FINDINGS OF THE CITIZENS' PANEL SURVEY ON VIBRANT COMMUNITIES

FINAL REPORT

PREPARED BY: IBP STRATEGY AND RESEARCH
                    EON HOUSE
                    EARN AVENUE
                    BELLSHILL
                    ML4 3LP
                    TEL: 01698 846825

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CONTENTS

APPENDICES (UNDER SEPARATE COVER)

Report prepared by:

IBP Strategy and Research
Eon House
Earn Avenue
Bellshill
ML4 3LP
Tel: 01698 846825
Web: www.ibp.eu.com/strategy

Summary of Key Findings

Introduction

This document sets out the findings of the thirteenth survey of the Argyll and Bute Citizens' Panel, fieldwork for which was conducted during October and November 2007. The survey focused on the "Vibrant Communities" elements of the new Community Plan, addressing the following specific issues:

➢ Housing

➢ The Role of Migrant Workers

➢ Gaelic Language Plan

➢ Child Protection.

The conclusions relevant to each issue are summarised below.

Housing

In considering the following conclusions, it should be noted that over 80% of the respondents were homeowners and only 13% tenants of social landlords, with a smattering of other tenures also being represented.

It is very apparent that the most pressing need is perceived to be for affordable homes to rent from social landlords.

The greatest potential need is also perceived to be for 3 and 4 apartment homes (equivalent to 2 or 3 bedrooms). Few people perceive there to be a need in the community for larger homes than this.

There is significant latent potential for churn in the housing market, with 58% of respondents saying that they may have a need for a new home and 55% saying that a family member might have such a need, over the next five years. The most common perceived demand is for 3 apartment (2 bedroom) homes amongst both respondents and their family members, with there also being significant potential demand for two apartment (one bedroom) homes amongst family members.

There is a strong consensus in support of house building on brownfield sites, on gap sites in towns and villages and, to a lesser extent, on land zoned for industrial or commercial use. There is also support for smaller-scale developments on the edge of larger settlements.

Opinions are more divided (and many people "don't know") in relation to larger-scale developments on the edge of existing settlements and the building of individual houses in the open countryside. However, a majority of those who express an opinion are supportive of house building in these circumstances.

THE ROLE OF MIGRANT WORKERS

There is a strong view that there are many more migrant workers in the area than was the case a few years ago. On the whole, it is perceived that migrant workers are made to feel welcome and most people who express an opinion believe that migrant workers are good for the economy of the area.

However, a majority of people who express an opinion believe that local services have not been fully capable of accommodating incoming workers and their families.

The main concerns that people describe relate to:

➢ perceived negative impacts in terms of displacement of jobs from local people and wages being driven down
➢ impact on housing availability
➢ other services (e.g. doctors and dentists).

It seems likely that at least some of these concerns are fostered by miscommunication through the media rather than real experiences.

A majority of people do believe it to be important for information to be translated into languages other than English, both as a service to tourists and as a service to people living and working in the area for whom English is not a first language.

People are most likely to believe that information should be translated as a service to tourists into the main West European languages of French, German, Italian and Spanish although a significant minority also mention Polish and Gaelic in this regard.

Polish, and to a lesser extent, Slovak and Latvian are the most common languages that people believe should be translated as a service for people living and working in the local area.

GAELIC LANGUAGE PLAN

Few people claim to be proficient in Gaelic although some do claim to be "able to have a limited conversation" in Gaelic.

There is only limited support for the promotion of the use of Gaelic in a variety of settings; support is most likely to be for promotion of Gaelic in places of learning.

This is reflected in support for some teaching of Gaelic to be provided to all primary school children and for such teaching to be available on an elective basis in secondary schools and for people who have left school.

It should be noted, however, that there are parts of Argyll and Bute (particularly the island communities) where the usage and commitment to Gaelic is much more significant.

CHILD PROTECTION

Most people say that they would take action if they believed a child to be experiencing abuse. Usually, this action would be contact a local Police Officer or the Social Work Department. On occasion, people would seek advice from others, such as health professionals, school staff or friends and relatives before doing so.

In the very small number of cases where people say they would not take any action, the main concern is "fear of getting it wrong".

There is already high awareness of organisations such as Childline / Parentline and the NSPCC. Although awareness of the Child Protection Committee Website is lower, a significant minority of people are still aware of it.

Preferred methods of receiving information about the work of the Child Protection Committee are local press and leaflets and flyers through the mail.

1.0 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

OBJECTIVES

1.1   This document sets out the findings of the thirteenth survey of the Argyll and Bute Citizens' Panel, fieldwork for which was conducted during October and November 2007.

The survey focused on a number of issues that relate to the 'Vibrant Communities' element of the new Community Plan for Argyll and Bute.

1.2   The survey sought feedback from the community in Argyll and Bute with regard to the following issues that were of relevance to the Community Plan:

➢ Housing

➢ The Role of Migrant Workers

➢ Gaelic Language Plan

➢ Child Protection.

These are addressed, in turn, in sections 2 to 5 of this report. Conclusions relevant to each section are summarised at the end of that section.

METHODOLOGY

1.3   A postal survey of the Argyll and Bute Citizens Panel was conducted. At the outset of fieldwork, Panel membership was 1,225. During fieldwork, 23 people asked to be removed from the Panel, leaving on active membership of 1,202. It should be noted that a substantial number of people have not responded to any of the three previous Panel surveys (this could be for a variety of reasons such as a change of address, change in circumstances or lack of interest). It is anticipated that this will be addressed via an imminent refreshment of the Panel.

1.4   An initial questionnaire was mailed out to Panel members in October 2007 and a reminder mailing was issued in November, with a closing date of 30th November 2007. In total, 589 responses were received, which is a response rate of 49%, based on the revised Panel size of 1,202.

1.5   For illustrative purposes, a random sample of 589 provides data accurate to $\pm$2.88% for the sample as a whole[1].

1.6   This document provides an overview of the survey results and the detailed data tables, which form Appendix 2 to the report, provide a more detailed breakdown of these responses. These should be read alongside Appendix 3, which provides full details of the verbatim responses to the open-ended questions that were included in the survey. For reasons of space, these have been provided under separate cover and are available from the Chief Executive's Unit at Argyll and Bute Council.
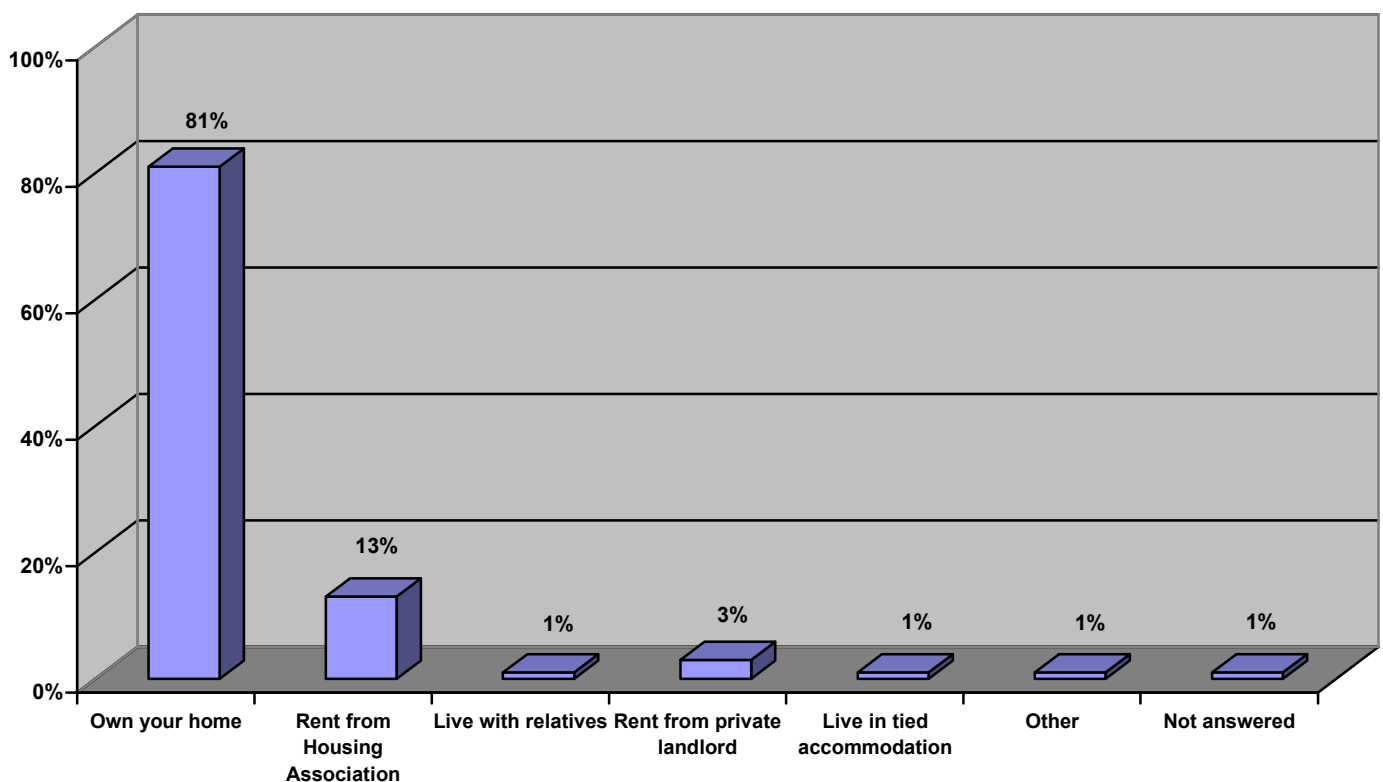
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[1] Based on a 50% estimate at the 95% confidence interval. Thus, if 50% of the sample answers in a given way, then we can be sure that if the whole population had been asked then the results would have been between 47.12% and 52.88%.

2.0 HOUSING

2.1   The questionnaire opened with a section on appropriate and
       affordable housing for local people. As illustrated in Figure 2.1
       below, the vast majority of respondents own their own home, whilst
       a notable proportion rent from a Housing Association.

Figure 2.1: Current Tenure
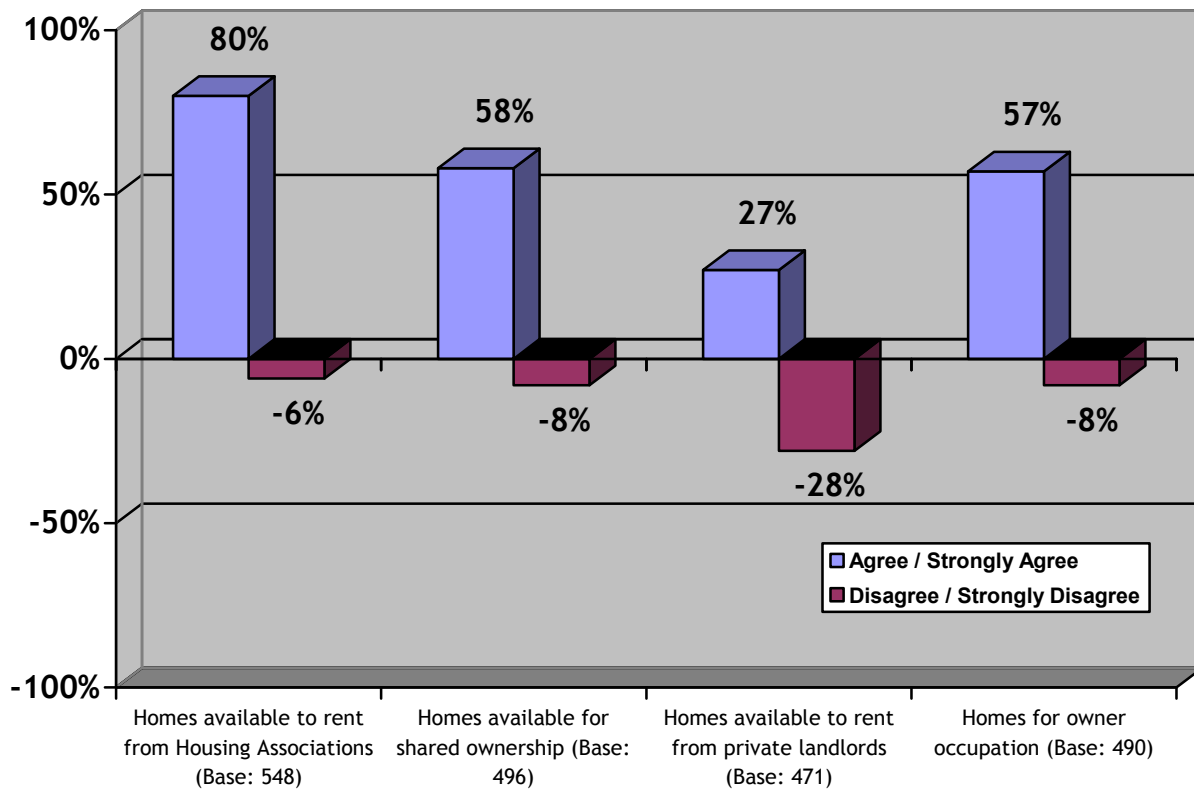
What type of home do you live in currently?

