healthwatch Cheshire West

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The Impact of Cost of Living Crisis in Cheshire Survey

Healthwatch Cheshire Citizens Focus Panel – December 2023

Introduction

Healthwatch Cheshire, consisting of Healthwatch Cheshire East and Healthwatch Cheshire West, help to plan, shape and improve local health and care services. We listen to people's views and join discussions to influence decision making, using local voices to encourage those who run health and care services to act on what matters to them.

Healthwatch Cheshire's Citizens Focus Panel enables us to get feedback on current topical issues from a set group of Cheshire residents on a regular basis. Our panel is made up of a wide range of people from all across Cheshire and continues to grow; we're always looking for new volunteers to join us.

Healthwatch Cheshire conducted a survey in December 2023 asking the Citizens Focus Panel members about the Impact of The Cost of Living Crisis in Cheshire.

To view previous reports, please visit:

healthwatchcwac.org.uk/what-we-do/our-reports

healthwatchcheshireeast.org.uk/what-we-do/our-reports

Summary of findings

- **28** members of our Citizens Focus Panel responded to this survey**.** The majority of respondents were over 65, **66% (17),** had no dependents living at home, **92% (25),** were White British **96% (26)** and their income was from a private pension **67% (18).**

- The majority **96% (26)** said they had made changes or anticipate making changes due to the cost of living crisis – mainly in respect to heating and energy costs.

- **22% (6)** had made a change in going to see friends/relatives due to the cost of living crisis and **11% (3)** anticipated making this change.

- Over half of **53% (15)** said they were putting on more clothes to keep warm and **18%(5)** anticipated making this change.

- **39%(11)** of respondents said that they were not turning on the heating when they normally would and **25% (7)** said that they were anticipating this change.

- **25% (7)** anticipated that they would start to use a warm hub but the majority **75%(21)** said using a warm hub was not applicable to them.

- Half of respondents **50% (14)** said they were turning off or avoiding using essential items (i.e. not using their oven). **14% (4)** said that they anticipated starting to do this.

- **32% (9)** of respondents said that they were cutting down or stopping social or entertainment expenditure. **21%(6)** of respondents said that they anticipated making this change.

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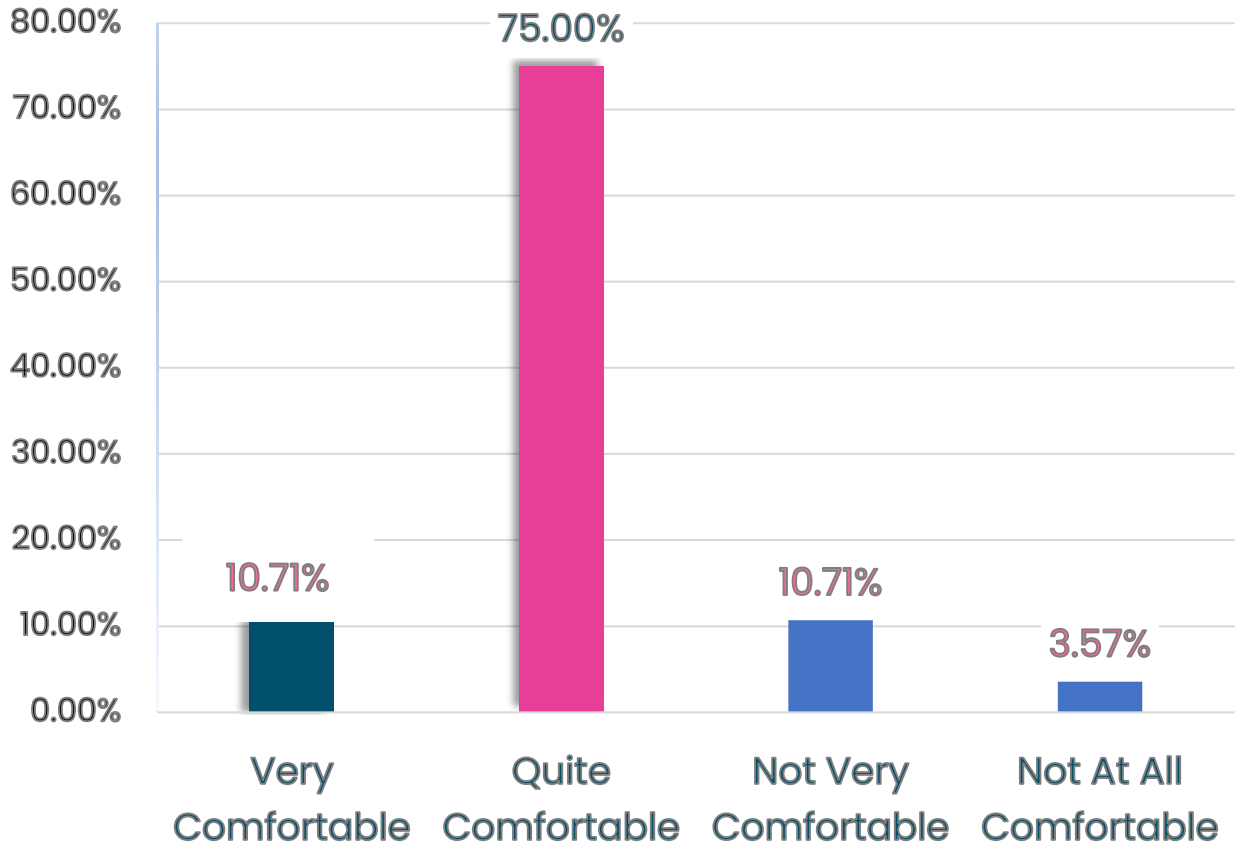
Survey Results

How would you describe your current financial situation ?

Answered: 28 Skipped: 0

- Of the **28** respondents who answered this question, the majority **(75%, 21)** said they were quite comfortable - have enough money for living expenses and a little spare to save or spend on extras or leisure.

- Whilst **10% (3)** respondents were not very comfortable - don't have enough money for living expenses and sometimes or often run out of money.



In the last six months, would you say your financial situation has…?

