

Equal Marriage

Report of the EQUALITYNETWORK Survey of LGBT People's Views on Marriage Equality

January 2011



Acknowledgements

The Equality Network would like to thank all the respondents who completed this survey, especially those who took the time and effort to explain their wide variety of views. We are particularly grateful to the many LGBT people who explained their beliefs and experiences so eloquently. Because you have provided such a large volume of writing of a very high standard, we have included a wider selection of quotes in an appendix so that all campaigns for equal marriage can draw on the wealth and diversity of your opinions.

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Introduction

Civil Partnership provides almost identical legal rights to marriage: a “separate but equal” institution for same-sex couples.

During the thirteen years the Equality Network has existed, the legal situation of LGBT people in Scotland has changed hugely, with the repeal of Section 28, the equalisation of the age of consent, new anti-discrimination protections in employment and service provision, gender recognition, civil partnerships, and new equality rights to fertility treatment and adoption services. Most recently, the Equality Network’s projects have worked to help Scotland achieve LGBT equality in hate crime law and sexual offences law.

All the Equality Network’s activities are based on extensive consultation with LGBT people across Scotland. In 2008, we asked what people thought of the new laws for LGBT equality. Were any further changes needed? A majority said yes, in two areas of the law: gender recognition and civil partnership. People wanted an end to the rule that forces transgender people to divorce before they can get gender recognition. Many people replying to our 2008 survey also wanted an end to the rule that marriage is only for mixed-sex couples, and civil partnership is only for same-sex couples.

So at the end of 2009 / start of 2010 we conducted a more detailed survey of LGBT people’s views on marriage equality. How big a problem do people think this is? This report details the findings of our survey, which has been one of our most popular surveys to date, with 427 LGBT people responding.

Methodology

The survey was available both online and in paper format. Access to the online survey was provided via the Equality Network's website for a total of 6 months (October 2009 to March 2010). The survey was advertised by email and printed newsletters to the Equality Network's community network list of 750 individual LGBT people and 500 LGBT organisations and also across other LGBT community information networks specifically, although not exclusively, within Scotland.

Using this recruitment strategy means that response rates cannot be calculated as there is no way to know exactly how many people heard about the survey.

Demographics of Survey Respondents

A total of 427 LGBT people responded to the survey. An additional 100 non-LGBT people also answered the survey, but their responses have not been included in this report, which focuses on reporting the views of LGBT people specifically.

Of the 427 LGBT respondents, 48% were men (including trans men) and 47% women (including trans women). 3% stated that they had another, non-binary, gender identity, and 4% preferred not to answer the question about gender.

14% of respondents stated that they had at some time identified as transgender.

44% of respondents defined as gay men, and 34% as lesbians or gay women. 3% identified as straight / heterosexual, and 13% as bisexual, with 6% identifying their sexual orientation using other terms (for example, as queer).

24% of respondents were in a civil partnership (11% men; 12% women). 7% of respondents were married – half of those respondents had identified as transgender, and just over half identified their sexual orientation as bisexual or using terms other than lesbian, gay or heterosexual.

The age profile of respondents shows that 50% were aged 25 to 44, while 11% were younger people aged 16 to 24, and 26% were aged 45 to 54, 10% were aged 55 to 64 and 4% were aged 65+.

60% of respondents stated they had no religion or were atheist or Humanist. 31% of respondents stated they were Christian, and the remaining 6% were from other religious groups.

In the open text responses, a wide variety of views were expressed on religion and marriage as a religious institution. To some respondents, religion or being included in religious rites or institutions were not major considerations. But for LGBT people who are religious, being excluded from religious rites and institutions can cause much pain and confusion. Some comments below express some of these feelings. These comments should not be misread as anti-religious. They are made by people who are religious and wish to be fully included in their religious communities and are not intended to cause offence.

No respondents, either religious or not religious, expressed any view that any religious organisations should be forced to officiate same-sex marriage ceremonies. Many respondents, both religious and not religious, noted that religious leaders and organisations should have the right to choose whether

they would like to officiate same-sex marriages or not. (Some noted that they had received blessings from their religious leaders.)

In most questions, there were notable differences in trends between answers provided by respondents depending on their gender, transgender status, age, religion and relationship status. Therefore, the analysis is structured around these characteristics. Where there are noticeable differences in opinions, graphs indicating these are included in the body of the report. Where there was little or no difference, graphs of these results are included in the appendices.

In terms of geographical location of respondents around Scotland, 25% had EH postcodes, and 20% had G postcodes. All other respondents (65%) indicated residence in other Scottish postcode areas.

There is independent evidence of substantial migration of LGBT people to Edinburgh and Glasgow; for example 28% and 27% respectively of civil partnership ceremonies take place in Lothians and in Greater Glasgow, compared to 4% in each of Tayside, and Ayrshire and Arran¹. Against that background, the geographical distribution of survey respondents is not as skewed as it may first appear.

There were no significant differences between the answers provided by people living in EH and G postcodes, compared to those living outside these areas. But because 65% of respondents live outside these areas, and migration of LGBT people to the larger cities is a key factor for LGBT life in Scotland, graphs illustrating answers by geographic location are included in the appendices.

15% of respondents indicated that they are disabled and/or have a long term illness.

70% of respondents stated that they were White Scottish or White British ethnicity, with an additional 17% defining as White English, Welsh or Irish. 8% were of other white background. A total of 4.5% identified as Asian (including Asian Scottish and Asian British), Black (including Black Scottish and Black British), Chinese (including Chinese Scottish and Chinese British), mixed race and of other ethnicities.

There were no significant differences between answers provided by disabled and non-disabled people or by people from different ethnic backgrounds. Differences in thoughts and beliefs about equal marriage tended to be much closer linked to respondents' ages and whether they were religious or not. Therefore the analysis does not focus on disability or ethnicity. However, the

¹ <http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/statistics/theme/vital-events/general/bmd-quarterly/index.html>

Equality Network can provide the data broken down by these characteristics if requested.

A full breakdown including graphs of the demographics of all LGBT respondents is in the appendices.

Views on Options for Change

Question 1: Marriage, civil partnership, or both?

At the moment, marriage is only available to mixed-sex (female/male) couples, and civil partnership is only available to same-sex (female/female or male/male) couples. Marriage and civil partnership have almost identical legal effects. But they have different names, and are legally a different status. Another difference is that marriage can be legally registered either in a civil ceremony done by a registrar, or in a ceremony done by a religious or humanist leader. Civil partnership can only be registered in a civil ceremony done by a registrar.

1. Thinking about this, which of the following do you most agree with (please tick one box):

- the current system is fine
- the current system would be fine if a civil partnership could be registered in a ceremony done by a religious or humanist leader
- marriage should be available to all couples (same-sex and mixed-sex), and civil partnership will not then be needed at all
- marriage and civil partnership should both be available for all couples (same-sex and mixed-sex) to choose between

Could you please say why you think that?

The options in the question above were those that the Equality Network had previously discussed with LGBT people in consultations. These options also reflect the different options available in other countries. At the time of writing, both marriage and the equivalent of civil partnership are available to all couples in the Netherlands and South Africa, for example. In some other countries, such as Norway and Sweden, their equivalent of civil partnership was abolished when equal marriage was introduced.

It should be noted that this survey began before the proposals were announced in England and Wales to allow civil partnership ceremonies to take place on religious premises. Nevertheless, the option was first mooted in Scotland in 2004, and so we included it in the question. The Equality Act 2010 now contains a section (section 202 – not yet in force at the time of writing) which will allow civil partnership ceremonies in England and Wales to be conducted on religious premises.

Main Results

The vast majority of self-identifying LGBT survey respondents think that there should be change to the current system, with only 6% saying that they think that “the current system is fine”. Of the three suggested options for change, the majority (53%) prefer both marriage and civil partnership being open to all, as seen in Graph 1.

Analysis of respondent characteristics

At least 50% of respondents in all age groups prefer the option of marriage and civil partnership to be open to all, but a larger proportion (60%) of respondents under the age of 25 prefer this option, and no respondents under the age of 25 indicated satisfaction with the current system, as seen in Graph 2.

Equal marriage was seen as more important by more of the women who responded to the survey than the men. As seen in Graph 3, only 3% of women said that the current system is fine and 60% called for both marriage and civil partnership be open to all.

An even higher proportion (64%) of transgender respondents believe that both civil partnership and marriage should be open to all, and only 2% said that having a religious element to civil partnership ceremonies would be their preferred option, as seen in Graph 4. The transgender respondents were more likely than other respondents to believe that both civil partnerships and marriage should be open to all, rather than believing that civil partnerships would no longer be needed if marriage were open to all. This is not surprising, because making both civil partnership and marriage open to all in a gender-neutral manner is the option which would most easily enable the removal of the requirement to divorce or dissolve an existing marriage or civil partnership in order to obtain a gender recognition certificate (GRC). Simply adding a religious element to a civil partnership ceremony would not improve the current requirement to divorce or dissolve an existing marriage or civil partnership. In addition, the current requirements for receiving gender recognition may have led many transgender people to feel particularly strongly about the importance of people being able to select the terminology of marriage or civil partnership which they view as most reflective of their relationship, rather than having terms imposed upon them by others. Transgender people can face intense emotional distress and practical difficulties through being forced to change their relationship status to get gender recognition. The survey results suggest that many of them want to ensure that similar difficulties are not be created in the future for any same-sex couples currently in a civil partnership, who might not wish to change to marriage upon one partner getting gender recognition.

A lower percentage of religious respondents (47%) prefer the option of making both marriage and civil partnership open to all but this option was still the most popular of the four options. The option of marriage being open to all and civil partnerships no longer being used was rather less popular, with 30% of respondents preferring it, as shown in Graph 5.

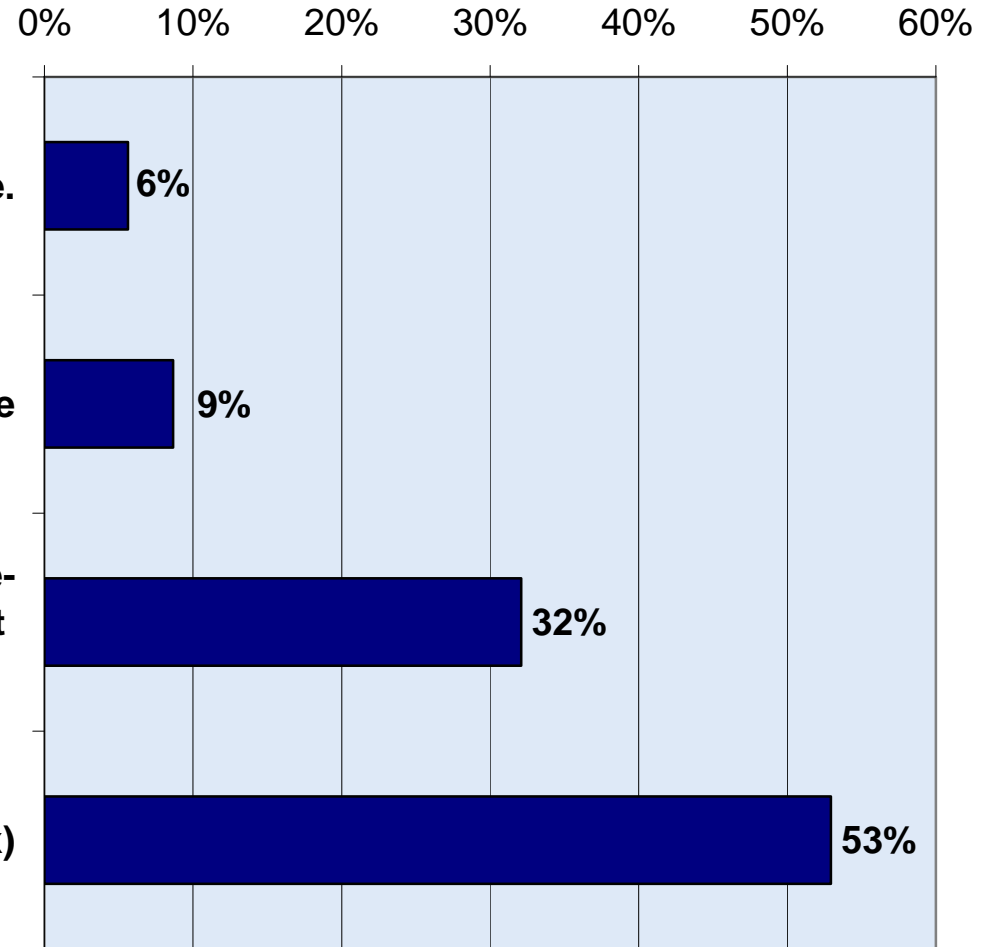
The option of both marriage and civil partnership being open to all is also preferred by a majority, regardless of their relationship status, with between 50% and 54% of respondents preferring this option across all relationship statuses, as seen in Graph 6.

In all cases the option of marriage being opened to all and civil partnerships therefore no longer needed is preferred by about 30% of respondents.

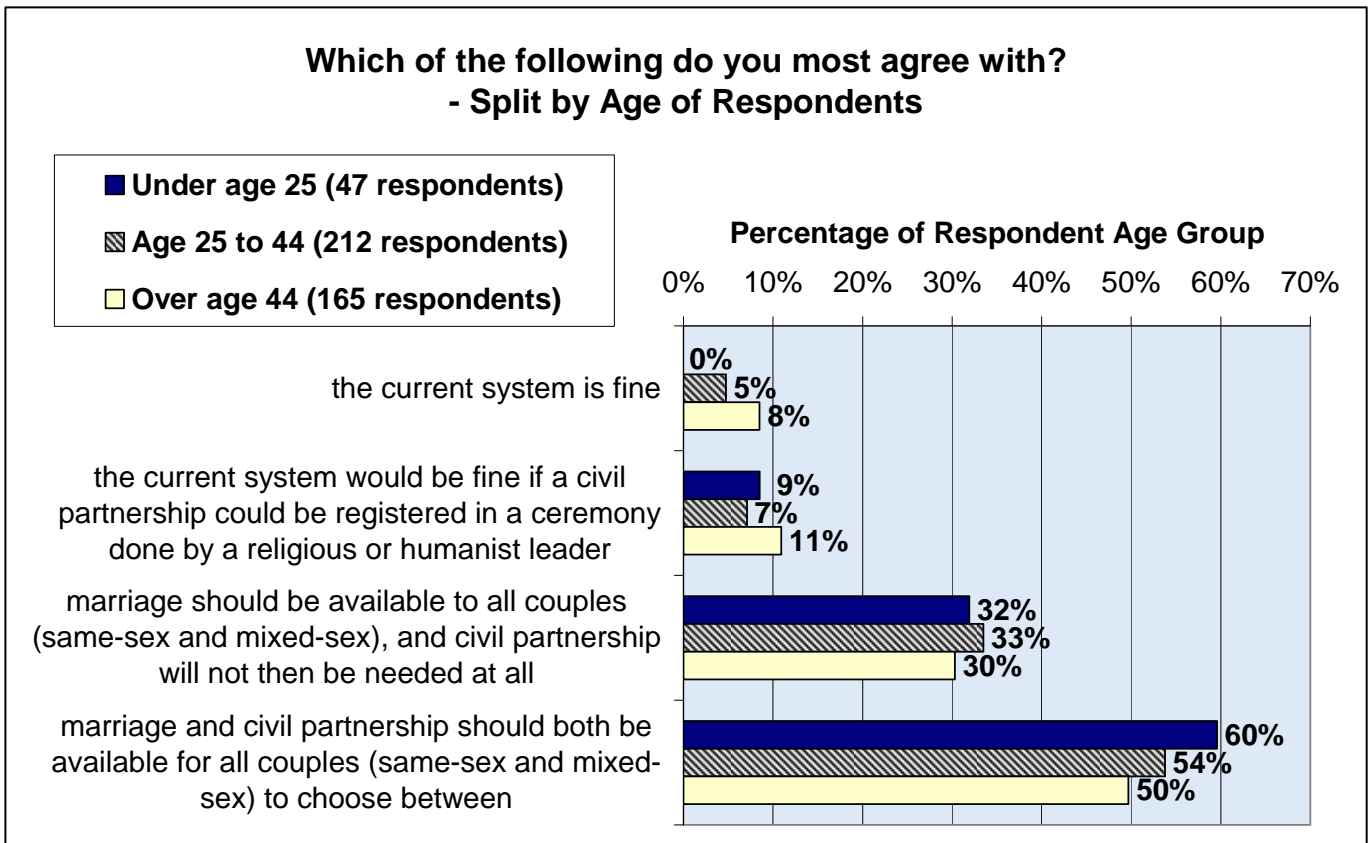
GRAPH 1: Views on Options for Change - All LGBT Respondents

Which of the following do you most agree with? - All LGBT Respondents

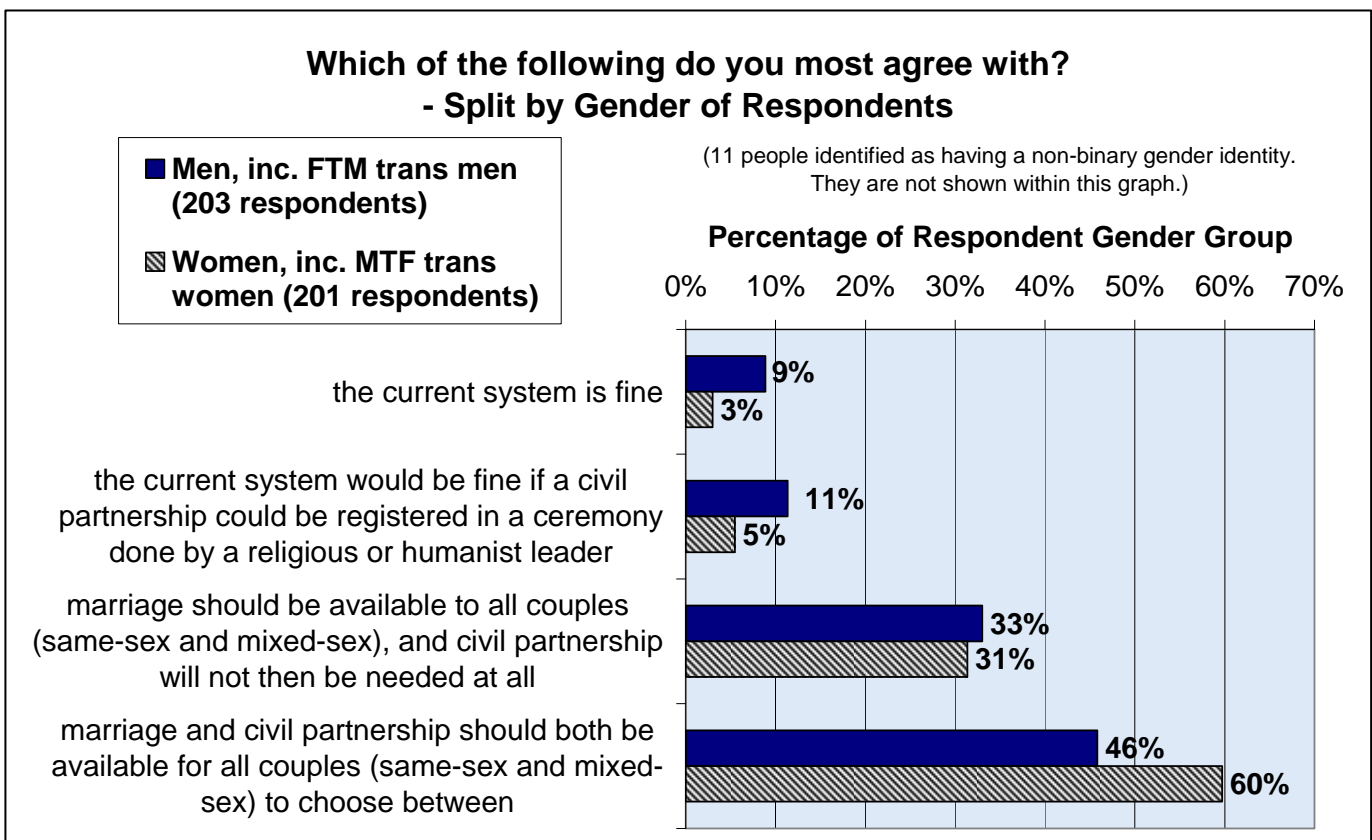
Percentage of All LGBT Respondents



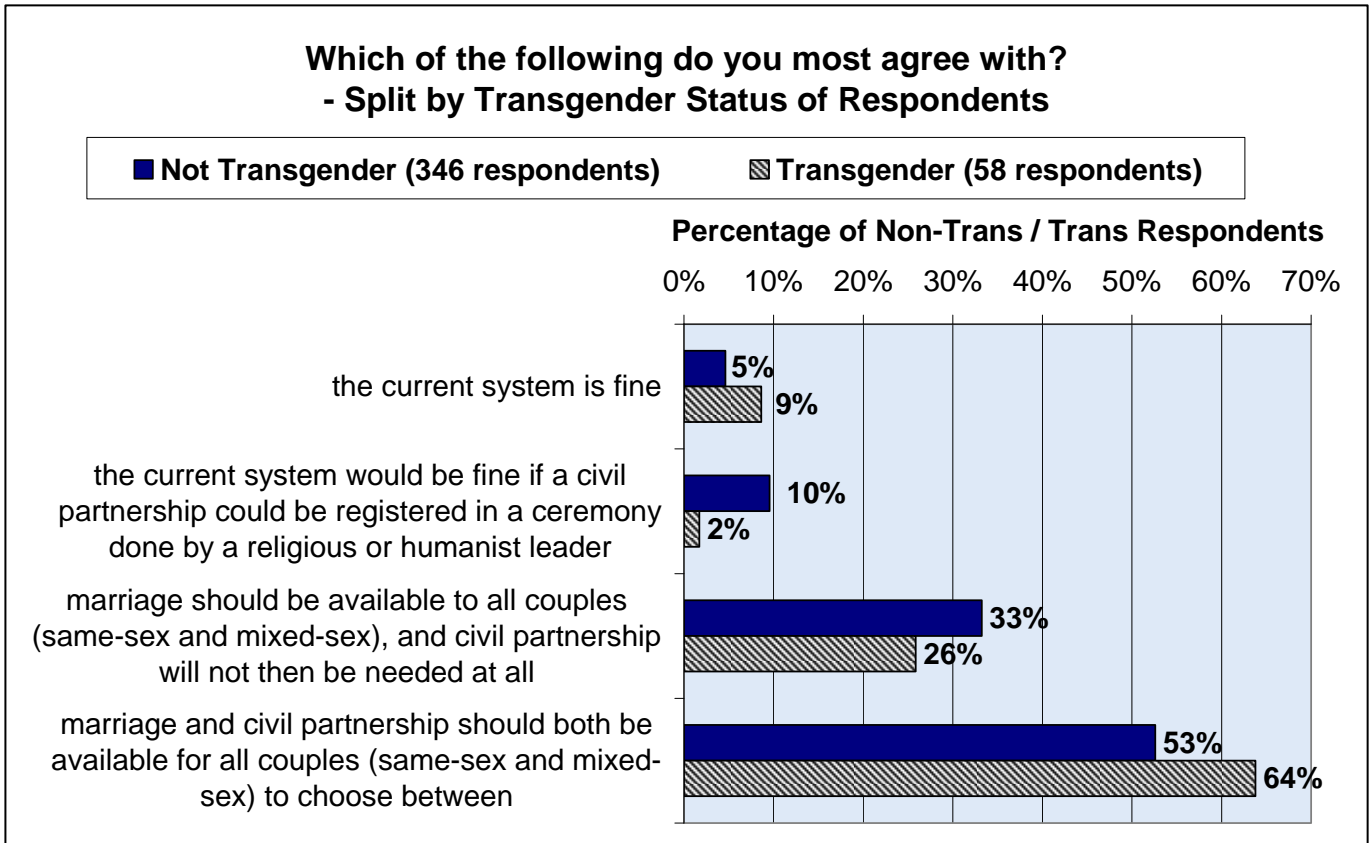
GRAPH 2: Views on Options for Change - Split by Age



