

West Dunbartonshire Council Local Housing Strategy Summary of survey findings



Theme 1: Housing Need and Demand – Question responses

Q - People should have access to affordable housing which is in the right location and is suitable for their needs – 76.8% strongly agreed or agreed.

New Homes should be:

1. Designed for a variety of needs (77 %)
2. Energy Efficient (65%)
3. Located on brownfield sites (54%)
4. Supportive of regeneration initiatives (53%)
5. Wheelchair accessible (44%)
6. Located in town centres (21.5%)

Q – Housing targets clearly set (40% strongly agreed or agreed they were & 35% neutral)

How this is being taken forward in the strategy:

We will continue to be ambitious in our new build development programme developing homes which fulfil the ambitions of our residents as set out above. We will encourage our strategic partners and private developers to do the same using the mechanisms available to us.

Theme 1: Housing Need and Demand

Comments

Tenure of Housing:

- Many commented that they would like to see more affordable housing
- Some commented that buying a home was very challenging and competitive and those with average incomes feel stuck and have limited choice. One solution suggested was more private affordable housing be developed.

How this is being taken forward in the strategy:

We have committed to continue to develop more affordable homes and will during the lifetime of this strategy carry out research into alternative affordable housing tenures.

Theme 1: Housing Need and Demand

Comments

General comments:

- Some questioned the quality of data and how to best plan for future need
- Some commented that they felt that demand is undercounted due to homeless households and adult children living with parents.
- Received a couple of comments pertaining to the design and materials used for new homes and support for them being in keeping with local materials.

How this is being taken forward in the strategy:

We note comments around the data but until the next HNDA is completed these are best agreed data set we have but we have committed to updating this section of the strategy when the new numbers are available.

We will continue to track adult children living with parents, may be linked to need for alternative affordable options.

WDC's design panel ensures that all developments are high quality and consultation is welcomed throughout the design process.

Theme 1: Housing Need and Demand

Comments

Type of Housing:

- Lots of support for wheelchair housing
- Housing should be designed with internal stairs so chairlifts can be fitted more easily
- More larger homes needed for families.
- Need for pensioner accommodation & possibility to free up family housing

How this is being taken forward in the strategy:

We note the need for more wheelchair housing and this is reflected in our design standard which requires 10% of

affordable housing to be wheelchair designed, we would like to see this required in the private sector and look forward to the updated housing for varying needs guidance which is being developed by the Scottish Government.

We note the demand for family, larger homes within West Dunbartonshire and will continue to consider waiting lists when we, or our strategic partners are developing new homes.

We have committed to carrying out an Older persons housing review which will look at demand for different housing models and aims to build on the success of our Creveul Court development.

Theme 2: Quality Homes: Questions & Answers

70% of survey respondents did not know about the energy advice service & when asked what type of information would be helpful the following was prioritised:

1. Information about how to reduce my fuel bills e.g. energy saving advice (57.5%)
2. Information about finance e.g. loans, grants to fund upgrades (52.5%)
3. Technical information about how to make my home more energy efficient (49.14%)

How this is being taken forward in the strategy:

We have taken a clear action from this feedback to promote our energy advice service taking guidance from what people have told us they would like information on.

Theme 2: Quality Homes: Comments

Energy Efficiency measures

- Some wanted to see provision for EV charging
- Others thought access to a house MOT service for energy efficiency improvements would be helpful
- Support and information about solar/ wind/ heat pumps
- Some wanted our existing homes to be upgraded to a high standard
- More should be done for existing homes rather than focussing on new build – new build homes very good and would be nice if older stock was as good as possible
- Really important to improve private housing stock

How this is being taken forward in the strategy:

We are delighted to see so much appetite for, and interest in, energy efficiency measures and when we are promoting our energy advice service we will take these into consideration.

It may require referrals to external agencies such as Energy Scotland who can help owner occupiers and private landlords access technical information specific to their home. This may become more pertinent if the Scottish Government introduces new requirements.

Theme 2: Quality Homes: Comments

Specific Housing

- Comments around multi-storey flats and how they felt they were unpopular. Some felt that children shouldn't live there and others thought that older people shouldn't live there meanwhile others thought they would be good for older people so they can live there with carers etc. on hand

How this is being taken forward in the strategy:

Our asset management strategy and database identified poorly performing stock and we will continue to monitor this information paying particular attention to our multi-story blocks of flats. If needed we will develop a specific strategy for these homes.

