

South Copeland Community Partnership resident research

JULY – OCTOBER 2022

FOR PUBLICATION

.YONDER

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South Copeland Search Area Millom & Black Combe and Scafell



Illustrative map of one of two search areas identified by the Copeland GDF Working Group

- Onshore area for consideration
- Excluded from consideration, retains funding
- Inshore area for consideration
- Inshore area boundary
- Electoral ward boundary

Programme of work

1

INCEPTION

Research objectives, survey questionnaire, and depth interview discussion guide agreed upon by Yonder and South Copeland Community Partnership

2

FACE-TO-FACE POLLING

158 face-to-face interviews with residents (16+) of the wards Black Combe & Scafell and Millom
Quotas and weights employed to ensure a demographically representative sample of the area's adult (16+) population

3

DEPTH INTERVIEWS

12 depth interviews with residents of Black Combe & Scafell and Millom wards
Each interview utilised a flexible discussion guide that Yonder developed in collaboration with the Community Partnership

4

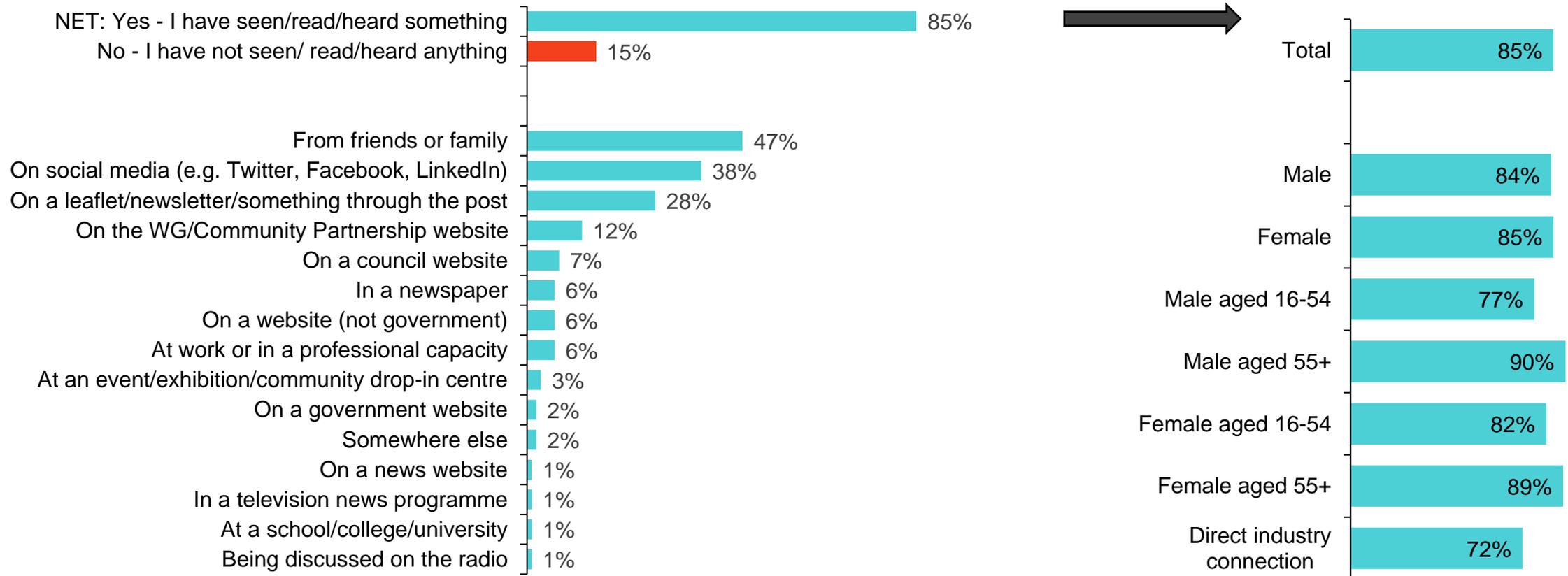
REPORTING

Integration of quantitative and qualitative research into one thematic report discussing relevant and actionable insights to be carried forward

