



Cyngor Sir
CEREDIGION
County Council

Public Consultation on the System for Voting at Ceredigion County Council Elections

Consultation Feedback Report

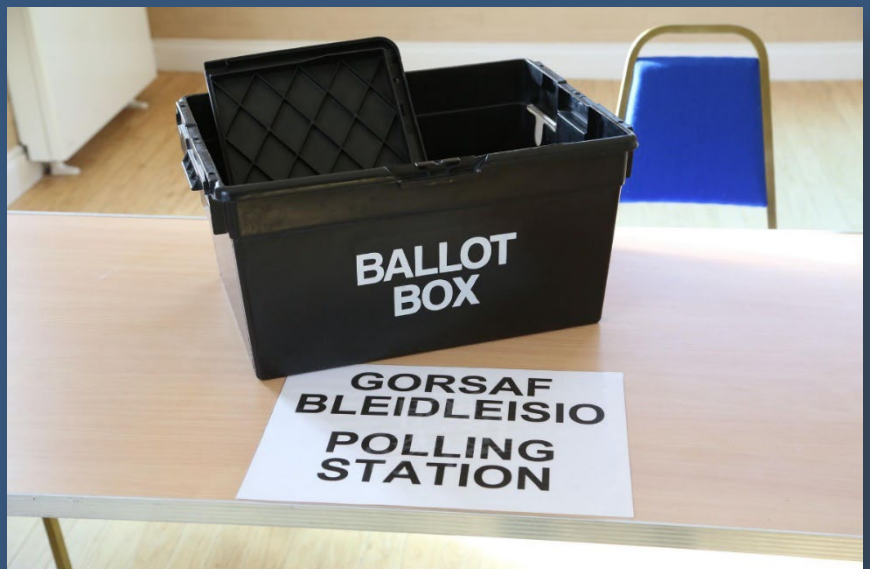


Image Credit - Chris Loades



475

Responses received



Consultation undertaken between **15th July and 6th September**

67%

supported **Single Transferable Vote (STV)** system.



30%

supported **First Past the Post (FPTP)** system.

3%

had **no preference** on the type of voting system used in the future.



Young respondents were more likely to **support** the change to the **STV system** compared to older age groups.

66%

respondents **within the County** supported **Single Transferable Vote (STV)**



(31% supported FPTP)

100%

respondents residing **outside of the County** supported **Single Transferable Vote (STV)**

Consultation undertaken between 15th of July and 6th of September 2024

The survey was available online via the Council's website, printed copies at libraries and advertised through social media.

A total of 475 responses were received.

The full results and the equality and diversity information are contained on pages 4-8.

Background

Between the 15th of July and 6th of September 2024, Ceredigion County Council consulted with residents to seek their views on the preferred voting system for County Council elections. The survey asked residents if they would like to remain with the current system, known as first past the post (FPTP), or to change to a Single Transferable Vote (STV) system.

All councillors in Wales are currently elected using a simple majority system, known as first past the post (FPTP), which is also the system used for electing Members to the Town and Community Council, the Police and Crime Commissioner and the UK Parliament. The Senedd currently two voting systems – one of which uses FPTP and the other has an additional member system, although these will change for the Senedd Cymru election in 2026.

The FPTP is a voting system where a candidate is elected if they receive at least one vote more than the other candidates. In a two-member ward, the two individuals who receive the most votes are elected. Counting the votes for a FPTP contest is a simple process when there is only one candidate to be elected. For a two-member ward, a system is required which records the votes given on each ballot paper.

In terms of the STV voting system, rather than one person representing everyone in a ward, there would be larger wards with an increased electorate, with between 3 and 6 Councillors representing each ward. Voters would be instructed to rank the candidates according to their order of preference. There is no provision for electronic counting in Welsh Government's draft rules, therefore, it is accepted that counting STV elections would be a lengthy process, which could take up to two days. The method of counting provided for is the Droop quota (as used in elections in Northern Ireland and principal council elections in Scotland). Votes needed to win seat = $(\text{number of valid ballot papers} / (\text{Number of seats} + 1)) + 1$.

