

# Consultation on the Public Health (Functions and General Public Health Duty) Bill 2026: Summary of Responses

July 2026



Cabinet Office

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## Overview

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From 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2026 to 20<sup>th</sup> February 2026 a consultation was undertaken on the Public Health (Functions and General Public Health Duty) Bill 2026.

The Bill was developed to provide a legal basis for delivering public health on the Island. The proposed Bill would encompass the range of services and functions undertaken by Public Health, and provide flexibility for changes to these services in the future.

The Bill included provisions relating to –

- the appointment of a Chief Public Health Officer (in place of the Director of Public Health) with associated deputies and officers;
- the functions of the Chief Public Health Officer;
- a proposed general public health duty for public bodies;
- enabling provisions for the establishment of advisory bodies, such as those required to advise on ethical controls on health and social care research;
- an information gateway to provide a legal mechanism for information sharing by, and with, Public Health; and
- amendments to the Public Health Act 1990 to enable amendments to the list of statutory nuisances, revising the application of the Act to vermin, and clarifying the powers of authorised officers of the Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture.

Feedback on the Bill indicated broad support for the Public Health functions set out in the Bill, the proposed Public Health duty and the amendments to the Public Health Act 1990. This is qualified by some concerns from public bodies (mainly local authorities) on the impact of the proposed public health duty. There were also some concerns with respect to the necessity for, and administrative burden of, the advisory bodies that may be established by the Bill.

There was also some feedback suggesting minor improvements to the Bill and highlighting where provisions may need to be improved to clarify their application.

However, there was less support for the proposed Chief Public Health Officer role. These concerns mainly related to the position not being required to be a medical professional or have medical experience, and the possibility of unsuitable or inexperienced persons being appointed to this role.

It was also noted that changes to other health legislation may impact on Public Health activities that require public consent.

Following further consideration of this feedback, policy direction, consultation and engagement, it is anticipated that a revised Bill can be progressed for consideration in 2027.

## We asked

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The Cabinet Office sought views on legislation to a Bill provide a legal basis for Public Health on the Island. This Bill included provisions relating to the appointment and functions of a Chief Public Health Officer, a general public health duty for public bodies and amendments to the Public Health Act 1990.

## You said

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The consultation ran from 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2026 to 20<sup>th</sup> February 2026 and received 49 responses.

Overall:

- There was qualified support for the appointment of a Chief Public Health Officer.
  - A significant number of respondents were of the view that this position should be held by a medical professional or someone with medical experience.
- There was strong support for the proposed Public Health functions and duties.
  - Some comments did express concerns as how the functions will be delivered, and if some proposed functions (e.g. commissioning) were suitable.
- There was strong support for the proposed general public health duty.
  - A small number of comments expressed either support, or opposition, for assessments to support this duty.
  - Additional comments noted the duty supported integrated public services and suggested the duty should apply Island-wide.
- There was strong support for Public Health to have the powers to establish advisory bodies.
  - A small number of comments did express concerns as to the resource impact of such bodies, and whether or not this power was required.
- There was strong support for the proposed definition of public bodies in relation to the general public health duty.
  - Some comments did suggest this term could be narrowed or unlinked from the definition in the Freedom of Information Act 2015.
- There was strong support for the proposed amendments to the Public Health Act 1990.
  - A small number of comments did highlight concerns over the suitability of extending statutory nuisance provisions or controls on vermin.
  - One comment suggested a broader review of that Act is required.

## We did

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The Cabinet Office is grateful to all those who responded to the consultation. Public Health will now –

- take into consideration the feedback from this consultation;
- engage with local authorities on the proposed public health duty;
- seek further feedback on the issues raised by this consultation; and
- having regard to recent amendments to the National Health Service Act 2001, consult on provisions relating to consent requirements for public health activities.

Once these actions have been undertaken the intention is to promote a revised Bill for consideration in 2027.

