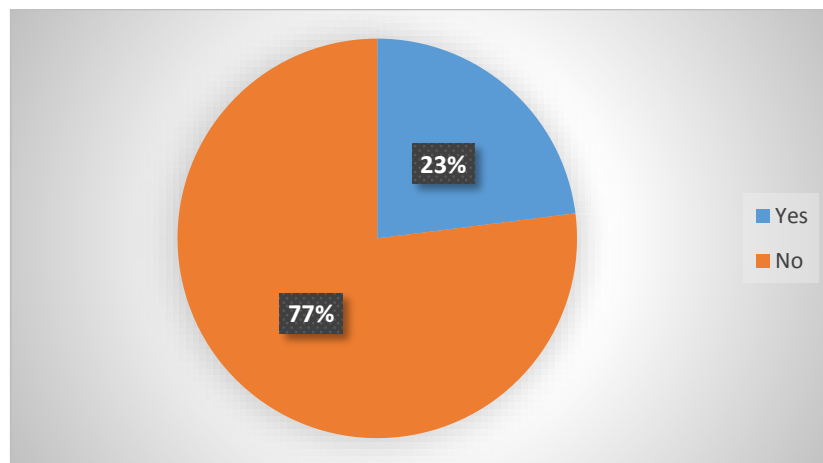


Council Tax Reduction public Consultation response overview

Part 1: Consultation responses

Should the Council keep the current Council Tax Reduction scheme? (Should it continue to administer the scheme as it does at the moment?)

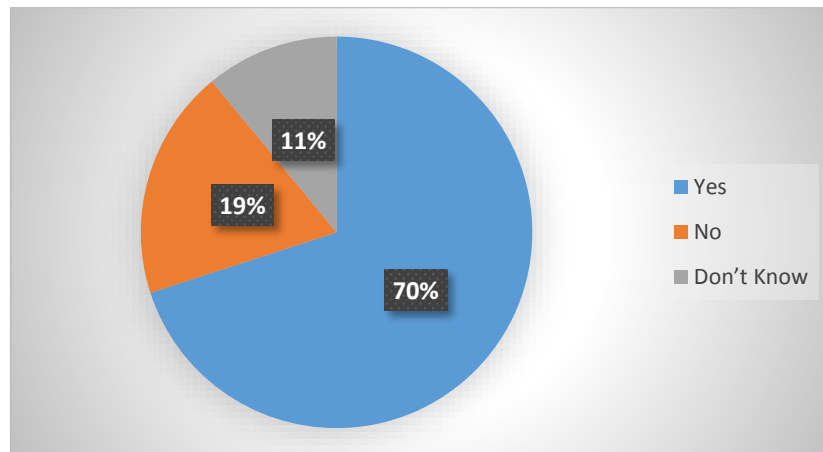


Selected comments:

- Hopefully, giving Local Council's more 'scope' to decide upon Council Tax Reductions by bringing in new and fairer systems of reduction; will significantly save in administration costs, thus allowing Councils to add funding to other projects.
- The current scheme provides too much discount in a number of cases
- Improvements are necessary
- You must find a way to make changes that do not mean people on these low incomes pay more. With food bank use soaring, how could the council justify hitting people with additional charges.
- I think it should change
- I worry about those families of more than 2 children who are on universal credit experiencing hardship as a result
- It is the council's duty to help those that need it
- Anything to simplify the system whilst maintaining fairness is a good thing.
- I do not receive any discount, and I do not want to pay more council tax so others can still get a % off
- The current scheme seems overly time consuming and fundamentally unfair. It is also a disincentive to people finding work / better paid work.

Do you agree that the following changes should be made to the scheme?

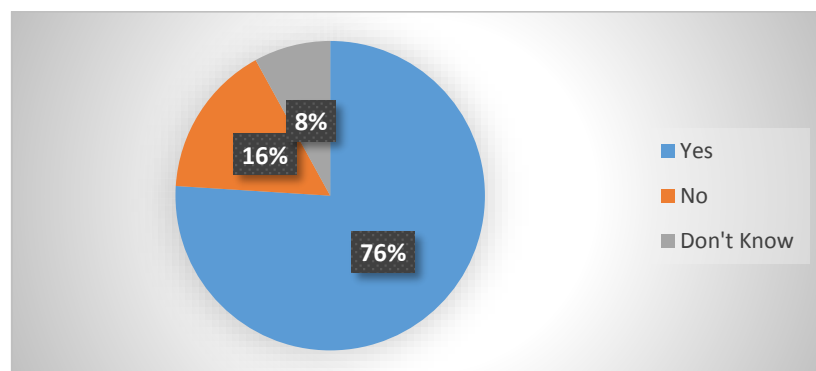
The introduction of an Income Grid scheme to replace the current scheme for all applicants of working age?