Knowledge and understanding

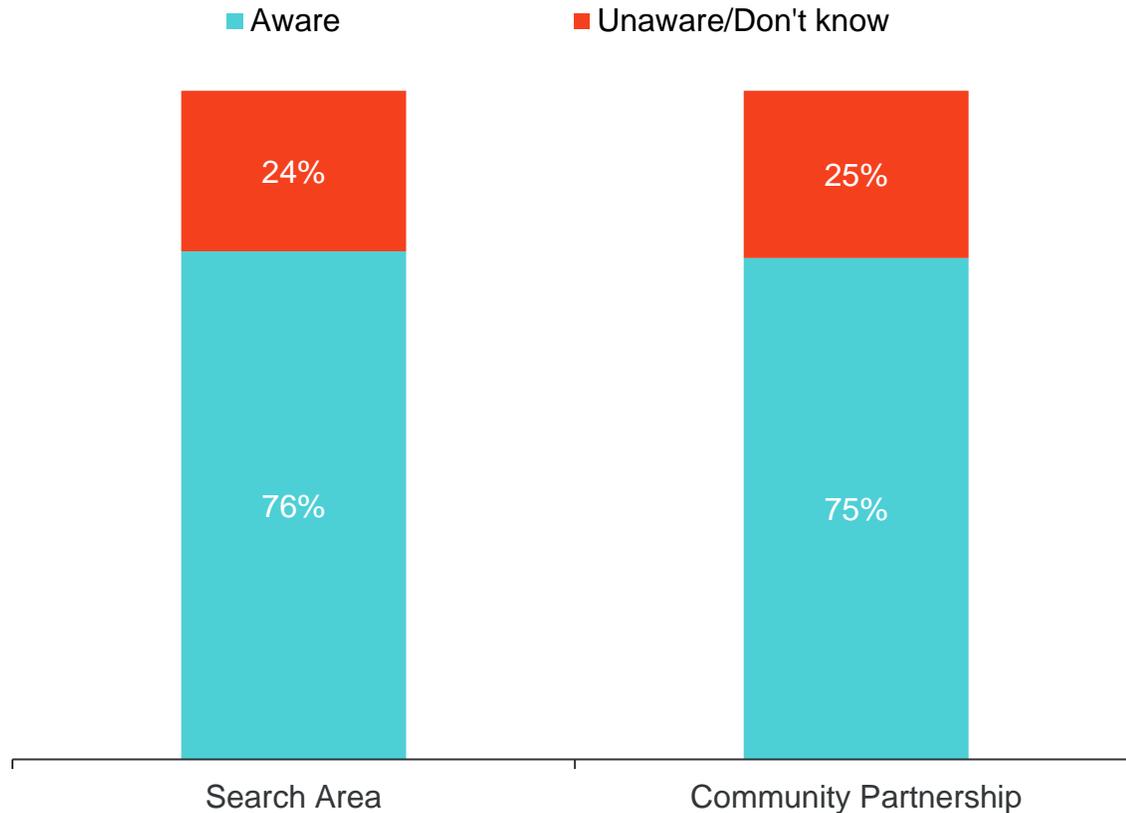
The majority of residents (85%) recalled seeing, reading or hearing something about radioactive waste or geological disposal in the past year

Q. Before today, have you seen or read or heard anything about radioactive waste or geological disposal or a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) anywhere over the past year? If so, where?



Three-quarters were aware of the identification of the Search Area and the Community Partnership

Q. Before today, were you aware or unaware of the following? A Search Area in South Copeland...has been identified for further investigation of its suitability for a GDF has been identified / A South Copeland GDF Community Partnership was formed in December 2021...

