

Classification	Item No.
Open	

Meeting:	Cabinet
Meeting date:	30 th June 2021
Title of report:	Future of the Civic Venues
Report by:	Councillor Gold, Cabinet Member for Communities
Decision Type:	Key Decision
Ward(s) to which report relates	All

1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1.1 The Council operates three Civic Venues all of which operate at a loss and are also in need of significant financial investment in future years. Following a meeting of the Council's Cabinet on 24th November 2020, closure of all three venues was proposed as an option, on a permanent basis, in order to generate ongoing savings, and to avoid the cost of future capital investment. The Civic Venues operated at a combined overspend of £252,232 per annum (19/20 figures), despite a budgeted subsidy.
- 1.1.2 All three venues are underutilised. 36% of users attend from outside of the Borough of Bury. Bury Council continues to subsidise all bookings. The budget saving potential from the closure of all three venues is reflected in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2021/22. It is important however to reference that very positive and complimentary feedback has been given in respect of the Civic Venues workforce via the public consultation, citing high levels of customer service and professionalism.
- 1.1.3 Feedback given to the public survey shows a consensus from all bar a few responders in respect of keeping the Civic Venues open, responders citing they are part of Bury's history and should be preserved for future generations. Responders feel the Council should provide such venues as they define the community's identity. Responders have a strong positive feeling towards the venues, describing their love for the venues, and their devastation in respect of the proposed closures. Responders are specifically concerned about the potential loss of the sprung dance floor in Prestwich, the potential impact the closures could have on health and wellbeing, and the older population of Bury.
- 1.1.4 Alternative venues exist for a high proportion of current Civic Venues bookings across the borough of Bury, i.e. for weddings, conferences, parties and meetings.

- 1.1.5 As a result of the Covid pandemic and subsequent government restrictions, all three Venues have been closed since March 2020. In line with the Governments road map, venues could re-open in July 2021, however both the Elizabethan Suite and Ramsbottom Civic Hall are being utilised as Covid Vaccination Centres and will continue to do so until 31/7/21(it is feasible that the venues will be required until 2022), preventing any feasible re-opening until a later date. However continued restrictions on weddings and the numbers able to attend large events could remain in place. Therefore, the detrimental effect of the Covid pandemic on income levels, as a result of the closure, social distancing measures, and potential reduced numbers will continue to affect the venues income.
- 1.1.6 The Longfield Suite requires immediate repairs to the roof, and other minor repairs, at a cost of c£150,000 to re-open.
- 1.1.7 The Civic Venues workforce (10FTE) are at risk of redundancy, subject to potential redeployment opportunities that may exist
- 1.1.8 A Place Management and Movement Plan is currently being developed for Ramsbottom to build on what already exists. In 12 months', time alternative opportunities could exist for the venue i.e. for the Council to advertise for a Partner to manage it.
- 1.1.9 The Elizabethan Suite is intrinsically linked to the options currently being developed for the future of the Town Hall, and the One Public Estate in Bury. There is no clear timescale in respect of any decisions being reached. In addition, significant options may exist as part of the proposed flexi Market Hall, subject to the award via a bid to the Levelling Up Fund, which would incorporate event / function space. A cross party member working group is proposed to consider and report back to Cabinet on options for the future of Bury Town Hall including the Elizabethan Suite.
- 1.1.10 The Longfield Suite is intrinsically linked to the regeneration and development of Prestwich and will be demolished in due course. It is anticipated an alternative community space, as part of the redevelopment, could be in situ by 2024.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

That the Cabinet: -

- 2.1.1 Note the results and feedback generated from the public consultation in respect of the Civic Venues.
- 2.1.2 Having regard to the views received from the consultation; the future of the Civic Venues are as follows: -
 - a) Ramsbottom Civic Hall to re-open once the Vaccination Centre has ceased, and when covid restrictions allow. Its future to be considered as part of the current planning process in respect of the Place Management and Movement Plan for Ramsbottom.
 - b) The Longfield Suite remain closed and be replaced by a new events and community space, to be provided by the redevelopment of Prestwich Town Centre.
 - c) That the sprung dancefloor at the Longfield Suite be retained and preserved for future use at an alternative venue in the borough. The memorial wall to be relocated as part of the regeneration and development of Prestwich.
 - d) The Elizabethan Suite to re-open, once the Vaccination Centre has ceased, and when covid restrictions allow, however, there will be no catering/beverage function.

- e) That the Chief Executive be requested to convene a cross party working group to consider the options for the future of Bury Town Hall and the Elizabethan Suite and to report with recommendations to a future meeting of the Cabinet.

3.0 Background – Venue Overview

3.1 The Elizabethan Suite.

3.1.1 The Elizabethan Suite is part of Bury Town Hall and opened in 1954. It has capacity for 350 people. Pre-Covid the venue held over 720 events per year and catered for 800 events via the kitchens. In addition to a main hall, balcony bar and two further meeting rooms, the venue homes holding kitchens, serveries and basement kitchens for the catering function, and the main booking office.

3.1.2 Utilisation of the venue pre-Covid was 32.1%.

3.1.3 All events operating within the venue are subsidised.

3.1.4 The Elizabethan Suite continues to be utilised as a vaccination centre. As a result, it has not been possible to carry out any maintenance or aesthetic work internally or externally, beyond urgent repairs to maintain it and keep it at a suitable standard. This, along with minimal investment over the years due to budget restraints, has resulted in a small list of essential works that will need to be carried out urgently, along with a more extensive refurbishment plan. It is estimated that the cost of immediate repairs is £3,300, with a further c£270,000 required to bring the venue up to a standard that is expected of today's clientele. This would be required to attract and increase custom and put the venue in a similar footing to the alternative premises available across the borough. The Town Hall is part of a wider asset review and regeneration programme. Any decision to invest in the Elizabethan Suite for the long term would need to be aligned to any future decision in respect of the entire Town Hall building.

3.2 The Longfield Suite.

3.2.1 The Longfield Suite in Prestwich was opened in 1971 and is the largest of the three venues, with a capacity for 560 people. Pre-Covid the venue held over 1700 events per year. The large ballroom homes a large sprung dance floor (attracting dancers from across the Country), a large stage and backstage area, bar, cellar and second floor offices.

3.2.2 Utilisation of the venue pre-Covid was 43.65%.

3.2.3 The Longfield Suite is the busiest of the three venues with regards to footfall and the number of events held. However, there has been a decline in income and core regular business over the past 3-5 years. As a result, a restructure has been previously undertaken to reduce the venues opening hours. All events operated within the venue are subsidised.

3.2.4 The maintenance budget is annually overspent due to the age of the interior and fabric of the building. The building requires extensive repairs and maintenance to meet health and safety requirements and is unable to re-open at present time due major health and safety issues arising from the poor condition of the roof. The cost to repair the roof, and other minor repairs, is c£150,000. (It is to be noted that £50,000 has been allocated from capital funding). A further £446,000 would be required to bring the venue up to a standard that is expected of today's clientele.

3.2.5 Several regular events have permanently cancelled their bookings.

3.3 Ramsbottom Civic Hall.

3.3.1 Ramsbottom Civic Hall was refurbished in 2010 and has capacity for 250 people. Pre-Covid the venue held over 880 events per year.

3.3.2 Utilisation of the venue pre-Covid was 30.8%.

3.3.3 A recent restructure reduced opening hours, closing on non-productive days, and thus reduced expenditure and workforce costs. All events operated within the venue are subsidised. It is estimated that the cost of immediate repairs is £3,400, with a further £10,000 required to bring the venue up to a standard that is expected of today's clientele. In addition, there are opportunities to develop the upper floor of the building. Development costs would need to be fully investigated.

3.3.4 Ramsbottom Civic Hall also has a very active Friend's group FORCH (Friends of Ramsbottom Civic Hall), who are a fully constituted and community-based organisation. They have tirelessly supported the Hall since forming in 2007. Throughout this period, they have assisted in obtaining additional funding through grants and sponsorship, supported events and have been the conduit to community engagement within Ramsbottom. FORCH have advised that they remain committed to the future of the Hall, however the current make-up of the group, the need for legal, financial and management skills would preclude a direct approach to a self-managed scheme, however if an appropriate organisation were to be approached, they would not oppose it.

3.4 Usage

3.4.1 Prior to the Covid pandemic, the venues collectively hosted over 3300 individual events annually. A breakdown of usage per venue is outlined in the table below: -

Elizabethan Suite Utilisation of the venue pre-Covid was 32.1% .	Longfield Suite Utilisation of the venue pre-Covid was 43.65% .	Ramsbottom Civic Hall Utilisation of the venue pre-Covid was 30.8% .
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Council meetings • Civic led events i.e. Mayor's Ball, Mayor Making • Vote counting • Weddings • Cultural events • Bury Pride • Internal and external corporate bookings • Celebratory events • Concerts for Bury Music Service • Award Ceremonies • High School Proms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly events, i.e. exercise classes, weight management groups, dance classes • Community events • Church groups • Social dancing events • Hosts the Made in Bury Business Awards • Large music festivals and live music events • Facilitates the quarterly Prestwich Artisan Market • Wrestling events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wellness classes • Community focused events • Weddings • Celebratory occasions • Live music events • Food, Craft and Artisan Markets

3.4.2 36% of the users of the venues are from outside the borough of Bury. The Civic Venues attract a large proportion of people from postcodes within a 10 to 20 minute driving radius, including Bury, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford and Blackburn.

- 3.4.3 The Civic Venues Team have taken continuous steps to develop the venues and attract new customers and bookings with the aim of maximising occupancy and income. Developments have included new wedding packages, increased programs of live music, a strong Christmas offering, an improved menu with higher profit margins, a more focused and robust marketing strategy and plan, increasing the number of both internal and external events, and new weekend income streams via the Friday Night Food Market. Although new and higher numbers of events contribute to the overall income, the income fails to cover the increasing operating costs.
- 3.4.4 As a result of the Covid pandemic and subsequent government restrictions, all three Venues have been closed since March 2020. In line with the Governments road map, venues could re-open in July 2021, however both the Elizabethan Suite and Ramsbottom Civic Hall are being utilised as Covid Vaccination Centres and will continue to do so until 31/7/21(it is feasible that the venues will be required until 2022), preventing any feasible re-opening until a later date. However continued restrictions on weddings and the numbers able to attend large events could remain in place. Therefore, the detrimental effect of the Covid pandemic on income levels, as a result of the closure, social distancing measures, and potential reduced numbers will continue to affect the venues income.
- 3.4.5 Historical uncertainty in respect of the future of the venues has had a determinantal impact on the number of bookings received across all three locations. Therefore, it is anticipated that this trend will continue, impacting on income and costs.

4.0 Financial Overview

- 4.1.1 The Civic Venues operated at a combined overspend of £252,232 per annum (19/20 figures). Strides have been taken to reduce the deficit over recent years; by closing the café at Castle Leisure Centre (operated by the Civic Venue Service), reviewing the vending and beverage service, restricting the service, closing on non-busy days and developing marketing strategies etc. However, despite the best efforts of the staff, the venues do not break even and as a result events and bookings are still being subsidised by the Council.
- 4.1.2 The average spend per person attending events ranges from £1.50 – £13.50. The venues achieve a consistent 68% gross profit on drinks and 53% gross profit on food which meets industry standards.
- 4.1.3 The table below identifies key financial information in respect of the three venues 19/20 figures pre COVID as a typical year, note that post COVID income will be impacted negatively, and costs will continue to increase:

2019 / 2020 Figures	Elizabethan Suite	Longfield Suite	Ramsbottom Civic Hall	Civic Chef	Total
Saving if fully closed (budget)	£19,800	£128,600	£102,600	£103,500	£354,500 (*£224,500)
Subsidy required if remain open (includes central overheads)	£145,391	£190,823	£123,327	£105,891	£565,432
Current annual loss (budget, plus historic overspend)	£84,091	£142,823	£22,927	£2,391	£252,232

* From the Medium-Term Finance strategy, a saving of £130,000 was taken as part of the 21/22 budget review creating the following Loss / Saving.

4.1.4 The following table states the current position for 2019 / 2020 stating actual cost of the service net of Central recharges and depreciation. This states a continuing annual loss of £269,984. The civic chef function is intertwined in the venues including a £103,500 budget with an overspend of £2,391. Additional cost if considered as a separate function is likely to be higher due to COVID restrictions, capacity and reduced events taking place.

2019 / 2020 Figures	Elizabethan Suite	Longfield Suite	Ramsbottom Civic Hall	Civic Chef	Total
Net Budget	-£86,800	-£22,900	£55,500	£103,500	£49,300
Actual Cost (net of Depreciation and Overheads/HoS)	£4,592	£125,205	£83,596	£105,891	£319,284
Variance	£91,392	£148,105	£28,096	£2,391	£269,984

In 2020 / 2021 additional budget to counteract unrealistic income targets was applied to the Civic Venues. Subsequently, as part of the Medium-Term Finance Strategy, £130,000 was taken as a budget saving for 2021/22. Any options which include reopening of the venues, would entail the reversal of some or all of these savings, as well as the strong likelihood of incurring costs above the levels budgeted for.

4.1.5 The required capital investment to re-open the venues to customers, and bring the venues up to a standard that is expected of today's clientele is outlined below: -

	Elizabethan Suite	Longfield Suite	Ramsbottom Civic Hall
Cost to re-open	£3,300	c£150,000	£3,400
Cost to make improvements to compete in the current market	c£270,000	£446,000	£10,000
Costs to maintain the basement kitchen	£3,400	N/A	N/A
Total	£276,700	£596,000	£13,400

5.0 Public Consultation

5.1.1 A public consultation survey, developed in conjunction with the Legal, Communications and Social Development Teams was live on the One Community site for a period of 8 weeks (21/1/21-17/3/21): -

- Paper copies were available on request
- Flyers were located in the boroughs Vaccination Centres, and at the main reception of the Town Hall to signpost residents to the survey.
- A press release was issued
- An email to all distribution lists held via the Civic Venues Service and Social Development Team (this includes Community Groups, including BAME representatives and LGBTQI) was sent
- Notifications were made on social media (Facebook and Twitter), and the Council's website
- Communication and consultation take place with the Civic Venues workforce in accordance with HR policy and legislative requirements.

5.1.2 The public consultation survey generated 4,121 visitors to the One Community site, of which, 2,599 directly contributed to the survey. (It is to be noted that the Social Development Team, who oversee public surveys, have stated this is a very good level of response, however, overall, this is a low percentage of the overall adult population that live in Bury). The survey contained questions with multiple choice answers, and questions which enabled the responder to leave their comments. (Please see Appendix 1). The list below outlines the key feedback from the multiple-choice answers: -

- 96% of responders had used / attended a Civic Venue prior to their temporary closure because of the Covid pandemic.
- 60% of responders have visited a Civic Venue to attend a function (i.e. a party / wedding / live music event / dinner).
- 47% also attended a regular activity (i.e. dancing / a weekly session).
- The majority of responders attended a Civic Venue once a month.
- The Venue most attended by responders is the Longfield Suite, followed by the Elizabethan Suite, and lastly, Ramsbottom Civic Hall.
- Those who didn't use or attend a Civic Venue, cited that better venues are available elsewhere / the Civic Venues were not attractive.
- 45% of responders do not attend wellbeing / exercise classes elsewhere. 10% did attend wellbeing / exercise classes elsewhere, as they hold gym membership / attend a swimming pool, attended a variety of sessions and on other days, to socialise, attend sessions around work commitments, as other locations are more convenient, and to keep fit / support mental and physical wellbeing.
- 36% of responders travel from outside the Borough of Bury to use / attend a Civic Venue. (Non-Bury residents).
- 75% of those who booked a large event / function did not consider alternative venues before booking.
- 60% said they would not book or attend events / functions / sessions in alternative venues if the Civic Venues were no longer open.
- Of the 40% who said they would book or attend events / functions / sessions in alternative locations, Community Centres, Church Halls and Local Hotels were the most popular alternatives.
- 68% of responders said they would miss the Civic Venues as a location for a function (i.e. party / wedding / live music event / dinner / dance) if they were to close.
- The highest proportion of responders were aged over 65 (28%). 65% of responders were female. 92% of responders described their ethnic background as white British.

