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# Local Government Candidates Survey 2022

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.

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## Local Government Candidates Survey 2022

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Views expressed in this report are those of the researcher and not necessarily those of the Welsh Government.

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Welsh Government, with the support of Data Cymru, carried out of a survey of local government election candidates for the May 2022 elections. This was the third survey of local government election candidates, the first having been conducted following the 2012 elections and the second after the May 2017 elections.
- 1.2 As part of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, local authorities are required to conduct a standardised survey of Councillors and candidates for election to the office of Councillor in their areas. The survey is to include both County and Town and Community Councillors and candidates and asks a prescribed set of questions that included (but was not limited to) questions about sex and gender identity; sexual orientation; language; ethnicity; age; disability; religion or belief; health; education and qualifications; employment; and work as a Councillor. Data Cymru conducted the 2022 survey on behalf of the local authorities.
- 1.3 The main aim of the survey is to provide timely information on the demographic profile of local authority Councillors and candidates. The intention is that the survey will be repeated during each ordinary election to track changes in Councillors' and candidates' characteristics over time.
- 1.4 A stakeholder group considered the 2017 questionnaire and proposed changes which were subsequently incorporated into the 2022 survey. This stakeholder group consisted of local government monitoring officers, electoral services managers, Councillors, the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA), One Voice Wales, the Electoral Reform Society, the Association of Electoral Administrators and equality groups. The 2022 questionnaire was required to be set out in regulations. Any changes to the questionnaire are highlighted in the report.
- 1.5 In terms of how the data have been analysed and presented in this report, it is important to note that the survey findings have not been weighted and confidence intervals have not been calculated. What this means in practical terms is 1) there are unknown margins of error around the numbers derived

from the survey; and 2) comparisons between the results from the 2012, 2017 and 2022 surveys should be made with caution, because the statistical validity of differences between the three surveys cannot be verified.

- 1.6 Data Cymru conducted a detailed analysis of the 2022 survey data and this report summarises demographic characteristics of elected Councillors and candidates who were not elected, focusing particularly on characteristics which signal diversity. It is intended that the information provided will support the Welsh Government and the political parties in the development of policies to increase the diversity of those who stand as County and Community Councillors.
- 1.7 The term 'County' is used for County and County Borough candidates / Councillors and the term 'Community' is used for Community and Town candidates / Councillors throughout this report.

## **2. Methodology**

- 2.1 The survey was conducted before, during and after the local government elections held on 5 May 2022. The questionnaire was made available to candidates for both County and Community elections as part of their nomination packs. The survey was conducted online with paper copies available on request.
- 2.2 The 2012 survey was conducted after the election. This approach had the potential for non-response bias resulting from candidates who were not elected responding at a lower rate than those candidates who were elected.
- 2.3 As with the 2017 survey, the 2022 survey was designed to reduce non-response bias from candidates who were not elected by being available prior to the election. Some unique identifiers were collected as part of the questionnaire to allow linkage to candidate records, helping to understand if the candidate was elected following the election. 14 per cent of responses were received before the election, 83 per cent were received after the election.
- 2.4 Direct comparison of results from 2022, 2017 and 2012 should be treated with caution.
- 2.5 Candidates can stand in County or Community elections, or both. A summary of the overall number of candidates is shown in

## 2.6 Table .

**Table 1: Candidates by election type<sup>1</sup>**

|  | Number of candidates | Percentage of candidates |
|--|----------------------|--------------------------|
| All candidates                         | 8,794                | 100                      |
| County only                            | 2,155                | 25                       |
| Community only                         | 5,503                | 63                       |
| Both County and Community <sup>1</sup> | 1,136                | 13                       |
| Total County                           | 3,291                | 37                       |
| Total Community                        | 6,639                | 75                       |

- 2.7 It is also possible for candidates to stand for more than one Community seat. Of the 6,639 candidates in Community seats, 82 (1.2 per cent) candidates stood in more than one Community seat. Where candidates stood for more than one seat they have been counted only once. Candidates who stood for more than one seat have been categorised as elected if they were elected to at least one of these seats. Uncontested seats are those that did not receive sufficient candidates to require an election. Candidates in uncontested seats are categorised as elected for this analysis.
- 2.8 Candidates who were elected are referred to as Councillors in this report. Candidates who were not elected in all seats in which they stood are referred to as not elected candidates.
- 2.9 A number of candidates responded to the survey more than once, as a result of receiving multiple nomination packs or reminders sent from Data Cymru or the local authority. Only one survey response has been included per candidate. Where duplicate responses were both complete (full) responses, the most recent response was selected for inclusion in the analysis. Where it was clear that a respondent started but did not finish the

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<sup>1</sup> For Powys and Swansea, the number of candidates by election type has been estimated using published data from their website. However, using this method we were unable to identify the number of candidates who stood in both County and Community elections. Therefore, there are no Powys or Swansea figures in the 'both County and Community' row and the figures in the 'County only' and 'Community only' rows may be slight overestimates.

survey, and at a later date fully completed the survey, the complete survey response was used.

- 2.10 Additionally, as part of the data cleansing, partial responses that covered less than approximately 25 per cent of the survey were rejected. An extensive candidate-to-respondent matching exercise was also undertaken, using data supplied by local authorities with survey responses, to ensure that the survey was completed by those for whom it was intended.
- 2.11 Overall, 8,794 candidates stood for election. Some candidates stood in more than one election. There were 2,155 unique County candidates and 5,503 unique Community candidates. 1,136 candidates stood for both County and Community elections. The survey yielded 1,077 valid responses and a summary of survey responses and response rates by election type is given in Table 2.

**Table 2: Response rates by election type**

|             | Number of candidates | Proportion elected (%) | Number of survey responses | Survey response rate (%) |
|-------------|----------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| All         | 8,794                |                        | 1,077                      | 12                       |
| Elected     | 6,265                | 71                     | 609                        | 10                       |
| Not elected | 2,529                | 29                     | 352                        | 14                       |
| Unknown     | -                    | -                      | 116                        | -                        |
| County      | 3,291                |                        | 613                        | 19                       |
| Elected     | 1,248                | 38                     | 309                        | 25                       |
| Not elected | 2,043                | 62                     | 261                        | 13                       |
| Unknown     | -                    | -                      | 43                         | -                        |
| Community   | 6,639                |                        | 670                        | 10                       |
| Elected     | 5,428                | 82                     | 444                        | 8                        |
| Not elected | 1,211                | 18                     | 138                        | 11                       |
| Unknown     | -                    | -                      | 88                         | -                        |

- 2.12 The response rate for the survey in 2017 was 18 per cent (1,701 responses) compared with 12 per cent (1,077 responses) in 2022. Firstly, a potential reason for this drop in response rate is that this year's survey was "digital first", whereas the candidate registration is not in most local

authorities, and therefore not all candidates provided an email address when registering. Secondly, after the COVID-19 pandemic, candidates may be experiencing “survey fatigue” associated with an increased number of surveys examining equality and well-being issues. Thirdly, UK General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) requirements (not yet in force in 2017) meant that it was not possible to follow up and remind specific candidates who had not responded; instead, only general reminders to all candidates could be sent.

- 2.13 Response rates of all candidates ranged from 40 per cent in Merthyr Tydfil to 1 per cent in Isle of Anglesey. The number of candidates and survey responses received in each local authority is given in Table 3.

**Table 3: Response rates by local authority**

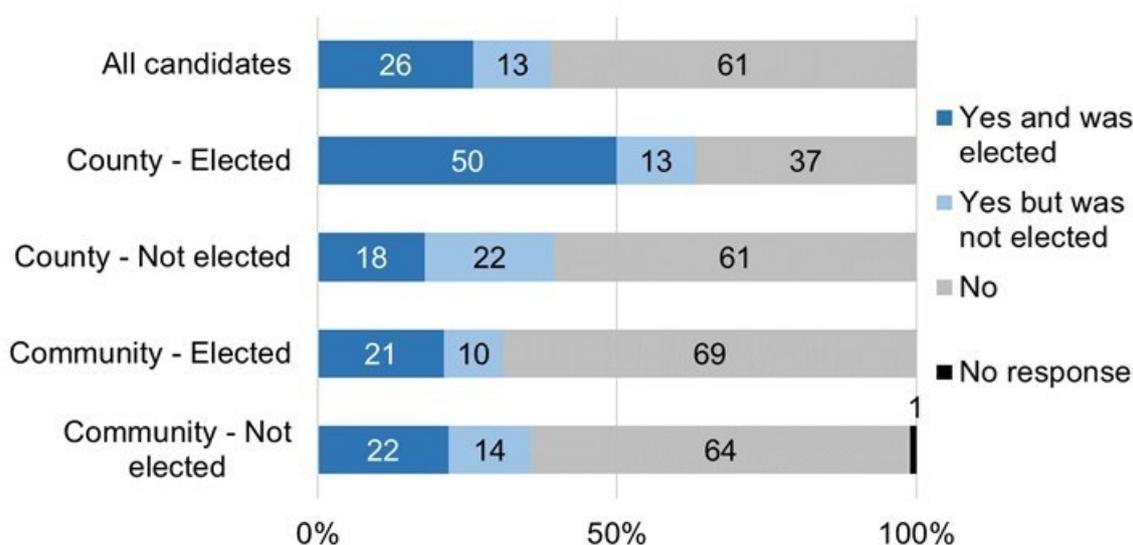
|                       | Number of candidates | Number of survey responses | Survey response rate (%) |
|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Isle of Anglesey      | 357                  | 3                          | 1                        |
| Gwynedd               | 623                  | 26                         | 4                        |
| Conwy                 | 412                  | 83                         | 20                       |
| Denbighshire          | 372                  | 36                         | 10                       |
| Flintshire            | 417                  | 110                        | 26                       |
| Wrexham               | 410                  | 93                         | 23                       |
| Powys                 | 1,024                | 36                         | 4                        |
| Ceredigion            | 491                  | 39                         | 8                        |
| Pembrokeshire         | 662                  | 91                         | 14                       |
| Carmarthenshire       | 785                  | 19                         | 2                        |
| Swansea               | 454                  | 35                         | 8                        |
| Neath Port Talbot     | 324                  | 85                         | 26                       |
| Bridgend              | 270                  | 43                         | 16                       |
| The Vale of Glamorgan | 353                  | 69                         | 20                       |
| Cardiff               | 392                  | 80                         | 20                       |
| Rhondda Cynon Taf     | 303                  | 46                         | 15                       |
| Merthyr Tydfil        | 75                   | 30                         | 40                       |
| Caerphilly            | 272                  | 44                         | 16                       |
| Blaenau Gwent         | 102                  | 32                         | 31                       |
| Torfaen               | 140                  | 38                         | 27                       |
| Monmouthshire         | 334                  | 26                         | 8                        |
| Newport               | 222                  | 13                         | 6                        |

- 2.14 Some respondents chose not to answer certain questions. These have been shown in tables and graphs as 'no response'. Doing this means the base can be kept consistent across the majority of charts.
- 2.15 From this point on, and unless stated otherwise, all figures in the report refer to candidates who responded to the survey, not to all candidates who stood in the elections.

