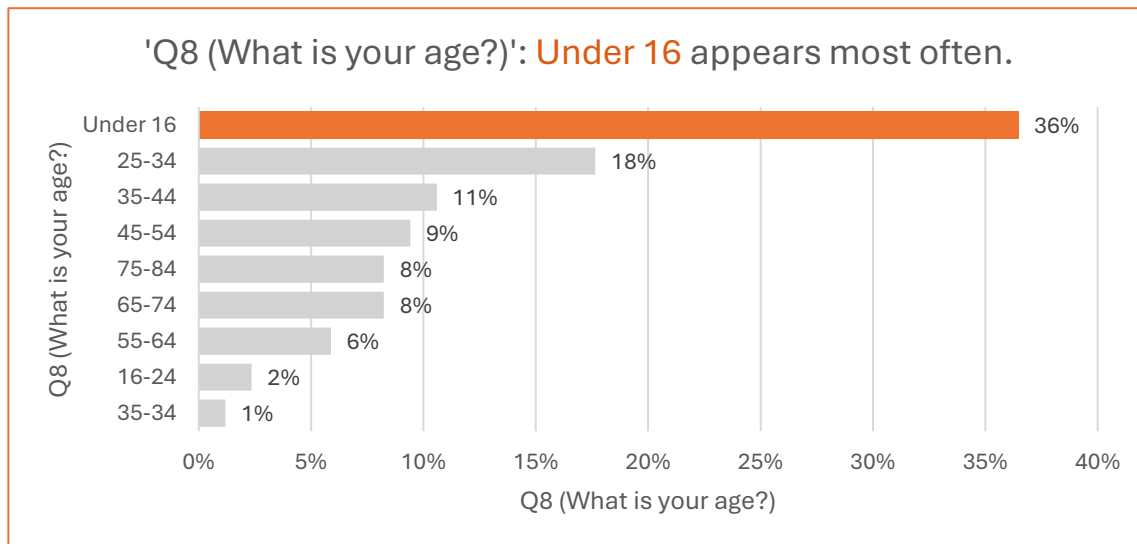
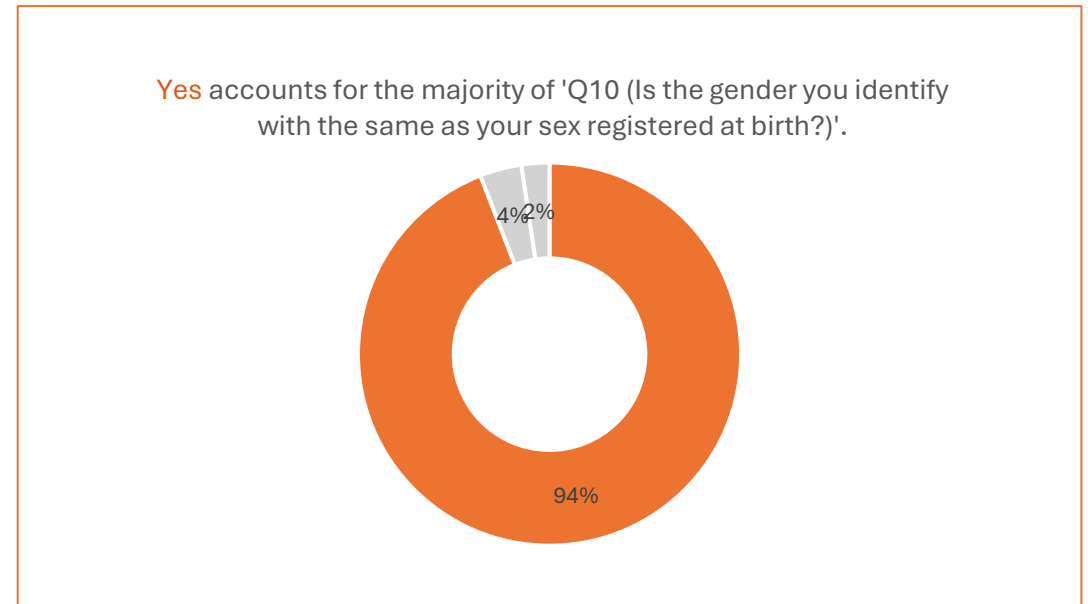
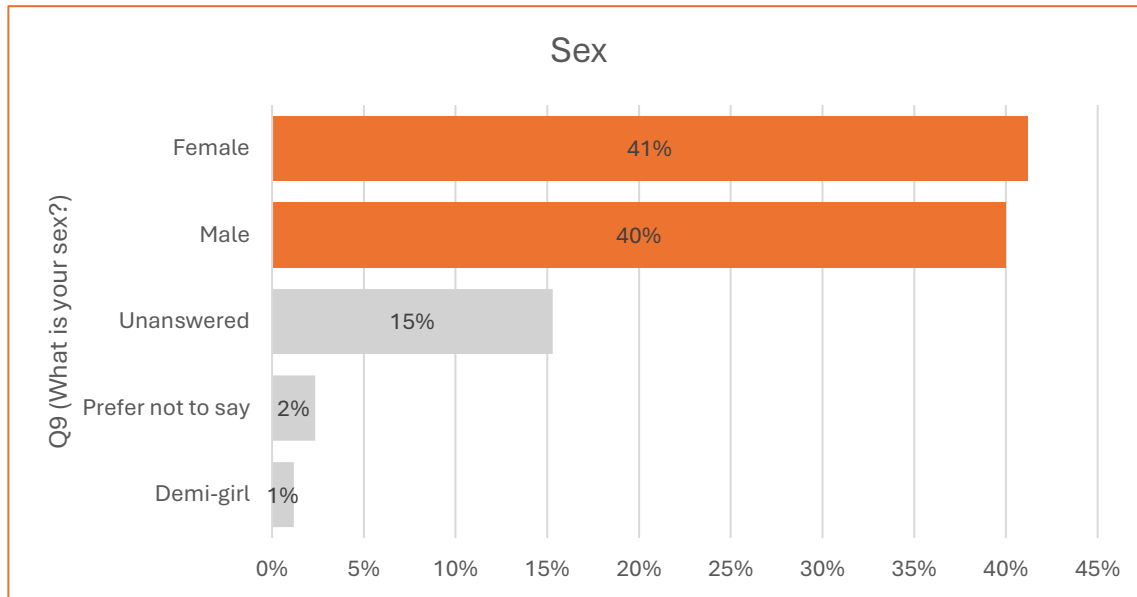
Carers Ethnic Groups



