

# Let's Talk Budget 2025/2026 Final Consultation Report

## Adult Social Care – Fairer Charging

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## 1. Introduction

We provide over 800 services to support and improve the lives of residents, businesses, and visitors in Stockport. Our annual budget is £336 million. Every year, we must balance our spend with the income we receive.

The cost of delivering our services is increasing. Alongside the uncertainty at a national level, the budget pressures have been exacerbated, and the financial risks the council faces have significantly increased, through several different impacts.

Achieving a balanced budget whilst delivering our longer-term ambitions is extremely challenging. We can only achieve this by making difficult decisions, robust prioritisation of our resource, and ambitious changes in the way we work to deliver services if we are to continue to meet the needs of local people today and in the future. The consequences of not achieving this are increasingly visible across the wider local government sector with an increase in government intervention and an increasing number of councils across the country warning of significant financial distress and bankruptcy.

We recently published our Responding to Our Medium-Term Financial Plan<sup>1</sup> update which outlines how we are responding to the financial challenges ahead. As part of this response, we are developing several savings proposals. Some of these proposals will have no direct impact on the way we deliver our services, whilst some may lead to a different way of operating or change the way we deliver some of our public facing services. As part of this we have seven proposed changes to our Adult Social Care Charging (ASC) policy.

In Stockport, we have been able to support the cost of care for our residents, unlike other areas we have capped the amount that individuals must pay towards their care. This is known as subsidising the cost of care. Unfortunately, this is no longer possible due to the financial pressure on councils and the increasing cost of care.

### **Charging for Adult Social Care**

The Care Act, 2014 provides a single legal framework for charging and requires a local authority to assess a person's ability to help to pay towards the cost of their care. Everyone receives a financial assessment to decide if they pay towards their care, and if they do how much this should be. All councils complete financial assessments in the same way based on national practice. We will continue to do this. The aim of the consultation and the proposed updates to the Adult Social Care Charging policy is to provide a consistently equitable framework for charging people who receive care and support, following an assessment of their individual needs and financial circumstances.

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<sup>1</sup> **MTFP Part B – Responding to our Medium Term Financial Plan – September Cabinet**  
<https://democracy.stockport.gov.uk/documents/s238430/Part%20B%20Report%20-%20responding%20to%20our%20MTFP.pdf>

## 2. Methodology

The public consultation took place between 21<sup>st</sup> November 2024 and 8<sup>th</sup> January 2025 (6 weeks and 6 days). We sought feedback from our residents, businesses, and other stakeholders. The below methods of communication and engagement were undertaken specifically in relation to the changes proposed to the policy.

### Objectives:

- a) Ensure the consultation is understandable yet includes enough background information for people to give an informed opinion.
- b) The consultation is undertaken for a reasonable amount of time.
- c) Use a mixed methodology approach to ensure a range of stakeholders can give their views.
- d) Gauge the level of support for making the suggested change.
- e) Understand how the changes would affect people both positively and negatively.
- f) Ensure the consultation is advertised widely.
- g) There is a digital and non-digital format for feedback.
- h) Results are used to inform Members' decision making at the Cabinet meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2025.

### Feedback mechanisms:

- **Online survey** – this made sure the consultation was easily accessible, and people can complete it in their own time. This was hosted on the council's online consultation platform. This platform received **107 direct submissions** (or 70.39% of the total received submissions) whilst the consultation was open.
- **Paper surveys** – The council identified those residents who may be impacted by these proposals and sent paper survey packs which included a covering letter, FAQ schedule, survey, and a pre-paid return envelope. Paper surveys were also available in all libraries for those that prefer this method. A total of **45 paper submissions** (or 29.61% of the total received submissions) were received by the council and these were manually transferred to the online consultation platform.
- **Alternative formats** – Printed, email, alternative language offer, library support, public consultation and partner consultation events have also been offered as alternative formats of consultation.

To reach as many people as possible the consultation was publicised using a range of different methods including;

- Member engagement through Scrutiny meetings.
- Social medial channels.
- **Facebook – across all posts not just ASC fairer charging proposals**
  - 23,975 Impressions
  - 19 Shares

- 53 Comments
- 66 Likes and reactions
- **X (formally Twitter) - across all posts not just ASC fairer charging proposals**
  - 5475 Impressions
  - 13 Comments
  - 9 Likes
  - 5 Shares
- Review Extra Newsletter (distribution over 10K) - **across all posts not just ASC fairer charging proposals.**
- Advertised in libraries across Stockport.
- Councils 'Have Your Say' consultation page.
  - Link from the ASC external webpages to the consultation page.
- Our internal communication channels.
- Partner communications, including but not limited to:
  - Age UK
  - Signpost for Carers
  - Healthwatch Stockport
  - Disability Stockport
  - Ageing Well Board
  - Mental Health Carers Group Stockport (via chair of the board)
- Working in partnership boards
  - LD Partnership Board
  - Direct payment action group
  - Making it Real Board

The proposals have also featured in several media outlets including, Manchester Evening News (3<sup>rd</sup> December 2024), Stockport Express (27<sup>th</sup> November 2024) and BBC Manchester Radio.

### 3. Results

This section of the report details the feedback received from the various methods of communication. Through the feedback gained across all methods of engagement and consultation (members, online & paper questionnaire) there were a few common themes across all seven proposals including;

#### Funding

- People told us that they disagree with the national charging framework and that there should be more funding for Adult Social Care.
- People told us that they do not feel that they should use all their savings or have to sell their property to fund care charges.
- Concerns were raised that people will reach the capital limit of £23,250 much quicker.

### **Affordability/cost of living**

- Concerns were raised regarding the affordability of the proposed charges alongside the cost-of-living crisis.
- Concerns were raised that decisions may have to be made by people in terms of paying for care over items such as food, heat, and clothes.
- Concerns raised that people may have to reduce or stop their care.

### **Means Testing and Equality**

- Across several proposals people agreed that financial assessments/means testing should be applied consistently for all.

Feedback from the Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny committee is presented first then the results from the wider consultation and engagement follow.

### **3.1 Scrutiny Committee Feedback November 2024**

The ***Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee*** took place on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2024. The cabinet member presented a report to the committee outlining the proposed strategic approach in responding to the medium-term financial plan.

The following comments were made and issues raised;

- The Scrutiny Committee were aware of the financial challenges facing the authority and other local authorities across the country.
- It was questioned whether the proposals would be a sliding scale or if there would be a 'knife edge'. The Director for Adult Social Care (DASS) explained that charges are based on a national charging framework which would not change under these proposals. Members of the committee expressed an interest to hear more about how the financial assessment works.
- It was questioned what would happen if a person currently in receipt of care decided to cancel or reduce their care because of the proposals and what is the risk that people may fall through the net. Reassurance was provided by officers that we have a duty of care to people and that we will work on an individual basis to provide support, including referral for benefit support where appropriate.
- A question was raised about how Stockport compares to other councils in Greater Manchester. Officers responded to say that a benchmarking exercise has been undertaken across the Northwest region and that this has identified that Stockport is an outlier.
- A question was raised about when the Equality Impact Assessment would be provided to the committee. Officers confirmed that this would be submitted in January 2025.
- Concerns were raised by members of the committee about the affordability of the charges.

### **3.2 Email and telephone response feedback**

A dedicated email address was set up to respond to queries. There were a total of five emails received;

- Three were from people seeking clarification on the proposals.
- Two were from people querying why they had received the letter.