### 3. Previous experience as a County Councillor

- 3.1 The question wording around previous experience as a County Councillor was changed in 2017. The wording for the 2022 survey matched that in the 2017 survey but neither uses the same wording as the 2012 survey. Therefore, direct comparison of the three results is not possible.

**Figure 1: Have you stood for election to a County or County Borough Council in the past?**



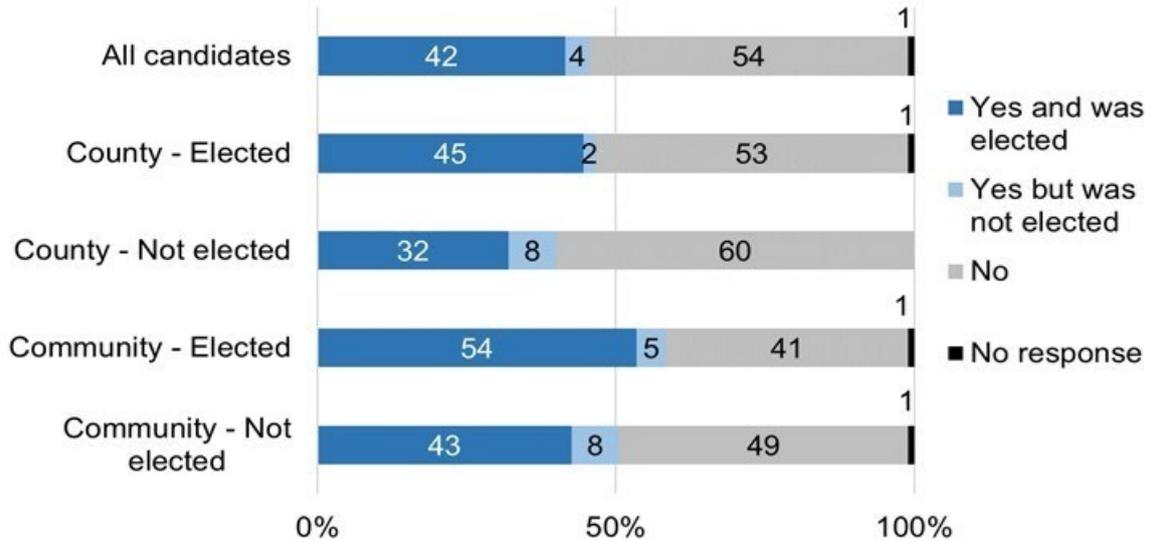
Bases: All candidates: 1,077; County – Elected: 309; County – Not elected: 261; Community – Elected: 444; Community – Not elected: 138

- 3.2 Over a third (39 per cent) of candidates had stood for election as a County Councillor in the past; 26 per cent had been elected previously.
- 3.3 Of those elected as County Councillors in 2022, 63 per cent had stood for election as a County Councillor in previous elections, and 50 per cent had been elected previously.
- 3.4 The total number of years that candidates had previously served as County Councillors ranged from less than a year to more than 46 years. The median length of previous service was 10 years. Around 46 per cent of those that had served as a County Councillor before had done so for 10 years or more. Candidates were asked to include all periods of office and were not asked about any breaks in service.

3.5 Over a fifth (22 per cent) of County candidates who were not elected had also been unsuccessful at election in previous years.

#### 4. Previous experience as a Community Councillor

**Figure 2: Have you stood for election to a Community or Town Council in the past?**



*Bases: All candidates: 1,077; County – Elected: 309; County – Not elected: 261; Community – Elected: 444; Community – Not elected: 138*

4.1 Nearly half of candidates had stood for election to a Community council in the past (46 per cent); 42 per cent had previously been elected.

4.2 Of those who were elected as Community Councillors in 2022, over half (59 per cent) had stood for election to Community councils previously. Nearly all of these (54 per cent of Councillors) had previously been elected.

4.3 The total number of years that candidates had previously served as Community Councillors ranged from less than a year to more than 52 years. The median length of previous service was nine years. Around 47 per cent of those that had served as a Community Councillor before had done so for 10 years or more. Candidates were asked to include all periods of office and were not asked about any breaks in service.

## 5. Party affiliation

**Table 4: Which party, if any, are you representing / did you represent?**

|                          | All candidates (%) | County - Elected (%) | County - Not elected (%) | Community - Elected (%) | Community - Not elected (%) |
|--------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Independent <sup>2</sup> | 46                 | 29                   | 26                       | 58                      | 51                          |
| Welsh Labour Party       | 29                 | 46                   | 26                       | 25                      | 24                          |
| Plaid Cymru              | 11                 | 12                   | 16                       | 12                      | 6                           |
| Welsh Conservative Party | 6                  | 6                    | 14                       | 2                       | 11                          |
| Welsh Liberal Democrats  | 3                  | 5                    | 6                        | 2                       | 4                           |
| Green Party              | 3                  | 2                    | 10                       | 1                       | 3                           |
| Other                    | 1                  | 0                    | 3                        | 0                       | 2                           |

*Bases: All candidates: 1,077; County – Elected: 309; County – Not elected: 261; Community – Elected: 444; Community – Not elected: 138*

- 5.1 Of the 1,077 candidates who responded to the survey, 46 per cent were Independent Councillors, around a third (29 per cent) represented the Welsh Labour Party, around a tenth (11 per cent) represented Plaid Cymru, 6 per cent the Welsh Conservatives, 3 per cent represented the Welsh Liberal Democrats and 3 per cent represented the Green Party.
- 5.2 Of elected County Councillors that responded to the survey, 46 per cent said they represented the Welsh Labour Party, 29 per cent were Independent, 12 per cent represented Plaid Cymru, 6 per cent the Welsh Conservatives, 5 per cent the Welsh Liberal Democrats, and 2 per cent the Green Party.

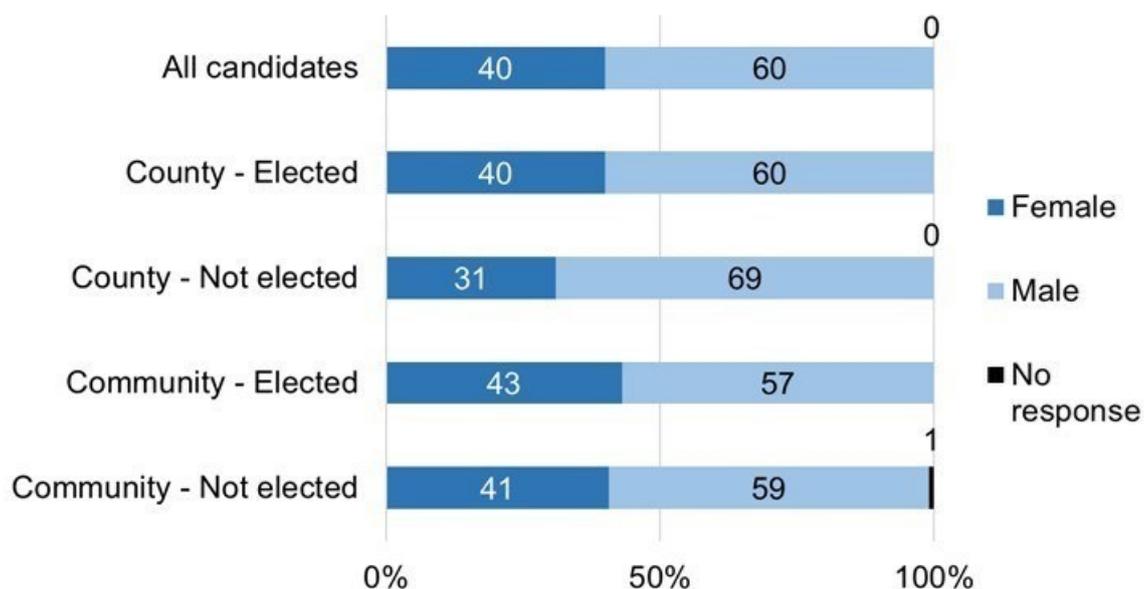
<sup>2</sup> The survey gave separate options for “Independent” and “Not affiliated to any party”. These have been grouped together as “Independent”.

5.3 Amongst elected Community Councillors, 58 per cent stood as Independent, 25 per cent the Welsh Labour Party, 12 per cent Plaid Cymru, 2 per cent the Welsh Conservatives, 2 per cent the Welsh Liberal Democrats, and 1 per cent the Green Party.

## 6. Sex and gender

- 6.1 To harmonise the question wording with the Office for National Statistics (ONS) standards, the 2022 survey asks about 'sex' rather than 'gender'. Therefore, direct comparison of results between 2017 and 2022 is not possible.

