Governance Code Consultation Summary

☑ **95%**
Easy to understand

⑤ **Principles**
Cover what you expect?
Yes = 85%   No = 10%

📖 **1 in 3 respondents (36%) want more detail**

⚖? **Simplicity v. detail**

Summary

Respondents in general feel that the Code is easy to understand, well written, and the five principles contained in draft are what respondents expect it to cover

A number of respondents want to see more details in the Code. However, while some suggestions fit well with the **Principles,** other suggestions would more appropriately sit under **other resources**. There is perhaps a need to ensure that people understand the purpose of the Code, and for the document to clearly link to practical resources. There is desire for clear link to OSCR and links to key legislation/good practice.

Some felt the Code was geared towards larger organisations – and these did not always recognise that the Code must also fit needs of smaller organisations (references to 'staff' etc).

Top 6 areas where people want to see more detail:

- **Diversity and board recruitment**
- **Culture and values**
- **Financial management**
- **Transparency and Accountability**
- **Strategy, impact, audits, evaluation**
- **Board / staff relationship**

Key areas for further resources/links:

- **Legislation and regulation**
- **Funding and finance**
- **Trustee recruitment**
- **Board roles and responsibilities**
- **Board meetings**
- **Reporting**
- **Board performance**
- **Staff performance**

Accessibility and dissemination:

B S L

- Alternative formats e.g. video/audio, large print
- Easy read versions   • Different languages
- Trial code with minority groups / young people etc
- Face to Face / workshops to check Code is clear
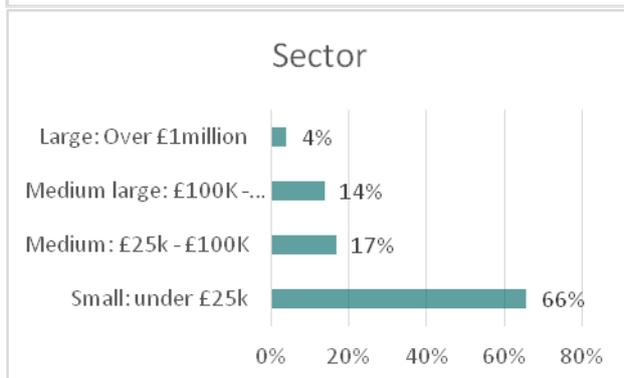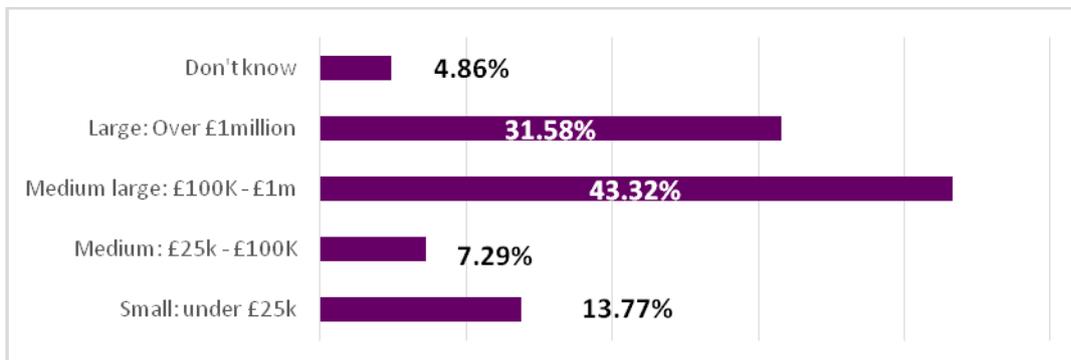- Dissemination: ensure key organisations link to Code

Q1 Respondents

247 respondents, with 83 charity trustees making up a third of respondents.

247 respondents

| Role	Percentage
Charity trustee	34%
Social enterprise director	3%
Committee member of a voluntary organisation	7%
Leader of a third sector organisation	22%
Other staff member at third sector organisation	18%
TSI	7%
Professional Adviser or management consultant	4%
Member of the public	3%
Other	2%

Q2 Organisation size

Good mix of organisation sizes responding in terms of numbers, although larger organisations over-represented proportionately to sector make-up.

