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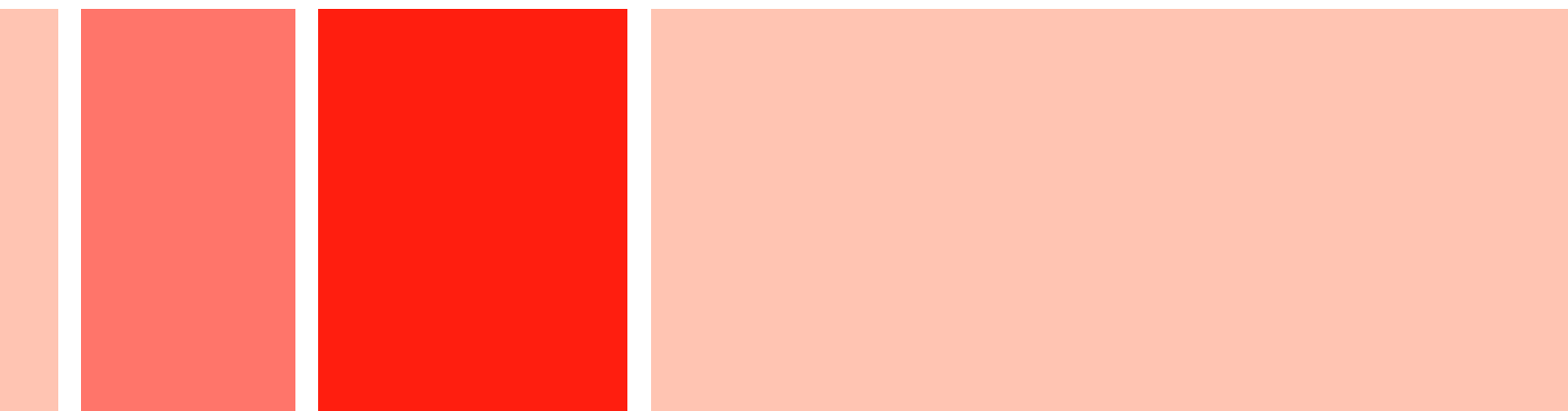
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Local Government Candidates Survey 2012



Survey of Local Government Candidates 2012

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

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Introduction

The Welsh Government, with the support of Data Unit Wales, has carried out a survey of local government councillors and candidates following the May 2012 elections. In relation to local government candidates, the survey is the first of its kind in Wales.

As part of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, local authorities were required to conduct a standardised survey of councillors and unsuccessful candidates for election to the office of councillor in their area. The survey was to include both county and community councillors and asked a prescribed set of questions that included (but was not limited to) questions about gender; sexual orientation; language; ethnicity; age; disability; religion or belief; health; education and qualifications; employment; and work as a councillor. Data Unit Wales supported a number of local authorities in collecting this information following the local elections in May 2012.

The main aim of the survey was to provide timely information on the demographic profile of local authority councillors and candidates, alongside analysis of trends over time, comparing against Electoral Reform Society (ERS) and Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) data from previous years. The intention is that the survey would be repeated at each ordinary election and allow for longitudinal comparisons over time.

This report summarises demographic characteristics of elected councillors and unelected candidates, focusing particularly on diversity. It is intended that the information provided will support the Welsh Government and the political parties in the development of policies to increase diversity of those who stand as county and community councillors.

Note: The results do not include data from Anglesey, whose elections were delayed for a year until May 2013, at which time there will be a separate survey for the county.

Summary of Key Findings

- A total of 3,201 responses were collected from 21 local authorities.
- The response rate of county councillors varied across local authorities from 66 per cent in Flintshire to 12 per cent in Cardiff.

Gender

- 32 per cent of elected councillors were female in comparison to 31 per cent of unelected candidates.
- Among county councillors, 28 per cent were female.

Age

- The majority of elected councillors were over the age of 60 – 57 per cent of county councillors and 61 per cent of community councillors.
- 46 per cent of unelected candidates were of the same age.

Ethnicity

- The majority of elected councillors were White – 99.4 per cent.
- 2.8 per cent of unelected candidates were from an ethnic minority background (Mixed/multiple ethnic groups, Asian/Asian British, Black/African, Other).

Religion

- 83 per cent of the sample of elected councillors said they were Christian in comparison to 70 per cent of unelected candidates.

Sexual Orientation

- 2 per cent of elected councillors identified as lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB) in comparison to 5 per cent of unelected candidates.

Disability

- 14 per cent of elected councillors considered themselves to be disabled compared to 15 per cent of unelected candidates.

Prior Experience

- 83 per cent of elected councillors said they had served as a councillor in the past, suggesting that re-election is very common.

Employment Status

- 44 per cent of elected councillors were retired in comparison to 35 per cent of unelected candidates.
- 3 per cent of elected councillors were not in the labour market in comparison to 6 per cent of unelected candidates.
- 43 per cent of elected councillors described their current or most recent employment sector as public, 43 per cent as the private sector, and 5 per cent as the voluntary sector. The remaining 9 per cent described their current or most recent employment sector as 'other'. There was little variation across the sample of unelected candidates.
- A lower proportion of unelected candidates were manual or craft workers.

Education Level

- 52 per cent of the sample of elected councillors held a qualification equivalent to NVQ level 4 and above (i.e. degree or professional qualification) in comparison to 59 per cent of unelected candidates.

Welsh Language

- 25 per cent of elected councillors said their first language was Welsh in comparison to 13 per cent of unelected candidates.
- 16 per cent of county councillors said their first language was Welsh in comparison to 26 per cent of community councillors and 15 per cent of unelected county council candidates.

1 Respondents

The Welsh Government's survey of local government councillors and candidates (referred to hereon as 'the survey') was administered to around 9,250 county and community candidates across 21 local authorities in Wales (due to the postponement of elections in May 2012, this excludes Anglesey). A total of 3,201 responses were collected representing an overall response rate of around 35 per cent. Of these, 2,485 respondents said they had been elected as councillors following the local elections in May 2012, and 523 respondents said they had been unsuccessful. 193 respondents said they had been elected and unsuccessful¹. For the purpose of this report, the latter respondents have been included as both elected and unelected respondents thus, the total sample of elected respondents is 2,678 and the total sample of unelected respondents is 716 (n = 3,394).

Of the 2,678 elected respondents:

- 228 respondents were elected as county councillors.
- 2,206 respondents were elected as community councillors.
- 244 respondents were elected as both community and county councillors
- The total sample of county councillors is therefore 472 (228 + 244).
- The total sample of community councillors is 2,450 (2,206 + 244).

Of the 716 unelected respondents:

- 419 respondents said they had been unsuccessful in standing for council at county level.
- 186 respondents said they had been unsuccessful in standing for council at community level
- 44 respondents said they had been unsuccessful in standing for council at both community and county levels.
- 67 respondents said they had been unsuccessful in standing for council but did not specify to what level they ran.
- The total sample of unelected county council candidates is therefore 463 (419 + 44).
- The total sample of unelected community councillors is 230 (186 + 44).

The report will primarily describe and compare the diversity characteristics of:

- Elected councillors, drawing distinctions between the diversity characteristics of county and community councillors;
- Unelected candidates, drawing distinctions between the diversity characteristics of this sample and unelected county council candidates.

¹ Candidates were able to stand at both County and Community level.

The table below disaggregates the total number of responses by local authority.