**Figure 3: What is your sex?**



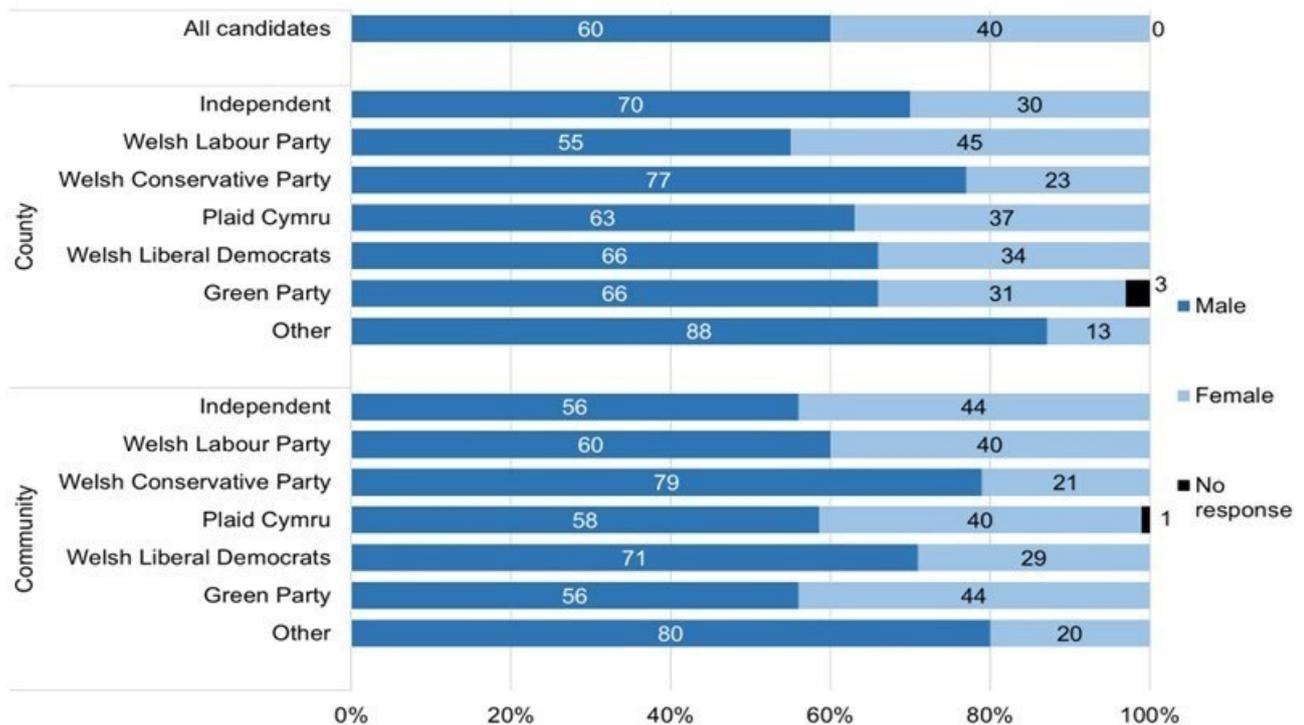
*Bases: All candidates: 1,077; County – Elected: 309; County – Not elected: 261; Community – Elected: 444; Community – Not elected: 138*

- 6.2 The survey found that overall, 40 per cent of candidates were female and 60 per cent were male.
- 6.3 Two fifths of County Councillors (40 per cent) were female and 43 per cent of Community Councillors were female.
- 6.4 A small minority of candidates, under 1 per cent, chose not to answer this question.
- 6.5 In the 2022 survey the following question was asked for the first time: 'Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?'. 97 per cent of all candidates answered 'Yes' to the question, 1 per cent answered 'No' and the remaining 2 per cent chose not to respond. There was little variation between Community and County candidates and between candidates who were elected and those who were not elected.

## 7. Sex and party affiliation

7.1 The question wording was changed in 2022, such that the survey now asks about 'sex' rather than 'gender'. Therefore, direct comparison of results between 2017 and 2022 is not possible.

**Figure 4: Sex and party affiliation<sup>3</sup>**



Bases: County candidates: 613; Community candidates: 669; All candidates: 1,077 (205 people included in both County and Community figures)

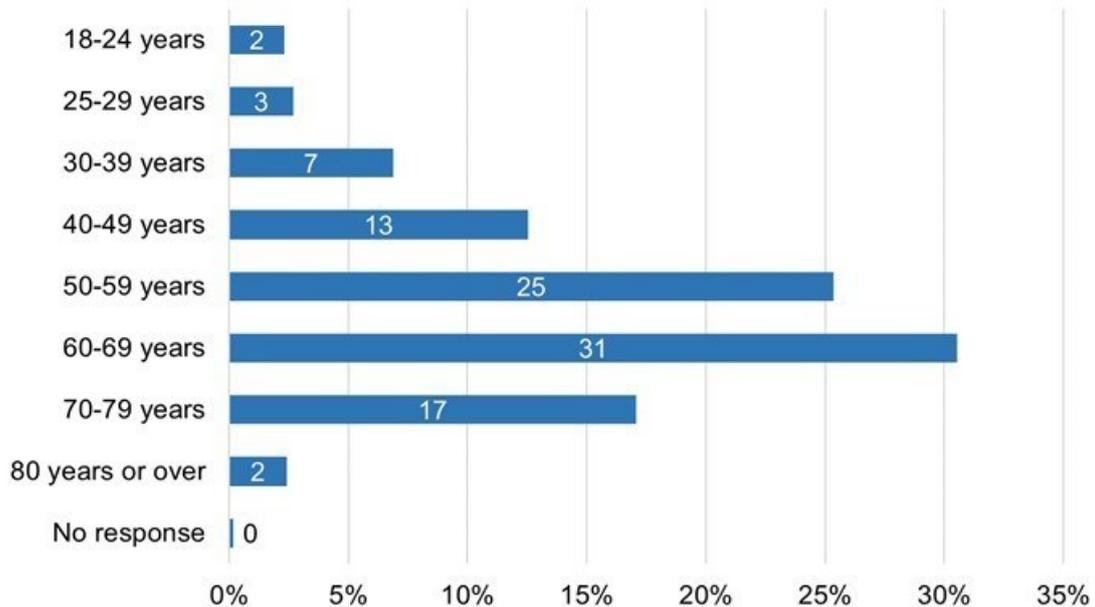
7.2 The survey found that the proportion of female County candidates ranged from 45 per cent to 13 per cent between political parties.

7.3 The pattern was similar for Community candidates, with a slightly higher proportion of female candidates in the Green Party (44 per cent), Plaid Cymru (40 per cent) and Other (20 per cent). The proportion of female Community candidates was lower than the proportion of County candidates in the Welsh Labour Party (40 per cent), Welsh Liberal Democrats (29 per cent), and Welsh Conservatives (21 per cent).

<sup>3</sup> The survey gave separate options for "Independent" and "Not affiliated to any party". In the results above, these have been grouped together as "Independent".

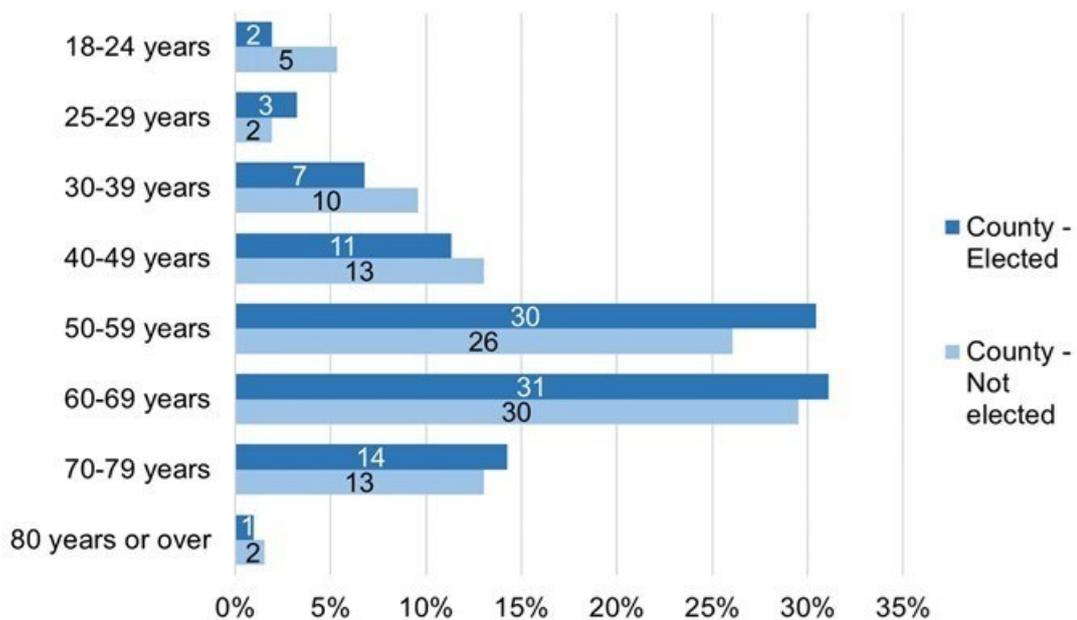
## 8. Age

**Figure 5: All candidates - What age band were you in on your last birthday?**



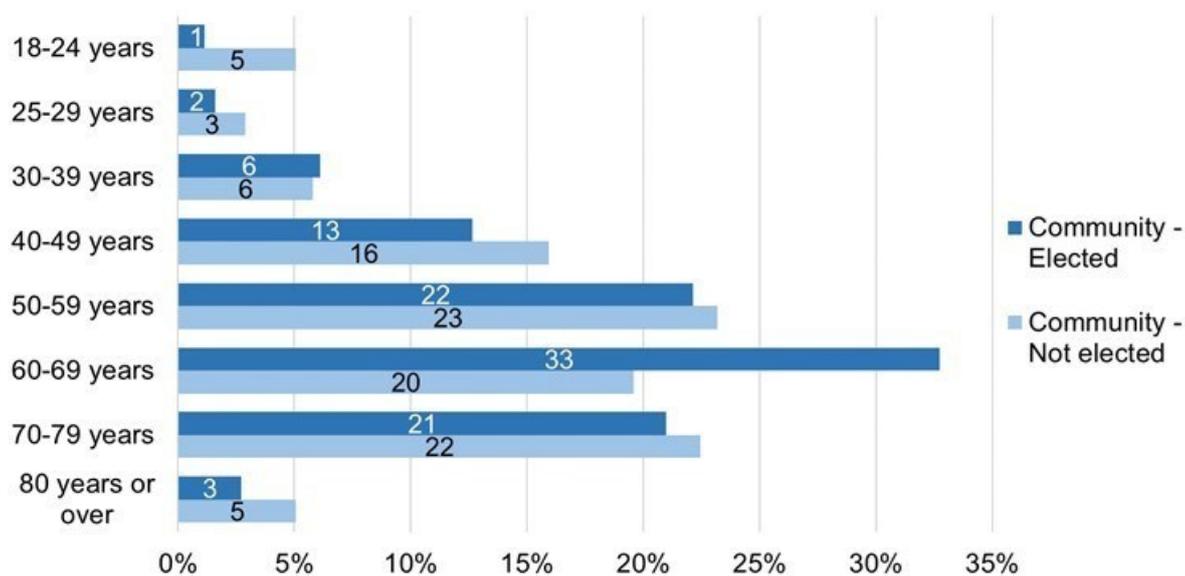
Base: 1,077

**Figure 6: County candidates - What age band were you in on your last birthday?**



Base: 570

**Figure 7: Community candidates - What age band were you in on your last birthday?**



Base: 582

- 8.1 The survey found that 50 per cent of candidates were aged 60 years or older.
- 8.2 Among elected Councillors, 46 per cent of County and 56 per cent of Community Councillors were aged 60 years or older.
- 8.3 A small minority of County Councillors (2 per cent) and Community Councillors (1 per cent) were aged 18 to 29 years. Among County and Community candidates who were not elected, 5 per cent were in this age bracket.
- 8.4 Looking at sex and age, 29 per cent of all County Councillors were males aged 60 years or over, 18 per cent were females aged 60 years or over, 30 per cent were males aged 18 to 59 years and 23 per cent were females aged 18 to 59 years.