Organisation size	Percentage
Don't know	4.86%
Large: Over £1million	31.58%
Medium large: £100K - £1m	43.32%
Medium: £25k - £100K	7.29%
Small: under £25k	13.77%

Sector

| Organisation size	Percentage
Large: Over £1million	4%
Medium large: £100K -…	14%
Medium: £25k - £100K	17%
Small: under £25k	66%

Q3. Do you have any paid staff?

85% of respondents were responding on behalf of organisations **with paid staff**, again higher than the wider sector, where only a quarter of charities have paid staff.
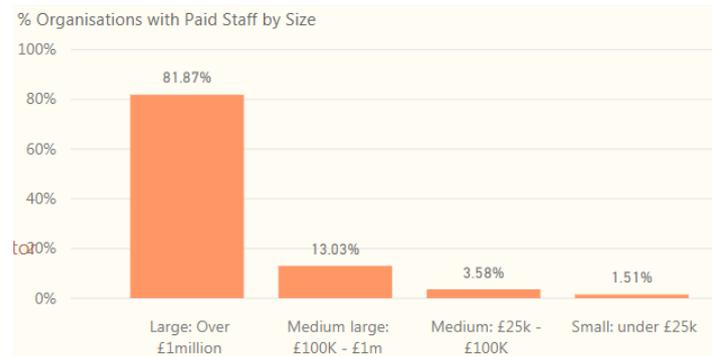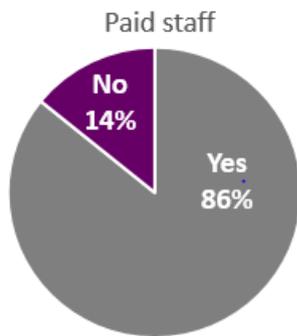
Q4. Do the five different principles of the draft Code cover all the areas you would expect?
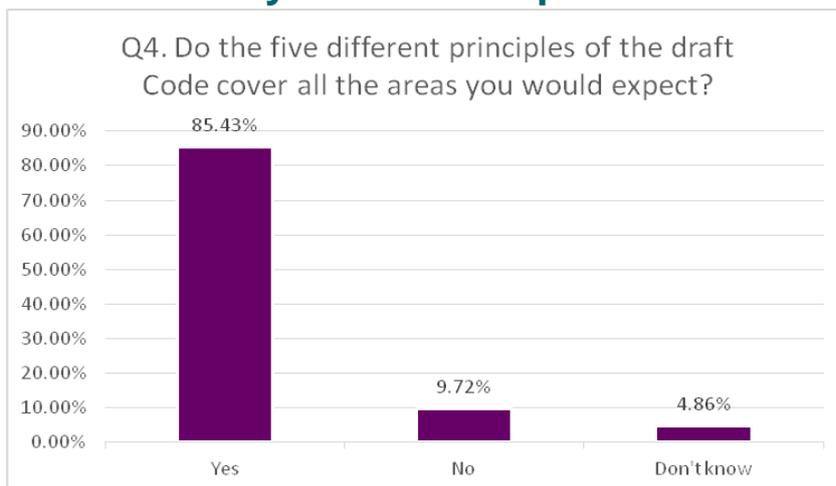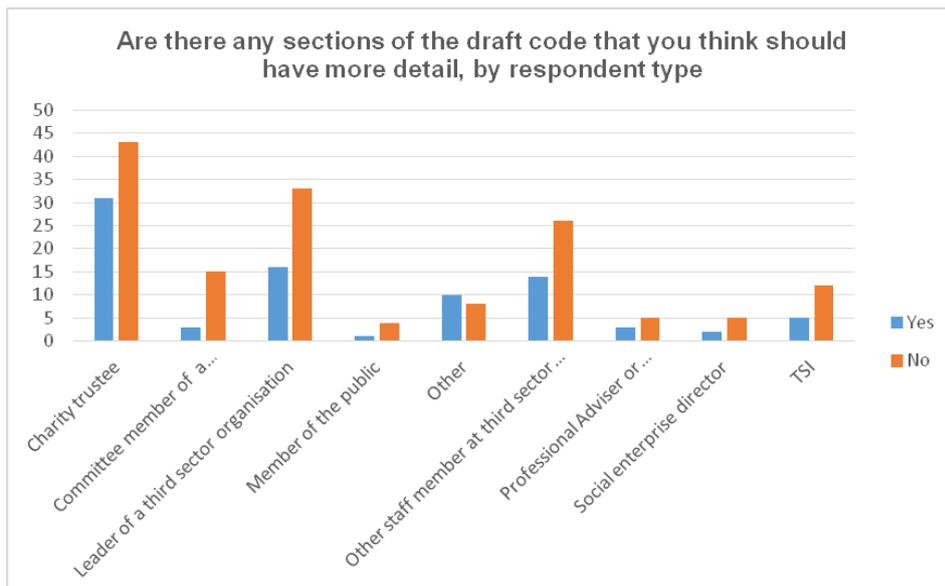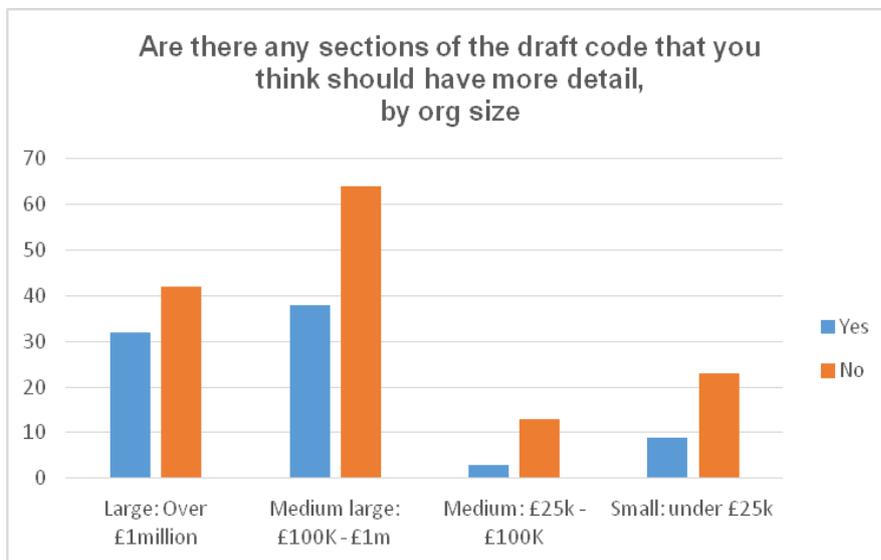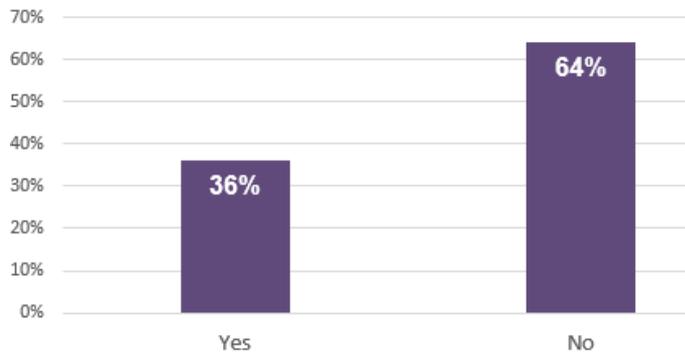

