

**Race.  
Equality.  
Gypsies,  
Roma,  
Travellers**

**Wales**

# Wales Race Equalities Action Plan



Romani Cultural & Arts Co. (RCAC) recently received a grant to carry out work related to the *Wales Race Equality Action Plan (REAP)*, part of the *Wales Strategic Equalities Action Plan 2020-2024 (SEP)*. Work is underway to monitor delivery of the *SEP*, and to review its content through the particular lens of COVID-19 (SARS-COV-19), and the novel coronavirus pandemic. Whilst the *SEP* is the Welsh Government's main, overarching plan for achieving greater equality in Wales, it does not do so alone. It is supported by, and supports a range of other important plans that also capture and guide the government's work in this area. As such, the *Race Equality Action Plan* will be a key element in the delivery of the *SEP* and officials are now beginning to engage with colleagues responsible for its delivery as well as those working on the other major plans, which tackle particular aspects of inequality, to establish progress to date and future outputs.

The *Race Equality Action Plan* engagement will take place across the public and Third Sectors. In addition, the Welsh Local Government Association will be involved through the *REAP Steering Group*. For this to be successful, the RCAC has been asked to carry out, through telephone and Internet communication, a survey with community members from the Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller communities in Wales to assess the potential impact and reach of the *REAP*. The results of the survey by RCAC will feed directly into the work of the *Steering Group* and the final plan itself.

***Strategic  
Equalities  
Action  
Plan,  
2020  
to 2024***

**Wales**

# Active policies to achieve equality in Wales

The Romani Cultural & Arts Company is currently engaged in supporting the Welsh government's community engagement with Romani and Traveller communities, over the *Wales Race Equality Action Plan* and the *Strategic Equalities Action Plan for Wales, 2020 to 2024*.

## What we are doing

We are carrying out a survey across Wales, with Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller communities, which the government officials and local government officers consider 'harder-to-reach' or more difficult to 'engage' with than other communities. Our survey asks individual Romani and Traveller people about their opinions regarding equalities, policies and action plans, representation and other matters, related to the Welsh government's

Partnership between Romani and Traveller communities and service providers, educators, planners and policy-makers as a means of improving service-delivery or consultation, is the basis for all of RCAC's work.

## Equality for all

In this case, we are asking questions of individuals and families from Romani and Traveller communities, regarding their knowledge and understanding of important policies, strategies and legislation related to racial equality, recognition of different minority ethnic groups in Welsh society, protection of those with different religious beliefs, support for those with additional learning needs and mobility impairments, equity for people with differing sexual orientation, and justice for those that experience hate crime and abuse.



# Romani Cultural & Arts Co.



**Isaac Blake, Director of the Romani Cultural & Arts Company (RCAC) says, ‘RCAC was founded in 2009, to work with the Romani and Traveller communities, promoting arts and culture as a means of empowering individuals, strengthening self-identities amongst Gypsies, Roma, Travellers, and advocating for equalities in Wales, both for Romani and Traveller peoples and for all the BAME communities...’**

**‘We think that the government’s commitment to achieving equality for all sections of Welsh society is an excellent goal, trying to address inequality that arises as a result of unequal distribution of wealth, obstacles accessing high-quality education, restricted opportunities in employment for women, and poor health outcomes for older men; these are all things (with some others mentioned elsewhere in this report) that need to change if Wales is to be a fairer, more equal place to live and work, to be young and old, to be a member of the Welsh population judged by the content of their character, rather than the colour of their skin or the religious beliefs they hold dear.’**

**‘That’s why the RCAC advocates for equal rights for Gypsies, Roma, and Travellers, because inequality for one group in Welsh society means inequality for *other* groups too; an injury to one is an injury to *all*.’**



**As a Gypsy, Roma, Traveller led organisation, RCAC is at the heart of OUR communities; we understand the issues, challenges and obstacles that the communities face, as we have lived them, and we have a fundamental understanding of culture, traditions and the resilience that these provide, through being immersed in them from early years, rather than relying on theoretical, scholarly research or academic qualification. As academics, activists and professionals, we are best-placed to serve the needs of our own...**

# **2009-2020**



**Eleven Years  
of Successful  
Community  
Engagement**



# ***Why are we doing this survey?***

For the past 40 years, progress on equality and diversity has traditionally been measured in Wales, by changes in the representation of women and minority groups in key sectors, such as government, education, employment, business, services and professions. This remains a vital measure of success. There is increasing recognition, however, that changes in perception and changes to the culture of institutions, organisations and societies are necessary in order to embed equality. Traditionally, equality surveys are of a quantitative nature. However, the use of a quantitative approach with statistical outputs cannot record people's perceptions, understandings or experiences on the success or failure of measures to improve, especially in communities. Statistical data are often used to dictate priorities for action, but without the benefit of understanding communities' perceptions, the real areas that need to be addressed can easily be overlooked. Carrying out an equality survey of your community or target population can help us learn more about:

- How people really feel about the policies, strategies or action plans of which they are a part;
- The way in which the government, local authority or public body, its policies and practices are perceived to operate;
- Where to focus government equality resources and initiatives in the future;
- The impact of equality initiatives, policies and strategies that groups, communities and populations experience over time.



# Gypsy, Roma, Traveller communities in Wales



## The Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller

populations in Wales have been present, in the case of Irish Travellers, since the end of the Roman period (5th century CE). The Gypsies, known as 'Egyptians' at the time (from a misidentification in Byzantium in the 11th century CE), arrived first in Radnorshire, mid-Wales in the 1530's, as blacksmiths, mummers, actors, 'cunning folk' (healers and herbalists), and fortune-tellers. Further groups, such as the extended clan that came to Bala, Gwynedd with Abram Wood in the 18th century and brought music, musicianship and storytelling, together with an inflected form of the Romani language, Rromani-chib, much studied by linguists and academics, such as John Sampson (The Dialect of the Gypsies of Wales, being the older form of British Romani, preserved in the speech of the clan of Abram Wood, 1926), that remained in daily use until the 1950's. In the early 20th century, groups of so-called 'Coppersmith Gypsies', whose origins in Rumania were originally as slaves to the wealthy landowners and princes (voivode) of the lands of Wallachia and Moldavia, arrived in Britain and some made their way to Wales and the north-west. As exceptionally skilled coppersmiths, goldsmiths and metal-workers, they were the cause of much sensation amongst the press and scholars, particularly those associated with the Gypsy Lore Society, founded in Edinburgh and later operating (under the leadership of John Sampson and Dora Yates), from Liverpool University. Other eastern European Roma began migrating to Wales in the late 1990's, from the Czech Republic and Slovakia, numbers increasing during the mid-2000's, as pressure from non-Romani populations and the enlargement of the EU allowed freedom of movement for persecuted and marginalised Roma, especially from eastern Slovakia. At present, 14,140 (approximately) Romani and Traveller people live in Wales; 6,684 Gypsies and Travellers living in caravans and trailers, 4,456 living in housing, and 3,000 Roma in poor quality and temporary accommodation. This amounts to 0.45% of the total Welsh population of 3,113,000.

# At the heart of our work are our communities...

**The Gypsy,  
Roma, and  
Traveller people  
in Wales are the  
basis upon  
which the RCAC  
builds its  
programme of  
arts and culture  
workshops with  
children on sites,  
support for  
elders, projects  
with Romani and  
Traveller women,  
exhibitions with  
Gypsy, Roma,  
Traveller artists,  
training sessions  
with Romani and  
Traveller experts,  
and advocacy...**

They have carried out these surveys with members of the Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller communities, going to great lengths to capture the data for this survey and report.

They have been trained as community researchers and have worked with the RCAC over a number of projects, been part-and-parcel of the training programmes delivered to professionals, educators, local government officers, Third Sector staff, and Welsh government employees.

Transfer of knowledge and skills is a crucial objective in the mission of the RCAC, which is why we train and develop the professional skills of our Community Champions, so that they will be the knowledgeable experts regarding the Gypsy, Roma, Traveller communities, rather than those outside of the communities...