## 9. Ethnicity

**Table 6: What is your ethnic group?<sup>4</sup>**

|   | All candidates (%) | County – Elected (%) | County - Not elected (%) | Community - Elected (%) | Community - Not elected (%) |
|---|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Asian, Asian Welsh or Asian British                     | 1                  | 1                    | 1                        | 1                       | -                           |
| Black, Black Welsh, Black British, Caribbean or African | 0                  | 0                    | -                        | -                       | -                           |
| Mixed or multiple ethnic groups                         | 1                  | 1                    | 1                        | 1                       | 1                           |
| White   | 96                 | 96                   | 96                       | 96                      | 96                          |
| Other ethnic group                                      | 1                  | 1                    | 0                        | 1                       | -                           |
| No response   | 2                  | 1                    | 2                        | 1                       | 3                           |

*Bases: All candidates: 1,077; County – Elected: 309; County – Not elected: 261; Community – Elected: 444; Community – Not elected: 138.*

*This breakdown of ethnic groups has been chosen to adhere with the ONS standards.*

*We report on higher level groupings here but in the survey we asked for responses at a more granular breakdown.*

9.1 Overall, 96 per cent of candidates reported they were from a White ethnic group.

<sup>4</sup> Where zero is shown in the table, this represents a number of people greater than zero, but which when rounded down as a percentage is 0%. Where a dash is shown, this means that the actual number of candidates was zero.

- 9.2 1 per cent of candidates reported they were from an Asian, Asian Welsh or Asian British ethnic group.
- 9.3 1 per cent reported they were from mixed or multiple ethnic groups.
- 9.4 Less than 1 per cent reported they were from Black, Black Welsh, Black British, Caribbean or African ethnic groups.
- 9.5 2 per cent of candidates did not respond to this question.

## 10. Religion

**Table 5: What is your religion?**

|                               | All candidates (%) | Community - Not elected (%) | Community – Elected (%) | County - Not elected (%) | County – Elected (%) |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Christian (all denominations) | 53                 | 57                          | 53                      | 49                       | 55                   |
| No religion                   | 40                 | 36                          | 39                      | 42                       | 39                   |
| Other                         | 3                  | 4                           | 2                       | 5                        | 3                    |
| Prefer not to say             | 3                  | 1                           | 4                       | 3                        | 3                    |
| No response                   | 1                  | 4                           | 1                       | 0                        | 1                    |

*Bases: All candidates: 1,077; County – Elected: 309; County – Not elected: 261; Community – Elected: 444; Community – Not elected: 138*

10.1 Around half of candidates (54 per cent) were Christian (including all denominations), while 40 per cent had no religion, and 3 per cent answered “other” (including Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim Sikh and ‘any other’ religion).

10.2 There was little variation across the answers of County and Community Councillors and candidates who were not elected.

## 11. Sexual orientation

**Table 8: Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?**

|                              | All candidates (%) | Community - Not elected (%) | Community - Elected (%) | County - Not elected (%) | County - Elected (%) |
|------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Heterosexual or straight     | 88                 | 88                          | 88                      | 88                       | 89                   |
| Gay / lesbian / Bisexual     | 6                  | 6                           | 5                       | 8                        | 6                    |
| Any other sexual orientation | 1                  | 2                           | 0                       | 1                        | -                    |
| Prefer not to say            | 4                  | 1                           | 6                       | 2                        | 3                    |
| No response                  | 2                  | 3                           | 2                       | 0                        | 1                    |

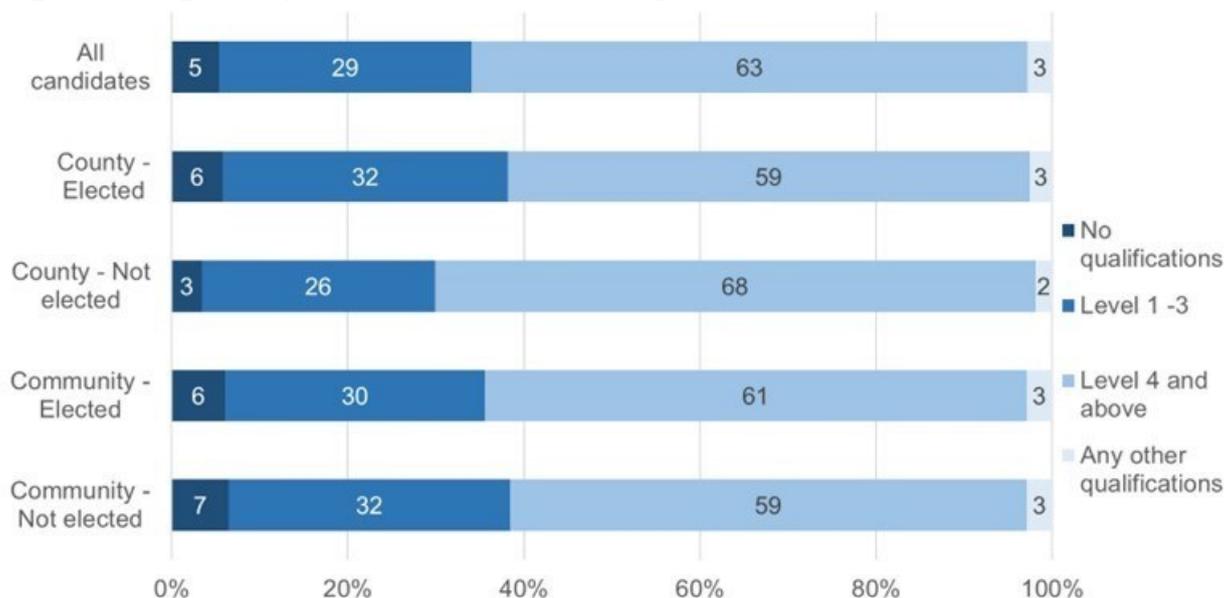
*Bases: All candidates: 1,077; County – Elected: 309; County – Not elected: 261; Community – Elected: 444; Community – Not elected: 138*

- 11.1 The survey found that 88 per cent of candidates identified as heterosexual or straight, 6 per cent as lesbian, gay or bisexual and 1 per cent as any other sexual orientation.
- 11.2 The percentage of candidates identifying as lesbian, gay or bisexual ranged from 5 per cent of Community Councillors to 8 per cent of County candidates who were not elected.
- 11.3 Questions about sexual orientation can be affected by under-declaration in surveys. It is worth noting that 6 per cent of survey respondents did not share their sexual orientation; 4 per cent chose the ‘prefer not to say’ response option and 2 per cent did not respond to this question. This is a larger proportion than those who did not disclose their sex (less than 1 per cent) or gender identity (2 per cent).

## 12. Education and qualifications

12.1 Although a similar question was asked in the 2017 survey, the question wording has been changed for the 2022 survey. Therefore, direct comparison of results is not possible as more qualification choices have been added.

**Figure 6: Highest qualifications achieved by candidates**



*Bases: All candidates: 1,077. County – Elected: 309. County – Not elected: 261. Community – Elected: 444. Community – Not elected: 138*

12.2 Nearly two thirds of candidates (63 per cent) held a highest qualification equivalent to Level 4 or above (e.g. a degree, post graduate or professional qualification). 5 per cent held no qualifications.

12.3 “Any other qualifications” includes professional qualifications or another qualification where the level is unknown.

12.4 These results were very similar across both County and Community Councillors and candidates who were not elected.

### 13. Employment status

13.1 Although a similar question was asked in the 2017 survey, the question changed for 2022 and direct comparison of results is not possible as additional employment statuses have been added as response options.

