

Consultation Findings

Proposed Changes to Derby City Council's Election Cycle

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Version Control

Date Issued	Version	Status	Reason for change
09/08/2016	V.1	Final version sent to Service Lead	-
19/10/2016	V.2	Amended version sent to Service Lead	Amended incorrect percentage in paragraph 4.8 and related Table 2 in Appendix. Proof read. Format changes as required.
15/11/2016	V.3	Final proof read sent to lead	pg no. reference changed, decimal place rounding amended, pie chart relabelled.



Summary of Key Findings

- 231 people took part in the survey
- Just over two-thirds of respondents (68.1%) opted for Derby to change to 'whole council elections'
- Under a third of respondents (29.3%) believed that Derby should keep the current system, whilst 2.6% had no preference.
- Reasons cited for changing to whole Council elections included [see page 4]:
 - Efficiencies – Cost (financial), Time, Where savings could be reallocated
 - Governance – Stability, Accountability, Planning & Delivery
 - Voting – Election turnout, ease for voters
- Reasons cited for keeping the current system included [see page 5]:
 - Accountability, Immediate change
 - Democracy, Political Opinion
 - Practicalities, Personal opinion, other reasons
- 57 respondents gave other suggestions to be considered

1 Background

- 1.1 Derby City Council is one of a relatively small number of unitary authorities across England that hosts 'elections by thirds'. This means that under Derby's current model, voters go to the polls three times in every four years, on each occasion voting for 17 of the city's 51 councillors. Each year, one third of councillors are up for election, except in the fourth year when there are no elections.
- 1.2 The alternative model, adopted by 36 of the 54 unitary authorities in England, is to have 'whole council elections'. Under this model, voters would go to the polls once every four years, but all 51 of the councillors would be up for election. This four-year cycle would result in more councillors' seats being contested at the same time, with no scheduled local elections during the intervening period.

2 Purpose of the consultation

- 2.1 Both election cycle models have their own advantages and disadvantages, and as such a public consultation was launched in May 2016 to help inform the Council's decision on whether to change the election cycle in the future.
- 2.2 The findings of the consultation will be presented to a special meeting of Council for them to consider. If at this meeting a two-thirds majority of those in attendance who are eligible to vote support a change to the election cycle, the motion will be passed and Derby City Council will move to four yearly 'Whole Council Elections'.

3 Methodology

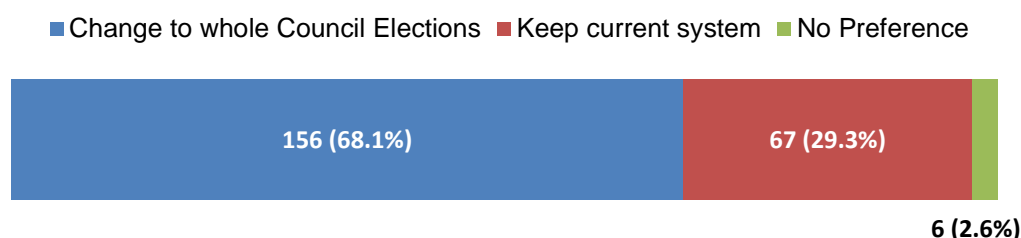
- 3.1 A public consultation was undertaken over eight weeks from 13 May until 8 July 2016 in the form of an online survey available through the Derby City Council web page.
- 3.2 The consultation was promoted in the local media in the period leading up to its launch and throughout it becoming available via the Derby City Council website, press releases and e shots.
- 3.3 All respondents were asked to state whether they felt that Derby should change to 'whole council elections' or keep the current system of 'election by thirds'. They were asked their reasons for this choice and whether there was anything else that they felt should be considered when making this decision. 231 individuals responded to the survey.

4 Results

Feedback on Proposals

- 4.1 Of the 231 respondents, 229 people expressed a preference; 156 (68.1%) believed that Derby should change to 'whole council elections', 67 (29.3%) of respondents preferred to keep the current system of 'election by thirds', 6 respondents had no preference (2.6%).

