

**Report title: Results of Council Tax Support Consultation, 2016**

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**Date: October 2016**

## **1. Background**

During the budget consultation for the financial year, 2015/16, over 70% of participants indicated that they would support a reduction in the levels of council tax support currently provided by Portsmouth City Council. Following on from information regarding the sustainability and ongoing level of support of council tax support (CTS) needed a consultation examining the possibility of change took place between Monday 11<sup>th</sup> July and Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2016.

A questionnaire was developed and made available to ALL residents in the city. Although primarily available online, hard copies were available on request. In total 21 hard copies were completed.

All recipients of CTS were invited to complete the consultation questionnaire or provide feedback. Local interested groups, such as the Portsmouth Disability Forum were also invited to submit responses as an organisation, while individual members were also encouraged to complete the consultation questionnaire too.

The questionnaire closed On Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> September and had been available for just under 12 weeks, allowing ample opportunity for all interested parties to submit their views, and in excess of minimum recommended periods required for statutory consultation.

In order to ensure as many residents as possible had chance to complete the questionnaire, it was promoted to residents, businesses and council staff in the following ways:

### **External communications**

- Promotion to the Citizens' Panel
- Writing to all CTS recipients
- Press releases encouraging participation
- Paid for Facebook posts
- Organic Facebook posts
- Twitter posts
- Information on the website: [www.portsmouth.gov.uk](http://www.portsmouth.gov.uk)

### **Internal communications**

- Inclusion in staff bulletins

### **2. Methodology**

The focus of the consultation was to understand resident opinion on if CTS should change and on a number of different options that could be consider if they felt it needed to. In addition to exploring a number of options, respondents were also asked to indicate a preferred option, as well as given many opportunities to provide free text (verbatim) responses, all of which are available in the appendices of this report.

Respondents were also asked a number of demographic questions to understand the groups of people that responded and how they represented the overall community.

The consultation was long but this was out of necessity, in order to ensure full and comprehensive background information and examples were given in order for an informed and considered response to be submitted.

### **3. Response rates**

As of Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> September 1340 responses had been received for the consultation - of which 21 were hard copies submitted to the revenue and benefits team prior to the closing of the consultation.

The level of responses can be classed as robust - based on a population size of 210,000, a confidence level of 95% will have a margin error rate of 2% and this is acceptable for such a consultation

Three hundred and eighteen people indicated that they were in receipt of CTS (24% of the overall number of individuals responding to the consultation). It should be noted that only 57% of respondents responded to the question asking them to indicate if they were in receipt of CTS.

In terms of representation of the resident population, residents' participation across demographic indicators was in line with usual response to consultations in Portsmouth.

More women than men responded - this is usual for most research/consultation work. Age range responses also followed previous response trends with the age group 45-55 years being the largest overall group.

More respondents than is usual indicated that they had a disability - 239 (18%) of the total number who responded.

In terms of ethnic representation, those who responded follow previous consultation trends and indicated predominantly that they considered themselves British White. Other groups identified included: Irish White, Traveller, Other White backgrounds, White& Black African, multi/mixed background, Bangladeshi, Chinese, Arab, and Caribbean.

### 4. Results

#### Headline data:

- 1340 individuals responded to the consultation.
- Of those who responded, 318 (24%) are in receipt of CTS.
- The majority of respondents stating a preference - 43% said 'No' when asked if the council should keep the current CTS scheme.
- When asked to rank their preference of those that responded the overall majority, 47% indicated Option 4 as their first choice and option 2 (36%) as their second.
- Of those that indicated option 4 as their first choice, 33% of this group indicated option 2 as their second choice preference, while 31% indicated that option 1 would be their second choice option.
- The majority of those participating indicated that they thought that the capital limit should be reduced.
- The largest proportion of respondents also agreed with the principle that the maximum level of council tax reduction payable should be restricted to a maximum of a band c property.
- 73% agreed with the principle that the minimum level of council tax reduction should be £2 per week.
- The majority agreed that reducing family premium and a reduction in the period of backdating to a month was necessary.
- In addition 76% of the overall cohort also agreed that there should be a removal of the entitlement to severe disability premium.
- The majority of all respondents did not favour a council tax increase or that savings should be found to support the Council tax support scheme by reducing funding to other services (see fig. 15). In fact, of those who indicated that they wished CTS to remain unchanged, even fewer than the overall average supported a council tax increase (20%) to maintain the CTS status quo.

