



Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2023/24

Engagement Report –
December 2022

How this report is organised

[Executive Summary](#)

[Engagement Methodology](#)

[Key Findings](#)

[Demographics Data](#)

[Further Information](#)

- Information in this report is organised in 5 sections
- You can skip between sections by clicking on the tabs at the top of each page



Executive summary

The Vale of White Horse District Council invited residents to express their views on a number of proposed changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme which would ensure that everyone contributes to services on a fairer basis. If approved, changes will take effect from 1 April 2023.

Consultees were asked to give their views on three proposals:

- That the maximum council tax reduction for eligible claimants be increased from 91.5 per cent to 100 per cent (full reduction).**
- That a single person living with another adult on low income should be entitled to up to 25 per cent reduction in council tax.**
- That council tax reduction should no longer be capped to Band E.**

A total of 76 completed responses were received. An additional 61 partial responses were submitted but not included in the results.

The vast majority of those who responded did so on their own behalf (**97 per cent**), as residents / members of the public (**89 per cent**).

A majority of respondents agreed with the proposals to remove the provision that recipients of council tax reduction must pay at least 8.5 per cent of council tax (**68 per cent**), and to allow single adults living with another adult on low income to claim up to 25 per cent council tax reduction (**65 per cent**). The third proposal to no longer cap council tax reduction to Band E was also supported by the largest group of respondents (**43 per cent**).

On the basis of the results obtained, the Revenues and Benefits Team has recommended that the council's scrutiny committee adopt all the above three proposals. Details of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2023 will be published on the [council's website](#) early next year.



Engagement methodology

The comment form for this consultation was emailed by the Consultation and Community Engagement Team to a sample of 1,000 residents. The mailing included a link to an online survey and details of how to comment. A copy of the notification can be found in Appendix B.

The sample of residents included 500 recipients of council tax support and 500 people on the council tax register whom are not currently receiving a reduction in council tax. Consultees in both groups were randomly selected by the council's Revenues and Benefits Team.

The online survey offered participants the opportunity to indicate to what extent they support or oppose each proposal, along with free text boxes to provide further comments. The consultation ran between Monday 10 October and 11.59pm on Monday 07 November 2022. A copy of the survey can be found in Appendix C.

An article for district councillors was published in 'In Focus' on 21 October to further raise awareness of this consultation and provide information about the proposed changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

Due to the nature of this engagement and its restricted access, no messages were published on social media platforms to advertise it and promote wider participation.

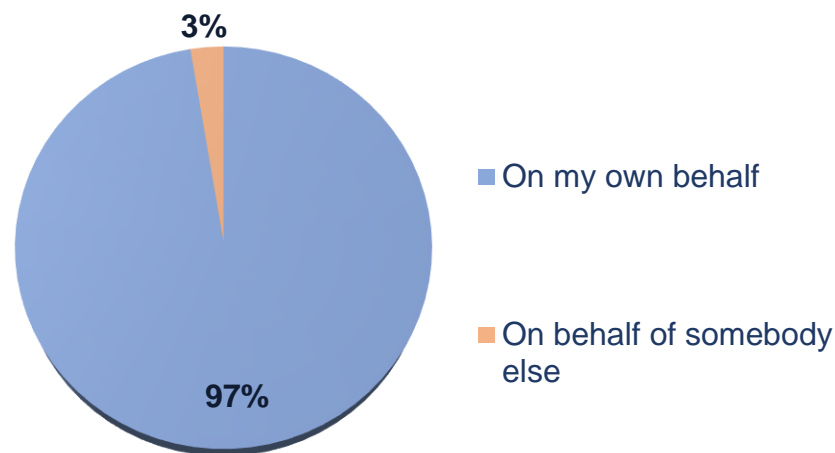
Any personal information supplied to us within comments that could identify anyone has been redacted and will not be shared or published in the report. Further information on data protection is available in our [general consultation's privacy statement](#) on our website.