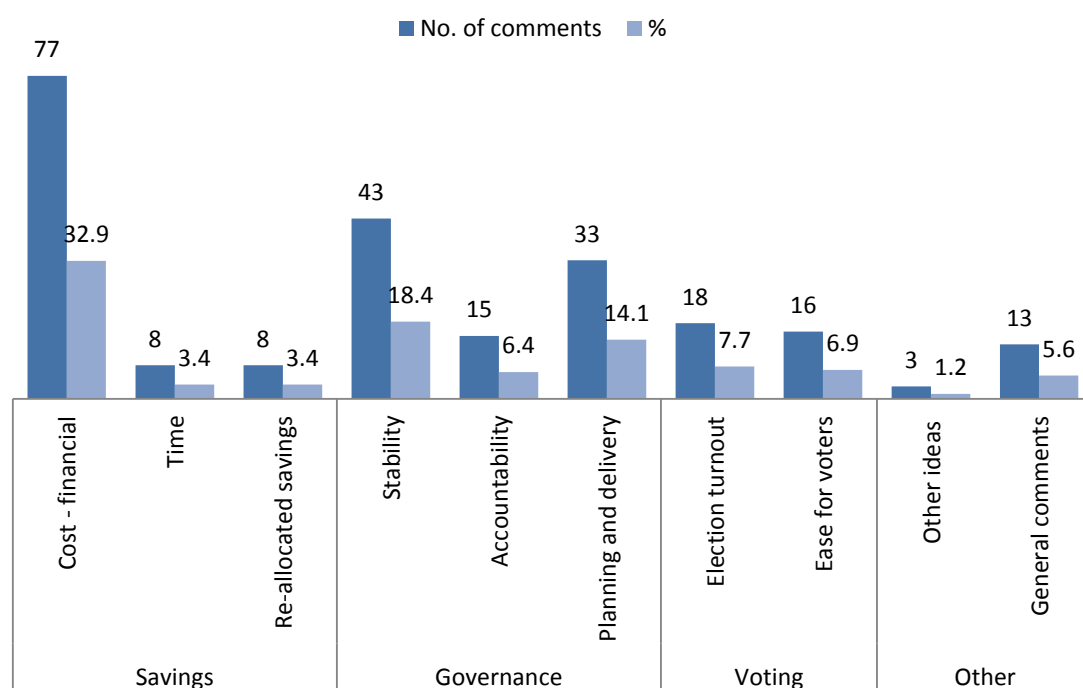
Chart 1: Preferred options for Derby residents to elect their Councillor



Base: 229 respondents

4.2 Respondents were asked to explain why they had selected their preferred option for Derby residents to elect their Councillors. Of the 156 respondents that selected 'Change to whole Council elections', 133 gave an explanation. Comments were categorised into broad themes as detailed in Chart 2.

Chart 2: Themed reasons for selecting 'change to whole Council elections'

