

COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT CONSULTATION 25/26

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Methodology

The consultation was carried out between 11th December 2024 and 28th January 2025 for a period of 7 weeks.

The survey was hosted on the Let's Talk Coventry platform. This is the platform where Coventry City Council hosts all its live consultations. Supporting documents were provided on the Let's Talk page as well as a description of the proposed changes to the scheme, including the Consultation Background Document , the Pre Budget-Report Appendix , and the Equalities Impact Assessment.

Also included were Frequently Asked Questions outlining where to gain further support, who pays etc.

Everybody in receipt of Council Tax Support were contacted directly 12,605 electronically, 3,345 of these were undelivered and letters were issued to these customers. There were a further 3,543 letters issued to customers where we held no phone number or email address for them. They were all given details of how to have their say on the proposals. An email address and telephone number were provided for those requiring the survey in a different format

The consultation was promoted across the city through Let's Talk Coventry newsletters through December and January.

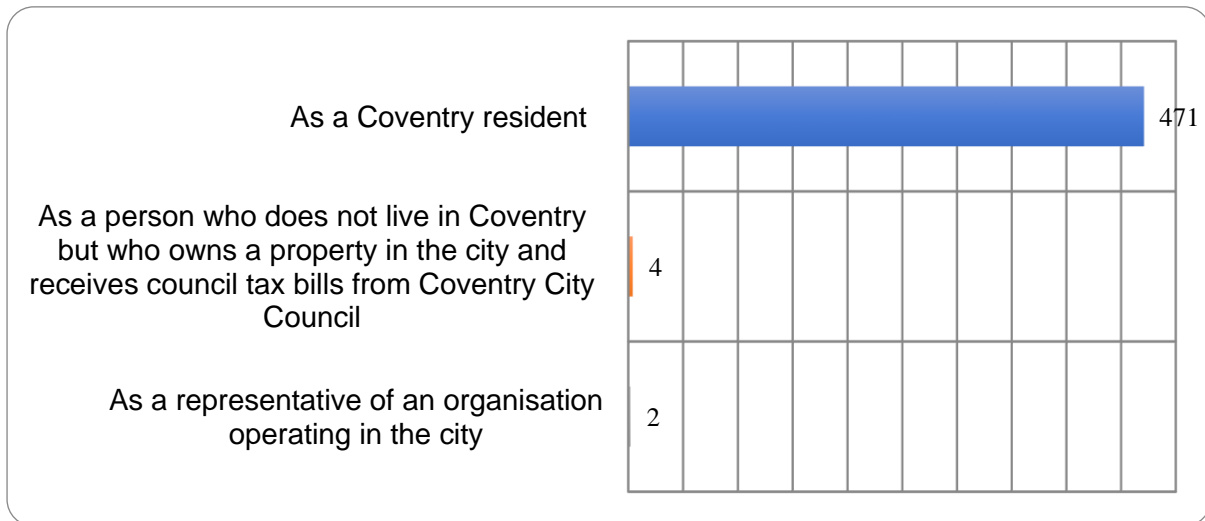
Survey Findings

Have you read the background information about the proposed changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme?

Information read?	Number
Yes, I have read it	454
No, I have not read it	17

96% of respondents stated that they had read the background information before completing the survey.

How are you responding to this survey?



This question was answered by 477 respondents, most respondents (99%) were responding as Coventry residents.

Two responses were received from organisations, Out in Cov and Urban Goodies CIC.

Which of the following statements best describes Council Tax Support for your property in Coventry?

Support Received	Number	%
I live in Coventry and my household receives full Council Tax Support	116	24%
I live in Coventry and my household receives partial Council Tax Support.	248	52%
I live in Coventry and my household receives no Council Tax Support.	89	19%
I do not live in Coventry.	2	
Don't know	24	5%

More than half of the responses (52%) were from those receiving partial Council Tax Support, while almost a quarter were receiving full Council Tax Support (24%).

Followed by 19% of respondents who do not receive any Council Tax Support.

