



CABINET

29 October 2015

A meeting of the CABINET will be held on Thursday, 5th November, 2015, 6.00 pm
in Committee Room 1 Marmion House, Lichfield Street, Tamworth

A G E N D A

NON CONFIDENTIAL

1 Apologies for Absence

2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting (Pages 1 - 2)

3 Declarations of Interest

To receive any declarations of Members' interests (pecuniary and non-pecuniary) in any matters which are to be considered at this meeting.

When Members are declaring a pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest in respect of which they have dispensation, they should specify the nature of such interest. Members should leave the room if they have a pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest in respect of which they do not have a dispensation.

4 Question Time:

To answer questions from members of the public pursuant to Executive Procedure Rule No. 13

5 Matters Referred to the Cabinet in Accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules

None

6 Equality and Diversity Scheme Update (Pages 3 - 24)

(The Report of the Portfolio Holder for Operations and Assets)

7 Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2016 Onwards Consultation Results
(Pages 25 - 58)

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. S. P.', written over a circular stamp or mark.

Chief Executive

People who have a disability and who would like to attend the meeting should contact Democratic Services on 01827 709264 or e-mail committees@tamworth.gov.uk preferably 24 hours prior to the meeting. We can then endeavour to ensure that any particular requirements you may have are catered for.

To Councillors: D Cook, R Pritchard, S Claymore, S Doyle, and M Thurgood.



**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
CABINET
HELD ON 22nd OCTOBER 2015**

PRESENT: Councillor D Cook (Chair), Councillors R Pritchard, S Claymore, S Doyle and M Thurgood

The following officers were present: Rob Barnes (Director - Housing and Health), Jane Hackett (Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer), John Day (Corporate Performance Officer) and Natalie Missenden (Public Relations Officer)

58 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None

59 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 October 2015 were approved and signed as a correct record.

(Moved by Councillor R Pritchard and seconded by Councillor M Thurgood)

60 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

61 QUESTION TIME:

None

**62 MATTERS REFERRED TO THE CABINET IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULES**

None

63 BUDGET CONSULTATION 2016/17

The Leader of the Council informed Cabinet of the outcomes arising from consultation undertaken with residents, businesses and the voluntary sector in accordance with the corporate budget setting process.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet endorsed the report and took account of the findings along with other sources of information when setting the 2016/17 Budget.

(Moved by Councillor D Cook and seconded by Councillor R Pritchard)

64 TENANTS ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Waste Management provided details of the Councils Landlord Performance for 2014/15 as required under the Homes and Community Agency Landlord Regulatory Framework 2012.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet approved the Production of the Council's Landlord Annual Report to Tenants' (2014/15) complying with required governance under the Landlord Regulatory Framework as shown at annex one of the report

(Moved by Councillor M Thurgood and seconded by Councillor R Pritchard)

65 TENANTS RENTAL EXCHANGE SCHEME

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Waste Management set out the details of the tenants' Rental Exchange Scheme being promoted via Big Issue Invest and Experian, in partnership

RESOLVED: That Members endorsed the sharing of tenants data for the purposes of signing up to The Rental Exchange Scheme, save where tenants reserve the right to opt out

(Moved by Councillor M Thurgood and seconded by Councillor D Cook)

Leader

THURSDAY, 5 NOVEMBER 2015

REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR OPERATIONS AND ASSETS

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY SCHEME UPDATE

PURPOSE

This report and appendices has been produced to provide an overview on the issues and work areas around equality that the Transformation & Corporate Performance team has a lead on and/or is involved in. This report aims to provide Cabinet with an update of the on-going work and to give assurance that systems or work streams are in place where required in order that Tamworth Borough Council embraces equality and diversity and remains compliant.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **That Cabinet approve the revised diversity and equality objectives as detailed within the report.**
- **That Cabinet approve the diversity and equality action plan**
- **That Cabinet endorse the Diversity and Equalities Scheme and recommend it to Council (7th December 2015) for formal approval.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**Current Position**

Tamworth Borough Council's last Diversity and Equality scheme and supporting action plan was reviewed in 2012 and whilst we have continued to ensure TBC remains compliant with legislation it is recognised that work in this area has been at a minimal level due to resource issues.

Over the last few months, the scheme has been revised and subject to formal approval will ensure that Tamworth Borough Council will not only remain compliant but with a few minor changes can ensure our commitment is maintained.

The revised scheme ensures that all necessary data that requires publication has now been updated and published (i.e. profile of the workforce) and includes 2 equality objectives which Cabinet are asked to consider and approve.

The two objectives are:

- **To use customer insight to develop accessible services particularly aimed at those demonstrating the greatest need.**
- **To ensure all council strategies policies and procedures consider the impact on our diverse community/ workforce to ensure maximum inclusion.**

Review Findings

In carrying out this review it became apparent that:

- Information is currently published both from a legal and governance perspective which includes a range of demographic data, workforce data, the Forward Plan, budgets and performance management data.
- The Modgov report template does not include any reference to impact assessment being carried out as part of the approval process.
- The budget setting process does require Directors to confirm that an equality impact assessment has been completed for all capital appraisal bids (Section 3 of the Capital Appraisal form refers).
- The business planning process does not currently require Directors and managers to consider the impact of any proposals in terms of equality.
- In learning from others we know that judicial reviews will always take into account evidence of how the authority has demonstrated consideration to equality legislation.
- The current Community Equality Impact Assessment requires simplifying.
- The current Diversity and Equalities Scheme and supporting action plan require updating.

It is therefore proposed that:

- the Modgov report template, which plays a part in proactively communicating and making clear the contents of those policies, strategies, plans etc that could have equality implications, is amended to include a mandatory paragraph that will require the author to demonstrate that they have given consideration to carrying out an impact assessment.
- The business planning process is updated to take account of the revised equality objectives to ensure that they are integral to the Councils business.
- that the revised Community Impact Assessment (as detailed in Appendix 1 Page 12) is implemented to mitigate associated risks.
- The revised action plan (Appendix 2 refers) is approved. [Note: Work on this has already commenced to ensure compliance].

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Budgets for training are already in place.

Delivery of the action plan does not require any further financial investment.

Delivery of the action plan will be undertaken by existing officers within their current job role

RISK AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

In carrying out this review the intention was to ensure that processes were adapted rather than additional resources requested so as to ensure sustainability. The adoption of the objectives together with the delivery of the action plan will ensure Tamworth Borough Council remains compliant with the Public Sector Equality Duty. HR will continue to monitor government policy on all associated matters and will advise CMT accordingly.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Legislation – New Government

The previous coalition Government took a light touch approach towards equalities and the Equality Act 2010. It removed some of the more prescriptive obligations on the public sector and did not enact some that were due to be brought into force under the act. The only exception to this being supporting and bringing in legislation to legalise same sex marriage.

The role of the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has been gradually eroded with reduction to its funding, changes in leadership and changes to its role. The EHRC has largely become an organisation that looks at and investigates strategic and theme based issues around equality. It has rarely used its enforcement powers recently in relation to the public sector.

It is believed the new Conservative government are not likely to change this position and if anything, will continue to look at reducing what they see as red tape and burdens on the public sector around equalities.

Review of specific duties

The one major aspect of the Equality Act 2010 that impacts on the council is the **Specific Duties** that are in place for the public sector (known as the PSED-Public Sector Equality Duty). Both the requirements for this and guidance from government indicate a light touch without being too prescriptive. The emphasis being on using existing data and information, rather than creating or collecting additional information. The requirements are that public sector bodies must:

- Publish information annually
- Have equality objective/s and review these every 4 years

REPORT AUTHOR

Anica Goodwin, Director – Transformation and Corporate Performance
Zoe Wolicki, HR Adviser

APPENDICES

1. The revised Diversity and Equality Scheme 2015 – 2019
2. Diversity and Equality Action plan 2015- 2019

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**Making Equality Real in Tamworth
(MERIT)**

**Diversity and Equality Scheme
2015 - 2019**

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DOCUMENT CONTROL - UPDATE		
Diversity and Equality Scheme		
Version / Approval	Author	Date
Diversity and Equality Scheme v1	AG/ZW	15/10/2015

1. Statement of Intent

The Council recognises the importance of involving the wider community in the development of services, which are accessible and reflect people's needs. The Council's values go further to specify the promotion of equal opportunities and to celebrate diversity.

By making equality and diversity a core element of all things that we do, we will be best placed to achieve our vision.

Where barriers exist which prevent us from achieving our goals, we have a moral and legal obligation to break them down.

The starting point and primary focus is this council's commitment to improving outcomes for people, place and organisation against the three strategic themes common to all our partner organisations and stakeholders are then

- Regeneration, growth and prosperity
- Healthier, more confident communities
- Safer, more resilient communities

These in turn translate into the council's strategic plans and intentions and form the basis of the Corporate and local plans, the sustainability strategy and the medium-term financial strategy.

Tamworth Borough Council (TBC) has recently launched a new demand management model, which provides vital knowledge about our citizens and, more importantly, enables us to shape and redesign our services to meet the needs of those most vulnerable within our community. However, the most important aspects of our Scheme are not the words within it but the actions and outcomes we have set ourselves in conjunction with the Tamworth community and visitors to the area.

2. Introduction

The Scheme outlines how we will promote diversity and equality in the delivery of our services provided both directly by ourselves and in conjunction with our partners.

Taking into account UK legislation, we have taken the decision to produce a scheme which clearly addresses our duties and responsibilities in relation to:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Race (which includes ethnic or national origins colour or nationality)
- Gender
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Marriage and civil partnership *

The above are known as protected characteristics within the act

* Only the first aim of the General Duty applies to the characteristic of marriage and civil partnership

This reflects our commitment to the wider equality agenda while ensuring that the strict duties that are placed upon us under the provisions of Equality Act. Consequently our actions in respect of each area are set out throughout the scheme.

With increased partnership working, commissioning and procurement of services, the Scheme also sets out the expectations placed on partners, suppliers and the voluntary sector to contribute to the Council's equality and diversity agenda.

The aim of this Scheme is to integrate the Council's equality and diversity activities into normal service delivery mechanisms, while at the same time encouraging directorates to deliver their products and services in an innovative and creative way. Prior to any mainstreaming, a key element of the Scheme will be the expectation that consultation and involvement of individuals and organisations will take place within the community to better understand their requirements and any barriers they face.

The scheme will be reviewed annually and reported to Cabinet.

3. Policy Statement

We need to create and maintain a community that embraces change and welcomes diversity; diversity helps to build such communities by celebrating differences and combining our talents.

To achieve this, the Council is committed to removing discrimination from public life. This includes major commitments that establish the Council as a community leader:

- The Council is striving to ensure that it does not discriminate against staff or members of the public.
- The Council is working to make Tamworth a place free from discrimination.
- People are proud to be who they are.
- Striving to ensure that the contribution of all groups is valued.
- All people are empowered to engage as citizens.
- Differences between people are welcomed.
- Removing barriers to ensure that all groups have the same chances of success.
- The Council will provide services that are inclusive and designed to meet customer needs.

The Council will support anyone who shares the same aims, including community groups, trade unions and partner organisations.

Tamworth Borough Council is committed to providing value for money and accountability which will underpin the delivery of all corporate themes. Working with others, the Council will deliver services that are well-governed, ethical, effective, efficient and economically viable.

4. Diversity and Equality at Tamworth Borough Council

4.1 What are our legal duties?

4.1.1 Equality Act 2010

The act brings together, harmonises and extends previous equality law. The Equality Act has replaced all previous discrimination law with a single act. The majority of the Act came into force on 1 October 2010. Within the Act there is a public sector equality duty which came into force on 6 April 2011. The public sector equality duty applies to public bodies and others carrying out public functions.

4.1.2 The public sector equality duty

The Public Sector Equality Duty consists of a general duty and specific duties which apply to the council.

4.1.3 The general duty

The general duty requires the Council to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups; and
- Foster good relations between people from different groups.

This means the Council is required to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Take steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
- Encourage people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

4.1.4 The specific duties

The specific duties underpin the general duty, they require the Council to:

- Publish its equality objectives and review them at least every four years starting from April 2012; and
- Publish information on employees and those affected by the council's policies at least annually, this can be found at www.tamworth.gov.uk.

The Council's objectives are:

- To use customer insight to develop accessible services, particularly aimed at those demonstrating the greatest need.
- To ensure all council strategies policies and procedures consider the impact on our diverse community/workforce to ensure maximum inclusion.

4.2 Monitoring the Scheme

The Scheme will be reviewed annually to check progress against actions and refresh the action plan for the following year. Progress will be reported to Cabinet on all diversity and equality matters annually this will be done via the council's performance management system COVALENT.

4.3 Consultation, Communication, Input and Involvement of the Community and Partner Organisations

A key element of the Council's overall programme of services, which forms an integral part of the Diversity and Equality Scheme, is customer involvement. The ability to access groups and individuals who face barriers and discrimination, which can provide a positive input to the development of services, is vital. Consultation and involvement with people is an essential part of current equality legislation.

4.4 Communication

A copy of the Scheme will be issued to all staff via NETCONSENT and elected members via email, in an effort to ensure that the Scheme is put into practice. In addition, the Scheme will be placed on the Council's intranet and internet.

The Scheme will also be included with tender information and contracts for work undertaken for Tamworth Borough Council by external organisations and individuals. All of our policies, including those relating to equality and diversity, will upon request be made available for translation and/or in another medium where required.

Our Procurement Strategy makes specific reference to our commitment ensure that all procurement practices comply with equality legislation.

Our partners and contractors will also be made aware of our commitment and targets under this scheme and again this will be detailed in the action plan.

5. Community Impact Assessments

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires the council to assess the impact on equality of policies, procedures; however the mechanism to do so is not specific.

Tamworth Borough Council has developed a straightforward internal process that seeks to ensure strategies and policies are impact assessed. This assessment goes further than just the protected characteristic and includes a number of other elements including safeguarding of the vulnerable, health and the environment. The process can be found at 14.1.

6. Programme of Training and Development

Diversity training is a mandatory requirement for all employees and elected members. All staff and elected members will attend a workshop by June 2016, the aim of which will be to provide refresher training and launch the updated scheme.

Staff

TBC has a comprehensive Diversity and Equality awareness training workshop which is mandatory for all new staff within the first six months of employment, with a refresher for all staff every three years. The programme is delivered in partnership with IODA who are diversity specialists.

The aim of the programme is to raise awareness of both legal and moral duties in the development of service provision, ensure all employees have read and understood the council's Equality and Diversity Scheme and to afford employee the opportunity to develop their knowledge.

Elected Members

We recognise each year that our elected membership may change and as such we need to ensure that their knowledge and skills in this area is current. Future activities in this area are contained within the action plan.

7. Breaches of this Policy

Any breach of this Policy will be treated very seriously and employees may be disciplined in accordance with the Council's Capability and Conduct Policy.

8. Responsibilities

- **Cabinet Members:** are responsible for approving this policy and monitoring performance via the performance management framework and all strategic policies are impact assessed.
- **Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Assets:** has responsibility for equality and diversity. The portfolio holder is required to work closely with the Council's designated officers and champion the scheme and its contents with elected members.
- **Chief Executive:** is responsible for ensuring that the Council is complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- **Director for Transformation and Corporate Performance:** is the organisation's Equality Champion and is responsible for ensuring equality activities are carried out in the Authority.
- **All Directors:** will ensure that policies presented to cabinet for approval and supporting strategies and procedures are impact assessed as per the scheme.
- **Children's and Families Safeguarding Officer:** is the Council's lead Officer for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. The Safeguarding and Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy can be found on the Council's intranet site Infozone
- **Human Resources:** will advise on the scheme, organise delivery of necessary training, monitor and produce employee profiles and workforce data and liaise with all service delivery managers to ensure awareness and compliance.
- **Managers:** are responsible for delivering equality in their area of responsibility, embedding it into policy and delivery of the services provided. Managers will also be responsible for ensuring breaches of the scheme are brought to the attention of the relevant director for any necessary action.
- **All Employees:** have a responsibility to treat people fairly, take account of different people's needs, challenge inappropriate behaviour and not knowingly discriminate, harass or victimise anyone and attend relevant training with regard to equality and diversity.
- **Contractors, Suppliers and Consultants:** are expected to meet equality requirements within contracts and service level agreements. The Council will not award contracts without an appropriate level of equality commitment from contractors.
- **Volunteers:** are expected to comply with, and be treated in line with, the principles of this policy.
- **Audit:** are expected to carry out reviews of the scheme as specified by the annual audit plan

9. Reporting Harassment or Discrimination

We have established systems for employees to raise any issues around harassment or discrimination via our Grievance and Dignity and Respect at Work policies.