Base: 589

3

2.2   Following this, respondents were asked which types of housing they felt there is a **need** for in the town or village in which they live. Figure 2.2 below shows that respondents were particularly likely to agree there was the need for more homes available to rent from Housing Associations. Conversely, respondents were less likely to agree that there was a need for more homes available to rent from Private Landlords[2].

Figure 2.2: Housing Needs (1)

To what extent do you think there is a need for more of the following types of home in the town or village in which you live, or is closest to you?

A majority of respondents also perceive there to be a need for more homes for owner occupation, including for shared ownership.

Whilst these findings are based on the general perceptions of Panel members (rather than directly recorded demand) they do suggest a strong view within the community of housing shortage, both in the private and social rented sectors.
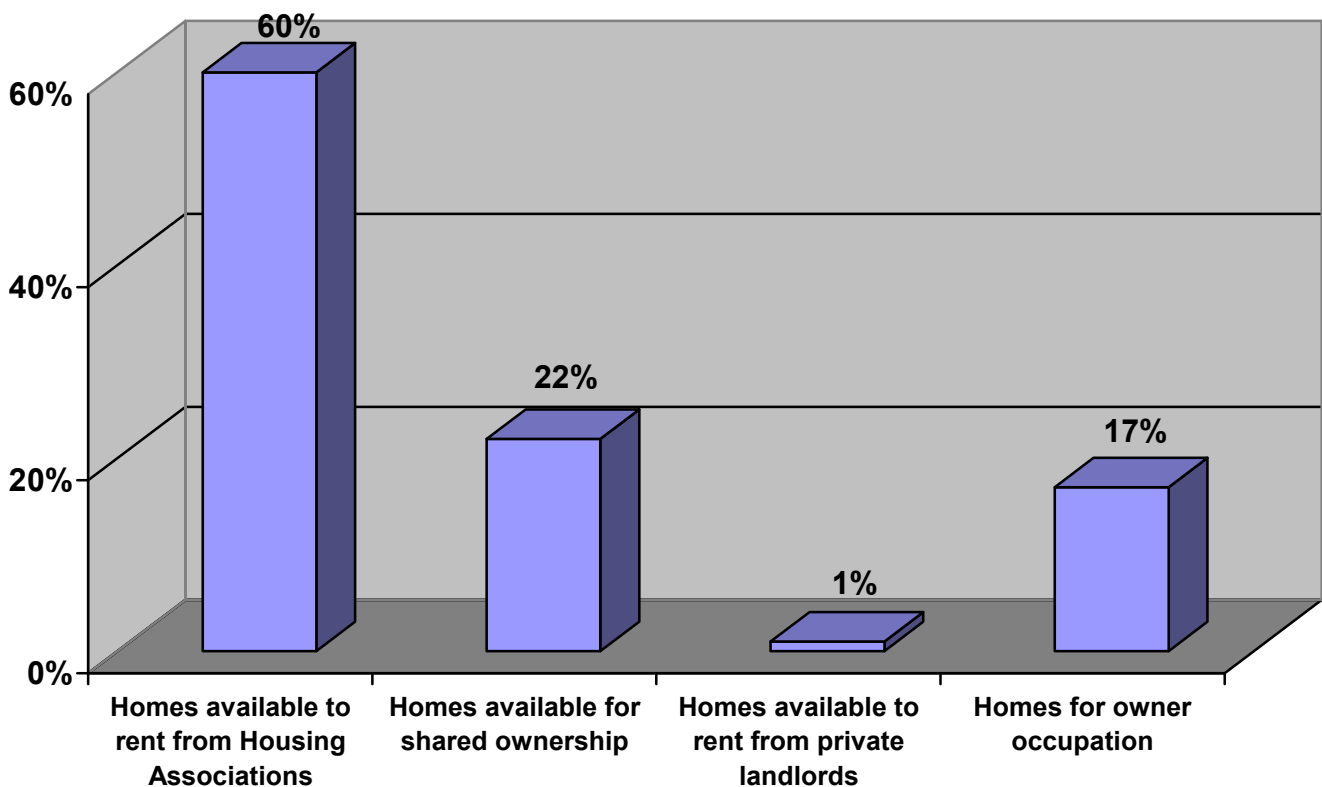
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[2] Throughout the report, charts illustrate the level of agreement and disagreement with a number of issues and statements. It should be noted that numbers do not add to 100 due to the existence of neutral responses. A more detailed breakdown of responses is contained in the appendices.

2.3 As illustrated in the appendices, differences of opinion across areas are quite modest. Similarly, all age groups and both genders are very likely to agree with the need for more homes to be available from Housing Associations.

2.4 The majority of respondents felt that the **greatest** housing need in their town or village was homes available to rent from Housing Associations, as shown in Figure 2.3 below. It is worth nothing that a significant number of respondents chose not to answer this question, suggesting that they did not feel able to express an opinion on the matter.

Figure 2.3: Housing Needs (2)

Which of these types of home do you think there is the greatest need for?
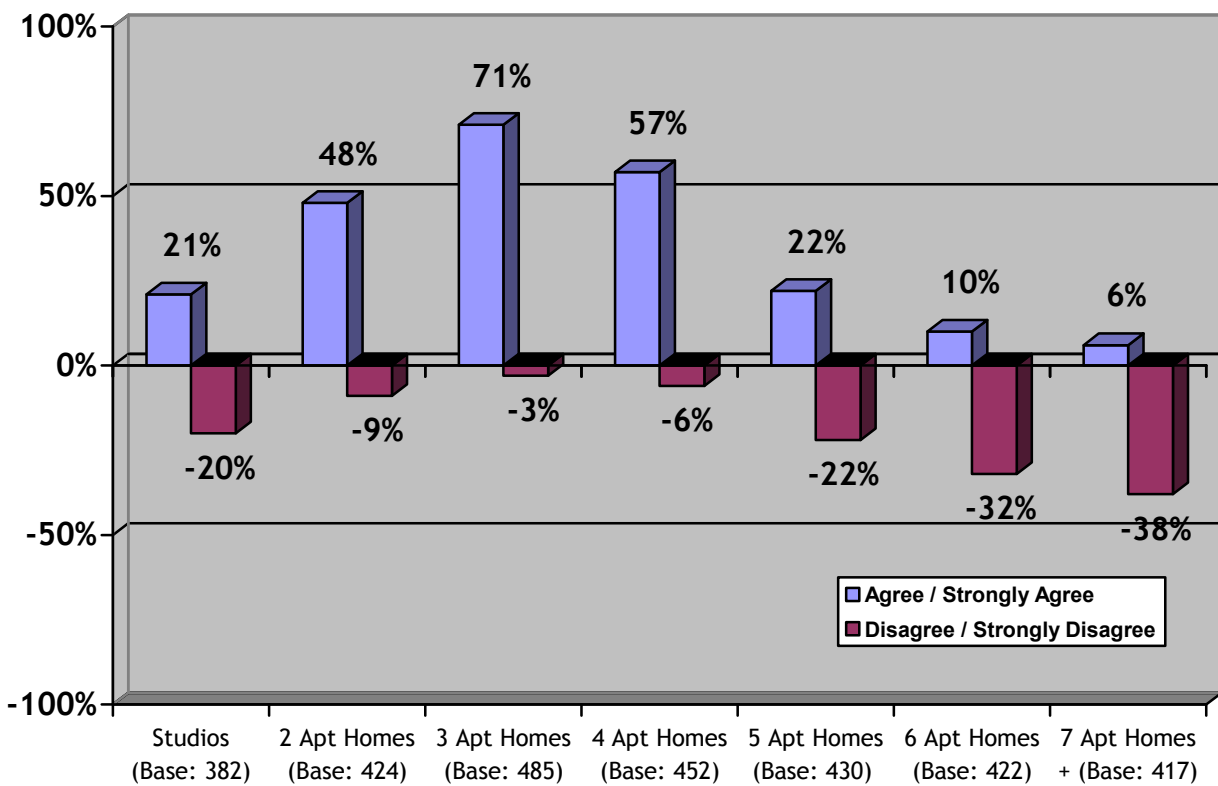

Base: 447

The perception of the **greatest** need being for homes available to rent from Housing Associations is greatest in Bute (70%, 33 respondents), in Mid-Argyll and Kintyre (68%, 76 respondents) and in Mull, Coll, Tiree and Lismore (69%, 32 respondents). This view is also particularly evident amongst those who currently rent from a Housing Association (86%, 49 respondents).

2.5   With regard to the particular sizes of housing needed, respondents were most likely to agree that there was a need for 3 and 4 apartment homes (equivalent to two of three bedrooms). Most of those who expressed a view also felt that there was a need for more 2 apartment (1 bedroom) homes.

Figure 2.4: Size of Homes Required (1)

To what extent do you think there is a need for more of the following sizes of home in the town or village in which you live or is closest to you?
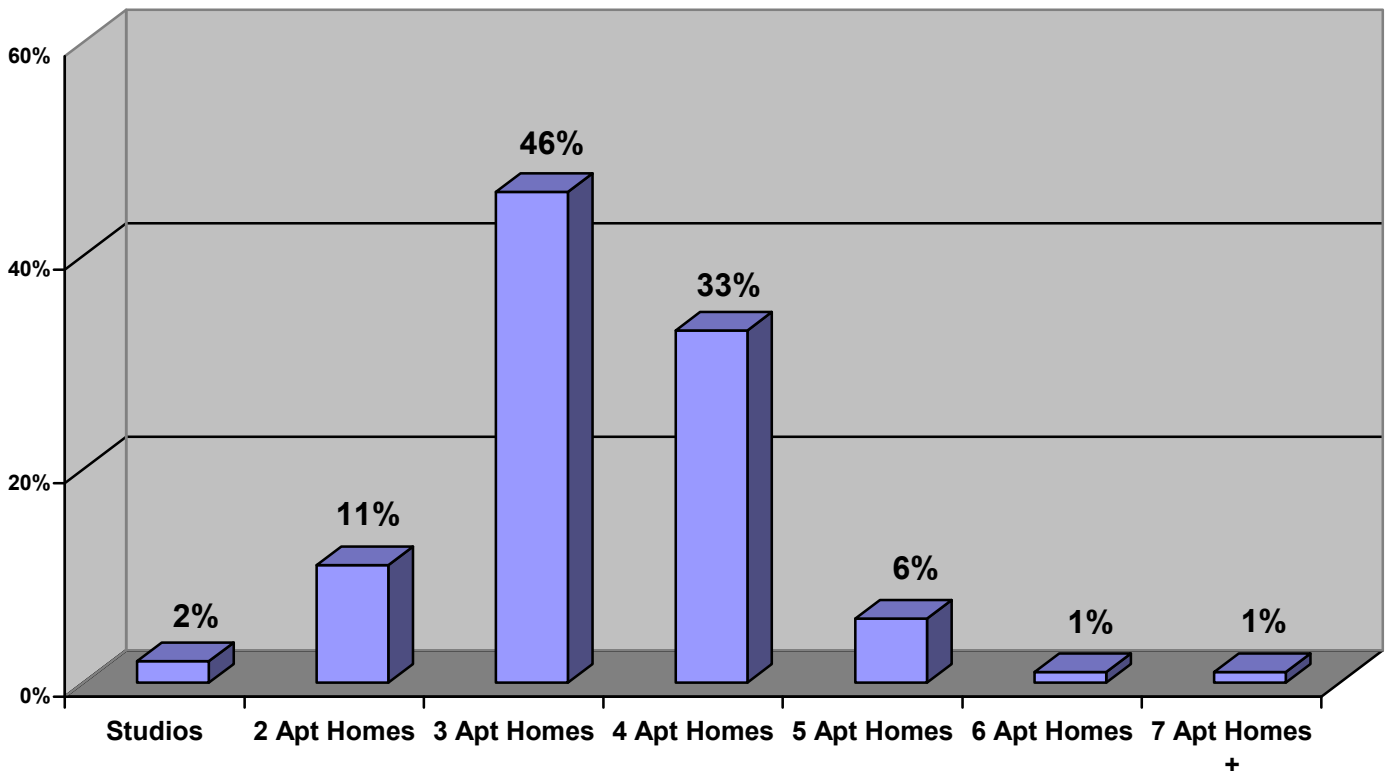

Comparatively few respondents perceived there to be a need for larger properties than this.

