

Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC) - Registrars Service

Analysis of stakeholder consultation

January 2021

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THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF
KENSINGTON
AND CHELSEA

Introduction

Background

The **Registration Services Team** wanted to hear feedback from past and future customers about their views on the registrars service at the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC). The consultation was designed to provide insight into the client experiences of wedding and civil partnership ceremonies, what worked well leading up to and on the day of these events, what could be improved, and to understand the views on the proposal for the service to move to a Council-owned trading company.

Methodology and report

A survey was developed to seek feedback from past, future and prospective clients about the ceremonies service on offer. A total of 275 completed surveys were received by the closing date 10 January 2021.

Where graphs are shown, percentage figures are used. Where percentages do not total a 100 per cent, this may be due to computer rounding, where respondents have chosen not to answer a question or where respondents have been able to select more than one answer.

Appendices

Appendix one contains the data tables of the results whilst appendix two details all the comments made by respondents in relation to the open questions in the survey. This is available as a separate document.

Acknowledgements

The Council would like to thank all past, future and prospective clients that took the time to feedback their views as part of this exercise.

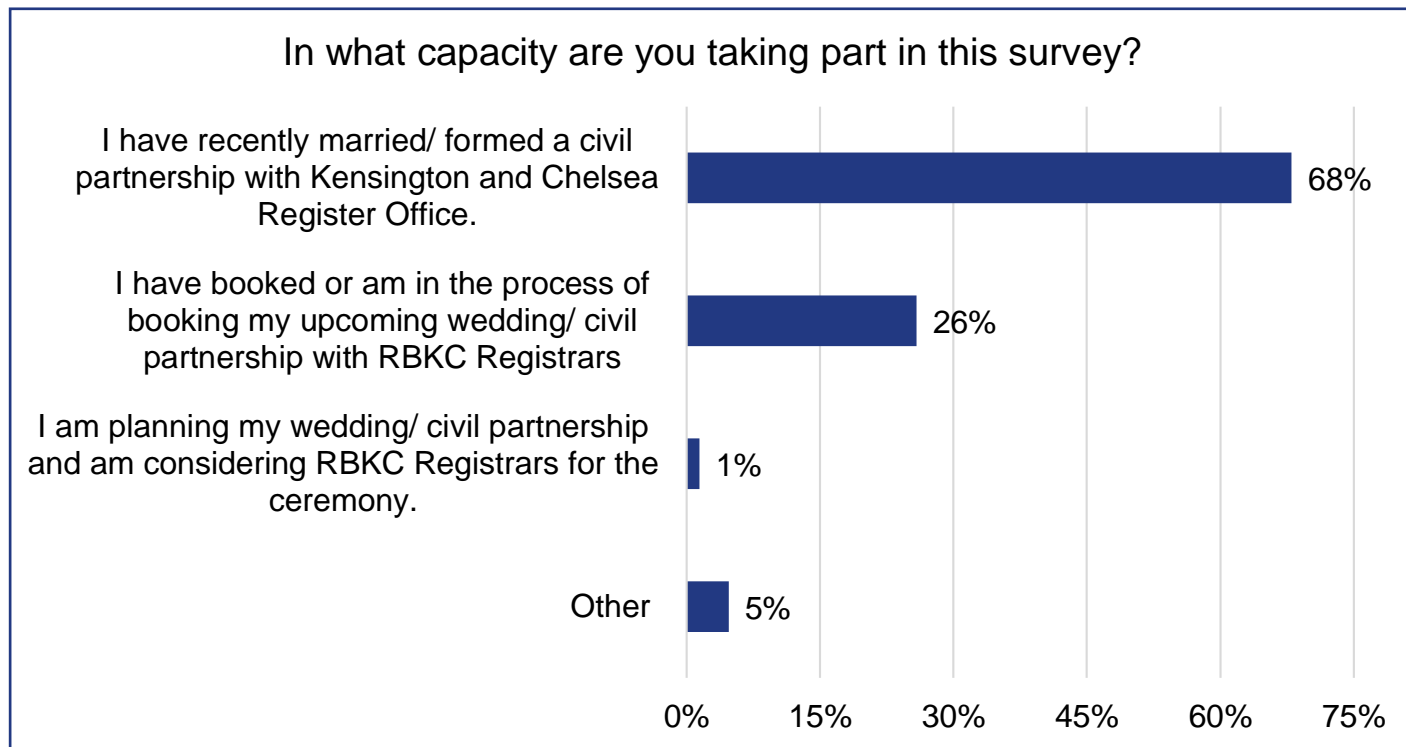
Results at a glance

- **Reasons for choosing RBKC Registrars:** Over half of respondents (55 per cent) chose RBKC Registrars because they *'wanted to have a ceremony in Chelsea Old Town Hall'* whilst 53 per cent chose it because *'It is an iconic location'*.
- **Valued about the RBKC Registrar service:** Nearly two thirds (63 per cent) highlighted that they valued the *'Customer service'* of RBKC Registrars, whilst 60 per cent selected the *'Online booking process'* as something they liked from the Registrar service.
- **Improvements to the RBKC Registrar service:** Just under a quarter (22 per cent) of respondents felt that the *'Communications leading up to the ceremony'* could be improved, whilst a total of 15 per cent felt the *'Cost'* is an area which can be improved.
- **Views on Premium RBKC ceremony offer:** Just under a half (44 per cent) of respondents said that they would be interested in an *'option to live stream the ceremony to guests'* whilst 41 per cent outlined they would be interested in *'being able to meet and choose the registrar ahead of the day'*.
- **Proposal to move to a Council-owned trading company:** A total of 16 per cent of respondents selected *'Yes'* when asked whether they would support a move to a Council-owned trading company, whilst just under a quarter (24 per cent) of respondents selected *'No'*. Over half (58 per cent) of respondents selected *'Don't know'* when asked about whether RBKC Registrars should move to a Council-owned trading company.

Consultation findings: Capacity of respondent

Respondents were asked in what capacity they were responding to the survey in:

- Over two thirds (68 per cent) were responding as individuals who had ***'recently married/formed a civil partnership with Kensington and Chelsea Register Office'***
- Just over a quarter (26 per cent) responded as individuals who had ***'booked or are in the process of booking an upcoming wedding/civil partnership with RBKC Registrars'***

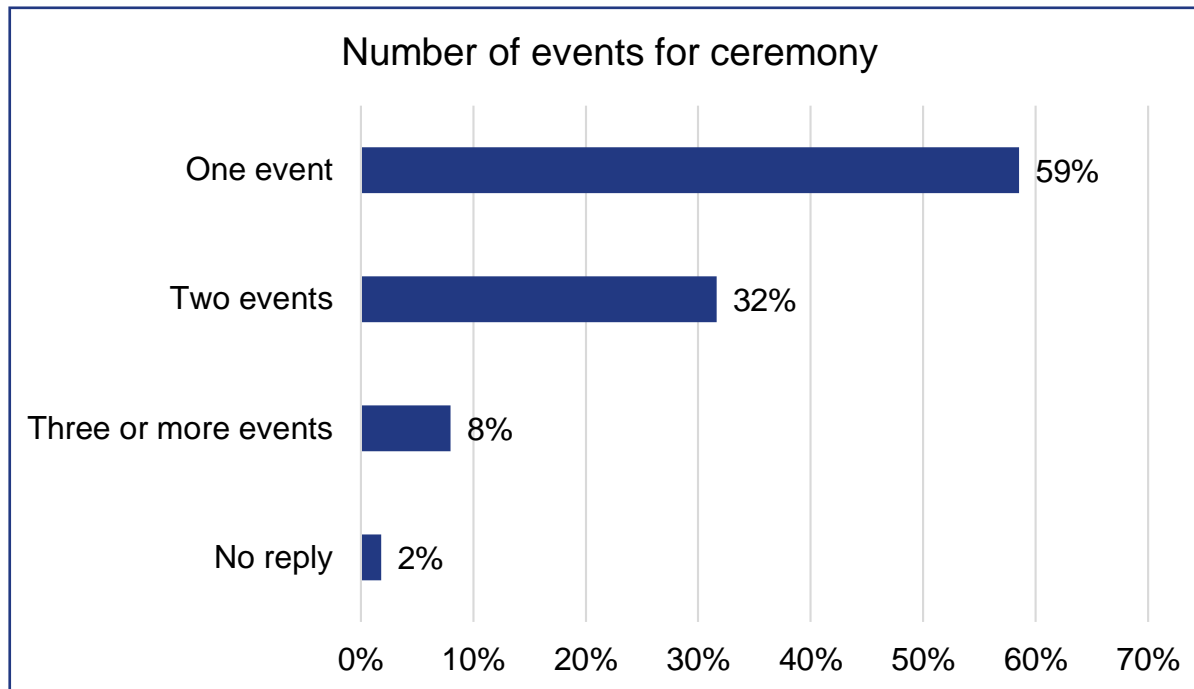


Base: All responses (275)

Consultation findings: Number of ceremony events

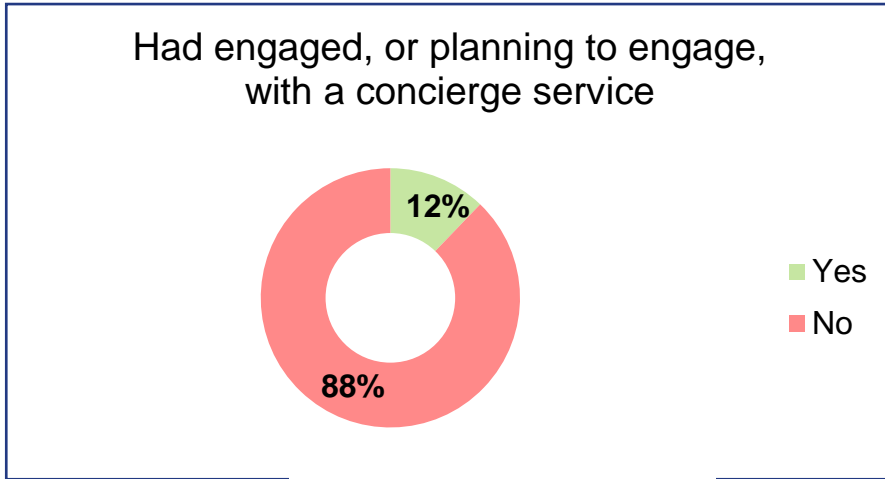
Respondents were asked how many separate events they had, or are planning to have, for their ceremony (for example, holding a legal ceremony, as well as a religious ceremony; excludes honeymoon):

- Over half (59 per cent) of respondents outlined that they had, or have planned to have , **'One event'** for their ceremony.
- Just under a third (32 per cent) of respondents mentioned that they had, or have planned to have, **'Two events'** as part of their ceremony.
- Whilst a total of eight per cent of respondents selected **'Three or more events'** as part of their ceremony.