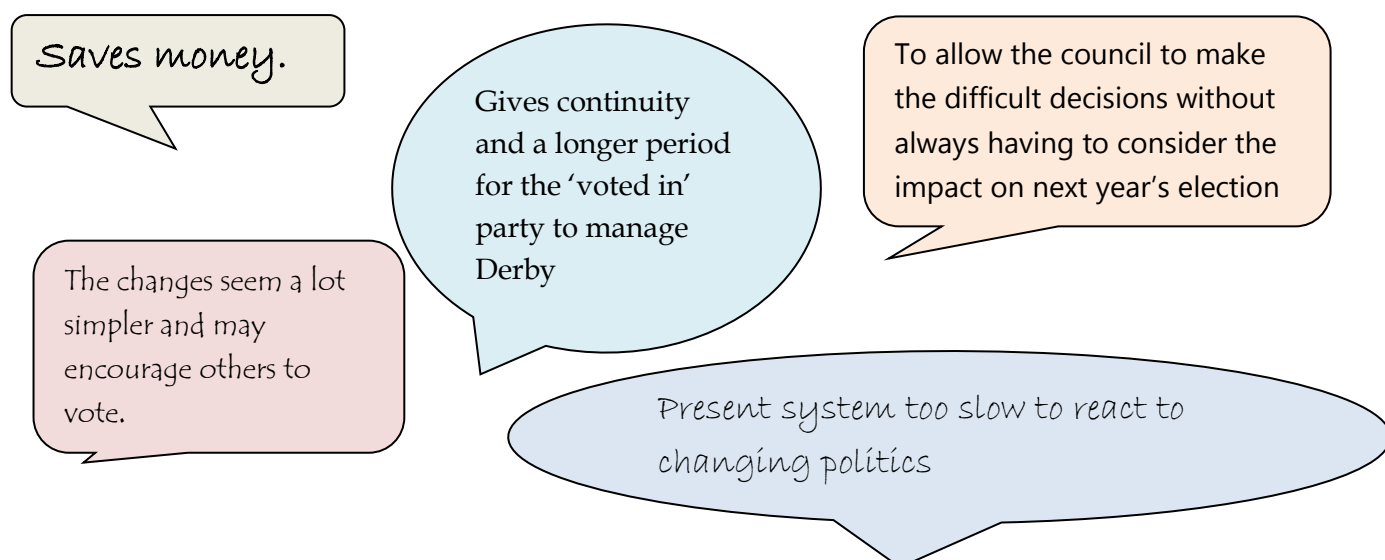


*The 133 respondents gave multiple comments and hence numbers do not total 133. Percentages are out of total themed comments.

4.3 After responses were categorised by theme, a number of sub-themes emerged. The key findings were as follows:

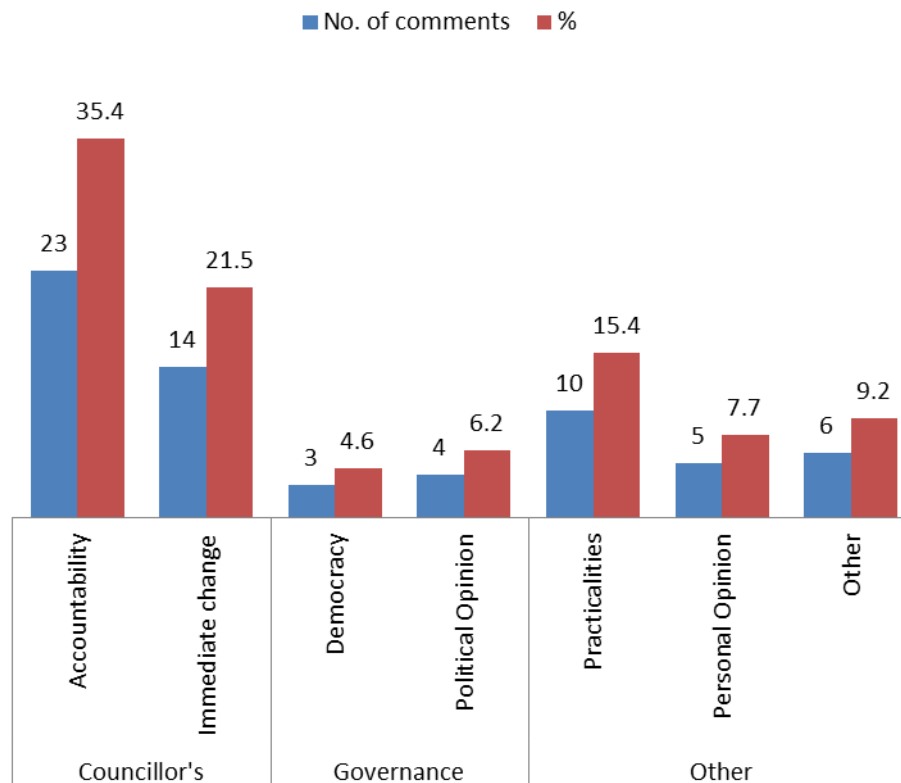
Most responses fell into the categories of 'Savings' (93 comments) and 'Governance' (91 comments) accounting for 78.6% of all comments made. Particular themes emerging from the comments related to 'cost (financial)', 'stability' and 'planning and delivery'.