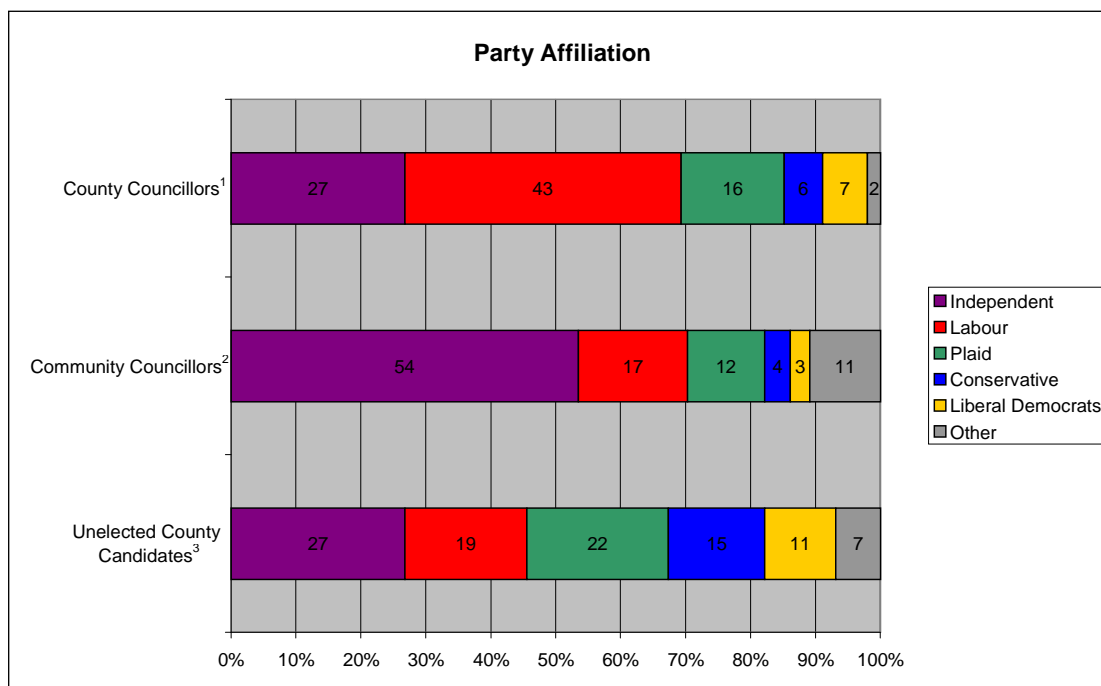
Local Authority	Elected	Unelected	Response Rate of County Councillors (per cent)
Anglesey	NA	NA	NA
Blaenau Gwent	14	3	21
Bridgend	58	15	43
Caerphilly	74	25	42
Cardiff	31	53	12
Carmarthenshire	376	87	54
Ceredigion	61	30	48
Conwy	187	53	53
Denbighshire	125	33	45
Flintshire	233	47	66
Gwynedd	219	25	29
Merthyr Tydfil	20	11	61
Monmouthshire	40	6	12
Neath Port Talbot	93	41	34
Newport	39	21	20
Pembrokeshire	354	60	52
Powys	223	25	23
Rhondda Cynon Taf	23	6	27
Swansea	124	37	40
Torfaen	28	20	18
Vale of Glamorgan	153	76	60
Wrexham	203	42	58
Total	2678	716	-

In relation to community councils, analysis is confined to the 2,450 community councillors. The relatively small sample size of the unelected community candidates (230 respondents) and the absence of any significant differences in demographic profile negate the need for a separate analysis. In relation to county councillors, however, we are able to directly compare unelected and elected candidates. This is justified on account of the roughly equal sample sizes – 472 elected and 463 unelected, and greater likelihood that significant differences will be discernible.

Some respondents chose not to answer certain questions - most notably, political party, sexual orientation, sector of most recent employment and qualification level. The analysis that follows includes valid responses for each question only. This means that the analysis for each question may be based on slightly different groups of respondents depending on how many answered².

² The figures may not always total 100 per cent as a result of rounding up.

2 Party Affiliation



Base: ¹464; ²2,095; ³454

52 per cent of the sample of elected councillors were Independents, 20 per cent held Labour Party seats, 12 per cent were members of Plaid Cymru, 4 per cent held Welsh Conservative seats and 3 per cent were Welsh Liberal Democrats.

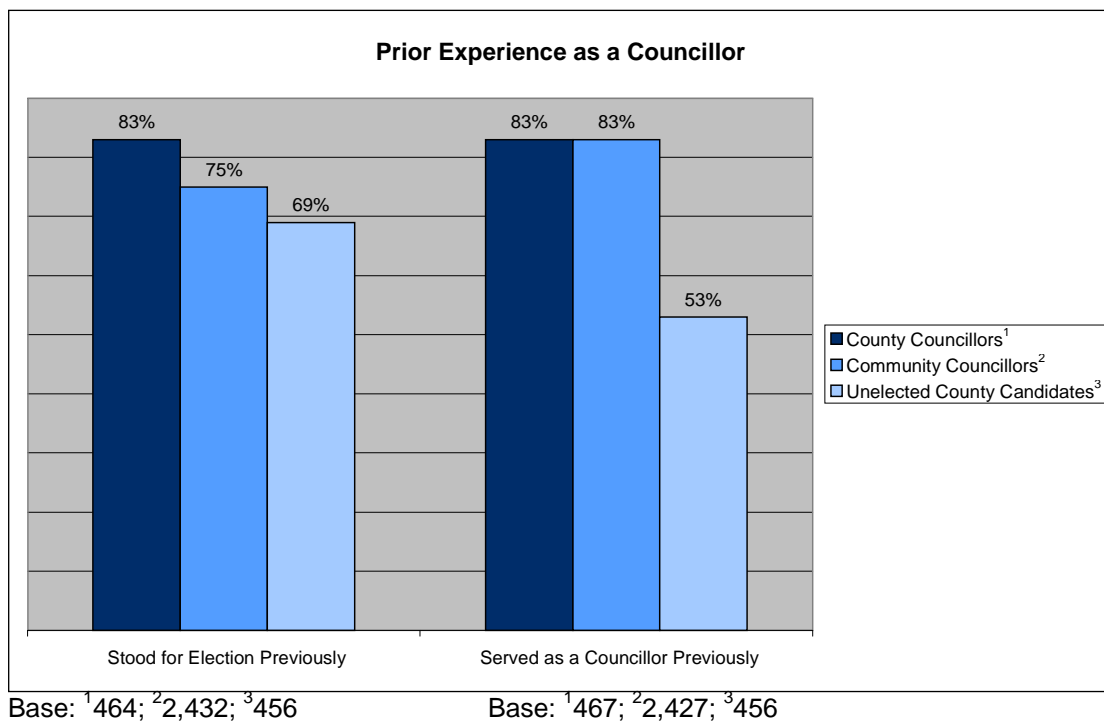
In relation to elected county councillors, 27 per cent of the sample were Independents, 43 per cent held Labour Party seats, 16 per cent were members of Plaid Cymru, 6 per cent held Welsh Conservative seats and 7 per cent were Welsh Liberal Democrats.

For elected community councillors, over 50 per cent were Independents. In comparison to county councillors, a smaller proportion of community councillors held Labour Party seats (17 per cent).

30 per cent of the sample of unelected candidates ran as Independent candidates, 19 per cent ran as Labour Party candidates, 22 per cent as Plaid Cymru candidates, 15 per cent as Welsh Conservatives and 9 per cent as Welsh Liberal Democrats.