Base: All responses (275)

Consultation findings: Engaging with concierge service



Base: All responses (275)

Respondents were asked if they had, or were planning to, engage with a concierge service as part of their ceremony:

- The majority (88 per cent) of respondents outlined that they had not, or were not planning to, engage with a concierge service as part of their ceremony.
- Whilst a total of 12 per cent outlined that they had, or have planned to, engage with a concierge service.

“Wedding abroad, so it's easier to get help from a local wedding planner”

Organising a wedding in a different country

“For professional advice and to take away some of the logistical burden”

Expertise required to set up a large event

“To help plan the reception and ceremonial ceremony abroad.”

Organising a wedding in a different country

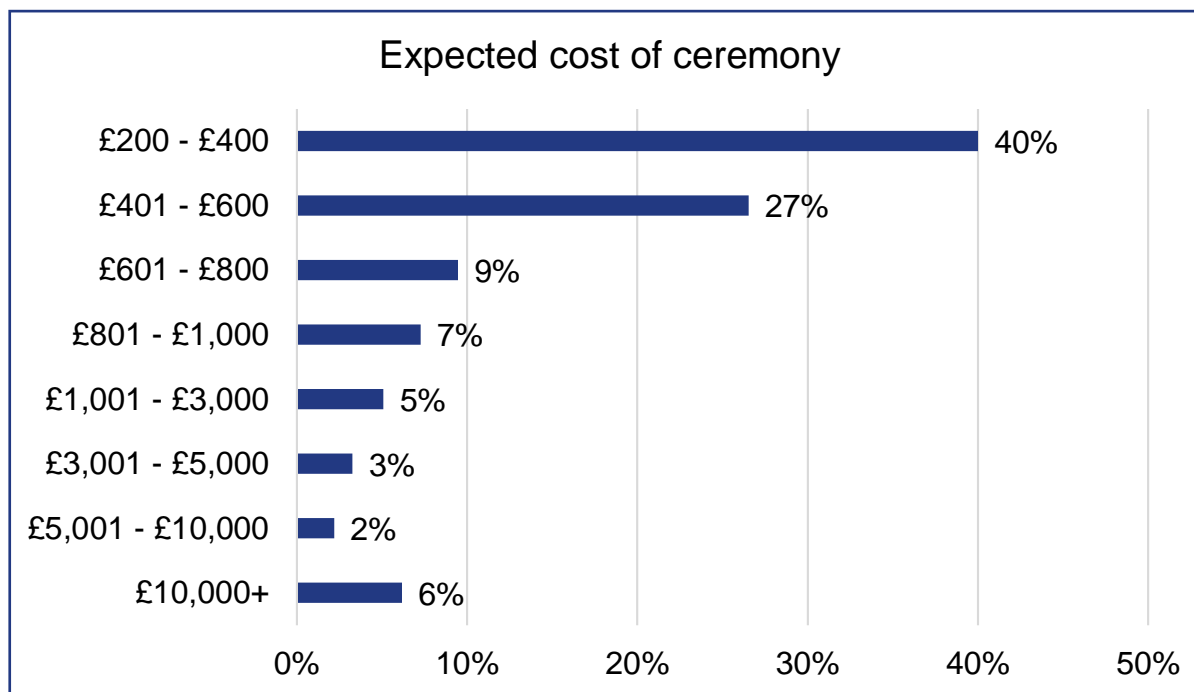
Those who responded ‘Yes’ to the above, were then asked the reasons for doing so. These have been themed in the table below, with some comments on the left.

Themes	Count
Organising a wedding in a different country	17
Expertise required to set up a large event	12

Consultation findings: Expectations for ceremony

Respondents were asked how much they expected, or expect, to pay for their ceremony:

- A total of 40 per cent of respondents expected, or expect, to pay '**£200 - £400**'
- Just over a quarter (25 per cent) of respondents expected, or expect, to pay '**£401 - £600**'
- A total of six per cent of respondents expected, or expect, to pay over '**£10,000**'

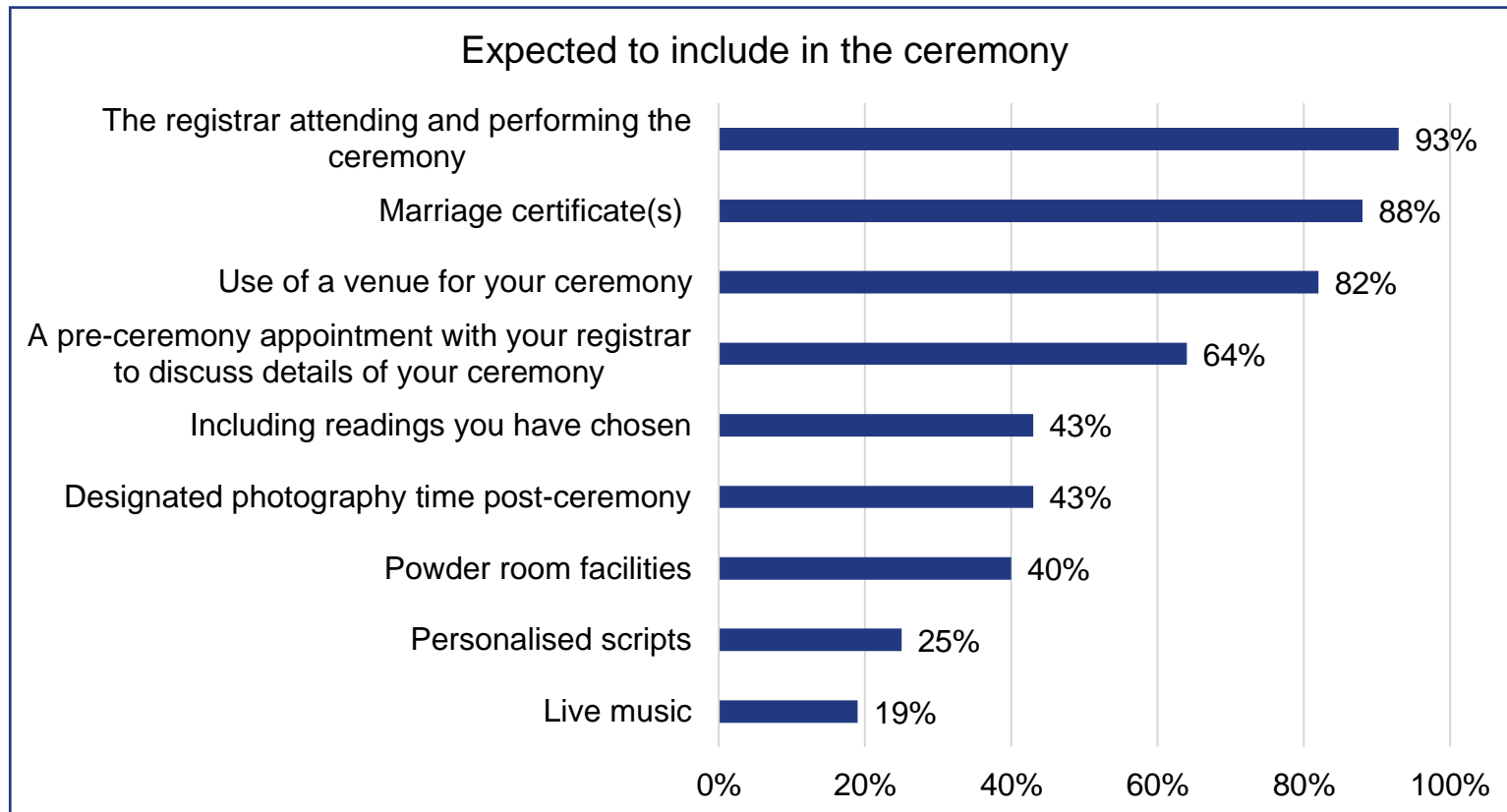


Base: All responses (275)

Consultation findings: Expectations for ceremony

Respondents were asked, based on the price they expected to pay, what they expected, or expect, to be included in their ceremony. Respondents were asked to select **all options that apply**:

- A significant majority of (92 per cent) respondents outlined that they expected, or expect, **'The registrar to attend and perform the ceremony'** whilst 88 per cent outlined that they expected **'Marriage certificates'** to be included as part of the ceremony.
- A quarter (25 per cent) of respondents expected, or expect, **'Personalised scripts'** to be included, whilst just under a fifth (19 per cent) of respondents expected **'Live music'** to be included in their ceremony.

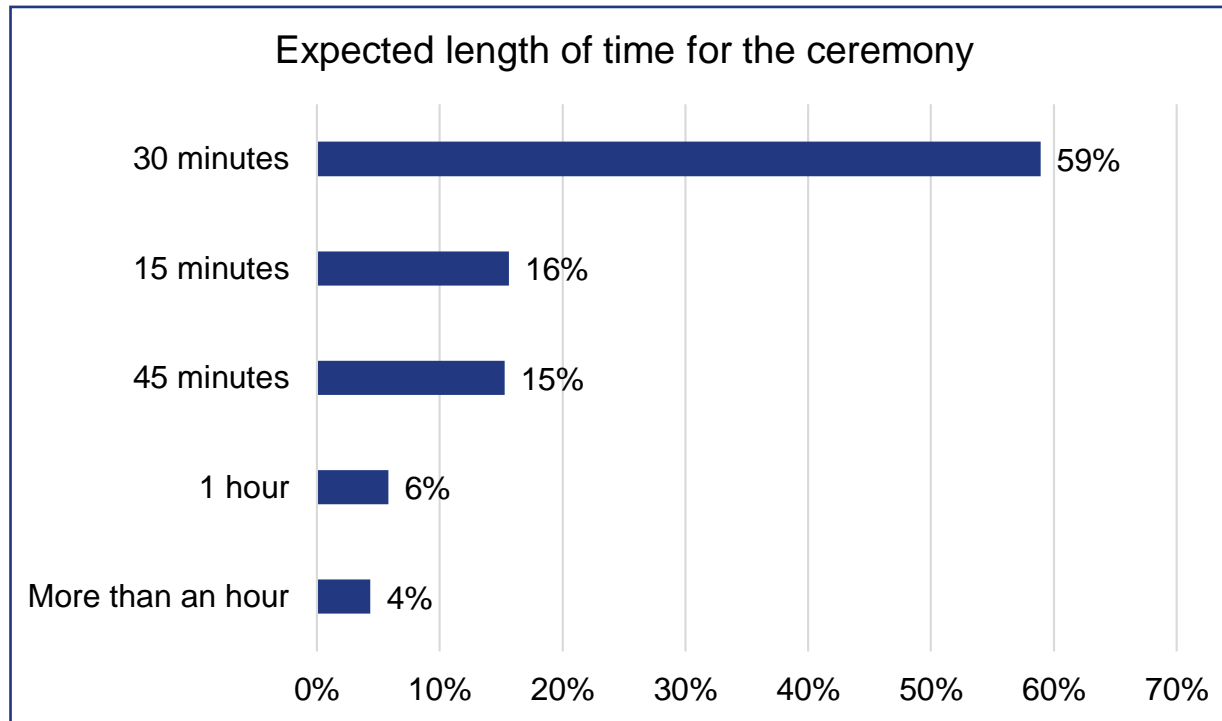


Base: All responses (275)