Comments on why the election cycle should change included:



- 4.4 Of the 67 respondents that selected 'Keep current system', 54 gave an explanation as to their reasoning. Comments were categorised into broad themes as detailed in Chart 3.

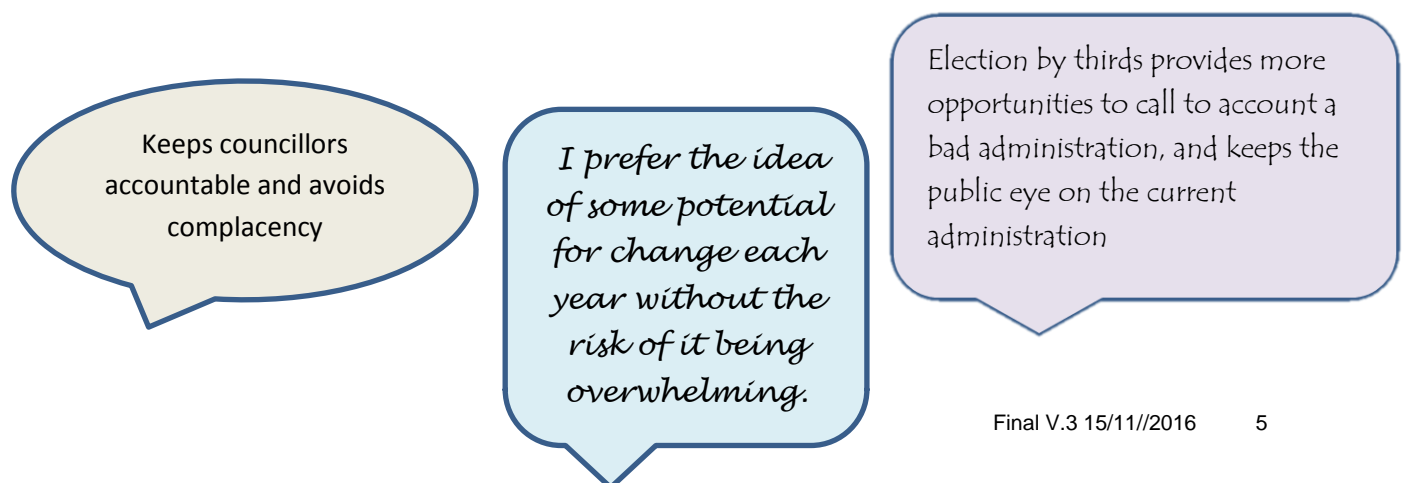
Chart 3: Themed reasons for selecting 'keep the current system'*



*The 133 respondents gave multiple comments and hence numbers do not total 133. Percentages are of total themed comments.

- 4.5 Most responses fell into the categories of 'Councillors' (37 comments) and 'Other' (21 comments) accounting for 89.2% of all comments made. Particular themes emerging from the comments related to 'accountability of Councillors to the electorate', the ability to effect 'immediate change' and 'practicalities' of changing a system.

Comments on why the election cycle should stay the same included:



Of the 6 respondents that selected 'no preference', 3 gave a rationale for their answer.