Proposals were outlined within the consultation document, there were 2 outlined changes, these proposed changes come under the headings of reduction in maximum support, and give additional support where a resident is made liable for council tax for 2 homes

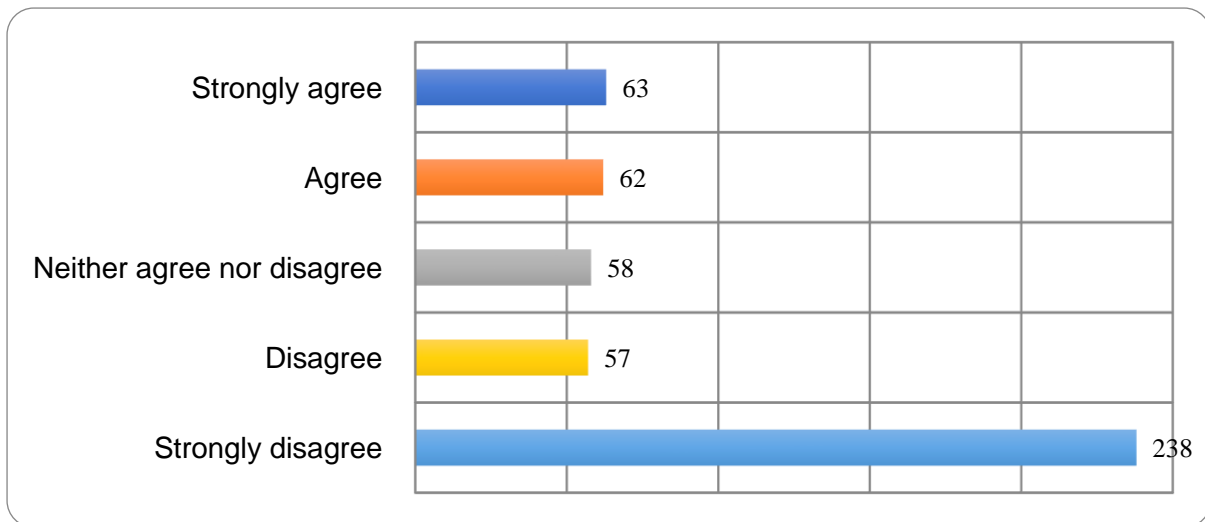
Respondents were asked their opinions about the proposed changes.

Do you agree with the proposed reduction in maximum support to the Council Tax Support scheme?

How much agreement	Number	%
Strongly agree	63	13%
Agree	62	13%
Neither agree nor disagree	58	12%
Disagree	57	12%
Strongly disagree	238	50%

Half of the respondents disagreed strongly with the proposal, 50% and a further 12% disagreed.

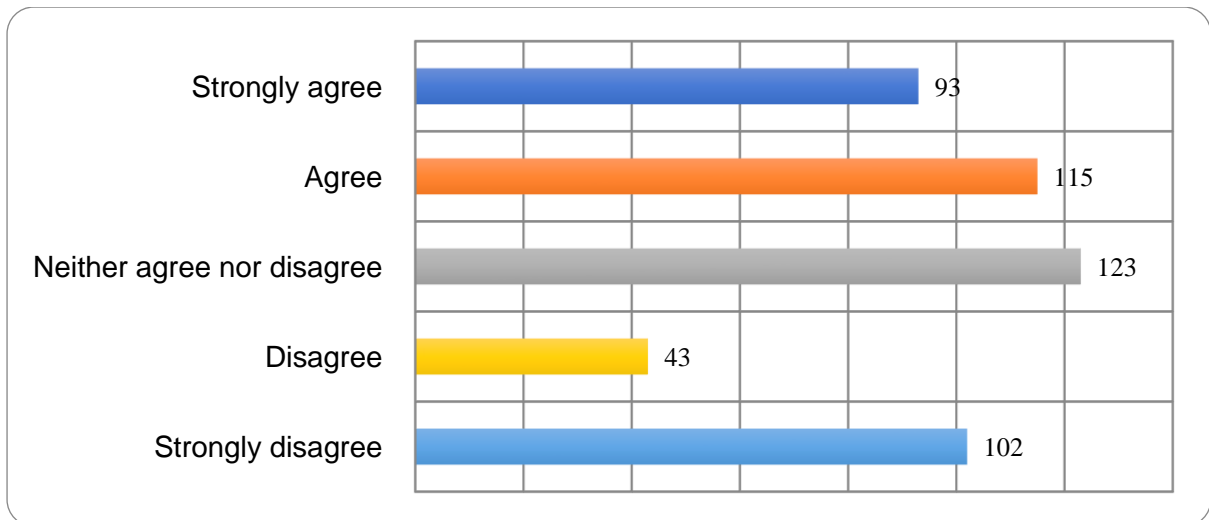
Therefore, more than 2/3 of respondents are in disagreement.