*Our  
Community  
Champions  
are our  
most  
valuable  
asset*





***Billy Cooney  
Chairperson, Bangor  
Back Lane Resident's  
Association***



***Jolana Curejova, Bristol  
City Council, Housing  
Advice Officer***



***Jamie James,  
Community Champion  
Co-ordinator, Romani  
Cultural & Arts Co.***

**...of our  
interviewees told  
us that they had  
no awareness of  
the *Strategic  
Equalities Plan for  
Wales 2020 - 2024,*  
or the *Wales Race  
Equality Plan***

**64%**



*In our survey of  
Gypsy, Roma,  
and Traveller  
people...*

**64%**

**agreed**

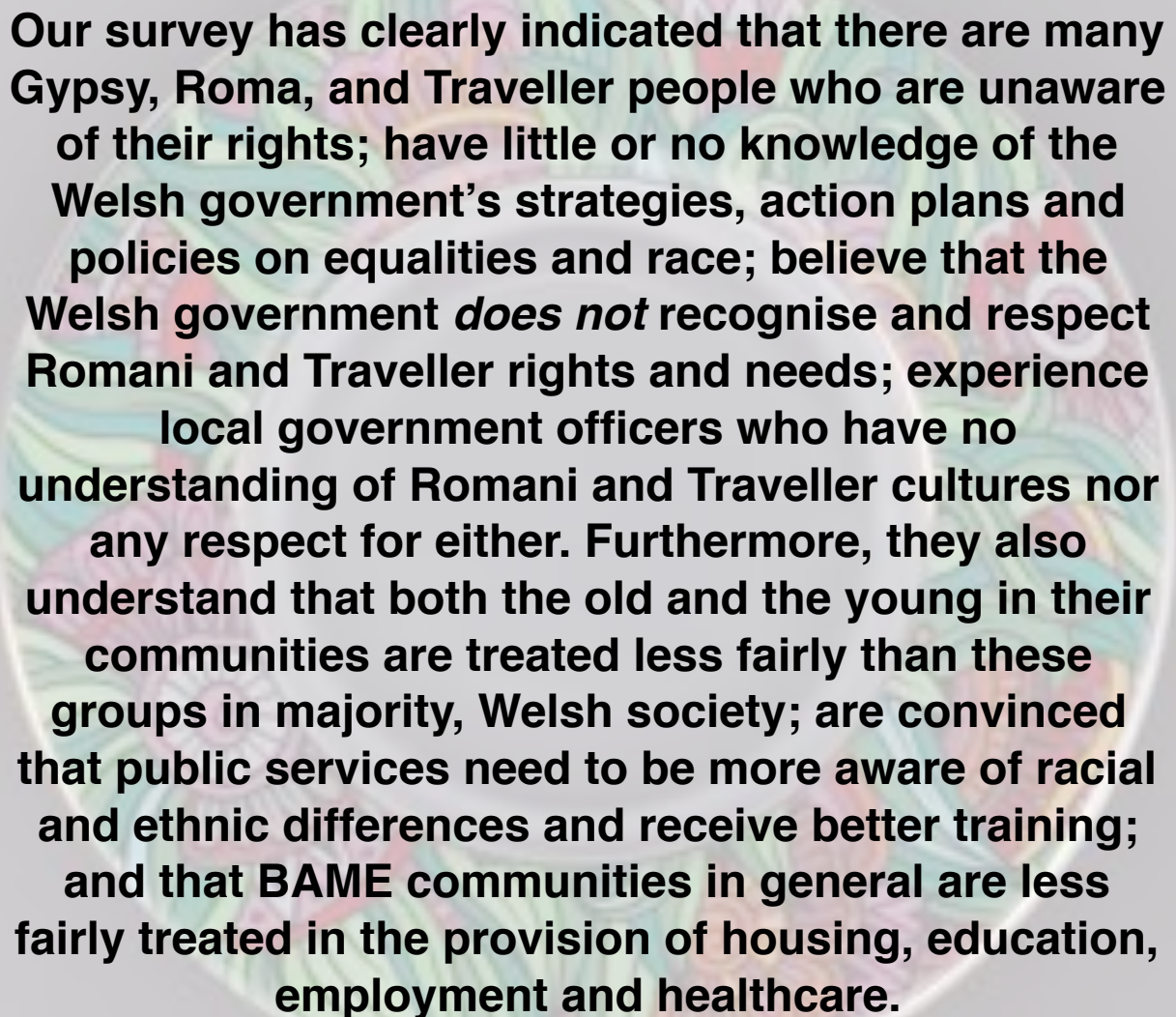
**in**

**that respect  
for human  
rights is  
deeply  
important to  
the Welsh  
government**

**total...**

**70%**  
**Of Gypsy, Roma,  
and Traveller people  
we spoke with  
strongly *disagreed*  
with the statement  
about the Welsh  
government  
respecting the rights  
of Romani and  
Traveller people...**

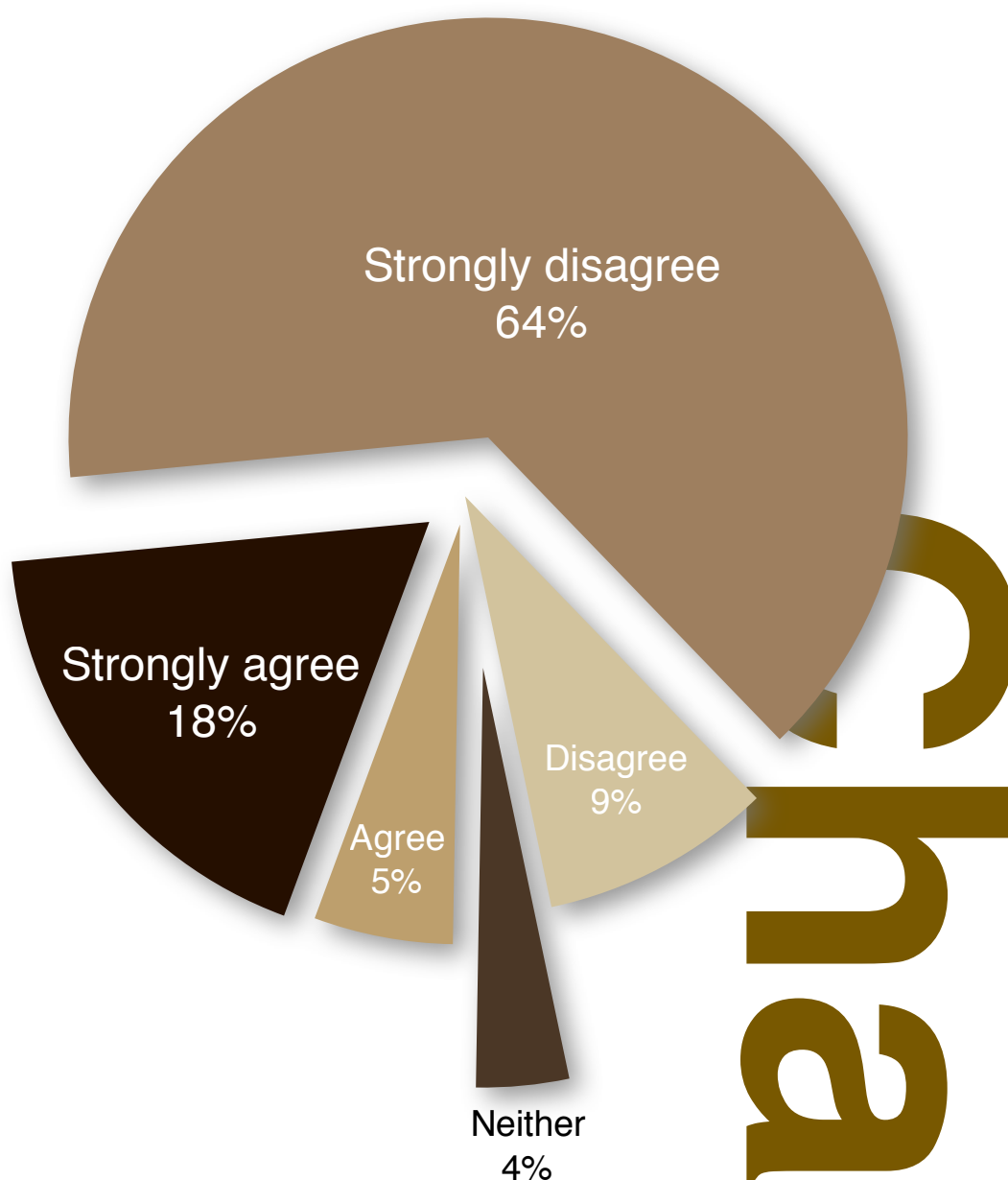
**A staggering percentage of our interviewees believe that local government officers in Wales *do not* understand nor respect the rights and needs of Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller people...**



**Our survey has clearly indicated that there are many Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller people who are unaware of their rights; have little or no knowledge of the Welsh government's strategies, action plans and policies on equalities and race; believe that the Welsh government *does not* recognise and respect Romani and Traveller rights and needs; experience local government officers who have no understanding of Romani and Traveller cultures nor any respect for either. Furthermore, they also understand that both the old and the young in their communities are treated less fairly than these groups in majority, Welsh society; are convinced that public services need to be more aware of racial and ethnic differences and receive better training; and that BAME communities in general are less fairly treated in the provision of housing, education, employment and healthcare.**

# Apppe ndic es

Statements	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly agree
I was aware of the Wales Race Equality Action Plan and the Wales Strategic Equalities Action Plan	36	5	2	3	10
Making sure everyone in Wales is treated equally and fairly is really important to the Welsh Government	33	5	5	4	9
Making sure that everyone's human rights are respected, in Wales, is really important to the Welsh Government	7	7	6	3	33
People from poorer communities or families are treated less fairly than people from better-off communities	8	2	2	6	38
Older people are treated less fairly and less equally than younger people in Wales	10	6	8	8	24
Younger people are treated less fairly and less equally than older people in Wales	8	6	8	8	26
The Welsh government has adequate resources for making sure people receive good services and support	21	4	5	9	17
The Welsh government could do more to make public services, transport and health provision accessible to all	2	1	3	4	46
Public services in Wales need to think more about the needs and rights of different communities, families and individuals	2	4	4	5	41
Transport, health provision and public services need to be given more support and training in equalities and diversity	5	5	1	1	44
The Welsh government recognises the needs and rights of BAME people in accessing housing, employment, education, and healthcare	31	10	3	5	7
Respect for LGBTQ+ rights are important to the Welsh government	18	6	9	5	18
The Welsh government respects and recognises the rights and needs of Gypsy, Roma, Traveller communities	39	7	1	1	8
The Welsh government recognises the cultures and traditions of Romani and Traveller people	46	4	0	4	2
Local government officers understand and respect the rights and needs of Romani and Traveller people	49	3	1	3	0
Romani and Traveller people have sufficient representation in local and national organisations and institutions	34	11	3	3	5
Romani and Traveller people have sufficient support from Third Sector organisations to promote their rights	14	13	14	6	9