Under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, Councils can decide individually whether they wished to remain with the current FPTP system, or to change to a STV system. Any change would require a vote of support by two out of three of the Ceredigion County Council Members, following a public consultation. If a decision is made to a STV voting system, this would only affect the voting system for Ceredigion County Council Members.

The survey was available to complete online and paper copies were available in all Ceredigion libraries. The consultation was advertised via social media and shared on the Council's website.

Response Rate

There was a total of 475 responses to the consultation, this included 472 survey responses and 3 general responses. The vast majority of responses (99%/470) were submitted online, 2 paper copies were received and 3 general responses from Town/Community Councils were shared via email. Most of the surveys (95%/445) were completed in English and 5% (25) were completed in Welsh. The pages that follow provide a summary of the findings.

Main Findings

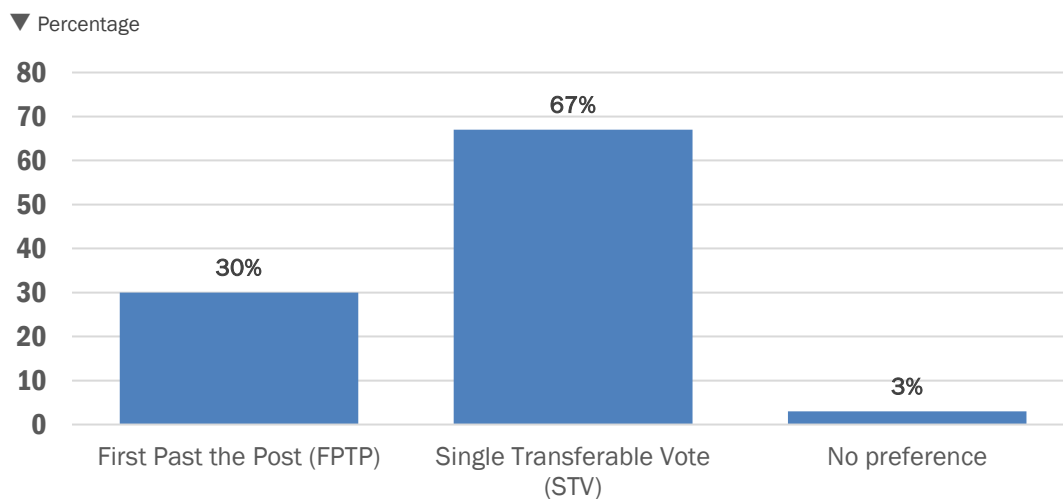
Question 1: What voting system would you want Ceredigion County Council to use to elect its Councillors in the future?

This question asked respondents what type of voting system they want Ceredigion County Council to use to elect its Councillors in the future. This was a multiple-choice question and included three options for respondents to choose from:

- A councillor who is local to you and is familiar with the local issues? (This is best served by First Past the Post)
- Between 3 and 6 Councillors who represent a large geographical area with a larger number of electors? The expectation is that these will have the same level of understanding of local issues. (This is best served by Single Transferable Vote).
- Do not have a preference

A total of 472 respondents answered this question. A majority, around two-thirds (67%/315) were in favour of a Single Transferable Vote (STV) system, whilst just under one-third (30%/143) expressed support for the current First Past the Post (FPTP) system. This suggests that a large majority of survey respondents are in favour of change, with only a small 3% (14) of respondents indicating that they had no preference on the type of voting system used in the future.

Q1. What voting system would you want Ceredigion County Council to use to elect its Councillors in the future?



Respondents preferred voting system was broken down by those who lived both within and outside of Ceredigion. Of the 472 responses, the vast majority (465/99%) were Ceredigion residents, whereas as little as 1% (7 responses) were from people living outside of the County. There was a clear majority for an STV preference, both from respondents residing within and outside of Ceredigion, with 66% (308 votes), and all 7 (100%) of external respondents. Notably, the FPTP system is still preferred by a significant cohort of respondents (30%/143), however, it received no support from those living outside the County. Overall, whilst the STV voting system is the more popular choice amongst respondents, Ceredigion residents are much more divided in their preference compared to those from outside the County, where STV gained unanimous support.