5.1.3 Feedback given to the survey shows a consensus from all bar a few responders to keeping the Civic Venues open, responders citing they are part of Bury's history and

should be preserved for future generations. Responders feel the Council should provide such venues as they define the community's identity. Responders have a strong positive feeling towards the venues, describing their love for the venues, and their devastation in respect of the proposed closures. Responders feel the venues give them an opportunity to meet friends and enable them to engage in sessions that support their physical and mental health. Some responders feel a closure of the venues would result in them being isolated and consequently live in poorer health. The majority of responders felt they wouldn't travel to alternative locations to access their usual sessions and / or the sessions they attend are not available at other locations. Specifically, responders felt a closure could impact more detrimentally on the elderly population in Bury.

- 5.1.4 In respect of the Elizabethan Suite, specific feedback has been received via Bury Music Service who are concerned that there may be nowhere else in Bury in which a large concert could be held, therefore potentially detrimentally affecting the ability of young people in terms of their ability to perform to an audience.
- 5.1.5 In respect of the Longfield Suite, a significantly large volume of responses were provided in respect of its dancing sessions. Responders have cited the quality of the sprung dance floor, with dancers travelling from far afield to partake, and the ballroom being one of the few remaining in the UK. The Wrestling group (Future Shock Wrestling) have also expressed their concerns at the potential loss of the venue.
- 5.1.6 Specifically, in respect of Ramsbottom Civic Hall, responders have cited there may be nowhere else available to hold live music sessions, or other locations for the Heritage Society exhibitions.
- 5.1.7 Additional comments were also received in respect of the closure of Radcliffe Civic Hall in 2016, with responders feeling negatively as no alternative venue has yet been built / made available, and similar concerns about the current venues closing, yet the buildings remaining empty.
- 5.1.8 It is important to reference that very positive and complimentary feedback has been given in respect of the Civic Venues workforce. Responders have cited the high levels of customer service and professionalism.
- 5.1.9 60% of survey responders said they would not book or attend events / functions / sessions in alternative venues if the Civic Venues were no longer open. The responders felt: -
 - Nowhere else is large enough in Bury / there is nothing else like the venues / the sessions on offer are not available elsewhere.
 - The sprung dancefloor / stages / acoustics are not available elsewhere.
 - There are no other community venues available to meet users' needs.
 - Alternative venues in the local area are too expensive.
 - They would not be comfortable attending other venues.
 - They would not travel further afield.
- 5.1.10 The survey asked whether other venues should be considered as alternative options to possibly relocate events / functions / sessions. A large proportion of responders said no as they felt the existing venues should be refurbished and better promoted. Some responders felt alternative could be considered, including Leisure Centres, Church Halls, local Hotels, Community Centres, Sports Clubs and local Colleges and School Halls. Specifically, a local Bowling Club have offered their support if the Venues were to close. Concerns have been raised about what alternatives may still exist after the Covid pandemic.
- 5.1.11 The survey asked for responders to provide their thoughts about the future of the Civic Venues and how the saving proposed via the closure could be made. The

consensus from all bar a few responders is that the Civic Venues should remain open to the public, responders citing they are part of Bury's history and should be preserved for future generations. Responders feel the Council should provide such venues as they define the community's identity. Responders feel the venues should be refurbished, better promoted and the Council should work in partnership with other operators and / or community groups to make the venues work commercially. Responders have cited an opportunity in respect of the possible sale of the top floor of Ramsbottom Civic Hall. Comments were also received in respect of retaining one of the venues only. Suggestions in respect of the achievement of the financial saving included rationalising office space, amalgamating services into one building, selling other buildings, and charging for car parking at the venues.

5.1.12 In addition to the survey, Dance Events North West, who have hired the Longfield Suite on a weekly basis since 2013 have expressed their concerns about the proposed closure. They are very concerned about how the proposed closure will affect their business, how it will impact their dancers in respect of their health and wellbeing, as replacement provisions are not available immediately, and the timing of the consultation in respect of the UK being in a third national lockdown. FORCH remain committed to the future of Ramsbottom Hall and have confirmed that they would not be opposed to conversations in respect of alternative management subject to an appropriate approach and support mechanisms being made available.

6.0 Alternative venues

6.1.1 If the venues were to close, bookers would need to source an alternative location in Bury.

6.1.2 Generally, the cost to hire other venues is more than that of the Civic Venues, and therefore internal Council meetings and events will incur greater costs if moved to alternative venues. Internal Council bookings account for 15% of all bookings.

6.1.3 Internally within the Council, Castle Leisure Centre has the facilities to host several of the larger dance competitions, dance events and wellness activities.

6.1.4 In Bury Town Centre, the Met have increased their capacity from 220 – 270 seated and 300 – 380 standing, which could provide an alternative venue for some events, including concerts for Bury Music Service.

6.1.5 Some external venues have already made an approach to support the potential transfer of bookings.

6.1.6 Alternative venues exist per booking type across Bury. A breakdown is contained in Appendix 2.

7.0 Workforce

7.1.1 There are currently 101 employees employed in the Civic Venues Team. 13 employees are employed on permanent contracts, and 88 via casual contracts (supporting weddings and parties etc). Those with employment rights equates to 10FTE. Employees are contracted to work across the three venues.

7.1.2 Throughout the current period of closure, the Civic Venues staff have been temporarily redeployed to support the Covid emergency as follows: -

- 7 with the Community Hubs
- 3 with the Vaccination Centres
- 2 with Bury Markets
- 1 with Corporate Communications
- 1 with Health & Safety inspections at the Longfield Suite.

7.1.3 Subject to the decision reached at Cabinet, the Council's Employee Consultation Toolkit will be implemented. In line with the Council's Redeployment Policy, employees with employment rights are currently priority two redeployees. Employees are at risk of compulsory redundancy (costs to be determined subject to decision reached) subject to suitable alternative employment being obtained across the Council.

8.0 Options to be considered

8.1 Ramsbottom Civic Hall.

8.1.1 A Town Plan is being developed for Ramsbottom to build on what already exists. In 12 months' time alternative opportunities could exist for the venue i.e. for the Council to advertise for a Partner to manage it. A potential delay of 12 months would allow a feasibility study of possible future options to be carried out in conjunction with the Friends of Ramsbottom Civic Hall. For Ramsbottom the options are as follows: -

8.1.2 Option 1 – re-open fully (whilst the Town Plan is being further developed) once the Vaccination Centre has ended, from 1/8/21 (it is feasible that the venue will be required until 2022). An ongoing minimum subsidy of £83,596pa will be required although this may be higher post COVID recovery. The workforce required to re-open (subject to the implementation of required HR policy and process) would resume in their Civic Venues posts. It is to be noted that due to the continued impact of covid restrictions, there would be a continued impact on income.

8.1.3 Option 2 – re-open in part (no major functions or weddings) once the Vaccination Centre has ended, from 1/8/21 (it is feasible that the venue will be required until 2022). Re-opening in part will require a subsidy of c£64,000pa. The workforce would be at risk of compulsory redundancy (subject to the implementation of required HR policy and process). Redundancy costs would potentially be incurred at a cost to be determined. The workforce required to re-open in part would resume in their Civic Venues posts. It is to be noted that due to the continued impact of covid restrictions, there would be a continued impact on income. Alternative options exist for bookers to relocate elsewhere.

8.1.4 Option 3 – fully close once the Vaccination Centre has ended, from 1/8/21(it is feasible that the venues will be required until 2022). This will generate a net budget saving of £55,500, but much of this has already been taken account of in the budget process. The workforce would be at risk of compulsory redundancy (subject to the implementation of required HR policy and process). Redundancy costs would potentially be incurred at a cost to be determined. The venue could remain empty for 12 months or more in line with the development of the Town Plan. Alternative options exist for bookers to relocate elsewhere.

8.2 The Elizabethan Suite.

8.2.1 The Elizabethan Suite is intrinsically linked to the options currently being developed for the future of the Town Hall, and the One Public Estate in Bury. There is no clear timescale in respect of any decisions being reached. In addition, significant options may exist as part of the proposed flexi Market Hall, subject to the award via an external bid. (Timescale to be determined). There are limited alternative venues in the Town Centre. (The Met, The Lancashire Fusiliers and Castle Leisure Centre can accommodate some bookings). Therefore, the options for the Elizabethan Suite are as follows: -

8.2.2 Option 1 – re-open fully once the Vaccination Centre has ended, from 1/8/21(it is feasible that the venues will be required until 2022). An ongoing minimum subsidy of £4,592pa + £105,891pa civic chef (£110,483) will be required. The workforce

required to re-open (subject to the implementation of required HR policy and process) would resume in their Civic Venues posts. It is to be noted that due to the continued impact of covid restrictions, there would be a continued impact on income and a higher overspend.

- 8.2.3 Option 2 – re-open once the Vaccination Centre has ended, from 1/8/21(it is feasible that the venues will be required until 2022), however there will be no catering/beverage function. Some of the workforce would be at risk of compulsory redundancy (subject to the implementation of required HR policy and process). Redundancy costs would potentially be incurred at a cost to be determined. The running costs of the venue would remain (i.e., utility costs), and income could be lower than previous levels.
- 8.2.4 Option 3 –fully close once the Vaccination Centre has ended, from 1/8/21(it is feasible that the venues will be required until 2022). This will generate a net saving of £4,592 + £105,891 Civic Chef (£110,483), much of which is already accounted for in the current budget. The workforce would be at risk of compulsory redundancy (subject to the implementation of required HR policy and process). Redundancy costs would potentially be incurred at a cost to be determined. The venue could remain empty for 5 years or more subject to the future of the Town Hall. The venue could not be opened up for use internally without the incurred costs of cleaning / caretaking and the co-ordination of bookings by another Council team etc. The running costs of the venue would remain (i.e., utility costs), however the venue would not be income generating. These costs would have to be absorbed by another Council team due to the infrastructure of the Town Hall utilities regardless of option. Alternative options exist for bookers to relocate elsewhere.

8.3 The Longfield Suite.

- 8.3.1 The Longfield Suite is intrinsically linked to the regeneration and development of Prestwich, and will be demolished in due course. It is anticipated an alternative community space could be in situ by 2024. Cabinet (24th March 2021) approved the acquisition of the Longfield Shopping centre, which includes the Longfield Suite and an agreement in principle to enter into a Joint Venture with a developer. This could take up to 9-12 months to complete, following which, the pre-development activity and community consultations will then take place. Once the acquisition is complete, more detailed information regarding the regeneration will be communicated. As part of the regeneration of Prestwich, the Council will seek to achieve a strong civic presence in the heart of the town and will seek to ensure that public health, social and community space, libraries and adult education are re-provided in flexible, cost efficient and state of the art space. Modern public sector hub buildings can be designed with specifications including 'sprung floors' to accommodate a wide range of activities such as dancing, and fitness classes and it has been proposed that the Longfield's Suite current floor is recovered and reused in this instance where possible. The Longfield Suite roof is very badly damaged and is a serious health and safety risk. To re-open the building to the public, c£150,000 repairs would need to be undertaken. Therefore, the options for the Longfield Suite are as follows: -
- 8.3.2 Option 1 – re-open fully once repairs to the roof, and other minor repairs have been undertaken. An ongoing minimum subsidy of £125,205pa will be required. The workforce required to re-open (subject to the implementation of required HR policy and process) would resume in their Civic Venues posts. It is to be noted that due to the continued impact of covid restrictions, there would be a continued impact on income.
- 8.3.3 Option 2 –fully close. This will generate a cost saving of £125,205pa, but some of this taken account of in the 21/22 budget, and a further budget saving of £23,000 would occur. The workforce would be at risk of compulsory redundancy (subject to the implementation of required HR policy and process). Redundancy costs would

potentially be incurred at a cost to be determined. The venue could remain empty until demolished. Alternative options exist for bookers to relocate elsewhere. The memorial wall will be relocated as part of the regeneration and development of Prestwich. In addition, full options will be explored to retain and relocate the existing sprung dance floor.

8.3.4 Management recommend the following: -

- Ramsbottom Civic Hall, Option 1, re-open fully (whilst the Town Plan is being further developed) once the Vaccination Centre has ended, from 1/8/21(it is feasible that the venues will be required until 2022).
- Elizabethan Suite, Option 2 – re-open once the Vaccination Centre has ended, from 1/8/21(it is feasible that the venues will be required until 2022), however there will be no catering/beverage function.
- The Longfield Suite, Option 2, fully close. The memorial wall will be relocated as part of the regeneration and development of Prestwich. In addition, full options will be fully explored to retain and relocate the existing sprung dance floor.

9 Conclusion.

9.1 Cabinet are asked to consider the information provided, the options and recommendations outlined, and reach a final decision with regards to the future of the Elizabethan Suite, the Longfield Suite, and Ramsbottom Civic Hall.

Community impact/links with Community Strategy

As per the Corporate Plan 2020-2022, the Council is facing a financial gap of c£21m by 2022 as a result of: -

- Spending restrictions
- Demand increases for statutory services
- Additional pressures as a result of Covid

In balancing our budget, we will look to make changes and efficiencies to our services which are aligned with the Bury 2030 pledges, to ensure decisions on resources match policy commitments as far as possible.

Equality Impact and considerations:

Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;*
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;*
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.*

The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services.

<p>Equality Analysis</p>  <p>Joint Equality Analysis Template - 1</p>	<p>Please provide a written explanation of the outcome(s) of either conducting an initial or full EA.</p>
<p>Reviewed by Director of People and Inclusion</p>	

**Please note: Approval of a cabinet report is paused when the 'Equality/Diversity implications' section is left blank and approval will only be considered when this section is completed.*

Assessment of Risk:

The following risks apply to the decision:

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
The venues operate at a loss and are also in need of significant financial investment in future years.	Proposed closure of the Civic Venues. Regeneration development options.
Continued restrictions as a result of the Covid pandemic will continue to affect the venues income.	Proposed closure of the Civic Venues.
Liability due to condition of current Buildings / carbon neutral by 2038 target.	Proposed closure of the Civic Venues. Regeneration development options.
Regeneration development options.	Proposed regeneration of Prestwich and the Longfield Shopping area. Consideration of the future of the Town Hall. Ramsbottom Town plan to be developed.
Civic functionality / community impact.	Civic functionality will drop but events but can be moved to many of the local alternative venues within Bury. Potential for other event organisers to facilitate events at a lower cost.
Friends of Ramsbottom Civic Hall (FORCH).	Ensure clear and transparent stakeholder engagement and involvement.
3 rd party operators.	Opportunities to work in partnership can be explored.

