

**AWDURDOD TÂN AC ACHUB GOGLEDD CYMRU**



**NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**Affordable Fire and Rescue Services for North Wales  
Consultation Analysis 2016**

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## **Executive Summary**

In the autumn of 2016 North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority conducted a public consultation entitled '*Affordable fire and rescue services for North Wales*.' The consultation invited anyone with an interest to give their views on how fire and rescue services should be developed in North Wales in the next few years. People were asked to respond to the consultation by post, email and via an online questionnaire.

The consultation closed on the 12<sup>th</sup> December 2016 and this report examines the responses given.

Firstly, an analysis of the responses via the online questionnaire:

- A total of 346 people responded via the online questionnaire. The demographic make-up of the respondents was fairly mixed, with some aspects quite diverse (e.g. age, sex) and others dominated by one category (e.g. sexual orientation, preferred language). The majority of responses were from members of the public with almost half of the respondents stating that they live in the county of Wrexham.
- The survey found that the majority of people supported the view that '*No fire and rescue services should be cut - county councils should cover all the additional costs*'.
- The survey also found that the majority of respondents agreed that '*Fire and rescue services in North Wales should not be cut (even if that means that people have to pay more council tax)*'.
- Over half of the respondents who completed the survey disagreed with the statement '*If we have to make do with one less fire engine, then it would make most sense to take it away from the fire station that has the most fire engines (i.e. from Wrexham, which is the only fire station in North Wales that has three fire engines)*'.
- Almost half of the respondents took the opportunity to complete a free text option within the survey with 50 people asserting that they'd like the Authority to reinstate the large animal rescue service<sup>1</sup> and 38 people who stated they were against the removal of a fire appliance from Wrexham.

In addition to the online questionnaire results the Authority received 27 written responses to the consultation via email and post. A summary of the responses can be found on pages 7-8 of this report.

In conclusion, of the people who responded to the consultation, the majority supported draft objectives one and four, with more divided opinion in relation to draft objectives two and three.

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<sup>1</sup> Note that all 50 responses were received within a 24-hour period.

## **Introduction**

North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority conducted a 12 week public consultation regarding the Fire and Rescue Services provided in North Wales entitled '[Affordable fire and rescue services for North Wales.](#)' Specifically in relation to the Authority's four draft improvement objectives:

- Objective 1** Continuing to keep people safe from fire in their homes.
- Objective 2** Taking a new approach to meeting the Authority's costs.
- Objective 3** Protecting all our communities with better planning of firefighting crews.
- Objective 4** Exploring how we can do more things for our communities.

People were invited to take part in the consultation through a variety of means, the primary route being an online questionnaire. The consultation was supported by social media, specifically via Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Messages and videos (in Welsh and English) outlined the key challenges and changes facing the Authority.

The consultation closed on the 12<sup>th</sup> December 2016 and this report analyses the data gathered from both the online questionnaire and the written responses received. The report starts by looking at the response rate and the characteristics of those people who took part and then examines the responses to the questions relating to the four draft improvement and wellbeing objectives and finishing with a summary of the key themes identified in written responses.

## **Response Rate and Characteristics – Online Survey**

### **Response Rate**

A total of 346 people responded via the online questionnaire; however this response rate decreased as people went through the survey. Therefore for each question referred to below the true response rate was analysed with the number of respondents per question identified. The characteristics section of the survey was optional; therefore the results of these questions can be viewed as a sample of those who responded to the consultation.

The demographic make-up of the respondents was mixed, with some aspects quite diverse (e.g. age, sex) and others dominated by one category (e.g. sexual orientation, preferred language). For further details see Appendix A.

## **Online Survey Response Analysis**

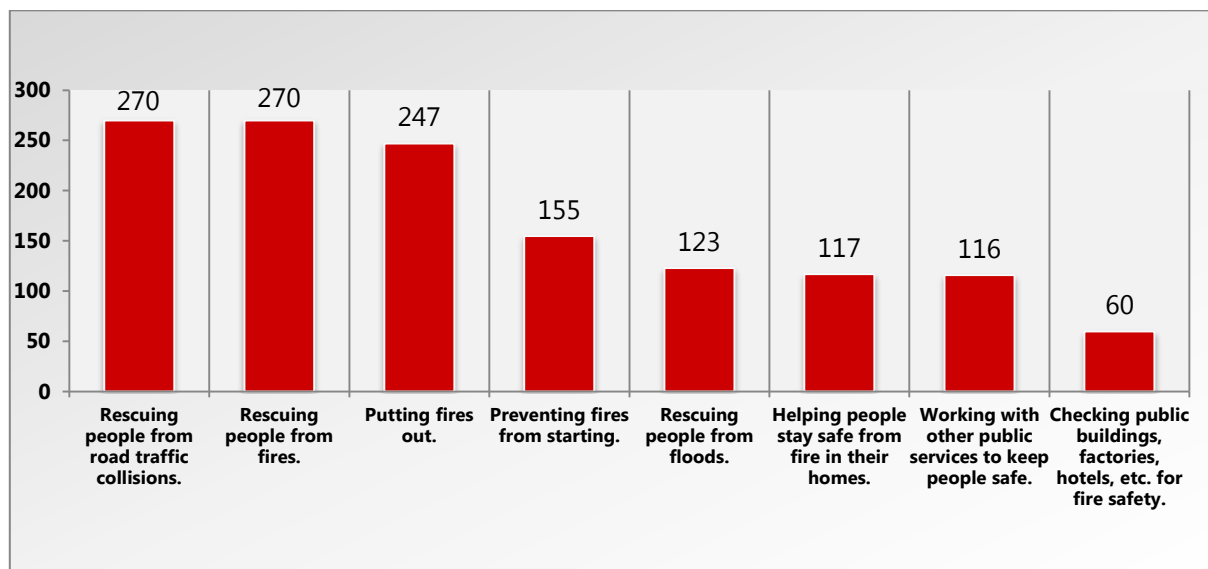
Respondents were asked to read the Authority's draft improvement objectives contained within the [public consultation document](#) and respond to a number of questions relating to the objectives. A total of 346 people answered the below questions (Q1 – Q6).

### ***Q 1. North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority provides important services. Which do you think are the four most important?***

- Putting fires out.
- Rescuing people from road traffic collisions.
- Preventing fires from starting.
- Helping people stay safe from fire in their homes.
- Checking public buildings, factories, hotels, etc. for fire safety.
- Working with other public services to keep people safe.
- Rescuing people from fires.
- Rescuing people from floods.

In the online survey respondents were able to select up to four of the above options. The most selected categories were '*Rescuing people from road traffic collisions*' (270), '*Rescuing people from fires*' (270) and '*Putting fires out*' (247).