**Table 6: What is your current employment status?**

|  | All candidates (%) | County - Elected (%) | County - Not elected (%) | Community - Elected (%) | Community - Not elected (%) |
|--|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| In full-time employment  | 30                 | 31                   | 33                       | 30                      | 31                          |
| In part-time employment  | 13                 | 16                   | 11                       | 10                      | 12                          |
| Self-employed  | 14                 | 14                   | 16                       | 13                      | 18                          |
| Student (full-time or part-time)   | 2                  | 1                    | 4                        | 1                       | 4                           |
| Retired / semi-retired   | 38                 | 32                   | 34                       | 43                      | 36                          |
| Carer / Looking after home   | 4                  | 5                    | 4                        | 4                       | 4                           |
| Long term sick or disabled   | 2                  | 1                    | 3                        | 2                       | 3                           |
| Other: Government training scheme, on parental leave, unpaid worker in family business | 1                  | 6                    | 1                        | 3                       | 2                           |
| Unemployed   | 2                  | 4                    | 4                        | 1                       | 2                           |

*Bases: All candidates: 1,077; Community – Not elected: 138; Community – Elected: 444; County – Not elected: 261; County – Elected: 309. Participants were able to select more than one option, hence percentages may sum to more than 100*

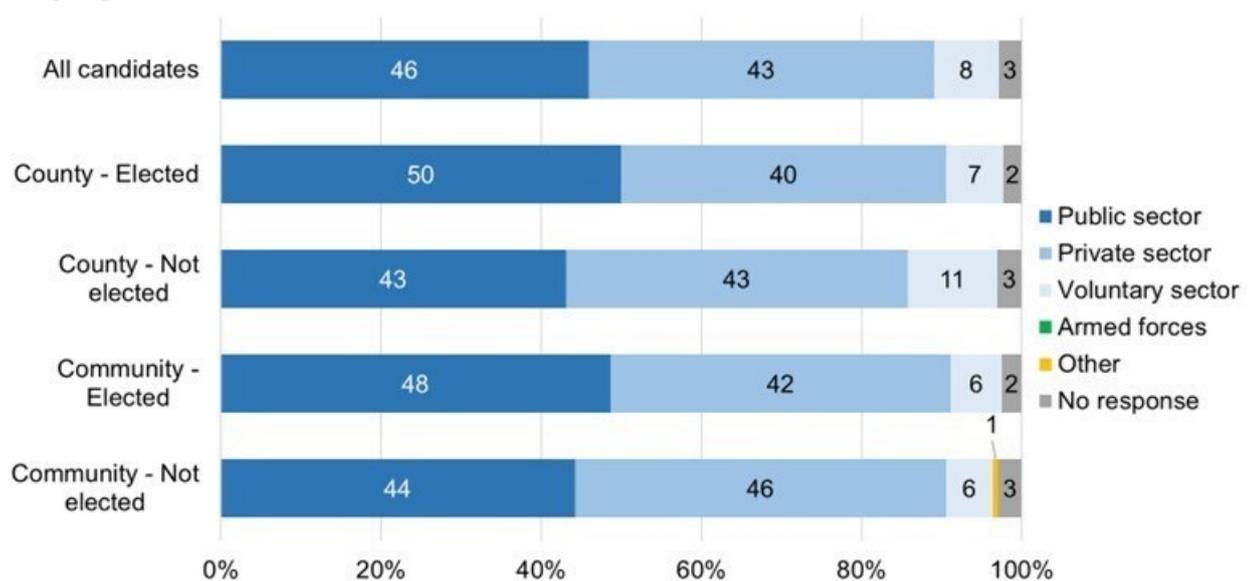
13.2 Over a third (43 per cent) of candidates were employed either full-time (30 per cent) or part-time (13 per cent) and a further 14 per cent were self-employed. 38 per cent of candidates were retired, and 2 per cent were unemployed. The remaining 10 per cent were full-time or part-time

students, on maternity leave, looking after family or home, long-term sick or disabled, on a government training scheme, unpaid carers, unpaid workers in a family business, or selected “other”.

13.3 Among County Councillors, 47 per cent were employees, 14 per cent were self-employed, and 32 per cent were retired.

13.4 Among Community Councillors, 40 per cent were employees, 13 per cent were self-employed, and 43 per cent were retired.

**Figure 7: What category best describes your current or most recent employment sector?**



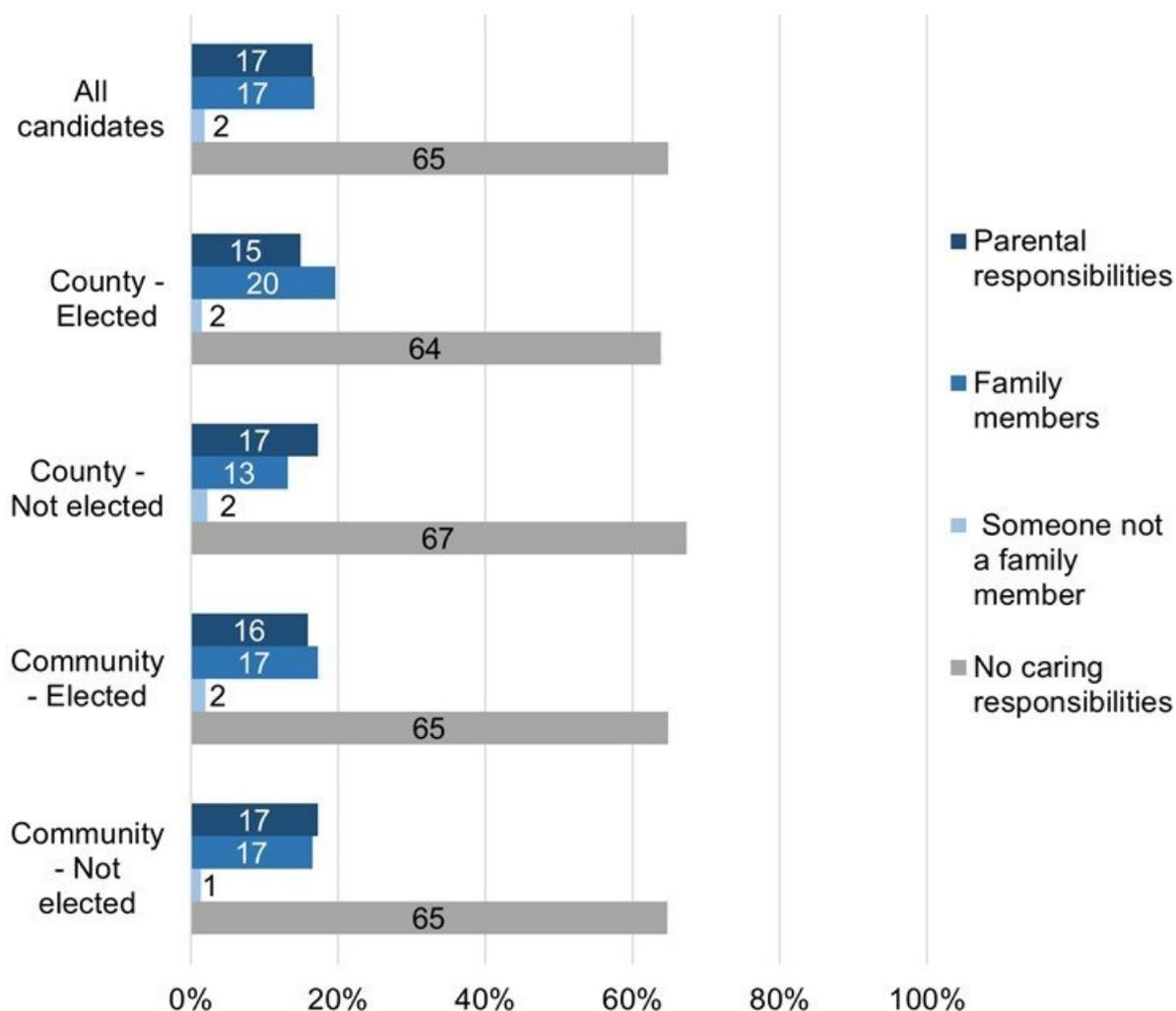
*Bases: All candidates: 1,077; Community – Not elected: 138; Community – Elected: 444; County – Not elected: 261; County – Elected: 309*

13.5 The majority of candidates (46 per cent) stated that their current, or most, recent employment was in the public sector (including local government, central government, NHS, education and other public sector). 43 per cent worked in the private sector, 8 per cent worked in the voluntary sector and 1 per cent in ‘other’ sectors (including agriculture). No candidates said they worked in the armed forces.

13.6 Among elected County Councillors, 50 per cent of worked in the public sector compared with 43 per cent of County candidates who were not elected.

## 14. Caring responsibilities

Figure 8: Do you have any caring responsibilities?



Bases: All candidates: 1,077; Community – Not elected: 138; Community – Elected: 444; County – Not elected: 261; County – Elected: 309. Participants were able to select more than one option, hence percentages may sum to more than 100

14.1 The survey found that 36 per cent of all candidates had some caring responsibilities. 17 per cent of candidates had parental responsibilities.

14.2 Among elected Councillors, 15 per cent of County and 16 per cent of Community Councillors had parental responsibilities. 17 per cent of Community candidates who were not elected and 18 per cent of County candidates who were not elected had parental responsibilities.

14.3 Among County Councillors, 13 per cent of males and 18 per cent of females had parental responsibilities, and 27 per cent of males and 49 per cent of females had caring responsibilities.

14.4 Among Community Councillors, 14 per cent of males and 18 per cent of females had parental responsibilities, and 29 per cent of males and 43 per cent of females had caring responsibilities.

## 15. Unpaid help

**Table 7: Which of these clubs or organisations, if any, are you currently giving your time to for free?**

|  | All candidates (%) | County Councillors (%) | Community Councillors (%) |
|--|--------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| Charitable organisation                          | 41                 | 45                     | 45                        |
| Religious group                                  | 11                 | 10                     | 11                        |
| Museum / heritage site                           | 5                  | 5                      | 5                         |
| Community groups                                 | 50                 | 57                     | 57                        |
| Environmental group                              | 18                 | 23                     | 16                        |
| Arts groups                                      | 9                  | 11                     | 9                         |
| Tenants / residents group or neighbourhood watch | 9                  | 12                     | 8                         |
| School or young person's group                   | 24                 | 34                     | 24                        |
| Pensioners group / organisation                  | 6                  | 7                      | 7                         |
| Sports club                                      | 16                 | 20                     | 16                        |
| Other club or organisation                       | 19                 | 18                     | 21                        |