Consultation:

Public consultation was undertaken from 21/1/21 to 17/3/21 inclusive.

The Trade Unions are engaged with regards to the potential impact on the Civic Venues workforce.

Legal Implications:

The Council will ensure compliance with all legislative requirements to those on permanent and casual contracts. All policies and procedures will be complied with in accordance with current Council policy and in conjunction with the employee consultation tool kit.

Financial Implications:

The 3 civic venues operated in 2019/20 at a combined cost of £565k per annum, exceeding the Council budgeted subsidy by £252k. A budget saving of £130k was identified during the 2021/22 budget setting process and has already been removed.

It should be noted that the civic venues employ a number of staff, 13 of which are employed on permanent contracts and the closure of these venues will result in redundancy costs being incurred if some or all of these staff cannot be redeployed. These costs are yet to be determined. There are also a further 88 staff who are employed on casual contracts when functions take place.

All of the venues require an element of refurbishment and significant investment in order to bring the venues up to a standard expected of today's clientele for functions. These costs are as follows:

- Elizabethan Suite, immediate repairs £3,300, further investment £270k
- Longfield Suite, immediate repairs £140k, further investment £446k
- Ramsbottom, immediate repairs £3,400, further investment £10k

Based upon the management recommendations if Ramsbottom is to re-open it will continue to require a subsidy of £83,596 per annum. This will require the reinstatement of £76k of the £130k savings that were removed as part of the 21/22 budget setting proposal. The closure of Longfield will generate a further saving of £23k but not until the site is disposed of because various budgets are still required until such time. There is sufficient funding within the Elizabethan Suite budgets to support its reopening with a reduced remit.

However, the significant investment at Longfield for both the immediate repairs of £140k and the further investment of £440k along with the further investment to bring the venues up to the standard expected of today's clientele at the Elizabethan Suite of £270k will not be required. These costs are unbudgeted at this time and therefore do not reflect a saving to the budget, but they do reflect cost avoidance in terms of the alternative options. There is sufficient budget within the overall service to fund the immediate repairs for the Elizabethan Suite and Ramsbottom

Report Author and Contact Details:

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Head of Strategic Projects
F.E.Hayward@bury.gov.uk

Background papers:

Please include a glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.

Term	Meaning
FORCH	Friends of Ramsbottom Civic Hall

Appendix 1 - Project Report

20 January 2021 - 16 March 2021

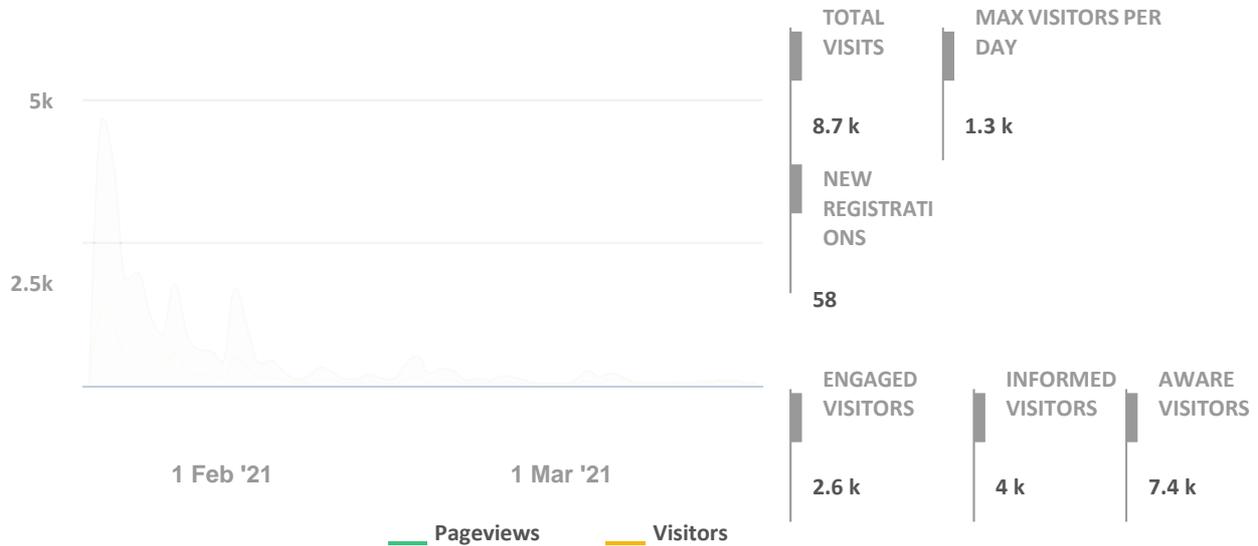
One Community

Bury Council Civic Venues Feedback Survey



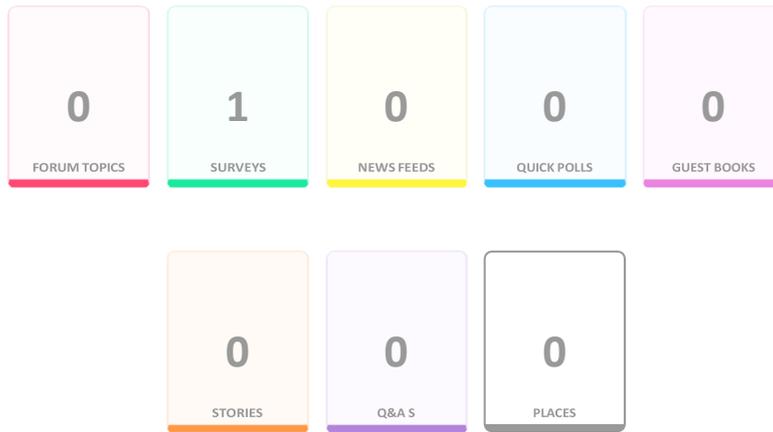
Visitors Summary

Highlights



Aware Participants		Engaged Participants			
7,363		2,599			
Aware Actions Performed	Participants	Engaged Actions Performed			
Visited a Project or Tool Page	7,363	Registered	Unverified	Anonymous	
Informed Participants	4,047	Contributed on Forums	0	0	0
Informed Actions Performed	Participants	Participated in Surveys	46	0	2,553
Viewed a video	0	Contributed to Newsfeeds	0	0	0
Viewed a photo	0	Participated in Quick Polls	0	0	0
Downloaded a document	0	Posted on Guestbooks	0	0	0
Visited the Key Dates page	0	Contributed to Stories	0	0	0
Visited an FAQ list Page	0	Asked Questions	0	0	0
Visited Instagram Page	0	Placed Pins on Places	0	0	0
Visited Multiple Project Pages	1,587	Contributed to Ideas	0	0	0
Contributed to a tool (engaged)	2,599				

ENGAGEMENT TOOLS SUMMARY



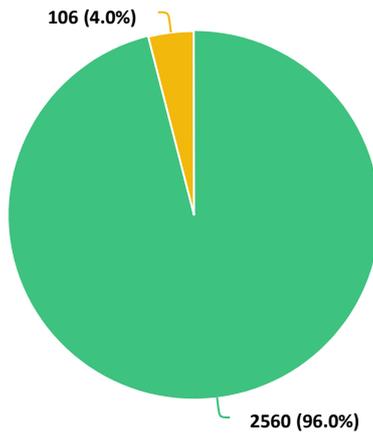
Tool Type	Engagement Tool Name	Tool Status	Visitors	Contributors		
				Registered	Unverified	Anonymous
Survey Tool	Civic Halls Feedback	Archived	4121	46	0	2553

ENGAGEMENT TOOL: SURVEY TOOL

Civic Halls Feedback

Visitors	4121	Contributors	2599	CONTRIBUTIONS	2666
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Prior to the temporary closure due to Covid, did you use / attend a Civic Venue?



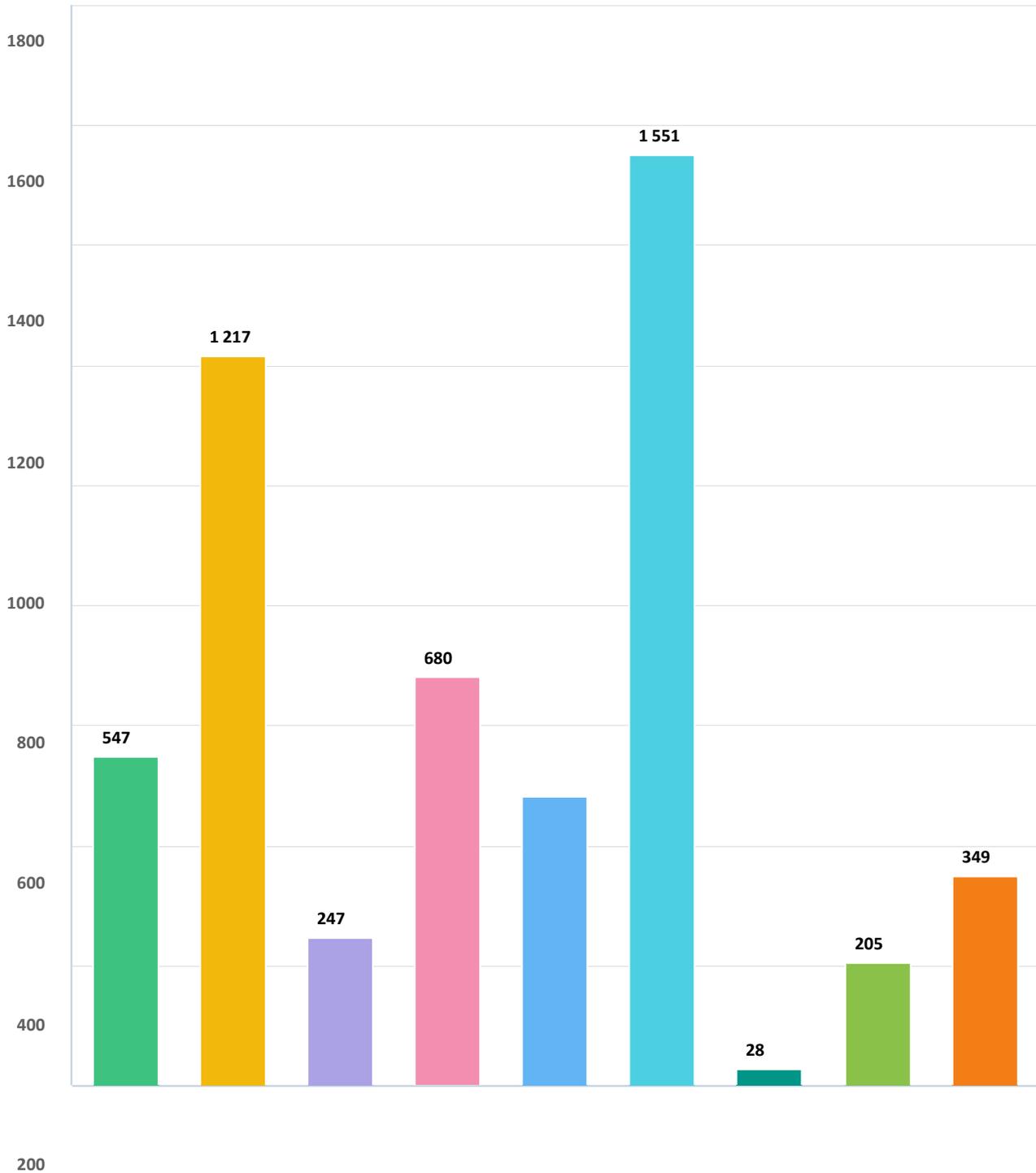
Question options

- Yes
- No

Mandatory Question (2666 response(s))Question

type: Radio Button Question

For what purpose did you use or attend a Civic venue for? (Tick all that apply)



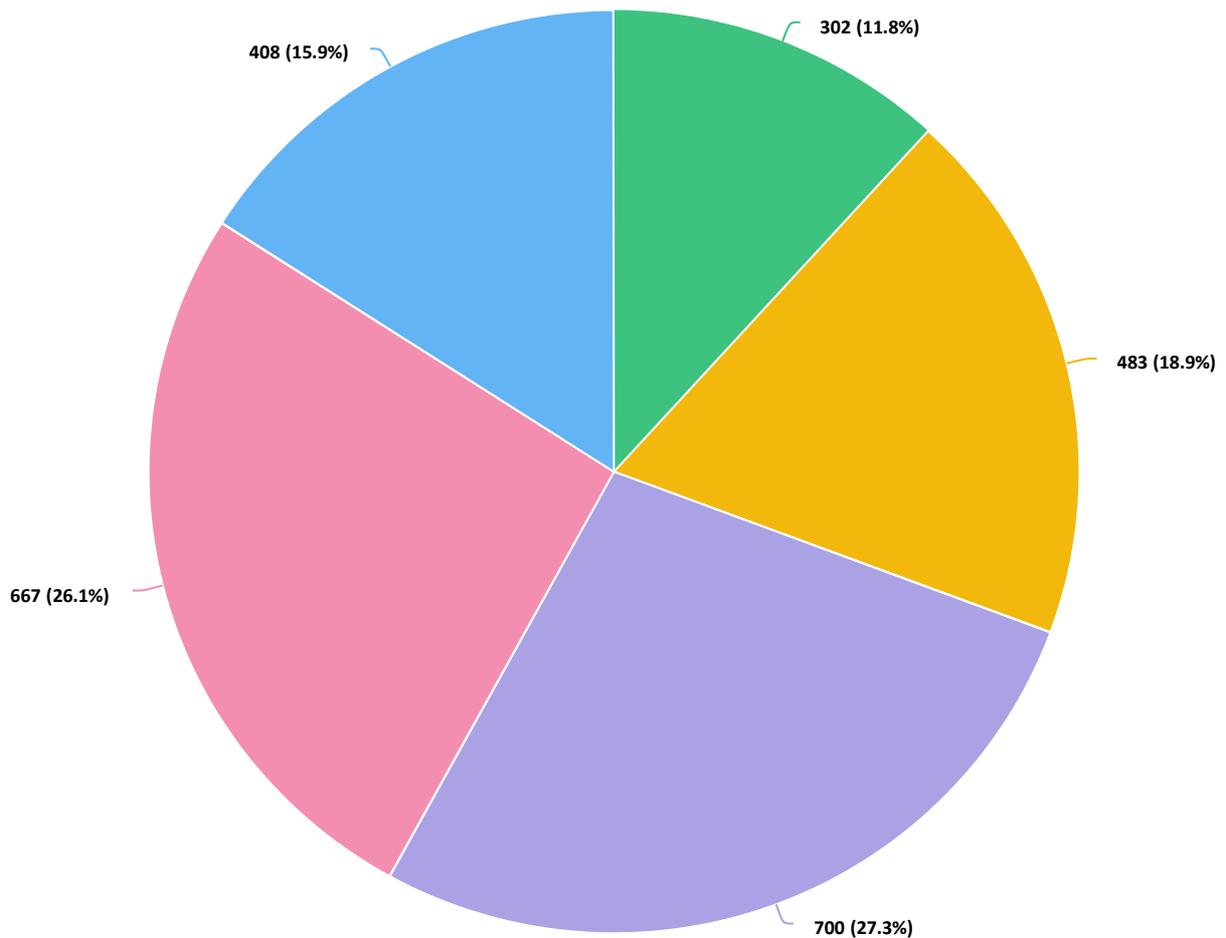
Question options

- To book an event or function ● To attend a regular activity (i.e. dancing, a weekly booking)
- Wellness activities (i.e. Chair based exercise, Fit 'n' 50) ● Attend exhibitions ● Attend conference / meeting
- Attend a function (i.e. party / wedding, live music event, dinner) ● Attend religious service
- Attend a planning enquiry ● Attend a sports event (i.e. boxing, snooker, wrestling) ● Other (please specify)

Mandatory Question (2560 response(s))Question

type: Checkbox Question

How frequently did you use / attend a Civic Venue?