**Figure 1 – Graph to show response relating to question one (freq.)**

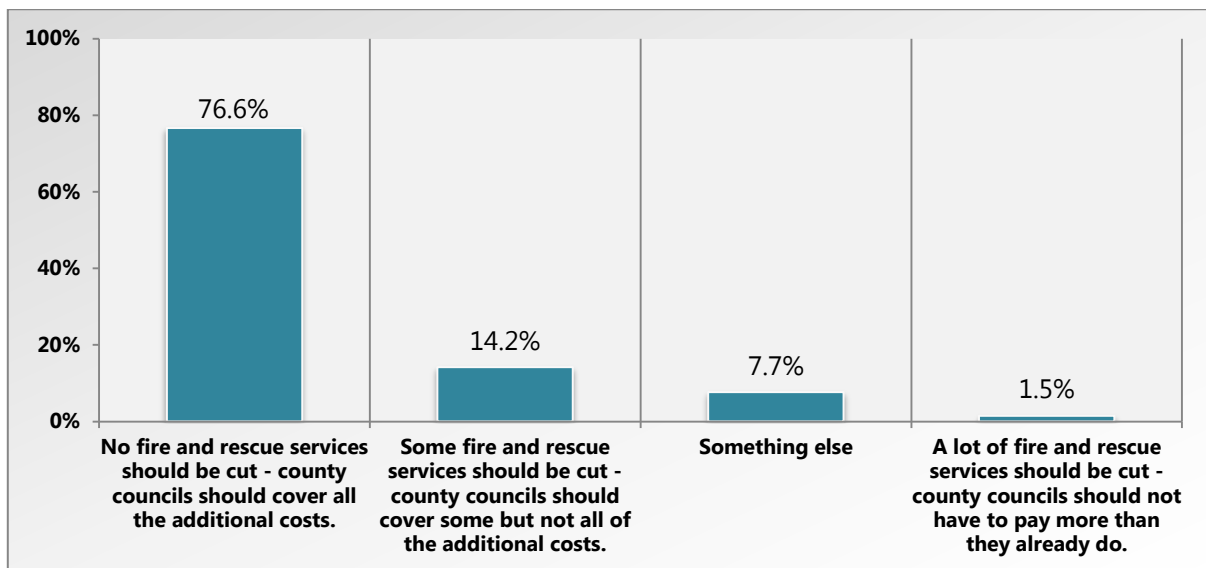


***Q.2 After years of making savings, the cost of providing fire and rescue services in North Wales is likely to increase. What do you think should happen next?***

- No fire and rescue services should be cut - county councils should cover all the additional costs.
- Some fire and rescue services should be cut - county councils should cover some but not all of the additional costs.
- A lot of fire and rescue services should be cut - county councils should not have to pay more than they already do.
- Something else

The majority of people (76.6%) selected '*No fire and rescue services should be cut - county councils should cover all the additional costs*', with 14.2% of respondents selecting '*Some fire and rescue services should be cut - county councils should cover some but not all of the additional costs.*'

**Figure 2 – Graph to show response relating to question two (%)**

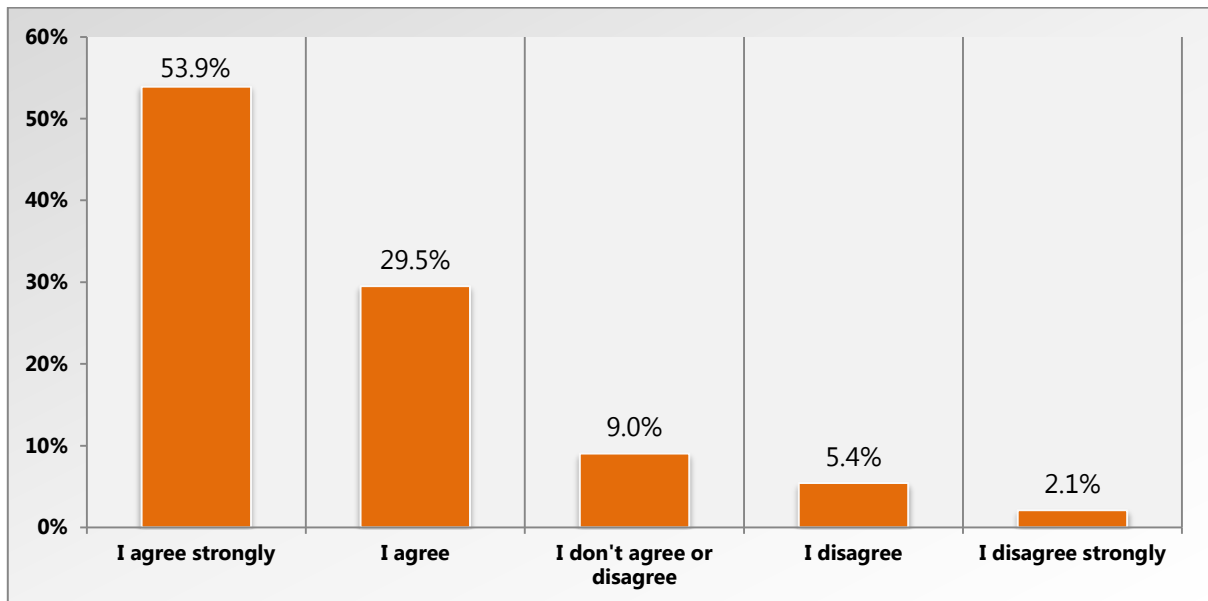


**Q.3 Please tell us what you think of the following statement:**

***Fire and rescue services in North Wales should not be cut (even if that means that people have to pay more council tax).***

A large proportion of respondents (83.4%) either strongly agreed or agreed with this statement. Only a small percentage (7.5%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed.

