
Aberdeen City Council Services Evaluation:

Enquiry into the views of Migrants



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1. Introduction

An unintended consequence of the unprecedented population increase within Aberdeen city during 2005/06 was that many public sector and other organisations were unprepared for the various impacts this would have. The impacts have been both positive and negative. For example, migrants flooded the “hard to fill” jobs in the labour market across all sectors, which has in itself had a positive effect on the local economy. The less positive aspects refer to barriers migrants face when settling somewhere new. For example, language can be a significant barrier to integrating and becoming part of a new community.

Two years following the huge population in-migration an investigation into migrants’ views of council services was undertaken.

2. Migration and Aberdeen City

It has been evident through National Insurance Numbers (NINO) under the Worker Registration Scheme (WRS) that there has been a steady increase of migrants moving into Aberdeen City in recent years from the new EU Accession States (A8). This has been highlighted in the table below. The table below also shows the NINO Registrations by country (European) of origin, 2007/08. It should be noted that this is purely for people who work and will not cover those who are not in employment for example, spouses, partners, older people and children and young people. A briefing paper produced by Aberdeen City Council notes that the percentage of migrants of working age in Aberdeen is 4%, the highest ranking across Scotland. In addition the paper notes that the actual number of migrants working in Aberdeen City is ranked 3rd with 5,700 migrant workers. (“Migrant Workers in Aberdeen City and Shire”. Aberdeen City Council Briefing Paper 2008/05)

Country of Origin	Number
Poland	2030
Nigeria	640
India	510
Ireland	190
France	180
China	160
Malaysia	120
Slovak Republic	120
Czech Republic	110
USA	110
Lithuania	90
Latvia	70
Romania	30
Bulgaria	10
Australia	80
Canada	60
Hungary	80
Russia	40
Philippines	40
Spain	50
Portugal	30
South Africa	30
Germany	80
Nepal	50
Pakistan	50
New Zealand	30
Netherlands	60
Total	5050

3. Background Information

Scottish Alliance of Regional Equality Councils (SAREC) funding was granted to carry out research investigating the views and experiences of minority ethnic communities living in Aberdeen City using and accessing a range of Council services. The budget for the research was provided by SAREC, with additional funding provided by Aberdeen City Council's Guildry Awards Scheme covering most of the Development Worker's hours.

The original timescale of the project was between October 2007 and February 2008. Following consultation with 3 targeted groups it was decided to push the deadline back to mid-April. The 3 groups met between 15th March and 19th April.

Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council and Nestrans websites were consulted to source current issues. Documentation produced by these organisations, in relation to minority ethnic communities, was also studied to find further questions.

4. Research Design

a) Research Question

Following discussion between GREC and Aberdeen City Council it was felt that an investigation into minority ethnic communities' experiences of the broad range of council services would be actioned. The Service areas included Housing, Social Work, Education, Transport and Recreation and Leisure.

b) Target Population

The original remit sought the views of people from the Muslim communities both older people and adults with a disability. The reasoning behind these specific target groups was the lack of consultation and that they had not appeared exclusively in investigative research work previously. However when the development worker embarked upon the project it became evident that the responses were producing low returns (The number for Older Muslim Men is 6 participants). It was therefore agreed to widen the target population group focus to include other migrant communities. People who would fall into a 'Skilled Professional Hindu' group (n=18*) and Polish Women (n=12) aged between 18-30 were chosen to make up the research population.

c) Sampling

Sampling of participants was mainly through GREC contacts. After speaking with GREC staff, including the Project Coordinator and Caseworker, facilitators were identified for each of the target groups. The facilitators had knowledge of the targeted communities and personal contacts. For the young Polish group, flyers were also distributed across the Torry area of Aberdeen (a community with a large Polish population) and the City Centre. Information was also published on the Polish website www.szkocja.net.

d) Methodology

A questionnaire was designed in consultation with project partners. The questionnaire was distributed in English and translated into Polish. 50 questionnaires were distributed via three different methods:

i. 'Focus group'

3 'focus groups' were held in Aberdeen City. 2 focus groups were held within GREC premises and 1 was held in a mutually agreeable venue to the Older Muslim group. The venues chosen allowed greater interaction between the participants, facilitators and GREC staff. This was particularly important since interpreters were present to clarify any aspects of the research or questionnaire that were unclear to the participants. It also offered an opportunity for participants to discuss points and share opinions.

- **Skilled Professional Hindus**

The focus group for Skilled Professional Hindus was held in the Boardroom on GREC premises. There were 2 GREC staff members, and 1 interpreter / facilitator present.

The total target number for the Hindu group was 20. 18 questionnaires were completed at the focus group. No additional discussion took place.

- **Older Muslim Men**

The focus group for Older Muslim Men took place in a venue agreed with the group and the facilitator, a local restaurant owned by one of the participants. There were 2 GREC staff members, and 1 interpreter / facilitator present.

The target population for the Older Muslim men's group was 10. 6 questionnaires were completed. No additional discussion took place.

- **Young Polish Women's Group (18 - 30)**

The focus group for Young Polish Women's Group (18 - 30) took place in the Boardroom on GREC premises. There were 2 GREC staff members, and 1 interpreter / facilitator present.

20 questionnaires were prepared for completion, but only 2 were completed at the focus group.

ii. 'ESOL Classes' through Local Language School

Following the focus groups, and since the number of attendees was very low, the remaining 18 questionnaires were distributed through ESOL classes by one of GREC's local Polish community contacts.

We received a further 10 completed questionnaires by post.

Gift vouchers and travel costs were offered as an incentive to participate and as a form of thanks for their assistance.

e) Participant's Profile

I. Geographical Location

All the participants lived within Aberdeen city, majority in AB10 / AB11 postcode areas. The Polish community was concentrated from the Torry area of the city (AB11 area).

II. Ethnic National Origin

- Focus Groups

Table showing the designation of the focus group participants

Ethnic /National Origin	Number
Polish	2
Skilled Professional Hindu	18
Older Muslim	6
Total	26

- ESOL Classes

All of the 10 questionnaire respondents, distributed through ESOL classes, were Polish.

5. Results

Table showing the return rate and number of questionnaires by the designation of the participants;

Ethnic /National Origin	Number Distributed	Number Returned	% of returns per total distribution	% of returns per group distribution
Polish	20	12	24	60
Skilled Professional Hindu	20	18	36	90
Older Muslim	10	6	12	60
Total	50	36	72	

The total number of questionnaires distributed was 50.

The total number of returns was 36 making a response rate of 72%.

Skilled Professional Hindu Group

The graphs below show the responses of the participants to the main 42 questions of the questionnaire. However, there were a number of corollary questions included in the questionnaire, many of which only applied to a small number of participants and were often of a qualitative nature. For this reason they have been omitted from the list of main questions and bar charts, but have been included in the analysis section.

Section 1 – Housing

Question 1 – Do you feel that there are suitable housing options available in your local area?

- *Moderate, I feel it is quite difficult in these days to find a house in your preferred location.*
- *Yes, but expensive.*
- *We are not eligible for any housing benefit since we are on work permit with no access to public funds. Rents are extremely high.*
- *Yes for private. Council not applicable.*
- *Public sector – no. Private sector – yes.*
- *No – Public sector. Commonwealth citizens are not allowed assistance with housing. Private sector. If it is not affordable, sharing our house with bigger number.*
- *Yes but getting harder day by day.*

Question 2 – Have you experienced any barriers to accessing housing?

- *Yes, I think so. When we went to the solicitors they say houses are given on first come first serve basis but I feel preference is given to local people.*
- *Yes, due to expensive flats not language or ethnic background and landlords maintenance (infrequent)*
- *Yes. Institutionalised racism. When we ask for assistance they refuse, there is a clause in the legislation whereas this has been interpreted by the housing association in a different way.*

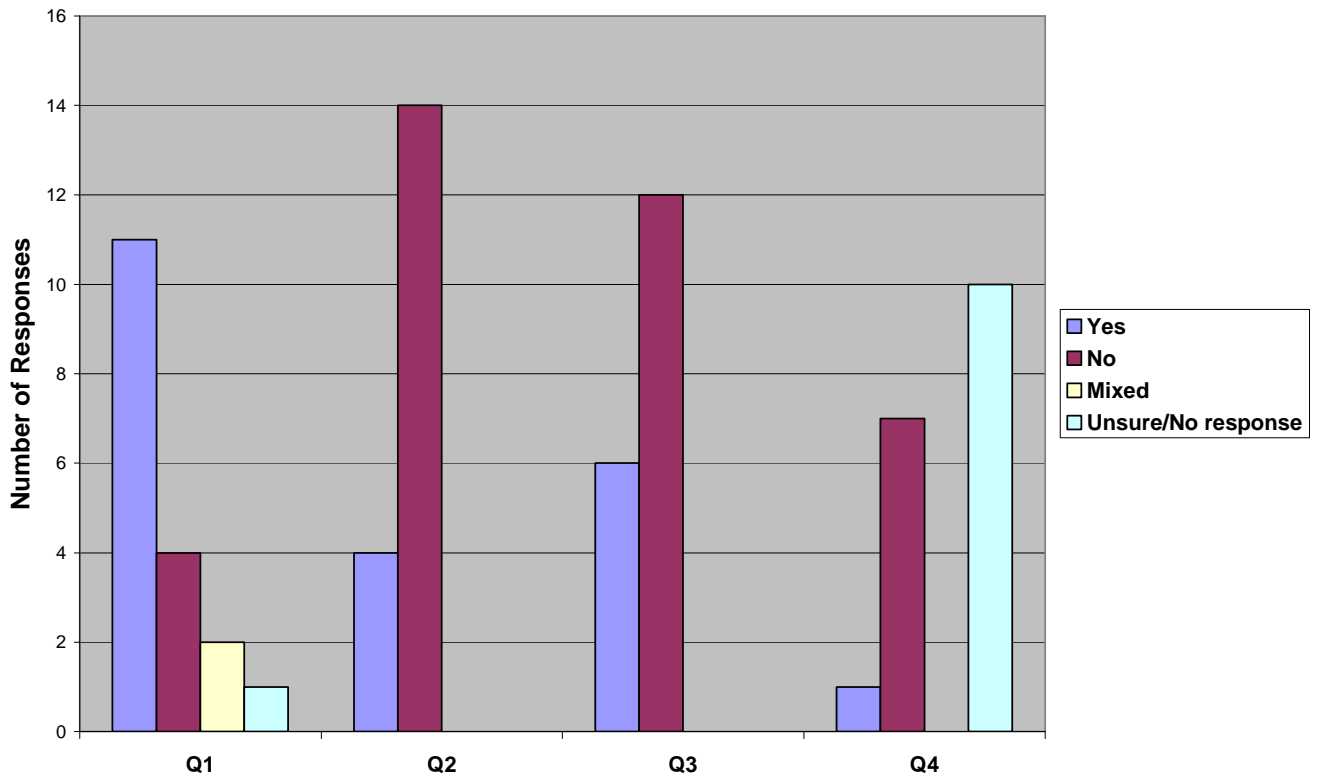
Question 3 – Have you ever had any questions or problems relating to your housing?

- *We had problems with housing initially which should have been resolved by our property agent. This was not dealt by property agent and I had to take the initiative to resolve them with property factoring company.*
- *Found it difficult to get a house to rent due to solicitors monopoly.*
- *Its rented accommodation. The problems are mainly to get landlord to provide maintenance.*

Question 4 – Did you find any available information to address this question or problem?

- *Independent finance advisors.*
- *Yes, from the internet.*

Chart 1: Showing responses to questions 1 – 4.



Question 5 – Have you ever applied for council housing?

- *Yes, difficult as this is not an entitlement.*
- *Yes, we found the college.*

Question 6 – Did you experience any problems due to language difficulties or your ethnic background?

- *No problem in ethnic background but suffered a little bit in language problem but it is ok.*

Question 7 – Have you ever required the council to repair your housing?

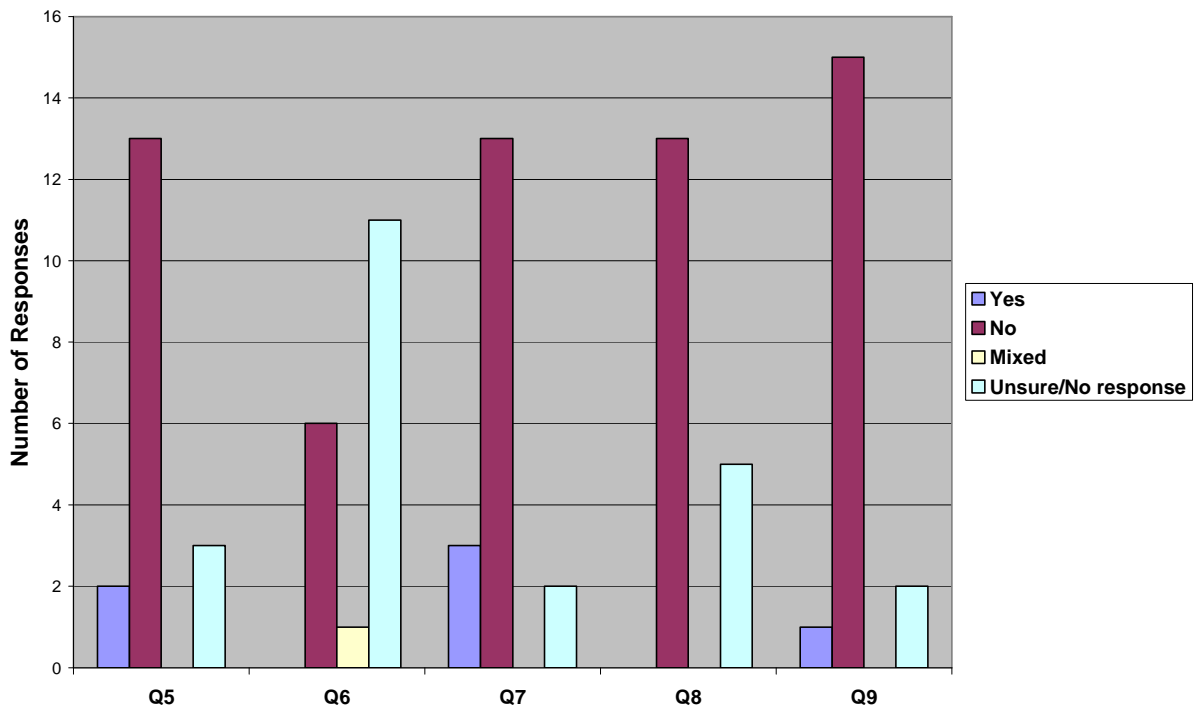
- Yes we had an infestation of bugs and the council had to come and spray. It was a good experience because they sorted the problem.
- Yes, the problem was bed bugs, they came and sorted it well.
- Yes, our boiler is not working and we called Scottish gas they came and checked everything.

Question 8 – Have you ever required the council to alter your housing (this could be due to a disability)?

Question 9 – Have you ever been affected by homelessness or overcrowding? (e.g. have you spent any time in a hostel, bed and breakfast etc.)

- Not in Aberdeen.
- Yes overcrowding in the home we stayed in before this one, but moved over to this one and it is very comfortable.

Chart 2: Showing responses to questions 5 - 9



Section 2 – Social Work

For all the questions in this section on Social Work (questions 10 to 21), none of the respondents from this group added any additional comments. One might speculate that this is because they had had little or no contact with, or access to, social work services. In fact for questions 14 to 21 all respondents either did not reply or stated the questions were not applicable.