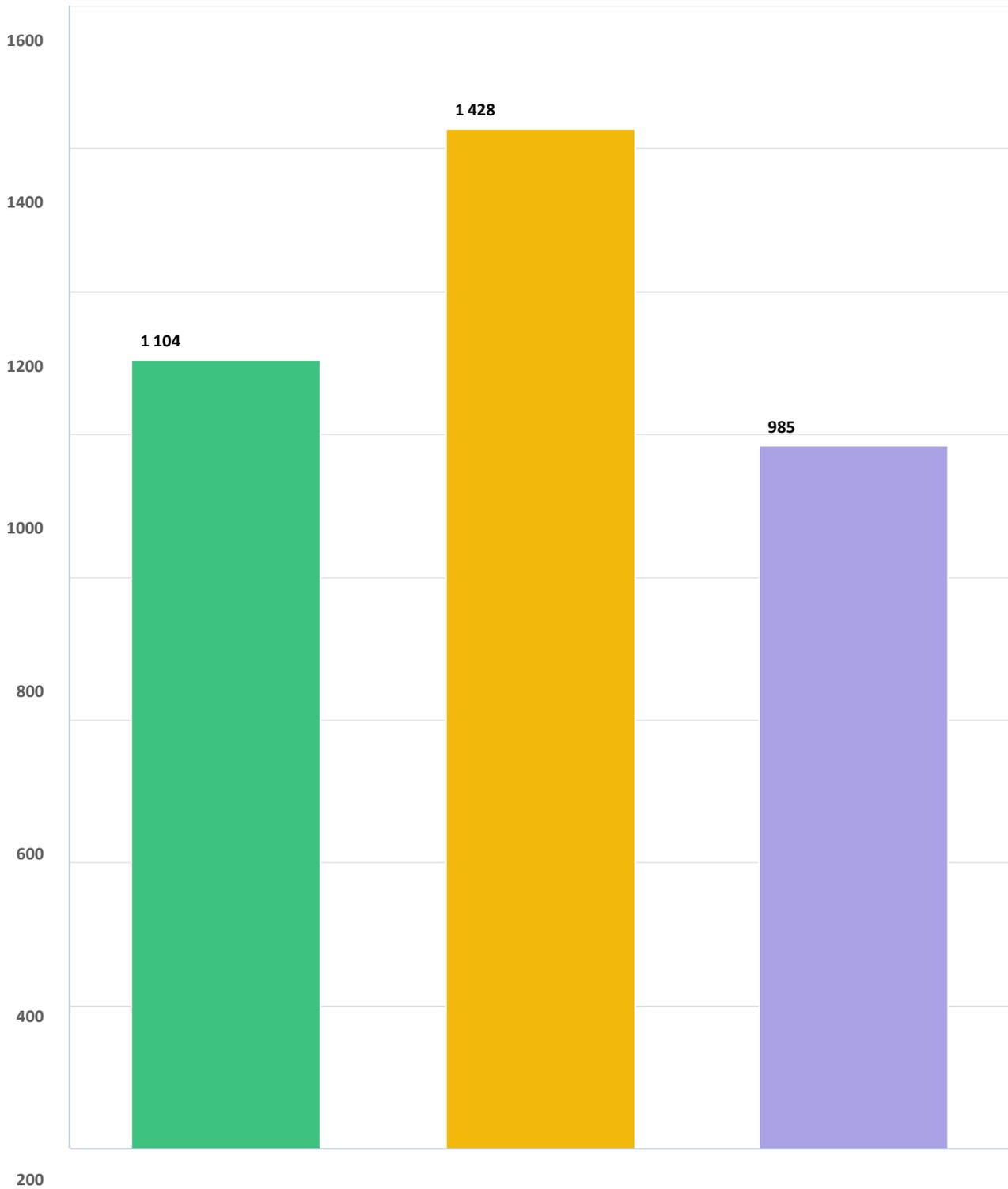
Question options

- More than once a week
- Once a week
- Once a month
- Once a quarter
- Once a year

Mandatory Question (2560 response(s))Question

type: Radio Button Question

Which Civic Venue did you use / attend? (Tick all that apply)



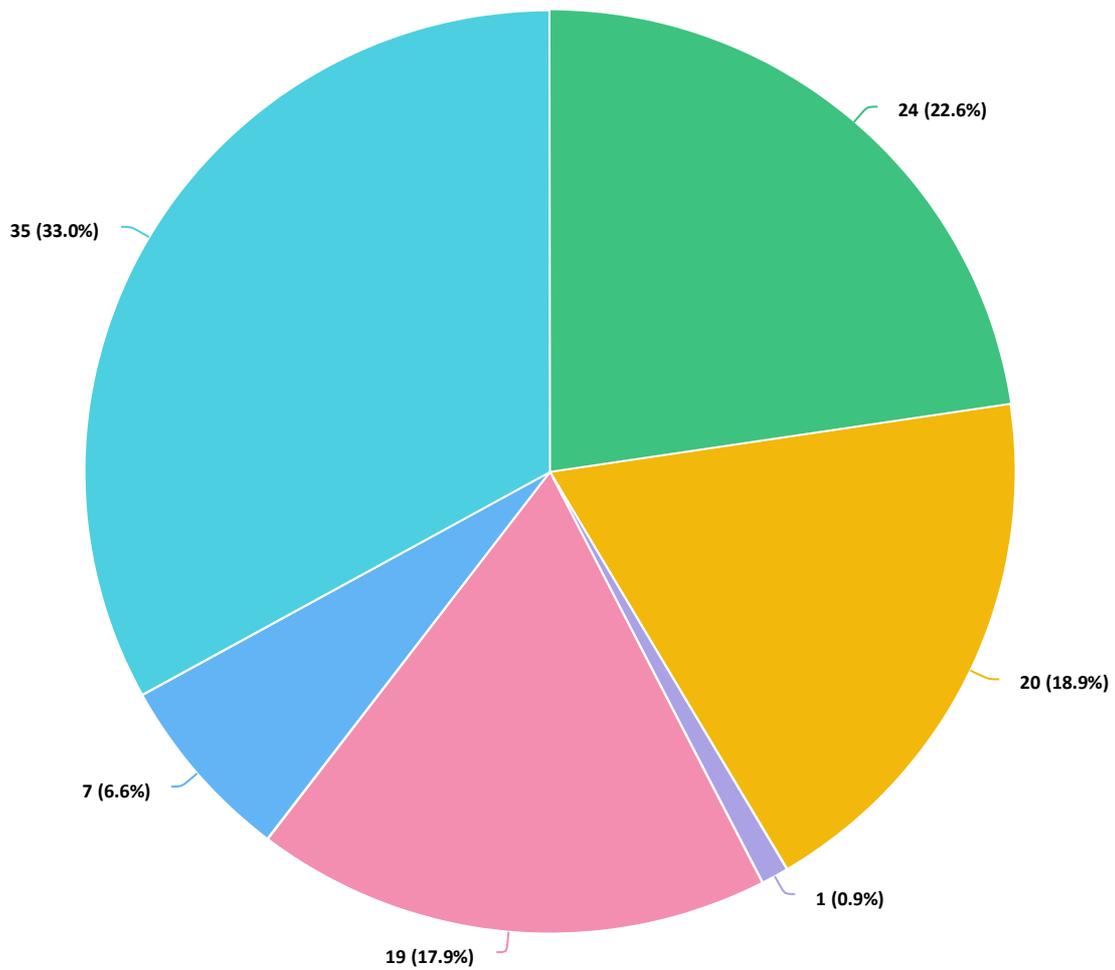
Question options

- Elizabethan Suite, Bury Longfield Suite, Prestwich Ramsbottom Civic Hall

Mandatory Question (2560 response(s))Question

type: Checkbox Question

You didn't use / attend a Civic Venue, why not?



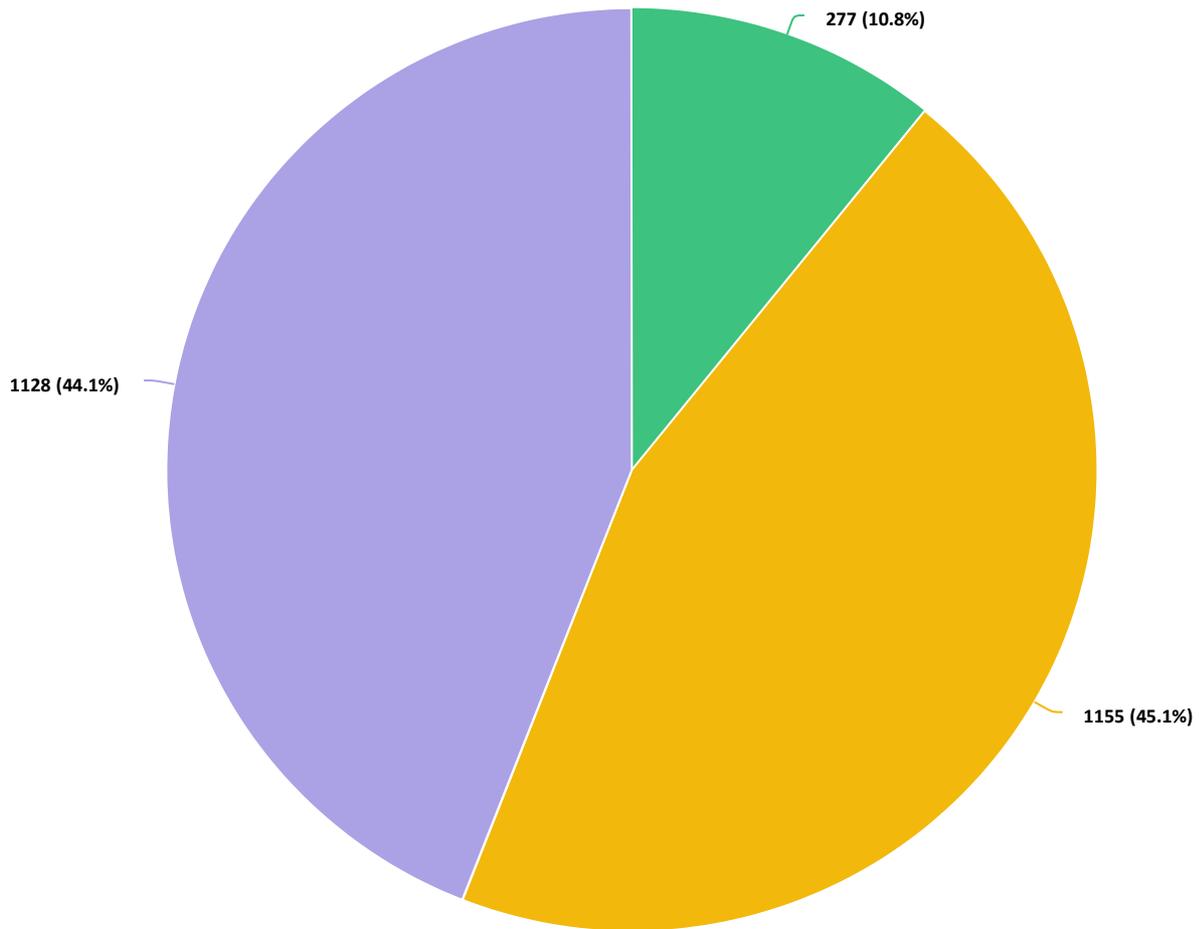
Question options

- The venues / environment are not attractive
- The offer does not meet my requirements
- Due to cost
- Better venues elsewhere
- Location
- Other (please specify)

Mandatory Question (106 response(s)) Question type:

Radio Button Question

If you attended a wellbeing / exercise class or dance class at a Civic Venue, did you attend wellbeing / exercise classes at other locations?



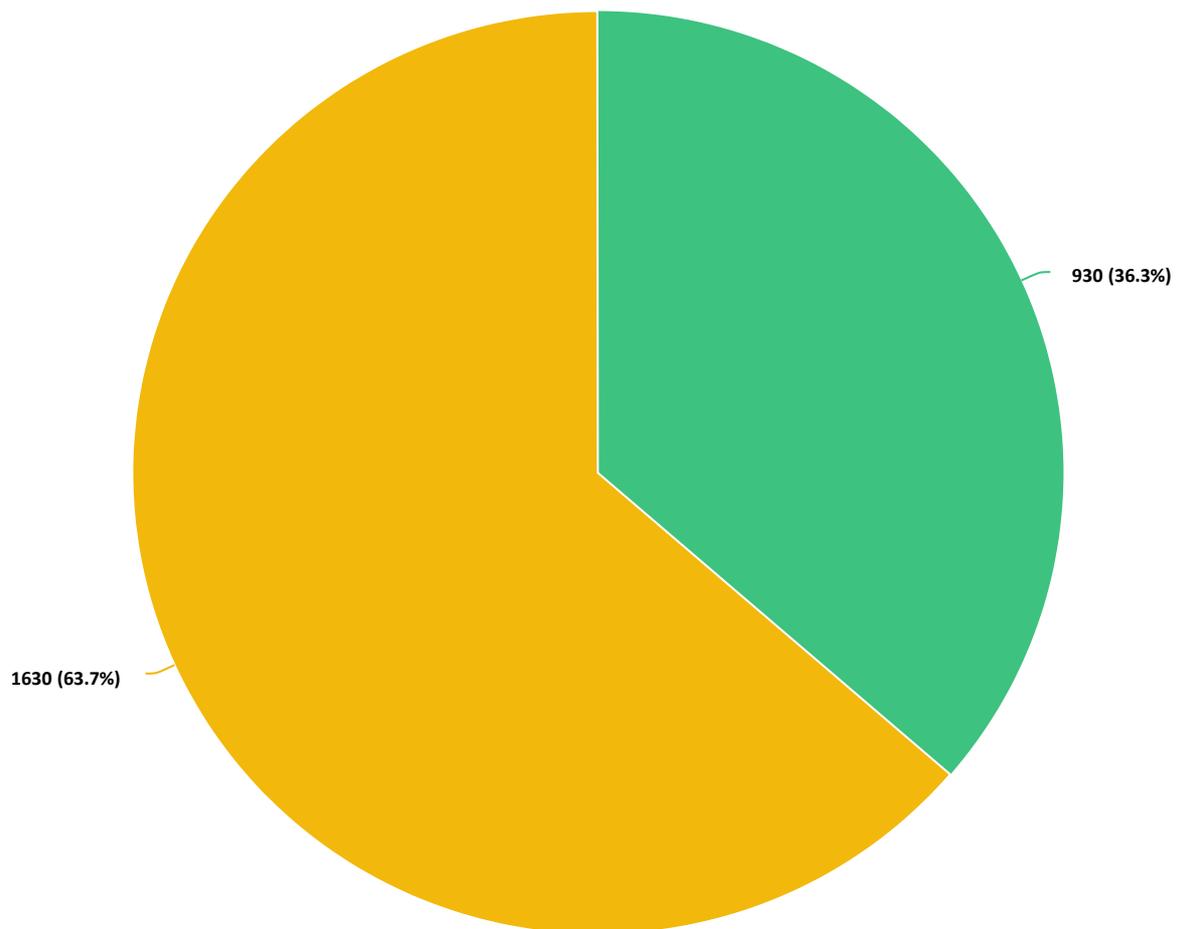
Question options

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable

Mandatory Question (2560 response(s))Question

type: Radio Button Question

Do you travel from outside the Borough of Bury to use a Civic Venue?