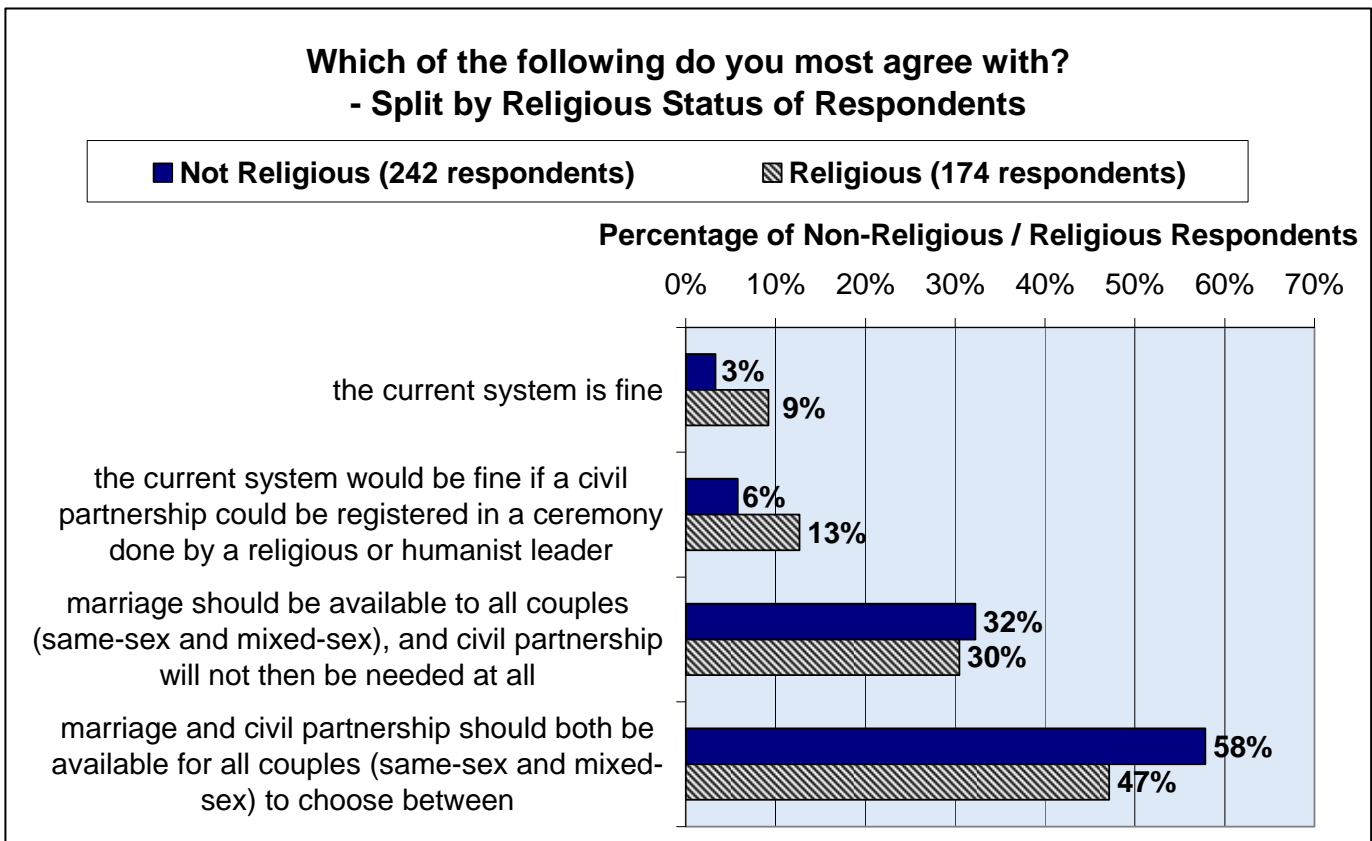
GRAPH 3: Views on Options for Change - Split by Gender



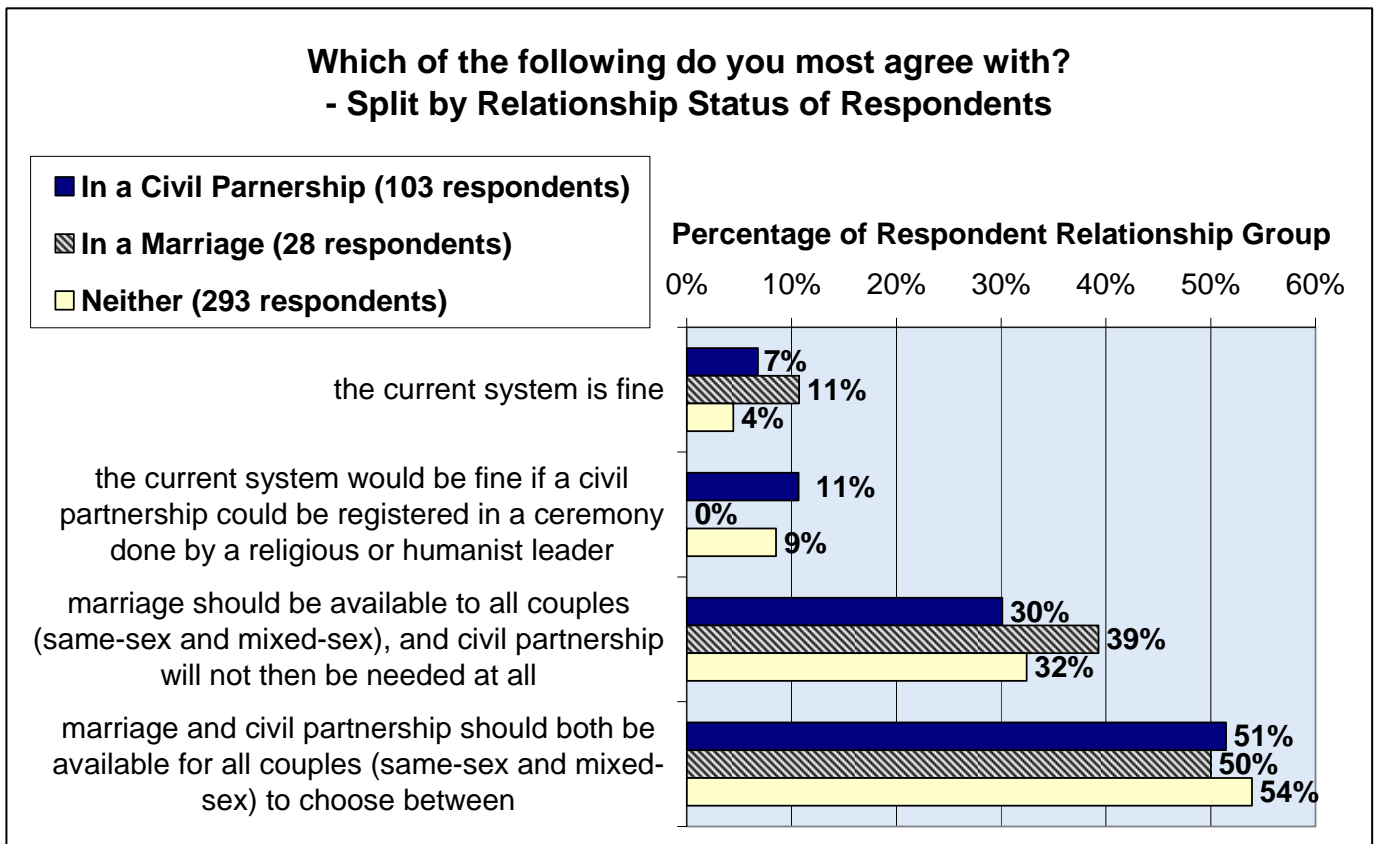
GRAPH 4: Views on Options for Change - Split by Transgender Status



GRAPH 5: Views on Options for Change - Split by Religious Status



GRAPH 6: Views on Options for Change - Split by Relationship Status



Illustrative Quotes

The current system is fine:

“While problems with harassment remain prevalent, why be concerned about gay marriage? If marriage and civil partnership have almost identical legal effects, there isn't a problem.”

The current system would be fine if a civil partnership could be registered in a ceremony done by a religious or humanist leader:

“many L&G people have a faith and feel excluded from the church as they are unable to make their vows in front of God. I was very lucky to have a priest bless my civil partnership”

“Recently had my CP... have not noticed any 'legal' or other difference. In fact, most people refer to us as being married, simply because CP is cumbersome to say! I refer to my Civil Partner as my wife, and no one bats an eyelid.”

Marriage should be available to all couples (same-sex and mixed-sex), and civil partnership will not then be needed at all:

“I think a single relationship for all will lessen the chances of future discrimination and do most to change the culture. It sends out a message that all relationships are equal. Religious blessings can then be at the option of the individual and their own religion. The existence of different forms of relationship has created a hierarchy in the minds of those who care to discriminate and those religiously opposed to gay marriage often do not accept civil partnership in any case (witness the Ladele case) so the government's attempt to separate the two relationships is not effective and many of the public see CPs as marriage despite the differences. Lastly, and NOT LEAST, the difference between marriage and CPs has created the heinous marriage bar in the Gender Recognition Act, where happily married couples are obliged to opt for a state-sponsored annulment of their marriage in order for the transsexual spouse to obtain gender recognition, a hateful and impossible choice as I know from my own situation.”

“...Such a change would place Scotland in the elite grouping of highly advanced liberal states including Norway, Sweden, The Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, Canada and South Africa which have true equality in this regard and would raise the profile of Scottish equality in general.”

“...Heterosexuals aren't required any duty to be entitled to have the right to marry, that is specific to heterosexuality. They don't have the obligation to have common biological children, for instance.”

Marriage and civil partnership should both be available for all couples (same-sex and mixed-sex) to choose between:

“... [A] recent poll showed that 62 percent of the British public support gay marriage...”

“The separation of marriage for mixed-sex couples and civil partnership for same-sex couples institutionalises a distinction that is fair to neither and identifies civil partners publicly as 'different'. Many mixed-sex couples would like a civil partnership without the traditional connotations of marriage. If mixed-sexed couples could become civil partners, civil partnership would not be publicly identified with a presumed sexual orientation.”

“I was torn between the last 2 options, being a married transsexual I would love to be able to continue my 22 year old marriage and obtain a grc to change my birth certificate etc, and either of these options might help with that. But in the end I chose the last option because I recognize some people might prefer to have a partnership than a marriage...”

“I don't think all religious leaders should be forced to do a civil partnership but it would be nice if Vicars like mine (I'm a lesbian Anglican) could choose to do them. Equally, it would be lovely if people who objected to traditional 'marriage' could choose to get CPed. I don't think separate but equal is equal and I think that both CPs and marriage have pluses and minuses.”

“I am bisexual, and I feel it is clear discrimination that I can be married to one gender but not to another. Also, I have heard of straight couples wanting to have civil partnership because they feel marriage is too loaded a concept for them, and this should be their right equally.”

“As a Quaker, we believe that the couple and God decide what is a marriage, we are but witnesses. At our York conference we therefore had to accept that at least some committed same sex couples are married...”

“I find it abhorrent the distinction that is made between marriage and civil partnership. It smacks of equal but different, and makes me feel as a lesbian that my marital status would not be of the same class. I feel this because I am aware that the government backed away from the idea of marriage for all largely because of the religious lobby who believe that same sex relationships do not have the special status of male-female relationships who in principle are able to create their own children. In my view the idea that my love and my relationship is of lesser importance in society is deeply offensive.”

“LGBT people are entitled to be as stupid as straight people when it comes to entering into the institution of marriage.”

Views on Importance of Working for Equal Marriage

Question 2: Is equal marriage a priority?

2. How important do you think it is for the Equality Network to work for a change in the law to allow same-sex marriage?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> it's a high priority | <input type="checkbox"/> it's a medium priority |
| <input type="checkbox"/> it's a low priority | <input type="checkbox"/> it doesn't matter at all |

In this survey, the Equality Network deliberately did not ask respondents to compare how they thought equal marriage should be prioritised compared other LGBT equality issues. This is because asking such a question within a survey specifically about equal marriage would have resulted in a skewed result. However, the Equality Network has subsequently conducted a survey on LGBT priorities generally. In that survey equal marriage featured consistently in the top four priorities for LGBT people alongside hate crime; bullying in schools; and improving homophobic and transphobic attitudes.

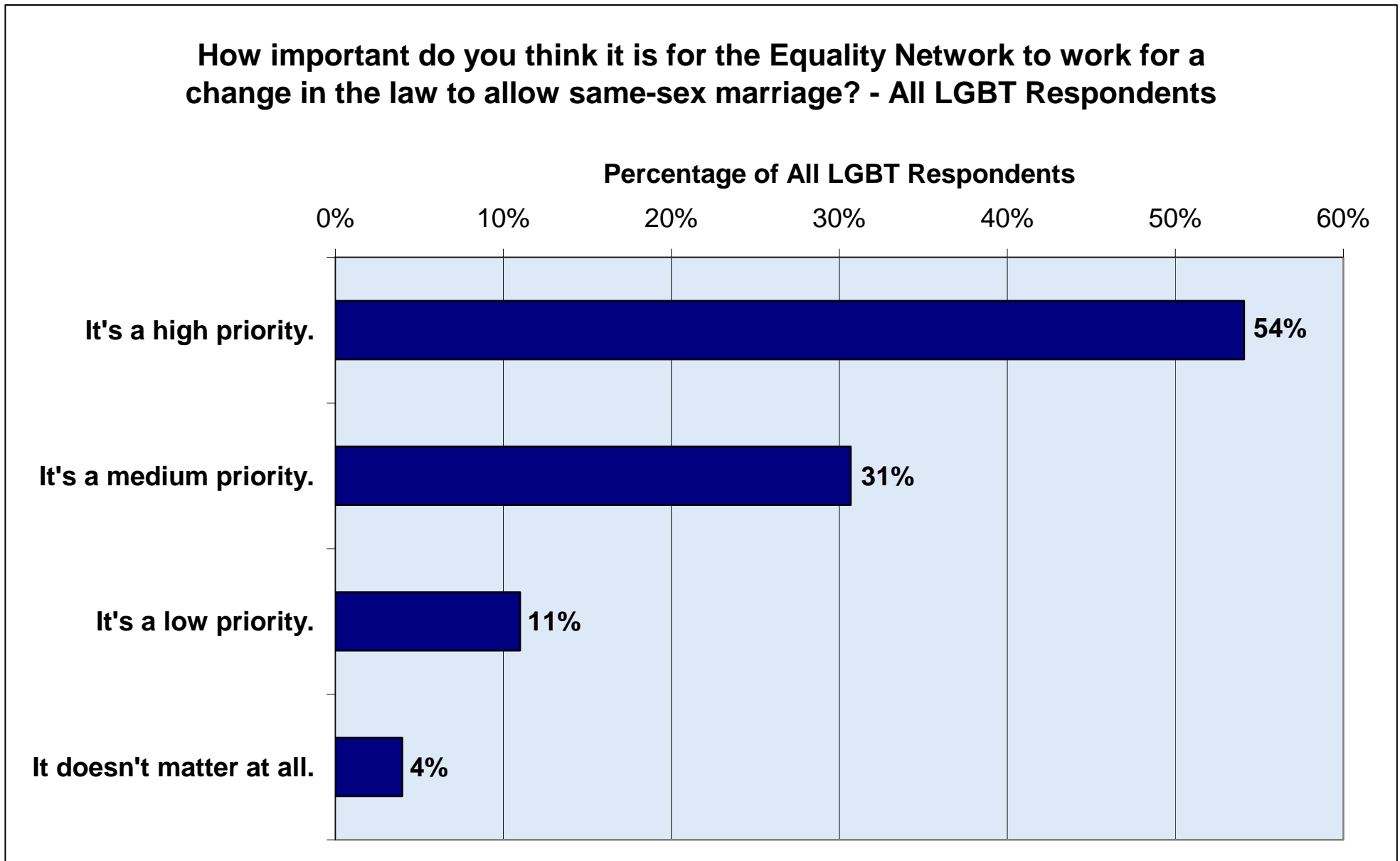
Main Results

As can be seen in Graph 7, the majority (54%) of LGBT respondents believe that working towards equal marriage should be a high priority for the Equality Network and only a very small percentage (4%) believe that equal marriage should not be a priority at all.

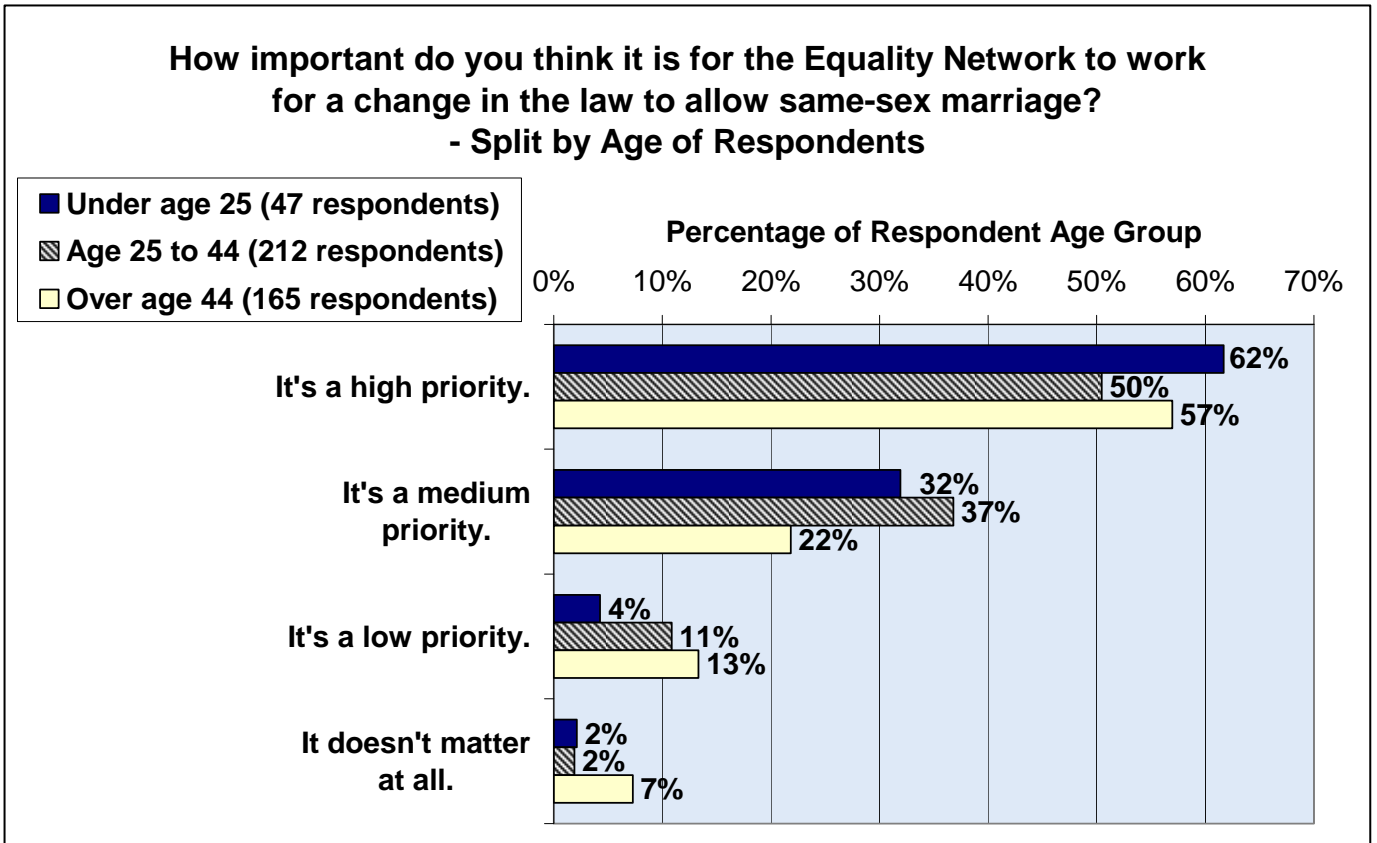
Analysis of respondent characteristics

The trend above played out across all demographics, with equal marriage being regarded as a high priority by all, but particularly for respondents under 25 (62%); women (55%); religious respondents (57%) and married people (79%). While the same proportion (55%) of transgender and non-transgender respondents in general saw equal marriage as a high priority, the much greater percentage of married people regarding equal marriage as a high priority may partially be explained by the fact that of the 28 married respondents, many are transgender and therefore may be particularly aware of the disruption to relationships resulting from the current requirement to divorce or dissolve a civil partnership in order to obtain a gender recognition certificate. All details can be seen in Graphs 8 – 12.