Q5. Are there any sections of the draft Code that you found difficult to understand?
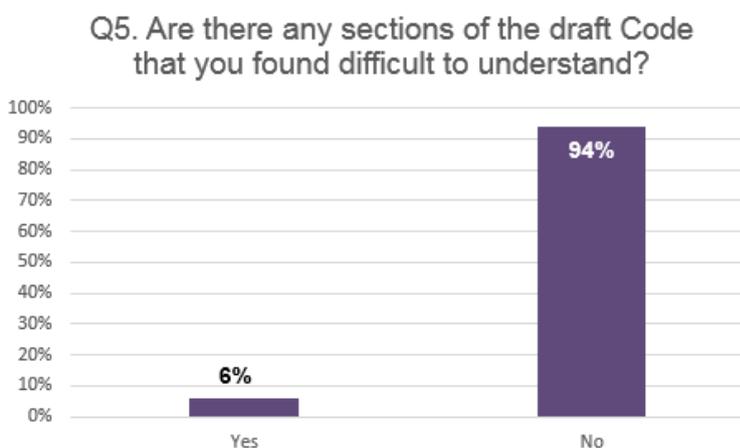
Q6. Are there any sections of the draft code that you think should have more detail?

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Response	Percentage
Yes	36%
No	64%

Are there any sections of the draft code that you think should have more detail, by org size

Org size	Yes	No
Large: Over £1million	32	42
Medium large: £100K - £1m	38	64
Medium: £25k - £100K	3	13
Small: under £25k	9	23

Are there any sections of the draft code that you think should have more detail, by respondent type

Respondent type	Yes	No
Charity trustee	31	43
Committee member of a...	3	15
Leader of a third sector organisation	16	33
Member of the public	1	4
Other	10	8
Other staff member at third sector ...	14	26
Professional Adviser or ...	3	5
Social enterprise director	2	5
TSI	5	12

The general feel is that the five principles contained in draft are what respondents expect.

There are a wide number of comments which focus on specifics of each principle – these have been pulled together from responses to Q4, Q5, and Q6.

Key comment areas:

- Board diversity
- culture and values
- accountability (stakeholders, members)
- transparency (reporting, communication)
- Board relationship with CEO /staff (delegation and responsibilities)
- strategy
- impact and evaluation
- future relevance/adaptability
- financial management
- risk management
- legislation and compliance
- Board skills / skills audit
- Board performance

More detail

A number of useful points were made by respondents, which have been slotted under the relevant sections where possible.

Many comments were simply that 'all of the sections' need more detail:

- "All of the principles should have text that shares what is viewed as good practice in each"
- "I think it's important for such a Code to be succinct, easy to read and understand and without too much detail that may, in turn, lead the Code become a cumbersome document. If it's easy and accessible, it will be useful. If there was an area that could be expanded more, I would say further explanation of the importance of **diversity** - having a Board that represents communities, service users, volunteers etc is very important. Ensuring your organisation is truly open to all, not just saying that it is, is a really important role for a Board in all of its work."

More detail – but perhaps not in Code itself

 A number of respondents want a level of detail **within** the Principles of the Code that would perhaps be more appropriate in accompanying documentation – it therefore perhaps has to be made clear that these are high level principles and that good practice and examples sit elsewhere:

- "We believe the inclusion of examples and case studies would strengthen the Code, whether within the Code itself or as an associated resource to be read alongside the Code."
- "Balance is good. Signposts and additional reading will be vital."
- "Detail and help is important, but I understand this to be about the principles, with the detail coming further down. I think this is the right way to do things."

<u>No more detail / balance</u>

Several respondents urged to keep things simple:

- "Any more detail risks obscuring the principles"
- "I answer NO on the basis that I assume there will be supporting information available to supplement the Code"
- "I think going into more detail end up with it being too restrictive and specific. The level of detail is right otherwise it could become 'all things to all people' and actually be helpful to none"
- "I think it is beneficial for the document to be relatively short. It encourages people to actually read the whole thing"
- "I think it is important for the code itself to be as concise as possible, with supplementary materials"

<u>Multiple version</u>

One responding org suggests two versions – a simple one for smaller organisations and a more detailed one for larger organisations with more complex governance needs.

However, another respondent feels:

- "The flexibility in the Code ensures that it can be equally relevant to smaller local groups as well as large charities."