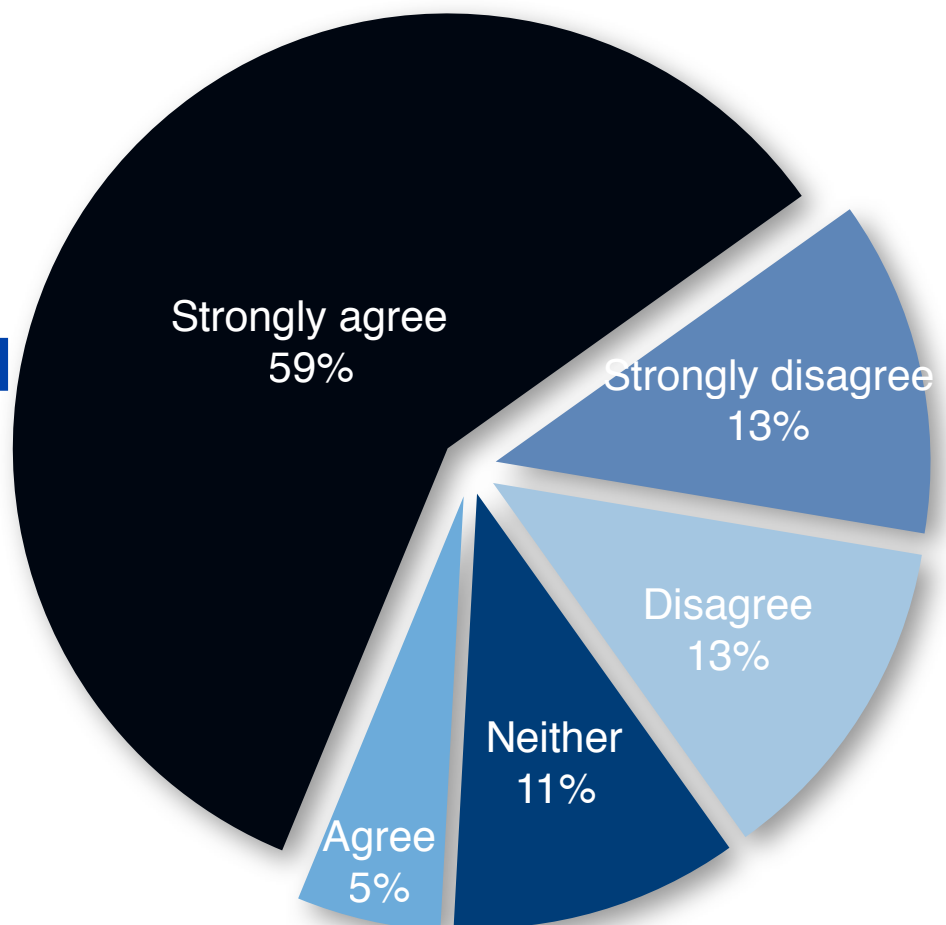


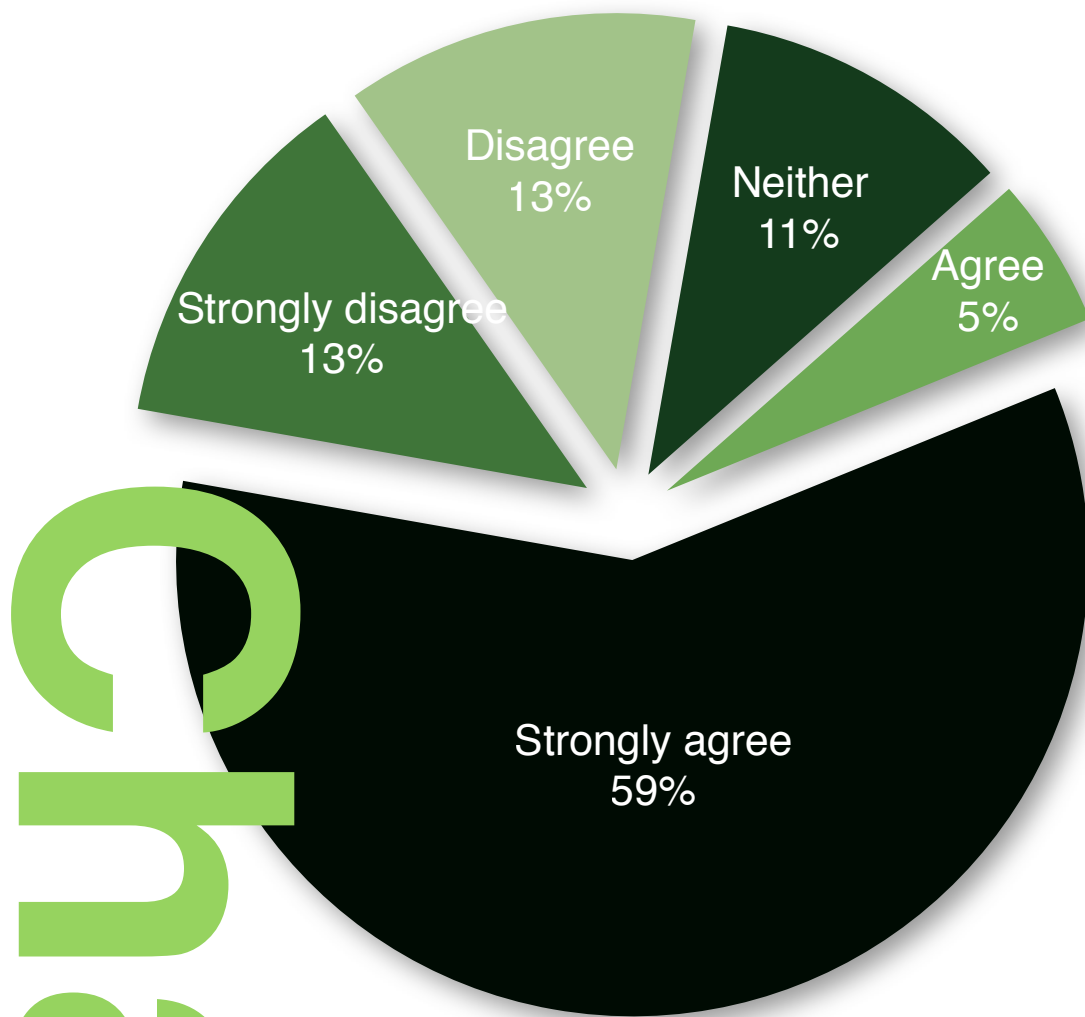
**I was aware of the  
Wales Race Equality  
Action Plan and the  
Wales Strategic  
Equalities Action Plan**