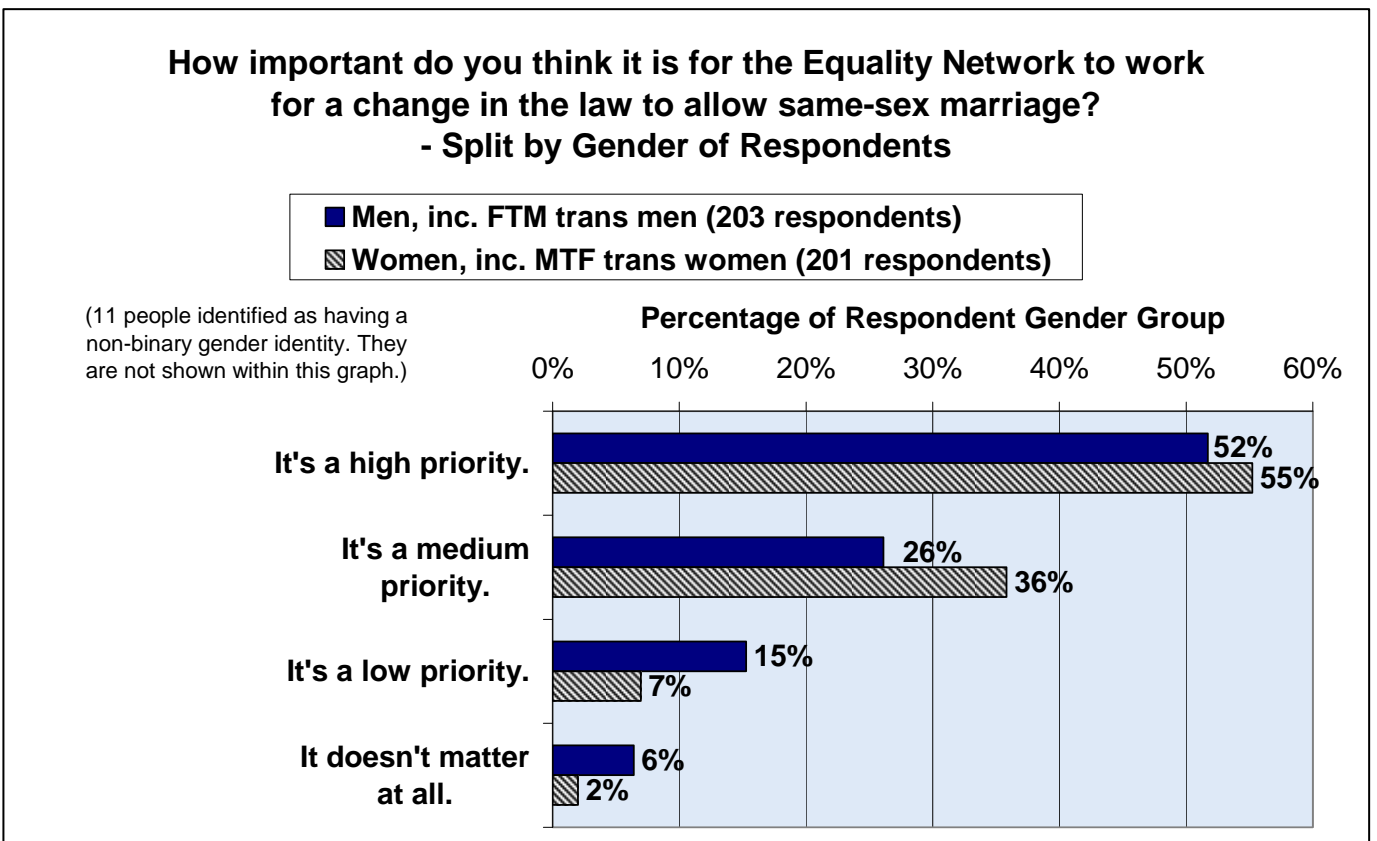
GRAPH 7: Views on Importance - All LGBT Respondents



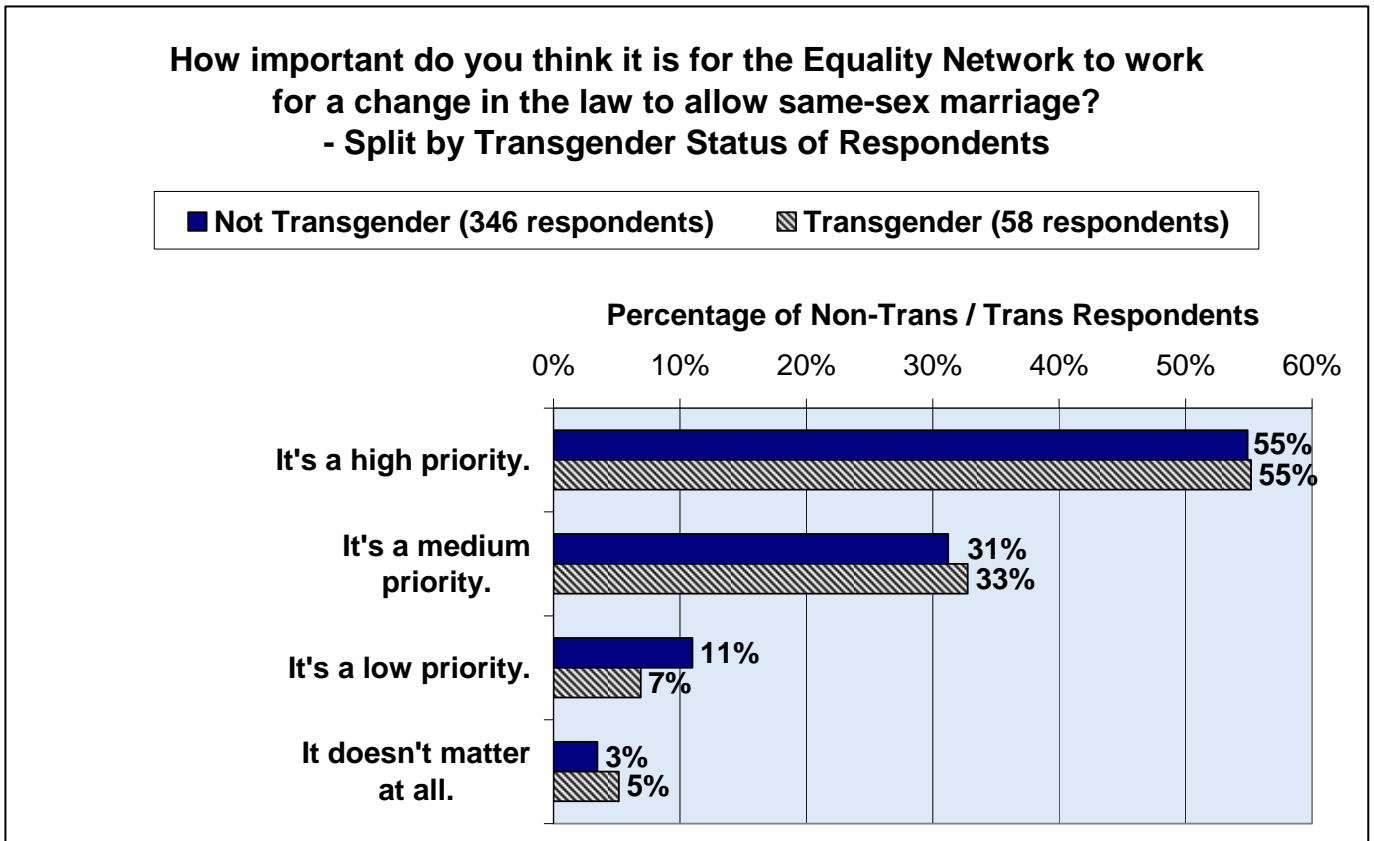
GRAPH 8: Views on Importance – Split by Age



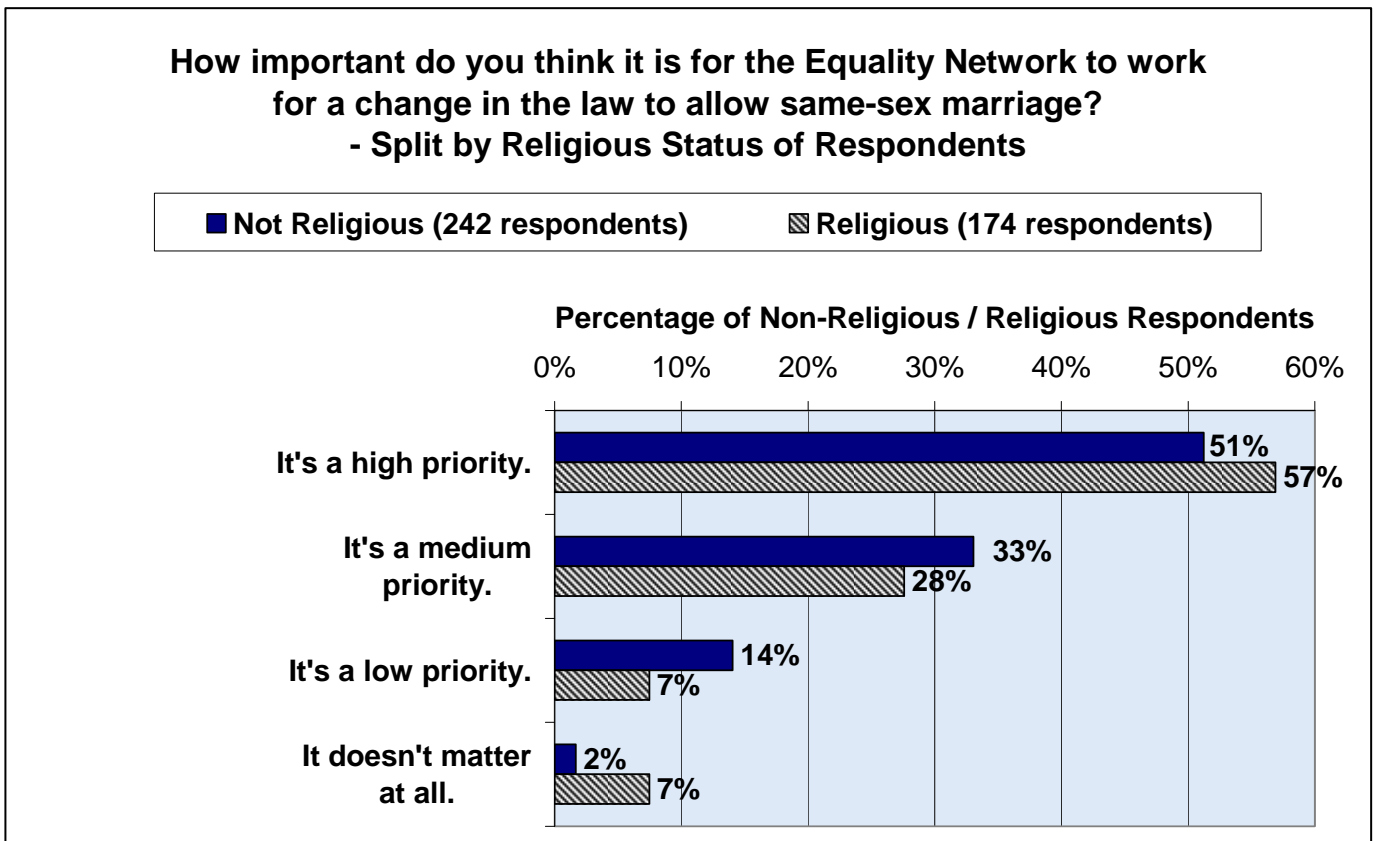
GRAPH 9: Views on Importance – Split by Gender



GRAPH 10: Views on Importance – Split by Transgender Status



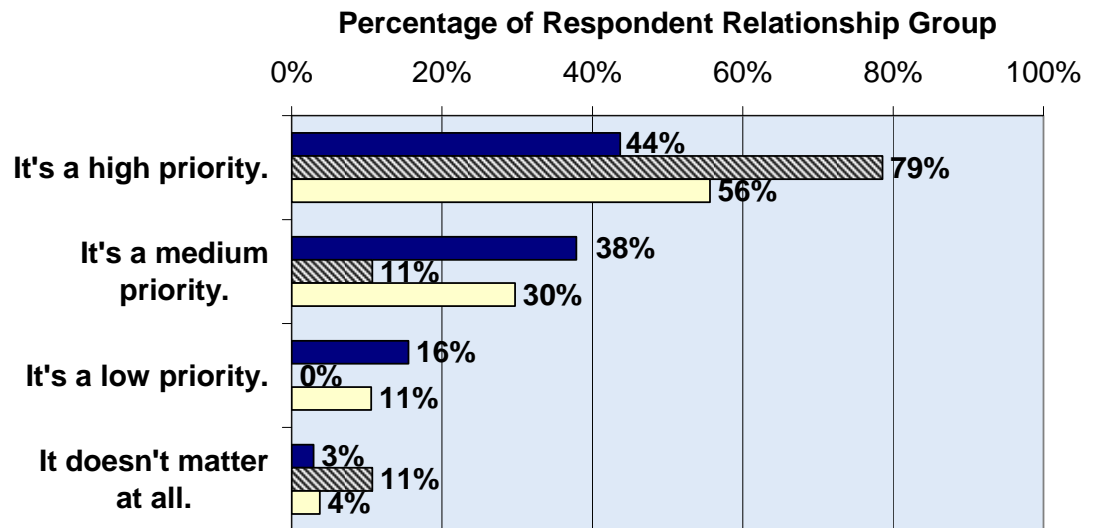
GRAPH 11: Views on Importance – Split by Religious Status



GRAPH 12: Views on Importance – Split by Relationship Status

How important do you think it is for the Equality Network to work for a change in the law to allow same-sex marriage?
- Split by Relationship Status of Respondents

- In a Civil Partnership (103 respondents)
- ▨ In a Marriage (28 respondents)
- Neither (293 respondents)



Views on Commitment Options Preference

Question 3: Options for registering a relationship

3. If marriage and civil partnership were both available for all couples to choose, which of the following do you think you might consider in the future (please tick all that you might consider):

- a civil partnership with the ceremony conducted by a registrar
- a marriage with the ceremony conducted by a registrar
- a marriage with the ceremony conducted by your minister, priest or other religious leader
- a marriage with the ceremony conducted by an authorised humanist
- unlikely to choose any of the above

Please write in any other option you would like:

Main Results

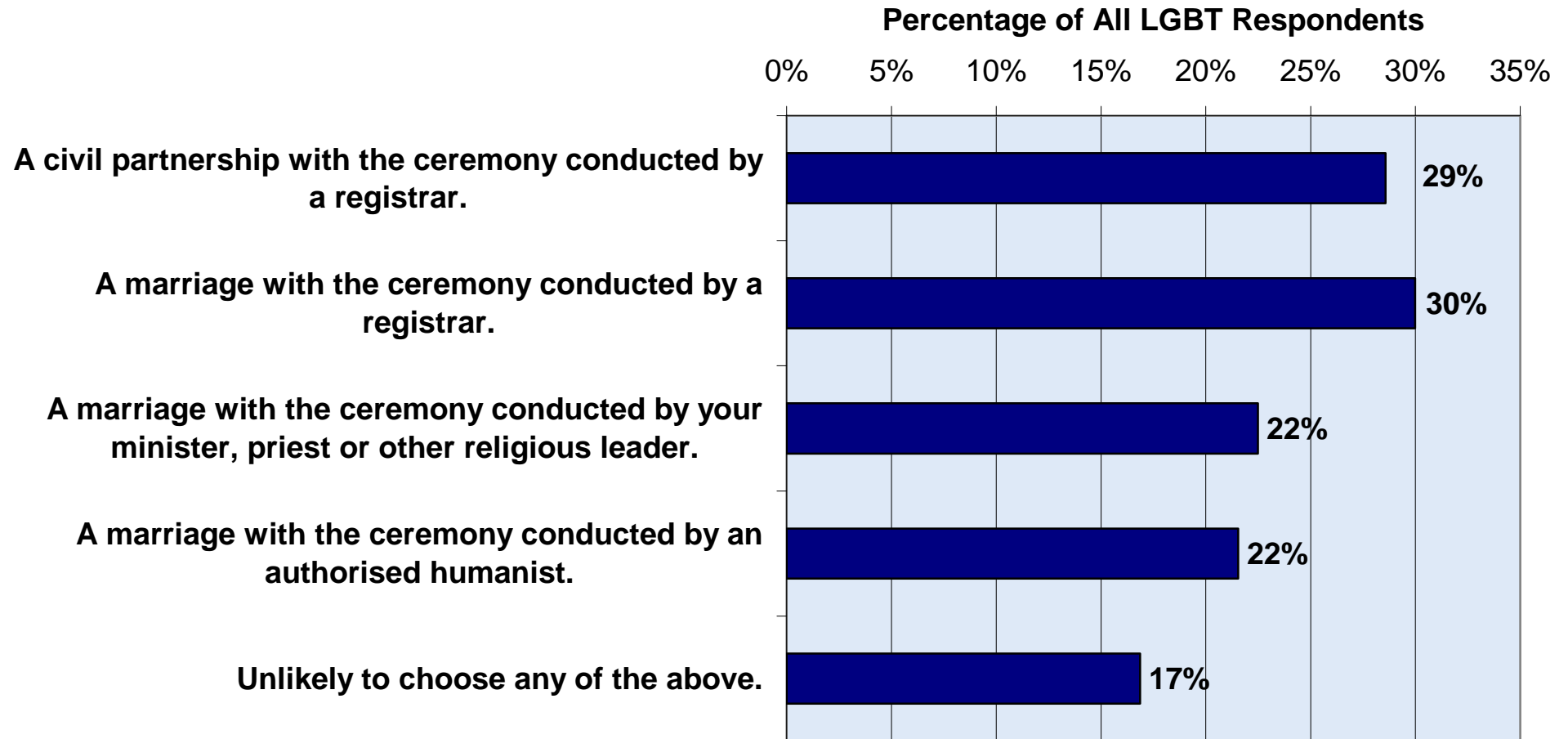
In this survey, three times as many respondents said that they would consider a having a marriage than a civil partnership, and the splits between preferences for civil, humanist and religious ceremonies were roughly equal. These results are in line with experience in the Netherlands where marriage and civil partnership are both available and three quarters of same-sex couples choose marriage while one quarter choose civil partnerships. These results, as detailed in Graph 13, show that there is likely to be a significant demand for civil partnership even after equal marriage is introduced.

Analysis of respondent characteristics

The above trend was similar regardless of gender or transgender status (as can be seen in Graphs ?? and ?? in Appendix ??). As seen in Graph 14 respondents under the age of 25 were more likely to choose civil partnerships or marriage ceremonies conducted by registrars. Not surprisingly, a much larger proportion of religious respondents (47%) said that they would consider religious marriage – see Graph 15.