Questions 10 to 21 are listed in two groups below, and chart 3 below shows the results from questions 10 to 13

Question 10 – Do you qualify for free or reduced travel from the city council (this can be due to a disability, age etc.)

Question 11 – Have you ever used community transport services (i.e. dial-a-bus)?

Question 12 – Do you have any experience of the social work department in connection to mental health problems?

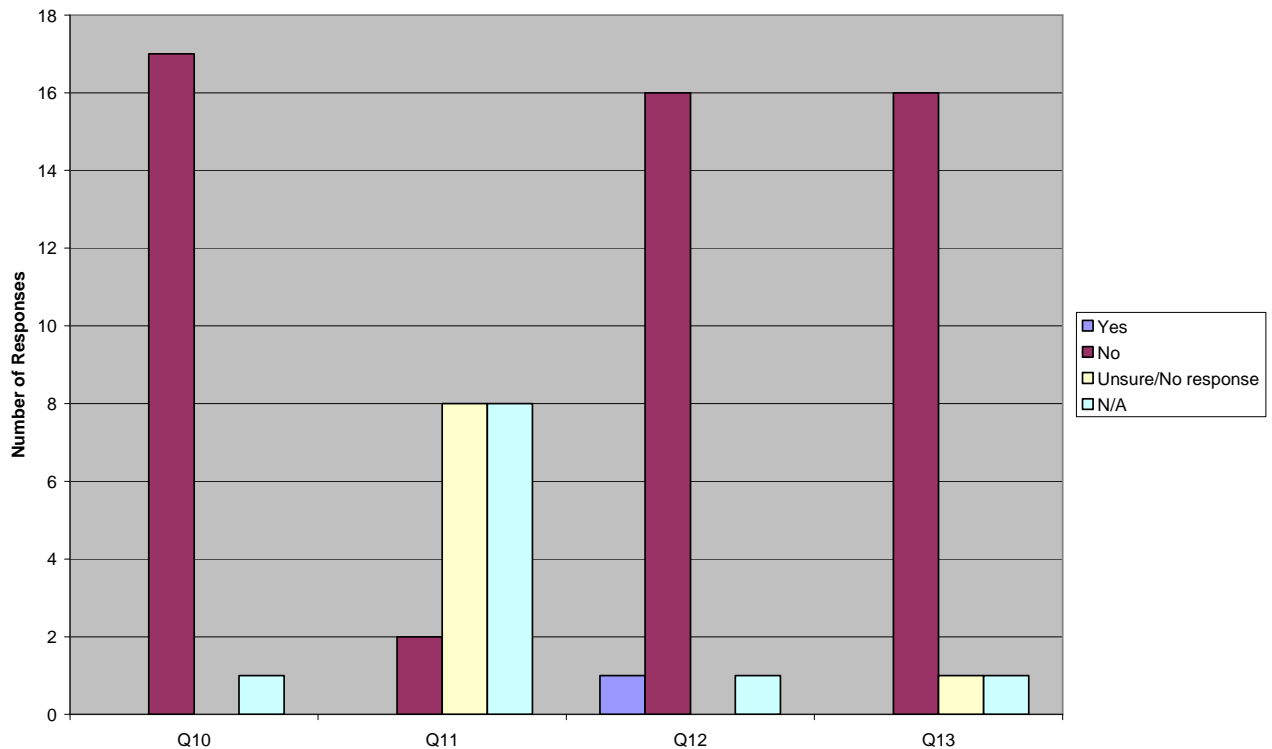
Question 13 – Do you have any experience of the social work department in connection to domestic violence?

Question 14 – Do you have any experience of carers and/or home help provided by ACC?

Question 15 – Do you feel that home visits, by the home help or carer, are easy to organise?

Question 16 – Have you ever required hospice care, provided by ACC?

Chart 3: Showing responses to questions 10 - 13



Question 17 – Do you have any experience of residential accommodation provided by ACC?

Question 18 – Do you have any experience of the community alarm system?

Question 19 – Have you ever required the council to alter your housing (this could be due to illness or disability)?

Question 20 – Are you eligible for garden maintenance from the city council?

Question 21 – Have you been involved in activities, organised by the city council, for elderly people (this includes community groups, day centres, 'Rootin About' programme etc)?

Section 3 – Education

Question 22 – Do you feel your local council provides enough opportunities for adult learning?

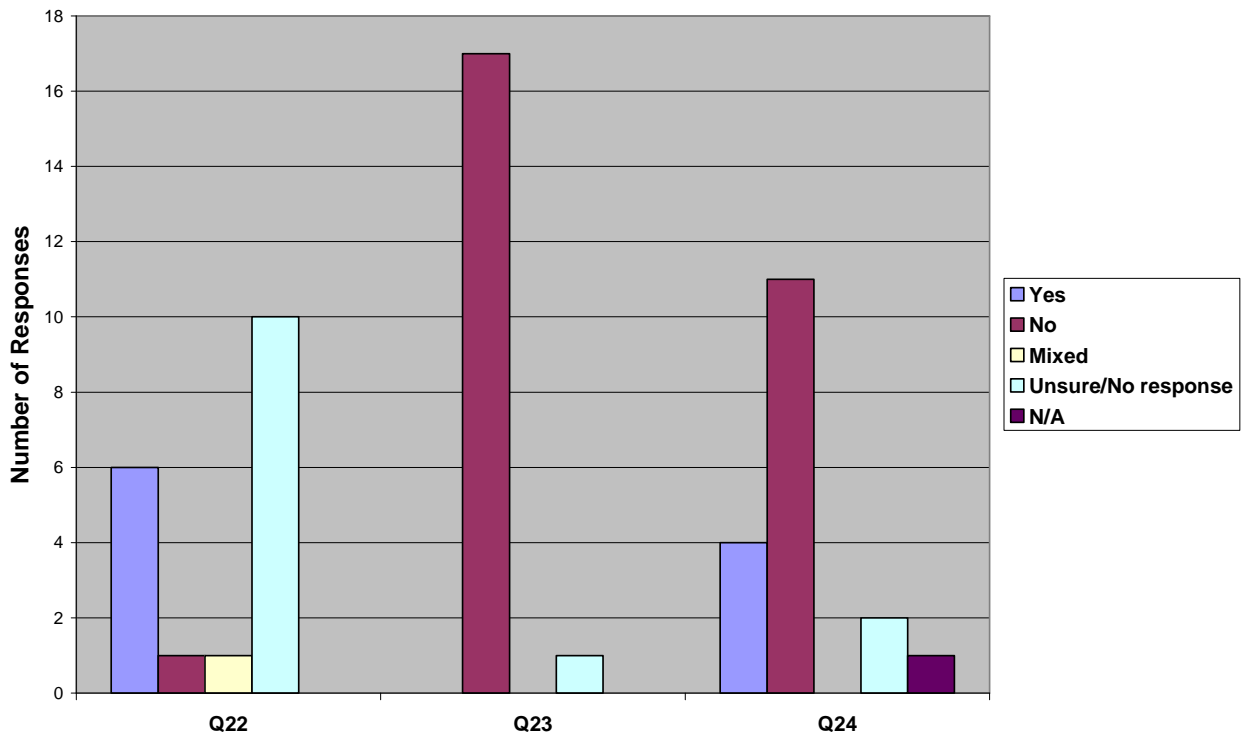
- *Hmm, yes but I want to improve my language but I am not able to find any class to improve my English. I know basics of the languages.*
- *I think they can improve the system by including some educational activities which can help them in their further progress.*
- *Don't know, I have heard of English classes but never needed one.*
- *Not sure, never explored it.*

Question 23 – Do language difficulties or your ethnic background discourage you from engaging in adult learning?

Question 24 – Have you ever required information on adult learning?

- *We have been informed about English speaking and writing classes it was very comprehensive information about the course.*
- *Yes li got information from the city library information centre and also from our local community centre.*
- *Yes, through friends.*

Chart 4: Showing responses to questions 22 - 24



Question 25 – How would you describe your level of qualification before coming to Aberdeen?

- *BA in commerce.*
- *Masters degree.*
- *Bachelor of arts.*
- *Good.*
- *Very good (no other info given).*
- *Bmech (mechanical engineering).*
- *Highly skilled, B.E. in mechanical engineering. More than 11 years experience in oil and gas petrochemical industry.*
- *I worked as a teacher in India, I am computer literate and have a masters degree in chemistry.*
- *Highly qualified.*
- *Chartered Accountant.*
- *Good. Software skills in technology which very few people have here.*
- *Good, technically sound.*
- *Graduate in engineering.*
- *Highly skilled.*
- *Very good.*
- *Masters level.*
- *I did a Btech in computer science and engineering. I am currently looking for course related jobs.*

Question 26 – Were you able to transfer skills developed abroad to Aberdeen?

- *Yes, as now I am using my educational skills in my company in Aberdeen.*
- *Not entirely. There is a tendency to disregard the experience that I gained in India.*
- *Yes my qualification was required in my company and I have transferred my skill to them.*
- *Yes but not everything.*
- *Yes but I am totally not able to transfer skills. I know some computer languages but didn't transfer that skill.*

Question 27 – What could be done to make the transfer of skills more successful?

- *By making more opportunities available.*
- *I can transfer technical experience to any new trainee required.*
- *Challenging job.*
- *More education around quality and skill of people coming from different countries. Don't know who can do what about this!*
- *Knowledge sharing.*
- *It can be made easier if there are accent classes available, most international people find it difficult in Aberdeen.*
- *I did Btech would like to use fully my skills here to be successful.*

Question 28 – If you are employed, do you feel that your job is well suited to your level of skills?

- Yes, I can work in more design oriented job but the scope of work I come across with my present employer is satisfactory as well.
- Yes - still slight gap is in existence.
- Not very bad but looking for something different.
- Yes I am suitable but change my course to a more useful/related skill.

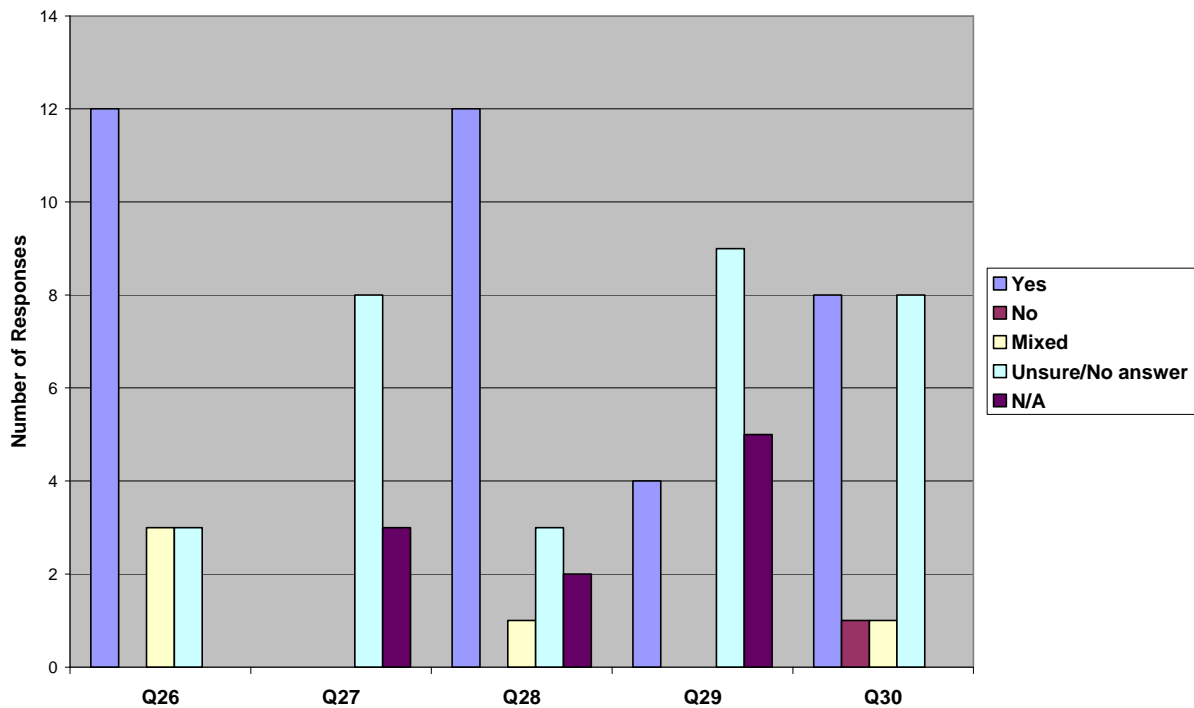
Question 29 – If not, would you wish to work in a job better suited to your skills?

- I have newspaper advertising experience but I am a housewife now.
- Yes I would like to work with my educational skills.
- No I am contracting at the moment but would like the opportunity if given to work in an organisation in Aberdeen.

Question 30 – Do you think that ACC encourages young people to continue learning and achieving out with school?

None of the respondents offered additional comment on this question. See responses in the chart below.

Chart 5: Shows responses to questions 26 - 30



Section 4 – Transport

Question 31 – How would you judge the transport system in Aberdeen compared to other places where you have lived?

- *Transport system in Aberdeen is very good and safe.*
- *I was in Camberley, England. Aberdeen seems to be more crowded than other places, particularly in the morning and evenings. Considerations should be given to such areas e.g. Hadigan roundabout.*
- *It's very good.*
- *The transport system is good. I travel with Stagecoach to Westhill everyday. The service is really poor and needs some changes and regularity.*
- *Not good - some places it is good like First Bus service but Stagecoach is very bad and not up to the standard at all.*
- *It's good but transportation system needs to be improved in certain sectors.*
- *Good.*
- *Good.*
- *It is better.*
- *8 on a scale of 1-10.*
- *Not so great.*
- *Very expensive, buses never on time, not frequent enough, taxis very expensive, rail travel is very efficient.*
- *Transport system in Aberdeen is good, frequency as well as work time constraints.*
- *Expensive.*
- *Needs complete transformation x pan (expand) to other big cities.*
- *Ok but need to improve, liked it more in Edinburgh.*
- *Not up to the mark.*
- *Here is transport system is very nice.*

Question 32 – Do you think that the transport system in Aberdeen makes the area an attractive place to live, work, visit and do business?

- *Of course, it is very easy to move from any place to anywhere at anytime.*
- *Transport system is well placed. The only problem is the traffic. Alternative routes/flyovers to be considered.*
- *Not really, it is oil and gas activities that attract people here and the transport system needs some improvement.*
- *Not really, transport system is good but feel punctuality of the buses could be improved.*
- *Maybe not, need to improve.*

Question 33 – Do you feel that Aberdeen has good air, rail and sea links with the rest of the UK?