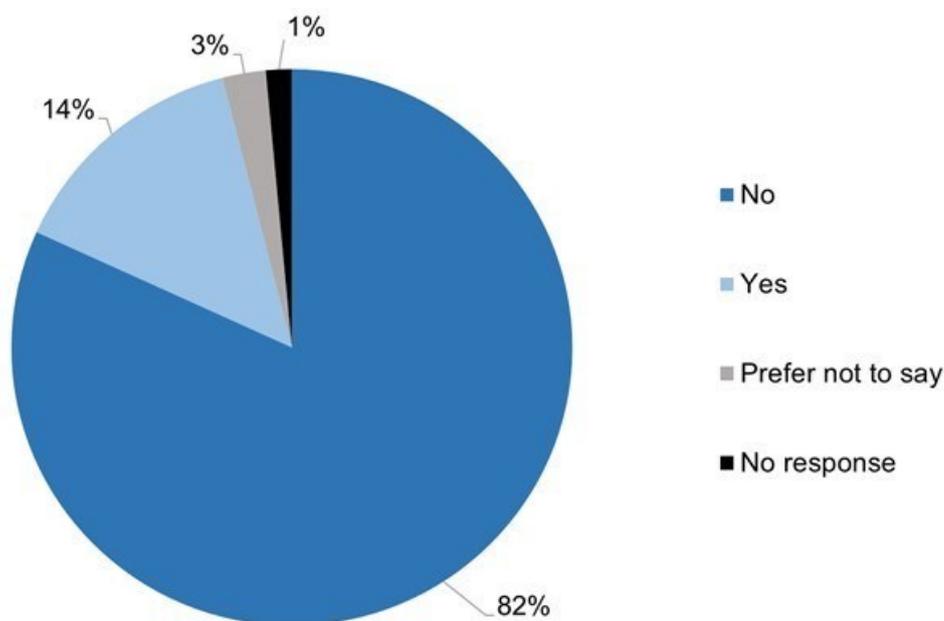
*Bases: All candidates: 1,077; County Councillors: 309; Community Councillors: 444*

- 15.1 Respondents were able to select multiple responses, hence the percentage figures sum to more than 100 for each group.
- 15.2 The most frequently reported unpaid activity was giving help to a Community group, with more than half of County Councillors (57 per cent) and Community Councillors (also 57 per cent) doing this. A large proportion (45 per cent) of Councillors give unpaid help to charitable organisations, while 34 per cent of County Councillors and 24 per cent of Community Councillors give their time for free to schools or young people's groups. The least frequent activity for both Community and County Councillors was working in a museum / heritage site, with 5 per cent of them giving unpaid help to these types of organisations.

## 16. Disability

16.1 Although a similar question was asked in the 2017 survey, the question wording was changed for the 2022 survey and direct comparison of the results is not possible.

**Figure 9: Do you consider yourself to be a disabled person<sup>5</sup>?**



*Base: 1,077*

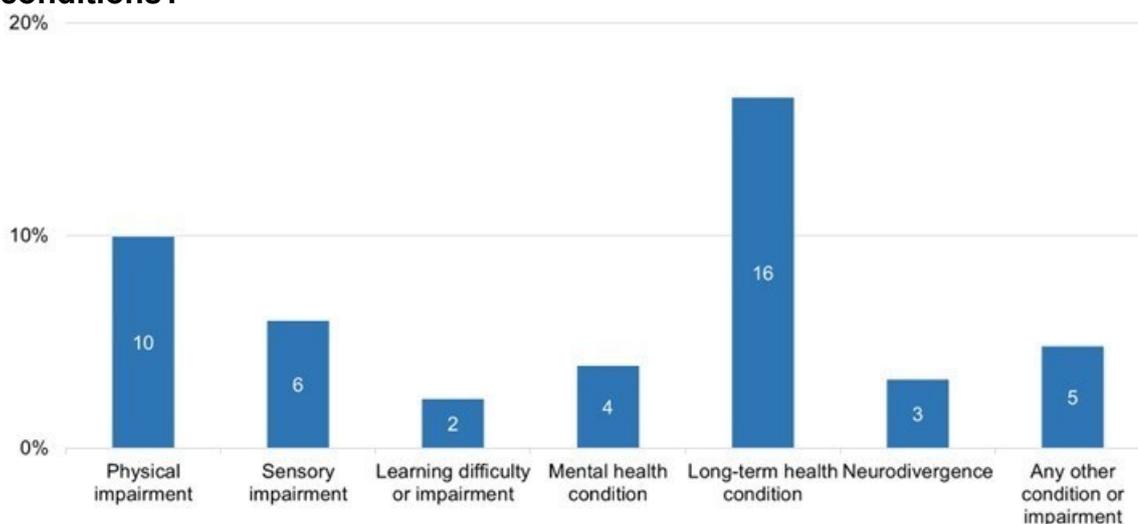
16.2 A large majority of all candidates (82 per cent) reported that they did not consider themselves to be a disabled person. 14 per cent of all candidates did consider themselves to be a disabled person, while 3 per cent preferred not to say.

16.3 Among County Councillors, 13 per cent considered themselves to be a disabled person. Among Community Councillors 15 per cent considered themselves to be a disabled person.

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<sup>5</sup> The question wording does not conform to the social model of disability. However, the decision to maintain this wording was taken in light of a technical consultation and the need for comparability over time.

**Figure 10: Do you have any of the following impairments or health conditions?<sup>6</sup>**



*Base: 1,077*

- 16.4 In total, 35 per cent (379) of candidates said that they have at least one health condition or impairment. Of these 379 candidates, 26 per cent (97) listed conditions or impairments in more than one category.
- 16.5 17 per cent<sup>6</sup> of all candidates have a long-term health condition.

<sup>6</sup> Respondents were able to select multiple responses, therefore the categories in the chart are not mutually exclusive. 9 per cent of candidates have conditions or impairments in more than one category. 63 per cent of candidates did not list any condition or impairment, and 2 per cent did not give a response (not shown). The denominator used in the calculation of percentages in Figure 12 is all candidates.

**Table 8: Health conditions and impairments**

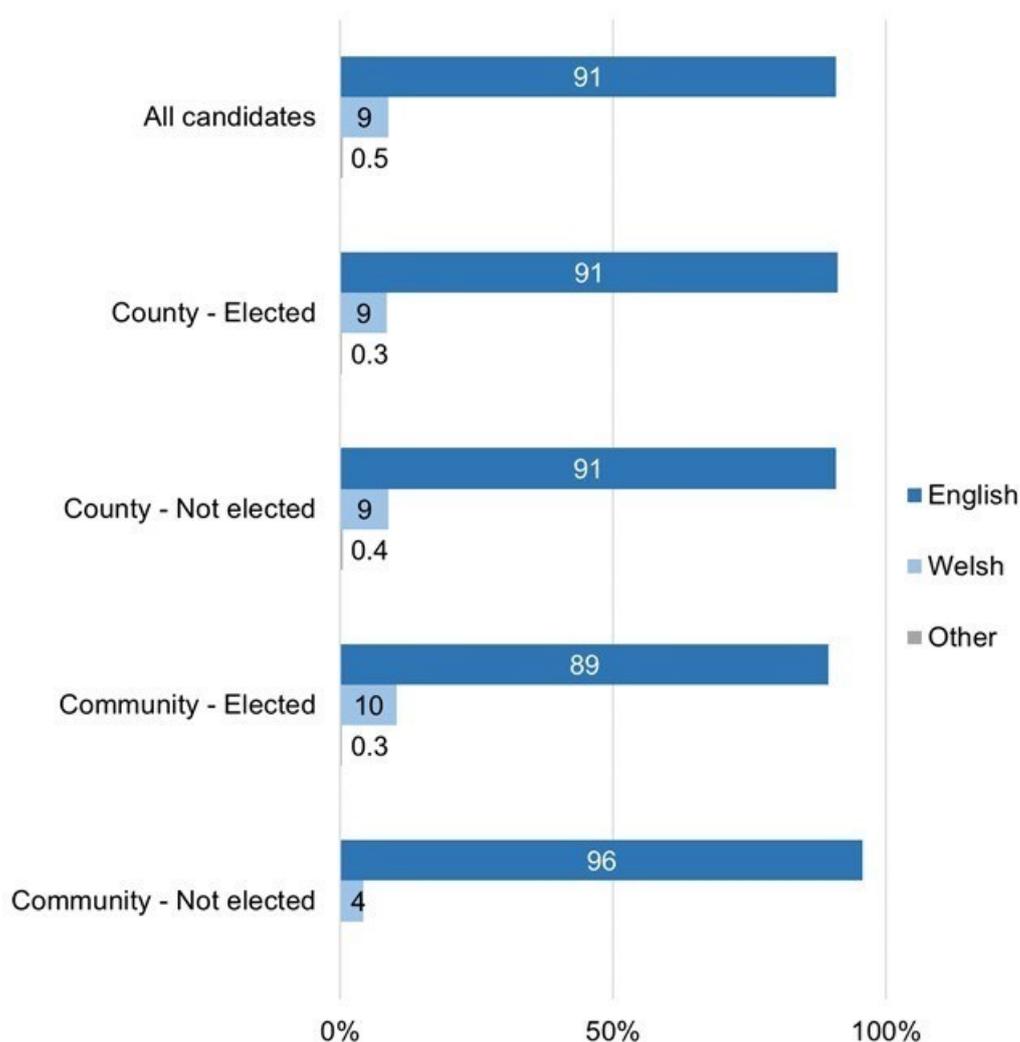
|  | Candidates who consider themselves to be a disabled person (%) | Candidates who do not consider themselves to be a disabled person, or who prefer not to say (%) | Total (%) |
|--|--|---|-----------|
| Have a physical impairment                       | 7  | 3   | 10        |
| Have a sensory impairment                        | 2  | 4   | 6         |
| Have a learning difficulty or impairment         | 1  | 1   | 2         |
| Have a mental health condition                   | 2  | 2   | 4         |
| Have a long-term health condition                | 7  | 9   | 17        |
| Are neurodivergent                               | 2  | 1   | 3         |
| Have another condition not included in the above | 1  | 4   | 5         |
| Do not list any conditions or impairments        | 0  | 62  | 63        |

*Base: 1,077. 97 (9%) of candidates listed conditions or impairments in more than one category*

16.6 40 per cent of candidates who reported having a health condition or impairment also considered themselves to be a disabled person.