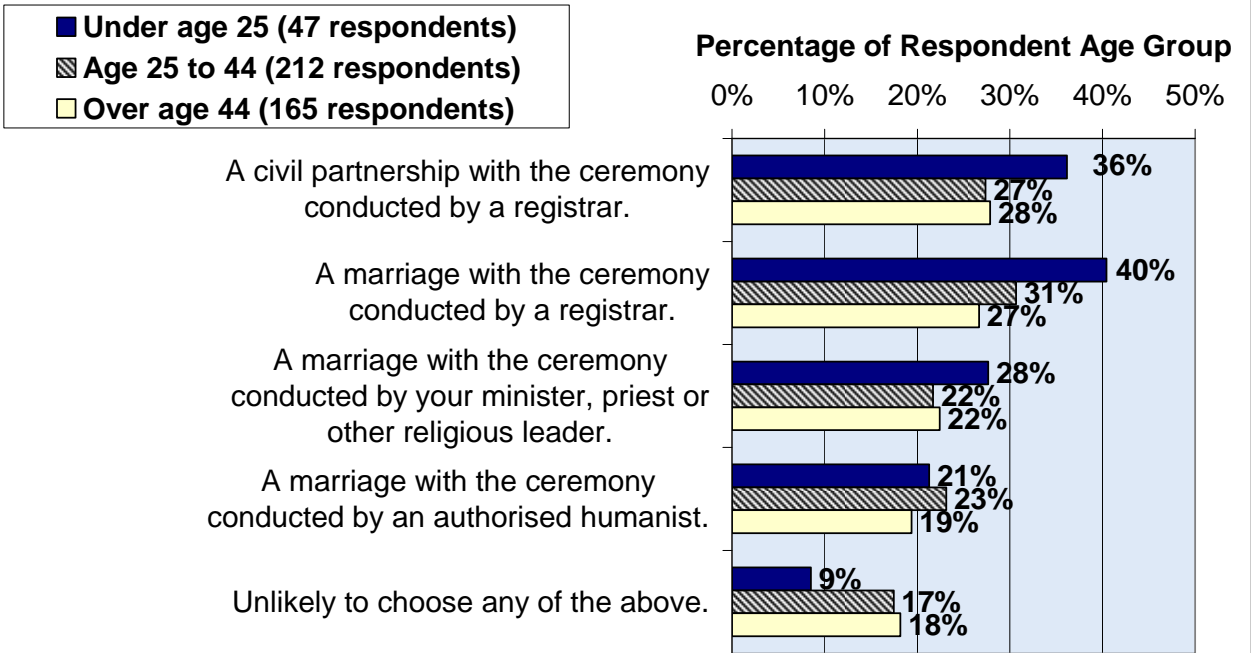
GRAPH 13: Views on Commitment Options - All LGBT Respondents

If marriage and civil partnership were both available for all couples to choose, which of the following do you think you might consider in the future? - All LGBT Respondents



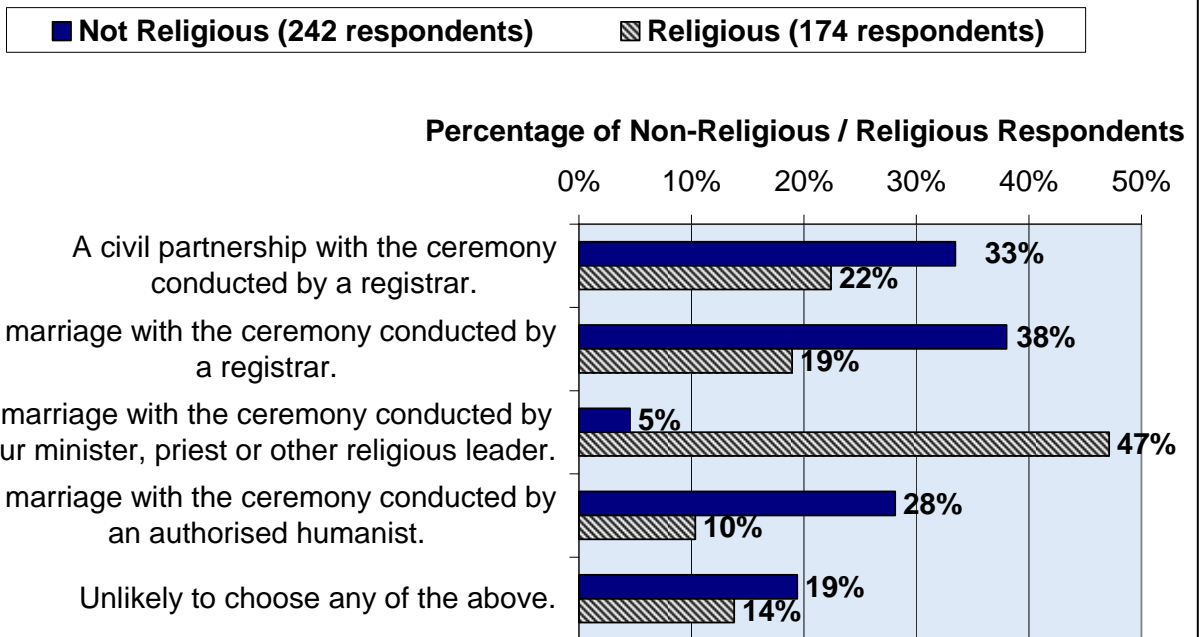
GRAPH 14: Views on Commitment Options - Split by Age

If marriage and civil partnership were both available for all couples to choose, which of the following do you think you might consider in the future? - Split by Age of Respondents

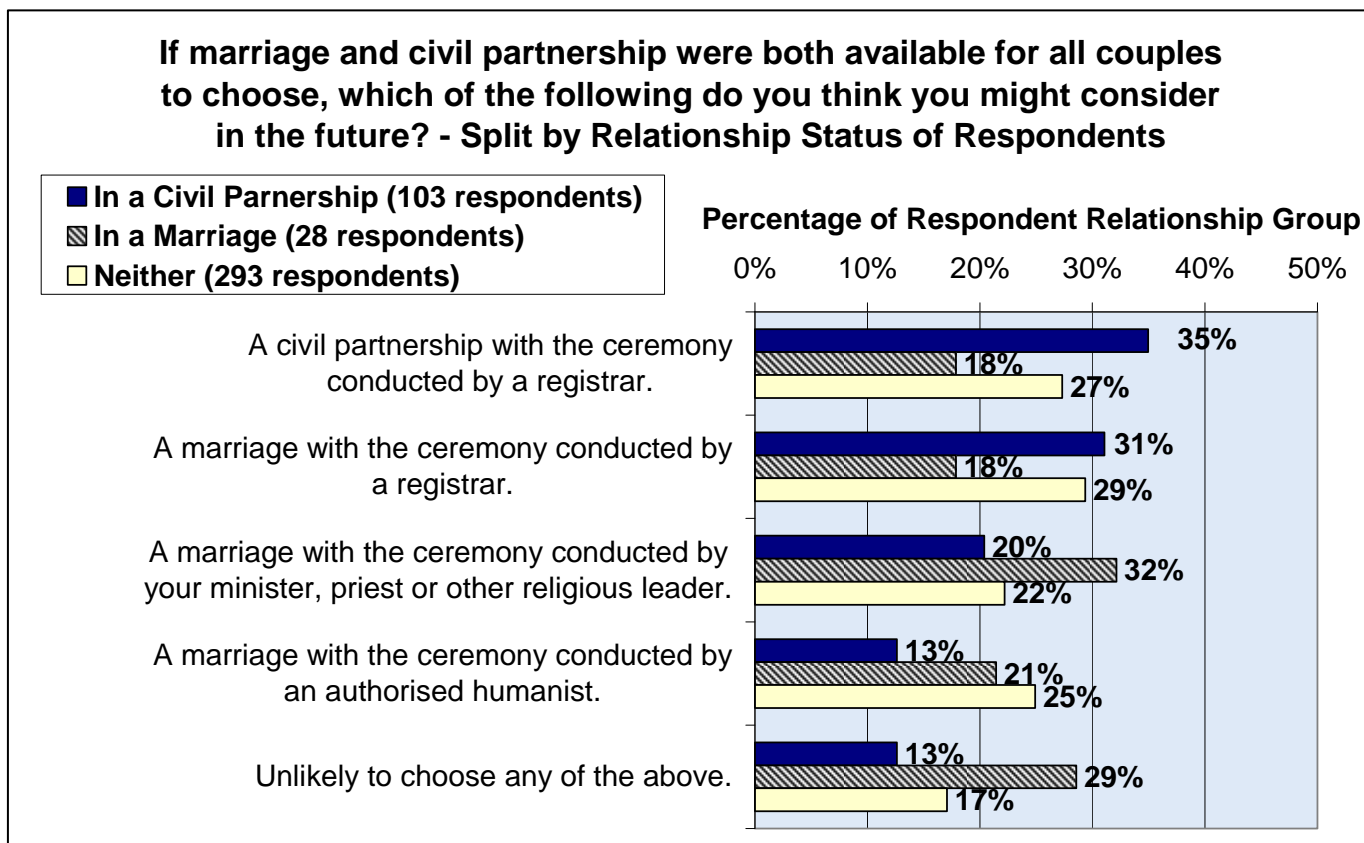


GRAPH 15: Views on Commitment Options - Split by Religious Status

If marriage and civil partnership were both available for all couples to choose, which of the following do you think you might consider in the future? - Split by Religious Status of Respondents



GRAPH 16: Views on Commitment Options - Split by Relationship Status



Illustrative quotes:

A civil partnership with the ceremony conducted by a registrar:

“already done it, and liked its low-keyness”

“I should also note that I am in a civil union with a partner of the opposite sex, an option which we had to travel to Quebec to exercise, so my answer to the above is not merely theoretical.”

“a civil partnership conducted by a minister, priest or religious leader”

“religious ceremonies, parties etc should be separate for all.”

A marriage with the ceremony conducted by a registrar:

“My partner & I had our Civil Partnership two years ago. Had a civil marriage been available we might have chosen that instead - mainly because it's difficult to talk about being "civil partnered" or "going through" our Civil Partnership! It sounds trite but it feels a bit awkward ... if we'd had the choice of marriage I think we would have preferred this. It would also have been a stronger statement to friends and family, some of whom didn't realise that Civil Partnerships had the same rights & responsibilities as marriage.”

"Marriage should be a civil ceremony first because in most countries of the world it is the civil authority which grants legal licenses to marry. Therefore Marriage is NOT a religious institution per se but anyone who wishes to have the blessing of a religious body should be able to have it provided that the religious body is willing to do so."

"As a trans person (woman with a gender history) I would choose marriage, not because I think higher of the institution of marriage but for one of the following reasons:

1) Trans people fought long and hard for the right to marry and therefore I would take that opportunity. 2) As I now have a GRC and am recognised legally as female it is my understanding of the law that I cannot enter a civil partnership with my boyfriend."

A marriage with the ceremony conducted by your minister, priest or other religious leader:

"separate but equal is never equal. marriage may be a religious institution to some (inc me) but it is, in law, a legal status created not by God but by the Marriage (Scotland) Act 1977. Those who, like me, see a religious connection do so quite separately from the law. Equal marriage in Scotland would not force anyone to change their religious understanding of marriage as that understanding is not tied in with the law."

"Or a civil partnership conducted by a minister, priest etc."

"I would like to be married in a church or chapel by a man (or woman) of God"

"I feel discriminated against as marriage in a church is not available to me."

"I would like some form of handfasting available as an official ceremony, to be renewed yearly"

A marriage with the ceremony conducted by an authorised humanist:

"I'm a humanist, and I feel i should be entitled to full marriage rights like everyone else. However I'm only entitled to civil partnership, and because of this when I have my civil partnership in May 2010 I am having to have the legal civil partnership on the Friday afternoon and then a humanist ceremony on the Saturday by an officiant who has been officiated specifically for my event. I feel this is an expense and fuss I have been forced to incur due to my sexuality, which is unfair. And even then I'm only civilly partnered - it's not the same, no

matter what anyone says and no matter how much I'd like to believe, given the event will cost me thousands of pounds just like any marriage would.”

“More than two people allowed to "marry".”

Unlikely to choose any of the above:

The reasons people gave most often for being unlikely to choose any of the above were because they were already in a civil partnership or a marriage or because they do not personally believe in either.

“In my own situation, I am already married and wish to remain so, and simply require gender recognition as female within our marriage.”

“I am of the belief that society should not privilege couples. Rights and entitlements should be available to all. My research on lesbian domestic violence has also revealed a fear that civil partnerships may well make leaving an abusive relationship more difficult to leave, as in heterosexual marriage. They may also lead to divisions within the lesbian and gay community, with differing responses to victims depending on whether they are a 'good' settled couple or not.”

“I am in a 12 year relationship and personally would not choose to do either but the option must be there for those who do to achieve real equality.”

“Would prefer a civil partnership conducted by an authorised humanist (which is not an option above)”

Views on Converting Civil Partnerships to Marriages

Question 4 and 5:

4. Are you:

in a civil partnership married neither of these

5. Please answer this question if you are in a civil partnership.

If same-sex marriage became available in the future, and you could convert your civil partnership to a marriage without losing any rights, would you:

consider converting your civil partnership into a marriage

prefer to keep your civil partnership

Could you please say why?

Main Results

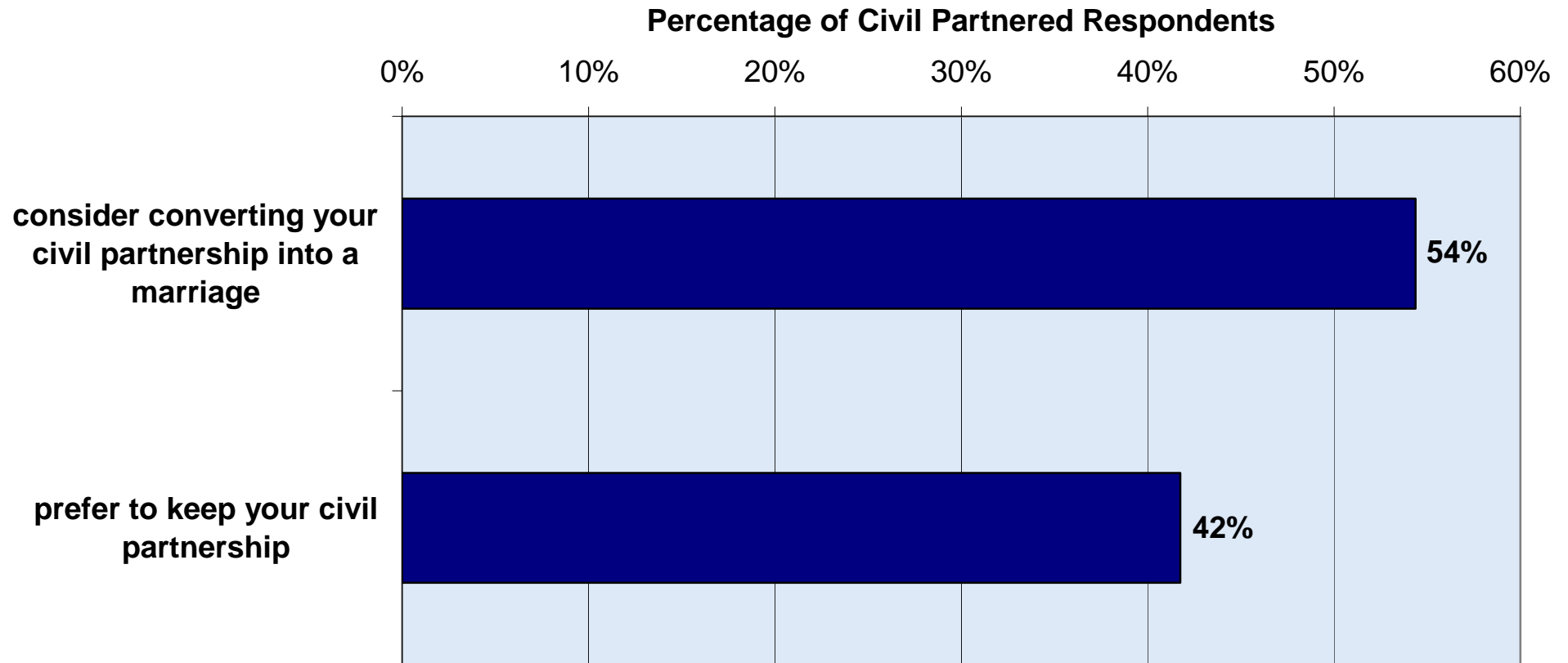
Respondents already in a civil partnership were asked if they would convert their civil partnerships to marriages if equal marriage were brought in. As seen in Graph 17, the majority (54%) said they would convert their partnerships to marriages. But a significant minority (42%) said that they would prefer to keep their civil partnerships. This indicates a need to retain civil partnerships as a choice even when marriage is opened to all partners.

Analysis of respondent characteristics

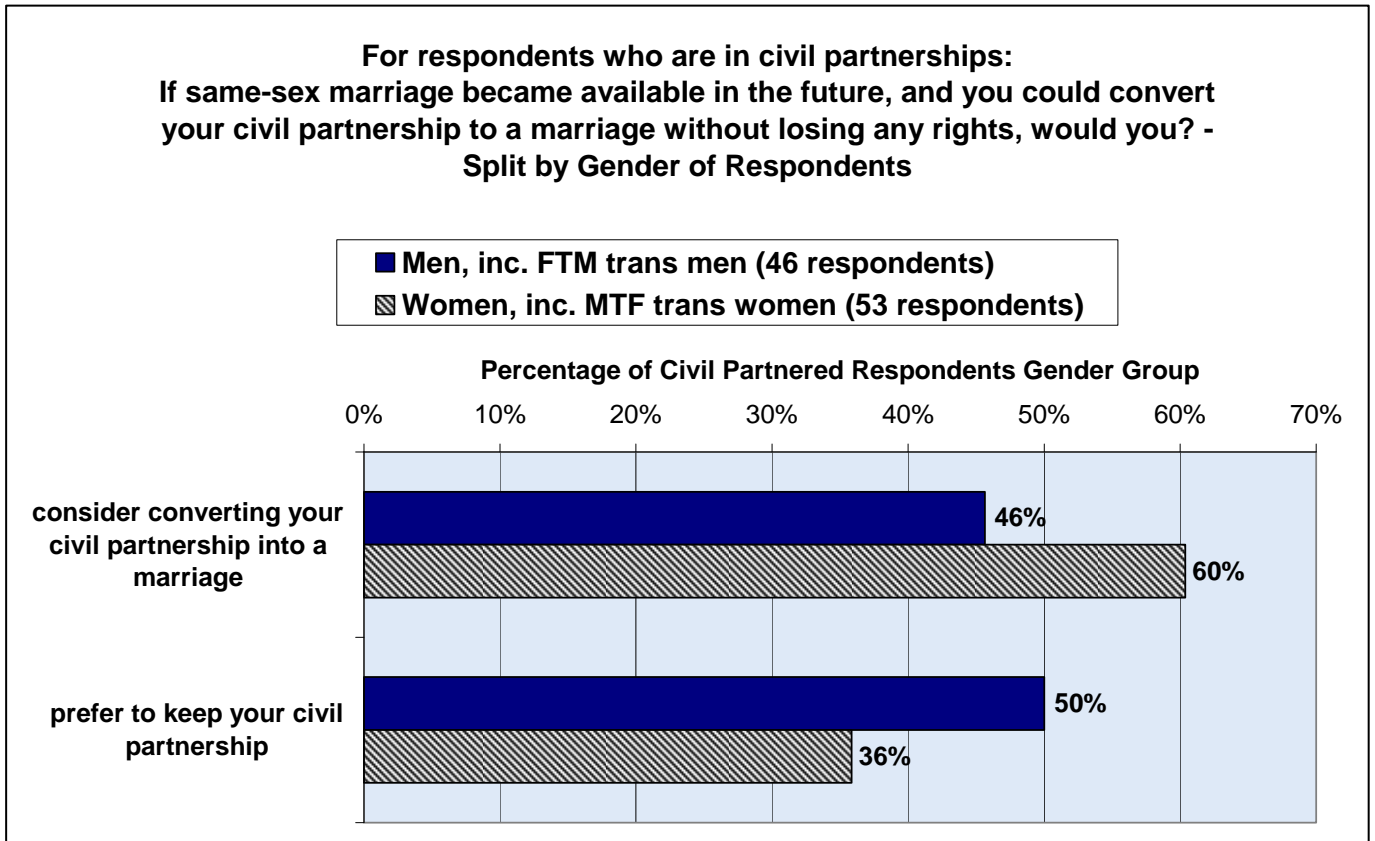
A significantly higher proportion (60%) of women would convert their civil partnerships to marriages (compared with 46% of men) as seen in Graph 18. This is consistent with the finding that, in general, for women equal marriage is even more important than for men.

GRAPH 17: Views on Converting - All Civil Partnered Respondents

**For respondents who are in civil partnerships:
If same-sex marriage became available in the future, and you could convert
your civil partnership to a marriage without losing any rights, would you:**



GRAPH 18: Views on Converting – Split by Gender



Illustrative Quotes:

Consider converting your civil partnership into a marriage:

The following were the most often quoted reasons for wanting to convert civil partnerships to marriages: equality; because people feel married; to call partners husbands and wives rather than civil partners; to make a statement that the commitment is the same; to avoid being forced to be automatically outed; because of religious beliefs; marriage is better understood and respected.

“I feel married, I describe myself as married, I live as though I'm married... I'd like to be legally married!”

“I feel it's taken more seriously by some members of society. Some people understand it more easily than 'a civil partnership'.”

“Because it gets kind of wearing to have people smirk when you refer to your wife, as if they are humoring you, or to be corrected by people saying, you mean your partner. Although legally there's now no difference, it does make a difference to people's attitudes to your relationship...”

“To make a statement about the equal value of same sex and mixed sex commitment.”

“...Also, having to state you are in a civil partnership rather than marriage forces you to out yourself whether you wish to or not.”

“For one thing, the present distinction is time-wasting and fiddly. “Are you married?” said an official, filling in a form for me, at a hospital. “Well, yes, no, not exactly, I have a civil partner.”...

Prefer to keep your civil partnership:

The most often quoted reason for preferring to keep civil partnerships was not liking the connotations of marriage.

“I do not like the connotations of marriage. Civil partnership is a wonderful institution. The only defect is that it identifies your presumed sexual orientation, and is not open to mixed-sex couples...”

“I feel that my civil partnership gives me the legal status I want - and I feel that converting it to a marriage would subsequently undervalue the CP”

"There'd be no difference (a) to my relationship (b) to the practical elements of our legal status and (c) to the attitudes of others to our relationship (those who matter). Would have been nice to have had my minister involved in the ceremony, but purely 'nice' - not crucial. Also - I dislike the historical baggage that comes with 'marriage'. Civil Partnership is a far better term for a modern, equal relationship."

“...depends really - would need to know what difference it would make, whether there were associated costs (e.g. it cost over £250 to register the CP - would we need to pay the equivalent again?)”

“My Partner and I had a civil union in New Zealand where any two adults can enter into a civil union. My partner is transgendered and for us to have had a civil partnership in the UK would have meant we would have had our civil partnership set aside for my partner to apply for his gender recognition certificate. Then if we wanted the legal protection we had received under the civil partnership we would have to get married. Not a very well thought through piece of legislation.”

Views on Equality of Civil Partnerships with Marriage

Question 6: Equal treatment?

Respondents in a civil partnership were asked if they felt that they were always given the same respect and rights as people in marriages:

6. Please answer this question if you are in a civil partnership. Do you feel that you and your partner have always been given the same rights and respect that a married couple would get?

Yes No

If you answered No, please can you say how you have not received equal rights or respect?