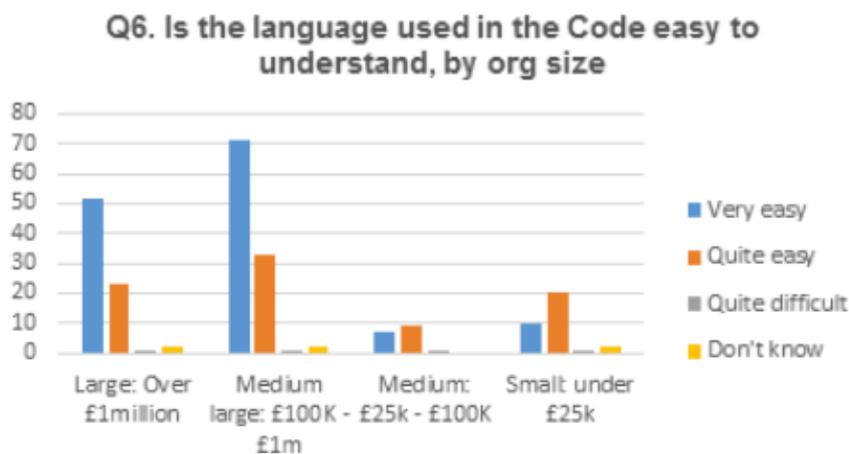# Q7. Is the language used in the Code easy to understand?

95.2% of respondents think that the language used in the Code is 'Very Easy' (58%) or Quite Easy (37%). Six respondents (2.4%) found the language 'Quite difficult'. No-one found the language 'Very difficult'.

Those from smaller organisations were more likely find the language 'Quite easy' and not 'Very easy'.

Q7. Is the language used in the Code easy to understand?
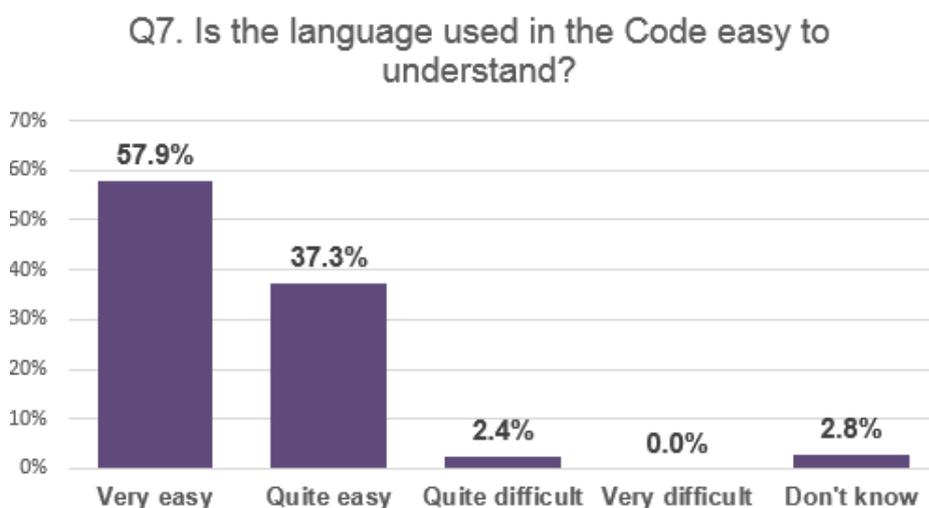
Comments from those saying 'Quite difficult':