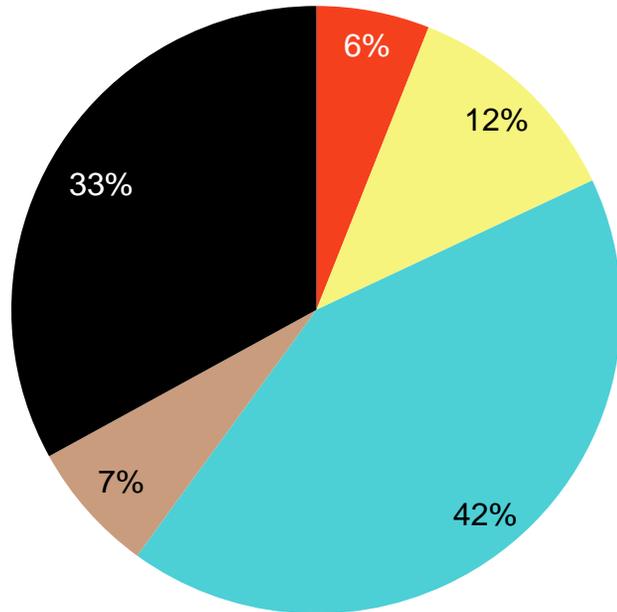


- + Though few possessed detailed understanding, most were aware that the question of how to manage radioactive waste was becoming an increasingly salient issue.
- + Most residents claimed to have heard of the Community Partnership. However, detailed understanding of it and its purpose was more limited.
- + Most were interested to hear more about the Community Partnership, and to have an opportunity to contribute opinions where appropriate.

Most residents were familiar with the nuclear industry. However, few had detailed understanding of how radioactive waste was managed

Q. What best describes your understanding of how the UK currently manages, stores or disposes of its radioactive waste?

- It ships it to other countries for disposal
- It buries it deep at sea
- It is stored at interim surface or ground-level storage facilities at sites across the UK
- It is held in vaults deep underground in the UK
- Not sure

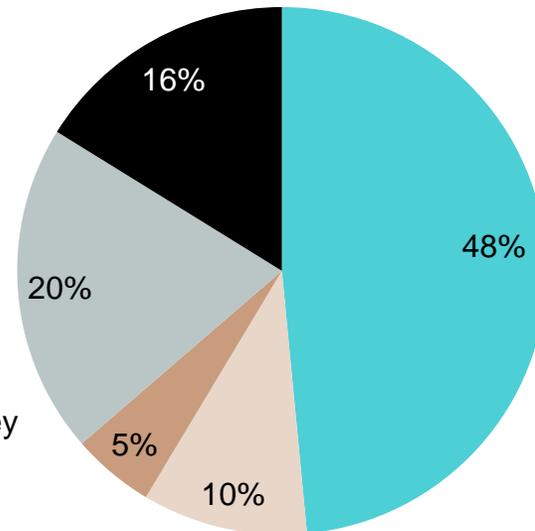


- + Most residents possessed at least limited understanding of the nuclear industry.
- + Existing knowledge was predicated largely on direct connections to the industry and through general proximity to Sellafield.
- + However, few had detailed understanding of how radioactive waste was managed.
- + Limited understand was generally attributed to a lack of time to engage, or apathy towards the subject.

Nearly half of those surveyed were able to identify the accurate description of a GDF

Q. Which, if any, of the following statements best describes what you know (if anything) about Geological Disposal Facilities?

- They are deep underground facilities for the permanent disposal of radioactive waste that are not currently used in the UK but that are being suggested for use in the UK
- They are deep underground facilities that are currently used in the UK for the permanent disposal of radioactive waste
- They are near-to- surface sites where the UK currently buries low-level radioactive waste
- Heard of the term but don't know what they are
- Never heard of the term