## Consultation Report

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### Responses to the survey

There were **49** responses to the survey from various persons and bodies as set out in the table below.

| Option                                                                           | Total | Percent |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|---------|
| A public body (e.g. a Government Department, Statutory Board or Local Authority) | 8     | 16.33%  |
| A business                                                                       | 2     | 4.08%   |
| A charity                                                                        | 1     | 2.04%   |
| A community organisation                                                         | 0     | 0.00%   |
| As a member of Tynwald                                                           | 0     | 0.00%   |
| As a member of the public                                                        | 37    | 75.51%  |
| Not Answered                                                                     | 1     | 2.04%   |

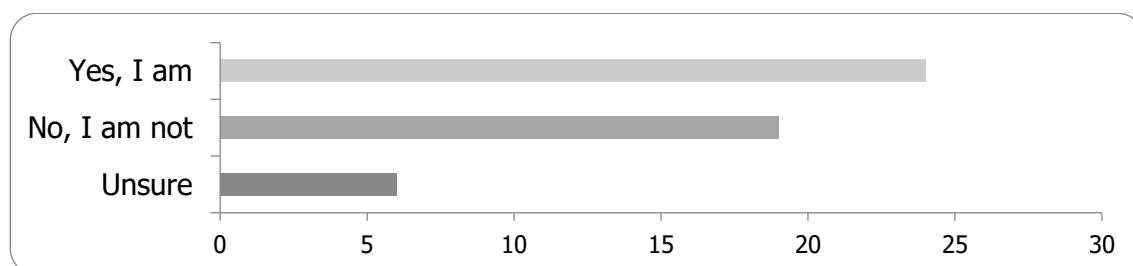
### Publication of responses

Respondents to the survey gave consent, or not, for the publication of their response to the survey as follows.

| Option                                       | Total | Percent |
|----------------------------------------------|-------|---------|
| Yes, you can publish my response in full     | 11    | 22.45%  |
| Yes, you may publish my response anonymously | 30    | 61.22%  |
| No, please do not publish my response        | 8     | 16.33%  |
| Not Answered                                 | 0     | 0.00%   |

### Q1. Are you content with the proposed role of 'Chief Public Health Officer' and how that person may be appointed?

There were **49** responses to this question.



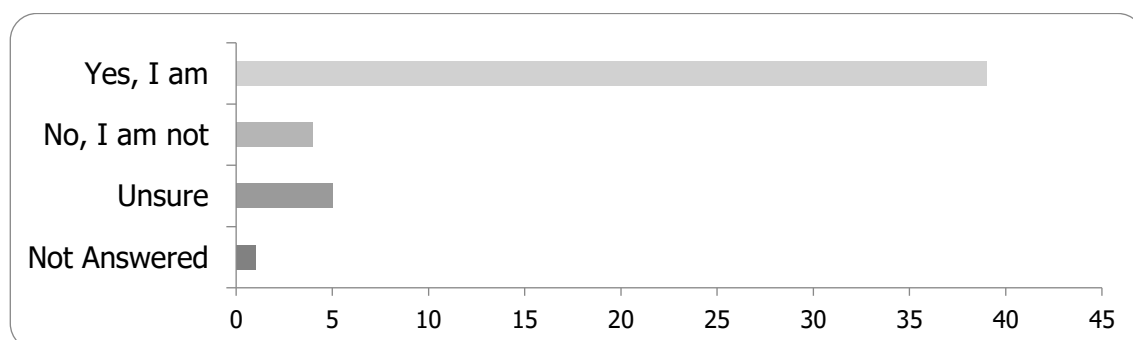
| Option       | Total | Percent |
|--------------|-------|---------|
| Yes, I am    | 24    | 48.98%  |
| No, I am not | 19    | 38.78%  |
| Unsure       | 6     | 12.24%  |
| Not Answered | 0     | 0.00%   |

There were **26** additional text responses<sup>1</sup> to this question. These can be summarised as follows –

- the post holder should have a medical qualification or medical knowledge and experience (15 responses);
- the post holder should have a public health qualification or suitable knowledge and experience (8 responses);
- the current arrangements are suitable, efficient or cost-effective (2 responses)
- support for Public Health having a role in central government (1 response);
- suggest the post holder should be publicly elected (1 response);
- retaining the Director of Public Health position (1 response);
- holding a review of the Sir Jonathan Michael’s review be reviewed (1 response).
- establishing a Single Legal Entity (1 response); and
- reducing the scope of Public Health (1 response).