# Charts

**Making sure everyone in Wales is treated equally and fairly is really important to the Welsh Government**

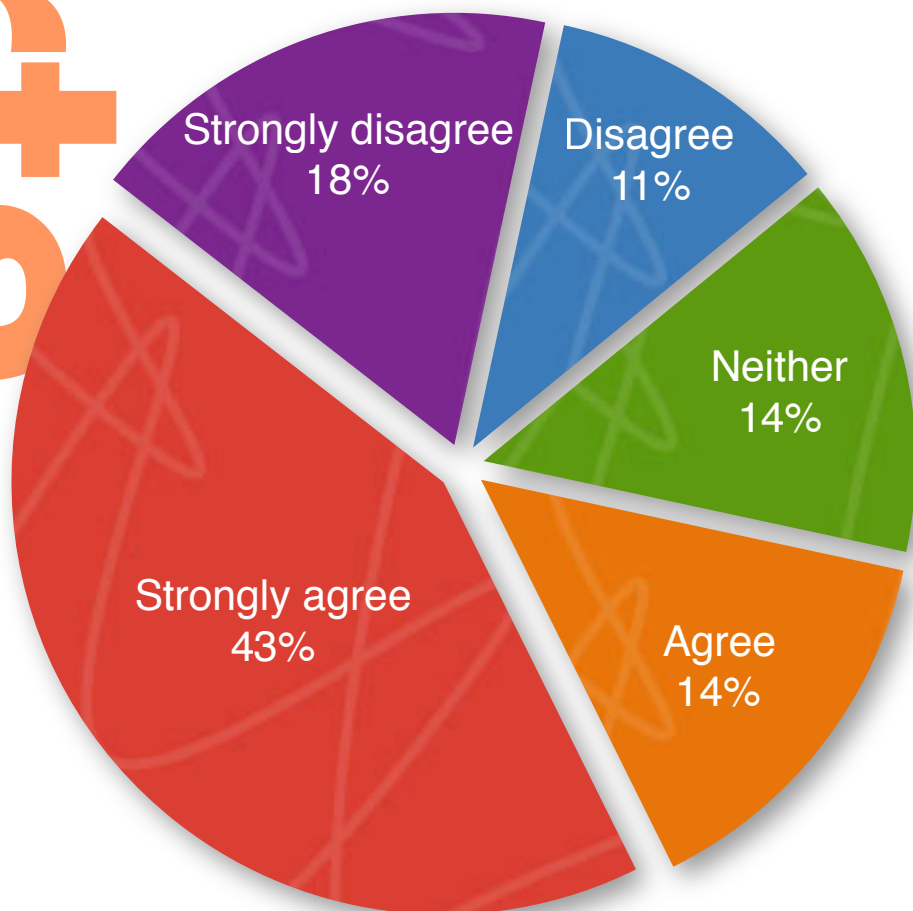




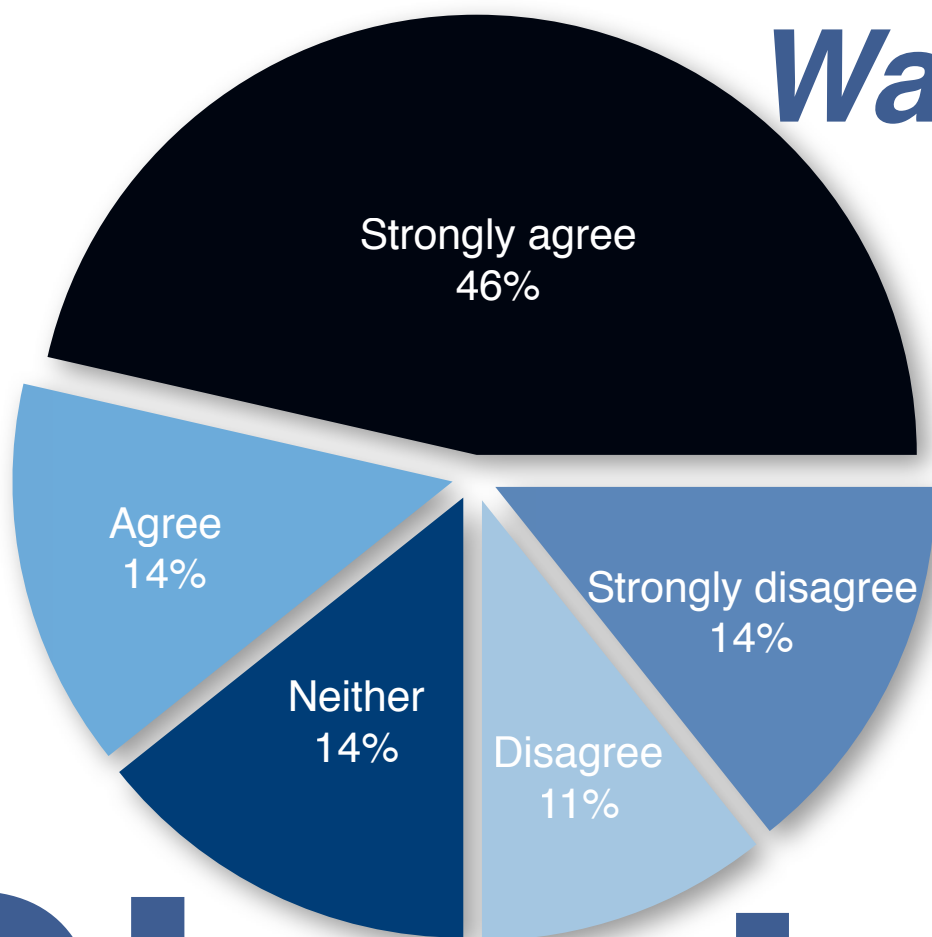
**Making sure that everyone's human rights are respected in Wales is really important to the Welsh Government**

# Charts

**Older people are treated less fairly and less equally than younger people in Wales**



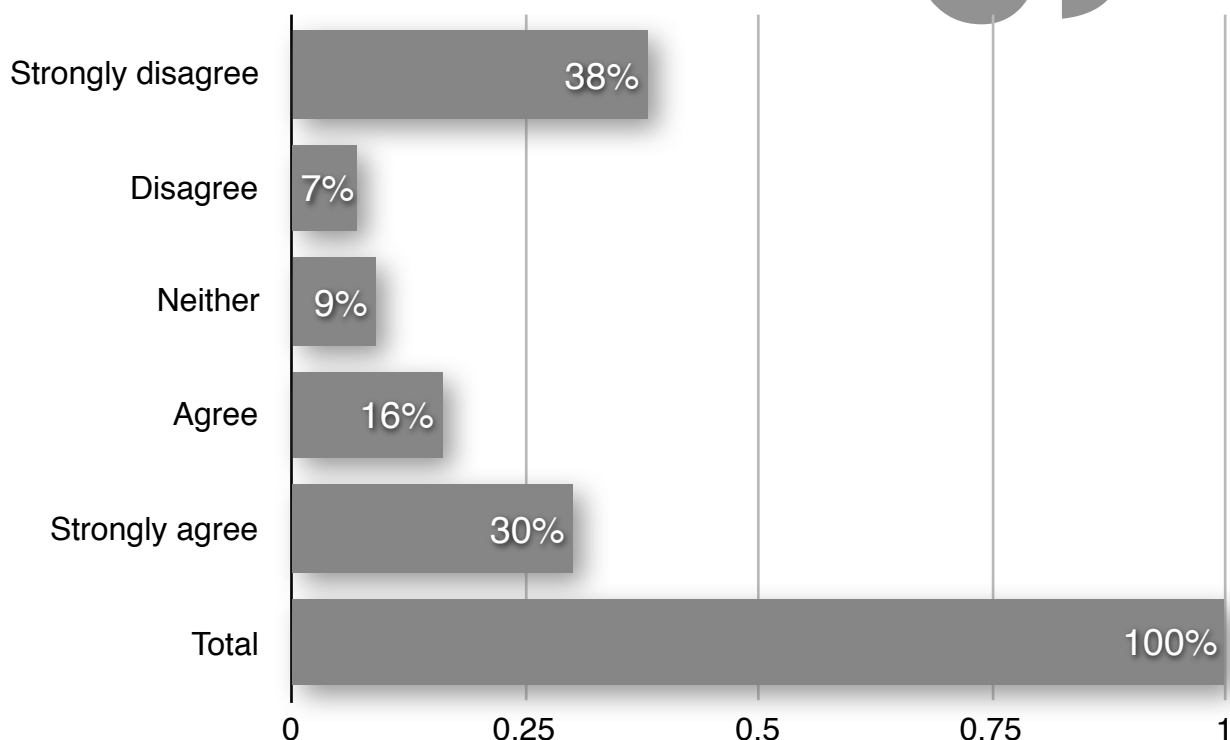
# ***Younger people are treated less fairly and less equally than older people in Wales***