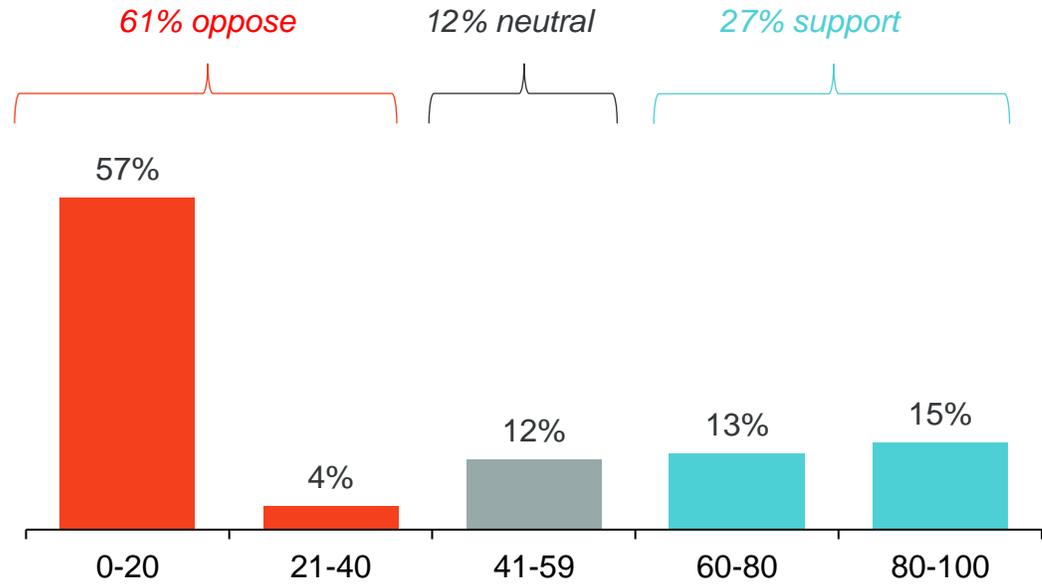
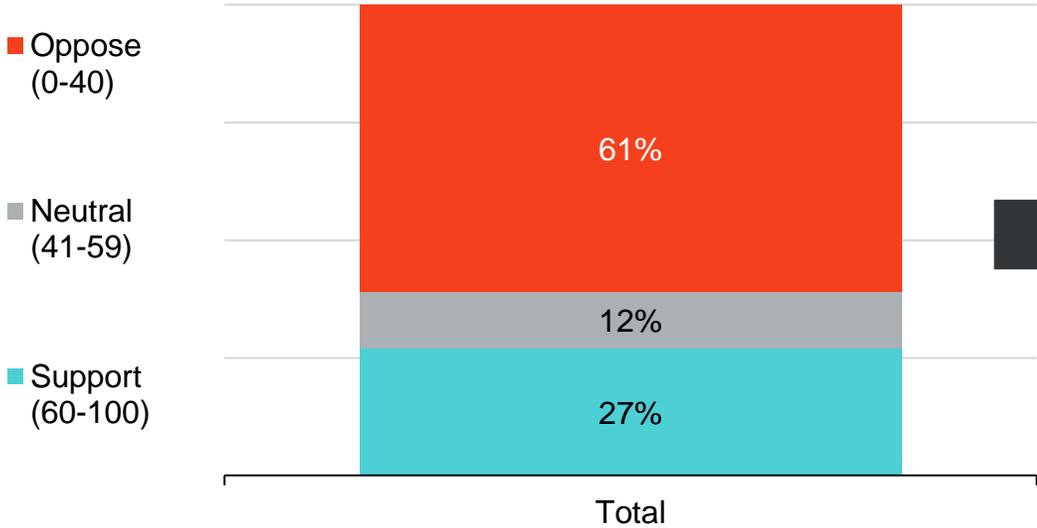
- + Only a minority of residents possessed in-depth knowledge of nuclear waste and the UK's current storage approach. None, however, with complete accuracy.
- + Those with a low awareness were surprised – and often alarmed – to learn of temporary surface storage facilities across the country.
- + Whilst several alluded to relevant descriptions and processes, most residents were unfamiliar with the terms 'geological disposal' and 'geological disposal facility'.
- + Those more familiar with geological disposal were generally aged 55+.

Geological disposal

A quarter (27%) supported a GDF in the South Copeland Search Area, whilst 61% were opposed

Q. Now, please imagine that the government proposed to construct a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) within the South Copeland Search Area – which covers parts of the wards of Millom and Black Combe & Scafell. Based on what you know, to what extent do you support or oppose this proposal?

Please use a 0-100 scale, where 0 means you completely oppose this proposal, 50 means you neither support nor oppose this proposal and 100 means you completely support this proposal.



NET support: -34%

Unprompted, residents raised concerns around the safety of the approach and the impact on the local environment

- + Though most recognised a GDF could bring benefits to the area, several important concerns were front-of-mind:
 - + The need for safety and security reassurances
 - + The potential impact on the local environment
 - + How the waste would be transported
- + Spontaneously, residents raised questions relating to the safety of the approach. The possibility of adverse weather or earthquakes was seen to increase the associated risks.
- + Residents also raised concerns relating to the impact of a GDF on the local environment, waterways, and wildlife.
- + Some residents asked questions about how the waste would be transported which, they claimed, would be unpractical given the state of the infrastructure in South Copeland.
- + Whilst there were several common concerns, interviewees welcomed the prospect of a GDF boosting local employment. Some, however, were concerned that local residents would not benefit, and feared that labour would be brought in from outside Copeland.