**Q2. The Bill sets out the proposed functions and duties of the Chief Public Health Officer. Are you content that these functions and duties are suitable for this role?**

There were **48** responses to this question.



| Option       | Total | Percent |
|--------------|-------|---------|
| Yes, I am    | 39    | 79.59%  |
| No, I am not | 4     | 8.16%   |
| Unsure       | 5     | 10.20%  |
| Not Answered | 1     | 2.04%   |

There were **20** additional text responses<sup>2</sup> to this question. Those that are relevant to this question can be summarised as follows –

- functions should be determined with input from medical staff (2 responses);
- the functions should require focus on reducing healthcare costs (1 response);
- the functions should include supporting emergency planning (1 response);
- express support for Public Health improvement as a function (1 response);
- express support Public Health powers to provide services (1 response);
- Public Health should not have commissioning powers (1 response);

<sup>1</sup> Note: Submitted additional text responses may cover more than one summarised response.

<sup>2</sup> Note: Submitted additional text responses may cover more than one summarised response.

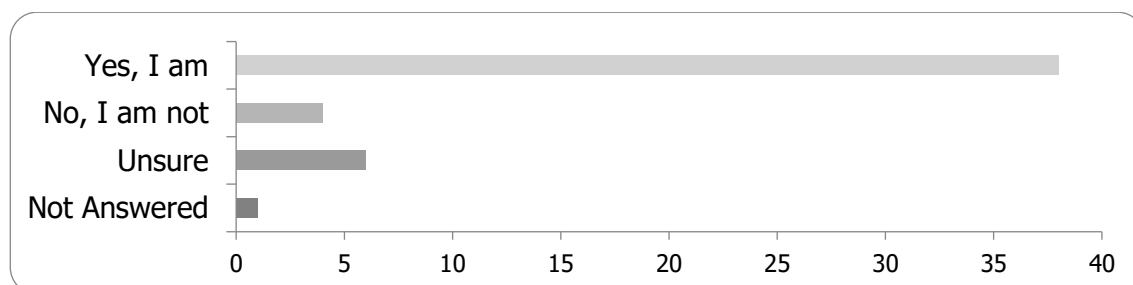
- Public Health should have an obligation to work closer with Planning (1 response);
- concern the proposed Public Health functions are unclear (1 response);
- highlight concerns as to drafting errors (2 responses); and
- concerns as to who introduces the regulations for new functions (1 response).

There were also additional text comments relating to the previous question that can be summarised as follows –

- the post holder should not be a lay person or without a medical qualification (3 responses);
- the post holder should be a medical professional or experienced (6 responses); and
- the post holder should be a public health professional or have relevant experience (1 response).

### Q3. Are you content with the proposed general public health duty as it applies to public bodies?

There were **48** responses to this question.



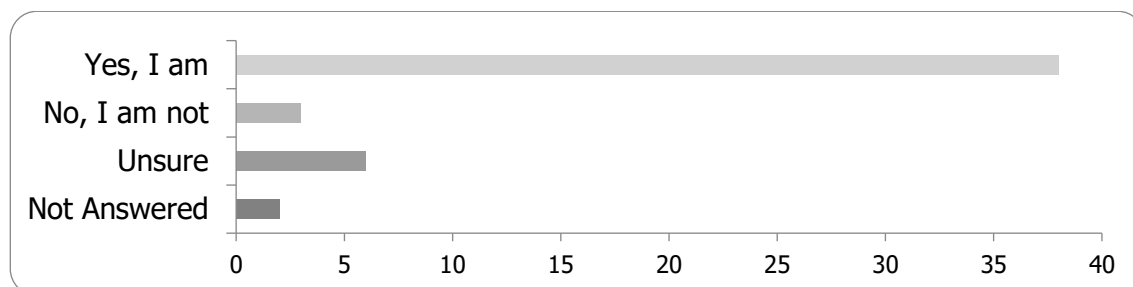
| Option       | Total | Percent |
|--------------|-------|---------|
| Yes, I am    | 38    | 77.55%  |
| No, I am not | 4     | 8.16%   |
| Unsure       | 6     | 12.24%  |
| Not Answered | 1     | 2.04%   |

There were **17** additional text responses to this question. These can be summarised as follows –

- the duty should apply non-statutory bodies or even the entire Island (3 responses);
- concerns that Public Health are either unaccountable or unsuitable to advise on this duty; (2 responses);
- support for impact assessments as part of meeting the duty, possibly as part of the climate change duty impact assessments; (2 responses);
- support approach of minimal or no assessments (2 responses);
- suggestion that Public Health should be part of the Department of Health and Social Care; (2 responses);
- noting this supports Public Health in society, including engagement, healthy eating and exercise promotion; (1 response);
- support Public Health's engagement with public services (1 response);
- state that another health service is not required; (1 response);
- devolve this duty to local authorities (1 response); and
- oppose central control or enforcement (2 responses).