- This is a good document - mostly the language is quite easy - but I do have some reservations - while I see that the terminology is explained it does feel like it is addressing a particular type of organisation i.e. corporate, has a vision and a board, rather than trustees in general - the language is very dense in places in the elaboration of the core principles, especially for people not used to reading this type of document - I suspect there might be trustees e.g. on management committees who might consider that this is not relevant to them - and a little confusing with the grammar shift, from 'the board' in the main part of the document which comes across as informative, to the use of 'we' in the elaboration of the principles which appear to be a set of statements   Overall its great and I do recognise that one-size-fits-all is nigh impossible. Hope the comments are at least partly useful.
- in that some of it is vague
- as always was is said and what is meant
- Personally, I could understand the language used throughout the document. However, I feel some of the language used is a bit academic and may be difficult for some people to understand, particularly those with English as a second language or literacy issues. The whole document would be better written in plain English and would therefore be accessible to the majority.
- I feel that there is some jargon that may not be easily understood and in interpreting what is written we may miss the true meaning.
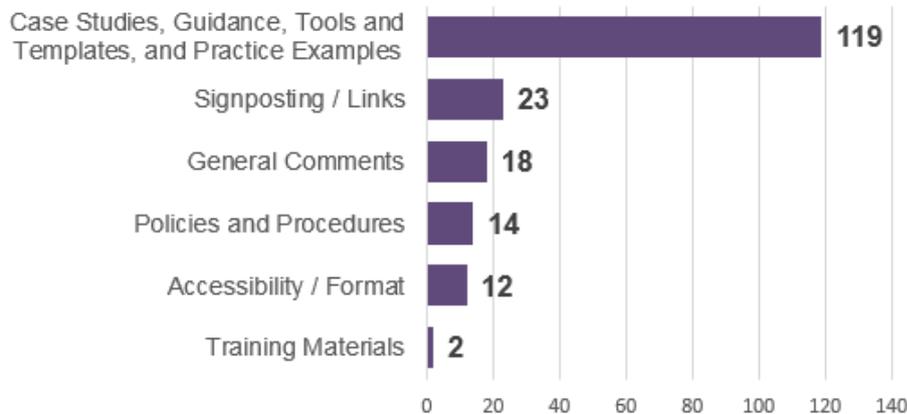

Q6. Is the language used in the Code easy to understand, by org size

Q6 Is the language used in the Code easy to understand, by respondent type
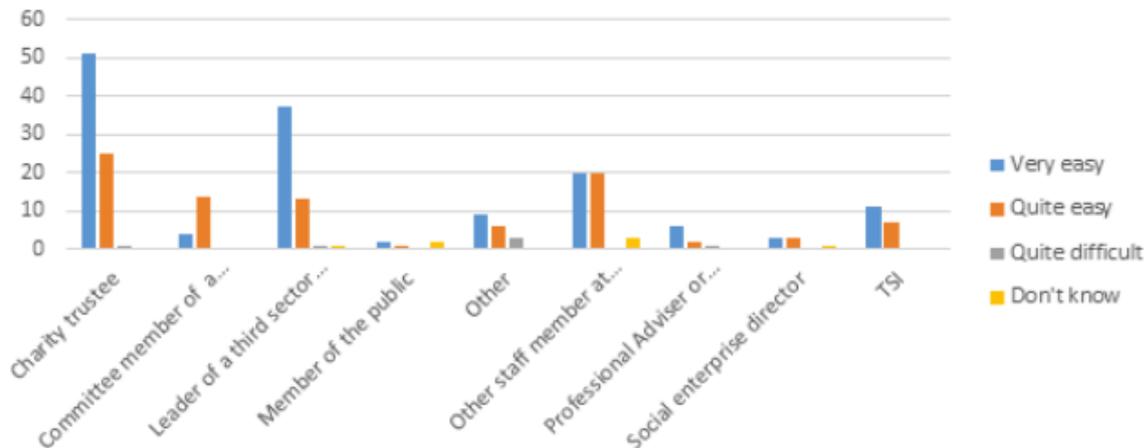
Q8. We will include a number of resources in the final online version, for example – templates, guidance, model documents. What particular resources do you think it would be helpful to have?


Q8 Resources

| Resource	Count
Case Studies, Guidance, Tools and Templates, and Practice Examples	119
Signposting / Links	23
General Comments	18
Policies and Procedures	14
Accessibility / Format	12
Training Materials	2

Topics (see full document for details):

- Legislation and regulation
- Funding and Finance
- Trustee Recruitment
- Board Roles and Responsibilities
- Board Meetings
- Reporting
- Board Performance
- Staff performance

Q9. Any other comments you would like to make?