Do you agree with the proposed additional support where a resident is made liable for Council Tax for two homes in the specific situations stated.?

How much agreement	Number	%
Strongly agree	93	20%
Agree	115	24%
Neither agree nor disagree	123	26%
Disagree	43	9%
Strongly disagree	102	21%

Of the 476 people who responded to this question more agree than disagree with the proposal – 44% either strongly agree or agree compared to 30% who either strongly disagree or disagree.



What impact (positive/negative) do you think the proposal could have for different groups of people? (please consider age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race/ethnicity, religion and belief, sex/gender, and sexual orientation)

Theme	Number
Will cause financial hardship	250
Negative impact on the most vulnerable	116
Agree with proposal / feel these groups of people shouldn't be treated differently	33
Poor decision making by the Council / Wasting money	18

Of the 479 customers who completed the survey, 375 provided responses to this question.

The majority of comments received were in relation to the financial hardship the proposal would cause to vulnerable groups generally. Many were along the lines of the examples below:

- *I think that it would just be another financial worry for people who are already struggling.*
- *I think I would have an incredibly negative impact on the poorer households which are struggling with a higher bills as it is and will put more people into poverty and debt which will in turn lead to more mental health issues for fear of losing their house or having County Court judgements against them, which would cause it incredibly hard for them to gain any kind of credit in the future*
- *They would cause people to struggle even more than they do now I know I will. Since Covid and the cost-of-living crisis people don't have the spare cash available. Some weeks I have to borrow money to get my food shopping for that week.*

Many comments mentioned the impact the proposal would have on specific groups of people:

- *The proposal to reduce council tax support would have a horrendous effect on young people with disabilities, especially if they are unemployed or underemployed and on a low income.*
- *If CTS is reduced, it might have a negative impact in the lives of disabled people because of not being able to get adequate care.*
- *Reduction in CTS for low income working households will plunge more children into poverty. Householders may also fall into debt, fall behind with rent/mortgage and become homeless.*

Some respondents did however agree with the proposal, and / or voiced opinion that everyone should be treated equally.

- *The reduction in council tax support should not have a huge impact on eligible residents.*
- *We all have to pay something, I am 64 next year, I'm on universal credit and pip, my doctor won't let me work so the help I get from the council is invaluable.*
- *It's tough times so tough decisions need to be made. Strongly agree to this cut.*

Some respondents felt that this was poor decision making by the Council, or that money was being wasted in other areas.

- *Council pays the councillors too much, we have 2 directors, and the council gains profit from waste and other services. This reduced tax aid payments will put people like me in poverty. I'm trying to make ends meet, but the council provides nothing more as a resident. Coventry council does a poor job on arts & culture, education and social economics. This is a poor city that looks very sad compared to our neighbouring towns and cities. Taxing our residents more is not the answer.*
- *People who are unable to work due to ill-health old age etc, are the ones most struggling in this city. Trying to make ends meet is near impossible as it is. Higher energy prices, food prices through the roof. Minimal benefit increase next year, and now you want to hit us with reducing the council tax support you give - shameful. Yet you'll spend money on a ferris wheel and Christmas lights - the priority's are all wrong!*

If you have any other comments on the current proposal and/or would like to make alternative suggestions.

Theme	Number
Council should raise money by other means	89
Poor decision making by the Council / Wasting money	47
Proposal will affect the most vulnerable	38
Will cause Financial Hardship	35
Agree / partially agree with the proposal	12

Of the 479 customers who completed the survey, 213 provided responses to this question.