Information needs

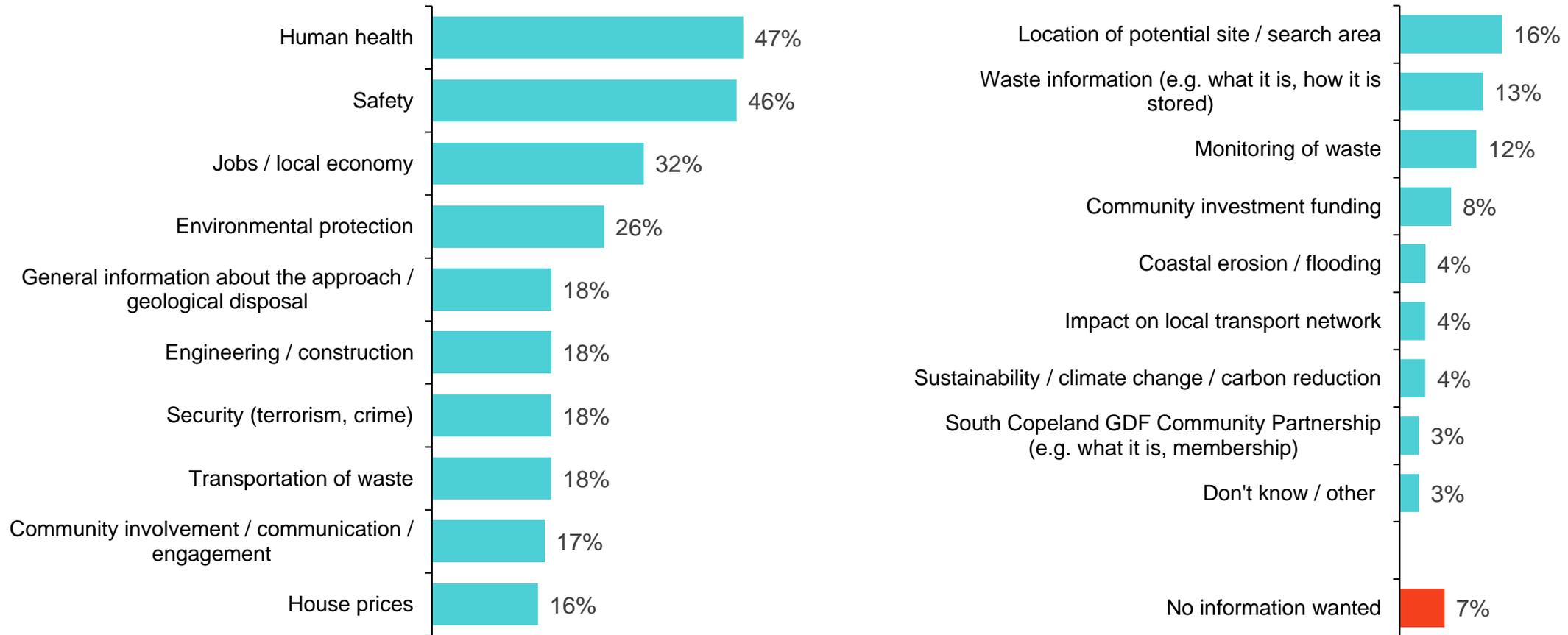
Residents wanted more information principally across five core areas

Safety reassurances	Environmental protection	Transportation of the waste	Local economic impact	Impact on future generations
<p>“How are they going to build this thing, and what it actually involves. Is it completely 100% safe?”</p> <p>“What it would be stored in? How it would be kept safe?”</p>	<p>“Well, how would it impact the landscape around it.”</p> <p>“I would be for protecting the wildlife.”</p>	<p>“It wouldn't be very good bringing it in by road.”</p> <p>“Would it improve the railway lines if this stuff was transported?”</p>	<p>“They'll bring people in from out of town, take the labour from somewhere else.”</p> <p>“I'm more concerned about local people and creating jobs.”</p>	<p>“I just worry about the effects on us, the community and what it will bring.”</p> <p>“I want to look after my grandchildren and future children and grandchildren.”</p>