## Appendix 1 - Council Tax Support Scheme

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### Full Breakdown of all questions in the Consultation Questionnaire

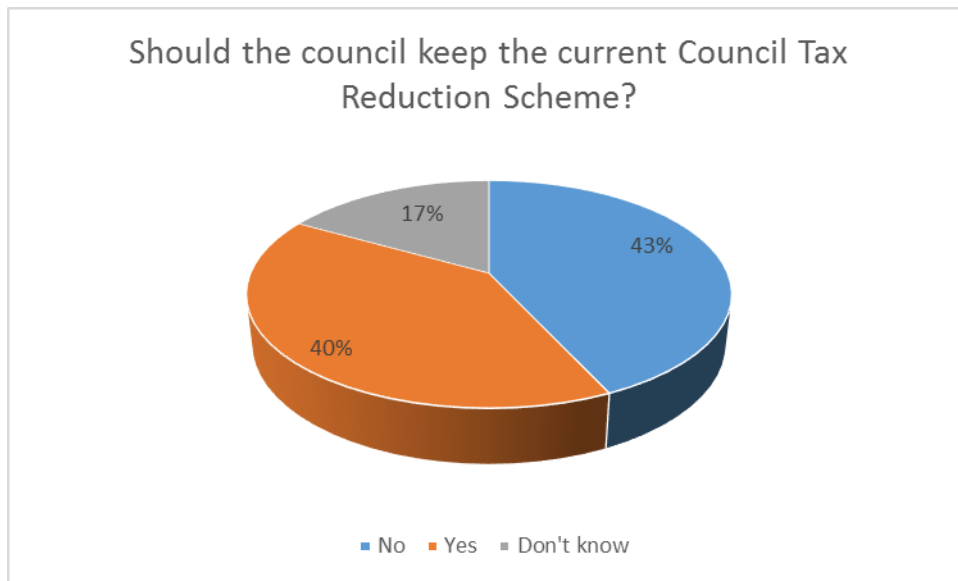


Fig. 1

### Responses to Options One-Four

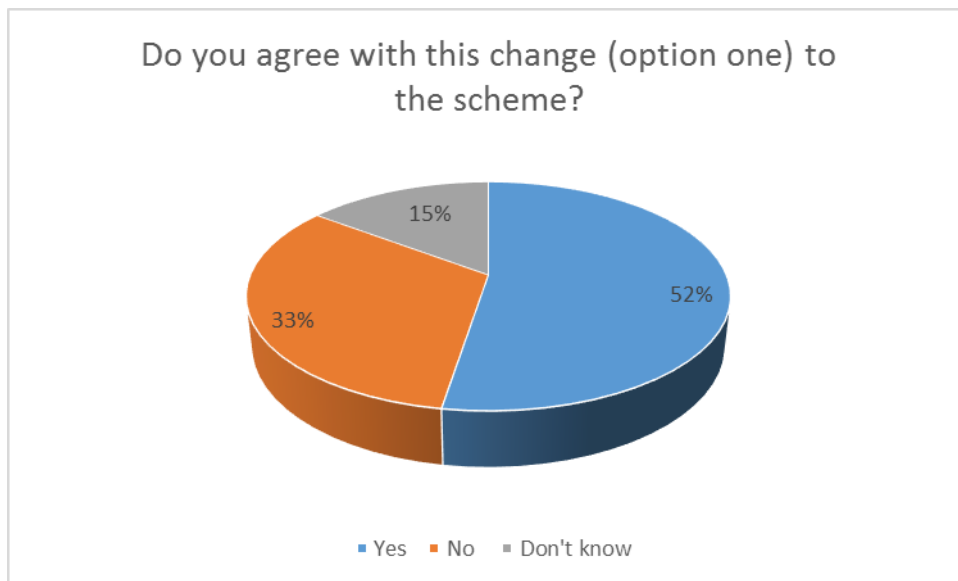


Fig. 2