Many of the respondents suggested that the Council should raise money by other means. Some acknowledged that savings needed to be made but felt that the money should be found elsewhere:

- *An alternative would be to freeze rates for at least 3 years to plateau spending and look elsewhere where the council has mis- managed funds. You can charge more for council tax or reduce the amount of help people do need and then charge for brown bin collections for example. How much is spent on the roads network and bicycle lanes to little or no effect!*
- *This deficit could be narrowed by implementing council tax for properties that only have students reside whom do not pay council tax! Tax the property owners! Raise the council tax rates, the highest band 5% lowest band 1% again the cost here being mainly put onto those that can afford it!
The current proposal is basically an increase of 25% to the bills being paid by the poorest residents of the city, this clearly is not the correct way to reduce a deficit or to raise funds!*
- *I don't agree that our council tax should increase so we cover the costs created by refugees being housed in hotels in Coventry and associated costs incurred by refugees.*

A number of respondents felt that the Council made poor decisions and wasted money on “vanity projects”

- *stop wasting money by putting in cycle lanes when there are far more important issues to be tackled*
- *it is a shame for the Council to seek additional money in the sector it neglects the most. Look at this city - everywhere is dirty and full of rubbish, because you do not know how to manage your expenses well. The mere fact of reducing rubbish collection a few years ago should give appropriate savings. You spend money on nonsense that the city does not need. I have the impression that the Council cannot cope with its duties. If the costs of rubbish collection are too expensive, find another contractor. Keeping the city clean is one of the Council's duties. Maybe it is also worth looking at how other cities, not necessarily in England, solve this problem. Impose fines on shops that do not take care of cleanliness, on properties that turn their gardens into rubbish dumps, the system of penalties and rewards has always mobilized society to act.*

Concerns over the proposal affecting the most vulnerable were raised.

- *Already majority of people are struggling, and this will have a big impact on them. many people do not understand such as me. I also have mental health issues. Council tax is already too high.*
- *The minimum support needs to be either kept the same as it is now or increased to 85% - 90% for the poorest households as well as additional support for people with disabilities - such as looking at making it easier to get work that they can do (if applicable), as well as additional support in households with people with disabilities and their carers. This is required so that Coventry can help those who are most at need, which is a key part of this city's traditions.*
- *The cost of living is growing higher on daily basis. The CTS for disabled people should be increased not reduced at this time.*

Similarly, respondents tended to comment on the proposal bringing about general financial hardship.

- *Taking yet more from an already low income is not going to work. We are in poverty already!*
- *Coventry is an area where there's lots of poverty and families struggling to make ends meet. It would have an enormous impact on daily lives.*
- *I for one couldn't afford to pay a more, as it stands if food bills raise and household bills raise, I will struggle and must choose if I can heat my house or feed myself. These are difficult times for everyone specially pensioners and people on benefits.*

A small number of respondents were in favour of all or parts of the proposal

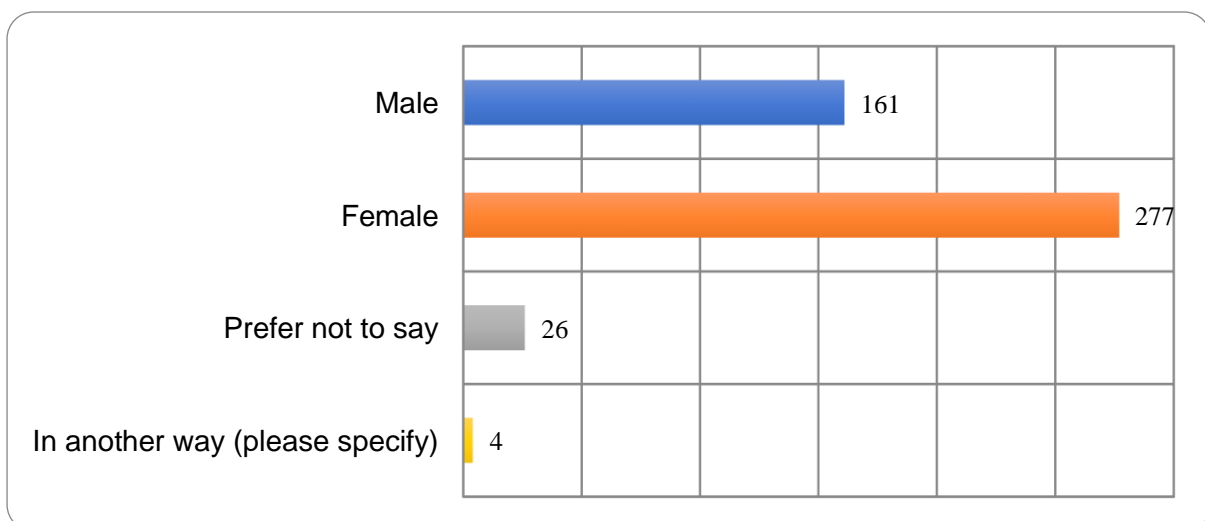
- *I understand that cuts need to be made somewhere. Even though I may be negatively affected by the cuts I understand that it is difficult for the council to function on its current budget, and when further cuts to the budget are implemented, things will be even more difficult.*
- *I think you have to make choice to get back on track but it still seem unfair sorry i have no alternative suggestions*