This was reflected in the survey, with residents wanting more information around human health and safety

Q. What kind of information would you like to receive regarding geological disposal and the siting process?*

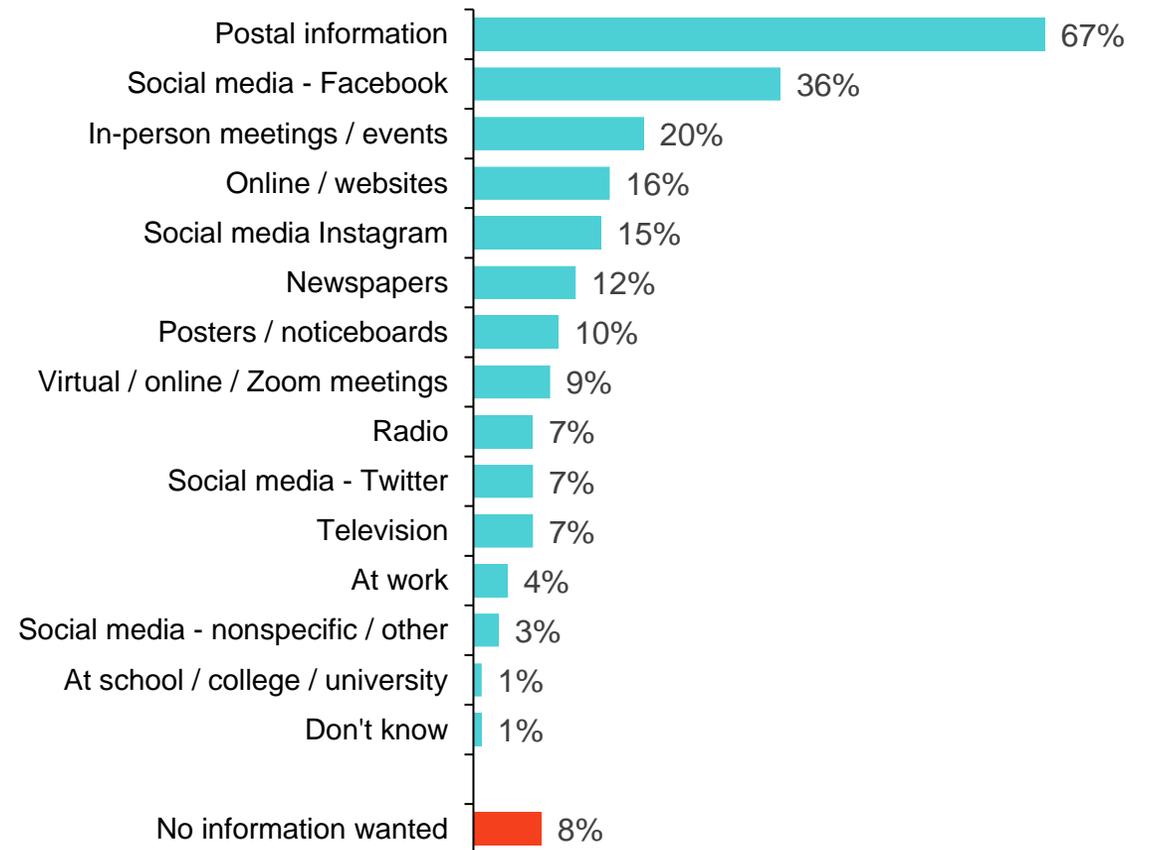
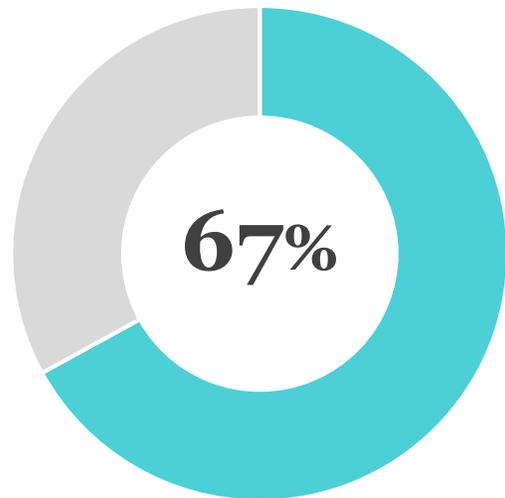


*Note: question was open-ended. Respondents' spontaneous answers have been grouped into consistent themes for the purpose of analysis.