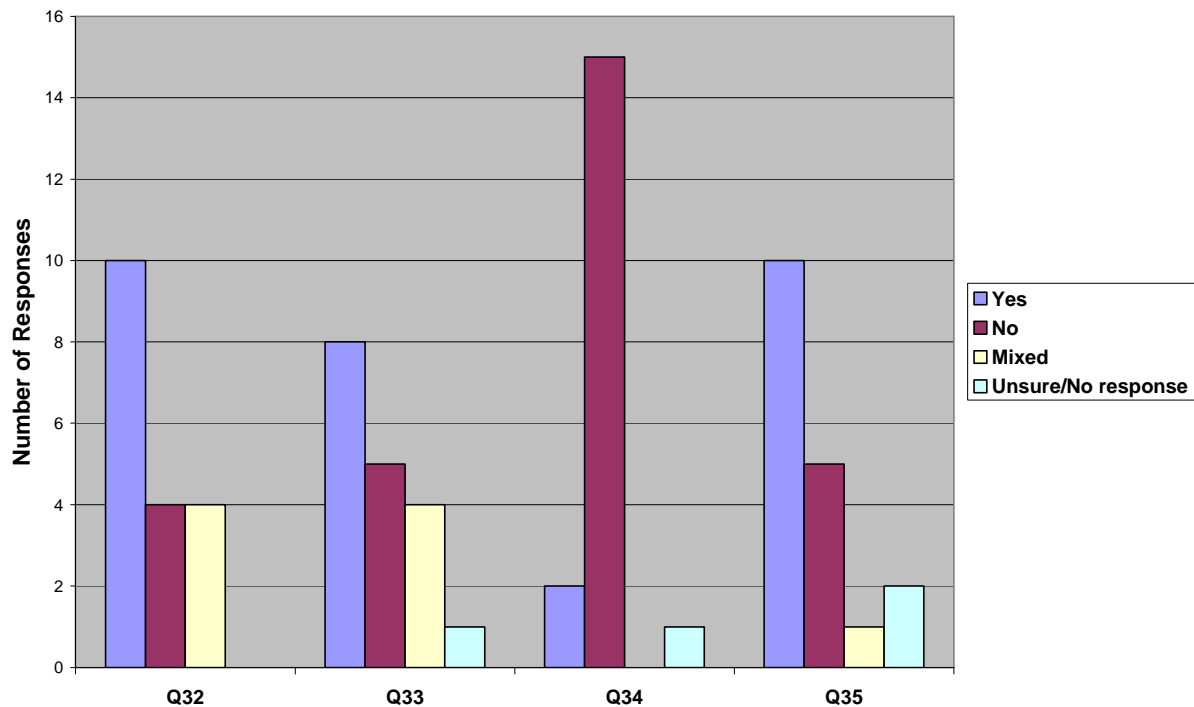
- *I don't know about the rest of the UK. But according to our friends who are in the south, Aberdeen had good air, rail and sea links. Nature-wise Aberdeen is very beautiful.*
- *I am not aware of transport system in rest of the UK other than Aberdeen so can not comment on this.*
- *Yes but will be much better if they make Aberdeen airport international.*
- *No. Rail links are not so good many flights to London are always late or get cancelled. I will rate it very poor.*
- *Air: options limited travelling to most European destinations; rail: moderate; sea: unaware.*
- *Not quite yet. Still have to change flights and trains to reach destinations also very expensive flights.*
- *Air and rail yes, sea - don't know.*

Question 34 – Are you aware of the proposal to build a new road around the city, called the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route?

Question 35 – Do you feel encouraged to use public transport?

- *Yes. To encourage the use of public transport is beneficial for nature, pollution control & also for people who has complete of traffic jam.*
- *Yes-for transport within city.*
- *I think, if they lower the prices of tickets it will be more useful to the people*
- *No it's too costly. And first buses are late around working hours I have no way out, public transport is the only option.*
- *No it's expensive.*
- *I don't feel encouraged to use public transport but I use it anyway.*

Chart 6: Shows responses to questions 32 - 35



Question 36 – What would encourage you to use public transport more often (e.g. faster services, more reliability)?

- Faster service, also my daughter told me it is better for nature and for us to walk.
- As said for above, frequent service and no parking issues.
- More convenient, cheap.
- More reliability and lower fares.
- By making public transport more reliable and dependable.
- Public transport is more convenient for me to travel to my office, it's faster, safe and reliable.
- Faster, more reliable service, more routes to cover all parts connected to each other.
- Good connectivity.
- Faster service.
- Increase in the frequency. Cheaper fares.
- Faster services.
- Faster services.
- Faster services, more reliability, less expensive.
- More reliability, affordable tickets.
- To avoid traffic in busy times.
- Better connectivity.
- Here is a fast service and good punctuality.

Question 37 – Have you encountered any problems using buses or taxis in Aberdeen?

- Yes, with Stagecoach buses.
- Yes with buses not with taxis.
- At weekends buses and taxis are a bit hard to get in the evenings.
- Buses: frequency very low to certain areas. Taxis: no issues.
- Buses 14, 15 and 27 take us to our office at Rubislaw. Bus no 15 was totally cancelled recently and both 14 and 27 are very infrequent and don't come at specified times.
- Availability of taxis is less; buses are not that frequent after a period of time during the day and weekends.
- Yes never come as per schedule.
- Yes sometimes but not quite often.
- Yes in bad weather buses are not reliable and taxis may or may not operate. I have trouble commuting during bad weather.

Question 38 – Have you ever experienced any problems with staff of transport providers because of language difficulties or your ethnic background?

- No people here are all so polite and good by nature.

Question 39 – Have you ever experienced any problems with other users of public transport because of language difficulties or your ethnic background?

- I feel teenagers are a bit harsh sometimes.
- Not really-people stare at times.

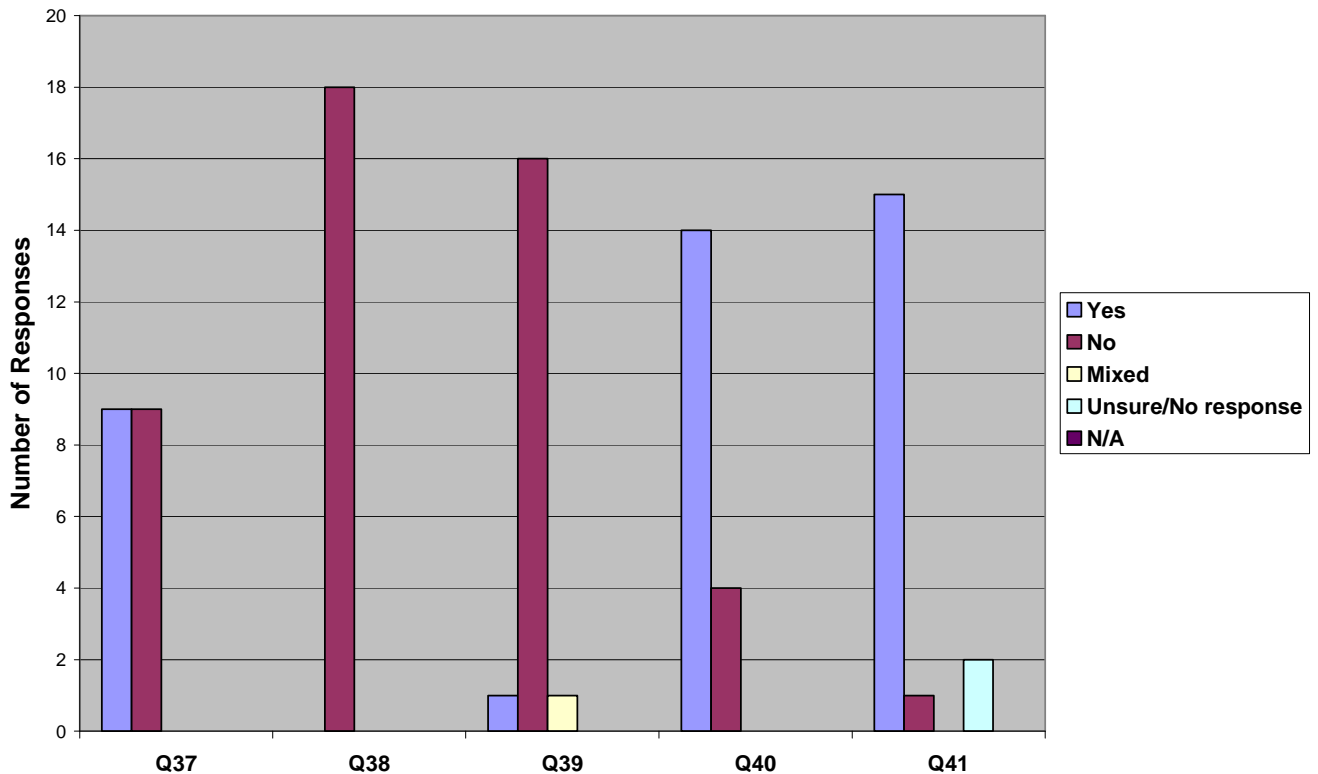
Question 40 – Do you feel that material provided by transport providers is accessible and easy to understand (this includes promotional material, timetables and bus stops)?

- Yes it's easy that web map is very easy to understand.
- It is very simple and good.
- No, timetables are not understandable.
- There are certain timetables which use colours which are not distinct enough e.g. recognising which is 14 or 15 bus services uses yellow colours for the display of timings.

Question 41 – Do you feel that providers of public transport in Aberdeen promote equality?

- Yes, we don't feel like outsiders here. We are very happy with people of Aberdeen they are very caring.

Chart 7: Shows responses to questions 37 - 41



Question 42 – Are you aware of information about reducing carbon emissions from transport and promoting walking, cycling and use of public transport?

- Yes that's why I always try to use public transport. It saves reducing carbon emissions.
- Yes my company encourages it.

Question 43 – Do you find this information easy to understand?

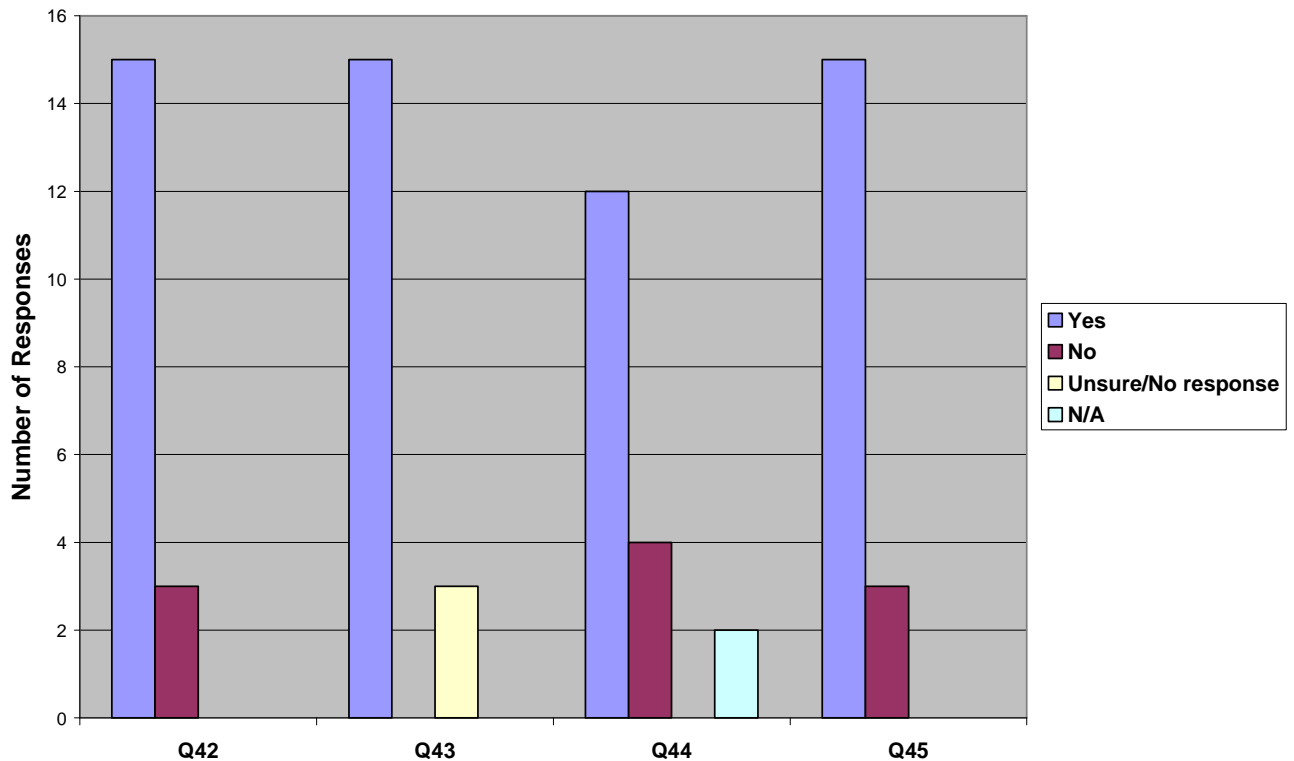
Question 44 – Have these initiatives encouraged you to change your travel behaviour?

- Yes nowadays I prefer to walk, I enjoy walking.
- Yes. I avoid using the car whenever possible. Also try to make pool (car) with friends to reduce vehicles on the road.
- Maybe not, need more changes in transport system.
- No because I use public transport most of the time anyway.

Question 45 – Do you think pavements and footpaths are of an acceptable standard?

- They are at very good standard.
- No they are not flat.
- Cleanliness I would rank them 4 out of 10 because you find cigarettes everywhere.

Chart 8: Showing responses to questions 42 - 45



Section 5 – Recreation and Leisure

No additional comments were made by the Skilled Hindu Group. Chart 9 below shows the majority of responses regarding recreation and leisure were positive. The respondent group gave a mixed response to the questions relating to events and festivals, with a majority giving a negative response and only 8 felt there was sufficient provision.

Question 46 – Do you feel that there is enough green space in your local area (i.e. parks, play areas, woodlands)?

Question 47 – Do you think there are sufficient sports facilities in your local area?

Question 48 – Do you feel that museums and galleries, provided by ACC, are of interest?