Profile of Respondents

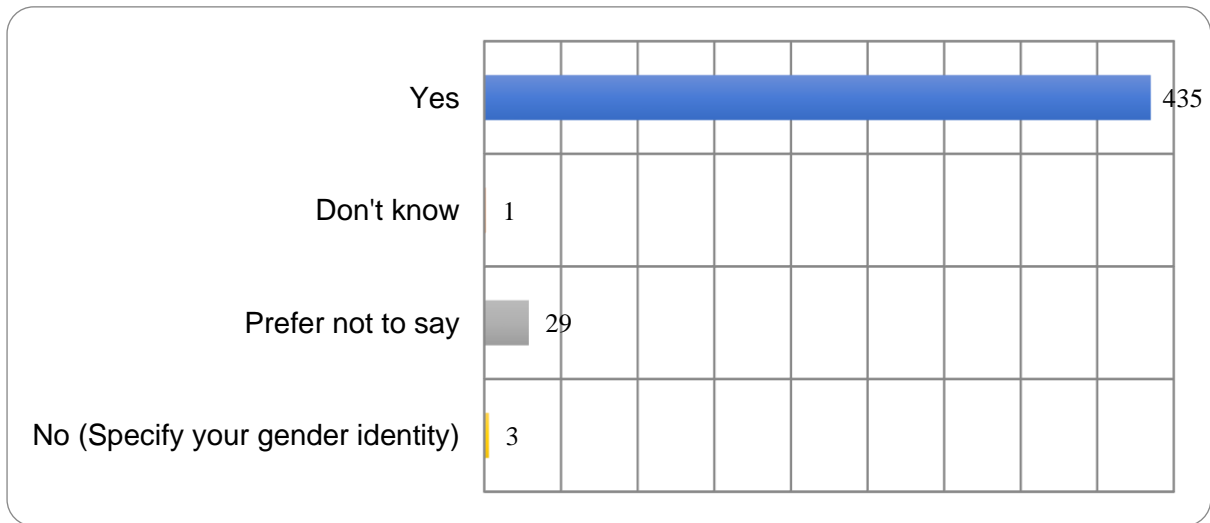
What is the postcode for your property in Coventry?

Ward	Number of responses
Bablake	23
Binley and Willenhall	34
Cheylesmore	26
Earlsdon	11
Foleshill	34
Henley	29
Holbrook	28
Longford	31
Lower Stoke	23
Radford	22
Sherbourne	10
St Michael's	36
Upper Stoke	21
Wainbody	6
Westwood	36
Whoberley	21
Woodlands	10
Wyken	15