**Figure 3 – Graph to show response relating to question three (%)**

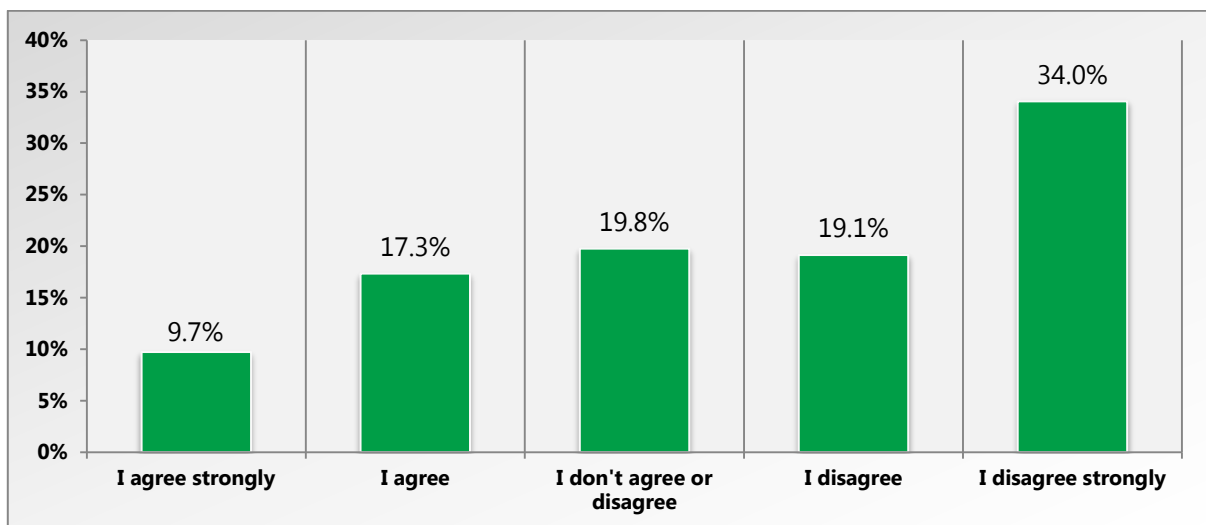


**Q.4 Please tell us what you think of the following statement:**

**If we have to make do with one less fire engine, then it would make most sense to take it away from the fire station that has the most fire engines (i.e. from Wrexham, which is the only fire station in North Wales that has three fire engines).**

Over half (53.1%) of respondents either strongly disagreed or disagreed with this statement. Almost a third (27.0%) either strongly agreed or agreed, whilst 19.8% selected the neutral option of *'I don't agree or disagree'*.

**Figure 4 – Graph to show response relating to question four (%)**



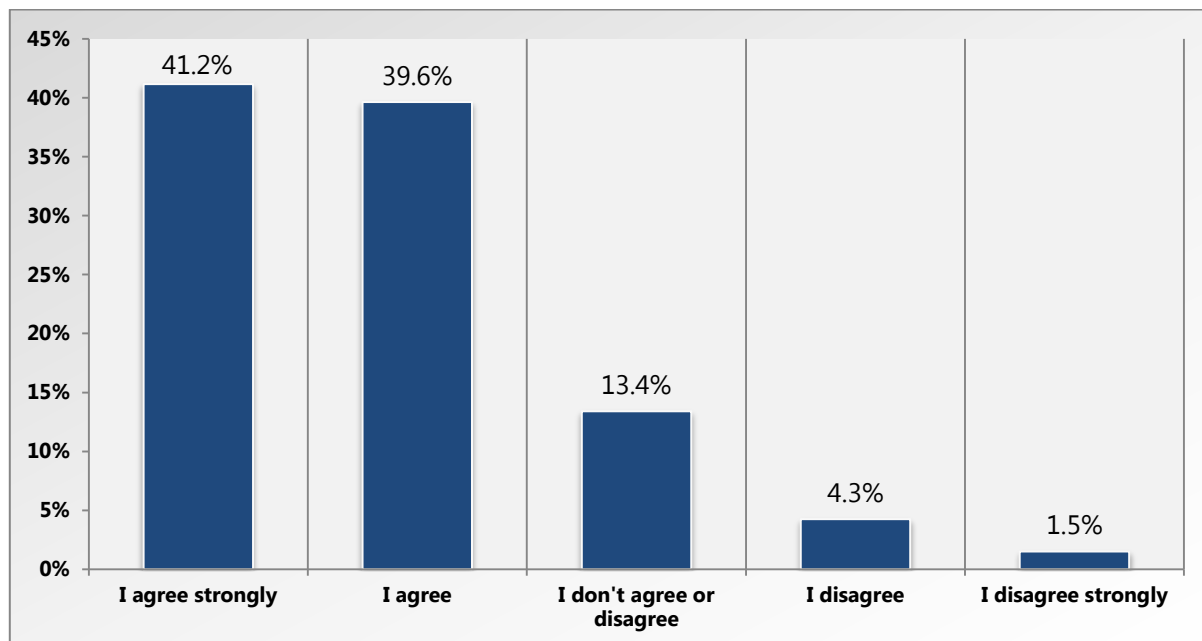


**Q.5 Please tell us what you think of the following statement:**

***Preventing fires is just as important as putting out fires.***

The majority of respondents (80.8%) either strongly agreed or agreed with this statement, whereas, 5.8% either disagreed or strongly disagreed. 13.4% of respondents neither agreed or disagreed.

**Figure 5 – Graph to show response relating to question five (%)**

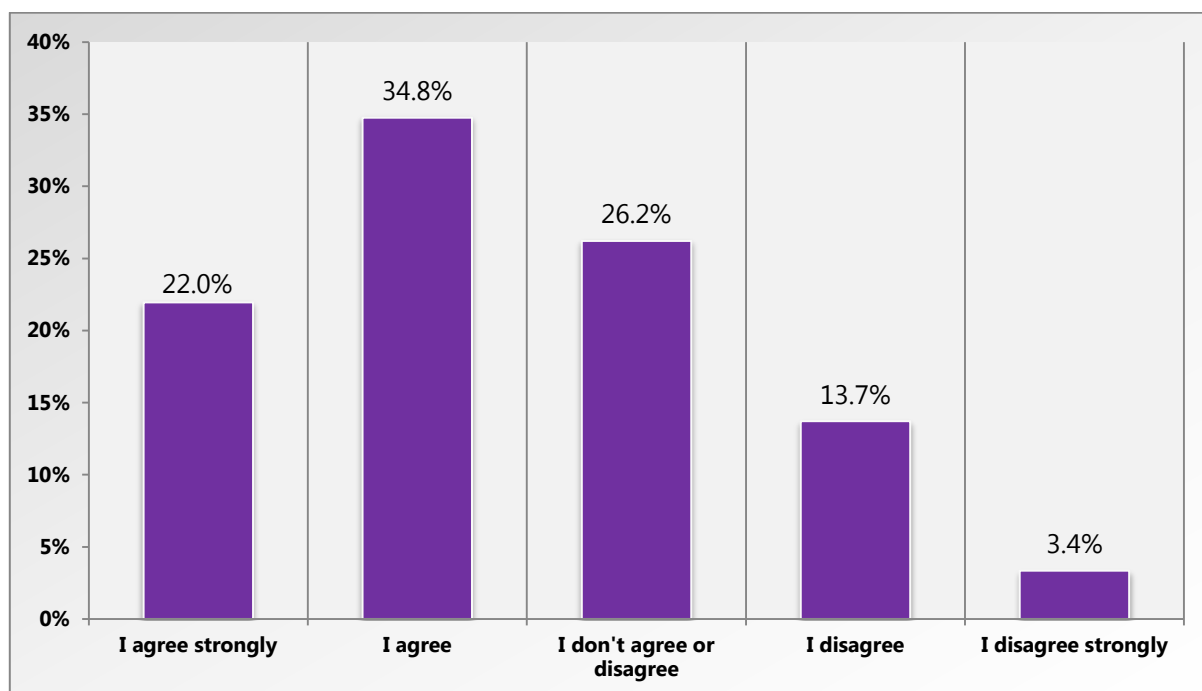


**Q. 6\_Please tell us what you think of the following statement:**

***Because we've been so successful in reducing the number of emergencies in North Wales, it makes good sense for the fire and rescue service to find new things to do to help local people.***

Over half of respondents (56.8%) either strongly agreed or agreed with this statement. Over a quarter of respondents (26.2%) neither agreed nor disagreed, with 17.1% either selecting disagree or strongly disagree.