A dedicated telephone line was set up for people to leave voicemails. Colleagues from transformation triaged these calls and used the warm hand over approach to ensure that the most appropriate person returned the call. A total of fifty-seven messages were received and responded to;

- 33 people wanted to understand how the proposals would impact them, or a loved one.
- Nine people were seeking clarification on the proposals.
- Ten voicemails were received where no contact details were left, or the line was silent and then the call was hung up.
- Five voicemails were received that did not relate to the consultation, these calls were all referred onto the relevant team.

### **3.3 Let's Talk public consultation questionnaire and public events**

There are seven proposals included within the scope of the consultation, for each of the seven proposals we asked three questions. These were;

- Who is completing the survey?
- Do you agree with the proposal?
- What impact the proposal would have on you / the person you care for? This was a free text field.

Respondents were able to answer as many questions as they wanted, with completion of the full survey taking no more than 15 minutes. Questions were either a single tick box answer or multiple choice, there was free text questions for respondents to explain and elaborate on their response.

To monitor the diversity of responses we included an 'About You' section that asked respondents a selection of demographics questions. The initial question is mandatory and asks the person to confirm whether they are happy to complete this information with no other mandatory questions in this section. Of the 152 responses received, 98.42% agreed they were happy to complete the 'About You Section' with 1.58% not wanting to supply this information. More information on this section of the survey can be found in section six of this report.

### **3.4 Public and Partner Consultation Events**

Several public and partner consultation events took place during November and December 2024. This provided an opportunity for people to come and listen, discuss the proposals, ask questions and raising any specific concerns. The following events took place:

### **3.5 Partner Events**

- A specific online partnership meeting took place on Monday 25th November 2024.
- A member of the ASC directorate management team attended the Learning Disability Partnership board which took place on 25th November 2024.
- SCAIN network meeting – 9th December 2024
- Making it Real Board – 17th December 2024
- Disability Stockport hosted a meeting for representatives of direct payment users – 19th December 2024.

### **3.5 Colleague Events**

- Adult Social Care *Let's Talk* briefing took place on 21st November 2024.
- Attendance at the benefits and debt advice team meeting – 17th December 2024.

### **3.6 Public Events**

- 26th November at Stopford House – 1 person attended.
- 29th November at Bramhall Library – 8 people attended.
- 3rd December at Stopford House – 3 people attended.
- 10th December at Stopford House – none of the individuals booked on the session attended.
- 11th December online event in the evening – 2 people attended.
- 13th December at Cheadle Library – 5 people attended.
- 18th December at Guildhall – 5 people attended.

## **4. Feedback**

### **4.1 Proposal 1**

#### **What we proposed**

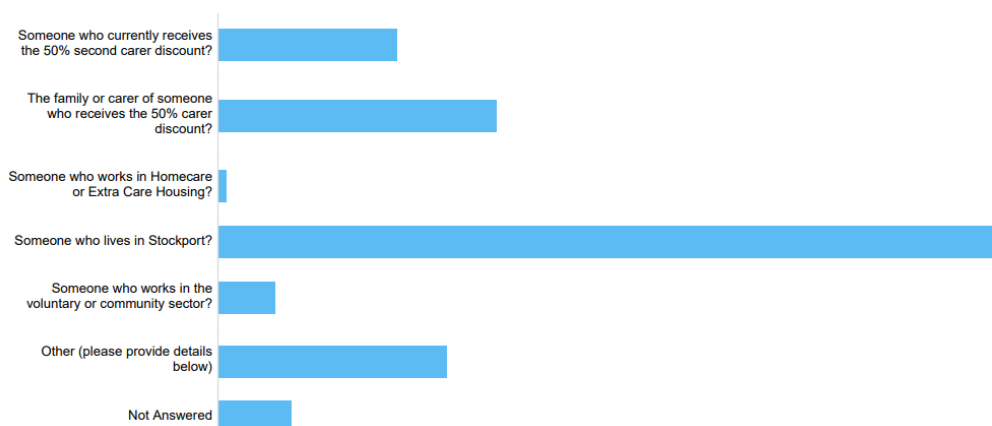
We propose to charge people based on the full cost of providing their care. Currently we have a 50% second carer discount, under this proposal that subsidy will be removed.

#### **Question 1 (152 responses)**

The first question who was completing the survey.

**Question 1: Are you completing the survey as: please tick all relevant boxes**

Are you completing the survey as



All 152 people who completed the survey answered this question, individuals were able to select more than one answer;

- 22 responded to say that they were someone who receives the 50% discount.
- 34 responded to say that they were the family or carer of someone who receives the 50% discount.
- 96 responded to say that they were someone that lives in Stockport.

**Question 2 (152 responses)**

The second question was how much do you agree or disagree that we should charge someone based on the full cost of providing their care. People were asked to select one of the options.

- 23.69% agreed or strongly agreed
- 61.18% disagreed or strongly disagreed
- 11.18% were neutral
- 3.95% did not answer

**Question 3 (133 comments)**

The third question was a free text option and gave individuals the opportunity to share with the council how this proposal would impact them or someone they care for. A selection of comments are provided below;

**Positive sentiment (4 comments)**

From the comments that were left there were very few that were of a positive sentiment, comments included;

- “The proposal does not strike me as unreasonable.”
- “Means testing based on affordability”

**Negative sentiment (79 comments)**

The key themes which were of a negative sentiment were in relation to;

- National charging policy;
  - “Completely unfair as it penalises people who have saved all their lives and have purchased a house”



- “It is abhorrent, central government needs to reform and provide free care.”
- Raising concerns about affordability;
  - “I cannot afford it”
  - “I already find it difficult to meet all those things which I am obliged to pay. Proposed increases in gas, electricity, water and council tax exacerbate matters”
- People indicating that they would need to reduce the amount of care that they receive
  - “I would reduce the number of carers and attempt the care myself. My husband's assets would reduce more rapidly “

### **Neutral sentiment (50 comments)**

The key theme in relation to neutral sentiment was from people who felt that they would not be impacted at this time.

- “At this time, it doesn't impact but it is fair if this should arise in the near future”

## 4.2 Proposal 2

### What we proposed

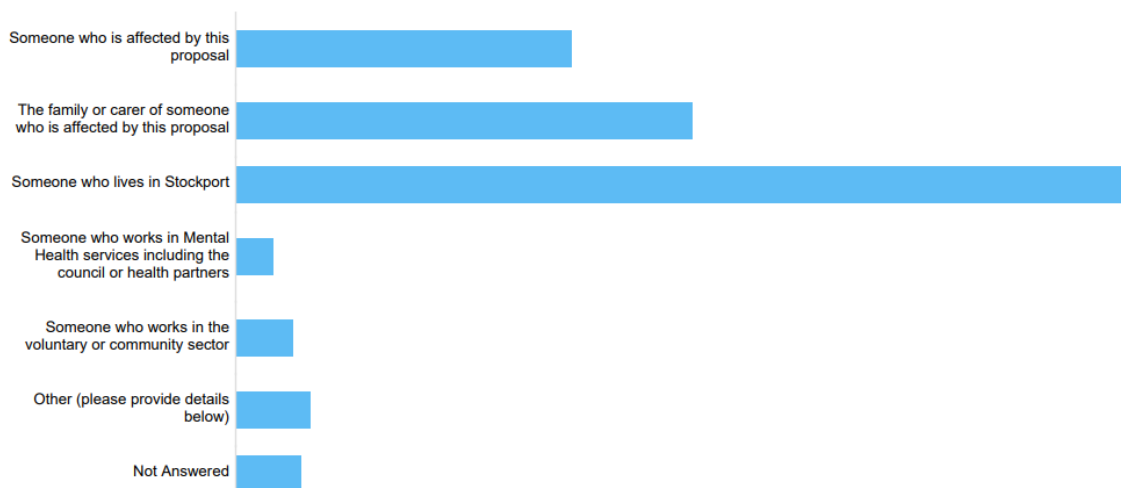
We propose to ensure that all people who receive funded care and support from the council will be financially assessed. This means that individuals under 65 supported in the community with mental health needs may need to pay towards their care.