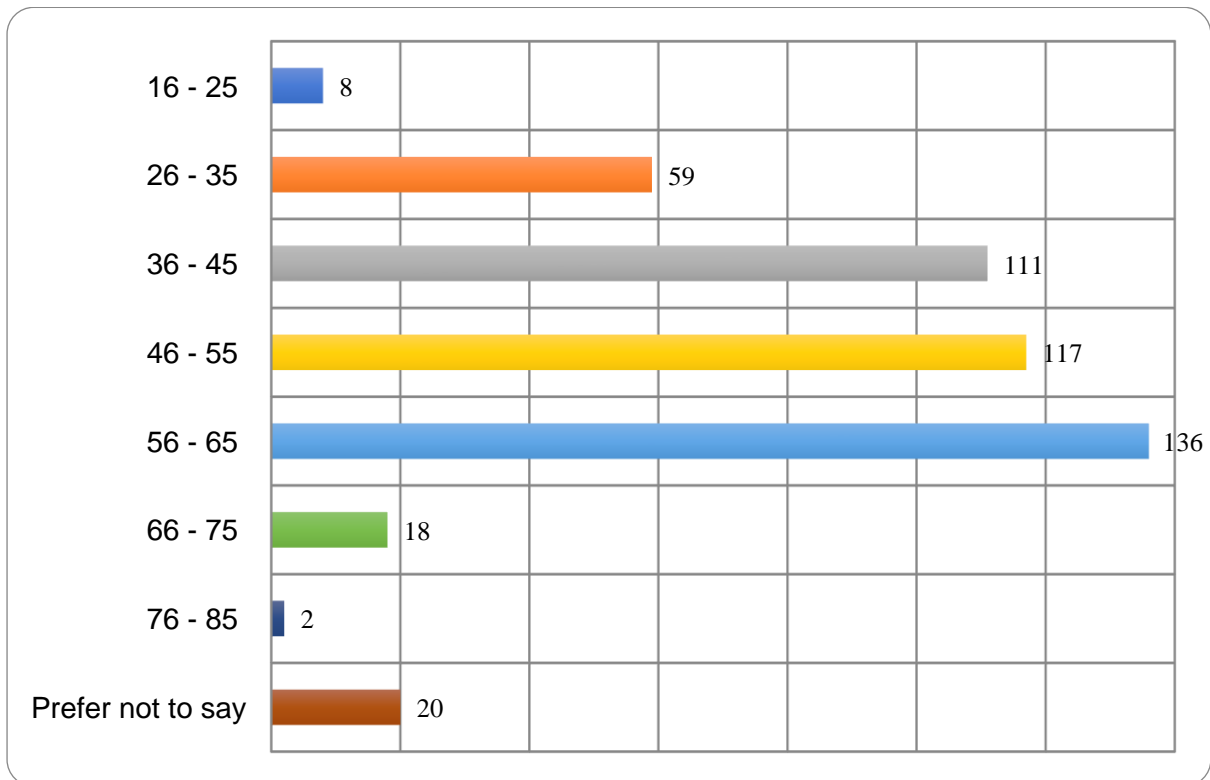
How would you best describe yourself?



Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?