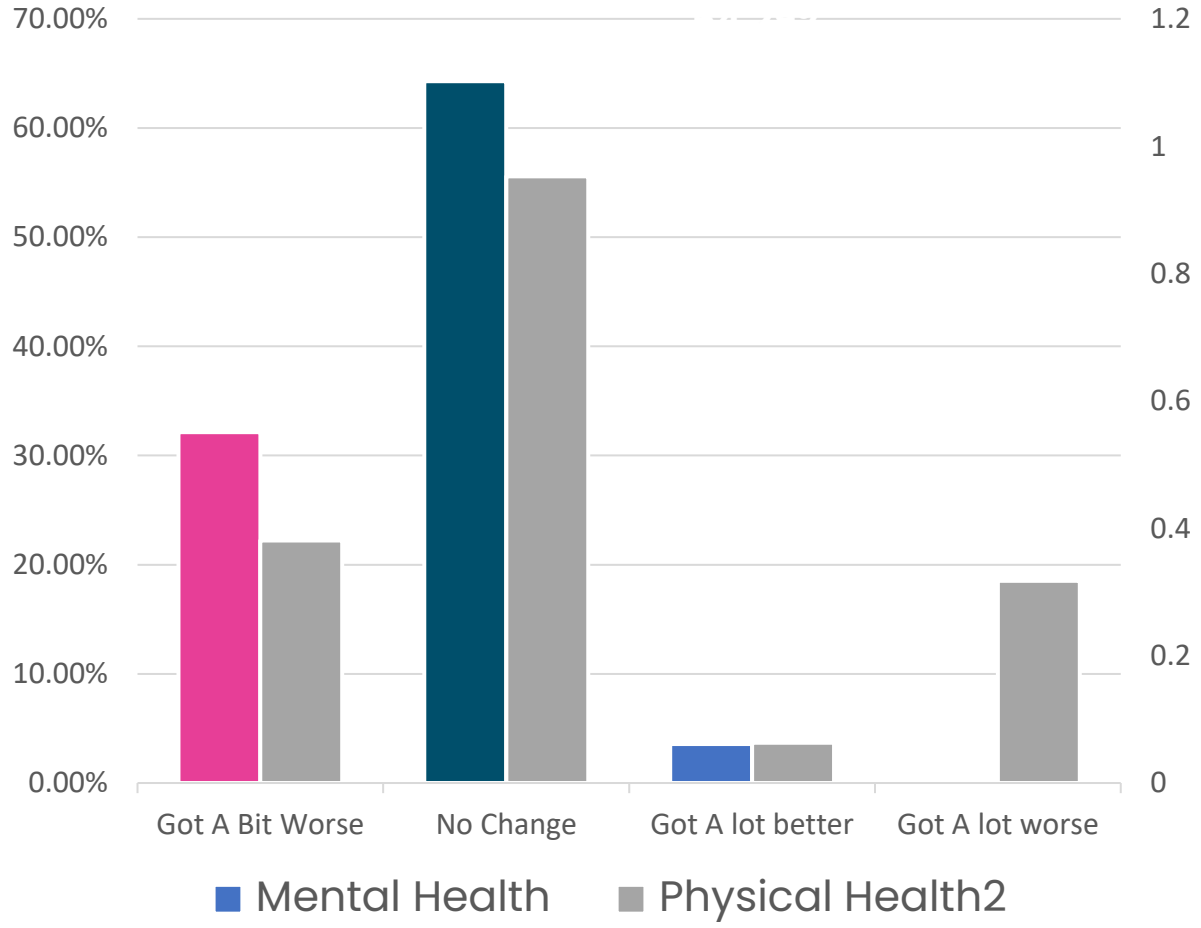
Answered: 27 Skipped: 1

- **11% (3)** of respondents said their financial situation had got a little better.
- Almost half **44% (12)** said their financial situation had not changed at all.
- **26% (7)** of respondents said their financial situation had got a little worse.
- **19% (5)** of respondents said their financial situation had got a lot worse.

Thinking about your health in the last two months, how has your physical and mental health been? (Mood, stress, anxiety)

Answered: 28 Skipped: 0

- **32% (9)** of respondents said their mental health had got a bit worse. **22% (6)** said that their physical health had got a bit worse.
- The majority of respondents **64%(18)** said that their mental health had not changed. **56%(15)** said that their physical health had not changed.
- **4%(1)** respondent said that their mental health had got a lot better. **4%(1)** said that their physical health had got a lot better.
- **19% (5)** of respondents said their physical health had got a lot worse.



Have you made or are you anticipating making any of the following changes to your health and care due to the rising cost of living?

Answered: 28 Skipped: 0

- **14% (4)** of respondents have avoided going to the dentist because of the cost of check ups or treatment**.** **11% (3)** of respondents anticipated that they would avoid going to the dentist. The majority of respondents **75% (21)** said this was not applicable.

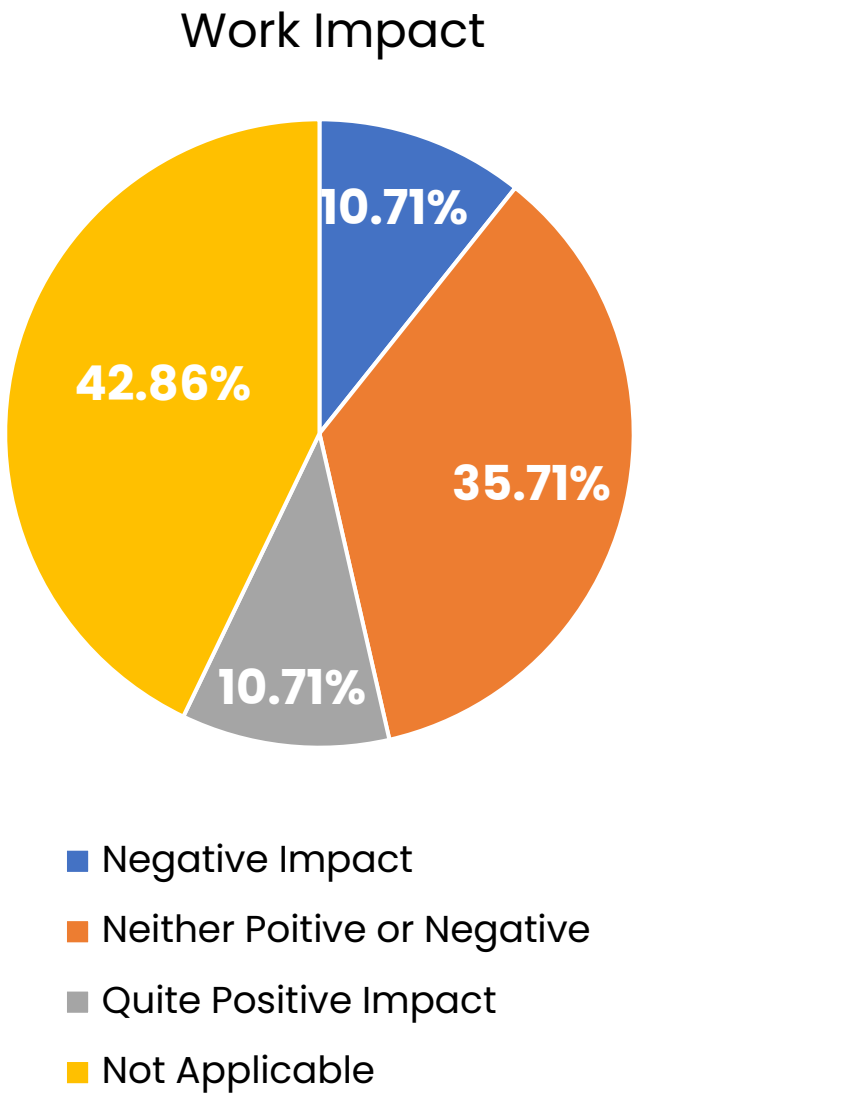
- **11% (3)** of respondents are cutting down or stopping support from services (that I pay privately for, such as physiotherapy, earwax removal or counselling). **7% (2)** anticipated that they would also make this change. The majority of respondents **75% (21)** said this change was not applicable.

Thinking about the changes that you have already made, what impact have they had on the following aspects of your life.

