

Survey response rates by respondent category

The response rates for the following categories of respondent have been detailed below and considered further in a commentary provided by the Consultation Institute

Respondent Category	Number	Total Base	% Response Rate
Resident	501	4,730 households	10.6%
Parent of pupil	102	800 households	12.8%
Teacher / member of school staff	33	142	23.2%
Member of local parish	27	220	12.3%
School pupil	20	1,200	1.7%

Commentary on the 3-16 Consultation Response Rate from the Consultation Institute

It is understandable that those overseeing a consultation want to see the highest possible response rate from their target audience.

While they can be influenced by the amount and targeting of publicity and the ease of responding, response rates can also reflect the level of inherent interest in the subject matter of the consultation among certain sections of the target population.

In the Institute's experience, people who are opposed to a proposal appear often to be more motivated to register their opposition than supporters are to show their support.

On some occasions, lower response rates may simply reflect a general acceptance of what is proposed, rather than a failure to provide an adequate opportunity to respond or to publicise a consultation properly.

Identifying an appropriate base for the response rate for residents can be difficult.

If you cast your net wider, and promote the consultation among those who may have a more marginal interest, in the interests of inclusivity, you may increase the total number of responses slightly, but you are likely to reduce the response rate.

Nationally, consultation response rates are typically no higher than 1-2% and a response rate of 4-5% would generally be regarded as high. There are exceptions where a consultation is very local (confined to a few streets) and the impact direct and immediate (e.g. a controlled parking zone).

With regard to the current consultation, there was some risk of consultation fatigue as the target population had already had a number of opportunities to make their views known on different options, while Covid restrictions placed some limits on face-to-face events which would normally be expected to boost participation among certain sections of the target audience.

Nevertheless, a response rate of over 10% was achieved for residents (10.6%), parents (12.8%) and parishioners (12.3%) and over 20% for staff (23.2%) – this would appear to be a good result. Unsurprisingly, fewer pupils responded directly to the survey (1.7%), so MTCBC arranged a 'pupil voice' exercise within each school in which well over 90% of pupils (94.75%) participated.