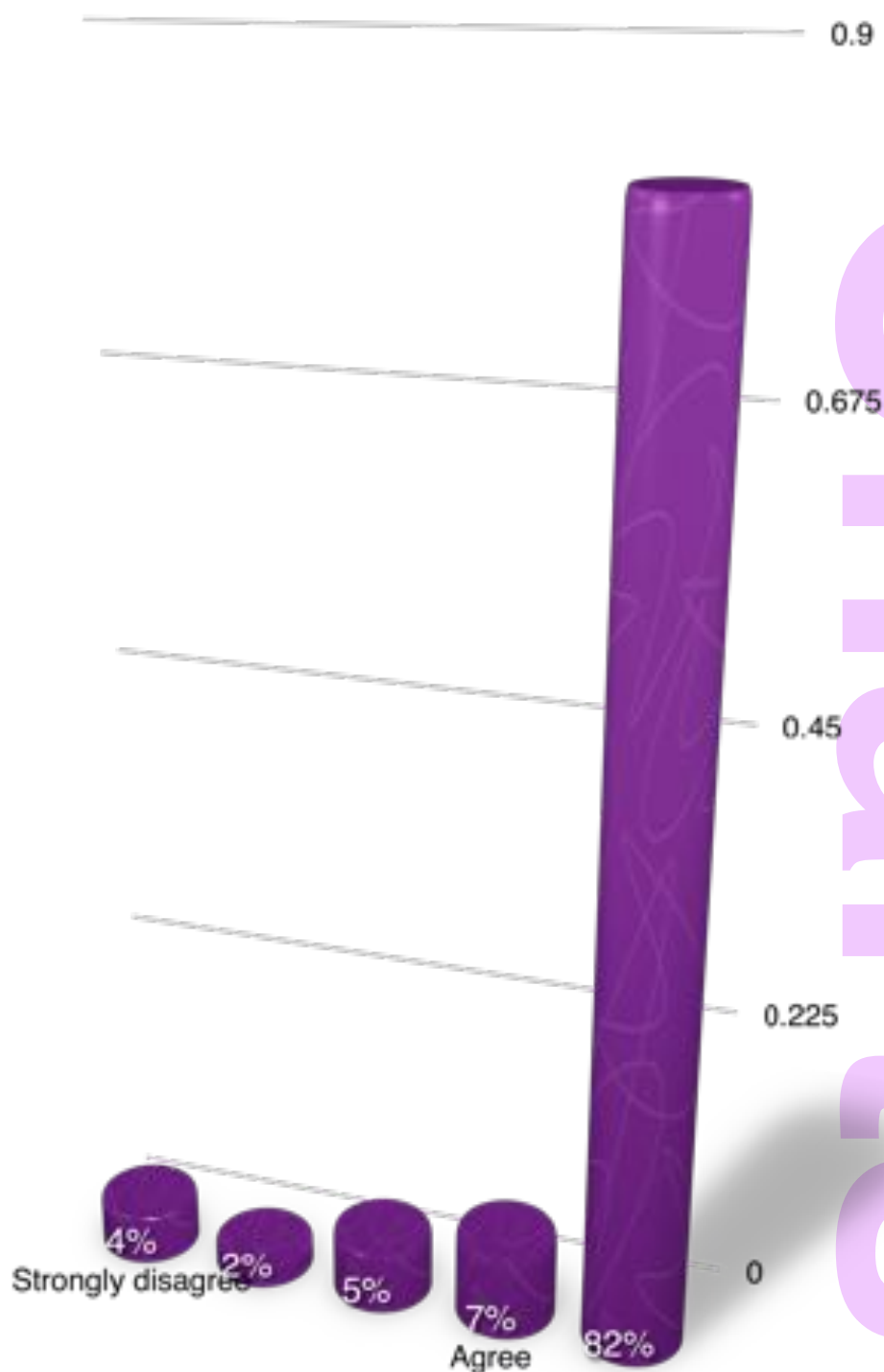


# Charts

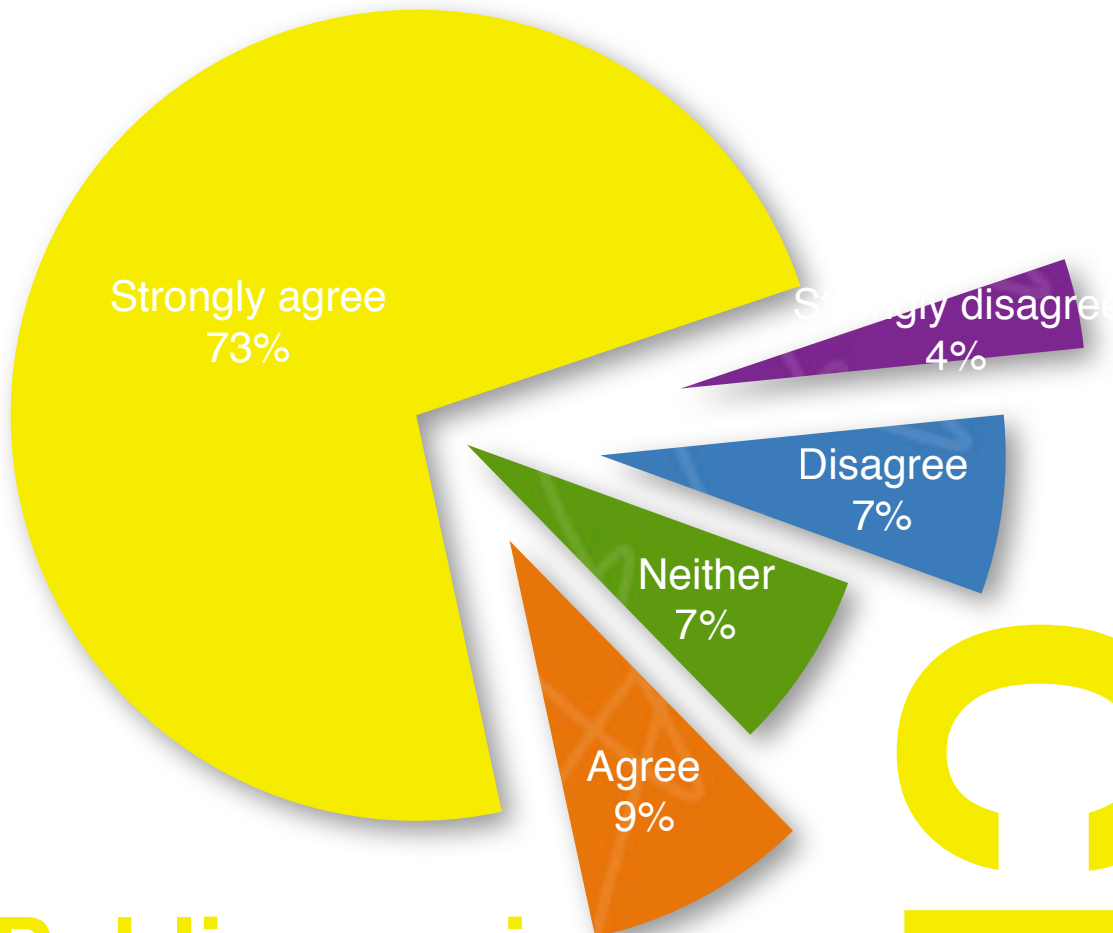
# The Welsh government has adequate resources for making sure people receive good services and support

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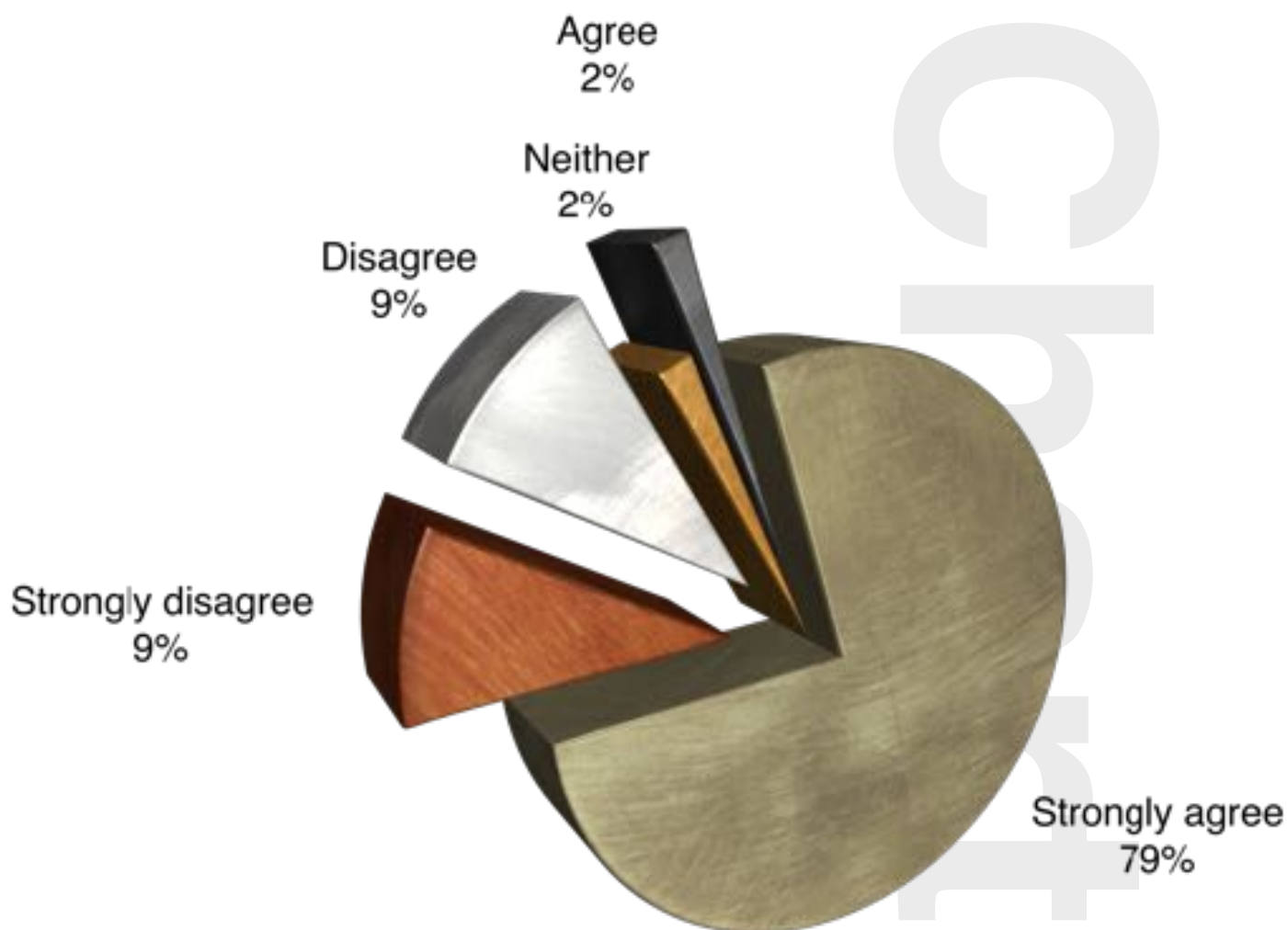
***The Welsh government could do more to make public services transport and health provision accessible to all***