Consultation findings: Expectations for ceremony

Respondents were asked, based on the price they expected to pay, how long they reasonably expected, or expect, the ceremony to last for:

- Over half (59 per cent) of respondents outlined that they reasonably expected, or expect, the ceremony to last **'30 minutes'**
- A total of 16 per cent of respondents outlined that they reasonably expected, or expect, the ceremony to last **'15 minutes'**, whilst a total of 15 per cent of respondents outlined that they reasonably expected, or expect, the ceremony to last **'45 minutes'**

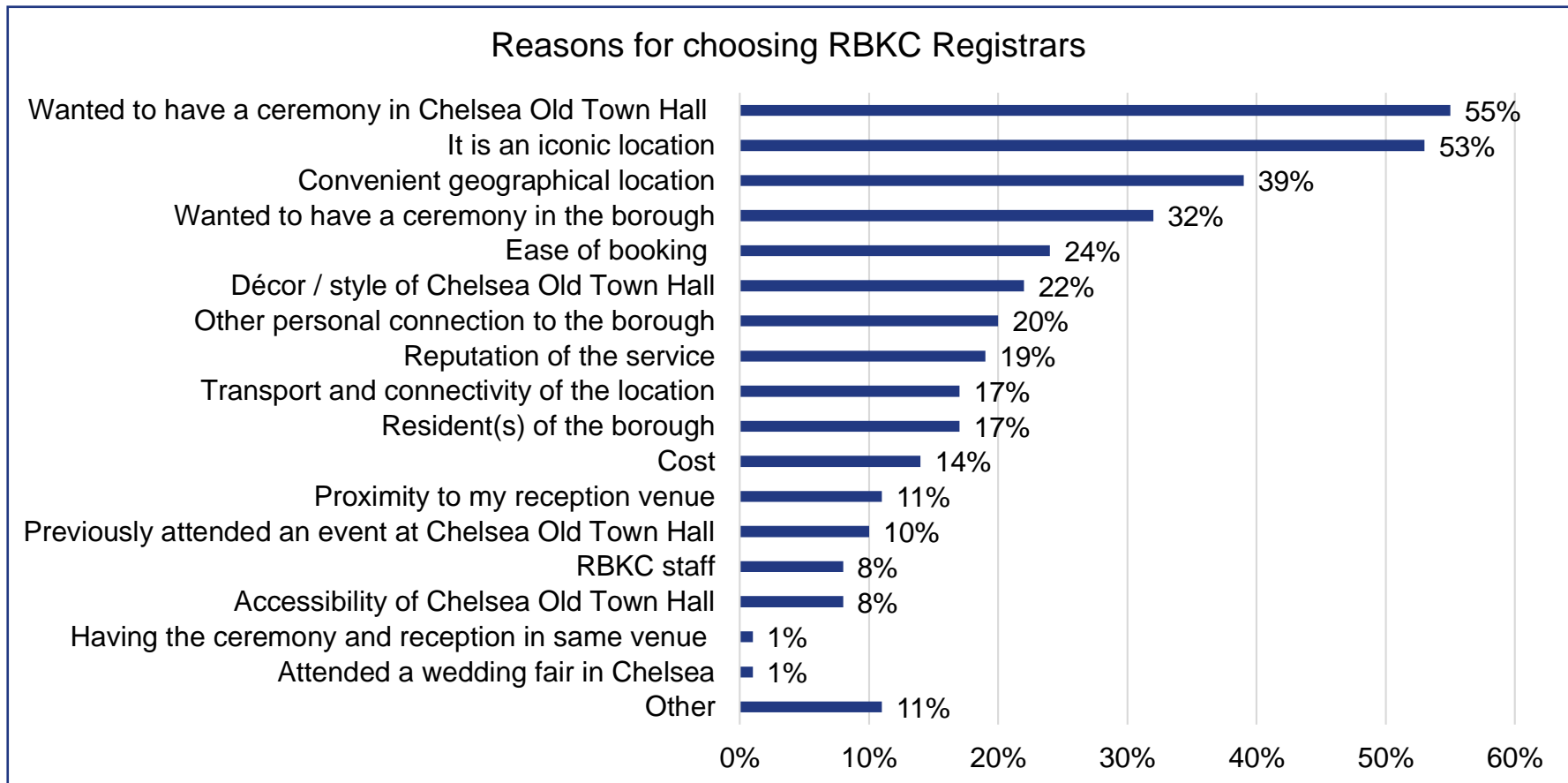


Base: All responses (275)

Consultation findings: Reasons for choosing RBKC Registrars

Respondents were asked why they chose, or were thinking of choosing, to have their ceremony with RBKC Registrars. Respondents were asked to select **all options that apply**.

- Over half of respondents (55 per cent) chose RBKC Registrars because they **'wanted to have a ceremony in Chelsea Old Town Hall'** whilst 53 per cent chose it because **'It is an iconic location'**.
- Just under a quarter (24 per cent) of respondents chose RBKC Registrars due to the **'Ease of booking'** whilst 19 per cent chose it because of the **'Reputation of the service'**.



Base: All responses (275)

Consultation findings: Choosing RBKC Registrars – Other Responses

Respondents that indicated an ‘other reason’ for selecting RBKC Registrars were asked to explain their reasons. These have been themed and the themes are summarised in the table below. Examples of comments made can be seen below, with the full list of themes and comments made can be found in appendix two.

Theme	Count
Convenience of the venue (location, dates)	9
The iconic venue	7
A member of family married there	4
Other	4

“COVID scuppered most of our plans- we wanted a convenient location to get married, and will plan a party for when we can have our friends and family all together.”

Convenience of the venue

“My now-husband and I had walked past the building a few times and he had remarked about how pretty the building was. When I proposed I did it by showing him the website and asking ‘should we book it’.”

The iconic venue



“My mum married at Chelsea Town Hall, twice! Feels very personal to me”

A member of family married there

“Husband to be Born in Chelsea and we lived in Pimlico as teenagers, and used to watch the ceremonies come outside and say ‘that will be us one day’ 26 years later we are!”

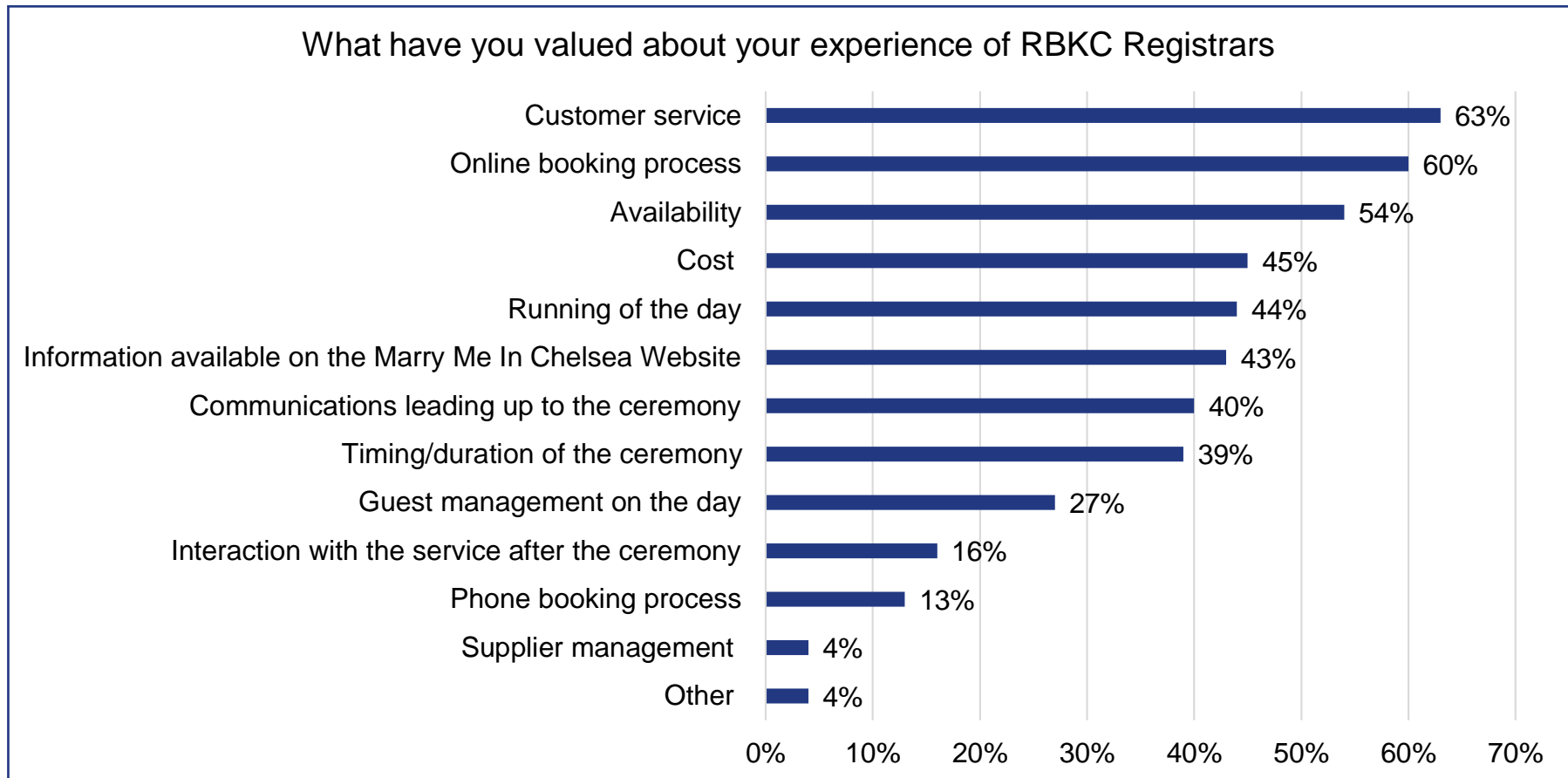
Other

Consultation findings: Valued experience of RBKC Registrars

Registrars

Respondents were asked what they valued about their experience with RBKC Registrars. Respondents were asked to select **all options that apply**:

- Nearly two thirds (63 per cent) highlighted that they valued the **'Customer service'** of RBKC Registrars, whilst 60 per cent selected the **'Online booking process'** as something they liked from the Registrar service.
- Just under half (45 per cent) selected **'Cost'** when asked what they valued about the service, whilst 40 per cent outlined that they valued the **'Communications leading up to the ceremony'**



Base: All responses (275)

Consultation findings: Valued experience of RBKC Registrars – Other Responses

Respondents that indicated an 'other reason' for valuing the RBKC Registrars service were asked to explain these comments. These have been themed and the themes are summarised in the table below. Examples of comments made can be seen below, with the full list of themes and comments made can be found in appendix two.