Selected comments:

- Consider why individuals can get more income on benefits than a person working full time and yet still get a council tax reduction.
- Those who earn more pay more, pensioners and people with children and depend pay less
- Families with more than 2 children should not be penalised
- None - I fully support the limitation to 2 children. Families who cannot support themselves should not benefit by having more children.
- Scrap it altogether. It is a disincentive to people finding work / better paid work
- I think that it is imperative that there aren't dispensations for people who are claiming asylum or benefits for children that they cannot physically prove are living in the country and biologically their children
- That all income is taken into account, including maintenance, child benefit and disability benefits and increase the income levels for everyone There is no mention of how self employed income would be treated.
- Self employed income should be calculated based on the actual earnings, not a notional value based on 35 x minimum wage like in UC.

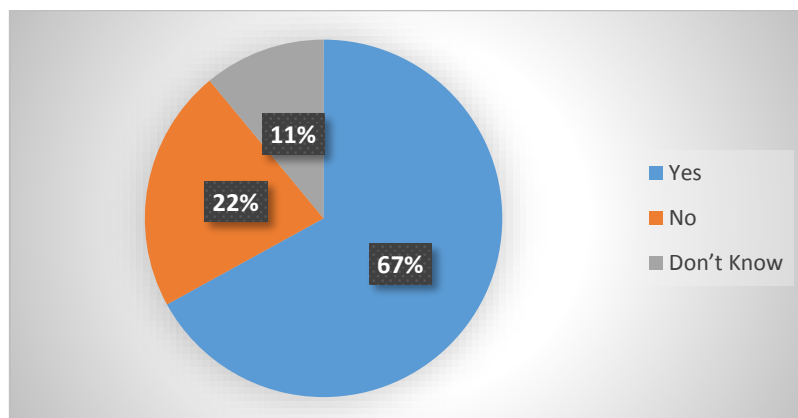
To limit the number of dependant children within the calculation for Council Tax Reduction to a maximum of two for all applicants?



Selected comments:

- Number of dependants should not be restricted.
- Don't disagree
- It shouldn't matter how many children you have. The reduction should be based on the number of adults in the house and whether or not they are on benefits.
- I agree in principle, but this option should be linked to family planning advice.
- Matches with DWP policy
- Yes, if residents need to be assessed for support then they can provided all of their finance situation.

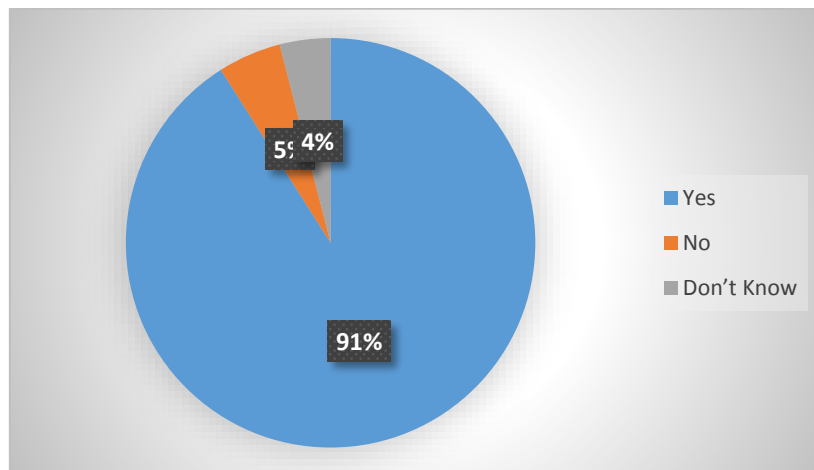
To remove Non-Dependant Deductions from the scheme?