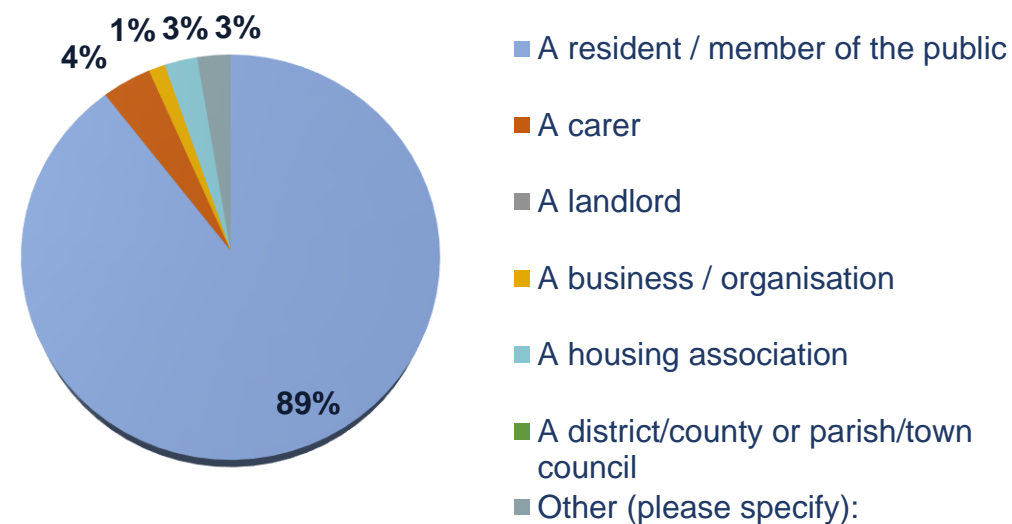
Key findings*

Note: When stating percentages in the analysis, we are referring to the percentage of respondents that answered the specific question, rather than the total number of responses to the overall survey. Percentages may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding up over .5 and rounding down under .5. Words that appear in italics are quotes taken from comments received.

Q1. How are you responding to this consultation?



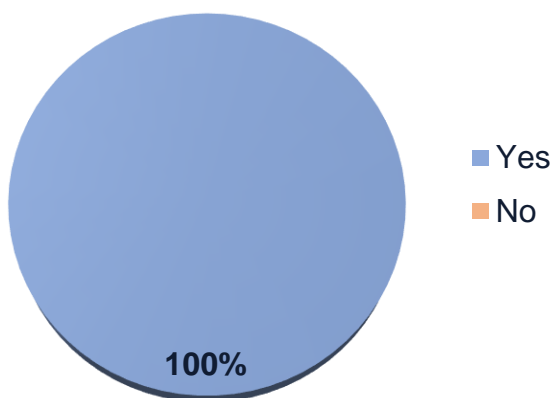
Q2. I am responding as / on behalf of



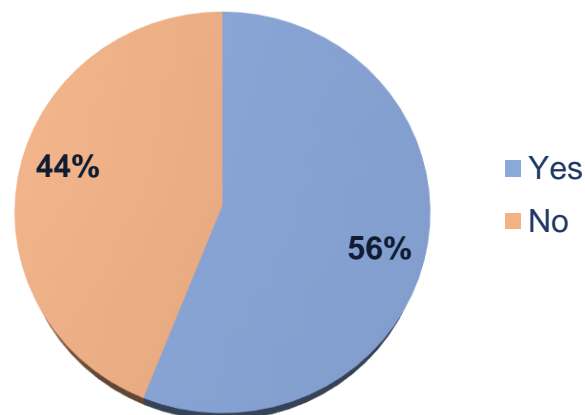
All 76 respondents answered the above questions. The vast majority of them responded to the consultation on their own behalf (97 per cent), and as residents / members of the public (89 per cent). 3 per cent responded on behalf of somebody else.