### Question 1 (152 responses)

The first question asked people who was completing the survey.

**Question 1: Are you completing the survey as: Please tick all relevant boxes**

*Are you completing the survey as*



All 152 people who completed the survey answered this question, individuals were able to select more than one answer;

- 36 responded to say that they were someone who is affected by the proposal.
- 49 responded to say that they were the family or carer of someone who is affected by the proposal.
- 96 responded to say that they were someone that lives in Stockport.

### Question 2 (152 responses)

The second question asked people if they agree or disagree with the proposal. People were asked to select one of the options.

- 50% agreed or strongly agreed
- 30.26% Disagreed or strongly disagreed
- 16.45% were neutral
- 3.29% did not provide an answer

### Question 3 (115 comments)

The third question was a free text option and gave individuals the opportunity to share with the council how this proposal would impact them or someone they care for. A selection of comments are provided below;

#### Positive sentiment (21 comments).

The key theme within the positive sentiment was that everyone should have a

financial assessment and pay towards their care if they can afford it. Comments included;

- “People I know accept that if they can afford it, they should pay for it”
- “There should be an equitable policy for all.”
- “Anyone who does not fully self-fund should have a detailed financial assessment. This should already happen to ensure ALL pay their fair share, not just the honest and those who have put money away rather than spend it”

### **Negative sentiment (60 comments)**

The key themes from the negative sentiment included feedback about the national charging policy and concerns about the affordability of the increased charges. Comments included;

- “Care should be free; government needs to reform the care sector and invest”
- “This is unjust. It is a reasonable expectation that full support is given. What are we paying the Adult Social Care precept for?”
- “Less money for food”
- “Further push people into poverty”

### **Neutral sentiment (34 comments)**

The neutral sentiment comments were mixed for this proposal, some people told us it was not relevant to them and other people told us that they were unsure of how it would impact them. Comments included;

- “It will not affect us as we’ve already completed the assessment”
- “I have already had an assessment”
- “Care must be taken re invasion of privacy”
- “Unsure what the offer may be”

### 4.3 Proposal 3

#### What we proposed

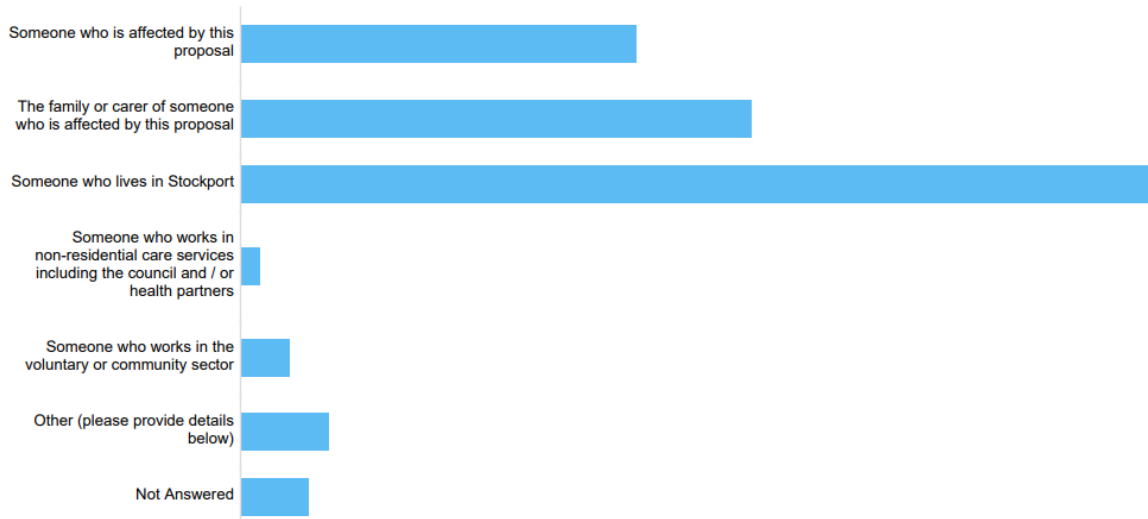
Currently we subsidise the cost of care provided by having a cap of £485 per week – this is known as the maximum assessed charge. We propose to remove the maximum assessed charge.

#### Question 1 (152 responses)

The first question asked people who was completing the survey.

**Question 1: Are you completing the survey as: please tick all relevant boxes**

*Are you completing the survey as*



All 152 people who completed the survey answered this question, individuals were able to select more than one answer;

- 41 responded to say that they were someone who is affected by the proposal
- 53 responded to say that they were the family or carer of someone who is affected by the proposal.
- 95 responded to say that they were someone that lives in Stockport

#### Question 2 (152 responses)

The second question asked people if they agree or disagree with the proposal. People were asked to select one of the options.

- 19.74% agreed or strongly agreed
- 65.12% disagreed or strongly disagreed
- 10.53% were neutral
- 4.61% did not answer

#### Question 3 (110 comments)

The third question was a free text option and gave individuals the opportunity to share with the council how this proposal would impact them or someone they care for. A selection of comments are provided below;

### **Positive Sentiment (11 comments)**

The positive sentiment in relation to this proposal included feedback such as;

- “It will impact, however as long as it is fairly applied it will be easier to swallow”
- “I strongly agree this should only be on the basis of a financial assessment demonstrating that they can afford the care”
- “I do not consider it unreasonable to remove the cap”

### **Negative Sentiment (85 comments)**

There were several key themes emerging through negative sentiment;

- People told us that they were concerned about affordability and needing to sell their property to pay for care;
  - “Like most people we would feel the cost and maybe cut back on certain things.”
  - “My parents and in-laws would have to sell their house that they have saved all their lives for. better getting a subsidised council property and spending their money”
  - “I can’t afford it”
  - “It would have me short of money.”
- People told us that they disagree with the national charging policy;
  - “This is unjust. You should secure greater central government funding. Will you be removing the adult social care precept?”
  - “We have been promised a cap on care costs. It would be dishonest to remove this cap.”
  - “Care should be free, and the government should not seek to charge.”

### **Neutral Sentiment (14 comments)**

The key theme in relation to neutral comments was from people who are not affected by this proposal or from people stating how the proposal will impact them.

Comments included;

- “None at this time”
- “Not currently but could in future.”
- “We will reach the capital limit sooner.”