Theme 3: Homelessness & Housing options

– Questions and Answers

Do you believe the section clearly explains the varied strands of the Council's approach to tackling this issue?

35% strongly agree or agree
32.23% neutral

How this is being taken forward in the strategy:

We have updated the text best we can to make it clearer however since a lot of it technical and statutory requirements it cannot be excluded or over simplified.

This feedback links to comments we

received which suggest that more clarity around the homeless process would be welcomed by many of our residents and tenants particularly because some of the processes and rules such as local connection are changing and others felt the system was inconsistent e.g. dealing with evictions or housing need.

Therefore when we are reviewing our communications approach we will include reviewing how we communicate our homeless procedures.

Theme 3: Homelessness & Housing options

comments

General comments:

- Support for supported accommodation
- Support for those escaping domestic abuse etc
- Dislike of private residential tenancies for homeless households Homeless officers should be available for face to face support
- More homes are needed

How this is being taken forward in the strategy:

For those who need support, supported accommodation can be a good model meanwhile for others housing first will be best and thus we will continue to take a person centric support. This also applies to the tenure of homes which are right

for homeless applicant, for some private lets will be the right option.

We have strong domestic abuse policies which should ensure that victims are protected from the perpetrators of violence.

The Covid pandemic has made it hard to deliver face to face services but we hope to return this service as soon as possible.

As set out before we want to see more homes built within the council area and homes which are suitable for a variety of needs and household types.

Theme 4: Place and community: 20 minute neighbourhood: Questions and answers

The strategy expresses support for the concept of 20-Minute Neighbourhoods. Do you agree that such an approach would improve our neighbourhoods?

72% strongly agree or agree
16.5% neutral

If the 20-Minute Neighbourhood approach was adopted where you live, do you think this would encourage you to walk or cycle more and to use a car less?