Main Results

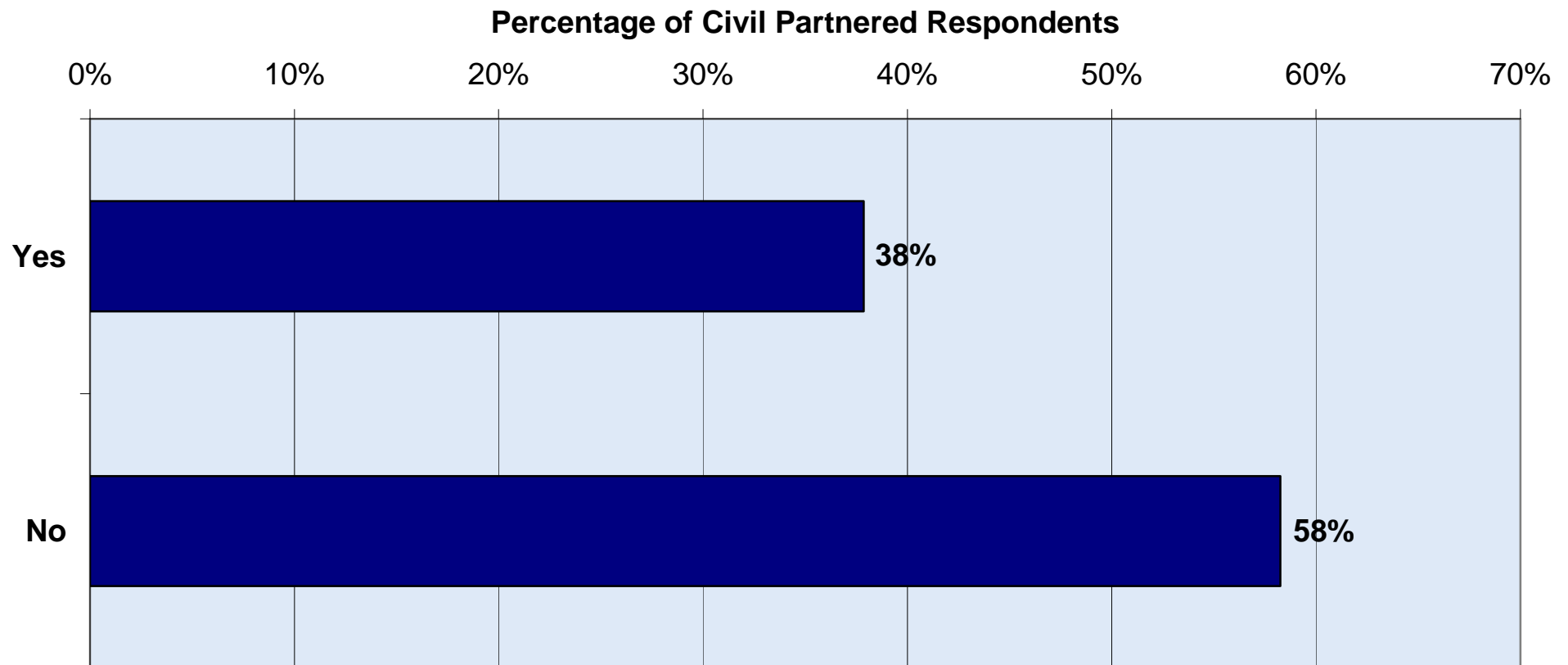
As seen in Graph 19, the majority of respondents (58%) said that they did not feel that they were treated equally.

Analysis of respondent characteristics

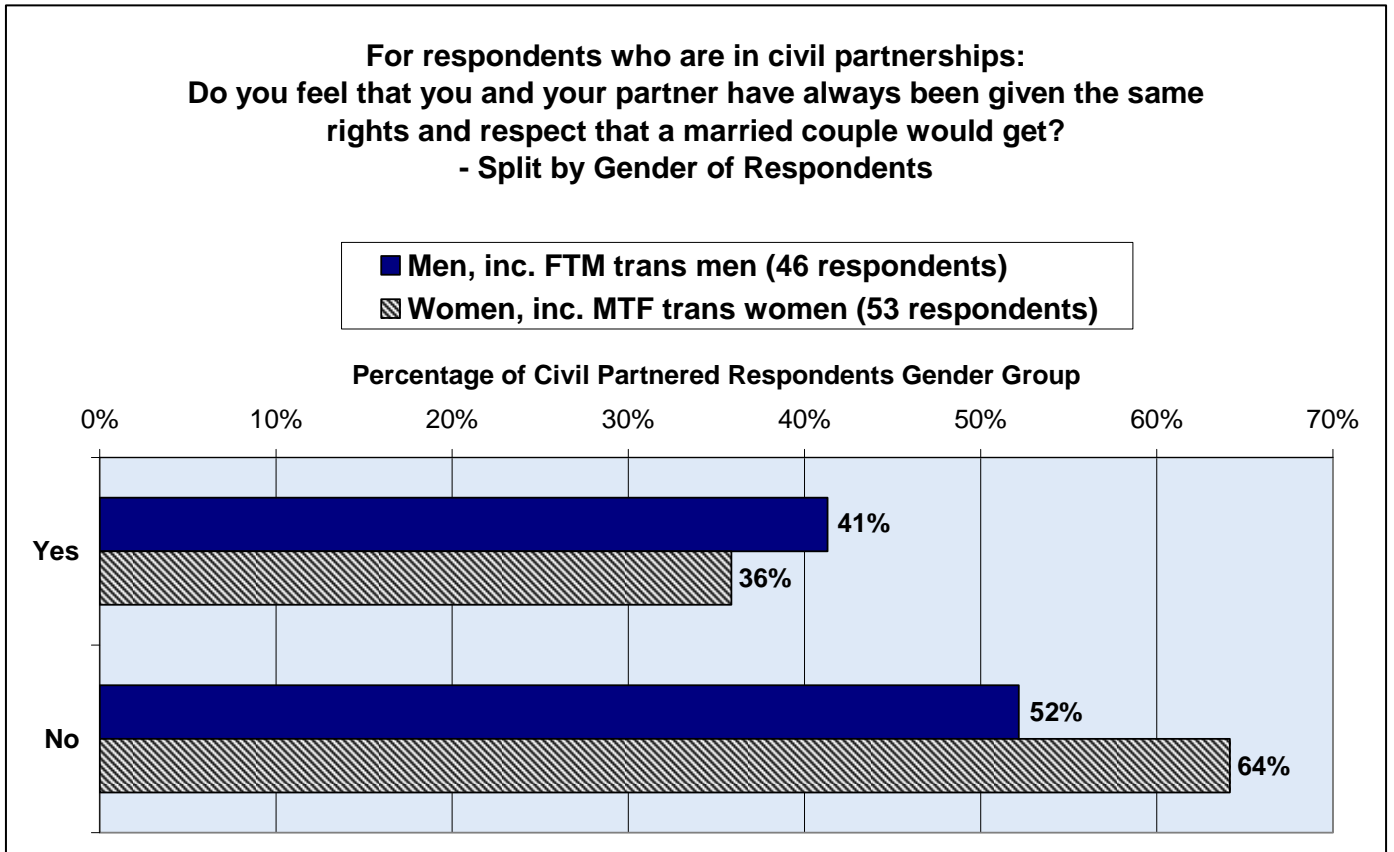
An even higher percentage of women (64%) felt that they were not treated equally, as seen in Graph 20. This may in part explain why, in general, women seem to regard equal marriage as an even higher priority than men do.

GRAPH 19: Views on Equality - All Civil Partnered Respondents

**For respondents who are in civil partnerships:
Do you feel that you and your partner have always been given the same
rights and respect that a married couple would get?**



GRAPH 20: Views on Equality – Split by Gender



Illustrative Quotes:

Yes (we have been given the same rights and respect):

“We have mostly, and definitely have received the rights. But I've lost count of the number of times I've had to answer the question, "what's a Civil Partnership?" and then deal with the "why?" question...”

“But I still feel I would feel more equal in eyes of society. Civil partnership just seems like something for people who are not allowed to get married because their relationship is still not considered quite on a par with a heterosexual one.”

“Qualification of the above - we have been in the main given the same rights and treated with the same respect as a gay 'married couple' would be, whether that amounts to the same respect as a heterosexual couple would get may be another question and another battle.”

No (we have not been given the same rights and respect):

“People refer to us as 'not really married' and we had problems with people understanding at the bank when we got a joint account.”

“Because we were previously married as man and woman, we had to get divorced in relation to gender recognition before getting a civil partnership. I did not want to get divorced at that time but had no choice. It felt like I was made to have the 'second best' option for a legal union, purely because of gender and sexual orientation; yet as a couple we still had the same relationship.”

“we want to adopt or foster and although the law has just now changed, it is a struggle to get through the assessment. civil partnership is like a second class thing”

“It's mostly about respect and other people's attitudes. For example, my wife's work is very old-fashioned and quite formal, despite her asking them to change her title to Ms, she always gets work-related post and is referred to in minutes of meetings as Miss. They say they only use Miss or Mrs, but will not change her title to Mrs. I have noticed that a lot of people don't seem to view a civil partnership in the same permanent light either.”

“The registry office details only allowed for bride and groom when we registered our intention...”

“Hospitals. Twice I've had stand-up arguments with hospital administrators, explaining that my partner is indeed my next of kin and has every right to any information I want him to have. And I was the sick person!”

"1 - survivors' pensions are calculated only on pension contributions back to 1989 for civil partners, but back to the year dot for married couples

2 - our partnership could not be celebrated, as a legal event, by our church minister"

“While we feel we have the same rights, we do not always have the same respect. When asked about marital status, you know that if you say 'civil partner' you are coming out and you sometimes see a reaction which indicates at best shock and at worst distaste. Questions about marital status, which are a common part of application forms, should not force you to reveal a presumed sexual orientation. If civil partnership were open to mixed-sex couples, 'civil partner' would not identify you publicly in this way.”

“My local Conservative candidate, Mark Nolan, said he was in favour of tax breaks for married couples. I asked him whether he envisaged the breaks as extending to civil partnerships. He said, No. (Later, after I pointed out David

Cameron had pledged to treat them alike, he backtracked.) [The] University, where I work, has been advertising English-language courses for the "spouses" of foreign students. I and the LGBT network here have been protesting and we seem to be getting somewhere, but initially a change was resisted. In my Department..., there is customarily a collection for those getting married. There was no collection for my civil partnership, though there was a card that people signed. It was as if someone thought, "Well, it's only gay, so we don't go the whole hog with a present." A year later there was a collection for someone's second marriage and another collection for someone who had left but was getting married."

"We are of course in a position comparable to many other couples whose partnership would not have been allowed a century ago -- mixed races or religions, divorced people and so on..."

"Hotels not returning our calls when we wanted to book for our civil partnership..."

"...NHS - civil partnership has to go under 'other' which is discriminatory... so I put married and am treated as if I'm heterosexual"

Conclusions

With 427 LGBT respondents, this survey had the largest response of any detailed survey conducted by the Equality Network. Clearly this is an issue that many LGBT people are interested in.

A large majority think marriage should be opened to same-sex couples:

Only a very small minority (6%) of respondents believe that the current law on marriage and civil partnership is satisfactory. 85% believe that marriage should be opened to same-sex couples. 53% believe that when this is done, civil partnership should be retained and opened to mixed-sex couples; while 32% believe that when marriage is opened up to same-sex couples, civil partnership would no longer be needed.

There are large majorities in favour of opening up marriage to same-sex couples across all the different demographic sub-groups of respondents. Women, younger people and transgender people are particularly in favour of opening up both marriage and civil partnership to all couples regardless of gender, and this is the most strongly preferred option for all demographic groups.

It is clear from respondents' detailed comments that key reasons for wanting marriage opened to same-sex couples include reducing discrimination and stigma, wanting equality of status, not wanting to be labeled as different, wanting access to religious and humanist marriages, and wanting to end the requirement to divorce before getting gender recognition.

A large majority think that this is a priority issue:

A large majority of respondents regard this issue as a priority for the Equality Network to work on: 54% said it is a high priority, and an additional 31% a medium priority. Even more women (91%) and younger people (94%) regard it as a high or medium priority.

There will still be a need for civil partnership:

If marriage and civil partnership were both open to couples regardless of gender, around three-quarters of survey respondents would consider a marriage in future. One quarter would consider a civil partnership. Clearly there would still be a significant demand for civil partnership, and this is in line with

experience in the Netherlands, where both marriage and registered partnership have been available for a decade.

Of the 103 respondents in a civil partnership, the majority (54%) would convert their civil partnership to a same-sex marriage if that option became available, but a large minority (42%) would prefer to keep their civil partnership. Reasons for this included not liking the connotations and 'historical baggage' of marriage. A somewhat larger proportion of women in civil partnerships would convert to marriage (60%) rather than keep their civil partnership (36%).

Most civil partners experience discrimination compared to married couples:

58% of civil partners said they had not always been given the same rights and respect as a married couple, and this rose to 64% for women civil partners.

Despite the anti-discrimination law, it is clear that discrimination continues. Many examples were given, including: being referred to as 'not really married'; being treated as second class; refusal to use the prefix Mrs when requested; using exclusive language like 'bride and groom'; refusing to recognise a civil partner as next-of-kin; less good pension rights; expressions of distaste; failure to respond to enquiries; benefits that are provided for marriage being denied for civil partnership; forms including marriage as an option but not civil partnership; and being required to out yourself as LGB because your status is civil partner and not married.

Demographics of survey respondents:

The respondents were evenly divided by gender, with significant proportions of transgender (14%) and disabled (15%) respondents. Almost one quarter of respondents were in civil partnerships, giving us very useful feedback on their experiences. As usual with our surveys, the majority (60%) of respondents were non religious, with 31% being Christian, again giving useful data. There was a spread of respondents by age, and geographical location across Scotland. There were few respondents from minority ethnic communities and minority faith communities – to discover the views of these LGBT people, specific targeted research would be needed.

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Appendix 2: Demographics of Survey Respondents

A total of 427 LGBT people responded to the survey. An additional 100 non-LGBT people also answered the survey, but their responses have not been included in this report, which focuses on reporting the views of LGBT people specifically.

Of the 427 LGBT respondents 44% (186/427) of respondents defined as gay men, and 34% (146/427) as lesbians or gay women. 3% (11/427) identified as straight / heterosexual, and 13% (57/427) as bisexual, with 6% (27/427) identifying their sexual orientation using other terms (for example, as queer).

24% (103/427) of respondents were in a civil partnership, including 12% (53/427) women and 11% (46/427) men. 1% (5/427) of respondents were in a civil partnership and had at some time identified as transgender. 7% (28/427) of respondents were married, including 5% (20/427) women and 2% (7/427) men. 3% (14/427) of respondents were married and had at some time identified as transgender. 2% of respondents (10/427) were married and identified as bisexual. Two of the married respondents stated that they were in same-sex marriages registered overseas.

48% (203/427) of respondents were men (including trans men) and 47% (201/427) women (including trans women). 3% (11/427) stated they had another non-binary gender identity, and 4% (15/427) preferred not to answer.

14% (58/427) of respondents stated that they had at some time identified as transgender.

The age profile of respondents shows that 50% (212/427) of respondents were aged 25 to 44, while 11% (47/427) were younger people aged 16 to 24, and 26% (109/427) were aged 45 to 54, 10% (41/427) were aged 55 to 64 and 4% (15/427) were aged 65+.

40% (169/427) of respondents stated they had no religion, and an additional 14% (59/427) defined as atheist and 6% (25/427) were Humanists. 31% (131/427) of respondents stated they were Christian, with 3% (12/427) Pagan/Druid, 1% (6/427) Buddhist, 1% (6/427) Jewish, 1% (5/427) Quaker and 0% (0/427) Muslim.

In terms of geographical location of respondents around Scotland, 25% (105/427) had EH (Edinburgh and Lothians) postcodes, and 20% (87/427) had G (Glasgow and surrounding area) postcodes.

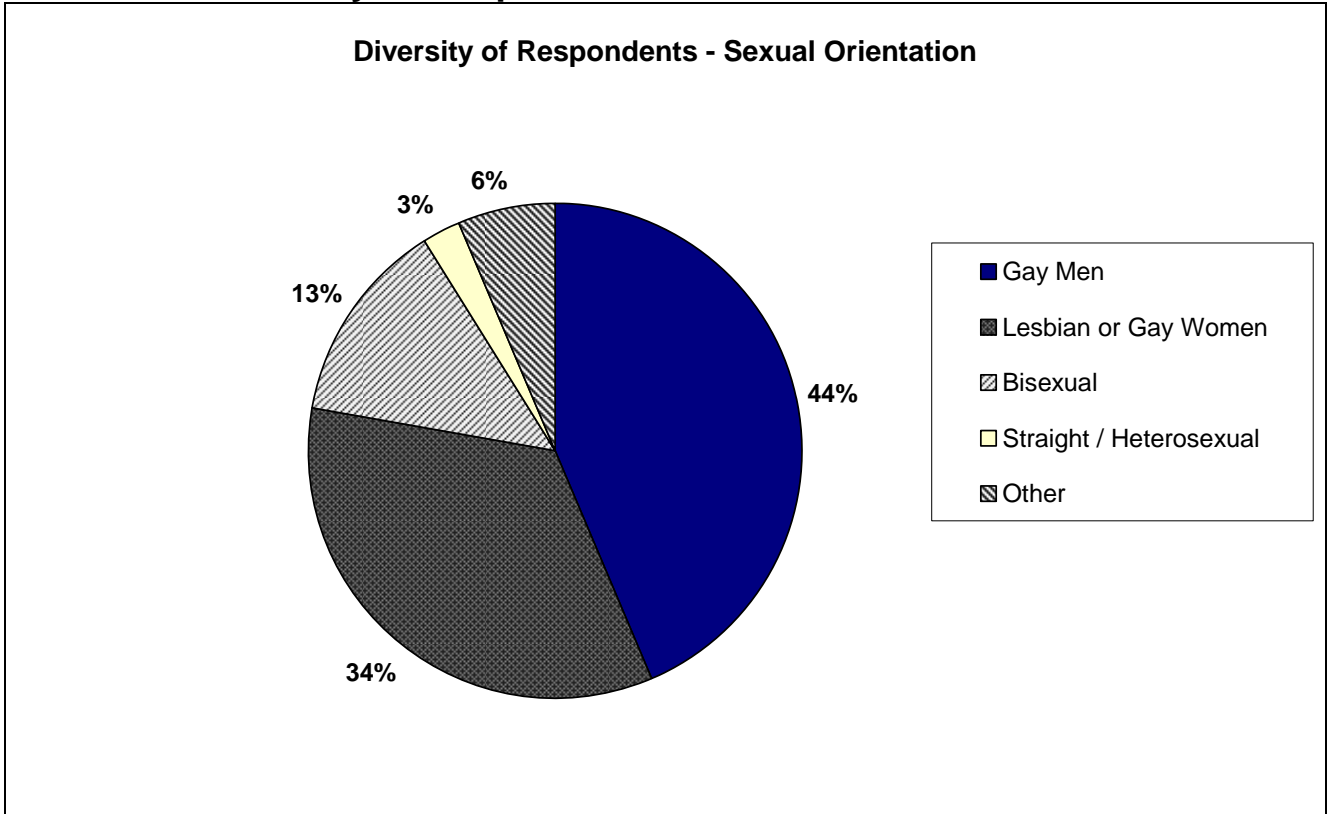
5% (21/427) had AB (Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire) postcodes and 4% (19/427) had DD (Dundee and Angus) postcodes. 3% (11/427) had KY (Fife)

postcodes, 2% (9/427) had FK (Falkirk and Stirling) postcodes and 2% (8/427) had IV (Highland) postcodes. 2% (7/427) had each of KA (Ayrshire and Arran) postcodes and PA (Argyll and Bute) postcodes. 1% (6/427) had each of DG (Dumfries and Galloway) postcodes and PH (Perth and Kinross) postcodes. 1% (5/427) had ML (Lanarkshire) postcodes, 0.5% (2/427) had each of HS (Western Isles) postcodes and TD (Borders) postcodes. There were no respondents with Orkney or Shetland postcodes.

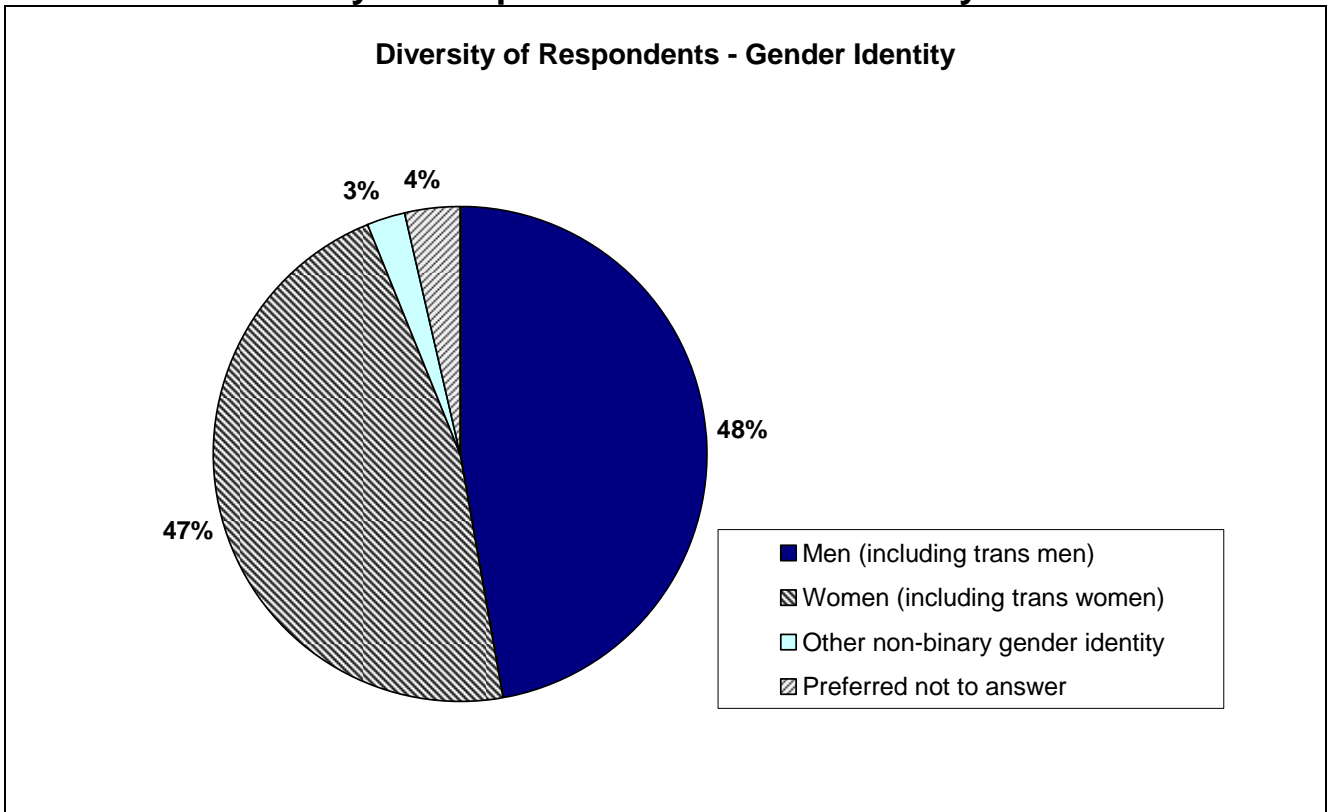
15% (65/427) of respondents were disabled.