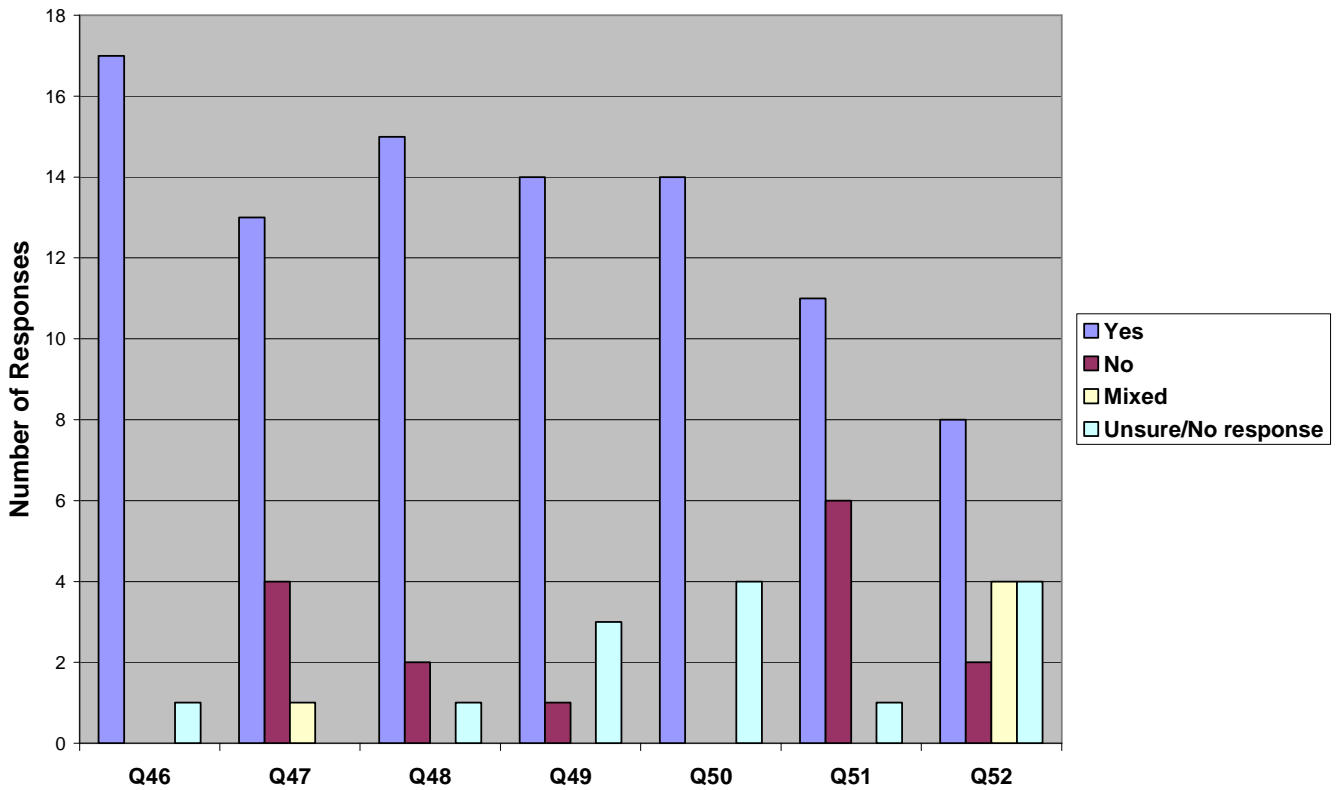
Question 49 – Do you feel that arts venues offer an adequate service (i.e. His Majesty's Theatre, Music Hall, etc.)?

Question 50 – Do you feel that the central and local libraries provide an adequate service?

Question 51 – Have you attended a council event or festival (i.e. Hogmanay celebrations, Aberdeen Highland Games, International Youth Festival, international street markets etc.)?

Question 52 – Do you think there are enough festivals and events in your local area?

Chart 9: Shows responses to questions 46 – 52



How did you find this consultation process?

- *I liked the questions in this consultation and the initiative to start this exercise.*
- *I think it is quite good. A good means by giving our feedback and letting everyone know our views.*
- *Very good.*
- *It's ok.*
- *Nice.*
- *This is very good process so that I could share my thinking with you about the facilities given by ACC.*
- *Good.*
- *Its good, quite a lot of questions are not applicable as we are not citizens of UK and law does not allow us to use facilities.*
- *It's a good effort made to improve the council activities.*
- *Good, this consultation helps the people to provide feedback as well as help the council improve what is needed.*
- *Never been to any.*
- *Friendly and informative.*
- *Good not much related to us because we are not entitled to so many things but it's fine. The questions are easy to understand and answer.*

Older Muslim Men Group

The graphs below show the responses of the participants to the main 42 questions of the questionnaire. However, there were a number of corollary questions included in the questionnaire, many of which only applied to a small number of participants and were often of a qualitative nature. For this reason they have been omitted from the list of main questions and graphs, but have been included in the analysis section.

Section 1 – Housing

The responses of the Older Muslim Group to questions 1 to 4 offer a very positive assessment of the housing situation in the area. All six respondents felt that there were suitable housing options in the area, and almost all indicated that they had faced no obstacles in their search for housing. The one exception, seen in the additional respondent comments, was an opinion that although no specific barriers had prevented the eventual accessibility of housing, it had taken a long time. None of the respondents had any questions or problems relating to their housing.

Question 1 – Do you feel that there are suitable housing options available in your local area?

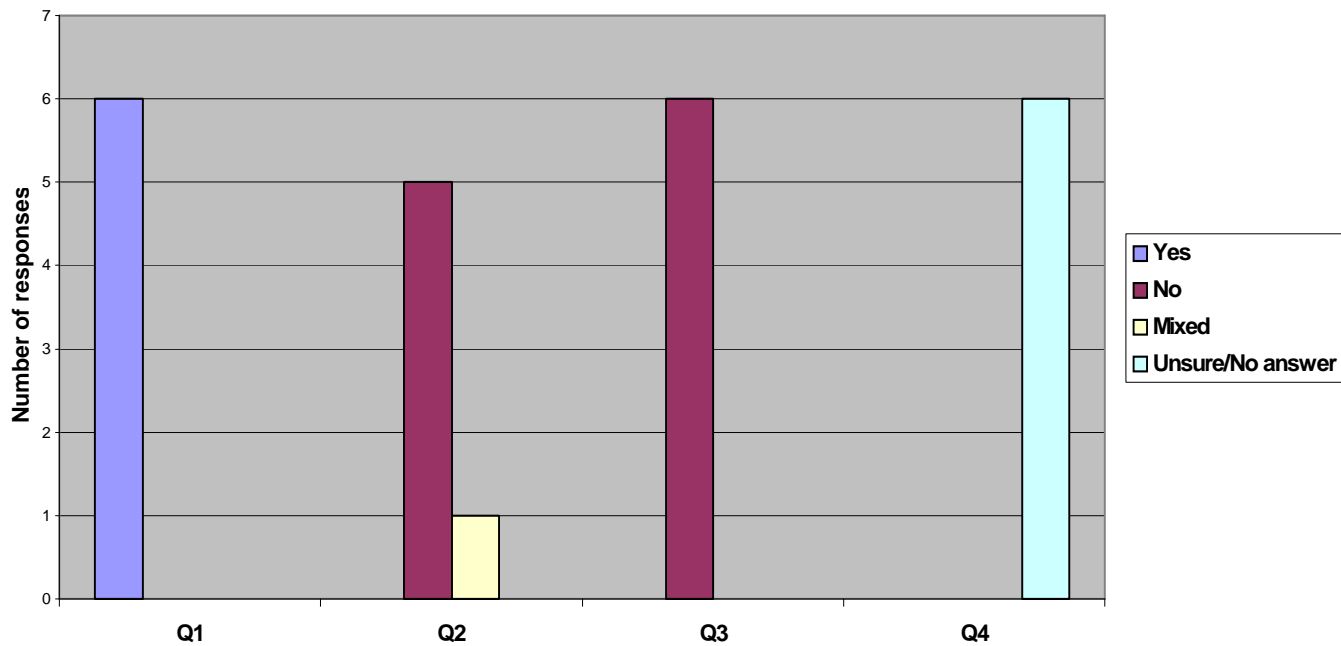
Question 2 – Have you experienced any barriers to accessing housing?

- It took a long time - but OK.

Question 3 – Have you ever had any questions or problems relating to your housing?

Question 4 – Did you find any available information to address this question or problem?

Chart 10: Showing responses to questions 1 – 4



The responses to questions 5 to 9 indicate a broadly positive attitude towards experiences with council housing and repairs in the area. The four respondents that had previously applied for council housing (question 5) were then asked how they found the process. Two of these respondents stated they had found the process “OK”; while the two others did not reply to the question. The three respondents who had required the council to repair their property were also asked about their experience. Although two respondents had no response to the question, the other stated it had taken “longer than normal”. The results of question 9 show that one respondent had been affected by homelessness, although had been able to live with friends. Although this response raises some concerns, the overwhelming experience of the participants has been positive with regard to housing in the city.

Question 5 – Have you ever applied for council housing?

Question 6 – Did you experience any problems due to language difficulties or your ethnic background?

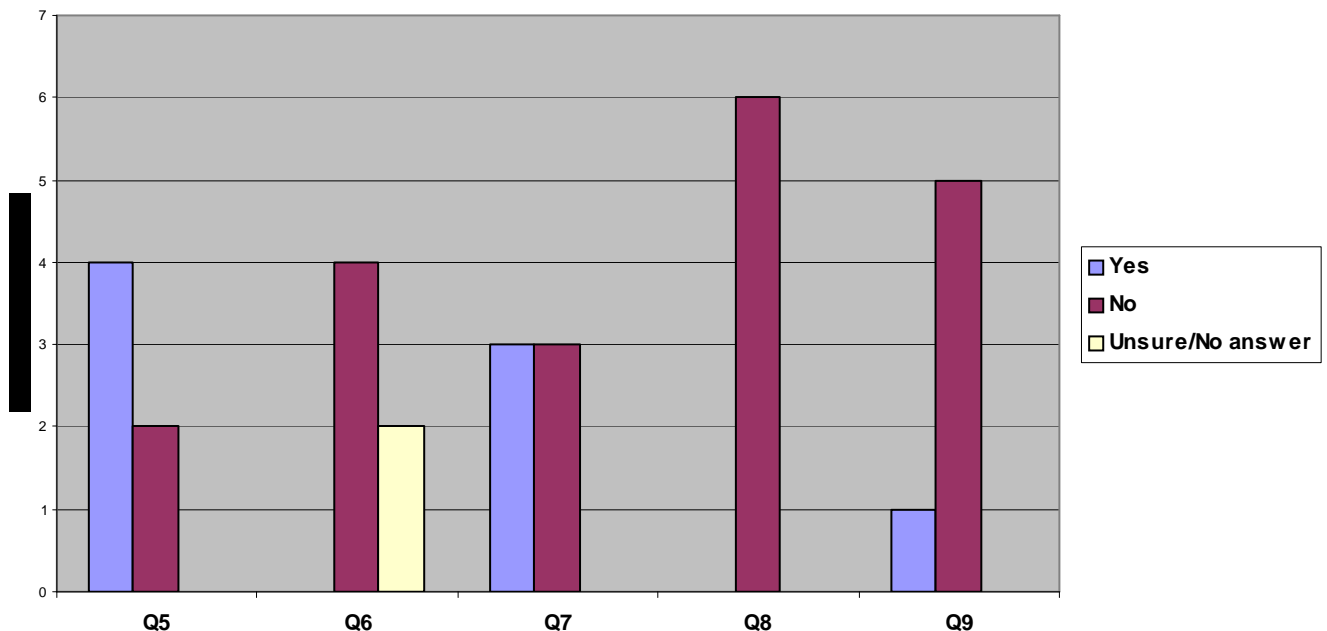
Question 7 – Have you ever required the council to repair your housing?

Question 8 – Have you ever required the council to alter your housing (this could be due to a disability)?

Question 9 – Have you ever been affected by homelessness or overcrowding (e.g. have you spent any time in a hostel, bed and breakfast etc.)?

-Yes. Lived with friends.

Chart 11: Showing responses to questions 5 - 9



Section 2 – Social Work

The majority of responses revealed that questions 10 to 16 were not relevant to the Older Muslim Men’s Group with the exception of question 10. All respondents qualified for free or reduced travel but other services covered in this section were not accessed.

Question 10 – Do you qualify for free or reduced travel from the city council (this can be due to a disability, age etc.)

Question 11 – Have you ever used community transport services (i.e. dial-a-bus)?

Question 12 – Do you have any experience of the social work department in connection to mental health problems?

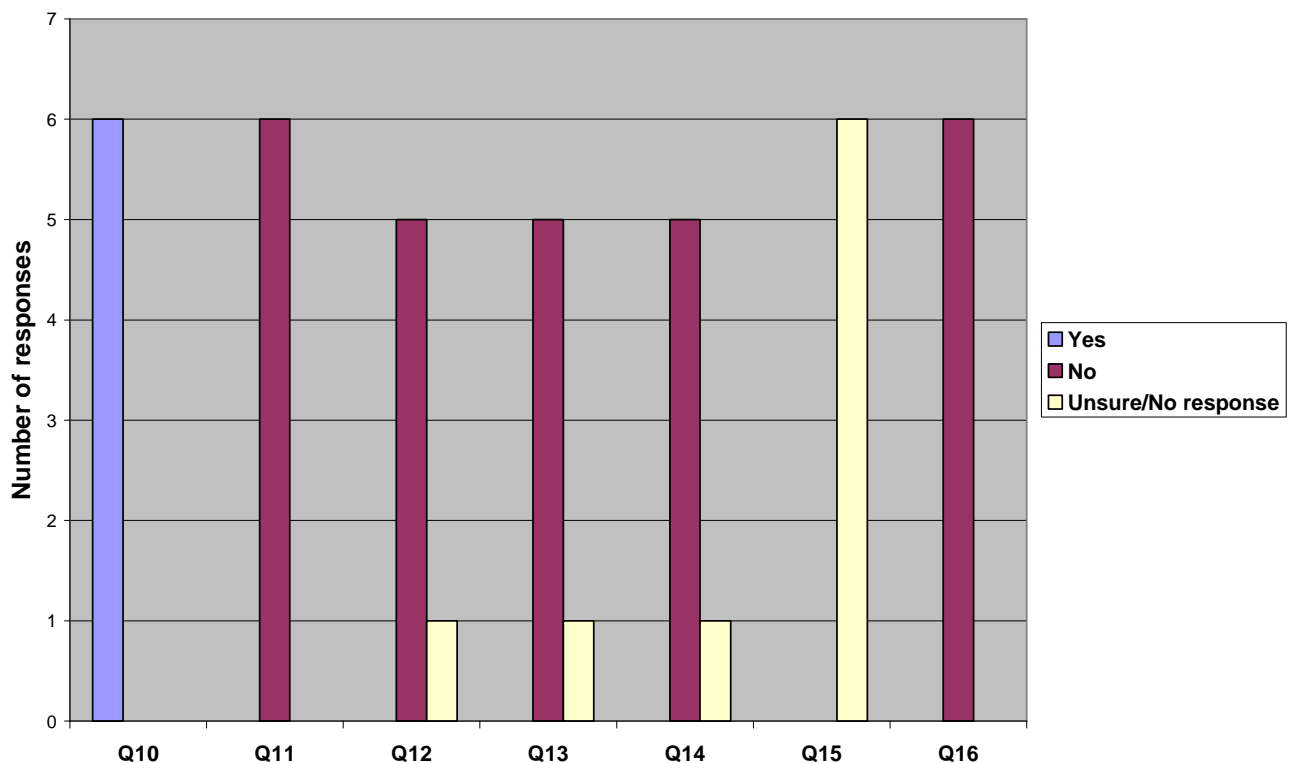
Question 13 – Do you have any experience of the social work department in connection to domestic violence?

Question 14 – Do you have any experience of carers and/or home help provided by ACC?

Question 15 – Do you feel that home visits, by the home help or carer, are easy to organise?

Question 16 – Have you ever required hospice care, provided by ACC?

Chart 12: Showing responses to questions 10 - 16



All respondents for questions 17 to 21 showed little experience of the services covered. Chart 13 below shows that the only mixed, rather than negative, response was to question 21.

Question 17 – Do you have any experience of residential accommodation provided by ACC?