Other comments (count)
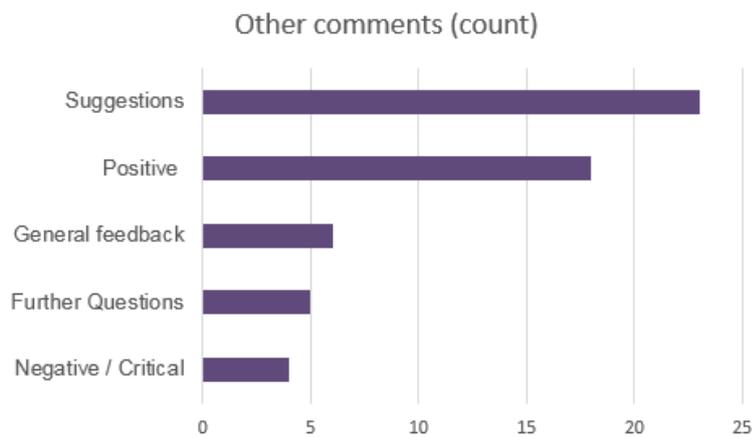
Q11. Equality Impact Assessment Question

Equality Impact - positive or negative?
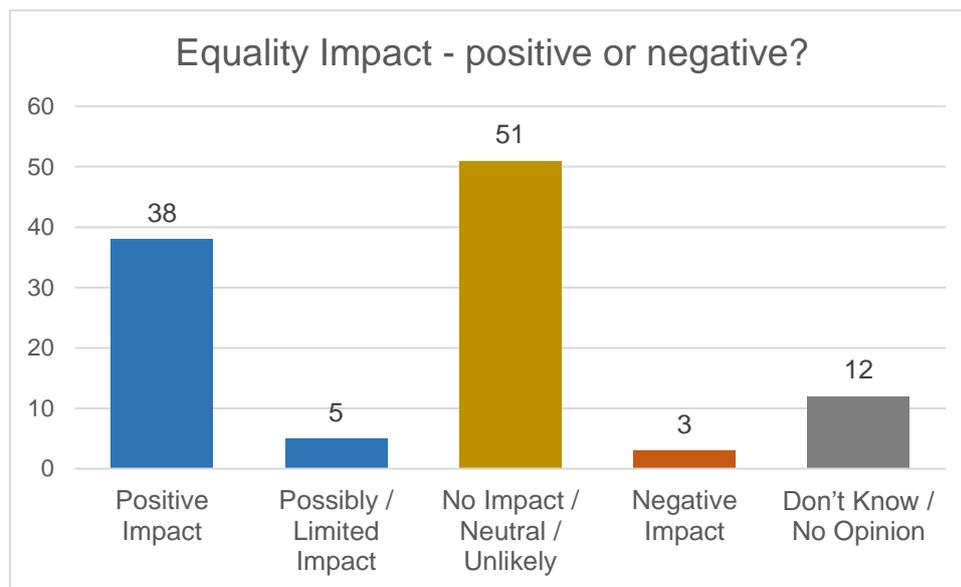
- 43 (39%) respondents thought that the Code would have a positive or limited positive impact.
- 51 (47%) respondents thought that the Code would have no impact on equality.
- 3 (3%) respondents thought the impact would be negative
- 12 (11%) respondents didn't know or had no opinion

However, respondents thought that addressing two key areas would ensure a positive impact:

1. Board diversity – expanding references in board recruitment etc
2. Accessibility and dissemination – see Q12 in full doc:
   - ensuring that documents are accessible and available in different formats;

- testing with a range of potential user groups
- ensuring that Code is distributed widely and via equalities networks

One respondent commented:

"It will have a negative impact if people from any of these groups, particularly those with disabilities are unable to understand/access and fully utilise the draft guidance. Producing the document in plain English, BSL and large print will help negate such an impact."

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