**Public services  
in Wales need to  
think more about  
the needs and  
rights of different  
communities  
families and  
individuals**

**charts**

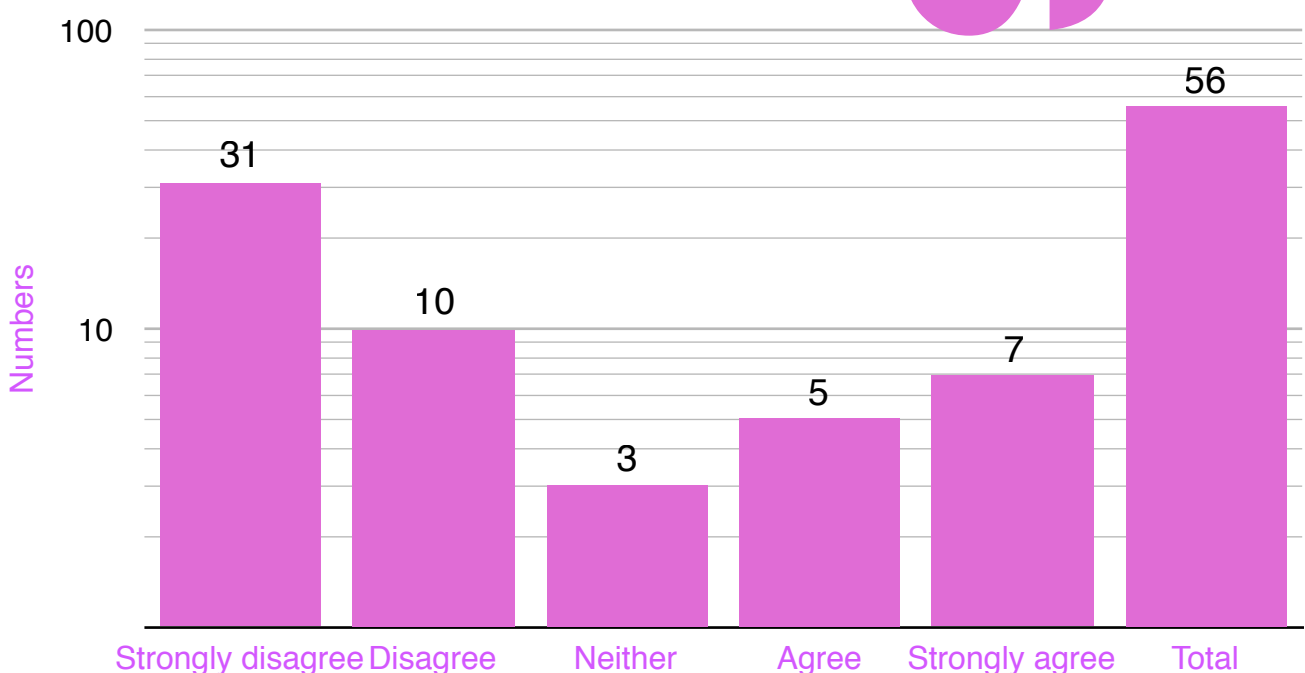


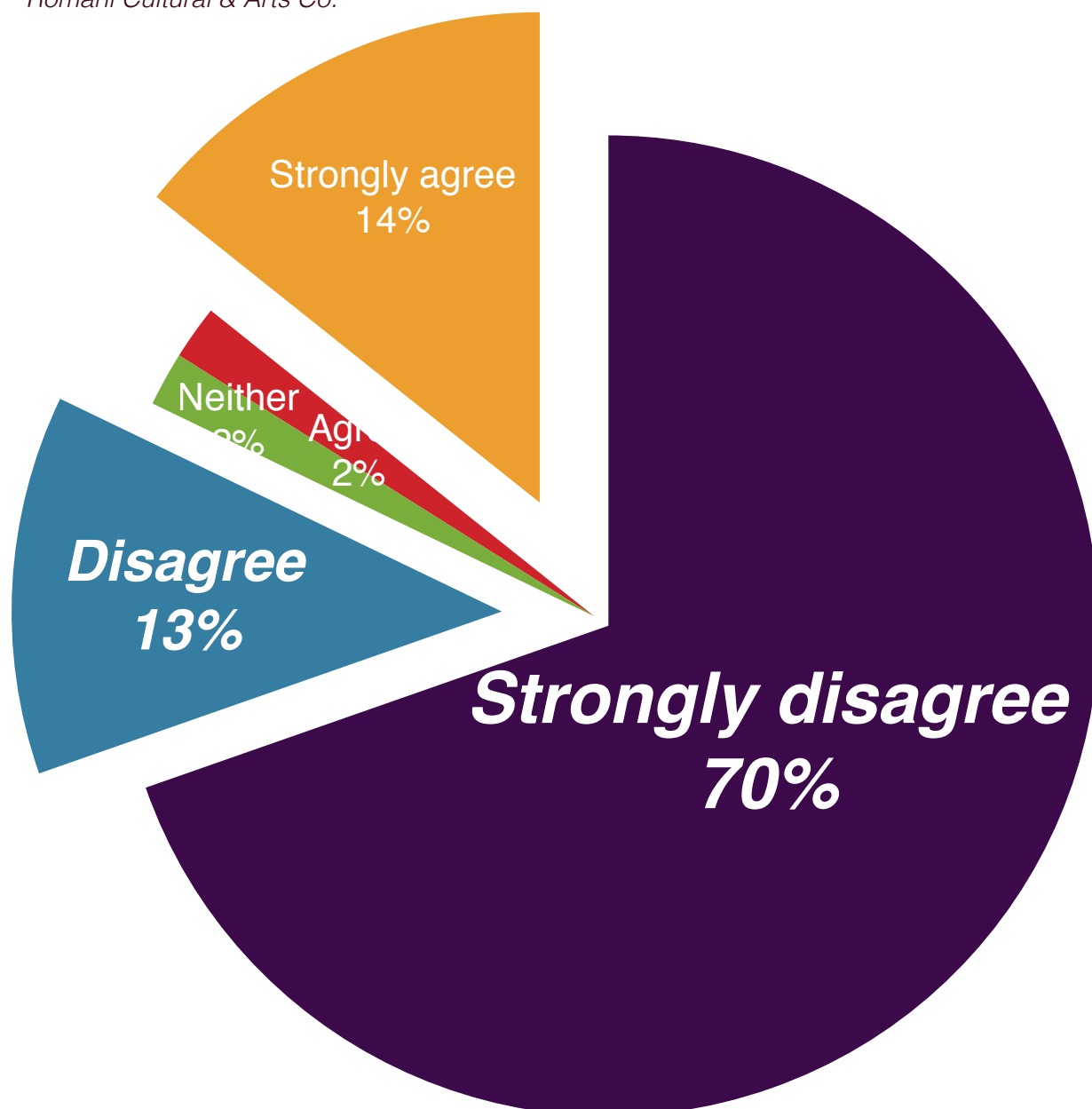


**Transport, health provision and public services need to be given more support and training in equalities and diversity**

The Welsh government recognises the needs and rights of BAME people in accessing housing, employment, education, and healthcare