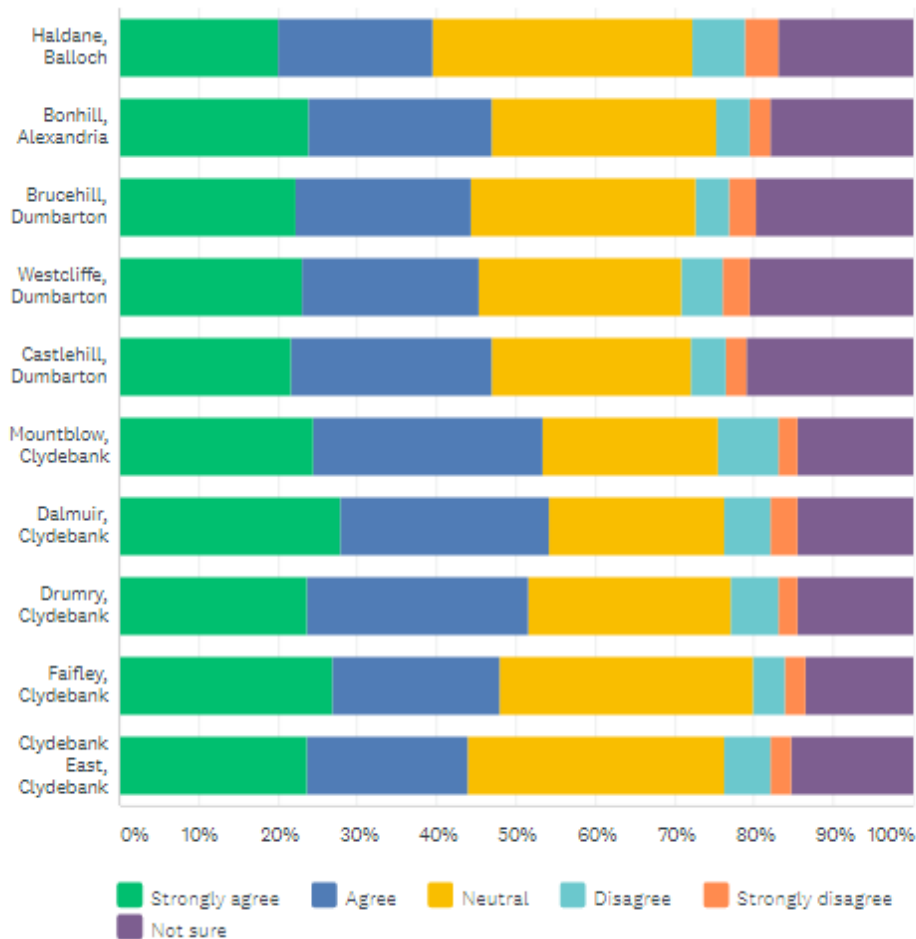
52.5% strongly agree
or agree

How this is being taken forward in the strategy:

We are delighted to see such support for the concept of twenty minute neighbourhoods and the potential they offer to encourage active travel.

We have committed to working with other departments in the council to carry out a 20 minute neighbourhood review per year of the strategy.

Theme 4: Place and community: Regeneration areas:



Comments:

- Doesn't show my local area (Duntocher)
- Doesn't show Bellsmyre
- Agreed, this includes my local area
- Need to focus on existing homes within these areas

How this is being taken forward in the strategy:

There is clear support for all of the regeneration areas identified in the draft survey and we have added Bellsmyre to the list reflecting feedback received. We did not add Duntocher because it was only mentioned once and does not meet other criteria.

Theme 4: Place and community: 20 minute neighbourhood: Comments

Comments:

- 20 mins is a long way for some people to walk
- Need for police and wardens to make feel safe

How this is being taken forward in the strategy:

We also note the comments about 20 minutes is far for some people to walk and have since clarified that within our strategy we are referring to a ten minute walk there and ten minutes walk back so 20 minutes in total.

We also note the importance of safety and this was identified by our HIA process too and therefore we will work with other teams to improve this where appropriate.

Theme 5: Particular needs housing: comments (no specific question)

Types of Housing:

- Need for those with complex needs to be housed appropriately to support them and their families
- More adaptive housing with space for wheelchairs and equipment
- Build more housing for older people with internet- perception older people are forgotten about

How this is being taken forward in the strategy:

We will continue to work with our colleagues in HSCP about the needs of the families and people they work with to ensure they access the right type of housing.

As mentioned we are developing more wheelchair housing alongside adapting existing homes, where appropriate. Our design standard requires 10% of affordable homes be designed for wheelchair users and we hope the private sector will develop more suitable homes.

We intend to carry out an older persons housing review to ensure that older households are able to access the right kind and type of housing for them. This will include amenities such as internet.

Theme 5: Particular needs housing: comments (no specific question)

Training/ awareness raising:

- Need for mental health awareness in housing, need for mental health approach appears very focused on physical health.
- Need for staff training on how to deal with mental health.
- Staff training for working with those with autism so can understand

How this is being taken forward in the strategy:

We have committed to training our staff and will encourage our strategic housing partners to do the same. This will include training for the areas identified in this survey (mental health and autism) but will also cover any other identified areas during the lifetime of this strategy.

Overarching comments:

How we communicate with people?

Comments:

- Closed offices & lack of face to face customer service was missed
- Have a note of best way to communicate with tenants and ensure it is used across all departments
- Have consistent people so that tenants engage with the same person as much as possible
- Paper forms can be hard for those who struggle with reading and writing
- Write clearly and use simple language
- Use social media, local TV and radio adverts to reach different people
- Partnership working e.g. other RSLs, community groups and spaces to promote services and opportunities

How this is being taken forward in the strategy:

We have committed to communications review during the lifetime of this strategy and welcome these initial suggestions and ideas of how to improve our communications.

We look forward to providing face to face customer service when it is considered safe to do so.