The voting preference was also analysed by age group. This analysis highlights a clear trend: younger respondents are more likely to support the change to the Single Transferable Vote (STV), compared to the older age groups. Approximately 89% of 16–24-year-olds and 80% of 25–44-year-olds are in favour of the STV system. Among the 45–64-year-old age group, support for the STV system declined to around 62%, while 68% of respondents aged 65 years and over backed the STV system. There was less consensus among the 6% of respondents who preferred not to disclose their age, 56% supported the STV system, whilst 46% backed the FPTP system. Although support decreases somewhat among older age groups, across all age groups the overall majority favoured the STV system.

In terms of gender, 100% of those who said that they were non-binary supported the change to the Single Transferable Vote (STV), although it should be noted that there were only 3 respondents that said they were non-binary. The majority of the male respondents (70%) supported the change to the STV as well as females (62%). Additionally, those who preferred to use another term (67%) or preferred not to disclose their gender (64%) supported the change to the STV. Females had the highest percentage of people supporting to stay with the FPTP (First Past the Post) vote (34%), although this was by a very small margin (I prefer to use another term 33%, prefer not to say 32% and males 28%).

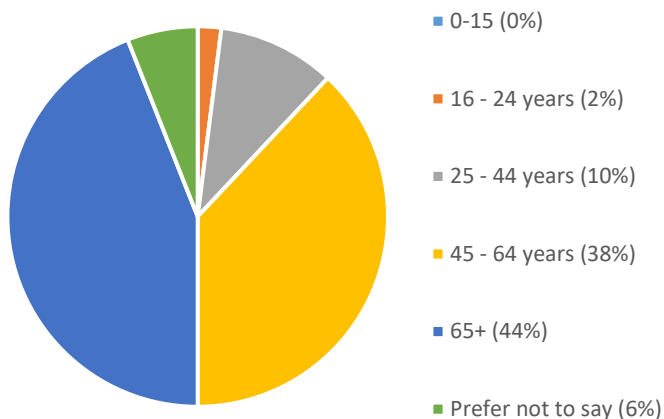
As noted above, there were also 3 general responses received from Town/Community Councils via email. All 3 responses from Town/Community Councils noted that they did not support the change to the STV (Single Transferable Vote). The concerns raised around the STV in these responses were:

- The current voting system ensures that there is a direct relationship between the elected member and the voters that they represent.
- Losing direct relationships between the elected members and their local constituents.
- Concerns around elected members being from one area only (e.g. more urban populated areas) which could separate the rural areas also covered.
- Electing members that don't have any connection or interest in certain areas.

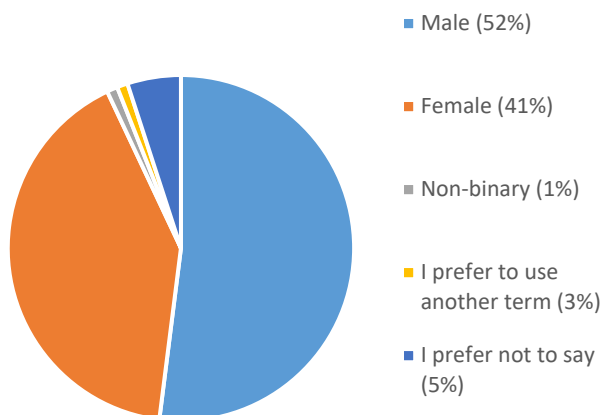
Equality and Diversity Information

The Council's standard demographic and equalities monitoring questions were asked as part of the survey.

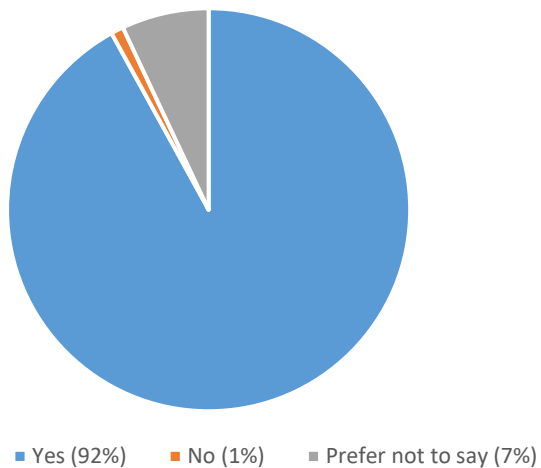
5. What is your age group?