4 per cent of respondents said they were taking part to the consultation as a carer, and 3 per cent were responding on behalf of a housing association. Only one organisation provided their name in the comments (*Age UK Oxfordshire*).

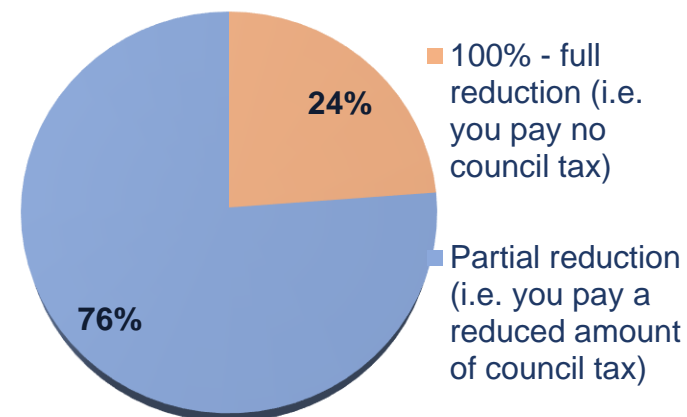
Q4. Do you live in the Vale of White Horse District Council area?



Q5. Do you currently receive a council tax reduction (previously council tax benefit)?



Q6. Please indicate the level of council tax reduction you receive



75 respondents answered the above questions 4 and 5, whilst 1 skipped them. All respondents said they live in the Vale of White Horse District Council area. The majority of them were recipients of council tax reduction / council tax benefit (42, 56 per cent), whilst the remaining 44 per cent were not receiving this support.

Among those who said they receive a council tax reduction, the majority receive a partial reduction (76 per cent), whilst the remaining 24 per cent received a full reduction.

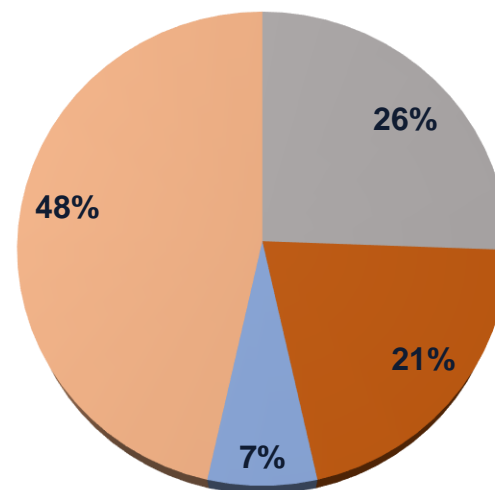
Q7. The following groups will not be affected by any changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme in the Vale of White Horse, and will continue to receive the same level of support that they were entitled to when in receipt of council tax benefit.

Please indicate if you belong to any of these groups:

42 respondents answered this question, whilst 34 skipped it.

The majority of respondents said they belong to one of these protected groups (55 per cent). More specifically, 26 per cent were pensioners, 21 per cent were people with disabilities and 7 per cent were single parents with a child under the age of 5.

The remaining 48 per cent of respondents said they do not belong to any of the listed groups (48 per cent).



- Pensioner or currently treated as a pensioner for council tax reduction purposes
- Person with disabilities (in receipt of any of the benefits listed at the beginning of this survey)
- War widows pension recipient
- War disablement pension recipient
- Single parent with a child under the age of five
- I don't belong to any of the above groups