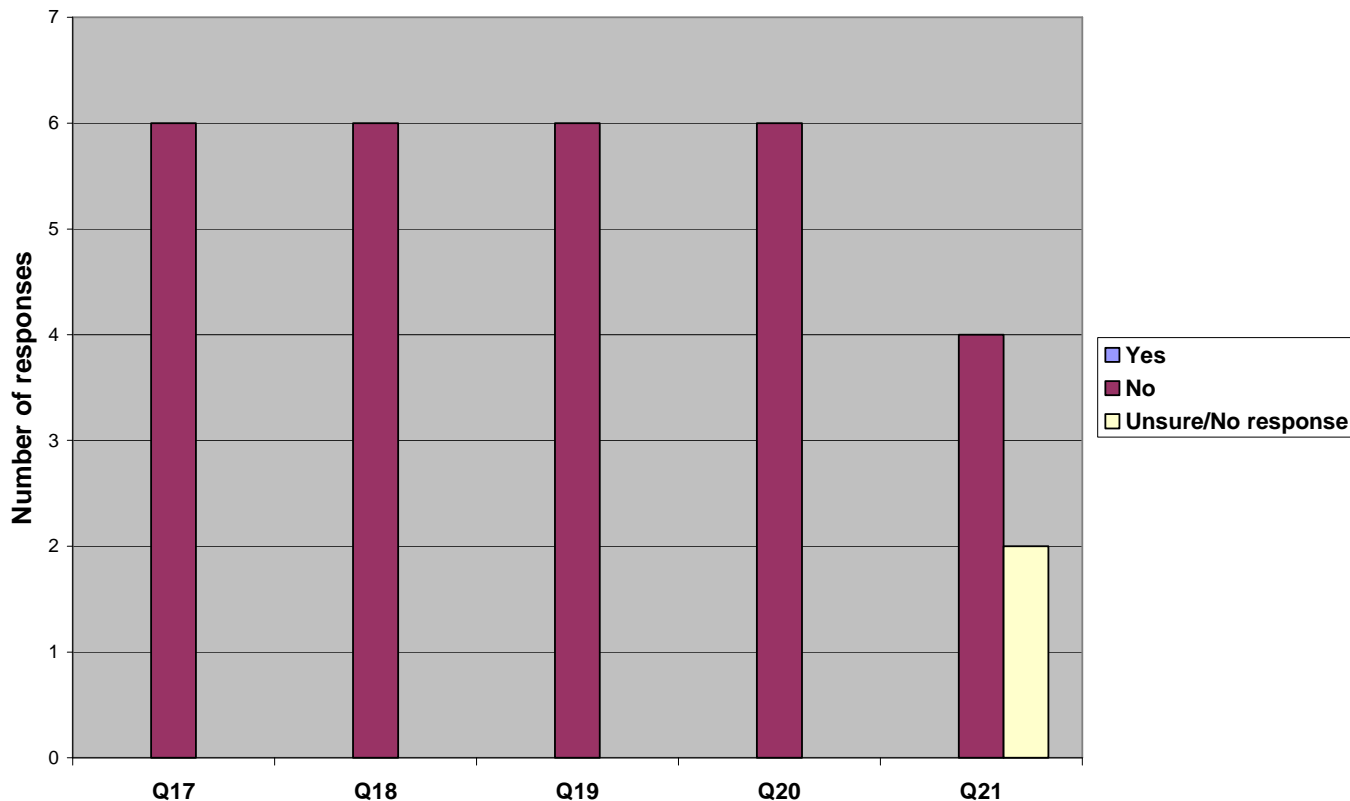
Question 18 – Do you have any experience of the community alarm system?

Question 19 – Have you ever required the council to alter your housing (this could be due to illness or disability)?

Question 20 – Are you eligible for garden maintenance from the city council?

Question 21 – Have you been involved in activities, organised by the city council, for elderly people (this includes community groups, day centres, 'Rootin About' programme etc)?

Chart 13: Showing responses to questions 17 – 21.



Section 3 – Education

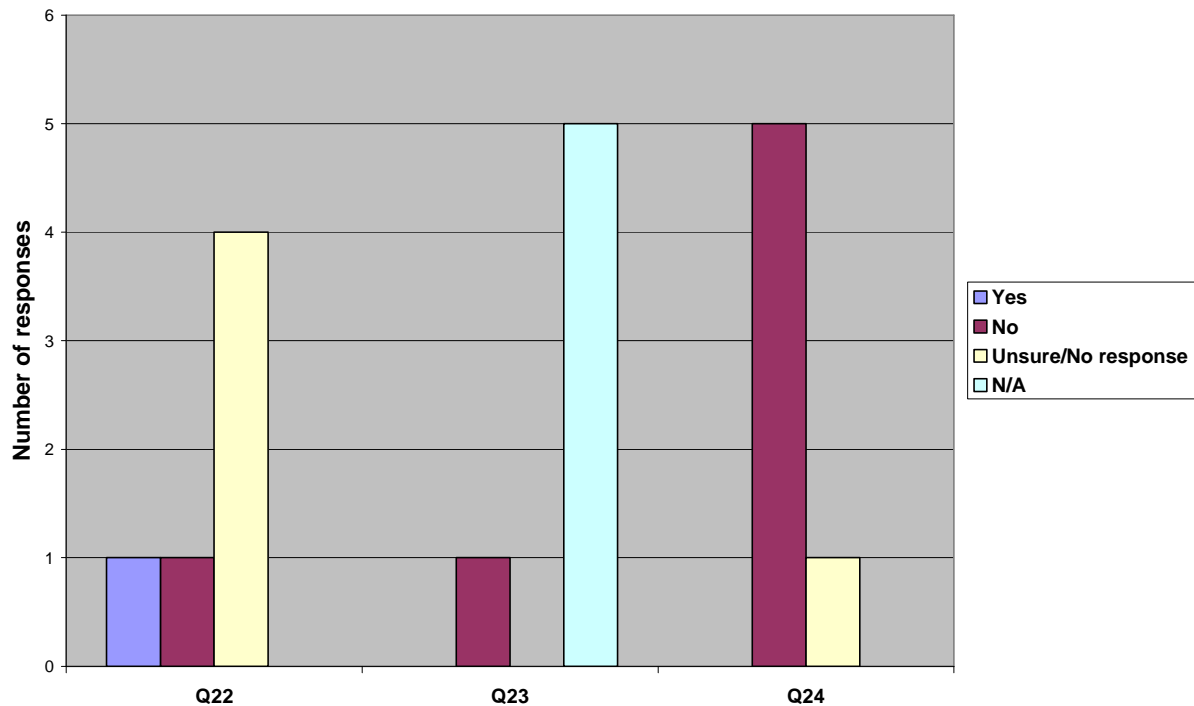
Question 22 – Do you feel your local council provides enough opportunities for adult learning?

- I know of opportunities but did not attend.

Question 23 – Do language difficulties or your ethnic background discourage you from engaging in adult learning?

Question 24 – Have you ever required information on adult learning?

Chart 14: Showing responses to questions 22 - 24



Question 25 – How would you describe your level of qualification before coming to Aberdeen?

- I have a BSc degree and post-graduate diploma in textiles.
- Labourer.
- Labourer.
- Skilled labourer.
- Skilled as a chef- Restaurant manager.

Question 26 – Were you able to transfer skills developed abroad to Aberdeen?

- "I used these skills in various aspects."

Question 27 – What could be done to make the transfer of skills more successful?

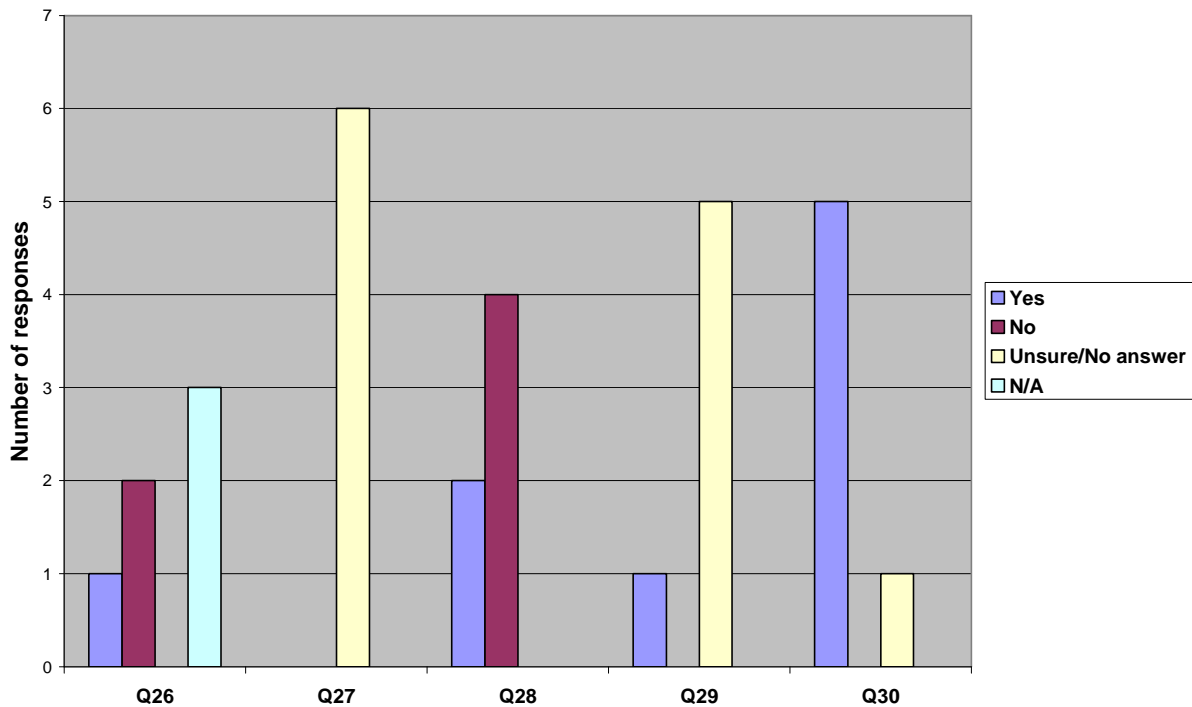
Question 28 – Are you employed?

Question 29 – If yes, do you feel that your job is well suited to your level of skills?

- I have [a] successful restaurant business.

Question 30 – Do you think that ACC encourages young people to continue learning and achieving out with school?

Chart 15: Showing responses to questions 26 - 30



Section 4 – Transport

Question 31 – How would you judge the transport system in Aberdeen compared to other places where you have lived?

- *Very good.*
- *Yes.*
- *Better than other places.*
- *Better than other towns.*
- *Better.*
- *Yes.*

Question 32 – Do you think that the transport system in Aberdeen makes the area an attractive place to live, work, visit and do business?

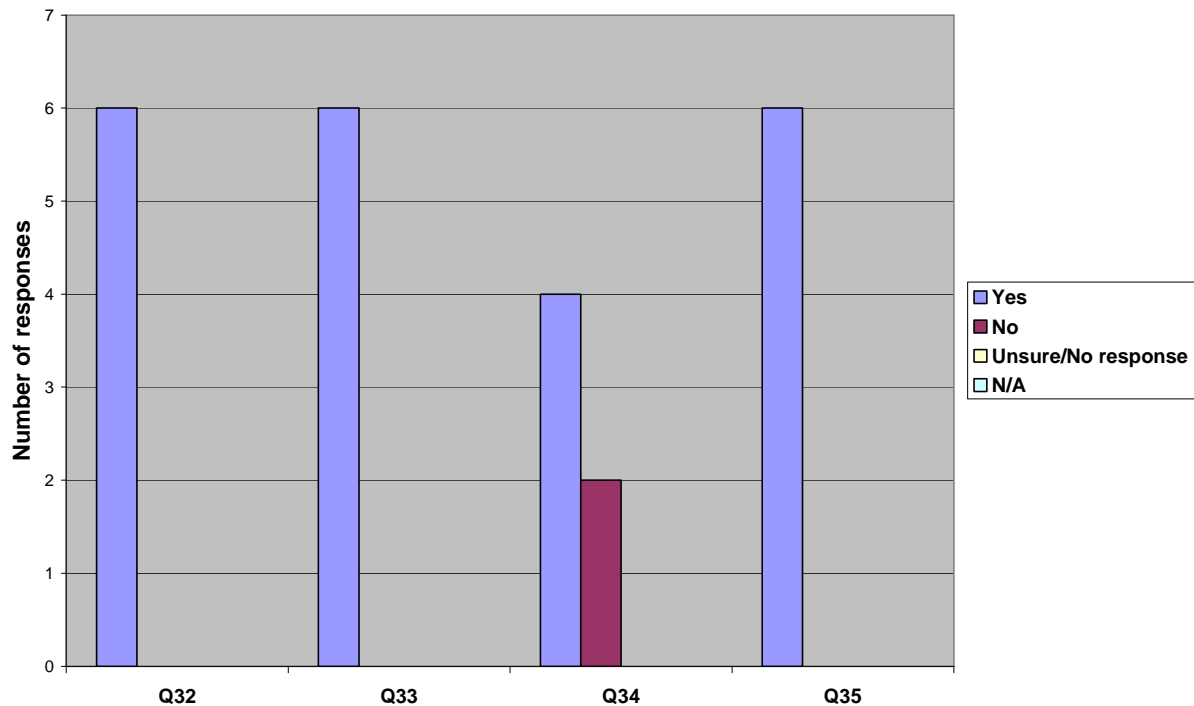
- *It attracts me to live in Aberdeen.*

Question 33 – Do you feel that Aberdeen has good air, rail and sea links with the rest of the UK?

Question 34 – Are you aware of the proposal to build a new road around the city, called the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route?

Question 35 – Do you feel encouraged to use public transport?

Chart 16: Showing responses to questions 32 - 35



Q36 – What would encourage you to use public transport more often (e.g. faster services, more reliability)?

- *It already is fast and reliable.*
- *Faster and more reliable.*
- *Faster and reliable.*
- *Faster and easier.*
- *Yes.*
- *If it was made faster and reliable.*

Question 37 – Have you encountered any problems using buses or taxis in Aberdeen?

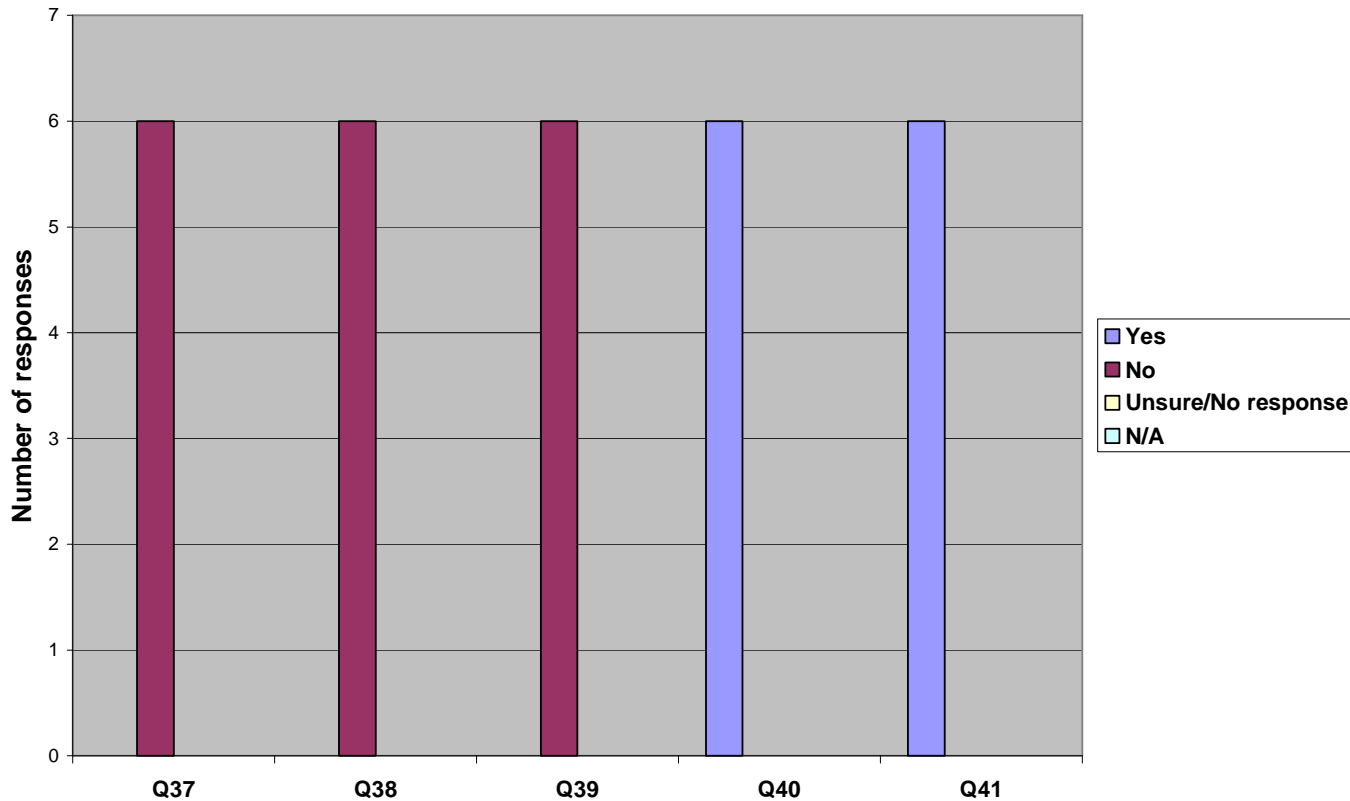
Question 38 – Have you ever experienced any problems with staff of transport providers because of language difficulties or your ethnic background?