#### Q4. Are you content with the proposed definition of public bodies?

There were **47** responses to this part of the question.



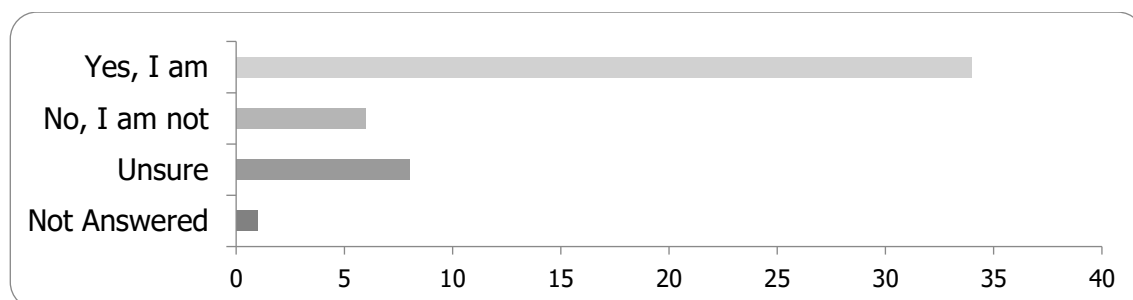
| Option       | Total | Percent |
|--------------|-------|---------|
| Yes, I am    | 38    | 77.55%  |
| No, I am not | 3     | 6.12%   |
| Unsure       | 6     | 12.24%  |
| Not Answered | 2     | 4.08%   |

There were **7** additional text responses to this question. These can be summarised as follows –

- this definition is unclear or should not be linked to the Freedom of Information Act 2015 (4 responses);
- support provision of joined-up services (1 response);
- important for public bodies to act impartially (1 response); and
- concern this would result in more staff being required (1 response).

#### Q5. Are you content for the powers to establish advisory bodies be provided in the Bill?

There were **48** responses to this the question.



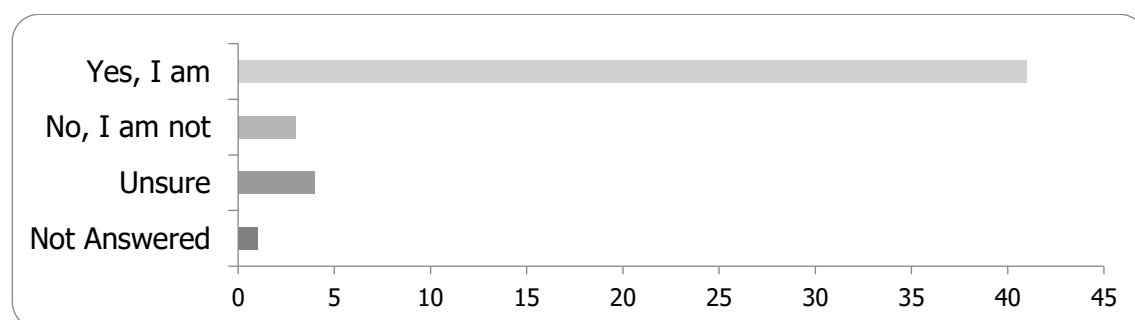
| Option       | Total | Percent |
|--------------|-------|---------|
| Yes, I am    | 34    | 69.39%  |
| No, I am not | 6     | 12.24%  |
| Unsure       | 8     | 16.33%  |
| Not Answered | 1     | 2.04%   |

There were **18** additional text responses to this question. These can be summarised<sup>3</sup> as follows –

- greater controls are required before these can be established (5 responses);
- it is unclear on how this works or not required (4 responses);
- these are costly, overly bureaucratic or burdensome (3 responses);
- there is a need for wider range of public bodies to be engaged in these bodies, including DHSC; (2 responses)
- this is unclear in its application (1 response);
- use of bodies for ethics and research is not a Public Health matter (1 response);
- a body is needed for infection control (1 response); and
- these bodies must be properly resourced (1 response).