Comments from those who had no preference included:

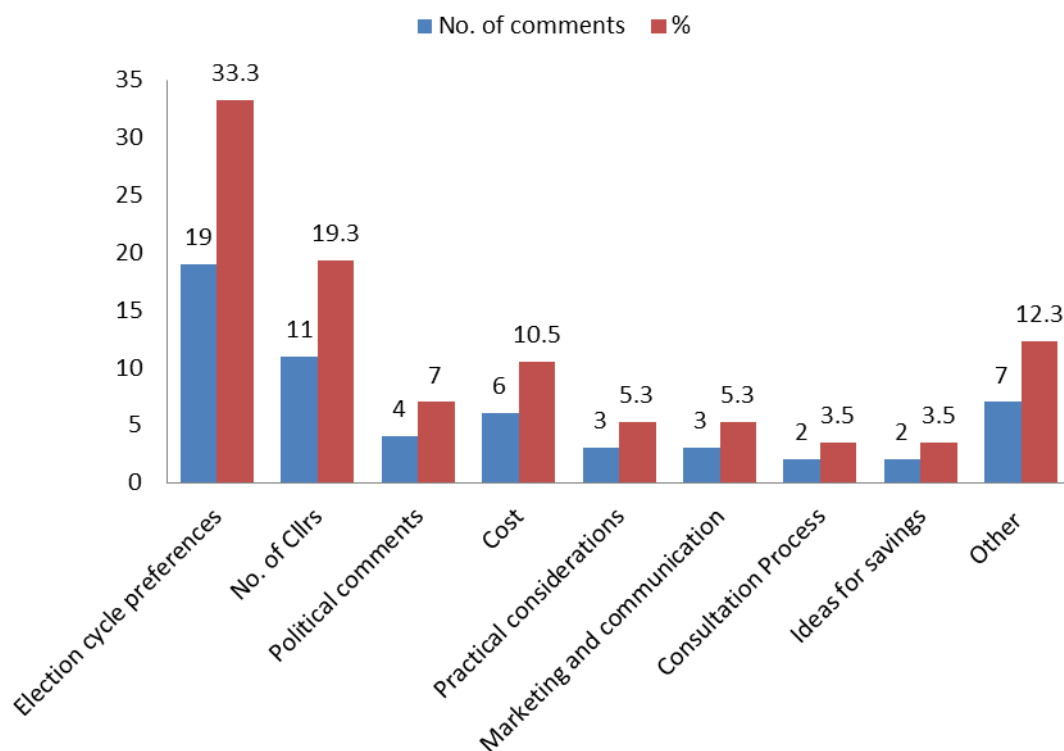
Having one third elected at a time does provide some stability within the council. It would be better if the PCC and other elections/votes could be arranged at the same time...

I would do half every two years as 4 years is too long, to wait if the council are not doing their jobs right

Other suggestions

4.6 Question 3 asked respondents to say if they had any other suggestions for consideration with regard to the election cycle proposals. 57 respondents provided a response

Chart 4: Themed 'other things to be considered'



- 4.7 Most responses fell into the categories of 'Election cycle preferences' (19 comments) and 'No. of Councillors' (11 comments) accounting for 52.6% of all comments made. Particular themes emerging from the comments related to frequency of elections – many of these respondents preferring to vote by halves every 2 years to ensure accountability to the electorate is maintained and the number of Councillors per ward was also a discussion point for 11 respondents.

Comments included:

I think every two years would be ideal it would keep councillors working harder in the community knowing they could be challenged for mistakes knowing their seat could be replaced. In the new system candidates from the first 50% would be Elected and in two years the next 50% and each council would have a 4 year term of office but 50% of the council could change every two years so better democratic service to the people and saves money than the present system.

Reduce the number of Councillors per ward, there is no need for 51 Councillor's – 3 per ward is far too many. 1 would be enough. This would also save money

As there is an increase in postal votes would it be possible to reduce the number of stations being used?

It would be helpful to attend pre-election meetings with Council election nominees speaking/debating, with each of the political parties represented. The parties are good at producing leaflets etc. but it would be more helpful to actually see and hear the nominees at local venues. This might also increase turn-out numbers for local Council elections and/or Crime Commissioner Elections (with an especially low turn-out at the moment). Politicians, even at a local level, need to be visible, well-known and responsive.