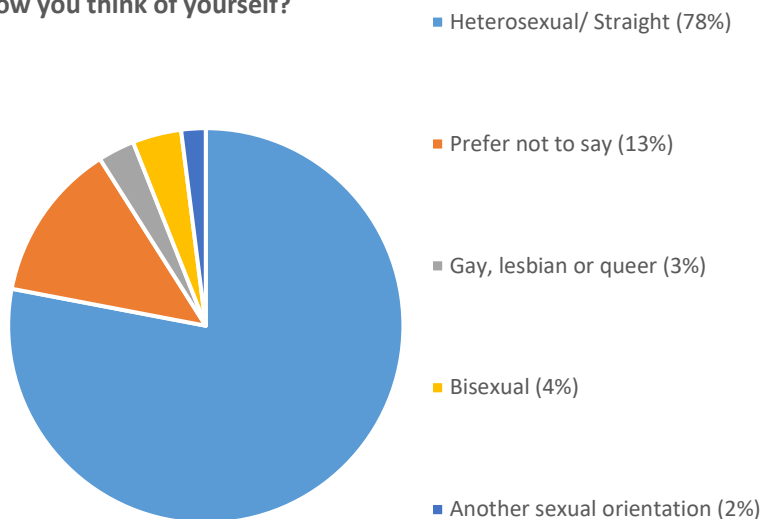
6. What is your gender?



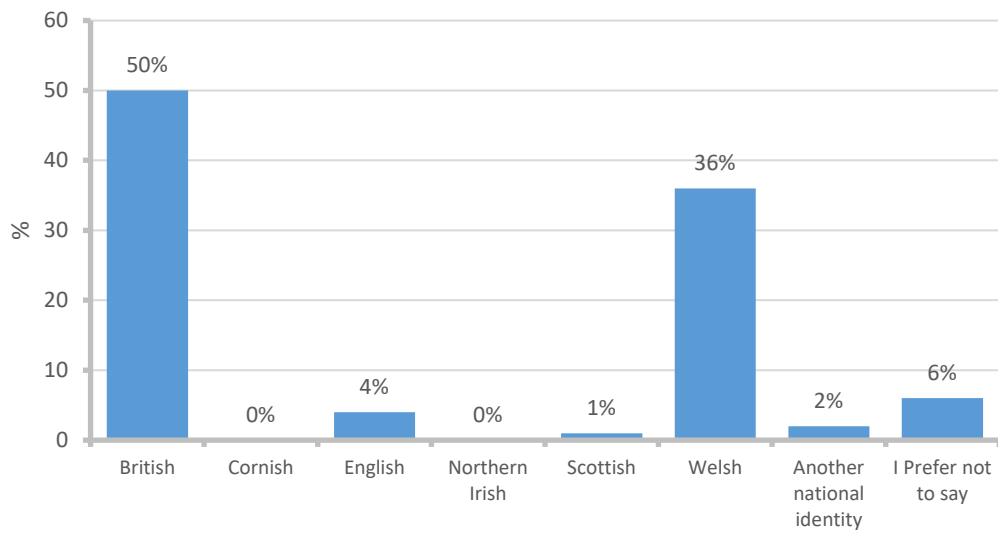
7. Is your gender the same now as when assigned at birth?