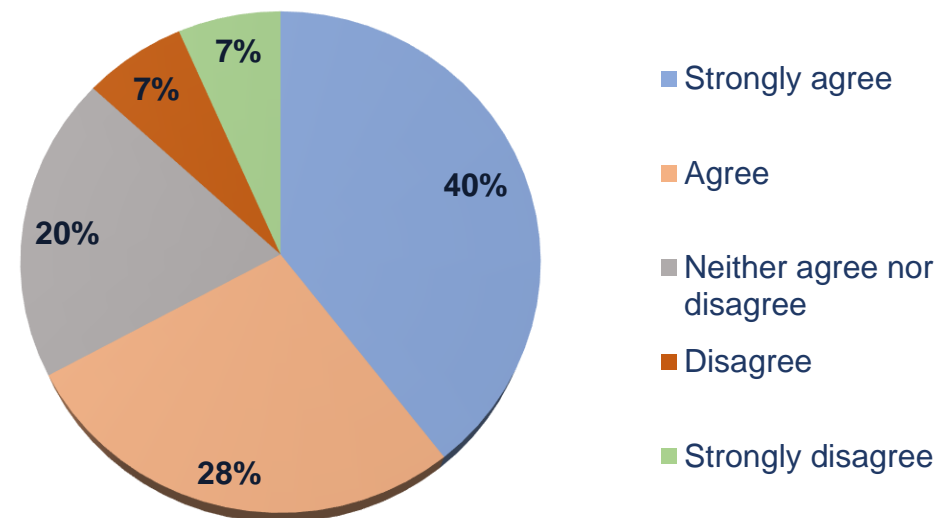
Q8. Proposed change 1. In order to ensure that everyone contributes on a fairer basis to council services, we are proposing a Council Tax Reduction Scheme which would remove the provision to pay at least 8.5 per cent of council tax (around £180.00 per year, based on a Band D property). This would mean that all eligible applicants could receive support for 100 per cent of their council tax. How far do you agree or disagree with the proposal to increase the entitlement to council tax reduction for eligible claimants from 91.5 per cent to 100 per cent (full reduction)?

All 76 respondents answered this question.

The majority of respondents agreed with the proposal to remove the provision that council tax support recipients must pay at least 8.5 per cent of council tax (68 per cent). This includes 40 per cent who strongly agreed with it and 28 per cent who agreed with it.

20 per cent of respondents said they did not agree nor disagree with the proposal.

Finally 14 per cent disagreed with this proposal, including 7 per cent who strongly disagreed.



Q9. Proposed change 2. Vale of White Horse District Council is planning to implement a change to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme which would allow a single person living with another adult on low income to claim up to 25 per cent reduction in council tax.

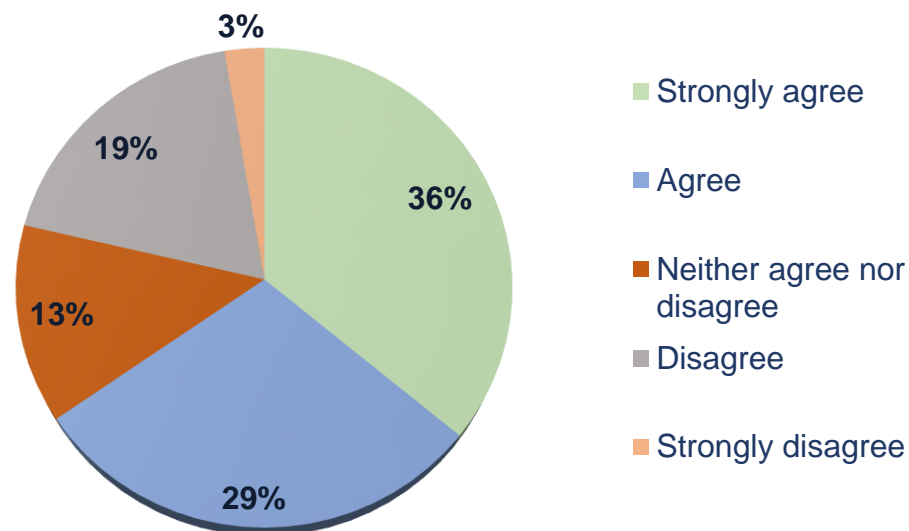
How far do you agree or disagree with the proposal that a single person who lives with another adult on low income could claim up to 25 per cent council tax reduction regardless of their income (excluding lodgers)?