Selected comments:

- Keep this and increase the deduction based on how many non dependants live with them and how much they earn
- If they have adult children living with them and adult children are unemployed council tax should be reduced
- I cannot see the point of making a change to the scheme that may increase its costs.
- I believe that any adults should be contributing, so you should continue to deduct a set amount.
- Adult kids should have to contribute
- Include the income or household contribution of these non dependants in the calculation if they form part of the household.
- Retain and increase it as all adults need to understand they need to contribute to council tax
- Don't disagree
- Retain the existing deduction for non dependant occupants
- The NDD should remain in place as is

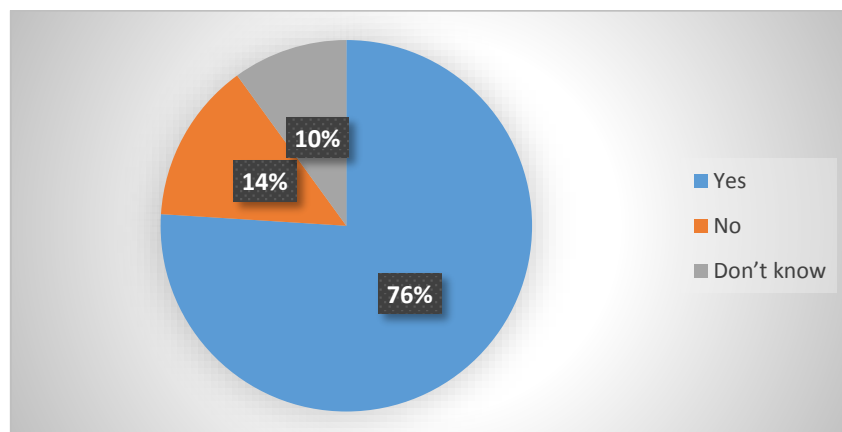
Changing the claiming process for all applicants who receive Universal Credit?



Selected comments:

- Continue separate claim as people may not need this in addition to other benefits. It shouldn't be paid automatically
- Seems sensible
- I feel that anyone claiming benefits, including Personal Independence Payments etc.. should have a discount.
- Don't agree
- Universal Credit has been widely discredited and shown not to work. To continue to pursue a path in the face of this must be considered insane or punitive.

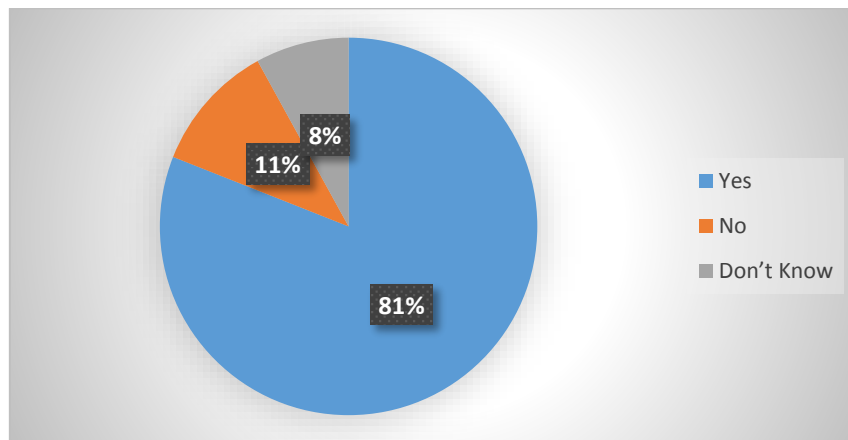
Removing the current earnings disregards and replacing them with a standard £25 disregard irrespective of a person's circumstances?



Selected comments:

- This would harm some of the very poorest people. Not everyone is in a position to work.
- Don't disagree
- None - it is the choice of parents to have larger families and should only do so if they are self-sufficient
- Will penalise working parents, if working, should be higher allowance to promote work ethic
- Make the limit £50-00 and not £25-00
- Agreed - but make the hardship payment process simpler