Theme	Count
Excellent staff and registrars	22
Disorganised leading up to the event	2
Other	4

“The staff on the day were absolutely marvellous - completely charming, friendly, enthusiastic and so helpful.”

Excellent staff and registrars

“The service we received was phenomenal. We rearranged at very short notice to get ahead of the COVID lockdown, and the two members of staff stayed late to accommodate us.”

Excellent staff and registrars



“I felt that the booking service was a little disorganised. I paid for the venue but I was called up and asked for payment weeks after I had paid, I didn't mind but it does worry me about my upcoming marriage and how smoothly it will run.”

Disorganised leading up to the event

“It was a perfect day!”

Other

Consultation findings: Choosing RBKC Registrars – Comments

Respondents were also asked to outline any additional comments about what they liked about RBKC Registrars ceremony offer. These have been themed and the themes are summarised in the table below. Examples of comments made can be seen below, with the full list of themes and comments made can be found in appendix two.

Theme	Count
Excellent and helpful registrars/staff supporting throughout	56
Website was informative and helpful	11
An easy and enjoyable experience	8
The venue	7

“I thought the celebrant was fabulous and the location was excellent as always. It was easy to book and felt that we were given all the information that we needed right away- which took the stress out of the event.”

“Beautiful building and history & cultural significance.”

The venue



“I really enjoyed the open day and having the opportunity to see the venue and talk through the ceremony.”

An easy and enjoyable experience

Excellent and helpful registrars/staff supporting throughout

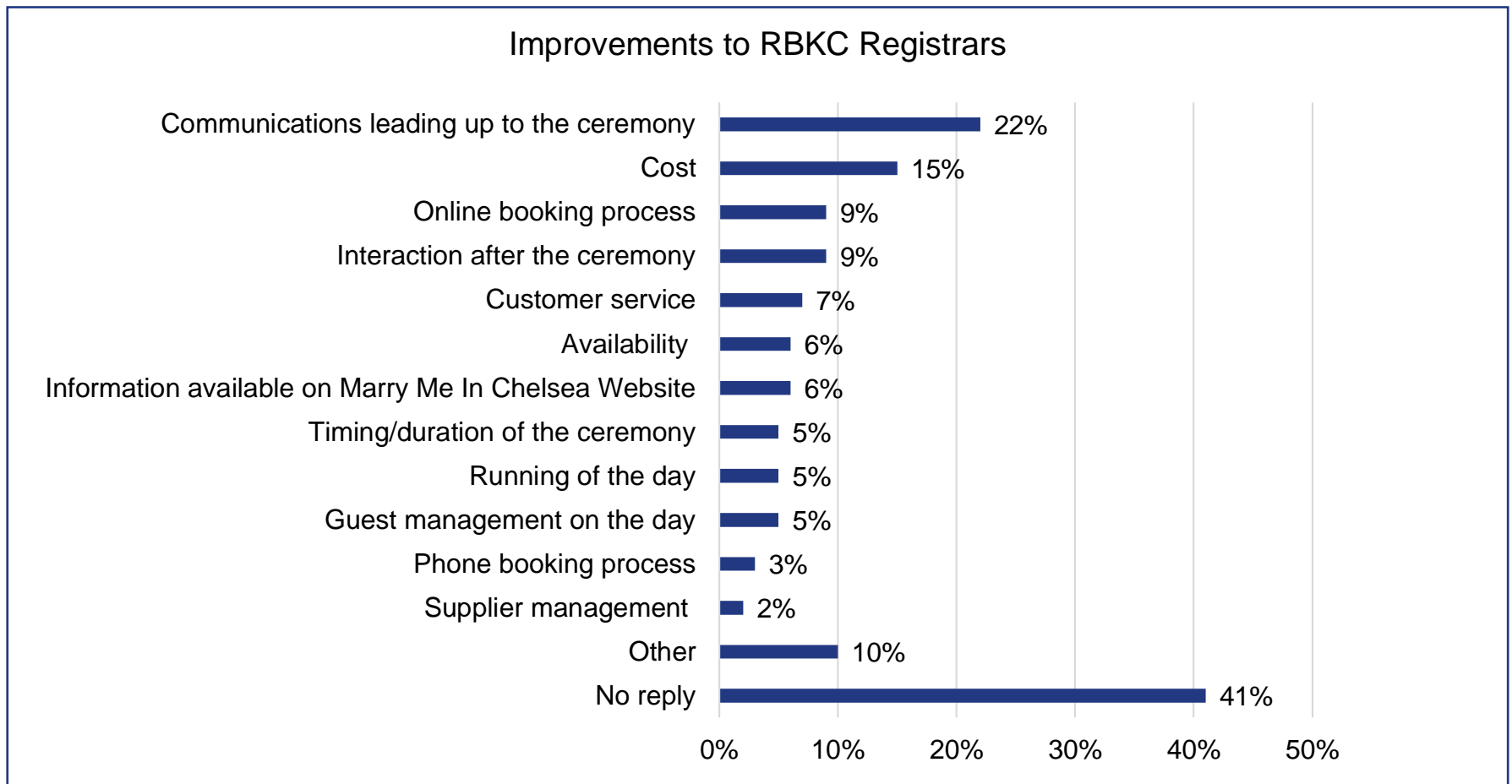
“The website is extremely informative and provides information on many considerations for those planning a wedding, outside of just the ceremony.”

Website was informative and helpful

Consultation findings: Improving RBKC Registrars

Respondents were asked to outline what they felt could be improved as part of the RBKC Registrars ceremony offer. Respondents were asked to select **all options that apply**.

- A total of 41 per cent of respondents **'did not reply'** to this question.
- Just under a quarter (22 per cent) of respondents felt that the **'Communications leading up to the ceremony'** could be improved, whilst a total of 15 per cent felt the **'Cost'** is area which can be improved.



Base: All responses (275)

Consultation findings: Improving RBKC Registrars – Other Responses

Respondents that indicated an 'other reason' for improvements to the RBKC Registrars were asked to explain their reasons. These have been themed and the themes are summarised in the table below. Examples of comments made can be seen below, with the full list of themes and comments made can be found in appendix two.

Theme	Count
No improvements required	24
More choices (e.g. room times, photography options)	11
Improvement of communication	10
COVID-19 caused issues	4
Other	3

“I have been very impressed with everything so far, so can't think of any improvements at present.”

No improvements required

“I wish there was a small standard photo package option included with the registrar. Just a couple photos for people who aren't able to hire a separate photographer.”

More choices (e.g. room times, photography options)



“The online booking system works (it is just probably not state of the art). Communication via email could be improved (what is happening and when).”

Improvement of communication

“Due to corona restrictions we had no preparation beforehand and much of the order of the ceremony was a total mystery to us. There was no rehearsal for the music so this went wrong on the day. The ceremony was vastly reduced but the price was not.”

COVID-19 caused issues

Consultation findings: Improving RBKC Registrars – Comments

Respondents were also asked to outline any additional comments about what they thought could be improved about RBKC Registrars ceremony offer. These have been themed and the themes are summarised in the table below. Examples of comments made can be seen below, with the full list of themes and comments made can be found in appendix two.

Theme	Count
Improved communication	26
No change required	23
More flexibility around timings and venue	14
Expensive cost for reduced ceremony	8
Making the booking process simpler	5
Other	5

“We were not welcomed at all, were confused about where to go or who to check in with on arrival. The security personnel gave us incorrect information per mask/COVID guidelines, causing additional stress on the day.”

Improved communication

“Nothing at all. Quick and efficient and wonderful experience.”

No change required

“I found the online booking process a challenge and felt that the website could be improved in this area. I had to call the registry office as I struggled to book the date I wanted online.”

Making the booking process simpler



“I think it was a little expensive for a limited service during COVID where we were limited in the amount of people who could attend. Maybe there should have been a COVID discount due to the fact that we couldn't have as full of a service as usual.”

Expensive cost for reduced ceremony

“Maybe a bit longer on the steps to have our photos would've been great.”

More flexibility around timings and venue

Consultation findings: RBKC Registrars Offer – General Comments

Respondents were asked to outline any general comments they had about the RBKC Registrars offer. These have been themed and the themes are summarised in the table below. Examples of comments made can be seen below, with the full list of themes and comments made can be found in appendix two.

Theme	Count
Nothing to change	12
Staff were excellent	11
More flexible options (e.g. photography, flowers, music)	11
More information leading up to the event	6
Other	7

“We wouldn’t change a thing about our ceremony it was perfect even during a pandemic!”

Nothing to change

“Nothing to add other than it was the most memorable, mad and marvellous day sneaking our wedding in just prior to the 2nd lockdown. We had the best time, the registrars were delightful and so much fun! I didn’t feel stressed at all - it was thoroughly enjoyable the whole way through. Can’t recommend enough.”

Staff were excellent



“It would have been nice to have a decorations package available for the room. We didn’t want to deal with other suppliers and if Chelsea Old Town Hall offered, we would have purchased. Easy options like fresh flowers and candles.”