We have also reviewed our arrangements for the reporting on incidents of harassment or suspected discrimination from members of the public in relation to service provision. The scheme covering this is known as the harassment, assaults and threats policy and is available on the Council's website.

10. Complaints, Comments and Compliments

We encourage feedback from local people and undertake to investigate complaints thoroughly in accordance with our procedures.

The council has complaints, comments and compliments procedure known as "Tell Us", which is operated in accordance with our diversity and equalities agenda.

We are committed to:




- dealing with complaints and comments quickly and effectively
- using feedback to review and improve our services
- encourage feedback from all sections of the community and undertake to investigate complaints thoroughly in accordance with our procedures.
- ensuring complaints, comments and compliments are fed back to the service area for a prompt response.
- ensuring that information from complaints are captured and monitored with the diversity agenda in mind.

11. Our Workforce



11.1 Full Time Equivalent Employees

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
FTE (April)	361.69	378.92	344.47	339.87	340.14	351.34	325.20

Key Facts:





-  The headcount and FTE figures of the Council have fluctuated over the last five years in response to a Voluntary redundancy exercise undertaken in 2010, which took effect in 2011. While FTE figures did reduce, the number of contracts and employees overall has remained reasonably stable in this period.
-  A peak in 2014 reflects an increase in temporary contracts and the dip in April 2015 is as a result of service reviews taking effect along with a delay in seasonal summer recruitment which took effect after that date. FTE on 1st October 2015 is 323.08. The figure is currently low due to a high number of vacancies in many areas which are subject to service reviews (customer services, arts and events, castle etc) or are in the process of recruitment (supported housing, housing solutions, streetscene).
-  A recruitment moratorium in force since July 2013 has prevented further growth to reduce the current FTE count.

11.2 Number and Type of Contracts Issued

							
	Male Full-time	Male Part-time	Male Casual	Female Full-time	Female Part-time	Female Casual	Total
Sep-15	135	4	44	139	79	75	477
Sep-13	144	10	54	148	85	67	508
Jun-06	165	14	49	172	122	76	598

Note: multiple contracts can be issued to the same individual above figures exclude elections/canvass staff.

Key Facts:

-  There is a slight shift away from full time workers into more flexible arrangements to meet with business needs through casual and part time contracts.
-  We do have a reasonable proportion of staff with multiple part time or casual contracts.
-  Careful consideration will need to be given in the future to the use of casual contracts due to their implications to pensions and close monitoring will need to take place in this area to ensure employment rights are recognised where appropriate.
-  Elections and canvass staff contracts equate to a further 832 contracts amongst 585 staff.

11.3 Length of Service

	<1 year	1 to 2	3 to 5	6 to 10	11 to 15	16 to 20	>20
2013	44	55	112	112	65	31	67
2015	28	45	95	92	115	36	61





11.4 Workforce demographics

Based on headcount including casuals but not election/canvass

11.4.1 Age

	55+	45 -55	35-44	25 -34	Under 25	Total
Sept-15	131	148	103	67	28	476
Oct-13	104	136	118	82	46	486
Jun-06	73	141	142	78	39	473


Key Facts:

-  The average age of a TBC worker is 46.
-  Nine workers are over 65 years of age.
-  There is a noticeable shift in the age profile of the organisation to a generally ageing workforce compared to 2006 and worryingly, the number of staff under 25 has dropped dramatically.
-  While flexible retirement is proving a very popular option for staff who qualify, very few individuals are showing indications of retiring at 65, with many working beyond this.

11.4.2 Ethnic Group

	Withheld	British	Bangladeshi	Caribbean	Chinese	Indian	Irish	Pakistani
2013	15	455	1	6	2	2	1	4
2015	26	438	1	6	2	1	1	1

Key Facts:




-  These levels are consistent with the local population profile.

11.4.3 Disability

	Withheld	Disabled	Not Disabled
2013	8	9	469
2015	6	2	469

12. Our Community

12.1 Profile of our Council Tenants

Gender	 39% of our tenants are men and  61% are women.
Ethnicity	We know the ethnicity of 79% of our tenants. 77% of our tenants are White British, 2% are Black and Minority Ethnic and 21% unknown.
Age	We know the age of 93% of our tenants. 63% of our tenants are aged between 16 and 64 and 31% are aged over 65 and 6% unknown.
Disability	 We know that 17% of our tenants have a disability of some form.
Religion	We know the religion of 32% of our tenants.
Sexual Orientation	We know the sexual orientation of 29% of our tenants.

12.2 Demographic Overview of our Community with Regional and National Comparison

	Tamworth		Staffordshire		England	
Total 2013 population	77,157		857,007		56,948,229	
Total under 5 population	4,978	6.5 %	46,099	5.4%	3,592,907	6.3%
Total under 16 population	15,242	19.8%	149,370	17.4%	10,764,403	18.9%
Total Working age (16-64) population	49,426	64.1%	536,755	62.6%	36,278,017	63.7%
Total 65+ Population	12,489	16.2%	170,882	19.9%	9,905,809	17.4%
Minority Ethnic Group %	5.0%		6.0%		20.2%	

It is recognised that the percentage of our community from minority ethnic groups has significantly increased from 1.9% (when data was collected for the previous scheme) to 5% (in the locality profile March 2015). Further research into this is underway.

13. We would like to hear your feedback.

We welcome all feedback on the content of this scheme.

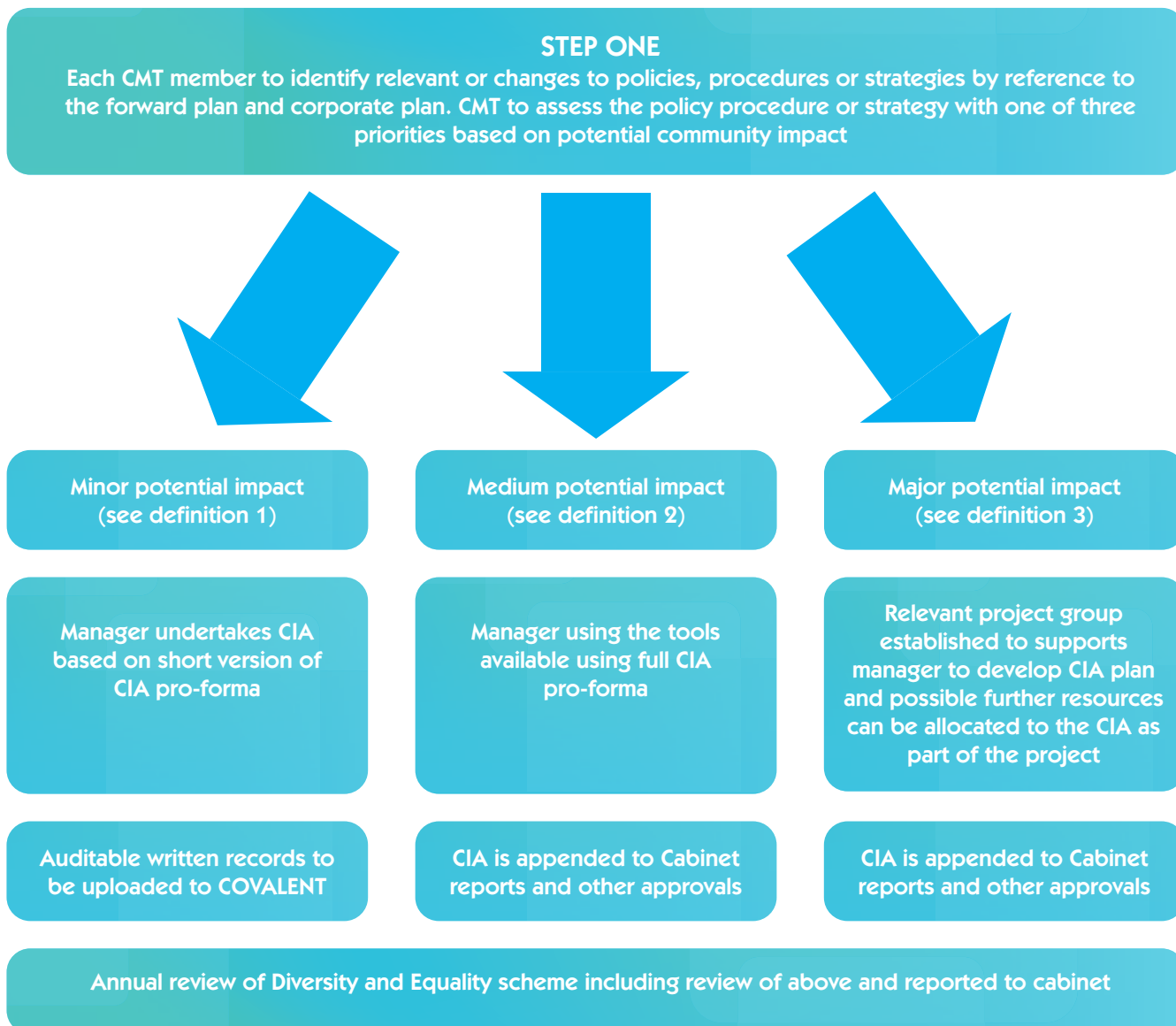
You can contact us by:

 enquiries@tamworth.gov.uk

 01827 709709

14. Appendices

14.1 Community Impact Assessment



Definition 1

Minor Potential Impact

This refers to policies, procedures or strategies such as HR policies, Subsistence Policy, these will be deemed to have no or minimal direct impact on place, people or organisational performance and will more likely be internal processes, procedures or strategies that affect only Tamworth the organisation or the people within it.

Definition 2

Medium Potential Impact

This refers to policies and strategies such as Licensing Policy, Repairs Policy. These will be deemed to have significant impact affecting one or more groups within the community.

Partners to be involved as required and some community consultation may be required.

Definition 3

Major Potential

All policies procedures and strategies defined within this area will be referenced within the corporate plan and forward plan. CMT will be aware of the high level impact of this document, every decision within this area should have a Community Impact Assessment carried out at an in depth level. The impact of these policies, procedures and strategies will be fundamental to Tamworth the Place and its community and/or the organisation and will be both complex and potentially contentious by nature examples of these are Core strategy, Customer Service and Access Strategy, Housing and Health Strategy.

14.2 Supporting Information

What do we mean by Diversity and Equality?

The two concepts of Diversity and Equality are very different and together form a whole that is larger in many respects than the sum of its individual constituents.

Diversity recognises that we can only achieve equality by taking into account the different needs of communities, equality is impossible to achieve without recognising diversity. Diversity is more about good management practice.

An example of Diversity

To ensure that all communities benefit equally from services, the Local Authority recognises that they need to address the different communities in the area. They developed an action plan for Black and Minority Ethnic people which included:

- Involving Black and Minority Ethnic organisations in advising on how they could change their service.
- Training staff in adapting services to meet diverse cultural, religious and dietary requirements.
- Researching best practice in other Local Authorities.
- Ensuring that information about the service can be produced in different languages, or in plain English versions.

A similar action plan was developed for services that needed to target particular disabled groups and gay, lesbian and bi-sexual communities.

Equality refers to outcomes, making sure that all social groups benefit equally from our activities.

An example of Equality

By comparing take up for services with the census, a Local Authority is aware that some community groups are underrepresented. Equality would only be achieved if service uptake is in the same proportion to the numbers of people in the district from different communities.

What is discrimination?

Discrimination is a type of negative treatment that affects a whole group of people or an individual because they belong to a group.

The best way to understand discrimination is to set it against other types of negative treatment. Negative treatment edges into discrimination when the person on the receiving end is being badly treated by someone else who assumes a dominant or superior position.

Reasons for bad treatment	Who it affects
Individuality	Individuals, such as personality conflicts, or aspects of a person that lead to them being harassed or bullied (i.e. a response to a person's personal behaviour).
Life circumstances/condition	People who have a change of life circumstances that leads to temporary bad treatment (i.e. becoming homeless or losing a job, and seeing how other people's behaviour changes towards them).
Social identity	A person's basic identity (who they are) is abused. The target is something about the individual which they share with a whole group and cannot change. This affects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ethnicity ■ Gender ■ Sexuality ■ Disability ■ Religion and cultural identity ■ Age

Discrimination affects whole groups in the following ways:

- Discrimination is a prejudiced reaction to a person's social identity (such as their gender or race).
- Discrimination is systematic, or institutional (i.e. it is embedded in laws, policies and in everyday culture – including much 'common sense').
- Discrimination leads to negative patterns (i.e. continuing pay gap between men and women, or continuing link between disability lack of employment).

Equality law recognises two types of discrimination:

- Direct discrimination: this is when there is a conscious intention to discriminate.
- Indirect discrimination: this is when discrimination is an intended result of a decision or action.

An example of Equality

A Council introduces a free advice service for single mothers who are employees. A male single parent objects on the grounds of sex inequality and is told that there is insufficient demand to extend this discretionary service to male employees.

An example of indirect discrimination

A Council introduces an employee support group for single parents. After a year the Council carries out a monitoring exercise of the group and finds that all members are female. This is despite the fact that there has been an increase in male single parents who are employees. The Council refuses to consult with male single parent employees on the grounds that all employees know about the group. The result is that the Council is not able to find out why the pattern has emerged that only women are using the group.

Equality Impact Assessment

Is this a new or existing policy?	Update to existing		
1. Briefly describe the aims, objectives and purpose of the policy?	To comply with the Equality Act 2010 which will ensure TBC's employees and services it offers are not discriminatory		
2. Are there any associated policy/ procedure/ practice which should be considered whilst carrying out this equality impact assessment?	Landlord Services Health Inequalities Policy Housing Strategy TBC Corporate Objectives		
3. Who is intended to benefit from this policy and in what way?	Employee of TBC and citizens of Tamworth or those accessing Council services within the borough		
4. What are the desired outcomes from this policy?	Compliance with legislation, all strategies and policies consider the impact on those who will access the service		
5. What factors/ forces could contribute/ detract from the outcomes?	Inconsistent application, indirect discriminatory practices		
6. Who are the main stakeholders in relation to the policy?	Citizens of Tamworth, Employees, Trade Unions, Elected Members		
7. Which individuals/ groups have been/ will be consulted with on this policy?	Trade unions, CMT, Heads of Service, Elected Members		
8. Are there concerns that the policy could have a differential impact on racial groups?	gg	As a result of	
9. Are there concerns that the policy/ procedure/ practice could have a differential impact due to gender?		N	
10. Are there concerns that the policy could have a differential impact due to them being transgender or transsexual?		N	
11. Are there concerns that the policy could have a differential impact due to disability?		N	
12. Are there concerns that the policy could have a differential impact due to sexual orientation?		N	
13. Are there concerns that the policy could have a differential impact due to age?		N	
14. Are there concerns that the policy could have a differential impact due to religious belief?		N	
15. Are there concerns that the policy could have a differential impact on Gypsies/ Travellers?		N	
16. Are there concerns that the policy could have a differential impact due to dependant/caring responsibilities?		N	
17. Are there concerns that the policy could have a differential impact due to them having an offending past?		N	
18. Are there concerns that the policy could have an impact on children or vulnerable adults?		N	
19. Does any of the differential impact identified cut across the equality strands (e.g. elder BME groups)?		N	
20. Could the differential impact identified in 8 – 19 amount to there being the potential for adverse impact in this policy/ procedure/ practice?		N	
21. Can this adverse impact be justified: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group? ■ For any other reason? 	N/A		
22. As a result of carrying out the equality impact assessment is there a requirement for further consultation?		N	Please explain
23. As a result of this EIA should this policy be recommended for implementation in it's current state?	y		Statutory compliance will be achieved.

PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING ACTION PLAN FOR ALL IMPACT ASSESSMENTS
Equality Impact Assessment Action Plan

Complete the action plan demonstrating the changes required in order to meet TBC's commitment to equality and diversity. The action plan must contain monitoring arrangements, the publishing of results and the review period required for this policy.