	What is your ethnic group or background?							
	White	Unanswered	Prefer not to say	Other ethnic group or background (please state here)	Mixed or Multiple	Black or Black British	Asian or Asian British	Grand Total
No	63%	75%	40%	0%	50%	75%	67%	60%
Prefer not to say	3%	25%	40%	33%	0%	0%	0%	9%
Unanswered	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%
Yes	31%	0%	20%	67%	50%	25%	33%	30%

■ No
 ■ Prefer not to say
 ■ Unanswered
 ■ Yes

Workshop attendee demographics

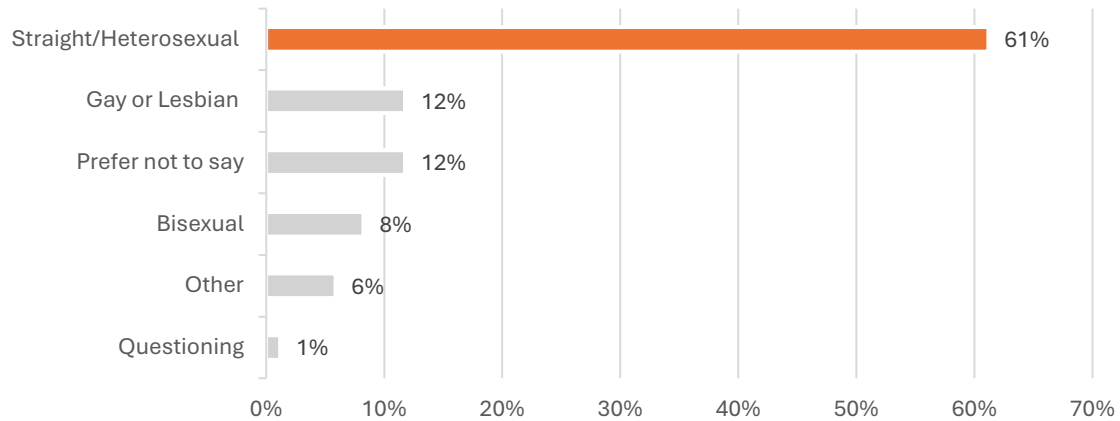


The majority (**36%**) of respondents chose were in the under 16 age range, followed by **18%** in the 25-34 age range.