Overarching comments:

Comments relating to Allocations:

Housing needs:

- Challenges moving to/ from an area
- How we check on people's "actual" needs
- Perception about *who you know*

Points

- Disabled but not enough points to get a new build.
- Points should be done away with
- Disabled but not enough points to qualify for appropriate housing
- Physical disabilities points compared to learning difficulties compared to mental ill health
- People with carers should be allowed to have 2 bedroom properties

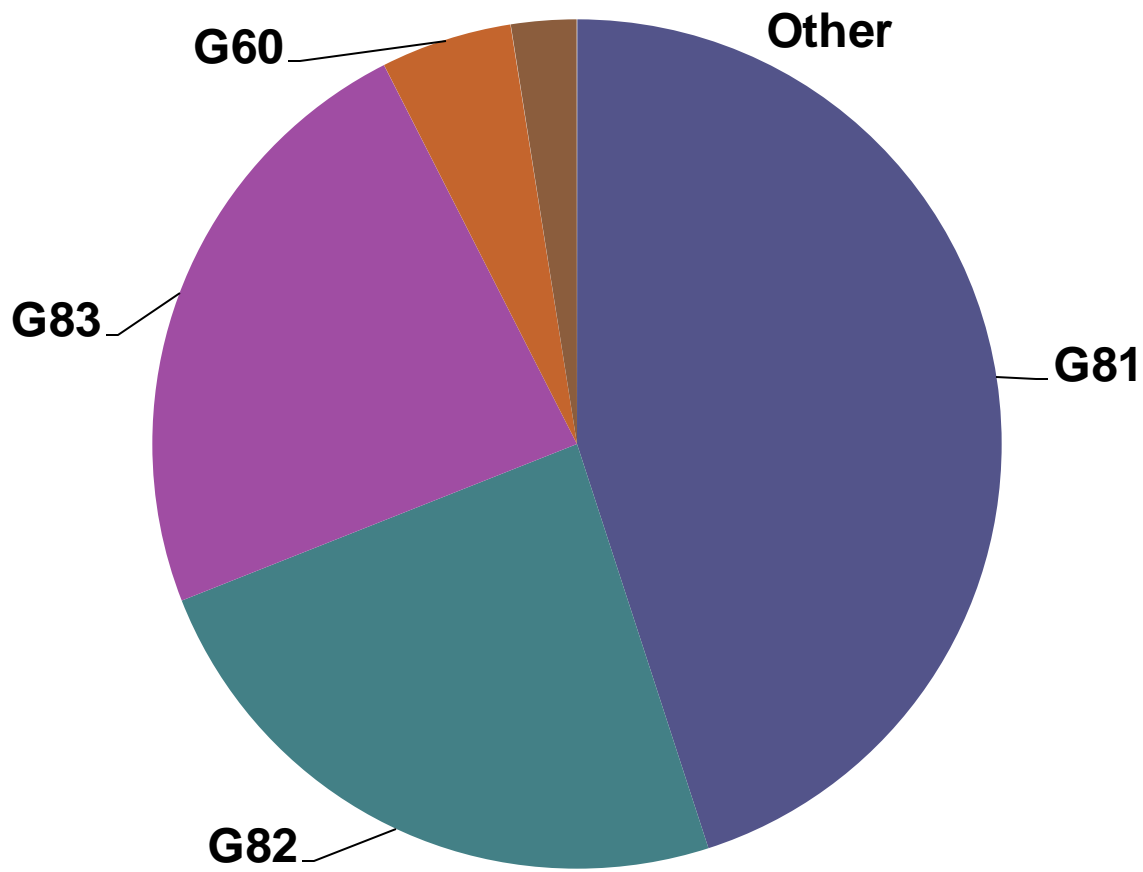
Medical Assessments:

- Medical assessment are not fair/ challenging
- Make the application process easier to get points e.g. GP letters cost money