70% (301/427) of respondents stated they were White Scottish or White British ethnicity, with an additional 12% (52/427) defining as White English and 2% (7/427) White Welsh. 3% (12/427) defined as White Irish. 8% (35/427) were of other white background (these came from around the world). 0.5% (2/427) of respondents were Asian, 0.5% (2/427) Black and 0.5% (2/427) Chinese, with 2% (7/427) of mixed race and 1% (6/427) of other ethnicities.

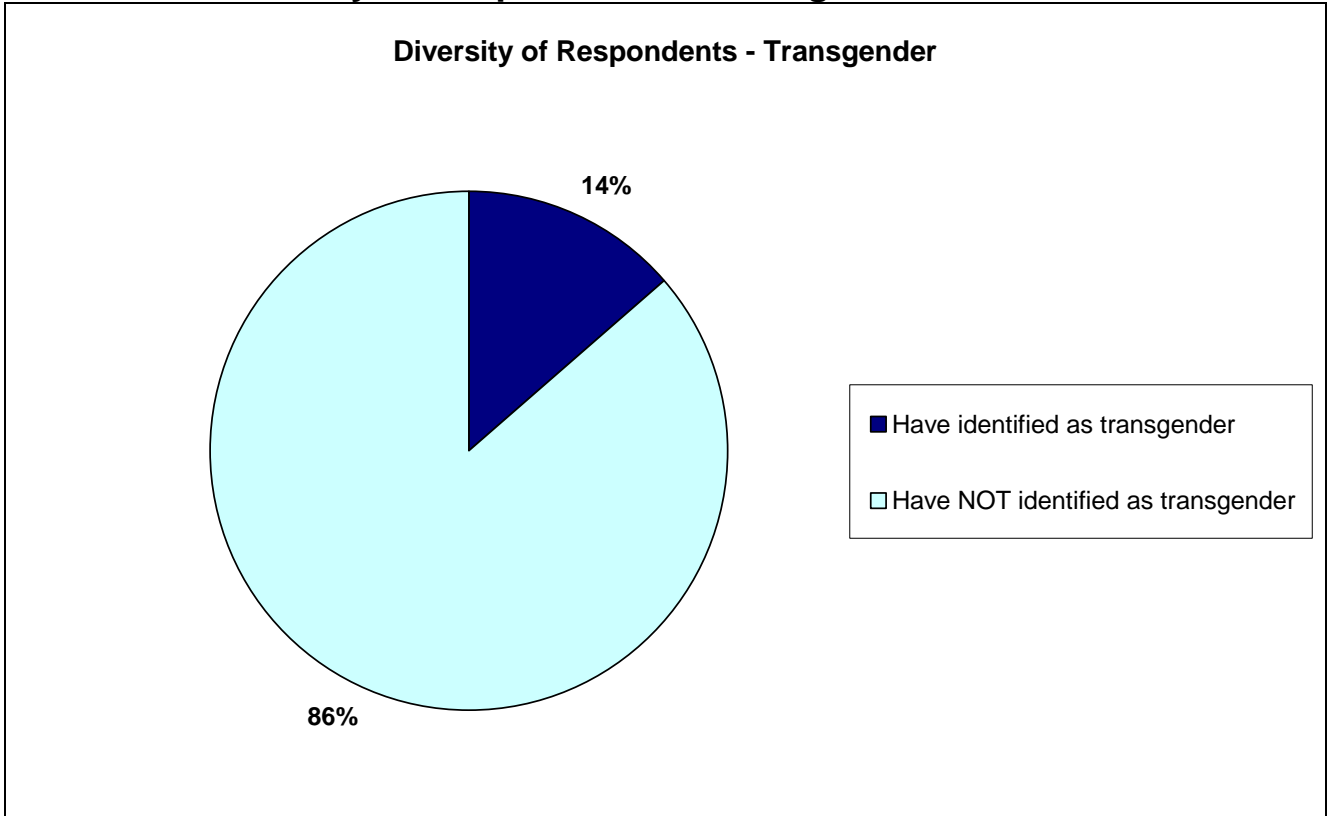
GRAPH 21: Diversity of Respondents – Sexual Orientation



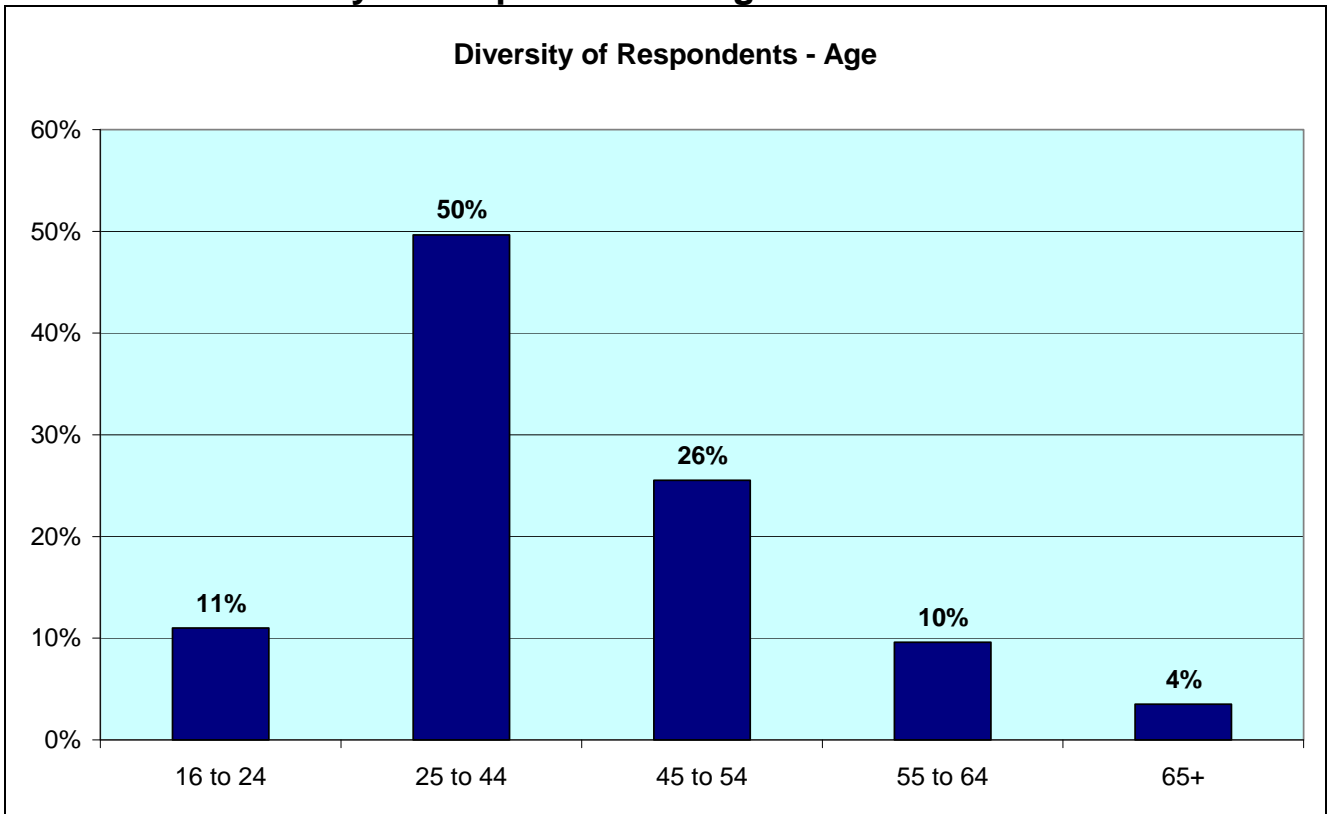
GRAPH 22: Diversity of Respondents – Gender Identity



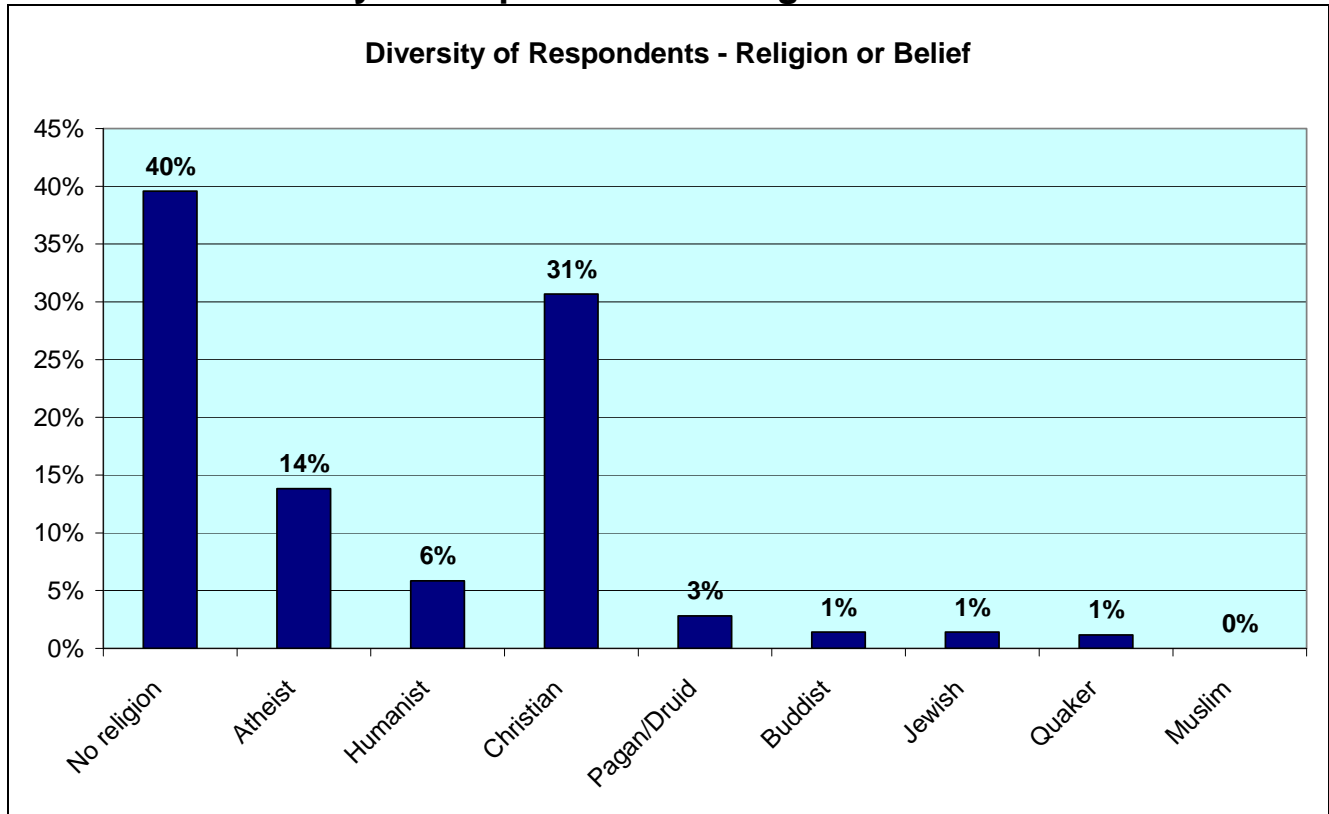
GRAPH 23: Diversity of Respondents – Transgender Status



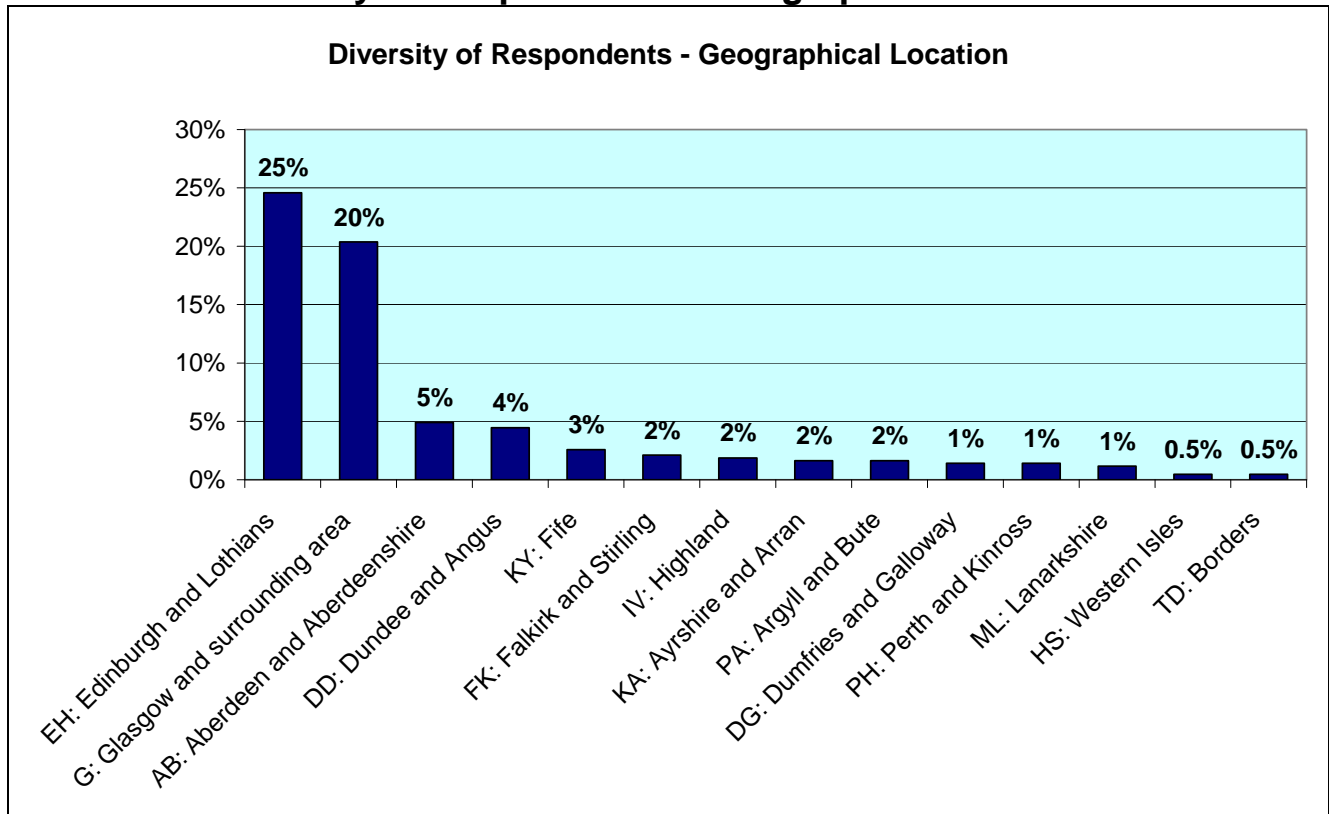
GRAPH 24: Diversity of Respondents – Age



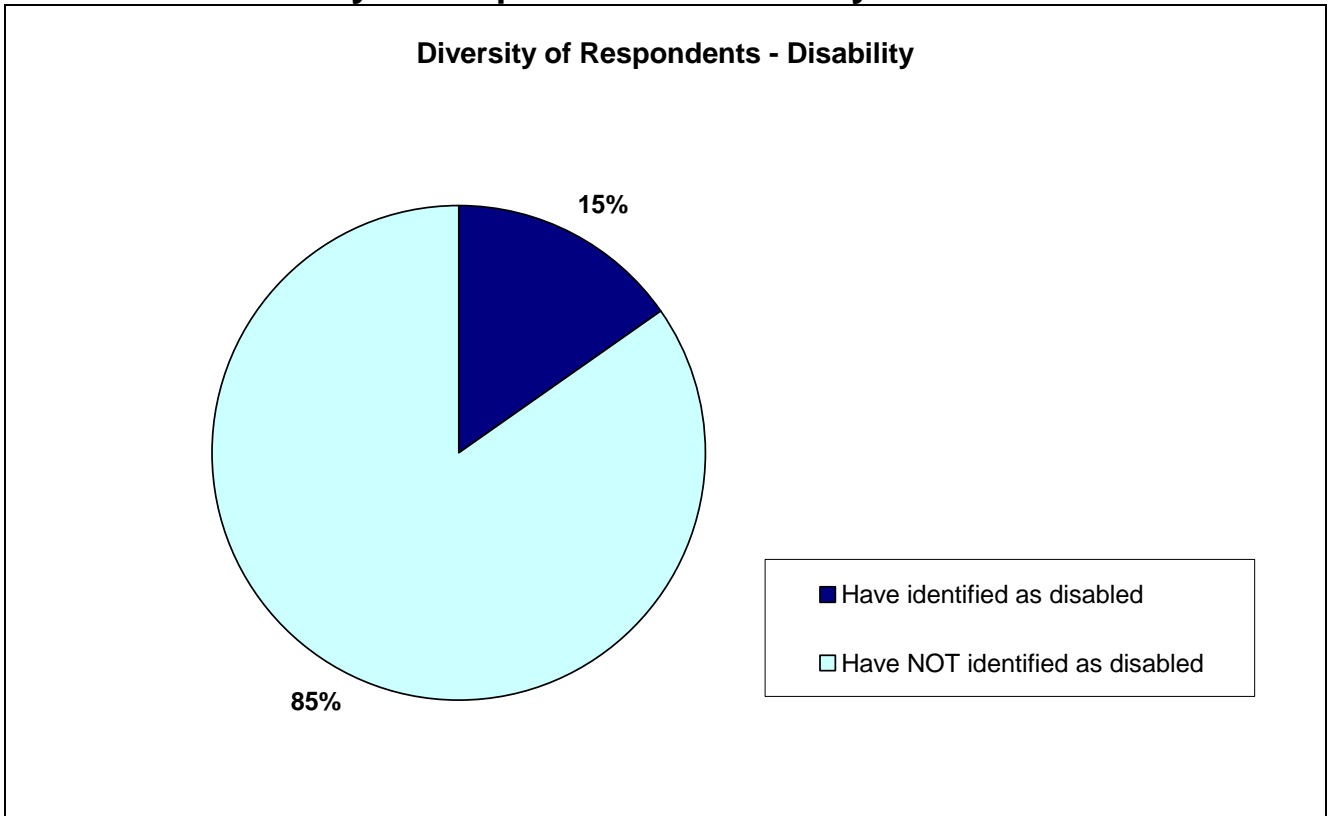
GRAPH 25: Diversity of Respondents – Religion or Belief



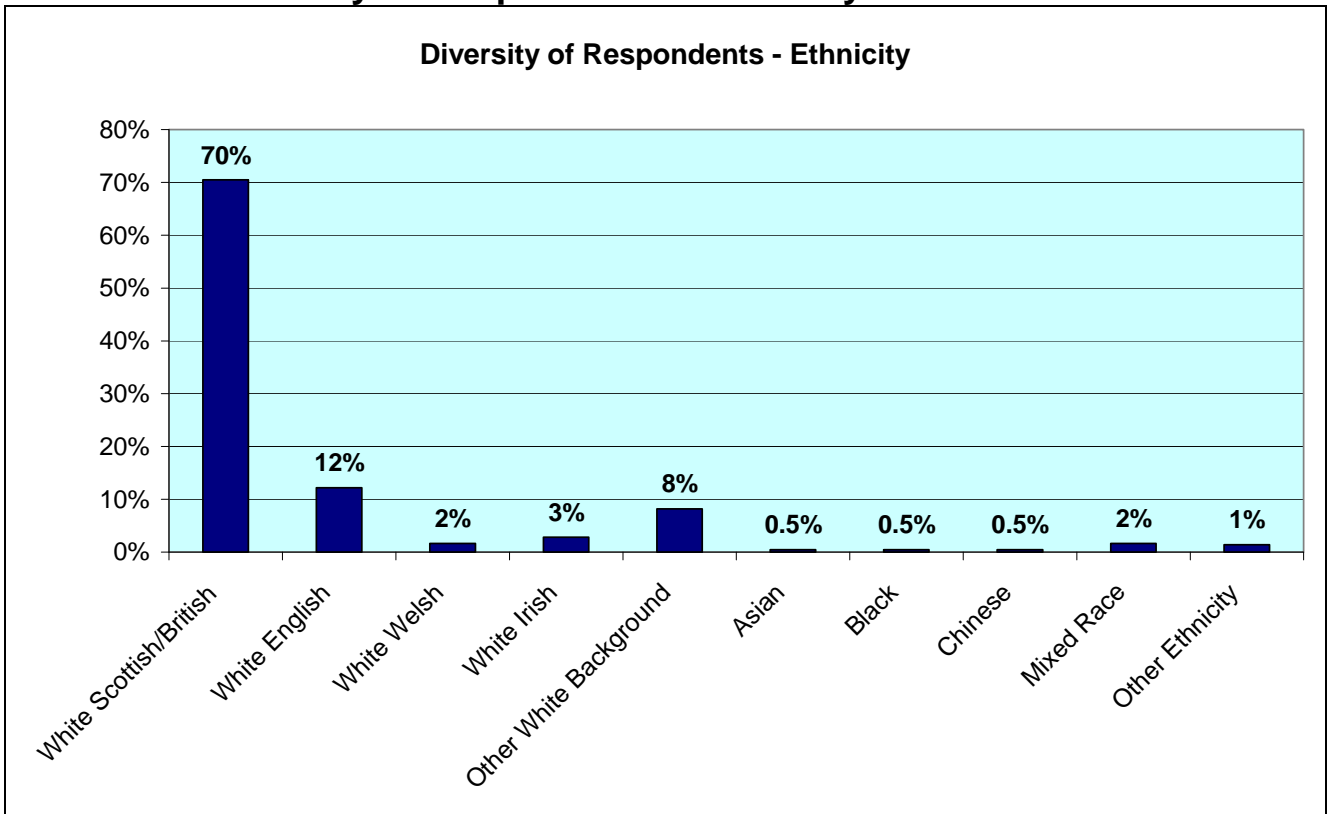
GRAPH 26: Diversity of Respondents – Geographic Location