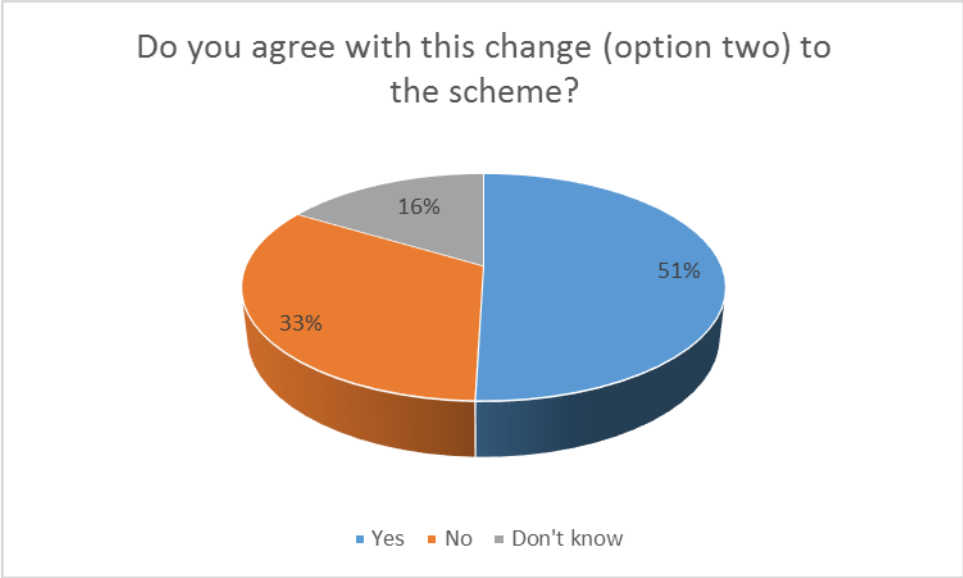


Fig. 3

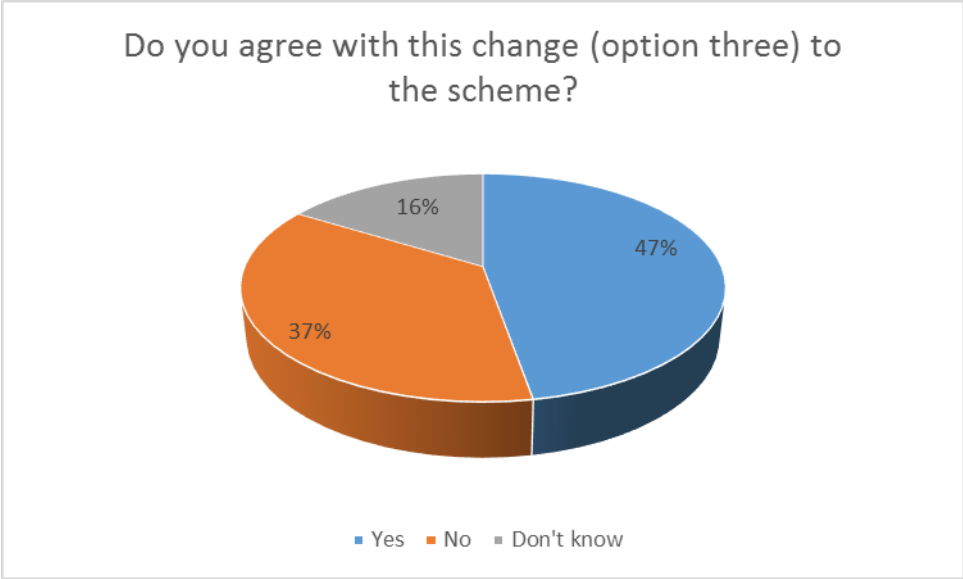


Fig. 4

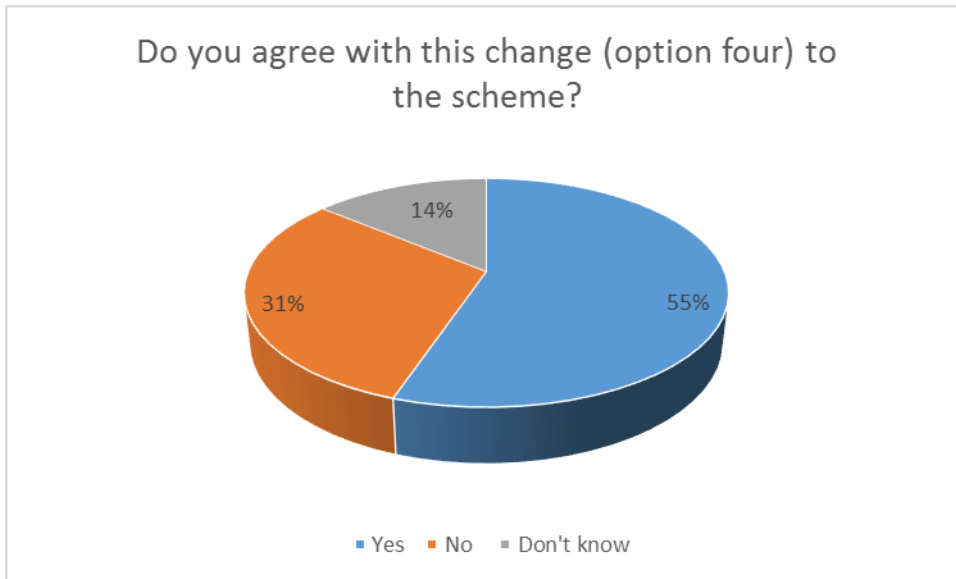


Fig. 5

### Responses relating to 