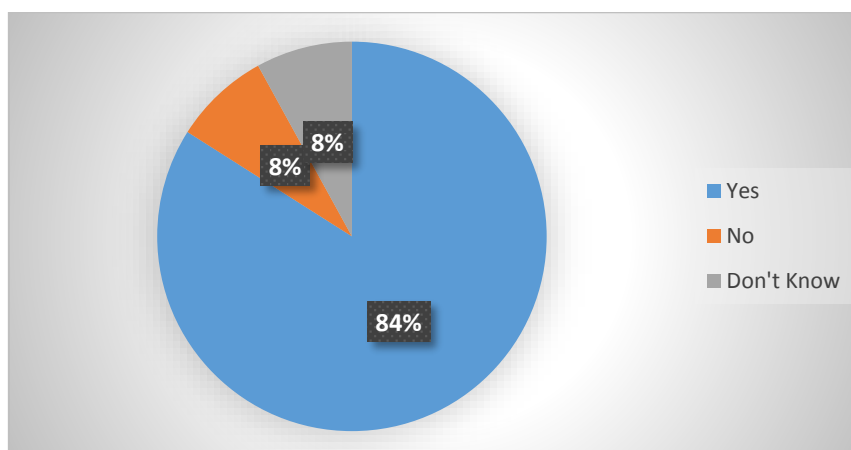
Disregarding a further £40 per week where the applicant, partner or dependant receives Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payment (PIP)?



Selected comments:

- Keep the current disregard for DLA
- Don't disregard these allowances
- Don't disagree
- Make it simple and reduce admin charges
- People who receive these benefits are very important, vulnerable and should be considered as such.
- None - give the support to those that need it - just ensure that those receiving disability payments are eligible for them.
- Why are disabled people given higher allowance then working families with children? Should be equal
- they are already receiving extra income for their disability and should not get extra benefits.

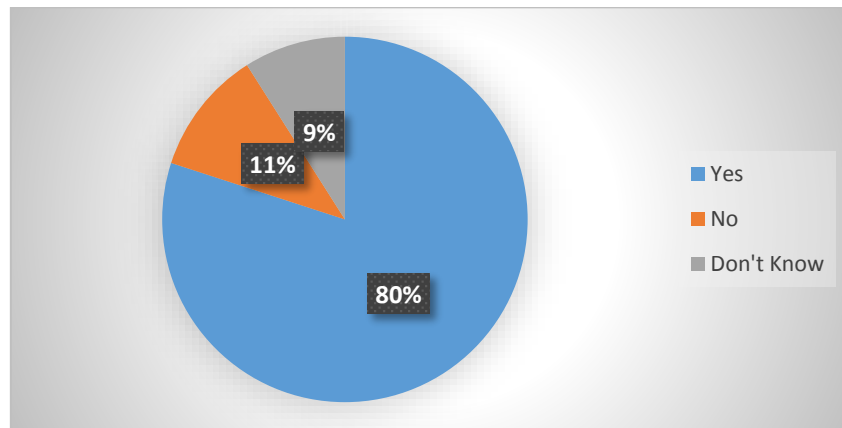
Disregarding Carer's Allowance which is currently taken into account as income?



Selected comments:

- Don't disregard carers allowance
- Seems fair
- Carers' allowance should make no difference to council tax - it's just there to help people who need it.
- Carers are saving local authorities a huge amount of money so totally agree with this
- Do not disagree if it is simpler and better financially
- It's income and should be treated as such

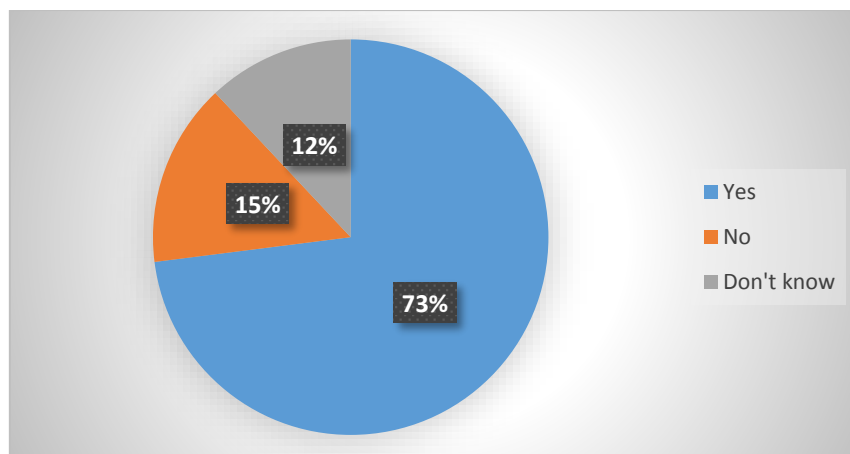
Removing the conditions that prevent certain students from claiming Council Tax Reduction?