Answered: 28 Skipped: 0

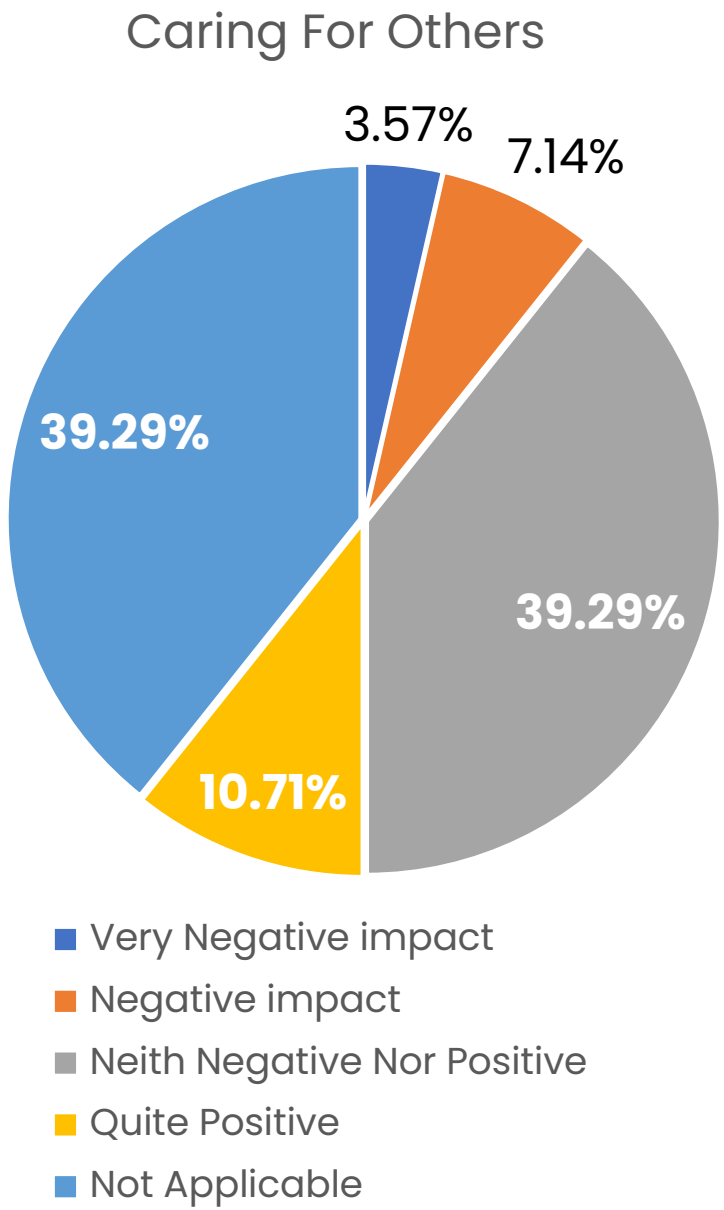
Your ability to work ?

- **11% (3)** of respondents reported a negative impact on the ability to work.
- **35% (10)**of respondents reported neither a negative or positive impact on the ability to work.
- **11% (3)**of respondents reported quite a positive impact on the ability to work.
- Almost half of respondents **43% (12)** said that this was not applicable.



Your ability to care for others?

- **4% (1)** respondent said that it had had a very negative impact on their ability to care for others.
- **7% (2)** of respondents said that it had had a negative impact on their ability to care for others.
- **39% (11)**of respondents said that it had neither a positive or negative impact on their ability to care for others.
- **11% (3)** of respondents said that it had had quite a positive impact on their ability to care for others.
- **39% (11)** of respondents said that this was not applicable to them.



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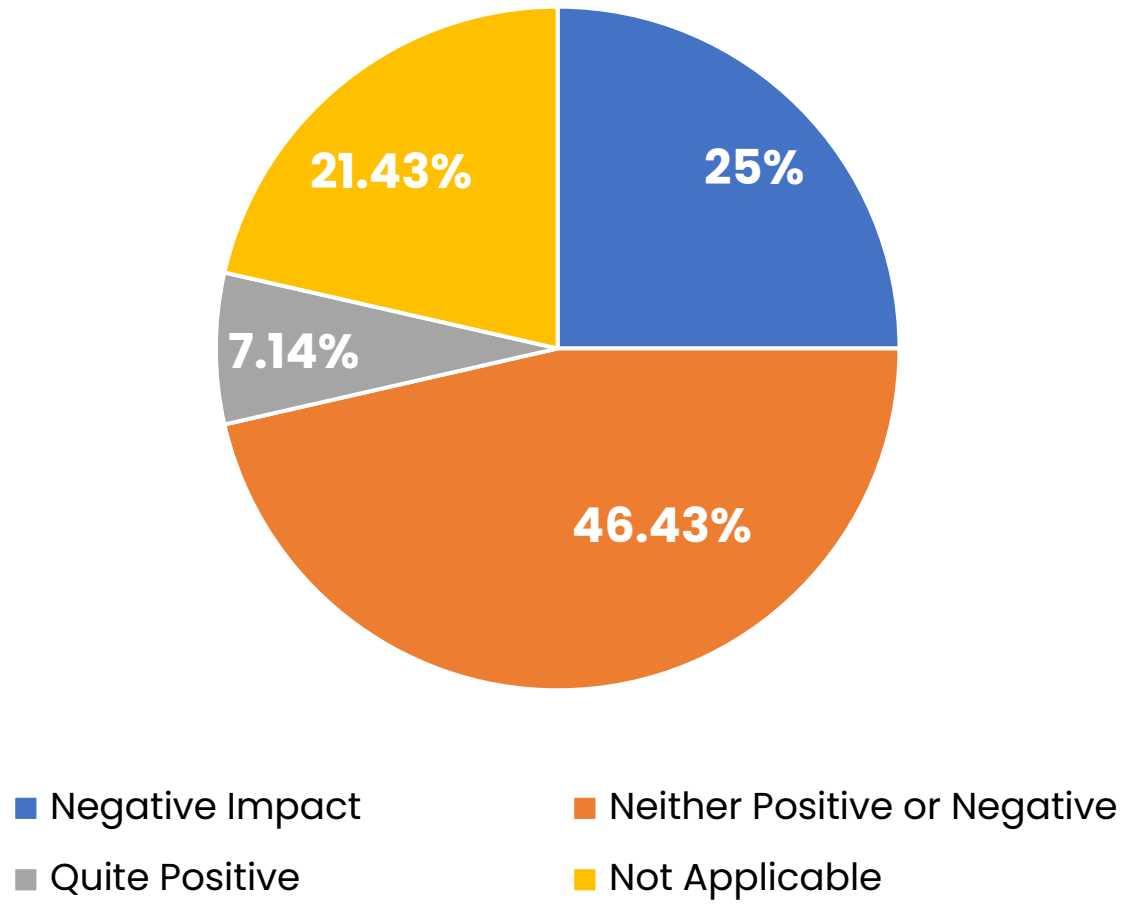
Your Mental Health?