'Additional Changes'

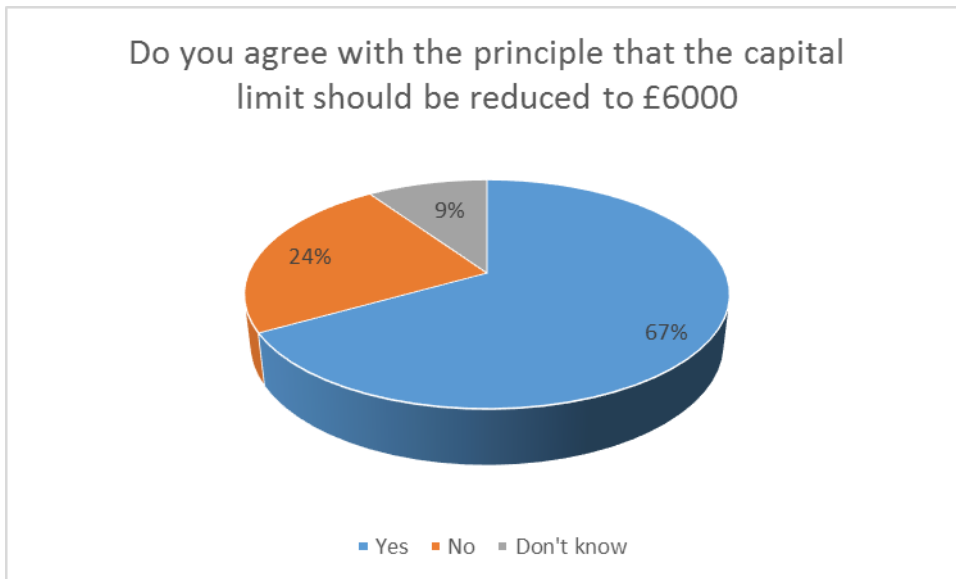


Fig. 6

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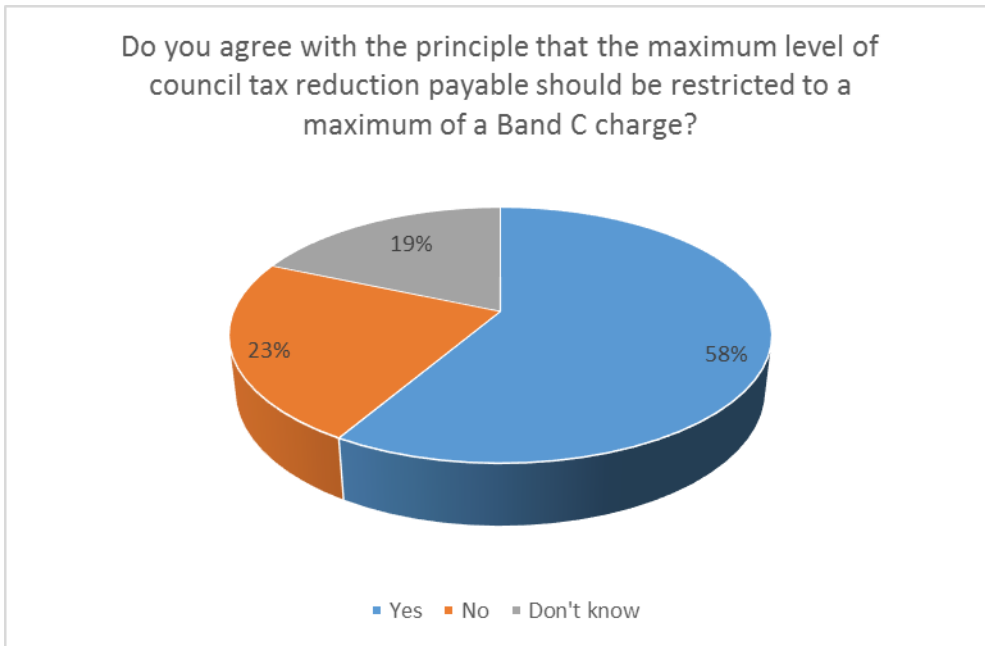