Action/ Activity	Responsibility	Target	Progress
Review in line with implementation of action plan	AG/ZW	2019	
Monitoring arrangements:		Data collected quarterly	
Publication:			
Review Period:		Reviewed 12 monthly unless otherwise stated	

End of Document

Tamworth Borough Council

Diversity and Equality Action Plan 2015 – 2019

Action	By when	Responsible officer	Completed	Outcome
Annual review of the scheme and action plan	By end of October 2015	AG/ZW	15/10/2015	Compliance with legislation
Annual report to cabinet on scheme	By end of December 2016	AG/ZW	On forward plan for 05/10/2015	Ensuring compliance with legislation
Revised 2015 -2019 scheme approved by CMT	By end October 2015	AG/ZW	Presented and approved by CMT on 19/10/2015	Scheme in place TBC compliant with legislation
Revised 2015 – 2019 Scheme approved by cabinet	By end November 2015	AG/ZW	To be presented on 05/11/2015	Scheme in place TBC compliant with legislation
Revised 2015-19 Scheme approved by Council	By end of Dec 2015	Portfolio holder	To be presented 7/12/15	Scheme in place TBC compliant with legislation
Scheme is communicated via netConsent and internet	By end of Dec 2015	AG/ZW		Compliance with internal audit recommendations
Development of a training matrix which determines mandatory training including E&D	By end of Feb 2015	ZW	February 2015	CMT approved the matrix and associated actions
Delivery of E&D training and refresher for employees and elected members	By 2018	ZW and Directors		Compliance with mandatory training matrix as agreed by CMT 19 Jan 15
Carry out annual equal Pay Audit	By end of March annually	CT	Approved in January 2015	Compliance with equal pay legislation
Publish annual pay policy	By end of December annually	AG	March 2015	Compliance with Section 38 of the Localism Act 2011
Carry out equalities audit as per annual audit plan	By end of February 15	ZS	February 15	Compliance with internal governance arrangements
Establish and communicate equality objectives and review on 4 yearly basis (ie use of Net Consent, internet)	By end of December 15	AG/ZW		Compliance with Public Sector Equality Duty (contained within the Equality Act 2010)
All HR policies must contain completed impact assessments	In line with review dates	CT	ongoing	Compliance internal audit recommendations
Publication of workforce data on an annual basis	Update by end of December 2015	AG/ZW	Published October 15	Compliance with Public Sector Equality Duty (contained within the Equality Act 2010)
Update equalities Risk Register	By end of November 2015	AG		Compliance with internal audit recommendations
All directors to ensure that strategic policies and	Ongoing	Directors		Improved provision of service ensuring

procedures contain community impact assessments				maximum inclusion
Monitor compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty	Annually	AG/ZW	September 2015	Review completed September 15
Amend the Forward Plan to include an extra column asking the author to ensure that recommendations put before Cabinet or Council have been impact assessed in accordance with the protocol	By end of December 15	AG		Achievement of equality objective
Update the PMF to ensure directors and managers give consideration to carrying out the relevant impact assessment when developing business plans	By end of November 2015	AG/JD		Improved provision of service ensuring maximum inclusion
Improve knowledge of the demographic of Tamworth in terms of the protected characteristics	By end March 2016	ZW/JD		Improved provision of service ensuring maximum inclusion

Key

Complete
In Progress
Not Started

THURSDAY, 5 NOVEMBER 2015

REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR OPERATIONS AND ASSETS**LOCAL COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2016 ONWARDS CONSULTATION RESULTS****EXEMPT INFORMATION**

This proposal is not exempt information for the purposes of Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) of the Local Government Act 1972

PURPOSE

To advise Members of the results and feedback from the recently undertaken consultation on and the financial implications of the 2014/15 scheme. To review the consultation feedback when considering potential changes to be applied in the 2016/17 Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme;

To advise Members that the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for working age customers for 2016/17 should include continued alignment to Applicable Amounts with those of Housing Benefit;

That Members endorse the proposed change, supported by the consultation results, to exclude child maintenance as income.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1 That Cabinet consider the results of the public consultation on the current scheme, carried out 31 July to 25 September 2015, and endorse or otherwise the proposed recommended changes detailed below when the scheme is considered by Council on 15 December 2015;

2 The base scheme (in place for 2014/15 and 2015/16) goes forward with the following exceptions/amendments;

- a) **That the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for working age customers for 2016/17 will continue to be aligned to Applicable Amounts with those of Housing Benefit, and**
- b) **That the exclusion of child maintenance as income becomes a policy change for the Local Council Tax Reduction scheme from 2016/17 onwards.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report details the key issues arising from the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

The Welfare Reform Act abolished Council Tax Benefit from 1 April 2013. It was replaced by a new Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for working age customers. A national scheme of regulations was introduced for pensioners, which mirrors the Council Tax Benefit Scheme.

Grant funding was reduced and is distributed by the Department for Communities and Local Government rather than the Department for Work and Pensions. Current outturn on the 2014/15 scheme is £4.156m of which the Authority's share is £453k (10.9% of the impact on the Collection Fund). At inception, the scheme design was modelled to ensure that the Authority complied with the Central Government requirement to achieve a 10% reduction in benefit cost but without increasing the burden of cost to the Council Tax Payer. However, grant funding predictions are expected to reduce further in future years and future years' projections indicate an ongoing reduction in grant funding to the Authority. The following table highlights the grant funding compared to scheme costs without any changes to the scheme:

Estimate	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Cost (10.9%)Est Outturn	£487k	£453k	£449k	£449k
Grant	£508k	£439k	£370k	£335k
Variance (Surplus)/ Deficit	£(21)k	£14k	£79k	£114k
Cum Variance (Surplus) / Deficit	£(21)k	£(7)k	£72k	£186k

The impact of grant funding and expenditure is closely monitored on a regular basis to identify whether the scheme is achieving its objectives but also not increasing cost burdens to the Medium Term Financial Strategy. The current maximum level of award under the existing scheme is 75%. The consultation consideration to reduce maximum help from 75% to 70% for most working age claimants was moderately supported, although respondents have stated that 25% is enough as people will struggle to pay even more.

Current financial modelling indicates that although grant levels are reducing the scheme maxima should not be changed for the 2016/17 scheme consultation as it would add further potential hardship to claimants. This position is under regular review. Members should be aware of the impact of the Central Government Grant reductions when formulating the scheme for 2016/17 as any subsequent changes to the scheme governance arrangements, not consulted on, would require a further consultation exercise.

Continued alignment of the scheme with applicable amounts for the Housing Benefit scheme should be considered. This is not a legislative requirement for those of working age, but a decision for this Council. The financial impact of this is not likely to be material as any increase in applicable amounts will be offset by increased income and state benefits received. This will also prevent confusion between schemes and reduce administrative burdens. Furthermore, it would reflect any cost of living rises allowed by the Government.

At the Council meeting on 16 December 2014, a motion was made that recommendation 4 be deleted and replaced with a new recommendation 4 with the inclusion of child

maintenance (this in fact should have read *exclusion*). This motion was not carried but it was agreed that consultation for the 2016/17 scheme would gauge views on excluding child maintenance as income from 2016 onwards.

In compliance with the above, a web based consultation exercise was carried out between 31 July to 25 September 2015. Consultation was also made on whether or not to reduce the maximum help for working age claimants (excluding those in protected groups) from 75% to 70%. The results are attached at **Appendix 1**. Local Community Groups were notified of the consultation and two press releases also encouraged responses.

A total of 109 responses were received. The proposal to exclude child maintenance as income from April 2016 was met with mixed reaction from the respondents with 46% perceiving it to be reasonable and 43% unreasonable to a certain extent.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

The current scheme for most working age customers bases an award on a maximum of 75% of their Council Tax liability. Those who receive a Severe Disability Premium, or who have a disabled child and those who receive a War Widows/War Disability Pension or Armed Forces Compensation Scheme payment have their awards based on 100% of their liability.

Pensioners also continue, under the Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2012, to have their awards based on 100% of their Council Tax liability.

Appendix 1 confirms that current policy principles and the proposed change to exclude child maintenance as income are supported.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Council Tax Benefit subsidy awarded for 2012/13 was £5.38m. The current scheme was modelled on delivering an estimated benefit reduction in the region of £700k for 2013/14, necessitated by grant cuts of 10% and protection for Pensioners and other vulnerable groups. The final amount awarded for 2013/14 was £4.4m and £4.2m for 2014/15.

Latest figures confirm that £4.1m has so far been awarded in Local Council Tax Reduction (LCTR) for 2015/16, to both working age and pensioner customers. The live working age caseload has reduced by approximately 11% since April 2013, which is attributable to customers finding employment and becoming financially self sufficient and contributes to the lesser amount now awarded.

Should Cabinet endorse the proposal to exclude maintenance as income from April 2016 for working age claimants, the overall Council Tax Reduction Scheme awards would increase by approximately £18.5k per annum for 77 claimants from that date.

Financial Summary

	2012/13	2013/14	Variance	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
	Estimate	Actual		Actual	Estimated	Estimated
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Council Tax Benefit	5,404					
Estimated Scheme Cost	4,685	4,470	(215)	4,156	4,122	4,121
Estimated Saving (incl Protection)	719					
Cost to TBC (10.9%)	511	487		453	449	449
TBC Grant rec'd *	516	508		439	370	335
Variance (Surplus) / Deficit	(5)	(21)		14	79	115
Extrapolation for Collection Fund	(48)	(189)		126	723	1,051
* includes SFA Grant Reduction (projected for 2016/17)				13.50%	(15.70)%	(9.70)%
SFA - Settlement Funding Assessment						

Within the limitations of the system, a detailed analysis of the outstanding arrears relating to Local Council Tax Reduction claimants has been carried out (where they can be identified). We can attribute £230k of arrears as at 31 March 2014 to these claimants, though that arrears figure has halved over the last 18 months.

An "in year" collection rate of 74.8% for 2013/14 compared to 97.6% overall and a collection rate of 87.5% as at 30 September 2015 compares to the 98.9% overall collection for 2013/14. This means the outstanding balances for Local Council Tax Reduction claimants have reduced by 49% since 31 March 2014, while the overall arrears have reduced by 61%. £118k of the arrears, attributable to those claimants, are still outstanding at 30 September 2015.

Risks around the estimate for 2016/17 include;

- Final Settlement Funding Assessment confirmation is not expected until January 2016 (provisional figures in December 2015);
- The final cost is dependent on collection levels – the estimated figures are based on the amounts chargeable (with arrears still to be collected);
- The scheme has now been running for 2.5 years. Current expenditure as above may or may not increase, as the scheme is demand led and depends on social and economic factors.

LEGAL/RISK IMPLICATIONS BACKGROUND

The Department for Communities and Local Government have confirmed that consultation on the scheme is not required annually if it is not amended. However, the Council has decided it wise to consult even when changes are not proposed. Notwithstanding this, as amendments to the scheme are proposed for 2016/17, consultation was mandatory for the 2016/17 scheme.

Appendix 1 confirms the public consultation results, gauging views on each of the current policy elements of the scheme as well as views on proposed changes.

Section 13 A(2) and Schedule 1A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as well as Schedule 1A, paragraph 16 of the Local Government Finance Act 2012 legislate that the scheme must be agreed annually by full Council.

Full Equality Impact Assessments were considered and taken into account when the scheme was initially finalised and agreed.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Funding for the replacement of the previous Council Tax Benefit scheme was changed from AMEY (unrestricted reimbursement of Council Tax Benefit subsidy) to DEL (restricted, pre allocated grant figure). The Council must be aware that there must continue to be a contingency if, for instance, a major local employer goes administration.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Welfare Reform Act 2012

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/5/pdfs/ukpga_20120005_en.pdf

The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) (England) (Regulations) 2012

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/2885/pdfs/uksi_20122885_en.pdf

REPORT AUTHOR

Karen Taylor x 529/Stefan Garner x242

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2013/14 Report, presented to Council on 13th December 2012 <http://democracy.tamworth.gov.uk/mglIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=2548>

Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2014/15 Report, presented to Council on 17th December 2013 <http://democracy.tamworth.gov.uk/mglIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=3849>

Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2015/16 report, presented to Council on 16th December 2014
<http://democracy.tamworth.gov.uk/documents/s10311/LOCAL%20COUNCIL%20TAX%20REDUCTION%20SCHEME%20FROM%20201516.pdf>

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme Consultation Summary report 2015

Appendix 2 Council Tax Reduction Working Age Expenditure summary

Appendix 3 Council Tax Reduction Caseload summary

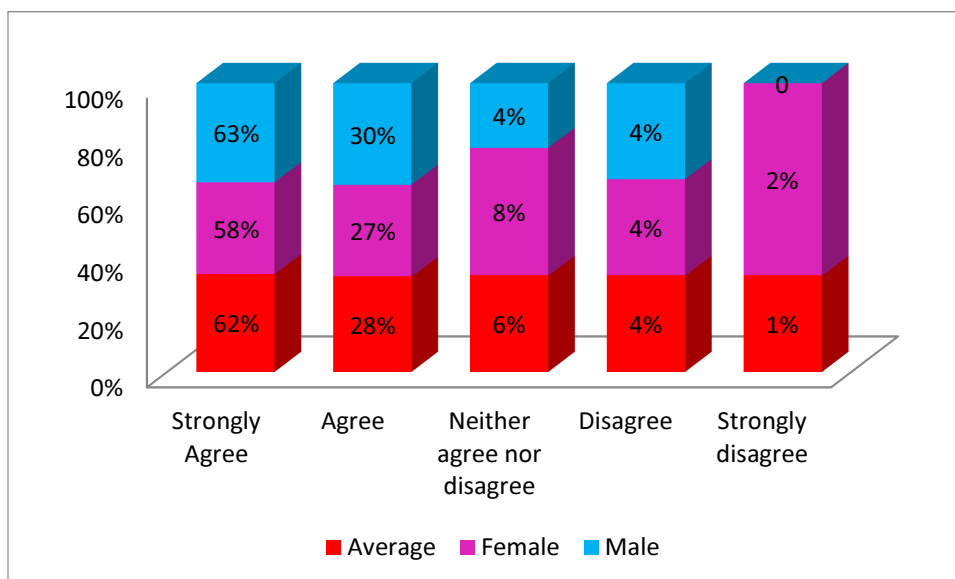
LOCAL COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME CONSULTATION SUMMARY

During the months of August and September 2015, Tamworth Borough Council consulted with residents regarding a Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme. In total, 109 responses were received and the main findings from these individuals is contained in the following document.

Q1. Are you answering this survey as...?

The entire sample of 109 respondents answered the survey as an individual rather than as an organisation representing a community.

Q2. To what extent do you agree with the principle “Every household with working age members should pay something towards their Council Tax Bill?”

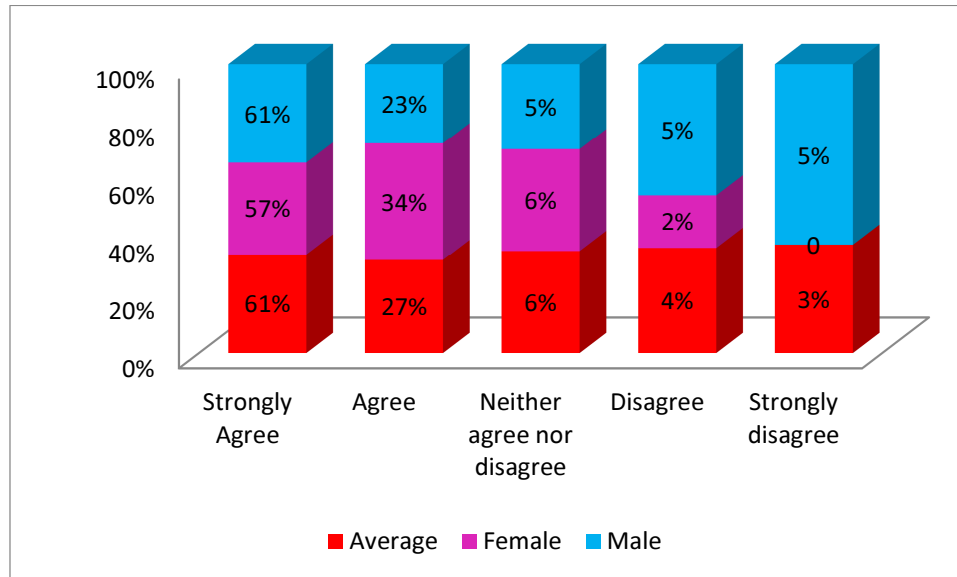


The vast majority of the respondents were in agreement with this principle with only 5% in disagreement.

When analysing the results by age category, no real difference of opinion was noted.

Q3. To what extent do you agree with the principle “The Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme should encourage people to work?”