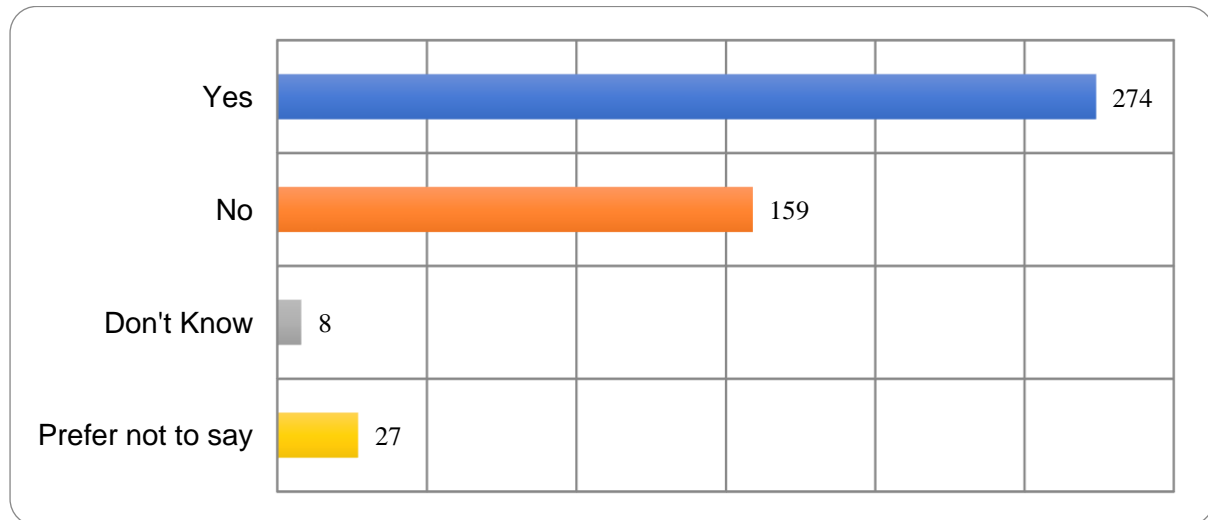


What is your age?

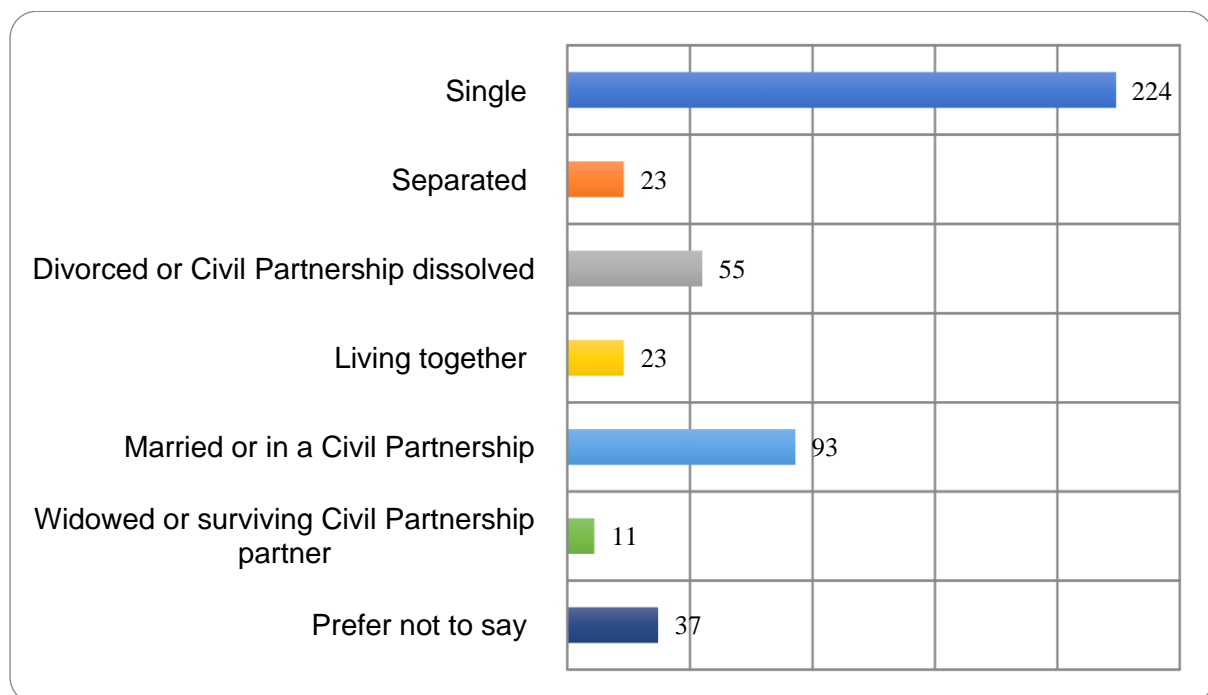


Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

The Disability Discrimination Act defines a disabled person as someone who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.



What is your legal marital or Civil Partnership status?



How would you describe your ethnic background?

Ethnic Background	Number of respondents
White - English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	317
White Irish	5
White Other	30
Mixed - White and Black African	2
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	4
Mixed – other	6
Asian/ Asian British - Indian	20
Asian/ Asian British – Pakistani	4
Asian/ Asian British – Bangladeshi	2
Asian/ Asian British – Other	3
Black/Black British – African	18
Black/ Black British - Caribbean	4
Black/ Black British – Other	2
Arab	3
Prefer Not to say	43
Other	5