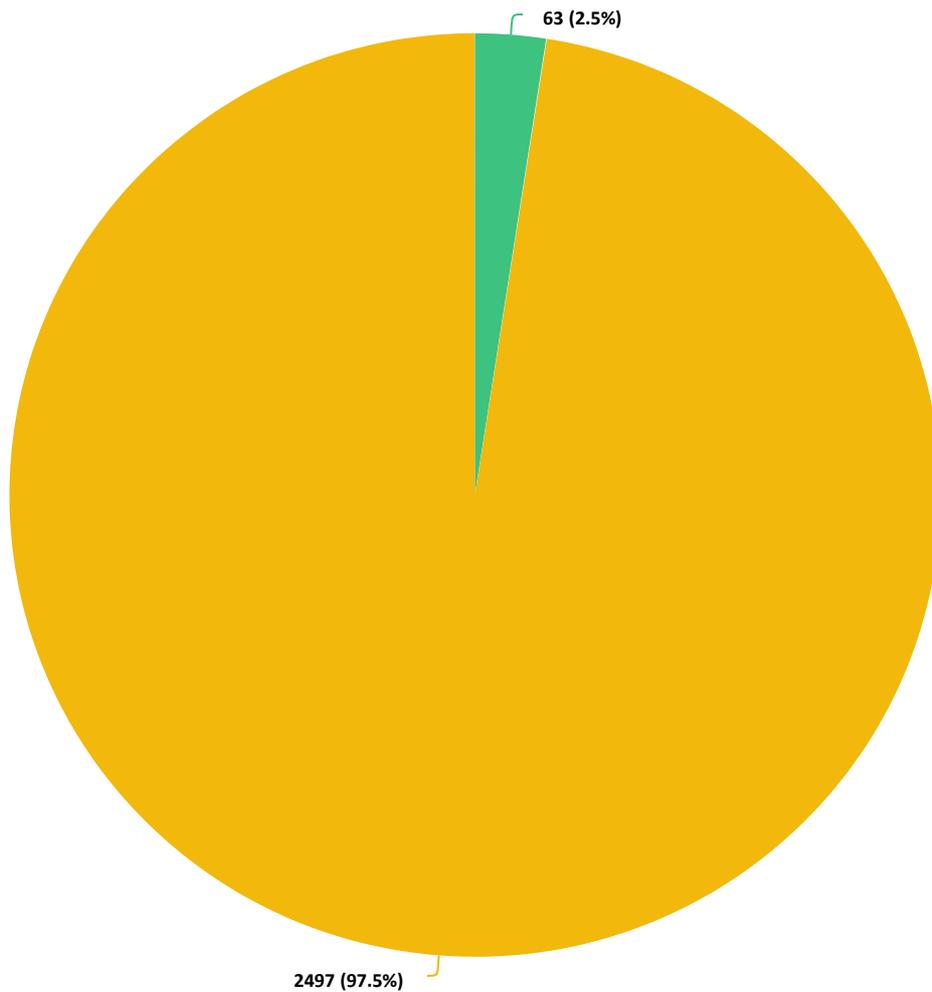
Question options

- Yes
- No

Mandatory Question (2560 response(s))Question

type: Radio Button Question

During the current temporary closure of Civic Venues due to Covid, have you managed to access other classes / events / functions within the Borough of Bury?



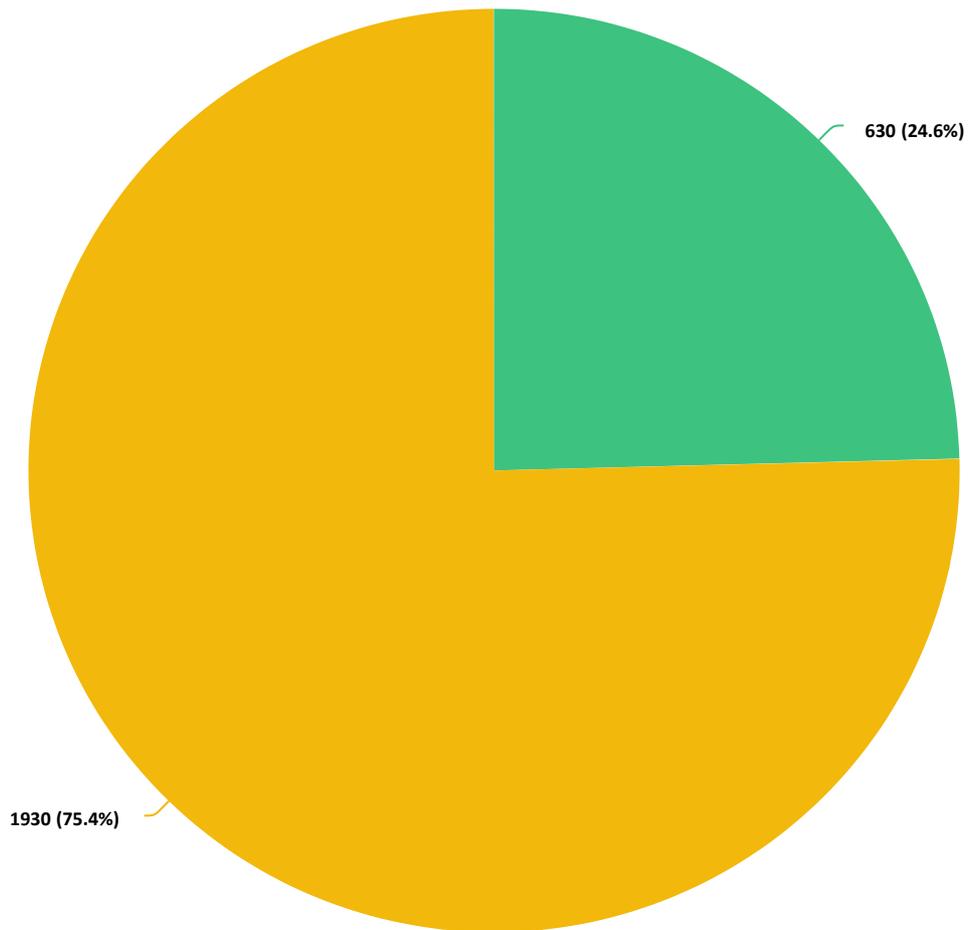
Question options

- Yes
- No

Mandatory Question (2560 response(s))Question

type: Radio Button Question

If you booked a large event / function, did you consider alternative venues before you booked?



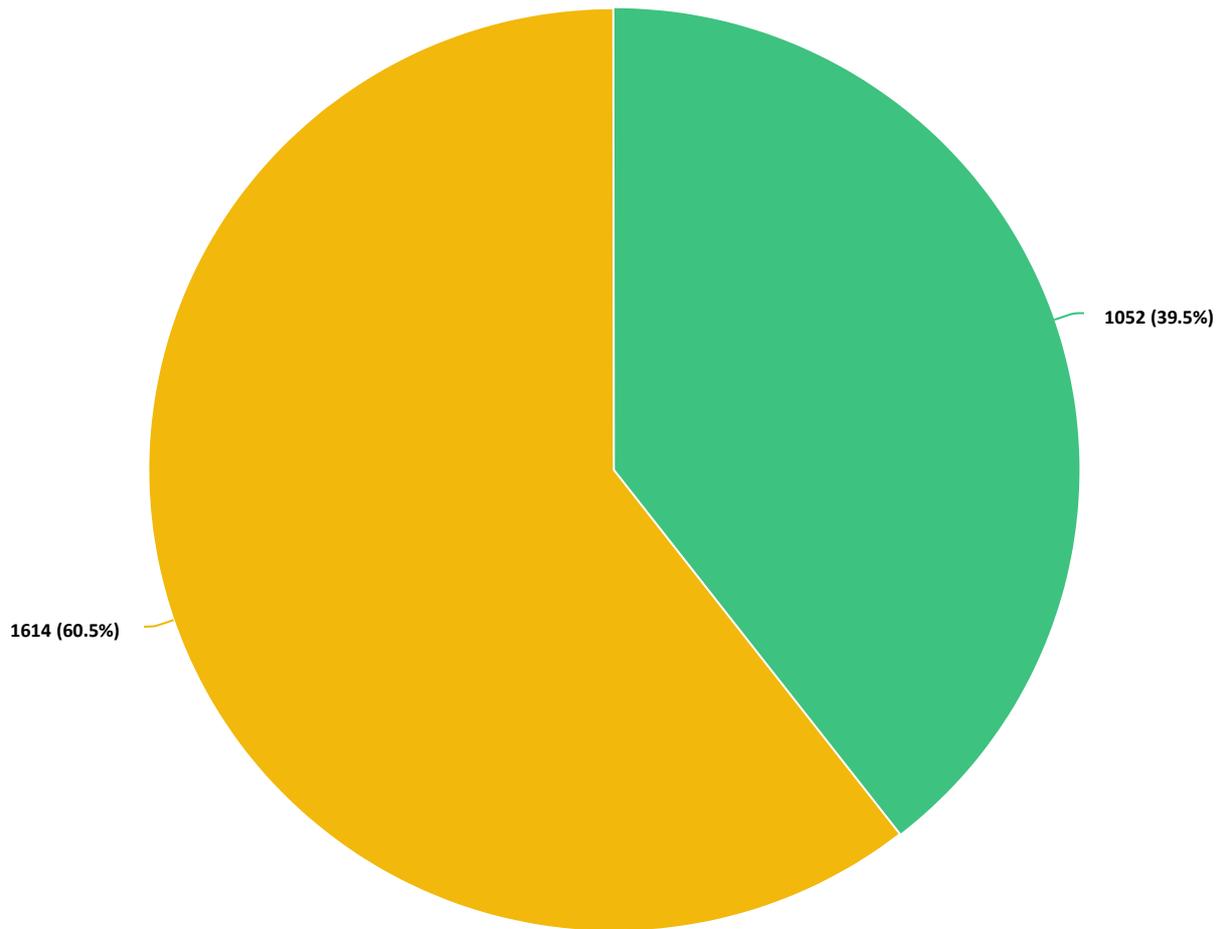
Question options

- Yes
- No

Mandatory Question (2560 response(s))Question

type: Radio Button Question

If the Civic Venues were no longer open, do you feel you would book / attend events /functions / sessions in alternative venues?



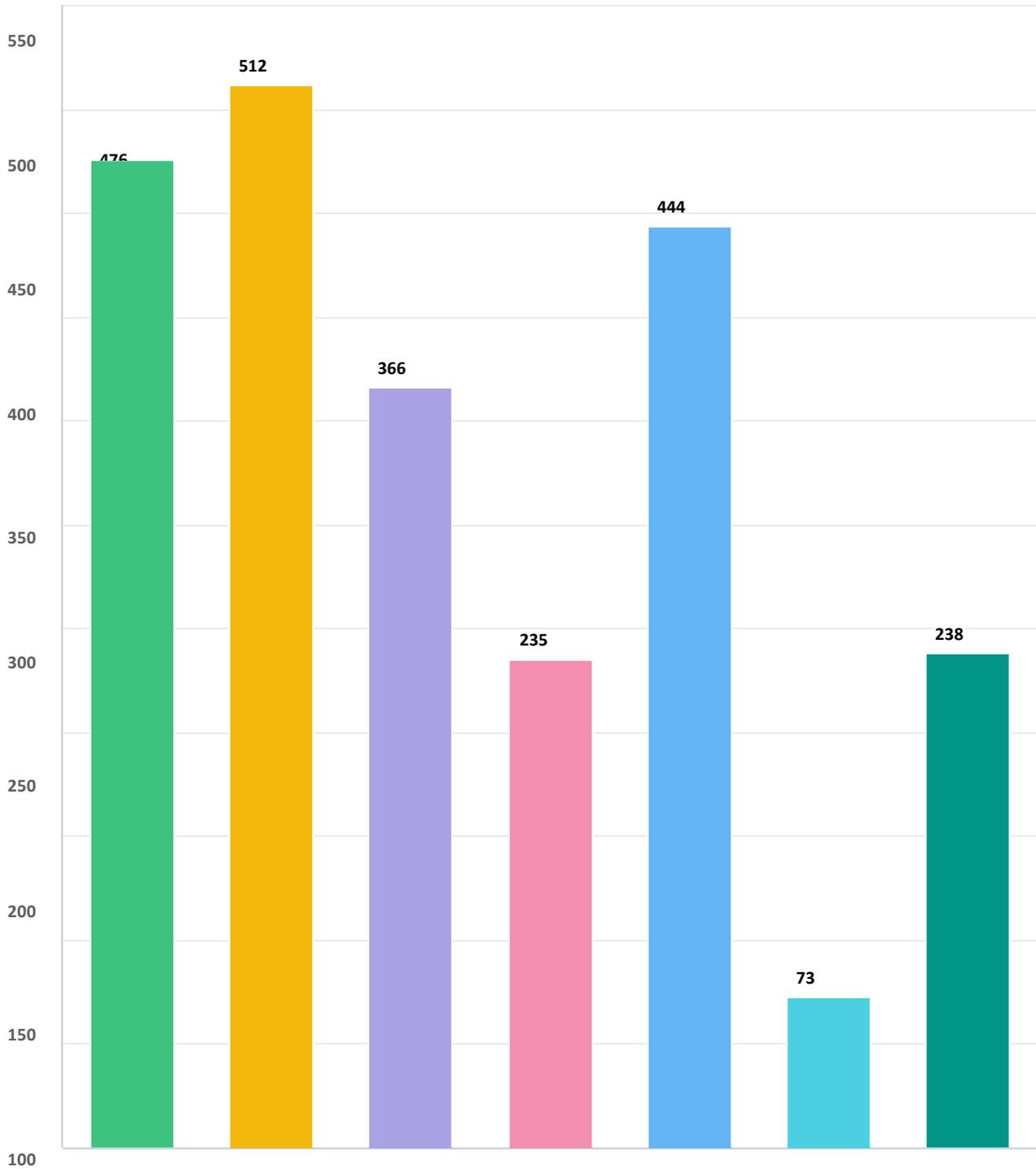
Question options

- Yes
- No

Mandatory Question (2666 response(s))Question

type: Radio Button Question

You said yes, which alternative venues would you attend? (Tick all that apply)