## 4.4 Proposal 4

### What we proposed.

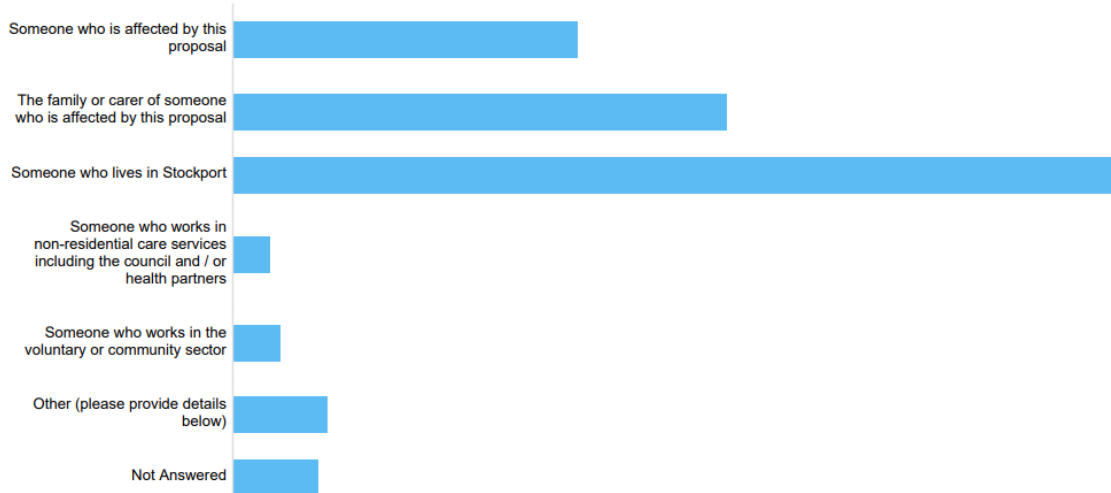
Currently we apply a 10% discount to the value of any capital that a person may have. We propose to remove the 10% discount.

### Question 1 (152 responses)

The first question asked people who is completing the survey.

**Question 1: Are you completing the survey as: please tick all relevant boxes**

*Are you completing the survey as*



All 152 people who completed the survey answered this question, individuals were able to select more than one answer;

- 37 responded to say that they were someone who is affected by the proposal
- 53 responded to say that they were the family or carer of someone who is affected by the proposal.
- 95 responded to say that they were someone that lives in Stockport

### Question 2 (152 responses)

The second question asked people if they agree or disagree with the proposal. People were asked to select one of the options.

- 16.44% agreed or strongly agreed
- 59.21% disagreed or strongly disagreed
- 19.08% were neutral
- 5.26% did not answer

### Question 3 (95 comments)

The third question was a free text option and gave individuals the opportunity to share with the council how this proposal would impact them or someone they care for. A selection of the comments are provided below:

### **Positive Sentiment (14 comments)**

The positive sentiment in relation to this proposal included feedback such as;

- “This always seemed a strange discount to have”
- “It seems an unnecessary complication.”

### **Negative Sentiment (70 comments)**

The negative sentiment in relation to this proposal falls into three key themes;

- People raised concerns about the affordability of care costs and reductions in savings;
  - “It would mean my husband would qualify for a financial assessment more quickly.”
- People raised concerns about the national charging framework;
  - “Disagree I feel that someone who has been sensible and save for their old age is penalised.”
  - "As a rate payer to Stockport for over 64 years, and after parting with my life's savings, I feel my property should be left as mine. I have worked hard for my money and lived a modest life, please leave my bricks and mortar as mine".
- People told us that they were concerned about the impact this will have on vulnerable people;
  - “This was put into place for a reason years ago, so why are you again picking on the sick & vulnerable people of Stockport are we an easy target?”
  - “This is failing to look after our vulnerable members of society”.

### **Neutral Sentiment (11 comments)**

The neutral sentiment was from people who told us that this proposal will not impact them. **Comments included;**

- “I don’t feel that this would affect me.”
- “It would possibly make only a slight, insignificant difference in the future to my mother's financial assessment.”

## 4.5 Proposal 5

### What we proposed

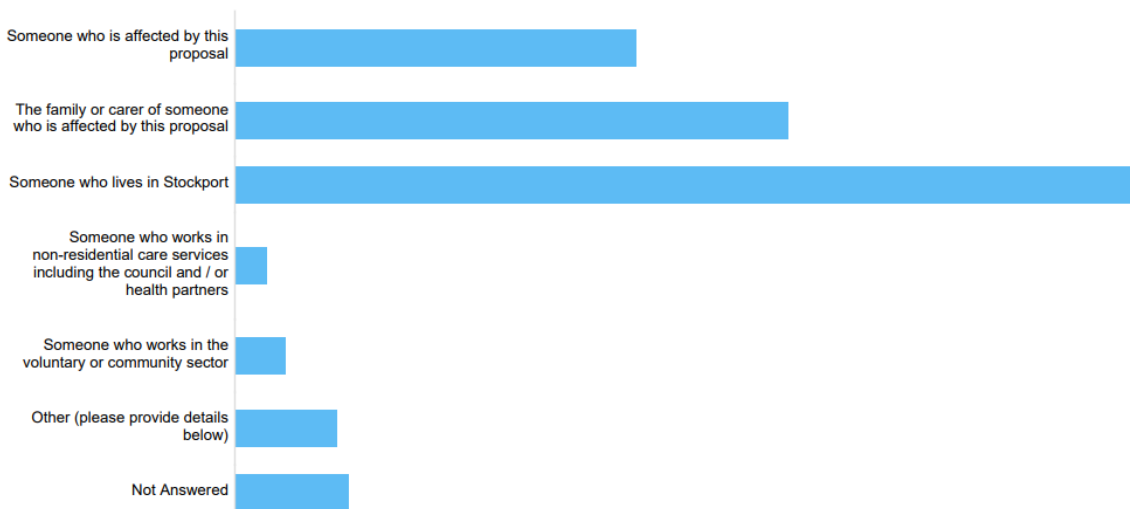
Introduction of administration charge to full cost payers / self-funders for commissioning services, ongoing review, arranging home care services etc for non-residential care.

### Question 1 (152 responses)

The first question asked people who was completing the survey.

**Question 1: Are you completing the survey as: please tick all relevant boxes**

*Are you completing the survey as*



All 152 people who completed the survey answered this question, individuals were able to select more than one answer;

- 39 responded to say that they were someone who is affected by the proposal
- 54 responded to say that they were the family or carer of someone who is affected by the proposal.
- 88 responded to say that they were someone that lives in Stockport

### Question 2 (152 responses)

The second question asked people if they agree or disagree with the proposal. People were asked to select one of the options.

- 18.42% agreed or strongly agreed
- 59.21% Disagreed or strongly disagreed
- 17.11% were neutral
- 5.26% did not answer

### Question 3 (133 comments)

The third question was a free text option and gave individuals the opportunity to share with the council how this proposal would impact them or someone they care for. A selection of the comments are provided below.

### Positive Sentiment (25 comments)

The positive sentiment in relation to this proposal included feedback such as;



- “Fair to charge for this as a service”
- “This is fine as long as it only applies to people newly applying.”
- “If people can pay for their own care, they can pay a management fee to help it to be arranged.”

### **Negative Sentiment (85 comments)**

The negative sentiment in relation to this proposal falls into two key themes;

- People felt that arranging care is the role of the council;
  - “Why would we pay for a job which we could probably do for ourselves??”
  - “Being charged for a council officer to do their job i.e. arranging care is wrong, arguably unlawful, against national guidelines.”
- People were concerned about the time it would take them to find their own care;
  - “Finding care for my mum 6 years ago was really hard. We had no idea where to start and ended up at citizens advice who suggested Age UK.”
  - “People do not need this adding to their worry on release from hospital.”
  - “Making private arrangements also adds a further burden of time and effort to those like me who look after relatives, with the knock-on effects on my work and ability to care for other members of my family. There is no amount stated in the proposal, so this could represent a significant amount of money.”

### **Neutral Sentiment (23 comments)**

Neutral comments were from individuals who would not be impacted by the proposal or were not sure on what the impact would be. Some people asked clarification questions about how this proposal would be managed;

- “I’m not clear if you are proposing an annual charge here or if it is just a 'set-up' charge. Will changes to the care package (e.g. hours, single/double-cover) be subject to a charge? If the charge(s) is/are significant then it is an extra cost to people who can't manage on their own and are desperate for help and I would disagree with that. What do other councils do?”
- “I’m not sure what this means as I’m not sure exactly what is involved in arranging care. It also depends on how much such a charge was and what it was useful.”