Among unelected candidates for county councils, 27 per cent stood as Independents, 19 per cent ran as Labour, 22 per cent as Plaid Cymru, 15 per cent as Welsh Conservatives and 11 per cent as Welsh Liberal Democrats.

3 Prior Experience as a Councillor



75 per cent of the sample of elected councillors had stood for election to a council in the past.

Of the elected county councillors sample, 83 per cent had stood for election to a council in the past in comparison to 75 per cent for community councillors.

61 per cent of the sample of unelected candidates had stood for election to a council in the past, in comparison to 69 per cent of unelected county candidates.

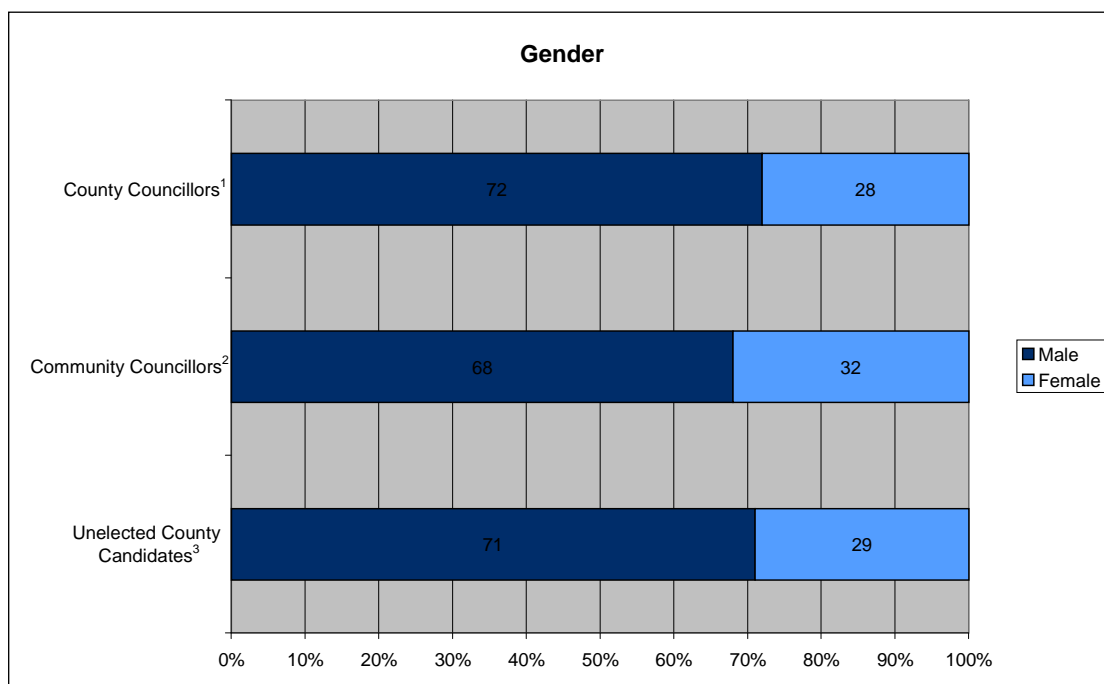
83 per cent of both county and community councillors said they had served as a councillor in the past, suggesting that re-election is very common (although respondents were not asked whether there had been any breaks in their service).

51 per cent of the sample of unelected candidates said they had served as a councillor in the past in comparison to 53 per cent of unelected county council candidates.

Including all periods of office served as a county or community councillor, over 50 per cent of county councillors had over 10 years' experience in comparison to approximately 40 per cent of community councillors.

67 per cent of county councillors had served as a county councillor in the past; again confirming that re-election is common.

4 Gender



Base: ¹468; ²2,422, ³455

Our survey found that, overall, 68 per cent of elected councillors were male and 32 per cent female. Unsurprisingly, these proportions do not reflect the approximately equal gender split in the general population.

Among community councillors, 32 per cent of respondents were female, whilst for county councillors, 28 per cent were female. This is comparable to data reported by the Electoral Reform Society, who estimated following the 2012 elections that 26 per cent of all county councillors were women³.

Our survey suggests an increase in the percentage of women county councillors compared to 2004 when 22 per cent of county councillors were estimated to be female (WLGA, 2004)⁴.

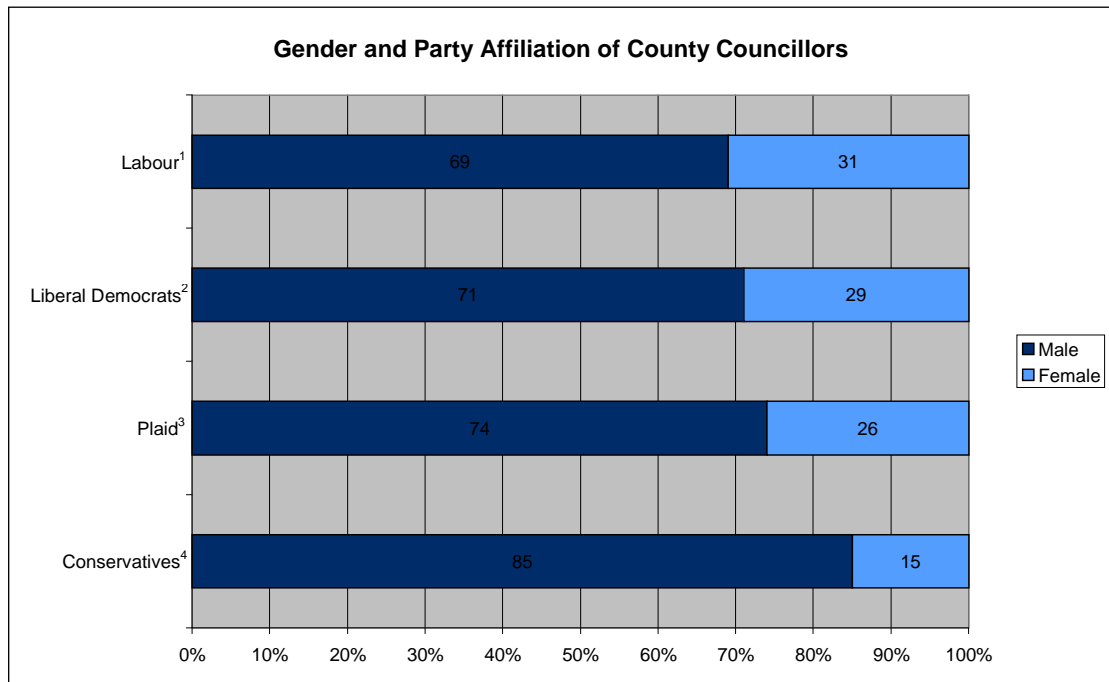
According to the survey, 14 per cent of female county and community councillors had dependent children.

69 per cent of unelected candidates were male and 31 per cent female. Among unelected candidates for county councils, 29 per cent were female. Of these women, 10 per cent had dependent children.

³ Electoral Reform Society (ERS). (2012). Spotlight on Wales: Women and Local Government Electoral Reform Society.