75 out of 76 respondents answered this question.

The majority of respondents agreed with the proposal that a single person who lives with another adult on low income could claim up to 25 per cent council tax reduction (65 per cent). This include 36 per cent who strongly agreed with it and 29 per cent who agreed with it.

Conversely, 22 per cent of respondents disagreed with the proposal, including 3 per cent who strongly disagreed.

Finally 13 per cent said they neither agreed nor disagreed with it.



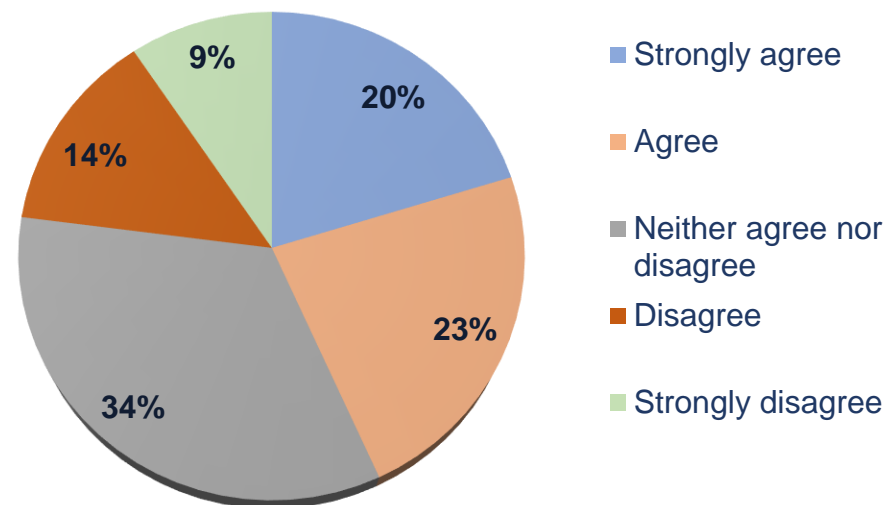
Q10. Proposed change 3. Vale of White Horse District Council is planning to introduce a change to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme so that entitlement to council tax reduction will no longer be capped at Band E.

How far do you agree or disagree with the proposal to extend entitlement to full council tax reduction to those living in properties where higher council tax is paid (bands F, G and H)?

74 out of 76 respondents answered this question.

The largest group of respondents agreed with the proposal to extend entitlement to full council tax reduction to those living in properties where council tax is above rate E (43 per cent). This includes 20 per cent who strongly agreed with this proposal.

The second largest group of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposal (34 per cent), whilst 23 per cent disagreed with it, including 9 per cent who strongly disagreed.



Q11. If you have any other comments about the proposed changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme in the Vale of White Horse, please write them in the space below(*):

11 comments were made by respondents in response to the above question.

Of them, 4 said that the way the Council Tax Reduction Scheme works should be revisited (31 per cent).

3 comments expressed support for the proposed changes to the scheme (23 per cent).

2 comments included questions on the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (15 per cent).

Finally 2 respondents said that the scheme should support the most vulnerable, and another 2 made other/ unrelated comments (15 per cent each).

(*)The full list of comment received are available to view in a separate document on [our website pages](#).