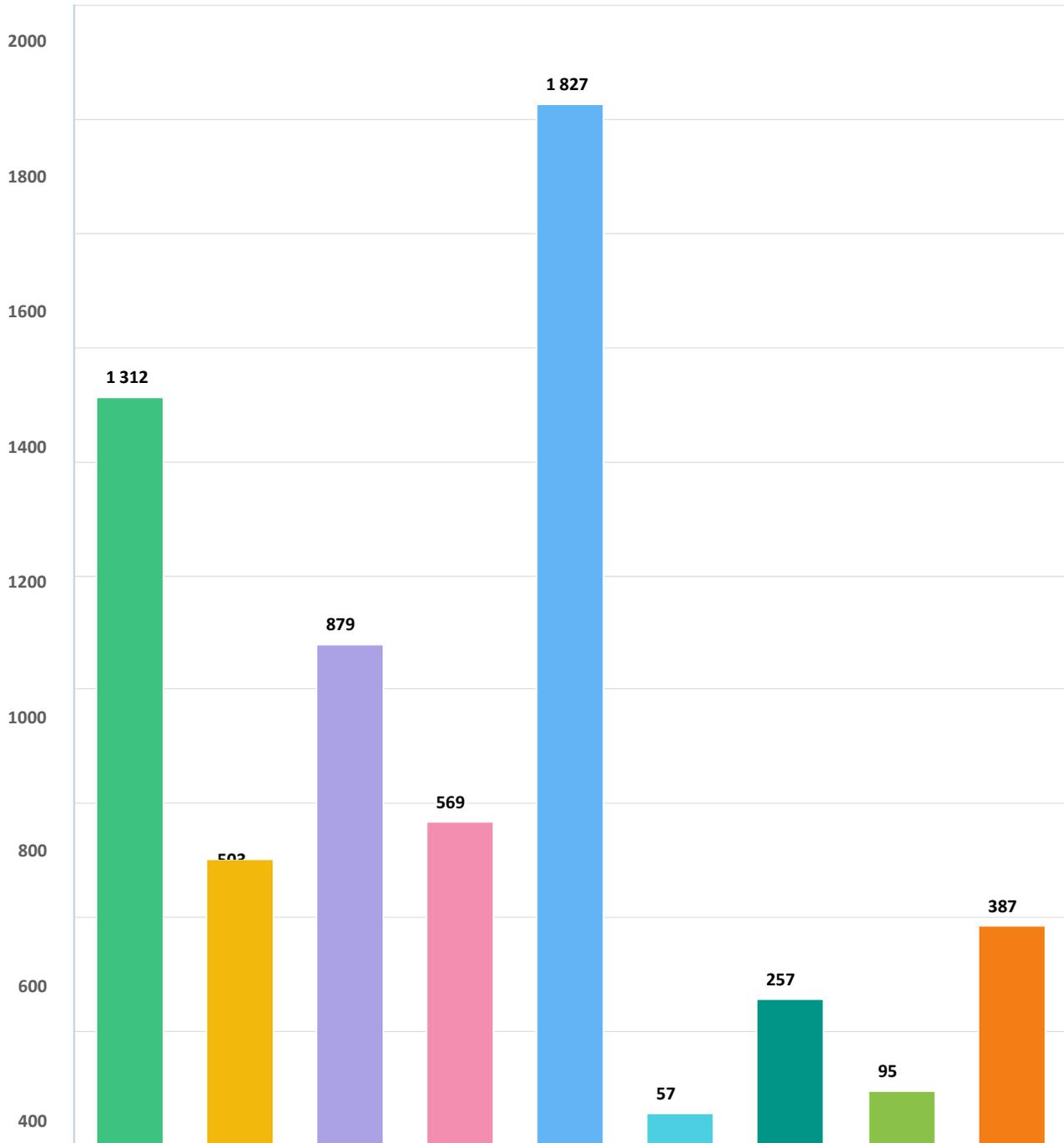
Question options

- Church Hall
- Community Centre
- Leisure Centre
- Library
- Local Hotel
- Children's Centre
- Not applicable

Mandatory Question (1052 response(s))Question

type: Checkbox Question

If the Civic Venues were to close, what would you miss the most? (Tick all that apply)



200

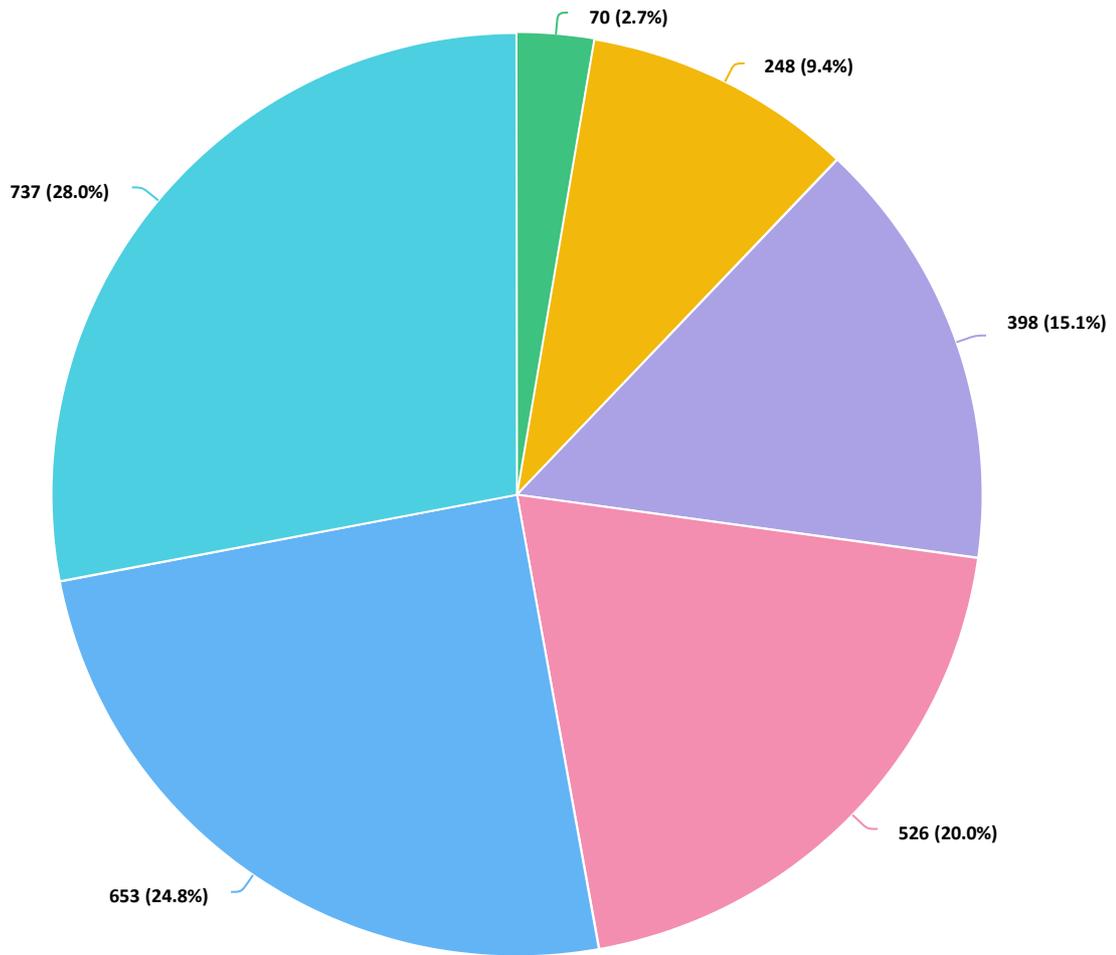
Question options

- Regular activities (i.e. dancing, a weekly booking)
 ● Wellness activities
● Exhibitions
● Conference / meetings
- Location for a function (i.e. party / wedding, live music event, dinner, dance)
 ● Religious service
- Sports events (i.e. snooker, wrestling)
 ● Not applicable
● Other (please specify)

Mandatory Question (2666 response(s))Question

type: Checkbox Question

Age - How old are you?



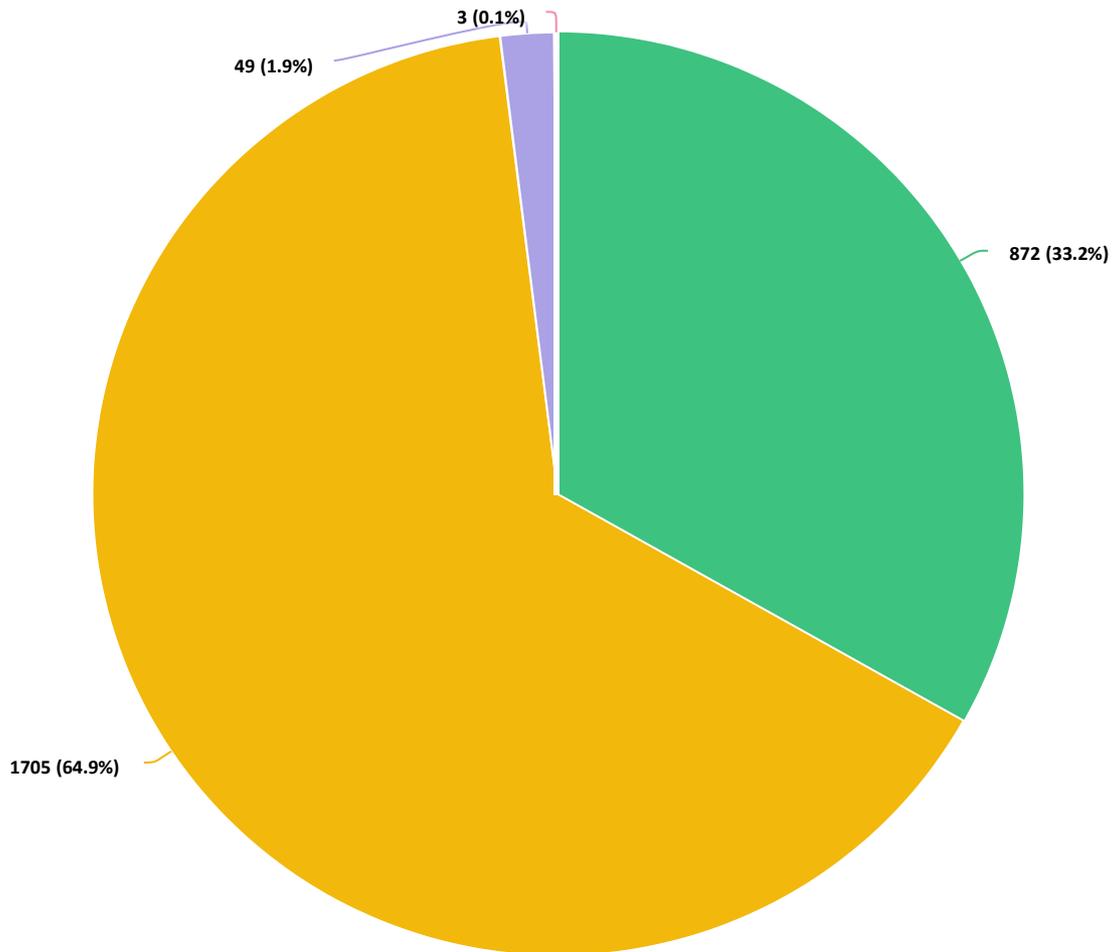
Question options

- 16-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65 years+

Optional question (2632 response(s), 34 skipped) Question type:

Radio Button Question

Gender - What best describes your gender?



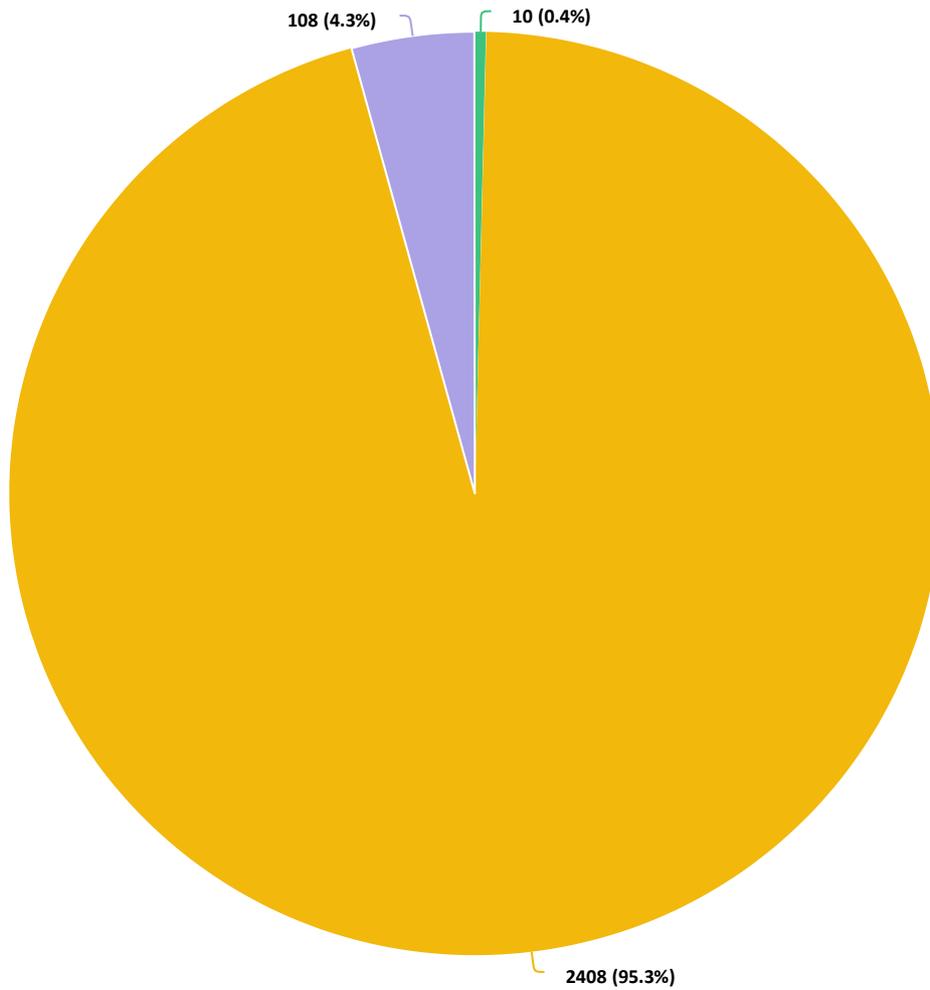
Question options

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say
- Other (please specify)

Optional question (2629 response(s), 37 skipped) Question type:

Radio Button Question

Gender Identity – Do you identify as trans?