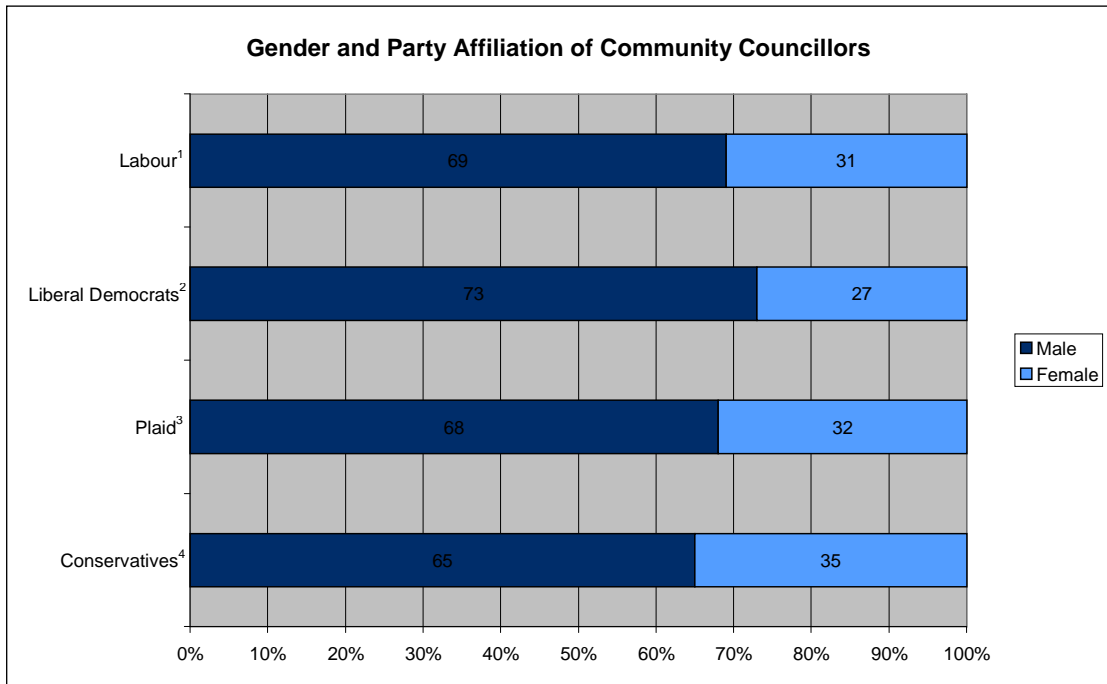
⁴ Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA). (2005). National Census of Local Authority Councillors 2004. Wales – An Overview.

5 Gender and Party Affiliation of Elected Councillors



Base: ¹201; ²31; ³70; ⁴26

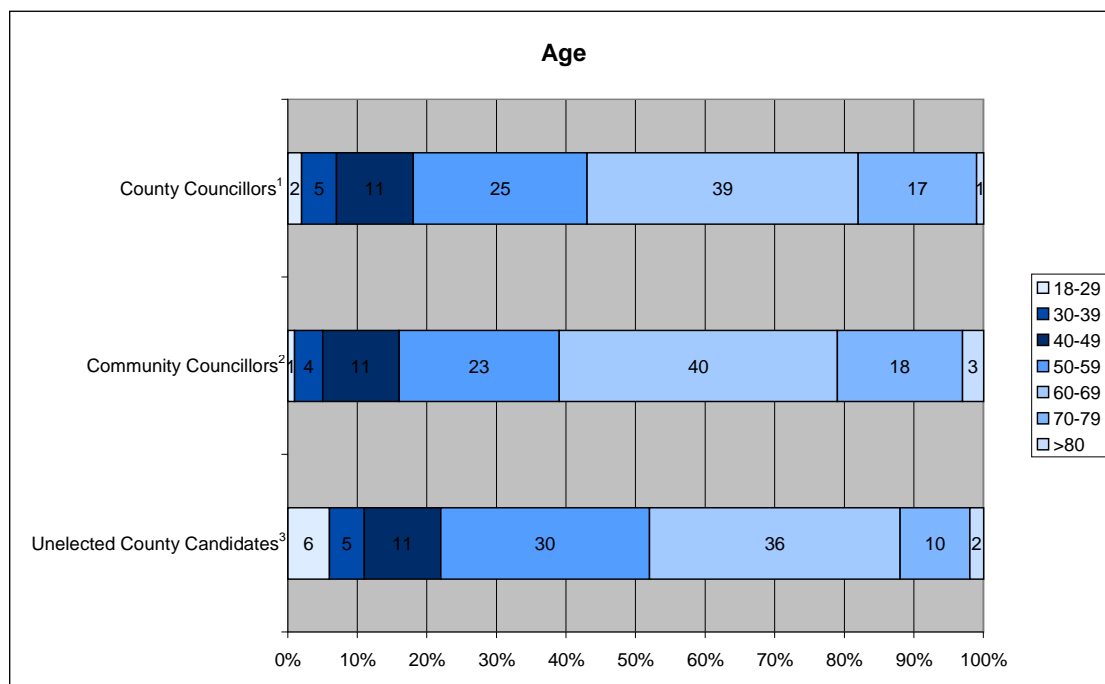
Our survey found that 31 per cent of Labour county councillors were female, compared to 15 per cent of Conservative county councillors. This is similar to data reported by the ERS who found that 'Conservatives do far worse than the other parties on gender balance'. ERS found that 20 per cent of Conservative councillors in Wales were female following the 2012 elections in comparison to 32 per cent of Liberal Democrat councillors and 27 per cent of Labour councillors.



Base: ¹351; ²52; ³240; ⁴82

Our survey found that Conservatives fair better in terms of gender representation among community councillors – 35 per cent of Conservative community councillors were women. In comparison, 27 per cent of Liberal Democrat community councillors were women.

6 Age



Base: ¹469; ²2,430; ³458

The survey found that the majority of elected councillors were over the age of 60 - 57 per cent of county councillors and 61 per cent of community councillors.

The survey also found that only a small minority of elected councillors were aged between 18 and 29 - less than 2 per cent of county councillors and less than 1 per cent of community councillors.

Bringing gender into the equation, we see that 61 per cent of county councillors were male *and* over the age of 50.

In 2004, the average age of county councillors who responded to a similar type of survey was 57 (WLGA, 2004).

Among unelected candidates, 46 per cent were over the age of 60, whilst 6 per cent were aged between 18 and 29 years old. As the graph indicates, similar percentages can be reported for unelected county candidates.

Overall, the above data coincides with a Welsh Government report that 'monitors' the wellbeing of older people (aged 50 and over). This report highlights that participation in politics and decision making is more prevalent among older people; older people are more likely to show an interest in political issues and constitutional affairs⁵.

⁵ Welsh Assembly Government. (2009). Older People's Wellbeing Monitor for Wales 2009.