Selected comments:

- If they are using services provided by the council and are over 18, they should pay
- I agree
- Students should not be eligible to claim as they can work to support themselves and should not need to claim benefits
- Don't charge those trying to better themselves with education

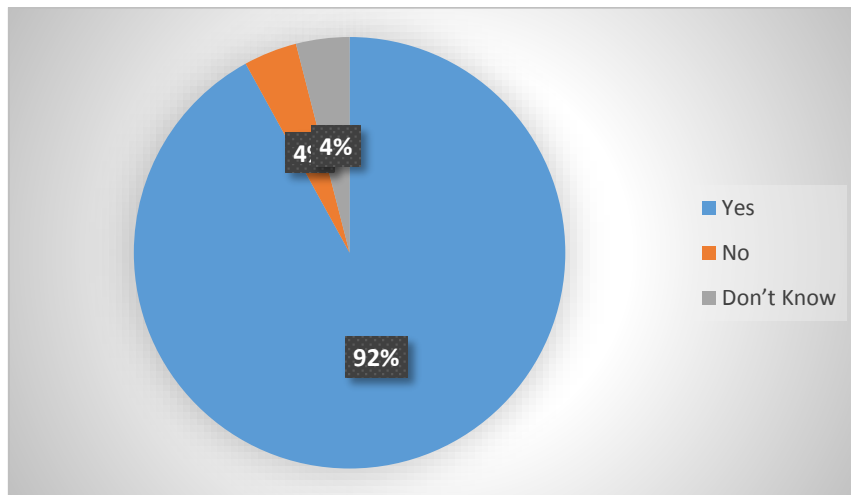
Removing the Extended Payment provision?



Selected comments:

- This makes getting back into work harder.
- Don't disagree
- I agree
- People should be helped back into work. removing this might cause hardship and deter people from changing their circumstances

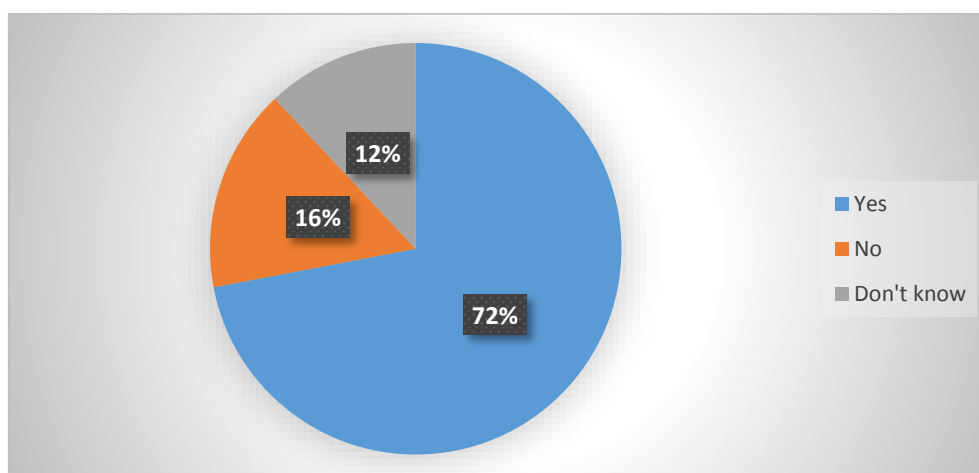
Any change in circumstances which changes Council Tax Reduction entitlement will be made from the date on which the change occurs, (rather than on a weekly basis as at present?)



Selected comments:

- Its only correct if changes are applied on the date of that change
- I agree
- Sort of agree, but will be very confusing for people to keep track of what is correct or not
- Continue with weekly to prevent daily changes or disagreements over dates

Simplifying the capital rules but leaving the capital limit in line with the current scheme (£16,000)?