2.6   The perceptions indicated in Figure 2.4 are reinforced in Figure 2.5, which illustrates which size of property people considered there to be the **greatest** need for. Again, a significant number of people chose not to answer these questions.

Figure 2.5: Size of Homes Required (2)

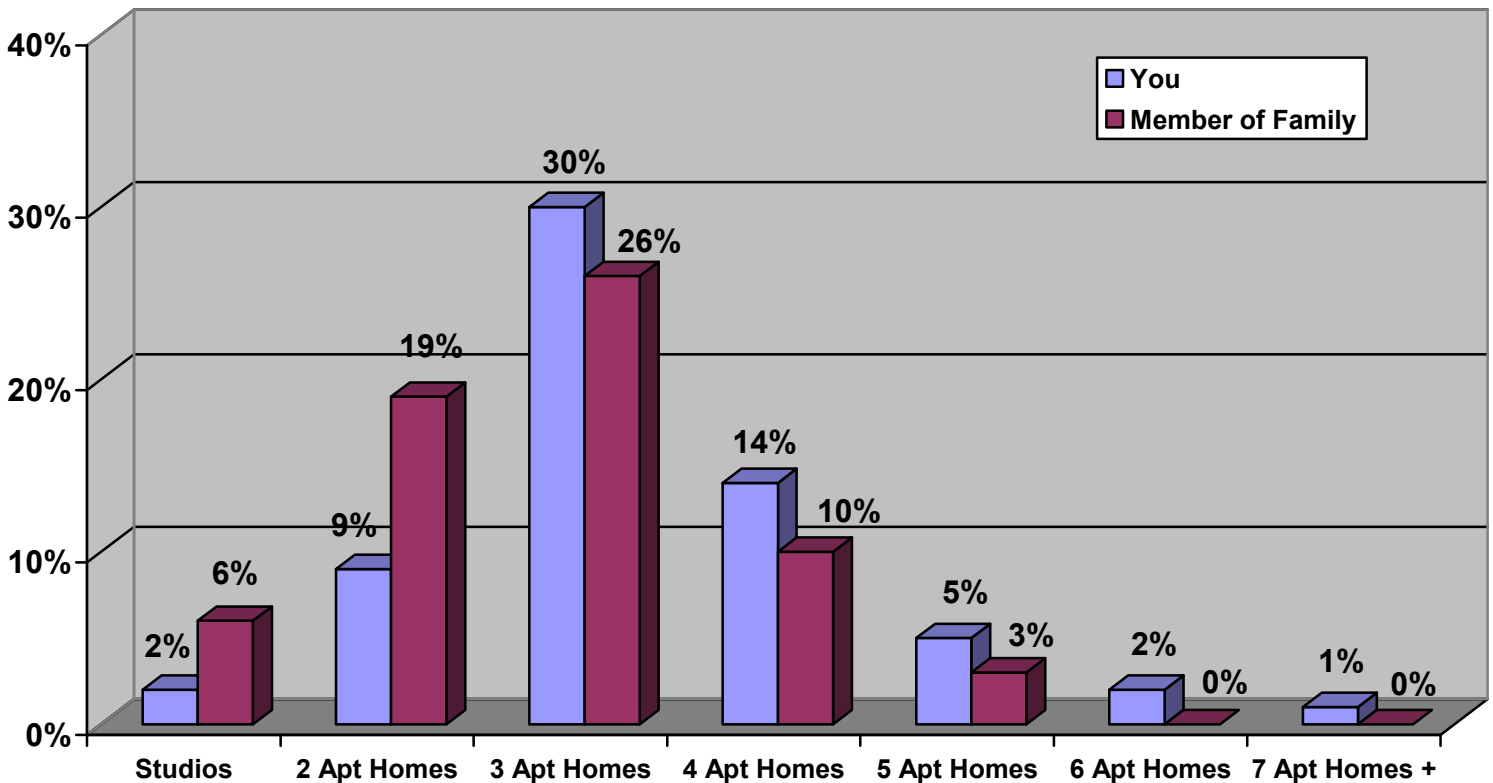*Which of these do you think there is greatest need for?*

Base: 409

Clearly, a very significant majority perceive that the greatest need in their community is for 3 or 4 apartment (2 or 3 bedroom) homes. This view is consistent across areas and age bands.

2.7 Respondents were then asked whether they or any of their family members were likely to have a need for a particular size of home over the next five years. Again, the greatest need is for 3 apartment homes amongst respondents and their family members, whilst there is also a significant desire for 2 apartment homes amongst respondents' family members.

Figure 2.6: Family Needs

Which of these types of homes do you think you or a member of your family moving away from the family home may need over the next five years?
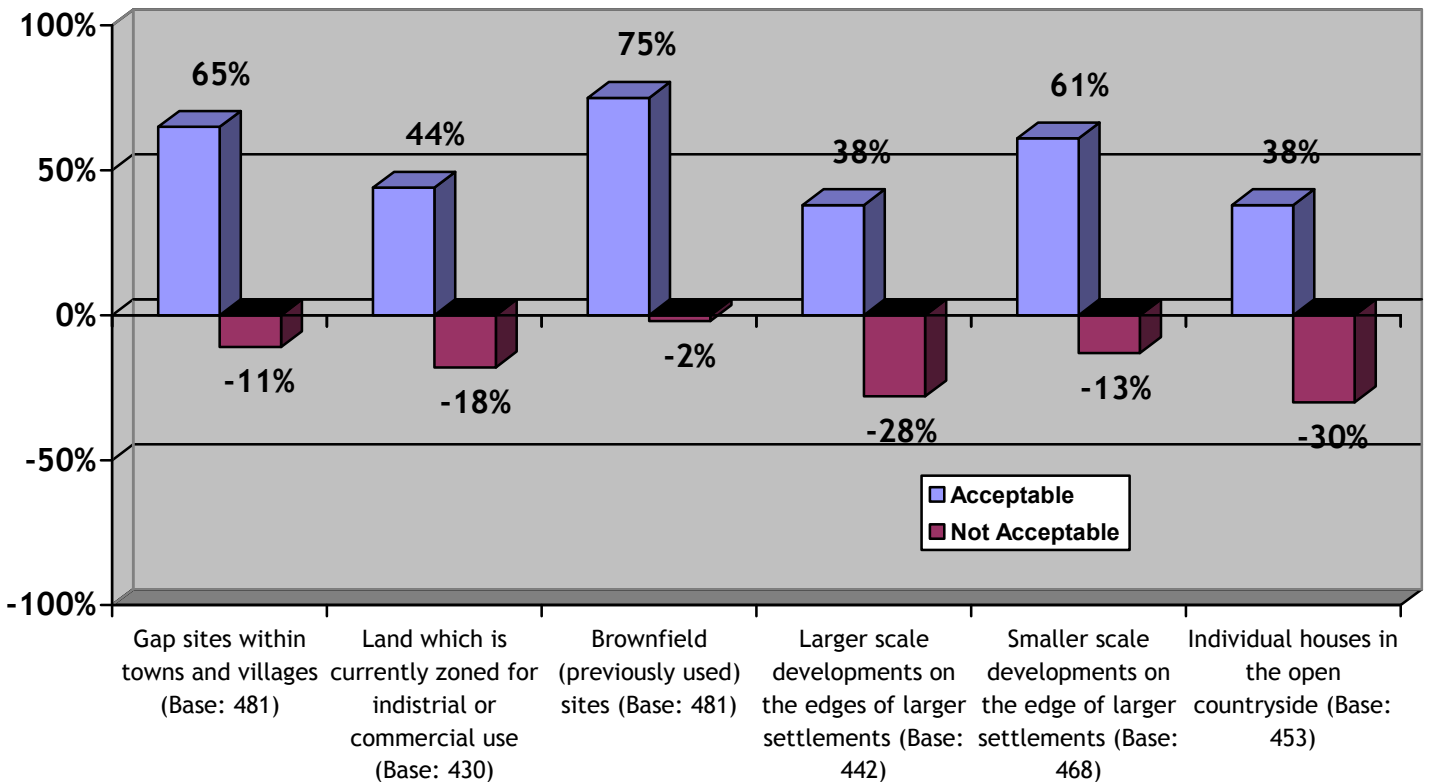

Base: 409

Overall, 58% of respondents said that they personally may have such a need over the next five years (a small number of people ticked more than one response). This would be equivalent to a "churn" of just over 11% per annum if it were to be realised fully and spread evenly over the 5-year period. It is worth noting that, amongst the small number of respondents in the 25-34 age groups, significantly more say that they would have a need for a 5 or 6 apartment home (23%, 18 respondents).

55% of respondents anticipated a need for a family member to seek housing, arising over the next five years or so (there were more multiple responses in this instance).

2.8   Respondents were then asked which **types** of land they felt it would be acceptable for the Council to release for house building. The results of this are set out in Figure 2.7 below. We have excluded those who left this question blank but as specific "don't know" responses were allowed, the numbers do not add to 100.

Figure 2.7: Additional Land

The Council may need to release additional land to allow more houses to be built. Which of the following locations do you think would be acceptable?[3]

There are some categories where the majority level of support is quite overwhelming:

➢ Brownfield (previously used) sites

➢ Gap sites within towns and villages

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[3] Numbers do not add to 100 due to the existence of both "don't know" responses and individuals not answering this question.

> ➤ Smaller-scale development on the edges of larger settlements.

There is also a comfortable majority of those who expressed an opinion who suggest that house building on land currently zoned for industrial or commercial use should be allowed.

Opinions are much more divided in relation to building in two particular instances:

> ➤ Larger-scale developments on the edge of larger settlements

> ➤ Individual houses in the open countryside.

Even in these cases, more people express support for house building to proceed than express outright opposition but a very significant number either choose a neutral option or do not answer this question.

2.9 Respondents were asked to make any further comments about the issue of affordable housing in their community. The great majority of these comments highlighted aspects of the desire for more social rented housing:

"Need to have more affordable houses for first time buyers".

"The Council/Housing association is the only body who can build affordable housing. The previous sale of council houses, while good for the lucky owners, has created an obvious lack of housing to rent or own. Housing Associations must replace this gap in provision or the lack of affordable houses will get worse and private landlords will charge what they want to".

"Councils should be allowed to possess properties abandoned or left to deteriorate in order to hand them to Housing Associations to redevelop for social housing".

"It is generally felt that council housing is needed as people in this area do not have a wage big enough to put down as mortgage security so if they can't do that they are living in accommodation which isn't always suitable for their needs".

A full verbatim listing of these comments is included in the appendices.

Conclusions

In considering the following conclusions, it should be noted that over 80% of the respondents were homeowners and only 13% tenants of social landlords, with a smattering of other tenures also being represented.

It is very apparent that the most pressing need is perceived to be for affordable homes to rent from social landlords.

The greatest potential need is also perceived to be for 3 and 4 apartment homes (equivalent to 2 or 3 bedrooms). Few people perceive there to be a need in the community for larger homes than this.

There is significant latent potential for churn in the housing market, with 58% of respondents saying that they may have a need for a new home and 55% saying that a family member might have such a need, over the next five years. The most common perceived demand is for 3 apartment (2 bedroom) homes amongst both respondents and their family members, with there also being significant potential demand for two apartment (one bedroom) homes amongst family members.

There is a strong consensus in support of house building on brownfield sites, on gap sites in towns and villages and, to a lesser extent, on land zoned for industrial or commercial use. There is also support for smaller-scale developments on the edge of larger settlements.

Opinions are more divided (and many people "don't know") in relation to larger-scale developments on the edge of existing settlements and the building of individual houses in the open countryside. However, a majority of those who express an opinion are supportive of house building in these circumstances.