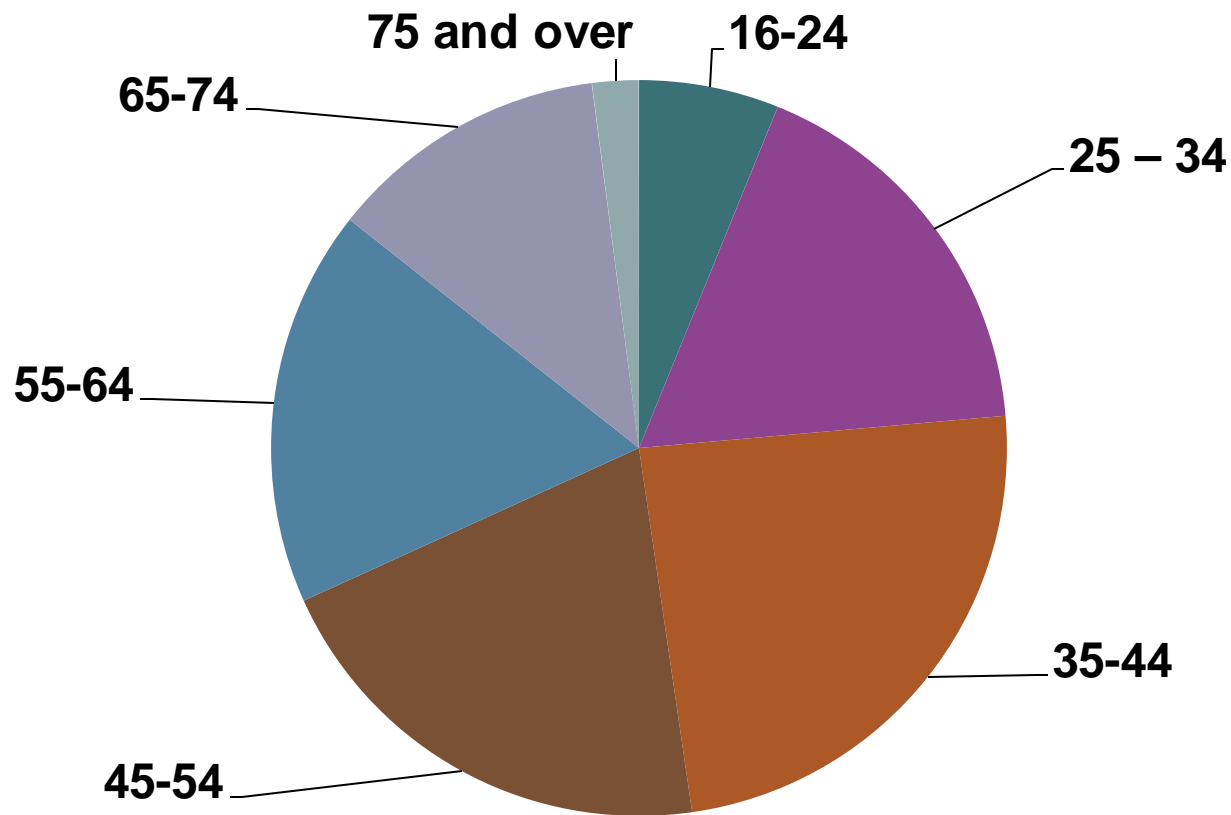
These comments will be picked up in our allocations policy review. They were shared with the team working on that project.

Who completed our survey:

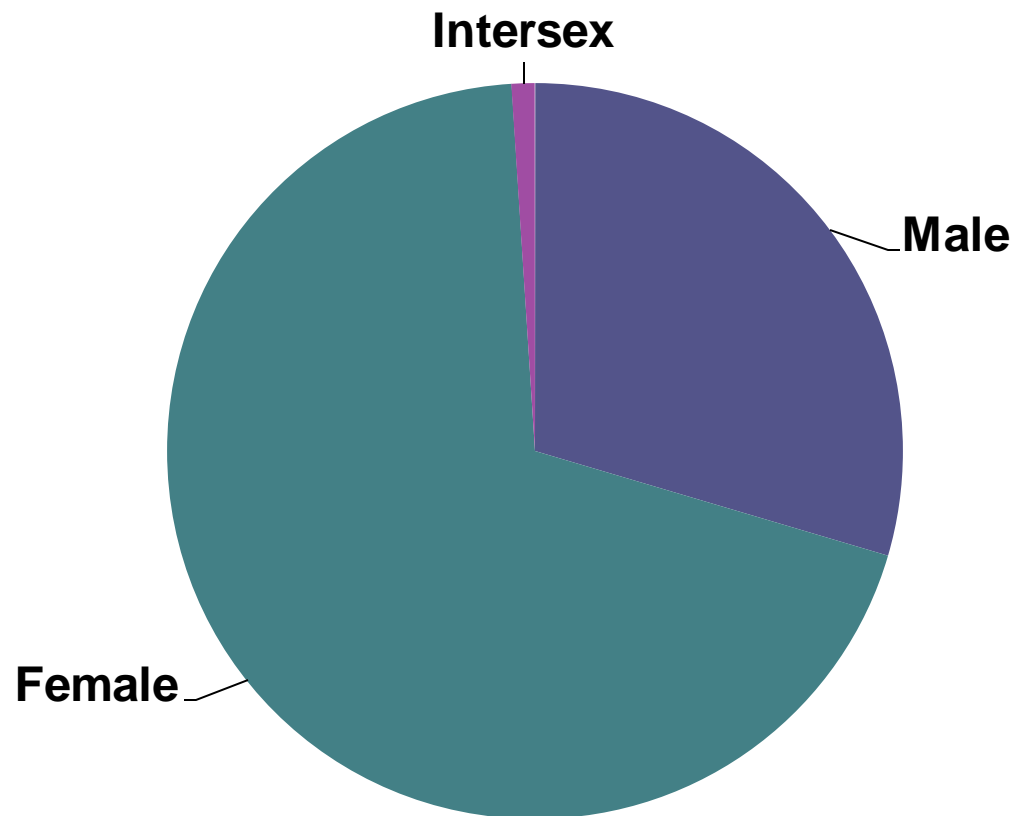
Where did our survey respondents come from (130 responses)?