7 Ethnicity

	White (%)	Other Ethnic Minority Group (%)
County Councillors ¹	99.4	0.6
Community Councillors ²	99.5	0.5
Unelected County Council Candidates ³	97.3	2.7

Base: ¹468; ²2,426, ³460

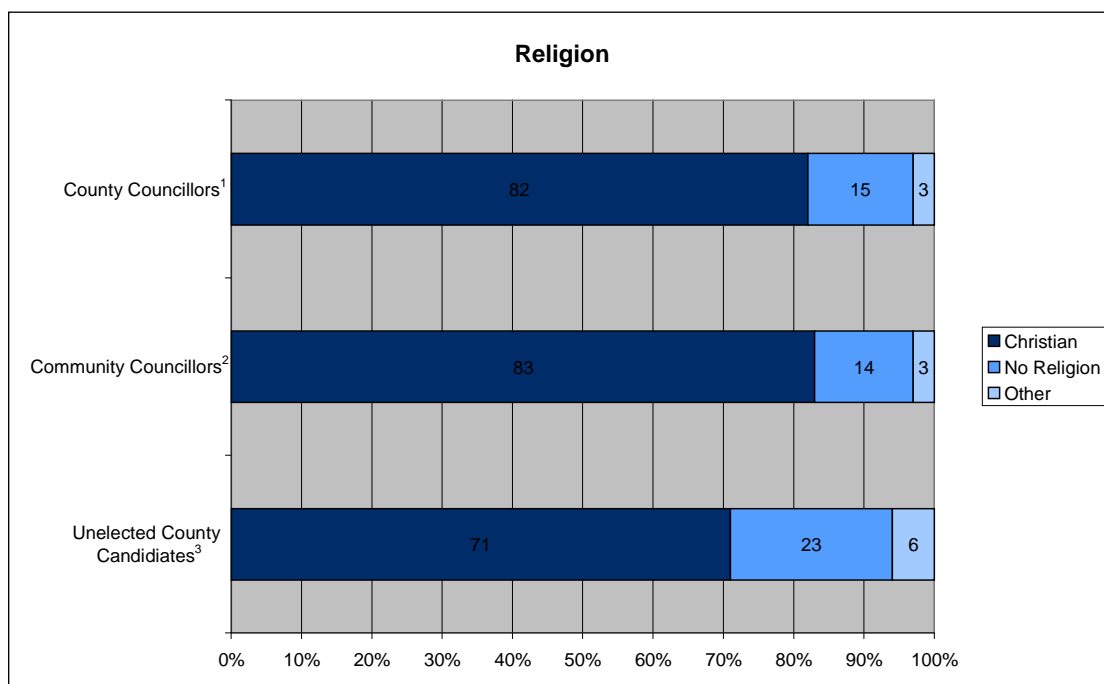
Our survey found that the majority of elected councillors were White – 99.4 per cent (more commonly White Welsh / English / Scottish / Northern Irish / British).

In relation to county councillors, 0.6 per cent belonged to other ethnic minority groups (Mixed/multiple ethnic groups, Asian/Asian British, Black/African, Other), whilst 0.5 per cent of community councillors belonged to other ethnic minority groups. This is comparable to data reported by the WLGA, who estimated in 2004 that 99.2 per cent of county councillors were white and 0.8 per cent were from an ethnic minority background (WLGA, 2004).

The survey also found that all female county councillors that responded identified as White.

Among unelected candidates, the majority were also white – 2.8 per cent belonged to other ethnic minority groups. As the table shows, similar percentages can be reported for unelected county candidates.

8 Religion



Base: ¹451; ²2352; ³442

Our survey found that 83 per cent of elected councillors said they were Christian, 15 per cent had no religion and 2 per cent responded 'Other'. 'Other' comprises the responses Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and 'any other religion'.

There was little variation across the samples of county and community councillors.

70 per cent of unelected candidates said they were Christian, 25 per cent had no religion and 6 per cent responded 'Other'. As the graph indicates, similar percentages can be reported for unelected county candidates.

9 Sexual Orientation

	Heterosexual (per cent)	LGB (per cent)	Other (per cent)
County Councillors ¹	97	3	< 1
Community Councillors ²	98	1	< 1
Unelected County Council Candidates ³	95	4	1

Base: ¹443; ²2,293; ³444;

Our survey found that the majority of elected councillors identified as heterosexual or straight – 98 per cent.

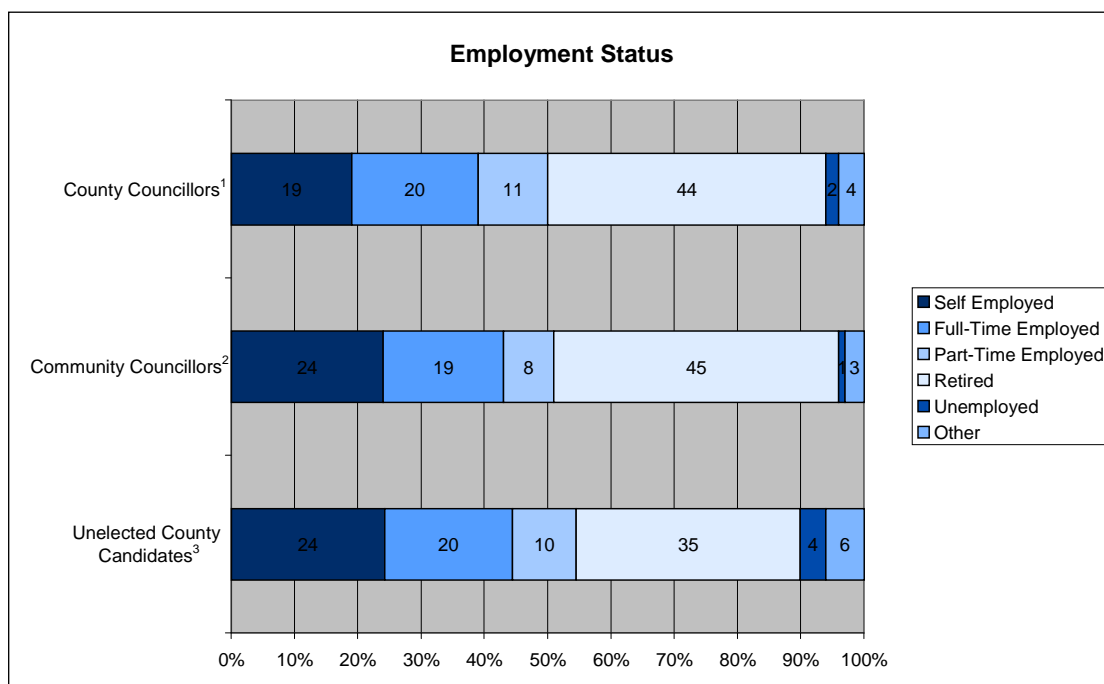
3 per cent of county councillors identified as LGB in comparison to 1 per cent of community councillors. As noted by the EHRC, such a question is likely to be affected by significant under-declaration⁶.

Among unelected candidates, 95 per cent of respondents identified as heterosexual or straight.

4 per cent of unelected county council candidates identified as LGB.

⁶ Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC). (2010a). *How Fair is Britain? The First Triennial Review*. Manchester: Equality and Human Rights Commission.

10 Employment



Base: ²469; ³2,430; ⁴458

Our survey found that 27 per cent of elected councillors were employees, either full time (19 per cent) or part time (8 per cent). 44 per cent were retired, 23 per cent were self-employed and 3 per cent were not in the labour market (on maternity leave, looking after family or home, full-time student, long-term sick or disabled, unpaid worker in a family business, unpaid carer or 'doing something else'). 1 per cent were unemployed.