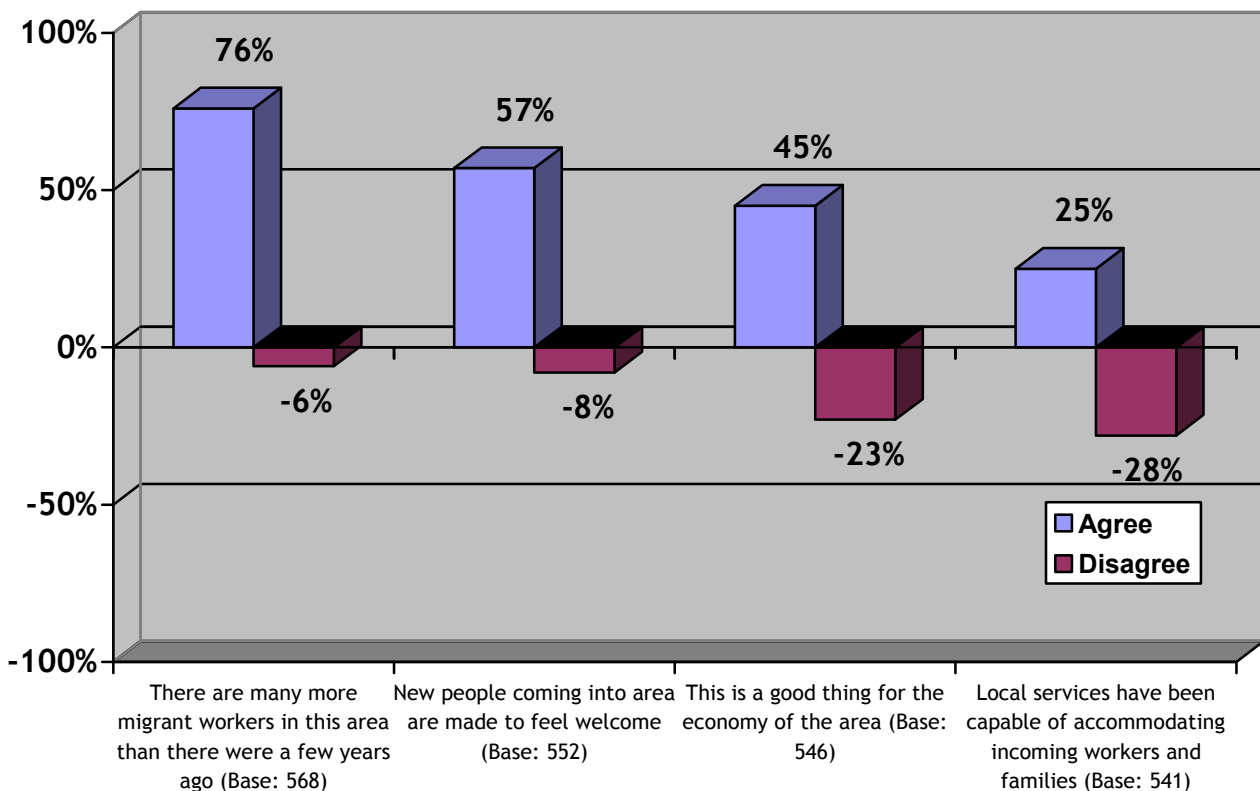## 3.0 THE ROLE OF MIGRANT WORKERS

3.1 As an introduction to this section of the survey, the following explanatory statement was provided:

"Argyll and Bute's Community Plan refers to the need for a community that is 'well balanced geographically with young people choosing to stay or move to the area'. It also refers to 'high quality public services…that attract people to settle in Argyll and Bute'. The role of migrant workers in Argyll and Bute is an important part of each of the above aspirations".

3.2 Figure 3.1 illustrates respondents' perceptions of a range of issues relating to migrant workers within the community. We have excluded people who left this question blank but neutral and "don't know" responses are still allowed, so numbers do not add to 100.

Figure 3.1: Statements About Migrant Workers

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following questions relating to migrant workers in your local area?

Clearly, a significant majority of people recognise there to be more migrant workers in the area than was the case a few years ago. A significant majority of those who express a view believe that new people coming into the area are made to feel welcome (although a small number disagree and many more give a neutral response).

3.3   The perception of there being many more migrant workers in the area is fairly consistent across all geographical areas although slightly less so in Helensburgh (where 53% agree). A similarly consistent pattern is evident concerning perceptions of people being made to feel welcome although those in Islay, Jura, Colonsay and Gigha are most likely to believe that people are made welcome (74%, 19 respondents).

3.4   Figure 3.1 also shows that most people who express an opinion believe the increase in numbers of migrant workers to be a good thing for the area (again, those in Islay, Jura, Colonsay and Gigha are most likely to share this view (69%, 19 respondents)). However, this view is quite lukewarm in that only 7% "agree **strongly**" with this contention and a significant minority express outright disagreement.

3.5   The area of greatest apparent concern is, however, related to whether local services have been capable of accommodating incoming workers and their families. A majority of those who express a view do **not** believe this to have been the case, the reasons for which require further detailed consideration. Again, this view is consistent across geographical areas.
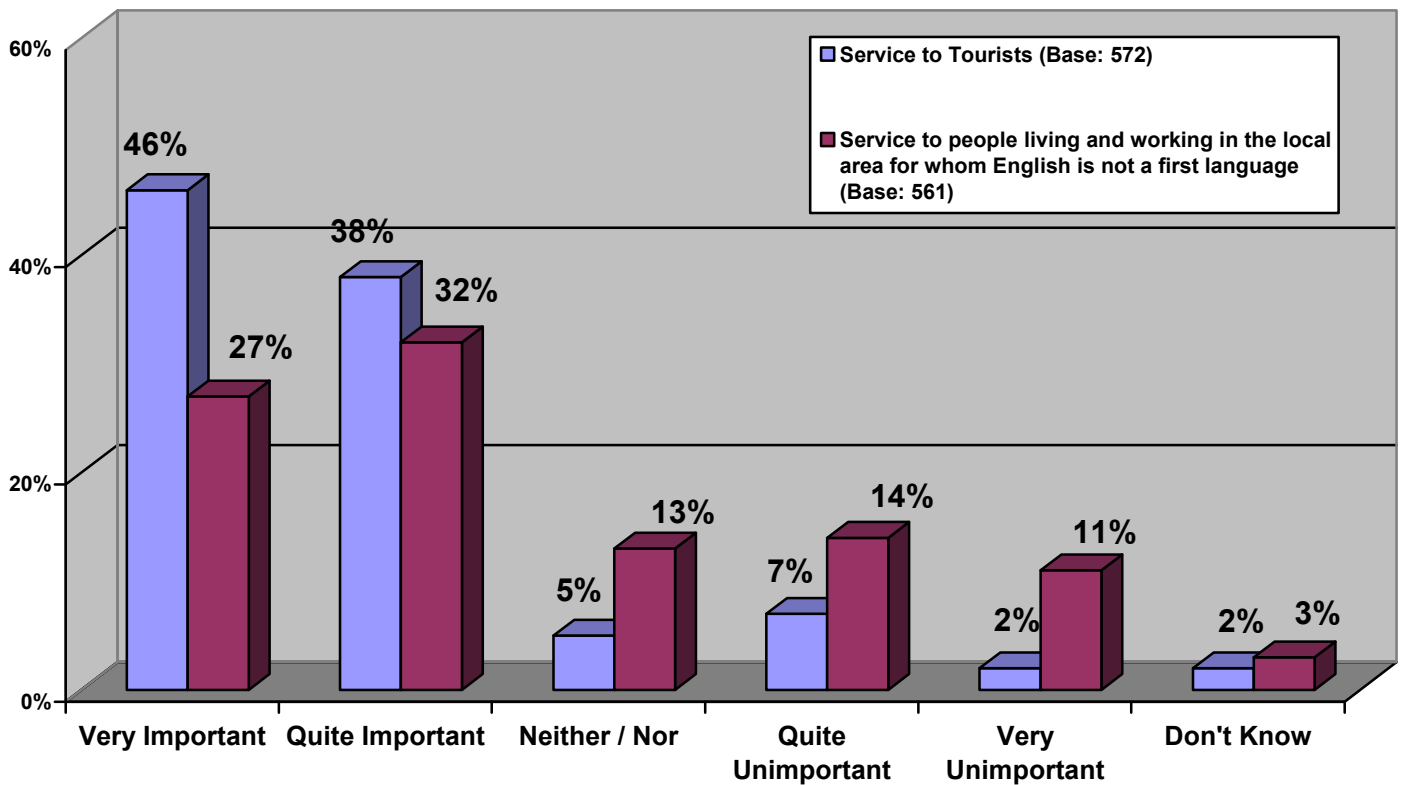
3.6   Those respondents who disagreed with the statements about migrant workers were asked to comment on the reasons for their disagreement. Some of the illustrative comments are shown in the table below and a full verbatim listing of comments is included in the appendices.

Statements	Illustrative Comments
There are many more migrant workers in this area than there were a few years ago	*"I disagree with too many foreign immigrants in Britain"*. *"They get jobs and stay which means local kids can't get houses"*.
This is a good thing for the economy of the area	*"They drive down already very low wages"*. *"This removes employment and accommodation from local people"*.
New people coming into the area are made to feel welcome	*"They are not made to feel welcome as they are seen as a threat in taking our jobs and house away"*.
Local services have been capable of accommodating incoming workers and their families	*"I have heard that some migrant families have been allocated housing to the cost of local homeless families"*. *"Our local services are already overloaded and migrant workers bring a new range of problems we are not able to absorb into budgets"*.

3.7   As shown in Figure 3.2 below, the translation of information into languages other than English is generally considered to be important, both as a service to tourists and as a service for people living in the local area for whom English is not a first language.

Figure 3.2: Translation of Information

How important do you consider the translation or information into languages other than English to be for the following purposes?

The provision of translation as a service to tourists is overwhelmingly seen as of importance (and is more often than not, "very" important). Support for such services as a service to people living and working in the area is significantly more guarded, with a significant minority of 25% suggesting that this is unimportant.

3.8   Figure 3.3(a) and (b) highlight the proportion of people who believe that certain languages should be translated as a service for tourists.