7. Which one of the following options best describes how you think of yourself?

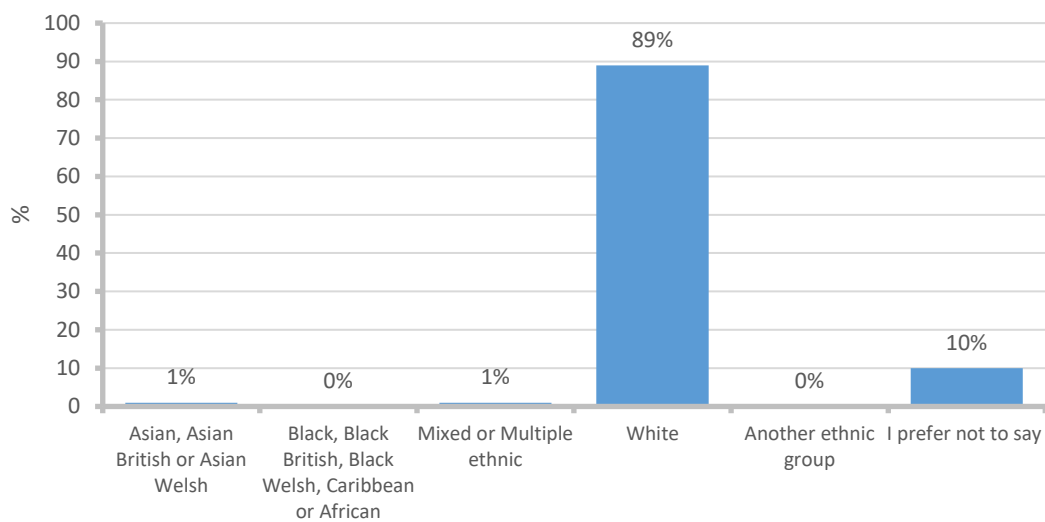


8. How would you describe your national identity?



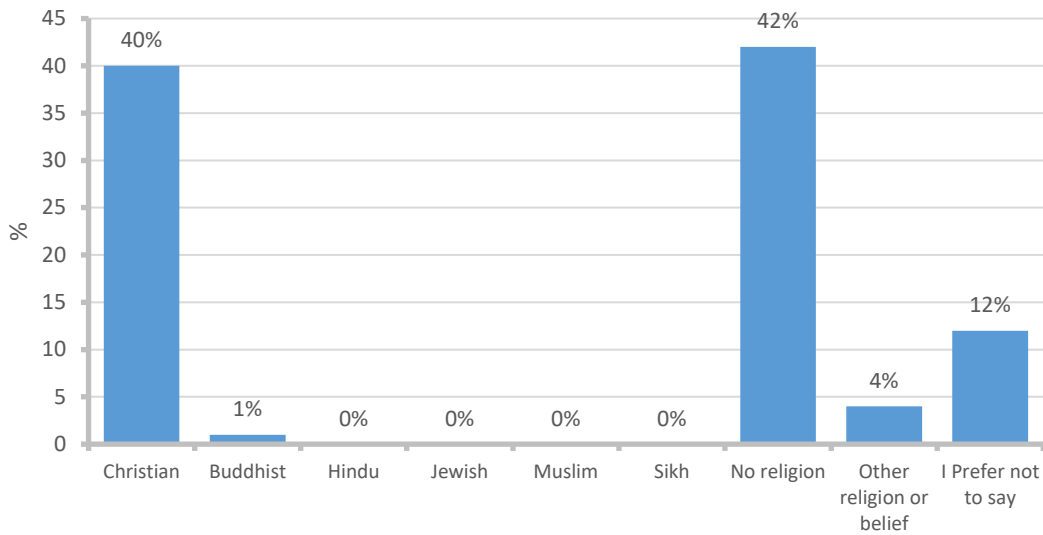
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41. What is your ethnic group? Choose one option that best describes your ethnic group or background?

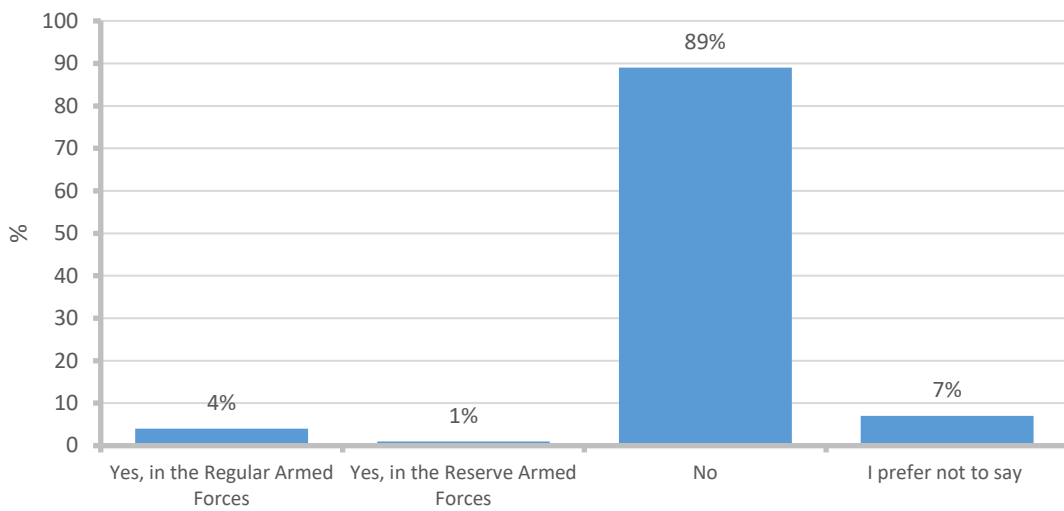


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42. What is your religion?