The following chart highlights to what extent respondents agreed with the principle...

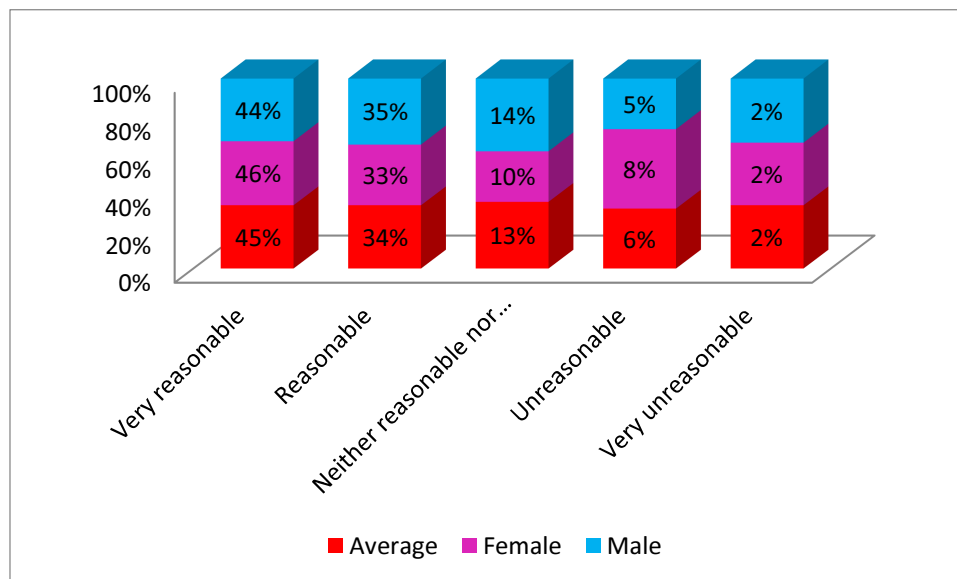


As can be seen, the vast majority of respondents agree with the principle (88%) with less than 10% disagreeing.

Q4 How reasonable do you think Policy 1 is?

Pensioners receive support for up to 100% of their Council Tax bill as they are protected by the Government under a national scheme. We also protect working age claimants classed as severely disabled and in receipt of a Severe Disability Premium, claimants with disabled children and claimants receiving a War Pension or Armed Forces Compensation Scheme payment in the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme. This means that pensioners, claimants classed as severely disabled, claimants with disabled children and claimants receiving a War Pension or Armed Forces Compensation Scheme payment are the only claimants that receive support for up to 100% of their Council Tax bill. All other working age claimants pay something towards their Council Tax bill and applicable amounts continue to be aligned with those of Housing Benefit

The chart below reveals how reasonable respondents consider Policy 1 to be...



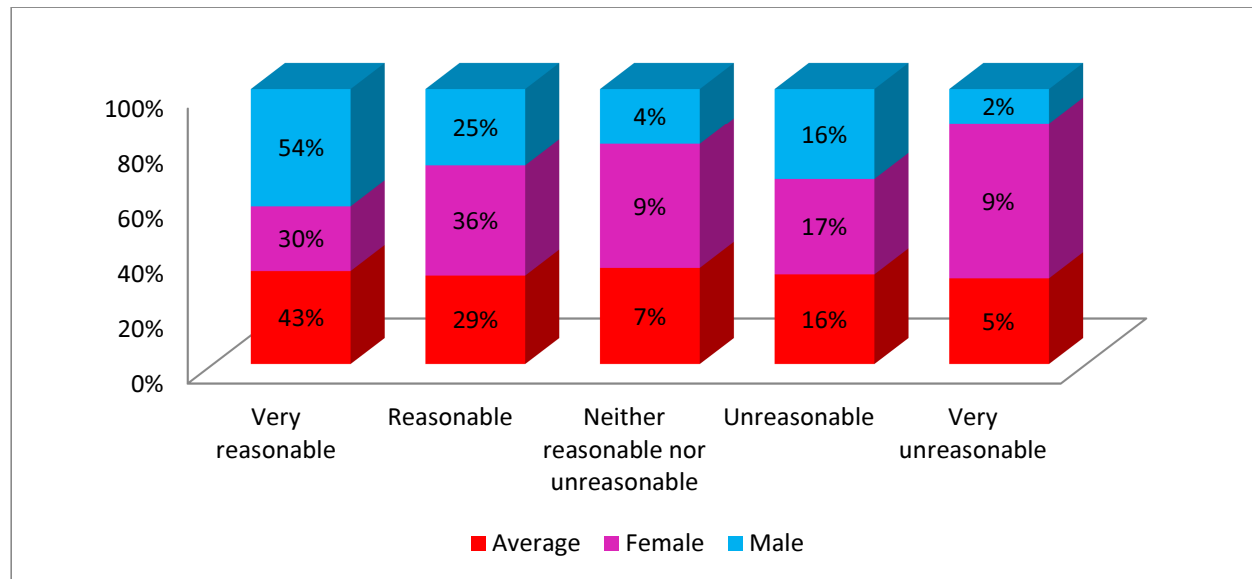
Over three quarters of the sample consider this principle to be reasonable (45% very and 34% reasonable).

One third of the sample made additional comments regarding this policy including; everyone should pay and contribute if earning (39%), and It would be expensive to administer but it should be means tested - easiest & fairest way of doing it (30%).

Q5. How reasonable do you think this is as a way of contributing to the future reductions that need to be made? (Policy 2)

All working age claimants that are not protected have to pay at least 25% of their Council Tax bill. To mitigate future grant reductions, the scheme could ask working age claimants pay at least 30% of their Council Tax bill. This means that working age claimants who are not protected would get less help than they do now

Respondent perceptions of Policy 2 are shown in the bar chart below...



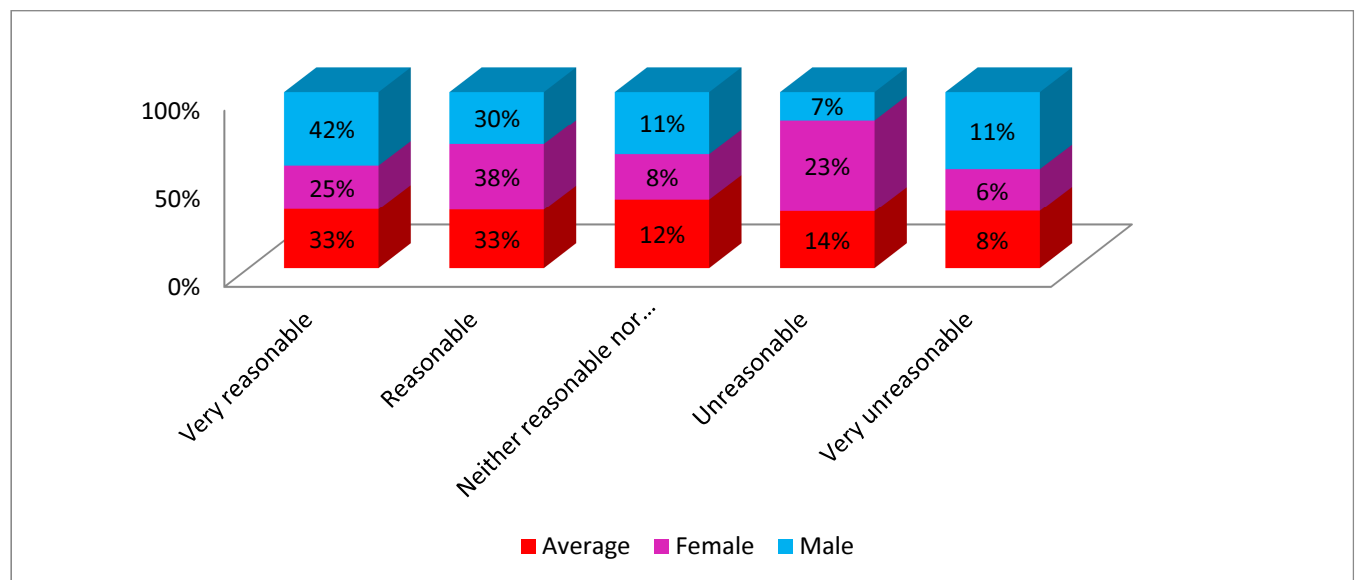
Almost three quarters of respondents consider Policy 2 to be a reasonable way of contributing to the future reductions that need to be made. The male respondents were more receptive to this policy than their female counterparts (79% compared with 66%).

Additional comments that were raised in relation to Policy 2 included the fact it should be means tested - depends on individual circumstances (23%) and 20% of respondents believe 25% is enough as some people will struggle.

Q6. How reasonable do think this is as a way of contributing to the reductions that need to be made? (Policy 3)

Council Tax Reduction is limited to the level that is given for a smaller house. We limit the maximum support offered based on 75% of the Council Tax bill for a Band D property, even if the claimant lives in a property with a higher banding than D. This means that any claimant who lives in a property with a banding higher than D has their Reduction calculated as if they lived in a Band D property

Reaction to Policy 3 is highlighted in the chart below...



Two thirds of those surveyed consider Policy 3 to be reasonable. Again the men were most likely to answer in the positive (72% compared with 62% of women considering it to be very reasonable or reasonable).

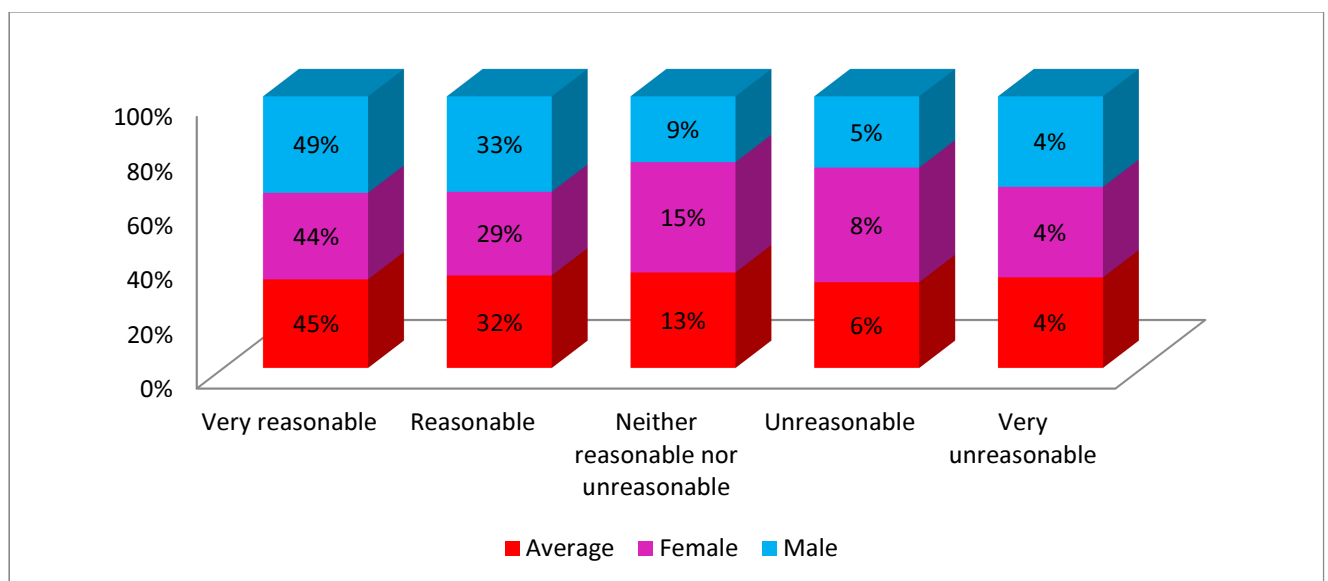
The most commonly recorded "other" comments regarding Policy 3 included; people should pay for what they live in (41%) and people should be taxed on income and not property value - just because they live in a big house doesn't mean they can afford more - it's unfair (26%).

Q7. How reasonable do you think this is as a way of contributing to the reductions that need to be made? (Policy 4)

Before April 2013, some customers were not entitled to Council Tax Benefit in their own right because their own income was too high or they had too much in savings. However, they could claim a Second Adult Rebate, for a reduction of up to 25% off their bill, because they had another adult living with them who was on a low income.

From April 2013, Second Adult Rebate was removed under the Local Scheme. This means that all those of Working Age who were previously entitled to a Second Adult Rebate have to pay 100% of their Council Tax bill. (Second Adult Rebate can still be claimed by pensioners as it is in the national rules)

The chart below reveals the respondents perception of Policy 4.



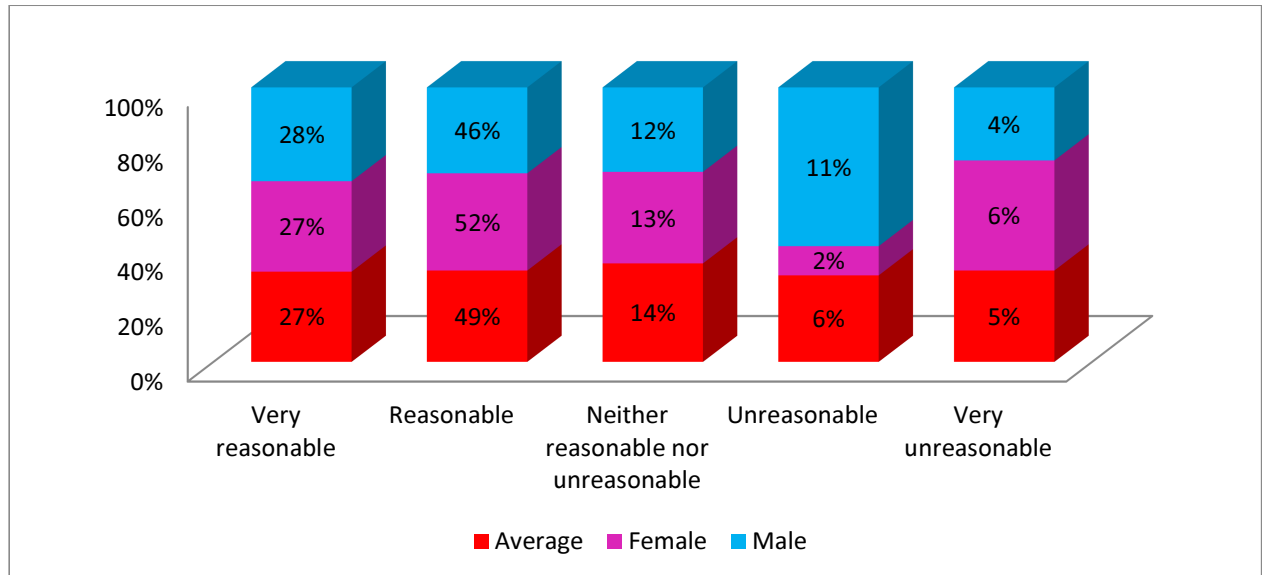
The majority of the sample (77%) deemed Policy 4 to be reasonable. The male respondents were most receptive to Policy 4 with 82% perceiving it to be reasonable to a certain extent (49% very and 33% reasonable).

Only 16 respondents made additional comments in relation to Policy 4, the most common of which were as follows: “all adults use services so should pay” (25%) and “don’t think pensioners should get help” (19%), “should look at a households family income not individual income” (19%) and this “Penalises single parents / single occupancy stay at home mums or people with carers” (19%).