**Q6. Are you content with the proposed introduction of an information gateway to provide a clear legal mechanism for the sharing of information with Public Health for the purposes of the functions of the Chief Public Health Officer?**

There were **48** responses to this question.



| Option       | Total | Percent |
|--------------|-------|---------|
| Yes, I am    | 41    | 83.67%  |
| No, I am not | 3     | 6.12%   |
| Unsure       | 4     | 8.16%   |
| Not Answered | 1     | 2.04%   |

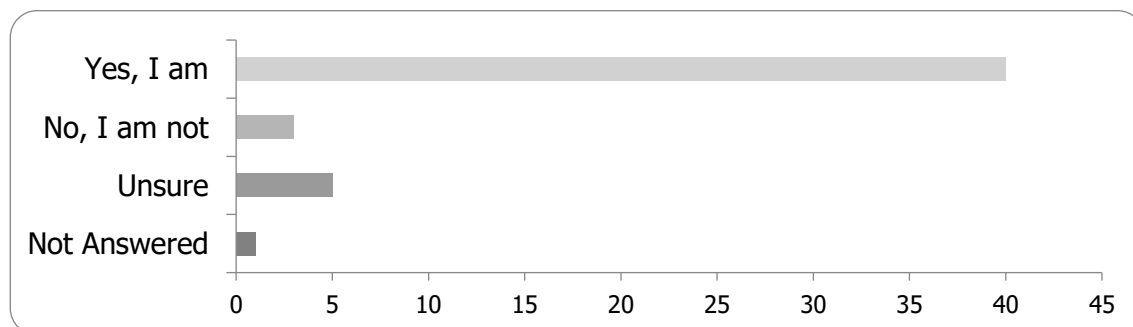
There were **9** additional text responses to this question. These can be summarised as follows –

- unclear on its drafting or how it will be applied (3 responses);
- support this proposal, conditional on these bodies reporting effectively (1 response);
- support sharing of data between UK and IOM (1 response);
- information sharing must be well regulated (1 response); and
- observation that insufficient information is published by Public Health (1 response);
- need for this to be properly resourced (1 response);
- no further comments (1 response).

<sup>3</sup> Note: Submitted additional text responses may cover more than one summarised response.

**Q7. Are you content for DEFA to be given the ability to amend the list of statutory nuisances by regulations approved by Tynwald?**

There were **48** responses to this question.



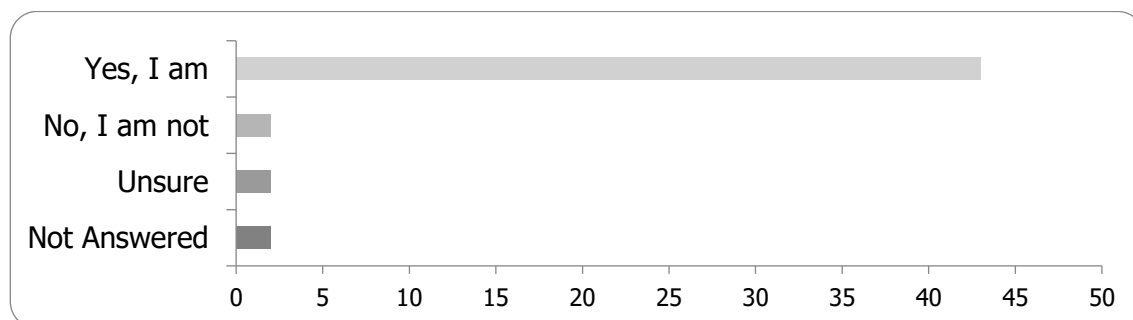
| Option       | Total | Percent |
|--------------|-------|---------|
| Yes, I am    | 40    | 81.63%  |
| No, I am not | 3     | 6.12%   |
| Unsure       | 5     | 10.20%  |
| Not Answered | 1     | 2.04%   |

There were **10** additional text responses to this question. These can be summarised as follows –

- a request these amendments do not focus on vermin (1 response);
- ask for greater scrutiny or consultation for introducing these changes (4 responses);
- a requirement for evidence for these changes (1 response);
- suggestion that these amendments require public consultation (1 response);
- suggestion that local authorities can amend these statutory nuisances (1 response);
- concern on how these powers may, or may not, be applied (1 response); and
- larger review of Public Health Act 1990 required instead (1 response).