Figure 3.3(a): Languages

What languages do you believe information should be translated into for each of the following purposes?
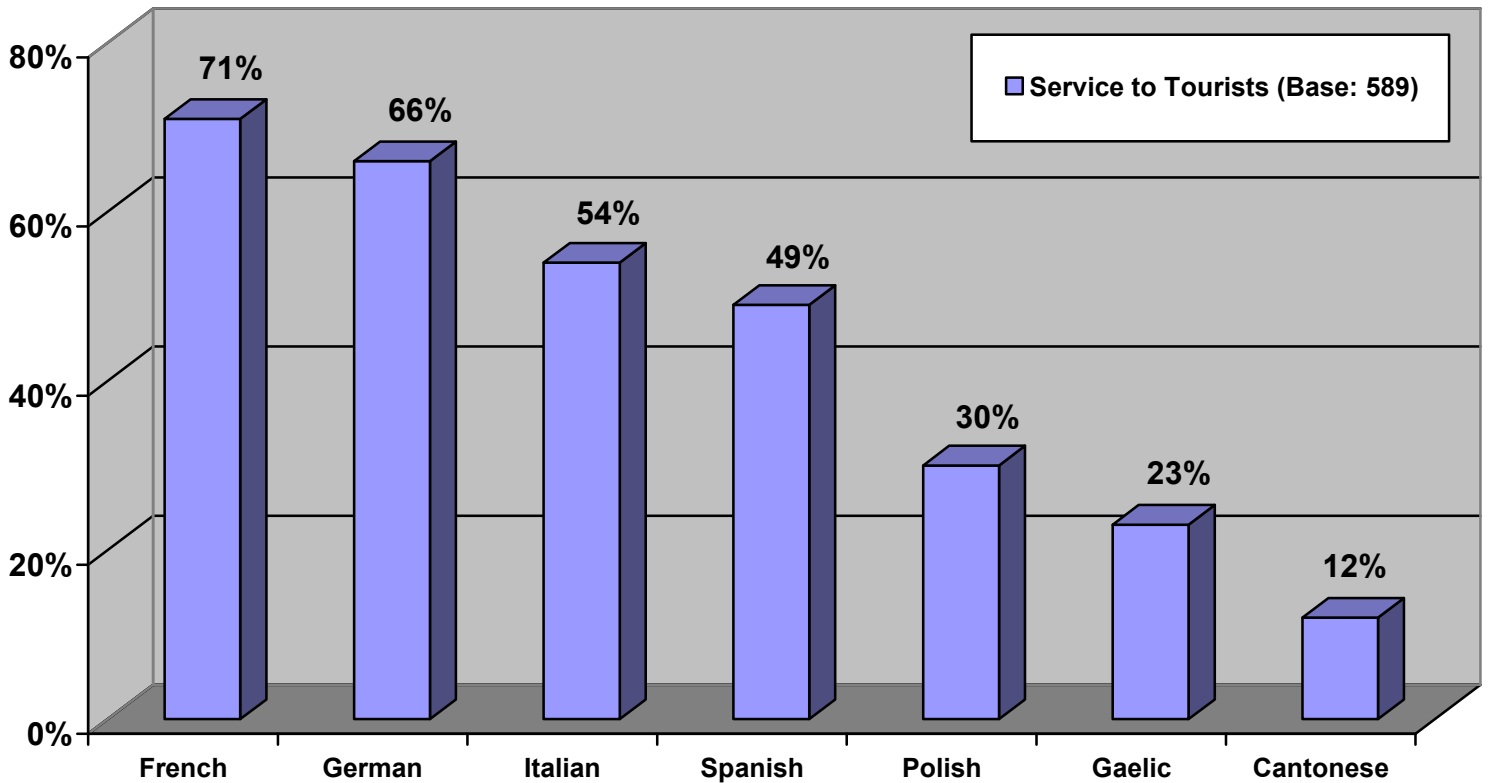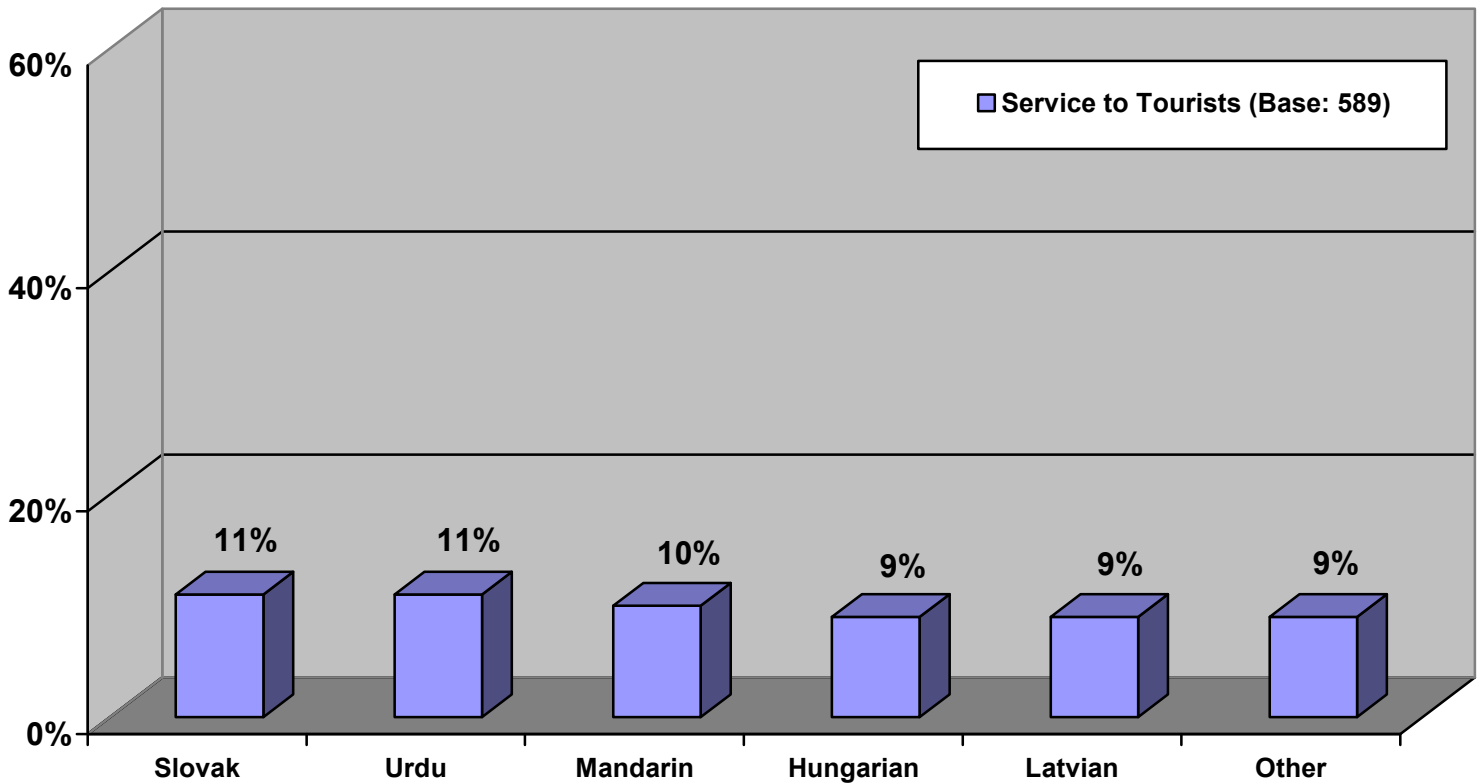
Figure 3.3(b): Languages

*What languages do you believe information should be translated into
for each of the following purposes?*

Other languages suggested included Dutch, Swedish, Japanese and Russian. A full verbatim listing of comments is included in the appendices.

Clearly, the most common languages alluded to are the main West European languages of French, German, Italian and Spanish, perhaps reflecting people's perceptions of the source of overseas visitors. A significant minority (30%) also believe that information should be translated into Polish or Slovak and a smattering of people mention a range of other, non-indigenous languages.

A sizeable minority (23%) suggest the translation of information into Gaelic, for tourist purposes, and this is an issue that we return to in Section 4.

3.9   Figures 3.4(a) and (b) illustrate people's perceptions of the languages that information should be translated into as a service for people living and working in the area for when English is not a first language.

Figure 3.4(a): Languages

What languages do you believe information should be translated into for each of the following purposes?

Legend: Service to people living and working local area for whom English is not a first language (Base: 589)

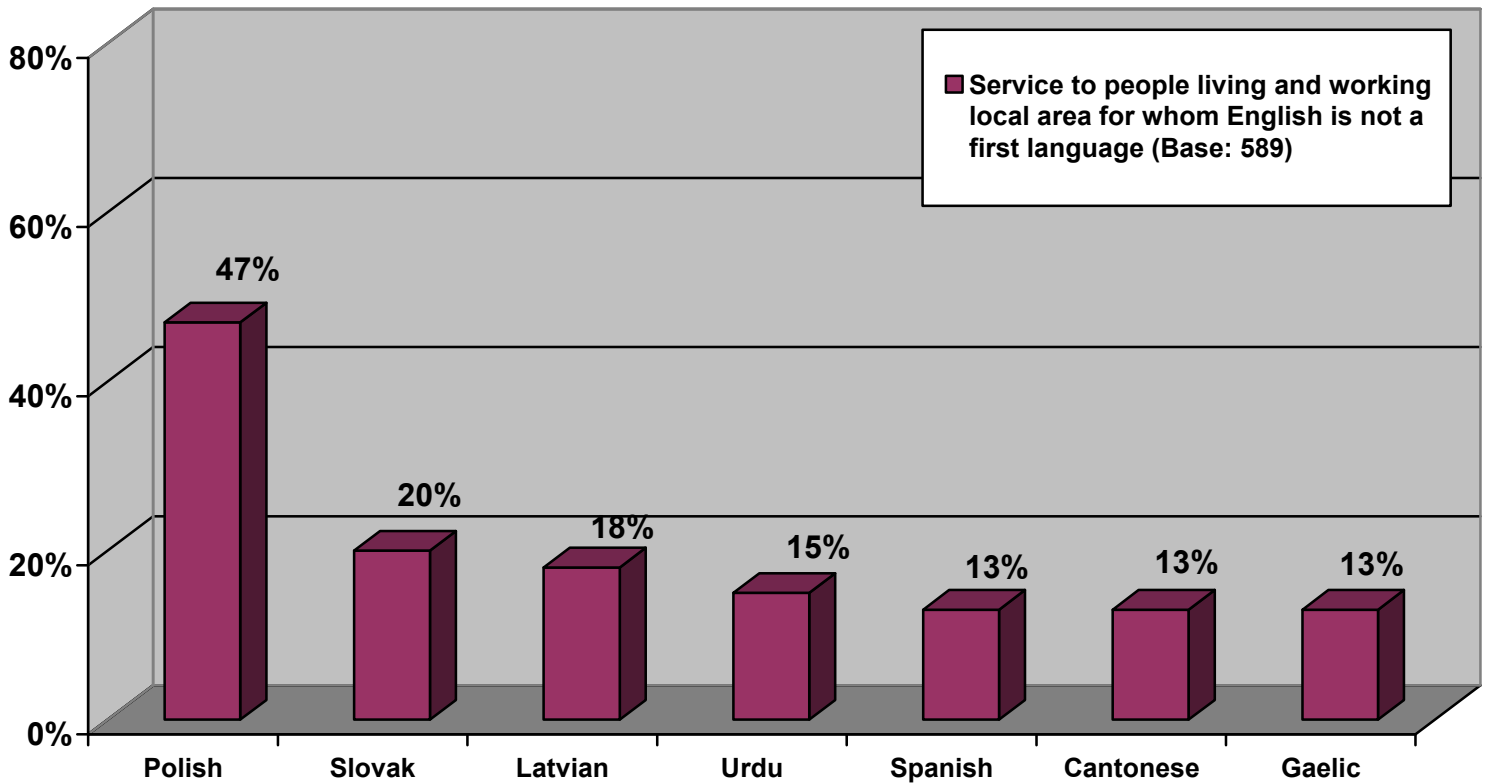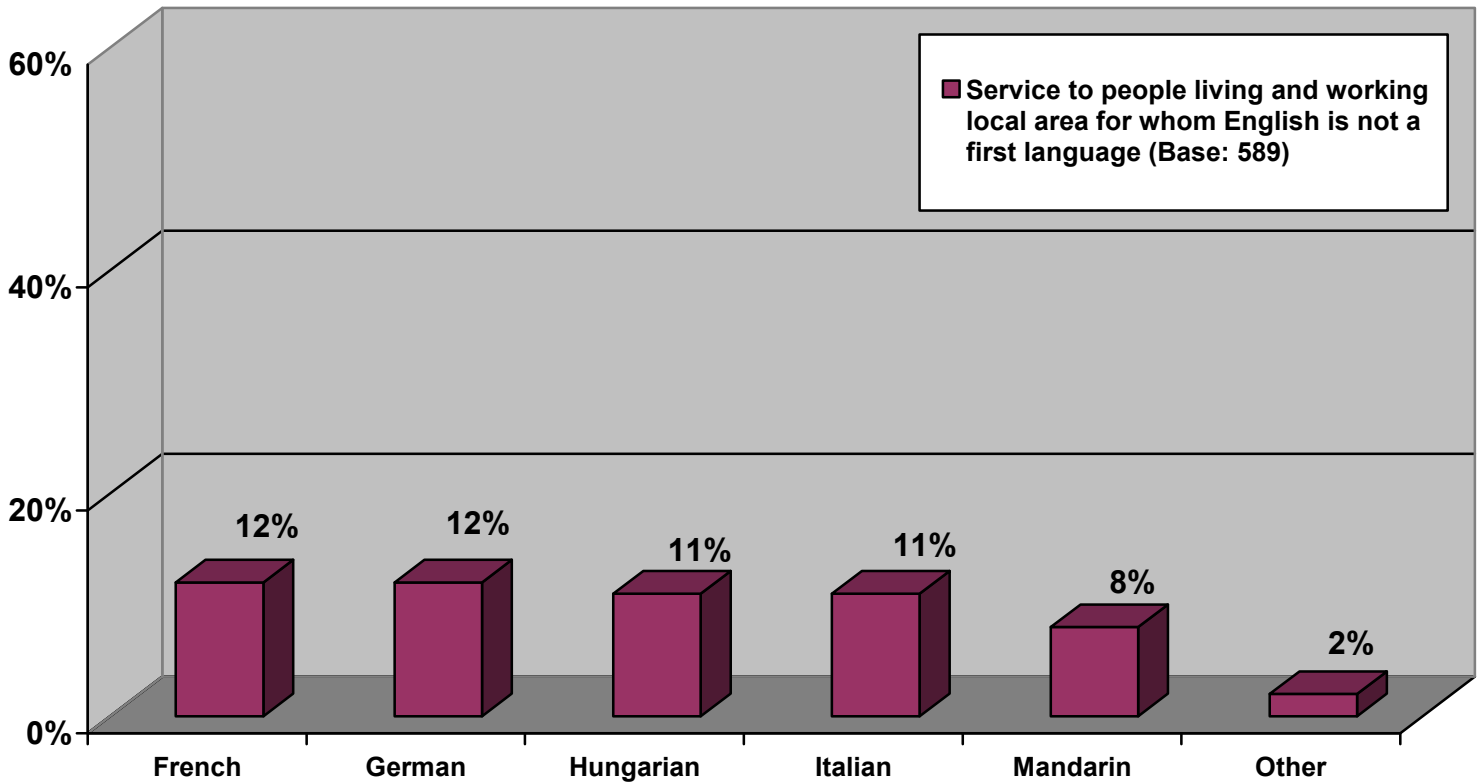| Language	Percentage
Polish	47%
Slovak	20%
Latvian	18%
Urdu	15%
Spanish	13%
Cantonese	13%
Gaelic	13%

Figure 3.4(b): Languages

What languages do you believe information should be translated into for each of the following purposes?

Clearly, the Central and East European languages of Polish, Slovak and Latvian are most apparent although a significant number suggest **all** of the other languages that were cited.