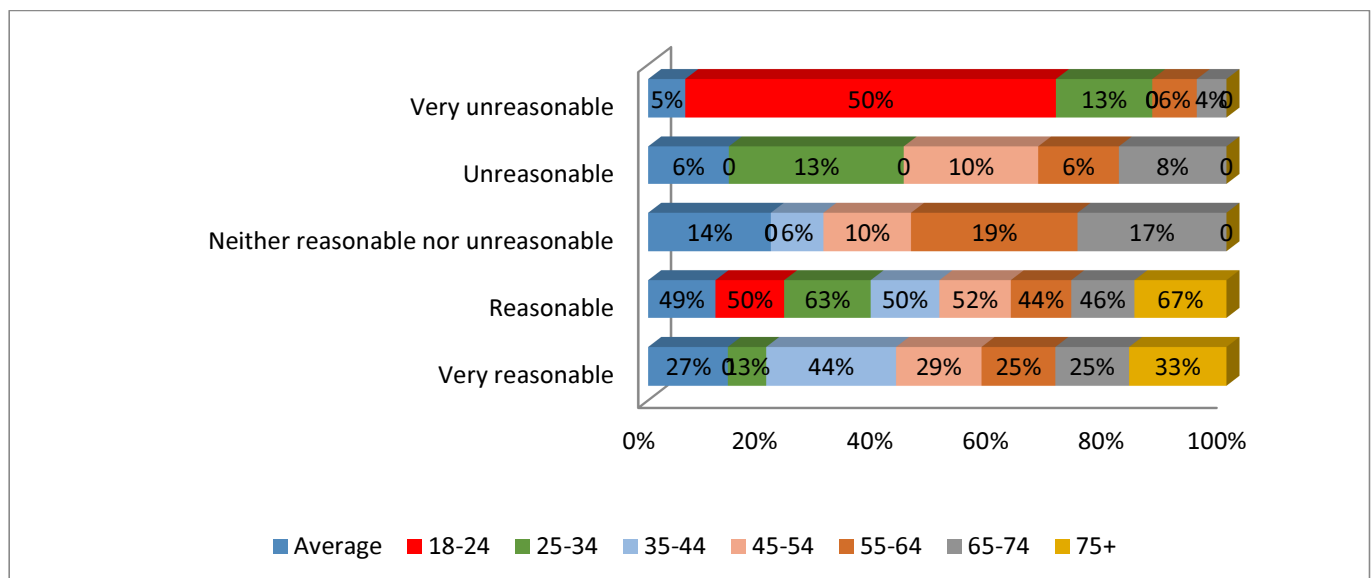
Q8. How reasonable do you think Policy 5?

Child care costs are allowed as an expense when calculating Council Tax Reduction. This does not contribute to any reductions but provides an incentive for parents to stay in work or return to work

Just over three quarters of the sample (76%) consider Policy 5 to be reasonable to a certain extent. The chart below reveals the extent of their opinions...



The youngest respondents were most likely to answer in the positive with 50% of 18-24 year olds and 63% of 25-34 year olds describing it as reasonable. The breakdown by age is shown in the chart below...



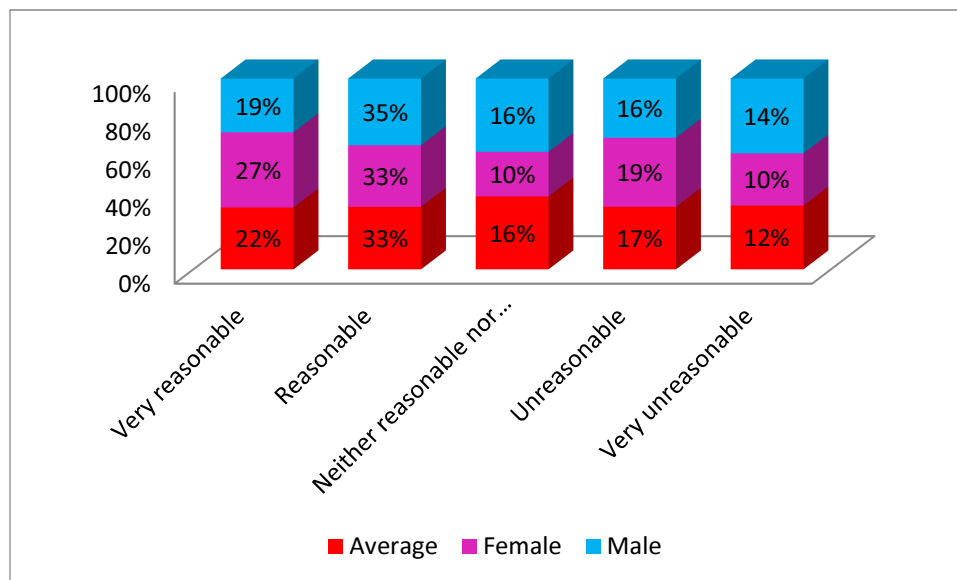
One fifth of respondents made additional comments in relation to Policy 5, the most common of which were as follows; "Childcare costs should not be considered in

reductions - parents should be able to pay for the costs of their own children” (29%), and “Promotes working incentives for parents within the benefit system” (24%)

9. How reasonable do you think this is? (Policy 6)

Claimants are able to have savings of up to £16,000 and still receive support towards their Council Tax Bill

Just over half of those surveyed consider Policy 6 to be reasonable however almost a third (29%) consider Policy 6 to be unreasonable to a certain extent (17% unreasonable and 12% very unreasonable)..

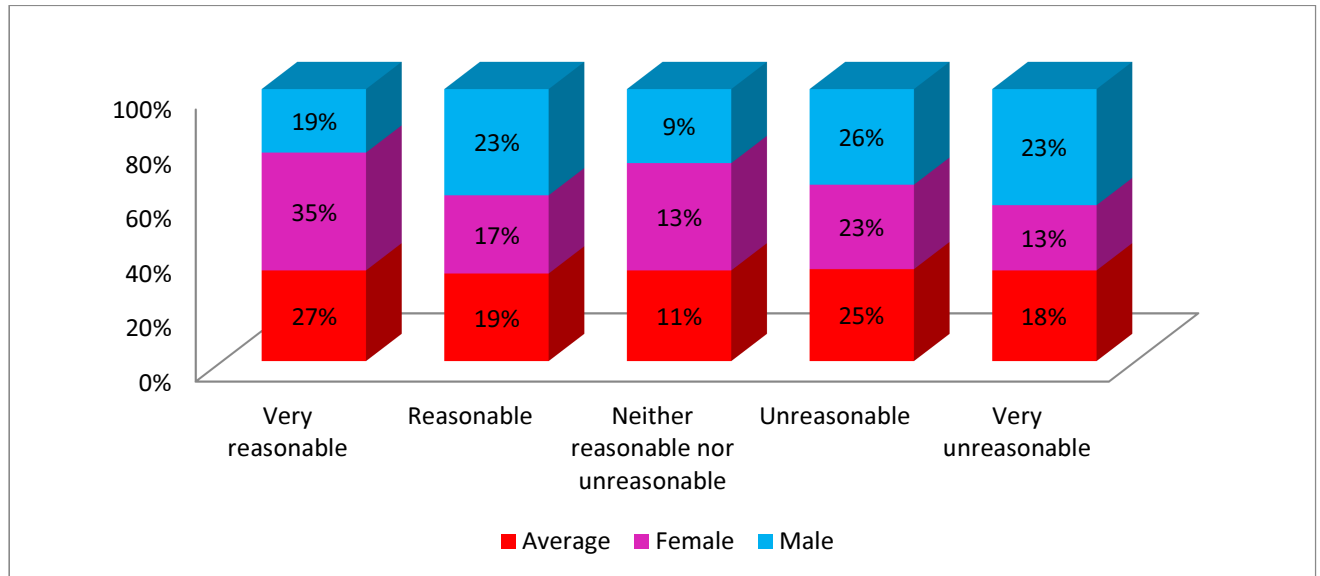


Over a third of respondents (37) made additional comments in relation to Policy 6 including “That’s a lot of savings - so they can obviously afford to pay if have that amount” (35%), “Savers/ pensioners who have saved should not be penalised (25%) and “Saving level is too high - should be £5,000 - £10,000” (25%).

Q10. How reasonable do you think Policy 7?

Child Benefit is not included as income when calculating a claimant’s Council Tax Reduction entitlement

Policy 7 met with mixed reaction from the respondents with 46% perceiving it to be reasonable and 43% unreasonable to a certain extent.



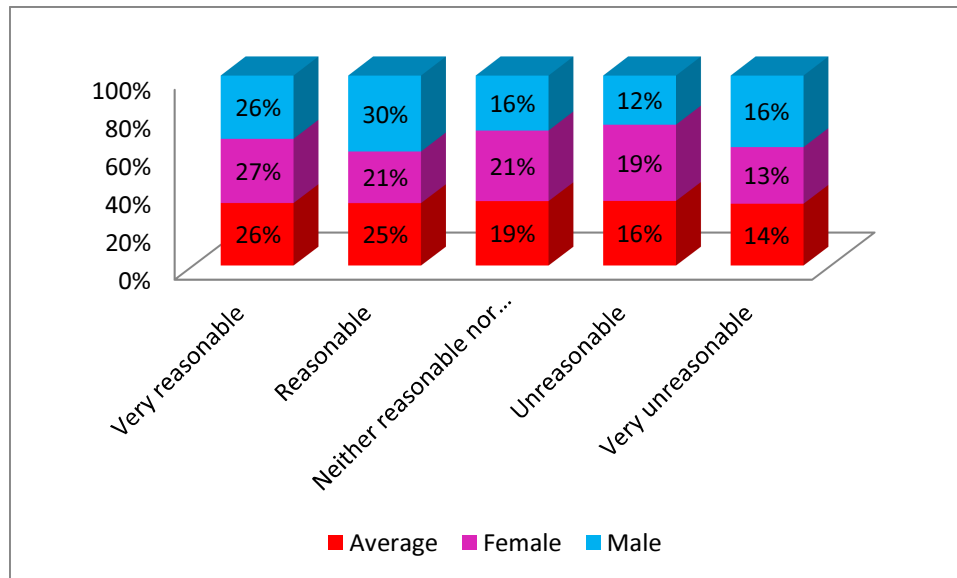
The women were most likely to answer in the positive with 52% describing it as reasonable compared with 42% of the men.

Over three quarters of the respondents who made an additional comment regarding Policy 7 stated that “Child benefit should be counted as income” (77%).

Q11. How reasonable do you think Policy 8 proposal is?

We currently include maintenance payments as income when calculating a Working Age claimant's Council Tax Reduction entitlement. From 1st April 2016 we propose to disregard maintenance as income, to provide an incentive for parents to stay in work or return to work

Approximately half of the sample (51%) consider Policy 8 to be reasonable to a certain extent while almost a third (30%) perceive it to be unreasonable to a certain extent. The men were more receptive to policy 8 than their female counterparts with 56% perceiving it to be reasonable compared with 48% of women.



Of the 34 respondents who offered additional comments relating to Policy 8, 47% stated "it's an income and should be considered as one and included". A further 18% disagreed commenting that child maintenance isn't income.

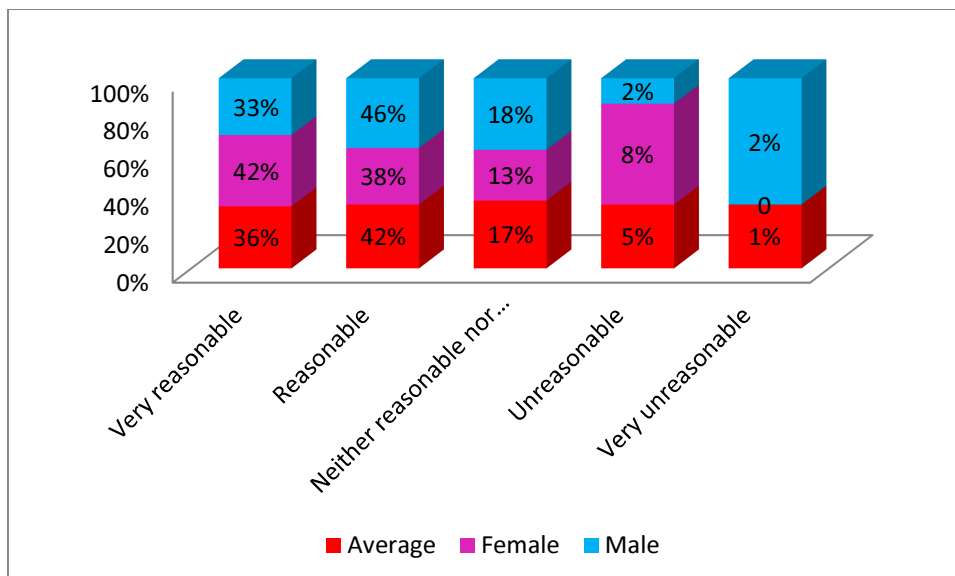
Q12. How reasonable do you think Policy 9 is?

If a Working Age person receives Disability Living Allowance, a Care Component may be added if they require help with day to day tasks or if they need frequent personal care. A lower, middle or higher rate is paid depending on the care needs of the claimant. Single claimants that receive a middle or higher rate Care Component are classed as severely disabled and can attract a Severe Disability Premium too, as long as no one lives with them and no one receives a Carers Allowance for looking after them. Couples can also receive this premium as long as they both are eligible for a middle or higher rate Care Component, no one lives with them and no one receives a Carers Allowance for looking after either of them.

A Severe Disability Premium is also payable if a Working Age person (and their partner if they have one) receives a Personal Independence Payment at the Enhanced Daily Living rate and no one lives with them and no one receives a Carers Allowance for looking after them.

Claimants who are eligible to Severe Disability Premium can receive a Reduction for up to 100% of their Council Tax bill

The chart below highlights respondent opinions of Policy 9. This policy was met with enthusiasm with over three quarters of the sample perceiving it to be reasonable to a certain extent (78%).

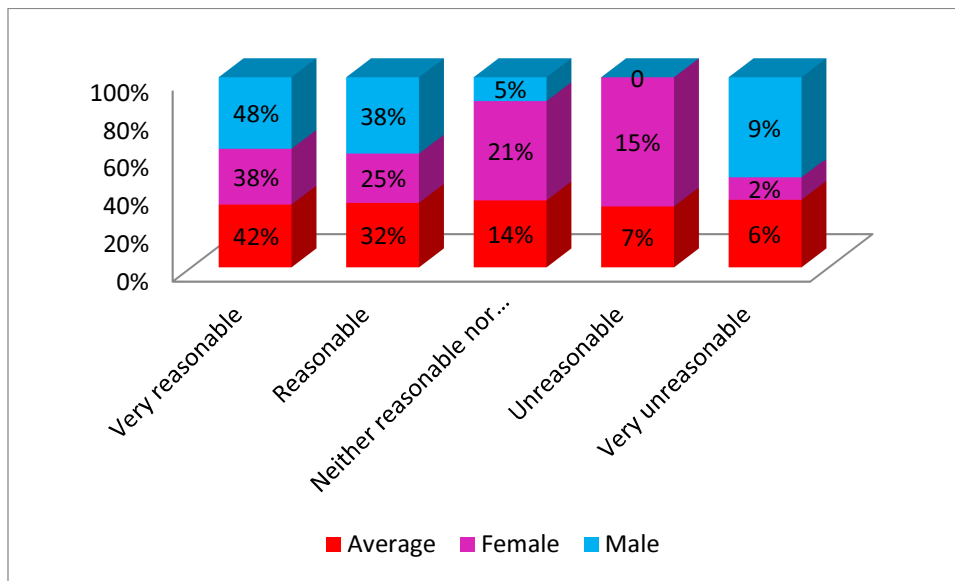


Just under a quarter of respondents offered additional comments in relation to Policy 9, of which 35% stated that “the vulnerable should be protected” and 22% indicated that it “Should be based on the ability to pay/on income”.

Q13. How reasonable do you think Policy 10 is as a way of contributing to the reductions that need to be made?

Any non-dependants living in a Working Age claimant's household are expected to contribute towards the Council Tax bill. If the non-dependant is not working then their contribution would be £5 per week. If the non-dependant is working then their contribution would be a £10 per week

Almost three quarters of the respondents who completed this survey consider Policy 10 to be reasonable to a certain extent (74%). The male sample were most likely to answer in the positive with 86% citing it as reasonable compared with 63% of the women surveyed.

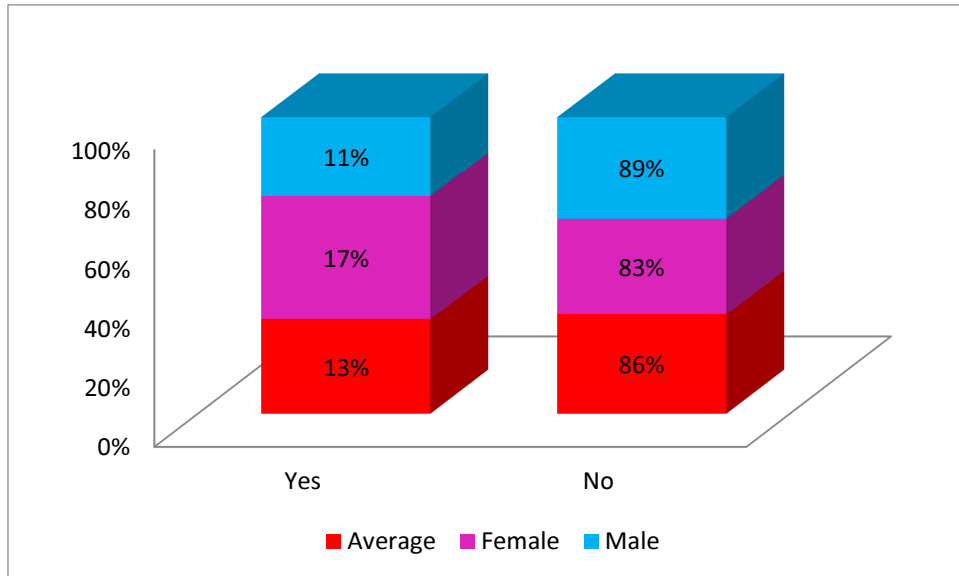


Over a quarter of the sample (29 respondents) made a comment in relation to Policy 10. The most common comments included; “If working then should contribute more” (41%) and “All adults should pay - if use the services then pay for them” (24%).