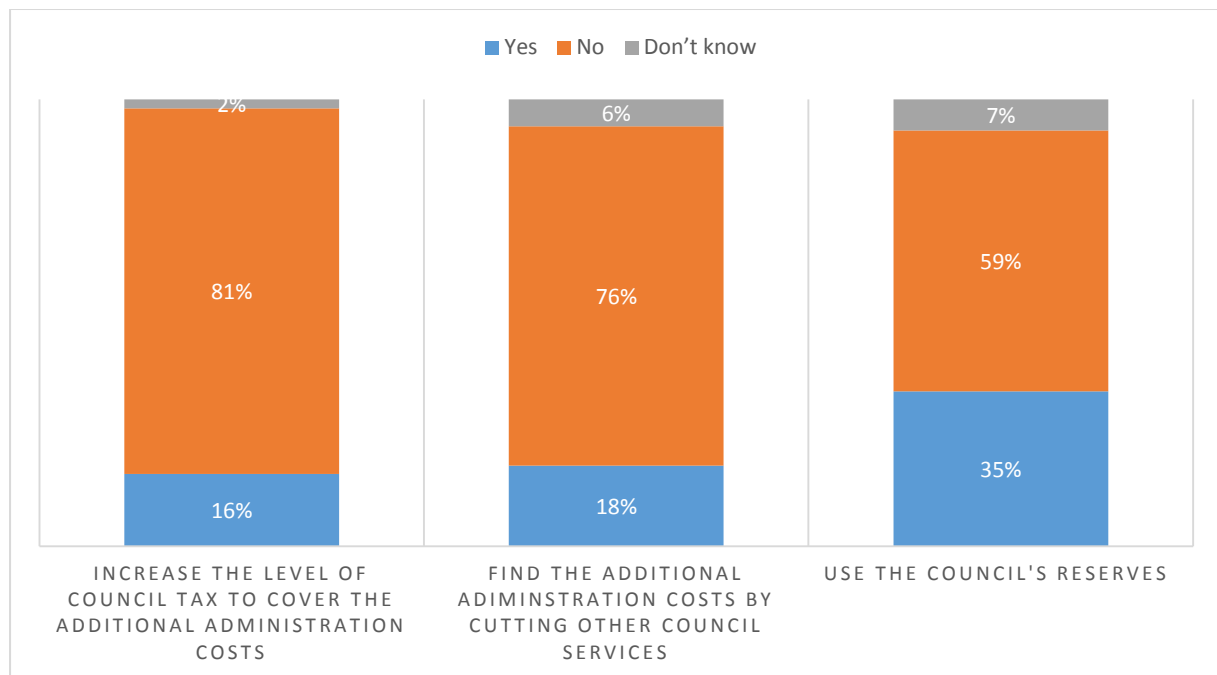
Selected comments:

- I think that the £16000 should be increased to account for inflation each year
- Keep it the same
- Should be 10000
- Anyone who has capital generally has worked for that capital so it shouldn't affect the reduction that person can claim. When someone who has worked hard and needs help they should be top of the list to be helped. Regardless of savings or property owned.

Part 2: Alternative options

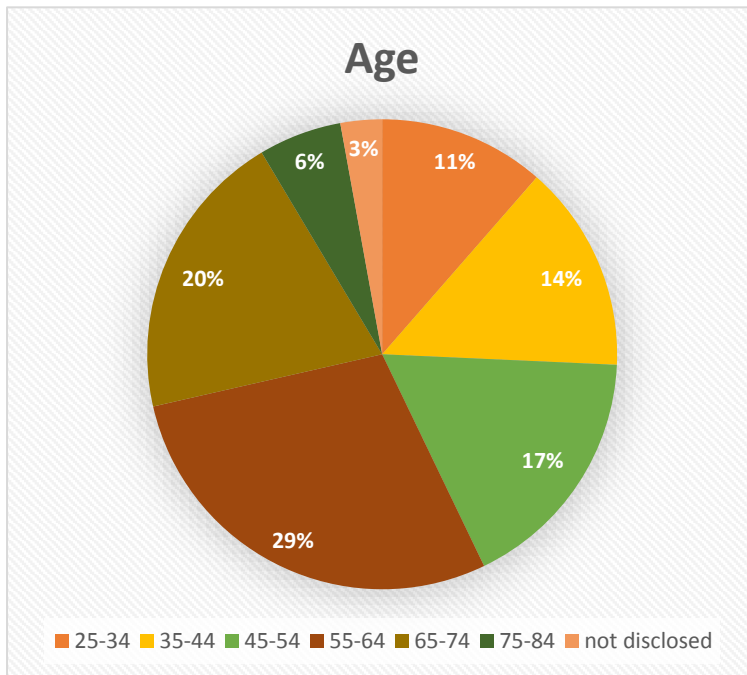
Do you think we should choose any of the following options rather than the proposed changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme? Please select one answer for each source of funding.