Question 39 – Have you ever experienced any problems with other users of public transport because of language difficulties or your ethnic background?

Question 40 – Do you feel that material provided by transport providers is accessible and easy to understand (this includes promotional material, timetables and bus stops)?

Question 41 – Do you feel that providers of public transport in Aberdeen promote equality?

Chart 17: Showing responses to questions 37 - 41



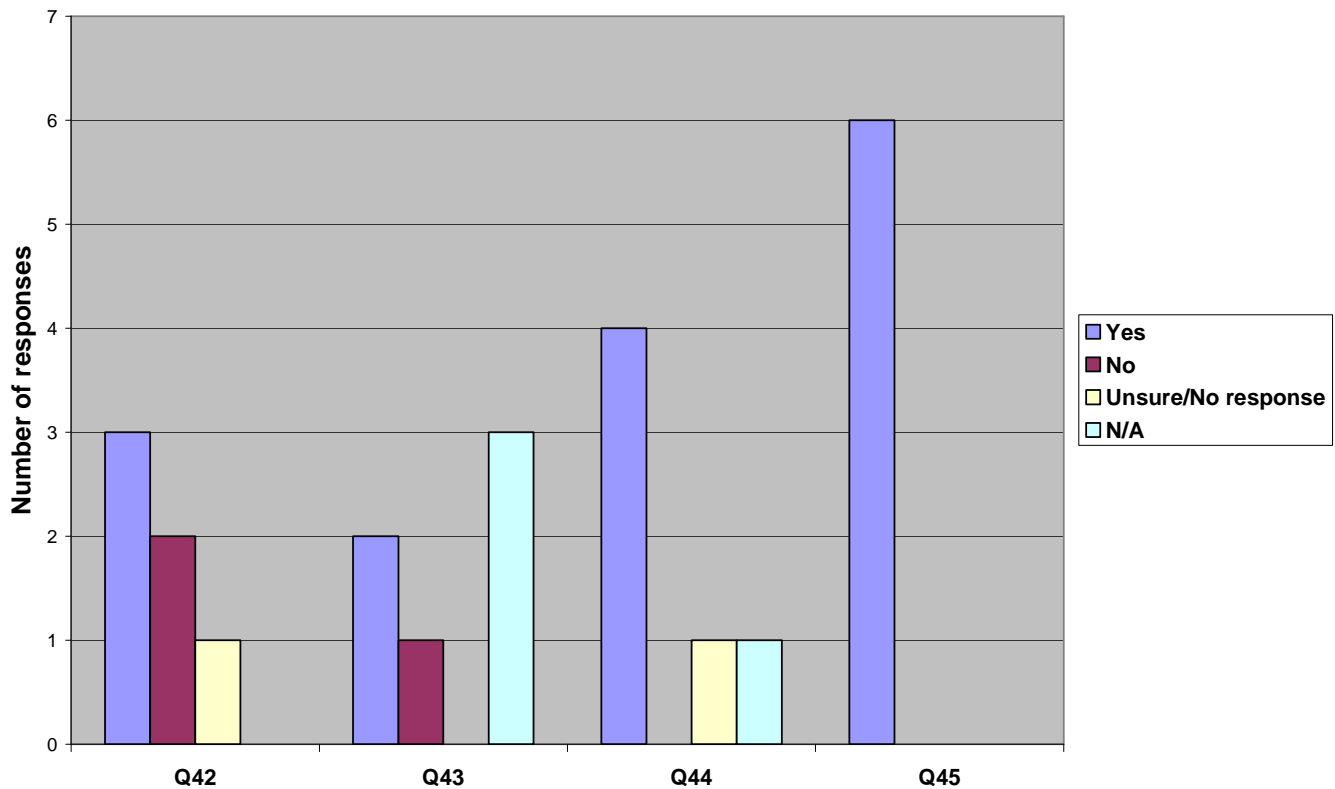
Question 42 – Are you aware of information about reducing carbon emissions from transport and promoting walking, cycling and use of public transport?

Question 43 – Do you find this information easy to understand?

Question 44 – Have these initiatives encouraged you to change your travel behaviour?

Question 45 – Do you think pavements and footpaths are of an acceptable standard?

Chart 18: Showing responses to questions 42 - 45



Section 5 – Recreation and Leisure

Question 46 – Do you feel that there is enough green space in your local area (i.e. parks, play areas, woodlands)?

Question 47 – Do you think there are sufficient sports facilities in your local area?

Question 48 – Do you feel that museums and galleries, provided by ACC, are of interest?

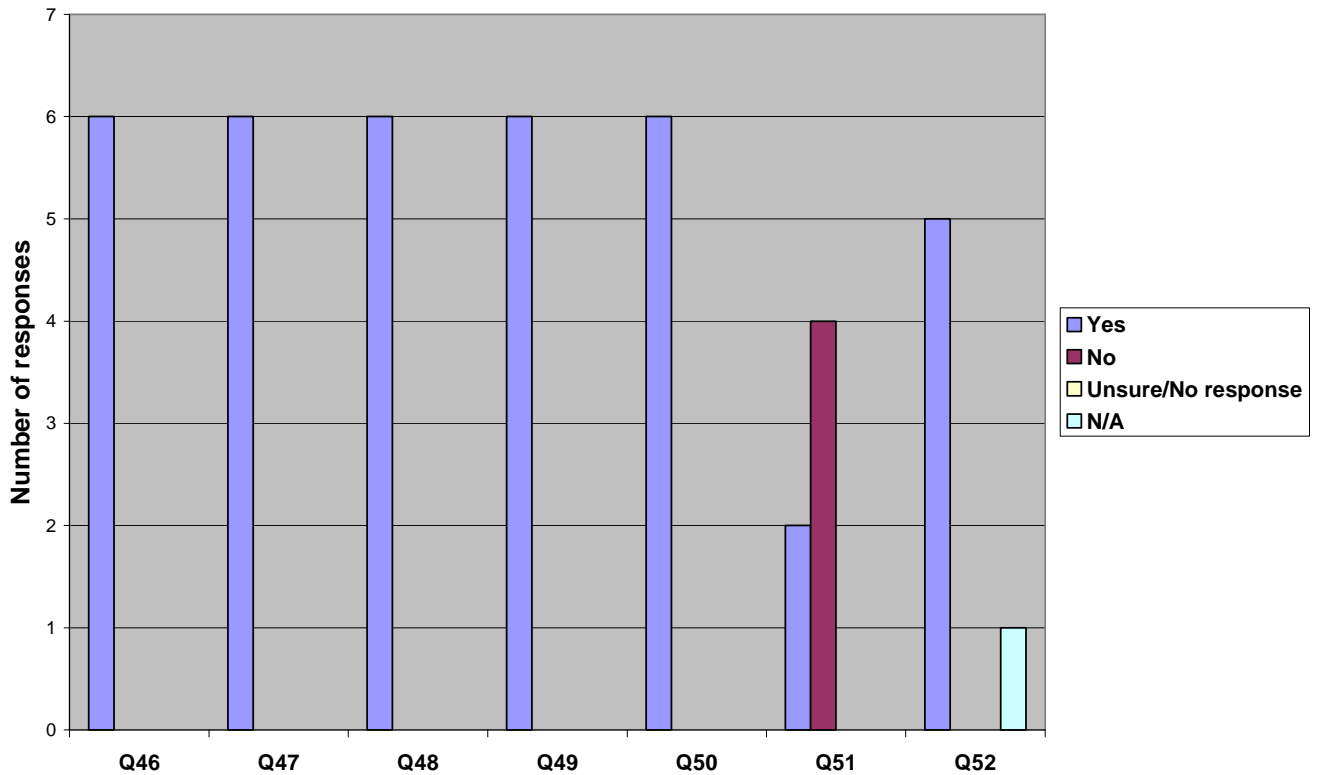
Question 49 – Do you feel that arts venues offer an adequate service (i.e. His Majesty's Theatre, Music Hall, etc.)?

Question 50 – Do you feel that the central and local libraries provide an adequate service?

Question 51 – Have you attended a council event or festival (i.e. Hogmanay celebrations, Aberdeen Highland Games, International Youth Festival, international street markets etc.)?

Question 52 – Do you think there are enough festivals and events in your local area?

Chart 19: Showing responses to questions 46 - 52



How did you find this consultation process?

- *Today's consultation meeting has been helpful to understand various information.*
- *Today's consultation helps to get more information.*
- *This consultation is definitely helpful.*
- *This consultation is fruitful to me.*
- *I found this consultation process quite helpful.*

Polish Women's group

Section 1 – Housing

Question 1 – Do you feel that there are suitable housing options available in your local area?

Response	Count
Yes	9
No	2
Mixed	1
Total	12

- *I think that ACC helps people to settle in Aberdeen.*
- *In Aberdeen is a lot of agencies where you can rent a flat.*

Question 2a – Have you experienced any barriers to accessing housing?

Response	Count
Yes	3
No	9
Total	12

Question 2b - If yes, were these due to language barriers or your ethnic background?

Of the 3 who said yes, 1 answered the above question with:

- *Sometimes yes.*

Another respondent noted the following additional comment:

- *I don't understand the process of awarding council flats and why nobody doesn't check the quantity of family after giving the flats. Sometimes somebody takes a 3 bedroom flat when all his family stay in Poland, and sometimes people who need flat, expecting a baby, wait too long for it.*

Question 3a – Have you ever had any questions or problems relating to your housing?

7 respondents noted they had problems relating to their housing whereas 5 did not experience any problems.

Question 3b - Did you find any available information to address this question or problem?

A further 6 noted that they had found appropriate information to address the problem with only 1 respondent stating that there was not enough information.

The 6 respondents who indicated accessing further information regarding housing problems or issues offered a range of information sources:

3 indicated that the internet was a useful information source with 2 specifically referring to the City Council website. 4 respondents noted that their friends provided them with necessary information and 1 respondents said 'adverts' helped them respond to a housing issue. 1 respondent noted that they attended the City Council housing office where the staff were very helpful and supportive.

Question 4a– Have you ever applied for council housing?

Of the 12 respondents, 11 had applied for council housing.

Question 4b – if yes, how did you find this process?

Of the 11 respondents who had applied for council housing, 4 made the following comments;

- *The application process is good and fast.*
- *My application form was consider fast and that's everything.*
- *Complicated, no rules.*
- *(Need) more information about the housing situation.*

The graphs below show the responses of the participants to the main 40 questions of the questionnaire. However, there were a number of corollary questions included in the questionnaire, many of which only applied to a small number of participants and were often of a qualitative nature. For this reason they have been omitted from the list of main questions and graphs, but have been included in the analysis section.

Question 5 – Have you ever required the council to repair your housing? (if yes, what was the problem and how did you find the experience?)

- *Plumbing, very fast, smooth, with no reservation.*
- *Was broken window in the kitchen I had to wait over one year.*
- *Mould, leakage - from 6 months, after a hard complain it was fixed on last Monday.*

Question 6 – Have you ever required the council to alter your housing (this could be due to a disability)? (If yes how did you find the experience?)

- I had problem with plumbing, but everything was fixed very fast after complaining.

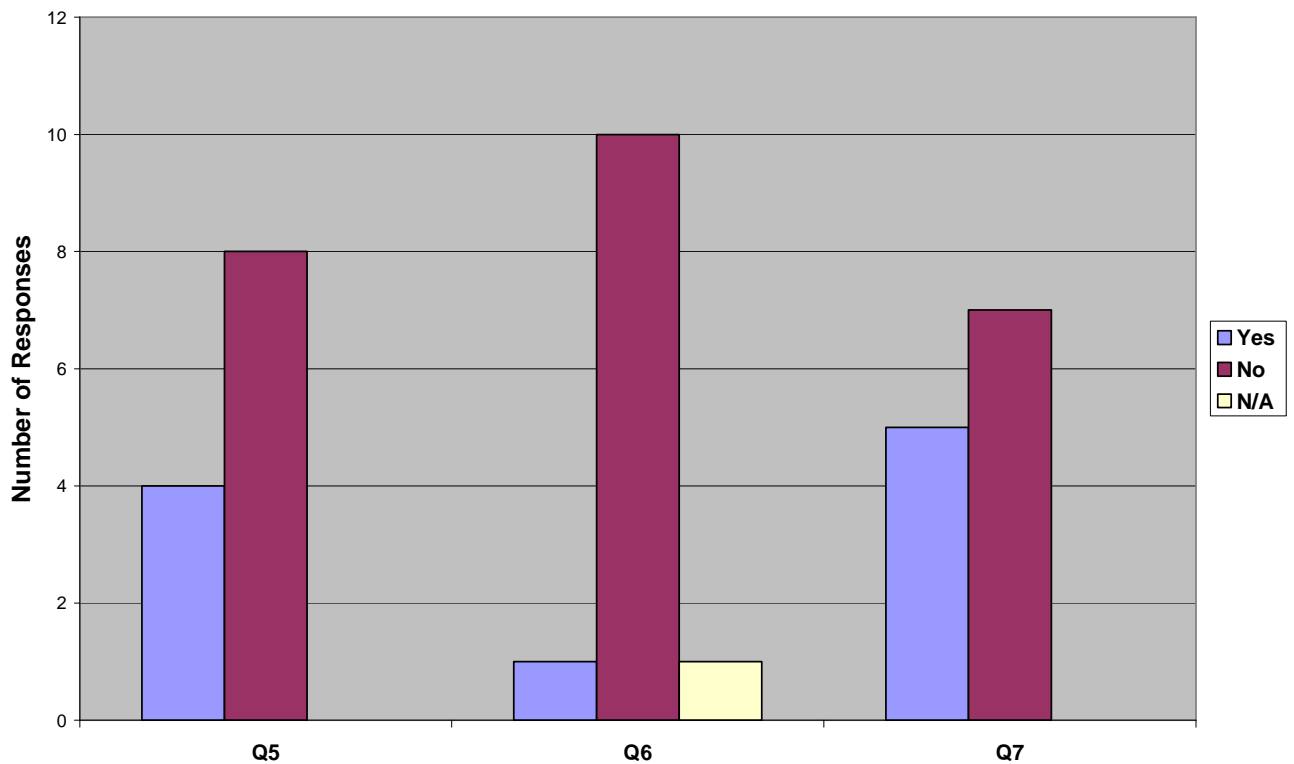
Question 7 – Have you ever been affected by homelessness or overcrowding (e.g. have you spent any time in a hostel, bed and breakfast etc.)?