GRAPH 27: Diversity of Respondents – Disability

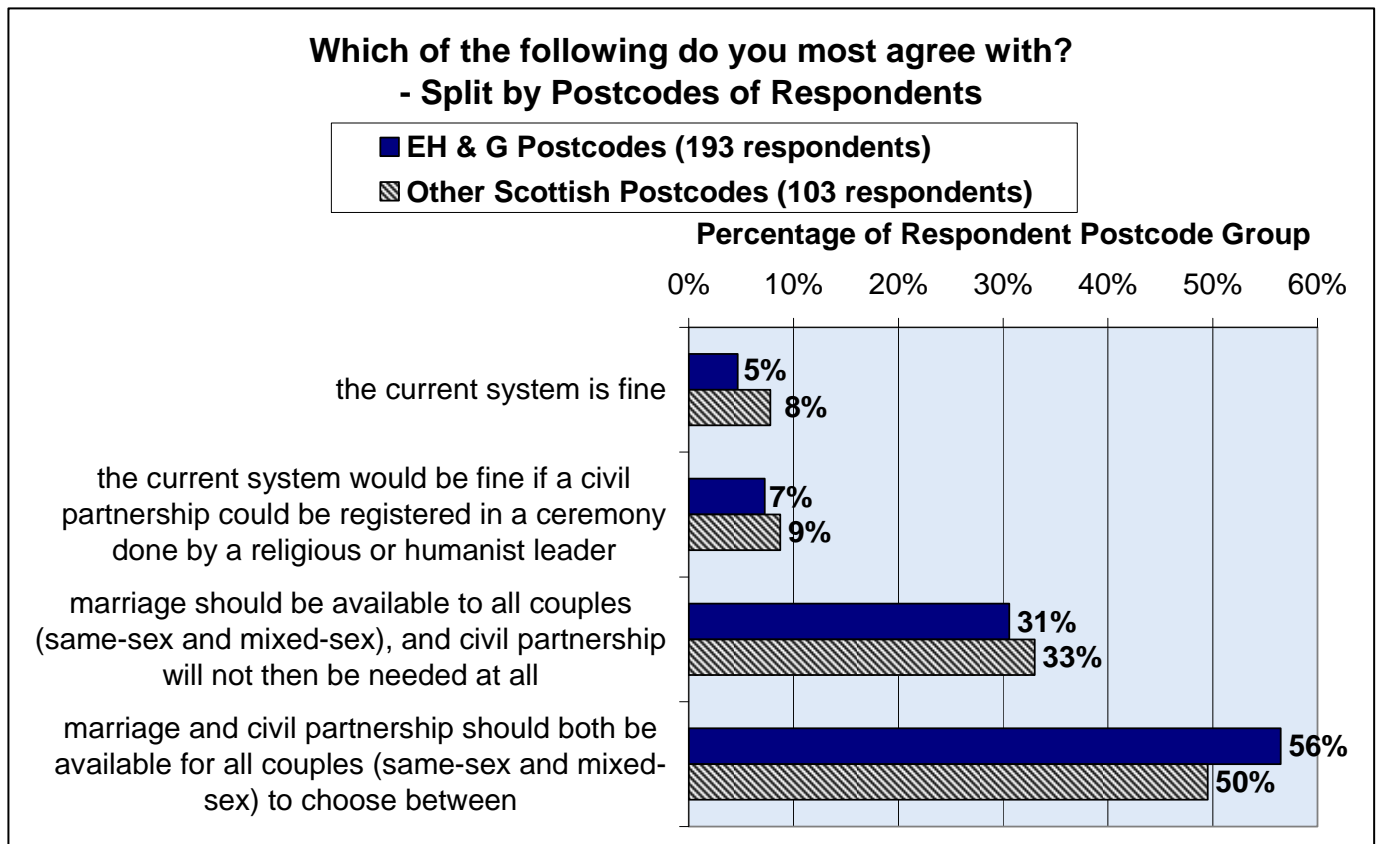


GRAPH 28: Diversity of Respondents – Ethnicity

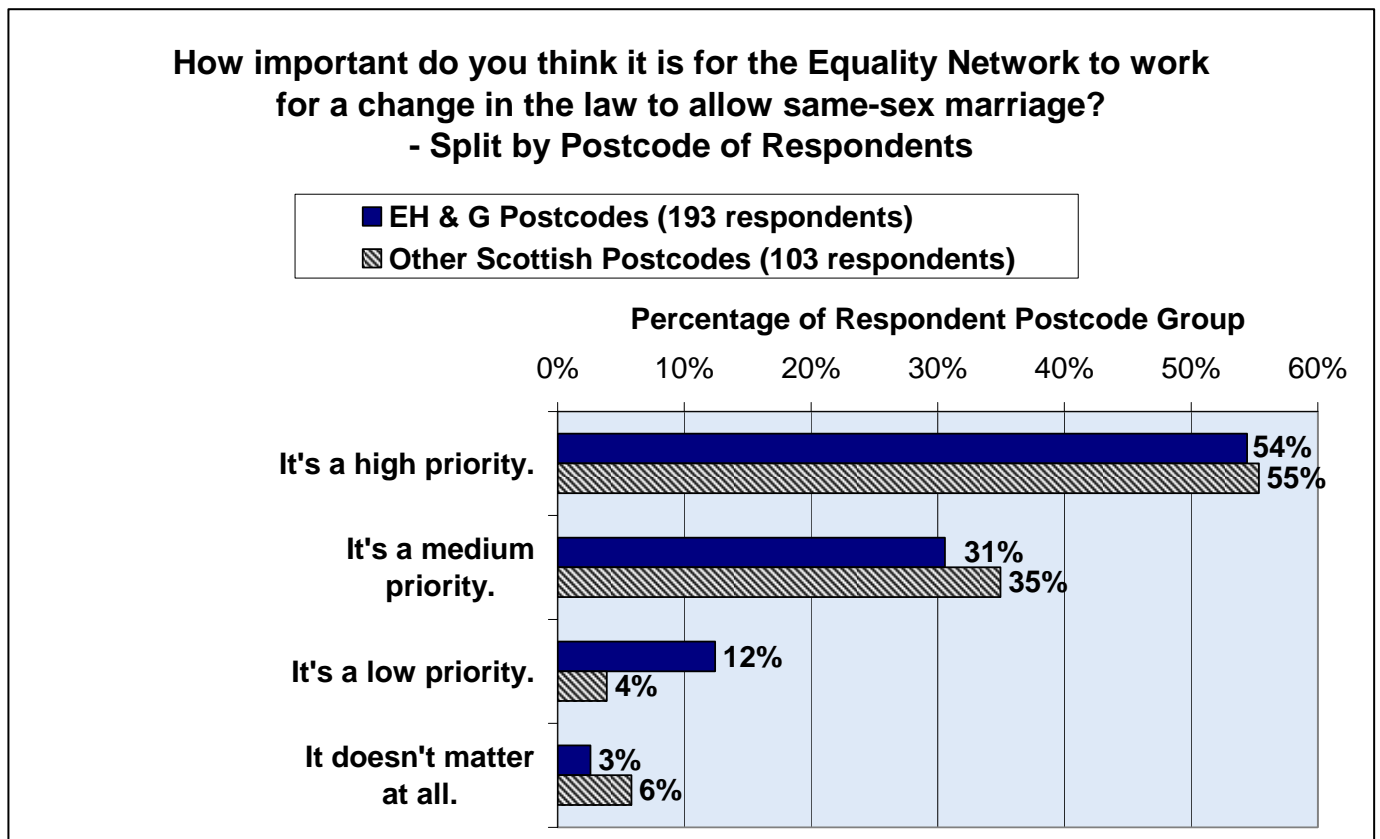


Appendix 3.1: Graphs of Responses by Location

GRAPH 29: Views on Options for Change - Split by Location



GRAPH 30: Views on Importance – Split by Location

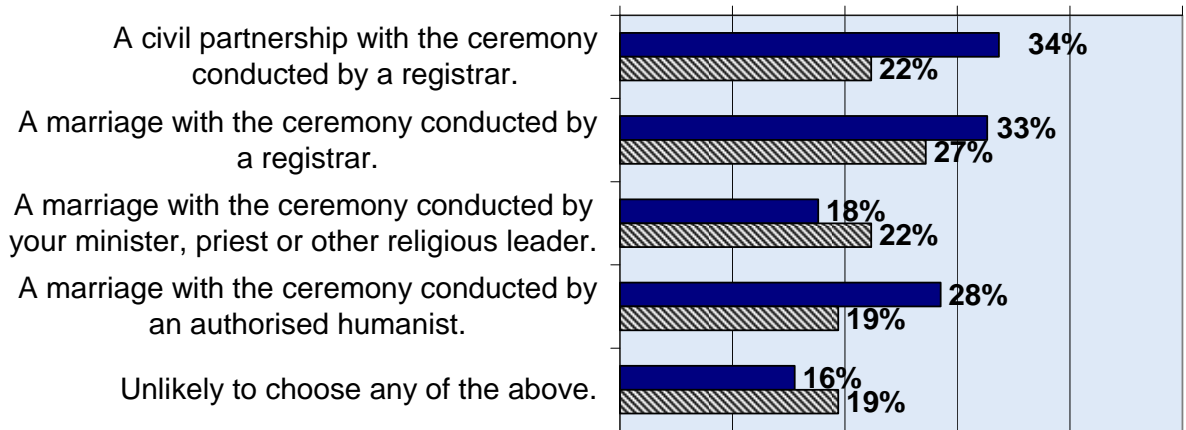


GRAPH 31: Views on Commitment Options - Split by Location

If marriage and civil partnership were both available for all couples to choose, which of the following do you think you might consider in the future? - Split by Postcode of Respondents

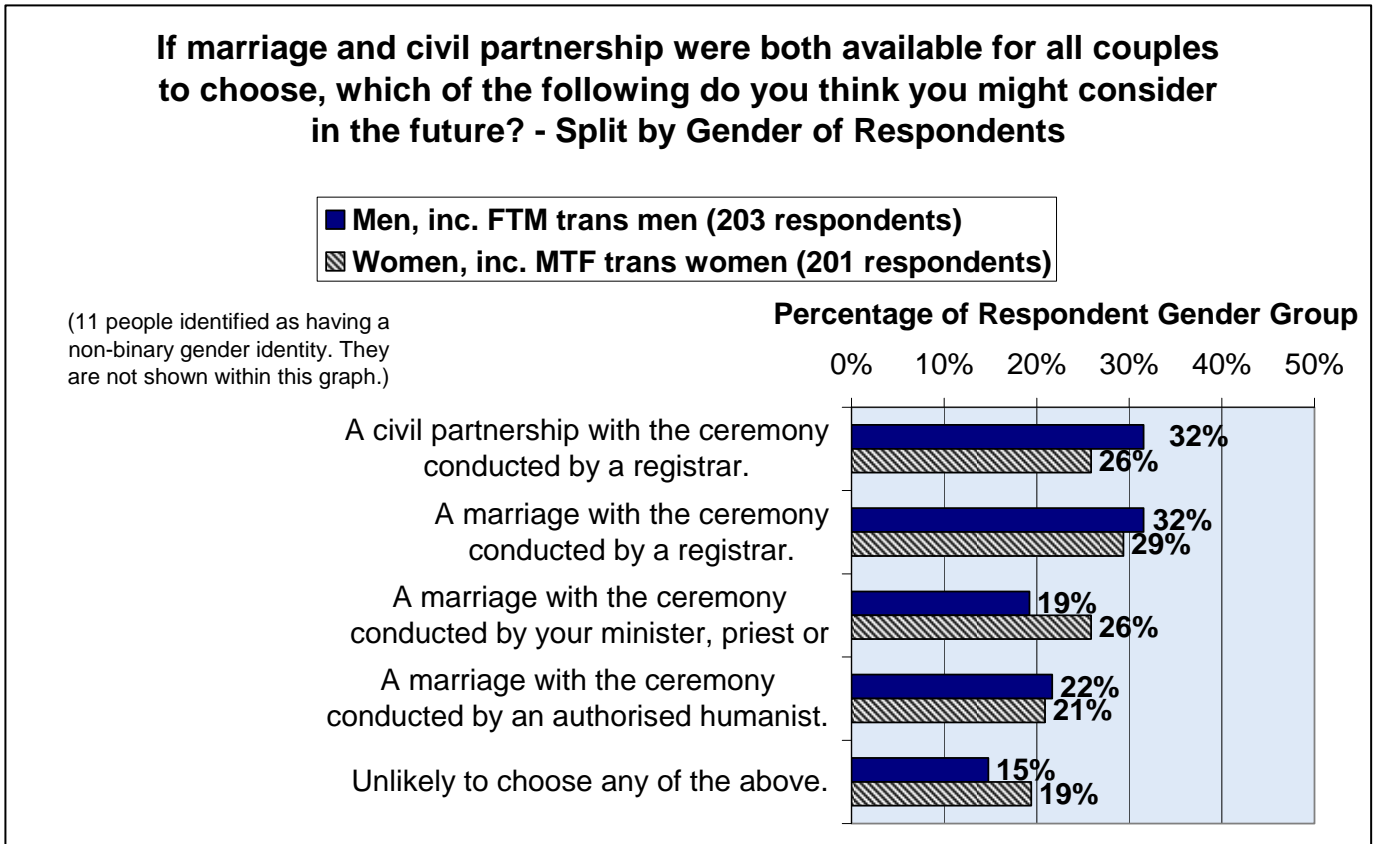
■ **EH & G Postcodes (193 respondents)**
 ▨ **Other Scottish Postcodes (103 respondents)**

Percentage of Respondent Postcode Group
 0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50%

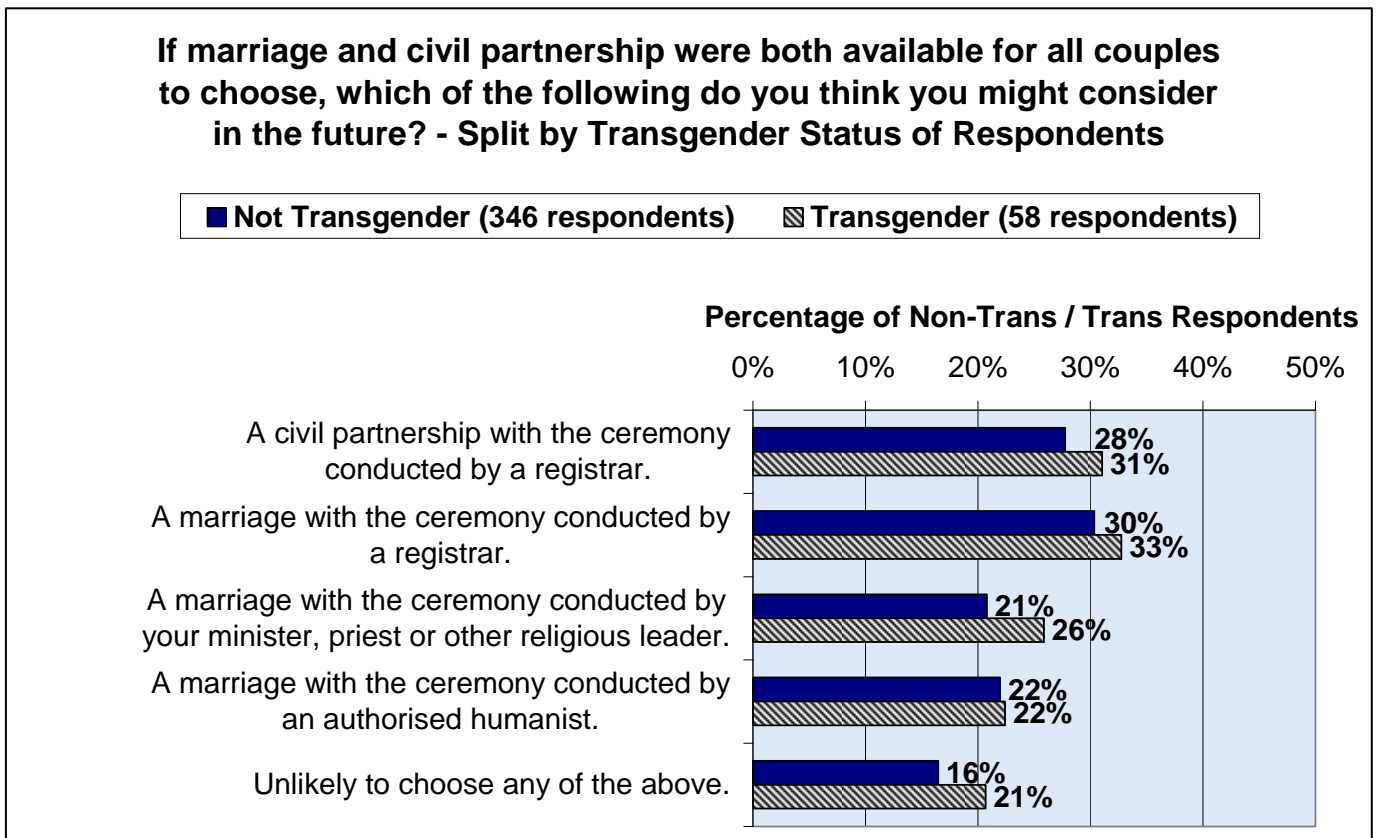


Appendix 3.2: Other Graphs

GRAPH 32: Views on Commitment Options - Split by Gender



GRAPH 33: Views on Commitment Options - Split by Transgender Status



Appendix 4: Illustrative Quotes

Below is a selection of some of the open text answers. They have been included here because while there were too many to include in the body of the report, there were a large number of high quality quotes that expressed a wide variety of options that should not be lost. It is also hoped that including this wider range of responses will be drawn on by all campaigns for equal marriage.

Which of the following do you most agree with?

the current system is fine	the current system would be fine if a civil partnership could be registered in a ceremony done by a religious or humanist leader	marriage should be available to all couples (same-sex and mixed-sex), and civil partnership will not then be needed at all	marriage and civil partnership should both be available for all couples (same-sex and mixed-sex) to choose between	Could you please say why you think that?
X				The problem that existed before the introduction of civil partnerships was that same sex couple did not have the same legal rights as mixed sex couples and this was unfair. That has been addressed now and I don't think that the system needs to change any more. Same-sex couples and mixed sex couples are different and diversity should be celebrated. Marriage and Civil partnership shows that diversity in action.
X				While problems with harassment remain prevalent, why be concerned about gay marriage? If marriage and civil partnership have almost identical legal effects, there isn't a problem.
X				Marriage is a hang over from religion and when people were property. It implies ownership and is not a "contract" based upon equality. Therefore, as a non-religious person and egalitarian the current situation is fine.

X	It is commonly said that gays/lesbians are just people like everyone else, and that is perfectly true. However in one respect we are different from the majority, and we should never try to pretend that that difference doesn't exist, still less should we apologise for it. I believe that a gay relationship is good and fine and sacred precisely for what it is and doesn't need to be "validated" by pretending that it's exactly the same as a straight relationship. I therefore don't think it needs to be called "marriage".
X	many L&G people have a faith and feel excluded from the church as they are unable to make their vows in front of God. I was very lucky to have a priest bless my civil partnership
X	Recently had my CP... have not noticed any 'legal' or other difference. In fact, most people refer to us as being married, simply because CP is cumbersome to say! I refer to my Civil Partner as my wife, and no one bats an eyelid.
X	I do want equality, and intend to have a c.p. (though would prefer a humanist ceremony) Don't need marriage which feels culturally less significant to me, and more of a heterosexual institution. That said, I have no objection for those people who want it.
X	...Heterosexuals aren't required any duty to be entitled to have the right to marry, that is specific to heterosexuality. They don't have the obligation to have common biological children, for instance.
X	Having two different types creates extra, unnecessary and expensive layers of bureaucracy. I would also like to be able to refer to my partner as my wife, and to say that I am married. Trying to find a suitable verb to use for civil partnerships, without sounding like a public limited company, is very hard. At the moment we have settled on espoused, which is clumsy and rather archaic. Also I very much appreciate the fact that I can now be legally joined to my partner, it still feels like a second-rate

	arrangement.
X	...Such a change would place Scotland in the elite grouping of highly advanced liberal states including Norway, Sweden, The Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, Canada and South Africa which have true equality in this regard and would raise the profile of Scottish equality in general.
X	I am a partner of a transgendered person. We cannot currently get a civil partnership because my partner does not have a gender recognition certificate. We also cannot get married because we would need to get a divorce before she could get a gender recognition certificate.
X	I was lucky enough to marry my same sex partner (who is British) in the Netherlands (where same-sex marriage is legal) because I am Dutch myself. It made us feel appreciated and just as important as any other (mixed-sex) couple. Although legally married in the Netherlands, it 'only' counts as a civil partnership over here. How weird! I pay the same tax as anyone else, can now be legally our children's other parent (I am going through the adoption procedure to adopt my child who was carried by my partner, however if we decide to have more children I will go straight on the birth certificate, fantastic!) but still can't officially be married to my partner because we're not a mixed sex couple. Time for change!!
X	I think a single relationship for all will lessen the chances of future discrimination and do most to change the culture. It sends out a message that all relationships are equal. Religious blessings can then be at the option of the individual and their own religion. The existence of different forms of relationship has created a hierarchy in the minds of those who care to discriminate and those religiously opposed to gay marriage often do not accept civil partnership in any case (witness the Ladele case) so the government's attempt to separate the two relationships is not effective and many of the public see CPs as marriage despite the differences. Lastly, and NOT LEAST, the difference between marriage and CPs has created the heinous marriage

		bar in the Gender Recognition Act, where happily married couples are obliged to opt for a state-sponsored annulment of their marriage in order for the transsexual spouse to obtain gender recognition, a hateful and impossible choice as I know from my own situation.
	X	... I don't see how the law sees it as discrimination if a same-sex couple were to be denied a room at a hotel but not so when they are denied access to marriage...
	X	however, all services should have a registered section - it's unfair that certain religions can just have 1 service and the others have to do both.
	X	...As more and more religious people come to believe that God, Allah, or whoever else considers gay people as much of a treasure as any other person, it seems ill advised to not allow such accepting religious men and women to fully express this belief by performing the marriages of their gay fellows.
	X	...Marriage should be available to any male, female or intersex person.
	X	LGBT people are entitled to be as stupid as straight people when it comes to entering into the institution of marriage.
	X	...Overall, Civil Partnership is a very popular and progressive legally binding union - if it were to be available for all (and still have exactly the same rights & responsibilities as marriage), it would feel like same-sex couples have been responsible for something positive for all ...
	X	Because people who want to declare a commitment to one another should be able to do so in a fashion they feel comfortable with and that suits them best, regardless of gender. Marriage may seem the 'wrong' institution for some but they may want to still be life-partners and choose a partnership, and vice versa. Also, I feel that it is cruel that for people who transition legally from one gender to another, they may have to have their life partnership suddenly considered void because of this,

	especially if they and their partner would like to remain together in the institution that they initially chose...
X	I was torn between the last 2 options, being a married transsexual I would love to be able to continue my 22 year old marriage and obtain a grc to change my birth certificate etc, and either of these options might help with that. But in the end I chose the last option because I recognize some people might prefer to have a partnership than a marriage...
X	The separation of marriage for mixed-sex couples and civil partnership for same-sex couples institutionalises a distinction that is fair to neither and identifies civil partners publicly as 'different'. Many mixed-sex couples would like a civil partnership without the traditional connotations of marriage. If mixed-sexed couples could become civil partners, civil partnership would not be publicly identified with a presumed sexual orientation.
X	As a Quaker, we believe that the couple and God decide what is a marriage, we are but witnesses. at our York conference we therefore had to accept that at least some committed same sex couples are married...
X	(and why only couples when people are in enduring poly relationships?).
X	Ideally, I would want marriage to be completely abolished - for all the obvious feminist reasons - and civil partnerships to be available to all those who wanted them.
X	as a post op transsexual if i want full gender recognition certificate i have to divorce my partner of 36 years then get a civil ceremony ,thus causing more trauma etc ,a silly situation that needs to be addressed...
X	...CPs were hard fought for and should stay...