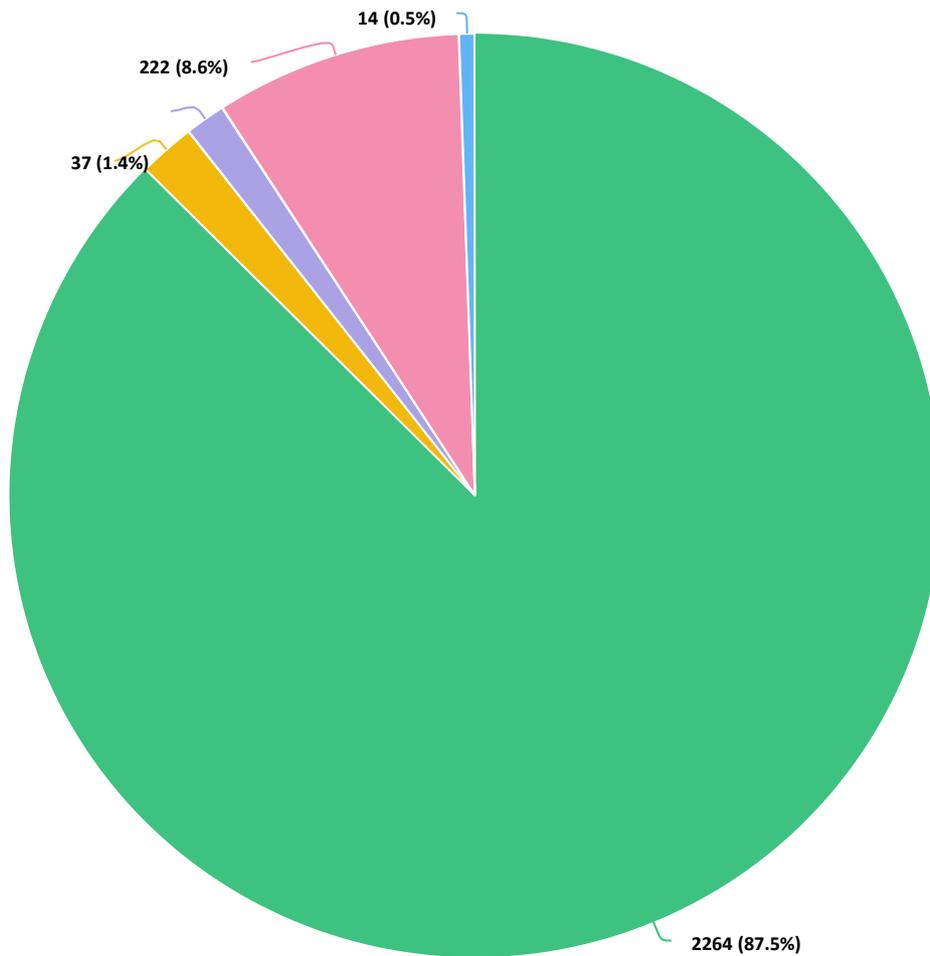
Question options

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

Optional question (2526 response(s), 140 skipped) Question type:

Radio Button Question

Sexual Orientation – What is your sexuality?



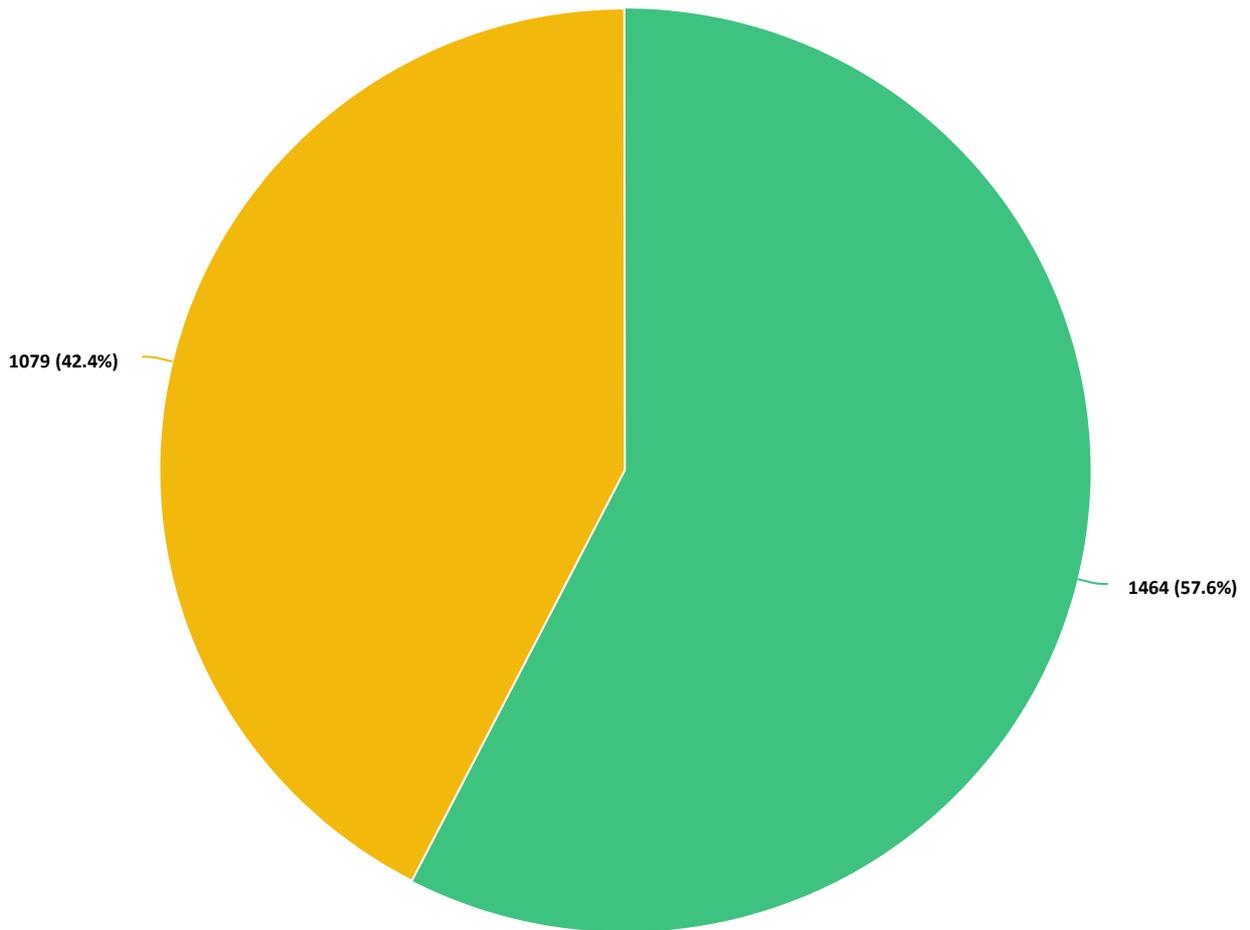
Question options

- Heterosexual/straight
- Gay/lesbian
- Bisexual
- Prefer not to say
- Other (please specify)

Optional question (2588 response(s), 78 skipped) Question type:

Radio Button Question

Marriage and Civil Partnership - Are you legally married or in a legally formed
samesex civil partnership?



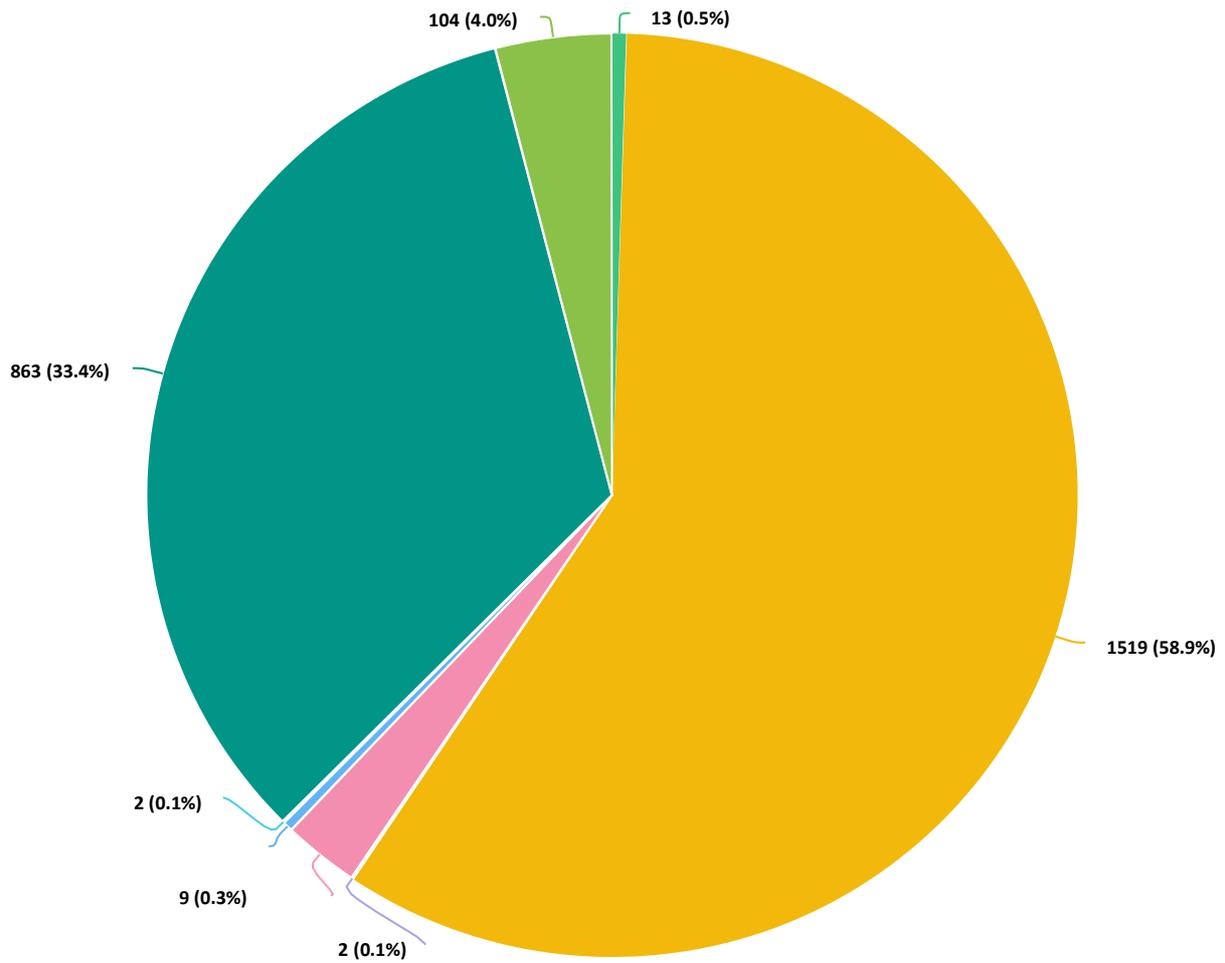
Question options

- Yes
- No

Optional question (2543 response(s), 123 skipped) Question type:

Radio Button Question

Religion or Belief – What is your religion or belief?



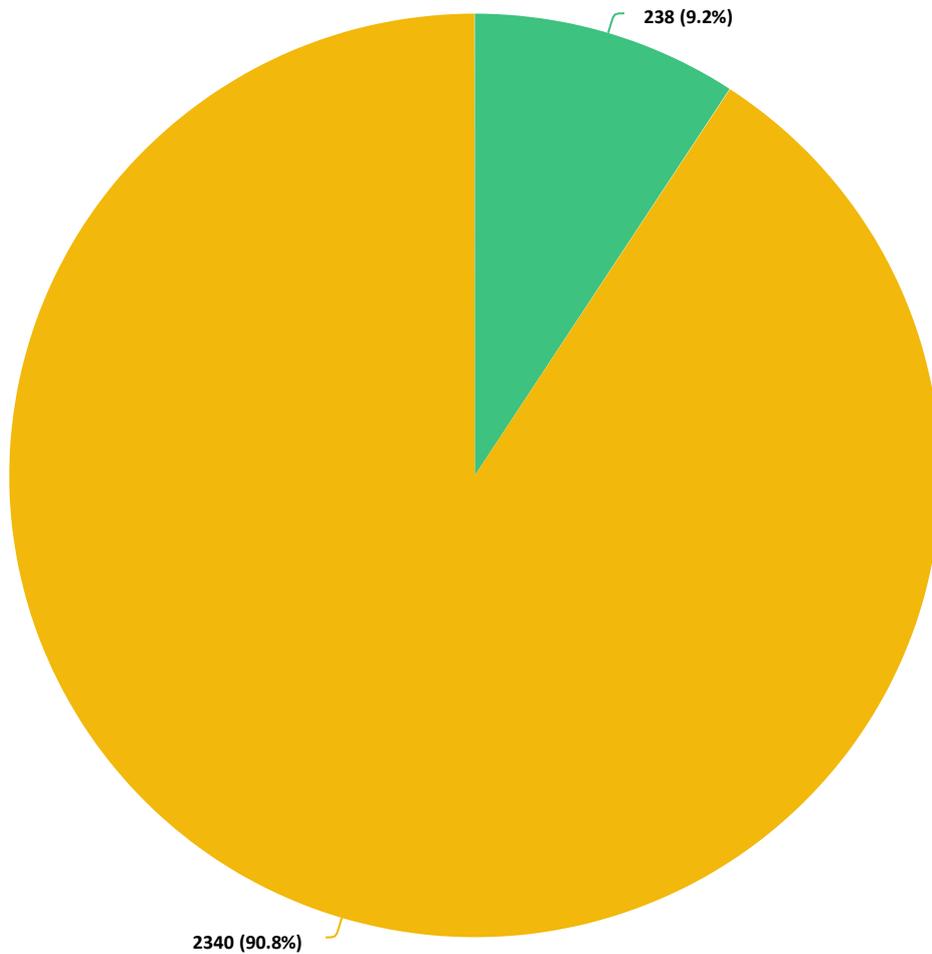
Question options

- Buddhist
- Christian
- Hindu
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Sikh
- No Religion
- Other (please specify)

Optional question (2580 response(s), 86 skipped) Question type:

Radio Button Question

Disability - Do you consider yourself to be disabled? The Equality Act 2010 regards a person as having a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment (including sensory impairment) which has both a substantial AND long term adverse effect...



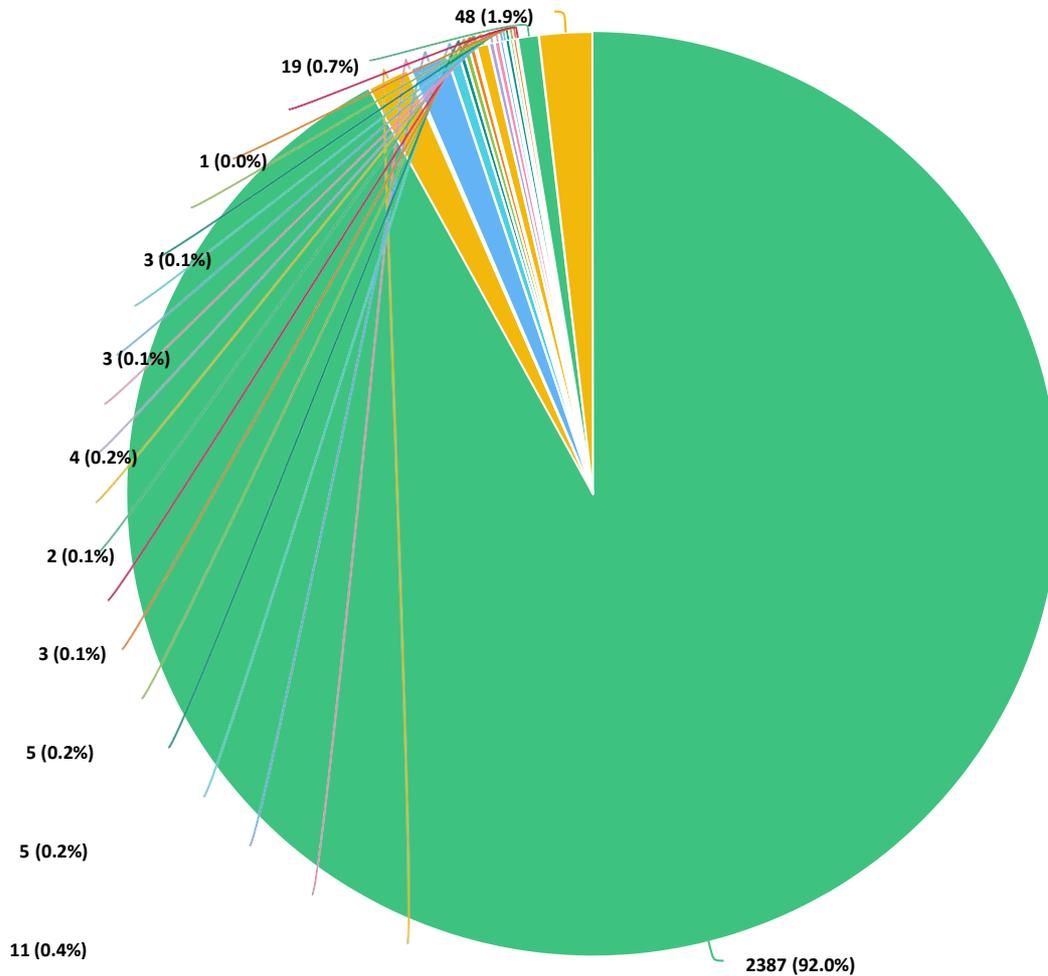
question options

- Yes
- No

Optional question (2578 response(s), 88 skipped) Question type:

Radio Button Question

Race - Please tick the box that best describes your ethnic background.