More flexible options

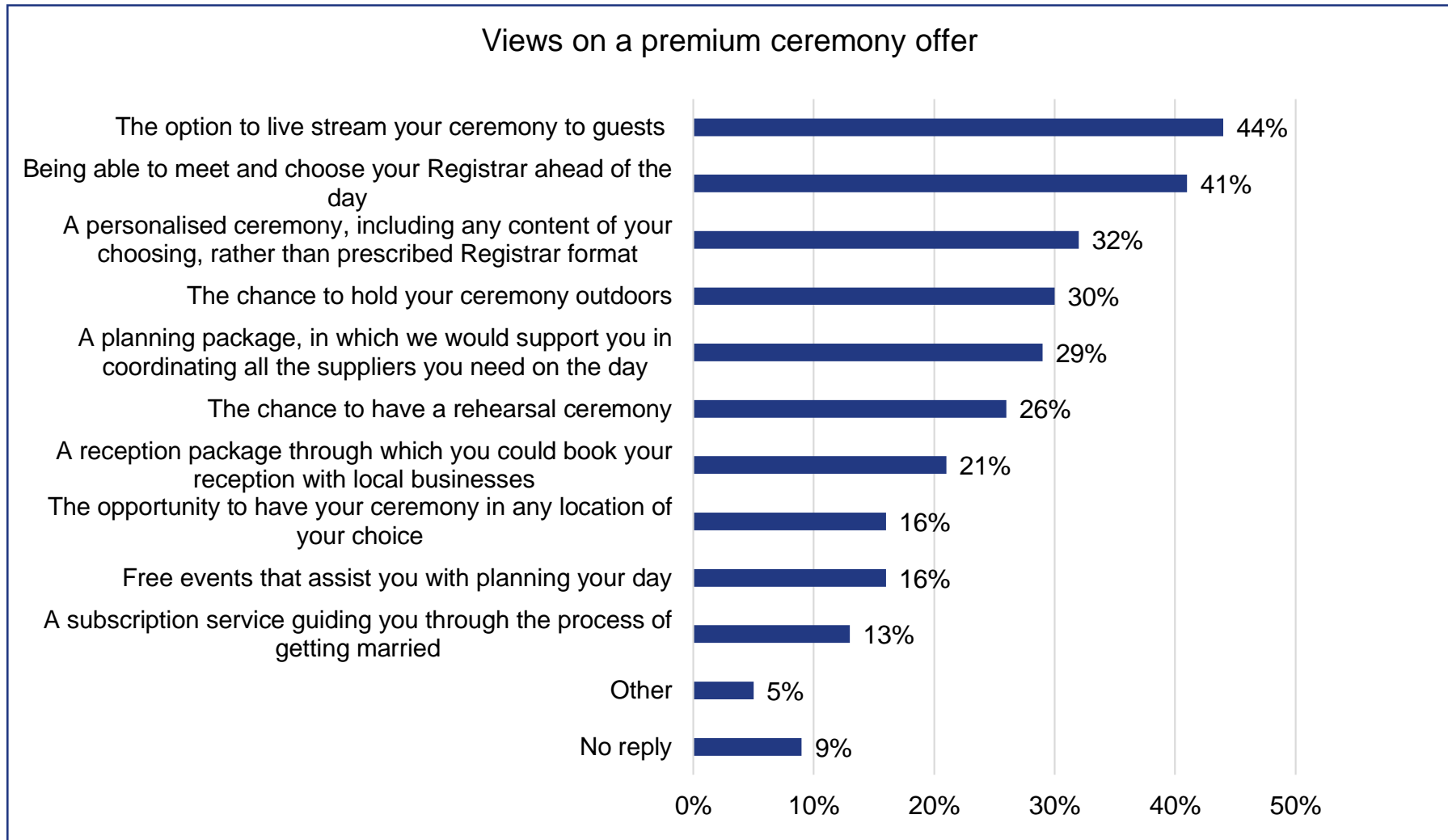
“I think it would be a good idea to give out more information on how the ceremony will run.”

More information leading up to the event

Consultation findings: Premium RBKC Ceremony Service

Respondents were asked to outline what additional options they would be interested in as part of a Premium Ceremony offer. Respondents were asked to select **all options that apply**:

- Just under a half (44 per cent) of respondents said that they would be interested in an **'option to live stream the ceremony to guests'** whilst 41 per cent outlined they would be interested in **'being able to meet and choose the registrar ahead of the day'**.



Base: All responses (275)

Consultation findings: Premium RBKC Ceremony Service

– Other Responses

Respondents that indicated an 'other reason' for additional options to be included in a premium RBKC Registrars were asked to explain their reasons. These have been themed and the themes are summarised in the table below. Examples of comments made can be seen below, with the full list of themes and comments made can be found in appendix two.

Theme	Count
Happy with the service offered	5
Rehearsal service	4
Venue organise streaming of event	3
Other	3
Happy with a simple event	3
Decorations, photography and flowers options	3
Pre-ceremony drinks and refreshments package	2

“For us the ceremony and the whole process met our needs perfectly.”

Happy with the service offered

“A run through would be nice as then nothings a surprise and practiced your entrance and heard the service so its not all new and you have more time to take it all in.”

Rehearsal service



“We used ZOOM but it would be one less thing to worry about if the venue to take charge of that.”

Venue organise streaming of event

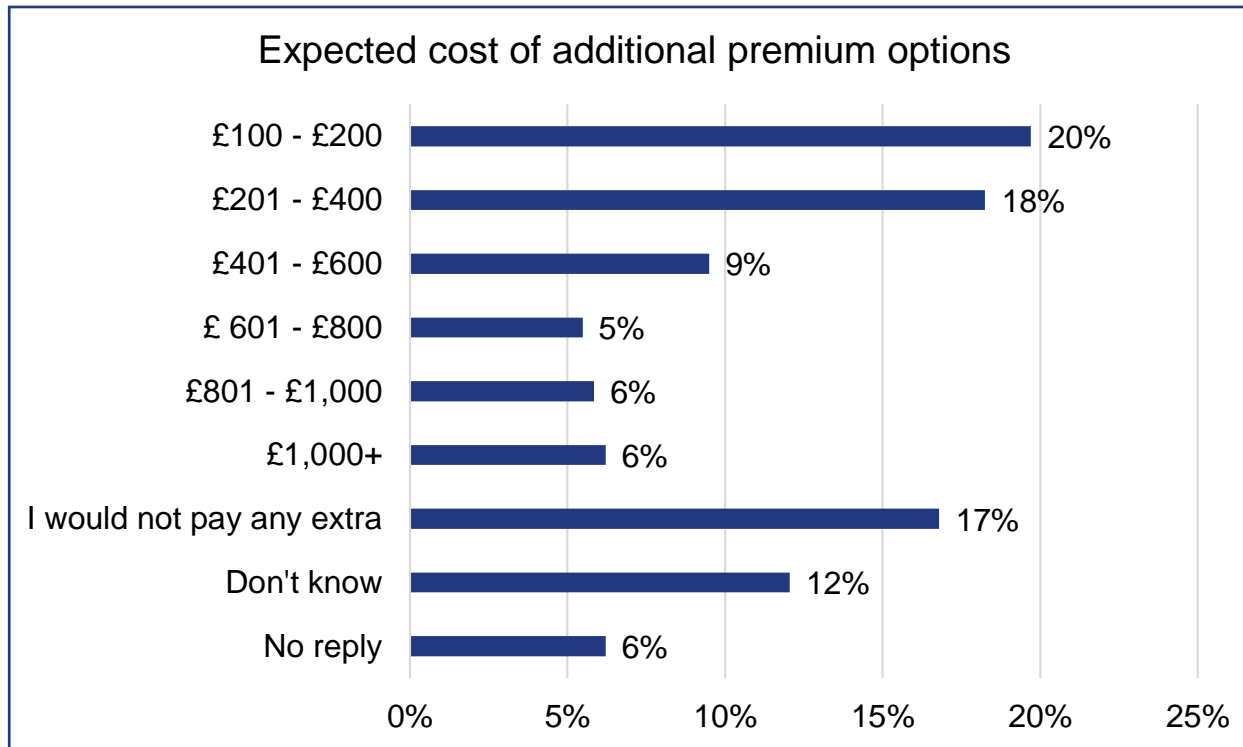
“I think offering a flower, photographer, music package is a great idea. I didn't realise we could get married in other locations out with Chelsea town hall either! Helpful to have more full guide on restaurants that offer private dining etc too”

Decorations, photography and flowers options

Consultation findings: Premium RBKC Ceremony Service

Respondents were asked, depending on the options they selected about what they would like to be included in a premium service, how much they would be willing to pay in addition to any standard fees:

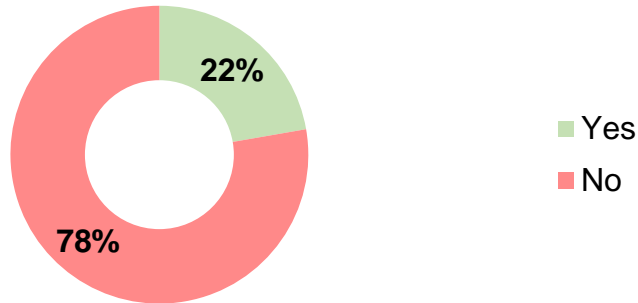
- A fifth (20 per cent) of respondents outlined that they would pay '**£100 - £200**' for extra premium options, whilst a total of 18 per cent of respondents said they would pay between '**£201 - £400**'.
- A total of 17 per cent of respondents outlined that they '**Would not pay any extra**' for the extra premium options.



Base: All responses (275)

Consultation findings: Views on independent celebrant

Consideration of independent celebrant

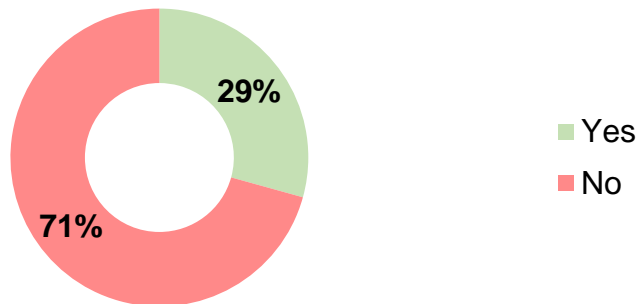


Base: All responses (275)

Respondents were asked if they had considered, or were considering, having an independent celebrant for their ceremony:

- Over three quarters (78 per cent) of respondents outlined that they had not considered, or were not considering, having an independent celebrant for their ceremony.
- Whilst just over a fifth (22 per cent) outlined that they had considered, or were considering, having an independent celebrant for their ceremony.

Choosing an independent celebrant



Base: All responses (275)

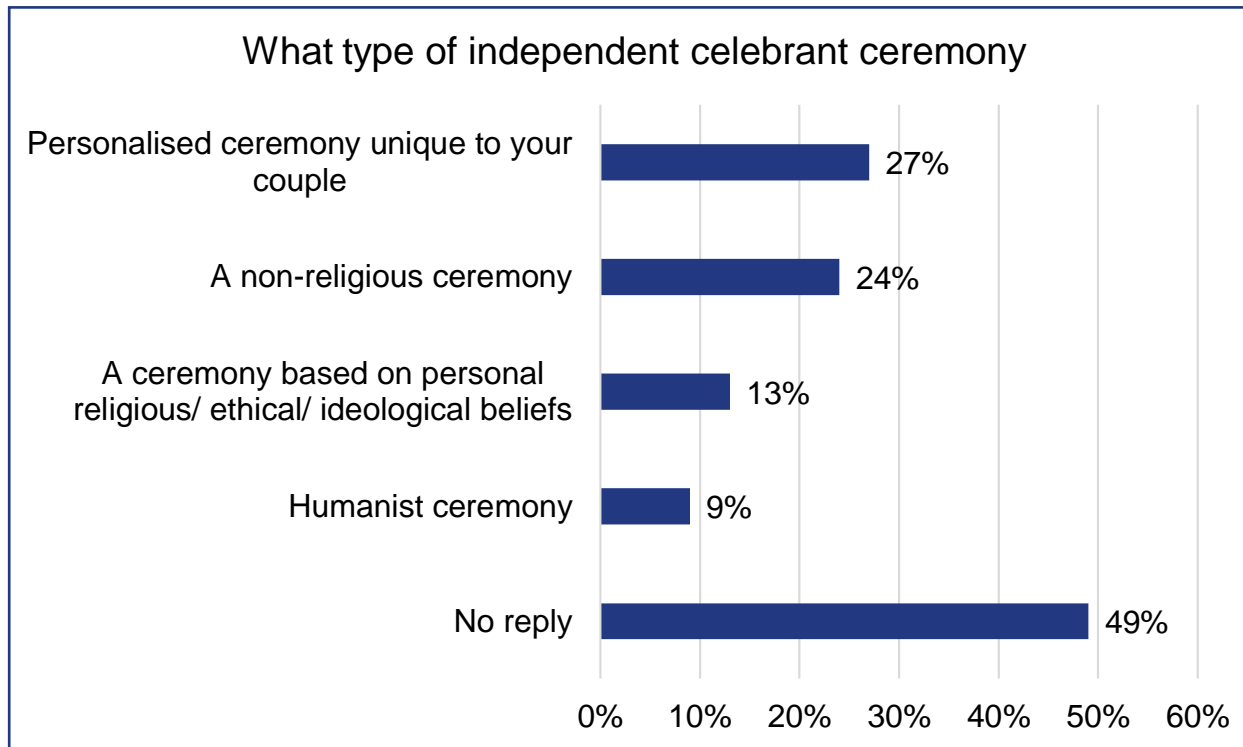
Respondents were then asked, if it was possible to be legally married by an independent celebrant, would they solely choose this option:

- Just under three quarters (71 per cent) of respondents selected '**No**' when asked whether they would solely choose the option of having an independent celebrant at their ceremony.
- Whilst 29 per cent of respondents selected '**Yes**' when asked about having an independent celebrant lead their ceremony

Consultation findings: Views on independent celebrant

Respondents were asked, if they were interested in having an independent celebrant, what type of ceremony they would be interested in. Respondents were asked to select **all options that apply**:

- Just over a quarter (27 per cent) of respondents outlined that they would be interested in having a **'Personalised ceremony unique to couple'**, whilst just under a quarter (24 per cent) outlined that would be interested in having a **'Non-religious ceremony'** with an individual celebrant.
- Just under half (49 per cent) of respondents **'did not reply'** when asked what type of ceremony they would be interested in with an individual celebrant.

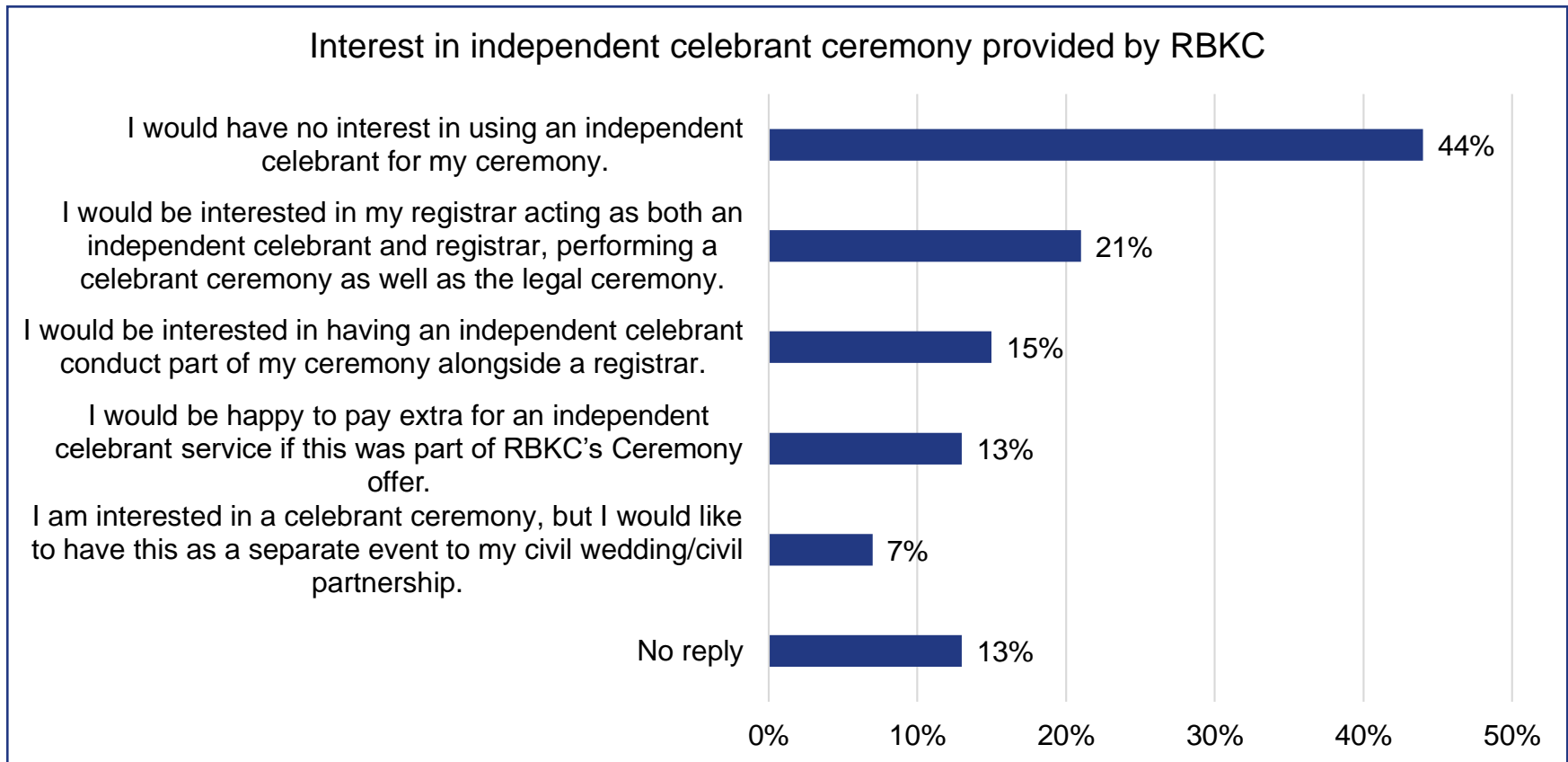


Base: All responses (275)

Consultation findings: Views on independent celebrant

Respondents were then asked about their level of interest in an independent celebrant ceremony provided by RBKC Registrars. Respondents were asked to select **all options that apply**:

- A total of 44 per cent of respondents outlined that they **'would have no interest in using an independent celebrant for my ceremony'**
- Whilst just over a fifth (21 per cent) of respondents identified that they **'would be interested in my registrar acting as both an independent celebrant and registrar, performing a celebrant ceremony as well as the legal ceremony'**

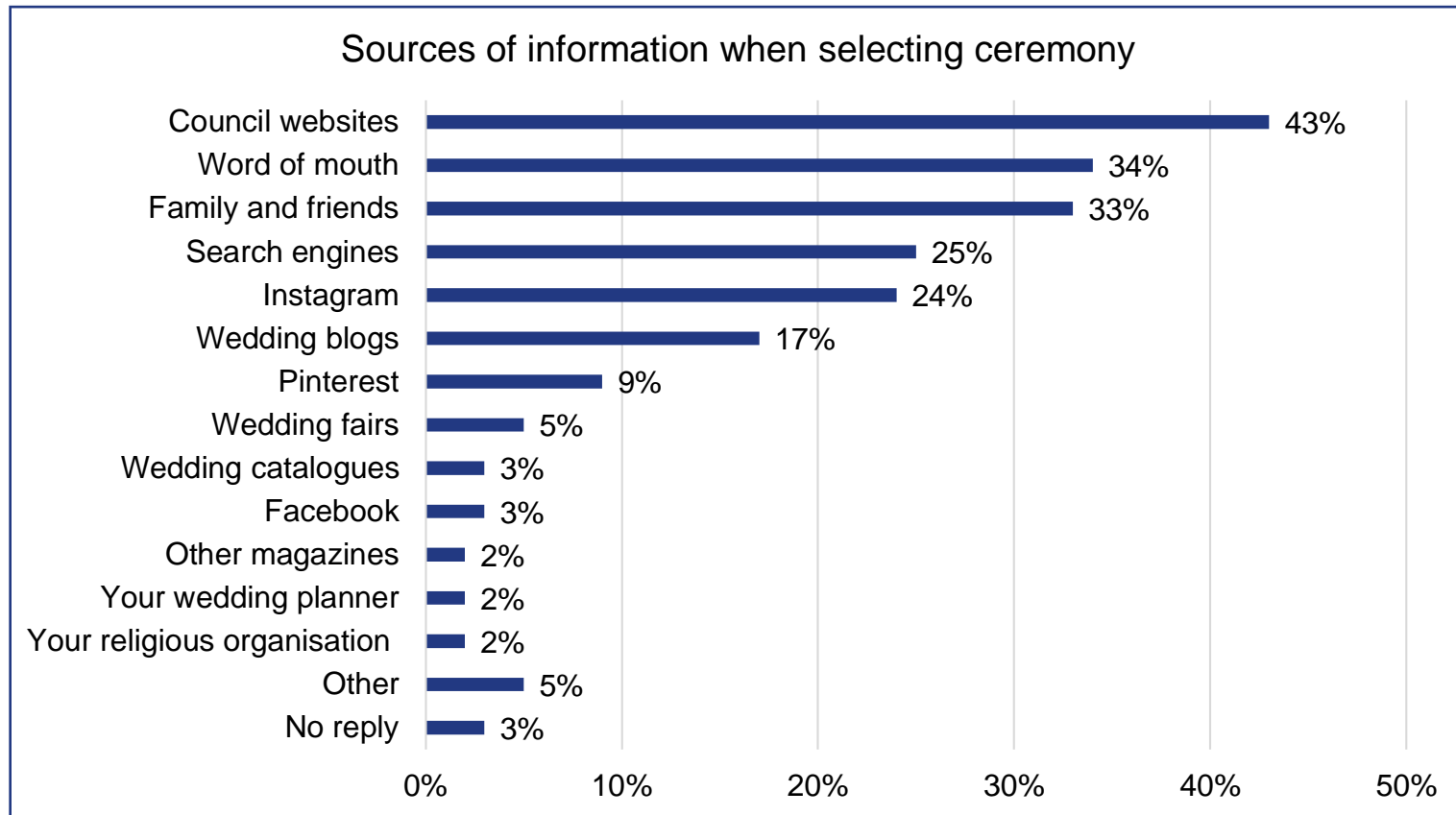


Base: All responses (275)

Consultation findings: Communications

Respondents were asked about which sources of information they used to inform their decision making about their ceremony. Respondents were asked to select **all options that apply**:

- A total of 43 per cent of respondents outlined that they used '**Council websites**' as a source of information, whilst just over a third (34 per cent) outlined that they sourced their information for their ceremony by '**Word of mouth**'.
- Just under a quarter (24 per cent) outlined that they used '**Instagram**' to source information for their ceremony, whilst a total of three per cent used '**Facebook**'.