Two-thirds wanted to receive more information via postal information, and one third via social media (Facebook)

Q. What kind of information would you like to receive regarding geological disposal and the siting process?

Postal information (Newsletters, leaflets, flyers sent in the post)



*Note: question was open-ended. Respondents' spontaneous answers have been grouped into consistent themes for the purpose of analysis.

These preferences were reflected in depth interviews



Postal information

The favoured method of engagement; welcomed across all demographics.



Local presentations & events

Valued by those with a baseline understanding; disengaged unlikely to attend.



Email updates

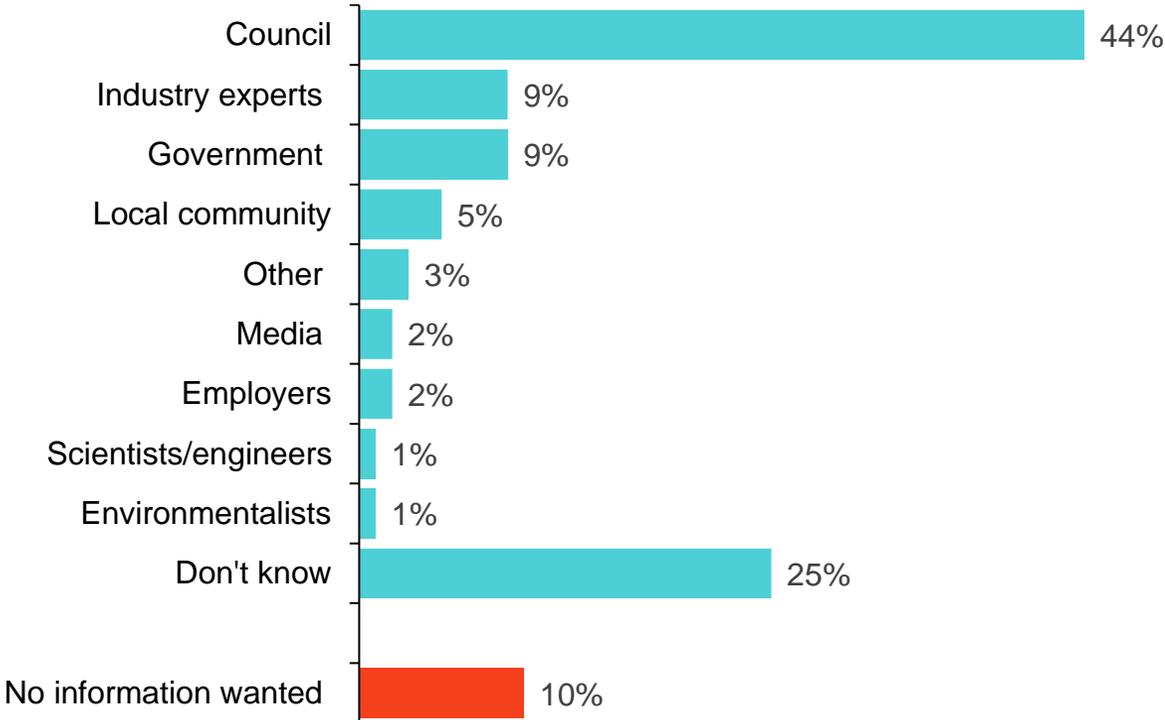
The most popular methods of communication among younger residents.