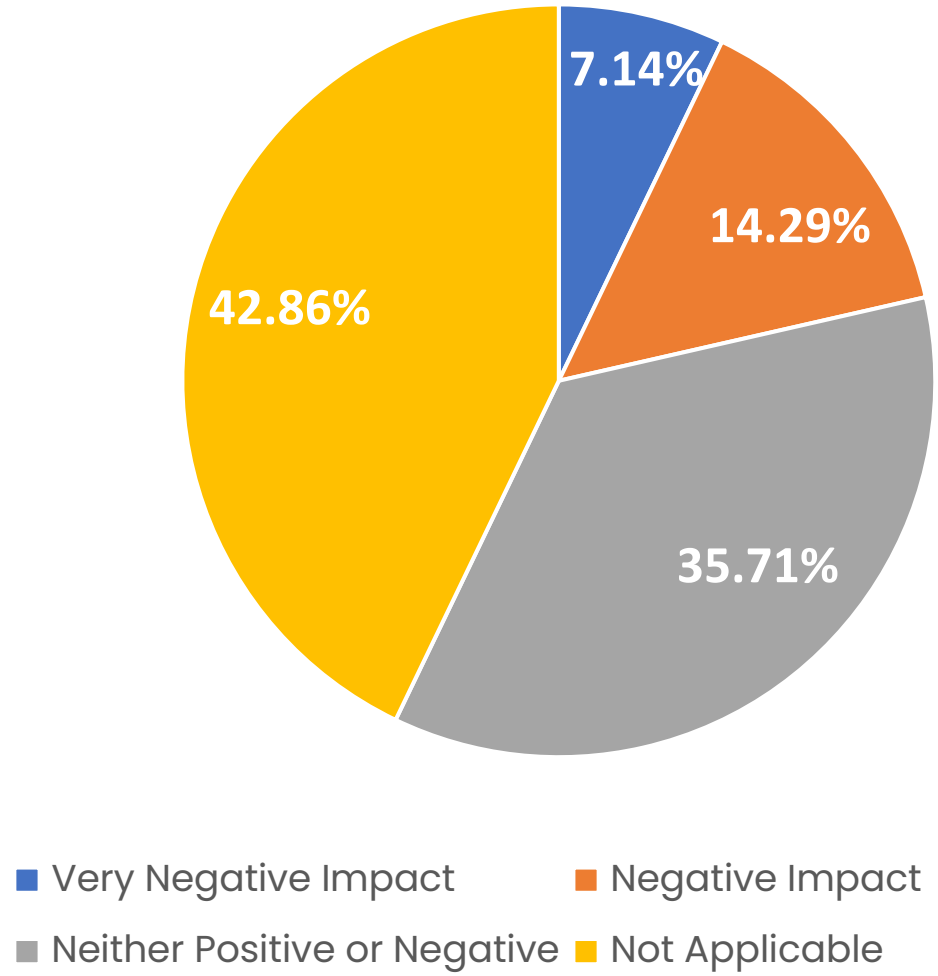
- A quarter of respondents **25% (7)** said they had a negative impact to their mental health.
- **46% (13)** of respondents said that they had neither a positive or negative impact to their mental health.
- **7% (2)** of respondents had quite a positive impact to their mental health.
- **21% (6)** of respondents said that this was not applicable to them.



Your ability to manage a long term condition (e.g. diabetes)?

Managing Long Term Illness

- **7% (2)**of respondents said that it had a very negative impact on managing a long term health condition.
- **14% (4)**of respondents said that it had a negative impact on managing a long term health condition.
- **36% (10)** of respondents said that it had neither a positive or negative impact on managing a long term health condition.
- **43% (12)** of respondents said that this was not applicable to them.



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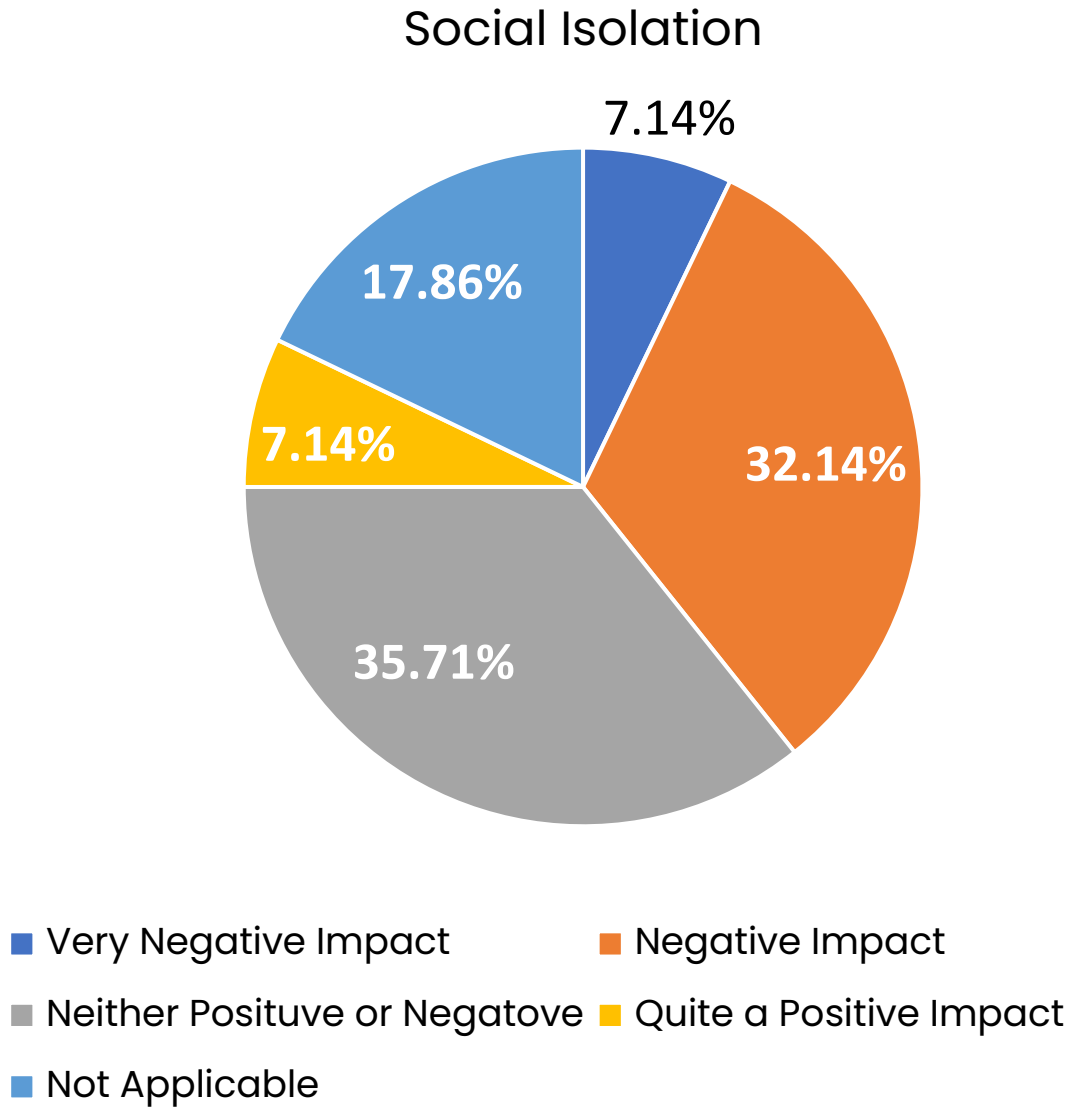
Social isolation from friends, family or community groups (e.g. how often you see friends or family or attend events)

- **7% (2)** of respondents had experienced a very negative impact on social isolation
- **32% (9)** of respondents said that they had a negative impact on social isolation.
- **36% (10)** of respondents had neither a negative or positive impact on social isolation.
- **18% (5)** of respondents said that this was not applicable.
- **7% (2)** of respondents said that they had quite a positive impact on their social isolation.