Base: All responses (275)

Consultation findings: Communications – Other Responses

Respondents that indicated 'other' when asked about which sources they used to help their decision making, were asked to explain these in comments. These have been themed and the themes are summarised in the table below. Examples of comments made can be seen below, with the full list of themes and comments made can be found in appendix two.

Theme	Count
Local to the area and knowledge of the venue	10
Personal experience/insight	5
Search engines	2
Other	2

“Knew it as an iconic destination, and we used it as our 'first' legal wedding ahead of our postponed bigger wedding celebrations.”

Local to the area and knowledge of the venue

“We have both been married before, and decided between us that we only wanted a small wedding to only include us and our children and grandchild.”

Personal experience/insight



“Google reviews, photos on the stairs on Instagram”

Search engines

“None, it was difficult as we had no guidance or idea what to expect.”

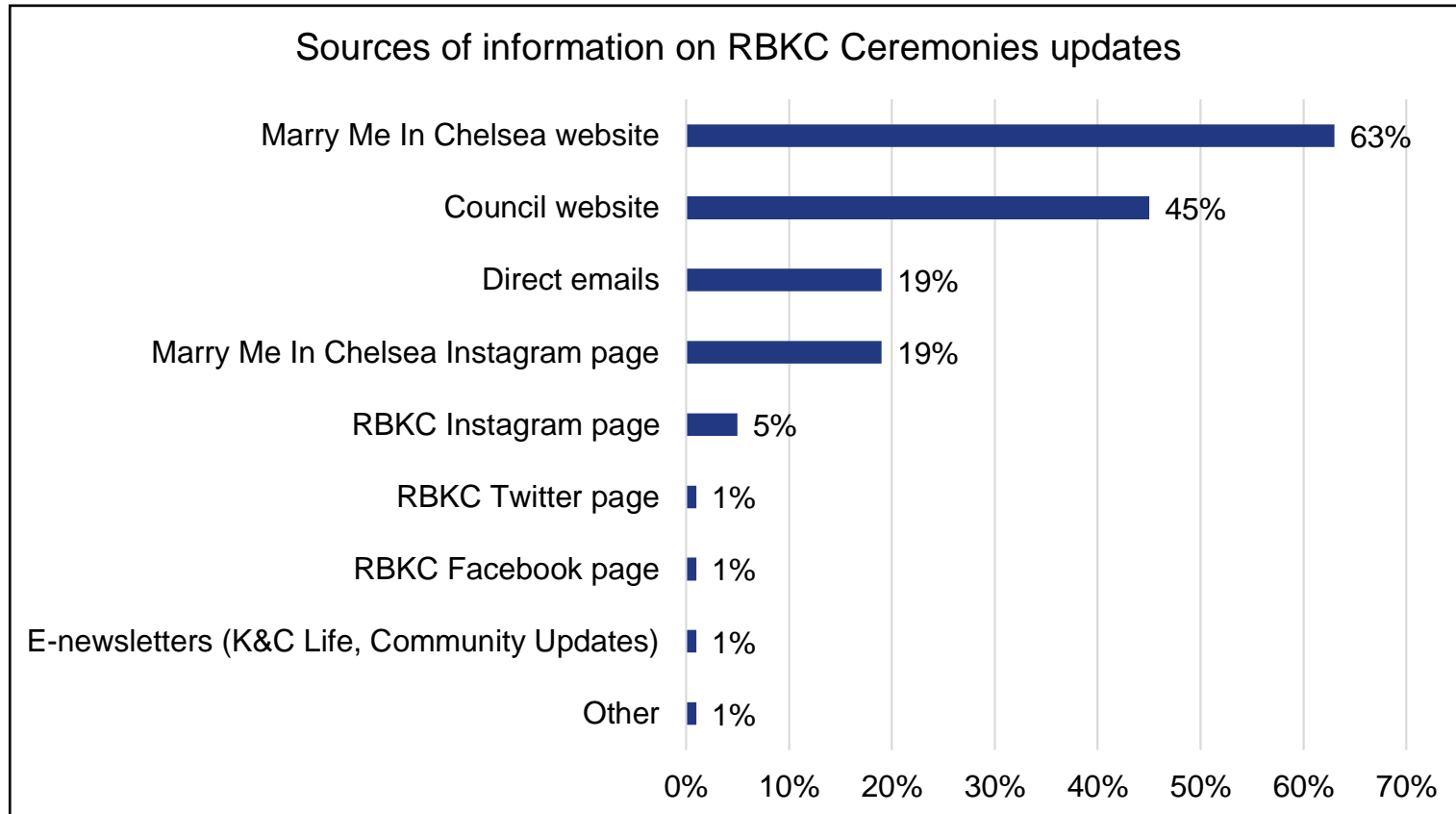
Other



Consultation findings: Communications about RBKC

Respondents were asked about which sources of information they use for updates on the RBKC Registration Service. Respondents were asked to select **all options that apply**:

- Just under two thirds (63 per cent) of respondents highlighted that they used the **'Marry Me In Chelsea website'** for updates about the RBKC registration service, whilst just under half (45 per cent) selected **'Council website'** as a source of information for updates.
- Just under a fifth (19 per cent) of respondents identified that they used the **'Marry Me In Chelsea Instagram page'** as a source of information about the RBKC registration service.

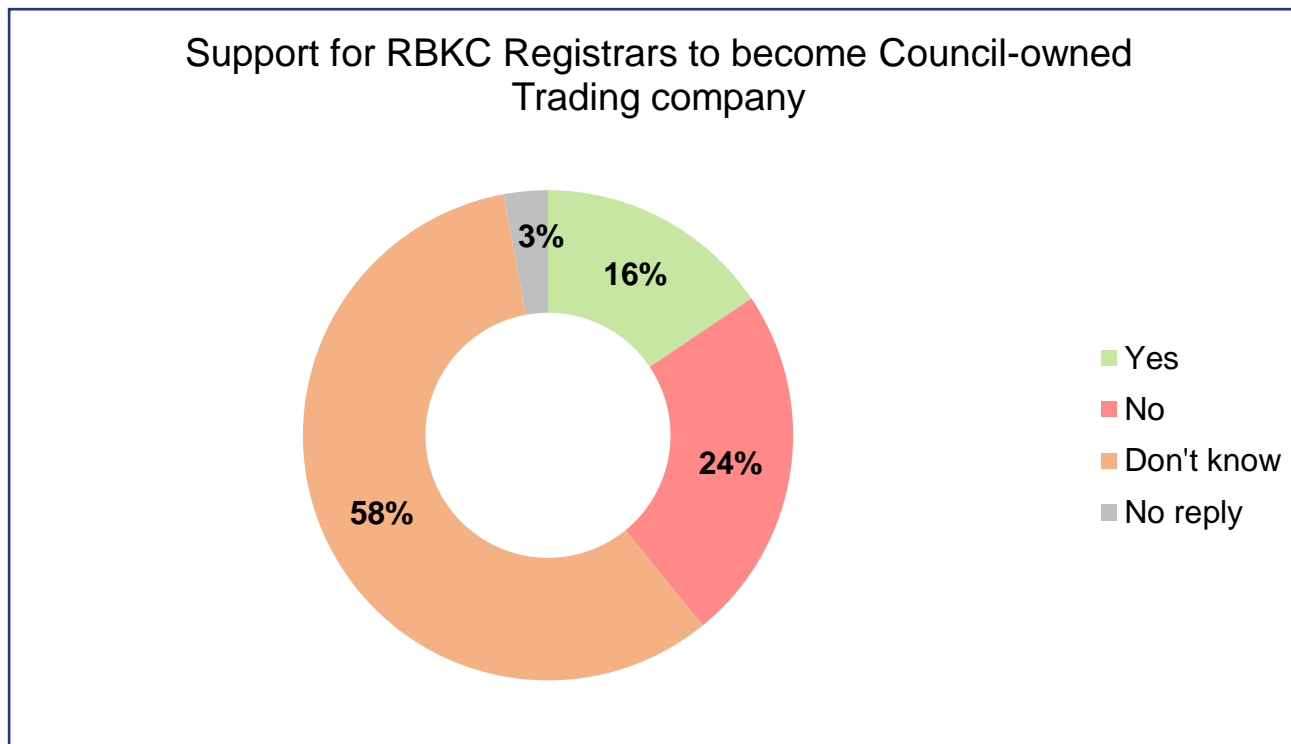


Base: All responses (275)

Consultation findings: RBKC Registrars as a Council-owned trading

RBKC Registrars Service are investigating options for how best to deliver their ceremonies in the future, and exploring the possibility of raising some of their fees and/or moving to a Council-owned private trading company model (i.e. setting up a business rather than operating as a Council service). Respondents were asked whether they would support a move from RBKC Registrars to delivering its ceremonies through a Council-owned trading company:

- A total of 16 per cent of respondents selected **'Yes'** when asked whether they would support a move to a Council-owned trading company, whilst just under a quarter (24 per cent) of respondents selected **'No'**.
- Over half (58 per cent) of respondents selected **'Don't know'** when asked about whether RBKC Registrars should move to a Council-owned trading company.



Base: All responses (275)

Consultation findings: Council-owned trading company – ‘If Yes’ Responses

Respondents that answered ‘Yes’ when asked whether they would support a move from RBKC Registrars to delivering its ceremonies through a Council-owned trading company, were then asked to explain their reasons. These comments have been themed and the themes are summarised in the table below. Examples of comments made can be seen below, with the full list of themes and comments made can be found in appendix two.

Theme	Count
Improve efficiency	10
Improve the offer to clients	9
Other	5

“I think acting as a business will create more efficiency.”

Improve efficiency



“As long as it is not that expensive, I suppose it will provides more options, customisation possibilities, and smoother communication.”

Improve the offer to clients

“Easier to contact, and I think you could make more money from this (deservedly!) - a lot of time and effort from your side clearly goes into this and I don’t think this is remunerated correctly by couples using the service”

Improve efficiency

“I don’t believe this would impact us, as long as prices didn’t then rise.”

Other

Consultation findings: Council-owned trading company – ‘If No’ Responses

Respondents that answered ‘**No**’ when asked whether they would support a move from RBKC Registrars to delivering its ceremonies through a Council-owned trading company, were then asked to explain their reasons. These comments have been themed and the themes are summarised in the table below. Examples of comments made can be seen below, with the full list of themes and comments made can be found in appendix two.

Theme	Count
Concerns about raising fees	18
Happy with the service and does not require change	10
Impact on the community	8
Only required a simple ceremony	5
Other	3

“Fee increase would make getting married even more of a challenge financially especially on a budget.”