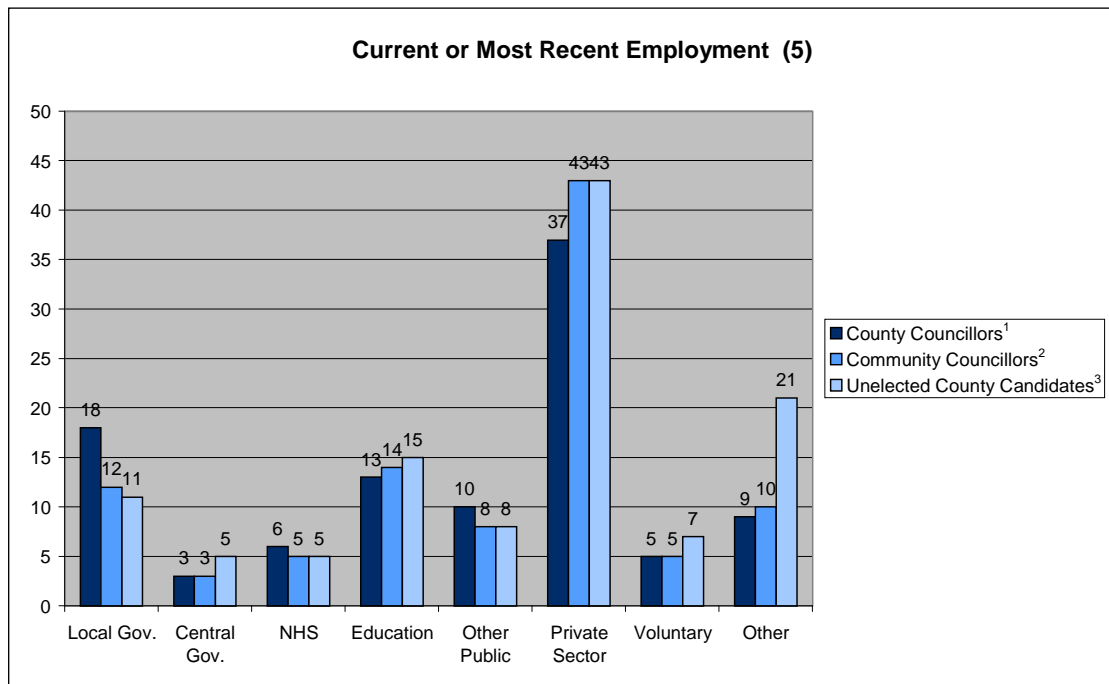
Among county councillors, our survey found that 31 per cent were employees, either full time (20 per cent) or part time (11 per cent). 44 per cent were also retired, 19 per cent were self-employed and 4 per cent were not in the labour market (on maternity leave, looking after family or home, full-time student, long-term sick or disabled, unpaid worker in a family business, unpaid carer or 'doing something else'). 2 per cent were unemployed.

In comparison to county councillors, a lower proportion of community councillors were employees (27 per cent), and a higher proportion were self-employed (24 per cent).

In 2004, the WLGA found that 32 per cent of county councillors were employees, either full time (23 per cent) or part time (9 per cent). 42 per cent were retired, 16 per cent were self-employed and 10 per cent were not in the labour market.

32 per cent of unelected candidates were employees, either full time (22 per cent) or part time (10 per cent). 35 per cent were retired, 23 per cent were self-employed and 6 per cent were not in the labour market (on maternity leave, looking after family or home, full-time student, long-term sick or

disabled, unpaid worker in a family business, unpaid carer or 'doing something else'). 3 per cent were unemployed. The graph shows that similar percentages can be reported across the sample of unelected county candidates.



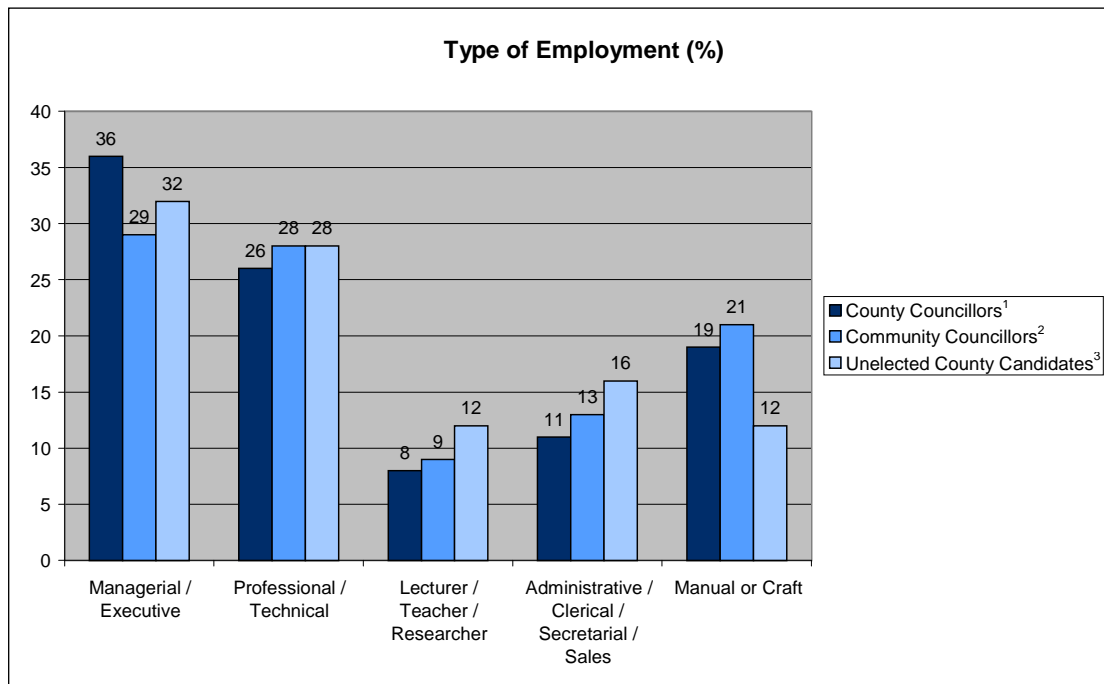
Base: ¹437; ²2,450; ³433

Our survey found that 43 per cent of elected councillors described their current or most recent employment sector as public (local government, central government, NHS, education or ‘other public’), 43 per cent as the private sector, and 5 per cent as the voluntary sector. The remaining 9 per cent described their current or most recent employment sector as ‘other’.

The graph shows that a higher proportion of county councillors described their current or most recent employment sector as local government, whilst a smaller proportion of this sample described their current or most recent employment sector as the private sector.

Among unelected candidates, 43 per cent described their current or most recent employment sector as public, 44 per cent as the private sector, and 6 per cent as the voluntary sector. The remaining 7 per cent described their current or most recent employment sector as ‘other’.

The graph shows that a higher proportion of unelected county candidates described their current or most recent employer as ‘other’ in comparison to county and community councillors.