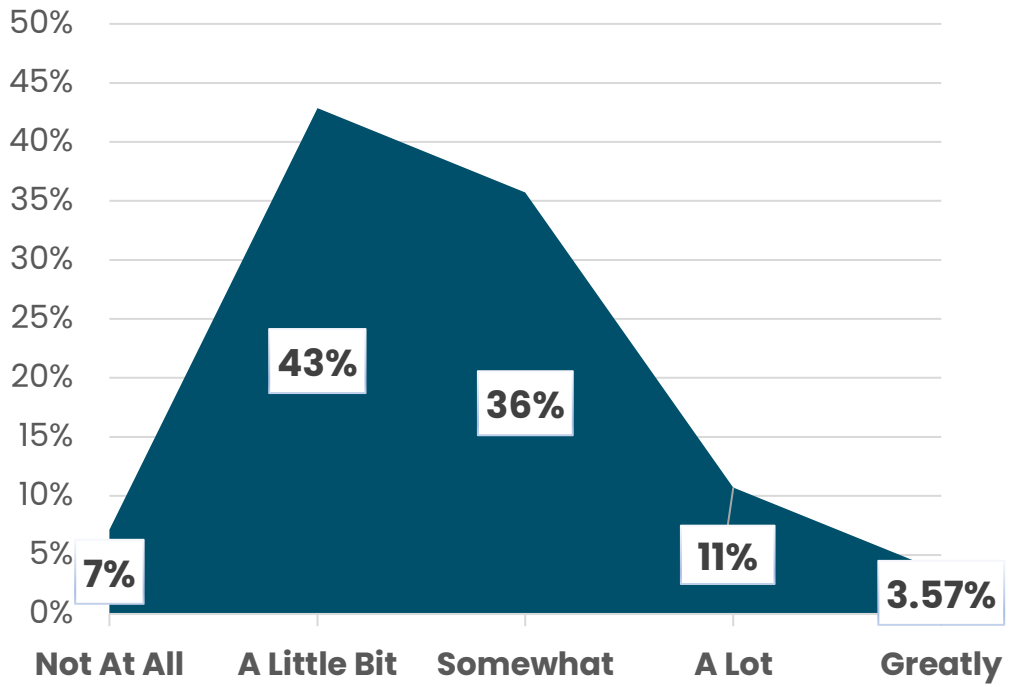


We also want to know about things that are impacting you other than the changes you have made….?

Answered: 28 Skipped: 0

Hearing about the rising cost of living is causing me to worry/feel anxious more often than before.

- **7% (2)** of respondents said not at all
- **43% (12)** of respondents said a little bit
- **36% (10)** of respondents said somewhat
- **11% (3)** of respondents said a lot
- **4% (1)** of respondents said greatly.



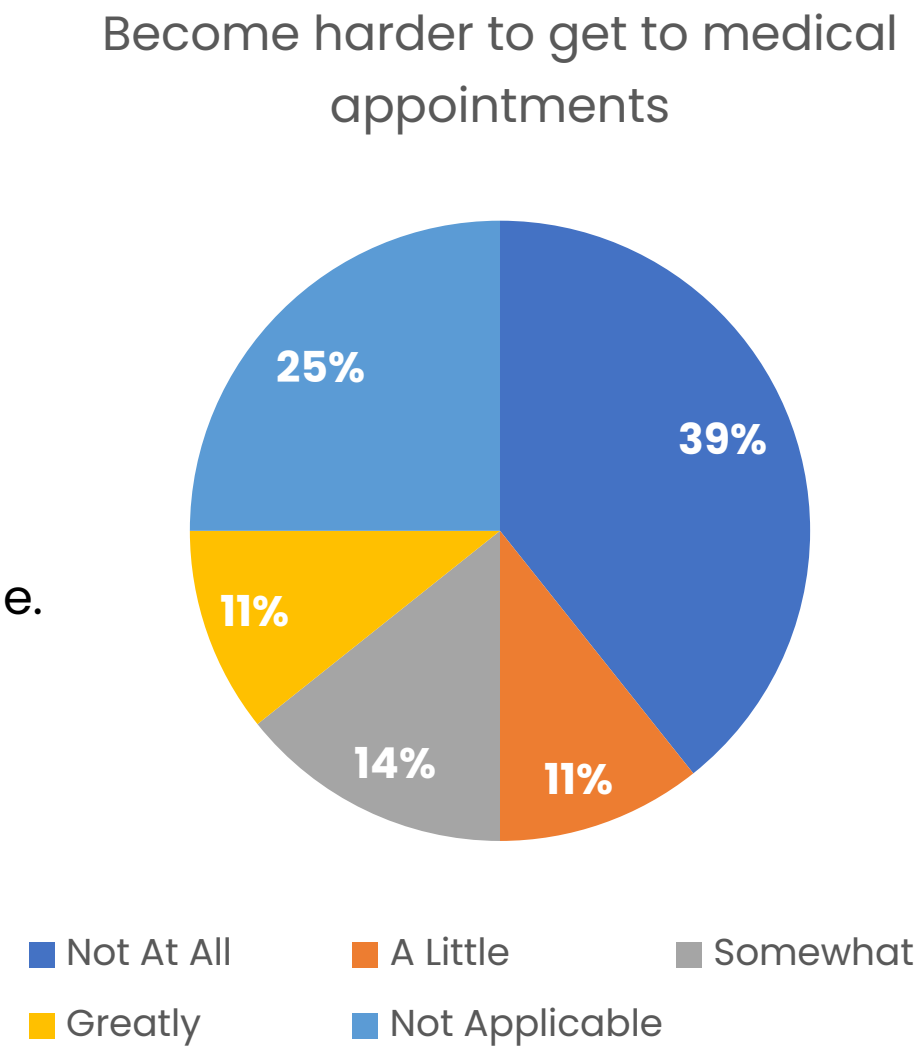
Other comments included:

- It is getting ridiculous, for me, and the rest of my family and friends. Living in Cheshire East is not easy at the moment, and it seems that Cheshire East DO NOT care about Crewe residents.
- I am 77 and autistic and can only just look after myself with no help, as I cannot afford help.

It has become harder for me to get to medical appointments, due to cuts in bus routes/lack of community transport etc.

Answered: 28 Skipped: 0

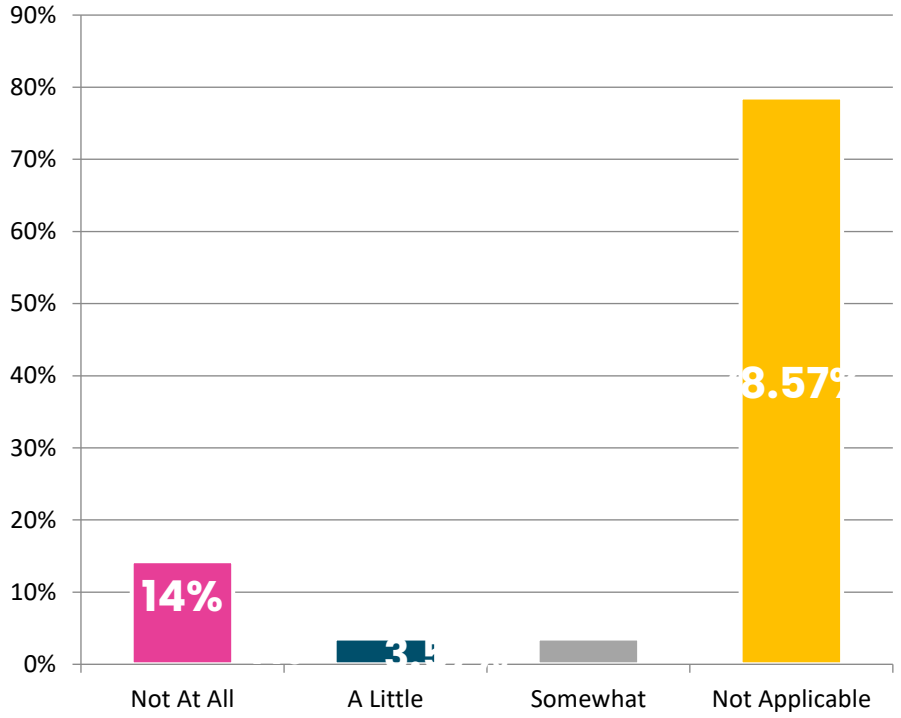
- **39% (11)** of respondents said not at all
- **11% (3)** of respondents said a little
- **14% (4)** of respondents said somewhat
- **11% (3)** of respondents said greatly
- **25% (7)** of respondents said this was not applicable.