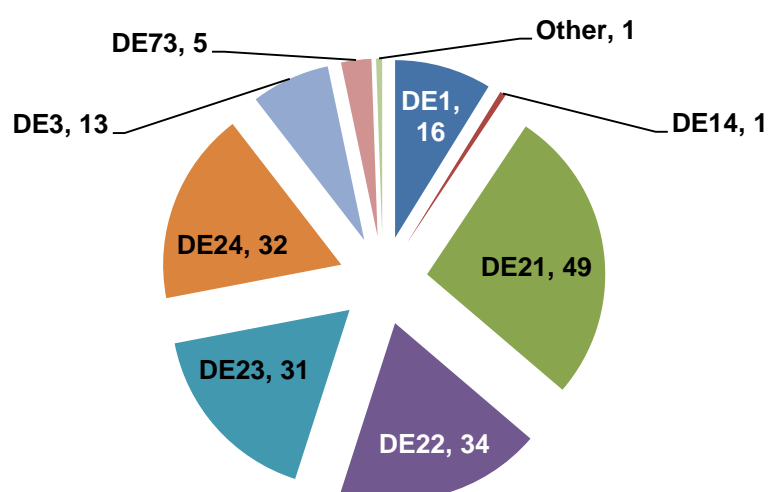
Who Responded

4.8 From the multiple response question, 87.9% (203) of respondents were Derby residents, 41.6% (96) of respondents were Public Sector employees/representatives, 7.4% (17) of respondents were Private Sector employees/representatives and 6.9% (16) respondents were from the Voluntary/Community sector either as a volunteer, an employee or a representative¹.

4.9 13 respondents (5.6%) selected 'other' which included responses such as 'retired' (7 respondents), and 'Self-employed/sole trader' (3 respondents). For respondents that did not describe themselves as Derby residents, the survey ended. Those who selected 'Derby resident' were asked a further series of questions.

4.10 182 provided their postcode. The breakdown is as detailed in Chart 5 below.

Chart 5: Respondent postcodes*

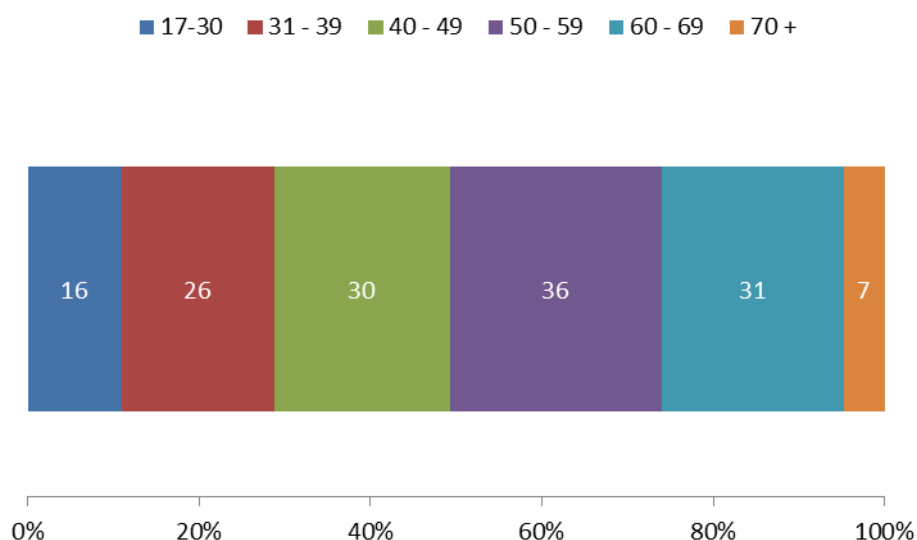


4.11 Of those that provided their details 51% were Male and 45% were Female. 8 respondents (4%) preferred not to say.

4.12 The vast majority of respondents (84.2% of the 146 that provided this information) were aged between 31 and 69. The age band least represented in the sample was the 70+ group with 7 respondents (4.8%). Chart 6 shows the respondent's age by percent.