## 17. Welsh language

**Figure 11: What is the language you prefer to communicate in professionally?**



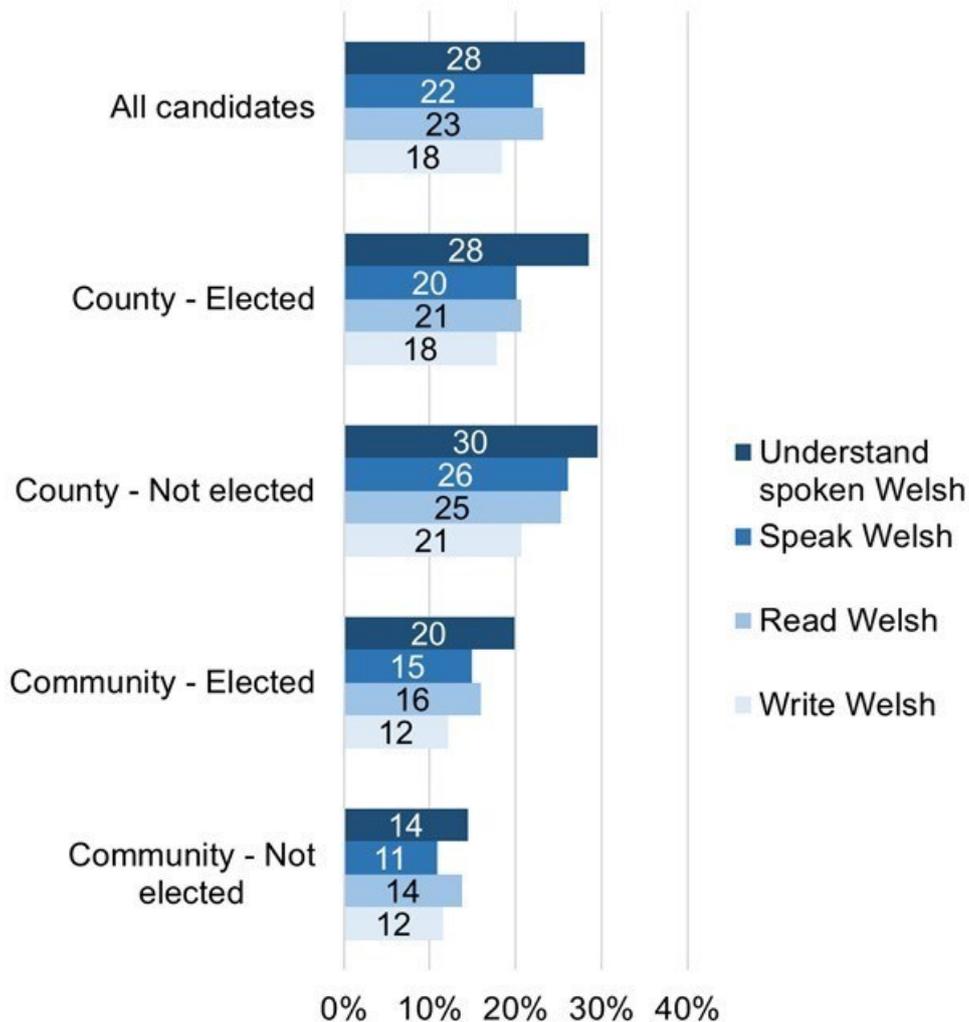
*Bases: All candidates: 1,077. County Councillors: 309. County – Not elected: 261. Community Councillors: 444. Community – Not elected: 138. Participants were able to select more than one option, hence percentages may sum to more than 100*

- 17.1 A large proportion (91 per cent) of candidates said their preferred language was English, and 9 per cent that their preferred language was Welsh.
- 17.2 A small number of candidates (0.5 per cent of respondents) stated that they prefer to communicate professionally in another language (German, French and Spanish were among the answers given).
- 17.3 Amongst County Councillors, 9 per cent said their preferred language was Welsh, compared with 10 per cent of Community Councillors.

17.4 These proportions may have been affected by the geographic pattern of survey response rates across Wales.

17.5 The Welsh version of the survey was completed by 7 per cent of candidates.

**Figure 12: Can you understand, speak, read or write Welsh?**



*Bases: All candidates: 1,077. County Councillors: 309. County – Not elected: 261. Community Councillors: 444. Community – Not elected: 138. Participants were able to select more than one option, hence percentages may sum to more than 100*

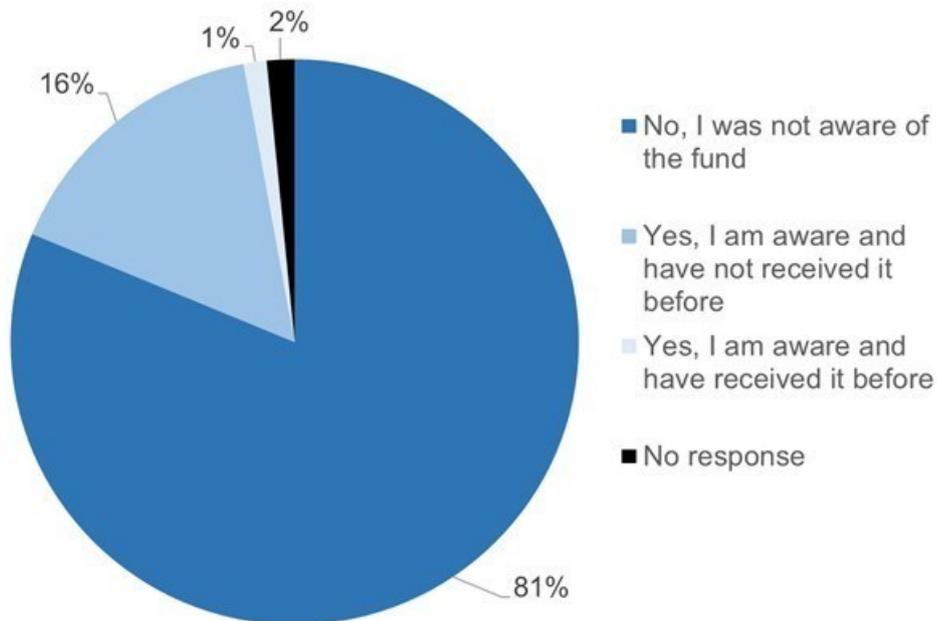
17.6 Among all candidates, 28 per cent said they could understand spoken Welsh, 22 per cent could speak Welsh, 23 per cent could read Welsh, and 18 per cent could write in Welsh.

17.7 A higher proportion of County Councillors said they could speak Welsh than Community Councillors, at 28 per cent compared with 20 per cent.

## 18. The Access to Elected Office Fund Wales

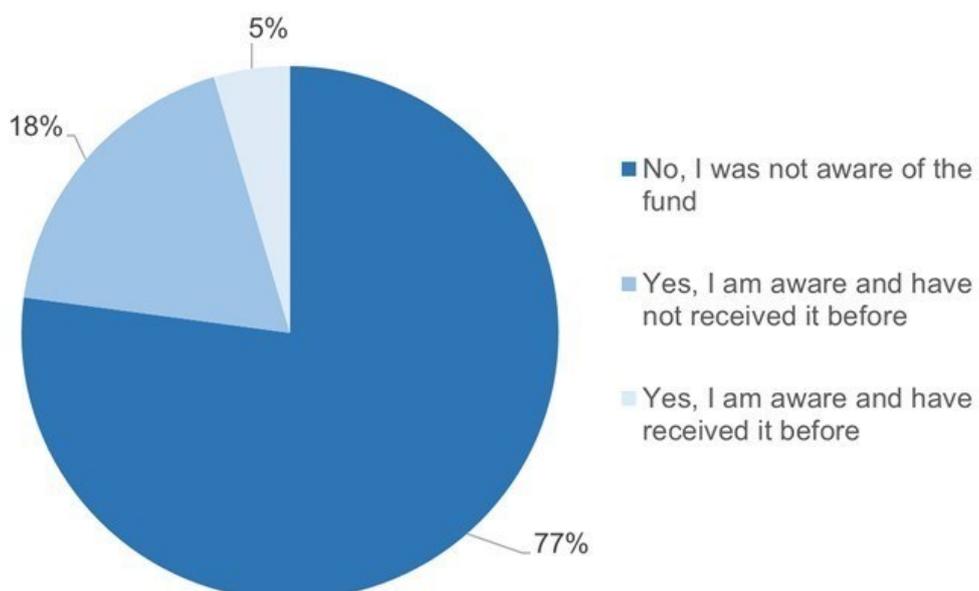
18.1 This question was not asked in the 2017 or 2012 surveys so direct comparison of results is not possible.

**Figure 13 - Are you aware of the Access to Elected Office Fund Wales?**



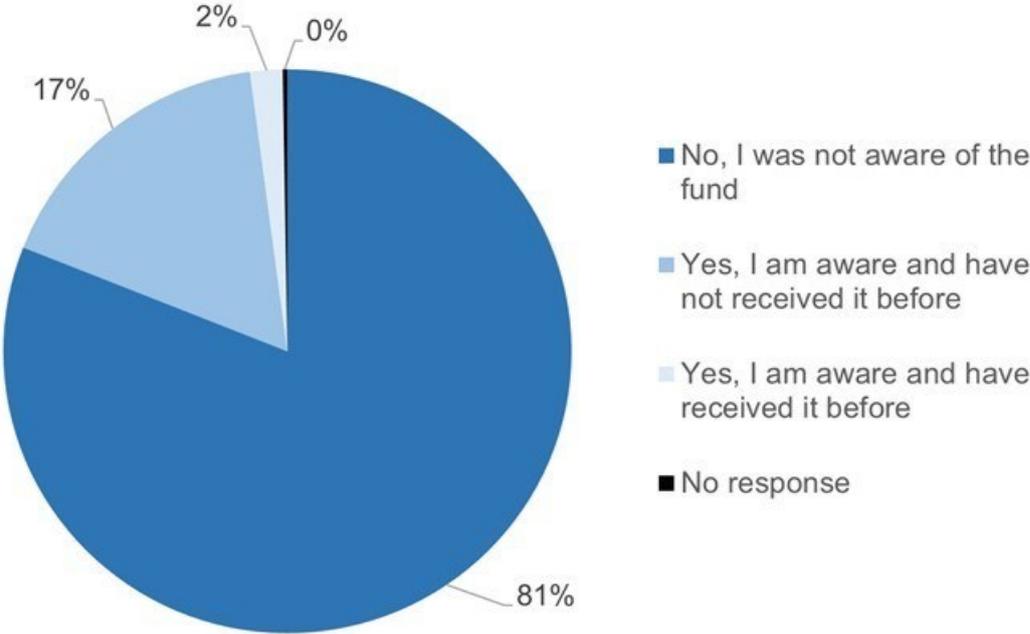
Base: 1,077

**Figure 14 - Are you aware of the Access to Elected Office Fund Wales? (Only candidates who consider themselves to be a disabled person)**



Base: 153

**Figure 15 - Are you aware of the Access to Elected Office Fund Wales?  
(Only candidates who have a health condition or impairment)**



Base: 379

18.2 A large proportion of all candidates (81 per cent) were not aware of the Elected Office Fund Wales. Only 1 per cent of all candidates had ever received money from the fund.