I pay for or contribute to paying for social care support for myself and the cost has increased...

Answered: 28 Skipped: 0

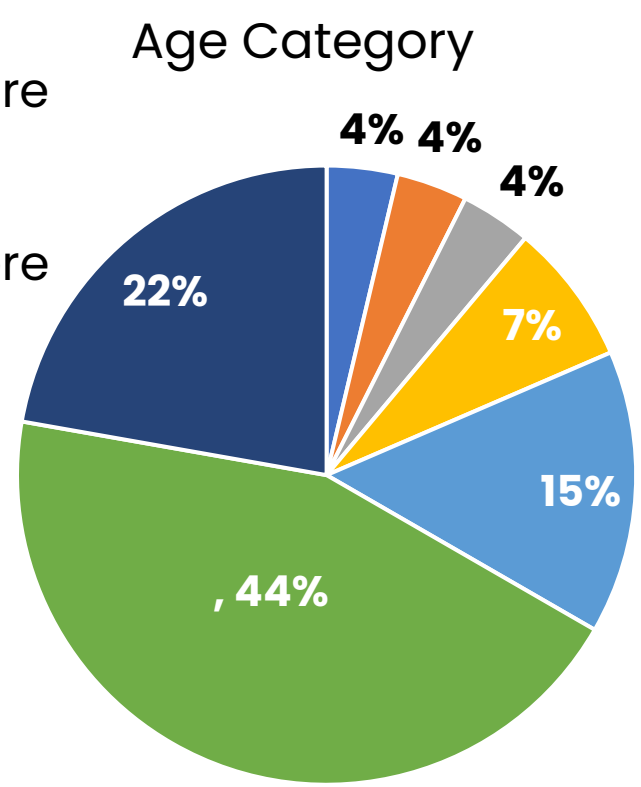
- **14% (4)** of respondents said not at all
- **4% (1)** of respondents said a little
- **4% (1)** of respondents said somewhat
- **79% (22)** of respondents said that this was not applicable.

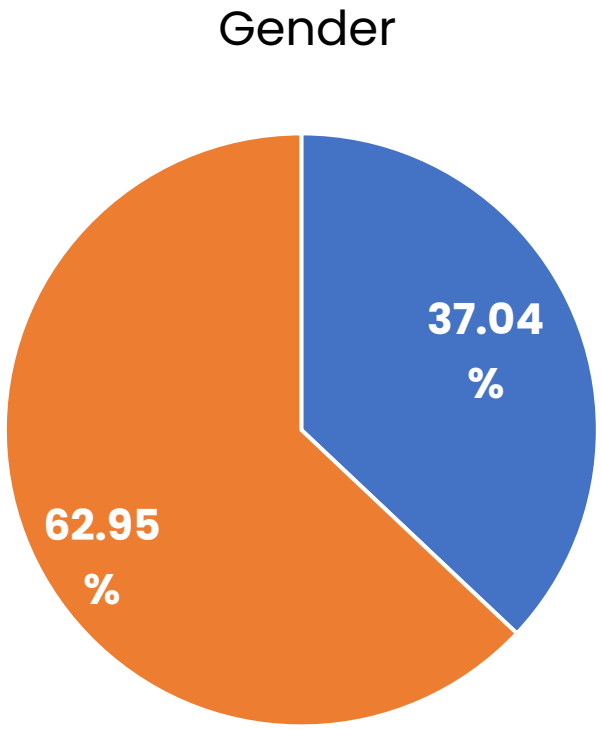


What is your gender ? Please tell us the age category that you fall into.

The majority of participants were aged 65-74 (44%)

The majority of participants were female (63%)

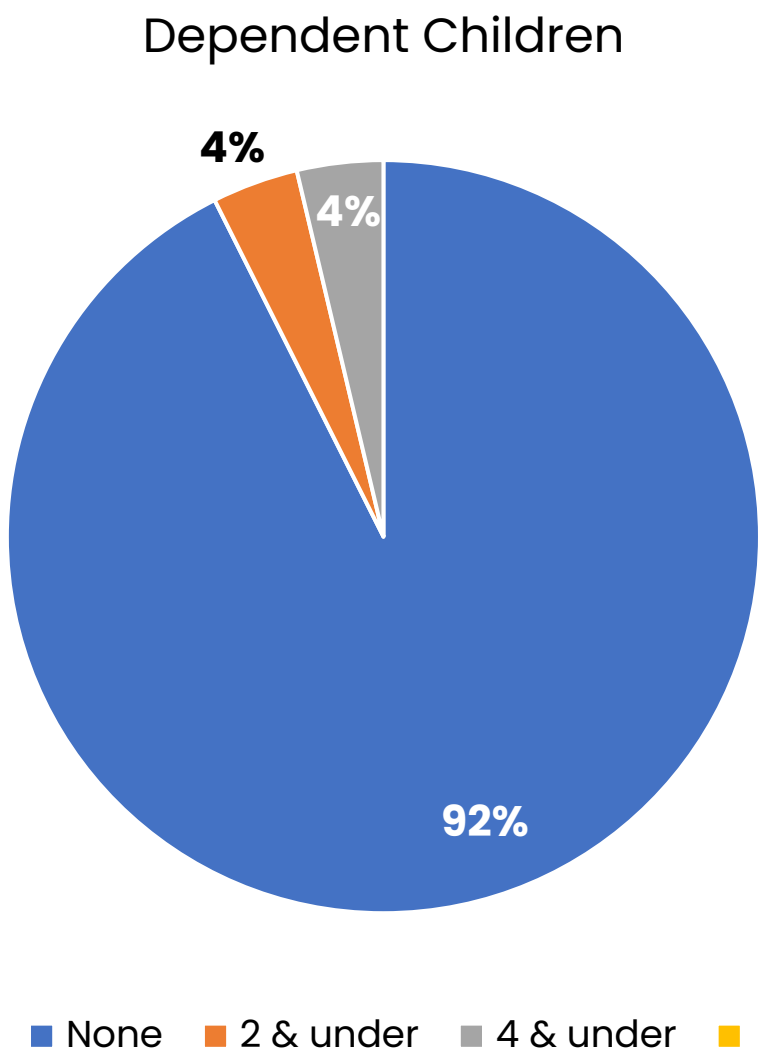




How many dependant children (18 & under) live in your home ?