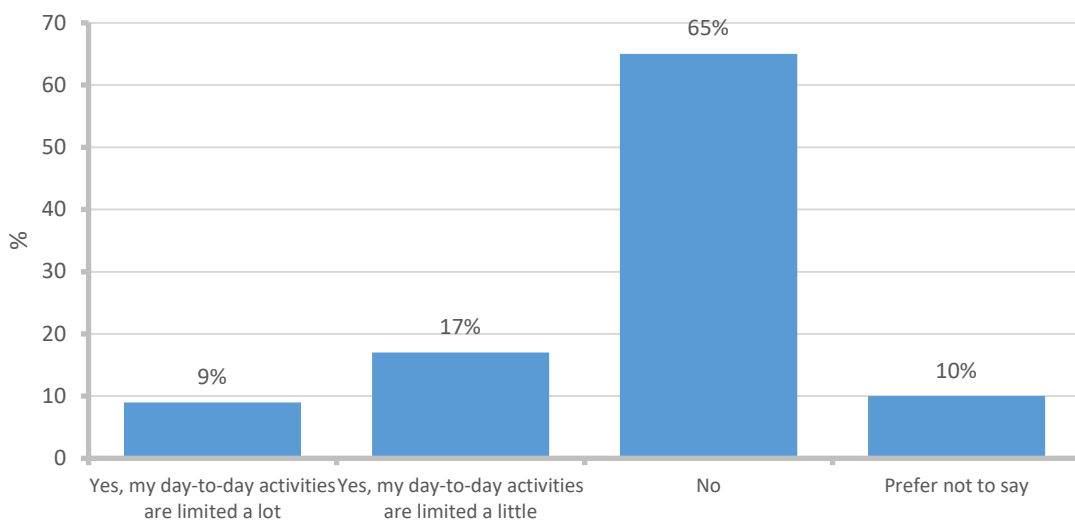


43. Have you previously served in the UK Armed Forces? (current serving members should tick 'no')

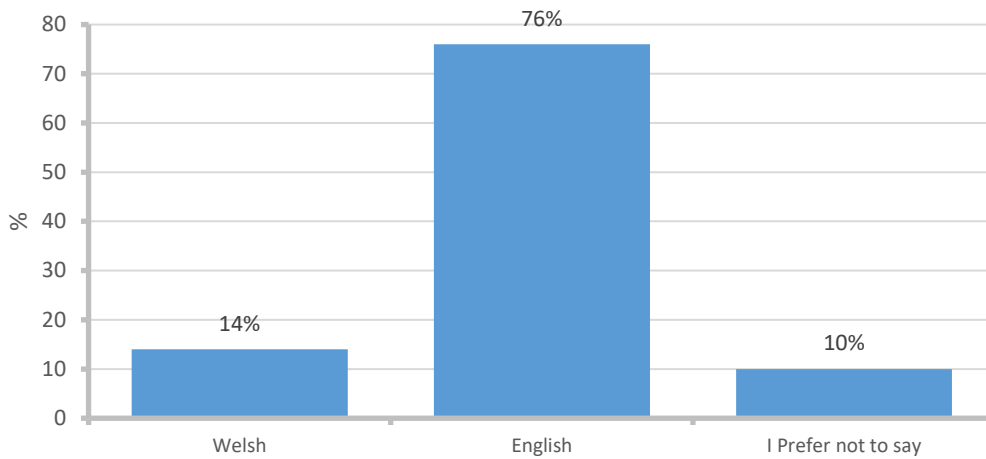


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44. Do have a long term physical or mental health condition or illness that reduces your ability to carry out day-to-day activities?