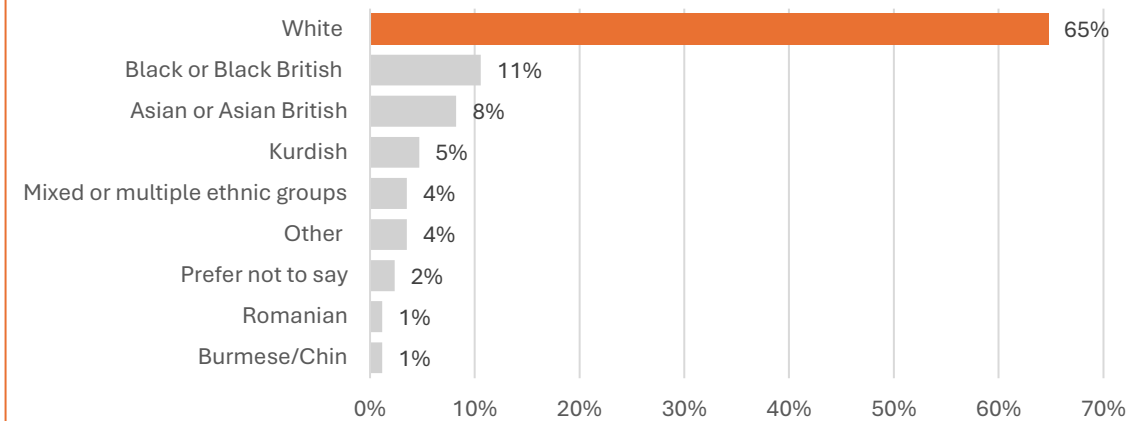
There was an even distribution of respondents who answered 'Male' or 'Female', with **17%** of respondents who chose not to answer the question.

Most respondents (**94%**) answered 'Yes' to the gender identity question, with **2%** answering 'No', and **4%** didn't answer the question.

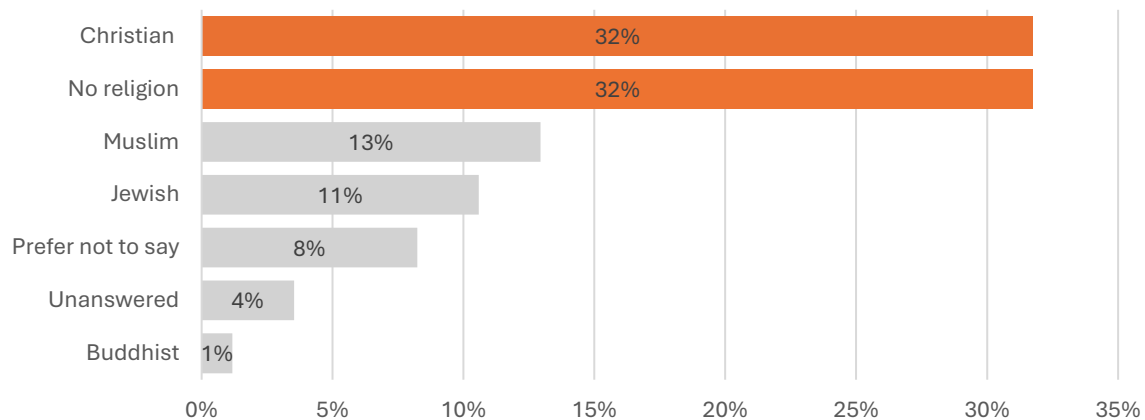
Straight/Heterosexual accounts for the majority of 'Q11
(What is your sexual orientation?)'.



Distribution of ' Q12 (What is your ethnic group or
background?) '.



'Q13 (What is your current religion, if any?)': **Christian**
and **No religion** equally favoured

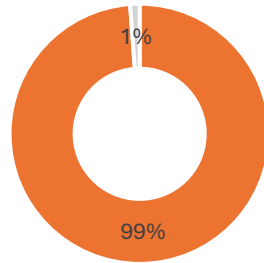


The majority (**61%**) of respondents chose Straight/Heterosexual, when asked about their sexual orientation. **12%** didn't answer the question and **27%** were LGB and other sexual orientations or questioning.