- I lived sometime in 2 bedroom flat with 10 flatmates, fortunately we got council flat really fast.

- I live in overcrowded flat. I'm waiting for a council flat over one year, I'm alone here with two adolescent children.

- Yes, at the very beginning I had to live with my colleagues in their flat for a first few days.

Chart 20: Showing responses to questions 5 - 7



Section 2 – Social Work

Question 8 – Do you qualify for free or reduced travel from the city council (this can be due to a disability, age etc.)

9 respondents said they did not qualify for free or reduced travel. 2 respondents did not answer.

1 appeared not to understand the question as the response given did not correspond to the question.

Question 9 – Do you have any experience of the social work department in connection to mental health problems?

9 respondents noted they did not have any connection with the social work department due to mental health problems. 1 person did not respond.

2 appeared not to understand the question as their responses given did not correspond to the question.

Question 10 – Do you have any experience of the social work department in connection to domestic violence?

10 respondents indicated that they did not have any experience of the social work department due to domestic violence. 2 respondents did not answer this question.

Question 11 – Do you have any experience of carers and/or home help provided by ACC?

One respondent noted that they had experience of carers and home help provided by ACC stating, “I have experience and got help, it was ok.”

9 respondents noted that they have no experience of this service. 2 did not answer the question.

Section 3 – Education

Question 12 – Do you feel your local council provides enough opportunities for adult learning?

Response	Count
Yes	7
No	2
Unsure	3
Total	12

Question 13 – Do language difficulties or your ethnic background discourage you from engaging in adult learning?

Response	Count
Yes	7
No	5
Total	12

Question 14 – Have you ever required information on adult learning? (If yes, how did you find this information?)

Response	Count
Yes	8
No	4
Total	12

Question 15 – How would you describe your level of qualification before coming to Aberdeen?

- Degree educated, library science, journalist. I also finished pedagogic course.
- Before I arrive in Aberdeen I worked as a sales assistant. My profession is environmental protection engineer than if I don't work with my profession I can't move up. Conclusion is easy - my qualifications are poor.
- I studied public service after finishing college, but after my first year I went abroad then I don't think we can speak about my qualification.
- Good, but with no English.
- I arrived in Aberdeen to finished my degree. In Poland I finished high school and I'm supplementing my education.
- I have High School Diploma. I've studied administration and marketing and never finished, I left it in 3rd year, because I was going abroad.
- I finished accounting at college in Poland.
- Bachelor's Degree.
- Middle, because I left my country after finishing school and here I found out more about my job.

Question 16a– Were you able to transfer skills developed abroad to Aberdeen?

9 respondents said they were not able to transfer their skills developed abroad to Aberdeen.

2 said that they were able to transfer their skills.

1 did not answer this part of the question.

Question 16b – if not, why were you unable to transfer your skills developed abroad to Aberdeen?

The majority of the 9 respondents who were unable to transfer their skills to Aberdeen noted that the difficulty in transferring skills referred to the language barrier and their need to learn English. A range of the comments made were detailed below:

- *With my poor English I even didn't try to find a job in my profession. Course of English could higher my chance for work in my profession.*
- *It's disappoint my dream.*
- *Language barrier" x3.*
- *Very poor English.*

Question 17 – What could be done to make the transfer of skills more successful?

6 respondents answered this question. The most popular answer concerned the provision of English classes:

- *I'll have to make an effort and move up my qualifications.*
- *English courses" x 3.*
- *change a job.*
- *I have to learn English and find a job.*

Question 18 a – If you are employed, do you feel that your job is well suited to your level of skills? If not, would you wish to work in a job better suited to your skills?

All 12 respondents did not answer either of the above questions.

Question 18 b - Do you think that ACC encourages young people to continue learning and achieving out with school?

4 respondents said that they felt ACC encourages young people to continue learning and achieving outwith school. 6 said they did not know and 2 did not answer this question.

Section 4 – Transport

Question 19 – How would you judge the transport system in Aberdeen compared to other places where you have lived?

- *Often late.*
- *Very good; polite personnel make I want to use it.*
- *Very good transport system. In fact, before some changes in the First was faster and better.*
- *Traffic jams, irregular bus service.*
- *Quite good, but at weekends you can feel slow service.*
- *Very good.*
- *Good.*
- *In my opinion, a big minus is a shortage service to suburbia . If you want to go there you have to go through city centre, because no links and instead of 15 minutes trip takes 40 min.*
- *Very good.*
- *OK.*
- *It's very good.*
- *Good.*

Question 20 – Do you think that the transport system in Aberdeen makes the area an attractive place to live, work, visit and do business?

- *I think transport system doesn't attract city, but gives some +(positivity).*
- *Shortage night buses make difficult get nightshifts.*
- *Yes; but it doesn't mean that Aberdeen is my last choice.*

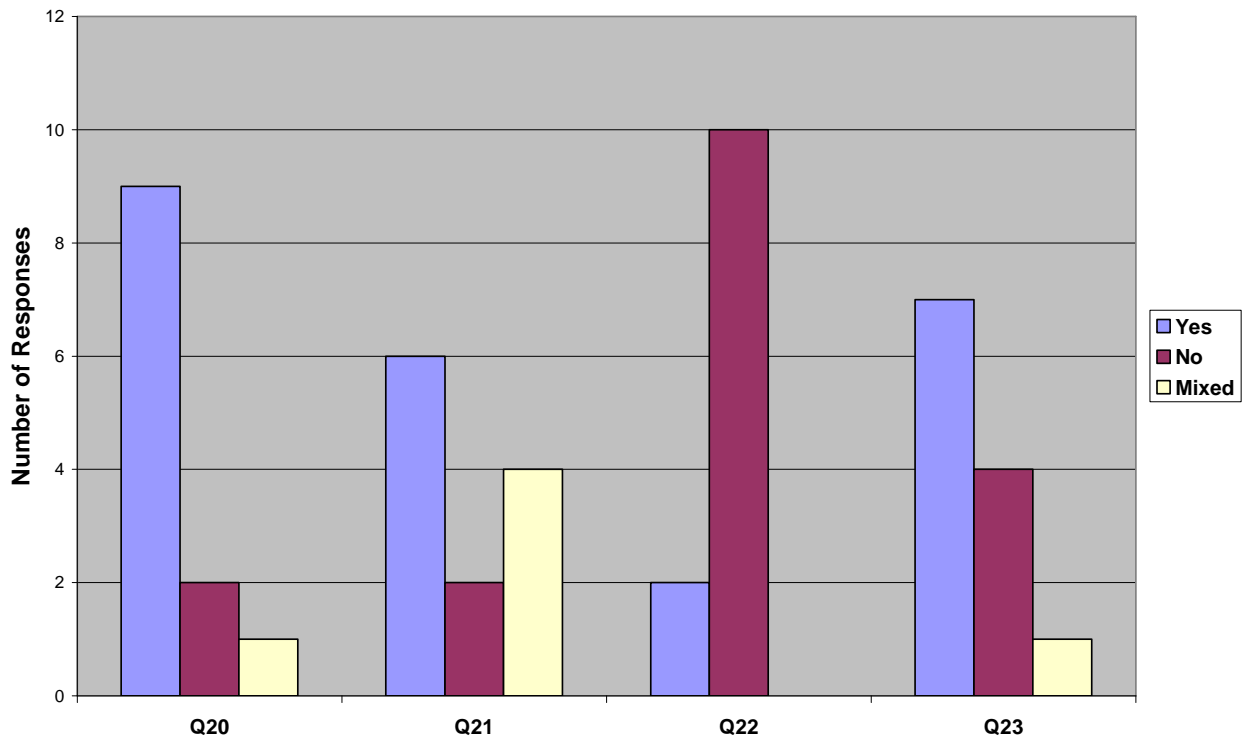
Question 21 – Do you feel that Aberdeen has good air, rail and sea links with the rest of the UK?

- *Yes, but not long time ago British Airways suspended flights to London.*
- *I think, yes. However we, Polish, are waiting for flights to our country.*
- *I don't know, because no straight flights where I live.*
- *No, no straight flights to Poland, that's a big difficulty.*

Question 22 – Are you aware of the proposal to build a new road around the city, called the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route?

Question 23 – Do you feel encouraged to use public transport?

Chart 21: Showing responses to questions 20 - 23



Question 24 – What would encourage you to use public transport more often (e.g. faster services, more reliability)?

- *I'm satisfied of public transport and I don't have any complains about time table or slow service.*
- *Faster service and on time, certainly.*
- *Price, on time.*
- *I'm sure, to go to work.*
- *Cheaper tickets.*
- *Faster service, on time.*
- *Faster service, ticket price.*
- *Nothing to complain.*
- *Faster service.*
- *Punctual service, more often service.*

Question 25 – Have you encountered any problems using buses or taxis in Aberdeen?

- *Yes, once we'd like to get a taxi at night, but nobody didn't tell us that the taxi don't come. It came, but the next day.*

Question 26 – Have you ever experienced any problems with staff of transport providers because of language difficulties or your ethnic background?

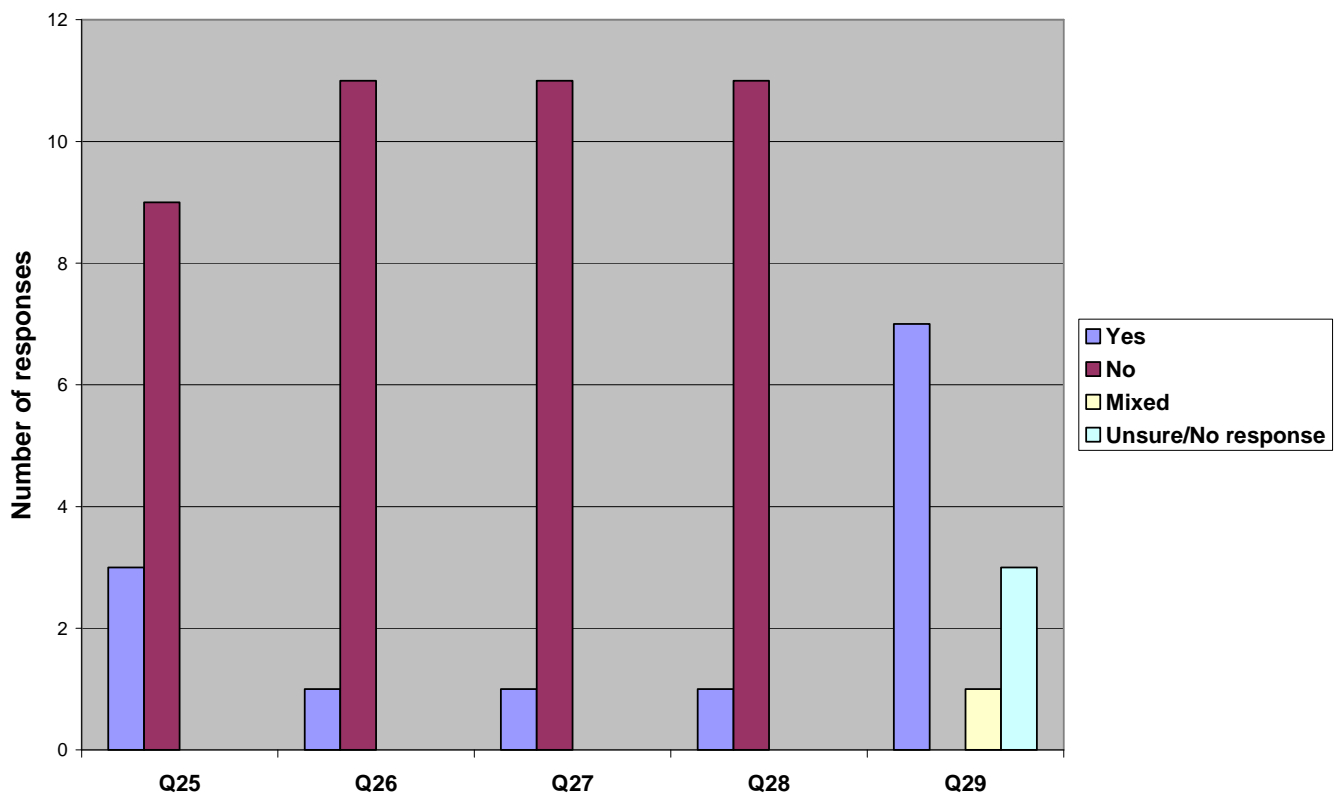
- No; in general I don't speak much.

Question 27 – Have you ever experienced any problems with other users of public transport because of language difficulties or your ethnic background?

Question 28 – Do you feel that material provided by transport providers is accessible and easy to understand (this includes promotional material, timetables and bus stops)?

Question 29 – Do you feel that providers of public transport in Aberdeen promote equality?

Chart 22: Showing responses to questions 25 - 29



Question 30 – Are you aware of information about reducing carbon emissions from transport and promoting walking, cycling and use of public transport?

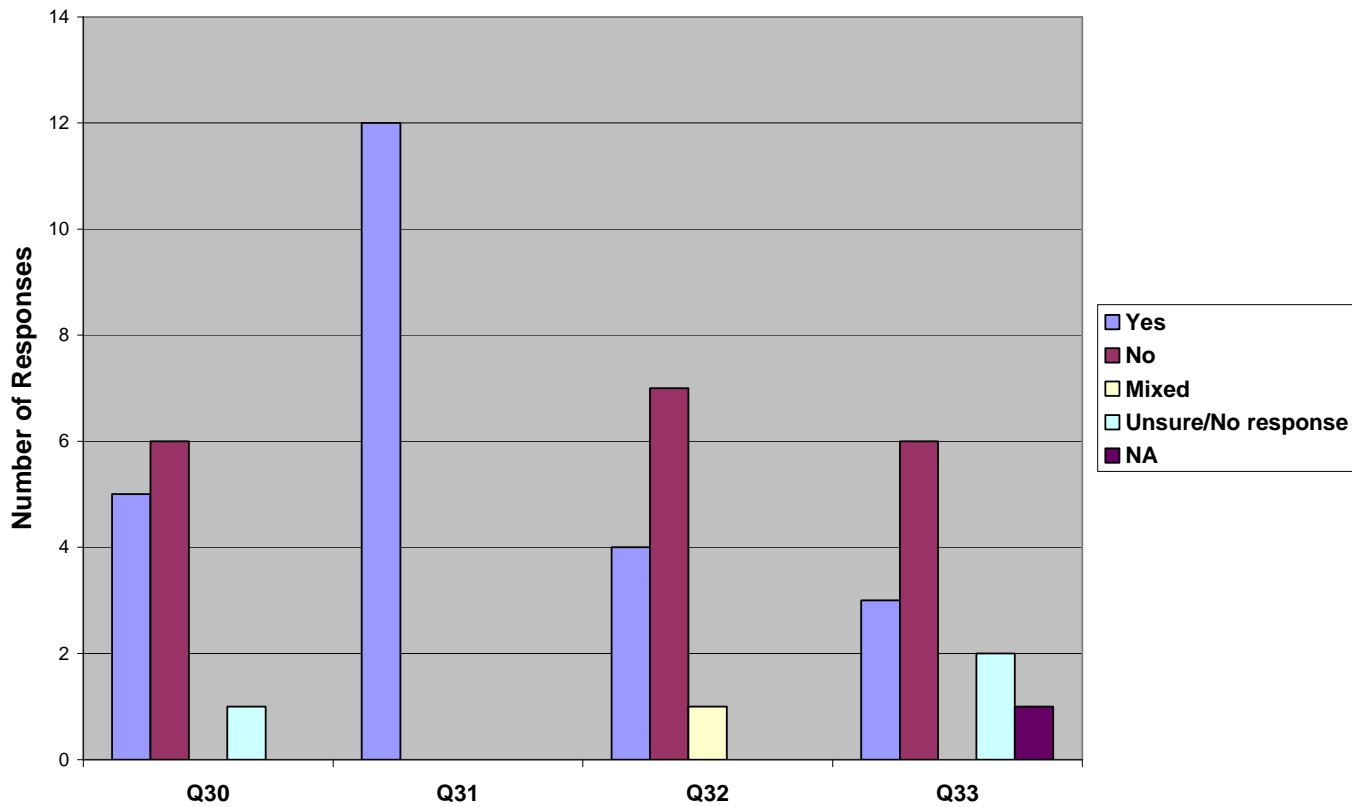
Question 31 – Do you find this information easy to understand?