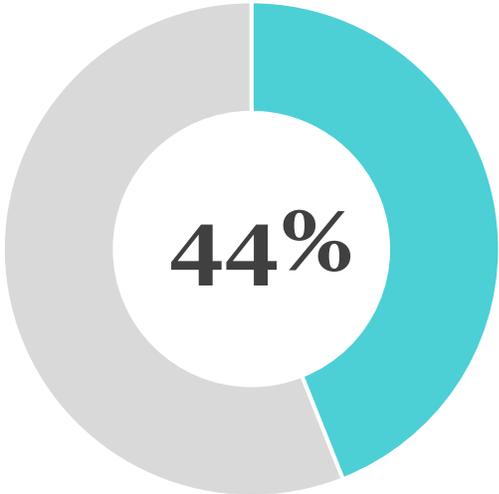
Social media

Among survey respondents, two-in-five cited the council as the source of information that they would like to hear from

Q. What kinds of organisations or people would you like to hear from regarding geological disposal and the siting process?



Information from the council



Interviewees also placed emphasis on the importance of the local council and nuclear experts/industry officials



National / local government

- + Spontaneously, most residents said that Government/official sources would be their first port-of-call when searching for more information.
- + Residents were interested in the views of the council. More often this was because they had not heard the position of the council to date.



The nuclear industry

- + Residents emphasised the importance of receiving impartial, fact-based information from nuclear industry experts. Indeed, several cited the importance of experts working at Sellafield specifically.
- + Reassurance from the industry was seen as critical to considering the prospect of a GDF both locally and as a broader policy.

Summary

Executive summary

Residents were familiar with the nuclear industry. However, detailed understanding of nuclear processes and of how radioactive waste was managed was more limited.

Most claimed to have heard of the Community Partnership. However, detailed understanding of the Community Partnership and its purpose was more limited.

Limited awareness of radioactive waste management primed a baseline position of opposition towards the policy. When considering a local GDF, there were many more opponents than supporters of such a proposal within the South Copeland Search Area. Three-in-five (61%) were opposed to the construction of a GDF within the Search Area, whilst a quarter were supportive (27%).

Residents felt that action was required to build understanding of current radioactive waste management approaches and explain the rationale behind the policy. In particular, residents wanted more information around the impact on human health and why geological disposal was a safe and secure approach.

Most residents wanted to receive more information via the post. This approach was favoured across all demographics. Other information channels, such as in-person events and social media were also valued.

Residents cited the council and industry/nuclear experts as the sources of information that they would like to hear more from regarding geological disposal and the siting process.

Appendix

Survey methodology

Methodology

Between 27 June and 15 July, Yonder interviewed 158 residents (16+) across the wards of Black Combe & Scafell and Millom. The interviews were conducted by Red Research, on behalf of Yonder.

Quotas and weights were employed to ensure the sample was representative in terms of the relative populations of the two wards and the age and sex profiles of the demographics in question.

With a sample of 158 and a 95% confidence interval, a +/-8% margin of error is expected.

Yonder is a member of the British Polling Council and abides by its rules. Yonder was formerly known as Populus and changed trading names in October 2020. For more information, see www.yonderconsulting.com.

Objectives

The research was designed to fulfil several objectives:

- + To provide insight into knowledge, understanding and perceptions of radioactive waste and geological disposal among residents (16+) in and around South Copeland
- + To investigate respondents' recall of media reporting of radioactive waste and geological disposal in South Copeland
- + To measure respondents' awareness of the formation of the South Copeland Community Partnership and the identification of the Search Area
- + To collect insight into the information needs of residents in and around South Copeland concerning geological disposal and the siting process

Qualitative methodology

Methodology

Between 22 September and 6 October, Yonder conducted twelve depth interviews with residents across South Copeland.

Each interview was conducted via phone or on an online platform (MS Teams/Zoom). The interview covered knowledge of the current approach to radioactive waste management, views of the South Copeland Community Partnership and how residents would like it to communicate with the community.

Each depth interview included residents of the wards of Millom and Black Combe & Scafell. Each interview lasted for 30 minutes and was moderated by an experienced Yonder researcher.

Objectives

A flexible discussion guide provided a loose structure for free-flowing conversations. The interviews covered the following themes:

- + Knowledge of current approaches to radioactive waste management
- + Knowledge of, and attitudes towards, geological disposal
- + Awareness of the establishment of the South Copeland Community Partnership
- + Preferences for community engagement
- + Preferred communication methods (e.g. how residents wanted to be engaged, what the process should look like, which communication platforms were preferred)

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