3.10   Respondents were given the opportunity to make any further comments about the role of migrant workers their community. A number of such comments were positive in tone:

"We have many Polish workers in our town. They fit in well, work hard and their lifestyle is similar to ours. Most have very good English and make the effort to integrate without forgetting their homeland".

Others, however, further illustrate the concerns that are raised by some people:

"Migrant workers should be qualified professional. Not entitles to benefits until they have lived and worked in the community for approximately 5 years".

"The migrant workers do their job well but also can withhold a lot of jobs for locals".

"A person should be able to speak English before coming to work here".

A full verbatim listing of comments is included in the appendices.

Conclusions

There is a strong view that there are many more migrant workers in the area than was the case a few years ago. On the whole, it is perceived that migrant workers are made to feel welcome and most people who express an opinion believe that migrant workers are good for the economy of the area.

However, a majority of people who express an opinion believe that local services have not been fully capable of accommodating incoming workers and their families.

The main concerns that people describe relate to:

➢ perceived negative impacts in terms of displacement of jobs from local people and wages being driven down
➢ impact on housing availability
➢ other services (e.g. doctors and dentists).

It seems likely that at least some of these concerns are fostered by miscommunication through the media rather than real experiences.

A majority of people do believe it to be important for information to be translated into languages other than English, both as a service to tourists and as a service to people living and working in the area for whom English is not a first language.

People are most likely to believe that information should be translated as a service to tourists into the main West European languages of French, German, Italian and Spanish although a significant minority also mention Polish and Gaelic in this regard.

Polish, and to a lesser extent, Slovak and Latvian are the most common languages that people believe should be translated as a service for people living and working in the local area.
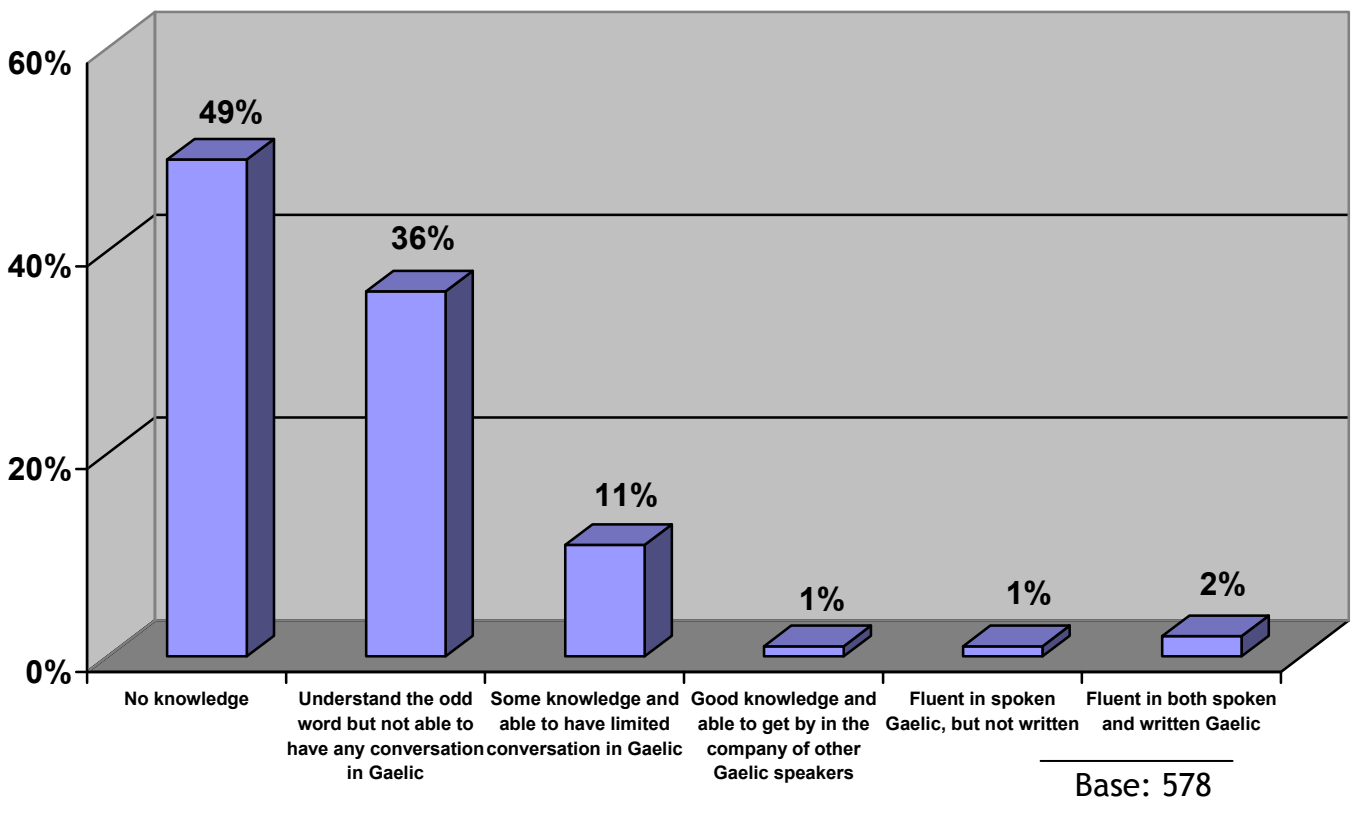

4.0 GAELIC LANGUAGE PLAN

4.1   The following descriptive preamble was provided for this section of the questionnaire:

The intention of the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 is to encourage the use and understanding of Gaelic. Public authorities are being asked to produce Gaelic Language Plans so that Gaelic users can access public services in their own language more often. Argyll and Bute Council is one of the first public bodies to be requested to produce a Gaelic Language Plan. Other public bodies among the Community Planning Partners will be requested to produce plans in due course.

4.2   Firstly, respondents were asked to indicate the level of their own personal proficiency in the Gaelic language. Figure 4.1 below shows that the vast majority have limited or no knowledge of the language although a significant minority do say that they have "some knowledge and are able to have a limited conversation in Gaelic".

Figure 4.1: Proficiency in Gaelic Language

How would you describe your own personal level of proficiency in the Gaelic language?
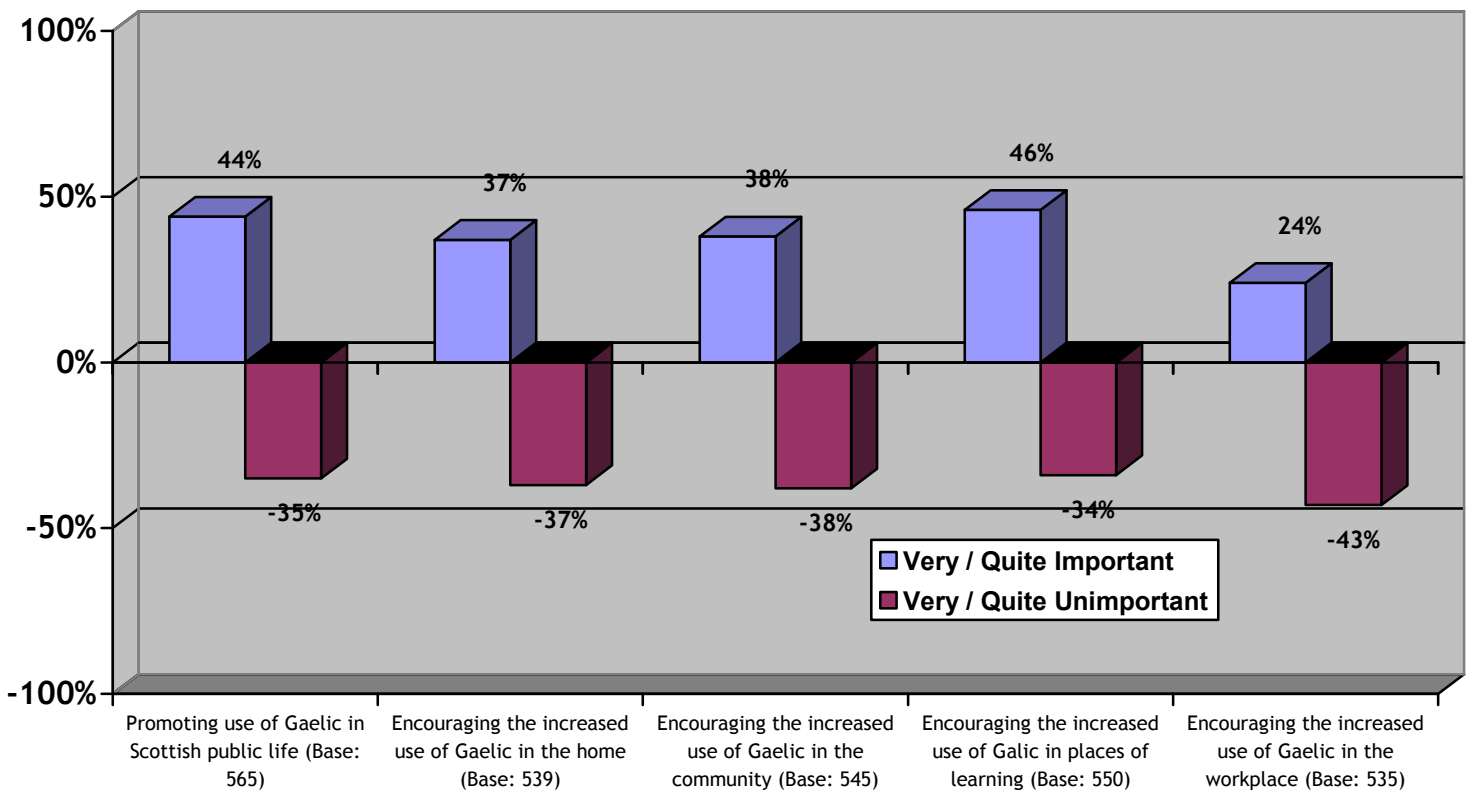

Base: 578

Levels of knowledge are significantly higher in specific areas of Argyll and Bute. For example, in Islay, Jura, Colonsay and Gigha 69% say they could at least have a "limited conversation" and 11% claim fluency in spoken Gaelic. In Mull, Coll, Tiree and Lismore 39% say they could at least have a limited conversation and 9% claim some degree of fluency, including 6% who are fluent in both spoken and written Gaelic.

4.3   In relation to possible elements of a Gaelic Language Plan, views on the importance of a number of potential elements are sharply polarised, as illustrated in Figure 4.2 below.

Figure 4.2: Purposes of Gaelic Language Plan

How important do you consider each of the following purposes of the Gaelic language to be?[4]

There are two areas where majority support is recorded (at least amongst those who expressed a view one way or the other:

➢ Promoting use of Gaelic in Scottish public life

➢ Encouraging the increased use of Gaelic in places of learning.

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[4] Again, numbers do not add to 100 due to neutral responses.

In two further cases, views are evenly divided as to whether the issue is important or unimportant:

➢ Encouraging the increased use of Gaelic in the home

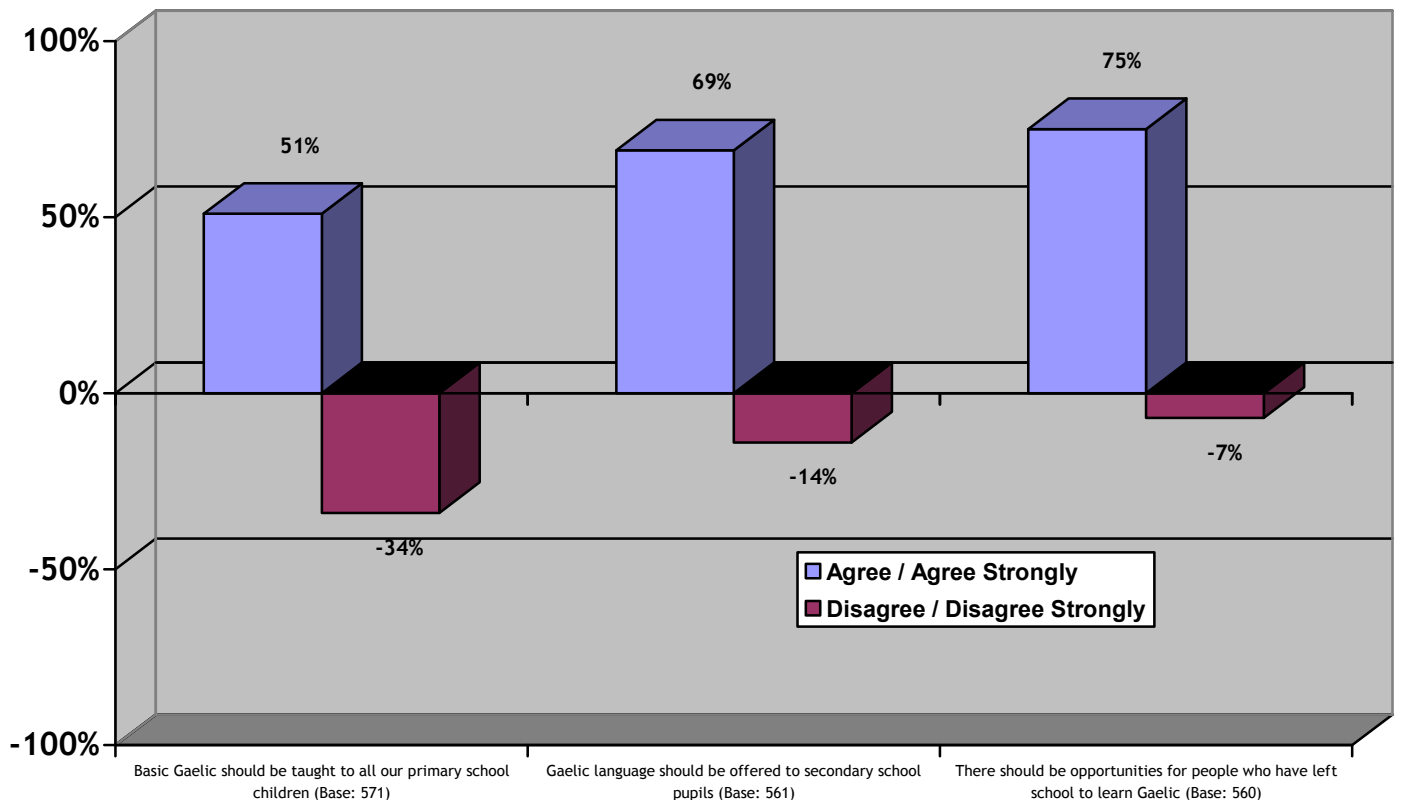➢ Encouraging the increased use of Gaelic in the community.

Only a minority of respondents ascribe any importance to encouraging the increased use of Gaelic in the workplace.

4.4 Again, however, there are clear differences within Argyll and Bute in relation to the importance ascribed to Gaelic. For example, in Helensburgh, only 34% of the 147 respondents ascribe importance to the promotion of Gaelic in Scottish public life whereas in Islay, Jura, Colonsay and Gigha this figure is 79% (of 19 respondents) and in Mull, Coll, Tiree and Lismore it is 61% (of 34 respondents). This reflects those areas where use of Gaelic is highest.

4.5 Figure 4.3 below, however, shows that the majority of respondents agree that Gaelic should be taught in both primary and secondary school and should be available for people who have left school.

Figure 4.3: Statements about the Gaelic Language

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements in relation to the Gaelic language?

□ Agree / Agree Strongly
■ Disagree / Disagree Strongly

Basic Gaelic should be taught to all our primary school children (Base: 571) — 51%, -34%

Gaelic language should be offered to secondary school pupils (Base: 561) — 69%, -14%

There should be opportunities for people who have left school to learn Gaelic (Base: 560) — 75%, -7%

Clearly, support for teaching Gaelic to **all** primary school children (as opposed to the "elective" situation in the other circumstances) is more guarded but still represents a majority of respondents. Once again, views are polarised between, for example, Helensburgh (where only 30% of the 148 respondents believe Gaelic should be taught in primary schools) and Islay, Jura, Colonsay and Gigha where 84% of the 19 respondents believe this should be the case and Mull, Coll, Tiree and Lismore where 74% of the 35 respondents agree.

4.6   Again, participants were asked to note any other issues relating to the Gaelic Language Plan. A number of such comments showed a positive comment to fostering the Gaelic language:

"Should be carried right through the education".

"Our heritage is dying out - or being smothered. It is time for a revival".

"If I knew how to go about it I would learn it myself".

In other instances, respondents suggested that efforts and resources should be targeted elsewhere:

"The priority should be to get basic English and maths up to scratch. Until this is 100% inward looking education should be on the back burner".

"When was Gaelic ever the language of all of Scotland? Three centuries ago or more? Our resources should be concentrating on making Scotland a modern forward looking country not wasted chasing a past which didn't exist".

A full verbatim listing of comments is again included in the appendices.

Conclusions

Few people claim to be proficient in Gaelic although some do claim to be "able to have a limited conversation" in Gaelic.

There is only limited support for the promotion of the use of Gaelic in a variety of settings; support is most likely to be for promotion of Gaelic in places of learning.

This is reflected in support for some teaching of Gaelic to be provided to all primary school children and for such teaching to be available on an elective basis in secondary schools and for people who have left school.

It should be noted, however, that there are parts of Argyll and Bute (particularly the island communities) where the usage and commitment to Gaelic is much more significant.

5.0 CHILD PROTECTION

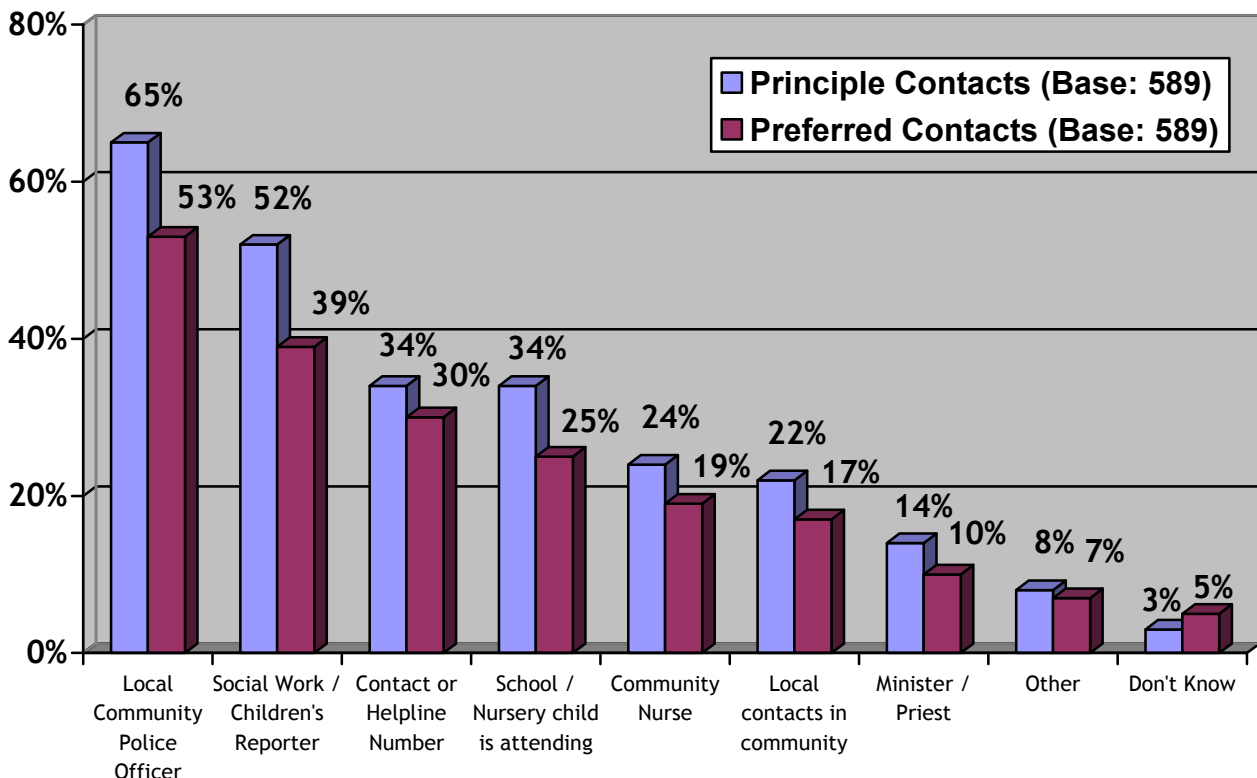5.1 The following explanatory statement was provided to participants at the outset of this section:

"Argyll and Bute's Child Protection Committee would like to gather information from you to help it in its role in keeping children and young people safe.

The Committee needs to make sure that members of the public know which agencies can be of help and also wishes to be able to measure the impact of its awareness raising activities. There are no right or wrong answers – your views are what count!"

5.2 Respondents were asked both where they would go if they had a concern about a child or young person and where they would **prefer** to go if they had a concern. As shown in figure 5.1 the local Community Police Officer is the principle and the preferred point of contact for the majority of respondents, followed by the social work / children's reporter and helpline numbers.

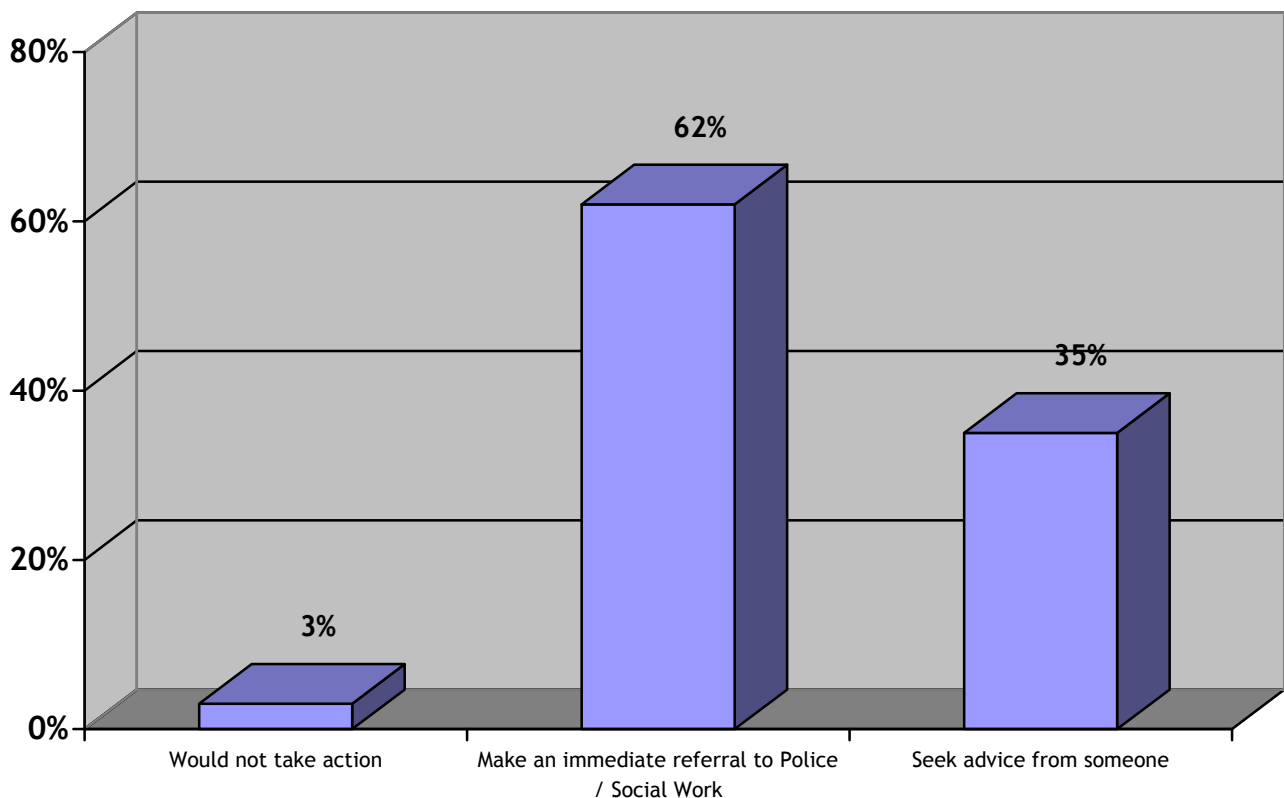**Figure 5.1: Child Protection Contacts**

Where would you go / prefer to go if you had a concern about a child or a young person?

26

5.3　Figure 5.2 below illustrates that almost all respondents would normally take some kind of action if they suspected that a child was being abused (although a small proportion do say that they would not take any action).