## 4.6 Proposal 6

### What we proposed

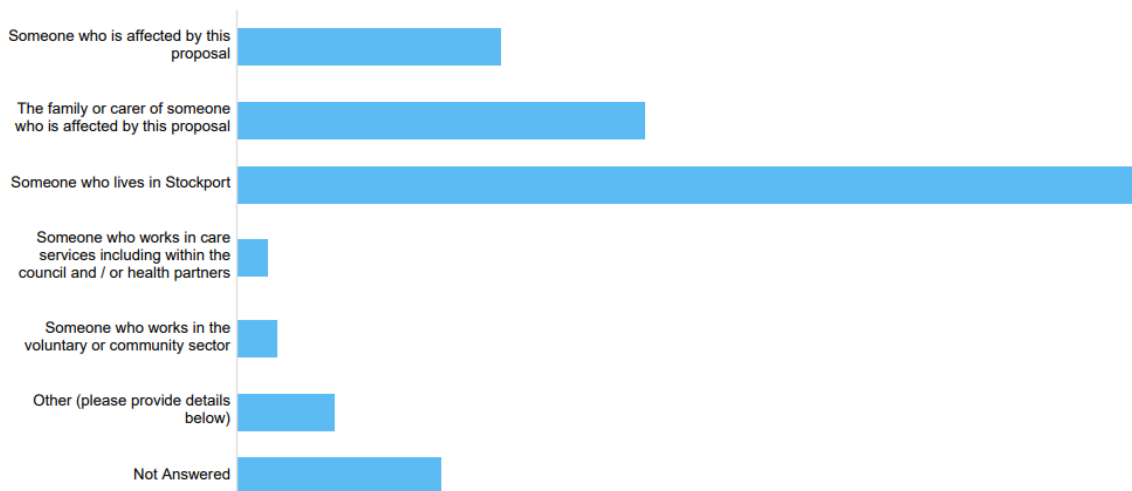
Currently we do not charge interest on money owed to the council when a Deferred Payment Agreement (DPA) has not yet been signed. We propose to introduce interest charges on the money owed to the council. The Care Act 2014 allows us to do this and sets the maximum amount that councils are able to charge.

### Question 1 (152 responses)

The first question asked people who was completing the survey.

**Question 1: Are you completing the survey as: please tick all relevant boxes**

*Are you completing the survey as*



All 152 people who completed the survey answered this question, individuals were able to select more than one answer;

- 33 responded to say that they were someone who is affected by the proposal
- 46 responded to say that they were the family or carer of someone who is affected by the proposal.
- 94 responded to say that they were someone that lives in Stockport

### Question 2 (152 responses)

The second question asked people if they agree or disagree with the proposal. People were asked to select one of the options.

- 17.11% agreed or strongly agreed
- 51.32% Disagreed or strongly disagreed
- 20.39% were neutral
- 11.18% did not answer

### Question 3 (109 comments)

The third question was a free text option and gave individuals the opportunity to share with the council how this proposal would impact them or someone they care for. A selection of the comments are provided below.

### **Positive Sentiment (22 comments)**

The positive sentiment in relation to this proposal included feedback such as;

- “Would not affect me but is a fair proposal”
- “There should be an equal approach for all.”
- “Again, it seems very fair for the Council to charge interest on money owed to it. But the Council would have to ensure that that such a policy was administered fairly, taking full account of personal circumstances and possible cases of hardship.”
- “This is allowed under law”

### **Negative Sentiment (61 comments)**

The negative sentiment in relation to this proposal falls into two key themes;

- Concern for the impact on vulnerable people who do not pay an invoice;
  - “It is very easy for vulnerable people and family members who look after their interests to miss a payment. Those in the most difficult situations are most likely to miss a payment.”
- Feedback that people do not think a council should charge interest;
  - “Why do you have to charge interest you’re not a bank! You’re a short term nominated Council who needs to look after its residents not hinder or try to make it a business!!”
  - “I really appreciate not having been charged interest on mum’s house and having Stockport pay for her care while we sell it. It would have been awful to lose even more money when trying to fund care for mum. We currently owe around £80,000 which is heartbreaking and stressful. I understand why councils may charge for this and that you must find the money to cover costs but it’s another painful burden on top of having to clear and sell my family home just so it can all go towards mum’s care. Maybe you could give people a time window, so they don’t take unnecessary time over this but waiting for the house to sell is out of my control. We’ve had an offer now so hopefully it was all go through for us”
- Feedback about the national charging framework;
  - “I feel that those of us who have managed to work and buy a home are being deliberately targeted when we need help. Not all pensioners are rich and have money tied up in their home. Little help is quickly available for ill or infirm homeowners and yet those in council.”

### **Neutral Sentiment (26 comments)**

Neutral comments were from individuals who would not be impacted by the proposal, or were not sure on what the impact would be.

- “I don’t think this would effect my mother.”
- “At the moment, it would not affect the person I care or.”

## 4.7 Proposal 7

### What we proposed

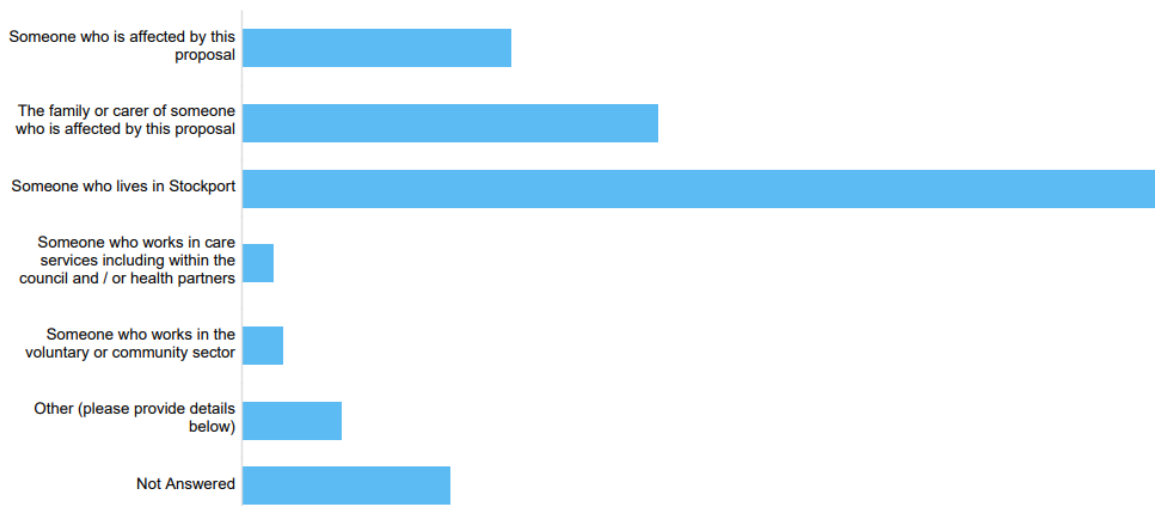
The introduction of charging for services related to the protection of property. The Care Act allows us to recover reasonable costs from people relating to protection of property.

### Question 1 (152 responses)

The first question asked people who was completing the survey.

**Question 1: Are you completing the survey as: please tick all relevant boxes**

*Are you completing the survey as*



All 152 people who completed the survey answered this question, individuals were able to select more than one answer;

- 27 responded to say that they were someone who is affected by the proposal
- 42 responded to say that they were the family or carer of someone who is affected by the proposal.
- 93 responded to say that they were someone that lives in Stockport.