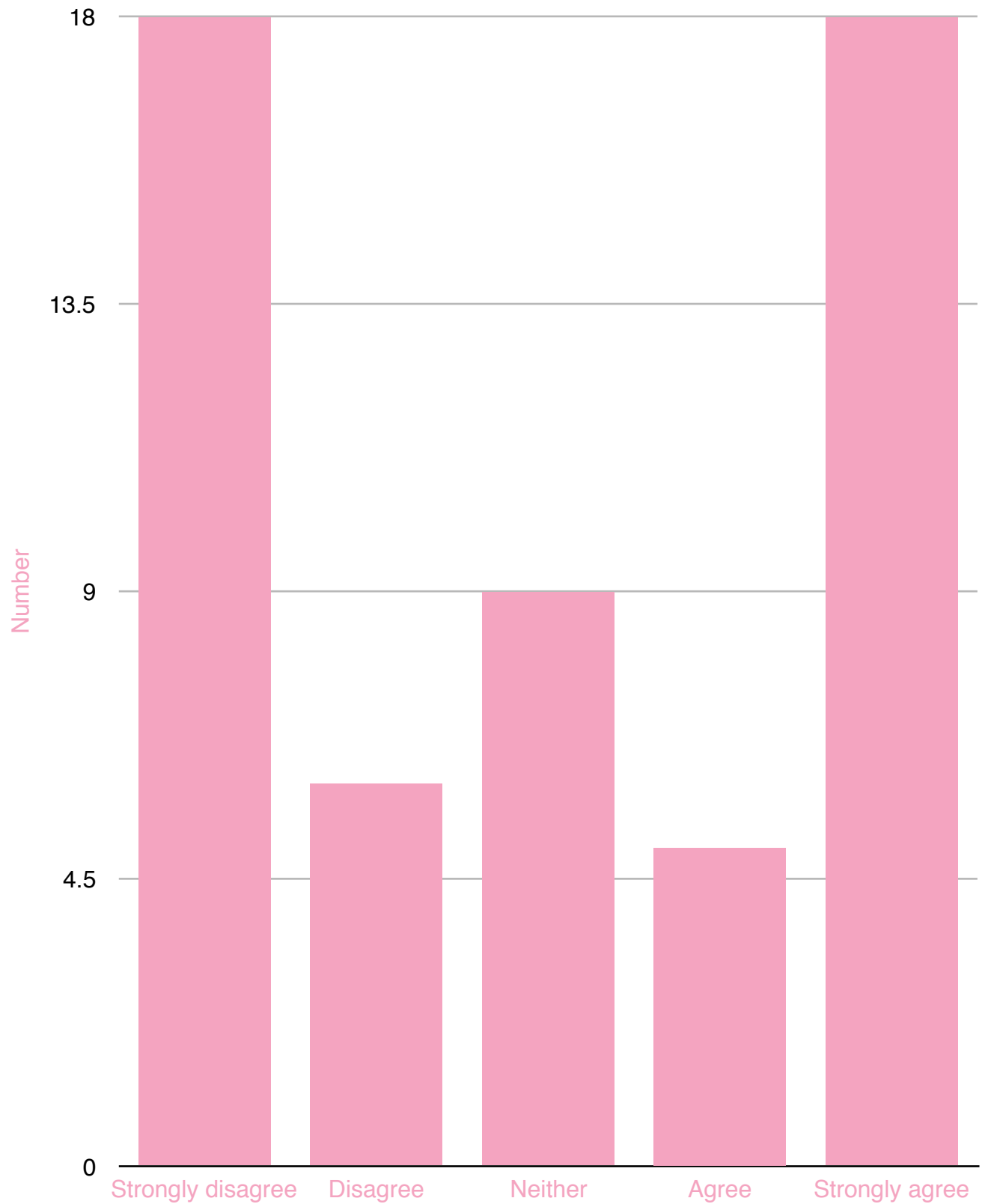
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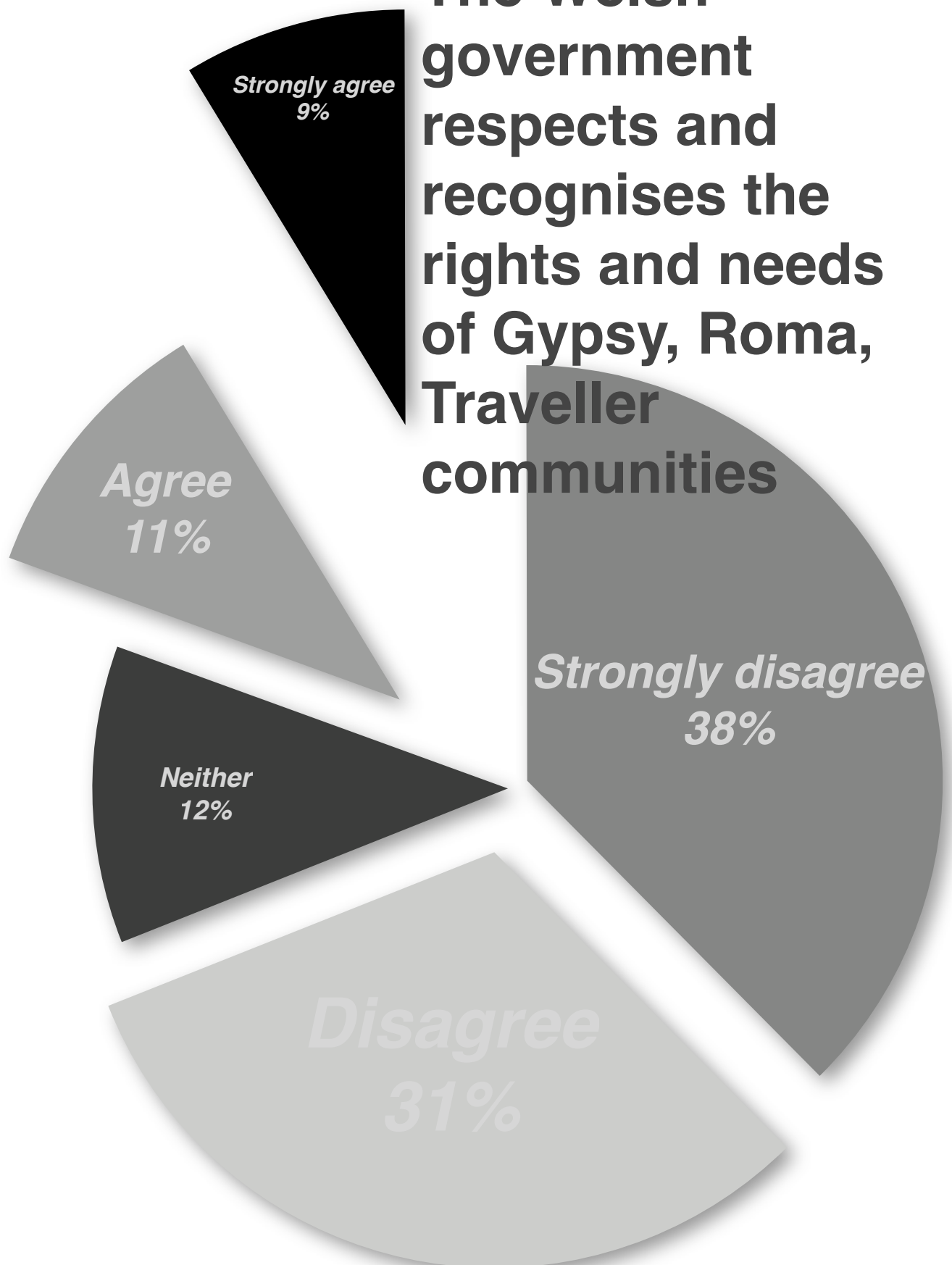


**The Welsh government  
respects and recognises the  
rights and needs of Gypsy,  
Roma, Traveller communities**

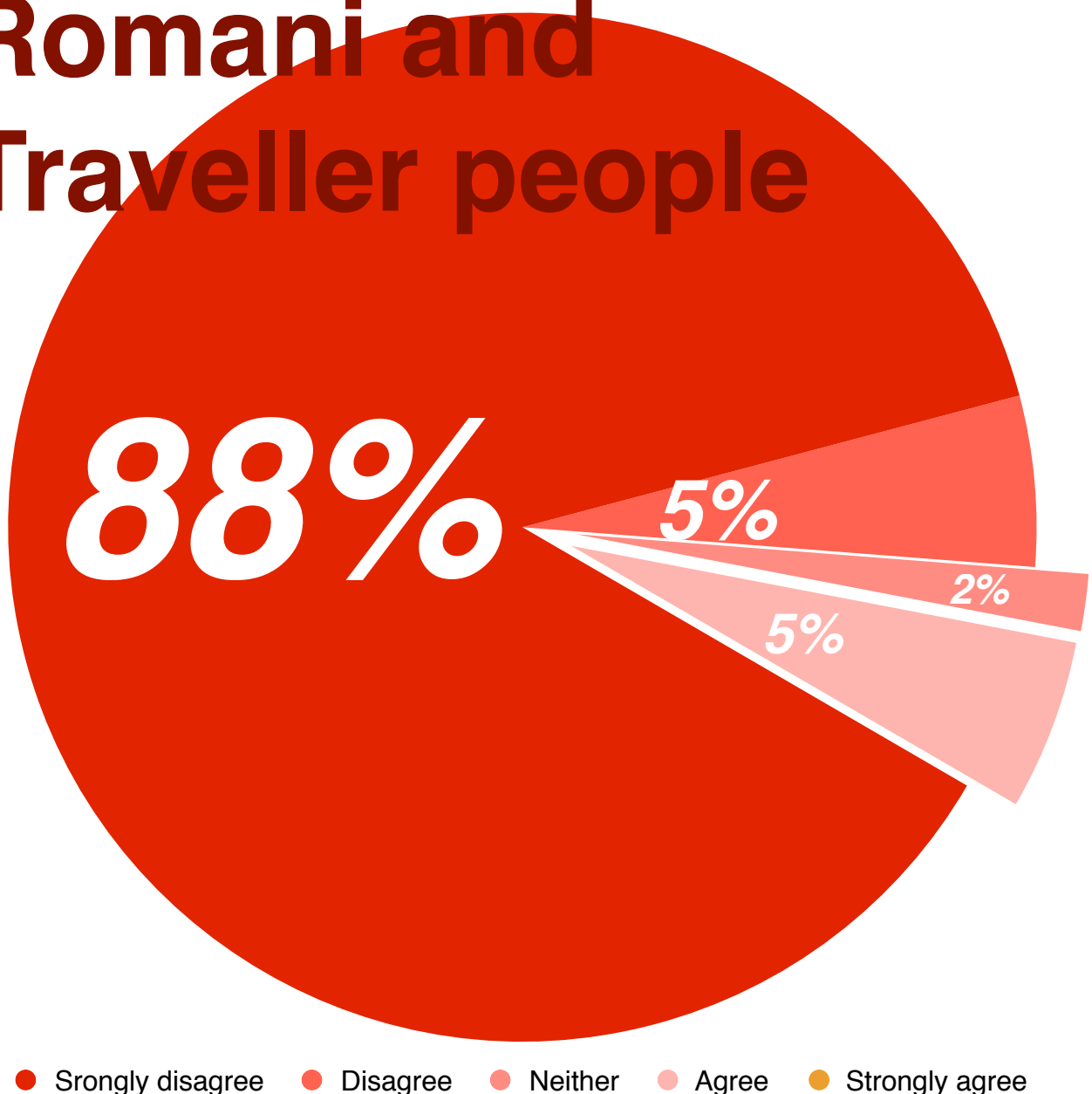
■ **Respect for LGBTQ+ rights are important to the Welsh government**