**Q8. Are you content with the proposed amendments on vermin controls?**

There were **47** responses to this question.



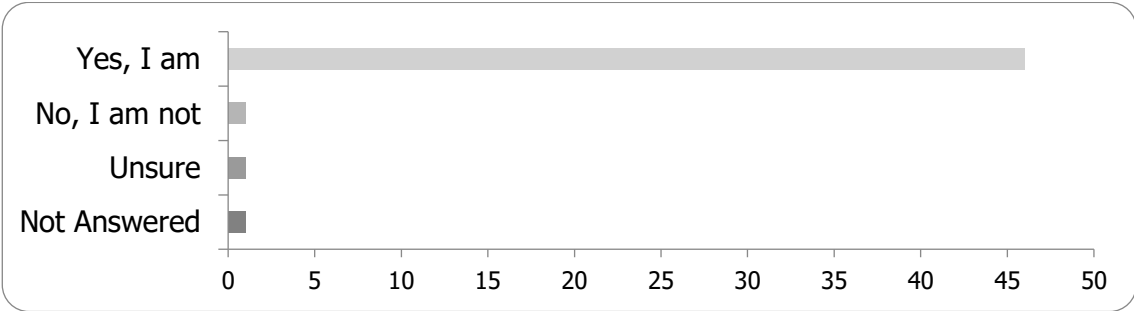
| Option       | Total | Percent |
|--------------|-------|---------|
| Yes, I am    | 43    | 87.76%  |
| No, I am not | 2     | 4.08%   |
| Unsure       | 2     | 4.08%   |
| Not Answered | 2     | 4.08%   |

There were **5** additional text responses to this question. These can be summarised as follows –

- this is unworkable or unclear (3 responses);
- this should mainly apply to the owners of premises and boats (1 response); and
- this amendment benefits the community (1 response);

**Q9. Are you content with the proposed amendments to public health inspection offences?**

There were **48** responses to this part of the question.



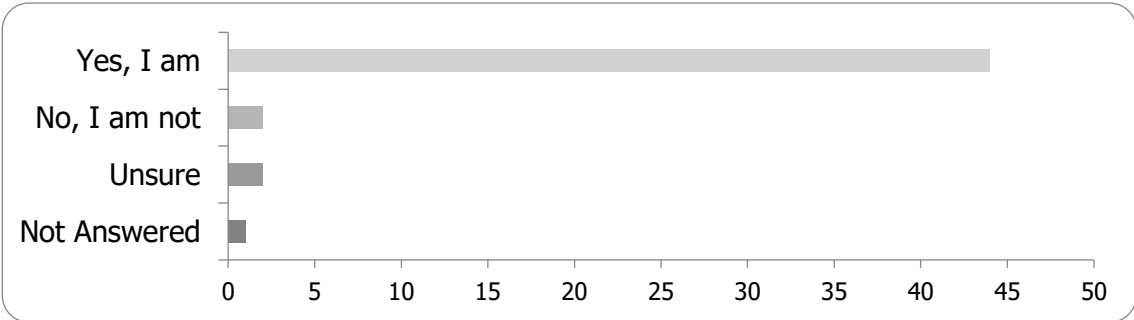
| Option       | Total | Percent |
|--------------|-------|---------|
| Yes, I am    | 46    | 93.88%  |
| No, I am not | 1     | 2.04%   |
| Unsure       | 1     | 2.04%   |
| Not Answered | 1     | 2.04%   |

There were **3** additional text responses to this question. These can be summarised as –

- an observation that this is common sense (1 response);
- a request that officers have appropriate knowledge and training (1 response); and
- a concern this amendment is unclear (1 response).