IMPACT OF THE CHANGES

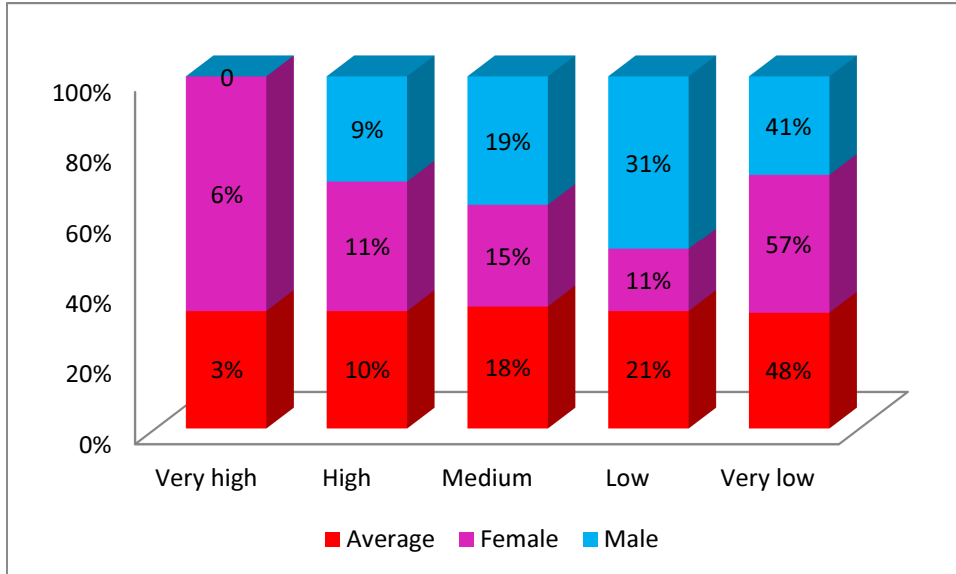
Q14. Does your household receive Council Tax Reduction?

Only a small proportion of the sample (13%) receive Council Tax Reduction.



Q14a. What impact have the changes from April 2013 had on your financial situation, or the financial situation of those communities you represent?

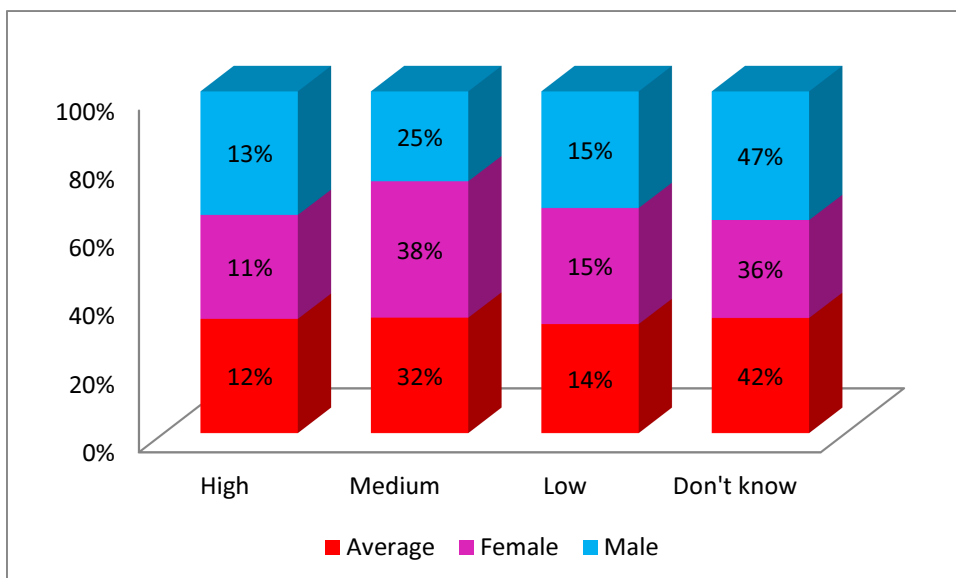
According to over two thirds of the sample surveyed, the impact felt has been low (69%). Just 13% of the sample claimed the changes felt had been high.



Q15. Please tell us whether you think the changes had a high, medium or low impact on each of these groups:

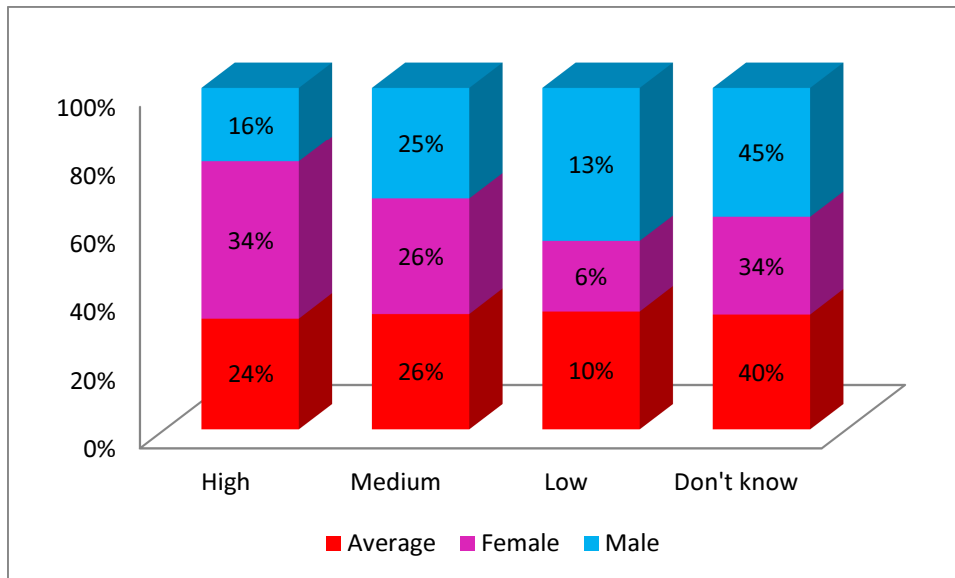
Families with children

Just under half of the sample (44%) think the changes have had either a high or medium impact on families with children.



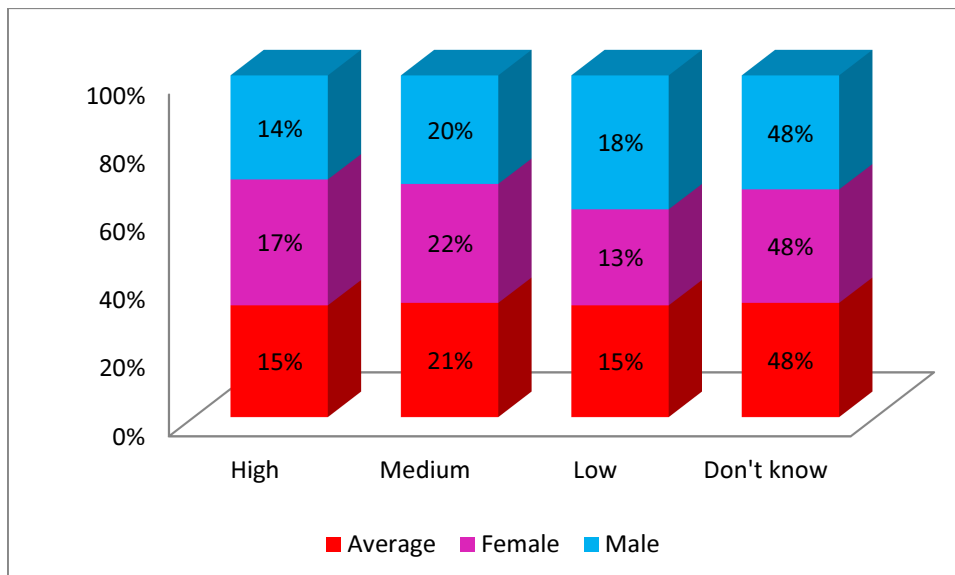
Lone Parents

Exactly one half of the sample think the changes have had either a high or medium impact on lone parents.



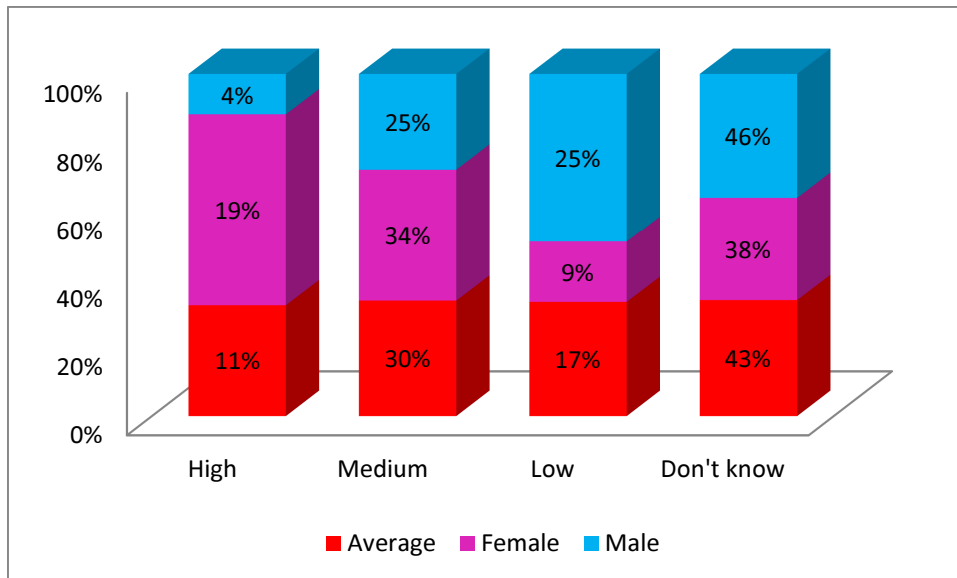
Carers

Over one third of the sample (36%) think the changes have had either a high or medium impact on carers.



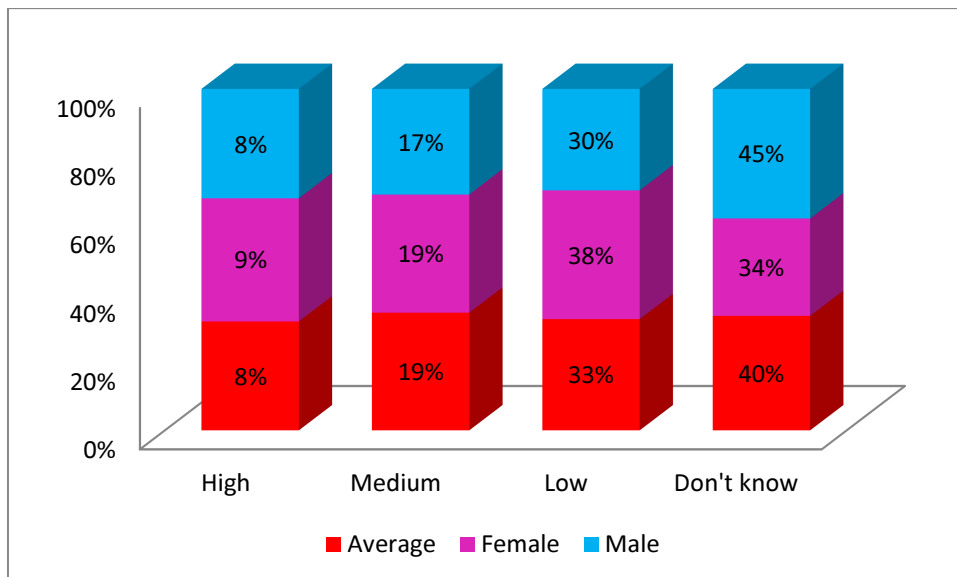
Part Time Workers

Under half of the sample (41%) think the changes have had either a high or medium impact on part time workers.



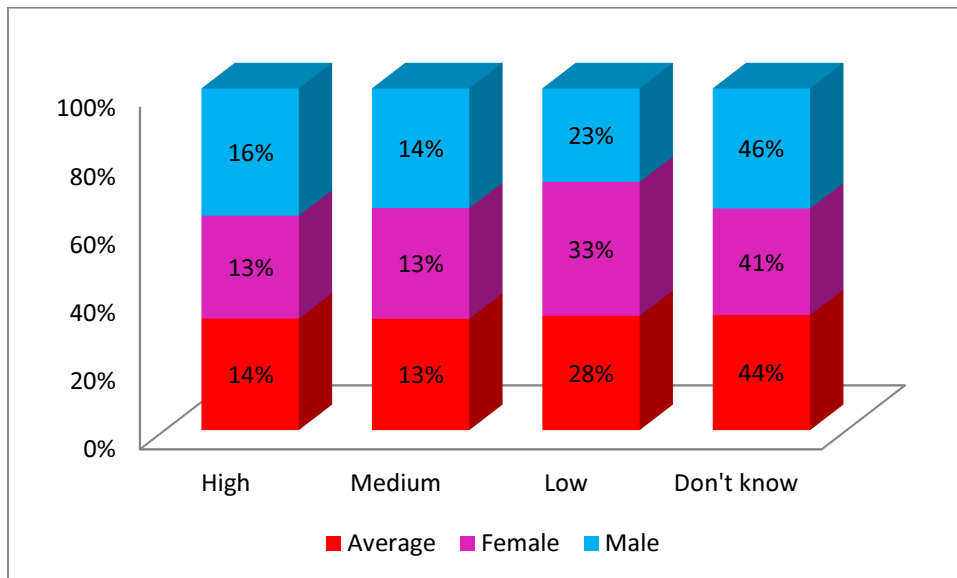
Full Time Workers

Just over a quarter of those surveyed (27%) think the changes have had either a high or medium impact on full time workers.



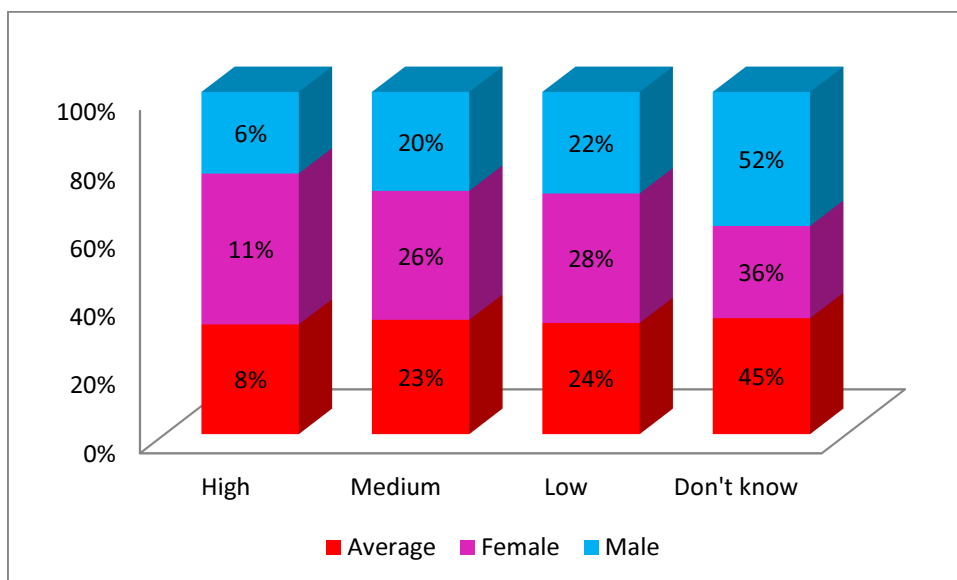
People who are disabled

Similarly, just over a quarter of those surveyed (27%) think the changes have had either a high or medium impact on people who are disabled.