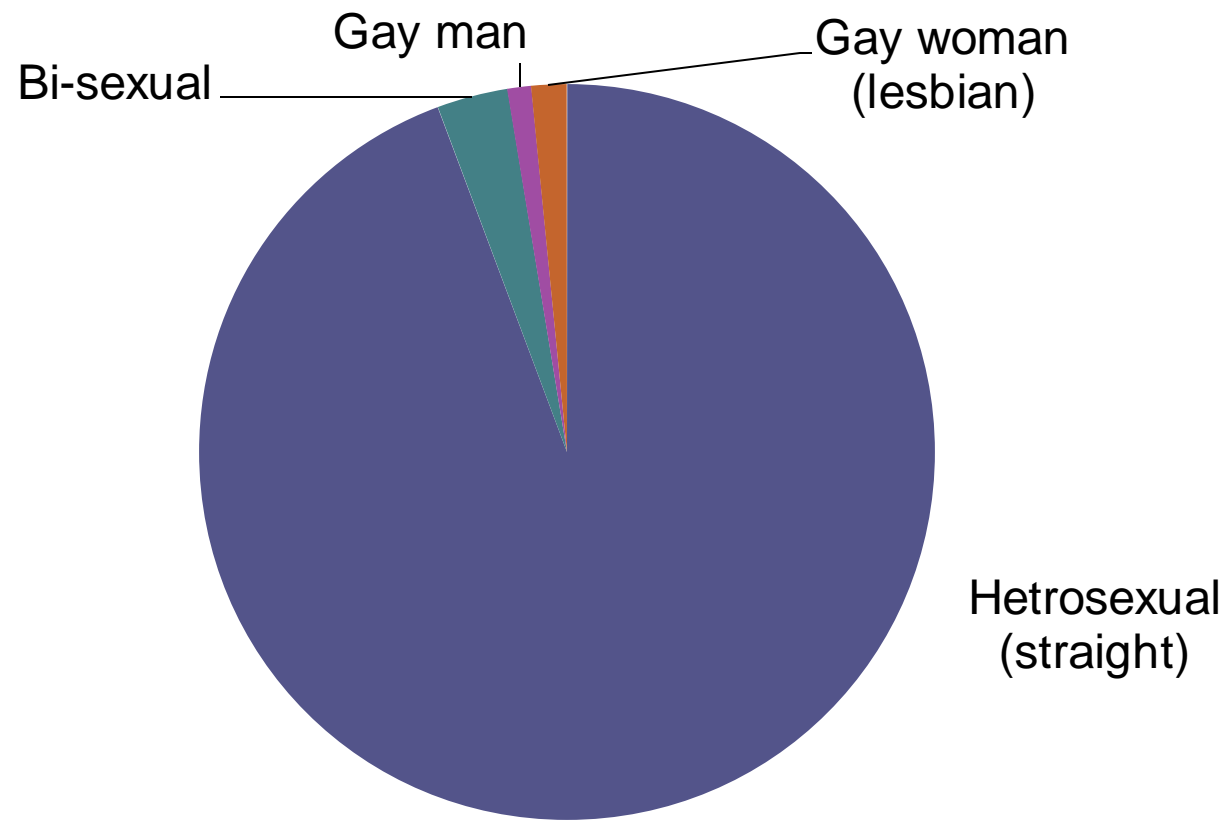
What age were our survey respondents?