Answered: 27 Skipped: 1

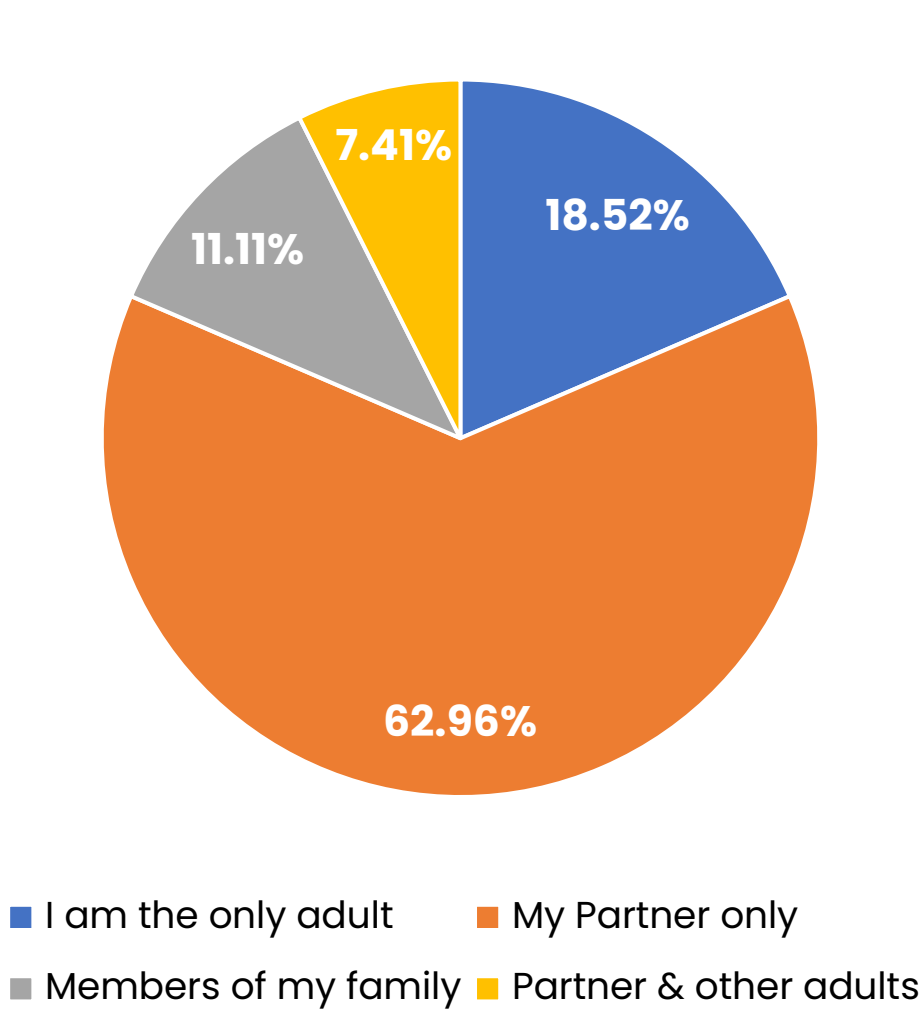
- The majority of respondents **92% (25)** had no dependant children living at home.
- **4% (1)** respondent said they had 1-2 dependant children living at home.
- **4% (1)** respondent said they had 3-4 dependant children living at home.



Besides you, what other adults (18 or over) live In your home ?

Answered: 27 Skipped: 1

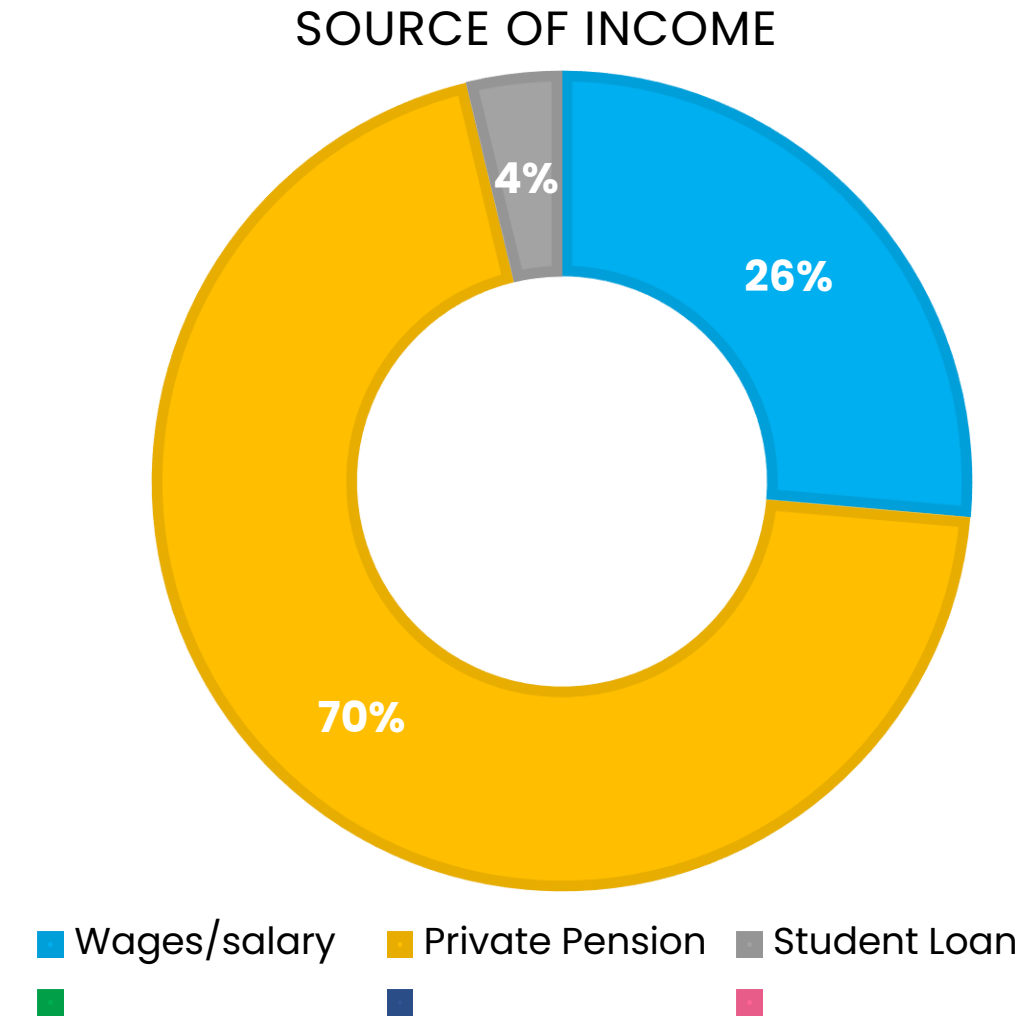
- The majority of respondents **63% (17)** said that they lived with their partner
- **19% (5)** of respondents said that they were the only adult living in their home
- **11% (3)** of respondents said that they lived with members of their family
- **7% (2)** of respondents said that they lived with their partner and other adults.



From which of the following sources do you receive income?