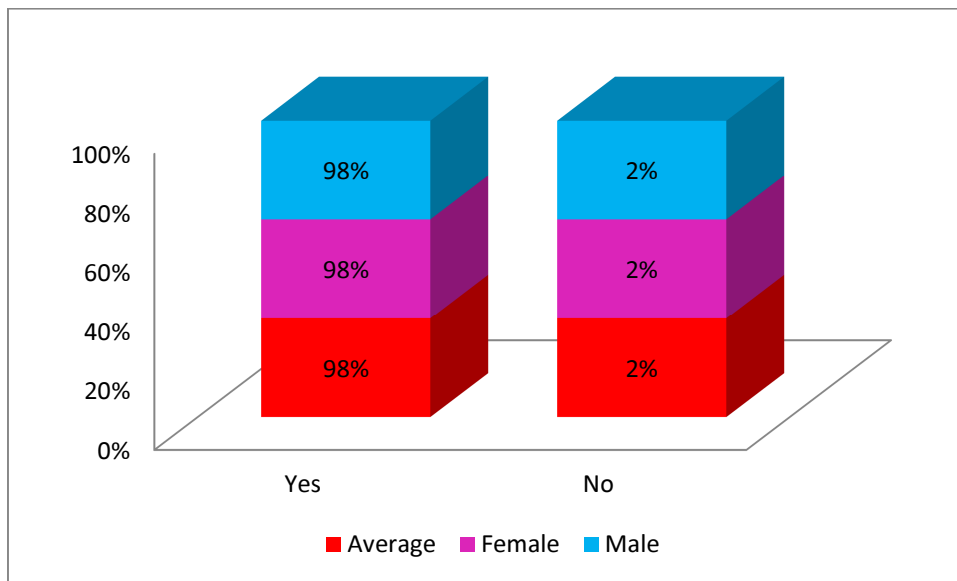
Single people and couples without children

Just under a third of the sample (31%) think the changes have had either a high or medium impact on single people and couples without children.



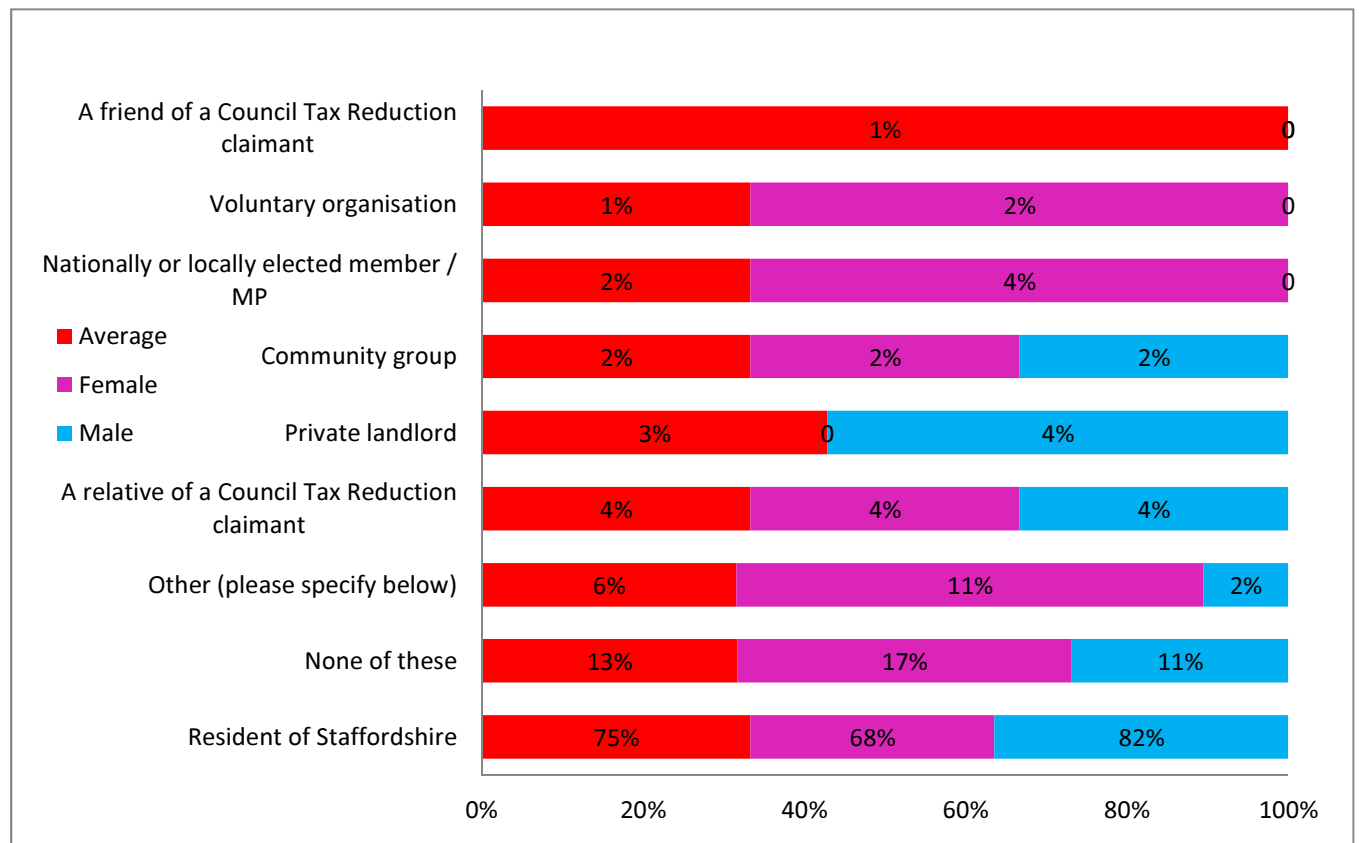
Q19. Are you a resident of Tamworth?

The vast majority of the sample are a resident of Tamworth (98%).

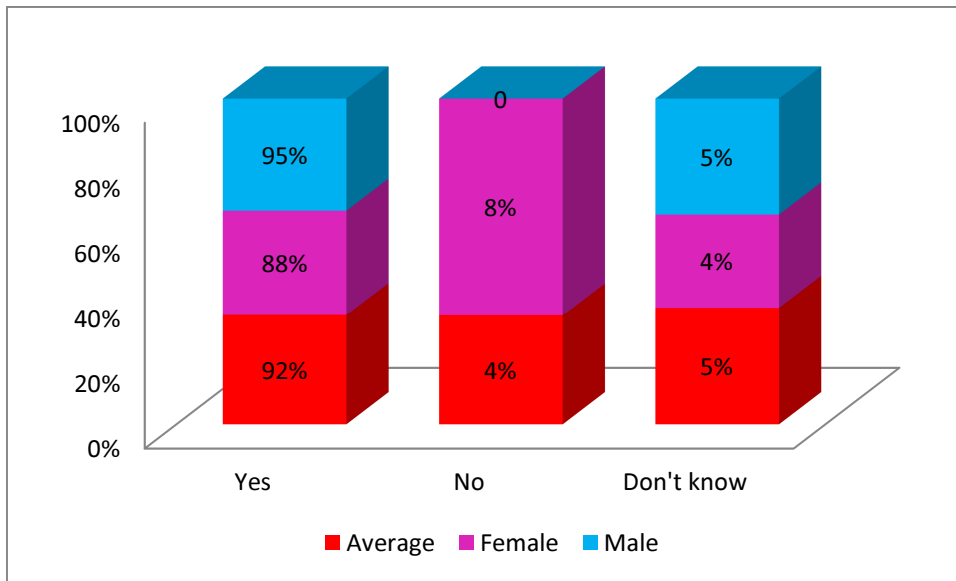


Q20. Are you submitting your views as...?

Three quarters of those who completed the online survey submitted their views as a resident of Staffordshire.

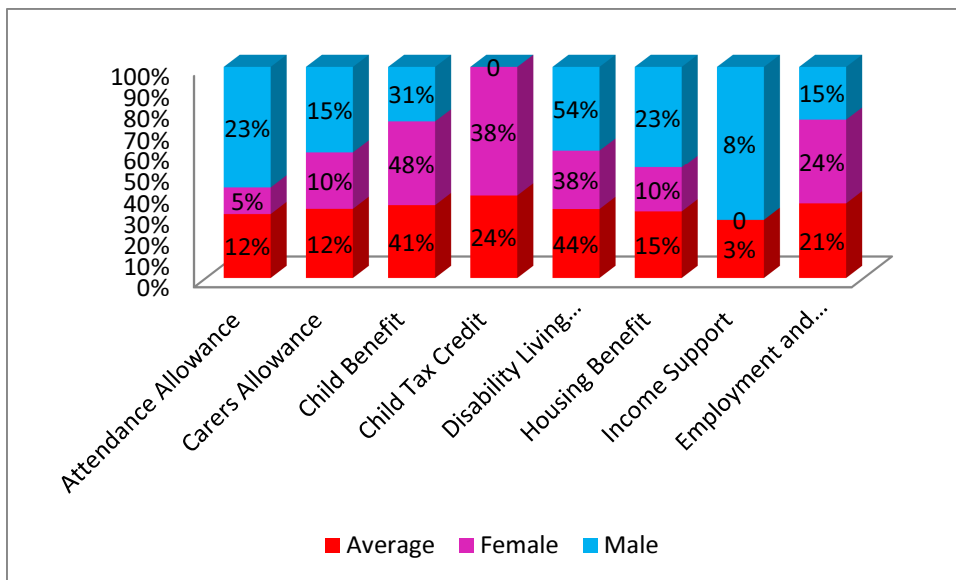


Q21. Does your name appear on the Council Tax Bill for your household?

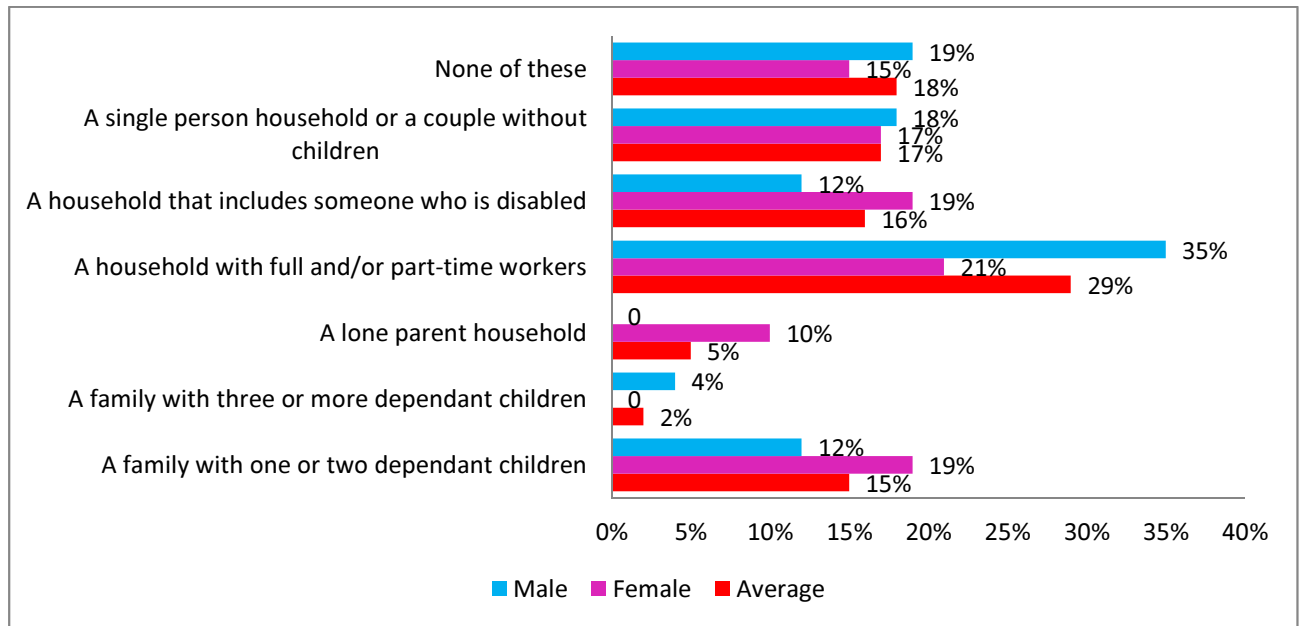


Q22. Does your household receive any of the following benefits?

The most common type of benefit received by the respondents was disability living allowance (44%) followed by child benefit (41%).

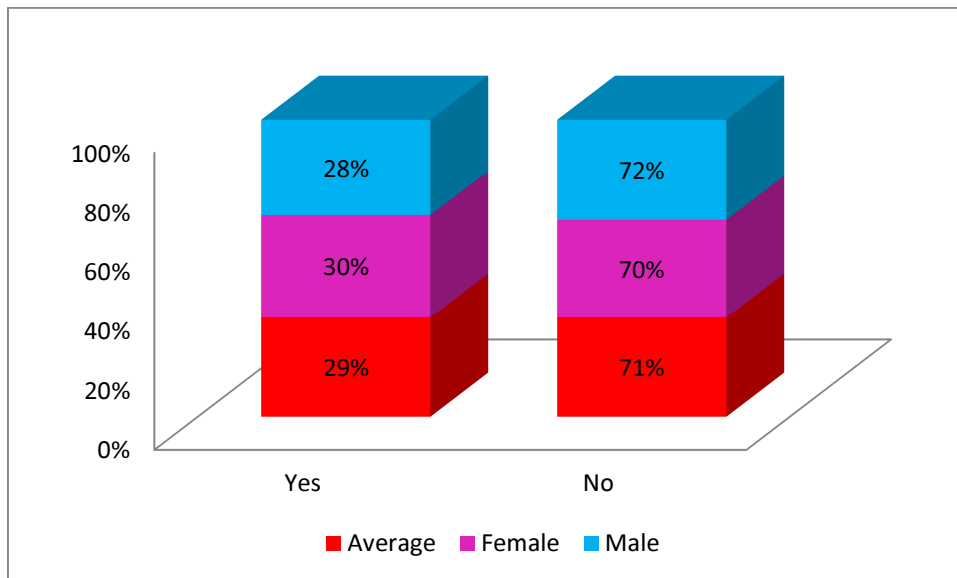


Q23. Would you say that any of the following describes your household?



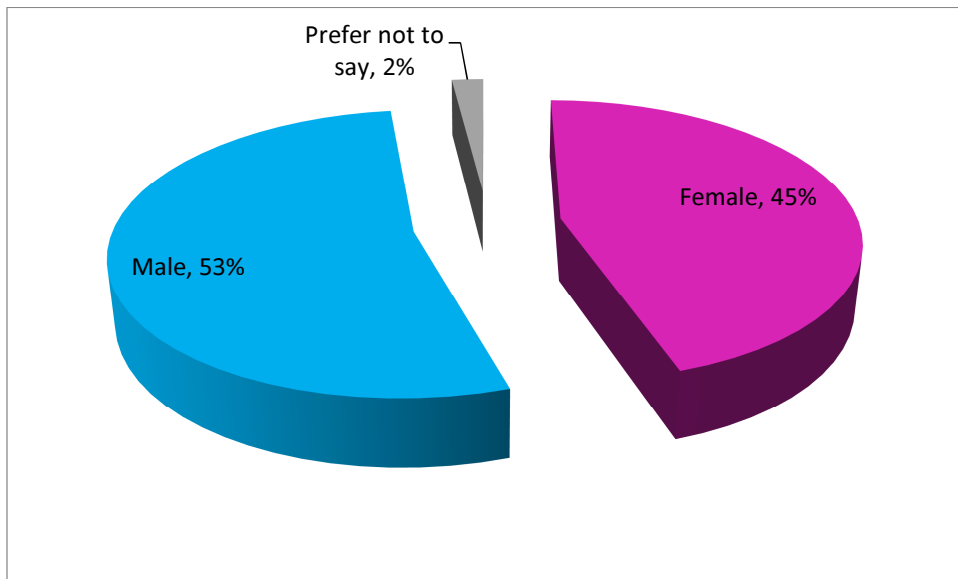
Q24. Do you regularly provide unpaid support caring for someone?

Less than one third of the sample (29%) regularly provide unpaid caring support for someone.