**Figure 6 – Graph to show response relating to question six (%)**



## **Responses providing additional comments**

In addition to the questions presented, respondents were given the opportunity to make additional comments. 164 respondents decided to do so. The broad categories of their responses can be seen below:

**Table 1 – Table to show subject area of additional comments**

<b>Subject Area</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>
Reinstate Large Animal Rescue*	50
Against removing an appliance from Wrexham	38
A suggestion	32
Other	16
Against the reduction of services	15
Funding related	9
Agreement with streamlining	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>164</b>

*\*Note that all 50 responses were received within a 24 hour period.*

## **Written/Email Responses**

In addition to the online survey, 27 written responses were received (either by email or by post).

A breakdown of response origin can be seen below:

- 5 responses from County Councils
- 2 responses from Members of Parliament
- 1 response from a Member of the Welsh Assembly
- 11 responses from Community/Town Councils – predominantly within the county of Wrexham
- 1 response from the Police and Crime Commissioner
- 1 response from the Fire Brigades Union
- 1 response from the Fire Officers' Association
- 1 response from a neighbouring Fire and Rescue Service
- 1 response from an employee of NWFRS
- 3 responses from members of the public
- 1 response from another organisation

Of the 27 written responses 69% disagreed with the Authority's proposal to remove one Wholetime fire engine from a 24-hour shift fire station.

A large number of the responses from Community/Town councils were very similar in terms of style, sentiment and in terms of the facts and figures utilised. Most of the councils are located in the county of Wrexham. All of these responses were against the Authority's proposal to remove one Wholetime fire engine.

Nine of the written responses supported proper funding of the Fire and Rescue Service, describing it as 'essential'.

A small number of responses referred specifically to draft objective one, *'Continuing to keep people safe from fire in their homes.'* Those that did supported the objective.

There was a mixed response from the County Councils:

- Flintshire County Council fully supported all four draft improvement objectives.
- Conwy County Borough Council fully supported all four draft improvement objectives.
- Denbighshire County Council's response specifically responded to draft objective two, *'Taking a new approach to meeting the Authority's costs'*, disagreeing with the objective and stating that *'it seems unreasonable that the Fire Service proposes an increase of +4% in expenditure in 2017/18, but then proposes to freeze the levy for the following two years, whilst deferring transformation / efficiency savings until 2019/20.'*
- Gwynedd Council's response supported draft objectives one and four, but in relation to objective three, *'Protecting all our communities with better planning of firefighting crews'*, Gwynedd council suggested that the Authority looks to review its arrangements with wholetime firefighters as well as retained firefighters. Furthermore, in relation to objective two, Gwynedd Council disagreed with the Authority's proposed actions stating *'It is unacceptable for the Fire Service to propose a +4% increase in spending in 2017/18 and to avoid efficiencies/transitions until 2019/20.'*
- Wrexham County Borough Council's response supported draft objectives one and four, whilst disagreeing with draft objective three, stating that *'It is unreasonable for the North Wales Fire and Rescue Service to be prioritised over other Local Government services and it should make savings to result in budget changes in line with the Local Government Provisional Settlement'*. In addition, in relation to draft objective three, their response stated *'Wrexham Council is vehemently opposed to any proposal to remove a fire engine from the town, both for the safety of*

*the town but also due to the cover the engine provides to other fire stations across the County Borough' and that 'funding issues for a regional body should be not be resolved by service cuts in a single County Borough Council area – this is a local solution to a regional issue'.*

## **Social Media Responses**

Throughout the consultation process the Service conducted a social media campaign in order to encourage as many people as possible to respond to the consultation.

The Service published 40 bi-lingual Facebook posts which reached the newsfeeds of 63,968 users with 1,279 users interacting by clicking on the posts.

The Service also tweeted 40 bi-lingual messages (via Twitter). The messages were seen 70,045 times and 539 users interacted.

The Service uploaded two videos via YouTube explaining the consultation. The two videos received 416 views.

In addition to the above the Service also conducted Facebook polls asking specific questions (derived from the online consultation survey). The results of the polls broadly mirror the findings of the main survey. For example when question two (see page 3) was asked via Facebook 71.4% selected '*No fire and rescue services should be cut - county councils should cover all the additional costs*', which is consistent with the figures reported from the online survey (76.6%).

## **Conclusion**

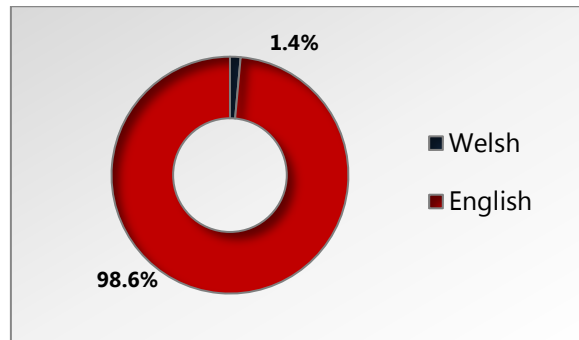
To summarise, the consultation found that the majority of people who responded supported draft objectives one and four, with more divided opinion in relation to draft objectives two and three.

## **Appendix – Online Survey Characteristics**

### **Language**

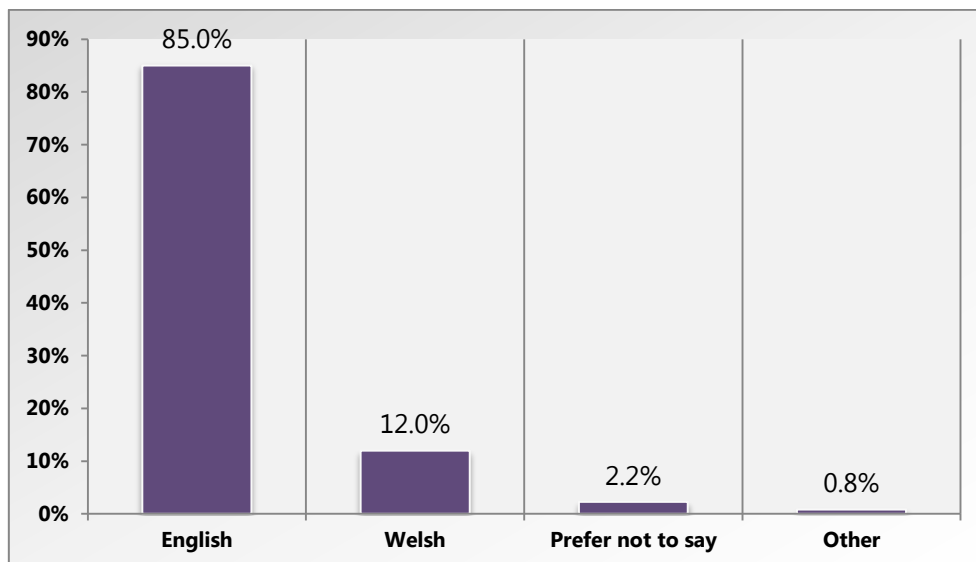
Of the 346 people who responded, 1.4% did so through the medium of Welsh. Conversely, 98.6% of respondents did so through English.