¹ Percentages do not add up to 100 as respondents could select multiple options – see Appendix 1, Table 2

Chart 6: Respondent ages by percent



- 4.13 The most represented ethnic group with 167 respondents (86.5%) was White – English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British. The next highest were those who preferred not to say (10 respondents/5.2%) and Asian or Asian British – Indian with 6 respondents (3.1%).
- 4.14 Of the 199 people that responded, 21 (10.6%) considered themselves to be disabled, 161 (80.9%) did not consider themselves to be disabled and 17 (8.5%) preferred not to say.
- 4.15 When asked about sexuality, 75.4% (147) respondents considered they were heterosexual / straight, 3.6% (7) considered themselves to be a Gay man and 16.9% (33) preferred not to say.
- 4.16 When asked about religious beliefs, 96 respondents (48.7%) did not consider themselves to have a belief, 61 respondents did (30.9%). Of those who considered themselves to have a religious belief, the largest percentage was Christian accounting for 81.66% of responses (49).

Full data tables follow in Appendix 1.

5 Appendices

Appendix 1: Data Tables²

Table 1: Which option would you prefer for Derby residents to elect their councillors?

Response	Number	%
Change to 'whole council elections'	156	68.1%
Keep the current system	67	29.3%
No preference	6	2.6%

Base: 229 respondents

Table 2: Are you a...?

Response	Number	%*
Derby resident	203	87.9%
Public sector – employee / representative	96	41.6%
Private sector – employee / representative	17	7.4%
Voluntary / Community Sector – volunteer / employee / representative	16	6.9%
Other	13	5.6%

Base 231 (* percentages do not add up to 100 as respondents could select multiple options)

Table 3: Postcode

Response	Number	%
DE1	16	8.8
DE14	1	0.5
DE21	49	26.9
DE22	34	18.7
DE23	31	17
DE24	32	17.6
DE3	13	7.1
DE73	5	2.7
Other	1	0.5

Base:182 respondents

Table 4: Gender

Response	Number	%
Male	102	51%
Female	90	45%
Prefer not to say	8	4%

Base: 200 respondents

Table 5: Age

Age Band	Number	%
17 – 30	16	11.0
31 - 39	26	17.8
40 – 49	30	20.5
50 – 59	36	24.7
60 – 69	31	21.2
70 +	7	4.8

Base: 146 respondents

² Some percentages may not total 100.0 exactly due to data rounding

Table 6: Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Number	%
Any other Asian background	1	0.5%
Any other Dual Heritage Background	1	0.5%
Any other ethnic group	1	0.5%
Any other white background	1	0.5%
Asian or Asian British - Indian	6	3.1%
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	3	1.6%
Black or Black British – Caribbean	2	1%
White – English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British	167	86.5%
White – Irish	1	0.5%
Prefer not to say	10	5.2%

Base: 193 respondents

Table 7: Disabilities

Do you consider yourself to be disabled?	Number	%
Yes	21	10.6%
No	161	80.9%
Prefer not to say	17	8.5%

Base: 199 respondents

Table 8: Sexuality

I consider myself to be...	Number	%
Heterosexual/straight	147	75.4%
Bisexual	3	1.5%
Gay man	7	3.6%
Gay woman/Lesbian	3	1.5%
Other	2	1.0%
Prefer not to say	33	16.9%

Base: 195 respondents

Table 9: Religious Beliefs

Do you have any religious beliefs?	Number	%
Yes	61	30.9%
No	96	48.7%
Prefer not to say	40	20.3%

Base: 197 respondents

Table 10: Religion

Religious belief...	Number	%
Buddhist	1	1.66%
Christian	49	81.66%
Hindu	1	1.66%
Muslim	3	5.00%
Sikh	2	3.33%
Prefer not to say	4	6.66%

Base: 60 respondents

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