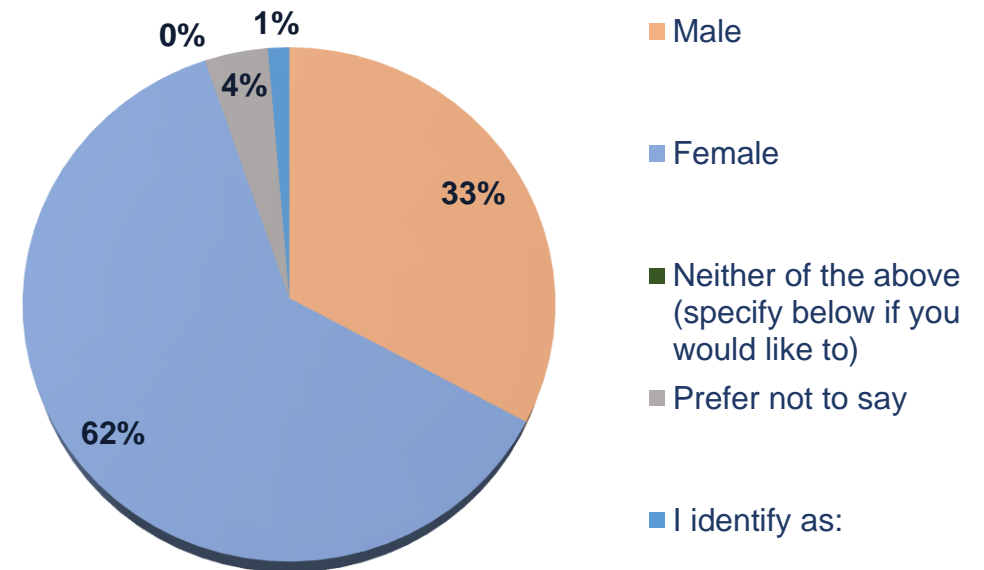


Demographic data

Q12. Which of the following describes how you identify yourself?

All 76 respondents answered this question, with females making up the majority of them (62 per cent) and makes a third of the total.

3 respondents said that they preferred not to say (4 per cent) and 1 respondent selected 'I identify as' and then provided an additional comment to specify this (1 per cent). This comment was redacted.



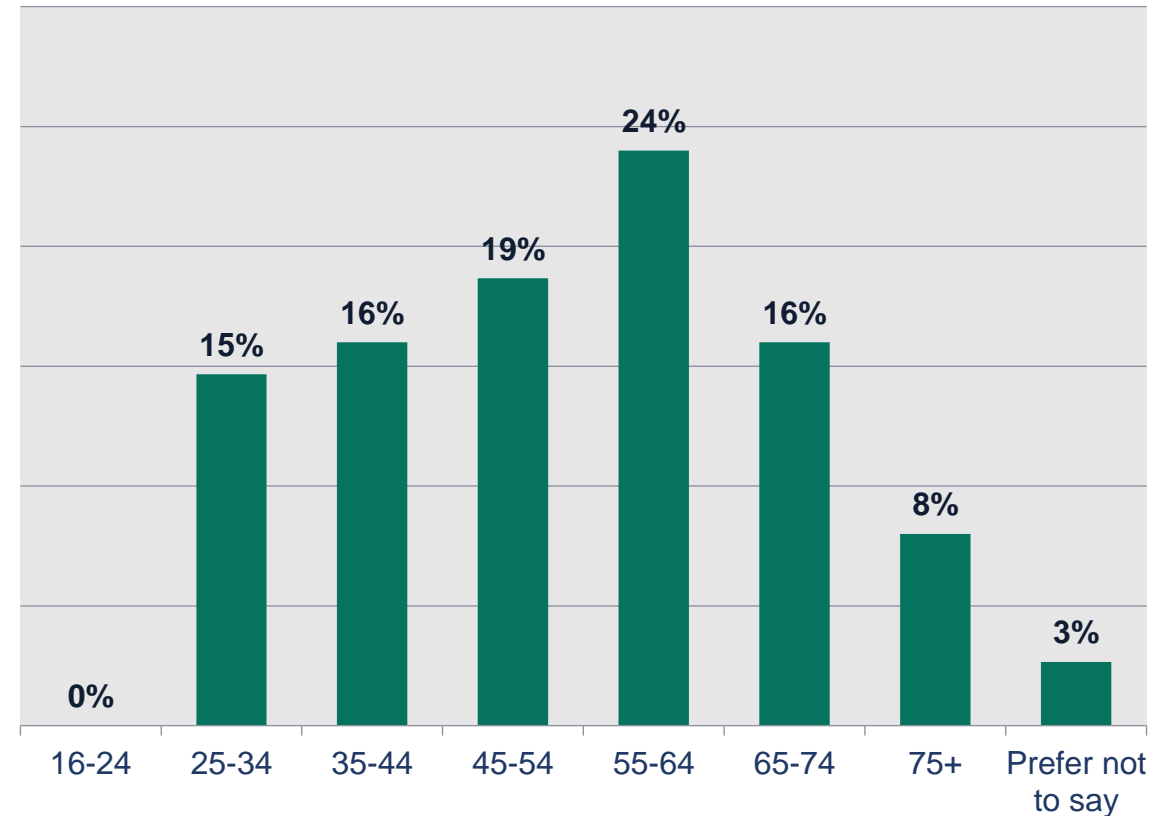
Q13. How old are you?