Question 32 – Have these initiatives encouraged you to change your travel behaviour?

- I'll change it, if I get enough information about it.
- I very often travel with public transport.
- If you think about trips to big cities - yes, to small towns - not, because public transport is not good enough.
- No, but I often walk.
- I use the public transport, that yes.

Question 33 – Do you think pavements and footpaths are of an acceptable standard?

Chart 23: Showing responses to questions 30 - 33



Section 5 – Recreation and Leisure

Question 34 – Do you feel that there is enough green space in your local area (i.e. parks, play areas, woodlands)?

- *Yes; there's a lot of green spaces.*
- *A lot of green spaces in place where I live, a park with a beautiful children's playground, golf course. Nice area.*
- *Yes, however never too much green spaces.*

Question 35 – Do you think there are sufficient sports facilities in your local area?

- *No, I've heard about a closing swimming pool near my flat.*

Question 36 – Do you feel that museums and galleries, provided by ACC, are of interest?

- *I've never been to museums and galleries, because I don't have much free time.*
- *Yes, especially maritime museum.*

Question 37 – Do you feel that arts venues offer an adequate service (i.e. His Majesty's Theatre, Music Hall, etc.)?

- *I think should be more concerts for youth.*
- *Yes, especially Music Hall.*

Question 38 – Do you feel that the central and local libraries provide an adequate service?

- *Yes, however should be more books written in other languages for ex. Polish.*
- *In my opinion central library has invaluable services.*

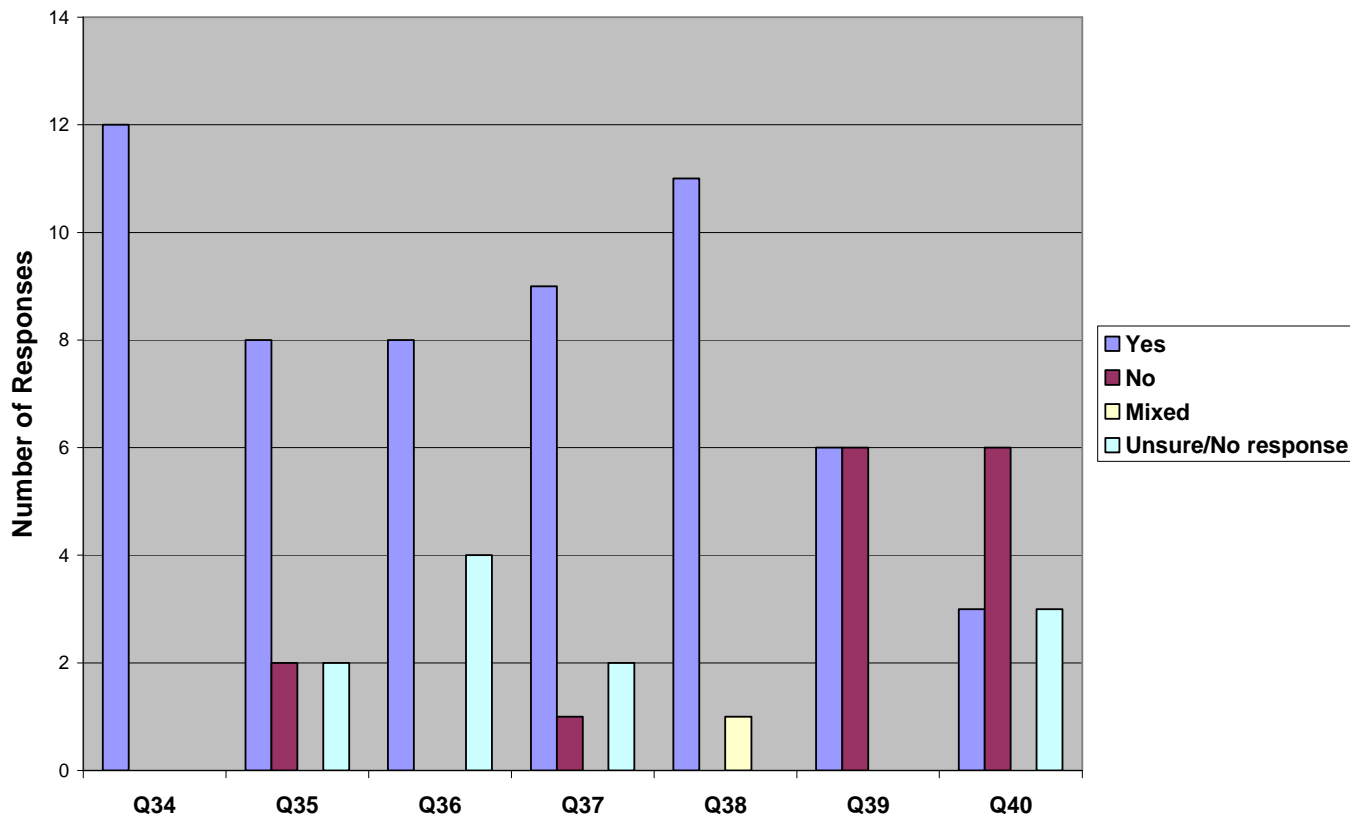
Question 39 – Have you attended a council event or festival (i.e. Hogmanay celebrations, Aberdeen Highland Games, International Youth Festival, international street markets etc.)?

- *No, too small amount of events.*
- *Yes; I was for Hogmanay, but I was surprised in small amount of fireworks.*
- *Last hogmanay; was fine, excluding fact - no fireworks (looked as no hogmanay there). In Poland it's unacceptable.*
- *Hogmanay was fine but short.*

Question 40 – Do you think there are enough festivals and events in your local area?

- *Could be more, not only at Christmas and Easter.*

Chart 24: Showing responses to questions 34 - 40



How did you find this consultation process?

- Questions are very general and I can't give a full answer.
- It's easy way to check the meaning of society with different backgrounds, mentality.
- OK.
- Alright.
- Good.
- I'm glad that the form is in Polish.
- I think it's a very good idea.
- It's a very good questionnaire, but some of the questions are bad formulated, are not clear and not understandable, that affect my answers.
- It's OK.
- It's very good.
- Deficiencies.

6. Discussion

While the questionnaires used with each of the three groups were not identical, they very largely covered the same ground across the five areas of housing, social work, education, transport and recreation & leisure: sufficiently so as to make it possible here to draw together any findings which reveal both the broad patterns and similarities and the differences in the experiences and views of the three groups.

This discussion will deal in turn with the five areas covered by the questionnaires and focus groups.

It should be noted that, while the prime aim of the study was to focus on council services, some sections of the questionnaire, and most notably the one covering transport, include services that are not provided by the city council.

Verbatim observations provided by respondents have been produced earlier in this report, and while some of them will be referred to indirectly in this discussion, they will not be reproduced again word for word.

Housing

All three groups were predominantly positive about the housing options available in the city, and most respondents did not register any problems in relation to barriers to housing, though a few in both the Skilled Hindu Group and the Polish Women Group had not had a perfectly smooth experience.

A clear difference between groups does emerge on the question of access to council housing.

For both the Older Muslim Group and the Polish Women Group, a clear majority of respondents – 11 out of 12 in the latter case – had applied for council housing. Few of those who had applied were critical of the application process, and several Polish women commented favourably on the ease and speed of the system.

In the Skilled Hindu Group only 2 out of 18 had applied for council housing. One might surmise that this could reflect a preference in this group for private renting and owner occupation, though the frequent comments about the high cost of housing in Aberdeen would tend not to support this idea strongly. One respondent even said that the only way of affording privately rented accommodation was by sharing occupation with others.

What is more intriguing about this group's low level of application for council housing are several statements made by respondents which indicate a clear perspective that people from the Commonwealth, in this case India, and also

people with work visas, are specifically debarred from access to public housing. One individual also said that Housing Associations seemed to interpret any such debarring rules more liberally and sympathetically than the local authority.

Few respondents had called on council services for repairs or alterations, and for the few who had the outcomes had been largely satisfactory.

Only one respondent reported any suspicion of discrimination on racial grounds operating in relation to access to housing, and this particular case referred to a solicitor operating in the private housing sector.

A majority of all three groups reported not having been affected by homelessness or overcrowding in Aberdeen, though within the Polish Women's Group a few had temporarily lived in overcrowded conditions before finding better accommodation. Two respondents recorded a past problem with homelessness, and in both cases this had occurred in other cities.

Comments about the availability of information on housing varied between the three groups. The Polish Women seemed most satisfied on this count and itemised a variety of sources of information that they had used. Most of the Skilled Hindu Group thought that information on housing was deficient, while most of the Older Muslim Group seemed unsure about the issue.

Social Work

The overall impression across all three groups is that individuals have had very limited contact with the social work services covered by the questionnaire – namely community transport, mental health services, domestic violence, carers, home helps, hospice care, residential accommodation, the community alarm system and garden maintenance. The one exception to this was that all of the Older Muslim Group made use of free or reduced travel provided by the city council, which is almost certainly a reflection of their age and eligibility for bus passes.

The few respondents who had had contact with social work did make specific comments that were very positive about their experience. The single exception to this was a suggestion from within the Skilled Hindu Group that social work has little specialist information specifically relating to that particular ethnic group.

Education

The results from this section produced a somewhat different picture for each of the three groups.

For the Polish Women there was a perception that sufficient opportunities for adult learning existed, but problems with English and the need for English classes were mentioned several times.

The Polish Women revealed a mixed range of previous qualifications, including some at degree level, and a similar mixed range of responses regarding the success or otherwise of transferring their skills after arriving in Aberdeen. Most felt they had not been particularly successful at transferring their skills and gave the barrier of language as the chief reason for this.

The most common response from within the Older Muslim Group to the question of adult learning opportunities was either non-committal or 'don't know'. Overall in this group there was little evidence of any real involvement or interest in educational provision, which may possibly be a reflection of the age of the respondents.

The level of qualifications in this group ranged from 'labourer' to 'degree level', and a majority felt they had not been successful in transferring skills. Several were unemployed, but it is unclear as to whether this reflects their age or other factors.

The most significant aspect of the Skilled Hindu Group is that they are predominantly highly qualified, most at degree level in science and technology subjects, but also including a chartered accountant and a bachelor of commerce and a bachelor of arts. As a group they felt opportunities for adult education were adequate, but did not indicate any particular interest in participating. This may be due to the high level of qualification with which they arrived in Aberdeen. They did not see any general problem with a language barrier, though one from this group indicated that the local Aberdeen accent could present incomers with some problems.

The majority of the group felt they had successfully transferred their skills in Aberdeen, though a few felt this had only partially been achieved.

It seems probable that most in this group are in Aberdeen to work in the oil related sector, and sought little involvement in local adult education provisions.

Transport

Not surprisingly, a full range of perspectives of the quality of Aberdeen's transport system emerged across the three groups. Positive and negative comments were made, but overall a good deal more satisfaction than dissatisfaction was expressed, and no significant problem was widely highlighted.

A majority of all three groups thought that the transport system makes Aberdeen an attractive place to live and work, and a similarly positive response emerged from all groups in relation to the city's transport links with the rest of the UK.

Very few individuals registered problematic experiences using buses and taxis, and presented an equally problem free picture with regard to their perception of transport staff and other transport users.

All three groups were positive about the promotion of equality by transport providers.

When asked how public transport could be improved, several respondents suggested cheaper fares and a greater frequency and reliability of services. It would have been surprising not to find such a wish list emerging, and the comments did not really amount to a groundswell of criticism of existing services.

Few individuals amongst the Polish Women and Skilled Hindus were aware of the western peripheral route proposal, but most of the Older Muslims knew about this development. A majority of all three groups were aware of information about reducing carbon emissions.

Nearly all the Skilled Hindus and Older Muslims were happy with the standard of Aberdeen's pavements and footpaths, but a majority of the Polish women were critical on this issue.

The Skilled Hindu and Older Muslim groups found information provided about transport services satisfactory, but most of the Polish Women expressed the opposite view. One might surmise that this could reflect a language barrier issue again.

Recreation and Leisure

All three groups were clearly satisfied with service provision in this section. Green space, sports facilities, museums, galleries, arts venues and the library service all received clear majority approval.

A higher proportion of the Skilled Hindu Group had attended a council event or festival than in the other two groups, and most of this group thought there were sufficient such festivals and events.

A majority of the Older Muslim Group had not attended a council event or festival, but felt there were enough provided.

Half of the Polish Women had, and half had not, attended a council event or festival, and most of the group indicated they would like more provision.

7. Key Findings

- No really clear patterns emerge from the perspectives and views expressed by the three groups which suggest changes are needed to service provision.
- Some individual critical comments on specific issues were recorded. For example, a small number of problems were reported relating to access to housing, and the cost of housing in the private sector was of concern to a minority of respondents. With regards to education, a perceived need for English classes was noted by some Polish Women. A cheaper and more frequent bus service would be welcomed by many. In no instance, however, was there a sufficient frequency of comment to constitute a general pattern of dissatisfaction.
- Overall, a generally positive rather than negative perception emerges in all five areas covered by the questionnaires and focus groups. This is a particularly strong feature of the responses in the section on recreation and leisure.
- Finally, the process of consultation through this exercise was widely welcomed through all three groups, with numerous individuals saying they had found the experience satisfying and valuable.

8. Conclusion

No broad patterns of dissatisfaction were revealed about the five service areas covered by this study, though a scatter-shot of critical comments do emerge. Overall, the respondents in all three groups produced a predominantly positive, rather than negative, set of views and perspectives of the issues they were asked about.

9. References

“Migrant Workers in Aberdeen City and Shire”. Aberdeen City Council Briefing Paper 2008/05