**Q10. Are you content with the proposed amendments to the powers provided to DEFA’s authorised officers?**

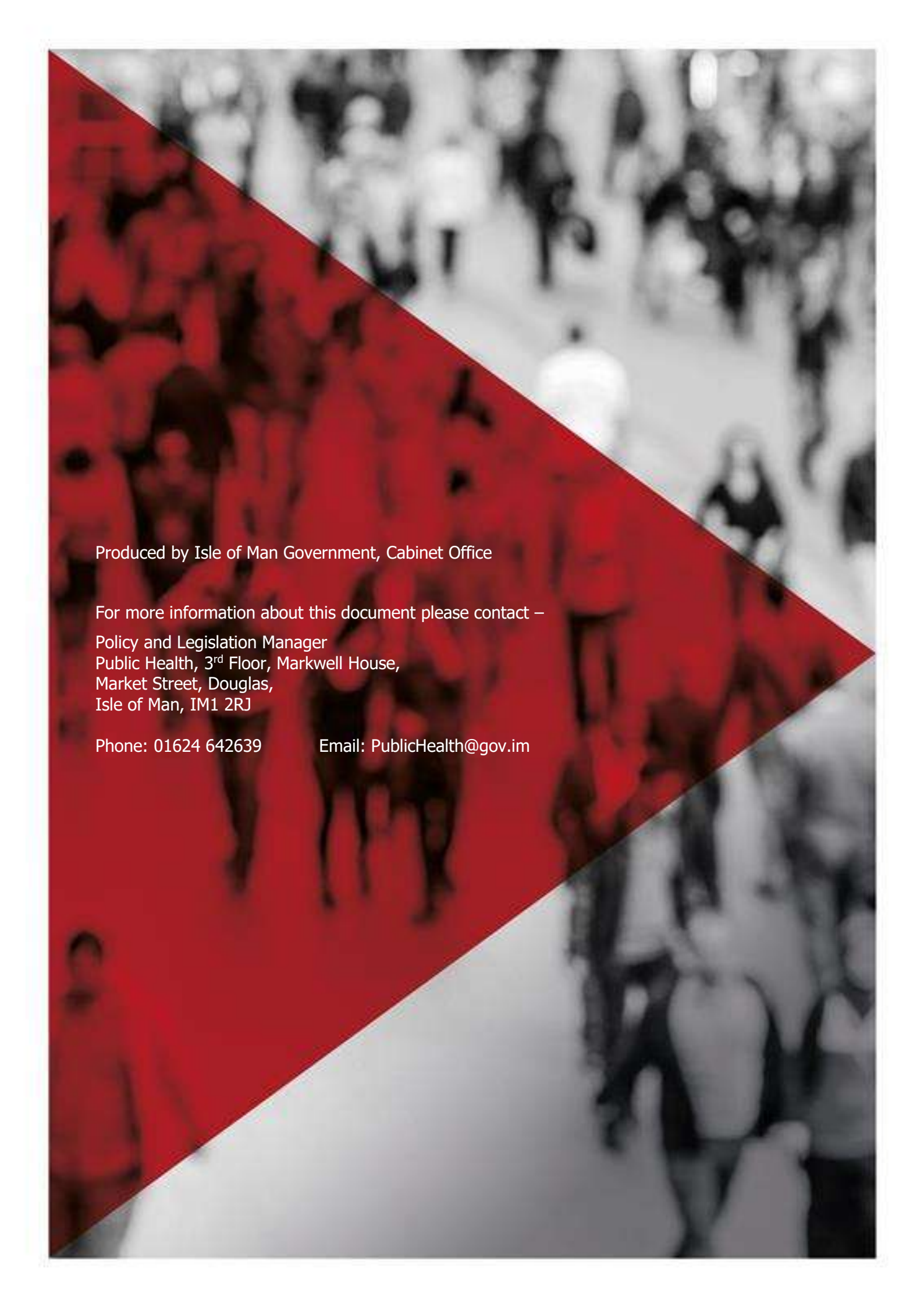
There were **48** responses to this part of the question.



| <b>Option</b> | <b>Total</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|---------------|--------------|----------------|
| Yes, I am     | 44           | 89.80%         |
| No, I am not  | 2            | 4.08%          |
| Unsure        | 2            | 4.08%          |
| Not Answered  | 1            | 2.04%          |

There were **6** additional text responses to this question. These can be summarised as –

- support for actions to protect public health (1 response);
- support for DEFA to undertake its duties (2 responses);
- a request that officers have appropriate knowledge and training (1 response);
- concern this is legal jargon or unclear (1 responses); and
- a suggestion that entry powers be repealed (1 response).



Produced by Isle of Man Government, Cabinet Office

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