75 out of 76 respondents answered this question.

Most age groups were represented in this survey with the exception of 16-24-year-olds.

The largest group of respondents were 55-64-year-olds (24 per cent), followed by 45-54-year-olds (19 per cent). However, respondents were overall evenly distributed, with those aged 55 and over making up 48 per cent of the total, whilst under 55-year-olds made up 50 per cent.

3 per cent of respondents preferred not to say.



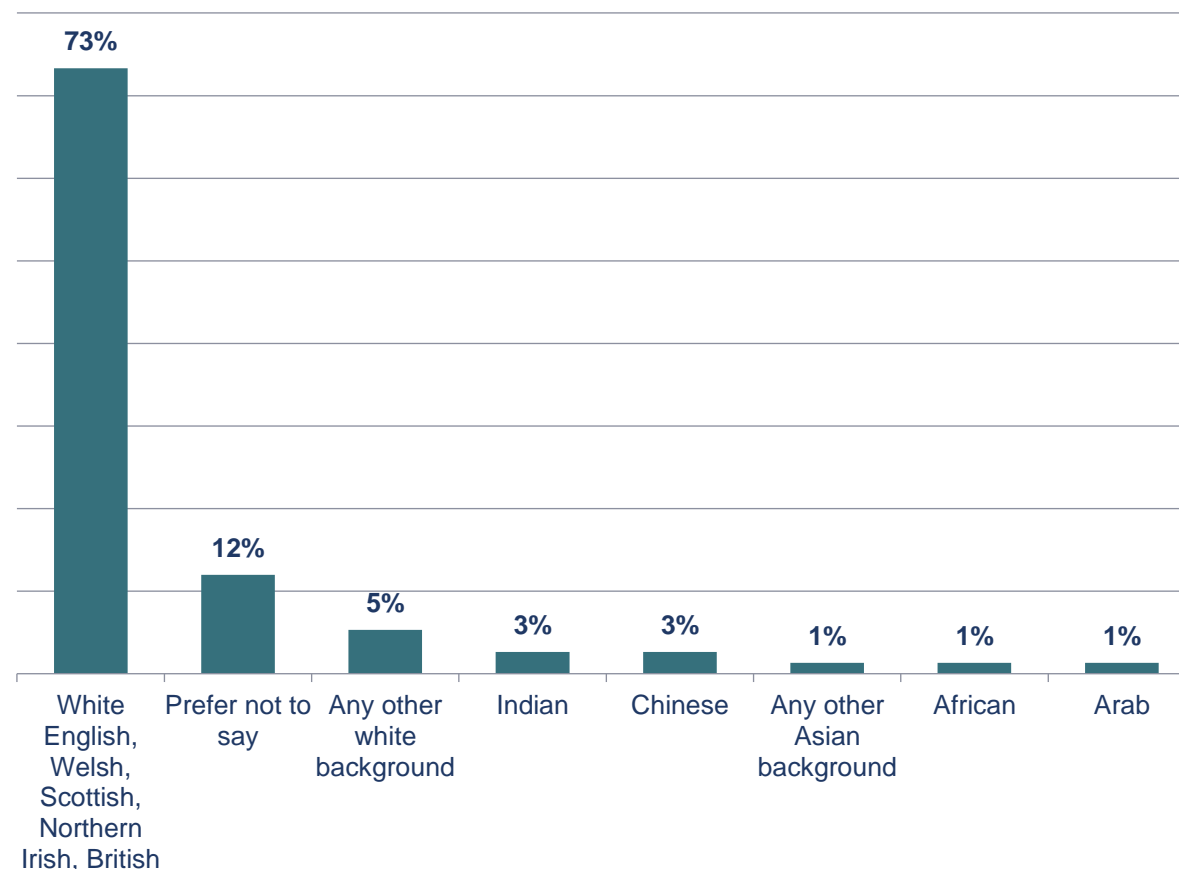
Q14. What is your ethnic group?*

75 out of 76 respondents answered this question.

The vast majority of respondents were from White English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish and British ethnic background (73 per cent)

An additional 5 per cent of respondents were from any other White background, whilst Indian and Chinese made up 3 per cent each, and African, Arab and any other Asian background 1 per cent each.

12 per cent of respondents preferred not to disclose their ethnic background.



*For ease of representation, ethnic groups which recorded zero per cent of responses have been omitted in the above chart.