Base: ¹236; ²1,246; ³242

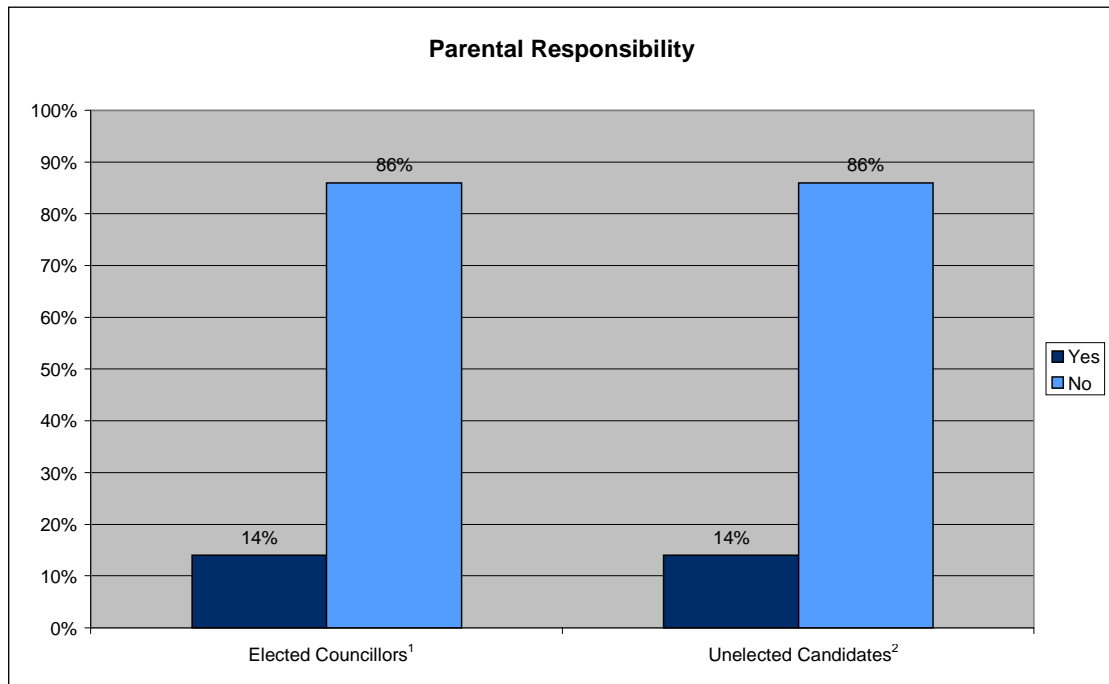
Our survey found that of those elected councillors who were currently employed and responded to the question *If your status is employed, which category best describes your type of employment?*, 30 per cent were managers or executives, 28 per cent were professional or technical workers, 9 per cent described themselves as a lecturer, teacher or researcher, 13 per cent worked in administration, and 20 per cent were manual or craft workers.

As the graph indicates, in comparison to county councillors, a smaller proportion of community councillors were managers or executives (36 per cent compared to 29 per cent), whilst a higher proportion were manual or craft workers (19 per cent compared to 21 per cent).

Among unelected candidates, 30 per cent were managers or executives, 29 per cent were professional or technical workers, 11 per cent described themselves as a lecturer, teacher or researcher, 14 per cent worked in administration, and 16 per cent were manual or craft workers

32 per cent of unelected county candidates were managers or executives, 28 per cent were professionals, 12 per cent described themselves as a lecturer, teacher or researcher, 16 per cent worked in administration, and 12 per cent were manual or craft workers.

11 Parental Responsibility



Base: ¹2,544; ²668;

14 per cent of elected councillors had parental responsibility for a child aged 16 or under.

14 per cent of unelected candidates also had parental responsibility for a child aged 16 or under.

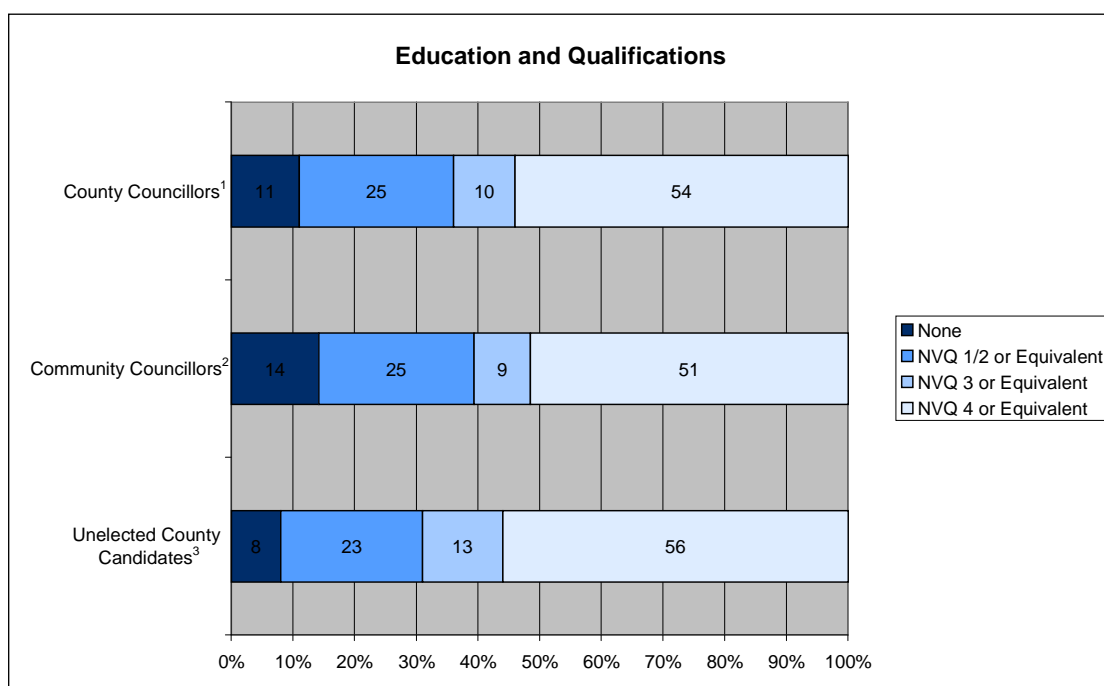
There was little variation across the other samples.

12 Unpaid Help

The table below shows the percentage of elected councillors and unelected candidates who had volunteered to the following groups or organisations at any time in the last 12 months.

Organisation	Elected Councillors (per cent)	Unelected Candidates (per cent)
Community or neighbourhood group	43	37
Children's education / schools	30	29
Political party	23	47
Youth/children's activities (outside school)	19	16
Religious or faith based group	16	16
The elderly	16	17
Environment group	13	17
Sports or exercise (e.g. coaching)	11	10
Social club	11	9
Health, disability or social welfare group	10	12
Education for adults	6	8
Citizen' group	6	7
Trade Union	6	8
Justice and Human Rights	4	8
First Aid	3	4
Animal welfare group	3	4
Gender group	<1	<1
Sexuality group	<1	<1

13 Education and Qualifications



Base: ¹449; ²2,311; ³446

Respondents were asked to identify the highest qualification they held. 52 per cent of elected councillors held a qualification equivalent to NVQ level 4 and above (i.e. degree, professional qualification), a further 10 per cent held a qualification equivalent to NVQ level 3 (i.e. GCE, A level). 25 per cent held a qualification equivalent to NVQ level 1 or 2, whilst 14 per cent reported they did not hold any of the qualifications listed.

In relation to county councillors, 54 per cent held a qualification equivalent to NVQ level 4 and above (i.e. degree, professional qualification), a further 10 per cent held a qualification equivalent to NVQ level 3 (i.e. GCE, A level). 11 per cent of county candidates reported they did not hold any of the qualifications listed. There was little variation across the sample of community councillors.

In 2004, the WLGA reported that 40 per cent of county councillors held a qualification equivalent to NVQ level 4 and above (i.e. degree, professional qualification), a further 10 per cent held a qualification equivalent to NVQ level 3 (i.e. GCE, A level). 19 per cent of their sample of county councillors reported they did not hold any of the qualifications listed.

59 per cent of unelected candidates held a qualification equivalent to NVQ level 4 and above (i.e. degree, professional qualification), a further 12 per cent held a qualification equivalent to NVQ level 3 (i.e. GCE, A level). 21 per cent held a qualification equivalent to NVQ level 1 or 2, whilst 8 per cent reported they did not hold any of the qualifications listed. As the graph shows, similar percentages can be reported for unelected county candidates

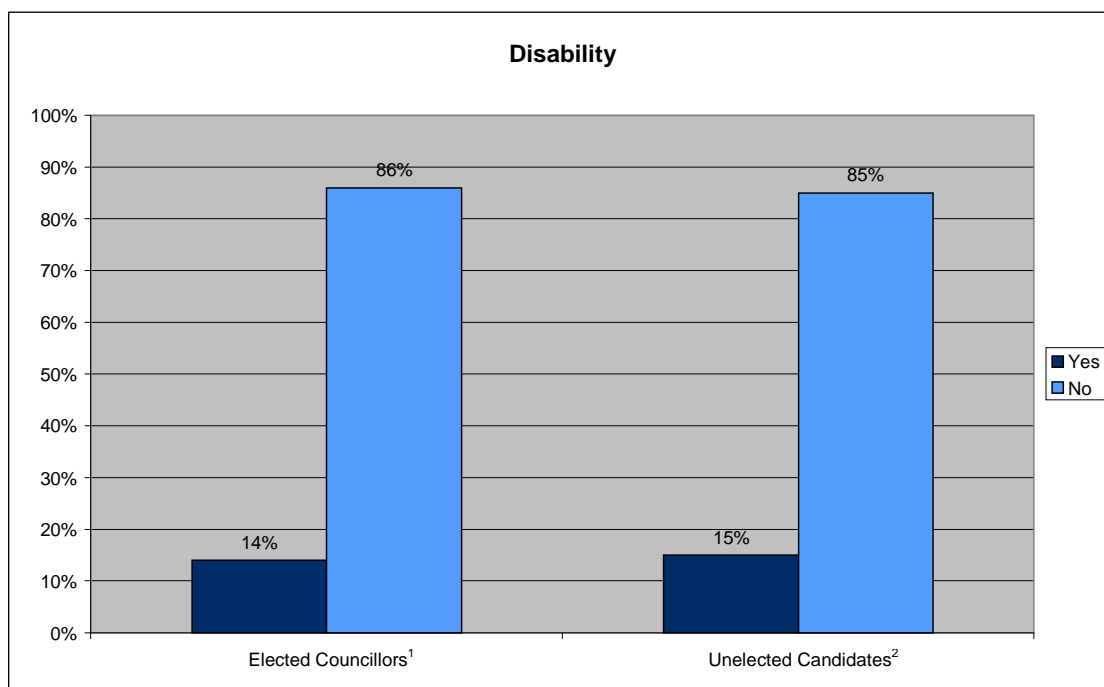
14 Physical and Mental Health

Our survey found that 82 per cent of elected councillors described their physical health as 'good' or 'very good', 4 per cent as 'poor' or 'very poor', whilst the remaining 15 per cent described their physical health as 'fair'.

The survey also found that 98 per cent of elected councillors described their mental health as 'good' or 'very good' and 2 per cent as 'fair'. Less than 1 per cent described their mental health as 'poor' or 'very poor'.

There was little variation across the sample of unelected candidates with regards to both physical and mental health.

15 Disability



Base: ¹2,613; ²699

Our survey found the percentage of those identifying as disabled was fairly consistent across all samples.

14 per cent of elected councillors considered themselves to be disabled. Of these, 71 per cent felt their illness or disability limited their activities in some way.

In relation to county councillors, 15 per cent considered themselves to be disabled in comparison to 14 per cent of community councillors.

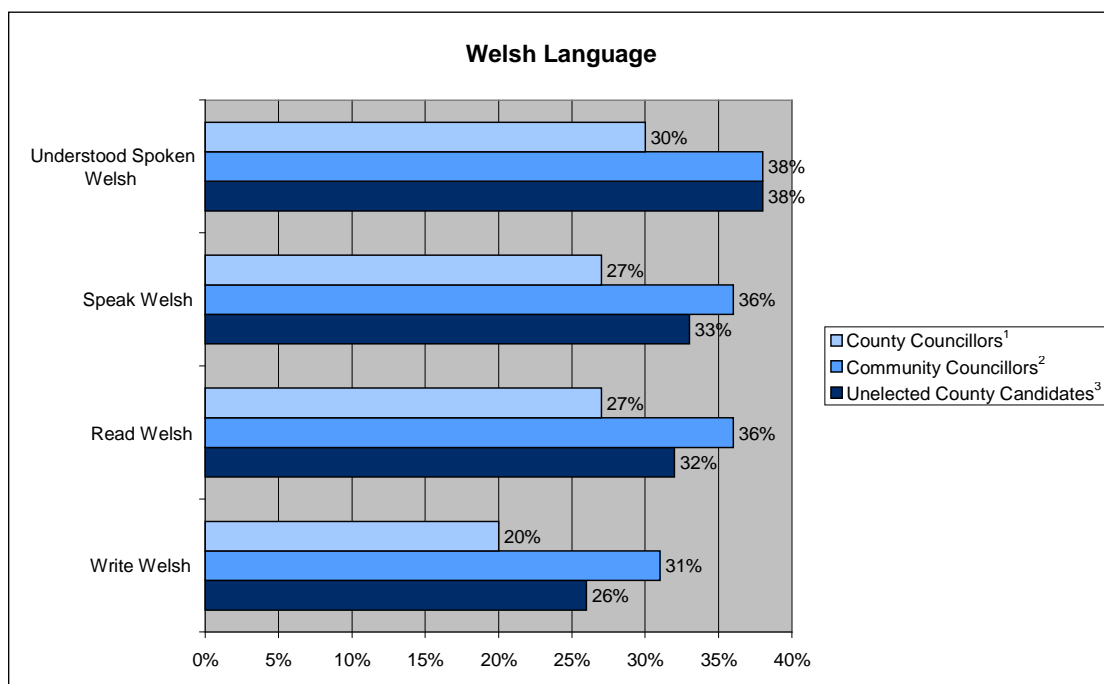
By comparison, 17 per cent of county councillors who responded to the WLGA survey in 2004 said they had a long-term health problem or disability that limited their daily activities or the work they could do.

With regards to age, the majority of elected councillors who considered themselves to be disabled were over the age of 50 - 91 per cent.

15 per cent of unelected candidates considered themselves to be disabled. Of these, 72 per cent felt their illness or disability limited their activities in some way.

Within the sample of unelected county council candidates, 13 per cent considered themselves to be disabled of which 83 per cent were over the age of 50.

16 Welsh Language



Base: ¹472; ²2,450; ³463

Among elected councillors, the survey found that 25 per cent said their first language was Welsh.

16 per cent of county councillors said their first language was Welsh in comparison to 26 per cent of community councillors.

30 per cent of county councillors said they understood Welsh, 27 per cent could speak Welsh and 20 per cent were able to write Welsh.

38 per cent of community councillors said they understood Welsh, 36 per cent could speak Welsh and 31 per cent were able to write Welsh.

Our survey suggests an increase in the percentage of Welsh speaking county councillors. In 2004, the WLGA reported that 10 per cent of county councillors said their first language was Welsh. 27 per cent of county councillors said they understood Welsh, 22 per cent could speak Welsh and 25 per cent were able to write Welsh. The lowest responding councils for our survey, however, appear to be non-Welsh speaking local authorities. This may have inflated the proportion of Welsh speaking respondents.

The survey found that 13 per cent of unelected candidates indicated that their first language was Welsh.

Among unelected county council candidates, 15 per cent who responded to the survey indicated that their first language was Welsh.

38 per cent of unelected county council candidates said they understood Welsh, 33 per cent could speak Welsh and 26 per cent were able to write Welsh.