

Piercing Model Byelaws Consultation

Consultation response analysis report produced by the
Consultation and Engagement Team – Dorset Council

Report produced September 2025

Consultation Response Report

What was the consultation about?	Since the formation of Dorset Council, there is some inconsistency in how we regulate piercing premises. Therefore, we are proposing to adopt the Department of Health model Byelaws for the whole Dorset Council area, to reduce the risk of transmission of blood borne virus infections such as HIV, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C and other infections. The proposals would also make enforcement across Dorset Council's area consistent too. The consultation asked for opinions on the proposed changes.
Over what period did the consultation run?	The consultation ran from 22/05/25 to 14/08/25.
What consultation methods were used?	This consultation was available through an online survey and a paper version of the survey. Business Support Officers sent out letters to all premises informing them of the consultation. It was also promoted in the Council's business e-newsletter.
How many responses were received overall?	10 responses were received.
How representative is the response to the wider population?	60.0% (6) of responses were from residents of Dorset (Dorset Council area) and 40.0% (4) from private businesses. 60.0% of respondents were female, compared to 30.0% that were male. 50.0% of respondents were aged between 50 to 59. 10.0% of respondents identified as having a disability and 80.0% identified as White: British.
Where will the results be published?	Results will be published on the council's website www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk and on Dorset Council's consultation platform
How will the results be used?	Results from this survey will be used to inform the next steps of the process.
Who has produced this report?	Consultation and Engagement Team, Dorset Council, September 2025

Background

There are currently several Byelaws for the regulation of businesses and practitioners who undertake skin piercing practices. Currently, we have different parts of the county following different rules. The Legacy Councils (East Dorset District Council, North Dorset District Council and Purbeck District Council) have Byelaws regulating Ear Piercing, Electrolysis, Tattooing and Acupuncture.

West Dorset District Council and Weymouth and Portland Borough Council however use newer Byelaws based on the Department of Health model, which covers 'cosmetic piercing' instead of 'ear piercing', and regulations for semi-permanent skin colouring, in addition to controls for Tattooing, Electrolysis and Acupuncture.

Since the formation of Dorset Council, due to these differences, there is some inconsistency in how we regulate piercing premises. Therefore, we are proposing to adopt the Department of Health model Byelaws for the whole Dorset Council area, to reduce the risk of transmission of blood borne virus infections such as HIV, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C and other infections.

The proposals would also make enforcement across Dorset Council's area consistent too. The adoption of the Byelaws under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 (as amended by the Local Government Act 2003) part VIII 1982 Act would mean that in all Dorset Council areas, any breaches of the Byelaws would carry with it the possibility of criminal prosecution. It would be an offence under Section 16 (2) of the 1982 Act for any person to contravene the proposed byelaws, which upon conviction could result in a fine of up to £1,000. The Court upon conviction would also have the power to cancel any registration under the 1982 Act.

The Consultation

The consultation survey was aimed at Dorset Council residents and piercers. It asked for their thoughts on the proposed changes.

Analysis Method

Responses to closed questions were reviewed and summarised, with the source of each dataset clearly shown in the report's base notes. All consultation questions and their results are included. For open-ended comments, they have been listed verbatim due to the number of responses.

The main points of feedback are summarised in the Executive Summary. Typically, each question would feature some narrative to describe the results and identify any patterns, but this is not possible in this case due to the low response numbers.

Note: Figures may not always total precisely due to rounding.

Executive Summary

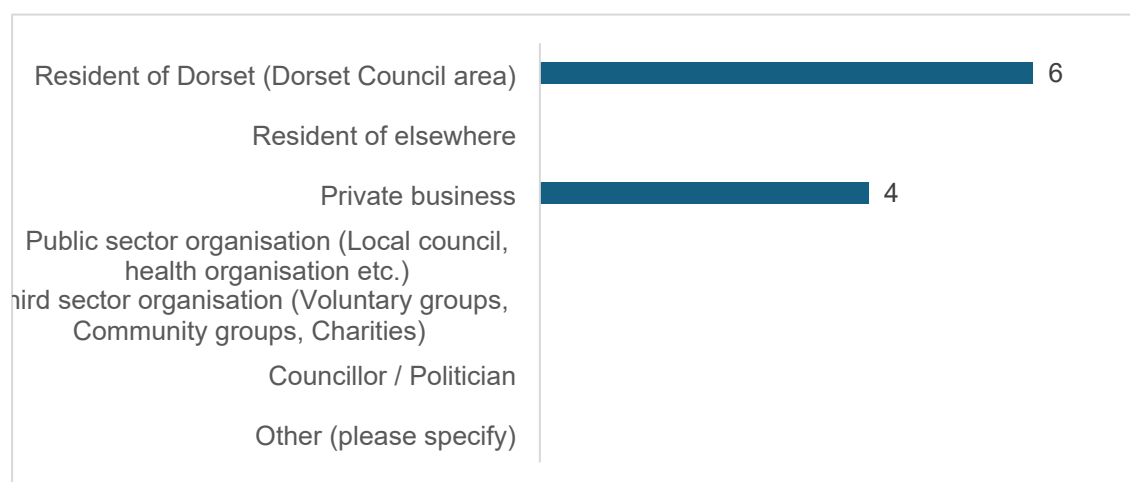
- 3 piercers responded to the survey (across residents and private businesses)
- of those, 2 operate from commercial premises, and 1 residential
- 9 out of 10 respondents aware of the need to be registered with Dorset Council as a piercing practitioner
- 9 out of 10 respondents also aware of the need for a premises to be registered
- 8 respondents agreed with the proposal to consolidate the Byelaws. Of those, 5 strongly agreed and 3 agreed. 2 disagreed
- 5 respondents identified as practitioners
- 4 practitioners thought the proposals would not add an extra burden on their business. 1 did
- there was some concern about the food and drink rule for clients, particularly for sessions longer than 1 hour

Due to the response size, the survey doesn't provide sufficient evidence to support any changes to the service. Feedback from this consultation could still be useful in shaping future decisions, but it can't be the sole basis for change.

Data Analysis

Q. Are you responding as a...

(n=10)



Option	Total	Percent
Resident of Dorset (Dorset Council area)	6	60.0%
Resident of elsewhere	0	0.0%
Private business	4	40.0%
Public sector organisation (Local council, health organisation etc.)	0	0.0%
Third sector organisation (Voluntary groups, Community groups, Charities)	0	0.0%
Councillor / Politician	0	0.0%
Other (please specify)	0	0.0%

Of the businesses responding, 4 left official responses.

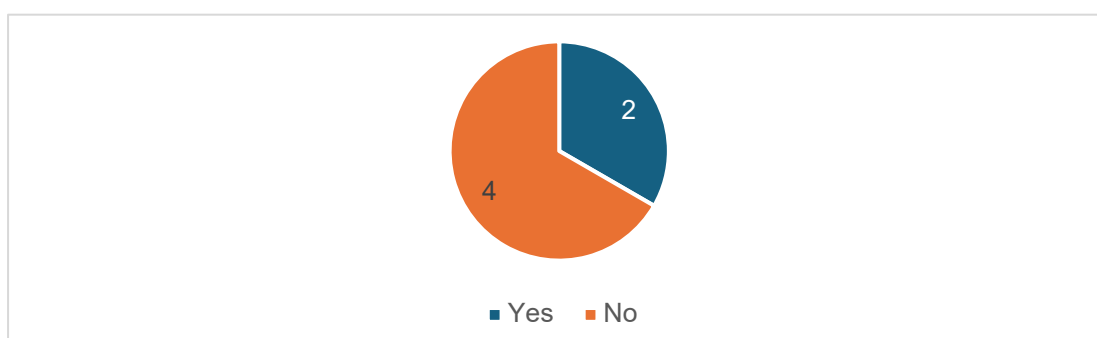
Official responses:

Name of organisation/business
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

The next set of questions asked respondents if they were piercers. Due to the branching within the survey, individual respondents had a slightly different path to groups and businesses. That is why they have been separated for this question.

Q. Are you a piercer - Resident of Dorset

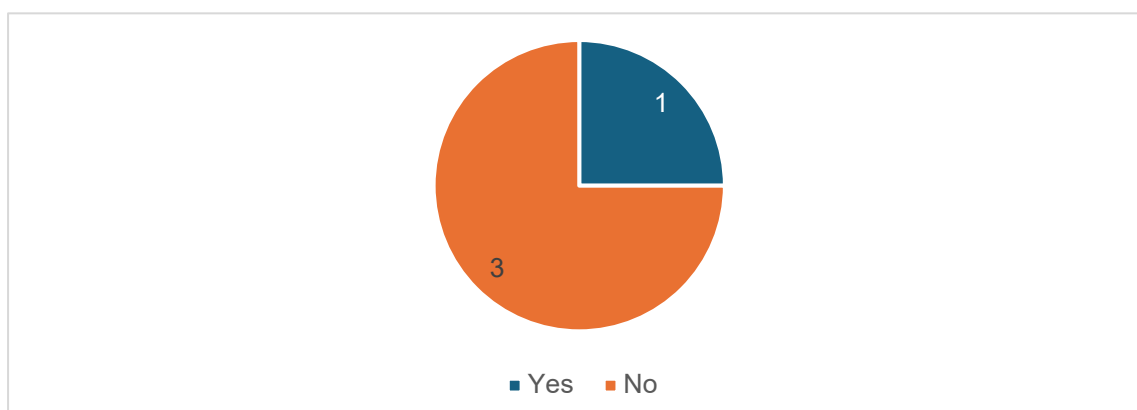
(n-6)



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	2	33.3%
No	4	66.7%

Q. Are you a piercer - Private business

(n-4)

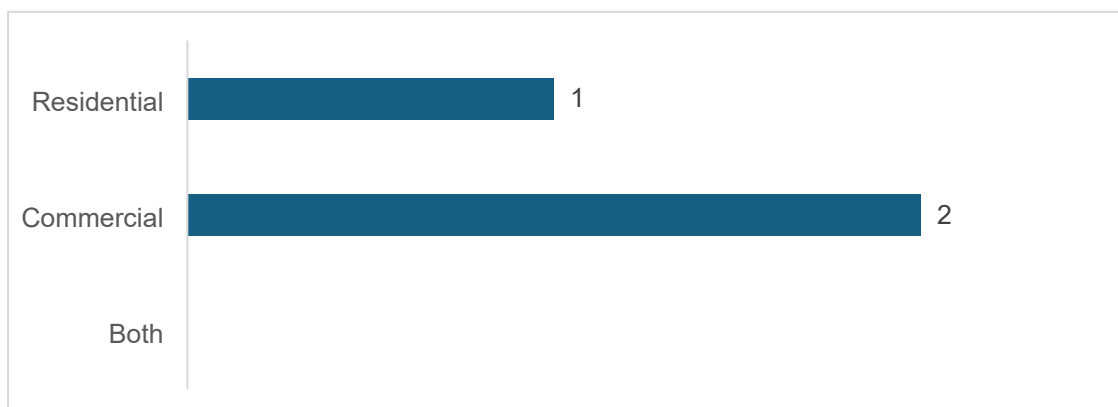


Option	Total	Percent
Yes	1	25.0%
No	3	75.0%

Across both individuals and private businesses, only 3 responses were received from piercers. Ordinarily, 30% of the total sample size would be a good level of representation, but caution should be taken when attempting to draw patterns from so few responses.

Q. Do you operate from a commercial or residential premises?

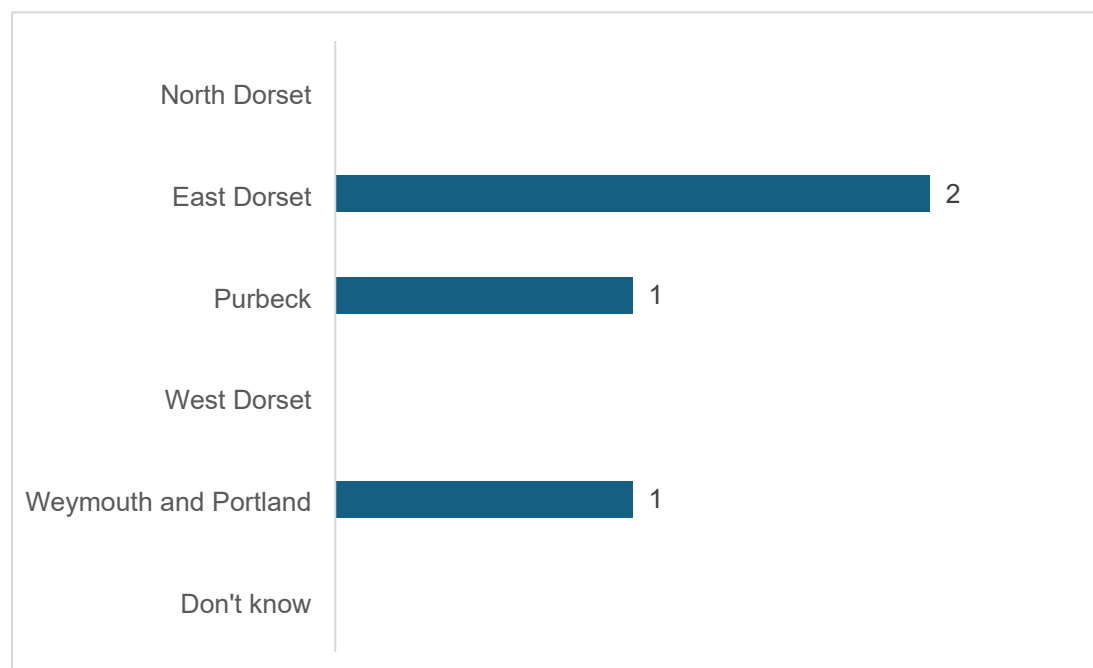
(n-3)



Option	Total	Percent
Residential	1	33.3%
Commercial	2	66.7%
Both	0	0.0%

Q. What is/are the area(s) of Dorset where you operate?

(n-3)

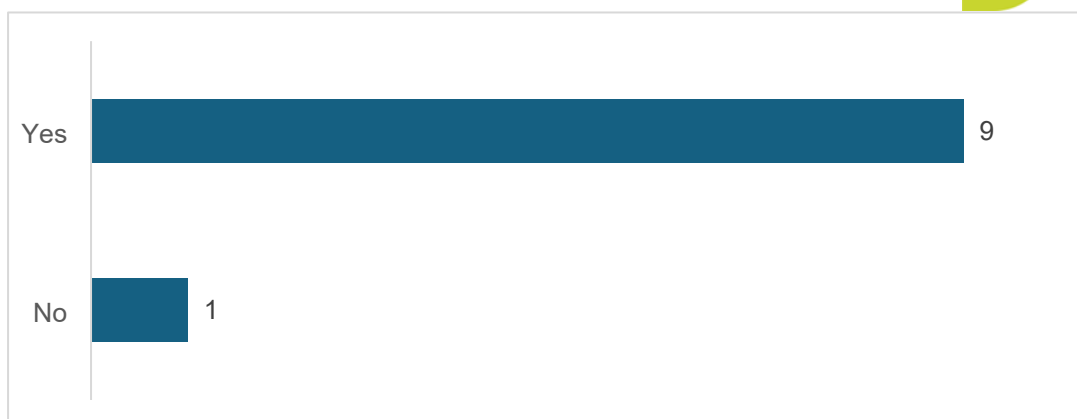


Option	Total	Percent
North Dorset	0	0.0%
East Dorset	2	66.7%
Purbeck	1	33.3%
West Dorset	0	0.0%
Weymouth and Portland	1	33.3%
Don't know	0	0.0%

Registration requirements

Q. Are you aware of the need to be registered with Dorset Council if you are a piercing practitioner?

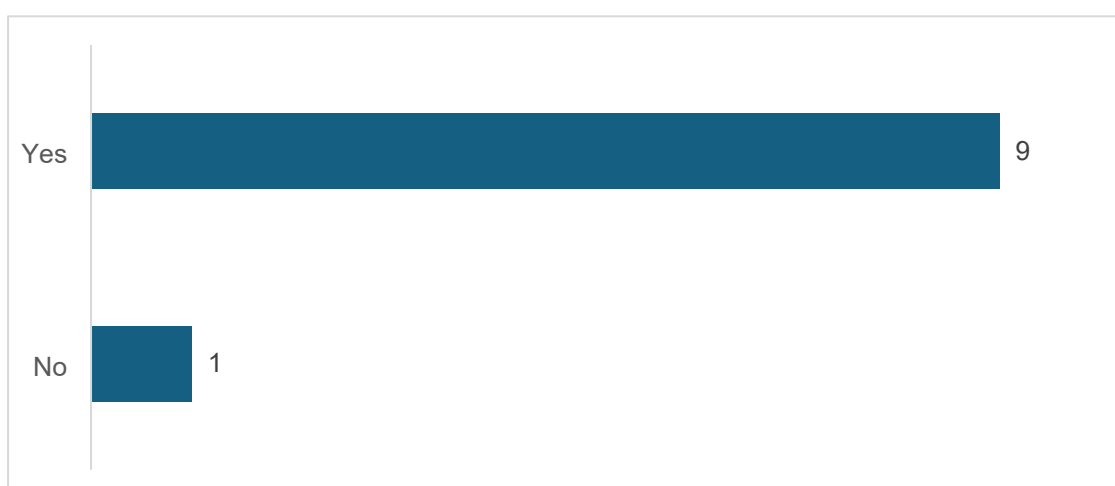
(n-10)



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	9	90.0%
No	1	10.0%

Q. Are you aware of the need for a premises to be registered?

(n-10)

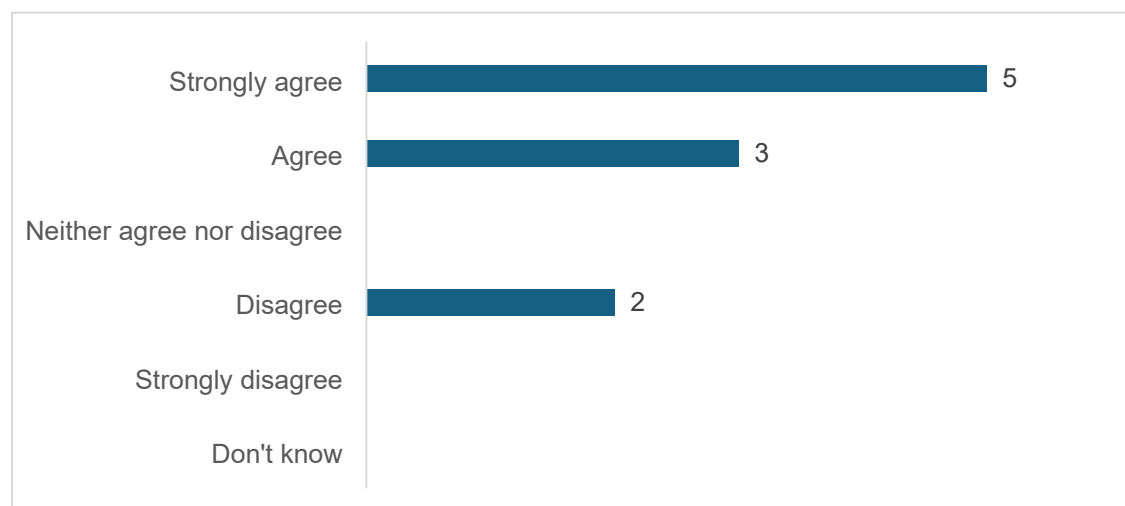


Option	Total	Percent
Yes	9	90.0%
No	1	10.0%

Proposed Byelaws

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed Dorset Council Byelaws?

(n=10)



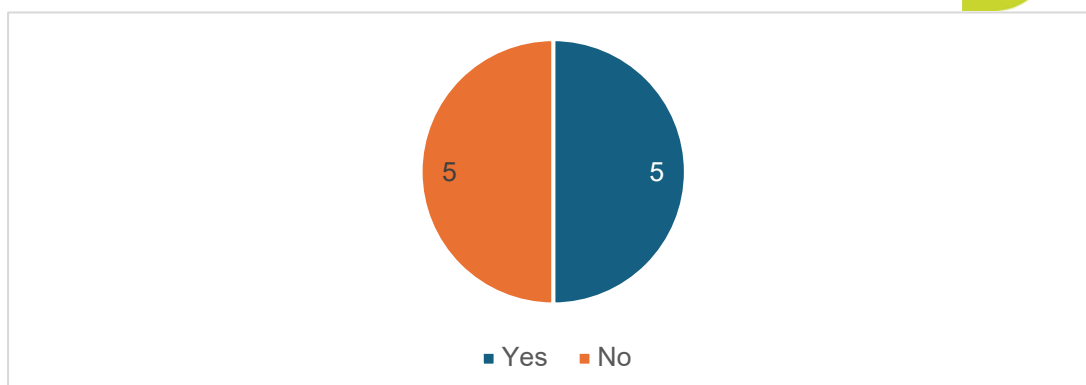
Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	5	50.0%
Agree	3	30.0%
Neither agree nor disagree	0	0.0%
Disagree	2	20.0%
Strongly disagree	0	0.0%
Don't know	0	0.0%

Official responses

Name of organisation	Level of agreement
[REDACTED]	Disagree
[REDACTED]	Strongly agree
[REDACTED]	Agree
[REDACTED]	Agree

Q. Are you a practitioner?

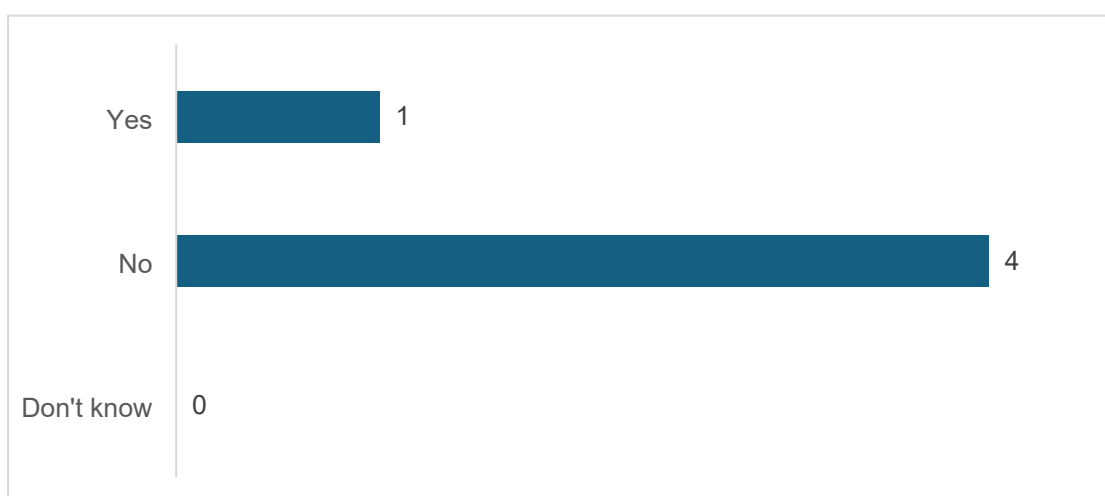
(n=10)



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	5	50.0%
No	5	50.0%

Q. Do you believe these proposed Byelaws will place any extra burden on your business which isn't already required under the current Byelaws?

(n=5)



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	1	20.0%
No	4	80.0%
Don't know	0	0.0%

Q. If yes, what extra burdens?

I work as an acupuncturist. I do not think it is practical or healthy to say no drinking in the treatment room. Clients are offered water in the treatment room, particularly if they experience dizziness etc. I believe it could affect the client adversely if the practitioner was not able to offer them water if they are feeling ill.

Furthermore, it will be unhealthy for me not to drink during the hours I practice. Often I see one patient after the other, remaining in the treatment room. I believe such a sign would be counterproductive for health and safety.

Acupuncturists often work in clinics where other therapists are working (e.g. chiros, osteos, physios) and they will probably be drinking during their therapies. In the clinics I work there are water fountains outside the treatment room.

Also, I believe that acupuncturists should be able to do home visits for the disabled. Some clients are unable to come to the clinic due to mobility issues, and it would be discriminatory not to offer them a service.

Q. If you have any further comments, let us know here

Official responses:

Name of organisation	Comment
[REDACTED]	My biggest concern is the no eating or drinking in the treatment area. My two main concerns are if a client is having a tattoo done for a long time (ie over an hour) the need for a drink and possibly some form of food is required to keep blood sugars and hydration at an acceptable level throughout the treatment. It is not acceptable to be stopping and starting during their appointment for them to leave the area, this prolongs the time and actually stopping and starting increases the pain aspect of the tattoo. Secondly if a client were to have a fainting fit it is necessary to rehydrate them and very often to make sure they consume something with sugar. I would ask how I am to move the client away from the treatment area, until they have revived substantially without sustenance
[REDACTED]	Will we be informed of when this comes into effect? Do we need to reapply for registration of premises and practitioners or will this be transferred over? One of the changes in the new byelaws is the no eating or drinking in treatment areas, in some circumstances it is necessary to provide clients with a glass of water during or after a treatment, would these byelaws mean that we can no longer offer this to a client who may feel unwell or dizzy? Moving them to an area where we can offer this may not be appropriate.
[REDACTED]	Seems reasonable

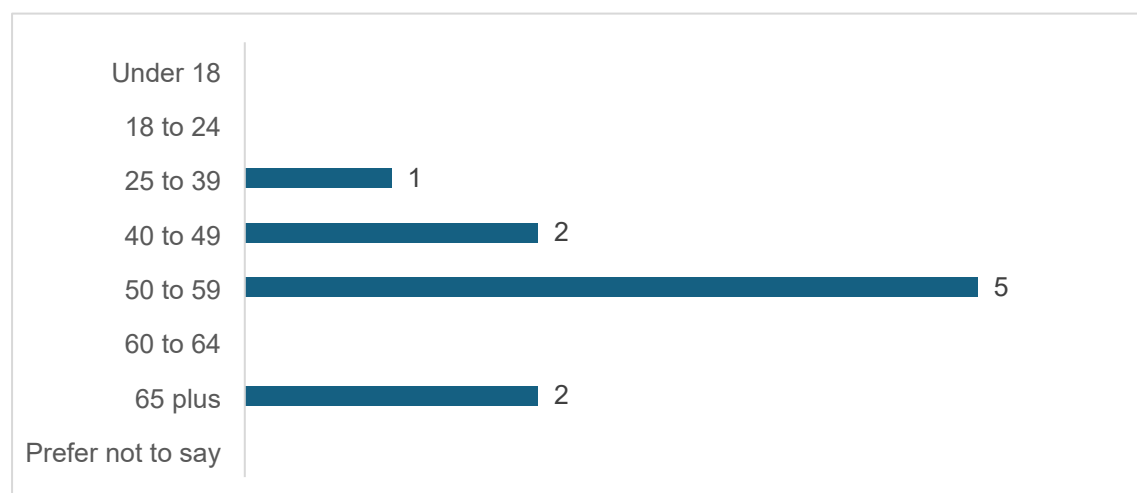
Comments from other respondents:

Good idea. Well done.
People having body work done like this should have a personal medical insurance certificate to cover the health costs for complications - not relieved on the NHS.
My existing registration was with Purbeck Council, [redacted]. I am a member of the British acupuncture council - www.acupuncture.org.uk and follow their stringent practice rules. I am glad the byelaws are being revised to pick up on such procedures as botox, collagen fillers etc. so they are properly regulated.

Demographic information

Please select your age group.

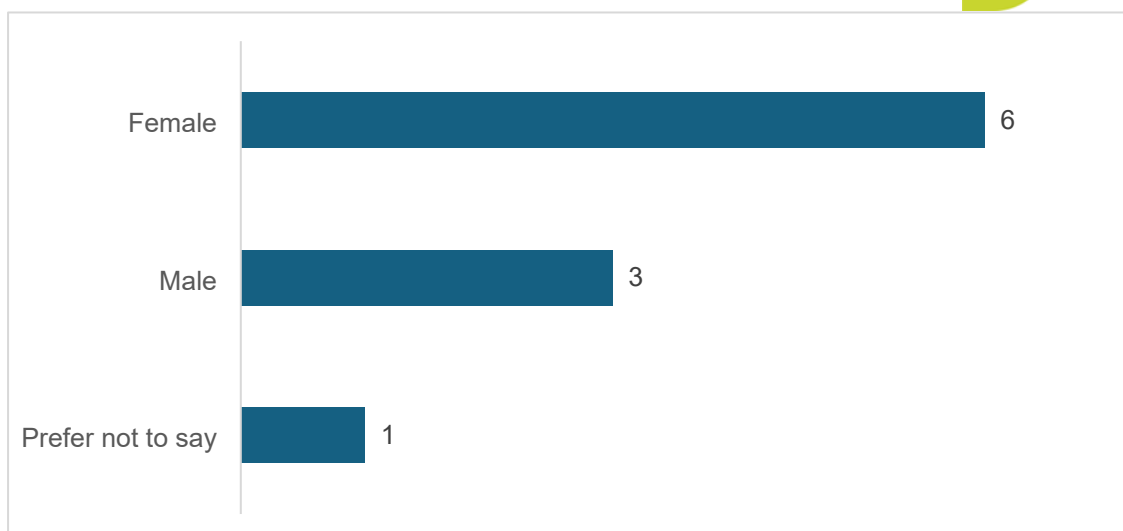
(n=10)



Option	Total	Percent
Under 18	0	0.0%
18 to 24	0	0.0%
25 to 39	1	10.0%
40 to 49	2	20.0%
50 to 59	5	50.0%
60 to 64	0	0.0%
65 plus	2	20.0%
Prefer not to say	0	0.0%

Q. What is your sex?

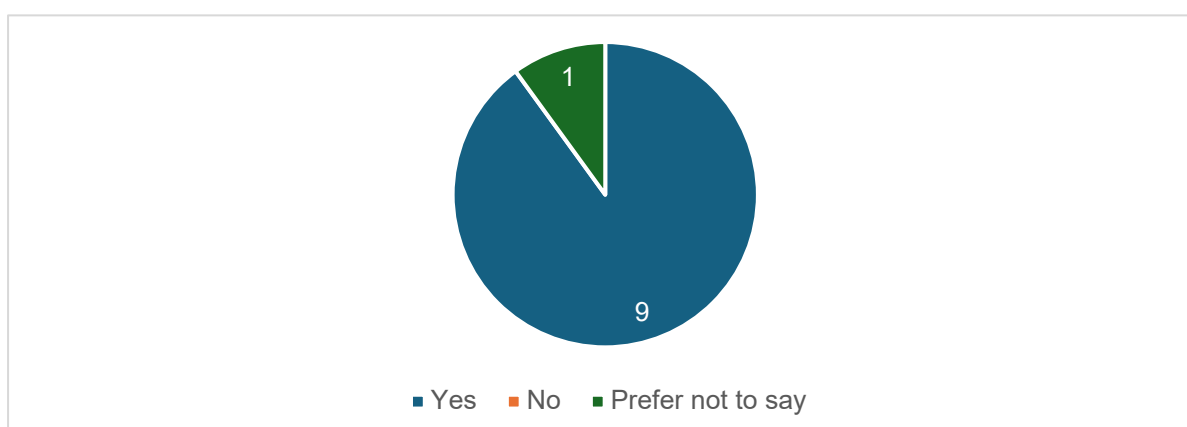
(n=10)



Option	Total	Percent
Female	6	60.0%
Male	3	30.0%
Prefer not to say	1	10.0%

Q. Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?

(n=10)

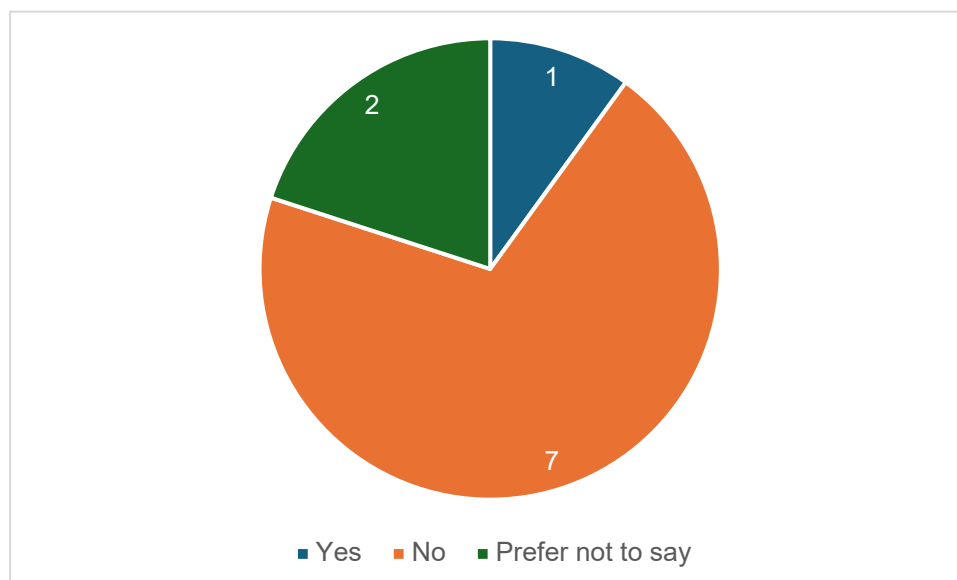


Option	Total	Percent
Yes	9	90.0%
No	0	0.0%
Prefer not to say	1	10.0%

Q. The Equality Act 2010 describes a person as disabled if they have a longstanding physical or mental condition that has lasted or is likely to last 12 months; and this condition has a substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. People with some conditions (cancer,

multiple sclerosis and HIV/AIDS for example) are considered to be disabled from the point that they are diagnosed. Do you consider yourself to be disabled as set out in the Equality Act 2010?

(n=10)



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	1	10.0%
No	7	70.0%
Prefer not to say	2	20.0%

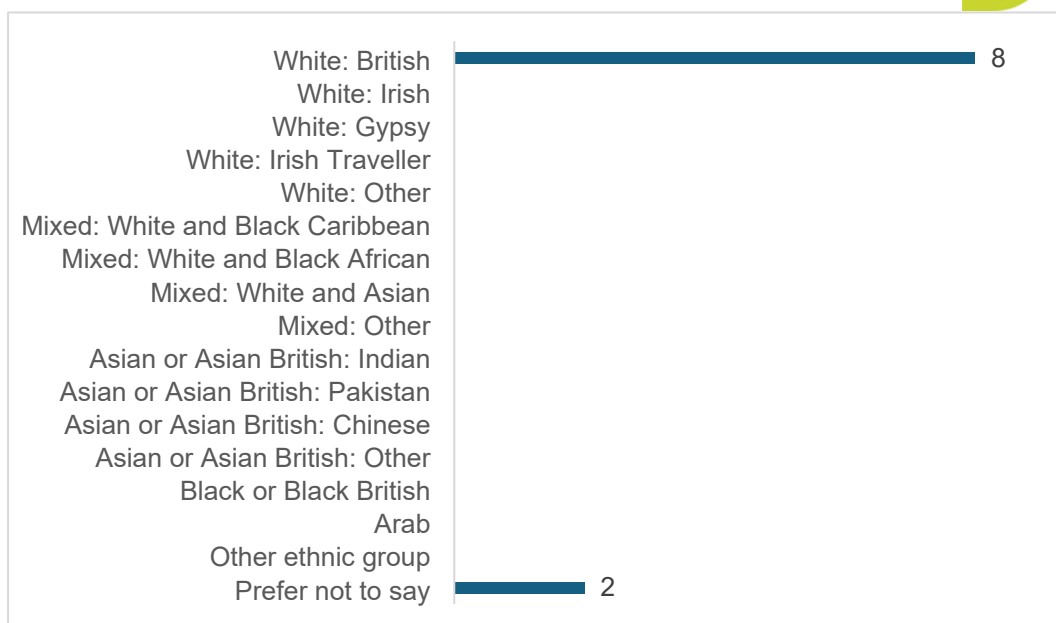
If at the previous question you stated you consider yourself to have a disability, please state the type of disability which applies to you.

(n=1)

1 – Medical conditions

Q. What is your ethnic group?

(n=10)



Option	Total	Percent
White: British	8	80.0%
White: Irish	0	0.0%
White: Gypsy	0	0.0%
White: Irish Traveller	0	0.0%
White: Other	0	0.0%
Mixed: White and Black Caribbean	0	0.0%
Mixed: White and Black African	0	0.0%
Mixed: White and Asian	0	0.0%
Mixed: Other	0	0.0%
Asian or Asian British: Indian	0	0.0%
Asian or Asian British: Pakistan	0	0.0%
Asian or Asian British: Chinese	0	0.0%
Asian or Asian British: Other	0	0.0%
Black or Black British	0	0.0%
Arab	0	0.0%
Other ethnic group	0	0.0%
Prefer not to say	2	20.0%