### Question 2 (152 responses)

The second question asked people if they agree or disagree with the proposal. People were asked to select one of the options.

- 23.03% agreed or strongly agreed.
- 34.21% Disagreed or strongly disagreed.
- 28.29% were neutral.
- 14.47% did not answer.

### Question 3 (98 comments)

The third question was a free text option and gave individuals the opportunity to share with the council how this proposal would impact them or someone they care for. A selection of the comments are provided below.

### **Positive Sentiment (26 comments)**

The positive sentiment in relation to this proposal included feedback such as;

- “If people own property, their actual home or otherwise, they can afford it one way or another”.
- “It seems very fair for protection of property services to be paid for by people using the service, but I assume that this would also be subject to financial assessment, and cases of hardship formally identified”.

### **Negative Sentiment (43 comments)**

There were three key themes against the negative sentiment;

- Concerns for vulnerable people
  - “My Mother may require this in future. This proposal will be further impoverishing and providing worry for the most vulnerable people at a time when they need the most help”.
  - “Charging would be a personal decision and depend on circumstances. I feel that charging an ill or vulnerable person who is just over the threshold for paying for their care, would add anxiety and stress to the person's already vulnerable and physically impaired state.
- Concerns that such charges should not be paid by the council.
  - “Surely this is what contents insurance is for.”
  - “Increases my invoice from yourselves again. This is probably covered on my house insurance or could be covered cheaper on my house insurance than the invoice you will send me.”
- Concerns that there would be a charge for people who move into care.
  - “This one is tricky, what if the care is temporary while recovering from a procedure, while family have to take time away from caring due to their own health while they recover. The home should stay protected but the part about pet care if nobody to help, what happens to the pets then if the person does not have the capital to cover this? How much would it be? I have a policy with The Dogs Trust for £12.50 per year where they would help with my pets needs or even rehoming, fostering etc. This one disturbs me.”

### **Neutral Sentiment (29 comments)**

Neutral comments were from individuals who would not be impacted by the proposal or were not sure on what the impact would be and were seeking clarification about what protection of property is.

- “I handle this myself”.
- “It seems reasonable to charge those who can afford it but you're not explaining who pays and who doesn't, and how much. Also, who decides what is reasonable protection and are they able to do this?”
- “My mother is currently able to live within her own home and is receiving care at home. Whilst she can continue living safely there, there is no requirement for the council to protect this private property.”

## **Public and Partner Consultation Events**

At each of the public and partner consultation events a presentation was delivered to explain each of the proposals. There was an opportunity for questions and answers because of this. The key themes emerging from these events was consistent with the feedback that was provided by individuals who completed the survey.

## **5. Conclusion**

The aim of our consultation and engagement was to obtain feedback on our approach to ensuring a balanced budget for 2025/2026, relating to introducing from April 2025, seven changes to the Adult Social Care charging policy.

A comprehensive approach has been taken to gather feedback from individuals who use Adult Social Care, their carers and families. There were 152 online and paper copy surveys completed and following a presentation to Healthwatch members we received a detailed response from them. In addition, valuable feedback was received through the seven public engagement events and several meetings with different stakeholders and partnership boards. Feedback was also received from frontline practitioners, the Councils cost of living team and Welfare Rights officers.

Across all channels there was a recognition that there are financial challenges and difficult decisions to be made, however there were a number of concerns raised through all forums, regarding the perceived impacts of the proposed changes.

These concerns span a number of areas including:

- The impact that the proposals will have on vulnerable people in terms of affordability in the cost-of-living crisis.
- Concerns that people may need to reduce or stop the care that they receive due to increased charges.
- Disagreement with the national charging framework for adult social care. People told us that they do not agree with selling their properties and using savings to pay for care.
- There were some concerns that the proposals were not allowed within the law. Readers of the report are asked to note that all proposals stated are legitimate charges as prescribed within the Care Act 2014.

## **6. Additional Information**

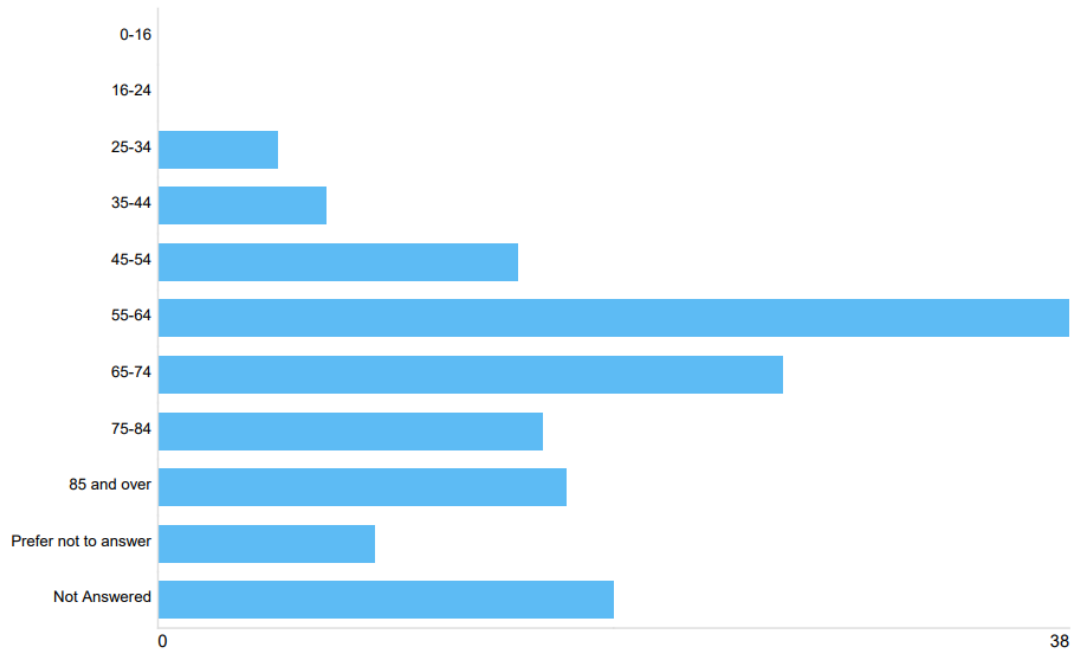
Key Demographics information (full demographic information is provided in the About you section below).

### **Age**

Responses have been received from a wide age range. The largest percentage of respondents are aged 55 - 64 with 25%, followed by 17.11% of respondents who are aged 65 -74.

**Question 2: What is your age?**

Age

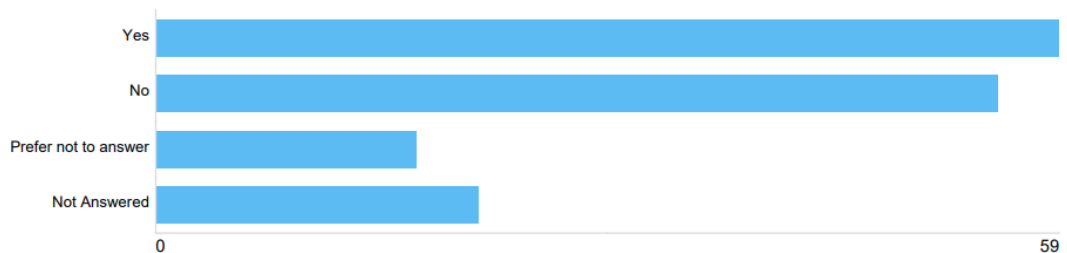


**Impairment, disability, or long-term health condition**

Of those who responded 38.82% (59 responses) said that they consider themselves to have an impairment, disability, or long-term health condition with 36.18% responding no to this question and the rest choosing either not to answer or advising they would prefer not to answer.