**Figure 7 – Graph to show split of response type by survey language (%)**



In terms of preferred language, 267 people responded and 85% stated they preferred English, compared to 12% who preferred Welsh. In addition, 2.2% preferred not to say and 0.8% selected 'Other'.

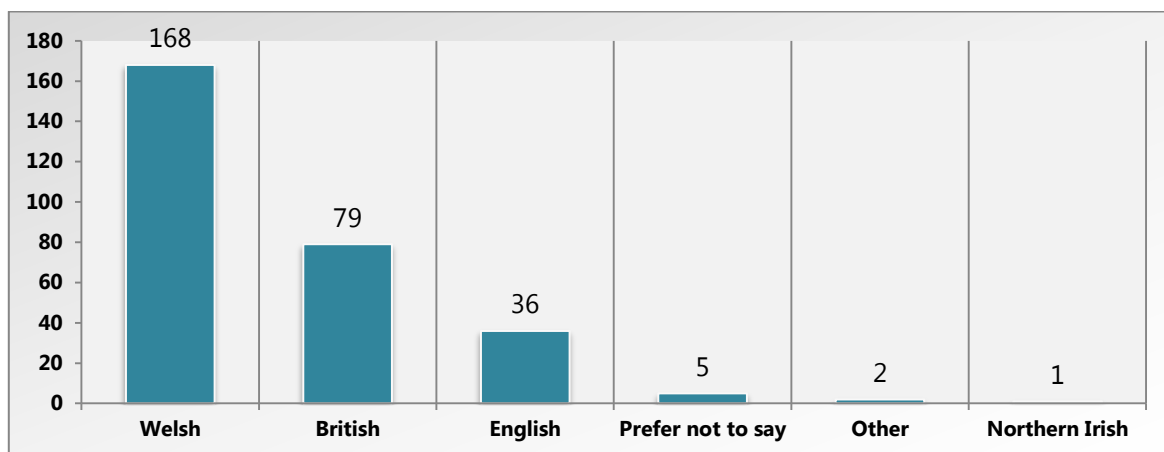
**Figure 8 – Graph to show split of response type by preferred language (%)**



## National Identity

In relation to national identity 291 people responded, 'Welsh' was selected 168 times, 'British' 79 times, 'English' 36 times, 'Other' was selected twice, 'Northern Irish' once and 'Prefer not to say' five times.

**Figure 9 – Graph to show split of response type by national identity**

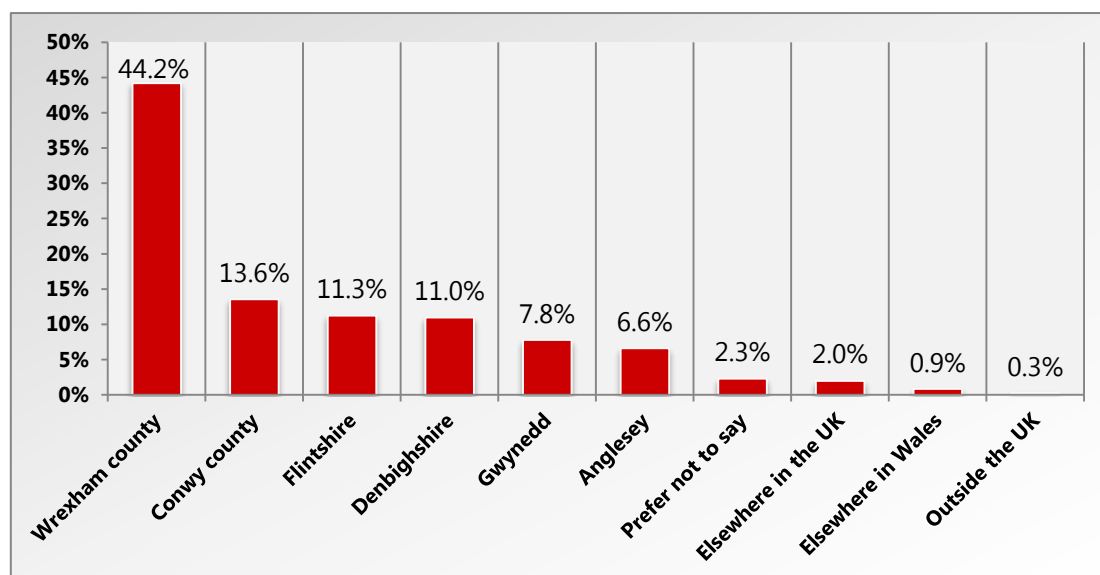


## Location, Response Type and Employment/Activity

### Location

Of the 346 respondents, a significant proportion of respondents stated that they live in the county of Wrexham (44.2%), with 13.6% stating Conwy (county), 11.3% Flintshire, 11.0% Denbighshire, 7.8% Gwynedd and 6.6% stating Anglesey (the remaining 5.5% was spread across the rest of Wales and the rest of the United Kingdom).

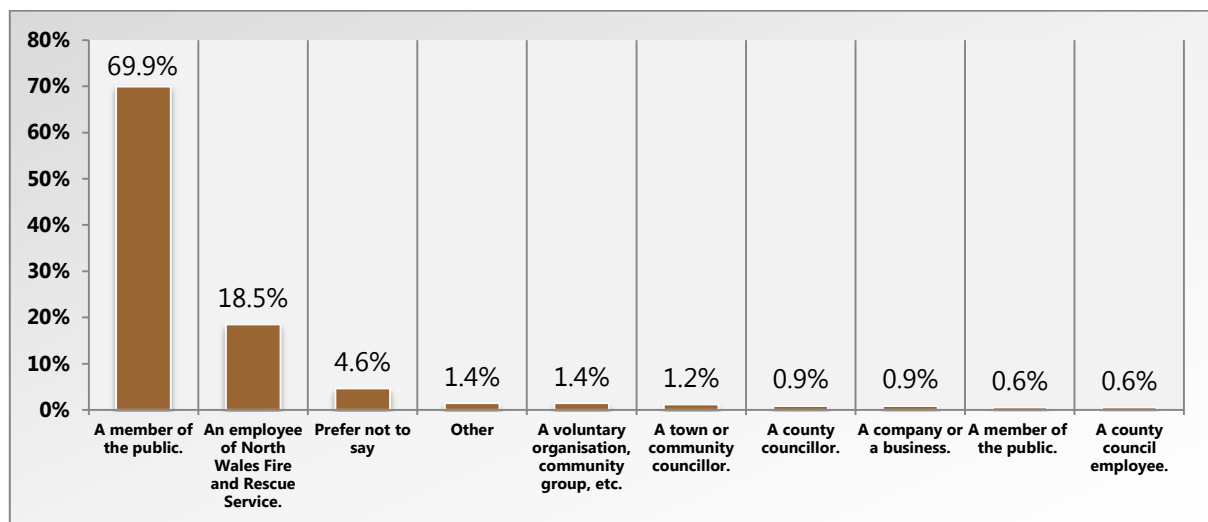
**Figure 10 – Graph to show split of response type by location (%)**