Concerns about raising fees

“Everything was so lovely and affordable that I'm tempted to say - don't change a thing!”

Happy with the service and does not require change



“I can see benefits to RBKC (higher fees, less direct accountability in event of problems or errors) but can't see any benefits to the consumer your service as it stands is excellent”

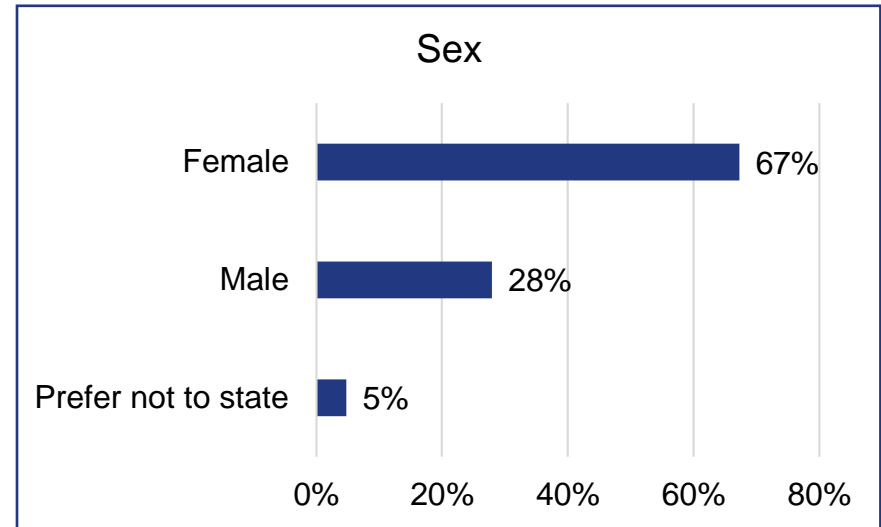
Impact on the community

“We just wanted a quick wedding in a nice place so if it would be much more expensive we would probably consider a different place.”

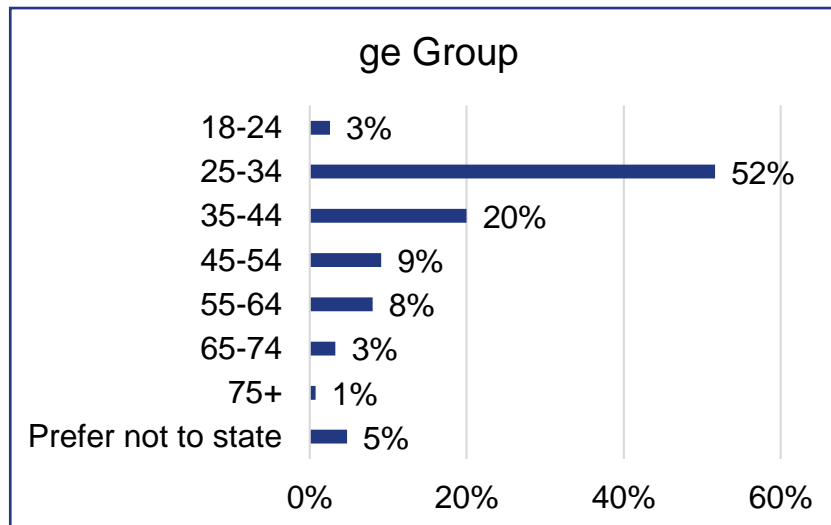
Only required a simple ceremony

Demographics: Sex and Age

- Just over two thirds (67 per cent) of respondents were **'Female'**
- Just over a quarter (28 per cent) of respondents were **'Male'**
- A total of five per cent of respondents stated that they **'Prefer not to state'** their sex



Base: All responses (275)



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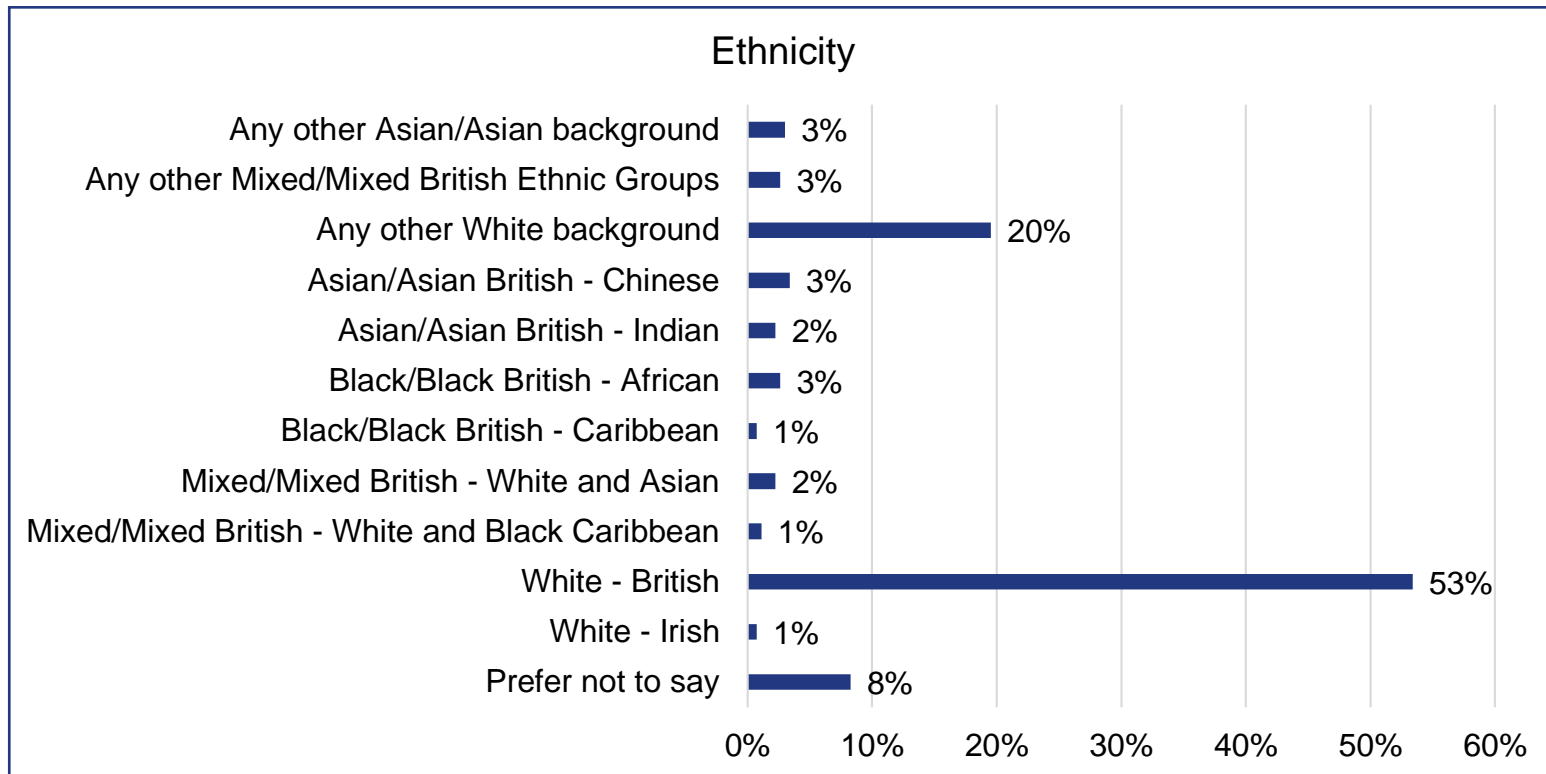
Respondents were asked to outline their date of birth, this was then analysed to create age ranges which can be seen below:

- Just over half (52 per cent) of survey respondents were in the age group **'25-34'**
- A fifth (20 per cent) of respondents were in the age group **'35-44'**

Demographics: Ethnicity

Respondents were asked to describe their **Ethnicity**.

- Just over half (53 per cent) of respondents were **'White British'**
- A fifth (20 per cent) of respondents were from **'Any other White background'**
- A total of eight per cent of respondents selected that they **'Prefer not to say'** when asked their ethnicity.

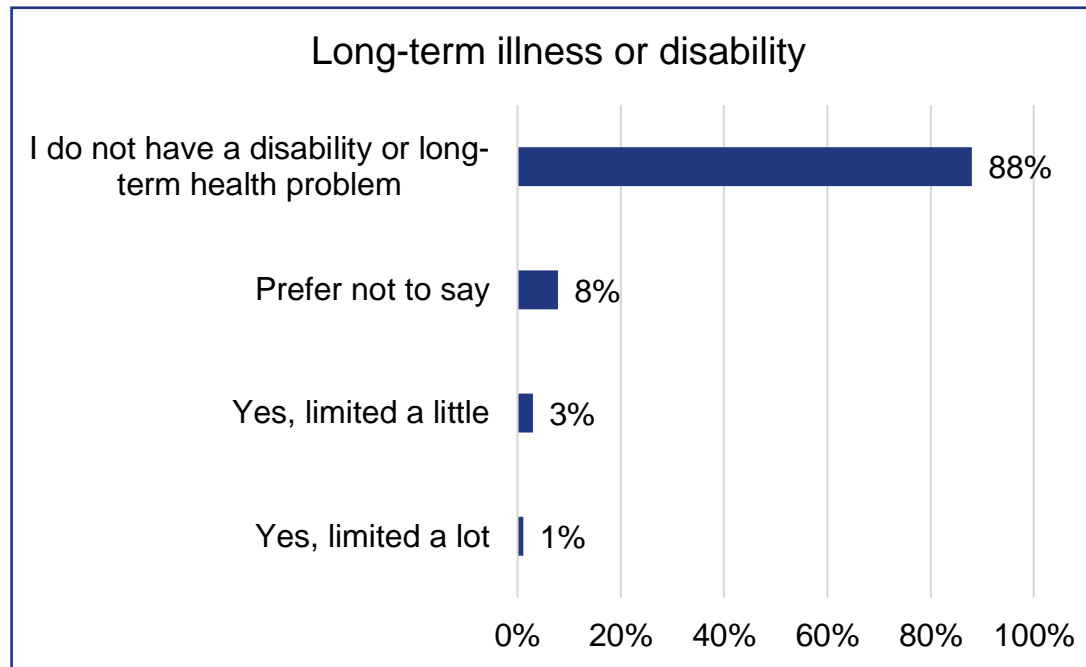


Base: All responses (275)

Demographics: Long term disability or illness

Respondents were asked whether they had any long-term illness, health problems or disability which limits daily activities.

- The majority (88 per cent) of respondents stated that they **did not** have a long-term illness, health problem or disability.
- A total of eight per cent of respondents outlined that they would **'Prefer not to say'** whether they had a long-term illness or disability.
- A total of four per cent of respondents stated that they had a disability or health problem that either **'limited them a little'** or **'limited them a lot.'**



Base: All responses (275)