Answered: 27 Skipped: 1

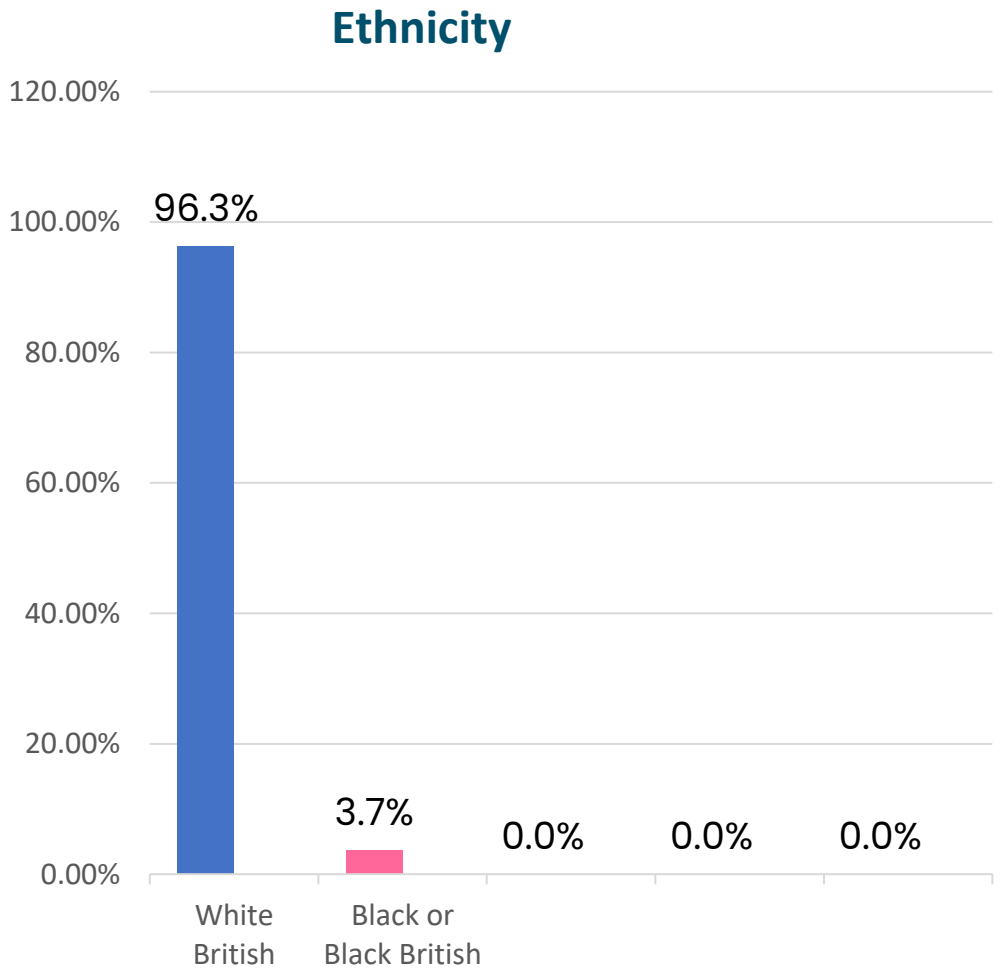
- The majority of respondents' **67% (18)** income was from a private pension
- **26% (7)** of respondents said their main source of income was from wages/salary.
- **4% (1)** of respondents said their main source of income was from student loans.



How would you describe your ethnicity?

•Answered: 27 Skipped: 1

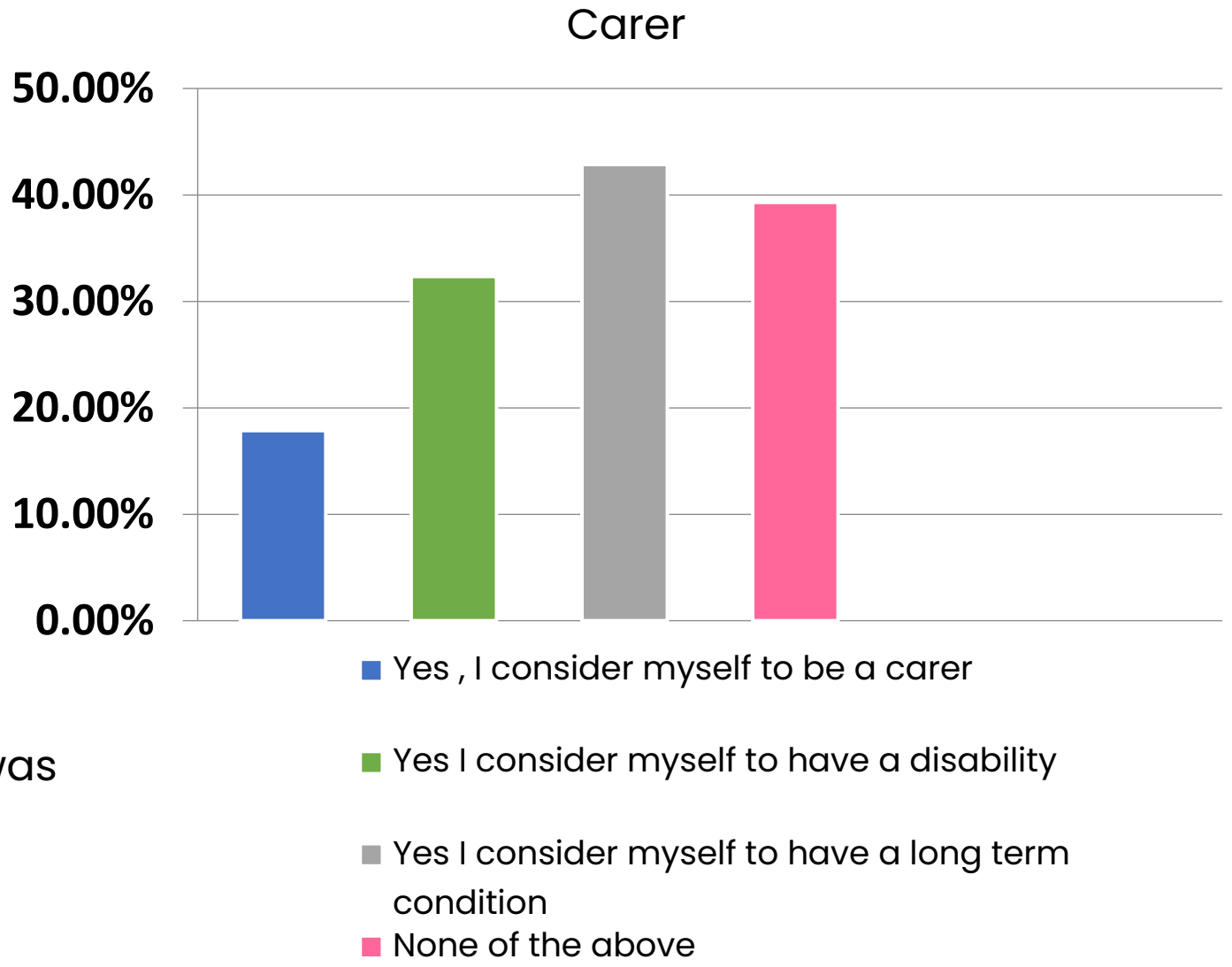
- Of the respondents **96% (26)** described themselves as White British.
- **4% (1)** described themselves as Black or Black British.



Do you consider yourself to be a carer, have a disability or a long term health condition ?

Answered: 28 Skipped: 0

- **18% (5)** of respondents considered themselves to be a carer
- **32% (9)** of respondents considered themselves to have a disability
- **43% (12)** of respondents considered themselves to have a long term health condition
- **39% (11)** of respondents said that this was not applicable.



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