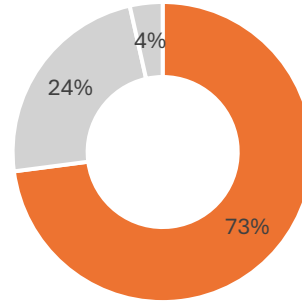
Most respondents (**65%**) chose 'White' as their ethnic group, with **36%** of respondents being global majority and mixed ethnic groups. The largest of this group were those who chose 'Black or Black British' as their ethnic group, this accounted for **11%** of total respondents.*

Respondents answered equally favourably to 'Christian' and 'No religion' (**32%**). Those who didn't answer the question equated to **12%**.

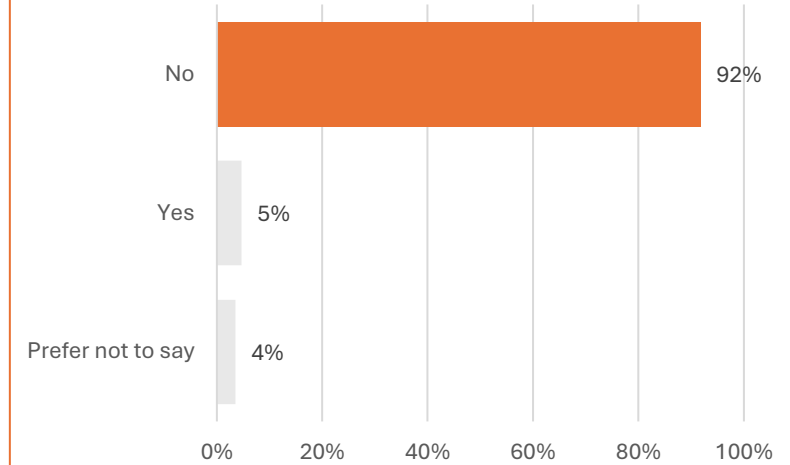
No accounts for the majority of 'Q17 (Are you pregnant, on maternity leave, or returning from maternity leave?)'.



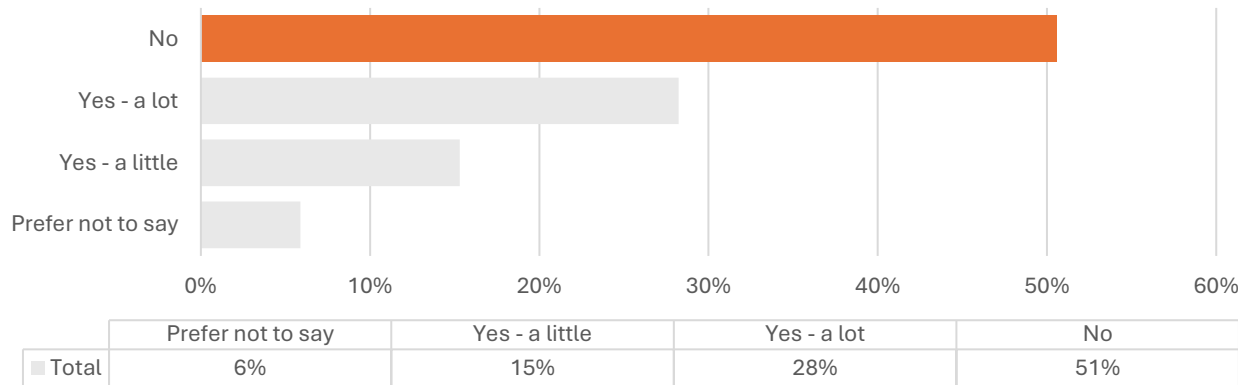
No accounts for the majority of 'Q16 (Are you married or in a civil partnership?)'.



Most respondents not carers



Distribution of ' Q14 (Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a long-term illness, health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?) '



99% of respondents answered that they weren't pregnant, on maternity leave, or returning from it. **1%** of respondents chose not to answer the question'.

24% of respondents answered 'Yes' to the marriage or civil partnership question, **73%** answered 'No', and **4%** chose not to answer.

92% of respondents answered 'No' to the carer question, with **5%** answering that they were.

43% of respondents answered that they had some long-term ill health which causes their day-to-day activities to become limited. **51%** of respondents answered no to the question and **6%** did not answer the question.