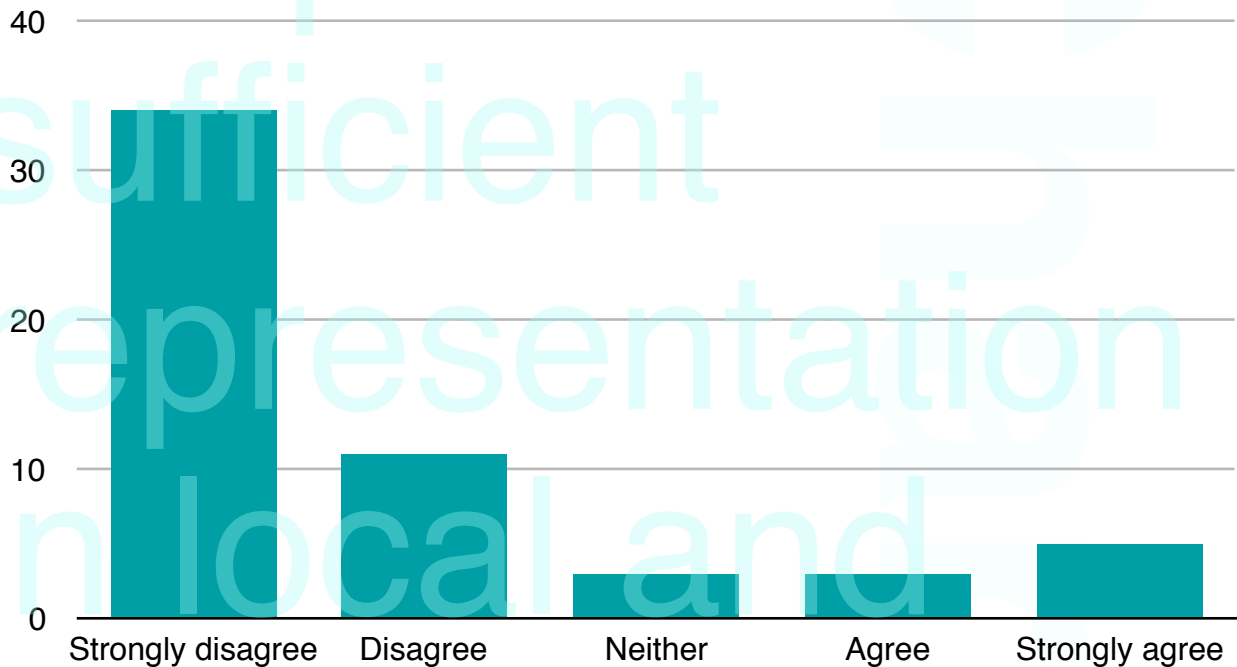
# The Welsh government respects and recognises the rights and needs of Gypsy, Roma, Traveller communities



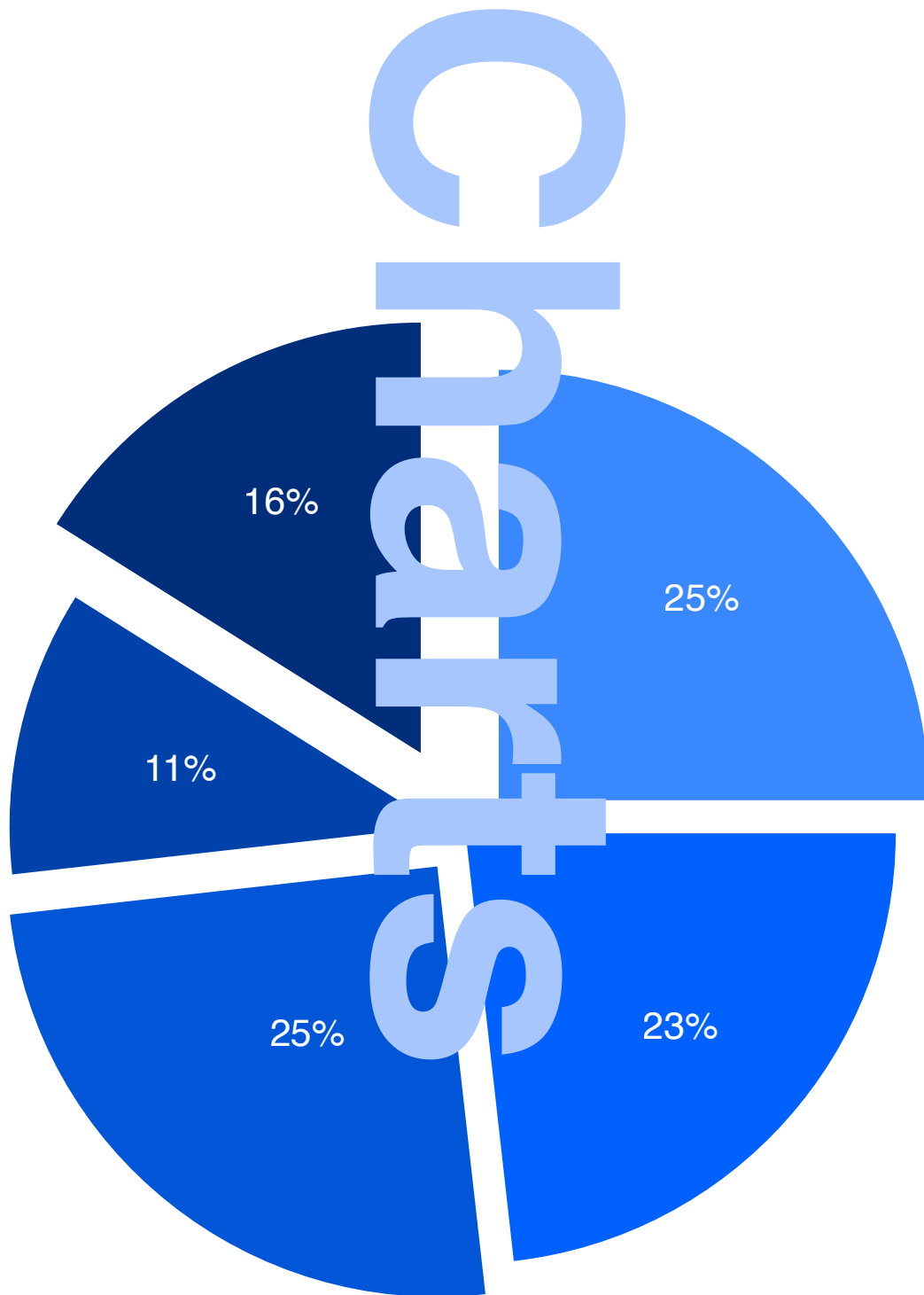
# Local government officers understand and respect the rights and needs of Romani and Traveller people



Romani and Traveller people have sufficient representation in local and national organisations and institutions







Romani and Traveller people have sufficient support from Third Sector organisations to promote their rights

- **Strongly disagree**
- **Disagree**
- **Neither**
- **Agree**
- **Strongly agree**

designed  
and  
produced  
by...

# international Romani Studies Network



## Terms used in this report

BAME

BLACK, ASIAN &  
MINORITY ETHNIC

ROMANI

GYPSIES, TRAVELLERS  
OF ROMANI ORIGINS,  
ROMA

TRAVELLER

IRISH TRAVELLERS IN  
WALES

LGBTQ+

LESBIAN, GAY,  
TRANSEXUAL, QUEER, +  
OTHERS

REAP

WALES RACE EQUALITY  
ACTION PLAN 2020

SEP

STRATEGIC EQUALITIES  
ACTION PLAN 2020-2024

EGYPTIANS

OLDER TERM FOR  
'GYPSIES' FOUND IN  
RECORDS

MUMMERS

ACTORS WHO  
SPECIALISED IN MIME,  
MOSTLY GYPSIES, 16TH  
TO 18TH CENTURIES

THIRD SECTOR

VOLUNTARY SECTOR IN  
WALES

ROMANI & TRAVELLER

GYPSIES, ROMA FROM  
EASTERN EUROPE &  
ROMANI TRAVELLERS &  
IRISH TRAVELLERS

GYPSY, ROMA,  
TRAVELLER

WELSH  
GYPSIES, ENGLISH  
GYPSIES, ROMA IN  
WALES, IRISH  
TRAVELLERS IN WALES



# Romani Cultural & Arts Co.