Fig. 7

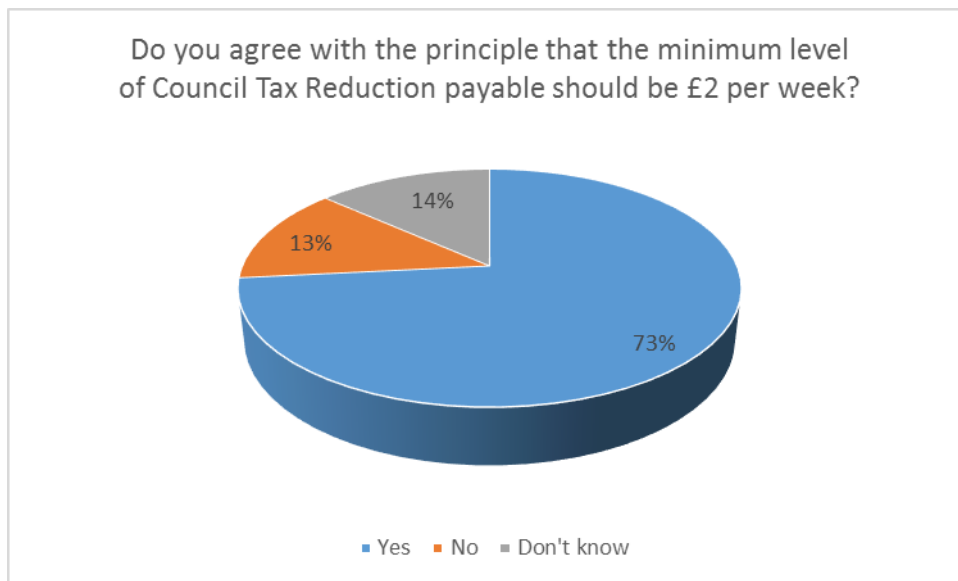


Fig. 8

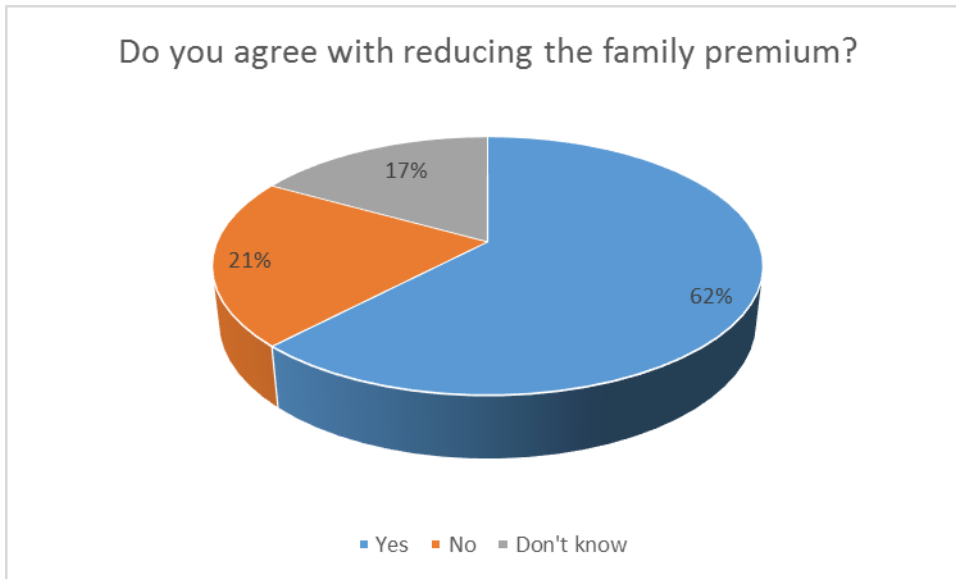


Fig. 9

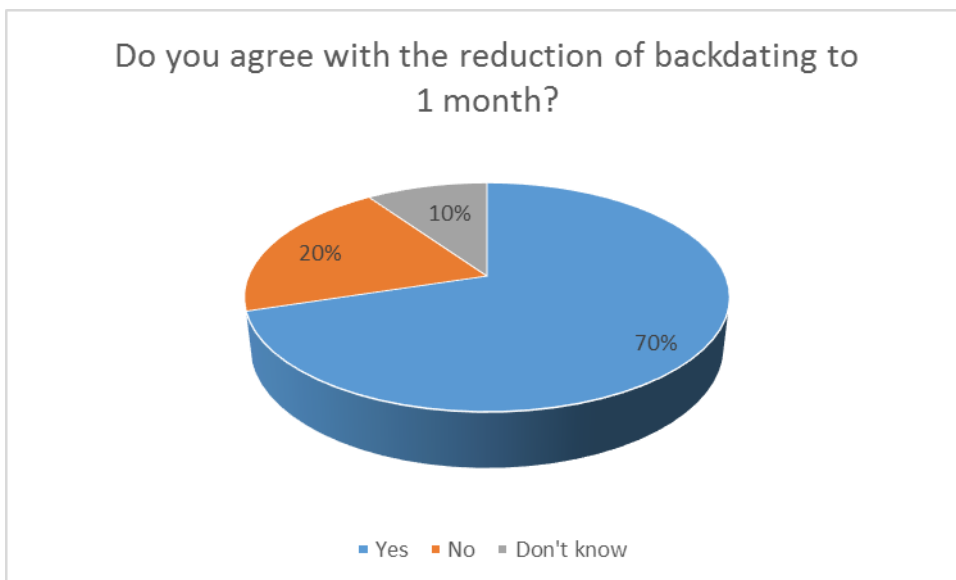


Fig.10



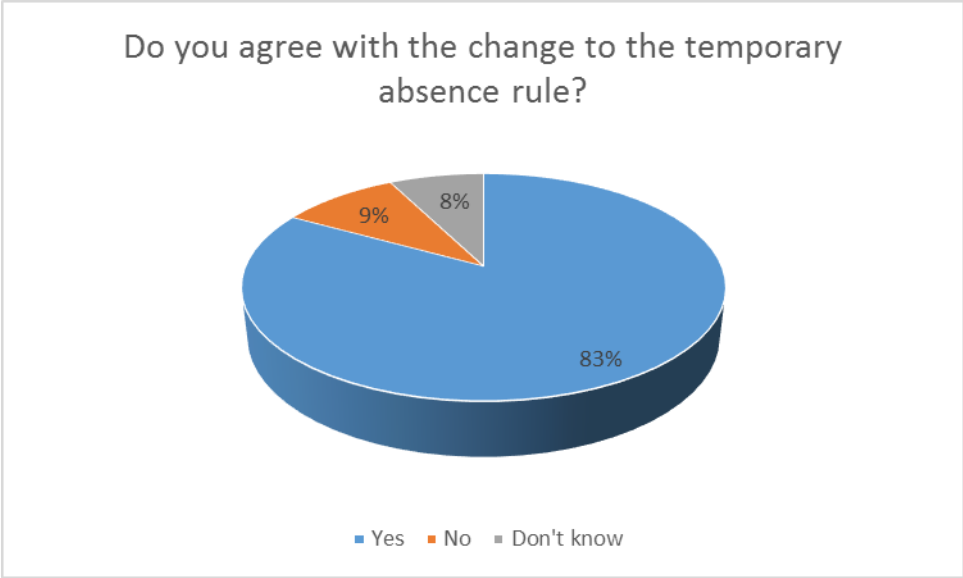


Fig. 11

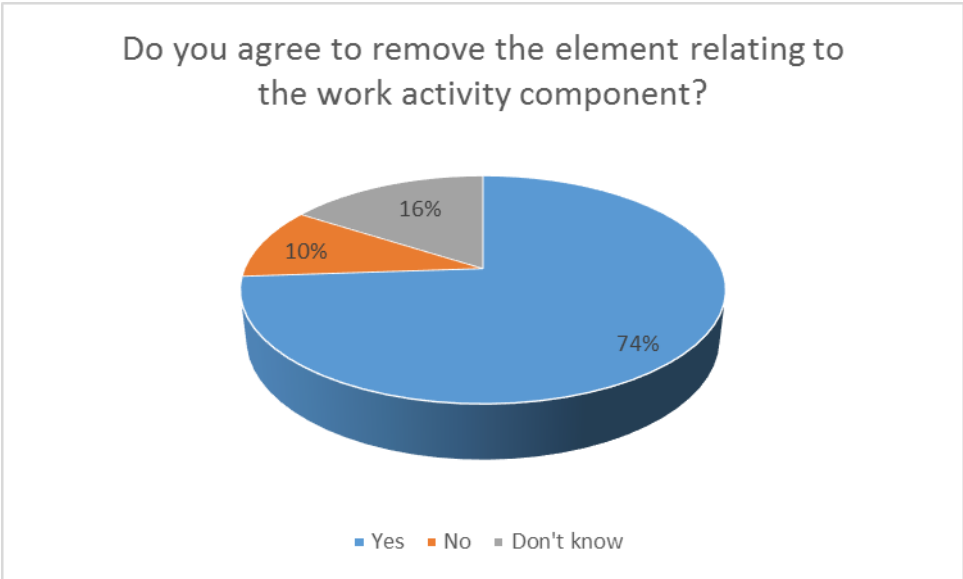