X	I find it abhorrent the distinction that is made between marriage and civil partnership. It smacks of equal but different, and makes me feel as a lesbian that my marital status would not be of the same class. I feel this because I am aware that the government backed away from the idea of marriage for all largely because of the religious lobby who believe that same sex relationships do not have the special status of male-female relationships who in principle are able to create their own children. In my view the idea that my love and my relationship is of lesser importance in society is deeply offensive.
X	... [A] recent poll showed that 62 percent of the British public support gay marriage...
X	I don't think all religious leaders should be forced to do a civil partnership but it would be nice if Vicars like mine (I'm a lesbian Anglican) could choose to do them. Equally, it would be lovely if people who objected to traditional 'marriage' could choose to get CPed. I don't think separate but equal is equal and I think that both CPs and marriage have pluses and minuses.
X	I am bisexual, and I feel it is clear discrimination that I can be married to one gender but not to another. Also, I have heard of straight couples wanting to have civil partnership because they feel marriage is too loaded a concept for them, and this should be their right equally.

If marriage and civil partnership were both available for all couples to choose, which of the following do you think you might consider in the future (please tick all that you might consider):

a civil partnership with the ceremony conducted by a registrar	a marriage with the ceremony conducted by a registrar	a marriage with the ceremony conducted by your minister, priest or other religious leader	a marriage with the ceremony conducted by an authorised humanist	unlikely to choose any of the above	Please write in any other option you would like:
				X	any of these options is still limited to two people- i think people should be able to define their attachments with as many people as they like, so siblings / friends etc
				X	I am of the belief that society should not privilege couples. Rights and entitlements should be available to all. My research on lesbian domestic violence has also revealed a fear that civil partnerships may well make leaving an abusive relationship more difficult to leave, as in heterosexual marriage. They may also lead to divisions within the lesbian and gay community, with differing responses to victims depending on whether they are a 'good' settled couple or not.
				X	I am already in a civil partnership and was happy to have the ceremony conducted by a registrar. My partner is catholic and if she wanted to re-new our vows with a priest (if we could find one that would do it!) then I would probably go with that.
				X	In my own situation, I am already married and wish to remain

		so, and simply require gender recognition as female within our marriage.
	X	I am unlikely to choose any of the above as I am a Pagan and I don't see that a ceremony conducted by a high priestess would be allowed in any part of the UK...
	X	I am in a 12 year relationship and personally would not choose to do either but the option must be there for those who do to achieve real equality.
	X	Would prefer a civil partnership conducted by an authorised humanist (which is not an option above)
X		already done it, and liked its low-keyness
X		It's a non secular, non religious way of stating your love for someone.
X		a civil partnership conducted by a minister, priest or religious leader
X		I should also note that I am in a civil union with a partner of the opposite sex, an option which we had to travel to Quebec to exercise, so my answer to the above is not merely theoretical.
X		religious ceremonies, parties etc should be separate for all.
	X	My partner & I had our Civil Partnership two years ago. Had a civil marriage been available we might have chosen that instead - mainly because it's difficult to talk about being "civil partnered" or "going through" our Civil Partnership! It sounds trite but it feels a bit awkward ... if we'd had the choice of marriage I think we would have preferred this. It would also have been a stronger statement to friends and family, some of whom didn't realise that Civil Partnerships had the same rights & responsibilities as marriage.

	X	<p>Marriage should be a civil ceremony first because in most countries of the world ---it is the civil authority which grants legal licenses to marry. Therefore Marriage is NOT a religious institution per se but anyone who wishes to have the blessing of a religious body should be able to have it ---provided that the religious body is willing to do so.</p>
	X	<p>As a trans person (woman with a gender history) I would choose marriage, not because I think higher of the institution of marriage but for one of the following reasons: 1) Trans people fought long and hard for the right to marry and therefore I would take that opportunity. 2) As I now have a GRC and am recognised legally as female it is my understanding of the law that I cannot enter a civil partnership with my boyfriend.</p>
	X	<p>Marriage by a Minister would be nice, but I accept that you can't force any religion to accept same sex marriage. However, you can change law to accept same sex marriage, and that should be the priority.</p>
	X	<p>I have strong culturally determined values and thoughts about marriage, which for me means definitely more, a stronger and more secure commitment than civil partnership. I'm not religious, so wouldn't seek an additional ceremony conducted by a priest or equivalent.</p>
	X	<p>Am in the less usual situation of married 22 years ago by my minister in my church. Partner has now undergone a sex change and current requirement for GRC is divorce then civil partnership. I very much object to the idea of annulling a sound marriage. However I have always been a supporter of marriage for same sex couples and if we hadn't been married before gender reassignment would opt for 3 above.</p>

	X	I don't think the marriage in church should however cover the legal aspects
	X	separate but equal is never equal. marriage may be a religious institution to some (inc me) but it is, in law, a legal status created nit by God but by the Marriage (Scotland) Act 1977. Those who, like me, see a religious connection do so quite separately from the law. Equal marriage in Scotland would not force anyone to change their religious understanding of marriage as that understanding is not tied in with the law.
	X	Or a civil partnership conducted by a minister, priest etc.
	X	I would like to be married in a church or chapel by a man (or woman) of God
	X	I feel discriminated against as marriage in a church is not available to me.
	X	I would like some form of handfasting available as an official ceremony, to be renewed yearly
	X	I'm a humanist, and I feel i should be entitled to full marriage rights like everyone else. However I'm only entitled to civil partnership, and because of this when I have my civil partnership in May 2010 I am having to have the legal civil partnership on the Friday afternoon and then a humanist ceremony on the Saturday by an officiant who has been officiated specifically for my event. I feel this is an expense and fuss I have been forced to incur due to my sexuality, which is unfair. And even then I'm only civilly partnered - it's not the same, no matter what anyone says and no matter how much i'd like to believe, given the event will cost me thousands of pounds just like any marriage would.
	X	More than two people allowed to "marry".

X	X	X	X	It's all about "owning" the choice.
X		X		I had a CP legally conducted by a registrar but was lucky enough to have a priest perform a blessing
	X	X	X	I feel I would prefer to marry my partner in a few years, and as such am waiting hopefully for that option to be available to us.

Please answer this question if you are in a civil partnership. If same-sex marriage became available in the future, and you could convert your civil partnership to a marriage without losing any rights, would you:

consider converting your civil partnership into a marriage	prefer to keep your civil partnership	Could you please say why?
X		Because it gets kind of wearing to have people smirk when you refer to your wife, as if they are humoring you, or to be corrected by people saying, you mean your partner. Although legally there's now no difference, it does make a difference to people's attitudes to your relationship...
X		To make a statement about the equal value of same sex and mixed sex commitment.
X		It's a fundamental question of my relationship being as valid as a married couples and wishing the law to reflect that. I have also come across instances where civil partnership is still not given as a relationship status when filling in forms. Marriage for all would be one way of avoiding this. Also, having to state you are in a civil partnership rather than marriage forces you to out yourself whether you wish to or not.
X		Only if required to have equality when we move abroad.
X		For one thing, the present distinction is time-wasting and fiddly. "Are you married?" said an official, filling in a form for me, at a hospital. "Well, yes, no, not exactly, I have a civil partner."...

X	<p>1. we are both practicing Christians and would dearly love a religious ceremony, although of course the Church may lag some way behind the law in allowing this.</p> <p>2. civil partnerships, ours and others', are still spoken of even by kind friends in terms implying lesser status than marriage -- for example, still using words like "your friend" or "your companion", with old-fashioned well-meant tact, which would not be used of someone's spouse...</p>
X	I feel married, I describe myself as married, I live as though I'm married... I'd like to be legally married!
X	I feel it's taken more seriously by some members of society. Some people understand it more easily than 'a civil partnership'.
X	<p>There'd be no difference (a) to my relationship (b) to the practical elements of our legal status and (c) to the attitudes of others to our relationship (those who matter). Would have been nice to have had my minister involved in the ceremony, but purely 'nice' - not crucial.</p> <p>Also - I dislike the historical baggage that comes with 'marriage'. Civil Partnership is a far better term for a modern, equal relationship.</p>
X	I do not like the connotations of marriage. Civil partnership is a wonderful institution. The only defect is that it identifies your presumed sexual orientation, and is not open to mixed-sex couples. I feel that that Equality Network should campaign for civil partnership to be open to mixed-sex couples, not only to correct the discrimination against mixed-sex couples, but also to avoid civil partnership being identified with a particular sexual orientation. As soon as you say you are civil partners, it is like coming out even if you do not wish to in that context.
X	Marriage is theistically derived, and I am not a theist (even where marriage ceremonies are conducted by a Registrar, the origins of marriage remain the same). Marriage is a (much tarnished) heterosexual institution, and carries with it extremely misogynist traditions (women being "given away" by their father to their husband, women passively taking their husbands' surnames, etc)...
X	depends really - would need to know what difference it would make, whether there were associated costs (e.g. it cost over £250 to register the CP - would we need to pay the equivalent again?)

X	My Partner and I had a civil union in New Zealand where any two adults can enter into a civil union. My partner is transgendered and for us to have had a civil partnership in the UK would have meant we would have had our civil partnership set aside for my partner to apply for his gender recognition certificate. Then if we wanted the legal protection we had received under the civil partnership we would have to get married. Not a very well thought through piece of legislation.
X	I feel that my civil partnership gives me the legal status I want- and I feel that converting it to a marriage would subsequently undervalue the CP

Please answer this question if you are in a civil partnership. Do you feel that you and your partner have always been given the same rights and respect that a married couple would get?

Yes	No	If you answered No, please can you say how you have not received equal rights or respect?
x		We have mostly, and definitely have received the rights. But I've lost count of the number of times I've had to answer the question, "what's a Civil Partnership?" and then deal with the "why?" question...
	x	But I still feel I would feel more equal in eyes of society. Civil partnership just seems like something for people who are not allowed to get married because their relationship is still not considered quite on a par with a heterosexual one.
	x	Qualification of the above - we have been in the main given the same rights and treated with the same respect as a gay 'married couple' would be, whether that amounts to the same respect as a heterosexual couple would get may be another question and another battle.
	x	we want to adopt or foster and although the law has just now changed, it is a struggle to get through the assessment. civil partnership is like a second class thing
	x	It's mostly about respect and other people's attitudes. For example, my wife's work is very old-fashioned and quite formal, despite her asking them to change her title to Ms, she always gets work-related post and is referred to in minutes of meetings as Miss. They say they only use Miss or Mrs, but will not change her title to Mrs. I have noticed that a lot of people don't seem to view a civil partnership in the same permanent light either.
	x	Don't get joint invitations at work and because we both use Ms people assume singleness.
	x	The registry office details only allowed for bride and groom when we registered our intention...

x	Hospitals. Twice I've had stand-up arguments with hospital administrators, explaining that my partner is indeed my next of kin and has every right to any information I want him to have. And I was the sick person!
	1 - survivors' pensions are calculated only on pension contributions back to 1989 for civil partners, but back to the year dot for married couples
x	2 - our partnership could not be celebrated, as a legal event, by our church minister
x	While we feel we have the same rights, we do not always have the same respect. When asked about marital status, you know that if you say 'civil partner' you are coming out and you sometimes see a reaction which indicates at best shock and at worst distaste. Questions about marital status, which are a common part of application forms, should not force you to reveal a presumed sexual orientation. If civil partnership were open to mixed-sex couples, 'civil partner' would not identify you publicly in this way.
x	Some people don't even know what it is.
x	...Where I work one person in particular did not like being classified as married/civil partnership. Although it was obviously nothing personal (how many times do you hear that), they just had the utmost respect for marriage and took it very seriously and did not think that we should have a classification that put married/civil partnership together. This person could still not understand that I felt exactly the same about my "marriage" as theirs.
x	My local Conservative candidate, Mark Nolan, said he was in favour of tax breaks for married couples. I asked him whether he envisaged the breaks as extending to civil partnerships. He said, No. (Later, after I pointed out David Cameron had pledged to treat them alike, he backtracked.) [The] University, where I work, has been advertising English-language courses for the "spouses" of foreign students. I and the LGBT network here have been protesting and we seem to be getting somewhere, but initially a change was resisted. In my Department..., there is customarily a collection for those getting married. There was no collection for my civil partnership, though there was a card that people signed. It was as if someone thought, "Well, it's only gay, so we don't go the whole hog with a present." A year later there was a collection for someone's second marriage and another collection for someone who had left but was getting married.

	<p>We are of course in a position comparable to many other couples whose partnership would not have been allowed a century ago -- mixed races or religions, divorced people and so on. The difficulty in accepting these changes is most frequently evident in family intimacy, e.g. where relatives kindly invite us to stay but expect us to sleep separately whereas married guests are offered a double bed; or introduce us to other visitors simply by name, sometimes requesting us in advance not to say things like "and this is my partner N -- " as they don't want their friends or fellow church-goers to know that we're gay.</p> <p>I wish to make clear that I am regretting but not criticising these kind relatives, and acknowledge that they struggle courageously with very deep-seated cultural prohibitions.</p>
x	Hotels not returning our calls when we wanted to book for our civil partnership. Some odd comments at hotels re double beds.
x	<p>Wide-spread heterosexism means that same sex couples are mostly perceived as 'friends' by the majority of people and treated as such. This is a particular problem with hospitality, retail and service-sector staff, as it results in us having to endlessly 'correct' them and then face their embarrassment, potential hostility, and undue attention from passers-by/other customers; i.e. we are continually turned into a public 'freak show' because of their ignorance.</p> <p>The medical profession is institutionally homophobic, and GPs/Practice Nurses/GP admin staff/GP Receptionists are notorious for disregarding acceptable terminology, disrespecting same sex couples, and for being passively discriminatory.</p>
x	...NHS - civil partnership has to go under 'other' which is discriminatory... so I put married and am treated as if I'm heterosexual
x	...When dealing with bureaucracy using the term wife is followed by a pause or immediately followed with what is your husband's name.
x	<p>Even with civil partnerships having been in effect for a number of years, they remain unrecognised by various service providers. This is evident when applying for, for example, insurance, mortgages, etc. or completing surveys, where civil partnership is not an option offered when asked about your relationship. This is problematic if applying jointly for products and in terms of having visibility for civil partnerships when surveys, questionnaires etc are analysed.</p> <p>I still find some service providers in the leisure industry (e.g. hotels, B&B's) do not afford respect and will raise their eyebrows, or question why you want a double room, for example.</p>

x	People refer to us as 'not really married' and we had problems with people understanding at the bank when we got a joint account.
x	...Respect - the prevailing culture is so focused on (straight) marriage, that anything 'less' than that isn't taken as seriously... My brothers and sisters weren't as interested or excited by our civil partnership as they were by any other wedding in the family.
x	Because we were previously married as man and woman, we had to get divorced in relation to gender recognition before getting a civil partnership. I did not want to get divorced at that time but had no choice. It felt like I was made to have the 'second best' option for a legal union, purely because of gender and sexual orientation; yet as a couple we still had the same relationship.
x	I think it's too new to be valued in the same way and until straight couples can also enter into one I doubt it will ever have the same value in society

Do you have any other comments on marriage and civil partnership? For example, if you are transgender, has the current law affected your relationships?

How important do you think it is for the Equality Network to work for a change in the law to allow same-sex marriage?

Thinking about this, which of the following do you most agree with?

it's a high priority it's a medium priority it's a low priority it doesn't matter at all

Response Text

the current system is fine the current system would be fine if a CP could be registered in a ceremony done by a religious or humanist leader marriage should be available to all couples (same-sex and mixed-sex), and CP will not then be needed at all marriage and CP should both be available for all couples (same-sex and mixed-sex) to choose between

Civil Partnership is the most important step we have taken towards equality and respect. It has made a massive difference to my life and I have felt a real change in attitudes since it was introduced. Our families were always loving and supportive towards me and my partner but before our Civil Partnership I know they didn't always "come out" to their own friends - but my father-in-law now calls himself my father-in-law, and I know that he proudly showed pictures of our CP to his golf club friends. A few weeks before they were making him feel uncomfortable with homophobic banter that he didn't feel able to tackle, but the legal status of our relationship is now not questionable, so he felt empowered to tell them that his daughter is gay! I also feel much more confident and comfortable when dealing with officialdom ... giving personal details to Government Depts or getting insurance, etc... Everyone knows that my relationship status is absolutely valid now, it's the law - regardless of their personal opinion - which means that I am valid too!

X

X

X	Really hope you guys can sort this out. Not sure if GRC is on the cards for my partner. Although we're told you don't need a GRC, she has been asked for one to have her gender altered on some records (though with the help of trans academic group the OU has changed its policy). If there was no requirement for us to end our marriage she would apply for a GRC, but we still think back to our wedding day with great affection and would hate to have it end just on some legal technicality.	X
X	There should be recognition too of enduring polyamorous relationships and less widely acknowledged family models/structures.	X
X	At the moment, transsexual people in pre-existing marriages have to annul or dissolve their marriages before re-registering the relationship as a civil partnership. This causes a huge amount of unnecessary cost and anxiety, and means that the partner's rights are often then affected, as many organisations will look at the date of the civil partnership (rather than the earlier date of marriage). The government likes to distinguish between them, but has a woolly message on whether they are the same or different - and the message seems to depend on the organisation they are talking to. If they are the same, then why were civil partnerships introduced? If they are	X

	different, then why force legally married people to dissolve that relationship only to recreate it in a different manner? Is this simply to pacify religious people or to "tick a box"?	
X	I am a male bisexual and currently have a girlfriend who is a female bisexual. If we were to choose to solemnise our relationship, we would be at liberty to marry, but not to enter into a civil partnership. If we parted and either of us began a relationship with someone of the same sex, the opposite situation would apply. Thus, unequal treatment can apply to the same person under different circumstances.	X
X	My partner and i are currently planning a civil partnership, however we have discussed waiting for the right to have a marriage rather than a civil partnership, the question is how long would we have to wait? We feel that the current legislation makes the vast majority of our (heterosexual) friends feel that a civil partnership is 'not as serious' as a marriage. which we find very upsetting.	X

X	Why, when there is so much real evil and real suffering in the world, as well as so many threats to the future of humanity, are so many people so "hung up" about two human beings falling in love with each other and wanting to dedicate their lives to each other ? It's a huge tragedy and soaks up so much energy that should be directed in many other directions.	X
X	...A campaign to redress this cultural imbalance may be more the pertinent issue than colluding with hetrocentricism to offer everyone marriage rights.	X
X	At the moment, although I am a post-operative transsexual woman, I cannot get my birth certificate altered because I am legally married to a woman. I don't see why I should be forced to choose between recognition of my true gender and my marriage.	X
X	It is so difficult to get info on marriage abroad and the implications of this when you return home. travel companies refuse to help although they help straight couples	X
X	There is no guarantee that any changes in "Marriage" will be equally and equitably applied to "Civil Partnerships" in the future or that changes could be made to Civil Partnerships and not Marriage. This would not be an issue or a concern if there was Marriage Equality.	X

Separate is never Equal. Why else, other than discrimination would it be separate?

As a lesbian in a relationship with a trans man, I feel that my relationship is neither lesbian nor straight, neither mixed sex nor same sex. As such, neither ceremony feels appropriate to me and my partner. Currently, I could enter into a civil partnership with my partner, as he is still legally female. However we would then have to dissolve the partnership if he wished to pursue gender recognition. Alternatively we could wait until he gets gender recognition, then we would be able to marry. We are the same two people, in the same relationship. The fact that a piece of paper stating that his gender is 'now' male affects our legal status is ludicrous. Our situation is unusual perhaps, but certainly not unique. I worry about what would happen if one of us were to die and we had no legal recognition of our relationship, but this is not enough to make me enter into a ceremony which denies the existence of complex relationships.

X

X

X	<p>...However, there are other very urgent and pressing issues such as homophobic bullying in school, fear of coming out, continued invisibility of LGBT people across all sectors of society (particularly lesbian women and transgender people) and of course the serious issue of LGBT mental health risks and suicidality. In my opinion addressing these issues is as important, if not more important, than pursuing Civil Marriage...</p>	X
X	<p>Because I choose not to formalise my relationship in either of these ways I feel pretty invisible in these discussions.... feels very much that in the future the only 'real' lgbt relationships are going to be judged on whether we are in a 'civil partnership' or not - back to the same fights feminist had to make way-back-when re not being defined by our 'marriage' status etc . sorry, don't mean to sound too negative cos actually some of the questions you did just ask do allow for an alternative view.</p>	X

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