**Question 8: Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability that has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months? - Do you consider yourself to have an impairment, disability or long term health condition?**

*Do you consider yourself to have an impairment, disability or long term health condition?*



The responses to each of the proposals by the 59 individuals can be broken down as follows:

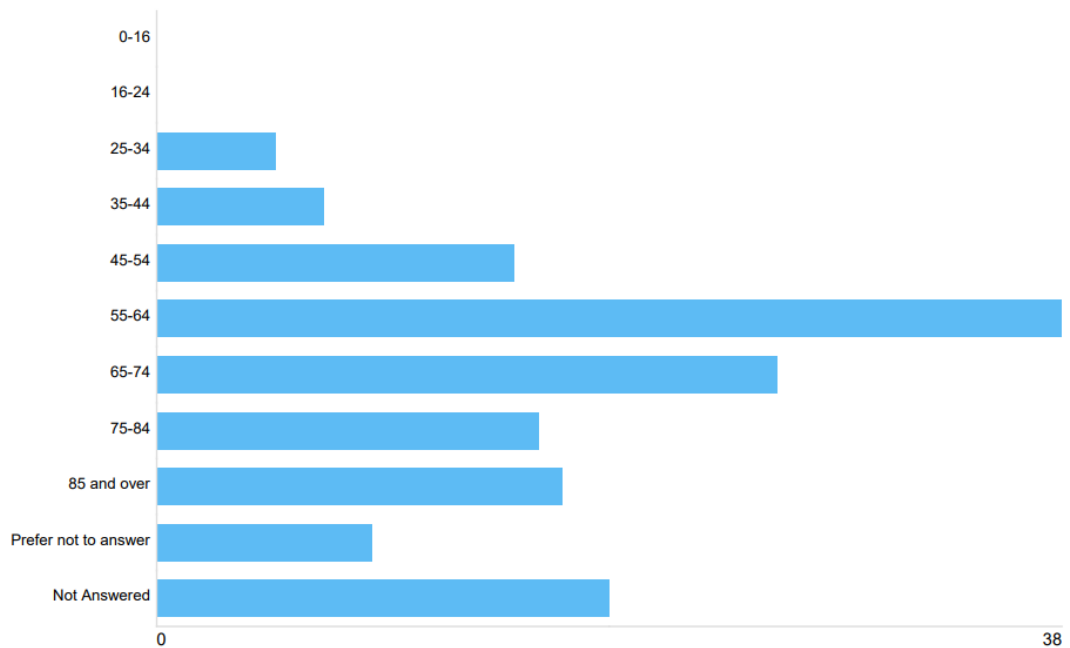
	% of People who Strongly Agree / Agree	% of People of Strongly Disagree / Disagree
Proposal 1	19%	68%
Proposal 2	53%	25%
Proposal 3	14%	75%
Proposal 4	10%	75%
Proposal 5	15%	58%
Proposal 6	15%	56%
Proposal 7	19%	39%

## 7. About you data

This section of the report provides a breakdown of the answers provided in the 'About you' section of the survey.

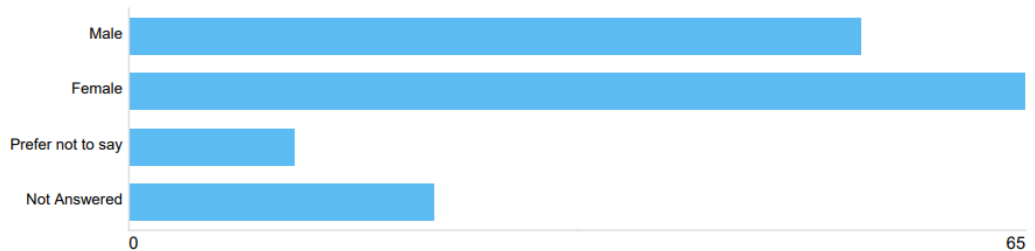
### Question 2: What is your age?

#### Age



### Question 3: What is your sex?

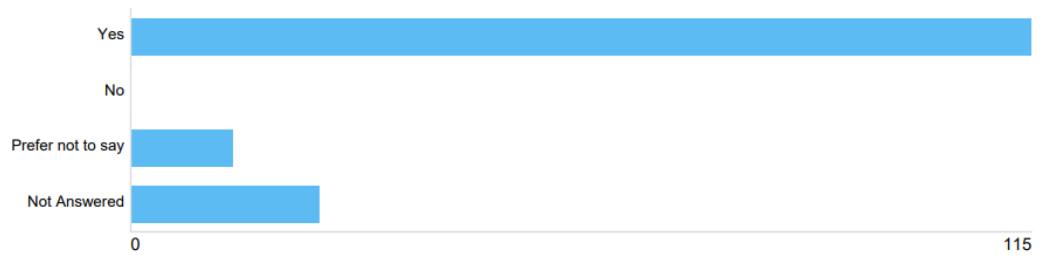
#### Sex





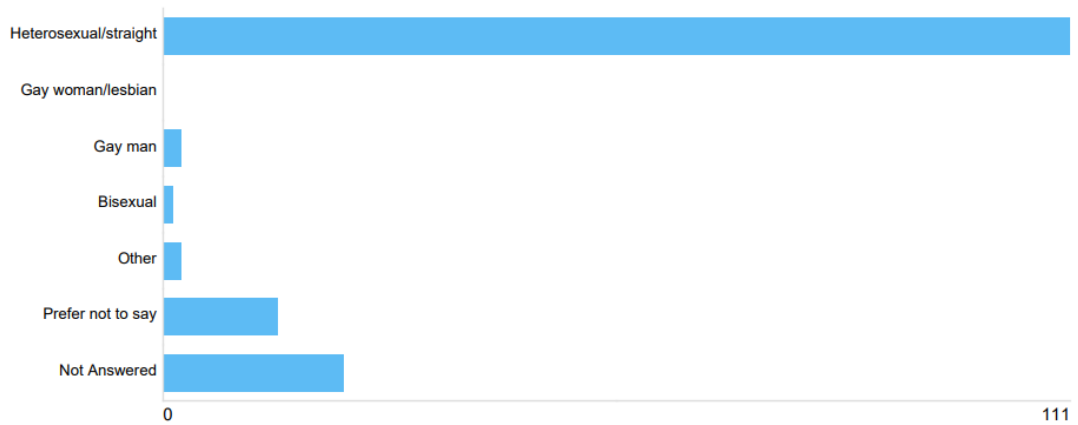
**Question 4: Is your gender the same as the one you were assigned at birth? - Is your gender the same as the one you were assigned at birth?**