Fig. 12

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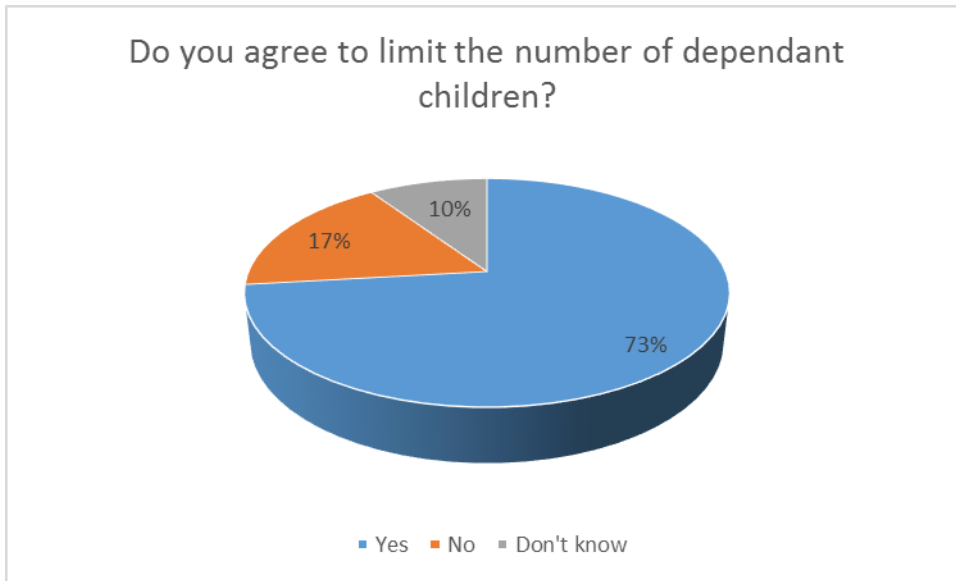


Fig. 13

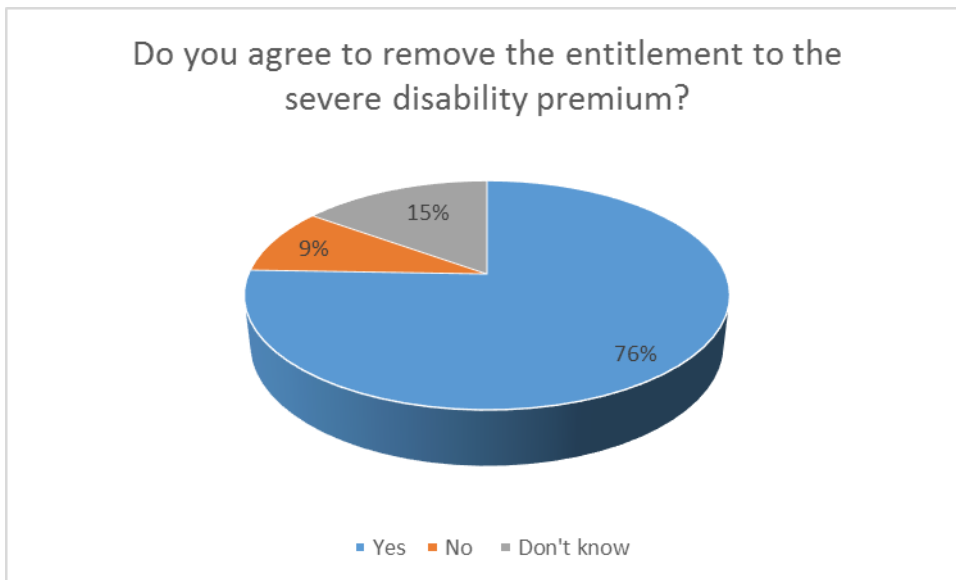


Fig. 14

	Do you agree there should be an increase in the level of council tax?		Do you agree we should find savings from cutting services?	
	Those who wish CTS to remain the same	Those who think CTS should be reduced	Those who wish CTS to remain the same	Those who think CTS should be reduced
Yes	34%	28%	38%	25%
No	53%	68%	46%	69%
Don't know	13%	4%	16%	6%

Fig. 15