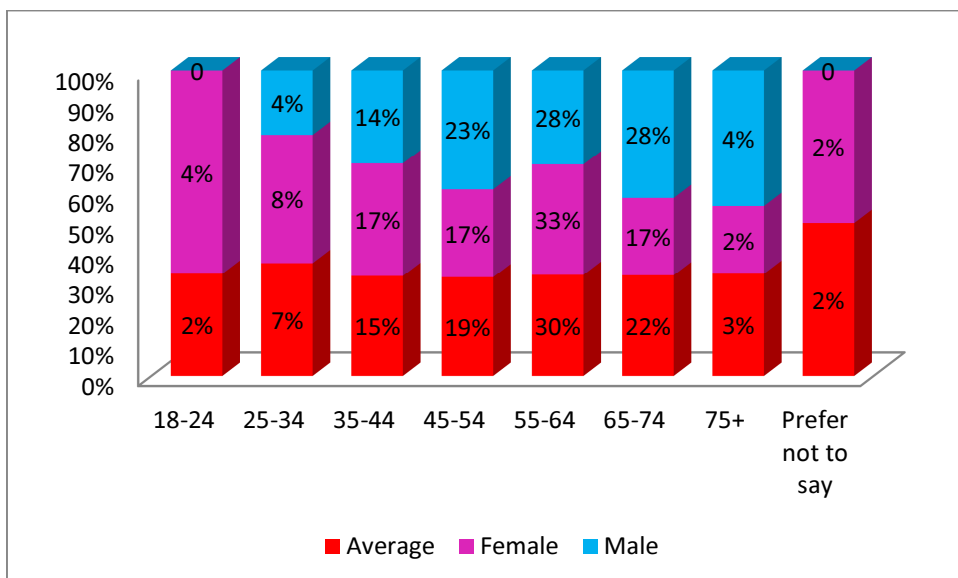
Q25. Are you male or female?

The sample comprised slightly more men (53%) than women (45%).



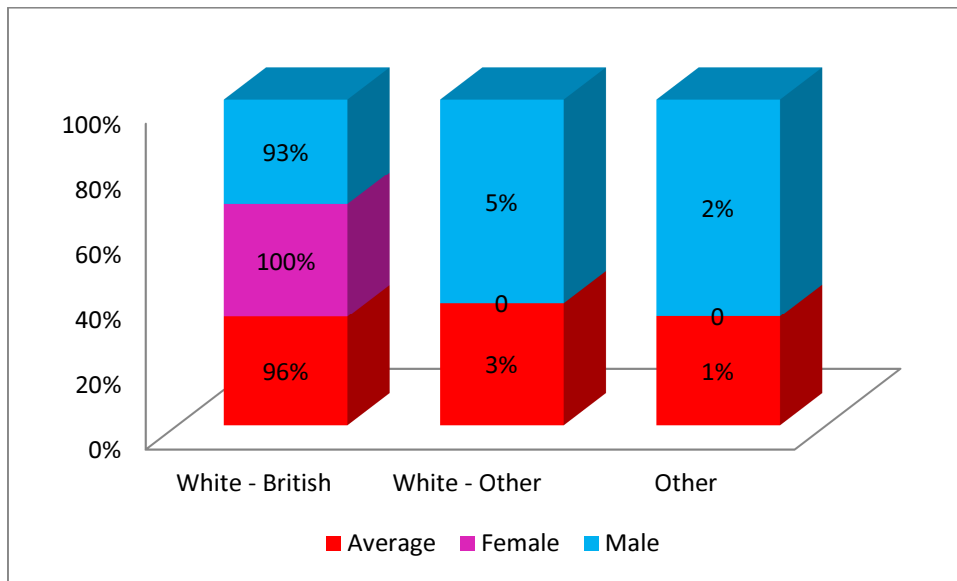
Q26. What is your age?

Just over one half of the sample fall into the 55-64 (30%) or 65-74 year old (22%) age brackets.



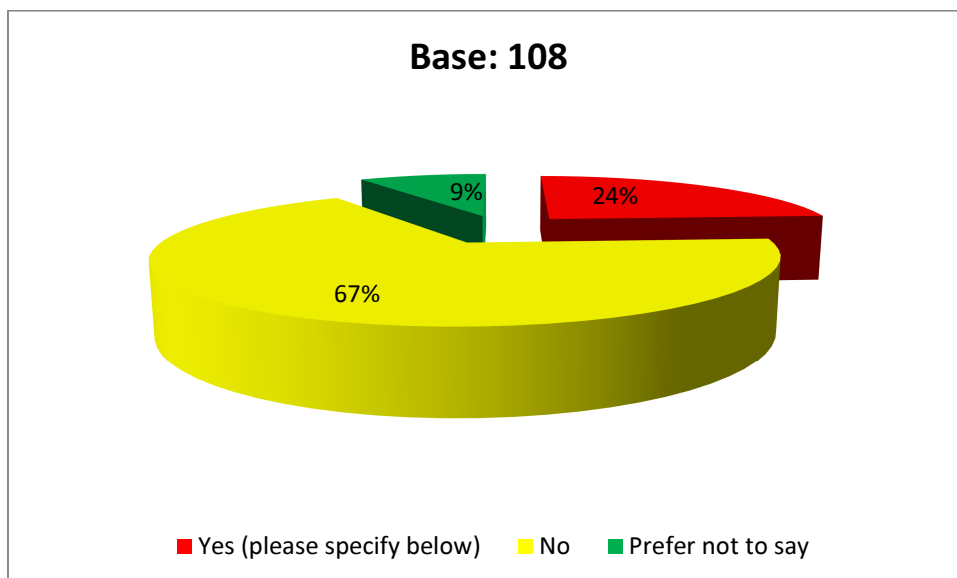
Q27. What is your ethnic origin?

The vast majority of the respondents are of White British ethnic origin (96%).

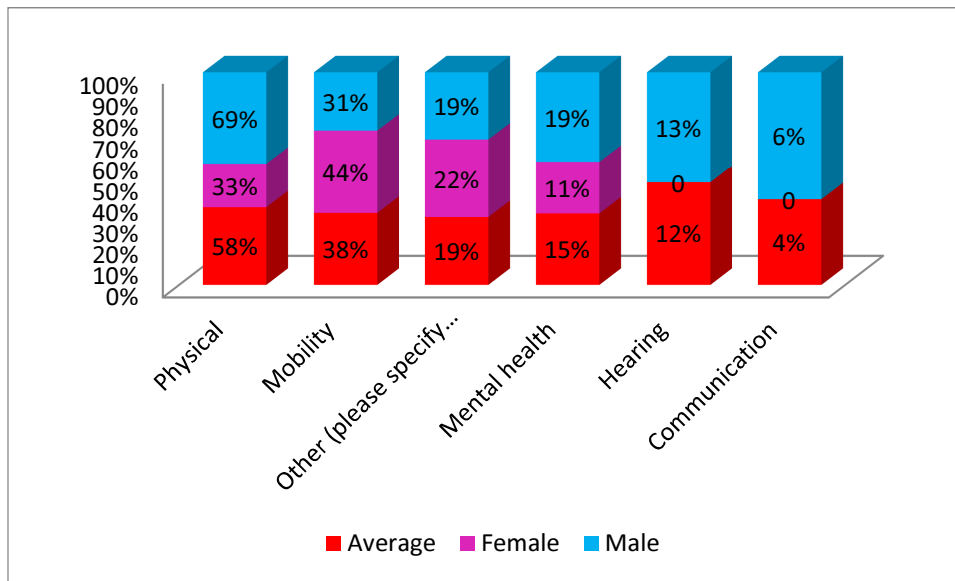


Q28. Do you consider yourself to have a disability or long term health condition?

Less than a quarter of the sample (24%) consider themselves to have a disability or long term condition.

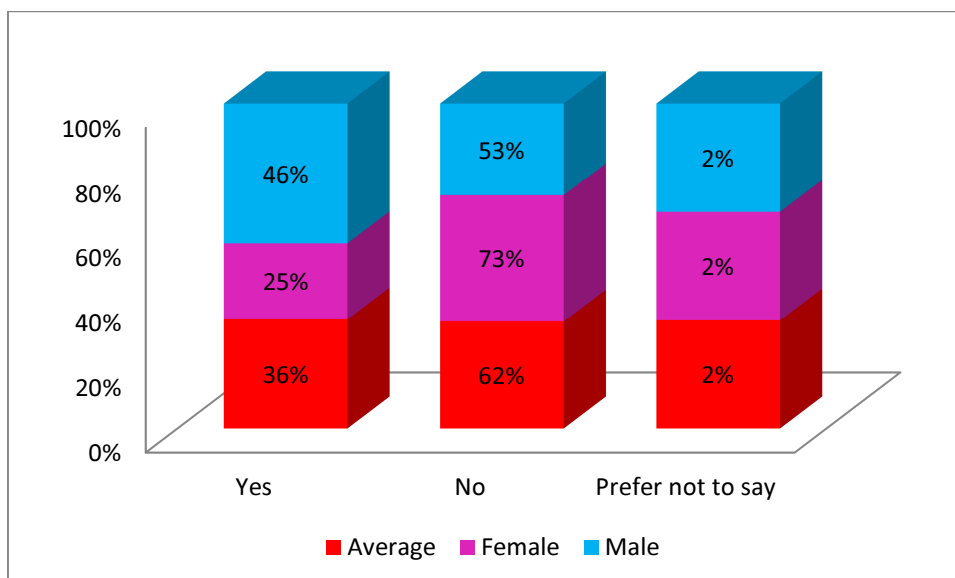


Q28a What is the nature of your disability?



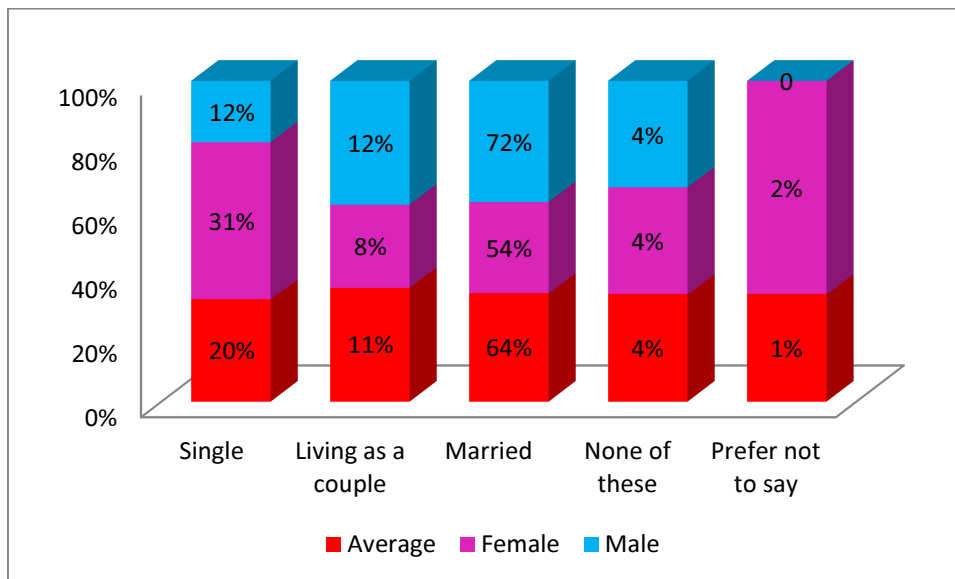
Q29. Are you receiving a Retirement Pension or Pension Credit?

Just over a third of the sample (36%) are in receipt of a retirement pension or pension credit.

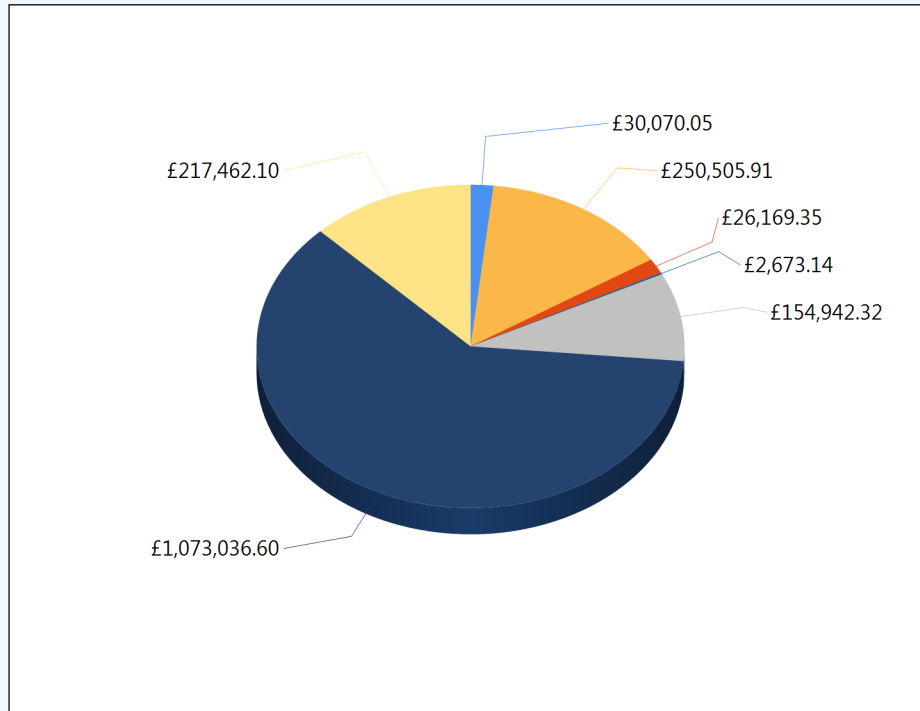


Q30. What is your relationship status?

Almost two thirds of the sample (64%) are married).



CTS Expenditure as of 2015-2016

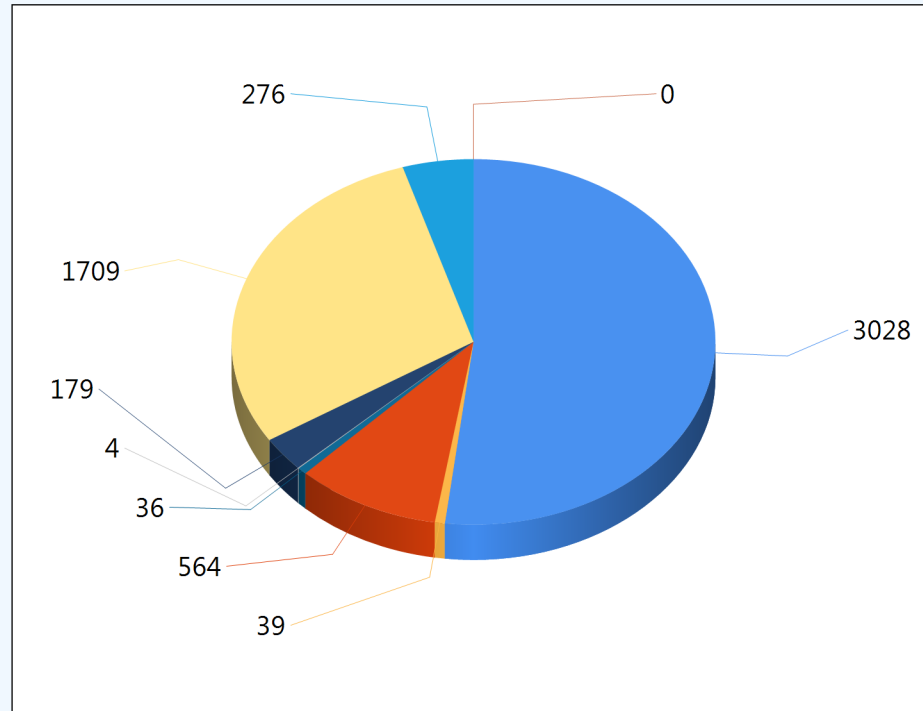


Group Description

- Working Age-Non-Passported-Disabled Child Premium
- Working Age-Non-Passported-Other
- Working Age-Non-Passported-Severe Disability
- Working Age-Non-Passported-War Pensioners
- Working Age-Passported-Disabled Child Premium
- Working Age-Passported-Other
- Working Age-Passported-Severe Disability

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CTS Caseload as of 14.09.2015



Group Legend

- Elderly
- Working Age-Non-Passported-Disabled Child Premium
- Working Age-Non-Passported-Other
- Working Age-Non-Passported-Severe Disability
- Working Age-Non-Passported-War Pensioners
- Working Age-Passported-Disabled Child Premium
- Working Age-Passported-Other
- Working Age-Passported-Severe Disability
- Working Age-Passported-War Pensioners

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