## Response Type

Of the 346 people who responded, the majority (69.9%) identified themselves as being 'a member of the public', whilst 18.5% were categorised as being employees of North Wales Fire and Rescue Service with the remaining 11.6% spread across those who preferred not to say (4.6%) and other organisations/positions.

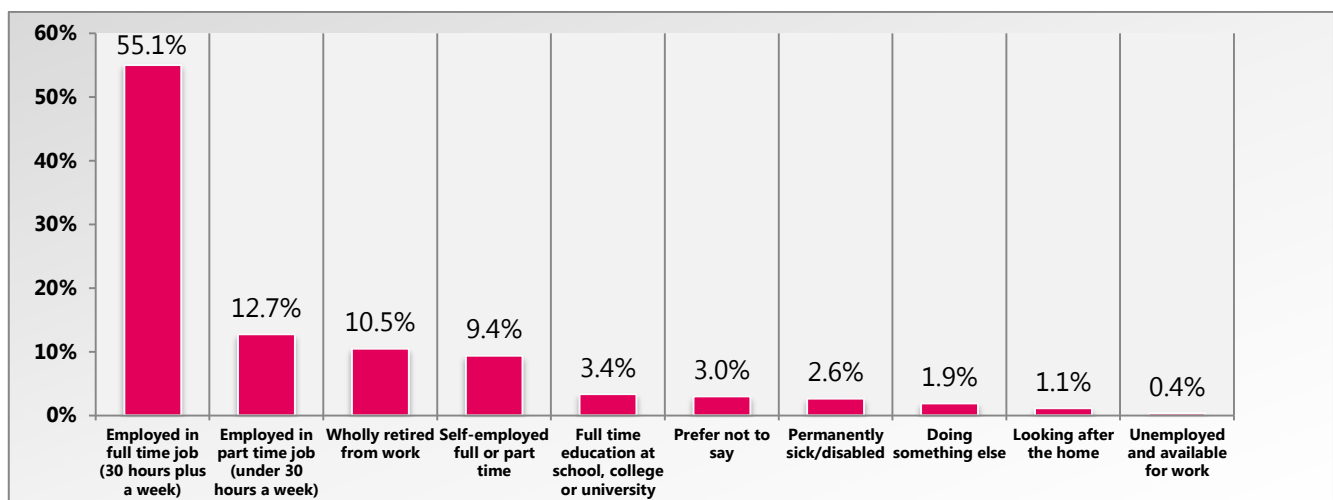
**Figure 11 – Graph to show split of response type by how respondents identified themselves(%)**



## Employment/Activity

Of the 267 people who responded over half (55.1%) stated that they were 'Employed in full time job (30 hours plus a week)', with 12.7% of respondents indicating that they were 'Employed in part time job (under 30 hours a week)' and 10.5% were categorised as 'Wholly retired from work'. The remaining 21.7% was spread across the remaining seven categories.

**Figure 12 – Graph to show split of response type by employment/activity status (%)**

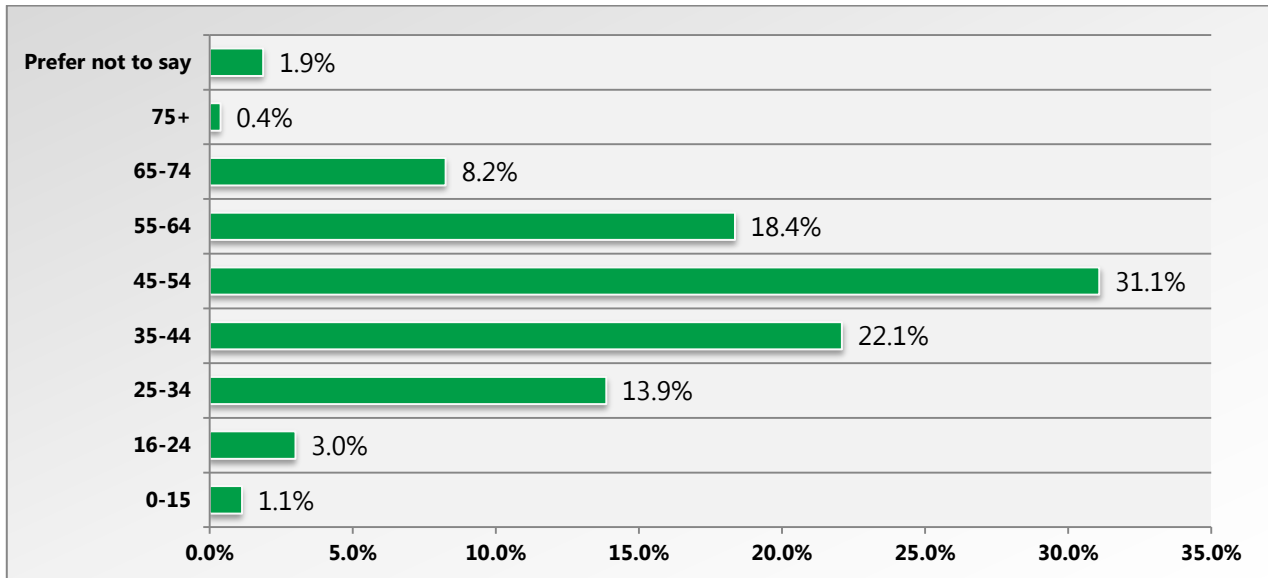




## Age

Of the 267 people who responded there was clear engagement from across the different age categories. The most represented segment was 45 -54 year olds, accounting for 31.1% of the responses. In comparison, there was little representation from 16 - 24 years or from 75 years old and above.