18.3 The proportion of candidates who consider themselves to be disabled people who are aware of the fund is slightly higher (23 per cent) compared with the proportion among all candidates (17 per cent). 5 per cent of candidates who consider themselves to be a disabled person have received help from the fund previously.

18.4 Among candidates who have a health condition or impairment, the proportion who are aware of the fund is 19 per cent, and 2 per cent of these candidates have received help from the fund previously.

18.5 There is little variation between Community and County Councillors, showing that the majority of candidates were unaware of the fund and very few have received it.

## 19. Recommendations

- 19.1 A survey of local government election candidates is a key means of gaining information on diversity within candidates. The approach undertaken for the 2022 survey involved using candidate nomination information as the sampling frame. This approach has been successful in obtaining information about the candidate population for the 2022 election.
- 19.2 Candidate nomination forms could be extended to support better understanding of candidate diversity. For example, fields for date of birth and political party are already included on nomination forms. Including questions on other characteristics, such as sex, gender identity, ethnicity, and sexual orientation, would provide valuable information on the candidate population.
- 19.3 Additional ways of boosting the survey response rate could be considered. If local authorities could collect digital contact information for each candidate (such as an email address) the response rate could be improved in future rounds of the survey. This could be achieved through the use of a GDPR-compliant data sharing agreement between local authorities and the research body. This would allow the research body to send surveys directly to candidates by email, and to manage any ongoing survey administration and targeted follow-up directly with candidates. This would save electoral services managers time and would enable queries from candidates about the survey to be answered directly by the research body who administer the survey.

## Annex – Copy of the Local Government Candidates Survey 2022

### Part 1: Administration information

*Please provide the same details below as those given on your nomination form(s).*

1. Please enter the **last 3 characters** of your **home postcode**.  
*For example, for 'CF10 4LG' please enter 4LG.*

---

2. Please enter the **last 3 characters** of your **surname**.  
*For example, for 'MURPHY' please enter PHY.*

---

3. Please enter the **day** of your **date of birth**.  
*For example, for '06/12/1992' please enter 06.*

---

**Part 2: Candidate information (for use when conducting the survey before the election).**

4. In which election are you standing?

*Please select one option.*

- County or County Borough Council
- Community or Town Council
- Both County or County Borough Council and Community or Town Council

5. Which party, if any, are you representing?

*Please select one option.*

- Independent
- Plaid Cymru
- Welsh Conservative Party
- Welsh Labour Party
- Welsh Liberal Democrats
- Other (please specify):

6. Have you stood for election to a **County or County Borough** Council in the past?

*Please select one option.*

- No (go to Question 7)
- Yes and was elected (go to Question 6A)
- Yes but was not elected (go to Question 7)

6A. How many **years** in total have you served as a **County or County Borough** Councillor?

*Please include all periods of office that you served as a County or County Borough Councillor.*

7. Have you stood for election to a **Community or Town** Council in the past?  
*Please select one option.*

- No (go to Part 4)
- Yes and was elected (go to Question 7A)
- Yes but was not elected (go to Part 4)

7A. How many **years** in total have you served as a **Community or Town** Councillor?  
*Please include all periods of office that you served as a Community or Town Councillor.*

**Part 3: Candidate information (for use when conducting the survey after the election)**

4. In which election did you stand?

*Please select one option.*

County or County Borough Council (go to Question 4A)

Community or Town Council (go to Question 4B)

Both County or County Borough Council and Community or Town Council  
(go to question 4C)

4A. You said that you stood for election to a **County or County Borough Council**.

Were you elected?

*Please select one option.*

Yes (go to Question 5)

No (go to Question 5)

4B. You said that you stood for election to a **Community or Town Council**.

Were you elected?

*Please select one option.*

Yes (go to Question 5)

No (go to Question 5)

4C. You said that you stood for election to a **County or County Borough Council and Community or Town Council**.

Were you elected?

*Please select one option.*

|                                  | Yes                      | No                       |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| County or County Borough Council | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Community or Town Council        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

5. Which party, if any, did you represent?

*Please select one option.*

- Independent
- Plaid Cymru
- Welsh Conservative Party
- Welsh Labour Party
- Welsh Liberal Democrats
- Other (please specify):

6. Have you stood for election to a **County or County Borough** Council in the past?

*Please select one option.*

- No (go to question 7)
- Yes and was elected (go to question 6A)
- Yes but was not elected (go to question 7)

6A. How many **years** in total have you served as a **County or County Borough** Councillor?

*Please include all periods of office that you served as a County or County Borough Councillor.*

7. Have you stood for election to a **Community or Town** Council in the past?

*Please select one option.*

- No (go to Part 4)
- Yes and was elected (go to Question 7A)
- Yes but was not elected (go to Part 4)

7A. How many **years** in total have you served as a **Community or Town** Councillor?  
*Please include all periods of office that you served as a Community or Town Councillor.*

#### Part 4: Candidate characteristics

8. What is your sex?  
*Please select one option.*

- Female  
 Male

9. Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?  
*Please select one option.*

- Yes  
 No (Please Specify Below)  
 Prefer not to say

10. What age band were you in on your last birthday?  
*Please select one option.*

- |                                      |                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 18-24 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 45-49 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 70-74 years      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 25-29 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 50-54 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 75-79 years      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 30-34 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 55-59 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 80 years or over |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 35-39 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 60-64 years |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 40-44 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 65-69 years |   |

11. Do you have any caring responsibilities?  
*Please select all that apply.*

- Yes, I have parental responsibility for a child aged 16 or under  
 Yes, I have caring responsibilities for a family member  
 Yes, I have caring responsibilities for someone who is not a family member  
 No, I do not have caring responsibilities for anyone

12. Are you aware of the Contribution towards Costs of Care and Personal Assistance (formerly known as Reimbursement of costs of care allowance) available for Councillors?

*Please select one option.*

- Yes, I am aware and have accessed the allowance before.
- Yes, I am aware and have not accessed the allowance before
- No, I was not aware of the carers allowance

13. What is your ethnic group?

*Please select one option.*

**A. White**

- Welsh, English, Scottish, Northern Irish or British
- Irish
- Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- Roma
- Any other White background (please specify below)

**B. Mixed or multiple ethnic groups**

- White and Black Caribbean
- White and Black African
- White and Asian
- Any other mixed or multiple ethnic background (please specify below)

**C. Asian, Asian Welsh or Asian British**

- Indian
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Chinese
- Any other Asian background (please specify below)

**D. Black, Black Welsh, Black British, Caribbean or African**

- African
- Caribbean
- Any other Black, African or Caribbean background (please specify below)

**E. Other ethnic group**

- Any other ethnic group (please specify below)

14. What is your religion?  
*Please select one option.*

- No religion
- Christian (all denominations)
- Buddhist
- Hindu
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Sikh
- Prefer not to say
- Any other religion (please specify):

15. Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?  
*Please select one option.*

- Heterosexual or straight
- Gay or lesbian
- Bisexual
- Prefer not to say
- Any other sexual orientation (please specify):

16. Can you understand, speak, read or write Welsh?  
*Please select all that apply.*

- Understand spoken Welsh
- Speak Welsh
- Read Welsh
- Write Welsh
- None of the above

17. What is the language you prefer to communicate in professionally?  
*Please select all that apply.*

- English
- Welsh
- Other, including British Sign Language (please specify):

## Education and employment

18. Have you achieved any other qualification?

*Please select all that apply.*

### **GCSEs or equivalent**

- 5 or more GCSEs (A\*-C, 9-4), O levels (passes), CSEs (grade 1) or Intermediate Welsh Baccalaureate
- Any other GCSEs, O levels or CSEs (any grades), Basic Skills course or Foundation Welsh Baccalaureate

### **AS, A level or equivalent**

- 2 or more A levels, 4 or more AS levels or Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate
- 1 A level, 2-3 AS levels
- 1 AS level

### **NVQ or equivalent**

- NVQ level 4 and above
- NVQ level 3, BTEC National, OND or ONC, City and Guilds Advanced Craft
- NVQ level 2, BTEC General, City and Guilds Craft
- NVQ level 1

### **Degree level or above**

- Degree, foundation, HND or HNC or above

### **Other or no qualification**

- Any other qualifications (including professional qualifications), equivalent unknown
- No qualifications

19. What is your current employment status?

*Please select all that apply.*

- In full-time employment
- In part-time employment
- Self employed
- Unemployed
- Full-time student
- Part-time student
- Retired / semi-retired
- On parental leave (maternity, paternity, adopters etc.)
- Looking after family or home
- Long term sick or disabled
- On a government training scheme
- Unpaid worker in family business
- Unpaid carer
- Other (please specify):

20. What category best describes your current or most recent employment sector?

*Please select one option.*

- Public sector
- Private sector
- Voluntary sector
- Armed forces
- Other (please specify):

21. Which of these clubs or organisations, if any, are you currently giving your time to for free?

*Please select all that apply.*

- Charitable organisation
- School or young person's group
- Tenants / residents group or neighbourhood watch
- Religious group
- Pensioners group / organisation
- Sports club
- Arts groups (e.g. drama, music, arts or crafts)
- Environmental group
- Museum / heritage site
- Community groups
- Other club or organisation

### Impairment or health conditions

22. Do you consider yourself to be a disabled person?

- Yes
- No
- I prefer not to say

23. Do you have any of the following?

*Please select all that apply.*

- Physical impairment
- Sensory impairment
- Learning difficulty
- Mental health condition
- Long term health condition
- Neuro divergence
- Other (please specify):

24. Are you aware of the access to elected office fund?

*Please select one option.*

- Yes, I am aware and have received it before
- Yes, I am aware and have not received it before
- No, I was not aware of the fund