- a. **Increase the level of Council Tax to cover the additional administration costs**
- b. **Find the additional administration costs by cutting other Council Services**
- c. **Use the Council's reserves**



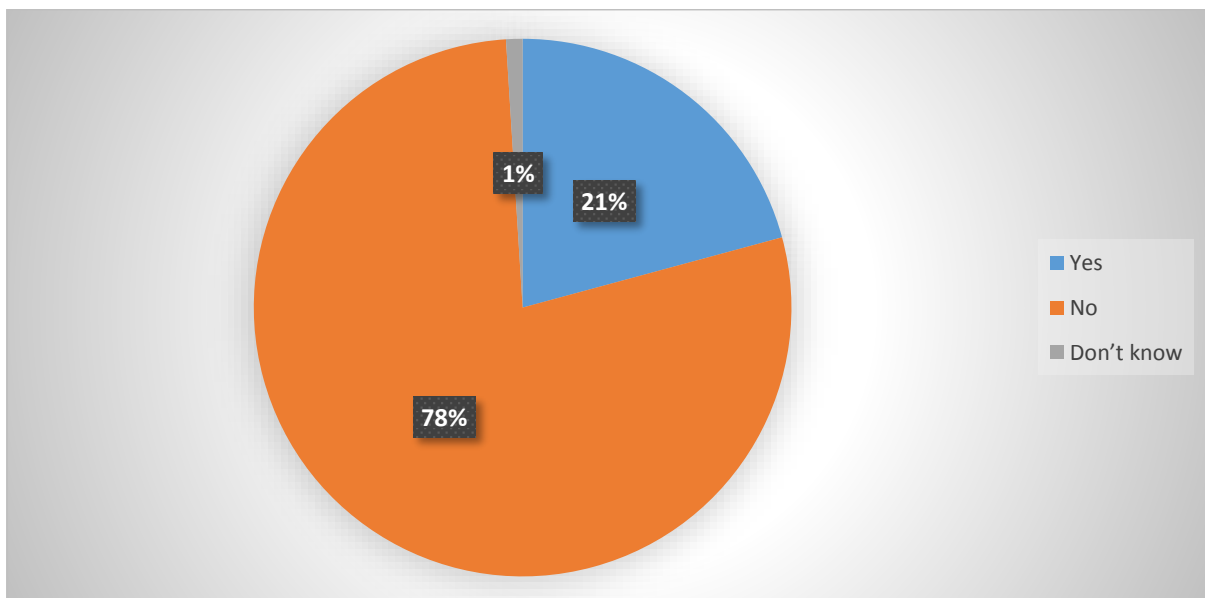
Part 3: Overview of respondents

Age of respondents



| Age | Respondents | Percentage |
|-------------------|-------------|------------|
| 18-24 | 0 | 0% |
| 25-34 | 16 | 11% |
| 35-44 | 20 | 14% |
| 45-54 | 24 | 17% |
| 55-64 | 40 | 29% |
| 65-74 | 28 | 20% |
| 75-84 | 8 | 6% |
| Prefer not to say | 4 | 3% |

Receiving Council Tax Reduction



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|--------------------------------------|
| Part 4: Agency feedback notes |
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Council Tax Reduction Consultation 2019/20

Agency feedback (18.09.18)

Attendees: East Kent Housing, Folkestone Rainbow Centre, DWP

Option 1:

DWP: Seems similar to JSA where you can have cliff edges where income doesn't change much but customers can lose a high % of discount. Can a taper be considered instead?

However, customers on that cliff edge would have been receiving much more up to the point that they fall off than they would have under current system if they were close to nil-entitlement.

Option 2:

All agreed it was a sensible consistent approach

Option 3:

EKH: Positive for claimants but would this cost a lot?

RC: Are costs neutral with saving on admin?

Option 4:

All round support, helps all those that need it.

Option 5:

EKH: Logical and simpler, incentivises work.

Option 6:

RC: Good to see support for disabled continues.

EKH: This would help customers that are vulnerable.

Option 7:

EKH: A pleasant surprise and support in this key area.

Option 8:

No significant comments.

Option 9:

No significant comments.

Option 10:

No significant comments.

Option 11:

No significant comments.