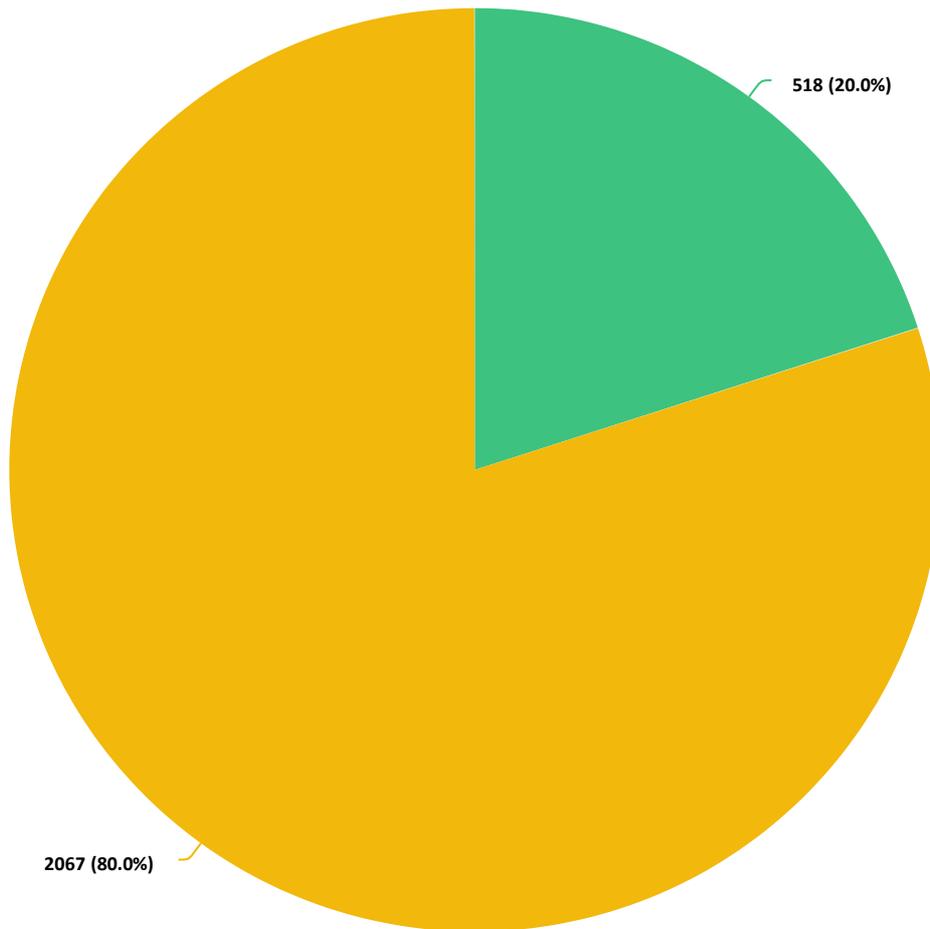
Question options

- White British
 ● White Irish
 ● White Traveller of Irish Heritage
 ● White Gypsy/ Roma
 ● Other white European
- Any other white background
 ● White and Black Caribbean
 ● White and Black African
 ● White and Indian
- White and Pakistani
 ● White and Bangladeshi
 ● Any other mixed race background
 ● Indian
 ● Pakistani
- Chinese
 ● Any other Asian background
 ● Black Caribbean
 ● Black African
 ● Black British
- Any other Black background
 ● Unknown
 ● Other (please specify)

Optional question (2594 response(s), 72 skipped) Question type:

Radio Button Question

Caring Responsibilities - Is there anyone who relies upon you for care and attention AND that you assist with their daily routine?



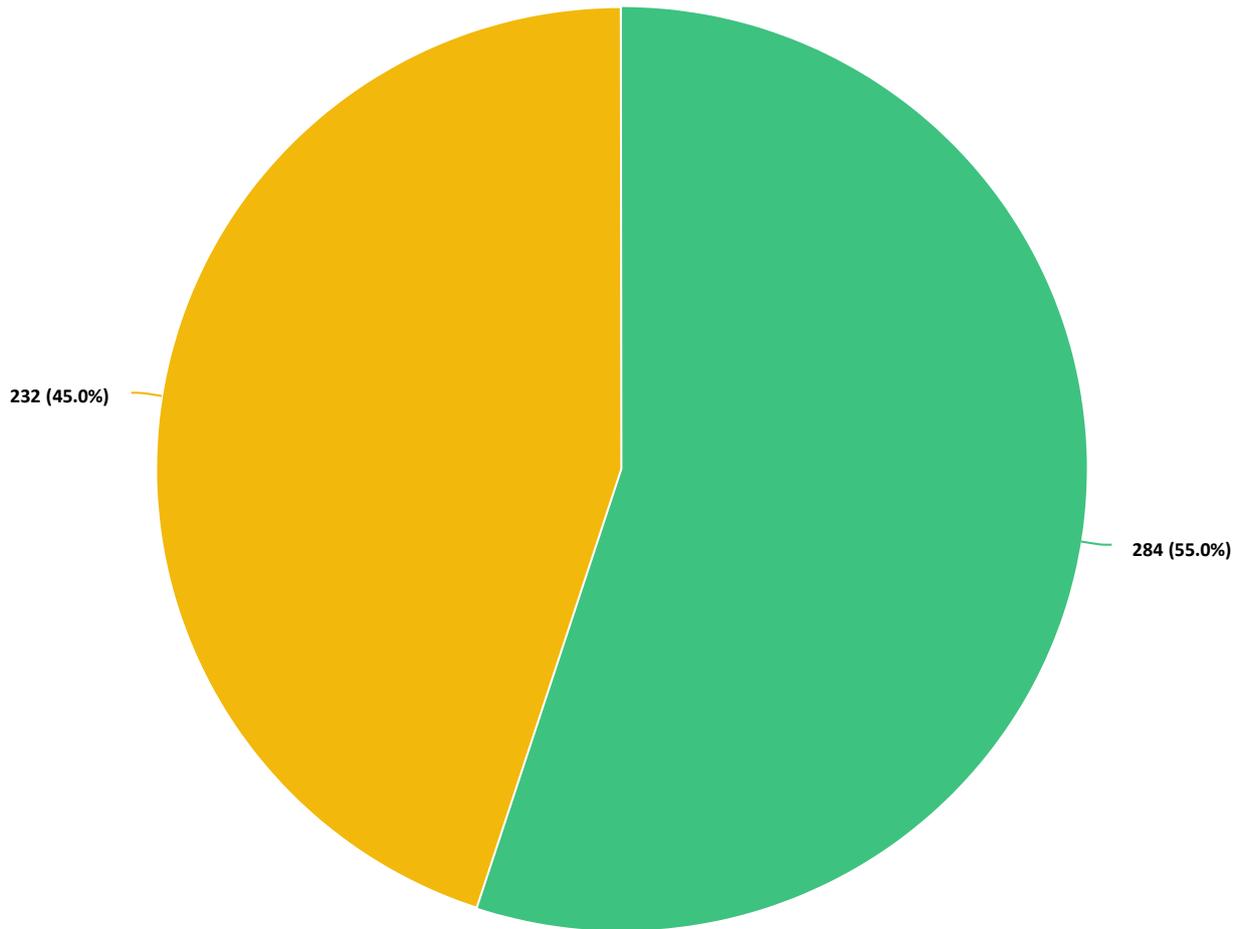
Question options

- Yes
- No

Optional question (2585 response(s), 81 skipped) Question type:

Radio Button Question

You said yes, please indicate who you provide care for?



Question options

- Adult/s aged 18+
- Children

Optional question (516 response(s), 2150 skipped)

Question type: Radio Button Question

Appendix 2 – Alternative Venues

Type of Event	Average Numbers	Alternative Venues Bury	Alternative Venues Prestwich	Alternative Venues Ramsbottom	Alternative Venues District
Wellness	20	Village Hotel, The Mosses Centre, Bury Leisure, Bury Library, Fusiliers Museum, Elton Lib Club, Walmersley Golf Club, Red Hall Hotel, Lowes Park GC, The Duck Club, Bury Masonic Hall,	Fairways Lodge, St Mary's Church Hall, St Margaret's Church Hall, Prestwich Cricket Club	Greenmount CC, Greenmount GC, Ramsbottom CC, Buchanan Sports & Social Club, Old Mill Hotel, Ramsbottom Pool,	Unsworth Cricket Club, Pike Fold Golf Club Unsworth, Stand CC, Whitfield Golf Club, Stand Golf Club, Radcliffe FC, The Welcome Inn (WF), St Mary's Social Club (Rad), Whitefield Con Club, Elms Community Centre (WF), Bury GC, Radcliffe Leisure Centre, Ainsworth Church & Comm Club,
Wellness	60	Village Hotel, Mosses Centre, Bury Leisure, libraries, Fusiliers Museum, Elton Lib Club, Walmersley Golf Club, Red Hall Hotel, Lowes Park GC, Greenmount CC, Bury Masonic Hall,	Fairways Lodge, Prestwich Cricket Club	Greenmount GC, Ramsbottom CC, Buchanan S&S, Old Mill Hotel, Ramsbottom Pool,	Unsworth Cricket Club, Pike Fold Golf Club Unsworth, Whitefield Golf Club, Radcliffe FC, Whitefield Con Club, Elms Community Centre (WF), Bury GC, Radcliffe Leisure Centre, Ainsworth Church Com Centre,
Social Dance	80	Masonic halls, Local church hall, Bury Leisure, Elton Lib Club (Line Dance), Red Hall Hotel, Lowes Park GC,	None	Greenmount GC, Ramsbottom CC, Buchanan S&S,	
Dinner	300	Castle Leisure Centre, Bury Armory	None	None	
Dinner	120	Village Hotel, Fusiliers Museum, Red Hall Hotel, Lowes Park GC,	None	None	

Type of Event	Average Numbers	Alternative Venues Bury	Alternative Venues Prestwich	Alternative Venues Ramsbottom	Alternative Venues District
Wedding	80	Village Hotel, Bury Golf Club, Fusiliers Museum, Elton Lib Club, Walmersley Golf Club, Lowes Park GC, Greenmount CC, Bury Masonic Hall,	Fairways Lodge	Greenmount GC, Buchanan S&S, Old Mill Hotel,	Unsworth Cricket Club (reception only), Pike Fold Golf Club Unsworth (reception only), St Bernadettes SC (WF), Whitefield Con Club, Bury GC, Ainsworth Church & Comm Centre,
Exhibition / Market (Main Only)	40 Stalls	Village Hotel, Mosses Centre, Masonic halls, Bury Leisure (Castle), hotels, Fusiliers Museum, Walmersley Golf Club, Red Hall Hotel, LPGC,	None	Greenmount GC, Ramsbottom CC, Buchanan S&S,	Ainsworth Church & Comm Centre,
Exhibition (All rooms)	55 Stalls	Bury Leisure (Castle), Red Hall Hotel,	None	None	Ainsworth Church & Comm Centre,
Conference / Meeting	40	Village Hotel, Mosses Centre, Premier Inn, Fusiliers Museum, Elton Lib Club, Walmersley Golf Club, Red Hall Hotel, LPGC, Bury Masonic Hall,	Fairways Lodge	Greenmount CC, Greenmount GC, Ramsbottom CC, Buchanan Sports & Social Club, Old Mill Hotel,	Unsworth Cricket Club, Pike Fold Golf Club, Whitefield Golf Club, Radcliffe FC, St Bernadettes SC (WF), Whitefield Con Club, Elms Community Club (WF), Elms Community Club (WF), Bury GC, Ainsworth Church & Comm Centre,
Conference	120	Village Hotel, masonic halls, hotels, Fusiliers Museum, Walmersley Golf Club, Red Hall Hotel, LPGC,	Fairways Lodge	Ramsbottom CC,	Radcliffe FC
Presentation	250	Village Hotel, Red Hall Hotel,	None	None	
Christmas Party	200	Village Hotel, Red Hall Hotel,	None	None	

Type of Event	Average Numbers	Alternative Venues Bury	Alternative Venues Prestwich	Alternative Venues Ramsbottom	Alternative Venues District
Religious Service	100	Village Hotel, Fuseliers Museum, Walmersley Golf Club, Red Hall Hotel, LPGC,	(Not inc. Churches) Fairways Lodge	Ramsbottom CC, Buchanan S&S,	Unsworth Cricket Club, Pike Fold Golf Club, Radcliffe FC, Elms Community Centre (WF),
Planning Inquiry	120	Village Hotel, Fuseliers Museum, Red Hall Hotel, LPGC,	Fairways Lodge	Buchanan S&S,	Unsworth Cricket Club, Radcliffe FC
Sports events (boxing, snooker, wrestling)	300	Bury Leisure (Castle)	None	None	
Small Party	50	Village Hotel, Mosses Centre, Wyldes Pub, Elton Lib Club, Walmersley Golf Club, Red Hall Hotel, LPGC, Walmersley Con Club, The Duck Club, Greenmount CC, Bury Masonic Hall,	Fairways Lodge, Prestwich Cricket Club	Greenmount CC, Greenmount GC, Ramsbottom CC, Buchanan Sports & Social Club, Hearth of the Ram pub, Old Mill Hotel,	Unsworth Cricket Club, Pike Fold Golf Club, Stand Golf Club, Whitefield Golf Club, Stand CC, Radcliffe FC, The Welcome Inn (WF), St Mary's Social Club (Rad), St Bernadettes SC (WF), Whitefield Con Club, Elms Community Centre (WF), The Bay Horse (Uns), Bury GC, Ainsworth Church & Comm Centre,
Large Party	150	Walmersley Golf Club, Red Hall Hotel, LPGC, Greenwood CC,	Prestwich Cricket Club	Buchanan S&S, Old Mill Hotel,	Unsworth Cricket Club, Whitefield Golf Club, Radcliffe FC, Bury GC,