**Figure 13 – Graph to show split of response type by age (%)**

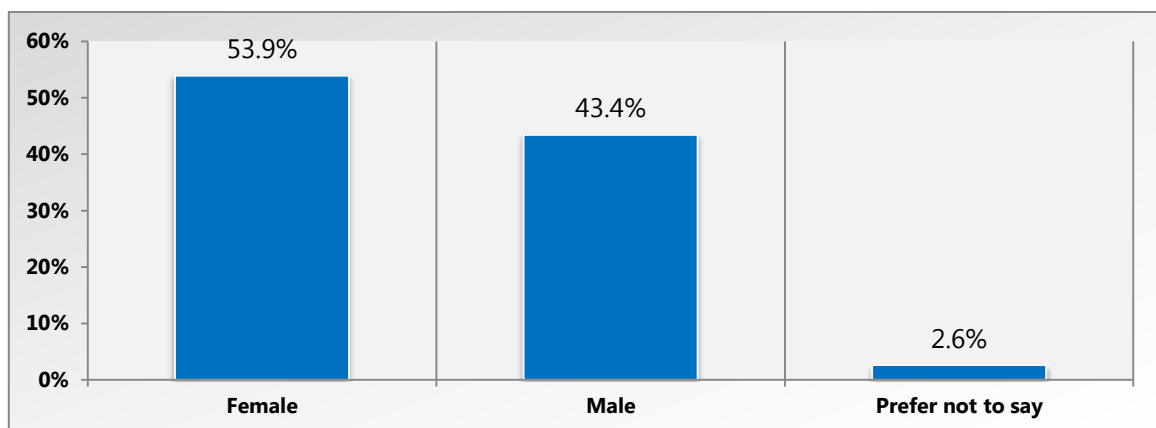


## Sex and Sexual Orientation

### Sex

Of the 267 people who responded there was a split of 53.9% Female to 43.4% Male (as well as 2.6% who preferred not to say).

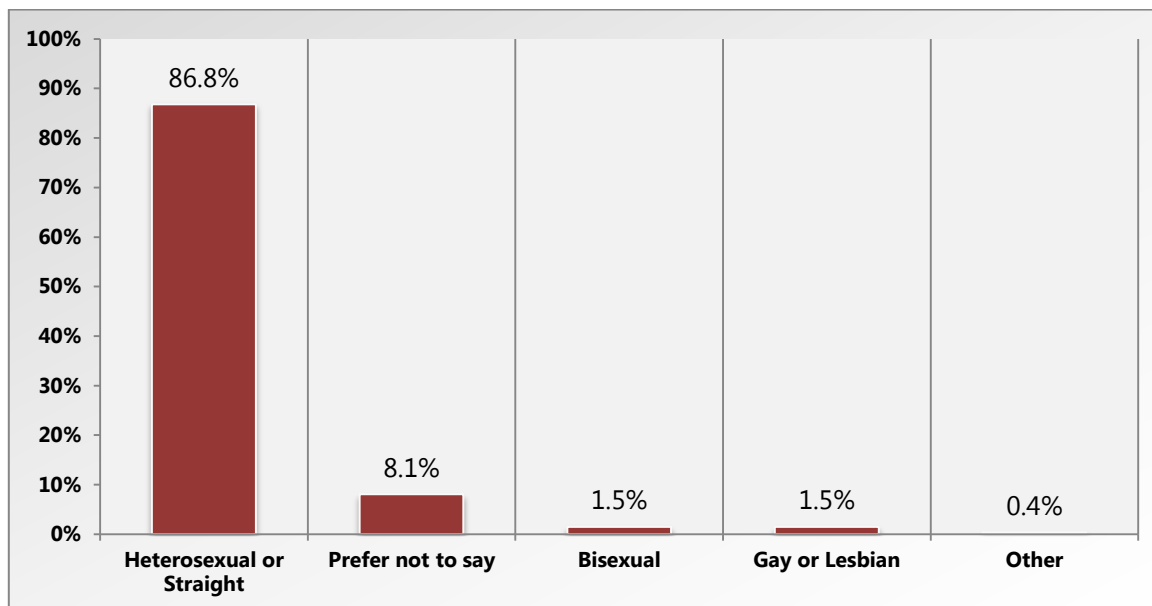
**Figure 14 – Graph to show split of response type by Sex (%)**



## Sexual Orientation

Of the 272 people who responded the majority (86.8%) stated 'Heterosexual or Straight'. The remaining 13.2% was split between 'Bisexual' (1.5%), 'Gay or Lesbian' (1.5%), 'Other' (0.4%) and 'Prefer not to say' (8.1%).

**Figure 15 – Graph to show split of response type by Sexual Orientation (%)**

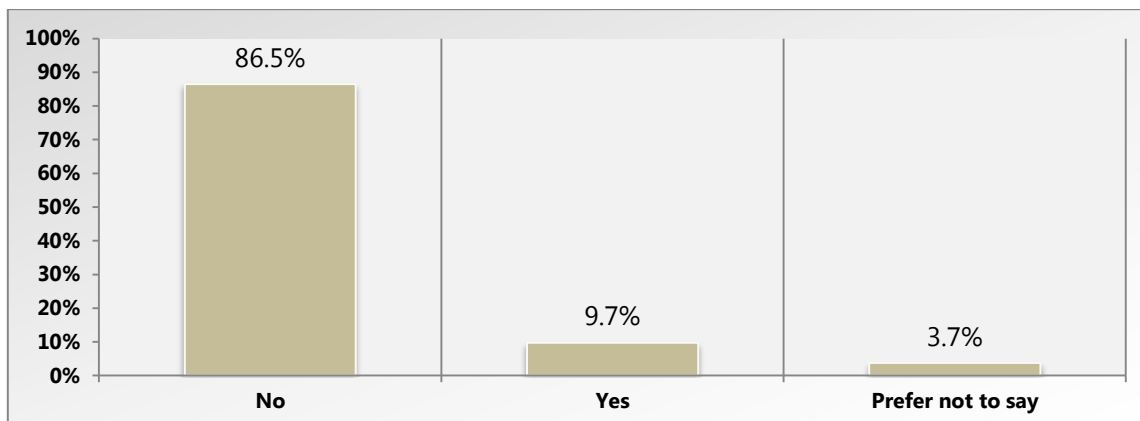


## Other Characteristics

### Disabilities

Of the 267 respondents who responded to the question; '*are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?*' 86.5% stated 'No' and 9.7% stated 'Yes'. In addition 3.7% selected 'Prefer not to say'.