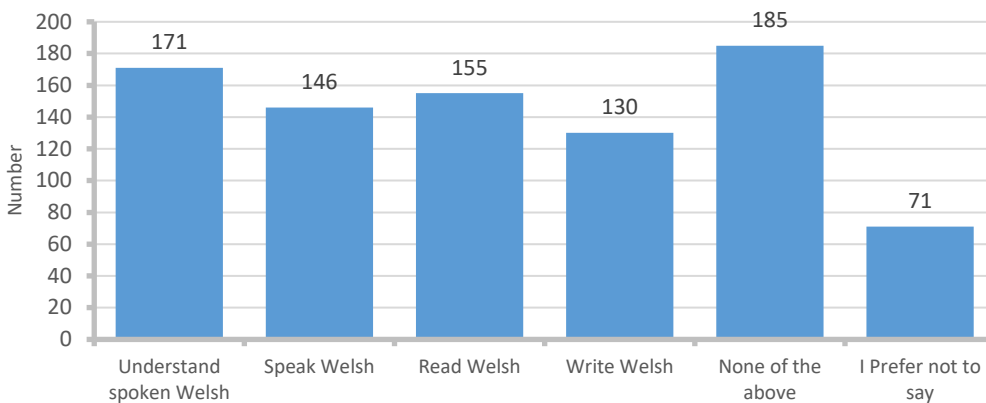


45. What is your preferred language?



**Figures may not sum due to computer rounding.*

46. Can you understand, speak, read or write Welsh?



**This question contained multiple answers and therefore do not sum to the total number of responses.*

The following section provides an overview of the respondents population characteristics, highlighting which groups are over or under-represented in the survey.

Age

Overall, the survey captured the views of residents from all ages. However, looking at the Ceredigion's age profile (using 2021 Census data), there was an under-representation of the younger age groups (15 years and under, 16 to 24 years and 25 to 44 years), and over-representation of older adults (45 to 64 years old and 65+ years). None of the age groups had an accurate level of representation (i.e., closest to the County-wide profile), but the 25- to 44-year-olds had the closest, according to the 2021 Census 19.0% of Ceredigion residents are within this age group compared to 10.0% survey respondents.

Gender

Our consultation survey had marginally more male participation compared to females. Out of the 472 survey respondents, 41% were female and 52% were male. It is difficult to understand the extent to which a gender was over or underrepresented as a small proportion of respondents preferred not to say their gender (5%), preferred to use another term (1%), or said non-binary (1%).

National Identity

The majority of respondents identified as being 'British' (50%), this differs to the make-up of Ceredigion's total population, with just 21.7% identifying with the British nationality in the 2021 Census. The second most common nationality identified was 'Welsh' (36.0%), which differs to its positioning County-wide, being the prevailing nationality in the 2021 Census (46.7%). However, there was an underrepresentation of English respondents, with as little as 4% being captured in the survey. This compares to 14.6% of Ceredigion residents identifying as 'English' in the 2021 Census. As 6.0% 'preferred not to say', it is difficult to understand the true extent of this underrepresentation.

Ethnicity

The majority of respondents (89.0%) were of 'white' ethnicity and 10.0% 'preferred not to say'. Just 3 respondents (1%) identified their ethnicity as Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh 1 respondent (0%) identified as Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African and 4 respondents (1%) identified as Mixed or Multiple Ethnic. This is fairly in-line with the representation County-wide, with the 2021 Census recording 0.5% and 1.5% of the resident population identifying with these other ethnic groups.

Religion

The percentage of people saying that they had 'no religion' (42.0%), had an almost accurate level of representation compared to the 2021 Census results (43.0%), although this is the second most common religion in Ceredigion. The second most common religion identified in this survey was Christian, with approximately 190 respondents (40%) selecting this religion type (compared to 46.7% of residents as recorded by the 2021 Census). 5 respondents (1%) identified as Buddhist, which is slightly higher than the figure recorded by the Census in 2021 (0.5%). 1 respondent (0%) represented as Hindu and 1 respondent (0%) as Jewish. Although these groups only comprise of 0.2% to 0.1% of the resident population, the lack of participation highlights their underrepresentation within the survey findings. Approximately 12.0% preferred not to state their religion and 4% stated 'other religion or belief'.