Figure 5.2: Action on Child Abuse

If you see, hear or feel that a child is being abused, what would you normally do?
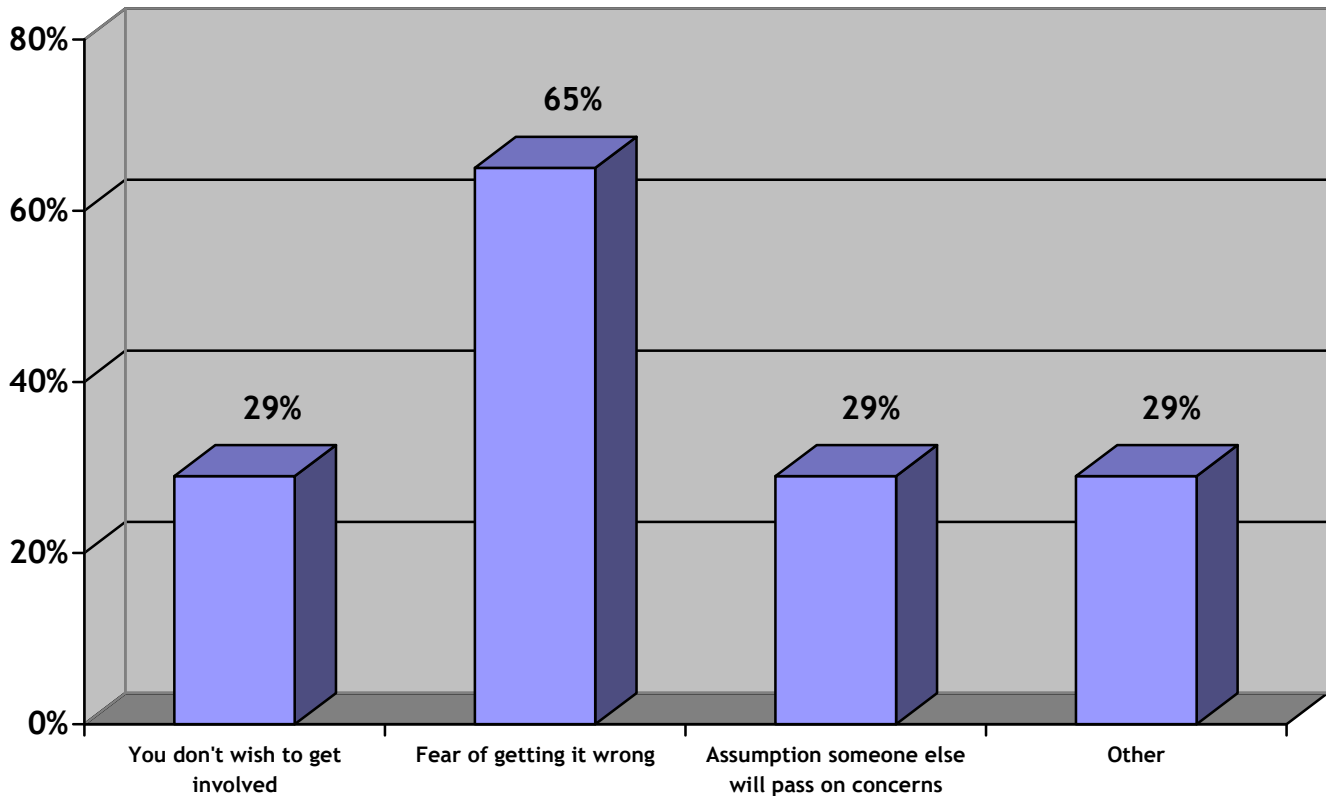

Base: 568

Men are slightly more likely than women to say that they would not take any action but this figure is still only 5%.

Those respondents who would seek advice from someone were asked who that would be. The most common responses were "Health Visitor", "Friends / Family", "Head Teacher / School", "Police" or "Local GP". A full verbatim listing of these responses is included in the appendices.

27

5.4 Of the small number of respondents (17 people) who would not normally take any action if they suspected child abuse, the main reason given was the 'fear of getting it wrong'. Figure 5.3 below shows the reasons given by respondents.

Figure 5.3: Reasons for Not Taking Action

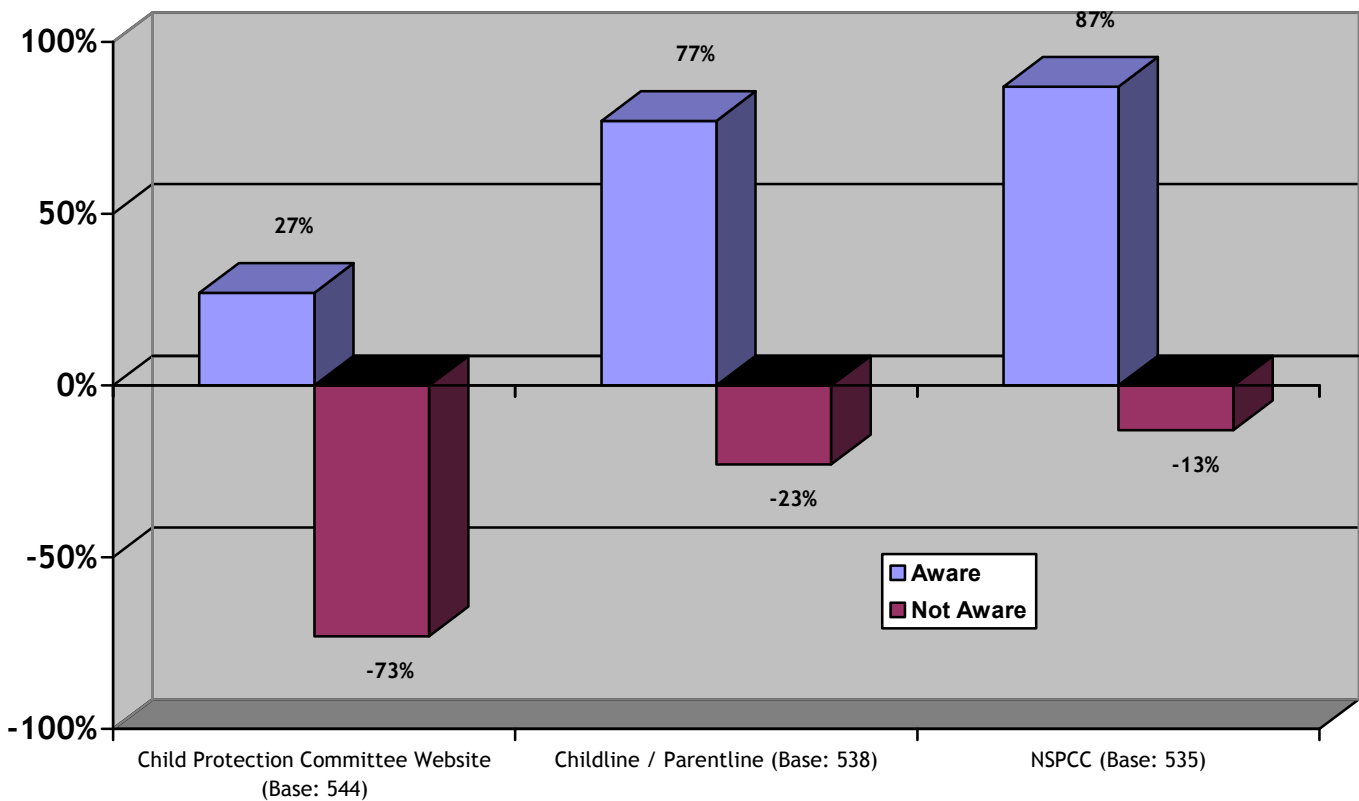*If you decided not to take action, is this because of any of the following reasons?*

Base: 17

5.5   The vast majority of respondents are aware of organisations such as the NSPCC and Childline / Parentline, although fewer (27%) say that they are aware of the Child Protection Committee Website, as shown in Figure 5.4 below. Those who left this question blank were a relatively small minority and they have been excluded from these results, meaning that the results add to 100%.

Figure 5.4: Awareness of Child Protection Organisations

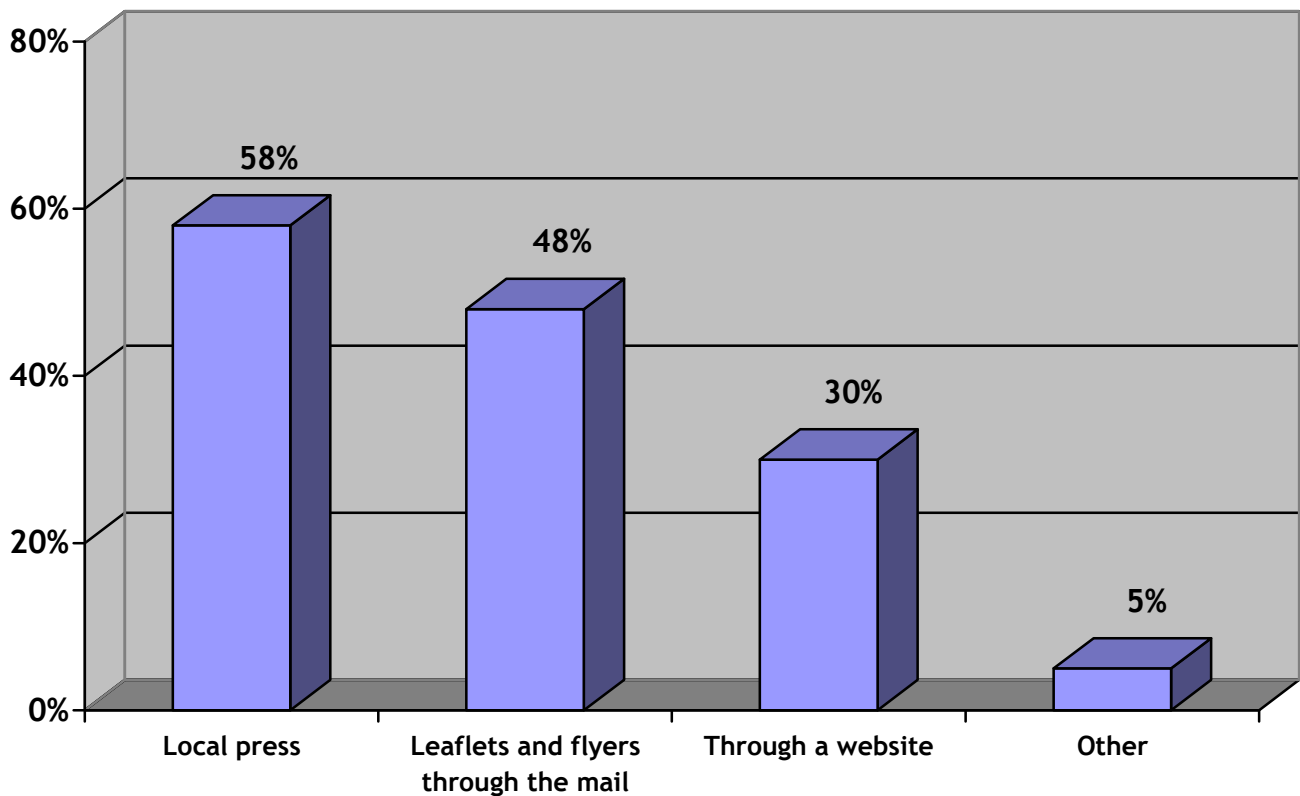*How would you describe your awareness of each of the following?*

Women's awareness of each of these elements is higher than men's (for example, 33% of women are aware of the Child Protection Committee website compared to 22% of men).

5.6   43% of all respondents would like to know more about the work of the Child Protection Committee (again, a small number of people who left this question blank have been excluded from this analysis). Again, the figure is highest amongst women (53%).

Figure 5.5 below illustrates the preferred ways in which respondents would like to be informed about the work of the Committee.

Figure 5.5: Information on Child Protection Committee

How would you like to be informed about the work the Child Protection Committee do?

Base: 250 (those who were interested in more information)

30

5.7   Once again, respondents were asked to identify any other issues that they felt should be considered under the issue of Child Protection. Such comments reflect a complexity with regard to the agencies involved in child protection:

"There is a bewildering array of agencies. So many that the only perceived reliable reference is to the police".

Many of the other comments were observations on the climate within society as it related to issue of child protection:

"Disclosure is far too heavy and put people off volunteering - causes more risks to kids than it prevents".

"We are over protecting the children".

"This is a difficult area since PC has often led to the loss of common sense. Extremes of abuse are clear but for lesser circumstances then expert and thorough knowledge of the situation is necessary, otherwise harm and offence can occur".

"I have grave reservations about the child protection industry which has created a climate where children are taught to fear adults and adults are reluctant to engage with children for fear of being regarded as a child molester".

A full verbatim listing of comments is included in the appendices.

Conclusions

Most people say that they would take action if they believed a child to be experiencing abuse. Usually, this action would be contact a local Police Officer or the Social Work Department. On occasion, people would seek advice from others, such as health professionals, school staff or friends and relatives before doing so.

In the very small number of cases where people say they would not take any action, the main concern is "fear of getting it wrong".

There is already high awareness of organisations such as Childline / Parentline and the NSPCC. Although awareness of the Child Protection Committee Website is lower, a significant minority of people are still aware of it.

Preferred methods of receiving information about the work of the Child Protection Committee are local press and leaflets and flyers through the mail.