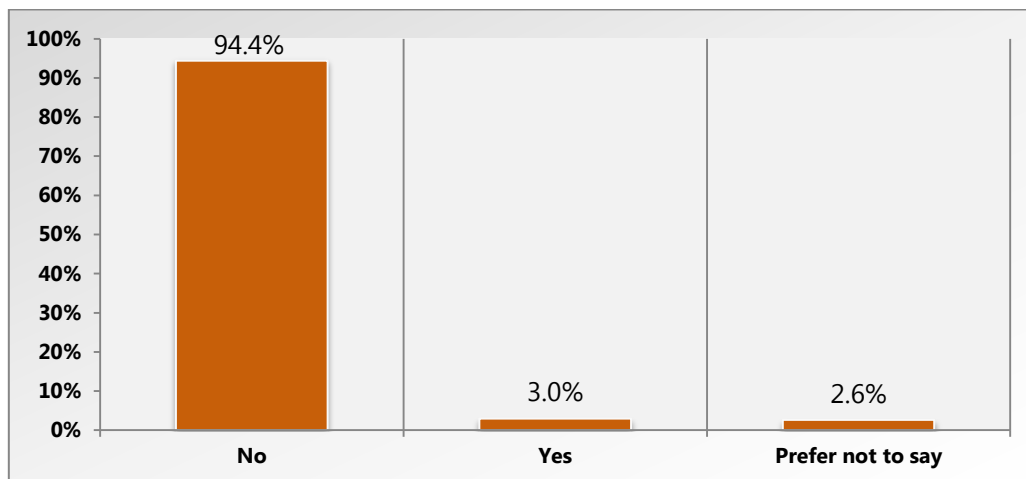
**Figure 16 – Graph to show split of response type by Disability (%) (n=267)**



## Pregnancy

Of the 267 who answered the question; 'are you currently pregnant or have you been pregnant or taken maternity leave in the last year?' the majority (94.4%) said 'No', whilst 3.0% said 'Yes' and 2.6% selected the 'prefer not to say' option.

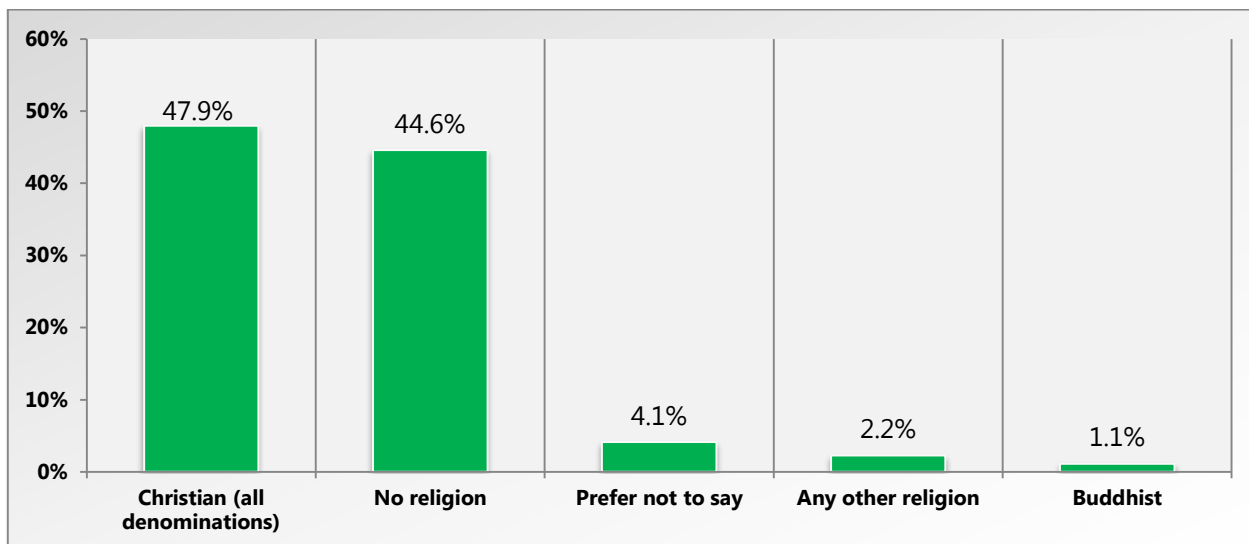
**Figure 17 – Graph to show split of response type by Pregnancy (%)**



## Religion

Of the 267 people who responded when respondents were asked about their Religion 47.9% responded with 'Christian (all denominations)', 44.6% stated they had 'No Religion' and 4.1% as 'Prefer not to say'. The remaining 3.3% was made up of 'Any other religion' (2.2%) and 'Buddhist' (1.1%).

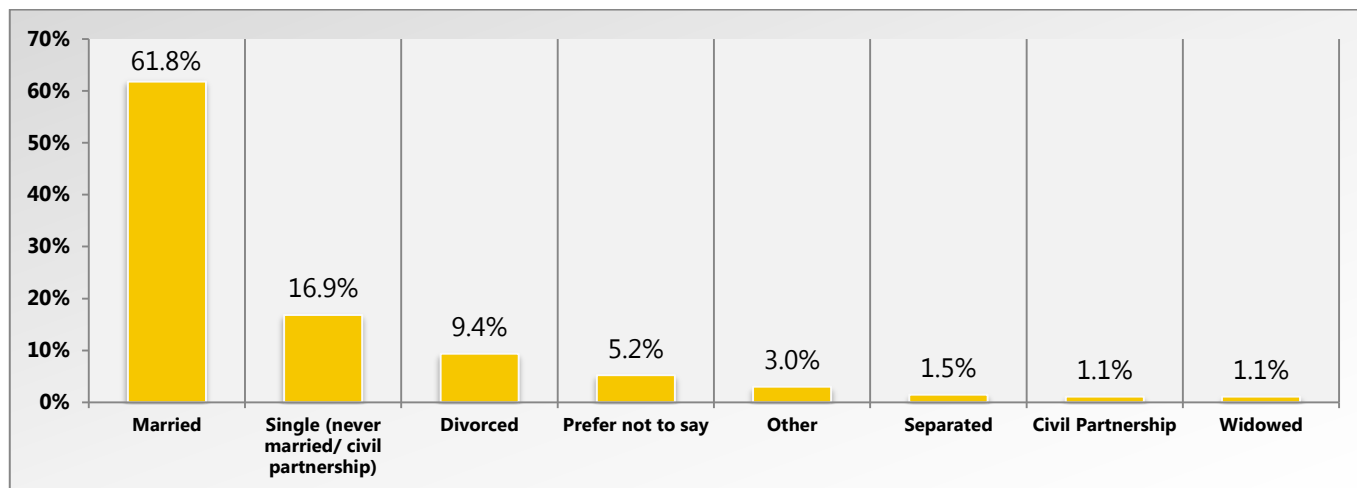
**Figure 18 – Graph to show split of response type by Religion (%)**



## Marital Status

Of the 267 people who responded, the main category selected was 'married' (61.8%), with 16.9% selecting 'Single (never married/civil partnership)' and 9.4% selecting 'Divorced'. The remaining 12.0% was spread across the remaining categories.

**Figure 19 – Graph to show split of response type by marital status (%)**



## Ethnicity

Of the 267 people who responded 93.6% selected the 'Welsh / English / Scottish / Northern Irish / British' category, whilst 4.5% of respondents selected 'prefer not to say'. The remaining 1.9% was spread across the remaining categories.

**Figure 20 – Graph to show split of response type by Ethnicity**