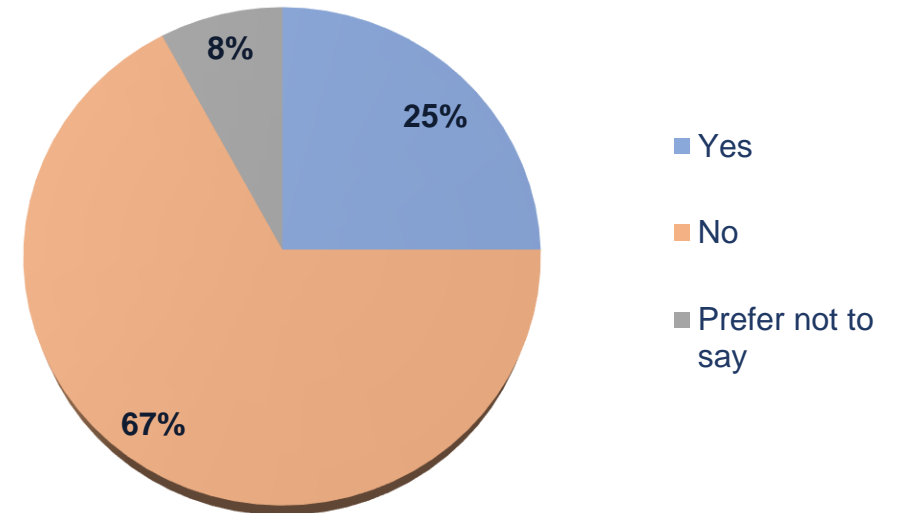
Q15. Are your day to day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted or is expected to last 12 months or more?

All 76 respondents answered this question.

Just over two-thirds of respondents said that their daily activities are not affected by a health issues or disability (67 per cent), whilst 25 per cent answered 'Yes' and 8 per cent preferred not to say.

4 comments were made by respondents to further clarify the health issue or disability that affect them. These were:

- Pneumonitis
- Arthritis and osteoarthritis
- Depression
- Anxiety



Further information



Please see below how you can get in touch with us:

- If you have any questions on the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, including who is eligible and how to claim this benefit, please email the Revenues and Benefits Team at vowh.benefits@secure.capita.co.uk
- If you have any questions on the results of this consultation or want to request this report in a different format (for example large print, Braille, email, Easy Read and alternative languages) please email haveyoursay@southandvale.gov.uk or call **01235 422425**.