**Gender**



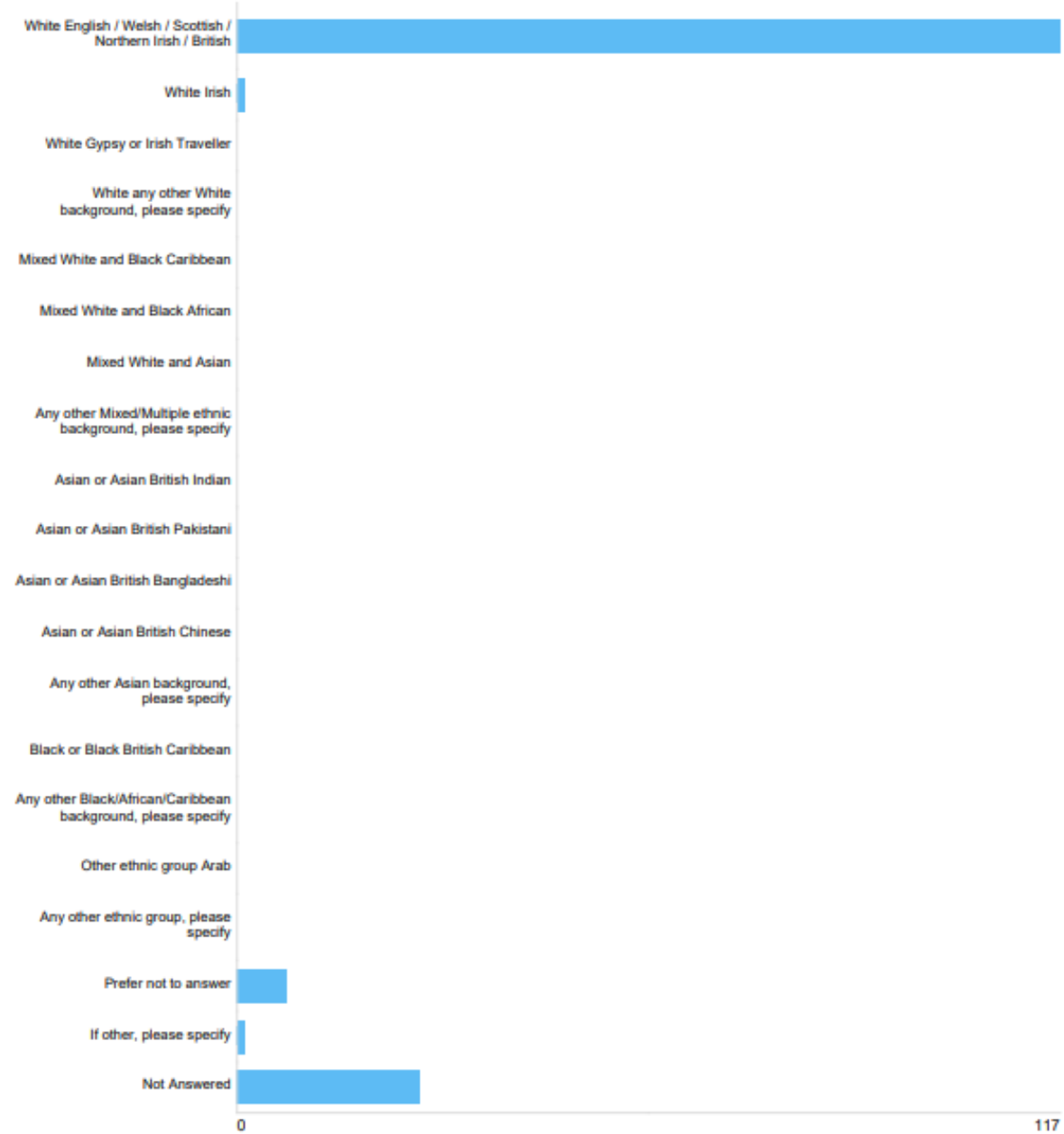
**Question 5: Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?**

**Sexual orientation**



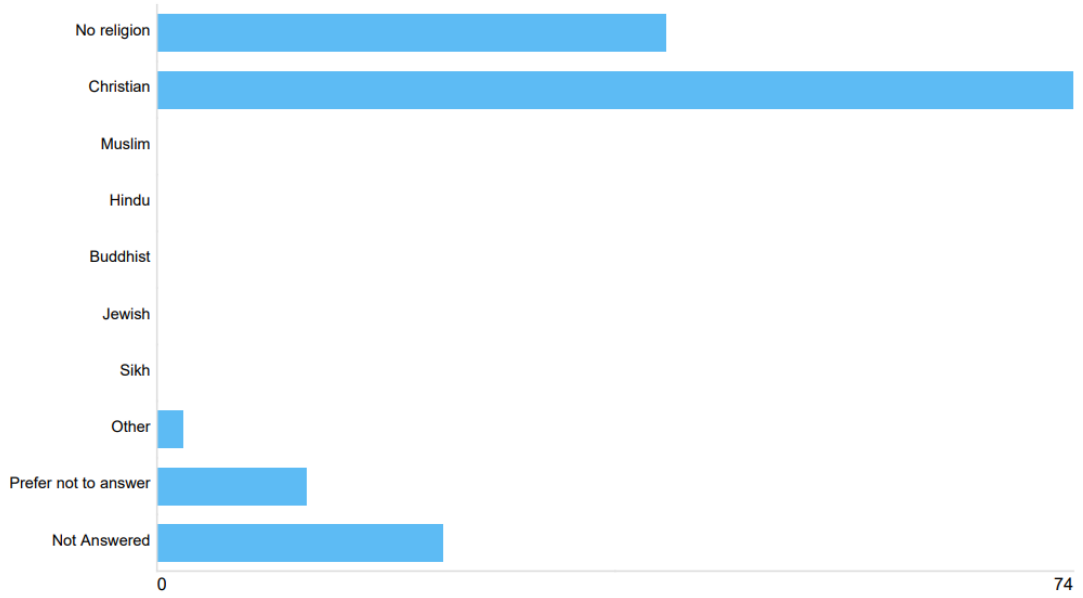
**Question 6: How would you define your ethnic group?**

*How would you define your ethnic group?*



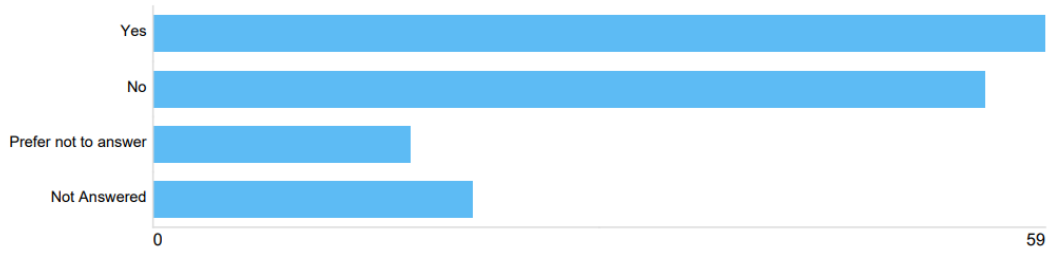
**Question 7: How would you define your religion or belief?**

*religion*



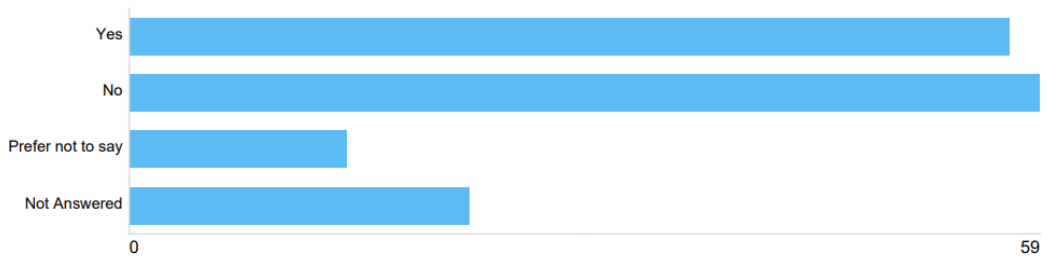
**Question 8: Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability that has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months? - Do you consider yourself to have an impairment, disability or long term health condition?**

*Do you consider yourself to have an impairment, disability or long term health condition?*



**Question 9: Do you have caring responsibilities?**

*Caring responsibilities*



**Question 10: Which of the following best describes your employment status?**

*Are you...?*