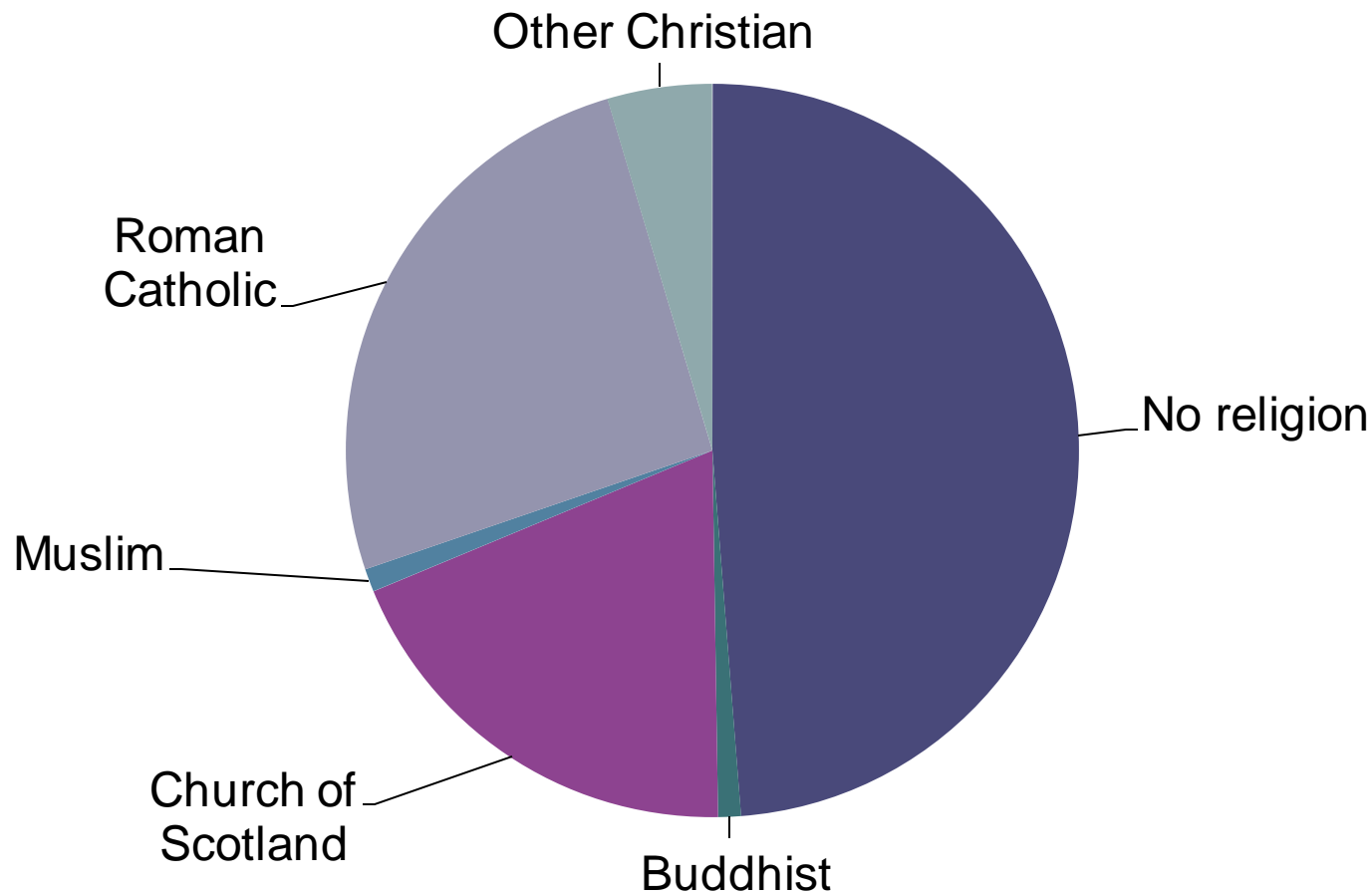
Sex of our respondents:



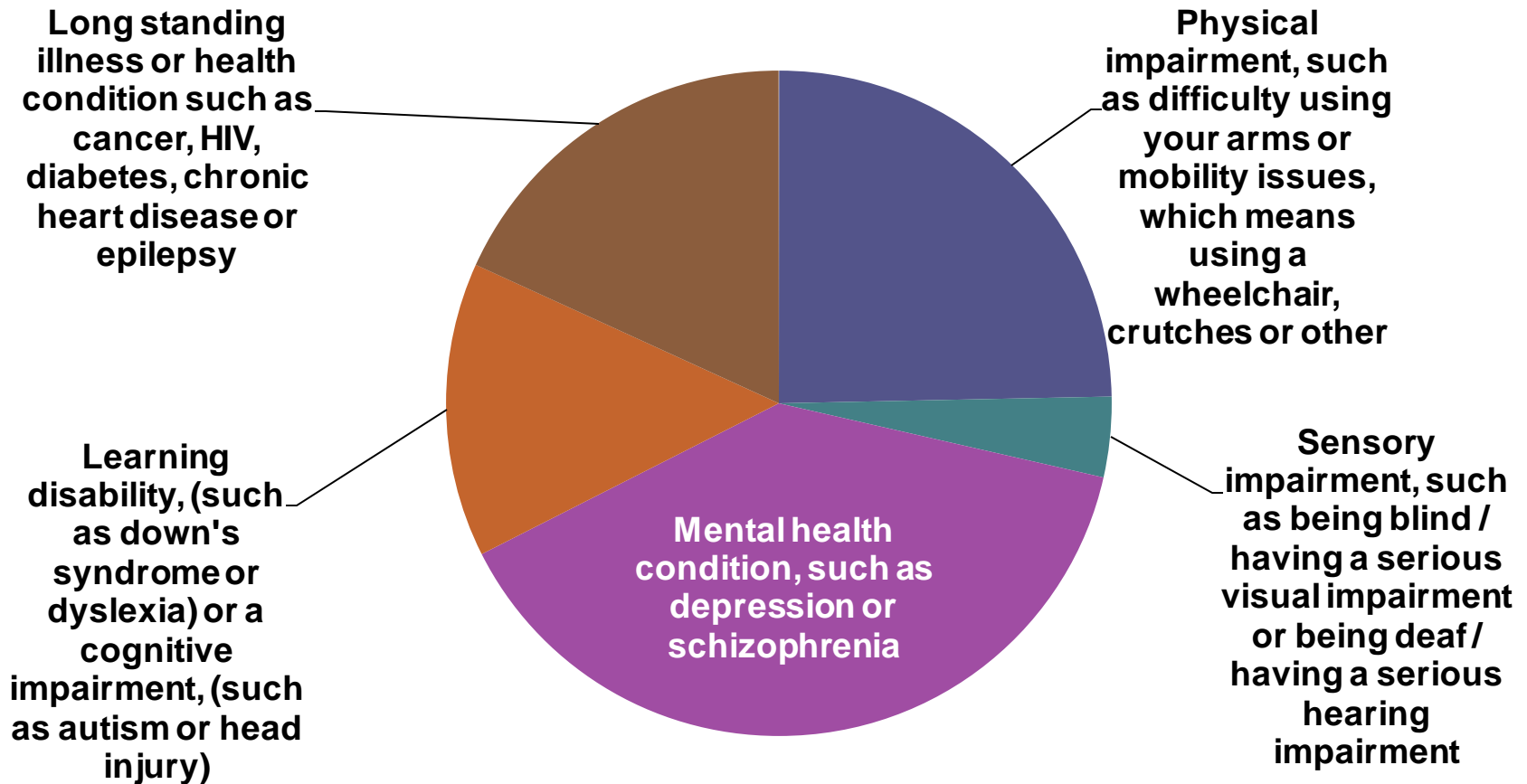
Sexual Orientation of survey respondents:



Religion of survey respondents:



23% of survey respondents considered themselves to have a disability, of those they reported the following:



Ethnicity of our survey respondents:

