

THE FUTURE OF THE CSPA'S DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURES

Survey consultation findings, April 2025

Presented by Matthew Boyd, August 2025

CONNECT

ABOUT CONNECT

10

Independent public affairs and communications agency, ranked in the *PR Week Top 10 for public affairs*.



Skilled and talented team including former politicians, advisers, journalists, councillors and civil servants.



Extensive experience in public affairs, and across multiple sectors, including sustainability, skills, taxation, food and drink, and community cohesion.



Cross-party networks to guide clients through politics, **enhance reputations**, and **drive positive change**.



Professional and ethical, following codes of practice for the PR and public affairs industries.



Award-winning creative campaigns that resonate. Three-time winners of the CIPR Excellence Award for Public Affairs, numerous PRCA Public Affairs awards.



CONNECT

WHY THIS SURVEY MATTERS

The CSPA is considering a move to an all-member ballot for EC elections

Follows growing concern over limited access to democratic structures

This consultation was designed to gather views across the membership

HOW THE CONSULTATION WAS RUN



Two surveys: one for individual members, one for groups/branches



Managed independently by Connect in collaboration with CSPA



Both print and online formats used to maximise accessibility

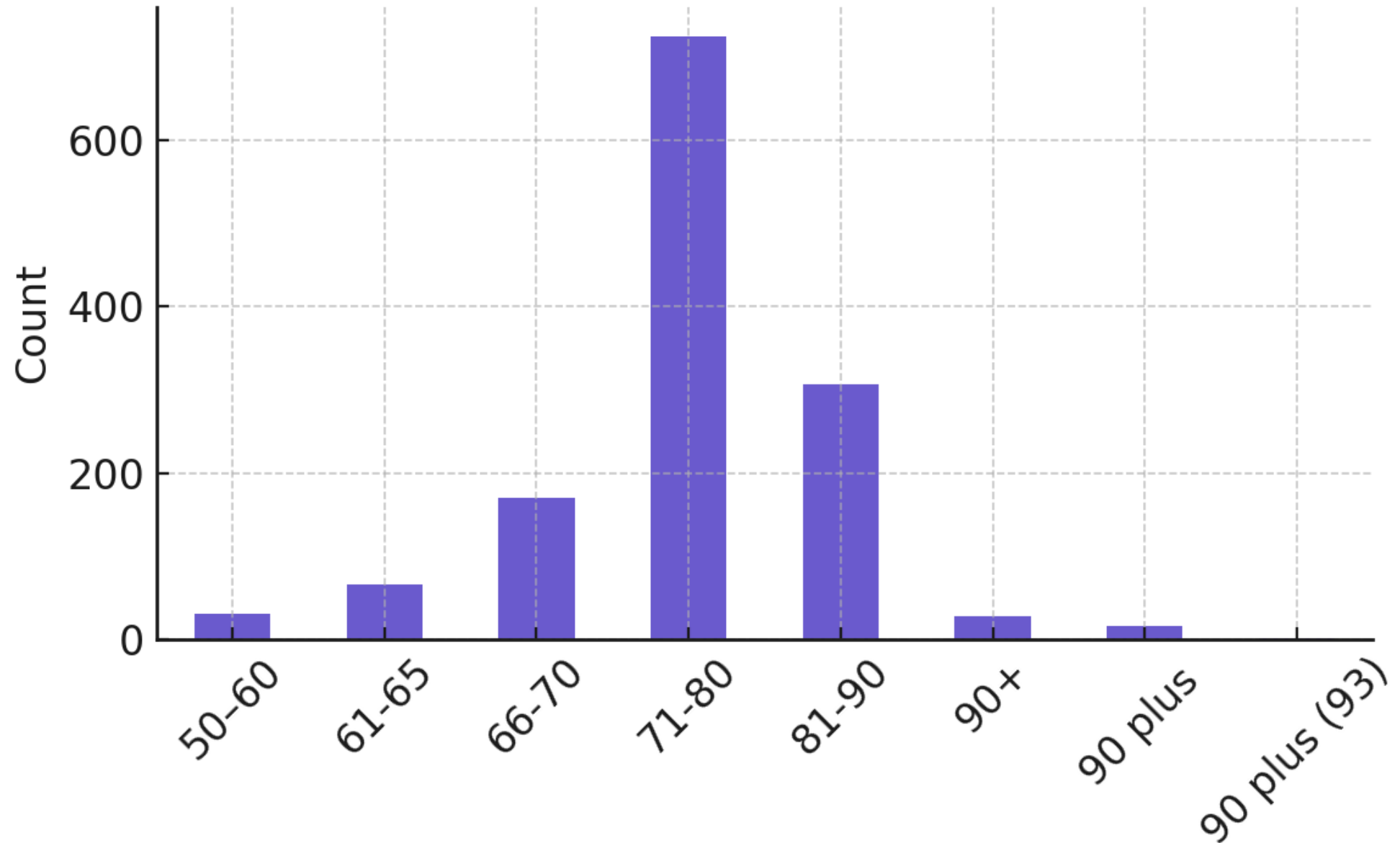
WHO TOOK PART?

1,353 individual
responses received
from across the UK

27 Groups and
Branches submitted
formal feedback

Responses reflect a
wide range of
member experience
and views

Age of Respondents



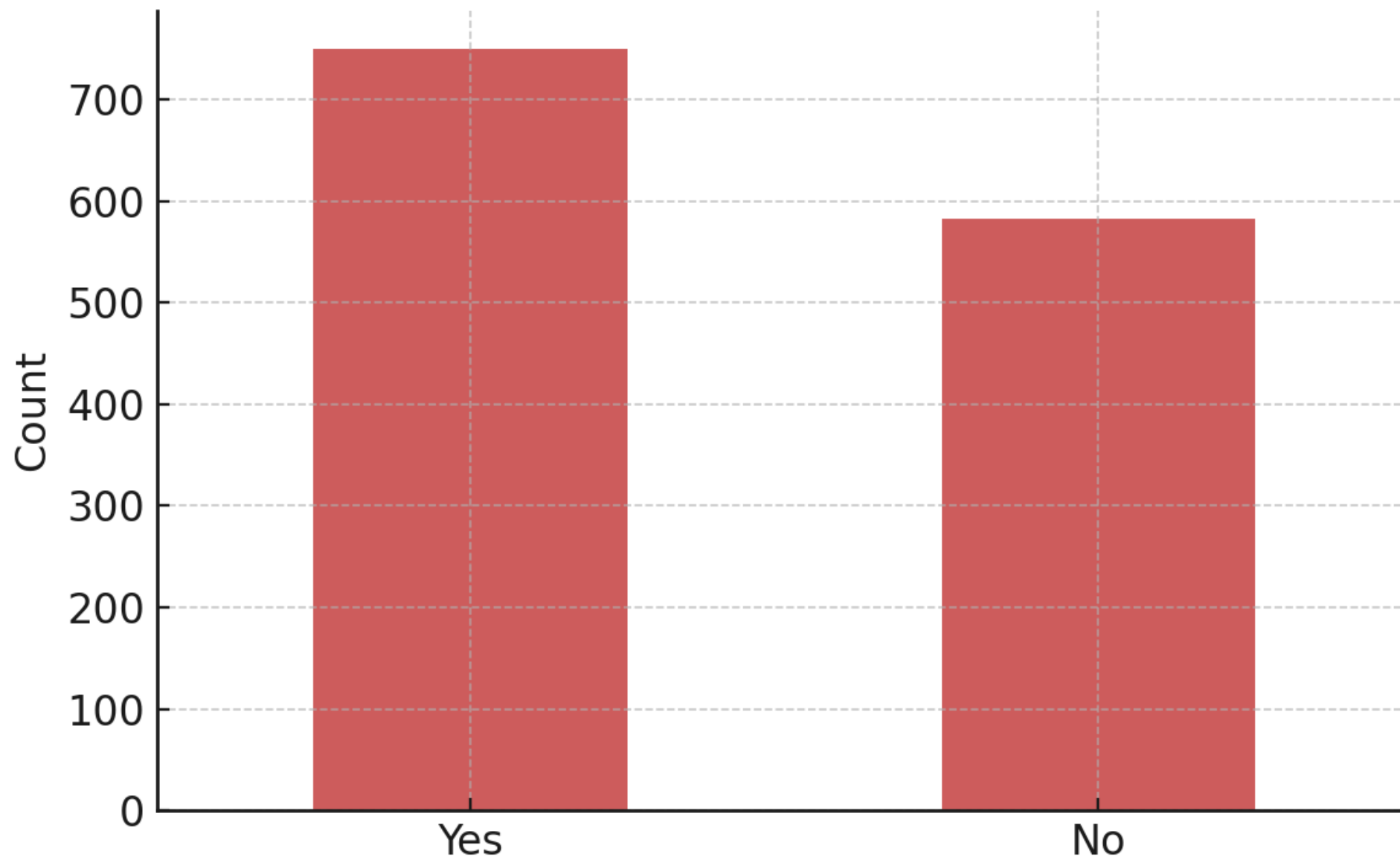
LENGTH OF MEMBERSHIP & RETIREMENT

76% of respondents have been retired over 10 years

58% have been members for more than a decade

Respondents show long-standing commitment to the CSPA

Feel Able to Participate?



WHY MANY CAN'T PARTICIPATE



43.7% say they do not feel able to take part in CSPA democracy



Main reasons: no local branch, unclear processes, low visibility



"Without a branch, I have no link to the decision-making process."
Member, West Midlands

FAMILIARITY WITH ELECTIONS



Only 20.7% feel familiar with how the Executive Council is elected

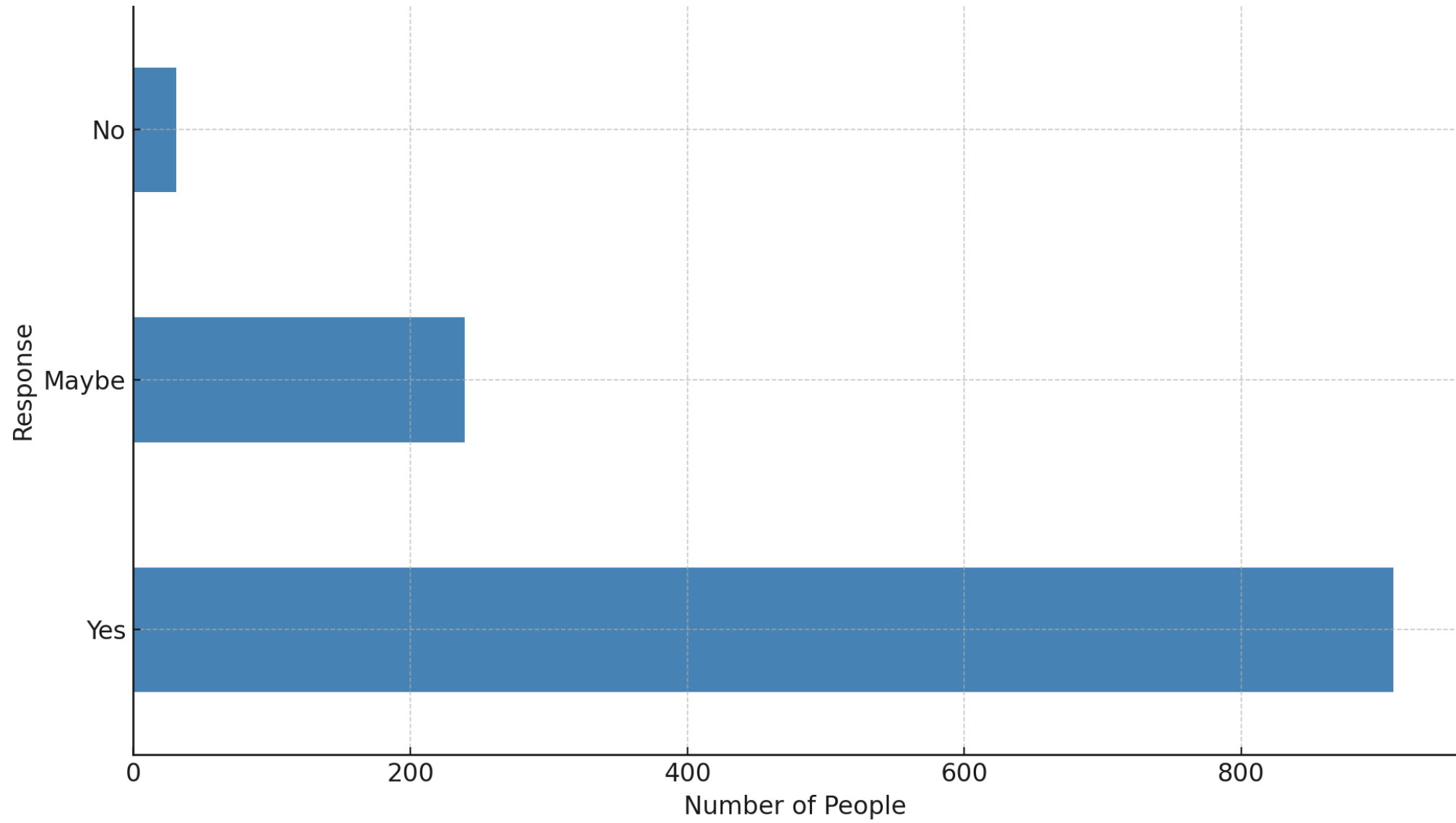


Over 1 in 5 are dissatisfied with communication from the EC

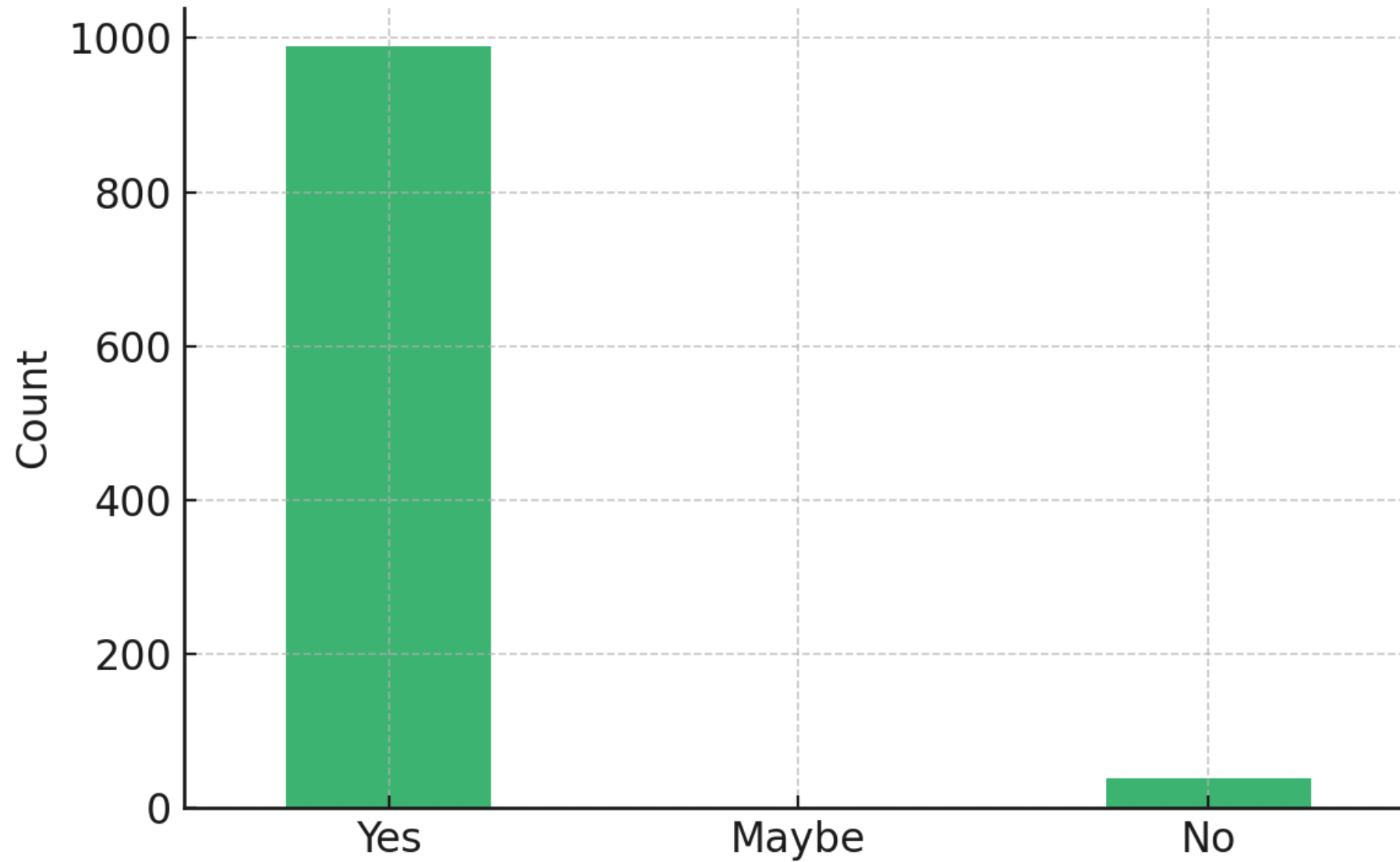


"I've been a member for over a decade and never really understood how decisions are made."
Member, Wales

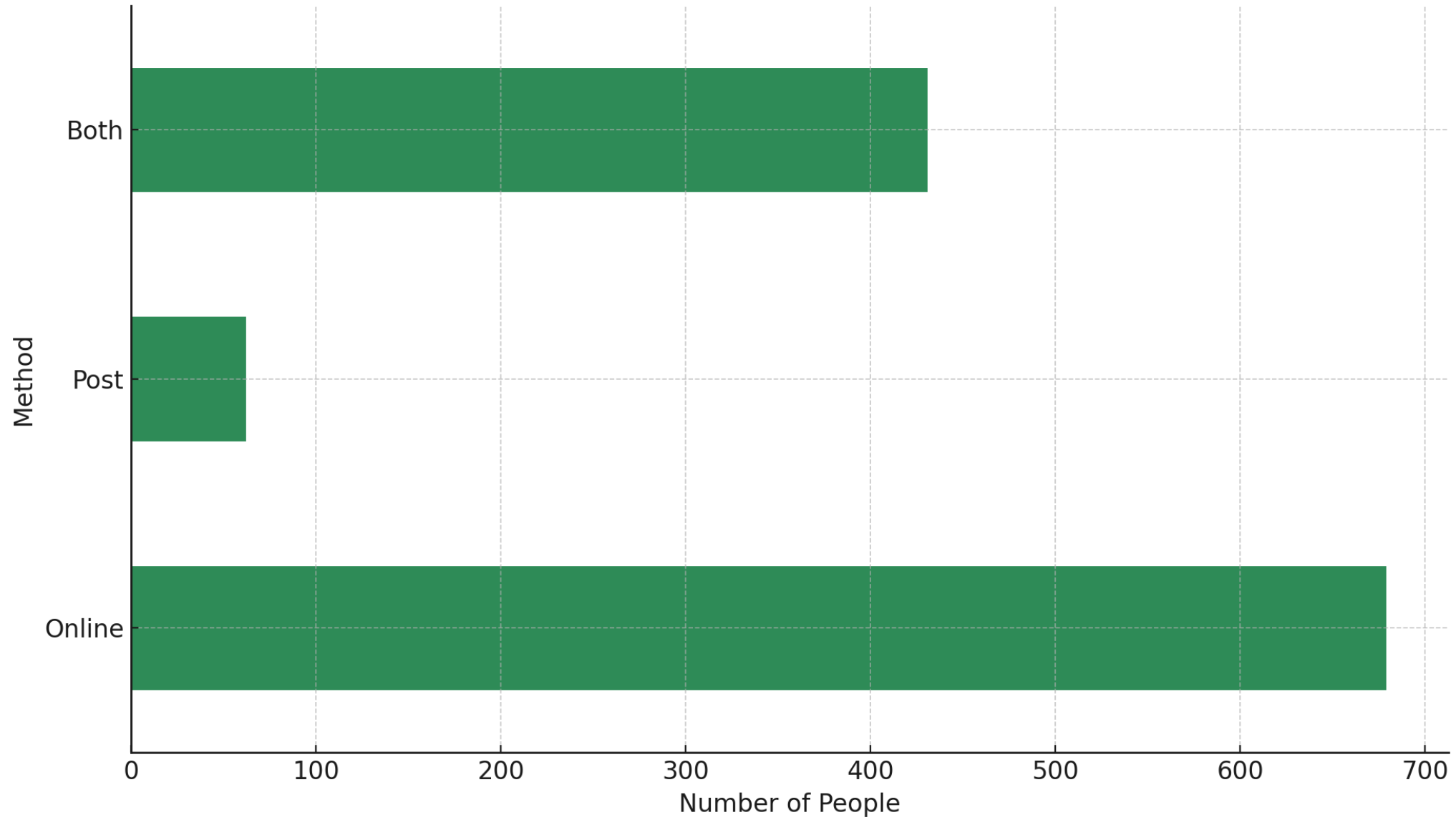
Support for all member vote



Would vote in all member ballot



Preferred Voting Method



WHAT GROUPS TOLD US



100% of groups reported they are engaged in democratic activity



Most groups meet regularly and publish newsletters



Groups remain central to CSPA's local engagement

VIEWS ON ALL-MEMBER BALLOT SYSTEM



60-70% of Groups support the all-member ballot system in principle or as a trial



Concerns: candidate visibility, complexity, impact on branches



“In theory yes, but in practice no – members don’t know the people standing” – Clacton Group

SUPPORT FOR A TRIAL



75-80% support a two-year all-member ballot trial before full adoption



Few groups opposed; most wanted to test approach first

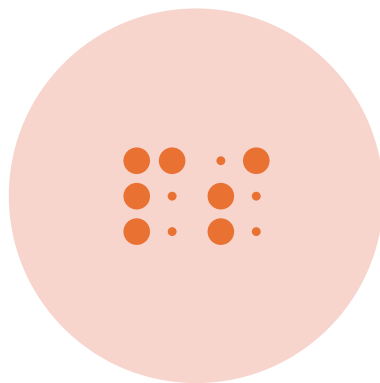


“Yes, it will allow time to test the new system” – Chester Group

PREFERRED VOTING METHODS



80% of groups favour a hybrid approach (postal + online)



Many flagged accessibility needs: large print, braille, alternatives



“Combined online/postal – but should also be available to those without internet” – Nottingham Group

WHAT MEMBERS WANT



More accessible and fairer elections



Clear, simple information about voting and candidates



Voting methods that fit personal needs and confidence

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS



**Run a two-year
all-member
ballot trial**



**Offer both
postal and
online voting**



**Invest in clear,
accessible
communication**



**Ensure the all-
member ballot
system
supports
branch
structures**



**Support and
encourage
diverse
candidates**



**Closely monitor
and evaluate
the trial**

WHAT MEMBERS SAID

“I gave 40 years to the civil service. I want to ensure my voice still counts”

Member, HM Prison Service

“More democratic”

Member, London

“Just because we are pensioners there is no excuse for living in the past”

Member, Norfolk

“Not enough info on who’s standing.”

Member, Hampshire

NEXT STEPS



Plan and resource a two-year all-member ballot pilot



Develop inclusive voting tools and materials



Prepare consistent candidate information profiles



Evaluate engagement, access, and regional participation



Report findings and make final recommendation post-trial